**Transcript – Lieutenant Michael Marshall, Officer Commanding B Company, 4th/5th Royal Gurkha Rifles, British Army**

**Warning: This transcript contains derogatory language and descriptions of death and warfare**

**All narration and voices are provided by actors.**

**NARRATOR**

The Gurkhas are a Nepalese regiment that can trace their roots in the British army back to 1816.

During the Second World War, over 130,000 Gurkhas served on battlefields ranging from Monte Cassino in Italy to Tamandu in present day Myanmar. Lieutenant Michael Marshall, Commanding Officer of B Company, 4th/5th Royal Gurkha Rifles, saw their prowess in battle close up.

**MICHAEL**

“During all this period, I was acting company commander of B Company and was joined by 2 Lieutenant Tom Briscoe who had been at school at Christ’s Hospital, was captain of rugger and head boy. We became immediate friends. Two months later he was killed.

As we advanced through the foothills, among dense trees, not jungle, we had a series of brisk actions against the Japs. One I well remember was rather macabre: after an afternoon battle, where D Company and my own B Company were involved, we had killed about twenty Japs. It was very close fighting.

It was the first time I heard Gurkhas actually shouting ‘Ayo Gurkhali’, a fearsome noise, and it undoubtedly scared the Japs. It was the first time I had seen them using their kukris at close quarters.

They mostly went for the throat, often putting down their rifles to do so. The Japs ran. We suffered considerable casualties. The Japs were not properly dug in otherwise they would not have run.

The Jap was a very courageous opponent and suffered enormously. But the Gurkhas were better. I was glad I was with them, not against them. My battalion took no prisoners until well into 1945; none of our men were taken prisoner.

At this time in the war, the Japs were thought to be invincible by some people, including many British troops. This was not the attitude of my Gurkhas.”

Source: Lieutenant Michael Marshall, Forgotten Voices of Burma: The Second World War’s Forgotten Conflict – Julian Thompson