



Engineer Sub-Lieutenant
Hugh John Gay Nicholson



Played with Adelaide University



Football Club: 1913 & 1914 (B & A Grade)

(Intervarsity 1913)

Cricket Club: 1915/1916 (A Grade)

Degree: BE (1916), FDip EEng (1916)

Background

Coinciding with the Centenary of Anzacs our incentive behind the series of biographical publications is the Adelaide University Football and Cricket Club's desire to honour our players who served in the Great War (1914 - 1918). These brave men put on hold their academic, professional and sporting careers for King and Country in the name of peace and freedom. The AUFC/AUCC WW1 Memorial Committee is endeavouring to identify every one of our players who served and prepare life stories on all. This is to ensure their sacrifices and further contributions to society will be recognised by future generations.

On Anzac Day 2015, the Centenary of the Gallipoli landing, a memorial plaque was unveiled on the Adelaide University Oval Pavilion and this was followed by the erection of a picket fence between the pavilion and the scoreboard with each picket bearing a plaque with the name of an AUFC/AUCC player who served.

The following documentation relates to the life of Hugh John Gay Nicholson. It is compilation of information and photographs collected from a variety of historical sources.

Service Record - AIF

<https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=7995368>

DUPLICATE - 2 APR 1917

AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCES.

REGATIVITY SCHEDULE

Subsequently served with R.A.F. 57/21/68

AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE.

ATTESTATION PAPER OF PERSONS ENLISTED FOR SERVICE ABROAD.

No. 511218 Name NICHOLSON- HUGH JOHN GAY Unit 487/21/68 Trained on 2 MAR 1917

War Gratuity Paid by Navy Dept. 487/21/68 196 225

Person Enlisting before Attestation.

- Hugh John Gay Nicholson
- In the Parish of Unley in or near the Town of Unley in the County of SOUTH AUSTRALIA.
- Natural born
- 21 5/11 years
- Engineer
- No
- No.
- (Father) NICHOLSON- DONALD (MR) PALMERSTON RD NTH UNLEY SOUTH AUSTRALIA.
- No
- No
- 2 years Senior Cadet 74 a trans to City of Free 28th Eng 74 reg and 74 in signallers
- Yes
- No
-
- Yes

7. Are you married? ...

8. Who is your next of kin? (Address to be stated) ...
The answer to this question shall not be construed as in the nature of a Will.

9. Have you ever been convicted by the Civil Power?

10. Have you ever been discharged from any part of His Majesty's Forces with Ignominy, or as Incorrigible and Worthless, or on account of Conviction of Felony, or of a Sentence of Penal Servitude, or have you been dismissed with disgrace from the Navy?

11. Do you now belong to, or have you ever served in, His Majesty's Army, the Marines, the Militia, the Militia Reserve, the Territorial Force, Royal Navy or Colonial Forces? If so, state which, and if not now serving, state cause of discharge.

12. Have you stated the whole, if any, of your previous service?

13. Have you ever been rejected as unfit for His Majesty's Service? If so, on what grounds?

14. (For married men, widowers with children, and soldiers who are the sole support of widowed mother) Do you understand that no Separation Allowance will be issued to you in respect of your service beyond an amount which together with pay would reach 6/- per day?

15. Are you prepared to undergo inoculation against smallpox and enteric fever?

I, Hugh John Gay Nicholson do solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true, and I am willing and hereby voluntarily agree to serve in the Military Forces of the Commonwealth of Australia within or beyond the limits of the Commonwealth.

And I further agree to allot not less than two-fifths of the pay payable to me from time to time during my service for the support of my wife and children.

Date 2 MAR 1917 Signature of Person Enlisted. Hugh J. Nicholson

* This clause should be struck out in the case of unmarried men or widowers without children under 18 years of age.
† Two-fifths must be allotted to the wife, and if there are children three-fifths must be allotted.

WO 59240

<https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=5220743>

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RSL Virtual War Memorial

<https://rslvirtualwarmemorial.org.au/explore/people/796795>

NICHOLSON, Hugh John Gay

Service Number:	Officer
Enlisted:	2 March 1917, Adelaide, South Australia
Last Rank:	Sub Lieutenant
Last Unit:	HMAS Cerberus
Born:	Unley, South Australia, 16 September 1895
Schooling:	University of Adelaide
Occupation:	Engineer
Died:	17 June 1972, aged 76 years, cause of death not yet discovered, place of death not yet discovered
Cemetery:	Centennial Park - South Australian Garden of Remembrance RSL, Wall 105, Niche B004
Memorials:	Adelaide HB17 SA Caledonian Society WW 1 ANZAC House*, University of Adelaide WW1 Honour Roll Mitchell Bldg*, Unley HB01 Town Hall*

World War 1 Service

2 Mar 1917: Enlisted AIF WW1, Adelaide, South Australia

31 Mar 1918: Discharged AIF WW1

1 Apr 1918: Enlisted Royal Australian Navy, HMAS Cerberus

20 Jan 1920: Discharged Royal Australian Navy, Sub Lieutenant, SN Officer

Biography

Early Life

Hugh John Gay Nicholson was born on 16th September 1895, at North Unley, SA, the only child of Donald Nicholson and Flora Dinah Richardson (SA Birth Registration 571/398). Hugh's father, Donald was a Sub-Inspector in the police force in 1920.

Hugh attended Sunday School at St. Andrew's Presbyterian in Unley in 1907.

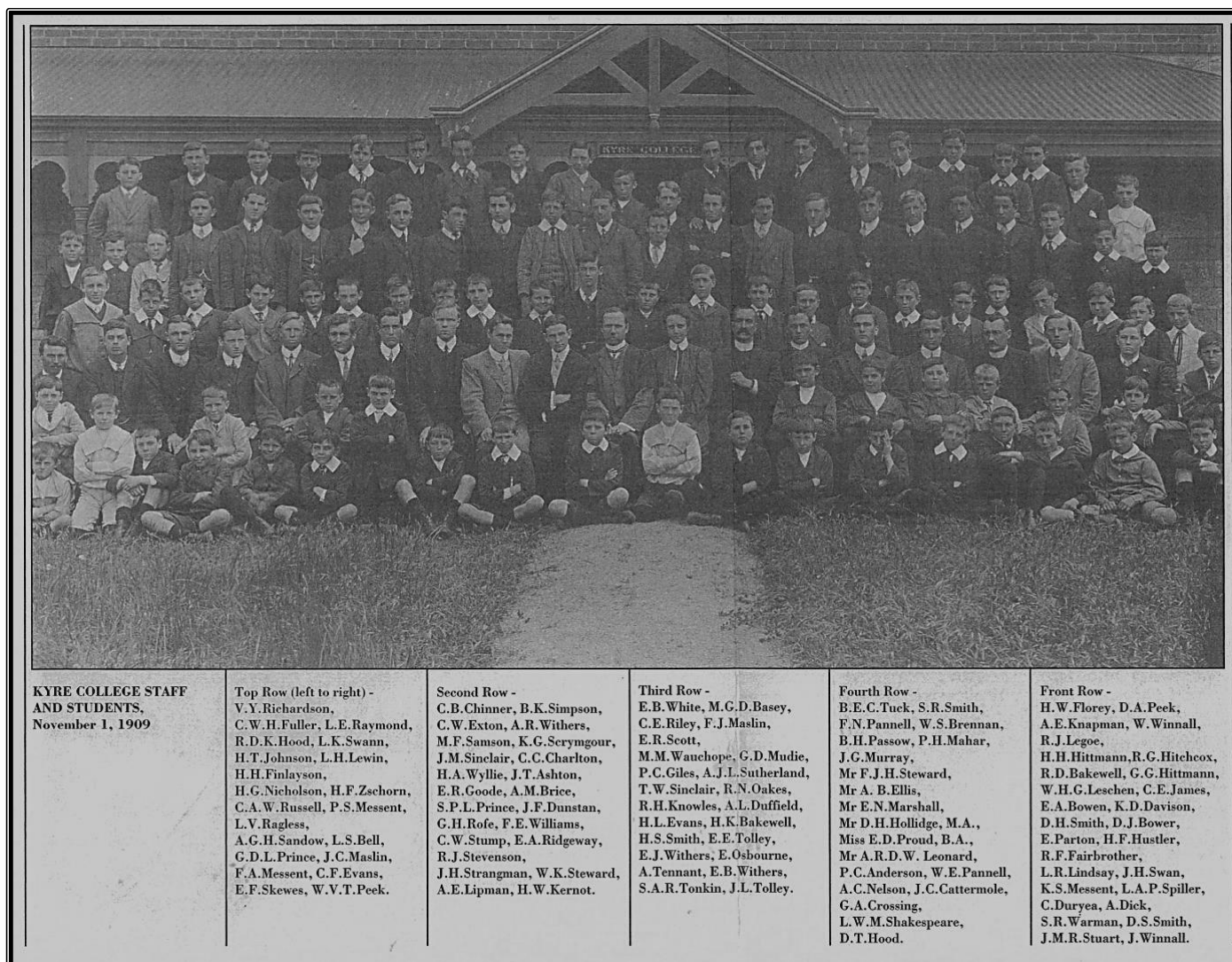
Schooling

Hugh attended Kyre College (which became Scotch College in 1919) from at least 1909 to 1912. He passed his Junior Examinations in 1910 and his Senior Examinations in 1912.

In December 1911 he was involved in presenting a scene for Shakespeare's Henry IV, part 1, act 3, scene 1 when Hugh played Worcester with J. T Ashton (Hotspur), E. Foster Skewes (Glendower) and H. X. Curnow (Mortimer).

Hugh came third in the 120 yards hurdles at the Kyre College Sports in September 1909. In 1912 Hugh won the 100 yards flat in the Intercollegiate race at the Christian Brothers College Sports.

1909 Kyre College – Staff and Students



H.J.G. Nicholson – Back Row – Ninth from Left (just left of the Kyre College sign)



*H.J.G. Nicholson
(from group above)*

1912 Kyre College – Staff and Students



H.J.G. Nicholson – Second row from Front – Third from Left

Hugh played football for Kyre and in 1912 he was captain of the First Eighteen.

He completed two years in the Senior Cadets then transferred to the Citizen's Forces, 28th Engineers, 74th Infantry & 74th Signallers.

Hugh was on the committee of the Kyre College Old Collegians in 1913 and 1914 and was at some stage the secretary of the association. In 1914 he helped contribute to an enjoyable evening at the annual gathering by playing the piano.

1912 - Kyre College - First Eighteen



*H.J.G Nicholson – Back Row – Fourth from Left
(Identifier by profiler as original photograph is unnamed)*

University

In 1913, Hugh commenced at Adelaide University and the School of Mines, studying Engineering. In addition to passing University and School of Mines examinations in 1913, Hugh also passed School of Arts examinations in Intermediate Perspective (May 1913) and Second Grade Plane Geometry (September 1913). In December 1916 Hugh was awarded his Bachelor of Engineering from the University of Adelaide and his fellowship diploma in electrical engineering from the School of Mines. He was an unsuccessful applicant for the 1917 Rhodes Scholarship which was won by Hugh William Bell Cairns

University Sport

Football

Hugh played football for Adelaide University in both the B Grade and A Grade in 1913. He also represented the University at the 1913 Intervarsity Football match and played A Grade football in 1914.

Rowing

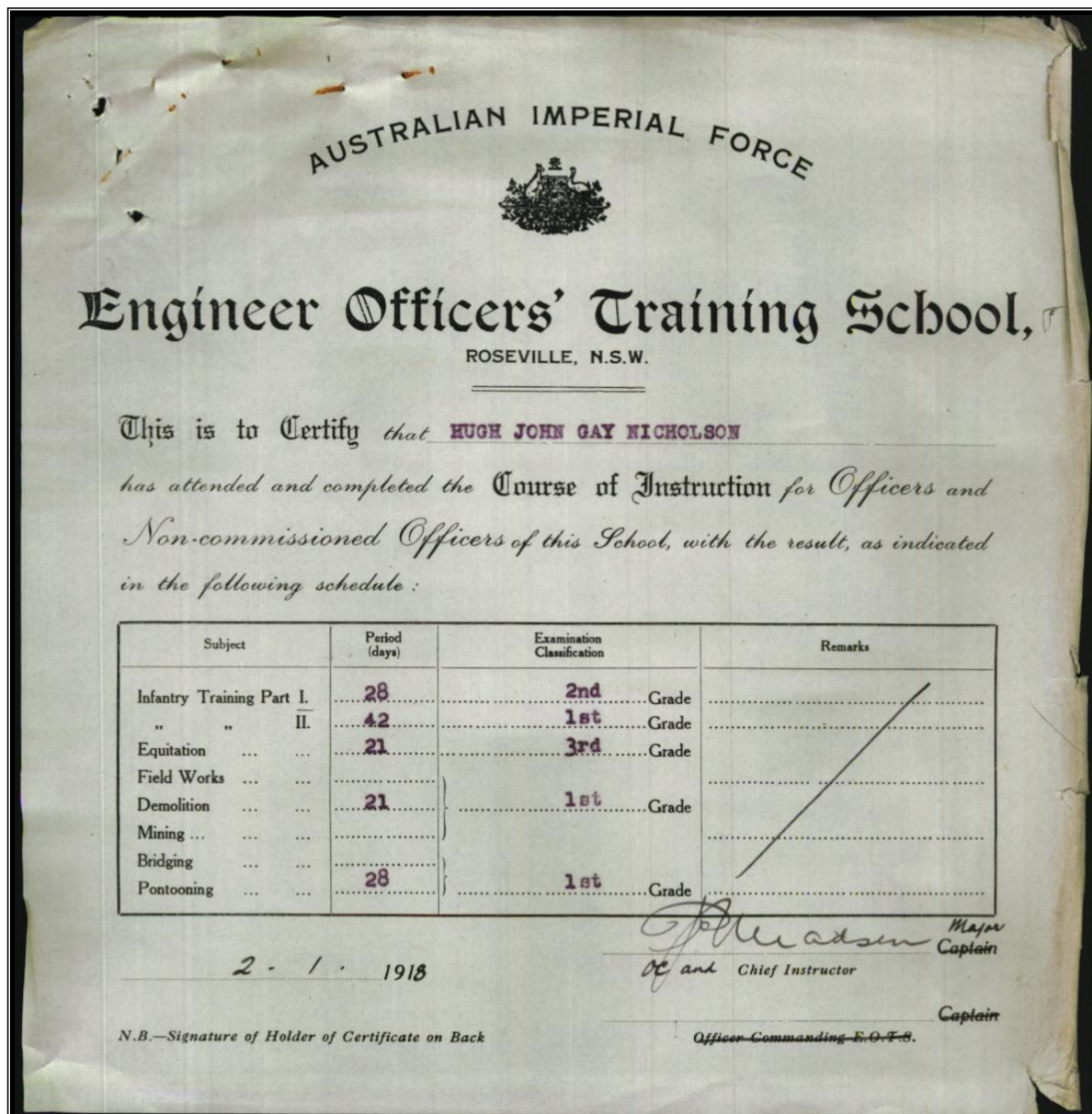
Hugh rowed for the Engineers at the Adelaide University Schools Boat Regatta in July 1914; the Engineers lost their heat to the School of Arts.

Cricket

Hugh played cricket for the University in a match in January 1916, perhaps covering the absence of players because of War-time service or University holidays.

World War I

Hugh enlisted on the 2nd of March 1917 at Adelaide, SA, SN S11218, aged 21 years and 5 months and as an Engineer. He was 5'9¼", 160 lbs, with a fresh complexion, blue eyes and auburn hair. His father, Donald Nicholson of Palmer St, North Unley was his next of kin. Hugh was assigned to the Tunnelling Reinforcements, B Coy, Mitcham, SA and went to Engineering Officers School where he was first a Sapper then an acting Corporal and an acting Sergeant. On the 31st March 1918 Hugh was discharged from the AIF in order to enlist in the Navy.



Hugh joined the Royal Australian Navy 1 April 1918 and was appointed an Engineers Sub Lieutenant.

He was assigned for duty as follows:

- 'Cerberus' 1 April 1918 to 29 April 1918
- London Depot 30 April 1918 to 1 July 1918
- 'Melbourne' 2 July 1918 to 5 August 1919
- 'Australia' 6 August 1919 to 20 January 1920

Hugh was present at the handover of the German Navy in November 1918 and wrote to his father describing the event. Hugh resigned from the Navy on 20th January 1920.

NAVAL SURRENDER.

SOUTH AUSTRALIANS PRESENT.

There were three Adelaide University men present on the occasion of the handing over the Germany navy—Sub-Lieutenant G. I. D. Hutchesson, of Sturtstreet, who was on H.M.A.S. Australia; Sub-Lieutenant H. J. G. Nicholson, son of Sergeant Donald Nicholson, of the City Watchhouse, who was on the cruiser Melbourne; and Sub-Lieutenant R. Berry Smith, of Unley, who was on the cruiser Sydney. In a letter to his parents, dated November 23, Sub-Lieutenant Nicholson stated:—"This has indeed been a momentous week, for we took a leading part in the handing over of the Hun fleet, and are guarding them at the present time. At 8.30 we went to action stations with all our gear shipped and half an hour later the first of the Huns came in sight. In the van was one of our light cruisers, followed by five battle cruisers and 16 battleships. We passed them about six miles off. By this time we had hoisted our battle flags, and they were flying their ensigns with the flagship carrying a white flag. A little later we came abreast of seven light cruisers, following one of ours, and then we turned. At midday 49 Hun torpedo boats, accompanied by 80 of ours passed us, and soon left us behind. At 3 o'clock we dropped anchor off Inchkeith, and it was indeed a wonderful sight to see all these Hun ships surrounded by ours. The Nurnberg was our particular ship, and we sent a party aboard to see that there was no ammunition, and that armistice. Everything was right, and the Hun had removed all the gear in connection with the training and firing of his guns. They found the officers sullen, but the men were cheerful. At 6 o'clock that night we held a thanksgiving service in the waist of the ship. We put our hearts and souls into the short service, especially in the singing of 'Now Thank we all Our God.' At once my mind flashed back to my college days when we were reading the history of Friedrich der Grosse in German. After one of his victories he had his troops massed and they sang the same hymn. What a difference! And a short distance from us was lying the Friedrich der Grosse, the Hun flagship. On Friday morning we coaled whilst our boarding party made the final inspection of the Nurnberg. The Sydney was looking after the Emden. What irony! Yesterday morning the first batch of destroyers left for Scapa. In the afternoon about ten of us made a tour in our steamboat, and thus had a very close look at the Huns. The first we came to was the Lmden. She had a couple of Iron

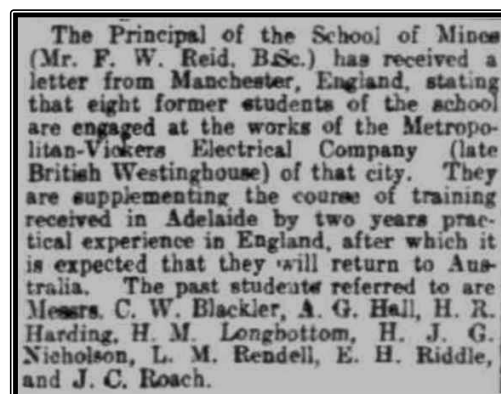
Crosses on her bows placed there by the Kaiser to celebrate the deeds of her predecessor. All the ships had some emblem on their bows, whilst on their stern was the Imperial crest. Yesterday Arthur Mears arrived to take over as senior engineer. He is from Australia, and is an old School of Mines chap, so we shall get on well together."

Career & Family Life

In August 1920, the Council of the Adelaide University awarded the Angas Engineering Scholarship to Hugh. Hugh's 24-page submission for the scholarship was entitled 'The Burning of Australian Coal in Warships' and is held in the Adelaide University Archives (Series 372, Student Essays and Theses). The scholarship was tenable for two years and Hugh left in September 1920 for England and America to further his studies.



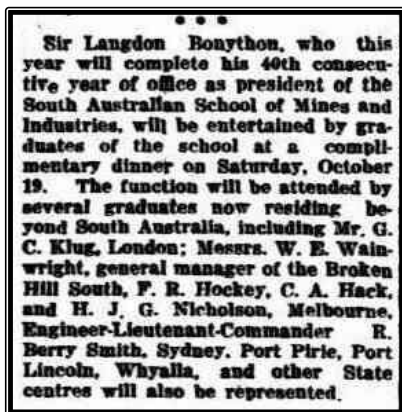
In October 1921 Hugh was one of eight former students at the SA School of Mines who were gaining experience working at the Metropolitan-Vickers Electrical Company (late British Westinghouse).



On his return to Australia Hugh took up a position with Australian General Electric Pty Ltd as an engineer in Melbourne, Victoria. He was living at Lauriston Hall, Wellington Pde, East Melbourne in 1924.

On the 28th of April 1925, Hugh married Marjorie Eleanor Elizabeth Skuthorpe, the elder daughter of Mrs O.T. Skuthorpe, Brentwood, St Kilda Road, Melbourne at Christ Church, South Yarra. The couple were living at 5 Tollington Ave, Malvern East and in 1925 they moved to 185 Toorak Road, South Yarra. In 1928 Hugh and Marjorie were living at 6 Albany Road, Toorak and their only child, a daughter (Margaret Anne) was born there on the 3rd December 1928.

In October 1929 Hugh visited South Australia and attended the celebrations to honour Sir Langdon Bonython's 40th consecutive year as President of the School of Mines.



Hugh and Marjorie had been living at 420 St Kilda Road, Melbourne and in 1931 they moved to 59 Westbury Street, St Kilda East where they lived until 1949

In 1934, on a visit to Adelaide, Hugh gave an address at the Scotch Old Collegians' Annual Meeting. Hugh attended a dinner at Scott's Hotel, Melbourne in September 1936 with a group of graduates from the School of Mines and the Adelaide University. Sadly, Hugh's father passed away on the 16th July 1937 leaving his mother, Flora, a widow.

In May 1944 Hugh was appointed Controller of Electrical Equipment in the Ministry of Munitions and was located at Henty House, 499 Little Collins Street, Melbourne.



For sport, Hugh was now a golfer and he played at the Kingston club. His last abode in Victoria was a East St, St. Kilda.

In July 1951 Hugh, Marjorie and their daughter Margaret Anne moved to South Australia and were living at Heathpool. Hugh played golf at Glenelg.

In January 1952, Margaret became engaged to William Roberts Clifton, son of Mr and Mrs J. Clifton of Kingswood. The couple were married on the 23rd February 1952 at St Columba's Church, Hawthorn.

In 1952 the cartoonist, Lionel Coventry, at the *News* drew a caricature of Hugh.



In November 1953, Hugh was the South Australian agent for British Insulated Calender's Cables Limited when the company ceased to carry on business in the state.

Death

Hugh died on the 17th June 1972 at Kensington Gardens, SA, aged 77 years; he had been residing at Heathpool, SA. He was cremated at Centennial Park Cemetery, RSL Walls W 105 B004. Marjorie passed away on the 1st December 1986 and was cremated at Centennial Park Cemetery.

William Roberts Clifton passed away on the 29th April 2005 (Last abode - Linden Park) and Margaret Anne Clifton passed away on the 31st October 2012 (Last abode - Myrtle Bank).

Profile Compiled by: Beth Filmer AUFC/AUCC WW1 Memorial Committee

Sources

The AIF Project <https://www.aif.adfa.edu.au/>
RSL Virtual War Memorial <https://rslvirtualwarmemorial.org.au/explore/>
The National Archives of Australia <http://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/>
Australian War Memorial <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/>
The Adelaide University <http://www.adelaide.edu.au/records/archives/>
The National Library of Australia <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/>
(Trove Newspaper articles tagged – Hugh J. G. Nicholson)
SA Genealogy <https://www.genealogysa.org.au/resources/online-databases.html>
<https://www.centennialpark.org/memorial-search/>
Kyre College Photographs from 'The Kyrian', with thanks to Scotch College Old Collegians
SA State Records – SRSA reg GRG 26/5/4/1940
<https://www.adelaide.edu.au/records/archives/guide/0372.htm>
<https://www.centennialpark.org/memorial-search/>
State Library of South Australia
'The Kyrian' - Kyre College Magazine
Ancestry.com.au - Electoral Roll