

News story: New Gurkha battalion to be established as brigade grows

The 3rd Battalion Royal Gurkha Rifles will be established as a Specialised Infantry Battalion and will begin recruiting in 2019.

The 3rd Battalion Royal Gurkha Rifles will join other members of the Specialist Infantry Group, to complete plans set out in the 2015 Defence Review to establish up to five Specialised Infantry Battalions. These specialised Infantry Battalions are designed to provide expert capacity building and training skills with a focus on niche capabilities or areas of the world.

For more than 200 years, Gurkhas have been an integral part of the British Armed Forces and have demonstrated exceptional military aptitude, with a 100% pass rate through basic training. Gurkha soldiers continue to make an exemplary contribution to the British Army through the unique skills they offer, including specialist language skills, which enable them to build longstanding relationships with the United Kingdom's global partners.

Alongside this new role, the Ministry of Defence will also be enhancing the support some Gurkha units already provide to the Army, for example the UK led NATO Allied Rapid Reaction Corps, and establishing additional Gurkha Engineer and Signals Squadrons . These are crucial capabilities to enable the UK to meet its global defence commitments.

The new units will allow Gurkhas to access more career opportunities, including promotion and increased chances to serve a full 24-year Army career within the Brigade of Gurkhas.

Minister for the Armed Forces Mark Lancaster said:

The Gurkhas have built an outstanding reputation for their skill and bravery as soldiers through centuries of service and sacrifice.

They bring unique expertise and perspective to the United Kingdom and British Army which makes them an ideal choice to form a third battalion of the Royal Gurkha Rifles as a Specialised Infantry Battalion.

Colonel of the Royal Gurkha Rifles Major General Gez Strickland DSO MBE said:

The Royal Gurkha Rifles is delighted to be able to support the Army by creating a third battalion. The specialised infantry role is exciting and challenging and we look forward to learning new skills and making new partnerships around the world as we begin the new task. We are enormously proud of the Army's confidence in our

ability to take this on.