

Japan-UK Relations

Exchange

Japan-UK Joint Memorial Services in Northeast India

14 Apr 04



Mr Harrop, Mr Hirakubo and Colonel Jacob at the Memorial service in Kohima

On March 10 and 11, Joint Memorial Services were held by WWII veterans of Japan and the UK in Kohima and Imphal, northeast India.

The Japanese group was headed by Mr Masao Hirakubo OBE (Chairman of the Burma Campaign Society), while Mr Leonard Harrop MBE represented the British veterans. The service was organised to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Imphal Campaign during WWII. Colonel Benz K Jacob of the 2 Assam Rifles, also attended, representing the Indian Army. The service in Kohima, at which more than 1,400 local people gathered to pray for peace, was held in a cathedral constructed with donations from former soldiers.

Mr Hirakubo, who now lives in London, has devoted himself to reconciliation and exchange activities involving former soldiers from Japan and the UK for more than two decades. Mr Harrop has looked after the Hodogaya Cemetery of the Commonwealth War Grave Commission for almost the entire post-war period.

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