

Queen's Gurkha Signals History



The Early Hong Kong Years 1955-1971

Hong Kong was the home of the Regiment and it is therefore fitting that the Regiment, in one form or another, has served in the colony longer than anywhere else. In 1954 **Major AR Glanvill's** 26 Gurkha Infantry Brigade Signal Squadron was redesignated 48 Gurkha Independent Infantry Brigade Signal Squadron and moved to Sek Kong Camp, Hong Kong. Despite various name changes and moves within Sek Kong Camp itself this Squadron has remained there until today. Only one member of the Squadron was forced to remain behind in Kuala Lumpur, when the Squadron moved lock, stock and barrel to Hong Kong, and that was 'Cassi' the Squadron's goat. Unfortunately Cassi was run over on posting to RHQ and sustained a broken leg. It is known that Cassi survived the trauma of losing her family and her broken leg, and survived with RHQ and categorically did not end up as Bhat.



Hong Kong

Hong Kong may have been seen to some as a quiet posting but when in 1966 the Cultural Revolution in China spilled over the border into the colony the posting became anything but quiet. Riots became if not commonplace then frequent in Hong Kong, inspired by zealous communists on the wrong side of the border. On the 8th July the Police station at Sha Tau Kok on the border believed it was under fire from across the border. From this time forward to 1969 [246 Squadron](#) was put on 24 hours notice to move. After the Sha Tau Kok incident the squadron installed a PA system into the police station and in other police stations like Lo Wu so that the communist propaganda from China could be countered. On many occasions technicians deployed to repair and maintain these facilities as well as repairing the telephone lines along the border road which because the road often came under heavy stoning the men from Hong Kong Light and Power Company refused to investigate. As the army took over more and more of the border posts from the police so the Squadron became more heavily involved in providing communications for the border area and the battalions deployed there.

One of the main contributions to the morale of the battalions on the border came from the Gurkha Forces Broadcasts presented by [246 Squadron](#). It has already been mentioned that the Regiment first became involved with these broadcasts in Malaya in 1953. On 12 February 1964 the Gurkha broadcasting station in Hong Kong was officially opened by **Brigadier AB Taggart MC** Commander of 48 Gurkha Infantry Brigade in Tarn Mei camp, having been built and equipped by [246 Squadron](#). The Squadron maintained the station with 3 technicians and 3 volunteer Newsreaders under the guidance of the Squadron's Foreman of Signals. A two hour show which was recorded in the Forces Broadcast Unit in Singapore was played every night between 8pm to 10pm. In addition the Newsreaders read out the daily news in Gurkhali which had again been prepared in Singapore and sent each day via the commcen to [246 Squadron](#). The Gurkha Broadcasts were a great success by the British Forces Broadcasting Service operating from Borneo Lines Sek Kong. Today the main presenter is one of the

Regiments own. **Honorary Captain (GCO) Kishorekumar Gurung MBE Retd**, who continued a long standing association.

The weather in Hong Kong does not remain glorious all year round and soldiers in 246 Squadron can well remember periods of drought and extreme cold. The other condition which happens without fail is the Typhoon season, roughly May to September, the Squadron provided the storms and disaster net from the moment it arrived in the territory in 1954. But in June 1966 Monsoon storms delivered the equivalent of UK's total annual rain fall in just two days as a prelude to a month of continuous rain. the squadron was effectively trapped inside Sek Kong camp by the floods and was not able to deploy the VHF rebroadcast detachment which supply the storms and disasters net for two days, a mistake it never did again, consequently the detachment now always deploy ahead of the storm and never during it.

An interesting annual event in 48 Brigades calendar was the Brigade Tattoo first run in 1968 and in which the squadron took an active part. Unfortunately the first Tattoo was slightly marred when 300 spectators had to be taken to BMH when the stand they were in collapsed. There had been so much interest from the local people, that they surged into the stands using tickets passed through the fence and thus causing overcrowding and the collapse of the stand from the unexpected weight.

The defence cuts which brought to an end 17 Gurkha Signal Regiment were weathered by [246 Squadron](#) and they gained a Defence and Employment Platoon which was the Regimental Pipes and Drums in disguise. And finally in 1971 they were joined by the newly reformed 248 Squadron, RHQ and Training Troop in Hong Kong, its exclusivity gone forever.