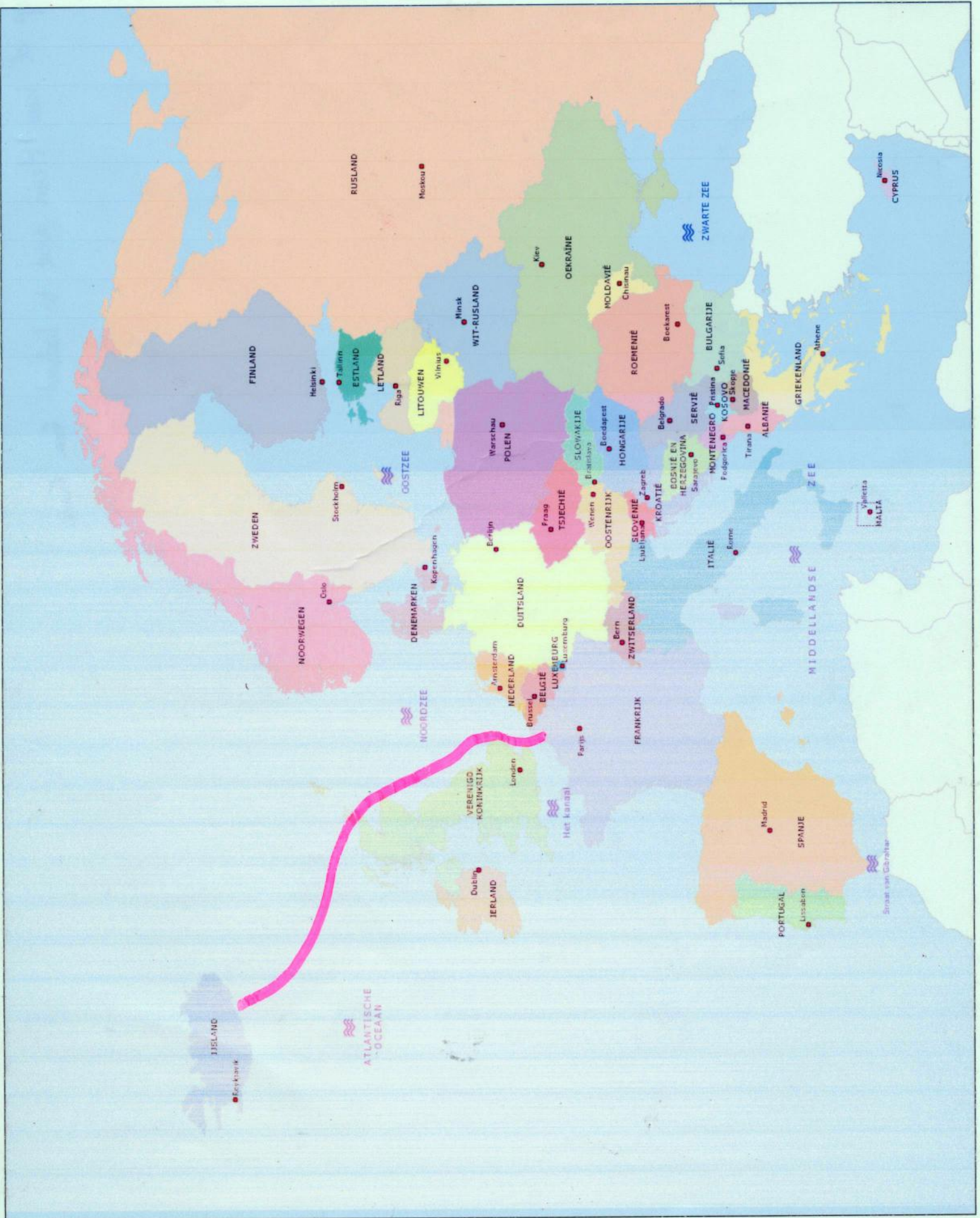


My Great Great Grandad (Henri Vilain) was born in 1891. He lived in a small coastal village in Belgium called Cokerseyde. He was the eldest son of 18 children. His father was a fisherman and they all lived in a two-roomed fisherhouse. Over the years six of his siblings died, life was hard. At first their house only had one room but the family got too big and they had to make

the house bigger. There was a place where if you dug you would find yellow bricks and they used them to make their house bigger. Later on, someone found out that it was an old monastery. At the age of 8 Henri went with his father to Dunkirk, France to join a sailboat destined to Iceland to go fishing. They would leave France in February and come back in September. It took two weeks to get to Iceland. (From France to Iceland is 35000km.) Then they would fish for cod 24 hour day. They ate potatoes and the heads to the fish with some sauce made from fat and beer. The boat had a crew of 18 adults and two children. The children had to clean the beds, cook food, make coffee and help to clean the fish. In the cold weather the boat would freeze and someone would have to scrape the ice of the boat. The crew had one week on land to go to church, wash clothes, visit the doctor and fix the ship. When they came back from Iceland they received one barrel of fish and got poorly paid. Henri moved to Antwerp and worked on a tug boat. He enlisted for the army in 1914 and was in Flanders Fields for four years. Henri never spoke about the war and after the war he returned to the tug boats.

Information from Marc Vilain  
Written by Kaya Vilain (2005)



# CARTE DU FEU VUURKAART

1914-1918

délivrée à *VILAIN,*  
afgeleverd aan *Henri L.*

Soldaat.

né à *Koksijde,* le *20-6-1891.*  
geboren te *den*

a servi pendant la campagne *1914-1918,*  
heeft tijdens den veldtocht *1914-1918*

du  
gediend, van

*4-8-14 tot 11-11-18 - Genie 6 L. D.*



N° d'ordre *V/15723*  
Volnummer

Signature du titulaire :  
Handteekening van den houder :

Le Ministre de la Défense Nationale,  
De Minister van Landsverdediging,  
P. O. - B. B.

Pour le *Capitaine A. De Baene.*  
Voor de *Directeur-Délégué.*  
Signé : *Capitaine Torrè.*

Nombre de chevrons de front :  
Getal frontstrepren :

Blessures :  
Kwetsuren :

Distinctions honorifiques de guerre  
Eervolle oorlogs onderscheidingen :

*Oorlogskruis met palm.*

*IJzerkruis.*

*Zegemedaille.*

*Herinneringsmedaille 1914-1918.*





