



1ST BATTALION THE ROYAL GHURKA RIFLES

Corporal Arjun Purja Pun was 33 years old and was raised and recruited from Khibang village in the Magdi District in Nepal.

He passed the notoriously gruelling Gurkha selection process and was enlisted into the British Army on 30 January 1995. His career was varied and successful and he was a hugely popular soldier wherever he served.

In 1998-99 he was a member of the Gurkha Reinforcement Company attached to B Company, 1st Battalion The Princess of Wales' Royal Regiment.

Most recently, he was posted to the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst where he supported the training of future Officers for the British Army and other national forces.

Cpl Arjun was in 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles based in Brunei at the time when they deployed on Op HERRICK 7 as the Reserve Battlegroup as part of Regional Command South based in Kandahar.

He deployed on Op HERRICK 12 in early June 2010 as a battlefield casualty replacement.

He brought with him a wealth of experience which quickly became highly valued by the chain of command.

Soon after his arrival, his Company Commander Major Bowman, who was also tragically killed in the same incident, commented on Corporal Arjun's excellent attitude and approach.

This is exactly what was expected from him as a Junior Non Commissioned Officer who had been awarded the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal in January 2010, his first possible look at such an award.

Corporal Arjun was a soldier who excelled and thrived on new challenges and the list of

courses that he attended and completed is extensive.

He completed the Section Commanders' Battle Course in Brecon, South Wales in October 2002 and was promoted to substantive Corporal in June 2003.

He was an instructor and advisor in mine awareness and Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear Defence, a testament to his pioneering background.

His selfless approach and professionalism is reflected in the way in which he arrived in Afghanistan to replace an injured comrade.

The Company had suffered losses before and Corporal Arjun was exactly the sort of individual that this Battalion wanted to see arrive to fill a gap.

He was an outstanding member of the Royal Gurkha Rifles, a credit to Nepal and himself; he shall never be forgotten.

He leaves behind his wife and two children and will truly be missed by his family in Nepal and the UK.

Corporal Pun's wife, Durga, said:

"Arjun Puja Pun was a tremendous husband. He was proud to be a soldier and died doing a job he loved.

"We are devastated by the loss of Arjun who was a loving husband and father. We are proud of the fact that Arjun was prepared to do his duty helping the people of Afghanistan."

Lieutenant Colonel Gerald Strickland MBE, Commanding Officer 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles, Combined Forces Nahr-e-Saraj South said:

"Corporal Arjun Purja Pun was a true Gurkha.

"Brought out to Afghanistan at short notice to replace an earlier casualty, he immediately immersed himself in the task in hand. Steadfast and loyal, he was true to his Regiment to the very end.

"We are a close knit community, and our Gurkhas are bonded through many years of service in a country far from their home.

"To all, Corporal Arjun was a guru-ji and a trusted elder brother.

"His loss is a cruel one. Torn from us in an unexpected night attack in the heart of his patrol base, we are stunned by the suddenness of his unexpected passing.

"I spoke to him shortly after he arrived in Afghanistan, and like all of us, he was apprehensive about what he might face.

"He also realised the enormity of the responsibility that he was taking on, leading his section on operations in which his decisions carried far reaching consequences.

"But he was not daunted, and he stepped into the breach, immediately earning the respect of his men.

"Nothing can describe the pain that his wife, son and daughter are going through.

"We share a small part of that pain as we mourn his loss.

"Corporal Arjun, we will cherish your memory."

Major Simon Archer RGR, Officer Commanding Gurkha Company (Sittang), The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst said:

"Corporal Arjun Purja Pun had been in the Army for over 15 years, had a wealth of experience, was the model soldier and provided an excellent example for the Officer Cadets at Sandhurst.

"He was the consummate professional; intelligent, determined, and brave.

"He was also a very good leader who knew how to get the best out of his men, especially when the situation demanded it.

"More than this though, he will be remembered for his true Gurkha spirit and his ever present smile.

"Corporal Arjun lived and died doing the job he loved.

"He will be missed by everyone at Sittang Company but none more so than by his wife and family."

Captain Prakash Gurung, 2 Platoon Commander, Gurkha Company (Sittang), The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst said:

"Corporal Arjun Purja Pun was a hardworking, loyal and honest soldier who never ever let me down.

"A top rated soldier in the Company, Cpl Arjun was very fond of football.

"He displayed all the attributes of a Gurkha soldier who was highly regarded by his superiors and much loved by his peers alike.

"He was a fit and capable soldier who always led from the front.

"My deepest sympathy goes to the bereaved family at this hour of need."

Sergeant Hisbahadur Thapa, 2 Platoon Sergeant, Gurkha Company (Sittang), The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst said:

"Cpl Arjun Purja Pun was one of the best and most capable soldiers that I have known.

"He mingled well with everyone in the Platoon and Company.

"A robust soldier, he always led the platoon from the front, be it in military activities or any championship events being run.

"He was at the forefront of every social aspect in the Company.

"He will be sorely missed by all.

"I send my deepest sympathy to his family and pray to God to give them strength in this hour of need."

Sergeant Buddhibahadur Gurung, Recce Platoon Sergeant, 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles said:

"Corporal Arjun Purja Pun is one of the best numberie (same intake) I have ever had in my life.

"He was a never complaining, tireless and honest numberie.

"He sacrificed his life amongst his friends doing the job he loved the most.

"Even though he is not with us his memories will always be. He was self motivated and the best commander amongst us.

"He was respected by the juniors and loved by the seniors.

"My deepest sympathies go to his wife and two children following this tragedy.

"The sacrifice and memories he leaves behind will always make him alive within us.

"He will never be forgotten amongst his family, colleagues and everyone that worked with him.

"He will always be remembered by all numberies, may his soul find peace in heaven."
Corporal Ekbahadur Pun, Section Commander, A (Delhi) Company, 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles said:

"Corporal Arjun Purja Pun was a true hero to me, 1 Platoon and all.

"He always led from the front and spoke up when he needed to.

"He loved his job and was very proud; he was always cheerful and motivated.

"He was a very good footballer and enjoyed watching and playing.

"He will be strongly missed by me, 1 Platoon and all members of A (Delhi) Company.

"Our hearts go to his son, daughter and wife."

Corporal Dhanbahadur Dura, A (Delhi) Company, 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles said:

"Corporal Arjun Purja Pun was a very hardworking individual.

"He had a good relationship with junior and senior members of the Battalion.

"It took him no time at all to make friends and was a very loyal and honest individual.

"He was quick to understand people, listening to them and remaining relaxed.

"He loved football and basketball and was excellent at playing both.

"My thoughts and prayers go to his wife and children during this terrible time. Jai 1 RGR."