

# WHEN YOU GO HOME



The newsletter of the Kohima Educational Trust

NOVEMBER 2024 21st EDITION



Above: the bugler and the piper at the service in York this year, alongside the memorial to the 2nd Division

## 80TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR 1944-2024

In this 80th Anniversary year there are many reasons why we commemorate the battle of Kohima. As Dr Robert Lyman MBE said in his winning speech in the National Army Museum's debate to identify Britain's Greatest Battle: "The Japanese invasion of India, of which the battle of Kohima was a significant part, was (their) first major defeat in the Far East."

Earl Mountbatten described Kohima as "probably one of the greatest battles in history...in effect the Battle of Burma... naked unparalleled heroism...the British/Indian Thermopylae".

To quote Robert Lyman again: "Kohima doesn't just represent a battle, but an idea. It was the idea that brute power and arrogance in an invading army could be defeated. It was the idea that indigenous people and defending army, much of which was Indian, could join together in the common cause of defending their homeland. It was the idea that a broken and defeated army only two years before could be rebuilt and vanquish their enemy so comprehensively that they called their retreat 'the road of bones.'"

Our founder, Gordon Graham, was himself a veteran of the battle of Kohima. He, along with other veterans, decided to make their memories count. As Gordon said, "Memory alone is not enough, it is what we do with it that matters". These memories are important, not just to those who were there, but to subsequent generations. It is up to us to "Tell them of us and say".

It is also vitally important that we continue to remember the involvement of the Naga People. It is for the Nagas that The

Kohima Educational Trust was formed and we remain committed to that memory.

We are also commemorating all those other battles fought on Indian soil which put the enemy into retreat. In 1944, battles were fought in Jessami, Kharasom, Ukhrul, Arakan, Imphal, the "Admin Box", Zubza, Maram and many more.

In Portsmouth, on the occasion of the D-Day commemorations, the battles of Kohima and Imphal were mentioned by His Majesty The King: "And as we remember, with humility, pride and gratitude, let us never forget...the soldiers who fought in the campaign....and while halfway around the world, at that same moment, the critical battles of Imphal and Kohima raged on...."

In the UK, commemoration services have been held, including our own service which took place in York once again, when over 330 people gathered to remember family members who fought and died in all the battles. And across the country, from Sidmouth in Devon to Inverness in Scotland, memorial services have taken place.

Next year we will commemorate the 80th Anniversary of VJ day, which came after many more battles had been fought and many more men had died. It remains our duty, and that of the KET, to keep their memories alive down through the generations – another reason why, as we look towards the future, we were so delighted to meet and welcome more grandchildren and great-grandchildren of veterans at our service in York this year.

# War | Memory | Gratitude



# 80TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION SERVICES

## YORK – SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE

We enjoyed another wonderful day on Thursday 4th July when we came together for the 80th Anniversary Service of Remembrance and Gratitude for the battles of Kohima and Imphal which took place in the Dean's Garden, York Minster. Rain threatened, but the moment the piper, Acting Pipe Major Euan Jardine of The Royal Scots Guards led His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of North Yorkshire and the Civic Party into the gardens, the sun came out!



We were most grateful to The Very Reverend Dominic Barrington, Dean of York for conducting the service and the 360 strong congregation very much enjoyed the wonderful military music provided by The Band of the Prince of Wales, with the kind permission of Major General James Bowder OBE, General Officer Commanding, London District. This year's Address, the text of which can be read on our website, was given by The Venerable Dr (Air Vice Marshal) Giles Legood, Chaplain-in-Chief and Archdeacon for the Royal Air Force (below),



As always, the four readings were given by descendants of veterans. They were all magnificent, in particular Jock Walker-Munro (below left) who read No Tears Were Shed at Kohima with particular poignancy. Gordon Graham would have been particularly proud of his granddaughter (below right) who read the Kohima epitaph.



We were honoured to be joined by His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of North Yorkshire, Mrs Johanna Ropner (below left) who laid a wreath along with The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor of York, Councillor Margaret Wells (below centre) and General The Lord Dannatt, GCB CBE MC DL (below right).



After the service, we returned to Imphal Barracks where we enjoyed a terrific lunch in The Kohima Restaurant and everyone was able to catch up with old friends and make new ones along the way. The Kohima Museum was open all afternoon and was a particular highlight for all those attending. As always, KET is indebted to the Dean and the Chapter at York Minster for allowing us to hold this annual service in Dean's Park. We are also immensely grateful to the CO 2nd Signal Regiment and the soldiers under his command, in particular GSM Brian Kiernan, who make this day possible and so enjoyable. **Next year's date is a week earlier than usual and will be held on Thursday 26th June 2025.**

To mark the 80th Anniversary, we arranged a Gala Dinner in the Merchant Adventurers' Hall (shown below) the evening prior to the service which was extremely well attended.



After dinner, Lord Dannatt gave an excellent and most thought-provoking speech and we were delighted that he and Dr Robert Lyman signed copies of their book *From Victory to Defeat* – copies are available to purchase from our online shop.





# KOHIMA – COMMEMORATION SERVICE 4TH APRIL 2024

In April this year, a team from KET, along with a group of supporters, visited Kohima to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the battle.



In Kohima Cemetery the descendants laid wreaths made with beautiful flowers grown in Nagaland. They paid tribute to those who fought in the Siege and in the subsequent battle of Kohima which was fought between 4th April and 22nd June 1944. Trustee, now Chair, Angus Barclay (pictured above with his family) laid a wreath in memory of his uncle, Lt Gilbert Charles Barclay.



The wreath-layers included two great-grandsons and a great-nephew (above) of Field Marshal Bill Slim. Several children from the local schools (pictured below) also took part in the ceremony – it was wonderful to see them wishing to be involved.



Rev. Dr. Vevo Phesao, the senior pastor from the Chakhesang Baptist Church, said the commemoration prayer and the congregation was moved by a wonderful song by the Khedi Baptist Church Youth group.

The commemoration programme was led by Rozelle Mero, a trustee of our sister organisation, the Kohima Educational Society.

Speaking after the ceremony which was held just above the war memorial, Viscount Mark Slim, the grandson of Field Marshal Bill Slim and the Chairman of the Burma Star Memorial Foundation, praised both the Naga people and the Indian forces for supporting the British Army fighting against the invading Japanese forces.



Above: members of the Walker-Munro family lay a wreath

The Kohima War cemetery is maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and is a particularly special place to visit. It lies on the battle ground of Garrison Hill, a long wooded spur on a high ridge in what is now the centre of the town. The site contains graves of the 1,420 men who fought and died there and a memorial to the 917 Hindu and Sikh soldiers killed whose remains were cremated in accordance with their faith.

At the lower end of the cemetery, near the entrance, is a memorial to the British 2nd Division who fought at Kohima. It bears the inscription of the Kohima Epitaph. Picture below shows The Viscount Slim (2nd from left) with two of his sons and nephew during their visit this year.



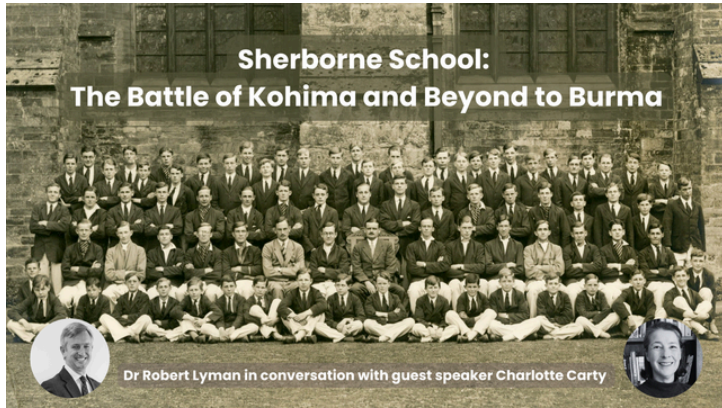
On 18th November 2024, Charlotte Carty will be presenting our final webinar of the year to commemorate the inauguration, eighty years ago, of the 2nd Division Memorial. With thanks to KET Trustee Andrew Hunter, son of Major Colin Hunter, we have one of the original service sheets from that day – a copy of which is on our website: see Resource Material and subject area 'The Battle of Kohima'.

We were thrilled also to meet Alisdair Ferrie, son of the Memorial stone's architect Lt J W Ferrie R.E., a copy of whose drawings were kindly donated to the Trust.



# WEBINARS

2024 has seen our programme expand with a total of nine presentations across the 12 months. The subject matter has varied enormously. In January we kicked off the season with the hugely successful look at the story of how Old Shirburnians were involved in the Burma theatre of war from 1944 as part of Britain's Forgotten Army. The presentation focused in particular on old boys at the Battle of Kohima but also covered those involved in Slim's Fourteenth Army across a range of regiments and services, including the Chindits. It was the first of our 'school' series and would love to hear from any other school who would like us to research their 'old' boys in terms of their involvement in fighting in the Burma Campaign.

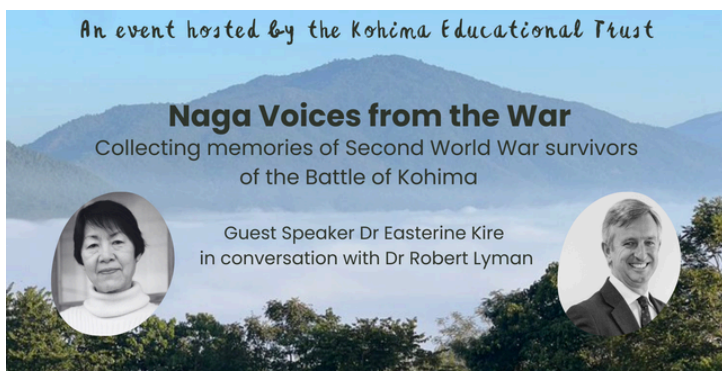


Continuing our plan to bring you the stories of specific regiments, in March we were treated to a meticulously researched presentation from Bishop Nigel Stock on the Durham Light Infantry's involvement at Kohima. In April, Steve Snelling took us through the Royal Norfolks' story with a focus on the somewhat erratic, eccentric and exceedingly heroic Colonel Robert Scott – who was actually recommended for a Victoria Cross for his outstanding leadership at Kohima.

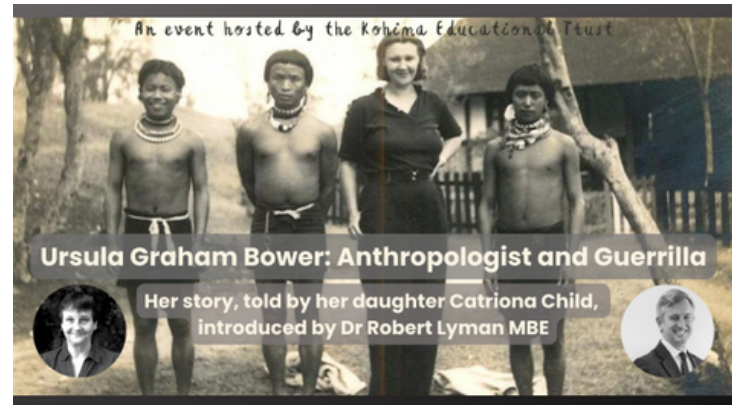


In February, we were delighted to bring you an excellent recording of a presentation which the curator of 31 Squadron Association, Terence O'Halloran very kindly made for KET on the considerable role of 31 Squadron in the battle of Kohima and, in particular, the role that the Dakota aircraft played in supplying the troops on the ground.

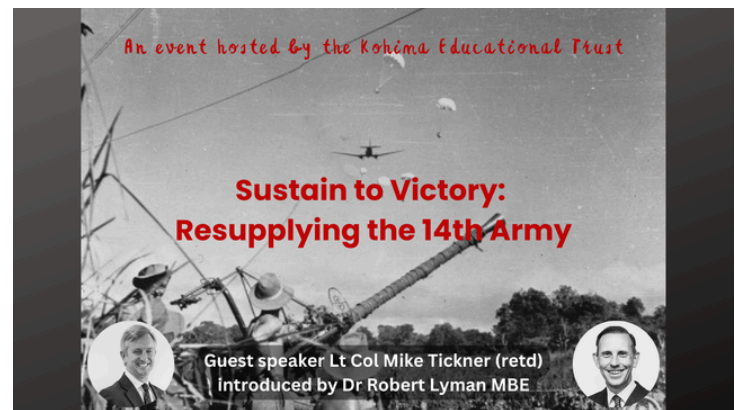
In June, we were thrilled that Easterine Kire, well known Naga author, was able to talk about the experiences of her mother Mari who lived in Kohima when the battle started. It was a fascinating insight into the Naga perspective.



In September, we were able to welcome, all the way from Delhi, the brilliant Catriona Child. She enchanted us all for an hour talking about her mother, Ursula Graham Bower and her role behind the Japanese lines, supported by a team of Nagas.



In October Mike Tickner's 'Resupplying the 14th Army' took us through the quite considerable logistics of battle and in November, on the anniversary of the unveiling of the 2nd Division War Memorial in Kohima, Charlotte Carty gave a brilliantly researched presentation entitled 'We Shall Remember Them – The Kohima Memorials: 80 years on'.



All of our webinars can be viewed on the website [www.kohimaeducationaltrust.net/news-and-events/webinars](http://www.kohimaeducationaltrust.net/news-and-events/webinars) where you can also see the recording of Fergal Keane's talk on 'The Road of Bones' which he prepared for The National Army Museum weekend. Copies of his book **Road of Bones** can be purchased from our online shop, as can copies of **Mari** by Easterine Kire.

## 2025 WEBINAR PROGRAMME

**16th January 2025** – The Special Operations Executive (SOE) and the Battle of Imphal – guest speaker Dr Richard Duckett introduced by Dr Robert Lyman

**20th February 2025** – The Treasures of the Kohima Museum – guest speaker, curator of the museum, Dr Bob White

**20th March 2025** – The RAF Regiment in Burma and India: operational history in SEAC 1942-46 – guest speaker Dr Nigel Warwick introduced by Dr Robert Lyman

**17th April 2025** – The Role of the Women's Auxilliary Service in Burma (WASBIES) – guest speaker Liz Lockhart-Muir introduced by Dr Robert Lyman

**15th May 2025** – A Thousand Places Left Behind: an American soldier's experience in the British V Force, the OSS and with the Kachin tribes of Northern Burma – guest speaker David Lutken, introduced by Dr Robert Lyman



# FUTURE PLANS

## OVERSEAS NAGA BURSARIES

The KET is delighted to announce that we are launching a new initiative. We are presently still waiting for the KES's licence to be renewed, which will allow us to re-commence our Scholarship programme in Nagaland. In the meantime, we are planning to set up a bursary scheme offering financial assistance to tertiary level students of recent Naga heritage who are resident outside India, with a focus on those studying in the UK. The bursary support will prioritise STEM subjects and professional qualifications in the trades and services sectors.



Thanks to the enormous generosity of one of KET's supporters, we are able to launch this new programme early in 2025. We aim to reach out to the diaspora of young Nagas already living abroad who may benefit from financial assistance in order to complete their studies.

Recognising the cost of education in the western world, we have set each bursary at a total of £3,750, which is 10 times the cost of a 3-year scholarship we were awarding in Nagaland. This is a very large amount for a donor to consider, so to make the bursary amounts achievable we would be delighted to receive donations that can cover a part of a bursary to match the amount a donor wishes to contribute. The bursary will be paid to the successful applicant on a prorated basis across the terms or semesters of their course.

If you would like to contribute to this new initiative or to learn more about it, please email [sylvia@kohimaeducationaltrust.org](mailto:sylvia@kohimaeducationaltrust.org) or visit our website [www.kohimaeducationaltrust.net](http://www.kohimaeducationaltrust.net)



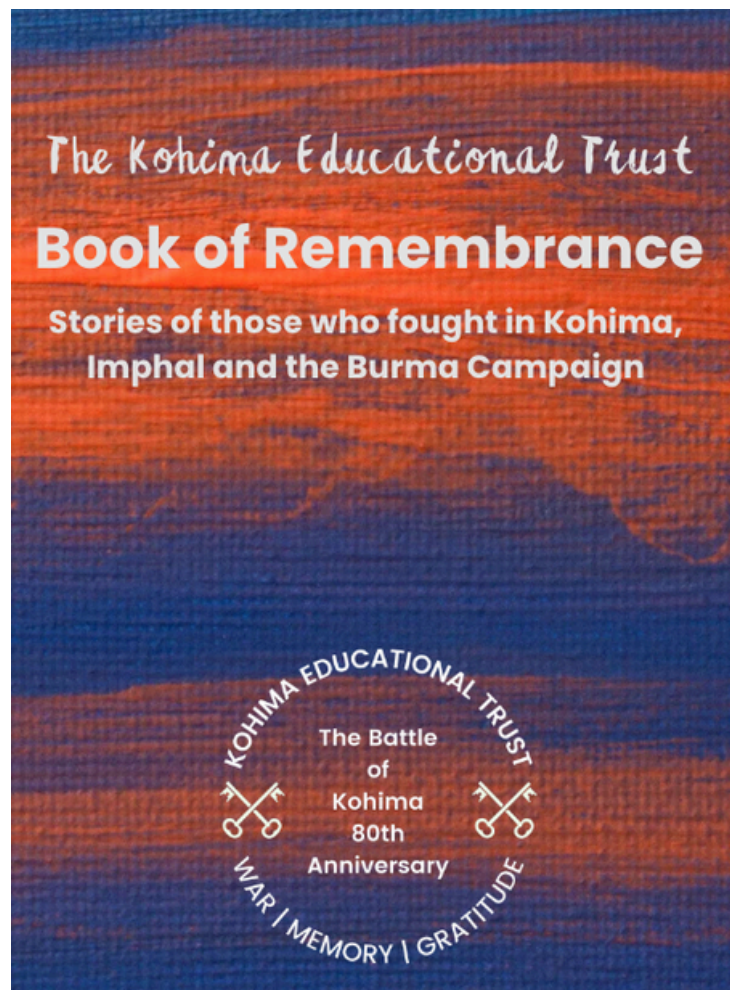
# BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE

Inspired by many of you who were at the Kohima Commemoration service in York this year, we thought you might be interested to contribute to a new idea from the KET.

So many of you have stories about your father's, grandfather's, great-grandfather's or other family members' experiences in the war. These were stories that they may have told you themselves, or you may have heard later from someone else, or you may have discovered after they died. I know there are one or two of you whose mothers or grandmothers were also involved.

We thought it would be a wonderful idea to collect as many of your stories as you allow us and to create a Book of Remembrance, in order to remember these men and women for posterity. Whether your relative was a private or a general, in Kohima or Schwebo, Imphal or Mandalay, or even involved afterwards in Japan; and whether they were in the Army, the RAF or the Navy, a doctor, a nurse or a padre, we would love to hear from you.

The Book of Remembrance will be a digital one, located on the KET website, designed so that we can add more stories as time passes and have them easily accessible by all who are interested to read them. We would like to launch the book in this 80th Anniversary year of the battles of Kohima and Imphal and we look forward to expanding it next year, as the 80th Anniversary of VJ Day approaches. We intend to keep it live into the future so that stories can be added continuously.



Thank you to those who have already contributed. There is still plenty of time for those of you who wish to send your stories to us. If you have photographs, please do send them as well. Ideally, we would like to receive a photograph(s) of the person involved and whilst we are limited by space we will endeavour to do justice to every story. This should all be sent via email, if at all possible. Due to space constraints, we do reserve the right to make editorial changes. Please submit any material to us at: [remembrance@kohimaeducationaltrust.org](mailto:remembrance@kohimaeducationaltrust.org). However, if hard copies are your only option, we would be happy to return material to you after we have taken copies.



# 39 HOURS: IN HER GRANDFATHER'S FOOTSTEPS

KET Trustee Charlotte Carty's mission to remember her grandfather, Lt Col William Felix "Bruno" Brown (pictured below) culminated in a stupendous endurance trek from Jessami to Kohima. The trek took place on the exact date and time, to the hour, eighty years after her grandfather made the same journey with his men, leaving Jessami at midnight on 1st April 1944, and making it to Kohima 39 hours later, just prior to the arrival of the Japanese army who were attacking Kohima.



Charlotte became particularly interested in her grandfather's war and was fascinated by the legendary fortitude with which he and his men of the 1st Assam Regiment withdrew back to Kohima, only to be faced with immediate contact with the enemy as the siege began. The withdrawal was made on foot and whilst the distance was 29 miles 'as the crow flies', the sub Himalayan mountainous terrain meant that the actual route was some 78 miles long. They had to follow narrow paths and tracks and were in frequent contact with the Japanese. The Regiment achieved this return to Kohima in just 39 hours, with some 260 men making it through to add a vital bolster to the thin defences at Kohima.



To commemorate the 80th Anniversary, Charlotte decided that she wanted to recreate this walk to highlight the achievements of all of the forces who fought at Kohima, and to remember the local Naga people who were so vital to the campaign and, in particular, to the fighting withdrawal of the Assam Regiment from Jessami. Charlotte is pictured above with her three children, all of whom accompanied her on the trip.



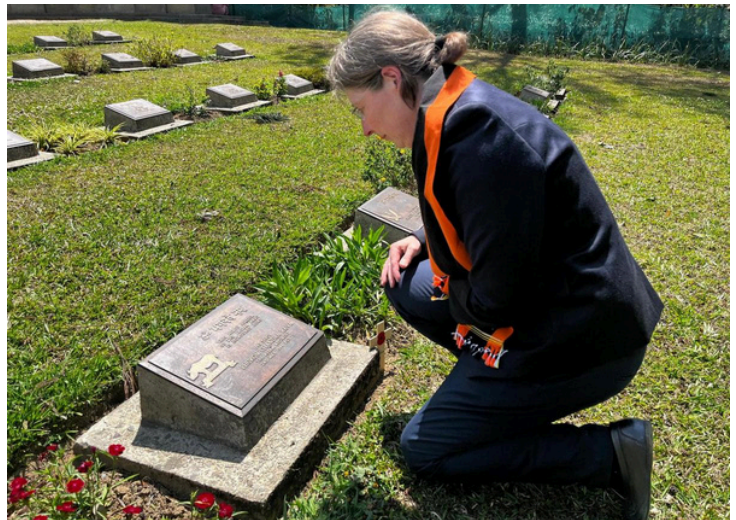
Twenty-three people took part, including Charlotte's three children, ensuring the torch of remembrance is passed on to the next generation.

They were joined by Viscount Mark Slim, the grandson of Field Marshal Bill Slim, along with two of his sons and a nephew. Other walkers included historian Dr Robert Lyman MBE who walked with his son, all pictured below.



KET's new Chairman Angus Barclay walked in memory of his Uncle Charles, who was killed on GPT Ridge while fighting with the Royal Norfolks. Also on the trek: the super-fit Walker-Munro family, descendants of Brigadier Ross Howman, who was the very first Commanding Officer of the Assam Regiment. The Walker-Munros were the first to reach Kohima, completing the trek in just 32 hours!

Sincere thanks to Sampan Travel for giving Charlotte's idea legs and making all the logistics possible. For more information on future walks please contact [hello@sampantravel.com](mailto:hello@sampantravel.com) To hear more, Charlotte's brilliant webinar can be viewed on our website.



Above: Charlotte kneels at a gravestone of the Assam Regiment (©The Hindu) Below: the group of walkers gather in the cemetery.



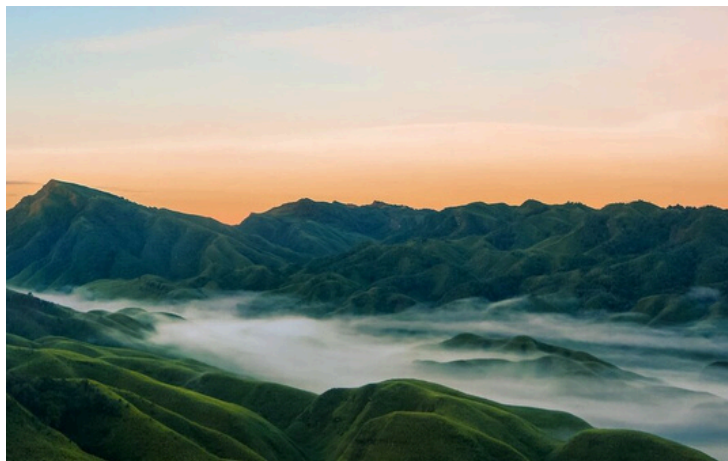


## TRIPS TO KOHIMA

In conjunction with Sampan Travel, Dr Robert Lyman MBE is once again leading a couple of tours early in the new year, one to Nagaland and one to Myanmar.

As part of **The Forgotten War Tour**, historian Dr Lyman will be leading a 14 day Second World War Battlefield Tour of North East India which will take you from Kolkata to Kohima and deep into the Naga Hills.

Sampan ensure that numbers are capped so that the tour remains an intimate and hands-on experience for all guests. They are happy to consider the specialist interest of their guests and will try to tailor your itinerary to ensure that you find what you are looking for on this journey. **Next year Sampan's Forgotten War Tour will take place 4-17 February 2025.**



Dzūko Valley, Nagaland, India | (Arindam Saha)

In the **Beyond the Chindwin Tour** Dr Lyman will trace Slim's reconquest of Burma and explore how the Second World War led to where Myanmar is today. You will follow in the footsteps of Field Marshal Slim's Fourteenth Army as he reconquers Burma in the Second World War. This unmissable battlefield tour of the Burma Campaign incorporates expert local guides and private film screenings. This journey honours the men that fought and will include Yangon, Mandalay and a hot air balloon ride over the temples of Bagan. Sampan are happy to discuss specific destinations. **Sampan's battlefield tour in Burma/Myanmar Beyond the Chindwin will take place 21 February to 3 March 2025.**

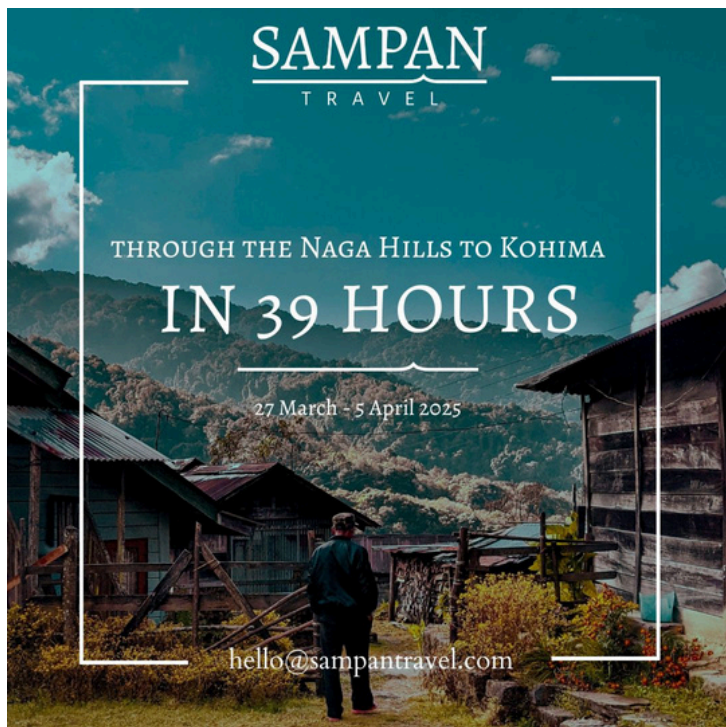
## KET HAS A NEW CHAIRMAN

After four challenging years managing a charity in Covid times, Steve White's tenure as Chairman has come to an end. Our heartfelt thanks go to Steve for the leadership and guidance he provided the KET through this difficult time.

We are delighted to announce that Steve's successor is Angus Barclay, who took over as Chairman in July. (He is pictured right, with his family, while on a visit to Kohima to commemorate the 80th anniversary).

After graduating from the University of Edinburgh with a degree in History, Angus led a very international working life, spending nearly all his career overseas with the Swire Group and Cathay Pacific Airways. He worked in the early 1990s in India as well as, over the years, in Korea, The Netherlands, Singapore, Australia and Hong Kong, where he spent the majority of his time, before retiring to the UK in 2023. Angus has been a Trustee of the KET since 2012.

Angus' uncle, Lieutenant Gilbert Charles Barclay of the Royal Norfolk Regiment, was killed in action at the battle of Kohima. For this reason, Kohima has always been of great interest to Angus and he learned more of the Naga culture through friends he made whilst working in India. Angus has visited Kohima several times, including earlier this year when he completed the 78 mile long, '39 Hours' walk from Jessami to Kohima to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the battle.



And in March/April 2025, Sampan are repeating the magnificent 39 Hours to Kohima - an endurance trek over the Naga hills. Led by Charlotte Carty, granddaughter of veteran Colonel William 'Bruno' Brown of the Assam Regiment, you will walk the 124 kilometre route from Jessami to Kohima, within 39 hours, the time it took Brown to lead his men back to Kohima in 1944.

The walk was completed this year for the first time and you can read more about this fantastic journey on the opposite page. Equally, tune in to the wonderful webinar which Charlotte presented for KET on her return last April and you will get a flavour of what to expect.

Enclosed with your newsletter are leaflets from Sampan with contact and booking details.





# NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM 80TH ANNIVERSARY WEEKEND



As part of the 80th Anniversary commemorations, the KET was delighted to be asked to join the National Army Museum in organising a weekend of events in April.

We assembled a stellar line-up of speakers for a weekend of talks that offered a wide range of insights into the campaign and its participants. It was a brilliant event, with over 1,000 people coming through the doors of the Museum on the Saturday alone!

The Viscount Slim and The Honourable Mary Ann Slim joined Dr Robert Lyman on stage to talk about their grandfather, Field Marshal Bill Slim before which Dr Lyman (below) delighted a full house by repeating his famous talk first given as part of a NAM debate on Britain's Greatest Battle, when he spoke out for the battle of Kohima.....and won.



Earlier in the day we heard about the medical support given during the battle from Soundararajan Jagdish and Christopher Jary, from the Keep Military Museum in Dorset, gave a brilliant talk on the role of the 2nd Dorset Regiment in the campaign.

NAM's own Alan Jeffries examined the transformation of the Indian Army over the course of the Second World War and James Holland shed light on the first British victory in the campaign at the battle of the Admin Box, which was fought in March the month before Kohima was attacked.



Bishop Nigel Stock, outgoing Chairman Steve White & Dr Robert Lyman



On the second day, we heard from Steve Snelling on the VCs won during the campaign and Robert Palmer presented the role of the Armoured Vehicle.

We were also treated to a wonderful recorded presentation from Fergal Keane who kindly filmed his talk for the event and he presented his own perspective on The Road of Bones, the title of his book on the subject.

Visitors on Saturday lunchtime attended a book launch, with author Hannah Watson signing copies of her wonderful children's book Jungle Warfare, written and published in support of The Gurkha Welfare Trust. The weekend was rounded off beautifully by Charlotte Carty who entertained a consistently full house with the events on the road in Kohima during her epic 39 hour walk.



Above: guest speaker James Holland addresses a packed audience.

There were opportunities to meet the speakers and engage with the wonderful group of re-enactors who were there throughout. The KET shop had a fantastic display selling books, jewellery and clothing handmade in Naga homes and it was a marvellous opportunity to engage with our supporter group, meeting old friends and making lots of new ones.

Most of the talks are available to view for free on our website, including the Fergal Keane film on Road of Bones.

The National Army Museum are planning a Burma Exhibition for next year and we look forward to bringing you further details in the near future.



## THE HIGHLANDERS' MUSEUM

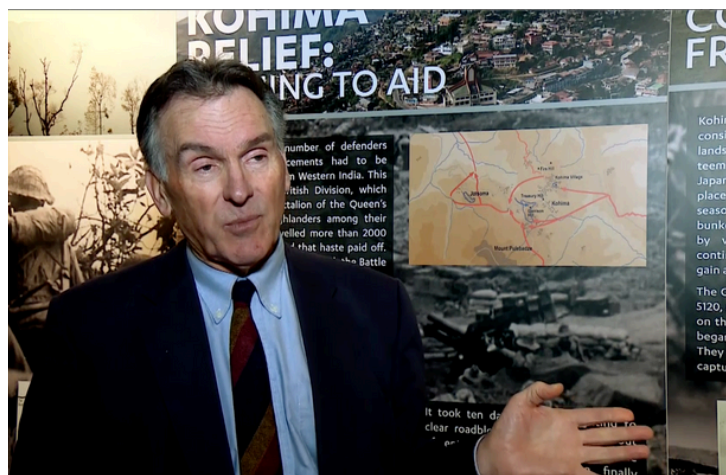
In this 80th anniversary year, a new exhibition about the battle of Kohima opened on 23rd September at the Highlanders' Museum in Fort George, near Inverness.

KET trustee and treasurer Andrew Hunter (pictured below) was invited as guest of honour to open the exhibition and cut the ribbon. Andrew is the son of Lochaber soldier Major Colin Douglas Hunter, who served with the victorious 5th brigade in the battle that finally halted the Japanese invasion of India.

The exhibition includes photographs and key sites of the battle, including an early photograph of the memorial to the Cameron Highlanders which is situated in Kohima Village. Also on show is a film which KET made in 2013 which features KET founder and Cameron veteran, Major Gordon Graham.

Museum Curator Robert Kill told the Inverness Courier: "As the Battle of Kohima shares its anniversary with D-Day, then as now the achievements of the men who fought in Asia are sadly overshadowed by the happenings in Europe. But we are proud to do our part in keeping their memory alive."

The exhibition will run until March 2025.



## FRIENDS OF MAIDSTONE MUSEUM



KET was delighted to be invited to give a talk to the Friends of the Maidstone Museum in October. It was an extremely enjoyable occasion and a great opportunity to remind the Friends of the importance of the Museum housing the Queen's Own Royal West Kent memorabilia and the crucially important role the Royal West Kents made in the Siege of Kohima. Some of the audience were new to the subject altogether but agreed they were all thrilled to have learned something about the Second World War and their local history.

With thanks to Bob Street for allowing us to quote from his and his father's book *The Siege of Kohima* which, whilst still available second hand, has been revised and reprinted by Pen and Sword under the title *We Fought at Kohima*. Thank you also to Bob White from the Kohima Museum in York who contributed to the presentation.

## QUEEN'S OWN CAMERON HIGHLANDER OFFICERS' DINNER CLUB

KET CEO was delighted to be invited to speak at the Officers' Dinner Club, formerly the Cameron Association, held at the Drumrossie Hotel in Inverness on 7th June 2024.

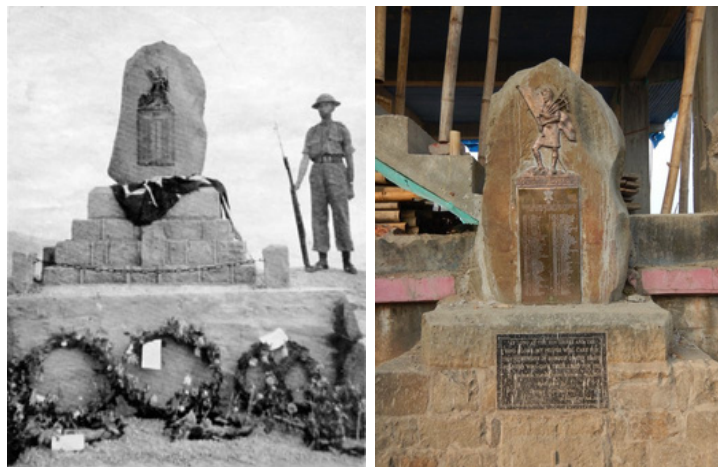


Wearing her dress of Cameron tartan (pictured above), in tribute to her audience and also to her late father who was himself a soldier in the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders in 1944, Sylvia spoke to the assembled guests about the work of the Trust and the focus on Remembrance in this 80th anniversary year of the battle of Kohima.

KET would like to thank the Chair, Douglas Young (pictured above far right) and other members of the Officers Dinner Club for their ongoing support of our work.

It was a good opportunity to raise upcoming new projects, such as the UK Bursaries, which we are launching next year.

Sylvia also spoke about the Cameron Memorial in Kohima, one of the four or five memorials which are still situated in the exact place they were erected eighty years ago. Having visited it on numerous occasions, three times this year, she is in touch with the people who are building around it and assured the audience that they are more than aware of the importance of this memorial and will continue to honour and care for it.



Above: the memorial, left circa December 1944 and right, in 2024



# THE KOHIMA MUSEUM, YORK



The Kohima Museum is unique. Its origins stem from reunions of veterans of the British Second Infantry Division who had fought in the Battle of Kohima. After long service in West Germany, 2 Division returned to York in 1983. Many veterans had retained souvenirs of the war and would bring these to the annual reunions. They often donated these artefacts, which grew into a fascinating collection.

For a decade, the objects were only displayed at the annual reunions, but Robin McDermott had the vision to turn the collection into The Kohima Museum, which was formally opened to visitors in July 1992. Its stated aim was "to hold together the traditions of the Division and perpetuate its deeds surrounding the Battle of Kohima, through the medium of collections of memorabilia." Robin was its first curator.

The Kohima Museum is housed in Imphal Barracks in York. It is run by three volunteers, led by curator Bob Cook, and is open to visitors on Thursday mornings. Visits at other times can be made by prior arrangement.

Since the original exhibits came from a single source, the Kohima veterans, most of the Burma Campaign was not represented. However, the collection has diversified over the years through ad hoc donations, such as part of the aircraft that crashed whilst carrying Orde Wingate. The Museum has no resources to actively acquire exhibits that would fill important gaps, but welcomes donations that broaden and strengthen representation.

Bob Cook, the fourth curator of the Museum, has steered its growth since 2008, ably assisted by Brian Ward, who has done wonders for the collection's presentation. Bob has told thousands of visitors about the battle and led many guided tours in Nagaland.



In 2025, Bob will pass the reins to his successor, Professor Bob White, whose father drove a Grant tank at the Battle of the Admin Box. Bob is proud that his dad fought in the battle which Bill Slim considered "the turning point in the Burma Campaign". Before Admin Box, the Japanese had always beaten the British; after it, they never beat the British again.

Bob White lectures at the University of York and will be the first Kohima Museum curator without a military background. He is keen to raise awareness amongst the younger generations, to pass on the memory of this part of our history. The Burma Campaign is not part of our educational curriculum, but Bob has organised projects and visits of students from the local universities and is building a youthful following on Instagram with posts about Kohima.



The Museum's website is its most effective medium for widening awareness and attracts thousands of visits from around the world. Bob White is working hard to build up the site that Bob Cook established, broadening & deepening its coverage. He has added pages describing the Naga, Allied air power and the Battles of Imphal, Admin Box, Jessami and Kharasom, as well as poetry written by soldiers at Kohima. He has also added a detailed chronicle of the day-by-day events at the Battle of Kohima, as recorded by the people who were there.

One can tour the museum online. An 'Object of the Month' page features selected items from the museum's collection, some of which are not currently on display. Indeed, there is insufficient space in the museum to show all the fascinating artefacts that it has in storage, but the website provides a means to make more of these public. High quality digitised images will soon become available. Bob adds new web content every week in a blog, with material about the Battle of Sangshak to be released soon. Visit the website at [www.kohimamuseum.co.uk](http://www.kohimamuseum.co.uk) to see what's new. Perhaps it will inspire a trip to the museum itself in York.



## THE 2 RANGER KOHIMA CORPORAL

On 25th April 2024, KET CEO Sylvia May was kindly invited to visit Keogh Barracks, home to the 2nd Battalion, the Ranger Regiment, formerly the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, to give a talk about the battle of Kohima.

Every year, for the last 24 years, the 2nd battalion PWRR, now part of The Rangers, remember their antecedent regiment, the Royal West Kents, who fought at the battle of Kohima. The regiment awards a "Kohima Corporal" each year and this year invited Sylvia to join their commemorations.

Sylvia was delighted to be invited and told the assembled corporals the stories of Jock Young and Lt Col Bruno Brown, moving on to the siege of Kohima, focusing on the enormous contribution made by the Royal West Kents and both the Assam regiments who together defended a garrison against the onslaught of 15,000 enemy soldiers.

KET would like to thank the 2nd Battalion Ranger Regiment very much for their warm welcome and for the opportunity to share the stories of the battle of Kohima with the next generation of soldiers.



The Kohima Corporal Roll of Honour Board

## THE SERGEANT HARRY MAY AWARD

Leaders are key to an organisation's success. "Leadership is doing the right things": leaders set direction, build an inspiring vision, educate and mentor their subordinates, and guide them to achieve common goals.

The Burma campaign including the Battles of Kohima and Imphal was spread out over a sustained period. The success of the 14th Army required commanders and leaders at all levels to motivate, inspire, mentor and train their soldiers; learn from mistakes made, delegate and empower their subordinates. They needed to plan, organise and set objectives, take the initiative, respond flexibly to changing situations and persevere to achieve common goals. They needed to do this daily. This was never truer of those Senior Non-Commissioned Officers like Sergeant Harry May.

The Sergeant Harry May Award is an annual award that is awarded to a Senior Non-Commissioned Officer on the strength of 2 Signal Regiment who best demonstrates the qualities of leadership outlined above. It is not intended to reward performance on a single occasion or incident but across a full year whether in barracks, on exercise and on operations. The nominee must have demonstrated a commitment to the education of their subordinates whether through mentoring, training or by encouraging them in their personal development goals. They must always epitomise the Values and Standards of the British Army.



KET is proud to be associated with this award and to present this year's Sergeant Harry May award to SSgt (FofS) Paul Reffin for his commitment to the development of his subordinates, his determination to find a way to make things work, and his embodiment of the Values and Standards of the British Army. SSgt Reffin was presented with a cheque by KET Chairman Angus Barclay (above) in York in July, during the 80th Anniversary commemorations.

## 80TH ANNIVERSARY REMEMBRANCE FOR THE ROYAL NORFOLKS

On Sunday 28th April 2024 a service of remembrance was held to commemorate the members of the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Norfolk Regiment who fought at the Battle of Kohima in 1944.

County dignitaries and veterans of the Royal Norfolk Regiment gathered at St Saviour's Chapel in Norwich Cathedral to mark the 80th anniversary of The Battle of Kohima, and also The Battle of Almanza on April 27 1707.

Representatives (pictured right) of the county of Norfolk, Royal Norfolk Regiment and trustee, now Chairman of the Kohima Education Trust, Angus Barclay, gathered to mark the occasion.

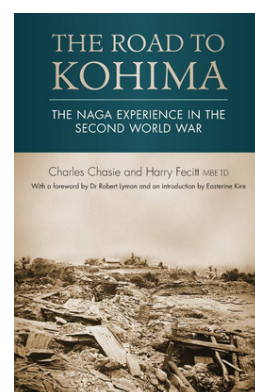
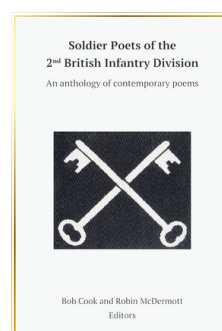
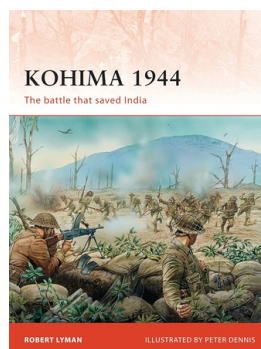
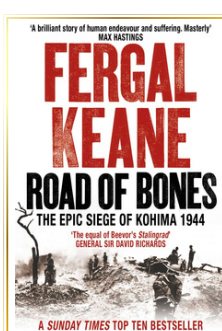
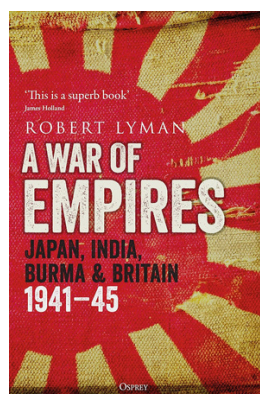
Angus' uncle Lieutenant Charles Barclay was killed on 5th May 1944. Charles volunteered for the army at the outbreak of war. His two brothers also volunteered, one to the RAF as a fighter pilot, the other to the Navy. The family came from Norfolk where his father was the Vicar of Cromer and after initially joining the Royal Signals, he was granted a transfer to the Royal Norfolks. Charles was killed by a sniper in the battle for GPT Ridge at Kohima. He left behind his wife and two young sons.



L to R: Angus Barclay (KET), John Steele (standard bearer), Margaret Stone, Lt Col Mark Nicholas (Chairman Regimental Association), Canon Aidan Platten (Norwich Cathedral), Michael Gurney (Vice Lord Lieutenant of Norfolk), CSgt Joseph Holmes (Langley School), Cllr Barry Stone (Chairman Norfolk County Council) and Peter Hornor. Photo © Norfolk Lieutenancy



# KET SHOP – BOOKS, POETRY, JEWELLERY AND MUCH MORE!



The Jungle War: an original novel for young readers 8+ about a Gurkha soldier, supported by and in aid of the Gurkha Welfare Trust



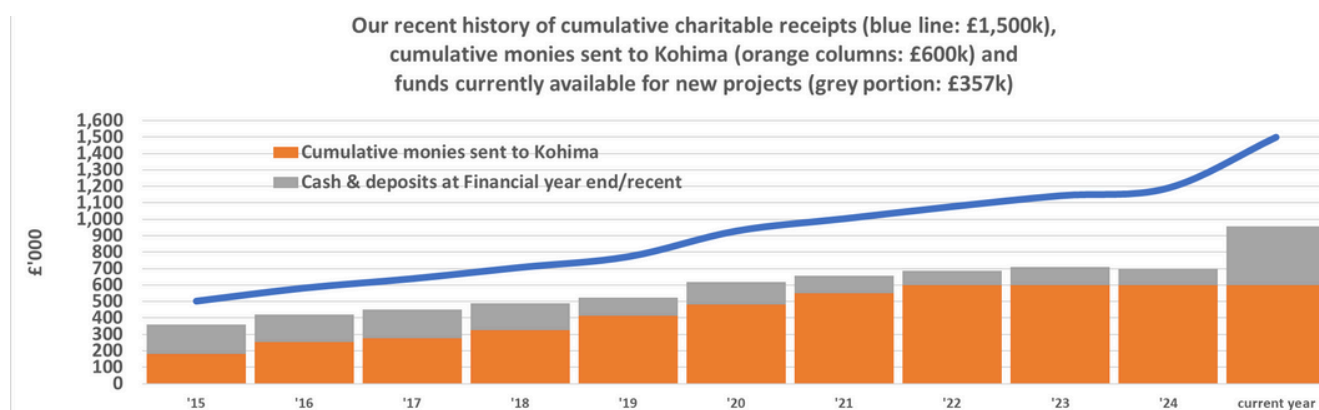
Christmas Tree Decoration  
3D-printed SPITFIRE in gold



Scarves, purses, jewellery: handmade in Naga Homes



## FINANCIAL UPDATE



Regular readers of this column will recognise this chart, summarising our cumulative financial position over the last half of our 21 year history. Not only have we now hit £1.5m in total receipts, but we are in possession of more funds than ever before.

This is largely the result of the Trust being the recipient of two significant donations this year allowing us to expand our remit in the UK whilst awaiting the outcome of our sister organisation's (Kohima Educational Society's) application to renew its licence to receive charitable donations from the UK. It also allows us to hold much of our funds in a medium-term savings account, maximising our interest income. As ever, we and our friends in Kohima are deeply grateful for your continued support, particularly whilst we wait and look forward to being able to resume our work in Nagaland and as we launch new projects in the UK.

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The KET policy on Data Protection can be found on the website. For further information about the many KET activities, please visit:

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