

EVANS Jack Ivor

Name: Jack Ivor Evans

Born: 27 October 1917

Rank: Corporal

Service Number: 5829588

Regiment: 4th Battalion, Suffolk
Regiment

Died: 22 May 2001



Early life:

Jack was born in Treorchy, Wales. The family moved to London when he was 16 years old.

Wartime experience:

Jack enlisted on 18 January 1940. As he was Welsh he was known to his fellow soldiers as "Taffy". On 29 October 1941, he left Liverpool on the RMS Andes bound for Nova Scotia and then transferred to HMS Wakefield, bound for Bombay via Cape Town, arriving on 28 December 1941. He was only in India a short time, when war with Japan was declared and on 15 January 1942, they were shipped to Singapore. Jacks' first experience of live action came when their ship was attacked but they managed to arrive and dock in Singapore on the 29 January only two weeks before it fell on the 15 February.

Once captured, Jack was taken to Changi prison before being sent to the Bukit Timah Road camp and then on to Sime Road camp before returning to Changi in December 1942. As part of "F" force, Jack and his colleagues were transported to Thailand where he was put to work on the Thai/Burma railway. During that time, they had to march nearly 200 miles from Ban Pong to Songkurai, which, on arrival, they found had some of the worst conditions on the railway. He was put in No. 2 camp, Niki, where there was a cholera epidemic and many of the men died. Jack, along with seven others, Bernard Bradley, Francis Edley, Ian Bradley, James Singleton, Frederick Woolard, Peter Jackson and William Dawkins made plans to escape. Prior to the escape Jack and Peter crept from their beds in the night and managed to fill a sack with food from stores whilst Ian managed to obtain a map and compass. On the 6 June 1943 they escaped into the jungle.



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Their aim was to follow jungle tracks to Chiang Mai, then the Me Ping river and then, hopefully, on to China. Initially they slept in the open, finding food and even tobacco in deserted villages. Unfortunately, after a week, two of them developed jungle fever but still managed to keep going. One member was able to speak Thai and so managed to obtain supplies from villagers, in order for them to survive. Eventually, on 12 July, tired and malnourished they came across some caves, near to a village, where they lived until the end of September. Sadly, James Singleton who was by this time very ill, died there. By the end of September, following a visit from some Burmese men, they decided it was getting time to move on.

On the 2 October, Jack, together with two of his comrades, left the cave to look for food and the remaining three were re-captured by the Japanese and it wasn't long before Jack and the other two were caught. They did not meet up again until their trial in Bangkok. They were all threatened with death sentences which were later commuted to life sentences. They were handed over to the Kempeitai (police) and on 27 October 1943, they were returned to Singapore. They had all received murderous treatment but managed to survive and now had to serve a life sentence in Outram Road Gaol. The gaol was a place of starvation, torture and terror, a place of madness and many deaths and sadly Bernard Bradley died there. Jack said very little of his time there save that he found it much worse than the camps.

Jack survived and returned home and was 'mentioned in despatches' for his bravery.

Civilian life after return:

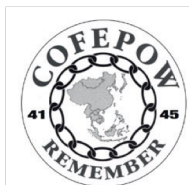
Jack married in 1948 and had three children. He eventually became a driving instructor, running his own driving school.

In retirement, when he was not with his family, he spent many happy hours playing bowls, often winning cups for his club.

He passed away on the 22 May 2001, at the age of 83.

'He is still very much missed by his family who for whom he will always be a hero'.

The above information and wording has been provided by Mary Morgan (daughter)



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