



CLARENCE HOUSE

On 10th September 1994, I reviewed the Formation Parade of The Royal Gurkha Rifles as the new Regiment's first Colonel-in-Chief. It was a remarkable day – even though it marked the end of nearly 200 years of Gurkha service to the Crown by some of the most distinguished Regiments in the history of the British Army, it also celebrated the beginning of a new era.

In my Address to the Regiment, I said that The Royal Gurkha Rifles must look to the future, and that the Regiment must rise to whatever challenges present themselves. I hoped that it would do this not only by maintaining the traditions and standards of its forebears, but also by building a reputation of its own.

I am delighted that it has succeeded in doing both these things; from the first operational deployment to the Balkans in December 1995, to its most recent tour in Afghanistan earlier this year, the Regiment's performance on operations has been exemplary. During the last twenty-five years, I have felt incredibly proud to see so many members of the Regiment receiving honours and awards for their gallantry and leadership.

I also recognize that the Regiment's reputation for military excellence has been hard won. Since its formation, fourteen members of the Regiment have lost their lives, and many others have sustained life-changing injuries on operations. Although this has brought unbearable hardship and sorrow, I draw some small comfort from knowing that the Regiment will never forget them, nor the sacrifices they made.

As I reflect upon the Regiment's first quarter century, it is sometimes difficult to remember exactly just how much has been achieved. This is why this book is invaluable – carefully researched, and with hundreds of fascinating images, it will perhaps help the reader to understand my deep personal pride in being Colonel-in-Chief.

We have so much to celebrate this year – not only past achievements, but also a bright future as we look forward to the creation of a new, third Battalion.