



VJ DAY 75

Activity Pack



Charity No. 1043992



Charity No. 219279

This year marks 75 years since VJ Day and the end of the Second World War.

We are remembering the contribution of all British, Commonwealth and Allied forces without whom the freedoms and way of life we enjoy today would not have been possible.

Victory over Japan Day (VJ Day) marked the day that Japan surrendered in the Second World War, bringing about the end of the conflict. This came several months after Victory in Europe Day (VE Day) which took place in May 1945 following Germany's surrender.

The Fourteenth Army, which fought against Japan in the Asia-Pacific, was one of the most diverse forces in history. People in the Fourteenth Army came from Britain and across the Commonwealth, including East Africa, West Africa and pre-partition India. The friendships made and service given in the Fourteenth Army has had a lasting impact on Britain today.

This year, we are remembering the many different communities who served and sacrificed in the Second World War, bringing an end to the conflict and shaping Britain today.

Background to the Second World War in the Asia-Pacific

In Britain, we tend to learn more about the conflict with Germany in Europe than we do about the conflict with Japan in the Asia-Pacific. The war with Japan is often overlooked, as is the contribution made by those who served in the region.

Japan became involved in the conflict in an attempt to grow its power and control the area around it. As well as invading countries including China, Japan attacked British and American territories. This led to a brutal conflict in the Asia-Pacific.

The landscape of the Asia-Pacific made fighting very difficult, and those who served in the region faced a fearsome opponent. The Imperial Japanese Army was very disciplined and its soldiers did not believe in surrendering. Soldiers captured by the Imperial Japanese Army were kept in terrible conditions as Prisoners of War.

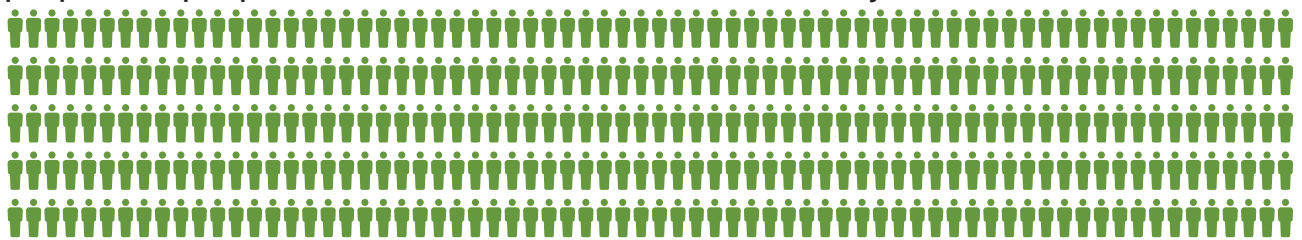
Against the odds, the Fourteenth Army, which served in the Asia-Pacific, won some of the greatest battles in the Second World War. After years of fighting, the Japanese surrendered on 15 August 1945, bringing about the end of the Second World War.



Around a million people served in the Fourteenth Army in the Asia-Pacific

500,000+

people from pre-partition Indian served in the Fourteenth Army.



120,000

soldiers from British Colonies in East and West Africa fought in the Burma Campaign.



29,968

British personnel died in the war against Japan.



The Fourteenth Army

The Fourteenth Army served in the fight against Imperial Japan and was one of the most diverse forces in history. The army included around a million people from Britain and across the Commonwealth, including pre-partition India, East Africa and West Africa, and Allied nations.

Coming from across the world, the people serving in the Fourteenth Army brought with them and shared a huge range of different languages, customs and religions.

The Fourteenth Army won some of the most brutal battles in the Second World War. However, their contribution is often overlooked, giving them the nickname; The Forgotten Army.

"We drank the same tea, used the same water and lavatories, and shared the same jokes. The white heat of battle... left only our common humanity"

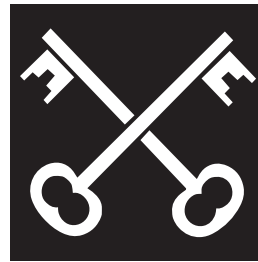
Waruhiu Itote, a soldier serving in the Kings African Rifles

A few years after the end of the Second World War the 1948 British Nationality Act was introduced. This new policy was part of the plan to rebuild Britain and its community, and gave all Commonwealth citizens the right to move to the UK and to have a British passport. Many people from communities linked to the Fourteenth Army moved to Britain and helped to rebuild it after the war. These communities have helped build the nation that we live in today and continue to shape it, its culture and society.

Inspiring Insignia

Each of the 15 Divisions in the Fourteenth Army had its own insignia inspired by the region from where its people came. Can you identify which country inspired these six insignia?

Hint: Two are from India, one is from East Africa, one is from Britain and two are from West Africa.



A. _____



B. _____



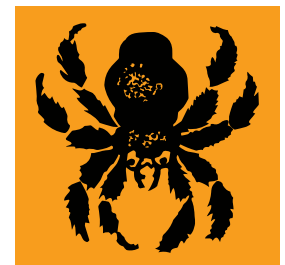
C. _____



D. _____



E. _____

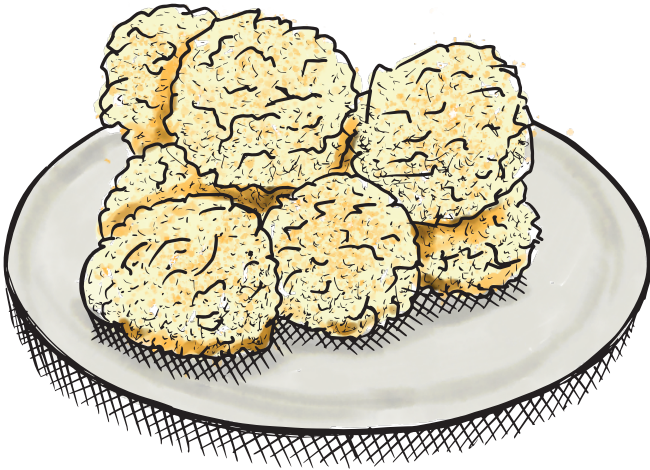


F. _____

Customs, Traditions and Cultures

People in the Fourteenth Army often introduced each other to different customs, traditions and cultures, and many introduced their comrades to food from their home country.

Why not try these recipes inspired by food served in some of the countries that contributed in the Fourteenth Army?



Shuku Shuku

Shuku Shuku is a popular dessert from Nigeria, West Africa



Preparation
10 minutes



Cook
20 minutes



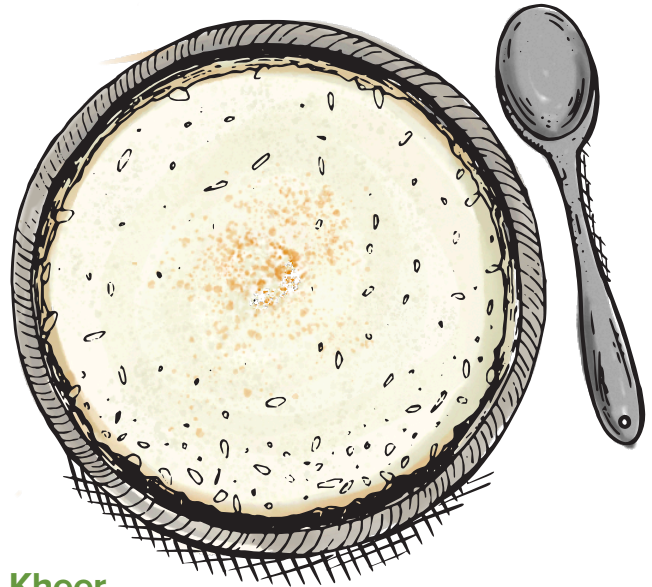
Makes
Around 14 pieces

Ingredients

100g desiccated coconut
50g caster sugar
3 egg yolks
40g self-raising flour

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C / Gas 4
2. In a medium bowl, mix together the coconut, sugar and egg yolks to form a stiff dough-like consistency. Roll the mixture into small balls, about 2.5cm in diameter. Coat the balls in flour and arrange them on a baking tray.
3. Place the tray on the middle of a preheated oven and bake until golden, usually for around 20 minutes.



Kheer

A creamy Indian rice pudding.



Preparation
10 minutes



Cook
20 minutes



Makes
Around 14 pieces

Ingredients

75g basmati rice, washed
1l whole milk
1 tsp ground cardamom powder, or
8 cardamom pods, lightly crushed
50g slivered almonds
75g sultanas
2 tbsp caster sugar
Handful of pistachio nuts, chopped, to decorate

Method

1. Wash the rice, then put into a large saucepan and toast over a low heat for a few minutes.
2. Stir in the milk, cardamom and almonds. Bring to a simmer and cook, uncovered, for 40 minutes.
3. Add sultanas and simmer for a further 15-20 minutes, or until the liquid has reduced by half and the mixture has thickened.
4. Add the sugar to taste. Remove from the heat and allow to cool.
5. Pour into a large covered bowl and chill in the fridge for 1-2 hours, or overnight. If you have used cardamom pods, pick them out.
6. Serve in 4 bowls and decorate with the chopped pistachios.

New Roots

Many plants grown in countries linked to the Fourteenth Army grow well in British climate and soil.



Ginger Lily

Hedychium gardnerianum, is native to India, Nepal and Bhutan. It grows best in flower borders and sheltered spots where temperatures do not fall below freezing. It is an erect herbaceous perennial and grows up to 1.5m tall.

Here are some planting suggestions including plants from Commonwealth countries that you could grow at home in your garden, or in pots. The plants are a beautiful addition to gardens and can be a living memorial to all those who served in the Fourteenth Army.



Red Fountain Grass

Pennisetum setaceum 'Rubrum' is native to Africa, South east Asia and the Middle East. It is an ornamental grass that is used in gardens for its reddish foliage and showy flowers. It grows well in full sun and does not like the cold.



Coral Cactus

Euphorbia lactea is native to tropical Asia, mainly India. It is an easy-to-care-for plant that is ideal for indoors. It can grow up to 60 cm and has an eye-catching appearance.



Aeonium

Aeonium are native to East Africa (as well as the Canary Islands and Madeira). They are succulents and make ideal house plants. They have spoon-shaped leaves and grow well in pots.

Visualising History: Remembering the Forgotten Army

Visualising History: Remembering the Forgotten Army is a brand new exhibition of illustrations about VJ Day, the Fourteenth Army and Britain today. The exhibition, by the artist Kremena Dimitrova, was inspired by workshops with young people and tells the story of the Burma Campaign and those who served in the Fourteenth Army.

Visualising History: Remembering the Forgotten Army will be on the National Memorial Arboretum's website from 8 August to 30 September 2020 and can be seen at thenma.org.uk

Here is a design inspired by one of Kremena's illustrations for you to colour.

