

## WHAT SHOULD WE REMEMBER ABOUT THE 'FORGOTTEN ARMY'?

### Extract from a British newsreel called *The Fourteenth's Victory*, July 1945

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Courtesy of [ITN/Source](#), London.

Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith, Governor of Burma meets Burmese leaders on board a British warship in Rangoon harbour to discuss Burma's future; epilogue to the 14th Army's total victory in that country.

It was in Rangoon that men of the 14th celebrated with a victory march their hard fought triumph over the Japs.

Lord Louis Mountbatten, Supreme Allied Commander in South East Asia took the salute. Once the forgotten army, 14th has written its name large in the history of Burma.

The monsoon rain, the old enemy of these jungle campaigners, couldn't even leave their victory parade alone.

Famous regiments of fighters from many nations were among the thousands of troops who took part in the march past. West Africans, Indians and Gurkhas proudly paraded alongside British marines and the men of county battalions.

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#### What is this source?

This newsreel was produced in 1945 after the British had taken Rangoon in Burma from the Japanese.

This newsreel was edited and broadcast to British audiences.

**ASIA 1939–1945: BURMA**

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**What's the background to this source?**

WW2 broke out in Europe in 1939. In the Far East war broke out on December 7th 1941 when Japanese forces destroyed the US fleet at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. The Japanese quickly followed up this victory with attacks on British held possessions in Malaya, Singapore and Burma. When Singapore fell the Japanese were holding around 110 000 Allied prisoners. Some of these prisoners were held in Singapore. Thousands more were shipped out to Burma to work on a railway for the Japanese forces, as well as other projects.

The death rates in Japanese prison camps were extremely high. Estimates vary from around 30% to 37%. The main causes of death were disease, inadequate food and brutal treatment by Japanese captors.

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**It's worth knowing that...**

The total death toll on the Burma Railway was horrendous. Around 12 600 Allied prisoners of war died building the railway alone. Around 85 400 civilian slave workers from Malaya, Singapore, Java and Burma also died.

The Japanese government has been pressured by veterans to openly admit and apologise for the horrors of the Burma Railway and other projects. Japan believes it has done so but most British veterans do not believe that Japan has properly acknowledged what happened.

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**How will you use this source?**

1. What does this clip tell you about the Fourteenth Army?
2. Does the clip give any clues about the conditions they had to endure?
3. Does this clip prove that the Fourteenth Army was not forgotten at the time the war ended?
4. What points from this source will you use in your presentation?

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