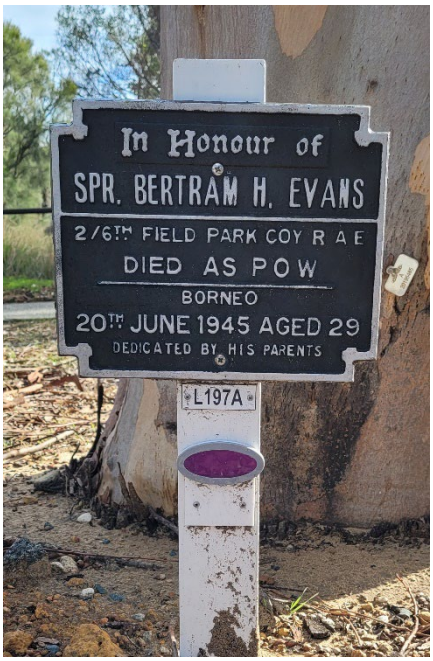
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Evans, Bertram Henry

A West Australian railway employee killed while on military service for his country

Forced to wait for information until the war ended, the Evans family found that their two sons had both died as prisoners of war after the surrender of Singapore.



Plaque in Lovekin Drive, Kings Park

Rail employment information

Employer:	Western Australian Government Railways, Tramways, Ferries & Electricity Supply
Branch:	Tramways
Designation:	Conductor

Rail employment notes: Born 11/12/1915. Joined Tramways 17/4/1939 aged 23 as Conductor, Perth.

(The tramways of Perth and adjoining suburbs were compulsorily purchased by the WA Government in 1913 and were placed in the management and responsibility of the WA Government Railways. The records of employees, including honour rolls, reflected this combined operation.)

Enlisted in AIF 2/8/1940. Died as POW 20/6/1945.

Military service information

Conflict:	Second World War 1939-1945
Service:	Australian Army
Military unit:	2/6 Field Park Company
Service number:	WX7339
Date of death:	20 June 1945
Place of death:	Borneo
Age:	29
Rank at time of death:	Sapper

Buried/commemorated: Labuan Memorial, Labuan, Malaysia

Bertram Evans enlisted on 6 August 1940 at Claremont. He quoted his Next of Kin as Henry Evans, his father. After training as WX7339 he was allocated to 2/6th Field Park Company, which comprised recruits mainly from Western Australia. The Field Park companies were mainly involved in logistics, workshops and other support and supply tasks. This was part of the 8th Division which was sent to Singapore and Malaya and fought against the enemy until the surrender in 1942.

The British commander of allied forces in Singapore surrendered on 15 February 1942. More than 130000 Allied troops were taken prisoner. This included more than 15 000 Australian soldiers, many of whom had arrived only a short time before. Of these, more than 7000 would die as prisoners of war, spread around multiple camps.

Sapper Evans died of illness in Borneo on 20 June 1945 apparently in the infamous Sandakan camp. He is remembered on the Memorial at Labuan, Sarawak, Malaysia.

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Additional/personal information:

Bertram Evans was born on 11 December 1915 in Carlisle, a Perth suburb. He was a son of Henry Frederick Evans and Emma Evans (nee Organ) with at least two siblings.

The Australian War Memorial holds a photo of Sapper Evans (PO2468.672) which is displayed with his Roll of Honour page.

As with many soldiers and especially those taken prisoners of war, the family did not gain definite information for some time afterwards, so the family notices were published much later when death had been confirmed.

Tragically, these notices reveal that the Evans family lost two brothers, both taken prisoners of war after the fall of Singapore and both dying whilst captives:

> EVANS. Bertram Henry (WX7339, Sapper, 2/6th Field Park), died while P.O.W..Sandakan, Borneo, on July 20, 1945; loving cousin of Marge and Allan Baird, Sylvia and Len Ranks.
>
> EVANS.—A loving tribute to Bert, died P.O.W., Sandakan, June 20, 1945; and Gordon, died P.O.W., November 6, 1942; best Pals of Sam (R.A.N.), Min and the Bowler family. Remembered always.
> Both *The West Australian* 7/11/1945p1
>
> MR and MRS H. F. EVANS. And Daughter (Mrs O. C. McAllister), of Geddes-street. Victoria Park. desire to THANK all kind friends and relatives for telegrams, letters. cards and personal expressions of sympathy in the sad loss of their dearly beloved sons and brothers. Sapper Gordon Evans. WX9668, and Sapper Bertram Evans, WX7339. *The West Australian* 29/12/1945p1

Sapper Evans is remembered with a plaque (L197A) in Kings Park dedicated by his parents in 1948.

Bertram Evans' younger brother Sergeant William Gordan Evans had also enlisted and been in the same 2/6 Field Park Company at the surrender of Singapore. William died in 1942 whilst captive in Borneo, and is remembered with plaque L197 adjacent to his brother's memorial.

Further information and/or photos may be added as available. Information may also be found on the Australian War Memorial website: *https://www.awm.gov.au/advanced-search/people*

Abbreviations: WAGR= Western Australian Government Railways (& Tramways at some periods); MRWA= Midland Railway of Western Australia; BDM=Western Australian Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages website; AWM=Australian War Memorial (Canberra and website); CWGC= Commonwealth War Graves Commission (including website). DVA=Department of Veterans' Affairs (including website)

Acknowledgements: Rail employment notes from WAGR Honour Roll and WAGR records held by State Records Office, Perth, transcribed by J.Austin 2019. Family information and collation by G.Higham

----------Lest we forget----------