

Name	EVERS, ALLEN EDWARD
Service	Australian Army
Service Number	NX52851
Date of Birth	12 Jan 1914
Place of Birth	MOLONG, NSW
Date of Enlistment	05 Jul 1940
Locality on Enlistment	CUMNOCK, NSW
Place of Enlistment	CUMNOCK, NSW
Next of Kin	EVERS, ALBERT
Date of Discharge	10 Jan 1946
Rank	Sapper
Posting at Discharge	2/6 Field Company
Prisoner of War	Yes



## Biography:

Allen Edward Evers was born on 12 Jan 1914 and his birth was registered in Molong. He was a son of Albert Edward and Priscilla Evers. Albert was a station hand working at Yullundry in 1930, according to the Australian Electoral Roll (AER) Cumnock/Calare.

The 1936 AER for Cumnock/Calare lists Allen working as a farm hand at "Croydon," Baldry in 1936.

*The Molong Express & Western District Advertiser (WDA)* - 22 Jun 1940, p7, reported that Allen was one of a number of local lads going to headquarters for their final examination before being admitted into the A.I.F. His attestation form was dated 5 Jul 1940 at Moore Park, Sydney. He was 26yrs and 5 mths old, single, and his occupation was a labourer. His next of kin was his father, Albert. He was 6ft 2¾ inches tall, had brown hair, blue eyes, a dark complexion and was of the Church of England religious denomination.

Pte Allen Evers was assigned to the 1st Pioneer Training Btn at Wallgrove, west of Sydney, on 28 Aug 1940. He was given 4 days leave without pay on 25 Nov 1940 to get married on 26 November.

*The Molong Express & W.D.A.* - 2 Dec 1940, p14, reported:

*"A quiet wedding was celebrated at the Church of England, Parkes, when Miss Thelma Sinderberry, daughter of Mr and Mrs J.J. Sinderberry, of "Ardell," was married to Pte. Alan [Allen] Evers of the A.I.F., son of Mr And Mrs Evers, of Yullundry... the reception was held at "Ardell"..."*

On 21 Nov 1940 Pte Allen was transferred to the 1st Pioneer Training Depot at the Royal Agriculture Showground in Sydney. He was appointed as Acting Corporal at Tamworth 19 Feb 1941. A/Cpl Allen Evers was granted pre-embarkment leave on 13 Mar 1941 which he spent with his wife and her family at "Ardell," Baldry.

A/Cpl Allen Evers was tendered a public farewell at the Shire Hall Cumnock while on final leave and was presented with a wallet from the Lord Mayor's War and Patriotic committee, and parcels of woollen goods from the ladies of the CWA and the Patriotic Knitting Club. He was also farewelled at the Eden Hall, Baldry, by Baldry residents, members of the local Cricket Club, and friends from Cumnock and Yeoval while on leave. He was presented with a leather writing case and a parcel of comforts from the Ladies' Patriotic Committee.

A/Cpl Allen Evans embarked at Sydney on U.S. Convoy 10 on 9 Apr 1941 and disembarked in Egypt on 3 May 1941. He joined the 2/6 Field company on 31 May, reverting to the rank of Sapper (Spr) He was trained and accredited as a grade 2 carpenter on 9 Jun 1941.

The 2/6 Field Company supported efforts in the Battle of Merdjayoun which took place during the Syria-Lebanon Campaign of WW2 from 19–24 June 1941 between Vichy French and predominantly Australian Allied forces in and near the Lebanese town of Marjayoun. The campaign ended with an armistice that was signed in mid-July.

*The Molong Express and WDA* - 6 Sep 1941, p14, reported on the birth of a son (on 31 Aug 1941) to Thelma and Allen Evers, and that both mother and son were doing well in "Rosedunate," Parkes.

The Field Company duties included construction work on roads, stables, buildings and airfields and setting out or clearing of minefields. Cricket, football and sport matches were popular recreation activities.

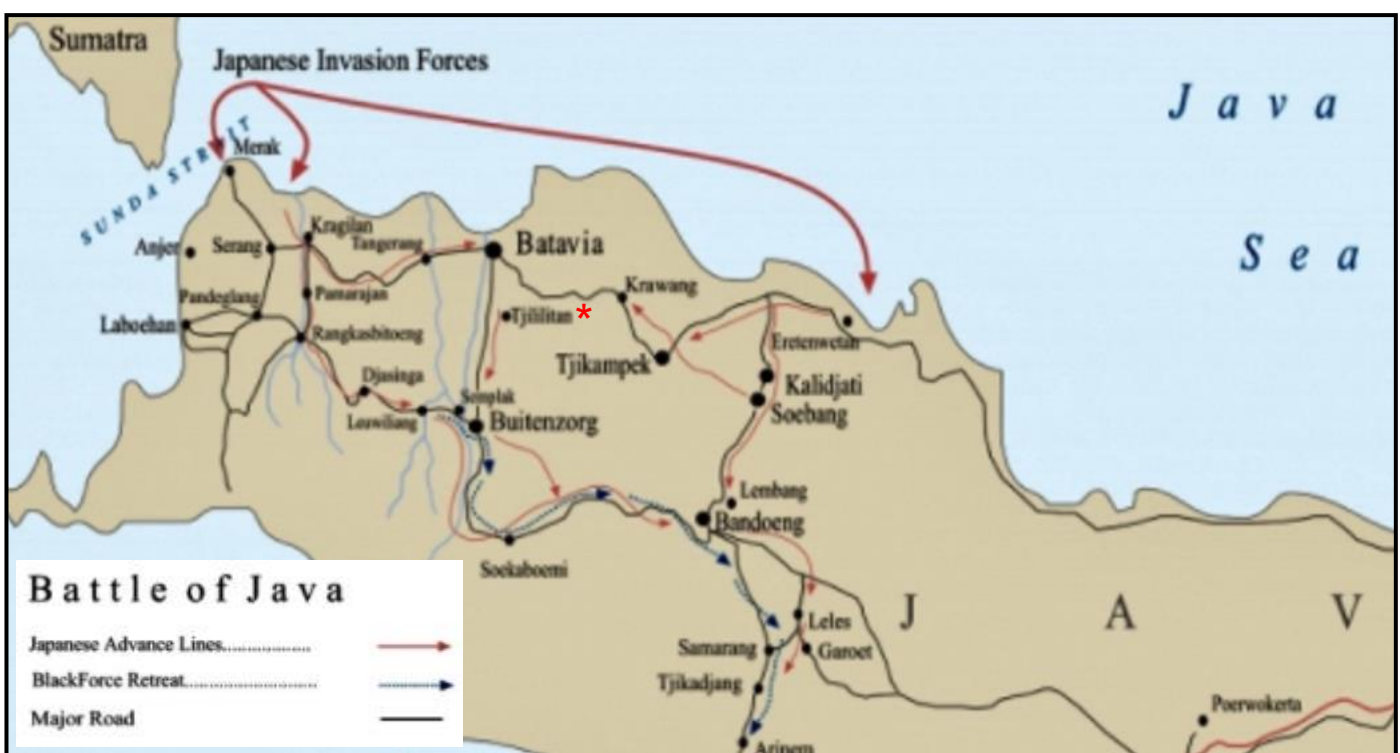
The 2/6 Field Company remained in Syria after the armistice was signed in mid-July, forming part of the Allied occupation force, based around Tripoli, Libya, from early November 1941. The winter of 1941 to 1942, especially over the Christmas period was bitterly cold, much colder than usual and the coldest winter on record. Snow covered the ground for long periods. ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2/6th\\_Field\\_Regiment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2/6th_Field_Regiment))

The 2/6 Field Company Commander's diary for Christmas Day 1941 stated: "*Xmas Day - Officers and N.C.Os. served Xmas dinner to O.Rs. (Ordinary Ranks). Excellent meal. Alfresco party at H.Q.R.A.E. in evening.*" A menu in the diary stated that there was: "*Vegetable or cream of chicken soup; roast turkey & seasoning, roast pork & roast beef; baked potatoes & onions, cauliflower au gratin and green peas; plum pudding & brandy sauce, wine trifle, peaches & cream, banana custard; as well as nuts, raisins, sweets ad lib, cigars in season, beer - beer - and more beer.*" This festive meal must have been a poignant memory for the soldiers of the 2/6 Field Company in view of what they had to endure for the next three to four years.

In response to Japan's entry into the war in December 1941, the Australian government requested the return of the 6th and 7th Divisions from the Middle East. As a result, in mid January 1942, the 2/6th was moved to Qastina, Palestine, as part of preparations to embark for Australia. On 31 Jan 1942 the company arrived at Suez and embarked at Shell Wharf on *HMT Orcades* on 1 Feb. The Unit diary commented: "*Embarkation completed after considerable confusion due to presence on ship of units that shouldn't be there and arrival of those not expected. 2nd Feb - Ship proceeds down Red Sea. Troops settling in and confusion being sorted out - despite trying circumstances of being 'mucked about.' Troops behaviour is good. Presence of over 3000 ORs in ship provides pretty problem in messing [meals]...*"

The *Orcades* arrived in Colombo on 9 Feb and departed the following day and anchored in Teloekbetoeng (Ostenhaven) at SE extremity of Sumatra on 15 Feb. Approximately 2500 troops were disembarked, armed with borrowed weapons and ammunition. However, when word was received that most of Sumatra was currently under Japanese control, the troops returned to the *Orcades*. On this day, 15 Feb 1942, the Allied Forces surrendered Singapore to the Japanese. Around 130,000 personnel became prisoners of the Japanese, including 15,000 Australians.

The *Orcades* sailed on to the Port of Batavia where it arrived on 17 February. Batavia was the capital of the Dutch East Indies on the north coast of Java (The area corresponds to present-day Jakarta, Indonesia). On 18 Feb, soldiers (204) of the 2/6 Field Company, the 2/2 Casualty Clearance Service, the 2/2 Pioneer Btn, 2/3 Machine Gun Btn and P1 of Guard Btn disembarked from the *Orcades* around 1800 hrs. The companies were later transported to camp at the airport of Tjililitan.\*



The United States sent into Java two groups of American troops to assist in fighting the Japanese around the 20 February.

On 27 Feb, 2/6 Field Company (less 1 & 3 sections which were attached to 2/2 Pioneer Btn & 2/3 MG Btn) moved to Tjileungsir, and then onto Dramaga as part of Black Force, a striking force to harry flanks of enemy advance from west on Batavia. With news of advancing Japanese on 2 March, the decision to withdraw Black Force to Bandoeng was made. On 4 March, 42 soldiers of 2/6 Field company were wounded in action and 4 soldiers were killed in action carried out with 2/3 Machine Gun Btn.

Commander's diary 2/6 Field Company: *"Discussions regarding capitulation occurred on 6 March and after Bandoeng was bombed several times on 7 March, Black Force moved south. They camped part of the night of 7/8 March near Samarang and at 1015 hrs news arrived that the Netherlands East Indies had surrendered. The company then had a long drawn out journey to reach the Arinem area, with intermittent halts particularly over the mountain latter stages. Many vehicles break down and are pushed over into the valleys. On 9 March orders from commanders that all armoured fighting vehicles and personal weapons were to be ready for demobilisation..."*

**Photo R: Arinem plantation, Java, March 1942 & members of 2/3 MGs**



Over 2000 soldiers dumped their arms and ammunition and moved to tea estate at Arinem to surrender. United States soldiers and Dutch forces and citizens also surrendered and became Prisoners of War (POW). The next three years of being prisoners of war to the Japanese in Java, Thailand and Burma were sheer hell.

Of the 204 soldiers of the 2/6 Field Company who were POWs, 50 died in captivity. The total number of Australians captured by the Japanese numbered around 22,000 and at the end of the war only 13,872 of the POWs were recovered: one-third of the prisoners had died.

Sapper Jack Ekin, of 2/6 Field Company, in *The Daily Telegraph* - 20 Dec 1953, p6, reported that his *"1942 Christmas menu was rice, native vegetables, and one-thousandth part of a pig, served in prison camp in Java."*

*The Sydney Morning Herald* - 1 Aug 1942, p11, published in the NSW Casualty Lists that Evers, A/Cpl. A E, Enginseers, Cumnock was classified as "Missing." The same paper later published on 11 Oct 1943, p7, that Cpl A E Evers was a Prisoner of War.

The war in the Pacific ended on 15 Aug 1945 when Japan surrendered to a group of countries that included the United Kingdom, the United States and Australia.

A news report in the *National Advocate* - 14 Sep 1945, p1, reported that Cpl A E Evers was one of the POWs alive in Siam (now known as Thailand) on 22 Aug 1945.

Sapper AE Evers embarked at Singapore on 29 Sep 1945 and disembarked at Sydney on 20 Oct 1945. *The Molong Express & WDA* - 2 Nov 194, p7, reported Allen Evers Is Home -

*"There was great rejoicing over the home coming of one of Yullundry's local men, Allen Evers, of the A.I.F., last week. Allen has been a prisoner of war in Japanese hands since the fall of Signapore. His last two years of imprisonment were spent barefooted. None of the Japanese shoes came anywhere near his size. He is finding some difficulty in accustoming himself to wearing footwear again.*

*Allen says that, normally speaking, he hates the sight of sand, but the most welcome sight ever to meet his eyes was the sand of Freemantle, the first Australian port of call on the way home.*

*His young son, John, whom he has just seen for the first time, is thrilled to have his father home. The entire community is thankful to have him back safe and sound, and extends all best wishes to him."*

Allen Evers was admitted to the 101 Australian General Hospital, N.S.W., on 24 Nov 1945 with "Post Haemorrhage Anaemia and Malaria." He spent time at the Ritz Convalescent Home, Leura, from the 4-19 Dec 1945. He was discharged on compassionate grounds from the A.I.F. on 10 Jan 1946.

*The Molong Express & W.D.A.* - 25 Jan 1946, p5, Yullundry - Rousing Welcome to P.O.W.

*"On Tuesday night of last week, nearly the whole district was present or represented at a rousing welcome home to Allen Evers, who has just received his discharge from the A.I.F., after being a POW... Allen Evers was presented with a pair of gold sleeve links and a roll of notes (of over £50).*

Allen had a younger brother who also served in the Australian Army, Private Kenneth Evers, NX83496 - 4th Btn. He enlisted on 13 Jan 1942, aged 20 years. He served in Darwin and North Queensland but Kenneth saw no combat action until late 1944 when the 4th Btn served in the Aitape-Wewak campaign. He was welcomed home to Yullundry on 2 May 1946 and discharged from the AIF on 6 Jun 1946.

*The Sydney Morning Herald* - 22 May 1946, p3, reported on the first of a long series of war crime trials, against Major Totaro Mizutani, a Japanese commander of POW camps. The force under Mizutani's command consisted of 2,000 POWs, including 350 Australians under Major LJ Robertson, 2/6 Field Company, Australian Engineers.

**Insert: Major Robertson's affidavit to the War Crimes Trial.**

Allen, Thelma and John moved to Arthurville, near Wellington, after his discharge from the A.I.F. in 1946. The 1949, 1958 and 1963 AERs for Lawson, Wellington, list Allen and Thelma as living at "Riverview" Arthurville and that Allen's occupation was a poultry farmer.

*The Wellington Times* - 3 Nov 1949, p6, Arthurville, reported:  
 "Mr Allen Evers has returned home from Concord Hospital. His condition is fair."

*The Wellington Times* - 13 Jul 1950, p12;  
 "A son was born to Mr and Mrs A Evers, 'Riverview,' Arthurville, last Friday at Bindawalla hospital, Wellington. David Edward are the names selected for the new arrival."

Allen Edward Evers died 17 Nov 1968, aged 54 years. He was buried at the Wellington Cemetery.

Thelma Evers died on 26 May 1975, aged 56 years. She is also buried at the Wellington Cemetery.

Allen Evers is honoured on the Baldry, Cumnock and Yeoval WW2 boards.

Major Robertson, who surrendered a force at Java, said in an affidavit, that the Australian party of prisoners eventually landed at Moulmein (Burma) on January 18, 1943, with American and Dutch prisoners. As a result of cruel and inhumane treatment of sick prisoners many died, and others were maimed for life.

**Sick Abandoned**

"About April, 1943, Mizutani forced sick P.O.W.s to march by night from Kilo 18 to Kilo 33 carrying their baggage, and threatening them with a machine-gun," stated Major Robertson. "A Japanese N.C.O. apologised for what he considered the inhuman conduct of his superior officers.

"Later, Mizutani refused to provide transport for very sick P.O.W.s when moving them from Kilo 80 to Kilo 100, and lined them up, and lashed the men with his sheathed sword. Those who could scramble to their feet he forced to walk.

"At the hospital at Kilo 80, the sick were virtually abandoned to their fate. Aid was non-existent, and men died in their own filth and lay unburied for days. About half the prisoners failed to survive, and many lost limbs."

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