

H.M.S. GURKHA



'Ready Aye Ready'

THE THIRD COMMISSION

1966 - 1968

Foreword

by

COMMODORE T. E. FANSHAW, D.S.C., R.N.
Commodore Naval Forces Gulf

The reputation of the *GURKHA*'s is the envy of all military men who have come into contact with them, and this applies to the ships who have carried the name as much as it does to the doughty Nepalese soldiers.

As I was proud to serve in the company of the last Tribal class *GURKHA*, so too have I been privileged to have the present holder of the name in my command.

Both these Tribals have served with distinction in troublous times, and their Ship's Companies can look back with justifiable satisfaction on the contribution they have made to the incomparable record of the Royal Navy.

I congratulate you, and thank you, for the cheerful and competent manner in which you have performed your duties. I have always had full confidence that the *GURKHA* would do the right thing at the right time.

Good Luck wherever you may go.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'T. E. Fanshawe' with a stylized flourish at the end.

Foreword

by

Commander R. A. S. IRVING, F.I.L.

Royal Navy



Pierhead jumps, especially when dated 1st April, are apt to be inauspicious. For myself, however, this jump proved the exception. It enabled me to become the longest-serving officer in Tribals, having previously been three years in the first of the Class.

This commission has had its trials (mostly post-refit and pre-refit) but very few tribulations. It has been a privilege to have commanded *GURKHA* for the active part of her third commission, and I have admired the way everyone has done his job to the very best of his ability in a part of the world where reliance on one's own resources is so much the rule.

In 1863, when it was first decided to establish a permanent Persian Gulf Squadron, the following was written by the authorities in Bombay:

"The naval force should consist of two handy screw steamers. Vessels on the more recent plan as to engines would be most efficient and cheapest in the long run. As a rule, one vessel should be on the move, the other in harbour to relieve or to meet accidents."

In 1967/68, I have found *GURKHA* efficient, handy and on the move. She has well lived up to the requirements of last century's prophet.

I have been very happy in *GURKHA*, and could not have asked for better co-operation or a better Spirit from you all. Though my next appointment, as Naval Attache in Cairo, will limit my Royal Navy contacts, I hope you may continue the many friendships you have made on board and that in the future I may have the pleasure of serving with *GURKHA*s again.

THE GURKHAS

The Men

The Gurkhas originally came from the small principality of GORKHA which, in the 18th century, conquered what is now known as Nepal. A mountainous country with a population of eight million, Nepal has a snow-bound frontier with Tibet and a semi-desert one with India. She has been an ally of Great Britain for 150 years and has

fought with us in the Indian Mutiny and two world wars.

The frugal, spartan life of the Gurkhas breeds courage and endurance, and amongst many decorations for gallantry won by the Gurkhas are 12 V.C.'s. Their motto is, "It is better to die than be a coward".

The Ships

The first *H.M.S. GURKHA* was a torpedo boat destroyer built in 1888 for the Indian Government. After serving at Portsmouth during the First World War she was eventually sold in 1920.

The second *H.M.S. GURKHA* was a 35 knot, oil burning torpedo boat destroyer launched in 1907. She joined the Dover Patrol in 1914 and took part in a number of surface and anti-submarine actions including the capture of the submarine U8. In 1917, however, she was sunk in an unknown minefield, leaving only 12 survivors.

The third *GURKHA*, a Tribal Class Destroyer, was built in 1938 and as a convoy escort sank a U-boat by depth

charges. As part of a force attempting to intercept the German Fleet off Norway in 1940, *GURKHA* was damaged by German bombers and eventually sank losing only fifteen lives.

At the loss of the third *GURKHA*, the Gurkha Brigade offered to pay for a new destroyer, so Winston Churchill caused a new LAFOREY class destroyer to be named *GURKHA*. As leader of the 11th and later the 9th Escort Groups, *GURKHA* saw many actions, sinking an Italian submarine and shooting down a Ju. 88. However, in 1942 she was sunk by two torpedoes from a U-boat, but once again few lives were lost.

The Fifth Gurkha

The ship is a Type 81 General Purpose frigate of the Tribal class. She is of 2,700 tons displacement and is capable of speeds greater than 20 knots.

Dimensions

360 feet overall and 46 feet in the beam.

Armament

2 single 4.5" Mk 5 gun mountings.
2 single 40/60 mm Bofors mountings.
1 A/S Mortar Mk 10 controlled by up-to-date sonar equipment.

The Radar is fully comprehensive for the Ship's roles.

Propulsion Machinery

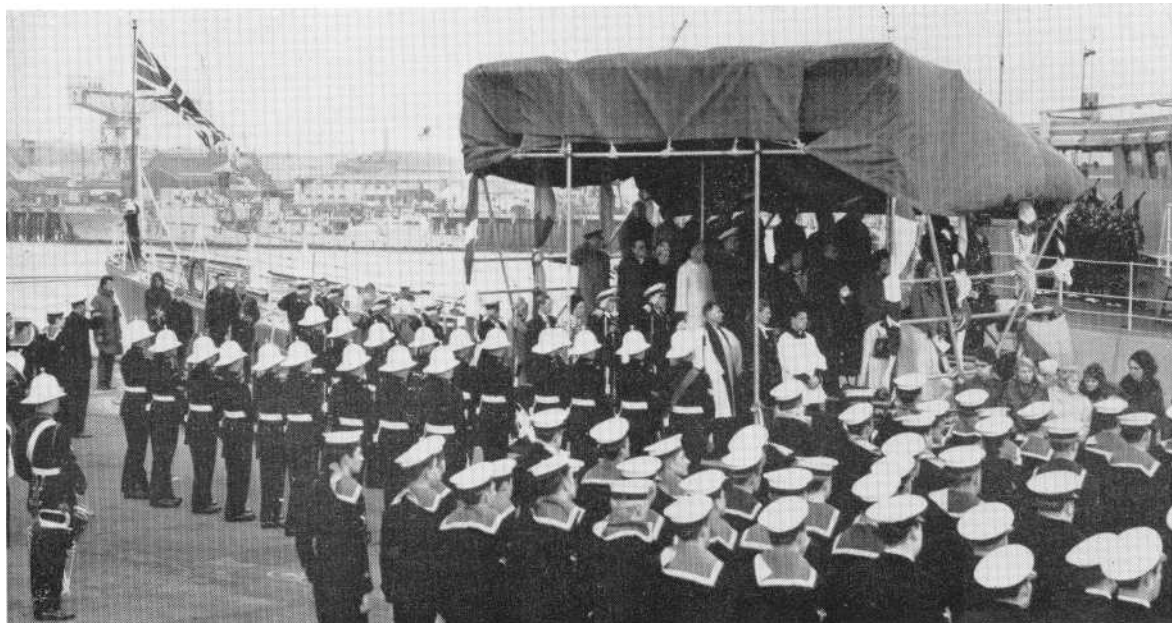
Combined steam and gas turbine machinery drive one propeller. Steam is used for normal steaming and the gas turbine for high speed and manoeuvring at short notice.

Helicopter

A Wasp HAS Mk 1 helicopter from 829 Squadron is embarked. Its primary role is anti-submarine, but it can be used for Bombardment Spotting, Communications, Casualty Evacuation and Troop Lifting.

H.M.S. GURKHA

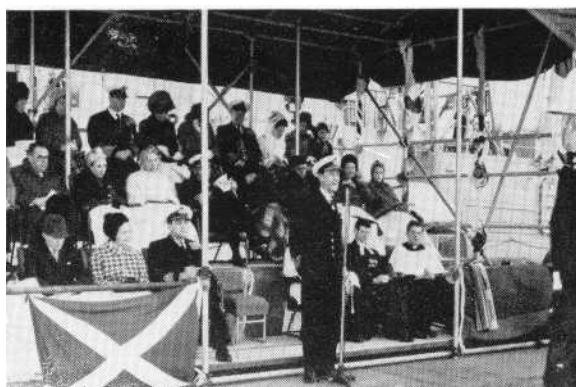
The Third Commission



Half the enjoyment of a commission, a cruise, or even a run ashore is being able to reminisce, and it would be interesting to discover how many can recall their thoughts on that fateful day in September '66 when, with our goods and chattels we found ourselves unceremoniously dumped at Inverkiething station. One's immediate thoughts must have been many and varied, but uppermost in our mind must have been transport ! The wise and crafty of us cajoled an RN Staff Car driver to take us to the 'yard, while the less wise, but equally crafty caught a bus and claimed a

taxi fare on their travelling expense form. Whatever our means of conveyance our reaction on our arrival in COCHRANE is unprintable !

The CHEVRON HILTON (affectionately christened by Jimmy) came as a shock to us all; no water, no heating, no drying facilities and in one particular case no sleeping billet (he was the chap who eventually sought refuge in the galley). These were a few of the snags encountered and you, I am sure, will be able to provide many more.



*" - and finally ... and in conclusion ...
... and lastly I would like to say ... "*



Lady Carrington is welcomed onboard after the ceremony

'Both Watches' came and went with monotonous regularity and always resulted in the late arrivals being sadistically mown down by a First Lieutenant who was also late in arriving. The long sleepy flog through the 'yard to the ship, 'catcalls' to an equally sleepy Emergency Party returning for breakfast in COCHRANE signified the beginning of another day.

In November, or was it December, it happened ! Smoke and steam was seen to issue forth from the funnels, hot water became available, we had steam heating on for at least one day in December, messdecks began to take on some semblance of order, and stores were being embarked by the ton. Then, just as No. 1 had begun to transform the upper deck from a drab chocolate admar to a more pleasing light grey he realised that he had to allow all and sundry to go home for Christmas.

Our return from leave was made bearable by the fact that we were finally to live in Gurkha and that at last we could say goodbye to the CHEVRON HILTON. The next few weeks were hectic ones. On 14th January, 1967, we commissioned. Our principle guest was Lady Carrington, the wife of a former First Lord of the Admiralty, who launched the ship originally in 1963. It was a bitterly cold day and, although charity is said to begin at home, I believe we all felt a little sorry for the Gurkha Pipers who played so excellently during the ceremony under such trying conditions.



On South Arm

Rosyth were reluctant to release us for warmer climes it seemed and I am sure the following pieces of verse at the time brought smiles to the faces of the Rosyth natives and the 'ugly bugs', but long faces to the southerners:

From the First Lieutenant:

*Said the Master of Boom-boat Garganey
"My course is decidedly zany;
The variable pitch of my whizzer is sich
That collisions are frequent and many"*

This won a packet of fags for George Mason:

*"Though dents on Gurkha are many
Have pity on Boomer Garganey
On her stern are two lumps
for taking the bumps,
As for brakes; she hasn't got any !"*

Even later, this by LRO Jenkins following another 'prang'

*"They changed our berth because of fear
Not feeling safe with Garganey near.
So on South Arm
Away from harm?
We now contend with PAS Freshmere!"*



South to Civilisation

We eventually managed to get south to civilisation and after only 3 days of trials this happened:

*Poor GHURKHA, the Rosyth PAS fender
Came south in one hell of a 'bender'.
She savaged a cat,
Gave HARDY a pat,
And Pompey have now got to mend her.*

On 1st April, 1967, Commander R. A. S. IRVING, F.I.L. Royal Navy, assumed command and we sailed for further trials and work-up. Our activities until 8th June are admirably explained in this rhyme:

AN ODE TO PORTLAND

*Seven Forty, weigh or slip
LH and M by Eastern Ship.
First ship through at eight o' five-
Starboard ten, let QM drive.*

*Down through Weymouth Bay we go,
Triplane buoy on starboard bow:
Turns to starboard then to port
Nearer Shambles than we ought.*

*Flyex then till half past ten
Flight deck crew dip out again.
Foxtrot South for A 26
St. Albans Head on which to fix.*

*'Action Mess' and AA Shoot
Helps Staff Pusser do a 'toot'.
TTB's seen by the score
Mugs of soup and apple core.*

*Casex and refuel at sea,
First Dogwatchmen, Hands to Tea
"Nothing left to do" you say?
Plenty more in Portlands day!!*

*Fly at night if not too dirty,
Hands to Supper, starboard thirty.
Off we race with G6 whine
Safety ship for Eight Two Nine.*

*Boat for staff at Alfa Head
Ship to anchor, Hands to Bed.
But wait - Departure Screen in morn.
Work on signals 'ere the dawn.*

*Friday comes R.H.O.C.,
Berth right in at Quebec Three.
PORTLAND ROADS then JOLLY SAILOR
No cash left for Naval Tailor.*

*Sunday morning comes at last
Half past nine and FOST walks past.
'Irish Pendant', piece of string
Does he ever miss a thing?*

*And when at last the Work-up's done
We all look back and say "What fun -
Not as bad as we first thought -
Three cheers for leave at our home port".*

Ayo Gurkhali.



What the eye doesn't see ...

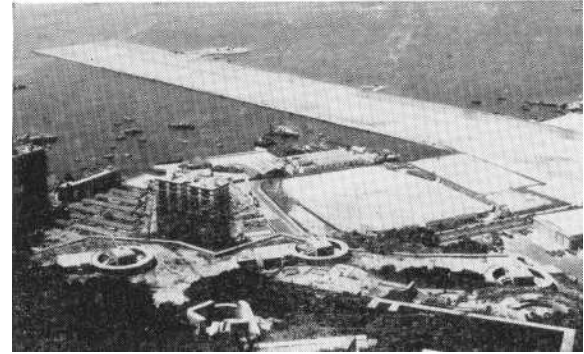
On completion of the work-up the first leave party were landed at some unearthly hour on the morning of June 9th, and the Flight Commander was passed ashore after the brow had been taken in before we sailed for Rosyth for a few days' leave each watch.

Our intention was to return to Portsmouth for a week-end, pick up the 2nd leave party and sail for the Gulf. Once again however we were to experience delays, this particular one being caused by the W.E.E.O.'s bedstead going u/s (he always said that he preferred Pompey to Rosyth for a run ashore).

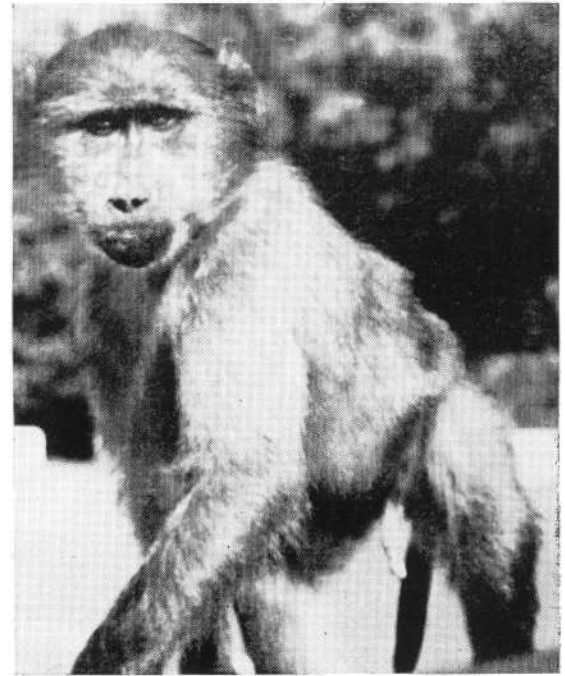
With much wailing and gnashing of teeth we left Portsmouth on the morning of Monday, 24th July, for Gibraltar, stopping off for a few hours at Brest to embark some

Saluting Gun ammunition for the Ruler of Dubai (contrary to popular belief I did not receive a gold watch for services rendered to the Ruler).

A very pleasant week-end was spent in Gibraltar, the local traders receiving the usual support from us all, bathing trips proved very popular and each evening the wealthier types (Flight Commander, Chief Shipwrights, etc.) were to be seen casting money with reckless abandon towards the croupiers of the Casino, only to be re-financed by 'Knocker' who appeared to have an in-exhaustable supply of notes of all denominations tucked about his person.



Some climbed for the view ...



... while others visited their ancestors

The highlight of our journey south to Simon's Town occurred on Tuesday, 8th August, when His Aquatic Majesty NEPTUNE REX was received on board. The day began something like this:

Clerk of the Court:

*Robert Irving F.I.L.,
As Captain of this ship
It is our Royal wish and will
To let some secrets slip!*

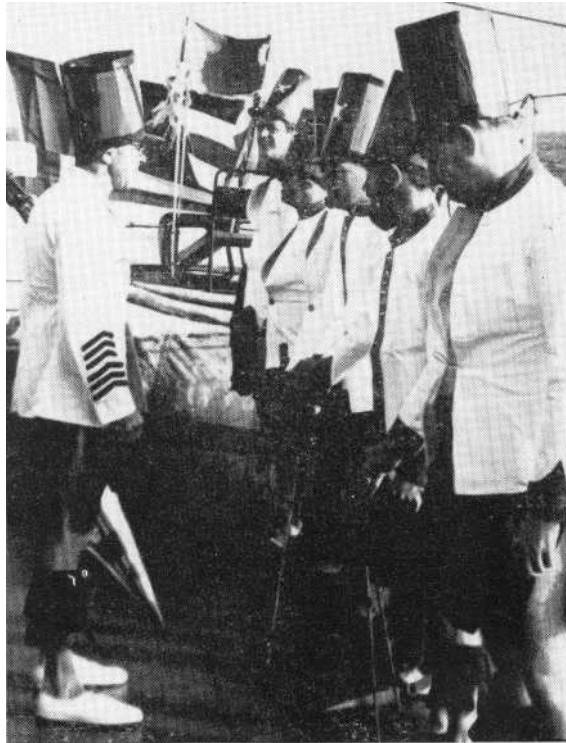
*Some SD Officers onboard
Are full of fear and dread
For you were once their overlord
And to their class you said:*

*"Funny but I do not think
You'll ever make the grade:
Your gins are getting far too pink
You totter on parade:
But if you ever go to sea
Take care you never serve with me."*

*In days of yore you were a Jim;
ASHANTI was your tribe;
But now all GURKHA's serve your whim
And tribal lore imbibe*

*Your signalmen wear AGR's
To save them from the smoke
That fogs the air from your cigars
And makes your sailors choke.*

*Some talk in Brum or Zummerzet,
Or Cockney like, too quick:
But what you say, we much regret,
Sounds just like Arabic.*



Stripsey i/c NEPTUNE'S Guard



AMPHITRITE `chats' up the Guard

*Neptuus Rex, with Queen and Court
Declare our Royal Will -
Which is that Robert IRVING ought
To sail the sea's until;*

*His fatty men become more thin;
His officers stop drinking gin;
His sailors all relinquish sex
And concentrate on SBX
His seamen learn to splice a wire
His stokers how to fight a fire;
His cooks produce non-greasy chips;
His bootnecks learn to live in ships;
His greenies how to mend a fuse;
His signalmen to read the news;*

*Commander IRVING, dost agree
Your ship's not fit to sail the sea.*



A lamb to the slaughter



Not before time

-and ended something like this:
Neptune's Defaulter: E. M. Powlton

Charge:

*The longest of the long haired crew,
He volunteered to do for you
He's not the electrical type at all*



Sorting out the Bears

*He'd rather be in the Dining Hall
Where he can serve the duff figgy
And alf the stokers can call him Twiggy.*

On to the Cape. A few of you may remember the beautiful sunrise over Table Mountain on the morning of our arrival in Simons Town, and doubtless many others will be able to recall the occasional sun rise during our stay there. It was rumoured after we had left that the "blue card" men suffered physical hardships through not having a duty to enable them to re-charge their batteries.

The hospitality we encountered was excellent, and being destined for the Persian Gulf left us with little to look forward to. "Clubs" somehow managed to drum up some enthusiasm and and land the occasional sports team, his request for players always being met with the same question - "Will I be back in time to catch the 5 o'clock train to Capetown ?"



The victors and the vanquished

The Ship's Platoon spent a day at the South African Navy Rifle Range shooting against the staff of the Simonsberg Training Establishment. We lost. It was a unique occasion in as much it was the first time to my knowledge that there have ever been volunteers for Butt Marking Party (if a certain member of one section is foolish enough to believe that he was not observed racing towards the butts with a case of beer under his arm, then he is mistaken).



It's a fix

All too soon the time came to leave the Cape and head for Beira where we were to do two patrols on our way to the Gulf. There can be nothing more boring and frustrating than steaming up and down the same patrol lines for days on end. Attempts were made to dispel the "Beira Boredom" by organising such things as Beer-b-q's, Seaboat drills, "Fishex's", R.A.S.'s, Horse Racing, Light Jackstay transfers. CAVALIER "Wurzels", N.B.C.D.X's, Fashion Parades, Flyex's, Uckers, Shack' Mail Drops and quiz's. I believe all these were instrumental in making life bearable.



Matilda



7 Mess Drink-ex



Mr. & Mrs. Sy, CO-Delic



Lady Aloysius Bott