

# HUGHES, Ralph Laurence (SX27854 AIF)



Image 1 ©n.d.  
circa 1942

<b>Name</b>	<b>HUGHES, Ralph Laurence Private AIF</b>
<b>Service Number</b>	SX27854
<b>Date of Birth</b>	18th June 1922
<b>Died</b>	30th March 1995
<b>Place of Birth</b>	Laura SA
<b>Resident</b>	Victor Harbor SA
<b>Cemetery</b>	Centennial Park Cemetery SA

Ralph Laurence Hughes was born at Laura on 18 June 1922, the fifth child of Frederick Thomas Hughes and Nellie Laura Hughes (nee Campbell). He joined the Militia (S56485) on 27 December 1941 while working on the farm for his mother. On 19 February 1942, he was called up for full time duty with the 6th Cavalry Brigade Company, Australian Army Service Corps in Adelaide. This Corps was responsible for military supply and transport. His older brother, Cam (SX4760 Frederick Campbell Hughes) had enlisted in the 2nd AIF on 2 June 1940 and was serving the 2/3rd Machine Gun Battalion.

Ralph spent much of March and April 1942 in hospital at Wayville recovering from mumps. Over the next three months he received three weeks leave without pay which was allowed to men who could be spared to assist with seasonal farm work. As an experienced dairy hand, he returned to the family farm at Waitpinga.

In June 1942, his unit, now called the 6th Armoured Brigade Company AASC, was sent to Puckapunyal in Victoria which later moved to nearby Tallarook. On 27 March 1943, Ralph was transferred to the 2/1st Australian Tank Transporter Company AASC at Singleton, New South Wales. This unit was equipped with truck-drawn special 40-ton capacity trailers for carrying tanks on long hauls, thus saving the tank tracks from wearing. From October to December 1942 Ralph received a further six weeks leave without pay which was spent working on the family farm at Waitpinga. On 21 December 1942, Ralph was officially transferred to the 2nd AIF.

Following his return to Puckapunyal, he was sent to Western Australia to join his unit, which had been transferred there as part of the 1st Australian Armoured Division. Units of this Division were deployed between Perth and Geraldton to defend that part of Western Australia should the Japanese attempt an invasion.

In February of 1943, Ralph was charged with being drunk on duty, and was later punished with a 14 day period of confinement to barracks.

As the Japanese invasion threat diminished, the Division spent more time training. It would never see action and was disbanded in September 1943, although several of its Regiments remained in Western Australia. Other personnel were redeployed to non-armoured units.

On 27 October 1944, Ralph and his unit began the long train journey back to New South Wales. In January 1945, he was transferred to the 2/34th Australian Tank Transporter Platoon in Queensland, where he remained until returning to South Australia in early September 1945. Over the next three months he moved between units at Warradale and Keswick with his medical classification downgraded in December 1945. Between January and April 1946, Ralph spent time in hospital while attached to the 11th Australian Ordnance Vehicle Park. On 23 May 1946, Private Ralph Laurence Hughes was discharged from the Army. He married Alison Mary (nee Adams) and they had two children.

Ralph died unexpectedly at his home in Torrensville on the 30<sup>th</sup> March 1995. He was just 72.

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*Compiled by the Victor Harbor RSL History Research Team, February 2013. Updated by T.Young & M.Young 15/08/2025*

# Appendix



Image 2 © Ian Milnes 2011  
*The Honour roll board Waitpinga*



Image 3 © thelockedjournal.com 2025



Image 4 © naa.gov.au 2025  
*Enlistment photograph Puckapunyal 1942*



