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# Gorkha Dimension in India-Nepal Relations



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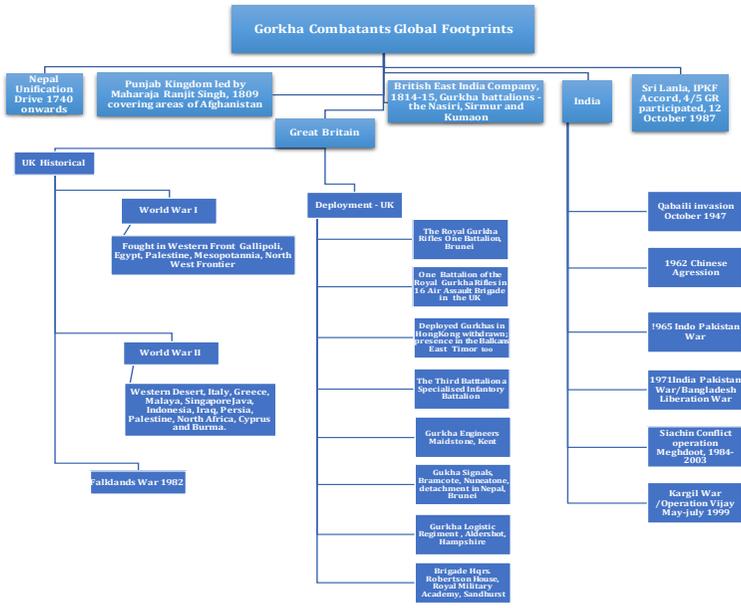
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# Gorkha Dimension in India-Nepal Relations

## Global Footprints of Gorkha Combatants <sup>1,2,3,4</sup>



## Gorkha-India Connection

Apart from geographic contiguity and ages old cultural and religious relations, India’s socio-economic linkages with Nepal continue to remain very well established and grow faster in other sectors of life. Armed with ‘Kukri’, emblematic to their valour, the fearless and friendly Gorkha recruits from Nepal in the Indian Army, have continued to cement their healthy and close ties.

- 1 <https://www.army.mod.uk/who-we-are/corps-regiments-and-units/brigade-of-gurkhas/gurkha-history>
- 2 <https://www.gurkhabde.com/the-role-of-gurkha-soldiers-in-first-world-war/>
- 3 <https://www.nam.ac.uk/explore/gurkhas>
- 4 <https://indiafoundation.in/articles-and-commentaries/indias-lanka-odyssey-indian-peace-keeping-force-in-sri-lanka/>

## Calendar of Events

Date	Details of events
1740	Gorkha, one of the principalities in the then Nepal Kingdom led by the King Prithvi Narayan Shah
1769	Gorkhali forces under King Prithvi Narayan Shah had conquered the Kathmandu valley including the independent Kirtipur state in 1769 during the unification battles
1775	Unification drive by Gorkha kings continued even after death of Prithvi Narayan Shah
1809	Gorkhas could not capture Kangra Fort as it came under Maharaja Ranjeet Singh
1809	Maharaja Ranjit Singh raised a battalion of Gorkhas to serve in the Sikh Army
1814-1815	Three irregular Gurkha battalions -the Nasiri, Sirmur and Kumaon - which had been raised in the wake of the 1st Nepal War of 1814-15
December 1815	The Treaty of Segowlie
1815-1816	British East India Company started recruitment of Gorkhas
1823	Sirmoor batllion to crush the dacoity menace
1824-1826	Newly raised Gurkha battalions were used in the Seige of Bharatpur against the Jats
1845-1846	Nasiri and Sirmoor battalions were also used in the Anglo Sikh wars
1855	Jang Bahadur Rana of Nepal invaded Tibet
1856	Treaty of Peace between Nepal and Tibet was executed with specific clauses about return of Sikh soldiers held as prisoners and suits and cases relating to the Kasmeries merchants of Nepal
1857	In India's First War of Independence, the British East India Company used the Gurkhas to suppress native uprisings in several parts of the country
1918	During World War I (1914-18), Gurkhas were enlisted in the Gurkha Brigade
21 September 1929	Army Headquarter Adjutant General Branch permitted to recruit Gurkhas whose homes were in Nepal for the Burma Military Police battalions, the Kashmir Rifles and the Eastern Frontier Rifles.
1939-1945	During World War II (1 September 1939 – 2 September 1945), Gurkhas were recruited in the Gurkha Brigade
29 September 1945	British India troops, including the Gurkhas, had suppressed nationalist movement at Surabaya in Indonesia resulting in fierce fighting between the Gurkhas and Indonesians.
2 September 1946	Interim Government announced and Jawaharlal Nehru nominated as Vice President of the Executive Council, External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations
March 1947	Major General Lewis Owen Lyne (Director of Staff Duties at the War Office) had visited India in March 1947, besides making arrangements to place the British Army on a 'peacetime footing', had also put forward the British proposal of recruiting Gurkha troops in the British army
April/May 1947	Girija Shankar Bajpai (Agent General in USA, 1941-47 & the Secretary General in the Ministry of External Affairs 1947-52) and Major General Lewis Owen Lyne both visited Nepal together to obtain the consent of the Nepalese Government to the employment of Gurkha troops in both the Indian and the British armies

01 May 1947	Meeting held at Kathmandu between the representatives of the British Government, GOI and the Government of Nepal, Terms & conditions explained by PM of Nepal
June 1947	Field Marshal Lord Montgomery, on tasking by British PM Attlee, had arrived at New Delhi to reach a UK- India-Nepal tripartite agreement about recruitment of Gurkha troops in the British Army
23-24 June 1947	meeting at New Delhi on of Jawaharlal Nehru with Field Marshal Montgomery specifically regarding final positioning including withdrawal of the British Army as well as of recruitment of Gurkha troops in the British Army
July 1947	Implementation of the India Independence Act 1947 for partition of India, to establish India domain and Pakistan domain
July 1947	2nd Battalion, 5th Royal Gurkha Rifles, returned to India from Japan. This unit more or less had mutinied, because of the differential treatment meted out to its men by British Military Police, and had observed sit-down strike at the palace of the Emperor of Japan in Tokyo when the battalion refused to obey its British officers. Brigadier Thimayya was called on to defuse the situation
1 August 1947	Auchinleck, the Commander-in-Chief stated in a note that he was taking necessary action "to effect the transfer without delay of eight pre-war battalions of Gurkha Rifles to HMG for service under the Crown. Baldev Singh had commented that there had been still some misapprehension and it was improper to transfer (any Gurkha battalions) before those conditions had been clearly laid down
9 November 1947	A tripartite agreement concluded at Kathmandu between the governments of Nepal, Britain, and India on 9 November 1947
1 January 1948	11 Gorkha Rifles, a Regiment which had been raised and demob in the First World War, was re-raised keeping in mind that there was no Gorkha troops from Eastern Nepal in the Indian Army, as also the large number of non-optees troops and their fighting qualities. 11 Gorkha Rifles Regimental Centre was raised at Palampur, the erstwhile Regimental Training Centre of 7 Gorkha Rifles <sup>5</sup>
29 June 1948	To facilitate induction of Indian Army to check movement of Pakistan troops in Kashmir, Nehru requested Maharaja of Nepal for Nepali troops for maintaining internal security in Indian states
14 December 1948	Nehru thanked the Maharaja of Nepal for placing 10 battalions of the Nepal Army, against whose substitution, the available Indian Army was deployed by GOI for internal security duties, Hyderabad action etc. Nehru had considered the possible return of this Nepali contingent by middle of January 1949
31 July 1950	India and Nepal signed a treaty of peace and friendship
1950	C-in-C KM Cariappa was the first Indian army Chief to be conferred honorary rank of Nepal Army General and this tradition continues of conferring the honorary rank to each army chief of Nepal and India, emblematic of the close ties
1982	UK-Argentina Falklands War
12 October 1987	The Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) Accord, 4/5 Gorkha Rifles participated in action with other Indian deployment in Jafna area

5 <https://indianarmy.nic.in/Site/FormTemplete/frmTempSimple.aspx?MnId=D5V0NOIOU2KhalmmnChl8Q==&ParentID=LjhEaor/cY3pwwVH+zIt+g==>

## **Unification Drive, Formation of Nepali Army, Attacks on Kangra, Kumaon and Garhwal**

Historically, around 1740 AD, the Gorkha, one of the principalities in the then Nepal Kingdom, was economically weak and small in size too. Prithvi Narayan Shah, its King had mobilised *Gorkhali* forces in leading the unification battles and conquered the Kathmandu Valley including the independent Kirtipur State in 1769. Subsequently, Gorkhali forces got transformed into the Nepali Army.<sup>6</sup> The unification drive by Gorkha Kings continued even after the death of Prithvi Narayan Shah in 1775. Consolidating their military power and gains, they continued to expand their territory. Later Gorkhas annexed Sirmour and Shimla hill states. Amar Singh Thapa, the then Nepali Army Commander could mobilise the support of many hill chiefs and later defeated Sansar Chand, the ruler of Kangra in 1806. Despite this, Gorkhas could not capture the Kangra Fort as it came under Maharaja Ranjeet Singh in 1809. After this defeat the Gorkhas began to expand towards South. This resulted in the Anglo-Gorkha War.<sup>7</sup> On the other side, Gorkhas had conquered Kumaon and attacked Garhwal reaching upto Langoorgarh in Pauri area. Then, due to a sudden Chinese invasion, the Gorkhas reverted back, but in 1803, recaptured Kumaon and Garhwal. King Pradyumna Shah of Garhwal escaped to Dehradun and later killed in the Battle of Khudbuda in 1804. Thereafter, Gorkhas ruled Garhwal for twelve years which culminated in 1815 when the British drove them to the West of the Kali River.<sup>8</sup>

### **Gorkha Recruitment by Maharaja Ranjit Singh**

Even before the British East India Company had targeted Gorkhas' recruitment in 1815-16, the first Nepali men had moved to Lahore in the

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6 Nepali Army, <https://www.nepalarmy.mil.np/page/history>

7 Gorkha & Sikh War, <https://himachal.nic.in/en-IN/gorkha-and-sikh-war.html>

8 <https://pauri.nic.in/history/#:~:text=After%20subjugating%20Doti%20and%20Kumaon,they%20again%20mounted%20an%20invasion> <https://pauri.nic.in/history/#:~:text=After%20subjugating%20Doti%20and%20Kumaon,they%20again%20mounted%20an%20invasion>

early 19th century to join the Army of Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Punjab. Those Nepalis at Lahore were later identified as ‘Lahure’.<sup>9</sup>

### **Treaty of Segowlie (Sugauli), 1815 and Gorkha Recruitment by the East India Company**

Governor-General Lord Hastings had sent East India Company combatants to attack Nepal in 1814. The Anglo-Nepalese War (1814-15) took place between the East India Company combatants and Gorkha troops of the Rajah of Nepal Girvan Yuddha Bikram Shah, resulting in defeat of this lesser-known King. This resulted in the ‘Treaty of Segowlie’ on 02 December 1815. As per history of the Brigade of Gurkhas, soon after this treaty, Gorkhas were recruited in 1816 as the East India Company combatants by the British.<sup>10</sup> Earlier, there were three irregular Gurkha battalions - the Nasiri, Sirmur and Kumaon - which had been raised in the wake of the 1<sup>st</sup> Nepal War of 1814-15. These were recruited from both the independent kingdom of Nepal and the neighbouring hill country that was ruled by the British, and though the vast majority were officially described as 'Rajputs', they included Gurkhas, Doteallies, Ghurwallies and Kumaonees, and bore little relation to the Rajputs from the plains of India.<sup>11</sup> According to Sir Charles Napier, the Commander-in-Chief, they were the "bravest of Native troops" and "at the battles on the Sutledge [Sutlej] in the 1<sup>st</sup> Sikh War (1845-46), displayed such conspicuous gallantry as to place them for courage on a level with our Europeans".<sup>12</sup>

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9 ‘THE NEW LAHURES’ Foreign Employment & The Remittance Economy of Nepal, book jointly authored by David Seddon, Jagannath Adhikari, and Ganesh Gurung, 2021, Introduction, published by Adroit Publisher, New Delhi

10 <https://www.army.mod.uk/who-we-are/corps-regiments-and-units/brigade-of-gurkhas/>

11 Caste Returns of the Sirmoor, Kemaon and New Nusseeree Battalions, May 1851, India Military Consultations, OIOC, P/43/38, No. 45 of 14 May 1852, as mentioned in The Bengal Army and the outbreak of the Indian Mutiny by Julian Saul Markham David Ph. D Thesis, University of Glasgow, Department of History February 2001, <https://theses.gla.ac.uk/1742/1/2001davidphd.pdf>

12 Sir Charles Napier, the C-in-C, Defects, Civil and Military, p. 28 <https://theses.gla.ac.uk/1742/1/2001davidphd.pdf>

Vikrant Deshpande of the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (MP-IDSA), in his article captioned ‘*Gorkhas of the Indian Army and India-Nepal Relations*’ dated 17 February 2017 had mentioned that contrary to popular belief that the British were the first to recruit Gorkhas, it was in fact Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who, impressed by the bravery and valour of these big-hearted little men from the hills, raised a battalion of Gorkhas to serve in the Sikh Army in 1809. As a result, all soldiers serving in the Indian Army are still called ‘Lahorey’ in Nepal, i.e., those who serve in Lahore – the capital of Ranjit Singh’s empire.<sup>13</sup> This has also been pointed out under the caption ‘*A Sensitive Account of the Brave Gurkhas*’<sup>14</sup> by Arvind Gupta, Director, Vivekanand International Foundation (VIF), in conclusion of the Book Review of ‘*Ayo Gorkhali: A History of the Gorkhas*’ by Tim I. Gurung of Westlands Publications Private Limited, 2020. As mentioned in this review, “Even before the Gurkhas were taken into the British Army, there was a tradition of them serving in Maharaja Ranjit Singh’s army in Lahore. Interestingly, the Gurkhas in the British and Indian armies were called ‘Lahure’, i.e., those who went to Lahore to serve in the Maharaja’s army.”

Historical narrative in the above mentioned book states, “British started recruiting the Gorkhas even without the permissions of the Nepal Durbar. Three Gurkha battalions were raised from the irregulars. They were called Nasiri batallion (presently 1st Gorkhas in the Indian army), Sirmoor battalion (2<sup>nd</sup> Gorkha Rifeles (GR) now with the British Army), and the Kumaon battalion (3<sup>rd</sup> Gorkha with the Indian Army).”<sup>15</sup> It adds the then immediate deployments of the Gurkhas: In 1823, the Sirmoor battalion was used to quell the dacoity menace; newly raised Gurkha battalions were used as a part of the 27,000 force at the Seige of Bharatpur (1824-26) against the Jats; and the Nasiri and Sirmoor battalions were also used in the Anglo Sikh Wars of 1845-1846. In India’s First War of Independence

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13 Gorkhas of the Indian Army and India-Nepal Relations, [https://idsa.in/idsacomments/gorkhas-indian-army-and-india-nepal-relations\\_vdeshpande\\_140217](https://idsa.in/idsacomments/gorkhas-indian-army-and-india-nepal-relations_vdeshpande_140217)

14 National Security Vol.IV Issue III | ISSN 2581-9658 (O), Pg. 310

15 Ibid, Pg. 308

(1857), the British were on the back foot. They used the Gurkhas to suppress native uprisings in several parts of the country. A grateful Lord Canning returned the Terai region to the Nepali kings and raised more battalions. Nepali rulers began to cooperate with the British more closely. The book has many stories narrating how the British influence in Nepal grew. British were careful not to turn Nepal into a colony but converted it into a protectorate. They also took sides in the feuds of the Nepali political elite. Nepali rulers needed British help against threat from Tibet in the North.<sup>16</sup> Some confrontations, between Tibet and Nepal were reported, especially on the economic and trade matters resulting in border conflicts at some trade and transit points, followed by the Khasa Treaty (September 1775) to maintain the borderline at its previous alignment. Subsequently the treaties of Kerung (2 June 1789), Betrawoti (5 October 1792) and Thapathali (24 March 1856) were executed.

### **Treaty of Peace 1856 with Tibet, Provisions for Sikh Soldiers held as Prisoners and ‘Kasmeries’ of Nepal**

Later, a Treaty of Peace<sup>17</sup> between Nepal and Tibet was executed in 1856. A part of the Article 4 states, ‘Tibet shall return to the Gorkha Government all Sikh soldiers held as prisoners.’ Article 7 also mentions that the Gorkha Bharadar at Lhasa shall not try and determine suits and cases amongst Gorkha subjects, and Kasmeries merchants of Nepal residing within the jurisdiction of Lhasa. In the event of dispute between the subjects and merchants and those of Tibet, the Bharadars of both Gorkha and Tibet shall sit together and jointly adjudicate the cases. All the incomes (fines, etc.) from such adjudications realised from the subjects and merchants of Tibet shall be taken by Tibet, and those realised from the Gorkha subjects and Kasmeries shall be taken by Gorkha. The Sikh prisoners of war who had been referred in the above treaty were those who were captured in

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16 Ibid, Pg. 308

17 [https://ignca.gov.in/Asi\\_data/75855.pdf](https://ignca.gov.in/Asi_data/75855.pdf)

1841 in the war between Bhot and Dogra troops led by Zorawar Singh.<sup>18</sup> They remained in Tibet until Jang Bahadur Rana of Nepal invaded Tibet in 1855. Subsequently, the above peace treaty specified that these prisoners be released. Article 4 was inserted at the behest of the British on behalf of Gulab Singh, who as then their ally was elevated as the Maharaja of Kashmir.<sup>19</sup>

## War Deployments of Gorkhas by the British

Generally, the British had started addressing Gorkha recruits as ‘Gurkhas’. These Gurkhas were also involved in Anglo Afghan War. During the 1857 Indian mutiny, Gurkha remained loyal to the British the East India Company. In between both the WWI (28 July 1914 – 11 November 1918), and WWII (1 September 1939 – 2 September 1945), over 2,38,000 Gurkhas were recruited in the Gurkha Brigade.<sup>20</sup> The Nepali Army claims that the ‘Gorkha’ heritage belongs, first and foremost, to the Nepali Army.<sup>21</sup> Gurkhas’ battle cry remains ‘*Ayo Gorkhali!*’ (The Gurkhas are upon you!) to horrify the enemy leaving them with a freezing feeling.

Just after WWI (1914–1918), beside the British Indian Army, para-military forces also pressed for recruiting Gurkhas. According to a decision of British Indian Government, *Gurkha Military Police, Bihar*, was entitled to recruit Gurkhas of Nepalese Nationality. This has been revealed in the National Archives of India’s digitized Government of India documents. Vide Home Department, Police Branch file no. 29/4/37-Police dated back to 1937, there were two Gurkha Companies of the Military Police in Bihar, both stationed at Ranchi. Originally there was only one Gorkha Company at Ranchi; formation of the second Gorkha Company was sanctioned in 1918 for Hazaribagh on a temporary basis. Further correspondence (Home/ External Affairs/Defence) indicated that in 1921 permanent retention

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18 Treaties and Conventions Relating to Tibet, Treaty Between Nepal and Tibet (1856), <http://www.tibetjustice.org/materials/treaties/treaties6.html>

19 <https://www.spink.com/media/view?id=232>

20 <https://www.army.mod.uk/who-we-are/corps-regiments-and-units/brigade-of-gurkhas/>

21 Nepali Army, <https://www.nepalarmy.mil.np/page/history>

of this company was sanctioned. Further, on 21 September 1929, Army Headquarter Adjutant General Branch had permitted recruiting officers at Ghoom (West Bengal) to recruit Gurkhas whose homes were in Nepal. Permissions were also accorded to the *Burma Military Police* battalions to recruit up to a total 30 companies comprising of 3,378 men, the *Kashmir Rifles* (2nd and 3rd battalions) to maintain an establishment of not more than 400 Gurkhas (total 800, of which not more than 60 percent should be Magars having Mongoloid features and in close to the Indo-Aryan speaking people) and Gurungs, and the *Eastern Frontier Rifles* to maintain an establishment of not more than 100.<sup>22</sup>

More or less a mutiny like situation had developed when 2/5 Royal Gurkha Rifles,<sup>23</sup> stationed at BRINDIV HQ Okayama, Japan, and led by British Officers, complained differential treatment meted out to the men by the British Military Police. Brigadier Thimayya's intervention was ordered by Major General Cowan, GOC BRINDIV to resolve this ticklish issue. Thimayya, after a patient hearing, resolved the problem to the satisfaction of all concerned. This unit had been relocated to India in July 1947. Later, in August 1947, 2/5 Royal Gurkha Rifles, the pride of the 5th Royal Gurkhas (FF), opted to serve in the Indian Army.

### **Formation of Interim Government in British India (September 1946)**

Frequent changes towards the independence were taking place in India. An Interim Government was formed on 2 September 1946 with Jawaharlal Nehru functioning as Vice President of the Executive Council, External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations. The proposed Mountbatten Plan of June 1947 was withheld, and soon after implementation of the India Independence Act 1947, India was to achieve freedom at the midnight of 14th August 1947.

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22 <https://indianculture.gov.in/archives/decision-first-company-gurkha-military-police-bihar-entitled-recruit-gurkhas-nepalese>

23 <https://usiofindia.org/publication/usi-journal/thimayya-of-india-without-doubt-the-greatest-2/>

## **British Proposal to Recruit Gurkhas – Diplomatic Moves**

The British Indian Military was to be restructured into new identities, namely Indian and Pakistani, after its division. Considering this forthcoming military situation, the Indian Political leadership in coordination with the British military leaders were gradually moving ahead towards that objective. The His Majesty's Government (HMG) had considered the interest of its Gurkha troops. For this, HMG initiated following concerted steps<sup>24</sup> which were evident in the minutes of the meetings of Jawaharlal Nehru with Field Marshal Montgomery at New Delhi on (23-24 June 1947) specifically regarding final withdrawal of the British Army as well as of recruitment of Gurkha troops into the British Army. As recorded by the British High Commissioner (BHC) Terence Shone:-

- Field Marshal Montgomery was empowered by the British Prime Minister Clement Attlee to finalise an arrangement with Nehru about the employment of Gurkha troops in the British army.
- In this regard, Major General Lewis Owen Lyne (Director of Staff Duties at the War Office, 1946-1949) had visited India in March 1947, besides making arrangements to place the British Army on a 'peacetime footing'.
- Major General Lyne and BHC Terence Shone had also discussed this issue during their meeting in March and April 1947 within the Indian government circle.
- During April 1947, Girija Shankar Bajpai, Secretary General in the Ministry of External Affairs 1947-52 and Major General Lewis Owen Lyne, both had visited Kathmandu, Nepal together to obtain the consent of the Nepalese Government to the employment of Gurkha troops in both the Indian and the British armies.

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24 Selected works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series, Volume Three, A Project of the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, Published by Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, Teen Murti House, New Delhi-11, Pg 297-300; Interviews with Field Marshal Lord Montgomery, 23 and 24 June 1947; [https://archive.org/stream/HindSwaraj-Nehru-SW2-03/nehru.sw2.vol.s03\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/HindSwaraj-Nehru-SW2-03/nehru.sw2.vol.s03_djvu.txt)Nepal-India

- Proposed visit of a British military delegation to Delhi to make a concerted plan about recruitment process with the Indian military authorities, was kept pending.
- Before division of the British Indian Army took place, Montgomery met Nehru on 23 June 1947 assuring all possible help to India at that time and also raised the question of Gurkha troops. Montgomery emphasised over the need of an urgent decision as arrangements were being processed “to place the British Army and it was essential to know the position as regards the Gurkha battalions which HMG wished to employ.”
- The BHC, Terence Shone, had noted that Nehru claimed difficulties with his colleagues in Delhi over the recruitment issue and the unwilling attitude of the Nepalese Government. Moreover, Nehru did not want to raise this issue in the Cabinet as it was then working in transition and changes of personnel were to take place during post-independence period.
- Terence Shone had further observed that Nehru kept silent about the visit of Bajpai and Lyne to Kathmandu though Bajpai had updated Nehru on his return from Kathmandu informing him that the Nepalese Government would not be averse to employment of Gurkhas in the Indian Army.
- Major General Lyne who had also participated along with Bajpai in dealings with the Nepalese Government on this issue in Kathmandu, had given to understand that the King of Nepal would welcome the proposals for employing Gurkha troops in both armies, if agreements were reached between the Government of India and the HMG and therefore, the HMG was desirous in reaching an agreement with the Indian authorities without any delay.
- Montgomery pressed Nehru for an assurance on this issue; if decision by the Indian Cabinet presented any difficulty, he would inform Attlee on his return to London. Nehru decided to consult some of his colleagues and Montgomery urged Nehru to do so by the next day.

- Clubbing forthcoming withdrawal of British troops as an additional reason for reaching an early agreement about the employment of Gurkhas, Montgomery told Nehru that withdrawal was to be finished by June 1948, but it could be expedited to end February 1948. Nehru too observed that ‘we shall not ask you to stay.’ They had also discussed the arrangements for the partition of the India whereat Nehru's ideas seemed to be rather nebulous and impractical.
- In his letter of 24 June 1947, Montgomery had intimated about an arrangement reached with Nehru for grant of facilities for employment of Gurkha troops in India. He had also sent a telegraph instructing the War Office to send a mission to India to finalise the details and then to proceed to Nepal with the Nehru’s mission to seek agreement with the Nepalese Government.

Regarding the abovementioned 23-24 June 1947 meetings held at Delhi, Nehru who had appeared as an early profounder of diplomacy and defence policy in Independent India, had separately recorded that Montgomery, accompanied by the BHC Terence Shone, had met him and reached a consensus on the final withdrawal date for last soldier of British Army from India by end February 1948. Nehru had hoped that the withdrawal would be speedy and complete. The highlights of the deliberations on the issue of recruitment of Gurkhas, are given below:-<sup>25</sup>

- In connection with the query by Montgomery regarding any possibility of the British troops to be left in India, Nehru had expressed that British troops in India be moved away completely. Montgomery had also put forward the British proposal of recruiting Gurkha troops into the British Army, previously taken up by Major General Lyne around March 1947. This proposal had already come up before the Cabinet; therefore, Girija Shankar Bajpai and

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25 Selected works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series, Volume Three, A Project of the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, Published by Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, Teen Murti House, New Delhi-11, Pg 300-305; Interviews with Field Marshal Lord Montgomery, 23 and 24 June 1947; [https://archive.org/stream/HindSwaraj-Nehru-SW2-03/nehru.sw2.vol.s03\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/HindSwaraj-Nehru-SW2-03/nehru.sw2.vol.s03_djvu.txt);

Brigadier Rudra were deputed by the Government of India (GOI) to Kathmandu to ascertain the attitude the Nepalese Government.

- GOI had agreed to take eight Gurkha battalions into the Indian Army, to be officered by Indian officers as informally proposed on behalf of the Nepalese Government.
- Although no decision could be arrived at over the Gurkha's employment into the British Army, some light had been thrown on the attitude of the Nepalese Government. Nehru had added that on this issue, Montgomery looked for a quick decision in this regard as plans for positioning of British Army and Indian Army divisions were to be tackled and facilitated. He did not ask for any formal decision of the Cabinet, instead sought Nehru's assurance to convey the same to Attlee, followed by discussions between representatives War Office, London with GOI, and their further visit to Kathmandu for final discussions and decisions.
- At that juncture, Nehru expressed his inability to commit on behalf of the then interim government or the yet to be formed Dominion of GOI.
- On insistence of Montgomery for an assurance, Nehru obliged him and did consult some of his colleagues on the issue. In the very next meeting on 24 June 1947, Nehru apprised Montgomery and Terence Shone about the unpopularity of the Gurkha troops, especially in Indonesia (on 29 September 1945, Indian troops, including the Gurkhas, had suppressed a nationalist movement at Surabaya in Indonesia, resulting in fierce fighting between the Gurkhas and Indonesians and generating much resentment. Besides, the Indian Army's past deployments for imperial purposes by the British Government. Nehru had also questioned the purpose of recruitment of the Gurkha troops and that in future, the Indian masses might consider it as a continuation of imperialist practices like the use of any troops, much more the Gurkha troops, against any people struggling for their freedom.
- Defending Gurkhas role in Indonesia as "helpful in keeping peace and preventing grave developments" and further claiming "Gurkhas

had been misjudged in Indonesia”, Montgomery had disclosed that Gurkha troops were to be stationed at Malaya as a reserve force to meet British commitments in the Far East. He denied any local use or against any freedom movement, “unless war came.” Besides, Terence Shone mentioned about the popularity of Gurkhas in Syria.

- Nehru had denied to play any intermediary role between the U.K and Nepal, an independent country. But due to its geographical location, India would facilitate transit facilities, not for troops, but for Gurkhas travelling as civilians across India, and likewise, money transfer facilities from the Gurkha soldiers to Nepal. Following division of the existing Gurkha battalions in India for the British Army, no proposal was initiated to establish any training or bigger recruiting centres in Nepal. Some recruiting agents might be based in Nepal and training was to take place whereat the battalions were stationed as in Malaya.
- Montgomery claimed that Gurkhas were preferred because of their past association with British Army, also pointing out to their recruitment by Indian Army too.
- Nehru had elaborated that Nepal, despite being an independent nation, was never treated as a foreign country by India and that did not apply to any other country except Nepal. India acknowledged the long-standing association of the Gurkhas with the British Indian Army.
- Nehru called Montgomery’s attention to “the psychological background of the problem and how the average Indian must necessarily look any such agreement with suspicion and how it might be misunderstood in other countries also, especially in Asia”. Nehru apprehended that recruitment of Gurkhas by British Army becoming a precedent and “they might think of recruiting troops from the North-West tribal areas, the Afridis etc., and might come to terms with Pakistan.” Montgomery guaranteed over no such plans. He underscored that the Gurkha matter could not and must not be treated a precedent. Nehru looked for feasibility of formal incorporation of all the Gurkha regiments into the Indian Army

and later loaning some of these to be under the British Army, but technically belonging to the Indian Army. He treated that arrangement as infeasible.

- On Nehru's intervention about the primary allegiance of a Gurkha soldier serving the British Army, Montgomery explained that while the soldier would be "under the discipline of the British Army, his primary allegiance would be to Nepal".
- Montgomery wanted an assurance of an in principle agreement to go ahead.
- Nehru reminded Montgomery of the willingness Nepalese Government to allow Gurkhas to serve both in the Indian and the U.K. Army, provided that Gurkhas must not be regarded as mercenaries and not be utilised against each other or against any popular movement. This was a clear message of the Prime Minister and Supreme Commander of Nepal during a meeting held at Kathmandu on 01 May 1947 between the representatives of the British Government, GOI and the Government of Nepal.
- Nehru showed his reluctance towards many proposals of Montgomery pointing out the implications involved, and further clarifying about not obstructing in any UK-Nepal agreement. Nehru had agreed for the transit facilities, subject to approval to details and an agreement with the Nepalese Government. Montgomery had sought tentative approval to inform the British Prime Minister accordingly, followed by a visit of a small commission (to be led by a colonel and one or two others) of British War Office to Delhi later to Kathmandu to discuss further details. When Nehru told of his busy schedule involving the partition and division of the army, etc., and asked for postponement, Montgomery suggested taking up the matter immediately following the forthcoming movement of the British Army and its components in the Indian Army. Despite Nehru's clarification to Montgomery that it was beyond former's power to commit to any course of action on behalf of the future Dominion Government, Montgomery asked for Nehru's personal oral assurance to proceed in that matter. He expressed his gratitude

to Nehru's agreeing to give the transit facilities the U.K. Government had asked for.

Subsequent to departure of Montgomery, communications regarding the Agreement in Principle, and its intimation to Attlee, War Office Representatives to India and the Mission to Kathmandu for finalisation of the Agreement were exchanged between Nehru, Montgomery, Mountbatten etc. Besides the Nehru's and Defence Minister Baldev Singh's notes, the chronology is as follows:-

- Before his departure for London, Montgomery had addressed a letter to Nehru on 24 June 1947 mentioning that as desired by Attlee, he came to an arrangement with Nehru concerning the grant of facilities for the employment of Gurkha troops in British India. He had then telegraphed to the War Office to send a mission to India to settle the details and proceeded to Nepal with Nehru's mission to obtain the Nepalese Government's agreement.<sup>26</sup>
- Nehru had also claimed in his reply dated 24 June 1947 to Montgomery that in this matter there had been agreement in-principle as Montgomery had informed Attlee, and the details were to be finalised with War Office representatives.<sup>27</sup>
- Nehru, in a letter to Mountbatten dated 05 July 1947, had expressed preference for then General William Joseph Slim who had links with 6<sup>th</sup> Gurkha Rifles for the appointment of Commander-in-Chief. But Slim had not taken up the appointment.<sup>28</sup>
- Nehru, in another letter to Mountbatten dated 29 July 1947 regarding recruitment of Gurkhas into the British Army, in reply to latter's

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26 Selected works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series, Volume Three, A Project of the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, Published by Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, Teen Murti House, New Delhi-11, Pg 306; Footnote to letter of Jawaharlal Nehru to Nepalese Prime Minister Padma Shamsheer Jung Bahadur Rana, 14 June 1947; [https://archive.org/stream/HindSwaraj-Nehru-SW2-03/nehru.sw2.vol.s03\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/HindSwaraj-Nehru-SW2-03/nehru.sw2.vol.s03_djvu.txt)

27 Ibid

28 Selected works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series, Volume Three, A Project of the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, Published by Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, Teen Murti House, New Delhi-11, Pg 306; Letter to Mountbatten, 24 June 1947; [https://archive.org/stream/HindSwaraj-Nehru-SW2-03/nehru.sw2.vol.s03\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/HindSwaraj-Nehru-SW2-03/nehru.sw2.vol.s03_djvu.txt)

communication dated 26/28 July on the subject, had conveyed that GOI's agreeing in-principle to the HMG engaging Gurkha troops, besides the conditions made by India as well as Nepal Government were clear to the Defence Department and these were even agreed to by Montgomery. As such, the matter was not referred again to Cabinet and the matter was to be put to Cabinet for final sanction after further details are worked out. Nehru had suggested executive action in the matter by the Commander-in-Chief.<sup>29</sup>

- Auchinleck, Commander-in-Chief, stated in a note that he was taking necessary action "to effect the transfer without delay of eight pre-war battalions of Gurkha Rifles to H.M.G. for service under the Crown."<sup>30</sup>
- Reacting on the Commander-in-Chief's note dated 31 July 1947 about Gurkha battalions being engaged by the HMG, Baldev Singh had commented that there had still been some misapprehension. Observing further, he mentioned that the Indian leadership had agreed on the principle but details and conditions were to be worked out in consultation with the Nepal Government. It therefore would be improper to transfer (any Gurkha battalions) before those conditions had been clearly laid down. The next step would have been to hold a conference between the representatives of HMG, India and Nepal to work out the details and conditions. The Nepal Government had laid stress on these conditions and one cannot bypass these.<sup>31</sup>
- Nehru observed on the contents of a telegram to the effect that a questionnaire was issued to Gurkha regiment personnel seeking their willingness to serve in the Indian Army or to opt for retirement.

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29 Book 'Nepal-China Relations Documents 1947-June 2005 Volume – I' Edited by Avtar Singh Bhasin, Document no. 17, Pg 53, Letter of Jawaharlal Nehru to the Viceroy Mountbatten regarding recruitment of Gurkhas in the British Army, New Delhi, 29 July 1947

30 Selected works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series, Volume Three, A Project of the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, Published by Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, Teen Murti House, New Delhi-11, Pg 320; Document 16; Auchinleck, Commander-in-Chief note R/3/1/147, I.O.L.R., London. dated 1 August 1947

31 Ibid, Pg 320, On the Proposed Transfer of Gurkha Battalions, Baldev Singh's observation.

Nehru noted that if it was issued only to the officers, then it was perfect. But if it was for the other ranks also, then he questioned the procedure followed up. He added, “The question of Gurkha regiments being retained in the Indian Army or being taken over by HMG 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 is not clear why the 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.”<sup>32</sup>

Following the movement of Pakistan troops against Indian forces in Kashmir, Nehru had sent a cable<sup>33</sup> to the King of Nepal on 29 June 1948, informing the latter about the disturbing military situation, insufficiency of reinforcing troops to counter possible attack on the western front and possible developments in Hyderabad. Recounting Nepal Government’s assistance in lending ten battalions of Nepali Army during WWII, Nehru acknowledged that with that cooperation, the then British Indian Government could move seasoned forces to centres of operation. Nehru sought similar help at that very time, explaining that the Nepali troops would be deployed for maintaining internal security in Indian states of West Bengal, UP and Bihar and not for any military operations. He had hoped that Nepal, as often in the past had helped for a just cause, would decide to do so again. Further in another communication<sup>34</sup> dated 14 December 1948, Nehru thanked the King of Nepal for placing 10 battalions of the Nepal Army on 29 June 1948, for substitution of the Indian Army deployed on internal security duties, Hyderabad action etc. Nehru had considered the

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32 Ibid, Pg 320-321, Document no. 17. The Gurkha Regiments in India, Note, 13 August 1947. Ministry of External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations, File No. 4(4)-CA/47, p. 4/notes, National Archives of India.

33 Book ‘Nepal-China Relations Documents 1947-June 2005 Volume – I’ Edited by Avtar Singh Bhasin, Document no. 15, Pg 51, Cable of Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to the Maharaja of Nepal, New Delhi, 29 June 1948

34 Ibid, Document no. 22, Pg 62, Cable of Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to the Maharaja of Nepal, New Delhi, 14 December 1948

possible return of this Nepali contingent by middle of January 1949.

Just a few days before India gaining independence, British Under-Secretary of State, Commonwealth Relations Office Alexander Colin Burlington Symon held a discussion<sup>35</sup> with Jawaharlal Nehru at New Delhi on 21 July 1947 on the issue of recruitment of Gurkhas for the British Army. Emphasising that a new government had already been formed, action could be initiated as per understanding reached with Montgomery over recruitment of Gurkhas by the HMG. Alexander claimed that Nehru had surprisingly asked as to what more could be done as there was no objection on this matter among his colleagues in the Indian Cabinet. Alexander further claimed that of the existing 27 Gurkha battalions, Nehru had intended to retain 12 of the 20 pre-war battalions for the Indian Army, leaving the other 8 pre-war battalions for the HMG, while the rest seven battalions were not to be disbanded for the time being. When Nehru was consulted regarding the British Mission led by Colonel Smith of the War Office to proceed to Kathmandu to negotiate a formal agreement with the Nepal Government, Nehru suggested someone from GOI with the British Mission due to political implications linked with the agreement. As the King of Nepal had reservations regarding the actual use of Gurkha troops by the HMG and GOI, Colonel Smith's Mission was to consult with the External Affairs Department before the Mission was to proceed to Kathmandu.

In view of the above proceedings, around June 1947, Jawaharlal Nehru, then functioning as Vice President of the Executive Council of the External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations in the Interim Government (formed on 2 September 1946), had sent a letter to the Nepalese Prime Minister Padma Shamsher Jung Bahadur Rana for the latter's consent on recruitment of Gurkha ex-soldiers in the police force of Bihar as per a

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35 Selected works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series, Volume Three, A Project of the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, Published by Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, Teen Murti House, New Delhi-11, Pg 314; Document 11; Symon's Report on Interview with Nehru, 21 July 1947. R/3/1/147, I.O.L.R., London. [https://archive.org/stream/HindSwaraj-Nehru-SW2-03/nehru.sw2.vol.s03\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/HindSwaraj-Nehru-SW2-03/nehru.sw2.vol.s03_djvu.txt)

request of the Bihar Government. The Bihar government was desirous to increase the strength to the extent of about 2,000 men.<sup>36</sup>

### **Tri -Partite Agreement (TPA), November 1947<sup>37</sup>**

Once in a press conference at Delhi on 20 May 1950, Nehru was asked about the position of Gorkha soldiers under the Indo-Nepal Treaty 1950 (later signed in July 1950) with reference to Gorkha recruitment in British units through Indian recruitment officers. At that time too, explaining the provisions of the 1947 Tri -Partite Agreement (TPA) covering transit facility to Gorkhas, etc., Nehru had mentioned that Gorkha recruitment by India was by arrangement with the Nepalese Government, and the British Government and Nepal Government had discussed for the British Army.

On 7 November 1947, in Delhi the representative of HMG and GOI had discussed the point of agreement regarding Gurkha Soldiers which were embodied in the memorandum dated 7 November 1947, a copy of which forms Annexure I of the document. During further discussion between the three Governments at Kathmandu, Government of Nepal put some pertinent observations on the memorandum of Agreement, as set out in Annexure II. In regard to some important points raised by Nepal, the representatives of HMG and India replied to Nepal as follows:-

- Firstly, the location of the Recruiting Depots, HMG in the UK had sought the use of the existing depots at Gorakhpur and Ghum for a temporary period till establishment of their own depots in Nepal. Nepal was informed that its wishes on the subject had been noted and arrangements for the establishment in India of the Recruiting Depots required to meet the needs of the Gurkha units of the British

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36 Ibid, Pg 297; Letter of Jawaharlal Nehru to Nepalese Prime Minister Padma Shamsheer Jung Bahadur Rana, 14 June 1947; [https://archive.org/stream/HindSwaraj-Nehru-SW2-03/nehru.sw2.vol.s03\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/HindSwaraj-Nehru-SW2-03/nehru.sw2.vol.s03_djvu.txt)

37 Book 'Nepal-China Relations Documents 1947-June 2005 Volume – I' Edited by Avtar Singh Bhasin, Document no. 20, Pg 54-61, Memorandum of Agreement among the Government of United Kingdom and the Government of the Dominion of India and the Government of Nepal re: Gurkha soldiers, Kathmandu, November 9, 1947

Army would be settled between the UK and Indian Governments.

- Secondly, Nepal had desired that the total number of Gurkha Units to be employed in the armies of the United Kingdom and of India should be limited and brought down to the peacetime strength of 20 Battalions out of which 8 Battalions will be allotted to the British Army. The representative the UK and India had taken note of the wishes of the Government of Nepal.
- The representative of the UK had explained that the long-term planning of British Post-War Army, assuming that Nepal would furnish sufficient manpower equivalent of an Infantry Division in South-East Asia and a final decision on the question of recruitment of Gurkhas in excess of 8 Battalions at peace-time strength should be left open until UK had an opportunity of considering the views of the Government of Nepal.
- As regards the reduction of the Gurkha Units in the Indian Army, Nepal had informed the representative of India that the reduction should not be carried out immediately in view of the existing political situation in India.
- Beside some of the abovementioned observations of Nepal, its representative also made certain suggestions which are contained in the Annexure III of this document:-
  - For promotion, welfare and other facilities, the Gurkha troops should be treated at par in the parent army so that the stigma of "mercenary troops" may for all time be wiped out. These troops should be treated as a link between two friendly countries.
  - The Gurkha troops should be officered by their own men and should be eligible to commissioned ranks.
  - The Gurkha troops should not be used against Hindu or any other unarmed mobs.
  - To avoid any clash between the Gurkhas themselves, Gurkha troops should not be used to serve in opposite camps arises.
  - Nepal had also requested for their military needs a well-equipped arms and ammunition factory producing all modern

small arms &ammunitions; a few Army transport planes; Nepal's requirements of Army Stores and civil supplies which could be discussed later on. Nepal had desired that the morale of the recruits as well as the armed forces, should remain unimpaired. Therefore, all activities prejudicial to the interest and security of one party should be prevented in the territories of the other parties.

The TPA remains the internationally recognised basis which enables Nepalese troops to be recruited and deployed in the British and Indian armies on a broadly comparable basis and, at the same time, protects the Gurkhas' status as Nepalese subjects throughout their service. Whilst the TPA has in the past and can continue in the future to be interpreted flexibly, the fundamental principles remain extant and will need to be adhered to in the spirit in which the agreement was written. A total of 26,574 British Gurkha as at 01 October 1999, were in receipt of a monthly pension from the UK Government.<sup>38</sup>

### **Role of Gorkha Troops in the Indian Army**

Post-independence, Gorkha troops were deployed in various operations along with other Indian troops during the following wars as well as in anti-terrorist operations in Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) (Operation RAKSHAK) and in the anti-insurgency operations in North-East (Operation RHINO and BAJRANG). In their glorious history, they have been awarded Theatre Honours and Battle Honours and a number of Vir Chakra, Shaurya Chakra, Sena Medals, Uttam Yudh Seva, Param Vishisht Seva, Ati Vishisht Seva and Vishisht Seva Medals, as well as many distinguished service awards. Besides, the Gorkha troops had also been earmarked to represent India in

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38 The 1999 Ministerial Examination Of Gurkha Pensions And Gratuities Report, [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/945973/19991223-Ministerial\\_Examination\\_Pensions\\_Gratuities\\_TOR\\_and\\_Report\\_GPS\\_Consultation.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/945973/19991223-Ministerial_Examination_Pensions_Gratuities_TOR_and_Report_GPS_Consultation.pdf)

United Nations Mission in Congo (MONUC).<sup>39</sup>

**The Qabaili Invasion (October 1947).**<sup>40</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> /5<sup>th</sup> Gorkha Rifles which was located around Srinagar in Kashmir around 26 October 1947, was alerted for a possible operation by General Lockhart. That Gorkha unit was led largely by British officers. To avoid the British component, Indian troops were preferred for that operation, hence 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of Sikh Regiment which was airlifted had succeeded in forcing the invaders to retreat. 1/5 GR<sup>41</sup> deployed in Kargil Sector during 1947-48 in Jammu and Kashmir Operations, was led by Lt Col Niranjan Prasad who was awarded Mahavir Chakra. The battalions of 11 GR have taken part in Hyderabad and J&K operations in 1948.

### 1962 Chinese Aggression

- a. **Ladakh.**<sup>42</sup> 1/8 Gorkha Rifles (GR) in Chushul Sector at Gurung Hill and Galwan Valley, Areas Sirijap, Yula, Spanggur Gap in November 1962. 3/4 GR was in position in area Dungi by 01 November 1962 during the battle of Rezang La.
- b. **1962 North East Frontier Agency.** 1/9 Gorkha Rifles in Ziminthang, Tsangdhar Ridge;<sup>43</sup> two companies of 2/8 GR and 3/3 GR at Walong, Ladders, Hyuliang;<sup>44</sup> 6/8 GR in Kameng<sup>45</sup> and

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39 PIB Press Release 06 November 2008, <https://pib.gov.in/newsite/erelcontent.aspx?relid=44612>

40 Book 'War and Diplomacy 1947-48' by C Dasgupta, Chapter IV, Pg 48

41 Book '1962 The War That Was Not', written by Shiv Kunal Verma, Publisher Aleph Book Company, Chapter 8: When Generals Fail, Pg 204

42 Ibid, Chapter 13: The Western Sector; The Battle of Galwan, Pg 340, 360 & The Battle of Rezang La, Pg 355

43 Book '1962 The War That Was Not', Chapter 7: Fall Back of Tawang, Pg 170; A book 1962 War: The Chinese invasion – II, By Major K.C. Praval, Issue Book Excerpt: Indian Army After Independence, <http://www.indiandefencereview.com/spotlights/1962-war-the-chinese-invasion-ii/>

44 Book '1962 The War That Was Not', written by Shiv Kunal Verma, Publisher Aleph Book Company, Chapter 9: The Battle of Walong; The deployment at Walong, Pg 224,225

45 <https://usiofindia.org/publication/usi-journal/1962-war-the-unknown-battles-operations-in-subansiri-and-siang-frontier-divisions/>

Subansiri<sup>46</sup> Frontier Divisions; 1/4 GR, two companies at Daporijo and battalion less two companies at Taliha by Nov 1962.

## 1965 Indo-Pak War

- a. 4 Mountain Division, the Battle of Asal Uttar<sup>47</sup> (8 to 10 September 1965) near Khem Karan against the Battle Group of Pakistan Army comprising of 1st Armoured Division and 11 Infantry Division. 1/9 Gorkha Rifles along with other units of Indian Army had destroyed or captured ninety-nine Pakistani Patton, Sherman and Chaffee tanks against the loss of Indian Army's 10 tanks. War historians consider this to be one of the greatest tank battles since the Battle of Kursk, fought during World War-II.
- b. Dera Baba Nanak Bridge was captured by troops of the 5th GR Regiment. 8th GR Regiment exhibited sterling combat performances during 1965 War. 9th GR<sup>48</sup> Regiment continued the fine traditions and earned many Battle Honours and gallantry awards. 5/9 GR earned its first post-Independence Battle Honour 'Phyllora'. All the battalions of the 9 GR<sup>49</sup> Regiment except 4/9 GR - which was located on Indo-Tibet Border - fought with distinction in the J&K, Ferozpur, Fazilka and Sialkot sectors. Battalions of 11 GR<sup>50</sup> also took part in the Indo-Pak War of 1965.

**The India-Pakistan War of 1971/ Bangladesh Liberation War.** As per records mentioned in a book<sup>51</sup> of Publication Division, Ministry of Defence

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46 Ibid, Chapter 9: The Final Countdown; Pg 316,317

47 <https://nationalwarmemorial.gov.in/war-depictions/details/7>

48 <https://indianarmy.nic.in/Site/FormTemplete/frmTempSimple.aspx?MnId=PChoaMsvtYdtjw3Sb9+5uQ==&ParentID=x2XssvJf/GCaSoF+8zxm6A==&flag=U9hTvpP8BdaDmwtT6ZfTzw==>

49 <https://salute.co.in/9-gr-the-power-of-nine/>

50 <https://indianarmy.nic.in/Site/FormTemplete/frmTempSimple.aspx?MnId=0AnArL-HUiQLVWjdxvo4QA==&ParentID=vlyFaK5ljptSbwVb8uCmEg==&flag=8CK-P966uzg96kLov0aWdfQ==>

51 The India-Pakistan War of 1971 A History, Chief Editor: Sn Prasad General Editor: Up Thapliyal, published by Upendra Arora, Natraj Publishers, Publication Division Dehra Dun New Delhi on behalf of Ministry of Defence, Government of India

(MoD), GoI, the details of the Gurkha deployment during the 1971 are given below:-

Sl. No.	Unit details	Formation details	Period	Other Details
<b>Operations in Jammu and Kashmir</b>				
	6/11 Gorkha Rifles <sup>52</sup> Com-mando Platoon	25 Infantry Division, commanded Kotli-Balnoi road	Dec 1971	Road Block between Mule Shed and Daruchhian, suffered heavy casualties due to Shells with Variable Time (VT)
	5/8 Gorkha Rifles <sup>53</sup>	191 Infantry Brigade	Dec 1971	Located at Tawi, recaptured Mandiala Bridge; Pt.994; Gurha and also involved in counter attack in Chamb area
	4/1 Gorkha Rifles <sup>54</sup>	191 Infantry Brigade	Dec 1971	Located at Mandiala Heights - Gurha Phagla – Barsala – Jhanda -Manawar - Chhati Tahlu – Nawan - Hamir
	2/11 Gorkha Rifles <sup>55</sup>	121(I) Infantry Brigade, Kargil Sector	Dec 1971	Captured Bahar Post, east of Shingo River; Black Rock and Post 28 (Hamid)
	5/3 Gorkha Rifles <sup>56</sup>	121 (I) Infantry Brigade	Dec 1971	Deployed at Leh, supported at 121 (I) Infantry Brigade and captured Hathi-matha complex
	1/4 Gorkha Rifles <sup>57</sup>	93 Infantry Brigade Punch Sector	Dec 1971	Defended Gulpur Sub-sector
	3/4 Gorkha Rifles <sup>58</sup>	52 Infantry Brigade	Dec 1971	Chicken's Neck area, Syphon area, east of Akhnoor, to repulse Pakistan attack tasked to secure Darh crossing area vacated by Pakistani troops
	7/11 Gorkha Rifles <sup>59</sup>	19 Infantry Brigade	Dec 1971	Battle for Chicken's Neck, captured Pul Bajuan

52 Ibid, Pg 137-139

53 The India-Pakistan War of 1971 A History, Chief Editor: Sn Prasad General Editor: Up Thapliyal, published by Upendra Arora, Natraj Publishers, Publication Division Dehra Dun New Delhi on behalf of Ministry of Defence, Government of India, Pg 141, 144-146, 148

54 Ibid, Pg141, 144-146

55 Ibid, Pg 124, 125

56 Ibid, Pg 124,125, 12

57 Ibid, Pg 131,132

58 Ibid, Pg 141, 147, 148

59 Ibid, Pg 152, 153

	3/5 Gorkha Rifles <sup>60</sup>	19 Infantry Brigade	Dec 1971	Battle for Chicken's Neck, captured Khoje Chak
<b>Operations in Punjab and Sind</b>				
	3/5 Gorkha Rifles <sup>61</sup>	54 Infantry Division	Dec 1971	Objective to capture Supwal ditch across Basantar river
	3/9 Gorkha Rifles <sup>62</sup>	36 Infantry Division, 87 Infantry Brigade	Dec 1971	Attack on Shakargarh to secure part of Chatrana, suffered heavy casualties including POWs
	4/8 Gorkha Rifles <sup>63</sup>	86 Infantry Brigade	Dec 1971	Eliminate Dera Baba Nanak Enclave and captured Eastern Bund
	1/9 Gorkha Rifles <sup>64</sup>	86 Infantry Brigade	Dec 1971	Eliminate Dera Baba Nanak Enclave and captured Colonel 's Hut
	3/11 Gorkha Rifles <sup>65</sup>	116 Infantry Brigade	Dec 1971	Fazilka Sub-sector, entrusted to capture Muazzam area
	2/8 Gorkha Rifles <sup>66</sup>	163 Infantry Brigade, Lahore Ferozepur Sector	Dec 1971	Defended Suratgarh Sub-sector
	1/5 Gorkha Rifles (FF) <sup>67</sup>	48 Infantry Brigade, Lahore Ferozepur Sector	Dec 1971	Khemkaran, Battle of Sehjra Bulge
<b>Eastern Command/East Pakistan</b>				
	5/1 Gorkha Rifles <sup>68</sup>	II corps, 4 Mountain Division, HQ 41 Mountain Brigade	Nov 1971	Operations Nila, Kasipur, Uthali in Jibannagar, capture of Darsana, Jhenida, Advance to Kushtia – Bheramara and Hardinge Bridge axis, earned two Maha Vir Chakra

60 Ibid, Pg 152, 153

61 Ibid, Pg163

62 Ibid, Pg167

63 The India-Pakistan War of 1971 A History, Chief Editor: Sn Prasad General Editor: Up Thapliyal, published by Upendra Arora, Natraj Publishers, Publication Division Dehra Dun New Delhi on behalf of Ministry of Defence, Government of India, Pg 175

64 Ibid, Pg 175

65 Ibid, Pg 187-189

66 Ibid, Pg 189

67 Ibid, Pg 180, 181

68 Ibid, Pg 87, 88,278,285,290

	2/9 Gorkha Rifles <sup>69</sup>	HQ 41 Mountain Brigade	Dec 1971	Deployed at Jibannagar, mopping in Darsana, Battle of Kaliganj, Maha Vir Chakra awarded to Havildar Bisbahadur Pun
	1/3 Gorkha Rifles <sup>70</sup> (Ex – Bengal area)		Dec 1971	Southern sector
	4/5 Gorkha Rifles <sup>71</sup>	59 Mountain Brigade Group	Dec 1971	Operations in Cachar – North (Tripura), captured Sagarnal and Ghazipur; Landing at Sylhet, involved in the first major heli-fit
	5/5 Gorkha Rifles (FF) <sup>72</sup>	78 Mountain Division under Echo Force	Jun 1971	101 Communication Zone Area, Jowai – Sylhet, captured Khadimnagar and the Sylhet Gas Complex
	2/5 Gorkha Rifles (FF) <sup>73</sup>	340 Mountain Brigade Group	Dec 1971	Advance to Pirganj in East Pakistan
	5/11 Gorkha Rifles <sup>74</sup>	340 Mountain Brigade Group	Dec 1971	Advance to Pirganj, capture in Bogra
	1/11 Gorkha Rifles <sup>75</sup>	23 Mountain Division, Kamalpur – Mynamati area	Dec 1971	Occupied Kashinagar, Padua, Gandasa, Mudafarganj, Main Bazar- Bangalmuri, crossed Meghna, Occupied Kuripara, ready to cross river Lakhya on 16 December morning for final surrender of Dacca.
<b>Southern Sector</b> (stretching from Ganganagar, Rajasthan to Arabian Sea) - No deployment of Gorkha Rifles was mentioned in the referred source				

**Siachen Conflict/ Operation MEGHDOOT (1984–2003).** Three units of the 11 Gorkha Rifles Regiment have participated in Operation MEGHDOOT and gave good account of themselves at the highest

69 Ibid, Pg 87,278,285 - 287

70 Ibid, Pg 280

71 Ibid, Pg 82, 83, 315, 319, 320, 322, 362

72 Ibid, Pg 89, 90, 321, 322

73 The India-Pakistan War of 1971 A History, Chief Editor: Sn Prasad General Editor: Up Thapliyal, published by Upendra Arora, Natraj Publishers, Publication Division Dehra Dun New Delhi on behalf of Ministry of Defence, Government of India, Pg 299,300, 304, 305

74 Ibid, Pg 299, 304, 305

75 Ibid, Pg 315, 329 – 331,412

battlefield in the world.<sup>76</sup> "Thud Thud" as the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of 3<sup>rd</sup> Gorkha Rifles which is popularly called, has the unique distinction of being raised in Palestine on 03 February 1917. After actively participating in WWI in Palestine, this battalion was demobilized in September 1920, and re-raised on 01 October 1940 at Lansdowne during the WW II, again involving in actions in Burma and Java. Post-independence, units the Battalion has served in all major operations from the frozen heights of Siachen Glacier (Operation MEGHDOOT).<sup>77</sup>

### **Kargil War/Operation VIJAY (May to July, 1999).**

- a. "Thud Thud" as the 3<sup>rd</sup> battalion of 3<sup>rd</sup> Gorkha Rifles was also deployed in Kargil during OP Vijay, the battalion re-captured various heights in the Dras Sector against tremendous odds, for which it was awarded Theatre Honour 'Kargil' by the President of India.<sup>78</sup>
- b. 11 Gorkha Rifles was an active participant in Operation VIJAY and carved a niche for itself in the annals of the history of Indian Army. Capt Manoj Kumar Pandey was awarded PVC posthumously and his battalion was awarded COAS Unit Citation for the second time. The unit has also been conferred with the title of "Bravest of the Brave" and awarded the "Battle Honour BATALIK" and the 'Theatre Honour KARGIL' for acts of gallantry in Operation VIJAY.<sup>79</sup>
- c. Lt. Gen (Retd.) Y M Bammi in his book '*Kargil 1999: The Impregnable Conquered*' has mentioned that under the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division/HQ 70 Infantry Brigade, operations undertaken by 1/11

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76 <https://indianarmy.nic.in/Site/FormTemplete/frmTempSimple.aspx?MnId=0y3Z-ySr43FjP0jG13hj0MA==&ParentID=+ClheuL7F2Kg5TFRGVT4zw==&flag=8CK-P966uzg96kLov0aWdfQ==>

77 PIB Press Release dated 08 November, <https://pib.gov.in/newsite/erelcontent.aspx?relid=44612>

78 Ibid

79 <https://indianarmy.nic.in/Site/FormTemplete/frmTempSimple.aspx?MnId=0y3ZyS-r43FjP0jG13hj0MA==&ParentID=+ClheuL7F2Kg5TFRGVT4zw==&flag=8CK-P966uzg96kLov0aWdfQ==>

Gorkha Rifles (from 10-30 May 1999 and onwards) were as given below<sup>80</sup>:-

- Put under command of Brigadier Davinder Singh in Batalik Sector in November 1998 to clear the Pakistan intrusion,
- Tasked to extricate patrol of 3 Punjab,
- Deployment on Khalubar Ridge from 28 June to 7 July 1999 and its capture on 5/6 July,
- Capture of Kukarhang from 6<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> July,
- Capture of Conical Post from 8<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> July.

Lt. Gen Bammi has also mentioned the operation conducted by 1/3 Gorkha Rifles at Point 5000 during 22-29 July 1999; road opening duties along with NH 1A in Matayan - Zozi La area and capture of the Bunker Ridge on 30 July.<sup>81</sup> Another Gorkha unit, the 3/3 Gorkha Rifles, under 192 Mountain Brigade was launched via Safaid Nullah to capture Sando Top in July 1999.

### **Other Notable Achievements of the Gorkhas**

Earlier in 1973, a soldier's General, SHFJ Manekshaw, MC, was made Field Marshal. He had close association with the Gorkhas as by the end of 1947 he was posted to 3/5 Gorkha Rifles. He was popularly known as *Sam Bahadur* (Sam the brave). As a Gorkha officer, he had once observed "if a man says he is not afraid of dying, then he is either lying or a Gorkha".

India had also taken a lead role in providing humanitarian aid in Nepal during an earthquake (May 2015). The earthquake caused disaster in Nepal, as per records (NDRRIP, 2015) it had resulted in more than 8000 human casualties, 22,309 injured people and huge loss of government and private properties. The epicentre of the earthquake was located near Barpak village in the Gorkha district of Nepal, approximately 80 km WNW of Kathmandu. On this humanitarian issue, while dispatching the

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80 Book 'Kargil 1999: The Impregnable Conquered' written by Lt. General (Retd.) Y M Bammi, Pg171, 298

81 Ibid, Pg 246

relief for the earthquake affected areas in Nepal, Prime Minister Modi had observed "we will wipe tears from every face", and had announced an aid package of \$500 million. India had sent 1000 National Disaster Response Force personnel to help with search and rescue efforts. In addition, it had deployed 13 aircrafts, six MI 17 helicopters and two Advanced Light Helicopters. Supplies were dispatched: 10 tons of blankets, 50 tons of water, 22 tons of food items, and two tons of medicine. Moreover, India sent three army field hospitals, an engineer task force and medical units of civilian doctors.<sup>82</sup>

Open channel interactions have been reporting mixed reaction generated about the 'Agnipath' scheme initiatives of GOI. In the neighbourhood, countries inimical to the India-Nepal connect are engaged in circulating anti-India propaganda about this recruiting scheme. In a weekly media briefing on 25 August 2022, the Ministry of External Affairs' (MEA) official spokesperson, Arindam Bagchi said. "India will continue recruiting Gorkha soldiers to the Indian Army under the Agnipath scheme. The MEA stated, "We have been recruiting Gorkhas Soldiers for long, we look forward to recruiting them".

Currently, 30,000 to 40,000 Gorkhas are serving the Indian Army. 1,22,000 pensioners (including around 90,000 from Indian Army and others from Central/State government services) reside in Nepal and cumulatively, these pensioners bring in \$620 million to Nepal's economy, compared to Nepal's defence budget of \$420 million.

### **Concluding Observations**

India has always been proud to have Gurkha/Nepalese as soldiers in Indian Defence Forces and has made every effort to ensure that they are looked after and cared for in their twilight years even when these pensioners reside in Nepal. The GOI has made every effort to ensure that these pensioners, their families and dependents are looked after in the best possible manner.

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82 <https://eoi.gov.in/havana/?4079?004>

To ensure these measures, various branches of the Defence Wing are working in sync to fulfil the aspirations of our Nepal Domiciled Gorkha Ex-servicemen community.<sup>83</sup>

Inarguably, the Gorkha Regiment soldiers are among the finest in the world, also much-feared and renowned for their bravery. During early post-Independence period, despite our policy of ‘Nationalisation’ or ‘Indianisation’ of Indian Armed Forces, Gurkhas remain an integrated component of Indian Army.

Nepal, a sovereign independent nation, continues to remain close to India. Nepal has never been treated as a foreign country by India. Over the decades, India has developed a naturally close bond with Nepal which does not apply to any other country; these ties would continue to grow. As such, there is a rare provision for the Nepalese to be commissioned into the Indian Army, which otherwise is not being practised anywhere in the world - provision for citizens of another nation to command home troops. Of late, in the changing international scenario, there is a need to strengthen bilateral relations between India-Nepal based on mutual consideration – primarily, security, modernisation and prosperity - which bring visible comforts to the people of both the countries.

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83 <https://www.indembkathmandu.gov.in/page/about-defence/>

## **About the VIVEKANANDA INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION**

The Vivekananda International Foundation is an independent non-partisan institution that conducts research and analysis on domestic and international issues, and offers a platform for dialogue and conflict resolution. Some of India's leading practitioners from the fields of security, military, diplomacy, government, academia and media have come together to generate ideas and stimulate action on national security issues.

The defining feature of VIF lies in its provision of core institutional support which enables the organisation to be flexible in its approach and proactive in changing circumstances, with a long-term focus on India's strategic, developmental and civilisational interests. The VIF aims to channelise fresh insights and decades of experience harnessed from its faculty into fostering actionable ideas for the nation's stakeholders.

Since its inception, VIF has pursued quality research and scholarship and made efforts to highlight issues in governance, and strengthen national security. This is being actualised through numerous activities like seminars, round tables, interactive dialogues, Vimarsh (public discourse), conferences and briefings. The publications of VIF form lasting deliverables of VIF's aspiration to impact on the prevailing discourse on issues concerning India's national interest.



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