

Queen's Gurkha Signals



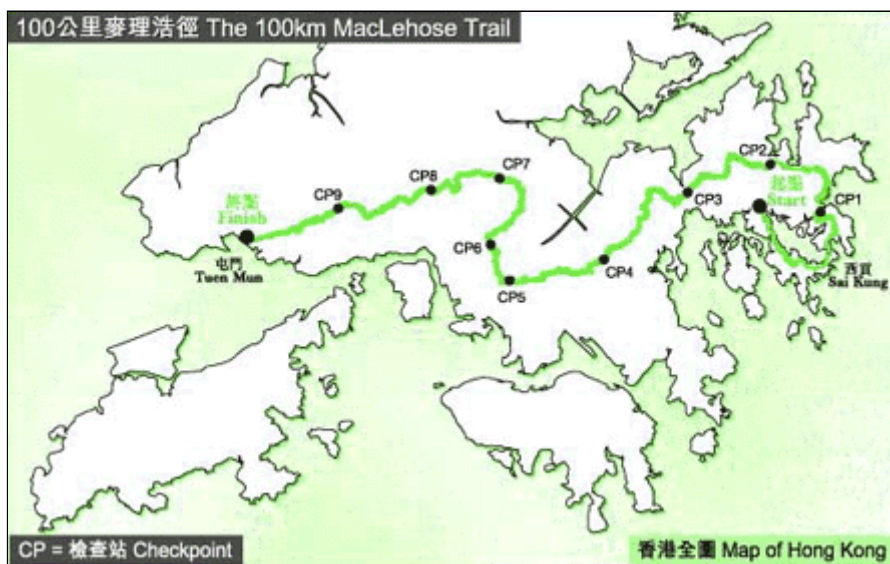
Community Relations and Sporting Achievements

Queen's Gurkha Signals has gained quite a reputation both within the Brigade of Gurkhas and the outside world as an organiser and a participant in sporting activities. The Regiment has been represented around the world from Honolulu to Cyprus in various sports and although every success is worthy of being mentioned there is only space to highlight a few of the better known events. Three events in particular have propelled the Regiment into the limelight in the military and civilian world:

- [Trailwalker](#)
- [Operation Mercury](#)
- [Regular Army Skill At Arms Meeting.](#)

Trailwalker

Over a period of just 10 years a Squadron charity walk has blossomed into probably the largest charity event in South East Asia and certainly one of the most physically demanding runs in the world. In 1981 246 Squadron's OC **Major S M A Lee** (now Brigadier Brigade of Gurkhas) encouraged his men to raise HKD 70,000 for the Hong Kong Spastics Society by walking the MacLehose Trail in the New Territories. The Trail begins in Sai Kung Country Park and finishes 100km later on the other side of Hong Kong at Perowne Barracks. In between the Trail crosses all the major peaks of the New Territories and their names have now become synonymous with the event; Grassy Hill, Pyramid Hill, Ti Mo Shan and Ma On Shan to name but a few. To climb all these hills is equivalent to walking up Mount Everest.



In 1983 246 squadron ran the event again and invited in some outside participants, mainly military, to raise more money for charity. Forty-four teams of four ran, and because of inter service rivalry the army teams began to compete against each other. By 1985 the event, now being run annually, had become a Regimentally run affair with some 60 four man (and woman) teams taking part, over HKD 100,000 was raised that year.

The event still continues today and in 1993 some 630 teams or 2540 people from all walks of life, took part. Trailwalker begins on a Friday morning in October-November time and finishes 48 hours later on a Sunday afternoon. There are now too many walkers to have just one start and so a second start occurs on the Friday afternoon. The Regiment mans all the 9 checkpoints, providing water, soup and

encouragement, and more importantly ensures that safety comes first no matter what. Using a network of computers and by bar-coding all the walkers like a supermarket product, the organisers keep tabs on the location of every walker in the event. 1993's event rose over HKD 10 million for charity, the money being managed by the Trailwalker Trust and the majority of it going towards the Gurkha Welfare Trust in Nepal and to OXFAM. A large number of community aid projects in Nepal and Hong Kong would only have been possible with the money from Trailwalker. The event continues to be popular, and every year there are more team applications than can be coped with. But why the popularity? It is the charity aspect, but its also the challenge. To walk 100km in 48 hours is no mean feat, and the is always the 20 hour goal which everyone would like to complete in. 10 Gurkha Rifles in 1993 won the record for the course from Queen's Gurkha Signals by 8 minutes. The goal for any future Trailwalkers 13 Hours 21 minutes.

Operation Mercury

In 1970 a group of Swiss businessmen on route to EXPO 70 in Japan stopped over for a few days in Hong Kong. They were all reservists in the Swiss Signal Corps and were therefore invited to visit the Regiment by **Colonel John Hart**. They were obviously well looked after because a few months later a competition crossbow arrived as a measure of their appreciation. In April 1972 **Major General E Honneger**, Director of the Swiss Signal Corps, was elected as Vice Chairman of the Swiss National Crossbow Championship and suggested that a live crossbow match between the Swiss Signal Corps and QG Signals in Hong Kong would be quite an innovative competition. **Lt Col Tony Lewis** readily agreed and the Regiment set about making arrangements for Exercise Crossbow.

The actual competition took place in July 1972 and a Telex circuit was established between Switzerland and Hong Kong with the help of the Cable and Wireless company. The local Swiss expatriate community was invited to attend the Hong Kong side and a fun day ensued. **Lt (QGO) Tikaram Gurung** was despatched to Switzerland to act as an observer and to present a Kothemora Kukri to the Signals there. The day was a great success, although the Regiment was well and truly trounced in the competition. The Swiss Expats brought along a small cheese to show their appreciation of the day out, and the whole Regiment dined on the 200 Lbs Emmental (3' diameter).

Exercise Crossbow soon became Operation Mercury and has been held annually ever since. Unfortunately the live crossbow competition against the Swiss Signal Corps finished in 1980 but the crossbow event still continues against the local Swiss community. It was discovered in 1973 that Swiss Expat communities everywhere must still re-qualify as reservists every year by doing an annual personal weapons test. Expats from 43 countries around the world compete for the best shooting results and since 1973 the Regiment has run the Swiss Requalification tests. Operation Mercury is now a family event where all variety of fullbore weapons can be fired for fun and in competition, it now has a very popular Raffle and of course each Op Mercury ends with the cutting of the Cheese.

RASAAM

Probably the event which has brought the Regiment more recognition within the army than any other is the Regular Army Skill At Arms Meeting (RASAAM) held at Bisley every year. Until 1980 the Regiment had never been represented at Bisley but since that year only 1984 has seen the list of competing Regiments without QG Signals entry.



In 1980 the Hong Kong Gurkha Signal Squadron team, which notably included **LCpl Krishna Gurung**, won the Minor units championship in the Hong Kong Skill At Arms Meeting (HKSAAM) and qualified for Bisley. On route to RASAAM the team warmed up by winning every team match in the Royal Corps of Signals SAAM and by beating all comers in the Falling Plate competition at the same event. At Bisley, despite this being their first appearance, the team came second in the Minor Unit Championship against the best of the rest of the army.

1981 saw Hong Kong Gurkha Signal Sqn narrowly beat Gurkha Field Force Signal Sqn in the Hong Kong SAAM into 1st place, and so two teams were off to Bisley from the Regiment. Again Hong Kong Gurkha Signal Sqn came second in the Minor Units Championship. In 1982 and 1983 it was Gurkha Field Force Signal Sqn who travelled to RASAAM to get 2nd and 3rd respectively. It wasn't until 1984 that the Regiment could compete as a Regiment in the Major Units Non Infantry competition, and until 1985 the Regiment wasn't represented again at Bisley.

1985 began the remarkable team captainship of **Capt (QGO) Lilbahadur Gurung**, and the pairing of **Capt Lilbahadur** and **Sgt Krishna Gurung** in the Machine Gun competition. In 1985 the Regiment was the best Non Infantry Unit at RASAAM. In 1986 the Regimental team came 8th in the Major units competition, by 1987 they were 4th. 1988 was undoubtedly the best shooting year for the Regiment ever. It won everything at the R Sigs SAAM and won the Series B open sights Major Unit Championship at Bisley. That same year the Regiment represented the British Army in Canada in Exercise Sharpshooter, an Exercise in which every major Western Army is represented. The Team walked away with 2 major trophies and 26 individual gold medals, making notable success in the Machine Gun Competition taking 1st, 2nd, and 3rd against 70 other teams. What is even more remarkable is that the team was using a World War Two vintage Bren/LMG machine gun.

Since 1988 the Regiment has continued to win the Series B Major Units competition at Bisley and to sweep the board at every other shooting event it takes part in.