

Tpr. F.W.Hampshire – 44th Reconnaissance Regiment (Royal Armoured Corps)

Frederick Walter Hampshire was born in Dorking in 1913, the son of Frederick James and Violet Hampshire. He was a member of the Westcott Scouts' Rover Crew in the early 1930s' and this experience would have helped prepare him for his wartime role. In June 1940 he married Greta Stannard and, as wartime newly-weds, they lived with Greta's parents, Ernest and Ellen Stannard at their home at Rookhurst Cottage in Coast Hill Lane.

After basic army training Frederick Hampshire joined the Reconnaissance Corps R.A.C. Known simply as the Recce Corps, these Units had the role of gathering vital information for infantry divisions, probing ahead and screening the flanks of advances. Men normally joined the Corps from the infantry. Each battalion comprised a headquarters squadron, three scouting squadrons and an assault troop which was called up if enemy resistance had to be overcome. The Corps was an elite group and its requirements were demanding. Men had to possess the right qualities and had to pass stringent tests before they were accepted for training.

Frederick was serving in Italy as a member of 'A' Squadron, 44th Reconnaissance (7th Bn The Queens Own Royal West Kent) Regiment when he was killed on 6th September 1944. He was buried in Gradara War Cemetery which is located midway between Pesaro and Riccione. The site for the cemetery was chosen in November 1944. It contains the graves of 1,191 Commonwealth service personnel who died during the advance from Ancona to Rimini which was taken by the Allies on 21st September 1944.

In 1946 Greta married Joshua Forster, a widower, who lived at Rookery Cottage. They had a daughter, also Greta, who was born in 1952 . Joshua had poor eyesight and was tragically killed when he was knocked down crossing the A25 at the end of Rookery Drive. Greta died in 2007, aged 91.