

The **Newton Abbot College History Ambassadors** have been undertaking an investigation into the lives of the family who owned and lived in **Dyrons House** before it became part of the College. You may recognise that Dyrons House is now better known as our sixth form centre!

The family provides us with an interesting link to the First World War, showing us not only a very local connection to the events of the war but the various different ways that people were able to contribute to the war effort.

The Vicary family had lived in the Newton Abbot area since the 1700s. The family at Dyrons House were: **Charles and Octavia Vicary and their children Florence, Charles, Gilbert, Walter, Alexander, Nora and John.**

On these boards you will find information about six of the children from this amazing local family...

**Alexander Vicary:** Alexander joined the Second Battalion in the Gloucestershire Regiment in 1908 and at the outbreak of World War One Alexander's regiment was sent to France where they fought in the Second Battle of Ypres. Towards the end of 1915, the regiment was moved to join the Salonika campaign where they fought in the Struma Valley for three years.

Alexander was quickly promoted and was a Battalion Major for the Second Battalion of the Gloucestershire Regiment during the fighting in Salonika.

Alexander also received a Military Cross and a Distinguished Service Order during his time serving in Salonika. The citation given for his medal tells us that Alexander showed "*conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty during an attack*" and that he "*set a fine example to all ranks of coolness and courage under heavy shell fire*". They went on to say that it was felt that "*the manner in which his battalion consolidated and retained the position under subsequent intense bombardment was undoubtedly due to his personal gallantry and marked ability to command*".

He retired from military work in 1930, but returned in 1940 to fight in Italy and Burma during the Second World War.



Alexander's battalion adopted a dog during their time at a training camp. The dog, named Buller, went to the battlefield with the regiment and was involved in active service successfully completing various missions during his time in the trenches.

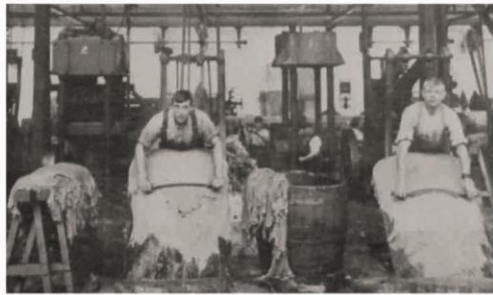


Alexander's horse, named Rajah, made an amazing journey with Alexander from China to India, then on to his posting in France and later to Salonika.

The story is unusual because Rajah not only survived his involvement in the battles of the First World War, but was successfully shipped back home to the UK at the end of the war. The horse lived out his final years in happy retirement with Alexander at the family house of Dyrons.







**Charles Vicary:** As the eldest son, Charles was given the responsibility to take over the family business. When war broke out Charles was able to stay at home because his job was crucial to the war effort. The Bradley Mill produced leather goods for the army.

**Nora Vicary:** As the youngest daughter Nora had more freedom than her older sister, Florence, and was able to also do her bit for the war. Nora joined the St Johns Ambulance and was a nurse for the duration of the First World War.

Vicary  
 Name: Nora Mildred  
 Address: Dymore Newton Abbot  
 Date of Engagement: Dec. 1914 Rank: 2nd Lieut. Pay: Nil  
 Date of Termination: Aug. 1917 Rank: 2nd Lt. Pay: Nil  
 Particulars of Duties: Nursing  
 Other whether part time, and if latter No. of hours served: 4,301 hrs  
 Previous Engagements under Joint War Committee, if any, and where: Nil

**John Vicary:** In 1914 John enlisted in the same Gloucestershire regiment as his brother Alex and was sent fight in Salonika [Greece] he fought alongside his brother in battle.

John received a military cross for his effort in the war. In the citation for the medal it tells us that John "led the front wave of the directing company in two successful attacks... He was wounded during the first attack, but continued at duty, and set his men a splendid example of tenacity and courage."

John remained a soldier through the Second World War, by which time he was a Brigadier and was in command of training troops for battle.



**Gilbert Vicary:** Gilbert joined the 5th (The Haytor) Volunteer Battalion of the Devonshire Regiment. When Kitchener came to Newton Abbot in September 1914 Gilbert was encouraged to join the full Devonshire Regiment in their role in the First World War. The Devons were sent to India in 1914 and by May 1917, they were fighting against the might of the Ottoman Empire (current day Turkey).

Captain G.D. Vicary was wounded in battle and the injury proved fatal. He died on 10th November 1917 aged 32. He was buried in the cemetery in Gaza and a memorial service was held by his family here in Abbotsbury.

**Walter Vicary:** Walter set out upon a medical career and he qualified as a Member of the Royal College of Surgeons in 1912. During the First World War he was appointed Surgeon to His Majesty's Fleet In his role as Surgeon he saw action in locations as far afield as the Mediterranean, the Adriatic, the North Sea and off the West coast of Africa.

Walter later became Surgeon Commander and, when the Second World War came in 1939, Walter re-entered active service and received a medal in recognition of significant services rendered to Norway.



SALONICA Dec 1916  
 Capt. Mackenzie  
 Lt. Col. ...  
 Major ...  
 Captain ...  
 Lieutenant ...  
 Sergeant ...  
 Corporal ...  
 Private ...



The project was completed with support from:

