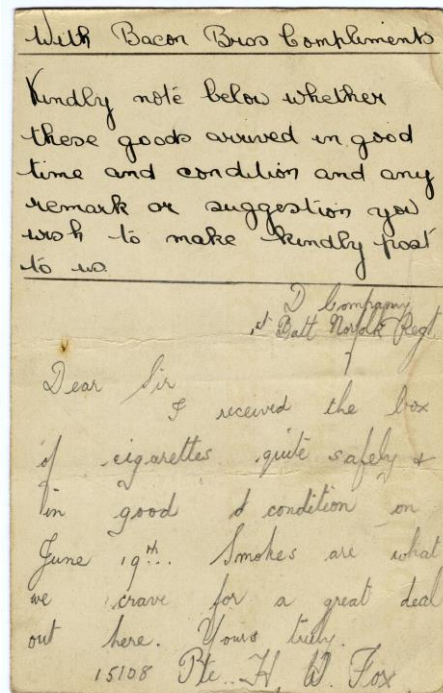
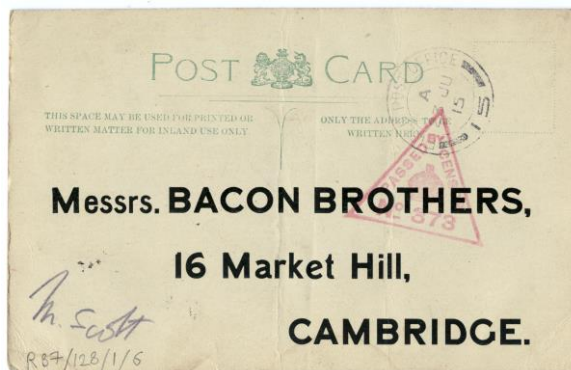


## Smokes from Home



*Market Hill in 1910 (Cambs Archives X20/57A). The Bacon Brothers shop was located on the corner of Market Hill and Rose Crescent where French Connection is currently based. A brass plaque with a poem by C. S. Calverley titled the "Ode to Tobacco" still marks where the firm was located.*

These postcards and letters were sent from soldiers during the First World War to Bacon Brothers tobacconists in Cambridge, to acknowledge the arrival of the cigarettes and tobacco that were sent to them by the shop. Some of the soldiers had bought the goods themselves, as some letters mention sending cheques, and some had been sent by family members. Many of the replies were sent on pre-printed postcards which Bacon Brothers produced to accompany the products.



Postcard from H W Fox, a Private in D Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Norfolk Regiment (Cambs Archives R87/128/1/6).

Many of these soldiers had personal links with Cambridge as they were buying their cigarettes from their local shop. Therefore, they are a good representation of the men who were recruited from Cambridge in the First World War. Most of the soldiers went into local regiments, such as the Suffolk and Bedfordshire Regiments, but many of them ended up in regiments from around the country, such as the Seaforth Highlanders and the South Wales Borderers. A couple of the soldiers who bought cigarettes from Cambridge were Canadian and Australian.

These soldiers were stationed almost everywhere the British army was fighting in World War One. There are postcards from Cairo in Egypt, Bangkok in Siam (Thailand), Salonika in Greece, Gallipoli in Turkey, Mesopotamia, and the trenches in France. There are even some postcards from prisoners of war who were being held captive in Germany.



*Lantern slide of First World War army tents in Salonika included in the parish church records of St. Luke's, Chesterton (Cambs Archives P40A/28/179).*

About half of the soldiers who bought cigarettes from Bacon Bros. were officers, because their connection to Cambridge was due to attending University there. Unlike other towns, Cambridge produced a large proportion of officers due to student involvement with the Cambridge University Officer Training Corps. This meant that when recruitment for the war started, the upper classes who attended Cambridge University had the necessary training to be elevated straight to officer rank.

With Bacon Bros compliments  
Kindly note below whether  
these goods arrived in good time  
& condition & any remark or  
suggestion you wish to make  
& post to us

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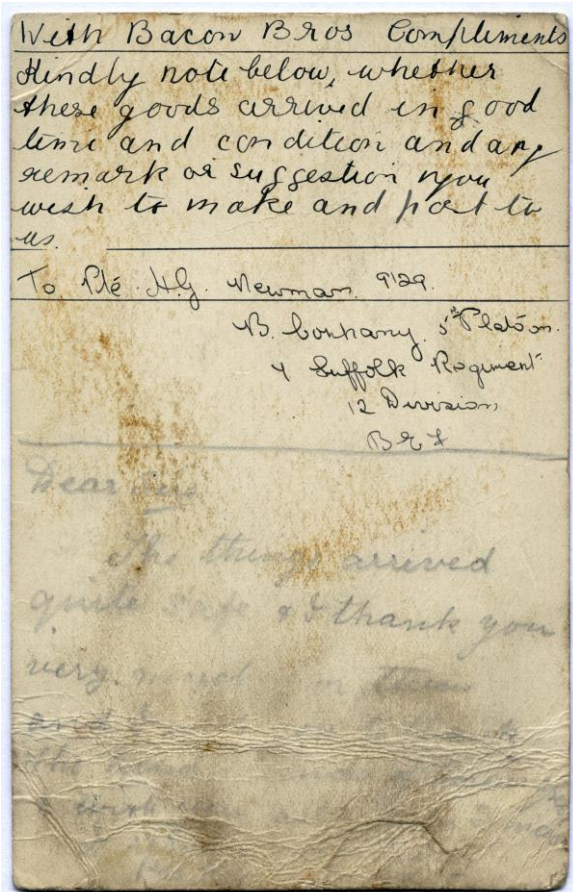
Cigarettes received  
in good order.  
H.A. Littlejohn.  
459<sup>th</sup> Bally R.F.A.



Cambs Archives R87/128/1/3. Photograph provided by Simon from the Great War Forum.

For example this postcard was sent by Hugh Ascot Littlejohn who was born in 1894, in Johannesburg, South Africa. Educated at Malvern College, and at Pembroke College, Cambridge, BA, 1914, Hugh joined the Officer Training Corps at Pembroke. He signed up for the army in 1913, when he was 19, and was immediately given an officer-rank position as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Royal Field Artillery. In 1916 Hugh was awarded the Military Cross for repeatedly entering a gun pit which was on fire despite the fact that it was full of 200 rounds of high explosive shells. The fire was put out due to Hugh's actions. From 1917 to 1920 Hugh was attached to the Egyptian Army with the rank of Bimbashi (Major) and was wounded in 1918 whilst fighting in the Nyima Hills. Hugh was also awarded the rare Sultan of Sudan's Medal. In 1920 he became a barrister with the Inner Temple. In 1935 Hugh was living in a flat in London with Jeanne Littlejohn, his wife, and he later became a businessman in Paris. He died in 1937 in Burgundy, France aged 43, of unknown cause.

Unfortunately, as you would expect, not all of the soldiers writing to Bacon Bros. survived the war. Whilst it is not always possible to discover the army records of authors of the postcards the following two soldiers can be identified as having been killed in the war.



This is the postcard of Private Harry George Newman, of the 7th Suffolk Regiment, No. 9129 (Cambs Archives R87/128/1/38). He was a traction engine driver from Cambridge, and was killed in action on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of December 1915, four days after writing this postcard.

With Bacon Bros Compliment.  
Kindly note below whether  
these goods arrived in good  
time and condition and  
any remarks or suggestion  
you wish to make and post  
to us.

Serjt A. Thurley 8226. A Corp.  
8 Bort. Reg. Bedo.  
B to X accy  
22/12/15.

Dear Sirs  
Pleased to say  
Tobacco arrived in good order  
this morning.

yours truly  
A Thurley Serjt

This postcard was sent by Sergeant Arthur Thurley, of the 8th Bedfordshire Regiment, No. 8226 (Cams Archives R87/128/1/43). Born 1886 in Cambridge, he was a carpenter. He died on the 27<sup>th</sup> of July 1916 in Belgium, aged 30.