



1942 postcard that found it's way home

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The chance discovery in California of a postcard written by a British soldier in the Second World War has led to a Norfolk friendship stretching across two continents.

Leora Krygier found a postcard written in April 1942 by British Army private Arthur Maynard as she was rummaging around a second-hand store in her hometown of Los Angeles.

After two years of research she finally tracked down the postcard writer, but he had died.

But she flew over to England to return the postcard to the writer's brother, who lives in Norfolk.

The postcard read: "Many thanks. I'll soon be out of here now, then I shall be lit up! God Bless America and FDR."

She later found out the postcard was a thank you note for a package of cigarettes sent to the soldier by the Overseas League Tobacco Fund.

She said: "I'm not sure what it was about the yellowing postcard that spoke to me. The gift of cigarettes seemed an odd throwback to another time. The text itself wasn't distinctive or sentimental, not even a letter to a loved one from the front.

"But I knew I liked the way the soldier had carved out eight lines in such a small space, the curling loops and curves of his handwriting, and his stab at humour.

"Mostly, though, I liked that he'd taken the time to write an ordinary thank you note in the midst of a war."

She spent a year on the internet trying to find Mr Maynard. She searched through the National Archives, the US and British censuses,

American Leora Krygier, who tracked down a Norfolk family after buying a postcard written by Arthur Maynard during the second world war.



The postcard written by Arthur Maynard during the second world war.

contacted the British Army, hired a graphologist and wrote hundreds of letters and e-mails to sources all over the world.

After a year of searching, and many disappointments, she finally found the private, but sadly he had passed away.

But she travelled to Stibbard, near Fakenham, with her teenage daughter, to return the postcard to Mr Maynard's brother and sister, Tom Maynard, 84, and Winifred Davis, 87, where they struck up a friendship. Next week she is coming back for another visit.

Mrs Krygier said: "I was welcomed as a long-lost family member. I learned that although Arthur had come from a poor, working class family, he loved the classics and found comfort in painting watercolors."

Arthur Maynard had served as a private in the Army Service Corps, but was invalided out in about 1942 or 1943 because of stomach problems. He never married and lived in Edmonton and Tottenham.

Tom Maynard, pictured left, a former warehouse manager who has also lived in Hockering and Bawdeswell, said his brother, who worked as a labourer after the war, was in London when he wrote the letter.

The widower, who has no children, said: "When I first received the letter from Leora I was astounded. I told my sister, and we both realized the postcard must have been written by Arthur.

"Coincidentally, I saved many letters Arthur wrote to me while I was living in Canada after the war, and the writing was the same so we confirmed it was his letter."

The matching letter which confirmed the postcard was from Arthur was written to Tom by his brother in 1961, two years before his death. In the letter he quoted novelist George Eliot: "The realm of silence is large enough beyond the grave."

Mrs Davis lives in Stevenage, Hertfordshire, but visited her brother in Norfolk when Mrs Krygier returned the postcard.