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TITLE: WAR AND COLLECTIVE MEMORY: A STUDY OF THE BATTLE OF  
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### ABSTRACT

The nation is a sum total of people's collective memories centred on pivotal historical events. The importance of cultural memory in the realm of identity discourse arises from its mediativity and capacity to be continually recreated despite being entrenched in the past. Because of its versatility, memory is a key political instrument for identity movements.

Within the context of cultural memory studies, this thesis firmly situates itself amid the contemporary discourse surrounding identity, focusing on the substantial contribution made by the brave people of Manipur and Naga hills to the wartime efforts. Amidst the tumultuous backdrop of the Battle of Kohima and Imphal, Indian soldiers and locals found themselves unwittingly thrust into the harrowing conflict between the Allied and Axis powers. Their unwavering resolve and courage illuminated the crucible of warfare, with these battles emerging as defining moments that decisively reshaped the trajectory of the global conflict. The historical records leave no room for doubt regarding the profound impact of Indian involvement in altering the course of history. However, it remains a poignant reality that, despite the undeniable loyalty and immense sacrifices made by Indian soldiers and the local population, the Empire, regrettably, never extended the recognition and gratitude they so justly deserved. These battles of Kohima and Imphal, which deserved monumental importance, were often overshadowed and underestimated, further underscoring the historical neglect of the remarkable feats achieved by those who fought and sacrificed for the British cause. This thesis seeks to rectify the historical oversight by shedding light on the significance of these battles and the enduring importance they deserved.

The battles of Kohima and Imphal, spanning just three intense months from April 4 to June 22, 1944, held decisive significance, not only for the Allied forces but also for India. Paradoxically, these events have suffered inadequate historical documentation, earning the moniker of the 'forgotten battles' and their valiant veterans, the 'forgotten army'. In stark contrast, WW II battles in other global regions, such as Europe, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Central Asia, received abundant attention through books, documentaries, films, and oral accounts.

# WAR AND COLLECTIVE MEMORY: A STUDY OF THE BATTLE OF KOHIMA AND IMPHAL (WORLD WAR II)

*by* Joginder Singh

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