

GORKHAS OF THE INDIAN ARMY



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FOREWORD

This book is a magnum opus, providing a wealth of information on all aspects connected with the Gorkhas. Their renown for valour and soldiering has spread all over the world. The Gorkha and his khukri have carved a special niche for themselves in the annals of military history. There was a joke current about them in the Second World War. The Gorkha was known to make a clean job with his khukri. In a close quarter battle, a Gorkha slashed the neck of a German officer. The German told the Gorkha that his khukri had not done much harm. The Gorkha replied, "Shake your head and you will find out".

In the Eighteenth Century, King Prithvi Naraynan Shah, the ruler of Gorkha principality unified Nepal as one kingdom which soon extended from Kangra in the West to Darjeeling in the East. The kingdom included the Tarai region of the Himalayas bordering UP and Bihar. Gorkha now became a generic term for all Nepalese. Gorkhas enlisted for service in the Sikh Army of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and also as levies in Assam under the East India Company. The word "Laure" in Nepalese is a derivative from Lahore. It stands for a Gorkha who has taken military service outside his country. This word continues to be in use even today and is reminiscent of the time when Gorkha soldiers had enlisted for military service under

the Lahore Durbar. Gorkha Infantry in the Khalsa Army under Hari Singh Nalwa distinguished itself in battle against the Afghans at Peshawar. Nalwa was all praise for them. Gorkha expansion in the West and incursions into the plains of UP and Bihar, brought them in conflict with the British. Two Gorkha wars were fought in which Gorkhas lost and had to cede large tracts of their territory. There was much valour and chivalry displayed by both sides. In a very rare incident of military history, the British put up memorials to the memory of both Major General Sir Robert Gillespie and General Balbahadur of the Nepal Army, who were killed in the Battle of Kalanga. The British were so impressed by the valour of the Gorkhas that they decided to enlist them on a regular basis in their Army. They also decided not to continue their offensive into Kathmandu Valley. The 1815 Treaty of Sagauli between the East India Company and Nepal made a provision for the recruitment of Gorkhas in the Indian Army. It also recognised the independence of Nepal. Thus Nepal remained the only independent country on the Indian Sub-Continent throughout British rule. The Gorkhas rendered invaluable help to the British during the 1857 uprising. Thereafter Gorkhas distinguished themselves in all the wars, the British fought in Asia, Africa and Europe. Their fame spread far and wide. They also fought in the Falkland War in the Southern Hemisphere. During the two World Wars, the Gorkhas earned much fame, as soldiers par excellence. Till 1947 the Gorkha units were officered exclusively by the British. The 1857 syndrome persisted among the British till the last days of their imperial rule over the Sub-Continent.

In 1946, I was serving as a Staff Officer in the Operations Room at General Headquarters in Delhi (now Army Headquarters). I recall that we used pins of three colours to indicate unit locations on the map - red for British units, green for Gorkha units and brown for Indian units. The strategy appeared to be not to have only brown

pins at any location without some red or green pins in that place.

There were ten Gorkha infantry regiments in the undivided Indian Army. Four of these were allocated for service with the British Army in Malaya and six remained as part of the Indian Army. At the time of Partition, Pakistan also made a bid for Gorkha troops but this was not accepted by Nepal which was a Hindu kingdom and Gorkha soldiers were all Hindus. Individual Gorkha soldiers were given the option to opt for service under the British in Malaya or in Independent India. The overwhelming majority opted for service in India. I remember that as a Major on the staff of the Army Commander, Lt Gen Sir Dudley Russell, I had accompanied him on a visit to a Gorkha unit at Taran Taaran in Amritsar. The General enquired from the British Commanding Officer if all the arrangements for the referendum had been made. The latter replied that he knew his men for nearly twenty years and he was sure they would not opt for service in India. The General told him firmly that he did not want him to forecast the results of the referendum. His job was to ensure that the referendum was held properly. Later when the results of the referendum came in from that battalion, it was found that over 95% of the soldiers had opted for service in the Indian Army. In fact to accommodate the non-optees from the four regiments (2,6,7 and 10 GR) earmarked for service under the British in Malaya, we had to raise two battalions each in two of our regiments (5 and 8 GR) as also raise a new regiment (11 GR). The author of this book has described in detail how the Gorkha Regiments were allocated to the Indian Army and to the British Army.

The Indian officers who were initially posted to Gorkha Regiments replacing British officers, carried out their duties with patriotic fervour to prove that they were as good, if not better than their predecessors. I was not among the first lot, being then on the staff. I joined a Gorkha

unit some three years after Partition. My generation of officers in Gorkha units did most commendable job in identifying themselves with their troops ensuring that the take over of Gorkha units by Indian officers became very successful. As already mentioned till 1947, Gorkha units were managed exclusively by British officers. Very few Gorkhas became officers during the Second World War but they were not posted to Gorkha units. They were posted to different Indian regiments. These officers were now posted to Gorkha Regiments along with Indian officers from various Indian regiments, mostly from Regiments which had gone to the Pakistan Army. Besides, four JCOs in each Gorkha battalion were given direct commissions and promoted overnight as Second Lieutenants. They were non-English speaking officers. This posed problems for the remaining English educated officers in the battalion, as they had to shoulder more than their normal share of responsibility for documentation and other administrative duties like courts of inquiry and so on. I recall Maitalal Gurung in my battalion had been promoted from Subedar Major to Second Lieutenant. A couple of years later, he was serving as a Company Commander in the rank of Captain. I was also a Company Commander in the battalion but in the rank of Major. As a measure of economy at the insistence of Finance, infantry battalions at that time used to have two rifle companies commanded by Majors and two by Captains. All officers of the Division had been assembled for an address by Major General Henderson Brooks, the Divisional Commander. The General spoke in English. At the end of his address, he spotted Maitalal Gurung in the audience, and asked him in Hindi if he had understood what he had said. Much to the amusement of all of us, Maitalal replied in Hindi, "Sahib if I could understand what you spoke, I also would have been a General today". There was another similar amusing incident that I can recall. General Cariappa (later Field Marshal) was our Army Commander and I as his GSO-2 (Ops) accompanied him to Naushera in January 1948. The General delivered his much talked of speech

to the troops in Hindi, He started "Ham Muft, Aap Muft, Mulk Muft, Sab Kuchh Muft hai" meaning India had become free and we were now a free Nation. At the end of his talk the General asked me to find out the reaction of the troops to his talk. I asked a Gorkha officer of 1/9 Gorkha Rifles, about his reaction to the General's speech. His reply was that the General spoke extremely well but he spoke in English, and he could not understand what he had said!

On taking over Gorkha units from British officers, we ensured as fair a deal for Gorkhas as possible. Not only were they now inducted into the officer cadre but they were given the same rates of pay as Indian soldiers, as indeed they were getting earlier. On the other hand British Gorkhas in Malaya had lower rates of pay than British soldiers. This later led to discontent. After Independence, there was liberal intake of Gorkhas with requisite education and other qualifications, into the India Military Academy and Officers Training School. Soon after Independence, few Gorkha officers from other Indian units had joined Gorkha units. The first Gorkha officer to command a unit of the Indian Army was Lt Col PS Thapa. He took over command of 3/5 Gorkha Rifles (FF) on 21 December, 1947. In 1951 I served under a Gorkha Commanding Officer, Lt Col TR Pradhan. In 1981 when I was Army Commander, I had a Gorkha Major General, Onkar Singh Bhandari serving in my Command. We cleared him for promotion to Lieutenant General. Unfortunately before he could pick up his rank, he died in a helicopter crash. In the way, there is nothing to prevent a Gorkha from Nepal, becoming the Chief of Army Staff of the Indian Army.

My long association with the Gorkha; goes back to 1945. I was serving in 6 JAT and my battalion was asked to take over a Japanese Prisoner of War Camp at Payagi, North of Pegu in Burma, now Myanmar, from a battalion of 3 Gorkha Rifles. We spent a couple of days handing/taking over of the Camp. I was appointed Adjutant of

the Camp and I took over my duties from Ronnie MacAlister who was the Adjutant before me. I found Ronnie very friendly. The Gorlida soldiers impressed me as very disciplined, carefree and cheerful. They took pride in their turn out and drill. I was told that Gorkha soldiers were previously not allowed to have hair on their head except for a small pigtail (Chutia) to which they used to tie their company colours when they were in their PT Dress. They had been asking for permission to grow hair which had been accorded only recently. They were happy to have hair on their head like other soldiers. Ronnie was transferred, from 3rd to 10th Gorkhas. The former had remained in the Indian Army and latter had gone to the British Army. In 1961 he and I did the Joint Services Staff College together in the UK. While I was President of the Gorkha Brigade in India, MacAlister was my counterpart as Major General Brigade of Gorkhaun Hong Kong. We had kept in touch with each other.

It was indeed my good fortune to serve in a Gorkha battalion for many years and thereafter command that battalion for three years. As a formation commander from a brigade to a Field Army, I had Gorkha troops in my formation at all levels. The battalion I commanded, served in my Division. As Deputy Adjutant General and after a gap of a few years, as Adjutant General at Army Headquarters in the Seventies, I had an opportunity to do much welfare work for the Gorkhas. In this, we had the full support of Field Marshal Manekshaw, the then Army Chief. We started a separate cell in Adjutant General's Branch called PS 10, to deal with problems of Gorkha soldiers. Their leave rules and rehabilitation problems were different. Families of Indian soldiers killed in war were getting grants from their State Government in the form of cash awards and in some cases also plots of land. Winners of gallantry awards also got grants from their State Governments. These benefits were not available to Gorkhas as Government of Nepal could not be expected to take on this commitment like our State Governments.

With much difficulty we got the Government of India to accept giving concessions on the, one lines as State Governments to Gorkha soldiers.

At that time, the concessions given by the Government of Tamil Nadu were the best among all the State Governments. We managed those scales for Gorkha troops from Government of India. We also set up a new unit called Gorkha Resettlement Training Unit at Raiwalla near Dehradun. We ran rehabilitation course for Gorkha soldiers on the eve of their retirement at this unit. With great difficulty we managed to get land at Pokhra from the from Government of Nepal, where we put up an excellent Pension Payment Camp with all other facilities. I had started this project as Deputy Adjutant General and a few years later when I was Adjutant General, I attended the inauguration at Pokhra by our Ambassador in Nepal. As Adjutant General, I had started a case for Bhartiya Gorkha Sainik Nivas in Khatmandu and some years later, I had the good fortune of inaugurating it, when I was the Ambassador in Nepal. It is the best such Sainik Nivas put by us anywhere in the country. The British Army Chief on a visit to Nepal, was taken round this Nivas and he remarked that he had not seen the like of it anywhere in the world. As Ambassador, I also managed to get land at Dhanan in Eastern Nepal where we put up another Pension Paying Camp with all connected facilities.

During my Army career, I had the honour of being appointed the Colonel of my Regiment, 5th Gorkha Rifles (FF) and I also became the President of the Gorkha Brigade. In my post-Army career I was appointed India's Ambassador to Nepal. So far, I have been the only Army officer to be given that assignment in Nepal. It was a great challenge because I was sent to Nepal at a very critical period. As Governor in Assam and later as Governor in Jammu and Kashmir, I have had numerous occasions to interact with Gorkha soldiers employed in counter insurgency operations. As a tribute to the Gorkha

soldier, I would like to mention that in 1989 when the Trade and Transit Treaty between India and Nepal lapsed leading to closure of Trade and Transit points, the families of our Gorkha soldiers in their villages faced great hardship due to non-availability of kerosene and salt. Yet the Gorkha soldiers fighting for India in Siachen and Sri Lanka never faltered in their loyalty to India. I received letters from many ex-servicemen in Nepal to do something to ensure relief for them. Living in retirement at Patna, there was little that I could do in the matter. Inscrutable are the ways of Providence. Soon, there was a change of Government at Delhi and the new Government chose to send me as Ambassador to Kathmandu. One of my first tasks was to get the Trade and Transit Treaty restored, providing the people of Nepal including our ex-Servicemen and families of our serving soldiers, the much needed relief.

The employment of Gorkhas from Nepal in the Indian Army was a joint decision of both the Government of India and the Government of Nepal. The treaty of Segauli in 1815 made a provision for this. On withdrawal of the British from the Sub-Continent, an agreement was reached between the new Government of India and the Government of Nepal ratifying that arrangement. Tourism and soldiering have been the two main industries of Nepal. Gorkha soldiers have been providing support to Nepal's economy. For the first hundred years or more, it suited the British to have a large presence of Gorkha troops in the Indian Army, as a counterpoise to Indian troops. After Independence, India was only too happy to continue to have Gorkhas in the Army, with the obvious advantage of retaining these soldiers par excellence. The old traditions of Gorkha units were duly maintained, when Indian officers replaced British officers. The bond between the officers and the men was further strengthened. This was also of help in forging unique and most friendly relations between the two countries. There were a few people in India at the time of Independence and after, who

questioned the wisdom of continuing with this arrangement, saying that there was no shortage of manpower in India and India was facing tremendous unemployment. These discordant views failed to enlist much support, in view of the larger interests of both India and Nepal. After some time the intelligentsia in Nepal particularly in Kathmandu Valley, began to show the sensitivities of a small country in its relation with a big neighbour. A feeling grew amongst them that it was not in keeping with their national self-respect to have their nationals serving in a foreign army. Demands started being made for terminating this arrangement. However, there was also a realisation that Nepal could not afford to lose the substantial benefits of remittances and pension that were flowing into its economy. Thus this move did not gain much momentum. During the 1962 war Nepal remained neutral between India and China. This did not have any impact on Gorkha soldiers in the Indian Army fighting the Chinese. However, this did influence Indian policy makers. In the post-1962 period while there was great expansion of the Indian Army, with a whole lot of new battalions raised in Indian regiments, no new battalions were raised in Gorkha Regiments. This was because it was felt that Nepal may impose restrictions on the employment of Gorkha soldiers against China in the Himalayas or encouraged by China, may want the arrangement of Gorkhas serving in the Army terminated. The only exception in terms of new raising in Gorkhas Regiments was 7/8 Gorkha Rifles but that was a replacement for 1/8 Gorkha Rifles which had been converted to mechanised infantry, with change in its class composition. The Maoists after the recent elections in Nepal have acquired a dominating political position in that country. They want to stop the recruitment of their nationals in the Indian Army. This is high up in their agenda. As part of their perception of their national self respect, they have been also demanding the scrapping of the 1950 Treaty of Friendship between India and Nepal. It is difficult to predict the future course of events. A

realisation may dawn among the new rulers in Nepal that pursuing the agenda of stopping recruitment of Gorkhas from Nepal in the Indian Army may be counterproductive. Moreover, some six million Nepalese citizens are employed in various vocations and jobs in India. Gorkha soldiers from Nepal represent a very small fraction of this huge number. Nepal cannot survive if any curb is imposed on its nationals seeking employment in India in other professions. Be that as it may, in case Gorkha recruitment from Nepal in the Indian Army is stopped, it would be a great tragedy for both India and Nepal. It will spell the end of two centuries of a unique and glorious military tradition which greatly benefits both countries. As one who has been so intimately associated with that great tradition, I cannot but feel very sad at the prospect of such an event coming to pass.

I congratulate Lt Gen Y M Bammi for his diligence, devotion and depth of understanding shown in this well researched and comprehensive book on the Gorkhas of the Indian Army. It is a major contribution to military literature. It provides a good understanding of a glorious military tradition that has been unique in the annals of world military history. I feel privileged to be invited to write a Foreword to this book which has such a great wealth of knowledge on the subject. I wholeheartedly commend this book to the reader.

(Lt Gen (Retd) S K Sinha, PVSM)

THE MOST FAMOUS GORKHA OF THE INDIAN ARMY



Field Marshal SHFJ Manekshaw, MC with some of the Gorkha Jawans he led to victory
Dec 1971



Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw & Author – Sept 2002

WINNERS OF PARAM VIR CHAKRA
They Made the Gorkhas Proud



Capt Gurbacahan Singh Salaria PVC
31 Gorkha Rifles



Maj Dhan Singh Thapa 18 GR
Sino Indian War 1962



Capt Manoj Pandey 1/11 Gorkha Rifles
1999 Kargil War

PREFACE

This book aims at understanding the significant role played by the Gorkhas in defence of India since Independence in all major wars, in countering the insurgency and fighting the militancy, and as India's ambassadors on UN Missions. It also examines how the continued employment of the Gorkhas from Nepal impacts on Indo-Nepal relations and covers the welfare measures initiated by India for her pensioners and their families in Nepal. It analyses the political, social-economic, and cultural aspects of the Gorkhas of Nepal.

The book is an indispensable work for policy makers and will be immensely useful for the armed forces. It is a result of General Bammi's Ph.D. work, which makes it profoundly valuable for scholars as well as those concerned with strategic and military studies. Its importance is further enhanced by the personal interviews of the author during his research work, and his vital inputs on the ethnicity, geography, and history of Nepal.

AUTHOR

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1

ETHNICITY AND CULTURE

In no other country has its geography impacted on the physical attributes ethnicity and culture of her population and their history, as perhaps in the case of Nepal. It is therefore essential to have a brief look at the land, history and traditions of Nepal, which has produced the finest soldiers of the world-the Gorkhas.

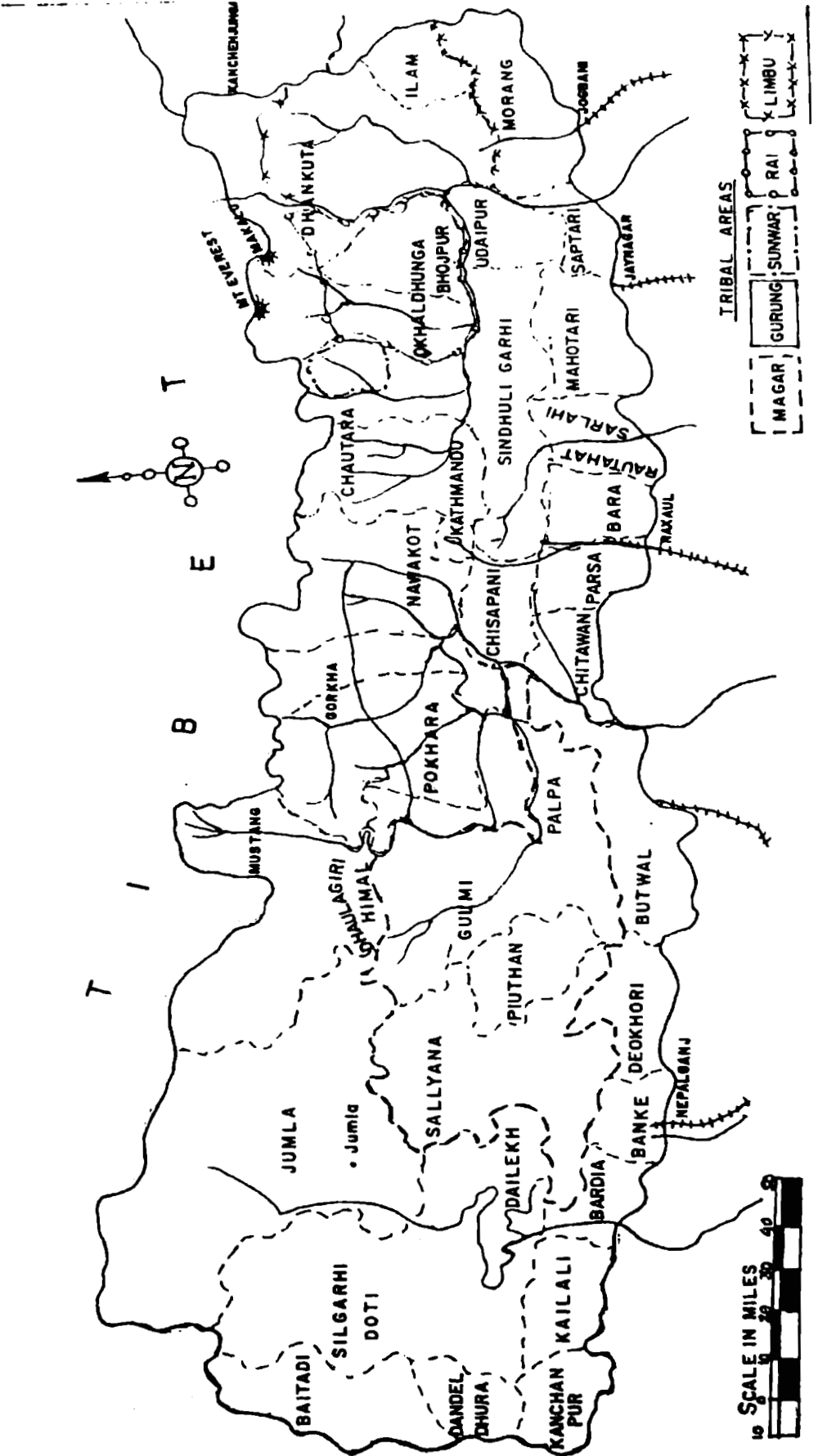
Gorkha

Gorkha is a district in Western Nepal inhabited mainly by Magar and Gurung tribes, in modern times all soldiers hailing from Nepal are termed as Gorkhas. As regards spellings of the word 'Gorkha', various differences may be noticed in the text. While the British spelt it as 'Gurkha' or 'Goorkha', the Indian Army adopted a more phonetic correct version of the Nepalese language, as Gorkha. Till consolidation of the country by the King of Gorkha, Raja Prithvi Narayan Shah in the 18th century, Nepal was known to be comprising only of the Valley of Kathmandu, including its three neighbouring principalities of Bhatgaon, Kathmandu and Nawakot.

Physical Features

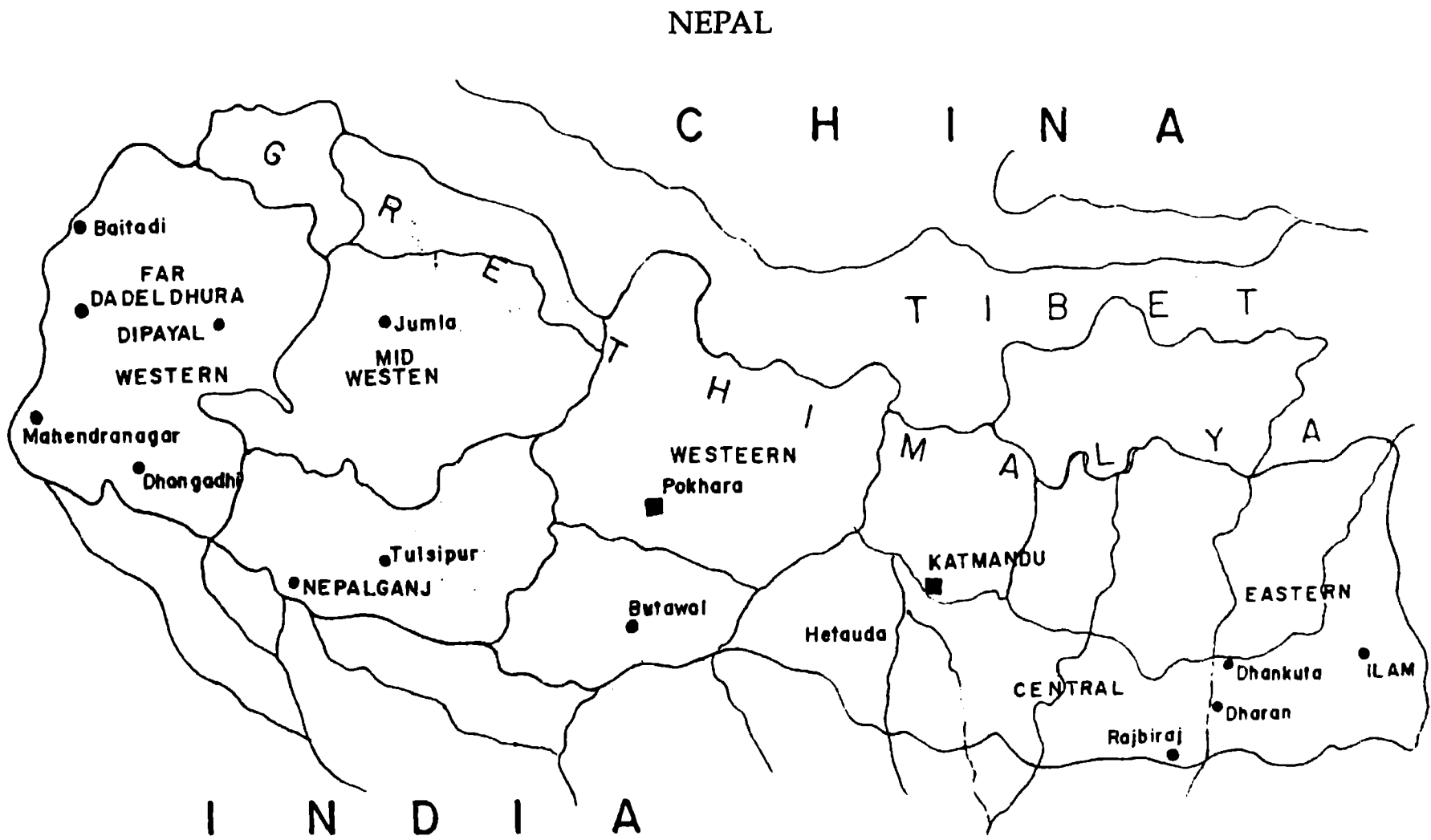
Nepal is one of the 38 land-locked countries of the world.¹

SKETCH MAP OF NEPAL



KANCHENJUNGA
NANKANG
MT. EVEREST
DHIANKUTA
ILAM
MORANG
JOBAN
SAPTARI
JAYNAGAR
MAHOTARI
SARLAHI
SINDHULI GARHI
CHAUTARA
OKHALDHUNGA
BHOJIPUR
UDAIPUR
KATHMANDU
MAHARAJGANJ
KARKWA
BARRA
RAUTAMAT
TRAXAUL

MUSTANG
GORKHA
CHISAPANI
NAWAKOT
POKHARA
CHITAWAN/PARSA
BARA
PALPA
RAUTAMAT
JUMLA
SILGADHIGIRI
HIMAL
GULMI
CHITAWAN/PARSA
BARRA
PALPA
BUTWAL
SALLYANA
PIUTHAN
DAILEKH
BARDIA
KAILALI
DEOKHORI
BANKE
NEPALGANJ
BHANDARI
JUMLA
SALLYANA
DAILEKH
BARDIA
KAILALI
DEOKHORI
BANKE
NEPALGANJ
KANCHANPUR
DHURA
DANDEL
SILGARHI
DOTI
BATAI



A mountainous country, tucked in the Himalayas, extending from 80 to 88 degrees East longitude and 26th to 30th degrees of North latitude, it forms a buffer between China's Tibet region and India. Shaped like a distorted rectangle, it has a land border of 1236 km with China in the North, while on other three sides it has borders with Indian states of Sikkim, W Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Utrakhund of 1,690 km. Out of this the plain area of Nepal in the South known as Terai accounts for approximately 1,400 km.¹

The country extends 885 km East to West from Mechi river to Mahakali and from 145 km to 241 km from North to South from the slopes of the Himalayas to the Terai (average breadth about 193 km). It has a total area of 1,47,181 sq km. Through its mountains flow a large number of major and minor rivers, mostly from north to south, which divide the country into distinct valleys.²

Nepal's mountains contain nine out of the world's highest ten peaks, including Mt Everest, located entirely or partially within her borders.³ The country can be divided into three parallel belts running North-West to South-East. Closest to China is the Himalayan range averaging elevation of 4570m. The second belt is dominated by the Mahabharata and Churia ranges, with elevation averaging 2500m, while the last belt is of the southern most region of Terai, with elevations averaging 61 m. Out of these, Terai is the plain area of swamps and forests and has alluvial soil which makes it the most fertile region of the country.

About 75% of the area consists of mountains, hills, river basins and tars (elevated flat lands), while 25% is the flat area of Terai (along border with India in South). Heights range from 8848 m to the low of 61 m. From South to North, the country can also be divided into three parts, 25% being the Terai region including low hills called Duns, Hilly region which cover nearly 50% of the area, and the Himalayan region accounting for remaining 25%.

The country has also been divided into four major regions:

- the Himalayan highlands of snow covered mountains and glacial valleys;
- the lower Himalayan ranges having green forest and long slopes leading to fertile valleys, such as Kathmandu, Pokhra and Surkhet;
- the forest areas of the inner Terai, the low river valleys and the foot hills of the Churiya, Siva-Lekh (Shivalek) range-with hot climate and;
- the flat and fertile land of the Terai, the North edge of the Gangetic plain.⁴

Till 1960s the Terai belt of 25 to 32 km was covered with thick malaria infested forest, which formed a barrier. This region has since been mostly cleared for cultivation, making the region the granary of Nepal. In its northern portion are the Churia ranges, a narrow elevated plain Babar, covered with forest. There are a number of longitudinal valleys of altitudes up to 200m between the Churia and the Mahabharata ranges, called inner Terai or Duns, where important towns like Dang, Butwal, Palpa, Janakpur, Chitwan, Makwanpur, Sindhuli and Udaipur are located.

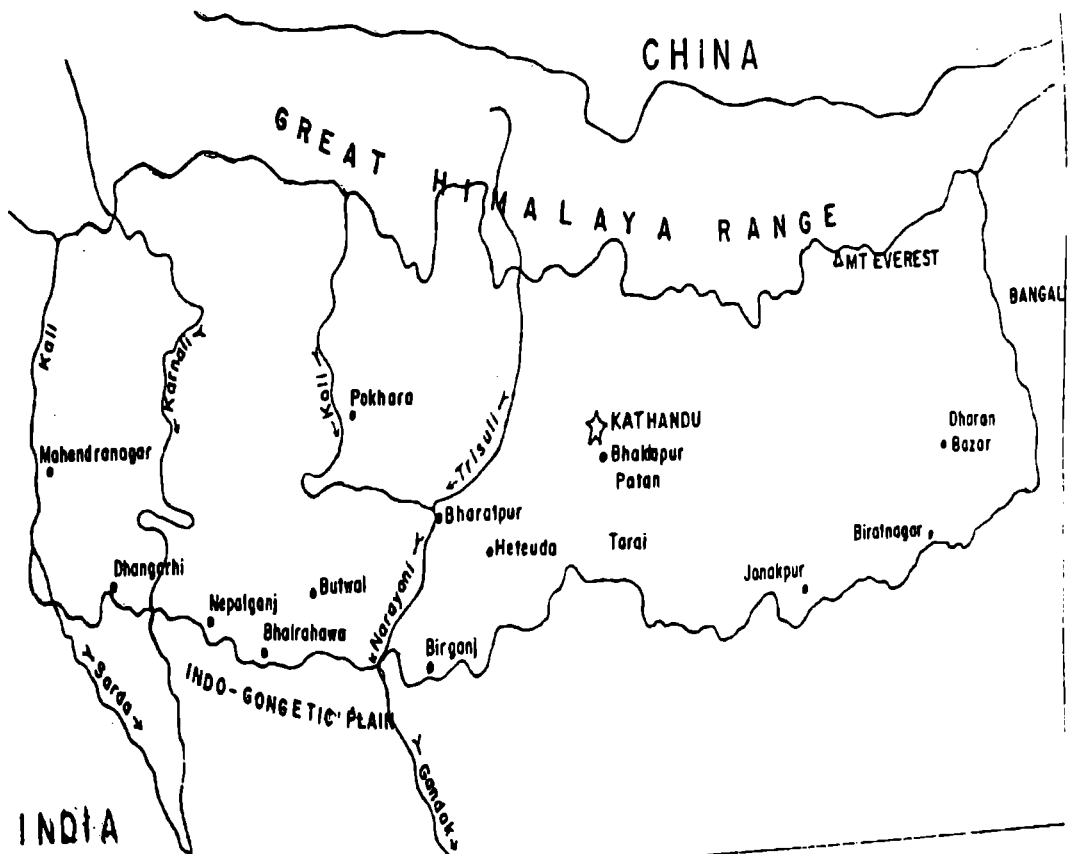
North of the Terai and South of the Himalayas, is the hilly region of Mahabharta mountains, Churia hills, tars and river basin, with altitudes ranging from 600m to 3000m. The Mahabharta range varying from 1500m to 3000m is in the middle of the region, in which lie Kathmandu and Pokhra valleys. The Churia (also called Shiwalik) in the South is 1500m high, is forested and runs up to Kosi River.

Further North is the Himalayan region, with heights varying from 3000m to 8848 m, ranges beyond 5000m being always snow covered. Important ones are Kumbhakarna, Mahalangoor, Rowaling, Ganesh, Gorkha, Annapurna, Dhaulagiri, Kanjiroba, Saipal and Api. They form deep and narrow gorges through which flow many rivers. Important peaks on these ranges include the world's highest peak Mount Everest (8848m, also called Sagarmatha), Kanchanjunga, Makalu, Gaurishankar, Lhotse, Manaslu,

Langtang, Annapurna and Dhaulagiri. Between these ranges are located important passes of Kodari (linking Kathmandu with Tibet by a road constructed in 1970s), Rasuwa, Mustang and Namja.

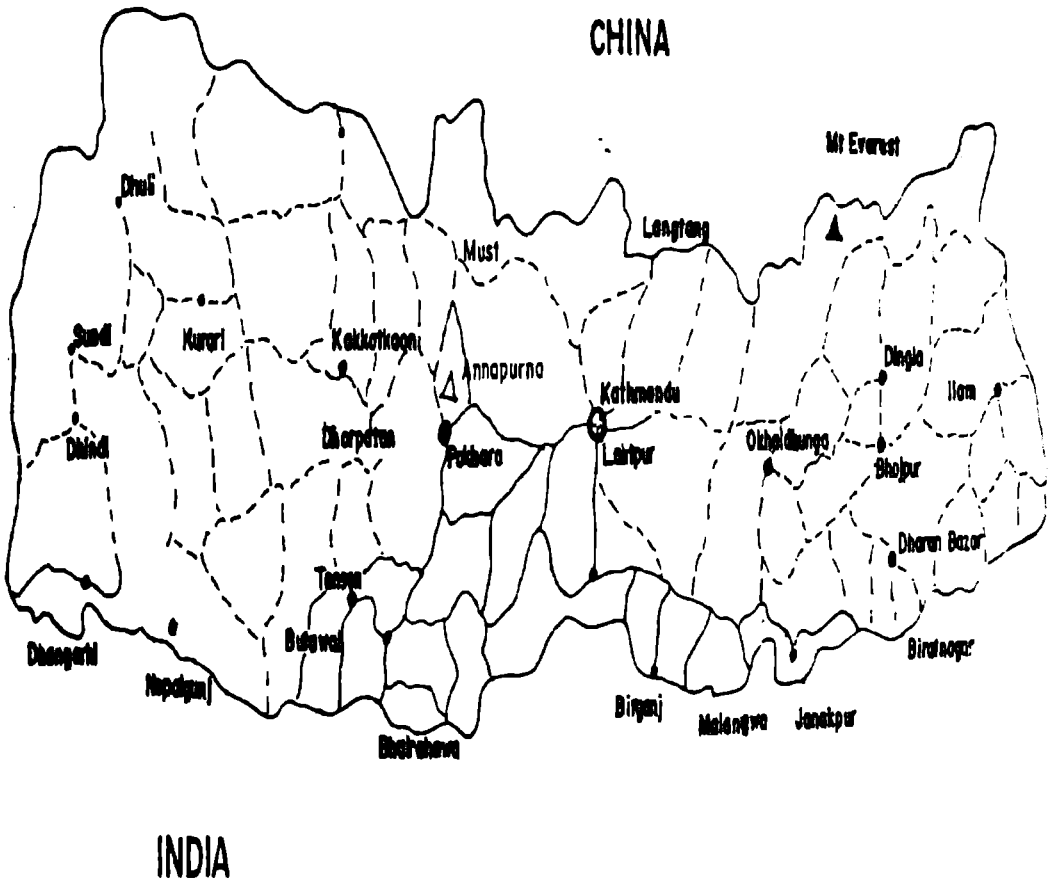
The inner zone of low hills between Terai and Hilly region has as well, but called as middle hills while others refer to a Trans-Himalayan zone as the northern border of Nepal does not everywhere follow the crest line of the Himalayas. Thus there are strips of Nepalese territory lying North of the main range inhabited by Tibetans.

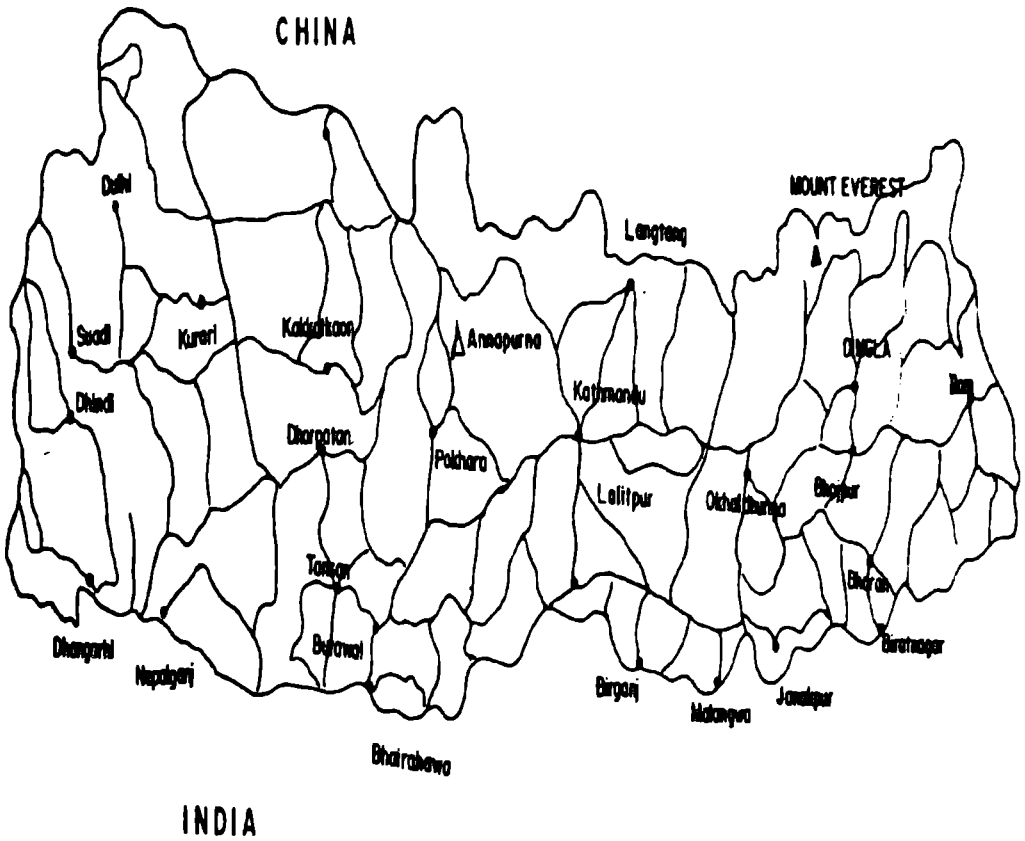
Often, there are references to the Valley of Nepal formed around Kathmandu—the cultural and administrative centre of the country and the Valley of Pokhara, which is a tourist resort.





NEPAL ROADS AND TOWNS

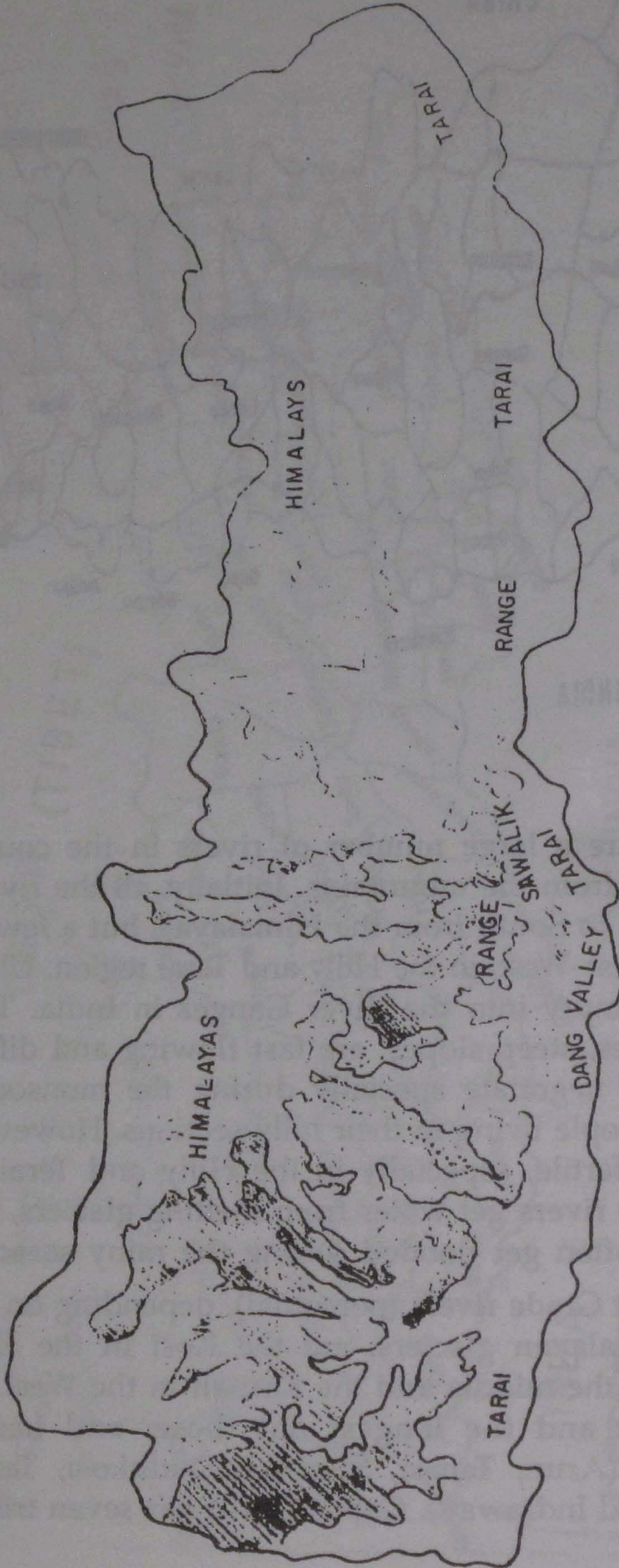




Rivers

There are a large number of rivers in the country, all originating from the mountains. Initially, all the rivers flow from North to South from the Himalayas, but a few change course to East–West, in the Hilly and Terai region. Ultimately, all rivers empty into the River Ganges in India. They cut sharp gorges, steep slopes, are fast flowing and difficult to bridge and negotiate specially during the monsoon, thus isolating people living in their hilly sections. However, their basins are fertile, especially in the Hilly and Terai region. Most of the rivers get water from melting glaciers, springs, lakes and often get flooded during the rainy season.

The first Grade rivers (perennial), depending on melting of the Himalayan glaciers, are the Kosi in the East, the Gandaki in the middle and the Karnali in the West. Kosi is the biggest and the longest out these, and has seven tributaries (Arun, Tamor, Sunkosi, Dudhkosi, Tamakosi, Ikhukosi and Indrawati). Gandaki also has seven tributaries



ELEVATION IN METERS

ABOVE 4000 HIGH HIMALAYA
1000-4000 MIDDLE MOUNTAINS
BELOW 1000 TARAI

(Trisuli, Burigandaki, Marsyangdi, Seti, Daraundi, Kaligandaki, and Madi). After Trisuli joins Kaligandaki at Deogarh, it is called Narayni. Karnali is the second largest river of Nepal and is formed by five tributaries (Mugu Karnali, Humla Karnali, Bheri (Ghagra in India), Seti and Tila). Trisuli, Sunkosi, Kulekhani and Gandaki are the major source of hydro-electricity. Canals from Gandaki, Chandra and Chartara are used for irrigation.

The second Grade rivers originate from the Mahabhart range, draw water from springs and rain, and not from glaciers. They contain very little water in winter. Prominent amongst these are Bagmani, Mechi, Mahakali (Sarda in India), Kankai, Kamla, Rapti, Tinau and Babai.

The third Grade rivers originate from the Churia range and depend upon monsoon rains for their water, hence are more or less dry during winter. Tilawe, Sirsia, Bagari, Mohana, Balan and Ratu are some of the prominent rivers in this grade.

Besides the rivers, there are a number of lakes in Nepal, which are used for cultivation and generation of hydro-electricity. Prominent among these are Rara mahendra of Mugu, Phewa, Rupa (of Pokhra Valley), Phiksundo (Dolpa), Satyawati (Palpa), Tilicho (Manang) and Shyarpo (Rukum). While Rara is the biggest lake, Phewa is most well known. A few lakes known for their religious importance are Gosainkund, Suryakund, Bhairabkund, Saraswatikund and Dudhkunda.

Glaciers

Amongst the glaciers, Khumbu of Mahalangoor Himalayas is the biggest, while Langtang is the longest. Other prominent glaciers are Kanchanchanga, Barun, Yalung and Ramtang. These are important, as they are the source for perennial rivers like Kosi, Gandaki and Karnali.

Passes in the Northern Border Leading to Tibet

In the West is Taklakot Pass, which crosses the border

at Khojarnath near Humla branch of Karnali. Above Muktinath beyond headworks of Kali is Mustang Pass, leading to Tradom. Kyerong Pass is situated on the upper reaches of Trisuli and is guarded by the fort of Rasua Garhi, through which ponies can pass, easily. From Kathmandu a road goes via Kodari to upper reaches of SunKosi, across Kuti Pass, onto to Lhasa. Like Kyerong route, this pass is also through a river gap. West of Mt Everest lies Nangpa-La at 19000ft, but Hatiya Pass following River Arun is more frequently used. Walungchung Pass, situated below the western shoulder of Kanchenjunga is also used, often.⁶

Climate

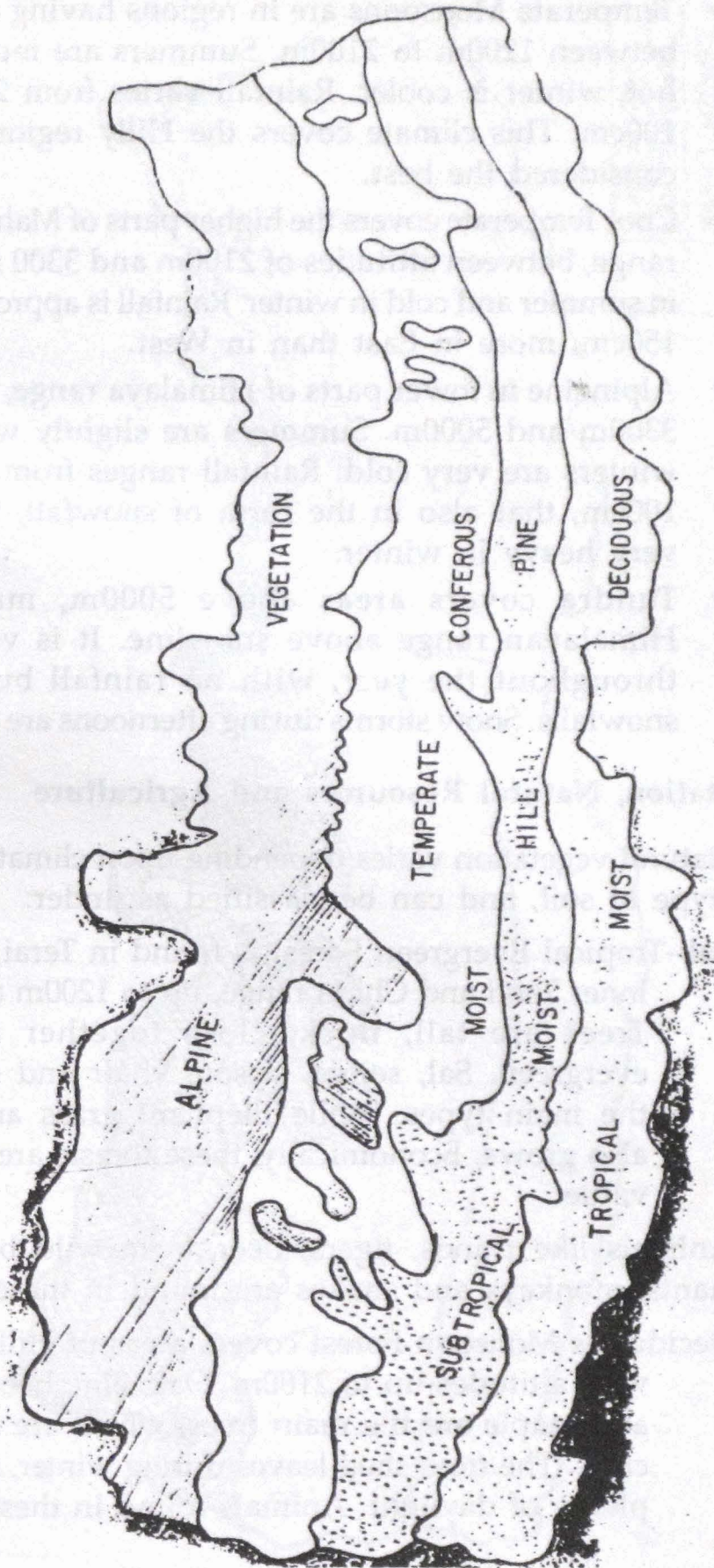
The country experiences various seasons, like summer (March to June), rainy (from June to August) and winter (from October to February). During these seasons, rainfall, temperatures, humidity and winds vary from place to place, depending upon altitudes and ground configuration. During summer, while the southern parts of the country (Terai and middle Hills) experience temperatures of 30°C, higher Middle Hills and the Himalayas have comparatively cooler weather. During monsoons, the southern slopes of Mahabharat and Churia ranges in Eastern Nepal receive heavy rains of up to 200 cm, which decreases towards North and West. Due to Machapuchhre Himalayas and the lake, Pokhra Valley though located in Central Nepal, receives the highest monsoon rainfall in the country, of 300cm.

The Himalayan ranges get only 50 cm of rain, but more snow fall. During winter, while temperature in Terai is about 15°C, it gradually reduces northwards, the Himalayas having sub-zero temperatures, resulting in heavy snowfall and snowstorms. Rainfall during winter season is very low.

Nepal experiences the following five types of climate:

- Sub-Tropical Monsoon are in region of Terai and Bhabhar, below altitudes of 1200m. Summers are hot, winters are cool; rainfall during monsoons is between 170cm in West to 100cm in East.

NATURAL VEGETATION



- Temperate Monsoons are in regions having altitudes between 1200m to 2100m. Summers are moderately hot, winter is cooler. Rainfall varies from 200cm to 100cm. This climate covers the Hilly region, and is considered the best.
- Cool Temperate covers the higher parts of Mahabharata range, between altitudes of 2100m and 3300 m, warm in summer and cold in winter. Rainfall is approximately 150cm, more in East than in West.
- Alpineine in lower parts of Himalaya range, between 3300m and 5000m. Summers are slightly warm but winters are very cold. Rainfall ranges from 50cm to 100cm, that also in the form of snowfall, which is very heavy in winter.
- Tundra covers areas above 5000m; mainly of Himalayan range above snowline. It is very cold throughout the year, with no rainfall but heavy snowfalls. Snow storms during afternoons are frequent.

Vegetation, Natural Resources and Agriculture

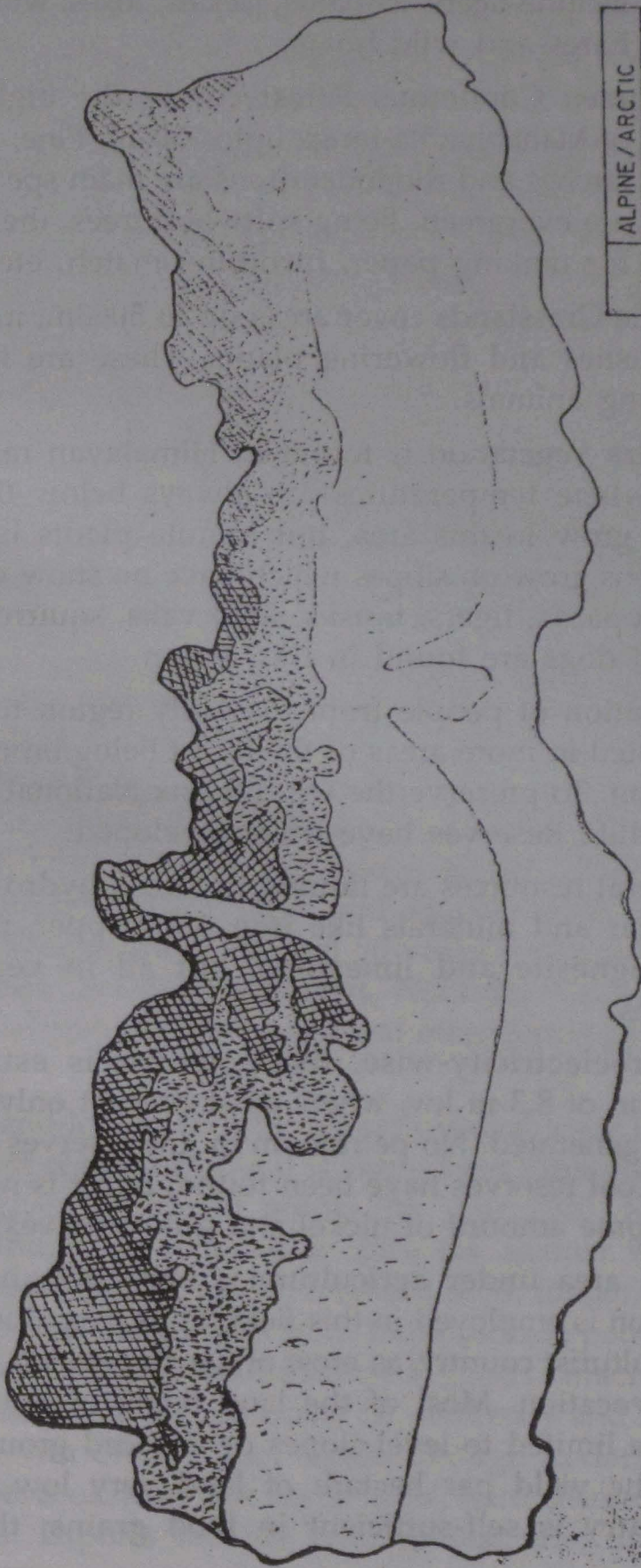
Natural vegetation varies depending upon climate, region and type of soil, and can be classified as under:

Sub-Tropical Evergreen Forest is found in Terai, Bhabar, inner Terai and Chiria range, up to 1200m altitudes. Trees are tall, thick, close together and are evergreen. Sal, semal, sissoo, khair and cane are the main types, while Elephant grass and sabai also grows. Economically, these forests are of great value.

Animals like rhinos, tigers, deer, bear, wild buffaloes, elephants, monkeys and snakes are found in these forests.

Deciduous Monsoon Forest covers areas of Hilly region with altitudes up to 2100m. Oak, elm, beech, birch and maple are the main trees, which are not very close. The trees shed leaves during winter, allowing plenty of daylight. Animals found in these forests

CLIMATIC REGIONS



ALPINE / ARCTIC
COOL TEMPERATE
WARM TEMPERATE
SUBTROPICAL

include tigers, leopards, jackals, foxes, wolves, bears, hares and wild boars.

Evergreen Coniferous Forest covers the higher region of Mahabharata range upto 3300m. Pine, fir, deodar, larches and rhododendrons are main species, which are evergreen. Being softwood trees, they are used for making paper, furniture, match, etc.

Alpine Grasslands cover areas up to 5000m, mainly with grass, bushes and flowering plants. These are ideal areas for grazing animals.

Tundra Vegetation is found in Himalayan range above 5000m, where temperatures are always below 0°. Though no trees grow in this area, but minute plants like mosses and lichens grow on slopes which have no snow deposition. Bears, leopards, tigers, musks, wild yaks, squirrels, wolves and wild dogs are found in this region.

Migration of people from the Hilly region to the Terai has resulted in more areas of the forest being brought under cultivation. To preserve the wildlife, six National Parks and five Wildlife Reserves have been developed.

Natural resources are limited to forest, hydro-electricity, soil, water and minerals like iron ore, copper, mica, lead, zinc, magnesite and limestone, but all in very limited quantities.

Hydroelectricity-wise, the potential is estimated to generation of 8.3 m kw, where as at present only 2.3 m kw is being generated. No petroleum or gas reserves have been found. Coal reserves have been found, but it is not of good grade. Some amount of nickel and gold reserves also exist.

Total area under agriculture is only 18%, but 91% of population is employed in this field. Thus, Nepal is primarily an agriculturist country, as most of her population is engaged in that vocation. Most of the land being in mountainous, fields are limited to level slopes or terraced ground, which makes the yield per hectare of land very low. However, the country is self-sufficient in food grains, though old

implements are still used for farming. Food crops are paddy, wheat, maize, potato, pulses and millet. Cash crops are jute, sugarcane, tobacco, oilseeds, cardamom, fruits and tea.

While the people living in the Hilly region grow enough food in the valleys for their consumption, those from Terai are able to export their surplus produce to other areas. Some areas have also taken to fish and livestock farming, while dairy products are produced mainly for the cities.

Industry, Trade and Economic Aspects

Till 1950s Nepal only had in country cottage industry and her trade was limited with Tibet and India, mostly on yaks, ponies and porters. It was only in 1960s that the true industrial and economic potential was planned to develop the country on modern lines. Today, industries-wise, the country have cottage and small scale, medium and large (mostly in Terai) and tourism. While cottage and small scale industries are popular in the valleys and are based on local raw material derived from agriculture, vegetation, minerals and animals, medium and large scale (covering jute, sugar, match, wood, cigarette, leather, cotton textile, cement etc) are mostly spread along Terai and middle Hilly region. Tourism has flourished in the last 50 years or so, mostly in the Kathmandu and Pokhara Valleys, National Parks and in the high Himalayas, due to Everest and other mountaineering expeditions.

Being a land-locked country, all her external trade (except that with Tibet region of China) is carried out through India, which has given 21 transit points. By year 2000, Nepal's trade with India has reduced to 28% (as against 90% in 1970). It includes paddy, maize, mustard seed, timber, skins, herbs, ghee, wool etc. Imports from India include petroleum and oil products, gas, manufactured goods, machinery, equipment, chemicals, salt, kerosene oil, stationary and luxury items. Trade with China (Tibet region through Kodari pass) includes imports of items like sheep wool, hard cheese, skins and blankets. Exports include food grains, jute, utensils,

flour, spices, textiles, sugar, cigarettes, paper, oil, soap and other items.

Trade with other foreign countries like China, Canada, Russia, the UK, Japan, France, Germany, Bangladesh, Korea etc amounts to 72% of the total foreign trade and is carried out through Calcutta Port. Main exports include jute, curio, carpets, bristle, herbs, oilseeds, tea, cardamom and garments, while imports include machinery, equipment, chemicals, vehicles, petroleum, stationary and luxury items. Thus, while finished goods constitute major exports, raw material and machinery are the main import items.

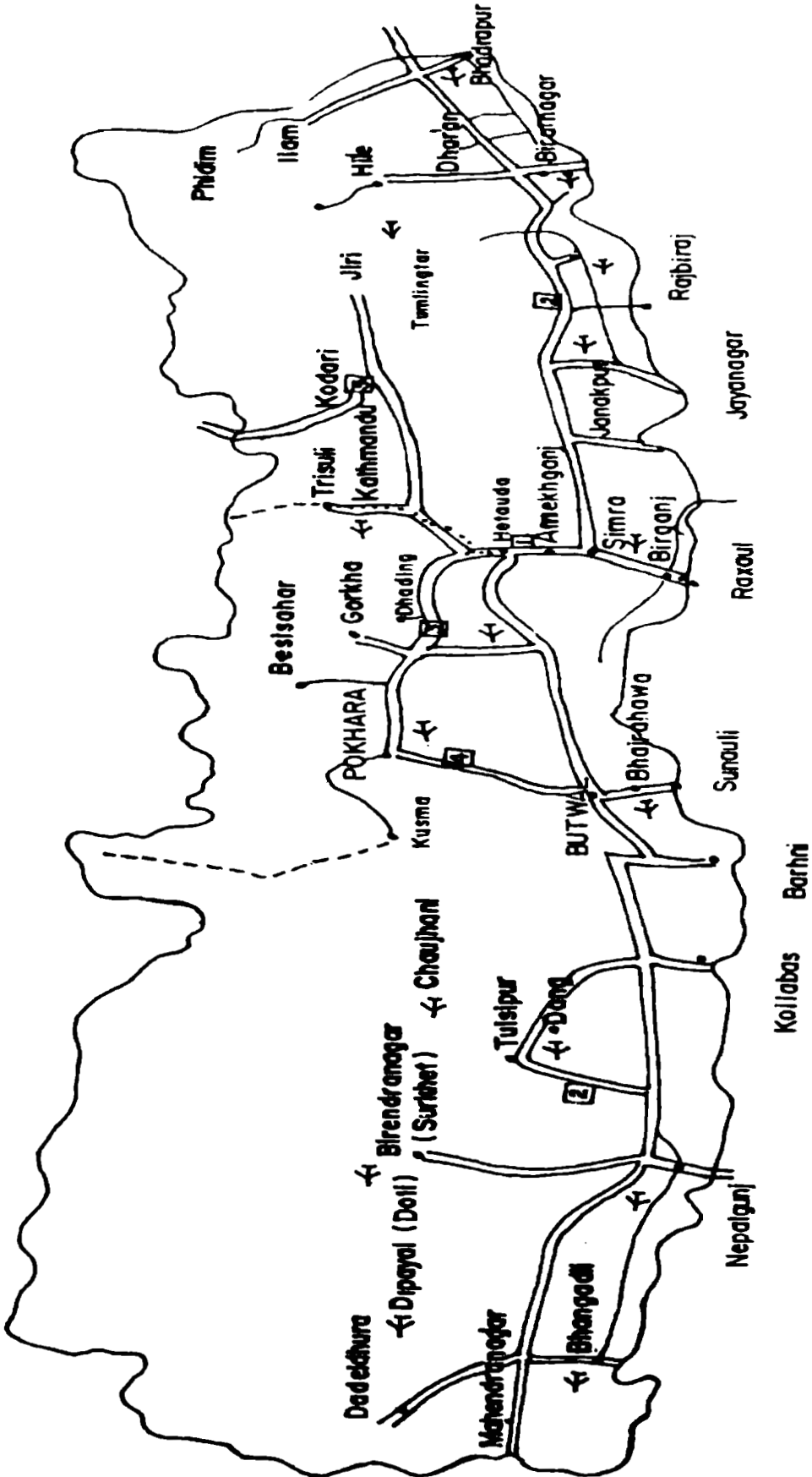
Transportation

The country had hardly any internal roads, upto 1940 when a road was constructed within Kathmandu Valley. In 1950s, Tribhuvan Marg, linking Kathmandu with India was constructed with Indian assistance. Since then a number of roads have been developed with local and foreign assistance, linking most of the country. Most of these roads run along the valleys and only a few link places across the mountain ranges, thus movement and inter-action amongst people living in different valleys is still minimal. An East-West highway runs along Terai and Hilly region, and has many feeder roads from Indian border towns. By 1989, the country had 7007 km of roads. Though in the next ten years there were 11,867 km of roads,⁷ but even in 2005, fifteen district headquarters had no road connection. The important roads are:

Tribhuvan Highway. Constructed with India's assistance, it is 190 km, links Raxual railway station with Kathmandu via Thankot, Khanikhola, Naubise, Tistung-Daman, Bhainse and Hetaunda. It is the main social, economic and vital link, giving Nepal an outlet to India and international market.

Arniko Highway. It is 114 km long, constructed with Chinese assistance, links Sallaghari with Tatopani,

TRANSPORTATION NETWORK



Kollabas Barhi

passing through Banepa, Dhulikheta, Panchkhal, Belephi, Lamosungu and Barhabasi.

Mahendra Highway (East-West). It is 1030 km long, runs through Terai and low Hilly region, from Kakabhita to Banbasa. This was constructed with assistance from India, USSR, UK and a few other agencies.

Prithvi Highway. It is 200 m long, links Kathmandu with Pokhara, passing through Dharke, Galchhi, Gajuritar, Mugling, Dumre and Damauli, and provides a link with Tribhuvan Highway. This road was constructed with Chinese assistance and connects areas of Bagmati, Gandaki and Narayani zones.

Siddhartha Highway. Constructed with Indian assistance, it links Sunauli (India) with Pokhara, is 184 km long. It goes via Bhairahwa, Butwal, Tansen, Ramdighat and Syangja, running through middle Terai and middle Hilly region.

Dharan-Dhankuta Highway. A 51 km long road in Eastern Nepal, it was constructed with British assistance and has opened up the area for commerce and socio-economic development.

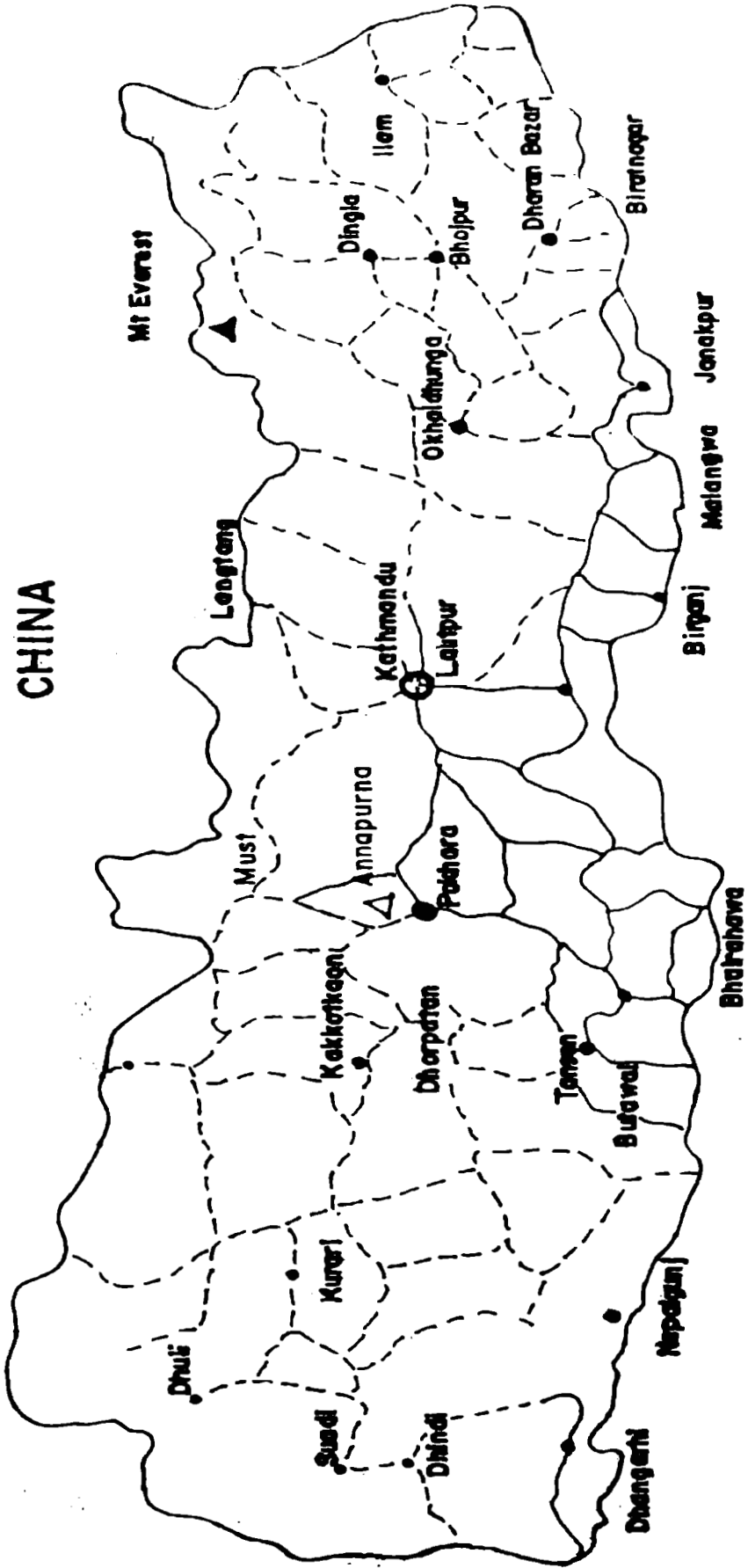
Other highways of importance are-Dhangadhi-Dandeldhura, Hetaunda-Narayangadh and Gorkha-Narayangadh

Despite development of a number of roads, in year 2001, 30% of the rural population residing in the mountains was still without access to an all-weather road.⁸ Terai region had maximum roads, nearly 60% of the total, but most of these were in poor condition.

Airfields

An airstrip was constructed at Kathmandu in 1940s and the present airport was developed with Indian assistance, in 1953. Since then travel by air has become very popular in the country, with 43 airfields linking nearly all important administrative, industrial and tourist places. Kathmandu is an International airport and operates flights to Delhi, Kolkata,

NEPAL: ROADS AND TOWNS



Varanasi, Dhaka, Singapore, Rangoon, Bangkok, Hong Kong, Dubai, London and Frankfurt. Other important airports are at Biratnagar, Bhadrapur, Nepalgunj, Simara, Dhangadhi, Pokhra, Janakpur and Bhairahawa. Smaller aircrafts link other airports like Jumla, Jomson, Namche, Rumjatar and Lamidanda.

Railways

There is only 53 km of narrow gauge railway lines confined to Terai, linking Birgunj to Raxaul, and between Bijalpura and Jayanagar, connecting with Indian border towns. While the railways are used mainly for transportation of goods, most of people travel by buses across the many feeder roads linking Terai with Indian towns across the 1400 km open border through 21 Transit Points.

Use of ropeway for hauling stores is very limited, there being only one 43 km long ropeway between Teku and Hetaunda, with carrying capacity of 28 tons per hour. Rivers being mountainous and fast-flowing, are not suitable for transportation purposes in the mountains, though in Terai area Kosi, Gandaki and Karnali are used for this purpose.

Maximum movement of goods and people takes place on foot tracks, which connect villages and bastis across the mountains, across rivers and villages in the plains. While yaks and porters are used as load carriers in the Himalayan region, ponies are used in the Hilly region, while carts are used in Terai.

Population

As per figures available in 2005, the population was 27,676,547, growing at the rate of 2.2% and the UN estimates that by 2010 it will be 30.72 m. Life expectancy was 60 years for males and 59 years for females. The main ethnic groups were Brahmins, Chhetri, Newar, Gurung, Magar, Tamang, Rai, Limbu, Sherpa, Tharus and others.

While 90% of the population spoke Nepali (written in

Devnagri script), there were nearly a dozen other languages having 30 dialects. Religion-wise, 86.2. % of the population was Hindu, 7-8% Buddhist, 3.8% Muslims and 2.2% others. Literacy rate was low at 45% (those above the age of 15, who could read and write), 63% in males and 27% in females.

Administration-wise, the country is divided in 14 Zones (anchals) and 75 districts, with 15 District headquarters still not connected with a road.

The GDP of Nepal was \$ 15, 00, even lower than that of Bangladesh which was \$ 2,000 and Myanmar which was \$ 17, 00. Nepal's 42% of population lived below poverty line, while un-employment was 47%, which made Nepal one of the poorest country in the world.⁹

Only 5% of the population lives in the Himalayan region, 48% in the Hilly region and 44% in the Terai. Out of the total hill population, 5% reside in Kathmandu. Urban and rural residence wise, while 92% of the population resides in rural areas, 8 % reside in urban areas. Density wise while it is 193 persons per sq km in Terai (maximum in Chhuria and Bhabhar belt, due to greater job opportunities) and in the Hilly region it is 113. Population density in Pokhara Valley is estimated at 500, in the Himalayan region it is 25 persons per sq km and in Kathmandu Valley, 1200.

Due to job opportunities in the Terai and low Hilly region, migration in the last ten years from upper Hilly region and rural areas is estimated at 44%. From 1996 onwards, the Maoist Insurgency has also forced a large number of hill people to either shift to urban areas near camps of the security forces in Terai, or to India.

Ethnic Groups Ethnicity and Culture

The population consists of two major groups, the Indo-Nepalese who are dominant and claim that their ancestors migrated into Nepal from the South, and the Tibetan-Nepalese whose forebears came from the North. However, the country is a unique blend and mix of many religions,

ethnic groups and cultures. While there has been influence of Tibet from across the Himalayas, major influence has been of Indian culture and religion, both from Kashmir through Tibet, as well as from the plains in South.

The official language of Nepal is Nepali (in Devnagri script) which is quite similar to Sanskrit and Hindi, and is used by nearly 50% of the population. Besides this, there are at least 80 other languages which are spoken by the people. Religion wise, the people practice Hinduism with elements of Buddhism (Gautam Budha was born at Lumbani in southern Nepal). Thus, pagoda temples with carved wood trims can be seen every where in Nepal. While nearly all people carry out farming and keep livestock, a few are known for their special vocations and trades.

Some of the important ethnic groups of Nepal are:

- o Brahman (also spelt as Brahmin and called Bhuan) - Chhetry (also spelt as Chhetri). They observe Hinduism and speak Nepali. While Brahmans engage in religious performance and trace their origin to Hindus of India, Chhetriyas mostly serve in the military. They are found mainly in lower mountains, tars and Hilly region. Brahmans are considered on top of the social ladder, Chhetries (warrior class, like Kashtriya in India) are placed next to them.
- o Newars. Mostly traders based in Kathmandu and Pokhra area, most are Hindus while some are Buddhists. Besides Newari, they speak Nepali, are most educated and are found in all Government jobs.
- o Gurungs. Belonging to central mountains, they are famous soldiers, speak Gurung Kura (language) and Nepali and are a mix of Hindus and Buddhists. They are financially and socially well respected.
- o Magars. Mostly residing in hills of Western Nepal, they speak Magar Kura, are less educated, but make very good soldiers. Religion wise, they are like Gurungs.
- o Tamangs. In appearance they look like Magars, reside

- in mountains of Central and Eastern Nepal, are mainly Buddhist and cannot speak Nepali.
- o Bhotiyas. Living in high Himalayas of Western and Central Nepal, they are more akin to Tibetans from across the mountains. Mostly keeping sheep and yak, they speak Bhotia language, are Buddhists and make very good porters and guides for mountain expeditions.
 - o Rais and Limbus. Residing mostly in hills of Eastern Nepal, a region which they ruled till the middle of 18th century. They make very good soldiers. They are somewhat like the Magars and Gurungs in physique and qualities, but are more quarrelsome and hot-tempered, and more tartan in appearance. They follow Buddhist culture and tradition, speak their own languages and have merged well with people of Western and Central Nepal.
 - o Sunwars (or Sunpars). Initially living independently North of the valley of Nepal, now they are found in the area wedged between the Rais and the Gurungs, and draw their name from the two banks of the Sun Kosi River. Initially of Tibetan origin, in appearance the admixture of the Gurung and Rai blood is prominent. Indifferent to any particular religion, they follow both Buddhism and Hinduism. Some of them recite 'Om Mane Padme Hung' to propitiate their Lama priests, while others are devotees of Shiva in a Hindu society.¹⁰
 - o Tharus. Mostly residing in Terai residing around the forests, they are Hindus and greatly influenced by culture and tradition from across the international border. They speak Hindi and Tharu, are economically weak, less educated and mostly farmers, fishermen, hunters and labourers. Being comparatively physically weak and thus prone to sickness, they are not enrolled in the Armed Forces.
 - o Other Groups. These include Sunwars in the Eastern hills, Thakalis (mostly running inns) in Mustang,

Thakuri and Kumai in Western hills, Chepang in Makawanpur and Danuwar in Sindhuli area. A few Buras and Shreshtas are also enrolled in the Army.

- o Terai also has Rajbanshi, Dhimal, Satar, Meche, Koche, Marwari, Muslims etc, who are not enrolled as combatant soldiers, but as tradesmen.

Gorkhas

The literal meaning of the word Gorkha is “defender of cows”, but for historical purposes, it means the people residing in the region of Gorkha. They are mostly practicing Hindus, animists, though some are also Buddhists. However, all believe in a concept of destiny that is inescapable and unchangeable, and like most of the people of Nepal, are superstitious. Socially, they follow conservative rituals; marriages are mostly arranged by elders, and son becoming an heir for religious and economic purposes. Normally 5ft 3 in tall, with thick-set and stocky body having strong calf muscles and arms developed from carrying heavy loads up the hill from childhood, his strength lies in his enormous stamina, physical and psychological; a predominant sense of organizational loyalty, and a keen team spirit, backed by a gritty, sinewy physique.

As regards martial tribes, East of Kathmandu are the Rai, Limbu and Sunwar each speaking distinct dialect. West of Kathmandu are Gurung, Magar, Thakur, Pun and Tamang. Chhetris reside all over the country.

Though initially all Gorkha soldiers may look-alike, after serving with the Gorkha units for some time, it is possible to identify the tribe of a Nepalese by looking at his physical features. For instance, while Chhetri and Brahmin have features more resembling the Aryans, claim to have pure blood and are dark in complexion, all the Northern tribes resemble the Mongols, and are comparatively taller. Newars and Tamangs have mixed appearances, but are taller than Rais and Limbus, while Tharus of the Terai resemble Santhals. Gurungs, on the other hand look more like the Mongols,

and they, along with Lepchas and Limbus, do not have eyelids. Gurungs are generally stronger than Rais, and have a fine square and sturdy built, with well developed calf and arm muscles and a large chest, like the Limbus. Even within Gurungs, those belonging to Jajrakot and Charhazar Parbat (4000 Hills) are sturdier, though all have low stature, fair complexion and almost no hair either on face or on their body.

Magars also resemble Mongols, and are considered more handsome, Puns from Jarjarkit being taller and fairer. However, being the first to have come into contact with immigrants from India, some of their sub-clans have lost their Mongolid looks.

Rais and Limbus from Eastern Nepal hale from an area which is more rugged and difficult to traverse. Thus, they are also physically sturdy, hardy and forthright. Though difficult to cultivate as friends initially, once they accept you, they make very brave and loyal soldiers, who are full of life and humour, the best recruits being from upper reaches of River Arun. Though mostly Buddhist, they adopt to Hinduism and follow their rituals in the Army. Limbus has a square face, but like all Gorkhas, has great capacity to improvise in the jungle and can survive off the land.

Dress

Each tribe has its own peculiar dress, here it will suffice to give a general description of dresses worn by Nepali men and women.

Men

Wear Daura (a double-breasted shirt held together by strings on the side of the waist) and a loose skirt below waist just up to knees, and Sural (a pajama with tight fittings like breaches on legs) or a Humbari (a long cloth wrapped around the waist), held together by a cumber band (which is strong enough to tuck-in a kukri, flint for a gun and tobacco). For headgear, either a pugree or a cloth round

cap, slanted to a side, is worn. Shoes are normally of leather or rubber sole, though in the interior improvised footwear with ropes may also be seen sometimes.

Women

Wear Chobandi (a full sleeve double-breasted blouse, tied with four strings on the side) and Gueu or Faria, a long cloth of five or four metres wrapped around the waist held together by a Pattuka (another length of cloth folded to six inches wide and used as a belt). In the villages, it also give strength to the waist while carrying Doko (a cane basket of conical shape) with a Namlo (head band made of jute, for slinging the cane cone basket), while climbing along steep slopes. At times, the women also cover their head with a rectangular or a triangular cloth, Mujetro, by tying it like a turban, for extra strength. Nepali women are very fond of ornaments made of gold, and wear Sarbandi (centre piece with two side strips), Chepte Soun (flat disk type ear rings), Dungari or Bulaki (large and small nose rings), Necklaces, thick Bangles and Anklets. Lately, with the influence of TV and other media, people living in urban areas have adopted more comfortable western and Indian dresses (like shirts, T shirts, and trousers, by the men and salwar kameez and saris by the women folk).

Musical Instruments

The most well known tribal instrument is Madal (a dholak or nobalibaja-a kettle drum), though Tamangs use a variation called Damphu, Magars use Khenchari and the Limbus use Chapdhung. Wind instruments like Bansuri (flute), karnala, shehnai and narsingha are often played. Sarangi and Iktara are the common string instruments, though children also improvise Binayo (from bamboo) and Machunga (from iron), which works like Binayo. A few northern tribes also have instruments used by the Tibetans.¹¹

Development Regions of Nepal

In 1960s that the country was divided into five main development regions, as under:

- ❖ Eastern-zones of Mechi, Kosi and Sagarmatha, Headquarters at Dhankuta, with 16 districts.
- ❖ Central-zones of Bagmati, Janakpur, Narayani, Headquarters at Kathmandu, with 19 districts.
- ❖ Western-zones of Gandaki, Dhanlagiri and Lumbini, Headquarters at Pokhra, with 17 districts.
- ❖ Mid-Western-zones of Rapti, Karuali and Bheri, Headquarters at Birendranagar, with 14 districts.
- ❖ Far-Western-zones of Seti and Mahakali, with 9 districts.

Shortage of trained manpower, financial resources, geographical impediments and lack of proper management has resulted in the country remaining one of the poorest in the region.

Education

Initially, except for religious and traditional education, Nepal remained very backward till the beginning of the 20th Century. In 1860s, Prime Minister Maharaj Jung Bahadur had sent his grand son to Darjeeling to be educated by Brian Hodgson, former British resident at Kathmandu's court, who was then living in retirement in Darjeeling. Similarly, in 1883 Maharaj Chandra Shamsheer who later became the ruler, was sent to Calcutta University by his father for graduation, but he was recalled after just completing his matriculation. Thus, modern education was the privilege of the chosen few only. At that time most children belonged to the ruling or upper classes were either taught at home by the Brahmin gurus, or by foreign teachers specially brought for educating them. Some children of the elite also went to schools in Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Calcutta.

It was only when Chandra Shamsher Rana came to power in 1901 that besides other reforms, he laid stress on education in Nepal. He founded the College of Kathmandu, then part of the University of Patna.¹² He also awarded scholarships to youth for medical and technical studies in Calcutta and Patna. However, the number of educated Nepalese remained very low, as was brought out by a survey carried out in Nepal in 1947. It was revealed that there were only seven Nepalese with college or graduate degrees, while the number of under-graduates was forty eight.

Since then, the country has made much progress in education, though there are still many villages without a school. According to one estimate nearly 591,000 children between the age group 6 to 10, still do not go to a school,¹³ out of which 63% or 374,000 are girls. As per one survey, there were 1.79 m un-educated youth in Nepal, between of 15 to 24 years old, which includes 70% females. At present there are more than 55,000 schools run by the State, while nearly 9,000 private schools also exist where 1.5 m children study.¹⁴

The data of 1998 indicates that the adult literacy rate was 39.2% (56.9% amongst males and 21.5% in females). There were 22,994 primary schools, 6023 lower secondary schools, 3178 secondary schools and 310 higher secondary schools. There were five universities in the country, out of which the Tribhuvan University in Kathmandu had 93,000 students and 4.300 academic staff in 1995-96.

For example, the figures for the district of Syangja in Western Nepal middle Hills, of year 2001, were as under-¹⁵

	<i>Primary schools-Government Run- 529</i>	<i>Private 41</i>	<i>Total-570.</i>
Lower Secondary	135	17	152
Secondary	82	17	99
Technical Institutes		1	1
Higher Secondary Schools	10	8	18
College Campuses	3	-	3
Sanskrit Institution	1	-	-
Total	760	84	844

Literacy rate of the District - 68%. Male 78%, Female-58%. Students-

	<i>Primary</i>	<i>Lower</i>	<i>Secondary</i>	<i>Higher Secondary</i>
Boys	35,857	12,914	5507	560
Girls	35362	12,179	4983	492
Total	71,489	25,693	10,490	1052

% of Students in Private schools 9%, in Government schools- 91%

Drop out rate was as high as 70% to 75%, mostly amongst boys.

Health

Due to rugged hilly terrain and remoteness of the villages, many areas continue to be deprived of modern medical facilities and still depend on traditional medicines. Though by 1996 the country had 82 hospitals with 3,604 beds, 17 health centres and 775 medical posts, yet more than 40% of the population was under-nourished and the bed provision was just 2 for every 10,000.¹⁶

Economy

While the country is executing 13th Five Year Plan, her GDP in 2004 was only \$ 6.7 b, with a growth rate of 1%. Per capita income was estimated at US\$ 3141.2, or US\$ 260 per year. The current account of balance GDP n year 2005 was -6.7, while the General Government Balance was -3.7. The Human Rights Report of February 2005 estimated the population of Nepal at 24.1 m, GDP per capita at US\$ 276.6 (or Nepali Rupee 20,474), and a growth rate of 3.7%.

Besides other factors, the economic growth has also been affected due to the uncertainty and disturbed security situation since 1996, as a result of the Maoist Insurgency.¹⁷

Thus Nepal has made significant strides in developing her social and economic strength in the last 50 years or so. However, the population in rural areas is yet to reap benefits of the development projects. The country therefore continues to face financial problems, un-employment and social handicaps.

Since early 1990s, the nation's development has been retarded due to the Maoist Insurgency. The April 2007 agreement between the political parties and the Maoists holds a hope for revival of economy as well as balanced development of all regions.

Impact on Gorkha Soldiers

Born and brought up in isolated villages and the rugged mountains of an undeveloped country, from the childhood a Gorkha learns the art of living in a society and community where respect for elders and seniors is paramount. He learns the art of survival and leading a frugal life, where hard work gives joy and happiness. Though initially denied education and modern health services, climbing mountains and trekking on slippery slopes of hills in thick forests, make him a physically tough and mentally robust person, who is brave, courageous and willing to take risks. While he might not be very forthcoming with foreigners and may

give an impression of being 'slow on the up-take' due to lack of education, he makes it up with his cheerful disposition, and trust and faith in friends and companions. Brought up in a close family society, he is proud of his language, religion, customs and traditions, and since 1960s, has developed a strong liking for education. Present day soldiers are much more alert and intuitive, have intelligence and initiative on par with others from the plains of rural India. Though they may not appear physically as tough as their predecessors of 1950s, they can be moulded into very good soldiers. Health-wise, now tuberculosis is not so wide spread as in 1950s, but AIDS and skin ailments are still common.

Tourism and other job opportunities in the local industry and overseas have reduced the charm for the youth of joining the Army as the first choice. Now, first preference is for a job abroad (even as a driver or a labourer in Iraq risking ones life, U A E, Japan, Singapore, Kuuwait etc), then in the British Army, followed by the Indian Army, lastly in the Nepal Army and the Police. More enterprising parents, including ex-servicemen residing in towns are sending their sons and daughters for professional education to colleges and institutions in Nepal and abroad, mostly to India. A few have even mortgaged their land and other property for sending their wards for studies to Japan, America and England.

Special coaching institutions have come up in Pokhra and Butwal, where working knowledge of German, Arabic, French, Japanese and English (most popular) is being imparted to aspirants looking for foreign jobs. A number of foreign recruiting agents are active in these places, enroll the youth as well as able bodied ex-servicemen for supervisory appointments.

However, despite the above avenues of employment, it was observed at the rescrutment rally at Butwal in Jun 06 that enrollment in to the Indian Army is still a preferred option. Though the Her Majesty's Gorkhas (H M G-term used for grokahs employed in the British Army since 1947)

with its higher emoluments and opportunity to settle down in the UK post retirement still remains the first choice, the Indian Army still draws a lot of suitable material. The ex-servicemen take pride and keen interest in training and coaching prospective recruits from their villages for these rallies and motivate them. Soldiering in the Army still remains a respectable and sought-after profession in Nepal.

Feed back received from units establishes beyond doubt that with the spread of education in Nepal, now the recruits are better educated. They quickly become proficient in handling sophisticated weapons and equipment (like night vision devices, hand held radars, computers, radio sets) being introduced in the Indian Army. Yet, their basic qualities of courage, devotion to duty and loyalty to the unit, regiment and the Army, remain un-changed.

Thus despite socio-economic developments having taken place in Nepal since 1960s, a Gorkha soldier retains his basic traits of loyalty, courage, bravery, physical and mental robustness and comradeship, even in the 21st century. Exposure to education and modern urban environment has enabled him to develop an analytical mind which made him aware of his surroundings. The present Gorkha recruit from Nepal is better educated than he was 50 years ago. He matches his Indian counterparts and shares responsibilities with him, cheerfully. Today a soldier from Nepal displays better initiative in handling weapons and equipment of modern technology being introduced in the Indian Army. Yet, he retains the basic fighting qualities handed down to him by generations of the best fighting soldiers of the World-the Gorkhas.

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PEOPLE OF NEPAL



१. मगर

MAGAR

जनसंख्या: १६, २२, ४२१



२. थारु

THARU

जनसंख्या: १५, ३३, ८७९



३. तामाङ

TAMANG

जनसंख्या: १२, ८२, ३०४



४. नेवार

NEWAR

जनसंख्या: १२, ४५, २३२



५. राई RAI

जनसंख्या: ६, ३५, १५१



६. गुरुङ GURUNG

जनसंख्या: ५, ४३, ५७१



७. लिम्बु LIMBU

जनसंख्या: ३, ५९, ३७९



८. शेर्पा SHERPA

जनसंख्या: १, ५४, ६२२



१. सुनुवार SUNUWAR

जनसंख्या: ९५, २५४



१०. माझी MAJHI

जनसंख्या: ७२, ६१४



११. थामी THAMI

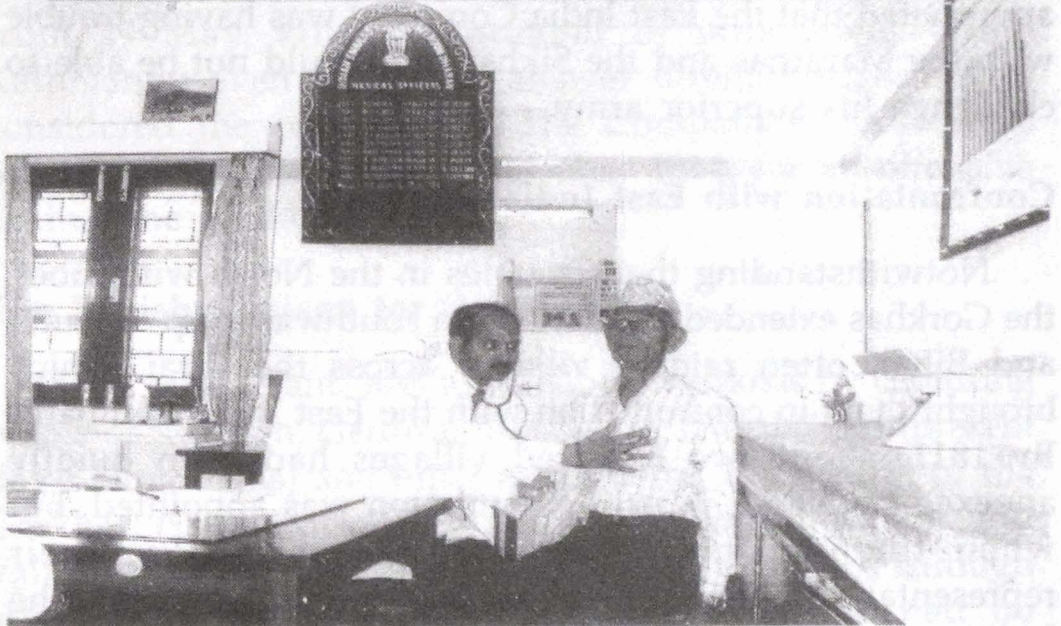
जनसंख्या: २२, ९९९



१२. डोल्पो DOLPO

जनसंख्या: १७, ५८२ (अनुमानित)

MEIDCAL CAMP BY INDIAN ARMY TEAMS



2

GORKHAS IN THE BRITISH INDIAN ARMY

Introduction

Having consolidated his power in Nepal and expanded eastwards up to Sikkim and up to Kumaon and Garhwal in the West, Bhim Sen was keen to extend southwards also. He was aware that unless his warriors were kept engaged in battle, they would create trouble for him in Nepal. He appreciated that the East India Company was having trouble with the Marathas and the Sikhs, and would not be able to challenge his superior army.

Confrontation with East India Company

Notwithstanding their troubles in the North with Tibet, the Gorkhas extended their attention southwards up to Audh and Bihar, often raiding villages across the Terai, which brought them in confrontation with the East India Company. By 1811, about two hundred villages had been quietly annexed by Nepal. A joint commission was appointed, but when the interim report found Nepal guilty, their representative left in a huff for Kathmandu. In 1813, the Indian Government became concerned at the silent and

steady penetration of the Gorkhas in Gorakhpur district after hearing the news that Nepal was secretly seeking assistance from China. Within Nepal, General Amar Singh Thapa who had conquered Kumaon and Garhwal, opposed Bhim Sen's policy of confrontation with the British, but his advice was not heeded.

By 1814, Prime Minister Bhim Sen had analyzed the problems being faced by the British from the Marathas, and the failure of their numerically superior force under General Lake in capturing the moated fortress of Bhuratpore. Thus, he questioned "How will the British be able to penetrate into hills? The small fort of Bhurtpore was the work of man, yet the English, being worsted before it, desisted from the attempt to conquer it. Our hills and fortresses are formed by the hand of God and are impregnable".¹ Being over confident, he disagreed with the opinion of his son, General Amar Singh Thapa.

Lord Moira, the Governor-General, demanded that Nepal withdraw all her troops within twenty five days from all villages that they have taken in Terai. This was complied with and British re-occupied them in April 1814, but due to the coming monsoon season and unhealthiness of the area, soon their positions were taken over by the native police. However, Nepali troops started raiding these posts from 29 May, killing a number of policemen. When Kathmandu even refused to answer ultimatums, war was considered the only course. The Company's forces were ordered to be ready by 1 November 1814, for an offensive against the Gorkhas.

The British Strategy for the 1814 War

Lord Moira's aim was to defeat the Gorkhas by capturing whole of Kumaon, Garhwal, Basahar in Punjab Hills (present day Shimla Hills) and other areas under the control of the Gorkhas. He also planned military operations in Kathmandu Valley, and contained the Marathas and the Sikhs through alliances. He assured the Chinese that Britain had no

permanent interest in Nepal, and that the military operations were of temporary nature.

He divided his force into four divisions, under Major Generals Ochterlony, Gillespie, Wood and Marley, out of whom only Ochterlony succeeded. The forces were to operate on four axes, as under:

1st Division - under Bannet Marley moved from Danapur (Patna) towards Makwanpur, on to Kathmandu.

2nd Division - under John Sulvian Wood moved from Banera to Butwal, thence to Palpa, and link up with 1st Division at Kathmandu.

3rd Division - under Rollo Gillespie began via Meerut/ Sharanpur to Dehra Dun, then to Srinagar (Garhwal). He was also to operationally control the 4th Division under Colonel Ochterlony, upto Nahan-Subathu.

4th Division - under Ochterlony began from Bilaspur to Ramgarh, Arki/Malaun-Subathu-Jaithaik, and then to link-up with Gillespie, for advance towards Srinagar. Sir George Nugent, C-in-C described these operations as "petty warfare on the frontiers of the British territories which rarely lasted more than one campaign and which always ended successfully", while Moira expected that his troops will be able to reach and secure Kathmandu Valley, by Christmas.

The initial strength of the British Forces, assembled for the offensive, was as under:

- Cavalry-6 Natives.
- Infantry-4061 Europeans, 31,000 Natives (finally 52,180), 17,111 Irregulars.
- Dromderry Corps-200.
- Pioneers-843.
- Artillery-3,628 all ranks.

- Artillery pieces-Total-106. Field guns-47, Howitzers-20, Siege guns-14, Mortars-23.
- Private followers for logistic support-1,50,000, out of which Ochterlony had 42,134.

The strength of the Gorkha Army, assessed by the British (though exaggerated), was:

- Infantry-5,000-7,000 in India, 10,000 in Nepal.
- Muskets-5,200 (Fusils), with 1,600 at Nahan-1,300 at Hindur, 300 at Basahar, 200 at Kumarsein, 500 at Subathu, 2,000 Arki and 100 at other miscellaneous forts.
- Guns-3 Pounders approximately 30-40, in India and Nepal. 4 Pounders - Arki, Rajgarh and Jaithak. 1.5 and 2 Pounders-100, in India.²

The above details do not cover the Fort of Kalunga and Srinagar.

In the Gorkha infantry, while half of the soldiers carried the Fusil, others carried bow and arrows. Everyone relied on Khukris for attacking the enemy at close quarters. Great emphasis was laid on capturing weapons and ammunition of the enemy.

While the British strength was nearly 100 times more than that of the Gorkhas, their troops had limited knowledge of the fighting potential of their adversaries. They were neither trained in negotiating the thick jungles of Terai nor had any experience of mountain warfare, and were found lacking in tackling the number of forts built by the Gorkhas. The Gorkha Army consisted of 12,000 soldiers, while the British had assembled a force of 30,000, including some irregulars, and sixty guns.

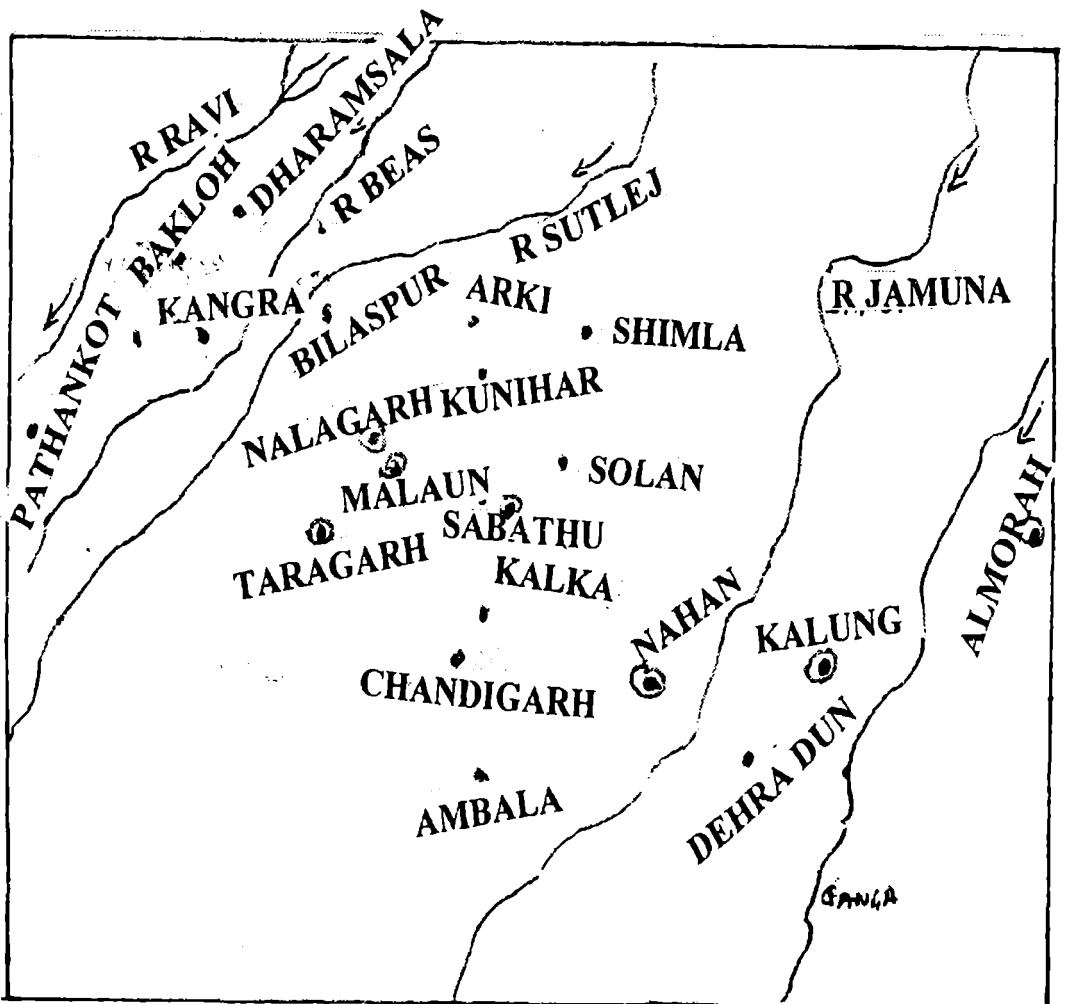
Battle of Kalanga Fort (also referred to as the Battle of Kalunga or Nalapani).³

As this was the first clash between the Gorkhas and the British, it needs to be described in some details. Gallespie's force comprised of a British Infantry and Cavalry regiment each with an additional squadron of Native cavalry,

initially 16 pieces of artillery (later 20), two Pioneer Companies and ten Native Infantry Regiments, a total of 20 battalions. The order of battle was 8th Royal Irish Dragoons (Gallespie's own regiment), 7th Native Cavalry and a squadron of Skinners Horse, HMs 53 Foot Infantry (under Lieutenant Colonel S Mawbey, 1st, 5th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 16th, 17th, 26th and 27th Native Infantry, two troops of Horsed Artillery (1st and 3rd), Nos 5 and 6 Company of Pioneers under Engineer officers, and an irregular force of 6,668.

He divided his force into two columns, one under Mawbey consisting of 1,300 infantry, 300 Cavalry and five guns and the other under Colonel Carpenter.

GORKHA FORTS ATTACKED BY THE BRITISH -1814/15



NOT TO SCALE

The Gorkha garrison of Kalanga was under command of the 35 years old Captain Balbhadra (Bal Bahadur), who had occupied the fort situated on a hill 150 m high, about 8 km from Dehra Dun, with 600 soldiers, mostly of Purana Gorkha, a regiment composed entirely of Magars.⁴ Balbhadra had developed a stockade around the fort, built up adequate stocks of rations and ammunition, constructed a water reservoir "Sagar Talao" along with an alternate spring, and had even visited Bharatpore to study the techniques used by the British for attacking forts. He had made plans to close the breach in the walls, if it did occur, and positioned muskets, then archers and finally soldiers with Kukris, to attack the enemy troops who might be able to rush into the fort. He had also deployed local intelligence sources, and was following the build-up and deployment of British troops and guns, closely. He had been visited by General Amar Singh Thapa, who had advised him to be prepared for a five month long battle and had promised to send his reinforcements, if needed.

Gallespie sent an advance column from Saharanpur under Mawbey, who reached Dehra Dun on 22 October. Mawbey's troops clashed with the Gorkha detachments covering the route to Rishikesh and after giving some resistance, the Gorkhas withdrew as per plan. On further reconnaissance, Mawbey found a level table top type of feature, approximately 1500 m distance from the Fort, which he occupied as an advance position for his guns. After intimidating fire by the guns, at night Mawbey sent a message to Balbhadra, asking him to surrender. Balbhadra was furious, and replied in a courteous but firm manner, that he was not in the habit to carry on correspondence at such an "unreasonable hour". When informed of Balbhadra's reply, Gallespie was furious. All this while Mawbey's guns continued to pound the Fort in a one way match. At this stage, Gallespie evolved a four directional attack plan, for night of 30/31 October 1814, as under:

Column 1 - A frontal attack from Table Top on the Fort,

commencing at 3.30pm on 30 Oct, under Colonel Carpenter. A force of four companies each of HM's 53 and 17th Native Infantry and Light Infantry from 6th Native Infantry. While Major Wilson was to lead with 7th Native Infantry, adequate support was provided for carrying ladders for scaling the Fort as well as for carrying ammunition for guns.

Column 2nd - An assault from North, under Captain J Fast. His grouping was three companies of 17th Native Infantry, one Light Infantry, 27th NATIVE INFANTRY and adequate logistic support. Troops were to concentrate at Karsiali (Kursiali), and commence operations at 2 am on 31 October.

Column 3 - Under Major Kelly, comprising of components from 7th NATIVE INFANTRY, Light Infantry Company and 5th NATIVE INFANTRY, with adequate pioneers. The force moved out at 2 am on 31 October, and was to develop the thrust along Lakhund.

Column 4 - Of Captain J Campbell comprised of two Grenadier companies of 6th NATIVE INFANTRY, one of Light Infantry and 16th NATIVE INFANTRY. Just like outflanking Columns 2 and 3, it moved out at 2 am on 31 October.

A reserve of four companies of Infantry and the Cavalry was created., under Maj Ludlow.

The General issued strict orders for fire-control, maximum use of bayonet, observance of silence, and simultaneous assault by all columns. Five guns were hauled up on table top using elephants, and were to open fire from 9 am on 31 October, and the attack by the outflanking three columns was to be launched at 11 am.

Being a restless man, at the last moment Gallespie modified the plan and besides the guns, moved the reserves also to Table Top. He also decided to surprise the enemy and advanced the timing of the attack by one hour, details of which did not reach the three outflanking columns in

time.

In the meanwhile, Balbhadra sent a party of about 50 Gorkhas to raid the guns. The raid failed and the Gorkhas retreated to the Fort after suffering a few casualties. Encouraged by the retreat of the Gorkhas, at 10 am Column 1 under Major Ludlow launched a determined frontal attack and managed to reach the outskirts of the Fort. Here, the Gorkhas sallied out of the Fort and attacked the British troops with Kukries, inflicting heavy casualties. The Gorkha women had also taken positions on the fort wall, and threw stones on the enemy inflicting casualties, shouting "Timiharu Sita Yudh Garne, Aru Ke Ho (will fight you . . . and what else", and stopped them from climbing their ladders for negotiating the wall.

Gallespie, who along with his advisors had moved forward to a vantage point, observed the outcome of the attack by Ludlow. He ordered the balance of 53rd to form the second wave under Ludlow and Carpenter, and launched them to teach the "recalcitrant Gorkhas" a lesson. This assault clashed with about 150 defenders in the Gorkha village outside the Fort, who rushed at them with their Kukris, shouting their battle cry "Ayo Gorkhali - Ayo Gorkhali" (The Gorkhas are coming-a battle cry since then adopted by all Gorkha regiments of the British and Indian Army). Behind them stood their brave commander, Balbhadra with his long sword drawn and his flag (bearing a massive Hanuman on a yellow cloth) flying majestically on a long staff. Near him stood his band, playing "O Nepali Sar Uchali" (Ye Gorkhas-Hold your Heads High). Inspired by Balbhadra, these soldiers used their Kukris to neutralize the British, and though quite a few of them were also killed, the remainder withdrew to their Fort.

Greatly upset at the second failure, Gallespie felt that 53rd H M had let him down. He again ordered Ludlow and Carpenter to stop, collect the withdrawing men and attack the Fort from the other approach, through the village. This was tried out, but while some troops did manage to reach the wall of the Fort, they encountered panjis (sharpened

bamboo spikes) in the moat of the Fort, which came as a surprise to them. British troops again pulled back, muttering, "They are damned barbarians...bloody Gorkhas".

In between the attacks, Balbhadra allowed the British to evacuate their casualties and collect the dead. He did not allow any mutilation, which generated good feelings between the two adversaries, and admiration for gallantry and chivalry. However, he recovered and captured all weapons and ammunition of the British soldiers, for use by his troops.

Further upset at the failures, Gallespie ordered Kennedy to move his guns as far forward as possible, to breach the Fort. Brave as he was and determined to capture the fort, Gallespie himself moved forward with the leading troops of the assault, but was fatally wounded about 40 m short of the Fort gate, In this assault, the British lost twenty officers and two hundred and fifty men After this, at about 11:15 am, the attack was called off and the artillery shelling of the Fort, intensified. By now the British casualties amounted to 775, including 75 killed. The Division pulled back to Dehra Dun, and Mawbey asked for reinforcements before continuing the attack. In the meantime his artillery kept on pounding the Fort. By 26 November, nearly 1200 round of gun and mortars had been fired, which had taken a heavy toll of the Gorkhas.

Not known to the British, their artillery fire had damaged Sagar Talao, and the spring from outside had been sealed by their cordon, thus causing acute water supply. Balbhadra had also lost a large number of troops, and as no reinforcements had come, he was contemplating to abandon the fort, rather than be taken prisoner. The walls of the Fort had also started crumbling due to the artillery shelling and he was left with about 90 able bodied soldiers, out of his 600. Realising the hopelessness of the situation, Balbhadra decided to abandon the Kalanga Fort. He escaped in three groups, the first under Ripudaman Thapa on 27 November with 20 men with standards and treasury, and four boxes full of jewellerys, along with the wounded who could walk,

and made for Srinagar (Garhwal). The second batch of 20 moved out on 28 November, while Balbhadra himself moved out on 29 November, with the balance 44. Though initially he moved to Nahan, later he took service with the Sikh ruler of Lahore, Maharaja Ranjit Singh, with which started the long association of Gorkhas with Lahore, giving them the name of Lahure (a term even now used frequently in Nepal for anyone seeking jobs outside the country, except India and with the H M G). When the British entered the Fort on 30 November, they counted about 180 bodies, a few dying men and some toddlers, calling for water. Penderal Moon, who witnessed the scene, wrote that "those two fruitless attacks costing casualties exceeding the total number of defenders, a stigma to the British bravery". Even Lord Moira recognized the Gorkhas both as brave soldiers and humane enemy, and felt that they were entitled to being treated well.⁵

Balbhadra's bravery has been well appreciated by the British, who in their memorial at Dehra Dun have placed a plaque in his memory also.⁶ Despite heavy odds, weaker strength, less firepower and defending an isolated fort, he offered tough opposition to the British till the end, and did not surrender. Instead, he escaped with his followers and families and joined the Sikh Army of Lahore. He is reported to have died fighting for them against the Afghans at Sopiyan in Kashmir in July 1819.

Gallespie was replaced by Martindell, who moved to North-West, to attack Jaitak on 27 December, but the attack did not succeed. At this stage General Martindell decided to pass through Nahan and attack Jaitak. Two columns, under Majors Ludlow and Richards were sent to occupy positions on the flanks of Colonel Kesar Sing and his Gorkha force of 2000. However, while Richards secured his objective, Ludlow went too far forward and was attacked furiously by the defenders. The British lost 12 officers and 450 men, and were forced to retreat, while Kesar Sing pulled back his troops.

In December 1814, Lord Hastings gave orders for raising of two corps of the Kumaon Levies under Colonel Gardiner and Major Hearsey, as he appreciated that a diversion from a new direction would be helpful. During their advance towards Almora in Kumaon Hills, while Hearsey (with 2,000 Pathans, 200 Kumaonis, two irregular companies and even some Gorkha soldiers)⁷ faced stiff resistance from the Gorkhas. Gardiner with 2000 to 3,000 soldiers and 10 guns was able to defeat the Gorkhas and secured Almora, which led to the fall of whole of Kumaon province by 27 April 1815, the first victory for the British.

In the meanwhile, on the far eastern flank, on 1 January 1815, two posts of General Marley in the Terai (who was to advance straight to Kathmandu via Bichiakoh and Hetowra), were attacked successfully by the Gorkhas. The British suffered more reverses, when in February 1815 Lieutenant Young with his 2000 irregulars,⁸ were driven back by Ranjit Singh and his 200 Gorkhas. This was followed by the failure of General Wood from Gorakhpur, who after attacking the Gorkhas positions in the Sal forests at Batoli in Terai, hastily sounded retreat, not appreciating that the enemy was also pulling back.

After his defeat at Kalung, General Amar Singh Thapa sought assistance from Maharaja Ranjit Singh to fight the British. The Nepal Durbar also sent feelers to Ranjit Singh, emphasizing that the King of Nepal was the defender of Hindu faith and the hope of Hindustan, but all this flattery failed.

All this while, Lahore Durbar was keenly watching the Anglo-Gurkha War and appreciated that the tide was turning in favour of the British. This request from Nepal was turned down, on account of the Lahore Durbar's treaty with the British. Though the Gurkhas were defeated, but they had fought bravely. Hence, Maharaja Ranjit Singh allowed them to be recruited freely in his Army, as he appreciated that these hill fighters will be good for fighting in Kashmir, against the Afghans. Maharaja Ranjit Singh became the first ruler

in India to enlist and welcome Gurkha soldiers.

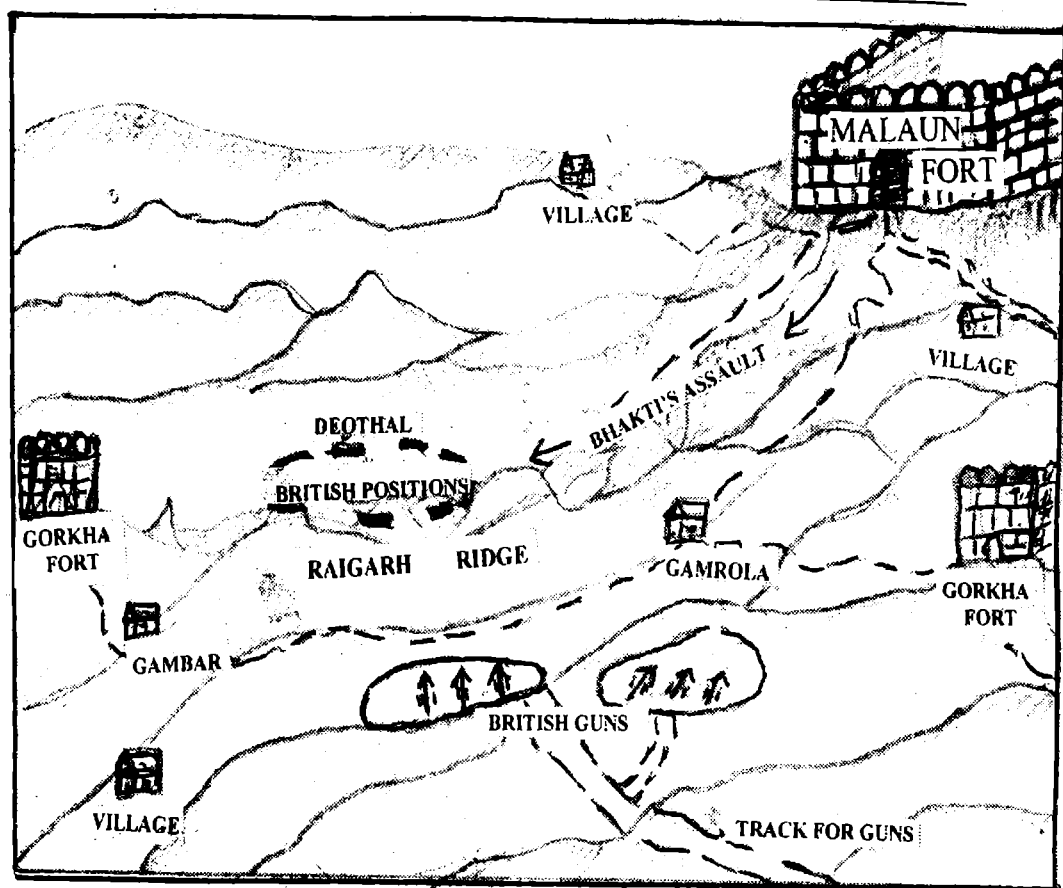
There is mention of the Sikh Army of year 1813 having bulk of its regular soldiers from Hindustanis, Gurkhas and Afghans', as the Sikhs looked down on the foot soldier and disliked doing drill. Hence, Ranjit Singh raised units of Punjabi Musslamans, Hindustanis and Gurkha troops (including deserters), The Lahore Durbar recruited soldiers from different communities and mixed them in a balanced way from company to corps, so that the spirit of togetherness and belonging prevailed. Following this, even the Sikhs overcame their prejudice and started enlisting in the infantry. Maharaja Ranjit Singh did not allow communalism, tribalism or localism to either hinder or threaten the efficiency of his Army.⁹

The Fall of (Rajgarh) Malaun Fort 15 May 1815

Kazi (General) Amar Singh Thapa had organized the defense of his territory in the hills of Punjab, by occupying perimeter defenses based on features and forts at Jutog, Taragarh (Bakloh), Mustgarh (Pinjore) and Taksal (Kalka), covering axis from Kalka-Nahan. He often depending upon local rajas and chieftains. His headquarters were at Arki, while the main defenses were based on forts at Nalagarh, Ramgarh, Tibu, Mangu and Rajgarh (Malaun).

Besides attacking forts, Ochterlony evolved a cohesive strategy. He knew that having been deposed, the local rajas were not happy under the Gorkhas and it was possible to win them over to the British side, by promising them their territories. His plan involved isolating and weakening Amar Singh from Nepal by denying reinforcements by cutting his lines of communications, collecting intelligence by intercepting and winning over messengers, subverting the Gorkha soldiers and their allies and inducing them to desert to his side, and employing agents and informers for spreading dis-information for lowering the morale of the Gorkhas.

SKETCH SHOWING BATTLE OF MALAUN FORT-15 MAY 1815



NOT TO SCALE

Having studied Gallespie's failure at Kalunga, Ochterlony decided not to attack the Forts headlong but first isolate them by a siege by infiltrating his troops. He also evolved an elaborate plan for construction of tracks for hauling guns and ammunition forward for reducing the forts. He had assembled forces of about 6000-7000 at Ludhiana, with the task of "reduction or dispersion of the Gorkha army under Kazi Amar Singh Thapa and the expulsion of Gorkhas from their conquests between the Sutlej and the Jamuna".¹⁰ He viewed his adversary as "ill-disciplined, ill-equipped and with self-overestimation". The initial advancing British Force of approximately 3000 was soon increased six folds. The artillery guns which played a decisive battle winning role, were increased from 16 to 30, including 18 ponder guns and 8 inch Mortars. Adequate logistics support had been arranged, including elephants for pulling the heavy guns.

The advance commenced on 1 November 1814 by an attack on Taragarh Fort, where due to three days of intense artillery shelling, the Gorkha garrison (which included some local hill people) gave-up without much fight. This boosted the morale of the British. Next day, the Gorkha prisoners were marched to Ropar and persuaded to join the British in fighting against Amar Singh Thapa. While a number of them, under a Subedar accepted the terms, and those who refused were taken to Ludhiana, as prisoners.

Upset at the loss of Taragarh, Amar Singh moved from Ari and strengthened Ramgarh, to give battle to the British. He had to depend upon the local rajas for protecting his flanks, some of whom later betrayed him and joined the British. The next major clash took place at Ramgarh, which was held by the Gorkhas with about 650 (out of a total of 1,500, balance being at Malaun) soldiers, though the British estimated the strength to be 4,000. Though the Nepal King Bhim Sen Thapa had promised to raise forty companies in 1814 and send them to the Kazi, only about half were effective, that too with 50% weapons. These were effectively intercepted by the British, resulting in acute shortages. Despite of these difficulties, the Kazi had created a reserve force "Amar Virgati" (the squad of martyrs) under his younger son Ranbir, of four companies. The British relied upon the information provided by the local rajas and re-deployed their guns, which when brought into action, did not reach their objectives.

Assessing the situation, Ochterlony quickly modified his plan. He changed the axis of attack, carried out detailed reconnaissance and by 24 November concentrated his forces at Nehr, for an assault by a "turning movement". All these moves were watched by the Gorkhas, and they decided to surprise the British and eliminate them before they could launch the attack.

Showing raw courage and without caring for their lives, the Gorkhas charged down the hill with Kukris and inflicted nearly 70% casualties on the British force under Lawtie, who did not get time even to open their ammunition boxes.

appeared very grim for the British. Ochterlony also changed his opinion Infantry on about the Gorkhas, calling them "skilful and enterprising, hardy and brave, excellent in art of stratagem of mountain warfare, with defensive art of stockade".

While the fighting was at its peak, Ochterlony wrote a letter to the Commander-in-Chief, recommending that the Gorkhas be enlisted in the Company's army, which at that time appeared strange. However, on 1 December 1814, Mr. Adams, Secretary to the Government, replied to Ochterlony and allowed him to raise local levies of irregulars to harass the Gorkha Army by cutting off their 400 miles support line from Nepal, by employing small bodies of troops, and for other duties like guarding convoys and protecting friendly districts, etc. Having captured vast territories of Kumaon and Garhwal, the Gorkhas had recruited a number of soldiers from the region, but as the Gorkha rulers were harsh, a number of these soldiers were not very happy serving under them. Even the loyalty of some of the Nepali soldiers from Baisia and Chabisia rajs was a suspect. Mr. J B Fraser, who was with the column at Dehra Dun said on record, "this gave rise to the measure of forming a light irregular corps". As more Gorkha forts and positions were captured, more and more soldiers were allowed to join.

The task of rising was given to Lieutenant Robert Ross of the 6th Native Infantry, with the nucleus of 2000 contingent from the army of Raja of Hindur. He was joined by a number of Nasiris (friendly) deserters from allies of Nepal, and employed them in the Battle of Malaun. Similarly, Lieutenant Young also raised a force of 2000 soldiers from plains and hills for operations on the flanks of Ochterlony, but they did not prove to be good soldiers.¹¹

Soon a Hill Corps of three Nasiris Units was raised and located at Sabathu, Almorah and Dehra Dun, for local security duties, rather than war. Another account of these Nasiri battalions mentions that "even before hostilities had concluded, men who had been taken prisoner or deserted

in response to invitations from the British were fighting for the Company. While the 4500 soldiers had impressed the British as potential soldiers and were formed into several Nasiri and Sirmoor battalions commanded by British officers, there was some reluctance to trust these new recruits as it was deemed that they would not "so soon fight their own brethren of Nepal".¹² However, in 1824, Sirmoor Battalion under Captain Young distinguished itself in anti-bandit tasks in Roorkee and in 1826 during the attack on fort of Bhuratpore, earning much commendation. Later, the Nasiri and Sirmoor units also fought as part of the Company's Army against the Sikhs at Sobraon, and earned more laurels.¹³

In the meanwhile, the British were able to intercept letters sent by the Kazi to the King of Nepal, in which he had given details of his plan to deploy small detachments at outposts like Ramgarh, and concentrate his main force to defend Malaun. Induced by the British propaganda and offers, these Gorkha detachments surrendered, and were allowed to march out of their forts, to join the British. An offer of the Governor General was also conveyed to the Kazi, "to confirm him and his family in their lands, worth about Rs 30,000 per annum, and to settle on him and his family Rs 24,000 more on condition that he surrenders his army and territory". Amar Singh rejected the offer and "declared his intention to resist to the last extremity".¹⁴

Rajgarh Hill, a 10 km long ridge at altitude of 1300 m, dominated Gamrola and Gambar area. It had a number of knolls and rocky outcrops, covered with bushes, on which the Gorkhas had constructed a number of defense works and forts, the main being the Fort of Malaun. There were a number of villages of Gorkha and other settlements, while the water sources were all in the nearby river beds. Left with a force of about 400, the Kazi was forced to leave gaps in his defenses, though for his flank protection he deployed his trusted lieutenant, Bhakti Thapa. By March 1815, the British had a total force of two Light Battalions (2/3 and 2/1 Native Infantry with about 2,000 irregulars (including 300 Gorkhas and four 6 Ponder guns), four Native

Infantry units in reserve, HM's 53rd, squadron of Skinner's Horse and a battery of guns. Divided into nine columns, on 14-15 April 1815, they were to advance and secure foothold on the main ridge, isolate Malaun and then work inwards, to attack.

By 15 April, Bhakti's position was isolated and became vulnerable, when Amar Singh called him to Malaun, for consultations. Under Bhakti, an attack was planned on the enemy occupying Deothal, at 4 am on 16 April. While there were suggestions of the likely subversion in the rank and file, not knowing the reality, Amar Singh rejected such talk stating that "no Gorkha worth his name can ever do it". That night there was intense activity in the Fort as a prelude to the attack next day at first light, in which the women folk assisted in distribution of ammunition and the final prayer, while young children were grouped for evacuation of casualties. Accordingly, at 2 am some 400 soldiers got ready under Bhakti Thapa and left Malaun Fort at 3:20 am, after prayers and "Tika". They were followed by Amar Singh himself, with drum beats of his band and his yellow flag with black Hanuman.

The feature was held by Thompson who had skillfully deployed his two Indian battalions (23 Native Infantry and 26 Native Infantry), companies of the Grenadiers and the deserters, a total of about 3,500, along with 6 pounder guns. When at first light the Gorkhas attacked them, they had only 400 soldiers and 200 flint-lock rifles and one 3 Pounder gun. With the long curved pipes sounding "Ayo Gorkhali", the Gorkhas charged with their Kukris, but they were badly cut down by the British fire, and only one Gorkha managed to reach the breach of the British gun. The first wave having failed, the second wave was launched soon after, which met similar fate. By now the sun had come out and seeing the grim situation, the 74 years old Bhakti Thapa divided his remaining soldiers into two waves and attacked from two flanks. He himself led one column, with his khukri.

The fighting was fierce and determined from both sides.

While the British troops held their ground and skillfully used their weapons, especially the guns, the Gorkhas showed raw courage in assaulting them with Kukris. However, once Bhakti Thapa, the brave soldier and trusted commander of Amar Singh who had served him loyally since the day he had crossed River Kali in 1790 was killed, the attack by the Gorkhas lost momentum and finally failed. General Amar Singh Thapa had been observing the attack and was all set to himself lead another assault with his ten-man personal guard, but was dissuaded, as it would have been be pointless. Thus, he returned to the Fort with his wounded soldiers, still flying his flag.

On this day, the British suffered 4 officers and 213 men killed and wounded, and their total casualties on 15 and 16 April were recorded as 61 killed and 293 wounded, besides the irregulars, whose casualties were not recorded.¹⁵ The British appreciated the "magnificent attack by the Goorkhas under Bhakti Thapa's leadership ", while the British bravery was "equally displayed as Lieutenant Fireworker Cartwright (Artillery) who continued to man his gun with only one gunner, while the other gun was manned by two Lieutenants and two sergeants. In spite of the impetuous courage of the enemy, they were at length repulsed".

Hereafter, besides pounding Malaun fort with 18 pounder guns, the Irregular Force under Ross (strength approximately 3,000, consisting of Bilaspurians, Patiala Sikhs and about 300 Gorkha deserters) had started weaning away Amar Singh's forces deployed around the Fort. On 3 May, Ross reported to Ochterlony that he had made proposals to three Subedars (Randhoj Thapa, Narbir Thapa and Uri Mardan Thapa) to cross over to his side, and was expecting two of them to do so with their troops.

Day after the fall of Deothal, Ochterlony stated on 17 April that the troops who occupied Deothal on 14-15 April included 1/9 Native Infantry, 300 Hindur Rajas household troops, 300 of Nasiri Gorkhas and about 300 of Mini Majra auxiliaries. Moira wrote on 2 August 1815 that "it may be proper to state that the 4463 Goorkha troops who deserted

in the course of operations of Major General Ochterlony were taken into our pay and formed an attached and useful corps”

On 25 April, the Gorkhas at Almora under Bam Shah Thapa were defeated by a column led by Gardner, who after a bold dash captured the Fort. Now, Amar Singh was totally isolated, and had no hopes of any reinforcements. Fifth columnists were active and effective and with the Kazi cut-off from Garhwal and Nepal, his fighting strength in Malaun Fort was reduced to 50 soldiers and about 150 women and children. Thus, by 13 May 1815, General Amar Singh Thapa seemed resolved to sign the convention on British terms.

One of the first Gurkha battalions in the service of the East India Company was authorized on 24 April 1815, when Lieutenant Frederick Young was sent to the prisoner-of-war camps for initial batch of recruits. From these he raised the Sirmoor Battalion, which eventually became the 2nd King Edward VII's Own Gurkha Rifles, and commanded them for twenty eight years. The battalion went to Britain after Indian Independence in 1947.¹⁶

Surrender at Malaun Fort

At this stage Amar Singh Thapa received a message from Ochterlony, stating that he will be given all honor and his safety ensured, if he accepted the convention. Signed on 15 May, the Convention included a clause “that all Nepali troops except those in the private service of Kazis Ummer Singh and Runjore Singh, will be at liberty to enter into the service of the British Government, if it is agreeable to themselves and the British Government chooses to accept their services, and those not employed will be maintained on a specific allowance by the British Government, till peace is concluded between the two States”.

With this began the employment of the Gorkhas in the British Army. However, these Gorkhas were mostly those who had deserted and mercenaries of the Irregulars, while

most from Nepal returned to their homeland. Kazi Amar Singh Thapa was allowed to march out from Malaun Fort, with his band and colors, along with his followers and families, in a respectful manner.

Thus ended the thirty year old Gorkha rule of the hills of the Punjab, Kumaon and Garhwal, after which the British gained control from River Kali to Sutlej. It also started the tradition of mutual respect between the soldiers of the two armies, and though the official raising date of the Nasiri Battalion is shown as 24 April 1815, the convention itself was signed on 15 May.

The Gorkhas were enrolled in the Army of East India Company, also known as John Company, hence the nickname "Johnny Gorkha".

However, as Kathmandu received reports of the of the Sikh Army preparing for a war against the British and of the lawlessness being created by the Marathas, Bhim Sen refused to ratify the Treaty offered by the British, which had been arrived at after long deliberations. The main clause which created the hitch in November 1815 was the British insistence on taking over the Terai, in which many of Nepal's nobles and officials had jagirs. As no progress was made, in January 1816 Lord Moira ordered a second offensive into Nepal.

End of the War-Treaty of Segauli

The campaign in the East was deferred due to malaria, to winter of 1815-16, and Ochterlony was given the command. As Bhim Sen Thapa continued to dither, two column of British troops were organized and ordered to advance to Makwanpur, a town and fort in Terai, enroute to the Valley of Nepal (Kathmandu), about 50 km away.

Though initially the Gorkha's put up resistance at their stockade at Churia Ghat Pass, Ochterlony's 13,000 forces of regulars with 4,000 irregulars was in no hurry for a frontal attack. When reconnaissance revealed a goat track by-passing

the Pass, he pushed his troops along it. On being surprised and outflanked, the Gorkhas abandoned their positions and retreated to Sisagarhi, leaving Makwanpur Fort as the only obstacle to be captured by the British forces advancing to Kathmandu. At this stage, while Ochterlony received reinforcements under Colonel Nicol, Colonel Kelly captured an outlying post on the flanks, at Hariharpur. After this, though the Makwanpur Garrison put up gallant resistance, they realized the hopelessness of the situation.

Though defeated and in hopeless situation, Bhim Sen still sought assistance from China, and on 28 February 1816 was prepared to ratify the treaty of the previous year rather than allow British troops into Kathmandu, but it did not materialize. Finally, the ratified treaty with the red seal of the Durbar (palace) was brought by the Nepalese Commissioner to Ochterlony at Segauli, on 4 March 1816 (see Appendix J attached).

As per this treaty, Nepal relinquished her claims to the Hills west of River Kali, and to Sikkim. She also ceded a large tract of Terai to the British, subject to the payment of Rs 2,00,000 a year as compensation to owners of jagirs. The eastern Terai was annexed by the Company, while the western portion was handed over to the Kingdom of Audh. Nepal also agreed to receive a Resident at Kathmandu. However, in order to create friendly relations, within a year Lord Hastings restored a large portion of the Terai back to Nepal, in lieu of the annual payment.¹⁷

The British also received permission to recruit Nepalese soldiers into their Army, while they recognized the sovereignty of Nepal. However, weary of foreigners, Nepal did not allow any military representatives into interior of the country, thus the recruitment was carried out in a semi-clandestine manner by the British.

Kumaonis and Garhwalis in Amar Singh Thapa's Army

As mentioned earlier, till the last decade of the 18th century, both Kumaon and Garhwal had been independent

kingdoms, when they were annexed by Nepal. As a large number of them were reported to have fought under Amar Singh Thapa against the British in 1815-1816, the British had appreciated the fighting potential of these soldiers, as well as that of the Gorkhas. Thus, when they raised an irregular force from the area including the prisoners and deserters, the Kumaonies who had surrendered, were also enrolled and later employed to fight the Gurkhas, who were finally defeated. As mentioned earlier, one of the three irregular units raised soon after the clash at Dehra Dun, was initially designated as Kumaon Battalion.¹⁸

As regards Garhwalis, the *Gazetter of the United Province* noted that in 1814, nearly two-third of the Nepalese force in that area, which fought the British, was composed of men from upper parganas of Garhwal and Kumaon, which was also confirmed in a letter by Gen Amar Singh Thapa that 'the his army and the force engaged in the defence of the fortress of Kalanga were only partly composed of Garhwalis'. Thus, it is probable that the larger proportion of Nepalese troops who surrendered to the British, and later took service with them to fight the Gorkha's, were Garhwali's and Kumaoni's the Nasiri, the Sirmoor, and the Kumaon Battalions, which were later designated as 1st King George's Own Gurkha Rifles, the 2nd King Edward's Own Gurkha Rifles and the 3rd Queen Alexandra's Own Gurkha Rifles.

Up to 1887, Garhwali's continued to be enrolled in the first five Gorkha Regiments, serving bravely alongside Gorkhas, as they had done in 1814-1815 War. Though the proposal to raise Garhwal Rifles was initiated in 1880, it did not materialize till 1896, when Gen Roberts, C-in-C, wrote that 'the men would be of an excellent fighting class'. The present 5th Gurkhas had many Garhwali's in its rank had repeatedly proved themselves brave and faithful soldiers, and were considered by the officers of that corps as quite equal to the pure Gurkhas in physique and pluck. The other Gurkha regiments count on their Garhwali's as amongst their best soldiers, and all the officers who know the class

best speak in the highest terms of their military qualifications'.¹⁹

The Gorkhas in the State Forces of Jammu and Kashmir

Having heard of the bravery of Gorkhas, Maharaja Gulab Singh, ruler of Kashmir, also enrolled them for service in his Army. The first unit, No 3 Kashmir Rifles was raised at Jammu in 1849, from men whose ancestors had fought under Gen Amar Singh Thapa when he invaded Kangra in early 1800s at the invitation of the Kangra chieftains. Accordingly, it was named Suraj Gorkha (presently 5th JAK Rifles). Later, in 1856 another battalion, the Raghunath (now 3rd JAK Rifles) was raised and had a sprinkling of Gorkhas, as did the Body Guard raised in 1869 (now designated as 2nd JAK Rifles). Special rice allowance was given to the families of Gorkha troops, and un-like other non-Kashmiris, they were allowed to settle down in the State, permanently.²⁰

Nepal-British Relations—Post 1816

Smarting under indignity of the defeat, Nepali rulers grudgingly consented to place some of their troops under the British if they wished so, which the British willingly accepted. By the Seguali Treaty, Bhim Sen also ensured that Nepal retained its independence, and there was no effort on part of the British to colonize her. In fact, Nepal remained an isolated and closed country till 1950s, except for an occasional foreigner being permitted to enter the country. The King and the PM of Nepal were left to rule and manage their country, a policy which India followed after her Independence.

The Gorkha Soldier

At that time, the British concept and understanding of a Goorkha soldier was "The genuine Goorkha is recognized by his high cheek-bones, broad tartar features, small elongated eyes, and the absence of whisker or mustache, with the exception of a few straggling hair on the upper

lip, cherished with great care. As a race, they are considerably below the average height of the natives of Hindustan, broad chested and bull-necked, with the muscles of thigh and leg so greatly developed as in some instances to appear unnatural. They are capable of enduring great fatigue, and in their constant sporting excursions in the heavy jungles of the Doons or the banks of the Jumna and Ganges with their fishing tackle perform journeys almost incredible to European pedestrians, particularly on their return journey when they generally have heavy loads of venison or fishing slung over their shoulders. They are tractable folk and very amenable to discipline.....gambling is their besetting vice, and they are thoughtless and improvident in money matters."²¹

Later, Brian Hodgson while describing the military qualities of Goorkhas, stated that "they dispatch their meal in half an hour, and satisfy the ceremonial law by merely washing their hand and face and taking off their turbans before cooking, laugh at the pharisaical rigour of the Sipayis (sepoys), who must bathe from head to foot, and make puja before they begin to eat their dinners, must eat nearly naked in the coldest weather, and cannot be in marching trim again in less than three hours. In my humble opinion they (Goorkhas) are, by far the best soldiers in India; and if they were made participators of our renown arms, I can see that their gallant spirit, emphatic contempt of medhesias (people living in the plains) and unadulterated military habit, might be reliable on for fidelity"²² Dr Oldfield stated in 1860 that no greater compliment can be paid for Gurkha's bravery than quoting their own saying 'KAFAR HONE BHANDA MARNE RAMRO' (it is better to die than being a coward)- a motto adopted by all Gorkah regiments of the Indian Army post -1947, except that word Kafar being of Urdu, has been replaced by 'Kayar'.

Why Gorkhas became Famous and Popular

Three factors which made them famous and popular

with the British.

1 hailing from an economically weak, isolated and under-developed country, till they joined the Army the Gorkhas had been used to a life of poverty, privation, drudgery and weariness closely associated with soil. Brought up under basic caste system of Hinduism, they realized the freedom of choice offered by the Army service. Thus, they outshone their military peers of other armies, as they do even now.

2 they seldom make a habit of exerting themselves for their rights and privileges, and have full trust and faith on their commanders. Their constellation of beliefs, attitudes, values, expectations, actions and responses both as a hill men and soldiers can be collectively identified as their soldierly "culture". The pride in belonging to an elite unit, where courtesy, discipline, and team spirit is welded as "comraidierie", makes a Gorkha adapt to Regimental life.

3 from his experiences with Gurkha soldiers, Young who had raised the Nasiri (also spelt Nassiri or Nassuri or Nassuree, meaning friendly) Battalion said that "Gurkhas are bold, enduring, faithful, frank, very independent and self-reliant: in their own country they are jealous of foreigners". As a rule, recruits on joining are very unsophisticated, very truthful, but dirty, and the first lesson taught to them is "cleanliness is next to godliness". The great vice of Gurkha is gambling, to which they are generally addicted. Though hot tempered and easily roused, they are in general quite, well-behaved men, and extremely amenable to discipline.... No officer can be too strict with them in parades, but they hate being "nagged at". From the warlike qualities of their forefathers, and the traditions handed down to them of their military prowess as conquerors of Nepal, a Gorkha is imbued with, and cherishes the true military spirit.

Physical Attributes of a Gorkha

His physique, compact and sturdy build, powerful muscular development, keen sight, acute hearing, and

hereditary education as a sportsman, eminently capacitate him for the duties of light infantry soldier on the mountain side, while his national weapon, the Kukri, has in Burma and in other theatres proved valuable. The Gorkha soldiers have proved their dogged tenacity with which to encounter danger, number of times in battle. Their fighting qualities, whether for sturdy, unflinching courage or enduring élan, are null secundus amongst troops we enroll in our ranks from varied classes of our Indian Empire, and no greater compliment can be paid to their bravery than by quoting one of their saying" Kafar Huno Bhandra Marnu Ramro (It is better to die than be a cowered)".²³

A Gorkha is not extrovert, but is tightly self-controlled until a critical point of anger, excitement or drink has been reached. Behind their pleasant, bland exterior, is a combination of unshakable conviction and iron nerve, along with the will and ability to survive on frugal means in a hostile environment. The Gurkhas are very jealous of their women, but are domestic in their habits, and make kind and affectionate husbands and parents. As a consequence, their wives are less shy and reserved, and have more freedom, and reciprocate their affection, carefully looking after their uniform and all culinary and domestic matters. In those days, polygamy was not illegal in Nepal, but a Gorkha seldom had more than two wives. Liaison with a widow was permitted, but no marriage ceremony was allowed.

While they have no facilities of any sports in Nepal, once in the Army they show keen sportsmanship. Fond of playing football and other group games, given an opportunity a Gorkha would like to spend his leisure time fishing or hunting. Thus, possession of a weapon is considered a great honour.

The above qualities made Gorkhas the finest soldiers the British could have.²⁴

Another description of the Gurkha bravery was written by Ensign John Ship of HM's 87th Regiment, himself termed

as "Bravest of the Brave", in 1816. He stated that "I have never seen more steadiness or bravery exhibited in my life. Run they would not, and of death they seemed to have no fear, though their comrades were falling thick around them, for we were so near that every shot told."²⁵

Performance of Nasiri Units

The next test for Gurkhas came in 1824, when Young with Sirmoor Battalion was ordered to lead a column from Dehra Dun to Roorkee in "aid to civil authorities", for clearing bandits from a fort. Later, in 1826 the Nasiri and Sirmoor Battalions fought under Lord Combermere, side-by-side the British at Bhuratpore and lifted the siege by storming the Fort, bravely.

While in the intervening period after 1815 to 1857 the Royal Court at Kathmandu saw great turmoil and was virtual hotbed of intrigues, it did not have any bearing on the Parbatiyas (hill people), who continued to serve loyally under the British. The Gorkha also fought along side the British against the Sikhs at Aliwal and Sobraon in 1846, at a time when Kathmandu had been carrying out secret and conspiratorial negotiations with the Court of Lahore. While the Sirmoor and the Nasiri Battalions came for much praise after Aliwal, Sir Hugh Gough wrote that at Sobraon he was "deeply impressed by the determined hardihood and bravery with which the two Battalions of Goorkas, the Sirmoor and Naseree, met the Sikh whenever they were opposed to them". It was due to these feat of valor that in 1850 Lord Dalhousie organized these three local Nasiri Battalions into regiments, and before his departure in 1856 recommended a big expansion of the Gorkha forces of the Indian Army, which was ignored at that time.

In February 1850, there was a near mutiny in the 66th Bengal Native Infantry, when the Brahmins and Rajputs objected to denial of Bhatta (extra allowance). Napier immediately disbanded the battalion and handed over its

number and colours to the Nasiri battalion. Though he was censured by the incoming Governor General Lord Dalhousie, Napier gave his views that the Goorkhas will be faithful, and for low pay we can enlist a large body of soldiers whom our best officers consider equal in courage to European troops. Even as matter of economy, this will be good; but the great advantage of enlisting these hill men will be that, with 30,000 or 40,000 Goorkhas added to 30,000 Europeans, the possession of India will not depend on opinion, but on an army able with ease to overthrow any combination among Hindoos or Mohammedans, or both together.²⁶

Later, when the Nasiri battalion was upgraded from local infantry to the regular line and titled 66th of Goorkha regiment, a new Nasiri battalion was raised in its place at Sabathu' and both these units along with Sirmoor Battalion were sent to School of Musketry at Ambala to be trained on new Enfield rifles, before their issue. Lieutenant (later General) D Macintyre, who was overall in charge wrote that after having been encamped for some time with the nisquads, a request was made by the Goorkhas, through one of their own officers, to be allowed to pitch their tents with those of the British soldiers, as they did not like to mix with the "kala log", as they called Poorbeah sepoy (Purbiya, meaning eastern, referred to Brahmins and Rajputs from Oudh who made up the majority of the Bengal Native Infantry). The request was granted.²⁷

Thus, the British emphasis on economy of employing Goorkhas as "cheap soldiers" and keeping them "separate and exclusive" from the Native (later Indian units) was prevalent even in 1850s, and continued to be so nearly 100 years, till 1947.

Nasiri Units become Gorkha Rifles

The three units (originally four were formed, but one was disbanded) formed from General Amar Singh Thapa's conquered troops were named Nassaria (Nassuri or Nasiri-meaning friendly) Battalions, and had troops mainly from

the Hilly region. While the first unit was later re-raised at Sabathu as 1st Gurkha Rifles, the 2nd became Sirmoor Battalion, the 3rd became Kumaon Levy at Almora. In 1857, 4th Gurkhas were raised at Pithoragarh and the 5th Gurkhas were raised at Abbottabad. Soon, charters were granted to the first four Regiments which gave them special privileges, like a permanent home in India for their soldiers and their families. In response to a dispatch from the Secretary to Military Department to Quarter Master General on 18 March 1864, the 1st Gurkhas were established at Dharamsala, the 2nd at Dehra Dun, the 3rd at Almora and the 4th at Bakloh. Later, a second battalion was raised in the 3rd regiment, and was allotted Lansdowne as its home.²⁸

At that time, these units consisted of Rai and Limbus from the Kiranti region in the East, Magars, Gurungs and Tamangs from the center, and the Chhetries and Thakuri castes from West. A number of soldiers from Kumaon and Garhwal region, who had served under the Gorkha Army, were also enrolled in them. Grouped together, they were called, Gorkha, and along with other martial races, like the Sikhs, Dogras, Punjabis and the people of the North-West Frontier, became the back bone of the British Indian Army. During this period, a few Gorkhas continued to serve in the Sikh Army, and fought in the 1st Sikh War at Soberaon.

By the end of the 19th Century, the notion of Goorkhas as a martial race had been fully justified by the British. Proclaiming the virtues of their soldiers, these officers stated that "Goorkhas are nulli secundus amongst the troops we enroll from in our ranks from the varied classes of our empire. They are natural fighters and coming from cool and bracing climate, produce a robust character, are physically as well as morally superior to that of Hindu of the plains or valleys".²⁹ It appears that initially they did not have a rigid recruitment policy, and besides Kumaonis and Garhwalis, even some fugitive criminal outlaws were reportedly enrolled. For instance, the caste division of the Nasiri and Sirmoor Battalions (later 1st GR and 2nd GR)

for 1830 indicates 9% Brahmins in both. Services castes (those employed for supporting the soldiers) were 7% in one and 5% in the other.³⁰

Martial Groups in Nepal

For some years, Hodgson's identification of martial groups in Nepal formed the basis of recruitment, which was limited to mainly Tibeto-Burman group of Magars and Gurungs.³¹ A special regiment was also formed of Khas (or Chhetries which implied Thakuris) who were earlier considered less desirable due to their brahmanical prejudices. The Newars who had in 1760s fiercely repulsed the attacks of the Gorkha Army, were considered less "martial", as were those from the "the service castes" and those from the very high brahmanical order. The Newars, Brahmans and Chhetris (N B C) were considered much like the non-martial Indians of the plains.³²

Even Rais and Limbus, though acknowledged as good fighters, were considered too headstrong, quarrelsome, thus undisciplined and less martial, and were initially enrolled in Para-military forces, like Assam Rifles and Burma Military Police. These eastern groups were gradually reclassified and enrolled in small numbers in units of Magars and Gurungs. It was only later that they were separated into exclusive eastern units in 1889 (10th GR) and 1907 (7th GR).

Similarly, Tamangs who though had affinity with Magars and Gurungs, were not given martial status till the middle of 20th Century, though a few of them passed did pass off as Gurungs.

Not recruited in full as a regiment till 1907, Limbus and Rais from eastern Nepal were considered to be bad tempered and difficult to manage. It could be due to their being the latest converts to Hinduism, due to which during moments of excitement and passion, the other classes reviled them regarding their former discretions. Such an incident would raise any Gurkha's ire, and Limbu or Rai, seeing red, probably whipped out his Khukri or bayonet, and went

for his calumniator, fastest. Though normally good tempered and more intelligent than other classes, they are fonder of gambling and brewing illicit alcohol, than other Gurkhas. However, they respond well to strict discipline and leadership, as long as it is fair, just, does not insult them or degrade their pride and self-respect.³³

As regards Magars and Gurungs, they like their other countrymen were primarily farmers, square built sturdy men, with fine, muscular, and large chest and limb development, low in stature, and with little or no hair on face or body, and of fair complexion. A happy go-lucky race, they are fond of animal food and beer made of rice, called Jaur and Raksi. Intensely fond of soldiering, they are hardy and simple-minded, kind-hearted, generous and absolutely truthful. Very proud and sensitive, they deeply feel abuse and undeserved censure. Obstinate and independent, very vain, in their private clothes they are inclined to be dirty. They are intensely loyal to each other and their officers in time of trouble or danger. While on Service, the Gurkha puts aside the very small caste prejudices they have.... Gurkhas will eat all and every kind of vegetable or fruit... They smoke English or Indian tobacco and are fond of cheroots....

Caste System then Prevailing in Nepal

The original inhabitants of the Gorkha province of Nepal were Khas, who were later overshadowed by the Mewar Rajputs who brought with them Brahmans, who became first in status and social ladder.

The Rajputs, both from Suryavanshi (Sun family) and Rajavanshi (Royal) lineage, married local Khas women and their off-springs had titles of Khashtriyas, the highest of martial race, though they are Khas (as the off springs follow their mothers lineage). Then there are Ekthariahs, who speak Khas kura. The Thakuris differ from Ekthariyas accidentally, mainly due to their royal lineage.

The Sahi or Sah are the royal family, while the main

military tribes are the Parbattias (Magars and Gurungs), who initially followed Lamaism, have now come under influence of Brahmans. They have their own language, which has very little similarity with Nepali or Newari. They have Tartar faces and are less rigid in their habits. Same is the case with Rais and Limbus of Kiranti region, which though separated by many mountain ranges, follow Lamaism more frequently and have come under lesser influenced of Brahmans. Thus, the martial classes of Nepal are Khas, Magars, Gurungs, Rais and Limbus - each having many kinders and sub-divisions.³⁴

Nepal underwent a major power struggle, resulting in Jung Bahadur Kunwar taking over as Prime Minsiter, from 1846 to 1877. He sealed the arrangements with Shah Family by arranged marriages of his heirs and the royal house.³⁵ Relegating the Monarch into background, he gained all powers of the State and thus started the hereditary reign of the Prime Minister's Rana family, which lasted till 1950s. Appreciating the supremacy of the British in India, he adopted a strategy of befriending them. He whole-heartedly supported the British in their 1st Anglo-Sikhs War and even offered to lead himself six regiments of his army on their side, should they have to fight the Sikh's again. He also undertook a year long trip to England on 15 January 1850, leaving his brother Bam Shah as the acting Prime Minister.

Gorkhas during 1857 Uprising in India

During the 1857 uprising, Jung Bahadur made an offer of military assistance with six thousand Gorkha troops to the British, which was initially declined by Lord Canning. However, later the British accepted the offer on 26 June. Accordingly, 3,000 troops of Nepal Army moved down the Trusil Ganga Valley and marching forty to sixty miles per day continuously, occupied two towns which had earlier been under the control of the rebels.

In July, Jang Bahadur himself led a force, and by March 1858 the Gorkhas were fighting along the British at Lucknow.

On 23 March 1858 Jang Bahadur went to Allahabad where he was informed by the Governor General that in gratitude for the military assistance rendered by Nepal, the British Government intended to restore the tract of Terai ceded by the Gorkhas in 1815.³⁶ This was accepted by Jang Bahadur, who not only sent nearly 9,000 troops to relieve British resident at Lucknow, but himself led his troops.

For his services and exemplary bravery, in 1858 King Surendra bestowed the honorific title of Rana on Jang Bahadur Kunwar, which was identified with the martial glory of Rajput princes of northern India. Thus Jang Bahadur became a Rana, and ruled the country till 1877. With this started the reign of Rana prime ministers in Nepal, which later became hereditary to next elder brother or his son, and continued till 1950.

On the Delhi front, Goorkha soldiers of Nasiri units fought side-by-side with other native and British units. Out of these the Sirmoor Battalion fought alongside with 60th Rifles (later the 2nd Royal Green Jackets) at Delhi's Bara Hindu Rao during the Delhi siege of 1857-58. It earned special fame for its discipline, loyalty and steadfastness.³⁷ Out of strength of 490, the Sirmoor Battalion suffered 327 casualties, including eight out of its nine officers, and repulsed twenty six attacks. Being the first Native Infantry Regiment to fight alongside the British, they were awarded a third colour by the Governor General in Council. The 60th Rifles also petitioned that having fought side by side with them, the 2nd Sirmoor be allowed 'to confirm to their dresses in comparison to that of the 60th', and that their sepoys should in future be known as riflemen.

Expansion of Gorkha Rifles

The British were deeply impressed with the fighting qualities and loyalty displayed by the Gorkhas, and besides allowing conversion of the three Nasiri units into regular

(1st, 2nd and the 3rd Gorkha Rifles), two more regiments, 4th and 5th Gorkha Rifles, were raised in 1857. Hereafter, Gorkha units became an important component of the British Indian Army and distinguished themselves in all conflicts and operations, like the Afghan War (1878-80) and the Boxer Uprising in China (1900). By 1908, they had grown into a Gorkha Brigade consisting of ten regiments, the new raisings being 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th Gorkha Rifles. Each regiment had two battalions, a total of twenty, numerically numbered. Gorkhas were also being recruited into Assam Rifles, Burma Rifles, Bihar Military Police and the Indian Police.

The Line Boys

Till then, Gorkhas born in unit lines termed 'Line Boys' were not considered good fighters. However, Reid who had led the Sirmoor Rifles at the Siege of Delhi stated that "the spirit-de-corps shown by these Line boys throughout the Siege was wonderful. Out of twenty five men who obtained the Order of Merit for Delhi, twelve were Line boys. Out of the seven who received the order for "Aliwal" and "Sobraon" in the Sikh Wars, five were Line boys. Only those of the Goorkah parentage were enlisted, and I never found they deteriorated in the least, or were in any way inferior to the pure Goorkha from Nepaul. They are loyal to the State as their regiment is their home".³⁸

Reid's remarks, attitude and experience stands much in difference with those of most British Officers, who looked down upon the soldierly qualities of the Line Boys, as late as 1947. Similar observations were also made by Maj. Gen. Nagel Woodyatt, ex 3rd GR and later Col of 7th GR, who stated that 'the youngsters born in unit barracks were called "line-boys", and many of them make good soldiers, signalers, bandsmen, etc. In the field, too, these line boys are most conspicuous for their daring and courage, being frequent leaders in an attack or assault'.³⁹

The British reservation regarding Line Boys was not limited to enrolling them as combat soldiers, but also in

promotions up to Viceroy Commissioned Officers V C Os, designated Junior Commissioned Officers J C Os since independence in the Indian Army. While this could be due to the fact that majority of soldiers being from Nepal, their senior most rank also should be a representative of their views, culture, tradition and sentiments. In practice this policy was somewhat discriminatory and as per an unwritten convention, normally an Indian domiciled J C O even if senior most and fully qualified, was not made a Subedar Major in the Battalion. It was only during the 2nd World War that Gajendra Malla (9 GR), though born in the 9 GR Lines at Dehra Dun and enrolled in Intelligence Section, was made a Subedar Major. He was granted commission after Independence of India in 1947, reached the rank of Colonel and commanded Gorkha Recruiting Depot, Gorakhpur, before retiring.⁴⁰ Similarly, in 4th GR, a few deserving Indian domiciled JCOs did reach the coveted rank of Subedar Major even before Independence.

Recruitment and Training

In Nepal, Prime Minister Ranoddip Singh (1877 - 1885) introduced a militia system, which created the capacity of Nepal to expand her Army at short notice. With this, his successor, Chandra Shamsheer Rana was able to assist the British during the 1st World War.

Until 1904, about 1500 Gorkhas were recruited by the British from Nepal, for their seven regiments of Magar and Gurung, two of Rai and Limbu and one of Chhetri and Thakuri. Initially, as the British were not allowed to send recruiting parties into Nepal, soldiers going on leave were the only source to bring suitable recruits with them. These recruits were medically examined and physically screened at Gorakhpur (for Central and Western region) and at Ghoom (Darjeeling) for Eastern region, before being sent to the units, for training.

To overcome the shortages, Regimental Centres were established in India at Dharamsala, Bakloh, Almora,

Abbotabad and Dehra Dun. Here, besides training recruits and positioning of a battalion after a tenure on the North West Frontier or abroad, serving soldiers were provided married accommodation and other facilities, like school, bazaar and hospital. They were encouraged to bring their families from Nepal. Those retiring were encouraged to settle down in or around the Cantonment, and their sons, termed as Line Boys (a term banned in the Indian Army) were given special preference for recruitment as bandsmen and clerks, as they were considered physically weaker than those from Nepal.⁴¹

In Nepal, soldiers retiring from the British Army were offered jobs in the Nepal Army, but very few accepted it. Notwithstanding the good relations between the British and the Nepal Durbar, the British were not always able to get the requisite number of recruits. For instance, while in September 1886 the 2nd Battalions of 1st, 2nd and 4th GR had been raised; adequate recruits for raising the second battalions of 3rd and 5th GR were not forthcoming. After discussions, while 2/5 GR could be raised but that of 2/3 GR had to be deferred.⁴²

There was a case of indiscipline in the 3rd GR at Almora, when the men refused to take their pay. After investigation it was found that the soldiers had a genuine cause, as though their earlier C O had been showing them as atta eaters and giving them bhatta at the rate of Rs 2 and 8 annas (which was strictly not as per rules), where as the new C O was strict and allowed mere 12 annas per man per month, as a rice eaters were entitled. The problem was soon resolved and the 2nd Battalion of the 3rd GR was raised in next May, and the word "Kumaon" was dropped from the regimental title.⁴³

Period 1857-1900 saw gradual expansion of Gorkha units, and Gorkhas were also recruited into the Assam Regiment and Assam Military Police. Due to increase in strength, in 1902, Gorkha Recruitment Depot were established, at Gorakhpur and Ghoom (in Darjeeling District). Since 1828,

Gorkhas mostly hailing from eastern Nepal were also being enrolled into the Assam Regiment and the Assam Military Police (later formed into Assam Rifles). The Assam Regiment had participated in a number of small campaigns in Chin Hills of Burma and Sikkim in 1865, where Bhakat Singh Rai had captured the enemy's standard in the 3rd Burmese War. In 1904, a Gurkha Rifle Regiment (a battalion of the old Assam Light Infantry) had scaled the almost impassable precipices and stormed the high-walled fort of Gyantse Jong, and then marched into Lhasa under Younghusband.⁴⁴ Similarly, in 1900-1901 the Gorkhas saw action during the Boxer Rising in China and on often on the North West Frontier Province.

By 1908, there were twenty battalions of the Gorkhas in the British Indian Army, organized into ten regiments. The Gurkhas continued to be employed on active service in Burma, Afghanistan, North-East and North-West Frontiers, Malaya, Cyprus, Tibet and China, and distinguished themselves as brave soldiers.

Gorkha's as Rifles Regiments

When in 1861 the Bengal Native Infantry was renumbered, there were four Gorkha regiments as part of the forty eight regiments of the line-infantry. At that time 5th GR was still part of the Punjab Irregular Force and Assam Regiment was not counted, though they also enrolled Gorkhas. As it was considered highly desirable that these corps should retain their national and distinctive character, on the orders of the Secretary of State for India, Gorkha regiments were separated from the Native Infantry, and numbered 1st to 5th Gorkha Regiments.

At this stage, only 2nd Gorkhas was a rifle regiment, though the 1st and 2nd had a rifle company each even when they were Nasiri battalions. As a hill regiment, the Gorkhas wore the green jackets, except for the brief period when the 1st Nasiri became 66th Bengal Native Infantry. The 1st, 3rd, 4th and 5th became rifle regiments in 1891,

the denomination "rifleman" aligning them with the British Army and distancing them still further from the sepoy.

It was in 1864 that considering their peculiar problems of recruitment from Nepal compared with other races serving in the British Indian Army, each regiment was granted a 'home' in the hills of Northern India, where at least some of the men might settle down with their families. These stations were to become their base to which they could return from active duty in Afghanistan or other theatres. It was stated that 'it be distinctly understood that the localities of the existing cantonment lines in which the corps are now located be given over to them in perpetuity as their homes'. The home of the 1st was at Dharamsala, the 2nd at Dehra Dun, the 3rd at Almora and the 4th at Bakloh. Though the home of 5th was at Abbottabad, it was not granted in perpetuity. These four 'chartered regiments' cherished their special status, and despite efforts of Lord Kitchener of Khartum to revoke the order and thus have more flexibility in moving them around, status quo was maintained.⁴⁵

As regards the term "Rifles", besides the association of Sirmoor Battalion with 60th Rifles at the Siege of Delhi, there is a theory that the term "Rifles" dates back to 1775, to New York. At that time, a regiment was formed with better skills at cover, wood craft and scouting, to defeat the French and the Red Indians. Called the Royal Americans, the soldiers were all settlers, who brought with them their short green jackets and long rifles, disdaining the scarlet coat and the official smooth-bore musket. Wearing green jackets with black buttons, they marched at a special quick step of 140 paces per minute, and were thus the first to reach every place well ahead of the others. Their common badge, the stringed bugle horn of a forest hunter was unique, as was their green dress. Their private soldiers were never called 'private' but always 'riflemen', did not refer to bayonets but as swords. They wore the full dress of hussar cavalry-busby, saber tache, cross belt, frogged jacket, and thus became army's foot cavalry. They had no colours, standards or guidons and never formed a line. Instead, they

carried their battle honours on their drums and wore on all occasions an over-weaning pride.

It was these customs of 60th Rifles, along with which 2nd Gurkhas 'Sirmoor' fought shoulder to shoulder at Delhi, that they were given the privilege to wear dark green dress until it died down after Kaiser's War. Since then, it has remained only as a Mess Dress and that of pipes and drums and the mess staff, but the tradition of wearing stringed bugle horn, a super quick step of 140 paces per minute and an overweening pride, continues even after 1947, in all Gorkha Regiments of the Indian Army.⁴⁶

The Gorkhas During World War I

During the 1st World War, besides assisting the British by sending 20,000 Nepalese troops to relieve their troops and take over duties in the North-West Frontier, the Ranas encouraged their people to enroll freely in the British Indian Army. As the number of Gorkha battalions increased from twenty to thirty and later to thirty three, about 55,000 new recruits were provided for them. Besides these, many Nepali soldiers were also assigned to non-combatant units (like Army Bearer Corps and Labour Battalions), who saw combat at Gallipoli, Palestine, Baluchistan, North West Frontier, Suez, Egypt and Mesopotamia. They also served from Salonika to the strife-torn Russo-Turkish frontier and fought bravely from China to France.

Though initially ill-clad for the extreme European winter and not oriented to the battlefield environment, the Gorkha soldiers fought the Germans in the frozen trenches of Flanders and Nue Chappale and the Turks in Gaza, rowed across River Tigris against heavy machine gun fire, attacked fearlessly machine gun nests, strong defence works and forts. Not only in fighting, but they showed their human face in often risking their lives while evacuating their comrades under fire, which earned them many awards and laurels.

In 1915, Lt General Sir James Willcocks, commanding the Indian Corps stated "..... I have now come to the

conclusion that the best of my troops in France were the Gurkhas... Taciturn by nature, brave and loyal to a degree, the Gurkhas ended; as I knew they would, second to none".⁴⁷ It is estimated that approximately 20,000 Gorkhas suffered casualties, out of the nearly 200,000 Nepalese who served in the British Army during the War. The award of Victoria Cross was extended to Indian and Gorkha soldiers in 1911 and for displaying exemplary bravery, two Gurkhas won Victoria Cross (V C) during the 1st World War.⁴⁸

Besides allowing for enhanced recruitment, Nepal also offered her Army to the British. Four regiments under General Padam Shamsher relieved Indian troops in North West Frontier. Initially, General Tej Shamsher brought two regiments to the United Provinces, which were augmented by General Kaiser Shamsher with four more regiments, being sent to North West Frontier. Thus, nearly 16,000 Nepali soldiers were deployed in India, which greatly enabled the British to control the internal situation.

First Raising of 11 GR

As the 1st World War extended over a vast area, need for additional troops were felt. Accordingly, for the Middle East theatre an additional Gurkha Regiment, the 11th Gurkha Rifles, was raised in 1918. For ensuring combat readiness at the earliest, cohesive and composite rifle companies along with their British and Gurkha officers were drawn from the existing Gurkha Regiments, and Battalions raised as under:⁴⁹

1st Battalion-Raised on 18 May 1918 at Kut-el-Amara by Lieutenant Colonel A E Johnson (1 GR), with companies from 1/5 GR, 2/5 GR, 1/6 and 2/6 GR.

2nd Battalion-Raised along side 1/11 GR on 24 May 1918, it had troops from 1/2 GR, 1/3 GR, 2/4 GR and 1/7 GR. The first Commanding Officer was Lieutenant Colonel A E Johnson, 10 GR.

3rd Battalion-Raised by Lieutenant Colonel J D Grant,

Victoria Cross, 8 GR, at Baghdad from drafts of 2/9GR, 1/10GR and a company each from 1/39 and 2/39 Garhwal Rifles, a mix which did not work. Later, the Garhwal troops were replaced by Gurkhas from 1/9 GR and 1/10 GR.

4th Battalion-Raised in Palestine on 24 May 1918 by Lieutenant Colonel W L Dundas, Distinguished Service Cross, 3 GR, with troops from 1/1 GR. 2/3 GR, 3/3 GR and 2/7 GR.

As the designation 11 GR caused confusion with 1 GR, the Regiment decided to use Roman figure "XI" in its title and its battalions were identified as 1/XI GR, 2/XI, 3/XI and 4/XI GR instead 1/11 GR and so on (being followed in the Indian army since the raising of 11 GR in 1948). Initially, as the Regiment did not have a badge of their own, all ranks continued to wear those of their parent Regiment, though some had these made at their own expense.

The first three Battalions returned to India in August 1918, and were located at Manmad. They saw active service on the North West Frontier and during the 3rd Afghan War, where they were mostly employed in offensive operations, and performed with distinction. 3/XI GR also won the Theatre Honour "Operations in Waziristan 1919-1920". The fourth battalion saw action against the Germans and Turks at Megiddo in September 1918, and returned to India in 1919, where it was disbanded in 1920.

In 1918, the Depot for the Regiment was established at Nowshera (now Pakistan) but moved to Abbottabad in January 1920. As the Nepal Durbar did not agree to provide manpower for these units after the War, the 2nd was disbanded on 15 July 1921, 1st on 20 July and the 3rd on 12 March 1922.

Thus ended the brief history of the XI GR, a regiment which was re-raised in 1948 from the Gurkha troops and which did not opt for service with the British Army - post 1947.

The Gorkha troops returned to their cantonments in India

from overseas theatres after the War in June 1921. To recognize the assistance provided by Nepal, Maharaja Chandra Shamsheer Jang Bahadur Rana was promoted General of the British Army, awarded the Grand Cross of St Michael and St George, the title of His Highness and a gift of rupees one million, per year, in perpetuity. A new treaty of perpetual peace and friendship was also signed on 21 December 1921, which laid the foundation of friendship between Nepal and Britain.

Following the war, Nepal requested Britain to cede back to it the portions of Terai as a recognition of the services rendered, but it was not agreed to. However, in December 1923 it resulted in the Treaty of Perpetual Peace and Friendship, granting "Unequivocal" recognition of Nepal's independence, which formed the basis of the continued independence after the British withdrawal from India in 1947.

During the War as a number of Gorkha units had to sail overseas for operations. As per Nepali custom, this affected their purity and required them to do a special "Puja" on return. This requirement was waived by the King of Nepal after consultation with the Royal Priest, as a special concession to Gorkhas serving in the British Indian Army.

In between, an unfortunate incident occurred in 1919, when Brigadier R E H Dyer ordered Gorkha soldiers to shoot at un-armed pro-freedom protestors at Jalianwala Bagh (Amritsar). Approximately 300 innocent and unarmed civilians men, women and children were killed and 1,200 wounded. This caused deep anguish to the people of India. However, they soon realized that it was Dyer and the British Government who were responsible for the massacre, as the soldiers were only carrying out orders given to them.⁵⁰

Between the two World Wars, the Gorkhas participated in various conflicts and campaigns like the 3rd Afghan War and in the North West Frontier, particularly in Waziristan.

Gorkhas During World War II

At the outbreak of World War II, in 1939 Nepal offered her forces to the British, an offer which was initially deferred. Nepal also sent a contingent of two brigades of Nepal Army under Brigadiers Nir and Kiran, sons of Maharaja Judha Shamsheer Rana, to India. Between 1939 and 45, ten battalions of the Nepal Army were deployed in N W F P, relieving troops of the British Indian Army.

However, when in 1940 first France and then Belgium fell, permission was sought by the British Minister in Kathmandu from Maharaja Judha Shamsheer Rana, for sending Gorkha troops overseas,⁵¹ and raising the strength of the Gorkha Battalions, from twenty to thirty. Both requests were granted immediately.

Soon thereafter, the British sought permission for raising additional ten battalions and a special parachute regiment of 500 Gorkha volunteers, which were also agreed to by Kathmandu. This took the number of Gorkha battalions in the British Indian Army to forty (numbered from 1st to 10th Gurkha Rifles, each with four battalions) and then to forty five. However, 11 GR which was raised during the 1st World War and had seen service from 1917 to 1920 was not re-raised. A large number of retired Gorkha soldiers residing in Nepal were asked to return to duty, at Depots.

Nepal also gave equivalent of rupees twenty-five thousand in pound sterling to Lord Mayor of London, for reconstruction work.

During the 2nd World War, Gorkha units of the British Indian Army fought side by side with other British, Indian and Commonwealth troops from Syria through the Western desert in North Africa, from North Malaya to Singapore and through Burma to Imphal.

The fall of first Malaya, then Burma and Singapore in 1941 up-rooted a number of Gorkhas who had settled in these areas, for which once again Kathmandu gave generous re-settlement grants. But what was more significant, was the brave fight put up by Gorkha units during the

withdrawal and re-conquest of Burma under General Slim, of 6th GR. Whether it was in the hill of Cassino, jungles of Malaya and Burma, the desert of Africa or the built-up areas of Italy, the Gorkhas fought bravely and earned ten Victoria Cross, seven in Burma, one in Tunisia and two in Italy. So far, out of a total of 31 Victoria Cross won by the British Indian Army, twelve were won by the Gorkhas, as under:

Rifleman Kulbir Thapa, 2/3rd GR., France 1915,
Rifleman Karnabahadur Thapa El Kefr, Egypt.
Palestine 1918,

Subedar Lal Bahadur Thapa, 2nd GR, Tunysia, 1943,
Havildar Gaje Ghale, Burma 1943

Rifleman Ganju Lama, 7th GR, Nangthoukhang,
Imphal, Burma 1943

Rifleman Tulbahadur Pun, 6th GR, Mogaung, Burma
1944

Subedar Netrabahadur Thapa, 2/5th GR (FF) Burma
1944

Naik Agan Singh Rai Burma, 2/5th GR (FF),
Bishanpur, Burma, 1944

Rifleman Sherbahadur Thapa, 1/9th GR, San
Marino, Italy 1944

Rifleman Thaman Gurung, 1/5th GR (FF), Monte
San Bartolo, Italy 1944

Rifleman Bhanbagta Gurung, 2/3rd GR, Meiktila,
Burma 1945

Rifleman Lachhiman Gurung, 4/8th GR, Tungdaw,
Burma 1945⁵²

During 2nd World War, nearly 200,000 Gorkha recruits went trough the ten training centre's for the forty five Gorkha battalions. Out of the 1,12,000 Gorkha soldiers who participated in the War, there were more than 25,000 casualties, including 7,544 fatal.⁵³ Besides being trained for Chindit Operations behind the enemy lines in Burma, in

September 1941 a brigade of Gorkhas was formed and disembarked at Port Swettenham in Malaya. Unfortunately, despite good performance during the withdrawal and the planned defence of Singapore, it was taken prisoner by February 1942, not before losing 11 British officers and 750 all ranks. Their actions were recorded as "In so far as the Gurkha battalions are concerned, no apology for Malayan debacle is necessary".⁵⁴

A newly raised Gurkha battalion also formed part of Wingate's first Chindit operation, in 1943. Broken into small groups and its sub-units mingled with the British troops, the Battalion suffered heavy casualties due to faulty planning and administration. However, the Gurkhas of the 48th Gurkha Brigade gave a very good account of themselves at the Battle of Sittang Bridge as well at Mandlay, Pegu, Prome and Kokogwa.

Besides fighting in all theaters of the 2nd World War, towards the close of 1944 Gurkha units were in Greece supporting the Government against the Communists, in 1945 in Indo-China clearing the Japanese and helping French to restore order, in Java, Malaya and "mopping up" the remaining Japanese soldiers in Indonesia. Though a number of Gorkha soldiers had suffered hardships while in Japanese captivity, they retained their unit loyalty. Only a few joined the Indian National Army of Neta Ji Subhas Chandra Bose.

The Gorkha soldiers earned a reputation for bravery and courage in all actions against heavy odds against every adversary, and in the two Wars, earned twelve Victoria Crosses.⁵⁵ Describing the Gorkhas fighting spirit, R N W Bishop wrote that "As might be expected, a fighting man with such love of order and discipline does not go widely into action. The Gurkha does not charge screaming texts from the Koran. He fights with a grim, quiet purposefulness which is terrifying as it is more businesslike. As soon as the enemy is within striking distance, he prefers to set aside his rifle and valuable cartridge and go in with the kukri or bayonet, with which he is a first class performer, and makes quite sure of his man, rather than continue firing without

being absolutely certain that the required objective is secured each time. His wiry, compact body, with centuries of hill-climbing ancestors to strengthen his physique; his absolute devotion to his officers; his perfect coordination on discipline and orders; and his personal fearlessness make him an opponent to be dreaded by the most experienced antagonist."⁵⁶

J P Cross⁵⁷ wrote that it is the Gurkha's built-in capacity to survive that sets him apart from other soldiers drawn from ethnic groups in any other part of the world. He attributes it to his harsh early life in rough terrain of Nepal's treacherous mountain slopes, where he learns to fight against nature. Here, along the steep and stony paths savaged by chilly winds, rosy cheeked youngsters inadequately clad in a few rags can be seen tending a straggling herd of sheep or struggling uphill under a heavy load. They may appear an easy going, cheerful crowd, but a closer view will reveal cracked grimy feet and shivering underfed bodies, telling an inherent hardiness and self-reliance. At heights up to 3000m, these children sit on grazing cattle and carrying water daily from deep gorges that cut into the valleys-activities that take several hours a day between classes at the local school (which is another trek of two more hours either way).

The Sirmoor and other Gorkha regiments were also welcomed by the British Army to camp next to them, and their soldiers allowed the use of their Canteen, a facility which was not extended to other native units, initially. Also, though since 1923 Indian national were being commissioned as officers and posted to Indian regiments, the Gorkha Units continued to be officered exclusively by the British. Being very good fighters the Gorkha units were designated as "Bravest of the Brave" and elite, but the British attitude of "exclusiveness for Gorkha units" stemming from their experiences of the India's 1st War of Independence, created a biased élan in these units, as they considered themselves "superior" to other Indian regiments.

The Gorkha Brigade 1945

A brief account of the Gorkha Brigade as it existed just before the 2nd World War will be in order. There were ten regiments, numbered 1st to 10th, each consisting of two Battalions, identified as for example, 1st Battalion of the 4th Gorkha Rifles, colloquially called 1/4 GR. During the War, a total of 1,14,971 Gorkhas were recruited from 1,68,294 volunteers, and the Gorkhas suffered 23,655 casualties, a little more than those suffered by them in the 1st World War.

Third and fourth battalions were raised for all Gorkha regiments. A fifth battalion was also raised by 1 GR, 2 GR and 9 GR, in lieu of their second battalions, which were captured in Singapore. The expansion also resulted in rising of regimental centres for imparting basic training to the recruits and for keeping regimental records. Five training battalions were also raised: 14 GR, 29 GR, 38 GR, 56 GR and 710 GR. New units designated as 25 GR and 26 GR were also raised for employment in Burma as garrison units for the defence of HQs of General Slim and the Corps, along with 153 and 154 (originally 3/7 GR) Gorkha Parachute battalions. A large number of Gorkhas were also recruited for non-Gorkha Brigade units, like the Kashmir State Forces, Assam Rifles, Burma Rifles, Indian Pioneer Corps, Indian General Service Corps and Indian Army Medical Corps. Thus, a total of 250,280 Gorkhas joined the Army, out of which 2,734 won gallantry awards for bravery in the face of the enemy, a ratio of 1:91.⁵⁸

In addition to the Gorkhas from Magar, Gurung, Thakuri, Chhetri, Rai and Limbu castes, traditionally from Western and Eastern Nepal, a number of Nepalese from extreme West (Dhotiyals) were also enrolled during the 2nd World War, as stretcher bearers, porters and labour.⁵⁹

General de-mobilization was ordered soon after the war ended, and at the time of Independence of India, the Gorkha Brigade was formed as under:

Ten Rifle Regiments, each with two battalions. While

the first three Regiments were raised in 1815 during the British war with Nepal, the last Regiment, the 10th was raised in 1908 (though its first battalion had been raised in 1890 from the Kubo Valley Police Battalion in Burma). One regiment, the 2nd had become a Rifle regiment in 1858; while the remainder became rifle regiments either in 1891 or as they became part of the Gurkha Brigade.

1st King Gorge V Own Gurkha Rifles (The Malaun) - Raised at Sabathu in early 1815 by Lieutenant Kennedy, from hill men, mainly Kumaonis and Garhwalis, who had fought under the Gurkha Kazi (General) Amar Singh Thapa against Sir David Ochterlony at Malaun. The home station was later shifted to Dharamsala

2nd King Edward VII Own Gurkha Rifles (The Sirmoor rifles) - Raised at Nahan, Sirmoor, in early 1815 by Lieutenant F Young from men as of 1st GR, who were captured by the British during the war with Nepal and held in the camps in Sirmoor and Dehra Doon. (Regimental home-Dehra Doon.)

3rd Queen Alexandra's Own Gurkha Rifles - Raised at Almora, Kumaon, by Lieutenant Sir R Colquhoun, BT, with hill men who undertook service with the British after the conquest of Kumaon by Colonel Jasper Nicolls during the Nepal War. This Regiment may well claim to be in fact the oldest of the Gurkha Brigade by a month or two, for its beginning was in late 1814 when Colonel Gardner was assailing Almora. However, officially it was raised by Colquhoun a few days after the 1st and 2nd. Its home was at Almora.

4th Prince of Wales' Own Gurkha Rifles - Raised at Pithoragarh, Kumaon, ten miles from Nepal border, in 1857 by Lieutenant D Macintyre as the Extra Gurkha Regiment, renamed 4th Gurkha Regiment same year. Its "home" was at Bakloh in the Himalaya, close to the hill station of Dalhousie.

5th Royal Gurkha Rifles - Raised in 1857 at Abbottabad in the North West Frontier Province on the borders of Hazara

by Captain H W F Boisragon as Hazara Gurkha Rifles. This Regiment was the only one of the Gurkha Brigade to belong to the old Punjab Frontier Forces, sometimes known as "The Piffers". Its home was at Abbottabad.

6th Gurkha Rifles - One of the old Assam Regiments, it was raised by Captain S Fraser at Chabianganj in Cuttak, Orrisa, in 1817 as the Cuttak Legion. In 1828 it became Assam Local Light Infantry and in 1886, the 42nd Gurkha Light Infantry. It was later based at Abbottabad, near the 5th GR.

7th Gurkha Rifles - One of the Burma Battalion, it was raised in 1902 by Major E Vansitrat at Thayetmyo in Burma, as the 7th Gurkha Rifles. Its home was finally moved to Quetta, Baluchistan. On orders of Lord Kitchner, the second battalion was raised at Quetta by Lieutenant Colonel Nigel Woodyatt in 1907, from Limbus and Rais, from Eastern Nepal.⁶⁰

8th Gurkha Rifles - Also an old Assam Battalion, it was raised at Syhet in Assam in 1824 by Captain P Dudgeon, as the Sylhet Local Battalion. In 1886 it became the 44th Gurkha Light Infantry. In 1835 its second battalion was raised by Captain W Simonds as the Assam Sebundy Corps, later to become the 43rd Gurkha Light Infantry. Its home was at Shillong.

9th Gurkha Rifles - One of the old Bengal Battalion, it was raised at Fatehgarh in UP in 1817 by Major C S Fagan, as the Fatehgarh Levy, and became 9th Gurkha Rifles in 1901. Its home was later shifted to Dehra Dun alongside 2nd Gurkha Rifles.

10th Princess Mary's Own Gurkha Rifles - One of the Burma Battalions, it was raised in 1890 by Lieutenant Colonel C R Macgregor as the 1st Burma Infantry, and in 1895 became the 1st Burma Gurkha Rifles. Its home was first at Maymyo in Burma, and later at Quetta.

The 7th and the 10th - It consists of recruits from Eastern Nepal, among Kiranti tribes, mainly Rais and Limbus. The

9th, from Khas Gurkhas of Western and Central Nepal. The other seven Regiments recruited from Western Nepal clans of Magars and Gurungs.⁶¹

11th Gorkha Rifles - It was raised for a short while during the 1st World War, from 1917 to 1919, and then disbanded. Later in 1947, it was raised from soldiers of 7th and 10th Gurkha Rifles, who declined to serve under the British Army, and wanted to serve in Independent India. Its home was initially Dehra Dun, then Ghoom and now, Lucknow. It draws its troops mainly, Rais and Limbus, from Eastern Nepal.⁶²

Despite Gorkha troops hailing from Nepal, they were from different tribes, and thus there was great inter-regimental rivalry amongst them. They cherished the privilege of using canteen of British troops, which was denied to Indian troops and often referred to Indian Regiments as "Desi or Indian units".

The characterization of Gorkhas of different regiment is difficult. But in early 1900s, Major General Nigel Woodyatt, 3 GR stated that 'the 1st at Dharamsala was renowned for its shooting, marching and band. The 2nd for polo and wonderful esprit de corps. This, though no means wanting in others, was so particularly marked at Dehra Dun, that if the men were all dying of scurvy, they would still perform prodigies for the good name of the 'siccon', as the Gurkhas call the regiment. The 3rd was remarkable for its football and later on its excellent training; the 4th, at Bakloh, for its dress and the 5th at Abbottabad, for good professional knowledge of officers, their mountaineering prowess and great experience in hill warfare'.

Woodyatt's observations on the traits and habits of the Gurkhas, though made in early 1900, are still valid. Temperament wise, he felt, that a Gurkha is like a public school boy-light hearted, cheerful, who has hatred for injustice, love of games and veneration for superior ability or skill. There is dogged affection, if treated well, and he works hardest with a firm controlling hand. He willingly accepts punishments, however severe, and never resents it,

if he knows that he thoroughly deserved it. He cannot stand 'nagging', is open to discipline, field work, and likes to be smartly turned out, both on and off parade, so much so he always likes to keep a private small looking glass with him. Though not used to hygiene and sanitation in the villages due to water problem, in the lines he is very neat and clean, and takes great pride in his surroundings. He enjoys changes, has a good sense of humour, can laugh at his own mistakes, likes music, drama and games, especially foot ball. Fond of fishing, shikar, hiking and outdoor life, his only weaknesses are gambling, wine and women, though he rarely gets into a drunken brawl or misbehaves with others under influence of liquor. A born scout, in war he likes aggressive and offensive operations which challenge him, and makes good friends. In war he can take great risks for the sake of his colleagues and seniors, shows boldness and courage of utmost high order.⁶³

Though in a light manner, characterization of the ten regiments was done by a British Officer of 4th GR, Lt Col John Masters, who served with them for long years including in Burma during the 2nd World War. He described "the 1st Gorkhas were earnest, the 2nd idle, the 3rd illiterate, the 5th narrow minded, the 6th downtrodden, the 7th unshaven, the 8th exhibitionist Infa, the 9th Brahminical (they enlisted high-caste Gorkhas) and the 10th alcoholic. The 4th, they were witty, happy, carefree, tough, efficient, and wise".....⁶⁴

As each Gorkha regiment had been allotted a "home", initially recruit training was carried out there under a Training Company, for which an additional Major was authorized. Normally, one of the two battalions of the Regiment was located at the "home", while one was on duty in the Frontier, or else where. It was only when a large number of recruits had to be trained that a separate Training Centre was authorized to each regiment, which also performed the functions of a Depot during the 2nd World War.

As regards officers were concerned, till 1923 there were no Indian King's Commissioned Officers. It was only after that a few selected Indians from royal and status families had started becoming officers and were posted to Indian units after a brief attachment with the British Army. But it was not so in Gorkha units, as this was not acceptable to the Nepal Durbar (Government), who had agreed that only British and Gorkha officers should serve in these ten regiments.⁶⁵ This anomaly was pointed out by the Wilcox Committee in 1945, which stated that it might not be feasible for Gorkha units to form part of the Post-War Indian Army, if the Indian officers were not allowed to serve in these units. It recommended that negotiations be started with the Nepal Durbar to persuade them to accept this change, and that perhaps "if the continued enrolment of Gorkhas into the Indian Army will depend upon the decision, they would be prepared to concede". It also stated that as a reciprocal gesture, commissions might be granted to Nepalese subjects.⁶⁶

The Wilcox Committee also recommended a Gorkha Brigade of eight regiments of two battalions each, and recommended that the 7th and the 10th GR be disbanded, being the two junior most. It also recommended that permanent training centres be established for training of recruits, as under.

14th –for 1 and 4 GR, Class Composition-2/3rd Magars & Gurungs, 1/3rd Limbus, Rais, Sunwars.

29th –for 2 and 9 GR, Thakuris and Chhetris.

38th –for 3 and 8 GR, composition as for 14th.

56th –for 5 and 6 GR, composition as for 14th and 38th.

The above proposal was later modified, as 2nd, 6th, 7th and 10th GR went over to the British Army and were titled His majesty's Gorkhas (H M G). Also, 11th GR had to be raised, after India became Independent in 1947.

Thus, while six regiments enrolled Magars and Gurungs from Western Nepal, two regiments had Thakuris and Chhetris from Central Nepal, while 7th and 10th had Limbus and Rais from Eastern Nepal. Limbus and Rais were thought

to be better in attack while the solid Magars and Gurungs were considered better when things were going wrong in a retreat. The 9th, with its Thakuris and Chhetris, both privileged classes in Nepal's social order, was to maintain its exemplary record.

Support to Research

The British admired the courage and valour of Gorkha soldiers and enrolled them to achieve their colonial objectives of controlling India. They also realized that a Gorkha was loyal to his oath, very well disciplined and an important link in relations between Nepal and the British Crown. On his part, the Gorkha soldier showed outstanding courage in all theatres of the two World Wars by winning many decorations, including Victoria Cross. Hence, Nepal became famous for her Gorkha soldiers, as much as for Mount Everest.

The British also felt that by enrolling these hill warriors from Nepal as soldiers, they would provide an outlet for the energies of the warriors, thus Nepal will remain peaceful and friendly. Nepal Durbar, also felt the same. Kathmandu also appreciated that allowing Gorkhas to join the British Army offered the best employment avenue to her people, besides earning revenue.

The British apprehended that mixing the Gorkhas with other native soldiers and serving under Indian officers would impact on the loyalty of the Gorkha soldiers. Hence, they never posted any Indian officers to the Gorkha Regiments and kept Gorkha troops isolated in separate 'homes in the hills'. However, as would be seen in later chapters, these assumptions were proved wrong.

Conclusion

The 1814-1815 British-Nepal Wars proved that a Gorkha was a very good soldier and a gentleman. Thus, though

the British won, they decided to enroll the Gorkhas in their Native Army, initially for service in India. Later, the Gorkha Regiments proved their worth on all fronts especially during the two World Wars.

During the two World Wars, the Gorkha soldiers with their Kukri became world famous. Their service in the British Indian Army had a strong impact on the relations between Britain and Nepal which continued to be maintained.

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4. There is also mention of the garrison being composed of 200 Gorkhas, 200 Garhwails and 200 women and other locals. A Re-discovered History of Gorkhas, by Brig C B Khanduri.
5. A Re-discovered History of Gorkhas, by Brig (Retd) C B Khanduri.
6. The photos of the memorial taken by the author during his field trip, are attached. Now, an annual festival is held at the monument, in November.
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8. History of the Sikh People 1468-1988, by Dr Gopal Singh, World Book Center, New Delhi, 1979.
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19. *Jammu and Kashmir Arms*, by Maj Gen D K Palit, Vr C.
20. *Johny Gurkha*, by E D Smith.
21. *Johny Gurkha*, by E D Smith. The fidelity of Goorkhas was well tested during the 1857 War of Independence at Delhi, where Sirmoor Battalion under Charles Reid fought side by side with 60th Rifles. Often, the mutineers called upon the Goorkhas to desert and join them rather than fight against them on behalf of the British, but Reid's troops remained steadfast. Their relationship with 60th Rifles earned them the hackle of "pom pom" for their hats.
22. Srl 48.
23. *Gurkhas at War*, by J P Cross & Buddhiman Gurung, Greenbill Books, London, 2002.
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26. —do—, —do—.
27. *History of Nepal, Perceval Landan, Volume II.* Later, 5th GR was given Abbattabad, 7th Quetta, 8th Shillong, 9th Dehra Dun and 10th Maymyo and Takdah.
28. *Handbook for the Indian Army, Gurkhas*, by Lt Col Vansittart, endorsing comments of Oldfield.
29. *Warrior Gentlemen*, Lionel Caplan. The term used by the British author was 'untouchables' following the caste prejudices then prevailing in India.
30. *Essays on Nepal and Tibet* by Brian Hodgson 1800-1894, Manjusri Publishing House, New Delhi, 1972.

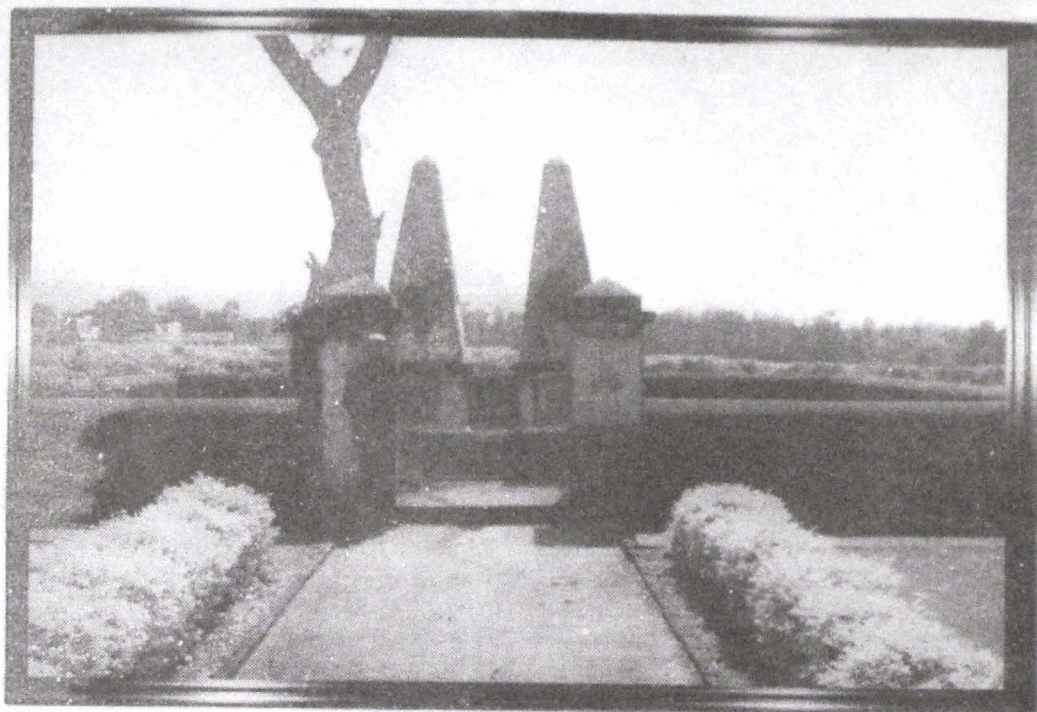
31. As for srl 41 above.
32. Under Ten Viceroys, by Maj Gen nigel Woodyatt, Herbert Jenkins Ltd, London, 1922.
33. As for Srl 48.
34. [http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query2/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+np0025\)](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query2/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+np0025))
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40. This notion of Line Boys being not fit for combat service is false. It had been nullified as early as 1857, when twelve out of the twenty four winners of Indian Order of Merit (I O M) win by Reid's Sirmoor Battalion were earned by Line Boys. Reid remarks "so much for doubts about their physique or courage". Later, the Indian domiciled Gorkhas have continued to earn gallantry awards in the post Independent Indian Army also. Johny Gurkha, by E D Smith.
41. The reason for giving priority to 2/5 GR was, the mutiny at Almora in 3rd G R, on reduced batta (ration allowance), Goorkhas being rice eaters, compared with Indian troops who were attah eaters. Imperial Warriors, Gurkhas in British Army, by Tony Gould, Granta Books, London, 1999.
42. _____do_____, _____do_____.
43. GORKHA, The Story of the Gurkhas, by Lt Gen Sir Francis Taker.
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45. Bugles and A Tiger, by John Master, Nautican & Aviation

Publishing Co Ltd, New York, America, 1990.

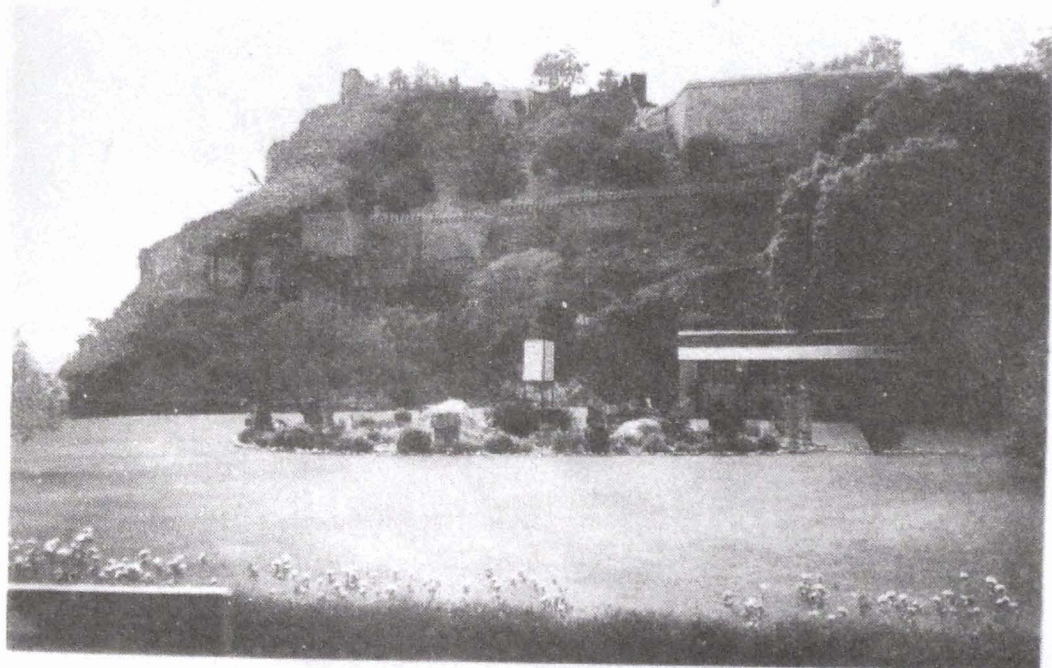
46. GORKHA, The Story of the Gurkhas of Nepal, by Lt Gen Sir Francis Toker.
47. GURKHAS, by Sandro Tucci, Guild Publishing, London, UK, 1985.
48. A Brief History of XI Gurkha Rifles 1918-1921, by Lieutenant Colonel H R K Gibbs, The Lineage and Composition of Gurkha Regiments in the British Army-A Publication of Gurkha Museum, Winchester, UK, Sons of John Company-The Indian and Pakistan Army 1903-1991, by John Gaylor.
49. These were recruits of 9 GR, on their way to join their unit in N W F P, when they were un-loaded at Amritsar railway station. This issue was also raised by a few pensioners with me during my field trips to Darjeeling and Kalimpong in year 2005. I assured them that no Indian holds the Gorkha soldiers responsible for it, as they were only obeying orders.
50. In those days, travel overseas Kala Pani (Black Waters) was considered un-holy, but the King could persuade the Priests to allow it. Else, a special "purity prayer ceremony" " had to be performed on return from overseas, before the person entered Nepal.
51. Great Stories of the Victoria Cross, by Sir John Smyth, Arthur Barker Ltd, London, UK,1977.
52. GURKHAS, by Sandro Tucci. Introduction by J P Cross.
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54. [http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/rf/cstdy@field\(DOCID-
np0130\)](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/rf/cstdy@field(DOCID-np0130)). Out of the 1354 Victoria Cross awarded by Britain till the Falkland war, 13 have been won by the Gorkhas.
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56. Interview by the author. Originally from 1st GR, JP Cross who has traveled extensively in Nepal, and now resides at Pokhara, Nepal.
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64. This is the first and the only document which states that the Nepal durbar had laid this stipulation. However, when an Indian team accompanied the British War Office Team to Nepal to work out the Tripartite Agreement, Nepal durbar denied having ever placed any such stipulation.
65. Sons of John Company, The Indian & Pakistan Army 1903-1991, by John Gaylor, Spellmount Ltd, London, UK, 1992. Published in India by Lancer International, New Delhi, 1993.
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KALANGA (GYLESPIE) MEMORIAL DEHRA DUN

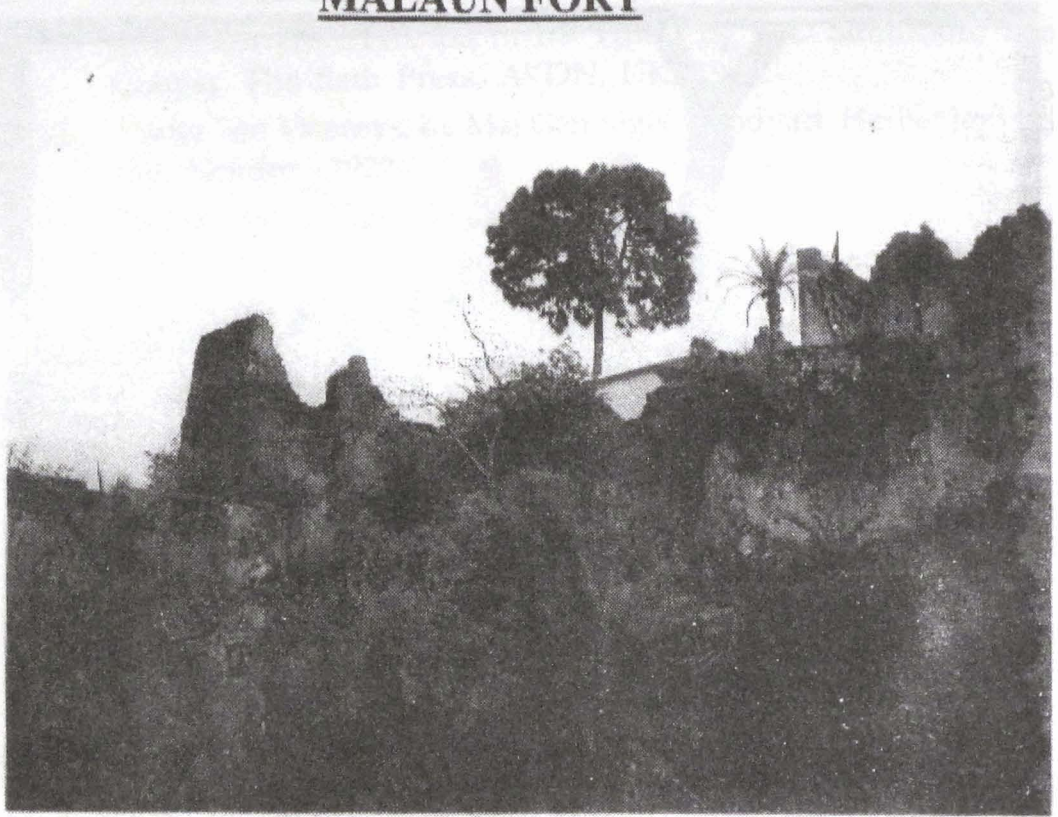


MEMORIAL PILLARS (WITH INSCRIPTIONS)



KANGRA FORT

MALAUN FORT



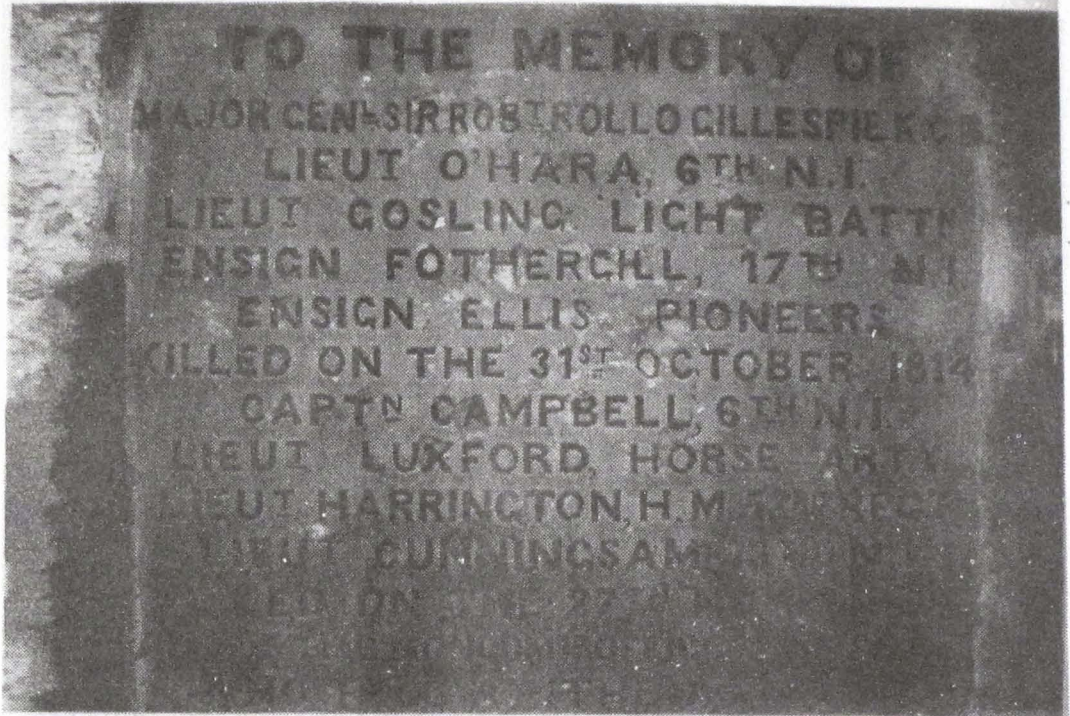
GENRAL TRIBUTE TO BALBHADRA

THIS IS INSCRIBED
AS A TRIBUTE OF RESPECT
FOR OUR CALLANT ADVERSARY
BULBUDDER
COMMANDER OF THE FORT
AND HIS BRAVE GOORKAS
WHO WERE AFTERWARDS
WHILE IN THE SERVICE
OF HUNJEET SING
SHOT DOWN IN THEIR RANKS
TO THE LAST MAN
BY AFGHAN ARTILLERY.

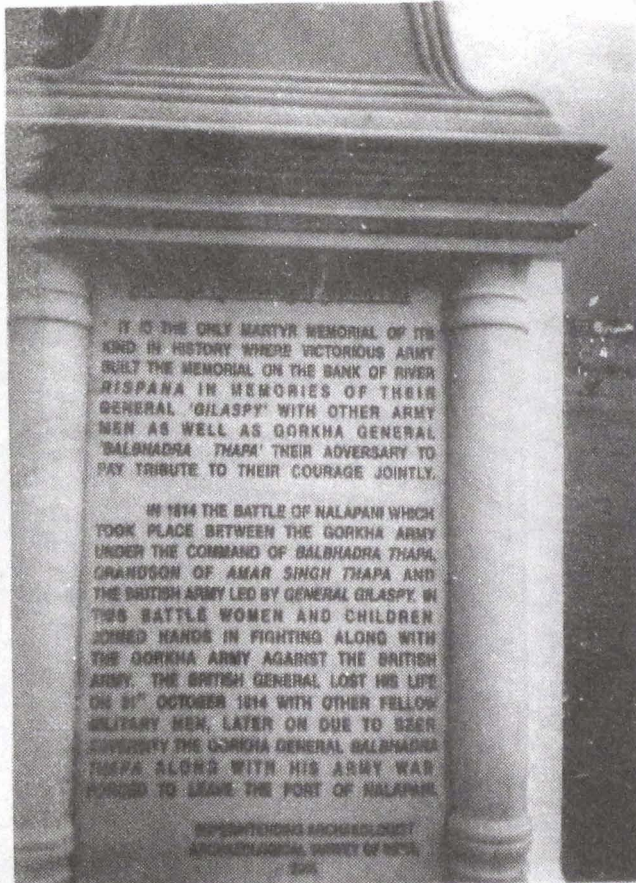
INSCRIPTIONS ON PILLARS

ON THE HIGHEST POINT
OF THE HILL ABOVE THIS TOMB
STOOD THE FORT OF KALUNGR
AFTER TWO ASSAULTS
ON THE 31ST OCT^R AND 27TH NOV^R
IT WAS CAPT. BY THE BRITISH TROOP
ON THE 30TH OF NOVEMBER 1815

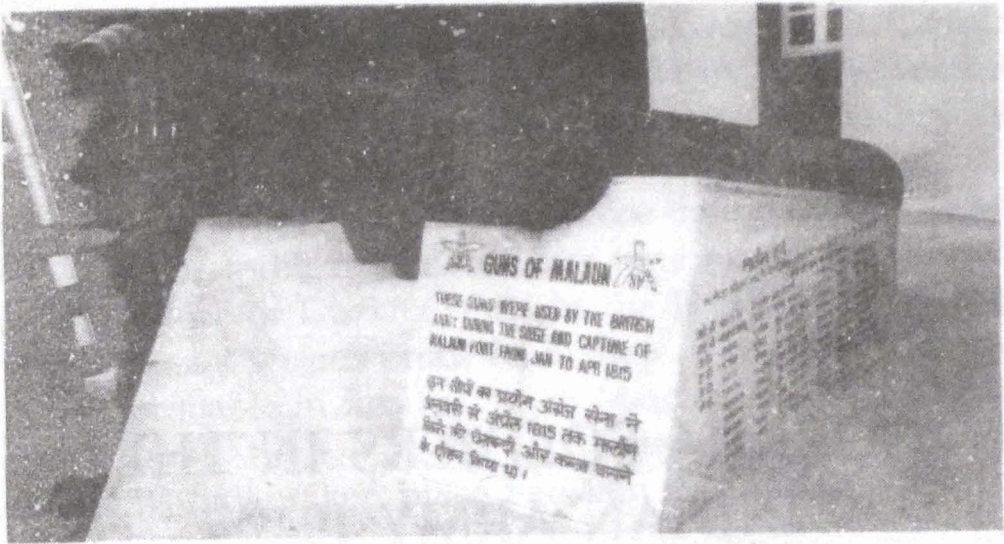
TRIBUTE TO GILLESPIE



SPECIAL FEATURES



GUNS USED BY BRITISH AT MALAUN



SAMADHI-BHAKTE THAPA

3

GORKHA SOLDIERS IN THE INDIAN ARMY 1947

Events Leading to the Division of the Gorkha Brigade in 1947

In the closing years of the War, in 1945 it became apparent to the British as well as other political leaders that independence of India was not far. In 1946 an Interim Government had been formed under Pandit Nehru as Prime Minister and Mr Liaqat Ali Khan (of Muslim League) as Finance Minister. There were a few Indians in the foreign and civil services, but most of the senior positions in the Armed Forces were held by the British officers.

A number of Indian officers had undergone training at Sandhurst in Britain and the Indian Military Academy, Dehra Dun since 1923 and 1932 respectively. The senior most Indian officer was Brigadier K M Carriappa, DSO. There were a number of lieutenant colonels and majors who had distinguished themselves during the War. While some of these officers had won gallantry awards during the war and operated side by side with Gurkha units, they had no first hand experience of commanding these troops or knowledge of their language, customs or traditions.

Role Played by General Sir Claude Auckenlak, C-in-C, India

Anticipating the post War scenario, General Sir Claude Auckenlak, C-in-C, India had sometime in 1945 formed a committee to study and recommend the reorganization of the Army, of which Brigadier K M Carriappa was a member. Besides other issues of a standing peace time post 2nd World War Army of India capable of war time expansion, he felt that the future of Gurkha units of the Imperial Army was going to pose a serious problem, in view of the constitutional changes probable in future. On 28 March 1945, he wrote to Lord Wavell, then Viceroy of India, that while some discussions have taken place between the War Department and the External Affairs Department, he had laid down the following guidelines and assumptions for the reorganization Committee (India):

- ❖ Gurkha units will be available to the Indian Army as in the past; or,
- ❖ They will not be available for the Indian Army, though Nepalese manpower might be available for the Empire as a whole.
- ❖ That at a fairly early date India will receive some form of self-government and will enter in to treaty relations by which the responsibility for the defense of the country will remain with H M G.
- ❖ That a national Indian Government will wish to fill the officer ranks of the Indian Army with Indians as early as possible.

In April 1945, Auchenleck, again wrote to the Viceroy and endorsed the idea of Britain employing Gurkhas for its Far Eastern garrisons. In September 1945, he wrote to Alan Brooke, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff and suggested that as the Gurkhas may not be required for the post war Indian Army, and even if they were, the number of battalions may have to be reduced; he opined that the British Government should 'include as many Gurkhas battalions as possible in its strategic reserve' all twenty perhaps, if they could be used in the Middle East as well

as the Far East. He followed it up by writing to the Vice-Chief of Imperial General Staff, Lt Gen Sir Archibald Nye, that any plan to take Gurkhas must not be regarded as a 'temporary arrangement', but as a 'reasonably permanent commitment'.

However, on Boxing Day 1945, Gen Sir Mosley Mayne from India Office in Whitehall wrote to Sir Nye that 'I feel that before HMG attempts to snap up all available Gurkha troops, the Indian Government 'of tomorrow' should be given an opportunity of lodging a demand for, at any rate, some of them. From the political aspect a friendly cooperation and interdependence between India and Nepal and from the point of view of the fighting efficiency of the Indian Defense Services, I feel that it would be a pity if Gurkhas were entirely excluded from the Indian Army; and until very recently Aucknelak though so.¹

Auchinleck was probably influenced by Lt Gen Sir Francis Tuker, C-in-C Eastern Command, who while accepting that Indian Army, 'to as great extent as possible had to be Indianized' but felt that Britain should take all the twenty Gurkha battalions of the Gurkha Brigade 'for its whole outlook was British and it was time bound to British Crown rather than to any Indian Government of the past, present or future. He felt that if the War Office agreed to take only a few battalions, then the rest should be disbanded or included in 'some form of imperial central army' designed to keep peace between the armies of the nascent dominions of India and Pakistan. Apparently, Tuker was less disturbed at the prospect of the break-up of the old Indian Army than Auchinleck. Auchinleck, whose old regiment, the 1st Punjab (half Muslim, ¼ Sikhs and ¼ Rajputs) was being split was against any division, but Tucker was an early advocate of splitting it along communal lines to reflect the evolving and, as he clearly saw, the inevitable political outcome.²

In end 1945, both Auchinleck and Tuker visited Nepal on official and private trips, respectively. On return, Auchinleck reported to Wavell that Judha Shumsher (in his

last days as maharaja) would be willing to allow Gurkha troops serving in the Indian Army, if the future government wish to retain them, and that he was even prepared to accept that they be officered by Indians, though 'he obviously did not relish the prospect'. The Maharaja was also very happy at the prospect of the British employing Gurkhas as their strategic reserves in the Far East. Auchinleck felt that of the two alternatives... 'There is no doubt whatever that they (Nepal) would prefer the latter'.³

He further conveyed to Lord Alanbrooke (Chief of the Imperial General Staff), the strategic potential of the Gurkhas as a sort of "Foreign Legion under H M G", as they had a two fold appeal, as under:

- ▲ They could substitute British troops, who were in short supply in overseas garrisons, and,
- ▲ They were less costly, which for a war bankrupt Britain was a major consideration.⁴

Auchenleck further spelt out the attitude which a future national Indian Government might take towards Gurkhas. While it was only a matter of conjecture at that time, he drew two extreme scenarios somewhere in between which the actual decision might be. These were:

- o There will be plenty of proved fighting material within India and there will be stiff competition for the privilege to serve in the Indian Armed Forces, as there was before the war. In such a case, politically it would be impossible for a National Government to "recruit foreigners and thus take bread away from the mouth of Indians".
- o The other view is that the future Government of India would appreciate that the destinies of India and Nepal are inter-dependent and linked, in which the fighting strength of the Gurkhas soldiers could be a factor in balance of power in the sub-continent. Therefore, to continue her cordial relations with Nepal, India may wish to retain the Gurkhas, and to control the source of recruitment.

- o The military advisors of the Indian Government would appreciate that in order for a war time expansion, India must have some Gurkha units during peace time also. Therefore, India might retain Gurkhas, whom they do not regard entirely as foreigners.
- o If the final solution lies in between the above extremes, then India may retain Gurkhas, but in lesser numbers, which will result in demobilization of certain units, resulting in surplus trained manpower in Nepal. The Nepal Durbar would very much wish that this manpower is employed, as her economy greatly depends upon the Gurkha regiments. As the H M G are likely to face manpower shortages and will in all probability have to keep some forces in the Far East for some times to come, and it is not clear whether the Indian Army will always be able to provide all the assistance the H M G may need, it might be that H M G will be glad to retain Gurkhas for her overseas garrison commitments. This will not only solve the problem of surplus trained soldier manpower of Nepal, but will also be in keeping with the treaties and assistance given by Nepal to H M G during the two wars and before, and ensure stronger friendship between Nepal and Great Britain.

In conclusion, General Auchenleck stated that –

The first and the foremost action required to be taken was, to ask H M G whether they would be interested in employing Gurkhas in the post war British Army, if all the twenty battalions were not absorbed into the post war Indian Army of the Defense Forces of India?

Once the views of H M G were known, then Nepal would need to be approached at an appropriate time and manner, regarding Gurkhas serving overseas in peace time conditions.

Also, at an appropriate moment, the question of Indians officering Gurkha Battalions remaining in the Indian Army would need to be taken up with Nepal Durbar.⁵

After a month, on 23 April, both Wavell and Auchinleck were in the UK for consultation and projected the above points to H M G, hoping for an early action, as by then the War in Europe was practically over. In the meanwhile the Committee formed by Auchinleck continued its work, and devoted on the future reorganization of the Gurkha Brigade.

In brief, their deliberations and recommendations were as under:

Origin of Gurkhas in H M G. Tracing the enrollment of Gurkhas into the British Imperial Army based on the treaty of Perpetual Friendship and Alliance between Nepal and H M G signed after the Second Nepal War in 1816, it highlighted that recruitment of Nepalese is not mentioned either in the Treaty nor in any formal Instruments signed with the East India Company. However, since 1815 a considerable number of Gurkhas have been enrolled by the Company's Native Army, later the Indian Army, from certain races of Nepal, conventionally designated as "Gurkhas". Besides Gurkhas from Western and Central Nepal, a number of other Nepali citizens mainly from extreme West, Dhotiyas, were also enrolled, mainly as stretcher-bearers, porters and laborers.

History of Gurkhas in Indian Army

While four battalions were raised in 1815 as irregulars from prisoners taken during the First Nepal War, one battalion was disbanded in 1829, another was raised in 1850, to replace the battalion transferred to the Bengal line, but this new battalion was in turn disbanded in 1860. However, two more battalions were raised in 1857, partly from Gurkhas serving in various regiments of the Punjab Irregular Force, especially the Guides and 2nd Sikhs. These five battalions in 1861 became the 1st to 5th Gurkha Regiments, and a second battalion of each was raised in 1886.

At the time of reorganization of the Bengal Army in 1861, the 42nd and 44th Native Infantry (formerly Assam Light Infantry and Sylhet Light Infantry) were composed of Gurkhas, Assamese hill tribes and a quarter or less of Hindustani Musclemans. In 1883 the Hindustani Mussalmans were eliminated, leaving only Gurkhas, except one company per battalion of the Assam Jaruas, which was also eliminated in 1889. In 1893 the 9th Native Infantry was converted to a Gurkha battalion, while in 1890 and 1902, two battalions, the 6th and the 9th GR, were raised. Under the reorganization of 1903, 10th GR was also raised. By 1908 all regiments had a second battalion, making a total of twenty, which went up to thirty three during the 1st World War and to forty three during the 2nd World War.

Thus, it will be noted that Gurkhas served in mixed units both in Punjab Irregular Force and in the Bengal Native Infantry. One Gurkha company also formed part of the Guides till 1922 and between 1920 and 1928, were also recruited in the Indian Signals. However, as per the wishes of the Nepal Durbar that Gurkhas (meaning soldiers hailing from Gorkha district of Nepal, Magars and Gurungs) should only be employed purely in Gurkha units, since 1941 their enlistment was restricted to British Gurkha Brigade, and stopped in other arms or corps. This prohibition, however, does not apply to Nepali subjects other than Gurkhas nor to persons of Nepalese origin domiciled in India, known as "domiciled Gurkhas", a small number of whom also serve in the Gurkha Regiments.

Economical Aspects

The enrolling soldiers who are neither British subjects nor even, like the Indian State Forces, subjects of a monarch acknowledging suzerainty of King Emperor, is a phenomenon which has no parallel in modern times, but it has been of great advantage to both, Nepal and India. Thus, whatever be the future form of the Indian Constitution, there are weighty reasons why this connection should be continued. Recruitment of Gurkhas in the Indian Army is of great

economic advantage to Nepal and its cessation would produce widespread distress and discontent. For the last 130 years, the 800 miles border between the two countries has had no anxiety or commitment. However, if the recruitment of Gurkhas is ceased, then, with the resultant economic dislocation and lack of outlet for the energies of a warlike and adventurous population, India might well be faced with a new and troublesome "frontier problem". Thus, in return for the money which flows into Nepal from India as pension and pay, she receives a guarantee of peace along a great part of her foreign land border as well as military services. Forty or fifty battalions of the world famous best Infantry, are an asset to any country, however well provided in manpower. The Indian Army cannot have this number of battalions in war, unless a proportion of them are retained in peace.

Indo-Nepal Relations

Dwelling on relations between Nepal and India, besides the geographical and historical ties and being a Hindu kingdom, the report stressed that ties between the two countries are historic which no other two nations can have. Thus, though Nepal was an independent country, there would be nothing inconsistent in recruitment of her nationals in the Indian Army. It also felt that any constitutional changes in the future are also not likely to cause any stress or strain on this connection. While Nepal may not object to present relationship as long as India remained under the Crown, but even if the Government of India were to renounce their allegiance to the Crown at a later date, it would be still be very desirable for it to enter into some similar relationship with Nepal without delay. Thus, there is desirability for the Gurkha Brigade continuing to form part of the Indian Army.

Officering Gurkha Brigade

The only difficulty to be surmounted, is relating to Indian

Officers commanding Gurkha troops. Since 1918,⁶ Indians have been granted commission, technically it should be possible for them to command Gurkha troops as is being done by British officers. However, the Durbar has not concealed its objection to the prospect of Indian commissioned officers in Gurkha Brigade; and a C-in-C and a Viceroy have given assurances to Nepal that as for the present and also for the future Gurkha regiments would be purely officered only by British and Gurkha officers. However, as the Indianization of the officer corps proceeds and is accelerated, this anomaly will need to be rectified. It is therefore an essential condition of the continued recruitment of Gurkhas in the Indian Army that the Durbar should waive its objection to the appointment of Indian officers to command them.

Financial Implications

While objections may be raised by a few in India that a large sum of money will flow into a Nepal a foreign country as pay and allowances, for which adequate manpower is available within India, it is felt impractical to take now any step which would anticipate or prejudice such a decision.

Gurkhas in H M G

The H M G may consider retaining Gurkhas as Imperial reserve in the East, especially as there are manpower shortages in Britain. There would be serious problems in recruitment, like transit through Indian Territory, but these can be resolved. However, if India were to decide not to recruit Gurkhas, then she might not allow the facilities to the H M G. This may entail H M G employing Gurkhas overseas only, in which case the Durbar's objection of service overseas (exemptions allowed during the 1st and the 2nd World War) would need to be waived. This scruple is now not so strong, but arrangements for long leave and family accommodation overseas, will need to be considered.

Gurkhas in H M G and Indian Army

As regards both India and H M G recruiting and retaining Gurkhas, there seems to be nothing in favor of such a plan. As the aim is to create the ability to expand from peace time in to a war time force at a short notice, in such a scenario there will be clash of interests for recruits, which might result in friction.

Replacement of Gurkhas

If Gurkhas were eliminated altogether from the Indian Army, it would be necessary to raise adequate number of battalions, with capacity of expansion, during a war.

Recruitment

For the 40 Gurkha battalions employed in the 2nd World War, a total of 110,000 soldiers were recruited over five seasons 1940-41 to 1944-45, and now Nepal's capacity to provide more soldiers is depleted. There are differences between recruitment in India and Nepal. First, communications and economy of Nepal permits recruitment during a five month period annually between October-March when the recruits can leave their farms and come down from hills. Thus, there is considerable time-lag which depending upon when the war breaks out, and may come to nearly one year in commencing full scale recruitment, and consequently a period of up to two years before trained soldiers can take part in war. The second difference is that this gap can not be entirely bridged by reservists, as due to difficult terrain, lack of road and postal communications, not more than a small number of reservists from Nepal can join their units, when called upon, in time.

Tour of Duty

Before the War, Gurkha battalions spent normally four years out of six at the headquarters of their regiment, which cannot be continued. However, as due to the distance of

his home, a Gurkha cannot avail of the annual leave of 2-1/2 months entitled to Indian ranks, but were permitted to accumulate this and take 7-1/2 months leave every third year. Because of the long absence from their homes Gurkhas have been permitted higher scales of married accommodation at their Centers. The same facility should also be extended for families of units in non-family station, at the Centre, and at stations of Gorkha units.

Miscellaneous Points

The Committee also covered aspects of terms of service, tour of duty of Gurkha battalions and their manpower for the expansion program.⁷

In conclusion, the General requested the Viceroy to project his point of view to H M G, who might be working on the post-War scenarios. He also stressed that if the Gurkhas are to be incorporated into the post-War Indian Army, then Nepal will have to agree that these units will be officered by Indians. He also recommended that "it will be in the interest of Independent Indian Army to retain the Gurkha Units".⁸

Views of Lord Wavell, Viceroy of India

In the spring of 1946, the Viceroy, Lord Wavell again warned H M G that the future Government of India may not be able to employ all the ten Gurkha regiments, and at best may keep four two-battalion regiments. He recommended that H M G take steps to transfer the residue of Gurkhas, but no immediate action was initiated by War Office, London.⁹

In early 1946, the War Office had drawn up plans to create a British Gurkha Division, which required converting a few battalions into Artillery and Engineers and other elements integral to Division, which was not welcomed by a few senior Gurkha officers, including Slim. He wrote to Auchinleck, "the Gurkha is an almost ideal infantryman and has shown himself to be so". While no doubt he could

be trained in time to be a useful member of any arm of the Service, he will never be as good a gunner, signaler, tank man etc... as he is an infantryman. It seems to me therefore to be unwise to destroy an outstanding infantryman in order to make a moderate gunner or what have you'.

Discussions at London

By May 1946, the British Treasury had approved employment of eight battalions of Gurkhas, while the War Office contemplated to ask for more, perhaps all the pre-war battalions-though it was reluctant to enter into a long-term engagement with Nepal. Unless it was absolutely essential in the negotiations with Nepal we would prefer not to put a definite term of years to our bid. However, as soon as War Office finalized its bid of eight battalions, Wavell ordered it to be held on hold, as no negotiations with Nepal could be done without involving the Interim Government of India, which, the British felt, latter delayed the final decision.

Identification of Regiments

As regards allotting regiments, Lt Gen Sir Geoffrey Scoone wrote to Auchinleck that 'to avoid any accusation' of partiality, either the first five regiments went to Britain and the rest to India (or the other way round), or odd numbers to Britain and even numbers to India (or vice versa), though he preferred the second option, with the even numbers going to Britain, which would result in both countries having a Rai and Limbu regiment and India would get the 9th whose caste and customs make them more difficult to deal with overseas. (Gen Sccone's impartiality would have stood out, if his own regiment, 2nd GR had not been included for the H M G.) However, another proposal suggested was that first battalion of each regiment should go to H M G, while the second battalions should form part of the Indian Army (or vice versa), but this would have created the problem of splitting the regimental centers. Then

there was an argument that 9 GR should not be excluded from H M G, as being more intelligent, they would be ideal to convert to artillery and engineers in H M G.

At the beginning of 1947, the War Office favored asking for six regiments, including either 7th or 10th, from Eastern Nepal, and possibly the 2nd, in view of its affiliation with the 60th Rifles, the King's Royal Rifle Corps, and 9th GR for conversion to artillery and engineers-overlooking the fact that the treasury had only sanctioned four regiments, a total of eight battalions. All these calculations came to naught, when F J Bellinger, Secretary of State for War, informed Patric-Lawrence at India Office, that funds were hardly enough to provide for the British troops needed for internal security and defense, let alone Gurkhas. He also mentioned that the expenditure on Gurkhas could not be justified at the expense of cutting down British units below the strength considered essential.

Thus, the whole question of the desirability of having a Gurkha element in the post-war British Army was re-opened again. By now Field Marshal Montgomery had taken over from Alanbrooke, as Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

Political Developments - Lord Mountbatten as Viceroy of India

On the political side after many deliberations, on 20 February 1947, Britain announced her plan for granting Independence to India by June 1948, and partition of the India to carve out Pakistan. At that time India comprised of a number of provinces and territories under the direct control of the Central Government and 526 princely states, which were under separate treaty obligations with the British Raj at Delhi. Under the bill passed by the British Parliament on 20 February 1947, all princely states were given an option to either join India, Pakistan or remain independent. Accordingly, by mid 1947, while most of the states had taken a decision, the rulers of Jammu and Kashmir in the North, Hyderabad in Southern region and Junagarh on the West,

dithered. As the state of Jammu and Kashmir (J & K) had borders with Afghanistan, China, Central Asia (thus Russia) and the new state of Pakistan, she was of strategic importance to India. However, Pakistan, on the other hand laid its claims to J & K as it had majority Muslim population.

For smooth transfer of power, Lord Mountbatten of Burma, who during the 2nd World War had been the Supreme Commander of Allied Forces in South East Asia, was sent in March 1947 to India, to take over from Lord Wavell as Viceroy of India. While the initial date for independence was fixed as June 1948, due to the communal strife which had engulfed most parts of the country, on 3 June 1947 it was advanced to 15 August 1947.

While division of the material and manpower assets between the two new states was unavoidable and was being worked out, the British were keen that the British Indian Army should not be divided, as it was "the only institution and organization capable of withstanding all communal stresses and strain". This idea was found impractical and though it was easy to identify units on religious class composition and other basis to be sent to Pakistan, the question of division of the Gorkha Brigade, units of which were still returning to their home stations after fighting in the war for four to five years, required serious deliberations and fast decision.

Deliberations in New Delhi

The question was discussed by the Interim Government of India, and on 23 October 1946 an un-official decision had been taken to employ Gurkhas in the post-war Indian Army. This was discussed with various Nepali officials too. However, it was not conveyed officially to the Nepal Government, as it required approval of the H M G also. It was only on 17 April 1947 that during the Cabinet meeting, Lord Mountbatten stated that "the question was not really whether India should employ foreigners in her Army but whether she should not show special consideration to Nepal

and continue her connection with that country which went back a long way". The Cabinet reaffirmed its decision that Gurkhas should be retained in the post-war Indian Army on the condition that they would have Indian or Gurkha officers. Liaquat Ali Khan, the Finance Member and his colleagues of the Muslim League opposed the move to have any foreigners in the Indian Army.¹⁰ Nehru also emphasized that the decision to employ Gurkhas did not mean a new policy but continuation of the existing practice. He felt that to break our connection with Nepal at this critical moment and treat the subjects of Nepal as foreigners would not only be alien to the thought of both the Governments but would probably render Nepal hostile to the new India now in the making. Moreover, although it could not be said that we were short of manpower for our Armed Forces, the Gurkhas, who had a fine military record extending over a hundred years, would be an asset to our country.

On taking over as Viceroy of India, Mountbatten was faced with many challenges, amongst which the division of the British Indian Army into the Indian and Pakistan Army, and the future of Gurkha Regiments, figured high. As regards the division of the Armed Forces, Field Marshal Auchinleck highlighted that the division on communal lines would be a difficult process, which may take months if not years, and that he was not prepared to undertake it, due to shortage of staff. Thus, it was decided that:

- o It should not be discussed in the Cabinet unless a political decision had been taken by the H M G,
- o That setting up of a high level staff to investigate the problem was essential, and that Field Marshal Auchinlek should look into it,
- o That it was necessary to carry out planning, at this stage, in broad outline only, and,
- o That any attempt to achieve nationalization and division of the Armed Forces by June 1948 would be a dangerous risk. Therefore¹¹ nationalization should be held up till a political decision had been reached.

As regards the Gurkhas, as early as 1946, the Government of India had decided (only three days before the Muslim League joined the Interim Government,), to continue to employ Gurkhas in the Indian Army, but the Muslim League felt it was wrong to continue to employ "foreign mercenaries" when India herself had more than a million unemployed demobilized soldiers. In the Cabinet, a heated discussion took place, and finally the Viceroy directed that the view of the majority should prevail, and that India should continue to employ Gurkhas. However, the employment of Gurkhas by H M G required tactful handling, to avoid the Cabinet turning down then and there H M G request that the necessary facilities be granted to them to employ Gurkhas too, as it was intended to establish training and administrative bases in Malaya.

Earlier, the opposition of the Cabinet members had been on the apprehension of the Gurkhas being employed for "suppression of national freedom and independence" which had been overcome by including relevant formula for reference to the U N O. The present opposition was based on the supposition that it would be difficult for the world generally to separate Gurkhas employed by India and Britain. The Viceroy questioned the cabinet as to how they proposed to stop Nepal sending Gurkhas to join the British Army. Did they intend to deny the inhabitants of an independent kingdom the right to cross Indian Territory? If so, had they thought out the repercussions of such a policy? These arguments of Viceroy had the desired effect, and resulted in the visit to new delhi by Major General Lyne on 23 April 1947, who later went to Kathamndu., along with representative of Pandit Nehru.¹²

By then there were ten Gorkha regiments, each with two to three battalions, some of them still in Malaya, Burma, Singapore and Indonesia (where they were also employed to control the Independence Movement). While the British were keen to retain the Gorkha units in the H M Gs Army for service in East Africa and Singapore post independence and Nepal Durbar was expected to welcome the move, the

problem of passage for soldiers and recruits transiting through the territory of Independent India to and back from Nepal, had to be resolved. Also, the view in H M Gs was that as the Gorkhas were part of the Imperial Indian Army, India had a prior claim for the service of the Gorkhas.

As the Government of Nepal had to be consulted and a new agreement had to be evolved, the issue required urgent consideration between England, India and Nepal. However, as the War Office and the Government in the UK was deeply involved in the post 2nd World War problems and the interim Government of India was still finding its feet, the question of division of the Gorkha Brigade and its officers, did not get the attention that it deserved. Like other units of the Indian Army, the Gorkha units were also returning to their "homes" after four to five years of war service overseas, while a number of them were still in Malaya.

During this period, leaders of the Interim Government of Independent India had given the issue a thought, and decided to retain Gorkha troops in the post-independent Army. As early as February 1947, Pandit Nehru had approved a note put up by Mr H Weightman, Joint Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, on 22 February 1947, suggesting that the ending of the arrangement by which Gurkha battalions in the Indian Army were led only by British officers, so that Indian officers could be later appointed. While approving it, Pandit Nehru also gave out the approach to be adopted during negotiations with Nepal, that Indian officers might be appointed to the Gurkha battalions, and it is only fair that Gurkhas should be eligible for commissions in the Indian Army, and it has already been decided that 8 or 9 battalions of Gurkhas will be retained in the Indian Army.¹³

The uncertainty of the future of Gurkhas was discussed by the Defense Committee of the Cabinet Office in London in mid-March 1947, where Prime Minister Clement Attlee and the Viceroy designate, Lord Louis Mountbatten were present. The Prime Minister expressed surprise how such an important issue had been left un-resolved till then, and

opinioned that in view of the shortage of manpower in the UK, there was a strong case for the inclusion of a substantial number of Gurkhas in the Armed Forces. He was supported by A V Alexander, Minister for Defense, who gave out a figure of 25,000 as the 'optimum number of Gurkhas' to be employed in the British Army. However, the Secretary of State objected and stated that 'unless they could be used in any part of the world, their employment would not be economical'. At that time, the cost of annual maintenance of a British infantry battalion in Malaya annually was Pound 240,000, whereas for a Gurkha battalion it was only Pound 150,000. Thus, the Defense Committee resolved that 'the representative of H M G should make every effort to secure agreement to employ up to 25,000 Gurkhas in the regular British Army and that 'there should be no suggestion of a time limit to their employment' (added later).¹⁴

Thus, it was at the initiative of the Cabinet that a delegation from War Office, London, led by Major General L O Lyne, CBE, DSO, (Director of Staff Duties in the department of the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, UK,) came to New Delhi on 24 April 1947, and held preliminary discussions on the issue with Sir Terene Shone, the first British High Commissioner in India, with the aim of transferring four Gurkha regiments (eight battalions) for a limited period of five years to H M G. Though he felt that there was full scope of raising a Gurkha Division in Malaya, he was not very sure of the views and reactions of Indian leaders, like Pandit Nehru on the topic. While the choice of regiments was kept in the background at this stage, it was important that H M G be allowed full use of the recruiting areas of Nepal which meant that 9th G R and either 7th or 10th GR should be included along with two out of the remainder seven regiments, and it was desirable that 2nd G R also comes to H M G.¹⁵

Visit of War Office and Indian Team to Nepal-April 1947

Maj. Gen. Lyne also held discussions with Auchinleck and representatives of the Central Government in New Delhi.

As the consent of the Government of Nepal was essential for any agreement, Pandit Nehru nominated Sir Girja Shankar Bajpai, Foreign Secretary to accompany him. Brigadier A. A. Rudra, Director of Morale, Army Headquarters, was also detailed by Sardar Baldev Singh, the Defense Minister, to accompany Sir Bajpai, and take part in the deliberations.¹⁶

Before leaving Delhi, the brief given to Brigadier Rudra by the Chief of the General Staff was to be a "silent observer" and not to make any comments or commitments. However, when the Brigadier met the Defense Member, Sardar Baldev Singh before flying out, he authorized him to offer "continued employment to all Gurkha Regiments if necessary, on equal terms with Indians" in all of which he will be backed by the Defense Member, in case of any subsequent recrimination from the Chief of the General Staff.¹⁷

Same day, Pandit Nehru also informed the Prime Minister of Nepal, H H Padam Shumsher Jung Bahadur Rana of dispatch of the delegation led by Sir Bajpai and Brigadier Rudra, and assured him that the talks that they may hold with him will be purely "informal and exploratory" and will not be intended to form the tripartite conference mentioned by "Your Highness in your letter of the 23rd April to Minister" (Lieutenant Colonel Sir George Arthur Falconer, British Ambassador to Nepal, 1947-51).¹⁸

The delegation left New Delhi on 27 April 1947,¹⁹ traveled by air to Patna, then by train to Raxaul, and thereafter on horse back just a short distance from Kathmandu, while a dandi (a chair mounted on bamboos) was made for Sir Bajpai. At Kathmandu, though both the delegations were put up at the British Residency, the British team kept to themselves for the next two days. While Sir Bajpai and Brigadier Rudra were keen to meet their Nepali counterparts alone before the meeting to gauge their reactions, they faced many hurdles in moving out of the Residency compound, alone. Finally, they found a way out, by going to pray at the Pasupatinath temple, where their British escorts could not go.

At the meeting held at Kathmandu on 1 May 1947, the

two delegations went to the Singha Durbar for the conference, where Sir Bajpai had a special and private audience with the Prime Minister, before the meeting.

The meeting was chaired by the Prime Minister and besides others his delegation included the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of Nepal. After the delegations were seated and the Prime Minister had welcomed them, Sir Bajpai opened the meeting by stating that "Though Nepal and India were two sovereign states, they shared the same sub-continental heritage, united by cultural, religious and economic bonds which were indissoluble. The Government of India was anxious to continue employing Nepali soldiers as in the past; and will give them equal treatment with all Indians in all respects". Sir Bajpai also reiterated that Independent India was quite willing to retain all the Gurkha regiments of the old Indian Army.

In his presentation, Major General Lyne offered employment for Nepali soldiers in the British Army (presumably a commitment of twenty battalions), and explained their proposed deployment in the Federation of Malaya state, Hong Kong, Singapore and Britain. He also spoke about the sea and air journey for leave parties. He also spoke of the strong and old bonds of friendship between Britain and Nepal, and how Gurkha troops were an important link in them.

In his turn, Brigadier Rudra reinforced what Sir Bajpai had said, and stressed that he had the assurances of India's Defense Member of "giving Gurkhas equal treatment with Indians, which included equal terms in all respects and India would grant qualified Nepali soldiers permanent regular commission as officers of the Indian Army. India would not make any differentiation between Gurkhas and Indians in any matter whatsoever, unless it was to give preferential treatment to the men from Nepal in matters of leave, leave travel allowances and other expatriate benefits".²⁰

The Maharaja was very pleased with the Indian stance, and then enquired from General Lyne whether Britain would

also accord equal rights to the Nepalese in matters of commissions and promotion prospects? As the General had not expected this question, he could not give a categorical assurance. Instead, he spoke of how Britain intended to "start a Gurkha tradition in the British Army, based on past associations" and that they would work out new terms; but he could not allay Nepali suspicions about racial discrimination, especially in regard to promotion to officer status (presumably as he had no brief on this).

Finally, the Prime Minister told the two delegations that Nepal welcomed the proposal to maintain the Gurkha connection with the armies of the United Kingdom and India. He announced the following decision- "If the terms and conditions at the final stage do not prove detrimental to the dignity and interest of the Nepalese people, my Government will be happy to maintain connections with both armies-provided men of the Gurkha regiments are willing to serve and if they will not be regarded as mercenary."²¹ While no allotment plan could be worked out without reference to the Indian and British Governments, but His Highness stipulated that once an allotment was announced, units as also individuals should be given free choice in the matter. He stressed that no one was to be coerced and no one was to be sent out of India against his will.

He also assured the Indian delegation that Nepal had never put any restrictions on Indian officers for serving in and commanding Gorkha Units, and he had no such reservations.

It was decided to form teams comprising of one British, Indian and Nepali officer, to visit all Gurkha battalions, to explain the matter to the men without indulging in any propaganda. Each Battalion earmarked for the British Army would then hold a referendum to decide whether the unit as a whole wanted to transfer out of the Indian Army (majority decision); thereafter each individual of the unit will be given the option of withdrawing from his units' majority decision. The Prime Minister insisted that:

- The supervision of these processes should be absolutely impartial-and must be seen to be, and,
- That Britain and India must give an undertaking that in no circumstance would a Gurkha be expected to fight against a Gurkha.²²

(The Indian Delegation felt that the last provision mentioned by the Prime Minister of Nepal was as subtle as it was unexpected; and it held a wealth of implication.)

While seeing off the Indian Delegation, the Prime Minister of Nepal assured them that he understood that the British had said that the Government of Nepal had stipulated that Indian Officers may not command Gurkha troops, which is not true, as Nepal had never disapproved of Indian Officers commanding Gurkha troops. This was untrue and false propaganda, and he would like to put the record straight.

The press also covered the above talks held at Kathmandu, with titles like "GURKHAS TO BE RECRUITED TO INDIAN ARMY".²³

Maj Gen Lyne Meets Pandit Nehru

The delegations returned to New Delhi, and before leaving for Britain, General Lyne met Pandit Nehru on 6 May 1947 where Sir Bajpai was also present, and explained that the object of his mission had been to dispel in the Maharaja's mind any doubts he might have as to the desirability and propriety of the employment of Gurkha troops in the Indian and British armies; also to find out whether he was really in favor of the proposal, provided the Government of India and H M G both approved the plan. In both aspects, the meeting had succeeded. Pandit Nehru stated that he was very busy for next two weeks or so, but realized that "some sort of decision" must be reached, soon.

He also raised the following points/queries with the General:

Whether he agreed that the Maharaja (Prime Minister

of Nepal) had put India first and then, if India objected to the employment of Gurkhas by HMG, Nepal would only provide them to India? To this the General replied that this was not his recollection, as the Maharaja continually emphasized the necessity of Nepal to be good friends with both India and Great Britain. He understood that he would not contemplate any scheme for employment of Gurkhas under either Government, which was not fully approved by the other Government.

There was also the possibility of India taking all the Gorkhas, and then loaning some to UK. Being a completely new idea, the General only replied that he felt it will have grave disadvantages and no advantages.

Whether His Highness had discussed the situation if the Gurkhas found themselves in the opposite camps? When told, yes, the issue did come up during the one-to-one and tripartite discussions, but the idea of Britain being at war with India was so fantastic, and not worth consideration. However, if India wished then some safeguards could be included in the agreement, so that Gurkha troops could never be in opposite side to their fellow countrymen. The General explained that there were some aliens (like Italians) in the British Army, and during the 2nd World War great pains were taken to ensure that they do not fight on the Italian front.

If Britain employed Gurkhas, then Britain should not give them a much higher rate of pay than what India proposed to give. The General hoped that their pay code for Gurkhas would be in line with that of the Indian pay code, provided this was not reduced.

Pandit Nehru concluded the discussions by asking what should be the next step. To this Lyne stated that once a decision has been taken by Indian Cabinet, a detailed plan for the employment of Gurkhas in the Indian and British armies would be worked out in consultation with a delegation from the British War Office, to be followed by a

final tripartite discussion with the Nepal Government before signing the agreement considered necessary.²⁴

Maj Gen Lyne Briefs the Viceroy

Before returning to England, Major General Lyne also briefed the Viceroy, who advised him that the negotiations were not yet finished, and impressed upon him the desirability of continuing to handle the matter with the very greatest care.²⁵

Consequent to the conference at Kathmandu, further discussions on the subject of Gurkhas took place between the Viceroy and Pandit Nehru, and it was decided that four of the pre-war ten regiments will be transferred to the British Army (a total of eight battalions).

It will be clear that Pandit Nehru was keen and even prepared to keep all the Gorkha battalions in the Indian Army, as he did not want them to be used by Britain in muzzling Independence Movements then spreading in Asia and South East Asia. Britain, on the other hand, was keen to form a Gorkha Division in Malaya, and wanted to have only Gorkha troops in it.

The role played by Lord Mountbatten, Viceroy of India, is also significant. When Clement Attlee, the British Prime Minister was in India, he sought Mountbatten's advice on transfer of some Gurkha regiments to the British Army. The Viceroy told the Prime Minister that there had been twenty three Gurkha battalions under his command during the War in South-East Asia, and they were the best battalions he had had. He felt that Britain would be most ill-advised to loose the services of such magnificent, cost-effective and efficient soldiers. Coming from a person of his stature, despite not being entirely popular in Nepal, Britain and India, this unique inclusion of non-British troops into the British Army was accepted. Thus, Lord Mountbatten played a major role in the Gurkhas going to HMG.²⁶

Finally, it was decided that four Gorkha regiments (eight battalions) will go to the British Army, while six regiments

(twelve battalions) will form part of the Indian Army. As all senior officers at Army Headquarters, New Delhi were still British, the decision to nominate the regiments was also in their hands. In any case, Indian officers neither had any knowledge of Gorkha troops, nor any love or preference for any regiment. In fact, they were not even aware of their regimental customs or traditions, having only seen them from a distance.

Final Division of Regiments

Though the division of Gorkhas was always considered between the British and the Indian Army, there were reports of a move by some British officers of 5th GR (FF) at the Centre at Abbotabad that the regiment should continue to be part of the "Piffers", allotted to Pakistan. However, this proposal was soon dropped as it found no takers.²⁷

Within the British Army hierarchy, there was a tussle by a few senior Gorkha officers to draw their regiment into the British Army. While logically 1st to 4th GR should have been allotted, there was pressure to bring 5th GR, being a "royal" regiment with V Cs. The British were keen for 9th GR also, as Chhetris and Thakuris were considered more intelligent, and would have made better gunners and signalers in the new Gurkha Division being planned for Malaya and the East. They were also keen to have 2nd GR at all cost, due to their association with 60th Rifles of 1857 Delhi Siege and being a V C Regiment. Besides this, they wanted to ensure recruitment from both Western and Eastern Nepal. Thus, various options considered were:

1. Select first Battalion of the first eight Regiments, being the oldest units. In this, though 2nd GR and 5th GR were covered; 9th GR would have been left out.
2. Select first four regiments, all having royal titles, with two battalions each. But this would have also left out 5th and 9th GR out.
3. Select odd numbered Regiments, 1st, 3th, 5th and 7th GR. In this, 2nd GR and 9th GR were left out.

4. Select even numbered Regiments, 2nd, 4th, 6th and 8th GR. In this also 9th GR was left out and the recruiting was restricted to western Nepal.²⁸

Finally, the War Office expressed a preference for 2nd, 7th and 10th Regiment (though in reality 7th and 10th did not recruit Gurkhas but Kirntis from Eastern Nepal) and thus from recruiting point of view, it was felt that some representation should also be given to Eastern Nepal, hence either the 7th or the 10th GR should become H M G. The only regiment on which there was complete unanimity, was 2nd GR (Sirmoor), a V C Regiment belonging to Lieutenant General Sir Francis Taker, then Army Commander, Eastern Command, as it had fought side by side with the 60th Rifles in 1857. The choice of the fourth regiment was left to General Headquarters, India, which nominated 6th Gurkhas, one of whose battalion was then on duty at the Viceroy's House in New Delhi. Some consideration was also given to the administrative location of units. As 2nd, 6th, 7th and 10th GR had a battalion each still in Malaya and the Far East, it was considered financially and administratively convenient to nominate them for the British Army.

Indian Policy

Pandit Nehru stated the Indian Government's policy, when on 28 January 1947 he wrote that "India's position in regard to retention of Gurkhas in the Army has been made clear. They would like to continue Gurkha regiments in the Indian Army. The number of Gurkha troops would depend on the total strength of the Indian Army. They are opposed to direct employment of Gurkhas in the British or any other army. The Indian Army would naturally be officered by Indians, including Gurkhas. There will be no difficulty in Gurkhas getting commissions and facilities for training etc will be given to them. All these questions will come up for discussion at the proposed tripartite conference. There should be no difficulty about payment of pension and the like to Gurkha soldiers...."

(The Tripartite Agreement on recruitment was concluded between the United Kingdom, India and Nepal on 9 November 1947. By this agreement the existing Gurkha regiments were divided, four being allotted to Britain and six to India.)²⁹

As regards division of Gurkha units, there was not much action from War Office after Major General Lyne's visit of May 1947. Mountbatten wrote in his diary that 'I had not been happy at the progress being made in the negotiations, which had been going on for some time, concerning the employment of Gurkhas in the British Army. I had telegraphed personally to Mr Attlee asking that Field Marshal Montgomery should come out prepared to clinch this issue. Thus the Field Marshal did talk with Pandit Nehru, at which the latter agreed to the grant of necessary facilities. There were still, however, certain details to be settled, and accordingly a Mission was dispatched out from War Office for the purpose'.³⁰ Thus, Lord Mountbatten, Viceroy of India, sent a telegram to Prime Minister Attlee, and suggested that Field Marshal Montgomery, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, should visit India soon. Montgomery arrived on 24 June 1947, with a two point agenda-first to settle the program for withdrawal of British troops from India, and second, to get an agreement for the continued use of Gurkhas in the British Army after India had gained Independence.³¹ Later, Mountbatten recorded that 'Pandit Nehru agrees to facilitate the employment of Gurkhas by H M G'.

Visit by Field Marshal Viscount Montgomery

During his visit, along with Sir Terence Shone, the UK High Commissioner in India, he had two meetings with Pandit Nehru, on 24 and 25 June 1947, where besides other issues, the question of Gurkha troops was discussed. Important points which came up for discussion were as under.³²

Montgomery stated that he was working on the reorganization of the British Army, and had been empowered

by the British Prime Minister to come to an arrangement with Pandit Nehru on the employment of Gurkha troops in the British Army, as a follow up of Major General Lyne and Sir Girija Bajpai's discussions held with the Government of Nepal. Mainly, he was keen to get an assurance on the transfer of Gurkhas to the British Army. He was keen to know if the Indian Government would give transit and other facilities to the Gurkhas of the British Army, so that work on working out the modalities could be done before the division of the British Indian Army.

Pandit Nehru informed him that the Government of India had agreed to inclusion of Gurkha battalions-probably eight in number in the Indian Army, on the express understanding that they would be officered by Indian officers or probably Gurkha officers. This had been agreed to on behalf of the Nepalese Government informally.

As regards Gurkhas serving in the British Army, while India was anxious to meet the wishes of H M G, there were considerable difficulties and many questions of principle were involved, which needed deliberations, but due to other pressing issues this had not taken place. At this stage, he (Pandit Nehru) could not commit future Dominion Government of India as that had not been formed.

However, after consulting some of his colleagues, next day Pandit Nehru told Montgomery that Gurkha troops especially, and, to an extent the whole Indian Army had become unpopular because of their use for imperial purposes by the British Government in the past. A year ago, Gurkha troops came into conflict with Indonesians and there was much resentment in Indonesia against Gurkhas.³³ Any thing that India might do and which might lead to a continuation of the old tradition of employment of Gurkha troops for imperial purposes would be subject to adverse comments in India. Thus, it would be looked down as holding down colonial territories, and might appear to continuation of imperial links with India. India was strongly opposed to any such use of troops, much more Gurkhas, against any

people struggling for their freedom. Pandit Ji asked Montgomery, "What were Gurkha troops required for?"

Montgomery assured Pandit Nehru that Gurkhas were required as a "reserve" for emergencies and to carry out the British commitments in the Far East, and will not be used locally and certainly not against any people's movement or freedom. They were not to be used at all in fact, unless war came. Explaining how Gurkhas had been misjudged in Indonesia, where in fact they had kept peace and prevented grave developments, he assured Pandit Ji that they would be located in Malaya.

Pandit Ji stated that India could not come in way of any arrangement between the U K and Nepal, as Nepal was an independent country; but owing to the geographical location of Nepal (surrounded by India); certain facilities were required of us. He asked Montgomery, "What were these facilities?" To this the Field Marshal replied, "Transit facilities, not for troops as such, but for individuals or groups of Gurkhas traveling as civilians across India". Britain did not propose to have any training or big recruiting centers in Nepal. At the most, they will have some recruiting agents in Nepal, but all training will be carried out at the battalions, whom they plan to take to Malaya after division from India. Montgomery pointed out the grave man-power difficulty being faced by Britain, which necessitated retaining of their Gurkha troops in South-East Asia for emergencies, notably war, and hoped that they will never be used for any other purpose. Britain naturally turned to Gurkhas because of their past association with them in the British Army.

As regards Gurkhas for the Indian Army, Pandit Ji pointed out that though Nepal was an independent country, it was very closely allied to India in culture and tradition, and India did not look upon it as a foreign country. India wanted to develop closest bonds with Nepal and hoped they will grow closer still in future. This did not apply to any other country in regard to Nepal, though India recognized the long-standing association of the Gurkhas with the British Indian Army.

Pandit Ji also stated that employment of Gurkhas by Britain may set a precedent, which may be misunderstood in India and even other countries of Asia. For instance, Britain may think of recruiting troops from the North-West tribal areas, the Afridis, etc, and might come to terms with Pakistan? The Field Marshal said that this was quite out of question, they never thought of it and they do not propose to think of it. He stated that the Gurkhas stood quite apart from others for many reasons and on no account would this be taken as precedent. He was prepared to guarantee that no other arrangement would be arrived at by the British Government in regard to any part of India as a whole without the consent of the Indian Union, or Greater India. He was quite emphatic that the Gurkha matter could not and must not be treated as a precedent.

At this juncture, Pandit Ji suggested that if it would be feasible for all the Gurkha regiments to be formally incorporated in the Indian Army and, then some of them loaned out to the British Army. In fact, they will be under the British Army, but they would technically belong to the Indian Army. The Field Marshal felt that it was a difficult and complicated matter and probably not feasible, and will result in all manner of confusion.

On being questioned on the primary allegiance of a Gurkha soldier serving in the British Army, Montgomery replied that obviously he will be under the discipline of the British Army, but his primary allegiance would be to Nepal. He felt that nothing could or should be done which might come in the way of allegiance.

On being pointed out by Pandit Ji of the likely confusion in the people's mind with Gurkhas serving both in the Indian and British Army, the Field Marshal felt that this could be clarified, later. At this stage, all he wanted was an assurance from India on employment of Gurkhas by the British, so that he could go ahead and plan on their movement and deployment.

Pandit Ji pointed out that during the Kathmandu

Conference, Nepalese Government, while expressing their willingness to allow Gurkhas to serve both in the Indian and the British Army, had made it perfectly clear that they must not be regarded as mercenaries and must not be used against each other or against any popular movement. The Field Marshal agreed that this could be clarified later.

After further discussions, Pandit Ji told Montgomery that while India was reluctant to agree to his proposal as it had many implications, but India was anxious not to create any difficulties between Nepal and the UK, if they wanted to come to an agreement. Thus, India was prepared to give them facilities for transit etc, asked for, subject to further consideration by the Nepal Government. This satisfied Montgomery, who immediately informed London, and later sent a team from War Office to finalize the agreement between India, Nepal and Great Britain, which came to be known as the Tripartite Agreement of 8 August 1947.³⁴

Parliamentary Debate in the UK

The future of Gurkhas was also debated in the British parliament. In reply to a questions from Brigadier Low, Colonel Duncan and Mr W Vans (all Conservatives), who wanted assurances that none of the regiments would lose their present character of being officered by the British officers without Parliament being informed and, what was the responsibility of the British Government in coming to an agreement before 15 August, and what will be the command and control of these units after 15 August? In his reply, on 4 August 1947, Mr Henderson, Under-Secretary of State for India, stated that urgent steps are being taken to hasten conclusion of the negotiations between the Government of Nepal, India and the U K, on the future of Gurkha regiments. After 15 August, the operational control of these units in India would be under General Lockhart, C-in-C of the Indian Army, and the C-in-C of the Pakistan Army.³⁵

Further, on 12 August 1947, Prime Minister Attlee told the House of Commons, that the transfer of Gurkha troops,

as per terms of the Tripartite Agreement announced on 11 August was on voluntary basis. Answering Brigadier Low (Conservative) whether it was right to transfer the Gurkha regiments to the Indian Army to be officered by Indians, Mt Attlee stated that "the Ruler of Nepal has agreed in principle that in future Gurkha units in the Indian Army should be officered by Indian officers, and the Government of the new Dominion have agreed that officers of Nepalese nationality should be equally eligible for appointment to these groups."³⁶

A similar press communiqué was also released, which stated that "subject to negotiations regarding terms and conditions, agreement has been reached in principle between the Governments concerned about the future of the Gurkha units which now form part of the Indian Army". As per this, the first and the second battalions of the 2nd, 6th, 7th and 10th Gurkha Rifles and their Regimental Centres have been allotted to H M G, while all other existing Gurkha battalions remain part the Dominion of India. It also clarified that from August 15, all Gurkha battalions serving in the dominion of India will be under the command of the C-in-C of the Army in India and those in Pakistan under command of the C-in-C of the Army of Pakistan until they can be moved to India. Gurkha battalions overseas will remain under command of the Supreme Commander.³⁷

During the debate Mr Attlee disagreed with Mr Duncan that the units should have been kept either in the British Army; or disbanded and the Gurkhas allowed to join Indian forces individually. Mr Duncan also wanted to know how the six regiments were chosen as one was a Royal regiment and the others had three Royal titles? Why were these chosen to go to India, which had already decided to leave the Empire as soon as possible? Mr Attlee explained that all transfers from Gurkha units were strictly on voluntary basis, and the arrangement was made after detailed discussions between the three Governments.³⁸

The "Opt" Option

There was also a stipulation laid down, that all ranks will be given the option of either serving in the H M G, the Indian Army, or to go home on discharge, (referred as an "opt") and there will be no pressure brought on any soldier. Accordingly, a questionnaire was issued by Army Headquarters to the Gorkha Regiments, where Viceroy Commissioned Officers (V C Os) and Non Commissioned Officers (N C Os) of all ten regiments were asked through their commanding officers to reply to the following:

- Whether they wish to continue to serve in the Indian Army?
- Whether they wish to serve overseas in the British Army?
- Whether, if they elect for either, they have any objections to serving in the other; and,
- Whether they wish to leave the army service altogether?

It was reported that Indianization of the officer ranks of the six regiments allotted to India, was to commence only after the men had expressed their opinion.³⁹

On reading the newspaper reports, Pandit Nehru was upset with General Lockhart, the Commander-in-Chief, and on 13 August 1947 wrote a letter to him "I have seen a telegram to the effect that a questionnaire has been issued to men of the Gurkha regiments asking them whether they are prepared to serve in the Indian Army or whether they wish to retire. If it has been issued only to the officers, then there is nothing more to it. But if it has been issued to the other ranks also, then I should like to know why this procedure has been adopted. The question of Gurkha regiments being retained in the Indian Army or being taken over by H M G has been discussed at the highest level for some time past and the Nepal Government has been consulted. Very soon there is likely to be a tripartite conference to consider further details. At this stage it's not clear why men of the Gurkha regiments should be asked

the questions included in the questionnaire. I shall be glad to know why this is being done. This, I may add, is something which even if it was necessary, required reference to the Nepalese Government".⁴⁰

The signal was withdrawn by Army Headquarters immediately and hereafter, the "Option" was only given to units earmarked for the British Army, and not to those being allotted to the Indian Army.⁴¹

As per the policy, the interview was to be conducted by a board comprising the British Commanding Officer, and a representative each from the Indian Army and Royal Nepal Army. Thus, a new "opt" was held in end 1947, where the men of regiments joining the British Army were given three choices, as under:

- ▲ Stay in the unit, that is, to join the British Army,
- ▲ To transfer to a unit staying with the Indian Army, or,
- ▲ To go home on discharge or pension.⁴²

While the press reported that 2nd, 6th, 7th and 10th GR were scheduled to go to the H M Gs, it was appreciated that soldiers of the six regiments allotted to India were likely to volunteer for service in India, in view of nearness of their country to India, cultural and religious ties and long association with the country, and also material benefits such as enhanced pay entitled as per new pay commission. As soon after the War most of the British officers had gone on "home leave" and revised terms and conditions of service for the Gorkhas were not announced immediately, there were apprehensions amongst the troops to volunteer for H M G. Also, having just returned from four to five years fighting overseas, many troops were apprehensive to serve again overseas. Thus, the results of the "Opt Interviews" were disastrous, in most cases.

Results of the Opt

Lieutenant Colonel Anant Singh Pathania, Military Cross,

who by then had been posted as Commanding Officer of 1/5th GR (FF) at Red Fort, Delhi, represented the Indian Army at the interviews conducted by 2/6th GR then on duty at the Viceroy Lodge, New Delhi. He recalled in October 2005, that the Subedar Major being the senior most Gorkha was the first to be interviewed. When asked by the Commanding Officer, whether he wanted to serve in the H M G or not, he smartly saluted all present and replied emphatically and respectfully, "Janna Sahib" (I wont go), and left the office. At this, the British Commanding Officer was lived with rage and told him, "Look at this disloyal fellow, till this morning he was with me, now he has deserted me". When later one Subedar volunteered to remain with H M G, the Colonel was all smiles and very happy. He got up, warmly shook hands with the Subedar and exclaimed "Shabash, Jolly Good, we want fellows like you".⁴³ However, hardly any Gorkhas volunteered for HMG. Thereafter, the Commanding Officer was directed to collect his British officers and 30-40 Gurkhas who had opted for H M G, and move to a camp at Paharjung, before going to Malaya. Later, the Subedar Major told that after the referendum, he had been roundly abused by the Commanding Officer for allowing the men to vote against joining H M G. It was learnt that the Commanding Officer visited Lord Mountbatten and enquired of him, "Sir, do you feel safe with the Indian officers in command of the battalion? If not, I shall bring back my British officers and take over the Battalion again". Lord Mountbatten dealt with that bit of presumptuousness properly.⁴⁴

The "opt" did not go well either at Bombay where on 3 November 1947, 1st Battalion of 2nd GR (Lieutenet General Sir Francis Tukur's old unit), which had received Queen's Trenchon during 1857 Siege of Delhi, refused en-mass to serve in H M G. The unit, except for some JCOs and N C Os, refused to parade and instead assembled outside the Quarter Guard, and told Lieutenet Colonel G S N Richardson, the Commanding Officer, that they did not want to serve the British in Malaya, that they did not trust them to look

after their interests any longer. They protested that the original terms of service for Malaya were not good enough and that they were still waiting for new terms. They stated that they were finished with their British officers; and would rather serve in India. On the matter being reported to the Sub Area Commander, Brigadier Brar himself addressed the men, who asked to be permitted to make their "opt" there and then. This was allowed, resulting in practically the whole battalion opting for India.

While the British put the blame for this in-discipline and behavior on Indian propaganda, it was Lieutenant General Sir Francis Taker, Colonel of the Regiment, who laid the blame squarely on the War Office, when he wrote to Gen Sir James Steele at War Office.

It took a great deal of provocation to incite a Gurkha into mass disobedience, but "they have had the provocation all right", and listed six reasons for the mutiny, as under:

- Splitting the Gurkha Brigade into two parts.
- Taking from March 1946 to August 1947 to decide the fate of the Gorkha Brigade.
- Shelly sallying over terms of service etc.
- Stripping the H M G regiments of all their best officers in whom the men had confidence.
- Failure to appoint a Commander for H M G Gurkhas and to concentrate the units.

The action of Indian political parties who use (d) the dirtiest tool they could find to wean away these regiments away from their British connection.

During his valedictory speech to the unit before leaving India for the U K, Gen Taker told the troops that if they did not go to H M G then they will have to return the Truncheon awarded to them by Queen Victoria for their service at Delhi in 1857. This probably had some effect on the troops, as during the second "opt" held in December 1947, 340 out of 717 volunteered for H M G. While the figures for the Centre were also the same (nearly 50%), in

2/2 GR located at Dinapore, 592 out of 834 opted for H M G.

The figures of "opt" of 2/6th GR at Viceroy House, New Delhi were equally disappointing from British point of view, where only 70 out of 770 volunteered for H M G (later figures show that out of 781, 692 decided to serve in India). This unit became 6/5 GR (FF), of the Indian Army.

At Ahemdabad in 2/7 GR, only 40 out of 729 soldiers volunteered for H M G (with 250 yet to make their choice), which was attributed by the British to propoganda done by their Subedar Major, resulting in the Commanding Officer terming it a "mutiny". The unit was later converted into 3/11 GR.

The results of "opt" led to a large number of Gorkhas staying back with the Indian Army, which resulted in India raising additional battalions in 5 G R and even a new regiment, 11 GR, to absorb them.⁴⁵

Finally by February 1948, Brigadier Osborne Hedley estimated that by 1 April 1948, the corps in Malaya would have 7,400 men, made up of 3,900 who had opted for service in HMG, 2,400 recruits, 300 volunteers from Indian Gurkha regiments and 800 of the remaining 1,400 men who were yet to decide, being on leave.⁴⁶

While personalities like Field Marshal Sir W Slim (6 GR and later 1 GR) had shown great admiration for Gurkhas (he had seen them in 1915 in Gallipoli and resolved that should he get an opportunity he would serve with them, which he did later), they could not help but see the bulk of the Gurkhas being abandoned by the post War Britain, due to economic reasons. A few of these officers felt helpless about the 'meddling by crass politicians' back home, and could only cry 'shame' and 'bloody disgrace' the way the Crown were abandoning these loyal troops, the Gurkhas felt that the British were abandoning them, now that the war was over. Some Gurkhas were so angry that that, when their colonel turned up to wish them farewell, they 'spat' in his face and shouted pro-Indian and anti British slogans.⁴⁷

The British had always felt that due to their association dating back to 1815, the Gurkhas will certainly volunteer to continue to serve with H M G, post-Independence, but were in for a rude shock. Though some of them attributed it to the propaganda carried out by "Line Boys" and the influence of India's freedom movement, the more balanced officers knew that it was not so.⁴⁸

The main reasons were after nearly 4 to 5 years service overseas during the 2nd World War, the troops did not want to be located overseas far away from their homes. Also, the delay in announcing the distribution of Gorkha Units, reinforced by no clear policy on pay and allowances, created further un-certainty. On the contrary, India had announced a clear policy of "equating Gorkhas with Indian soldiers in all respects, including grant of commission as officers, to competent persons".⁴⁹

The reasons for the Gurkhas declining service under the British were analyzed dispassionately by Sir Taker, who admitted that the outcome of the referendum in early November and December 1947 resulted in near mutinies in two famous Regiments of the Gurkhas then in India (2nd at Bombay and 7th at Ahemdabad), which was un-heard of. He felt that the men were sick at heart for, after waiting and expecting for nearly two years, they had not yet been told under what terms they were to serve. The Gurkhas were also subjected to propaganda by Indian organizations and political big-wigs, against the British and their officers.⁵⁰ Their officers, with whom they had fought the war and trusted, had been either transferred to other arms and services, and it was only in January 1948 that new officers were posted to command them. According to him, the ignorance at home (London) of the outlook and character of its Gurkhas was abysmal. He further confessed that on the other hand, India had long before offered precise terms of service and had held out the carrot of proper commissions—a carrot which few Gurkha owing to Nepal's lack of educational facilities, had the chance of taking advantage

of.⁵¹ In brief, the Gurkha soldier felt that we (the British) had betrayed him.⁵²

Though the Gurkhas had been in the service of the British since 1815 and had served them with utmost loyalty, the British had denied officer rank commissions to the more able Gurkha soldiers, on the plea that 'discipline was better maintained by their own very capable white officers'.⁵³ Thus, when in 1947 they decided to leave India without matching the declaration made by the new Indian Government of treating 'Gurkhas including those from Nepal, on equal terms with the rest of the Indian Army, including in matters of promotion', the Gurkhas felt cheated and insulted by the British. They felt doubly insulted when they felt that Britain did not rate them as highly as the Indians did, when it came to promoting them to officers.⁵⁴ They were also upset as a few Indian looked down on them as 'soldiers of fortune who could be bought at the right price', but a majority of them stayed back in India, 90% of the total Gurkha Brigade.

The Handing/Taking Over

The attitude of certain British officers towards the Indian officers sent to take over the Gurkha units from them, also left much to be desired, especially as regards the officers mess silver and funds were concerned. It seems that British officers had, in a few cases, taken legal advice and were told that as these funds and property was contributed by them, they could dispose it the way they wished. Thus, some pieces of silver were taken back to England and returned to families of the officers or presented to institutions, while officers started living "free" on mess funds, till they exhausted.

The case of 5 GR, Brigadier Osborne Hedley own regiment, and a few other units was adversely commented upon by him as under:

"The 4th were alright, 3rd and 8th bad, some battalions had left dud cheque, some fed free or practically free

from Mess funds from middle of August until Indians took over".⁵⁵ However, rather than create an official protest leading to a scandal, it was left to Colonels of the Regiments to arrange for return of missing silver and funds. This approach did succeed to an extent, and quite a few items of silver returned to the Regiments.

Lieutenant Colonel SK Korla, D S O, MC, a graduate of Staff College, Camberley, along with Major Singha, went to take over 2/1st G R at Kosi Kalan (near Mathura). He was very coldly received by the outgoing British Commanding Officer, and sent to the JCOs Club for lunch. Here, the JCOs tried to get him drunk on rum with no food, but he was made of stronger stuff and survived. His character and greatness was clear next day, when without any malice, he gave a very warm and befitting farewell to the British Officers.

There were uncertainty and doubts in the minds of the British Officers of the Gurkha regiments also, as they were not certain of their future place in the reduced British Army. So much so, that on 8 August 1947, Lieutenant General Savory, Adjutant General, General Headquarters, Delhi had to issue a letter to clarify their doubts (Copy attached at Appendix). There were a miniscule number of Gurkhas from the regiments allotted to the Indian Army, who volunteered to go to H M G in Malaya, mainly due to personal differences with their immediate senior.⁵⁶

Hereafter, on the issue of transfer of Gurkhas between the Indian and British armies, there were a few letters exchanged between the Prime Minister of Nepal and Pandit Ji, and between Pandit Ji and Field Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck, Supreme Commander of Forces in India and Pakistan.

On 3 September 1947, the Nepalese Prime Minister agreed with Pandit Ji that there was no need of a referendum for Gurkha Regiments, as it has already been decided between India and Britain, with the approval of Nepal Government,

as to which Regiments will go to Britain and India. It was only necessary to ascertain whether Gurkhas of the four regiments joining the British Army were willing to serve abroad or not. Sir Taker also foresaw the reduction and dilution of the Gurkha Battalions in India.⁵⁷

Pandit Nehru also conveyed the views of his Nepali counterpart to Field Marshal Auchinleck, the Supreme Commander on 5 September, and told him to employ all Gurkha regiments, including those intended for the British Army, to control the grave law and order situation prevailing in the country, as thus far they were part of the Indian Army and there can be no objection to their employment. On 8 September, Auchinleck replied that all 27 Gurkha battalions "now belong to the Army of India and are entirely at the disposal of your Government".⁵⁸

Same day, on 8 September, Auchinleck wrote to the Prime Minister that personnel of the 19 Indian Gurkha Battalions would have prior claim to serve India and those men from eight British battalions who also wished to serve India would be posted to the vacancies caused in the 19 Indian battalions. Conversely, men of the British battalions would have first preference to serve the British Government and only in case of choice it would be extended to men from 19 Indian battalions. Pandit Ji replied that while he had no objection to the procedure suggested by the Supreme Commander, he felt that it did not quite fit in the views of the Maharaja of Nepal. He advised that the decision should only be taken after the final Tripartite Conference, and nothing should be done without approval of Government of Nepal.⁵⁹

Finally, the Tripartite Agreement was signed on 9 November by the Governments of Britain, India and Nepal. It offered to the Gurkha soldiers protection of employment in their existing battalions under the British and Indian Armies and also option to move from one Army to another, if they so desired. The Agreement also provided arrangements for substantial adjustments and facilities during the transitional period.

Posting of Indian Officers

During this period of transition in 1947, decision on distribution of the rest of the British Indian Army in India to India and Pakistan had also been taken. A number of infantry regiments having Indian companies and officers, like the Frontier Force (which had a company each of Sikhs, Dogra, Punjabi Musalman and Pathans), the Punjab Regiment and the Baluch Regiment went over to Pakistan, while their Indian officers and men were assimilated in to the Indian Army. Some of these highly competent, battles decorated and experienced officers were available for posting to Gorkha Battalions, to fill the void created overnight by the departure of the British officers. A few officers serving in the Indian regiments like the Marathas and Rajput were also selected for posting to the Gorkhas, thus giving a strong foundation to these new units of the Indian Army.

Soon, the whole Indian Army was involved in guarding trains of refugees from India to Pakistan and vice-versa, and guarding and administering refugee camps, a task the disciplined troops performed, with dignity and honor. As if these problems were not enough, October 1947 saw raiders from Pakistan invading the State of Jammu and Kashmir which had joined the Indian Dominion, and the Indian Army had to rush in to save the State, her people and their property. A stipulation that "the British officers will not enter Jammu and Kashmir" further created difficulties in employment of the Gorkha units initially. A decision was taken in August 1947 that all British officers were to go back to England by January 1948, thus the problem of officering the Gorkha units posed a serious concern for the Indian Army, which besides re-organization and employment on Aid to Civil Authorities for controlling communal riots, also got involved in a full-fledged war in Jammu and Kashmir, with Pakistan. This challenge was met by transferring officers from infantry units which went to Pakistan (Frontier Force, Baluch, Punjab Regiments) and by giving promotion to selected and deserving Gorkha JCOs of the battalions, transferring of officers from selected Indian

regiments and posting the best newly commissioned officers from the Indian Military Academy. These officers soon learnt the language and fighting qualities of their soldiers, and effectively led them in war.

As mentioned earlier, though Indian officers were granted commission since 1923, but none was posted to a Gurkha Regiment, and these units had been kept as a preserve of the British only, for nearly 150 years.⁶⁰ Lieutenant General Sir Francis Taker observed that 'ever since we had first raised the Nasiri Battalion, the Sirmoor and the Kumaon Battalion in 1815, it had been agreed, perhaps unwisely, that Gurkha regiments in our service would never be officered by the Indians. For one hundred and thirty odd years that rule had been observed carefully and Gurkhas had come to enlist for service under British officers. Thus, the Gurkha connection, though through the Indian Army, has been with Britain and always with the British rather than India'.⁶¹

Thus, post Independence, there was an urgent requirement of posting of Indian officers to Gurkha regiments. After his return from Nepal Brigadier Rudra had sent his recommendation to the Chief, suggesting that to begin with at least two Indian officers be posted to each of these battalions, with out delay. Thus, for the 26 battalions, the requirement was of 52 officers, who should preferably be pre-war regulars, and the list be approved by a committee of at least three senior Indian officers. He also suggested that the Battalion Commanders of Gurkhas be asked to submit a list of two Gurkha Officers (Subedar Major, Subedar, or Jemadar) whom they consider fit for award of immediate commission, as this would create confidence in the Government of Nepal about India's intentions and assurances. Soon, Brigadier Rudra was appointed to the Military Secretary's Branch, and became responsible for posting of these officers.⁶²

At Army Headquarters, New Delhi, a special cell was created under Brigadier Hutton (?) (the name could be Brig R C O Hedley), 5 GR, who was designated as co-coordinator

of the British Gurkha Force) in the Adjutant General's Branch for monitoring all aspects of Gurkha units, including posting of officers. He ruled that Indian officers transferring to the Gurkhas would be posted "on approval" to these units, and will only be confirmed if approved by the subedar majors, and created much confusion. It resulted in Colonel G G Bewoor (formerly of Baluch Regiment, who later joined 11 GR, rose to the rank of General and became Chief of the Army Staff) strongly objecting to this system, before the order was cancelled.

Similar was the reaction from Major (later Maj Gen) D K Palit, who during the War had served with distinction with Baluch Regiment (it had a Brahmin Dogra company), when in August 1947 he was transferred to take over 3/9 GR, then at Gurgaon, near Delhi. At first he did not understand why India needed to employ foreign troops, when the country had adequate number of martial classes, like Marathas and Sikhs, who he felt were better than the Gurkhas? He also did not want to be "associated with men whom Indians regarded as anti-Indian half-Tommie's, who had shot down unarmed people in Jallianwala Bagh in 1919" (he later realized that the troops were from his own regiment). He was of the opinion that the British had kept Gurkha regiments totally segregated from Indian units and they were not indianized till Independence. The Gurkhas were never stationed at normal military stations in India, and served either in their isolated and privately owned "regimental estates" in Kangra Hills, Dehra Dun or Almora (which were their private property-by Royal Warrant issued during Queen Victoria's reign for their pro-British services during the Mutiny), or, on active service on the North West Frontier or Baluchistan.⁶³ Thus; till 1947, no Indian officer got a chance to "know" Gurkha troops, let alone officer them. When Palit's pleas for cancellation of his postings to Dogras instead of 3/9 GR were turned down, he went to take over from Lieutenant Colonel David Amore, MC. However, he was in for a shock when he met his Brigade Commander, Brigadier Lakhinder Singh, who showed him

a letter written by Captain Johnson, Adjutant, to his mother, that British officers had been drilling it into the Gurkha officers (JCOs) and men "That Indians would be corrupt, would want bribes for each step in their promotion and would not lead them in battle especially as the new CO was going to be a Bengali babu, unfit for command".⁶⁴ Palit also feels that in their desire to keep the Gurkhas politically "untainted" by contact with the Indians, the British did not even recruit sons of JCOs and N C Os born in the unit lines (as was being done by the Indian units) or in the Gurkha settlements which had come up around the regimental homes in places like Dehra Dun and Dharamsala,, termed them as "Line Boys" used as a derogatory term, almost amounting to abuse. In his opinion, the British recruited almost entirely from the "gauche and illiterate hill-bellies" from the remote fastnesses of Nepal. He also states that ironically, this British prejudice has sometimes been kept alive in the post-war Indian Army by many a mindless Indian Commanding Officer.⁶⁵

In this regards, the first experiences and impressions of Colonel H K Sibal (later Lieutenant General, Colonel 5th GR (FF) and Army Commander), is relevant. General Sibal recalled that he first met the Gurkhas in 1943, during the 2nd World War, in the Suez Canal, when he was invited by his Brigade Commander to spend some time with him. As Sibal was serving with the Baluch Regiment, he found the Commanding Officer 1/5th RGR arrogant and the troops "snooty" towards Indian officers and units, and thus he did not fancy them. When told by the Brigadier that if time came for Indian officers to be posted to Gurkhas, he would like to recommend him, Sibal declined immediately. Later, when after Independence he was ordered to take over 5th GR Training Centre from Colonel N Prasad at Dehra Dun, he went with mixed feelings, but was successful in amalgamating it with 8 GR Centre. However, his stay at Dehra Dun was short, and while on his way to Staff College, Wellington as an Instructor, he was ordered to command 6/5th GR (FF) at Ambala, where a near mutiny had taken

place. Enroute, he met Brigadier M S Pathania (later Lt Gen) and Major General L P Sen, DSO (later Lt Gen and Colonel 1st GR), Brigade and Divisional Commanders respectively. They told him that his unit was in poor shape, and needed immediate improvement.

On way to the unit lines, he passed the football ground where a match was being played. As till then his posting was not known to many, he was surprised that a number of JCOs and ORs did not get up to salute him. Known for not losing his cool, on investigation Colonel Sibal found that the previous Commanding Officer had been indulging in excessive drinking, often with the JCOs in their Mess, and had thus lost all his authority and respect. This became clear to him next day, when he found hardly any officer or JCO on PT and drill parade. By setting a personal example, he started going for all parades, and was soon followed by other officers and JCOs. Organized training, including route marches to Chandigarh and Narayangarh Ranges by day and night (about 40 miles distance) were carried out, and drill, PT and games made compulsory. On his first inspection of the Quarter Guard, rifle of one soldier fell, and while the Subedar Major and the Adjutant recommended disciplinary action against the defaulters, Colonel Sibal pardoned him, suggesting more training. Thus, by setting a good example, humane behavior and yet strict training and disciplinary regime, the battalion soon came out of its slumber, and started winning all championships.

Later, during 1965 War, Gen Sibal saw 6/8th GR and 1/5th GR (FF) in operations in Khem Karan Sector, and as Adjutant General at Army Headquarters in 1970s under General (later Field Marshal) S H F F J Manekshaw, MC, he initiated a number of schemes for the welfare of Gorkha troops hailing from Nepal. Recalling his experiences, he feels that Gorkhas are very good troops, who need very good officers. Used to an honorable and happy life in Nepal, they are not used to abusive language or ill-treatment and want to be treated with respect and dignity, though they are ready to accept any punishment awarded for a fault

committed. Very well disciplined, they do not question orders, and have full faith in their leaders, who must win their loyalty by hard work, fair play, professional competence and honest treatment, and must have genuine concern for their welfare.⁶⁶

The experience of Colonel Niranjan Prasad (later Maj Gen) as Commnadant of 5th GR (FF) Centre at Abbottabad in 1947, the first Indian officer posted to the Centre was somewhat similar. He moved the Centre to Dehra Dun, to join Centres of 2nd, 3rd, 8th, and 9th GR. Before leaving for the UK, the British officers had already gifted the billiard table and furniture of the officers mess of 5th GR Centre to the Indian Military Academy, while the silver had been shipped to England. Thus, initially the Indian officers of the Centre had to live and dine in the M E S Inspection Bungalow. However, on the intervention of UP Area and the Adjutant General, Army Headquarters, Major General Thakur Mahadeo Singh, Commandant, I M A, ordered return of all items. As regards silver, an appeal was made to the daughter of the British officer in the UK through the press, and most of these items were returned by them.

As regards transfer of 5th GR (FF) to the Indian Army, General Prasad stated that it was mainly due to the near mutiny that 2/5th GR (FF) had in Japan, post 2nd World War. The officers were drinking and enjoying themselves, which also trickled down to JCOs and ORs, and there were a number of V D Cases. But for Brigadier K S Thimmaya, DSO's intervention and tactful handling, including an address to the unit, the unit might have faced severe disciplinary action.

General Thimmaya, DSO, has described the incident as under:⁶⁷

Though 2/5th GR was part of his Brigade in Nasik before moving as part of the Occupation Forces in Japan, their CO, Colonel Townsend made special efforts to keep him away from his troops. Thimmaya felt that the British were afraid Indian officers might disaffect

the Gurkhas from the British. It was obvious now that a good Indian officer could win greater loyalty from Indian troops than could the British. It was also obvious that India's independence was due shortly. Perhaps some British were not sure that independence could be achieved peacefully. Maybe a few were not even reconciled to the idea of free India. They knew that Indian troops could not be counted on to uphold British authority. The British had always convinced themselves that the Gurkha loved them and disliked Indians. Nevertheless, the Indians and the Gurkhas were Asian, and the Indians might be able to contaminate them with radical ideas. Thus, they, in order to have some part of the Indian Army on which they could rely, the Britishers denied opportunities to the Indians, DSO, to inter-act with the Gurkhas. Where not possible, these contacts were kept to the minimum.

On orders of the G O C, Major General Cowan, himself a Gurkha, 2/5 GR was specially moved away from the Brigade, from Matsue to Kure, for duties at the Divisional Headquarters. The first inkling of the trouble in the battalion came, when Thimmaya learned that two JCOs and a Havildar clerk had been court-martialed and dismissed from service by the Commanding Officer for disobeying orders, without reference to him, which was unheard of. Thimaya refused to confirm the sentence without giving a fresh hearing to the accused, and told the Divisional Headquarters that if they wanted, they could finalize the case.

Soon, a more serious case occurred, when a Gurkha soldier was caught with a Japanese woman. Though officially fraternization between the Occupation Army and the locals was prohibited, but it was openly being carried out. In this the Gurkhas, due to their liberal and lavish spending habits, pleasant disposition, friendly attitude and Asian looks, got preferential treatment from the Japanese women over the American and Australian troops. Thus, there was a simmering jealousy, due to which the Military Police was especially discriminating against the Gurkhas. Soon, in boiling

rage, 600 Gurkhas with their kukris drawn had poured into the street for taking revenge and getting their comrade released. They only relented when Colonel Virendra Singh of the Divisional Headquarters intervened and assured them that he will try to get their colleague released.

Despite knowing that the morale of the unit was low, Colonel Townsend had sent a detachment to Mikado, the Emperor's Palace in Tokyo, where the situation as regards to women was even worse. Suspecting that some of the men were bringing women in their barracks, the Colonel had asked officers to lay traps to catch them, which had further infuriated the soldiers, as they felt that their own officers were humiliating them. The whole Battalion refused to go on parade, which caused great embarrassment to the Allied Command. The troops would neither speak to the British officers nor listen to them, and demanded to be sent back to India.

It was at this stage that Brigadier Thimmaya, DSO, was called by the Divisional Commander to handle the situation. On reaching Tokyo, he felt that Colonel Townsend was unhappy that an outsider has been asked to resolve the crisis. Thimmaya found him to be a fine soldier, who, like many other British officers in the Indian Army, loved the unit and his men as his only children. But he was too stern a father who had no interest in games, entertainment, parties, cinema or other activities and he expected the men to feel the same way. During the war the unit had been through hell and earned two V Cs. The whole world was now relaxing, except 2/5th GR (FF), whose discipline was further tightened to such an extent that Townsend had suddenly become unpopular. He was a broken man, and felt that his own children had disobeyed him and lost faith in him.

Brigadier Thimmaya spoke to the Subedar Major, the J C O and N C Os about the fine reputation and tradition of their Battalion, about the bravery shown by them in the War, and told them that what they were now doing was very shameful and serious. It would spoil their reputation and bring disgrace to them, which would have effects even

in Nepal. He asked them to let him know their problems and assured them that he would try to resolve them, failing which they would be sent back to India.

Initially very hesitant, soon a few men spoke their minds and told him their many points, out of which Thimmaya felt that three were genuine and merited consideration:

1. The discipline had become unduly strict, they were not allowed to celebrate their traditional Hindu festivals and they had no trust in the CO.
2. As regards meeting women, they wanted to be treated on par with other Allied troops
3. They felt that the two JCOs and Havildar Clerk had been wrongly punished, and should be re-instated.

They told Thimmaya that they were proud to have an Indian Brigade Commander, but had a complaint against him also. He had not visited them earlier, while he had been visiting other units, often.

Thimaya promised them that he will project their points to the Division, and that he will visit them often. He later, joined them for Dussehra. He also briefed the Divisional Commander, who accepted all three points raised, thus a very unfortunate situation was suitably resolved. The battalion continued to remain with the Indian Army and won more laurels in years to come, including overseas, on a UN assignment in Congo.

General Dudley Russel, Army Commander Delhi and East Punjab Command (from Sep 1947 to January 1948), himself being from Frontier Force, was keen to retain the regiment, but as the bulk of Frontier Force units went to Pakistan Army and Gorkhas being Hindus could not go to Pakistan, the 5th GR (FF), with 3 Victoria Cross, was allotted to India. Recalling the referendum at Dehra Dun conducted under a British brigadier, Col Niranjana Prasad observed that the Gorkhas were fed up with serving the British masters as mercenaries, with whom they had nothing in common. On the other hand, with India they shared the Hindu religion, were closer home and had greater cultural affinity. He was

convinced that there was no impact of either the I N A or the political developments in India on the decision of Gorkha troops to serve with the Indian Army, rather than go to H M G.

When despite talks by British officers to Gorkhas of better pay and travel facilities a large number did not volunteer for H M G, the Army Headquarters had to be approached for sanctioning new units, for absorbing them. Thus was raised 11 GR, with Rais and Limbus. Col Niranjana Prasad found that all JCOs were very loyal, professionally competent and wanted to stay back for service with the Indian Army. Recalling that till December 1947, the brass band which used to play "God Save the King" after every official function, changed to the Indian National Anthem from mid-night 31 December 1947. When promoted jemadar, the band master, Havildar Damai was still not allowed into the JCOs Mess, being of low caste. It was only when Colonel Prasad told the Subedar Major that he would also boycott the JCOs Mess unless Jemadar Damai was allowed, that the JCOs Panchayat allowed the newly promoted JCO full privileges.⁶⁸

Initially, similar observations were made by Colonel H S Chauhan, a Territorial Army officer of the Rajput Regiment, who was tasked to raise 11th GR from the Rai and Limbu of 6th GR and 10th GR who had opted against going to HMG, at Palampur/Alhwal. Recalling his experiences of Gorkha troops at Razmak, he had observed that they were often snooty and avoided saluting Indian officers. Initially, he and Major Soni (Records Officer) were given a similar cold reception by the British officers on arrival at Palampur, on 28 December 1947, and were even surprised that a number of JCOs and ORs only saluted the British officers. However, at the dinner night held on 31 December 1947, the band major came to Colonel Chauhan for permission to march off the band, and not to the British Commandant. When Chauhan told him to seek permission of the British Commandant, the Band Major replied, "Sir, from now on, you are my Commanding Officer". The attitude of all ranks also changed from 1 January 1948, every one saluted the

Indian officers, showed respect and affection, and became a cheerful lot. At the Durbar, Col Chauhan again asked those who wished to go to H M G to raise their hands, but there were no takers. His problem of surplus manpower and welfare of forty families of soldiers was soon solved by Lieutenant General S M Shrinagesh, Adjutant General, Army Headquarters. He allowed raising of a new Gorkha regiment, 11th GR, of two battalions, to absorb all those willing to serve in the Indian Army.

As the British officers had planned to auction most of the Mess property and Col Chauhan had no funds to buy it, he debarred any contractor to bid and allowed the British officers to take away everything they wanted. This forced them to leave the billiard table and furniture. Though 7th and 10th GR were old regiments, they left no funds for their Indian successors, so much so that even the Unit Dai (mid-wife) had to be paid by taking a loan. Soon, other Indian officers started arriving. Chauhan also got assistance from his old friends like Lieutenant Colonel Raj Bir Chopra, Commandant 4 GR Centre. The JCOs and ORs got down to training and administration, and proved to be great assets.

The only problem that arose was from an Indian domiciled Subedar, who wanted to be promoted as Subedar Major, out of turn. When told that he will have to wait his turn, he wanted to go and meet Pandit Nehru, the Prime Minister. Colonel Chauhan dealt with him firmly, ordered Major Soni to immediately discharge him for indiscipline, and put him on the next train out from there. Thereafter, discipline in the Centre saw a marked improvement. During his informal inter-actions with all ranks, Colonel Chauhan found that most of the Gorkhas opted for service in the Indian Army, as they wanted to remain closer to home and had greater religious and cultural affinity with India. They served him very well, and hereafter he had no problems. He feels that Rais and Limbus, like all other Gorkhas, respect their leaders, are very obedient, well disciplined, but can not suffer insults, abuses, ill-treatment and selfish treatment. They make very fine soldiers, as good as or even better

than those from other Indian martial race, but require leadership of a very high caliber, which must not only identify with them, but be sensitive to their feelings, demands and problems.⁶⁹

On the other hand, there were Indian officers who after Independence volunteered for transfer to Gorkha Rifles. One of them was Major G S Nagra, who as 2 IC 1/4th GR officiated as commanding officer of the battalion during the 1948 Punch-Link Up after the Commanding Officer was wounded and evacuated, and later rose to be a Major General in command of troops who made world history by entering Dacca first during the 1971 Indo-Pak War. Hailing from Hoshiarpur, as a school student he had seen the Gorkhas from Dharamsala and Bakloh camp near his village during their summer training manoeuvres, and they deeply impressed him by their smart turn out and discipline. Having played a few football matches against them, he knew that the soldiers from Nepal were very friendly, fair and just. They encouraged the fellow players and even opponents, to improve. As in 1942 Indian officers were not commissioned into the Gorkhas, Nagra joined a Frontier Force battalion in Burma. Here, when posted as Intelligence officer of a Brigade, he came in to close contact with 4/4 GR, one of the three units of the formation. The battalion provided the Defense and Employment Platoon to the Brigade Headquarters, under Subedar Magras Gurung, who had won a Military Cross for his bravery at Mandlay. Going around their perimeter defenses at night, Nagra came to know the troops quite well.

He found them alert, upright, capable of facing hardships cheerfully without complaining, very well disciplined, willing to take on any assignment and able to survive on frugal rations. Though he felt that they did not take initiatives like the Sikhs and Punjabi Mussalmans of the Frontier Force (his battalion also had a company each of Dogras and Pathans), but the Gorkhas were in no way lacking in soldierly traits. Thus, when in August 1947 the transfer of officers was being done, he asked to be transferred to 4 GR, though

initially he was posted to Garhwal Rifles, another very fine regiment of the Indian Army. He knew that the Gorkhas need very good leadership, which should be caring, humane and treat them with dignity and understanding, in response to which the soldiers will die for their leader, without any hesitation a trait which he practiced and instilled in all his officers.

Though the Indian Army did not want to perpetuate the "cult" built by the British around Gurkhas, yet it wanted to provide them with the best officers that could be found, and continue with the tradition of the Gurkha Brigade.⁷⁰ Once the panel of officers had been drawn, letters were sent by Army Headquarters, New Delhi to them, asking them to give their option and willingness for transfer, as well as for protecting their seniority.⁷¹

Recruiting of Gorkhas from Nepal

Despite agreeing to service by the Nepalese in the East India Company's Army after the 1815 War and subsequent improvement in relations, the Nepal Durbar did not allow free and open recruitment of her subjects in the service of the British in India, till 1885. All this while, soldiers going on leave were specially briefed to encourage, induce and smuggle the requisite number of prospective recruits clandestinely across the Border, mostly to Gorakhpur, which was by then connected by rail to Western India. At times, these soldiers had to masquerade as civilians, for which they had to spend some of their leave in India for growing hair, before entering Nepal.

It was after Maharaja Bir Shamsheer Rana became Prime Minister and his brother General Chandra Shamsheer took over as the Commander-in-Chief of Nepal Army, that formal permission for the recruiting parties to enter Nepal was granted, for recruitment as per areas and numbers approved by the Durbar.

Once at Gorakhpur or other temporary camps, the recruits were first screened by representatives of the Army,

medically examined and then sent to training companies of the respective regiments, for training. Those not selected were given enough money to go back to their homes, often ten to fifteen days march. Recruitment was restricted to the cold and dry season of October to March. Later, besides the leave party, a few trusted and dependable retired JCOs and NCOs were nominated by the Regiments, to visit the interior of Nepal during festival and village gatherings, and select suitable recruits for the respective regiment. Termed as 'Gallewalas', they were paid for each recruit, whether finally selected or rejected, and this system continued till 1969.

Thus, prior to 1886, there was no centralized recruitment system in the Indian Army or the Gorkha Regiments. Regiments made their own arrangements by sending recruiting parties, and the recruits thus obtained were brought to the Battalion, for enrolment and training. However, when in 1886 the second battalions were raised in the first five Gorkha Regiments, the number of recruits required also went up, for which G R D was established, the first Recruiting Depot in the Indian Army.

The Nepal Durbar encouraged recruitment through assurances to their population that service with British forces would be regarded as service in the Nepalese Army, and that special effort would be made to provide employment for returning veterans. This policy was based on the view that returning veterans would add to the military strength of Nepal during emergencies. Thus, relative higher pay and pensions as well as opportunities for advancement to non-commissioned ranks in the Nepal Army also helped the recruitment efforts.

To facilitate and streamline recruitment, Gorkha Recruitment Depot was established at Gorakhpur on 3 March 1886, in the Old Artillery Bazaar Lines, and commenced monthly recruitment of persons brought by the Gallewalas, pre-runner of the present day Recruiting Officers (commissioned officers) and Assistant Recruiting Officers (JCOs). Until 1887, the Depot continued here during the

winter season and moved to Darjeeling-Ghoom during summer months, when in 1887 Capt Trench, the Deputy Recruiting Officer was given permission to demolish the Bazaar Lines and build hutments with the debris. These hutments continued to be occupied by recruiting parties of each Gorkha Regiment (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 42nd, 43rd and 44th Gorkha Rifles). In 1894, a dharamsala (rest house) was also constructed for the pensioners.⁷²

However, due to plague, in 1903, the Depot was shifted to Pharendra and then camped on the banks of Ramgarh Tal (lake) till 1906, when initially 15 acres land was acquired for a permanent camp at Kunraghat, near Gorakhpur where it now occupies over 104 acres. Construction of buildings commenced in 1911, and as a number of pensioners also used to come to the Camp along with their wards as recruits as well as to resolve their pension cases, a sarai (hostel) for them was specially constructed. The Recruiting Depot also took on the responsibilities of a Records Office, distribution of pensions and pays to leave parties, and to monitor their welfare.

Once recruitment was also permitted from Eastern Nepal, in 1890 a subsidiary Gorkha Recruiting Depot was established at Darjeeling, West Bengal, which initially functioned from Deputy Commissioner's office, on part time basis. Subsequently, during winter months it used to be shifted to Lahiria Sarai in Bihar, a practice which was discontinued after 1947. It moved from Darjeeling to Ghoom in 1901 and a Record Office was established along side it in 1945. Later in 1975 it shifted to Lebong but due to administrative reasons returned to Ghoom in 1985, where it is presently located. It operates under the control of Commandant, Gorkha Recruiting Depot, Kunraghat.

By 1914, there were twenty Gorkha battalions and a company of the Queen's Own Corps of Guides, for which recruits had to be enrolled. Besides, there were demands of Assam Rifles, Burma Military Police and the Kashmir Imperial Army, who also employed Gorkhas. Thus, yearly

requirement worked out to between 1,800 to 2,000 recruits. The Central Nepal Recruiting Area of Nepal constituted of basin of River Gandak, though a few recruits were also taken from eastern districts of western Nepal, the Basin of Gagra River. The classes enlisted were Thakurs, Khas/Chettries, Magars and Gurung, and a few Newars, and men for essential services, such as Damais for bandsmen or buglers, and Sarkis and Kamis for boot makers, blacksmiths or armourers.⁷³

While Khas, Thakurs and men from services classes were fairly distributed over the recruiting areas, Magars and Gurnugs mainly reside in Nos 1 to 4 West, Palpa and Piuthana. Units of 9 GR enrolled mainly Thakuris and Khas/Chhetries, and 11 GR - Rais and Limbus from Eastern Nepal. The rest of the Indian Army, mainly 1st, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 8th GR till 1980s used to enroll majority of Magars and Gurungs- a trend which has been changed, with 25% being enlisted from other castes. Earlier, the enrollment in Kashmir Imperial Troops was restricted to 60% Magars and Gurungs, which has since been discontinued. At present, in the Gorkha Regiments of the Indian Army, 60% soldiers are enrolled from Nepal, while Indian Domiciled Gorkhas make up balance of 40%.

As regards Eastern Nepal, here recruitment could be carried out throughout the year from the Basin of Kosi River, at Laheria Sarai from November to March and at Darjeeling from April to October. Enlistment was done mainly from Limbus, Rais, Sunwars, Lamas and other men of services classes, whose families had migrated to the region. The best recruits were obtained from region of Limbuan, between Rivers Arun and Tamarkhola in Dhankuta district, especially from Tamarkhola, Taplinjung, Yangrup, Sabhaya, Utter, Mewakhola and Athrai, while a few Limbus also came from Ilam. Rais mainly came from area between Rivers Arun and Dudhkosi in Bhojpur district, the best being from Sanamajhuwa, Hatuwa, Apchat, Bokhim, Rasuwa and Siktel, while a few came from Ilam, Okhaldhunga.

Sunwars were mainly resident of area between Rivers Likhu and Tamarkosi, North-East of Kathmandu Valley, in Okhaldunga district. Lamas were recruited from area either side of Sunkosi and Rosikhola rivers, of Dhulikhel district and Layang (Nos 1 and 2 East). A few recruits were also selected from Gurung colony in Sikkim. Earlier, besides 7th and 10th GR, Burma Military Police and Assam Rifles also used to enroll from this area. However, now mainly 11 G R depends upon Gorkha Recruiting Depot, Ghoom.

When in the earlier days Gorkha Recruiting Depot, Gorakhpur used to shift to Darjeeling from April to September during summer, the permanent staff was boosted by attaching Medical Officers, Recruiting Officers and JCOs from Gorkha Regiments for whom recruitment was to be made. From the beginning, a Recruiting Officer was also made responsible for the settlement of the estate of all deceased Gorkha soldiers whose heirs applied to him, for investigation of family pension claims. He also extended assistance to any Gorkha, man, woman, or child, soldier pensioner or otherwise, who approached him. He was also incharge of the Gorkha Reserve Centre.

The success of good recruitment was entirely dependent upon the Gallawalas (as the recruiting parties were then called), men returning from leave and furlough, as the Gorkha Recruiting Depot could not officially send teams into Nepal. Till 1888, cases of recruiters being ill-treated in Nepal were frequent, but these eased in the latter years, after recruitment was formally permitted by the Nepal Durbar.

Conduct of Recruiting Rally

After 1947, after informing Nepal Durbar through the Embassy of India, Kathmandu, Recruiting Teams used to tour Nepal and complete initial and partial screening in Nepal, after which the selected candidates were called to G R D, for final physical and medical tests. This system continued till 1995, when it was decided to conduct full-

fledged Recruitment Rallies in Nepal, following the same protocol.

At present, besides physical and medical fitness tests, Gorkha Recruiting Depot employs scientific and modern techniques for selection of best suitable material. These include written tests, on-the-spot interviews and screening for security through verification by ex-servicemen and Nepal Police.

The procedure followed is as under:⁷⁴

Depending upon yearly wastage rate, vacancies for recruitment for each Gorkha regiment are released by Army Headquarters, for each quarter. Based upon these, Gorkha Recruiting Depot, Kunraghat plans recruiting rallies tentatively for the whole year, with firm demand for the quarter, from region/zones/districts where the tribes of recruits are residing.

In order to ensure transparency and full opportunity to all suitable candidates, the rally schedule is advertised through the Embassy of India, Kathmandu and the District Soldier Boards working under the Defense Advisor in local media (vernacular press and TV), at least 30 days in advance. To manage the crowds, assistance is sought from Nepal Army, Nepal Police and local administration. Now a days, rallies are conducted through out the year, even though efforts are made to avoid them during the monsoon season.

The duration of each rally is about 10 to 12 days, including time for induction and de-induction of the Team from Gorakhpur in to Nepal. First two days are spent on establishing the Camp at the site allotted by the local administration, collecting the candidates and grouping them as per villages, zila and caste. There after, they are addressed by the Rally In charge, who explains various documents required to be produced, type and conduct of physical and written tests, and ensures that touts are totally eliminated. Besides the Team comprising of officers, JCOs and NCOs from Gorkha Recruiting Depot (people belonging to the area

of the Rally are specially excluded), assistance is also taken from retired JCOs and NCOs residing in the area.

First, the documents of the candidates are checked, for age, educational qualification (school leaving certificate) and proof of residence (nagriкта parman patra), after which the candidates are grouped as per their sub-castes (Gurung and Magars, Chhetris and Thakuris, Other Castes). Sons of ex-servicemen are also verified through documents issued by either the Records Office; or the Embassy of India, Kathmandu.

Thereafter, the aspirants are grouped in batches of 10 to 15, depending upon the sports ground available for the running test. Then they are put through physical tests over 3 to 5 days, while simultaneously their physical measurements and documents are re-checked.

Those who pass are then put through a one day written pre-check on the site, to check any fake education certificates. Next 3 to 4 days are spent on medical examination, checking the authenticity of documents through civil administration, and issue of admit cards for the final tests at Gorkha Recruiting Depot, Kunraghat, which takes place after a week. Now, the selected candidates have to bring certificates and witnesses to verify their character, which also acts as security verification, against infiltration by Maoists or agents of the I S I of Pakistan.

After a week they arrive at G R D, where they are given a common entrance written test, for which paper is set as per directions of Army Headquarters. Finally, those selected are put through a final medical test, including x ray of chest. Their documents are finally checked, verification completed, and a nominal roll of successful candidates produced, a procedure which takes from 6 to 7 days.

The selected candidates stay for four weeks at the Depot, during which they are imparted motivational training, introduced to military discipline and physical fitness, while their documents are finally checked, before they leave for respective Training Centers.

Besides being the sole agency for recruiting Gorkhas from Nepal, the Depot also functions as a Records Office for pensioners, looks after welfare of the widows and needy. It also acts on behalf of Assam Rifles. Being the only Army unit at Gorakhpur, it also functions as Station Headquarters, liaises with the Air Force, civil administration and the railways.

An account of the Recruitment Rally attended by the author in June 2006 at Butwal, Western Nepal.

Special Items of a Gorkha's Dress-The Kukri and Hat Felt Gorkha

While Gorkha soldiers have worn various dresses as prescribed by the Army from time to time, "Gorkha Hat" and "Kukri" has remained a unique head dress of the Gorkha Regiments. These have also been adopted by Kumaon Regiment (3rd Kumaon and Naga Regiment), Garhwal Rifles, Assam Regiment and the Assam Rifles, due to their affiliation with the Gorkhas. A brief description of these items and the affiliations is covered here.

Kukri

The origin of Kukri is traced to Machaira the cavalry sword of ancient Macedonians carried by Alexander's horsemen, or to a similar form of blade of Greek sword Kopis. Few others feel it follows early Hindu weapons. Nepali scholars say that it was first used by the Malla rulers of 13th century, but trace its links to sword construction in Japan. It is most likely that it may have been developed in Nepal as multi-purpose weapon by the peasants, themselves.

Historically, the oldest Kukri preserved in the National Museum, Kathmandu, is of Raja Drasdas Singh Shah, King of Gorkha, in 1627. It is not only heavy and broad-based, but has a carved wooden handle and has the traditional peculiar curve and notched guard at the base of the blade. The heaviest kukri in Kathmandu Museum belongs to Kaji

Kalu Pande, the warrior of many battles in 1749. It is exceptionally heavy and stands testimony to the strength of the brave soldier.

Kukri was used by the soldiers of Gorkha King, Prithvi Narayan Shah, very effectively during their invasion of Nepal valley in 1767-78, for blunting the opponent's heavy, long and un-wieldy double edged swords, long spears, short wrist-guard daggers and straight swords. Since then, it remains practically un-replaceable by sword, saber or rapier.⁷⁵ Kukri is the most often used weapon of close quarter battle and multi-purpose tool used by the Gorkhas.

In Nepal, a boy may get his first Kukri at the age of five, thus he learns to use it for various purposes from childhood. In later life, it is used by men and women, alike. A slightly curved knife of normally 12 ½ in (18 cms) length and 2 in (4 cms) wide at its greatest width, it is reverse of a saber, as its outer edge is unsharpened and the inner edge performs the act of cutting. Normally made from steel by local blacksmiths (kamis), it weighs approximately 500 gms. The main Kukri being a sharp tool or weapon is normally kept in the scabbard, along with two small Kukris of 8 cms. In Nepal, the quality of the steel, finish of the blade, material of the handle (wood, steel, ebonite or ivory) and cover of the scabbard (cloth, leather or velvet) not only indicate the intended use of the Kukri, but also the status of the person.

Every officer and soldier serving in a Gorkha unit has his own Kukri used for parades and other ceremonial occasions, while a certain numbers are also issued by the Government and kept as reserve for various occasions, like sacrifice during Dussehra. These are normally manufactured by contractors.

While Kukri may vary in shape or length depending upon the purpose for which it is being manufactured, all of them have two notch near the handle and groove along the edge of the blade. This enables catching the blow of the adversary's sword, dagger or saber and slipping it down

into the notch for a quick twist by the holder of the kukri. The scabbard has a pocket for keeping a leather purse and two small knives; one a dull-edged for a hone and the other, a sharp one, for smaller cutting jobs. A few people carry a tweezer in the pocket.⁷⁶

Carried tucked into waist band in the front when in civilian clothes, in uniform it is slung by a loop on the belt, at the back. A Gorkha learns to use kukri from childhood, for cutting grass, harvesting the crop, slicing fruits, sacrificing animals and cutting wood. Thus, even in battle, he feels very encouraged, comfortable and at ease in using kukri in close quarter battle, specially while attacking or silencing sentries, in hand-to-hand battle. At times, while charging at an enemy position, Gorkha soldiers may draw Kukri and assault, shouting the battle cry 'Ayo Gorkhali' (the Gorkha are coming), sight of which creates fear in the enemy. Bigger size kukris are made for special occasions, like Dussehra, and are used exclusively for sacrificing animals like buffalo, with one stroke. Kukri made from white metal, with silver plated scabbard, are also given as presents at important occasions by the Gorkhas or Gorkha Units.⁷⁷

Highlighting the religious importance of Kukri, Maharaja Padma Shamsheer Jung Bahadur Rana, the Prime Minister of Nepal, stated in 1948 that 'the Kukri is the national as well as the religious weapon of the Gorkhas. It is incumbent upon a Gorkha to carry it while awake and to place it under his pillow when retiring. As a religious weapon it is worshipped during the Dassain (the most important Hindu festival) and at other times whenever any sacrifice is to be made'.⁷⁸

Due to its significance for military bravery, Kukri forms an important part of the Regimental Badge and crest of every Gorkha unit, including that of Assam Rifles, though the positioning of Kukri may differ.

A question had risen in Independent India regarding legal status of Kukri, when in May 1947, just before Independence, the Police of Sind (now in Pakistan) seized

two Kukris from two Gorkhas, which caused resentment amongst them. Shri Nihchaldas, in a letter dated 15 May 1947 from Karachi to Sardar Patel, the Home Minister, suggested that the only way to resolve the issue was to issue a notification by the Governor-General under Section 27 of the Indian Arms Act, exempting Kukris on the pattern of Kirpans carried by the Sikhs. On 21 May 1947, Sardar Patel replied to him that there was considerable difference in the Sikhs wearing a Kirpan (a religious issue) and a Gorkha carrying a Kukri (a right based on custom to a war like race which has no religious significance at all), while the sentiments in both cases may be similar. He clarified that while the Arms Act provides for exemption for the Sikhs for many years, but it was difficult to provide any exemption for any particular class in the Indian Arms Act, but the suggestions made will be carefully considered.⁷⁹

Carrying of the Kukri by Gorkha soldiers is covered in the Tripartite Agreement of 1947 between Nepal, India and the UK.

Gorkha Hat

The other distinct part of Gorkha uniform is the Hat Felt; normally two stitched one inside the other, with a pugree around, and regimental cap badge. Traditionally, till 1858 Gorkhas wore a turban, like Sikh troops. However, in 1859, a Kilmonoch cap was adopted, which in 1904 was replaced by the present day Hat Field Service, initially of single piece, for all duties except for ceremonial occasions.⁸⁰ This experiment continued till 1st World War, during which steel helmets were worn during the war, while Hat Gorkha was worn during peace time duties. By 1930s, Hat Felt Gorkha, with pugree and regimental badges and flash became a common site in the Gorkha Brigade. However, it was shelved during 2nd World War, when though it was worn in Burma and the Far East, in other theatres steel helmets were worn. Soon after the war, it returned as head dress for all ceremonial purposes, and has since then inspired many youth to join the Gorkhas.⁸¹

Each regiment follows a different pattern of pagree around the hat on which their distinct cap badge and company code is patched up. However, it is worn by all non Sikh officers, JCOs and OR on normal and ceremonial occasions.

For instance in 4th GR, the hat of officers has nine folds, of JCOs seven and that of OR five. The badge is of size 1.3 in x 1.5 in and is worn on left side on a 2 in x 2 in woolen black piece of cloth. All persons wear Gorkha Hat at an angle of 45°, keeping the badge on the left and about 2 fingers width (1.5 in) above the right eye. To keep the Hat in position, a leather chin strap of ½ in width is used. To denote sub units down to coy level, a rectangular woolen cloth patch of 2 in x 2 in is stitched at the back in a diamond shape. To ensure proper shape and stiffness two Gorkha felt hats are stitched into each other, at the rim.⁸²

All ranks of Gorkha Rifles, Assam Rifles, Assam Regiment and a few Kumaon and Naga regiment are entitled to wear Gorkha Hat. They take great care and pride in maintaining it.

Gorkhas in Assam Regiment

Assam Rifles provided the nucleus for raising of Assam Regiment. Though mainly recruiting from the tribal areas of the North East, a certain number of Gorkhas from Nepal and those living in the region have also joined the Regiment. In November 2005, there were 471 Indian domiciled and 81 Nepal domiciled (residual of pre- 1984 period) Gorkhas in the Assam Regiment. They had done the Regiment proud and won the following gallantry awards:

Serving

Subedar Dil Bahadur Thapa, 9 ASSAM. Kirti Chakra awarded on 15 August 2003. Commendation Cards-8.

Retired

Hav Diwan Singh Thapa, 1 ASSAM-Indian Distinguished Service Medal, won on 6 June 1942.

Lance Hav Bishnu Bahadur Thapa-, 4 ASSAM, Vir Chakra, won on 6 June 1990.

Naik Tike Ram Thapa, 3 ASSAM-Kirti Chakra, won on 15 August 1999.

Sepoy Damar Bahadur Chhetri, 5 ASSAM, Lance Naik Chura Bahadur, 1 ASSAM and Hav Tike Bahadur Thapa-10 ASSAM, all won Sena Medals.

Commendation Crads were awarded to 15 personnel of the Regiment.

The Gorkhas in the Assam Rifles

Raised in 1835 as Cachar Levy to guard British economic interests in tea gardens, coal and timber in Assam against the tribal, initially the Force worked under Police Officers and mostly comprised of Gorkhas, with a sprinkling of other tribal of the North East India. Gorkhas were preferred by the officers, as they were hardy, could withstand the rugged country and life in isolated region with limited logistic support, and were well disciplined and dependable. Unlike a number of local tribes, they could face the climate better, and had no personal involvement in tribal disputes.

Later, in 1878 its role also covered 'punitive action' and supporting the administration in far-flung areas,, which it did by establishing a number of isolated posts, often at 7 to 10 days marching distance. There was often a tussle between the Army and Assam Rifles for recruitment of Gorkhas, as adequate number of recruits from Nepal were not always available. Though officially Darjeeling became the recruiting point and Assam Rifles was only permitted to recruit from the 'residual' of the Army, a number of agents brought recruits direct from Eastern Nepal for the Force.

In 1882, it was re-designated as Assam Military Police

and adopted a crest with two kukris. During the 1st World War, the Force sent reinforcements of 23 Indian officers 9 JCOs and 3174 men to affiliated Gorkha battalions operating in France, Egypt, Gallipoli, Mesopotamia, North Persia and the North West Frontier of India. Out of these, 5 JCOs and 237 men were killed and 6 JCOs and 247 men were wounded. Eleven JCOs and 69 men earned gallantry awards (3 Indian Order of Merit, 5 Indian Distinguished Service Medals and 12 Meritorious Service Medals), mostly by the Gorkhas.

In recognition of the services rendered by its troops, in 1917 the Force was re-designated as Assam Rifles.⁸³

As a result of the above experience, in 1925 Assam Rifles was designated as a second line of reinforcement' for the Gorkha Regiments, and the following permanent affiliations were made for provisioning of officers, JCOs and NCOs.

1st Assam Rifles to 2nd G R Group (2 and 9 GR).

2nd Assam rifles to 5th Group (7 and 10 GR).

3rd Assam Rifles to 1st group (1 and 4 GR).

4th Assam Rifles to 4th Group (5 and 6 GR).

5th Assam rifles to 3rd Group (3 and 8 GR).

During the 2nd World War, units of Assam Rifles acted as flank guard, forward eyes and ears of the regular army by penetrating deep behind the Japanese lines, formed part of V Force and provided support to Chindit Operations. Platoons of Assam Rifles also took part in Slim's pursuit across the Chindwin River into Central Burma and beyond, up to the border of Siam. It also trained the nucleolus for the Assam Regiment, which still wears Gorkha Hats to commemorate their old affiliation.

A total of 43 awards were won by troops of the five Assam Rifles battalions, which included 3 Member of the British Empire, 5 Military Cross, 4 Order of the British Empire, 1 Indian Order of Merit, 13 Military Medals, 15 Indian Distinguished Service Medals, 7 British Empire Military Service medals, and innumerable Mention-in-

Dispatches. Subedar Major Uttam Singh Chhetri was awarded Military Cross.

In 1947, Lieutenant Colonel Sidhiman Rai, M C, became the first Indian Army officer to take over as Inspector General of the Force. The following prominent Gorkhas have inspired all ranks of the Force by their heroic gallantry.

Pre-Independence

Sub Maj Hony Capt Sardar Bahadur Ganjalal Rai, O B I, 1829-1938, 4 AR.

Sub Maj Sardar Bahadur Bal Bahadur Gurung, KPM, OBI and MM-3 AR.

Sub Maj and Hony Lt Sardar Bahadur Sukhraj Limbu, OBI, 1938-42, 4 AR.

Post Independence

Sub Maj Kharka Bahadur Limbu, AC (Posthumous), MC, 8 AR.

Capt (later Lt Col) Man Bahadur Rai, AC, MC, IDSM, 8 AR. One of the highest decorated officer of Assam Rifles.

Due to expansion of Assam Rifles, the affiliations with Gorkha Regiments were revised in 1977, as under:

1st and 20th AR with Assam Regiment,

2nd and 21st AR with 1 GR,

3rd and 19th AR with 3 GR,

4th and 18th AR with 4 GR,

6th and 5th AR with 8 GR,

7th and 9th AR with 9 GR,

10th and 15th AR with Garhwal Rifles,

11th, 14th and 17th ARs with Kumaon Regiment,

12th and 16th AR with 5 GR (FF) and 13th and 8th AR with 11 GR.

While efforts are made to provide officers from affiliated

Gorkha Regiments to affiliated A R units, it is always not possible.

At the time of its inception, Assam Rifles was composed mostly of Gorkhas and Tribal from North East and Hill areas, which remained unchanged for nearly 150 years. However, by 1984, the rank and file consisted of 70% Gorkhas, 20% from Garhwal and Kumaon, and balance 10% Jaruas, Nagas and Kukis from the North East. This underwent a change, in 1985. Recruitment of Nepali nationals has been stopped, while Indian domiciled Gorkhas are being encouraged to enroll, and are given special relaxation of 5 cms in height and 2 cms in chest measurements.⁸⁴

All ranks of the Force are covered by the Pension rules applicable to all Para Military Forces of the Central Government. To enable Nepali pensioners to collect their emoluments in Nepal, special cells function along side Pension Paying Office Kathmandu, Pokhra and Dharan (Eastern Nepal). Besides this, Assam Rifle pensioners and their authorized wards are also entitled to draw their pension from the seasonal pension camps organized by the Indian Embassy, Nepal at various places.

For promotion, there is no restriction or embargo of any sort. Suitable and deserving candidates have avenues open till commandant (Colonel) and a number of them have risen to this rank.

Since 1985, approximately 3700 Indian Gorkhas have joined the Force and served with distinction in all theatres. The Gorkhas have also excelled in professional activities (like shooting), sports (football, hand ball and boxing) and adventure activities (like mountaineering and rafting). As on October 2005, there were 2186 Nepal domiciled and 3631 Indian domiciled Gorkhas in the Force.⁸⁵

Post 1947 Political Developments in Nepal

Following the Indian National Movement in late 1940s Nepal was also undergoing political transformation. The surge of nationalism and democracy was spreading across

the Nepal-India border and the autocratic rule of the Rana Maharaja Prime Minister's family had given rise to a near revolt by the Nepali Congress, which enjoyed support from not only the King but also from Indian leaders. Some of these leaders had participated in India's freedom movement and served jail sentences. In October 1946, they formed All-India Nepali National Congress, at Banares which during its meeting in Calcutta in January 1947 came under the leadership of Bisheshwar Prasad Koirala (1914-1982). The party formulated its aim the 'ouster of the Rana dictatorship by peaceful means and establishment of democratic socialism'.

In November 1947, Juddha Shumsher resigned as the Prime Minister, and was succeeded by Padma Shamsheer, who used strong arms tactics at the agitators at Biratnagar. Though he subsequently announced elections to municipality and district boards and released political detainees, the winds of democratic change continued to sweep the country.

In January 1948 he announced the first constitution for the country, while retaining almost all powers of the Prime Minister and rules of succession for both the King and the Prime Minister as before. Yet, the Nepali National Congress agreed to work within the framework. However, beset with problems from all sides, Padma Shamsheer resigned in early 1948, and was succeeded by Mohan Shamsheer, who showed no interest in implementing the new constitution. He also rejected the progressive elements of the Rana aristocracy, many of whom founded the Nepal Democratic Congress (Nepal Prajatantrik Congress) in Calcutta, in August 1948. They openly called for the overthrow of the Ranas by any means, including armed insurrection, and even tried to foment an army coup between January 1949 to January 1950 which failed.

Later, the party merged and in March 1950 became Nepali Congress Party and decided to wage a war against the Ranas. All this while King Tribhuvan Bir Bikram Shah had been making anti-Rana statements, and on 6 November 1950, along with his family he escaped from the palace and

sought asylum in the Indian Embassy in Kathmandu. Simultaneously, the Liberation Army of the Nepali Congress Party, Mukti Sena began launching attacks in Terai on 11 November. Due to the deteriorating situation, on 7 November 1950, the Prime Minister Maharaja Mohan Shumsher Rana removed the King from the throne.

By now the Prime Minister Mohan Shumsher Rana had realized that he was fighting a futile battle against the King who appeared to be very popular, as was evident from the pro-King rally by nearly 50,000 in Kathmandu. He also knew that India in the South had gained Independence and in the North the Chinese had moved into Tibet. In Nepal, the rebels had captured several towns in Terai. Palpa had fallen on 6 January 1951 and the rebels took control of Pokhara and Gorkha on 9-10 January, for a day.

As early as 24 December 1950, the Prime Minister had sought India's assistance to resolve the issue, but Pandit Nehru refused to accept the deposition of the King and suggested reorganization of the Nepalese Government on democratic lines and elections to the Constituent Assembly. Prime Minister Mohan Shumsher Rana accepted India's suggestion on 8 January 1951, and promised restoration of the King, amnesty to all political prisoners, and elections based on adult suffrage by 1952.

On 10 January 1951, a cease-fire was agreed to, which came into effect from 16 January. Further negotiations were held between the King, the Ranas and the Nepali Congress Party, which resulted in formation of an interim government under Mohan Shumsher, with five members. The King returned to Kathmandu and the new ministry was sworn in February 1951. This saw end of the rule of the hereditary Rana Prime Ministers, who had ruled the country for more than 100 years, and denied the King his rightful place.

King Tribhuvan's Rule Restored

A Treaty of Peace and Friendship between India and Nepal was signed on 31 July 1950, which till date is operative

(copy attached as Appendix S). He returned to Kathmandu and assumed his rightful place, including all executive powers, financial management, appointment of government officials and control of the Armed Forces. On 16 November 1951, the King appointed Mukta Prasad Koirala, brother of B P Koirala belonging to Nepali Congress as the Prime Minister.

The reign of King Tribhuvan saw excellent good-will and cooperation between Nepal and India in all fields. In defense and security areas, India was requested to send a team to reorganize and equip the Royal Nepal Army. Also Joint Detachments were deployed along the Nepal-China (Tibet) border, to monitor the activities of the Chinese. On the political side, the King convened an advisory assembly on 4 July 1952 and tried to work the democratic system, but for the next decade the experiment faced many hurdles, often forcing him to take direct control.

The Royal Visit

The highlight of the mutual trust and respect for each other's country and the vital role the Gorkha soldiers played in it was evident when the King and the Queen of Nepal toured India in Nov 1955 and visited Dehra Dun, for two days. At Dehra Dun, they were accorded a warm welcome, and a special ceremonial parade was held for His Majesty. In this, besides mass bands, contingents from all Gorkha regiments of the Indian Army participated. The parade was witnessed by a large number of civilians, school children, soldiers and their families, while Colonels of all Gorkha Regiments had specially come from their duty stations to be present to welcome the Royal guests.

Commanded by Colonel U C Pant 39 G T C, Lt Col T R Prodhan of 2/4 GR was the parade 2nd in Command. Contingents composed as under, participated.

The first contingent was composed of 2/4 GR under Maj M S Jesudian and consisted of Nos 1 to 6 companies

The second contingent was of 6/5 GR(FF) under Lt Col I C Katoch comprising of No 7 to 12 Coys.

The third contingent of recruits battalion was commanded by Maj R Y Paphade and consisted of Nos 13 Coy (14 G T C), 14 Coy (39 G T C), 15 and 16th Coys (58 G T C), 17th Coy (11 G R C) and 18th Coy from Gorkha Boys Company, under the command of Capt Til Bahadur Thapa.

Beside the brass band of 58 G T C, pipes and drums of all other four Gorkha Centres participated in the parade.

The Royal guests also visited 39 G T C and 58 G T C, besides I M A and other institutions at Dehra Dun. During his period, while Nepal established diplomatic relations with a number of countries including China and Pakistan, relations with India were always considered 'special'.

Post Tribuvan Era

His passing away in 1955 was a big jolt to India. He was succeeded by his elder son, King Mahendra Bir Bikram Shah. While maintaining cordial relations with India, Bir Bikram Shah at times tried to play China card. In 1958 he proclaimed the first democratic constitution for Nepal, and held elections for the two houses, in 1959. The Congress Party won the majority, and Bisheshwar Prasad Koirala became the Prime Minister. However, in December 1960, Koirala was dismissed by the King as he felt that the government was "corrupt and in-efficient and the parliamentary system was un-suited to Nepal".

Having experimented with an Advisory Council in 1961, on 16 December 1962 a new constitution was proclaimed by which he devised a four tier centrally controlled party less Panchayat System of government from village up-wards, which was incorporated in the Constitution.⁸⁶ At the lowest level there were 4000 village assemblies (gaun sabha), which elected nine members of the village panchayat, who in turn elected a mayor (sabhapati). Each village panchayat sent a member to sit on one of the seventy five district (zilla)

panchayat, representing from 40 to 70 villages; one-third of the members were chosen by the town panchayat. Members of the district panchayat elected representatives to fourteen zone assemblies (anchal sabha), which functioned as Electoral College for the National Panchayat, or Rashtriya Panchayat, in Kathmandu. Besides these, the class organizations at village, district, and zonal levels were also created, for peasants, youth, women, elders, laborers and ex-servicemen. They elected their own representatives to the anachal sabha (assemblies).

The National Panchayat could not criticize the Royal government, debate the principles of party less democracy, introduce budgetary bills or enact bills, without the approval of the King Mahendra. The King was Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, had the powers to appoint and remove members of the Supreme Court and Public service Commission, and could change any judicial decision or amend the constitution at any time. He was also the spiritual force in the only Hindu kingdom, representing the god Vishnu upholding dharma on earth. Thus, it will be seen that within ten years, the King had regained all powers enjoyed by Raja Prithvi Narayan Shah. Thus, while on the face of it the power initiated and lay with the village representatives, but in actual fact it was with the King. This was not acceptable to the political parties, who had been rendered powerless.

The Panchayat system was able to bring nearly 50,000 to 60,000 people on to a single representative government, and though land reforms were initiated, they failed due to influence of the aristocracy. Eradication of malaria, construction of East-West highway, increase in areas under cultivation, settlement of migrants and initiation of Five Year Development Plans, were a few achievements of King Mahendra.

His death in January 1972 resulted in Birendra Bir Bikram Shah coming to throne, who being young and educated was keen to speed up economic and development reforms.

Faced with internal turmoil, he formed a seven member Reform Committee to review the Panchayat Raj, but the June 1973 hijacking of a Royal Nepal Airlines plane to India and their escape with Rs 30 million (Indian Rupee - approximately US\$ 4.6 million) proved a great set-back. The Reform Committee resulted in formation of five development zones, increase in the number of members of the National Panchayat from 90 to 134, with the King nominating 20%. Other suggestions were only cosmetic, which further created a rift between the Durbar and the political parties.

All this while, India had suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of the Chinese in 1962, and was involved with another war with Pakistan in 1965, and then again with Pakistan in 1971. However, there were no restrictions on recruitment and employment of Gorkhas by the Indian Army, and military-to-military relations between the two countries continued to be very good. A few Nepali political leaders raised their concern in Nepal's National Assembly about the Gorkha soldiers being employed by India against Pakistan, but these were suitably pacified by the Nepali Foreign Minister.

King Bir Bikram Shah died in 1972, and his son Birendra Bir Bikram, was formally crowned in 1976. The policies of the new King intended to restrict the reforms started by B P Koirala. These resulted in wide spread anti-monarchy sentiments resulting in riots, after which the King relaxed his grip on the Government. A referendum on what type of government was best suited for the country was held in May 1980, and the panchayat raj system was retained, which was also very autocratic as the King retained the powers of appointing and removing the Prime Minister and his council of ministers.⁸⁷ Fresh elections under the new provisions were held in 1981 and then in 1986, but no stable Government could be formed. All this resulted in the influence and interference of the King continuing on the Government.

The 1986 elections saw the emergence of the Communist

Party of Nepal as a political party. It also tried to form a coalition Government, but failed. Political instability in the country adversely effected the economic growth of the country and development projects continued to run behind schedule. Having tried the Panchayat system which did not work, the Referendum of May 1980, elections of 1981 and again in 1986 it was clear that due to lack of political programs the economy of the country was failing.

In 1989-90, a movement for restoration of democracy was jointly launched under the leadership of Ganesh Man Singh, a veteran congress leader who was made the Supreme Leader by the Nepali Congress, and the Nepali Communist Party. Using force, the King arrested all political leaders and tried to suppress the movement, using force. He was encouraged by the Chinese to do so, as they had recently used force to crush democracy in Tinamen Square. Reacting to the events, Indian leaders like Shri Chandra Shekher (who were close to Nepali Congress leaders) issued anti-monarchy statements, which were not appreciated by the Palace, who also blamed India for sending people to Nepal for creating disturbances in favour of the political parties. During this period, defying the terms of Indo-nepal friendship treaty, Nepal had imported some anti aircraft guns from China, as well as allowed Chinese engineers to work on projects in Terai region adjoining Bihar and UP, which was not appreciated by India. There were also reports of some differences between the King and Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi, which further strained relations between the two countries. The Trade and Transit treaty (which had provided twenty two points for imports to Nepal from India, though as per International law, a land locked country is to be provided atleast one trade and one transit point) between the two countries was also due to lapse and both countries decided not to renew it. India allowed two points raxaul in Central Nepal and Biratnagar in Eastern Nepal, and closed the remaining, which greatly inconvenienced people of Western Nepal the region from which bulk of the Gorkha soldiers of the Indian Army hail as the lateral lateral

communications were poor and they were mainly dependent on trade and transit from UP for even basic essentials like medicines and salt.

The atmosphere was further spoilt as hardliners in India wanted to bring Nepal down to its knees while their counterparts in Nepal wanted to show that they could defy India by importing goods overland from China and by air from the West. Anti India lobby in Nepal had a field day internationalizing the issue and painting the Indian act as 'blockade' and blamed N Delhi of being 'high handed'. However, the pragmatic political leaders and most of the people of Nepal realized the reality. They appreciated that the economy of Nepal was so deeply interlinked and dependent on India that no other country could replace it. During his visit to Neap at that time, even the Chinese Premier stated that 'Nepal must come to terms with its geography'.⁸⁸

Despite all these developments, it is to the credit of the Gorkha soldiers that despite hardships being faced by their families back home, they never wavered in their loyalty to India and carried out assigned tasks in all operations, specially in Sri Lanka and Siachen Glacier. Concerned about the welfare of families of Gorkha soldiers in Nepal, Gen V N Sharma, PVSM, AVSM, the COAS specially requested Shri Rajiv Gandhi to review the decision about the economic blockade. In order to ensure that her Gorkha soldiers and their families were not put to any difficulty, the Indian Army made a special recommendation to the Government to relax the export of essential items. It also allowed her Gorkha soldiers to take essential items for their personal use during holidays to Nepal, without any restrictions.⁸⁹

At this juncture, a new Govt was formed in India. The fortunes of Indo-Nepal relations changed for the better as Lt Gen S K Sinha, PVSM, (Retd), a vetren Gorkha offer, was appointed as Ambassador to Nepal. A respected and renowned learned soldier from a distinguished Bihar family, with his fluency in Nepali language, Gen Sinha established

a warm rapport with the King from the very beginning and won his confidence. Hailing from Patna, he had known a number of senior Nepali politicians who resided there from time to time, like Shri BP Koirala, Shri GP Koirala and Shri Ganesh Man Singh. Thus a cordial link was established, so much so that breaking all protocol, the King visited the Ambassador's residence. As per directions from Delhi, Gen Sinha advised the King to restore democracy and release all political leaders from jail, who had been demanding a constitutional monarchy and a multi-party system of democracy. As indications of eruption of insurgency in Nepal were also evident, Gen Sinha was able to advise the King that his Indian experience indicated that when the Indian Army has not been able to fully control the situation in NE and Kashmir, it would be very difficult for the Royal Nepal Army do so. Soon, in Apr 90 violent disturbances broke out in Kathmandu and the Nepal Army was called out, resulting in quite a few deaths. Once again, Gen Sinha advised the King that release of leaders and start of the political process will cool the situation.

Though initially reluctant, the King agreed and released all political detainees, agreeing to their demand for an inquiry into excess committed by the Security Forces. Thus, a multi-party system was adopted and an Interim Coalition Government (of Nepali Congress and Nepali Communist Party) was formed, under Shri Krishna Prasad Bhattarai. The King ended the ban on political parties, and a multi-party government took office in April. The first democratic elections in 32 years were held in May 1991, in which the Nepali Congress won the majority. Soon, the relations between India and Nepal took a positive turn and Trade and Transit Points were re-opened, with much gaiety, fanfare and festivity. Recalling the Bairwah function, Gen Sinha nostalgically described that the convoy of trucks from India were seen off by Shri Mulayam Singh, then Chief Minister of UP and were welcomed by the Prime Minister of Nepal at the check post. The trucks flying flags of India and Nepal were cheered by a large crowd, which included a large

number of Gorkha ex-servicemen of the Indian Army, in the midst of music being played by the brass band of 11 Gorkha Rifles Regimental Centre (which had specially come from Lucknow for the function) and the locals chanting slogans of Indo-nepal friendship. Hereafter, relations between Nepal and India continued to grow from strength to strength and soon reached a new height. India assisted Nepal in drawing her constitution by providing services of two eminent jurists, Shri L M Singhvi and Shri AG Noorani. Also, Richard Attenborough's film on Mahatama Gandhi which had not been allowed in Pakistan and Nepal, was screened in Nepal. While the credit for the improved relations should go to the astute leadership of India and Nepal, the important role played by Gen Sinha – who had developed lasting love for the Gorkhas and Nepal during his long and distinguished service with the Gorkhas of the Indian Army, can not be overlooked. Infact, his contribution was appreciated by the King of Nepal, who at the time of gen Sinha's departure wrote to the Prime Minister, that 'Gen Sinha was as much India's Ambassador to Nepal as Nepal's Ambassador to India'.

However, since 1990s the political conditions in Nepal have remained unstable. The King has often changed the PMs and the cabinet, and despite trying various coalitions partnerships, a stable and progressive government still remains an illusion. The country continues to have a weak and slow development resulting in un-employment, while the democratic aspiration of the growing population continued to rise till 2008, when the elections were held. Before that, a brief mention of the Maoist Insurgency in Nepal is essential.

Maoist Insurrection in Nepal

The Communist Party of Nepal (C P N) was formed in 1949, and was inspired by the communist take over of China. It started the movement as early as 1954, and fought the first multi-party elections in 1959, winning 4 out of the 108 seats. In 1970-72 it initiated a Naxal type

movement in Jhapa (Eastern Nepal), which was crushed. It was in 1986 that the C P N (Maoists) declared that the feudal and semi-feudal rule needed to be changed, and in 1990-91 formed Samyukta Janmorcha Party and fought elections and won 9 seats in the Parliament, but felt neglected and isolated in the formulation of the new constitution.

A radical group of the party placed its 40 Point Demand on the Prime Minister, with thrust on socio-economic developments and constitutional changes, civil control over the Royal Nepal Army, abolition of the monarchy, scrapping of the 1950 Indo-Nepal Treaty of Friendship and stopping recruitment of Nepalese citizens in Indian and British Army.

Taking advantage of the backwardness of Western Nepal (the main recruiting areas of the Indian and British Army for Magars, Gurungs, Thakuris and Chhetris), the Maoists were able to set up bases and win over the local population by fear, coercion and propaganda. The Government initially employed the police to handle the situation, besides initiating a dialogue for a peaceful solution. To gain time for their armed struggle, the Maoists opened negotiations with the Government and even had three cease fire agreements, but finally they decided to adopt violent means to overthrow the monarchy and the government.

The internal situation in Nepal took another turn on 13 February 1996, when the Maoists launched a People's War. Raising the slogan "let us now move on the path of struggle towards establishing the people's rule by wrecking the reactionary system of the same", they adopted the ideology of the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist that the "political power flows from the barrel of the gun". Their ultimate aim was to convert the country into a democratic republic, with no powers or place for monarchy.⁹⁰

Maoist's 40 Points Demand-Impact on Recruitment of Gorkha Soldiers

Their 40 Point demand also included "abrogation of the

1950 Treaty of Friendship and the 1947 Tripartite Agreement". They stated that these Treaties and Agreements were agreed upon by Nepal under pressure, and argued that Nepal should not allow her citizens to serve in armies of Indian and Great Britain. Since then, they have been making efforts to woo soldiers going on leave, to train their cadres and contribute to their funds. However, they have not succeeded in any great measure, nor have they found support from the political parties or the monarchy for their two demands.

To face the challenge from Maoists, Nepal decided to expand her Army and Air Force, for which she received assistance from a number of western countries and India. While Nepal battled the Maoists, India also strengthened the Indo-Nepal border, to deny movement and grouping of Maoists of the two sides. Besides putting pressure on Indian soldiers on leave in Nepal, in 2005, the Maoists kidnapped a leave party of Indian Gorkha soldiers, but released them on intervention by an N G O.

The 1st of June 2001 was a dark day for Nepal, when ten members of the Royal family, including King Birendra and Queen Ashiwaraya, were assassinated by Crown Prince Dipendra, who also shot himself. In keeping with the sentiments of the troops, Gorkha units of the Indian Army held special prayers for giving peace to the departed royal family. Birendra, considered as an 'anchor of stability' in a turmoil ridden political system threatened by the Maoists, was succeeded by Gyanendra, who also followed the old style of changing Prime Ministers frequently. He gave full powers to the Royal Nepal Army to "crush the Maoists", ordered their modernization and expansion, and often sidelined the political set-up.

During 2003, the situation took a dramatic turn, when the Maoists signed a peace accord with the Government, but it was a short lived lull, as in January 2005 they broke the cease fire, blaming the Security Forces. The crisis culminated in early 2005, when Gyanendra once again dismissed the Prime Minister and took over direct powers

for governing the country and banned all political activity, which was resented by all democratic powers of the world, including India. Relations became even more strained when Nepal decided to import weapons and ammunitions from China and even Pakistan, and a large number of Nepalese citizens fleeing into India.

The Indian Stance

Worried about the security and welfare of her nearly 1.2 million pensioners and families and 45,000 serving soldiers (who even feared going on leave to Nepal.), India again suggested to King Gyanendra to start a dialogue with the political parties, to seek a solution to the problem. New Delhi also agreed to release non-lethal military aid to the Royal Nepal Army (like jeeps, trucks, etc), and agreed to re-consider supply of 5.56 mm rifles and ammunition in 'proper perspective'.⁹¹

In the meanwhile the Maoists realized that despite their struggle for nearly ten years, they could not gain power purely by arms. Thus, they started dialogue with the political parties, who had formed a Seven Party Alliance (S P A). Though there remain major differences to be resolved between the S P A and the Maoists, the coming together of democratic anti-monarchy forces resulted in massive anti-monarchy demonstrations in April 2006, which forced King Gyanendra to hand over executive powers of the Government to the representative of the S P A. In this dialogue between the S P A and the Maoists, India played a significant role specially in persuading Gyanendra to give up power.

The Present Situation

By November 2006, King Gyanendra had been stripped of his executive powers and term "Royal" has been deleted from all proclamations and places. An un-easy cease-fire between the Maoists and the Army has been in force since the last nine months. The S P A and the Maoists have been able to come together and formed a Government, but

differences amongst them still persist. While both groups agree to the need for fresh elections and need to draft a new constitution, the Maoists are reluctant to lay down their arms before the elections, which is a must from the point of view of S P A and international agencies, including the UN. There is also the question of the status of the King-while the Maoists want a Republic in which King has no role, the S P A is keen to give him some position, may be even as president or a titular head of the country on the lines of the U K. While the Nepal Army has returned to barracks, the Maoists continue to use extortion, kidnapping and kangaroo courts to terrorize the innocent people. So far, the last ten years of militancy has resulted in loss of nearly 10,000 lives, disrupted the economy, caused administrative hardships, and forced many people from the interior to shift to the plains.

By April 2006, the law and order situation had improved considerably, permitting holding of recruitment rallies by the Indian Army in June at Butwal and in August at Pokhra, with great success. At these rallies, considerable enthusiasm was noticed amongst the Nepalese to join the Indian Army, as for every one vacancy nearly 100 youth tried their luck. While a few ex-servicemen are reported to have joined or supported the Maoists, mostly due to threat to their families and coercion, it is to the credit of the serving and retired Gorkha soldiers residing in Nepal that despite threats of violence and kidnappings, they did not succumb to the Maoists pressure and maintained their loyalty to the Indian Army. On its part, the Indian Army also allowed extra quota of family accommodation and facilities to the families of the soldiers, and continued to ensure that the welfare of the ex-servicemen was looked after, as heretofore.

The working of the Seven Party Alliance Govt was strained, while the Jan Jatis from the Terai asked for autonomy. The elections for a new assembly which is to write a new constitution were announced in 2006, but postponed twice. Though the UN Mission continued to press the Maoists to fully disarm, they did not do so. In the

meanwhile, sporadic violence and clashes between various groups continued to impact the economy and development.

The 2008 Elections

Finally, the elections were held in Nepal in April 2008, adopting the direct and representational method. The Maoists manifesto included removal of the Monarchy and establishment of a Republic as the main issue, while the other parties did not press for it but talked of drafting a new constitution. To everyone's surprise, the Maoists emerged as the single largest party with, but they did not get a 2/3rd majority required for introducing a new constitution. Both the Nepali Congress and CPM fared poorly, with a number of their prominent leaders losing, while new parties from Terai made their presence for the first time.

The elections were declared fair, and efforts to form a coalition Govt headed by the Maoists are being made. Prachanda, the Maoist leader has reiterated his call for the King to step down and for his stance of his 40 Point program remains unchanged.

Likely Future Trends

Having joined the Government in April 2007, the Maoists were quite on the issue of Gorkhas serving in the British and the Indian Army, nor did they question the continuation of the 1950 Agreement. However, now having emerged as the largest political party, Prachanda has restated his demand for reviewing the 1947 Tripartite and 1950 Agreements.

India has stated that it will be willing to review all agreements and treaties with Nepal, as she has done recently with Bhutan.

It is likely that the financial benefits and employment implications of the Gorkhas serving in the Indian and the British Army have not been fully realized by the Maoists. Even in case the Nepal stops recruitment of the Gorkhas,

India will be able to fill these vacancies from Indian domiciled Gorkhas, for years to come. Similarly, the loyalty, fidelity and links with the pensioners will continue to be strong.

Conclusion

Indian leaders were very far-sighted and pragmatic in deciding to keep Gorkha soldiers in the Indian Army. They were aware of the strategic place which Nepal had in the security of South Asia and along India's Northern Borders, and wanted to strengthen it by maintaining friendly and cordial ties with the Himalayan Kingdom. Besides the ancient bonds of historical cultural and religious affinity, New Delhi was also aware of the socio-economic part played by the Gorkha soldiers in Nepal's economy and employment situation. Thus, though there was no shortage of trained manpower for recruiting fresh soldiers, after independence, India decided to retain ten Gorkha Regiments.

Despite the current turmoil in Nepal, the soldiers of the Gorkha Regiments of the Indian Army have continued to perform their assigned tasks, with dignity, loyalty and trust.

The new Govt when formed in Nepal may like to review the 1947 Tripartite and the 1950 Agreements, for which India has already stated her willingness. While these developments need to be watched, they are not likely to have any impact on the strength of the Gorkha Regiments of the Indian Army.

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43. Interview with Major General A S Pathania, M V C, MC, in October 2005, at Dharamsala. Ultimately, due to poor number of volunteers, 2/6 GR did not go to the H M G, but was re-designated as 6/5 GR(FF) as part of the Indian Army.
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51. This prophesy of Sir Taker proved be wrong, as on 15 August 1947, two JCOs per Gorkha Battalion forming part of the Indian Army were granted permanent regular commission (See Appendix). Also, instead of reduction in their strength, the number of Gorkha Battalions in the Indian Army increased from 12 to 35 after 1962 India-China War, while those in the British Army have now reduced to two, from eight.
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53. On analysis, it appears strange that while the British had seen the Gurkhas fighting so bravely in the Royal Nepal Army under Nepali officers, they never considered even a single Nepali to be a suitable 'officer material' to command Gurkha troops of the British Indian Army, as a commissioned officer. This could only be due to racial bias and prejudice.
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1. THE GORKHA RIFLES IN J & K OPERATIONS 1947/1948

During the period 1947-64, the Indian Army participated in two major wars, in 1947-48 against the Pakistani Qabailies and the Pakistani Army in Jammu and Kashmir and the Chinese in 1962. Besides these two major operations, the Indian Army was also employed in liberating Hyderabad State in 1948 (OPERATION POLO). The Army was also tasked to carry out Counter Insurgency Operations in Naga Hills in 1956, thereafter in Manipur, Mizoram, Assam, the Punjab and J & K. In between, the Indian Army also sent

contingents on U N Missions and to Sri Lanka. The Gorkhas Regiments formed an important part of them.

India was also forced in fighting two wars with Pakistan, first in 1965 and the second a decisive one in 1971 leading to birth of Bangladesh. The Gorkha units played an important role in all these operations, earning more honors and many battle decorations.

In all these operations, units of Gorkha Regiments have performed admirably and earned many laurels. This chapter covers the 1947-48 J & K Operations. A brief account of OPERATION POLO, Liberation of Hyderabad in 1948, is also included.

Background

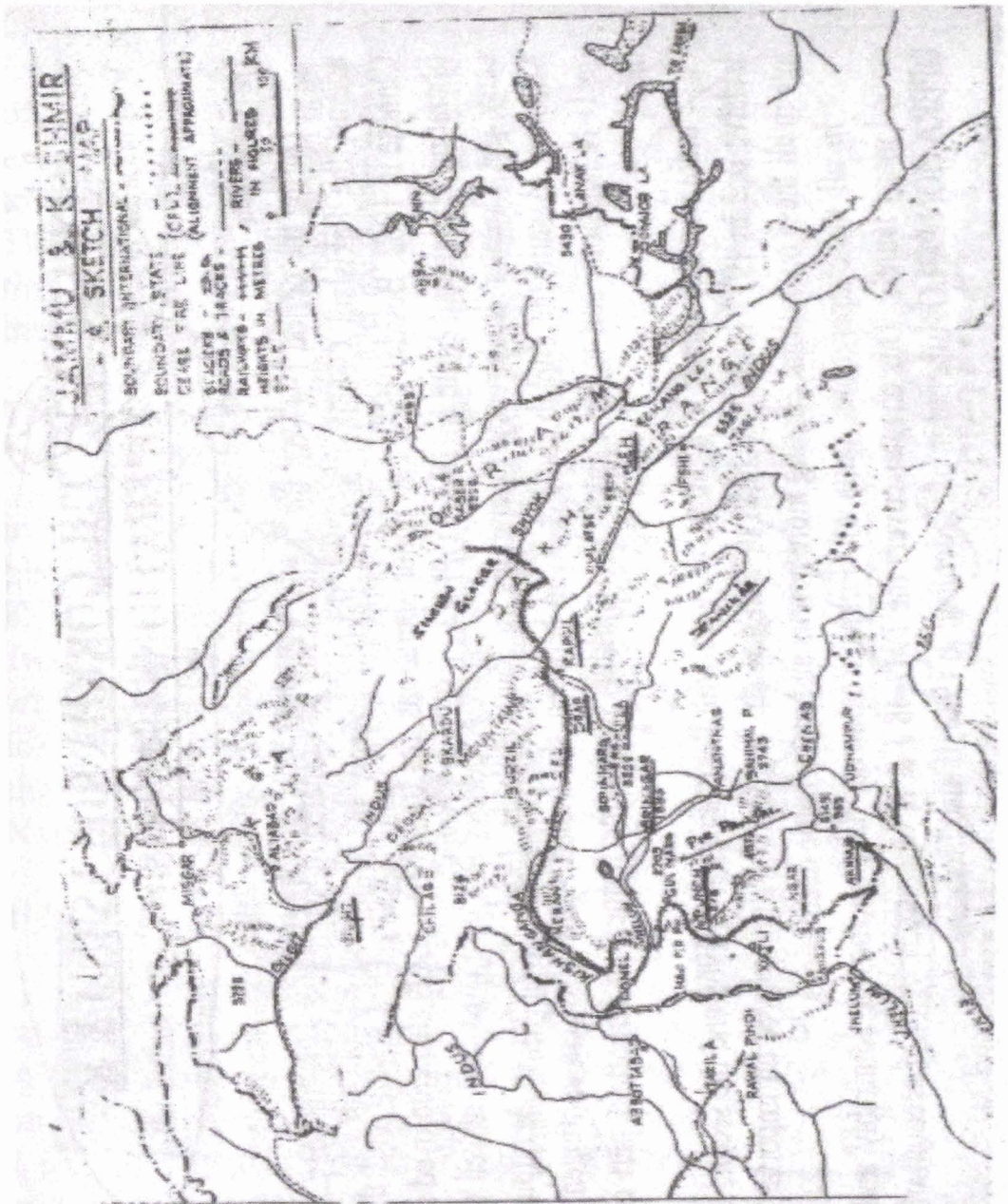
As mentioned earlier, the Transfer of Power Bill gave the option to the 526 princely states of India, that after 15 August 1947, they could either join India or Pakistan, or remain independent, the last option not recommended by Lord Mountbatten, the Viceroy of India. While all states had taken decision about their future well in time, Hyderabad, Junagarh and Jammu and Kashmir decided to adopt a 'wait and watch' attitude.

As regards J & K, the state had a Hindu ruler but Muslim majority population, on the basis of which it had been eyed by Jinnah all along for inclusion in Pakistan. When the Maharaja decided to have a 'stand still' arrangement with both new dominions, Pakistan unleashed an invasion by Qabailis of North-West Frontier. This was organized, equipped and supported by Pakistan Army and aimed to capture and annex the state, by force.

Commencing October 1947, these tribesmen and raiders poured into the state and looted and plundered both Muslims and Hindus alike. While their main thrust was towards Srinagar along the only motorable road then existing in the state running along River Jhelum linking Rawalpindi with Srinagar (via Muzzafarabad-Domel-Baramulla) they also ingressed across the border from Kotli-Rawalakot into Punch-

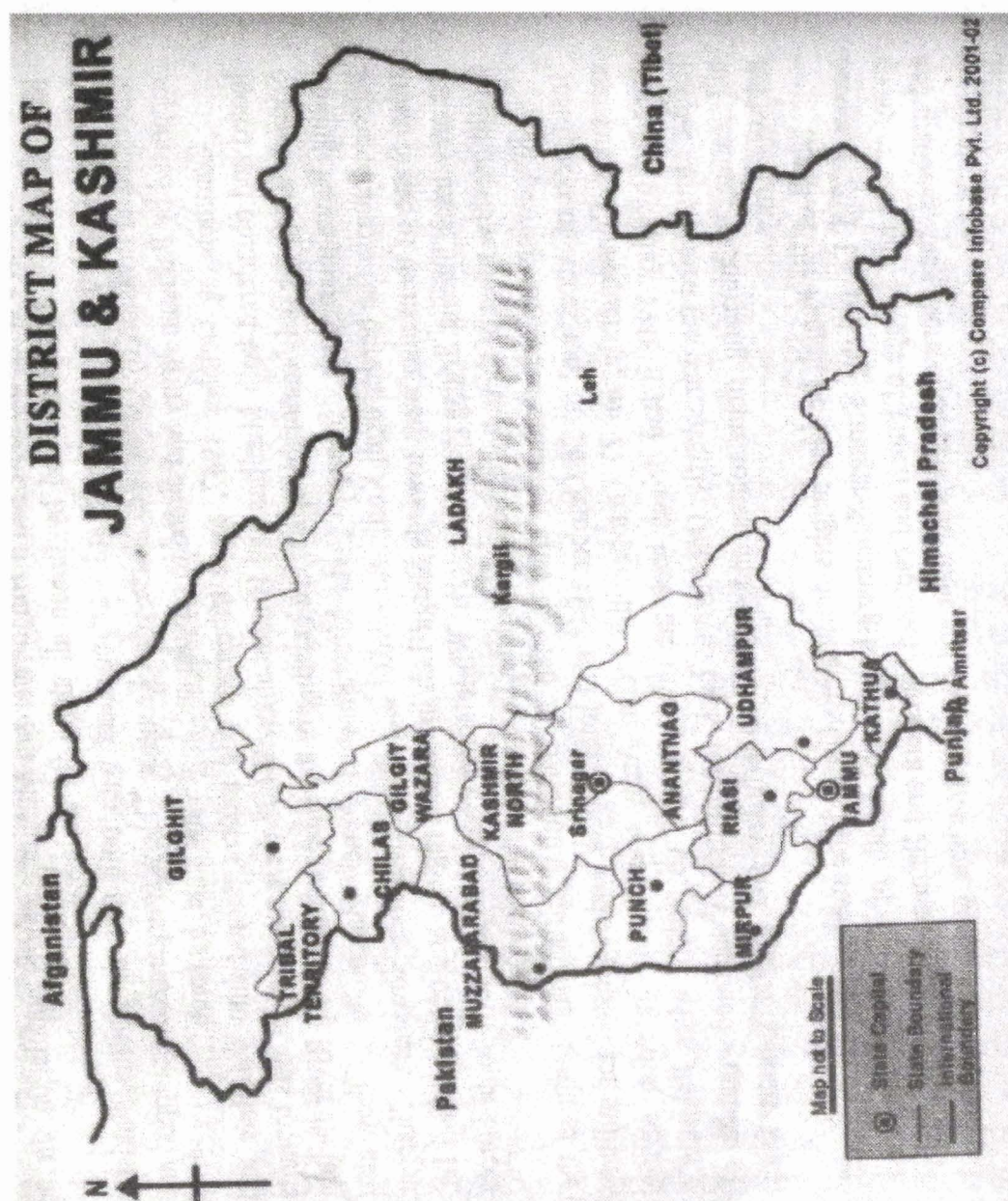
Mandher-Nowshera - Jhangar areas. Some of them also went towards Kargil-Leh in Ladakh region, and occupied Zoji La, the only track linking Srinagar with Ladakh. While some troops of the J & K State Forces fought bravely, most of them were induced to defect, on communal grounds.

Reviewing the grave situation after the fall of Baramulla, the Maharaja signed the 'Instrument of Accession' on 26 October 1947 and joined India, and requested for military assistance. Consequently, on 27 October, the Indian Army was flown in. After saving Srinagar, by May 1948 it had



driven back the invaders right up to Uri, when Pakistan's regular army joined the war, overtly. Once driven back, the infiltrators occupied a number of hill features dominating main routes and banked on artillery and mortar support from Pakistan Army.

North of Pir Panjal, besides heights dominating Uri and the road to Domel, they had occupied Zoji La linking Srinagar-Sonamarg-Kargil-Leh. South of Pir Panjal, they had encircled and laid a siege of Punch and captured Naushera and Jhangar. Besides small arms and grenades, they were



equipped with light and medium machine guns, 3 in mortars and were supported by the artillery of the Pakistan Army. Wherever check-mated, they dug defenses and indulged in loot and plunder of local villages for their sustenance.

During this period, while undergoing division, the Indian and Pakistan armies had a large number of British officers (mostly in Gorkha units) and British C-in-Cs and a Supreme Commander. As the British did not want their officers involved in the war on either side, they were barred from entering J & K. This delayed the employment of Gorkha units in J & K operations, as while the British officers were leaving en-block, the Indian officers were yet to join these units. However, when employed, the Gorkhas gave an excellent performance of their battle worthiness and loyalty to Indian officers and India, and earned many Battle Honors. This also demolished the myth created and perpetuated by the British, that the 'Gorkhas only wanted to serve under the British officers'.

The Gorkhas in J & K October 1947

Records indicate that the first Gorkha troops inducted in J & K were in Oct 1947, when Brig Y S Paranjape with his 50 Para Brigade was tasked to keep the road Madhopur-Kathua-Jammu-Srinagar open against raids by the Qabailiese. Two platoons of 7 GR were placed under his command, whom he deployed at Kathua, till they were de-inducted for transfer to H M G. Thereafter, 1/9 GR formed part of the formation and fought many an action to defend Naushera.¹

1/9 GR January 1948

Hurriedly inducted into Jammu sector, the unit was first tasked to guard Akhnur-Chhamb area and then moved up in companies to Beri Pattan. In its first operation at 6.30 pm on 20 Dec, one company was placed under command 2 JAT and it attacked a group of infiltrators and killed 40 and wounded 73 of them. Soon, one more company joined

the force, and on 21 Dec they carried out road opening duties from Beri Pattan to Naushera, successfully. Thereafter, balance of the unit joined the brigade and reinforced Naushera defenses which were under constant attack. On 8 Jan 48, the unit was ordered to lead the advance and establish a post at Kangota, dominating the road to Beri Pattan.

By mid Jan 1948, the unit came under command Z Force, and was tasked to open road up to Nausherra, excluding Seri. By now the Kukri wielding Gorkhas had created so much fear in the minds of the infiltrators that the task was carried out against light opposition. Finally, by 15 Jan 1948, the unit was concentrated in Naushera.

3/9 GR in Punch January 1948

In August 1947, the battalion was located at Gurgaon (near Delhi) and was carrying out refugee and riot control



tasks, when Lt Col D K Palit, took over command. By now, the Qabailies had laid a siege of Punch town, where refugees and the population were having a difficult time as rations were running out. Thus, while operations were being launched to link-up with the Punch Garrison, the beleaguered force was trying to push back the enemy from heights dominating the town. The rough landing strip was its only link with outside world. The Force also carried out attacks on enemy positions dominating the cultivated fields, so as to harvest the crop for feeding the large number of refugees sheltered in the town.

Initially, A and C Companies of 3/9 GR ~~were airlifted~~ to Punch in Jan 1948. They saw their first action under the command of 1 Para (KUMAON) on 16 Jan, in which 89 infiltrators were killed, 90 wounded and 11 taken prisoners. Own troops suffered 2 fatal and 9 non-fatal casualties. B and D Companies with Battalion HQs were airlifted on 4 and 10 Feb, and saw the first action on 14/15 Feb.

In this silent attack, the Gorkhas with a company 1 PARA (KUMAON) under command, left their base at last light on 14 Feb and reached the base of Kosaliyan by 10 pm. The assault was launched at 2.30 am on 15 Feb, and B & C Companies leading the attack secured their objectives against stiff initial resistance. While B Company consolidated its gains, D Company was sent forward to secure Pt 4024, and sent No 10 Platoon under Hav Lal Bahadur as a protective patrol, about 180 m forward. At day break, it was found that Pt 4024 was still further up, and the patrol came under heavy fire and suffered a few casualties. At this stage, the C O ordered Hav Lal Bahadur to pull back his patrol. Though wounded, the N C O showed great courage and went back through the machine gun swept ridge to evacuate his wounded men. Later D Company launched an attack and captured Pt 4024. The enemy made repeated attempts to recapture Pt 4024, but the Gorkhas held it with grit and determination till 18 Feb. This allowed the refugees of Punch to harvest nearly 75 ton of grain and send it back to Punch.

A similar operation was again launched on 2-3 Mar,

when two companies of the unit operated under the Kumaonis and inflicted casualties on soldiers of 3/16 (Para) Punjab of Pakistan Army at Khaneter Ridge.

On 27 Aug, the unit launched a major operation to relieve pressure on Picket No 8, held by a mixed force of about 150 men of 11 J& K Militia and 1 Kashmir Infantry. The enemy had launched a battalion size attack to capture the post, and having failed to do so had occupied feature dominating it. The Gorkhas with a Company of 8 Kashmir Infantry, moved at night through thickly wooded area and reached Post No. 7, the assembly area, and then crept up and launched a fierce assault at 5:30 am on 28 Aug, taking the enemy by surprise. After fierce hand-to-hand fighting, the Post was saved, and though the enemy brought down heavy 3 inch mortar and machine gun fire on them, the resolute Gorkhas reinforced and saved Post No. 8 from further enemy attacks.

1/1 GR in Jhangar

Area of Jhangar-Nowshera comprised of low hills, which had been captured by the enemy having bases at Kotli and Mirpur. In late 1947, 50 Para Brigade was tasked to liberate it. Brave actions fought by the troops under Brigadier Usman had resulted in re-capture of Nowshera and Jhangar, but Kotli and Mirpur and many hills around them still remained with the enemy. It was to relieve 50 Para Brigade that 268 Infantry Brigade was inducted into Jhangar-Nowshera sector, and 1/1 GR located at Madhopur since November 1947, was allotted to it. The enemy having lost Jhangar was very keen to re-capture it, as it dominated his routes of maintenance.

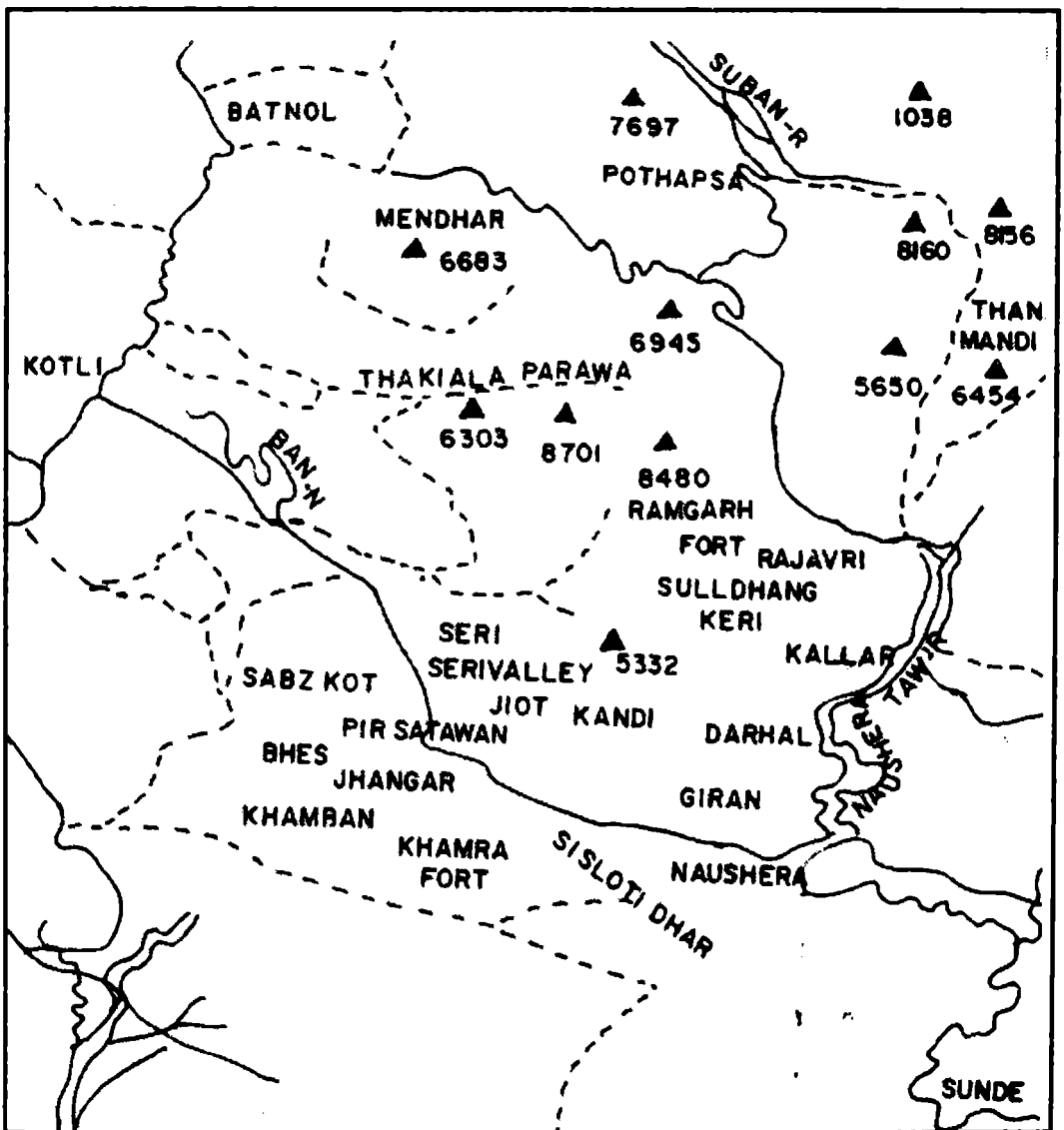
Having been taken over by Maj Mehta as the CO, the unit reached Jhangar on 16 May 1948, and was deployed at Pir Setwan and other posts facing the enemy at Sabz Kot, 5 km away. The task given to the unit was to 'carry out aggressive patrolling to keep the enemy at bay'.

On 26 August, Hav Gopi Thapa was leading a patrol,

when his men were surrounded by the enemy. In the exchange of fire, Rabi Lal showed cool nerves and presence of mind, redeployed his patrol and engaged the enemy effectively. One enemy soldier was killed and another was wounded, but Rabi Lal was able to pull back his patrol to safety. However, soon the enemy from a neighboring position opened up machine guns and mortars but he could not inflict any casualties.

MAP 1

AREA OF OPERATIONS: 1948
1st Battalion



NOT TO SCALE, ALL BOUNDRIES SHOWN APPROXIMATELY

1/1 GR in Jhangar-May 1948

The next important patrol clash took place on 27 September, when a patrol was tasked to check infiltration. The patrol came under heavy fire from enemy piquet surrounding from heights, forcing the patrol to deploy. At this time, L Nk Rabi Lal Thapa, one of the section commanders, noticed an enemy patrol attempting to encircle the Gorkha patrol. Discarding his sten gun, he picked up the L M G and engaged the enemy, killing three and forcing the remainder to withdraw. At this stage the patrol came under mortar and artillery fire, forcing the patrol commander to pull back the patrol. In the meanwhile the enemy had again re-grouped and was attempting to encircle Rabi Lal's section, but Rabi Lal rushed towards the enemy firing his sten gun. In the exchange of fire, though Rabi Lal was fatally wounded, his section were able to pull back safely.

Seeing his section commander being killed, Rifleman Bhadra Bahadur Thapa took charge and picked up the LMG. While pulling back, he noticed movement of another enemy patrol trying to encircle them. Not caring for his own safety, Bhadra Bahadur rushed towards them firing the LMG from his hip, killing two and wounding three. Thereafter, the enemy again shelled the patrol, which was later rescued by two platoon strength columns sent under Capts A R Dutt and A K Rawlley.

During both the above actions, these two OR risked their lives for saving those of their men. For displaying bravery and devotion to duty of a very high order in the face of the enemy L Nk Rabi Lal Thapa was awarded M V C (posthumously), while Rfn Bhadra Thapa was awarded Vr C. Hereafter; the enemy did not ever challenge the Gorkhas.

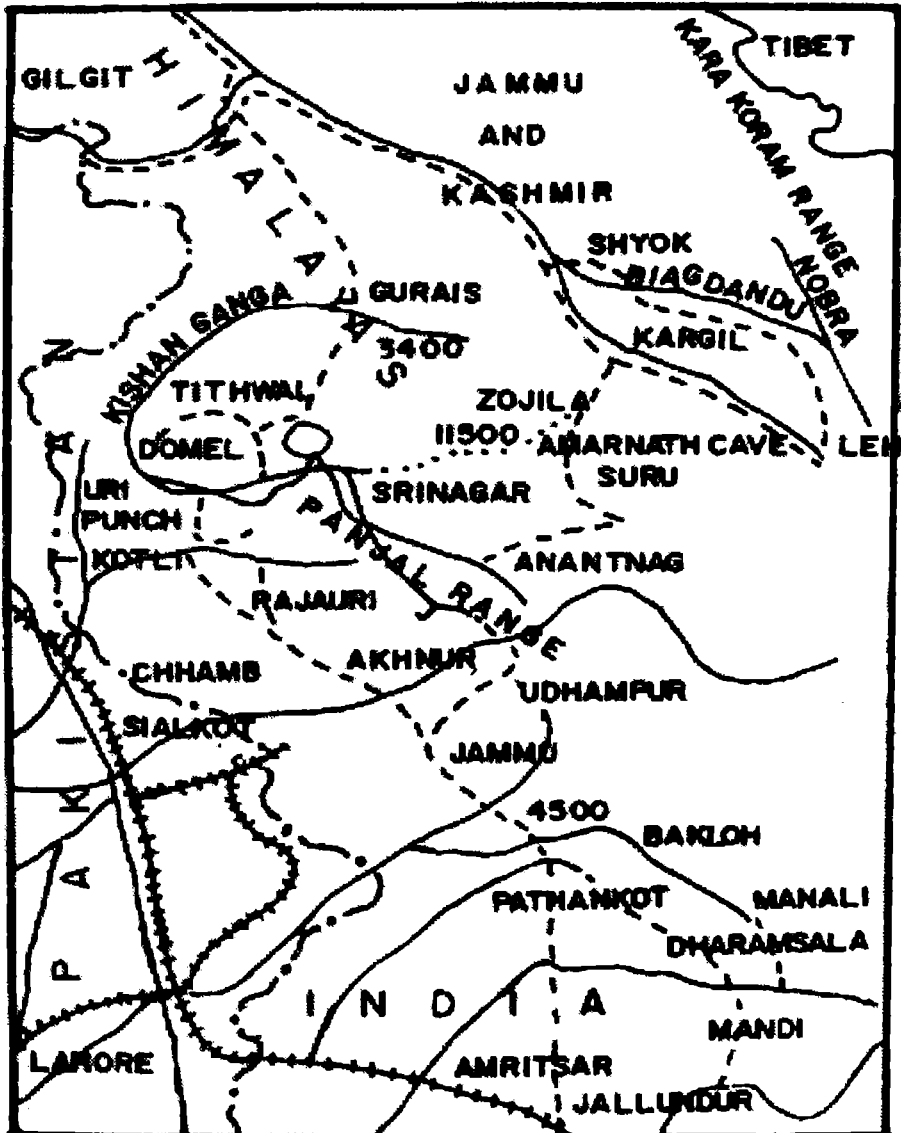
As efforts in 1947 to relieve pressure on Punch from Uri side had succeeded partially only, a fresh offensive was planned from Rajauri's direction, in October 48. In this 1/1 GR was tasked to capture Pir Badesar, an important feature for ensuring security of the flanks. After celebrating Dussehra, the operation was launched on 13 October and by 16 October had captured its objective, in conjunction

with 1st PUNJAB (later 1 PARA). Thereafter, extensive patrolling was carried out till December 1948, when the cease fire came into effect.

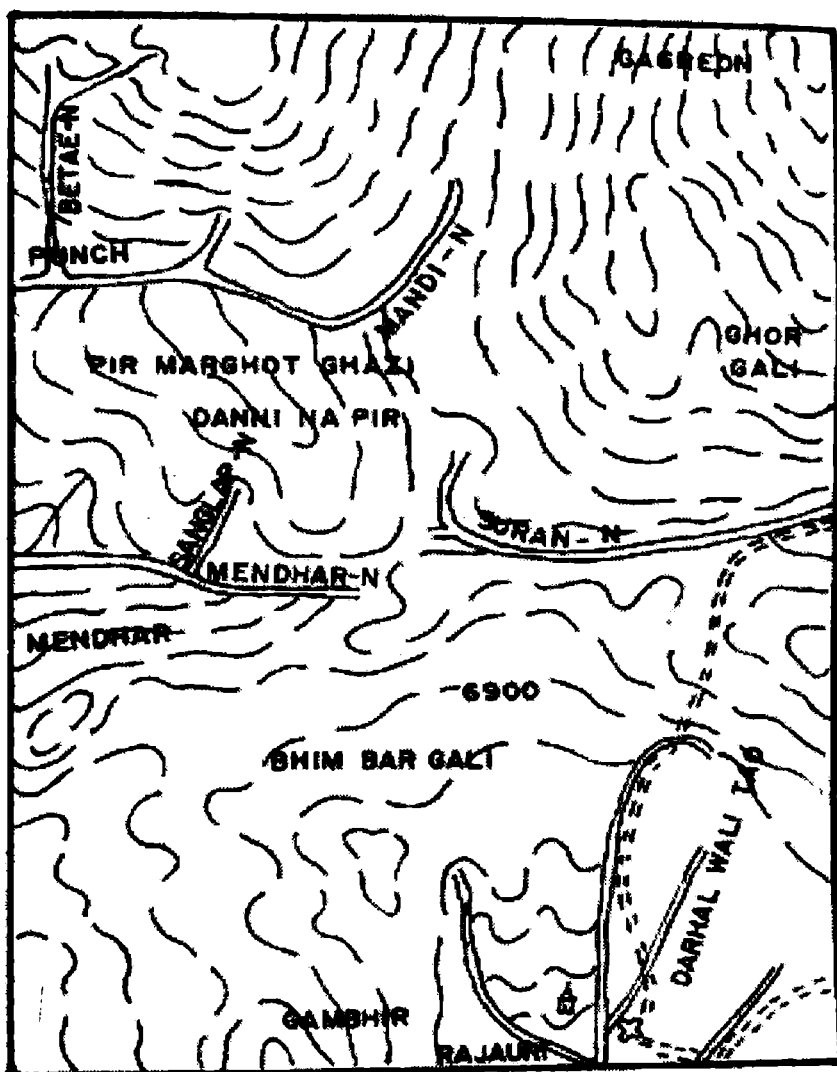
1/4 GR in Punch Link-Up October/November 1948

Having moved from Ambala to J & K in Sept 48, first to the Valley and then to Jammu, by October the unit formed part of 5 Infantry Brigade, tasked for carrying out an offensive to link with the besieged Punch Garrison, via Rajauri. Under the leadership of Lt Col S C Pandit and

JAMMU AND KASHMIR 1948



RAJAURI PUNCH AREA



Maj G S Nagra as 2 IC, like other Gorkha units of that time the battalion had very few regular commissioned officers. However, the unit was fortunate to have three very good war experienced Gorkha officers in Lts Lil Bahadur Thapa, Dil Bahadur Gurung and R D Thapa all of whom had been promoted from JCOs on Independence, commanding rifle companies.

The enemy was holding heights dominating the main track Rajauri. Thana Mandi-Surankot in strength, and had occupied dominating hill features on the ridge line running from Pir Kalewa-Pir Marghot Ghazi and ridges dominating

Rajauri and Mendhar. His positions were mainly held by Azad Kashmir units consisting of deserters of J&K State Forces, Punchi ex-servicemen of the 2nd W W and the tribesmen from N W F P. Boosted by regulars of Pakistan Army these defenses were well prepared and stocked. Adequate fire support of machine gun, artillery and mortars had also been arranged by him.

The terrain was mountainous with primary forests, with a number of streams and only a few foot tracks.

For the offensive, a force of three Brigades, 5, 19 and Ramgarh Brigade, had been grouped under Maj Gen Atal, G O C Jai Durga Force. He planned the operation in four stages.

The first phase aimed to deceive the enemy in believing that the main thrust was along the track via Thanamandi, for which 5 Brigade was to capture Pir Kalewa (Pt 6650) and link-up with Rajauri garrison, while 19 Brigade captured the ridge running alongside. The Ramgarh Brigade was tasked to capture Ramgarh, North-West of Chingas.

In the second stage, 5 and 19 Brigades were to capture shoulders of Bhimber Gali.

In the third phase enemy positions on ridge lines running North and South of Mendhar were to be secured.

In the last phase, 5 Brigade was to capture Pir Marghot Ghazi.

1/4 GR took part in all phases of attack, and finally linked up with 1 Kashmir Infantry of the Punch garrison on 28 November 1948, at Pir Marghot Ghazi.

Brig K Umrao Singh, Commander 5 Brigade had planned the opening attack on Pir Kalewa in three phases. In Phase 1 the GORKHAS to capture Pt 5926 and link-up with Rajauri Garrison, in Phase two 4 MADRAS to capture Pir Kalewa and Pt 6650, and then in Phase three, 5 RAJPUTANA RIFLES were to exploit North-East up to Parat Gali and beyond.

Commencing the move at 8:30 pm in total darkness on 25 Oct, the unit concentrated for the attack by 1030 pm

after crossing River Tawi, and launched the attack by B Company under Sub Magras Gurung, MC. With stealth, it achieved complete surprise and secured the first objective by 0400h on 26 Oct, without suffering any casualties. Then D Company under Sub Damar Singh Thapa passed through, and after a fire-fight, captured its objective just before day light. Having been surprised, the enemy was totally disorganized and demoralized, and withdrew in haste without offering much resistance. The easy capture of its objectives gave an opportunity to the Gorkhas to capture Pir Kalewa, initially allotted to 4 MADRAS, but this was not agreed to. After first light, D Company under Maj P D Limbu attacked Pt 5459, and though it came under intense enemy fire at 600 yds distance, it pressed home the assault and captured its objective by 2 pm. Soon, after artillery and air strikes, 4 MADRAS captured Pir Kalewa by last light 26 October.

It was bitter cold and the logistic column had not fetched up, but the advance was resumed on 27 October and enemy opposition was cleared from a number of out-lying posts, inflicting heavy casualties on him. Faced with strong opposition at Pt 4963, a bold day light attack was launched by D Company under Sub Dammar Singh, supported by artillery. This unnerved the enemy who seeing the assaulting Gorkhas shouting 'Ayo Gorkhali' and a few from a flank swishing their Kukris, abandoned the position.

Unfortunately, during the attack Lt Col S C Pandit, CO, was wounded by enemy's shelling, and the command responsibility devolved on Maj G S Nagra. Hereafter, the Gorkhas led the advance of 5 Brigade through out, and after capturing Pt 6911 with two companies under command Maj G S Nagra, secured Bhimber Gali. Thereafter, the unit moved forward along the ridgeline, towards Mendher and Pir Marghot Ghazi.

After clearing all opposition en-route with 2 PUNJAB being on their flank, the battalion moved at night. After crossing a nullah full of boulder and knee deep freezing water, they launched the final attack with two companies,

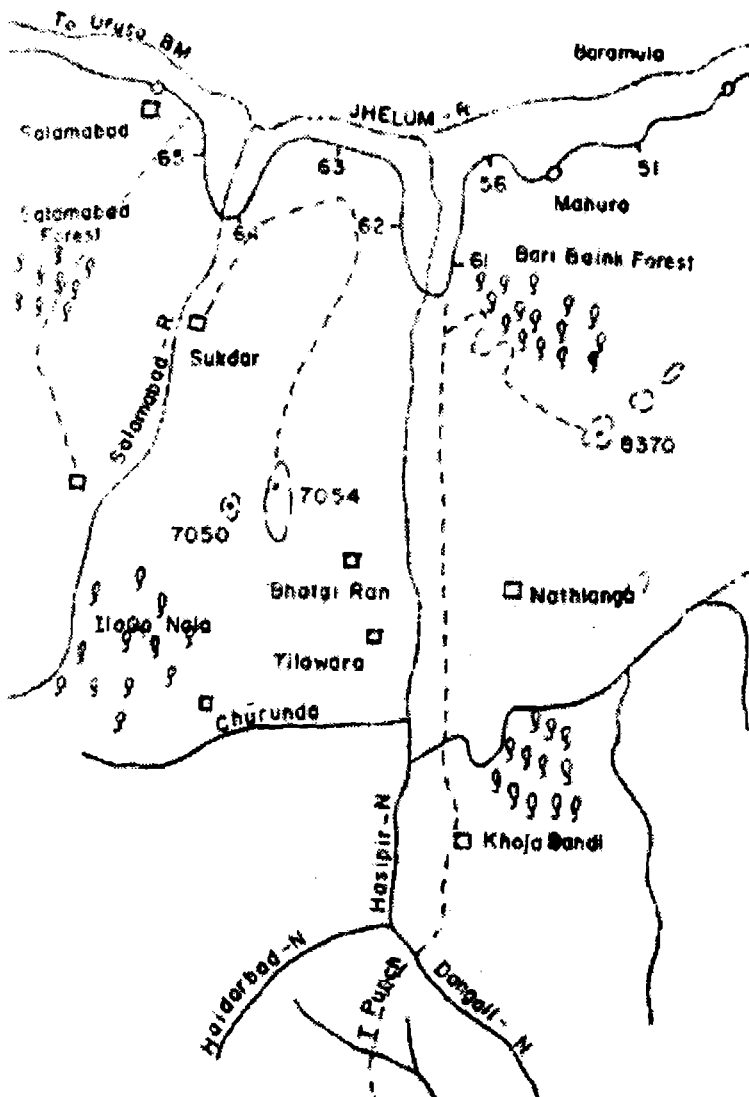
with Maj G S Nagra leading. The attack from an un-expected direction to capture of features near Pir Marghot Ghazi, on 19 November succeeded. Though subjected to sporadic shelling and machine gun fire, the Gorkhas assaulted the feature fearlessly, and by 1230 pm on 20 November, had cleared the complete ridge of all enemy troops.

2nd Lt S S Gill of 1/4 GR created history when he led a platoon of C Company and became the first unit of the Indian Army to link up with elements of 1 Kashmir Infantry of 101 Infantry Brigade of Punch at Pir Marghot Ghazi (Danana Pir Complex).

Thus, the siege of Punch was lifted by the final push by the battalion, after an operation lasting nearly 26 days. During this operation the Gorkhas had advanced over 50 miles of rough and broken mountain terrain, moving on man-packed basis, each OR carrying a load of nearly 70 lbs. The battalion had launched four major battalion size attacks and many company size attacks. It had killed 15 enemy soldiers and taken 12 prisoners, besides recovering some arms and ammunition. Own casualty was only the CO, who was wounded due to enemy shelling, but soon rejoined during the war. For its outstanding performance, the unit was awarded Battle Honor "Punch Link-Up" 1948. The unit won two Vr C (Lt Col S C Pandit and L Nk Dal Bahadur Pun), while Maj G S Nagra was Mention-in-Dispatches.

The Gorkhas concentrated at Punch on 22 November, and were welcomed warmly by Brig Pritam Singh and the local population, for lifting the siege. Soon, they came under the Punch Brigade and after a rest of few days, were tasked to clear enemy pockets from area Loran-Mandi-Thampir-Doda and between Punch and Rajauri, along with 1 Kashmir Infantry. As the Punch-Link-Up had already broken the enemy's will to fight, hereafter his resistance was less. The unit carried out these operations till December 48, when a UN Cease Fire came into effect on 1 January 1949.

URI SECTOR



For its outstanding performance, the battalion was awarded Battle Honor "Punch-1947-48".

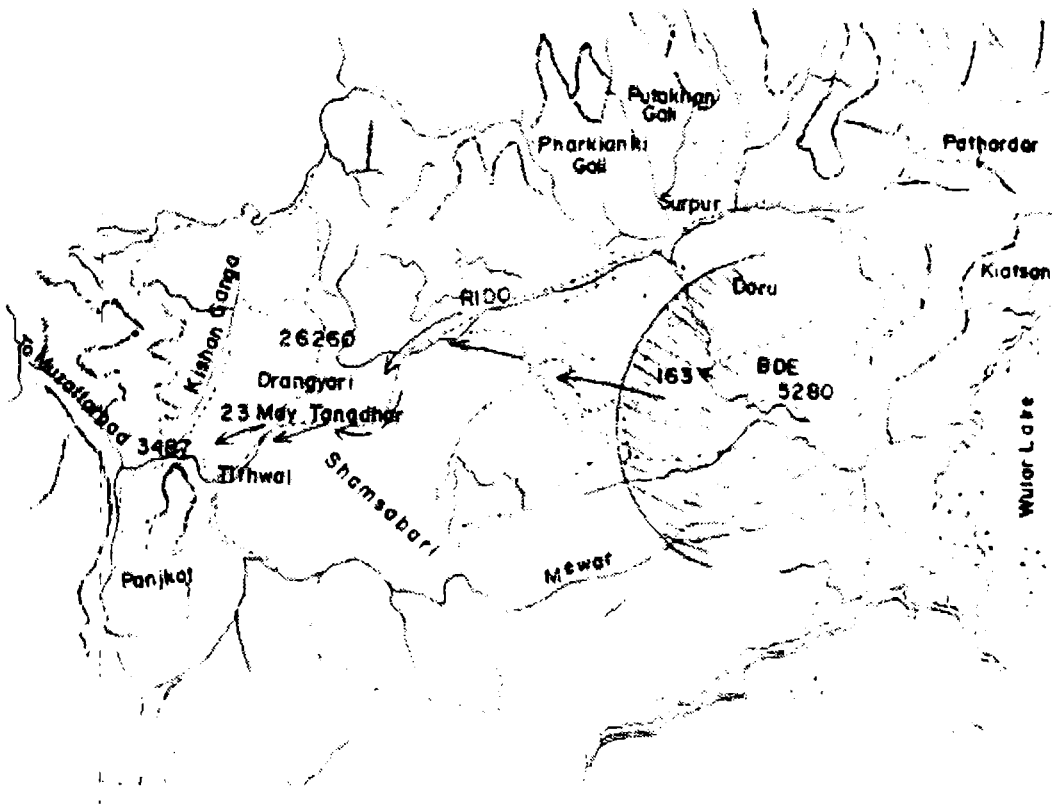
2/3 GR Captures Pirkanthi-June 1948

The Independence Day found the unit in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, from where it reached Delhi in December 1947. Under the command of Lt Col Prem Dass, MC, the unit was deeply involved in quelling communal riots. In May 1948, it received orders for move to J & K, and in June was part of the Brigade tasked to clear Road Uri-Muzzafarabad, by capturing Pirkanthi, a feature at the height of 10,930 ft, as it dominated the road.

Before the main attack, an operation to capture Pakistani forward positions at Urusa on the ridge to Pirkanthi had been carried out successfully, which besides providing a firm base and closer observation of the enemy defenses, had also greatly enhanced the morale of the troops. Simultaneously with the attack of 2/3 GR, 17 RAJPUTANA RIFLES were to attack Ledi Gali, on the flank.

Being an important feature, Pakistan was holding Pirkanthi with elements of 3rd Battalion of Pakistan's Bagh Brigade, comprising of Pathans, Punchis and regular troops, supported by machine guns, mortars and artillery.

ADVANCE TO TITHWAL 18-23 MAY 1948



After initial probing attacks, the plan evolved by the Col Prem Das evolved a deception plan depicting the attack from the front. However, the main attack was to be launched from East by D Company under Capt Nair who was to capture Pt 10930. Then, B Company under Maj Pathak was to exploit further. Adequate reserves had been positioned, and the CO himself had moved forward to control the attack.

The attack was launched on Night 27/28 June 1948, and the deception plan succeeded. As the enemy was expecting the attack from the West, the movement of A and B Companies from the East and concentration of the Battalion behind C Company, went un-detected. Soon, Phase 1 was launched and B Company succeeded in capturing Bushy Pimple, without much opposition. However, D Company came under intense machine gun and mortar fire 100 yds short of the objective, and further advance was held up, when the leading platoon commander and 5 OR were killed. At this stage, Maj Pathak decided to launch Phase 3 and exploit beyond Pt 10930, which put the enemy in disarray. While the leading troops were 50 yards away from the objective, the enemy brought intense and accurate small arms fire on them. To silence it, Rfn Jas Bahadur Thapa, though wounded, crawled forward and lobbed a hand grenade in the loop hole of the bunker, killing the machine gun crew.

Now Maj K S Rana led a determined attack with Kukris, which totally disheartened the Pakistani troops, who abandoned the position. As the leading elements closed with the enemy, Nk Purna Bahadur Thapa took a detour, moved along a slippery slope swept by enemy machine gun fire, and lobbed hand grenades into a bunker, which silenced the machine gun and enabled further move.

In this attack, the unit suffered 11 fatal and 50 non fatal casualties (including one officer and two JCOs), while the enemy losses were 54 killed, 40 wounded and 2 Pakistanis were taken prisoners. Inspection of the enemy position revealed strong defenses with bunkers, well stocked with rations and ammunition. Interrogation of prisoners revealed that the position was held by troops from 3rd Battalion of Bagh Brigade, 3 Platoons of Regular Pakistani Army (possibly 2/13 Frontier Forces and 1/15 Punjab) and 100 Pathans.

The unit earned three Vr C (Maj K S Rana, L Nk Purna Bahadur Thapa and Rfn Jas Bahadur Thapa—the last two posthumous), while 22 all ranks were Mention-in-Dispatches and the heroic actions of 17 were commended upon.

The Battalion was also awarded Battle Honor URI (Pirkanthi), the first post-Independence award of the Regiment.

During those days the Indian Army did not have adequate clothing and equipment to fight and survive in high altitudes during winter. The Cease Fire on 1 Jan 1949 created the Cease Fire Line (C F L) at the positions held by opposing troops, 2/3 GR was ordered to pull back to Uri and to re-occupy the feature after the snow melts. However, when the Gorkha patrols went back to re-occupy the feature after the snow had melted, they found that in violation of the U N Cease Fire Agreement, the Pakistanis had surreptitiously occupied the positions. Thus, to date Pirkanthi, captured by 2/3 GR with great grit and determination, continues to be under Pakistan's control.

2/4 GR in Gurez Sector June-December 48

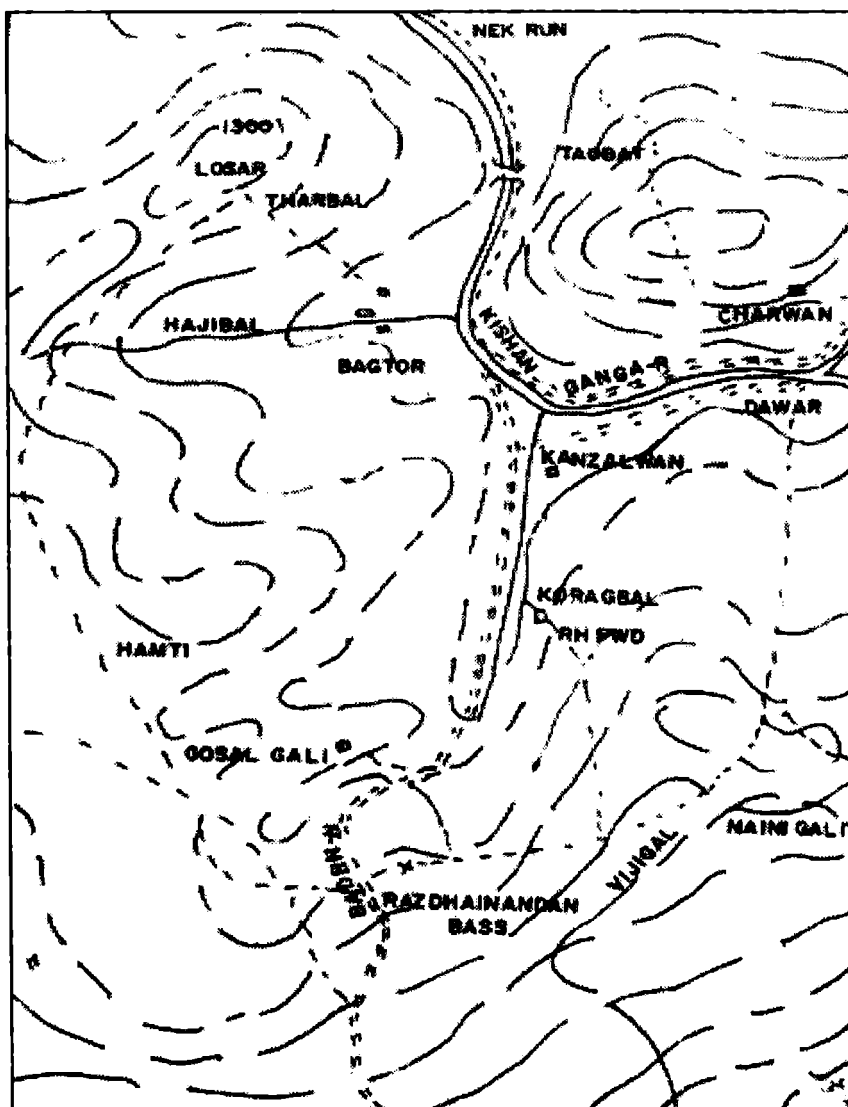
At the time of partition, the Battalion was at Amritsar, escorting trains and columns of refugees from both India and Pakistan. In May 1948, under command of Lt Col A W Desai, it first moved to Uri, then to Srinagar and finally by mid June was tasked to capture Kanzalwan. They were to link-up with 1 GRENADIERS who were tasked to capture Gurez, which was a key position on the traditional route from Srinagar to Gilgit via Astor. In those days Pakistan was not connected with Gilgit Agency by any other prominent route. As the situation in Ladakh was grave, D Company had been detached and air lifted to Leh.

By now Battalion HQs and B Company had built up. Lt Kam Lal Gurung commenced the advance on 25 June. During an attack on a Pakistani post, two OR of the company were wounded. Nk Kali Charan displayed commendable devotion to duty and courage, when he crawled under fire and evacuated them, an act for which he was awarded Vr C. By now A Company also joined, and the CO decided to advance with two companies to capture Kanzalwan. It was

finally secured on 29 June, and a link-up carried out with 1 GRENADIERS advancing from the other direction.

The road to Kunzalwan passed through Razadhani Pass at an altitude of 11,585 ft, which was dominated by two features, Pt 11,936 and Pt 12,000. It was connected with Bandipore by a motorable track, which even in dry season was only fit for mules. Thereafter, right up to Kishanganga River, there were only foot tracks connecting various villages in the thickly forested mountainous terrain. The Pass and other areas experienced heavy snowfall in winter and heavy rains during the monsoon, which created major logistic problems even for mule column. Having relieved 1

GURAI-KANZALWAN OPERATIONS-1948



GRENADIERS, the Gorkhas commenced the advance for capture of Kanzalwan on Ni 22/23 June, with C Company under Lt Kam Lal Gurung, leading. By stealth, they led an attack on an enemy company position and captured it after a stiff fight.

By 24 June, the Gorkhas had secured nearly 20 miles of track Bandipore-Gurez, driven back the enemy and recovered large quantity of ammunition and stores and a few weapons, while the company suffered only one non fatal casualty. In this operation Nk Kali Charan displayed commendable devotion to duty and courage when he crawled under enemy fire and evacuated a soldier of his section, for which he was awarded Vr C.

Thereafter, by carrying out regular patrolling, very good rapport had been established by the Gorkhas with the locals, who gave information about the tribesmen having occupied Losar and Bagtor.

Accordingly, operations were launched to capture these features, and enemy driven across River Kishanganga. Though widely dispersed with only three Companies, the unit launched another attack to dislodge the enemy occupying heights.

The enemy also attempted to re-capture lost positions and launched attacks on Ni 24/25 and 25/26 July, but the Gorkhas held their fire till the end and beat back three attacks. Thereafter, the enemy occupied a few features dominating the Gorkha defenses, and engaged them by machine gun and mortar fire, which disrupted normal maintenance.

When rations and ammunition situation became precarious, on Night 28/29 July Sub Rudra Bahadur Pun crawled out with a few men and despite danger to his life, went to the Supply Platoon point and returned with cooked food and ammunition for his company, which raised their morale and fighting capabilities. For his heroic act, Sub Rudra Pun was awarded Vr C.

At this stage it was decided to launch C Company to

attack the enemy occupying the heights, a task which Lt Kam Lal Gurung carried out after a long march following a difficult route. The attack was to be launched on a Friday, when the enemy was expected to be least vigilant. Reinforced by a platoon under Jemadar Rabe Gurung, though the troops had been worn out after seven days of privations in a beleaguered locality on reduced rations, they climbed the precipitous slopes of a spur, and attacked the enemy with stealth using Kukris, taking him totally by surprise. The enemy abandoned his positions and withdrew, leaving behind his wounded soldiers and a large quantity of war like stores. For displaying leadership of a very high order in this and earlier operations, Lt Kam Lal Gurung was awarded Vr C, while Rfn Tika Ram Newar was Mention-in-Dispatches. Hereafter, aggressive patrolling was carried out to dominate the vast area. In one such patrol on 3 Sep, L Nk Lal Bahadur Rana boldly ambushed an enemy party and captured one 3 in Mortar, for which he was awarded Vr C. In another clash on 22 Sep, a platoon patrol under Jem Lal Bahadur engaged an enemy position with mortar and machine gun fire, inflicting casualties on the enemy, forcing him to withdraw.

D Company 2/4 GR in Ladakh

Under command of 2nd Lt S K Kaul, with Sub Kanwar Lal Newar as officiating 2 IC and Jem Tek Bahadur Thapa as Platoon Commander, the company reached Leh on 1 June 1948 from Srinagar. It carried arms and ammunition for the Leh Garrison under Lt Col Prithvi Chand, who was raising a local Militia. The company operated under the Leh force, initially under Col Prithvi Chand and later under Lt Col H S Parab, CO 2/8 GR which had been inducted along Manali-Upshi route.

By July 48, the tribesmen had advanced along River Indus from Kargil and Chorbat La, towards Leh. One platoon of 2/4 GR was dispatched to delay the enemy at Dumkhar, which came under intense fire. During this action Nk Thaman Rana showed cool courage, inflicted casualties on the enemy

and ensured that his wounded L M G No 1, Rfn Lal Bahadur Thapa, was safely evacuated, an act for which he was awarded Vr C. In another action, Nk Sri Parsad Gurung and Rfn Bir Shamsheer Gurung silenced an L M G of the enemy by lobbing grenades from close range, as part of a raiding party under Maj Kushal Chand. Rfn Udey Prasad Pun played an important part in commando raid carried out by Maj Hari Chand, in which enemy 3.7 in Howitzer was destroyed.

Sub Moti Lal Gurung, MC, the permanent company 2 IC, was on leave in Nepal when the company was inducted in Leh. On hearing about the operations from leave parties, he rejoined voluntarily and took part in the operations from Oct 48. He found that his company had been split in small portions, and as the Company Commander had been evacuated, the command and control was not effective. As by now the enemy offensive had petered off, and an offensive was being planned to drive the enemy back, Sub Moti Lal Gurung requested CO 2/8 GR permission to concentrate his company and asked him to give a worth-while task. This was agreed to. Thereafter, a number of raids were carried out by the company, in which L Nks Thaman Rana and Dal Bahadur Pun, Rfns Kul Bahadur Gurung and Udey Parsad Pun, did exceedingly well.

In the above operations, 2/4 GR earned 5 Vr C (Lt Kam Lal Gurung, Sub Rudra Bahadur Pun, Nk Kali Charan Gurung and L Nks Lal Bahadur Rana and Thaman Rana), one Ashok Chakra (Rfn Tika Ram Newar), while 12 all ranks were Mention-in-Dispatches.

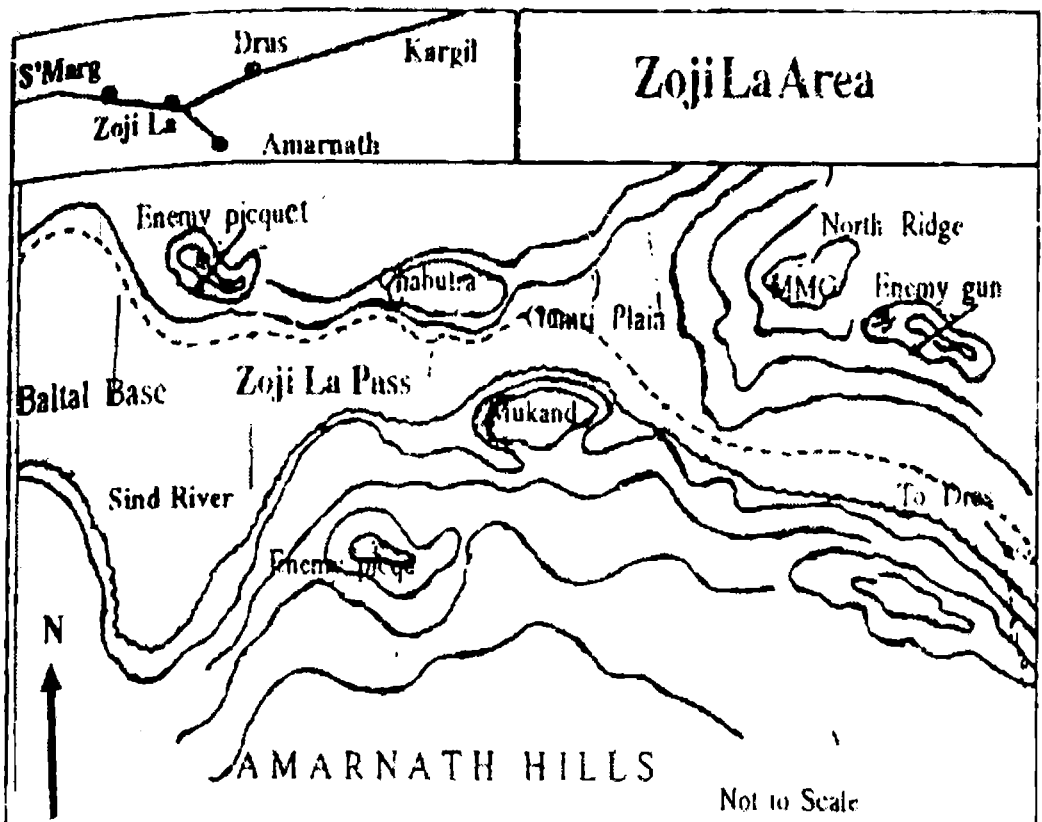
1/5 GR (FF) at Zoji La and Kargil October/November 1948

When the fighting flared up in J & K in October 1947, the battalion under the command of Lt Col A S Pathania, MC, was stationed at Red Fort, Delhi, and was employed in maintaining communal harmony. Though initially ordered to fly to J & K, the orders were changed at the last moment as the unit was short of Indian officers and British officers

were not permitted to go to J & K. Finally, it moved in August 1948, and was grouped with 77 Brigade under Sri Force for capture of Zoji La, and then advance to Kargil.

By now the enemy was well entrenched on features at heights of 16,000 ft dominating both shoulders of Zoji La and had deployed his machine guns, mortars and artillery in a coordinated manner. They had also secured the towns of Dras and Kargil. Though the Indian troops had succeeded in occupying certain features on lower slopes of Zoji La, attacks to dislodge the enemy and open the only land route to Dras via Zoji La, had not been successful.

On 1 Sept, the Gorkhas were tasked to advance via Botkulan Gali (a pass-located on a flank) which was reported to be un-held, and capture Dras, thus turning enemy's flanks. Though still in summer clothing, on 3 September the Gorkhas moved stealthily along a difficult track, but found the Gali already occupied by the enemy. A two company attack was launched on 5 September by Lt Ichhe Gurung, MC and Sub Harka Bahadur Gurung, MC and the enemy was routed.

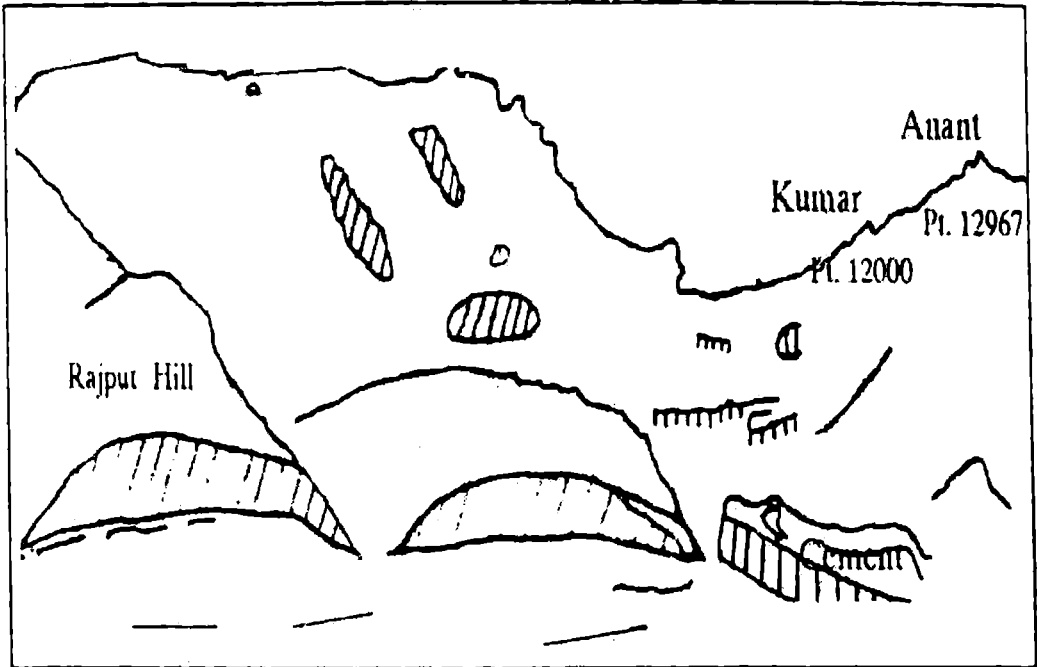


However, further advance to Dras was not possible as the nullah was frozen and no track could be made. Thus, on 9 Sept, the troops were called back after leaving a company to hold the pass.

By now the plan to capture Zoji La had been formulated by Maj Gen K S Thimayya, D S O, and Brig K L Atal. In this tank of 7 CAV were to shoot-up the enemy defenses before the infantry assault. The Gorkhas were to attack Mukund (Pt 12967) after sun-set, while another battalion was to capture the feature on its left, and then advance to Dras. The attack commenced at 10 am on 1 November, and after neutralizing enemy bunkers, the tanks advanced to Gumri, by noon. Soon, it started snowing and a thick fog enveloped the mountains, thus the enemy held on to higher slopes of Mukund and Chabutra features. During the attack Maj S P Burathoki's company came under heavy mortar fire, to silence which he asked for two volunteers. L Hav Ram Prasad Gurung and Sher Bahadur Gurung volunteered. Leading a fighting patrol they attacked the enemy bunker from the rear, capturing a 3 in Mortar. For displaying exemplary courage, while L Hav Ram Prasad won an M V C, Rfn Sher Bahadur Gurung was awarded Vr C.

By 4 November, the leading elements of the Brigade had secured area just short of Pindras. At this stage 1/5 GR (FF) was ordered to capture Pt 12967 while the Rajputs were to capture Batkundi, located on a ridge. While the Gorkhas reached their objective, the other troops were held up due to enemy machine gun fire, hence the attack was held -up. Once again, tanks were brought forward, for which the Gorkhas also assisted in developing the track, and enemy bunkers on dominating heights engaged.

Pt 12967 being on a long ridge, it was divided into two company objectives, Kumar and Anant. One company each under Sub Harka Bahadur, MC and Lt Ichhe Gurung was tasked to capture it, one by one. The Gorkhas crossed over to Pindras on Night 13 November by stealth, and launched the attack on 14 November, securing their objectives after a bitter fight, by first light 15 Nov. In this operation, L Nk



Kumar and Anant features; from original sketch drawn in 1948.

Dharam Singh Thapa showed outstanding courage by charging an enemy bunker, for which he was awarded Vr C.

After the attack, the battalion was tasked to advance to Kargil. By 21 November the Gorkhas concentrated at Kharbu, and commenced advance next day along both banks of Dras River in freezing cold weather. As the withdrawing enemy had burnt all bridges, on 22 November the advance was held up and leading elements came under heavy fire. As crossing the river was essential, Capt A K Kochar, Adjutant, volunteered and swam across the frozen river with a rope, which enabled operations of a boat ferry. This enabled speedy build-up for clearing the far bank and by the evening Jem Lal Bahadur Pun with 15 OR was able to cross the river. Though fired upon by the enemy, he climbed the hill and led an attack, forcing the enemy to withdraw leaving behind ten dead bodies. For his brave act, Jem Lal Bahadur was awarded Vr C. Soon, the engineers built a bridge at Kharal and as the crossing had been organized by Sub Harka Bahadur Gurung, it was named after him.

While the fighting was taking place at Kharal, a company had been sent under Capt Sen and 2nd Lt G S Rawat (later Lt Gen) along a track over 14,000 ft snow covered ridge, to Kargil, where it reached at 4 am on 23 November. By now the Raiders had fled Kargil. Soon, on 24 Nov, Lt Ichhe Gurung with his D Company linked-up with elements from Leh Garrison, thus ensuring safety of Ladakh.

In this operation, the unit suffered 14 fatal and 22 non fatal (including two JCOs), while 4 OR were reported missing. The Gorkhas won two M V Cs (Lt Col A S Pathania, MC and L Hav Ram Prasad Gurung) and 3 Vr C. Nine all ranks were Mention-in-Dispatches. The unit was awarded Battle Honor 'Zojila' and 'Kargil' and Theatre Honor 'J&K 1947-48'.

The operations succeeded due to exemplary courage and bold leadership shown by all officers, who proved that they were second to none. Equally, the JCOs and O R proved their mettle and loyalty to their Indian leaders, setting an example for others to follow. Fighting in high altitude and extreme cold region with ordinary clothing, all ranks braved these hardships cheerfully, and earned fame and glory for the Gorkhas of the Indian Army. They proved that the decision of the Government of independent India to retain Gorkha soldiers was correct, and that the troops were loyal and devoted to their duty and regiment, as dedicated soldiers.

2/8 GR Saves Ladakh-1948

The battalion located at Ferozepur was tasked to move to Leh in June 1948. One company moved under Maj Hari Chand, and after marching for 25 days via Manali, reached Leh on 10 July 1948. Col Prithvi Chand, Commander of Leh Garrison, tasked the company to occupy Khalastsi (Khalsi). By 17 September the whole battalion had built-up after a grueling march, when Col Parab assumed command. He was also given the judicial and executive powers, to restore administration and ensure security of Ladakh. Besides his own battalion, a company of 2/4 GR and a platoon of J & K State Forces, few Militias and volunteers were also grouped under him.

By now the Qabailies had captured Skardu and were all set to advance along Indus River to secure Leh and capture Ladakh. Besides machine guns, they also had one 3.7 in howitzer which had been playing havoc with our troops. Own troops were deployed along both banks of Indus to check the enemy, and to enhance the confidence of the locals.

To neutralize the enemy howitzer, Maj Hari Chand was tasked to organize a raid with his D Company and local guerillas on village Bosgo, which he carried out successfully, after marching 60 miles and crossing over a mountain range at 16,000 ft. Besides capturing the gun and a taking few prisoners, Maj Hari Chand's column also ambushed a logistic column of the raiders, thus degrading their will to fight. For displaying courage and leadership of a very high order, Maj Hari Chand was awarded M V C.

Thereafter, Capt Subba led an attack on the bridge at Nimu and drove the Qabailies back by about 15 miles, and their resistance between Khalatsi and Saspol, broke. By November 1948, 1/5 GR (FF) had secured Zoji la and their leading troops were advancing towards Kargil, where Maj Hari Chand met them on 23 November 1948. Though there was no bridge at Suru River, he crossed it by using two wooden logs.

During these operations, Sub Ranjit Pun was in-charge of a piquet near Tharu. Being isolated for nearly six months, the post was under constantantly subjected to mortar shelling and was often attacked by the enemy. Sub Ranjit Pun showed exemplary leadership to his troops and beat back these attacks. When low on ammunition and even an air drop was not feasible, he encouraged his Gorkhas to fight with Kukris if necessary, but held the post without sufficient ammunition for two days. For displaying outstanding devotion to duty and qualities of leadership, Sub Ranjit Pun was awarded Vr C.

In another incident, during an attack on the enemy position, L Nk Trilok Singh Thapa single handedly attacked and captured a machine gun, for which he was awarded

Vr C. On 2 Dec, during a surprise encounter with an enemy patrol, Sub San Bahadur Pun and L Nk Jas Bahadur Thapa attacked the enemy without fear, and earned Vr Cs. In December 48, a special task force of Sub Budhbal Gurung and 40 OR crossed two snow covered passes and cut-off a Pakistani post, forcing them to surrender.

By the time the Cease Fire came into effect on 1 January 1949, 2/8 GR had established firm control over Ladakh tehsil of 36,000 population. The Gorkhas had by then vanquished 150 enemy Qabailies and captured one 3.7 in Howitzer, 30 muzzle loading guns, twelve .303 rifles and one each 3 in and 2 in Mortars. Besides one prisoner, the Gorkhas had captured 30,000 rounds of ammunition and 40 pony loads of other war like stores.

The Gorkhas suffered 12 fatal and 11 non-fatal casualties (including one J C O). They won one M V C (Maj Hari Chand) and four Vr Cs (Subs Ranjit Pun and San Bahadur Gurung, MC, L Nks Trilok Singh Thapa and Jas Bahadur Thapa).

6/8 GR in Jammu Sector and Punch Link-Up 1948

Under the command of Lt Col J D Nadirshaw, the unit moved to Jammu in September 1948, and was tasked to occupy a defended sector. Under Maj Mingail, 2 IC, on 5 October, a force of two companies carried out an operation to remove Pakistani encroachment between the Basantar River and the I B, which was successfully carried out against light opposition.

On 28 October, the battalion was ordered to advance along the high ridges on the West of Road Rajouri-Bhimbar Gali-Punch, and clear enemy opposition. Moving on 4 November on mule-pack basis, the leading troops under Sub Birta Bahadur Gurung, I D S M, I O M, occupied Pt 4642, while C Company under Capt Gurbachan Singh secured feature Pt 4844 (Naghun Hill) before day break. As the radio link with supporting tanks and mortars was disrupted and the enemy had by now detected the Gorkhas,

artillery and air attacks were carried out. After these the Gorkhas led a fierce assault on the feature, forcing the enemy to withdraw to Pt 4700. After a fierce hand-to-hand fight, the objectives were captured and Pakistani opposition cleared from depth objectives also, in which Lt Dewasingh Ghale led his company, boldly.

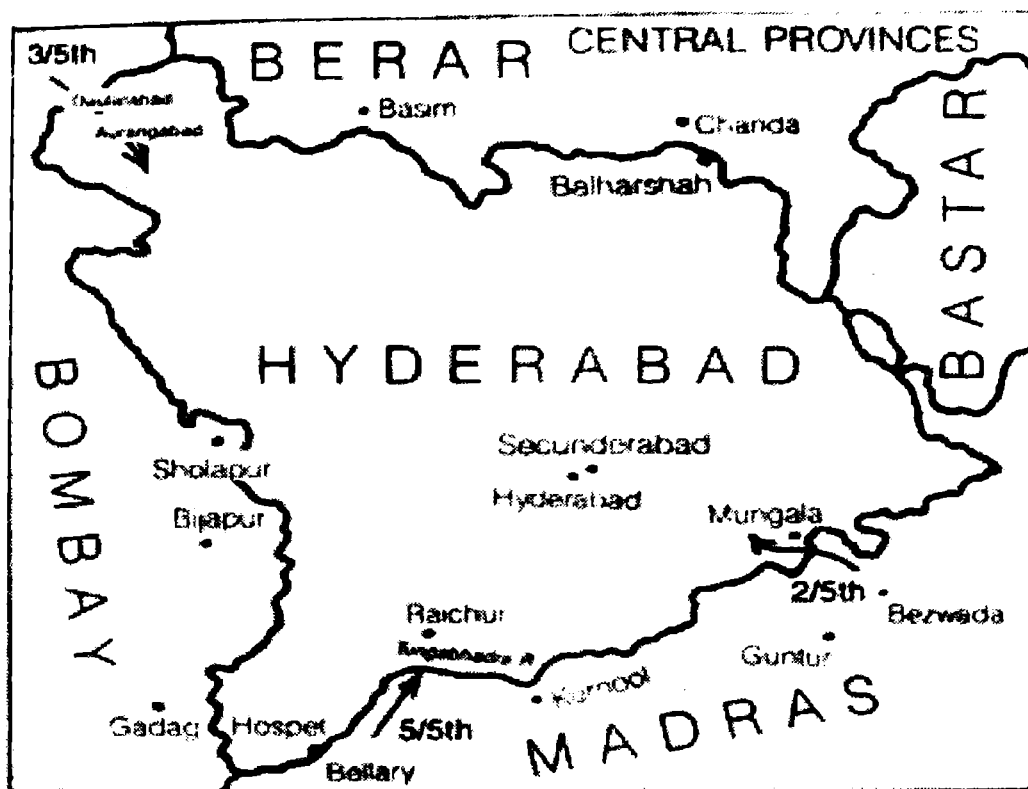
After a quick re-organization, on 8 November the advance was resumed and the Gorkhas assisted 2/2 PUNJAB in their attack on Ramgarh Fort. By 11 November, they had captured Pt 6480, suffering one fatal and two non-fatal casualties, and inflicting many on the enemy. Hereafter, the unit occupied a defensive position and continued to carry out aggressive patrolling, till the cease fire came into effect on 1 January 1949.

During this operation, the battalion suffered a total of two fatal and eight non-fatal casualties. It won one Vr C (the CO), while five all ranks were Mention-in-Dispatches. The unit was awarded Battle Honor 'Punch' and theatre honor 'J&K 1947-48'.

OPERATION POLO (HYDERABAD OPERATIONS)

Background

Hyderabad as a state though ruled by the Nizams had been under the British rule for nearly 150 years. When given a choice for accession, the Nizam decided to remain independent, and signed a status quo agreement with India on 29 November 1947, for a year. However, by May 1948 indications were received that under Syed Kasim Rizvi, the state was organizing Razakars and seeking arms assistance from Pakistan and abroad, and had no intention of honoring the agreement. Soon, the Razakars started ransacking trains passing through the state, and even attacked a few Indian Army detachments. Emboldened by passive reaction from India, in September 48 elements of Nizam's forces started looting and encroaching on Indian territories. As the Indian Army had been engaged in J & K, initially no troops could be spared for internal security role.



Hyderabad State in 1948. Routes taken by the 2/5th, 3/5th and 5/5th.

However, as by mid 1948 the situation in J & K had stabilized, greater attention was given to tackle Hyderabad problem. When the Nizam failed to disband the Razakars, the Indian Army was tasked to disarm them.

Planned and conducted by Maj Gen J N Chowdhri, OPERATION POLO envisaged a speedy multi-prong advance into Hyderabad State, securing of road and rail communications, and capturing and disarming of the Razakars.

2/1 GR

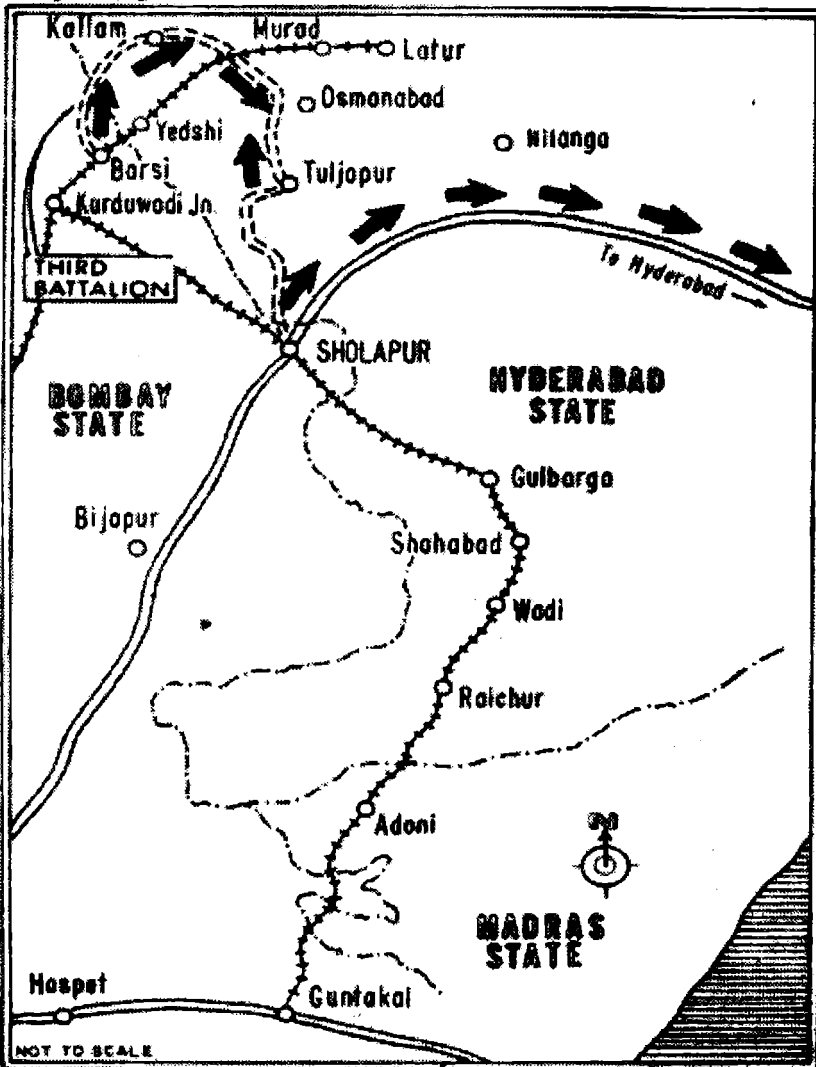
The Gorkhas under the command of Maj C L Whig moved from Kosi Kalan and by September 1948 were at Bijapur, forming part of 9 Brigade. The unit was tasked to capture Tuljapur, 34 kms North-West of Naldrug, on Sholapur-Naldrug-Secunderabad road by an out flanking move. It was allotted a squadron of 3 CAVALRY, battery

of 9 Para Field Regiment and a detachment of 10 Field Company Engineers.

Commencing at 8 pm on 12 September, the leading elements were in contact with enemy's dug-in positions at Tuljapur at first light on 13 Sept. Immediately, a company attack supported by tanks was launched and the enemy routed with 14 fatal casualties, while on own side one OR was wounded. By 4 pm all resistance from the 200 strong enemies had ceased.

THIRD BATTALION : HYDERABAD POLICE ACTION

DIAGRAM-3



Next, the unit formed part of 1 Armored Brigade and on 16 September was tasked to capture Zahirabad, a strong

hold of Razakars in a built-up area. The task was completed and heavy casualties were inflicted on the enemy. Soon, D Company secured Kohir by mid-day of 17 September, crippling the Razakars who had given up their fight. Thereafter, the Gorkhas entered Secunderabad, searched nearby villages to disarm the Razakars and by the end of the operations had recovered 1400 rifles and a large quantity of ammunition.

2/5 RG R² (FF) Advance from Bezwada to Hyderabad September 1948

On 13 September, under the command of Lt Col Gurkirpal Singh, the Gorkhas commenced advance on Bezwada- Mungala-Kodar Road, towards Hyderabad. Soon, it encountered a ditch, which was filled and enemy opposition cleared. Resuming the advance on 15 September, the Gorkhas encountered another demolished bridge on Musi River. Here troops of Hyderabad State Forces offered some resistance, but they were soon overpowered. On 16 September, the Gorkhas took surrender of the Hyderabad Lancers along with their weapons. Active patrolling was carried out in the area, which resulted in the villagers coming forward with information about the Razakars.

3/5 GR(FF) captures Aurangabad September 1948

Under Lt Col P S Thapa, the first Gorkha officer to command a Gorkha unit, by early September 48 the unit had concentrated at Nandgaon, between Manmad and Chalisgaon on the border of Hyderabad State, when it was given the task to capture Aurangabad. Leading D Company, Maj Fremantle advanced with speed. After brushing aside minor opposition, the Gorkhas by an outflanking move surprised troops of 8th Hyderabad Infantry and secured Piplagaon. The unit followed up and by 14 September cleared Warjhadi and Jambala, and started preparations for an attack on Daulatabad Fort. By now the move of tanks and artillery, together with the advance by Kukri wielding Gorkhas had

unnerved the enemy. The Fort Garrison surrendered on 15 Sep to Maj K J S Chhatwal. This further demoralized the Subedar (Administrator) of Auragabad, who on 15 September surrendered to Lt Col Thapa. Thereafter, company columns were sent to Ajanta Caves, Jalna and Paithan where troops of the State Forces surrendered without giving much fight. This forced the Nizam to surrender on 17 September.

Hereafter, search for hidden arms and Razakars were carried out, with good results. The Gorkhas suffered only a few casualties, while ten enemy soldiers were killed.

5/5 GRG (FF) Captures Tungbhadra Bridge and Raichur

Under command Lt Col C E James, MBE, in early Sept the unit was moved to Guntakul. It was tasked to capture the bridge on Tungbhadra River and then advance and secure Raichur in Hyderabad State.

The road cum rail bridge was being guarded on both ends by the State Forces backed by the Rzakars and had been prepared for demolition. Being an important bridge, it was vital that it be captured, intact.

To achieve surprise, the Gorkhas sent a column across the bridge in a goods train, while some wagons were readied to carry weapon carriers.

On Night 14/15 September, a simultaneous attack was launched from both ends, in which Nk Nar Bahadur Thapa showed bravery of a very high order, when he charged an enemy machine gun which was holding up the assault of his section, for which he was awarded Ashoka Chakra Class 1 (now Ashoka Chakra). Soon thereafter, the Gorkhas entered Raichur, much to the delight and relief of the locals, who had been living under threat of the Razakars.

Conclusions

In the 1947-48 J&K Operations and OPERATION POLO, the Gorkhas troops proved, if any proof was needed, that the Indian officers were as good to lead them in war as

their erstwhile British commanders. The professionalism, devotion to duty, ingenuity and courage displayed by their officers and the troops established beyond doubt their loyalty to their regiment, Indian Army and to India. Though the opposition during OPERATION POLO was light, but the Gorkhas soldiers, as others of the Indian Army employed in this operation, showed their ability to change from one type of warfare and terrain to another, with ease.

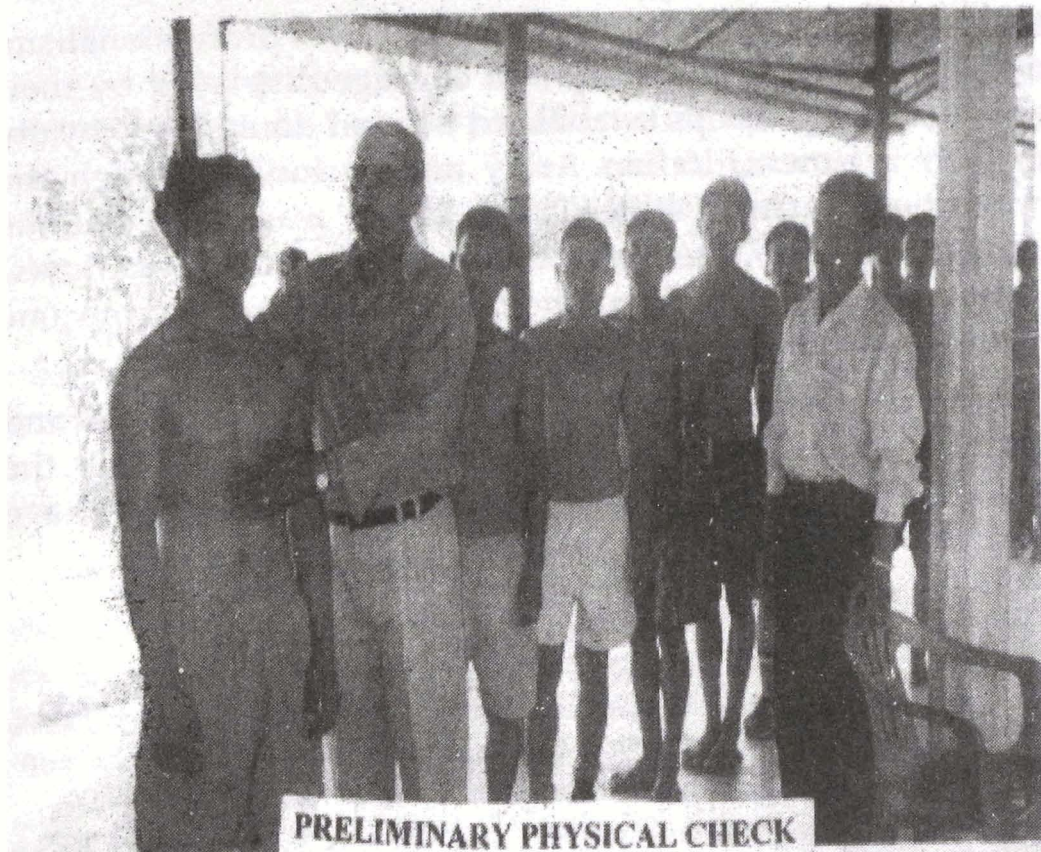
The bonds of comradierre laid between the troops and their commanders in the 1947-49 Operations became the bedrock of regimental spirit, loyalty and pride, which have continued to develop, thereafter.

REFERENCES

1. Ops in J&K-1947-48. Gov. of India, Min of Def, Thomson Press, N Delhi, 1987. According to a scholar, the troops could be non-optees of 7 GR, who were later merged into 5 and 8 GR.
2. At that time, the designation of 5 GR was Royal Gorkha Rifles (Frontier Force). This changed in 1950, when 'Royal' was deleted.



A WIDOW WITH HER PENSION PATRA



PRELIMINARY PHYSICAL CHECK



CLASSIFICATION OF HOPEFULS

2. THE GROKHA'S IN THE 1962 INDO-CHINA WAR

General

In September 1959, the Chinese laid claims to about 50,000 sq miles of Indian territory in N E F A and Ladakh. Not known to India, in Ladakh they had built a road through Aksai Chin, linking Rudok in Tibet to Sinkiang. They also laid claims to Aksai Chin plateau and on 20 October 1959 ambushed a police patrol. In the NE, they constructed roads in Ladakh and laid claims to a vast Indian territory, running down to the plains of River Brahmaputra. Their patrols often intruded across the Mac Mohan Line and laid claims to the areas.

In order to check Chinese intrusions in to her territory, India decided to undertake limited defensive measures by occupying forward posts. The Chinese reacted by attacking some of these posts, culminating in to the 1962 India-China War.

After launching probing attacks on 8 September 1962 and pushing back Indian forward posts mostly of Assam Rifles, on 20 October the Chinese launched an offensive across the Mac Mohan Line in Chusul (Ladakh, where 1/8 GR was deployed). In NEFA, they crossed the Mac Mohan Line and attacked positions held by 1/9 GR at Namka Chu and 6/8 GR at Chako/Bomdi La in Kameng Frontier Division. In Lohit Division, they attacked 11 Infantry Brigade, where 3/3 GR and 2/8 GR were deployed at Walong and Menchuka, respectively.

There were a number of other Gorkha units rushed to NEFA to stem the tide of the Chinese advance (like 1/4 GR in Subansiri Sector) but their accounts are not being included as the war ended before they could see combat.

At all places, the Chinese attacks were well planned, in overwhelming strength and supported by artillery fire. On the other hand, the deployment and strength of Indian troops

was weak, as the units were inducted in the areas which had no road communications or logistic infrastructure.

It is to the credit to the Indian soldier that despite adverse climatic conditions, lack of proper logistics and firepower, he fought on all fronts bravely till the end. The devotion to duty, courage and gallantry shown by each soldier was commendable, though quite a few of them suffered fatal and non-fatal casualties and some were taken POWs.

As in the 1947-48 J&K Operations, in the 1962 India-China War also the Gorkhas fought with guts and courage along with their comrades of the Indian Army. They wrote many new chapters in the annals of bravery associated with them and their regiments.

EASTERN SECTOR

1/9 GR at Namka Chu October 1962

By September 1962, the unit had been in N E F A area for over two years, and had earned a very good reputation amongst the local Monpas. The Gorkhas were applauded by all higher commanders, who considered them as the best ambassadors of the Indian Army. Their love for children, discipline and honest dealings with the locals, and habit of spending money lavishly, had made them popular in N E F A. Thus, they were held in high regard by the villagers, who came forward to assist the Army in its build-up ahead of Towang.

Having completed its field tenure of two years in hard conditions in Towang and other areas of Kameng Frontier Division of N E F A, the unit under the command of Lt Col B S Ahluwalia had concentrated at Misamari in Sep 1962 and was awaiting move to its peace station at Yol, to celebrate Dusshera with families. As there were no indications of any hostilities between India and China, a large leave party had proceeded to Nepal, leaving only about 400 able bodied combat soldiers in the unit.

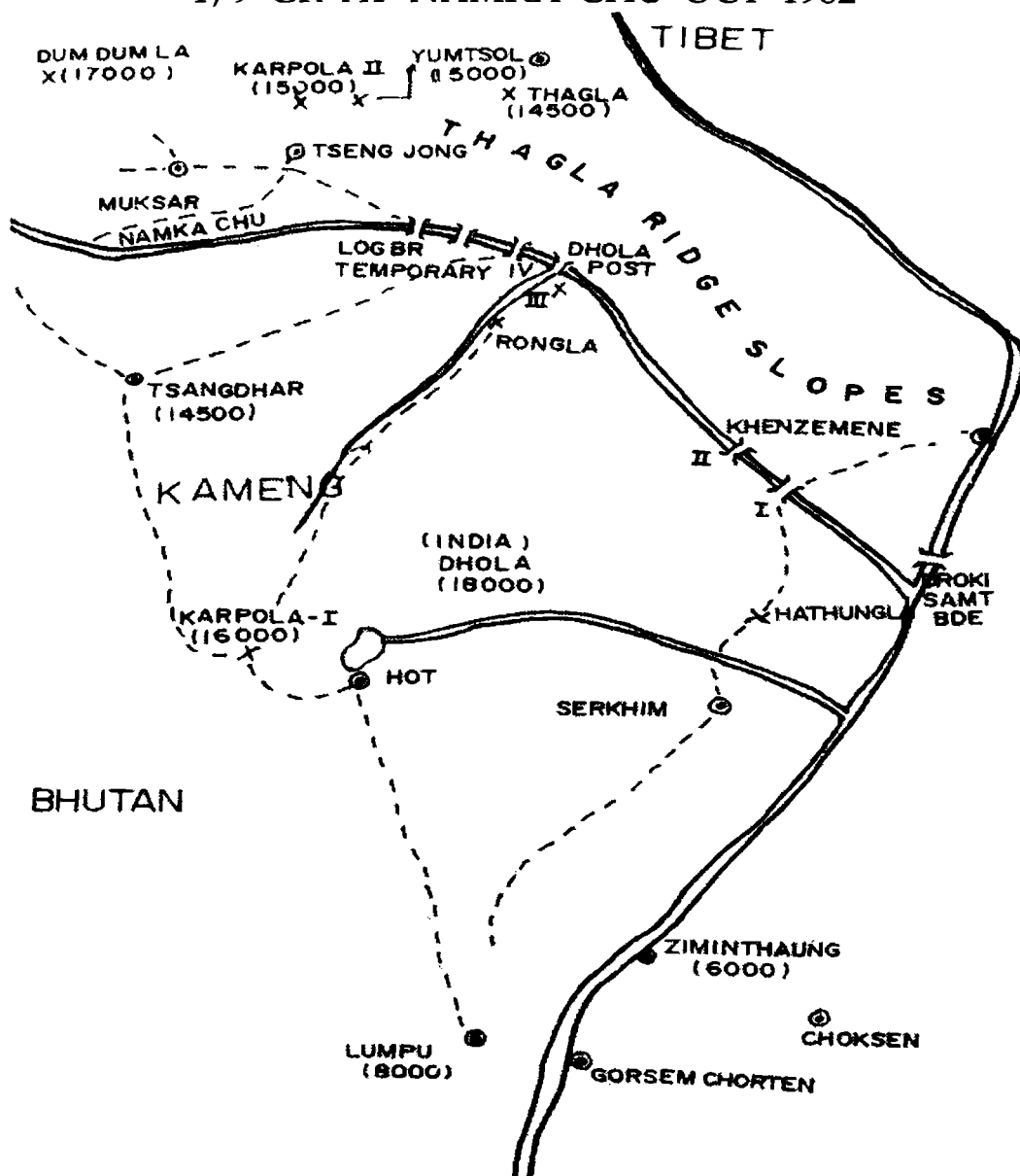
However, when on 8 September 62 the Chinese intruded

into the Thagla Ridge area and encircled and attacked our Dhola Post (ahead of Towang, on the flanks of Namka Chu facing Thagla Ridge), the unit was ordered to move back immediately to rejoin its former brigade and strengthen the defenses of Towang. As the road was still under construction and passes were covered with standing snow, no vehicles were made available. Also due to acute paucity of porters, the troops had to march 350 km in summer clothing wearing ordinary boots, without any proper food and lodging arrangements. Sharing one blanket and a ground sheet (rubberized sheet, which acts as a canopy in making a shelter) between two men, besides his personal weapon and share of section's loads, each soldier carried three days rations and 50 rounds of small arms ammunition, a total weight of 40 kg. The unit left behind much of its heavy equipment and weapons, like entrenching tools and 3 in Mortars.

Though the unit had not done any field firing or classification training, instead of being given time to train, due to pressure from higher HQs, the Gorkhas (with other elements of 7 Infantry Brigade) were moved forward in rain and snow, to occupy defenses guarding the bridges on Namka Chu Valley, an extremely rugged and narrow valley, with precipitous and thickly wooded slopes. The river was a very fast-flowing boulder-strewn mountain stream, between 8 to 40 m wide and was a considerable obstacle. It was bridged at a few places with two-three logs tied together. However, during September-October, it could be crossed at a number of places. Thagla Massif is about 5000m high and slopes down to Namka Chu at 3000 m, in 5 km, thus it provided the Chinese good domination and observation of the Indian defenses on the southern bank of the river.

The weather at Towang and beyond was extremely cold, due to rain and snow fall and maintenance of troops was difficult due to non-availability of porters and poor track conditions. While a dropping zone had been prepared, the air drops were not accurate and only 30% of stores could be retrieved. In the absence of digging tools, the troops had to use Kukris and other implements to dig defenses and construct over head shelters using local wood.¹

1/9 GR AT NAMKA CHU OCT 1962



The Gorkhas reached Lumpu on 28 September 62. Next, they were ordered to move forward across Karpola I Pass (4500m), though they were not clad to undertake the journey, and reach Tsangdhar (3800m) which had hardly any shelter. On 9 October, the unit was ordered to move to Namka Chu, under Chinese observation, which though was considered tactically not sound, but it had to be implemented, as another battalion was tasked to occupy a 'gap' in the Chinese positions on Thagla Ridge. Same day, the Gorkhas were ordered to reinforce Tseng-Jong with one coy, while the battalion was deployed above Che Dong on track from

the Assam Rifle post. D Company held the central location, while A and C Companies were on its flanks. B Company was above Bridge II, protecting the Brigade HQs. Till now, there was belief that the Chinese will not launch a major attack across Thagla Ridge, though all battle indications showed otherwise.

On 10 October, a patrol of 9 PUNJAB was ordered to cross Namka Chu and occupy Tseng-Jong. Provoked, the Chinese attacked the patrol. Though their first two attempts failed with heavy casualties, in the third attempt they encircled the Punjabis. As the company of Punjab unit could not be reinforced or supported by mortars (there being hardly any artillery support available in the sector), the patrol was ordered back. Though they had fought bravely, but they had suffered heavy casualties.

In the meanwhile, despite shortages of digging tools, the Gorkhas continued to build their defenses, under the direct observation of the enemy. The task of 'guarding bridges' led to dispersion of troops, with positions having no mutual support. Period 13 to 19 October witnessed feverish enemy build-up on Thagla Ridge and its slopes towards Namka Chu, and indicated that the Chinese were preparing for a major attack, soon. In the meanwhile, higher HQs had ordered that balance of Gorkhas-battalion less one company should be moved to Tsangle immediately, which was strongly objected to, but with no success. Thus, one company was sent on 17 October. The balance of the unit (battalion less two companies) was getting ready to move on 20 October morning, when the Chinese attacked across the Namka Chu.

On the morning of 20 October, the Gorkhas were spread out over a wide area, with one company at Tsangle, one company at Tsangdhar (looking after the dropping zone) and battalion less two companies at Track Junction, behind the river. The defenses were not only weak and without mines or wire obstacles, but there was hardly any fire support and ammunition with the troops to fight. The troops had been on reduced rations, in summer clothes in extreme cold

and hard conditions, a number of soldiers had fallen sick due to high altitude effects. Yet, despite their hopeless tactical and administrative situation, their morale was high.

Not known to the Indian troops, on the nights 18/19 and 19/20 October, one Chinese Division (nearly nine times the strength of the Gorkhas and three times that of the total force in Namka Chu) had infiltrated across the Namka Chu, and got behind the positions of the Gorkhas and other troops of the brigade. Simultaneously, the Chinese had sent columns to depth localities, thus intercepting and cutting all routes of withdrawal.

At 5 am on 20 October, the Chinese fired two rounds of signal pistol opposite Bridge III, which was the signal for their artillery and mortars to start engaging the defenses of 7 Brigade, trapped in the Namka Chu. The Chinese had also cut-off the telephone lines laid by the Indian troops, thus command and control was lost, once the fighting commenced. Soon, nearly 150 guns, including 76mm rapid fire automatic field guns and 120 mm mortars opened up. They concentrated their fire on Dhola-Tsangdhar sector. After an hour long artillery shelling, the assault started at 6 am, from the rear of the positions. Soon, the defended positions were overwhelmed, all over.

At the time of attack, the Gorkhas were getting ready to move for Tsangle, and were thus caught flat-footed. Though the move was stopped, the unit suffered heavy casualties. The Gorkhas used their 3 in Mortars to engage the assaulting Chinese, but these were they soon neutralized. At 6.25 am, nearly 500 Chinese attacked C Company. In the ensuing fight, while Capt Gambhir was killed, 2nd Lt Dogra was wounded.

At this stage, Col Ahluwalia directed Sub Maj Jit Bahadur Chhetri to take a platoon and reinforce Dogra, but by 7.30m, Dogra's position had been overrun. Though wounded, Dogra continued to fight with a L M G. By now, A Company had also come under attack, resulting in hand-to-hand fighting. Lt Col B S Ahluwalia was severely wounded in the shoulder

and seeing no hope, he ordered the troops to withdraw towards Tsangdhar. By now Sub Maj Chhetri's platoon had also been encircled. Hereafter, command and control was lost, and the troops withdrew in two groups, one column headed towards Tsangdhar while the other went towards Bridge II, and finally made it to India, via Bhutan. Capt Mahabir Prasad and Lt Mahindra were wounded and reported missing, while Lt Col B S Ahluwalia was captured.²

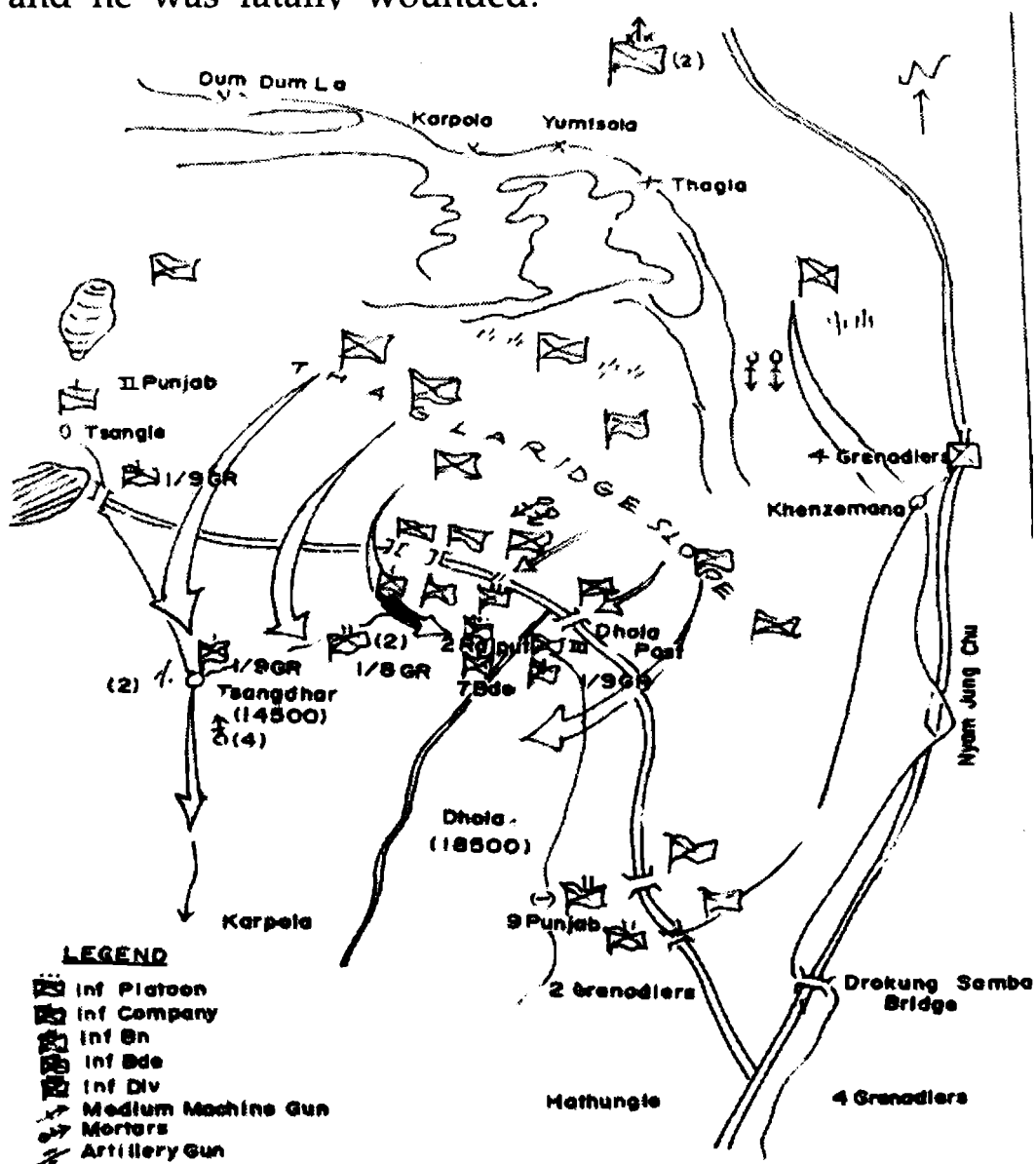
The battle account would not be complete without mentioning the three brave actions fought by troops of the battalion.

In one incident, despite the intense shelling and the overwhelming strength of the Chinese assault, Sub Bhab Bahadur Katwal, though wounded held to his post. Having exhausted his ammunition, he only withdrew when ordered by battalion HQ, when the position became untenable. He took his party of 15 soldiers to Tsangdhar next day, where they came under Chinese M M G fire. Ignoring his own wounds, Sub Katwal launched an attack on the Chinese position, so that his men could be saved. However, the Chinese overwhelmed them. Soon thereafter, Sub Katwal succumbed to his wounds.

At another post, Hav Ganga Bahadur Raval was performing the duties of Company Havildar Major, when his post was overrun by a superior Chinese force after intense artillery and mortar shelling. Not one to lose his nerve, Ganga Raval collected his handful of survivors and launched an immediate counter attack, personally leading a charge. The suddenness and fury of the counter attack stunned the Chinese and enabled Hav Ganga Raval and his men enough time to reach their platoon HQs. At this stage the enemy opened up with small arms fire, on which Hav Ganga Bahadur launched another attack which prevented collapse of the platoon locality. Though in this process Hav Ganga Raval gave the supreme sacrifice of his life, he enabled his colleagues to withdraw, safely.

³⁰⁷ At Tsangdhar, Hav Kalu Singh Thapa was officiating

as Company Havildar Major, when on the Night of 20 Oct the Chinese attacked his post. He positioned himself with his L M G so as to prevent the Chinese from threatening the flank of his position. When the soldier manning the L M G was hit by an enemy bullet, Hav Kalu Thapa himself manned the gun and inflicted a number of casualties on the assaulting Chinese. Once the position became untenable and he was ordered to pull back, Hav Thapa ordered his men to withdraw but he himself continued to fire the machine gun, covering their move. With complete disregard for his own safety, he continued to hold his position till it was overwhelmed by the Chinese, and he was fatally wounded.



Above three brave soldiers of the unit lived up to the tradition of gallantry under adverse conditions. They proved that a Gorkhas remains brave even under most difficult battle conditions. Each one of them was awarded Vr C (Posthumous).

When the bunker of battalion HQs was surrounded and came under intense machine gun fire as a prelude to an assault by the Chinese, without any regard for his personal safety Maj Shrikant came out of the bunker, took the carbine of his runner and fired on the enemy, killing a few and pushing back the others. This gave the Gorkhas time to attend to their wounded colleagues and make their way out from the encirclement of the Chinese. Similarly, when young Dogra found that his platoon had been encircled, though wounded, he took up the L M G and engaged the Chinese till he ran out of ammunition. Thus, though he was finally taken prisoner, he saved a number of his troops from sure death. It was due to such fearless actions that though vastly outnumbered and out-gunned, the Gorkhas put up a stiff resistance. For displaying bravery of a very high order the unit won two M V Cs (Maj Shrikant and Lt Dogra), three Vr Cs and one S M, for bravery.³ Though the battalion suffered nearly fifty fatal casualties and quite a few were wounded and taken prisoners, Maj Shrikant organized the remaining soldiers and led them, along with stragglers of other units back to India, via Bhutan.⁴

Thus, while the Indian troops and the Gorkhas were greatly handicapped due to un-suitable deployment and lack of operational support in the hostile terrain of Namka Chu Valley, they fought bravely with grit and determination. Though they were outnumbered by a stronger and well equipped Chinese Army which had much greater fire power, the Indian soldiers fought with tenacity till the end, though they finally lost the battle, within 3 hours.

6/8 GR at Bomdi La/Chako November 1962

After the fall of Se La, fresh defenses were planned by

the Indian Army at Dirang and Bomdi La. While some withdrawing troops moved along the only un-mettled road to Chako and Foot Hills, others trekked back via Hum La. It was in this fluid tactical situation that 6/8 GR under the command of Lt Col G S Kale reached Misamari on 17 November 1962. The unit was ordered to move to Dirang within 2 hrs by vehicles with minimum loads and rations, as all logistic support was to be provided at the destination. However, the move was hampered at Tenga due to the traffic jam on the road caused by the troops withdrawing from Se La and those moving up. Hence, on 18 November the Gorkhas occupied defenses on heights dominating Tenga Valley. Soon fresh orders were received to move up and occupy defenses at Bomdi La and the troops were deployed by 19 November. However, before these could be fully developed, fresh orders came ordering the unit to move to return to Tenga. But before these could be implemented, new orders came to occupy Rupa Defile till the rest of the brigade (withdrawing from Bomdi La) passed through to Chako. After which, the Gorkhas were also to withdraw to Chako and prepare defenses.

As the Gorkhas got down to preparing defenses at Rupa Defile with their Kukris and mess tins (their digging tools were still at Tenga), the advancing Chinese opened fire on the columns which were withdrawing from Se La and Bomdi La, which created further confusion. In the meanwhile, D Company under Maj D B Phadkar had been sent on an independent mission by the brigade HQs to report enemy activity along a track beyond Rupa. However, its progress was not known, as it was out of communication.

Finally, at 5-30pm on 19 November, the battalion less D Company reached Chako, where along with two companies of 1 SIKH L I, it started preparing defenses. At 2-30am on 20 November, the Chinese engaged them with machine gun and mortar fire, and then launched attacks to capture features dominating the Chako Defile. This created a crisis situation, resulting in a number of vehicles and troops withdrawing further South. By 3:30 am, the enemy had

overrun a platoon locality and by 4 am the battalion HQs had been neutralized. As the sun came out on 21 November, it was apparent that the Chinese were planning to encircle the remaining position. Thus at 5:15 am, orders to abandon the positions and withdraw further South along the nullahs were given. Marching back in groups, the troops reached Misamari between 22 and 23 November, but till then 5 officers, 3 JCOs and 147 OR were still un-accounted for, mostly from Chako position. However, the total number of casualties could only be ascertained by Apr 1963.

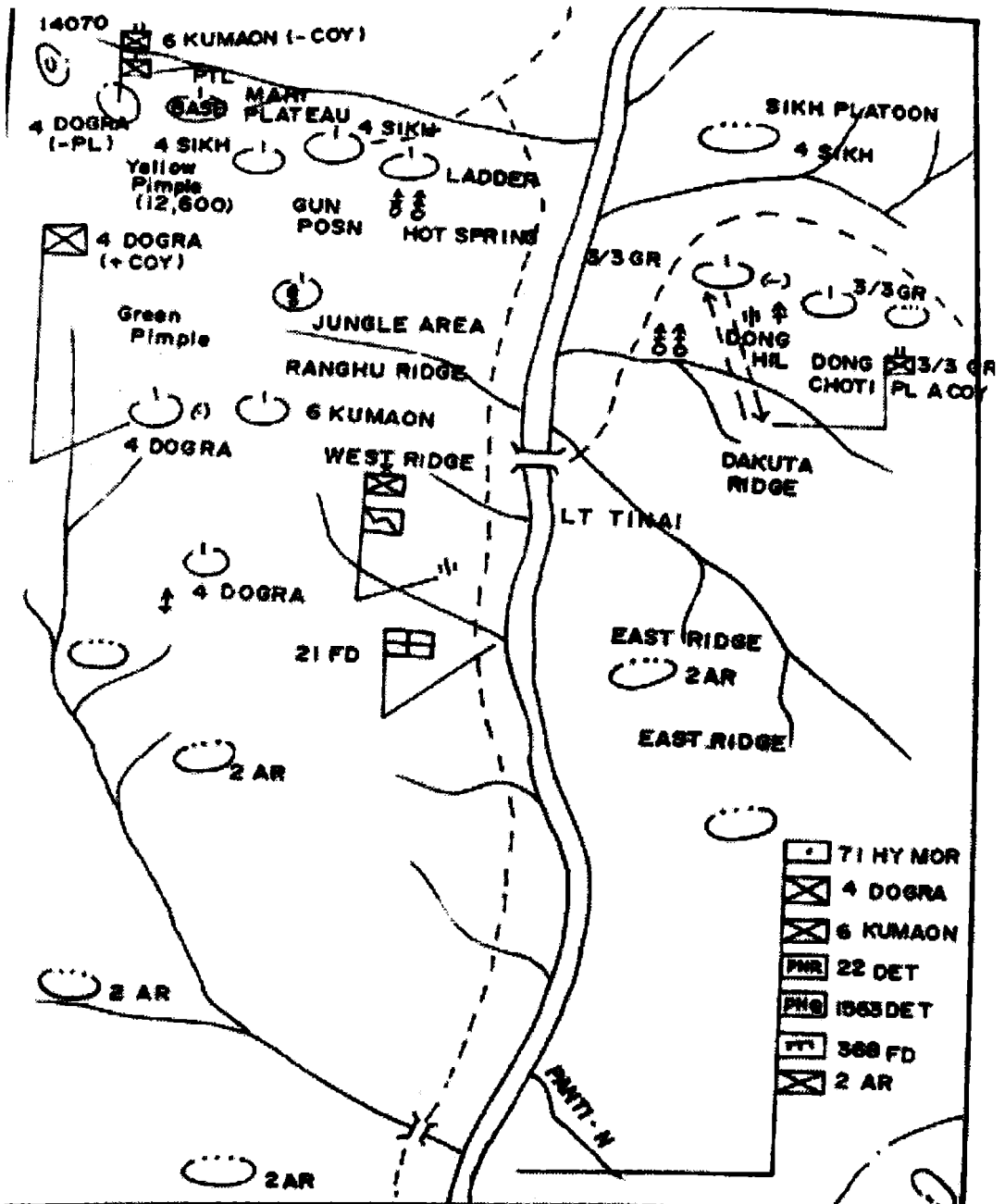
The unit did not get an opportunity to fight the Chinese. Due to shelling and other exchange of fire at various locations, it suffered 59 fatal (including Maj J S Negi, Capt Rajinder Singh and one J C O) and 44 non-fatal casualties (including Lt Col Kale and Capt George Hari Singh, R M O). One J C O and 17 OR were taken as P O Ws.

3/3 GR in NEFA-Walong November 1962

After launching probing attacks on 8 September 62 and pushing back forward posts mostly of Assam Rifles, on 20 October the Chinese launched an offensive across the Mac Mohan Line in Chusul (Ladakh, where 1/8 GR was deployed) and NEFA in Kameng Frontier Division on positions held by 1/9 GR and in Lohit Frontier Division.

In Lohit Sector, the forward defenses were based on features dominating Walong airfield-the life line of the troops, a distance of 100 km distance on a foot track from Hailuliang and 150 km from the road head at Teju. The defenses were occupied on both sides of the fast flowing Lohit River, which ran deep in gorges and could only be crossed on a foot cane bridge. The main track from the Mac Mohan Line ran along Western bank of the river, while on the Eastern side there were no tracks or hunter's trails through the thick primary forest.

DISPOSN OF 3/3 GR ON 15 NOV 62



After the attack of 20 October on defenses occupied at Walong held by 6 KUMAON and 4 SIKH, which were beaten back inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy, the sector was reinforced with 4 DOGRA, 2/8 GR and artillery. Finally, 2/8 GR was pulled out and 3/3 GR was inducted in to the sector. Under command of Lt Col N B Jadhav, the unit moved at short notice from Shillong. It faced many hurdles in

movement and often received contradictory orders for deployments at Teju and Hailulang. Finally on 5 November, it occupied a defended sector East (two companies) and West (battalion less two companies) of Lohit River sector, as part of 11 Brigade at Walong.

On 13 November, a Chinese patrol probed Ladder Post of C Company. The Gorkhas brought down accurate fire on the Chinese who pulled back after suffering casualties, leaving behind a dead body, one .303 rifle and six beddings. The main attack of the Chinese commenced at 5 am on 16 November. After a heavy concentration of artillery fire their infantry attacked all forward defenses West of Lohit, and drove back the Sikhs from Maha Plateau and contacted D Company of 3/3 GR at Lachman Ridge. Sub Kharka Bahadur, the forward platoon commander, held fire till the enemy had closed-in, and then engaged them effectively killing 15, who then retreated. The second attack at 6:30 am was also beaten back and heavy casualties inflicted on the Chinese.

After this, the Chinese changed the direction and tried to get behind the company position, at which Nk Keshar Bahadur Gurung took his L M G to a vantage point, and engaged them throughout the day, which delayed the attack. As darkness approached, the Chinese cordon around D Company seemed to be closing. As neither the battalion nor the brigade HQs were in communication, Capt K N Bavadam, the company commander ordered his troops to withdraw. Covered by Sub Kharak Bahadur Gurung, the Gorkhas pulled back, bringing Maj Shamsner of 4 SIKH, who had been wounded. Though the move commenced in an orderly manner, soon the column was ambushed, in which Nk Keshar Gurung again showed exemplary bravery, but was fatally wounded. On this, Hav Chandra Bahadur Pun took over the L M G and covered the withdrawal till he was also fatally wounded. As the Chinese again shelled and attacked the company which had by now reached the area earlier occupied by 4 SIKH, Capt Bavadam ordered his men to disperse and withdraw. In this process, a number

of Gorkhas were killed and a few were taken prisoners.

C Company occupying Ladder Post further down of Maha Plateau was under the command Maj N B Chand, IOM. At 6:30 am it also came under intense artillery and rocket fire of bazookas, which destroyed a number of forward bunkers, killing the occupants. Maj Chand moved up and motivated his Gorkhas to fight from the fire trenches, and beat back enemy assaults. By now 4 SIKH and 6 KUMAON had been withdrawn and Maj Chand was not only out of communication with the battalion HQs on East bank but his ammunition was also running out. Reviewing the situation, at 4:30 pm he ordered the company to withdraw. Though the company came out without much loss, Maj Chand was taken prisoner.

East of Lohit, Company of 4 SIKH at High Plateau came under the Chinese attack on night 16 November, and a platoon of B Company was sent by the Gorkhas to reinforce them. However, on arrival the Gorkhas found that Plateau had already been vacated by the Sikhs. After clashing with the Chinese patrol, the platoon was pulled back.

Through out the day of 17 November the positions of A and B Companies at Dong Plateau and Dong Hill came under intense shelling and the Chinese made attempts to close-in, but till 2 pm all positions remained intact. However, by 2:30 pm the situation became grim as the Chinese built -up for a determined assault on Dong Plateau. At this stage in view of the overall battle situation and on the advice of Maj Chatterji, the CO ordered both companies to commence withdrawal. A Company reached Dakota Hill at 3 pm and commenced movement towards Tinja camp, while the CO waited for B Company but when they did not reach by 3:45 pm, to fetch he followed A Company. B Company moving was ambushed during its withdrawal, in which one platoon got detached, and reached battalion HQs location, directly. However, as by now the position had already been occupied by the Chinese, these men were taken prisoners, though they offered resistance.

The battalion crossed Dantir Nullah at 9 pm on 16 November and was making steady progress across the hills to Yepak, when on 17th morning they were ambushed. The fire fight resulted in setting fire to the undergrowth, which caused confusion and loss of command and control. The CO with a group of five officers, four JCOs and about 60 to 80 OR moved along a jungle trail till 28 November, when they were ambushed near Kamavanti River. Though they offered resistance, most of them, including Col Jadhav, were taken prisoners.

All this while B Company continued to move steadily through the hills. By now their rations had finished when on 29 November they sighted a deer, they fired a shot and killed it. This alerted the Chinese patrols lurking in the area who soon ambushed them. In the fire-fight, while a number were killed, Maj Virk and some others were taken prisoners.

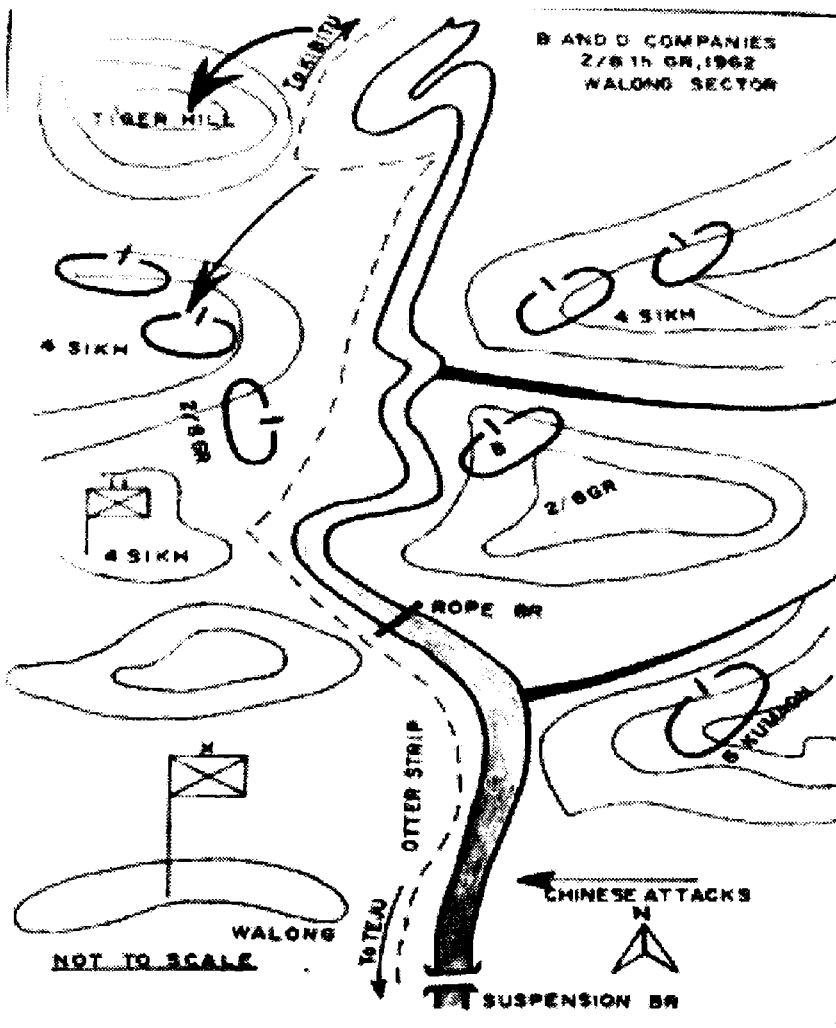
Thus the saga of 3/3 GR at Walong came to a tragic end. As the unit did not receive orders of withdrawal in time, it resulting in an un-organized withdrawal. The stragglers kept on returning in small batches till December 1962. The Chinese returned a batch of 1 JCO and 13 OR through Red Cross. A total of 190 all ranks trekked back in small groups, while 75 soldiers remained un- accounted for.

The Gorkhas were finally de-inducted from the Sector on 12 January 1963, and received reinforcements from the centre, bringing it to full strength. Their soldierly values were commended upon by Brig N C Rawaley, Commander 11 Brigade. In his farewell message, he said that 'I was proud to have you under my command and proud to say that it was your Battalion's positions alone at the Walong defenses that were not penetrated by the Chinese. You held your positions till 1600 hr 16 November. You have now been issued with new weapons, yet you were able to stop the Chinese with your old ones, as if you did so, it should have been possible in other places. However, you had a weapon more powerful-the guts and courage to fight. I will try to get you back under my command as you are all

physically tough and fit for the mountains, which is a great asset. I congratulate you all.'

2/8 GR at Walong, Tuting and Manchuka 1962

Under the command of Lt Col D A Taylor, the unit moved to N E FA in Sep 1962. Initially, A Company was airlifted to Along, followed by C Company and battalion HQs, while B and D Companies remained at Chabua airfield, the mounting base, as sector reserves.



Deployment at Walong

However, after the fall of forward location of Kibitu on 21/22 October in Walong sector, an attack on Walong became imminent. Thus, instead of joining the battalion HQs at Along, B and D Companies were airlifted to Teju and then to Walong and occupied depth positions behind 4 SIKH

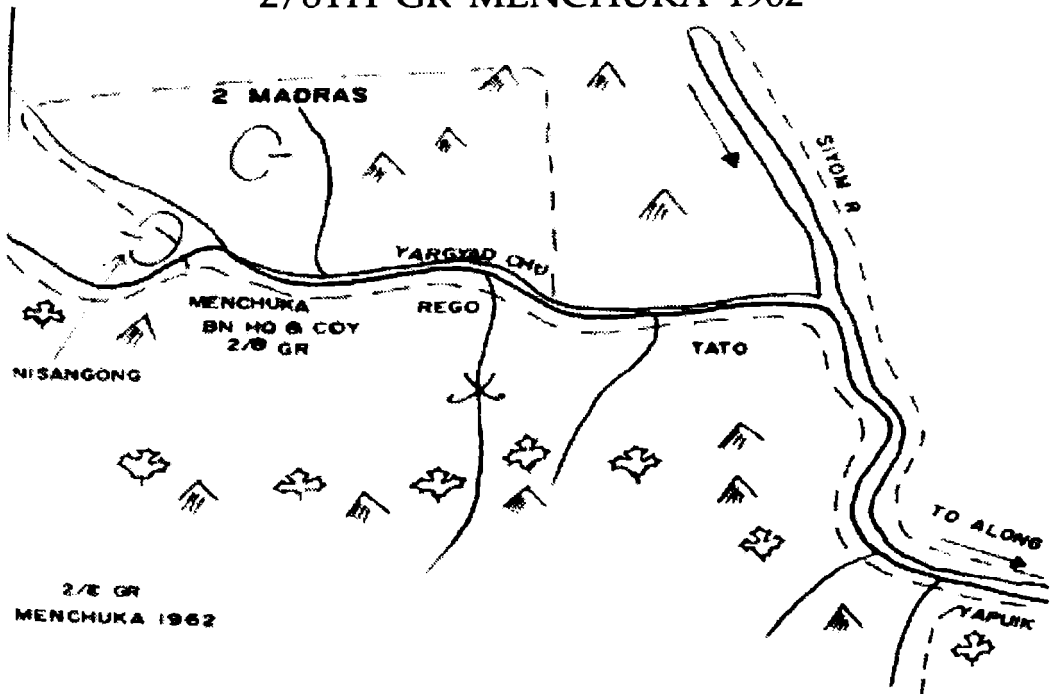
and 6 KUMAON on both sides of Teju river, under command 11 Infantry Brigade.

On 26 October, the Chinese launched their attack on D Company under Sub Dah Bahadur, which was repulsed, in which own troops suffered only one casualty. The enemy again attacked on night 26/27 October, but did not succeed, and left behind a few dead bodies and some automatic weapons. Thereafter, there was a lull in fighting, during which the companies were ordered back to Along, to join the battalion.

Action at Menchuka

In the meanwhile, reports of Chinese build up at Lo La were received, which posed a new threat to Tuting and Menchuka. Hence, on 15 October, A Company under Maj S N Dar was airlifted from Along to Menchuka. Here, Wing HQs and two platoons of Assam Rifles were already located. One company of 2 MADRAS at Menchuka which was placed under command 2/8 GR, while the balance of 2 MADRAS was at Tuting. Though 2/8 GR was of 62 Infantry Brigade, during this operation the battalion was placed under HQ 192 Infantry Brigade, which had been inducted from Naga Hills.

2/8TH GR MENCHUKA 1962



Initially only A Company under Maj Dar occupied defenses at Nisongong, but once the Chinese occupied Lo La and started advancing towards Nisongong, the rest of 2/8 GR was also airlifted to Menchuka. The move was completed by 7 November, and troops of Assam Rifles and company 2 MADRAS located at Menchuka were placed under command 2/8 GR. As tracks from Tuting and Menchuka converged at Tato and then went on to Along, C Company was ordered to move to Tato and occupy defenses there. Troops from Walong also joined up at Menchuka. On 17 November the Brigade Commander briefed Lt Col Taylor that as the Chinese were advancing from Tuting towards Along, 2/8 GR was to withdraw to Along and occupy defenses there. At this moment, the advancing elements of the Chinese were trying to outflank and encircle A Company at Nisangong, but on being effectively engaged by our mortars, they withdrew towards Lo La.

On 18 November, a number of Otter aircrafts landed at Menchuka and lifted heavy baggage, evacuated sick persons and a section 3 in Mortars, back to Along. Same day, in the afternoon the Chinese in strength made another attempt to encircle A Company, but were once again driven back by the unit mortars under Lt Gore, who kept on firing till about 1 am on Night 18/19 November. In the meanwhile the CO had already ordered A Company to join the battalion HQs at Menchuka by midnight 18/19 November. Similar orders were issued to company of 2 MADRAS, which joined the battalion HQs, less one platoon which followed its own route to Along.

The withdrawal was to commence at first light 19 Nov and the battalion was to occupy an intermediate position at Rego. The advance to Rego was to commence at 3 am 19 November, with A Company (with elements from B and C Companies) in the lead. To avoid ambush by the enemy, a track through dense forest, South of the main track, was selected. C Company less a platoon at Tato was to defend Tato, till arrival of the main force.

The advance commenced as planned, but there being no

track, the progress was slow, difficult and tiring, as the troops had to hack their way through. By the evening, the column got split into two. The rear group under Lts Gore and Barooah lost contact with the head, which was under Maj Dar. In the meanwhile the Chinese too were advancing towards Rego on the opposite side, awaiting arrival of 2/8 GR.

The move re-commenced at 2 am on 20 November, but by now the column which by now also had some civilians withdrawing from Menchuka ran into the rear of the Chinese column at Rego, and a brief encounter took place. While the Gorkhas killed a few Chinese, they also lost a few men. Maj Dar and Lt Chauhan were wounded, and along with a few others, taken prisoners. A few men retraced their march and under Lt Sisodia hid themselves for a couple of days in the forest and then tried a different route to return, but his party was intercepted by a Chinese patrol and taken prisoner. A few Johnnies managed to avoid capture and in small groups of tens and twenties, moved towards South-East.

At that time, no one knew of a track going via Chetak Pass to Taliha and Daporijo. Thus, after searching for a track and food in the jungle for a couple of days, and still trying to avoid an ambush and capture, troops were tired, hungry and exhausted. Small groups joined together. One group was with Lt Col Taylor, Maj Pingle (Company Commander 2 MADRAS), Capt B B Ghosh (Adjutant) and Lt Sharma (Medical Officer). Another group was under Gore, Barooah and Reddy (2 MADRAS) and they found the track to the Chetak Pass. Through drenched in rain, the group under Gore traversed the snow covered Chetak Pass on 28/29 November, reached Taliha and then Daporijo, where they were received by 1 JAMMU & KASHMIR RIFLES.

Unfortunately, Lt Col Taylor's party could not cross Chetak Pass. They all perished due to cold and exhaustion. In 1963, the unit sent a search party under Lt Barooah, who recovered their bodies and carried out their last rites.

At Tato, before the main body could join, the troops

under Sub Krishanlal Rana moved along the track and reached Along, so did Maj Majumdar's party.

In this operation, the unit suffered 48 fatal (including three officers, Lt Col Taylor, Capt Ghosh and Lt Sharma) and four non-fatal casualties. Three officers (Maj Dar, Lts P S Chauhan and J S Sisodia) and ten OR were taken POWs. On 12 Dec 62, the Chinese flew Lt Chauhan in a helicopter to Along and handed him over through the International Red Cross, as he was in a critical condition due to chest wounds.

WESTERN SECTOR-LADAKH

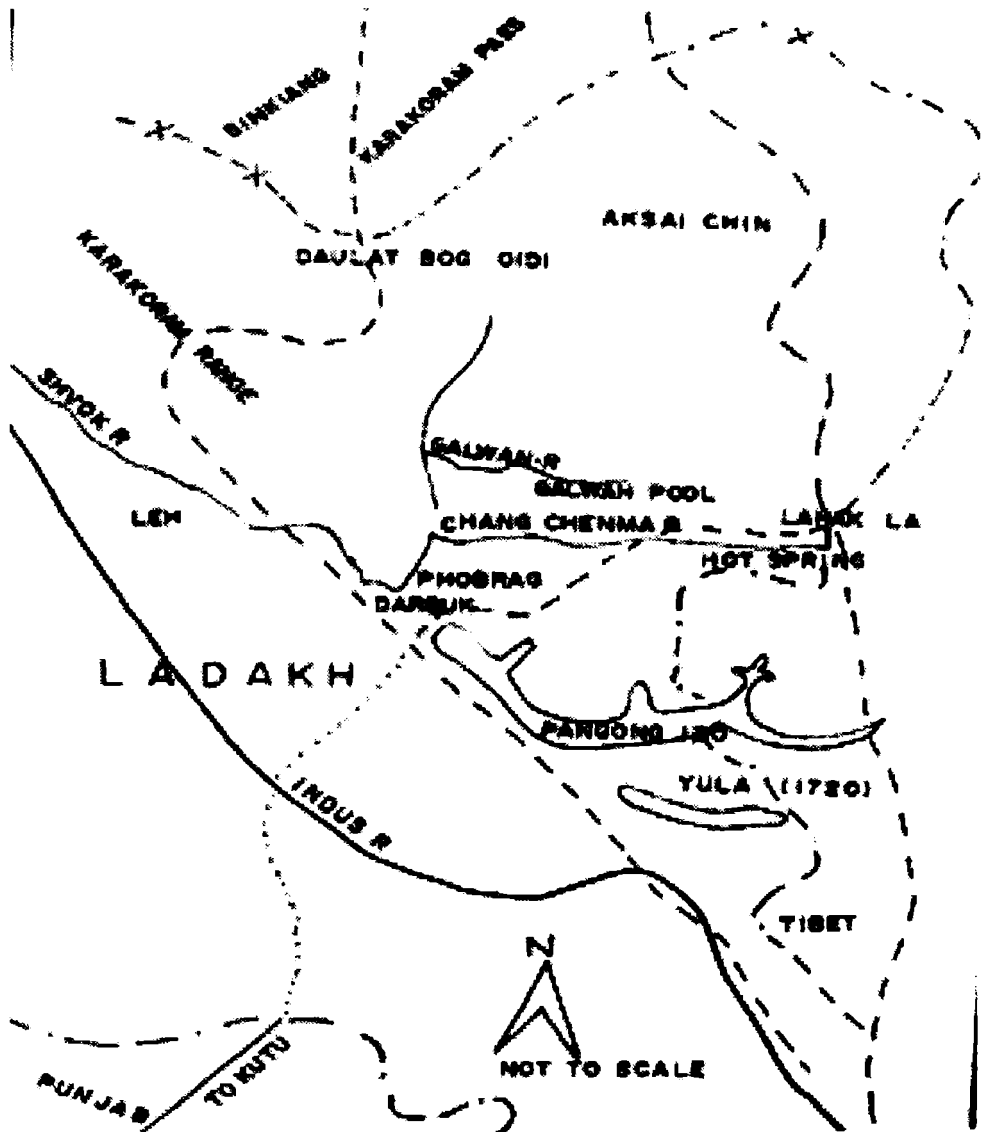
1/8 GR in Chushul

Chushul is a sandy valley running North-South for 25 miles and East-West for 4 miles, and is about 15 miles from the Indo-Tibet border at an altitude of 14,230 ft. To its North-East is Pangong Tso (lake). The Valley is surrounded by lofty rocky mountain ranges of altitudes up to 19,000 ft, but there is an opening to the East where Spanggur Tso is situated. There were three main routes to Leh from the border, which were being guarded by J & K Militia troops. In order to defend the rough airstrip of Chushul the life – line of troops, and to deny the Chinese the routes for advance to Leh, it was felt essential to occupy the dominating features. The area was void of any local resources and habitation, except for a few traders and grazers. There was no vegetation, thus high altitude effects on health were pronounced. The region experienced very low temperatures, scanty rains, heavy snowfall and sand storms.

In mid 1960, 1/8 GR was serving in J & K, when it was ordered to move to Chushul. C Company was airlifted on 19 September. The remainder unit concentrated there by 27 April 1961, and the Battalion HQs was established at Chushul village on 3 May 1961. It was appreciated that one Chinese Regiment (equivalent of a Brigade) was located at Rodok, with platoon posts at Spanggur, Khurnak Fort, Manadal Naga, Kane La, Nyagzu and Lanek La area.

The Northern boundary of the battalion with 14 J & K Militia, ran from Hot Spring along Chang Chenmo River, and thence along Shyok River. The Gorkhas were given the task to deny the two main approaches: through Tsogetsalu-Phoborang, and through Chushul, and prevent infiltration in to their area of responsibility. In case of confrontation with the Chinese intruders, the Chinese were to be persuaded to withdraw from our territory. In case they refused, then status-quo was to be maintained. Force was not to be used unless hostilities had broken out, except in self-defense.

INITIAL AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY LADAKH
1/8 GR 1862



Soon after arrival, the companies were deployed at Hot Spring and Phobrang and work on construction of the defenses commenced. Due to the wide extent of the area, perforce the platoon positions were isolated, had no mutual support and were mostly at three to four days march from Company or Battalion HQs. Soon, Capt P L Kher sited a post on Rzung La pass, 19 miles South of Chushul at an altitude of 16,420 ft. Snow and rain was experienced from August 1961 onwards, which impeded the built-up. However, the Gorkhas were well acclimatized and motivated to face any challenges.

From Apr 1962 onwards, there were a series of confrontations between the Gorkhas and the Chinese, who invariably tried to establish posts opposite our positions, claiming the area as theirs. During this period, in Apr 1962, the Government implemented its 'Forward Policy' for guarding the Himalayas, and gave orders to establish posts all along the Northern borders. Accordingly, a number of forward posts were established in Ladakh by the I T B P, and additional troops inducted in Chushul area.

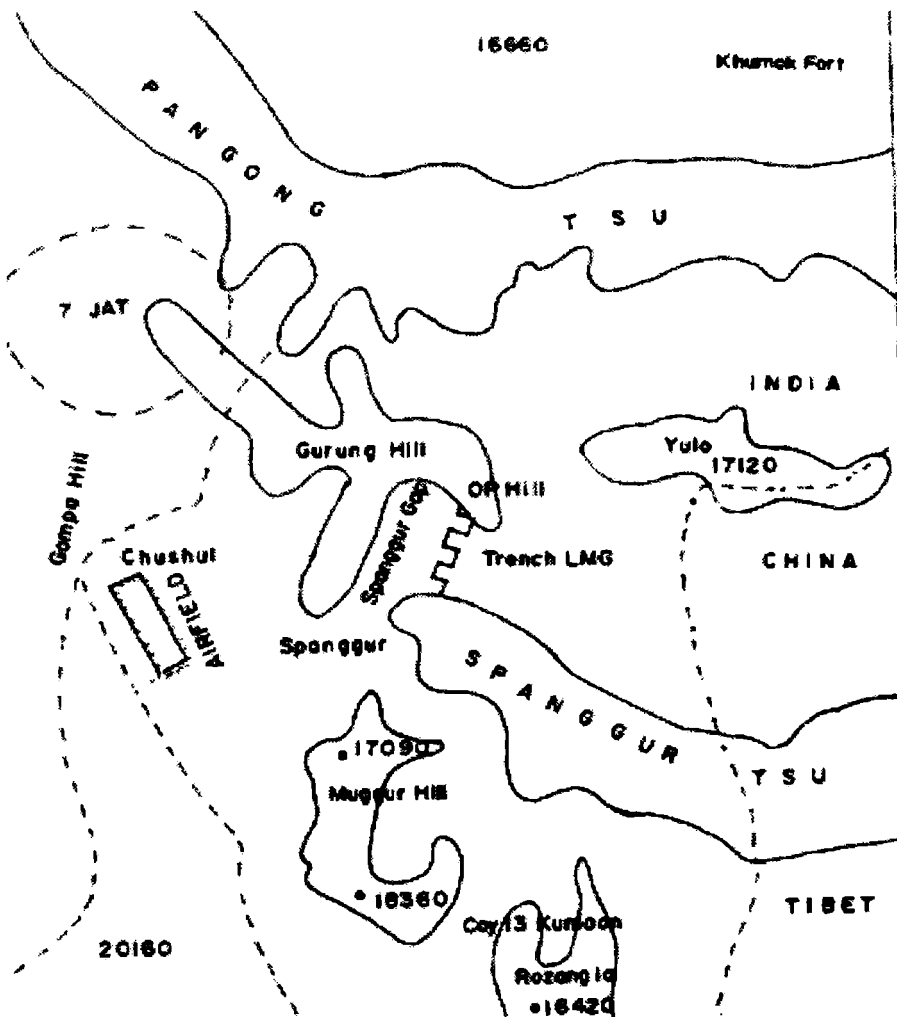
Action at Galwan

By this time, Lt Col Hari Chand, M V C (of 1948 Ladakh fame) had taken over the unit. On 30 Jun, he led a party from Hot Spring to establish a new post at Galwan River bend, three days march under Jem Jang Bahadur Gurung, and established it by 5 Jul. Being far away, two Staging Posts (Posts 1 and 2) were established between Hot Spring and Galwan, and a ferry operated across the lake.

Next day, the Chinese tried to establish two posts opposite Galwan, but they could not do so, due to the lie of the ground. However, nearly 300 Chinese tried to encircle the Post, and intimidated the Gorkhas to vacate it, which was rebuffed. Thereafter, the Chinese took up positions at a distance of 50 yards and the next day tried to close up to 15 yards, but did not succeed.

On 12 July, Capt Kotwal led a patrol across to Galwan,

but found that the Chinese had blocked the route. On 18 July, four Chinese officers approached Jem Jang Bahadur Gurung and asked him to vacate the Post and withdraw to Hot Spring, which he refused. In the meanwhile, an airdrop was carried out to supply rations and stores to the Post, but the stores fell at some distance close to the Chinese positions, and hence could not be collected. On 28 July, the Chinese again intimidated the J C O and even tried to lure him by agreeing to return his ponies and allow him to collect the stores airdropped for him. They also tried to incite him to vacate the Post, but the brave J C O did not give-in. Some pressure-cum-persuasive tactics were applied by them on 30 Jul, but failed. On 7 August, Capt Bhasin was able to land by a helicopter at Galwan Post, and he tried to negotiate with the Chinese to allow use of the track, but it was not agreed by them, though they agreed to release the ponies.



On induction of 5 JAT, the Gorkhas handed over Galwan Post to them, having held it for eighteen months against heavy odds. For showing very high devotion to duty and bravery of a high order, on 30 September 1962, Jem Jang Bahadur Gurung was awarded V S M Class II (now AVSM).

Action at Srijap

The next confrontation between the Chinese and the Gorkhas took place at Srijap Post. Established on 26 June, it was initially occupied by a section, but once the Chinese established a post around it, on 4 July it was reinforced by another section. The Chinese being 800 yards away, on 19 Jul Capt Bhasin established a new post with approximately a platoon, at Srijap II. On 11 August, Capt Dhan Singh Thapa came on posting from the centre, and took over the post. As in Sep the Chinese had isolated the two posts of the Gorkhas by establishing a post on the track linking Srijap I and II, the strength of these posts was further enhanced to a platoon each, with well prepared defenses. In the meanwhile, the Chinese had constructed a class 9 road linking their post opposite Srijap with Khurnak Fort.

The Chinese launched their offensive in N E F A and Ladakh on 20 October 1962. The attack on Srijap I, then held by Maj Dhan Singh Thapa with 28 OR, commenced at 6 am, when the Post was subjected to heavy artillery fire. From neighboring posts it could be seen Chushul, Srijap, Gurung Hill, Spanggur Gap Area, 1/8 GR 1962 burning till 8:30 am, when it got covered with smoke. As the signal communications with the post were lost, a patrol from Tokung Post under Nk Rabi Lal Thapa was sent by boat to contact it. But as Nk Rabi Lal's patrol came under heavy machine gun fire, he could not reach the post. He reported that having fought till the end, Maj Thapa and all 28 OR with him had been killed in the action. For their heroic acts, while Maj Dhan Singh Thapa was awarded P V C (initially posthumously), Nk Rabi Lal Thapa won M V C.

Later it was revealed that all the Gorkhas at Srijap I had not been killed. With stout courage, under Maj Dhan

Singh Thapa they had beaten back two attacks by the Chinese, in which Nk Krishna Bahadur Thapa lost a leg when he was hit by a shell while firing his machine gun. Sub Min Bahadur Gurung was fatally wounded while moving from bunker-to-bunker, inflicting heavy casualties on the Chinese. Maj Dhan Singh Thapa's bunker had been overrun and set on fire by a smoke grenade, and along with a few others he was taken prisoner and evacuated to Khurnak Fort. While being escorted to Khurnak Fort, Rfn Tulsi Ram Thapa of Srijap II showed great sense of loyalty and dedication by managing to escape. After enduring low temperatures of -3*, he rejoined the unit. For this, he was awarded Vr C.

After capturing Srijap I, the Chinese attacked Srijap II at 8 am and after a stiff fight, over-ran it. An Observation Post established by a party from Srijap II managed to pull-out safely, and rejoined the unit.

Spanggur Gap and Chushul Airfield Area

By May 1962, the enemy build-up indicated that the Chinese had established and reinforced their post opposite Spanggur Gap. Accordingly, in June the Gorkhas established two section posts at Yu La pass and maintained them by using assault boats across the Pangong Lake. The Chinese reacted and moving stealthily by night from Khurnak Fort, established another post opposite Yu La. By August, the Chinese reinforced these posts and started maintaining them with yaks, ponies and vehicles. The threat created by these additional Chinese posts was met by 1/8 GR by establishing three posts guarding the airfield, at Gurung Hill, Trench Line and Paw Hill, supported with machine guns. By September 1962, the Chinese had established 30 additional posts in the area. On 18 October, the Gorkhas received two 106 mm RCL guns with jeeps.

In the meanwhile, additional Indian troops were inducted into the area. HQ 114 Infantry Brigade under 3 Himalayan Division was made responsible for operations, and 13

KUMAON moved into Mugger Hill and Rezarng La in October 62. The Gorkhas defenses included Gurung Hill, Gun Hill and Spanggur Gap, while 1 JAT held defenses at Tokung, Gompa Hill and Chushul Village. The intention of the Chinese became clear after the fall of Srijap on 21 October, hence Brig T N Raina, the Brigade Commander moved his Tactical HQs to Chushul.

After the attack on Srijap I, the enemy shelled and isolated Yu La II, and as it was in the danger of being overwhelmed, it was ordered to pull back. This task was again carried out by Nk Rabi Lal Thapa, who despite enemy fire, made three trips across the Pangong Lake and evacuated the men, who then reinforced Yu La III. Same day, three 25 Ponder guns of 13 Field Regiment arrived at Chushul, to join the battle.

On 25 October, Yu La III was shifted to Point 16340 on Gurung Hill. The enemy attacked Yu La I, in which 1 J C O and 19 OR were feared killed or taken POWs. As there was no communication with the post, Nk Khamba Singh took a patrol and brought back four OR who were still there. Next day, the Gorkhas took over the defenses of Pt 16040 from the Kumaonis. On 3 November, Lt Rana with 8 OR (the last to leave Hot Spring) rejoined the unit after marching for eight days, traversing through snow bound areas.

The Chinese re-commenced their offensive on 18 November. After intense shelling lasting four hours on Rezarng La (Kumaon), Muggur Hill, Spanggur Gap and Gurung Hill, they launched their infantry. Though the Chinese were given a very tough and determined fight by the Kumaonis under Maj Shaitan Singh (who was awarded P V C, posthumously) inflicting heavy casualties on them, by 9:30 am the enemy was able to capture Rezarng La and portion of Gurung Hill. At night, the Chinese made repeated attempts to capture Gorkha positions at Spanggur Gap and Trench Line, but failed. However, by the afternoon of 19 November, after suffering heavy losses the Chinese were able to secure Gurung Hill and O P Hill, which resulted in

the Gorkhas withdrawing to their post at Spanggur Gap. As the Chinese from Gurung Hill now dominated Spanggur Gap and Trench Line Posts and these post had already withstood repeated attacks, they were ordered to fall back on Gompa Hill. Capt P L Kher, the adjutant was tasked to establish new posts in the area which he did under enemy shelling, for which he was awarded Vr C. There was a lull in fighting on 20 November, and the same night the Chinese declared a unilateral cease fire.

In the defense of Chushul, the Gorkhas suffered 59 fatal (including 3 JCOs) and 19 non-fatal casualties (including one officer), while 22 (including one J C O) were reported missing.

In this operation, 1/8 GR won one P V C (Maj Dhan Singh Thapa, who returned alive from a P O W Camp), one M V C (Nk Rabi Lal Thapa), one A V S M (Nb Sub Jung Bahadur Gurung) and two Vr Cs (Capt P L Kher and Rfn Tulsi Ram Thapa).

For its heroic feat, the Battalion was awarded Battle Honor "Chushul" and Theatre Honor "Ladakh 1962".

3/5 GR (FF) at Mac Mohan Line 1986/87

During first week of April 1987, the Chinese established a new post at Sumado Rong, just across the Line of Actual Control in Kameng Frontier Division of NEFA. By 19 April they started erecting a wire fence around it. However, after a warning shot was fired by the sentry of 3/5 GR (FF), the Chinese withdrew.

On 5 Aug 1987, the Gorkhas were tasked to organized a Flag meeting at Bum La with the Chinese, the first since 1962.

Conclusion

While the overall performance of the Indian Army was not commendable during the 1962 India-China War, at individual and unit level the soldiers performed as best as they could under severe adverse conditions.

In Chushul, 1/8 GR had clear-cut orders and had prepared its defenses in time. Thus, the Gorkhas gave a very good account of their battle efficiency and inflicted heavy casualties on the Chinese. In NEFA, unfortunately the units did not get adequate time, operational or logistic support to prepare their positions. Hence, though they fought bravely till the end, they were overwhelmed by the Chinese.

While in captivity the Gorkhas were subjected to anti-India propaganda by the Chinese, who made full efforts to brainwash them. It is to the credit of the Gorkha soldiers that they resisted all favors, temptations and pressures. They remained loyal to their units and regiment. Soon thereafter, all ranks trained hard to overcome the shortcomings of the War, and proved their worth in Counter Insurgency Operations in Naga Land and during the 1965 Indo-Pakistan War.

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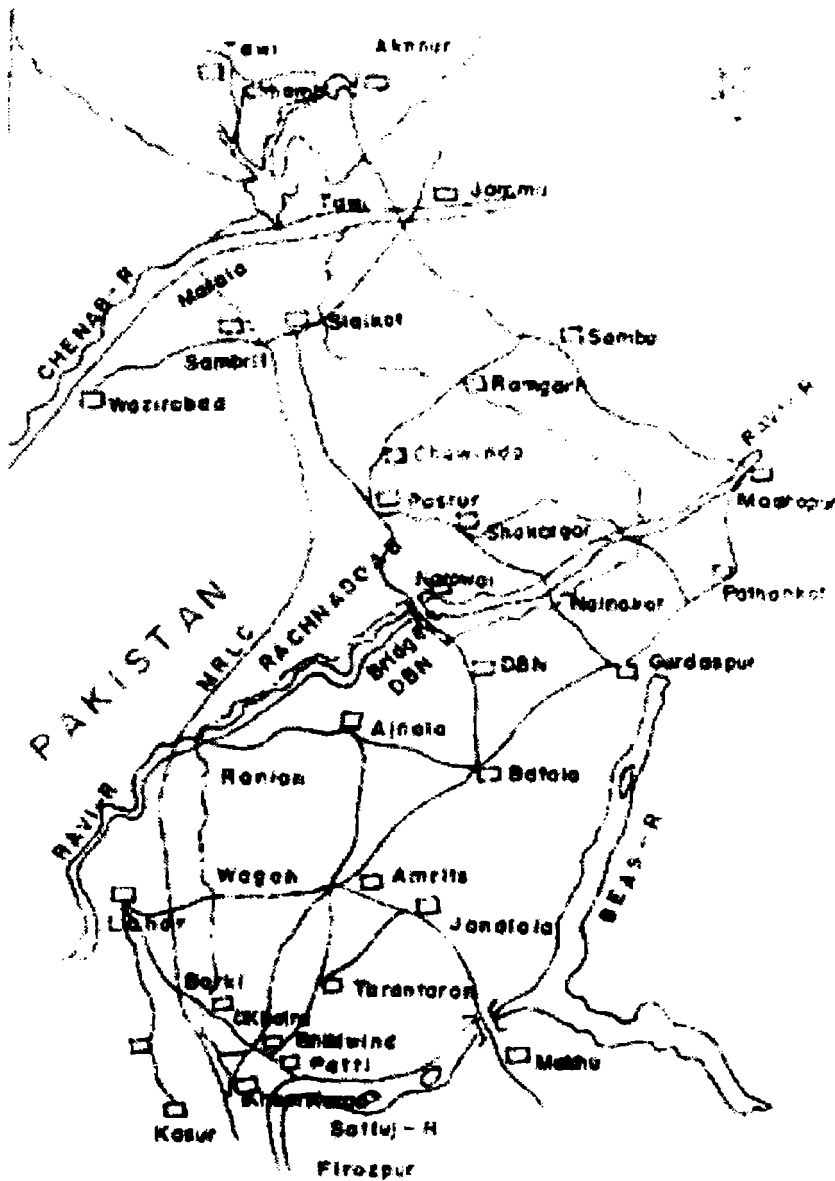
3. 1965 INDO-PAK WAR

Background

Having failed in her attempts to wrest J & K in 1947-48, Pakistan decided to take another chance to recapture the state, in 1965. Encouraged by the un-stable conditions in Kashmir, Pakistan assessed that the 1962 Chinese aggression had weakened the Indian Army. Rawalpindi also thought and the Indian Government under Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri was a weak one and not capable of taking hard military decisions. On the other hand, having

joined the Western Bloc Pakistan Armed forces had received Patton tanks and F 86 aircrafts, which had strengthened their offensive combat potential.

Thus, the Pakistani President, Field Marshal Ayub Khan, encouraged by Bhutto, the Foreign Minister evolved a three phase plan to wrest J & K. To begin with, a limited attack was launched in the Ran of Kutch during April-May 1965, primarily to lure the Indian Army away from the Western Front. Thereafter, infiltration by especially trained, equipped and organized raiders under regulars of the Pakistan Army, into the state of Jammu and Kashmir was carried out, as the state was considered ripe for an up-rising.¹ Lastly, in



conjunction with the up-rising in J & K, an all out military offensive to wrest Akhnur, the choke point on the life - line of Punch-Rajauri-Nowshera region was launched. Internationally, Pakistan being a member of Western Military Alliance and having developed close relations with China, was confident of their support against India.

While the initial attack by Pakistan in the Rann did come as a surprise and her forces managed to capture some posts manned by the Para Military Forces, having analyzed Pakistani intentions and the oncoming monsoon, India did not move any large sized forces to that area. Later, Pakistan agreed to a British proposal for a cease-fire, following which the relations between the two neighbors were expected to improve. However, it did not happen, on the other hand, the situation in J & K along the C F L deteriorated, with nearly five hundred incidents of violations.

The Pakistani infiltration into J & K commenced in August 1965, but did not achieve the desired results. Instead of rising in a revolt or assisting them as anticipated by Pakistan, the loyal Kashmiris detected these columns and reported them to the Indian Army, and by end August this operation had also failed. The third part of the operation, an offensive into Chhamb Sector for securing Akhnur Bridge, was launched on 1 September, and nearly succeeded.

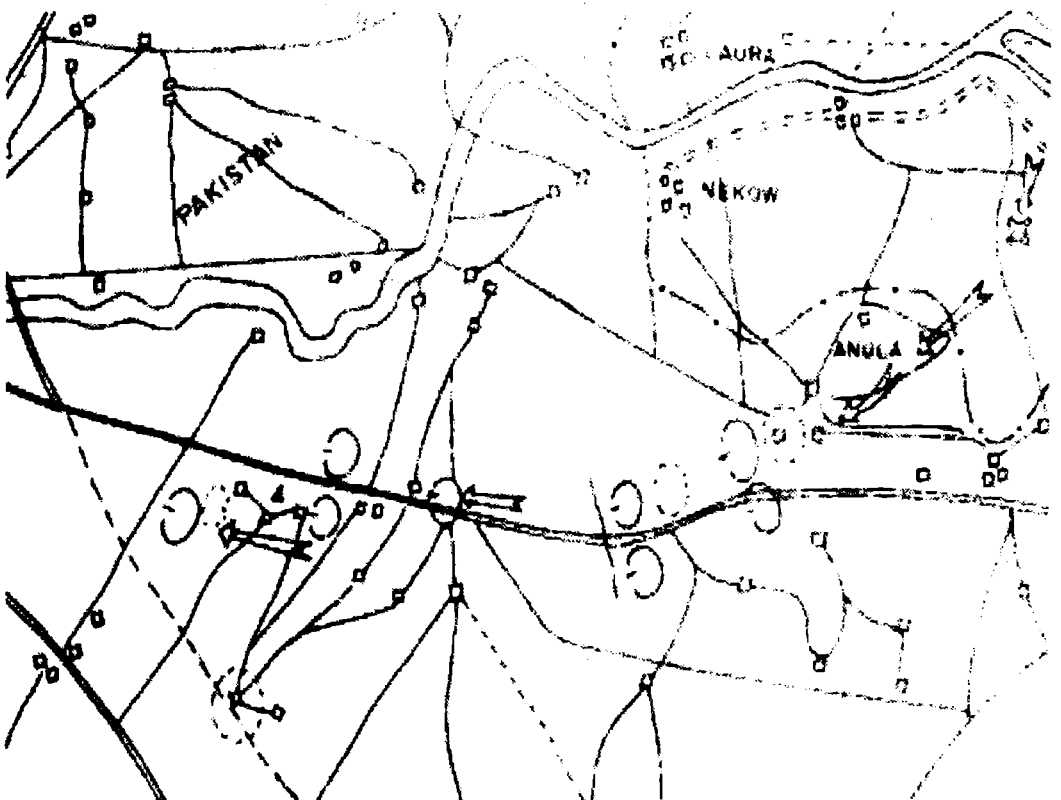
In order to relieve pressure from J & K and Chhamb, on 6 September 1965, India launched a major all-out attack across the IB into Pakistan, a decision of Prime Minister Shastri which came as a surprise to Pakistan. The fighting was hard and bitter and extended from Ladakh to Rajasthan, in which the Armed Forces of India gave a very good account. Whether it was in the high altitude mountains, low hills of Kashmir, plains of the Punjab or the deserts of Rajasthan, Gorkha troops fought bravely every where. The most impressive aspect of this war was that though postal and communications in Nepal were still not fully developed and coverage by radio or TV was very limited, a large number of persons on leave as well as the reservists reported back to their units, on their own.

OPERATIONS IN JAMMU REGION

2/1 G R at Bajragarhi

The unit was part of 162 Infantry Brigade, along with 5/4 GR. To facilitate the offensive towards Sialkot, the brigade was ordered to cross the border on Road Zafarwal-Sialkot and establish a firm base for the offensive. First, 5/4 GR was to capture Anula on Night 6/7 September, after which 2/1 GR was to pass through them and capture Bajragarhi and exploit up to Dajowal, Mahal and Sarobe. Though the complete divisional artillery was to support the attack, but to maintain surprise, no trans-border patrolling was permitted before the D Day.²

The battalion under the command Lt Col Ash Dutt (who as Captain had joined the Gorkhas in 1947 and had commanded a company during the 1947-48 Indo-Pak War) launched the attack on 11 September night on Bajragarhi, a village of medium size held by a company plus of Pakistani troops with machine guns, with two Gorkha companies.



Once own artillery fire lifted, the Gorkhas charged the enemy. During the assault, Rifleman Kehar Singh Ale noticed an enemy L M G on a flank. He took two men with him and silenced it with hand grenades, for which he was awarded Sena Medal. Soon after the capture of the objective, our tanks reached there. Though bulk of the enemy had run-away, at about 1130 am an enemy machine gun started engaging the battalion HQ from a flank. This position was attacked by Hav Padma Lal Pun, who despite being wounded assaulted the enemy twice, killing a number of them and silencing the machine gun. For his bravery, Hav Padma Pun was awarded Sena Medal (SM), (posthumously).

By 8 September, the battalion had concentrated at Dajowal, and by first light of 9 September, along with tanks of 18 CAV, the Gorkhas had established a block in Pagowal, cutting Road Sialkot-Dhamtal. During the day of the 9th, C Company along with tanks captured the Ura Bridge, while B Company secured Mahal and Rasulpur. In this action Nb Sub Puran Singh displayed great presence of mind and courage. Soon, the Gorkhas came under intense artillery shelling and suffered 19 casualties, including 5 fatal.

The enemy reacted to the loss of Mahal and the road block, and launched a counter attack to dislodge the Gorkhas, but failed. Nk Devi Bahadur Gurung at mortar position showed outstanding courage, when despite of having been hit by enemy artillery he kept on engaging the enemy, for which he was awarded Vr C. Night 8/9 September also saw repeated enemy attempts to re-capture Rasulpur, but despite heavy artillery and machine gun fire, C Company held its ground. In this action, Sub Chandrabir Thapa and C H M Basu Thapa showed outstanding qualities of leadership. Later, it was learnt that in these two attacks, the enemy casualties were 51 dead. He left behind 5 tanks and a large quantity of arms and ammunition. Hereafter, till the end of the war, though the enemy subjected the Battalion to air attacks and frequent artillery shelling, the Pakistanis did not launch any physical attacks. The Gorkhas continued to carry out aggressive patrolling and collected

intelligence for further operations, even crossing the Aik Nadi.

Recalling the operation in 2005 after nearly 40 years, Maj Gen A K Luthra (who was then the Brigade Commander) mentioned that he gave the task of advance to 2/1 GR, as he had more faith in Col Dutt. He felt proud that he was right. He found that the Gorkhas performed exceedingly well, withstood enemy shelling bravely, and took initiative to keep the enemy at bay. The troops treated the Pakistani civilians with respect and dignity, and showed exemplary discipline by not indulging in loot or plunder; due to which even after 30 years, Gen Luthera still hold 2/1 GR in very high esteem.³

5/4 GR in Jammu Sector

Under the command of Lt Col V B Sathe, on Night 7/8 September 65 the unit was given the task of capturing Anula, a Pakistani village, in Phase 2 of the brigade attack, after 2/1 GR. The move to Forming Up Place commenced at 5 pm as planned. The assaulting troops crossed the start line at 2:30 am on 8 September, with A and D Companies under Maj HC Tewari and Capt SC Jolly respectively. Though the enemy brought down intense fire the unit pressed on the attack and captured the objectives, speedily. The enemy opened up with long range artillery, in which the CO was seriously wounded and was evacuated by Nb Sub Om Bahadur Gharti, who risked his life in doing so.

At first light 8 September, A and D Companies relieved troops of 2/1 GR who had captured Bajragarhi. Hereafter, the unit was given the task to ensure security of the lines of communication from the border to Bajragarhi, for which it occupied an extended defense, with one flank resting on Aik Nullah and a hillock near village Karlup, which was occupied by a Pakistani patrol. As this dominated the track which enabled the enemy to bring down effective artillery fire on own movement, it was decided to launch a patrol and evict the enemy from Karlup. A raiding party of two

platoons under Capt Mishra secured the area on 21/22 September, but found that the enemy had abandoned it, and returned. Later, a patrol under 2 Lt BS Khatri was sent to occupy it, which it did under intense enemy shelling seriously wounding Khatri, who may not have survived if L Nk Amar Bahadur Thapa had not risked his life and evacuated him to safety. Thereafter, exchange of fire continued till the cease fire came into force.

After the cease fire, Capt Bhanot was wounded while demining an area. As he lay wounded in side the minefield, he was evacuated by an OR of his company from the minefield, at great personal risk.

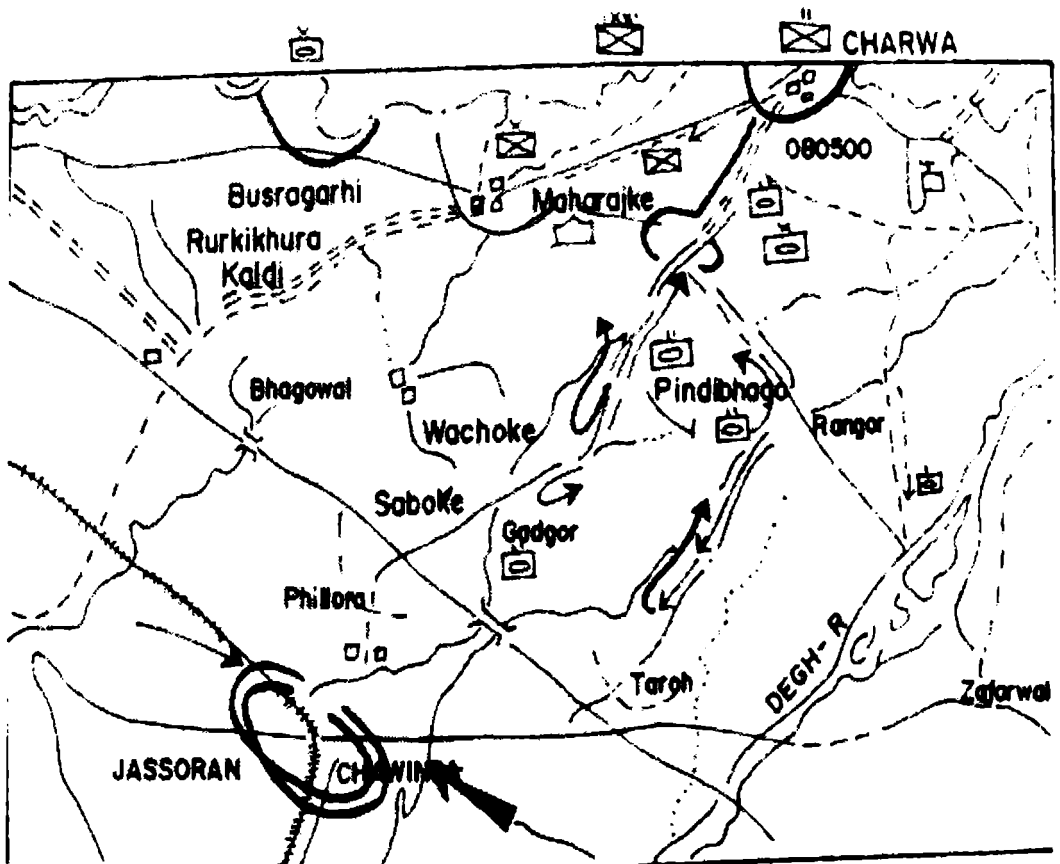
In this operation the battalion lost 8 men, while one officers and 15 OR were wounded. The young battalion earned a reputation of having close trust and faith amongst all ranks, which was proved by the risks taken to evacuate their comrades.

3/1 GR at Chawinda

By 15 September, forming part of 58 Infantry Brigade of 6 Mountain Division, the battalion under command of Lt Col Dire Singh had occupied a defended area at Sabzpur, awaiting orders for crossing the IB as part of the 1 Corps offensive, under 6 Mountain Division into Pakistan. By now, leading Indian troops had already secured line Phillora-Phagowal-Alhar, while the enemy was making an all-out effort to forestall further offensive and dislodge them. Besides tanks and artillery, air forces from both sides were very active in the area.

The brigade plan envisaged an attack on Chawinda on Night 18/19 September in two phases. In Phase 1, 14 RAJPUT and 4 JAK RIF were to capture Chawinda from the direction of the railway line, while in the next phase 3/1 GR was to mop-up the area. Having reached the assembly area at 1 am on 19 September, the Gorkhas waited eagerly for the success signal from the units of Phase 1, but as the attack had not been fully successful, at 3 am the Gorkhas were

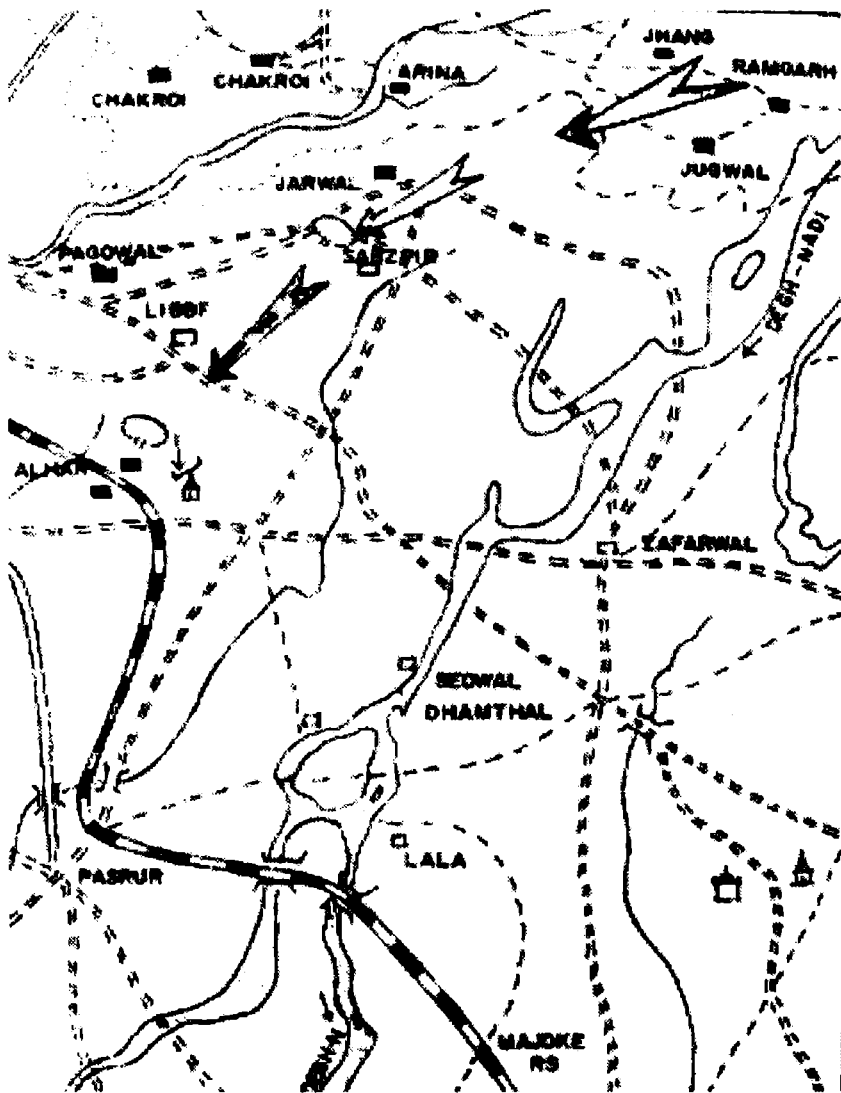
ordered to launch Phase 2. Accordingly, the attack was launched at 0810 am in daylight, supported by artillery and tanks. However, enemy artillery was very active, and due to accurate machine gun fire, the assaulting companies suffered heavy casualties and were held-up 500 m short of the objective. Though the Battalion wanted to firm-in there, at 1100 the troops were ordered to fall back at Wazirawali.



At this stage, 4 RAJPUTANA RIFLES deployed at Alhar was under threat of attack by the enemy. Thus, it was decided that first the Gorkhas should reinforce them, and then attack Chawinda on Night 19/20 September. By this time the Gorkhas had suffered 63 casualties, and were also short of some supporting weapons.

While the leading elements were moving in darkness, they were mistaken as enemy and engaged by own troops, which caused delay and confusion, besides a few casualties. After this, the unit was first ordered to move to Gadgor and on 21 Sept to Chobara to occupy defenses. It was at

INDO-PAK CONFLICT 1965 ADVANCE OF 3/1 GR



this place that the news of UN cease-fire which was to be effective from 23 Sept was received, but knowing that Pakistani troops would take advantage of this announcement and continue to use their artillery, the Gorkhas continued to develop their defenses.

In this operation, the battalion suffered a total of 89 casualties, including 12 fatal, which included one officer and two JCOs.

1/1 GR at Chawki Chura

By mid September 65, under Lt Col Stracy the unit

concentrated further North of Akhnur on Road Jaurian-Nowshera, where it was given the task to capture enemy locality at Manani Ridge. Information indicated that the enemy was holding a forward feature, Unchi Zamin, which would have to be secured first. Thus, on Night of 17 September, C Company under Capt Kaul attacked the feature, during which I. Nk Lila Nath crawled up to the loop holes of an enemy bunker, lobbed hand grenades and silenced a machine gun. Thereafter, D Company passed through and captured feature Pahari, after which B Company went for feature Roti.

During the assault an enemy machine gun opened up from a flank, which was attacked by Nb Sub Chhetri, boldly. Though he was wounded in both legs, Chhetri refused to be evacuated. He noticed some enemy running back. Unmindful of his bleeding due to which he which he was drowsy by now, he engaged them with his sten gun and then pounced upon one and captured him. For his brave act, he was awarded Vr C, and later rose to become the unit's Sub Maj

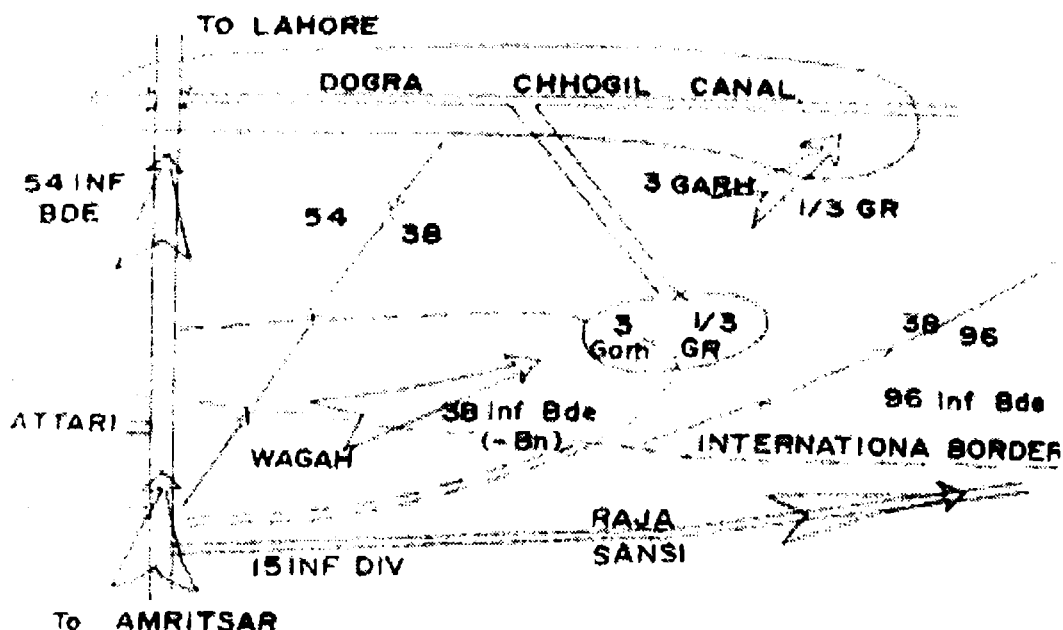
OPERATIONS IN SILAKOT SECTOR

1/3 G R Attack on Bhasin 7 September 1965

The battalion move^d from Bakloh to its operational location, under command of Maj J K Kachari, as Lt Col Campagnac, the CO, was on leave. Crossing the IB on Night 7/8 September, it concentrated Southwest of Bhasin, a position held in strength by Pakistani Army. The brigade plan of attack envisaged launching a night attack with two battalions, with the Gorkhas along with 3 GARHWAL RIFLES. However, due to late receipt of orders, the attack had to be launched by day. Though the troops fought bravely and closed-in with the enemy, they came under intense artillery and machine gun fire. Thus, the attack did not succeed and both the assaulting units suffered heavy casualties.

By midday Maj Kachari was able to muster about 140

BATTLE OF BHASIN



all ranks, but it took two more days for him to regain command and control, as men kept on staggering-in till then. Thereafter, the battalion occupied defenses, and were subjected to artillery and air attacks, the troops carried out aggressive patrolling till 23 September, when the cease fire came into effect. Soon, after cutting short his leave, the CO rejoined in the midst of fighting.

In the meanwhile on 21-21 September the Gorkhas were tasked to send a company to reinforce 1 JAT, who had suffered heavy casualties during their attack. B Company under Maj Paralkar and Lt Kuncheria moved up, but came under intense enemy shelling, resulting in four fatal casualties.

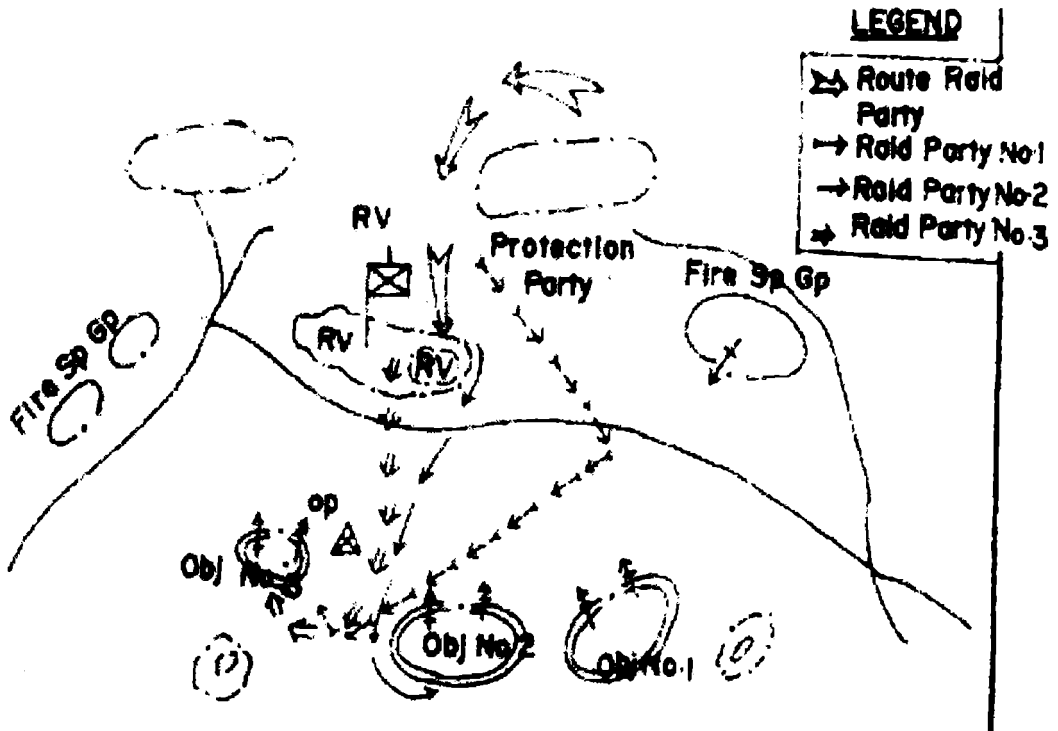
On 23 September, in order to capture maximum territory before the cease fire came into effect, the enemy at Bhasin launched an attack to dislodge the Gorkhas, but was beaten back, with heavy casualties.

In this operation, the unit suffered 15 OR killed, 49 wounded (including 4 officers and 1 J C O). Five Gorkhas went missing out of which two had been taken prisoners and returned after the war was over.

Raid by 4/3 GR-Naushera Sector 17 May 1965

Prior to the 1965 War, Pakistan had increased his activities of carrying out harassing fire on our piquet across the Cease Fire Line. Often, he also employed his heavy machine guns, anti tank and artillery guns in direct firing role, which caused considerable damage and destruction to our posts.

RAID ON ENEMY POST



To silence such firing, one raid was planned and executed under Maj Chanda, lasting 7½ hr. Planned as surprise raid, the No 1 party encountered enemy during its move, which resulted in change of plans, and now No. 3 Party under Lt Sharma was ordered to carry out the attack. Coming under heavy machinegun fire just 50 m short of the objective, Nk Kharka Bahadur Thapa bayoneted a Pakistani, while Lt Sharma snatched his rifle. After intense fighting on the objective lasting for twelve minutes, the enemy abandoned the post. Having fulfilled its mission, the patrol returned without suffering any casualties. Hereafter, the enemy did not interfere or engage our positions, in this sector.

The raid drew much praise from all, and the brigade

commander wrote that 'The raiding party of 4/3 GR put up a courageous show in reaching their objectives regardless of the heavy fire and enemy strength. They showed tremendous sense of duty in assaulting the enemy positions though the odds were against them. And while they cannot show much by way of captured arms or prisoners, the moral victory of this small force is indeed of considerable value.' For showing boldness and courage of a very high order, both Lt Sharma and Sub Rik Bahadur Gurung (one of the assaulting party commander) were awarded Mention-in-Dispatches.

OPERATIONS IN LAHORE SECTOR

1/9 GR in Khem Karan Sector September 1965

Forming part of 7 Mountain Brigade of 4 Mountain Division, the unit was grouped with 62 Mountain Brigade for Phase 1 of their attack on Rohi Nullah, on Axis Khemkaran-Kasur, on Night 6 September. The Gorkhas were tasked to cover the move of the formation to the assembly area and provide protection to gun areas. For this, the unit was deployed along track Kals-Khem Karan-Machike. After Phase 1, the unit was to revert back to 7 Mountain Brigade.

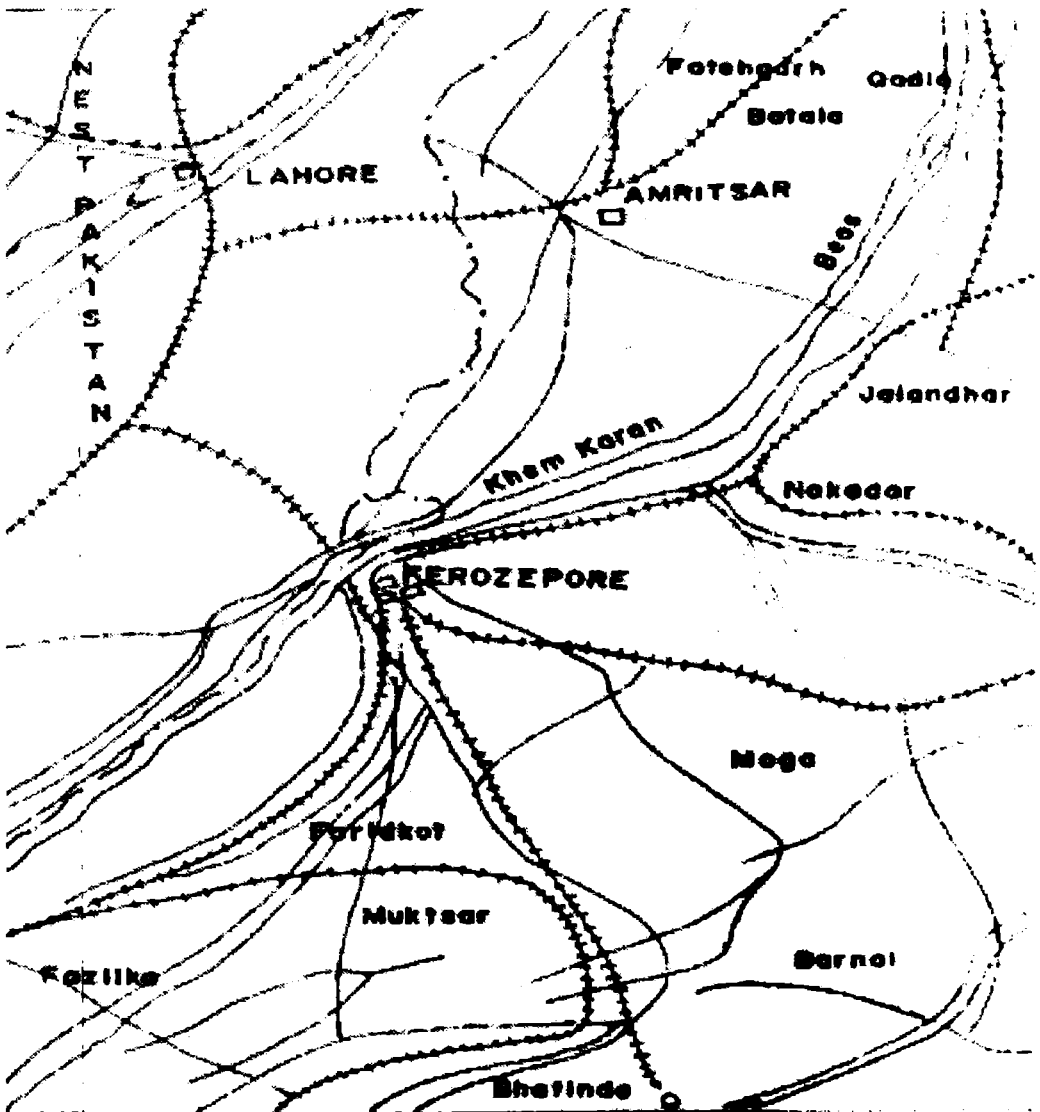
However, as the enemy also launched his offensive the same night and shelled Indian defenses heavily, by 7 September the situation in the Division became grim. While two companies of 1/9 GR were withdrawn, the balance of the unit was intact, though spread over 10,000 yds, from Kals to Khem Karan-Machike. The Gorkhas were ordered to re-deploy and prepare new defenses on Axis Khem Karan-Bhikkiwind-Asal Uttar, a task which they performed immediately.

The enemy launched an attack on 8 September supported by tanks, and by the evening was able to overrun the forward defenses and made a dash for the depth areas, but was suitably stopped by our tanks. Thus, he could not consolidate his gains, and was forced to pull-back, due to the stiff resistance offered by the Gorkhas.⁴

1/5 GR (FF) in Dera Baba Nanak and Khem Karan Sectors

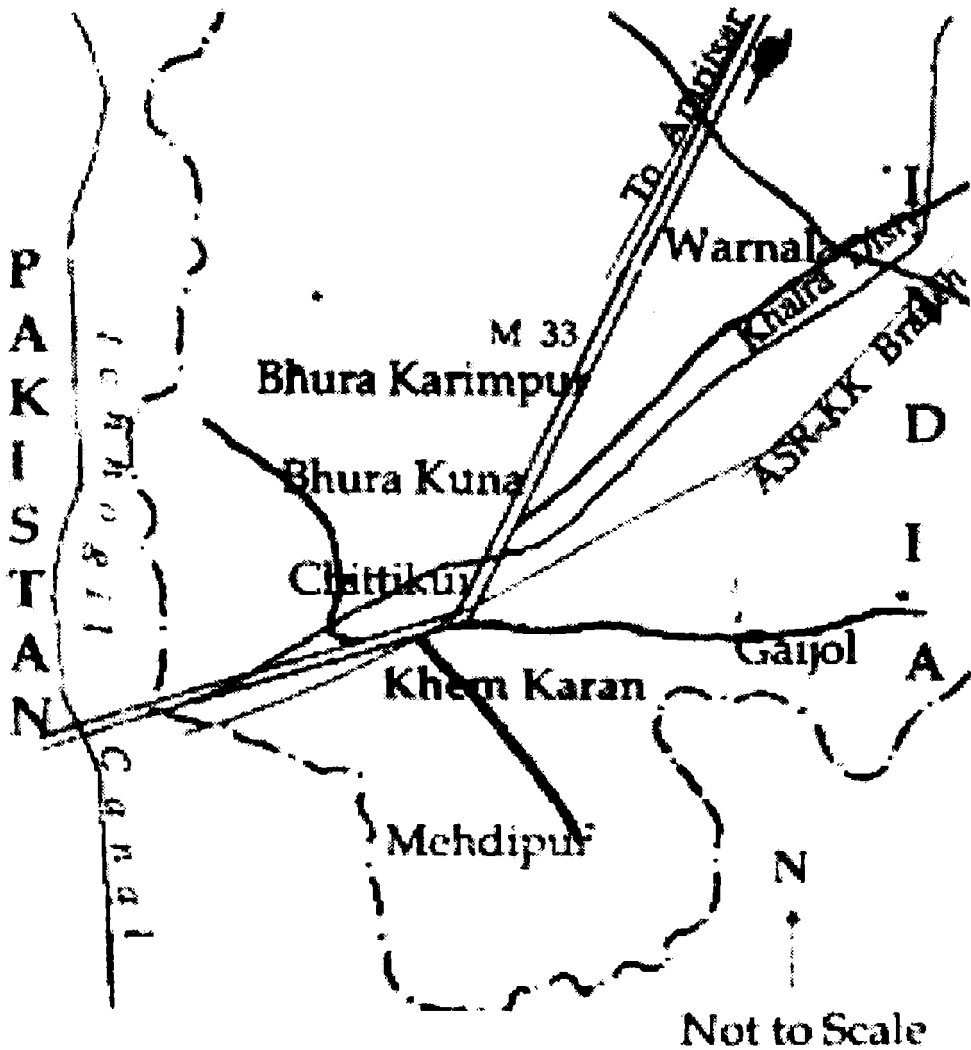
Under the command of Lt Col S N S Gurung, the first Indian Gorkha commissioned after independence from the Indian Military Academy, Dehra Dun, in 1947, the unit was moved to village of Qila Sobha Singh (near Batala), and was tasked to capture the rail bridge over Ravi River, at Dera Baba Nanak. The approaches to the bridge were heavily guarded on both ends by regular troops of the Pakistan Army, with machine guns in bunkers. Pakistani tanks were also known to be located on far bank. The approaches passed through tall grass (sarkanda) and no worthwhile tracks

AMRITSAR-KHEM KARAN



existed in them. Capture of the bridge was considered vital for India, as the enemy could induct his armor and troops over it for an offensive in Amritsar Sector.

On 5 September, two companies of Gorkhas advanced with stealth through tall sarkanda grass and captured home bank of the Bridge, and sent patrols across it to obtain vital information. Once surprise was lost, the enemy shelled the Gorkhas and brought down heavy machine gun fire on them. Though the Gorkhas suffered one fatal and ten non-fatal casualties, they captured twenty prisoners, all belonging to 3rd Punjab battalion of Pakistan Army, besides a number of weapons and a large quantity of ammunition.



Area of Operations, 1/8th, September 1965

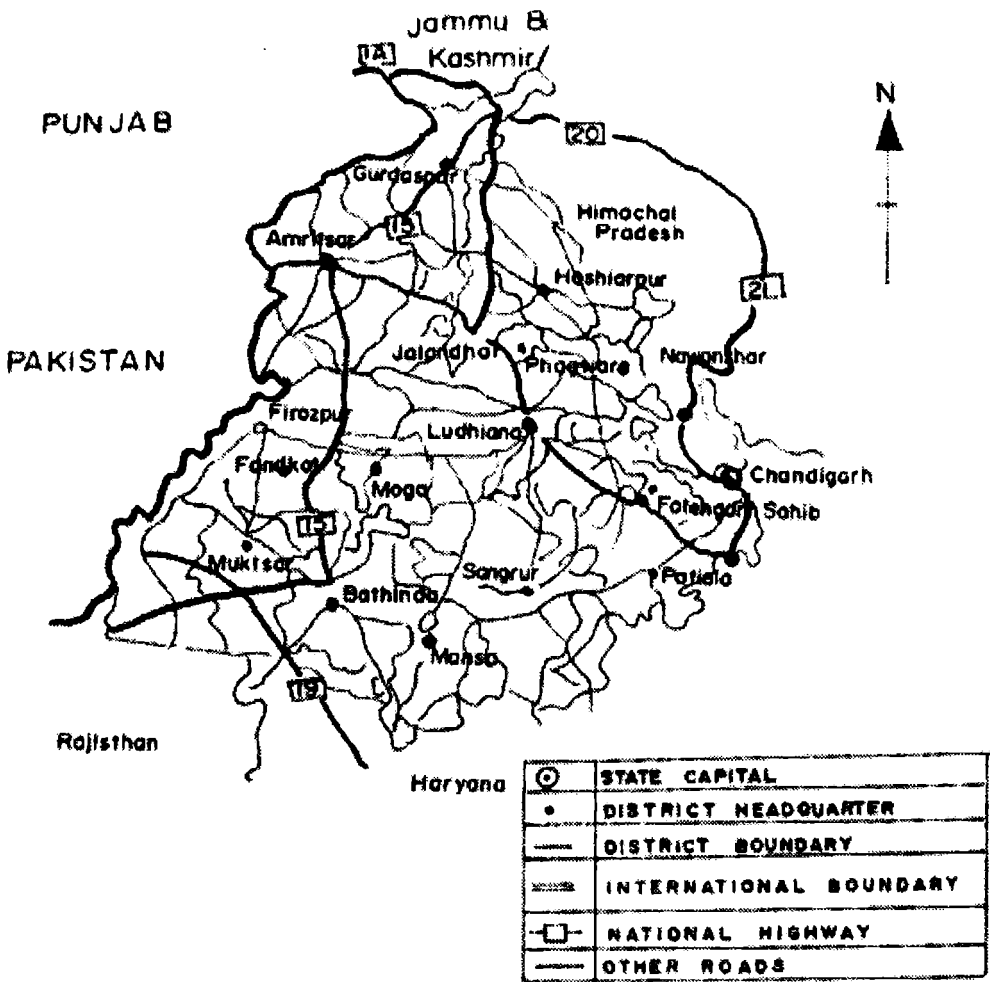
Soon, the enemy inducted tanks across the Bridge, and as till then own armor had not fetched up, these were engaged by own 106 mm recoilless guns, under command of Hav Indra Bahadur Thapa. Though in the firefight Rfn Parjit Gurung gun No. 2 was killed, Hav Indra showed remarkable cool courage and engaged enemy tanks, knocking out two, before he was fatally wounded. For his brave act, Hav Indra Bahadur Thapa was awarded VrC.

3/9 GR in Fazilka Sector

Except for some clashes and attacks on Border Out Posts, by and large the sector remained dormant. The unit was tasked to occupy defenses on a bund, and carry out offensive patrolling in the thick undergrowth of sarkanda, so as to deny the enemy an opportunity to occupy Indian Territory. In one such action, a patrol led by JCO clashed with an enemy company size patrol and after exchange of fire, took cover in the thick undergrowth, stalked the enemy, and brought back useful information.⁵

1/5 GR (FF) in Khem Karan Sector

Soon after the situation was stabilized in this sector, the unit was moved to Khalra and Bhikkiwind to form the corps reserve, as the fighting there was intense. Besides other tasks, the unit was ordered to launch an attack to recapture Khem Karan on 16 September. A special patrol was launched under Lt S N Khanna which captured and brought back a soldier of 2nd Battalion the Frontier Force of Pakistan Army. After his interrogation it was realized that the enemy strength at Khem Karan was much beyond the capability of the Gorkhas. Hence, the attack plan was shelved, and the unit occupied a defended sector, which came under enemy attack on 20 September. The Gorkhas held their ground and repulsed the attack.



NOT TO SCALE

Despite frequent requests by the CO to higher commanders for a worthwhile independent task, the unit continued to be moved from one place to another, as a reserve. In the end, just before the cease fire was to come into effect, one company under Maj Hari Singh was launched on 22 September to capture portion of Khem Karan Distributory, a task much beyond its capabilities. Soon, it came under heavy tank and artillery fire and had to pull back, with some casualties.

During the operations, the unit suffered 21 fatal casualties (including 1 officer and 1 J C O). The Gorkhas won one Vr C which was awarded to Hav Indra Bahadur Thapa (posthumously).

Recalling these operations in year 2005, Col Gurung still felt that his unit should have been given a more worthwhile task, preferably an independent one, so that his troops could have shown their battle worthiness much better.

1/8 GR in Khemkaran Sector September 1965

After carrying out tasks in Chhamb Sector, under the command of Lt Col Jasbir Singh Khurana, on 19 September the unit arrived in Khemkaran sector, which had already seen heavy fighting. On 21 September the unit was tasked to capture Chittikui. A and B Companies left the forming-up-place as per plan, but came under heavy artillery shelling, due to which radio communications was lost and command and control disrupted. While Maj P K Jawa (B Company) with 15 OR returned to the Forming Up Place, but his second-in-command, Sub Dan Bahadur Gurung was killed. This resulted in the attack being called off and the troops were ordered to firm-in their positions. During the day of 22 September they again came under intense enemy shelling and suffered more casualties. By 23 September the unit was ordered to fall back and occupy defenses at Bhura Karimpur, and send an officer patrol to Khemkaran, where Maj Jawa, 2nd Lt Narula and six OR were taken prisoners.

During the War, the Gorkhas suffered 20 fatal (including Maj S R Mandke and Sub Dan Bahadur Gurung) and 40 non-fatal casualties (including two officers). Eight all ranks (including two officers) were taken P O Ws.

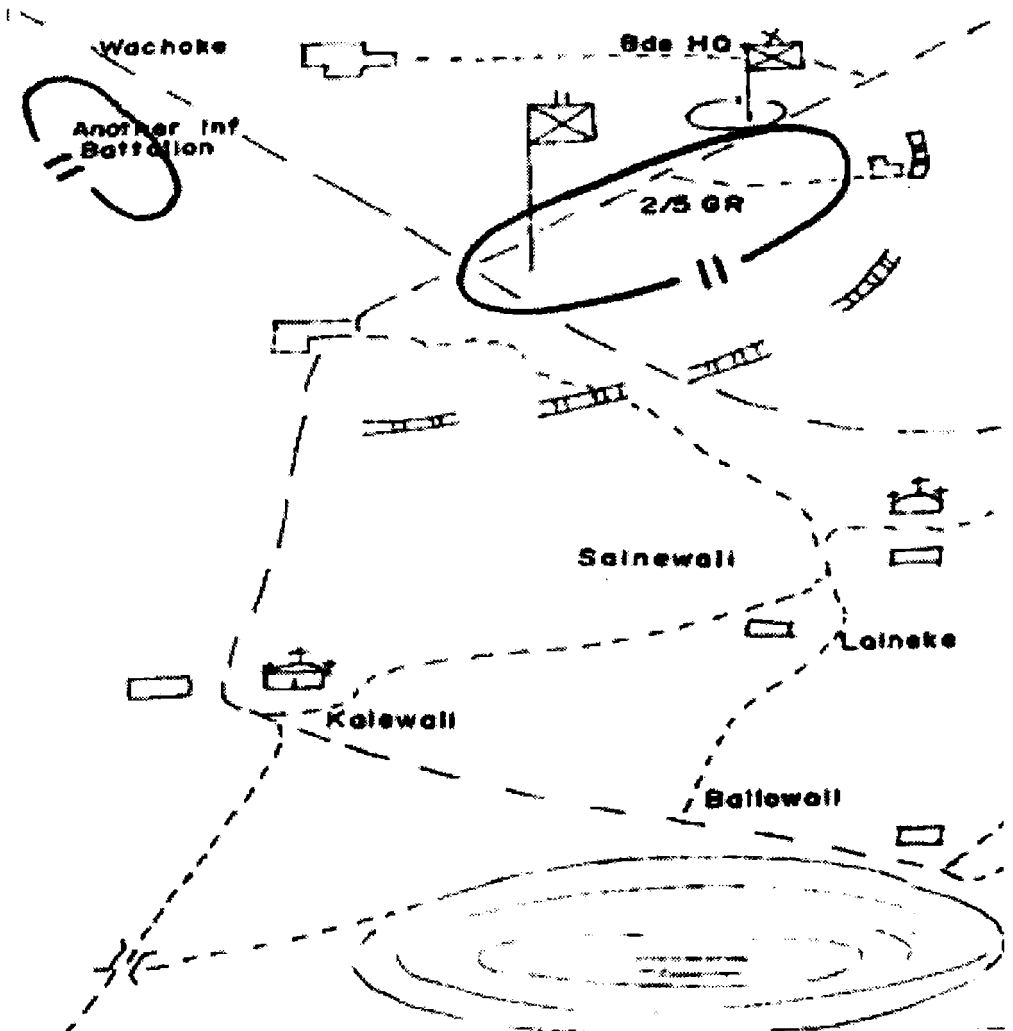
6/8 GR in Khalra Sector September 1965

During these operations, the unit under the command of Lt Col G A Nagle, on 6 September captured Gaga post of Pakistan astride Khalra-Lahore Axis. After an attack by another unit to capture the Bridge on Hudiara Drain at Jhaman had failed, the Gorkhas were tasked to capture Jhaman. On night 12 September, supported by tanks the Gorkhas moved from Dal and moving through a marsh, secured Jhaman. During this action Capt R C Bakshi showed

bravery of a highest order, for which he was awarded Vir Chakra.

The next task given to the unit was capture of Padhana, on 17 September and Bridge 4 on the Upper Bari Doab Canal near Jhaman. Both the objectives were captured by 21 September, and heavy casualties inflicted on the enemy. Though the enemy shelled both these positions and made repeated attempts to re-capture the Bridge, his efforts were defeated by the alert Gorkhas.

The last action of the War was on 6 October, much after the cease fire, when a Pakistani patrol had intruded into Indian territory. 2nd Lt V P Barokar was sent on a patrol to ask the intruders to withdraw, peacefully. Instead, violating the cease fire the Pakistanis opened fire on him, due to which he was fatally wounded.



In this war the unit suffered 16 fatal (including Capt R C Bakshi and 2nd Lt Barokar and one J C O), and 47 non-fatal casualties (including two officers). The unit was awarded one Vr C (Capt Bakshi, posthumously) and one S M. One OR was also Mention-in-Dispatches. For its contribution to the success of operations against Pakistan, the unit won Theatre Honor 'Punjab 1965'.

2/5 GR (FF) in Sialkot Sector

Under the command of Lt Col M L Whig the unit was tasked to facilitate further operations at the outbreak of war by capturing Pakistani post at Charwa on Night 7 Sept 1965. As the enemy was known to be holding it with a Company, two rifle companies supported by artillery fire were launched at 11 pm. While the initial phases succeeded without much difficulty, the reserve B Company under Lt Barua came under intense fire, resulting in a few casualties. In this attack, Rfn Dhan Bahadur Gurung showed outstanding courage in rushing to an enemy bunker and silencing a Pakistani machine gun, while Rfn Man Bahadur Gurung gave him support. For his bravery, Rfn Dhan Bahadur was awarded Vr C, while Rfn Man Bahadur was Mentioned-in-Dispatches.⁶

Hereafter, the Gorkhas were tasked to provide a firm base for attack on Phillora, and remained deployed as a reserve till the cease fire. However, as Pakistani troops continued to encroach across the IB even after the cease fire, active patrolling was carried out to check them. One such patrol clashed with the enemy, killed five Pakistanis and secured village Billawal.

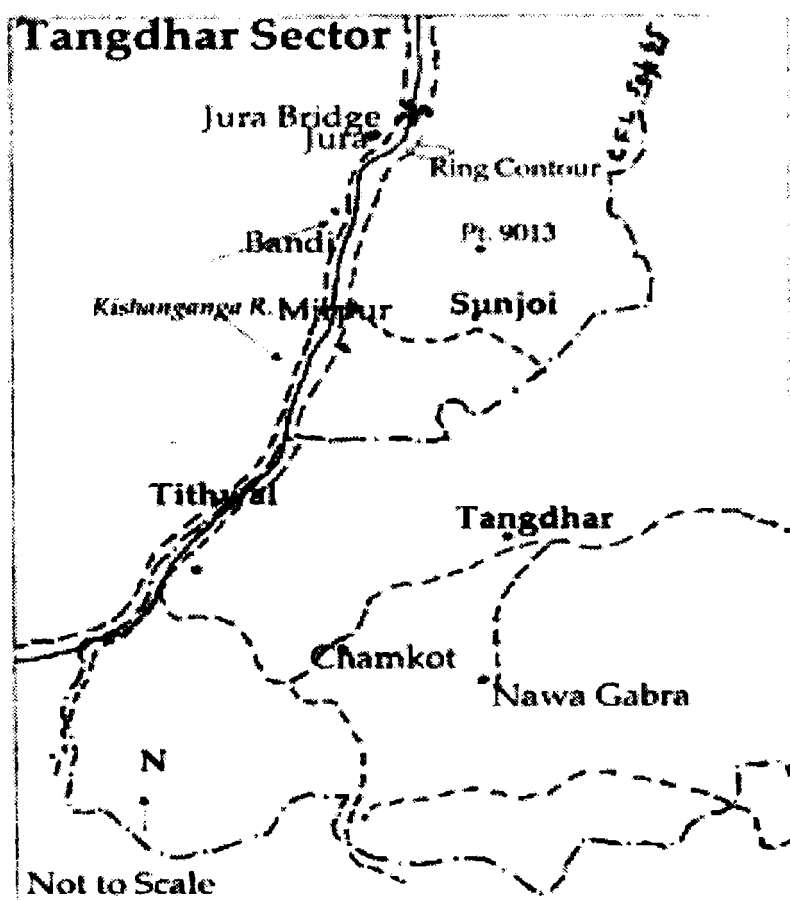
During these operations the Gorkhas suffered 8 fatal (including 1 J C O) and 37 non-fatal casualties (including 2 officers and 1 J C O). Besides one Vr C, six others were Mention-in-Dispatches. The Gorkhas were awarded Battle Honor 'Charwa'.

5/9 GR at Philora 1965

Forming part of 43 Lorried Brigade, the unit in troop carrying vehicles was grouped with 1 Armored Brigaded. It crossed in to Pakistani territory on Night 7/8 September, for capture of Philora-Phagowal by last light 8 September. Despite being shelled by the enemy, the unit launched the attack on 10/11 September, and by 3:30 pm on 11 Sept the Gorkhas had secured Phillora, along with 5 JAT.

OPERATIONS IN JAMMU & KASHMIR**3/8 GR Captures Sunjoi September 1965 Tangdhar Sector**

Since 1949, Pakistan had been violating the Cease Fire Line by establishing posts in un-held areas and used them for launching raids and for infiltration purposes. Ring Contour and Sunjoi opposite Tangdhar Sector of Titwal posts East of Kishanganga River, were two such posts which were

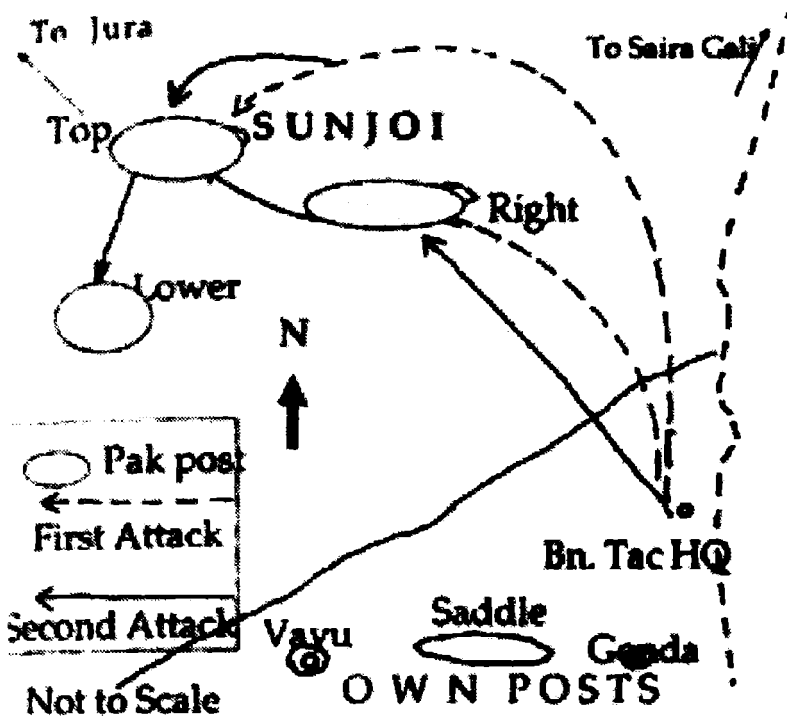


Tangdhar Sector, 3/8th, 1965

used by Pakistan for infiltrating raiders in to Kashmir. The bridges on Kishanganga River gave Pakistan the ability to infiltrate raiders into the salient East of the river, and then carry out operations in Tangdhar sector.

Raid on Ring Contour

After its third raising in 1963, the unit under the command of Lt Col Kapur took over the Tangdhar defenses in June 1964. The violation of the Cease fire Line by Pakistan was reported to the UN Observers, who were asked to get the post at Ring Contour removed. Instead of vacating it, on 20 September 1964 the Pakistanis crossed the Cease Fire Line and attacked a post of the Gorkhas. Though the attack was beaten back, it was decided to teach Pak a lesson, by raiding Ring Contour, a post held by about 50 men.



After an approach march along a steep slope, on 22 September a silent raid was launched by D Company under Capt Am Bahadur Gurung. Despite heavy rains, slushy and slippery slopes, the Gorkhas closed in with the enemy maintaining silence, and then un-leashed their might with kukris. Once alerted, the enemy opened up with machine

gun, which was neutralized with hand grenades lobbed by Sub Nanda Bahadur Gurung. The operation was successfully completed by 4.15 am, killing 19 soldiers, while the Gorkhas suffered no casualties.

The raiding party returned safely. It brought back two Medium Machine Guns, two Light Machine Guns and one Rocket Launcher, besides other equipment. The unit earned two Sena Medals (bar to SM for Capt Am Bahadur Gurung and L Hav Kul Prasad Gurung). Later, the Post was re-occupied by the Gorkhas in September 1965.

Capture of Sunjoi

Sunjoi post was being used as a base by Pakistan for infiltrating raiders across the Cease Fire Line. Besides HQ of the Special Forces, one company of 15 Frontier Force was also based at Sunjoi and was deployed on three contiguous features (Top, Right and Lower Sunjoi). The Gorkhas were holding posts of Vayu, Saddle and Gonda, when in September 1965 the Brigade HQs received orders to capture the bridges on River Krishanganga. As the bridges were dominated by Sunjoi, its capture became important for successful conduct of the operation

Col Kapur planned to move two companies under Capt Am Bahadur along the track to Saira Gali, and then attack Sunjoi Top from rear, on Night 31 August/1 September, while a diversionary attack was launched on Sunjoi Right under Capt Barooah. However, the surprise was given away when the attacking troops were on their way to the objective. Hence the attack was called off and troops returned to their locations. As a result of this attack, the enemy thinned out Sunjoi Right and reinforced the positions in the North.

Not to be disheartened, a second attack was launched by the Gorkhas on Night 3/4 September, by assaulting the feature directly through thick jungle and broken ground. Capt Am Bahadur and Maj Phadkar led the assault on lower slopes of Sunjoi Top, while Sunjoi Right was secured without much difficulty.

Hereafter, the attack on Sunjoi Top was launched along a narrow ridge line, which was covered by enemy machine guns. During the assault, L Nk Raj Bahadur Gurung scaled a tree with the help of Sub Man Bahadur Gurung and jumped over the enemy bunker, and then lobbed hand grenades to neutralize it. After a grim hand-to-hand fight lasting for more than 57 minutes, Sunjoi Top was captured by 1:30 am, in which Maj S P Verma and 13 OR were fatally wounded. Thereafter, Sunjoi Lower was captured by 1030 am next day, without much difficulty, as after suffering heavy casualties, the Pakistani had abandoned their post. The enemy launched counter attacks on 4 and 5 September, which were successfully beaten back, though the Gorkhas suffered 4 more fatal casualties, including Capt S L Purim. For displaying bravery of a very high order, Maj S P Verma, Sub Man Bahadur Gurung and L Nk Raj Bahadur Gurung were awarded Vr C, immediately.

On 11 September, Capt Am Bahadur Gurung with his D Company attacked the Pakistani piquet guarding the Murmur Bridge, and after a tough hand-to-hand fight, he secured the objective. Fearing capture of bridge by the Indian troops intact, at 4 am on 12 September the Pakistanis burnt the bridge and withdrew West of the river. In this operation, the Gorkhas suffered 5 fatal (including Nb Sub Caber Gurung) and 7 non-fatal (including 2nd Lt Padre) casualties.

During these operations, the Gorkhas won 4 Vr C and 5 S Ms, while three all ranks were Mention-in-Dispatches. For the capture of Sunjoi, the unit was awarded Battle Honor 'Sunjoi - Murmur' and Theatre Honor 'Jammu & Kashmir 1965'.

4/8 GR in Hangar Sector August 1965

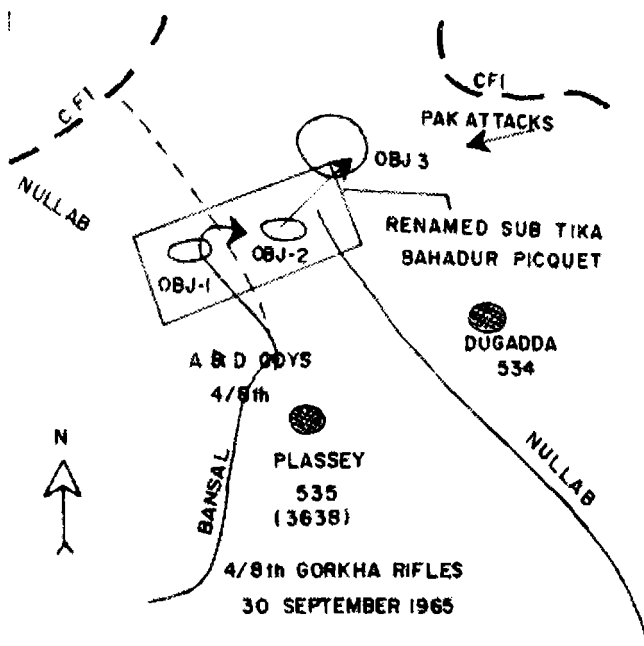
The battalion under the command of Lt Col D S Barr was holding posts in Hangar sector, when it was tasked to carry out anti-infiltration tasks. The first success was achieved by Capt T P S Mann, who on receiving information about six raiders took a small patrol to apprehend them. However,

on closer observation he found a group of sixty Pakistanis resting in a forest. Not to be deterred, he launched a quick attack and scattered them, inflicting casualties and recovering important documents. Soon, A and C Companies were also launched, resulting in Hav Ram Bahadur Gurung capturing a Pakistani Captain and an OR, the first during the 1965 Operations. Based on information obtained, more patrols were launched to nab the raiders, and a big gang of about 100 was intercepted on 10/11 August, on whom heavy casualties were inflicted. A large quantity of arms and ammunition were recovered from this group.

Though the Cease Fire had come into effect on 23 September, approximately 40 Pakistani troops infiltrated across the Cease Fire Line and tried to establish a new post, near own post Plassey. When despite warnings they did not vacate the area and instead continued to strengthen it, an attack was launched on 30 September by A and D Companies under Maj Dean and Bole, to capture it.

The attack progressed as planned and though wounded twice, Maj Dean captured Objectives 1 and 2, and then Maj Bole captured Objective 3. Thereafter, Dean was evacuated and his company continued to hold the feature, under Sub

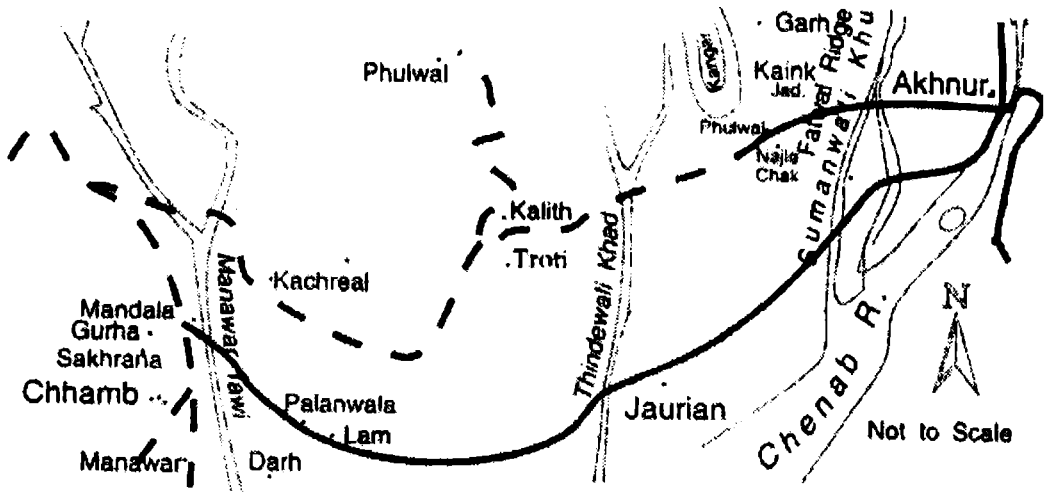
4/8TH GR 30 SEPTEMBER 1965



Tike Bahadur Thapa. Soon, Pakistanis shelled the post and launched a counter attack at 7 am, which was defeated. The

The Pakistanis launched the second counter attack at 1130 am with about two companies and managed to close within five yards of the Gorkhas, which resulted in heavy hand-to-hand fighting at some places. Sub Tike Bahadur had re-deployed the machine gun captured earlier from the Pakistanis, and used it effectively to engage them. Though his mortar was damaged, the J C O kept on moving from trench to trench motivating his soldiers to fight due to which the second attack was also beaten back. During this attack, Sub Tike Bahadur was fatally wounded, and 2nd Lt K S Gopal took over the command. During the third counter attack, the enemy managed to get into the positions which again resulted in fierce hand-to-hand fighting, in which 2nd Lt Gopal and Sub Sepal Gurung were killed while leading their men. At this stage, Rfn Bull Bahadur drew his Kukri and charged at the enemy soldier who had earlier killed Gopal, and neutralized him.

In this operation, the Gorkhas suffered 13 fatal (including one officer and 3 JCOs) and 33 non-fatal casualties (including 3 officers). The battalion won one M V C (Sub Tika Bahadur Thapa-posthumous), two S M (Lt Gopal and Sub Sukpal Gurung-both posthumous) while four all ranks were Mention-in-Dispatches. Among the Pakistani weapons captured were one .30 Browning Machine Gun, one 2 in Mortar, four rifles, one Pistol signal, one wireless set and some ammunition. Seven bodies of Pakistani soldiers killed in action, were buried by the unit.

5/8 GR IN AKHNUR SECTOR-SEPTEMBER 1965

Under the command of Lt Col H C Dutta, initially the unit occupied the depth defenses in the sector. After the initial fighting had petered-off in Chhamb, a fire base was established under 2nd Lt B V R Rao in the no-man's land, to engage the enemy from a flank. Though often under heavy fire, Rao carried out the task successfully, till he was fatally wounded. For his heroic action, he was awarded Vr C.

Performance in the Operations

By their daring actions, the Gorkhas soldiers of the Indian Army once again proved their outstanding fighting capabilities, devotion to duty and regimental loyalty. Rejoining units voluntarily by persons on leave in Nepal as well as the reservists established beyond doubts that a soldier from Nepal fully realized his responsibilities and obligations towards his unit, regiment, the Indian Army and India.

By now the 1947 Direct Commissioned Gorkha JCOs of the 2nd W W had retired and post Independence Indian officers were fully settled in their Gorkha units. These officers had made special efforts to learn the language and customs and traditions of their men, hence they commanded full and unflinching respect from them.

Often fighting at sub-unit level, the Gorkha JCOs and NCOs proved that they were competent to hold their posts and complete assigned tasks, independently also.

While some anti-India statements were made during this War in Nepal, they neither had any support of the Government of Nepal nor did they influence the gorkha soldiers of the Indian Army. Despite ups and downs in Indo-Nepal relations, these soldiers continued to provide a strong bond between the two countries.

Conclusion

During this War, the Gorkha soldiers fought daringly with courage, as always. They displayed exemplary soldierly qualities and devotion to duty of a very high order, by voluntarily joining their units from in Nepal, and as reservists.

The bravery shown during the Raid at Sunjoi, attacks at Bajragarhi and defense of Tika Bahadur picquet, are a few sagas which will continue to motivate future generations of soldiers.

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2. *The History of the First Gorkha Rifles*, by Brig (Retd) C B Khanduri, Vanity Books, New Delhi, 1992.
3. Interview with Maj Gen A K Luthra (Retd), MC, AVSM, in 2005.
4. *War Dispatches, Indo-Pak War 1965*, by Lt Gen Harbakhsh Singh, Vr C (Retd), Lancer International, N. Delhi, 1991. After visiting the battlefield on 8 Sep, G O C XI Corps recommended disbandment of some units to the Army Commander, except 1/9 GR and 4 GRENADEIERS, as these were the only two units which despite heavy odds carried out their tasks and held their ground.
5. Interview with the actual participants at Dehra Dun, Sep 2005.
6. According to Lt Gen Harbakhsh Singh, Vr C (Retd), the attack was launched by 99 Mountain Brigade with two battalions up, 2/5 GR(FF) and 4 Rajputana Rifles, on night 7 September. The Gorkhas swept swiftly over the objective and giving free play

to their Kukris quickly evicted an enemy rifle company and a mujahid company. They used their 106 mm R C L guns effectively, and exploiting their brilliant success, pushed forward beyond their objective to cover road coming into Charwa from Maharajke, Chobra and Ikhnal. War Dispatches, Indo-Pak War 1965, Lancer International, N Delhi, 1991.

4. 1971 INDO-PAK WAR

General

The political situation in Pakistan, especially the relations between the Punjabi dominated military and political powers with their own Eastern regions dominated by Bengalis, had remained strained since 1947. The people of East Pakistan felt that they were not given their dues as regards rights in governance and development projects, even though they were the majority population and earned more foreign exchange by exporting jute and other goods. The elections of 1971 resulted in the Awami League emerging as a majority party under Sheikh Mujib Rahman, but Bhutto or the West Pakistan dominated Pakistan Army was in no mood to hand over the power to him. Soon, Pakistan Army commenced a crack down in East Pakistan, which resulted in nearly ten million refugees pouring into India. Tension grew when efforts made by international powers, especially India, failed to convince Pakistan to create conducive conditions for return of her refugees back to their homes. Instead, Pakistan adopted an aggressive attitude towards its people belonging to the Eastern Wing, resulting in widespread genocide and killings of innocent Bengalis, including women and children.

Hoping to benefit from her newly formed friendship with America and China, Pakistan was confident of their support in check-mating India. Since the Pakistan Army had not been able to wrest J & K in the 1965 War which remained inconclusive, she continued to harbor intent of having another round of war. Thus, in the growing tension, on the evening of 3rd December 1971, Pakistan Air Force launched air strikes at a number of Indian air fields in the

West, followed by well coordinated attacks in Punch and Akhnur. This forced India to retaliate and declare a war on Pakistan.

Military Situation

After the 1965 War, an un-easy calm prevailed along the western borders in J & K. Pakistan continued to fire across the C F L on Indian posts, as well as targeted vehicle convoys by artillery fire. Cases of sabotage and planting of land mines from across the border also continued.

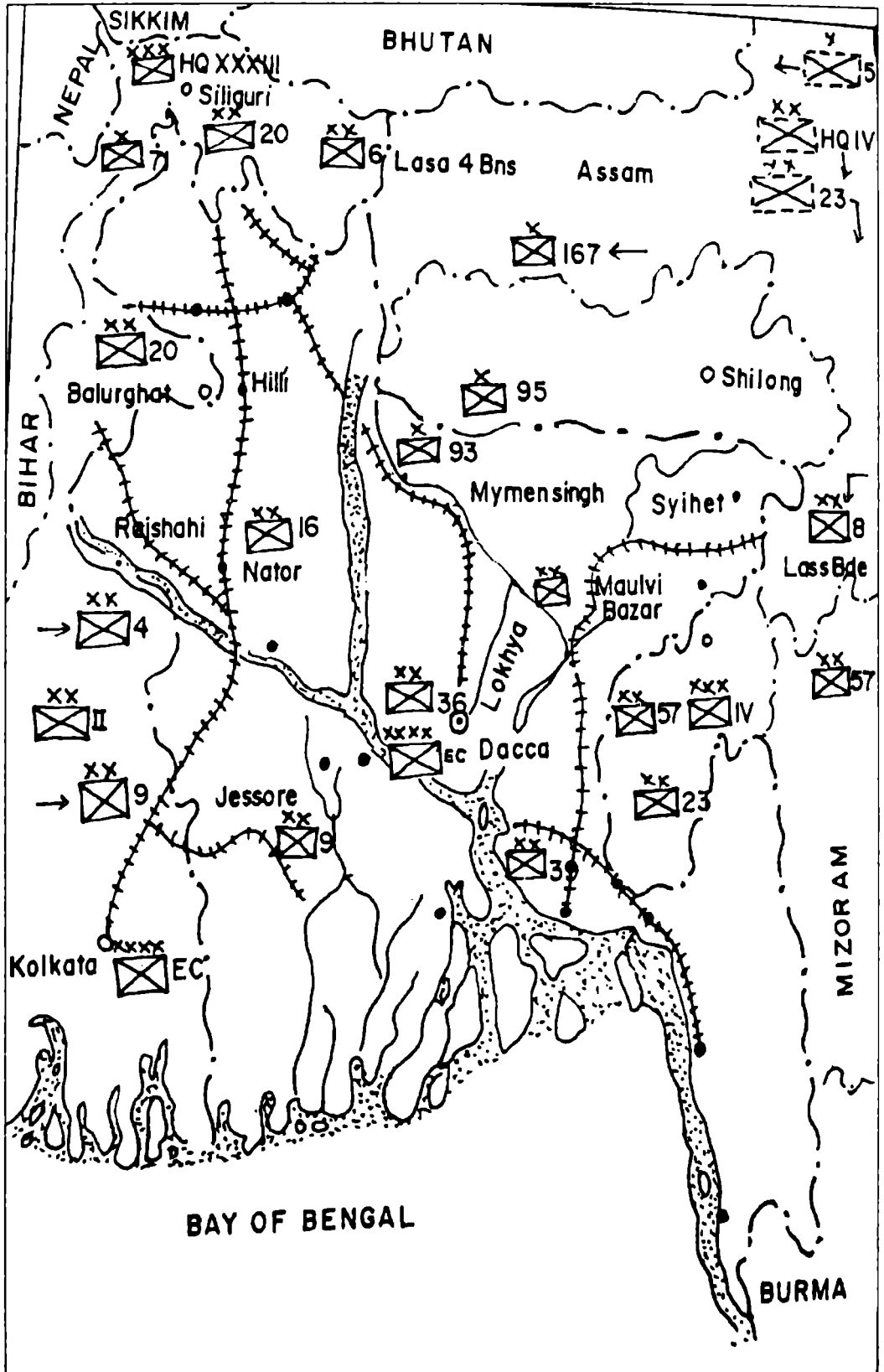
As regards East Pakistan, the terrain being riverine - full of marshes and swamps, roads, tracks, railway lines, ports and ferry sites - it assumed significant military importance. The Pakistan Army, supported by mujahideens, razakars and other Para Military Forces, had developed strong points around most of the towns and villages which were well stocked. Mukti Bahini, a guerilla force which had recently evolved had been successful in harassing the Pakistan Army to a certain extent but did not have the requisite strength to defeat them.

India had readied her forces for an offensive for the liberation of East Pakistan so that the Government of Bangladesh could takeover their country. For the Western Theatre; a strategy of offensive-defense (no loss of territory) was adopted, by taking the war into Pakistan, if required.

GORKHA'S IN THE WAR ON THE EASTERN FRONT

The operations were launched by 2nd, 4th, 33rd Corps in conjunction with the 101st Area, from east, west and north, with the major rivers serving as inter-formation boundaries. As Pakistan had started nibbling actions in November, a few preliminary operations were carried out by our own forces, to secure launch pads. The India Air Force and the Indian Navy also played a vital part, besides the Mukti Bahini which acted as eyes and ears of our troops and arranged logistic support for columns. Nearly all Gorkha

units of the Indian Army participated in these operations, and by their gallantry, proved their worth, in gold.



The external boundaries of India depicted in this map are neither correct nor authentic.

4/5 GR (FF) Operations for Atgram, Gazipur and Sylhet

Under the command of Lt Col A B Harolika, the unit had moved opposite Sylhet Sector, where it was tasked to capture Atgram. A small village located in a salient formed by Surma River, it was being used by Pak troops for launching raids on Indian posts. Held by a company of 31 Punjab Regiment, the enemy had laid a minefield around his positions, which were well covered by machine gun fire.

The Gorkhas crossed the river in country boats at night by stealth, and after establishing a road block in the rear to cut off the withdrawing enemy, launched a silent and vicious attack. Once alerted, the enemy put up stiff resistance, but by first light the Gorkhas had captured the village. During the assault, 2nd Lt Hawa Singh showed leadership and courage of a very high order - for which he was awarded Vr C. While assaulting the enemy positions, Rfn Dil Bahadur Chhetri also showed exemplary courage and charged the enemy without fear, single handedly killing eight Pakistani soldiers with his Kukri - an act for which he was awarded the M V C. The Battalion captured 44 prisoners, including Maj A S Alvie - the Pakistani Company Commander. The Gorkhas suffered 5 fatal (namely Capt P K Jauhri and 2nd Lt Hawa Singh, Vr C, 1 J C O and 2 ORs) and 21 non-fatal casualties.

During the night of 4/5Dec, the unit was tasked to capture Gazipur, a mission which was carried out without fear, though both sides suffered heavy losses. The unit suffered 11 fatal (including 1 officer) and 63 non-fatal casualties (including 4 officers and 2 JCOs), mostly due to intense enemy medium artillery shelling. The enemy losses in this place were much higher. Nonetheless, undeterred by the losses, the Gorkhas continued to lead the advance to secure Kaluara by midday 5 December.

Heliborne Operations for Capturing Sylhet

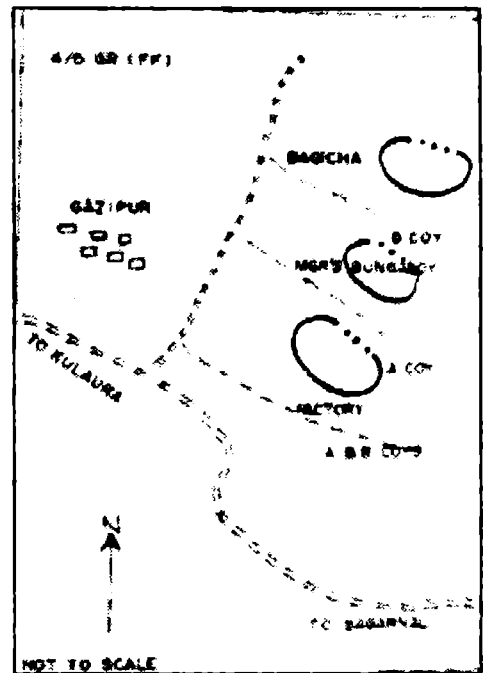
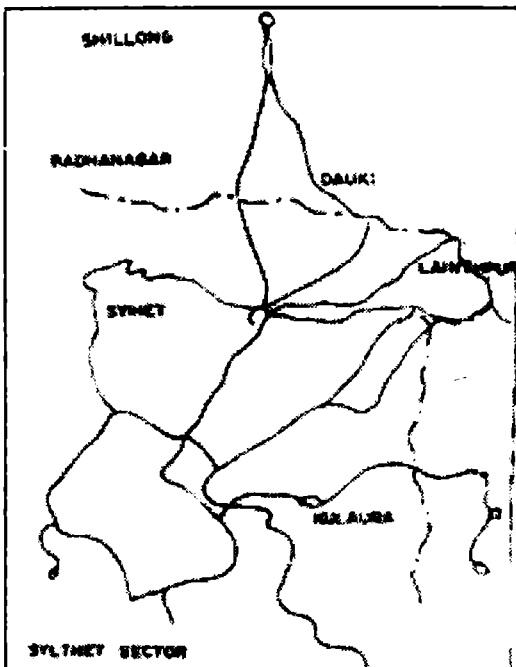
At this stage, it was perceived that instead of attacking strongly held localities along the routes of advance, much faster results could be achieved by capturing vital enemy localities in his 'guts', like Sylhet. Hence, a heliborne operation by 4/5 GR (FF) was planned, in which the unit with some artillery guns were to be inducted behind Pakistani 202 Brigade, via helicopters. After an aerial recce, the first wave with the C O and part of 'C' Company took off on the afternoon of 7 December from Kalaura, and after a 20 minutes flight, landed at Mirapura landing site, which they soon secured. Though initially engaged with small arms fire, sorties later came under immense enemy artillery fire. By the evening a Pakistani company was also seen preparing to launch an attack, which was disorganized by the Gorkhas charging at the enemy with Kukris. Similarly, the third sortie also faced active enemy artillery shelling; forcing a cancellation of further induction. Throughout the night the Gorkhas were subjected to a barrage of artillery shelling

The build-up re-commenced on 8 December morning, and despite shelling, the brave pilots of the I A F brought the balance of the battalion and two guns, escorted by a platoon of 9 GR, by 0800h. By this now the Gorkhas were ready for carrying out attacks and eager to capture the bridge, which was well guarded by the enemy. To deny the enemy any opportunity of reinforcements, Col Harolihar positioned a two company block, cutting the road leading to the bridge. Though the enemy tried his level best to dislodge the Gorkhas, he failed. In one such action, Rfn Pas Bahadur Pun charged the attacking enemy and even though seriously wounded, he inflicted heavy casualties on them - for which he was awarded the Vr C.

Hereafter the Gorkhas came under intense enemy shelling which continued unabated for four days. Along with the ongoing operations, this resulted in shortages of rations and ammunition, yet, the biggest concern of Col Harolihar was his inability to evacuate his wounded soldiers whose numbers

had increased, leaving only 45-50 able bodied men in each company. Though an airdrop did take place, casualty evacuation remained a major problem. It was only on the 5th day that the first helicopter landed amidst enemy fire and evacuated two casualties, followed by the evacuation of another five later.

Flying Officer Sharma, who had landed with the unit as an air representative, was so highly motivated by seeing the Gorkhas in action that he also assaulted a patrol of the enemy, for which he was awarded Vr C.



AREA OF OPERATIONS OF 4/5 GR (FF) AT GAZIPUR & SYLHET

Finally, a link-up was established at 1130 am on 14 December by 6 RAJPUT - advancing forward after crossing Surma River - while 5/5 GR (FF) advancing from Jaintiapur linked-up at Khadim Nagar, on 16 December.

During the operations at Sylhet from 7 to 16 December, the unit suffered 13 fatal (including 1 Officer, 2 JCOs and 10 ORs) and 35 non-fatal (including one officer) casualties.

After the cease fire, the unit suffered casualties wherein 1 OR killed while 2 officers and 2 OR were wounded.

For displaying raw courage and exemplary leadership qualities under most severe battle conditions in the face of the enemy, Lt Col Harolikar was awarded the M V C. The unit earned the Battle Honor 'Sylhet'.

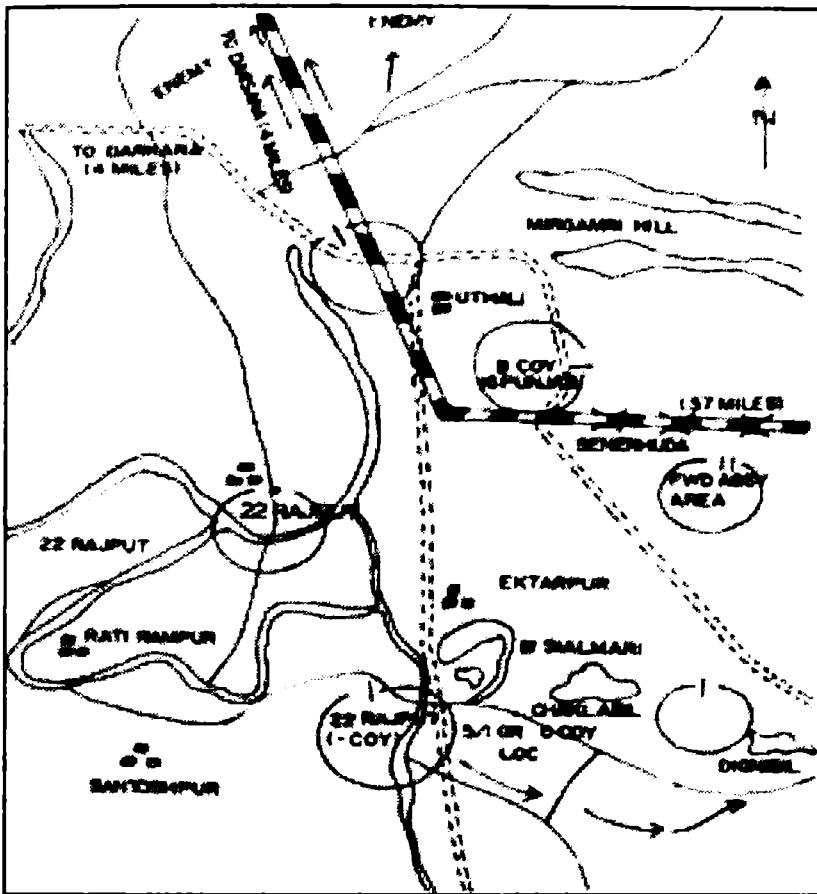
5/1 GR Captures Uthali

Forming part of 41 Brigade of 4 Division, on 3 December the unit was given the task of capturing Uthali and Darsana, strong points occupied by a company of Pakistan Army. Lt Col Venugopal, the CO, decided to follow a route through tall grass at night and attack at first light, with full artillery and tank support, while simultaneously establishing a 'block' to trap the withdrawing enemy. By converting the built-up area, the enemy had constructed formidable bunkers and pill boxes, and had sited his machine guns and other weapons, including a minefield, cunningly.

The Gorkhas reached the forming-up-area at 8 am, just 300 m short of the objective, when they came under intense artillery and machine gun fire. The squadron of PT 76 tanks grouped with the in were unable to provide effective fire support, as their view was obscured by sugar cane fields. Thus, Col Venugopal asked own artillery to engage the enemy, though this could also endanger our own troops who were then in the open.

Under the artillery barrage of medium guns with no care for their own safety, shouting the battle cry "Ayo Gorkhali", the Gorkhas launched the attack at 9 am, with B and C Companies. At this stage, the enemy opened up fire with a heavy machine gun from a flank, which was destroyed in the ensuing combat by brave Rfn Pati Ram Gurung who charged at it, single handedly. Also, Rfn Moti Kumar Newar showed exemplary courage when, despite being wounded by a machine gun burst in his thigh, he continued to fire his L M G at the enemy and reached as close as 30 m to the enemy bunker. There he left his LMG,

BATTLE OF UTHALI



crawling forward to the bunker, lobbed hand grenades and silenced it. He was mortally wounded in this incident. By 1015 h, the two assaulting Companies had captured the first tier of enemy bunkers, often after hand-to-hand fight. As per brigade plan, at this stage another battalion was to pass through 5/1 GR for Phase 2, but Col Venugopal volunteered to press forward the attack to capture the depth defenses of the enemy. This was agreed to by Brig Michigan, who had been watching the brave action of the Gorkhas closely.

Soon, A and D Companies were launched where after another fierce encounter they captured Uthali by 1130h. Thereafter, the Bn marched further towards Akandabaria.

In this operation, the Gorkhas killed 23 enemy soldiers of 18 Punjab of Pakistan Army, and wounded 30. Their own casualties were - 6 killed and 27 wounded (including two

JCOs). The unit also captured a large quantity of arms and ammunition, including a 76 mm RCL gun and 82 mm Mortars. For displaying courage of a very high order, Rfn Pati Ram won M V C while Rfn Moti Kumar Newar was awarded Vr C (posthumously).

Capture of Darsana

The next objective of the 41 Brigade was Darsana, in which 5/1 GR in Phase 1, was to capture Darsana Hall, Railway Station and Club, whereas in Phase two, the 2/9 GR was to capture the remaining localities. The enemy defenses were held by 18 Punjab, less one company, with elements of Recce & Support unit, anti-tank guns, and heavy mortars.

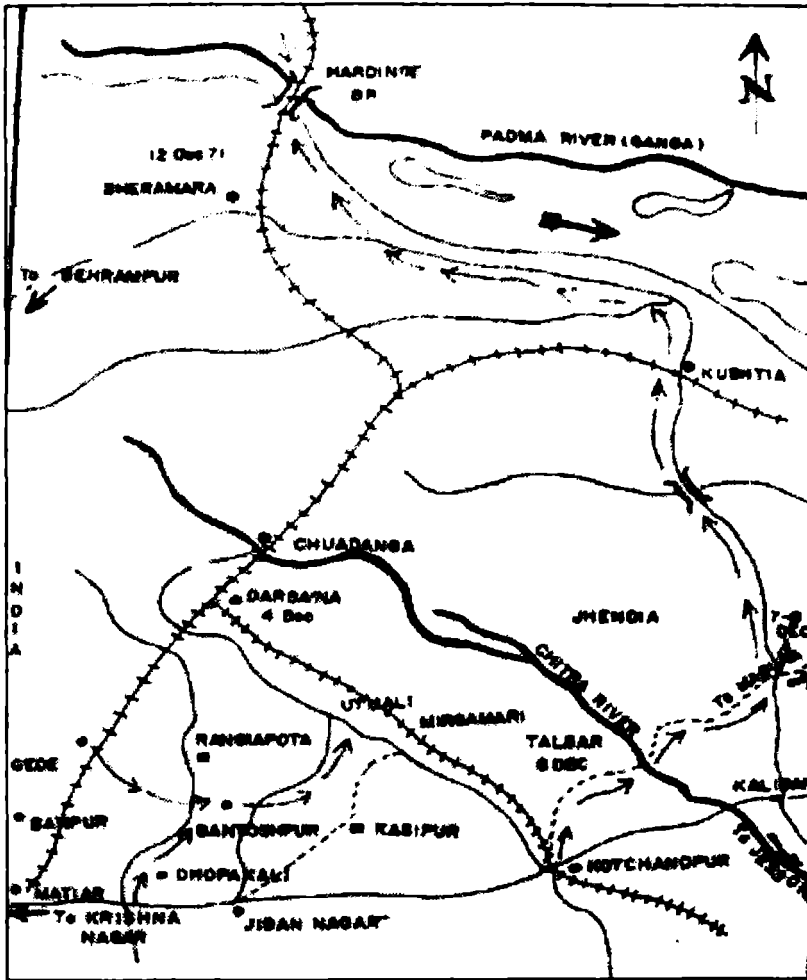
Lt Col C Venugopal decided to launch a first light attack on 4 December, with D Company capturing the forward line of bunkers in Phase 1, while in the next phase A Company was to capture area Club. Thereafter, B and C Companies were to attack Chandpur. Adequate artillery and tank fire had been arranged, while engineers were tasked to clear a vehicle safe lane for the fast move of tanks.

The Gorkhas left Uthali at 5 am and reached the firm base provided by 22 RAJPUT, with D Company launching the assault at 7 am. Despite heavy shelling by enemy artillery and firing by machine guns, the C O kept his cool and directed the leading troops to their objectives - who after a fierce hand-to-hand fight, in which Kukris were often used - captured the first line of bunkers after a march of 15 km. Thereafter, as per plan, A Company captured area Club after a bitter fight.

In the next phase Chandpur was captured, in which despite heavy enemy fire, Hav Bir Bahadur Pun (later Sub) rushed through a nullah and attacked the machine gun bunker of the enemy, silencing the enemy by lobbing two hand grenades - for which he was awarded M V C.

At this stage Venugopal suggested to the Brigade

INDO-PAK WAR—1971 EAST PAKISTAN



Commander that he would like to launch Brigade Phase 2 also, so that the enemy does not get an opportunity to consolidate his position, which was agreed to. Thus, instead of 2/9 GR, 5/1 GR by 1030 am had cleared all enemy opposition around Darsana.

Not resting on their laurels, the unit moved further on 5/6 December on man-pack basis towards Talsar-Ghaga, with supporting attacks of other units of the Brigade. From there, the unit advanced to secure Harding Bridge, where it successfully trapped the withdrawing Pakistani soldiers, inflicted heavy casualties and captured a huge amount of weapons and other war material.

The bravery displayed during the capture of Darsana by 5/1 GR was highly appreciated and admired by all commanders, which also achieved wide media coverage -

as it was a show of great courage and dash of the troops under their CO, Lt Col Venugopal. The unit was awarded Battle Honor 'Darsana', citation as written by Brig AH E Michigan read '5/1 GR showed commendable grit, courage and determination on part of all ranks'. He further stated that 'the battle was a fine example of a highly coordinated attack, there was close and complete co-ordination between the infantry, armour and engineers. It was a prestige objective but the enemy who held it very strongly was completely trounced'.

In these operations, the unit earned three M V Cs (Lt Col C Venugopal, Hav Bir Bahadur Pun and Rfn Pitaram Gurng- posthumous) and two Vr Cs (L Nk Man Bahadur Pun and Rfn Moti Kumar Newar). The Gorkhas casualties were 7 killed (1 Officer and 6 ORs) and 19 wounded (1 JCO and 18 OR).

2/9 GR Captures Jiban Nagar-Darsana-Daman

By November 1971, under the command of Lt Col P N Kacker, SC, VSM, the unit forming part of 62 Brigade of 4 Division, was moved to the border areas of East Pakistan. The first operation carried out by the unit was the capture of a Border Out Post at Dhopakali - a sleepy border town held by two platoons of Pakistani troops. Once the Pakistan Army had launched air strikes and tank raids into Indian territory, permission was given to the unit to carry out the raid. On 12 November, two companies were launched on this silent mission, after the post had been heavily pounded by our mortars and artillery. By 2 am on 13 November, the assaulting troops had put a 'stop' and occupied their positions, and though the enemy engaged them by artillery and machine gun fire, they raided the post and brought back useful information.

The next objective given to the unit was Jiban Nagar, an important communication centre close to the IB, on East Pakistan side. The enemy had constructed strong three tier defenses, laid a minefield, and had used railway lines and

sleepers for over head protection. His fire support was well coordinated and he was well stocked, logistically.

The brigade plan envisaged the creation of a firm base by 5 MARATHA L I. In Phase One, the 2/9 GR was to capture main enemy locality, while in Phase Two, another unit was to pass through and capture the depth localities. The firm base was ready by 1100 am, and the Gorkhas commenced their attack at 1 pm with C Company under Maj A P Dutta and D Company under Maj I K Verma. Soon, they came under enemy fire and decided to change the direction of attack, through a marsh, the least expected approach. With support from their M M Gs, the Gorkhas assaulted the enemy from the rear, achieved surprise and forced him to pull out. After bitter hand-to-hand fighting in which Kukris were extensively and fiercely used in the final stages, the companies had achieved their objectives by 4 pm. In this operation, the enemy casualties were 12 killed and 50 wounded. Own troops captured a Heavy Machine Gun, three L M Gs, 2 radio sets, 2 vehicles and large quantities of ammunition and rations. For displaying outstanding leadership, Maj A P Dutta was awarded Vr C. L Nk Om Bahadur, the leading section commander, who had single handedly destroyed the enemy bunker, was also awarded Vr C (posthumously).

After the attack, 2/9 GR was loaned to 41 Brigade for the capture of Darsana, a position strongly held by the enemy. In this attack, 5/1 GR was ordered to capture the first tier of defenses of Darsana by 10 am on 4 December, after which 2/9 GR was to capture the area of Distillery by 5 pm on 4 December. Following 5/1 GR's success, the unit commenced movement at 10 am, but came under heavy enemy fire in which four persons (including Maj S S Rawat, OC B Company and one more officer) were wounded. The attack was again led by C and D Companies, and while D Company faced comparatively lighter opposition, C Company faced much stronger enemy. Thus A Company under Maj N S Khattri, Battalion 2nd In Command, was sent to reinforce it. Finally, with the support of artillery

and tanks, the objectives were captured by 1 pm, and a link-up carried out with a road block established in the rear by 5 GAURDS. Having accomplished this task, the unit reverted to 62 Brigade and concentrated at Andalbaria.

On 5 December it was tasked to send a company to link-up with 4 SIKH L I at Bazarpur, while rest of the troops concentrated at Kotcharadpur. The next opposition undertaken by 2/9 GR was the capture of Ghotachighati, a village located on a high ground surrounded by marshy ponds. Outflanking moves by vehicles and tanks around the enemy was not possible as the road running on the embankment was covered by the enemy with his machine guns, artillery and mortars.

The brigade plan envisaged the Gorkhas establishing a road block behind the enemy position, while 4 SIKH L I was to launch a frontal attack. The Gorkhas commenced their move at 9 am and after wading through waist deep marshes and cultivated fields, by 4 pm the leading elements had reached 600 m short of the road block site. When the enemy detected their move, they blew up the culvert and drew heavy fire on them. However, soon B and C Companies reached enemy's gun area at Iswarba and raided it. Though the enemy was able to withdraw his 105m guns, he left behind a large quantity of ammunition. As it was getting dark a 'road block' was established which had two enemy columns hitting it. Another enemy column was trapped by D Company, thus completely disorganizing the enemy battalion. The enemy suffered twenty killed and more than 40 wounded, and lost a large quantity of arms and ammunition to the Gorkhas. Kaligang was secured by 1 pm on 7 December, and by 2 pm, the advance was resumed towards Jhenida.

Kamarkahli, a village across the 1800 ft wide Madhumati River was the next objective of 2/9 GR. The bridge on the river was being held by the enemy in strength. By 9 December, 5 MARATHA L I had secured the home bank of the river, when the Gorkhas were tasked to move towards Kamarkahli-Kusumdi, which they did by 8 pm. After four

days of planning, the plan to capture Kamarkhali was formulated, in which the Gorkhas were asked to cross the river and advance towards Duman in the shield of tanks. The move commenced on 14 December and by 5 am on 15 December, the unit was across the river waiting eagerly for the PT 76 tanks to swim across and join them, which they did so by 6 am. Soon, the advance commenced at 7 am and having surprised the enemy, Duman was captured by 1 pm. The enemy reacted very violently and shelled the Gorkhas very heavily, but they held their ground. Throughout the Night of 15/16 December the Gorkhas attended to their wounded comrades which saved many lives. L Nk Om Bahadur of A Company showed exemplary courage in this action, for which he was awarded Vr C. By first light on 16 December, Col Kacker resumed advance, when at 1030h on 16 December he met an enemy opponent, a Lt Col of Pakistan's 9 Infantry Division on the road who had come to surrender his force to him.

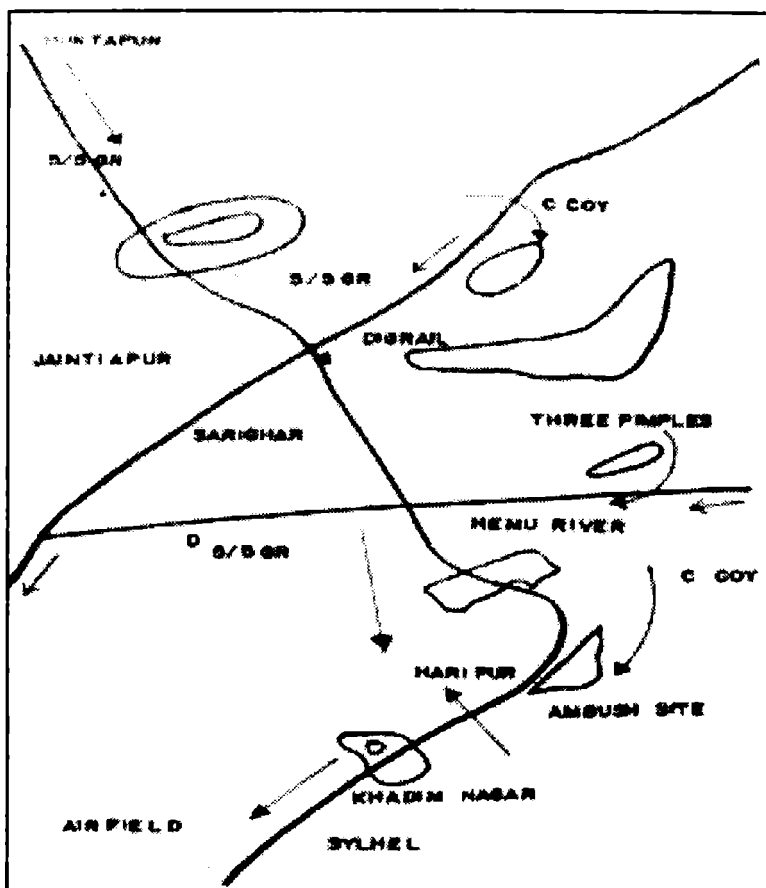
In these operations, the gallant Chhetris and Thakuris of 2/9 GR suffered 11 fatal and 32 non-fatal casualties. The unit won two Vr Cs (Maj A P Dutta and L NK Om Bahadur Chhetri) while two others were Mention-in-Dispatches (Lt Madan Gopal and Rfn Ek Bahadur)

For its decisive and bold action, the unit was awarded Battle Honor "Khamarkhali" and Theatre Honor "East Pakistan 1971".

After the ceasefire, the unit was asked to collect and transship the Pakistani P O Ws to camps in India, and returned to Kanpur in Feb 1972.

5/5 GR (FF) Advance on Road Dauki-Jaitiapur-Sylhet

Under the command of Lt Col V N Rao, the unit was ordered to advance along Muktapur-Sylhet axis from the North. The first few objectives raided and attacked by the unit were Digrail and Radhanagar close to the I B amongst the tea gardens were fortified and strongly defended by Pakistani regulars, mixed with Tochi Scouts.



Dighrai was an important bridge, the capture of which was considered vital for a smooth advance to Sylhet. A raid was launched by C Company under Maj Shambaiah with 2nd Lt Vilas Zendi, and the Gorkhas succeeded in capturing the bridge, intact. Though the enemy shelled the Gorkhas and launched three counter attacks, he could not recapture the bridge. The company's casualties were 4 fatal and 11 non-fatal, while six enemy soldiers were killed.

The attack on Radhanagar was launched by Maj S P Singh with 2nd Lt Devpal Singh as a Platoon Commander, while A Company under Maj D M Thapa provided a firm base. Despite stiff resistance and accurate fire of enemy's machine guns, the Gorkhas captured their objective. In this operation, both Maj S P Singh and Lt Devpal and ten more ORs were fatally wounded, while 22 suffered grave injuries. The enemy ran back from the post, leaving behind fourteen dead and fifteen wounded soldiers. For displaying exemplary courage, Lt Devpal was awarded Vr C, while Maj S P Singh won S M, both posthumously.

Next, the unit attacked Jaintiapur, a dominating hill feature on the road. In spite of the stiff resistance in this attack, all four companies were employed, two of which were under the command of Lt Col Rao. The feature was captured after a stiff hand-to-hand fighting, in which Sub Lal Bahadur Pun of A Company displayed bravery of a very high order, for which he was awarded Vr C. The unit suffered 5 fatal and 11 non-fatal casualties (including one officer), while the Pak troops left behind 15 dead bodies and 25 wounded soldiers.

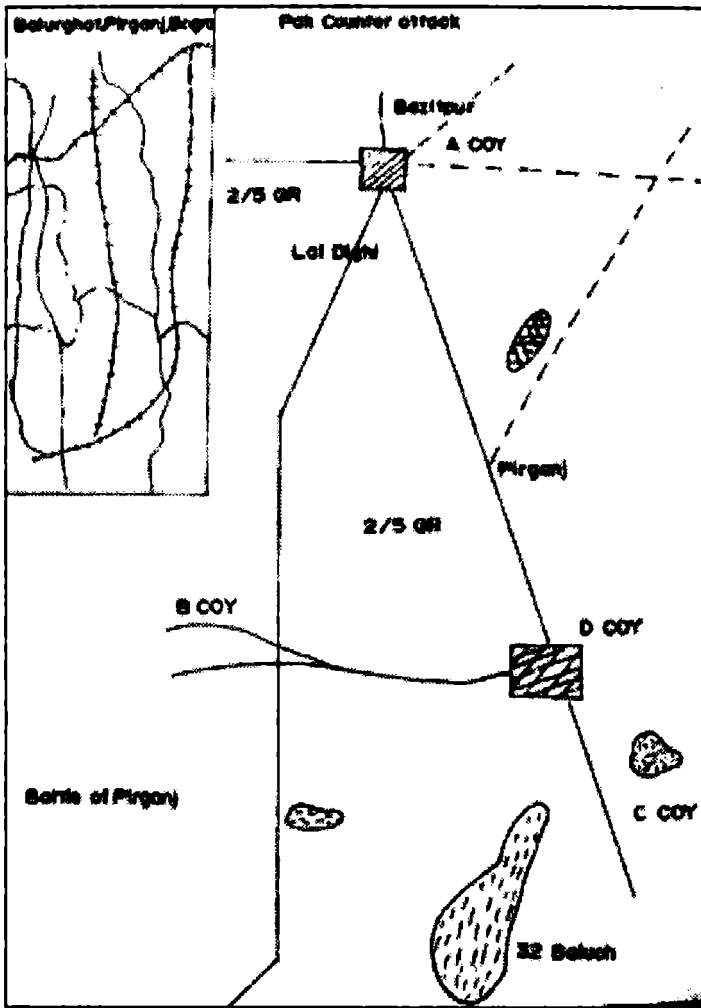
Subsequently, the battalion advanced and captured Haripur by 9 Dec, Hemu on 11 December and Chandghat by 13 December. In the attack on Chandghat, Hav Narain Singh Gurung and L Nk Bal Bahadur Gurung displayed bravery of a very high order, when with complete disregard of their own safety they assaulted the enemy positions. For their acts of gallantry, while Hav Narain Singh was awarded S M, L Nk Bal Bahadur Gurung earned a Vr C.

The last attack launched by the unit, was on Khadim Nagar, on the outskirts of Sylhet, on 15 December. During this operation, C Company captured a post of 31 Punjab as well as the 12 Azad Kashmir battalion of Pakistan Army, and even the battalion headquarters of 31 Punjab. On 16 December, it secured Radio Station and College area, and after that took surrender of Brig Iftekar Rana and his two units namely 31 Punjab and 30 Frontier Force. It finally linked-up with 4/5 GR (FF), at Sylhet, which had been heli-lifted there earlier and had carried out its task in spite of many difficulties.

In these operations the unit suffered 31 fatal (including three officers) and an equal number of non-fatal casualties. It won three Vr C and two S Ms, and was awarded theatre honor 'East Pakistan 1971'.

2/5 GR (FF) Attack on Bogra

Under the command of Lt Col F N Bilimoria, the unit, supported by tanks was ordered to advance from Balurghat

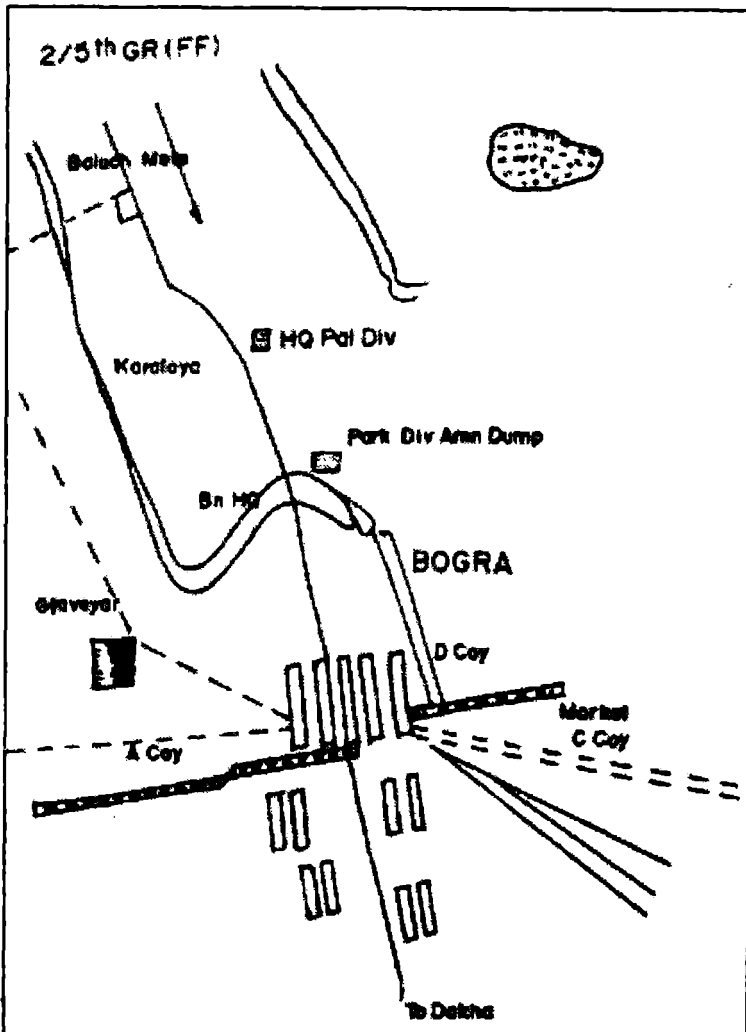


to Pirganj and then to Bogra. Commencing the operations, the first success was achieved when on Night 4/5 Dec, Maj Jagota with Sub Jung Bahadur Thapa encircled an enemy outpost near Phulbari, and took surrender of 21 Razakars near the bridge on Ichamati River, facilitating further advance.

The next task carried out by the unit was "establishment of a road block, cutting Pirganj and Bazipur". For this, the Gorkhas moved on 7 December with A (under Maj Jagota) and C (under Maj Bharpur) Companies, along with tanks of 69 Armed Regiment, and established the blocks. Soon, the enemy reacted and attacked the blocks, in which Maj Bharpur Singh and Lt Varughese were wounded, and five ORs were killed. As the situation became critical, Maj Itbar Singh and Capt J N Sud (M M G Platoon Commander) were moved up. It was found that two companies of enemy's

32 Baluch, supported by two machine guns, were planning to launch an attack to break the Block. Realizing the importance of silencing the enemy machine gun, Capt Sud attacked the position and though he was fatally wounded, he managed to neutralize it. In this clash, CO 32 Baluch was also killed, after which his troops lost heart and failed to press home their attack.

As the Pakistani troops started withdrawing, their Brigade Commander, Brig Tajumal Hussain Malik was ambushed by a patrol of the Gorkhas. Though he escaped through tall sarkanda grass, the patrol recovered his brief case containing operational papers and maps, which provided vital intelligence. The block at Pirjung resulted in serious disruption of the enemy's plans, and greatly facilitated further operations of the Indian Forces in this sector.



The next important task carried out by the Gorkhas was the attack on Bogra. By 5 am of 14 December, the unit had concentrated North of the town. After intense fighting involving clearance of built-up areas, B and C Companies had successfully cleared the enemy by 1 pm when suddenly a Pakistani Chaffee tank joined the battle. As its fire was causing much delay, L Nk Gobardhan Adhikari was directed to bring his RCL gun forward and destroy it. Despite heavy shelling and being wounded, the N C O kept his cool and engaged the tank thus blowing it into pieces, for which he was awarded Vr C (posthumously). By 4:45 pm, 2/5 GR (FF) had cleared all enemy opposition in Bogra too including the railway line - the task assigned to it. Thereafter, it took surrender of Pakistani troops, including that of the GOC 16 Pakistani Division.

During these operations, the unit suffered 15 fatal (including Capt Sud) and 14 non-fatal casualties. It was awarded two Vr C (Capt Sud and L NK Gobardhan Adhikari-both posthumously), and one OR was Mention-in-Dispatches.

1/11 GR Offensive to Buschi-Chandpur-Narayanganj 5-17 December 71

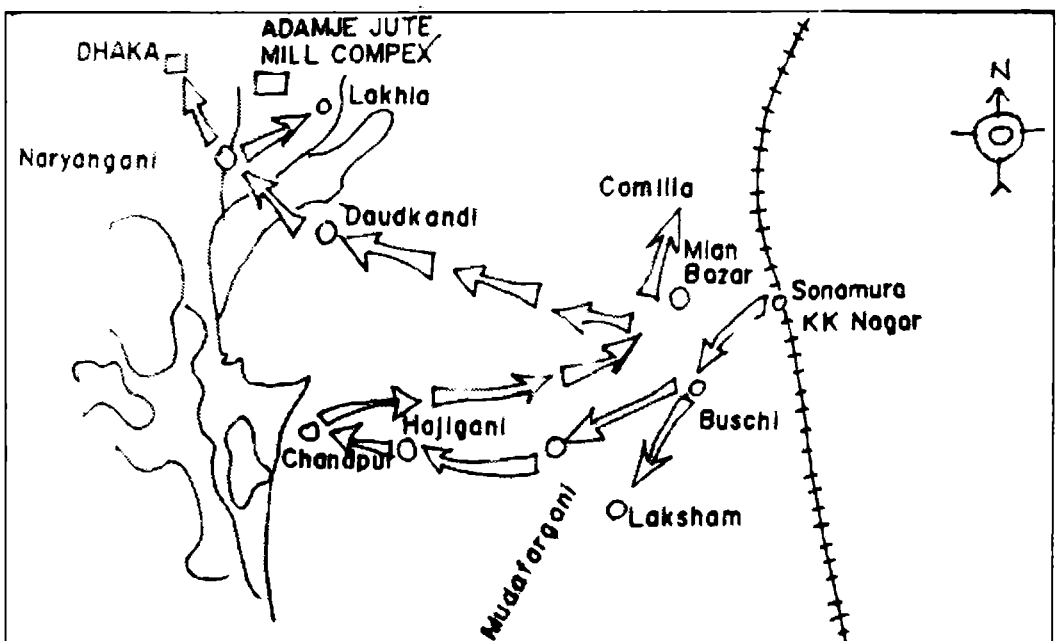
Under the command of Lt Col Shankaran Nair, by 3 December the Kirantis were fully prepared to take on the Pakistan Army deployed in Comila Sector. The first objective captured by the unit was Hilalnagar, where the enemy was isolated and encircled by an outflanking move, and forced to surrender. This operation planned and executed under the guidance of CO, Capt R V Ram showed great courage and presence of mind, and enabled the surrender of CO 25 Baluch with 5 more officers, 8 JCOs and 202 ORs, along with a large cache of weapons and ammunition.

On 5 December, the brigade was directed to capture Chandpur, for which the Gorkhas were asked to infiltrate and secure Mudafarganj along with the bridge which lay 35 km away on the tri-junction of the road in between Laksham-Chandpur-Datipur. The unit moved under the garb

garb of darkness, and a patrol led by Lt Sidhu reported the town held by the enemy. The attack was launched by Maj Shekhawat with his C Company at 8 am, and the first tier of enemy defenses were captured soon thereafter. The enemy carried out intense artillery and mortar fire, and his machine guns held up further progress. Hav Bir Bahadur Tamang crawled up to the machine gun, and though wounded, silenced it with hand grenades. Thereafter, the second phase of attack succeeded and the town was captured by 11 am. As the enemy withdrew, 2 in Mortar under Rfn Lal Dhoj Limbu engaged them, while Maj Shekhawat and his men used their Kukris boldly. At that moment GOC Pak 39 Division was traveling through the area and escaped being captured, however, the Gorkhas recovered vital documents from his jeep which greatly enhanced planning of further operations. The only fatal casualty of the unit so far was Rfn Sukra Bahadur Rai, while the enemy had lost 17 soldiers. A Company was tasked to secure the bridge and hold it at all costs, a task which the Gorkhas performed admirably.

The enemy reacted violently at the loss of the bridge held by Maj Badgel's A Company, and made repeated

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attempts to re-capture it, but failed. In their repeated attempts to capture the bridge, more than 30 Pakistani soldiers were killed in close proximity of the Gorkha trenches, but Maj Badgel and his men held their ground. In one attempt, the Pakistanis surprised a listening post and managed to take Nb Sub Bir Bikram Limbu and three ORs with them. During his interrogation, the J C O misled the enemy by giving false and exaggerated strength of our troops in the area, which greatly perturbed the Pakistanis. Later, the J C O and his party escaped from Laksham on 10 December, and rejoined the unit.

Following the progress of other units of the formation, on 8 December after a cross country speed march, Col Nair with his troops moved up to Hajiganj and occupied defenses - which was not known to Pakistani troops. Thus, their 23 Punjab was surprised when it hit the road block established by the Gorkhas and suffered heavy casualties before withdrawing to Chandpur. In this action, L Nk Kul Bahadur Rai and Rfn Jai Prasad Limbu showed great presence of mind and held their fire till the enemy had closed-in to 50 m.

On 10 December, the unit carried out search for the IAF Hunter aircraft which had been shot down in the area and recovered the body of Squadron Leader Sachdev. By now as the number of Pakistani prisoners had swelled, a Prisoner of War Camp was set-up for them and they were disarmed.

Next day, a gunboat carrying Pakistani soldiers flying a white flag was observed by D Company. After arranging covering fire, Maj Bhatia took out a patrol to meet them. When he had crossed an area of 75m, an enemy boat fired on his party in which one OR was killed. Subsequently our own artillery and tanks engaged the gunboat setting it ablaze, while the reserve platoon of Bhatia assaulted the enemy with Kukris. During this engagement, L Nk Bir Bahadur Gurung, the radio operator displayed a very high sense of devotion to duty, when he picked up a rifle and engaged the enemy, till he was fatally wounded.

By 12 December the brigade commenced advance to Daudhkandi. The Gorkhas moved on 13 December, and reached the other end by mid-day 14 December. As the ferry at Comilla was non-operative, the troops were lifted in helicopters, along with their meat-on-hoof rations, and by 15 Dec, A & D Companies had secured Lakhya River against heavy enemy fire, in which Patnaik showed commendable courage. At this stage the unit was told to infiltrate a company on 15 December and secure Lakshman Khola area by first light of 16 December. Against a well entrenched enemy, this task was carried out by A Company under Ram, and by mid-day on 16 Dec, the Gorkhas had concentrated at Jalkundi.

By now the unit was about 15 km from Dacca even as the ceasefire had been announced. However, the enemy was still occupying the buildings of Adamjee Jute Mills and engaged the Gorkhas, for which mopping up operations had to be undertaken.

During the ensuing operations, the unit had marched cross-country through riverine terrain, and secured its objectives well before time. It won one Vr C and two S Ms, while Lt Shukla and Sub Maj Phul Bahadur Rai were Mention-in-Dispatches. For leading his unit from the front and providing leadership of a very high calibre, Lt Col Nair, C O, was awarded V S M. The unit suffered 4 fatal and 11 non-fatal casualties during the war.

5/11 GR Advance towards Gobindganj-Ghoraghat-Saulkandi-Bogra

Under the command of Lt Col F T Dias, by early December 1971 the unit had concentrated at Charkari. Crossing Karatoya River on 7 December, the leading troops cleared minor oppositions and established road blocks north of Pirganj. During this skirmish, A and D Companies at Kumedpur were attacked by the enemy tanks and infantry, which was beaten back.

Following success of other troops, the unit moved in

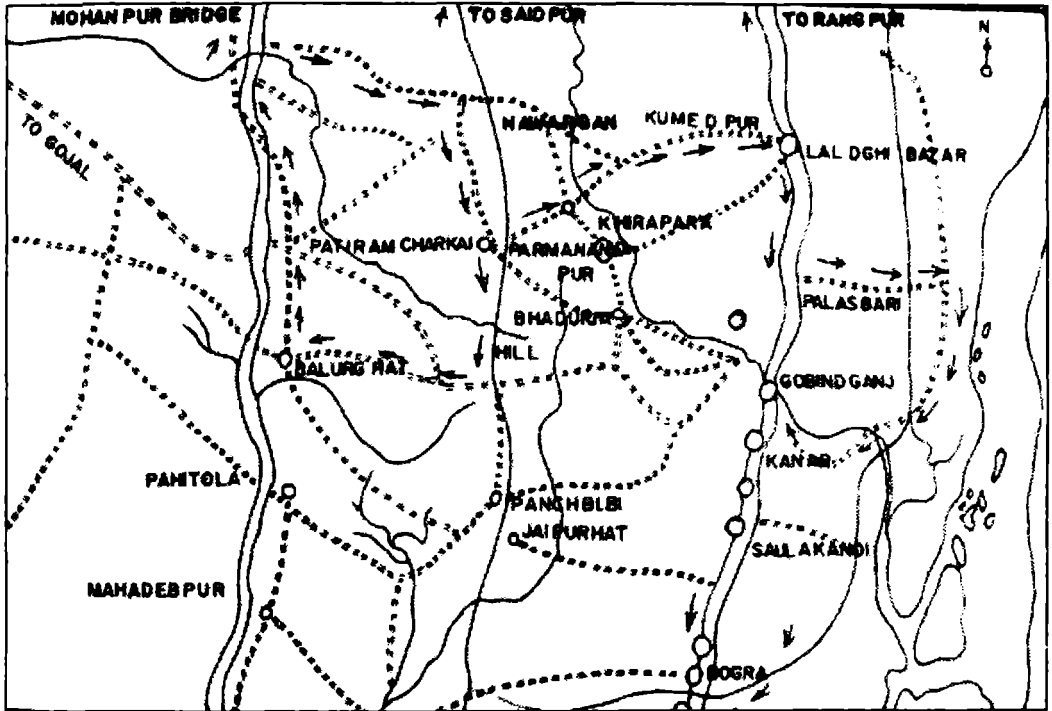
vehicles to Palasbari by 1 pm, along with tanks. The C O decided to capture Goraghat Bridge intact, which was being guarded by about 200 Pakistani soldiers in well-fortified positions, behind a minefield. While Maj Yadav was able to secure his objective of Chak Malik by 9 am without much difficulty, Maj Mamik faced the brunt of enemy fire. Indian Air Force bombarded the enemy, after which the attack by Mamik's company succeeded, and the enemy withdrew towards Monglishpur. Simultaneously the move by Maj Bhasin's C Company caught the enemy at Monglishpur and it was secured after five hours of stiff fighting. By the evening the Gorkhas were firmly entrenched at Karatoya River. In this operation, the unit suffered three fatal and three non-fatal casualties.

The next task assigned to the unit was the capture of Gobindganj by an outflanking move, from North and East. Along with tanks, the troops moved out at 2 pm on 11 Dec and crossed Karatoya River 8 kms north of Gobindganj, and then moved down. A road block was established at Shahpur with a Company and tanks, while the main column attacked Gobindgang. Though the enemy put up a stiff resistance, all the objectives had been successfully achieved by the Gorkhas by the morning. In this attack, Nk Nand Lal Limbu displayed exemplary courage by crawling on to an enemy machine gun and lobbing grenades to silence it. He was Mention-in-Dispatches. Just before sunset, Lt Babu Rao was sent out with a platoon mounted on tanks to link-up with A Company, when he was fired upon. Though wounded, he continued to lead his men and charged at the enemy and inflicted heavy casualties on them. In this operation, the unit suffered 4 fatal (including Lt Babu Rao) and 9 non-fatal casualties (including Capt P B Singh and Nb Sub Man Bahadur Rai). By next day, the unit was again ready for further advance.

Moving with tanks at 3 pm on 12 Dec, heavy fire was encountered from high banks of Ichhamati Nullah. Besides one company supported by machine guns on each side, the enemy was also holding Malahar in strength. While

Maj Yadav was ordered to infiltrate with his A Company through a gap 400 m further up across the Nala and establish a block in the rear, Mamik and Rai were to attack from front, while Pathania with tanks was to advance along the main axis to capture the bridge.

5/11 GR - 1971 INDO-PAK WAR



A patrol sent by Maj Yadav under 2nd Lt TS Bedi to select the site of the road block found a telephone line, and followed it to the Command Post of 32 Baluch. Though with only a few Gorkhas, Bedi showed great presence of mind and initiative, and promptly took the CO and O Group of the unit prisoner, completely disrupting their chain of command and control set-up. Though a fierce hand-to-hand fight ensued, Bedi called for artillery fire, which further broke the will of the enemy to fight. The Pakistanis losses read as 40 dead. Bedi was awarded S M for this gallant action.

In the meanwhile, the attack from the other direction went on as planned and the Gorkhas achieved their objectives even against stiff opposition. In this assault, Rfn Lal Bahadur Rai and Chakra Bahadur Limbu crawled up to an enemy

machine gun and neutralized it by hand grenades, for which they were Mention-in-Dispatches. Here, 57 Pakistani all ranks, including their Company Commander and his 2 I C were taken prisoners. The successes achieved here, together with Lt Bedi's patrol action, broke the will of the enemy to fight at Malahar and so by 12 noon Ichhamati Nala was well in the hands of the Gorkhas.

Not ones to rest on their laurels, the Gorkhas pressed on and soon Maj Pathania secured the bridge at Mahasthan (once the capital of the Pandras during the Maurya period) just before the enemy could blow it up. Nk Bir Bahadu Magar used his Kukris to cut the circuit wire, and recovered 500 kgs of explosive from the site.

By now, other troops, including 2/5 GR (FF) had concentrated for the brigade attack on Bogra. For this attack, 5/11 GR was commanded to clear enemy pockets up to the railway station, West of Bogra and the Bogra-Nator road. Under the CO, the Kirantis moved out on the early morning of 15 December and after a stiff fighting by A Company under Maj Yadav, secured their objective, for which Yadav was awarded Vr C. C Company also attacked the enemy at cross roads, where Maj Pathania was wounded. Nk Dhan Raj Rai, who was close by, rushed under fire and lobbed hand grenades to silence the machine gun, and then rushed back to evacuate Pathania. He was awarded S M. In the meanwhile Maj Mamik was sent to relieve the pressure on C Company. Though he faced stiff opposition, he managed to reach the cross roads. Thus, by last light, the unit had secured all its objectives.

The morning of 16 December saw fires in the city, as anticipating a defeat the enemy started destroying his stores and equipment. The Kirantis took the surrender of 9 officers, 15 JCOs and 145 OR of 8 Baluch, 32 Baluch and the 4 Frontier Force and 80 all ranks of the Engineers. The Pakistanis left behind 50 of their dead. The Gorkhas suffered 8 fatal (including Cap Pathania) and 21 non-fatal (including a J C O) casualties.

In this War, the Kirantis advanced 70 km and suffered a total of 19 fatal (including two officers) and 50 non – fatal casualties (including two officers, three JCOs). It won 3 Vr Cs and 3 S Ms, while three all ranks were Mention-in-Dispatches. For the gallant actions fought by all ranks, the unit was awarded Battle Honor ‘ Bogra ’ and Theatre Honor ‘East Pakistan 1971’.

1/3 GR–Amphibious Ops at Cox Bazar 13 December 71

Located at Fort Williams, Kolkata, under the command Lt Col Inder Singh, the unit was moved opposite Jessore Sector of East Pakistan to provide a firm base to the offensive operations. However, on 10 December it was de-inducted and grouped as Romeo Force under Brig S S Rai for an amphibious operation, with the intent to “cut off Pakistani troops withdrawing into Myanmar”, thereby securing Cox Bazar. Additional troops grouped with the Gorkhas were, a company of 11 BIHAR, a Light Battery of artillery and an Ambulance Platoon. Necessary logistics support was made available. With much difficulty in loading and getting on board a merchant vessel, Vishwa Vijay, the unit sailed from Kiddpore Dock along the high tide of Hoogly River.

After two days of sailing in the Bay of Bengal on the cramped cargo ship, the task force reached the rendezvous point with I N S Vikrant (the aircraft carrier which was to provide fire support and two Landing Ship Tankers, Ghariyal and Guldar). On Night 13/14 December, A & B Companies went over to I N S Ghariyal while the remainder of the unit mounted I N S Guldar. B echelons (logistic elements, including vehicles) remained on ship Vishwa Vijay.

Soon, naval divers were sent to detect mines off the shore, and after getting an all clear signal from them, Ghariyal reached the beach and B Company started dismounting using rope ladders. Unfortunately, in reality, the L S T had not reached the beach but had hit a sand bar, where water was still 9 ft deep, instead of waist deep. This caused confusion and resulted in the Gorkhas finding

themselves in deep and choppy waters. Despite rescue operations by naval divers, the company lost two men. This forced the Force Commander to call off further landings.

Next day, the C O sought permission to try landing a patrol, and Capt H S Klair and Lt K J Singh took a Platoon in naval motor boats at 1000 am on 14 December and landed safely on the beach. Thereafter, they mustered some civil transport and moved to Cox Bazaar, about 80 km to the East. By 7 pm they found that the enemy had already withdrawn. Quickly, they organized a flotilla of civil crafts, which transshipped the rest of the Force to Cox Bazar, less heavy weapons, by mid night.

Though the Amphibious Operation did not succeed in establishing a beachhead or capturing the enemy, it came under much praise, as it showed the willingness and capacity of the Gorkha soldiers to take on hazardous tasks, without any reservations.

THE GORKHA'S ON THE WESTERN FRONT-1971 INDO-PAK WAR

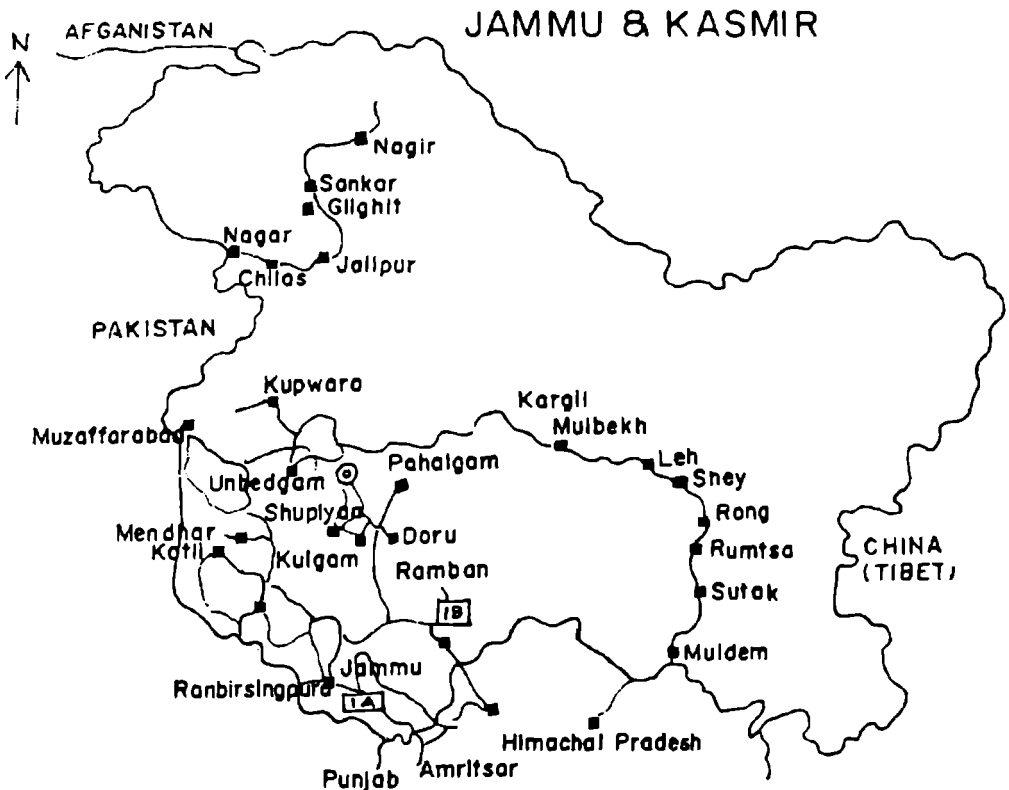
1/5 GR (FF) Captures Sehjra Bulge

Situated opposite Ferozepore Sector, a portion of the Bulge falls on Indian side of the Sutlej River. Village Sehjra is located on high escarpment. Both sides of the river bed had tall and thick sarkanda grass, providing good cover but impeding mobility. The area was void of any tacks. In the 1965 War, Pakistan had concentrated its armour and posed a threat to Harike Bridge. Hence, during the 1971 War it was planned to capture the Pakistani Post defending the Sehjra salient. The mission was assigned by Maj Gen F L Freemantle - himself a 5 GR officer - to 1/5 GR (FF) under the command of Lt Col S C Gupta.

The enemy was known to be holding the bulge with four companies, one from 25 Baluch, one of Rangers and two of Mujahideens. He was supported by a platoon of 6 ponder anti tank guns and infantry mortars. Considering

the enemy strength, Col Gupta planned a circuitous approach march to achieve surprise, and attack the depth positions, first.

Moving under the cover of darkness on Night 4/5 December, the assaulting troops left the forming-up-position and achieved complete surprise. They attacked the depth locality with Kukris, as the village woke with the sound of the Gorkhas shouting, "Ayo Gorkhali", a war cry which made the enemy lose their nerves. The Pakistanis ran back leaving a large quantity of arms and ammunition and their wounded soldiers. By 6 am, Sehjra Bulge had been captured by the Gorkhas. In this operation, Maj S K Puri showed leadership of an exceptional high order.



Upset at the loss of the tactically vital Bulge, on 12 December, the enemy infiltrated a company to re-occupy his defenses, but was repulsed successfully and driven back. The enemy suffered 30 fatal casualties, while 3 Pakistani soldiers were taken prisoners.

The Gorkhas suffered 6 fatal (including one J C O) and

and 19 non-fatal casualties. The enemy losses were 30 dead and 64 Prisoners. He also left behind a large quantity of arms, ammunition and stores.

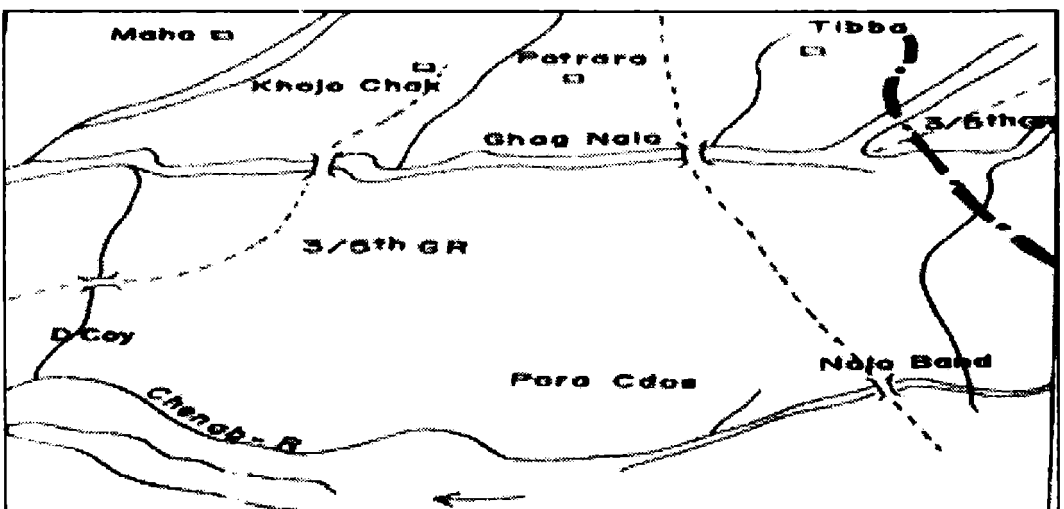
Besides being awarded Battle Honor 'Sehbra' and Theatre Honor 'Punjab 1971', the Gorkhas won 4 Vr Cs (Lt Col S C Gupta, Majs S K Puri and K S Gill and Hav Dal Bahadur Gurung) and 5 S Ms. One OR was also Mentioned-in-Dispatches.

3/5 GR (FF) Operations in Chicken's Neck

Located between two main branches of the Chenab River in J & K, this Pakistani enclave runs South of the Chhamb-Akhnoor Axis (locally called Bhatiar). Full of sarkanda, it had very limited tracks, a few villages and was crisscrossed by a number of streams. The ferry site at Saidpur was important, as it provided an avenue for the enemy to infiltrate and threaten Jammu and Akhnur areas. It was known to be held by at least a company of regulars supported by Mujahids.

The attack was planned in two phases. In Phase 1, 7/11 GR was to establish a firm base on the I B and Para Commandos were to secure the Ferry. In Phase 2, 3/5 GR (FF) along with tanks, was to infiltrate and take over the Ferry and capture enemy positions.

ROUTE TAKEN BY 3/5TH G.R. (F.F.); CHICKEN'S NECK



Commencing operations on 5 December, the Gorkhas moved across Chandra Bhaga River and then the I B after getting an OK signal from 7/11 GR. The Ferry was captured by 7 December, as planned, with secrecy. Soon, an enemy convoy was ambushed and three soldiers of 36 Punjab of Pakistan Army were captured, after which the enemy became very active. An attack on Khaje Wala was planned for noon of 6 December. On 7 December, the Gorkhas assisted in beating back an attack on the Para Commandos and by early morning 8 December, they secured Gondal Ferry. After this, the sector was handed over to another unit, and the Gorkhas moved to another area for further operations.

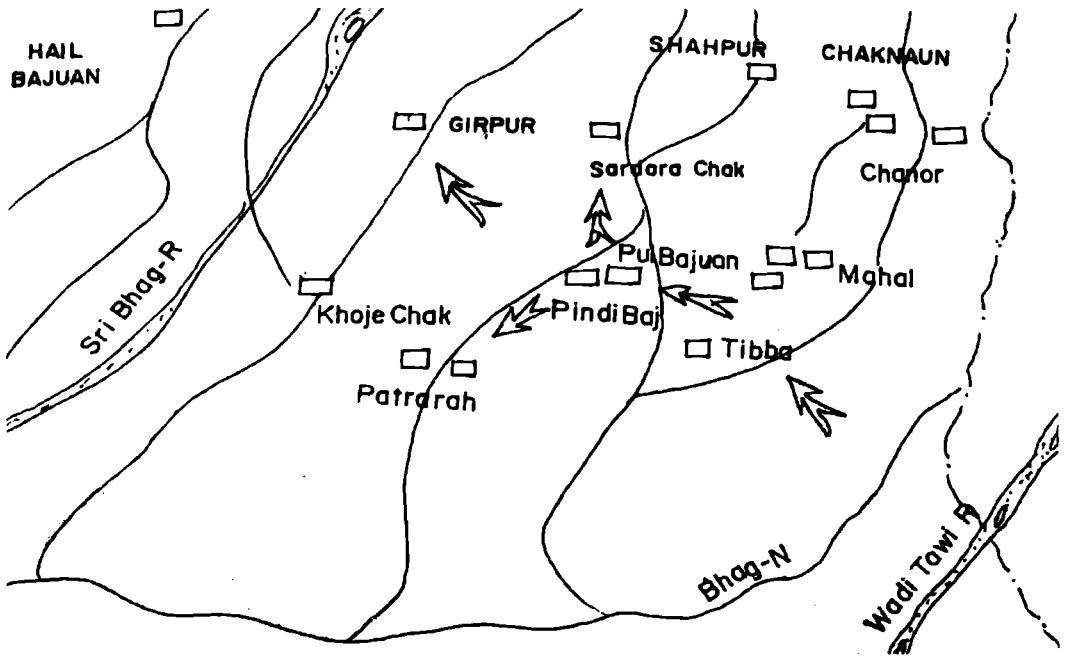
During this operation, the unit captured some documents, one machine gun and two jeeps. Capt Y S Tyagi was Mentioned-in-Dispatches for accurately navigating the Battalion through sarkanda. In this operation, the unit suffered two fatal and two non-fatal casualties.

7/11 GR Operations in Chicken's Neck

Under the command of Lt Col K P Mehta, the unit was tasked to capture Nullah bend in Phase 1 of the Brigade attack, while 3/5 GR(FF) with a Para Commando group was to go for Saidpur Ferry and other depth objectives. Commencing the move during the Night of 5 December through tall elephant grass, and continuously strafed by Pak Air Force and engaged by the enemy artillery, C Company under Maj Bhanot secured Nala Bend by 11 pm. The village of Tibba Mahal, the next objective was undertaken by A Company under Maj G S Pitta, and captured against heavy opposition.

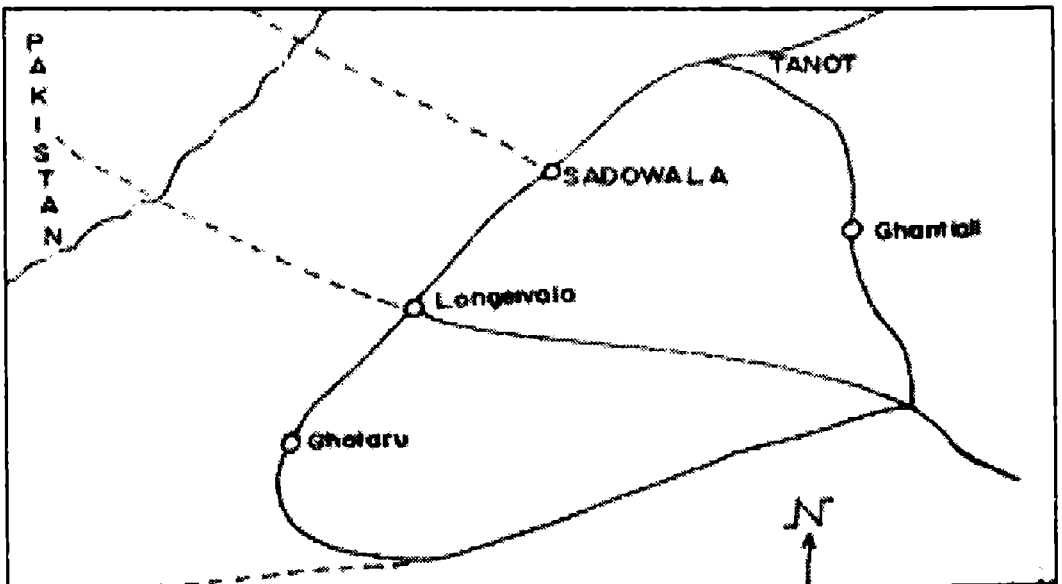
While 3/5 GR (FF) was carrying out its operations, 7/11 GR followed up 11 GUARDS and captured Pul Bajuan by 3 am, with A and C Companies. Thereafter, D Company captured Pindi Bajauan and C Company captured Girpur and Sardara Chak. In this operation, 2nd Lt N K Pradhan showed a great sense of military acumen by detecting and avoiding a minefield and attacking the enemy from the flank, killing six Pakistani soldiers.

7/11 GR - CHICKEN NECK—1971 INDO-PAK WAR



On 7 December, Rfn Dhan Bahadur Rai, while manning a machine gun in anti-aircraft role at Pul Bajuan, though being strafed by the attacking enemy MIG 19 fighter, engaged it with his machine gun and shot it out of the sky. He was awarded Vr C.

By 9 December, though the battle in the neighboring Chhamb Sector was raging, the unit was moved to that sector and was successful in occupying deep defenses.



For its operations in 'Chicken Neck' area, the unit was awarded Theatre Honor, "Jammu and Kashmir-1971".

6/5 GR (FF) in Desert Sector—Attack on Kunewala Dar

Under the command of Lt Col Kanti Swarup, the unit moved to the Rajasthan Sector. After the enemy attack on Longewala had been beaten back and heavy losses inflicted on Pakistani troops, the Gorkhas were asked to capture Kunewala Dar on its flank. Though heavily shelled, the attack was launched on 8 December and the feature secured by 9 December. In this attack, Sub Meghadhan Gurung showed exemplary heroism, for which he was awarded Vr C. Thereafter, Maj Hamal exploited further. Lt Joshi's patrol sighted a few enemy vehicles and engaged them; an action in which L Nk Krishna Bahadur Thapa won a well deserved S M.

The unit suffered only one fatal and one non-fatal casualty, and won one Vr C and two S Ms.

3/11 GR in Fazilka Sector

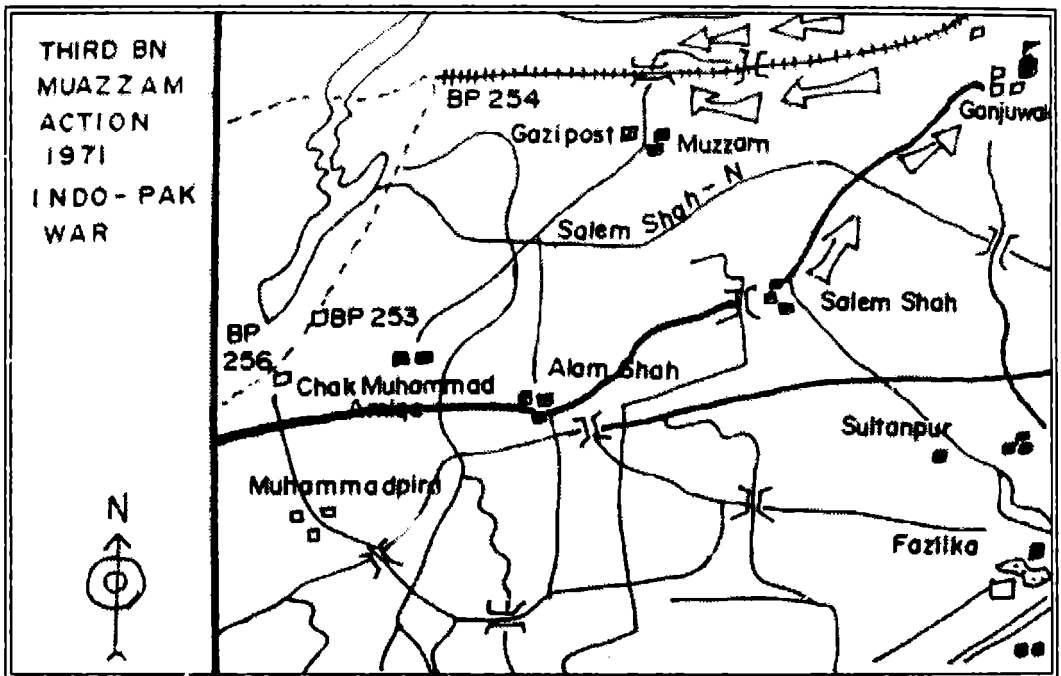
Under the command of Lt Col B S Aswal, by 7 December the unit occupied defenses around villages and also on Sabuna drain. On one occasion an enemy patrol came close to the mortar position under Sub Dal Bahadur Rai, and was suitably challenged. By now the brigade plan to recapture our Posts at Muazzam, Gazi and K Post lost earlier to Pakistani troops was finalized, and the unit was commanded to carry out these attacks.

On 11 December, the first objective was attacked by B Company under Maj Mall. Though fire support of tanks and artillery was provided, but Mall preferred to launch a silent attack from the rear and captured the post, with only 4 fatal and 9 non-fatal casualties. By now the troops were ready to attack Gazi, when orders were received to concentrate back to Fazilka.

The task of capturing Gazi was now given to another unit, but the Gorkhas were asked to patrol the area. While

on a patrol, 2nd Lt Satinder Singh located an enemy M M G in a field. By a flash action Maj Mall and L Nk Ram Bahadur Limbu captured the gun and also brought its crew back as prisoners.

Though a cease-fire had come into effect on 17 December, the Pakistani troops had infiltrated and occupied the village of Nathlke located on the Indian side of the I B, and secured the ferry on Sutlej River next to it. Thus, in Jan 1972, the Gorkhas were tasked to recapture Nathlke and the ferry.



During reconnaissance, Maj Mall brought a ferryman, who later acted as a guide through the tall sarkanda and the broken ground, as there was no regular track to follow. While Capt Mantravadi established a stronghold behind the post, Maj Mall attacked and captured it by midnight. Two Pakistanis were taken prisoners and a large quantity of stores recovered from the post. In the meanwhile Capt Mantravadi spotted the enemy trying to escape on three boats, which were engaged effectively by the artillery. During the day, the enemy tried to re-capture the post, but was driven back by hand-to-hand combat, in which Hav Bir Bahadur Rai used his Kukris effectively. Besides the two officers, in this operation Nb Sub Gopal Pradhan,

Rfn Durga Prasad Limbu, L Nk Ratna Bahadur Rai and Nk Budh Singh Limbu displayed a great sense of patriotism and bravery. In the ensuing operation, a total of 16 Pakistani soldiers were killed, 24 were wounded and 12 were taken prisoners. Large number of arms and ammunition, rations and stores and other equipment was also recovered from the post.

In this war, the Kirantis suffered 9 fatal and 20 non-fatal casualties. L Nk Ratna Bahadur Rai was awarded, S M.

3/3 GR Captures Chumbian

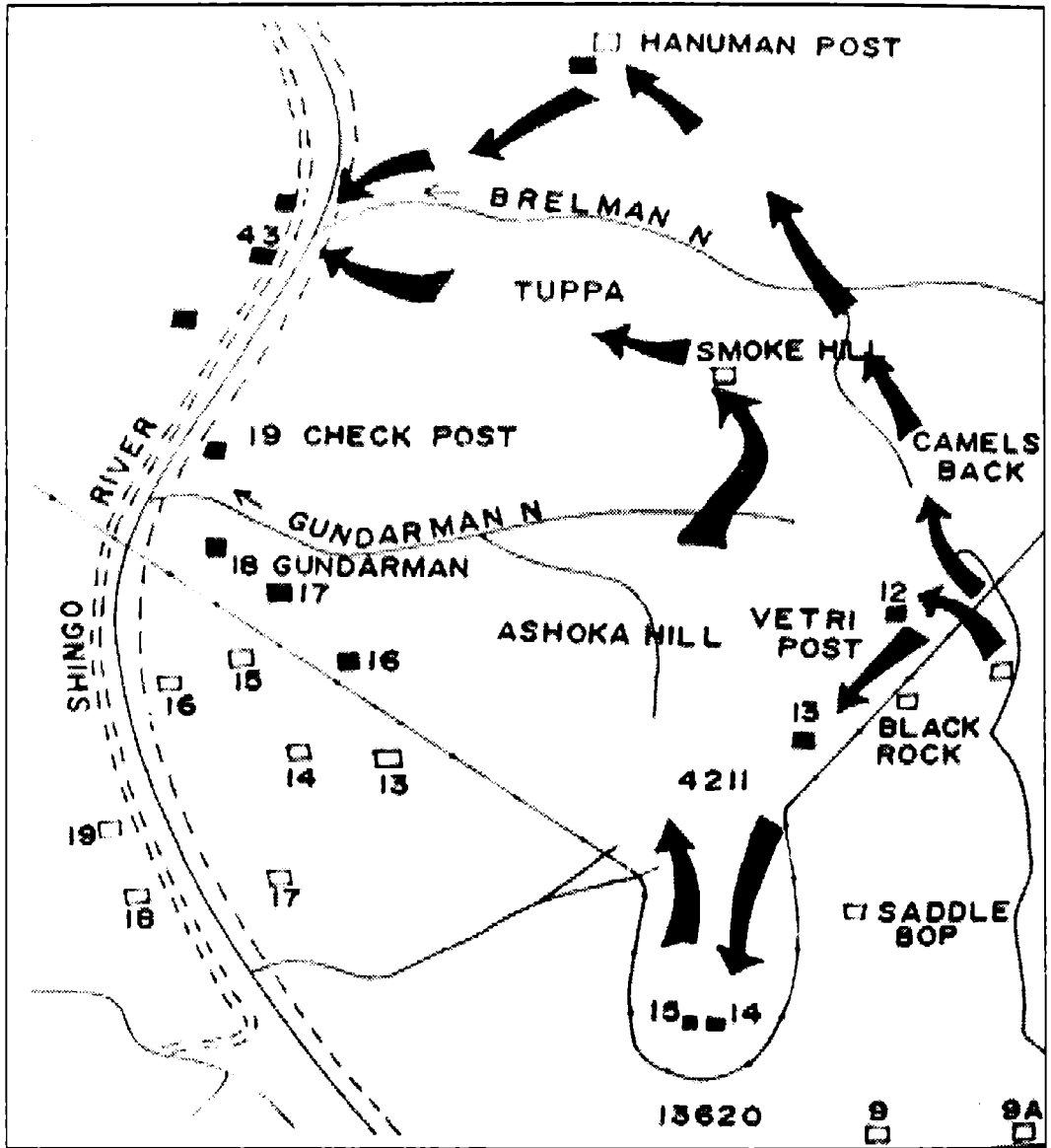
The battalion under the command of Lt Col V R Dani, SC, had occupied defenses in a vital area of J & K, where it was assigned to carry out aggressive patrolling cum raids across the IB with an aim to keep the enemy in check. The first important task completed was a joint patrol along with the engineers to successfully reach 250 m close to the enemy defenses. With stealth, the patrol entered the enemy minefield, disarmed a mine and brought it back, for investigation.

Thereafter, D Company captured Pakistani outpost of Chumbian, and held it against two enemy attacks, forcing him to withdraw leaving behind its dead. After one such attack, Rfn Sher Bahadur Thapa moved up to a dead Pakistani soldier and brought his rifle and documents for verification.

2/11 GR captures Pt 13,620 in Kargil

Under the command of Lt Col R B. Gurung, the unit was fully acclimatized and geared up for securing the Pakistani posts along the Kargil-Leh Road, including Pt 13,620. As the Pakistani posts was on higher grounds, in some cases the muzzles of their machine guns could be seen from lower positions. However, full details of the terrain could not be ascertained even after a helicopter reconnaissance. Thus, Col Gurung decided to occupy a

vantage point on a flank, from where all commanders could be shown their objectives. Hence, on 13 October 1971, Capt Pathania with Commando Platoon occupied a feature Hill, on the flank.



The brigade plan involved a four battalion operation, including 5/3 GR. 2/11 GR was assigned to 'secure South bank of Shingo River', by capturing Posts 7 to 10 by D plus 4, and Pt 13,620, the most dominating feature in the area, the next day. Adequate artillery, heavy mortar and air support had been arranged for the attacks, which were being carried out on man-pack basis. The rugged high altitude mountains in bitter cold winter experienced

temperatures between -16 to -20 °C. The enemy was known to have regular Scouts troops, with supporting weapons deployed in bunkers and nests. He had good logistic support and had even mined his positions. The Pakistanis were anticipating the attacks and were expected to give a tough fight.

The operation commenced on 6 December. D Company under Maj Mann and Capt Uppal were left behind at Posts 13 to 17 for capturing enemy Post 18 and other posts, after the signal was given. One platoon was deployed at Hill to provide flank protection and engage the enemy at Camels Back. Maj Dhillon with unit mortars and Capt Pathania with his commandos were behind Brown Hill, while Maj Sethi (Artillery) was located close by.

The first post to be attacked was Post 12, which was reportedly held by a platoon. Being on a narrow ledge, it could only be approached from the rear, on which not more than one person could walk at a time. Its defense works were in echelons, with sheer cliffs on three sides and a minefield in front. It had mutual support from other Pak posts, including Pt 13,620. After our artillery had fired on the post, the machine guns took over to guide A Company to their objective. Soon after Nb Sub C B Tamang had secured the forming up position, A Company under Maj Vetri Nathan launched the attack around midnight, on a pitch dark night. The enemy opened up with all his weapons when the assaulting troops were still 100 m from their objective, and the Gorkhas rushed to silence them with Kukris. While Maj Vetri silenced a M M G, Hav Karna Bahadur Rai saw an enemy soldier trying to bayonet him. Enraged, he killed the Pakistani with his Kukris and saved his company commander's life. L Nk Babu Lal Rai crawled up to an enemy L M G bunker and silenced it by lobbing hand grenades. Both Babu Ram and Karma Bahadur were Mention-in-Dispatches.

As the troops moved up from one rock to another, Rfn Dal Bahadur Limbu displayed great courage when though badly wounded; he still crawled up to the enemy post and

silenced an M M G by lobbing grenades. Vetri then attacked the enemy R C L gun and then moved up to attack the L M G, when he was fatally wounded. For displaying leadership of a very high order, Maj Vetri was awarded Vr C.

By now A Company had been fighting in bitter cold for more than three hours, yet the enemy held the top portion of the post. As the sun was due to come out soon, Col Gurung, who had been watching the attack from close by, ordered C Company under Maj M Sabherwal with Capt T L Fernandes to reinforce A Company. He also ordered Capt Pathani to attack the enemy M M G at Black Rock, which had been interfering with the assault. As he moved, Pathani was wounded by a shell which killed Rfn Mahendra Limbu next to him, but this young officer refused to be evacuated and carried out the task assigned. Though C O's normally do not go into actual attack, seeing the grim situation, Col Gurung personally moved up with Maj Sabherwal to motivate his troops.

On Post 12, as grim hand-to-hand fighting was going on, Col Gurung noticed one M M G from a flank holding up the assault. He mustered a few soldiers behind him and led a charge on the enemy bunker, neutralizing the gun. During the assault of C Company, Hav Purba Lepcha found a machine gun from the Top holding his men. So, he crawled up the rocks and went up to the rear, and lobbed two hand grenades to silence it. When even this did not have the desired effect, he rushed into the bunker with his Kukris, and neutralized the crew. This greatly helped to end the enemy resistance on Post 12. For his brave act, Hav Lepcha was awarded Vr C. By 9 am, all enemy resistance had seized, and the troops started consolidating their victory. It was learnt that the enemy had strength of two platoons at Post 12. Out of these, fourteen dead bodies were counted on the post and two Pakistanis were taken prisoners, while nearly 30 abandoned their positions.

Soon, the enemy shelled Post 12 and engaged it with machine gun fire from other posts. Their fire was countered

by our artillery, mortars and machine guns. Undaunted, the Gorkhas attacked Black Rock, only 350 m away, at 3.30 pm in broad day light, and secured it against light opposition, as the enemy ran back to Pt 13,620, in panic. As the attack on Post 12 and Black Rock took time, Col Gurung modified his plan, and deployed 'stops' to intercept any reinforcements to Pt 13,620 and deny the use of water point to that post. On 8 December, besides air strikes on Post 13,620, JAK Militia occupied Laila post under the brigade's orders, which completely bottled up the enemy.

On 9 December, J&K Militia reported that the enemy seemed to be thinning out from Pt 13,620, which was earlier reported to be held by a company with M M Gs. Col Gurung immediately ordered Capt Fernandes with C Company to secure it, which he did with admirable speed against light opposition. Simultaneously, 2nd Lt Sandhu attacked Camel's Back, and secured it by 2 pm, against stiff resistance. Soon, Maj Mann with D Company also joined the unit at Pt 13,620 on 10 December, and was briefed to capture Gunderman. However, as by now the enemy resistance at long Shingo axis had increased, the brigade ordered Col Gurung to take his unit on a wide hook to capture the bridge at Bielargo.

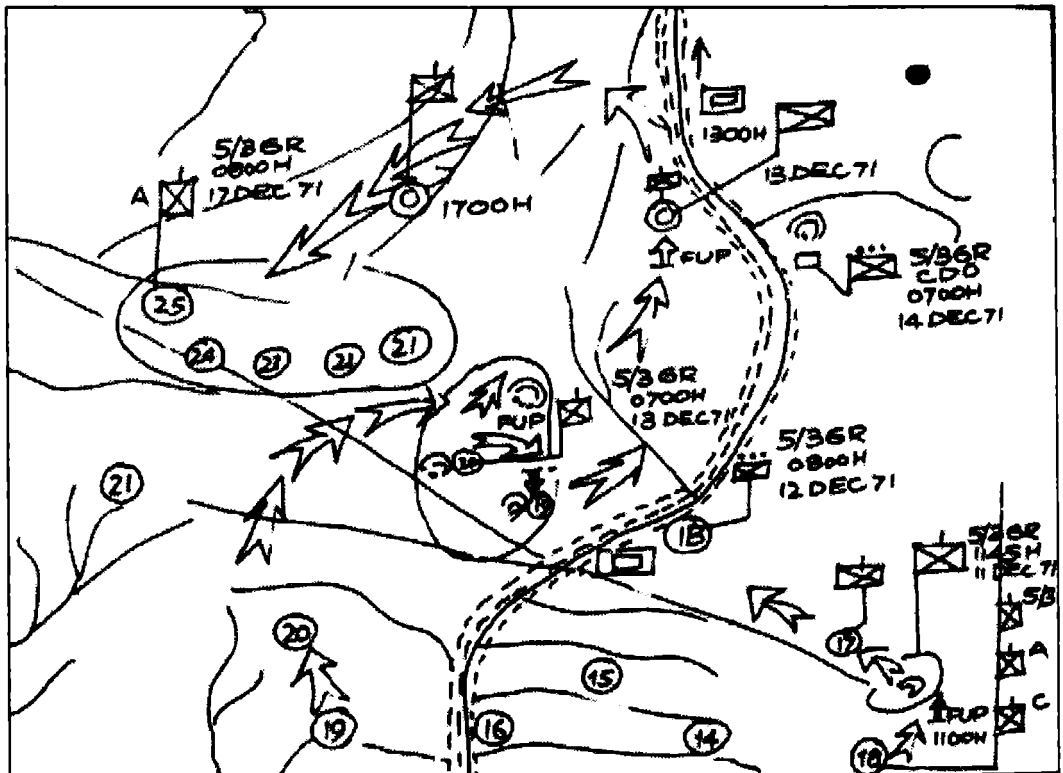
Thus, by 16 December the Kirantis concentrated at Batalik and after traversing over very difficult terrain in extreme cold reached the general area of the bridge by afternoon of 18 December. They were all set for launching the attack when the news of the cease-fire and orders to stop all operations was received.

In this operation, the Kirantis suffered 9 fatal (including Maj Vetri Nathan) and 30 non-fatal casualties (including 3 officers). For carrying out all assigned tasks against heavy odds, the Gorkhas were awarded Battle Honor 'Shingo River Valley' and Theatre Honor 'Jammu and Kashmir 1971'. It was to the credit of the physical fitness of all ranks that not one frost bite case occurred. The unit earned 8 Vr Cs (including Col R B Gurung) and 7 S Ms, while seven others were Mention-in-Dispatches.

5/3 GR Captures Pak Posts in Shingo Valley (Kargil-Ladakh)

Performing a defensive role under the Leh Division, the unit was specially nominated and moved to Kargil, for an offensive task. Commanded by Lt Col D S Jaggi, the unit moved to Kargil, where it initially came under severe enemy shelling, causing some casualties and disruption. However, due to good drills and battle procedures, order was soon restored.

Since 1947-48 Operations, Pakistan had by deceit occupied certain heights along Road Srinagar-Zoji La-Kargil-Leh, severely hindering the life line of Indian troops as well as the civil population of Ladakh. Pakistan often used these posts for bringing down accurate artillery and machine gun fire on the convoys. Though some of these Pakistani posts had been captured during the earlier two Wars in 1947/48 and in 1965, but as per UN resolutions, these had been handed back to Pakistan. Thus, during the 1971 war, it was decided to eliminate this threat, for which 1/11 GR, 18 PUNJAB, 3/3 GR and 7 GUARDS were assembled near Kargil. The posts were numbered for identification,



situated on sheer escarpments running along River Shingo, at altitudes of 3,300 m to 4,500m. They were also well defended by Pakistani troops with strong defense works including mines, bunkers and sangars (stone breast work). The enemy had artillery and mortar support, had sited his machine guns well, and stocked the posts for a long fight.

Though the area experienced very low temperatures during the night (upto -10*), Col Jaggi decided that in order to achieve complete surprise, the Gorkhas should attack by night. He planned the operation in two phases. In Phase 1, capture Posts 16, 17 and 18 on the eastern bank of River Shingo with two companies. In Phase 2, employ Company of 18 PUNJAB to capture Posts 19, 20, Lakkar, MMG Post and Post 43 in depth on the western bank. Simultaneously, as per the brigade plan, 18 PUNJAB, less a company, was to attack the main feature of Hathi Matha and its supporting Posts 21 and 22.

On 11 December, after relieving company of 1/11 GR, Col Jaggi decided to launch A Company under Maj Bhanot to capture Post 16 by 1600 hr, after which C Company under Maj Seth was to capture Post 17. B Company under Maj Bhag Singh was to then capture Post 18. To avoid detection, A Company moved up hugging the hill side along a goat track, and surprised the enemy from an un-expected direction. Using Kukris they charged yelling 'Ayo Gorkhali' which un-nerved the enemy who quickly surrendered, and by 1130 hr the objective had been accomplished. Though the enemy became more active, C Company pressed home their attack and once again made a Kukri assault and had captured Post 17 by 1730 hr. Disheartened, the enemy abandoned Post 18, which was soon secured by Sub Mukta Bahadur. By now, a number enemy Vickers Machine Guns, rifles, ammunition and rations had been captured. The enemy belonging to Karakoram Scouts, had lost 5 dead and 5 wounded, while the Gorkha casualties were one OR fatal and 3 nonfatal.

For clearing eastern bank, a task force consisting of B

Company of 3/3 GR and Company of 18 PUNJAB had been formed, under the unit second-in-command, Maj Shanker Prasad, which was under the overall command of Lt Col Jaggi. Recce on 12 December indicated that the enemy had by now reinforced Posts Lakkar, 19, 20 and 43. The best route of attack would be for both columns to move out at night initially together, separate 500 m short of the objective, and then launch simultaneous but coordinated attacks from different directions.

Accordingly, the Task Force moved at 4 pm of 12 December, when at 11 pm Maj Bhag Singh realized that he had hit the enemy minefield. Cautioning his men to avoid mines by stepping on stones, he reached the RV and waited for the Punjabis, who got delayed. Thus, rather than attacking in the daylight, Maj Shankar Prasad ordered B Company to attack Post 20, when suddenly an enemy M M G opened up from a flank. Subsequently, hand-to-hand fighting took place in which the Gorkhas wielded the Kukris freely, killing many and taking 1 J C O and 12 OR as prisoners. Having surprised the enemy, Maj Bhag Singh left a platoon and attacked the remaining posts. By first light of 13 December, Posts Lakkar, 19 and 20 had been secured. Later, when the company of 18 PUNJAB caught up, it was employed to capture Post 43.

However, enemy at Sagar Matha was still holding out. This posed a serious threat to the road to Leh for which the G O C ordered 5/3 GR to capture it. Col Jaggi deputed A Company under Maj Bhanot to capture it at night. Moving along the directions indicated by our artillery and in the cover of M M G fire, the Gorkhas hugged the slippery and razor edge slopes of the feature, attacking the lower portion of the post first which also turned out to be enemy's Company HQ. They began silently by using Kukris but by then the enemy was fully alert. In the fire-fight, Hav Man Bahadur Thapa was critically wounded, but continued to lead the assault till he succumbed to his wounds. His brave act inspired 2nd Lt S N Handa, who despite heavy enemy fire, continued to press the assault with Kukris, finally

capturing the objective by 8 am. After this, the enemy abandoned Posts 21 to 24. Thus, 5/3 GR cleared all enemy positions from both banks of River Shingo, ensuring security of the road to Leh.

In this operation, the battalion won two Vr Cs (Maj V Bhanot and Rfn Prem Bahadur Thapa-posthumous), one S M (Rfn Deo Bahadur Chhetri), while two all ranks were Mention-in-Dispatches. The unit suffered 12 fatal and 29 non-fatal casualties (including one J C O). The Gorkhas killed 12 enemy soldiers and took 15 Pakistanis (including one J C O) prisoners. They also captured 42 weapons and 22 other items of equipment.

ADVANCE OF 3/1 GR



For showing great grit and determination against heavy odds and stiff resistance, 5/3 GR was awarded Battle Honor "Shingo" (Ladakh).

3/1 GR in Shakargarh Sector

Forming part of 91 Brigade of 54 Infantry Division, the battalion was well trained for attacks by 'deep thrust' moves on foot. Under the command of Lt Col R P Singh (later Maj Gen), it moved to Jammu region during late November/early December 1971. Crossing the I B on night 4/5 December, it secured Chak Bhura by first light of 5 Dec, in which Hav Som Bahadur Thapa, though wounded by a machine gun burst, continued to lead his platoon boldly (he was awarded Vr C - posthumously) while Nk Mek Parsad Pun won a S M (posthumous) for charging the enemy.

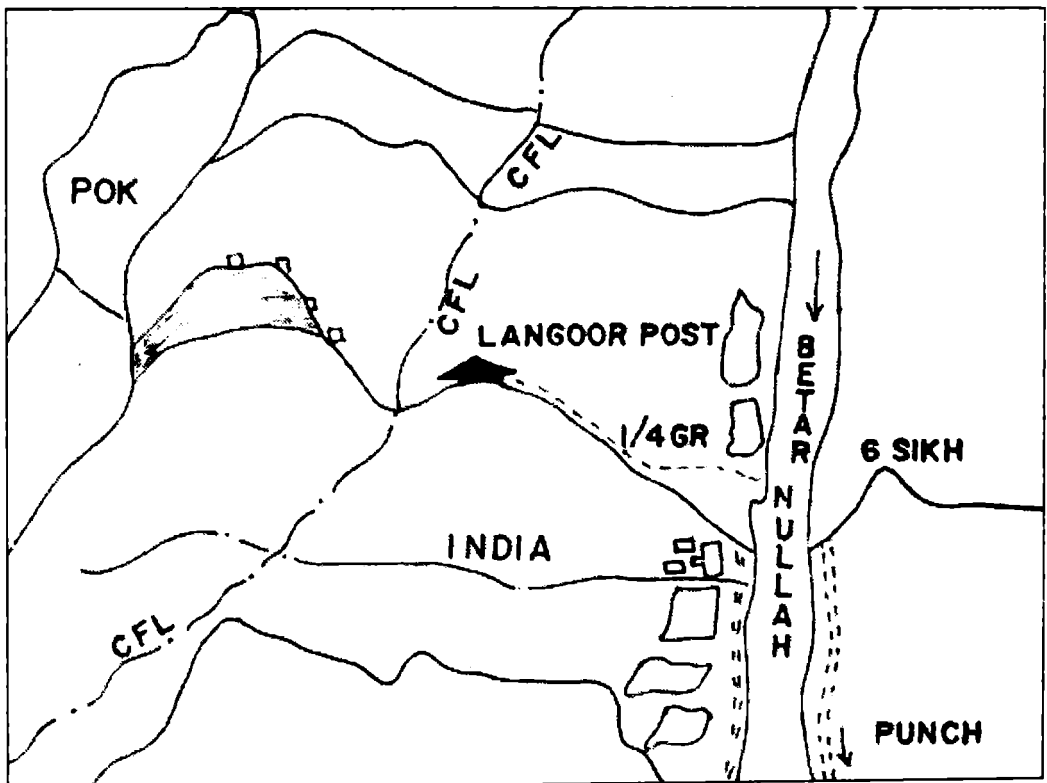
Despite interference by enemy artillery and aircrafts, by 8 December it had moved forward to Bari, when orders were received to attack Chakra and Dhelra. The leading elements moved forward to Uplian and secured Barakhaniyan by 9 December, when a well coordinated enemy minefield of approximately 800 m was encountered ahead of the main defenses on Supwal Ditch. The next two days were spent on recce and planning, and on the night intervening 13/14 December, an attack was launched across the minefield as part of the brigade plan which included 6 KUMAON and 3 GARHWAL. The aim was to provide a firm base for the forthcoming Divisional attack. The Gorkhas secured Jumbiyan Manhasan and moved up to Pandori, expanding towards Jarwal. Later, the unit was asked to take over defenses from 6 KUMAON in area Chanda-Ramri, a job which was completed during the Night of 16 December.

During these operations, the unit suffered 36 casualties (1 JCO and 7 ORs killed and 2 Officers and 25 ORs wounded). By the end of the war on 17 December, the offensive-defense strategy of India in western theatre had resulted in securing 7,800 sq km of Pakistani territory, while Pakistan was able to capture only 130 sq km of Indian territory, in Chhamb and Husainiwala.

1/4 GR in Defense of Punch Sector

Under the command of Lt Col V Madan, the unit was occupying a series of defended localities guarding the Cease Fire Line in Gulpur Sector, across the Betar Nullah. One such isolated locality (1200 yds away on a low spur) was Langoor, on a ridge line running down from a dominating Pak post towards the river. The Pakistani post was less than 100 yds away was on a dominating feature and had tactical domination, both by observation and fire. The feature being 20 yds wide and 50 yds long was originally held as a platoon protective patrol, with plans to pull it back if attacked, after delaying the enemy. But once the Gorkhas took over the post, it was realized that if attacked, then reinforcement or withdrawal at night would be difficult as the enemy would certainly put 'stops' on the only foot track leading from the rear along a spur. Hence, the post required to be strengthened to fight it out for at least one night, on its own.

SKETCH SHOWING LANGOOR POST-1/4 GR 1971 WAR



Accordingly it was occupied by B Company less a Platoon under Maj K K Prodhan. 2nd Lt M S Chauhan was commanding a platoon, all troops were well motivated. Patrols and minefields were fully coordinated, with fire of M M G, artillery and mortars. One post of 6 SIKH, a neighboring unit deployed across the river at 1400 yds distance, was also ordered to provide support to the defenses, to the extent possible. In all discussions, the senior commanders were quite reconciled about the post being vacated after delaying the enemy, as being isolated it had no chance of holding out against a superior enemy force.

On 3 December 1971 evening, protective patrols were already out on the likely enemy approaches, when the news of the attacks by Pakistani Air Force on airfields of India, including Srinagar was received. Soon, enemy movement was detected by the patrols in the nullahs coming from Pakistani side towards the post, and all troops were alerted. After intense artillery and mortar fire (which was not very effective due to ground configuration) and heavy machine gun and rocket fire from close range, following war cry of 'Allah-o-Akbar, Yah Ali Kar Madad' (All Mighty-Help), the enemy launched the first assault at 8 pm. On this approach L Nk Narjang Gurung (son of ex Sub Maj & Honorary Capt Sarabjit Gurung, IDSM) was leading a small patrol as a Listening Post. When confronted by the enemy, Narjang engaged them from successive fall-back positions, inflicted heavy casualties, delaying and disrupting enemy's assault echelons. When in danger of being surrounded, he sent his two ORs back; and single handedly manned his L M G. He continued to engage the enemy, till he was fatally wounded. 2nd Lt Chauhan showed exemplary leadership by moving from trench to trench and motivating his men to engage the enemy with accurate fire. Engaged by our own mortars and machine gun fire - more importantly by hand grenades and effective fire control of the Gorkhas even though one Pakistani J C O and three enemy soldiers were able to close-up to the minefield - by 10 pm the Pakistani attack had been beaten back.

The enemy suffered heavy casualties and made a second attempt at 3 am on 4 December to recapture it, but by 5-30 am he was again beaten back successfully. Day light revealed that the enemy had suffered heavy casualties and had withdrawn leaving behind some weapons and a large quantity of medical stores.

The attack was witnessed by a number of senior commanders, who allowed the C O to take a decision to withdraw the post if found untenable. But on visiting Langoor on 4 December, Lt Col Madan and Sub Maj Bir Bahadur Thapa found the morale of the troops very high, hence there was no question of vacating it. The body of L Nk Narjang Gurung was found with multiple wounds, about 15 yds from the Post. The enemy made another attempt to recapture the post on Night 4/5 December, but it was crushed.

In this operation, for showing bravery of a very high order, Maj Prodhan, 2nd Lt Chauhan and L Nk Narjang Gurung were awarded Vr Cs (the NCO posthumously), while Nb Sub Yudh Bir Kanwar was Mention-in-Dispatches.

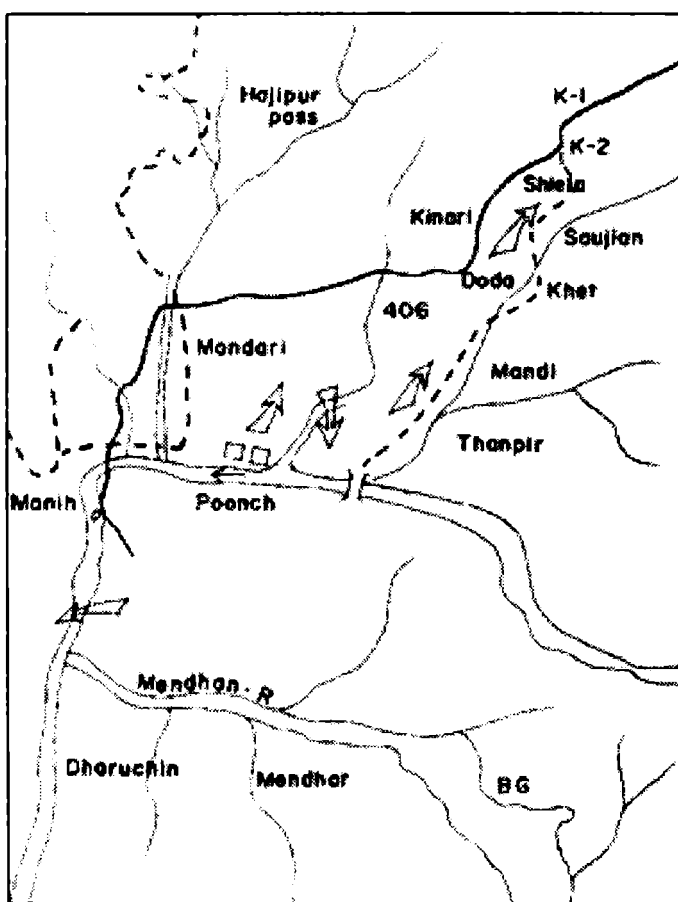
Eventually, the unit took bold initiatives and occupied dominating features close to the Cease Fire Line and held them against Pakistani fire. For leading the unit with courage and boldness and showing leadership of a very high order, Lt Col Madan was awarded V S M.

The unit suffered a total of six fatal and nine non-fatal casualties, and proved to all that determined Gorkhas can hold their head high even against all tactical odds.

Describing the above action, Lt Gen K P Candeth, then Army Commander, Western Command, writes '1/4 GR held the area north of the River Punch and one of their posts called Langoor was surrounded on three sides by Pakistani posts. Its capture would give Pakistan control of all area East of Betar Nala and North of Punch River. During the night of 3/4 December, 3rd Pakistan Occupied Kashmir battalion was forming up below to post to attack it when a Gorkha patrol came upon it. Immediately, heavy artillery and mortar fire were brought to bear on the Pakistan

Occupied Kashmir battalion, completely disrupting their plans and causing them losses. The Battalion however reformed and attacked at 8 pm. The enemy managed to creep up to within 15 yards but the accurate small arms and artillery fire took its toll and they were repulsed. The 3rd Pakistan Occupied Kashmir battalion, made another attack at 3 am on 4 December 7, but were beaten back once more. On the night of 4/5 December they tried again, using two fresh companies, but by that stage the Pakistanis had lost heart for their attack. The Pakistanis had had enough, for after that they left 1/4 GR alone.¹

SIXTH BATTALION: 1971 INDO-PAK WAR



6/11 GR in Defense of Punch

With Lt Col P Chowdhuri as the Commanding Officer, the unit occupied defenses deep in this sector and acted as a vital reserve.

It carried out preparations for a number of contingency

tasks throughout the sector, and launched a number of patrols along the Cease Fire Line. During a patrol clash, Rfn Sahal Singh Lama was wounded in the abdomen, but was rescued by effective fire provided by a neighboring post.

2/4 GR in Defense of Jammu

Under the command of Lt Col P K Gupta, the Gorkhas were deployed in a defensive position, guarding enemy's approaches to the vital areas of Jammu Sector. Once the threat had receded by early Dec 1971, the unit now reinforced with tanks and anti tank guided missiles, was re-deployed to guard the flanks of a strike formation. Accordingly, offensive patrolling was carried out to keep the enemy on the run, across River Basantar. One such patrol was launched by C Company on 5 Dec under Sub Bir Shamsheer Gurung to dominate enemy post at Abdullah.

Having reached close to the post, the J C O observed that the enemy was in the process of establishing a new post well inside Indian territory. On getting this information, Capt Pant moved up and joined Sub Gurung, and launched a day light attack to drive the enemy back to their post at Bhoi Brahmanan. Though under intense enemy fire and being encircled from the rear, Capt Pant engaged the enemy and forced him to pull back. Two patrols were also sent during the Night 13/14 December, well behind the enemy lines, which forced the enemy on the defensive.

While the cease fire had come into effect on 17 December, Pakistani troops continued to violate it by sending patrols across the Cease Fire Line (later designated as the Line of Control). In one such clash with the Gorkha patrol on 29 Jan 1972, while fighting to break an ambush, L Nk Lalkaji Gurung of B Company charged and beheaded an enemy soldier, though he himself was fatally wounded.

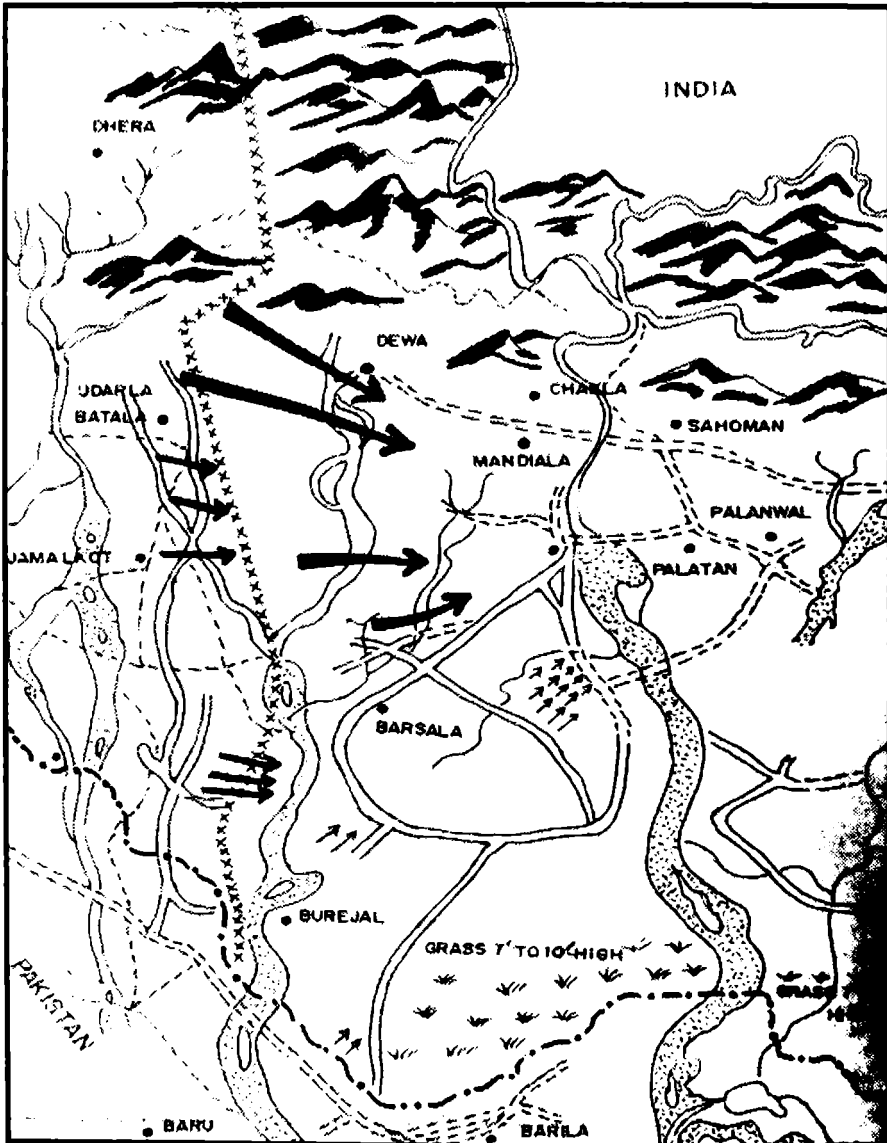
6/8 GR in Defense of Arnia (Jammu Sector)

Under the command of Lt Col J N Khanna, the unit

carried out a defensive task by guarding approaches from Sialkot in to Jammu Sector. On 13 December, during an ambush with the enemy, Rfn Kumar Gurung was seriously wounded, but 2nd Lt W J B Sturgeon risked his life and brought him out through the minefield to our own post at Devigarh. The Pakistanis made two attempts to capture the post, but had to beat a hasty retreat thanks to the Gorkhas and the B S F jawans.

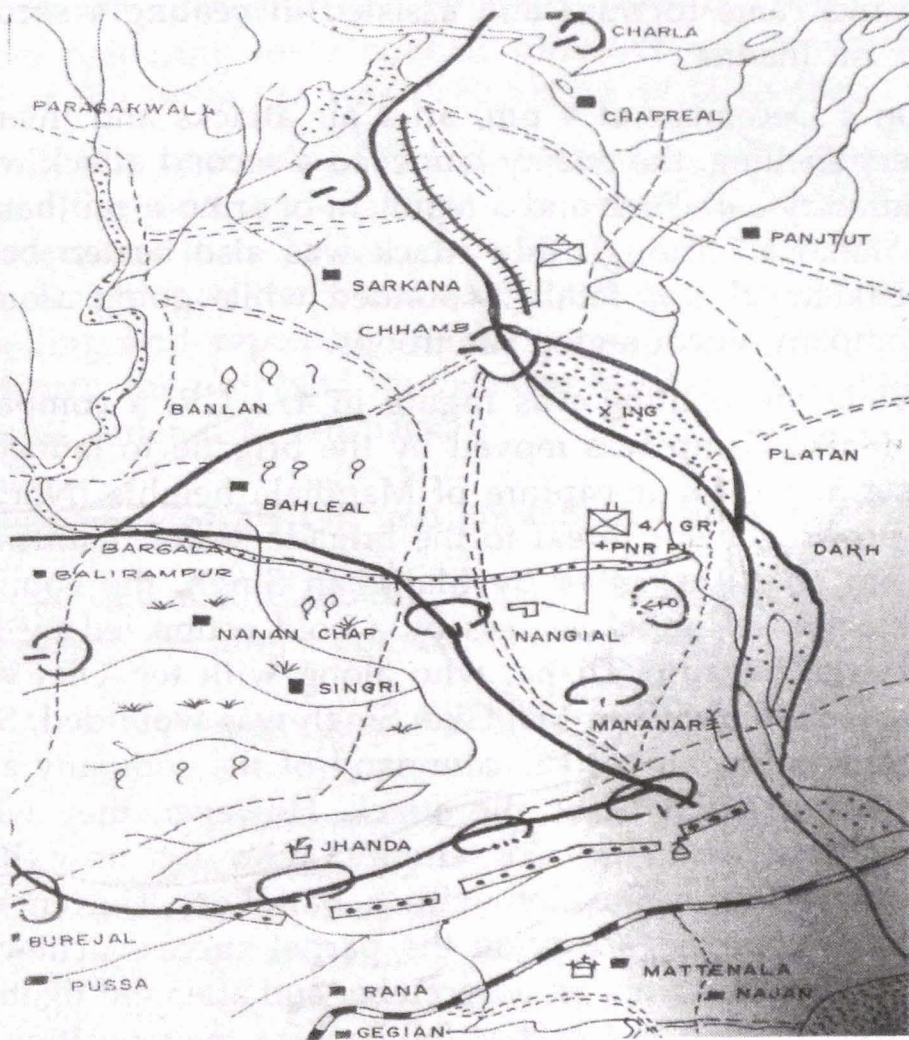
In these operations, the total casualties suffered by the unit were two, including one fatal.

SKETCH SHOWING AREA OF OPERATIONS-CHHAMB SECTOR 1071



4/1 GR in Chhamb

Forming part of 191 Brigade, the Gorkhas under the command of Lt Col B D Bhawal had been moved across Munawar Tawi on 1 December 1971, and were occupying the southern portion of the defended sector, which was to be a firm base for an offensive. Companies were deployed at Jhanda, Manawar, Nangial, Malke Camp and Kalampur (with a platoon at Mangotian) guarding the likely approaches of the enemy. Two sections had also been deployed at the B S F posts on the Cease Fire Line. Though anti tank missiles were deployed, the promised troop of tanks was yet to join.



On the evening of 3 December 1971, the Gorkha patrols were out when Pakistan launched a surprise offensive aimed at crossing Manawar Tawi and capturing Akhnur. Preceded

by intense artillery shelling, Pakistani infantry and armour attacked all across the brigade sector, and after facing stiff resistance the enemy was able to capture Mandiala heights in the North.

In 4/1 GR sector, though Jhanda and Manawar companies came under attack on Night 3/4 December, the enemy attacks were beaten back by the alert Gorkhas. However, the enemy infiltrated around the platoon at Mangotian and then attacked it, forcing them to fall back on Jhanda (on 4 Dec they were ordered to re-occupy the position, which they succeeded to do so). On 4 December, our tanks came forward and assisted in beating a second attack on Jhanda.

On 4 December at 4 pm, after air attacks and intense artillery shelling, the enemy launched a second attack with two infantry battalions and a regiment of armour on Jhanda and Manawar. Though this attack was also beaten back, Maj Lakhanpal was fatally wounded while going around his company, encouraging his troops.

While the fighting was raging in 4/1 GR, a company from Malke Camp was moved by the brigade to launch a counter attack for re-capture of Mandiala heights (North), as it posed a major threat to the brigade sector. Launched at 8 pm on 4 December by Maj Gian Singh, the counter attack achieved initial success by a bold action led by Nb Sub Harka Bahadur Thapa, who along with ten ORs was fatally wounded. When Maj Gian Singh was wounded, Sub Dal Bahadur took over the command of the company and continued to press home the attack. However, they were not able to dislodge the enemy, who by now had strengthened their position with a battalion. The enemy launched a counter attack on the partial success achieved by the Gorkhas at 5 am on 5 December and after stiff fighting dislodged them. The Gorkhas fell back to their position at Malke Camp.²

All this time the Pakistani Air Force and artillery continued to shell defenses throughout 5 and 6 December,

resulting in the loss of communication with the platoon at Mangotian. As Pusha platoon locality held by a platoon under 2nd Lt P S Khati (later Maj Gen) covered the approach to Mandiala, it came under repeated enemy attacks. However, young Khati held the position till 6 December against heavy odds, when he was ordered to pull back, as part of the brigade's withdrawal plan. For showing devotion to duty, boldness and grit of a high order, Khati was awarded Vr C. The platoon at Mangotian was out of communication and a number of its men were taken prisoners by Pakistan.

Thereafter, the unit was ordered to fall back East of Munawar Tawi and occupy fresh defenses. The Gorkhas were preparing for a counter offensive but it was called off as the cease fire was declared on 17 December.

In this operation, 4/1 GR suffered 12 killed (including one officer and one J C O) and 24 wounded (including two officers and three JCOs), while 28 all ranks were taken P O Ws. It is to their credit that despite heavy air attacks, artillery shelling and repeated attacks by Pakistani armour and infantry, the unit held its defenses against heavy odds, till it was ordered to fall back.

Operations of 3/4 GR and 5/8 GR in Chhamb 1971

Lt Gen K P Candeth, Army Cdr, Western Command, describes the above operations as under:

“The enemy rested and regrouped on the 7th and at 1:30 am on 8 December they mounted an attack on the forward companies of 7 KUMAON, 5/8 GR, 9 JAT and 10 GARHWAL RIFLES, but these attacks made no headway. At 6.45 am Pakistan's 42 Punjab attacked 10 GARHWAL and 9 JAT at Raipur Crossing and managed to get a lodgment on our side but by 7:30 am a counter attack had removed the lodgment.

The enemy spent 8th and 9th in a series of probing attacks all along the front to discover our weak spots but they were all repulsed by our artillery fire. By

10th they appeared to have made up their mind to effect a crossing over the Darh and Raipur ferries, for at 1 am on the night of 9/10 December they put in two battalion attacks on the Jat positions covering the ferries, but failed. Then on early morning at 6:30 am on 10th December, 10 Baluch supported by two squadrons of 28 CAV put in another attack on the Jats which succeeded in overrunning the forward company. A Company of 5/8 GR immediately put in a counter attack, which though unsuccessful in throwing them off the position, scattered the Pakistani infantry following behind the assaulting troops of tanks. The enemy then began to enlarge the bridge head. By persistent attacks they managed to dislodge a depth company of 9 JAT, another company overlooking the Raipur ferry, and two platoons of 10 GARHWALS. Thus by the afternoon they had established a bridge head about 4000 yds wide and 1000 yds deep.

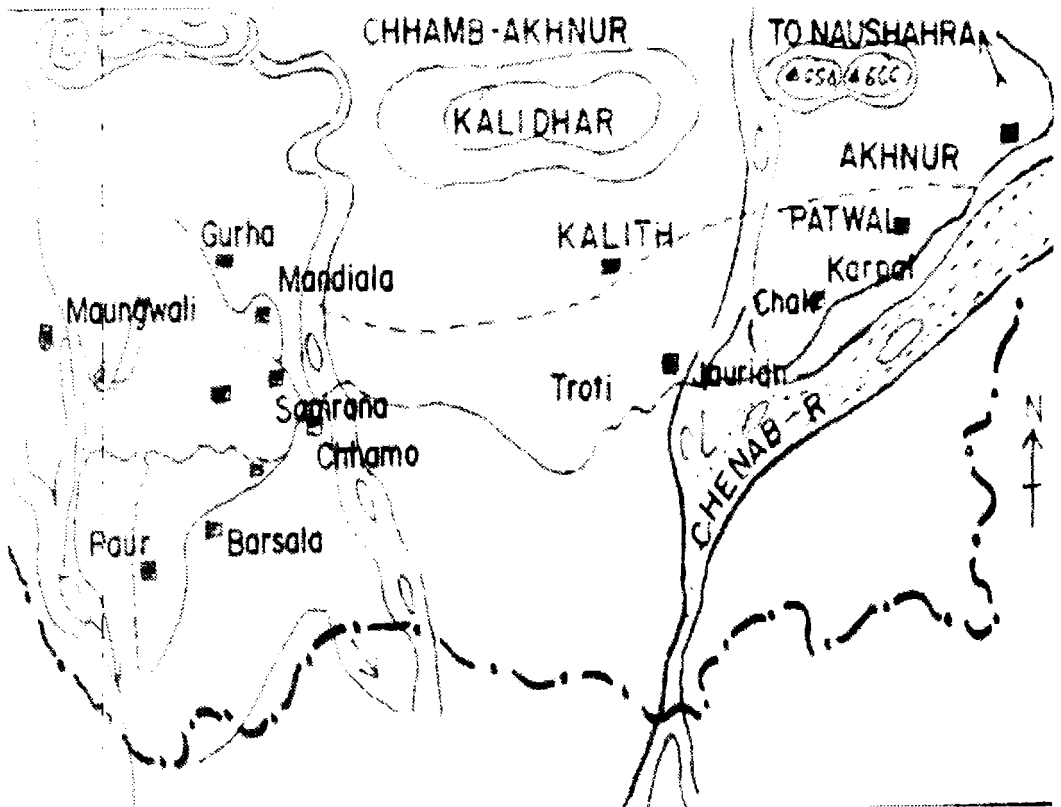
It was imperative for us to liquidate this bridge head and so mustering together all available troops, a counter attack was launched to recapture the two crossings. A Company each of 7 KUMAON and 5/8 GR with a squadron of 72 Armored Regiment attacked the Darh crossing from the North and captured it by 7:30 pm after some fierce fighting. A Company of 3/4 GR attacked the same crossing from the Southern end and the Pakistanis, caught between the two, lost their nerve and melted away. By 1 am on the 11th December the crossings had been secured".³

3/4 GR at Darh Crossing-Chhamb Sector

Under Lt Col M K Puri, the unit was occupying defensive positions in Akhnur Sector, when on 3 December 1971; the enemy launched his major attack in Chhamb. As the situation became grim and positions West of Munawar Tawi came under pressure, the Gorkhas were regrouped and moved forward to occupy defenses East of Munawar Tawi, a task

which despite intense artillery shelling and air attacks, was completed on 7 December. As positions of 9 JAT at Darh Crossing over Manawar Wali Tawi were under intense enemy shelling and pressure, A Company under Maj Virendra Singh was moved up and placed under Lt Col Jagjit Singh, C O 9 JAT, as a counter attack force.

After a pause of three days, preceded by intense artillery shelling and air attacks, on Night 9/10 December the enemy launched a second major attack with an infantry battalion – armor regiment group, to capture Darh Crossing. By 0630 am on 10 December, after intense hand-to-hand fighting in tall grass, the enemy was able to establish a bridge head, which if not checked would have allowed him to induct tanks and advance towards depth positions.



At this stage, C O 9 JAT ordered Maj Virendra Singh to launch a counter attack on the enemy bridge head and throw the enemy back, West of the river. Though he was to be supported by tanks, artillery and machine gun fire from 9 JAT, and as time was of essence, fearing delay in these

elements joining him, Maj Virendra Singh launched the attack on his own. Moving through thick under growth to achieve surprise, the Gorkhas destroyed two enemy tanks and delayed the further build-up of Pakistani tanks, but were out numbered. In this counter attack, Maj Virendra Singh and ten ORs were fatally wounded. The company under 2nd Lt D K Bharadwaj fell back and occupied a defensive position, to provide a firm base for a subsequent attack.

After reviewing the situation, the brigade commander ordered Col M K Puri to launch a counter attack to recapture Darh Crossing. Puri moved forward with two companies, but the late arrival of tanks resulted in the attack being delayed. By then the enemy had inducted more tanks across the crossing, so the attack did not proceed as planned. However, taking advantage of the tall grass and broken ground, the Gorkhas launched a number of 'tank hunting' parties (small patrols armed with 3.5 in Rocket Launcher) to search and destroy enemy tanks with stealth. These patrols imposed caution on the enemy, who thereafter became very cautious and delayed his advance. Meanwhile, B and D Companies had taken up fresh defensive positions, and thereafter did not allow the enemy to advance further.

During the stalemate which continued till 17 December, raids were launched by the Gorkhas on enemy vehicles, administrative echelons and parties, even across the river. In one such raid, while 2nd Lt N Sisodia successfully completed the assigned task, this young and brave officer was fatally wounded. The enemy continued to shell defensive positions and administrative convoys of the Gorkhas, during which in one such incident Maj V K Behl and Rfn Ram Bahadur Thapa were fatally wounded.

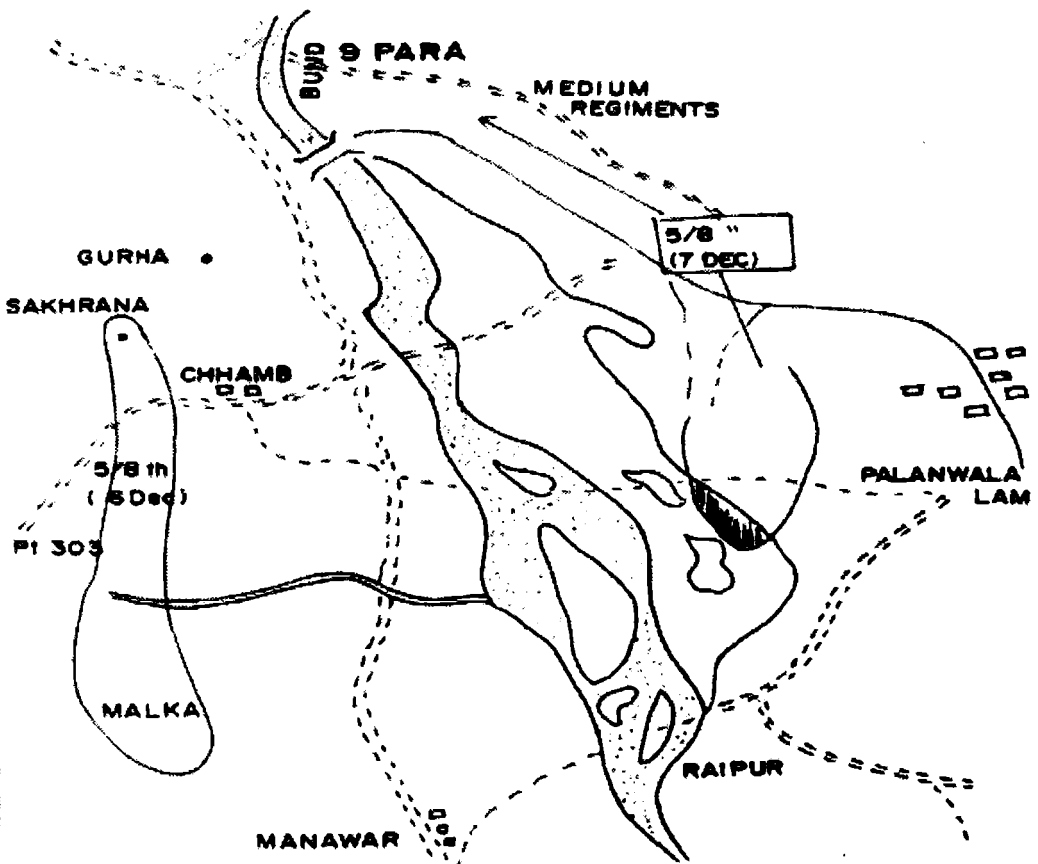
In this operation, 3/4 GR suffered 17 fatal (including 3 officers, 2 J C O and twelve O R) and 27 non-fatal casualties (including 1 J C O). By their sheer dint and courage, the Gorkhas stemmed the further advance of the enemy across Darh Crossing. As a special gesture of comradeship, besides the monetary grants given by the Government to the families of the deceased, retired and serving officers and all ranks

of the unit donated 10 days of their salary for rehabilitation purposes.

5/8 GR at Akhnur

Under the command of Lt Col A S Kalkat, the unit reached Chhamb on 2 December as part of a reserve formation, and occupied depth localities. After intense shelling, the Pakistan Army started its offensive on Night 4/5 December, and its elements managed to secure the eastern bank of the bridge on Manawar Tawi. On same night the Gorkhas were directed to launch a counter attack, which was successfully launched by B Company under Maj A S Nanda.

As the tactical situation West of Manawar Tawi deteriorated and the enemy was able to make some gains, on 5 December the Gorkhas were asked to move forward and occupy defenses west of the river. Despite enemy shelling, the troops moved and occupied defenses at Malka,



Sakrana East and West, with the Battalion Headquarters at Chhamb.

On 6 December FN, the unit was ordered to launch a counter attack and recapture Pt 303, defended locality of 5 SIKH, which had earlier been captured by Pakistani troops. Maj Rai with C Company launched a spirited attack and killed 27 Pakistani soldiers, while his own losses were 5 killed, 14 wounded, while 5 ORs went missing. Another counter attack was launched on same day in the evening on Gurha position (earlier held by 5 SIKH) by D Company under Maj K S Thapa who succeeded in recapturing the locality.

By this time the enemy had strengthened his hold in Chhamb West of Manawar Tawi. During the ensuing Night of 6/7 December, the Indian troops were ordered to fall back on positions East of the river. The battalion provided security to the withdrawing troops and moved back carrying all its major equipment, on man-pack basis.

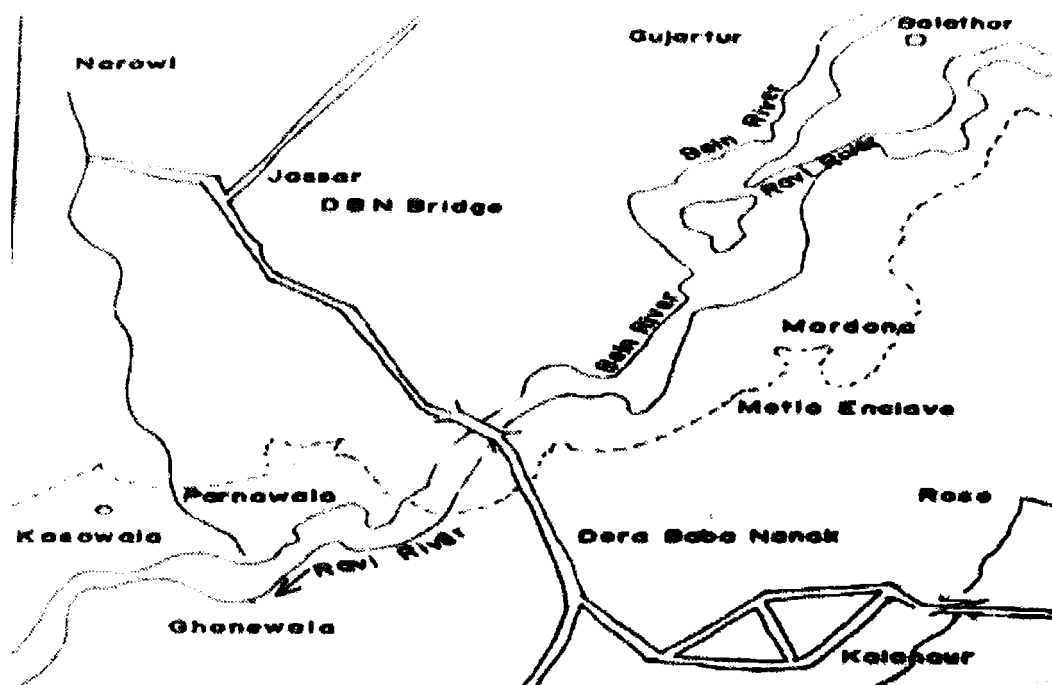
As mentioned earlier, despite stiff resistance offered by 9 JAT, on 9 December the Pakistani's were able to infiltrate across Manawar Tawi in area of Darh Crossing. The task of counter-attacking the enemy and sealing the breach was given to Lt Col Kalkat, who assigned C Company under Maj D S Rana to launch the attack, supported by tanks. As the tanks did not arrive at the RV till 5:45 pm, a decision was taken to launch the attack without them, from the North. After a tough hand-to-hand fight, the Gorkhas secured their objective by 7:30 pm.

During the operation, the Gorkhas launched four successful counter – attacks often at night moving stealthily through thick grass and sarkanda, braving enemy artillery and air attacks. They held their defenses both East and West of Manawar Tawi resolutely. The battalion suffered 17 fatal (including Capt Padmanabhan, AMC and 2nd Lt P R Sharma) and 44 non-fatal (including 3 JCOs) casualties. It won two Vr C (Rfn Padam Bahadur Thapa and Rfn Dalip Singh Thapa-posthumously) and one V S M (Lt Col A S Kalkat), while

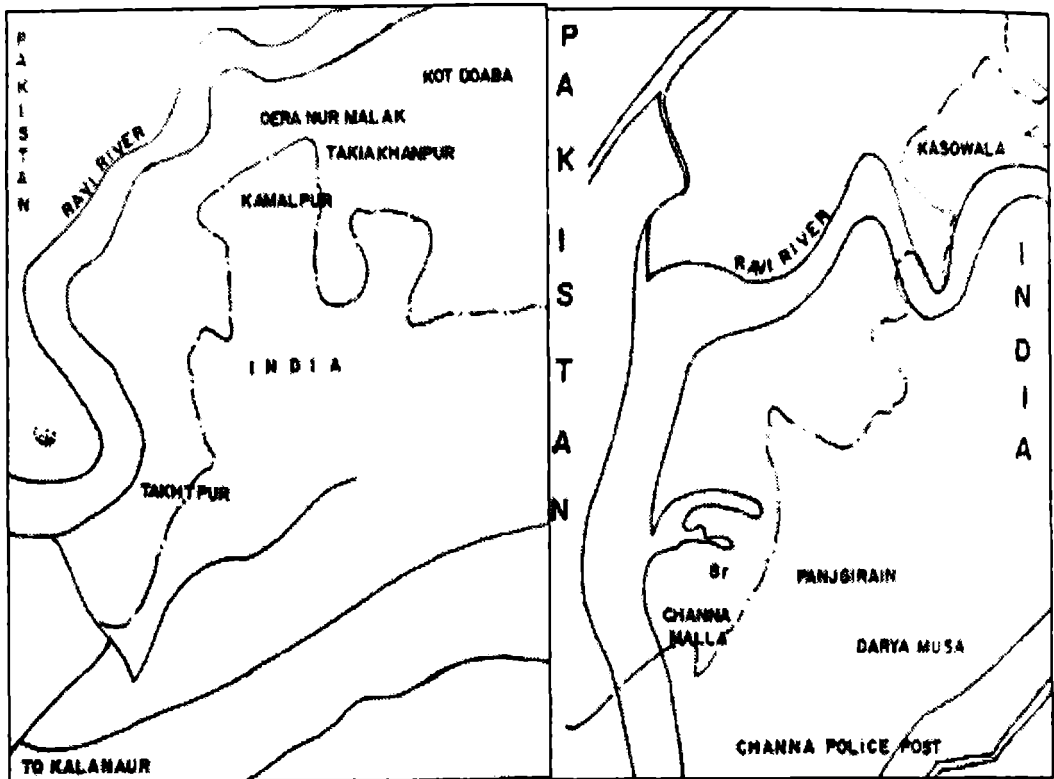
three all ranks (including 2nd Lt Sharma) were Mention-in-Dispatches.

4/8 GR on the Punjab Front

Under the command of Lt Col Ashok Krishna, the unit was initially sent to defend Dera Baba Nanak Sector, and then to capture Pakistani posts across the Ravi River. As the enemy controlled both ends of the bridge and could have used his enclave South of Ravi River for launching an offensive into Amritsar Sector, the first task assigned to the unit was to "secure Melta Enclave". The area was full of tall grass, had many small streams and hardly any tracks. Thus movement on foot even by day was difficult.



The first enemy post captured by the Gorkhas was Mardana, by Maj Mandlik on Night 5/6 December. The second operation was launched to eliminate the threat to Kasowal Bulge, by capturing Pakistani posts at Kot Doaba and Takiakhanpur, on Night 11/12 December, by A Company under Maj Dewan. The last attack was launched on Pak post Balthor on Night 16/17 December, again by D Company under Maj Manglik. In this action Rfn Juthe Gurung displayed exceptional bravery, when despite a head wound



he continued to charge and silenced the enemy machine gun with his rocket launcher.

By the end of the War, the Gorkhas dominated 12,000 sq yds of enemy territory and had established a bridge head for further operations. Soon after the cease fire, it was noticed that Pak troops had occupied a new post at Channa Malla, across the I B on Indian side. On 24 December, the unit launched an attack through 10 to 12 ft tall sarkanda and despite heavy machine gun and mortar fire by the enemy, drove him back after a 20 min hand-to-hand fight. The enemy fled in haste leaving 8 dead bodies behind, while quite a few of the retreating Pakistanis drowned in Ravi River. In this operation, Sub Nima Lama showed exemplary courage by closing in on the enemy bunkers and lobbing hand grenades on them, for which he was awarded Vr C.

During the operations, the unit suffered only one fatal (Rfn Juthe Gurung) and two non-fatal casualties. The enemy losses were-killed 16 and wounded 17. The unit won one Vr C (Sub Nima Lama) and three S M (Maj S K Gupta, Lt

Assessment of Performance

The performance of Gorkha troops in the 1971 War, both on the Eastern and Western Front, proved that given the time and opportunity to train and plan their operations, these Hill people can do equally well in all types of terrain. The leadership showed by junior leaders and their officers gave great confidence to the rank and file, to fight against a well trained adversary. The welfare measure initiated by the Indian Government for the war wounded and pensioned soldiers in Nepal proved the genuine interest of India for her soldiers.

Conclusion

During the 1971 Indo-Pak War, the bravery, devotion to duty and courage shown by the Gorkha soldiers of the Indian Army, was exemplary. Fighting at all fronts, from the swampy marshes of East Pakistan to the river banks of Ravi or Munawar Tawi, from the Thar desert to the snow covered mountains of Ladakh, they proved their adaptability and versatility of performing equally/exceptionally well in all terrain and climatic conditions.

Besides earning many decorations, they have done the Indian Army proud and earned more laurels for their units and the Gorkha race as a whole, establishing once again that the Gorkha is a very dependable professional soldier. He is loyal, devoted and courageous, and can perform exceedingly well in any type of terrain or climatic conditions.

REFERENCES

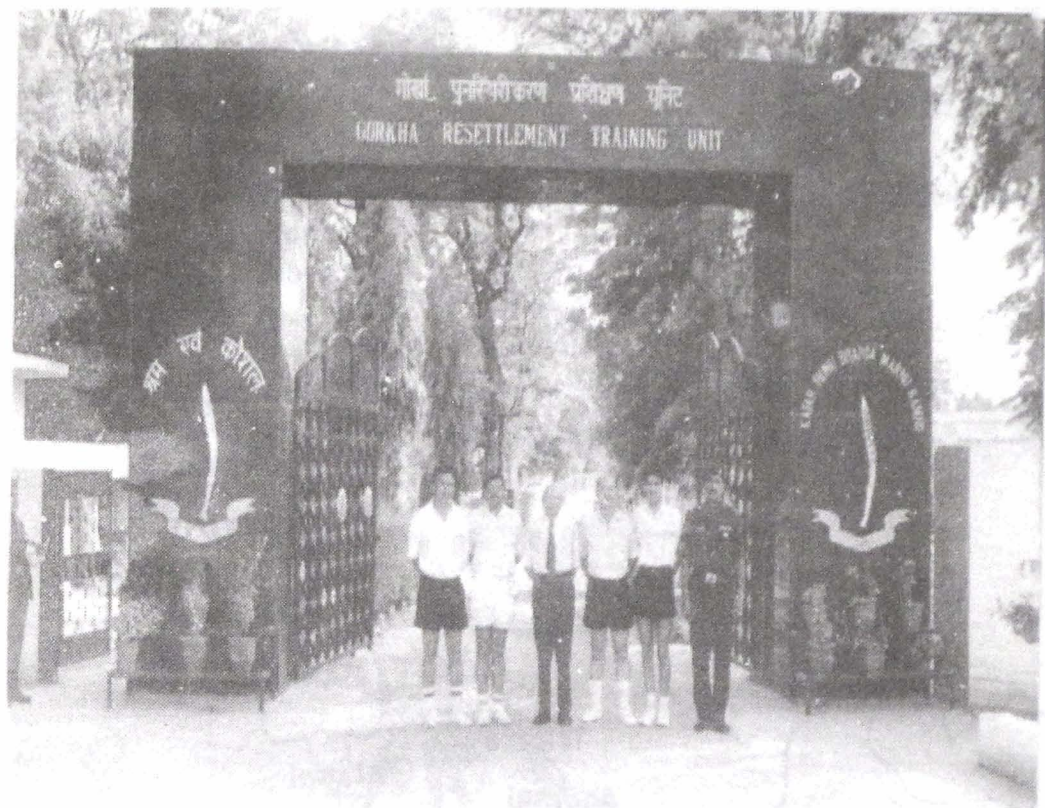
1. The Western Front, The Indo-Pak War 1971, by Lt Gen KP Candeth, published by English Book Depot, 15 Rajpur Road, Dehra Dun, 1997.
2. Lt Gen KP Candeth states that 4/1 GR gallantly counter attacked Mandiala North but without much success. Next day, it was found that 13 Azad Kashmir Battalion and 47 Punjab had infiltrated across the Tawi at 5:30 am. They attacked 9 Para Commando positions and overran portion of it, but the position



SHRI S S MUKERJEE AMBASSADOR OF INDIA IN NEPAL-MEETING PENSIONERS



THE NEPAL BHARAT MAITRI VIDYALAYA: PPO POKHARA



was restored by a counter attack. The Western Front-Indo-Pak War 1971, published by English Book Depot, 15 Rajpur Road, Dehra Dun, 1997.

3. The Western Front, The Indo-Pak War 1971, by Lt Gen KP Candeth, Published by English Book Depot, Dehra Dun, 1997.

5. GORKHAS IN OTHER OPERATIONS 1950-2002

General

Besides the conventional wars fought by the Indian Army covered in the earlier chapters, the Gorkha units have also shown their bravery and valor in other operations, since 1950s. Amongst these, the Counter Insurgency Operations in Naga Hills, Manipur, Mizoram, Assam, Operation PAWAN in Sri Lanka, defense of Siachen Glacier in J & K, and anti-militancy operations in J & K, merit mention.

Besides the regular units, the Gorkhas also have an artillery regiment and a Territorial Army unit. Brief details of these are also included in this chapter.



Three Gorkha units also showed their bravery during OPERATION VIJAY in 1999, when the Indian Army threw back Pakistani troops from Kargil Sector.

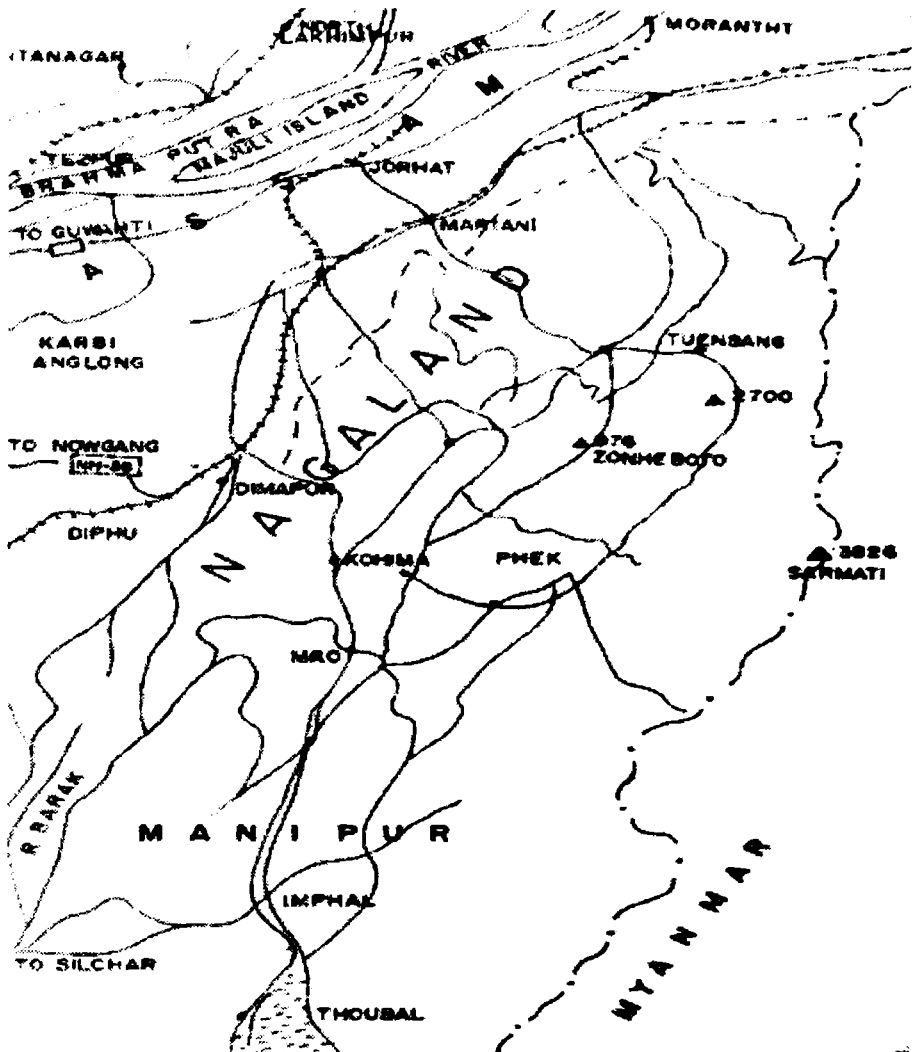
Brief account of these operations is covered in this chapter.

COUNTER INSURGENCY OPERATIONS IN NAGA HILLS AND TUENSANG AREA COUNTER INSURGENCY OPERATIONS IN NAGALAND

Background

Till 1947, the area of the north-east inhabited by Nagas, Mizos and those living in mountains of Upper Assam close to the Tibetan Plateau formed part of Assam. Out of these

NAGALAND



Nagas and Mizos were predominantly Christians, though Nagas were the most warlike. During the 2nd W W, a large number of weapons and ammunition had been hidden and abandoned by the withdrawing forces, remained covered and hidden in the mountainous jungles of the area. During the British rule, the area had been left neglected and no development worth the name had taken place, though Christian Missionaries had established a number of schools and churches, and spread Christianity.

After Independence, though the Indian Constitution made special provision for safeguarding these people, they were misguided by Phizo, to seek independence. Thus started insurgency, which has eluded a permanent solution till date. The present cease fire between the Government and one

Insurgent NAGALAND Group NSCN (I&M) has lasted for five years, which has brought some peace and stability to the State for the last five years.

Initially armed with old weapons, the Under Grounds (U Gs) hostiles were given aid by China in late 1960s. Pakistan also gave them monetary and military assistance, while certain Church groups from abroad provided them funds and political support.

Organized as the army of NSCN, initially the UGs operated in groups of ten to twenty. Besides using fire arms, initially they also used bows and arrows and dah. They were able to exploit lack of development and independence of the region as the cause of struggle, and thus enjoyed support of the locals.

However, once the State came into existence and undertook development projects, the agitation slowed down as the people started looking for peace. Being local hill people, the UG cadres have good knowledge of terrain. They are good at laying ambushes, raiding isolated posts, improvisation, jungle survival, and often take to collection of taxes from the businessmen as well as the locals, at times by force.

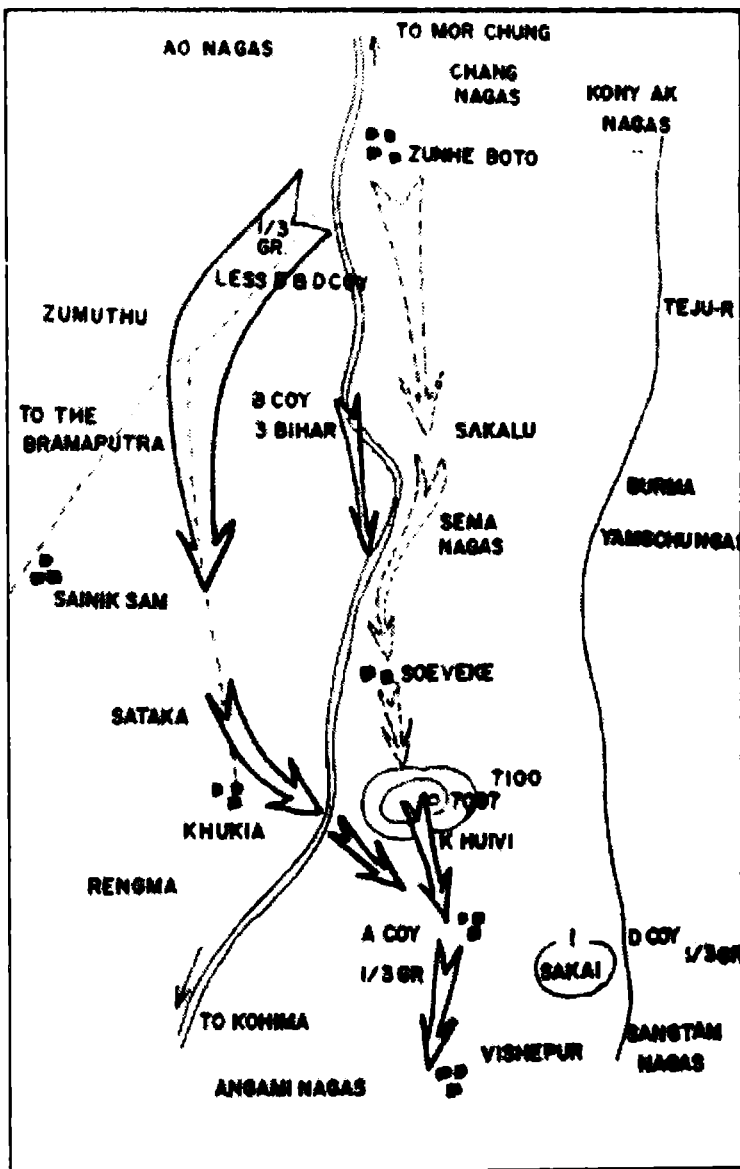
The movement started in 1954 and soon turned into an open armed revolt against the Government of India. By 1956, the Nagas had formed a parallel government with an army, and the situation was beyond the control of the civil administration. As some Nagas were also residing in Manipur, Mizoram, the plains of Assam and Myanmar, areas which they claim as Greater Nagaland, the problem was a complex one.

The Indian Army was called in to restore law and order in 1954 and carried out relentless operations in this under-developed area, due to which peace was restored in 1957, and a new administrative unit, Naga Hills and Tuensang Area was formed. However, the Nagas breached the cease-fire in 1959 resulting in induction of more Army units. Though the Army strength was reduced during the 1962

1962 and 1971 Operations, it continues to be deployed in the region, along with Assam Rifles. Being Indian, the insurgents have never been called 'enemy', but as Under Grounds (UGs), Hostiles, or Insurgents.

1/3 GR Captures Khuivi-1955

During its peace tenure at Shillong in September 1955, under the command Lt Col J R Chitins, it was one of the first Army units to be moved to Naga Hills at a very short notice. Deployed in company posts at Zunheboto, Mokokechung and Tuensang, it was given responsibility of ensuring security of the main Road Kohima-Dimapur,



carrying out operations to apprehend Phizo belonging to Khonoma village and other areas. Despite many administrative problems and lack of hard intelligence, the Gorkhas started aggressive patrolling and by April 1956 were dominating their area of operation.

By this time, Kaito Sema, the self styled C-in-C of Naga Army, had regrouped his forces in Sema Area, and his Headquarter was reportedly at Khuivi, a dominating village on Road Kohima-Mokokchung. He was reported to have about 2500 men armed with rifles, 10 LMGs and 40 Tommy Guns, and had deployed detachments at Villages Sakalu, Seveke and Sataka.

For attacking Khuivi, Col Chitnis could not move his B Company from Tuensang while D Company at Sakai was already carrying out operations. Thus, besides his A and C Companies, he was allotted a company of 3 BIHAR. In April, the hostiles had laid ambushes for road opening patrols of A Company and Company 3 BIHAR, but these were beaten, in which a few hostiles had been killed and 3 rifles captured. Thus, the morale of the troops was high, when they were tasked to capture the Naga HQs at Khuivi.

Col Chitnis planned a night approach march, with the Bihar Company along the road, while he led A and C Companies through the forest to Sataka Ridge to establish a firm base. He tasked D Company at Sakai to join, later. Move commenced at 3 am but by 6 am the Bihar Company ran into the hostiles, and lost a soldier. However, they broke the ambush and secured Sakalu by a flanking assault. The Gorkhas cleared Zumuthu and Khukia and surprised Kaito, who was expecting the attack along the main road.

However, Kaito soon reacted by engaging A and C Companies with intense small arms fire from short distance, which was suitably replied by a spirited assault by the Gorkhas, the hills echoing with 'Ayo Gorkhali'. In this assault Nk Ram Singh's section killed two UGs and the platoon of Lt Talwar killed four hostiles. Soon, the fire stopped as the hostiles pulled back, and by first light the Gorkhas had

occupied Mohumi. During the attack 3 in Mortars under Hav Gamar Singh Gurung played a major role by providing accurate fire support. Advance commenced and soon Khukia, the administrative base of Kaito Sema, was captured.

For further operations, Col Chitnis adopted the road approach, as he wanted to finish the operation at the earliest. Thus, leaving a platoon of A Company at Sataka base, he moved C Company forward, along a mountain side. Soon, the hostiles opened up with all their weapons, which temporarily stopped the assault. Realizing the gravity of the situation, the C O mustered all available reserves and decided to pull back, to evacuate his wounded soldiers. After evacuating them, he re-organized the company under Maj Negi and next day launched them from the forest approach along Sakalu-Sheveke to capture Pt 7097-Khuivi. Negi launched a bold attack, killed twelve hostiles and captured Seveke. Three Gorkhas were injured during the assault by the 'panjis', but recovered due to prompt medical aid.

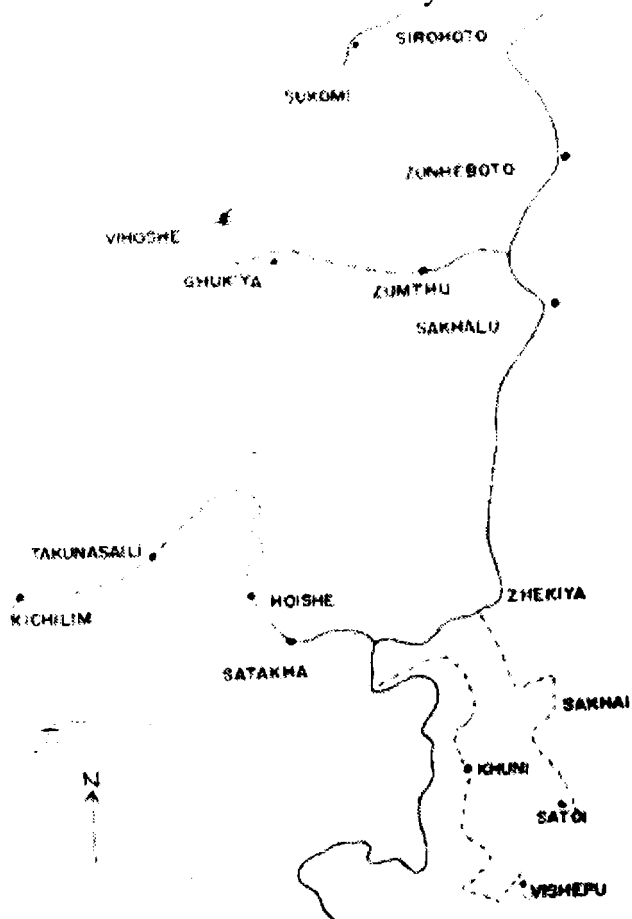
Two days later, A and C Companies commenced their attack on Pt 7097 at 11 pm in pitch darkness silently, and after negotiating a very steep and slippery climb, attacked the objective at 3 am. Surprised, Kaito and his men abandon their post. Having captured Khuivi, the Gorkhas exploited and captured Visheppur and Sakai, which forced the hostiles to lift their siege from D Company also. After this very successful operation which forced Kaito to change his base, the battalion returned to Zunheboto.

However, the joy of the battalion was short lived as on 14 June 56, the convoy of Col Chitnis and Sub Maj Nain Singh Thapa moving from Mokokchung to Zunheboto with the treasury chest carrying unit's pay, was ambushed. The CO extricated himself and launched a determined attack to break the ambush, but the Nagas did not melt away which was their normal tactics. The hostiles continued to give fight, as probably they had orders to take revenge for the loss of Khuivi.

Though wounded, Lt Col Chitnis did not loose heart, deployed a small covering party and himself led a bold assault on the dominating hill occupied by the hostiles, forcing them to break contact. Gravely wounded, he was evacuated to Zunhoboto, but could not be saved. For this gallant act of a very high order, he was awarded Ashoka Chakra Class 1.

1/8 GR at Mokokchung-Chnagki 1956

Soon following 1/3 GR, the unit was inducted in Jul 1956, and tasked to take over posts of 1/3 GR at Mokokchung, ensure security of communications to Mariani and to Zonheboto, and establish posts at Chongliyamsen and Aochagalimi (last one named after the Assam police post set ablaze earlier by the hostiles). The first clash occurred between a road opening party on Road Kohima-Tuensang, when the hostiles burnt a wooden bridge with a view to ambush the convoy of General Officer



The Gorkhas detected the hostiles and engaged them with machine guns, at which the hostiles broke contact. Soon, the bridge was repaired using local bamboos, and the convoy passed through, safely.

On 31 July, the hostiles set the Assam Police post at Aochagalimi on fire using arrows, and laid an ambush to prevent the two company reinforcement sent under Maj Joglekear and Lt Dani. However, they failed, and the Gorkhas were able to reinforce the post, and saved it. Thereafter, the Gorkhas occupied the post and carried out aggressive patrolling, which resulted in a number of hostiles being captured. Presence and good conduct of the Gorkhas encouraged the villagers to return to their homes from the jungle, and led to an ex-president of the Sema tribal council surrendering to the post. In an encounter on 26 October, a patrol under Capt K S Thapa killed three hostiles and captured one rifle, while another patrol from Waromung captured more arms on 23 January 1957.

During the next eight months, the unit made special efforts to instill confidence amongst the locals to take part in the elections held in March 57, and in arranging a cease-fire. Yet at the same time, the Gorkha patrols continued to dominate the area, often clashing with the hostiles, recovering weapons and destroying camps. In one such clash, Maj G S Saran was fatally wounded while leading a patrol.

During its tenure in Naga Hills, the unit suffered 8 fatal casualties, including Maj G S Saran. For displaying bravery of a very high order, 2nd Lt V R Dani, Nb Sub Tek Bahadur Gurung and Nk Padam Singh Thapa were awarded Shaurya Chakras.

2/9 GR in Naga Hills-July 1956

Under the command of Lt Col Sri Ram, the unit was scheduled to move to Ranikhet, but was diverted to Naga Hills and Tuensang Area. Having deployed in Litsammi Area, on 9 August it carried out a major operation to apprehend the top hierarchy of the hostiles. Moving along a difficult

route through mountains and thick jungle, a patrol under Capt Kartar Singh was ambushed on 1 September, in which Rfn Tej Kumar Sahi was fatally wounded. Soon after a forced march of two days a hostile column was detected by the leading scout L Nk Deb Bahadur in pitch darkness, and engaged effectively. The hostiles dispersed and occupied a ridge and engaged the Gorkhas throughout the night and even tried to raid the column. However, at day break they broke contact. Soon, the troops entered Village Tichipami and carried out search of the adjoining area as well as civic action for the locals. Later, it was learnt that the logistic column of the hostiles had suffered some casualties, which they had carried away under darkness.

On 5 September, a strong patrol under Maj N L Jamwal searched Sirohoto. On 22 December, a vehicle convoy under Jamwal ran into an ambush. Relief patrols under Maj R V Doss and 2nd Lt P K Kaker were rushed to break the ambush, for which they had to attack the hostiles who had occupied trenches on a dominating hill feature. In this action, 10 hostiles were killed, while the Gorkha casualties were 5 fatal and 10 non-fatal (including an officer and a J C O).

The next major raid launched by the unit was at Liam, in which the Gorkhas got the better of the hostiles, inflicted heavy casualties on them and recovered a few weapons. Another very successful operations carried out by the unit, was the raid at Sokhumi Camp. Launched under OPERATION MILAP, the aim of the raid was to break the backbone of the hostiles, after the initial peace talks had failed. At this time, Lt P N Kaker was commanding a company at Zohenoboto and operating in conjunction with 1/3 GR. At 2 pm on 16 December, Lt Kaker got information about the gang led by Naga Chief Kaito Sema had been reported at Lochimi, about 20 km distance. Located in thick jungle, the village was not connected by a road. Hence, at 6:30pm, Lt Kaker with two of his platoons moved to Lochimi following un-beaten tracks, to achieve surprise. By about 2 am on 17 December, the Gorkhas were in position at 'stops', and they fired verey light pistols and illuminating mortar

shells, to light up the area. Taken by surprise, the hostiles opened up with all their weapons and offered stiff resistance to the Gorkhas till 6 am, but at day break they tried to escape. In this operation, the hostiles suffered 11 killed and 20 wounded casualties, which were confirmed by the villagers who were forced by the hostiles to carry their wounded and the dead. Casualties of the Gorkha's were nil. Lt Kaker's patrol recovered three .303 rifles, one Japanese rifle, one 12 bore gun, two barrels of L M G, a number of 2 in mortar bombs and about 20,000 rounds of small arms ammunition. A large amount of rations and some important documents of intelligence value were also recovered by Lt Kaker's party, which returned to camp by noon. This was the first major success achieved by the Security Forces in Naga Hills and this greatly shook the hostiles..

Having suffered heavily, the hostiles decided to take revenge and ambushed the jeep convoy of 2/9 GR on 22 December 56 near Sirohoto in Kaito Sema's area. When the convoy reached Sirohoto (nearly two hours distance from the nearest Security Forces post), it ran into an ambush laid by about 150 hostiles, well armed with L M Gs and grenades. Lt Kaker, then based at Aichungami Post heard the firing, and immediately rushed with a platoon to the ambush site. He engaged the hostiles, forcing them to break contact. In this action, the Gorkhas suffered 5 fatal and 8 non-fatal casualties out of the 20 all ranks in the convoy, while the casualties of the hostiles could not be ascertained. For fighting boldly in this and other actions, two officers, 1 J C O and 2 OR were awarded Kirti Chakra (Nk Jai Lal Adhikari), Shaurya Chakras (Maj N L Jamwal, Lt P N Kaker and Rfn Rudra Bahadur (Posthumous), while Sub Ran Bahadur was Mentioned-in-Dispatches.

Though during its two years tenure the unit suffered 11 fatal and 19 non-fatal casualties, it inflicted many more losses on the hostiles. It also dominated its area of responsibility effectively and kept the hostiles on the run, by raiding their camps and hideouts.

4/8 GR in Zunheboto Area 1957

Moving in 30 October 1957, the battalion under the command of Lt Col O S Kalkat, took over the posts held by 1/8GR. In February 1958 it moved into the Sema area of Zunheboto and carried out extensive domination of the area. In the meantime, another Naga People's Convention was held, which forced a number of Naga hostiles to surrender. On 25 August, five Sema hostiles, along with one machine gun, one .303 rifle and some ammunition, surrendered to the unit.

On 5 March 59, after an approach march of two nights and a day, a raid was carried out during heavy rains on the headquarters of Zuheto Sema, a prominent hostile leader. Though the camp seemed to have been abandoned a short while earlier, some important documents and equipment was recovered from the site. In another raid, Khugate Sema, a well known Sema hostile was captured on 26 March, and a few days later four more hostiles were apprehended by the Gorkha patrols. On 4 April, in a raid a patrol killed four Sema hostiles and recovered three rifles and one machine gun. Patrols continued to successfully raid camps and apprehend hostiles in May also.

A major clash took place on 25 May, when a patrol under Maj Gurnaib Singh and Sub Satlal Pun and twenty four OR from Satakha was ambushed and encircled by about 120 hostiles under Kaito Sema. In the ensuing fire-fight, Rfn Jut Bahadur Thapa showed courage of a very high order, when though wounded, he snatched a rifle from a hostile and killed him, and prevented another from bringing down accurate fire from a dominating ground. He was awarded Kirti Chakra, posthumously. In this action, Sub Satlal Pun also showed cool courage and leadership of a very high order, and earned a Kirti Chakra.

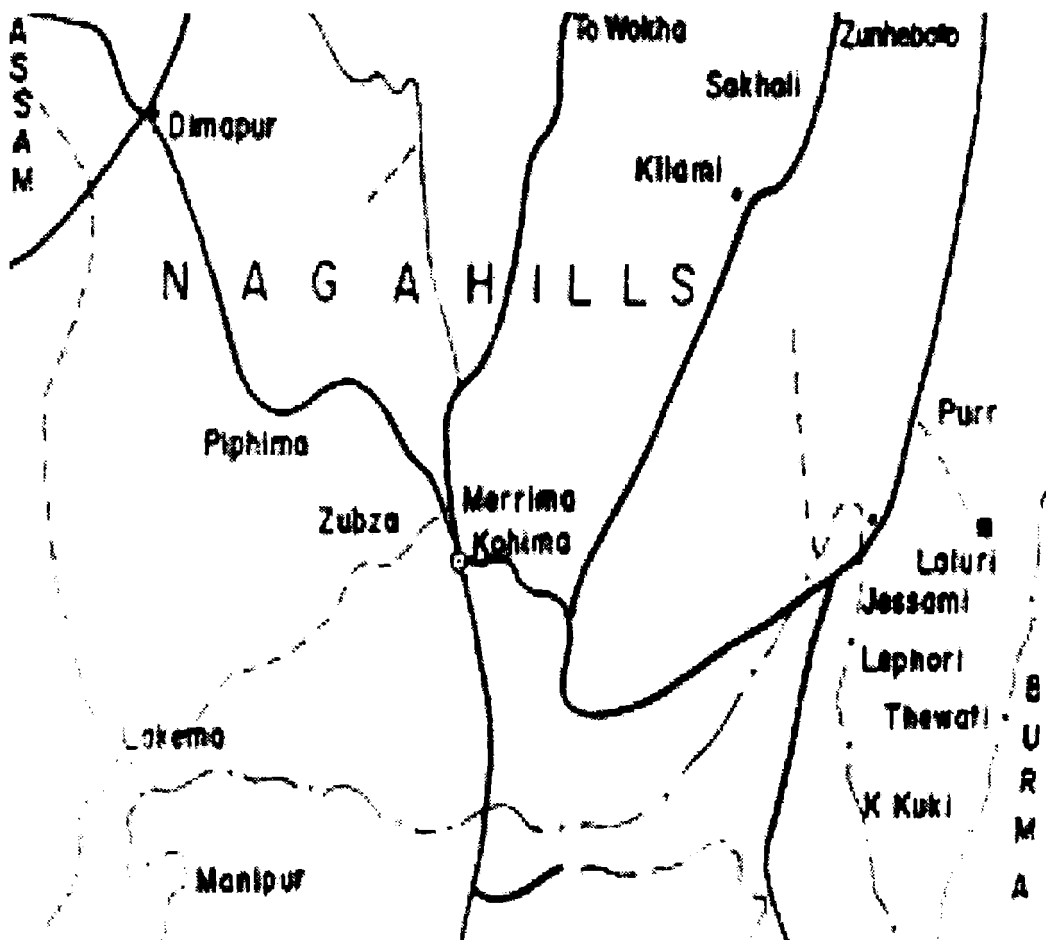
On 22 July, despite heavy monsoon showers, the company at Satakha launched a raid on a hostile camp, killed 11 hostiles and recovered six rifles, without suffering any loss. In this action, L Nk Bom Bahadur Thapa and Nk Lal Bahadur Thapa were awarded Shaurya Chakras.

Between October 59 and Jun 1960 till it was de-inducted from Naga Hills, the Gorkhas established a number of new posts in Sema area and sanitized the area. An operation was launched at village Houpu (north of Zunheboto), which was a strong hold of the hostiles.

The village was found well fortified with panjis (sharpened bamboo sticks buried in the ground). During Jun 1960, the hostiles had fired upon a goods train near Bokajan, thus the Gorkhas were tasked to provide escorts for running the trains.

During its tenure in Naga Hills, the unit won two Kirti Chakras (Sub Satlal Pun and Rfn Jut Bahadur Thapa-posthumous) and two Shaurya Chakras (L Hav Bom Bahadur Thapa and Nk Lal Bahadur Thapa). It suffered only one fatal casualty Rfn Jut Bahadur Thapa, Kirti Chakra.

5/8 GR and 6/8 GR in Naga Hills October-November 1960



The period saw the Naga Hostiles holding two rounds of talks with Prime Minister, Pt Nehru. These negotiations resulted in formation of an Interim Body before a new state could be born. But there was a division amongst the Nagas, as while some were keen to resolve the problem and bring peace in the troubled region, the others (including Semas) wanted to continue their arms struggle. However, as the hostiles did not stop their activities, cordon and search operations by the Security Forces continued, un-abated.

5/8 GR in Naga Hills November 1960

With Lt Col M M Bakshi in command, the unit reached Naga Hills in November 1960, and with battalion HQ at Piphema, was tasked to protect the main road, from Kohima to Dimapur. During induction, its first convoy from Dimapur to Kohima was fired upon by the hostiles during the induction itself at Zubza, which was returned promptly and effectively. Thereafter, the hostiles did not interfere with convoys run under arrangements of the unit. Despite threats from the hostiles, nearly 650 Naga delegates proceeding to Kohima for the inauguration of the Interim Body, were escorted safely. In Aug 1961, the unit moved and occupied posts in Chakabama area. On 24 August, during a search operation there was an exchange of fire, in which Rfn Bhakta Bahadur Thapa killed two hostiles, though he was also fatally wounded. He was awarded a well deserved Sena Medal. On 13 January 1962, Capt D Sarbadhikari led a two platoon patrol (under 2nd Lt R K Nagpal and Hav Am Bahadur Thapa) to seal escape routes of the hostiles in Kheza-Khonoma village. In this operation, Hav Am Bahadur's platoon killed three hostiles and recovered one sten gun and two rifles, and a large quantity of ammunition. Both Capt Sarbadhikari and Hav Am Bahadur were awarded Sena Medal. This was followed by another success, when on 21 April, while on a patrol Rfn Tul Bahadur Rana killed one hostile and apprehended another. He also recovered three rifles, for which he was awarded Sena Medal.

In first week of Nov, the unit moved into west Sema

area, where the Rengmas had passed a resolution, asking the hostiles to surrender to the security forces. As a result of goodwill created by the battalion, a number of hostiles surrendered to the Gorkhas, but without weapons.

The unit had changed its location many a times, and often operated from temporary camps. It had won five Sena Medals (Capts Jasbirpal Singh, and D Sarbhadikari, Nb Subedar Am Bahadur Gurung, Rfn Tul Bir Rana and Bhakta Bahadur Thapa-posthumously).

2/8 GR in Nagaland 1961-62

In 1961-62, while serving at Ranchi during its peace tenure, as per practice followed at that time, the unit moved to Naga Hills for Counter Insurgency Operation for a period of six months. It was deployed in Kohima area of Sema nagas. Besides road protection, the troops raided a number of hostile camps. In one such raid Nk Jas Bahadur Thapa and Rfn Purna Bahadur Thapa recovered four single-barrel muzzle loader guns and captured two hostiles.

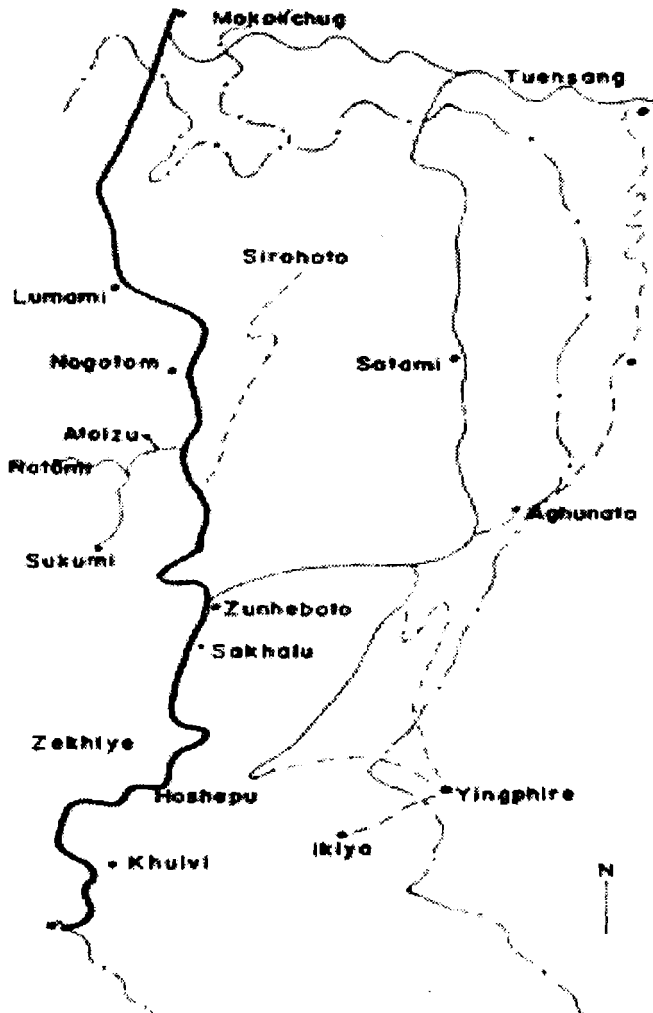
3/5 GR (FF) in Zelling-Kuki-Sema Area August 1956

Inducted during the monsoon season, the unit got its first success when on 30 August 1956 it's patrol was fired upon near village Pulomi, in which the section commander was fatally wounded. Un-deterred, Rfn Tara Prasad Gurung crawled under fire, recovered the body and weapon of his section commander, and engaged the hostiles, killing three of them. For his brave action, he was awarded Ashoka Chakra cl 2 (now Kirti Chakra), the first won by the unit.

After nine days, a patrol led by 2/Lt A B Harolihar was fired upon near village Phigwami, in which Harolihar was wounded and an OR was fatally wounded. At this stage, L Nk Ram Bahadur Gurung, though wounded in his arm, engaged the hostiles who had constructed bunkers, and saved the balance of the patrol. For his brave act, he was awarded Ashoka Chakra cl 2 (now Kirti Chakra).

On 26 September, the unit was tasked to provide an escort for a jeep convoy taking some civilian VIPs, including a lady from Burma. The convoy was ambushed on way to Kukhidolan, in which four persons (including the lady) were killed and two were injured. Rfn Dhan Bahdur Pun not only engaged the hostiles and secured the weapons left behind by the Assam Police personnel, but also sent for reinforcements from the nearby post and employed them to beat the ambush. For displaying courage and leadership of a very high order, he was awarded Ashoka Chakra cl 2 (Kirti Chakra).

Thus, the Gorkhas established a unique record of winning three Ashoka Chakra cl 2, in a matter of twenty-seven days. The tenacity, alertness and boldness displayed by all ranks proved a great deterrent to the hostiles, who thereafter avoided contact with the Gorkhas.



6/8 GR October 1960 November 1962

The unit was inducted in Naga Hills during October 1960, and with HQ at Mariani, was employed in the Plains Sector. Initially, Lt Col J H Mingal and later Lt Col G S Kale were the COs. The first task assigned to it was to 'provide safe passage to the delegates of the Interim Body at Kohima, which was carried out successfully. Thereafter, in Jul 1961 the unit was moved to Mokokchung and then to Satami in Sema region, for conducting operations around Aghunato, where eight soldiers of the Assam Rifles had been murdered by the hostiles. After the hostiles had raided Purr on 25 August, patrols were launched to block their routes of escape. On 9 August, the patrol led by Lt R S Negi clashed with the hostiles, in which two OR were killed, while the hostile casualties could not be ascertained. In Jan 1962, the unit shifted to area Sirihoto. On 19 July, a patrol under command Jem Kazi Man Limbu successfully ambushed a hostile patrol, killing two and wounding four of them. It also captured four.303 rifles and some ammunition. For this operation, Jem Limbu was awarded Sena Medal.

On 8 November 1962, the unit received orders for move to N E F A, and moved out of Naga Hills.

1/4 GR in Nagaland 1961

The unit was inducted into Nagaland 22 July 1961, under the command of Lt Col Ranjit Singh. Initially the Gorkhas occupied posts in Sema area inhabited by Sema, Angami and Rengma tribes. Here, two prominent Naga leaders like Kaito Sema and Khugate Sema had strong following. Along with a Company of Madhya Pradesh Police (formed from Gorkhas of 7 and 10 GR who did not opt for H M G), it occupied six posts on Road Kohima – Thimokdema-Wokha (two off the main road) over a stretch of 36 miles. Besides carrying out cordon and search operations in its area of responsibility, the unit also moved to India-Burma border and other areas, for specific large scale operations. In one such operation, on 18 October a patrol led by Sub Lal

Bahadur Gurung killed one hostile and captured one muzzle loading gun. Based on information from documents recovered, a search was launched to detect camps of Kaito Sema in the area. Though he managed to elude the Gorkhas, large quantity of rations were recovered from these camps.

Later, the Gorkhas were deployed along Road Kohima-Chakabama-Satazumi, for a period of six months. In OPERATION PENDULUM, the battalion remained totally air maintained and operated on man-pack basis from 18 February to 31 March 62, in area close to Naga Hills-Burma border. While most of its posts were road maintained, often it had to rely on air maintenance for logistics and casualty evacuation. Road opening was a major task which had to be carried out at least thrice a week, for which troops often moved out at dawn and returned after dusk. Operations were also launched on specific information, which was possible due to the effective intelligence network established by the unit, due to exemplary discipline of its men.

By the time the unit was ordered to move from Naga Hills on 30 October 62, it had neutralized 60 Hostiles and seized 40 arms of all types, with ammunition. It had also destroyed many jungle camps, from where it had recovered documents and large quantity of rations. Except for loss of one OR in a drowning incident, the unit had suffered no casualty and not a single individual had fallen out from any patrol or march. The battalion had fully maintained its quite efficiency, not one patrol or road opening party was ever ambushed, nor was any complaint received from any village or civilian agency against the Gorkhas. At 24 hr notice, it moved on foot and vehicle and concentrated at Dimapur by 1 November, for onward move, by rail and air, for induction into NEFA.

3/3 GR in Nagaland-1961

Like 1/3 GR, the battalion had just begun its peace tenure at Shillong, when on 17 February 1961 it was moved to Kohima, where it deployed with a company each at

Kukidolan and Dimapur. Besides other operations, it took part in OPERATION MAHURAT from 7 to 31 August 61, during which company columns were out for 4 to 7 days on man-pack basis, conducting out 'cordon and search' operations in the thick forests, despite heavy rains. On receiving information of a hostile camp in area Pulebadge and Khuzama, a patrol of one officer, 3 JCOs and 60 OR was launched, which captured one hostile and recovered one Japanese rifle and some ammunition. The unit returned to Shillong, but was soon sent to Cachar Hills, and later saw action in Walong Sector of NEFA, during the 1962 War.

2/8 GR in Naga Hills March 1963

Soon after re-organizing under the command of Lt Col Shamsher Singh after the 1962 N E F A operations, the unit was inducted into Naga Hills, and given the task to dominate Road Kohima-Imphal. Having sanitized the area, it was moved to Zunheboto area. In May, a party under 2nd Lt Barooah was sent to Menchuka to locate dead bodies of those soldiers of the unit who had perished there during the 1962 Operation and do their last rites. They buried/cremated 24 bodies and brought back identification of ten.

Notable successes during this tenure of the unit were two raids on camps of the hostile. The first on 29 September under 2nd Lt B C Sharma in Village Khuivi captured a musket. The second under Jem Kulman Singh Gurung on 3 October recovered one musket and some grenades.

As the new state of Nagaland was formed on 1 December which was resented by the hostiles, the unit was moved to Mokokchung area to dominate the region. Active patrolling ensured that elections were held successfully in Jan 1964 and that the peace loving Nagas were able to move about freely. The Gorkhas left Nagaland in July 1964. During this tenure, the unit carried out extensive patrolling, and laid many an ambush, ensuring safe passage of convoys on the main road. It also neutralized a number of hostiles, while suffering six fatal casualties.

5/8 GR in Naga Hills Mar 1963

After cessation of hostilities on the Eastern front on 21 November, the unit reached Dimapur in March 1963, and was given the task to ensure security of Road Dimapur-Kohima, and to flush out hostiles from its area of responsibility. Success was achieved in November 1963, when a patrol led by Maj Shankar Prasad raided a hostile camp and recovered a number of weapons, mortar bombs, grenades and large quantity of ammunition.

At this stage it was learnt that a number of Naga hostile gangs had gone via Manipur to East Pakistan, and were returning with arms and ammunition. Thus, in December 1963 the unit was moved to Manipur to lay ambushes and intercept them. After two months of patrolling in and around Imphal and in the Kuki area bordering Mizo Hills (now Mizoram), the unit was de-inducted from Naga Hills in Jun 1964.

4/1 GR in Nagaland December 1963

The unit reached Nagaland on 1 December 1963, the day the new state of Nagaland was formed, and was deployed in Zunheboto area in four company posts at Atoizu, Zunheboto, Rotomi and Sirohoto). The task given to the Gorkhas was to 'ensure protection of Road Mokokchung-Satakha, capture maximum UGs and destroy their hideouts'.

Soon intelligence network was established, and on 7 January 1965, a road opening party (R O P) of the unit came under fire while opening the road for a convoy. Fire was returned immediately, which forced the UGs to break contact. The next action took place on 18 January, when a platoon under Sub Chandra Bir Thapa was fired upon near Atoizu. In this clash, the UGs were able to kill three and wound three soldiers, while a number of their cadres were also wounded (Nagas never left their injured behind, so exact casualties can never be known). A battalion size operation was launched to search and destroy their hideout and one hostile was caught. Soon, all four companies were

out in the jungles, often for four to five days at a time, and on 2 February 1964 they succeeded in killing four UGs. Later in August Subedar Tahalk Singh Gurung had another clash, in which though a self styled Capt of Naga Home Guards escaped, he left behind vital documents. In August 64, a patrol led Maj Balbir Singh detected a gang of 20 hostiles and engaged them effectively, which resulted in recovery of some ammunition.

Hereafter, the hostiles avoided confrontation with the Gorkhas, knowing that they were always alert and ready to give a fight. Thus, by the time hostilities were ordered to be suspended due to peace talks on 6 September 1964, normalcy had returned to the area, mainly due to the aggressive patrolling carried out by the units.

1/11 GR in Zakhama 1968

Under the command of Lt Col U Saxena, the unit took over operational responsibility of Zakhama-Wokha-Chakabama areas, and was actively involved in laying ambushes to intercept Naga hostiles returning from China.

In one such clash, in January 1969 Maj M M S Bajaj was fatally wounded while searching a hideout from where a large cache of arms and ammunition was recovered. For displaying bravery of a very high order, he was awarded Shaurya Chakra. After the hostiles had surrendered, the unit was made responsible for establishing a camp for them at Chakabama, and then escorting them by train to Hazaribagh, tasks which were carried out successfully. For displaying a very high sense devotion to duty, Sub Talman Limbu was awarded Sena Medal.

In an ambush on 14 August 1969, Nk Dal Bahadur Limbu showed outstanding courage in extricating the convoy and killing two hostiles, for which he was awarded the Shaurya Chakra. In another major operation in 1970, Capt J S Thapa and Nb Sub Chandra Prakash Limbu led a patrol successfully and raided a hostile camp, and recovered a large number of weapons and ammunition, including a weapon lost by

the unit year earlier. In this action, Capt Thapa and Hav Dal Bahadur Rai were awarded Army Commander's Commendation. During Sep 1970, 2nd Lt R V Ram and Capt Chandran led a number of successful patrols and recovered number of weapons and stores, for which they were a Sena Medal and the Army Chief's Commendation Card, respectively.

During its two years tenure, the unit earned two Shaurya Chakras, three Sena Medals and three C O A S Commendation Cards.

6/5 GR (FF) in Manipur/Nagaland 1987

Under the command of Lt Col D D Dhoundiyal, the unit underwent orientation training of four weeks at Varangte. Soon after induction in Imphal, patrol led by Capt Ghosh killed one hard core insurgent of N S C N and recovered one double barrel gun from him. Thereafter, a patrol led by Maj Nair recovered one 7.62mm SLR rifle, while the one led by Nb Sub Sun Bahadur Pun located and destroyed a major N S C N camp in Ukhrul. A major raid was carried out under Lt Col Wadhawan, in which two insurgents were killed and some weapons, including one RCL gun was captured.

The unit won one S M (Lt Col Wadhawan), while Capt Ghosh and Rfn Deb Bahadur were Mentioned-in-Dispatches.

1/5 GR (FF) in Nagaland 1992

The unit was deployed in area Chakabama-Jessami, to negate the activities of NSCN (South). On 12 June, its vehicle column under Maj Satish Chandra (in which Col DJ Singh, the CO was also traveling) going from Chakabama to Jessami ran into an ambush laid by 40 UG of NSCN (South) near village Chizami. Though injured in the leg, Col DJ Singh rallied his escort and braving grenades and Molotov Cocktails, made a charge at the UGs deployed on a high ground. At this stage, a well sited machine gun of the enemy brought down accurate fire on the assaulting Gorkhas, but

soon the ambush was defeated. Though Col DJ Singh received a burst of machine gun fire, Nk Nirmal Thapa attacked one of the UGs and neutralized him on the spot. At the same time, Maj Satish Chandra, though gravely injured, led assault to break the ambush, from a distance of 20 m. In the meanwhile, Nk Karna Bahadur Gurung who was traveling in a 3 ton, though injured in the initial ambush, jumped out of the vehicle and took up a firing position behind a boulder, from where he could observe the UGs. Noticing one individual giving direction, he realized him to be the ambush commander. He deployed his machine gun and engaged this UG, killing him (who was later identified as Capt self styled Capt Pungthin). Killing of the ambush commander by Nk Karna Bahadur Gurung disheartened the UGs, who soon broke contact, leaving the body of their commander.

In this counter-ambush, though Col DJ Singh and Maj Satish Chandra were fatally wounded, the Gorkhas showed to the NSCN that they could beat them. The NSCN withdrew leaving behind shattered bodies of s s Capt Pungthin and s s Private AS Shimre, and their weapons. Hereafter, they never dared to ambush any convoy of the Gorkhas.

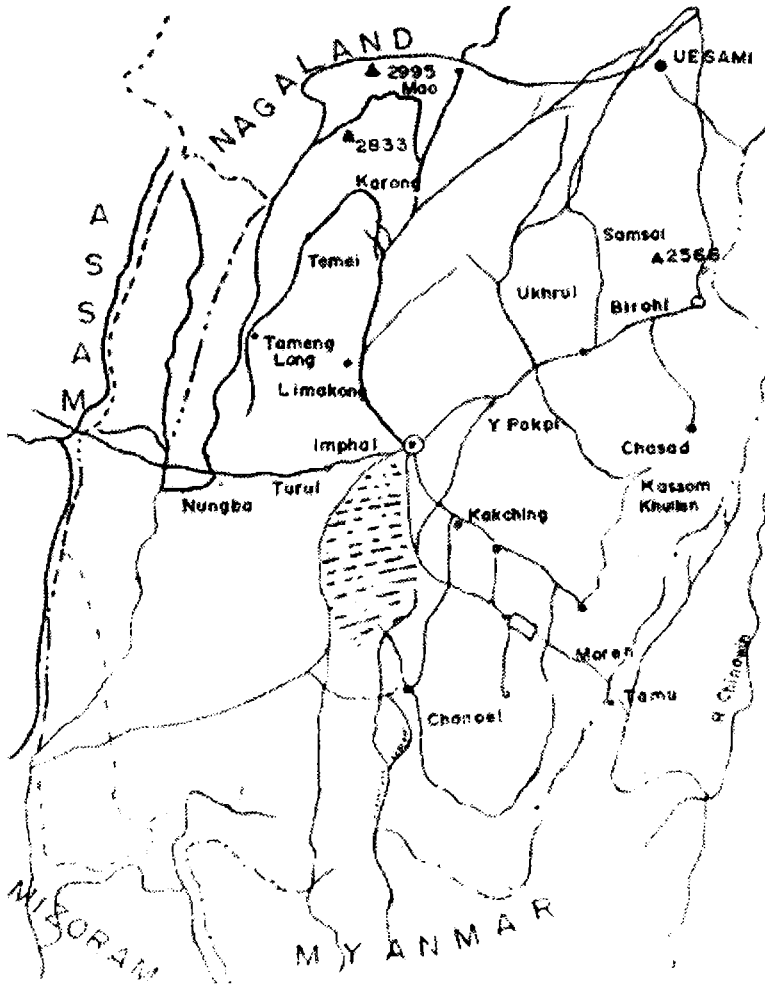
For showing exemplary courage and bravery, SM were awarded to Col DJ Singh, Maj Satish Chandra (both posthumous), Nk Nirmal Thapa and Rfn Karna Bahadur Gurung.

COUNTER INSURGENCY OPERATIONS IN MANIPUR

Background

Tucked in the north-eastern portion of the country, Manipur shares boundary with Nagaland, Mizoram and Assam states of India, and with Myanmar. Open borders, rugged mountainous terrain, lack of industrial development and total dependency for trade and commerce on communications with the neighboring states, the aspirations of locals have been marred, who have often taken to arms. Ethnic and demographic reasons, claim of the Nagas on its

its territory, illegal trafficking of drugs and goods from Myanmar, lack of job opportunities for the youth and easy availability of weapons led to insurgency. As the situation went beyond the control of the State, the Army was called-in to restore the situation, and has remained deployed since then.



4/8 GR in Manipur 1975-78

The unit reached Nagaland in December 1975, but as by then the 'Shiilong Peace Accord' had been signed by the Naga hostiles with the Government, the unit was moved to Manipur to control the Kukis rebels and elements of Tungkhul Nagas who were opposed to the Accord. As there were reports of some gangs having gone to China via Burma, active patrolling was carried out along the Indo-Burma border. Initially, the unit was under the command of Lt Col Ashok Krishna, who soon after induction handed over

to Lt Col R C Sharma, who in June 1979 was relieved by Lt Col B K Barooah.

2/1 GR Operations in Manipur 1980

Having moved in February 1980 under command of Lt Col D P Singh, the unit started patrolling around Imphal town, while simultaneously by their exemplary discipline, humane and helpful attitude and behavior, the troops won over the hearts and minds of the locals, specially the youth. Soon, they established a good network of intelligence. In June it was tasked to search and destroy a camp of National Socialist Council of Nagaland (N S C N) in Khagbal-Tanghkul Area, for which the unit was given an additional company of 4/3 GR. Launched under Maj Chopra on 24 June, the operation involved cordon and search of a number of villages, by operating through thick undergrowth. Moving by stealth, the columns raided the camp which led to recovery of documents belonging to A Angelus, the self styled Foreign Secretary of N S C N, a M22 Chinese automatic rifle, 100 detonators and a large quantity of ammunition. In another major operation conducted by Majs Bammi, Danial, Tewari, Sarabjit and Capt Rawat, the unit apprehended 16 insurgents and recovered fake currency, which they had stolen after a bank robbery. It also captured 4 insurgents on 16 September 1983, and dominated its area of responsibility by aggressive patrolling. It also apprehended the insurgents who had planned and assassinated the Chief Minister.

4/3 GR in Manipur 1983-84

The unit was deployed in Imphal-Churachandpur area, where a number of UG gangs were operating and were often involved in gun-running. In an operation on 23 August 83, Lt S Kashinath raided a camp and apprehended a number of hard core UG belonging to PLA and PREPAK gangs. He also recovered two rifles, 3 country made pistols, one Japanese made pistol, one M22 automatic rifle and 3 hand grenades.

Inspired by his bold actions, his troops launched relentless cordon and search operations, including one to apprehend Leichambam Khellemba, a hard core PREPAK member, who was hiding in a house in Auangkhum in Tamenglong District. In this operation conducted at night on 16 December 85 in dense fog, Lt Kashinath surprised the UG who had taken shelter behind bamboo door. Though in the ensuing exchange of fire Kashinath was fatally wounded, he succeeded in his mission. Besides apprehending the UG the patrol also recovered a Chinese M 22 rifle. For displaying bravery of a very high order, Lt Kashinath was awarded K C (Posthumous).

By organizing effective intelligence network assisted by good civic action, on 9 January 84 a trap was laid by Maj AK Nayak, in which they arrested a UG while he was negotiating an arms supply deal. For his efforts and good work, Maj Nayak was awarded VSM and SM (Gallantry).

In an operation launched on 3 September 84, Capt BS Bisht led a patrol to apprehend a dreaded NSCN Corporal Thering Anal/Joseph, who had earlier in a day light robbery raided the SDOs office in Chakpikarong. After a long night along Manipur River, he laid an ambush and challenged the gang of UG. On being surprised, the UG opened fire. However, assisted by Hav Bom Bahadur Basnet, Capt Bisht pounced on Corporal Anal and overpowered him. The patrol also recovered one Chinese pistol from the UG. For this action, Capt Bisht was awarded Shaurya Chakra (S C).

5/3 GR in Manipur 1993 Nagaland 1994

From October 93 onwards, the Gorkhas were employed in Road Opening Duties and other tasks along NH 36A (Kohima to Limekong) and dominating the adjoining areas. Thereafter, the unit moved to Nagaland and carried out extensive patrolling in Dimapur area, where it also raided a camp of UG, recovering a SLR and a large sum of cash.

5/5 GR (FF) in Manipur 1997/98

The unit carried out operations in Thoubal district, the granary of Manipur and hub of the valley based insurgent groups in the state. Due to weak presence of Security Forces in the area, till then the insurgents had a free run in the district, which was challenged and checked by the Gorkhas. By launching measures to win 'hearts and minds' of the local population, the intelligence soon started flowing to the unit. Unconventional methods were evolved by Col A D Gardner, Vr C, in that instead of moving along roads and tracks which often gave advance warning, the Gorkhas mastered the art of rowing country boats and moving through marshy lakes and ponds at night. The first operation was launched on night 25 January 98 under Maj KD Singh, and the Gorkha 'flotilla', in which a self styled Sergeant Wangthou and his stick leader Romeo of the United National Liberation Front, Thoubal District were neutralized. This was followed by another important action on night 21/22 May 98, in which the boat patrol under Capt SS Dhaliwal and his buddy Rfn Amar Bahadur Gurung killed four hardcore militants of UNLF, including SS Sergeant Oinamacha and recovered a large cache of war like stores.

Hereafter, the Gorkhas dominated their area of responsibility and in the next operation on 16 August 98 at Waikong, Capt Prasant Rao and his patrol of ten killed an insurgent belonging to PREPAK and recovered one SLR and some ammunition from him. Soon thereafter, Capt Rao led another successful patrol and neutralized a militant on 15 October, recovering a AK 56 rifle.

His success was followed by Maj V Narang who on 1 Nov neutralized an insurgent and recovered a SLR from Karongthel. On 2 March 99, the Gorkhas achieved a major success when acting on hard intelligence they raided a camp of Kangelei Yawoi Kanna Lup insurgents. They not only neutralized five insurgents but also recovered two SLR and two Chinese rifles, one Kenwood radio set and a large quantity of ammunition. During the unit's tenure in Manipur,

it neutralized 17 insurgents, wounded four and apprehended 127 people (declared Black). For there very good performance, the unit won two Shaurya Chakras (Capt SS Dhaliwal and Rfn Amar Bahadur Gurung), two SM (Maj KD Singh and Hav Ganga Bahadur Gurung) and a number of other commendations. It captured

Pistols-6

Rifles-SLR 5, AK-4 and Chinese rifles-2

40 mm Grenade Launcher-1

Chinese RPG-1

LMG-1.

It also recovered a large quantity of assorted ammunition, explosives and IEDs and 10 radio sets of all types.

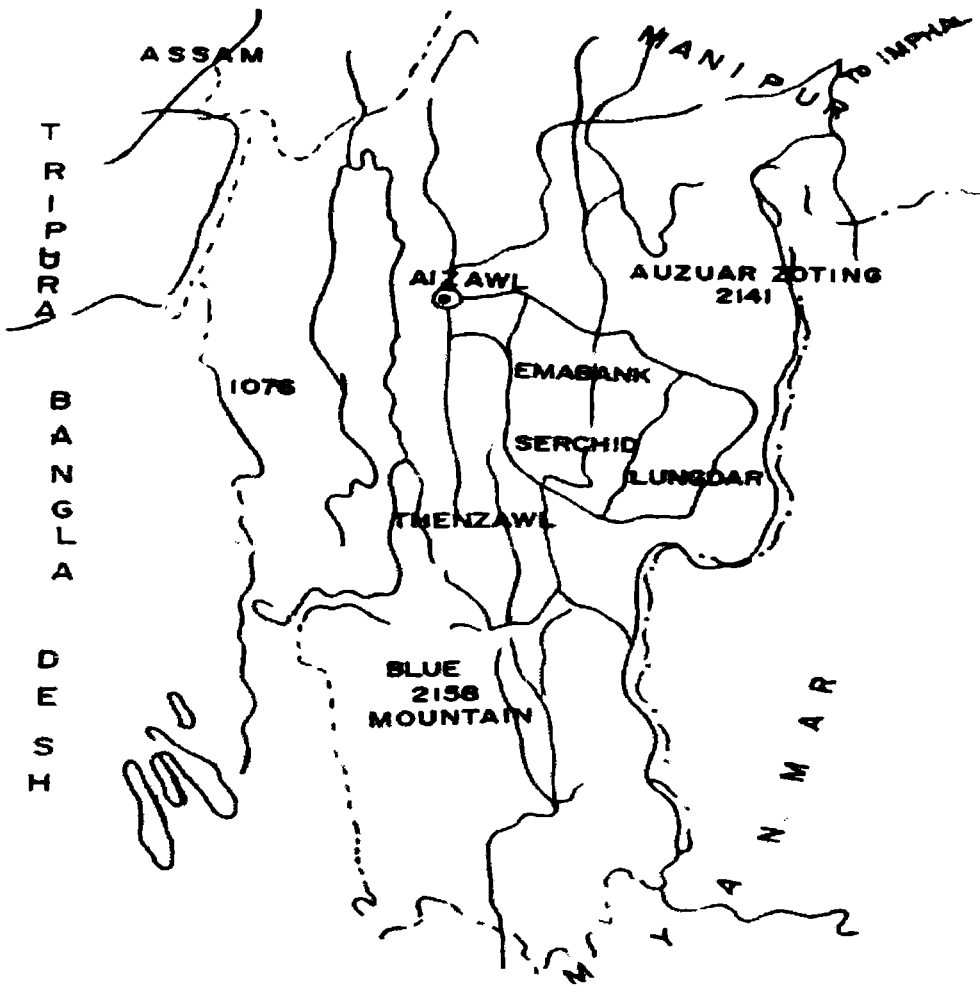
4/4 GR in Manipur 2003

During the year 2003/04, the unit was involved in LICO in Manipur against militants of United Naga Liberation Front. On 22 October 2002, during one such operation near village Phoipi, while laying in an ambush Rfn Hasta Bahadur Gurung neutralized two hard core militants with his sniper rifle, resulting in excessive retaliatory fire from them. In the ensuing fire-fight, though critically wounded, Rfn Hasta Bahadur continued to man the 'stop', which resulted in three more militants being accounted for. The patrol recovered one AK 56 rifle, one 9mm Chinese pistol, one 2 in Mortar, two carbines, two assorted Kenwood Radios, besides a large quantity of assorted ammunition. For displaying bravery and devotion to duty of a very high order, Rfn Hasta Bahadur Gurung was awarded SC (Posthumous).

THE GORKHAS FIGHTING INSURGENCY IN MIZORAM

2/11 GR Secures Aizwal Mar 1966

After doing a short stint in Nagaland during the cease fire, the unit was located at Agartala, when the Mizo insurgents raided and looted the treasuries at Aizwal and

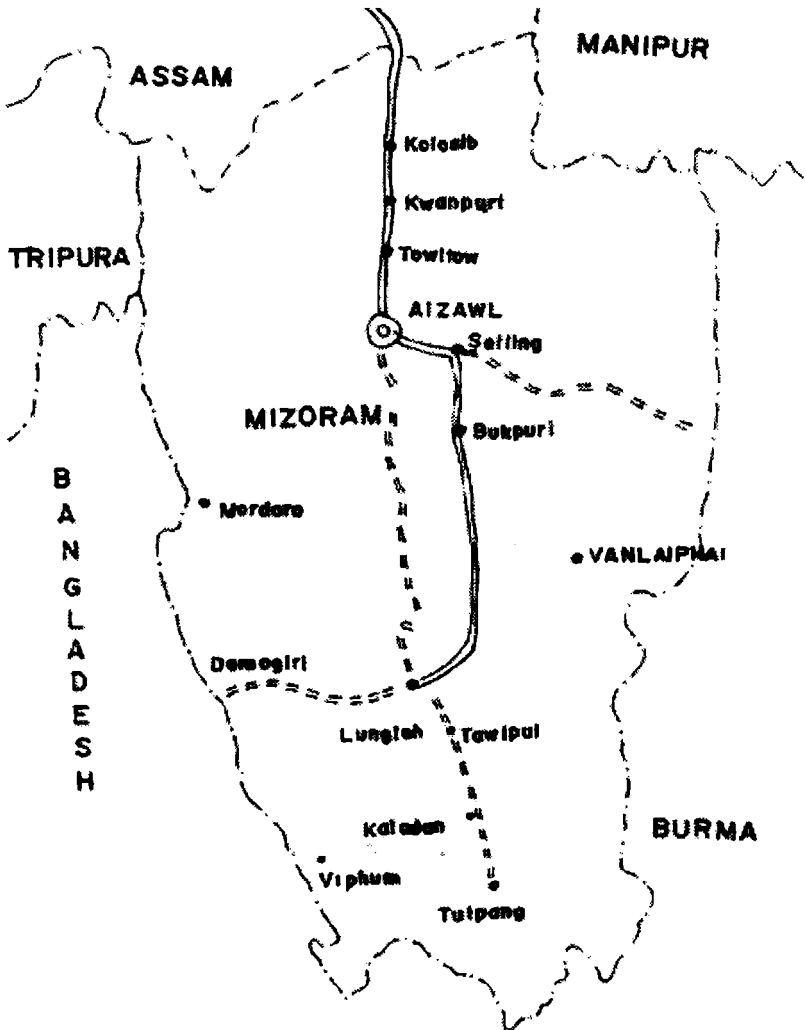


Lungleh, freed prisoners, attacked Assam Rifles posts and disrupted main road communications by burning several bridges.

At a very short notice, along with 8 SIKH, on 5 Mar the unit under Maj Ajmer Singh was tasked to advance from Agartala to Aizwal. Bypassing the Sikh's, Capt Vetri Natahan advanced with his company and after brushing aside minor opposition by Mizo hostiles enroute, linked up with the main column and assisted them in clearing Kolosib and Kawnpui. By 3 pm the brigade column had reached 3 km short of Aizwal, and occupied Chatlang Ridge, which dominated the town.

Though the town was burning, and there was sporadic machine gun fire, the Assam Rifles were still holding out, and had secured a football ground, where helicopters under

escort of fighter aircrafts landed 81 mm mortars of the unit, with Sub Deibe Keshar Rai, and provided vital fire support. Soon, the remaining companies joined-up, and though it rained heavily, the Gorkhas started sweeping through the town, clearing one house after another, till they linked-up with the Assam Rifles. By evening, the siege of Aizawl was lifted and announced on All India Radio, which encouraged many officials and people to return to the town.



Thereafter, columns were sent to clear Champai and Seling, along newly cut tracks which were not even fit for jeeps and were slushy. However, despite many logistic problems, the Gorkhas cleared opposition en-route and established the Government's control by 11 March 66, after launching a wooden bridge across a 35 m gap over a deep

two OR of Maj Prem Kumar's C Company was wounded. Capt Neog, the R M O showed extreme devotion to duty when despite being under fire, he continued to provide medical cover, for which he was awarded Shaurya Chakra. Similarly, though wounded L Nk Mani Kumar continued to man his radio set. When a jeep of A S C column came under fire, Rfn Karya Bahadur Rai showed great presence of mind and boldness and took over the wheels from the injured driver, and delivered mortar ammunition to the post, safely. Inspired by bravery of the Gorkhas, Lt Nima Tenduff, A S C, despite his injuries drove his vehicle under fire, and beat the ambush. In this clash, the hostiles left behind ten dead bodies and a large quantity of ammunition, while the battalion suffered two fatal and 14 non-fatal casualties. However, Champai was cleared of all hostiles.

The very next morning, Maj Bhanot took his D Company to re-capture Assam Rifles post, six km away, a task which he completed by 11 am, after three assaults against stiff resistance. Hereafter, long duration (30 to 40 days) helicopter maintained patrols were launched to apprehend the hostiles hiding in the jungles, with good results. Civic action was undertaken and essential items of rations, like salt, sugar and medicines were distributed to villagers living in far-flung areas, especially along the Indo-Myanmar border.

The hostiles ambushed three columns of the unit. While on 30 March and 12 May they were able to inflict light casualties, on 14 May Capt Natahan got the better of them and inflicted heavy casualties on them. In June 66, 2nd Lt Rajiv Mehra while leading a leave party convoy successfully defeated an ambush and killed two hostiles, though his column suffered seven casualties.

During June 1967, about 350 hostiles were reported to have been driven out by Myanmar, into India. The Gorkhas laid a number of ambushes along the Indo-Myanmar Border to intercept them successfully. In one such action, the column under self styled Capt Zaiwala of the Mizo National Army, suffered heavy casualties.

The unit was also involved in shifting and grouping of isolated villages along the main roads and tracks, a delicate and a sensitive task carried out with tact and persuasion, successfully.

3/11 GR Dec 1969 July 1971

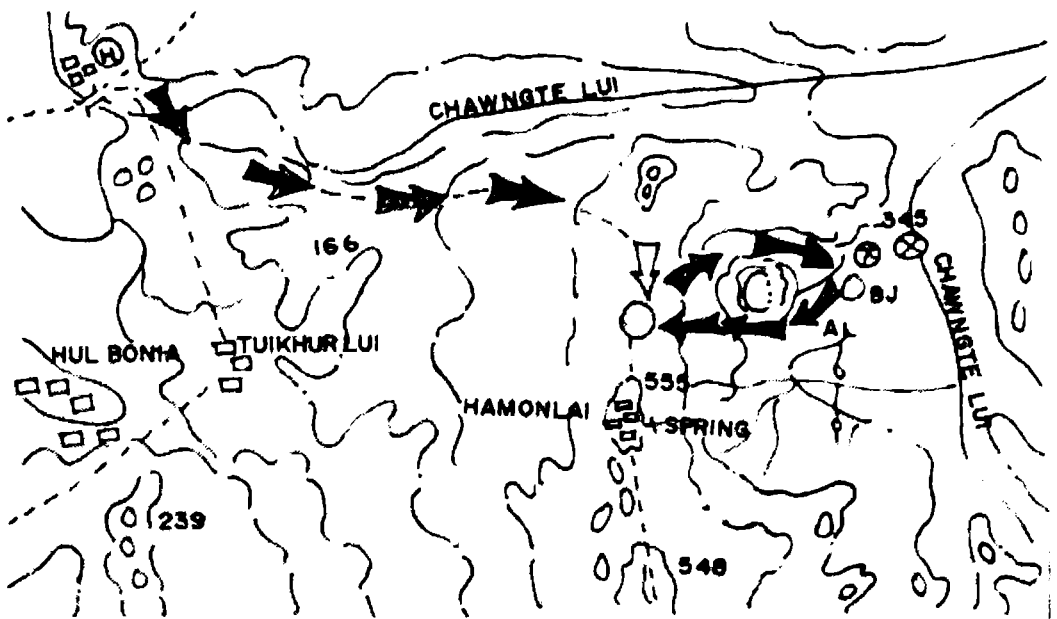
Under the command of Lt Col H S Mamik, the unit had its first Counter Insurgency Operations experience in Mizoram, during which it carried out a number of successful cordon and search operations. Posts were spread out along the India-Myanmar-East Pakistan Borders, and constant vigil had to be maintained as the hostiles were known to have camps across the I B. In one operation, acting on reliable information, during a rainy night Maj K S Mall led the Commando Platoon and completely surprised the hostiles and recovered valuable information and stores from them. After ten days, he led another patrol and by a forced speed march surprised the hostiles and raided their camp at Rankhiang, but the hostiles had by now crossed over to Myanmar.

Another important raid was carried out on 10 August 1970 by C Coy under Maj Mantravadi at Chawngte. Inhabited by Pawi, Lakhir and Chakma tribes, the area was often visited by the hostiles. Acting on reliable information, a patrol of 14 men marched 20 km avoiding beaten tracks and charged the camp, and recovered two rifles, a carbine, ammunition, demolition kit and propaganda material. For displaying qualities of sound leadership, both Mantravadi and the patrol 2 IC, Hav Prithi Bahadur Rai was awarded Sena Medals.

5/11 GR 1975-1978

Under the command of initially Lt Col P Dutt and for a short spell under R P Malhotra, and finally under later Lt Col R Dewasar, the battalion was located at Kolosib, with posts along the road from Verengte to Aizwal. Besides carrying out cordon and search operations, the unit was

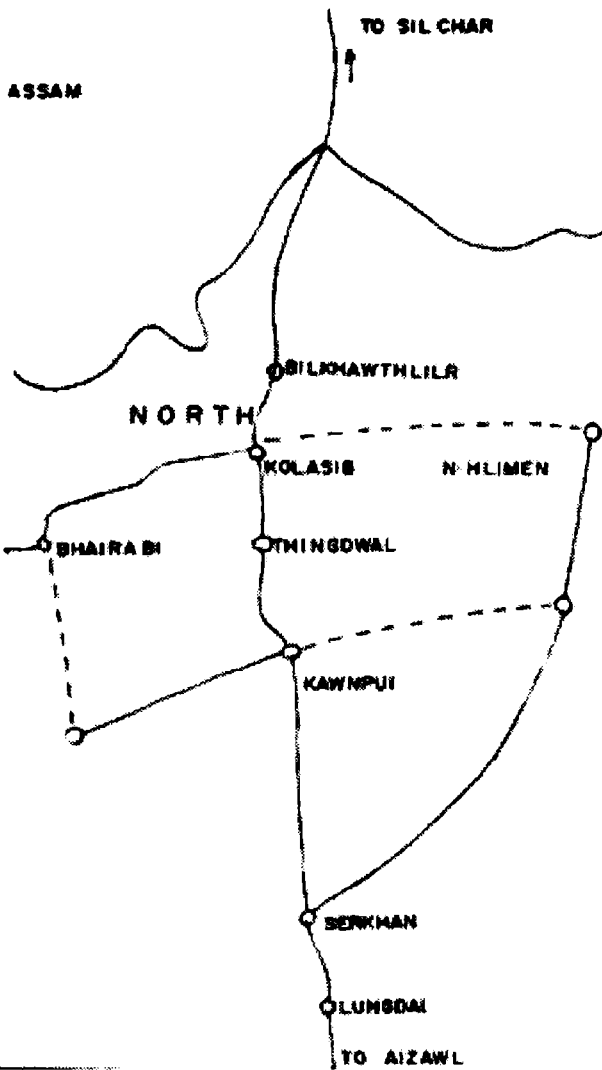
THIRD BATTALION: CHAWNGTE RAID—1970



tasked to instill confidence amongst the people in the newly formed Government, under the Indian Constitution.

The first important raid was carried out on 5 December 1975 at Thinghwal by Capt Madan Gopal, after a grueling five hours approach March. Though surprised, the hostiles soon opened fire as a result of which L Nk Sonam Rai who was leading the assault, was injured and was being dragged away by a hostile. Soon, Capt Gopal wrested the rifle from the hostile and after a hand-to-hand fight, shot him, and thus saved the N C O. Besides weapons, the patrol recovered documents of intelligence value from the camp. For their brave acts, while L Nk Sonam Rai was awarded Shaurya Chakra, Capt Gopal was awarded Sena Medal.

On receiving information of the return of hostile gang from china, in March 1979, Col Dewasar deployed a number of ambushes along the likely routes of infiltration along the Indo-Myanmar Border in Pullen area. By active patrolling carried out under Maj Bopanna by Sub Lalit Kumar Pradhan and Hav Sukra Bahadur Tamang along the 30 km stretch, the gang was successfully intercepted and apprehended. For their dedicated and deliberate actions, all three were awarded the C O A S Commendation Cards.



2/5 GR(FF) 1979

After undergoing special Counter Insurgency training at Virangte, in end November 1979 the unit was inducted into north Mizoram, and established an effective grid along Road Silchar-Aizwal road, and started patrolling.

The first encounter occurred on 1 June 1980, when a leave party convoy was attacked by Mizo National Front, with rockets and inflicted 4 fatal and 20 non-fatal casualties. A search was carried out by Maj Mankotia, but the insurgents were able to get away. However, after a brief cease fire from 30 June 1980 to 20 June 1982, the operations were resumed and within six days the Gorkhas captured 21 suspects and recovered some arms. By July, the Gorkhas had apprehended five important hostiles and recovered some

weapons, for which Sub Hasta Bahadur Thapa was Mentioned-in-Dispatches, Sub Gaja Ram Thapa was commended and Capt K K Sharma won a S C. Hereafter, the unit continued to carry out extensive patrolling with success, till it left the area in April 1983.

3/8 GR September 1983

The unit, under the command of Lt Col AK Tyagi, entered Mizo Hills and occupied posts, with a view to flush out insurgents. Active patrolling by all ranks ensured that the people were able to cast their votes in the elections held in April 84, peacefully. The unit tasted its first success on 24 July, when a patrol under Nb Sub Khim Bahadur Pun clashed with the hostiles and recovered one rifle, along with some ammunition. Next, Capt Cedric Thomas caught 8 hostiles on 5 March 85 and recovered more weapons, ammunition and cash, for which he was awarded the Chief's Commendation Card. In another action, on 8 September being part of the CO's escort, Nk Yo Bahadur Gurung showed great presence of mind and captured a hostile with weapon.

The unit was de-inducted from the area after the Peace Accord was signed on 1 July 1986.

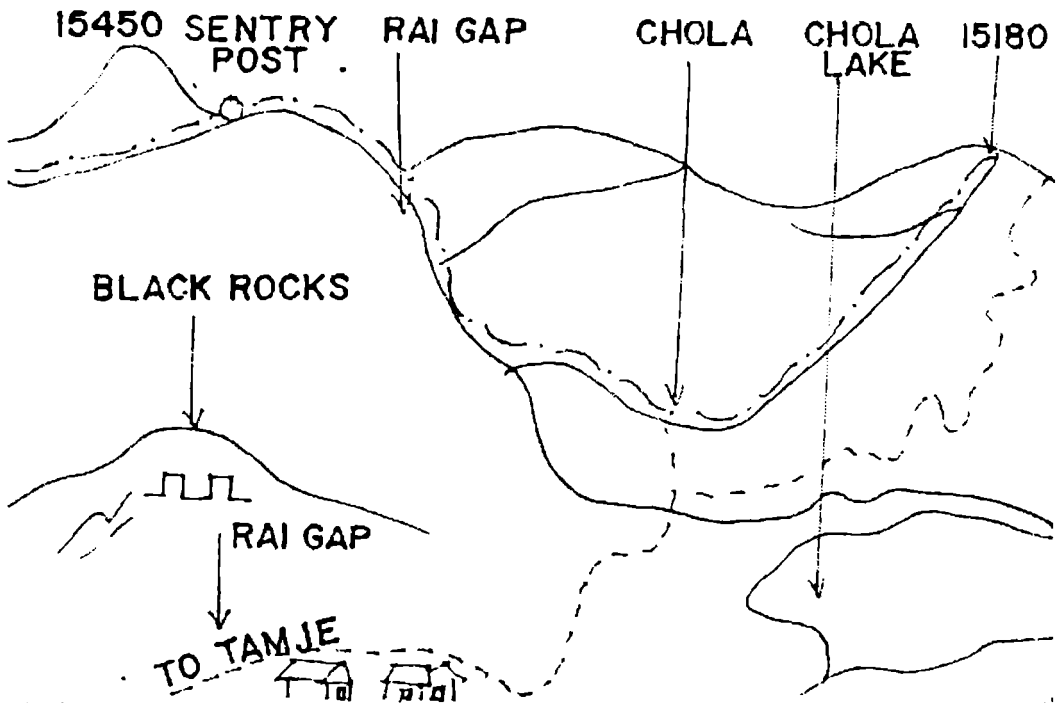
For displaying leadership of a very high order, the CO was awarded V S M.

5/3 GR in Mizoram-1980s

During the peace talks of 1986, the unit carried out extensive patrolling in southern Mizoram along Indo-Bangladesh border, to check movement from MNF camps across the border. Capt (now Col) Harminder Singh's patrol earned special commendation, as it obtained very vital information which was used to finalize the terms of surrender. For leading the patrol, he was awarded SM, while Hav Chhetra Bahadur Chhetri (later Sub Maj) was Mentioned-in-Dispatches.

THE GORKHA'S AT CHO LA-SIKKIM 1967**Background**

In this area of high altitude, at places the troops of China and India are in eye-ball to eye-ball deployment. Since the 1965 Indo-Pak War, when China had threatened India with dire consequences and even demonstrated opposite the border in Sikkim, the Indian troops had been on high alert as China did not accept the watershed principle as the boundary line. Thus, patrols from both sides often moved shoulder to shoulder along the watershed. At one place near Cho La pass, the centre of a big boulder was considered as the boundary line by India, which was contested by the Chinese.

SEVENTH BATTALION: CHOLA AREA 1967**The Incident**

Having completed its two years tenure, 7/11 GR was at Gangtok, on its way to a peace station, when on 11 September 1967 there was a sudden exchange of fire at Nathu

La in the Grenadiers sector. Thus, as a precautionary measure 7/11 GR was ordered to occupy depth defenses. Once the situation stabilized, the unit was again concentrated and was getting ready to move, when it was tasked to temporarily relieve a JAK RIFLES unit, for a month.

27 September, there had been a minor scuffle between the sentry of JAK RIFLES and the Chinese, on a flat portion of the unmarked boundary, which had a 30 cm high boulder on a narrow crest which marked the dividing line, according to the watershed principle. Three Indian and Chinese soldiers were positioned on opposite side of the boulder at two metre distance from each other, more or less eyeball to eyeball. During the scuffle, a Chinese soldier had been ruffed up and had lost a button. So the situation was already tense when the Gorkhas were tasked to take over the sector.

On 28 September, C and D Company groups under 2nd Lts M S Samuel and R S Rathore, were ordered to move and take over positions of JAK RIFLES. While C Company was to occupy Twin Huts and Pt 15181 (with M M G) and Cho La (with R C L), D Company was to be deployed at Pt 15,450 and Rai Gap with a Mortar Fire Control. The mortars were deployed in depth. The battalion second-in-command had positioned himself at Twin Huts, and was observing the movement of his troops, when at 9:15 am October 1, he observed that a Chinese section was trying to encircle Pt 15,450. He immediately alerted the troops who were still moving up, to be vigilant.

At this time, Nb Sub Gyan Bahadur Limbu was involved in a heated argument with the Chinese on the Boulder, and had planted his foot on it. The Chinese pushed Nb Sun Limbu's foot back, which he re-planted on the Boulder. At this, one Chinese bayoneted the J C O in the arm, at which the Gorkhas used their Kukris and cut off arms of the Chinese soldier who had hit their J C O. This led to opening of fire by the Chinese, which was suitably replied by the Indian troops.

By now, a Chinese patrol had encircled the post taken

over by L Nk Krishna Bahadur, when he decided to assault them. When he received three bullet hits and was fatally wounded, Rfn Devi Parsad Limbu, took out his Kukri and killed at least five Chinese, before he was also fatally wounded. He was awarded Vr C, posthumously.

Lt Rathore at Pt 15,450, though wounded by a machine gun burst, continued to lead his men bravely, which inspired his men to fight till the end. In the meanwhile, the mortars had opened up and brought down accurate fire on the attacking Chinese, when Joshi detected another enemy group trying to encircle Pt 15,450. With complete disregard for his personal safety, the C O took a rifle from his protection section, and personally engaged the enemy, thwarting their attack plan. As by 1015 am own position at Twin Huts and Rai's Gap were also under rocket and machine gun fire, Joshi along with his protection party moved out just before his bunker crashed. The Chinese were also able to interdict the mortar position and JAK Post at Pt 15,180, which had not as yet been taken over by the Gorkhas. During this move, the Chinese were able to kill one OR from Joshi's party, while Joshi himself accounted for two Chinese dead.

By now heavy fire was brought on the Chinese due to which they were not able to expand their gains. Hav Tinjong Lama, the recoilless rifle detachment commander at Cho La located one H M G of the Chinese, and destroyed it with a direct hit. The Chinese retaliated and brought down heavy fire on Cho La, but the brave N C O continued to engage them, till his ammunition lasted. At about 1130 am, the Chinese fired a few green vary lights, probably for a cease fire, but it was replied with a heavy artillery shelling by own guns. The firing continued till about 4 pm, when the area was covered with thick fog, after which the C O made his way back to Twin Huts. Though initially presumed dead, he reached there by 5 pm, and requested the G O C to allow him to launch a counter attack to recapture Pt 15,450 the same night, as any delay would permit the enemy to strengthen the position. Though initially there was some hesitation on Joshi's plan of a silent attack, it was agreed to.

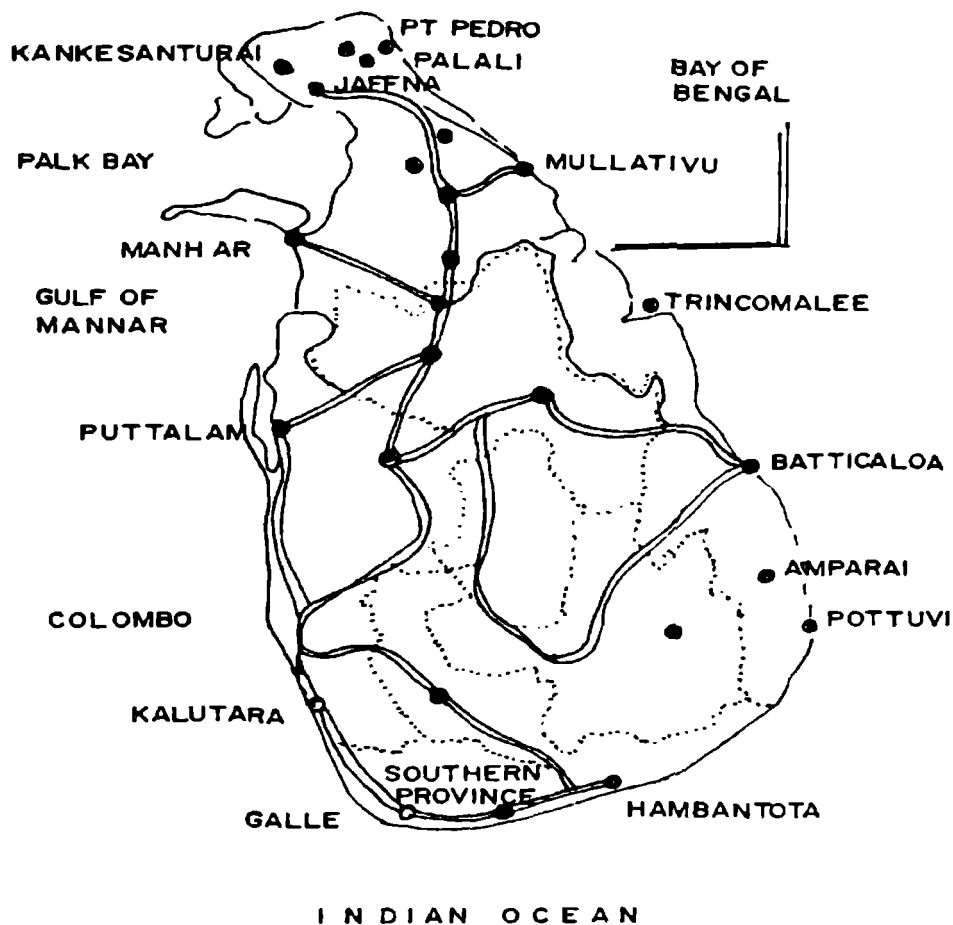
Commencing the move on night 1/2 October, with Capt Parulekar leading his B Company with a guide from JAK RIFLES, Joshi with his Kiranti Gorkhas reached short of their objective just before first light. Though the Chinese fired some flares the Gorkhas attacked them from two directions, and re-captured Pt 15.450 soon after day light, without suffering any casualties.

In this operation, the unit earned two Vr Cs and proved that they were superior to the Chinese soldiers.

THE GORKHA'S IN 'OPERATION PAWAN' SRI LANKA

Background

As the ethnic strife between the Tamils and Sri Lankans took a violent turn in mid 1980s and their own forces were not able to restore the situation, in 1987 Sri Lanka requested India to assist by sending the Indian Armed Forces.



The Tamil Tigers (L T T E) were well equipped with modern small arms, had very innovative methods of using improvised explosives devices (I E Ds) were highly motivated and enjoyed local support in their areas. The terrain was marshy with a number of small islands and thick jungles and cultivated fields. While good roads connected main towns and villages, movement off the track was difficult. Thus airfields, ports and railway lines assumed importance. Language was another barrier, as the locals mainly spoke Tamil or Sinhali. The climate was humid and warm, with heavy rainfall and cyclonic storms. While initial contingents of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (I P K F) were flown in and their heavy baggage and transport was sent by sea, later units sailed in two ships.

Initially, the I P K F was welcomed by the L T T E, but fighting broke out when they were asked to surrender their weapons, which also meant dealing with a hostile population. It was in this situation that the Indian Armed Forces operated for nearly three years, before they were pulled out.

5/1 GR from October 1987 to November 1988

The unit was airlifted from Gawalior to Paleli Airfield, Jaffna on 18 October, and was immediately ordered to advance to Kopai North via Urampirai and link-up with 4 MAHAR. Allotted Infantry Combat Vehicles (I C Vs) and a detachment of Engineers for mine clearing, the advance commenced early morning on 19th, but was held up due to enemy opposition en-route, as the L T T E had occupied houses dominating the road. In this clash, six enemy cadres were killed and nine were wounded, while the column suffered ten fatal and seven non-fatal casualties. Urampirai being a strong-hold of the L T T E, they engaged convoys and tried to ambush patrols by occupying houses dominating the routes, often operating in disguise of common farmers and civilians. However, active patrolling maintained pressure on them, which resulted in a clash on 20 October, in which a two platoon charge by Maj K P Singh on a double story house resulted in killing four and wounding eight L T T E

cadres. In another operation on 26 October, a large explosive dump (probably manufacturing plant for I E Ds) was unearthed close to the unit lines. Search of Jaffna College, area of Manipal and the Jetty also resulted in capture of a number of AK Rifles, explosives and 4 kg of Cyanide. Besides search operations, the unit also looked after the large number of refugees who had taken shelter in Nallur temple, amongst whom the R M O was most popular. In another significant operation, a number of prominent L T T E leaders were apprehended from Jaffna Bus Stop on 4 June 1988, along with one AK Rifle, one 9 mm Carbine, one 9 mm Pistol and some ammunition.

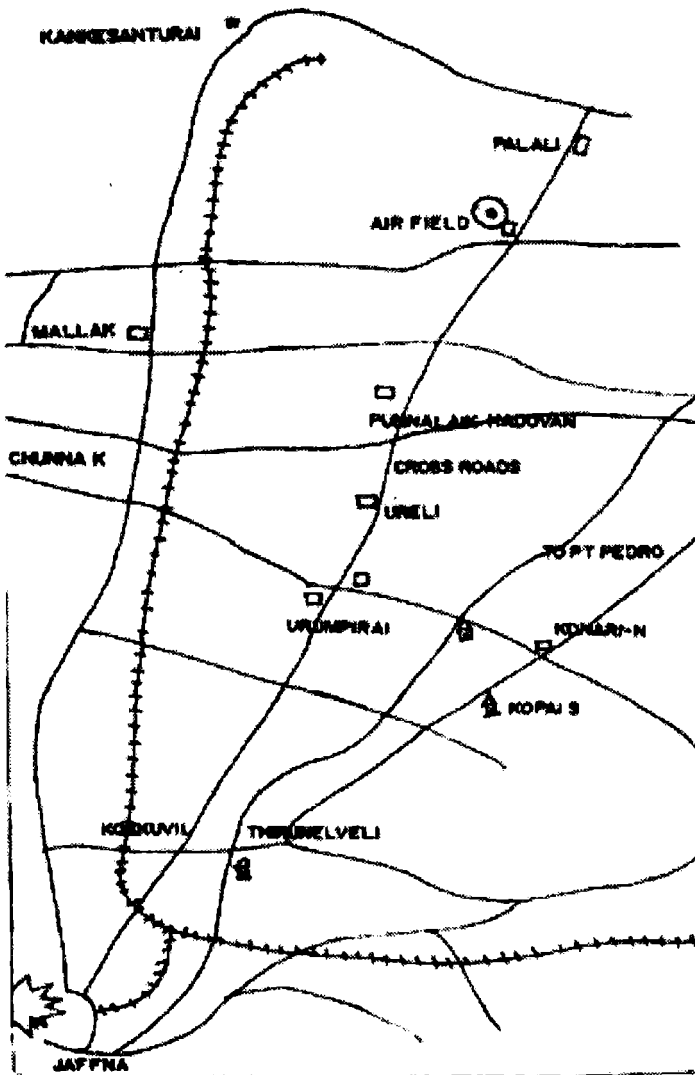
For displaying bravery of a very high order, the unit was awarded two Vr C (including Sub Maj Bhagwan Singh Rana), three S M (including Lt Col B C Pandey), while one OR was Mentioned-in-Dispatches.

4/5 GR (FF) in Sri Lanka October 1987

Under the command of Lt Col I B S Bawa, the unit was airlifted on 11 October, and reached Palali airfield, at 1040 am. As a detachment of Sikh Light Infantry and Para Commandos had been surrounded by the L T T E at Jaffna, despite difficulty of language and lack of intelligence, the unit commenced advance at 6:30 pm, same day. After an advance of 4 km, the leading Company came under intense fire from a village, which was neutralized by a quick attack, and some L T T E cadres were apprehended. Thereafter, A Company under Maj Gardner also came under fire, but he soon organized a two company attack, using D Company under Maj N J D Singh as a cordon. He personally led his troops and cleared the school and houses, and though wounded, refused to be evacuated. The advance was resumed by Maj Singh, but soon he was fired by a young girl who looked innocent, and had to be evacuated. At this stage, the troop of tanks requested by Col Bawa joined the column.

A night attack on Kondavil was launched on Ni 12/13 Oct in which Col Bawa himself led A Company. Despite

heavy enemy fire, the Gorkhas were able to establish contact with the beleaguered force of Sikh Light Infantry and Para Commandos, after which he returned to the battalion. The operation was finally over by 4 am on 13 October, and the whole Force returned to Urumpirai, tanks leading the column and the Gorkhas doing the rear guard. However, once the tanks had passed, the L T T E cadres engaged the rear guard from vantage points along the road, due to which the Gorkhas suffered casualties. Notwithstanding such fire, the Gorkhas made efforts to clear the houses enroute, and in one such action Sub Tula Ram Gurung was fatally wounded.



Palali-Jaffna Arear; 4/5th; October 1987.

As the enemy was engaging D Company under Maj N J D Singh from close range, Lt Col Bawa moved up to arrange mortar fire and air strikes on the enemy, when he was hit in the chest. But unmindful of his own wounds, Bawa relayed the latest situation to Brigade HQ and D Company by radio, though his radio operator, Rfn Ashok Kumar Thapa was also seriously wounded. For showing gallantry and devotion to duty of a very high order, Col Bawa was awarded M V C and Maj N J D Singh Vr C, both posthumously. Sub Prem Bahadur Thapa took showed devotion to duty of a very high order, when he risked his life in recovering bodies of Maj N J D Singh and Rfn Ashoka Kumar Thapa, for which he was awarded Vr C. The situation was stabilized after the gunship helicopters of the Sri Lankan Air Force joined the battle.

Though in this operation the battalion had suffered heavy casualties and was left with only two company commanders, it relied on its fine and dependable lot of J C O s for further operations. As L T T E cadres were often in civilian disguise, great care had to be taken during searches.

On 27 October, the unit was airlifted to Vavunia, where they carried out search operations in the thick jungles. While returning from one such patrol, the party was ambushed by fire of three machine guns, in which an OR of the engineer's team attached with the unit was killed. To break the ambush, Sub Man Bahadur Gurung boldly charged at the enemy, during which he was mortally wounded. Similarly, on 30 November, the vehicle convoy moving under the protection of Capt Mahipal Singh came under effective enemy fire, when the leading vehicle had blown up on an I E D planted under a culvert, resulting in a few casualties. Though L T T E cadres tried to snatch the weapons but Capt Mahipal Singh thwarted their plans.

On 2 January 1988 the Gorkhas moved to a new area, where on 17 Apr they succeeded in nabbing a hard core terrorist. On 28 May, a patrol under 2 Lt Rawat surprised an L T T E group and killed three of them, though Rawat

was also seriously wounded. Before de-induction in December 1988, the unit assisted in safe conduct of elections in Trincomalee region.

During its tenure in Sri Lanka, the unit lost 21 all ranks (including Lt Col Bawa, one more officer and four JCOs), while 70 were wounded. It won one M V C, three Vr Cs and one Y S M, while two other ranks were Mentioned-in-Dispatches.

1/5 GR (FF) July 1989

Under the command of Lt Col H B Vadde, the unit was earmarked for Batticoloa. However, while still on high seas it was diverted to Trincomalee. Finally, after training at Jamalia, its two companies were heli-lifted first to Vavunia and then to Trincomalee, where in end July it was tasked to move to Jaffna. On 28 July 1989 an agreement was reached between the Government of Sri Lanka and India to defuse the situation on the island, following which there was a visible reduction in hostilities. However, there was no let-up in operations.

Orders for move to Jaffna resulted in move of an advance party, when these were changed on 29 August, and the unit tasked to move to Vavunia, and carry out 'search and destroy operations in an area of 4 kms by 4 kms.' The area of responsibility had thick jungle with thorny undergrowth, very limited tracks or landmarks. During monsoon, the cultivated patches turned into ponds, making movement of any type difficult. The villagers were mostly sympathizers of the L T T E and had their hideouts and camps in the forest area. The companies carried out relentless operations from 7 to 13 September, and after destroying a few camps and recovering weapons, reached Jaffna by 13 September. Thereafter, intense search of the area was carried out till third week of Jan 1990, when orders for de-induction were received. However, on 21 Jan, a major clash took place when 200-300 L T T E cadre's isolated one of the company post, attacked it and ambushed a convoy of a neighboring unit.

As the isolated post was running short of rations and ammunition, Capt Tiwari at great personal risk supplied it with essential material, while Maj Rajput searched the area and Maj Rajpal Singh opened the route. Though in the exchange of fire Rfn Nir Bahadur Thapa was killed and Sub Man Bahadur Thapa and two OR were wounded, but the siege was lifted, effectively. Thereafter, as part of the overall plan, the unit was de-inducted to India on 3 February 1990.

1/1 GR from February 1988 to August 1989

The unit sailed by ships and by March 83 had deployed at Vellukulam area, in four company nodes. Along with a company of Madras Engineers, a few M-8 attack helicopters (AKBAR) were allotted for fire support.

On 17 March, while on a patrol Hav Dil Bahadur Gurung and Rfn Rajinder Bahadur Thapa got detached from the main column. They were subsequently ambushed, in which Dil Bahadur was wounded. However, Rajinder Thapa not only looked after him, but brought him safely to the post, for which he was awarded Vr C.

In subsequent operations it dominated the Veravil Bulge by sustained patrolling, raided a number of camps and recovered radio sets and 66 mm Fire and Forget anti-tank missiles. Months of July and August saw a number of encounters with the L T T E and the unit detecting and destroying a number of I E Ds. In one exchange of fire, L Nk Parsad Gurung showed great presence of mind and alertness while engaging the enemy, for which he was awarded S M. In all, the battalion suffered two fatal and one non-fatal casualties in this operation, in which Para Commandos were also participated.

The performance of the unit was much appreciated by Lt Gen A S Kalkat, the Overall Force Commander of the I P K F, who wrote that 'I am immensely pleased with your performance. I rate you one of the best battalions in the world'.

4/1 GR January 1989 March 1990

Under command of Col R P Singh, the unit concentrated at Madras by January 89 and after a short training capsule, was inducted into Sri Lanka in February, where its area of responsibility extended from River Mahaveli Ganga up to Monkey Bridge. Tasked to cut river routes of the L T T E, the area had thick undergrowth and forests, which were used by them as hide outs and camps. After a few small encounters, a major clash took place on 22 February, when a platoon patrol was ambushed by the L T T E., in which the leading scout, Rfn Khem Bahadur Thapa was killed. Though the unit lost 19 men in a mine blast incident on 25 July, the men did not loose heart and took the challenge on 1 August, when the road opening party under Nb Sub Kesh Bahadur Gurung killed Capt Rajani, the Area Commander of L T T E and his three comrades.

Another important clash took place on 20 September, the day cease fire was to be effective, when a road opening party under Sub Jai Prakash detected a L T T E insurgent. Taking prompt action, though wounded in the fire-fight, the J C O with his men chased the insurgents, killing two.

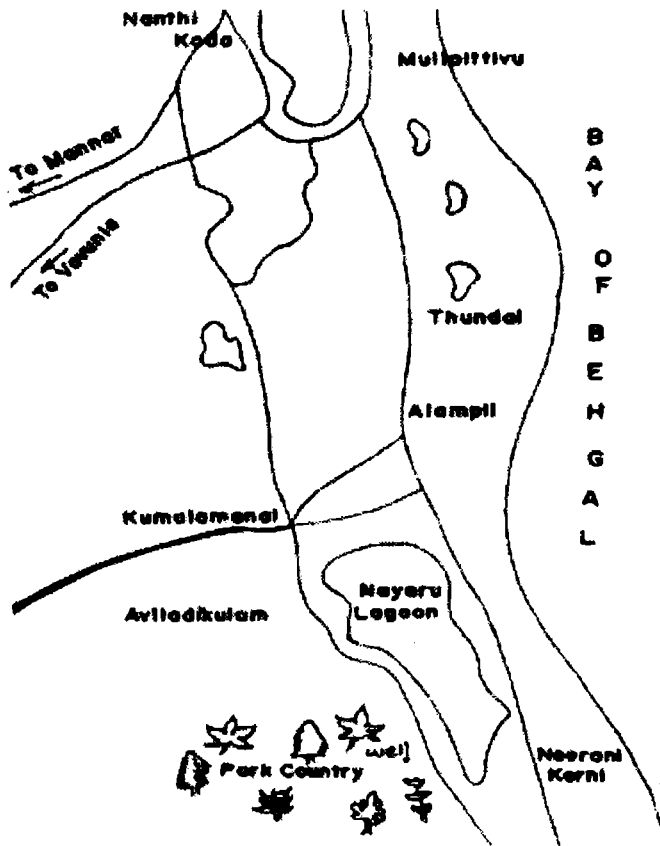
On 1 March 1990, as part of the overall plan, the unit was de-inducted and reached Delhi, where it was welcomed amongst others, by Prime Minister V P Singh. In its one years stay in Sri Lanka, the Battalion suffered 28 casualties, including two JCOs, while twenty all ranks were wounded (including one officer and one JCO). It killed 7 L T T E cadres and injured 15 and captured a large quantity of explosive and mines.

For showing bravery of a very high order, Maj Anurag Nariyal was awarded Kirti Chakra, while Sub Jai Prakash Rana, Nb Sub Chandra Bahadur Thapa and Nk Gyan Bahadur Gurung were awarded Sena Medal, the first two, posthumously.

6/8 GR in Sri Lanka January 1989

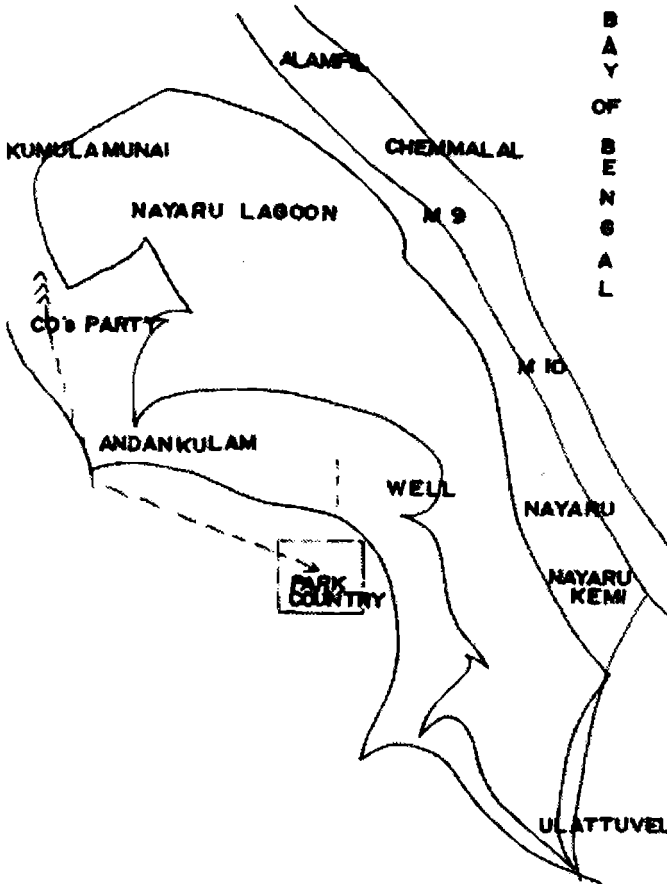
Under the command of Col V K Bakshi, the unit reached Trincomalee on 28 January, and was assigned the task of conducting parliamentary elections in the Tamil-inhabited area of Mannar. Thereafter, the unit moved to Kumulamanai on the east coast, with its area of operations covering Vanni jungles. The task involved carrying out cordon-and-search-and-destroy missions, laying of ambushes, and undertaking search and destroy missions against the L T T E, who were very active in the area and enjoyed local support.

The first major operation was led by the C O and was carried out soon after taking over the operational responsibility from 22 SIKH, from 1 Mar 1989 in the Vanni Forest. Patrols were launched on un-frequented tracks along Nayar Lagoon through thick forest, up to the open grassy patch, named Park Country. A number of camps were destroyed, disrupting the L T T E network in the area. Stops



Area of operations 6/8th Sri Lanka, 1989-1990.

had been established at Ullatuveli and Mile 9, to close escape routes of the insurgents.



2nd to 4th March 1989.

Based on specific information, the forest was searched from 2 March onwards, and the first contact was established at 4:45 pm, but after a fire-fight lasting an hour, the militants withdrew. Own troops suffered one fatal and two non-fatal casualties, while those of the militants could not be ascertained, due to darkness. At first light 3 March, a helipad was secured for replenishing ammunition and evacuating casualties, but it was fired upon by the enemy. Meanwhile B Company spotted some boat movement in the Lagoon and engaged it.

In the Park Country, from early morning of 3 March, the L T T E tried to encircle the Gorkhas and brought down effective machine gun and mortar fire on them. Col Bakshi asked for reinforcements and replenishment by helicopter, and also directed his troops at the two stops to move towards

his location. Soon, team of 9 Para Commando under Col H S Lidder landed at Neerani Kerni, and troops from Ulattuveli were ordered to link-up with him. But the L T T E had laid ambushes to block these moves and prevented their link-up. By noon, as the fighting intensified, command and control of Col Bakshi's party had been disrupted, and though he was wounded twice, he continued to rally his men boldly, leading them from the front, for which he was awarded M V C, immediately. The radio operators of C O's party (Hav Guman Singh Gurung) and A Company (L Nk Kumar Singh Gurung) were also awarded Vr Cs, posthumously, for maintaining radio communications till the end. As their ammunition ran out, Sub Man Bahadur Thapa and Nb Sub Gambir Mall Thakur led attacks by Kukris for breaking the ambush but were fatally wounded, while Sub Bal Bahadur Thapa received non-fatal wounds. By 3 pm, the party had suffered 11 fatal (including the C O and two JCOs) and 17 non-fatal (including one J C O) casualties, when Maj Thimmaiah was ordered to break contact and return to Kumuamunai, with all wounded. He broke contact and evading the L T T E in small groups, reached the battalion HQs on 4 March. Later, radio intercepts revealed that in this clash 45 L T T E cadres were killed (including some leaders), while 13 were wounded.

In subsequent operations between April-September 89, the unit captured two fiber glass boats, a large quantity of rations and fuel, number of mines and destroyed a number of camps in the forest.

In another major operation, on 27 June the Gorkhas carried out search of village Alampai, under Lt Col Tewari, 2 IC. The L T T E group was taken by surprise and in the 1½ hour fire-fight, three of the enemy cadres including their leader Madhavan were killed, while the Gorkhas suffered four fatal casualties. The L T T E retaliated on 29 June and attacked our posts at Nayaru and Chemmalai, and though outnumbered and isolated, the Gorkhas held their positions against heavy odds. In this action, Nb Sub Ran Bahadur

Pun, L Nk Bhakta Bahadur Pun and 2nd Lt Deepak Vashisht displayed bravery of a very high order.

On 7 August, in a well coordinated ambush the Gorkhas under Sub Narayan Bahadur Gurung and Nb Sub Madan Gurung successfully engaged a column of L T T E, killing six and wounding five. As the fire-fight continued, patrols under Nb Sub Bhupal Singh Rana and Maj SK Sharma with 81 mm mortars support under Capt Dogra also joined in, and forced the L T T E to break contact.

By the time the unit was de-inducted to India on 14 Dec, it had suffered 28 fatal (including Col Bakshi and 2 JCOs) and 33 non-fatal casualties. It won one M V C (Col Bakshi, posthumously), two Vr Cs (Hav Guman Singh Gurung and L Nk Kumar Singh Gurung), and five of its men were awarded Army Commander's Commendation.

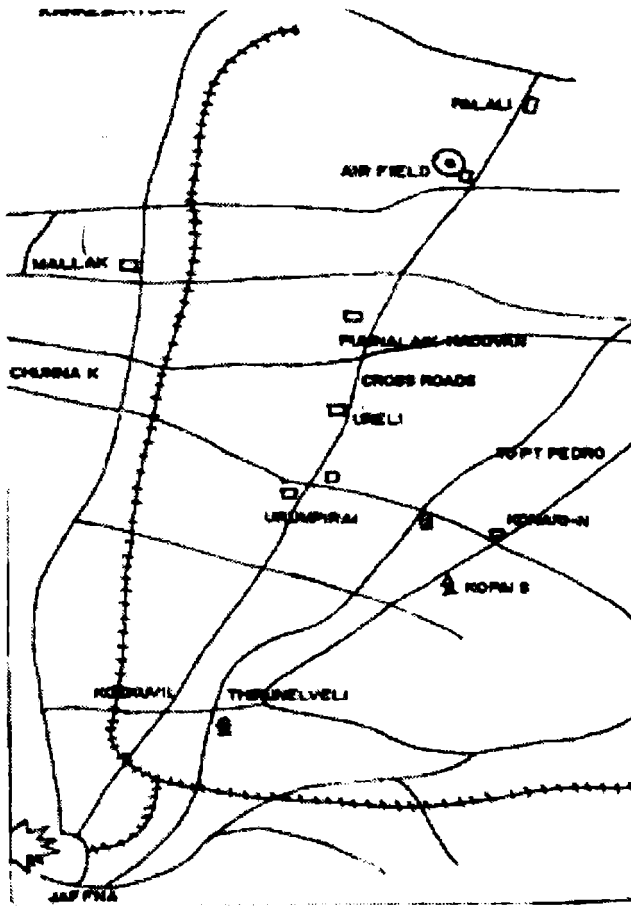
7/8 GR in Sri Lanka September 1988

Under the command of Lt Col K P Sasikumar, the unit was deployed in and around Kondavil, with companies at Tirunelveil, Nallur, Kopi North, Kopi South and Urumpiri. Though a few minor clashes took place during October 88, the unit suffered first non-fatal casualty on 29 October, when L Nk Ram Bahadur Pun was wounded by an I E D. The unit launched three patrols the same night and captured four enemy cadres. Similar raids were carried out during November and on 16 November Capt R S Raghav captured a pistol, a grenade and assorted ammunition. Another clash took place on 10 Dec, when Lt Col Sasikumar's party chased and killed one terrorist and recovered a 9 mm pistol, with ammunition. The unit ensured that the Presidential Elections on 19 Dec were conducted peacefully.

On 19 January 1989, L T T E activist fired on L Hav Hom Bahadur Gurung and Nk Soman Rai, while they were guarding their vehicle in Jaffna town, while on 14 March Maj S Mehta's party was fired from a false ceiling during a search mission in a house. On 14 April, the L T T E made an abortive attempt to blow up a post with an explosive

filled car, but the car exploded 150 m short of the post of the University Cross Road on the Jaffna-Palai Road, loosing four of their cadres.

In an encounter on 8 June 1989, at Tirunelveli, a patrol led by L Nk Bal Bahadur Thapa recovered Rs Three lakhs from the enemy, but the brave NCO was fatally wounded in the exchange of fire. For his heroic deed, he was awarded Vr C. On 11 December, Maj S K Singh and Capt S Sood led a patrol to search a camp and recovered a light machine gun earlier abandoned by a local para military unit.



Area of operations, 7/8th, Sri Lanka, 1988-1990.

On 21 January 1990, one company under Maj S K Sinha was sent in aid of a neighboring unit, for opening Road Jaffna-Kandy, from Jaffna Gate to Ariali. Col Sasikumar, with his protection party was also with this company. Soon, they

to clear four houses successfully. However, while charging the enemy hiding in the fifth house, Col Sashikumar was wounded in his chest. L Nk Tul Bahadur Rana brought him behind a tree and rendered first aid, but at 2:10 pm he passed away in the lap of this NCO. Hereafter, Maj Sinha charged the house and in the ensuing fire-fight, L Nk Chet Bahadur Thapa and Rfn Prakadh Chandra Thapa were also fatally wounded, while Maj Sinha, Nb Sub Ram Kaji Gurung and two OR were wounded. The militants, some 40 in number suffered heavy casualties and gave ground only when they were attacked by Capt Sood with reinforcement. The L T T E again fired on the Gorkhas on 29 and 30 January, but when challenged, their cadres did not give fight.

The Gorkhas returned to India in February 1990. During OPERATION PAWAN the unit suffered 10 fatal (including the CO) and 15 non-fatal casualties (including three JCOs). It won two Vr Cs (Col Sasikumar and L Nk Bal Bahadur Thapa, both posthumous), one Yudh Seva Medal (Maj V Bhatia), five S Ms, while one OR was Mention-in-Dispatches. Maj V K Nautiyal received the Army Chief's Commendation and four OR won Army Commander's Commendation Card

THE GORKHA'S IN OPERATION RAKSHAK-THE PUNJAB-1990s

Background of Operation RAKSHAK in the Punjab

Having failed to defeat India in conventional wars, in late 1980s Pakistan adopted the strategy of 'Bleeding India with a Thousand Cuts', by inciting terrorism and militancy in the border states of Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir

As per their plan, a number of disgruntled and misguided Punjabi youth, both from India and some from abroad, were lured to Pakistan, where after training and arming, they were infiltrated back into the Punjab, to create disturbances leading to insurgency. As by 1989 the situation had gone beyond the control of local police and PMF, the Army was deployed on 'border sealing' and 'anti-terrorist' operations in the hinterland, under OPERATION RAKSHAK. Soon, as

the insurgency also spread to the state of Jammu and Kashmir, troops were also deployed there. While in the Punjab the situation was brought under control and elections were conducted in 1991, in J & K the situation became more critical as Pakistan sent foreign militants and those surplus from Afghanistan, thus Operation RAKSHAK II still continues in that state.

4/1 GR in Jandialaguru

Moving in May 1990, the unit's area of responsibility spread to nearly 600sq km, where it was to 'hunt and destroy' insurgents. The first clash took place on 3 Feb, when a patrol led by Maj Pradeep ambushed and killed two insurgents and recovered one G P M G and 562 rounds. For this action, Maj Pradeep was awarded S M, while L Nk Bhai Bahadur Gurung of his patrol received a Commendation Card from GOC-in-C, Western Command. In another ambush, though Rfn Jit Prasad Shreshtra was killed, the patrol recovered 3 AK-47 rifles, one .303 rifle and a pistol. In another ambush on 8 May, two terrorists were killed and 5 rifles (3 AKs, one Belgium FN and one .303) along with ammunition were recovered. Simultaneously with patrolling, the unit also trained local youth in guard duties, instilling in them pride in guarding their own village.

7/8 GR in Phagwara-Mukhu Area April 1990

During these operations, the unit achieved a notable success on 17 January 1991. A patrol led by Maj S Mehta, SM and Capt C R Deshpande apprehended a few militants after exchange of fire. Though Hav Narayan Prasad Sharma was seriously wounded (and later succumbed to his injuries), the patrol showed great presence of mind in recovering him. Soon thereafter, in another action on 19 January, it recovered large cache of arms and ammunition from a field.

5/3 GR in Punjab December 1990 to August 92

The unit was deployed during OPERATION RAKSHAK

in Kalanaur area of Gurdaspur District, dominating the IB, for checking trans border infiltration of militants. It achieved big success on 14 August 92 by apprehending Jagir Singh son of Gurbax Singh, a hard core militant and Self Styles Lt Gen of Khalsa Combat Force.

THE GORKHA'S IN JAMMU & KASHMIR 1972-1990

3/4 GR in Punch Along the L O C 1980-81

During this period, the unit under the command of Lt Col Ashok Chaki was occupying defenses near the L O C, when an encroachment by Pakistani troops was detected in an isolated forested hilly region. When challenged, the Pakistani's not only refused to withdraw, but started shelling our posts. While returning from his forward post Capt U Routh and his party came under intense machine gun and artillery fire, in which he fatally wounded. Unmindful of danger to his own life, Hav Ek Parsad Gurung and Rfn Padam Bahadur Thapa risked their lives, and evacuated Capt Routh to safety, but could not save his life. Soon, the Gorkhas took revenge, and moving silently on a pitch dark night, attacked the enemy post with Kukris, inflicting such heavy casualties on him that he raised a white flag and asked for a cease fire. For his exemplary leadership Lt Col Chaki was awarded V S M, while both Hav Ek Parsad and Rfn Padam Bahadur were awarded S Ms.

5/8 GR in Kalsian Mar 1982

The unit under the command of Lt Col S P Ahuja was occupying posts along the L O C, and was busy improving defenses. This was objected to by the Pakistani troops, who in February 1984 brought down heavy artillery and machine gun fire on our posts. Despite this, the Gorkhas continued to maintain vigil and improved their defenses further, for which it was awarded one Shaurya Chakra (Sub Maj Lal Bahadur Chhetri) and three Sena Medals (Capt Amarek Singh, Hav Bishnu Kumar Thapa and Rfn Bimal Kumar Thapa).

3/4 GR in Siachen 1987

The Gorkhas were inducted in the highest battle field of the world in 1986 under the command of Col P S Gurung. Adequate training had been given to all ranks to fight at altitudes of up to 21,000 ft, where temperatures were often as low as -50* and snow storms of 150 KMPH were common. Besides crevices and extreme cold, the Pakistanis had been making repeated attempts to capture important dominating heights on the Saltoro Ridge. Two post, taken over by the Gorkhas were U Cut and Ashok. After intense shelling, these posts were attacked by the Pakistani troops thrice between 20 and 25 September. Despite suffering a few casualties, the company under Maj KG Chatterjee beat back these attacks launched by two battalions and SSG of Pakistan (especially raised under Col Musharraf).

In one instance, the enemy was able to crawl up to 50 m close to the defenses under L Hav Nar Bahadur Ale. As his rifle got jammed, though critically wounded, L Hav Nar Bahadur Ale took out his Kukri and attacked them.

In another incident, despite being wounded, Nk Prem Bahadur Gurung and L Nk Hira Bahadur Thapa continued to man their M M G and beat back the attacks of the enemy. Once both of them were killed, Nk Hom Bahadur Thapa took over the machine gun and continued to fire it, till the enemy was beaten back. During the attack, Rfn Sanjeev Gurung manned his post against heavy odds, and though critically wounded, held on to his post. The role played by 2nd Lt A K Sharma of Army Ordnance Corps on Infantry attachment with the unit, and Nb Sub Bhim Bahadur Thapa, who manned various portions of the post and encouraged the Gorkhas to give their best, was also commendable. Col P S Gurung also played a vital role in encouraging his troops.

For defending their positions against very heavy odds during repeated enemy attacks, the unit was awarded 3 M V Cs (Maj K G Chatterjee, L Hav Nar Bahadur Ale and Nk Prem Bahadur Gurung (last two posthumously), 5 Vr Cs (2ndLt A K Sharma, Nb Sub Bhim Bahadur Thapa, Nk Hom

Bahadur Thapa, L Nk Hira Bahadur Thapa and Rfn Sanjeev Kumar-the last two posthumously), one YSM (Col Gurung), 7 S Ms, while five all ranks were Mention-in-Dispatches.

In this operation, the Gorkhas showed their steadfastness against all odds, and established a record of winning the highest number of gallantry awards ever won by a sub-unit in one operation.

The Gorkha Terriers 107 Infantry Battalion (Territorial Army)

Raised at Darjeeling on 1 October 1960 as part of the 'citizen's army', it incorporates people of Sikkim, West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya and Mizoram. As most of the people of Darjeeling region are Rais and Limbus working in tea gardens, the battalion is affiliated with 11 GR. The first training camp was held in November 1961 with the assistance of 11 GR Regimental Centre, a practice which continues to be followed.

The Gorkhas of the unit participated in the 1962 and 1965 Wars, and took over protection and guard duties at important military depots and installations in the eastern theatre. During the 1971 War, its troops reinforced 12 GARHWAL RIFLES and participated in active operations in Bangladesh, along Axis Jalpaiguri and Maiguri and in Chittagong Sector. Soon after the War, the whole unit was employed on guarding Pakistani P O Ws at the war camps.

In May 1991, the unit was inducted in J & K and carried out internal security tasks in Srinagar area, under 31 Sub Area. Troops were also employed on road opening duties on Srinagar-Banihal Sector, protection and security of the Badamii Bagh Cantt, protection of Avantipur Air Field, security of V I Ps, and provision of Quick Reaction Teams. The unit was de-inducted in May 1992, and the performance of all ranks was highly commended by all higher commanders.

On return to Darjeeling, troops were employed in Assam, Manipur and Nagaland on counter insurgency tasks as part of OPERATION RHINO and other operations.

Achievements of the Unit

The unit had the unique honor of being adjudged the Best Territorial Army unit in Eastern Command for four consecutive years and winning the Trophy. As part of adventure activities, the Gorkhas of this 'citizen's army unit' have successfully climbed Nanda Devi, Saser Kangri and Kokthang (21,000 ft) peaks. It has won one V S M, four C O A S's Commendation Cards and seven other awards, and its soldiers have set an excellent example of discipline and patriotism.

THE GORKHAS IN OPERATION VIJAY-KARGIL 1999

Background

By the year 1999, the militancy situation in the Valley had improved. The people of J & K had shunned violence and were fed-up with the Pakistani supported Mujahideens, who had been taking undue advantage of the innocent Kashmiris.

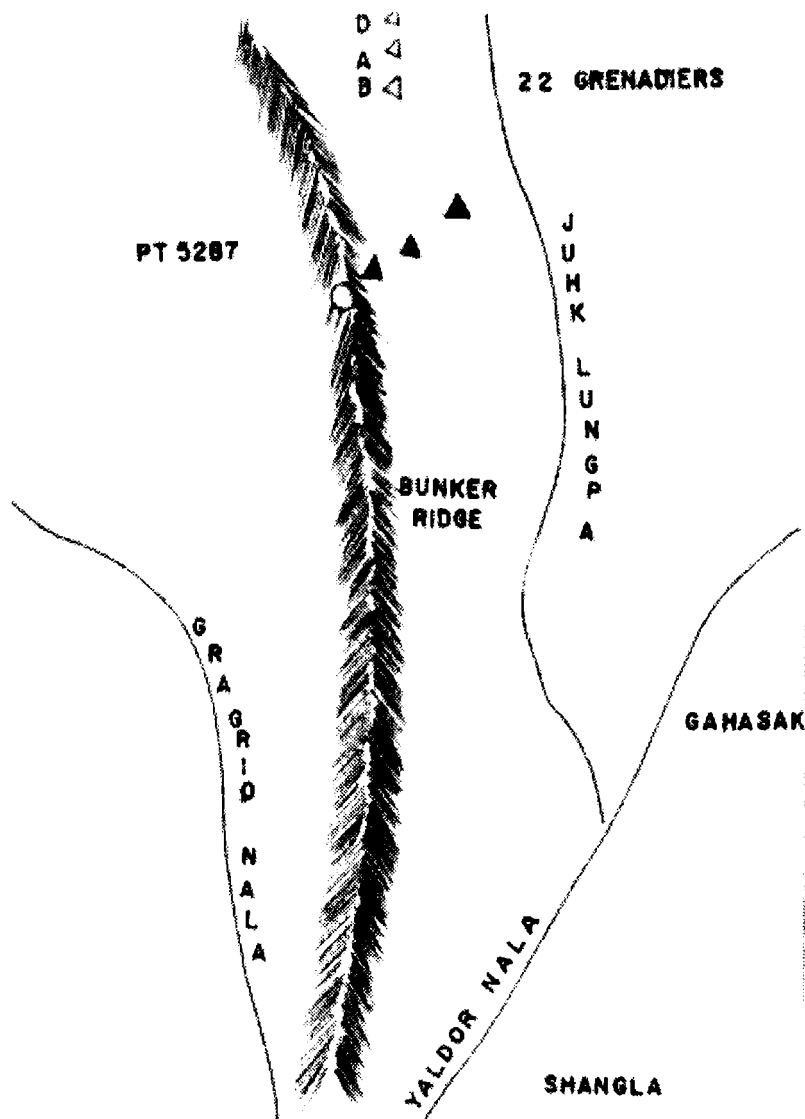
Soon after taking over as Army Chief, Gen Parvez Musharraf planned intrusion by Pakistani regular troops across the L O C in the Kargil Sector of Ladakh Region, for cutting the route of maintenance of the Indian troops and population, across Zoji La. Initially disguised as Mujahideens, these troops were well trained, supported and equipped to fight in high altitude areas. Though India was initially taken by surprise, but once the intrusion was detected then strong military and diplomatic initiatives were taken to drive out the intruders.

As in other operations, in this limited war also the Gorkha units performed exceedingly well and succeeded in clearing the intrusion made by the Pakistani Army in the high altitude region of Dras and Batalik in Kargil Sector.

1/11 GR in Batalik Sector

The battalion had just finished its tenure in the Siachen Glacier and was waiting to go to Pune for its well earned

peace tenure, when on 6 May 1999 the Pakistani intrusion was detected in Dras Sector. At short notice, the unit under the command of Lt Col Alok Asthana, officiating commanding officer, was asked to move. The Kirntis did a speed march of six hours and covered 24 km on man-pack basis and concentrated at Yaldor on 8 May. Thereafter, patrols were sent to find out details of the enemy defenses, while the logistic tail was built up, again on man-pack basis. In the meanwhile Col Lalit Rai (his father had retired as a Major from 1/11 GR) took over the command. He found his unit dispersed in penny-packets, with no worthwhile task. Thus, he approached the Brigade Commander to be given an independent task, where he could prove the merit of his unit.



As earlier attempts to capture Khalubar Ridge had not succeeded, now the Gorkhas were tasked to launch the first major attack on 1 July 1999 to capture enemy positions on this dominating, razor sharp ridge, at altitudes ranging over 5000 m. In order to build-up the morale of the unit, Col Rai planned the attack with A and B Companies, followed by C Company, and decided to lead the assault himself. After marching along Junk Lungpa (nullah) during day, often under enemy shelling and machine gun fire, they reached the assembly area, where guides from the holding troops were to lead them to the objective. However, when they did not arrive, the Gorkhas started climbing along a steep snow covered nullah, along its slippery slopes in -2° temperature, in rain, and reached near the enemy positions, when just before first light they came under heavy machine gun and artillery fire. The enemy also opened up his machine guns from Bunker Ridge, a feature not identified earlier, with the result that B Company was diverted to capture it, while A Company launched the attack on the main ridge at first light.

After a stiff hand-to-hand fight during which the Gorkhas used their Kukris fiercely, the objective though covered in fog, was captured by 5:15 am on 2 July, just before day break. However, once the fog lifted by 9 am, Col Rai realized that he was still about 25 m below the main Ridge Line, which was still held by the enemy. By now the enemy also located the Gorkhas holding a lower feature in between two of his localities, and opened up on them from two sides, at distances of 50 m to 75 m. Though by now Maj Ajit Singh with his small force of 22 GRENADIEERS had also joined the Gorkhas, the situation became grim after 24 hours, as there was no sign of any reinforcements, casualties were mounting, the ammunition was running out and the troops had been without food or water for nearly two days. The enemy company commander located 150 m was enticing them to surrender rather than face sure death, promising them freedom and good life, but the Gorkhas replied 'you have not seen our fury till now. Wait till our

reinforcements come, then instead of us, you will be surrendering soon', and held their positions. Instead of remaining in the trap, Col Rai decided to launch an attack and break out. After a silent prayer, the Gorkhas under Col Rai and the Grenadiers under Maj Ajit launched an attack, which took the enemy by surprise, killing Maj Sayeed, the enemy company commander of Northern Light Infantry. As darkness fell, though wounded, Col Rai asked for artillery fire on his own position. By now Col Rai and his handful of Gorkhas had remained without food for four days, fought the enemy from open boulders in bitter cold and rain. With their ammunition running out, a decision was taken to pull them down on 4 July. Not known to Col Rai, by now the enemy had also suffered heavy casualties and had decided to pull out. Thus, Lt Col Asthana with his reserve Gorkha company had a comparatively easy task of capturing remaining positions on the Ridge.

Earlier, during the re-organization on 2 July, Col Rai had sent out a patrol under Hav Gain Bahadur to link-up with Maj Correya's B Company. However, the patrol clashed with an enemy party withdrawing from Bunker Ridge. In the clash, all seven enemy soldiers were killed, while Hav Gian Bahadur was wounded in the neck and got separated from his men (after wondering alone in the mountains for two days, he joined back the unit). On hearing the sound of firing, Col Rai sent another patrol under Nk Gyanendra Kumar Rai to investigate, but he too clashed with the enemy and was wounded before he was taken prisoner. He fell unconscious and dreamt that he was surrounded by men in khaki, and was wielding his Kukri at them, when he realized the reality. Tortured and beaten-up, the Pakistani soldiers in khaki dress had assembled to see what a Gorkha looked like, and between taunts of 'now swing your Kukri', were stamping on his hands. They were also discussing plans to take them back to Pakistan and hang him, when suddenly the Indian artillery fired on the feature, dispersing the enemy helter-skelter. Taking advantage of the confusion, Nk Gyanendra Rai rolled down a snow covered hill side

and made good his escape and rejoined his unit, after three days. For his display of devotion to duty, determination and courage, he was awarded Vr C.

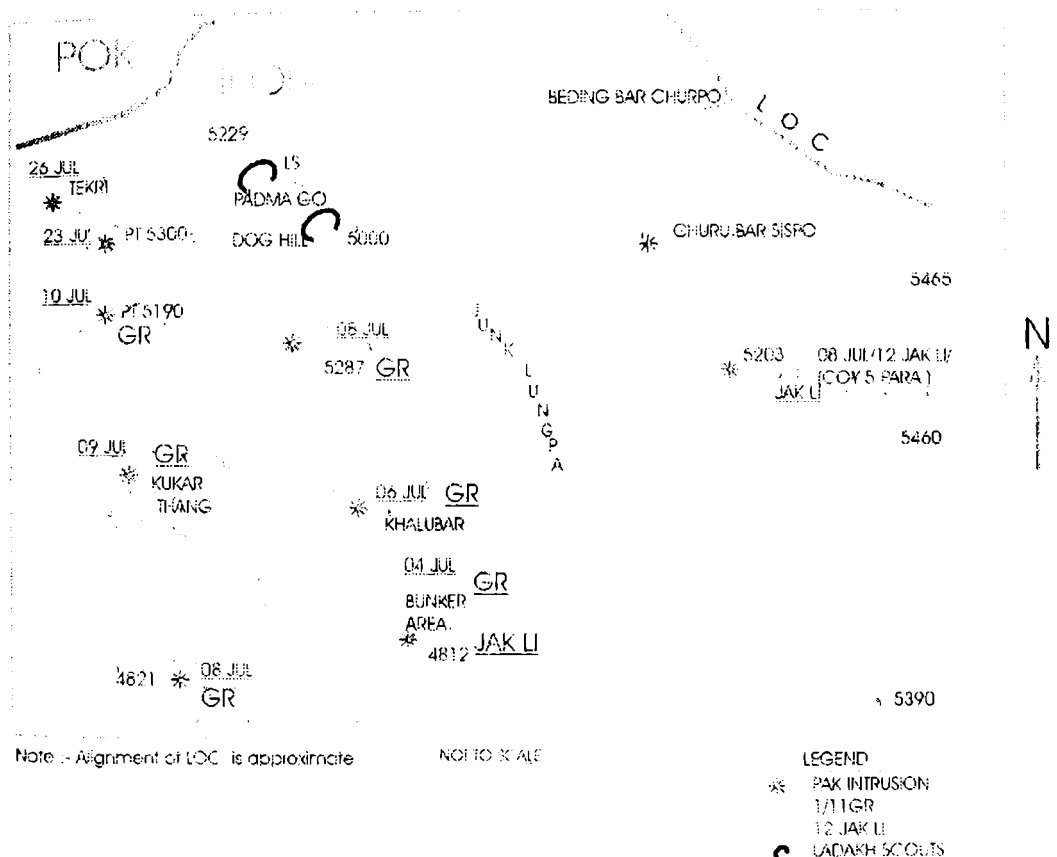
In the meantime, B Company under Maj Correya with Lt Pande leading his platoon located first two and later four more bunkers, from which machine gun fire was coming. Lt Pande tasked Hav Bhim Bahadur Diwan to attack two bunkers, while he took on the other ones. Hav Diwan crawled up to the bunker and lobbed a grenade silencing it; though in the process he was wounded. While attacking the next machine gun position, Lt Pande also crawled up and lobbed grenades in the bunker and silenced it. At this stage it was suggested to him that as the men were exhausted due to the steep climb, they should take a pause before attacking the next bunker. To this he replied that 'the CO has asked me to complete the task, and I must do it at the earliest'. He showed bravery of an exceptionally high order and rallied his men to attack the next bunker with Hav Diwan, during which he also lobbed grenades in the bunker. While crawling back after destroying the bunker, he stood up to see the results of the attack, when he was fatally wounded by machine gun fire. Hav Diwan also died soon thereafter, shouting to his section 'Dushman le Na Chodno Hos' (Do not leave the enemy). Inspired by the bravery displayed by their officer and section commander, the men were infused and charged the remaining bunkers with Kukris, seeing which the enemy abandoned his bunkers, but was chased by the Kirantis. For displaying bravery of an exceptionally high order, Capt Pande was awarded P V C (posthumously), the nations highest gallantry award, while Hav Diwan was awarded Vr C. By their daring act, they had captured Bunker Ridge by 3 pm 3 July, which became the firm base for further attacks on Khalubar Ridge. In this operation, 11 enemy soldiers were killed, while the Gorkha casualties were two (Capt Pande and Hav Diwan).

Hereafter, the Gorkhas consolidated on Khalubar Ridge for a day. Thereafter, on 5 July the Gorkhas launched a bold day light attack on Pt 4812 and captured it after some

tough hand-to-hand fighting. Same night, Maj Tomar attacked Khalubar South, in which Sub C B Limbu led a bold assault from a flank taking the enemy by surprise and captured the position by 4 am of 6 July. By now, the enemy resistance had weakened and Khalubar North was attacked the same day, while Pt 5287 was captured on 7 July and Pt 5190 on 10 July. There was a pause in operations for two weeks due to the cease fire, but as Pakistani troops violated the understanding and tried to occupy new positions, these were renewed from 22 July. The Gorkhas attacked Pt 5300 and Tekri and by 26 July had driven back all Pakistanis back across the L O C.

OPERATIONS OF 70 INFANTRY BRIGADE

Sketch 70

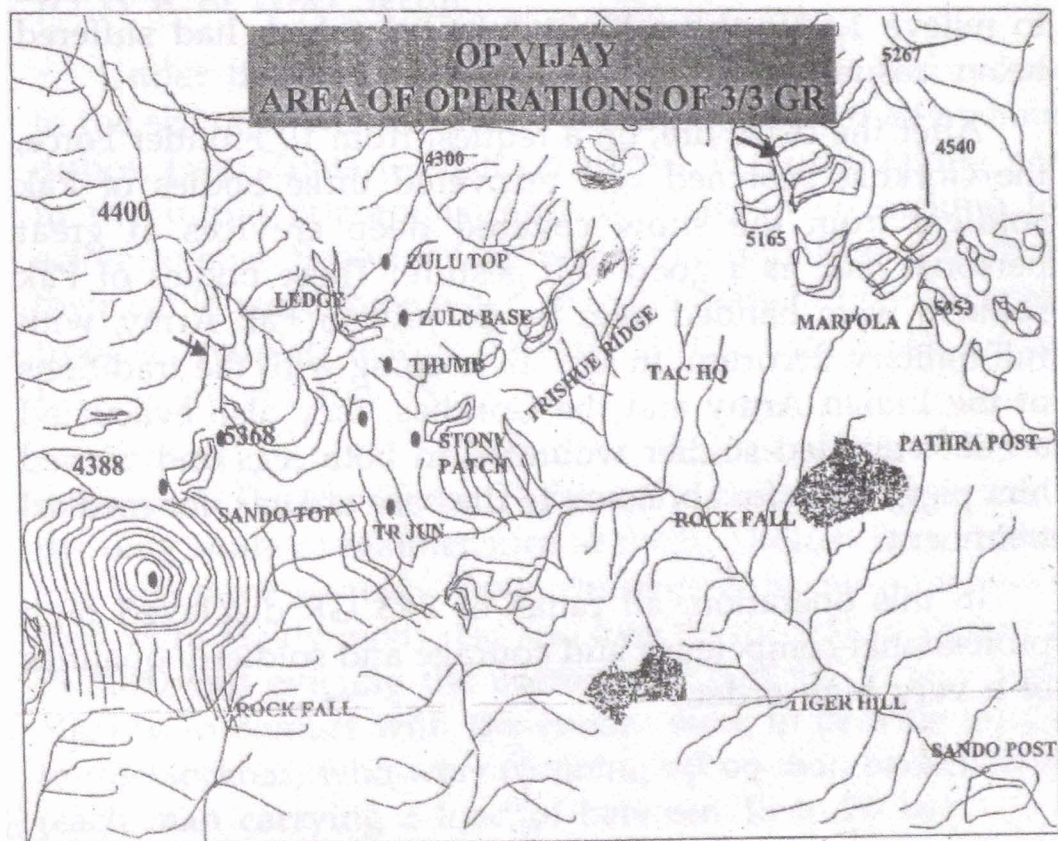


By now the reputation of 'Kukri wielding Gorkhas' had spread amongst Pakistani troops. So much so, a Pakistani P O W made a request to Col Rai to show him a Gorkha with a Kukri. A demonstration was organized for the P O Ws by Col Rai and though it did not include a live 'beheading', it did shake the Pakistanis.

In these operations, the Kirantis suffered 12 fatal (including Capt Manoj Pande) and 35 non-fatal casualties, and counted 29 enemy dead (including two offers-all belonging to 5 Northern Light Infantry). The unit recovered two Stinger Anti-Aircraft missiles, three, ten small arms and a large quantity of ammunition. It was awarded one P V C, four Vr Cs and many other awards. Battle Honor 'Khalubar'-Kargil 1999 was won by the unit for the excellent performance by all ranks under difficult conditions.

3/3 GR in Dras Sector

The unit was inducted into the sector in end June and placed under 192 Mtn Bde. Brig Amar Aul, its old CO, whose son was serving as a Capt, was also in the same area. The Gorkhas were tasked to assist (PARA Commando (SF) in conducting operations to drive back the Pakistanis, who despite the Cease fire were still on Indian side of the L O C. They were to advance and secure heights on the LOC, at the earliest.



The initial plan involved an advance through feature Sando Top, but it was modified when the patrols reported a snow wall of twelve feet Enroute, which was difficult to negotiate.

Adopting a circuitous route, the Gorkhas advanced on 20 July along Safed Nala and in a surprise attack secured Tri Junction and established a base for the Commandos at Trishul. Probing forward, they found that the enemy had vacated Sando Top, which the Gorkhas occupied, immediately. As the Commandos were moving up to link-up, the Gorkhas came under intense enemy artillery fire, but only suffered one fatal and one non-fatal casualty as due to their good training they had taken shelter behind rocks and boulders. Thereafter, on 23 July, they sent reinforcements to the Commandos, who by now had captured Z Spur after a stiff fight.

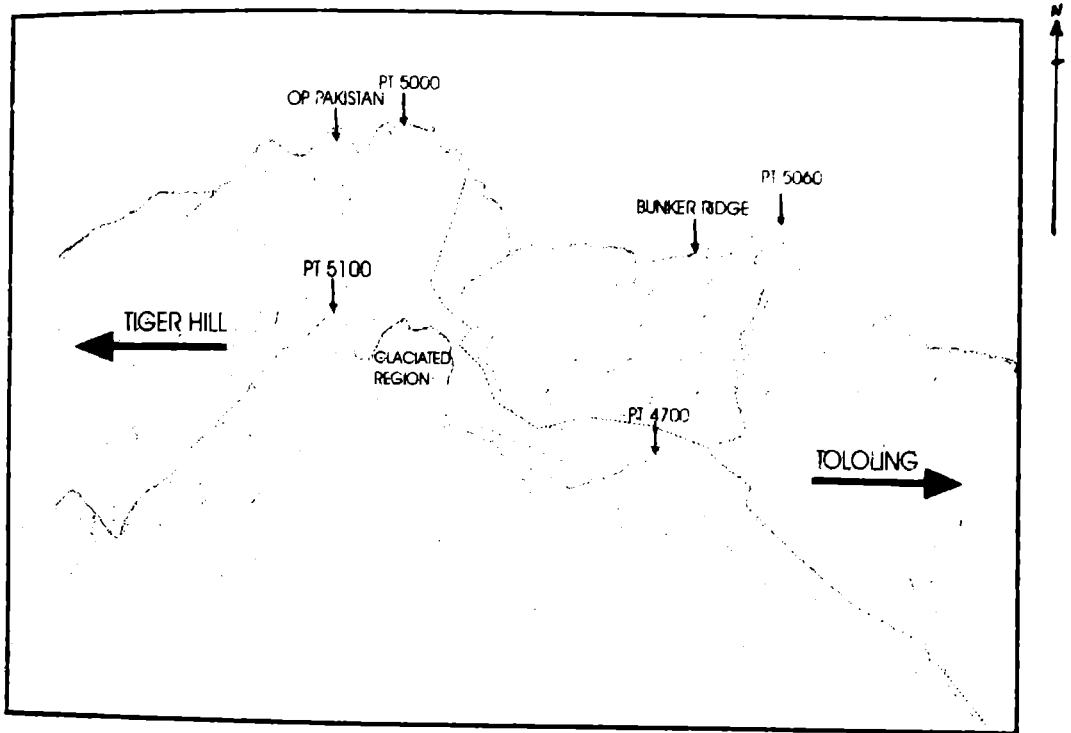
Taking advantage of the moon light, next night the Gorkhas advanced towards the L O C and secured it against opposition from the withdrawing enemy, engaging Pak soldiers of 19 Frontier Force, a unit which had been inducted to relieve 12 Northern Light Infantry, which had suffered heavy casualties.

After the cease fire, on a request from 19 Frontier Force, the Gorkhas searched and recovered three bodies of Pak soldiers from the snow covered deep crevices at great personal risk, as a good will gesture. These bodies of Pak soldiers were handed over on 26 July to Pak Army, with full military decorum, in situ. In keeping with the traditions of the Indian Army and the Gorkhas, they also evacuated a Pak wounded soldier wounded in both legs and carried him piggy-back for six hours to the base at Dras, for medical treatment.

In this operation, all ranks of 3/3 GR displayed high professional competence and courage and soldierly qualities of a very high order.

OPERATION - PT 5000- 1/3 GR

Sketch 48

NOT TO SCALE**1/3 G R in Dras Sector**

Under the command of Col Mial, the unit had moved to the sector in mid Jul and was employed on road opening duties, from Zojila to Matayan. Thus, it missed taking part in the initial operations, and all troops were itching for active combat. Soon the Gorkhas got an opportunity to show their battle worthiness when after the cease fire the Pakistani troop's occupied feature Pt 5000 on the Indian side of the L O C, in end July 99.

Feature Pt 5000 consisted of three small knolls, and dominated Bunker Ridge, Pt 5060 and the glacial bowl, and the only route of maintenance to them. Though the Gorkhas did not have enough snow clothing or snow equipment, they were highly motivated and took on the task of capturing Pt 5000 and evicting the enemy. GRENADIERS, who were already in contact with the enemy were to provide guides to the Gorkhas, who were climbing up on man-packed basis (each man carrying a load of between 15 to 20 kg).

It had become dark by the time the column reached the base of Pt 4700. As contact with the Grenadiers could not be established, the Gorkhas under Maj Rana moved up, when they encountered machine gun fire. Soon, the enemy spotted them, and brought down artillery fire on them, which the Gorkhas endured for next three days. The only protection available to them was from boulders and rocks, and the trenches dug by the troops with their Kukris.

On 29 July, the enemy intensified his firing, which indicated that he was planning to launch an attack on the Gorkha position. Hence, when the assault came at 11 pm 29 July, the troops were ready for it. With their excellent fire control, they inflicted heavy casualties of the enemy and forced him to withdraw. Having failed, the enemy withdrew from Bunker Ridge, which was soon occupied by the Gorkhas. Using Kukris, they cut steps in the hard standing snow and made a track to maintain themselves. By now reinforcements had come and thus the Gorkhas were able to capture Pt 5200 and beat back counter attacks by 19 Frontier Force. In these operations, besides Maj T P S Rana, Capt Surjeet Singh (Artillery Observation Post Officer), Nb Subs Bhim Bahadur Gurung and Suk Bahadur Thapa displayed bravery and devotion to duty of a very high order. The unit suffered 10 non-fatal casualties (including three officers), but all of them refused to be evacuated and continued to fight with the unit, till the unit was de-inducted from the operational area.

Induction of 4/3 GR and 5/3 GR

Soon, these two Gorkha units were also inducted in the Kargil Sector and were fully prepared for operations, but did not get an opportunity to sharpen their khukris, as the cease fire became effective. However, the Gorkhas were tasked to move forward and occupy positions on the L O C, which they did against heavy logistic odds.

Summary of Operations

While only three Gorkha units saw action in this hard-fought limited duration war, the Gorkha soldiers proved that they were second to none. They operated and fought under most difficult climate and launched attacks on high altitude mountain peaks with great determination, which shattered the morale and fighting ability of the Pakistani soldiers.

The soldierly manner in which the Johnies treated and evacuated the Pakistani POWs in keeping with the traditions of the Indian Army, was exemplary.

THE GORKHAS IN COUNTER INSURGENCY OPERATIONS IN JAMMU & KASHMIR 1990 TO 2000

Background

Having failed in her earlier attempts to grab J & K, in 1988-90 Pakistan evolved a new plan to 'bleed India with thousand cuts' and to 'garb J & K by militancy'. Her ISI lured innocent Kashmiri youth across the LOC into training camps in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir and other areas. After indoctrinating them in fundamentalism and Islamic Jihad and training them as terrorists, Islamabad infiltrated them back into India, to wage a low cost war. Soon after the Afghan War, Pakistan also started inducting foreign mercenaries as militants in Kashmir.

As the situation went beyond the control of local police and para military forces, the Army was inducted to fight the insurgency, which soon turned into a full blown militancy.

32 Rashtriya Rifles (3 & 9 GR)

Raised in 1994 at Varansi, with 52% Gorkhas and 48% other troops. While still undergoing training at Counter Insurgency & jungle Warfare School, Varangte, the unit moved to North Cachar area of Assam due to escalation of activities by the Under Grounds (UGs). Extensive patrolling,

accompanied by humane civic action led to restoration of peace and confidence amongst the locals, for which the unit won two SM.

From Assam the unit moved to Manipur and conducted extensive patrolling in Churachandpur and Bishanpur districts, which were badly affected by the U G. A number of UGs were killed and a few weapons recovered, but the main achievement of the unit was restoration of peace and confidence amongst the locals, who had been adversely affected by ethnic violence.

In 1999 the unit moved to J&K and has carried out LICO in various militant affected areas of the Valley, like Kupwara (Lolab Valley-the cradle of militancy) and Rafiabad Districts, besides carrying out Road Opening Duties (R O P). It has so far neutralized 119 Anti National Elements (A N Es) including top Hizbul Mujahiddin leaders. It apprehended 93, while 9 have surrendered to it along with their weapons. During the peak of insurgency in the area, Maj JS Tanwar led three very successful search and destroy missions in the forests around his camp, neutralizing six ANEs and recovering large cache of arms and ammunition from Rangat forest, for which he was awarded Kirti Chakra. In another search and destroy mission, on 16 Jun 02 Nk Man Bahadur Chhetri engaged a group of ANEs in a dense jungle near Sogam and neutralized three of them. For this action, he earned Shaurya Chakra. Besides these two, the unit has also won five S Ms (4 posthumously), besides many commendation cards.

The performance of the unit has won a number of appreciations and citations not only from military but also from local people.

15 Rashtriya Rifles (1 & 4 GR)

Operating in J&K since its raising in 1994, while on a patrol in Jul 2001, Rfn Bijay Thapa chased a hardcore ANE of Al Badar group and neutralized him. For his bold action, he was awarded SM.

In another daring operation on 18 Aug 2002, a patrol of the unit on a 'search and destroy' mission came under fire of the militants. Rfn Jham Bahadur Pun showed complete disregard for his personal safety and engaged the militants by firing his rifle from the hip and killed a Pakistani militant belonging to Tehreek Jahadi Islami and injured another, who fell in a gorge. For showing bravery of a high order, Rfn Bijay Thapa was awarded SM.

33 Rashtriya Rifles (5 & 8 GR)

Raised in 1994 for special Counter Insurgency Operations, the unit has 48% Gorkhas, 31% troops from Armored Corps and balance 21% from other arms and services.

Soon after raising, it was employed in active operations initially in the NE and since 1999 has been carrying out Low Intensity Combat Operations in Manasbal-Kangan areas of Baramulla district of J&K, the most militancy prone area of the state. Besides carrying out cordon and search operations, during the 1999 Kargil War it also did Road Opening and Protection duties, from Srinagar to Leh.

It's most significant achievements have been killing of 48 militants within 18 months in Manasbal area in 1999 and eliminating another 23 in Magam area since then. By following the doctrine that the battle in Counter Insurgency is not won on the battle field but in the hearts and minds of the people (awam)', along side operations the unit also launched popular and durable welfare schemes for the local population. Reinforced by their exemplary behavior and effective efforts to win 'hearts and minds' of the local population, the Gorkhas also apprehended two and induced three hard core Hizbul Mujahiddin terrorists to surrender. The success of the unit can be seen from the following results.

Attrition of Anti national Elements- Killed 89,
Apprehended 10, Surrendered-4.

Major weapons/ammunition recovered-

AK 47/56 Rifles-91, with 6253 rounds of ammunition.

Pistols-18, with 213 rounds.
 Rifles SLR-1
 Rocket Propelled Grenades-2
 Universal/PIKA Machine Guns-2, with 624 rounds.
 Pen pistol-1
 Disposable rocket launchers-2
 Under Barrel Grenade Launchers-17
 Grenades-all type-415
 Explosives-190 kg
 Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs)-2
 Radio sets- 44. Satellite phone-1, super sky antenna- 1
 Camera-1

The unit again moved in May 2003 to Magam, where within a year it eliminated 16 terrorists.

Performance of the unit was well rewarded by award of one Kirti Chakra, one Shaurya Chakra and seven Sena Medals, besides appreciations from higher authorities.

1/4 GR in Assam 1996

While deployed in the NE, the unit was given the additional task of carrying out Counter Insurgency Operations against Bodo insurgents in Kamrup district. In one such operation on 8 October 96, a search party under Capt HP Singh encircled a house in village Batabari, where a few UG were holed up. In the firefight that ensued, 5 UG were neutralized and their weapons, along with large quantity of ammunition were recovered. In another incident on 27-28 October, Rfn Manav Rana displayed alertness, initiative and presence of mind when he and his buddy Rfn Thaman Bahadur Gurung were tasked to capture a sentry guarding a hostile hideout. Once the surprise was lost and the UG opened fire. Though wounded, Manav Rana charged

the sentry and neutralized not only him but four more UGs who tried to run out of the hut.

For showing bravery of the highest order, both Capt HP Singh and Rfn Manav Rana were awarded SM.

3/5 GR (FF) in J&K 1994/96/98

The unit was employed on Counter Insurgency operations in Nagum area. In 1996 while searching a suspected village its patrol came under militant fire, resulting in casualties of a few own troops. Capt (Miss) Leena, RMO was rushed along with Sub Maj NB Chhetri as reinforcements to the site, where under hostile fire she daringly provided medical aid to the soldiers as well as to civilians, saving precious lives. In the meanwhile, Sub Maj NB Chhetri himself led a search team to a house and using unconventional methods, killed and injured two ANEs who were firing their AK 56 rifles at our soldiers. This action of his inspired Sapper S Krishna Kutty (attached with the unit), who then physically grappled with a militant, denying him opportunity to use his weapon. Simultaneously, Nk Lal Bahadur Thapa cornered the two ANEs who were trying to escape and injured another, single handedly grappling with the third.

In another operation during its second tenure in J&K, in Jan 1999 Maj Abhijit Mitra led a small column and attacked a hideout of the ANEs, capturing large quantity of arms, ammunition and stores. In the exchange of fire, Rfn Yam Bahadur Rana displayed exceptional courage when he single handedly killed an Afghan Mujahiddin, though he also died in the act. In another encounter, Lt Suraj Chambial also showed resoluteness of a high order in laying an ambush and killing two hard core militants of Jaish-e-Mohammed, while L Nk Ram Prasad Naupane accounted for two more, who tried to break the cordon by firing grenades.

2/11 GR in Counter Insurgency Operations in J&K 1990/92, 95/97 & 2000

During their first tenure, the Kirantis neutralized 455

militants and recovered 277 weapons of all types and 470 grenades, for which they were awarded the Unit Citation by the Army Chief and were commended by the Governor of J&K.

In 1995/97 while deployed in guarding Line of Control (L O C), the Gorkhas effectively checked infiltration, neutralized 28 ANEs and captured 31 weapons. During their last stint, in year 2000 in a short span of three months the unit neutralized 7 militants and recovered 10 weapons, along with huge caches of ammunition.

6/11 GR in Manipur and J&K 1997, 2000/03

During 1989, the unit was tasked to carry out counter insurgency operations in Ukhrul district of Manipur. By relentless operations within a short span the unit killed one terrorist and apprehended 8, along with their weapons and ammunition.

In 1997, the unit was tasked to conduct counter infiltrations in the high altitude areas of the Pir Panjal ridge in J&K. Braving adverse winter and snow, within a short period of one month in eight encounters the brave and alert Kirantis eliminated 29 terrorists and apprehended 18 ANEs. They also recovered 18 AK Rifles, one sniper rifle and an universal machine gun, five pistols and a large quantity of ammunition. For their dedication to duty and effective domination of the area of operations, the unit was adjudged the Best battalion of the formation.

The unit again saw active Counter Insurgency Operations during its field tenure in J&K from 2000 to 2003, in area Richimar Salient of Tangdhar District. Though it was also occupying defenses, by effective patrolling the Kirantis killed 10 militants who were trying to cross over from Pakistan, and took surrender of one. They also arrested 8 over ground workers (sympathizers of militants), including one Pakistani agent who was running the financial network of L e T. They also killed more than 14 Pakistani soldiers in exchange of fire across the LOC. Their effective domination by fire

of Lower Neelam Valley road resulted in destruction of more than 28 Pak military vehicles and 11 mules. In one raid, the Gorkhas recovered 14 weapons and 9000 rounds of assorted ammunition, and Rs 4 lacs of Indian currency. For displaying bravery of high order, Hav Kishore Rai was awarded Shaurya Chakra in 1997, while Rfn Kishan Rai earned a Sena Medal in 2003.

4/8 GR in J&K 2000/01

While deployed on defenses, the unit was given the additional task of carrying out Counter Insurgency Operations in area Chakwali. On 6 May 2000, Hav Pirtha Bahadur Gurung noticed three terrorist trying to infiltrate across the LOC. With complete disregard for his personal safety, the NCO crawled forward, took a position and neutralized all three of them with his weapon. For displaying raw courage and aggressive spirit of a very high order, Hav Pirtha Bahadur Gurung was awarded Shaurya Chakra.

5/3 GR in J&K

From Dec 2002 the unit carried out operations for two years in area Kupwara. Displaying a high degree of professionalism, the Gorkhas killed 17 militants in thirteen operations, apprehended one and obtained surrender of nine others. They recovered 46 weapons, 10 radio sets, 360 grenades, 4274 rounds of ammunition and other war like stores. When deployed on the LOC, they dominated their sector and thwarted infiltration attempts of the militants. Besides operations, they conducted themselves with dignity, maintained honor of the locals and earned their respect, through civic action. They were awarded three SMs and 12 Commendation Cards by the COAS, and awarded Unit Citation.

1/5 GR (FF) in J&K 1996/97, 2002/03

The unit was conducting operations in Wantar Gali area, which was known to be a strong hold of the ANEs. In one

cordon and search operation, on 31 July 96 a party under Maj JK Tiwari spotted five to six ANEs moving on a track. Rfn Nar Bahadur Gurung, the scout spotted them and opened fire, killing two on the spot while the others ran for cover. Maj Tiwari gave a hot chase to the ANEs and killed one, when he was hit by a machine gun burst in the arm. Seeing this, Rfn Dan Bahadur Gurung opened fire on the ANEs from a flank and diverted their attention, while Maj Tiwari charged and killed the fourth ANE, which forced the remaining enemy to break contact. The patrol recovered a number of weapons and a large quantity of ammunition. For displaying leadership and courage of a very high order, Maj Tiwari was awarded Shaurya Chakra.

In another action on 7 August 97, the early warning detachment intercepted a message regarding movement of ANEs in Ramphal forest for which a search party under Maj A Koul was launched. As the column was moving, just before dusk Rfn Indra Lal Kandel, the leading scout was engaged by three ANEs hiding behind a tree. Though wounded, Rfn Indra La returned fire and shot dead one foreign militant and engaged the other two, who by now were running away. Further search of the area led to explosion of an IED in which Maj Koul and his radio operator Rfn Kosh Bahadur Khadka were seriously wounded. Showing great grit and determination despite his injuries Rfn Kosh Bahadur ensured continuous communications, which greatly helped in maintaining momentum of the operation. At first light 8 Aug, a patrol under Maj Cardozo detected a blood trail. This was followed with Rfn Satinder Thapa as scout. Soon, an encounter with the withdrawing ANEs started, in which Rfn Satinder Thapa though wounded, engaged the enemy and killed him. In this operation Rfn Indra Bahadur Kandel, Rfn Kosh Bahadur Khadka and Rfn Indra Bahadur Thapa were awarded SMs, the first two posthumously.

During its next tenure in J&K, the unit was occupying defenses along the LOC. On 10 August 2002, Lt Mohit Singh, occupying a flanking post observed Pakistani troops moving some stores to a forest across the LOC, for reinforcing a

post. Maj AA Bhambere, the Company Commander deployed a Hand Held Thermal Imager to keep the area under surveillance and launched a raid to destroy the dump. He sent Lt Mohit Singh on a flank, while he himself led a section to destroy the dump. Soon they were engaged by enemy machine guns, but Nk Narendra Singh manning the automatic grenade launcher, kept them at bay, allowing the raiding party to complete its task. Besides razing the Dump, the patrol also inflicted seven fatal casualties on Pakistani troops, who had intruded across the LOC. For displaying very good leadership Maj Bhambere was awarded Yudh Seva Medal and Lt Mohit Singh, SM.

4/3 GR in J&K 1999/2005

Deployed in Anantnag High Ground from Oct to Nov 99, the unit recovered two AK rifles, one flame thrower, 44 assorted hand grenades and a large quantity of ammunition. Then the unit was moved to Kupwara area. On 11 November 2000, on learning that the ANEs were hiding in a village, a patrol was sent under Lt Nawang Kapadia. While doing the search, the patrol came under fire, resulting in injuries to Nawang and another member of his patrol. With complete disregard for his own safety, Nawang crawled forward, extricated and saved the life of his buddy, though in the process he succumbed to his injuries.

During OPERATION PARAKRAM, the unit again moved to J&K. This time in a short span of three months it recovered two AK rifles, 5633 rounds of ammunition, 30 RPG rockets, one RPG launcher, 22 boosters, 23 remote control devices and 100 kg of explosive. In another action on 28 November 2001, the CO and his Quick Reaction Team (QRT) engaged a group of militants in Magam, killing three, including one Pakistani resident. Thereafter, six more hard core terrorists were neutralized by end December 2002.

Deployed on the LOC since 2005, in 6 May 05, the unit recovered 1040 rounds of AK ammunition, grenades and five IEDs. After an encounter on 29 May, besides ammunition

and hand grenades, the troops recovered a radio set, mattresses, antenna and other items of military use from a hideout. In Jul 05, the Gorkhas ambushed ANEs trying to sneak across the LOC killing two of them, and recovered one AK rifle, explosives, RPG projectiles, under barrel grenade launcher and ammunition. Aggressive patrolling along the LOC resulted in more encounters in Aug, in which more ammunition and explosives were recovered by the Gorkhas.

5/5 GR (FF) in J&K 1993/94

During its tenure of guarding the LOC, the unit carried out extensive patrolling to nab insurgents. On 3 Mar 93, a patrol in Rajouri area under Maj GS Dhillon suspected that some militants were holed up in a cave. Just as the cordon was being deployed, the insurgents from the cave opened fire. Rfn Ram Kumar Gurung accompanied Maj Dhillon to the mouth of the cave and lobbed hand grenades inside it, while Maj Dhillon charged inside. Though wounded, Maj Dhillon neutralized those hiding in the cave. Both Maj Dhillon and Rfn ram Kumar Gurung were awarded SM. In another incident on 23 Oct 93, Sub Man Bahadur Magar while on a patrol along the LOC spotted some insurgents who were trying to sneak from Pakistan side. Having spotted them, he ordered lobbing of hand grenades on them, which set-off the explosives being carried by the insurgents. Thus, he not only neutralized both the insurgents but also destroyed their explosives. For showing initiative and leadership of a high order, Sub Man Bahadur Gurung was awarded SM. In another patrol clash on 11 May 94, L Nk Ram Bahadur Gurung showed raw courage and charged on the insurgents who had laid an ambush for his patrol. Though wounded, he continued to engaged them till the balance of patrol could extricate and reorganize, finally defeating the ambush. For displaying devotion to duty of a very high order, Rfn Ram Bahadur Gurung was awarded SM(Posthumous).

5/4 GR in J&K 1992/93 and 2000/02

Deployed to guard the LOC, the Gorkhas were often tasked to carryout CI Ops near their defenses. In Dec 1992 a patrol under Maj RD Kaushik, L Nk Sur Bahadur Thapa was out searching the ANEs, when it came under intense automatic fire. While the column took positions, L Nk Sur Bahadur Thapa picked up his L M G and rushed to the boulder behind which the ANEs were hiding. Chasing them, he neutralized three of them and recovered a large cache of ammunition from them. This operation, along with a rescue operation of a Kashmiri couple, earned the Unit Citation of the COAS, in 1992.

In year 2000 when the unit was deployed in the Valley, a column in which Col SK Patyal, the CO was traveling came under ANE fire. Unmindful of danger to his life, Col Patyal led a charge which broke the ambush, and organized search operations. For their bold actions, both L Nk Sur Bahadur Thapa and Col Patyal were awarded SM.

1/4 GR in J&K 1999-2001

Deployed in Kupwara District, the unit sent out search missions in the forested area along the LOC, which was often being used by the ANEs as their staging camps. In these operations, the unit won one Kirti Chakra(N Sub Dev Bahadur Thapa-posthumous), one SC (Maj JV Singh) and 22 SMs (4 officers, 4 JCOs, 11 NCOs and 3 OR) and was awarded the Unit Citation of the Army Chief, besides being declared the Best unit of Northern Command. Among the many operations carried out by the Gorkhas, only a few are being narrated.

The Gorkhas opened their record of success on Night 15/16 May 2000, when a patrol under Hav Dil Bahadur Pun observed a group of ANEs trying to sneak across the LOC into India. He immediately laid an ambush and allowed the ANEs to walk in to the trap, and then opened effective fire on them. When one of the ANEs tried to run, Hav Dil Bahadur chased him, and soon neutralized him. Besides an

AK rifle, grenades and a Chinese pistol, documents recovered indicated that the ANEs belonged to Al -Barq Mujahideen group.

In Aug 2000, Nb Sub Dev Bahadur Thapa was leading a search party when he came across a gang of ANEs, who had occupied a knoll. Though he was wounded in the initial exchange of fire, Nb Sub Thapa kept his cool, deployed his cut-off and support groups tactically and then led a charge on the ANEs, killing two of them. Observing that one ANE was trying to escape, he lobbed a grenade and accounted for him also. At this stage he suffered a fatal wound, but his brave and gallant leadership had infused his men, who charged at the remaining ANEs and neutralized them. In this operation, Nb Sub Dev Bahadur Thapa neutralized three ANEs, though he gave the supreme sacrifice of his life. For his brave action, he was awarded Kirti Chakra (posthumous).

Nk Sachita Thapa was leading a patrol along the LOC, when on Night 21 September 2000 he spotted a group of ANEs trying to cross over to India. He laid an ambush and engaged them at short range, neutralized one when the remainder tried to run back, taking advantage of bad weather. Though exchange of fire was still on, with complete disregard for his own safety, Nk Sachita immediately ran after them and engaged them and neutralized one more. The patrol recovered one AK rifle, one Chinese pistol, a number of hand grenades and documents which identified both the ANEs as Pakistani nationals.

Sub Karna Bahadur Subba was conducting a cordon and search operation in a thickly forested area, when his party came under intense fire of ANEs from a high ground. After coolly appreciating the ground, he took a detour and crawled silently within three meters of the enemy, and made a bold charge at them from the rear. Besides lobbing grenades, he used his rifle and eliminated two ANEs which enabled him to extricate his patrol.

Rfn Nar Bahadur Gaha Thapa was part of a patrol on

19 May 01. While searching a village the patrol came under enemy fire. Soon, taking advantage of the terrain, the ANEs started withdrawing. Seeing this, Rfn Nar Bahadur along with his two comrades closed-in with them and neutralizing three Jaish-e-Mohammad hard core ANEs. He also recovered a large quantity of ammunition, a few weapons and incriminating documents.

While on a 'seek and destroy' mission of a week's duration, after six days of patrolling Nb Sub Kosh Bahadur Gurung observed movement of some ANEs on 30 May 01. He quickly laid an opportunity ambush, which resulted in neutralization of five ANEs (including three foreigners of Jaish-e-Mohammed) and recovery of large amount of warlike stores.

In another display of bravery, during an ambush Rfn Sabin Kumar Khawas Bhujel crawled under ANEs fire. He then lobbed hand grenades on the ANEs who were engaging the patrol from a baihk (forest hut). Thus, he not only saved lives of his comrades but also neutralized two ANEs.

While waiting in an ambush on 4 July 01, L Nk Lal Bahadur Thapa observed two ANEs approaching the site along a nullah. When engaged, the ANEs returned fire which wounded Lal Bahadur's buddy. In order to save his buddy's life, L Nk Lal Bahadur sprang from his position and charged the ANEs who were still engaging him. Surprised at the guts and courage shown by the NCO, the ANEs broke contact. In this operation L Nk Lal Bahadur risked his life, to save that of his 'buddy'.

On 11 July 01, while searching a forest Maj Amitabh Jha's patrol exchanged fire with a group of ANEs, in which he was wounded in the jaw. Without any care for his personal safety, he along with his buddy, charged at the ANE and eliminated him with his Kukri. Then he charged at the other ANE with his rifle, and neutralized him. In the same ambush, L Nk Eric Lepcha showed great presence of mind when he saw two ANEs trying to escape. Without awaiting orders, he boldly rushed at them and neutralized them in a hand to hand combat.

Forming part of a 'seek and destroy mission', on 2 August 01 Nk Shankha Bahadur Gurung showed outstanding coolness and courage in destroying an enemy hideout with his rocket launcher, even though he was under fire. He not only neutralized two ANEs but also saved the lives of his three comrades, who were then under effective ANE fire.

A patrol led by a JCO came under intense enemy fire on 19 November 01, resulting in fatal injuries to the JCO. On getting information, Capt Manik Mohan rushed with a patrol to extricate the patrol. By taking a detour and crawling, he achieved surprise, hurled hand grenades and neutralized two ANEs. He not only broke the ambush but also recovered the body of the JCO.

On 7 June 01, Nk Chok Bahadur Thapa was in-charge of a 'stop' of an ambush party, when he spotted ANEs approaching the killing area. As the ambush was sprung, he noticed two ANEs trying to escape. Though he came under their fire, without any regard for his personal safety, Nk Chok Bahadur chased them quickly.

Nb Sub Ram Bahadur Pun was on an independent seek and destroy mission, when on 19 June 01 his patrol observed movement of two ANEs in a forest. Soon, he laid an ambush and entrapped the ANEs, who opened fire and tried to escape. Rfn Tek Bahadur Pun, a 'stop' noticed that the ANEs were firing from a high ground. Unmindful of the danger to his life, he crawled and sneaked behind the ANEs and charged at them, neutralizing one on the spot. Thus, he not only saved his comrades, but the patrol achieved success of neutralizing three ANEs and recovering one universal machine gun, two AK rifles and some ammunition, including hand grenades.

Nb Sub Hemta Kumar Ghale was commander of a surveillance patrol along the LOC, when on night 17/18 August 01 he detected a group of heavily armed ANEs trying to cross over from Pakistan side. Soon, a fierce fire-fight started. Nb Sub Ghale crawled around the ANEs position and led a charge, neutralizing two on the spot.

This motivated L Nk Bhupinder Salami who led his detachment from a flank, gave covering fire to Nb Sub Ghale and also charged on the ANEs. In this operation, the patrol recovered 3 AK rifles, one rocket launcher, 40 kg of explosives and assorted ammunition and other stores.

In early 2002, Maj Peeyush Jha was leading a patrol in the forested area of Kupwara, when his party came under machine gun fire of the militants. With least care for his own safety, Jha crawled behind the hillock on which the militants were deployed and charged them. Thus, he not only saved the lives of his men but also recovered a large cache of ammunition from the running militants. He was subsequently awarded SM, for continuously leading dangerous missions.

While on a 'seek and encounter' patrol, Capt Anirban Bandyopadhyay, a second generation officer in the unit was leading a patrol in Lolab area of Kupwara on 23 March 2002, when his patrol came under fire of the ANEs. Though in the fire-fight one terrorist was injured, he managed to escape. However, Capt Anirban did not give up, and followed up the trail into a thick forest, and again engaged them at close quarter. In this exchange of fire, while charging on a militant he was fatally wounded, though he managed to neutralize the ANE. For displaying bravery of a very high order, Capt A Bandyopadhyay was awarded SM (Posthumous).

In a well planned and coordinated operation in Kupwara forests, on 19 November 02 working on hard intelligence, Maj Parveen Chauhan, along with Maj Vyas, Lt SS Karki and Sub Kosh Bahadur Gurung undertook a long and difficult route in Rajwara forest to 'seek and destroy' the ANEs. As soon as the search started, the column came under fire of the ANEs, to which L Nk Sanjan Lama manning a L M G reacted swiftly and neutralized one ANE. As night fell, the column detected a few more hideouts and decided to extend the search by three days. Searching the forest the Gorkhas detected pieces of plastic bags, which led to a dug-out from which suddenly the ANEs opened fire. As

visibility was poor, a cordon was laid and the search continued next day and the ANE dug-out was set on fire, resulting in recovery of bodies of three ANEs. These were later identified as Abu Umar of LeT (resident of Karachi), Tahir of LeT (resident of Attuk) and Abu Gajali of JUM (resident of Abbotabad). The column also recovered 3 AK 47 rifles, 5 grenades, a large quantity of ammunition, rations and clothing and an ICOM radio set. In this operation carried out in conjunction with 6 RASHTRIYA RIFLES and JAMMU & KASHMIR RIFLES, besides Majs Chauhan, RS Rana and P Vyas, Lt Karki, Capt Bhandoria (RMO), Subs Chinta Bahadur Thapa, Chhabi Lal Pun Kosh Bahadur Gurung and Hemanta Kumar Ghale of the unit showed devotion to duty of a very high order. L Nk Sajan Lama, Rfn Om Bahadur Gurung, Amir Karki, Resham Bahadur Roka and Ashish Gurung also displayed courage and determination of a very high order.

On 9 December 02, a column under Maj V Gosain along with Lt Karki and Nb Sub Ram Bahadur Pun while searching a forest came across a well concealed hideout of the ANEs. After a brief exchange of fire, the patrol recovered one rifles under barrel grenade launcher, one Chinese pistol, assorted ammunition of AK weapons, one anti-tank mine, 4 IEDs, 25 detonators, 20 Chinese grenades, pencil timer and a Japanese compass.

During a cordon and search operation under Maj RS Rana with Capt SS Negi and Sub Chinta Bahadur Thapa, on 16 December 02 a column searching a forest in the snow covered mountain ranges, the patrol discovered a hidden cache of one rocket launcher, one flame thrower, three disposable rocket launchers, one AK 56 rifle, one Chinese pistol, 15 kg of explosives, detonators with 30 mtrs wire, remote control devices, 30 mtrs of safety fuze, two radio sets and a large quantity of assorted ammunition. For displaying alertness and devotion to duty of a high order, besides the officers, Subs Chinta Bahadur and Kosh Bahadur Gurung, Nb Sub Ram Bahadur Pun, CHM Phon Man Gurung, L Nks Jun Parsad Gurung and Ram Bahadur Dhurel

and Rfn Sunder Bahadur Rana, Krishna Parsad Regmi and Ramesh Kamcha were commended. The patrol also earned high praise from the Army Commander, Northern Command.

For their continuous high grade performance, 1/4 GR was also awarded 'Unit Citation' by the Chief of the Army Staff.

2/4 GR in J&K 2002/03

While deployed on LOC duties, columns of the unit were often tasked to carry out seek and destroy missions in the neighboring forested area which was reportedly being used by the militants as their staging camp. Due to good rapport established by the Gorkhas, soon hard intelligence started flowing, which enabled the unit to achieve very good successes. In one such operation launched under Cap Kisham Bahadur Gurung on 22 February 2003, the patrol moved fast at night and by first light surprised the ANEs. Soon, an effective cordon was formed and a fire-fight started which continued for a few hours. As visibility was poor due to bad weather, there was every chance of own casualties due to cross fire, which made Capt Gurung take special precautions. The alert Johnny kept a strict vigil and fire discipline, the ANEs hiding in a dhok (hut) were assaulted. In this, the fire support provided by Sub Tek Bahadur Gurung who was manning the rocket launcher proved very fruitful, and enabled neutralization of two ANEs and recovery of arms and ammunition. For showing bravery of a very high order Cap KB Gurung was awarded a SC, while Sub TB Gurung earned a SM.

In a subsequent operation launched on 27 April 2003, a night patrol led by Hav Sunil Kumar Gurung (hailing from Bakloh) was fired upon by the militants in a forest. Hav Gurung quickly returned fire, which forced the militants to run into the forest and take refuge in a dhok. Not losing contact, the patrol cordoned the ANEs and at first light neutralized three of them and recovered their weapons.

On 6 May 03 Hav Til Bahadur Thapa was leading a

patrol, which clashed with the ANEs in a forest. Once the fire was returned, the ANEs broke contact and took refuge in a cave but Hav Til Bahadur thoroughly searched the area, followed the tell-tale signs and finally neutralized two ANEs.

For their brave actions and leadership, both Hav Sunil Kumar Gurung and Til Bahadur Gurung were awarded SM.

3/1 GR in J&K 2002/4

The unit was inducted in Banihal region of J&K and saw active Counter Insurgency operations. In one such operation on 26 November 02, a patrol under Maj Ram Singh Chhetri was searching a dense thorny undergrowth in a rocky mountain, when it came under fire of the ANEs. In the ensuing fire-fight, Maj Chhetri and an NCO were wounded, seeing which Rfn Prem Bahadur who was also injured, took a circuitous route and made a gallant charge at the ANEs, neutralizing two of them. Though he succumbed to his wounds, Rfn Prem Bahadur showed dare-devil courage, for which he was awarded SC (Posthumous).

In a similar operation on 8 December 02, Rfn Man Bahadur Pun showed exemplary courage, when as part of a patrol he sighted two ANEs and engaged them at short distance of 40 mtrs, neutralizing both of them instantly. One of the ANE was later identified as Mohammed Ahmed, a Pakistani national and a Divisional Commander of Jaish-e-Mohammed. For displaying shikari instinct and dogged determination, Rfn Man Bahadur Pun earned a SM.

Thereafter in year 2003 the Gorkhas were deployed along the LOC. Here, they had the additional task of carrying out cordon and search operations in their area of operation.

Soon after deployment, the Gorkhas located and busted five hideouts of ANEs, recovered a large quantity of arms and ammunition and neutralized ANEs including a dreaded one, belonging to Jaish-e-Mohammad. In these operations, Maj BK Thapa and Rfn Gir Bahadur Rana and Lil Bahadur Bishwa won praise from all.

In another operation on 18 June 2003, Maj A S Rawat led a patrol which detected and destroyed a hideout recently constructed by the ANEs, which could accommodate 10 persons. In this operation, L Nk Parkash Gurung played an important role.

Inspired by the above successes, on 10 July in a combined operations with 48 RR, a company column under Maj Ravi Sharma and Capt PK Mishra established a cordon and commenced search of a forested area in mountainous country in Darhal. At first light contact was made with the ANEs, which soon turned into a fire-fight in which two ANEs were neutralized while other two tried to escape. They soon ran into 'stops' were also neutralized. All four were identified as Pak nationals belong to Jaish-e-Mohammed. The patrol recovered two AK 56 Rifles, nine magazines and a large quantity of ammunition from these terrorists.

On 14 July 03, a patrol led by Lt Vivek Yadubanshi located a cave about 400 mtrs above, where a few ANEs were hiding. Unmindful of his safety, young Vivek accompanied by two Gorkhas crawled up to the entrance and lobbed grenades, resulting in neutralization of the ANEs and recovery of a large number of warlike stores.

On same day in another action Maj BK Thapa's patrol located another cache, but missed the ANE. To lure the adversary, Maj Thapa called off the search at last light and lay doggo, when at 10 pm he noticed some movement. Engaged, the ANE ran for cover. Maj Thapa ordered the area to be illuminated by firing para light illuminating bombs and Rfn Bishan Singh Budal engaged the ANE with his L M G, and unmindful of his personal safety, neutralized him from a distance of 5 mtrs. The ANE was identified as Asmatullah @ Abu Habshi of Dera Ghazi Khan, Pakistan and a dreaded member of Jaish-e-Mohammed. The patrol recovered one AK 47 Rifle with magazine and ammunition and 10 hand grenades.

The above good work was continued by the Gorkhas on 16 and 21 July, when patrols led by Capt UV Sagne

and Maj Ravi Sharma respectively busted more hideouts and recovered arms and ammunition.

While on a patrol on 16 May 04, Rfn Amit Thapa suspected that a militant was hiding in a cowshed. As the search progressed, the militants broke cover and tried to escape, but Rfn Amit Thapa sprang on him and engaged him. Though an ANE bullet had pierced his helmet causing grave head injury, young Rfn Amit Thapa did not take cover till the militant had been neutralized. For his brave act, Rfn Amit Thapa was awarded SM (Posthumous).

5/1 GR in J&K 1997/99

During this period, the Gorkhas operated in Pnazgam, Trehgam and Kupwara Sectors in the Kashmir Valley, and achieved many successes. During this period the unit also guarded the LOC and carried out anti-infiltration tasks, besides launching 'seek and destroy' missions in the area of responsibility.

Soon after induction, on 1 May 97 it neutralized four foreign militants, including an Area Commander of Hizbul Mujahideen, recovering weapons and warlike stores. In another successful operation launched after detailed planning in July same year, it raided a camp of the ANEs, eliminated 32 terrorists and recovered a large cache of arms and ammunition. As there were indications of the ANEs using the Shamshabari Range during the winter, two companies were moved to patrol the snow covered mountain range of altitude 3,500 mtrs, where icy winds of 50 km were a normal feature.

The unit ensured free and fair elections to the Lok Sabha in Mar 1998, which had been threatened by the ANEs. Amongst its civic actions and assistance to the locals, extinguishing the fire at villages Dardhare and Melyal village earned the Gorkhas high respect.

Despite its hectic operational schedule, Rfn Pemba Tamang was trained and won laurels for the Indian Army in the national Shooting Championship at Bangalore in Jan

1999, by winning four Gold, one Silver and one Bronze medal.

During its tenure, the following brave Gorkhas sacrificed their lives for the sake of the nation.

Rfn Sher Bahadur Gurung (GT), awarded SM (Posthumous).

L Nk Nun Bahadur Rana, awarded SM (Posthumous)

Rfn Ram Bahadur Thapa

Nk Tul Parsad Pun

The unit had the distinction of neutralizing 32 ANEs, apprehending 2, while 12 surrendered to them. It recovered 101 AK series of rifles, one sniper rifle, one pistol, one universal machine gun, two 12 bore guns, one 60 mm mortar, 386 grenades and 36 assorted mines and IEDs, along with a large quantity of ammunition. It won one SC and 6 SMs, along with a large number of commendations.

For its outstanding performance, the unit was awarded Unit Citation by the COAS.

5/4 GR on LOC/CI Ops May 08

Soon after taking over the op responsibility, the Gorkhas developed intelligence sources while simultaneously carrying out affective domination of the LOC in snow bound area of J&K.

On the evening of 30 May, information was received that a group of militants of a mixed tanzeem had assembled at Pak Post Dudhnial, their launch pad. Their movements were picked up by own surveillance devices and by 2300 hrs it was confirmed that a group of 18 terrorists was heading towards own post, Kolang. Immediately, ambush parties along the anti-infiltration obstacles were alerted and as the first terrorist attempted to cross over, he was neutralized by Rfn Dil Bahadur Thapa, with by a short burst of AK56 fire. As the terrorists tried to withdraw, the area was illuminated by 81 mm fire and they were engaged with

machine gun fire from neighboring posts, under the able guidance of Maj Deependra Jasrotia and L Hav Sam Bahadur Gurung, using the Hand Held Thermal Imagers. Early morning search of the snow covered area revealed that three terrorists were killed and a few wounded (later intercepts confirmed five terrorists killed). Own patrols recovered the following items from the three dead terrorists.

AK 56 Rif-two

Amn for AK 56-150 rds

Magazines-5

Single bore rifle-one

Radio set with antenna-one

Hand Grenades- five

The success of the operation was due to accurate and timely intelligence, excellent coordination between the sensors and shooters and, a high level of motivation of all ranks. Their success was greatly appreciated by higher commanders, who visited the site next day, along with the CO, Col Manish Awasthi.

The above are only a few accounts of the excellent performance of the Gorkha in the fight of the nation against insurgents and militants. For instance, 15 RR and a number of G R units also performed very well, and were awarded Unit Citations. However, their details are not available.

In Counter Insurgency Operations, the Gorkhas have shown their bravery, devotion to duty and willingness to take bold and courageous risks in the face of fire, of which any Army can be proud of.

Being hill people, the Gorkhas are very good at patrolling and laying ambushes in forested mountains, can trace and follow the 'trail' of a militant, maintain silence and alertness for long durations and yet act sharply, when the adversary least expects it. Being physically tough and mentally robust, they can survive for long durations with limited logistic support and can turn the jungle to their advantage. Though

there have not been very many cases of the use of 'Kukri' in these operations, the Gorkhas always carry it, as a last weapon of use.

As in other operations, in counter insurgency also the Gorkha Regiments have added new chapters in their glorious history, and continue to do so.

Nearly all infantry units of the Indian Army and of the Gorkha Rifles have done tenures in different areas of J & K tackling the militants, the performance of the following units of the Gorkhas has been outstanding, for which they have been awarded Unit Citation by the C O A S.

1 GR

4/1 GR-1992-One of the first recipient since the award was instituted.

2/1 GR- 1997

5/1 GR- 2000

4 GR

5/4 GR-1992

2/4 GR- 2000

1/4 GR-2002-Declared the Best unit in CI Ops, by GOC-in-C, Northern Command

5 GR

1/5 GR (FF)-1993

3/5 GR (FF)- 1994

1/5 GR (FF)-1999 and 2004.

9 GR

5/9 GR- 1998

2/9 GR- 2001

4/9 GR- 2005

3/9 GR- 2006

11 GR

2/11 GR- 1993

1/11 GR-1996 and 2000

While fighting the militants, number of brave men have also sacrificed their lives and won gallantry awards. As it is not possible to list achievements of all units, the award winners are listed below.

2nd Lt Puneet Nath Datt, 1/11 GR. In 1997, young Datt was leading a patrol to nab a group of hard core militants, who were hiding with stocks of ammunition and explosive in a house in Srinagar. As his patrol approached the house compound, it came under heavy fire from inside. With complete disregard for his own safety, Puneet jumped across the boundary wall and engaged the militants, who by now had come out of the house. Realising the danger to his patrol, Dutt dashed out of cover and killed the terrorist. Realizing their hopeless situation, while one militant climbed on the roof and started firing at Puneet (due to which he was seriously injured); the others tried to escape from the rear. Though bleeding, Puneet threw a grenade through a window and fired his AK killing two militants and setting a large quantity of explosive on fire. Seeing the bravery of their leader, the patrol also engaged the enemy and neutralized the remaining militants.

For displaying bravery of the highest order and making the supreme sacrifice of his life, 2nd Lt Puneet Dutt was awarded 'Ashoka Chakra' on 26 January 1998.

Bravery displayed by Paratrooper Sanjog Chhetri, 9 PARA (Special Forces). Young Sanjog hailing from Sikkim was part of a Commando Team carrying out anti-terrorist operations in Hill Kaka forest of Jammu region on 22 April 2003, when

his patrol came under effective machine gun fire from three sides. Sensing danger and threat to his party, Sanjog broke cover and silenced and pushed back the enemy by lobbing two hand grenades on their positions. However, the militants soon regrouped and occupied another position, and soon opened up with machine guns on the patrol. As by now Sanjog had run out of grenades, he without any fear for his life charged at them from a flank and killed two of them. Though by now he had received multiple gun shot wounds, the brave Gorkha continued to engage the enemy and killed one more, at point blank range. Inspired by his act, the patrol changed position and attacked the militants, killing another thirteen and capturing one. In this operation, the patrol also recovered weapons and a large quantity of ammunition and rations.

For displaying gallantry and concern for his fellow comrades of a very high order, Paratrooper Sanjog Chhetri was awarded Ashoka Chakra (posthumously), on 26 January 2004.

Conclusion

From the above brief account, it would be evident that Gorkha soldiers of the Indian Army have carried out Counter Insurgency Operations, with great zeal, determination and devotion, without any care for their lives. The Gorkha Regiments have performed exceedingly well not only in insurgency affected regions of India but also in Sri Lanka, despite heavy odds. The camaraderie displayed by the Gorkha soldiers in evacuating their wounded colleagues speaks very high of their soldierly qualities, of which any nation, army. or regiment can be proud of.

In the above operations all ranks of Gorkha Regiments won a number of gallantry awards, out of which only two have been mentioned here to show that a Gorkha remains 'Bravest of the Brave' under all situations.

4

GORKHAS ON UNITED NATION MISSIONS

Background

Due to her policy of non-alignment and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, India has been asked by the UN to provide troops to resolve disputes between countries and at times with-in countries, world over. Forming part of peace maintaining and enforcing contingents, Indian Armed Forces have earned laurels in both roles, including praise from local inhabitants.

The first Gorkha unit to be sent on such a mission was 3/1 GR in Congo, which came back with flying colors. Since then a number of Gorkha contingents have served abroad on UN assignments and earned laurels for their regiment, the Indian Army and India. A brief account of a few such units is covered in this chapter.

3/1 GR in CONGO in 1961

This African country having diamond and copper wealth, had been ruled by Belgium and France since 1876 and became independent after a brief but bloody struggle in 1960. There were a number of internal and external groups

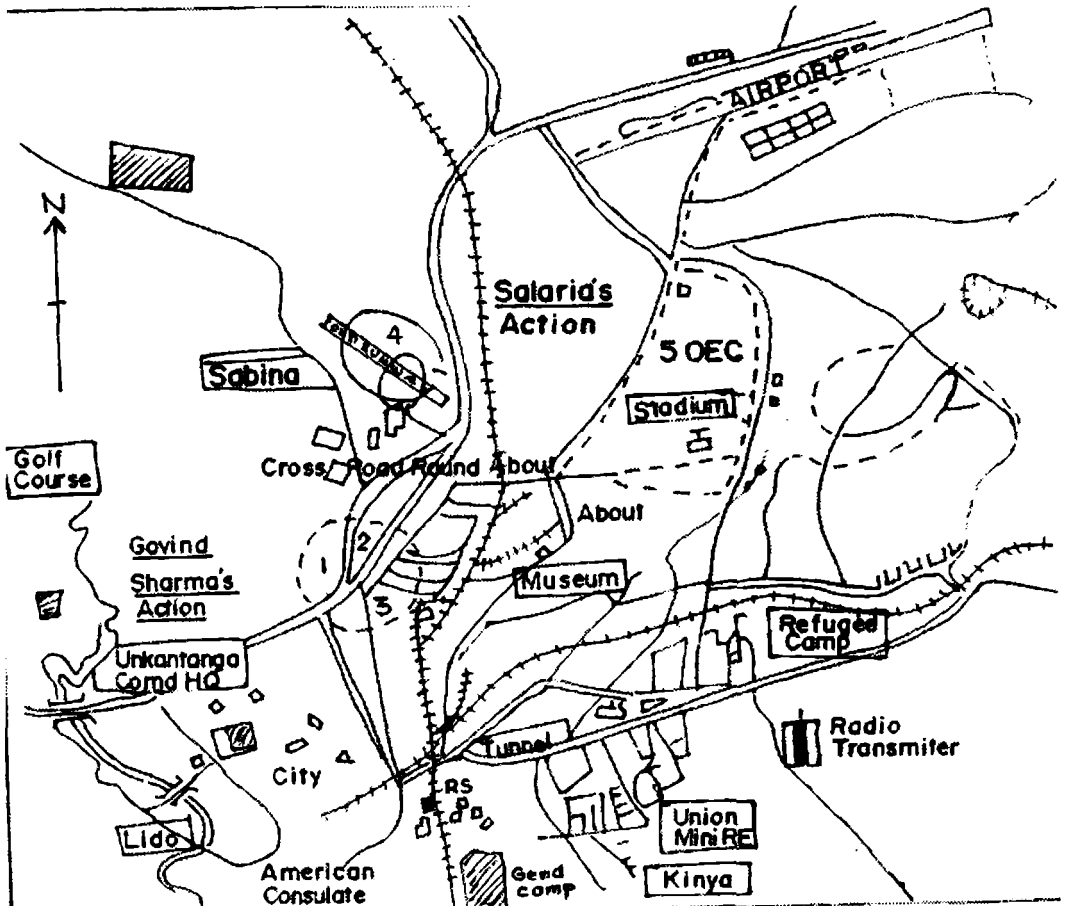
armed to the teeth, including mercenaries trying to take control of her mineral wealth. Soon, its Army mutinied and under the leadership of Moise Tshombe, the central province of Katanga decided to break away.

On a request from the newly formed Government of Congo, on 16 July 1960, the UN decided to send a military mission to assist the newly formed country. The initial team faced a great deal of difficulty due to internal strife between the Prime Minister and the President, which in February 1961, compelled the UN to authorize 'use of force to prevent a civil war and expel Belgians from Congo', and augment the UN Force. India responded by sending 99 Brigade (2 JAT, 1 DOGRA and 3/1 GR) with a squadron of armour, a heavy mortar battery, a field company of engineers and a medium machine gun company, with support elements, to fulfill her international obligation.

Raised in 1960 by Lt Col S S Moitra, 3/1 GR was located at Solan and on short notice moved to Delhi in March 1961. After making up its deficiencies, the unit was airlifted to Leopoldville by end March. The opposition it faced there was basically from the para military forces of Moise Tshombe's Gendarmerie under Belgian officers and some mercenaries (group-mobiles-commandos), equipped with armored cars, jeeps, mortars and other modern weapons.

The task given to the force was 'to free and annex the secessionist Katanga into the Republic of Congo', for which in April 1961 the Gorkhas were sent to Kamina, an important military base in Central Katanga. Soon, thanks to aggressive patrolling and good public-relations on their part, the Gorkhas started securing important vital installations like airfield, power supply plant and water point, and dominating the area by winning over the locals. However, as the overall situation continued to deteriorate, the brigade had to move 3/1 GR to Manono. By beginning of December, besides the 99 Brigade Group and bombers of I A F, two additional Brigades (from Swedish and Ethiopian Army) had been concentrated in the area.

On 5 December, 3/1 GR was deployed between Lido and Castle in Elizabethville, with a platoon detached at Refugee Camp under Capt G S Salaria, when they were given the task to clear a road block set up by a company of Gendarmerie (supported by armored cars and mortars) on the road between the airport and headquarters of the UN Katanga Force.



Key Positions in Elizabethville

Col Moitra decided to launch a surprise attack with a company under Maj G S Sharma, while Capt Salaria was ordered to move and intercept the withdrawing enemy. While the bold attack under Maj Sharma succeeded, Salaria ran into opposition at the old airfield near Sabena. To reach the given destination in time, Salaria's platoon consisting of only 16 men charged at the enemy company. In this assault, Salaria himself led his troops, killing a sergeant of the enemy at close quarters. Through gravely wounded by an enemy burst of machine gun, he continued to lead his

men till the end, after which Hav Durga Bahadur Thapa, his 2 IC took over. Thus, Salaria and his men prevented the enemy from moving any re-enforcements, which greatly assisted the battalion's main attack. For displaying courage and bravery of the highest order,

For showing bravery of the highest order in the face of the enemy, Capt Salaria was awarded P V C¹ (posthumously), while Hav Durga Bahadur was awarded Sena Medal and Maj Sharma, Vr C.

After this operation, the reputation of 3/1 GR went sky high in Congo. While the enemy feared them, the locals and other elements of UN Force developed a special liking for them. The leadership of Col Maitra specially came in for special praise from international press and agencies, as he had instilled very high standards of discipline and devotion to duty in his soldiers. After being relieved by 2/5 GR (FF), the unit returned to Bombay in March 1963. During its UN assignment, the Gorkhas won one P V C, two M V Cs (Nk Mhavor and L Nk Ran Bahadur), four Vr Cs, one A V S M and two S Ms. Seven all ranks were Mentioned in Dispatches. The unit set a very high record of devotion to duty and gallantry, which remains un-matched till date by any UN Contingent.

2/5 GR (F F) in CONGO 1962

With Lt Col ZC Bakshi, Vr C, MC, in command, the unit sailed from Bombay on 10 Mar 62 to form a part of the Indian UN contingent in Katanga. As per rules, V C winners were not permitted to accompany a unit going to an area where active hostilities were likely. However, as the two Victoria Cross winners then serving with the unit were adamant on accompanying the unit rather than staying

1 The first PVC won by a Gorkha Unit. Later, during the 1962 Indo-China War, Maj D S Thapa, 1/8 GR was also awarded a P V C in Ladakh sector. This was followed by award of PV C to Lt M K Pandey (posthumously), 1/11 GR, during the 1999 Kargil Ops, Op VIJAY.

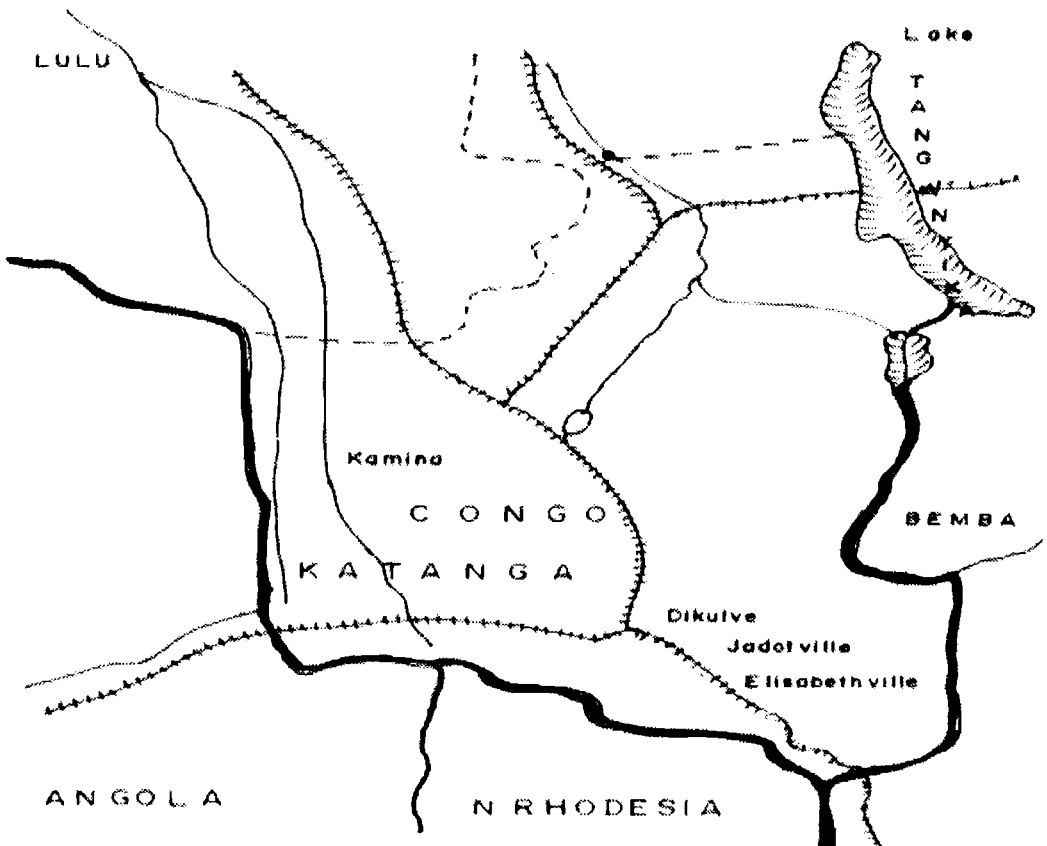
back, special permission was obtained for Sub Maj Gaje Ghale and Sub Againsing Rai to accompany the unit.

The situation in Katanga was fluid, with the Katangese Gendarmerie threatening to attack the Luano airfield held by the unit. There were strict instructions for the UN troops 'not to open fire unless fired upon', which posed a serious problem. Often, a mere threat of opening fire or un-shielding of Kukri was enough to dissuade the Gendarmerie, as was done by Maj CB Shah and Lt Itbar Singh to get a position vacated. On 12 September, when Itbar and his section were surrounded, he ordered his men to fix bayonets and charge, which created terror in the hundred odd opponents, who bolted from the scene, after which the Gorkha demolition party destroyed the enemy camp.

In another incident, a section under Nk Maker Singh Gurung came under fire and had to be extricated. Capt Mehra organized its relief by sending a platoon on a flank

To Leopoldville

K A S A I



grouping all his company 2 in mortars together, and threatening the Gendarmerie the use of 3 in mortars. This forced them to withdraw. In this action, the excellent signal communications played an important role. After this, in Nov the unit was moved to Elizabethville.

On 4 December 62, the Gendarmerie shot down a UN helicopter and took its occupants prisoner. When all negotiations to free them failed, the Gorkhas were ordered to launch an attack and rescue them. However, the menacing posture adopted by the marching Gorkhas was enough to demoralize the adversary, who soon freed the hostages.

On the night of 27 December, the enemy started shelling the defenses occupied by the unit, and though the Gendarmerie General tried to stop the firing, his troops disobeyed him. With all options exhausted, the Gorkhas re-grouped and tasked A Company to attack the enemy, while the others held fire. However, the battle cry of 'Ayo Gorkhali' was enough to bring them on their knees. Following this, by 29 December the unit cleared the airfield of all enemy opposition and captured Kasapa, after clearing a number of booby-traps. By end of the year, an area 12 miles around Elizabethville had been cleared of all enemy opposition. Soon, the unit sailed back and reached Bombay in Mar 1963.

During the above assignment, the unit won one VSM (CO), two SMs (Maj CB Sahi and L Nk Bhim Bahadur Gharti), while four others were Mention-in-Dispatches.

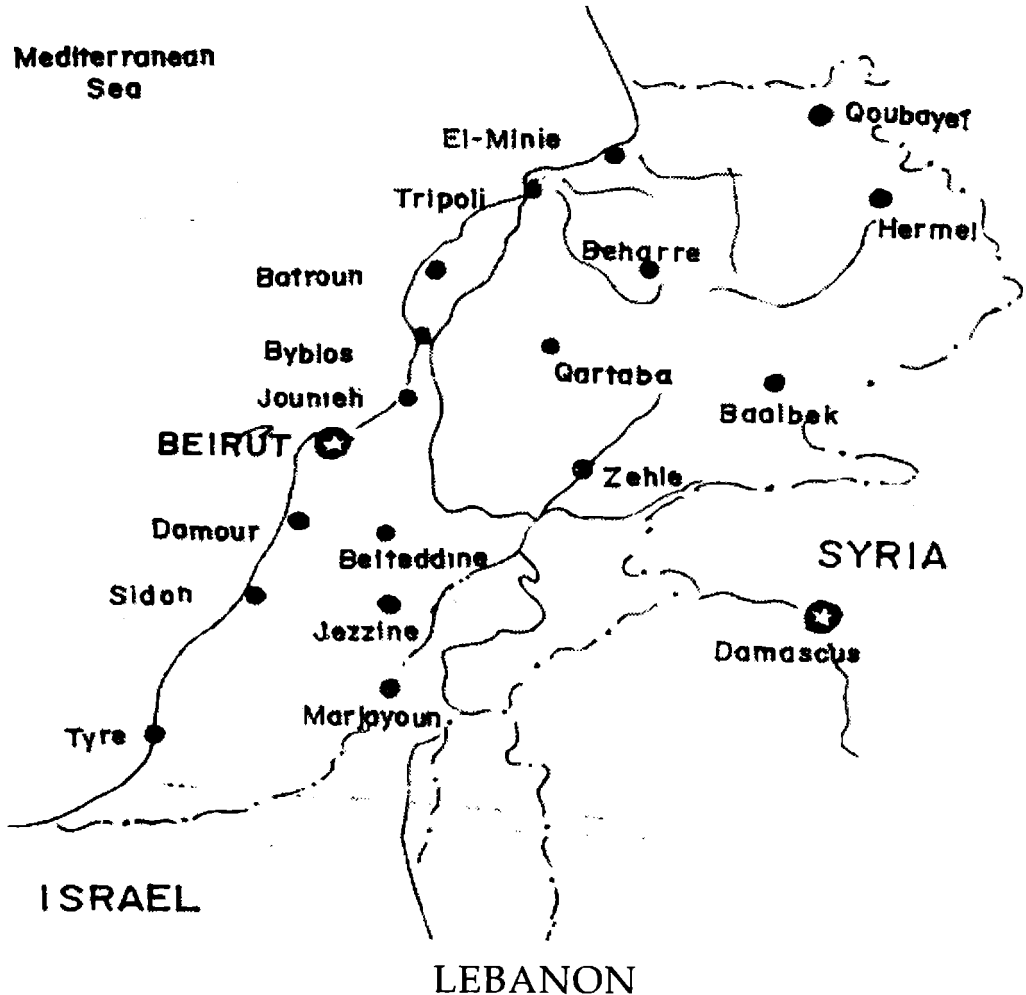
2/4 GR in LEBANON 2000/2001

As part of India's commitment to world peace, the country was requested to send a contingent to form part of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). Deployed in the most beautiful but politically volatile section of Southern Lebanon, the Gorkhas soon established their reputation for fairness, discipline and genuine concern for the locals. Occupying posts on the rocky outcrops in an area surrounded by Israelis, where mortar fire was often

exchanged by the rival groups, the primary task of the unit was to ensure peace, by preventing incursions and infiltration into their enclave by the Lebanese resistance (Hezbollah), Israeli Army and its surrogate militia the Southern Lebanon Army (S L A). Thus the Gorkhas were tasked to provide protection to the 1,00,000 odd inhabitants of the area - a task which the earlier units of the Norwegian Army had not been able to achieve in the last twenty years.

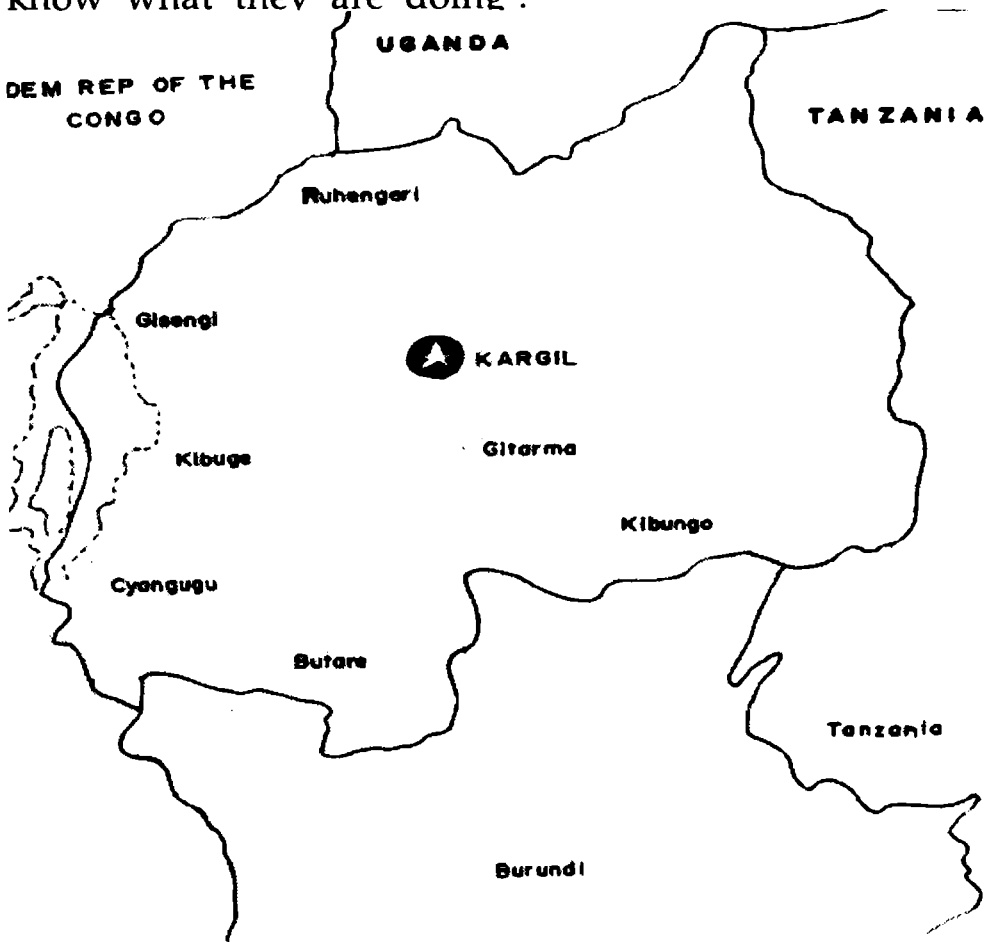
By carrying out vigorous patrolling, establishing vehicle check posts and undertaking extensive humanitarian work, the unit under the command of Col GS Batabyal, soon won over the locals by their smile, gentle behavior, genuineness and transparent sincerity.

For its excellent performance, on 14 October 2000, the unit was awarded the UN Peace Medal at a special parade



held at Ebel-es-Saqi in Southern Lebanon. To commemorate the event, the unit dedicated a park developed by it as 'Mahatma Gandhi Park', to the local people. Thus, though far away from home, the Gorkhas kept the Indian tricolor and the regimental flag flying, in a befitting manner in the finest traditions of the Indian Army.

This was commented upon by Michel Jensen in the Irish Times and Deccan Herald, who noted that 'INDBATT personnel are greeted with a smile and a wave from everyone passing by'. Timor Goksel, the UNIFIL spokesman and senior advisor to the force commander stated that 'the Indians are terrific. They stand up to pressure'. Similar remarks were also made by Mr Hassan Siqlawi (who had been working with the Force for 17 years) that 'the Indians are most professional soldiers we have had so far. They really know what they are doing'.



1/3 GR in RAWANDA 1994/96

1/3 GR in RAWANDA 1994/96

Another unit of the Gorkhas which earned a name for itself and India, was 1/3 GR, which operated under very difficult conditions in this strife-torn country, from 10 November 1994 to 19 April 1996. The unit was inducted as part of the UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR), a country which had been ravaged by ethnic violence between Hutus, led by the Government of Rwanda and the Tutos, controlled by the Rwandan Patriotic Front. Besides economic devastation and large scale genocide, the clashes had resulted in Tran's border movement of refugees from the countries surrounding Rwanda - mainly Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi and Zaire.

Terrain wise, the country has rugged hills with steep slopes and flat ridges, which are intersected by a number of rivers. Situated at approximately 1500 m altitude, it has tropical rainforest, which has been devastated to a large extent.

The unit was tasked to provide security to VIPs, protection of convoys carrying Internally Displaced Persons and prisoners, patrolling and other tasks like providing Rapid Action Force. Besides the assigned tasks, the Gorkhas also took on humanitarian tasks, adopted twelve orphanages and established two medical clinics for the locals. They also assisted the Rwanda Government in de-congestion of prisoner camps by constructing two new camps, and moved the inmates under strict security. The Gorkhas undertook distribution of cooked food to orphans and also organized entertainment programs for the locals-events which were keenly looked forward by the locals.

Besides the above tasks, in December 1994 in conjunction with the local army, the unit launched specific operations to un-earth arms caches. The unit recovered a large number of swords, spears and machetes from a camp in Kibecho, thus avoiding a major clash. The Gorkhas also escorted 7194 displaced persons from camps to Southern Rwanda, providing security and administrative support to them

through hostile mountainous terrain. Again when the Kibecho Camp was attacked by the opposing side in April 1995, the unit provided ten vehicles under escort to move 3068 unruly inmates to their homes, a task which was carried out under hostile fire.

The UN installations in Rwanda often came under hostile fire. Hence, besides the residence of the Force Commander, the Gorkhas provided protection to the Force HQs, Blue Beret Camp, UN helicopter base and Administrative Base. They also manned the 500 men Transit Camp, Communication Compound, UNDP and UNHCR offices. Another challenging task undertaken by the unit, was the protection of Overnight Way Station at Ndera, which housed the refugees who were often under attack. Here, large scale humanitarian assistance was also provided to the refugees.

As part of the Rapid Action Force, the unit was mobilized twenty times for operation tasks of cordon and search operations, and often moved out at short notice in special vehicles provided by the South African Army.

At that time, a number of Non Government Organizations (N G Os) were operating in Rwanda, and they all sought assistance from the unit. Though often hard pressed for manpower and transport, the unit made sure that all possible help was extended to such organizations.

On reaching Rwanda, the unit identified rehabilitation of orphans as a Key Result Area. To achieve this objective, it identified ten orphanages namely Missionaries of Charity (at Kigali and Kibungo), Masaka Orphanage (Kigali rural), Belgium Red Cross (Kigali), Unaccompanied Children Orphanage (Kigali), Shwogwe Orphanage (Rawamanga), Gatsata Orphanage, Ceisa Orphanage, Gahini Orphanage and Centre Medical Social (Bilyogo, Kagali). Assistance provided included donation of rations and foodstuff, periodical medical check up and distribution of medicines, electrification of buildings, provision of water tanks and repairs of pipe lines, transport for shifting orphans and their belongings, donations of presents during festivals,

entertainment by unit's jazz band, donation of canteen stores, tentage and repairs to approach roads and living accommodation.

The two Medical Inspection Rooms set up by the unit became so popular that people from far off places started coming to them, which often meant 250 to 350 patients per day. Mobile Teams were also sent to the villages, and were very popular among the Rwandans.

The professional conduct of all ranks of the unit was greatly appreciated by the local population, the Government officials, the Rwandese Patriotic Army, the UN Staff, the Non Government Organizations, civilian dignitaries and other diplomats located in the country. The Indian community was especially very proud and appreciative of the good conduct of the Gorkhas, who earned the status of being ambassadors of the country. The Indian Government recognized the good performance of the unit by awarding Vishisht Seva Medal to Colonel N K Singh, the Commanding Officer, while the Chief of the Army Staff awarded commendation cards to Lt Col Sadanandam K, L Nk Naresh Thapa and Sub N Pitchai (Army Postal Service).

The tenure of 1st Battalion of 3 Gorkha Rifles added another feather in the cap of the Gorkhas of the Indian Army as they lived up to its high standards and traditions.

During the above assignment, the unit won one VSM (CO), two SM (Maj CB Sahi and L Nk Bhim Bahadur Gharti), while four others were Mention-in-Dispatches.

5/8 GR in Sierra Leone 2000/01

Under the leadership of Col Satish Kumar, the Gorkhas, along with a field company (of Engineers) and a field hospital were airlifted on 6 January 2000 to Lungi airport of Freetown. Soon they joined the Mechanized Company and formed combined groups with Motorized Company, which were deployed at Kailahun and Daru, 70 km to East.

The security situation in the forested and mountainous

country with a number of rivers was precarious. Though the country had been independent since 1961, it had undergone political and economic turmoil including military rule. Since the elections in 1998, the country was being ruled by the Sierra Leone People's Party under Dr Kabbah. He was facing serious challenge from the Revolutionary United Force (RUF) an armed group which had been against the elections. Encouraged by neighboring countries who were also vying for the diamond riches of Sierra Leone the mines were mainly in the eastern part of the country. Though the neighboring countries had earlier assisted the country in her economic and political stability, the peace was fragile and there were often trans-border forays by the rebels.

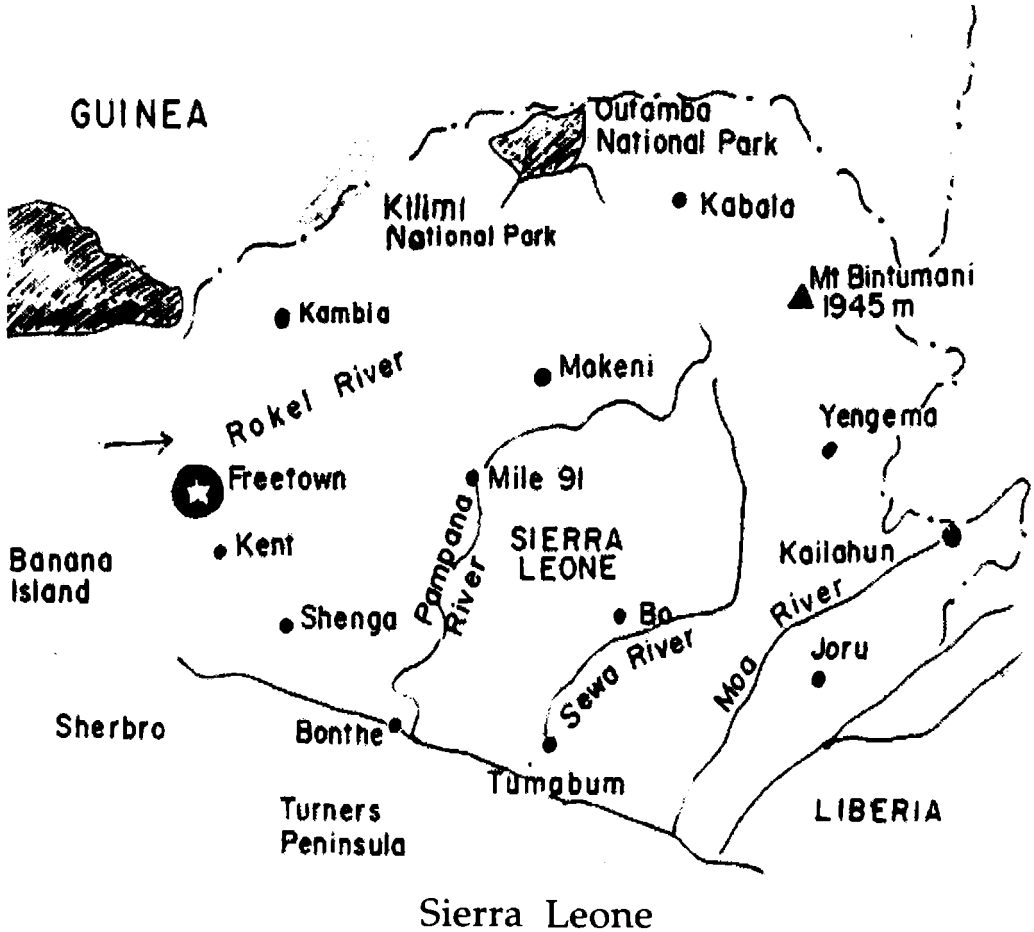
The battalion group was organized as a composite force based on two motorized companies, two mechanized companies and a support company comprising platoons of the infantry mortar, workshop, engineers, signals and the medicals. Two more sub units were formed by the unit, to act as Quick Reaction Company and a Guard and Administration Company.

The UN Mission had established contact with the R U F and held meetings with them, persuading them to return to the mainstream, but these were not fruitful. Accordingly, UN detachments were deployed at Daru, Kalahun, Koidu and Makeni. The Gorkhas with their HQ at Daru dominated the area effectively, so much so that the civil administration was able to return after a gap of 10 years and meet RUF leaders at a public meeting. Though the RUF was active in the countryside, the UN troops were able to move about the region, freely. By their exemplary conduct and genuine concern for the up-lift of the locals, soon the Gorkhas were able to win the hearts of the population. At the same time, their soldierly bearing and efficiency in patrolling dominated the countryside. Thus, they were able to encourage a number of surrenders from the RUF cadres and contribute to the UN cause.

Upset with the successes and the popularity of the Gorkhas and the UN leading to strengthening of the position

of Dr Kabbah, in April-May 2000 the RUF breached the understanding for surrendering their arms. Instead, they took the UN contingent located in Central and Northern provinces as hostages. A team of UN Military Observers which had gone for negotiating the release of the hostages, was also detained. At the same time, UN helicopter carrying cash and 500 UN soldiers occupying a camp at Kailahun were also surrounded. The second in command of 5/8 GR who went to negotiate the freedom of these companies, was also taken hostage at Kuiva.

While the UN and other friendly nations got involved in intense negotiations which were carried out for the release of the hostages, the RUF threatened to attack the hostage



All this while, 5/8 GR had drawn-up a plan to rescue the 2 IC and his detachment from Kuiva, but they were not allowed as it would have involved use of force, which was not permitted under the UN charter. The stand-off came

to the brink when on 7 May when the RUF threatened to attack the Indian contingent at Kailhun, if they did not surrender. However, on seeing the resolute Indians, they gave up. Soon, the local chiefs pressurized the RUF, who having failed to scare the two companies, lifted the siege. Thereafter, the RUF allowed food convoys to move, and after negotiations allowed the 2 IC of 5/8 GR and his 20 men to pull out through Liberia on 29 June. In the meanwhile, reports of rebel forces assembling in Liberia, 25 km from Kailahun, for attacking the UN troops held hostage there were received.

This resulted in the UN to allowing launch a multi-national OPERATION KUKRI to assist the two companies to break out from Kailahun and move towards Daru to join 5/8 GR. The three dimensional operations employing helicopters, sea boats and land columns, was launched on 15 July 2000 with a combined force. Besides the Gorkhas, it included soldiers of 18 GRENADIERS, Team 2 PARA Special Forces, engineers, mechanized infantry and aviation assets from Britain. After pre-emptive air strikes and shelling by artillery, the Gorkhas advanced from Daru to Kailhun. In the meanwhile, the Kailhun garrison was tasked to establish a bridgehead with assistance of 2 PARA and after air evacuating sick and valuable stores, they were to break-out towards Daru and link-up with the Gorkhas.

The plan was well executed. Though the RUF tried to engage the breaking-out columns of Kailhun and ambushed them to delay a link-up with the Gorkhas, they were beaten back. Similarly, the Gorkha column, under the CO captured Kuiva and Mobai-the HQ of RUF and capturing their arms and ammunition. They secured Pendembu by noon and by 4:30 pm linked-up with the column coming from Kailhun. The operation was successfully completed by 6 pm, and then the force returned to Daru.

Consequent to their failure to hold the siege, the RUF posed threats to Daru and other towns in the area. Thus, vigorous patrolling coupled with civic action was carried

out, and a number of RUF cadres induced to surrender at Daru.

The tenure of the Gorkhas came to an end in December 2000. As the road from Daru to Kenema was under threat of the RUF, an alternate route via Hastings was secured for move to Lungi airfield at Freetown for de-induction to India.

During their UN Mission to Sierra Leone, 5/8 GR earned high praise for their steadfastness, restraint and humane conduct. In OPERATION KUKRI they set a very high standard of fast march, ingenuity in clearing opposition, taking initiative at local levels and daring conduct of negotiations even under adverse hostile environment. By carrying out a swift rescue operation with restraint, they not only earned a high name for the UN and India, but also for the Indian Army and the Gorkha Rifles . They added a glorious chapter to the history of 8 GR.

Conclusion

By their exemplary conduct, composure under fire and genuine feeling for assisting the locals, Gorkha troops of the Indian Army have won many laurels on their UN Missions. They have earned fame and glory for their regiments, the Indian Army and India and proved beyond doubts that they are not only brave and courageous under fire, but also large and kind-hearted when dealing with the local population. Their genuine feelings for the children, sick and old have endeared them to the locals wherever they were deployed. Yet, when challenged by fire or hostile acts, they have proved their military capabilities.

5

VIEW-POINT

Introduction

It would be pertinent to record what Indian retired officers who have served in the Gorkha Regiments have to say about their experiences, both in war and in peace time conditions. Also, what is their advice on handling Gorkha troops, so that the honor and prestige of the Gorkha Rifles remains ever high?

Views of a Few Retired Gorkha and other Officers

Maj Gen A S Pathania, MVC, MC, 5 GR (FF),¹ the first Indian CO of 1/5 GR, who led his unit in the Battle of Zojila in 1948, felt that Gorkha soldiers are very well disciplined, obey orders of their seniors blindly and faithfully without any question. Thus, it becomes very important for their leaders, especially the officers to give them leadership of a very high order evaluate viability and practicality of every order in advance in detail and, give specific instructions for every eventuality. In his view, Gorkha soldiers require very little logistic support and can withstand rigors of war easily, as long as they know that their commanders are sharing the same hardships. He was of the opinion that while a Gorkha does not doubt orders received from the

'top', at times he obeys and executes them literally curbing his own initiative. Thus, it is essential that their leaders explain the orders, their execution, likely turn of events and situations that the men might face in detail and discuss the expected actions of each team member before launching the troops on an operation. Narrating his experiences of the 1947/48 War, he described how his troops fought on the snow covered mountains at altitudes of 13,500 ft in ordinary woolen clothes and boots of 2nd World War vintage, the same being worn by his officers. He also realized that when a Gorkha replied to an order with 'Huncha Hazoor' or 'Hous' (yes sir), he only conveyed explicit obedience and not necessarily that he had understood it. Thus, it was essential to ask him 'Kay Bujho' (what have you understood) and ask him to repeat it or re-check it. This drill soon became part of the life-style of officers serving with the Gorkhas, who even while dealing with others often adopt same procedure.

While de-briefing a column on its return from an independent mission, he felt that they had carried out the task assigned but could have gone further. When asked, the company commander agreed, but stated that he had not been told to go beyond, so he stayed put at the designated place. He also felt that sudden changes in orders must be explained and need to be explained at the earliest opportunity, else the troops loose faith and trust in their higher commanders. He found that the direct commissioned Gorkha JCOs performed very well as sub unit commanders and though the Indian officers had just joined the unit, the soldiers were very loyal, devoted, and proud of their unit, the regiment and the Indian Army.²

Lt Gen GS Rawat (who was a Lt with the above unit in 1948) narrated how the troops followed the example of Capt Kochar, who swam across the ice cold river in Dras to assist in construction of a bridge. Sub Harka Bahadur said 'when Captain Sahib can do it, so can I', and voluntarily swam across the river near Kargil with a rope to assist in launching of the bridge.³

Lt Gen HK Sibal, PVSM, MVC, 5GR (FF), who first commanded the 5 GR Center and then 6/5 GR) felt that Gorkha troops follow the laid down rules and regulations explicitly, do not complain of hard work, extra fatigue or lack of rest or recreation and admire their officers who share such ordeals with them. Besides leadership of a very high order, they expect to be treated with dignity and do not like being 'bullied, insulted or abused' as they are not used to such behavior in Nepal. They take punishments awarded to them after a fair trial cheerfully, do not try to influence or manipulate the system for their benefit, and remain cheerful and happy with minimum facilities. During holidays, they like to be left alone to spend time with their friends, go for fishing or hunting or play cards or football. Fond of gambling and an occasional of rum, they love dancing and singing folk songs, love animals and children and are always respectful to women. Though not very technical minded, they take great care and pride of their weapons and equipment, barracks and uniform. They love competitions and do not hesitate to spend their own money on up-keep of their lines or equipment. Not unduly bothered about winning, they can laugh at their own mistakes. They enjoy social and religious gatherings of all faiths, cheerfully. While they have full faith in their officers, unlike other regiments, their trust has to be won, earned and retained.⁴

Late Maj Gen G S Nagra, 4 GR, who during the 2nd World War had served in Burma with Frontier Force having Pathan, Punjabi Musلمان, Dogra and Sikh troops and led 1/4 GR as officiating CO in 1948 Punch Link-up and had volunteered for 4 GR, opined that he found their language quite similar to Sanskrit and food habits just like Punjabis. While detailed instructions had to be given before the attack, once the assault started then there was no stopping the troops from capturing their objectives. They were masters in field craft and felt at home operating in the mountains, using the broken ground to their advantage. Fierce in hand-to-hand combat, they preferred to use their Kukri to bayonet, were very conscious of ammunition expenditure and did

not care about wounds. As the unit was short of officers, most of the attacks were led by direct commissioned JCOs, who proved their worth in gold. The troops could operate without regular logistic support on man-pack basis or on reduced rations, and were cheerful in fighting till they had adequate ammunition. He found that after giving orders while it was not essential to re-check them with Pathans or Sikhs, with the Gorkhas it was necessary. Thus, all his briefings ended with 'Bujhe ye Buujhe Na'? (Have you understood) and on it being confirmed that it had been understood, ask him to repeat the order. Once he had understood it in detail and had been explained the contingencies which he might have to face, then a commander could rest assured that the task would be accomplished in the most befitting manner.⁵

Lt Gen Z C Bakshi, PVSM, MVC, Vr C, VSM, 5 GR (FF), who on partition volunteered for 5 GR after participating in the 2nd World War as a Maj and later became one of the highest decorated officer of the Indian Army), felt that the loyalty of Gorkha troops towards their unit and leader was unshakable, provided the officer was as brave and dedicated as them. From his experience of serving in Frontier Force, he felt that a Gorkha was any day a better soldier than a Patahn and was always willing to risk his life in battle cheerfully as his 'Dharma'. He is not clannish, is jovial, can laugh at himself and is honest. A very fine human being, he is very well disciplined, which is apparent from the low crime rate of Gorkha units. However, while he places implicit faith in his officers, he expects them to look after his welfare and other interests, sincerely. He is not vocal of his difficulties, has great capacity to bear hardships, and does not express his feelings or impressions easily, which makes it more essential to feel his 'pulse'. Till Independence the British had kept the Gorkhas away from Indian officers and troops, primarily to serve their imperial motives, but that myth has been broken as now the Gorkha soldier mixes very well with the Indian troops and perform exceedingly well under their Indian officers. Gen Bakshi

strongly felt that the present policy and structure of the Gorkha Rifles had stood the test of time both in peace and in war, thus there was no need to upset it. If possible, we should further strengthen it by enrolling more soldiers from Nepal, as they are our real ambassadors in Nepal and form part of overall Indo-Nepal relations.⁶

Brig P N Kacker, SC, 9 GR who was awarded Shaurya Chakra for successful counter insurgency operations in Naga Hills in 1956 and later commanded 2/9 GR in the 1971 War in East Pakistan and retired after commanding 39 Gorkha Training Centre, stated that he found the Gorkhas to be best in Counter Insurgency Operations and deliberate attack operations. A Gorkha is very much at home in mountain and jungle warfare, where his skills and instincts of 'a shikari' and 'hill man' come out strongly. In an ambush he can remain still and silent for a long time, can detect slightest movement in jungle and at night and follow tracks and animal trails, efficiently. For other types of warfare (like the water obstacle ridden terrain of East Pakistan), he needs to be given time to train, but picks up the nuances really fast. Amongst his traits, honesty, obedience, loyalty, use of local resources and ability to withstand hardships stand out. He gives due importance to human rights, never steals or molest women and thus is liked by civilians even in hostile environment. He admits his mistakes cheerfully, accepts punishments sportingly without holding any grudge against the punishing authority or the system. He seeks no personal favors, is warm and friendly but correct in his behavior. Very hardworking and devoted, he needs very little looking after to be happy. Used to simple but wholesome food he is satisfied with 'dal-bhat' (lentil and rice) though he enjoys meat. He enjoys a tot of Rum (rakshi) but rarely gets drunk, and makes merry by singing and dancing to any music.

While touring interiors of Nepal it was very heartening to meet ex-servicemen who had trekked miles to just say 'kasto hunu huncha hazoor, ghar man sab thik-thak honu huncha?' (How are you, sir, hoping all is well in your home?). The Gorkha soldiers have good sense of humor and once

in a while love to make fun of their officers in a lighter vein during Dussehra festival (Dassain) or barakhana. In Chhetri and Thakuri units, the earlier influence of 'bhauns' (pandits) is reducing and now they sit and eat with other castes, freely. A Gorkha soldier quickly establishes a 'family bond' with his officers and expects genuine life-long friendship on reciprocal basis, which is evident from the warmth and hospitality shown by them to visiting teams of Indian serving and retired officers in their villages in Nepal.⁷

Brig NK Talwar, 3 GR who was part of 1/3 GR, the first Gorkha unit inducted in Naga Hills in 1956, recalls that though we were new to the task, the JCOs and older NCOs quickly recalled their experiences of NWFP and modified them to local terrain and conditions. Soon, the 'Johny' became an expert at road opening, cordon and search and ambush. He quickly learnt a few important words on Angami, availability of local jungle food and the habits of Nagas, which came in very handy in quick interrogation of UGs on the spot. During the ambush of vehicle convoy of the CO, Lt Col Chitins, his escort party showed great sense of devotion, dedication and loyalty in covering and evacuating him. Despite fatal casualties, our troops did not lose their balance or act with vengeance against the locals, but operated more vigorously for locating the Under Grounds.⁸

Brig S P Shrikant, MVC, who was adjutant of 1/9 GR in Namka Chu Valley in Kameng Frontier Division of NEFA during the 1962 Indo-China War, remembered that though the unit was looking forward to a well earned peace tenure and Dassain at Yol when it was re-inducted to Kameng from the railway station, the order was taken without any murmur. During its march of nearly 100 miles in ordinary clothing, despite lack of proper billeting and food arrangements, the troops marched cheerfully. Even when the unit was ordered to move forward from Tawang on man-pack basis and ordered to prepare defenses in the face of the Chinese in Namka Chu valley, they diligently got

involved in the assigned task of preparing defenses, using their kukri for cutting trees and digging trenches. In the absence of other defense stores, they improvised overhead cover with parachutes and constructed 'sangars' (stone work). Despite witnessing the overwhelming attack of the Chinese on 9 PUNJAB position on Thagla Ridge, the troops were ready to face the Chinese challenge. They remained steadfast under the intense Chinese shelling on 8 October 1962, and only commenced withdrawal on receipt of orders. Even under these adverse conditions, there were acts of bravery at sub unit level, which speak highly of the Gorkha soldier. However, as the disruption of telephone lines resulted in orders not reaching all detachments, initially some confusion took place, resulting in breakdown of command and control. This resulted in sub units withdrawing along different routes some even being taken POWs, but soon the officers and JCOs present with the detachments took charge.

During his march back to Misamari/Tezpur via Bhutan a number of other stragglers also joined his column. While these soldiers found it difficult to go without food or water, the Gorkhas managed to survive by digging out local roots from the fields and little water, being physically tougher. Though they were equally exhausted, the Gorkhas assisted other wounded and sick soldiers during their ordeal through mountains and forests. Though there were a few cases of pulmonary edema and frost bite (the Gorkhas being generally prone to chest ailments in Nepal), there were no fall outs amongst his group. The group halted when ordered, quickly cooked whatever rice or vegetables they had and drank water only from running streams. Thus, they marched more than 150 miles through snow covered mountain trails and forest at altitudes of 4500m, with comparative fitness.

At the debriefing at Tezpur/Misamari, there was no complaint or blame-game for their ordeal or failure, which was taken as part of war. He felt that this was only possible due to the high degree of discipline, soldierly attitude and trust in the leader ingrained in the Gorkha soldier as a tradition, which is difficult to match. Brig Shrikant opined

that prior briefing about Geneva Convention, Chinese Army and evasive action in the face of the enemy would have certainly improved the performance of his troops.

Narrating his experiences of tenure in the UK as Indian Army Liaison Officer during later 1960s, Shrikant mentioned that he found that Gorkha Johnny of 7 and 10 GR were more 'flashy', flabby with long hair, ate and drank quite a bit and their Gorkha Officers were comparatively more dependable. The British officers with HMG units were very professional and highly motivated and dedicated.⁹

Brig SN Dar, AVSM, VSM, 8 GR, who was in command of a company and other troops of 2/8 GR in Walong and Menchuka area of Siang in NEFA during the 1962 War, felt that initially the rumors of Chinese military might had an adverse impact on the soldiers, till they were countered by their officers, which later resulted in the troops giving good performance even under adverse situations. During withdrawal, the necessity of detailed orders and their confirmation by cross-checking was felt, as once the columns were ambushed then command and control could easily be lost. The Gorkha troops survived the ordeal of withdrawing without any logistic support only because of their physical toughness, mental robustness and ability to turn jungle to their advantage. Recounting his experiences of Naga Hills, he felt that initially the troops reacted slowly when suddenly fired upon, but later became alert. His peacetime experience indicated that in competitions and exercises they display tremendous competitive spirit, take pride in their smart turnout and up-keep of unit lines and their weapons and equipment. However, their administrative needs must be looked after by their officers diligently. Interference in their social and religious customs as well as personal life should be avoided, and they should be left on their own during rest and free time.¹⁰

Brig PS Chauhan, 8 GR, who fought with 2/8 GR in Walong and Menchuka and was wounded and taken POW by the Chinese, admires the steadfastness of Gorkha soldier under shelling. He feels that the Gorkhas are highly

superstitious. During the Dussehra (Dassain) of 1962, the incident of an otherwise tough jawan's inability to sacrifice even a chicken and vegetables ceremoniously was considered a bad omen for the unit, and was often mentioned as the cause of casualties suffered by the unit in the 1962 War. During captivity he noticed that though the Chinese tried to brainwash the POWs from Nepal, they were not affected by the anti-India propaganda. His post-war experience as India's Defense Advisor in Nepal during early 1980s convinced him that while the developments in education and communication have improved the education standards and inter-action of Gorkhas from the interior with the outside world, they still remain hardy, good natured and loyal to the Indian Army both while in service and after retirement. He felt that they still are the best material for non-technical arms of our Army.¹¹

Lt Gen R K Anand, 3 GR who was India's Defense Advisor in Nepal from 1973 to 1977 and before retirement was Director General Manpower Planning at Army HQ, N Delhi, felt that status-quo should be maintained as far as the composition of Gorkha Regiments was concerned. During his stay in Nepal he had found a certain section of the local polity often working against India and created an impression locally that India has been violating the 1947 Tripartite Agreement when it suited her. While he appreciated that adequate number of Indian Gorkha soldiers may not be coming forward to join the Army because of other opportunities, recruits from Nepal were still very willing to serve in India and Great Britain. He was of the opinion that the Gorkha units are very well integrated with the Indian Army and are an important element of Indo-Nepal relations, which must be further strengthened.¹²

Maj Gen A K Luthera, MC, Dogra Regt, had commanded a brigade in the 1965 War had 2/1 GR and 5/4 GR under him whom he employed in attacks across the IB in Jammu Sector. He found both units keen to go into battle to establish their credentials as 'brave and courageous' soldiers. At Anula and Bajragarhi, despite intense medium artillery shelling,

both units fulfilled their tasks and though they had quite a number of casualties (including Lt Col V B Sathe, CO of 5/4 GR), they never flinched from their positions. Later, having dealt with 3rd, 5th, 8th and 11th GR units, his experience indicated that the British purposely kept the Gorkhas un-educated so that they do not become inquisitive to analyze the orders and remain loyal with blind obedience to the foreign British rulers. As a trait a Gorkha soldier never questions orders and carries them out beyond the normal call of duty, as he places immense faith in his leader. Thus, it is more important to provide them with officer leaders of a very high standard who must direct and lead them to victory and not disaster, and show them the right direction, compared with Dogra, Sikh or Maratha troops. The Gorkha soldiers have blind faith in their leaders who must reciprocate it honestly and faithfully, by taking special care of their training and welfare.¹³

Brig S C Jolly who with three years service commanded a company of 5/4 GR under Brig AK Luthera, MC, during the 1965 War states that most of the soldiers of this newly raised unit were experiencing artillery shelling for the first time, which was indeed intense. Thus, they immediately went o ground and had to be guided by the JCOs and officers to dig their trenches or move to a safer place. However, after their first battle initiation, they were least concerned and carried on with their assigned tasks without much care of shelling which caused a few casualties. But after the first baptism under fire, when he and Sub Gore Gurung went around exhorting them 'Nikal Kukri auri charge' (draw your Kukri and charge), to launch the assault, they responded brilliantly and fearlessly charged the enemy positions. Though his company did suffer a few casualties, they quickly captured their objective and huddled a number of Pakistani nationals who were scared stiff seeing the Gorkhas with Kukris drawn.

The Gorkha trait of humane attitude towards the vanquished was soon evident, as the troops did not touch the valuables or the person of a single prisoner and allowed

the Pakistani civilians to withdraw with whatever they could carry. Amongst his casualties a few had severe gun-shot wounds, but they were very reluctant to be evacuated, lest the others felt that they left the battle ground. It was only when the Doctor assured them of early return to the battlefield that they agreed to be evacuated, on the condition that they would be allowed to re-join the company at the earliest.

Jolly stated that his experience of leading these 120 men with service ranging from six months to six years proved what he had read in regimental history, that a Gorkha is a brave soldier, who is fatalist. He needs to be led by personal example, is humane and does not like to be identified as a 'patient'.

Lt Gen SC Malhotra, PVSM, GUARDS, who as GOC 3 Infantry Division during the 1971 War had employed 2/11 GR and 5/3 GR for capturing a number of Pakistani posts dominating Shingo River in Kargil Sector, felt that both these units fought extremely well and captured Pakistani Posts at Pt 13620 and Hathi Mata against heavy odds, with great ingenuity and courage. Operating under sub-zero temperatures in December 71 at heights of 3500 m to 4500 m, the Gorkha troops had minimum administrative needs, were physically very hardy and suffered minimum casualties both due to climatic conditions and enemy shelling, because of their excellent use of ground. Their officers and JCOs led them from the front, often changed the objectives and guided their sub units to success.¹⁴

Brig D S Jaggi, 3 GR who was commissioned into 3 GR and had the distinction of commanding 5/3 GR in the 1971 War in Kargil along Shingo River, feels that a Gorkha Johnny is 'an embodiment of cheerfulness, indomitable spirit, fearlessness, courage, sense of humor, outspokenness and loyalty' under all circumstances. Recalling the incident when the convoy of his unit came under enemy shelling at Kargil airfield resulting in a few casualties, when he went around and asked an OR 'sab thik cha' (is all well), he replied with a smile 'thik to thik hi cha, tra hamro tactics fail bhayo'

(yes it is Ok, but our tactics of parking vehicles in the open has failed). Later, during another burst of shelling, his batman endangered his own life but made Jaggi safe, an unforgettable experience of courage and loyalty. On 11 December, watching the day light assault by Maj Sethis's company under intense enemy shelling, Jaggi and his artillery advisor had a ring side view of the Gorkhas running and jumping from one boulder to another, avoiding enemy mines. Seeing their movement with absolutely no care for life, the artillery officer could not hold back his comments. He said 'Sir, I had heard a lot about Gorkhas assaulting the enemy, but never imagined the difficulties involved. One needs a lions' heart to face bullets like this. I am proud to be associated with your Battalion'.

In peacetime as well as in war, a Gorkha lives for today and follows the saying 'Aj to jee, Bholi Kisle here ko cha' (live well today, who has seen tomorrow). That is why he spends lavishly on his family, eats well and can enjoys life under all circumstances. A true friend in all situations, he is very well disciplined and never takes advantage of ones friendship.¹⁵

Brig S P Sinha, 9 GR has had long stints with his unit, 3/9 GR in Counter Insurgency Operations. He has also had the unique honor to command a rifle company both in the 1965 and 1971 India-Pakistan Wars. He is of the view that while in other regiments the soldiers are moulded by the qualities of their officers, in the Gorkhas it is often that having served with them for a long time, the qualities of these excellent soldiers from Nepal mould the character and conduct of their officers. The inherent strength of a Gorkhas character, like fairness, trust, impartiality, faithfulness, sense of loyalty and ability to withstand hardships cheerfully have a great lasting impact on their officers. Having seen their performance in defensive as well as offensive operations under intense artillery and machine gun fire, Sinha is of the view that a Gorkha is a fatalist and accepts the consequences of his actions without bickering, and is an ideal companion in war.

His experience proved that a well trained Gorkha unit or sub-unit will never flinch from 'charging' on the enemy, despite facing heavy fire. While going around his company after shelling which had caused a few casualties, he was surprised at the soldiers having their meal with dead bodies around, unconcerned. A Gorkha rarely shows his emotions or sentiments and commanders at all levels must provide resolute leadership, so that he goes into battle well briefed which builds up his confidence. Else, he can be as fickle as any ordinary soldier. When faced with uncertainty, like being taken prisoner, he tends to remain isolated from non-Gorkha soldiers, but is always loyal to his team.¹⁶

Maj Gen Venugopal, MVC, PVSM who commanded his unit 5/1 GR during the 1971 War in East Pakistan and won many a battles against well prepared Pakistani positions, is of the opinion that as a Gorkha hails from the mountains where often life is a daily struggle for survival, he has great trust in nature to sustain him. Used to hard and frugal living in Nepal, he believes in fate and considers death as inevitable and a soldiers' death in battle an honor-hence he is fearless. Very brave, honest and loyal, he never questions orders even when death may be inherent, and has full faith in his leaders. Simple and straight forward in his dealings, he expects others to be the same, and is not very world-wise. Hard working, he can face adversity calmly without blaming anyone, as he is a simpleton who takes things on their face value. Mentally and physically robust, he can live under difficult conditions cheerfully, as long as he sees his officers doing the same. He has the unique trait to accept his shortcomings and faults without any grudge, and accepts punishments well, if given impartially. Very good at hunting, he makes a good shot, has 'an eye for ground and can close with the enemy under intense fire when ordered by officers who have gained his faith and trust. Like a child, he expects his officers to look after his basic needs and welfare, train him for all eventualities and lead him from the front. A Gorkha does not like being nagged, humiliated, abused or ill-treated in public, though

he accepts punishments cheerfully. He is an adorable friend and a trusted companion, and it is a rare honor to have him under your wings, both during peace time as well as in war.

From his experience of serving in 14 Gorkha Training Centre during 1960s, Gen C Venugopal is of the view that compared to his Nepali brothers, while the Indian Gorkha is more educated and intelligent, he has lost the basic traits of his Nepali counterparts due to his upbringing under Indian environment. They are not so physically tough or mentally robust and are used to better living conditions. Though they mix well with the others, most of them desire to become officers no harm in that, while a Johnny from Nepal aspires to retire as a JCO or NCO. Thus he does not pay much attention to education.

As regards continued recruitment of Gorkhas from Nepal into our Army, recalling his experiences of serving with the Indian Military Mission in Nepal from 1956 to 58, he feels that Indian policy makers should not give an impression of being a 'Big Brother' to the Nepalese. He believes that our soldiers and pensioners in Nepal are the best ambassadors of Indian culture and enduring genuine friendship with the Hindu Kingdom, who do mould Nepal's foreign policy towards India more than the domestic events.

He strongly recommends continuation and strengthening of the ties with Nepal through the route of Gorkha soldiers, whom he describes as an 'inherent asset who have served our country, loyally'.¹⁷

Lt Gen R K Nanavatty, 8 GR who served as the Indian Liaison officer in UK, commanded a 8 GR unit and retired as Army Commander, Northern Command, feels that there are two qualities which sets a Gorkha soldier apart from his Indian counterparts. First, he is a volunteer who genuinely enjoys soldiering as a profession and, secondly he possesses in abundance the innate sense of discipline—self discipline of a man of the hills. During his command of a Corps in the North East and later the Northern

Command in J&K, 5/5 GR (FF) and 1/4 GR respectively were his best units as their performance stood out amongst the others. In his opinion, today the Gorkha units enjoy a position and status of pre-eminence in the Indian Army. Hence it is imperative that their officers understand them and become more competent to provide leadership of a high order to them.¹⁸

Brig A B Harolikar, MVC, of 5 GR (FF)¹⁹ who led his unit 4/5 GR (FF) daringly in 1971 war in Bangladesh and established a record of helicopter borne operations by the Gorkhas, states that loyalty and honesty are two hallmarks of their racial quality. Vivacious and lively, they possess zest for life and remain cheerful and satisfied even under adverse and difficult conditions, with minimum logistic support. They know how to survive in such situations as their sub-units are well knit and integrated. During battle, they show remarkable camaraderie and cover their compatriots through thick and thin, often endangering their own lives. To a sincere leader who reposes his faith and confidence in them, they overwhelmingly respect him and will willingly risk their lives to carry out his orders. Very hardworking, they are always working hard to improve the status and condition of their family, through fair means and opportunities. Self respecting and just in their behavior with others, they expect similar treatment from their officers towards them. Disdain, duplicity, dishonesty and unfairness put them off. Ever ready to lay down their lives for the sake of the honor of their unit and regiment, they respect and follow officers who lead them from front.

Touring Nepal and interacting with the pensioners has brought out the good will which India enjoys even in the interior villages in remote areas. These pensioners and their families depend extensively on their pension which is distributed by a well organized net work managed efficiently by our Embassy in Nepal, and enjoy benefits of many medical and welfare teams which regularly visit Nepal. Though politically not active just like their Indian counterparts, to an extent they indirectly counter anti-India

feelings often created by some interested parties, and act as our ambassadors-at-large in a country with which India enjoys long standing cultural, religious, social and friendly ties. While there may not be any dearth of suitable recruits in India, enrolling Gorkhas from Nepal also impacts the economy of our neighbor with which we have special relations.

In his opinion, there is no need to change the provisions of the Tripartite Agreement of 1947. If need be, it can be reviewed and differences resolved between New Delhi and Kathmandu in a cordial and friendly manner.²⁰

Maj Gen A V Natu, PVSM, MVC, 9 GR who was our Defense Advisor in Nepal from 1967-70 where he traveled extensively, is of the opinion that modernity may bring about certain changes in the habits of the Gorkhas, but his basic character of loyalty, devotion to duty, sense of self-discipline and camaraderie will remain un-changed. Ingrained from the childhood and followed through family tradition and pride, a Gorkha soldier will always fight daringly and boldly and face heaviest of odds in battle cheerfully, living up to the motto 'Kayar Honu Bhandu Marnu Ramro' (It is better to die than to be a coward), for which he has lived since generations. Fond of wine and women, Gen Natu felt that while a Gorkha does enjoy his drink and spends lavishly on market purchases, but does not cross the limits of decency and decorum and maintains his dignity always.²¹

Lt Gen (Retd) Vijay Madan, PVSM, VSM, who commanded 1/4 GR during the 1971 War with distinction, vividly recalled the Pakistan attack on Langoor Post. Initially, the Post was expected to fight as a protective patrol and pull-back if the situation so demanded. However, after discussing all contingencies with the JCOs and NCOs of the Post, they came to the conclusion that in such a course they would suffer heavy casualties, as well as the name of unit, regiment, the Gorkhas and the Indian Army would be tarnished. All ranks volunteered to hold on to the Post, fight-back and defeat the enemy, so that own artillery and mortars could effectively engage the enemy in day light.

The 60 odd men under Maj KK Proadhan (who won a Vr C for defending the post) fought with such a strong grit and determination that after the cease-fire even the Pakistani CO admired their courage.²²

Sub Maj and Hony Capt Bhakta Bahadur Thapa who was commanding a platoon at Langoor Post recalled that despite enemy shelling and patrols reporting enemy movement, own troops held their fire till the end as they were aware of the consequences of being isolated. Once the enemy had closed, the Gorkhas let hell loose on the assaulting enemy and inflicted heavy casualties . This forced the enemy to call off the attack.²³

Maj Gen K L Rattan, MVC, SIKH Regt, who as CO 6 SIKH had watched the attack of Pakistani troops on the flanking Langoor Post of 1/4 GR on 3 December 1971 in J&K, was of the opinion that the stout defense and steadfastness displayed by the Gorkhas against a four times superior attacking Pakistani force is a saga of glory, which needs to be studied by all military leaders. Though isolated from all sides and under intense fire from a dominating Pakistani post, the Gorkhas fought not only for their existence or as a duty but for their honor. Suffering minimum casualties, they inflicted heavy losses on the Pakistani Army, forcing them to call-off the attack before day break. Watching the attack from a flank, he felt miserable and concerned about the Gorkhas, who could not be assisted or reinforced, especially as the loss of Langoor would have opened another avenue for the enemy to attack Punch. While chances of the survival of the post were being raised by military tacticians, they forgot to take in to account the 'great fighting quality' of the Gorkhas and their brave leaders. It was very heartening to see on 4 December that not only was post intact but had inflicted such heavy losses on the Pakistani Battalion that after this they never dared to attack any post of the Gorkhas.

Even more touching was the burial arranged as per Islamic rites by the Gorkhas of the three Pakistani soldiers,

who had braved to come close to the post. This showed the true military and soldierly character of a Gorkha.²⁴

Major General Rajinder Nath, who was commissioned into 11 GR in December 1947, feels that "soldiering is in the blood of Gorkhas." They belong to tough environment due to which they can endure great hardships, have very limited needs and know how to survive on limited resources. They are highly professional, have strong faith and affection for their leaders, and create everlasting bonds of loyalty within their battalion, regiment and the Indian Army. Their association with the Indian Army even after retirement, has a major positive impact on India-Nepal relations.²⁵

Lieutenant General Dipender Singh, 8th G R felt that more than any other regiment, the "Gorkhas require very good leadership". If the leaders are good, then the Gorkhas will produce excellent results, else, only ordinary. Their inherent quality and likeness for soldiering, followed from generations, makes them well disciplined soldiers well motivated, with very strong physical capabilities and mental robustness. The pensioners always remember their days with the Indian Army with nostalgia, have much respect for their officers, and provide a very vital link in Indo-Nepal relations. Totally apolitical even in Nepal, the Gorkha troops are impartial and highly disciplined, the reason why they are the first to be employed in curbing communal riots or other civil disturbances.²⁶

Brigadier D Paneser, 1st GR, former Commandant 14 Gorkha Training Centre, felt that the "British created an artificial awe and cult" around Gorkhas, by overplaying their "loyalty and bravery" achievements, as it suited the Crown. The Gorkhas were deliberately kept "isolated" from Indian units and officers, and treated Indian units as "desi paltans", a trend which was even followed by a few Indian officers after 1947, who continued to pamper their troops. He felt that the achievements of Gorkha units during the 1962, 1965 or 1971 Wars or the operations in Sri Lanka did not show any remarkable or outstanding results. However, they are the best troops for Counter Insurgency Operations,

and have proved their worth in Jammu and Kashmir, where out of nearly two dozen battalions, in 2003, the Army Commander, Northern Command declared 1/4 GR and 3/1 GR as the "best units". From his experience, he feels that if pointed out properly, a Gorkha is always willing to accept his mistake, is prepared to face punishment, and is ready to rectify it, and does not hold any malice against the punishing officer. He is fond of outdoor life, fits in very well in a team, is not selfish or cunning, and is not interested in either Indian or Nepalese politics. Besides his unit and the regiment, he has great love for his family and is keen to give his children better education, for a brighter future.

Brig P S Gurung, 4 GR, is a resident of Nepal, now settled in Dehra Dun. Under his command 3/4 GR (Chindits) beat back three Pakistani attacks in Siachen in 1987 earning three M V Cs, number of Vr Cs and a Y S M. He feels that "if led properly, a Gorkha will die for you". An officer must understand his characteristics and should not go by his appearance, which looks very simple, as he can not express himself well in Hindi initially on joining. A Gorkha is very sentimental and affectionate, and looks to his friends, village, sub-unit, unit and regimental bonds for overcoming his problems and difficulties. Fearless, he loves to accept dangerous challenges, especially if led by his officers. Though infrastructure and facilities in Nepal have improved, Gorkha soldiers still come from remote villages, thus they need minimum logistic support. A Gorkha is willing to suffer any hardship and endure great stress and strain, provided his officers and other leaders explain the logic and reason, and share them with him.

A similar view was expressed by Lieutenant General A M Vohra, one of the first Indian officers to be transferred to 3rd GR. The General felt that being a hill tribe, Gorkhas are happy-go-lucky, physically rough, willing to face challenges, and yet remain cheerful even in adversity. He has a positive state of mind, which is ideal for a soldier and results in very good discipline, due to which a Gorkha soldier never says "no", and always has a positive "Honcha

Hazur", (will be done) attitude. His outstanding qualities are reliability, honesty, honor and team spirit right from the bottom, which make them very good soldiers. While the Gorkhas are very brave and obedient, they require leadership of a very high order at all levels, then only can one expect good results. Being comparatively slow in analyzing technical things, they need patience and time to understand a problem, need detailed and specific instructions covering all contingencies, and are thus not ideally suited for technical jobs, unless given special education and aptitude tests. Also, they are little slow on the uptake and do not take initiatives in all situations, compared with other Indian troops like the Sikhs, Marathas or Dogras. They have tremendous capacity for hard work under severe conditions with meager administration, and can do wonders under stress of battle, without any complaint, as long as their officers are with them. Thus, for an officer, winning the loyalty of his soldiers by learning Nepali, proving his professional competence, honesty, integrity and loyalty towards his troops is much more important and difficult in the Gorkhas. The men hate being "nagged, insulted or abused as they are not used to such low degradation or ill-treatment in Nepal, which must be guarded by all officers.

Lt Col Shiv Rai, a second generation Gorkha from Dharamsala who was initially commissioned into 1 GR and later commanded a unit of Maratha LI, drew extensively on his knowledge of military history while commenting on the qualities of a Gorkha soldier. Narrating how a handful of Gorkhas fought the British East India Company's Army at Dehra Dun under Balbhadra and later at Malaun Fort under Bhakte Thapa and Amar Singh in 1814-1815 he emphasized his point by citing the following illustrations.

Field Marshal Slim saw a Gorkha unit for the first time during the 1st World War where they were fighting the Turks at Gallipoli. He noticed that when all other troops of the Commonwealth Armies were in a bad shape, the 6th GR held on to their positions, which carried the day. When the intensity of the fighting slowed down, the Gorkhas

went about the task of evacuating and attending to their wounded comrades in an orderly manner. Lt Slim decided there and then that when an opportunity comes, he will join the Gorkhas.

A few specific incidents cited by Col Rai were.

Brave action of a unit of 9 GR at the Battle of Casino.

Wingate would only accept no other Indian troops than the Gorkhas in his Chindit Force.

At Falklands, it was the Gorkha Kukri which brought the curtain down.

Reviewing the situation prevailing in Nepal during 2005/06, he opined that in the recent past the Gorkha womenfolk have come out in large number to challenge the King of Nepal, which has given an added dimension to the struggle for democracy. Earlier also the Gorkha womenfolk had fought along side their men at Nalapani and Malaun and put their lives in the line of fire without any thought of consequences. Thus, they are an important part of a Gorkhas fighting mentality.

Describing a Gorkha soldier, Shiv Rai states that 'he is short, well built and has Mongol features. Has pleasing personality, is amenable to discipline and responds to training, wholeheartedly. Probably the smartest soldier in the Army, his movements are sharp, quick and precise. He has the ability to laugh at himself, loves music and mimicry, his family and children and pets. He is extremely fond of shooting and fishing. His only failings are drinking, gambling and women but he has the ability to do all in moderation, without creating a fuss. A devout Hindu, he is secular in outlook and a good human being. Punish him if he is guilty but don't ever abuse him, else he will be quick to draw his Kukri.²⁷

Col Rai's states that as part of the British or the Indian Army though the Gorkhas do not fight for their own country, they continue to serve both Armies, loyally. They do it for

their regiment and above all because they are Gorkhas-the INVINCIBLE.

In his view, John Master has summed-up the Gorkhas aptly in his book 'Bugles and a Tiger', by quoting R L Turner describing them as 'bravest of the brave, most generous of the generous'. Nothing could better define the Gorkha race.²⁸

Recounting his experiences of the 1965 War as Commanding Officer 3/9 GR, Lt Col K S Gurung narrated how he came to 9 GR. Having been commissioned from Indian Military Academy, Dehra Dun on 16 January 1944, he was posted to Garhwal Rifles, as the British did not post any Indian Officers to Gorkha Regiments. After seeing operations in Burma, and then Indonesia, he was in Peshawar when on 22 August 1947 he was posted to 2 GR Regimental Centre at Dehra Dun. Soon, there was a referendum in 2nd, 6th, 7th and 10th GR which later resulted in raising of 11 GR. Capt Gurung was posted to 9 GR and became Adjutant at Calcutta, commanded a Company and then took over as Commanding Officer of 3/9 GR in 1960s .

During the 1965 War his troops under Capt Surve and SP Sinha were involved in battle with Pakistani troops. Despite suffering a few casualties and a few becoming POW, they gave a good account of their fighting ability. He recalled one action in which the Gorkhas braved the thick undergrowth and carried out a raid on Pakistani troops, forcing them to abandon their attack on his defensive positions.

From his battle experience Col Gurung found that minor set-backs do not upset the morale of Gorkha troops, and under good leadership they 'bounce back' fast and are always eager to take revenge from the enemy. He found similar enthusiasm while raising 4/9 GR after the set-back to 1/9 GR in the 1962 War.

Though he took premature retirement in 1966, in keeping with his family tradition first his son Maj Pradeep Gurung joined the Army (now a successful builder), and now his daughter is a commissioned officer in the Ordnance Corps.

In his view, though the educational levels in Nepal have improved for the better, the basic fighting qualities of a Gorkha soldier remain the same. A 'kancha' (younger brother) still remains simple, obedient, hard working and willing to take bold risks, which can be molded by good leadership.²⁹

Lt Col SNS Gurung, 5 GR (FF) a second generation from Dharamsala, one of the first Gorkha Gentleman Cadet commissioned from IMA, Dehra Dun in 1947 who commanded 1/5 GR (FF) during the 1965 War and was later Commandant of GRD, Kunraghat.

Describing his experiences, he felt that during the opening phases of an attack like all other green troops, the Gorkhas also look towards their leaders for guidance. Here, the role of officers and JCOs becomes very important, especially if the unit is under intense artillery shelling, tank, aircraft or machine gun fire. However, after the initial inoculation, a Gorkha is as strong as steel and can face any eventuality, boldly with courage. Too many orders or frequent changes confuse him, and he only likes direct and clear-cut orders and the leaders need to brief him in advance of the various contingencies he is likely to face. Then, he performs with excellence, uses his initiative and performs with distinction. He is physically tough, mentally robust, needs minimum personal logistics and can survive on frugal meals. He is happy to go to war, looks down upon falling sick or being evacuated even when wounded, as it hurts his pride of being a soldier.

A dependable colleague in peace and war, he takes pride in his uniform and regimental tradition and on belonging to the class of distinguished soldiers.³⁰

Lt Col D S Gurung, 4 GR, also a second generation Gorkha from Dharamsala who commanded a rifle company in Counter Insurgency Operations and during the 1962 War before taking over command of 1/4 GR in a High Altitude region, felt that there should be no discrimination between Indian and Nepal domiciled Gorkhas, as they are both from

the same stock and have similar basic traits of a good fighter. He felt that with greater opportunities for education available in India, Indian Gorkhas are not coming forward to join the Army as soldiers, but prefer other vocations like engineer, management, medicine, chartered accountants and medicine.

He recalled the incident when during the 1962 War an overall withdrawal was ordered, directing the unit to fall-back on a position in depth, though the Chinese were still some distance away. There being no porters, orders were received to destroy items which could not be carried back, but were vehemently opposed by Sub Maj Sarabjit Gurung, IDSM. The Sub Maj sahib (who had fought in the 2nd World War at the Battle of Sittang in Burma) told the CO that even under Japanese pressure it was only 1/4 GR which had brought back all its weapons and equipment across the bridge before it was demolished. As the Chinese were still far away, what face would we have after destroying our equipment, though officially we may be permitted to do? He volunteered to stay back and evacuate all items in shifts over the next three days, even at the risk of the Chinese threat. Finally, his advise was taken and the unit kept up its honor.

Col D B Gurung was of the opinion that with better education and welfare measures we should be able to get better recruits from Nepal, who make very good soldiers.³¹

Leadership of Gorkha Troops

Col H S Chauhan, founder of post Independence 11 GR in the Indian Army, recalled the reasons for a mutiny in 4/11 GR in Kashmir in 1950s. He attributed it to lack of understanding the Gorkhas psyche by their officers, who did not appreciate that the soldiers were merely having a bit of fun by clapping and indulging in cat-calls during a dance item in a film being screened, after the unit had returned from a tough assignment in a snow bound area.³² The troops felt insulted when in front of families they were punished and ordered to parade at night, which could have

been avoided. He felt that it is important that any soldier, more so a Gorkha, is not humiliated in front of others. He opined that if the CO of 4/11 GR had been aware of the incident of 2/5 GR(FF) in Japan and how Gen Thimaya had handled the situation, then probably he would have conducted himself in a more humane and sympathetic manner, avoiding embarrassment to all.

Giving his view on the act of in-discipline by a few soldiers of 4/3 GR in Ladakh in 1970s, Lt Gen SL Menezes attributed it to lack of proper care of troops by their officers. Col Chanda who later took over the unit also endorsed the view, as he felt that at that time the officers seemed to be more concerned about their own advancement rather than the up-bringing of the unit. This was not acceptable to the men, who expected to be looked after in a proper manner.³³

In a more recent case of 5/5 GR (FF), in the year 2003 an officer of the unit was charged for 'fake killings' during the units Siachen Glacier tenure. In order to achieve fame, he grossly misused his position and took un-healthy advantage of the loyalty, discipline and simplicity his soldiers and JCOs, when he tutored them to act as Pakistani troops. Then, he filmed them being shot down in a number of shooting incidents, and tried to gain self-glory. Fortunately, the facts came to light and disciplinary action was initiated against the guilty.³⁴

The British Gurkhas also faced a similar leadership problem in 1986, when a Company from Hong Kong under training in Hawaii disobeyed their officers. The troops were not satisfied with the administrative arrangements made for them, while their officers enjoyed all the comforts. As per one account, following a heated argument between their British officers and the Gurkha Officers (equal to a JCO), the Gurkhas were called 'savage, hungry, uncivilized and impolite'. The troops felt humiliated and became defiant, for which all 111 of them were dismissed from service, without any pension or compensation, including those who were reportedly innocent.³⁵

A Few Outstanding Achievements of the Gorkha Rifles

Besides soldiering in peace and war, the love of a Gorkha for music has enabled him to represent India abroad. In 2002, Company Havildar Major Gurlman Singh Rana, 4 GR was selected by Army HQ, N Delhi out of 300 pipers and sent to train the pipers of the Kingdom of Lesotho, South Africa.

Same year, after a stiff selection from 350 pipers, Havildars Bhas Bahadur Thapa and Bir Bahadur Gurung, both of 4 GR were selected by Army HQ, N Delhi and sent to play at the 'Concert Flanders Battle Pans' in Paris, at the Neuve Chapelle War Memorial (France) and Ypres (Belgium). During their ten day tour, they also played at ceremonial functions in London, Paris and Brussels, and earned laurels for India.

Message for the Future

Once again, the need for leaders of the Gorkhas to know the traits, strengths and weaknesses of their soldiers has been amply brought out. The Gorkha Johnny remains loyal and proud of his regiment and the Indian Army. He looks up to his officers to train him for war, care for him in peace and lead him from the front. It is imperative that his silence, ability to withstand hardships, willingness to do any thing for the sake of the pride of his unit and special trait of "blind obedience" should not be taken as his weakness by his leaders.

Despite all odds, the Gorkhas have performed exceedingly well in all operations and other fields, brought honor and prestige to their regiment, the Indian Army, India and Nepal. They have proved to be an important and durable element of India-Nepal relations. An avenue which needs to be further strengthened.

Supreme Sacrifices made by the Gorkhas

From Appendix AA, it would be seen that nearly 13,000

Gorkha all ranks have made the supreme sacrifice of their lives while defending India. A number of brave Gorkha soldiers also won honors and awards, both of Vir Chakra (Appendix BB) and Ashoka Chakra (Appendix CC) series.

Their heroic deeds, sacrifices and acts of bravery will continue to inspire younger generations, and further strengthen Nepal-India relations.

Conclusion

It would be evident that the Gorkha soldiers of the Indian Army have proved their mettle as one of the finest fighting men of our Army. Since Independence, they have participated in all operations undertaken by our Army and proved their loyalty and dedication beyond doubt, thus creating a niche for their bravery and gallantry.

The fact that 'Good Leaders create Good Soldiers' is more relevant in the case of the Gorkhas, as by nature a Gorkha is quiet, unassuming and does not express his feelings, easily. As it is he has very limited personal needs and can survive cheerfully under worst and difficult circumstances, but often it is his sense of regimental pride and of being a Gorkha that stops him from complaining. Hence, it becomes more incumbent on the officers who have the honor and privilege to serve with them to look after their interest sincerely, treat them with due regard and provide them with leadership of a very high professional order.

Like all human beings, a Gorkha has his pride, self respect and honor. Though he accepts punishments cheerfully and does not crib on small matters, it does not mean that he accepts injustice, insults, abuses or rude remarks. Being simple and straight forward himself, he expects just and fair treatment from his commanders, whose orders he is willing to obey even if it means sacrificing his life.

A very good soldier, he needs to be trained, informed and cared for with personal interest by his commanders, and then only they can rightfully claim his loyalty. There

is no difference between the traits of Indian or Nepal domiciled Gorkhas as a soldier. Of course, being more educated an Indian domiciled is at an advantage in a unit, but the gap is gradually narrowing.

A Gorkha will follow his commander in battle cheerfully, if the commander has been able to win his trust during peacetime by professional efficiency, loyalty and honestly looking after his men. A very fine soldier of the Indian Army, whose strength should continue to grow in the national and regional interest of India.

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6

IMPACT OF GORKHA SOLDIERS ON INDO-NEPAL RELATIONS

Introduction

The impact of Gorkha soldiers from Nepal serving in the Indian Army since 1947 on Indo-Nepal relations cannot be seen in isolation with other aspects of the ties between the two countries, as they form part of the holistic picture.

Strategic Aspects

In 1947, one of the main reasons why Pandit Nehru was reluctant to allow Gorkha troops to serve in the British Army was their likely employment to curb the surge of independence movements then resurging through South-East Asia. However, at the back of his mind was also the strategic location of Nepal on India's northern borders. By retaining the Gorkhas in the Indian Army and extending to them equal terms in all respects with other all ranks of the Indian Army, Pandit Nehru laid the foundation of strengthening the bonds which were then in a nascent stage.¹

Acharya Vinoba Bhave, the Gandhian Leader had articulated similar views to Shri Shriman Narayan, before he took over as Ambassador of India in Nepal in the 1960s.

He told him that 'Indian diplomacy in Nepal ought to be based on positive and constructive cooperation, and not on animosity towards China. Any conflict, military or diplomatic, between China and Nepal would be ultimately detrimental to India's security in the north'.² He further elucidated that after the Chinese aggression on India's northern borders, the strategic importance of Nepal had assumed greater importance. He told Shriman Narayan to proceed to Nepal at the earliest and help in improving relations with the Himalayan Kingdom, as Nepal occupied a very crucial geographic position between India and China. Enunciating India's approach towards Nepal, PM Lal Bahadur Shastri told Shriman Narayan on 10 September 1964, that no country is big or small, as all nations are sovereign. We have to deal with them as equals. The ambassador fully realized that Tibet which used to be a big 'buffer' was now gone and China had become Nepal's immediate neighbor in the North.

The strategic aspects of Indo-Nepal relations were also articulated by Gen (Retd) K V Krishna Rao, who felt as the border passes north of Nepal were at comparatively low altitudes, they were easy to negotiate. As regards Indo-Nepal border, it is in plain country and has never been guarded. Thus, once an adversary gets into Nepal, it would be 'quite easy for him to roll down into the Indian plains'. Therefore, India would always like a stable, strong and friendly Nepal across her borders.³

In fact, in 1947 even before becoming independent, India agreed to grant direct commission to selected J C Os of each Gorkha Battalion which established India's positive intent to look after the interests of her Gorkha soldiers. This one decision of leaders of new India went a long way in creating confidence amongst the soldiers and in strengthening the overall ties between Nepal and India. The pay and allowances and pensions drawn by the Gorkha soldiers in service with India also had its impact on the economy and employment avenues for the youth of Nepal, who in any case were motivated by their family tradition

of military ties. India also took on the responsibility of paying pensions and allowing transit and other facilities to Gorkhas employed by the British, till their infrastructure came up. India and Britain both agreed not to treat Gorkhas as mercenaries and to treat them on par with their own troops. As in 1947, even now India faced no shortage of suitable manpower for raising new units for her Army, her decision to retain the Gorkhas was an act of sincere friendship to help her neighboring country, and not upset Nepal's economic and employment balance.

Thus, it can be stated emphatically that , since 1947 to enrollment of Gorkhas of Nepal in the Indian Army has been an important element of India's overall relations with Nepal.

Britain, on the other hand, was keen to retain Gorkhas in the post 2nd World War British Army, mainly due to their lower wages and shortage of suitable manpower in England. Being loyal and distinguished soldiers who had earned laurels in all theatres of the war especially in Burma, they were ideally suited to fit in to Britain's strategic interests in South East Asia. Their retention also gave expression of London's loyalty and continued support to Nepal, an old and dependable friend with whom they had had strong military relations since 1815.

Nepal has had close religious, social and cultural ties and affinity with India since centuries. While in 1816 the Nepal Durbar agreed to allowed enrolment of Gorkhas in the British Indian Army under pressure of the Treaty of Segowlee, Kathmandu was also aware of the need to keep the warrior Gorkhas employed and engaged, or else once restless they could create disturbances in the country. Also, for a country with no industrial base, the salaries of the soldiers contributed to the economy of the country. While same conditions or compulsions did not exist in 1947, the rulers of Nepal would have also realized that it was in the interest of a land-locked Nepal bound on three sides by India to maintain good neighborly relations with India. In these relations, besides its economic and employment

advantages, employment of Gorkha soldiers in the Indian Army would provide a major link to friendship. Thus, they not only willingly agreed that post 1947 Indian officers could command Gorkha troops, but also agreed to a security understanding between the two countries. As mentioned in the 1950 Treaty, Nepal agreed to "mutual consultations of all security issues" and "to import arms from overseas only if India could not meet her needs".

Thus, the two key elements of Indo-Nepal relations have been, 'equal opportunities to Nepal Domiciled Gorkha soldiers in the Indian Army' and 'visa free movement to citizens of Nepal for crossing into India and openness for job opportunities in India (except in Foreign Service)' on reciprocal basis. Besides these, India has also given special economic, trade and transit concessions to Nepal, for import of goods from India or other countries, due to her special relations.

Military Aspects of Indo-Nepal Relations 1950 to 1955

Keeping the mutual interest of the two countries in mind, the relations between the Nepal Durbar and New Delhi developed on a very warm faith and trust during the reign of King Tribhuvan. In 1951 on Nepal's request India sent a Training and Advisory Team to train and modernize the Royal Nepal Army. It was composed mostly of officers from Gorkha Regiments, and earned a very good reputation for their dedicated service and professionalism. Later, New Delhi also provided signal detachments, which along with the RNA were deployed on Nepal-Tibet border. India also met training and logistic needs of Nepal, to the extent possible.

All this while, the excellent performance of Gorkha troops during the 1947-48 War in J&K was not lost on leaders of both countries. Their performance also smashed the myth of 'only British officers could lead the Gorkhas' as these units performed exceedingly well under their newly posted 'Indian' commanders.⁴

India defined her relations with Nepal as 'Special'. Prime

Minister Pandit Nehru stated in 1955 that an attack on Bhutan or Nepal would be considered as an attack on India. Realizing the importance of Nepal as a buffer between China and India, he further stated that Indo-Nepal relations are not confined to political only, but also cover socio-cultural and economic aspects.

The two countries agreed to bestow the rank of General on C-in-Cs of each other's Army, a unique tradition which continued till the year 2004. The King of Nepal visited India in 1955, and a special ceremonial parade was organized during his royal visit to Dehra Dun, in which contingents from all Gorkha regiments participated. Since then, it has been a custom for the King of Nepal to be given a guard of honor by a Gorkha Battalion, as far as possible.

The Golden Era of Indo-Nepal relations declined after the demise of King Tribhuvan, when King Mahendra took over in 1955. During this period, while China consolidated her grip over Tibet, Nepal often played the China card against India, and even awarded the contract for construction of the East-West Highway to China, but later accommodated India's objections.

India's prestige suffered during the 1962 Indo-China War. Along with other Indian troops, while the Gorkha soldiers of 1/8 GR fought gallantly in Ladakh (Chushul) and Maj Dhan Singh Thapa received the highest gallantry award of P V C, due to various strategic, tactical and administrative reasons, the performance of the Indian Army in NEFA was not commendable, and her three Gorkha units 1/9 GR, 3/3 GR and 2/8 GR had rather a rough time. Along with their officers and colleagues of the Indian units, a number of Gorkha soldiers suffered casualties or were taken prisoners. Though the Chinese tried to brainwash them with anti-India propaganda, they could not shake the loyalty of Gorkha soldiers. Post 1962 the Indian Army expanded to face the new threat from her two neighbors, and as part of it a number of Gorkha units were also raised with manpower from Nepal.

All this while, the Indian Embassy in Nepal was involved in streamlining the pension distribution system for the Indian pensioners living in remote and far-flung areas of Nepal. It also introduced and launched a number of welfare schemes for them (like tour by medical teams) and recruitment camps, which proved very successful.

The excellent performance of 3/1 GR on UN Mission in Congo during 1960-61 won world-wide acclaim, and earned fame for their regiments, the Gorkhas, the Indian Army and India.

In Nepal, internal political crisis led to many changes in Prime Ministers and Shri BP Koirala was even accused of 'plotting merger of Nepal with a neighboring country'. An anti-India lobby emerged, which put pressure on the Durbar to withdraw the Indian Training Team (by now the scope and size of the original team had been reduced considerably) and Signal Detachments, which was carried out by India in a phased manner in between 1969-1970. During this period Nepal came closer to China and Pakistan, while India's security interests suffered, as the Joint Consultative Mechanism on security attached with the Indian Military Mission was discarded, and later within two years the Mission was downgraded to Indian Military Advisory Group. Its status was further eroded in Dec 1963 when it was reorganized as a Liaison Group, with functions confined to coordinating military supplies from India to Nepal. Nepal also started looking elsewhere for military support and supplies (like USA, and UK) and gradually India became redundant in this field. Years 1960-70 saw the Nepal Durbar forcing India to close down the Liaison Group as well as the check posts on the northern borders. However, on 20 Oct 1970 King Mahendra announced that Nepal had 'agreed to share military information with India on developments harmful to the two countries', but this arrangement remained only on paper.⁵

During the 1965 Indo-Pak War, the Gorkha units performed admirably and won many awards. It was heartening to see the enthusiasm shown by reservist soldiers

and those on leave in Nepal, who voluntarily rejoined their units on hearing about the war on Radio Nepal. Their devotion to duty and loyalty to their unit, the regiment and the Indian Army was evident, when after the cease fire they even refused to take balance of leave due to them. During the war, a few anti-India elements in Nepal raised the question about 'India violating the Tripartite Agreement of 1947 by employing Gorkha troops against Pakistan without prior consultation', which were countered by the Durbar. As in the earlier wars, in this conflict also, the Gorkha troops fought bravely and proved their mettle as one of the finest soldiers of the world, along with their Indian counterparts. Pakistan had been trying to poison the friendly relations between India and Nepal, and Rawalpindi went to the extent of broadcasting false reports that 'Kathmandu had asked India not to use Gorkha troops in the fighting against Pakistan'. However, her attempts failed, as Shri Kirti Nidhi Bista, Nepal's Foreign Minister announced that 'India was free to use Gorkha troops in her army for the purposes of self defense'.⁶ He also stated that 'Nepal had neither issued nor had any intention of issuing any warning to India as alleged by Rawalpindi'. Further, Shri S B Thapa, Chairman, Nepal Council of Ministers, announced in Kathmandu on 15 Sep 65 that 'Nepal would not allow Pakistan to use her soil for any anti-India activity'. Pakistani tactics were also adversely commented upon in the media of Nepal and they supported PM Lal Bahadur Shastri's statement at Red Fort of 15 Aug that 'force will be met with force'. President Ayub Khan and ZA Bhutto were also criticized for their statement that 'the trouble in Kashmir was a result of internal revolt there'.

During this period Nepal tried to woo Pakistan and floated the proposal of 'Zone of Peace and Neutrality', which India felt was not in her national and regional interest, and thus relations between the two countries became 'formal'. Though in India there were changes in Governments and Prime Ministers (after Pandit Nehru, Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri, and Mrs Indira Gandhi) and there were a few changes in

the Indo-Nepal relations, it did not have any impact on the employment of Gorkha soldiers.

In the 1971 Indo-Pak War, Gorkha units of the Indian Army fought in large numbers on Eastern and Western fronts with valor and distinction. A large number of these brave soldiers sacrificed their lives and were awarded many gallantry awards. Once again, there was a murmur from some opposition parties in Kathmandu against India's employment of these troops, but it died a natural death. Like the earlier ones, these protests did not have any impact on the policies of Nepal Durbar and did not dampen the enthusiasm of Nepali recruits from joining the Indian Army. In fact, the fairness and equality shown by India earned much status and pride for the ex-servicemen in Nepal. But Nepal obtained some weapons and military assistance from Israel and Pakistan without prior consultation with India and violated the norm of 'mutual understanding on consultation' in such matters. However, these issues did not in any way impact the military to military relations between the two countries.

Year 1972 saw King Birendra taking over from King Mahendra and adopt a policy of direct rule on non-party basis. Nepal also pursued the policy of balancing India with China. During the period 1972-1987, India saw leadership changes (Mrs Indira Gandhi, Shri Morarji Desai, Mrs Indira Gandhi and then Shri Rajiv Gandhi). Relations between Nepal and India reached a low level in 1987. Nepal once again flouted the 'Special Treaty' relating to import of weapons and without informing India imported anti-aircraft guns from China. It also did not agree to negotiate the Trade and Transit Treaty which expired in 1989, resulting in restrictions on import of petroleum products and other important items of daily need from India. The anti-India lobby in Nepal had a field day alleging 'big brother and bullying attitude' charges against India, without analyzing the root causes.

However, as these restrictions caused hardships to families of Gorkha soldiers residing in Nepal, India made

special dispensation and allowed soldiers going on leave to carry salt, medicine and kerosene oil to Nepal. Gen V N Sharma, then Chief of the Army Staff, Indian Army, conveyed his concern about the hardships being faced by his Gorkha soldiers and his pensioners in Nepal to the Government of India. This was largely instrumental in New Delhi relenting on exports of essential goods to Nepal. It is to the credit of the then Prime Minister, Shri Rajiv Gandhi and the Nepal King that the matter was resolved soon, and the Treaty was re-negotiated to the satisfaction of both sides. This was probably the first incident of the welfare of the serving and retired soldiers of the Indian Army residing in Nepal having a direct bearing on policies and Indo-Nepal relations.

During 1987-89 the Indian Army went to assist Sri Lanka in controlling and resolving the ethnic problem created by the LTTE. The peace enforcing mission soon turned into an armed conflict, in which a number of Gorkha units also saw action, as per their field tenure roster. Once again, a few anti-India elements in Nepal raised the issue of India violating the 1947 Tripartite Agreement and employing 'Gorkha troops against Hindus' in the Rashtriya Assembly, but they were silenced in the assembly by the Prime Minister, who clarified the role and situation prevailing in Sri Lanka at that time. It is to the credit of Gorkha soldiers that they carried out their duties with full devotion and dedication and put 'service before self', knowing that at that time due to the economic blockade their families back home in Nepal were undergoing hardships.

From 1990s Nepal has undergone major political changes, first the pro-democracy agitation and then the insurgency launched by the Maoists. While political changes do not impact soldier's world over or in Nepal, the Insurgency did result in disruption of peace and security of families, leave personnel and pensioners. Initially the Durbar dithered to employ Royal Nepal Army in controlling the Insurgency, but later gave them a free hand. The Royal Nepal Army underwent expansion and received arms assistance from India and other western countries, and succeeded to a degree,

forcing the Maoists to start political dialogue with the seven political parties, who had formed an alliance. The internal situation took a turn for the worse when on 1 February 2005 King Gyanendra took direct control of the country and put political leaders behind bars, which was not appreciated by India or the Western countries. This resulted in stoppage of supply of arms and ammunition to Nepal, of which Pakistan and China tried to take advantage by becoming alternate suppliers.

The above events also affected the Gorkha soldiers of the Indian Army. The security and safety of their families as well as pensioners back home caused worry, as often they were threatened and troubled by the Maoists to contribute funds or provide shelter to their cadres. Soldiers going on leave were accosted and asked to either contribute funds or impart training to the Maoists, which they refused. A few cases of extortions from serving soldiers on leave were also reported, as a result of which the leave parties started drawing lesser amount when proceeding on leave. The Maoists also tried to employ Gorkha ex-servicemen to train their cadres, but most pensioners refused and shifted out from the affected areas. This forced a number of soldiers to shift their families to stations in India, while a number of pensioners disposed of their properties and shifted to safer towns in the Terai. In one case, leave party of a dozen Gorkha soldiers was kidnapped near Kailali (eastern Nepal) on 14 Jan 2005,⁷ but was released un-harmed after intervention of a NGO. Similarly, a few incidents of the Maoists snatching identity cards of soldiers going on leave came to light, which could be used by them to gain access to security installations.

This resulted in the Ministry of Defense advising the Government to release non-lethal aid to the RNA, so as to enhance their fighting capabilities. The decision of the Government was welcomed by the serving as well as retired soldiers of the Gorkha Rifles, both in India and in Nepal, who felt that India could not let down a friend in need. The Indian Army also felt that considering their long

established strong ties with the Nepal Army, it would be strategically disastrous if some other country stepped in to replace India as the main supplier of defense equipment, and it did not want anti-India elements to gain ground in the Royal Nepal Army. The morale of the 45,000 Gorkha soldiers and nearly 1,20,000 ex-servicemen in Nepal, who in all draw a pay and pension bill of about Indian Rs 1,000 crore annually⁸, was also being affected by the deteriorating law and order situation in Nepal, which would have worsened if the timely supplies of arms were not made available to the Royal Nepal Army. Thus, there was all round satisfaction that 'real politik' advice of the Ministry of Defense had prevailed over 'idealistic concerns' of the Foreign Office, New Delhi.⁹

Similar views were also expressed before departure of PM Manmohan Singh for Indonesia in April 2005. The Ministry of Defense conveyed to their Foreign Office counterparts the difficulties being faced by the 1.2 million ex-servicemen at the hands of the Maoists whom the Royal Nepal Army was fighting, and stated that if arms aid was not resumed the fighting potential of the Nepal Army would further go down. The welfare of families of 45,000 Gorkha servicemen of the Indian Army was also being affected by these disturbed conditions in Nepal, so much so that the soldiers were finding it difficult to even go on leave to Nepal and face pressures from the Maoists. Though India was not happy at the declaration of emergency by King Gyanendra, all these aspects played a major role in release of aid by New Delhi, after considering it in 'proper perspective.'¹⁰

Keeping the overall strategic aspects in mind, India resumed supply of non-lethal aid to Nepal in May 2005, which was followed by the UK and USA. Though the performance of the RNA showed some improvement, the mid-2006 anti-monarchy agitation resulted in the 7 Party Alliance and the Maoists sinking their differences and joining hands for creating a democratic Nepal. While this did bring peace in the country, the de-mobilizing of Maoists cadres

under the UN supervision did not proceed as visualized, though the Nepal Army went back to barracks.

The elections of April 2008 have resulted in the Maoists emerging as the largest single party though they are short of majority. The Maoists have re-stated their desire to take up their 40 Point Program. While the process of forming a Govt continues in Nepal, the law and order situation in the country is still fluid. The un-settled conditions in Nepal have resulted in not only migration of people from hills to the plains in the country, but also across the Indo-Nepal border into India, both for safety and employment.

Dissenting Voices from Nepal

It needs to be mentioned that India has all along adhered to the Tripartite Agreement of 1947 and never considered Nepal Domiciled Gorkhas as either mercenaries or differentiated between them and their Indian counterparts in any way. The Gorkha soldiers of the British Army have faced some disparities in promotion avenues, pay and allowances and pensions, leading even to court cases. These differences have often been taken up by the Gorkha Ex-Servicemen Association with the British and Nepal Government.¹¹

In an editorial in Kantipur Post of 5 August 99 author Dipta Prakash Shah felt that the Tripartite Agreement was in violation of 'Panchsheel'. It was argued that the impact of salaries on the Government Treasury was not as big as it was made out to be by the advocates of the Agreement, as only 1000 to 1500 Nepalese were being enrolled every year. In his opinion, all three signatories had violated the Agreement at one time or the other (India by employing Gorkhas against Hindus in Sri Lanka and the British by reducing the number of soldiers from 20,000 to first 8000 and now 2000 and employing them in a third country-the Falkland War, and Nepal by allowing enhanced recruitment to India). The article concluded by recommending that due to the changed international environment, there was a need to relook at the Agreement.¹²

As had happened during the earlier conflicts, the Kargil War (which coincided with the Kosovo War in which the HMG were employed) also gave an opportunity to a few Left Wing politicians of Nepal to raise the issue of continued employment of Gorkhas in the Indian Army.

Raising the issue in the Nepal Parliament, Shri MR Josse asked the Government of Nepal to announce a cut-off year, for stopping the enrollment of the Gorkhas in the Indian and the British Army. He argued that if that was not possible because of 'grinding poverty' or the unwillingness of the political parties to grasp the issue, then why not allow Nepalese nationals to be recruited in to whatever armed forces that will have them'? He wanted the Foreign Minister, Dr Ram Sharan Mahant to make a statement on it.

Shri Madan Regmi also raised the issue of employing Gorkha troops during OPERATION VIJAY in Kargil. He felt that Pakistan may condemn the use of Gorkhas-Nepali citizens as mercenaries, and they may not get any cover under Geneva Convention. This may raise the question of the sovereignty status of Nepal itself, a country which permits recruitment of her nationals in foreign armies. Referring to Geneva Convention of 1947 and its two protocols of 1977, he stated that status of such recruits has been clearly defined as mercenaries. In the event of capture, they would not be covered by Geneva Convention. Thus, he strongly recommended immediate stoppage of recruitment of Gorkhas from Nepal in to the Indian and the British Army, more than fifty years after the retreat of colonialism from this region.¹³

Dr Mahant, Foreign Minister was able to reassure the House and confirm that while in India the Nepali Gorkhas were getting equal pay and allowances and other compensations, there were some disparities in the HMG, which were being resolved with the British Government.¹⁴ It was also explained to the honorable members that as per Indian pension rules, a family of a deceased soldier would get a total of Indian Rs. 13.25 lac, with out any discrimination. As in India the state governments also give

certain compensation to soldiers belonging to their state, in case of Nepal Domiciled Gorkhas this was being matched by a special grant by the J&K State (in whose region the fighting took place) and the Central Government.¹⁵

Despite such comments and though seven Gorkha soldiers from Nepal were killed in the Kargil War, it did not dampen the desire of Nepali youth to join the Indian Army. For example in a recruiting rally held at Dhankuta Bazar for filling 125 vacancies soon after the war in end Aug 1999, nearly 10,000 Nepali hopefuls turned up.¹⁶

Positive Views from Nepal

During his four field trips to Nepal, besides meeting a number of ex-servicemen at various places, the author made efforts to meet a number of opinion and policy makers of the Himalayan Kingdom. He found that the aspect of Gorkha soldiers influencing Indo-Nepal had never been analyzed. While discussing with various dignitaries, their unanimous view was that while there are anomalies as far as H M G is concerned in the 1947 Tripartite Agreement, as regards India is concerned there are no problems or issues.

HE Shri HR Adhikari, Nepal's Ambassador to India was of the view that it is a very good agreement, as it provides employment avenues to the Nepali citizens on equal basis with the Indian citizens. He was, however critical of the anti-Royalty and anti- R N A stance of a few Indian media persons.¹⁷

Shri L R Baral, Director of Asia Research Centre, Kathmandu, felt that the Gorkha soldiers have served India very well in all wars. The Indian Government has looked after them very well, by ensuring parity in pay and allowances. They look after the welfare of the pensioners even in the interior of Nepal, where often the Government machinery does not reach, which is commendable. The soldiers and pensioners, as well as the people of Nepal realize the value of such measures and they go a long way in strengthening Nepal-India relations.¹⁸

Shri P A Raj, Journalist and author of many books, was of the view that the Nepali soldiers act as Nepal's ambassadors at large, in India. By enrolling them in her armed forces and giving other jobs, India shows her trust and faith in Nepal, which is unique. Similarly, the Gorkha soldiers consider the Indian Army as their own and thus fight with great valor for defense of India. Just as Indian leaders consider Nepal an important factor in their northern security spectrum, Nepal also should consider India's preferential trade and economic assistance as an important and stabilizing factor for Nepal. Besides the salaries brought back by Nepali youth from the Indian Army, the Gorkha pensioners also receive pensions nearly at their doorsteps, even in far-flung villages. Thus, they impact the village economy of Nepal, also. He was of the view that this Agreement has stood the test of time and has benefited both countries.¹⁹

Dr Surinder KC and Shri Jagman Gurung, member of Royal Academy of Nepal, were of the view that whether stated or not, every one in Nepal realizes that it is in Nepal's interest that the Gorkhas continue to serve in the Indian Army. Emphasizing on religious, historical, cultural and socio-economic ties between the two countries, both of them felt that this is a solid link which has stood the test of times, even when other relations may have been under temporary strain.

Shri Nirmal Tuladhari of the Centre for Nepal and Asia Studies, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, was of the view that there is no doubt that the Gorkha soldiers being employed by India has a big socio-economic positive factor in Nepal-India relations. He stated that it should be appreciated that while it is no problem for India to recruit 40-50 thousand soldiers for her army in India, it is a matter of great concern for Nepal, where job opportunities are still very few. While in the last two decades Nepal's economy has benefited from tourism, yet the in-flow of salaries and pensions, both from India and the UK are an important factor. It was a matter of pride that India considers Gorkhas

from Nepal as her own soldiers. We in Nepal are also very proud that these soldiers consider the Indian Army and India as their own country, when it comes to shedding their blood.

Dr H B Gurung opined that the Gorkha soldiers have for decades been serving considered as part of the Indian Army. Hence, in Nepal we consider them as part of India, with pride. About recruiting, he felt that as Ggurungs are not Hindus, nor are the kirantis. Thus, India should not stress on the 'Hinduvata' card too much, else she may find shortage of good recruits in future. This is also linked with other employment avenues now available to the Nepali youth.²⁰

Col Surgeon R B Gurung, R N Police, felt that while a number of countries may have given assistance to Nepal, India is the only country which has done so with genuine care for the people of Nepal. Giving his own example how in 1970s he was encouraged by Maj IK Verma, 9 GR of the Indian Embassy to study hard and then sent to school, he was emphatic that but for the educational grant and assistance given to him at each stage, he would not have been able to either afford or do specialization. Being a son of an ex-servicemen, he could never have dreamt of becoming a doctor, but for India's assistance. He felt that more such scholarships should be offered by India to children of Gorkha ex-servicemen, as a reward for the services rendered by their fathers in the Indian Army and in defense of India.²¹

Lt Col HK Thapa, ex R N A (now Director Greenline Tourist Bus Service, Kathmandu) fondly remembered the course done by him in 1980 at Mhow, and how he was looked after by every one. On the course with him were a few Indian Army Gorkha officers, including some from Dehra Dun. They showed great concern for his comfort and coached him for the classes, so that he could get a good grade. Considering that there were at least ten more foreign officers on the course, he was convinced that the special concern for him was borne out of goodwill and prestige enjoyed

by the Gorkha soldiers in the Indian Army, with whom he was identified.²²

Sub Maj & Hony Capt Nar Bahadur Chhetri, MVC, 12 GUARDS, specially came to meet the author at Kathmandu and Pokhara. Having joined the missile unit in 1966, he was selected to go to France for training and proved the trust placed in him by Lt Col A K Handoo (later Lt Gen), his CO, by destroying Pakistani tanks in the 1971 War at Chhamb. Awarded Maha Vir Chakra for displaying gallantry of a very high order in the face of the enemy, after retirement he invested in a petrol pump, which is flourishing. Recalling his days in the Indian Army, he considered it the most glorious and happy period of his life, as he enjoyed all privileges and facilities. He felt that every soldier who has served in the Indian Army should thank God Almighty for the opportunity given to him, which besides economic benefits, also makes him member of an enlarged family, even when he is living in an isolated village in Nepal. More than near and dear ones, units and regiments remember these pensioners, invite them for reunions and look after them so well, that they feel pampered.²³

Hav Dil Bahadur Chhetri, 1/9 GR (who joined in 1972 retired in 1990), stated emphatically that he was ever grateful to India for giving him an opportunity to serve in the Indian Army, and now looking after him in retirement. Hailing from Gorkha, he stated that if there was a War and his unit wanted him, he was willing to serve again and go to the front, as he had eaten 'salt' of India.²⁴

Lt Col Lal Kaji Gurung (formerly 2/4 GR, later MP, Nepal and now a businessman in Kathmandu), felt that the two seats reserved in Nepal for ex-servicemen (one each for HMG and the Indian Army) are an opportunity for the pensioners representatives to project problems of the ex-servicemen to the Nepali Government. Recalling the respect and status enjoyed by Col Burathoki, ex 5 G R, Home Minister of Nepal, he opined that the serving and retired Gorkha soldiers serve as a very important link between

Nepal and India, which must not be weakened. Instead, it should be strengthened.²⁵

The positive impact of Indian pensioners residing in Nepal and the Nepali soldiers serving in the Indian Army was highlighted by Mr Dev Raj Dahal, an academician and social scientist of Nepal (who is also the country chief of a Germany-based social research group), when he stated that 'this group of people is very important in rural Nepal, as every year they bring substantial amount of money to keep Nepal's rural economy alive'. He emphasized that these remittances were crucial for poverty eradication in rural Nepal'. He felt that this as the reason why there is always a social push to ensure more and more soldiers join the Indian Army. He felt that Lahure (name given in Nepal to ex-servicemen and serving soldiers of the Indian and British Army) are the unofficial ambassadors of the Indian Army, and a strong bridge for Indo-Nepal friendship'.²⁶

Differences of Gorkha Soldiers of H M G with the British Government

Though the British Government has made certain concessions, a few aspects still remain outstanding. Notwithstanding these issues, enrollment in H M G continues to be most popular and lucrative, being financially most advantageous.

While some opposition leaders even suggested stopping recruitment for HMG, the public opinion in Nepal was that the number of Gorkhas in HMG had come down drastically, and severing of the umbilical cord altogether will harm Nepal more than Britain. Besides stopping employment, this will also stop in-flow of hard currency presently being brought as pay and allowances and in future, even the pension. More pragmatic persons felt that the old fashioned Kukri wielding foot soldiers are becoming a relic of the past in the high technology military forces of modern times.

The issue of disparity in pension and other benefits to Gorkhas in the British Army has been subject of much debate

and the court cases going up to the Privy Council. The case of widow of Sgt Balram Rai (who was killed while operating in Kosovo) was highlighted by even British politicians, who stated that 'while it is true that the cost of living in Nepal is much less than in the UK, widow of a British soldier would be getting Pound Sterling 54,000 as compensation and a pension of 15,000 while that of a Nepali Gorkha soldier getting 19,000 and then 939 for the next 5 years and then 771 Pound Sterling annually' is not correct. Chairman of the Labor Party, Mr Bruce George stated that while it is accepted that the cost of living in Nepal is much lower than in the UK, but Gorkha pensions are rather niggardly. He felt that it was time that these were reviewed, which was also supported by Liberal Democrats. British Prime Minister, Mr Tony Blair stated that while pay and allowances have been brought on par, there were still differences in compensations and pensions, which are being looked into. The announcement by the PM to grant British citizenship to Gorkha soldiers who retired after 1 July 1997 and their families has been welcomed by quite a few, and nearly 700 families had applied for residence in the UK. However, a section of Nepalese feel that this would gradually decrease the in-flow of pension in Pound Sterling, and may affect the economy.²⁷

Notwithstanding these promises, on behalf of Gorkha Army Ex-servicemen Organization (GAESO) and the Commission of Racial Equality, a law suite was filed in the court by Mrs Cherry Blair, wife of the British PM, as while a British soldier got Pound Sterling 473 per month, a Gorkha got only 15 pounds. Following the agitation, in consultation with Nepal and India, Britain announced revised rate of Pound, 23,406 for ranks below corporal and up to 58, 674 for up to Major's rank, were announced as death cum gratuity pension.²⁸ Since then, the British Government has also announced grant of citizenship to Gorkha soldiers and their families, with certain stipulations. While this has been welcomed by the soldiers, a few people in Nepal are

concerned at the loss of revenue as it would result in stoppage of flow of hard currency through pension.

Maj Gurung of GAESO, who is spearheading the fight against the British, stated that it is 'dharma' of a soldier to go to war, whether it is Kosovo or Kargil. The issue that needs to be discussed is, equality of pay and allowances and compensation. For this, the Government of Nepal needs to take up the matter with the British Government, vigorously.

Public opinion in Nepal was that the number of Gorkhas in HMG has come down drastically, and severing of the umbilical cord altogether will harm Nepal more than Britain, as the Kukri wielding foot soldiers are becoming a relic of the past in the high technology military forces of modern times. Yet, there is a need to discuss the basic issue- whether to continue and if so, for how long the archaic system of hiring our Nepali nationals for service in the Indian and British Army? A few leaders felt that a fully sovereign and formally a non-aligned nation cannot have her its citizens fight another state's wars particularly against neighboring countries with which Nepal enjoys close and friendly ties.

Views from India

The goodwill enjoyed by India in Nepal was also proved in 1989-90, when despite the difficulties faced by the pensioners in Nepal due to lapse of Trade and Transit Treaty, they told Shri GP Koirala (present PM and then leader Nepali Congress who was in the vanguard of pro-democracy and anti-monarchy movement) that they had no grudge against India, as 'India has given us our bread and always looked after us'. On the Indian side, Gen VN Sharma, the then Army Chief protested to PM Shri Rajiv Gandhi that the embargo must be lifted immediately, as it was causing great hardship to the families in Nepal of serving Gorkhas in the Indian Army who were willing to lay down their lives for India's national interests.²⁹

Lt Gen (Retd) S K Sinha, 5 GR (FF) (former Indian

Ambassador to Nepal, Governor of Assam and J&K) feels that 'India has special relations with Nepal, the likes of which she does not have with any other country in the world. Nepal is still under developed and except for tourism and soldiering, has no industry. He described his experiences of briefing an India parliamentary delegation in 1960s. They enquired why 'India should recruit soldiers from Nepal when she had surplus manpower?' He replied that 'by continuing to recruit Gorkha soldiers in her Army, India was helping a friendly neighbor, as salaries and pensions earned by the Gorkha soldiers were a major factor in the economy of Nepal'. He felt that the Gorkha soldiers returning to Nepal became ambassadors of goodwill towards India. From the point of view of national security, a friendly Nepal on our sensitive frontier is a great asset for India, and India should consider the aid being given to Nepal as an investment in her national interest.³⁰ He worked hard to enhance Indo-Nepal friendship by meeting a large number of pensioners, when he got an opportunity to serve there as India's Ambassador, in 1990s.

Gen (Retd) K V Krishna Rao, who as COAS, Indian Army toured Nepal in April 1982 at the invitation of his Nepalese counterpart, felt that China had been wooing Nepal, while Pakistan was trying to take advantage of some local irritants in Indo-Nepal relations. He opined that occupation of Nepal by a hostile power would pose a new threat to India from the north. Due to very close and special relations between our two countries, there are no troops or paramilitary forces stationed on the border. Further, a large number of Gorkhas from Nepal are in our Army and a large number of ex-servicemen resettle in Nepal, whom we are looking after. Thus, he felt it was necessary that the friendship between our two countries and the two armies was not only consolidated, but further enhanced. He felt that the high point of his visit was the investiture ceremony on 30 April 1982, when HM King Birendra conferred the honorary rank of General of the RNA on him.³¹

Shri Kanwal Sibal, former Foreign Secretary of India

and currently country's Ambassador in Russia, stated that often the policies of the Nepal Durbar try to balance between India with China, though they know that a land-locked country like Nepal has to rely on India for trade and communications with the outside world. Nepal provides a viable shield to India's northern borders, and thus it is in the interest of India to see that her existing 'Special Relations' with Nepal are maintained. However, India must remain firm in her dealings on important issues and show firmness, as was done by Shri Rajiv Gandhi in 1989. Gorkha soldiers and pensioners of the Indian Army are a loyal and well disciplined element of the Nepali population. Though politically not active, they are very well respected in Nepal, and thus create a favorable pro-India lobby. Their enrollment in the Indian Army and willingness to fight and die for India's defense, is unique and unparalleled in the world. India, on its part also treats them with equal care and concern, both while in service and after their retirement in Nepal. The pay and allowances and pensions drawn by them contribute to Nepal's economy, which must continue. India gives same grants and privileges to them as to her own soldiers, and offers same job opportunities to Nepali citizens also. Coupled with it, the special long standing religious, social, cultural and economic ties between the two countries have no other example in the world. To keep up the tradition and for strengthening the ties, India should continue to enroll and look after her Gorkha soldiers, in future also.³²

Lt Gen (Retd) Dipender Singh, former President Gorkha Brigade and Col 8 GR felt that Gorkha soldiers from Nepal are a historical legacy of a vital link of relations between the two countries, which should not be disturbed but strengthened. Their pension and salaries have an impact on the economy of Nepal, especially in rural areas where other types of employment avenues are nil, and creates a dedicated pro-Indian Army camaraderie down to village level, which will in due course spread to towns also. While there may have been political differences between Delhi and

Kathmandu on some matters, the bond of friendship between Gorkha soldiers and their Indian counterparts, as well as between the two Armies has always remained strong. The Gorkha soldiers have obeyed orders willingly and cheerfully, and fought boldly with courage whenever India's security has been threatened, often giving supreme sacrifice of their lives. No other country or people will do it so cheerfully for another country, as the Nepalese have done for India. This further proves the strength of friendship between India and Nepal.³³

Shri Arvind Deo, former Ambassador of India in Nepal (1989-90), was of the opinion that while the Gorkha ex-servicemen per say are non-political, the continued enrollment of Gorkha soldiers by India does have an important place in the overall Indo-Nepal relations. They are a respected and a disciplined lot, who are loyal to their unit and regiment, and warmly recall their service with the Indian Army. The monetary and welfare benefits and schemes undertaken by India for them are the envy of the local authorities as well as the British, who cannot match them. He felt that employment avenues of Nepali youth and monetary aspects of pensioners are important which are often overlooked by Nepali opposition. While dealing with issues of employment of troops as well as other issues, India must adopt a firm attitude, and not allow historical background or sentiments to weigh the decisions.³⁴

Maj Gen (Retd) Rajinder Nath (11 GR) felt that Gorkha soldiers have great faith and trust in their leaders, and are willing to give their life for the honor and pride of their unit. Born soldiers, they are tough and fearless, ready to take risks, try out new weapons and systems and, can survive with little administrative support, cheerfully. They have strong bonds with their unit, regiment and the Indian Army, which they carry back home to Nepal, after retirement. While economy of Nepal has now got a fill-up with tourism, yet pay and allowances taken home by soldiers and pensions drawn by the pensioners form a substantial portion of Nepal's economy, specially in rural and interior areas. Thus,

it is in the mutual interest of Nepal as well as India that the Gorkhas continue to serve in the Indian Army.³⁵

Shri MK Rasgotra, former Ambassador to Nepal and Foreign Secretary of India, was of the opinion that the continued employment of Gorkhas from Nepal does result in strong bonds of friendship between the two countries and India should be firm in handling criticism of their employment. If Nepal wishes to revise the 1947 Tripartite Agreement, we should be willing. While enrolling 40,000 youth from within the country will pose no problem to India, the un-employment factor and loss of earnings will have a greater impact on Nepal-which should be realized by the Nepali critics.³⁶

Views similar to those of Shri Rasgotra were also expressed by Lt Gen (Retd) A K Handoo, PVSM, who felt that while the Gorkhas have fought bravely and earned laurels in all conflicts, India should not allow Nepal to dictate or criticize their employment or play their card against India. Indian soldiers have also shown equal bravery and dedication to service, and hence, if Nepal wishes to stop their recruitment into the Indian Army, we should not be unduly sentimental about it. The issue has larger diplomatic and political implications, and needs to be handled firmly, as it is an important element of overall Indo-Nepal relations.³⁷

Shri D Banerjee, former Ambassador of India in Nepal (1994 to 2000) expressed the view that while we should continue to enroll the Gorkhas from Nepal and continue to undertake development projects in their villages, we should not do so under any pressure. The Durbar should safeguard India's strategic interests, just as India goes out of its way to ensure economic and trade concessions to Nepal, much beyond the international obligations. During his extensive tours, he found there was great warmth and genuine appreciation for the Indian Army amongst the pensioners and their dependents, and just because they do not have any say in political matters or influence on the Durbar policies (like their counter parts in India), it does not mean that they do not have love for India. More can

be done to improve their lot, in the field of education, medical cover and technical training, thus opening employment opportunities other than soldering.³⁸

Col Shiv S Rai (a second generation Gorkha from Dharamsala, former from 1 GR now Maratha LI) was all for the continued employment of Gorkhas from Nepal in the Indian Army. Tracing the historical background and their deeds of valor during the 1st and the 2nd World Wars as well as in India's wars since Independence, he felt that an odd remark by an un-informed politician in Kathmandu should not color the major issue of Indo-Nepal relations, of which Gorkha soldiers have been an important link. It should be remembered that though while serving in the Indian Army a Gorkha is not fighting for his country, yet he is willing to sacrifice his life for the sake of his unit, regiment and above all, because they are the Gorkhas-the invincibles.³⁹

Lt Col (Retd) JK Kachari, 3 GR (one of the first cadets from IMA to join the Gorkhas in 1948) was of the view that while there will always be some elements in Nepal who would label India as a 'big brother who is a bully' and blame us for all their ills and difficulties, they are in small numbers and should be ignored. Our policies towards Nepal must take into account the welfare and well-being of the large number of common man, of whom our serving and retired soldiers form a sizeable balanced and mature segment. By applying economic blockade or reducing points of entry, we create hardships for the common man and deny them their livelihood and 'rozi-roti' (employment and food), which needs to be avoided. Our ex-servicemen in Nepal are our best mouthpieces for spreading the inherent goodwill that lies in the minds and heart of an average Indian who may not have even come in contact with them. While the politicians and businessmen may crib about India due to their personal and selfish motives, the soldiers of Gorkha Regiments have and will always remain loyal to their unit, regiment and the Indian Army. Thus, they do constitute a vital element of Indo-Nepal relations.⁴⁰

Lt Col (Retd) S N S Gurung, 5 GR (FF), a second generation Gorkha and the first Indian domiciled cadet from Dharamsala to pass out as a commissioned officer from IMA after Independence, who led his unit in 1965 War, traced the origin of the Tripartite Agreement of 1947, when PM Pandit Nehru had stated in the Parliament that India was continuing with Gorkhas in the Indian Army as a measure of enduring Indo-Nepalese Friendship and that they will not be treated as 'mercenaries'. Since then, India has honored the Treaty, fully. The Chinese advance in to Tibet in Oct 1950 made India review her defense policy on the northern borders. While addressing the Parliament on 6 Dec 1950, Pandit Nehru stated that from time immemorial the Himalayas have always provided us magnificent frontiers and we cannot allow them to be penetrated, because it is the principal barrier to India. Therefore we must have an independent Nepal and cannot allow anything to go wrong in Nepal or permit that barrier to be crossed or weakened, because that would be a risk to our own country. Thus, the safety, security, independence and well-being of the people of Nepal are in India's interest. In this context, while Nepalese citizens have been going abroad to seek lucrative employment and some of them do return with more money, but they do not get any pension or welfare benefits, like those enjoyed by the ex-servicemen of the Indian Army in Nepal. Though Nepal has made strides in opening tourism and other industries, yet soldiering in the Indian Army remains one of the most sought after honorable opportunity.⁴¹

Gen (Retd) V P Malik, former COAS, Indian Army, warmly recalled his visit to Nepal, where besides being bestowed the honorary rank of General of the RNA he met a large number of ex-servicemen at Pokhara. He felt that the Gorkha ex-servicemen had a genuine affection and regard for their units, regiments and the Indian Army, which they demonstrate openly. As special citizens of Nepal who have shed their blood for safety of our country, they need to be treated with care and looked after retirement. They form part of our overall foreign policy, and should continue to be employed in our Army.⁴²

Similar views were expressed by Gens S Roy Chowdhry and NC Vij (former CsOAS, India) after their tours of Nepal. Gen Roy Chowdhry felt that Gorkha soldiers had immensely contributed to enhance the fame and glory of the Indian Army, both at international and national level. They form an important link in Indo-Nepal relations. He stressed that the foundation of the especial relations between India and Nepal was based on the half century old links through Gorkha Regiments of our Army. This was proved beyond doubts to him when he visited Nepal, where even 1st WW pensioners trekked miles to come to attend his rally at Pokhra. They showed their pride and regimental loyalties by wearing their medals and ribbons with pride and asked for nothing more than an opportunity to shake hands with the Indian Army Chief. He observed that the pension camps and welfare projects undertaken by India in Nepal for the pensioners were greatly appreciated and admired.

Gen Vij opined that the exemplary devotion to duty and loyalty shown by Gorkha soldiers of our Army was very difficult to match. Both General Roy Chowdhry and Gen Vij felt that whatever be the issues, India should continue to enroll them from Nepal and honor the 1947 Tripartite Agreement.⁴³ He found that a Gorkha soldier remained loyal to his oath of loyalty to India even after retirement. Thus, he was a true representative of India.⁴⁴

Lt Gen (Retd) A M Vohra, 3 GR (one of the first officers to be transferred to the Gorkhas after Independence) felt that continued employment of Gorkhas in the Indian Army was an important pillar of Indo-Nepal relations, at people-to-people level. These mountain warriors leave their homes and villages at a young age, and return after 20 to 30 years of service in the Indian Army, often disabled in a war. They carry back with them not only the monetary benefits and welfare schemes, but the goodwill, love and affection of their Indian counterparts, officers and friends. They cherish these for the rest of their lives and talk of their experiences in their villages and homes. Thus, they become true grass-root ambassadors of the Indian Army and India. He felt

that India has a unique record of honoring all her treaty agreements faithfully. Thus, we should continue to strengthen the link with our Gorkha ex-servicemen in Nepal and abide by the Tripartite Agreement of 1947, whatever be the irritations and provocations from the anti-India elements in Nepal.⁴⁵

The positive impact of Nepalese enrolled in the Indian Army was also highlighted by Shri Salman Haider, former Foreign Secretary of India. He felt that these soldiers have served both Nepal and India positively, as part of our mutual military ties, which are part of the overall close and intimate relations between our two countries. Though they may be political ups and downs in Indo-Nepal relations but this special aspect of relationship has remained stable. He felt that as the 1950 Indo-Nepal Treaty of Friendship gives Nepalese citizens virtually all the rights of employment on reciprocal basis that are enjoyed by citizens of India, so there is a supervising bilateral agreement to underpin the recruitment of Nepalese to the Indian Army. He was of the opinion that should Nepal at some stage decide that it is contrary to Nepalese interest and that this should stop, they can of course do so, but till now neither Nepal nor India have found many advantage in working to end the long established arrangement, which has stood test of time. The continued enrollment of Gorkhas is also important for Nepal as well as India's interest. A large number of other Nepalese also come to India for employment and make useful contributions, but nowhere more than in the army. India is a large and developed enough to continue to extend this facility to Nepal in our public and private sector as well as in the security forces, as a deliberate measure of economic cooperation to a land-locked developing country which is a very close neighbor. India certainly wishes to see Nepal keep pace with growth and development as a democratic country, and to this end we would do well to enlarge areas of cooperation rather than cut off those that already exist.⁴⁶

Shri S S Mukerjee, India's Ambassador in Nepal, also felt that the development projects being executed by the

ex-servicemen with Indian assistance have won considerable goodwill for our country in Nepal. In his opinion, the welfare of ex-servicemen and in-directly the employment of Gorkhas by India was an important link in Indo-Nepal relations, which needs to be further, strengthened.⁴⁷

Shri Jaswant Singh, former Foreign Minister of India (who being an ex army officer has met a number of Gorkha soldiers and ex-servicemen in India and Nepal, a country which he has also traveled officially) stated emphatically that 'India and Nepal have a very important link since more than half century, through the Nepali soldiers serving in the Indian Army'. He felt that they were integral part of the overall relations between India and Nepal, which are unique and special. In totality our relations with Nepal are governed by geographic location, social and cultural ties, trade and commerce, in which soldiering by the Gorkhas is an example of the strength of these relationships. Known for their bravery, devotion to duty, loyalty and courage, during the 1st and 2nd World War, these soldiers from Nepal won the highest number of Victoria Cross ever won by a regiment of the British Imperial Army. Thus, there bravery is beyond doubt. Employment and economy of Nepal are inter-linked with soldiering by them in India, thus each soldier becomes an ambassador of India in Nepal, and is part of the security of India's northern borders. A large number of these soldiers after retirement have also settled down in India and take part in the democratic system of elections in West Bengal and Sikkim. They can join any service in India (except Foreign Service) and rise to the highest rank, on merit. Citizens of Nepal can travel freely and buy property any where they like, which speaks volumes of the special Indo-Nepal relations. Earlier, Nepali citizens educated at Benares Hindu University, Allahabad, Patna and Calcutta became representatives of India in Nepal, but now it is the Gorkha ex-servicemen of the Indian Army who represent the ethos, culture and attitudes of India in Nepal, down at village level. These soldiers have shed their blood cheerfully in the defense of our country, which cannot be

matched by any bigger sacrifice. Hence, we have a commitment to ensure their welfare, dignity and honor.

He was of the opinion that whatever be the diplomatic or political pulls or pressures of the 21st century, relations between India and Nepal must be developed and further strengthened. Giving example of the strong relationship between the UK and the USA, he felt that India and Nepal must not reduce the strong link provided by the Gorkha soldiers and India should not reduce intake of Gorkhas from Nepal, as it is a major source of income, especially to old pensioners who have no other means of livelihood.⁴⁸

Shri Shyam Saran, IFS (who was our Ambassador in Nepal from 2001-04 and then Foreign Secretary till 2006) was of the opinion that by carrying out realistic and genuine welfare as desired by our ex-servicemen in Nepal, India was reaching out to a large section of the populace as the benefits were drawn by all residents of the village or 'basti'. Giving examples of piped water supply, schools, medical camps and projects of solar lights, he felt that the pensioners are well respected in their society, as they are financially better off and have greater administrative and leadership acumen, having been exposed to Indian society. Thus, they invariably are looked upon as 'leaders' at panchayat and village level, though they are shy, like our pensioners, of joining politics. As regards reactions of the erstwhile monarchy, the political leadership and the Royal Nepal Army towards our welfare schemes, he felt that while they do not support them whole heartedly, they grudgingly accept them, there being no alternative arrangements through the administration. Unemployment in Nepal has increased, especially amongst the educated youth. Hence, the rulers of Nepal continue to honor the 1947 and the 1950 Treaties as these provided a safety valve for the youth, rather than due to any special consideration for India. We should remember that Kathmandu is not Nepal, and real Nepal lives in the countryside. Thus, as the ex-servicemen live in the countryside, they will continue to have an indirect positive impact and influence on Indo-Nepal relations.

Commenting upon the pension camps, he was of the opinion that now that banking facilities have spread to a wide area in Nepal, Indian Embassy should hold camps only in remote areas where this facility is not available. In this regard, we could follow the British Gorkha model. As regards recruitment, he felt that for long we have neglected the Terai region inhabited by the Medhasias, and should not discriminate amongst various castes of Nepalese. Percentages could be worked out by the Army HQ, and these people also given an opportunity for joining the Indian Army.

He mentioned that during his tenure in Nepal he received a number of representations from Indian Gorkha pensioners and Associations from Dehra Dun and Darjeeling, suggesting greater enrollment from India instead of Nepal, as now more educated and suitable recruits were available from Indian domiciled Gorkhas. Thus, if Nepal wanted to revise the 1947 and the 1950 Treaties, India should not object to it as our requirements of soldiers for Gorkha Regiments can easily be met from the Indian domiciled Gorkhas.

Expressing his overall assessment, he stated that during his extensive tours of the countryside in Nepal, he met a large number of our ex-servicemen and found them a cheerful and loyal lot. Their links with their regiments, the Indian Army and India are very strong, which is even realized by the authorities in Nepal. This has been proved time and again as even when the graph of the Indio-Nepal relations was at its nadir, this vital link between the Gorkhas and the Indian Army was never questioned or commented upon, either by King Gyanendra or any leader of status and authority. He suggested adoption of welfare projects which would give long term benefits not only to our ex-servicemen and their dependents, but even to those residing around them. He concluded the interview with the remark that India should adopt a non-discriminatory approach in recruitment and welfare measures and in future extend them to cover the Medhasias of the Terai also. He agreed that extension of Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme

(ECHS), schools on the lines of Sainik Schools and vocational training centres on the model of Gorkha Resettlement Training Unit, Raiwala, should be undertaken by India independently of Nepali authorities, and these benefits also extended to local non-ex-servicemen by a quota system, without discrimination.

Shri Shyam Saran was of the opinion that irrespective of ups and downs in Indo-Nepal relations and a miniscule anti-India lobby in Nepal, the centuries old relations between the two countries will continue to grow, of which the Gorkhas of Nepal, both serving in the Indian Army and pensioners who have gone back and are residing in Nepal, form an integral link. He stated that while Nepal is currently undergoing a political change, the policies and views of the new authorities on the Treaties of 1947 and 1950 would need to be watched. So far, the new leadership has not mentioned this aspect of their foreign policy.⁴⁹

The Indian Army Gorkhas are also contributing in restoring peace in the strife-torn Nepal. In Jan 2007, a total of 111 Nepal domiciled ex-servicemen who retired between 2003 and 2006 have been selected to form the first UN Interim Task Force, under Lt Col Bhim Bahadur Gurung (former Garhwal Rifles). They have expressed their happiness on their new role, which would give them an opportunity to assist in restoring peace and help in the development in their own country.⁵⁰

Shri Subhash Ghising, an ex-serviceman as President of the Gorkha National Liberation Front had in 1980s launched an agitation from Darjeeling, for creation of the Gorkhaland and demanded a separate Gorkha Regiment for Indian domiciled Gorkhas. After the agitation had been resolved leading to the formation of the Gorkha Hill Council, he had submitted a memorandum in August 1988 to the Government of India, seeking inclusion of a provision that the Indian Gorkhas would be eligible for enrollment for joining any corps/regiment of their choice. He was apparently not aware that even at that time the Gorkhas were free to join any corps/service of their choice, subject

to vacancies based on district/state quota and their educational and other qualifications. In fact, a number of them from West Bengal's Darjeeling district were at that time serving in the Brigade of Guards, Parachute, J&K and Mahar Regiments as well as in the Corps of Military Police, Medical Corps, Electrical and Mechanical Engineers and Signals, as per percentages laid down for the Indian and Nepal domiciled Gorkhas. His demand of an exclusive regiment for the Indian domiciled Gorkhas was rejected, as the Indian and Nepali Gorkhas were deliberately mixed in the Gorkha Rifles, so that those from Nepal are not 'viewed as foreign mercenaries'. Also, it went against the laid down policy of the Government to raise any new units.⁵¹

Col SC Mehta, 1 GR who served for three years as PPO, Dharan from 1987 felt that our welfare schemes need to be enhanced, from small to medium or big size, so that instead of individual or a small number of pensioners, they can be of use to a larger number. For instance besides making small water tanks or providing solar lighting to a village, we could open medical dispensaries under the Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme at important places and establish educational and vocational training institutions on the lines of Sainik School and Gorkha Resettlement Training Unit, Raiwala. These should be at places having a large population of ex-servicemen and where similar infrastructure does not exist. As regards distribution of pensions by holding Camps or sending parties to the interior, he felt that we should take advantage of the extensive banking system now available in Nepal, but continue to hold camps in remote places.

In his view, our staff was very well motivated and our welfare schemes were well received, even when Indo- Nepal relations were strained in 1989. Our composite pension, medical and recruiting teams were always welcomed by the locals, especially those living in remote areas. They were highly appreciative of the cover provided by our dental and eye specialists, who made and distributed 30 to 40

dentures and spectacles respectively per day, even to a few non-ex servicemen.⁵²

Shri George Fernandese, MP and former Defense Minister of India, opinioned that a Gorkha soldier was physically tough and mentally robust, an ideal infantryman for the mountains. He is very loyal, courageous and well disciplined, and shoulders battle hardships, cheerfully.

Recalling his visit to Base Hospital, Delhi Cantt to see battle casualties of the Kargil Conflict of 1999 where a few jawans of 1/11 GR, the first unit to be inducted in Dras sector were undergoing treatment, he stated that he was amazed that despite serious wounds, they wanted to get-up, come to attention to greet him. When informed that soon they would be sent on sick leave to Nepal, they expressed a desire to be sent back to their 'paltan' instead, which was still in the field area. He was convinced that the Gorkha as a professional soldier was outstanding and very difficult to match.

As regards the 1947 Tripartite Agreement, he stated that the question of reviewing it never came up during his interactions with his Nepali counterparts, and he got an impression that Nepal was quite happy with it. In any case, it involved the UK also. He felt that it was in Nepal's interest to continue to maintain and forge strong and lasting links with India, the Gorkha soldiers and ex-servicemen being an important part of the overall Indo-Nepal relations. As regards recruitment, he strongly felt that we should not reduce the percentage of Nepal domiciled Gorkhas from 70%, even if we have more Indian domiciled recruits available. While the Indian domiciled have many other avenues open to them in the developing economy of our country, their Nepali counterparts have comparatively only few options. Thus, soldering still remains a priority for them.

He endorsed the suggestion that we should enroll recruits from Medhasis also, as they are our own kith and kin who have been living in the Terai for generations. To start with, up to 2% could be enrolled against the quota of Nepal. He

regretted that this issue never came up during his tenure as Defense Minister, or else he would have seen it through.

He felt that our welfare projects in Nepal should benefit maximum ex-servicemen and portray India's continued commitment for their well being. These should aim to provide medical, educational and vocational training facilities, so that their children could secure a good position in their own country and society. He concluded by praising the role played by the Gorkhas of the Indian Army during the 1999 Kargil War, and recommended increasing their in-take.⁵³

The impact of Gorkha pensioners in Nepal on the local society was evident to the author from visits which he made to Sainik Basti, Pokhra in 1995 and again after ten years, in 2005. Located about 6 km on the main Pokhra-Kathmandu road, soon after his retirement in 1990s, Sub Maj and Hony Capt Lil Bahadur Gurung, 3 GR, collected like-minded pensioners and purchased land on both sides of the road. Plots were allotted as per individual JCOs and NCOs need and everyone made responsible for civic duties individually and for the community. With further assistance from Army HQs and our Embassy in Kathmandu, they constructed a school, MI Room and a Buddhist temple. During his first visit the author gave them a grant from Army HQ for establishing a common room or 'club' where they could hold meetings. He was deeply impressed that by 2005 they had constructed a double storied community hall (used for weddings and other occasions) and rented out ground floor shops to create an additional source of income. Witnessing the success of this 'mini unit lines' a civil engineer had come forward to construct a pipeline for fresh supply of water, while another prominent person had allowed use of water from his land. The colony is open to HMG pensioners also and Capt Lil Bahadur Gurung in his ram-rod posture with immaculate dress keeps a tag of all activities of the society.

The neat layout, flower beds, healthy children in the school and the lamas in the temple, all displayed a very high sense of satisfaction. They indicated the success of the

initiative taken by the Indian Army ex-servicemen of Pokhra. These pensioners have used the ethos of the Army training combined with their management acumen, resources and ingenuity for improving their quality of life and have set an example for others to follow. They are, in the real sense of the word, true ambassadors of India in Nepal.

A similar organization is also being run near Dharan by ex-servicemen of the Indian Army. Here the author noticed that they have developed a 'code of conduct' for their members and their children, for making them better citizens.

Conclusion

From the views given above it is proved beyond doubt that the Gorkha soldiers from Nepal serving in the Indian Army form a vital link between the two countries. These soldiers have shed their blood cheerfully in the defense of India. They have lived up to the oath taken by them at the time of attestation to uphold the constitutional authority of India, and have never betrayed the country. Their financial emoluments and the welfare measures undertaken by India form an important element of their socio-economic status and environment, due to which they enjoy a special status in their homes and society. Thus, each one of them and their family members become real ambassadors of India's genuine goodwill towards Nepal.

While at times there may be minor pin-pricks or statements indicating opposition to the employment of Gorkha Regiments by India, these should be ignored as they do not represent either the official stand or the majority view of those directly affected. There is a need for the Nepalese authorities to dissuade their disgruntled elements from spreading anti-India feelings and keep India's security concerns in mind, as in the overall context of the regional security these have a direct influence on their own security and stability, as well as on the region. They would be aware of the economic impact of the continued employment of the Gorkhas in Indian Army, and thus should make efforts

to counter baseless anti-India propaganda, especially as they affect morale of the soldiers and ex-servicemen. If Kathmandu feels the need and desires to re-negotiate the 1947 Tripartite Agreement, then she should formally approach India and Britain for it, rather than allow anti-India or anti-British sentiments to simmer in Nepal, which create aberrations in the otherwise strong links between the signatory countries.

On India's part, while tactful and firm handling of bilateral issues is necessary, minor incidents of dissent should not be allowed to influence the otherwise traditional and strong bonds of friendship and cooperation. India has always fulfilled her treaty obligations, and should continue to do so, resolving issues by mutual discussions and consent. The Tripartite Agreement of 1947 has stood the test of time, and needs to be strengthened further.

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MAKING OF A GORKHA SOLDIER

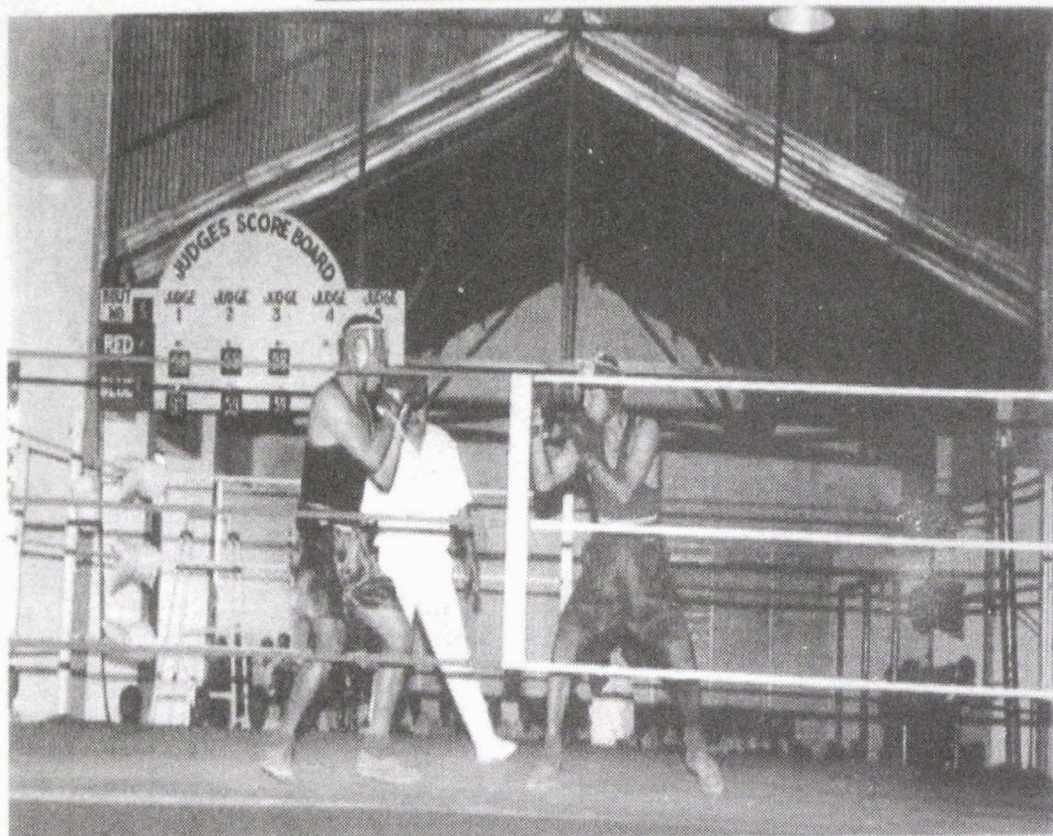
BATTLE OBSTACLE COURSE



GREN RANGE



BOXING RING



INFO & MOTIVATION HALL



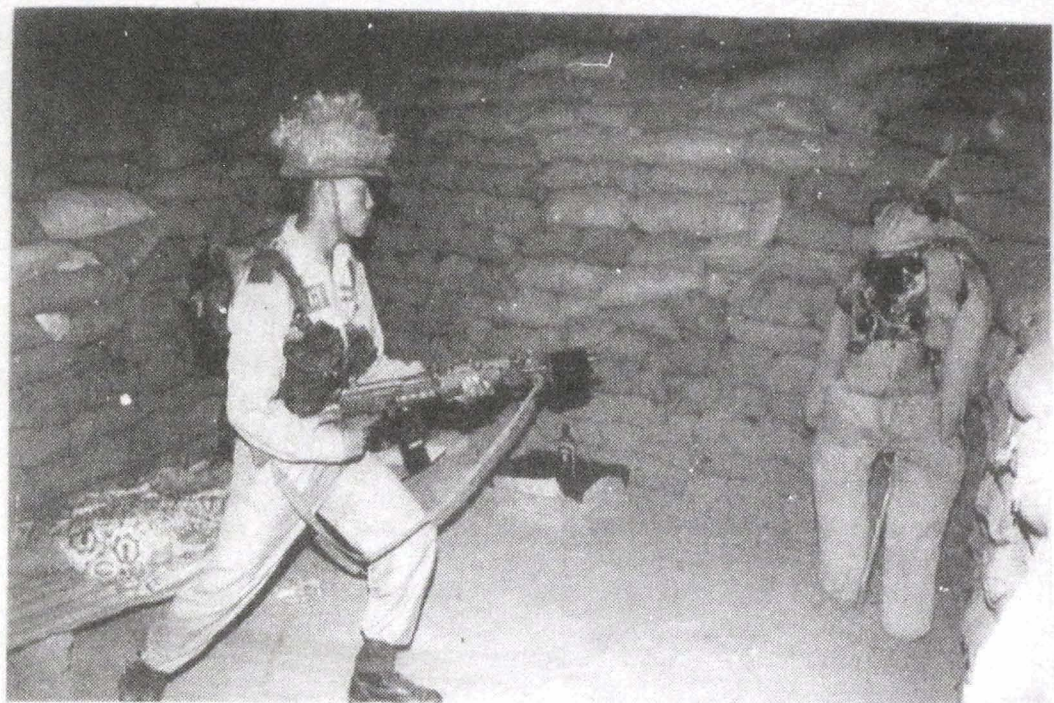
BATTLE OBSTACLE COURSE



LONG RANGE (CL RG)

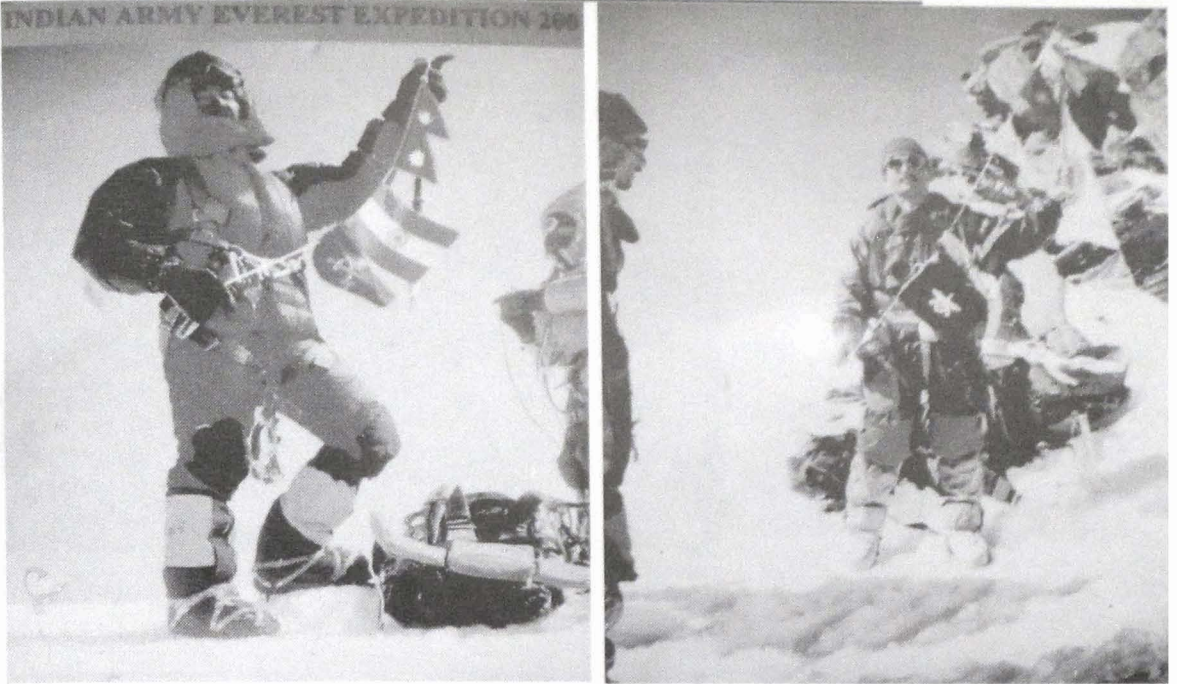


ROOM SHOOTING RANGE



THE GORKHAS ON MOUNT EVEREST

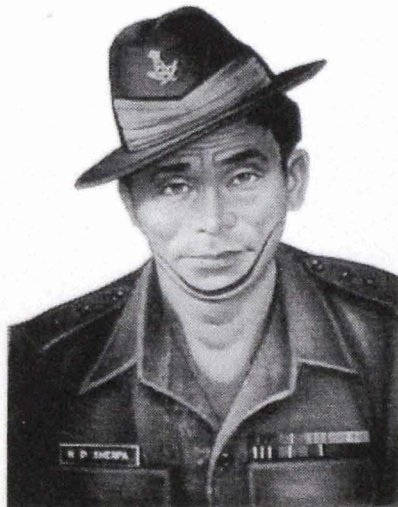
INDIAN ARMY EVEREST EXPEDITION 2001



Hav Till Bikram Budhathoki , 1/1 GR, 23 May 2001



HAV MINGMAR GURUNG WITH THE 4 GR FLAG AT THE SUMMIT OF MT EVEREST, 16 MAY 2007

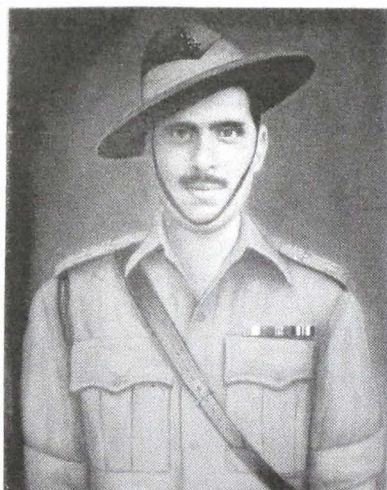


Sub (Late) ND Sherpa, KC, SM*, VSM

Ashoka Chakra Winner



Nk Nar Bahadur Thapa, 5/5 GR (FF)



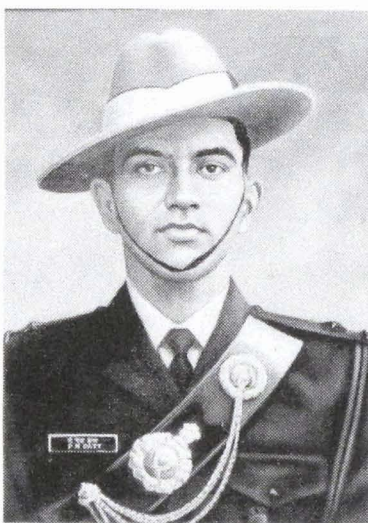
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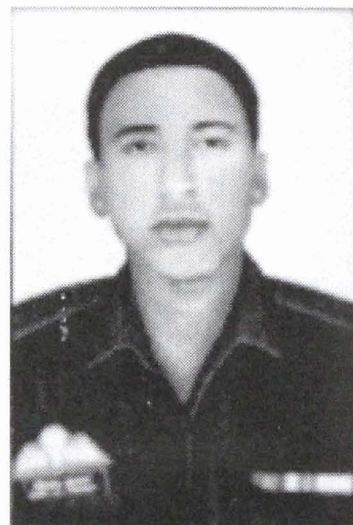
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Maj MB Rai, MC, IDSM, 11 GR



2/Lt Puneet Nath Datt, 11 GR (P)



Ptr Sanjog Chhetri, 9 PARA SF (P)

