

OCR A-Level Topic: Kohima Essay Subject

Either:

Assess the significance of the Battle of Kohima for the Second World War in Asia

Or:

Assess the reasons for the British victory at Kohima in 1944

In 1944 Kohima – a hill town in Nagaland near India's border with Burma – was a key objective of the Japanese Army's ambitious Operation U-Go. The battle fought there (3 April-22 June), heroic and relentless in defence and attack on both sides, finally forced the Japanese into retreat. This, one of the epic encounters of the Second World War, has been described as 'the Stalingrad of the East' and voted 'Britain's greatest battle.'

Several crucial issues and questions of interpretation will play a part in any analysis of the battle and its implications. These include:

- What were the real strategic aims of the Japanese advance?
- What was the turning point of the battle of Kohima?
- How close did the Japanese come to victory, and the British to defeat?
- What were the consequences of defeat for the Japanese, of victory for the British?

Primary Sources

The following are among the books, citing and quoting primary materials, that writers on Kohima have found useful in their understanding and interpretation of the course of the battle, its context and significance

They are all in print and/or available in libraries and via interlibrary-loan

Allen, Louis: *Burma, the Longest war* (London, 1984)

Callahan, Raymond: *Burma, 1942-45* (London, 1978)

Campbell, Arthur: *The Siege, A Story from Kohima* (London, 1956)

Colvin, John: *Not Ordinary Men* (Barnsley, 1994)

Keane, Fergal: Road of Bones: The Siege of Kohima 1944 (London, 2010; pb 2011)

Latimer, Jon: Burma: The Forgotten War (London, 2005)

Lyman, Robert: Slim, Master of War (London, 2004)

Lyman, Robert: Kohima, 1944: The battle that saved India (Oxford, 2010)

Slim, William: Defeat into Victory (London, 1956)

Thompson, Julian: The Imperial War Museum Book of the War in Burma, 1942-45 (London, 2002)

Further reading

Edwards, Leslie: Kohima – The Furthest Battle (Stroud, 2009)

Graham, Gordon: The Trees Are All Young on Garrison Hill (Kohima Educational Trust, Marlow, 2006)

Hart, Peter: At the Sharp End: from Le Paradis to Kohima (Barnsley, 1998)

Hastings, Maz: Nemesis: The Battle for Japan, 1944-45 (London, 2007; pb. 2014)

McLynn, Frank: The Burma Campaign (London, 2010)

Street, Robert: The Siege of Kohima (Grantham, 2003)

Tamayana, K. & Nunneley, J: Tales by Japanese soldiers of the Burma Campaign, 1942-45 (London, 2000)

Wikipedia: 'The Battle of Kohima'; 'The Battle of the Tennis Court' &c.