

# GHURKHAS CAREERS ON THE RIGHT TRACK TO UTILISE THEIR SKILL

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Retired Ghurkhas are now able to take on a new challenge thanks to a leading on-track recruitment specialist.

Ganymede Solutions, part of the RTC Group, is a recruitment specialist within safety-critical environments for clients on rail maintenance and infrastructure projects, and is investing thousands in sending the skilled Ghurkha engineers on courses to familiarise them with the challenges of railway engineering.

This critical training will allow the renowned former soldiers to join gangs of rail workers on engineering projects, opening up a link to an untapped supply of skilled labour in the rail sector, an industry which has seen a decline in new entrants over recent years.

Gary Hewett, Managing Director of Ganymede Solutions commented: "Ghurkhas are renowned for their dedication and high work rate and coming out of the service they have a very high skill set. Typically they have been combat engineers who can apply themselves to a broad range of tasks, which makes them ideally suited to rail projects. We are helping them transfer their skills for work in new areas."

Ganymede has tendered for its first project under the new initiative, to work with Network Rail and its principle contractors, with whom it already has strong links filling labour requirements for specific projects.

Already one of the leading Link-up approved suppliers of flexible manpower solutions to the rail infrastructure industry, Ganymede provides customers with a unique blend of skilled, experienced and well-trained personnel.

Hewett said: "We have tendered for a contract with Network Rail to supply teams of skilled labour on temporary contracts to supplement the permanent workforce, helping the organisation cope with peaks and troughs while ensuring that the rail network is kept on track.

"This would be the first project that a team of Ghurkhas would be working on so it is very exciting for us. It is a unique initiative and is one which provides a tremendous opportunity for the Ghurkhas.

"One of the things that Ganymede strives to address is developing newer ways of working in a very traditional industry. With this new pool of highly skilled, motivated and committed workers, we will be looking at introducing more modern practices in some areas, while continuing to compete on price and quality in a difficult marketplace.

"We believe this approach is clear evidence of Ganymede's innovative approach and commitment to provide the best quality staff for the job while also investing in the future of these dedicated former soldiers who have served this country."

There are currently around 5,000 ex-Ghurkhas resident in the UK, based largely around 12 locations. Most now work in the security field, regardless of their specialism, as the engineers find it difficult to get employment in their own skill area.

Initially, Ganymede is working with former Ghurkhas in Aldershot, Hampshire, near their main UK barracks. Around 15 to 30 per cent of those who have come out of the service could be interested in retraining for work of this type.

The first group is due to start their personal track safety course with Catalis Training on 22nd January followed later by a track induction course. Ganymede will fund training up to £1,000 per person.

The company hopes to have around 400 people working full-time on the railway contracts by the end of 2009, with potentially one or two Ghurkhas in each gang initially.

This use of external suppliers such as Ganymede Solutions by organisations like Network Rail ties in with the Office of Rail Regulation's directive to save costs, and Ganymede's flexible workforce is cost and quality effective as well as an extremely efficient way of working.

Ganymede was established in 1995 and acquired by the RTC Group in October 2002. It provides the industry with safe and reliable individuals for all maintenance, renewal and new railway work.

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