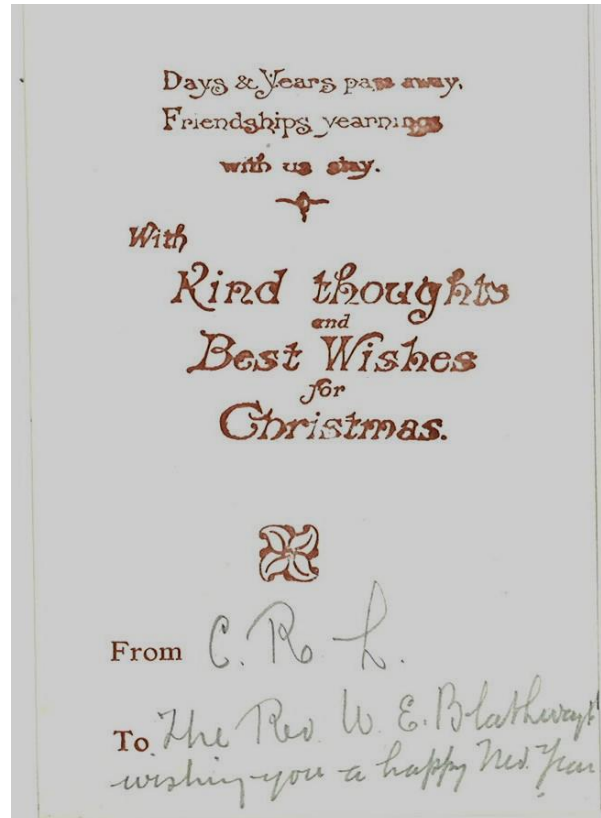


## Christmas Cards from the Front

**Printed cards:** These were the simplest type of greetings cards and probably the cheapest, but in some smaller towns, they may have been the only cards available near to the front lines.



**Photographic cards:** These were very popular, especially where soldiers had access to larger towns, where chemists and photography studios could be found. They generally consisted of a photograph of the soldier together with an appropriate greeting.

Often soldiers would get together with their friends or comrades to have joint images taken, so making it cheaper. Although colour photography was available, this was often very expensive and so most of these types of cards were black and white.



**Embroidered cards:** Known as 'WW1 Silks', these were made of silk that had been hand embroidered onto lace. They were made by French and Belgian women refugees who worked in their homes or refugee camps and produced in long strips (with about 25 individual embroidered designs per strip) and then cut and mounting onto card, whereupon they were then sold to soldiers for a few pennies. Soldiers could write on the back and send them back home to their loved ones and sweethearts.



They provided a valuable income for the women and because of their beauty and uniqueness they were very popular with British and American servicemen. Like greetings cards today, there were lots of different themes - Christmas, birthdays and general greetings cards. These often had motives such as 'To My

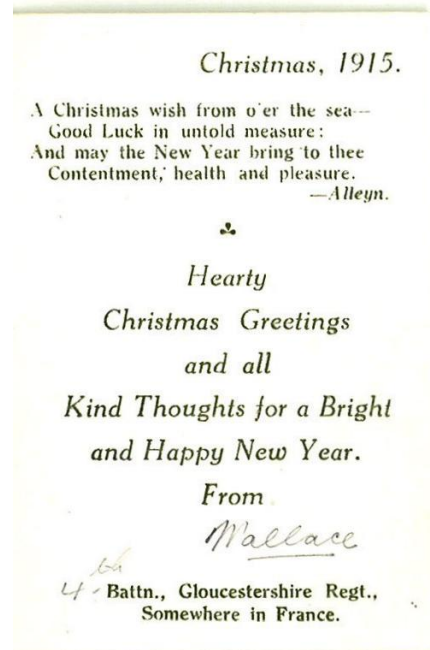


'Dear Mother' or 'To My Dear Sister' (as the one below). There were also patriotic cards often featuring British, French and American flags and symbols.

**Commercial greetings cards:** These came in all sorts of designs for lots of occasions just like greetings cards today. Some had very typical designs (such as Christmas trees for Christmas) but others were more odd, such as the one below which has a swallow. Others used drawings or cartoons by famous artists (like the Heath Robinson ones below), which were personalised by printers.



**Hand-made Regimental Cards:** These were hand-made designs produced by craftsman for individual Army regiments. They usually had the regimental badge on the front and works of greeting inside. This example shows the Egyptian Sphinx badge of the Gloucestershire Regiment.



**Cards to Soldiers from their Home Towns:** Towns and districts would often send greetings cards - usually showing local scenes - to their soldiers serving overseas, such as the example below sent from the people of Cirencester to all Cirencester soldiers serving in 1916.

