Greenwich’s Gurkhas to tell their heroic history

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With a rich heritage in terms of culture, traditions and beliefs, they will now be able to share this information with a wider audience. The project, being run by Greenwich-based organisation, Community Empowerment and Support Initiatives, will involve recording interviews with former servicemen as well as gathering photographs and other artefacts. The information will be placed on DVD and CD, a community website and will be distributed to local schools, colleges, libraries, museums and community centres.

The borough of Greenwich is home to some 5000 Nepalese and an estimated 3000 of these are Gurkhas who served previously in the British Army or who have family members that are still serving.

Gurkhas have been a part of the British Army since 1815 serving with distinction in both World Wars, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Borneo, Cyprus, The Falklands, Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan. They take their name from a hill town from which the Nepalese kingdom originally expanded. With their motto “Better to die than be a coward” they are known for their toughness and bravery.

The project will recruit volunteers from among the Gurkha community to research the importance of their contribution to the British Army. It will also look at the integration of the community into UK society.

Commenting for the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Head of HLF London Sue Bowers, said: “This project will help the local community to understand better the Nepalese settlers, their customs and traditions, and, in particular, the tremendous contribution to Britain made by Gurkha soldiers over so many years.”

For the Community Empowerment and Support Initiatives, chairman Laxman Sah, said: “CESI is very grateful to the HLF for this award of funding as it will enable the organisation to go a long way in achieving one of its major objectives of contributing to the integration of the Nepalese Community in Greenwich in particular and the UK in general.”

Notes to editors

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported 33,900 projects, allocating £4.4billion across the UK.

Further information

HLF Press Office, Vicky Wilford on 020 7591 6046 / 07973 401937 or vickyw@hlf.org.uk or Phil Cooper on 07889 949 173.

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