

THE 25TH INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER AWARD 2018 PRESENTED TO MAJOR DILBAHADUR GURUNG MVO 2/2GR IN ITALY

By Major Yambahadur Gurung BEM 2GR

Major Dilbahadur was awarded with the FOCSIV (the Italian Federation of NGOs) 25th International Volunteer Award in Rome on 29th November 2018 **in the Volunteer from the South category**. This "continues to be the only recognition by NGOs, for a commitment that is a choice of life and value at the service of the community" as explained by the FOCSIV President Gianfranco Cattai, that is awarded annually, only two were awarded in 2018, the other being a lady in the Young European Volunteer category - two volunteers, two lives, two cultures and two different ages, both experienced in many parts of the world, but with one goal: to improve the lives of the most vulnerable people, creating opportunities and opportunities that allow them to build a possible future. DB Saheb is the first Asian to be awarded. View link <https://www.focsiv.it/category/premio-del-volontariato-internazionale/albo-dei-premiati/>

His citation reads:

Dil Bahadur Gurung, 79, born in a small mountain village, Galyam, 1400 meters high in the Syangja district of Nepal. Dil Bahadur, in the local language "the brave", enlisted at the age of 17 in the body of the Gurkha, the special unit of the British Army consisting of only Nepalese. Dil Bahadur has worked in many countries of the world especially Eastern and was also in the Guard Corps of Queen Elizabeth, role for which he was named MVO - Member of the Royal Victorian Order. In 1985 he took his leave with the rank of Major and returned to Pokhara, Nepal, where he now resides. Married with 5 children and numerous grandchildren, he considers himself a lucky man and feels he has received a lot from life. Since his return to Nepal he has taken care of the poorest, the most vulnerable, Pokhara slum . At Galyam, he contributed to the construction of an aqueduct that brings drinking water to the village, made the only road, expanded the present school from the sixth to the tenth grade, improving the training offer with qualified teachers, organizing a library, a science and a computer science classroom. Last February, during the celebrations for the 60th anniversary of the school, the Major received a warm sign of affection and esteem for his incessant work to improve the living conditions of this small community. "To be back, after living far from his village and from his own country, Nepal; for having chosen to dedicate the rest of his life to volunteer work, with constant and all-encompassing efforts ... "

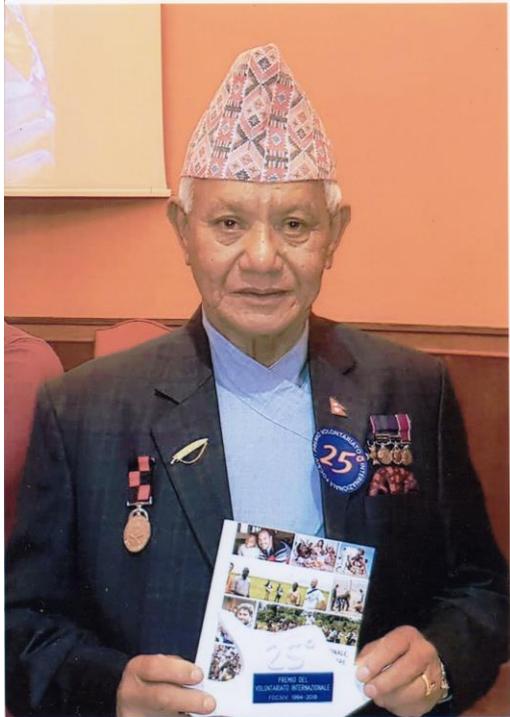
Those in 2/2GR will remember, Dilbahadur Saheb was the Gurkha Major from Oct 1982 to Nov 1985. He was also the Queen's Orderly Officer from Mar 1981 to Mar 1982. Major Dilbahadur thanks all Sirmooris and friends who voted him online. He was recommended by the Italian NGO VISPE (office in Milan) who had supported his work in his village for the last 20 years.

With his birth place at Galyam village in Shyangja, since he retired as ARO in 1995, he took interest in rebuilding his village school. INTERVITA ONLUS, an Italian NGO were his first supporters through his contact while with BGN. He served as Chairman of his village NGO GONESA (Good Neighbour Association Service Nepal) since 2008 but was Advisor from 2003 when they were set up. Apart from his support to the GWS built Galyam village school (previously to Class 7 only hut he raised it to Class 10), his work also included supporting maternity needs of women and constructing a school for blind children. He then extended his work to helping 26 slum areas - 1 in Tanahun (Kotre), 1 in Gorkha and the rest in Pokhara

valley (Ramghat, Hyangja Byansi, area behind airport, Chhorepatan, behind Mountain museum and so on, 3 handed over to Nepal government), setting up nursery classrooms and providing teachers, books, stationary, school bags and snack benefiting some 500 children aged 2 1/2 to 4 1/2, office with a clinic and a nursery classroom is in Birauta, Pokhara. In addition, another 500 bright children from slum areas were provided with education to Class 12 in government schools and were also given school bags and dress.

When he heard the good news he travelled from Kathmandu on 26 Nov, he was received on arrival by VISPE General Secretary Antonio Cassino who organised his programme, transport and accommodation (hotel near the Netherland Embassy) and accompanied him throughout. On 27th, he went sightseeing in the very historical Vatican city and also saw the Roman empire architecture. He was joined by his nephew 21165857 Cpl Suryabahadur Gurung Ex-Mortar Platoon 1/2GR and his wife Gutu Gurung plus his close friend Richard Dutli, a Swiss and his wife Sabeth. On 29th, the event was held at the *Accademia Nazionale Dei Lincei* in Rome. Before the presentation, he was interviewed on two Italian TV channels through an Italian interpreter. Message from the Italian President was read followed by speech by past Italian PM Paulo Zentonio, Vice Foreign Secretary lady and foreign volunteers from Brazil, Morocco and so on, finally by his project supporter VISPE General Secretary. The two awards were chosen from 10 short listed candidates by a Jury composed of some 12 very senior members from the Italian universities and influential institutes. Afterwards, his Swiss friend presented DB Saheb with Swiss Frank 1,000 cheque. In the evening at the FOCSIV 25th Anniversary dinner party, DB Saheb was honoured to cut the cake with the President. Next day he was interviewed by an Italian Chief journalist. He returned to Nepal on 2nd Dec.

No doubt this award will raise his credibility so that more donors will be attracted to DB Saheb and GONESA. We are proud that a Lali Gurkha Major Saheb has achieved such international recognition. We all Sirmooris wish him and GONESA the best. If you wish to contact DB Saheb to support his projects, his email address is galemdanda@yahoo.com.



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Major Dil Bahadur Gurung, Antonio Caccini-Italy, Major D.B. Gurung, Gita Gurung, Sabeth Dutli (Switz), Richard Dutli (Switz)

