

## **My name is Robert Halls**

I was born in Maylands WA on the 9<sup>th</sup> of June 1918. I went to school at Whittakers Mill a timber town about 50 miles south of Perth. At the age of fourteen I left school to work on my Uncles dairy farm at Mundijong. I arose at 4:30 am for 10shillings a week and keep. I helped with the milking, looked after the fowls, cleaned the eggs and did any other job that needed doing. A year later I went back to Whittakers Mill and stacked firewood for burning in the Babcock boilers which gave steam for the mill machinery and other odd jobs. I was a teenager during the great depression. When I hear people complaining now about how tough things are they don't know what tough is. When war broke out I was 21 years old and how I came to join the army was because they were calling for volunteers for a forestry unit to go to Britain. Dad was a saw doctor so we applied. He was rejected because of bad legs and they could not wait for him to get them fixed. He was a returned soldier from the First World War. I was told I was too fit to go to Britain so I joined the regular army and was sent overseas in 1941 with the reinforcements for the 2<sup>nd</sup> 43<sup>rd</sup> battalion in Egypt.

After spending sometime in Palestine I was sent to Tobruk. After returning to Palestine, an uncle of mine who was in the 2<sup>nd</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> field Ambulance there asked me to transfer to that unit which I did. When Japan entered the war the sixth division was returned to Australia. On the way back we disembarked at Port Sudan and stayed there a week. While we were there Singapore was taken over by the Japanese.

On returning to the ship we were informed that now Singapore, which was to have been our destination had fallen and now we were going home to Australia.

When we arrived in Fremantle we were given 24 hours leave. Mum and Dad came to Perth. We were able to spend some time together. We then sailed on to Albany where the people wanted to give us a party, but no leave was granted and we soon were off again. Next stop was Port Adelaide, where we were billeted in the Adelaide Hills and Mount Lofty for some months. After a fortnight home leave we were transferred to the Northern Territory. While we were there the battle of the Coral Sea was fought. Next we were sent to the Tablelands of Queensland where we stayed for some time before being sent to Aitape and Wewak in New Guinea.

Where we were when the war ended. After returning home I stayed in the army for six more months and was stationed at the Army Hospital at Hollywood. This is where I met my future wife. I was a Corporal cook in the main kitchen and she was in the diet kitchen which was very busy with all the POWs coming home. I was discharged in 1946.

My wife was a child migrant who came out to the Fairbridge Farm School in 1933. We got married on December the 24<sup>th</sup> in 1946. We have two children, a boy and a girl, six grandchildren and eight great grandchildren.