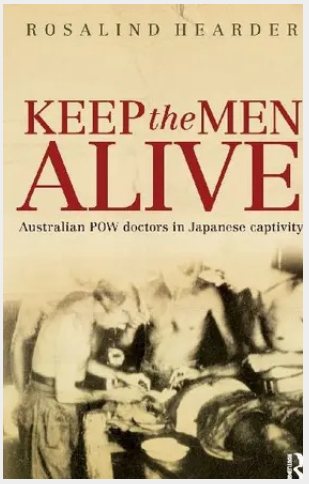
Hearder

Keep the Men Alive

Australian POW doctors in Japanese captivity

'The thing that haunts me most to this day is that blokes were dying and I could do bugger all about it - do you look after the bloke who you know is going to die or the bloke who's got a chance?' - Australian ex-POW doctor, 1999 During World War II, 22 000 Australian military personnel became prisoners of war under the Japanese military. Over three and a half years, 8000 died in captivity, in desperate conditions of forced labour, disease and starvation. Many of those who returned home after the war attributed their survival to the 106 Australian medical officers imprisoned alongside them. These doctors varied in age, background and experience, but they were united in their unfailing dedication to keeping as many of the men alive as possible. This is the story of those 106 doctors - their compassion, bravery and ingenuity - and their efforts in bringing back the 14 000 survivors. 'You are unfortunate in being prisoners of a country whose living standards are much lower than yours. You will often consider yourselves mistreated, while we think of you as being treated well.' - Japanese officer to Australian POWs, 1943

The moving and remarkable stories of the 106 Australian doctors who were prisoners of war under the Japanese in World War II.



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