

HUGHES, Ralph Laurence (SX27854 AIF)



Image 1 ©n.d.
circa 1942

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

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SERVICE AND CASUALTY FORM						A.F. B.103-2 (Adapted) (Formed, April, 1942)	
Continuation Sheet to A.F. B.103-1							
Army No.		Surname		Initials			
REPORT				Date of Death	Place of Death	Authority	Part II R.O. No.
Date	Forces received					or other Document	Author- izing Document of later
24.1.56	D.C.M. Confirmed	SA					
	Surgeon - Gunner						
	Top Grade - To be paid the sum of Ten Pounds.						
	Confirmation Confirmed by Card						
	SAFAR Area on 18 Jan 56	CIR					
	Date of Injuring at 24 Jan 56	31/1/780					
	Period of confinement area of hospital	R034					
	2 days	Total					
	Total for future Ten Pounds & 2 days 15 lbs	W3011					
24.1.56	Rank and Rate	Forster 1st Proficiency Pay		15.1.56		3/1/6	Adm
2.2.56	"	Road to Mat 2nd Proficiency Pay		15.1.56		3/1/6	Adm
		Road to Mat 2nd Proficiency Pay		15.1.56		3/1/6	Adm
6.2.56	Mat 2nd	(7 D. 1st Proficiency Pay to X. 1st)		27.1.56		7/1/6	Adm
		Death Mat 2nd Proficiency Pay					
		(7 D. 1st Proficiency Pay to X. 1st)					
6.2.56	Mat 2nd	Road and Unit from Mat 2nd Dis. Prof.		6.2.56		6/1/6	Adm
		Road and Unit from Mat 2nd Dis. Prof.				6/1/6	Adm
1.3.56	John R.	Road and Unit from X. 1st		6.2.56		28/1/6	Adm
		Road and Unit from X. 1st				28/1/6	Adm
16.4.56	2nd ASH	Road 123 ASH (NYD) & Trans				W3037	
		To X. 1st		5/1/6		5/1/6	Adm
16.4.56	2nd ASH	Road 123 ASH (Use this if NS) HU 1.		16.4.56		5/1/6	Adm
16.4.56	11 Am 1st	Rejoined Unit from 123 ASH. 9 Alamek				15/4/6	Adm
		To X. 1st				15/4/6	Adm
20.5.56	Ward 1st	Road to Ward 20 2nd for disposal.		16.4.56		8/1/6	Adm
		Road to Ward 20 2nd for disposal.		20.5.56		8/1/6	Adm
		Road to Ward 20 2nd for disposal.				Mod. 1/1/6	Adm

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