

The Underhill family in WW1, an introduction

At the outbreak of war in 1914, Collingwoode Underhill senior, at the age of fifty-one was over the age of enlistment, but in order to support the war effort, he joined the Volunteer Training Corps (VTC), the WW1 equivalent of the Home Guard in WW2. His children also played their part: Dorothy worked in the Recruiting Office in Birmingham; Vincent used his skills as a driver and engineer in the 5th Motor Ambulance Convoy (5 MAC) clearing casualties from the front line in France to hospitals and ambulance trains, and Coll became a Signal Instructor. He was attached to the Royal Garrison Artillery. Dorothy, married Andrew Barclay, the 'boy next door' in 1915, but saw little of him for the next three years as he was serving in the RGA in France supporting the 48th South Midland Division. Correspondence to the Underhill family from Leo Barton indicates that they knew each other well. Leo served in the Royal Field Artillery, also in support of the 48th South Midland Division. Coll went on to marry Leo's sister, Gladys, in 1928. With the help of Graham, Coll's son, we have been able to piece together the rôle that each of the family members, highlighted below, played in the Great War.

