



Surviving Tenko: The Story of Margot Turner

Penny Starns

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Margot Turner's tale of survival is so unusual and dramatic that it inspired the 1980s television series *Tenko*. The cargo ship on which she was evacuated from Singapore in 1942 was shelled, leaving her on a makeshift raft with 16 other survivors. One by one they perished, leaving her alone, burnt black by the sun, and suffering from heat exhaustion and dehydration. Discovered by a Japanese destroyer and imprisoned on Banka Island, Turner was beaten and tortured, before being taken to the notorious Palembang jail. Here, crammed with murderers and rapists in a filthy cell, she spent six months, living in daily fear of joining the many who were noisily tortured and executed. In this, the first biography for 40 years, Penny Starns describes the often horrific, but occasionally heart-warming, experiences of this unbreakable woman who, not content with surviving the war, went on to become a brigadier and Chief Military Nurse. Using recently released material from The National Archives and Turner's own words, she re-analyses the Pacific conflict against a backdrop of one woman's incredible fortitude and strength, and brings the story of a remarkable woman to life.

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