

## RONALD WESTON ROBERTS



### WX16618 Pte. Ronald Weston Roberts.

Ronald Weston Roberts was born on the 1<sup>st</sup> of November 1921 at Wonnerup, his parents were Edmund Henry and Alice Ivy Roberts (nee Catchpole). Ronald was the second child and the eldest son in a family of nine children. Prior to their arrival in Nannup, the Roberts family had previously lived at Yornaning, near Cuballing and later Wonnerup. His father, Edmund had served at Gallipoli and in France with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Field Ambulance and 1 Australian Casualty Clearing Station (WWI) with regimental number 4867 and had enlisted in the A.I.F. in August 1940 (WWII) aged 48. He was discharged as medically unfit for military service 3 months later.

At the time of his enlistment, Ronald, also known as “Digger,” gave his occupation as that of farmhand / labourer, marital status, single, next of kin initially that of his father and later, changed to mother (Ronald’s father died in 1942) and address as Carlotta via Nannup.

Ronald had previously been a member of the 13<sup>th</sup> Training battalion with regimental number of W26001, He enlisted in the A.I.F. on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September 1941 and was initially posted to 3 Training Battalion Western Command (General Details Company). Transferred to the 2/32<sup>nd</sup> Reinforcement battalion. Granted pre-embarkation leave from 7<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> of December 1941.

On the 30<sup>th</sup> of December 1941, Ron was transferred to the 2/4<sup>th</sup> Machine Gun Battalion and after just 4 months of military service, embarked at Fremantle on 15<sup>th</sup> January 1942 (Convoy MS.2). Bound for Sumatra where the troops were offloaded onto smaller Dutch ships (Convoy MS.2a) and taken on to Singapore, arriving there on the 24<sup>th</sup> of January 1942. It was not long before the 2/4<sup>th</sup> MG Battalion was in action. The Japanese army had already captured Malaya and were preparing to attack Singapore. After days of air raids, on the 8<sup>th</sup> of February 1942, the Japanese attacked Singapore. The **Special Reserve Battalion** under the command of Major Albert (Bert) Ernest Saggars was formed in Singapore on the 7<sup>th</sup> of February 1942. It was to comprise of “A” and “B” companies, which were mainly Service and Ordinance Corps personnel with the remainder being reinforcements for the 2/4<sup>th</sup> MG Battalion.

In an area known as Bukit Timah, Singapore and near the village of the same name. “E” company walked into an enemy ambush sustaining very heavy casualties. It was during this engagement, Ronald and five of his platoon were Killed in Action.

*Of the 25 men of 3 platoon, E Company, **Special Reserve Battalion**, 6 were killed In Action, 5 died as P.O.W’s and 14, having spent 3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> years as P.O.W’s, Returned to Australia.*