

Joseph Walter Hickling

Private H.Q. L. of C., Royal Army Service Corps

Died on 17 June 1940 Age 35

Service number S/49460,

Comemorated in the Pornic War Cemetery

Inscription 'The strife is o'er'

<https://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead/casualty/2366939/hickling,-joseph-walter/>

Joseph Walter was the son of Walter (born 27 March 1874) and Annie (nee Coupe born on 16 February 1877) Hickling. Their marriage was registered in the Worksop Registration District in 1902 in the December quarter of that year.

- Beatrice Harriett, born in Hucknall Torkard registered in Basford RD in the December quarter of 1903
- Walter Joseph born in Hucknall Torkard registered in Basford RD in the March quarter of 1905.
- Herbert born 1912 registered in Southwell RD in the Dec quarter,
- Grace Born 1915 registered in the Basford RD in the June quarter.

On the 1911 Census Walter and Annie with Joseph and Beatrice are living in Bleasby, Walter is a Police Constable in the employment of Notts County Council.

The family probably remained in Bleasby until after Herbert was born in 1912 then moved to Carlton before Grace was born in 1915

By 1920 the family are living at 330 Carlton Hill (Electoral Register) and around 1925 they moved to live at 2, Conway Crescent.



Conway Crescent in
2020

Number 2 is on the
right

Joseph Walter was married in 1927, to Phyllis A Wright registered in the Nottingham Registration District in the June quarter.

In 1939 Phyllis was living at 46 Attenborough Lane, Chilwell, working for the ARP Medical Service.

Joseph was in the RASC - HQ L of C stands for head quarters Line of Communication - and in 1940 was in France during, and following the Dunkirk Evacuation. After the Dunkirk evacuation, the remaining troops and also civilians were told to make their way to various ports including St. Nazaire to be picked up and evacuated from France by troopships. On 17 June 1940 H.M.S. Lancastria, which had been requisitioned for use as troopship in 1939, was at St Nazaire. This ship could normally accommodate around 2,200 passengers and crew, but the Captain was ordered to take as many people as possible. Accounts of how many people were on board vary from 4,000 with other estimates of 5,200 and 7,200 possibly up to 9,000. People were crammed everywhere including the cargo holds. All the time German aircraft were overhead and attacking the ships. HMS Lancastria was bombed, and sank within 15-20 minutes. Many of those people who managed to escape into the sea drowned because there were insufficient life jackets, or died from hypothermia, or were choked by fuel oil, plus German aircraft were strafing survivors in the water and dropping flares into the floating oil.

Fewer than 2,500 people were saved with estimates of at least 4,000 men, women and children losing their lives.

The Lancastria was the largest loss of life from a single engagement for British forces in World War Two and is also the largest loss of life in British maritime history - greater than the Titanic and Lusitania combined.

Following the sinking of the Lancastria, Prime Minister Winston Churchill imposed a media blackout. The government feared what the news would do the British nation in the midst of its darkest hour.

Soldier Casualties

Casualties among local members of H.M. Forces officially reported this week include Joseph Walter Hickling, of the R.A.S.C., drowned at sea. He is the eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. Hickling, of 2, Conway-crescent, Carlton.

South Notts Echo

17 August 1940

Joseph is commemorated in the Pornic War Cemetery in Departement de la Loire-Atlantique, Pays de la Loire.

Many of those buried at Pornic War Cemetery were washed ashore after the sinking of the troopship "Lancastria" 17th June 1940.

Information about the cemetery and photographs can be found on

<https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/2210604/pornic-war-cemetery>

The Nottingham Evening Post on 12 August 1940 also reported Joseph's death

DEATHS

HICKLING- Joseph Walter RASC, drowned at sea.
The eldest son of Mr and Mrs Hickling of 2, Conway Crescent, Carlton, Loving brother of Beatie Herbert and Grace,

Probate Records.1940

HICKLING, Joseph Walter of Homelands Attenborough Lane Chilwell Nottinghamshire, died 17 June 1940 on war service. Administration Nottingham. 10 December to Phyllis Annie Hickling widow, Effects £381

<https://probatesearch.service.gov.uk/#wills>

When the CWGC was collating their information following WW2 Phyllis Annie Hickling, was based in.Plymouth.