

By Hellship to Hiroshima: A Harrowing Account of Survival and the Horrors of War



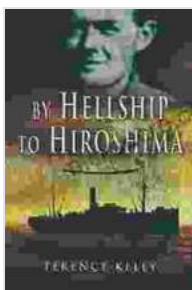
Prologue

The Second World War, a cataclysmic conflict that engulfed the globe from 1939 to 1945, witnessed some of the darkest chapters in human history.

Amidst the carnage and atrocities, the horrors endured by Allied prisoners of war (POWs) in Japanese captivity stand as a chilling testament to the depths of human suffering. The story of "By Hellship to Hiroshima," as recounted by British survivor Ernest Gordon, provides a harrowing account of the unimaginable hardships and unimaginable cruelty experienced by POWs during this tragic era.

Early Life and Enlistment

Ernest Gordon was born in the coastal town of Penzance, Cornwall, England, in 1914. As a young man, he joined the British Royal Air Force (RAF) and was subsequently stationed in Singapore, a strategic British stronghold in Southeast Asia. With the outbreak of war in the Pacific in 1941, Gordon found himself on the front lines of a conflict that would forever alter the course of his life.



By Hellship to Hiroshima

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

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Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 296 pages
Lending	: Enabled

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Captured and Imprisoned

In February 1942, Singapore fell to the advancing Japanese forces, and Gordon was taken prisoner. Together with thousands of other captured

Allied soldiers, he was transported to a series of POW camps throughout Southeast Asia, where he endured horrific conditions and relentless abuse.

Starvation, disease, and forced labor became the daily realities for Gordon and his fellow POWs. The meager rations provided by their captors were barely enough to sustain life, and many succumbed to malnutrition and illness. Those who attempted to escape or resist faced brutal punishments and torture.

Hellship to Hiroshima

Gordon's ordeal took a horrifying turn in early 1944 when he and a group of fellow POWs were ordered to board a Japanese hellship bound for Hiroshima. The ship, the Motoyama Maru, was dangerously overcrowded, with over 1,000 prisoners crammed into a space designed for half that number.

The conditions on board were appalling. Prisoners were forced to live in squalid, unsanitary quarters, infested with rats and disease. They were denied proper food and water, and the air was thick with the stench of human waste. The journey to Hiroshima was a tortuous one, lasting over a month and taking a heavy toll on the prisoners' physical and mental health.

The Atomic Bombing

Upon arriving in Hiroshima, Gordon and his fellow POWs were transferred to a prison camp on the outskirts of the city. They were unaware of the impending disaster that would forever change the course of history. On August 6, 1945, the United States dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima, causing unimaginable death and destruction.

The epicenter of the explosion was less than a mile from the prison camp where Gordon was held. The deafening blast wave knocked him unconscious and buried him under a pile of rubble. When he regained consciousness, he witnessed the horrifying aftermath of the bombing.

Hiroshima had been reduced to a smoldering ruin. The city was engulfed in flames and thick black smoke. The streets were littered with the dead and dying, their bodies charred and disfigured beyond recognition. Gordon and his fellow POWs were among the lucky few who had survived the initial blast.

Aftermath and Legacy

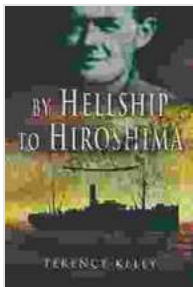
In the aftermath of the atomic bombing, Gordon and his fellow POWs were left to fend for themselves in the devastated city. They faced starvation, radiation sickness, and the ever-present threat of further attacks. It was weeks before they were finally rescued by Allied forces.

The horrors experienced by Gordon and other POWs in Japanese captivity during World War II left an indelible mark on their lives. They returned home as changed men, haunted by the memories of their suffering. Gordon's account, "By Hellship to Hiroshima," serves as a poignant reminder of the resilience of the human spirit and the horrors of war.

The Importance of Remembering

The story of Ernest Gordon and the thousands of other Allied POWs who endured the horrors of Japanese captivity is a crucial reminder of the devastating consequences of war. It highlights the importance of remembering the sacrifices made by those who fought for freedom and the need to strive for a world without conflict.

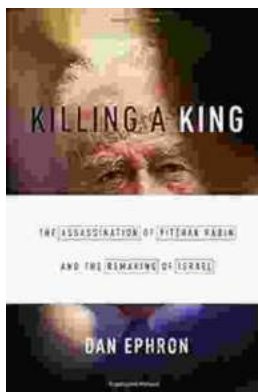
By sharing the stories of survivors like Gordon, we can honor their memories, educate future generations about the horrors of war, and work towards building a more peaceful future.



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