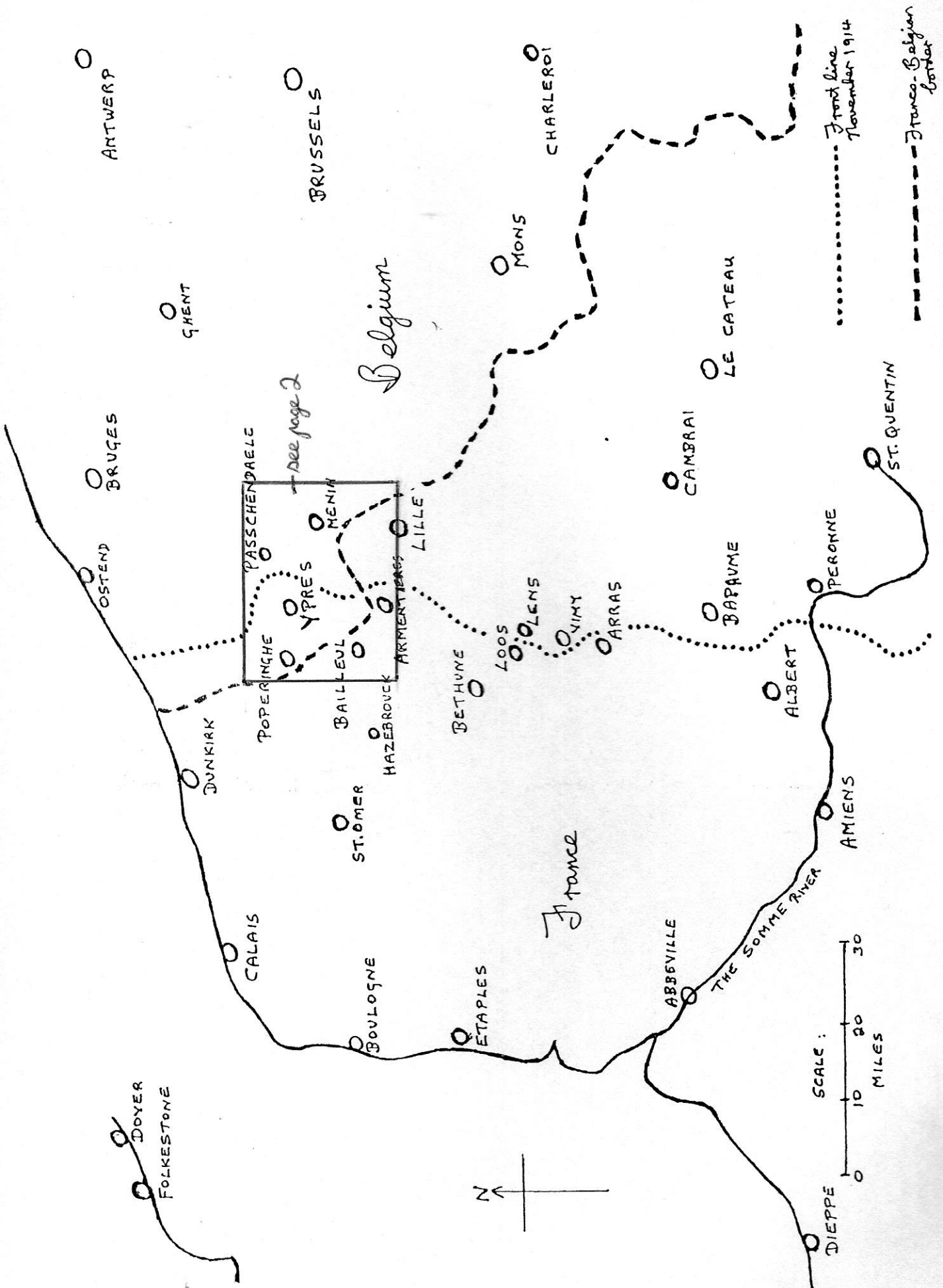


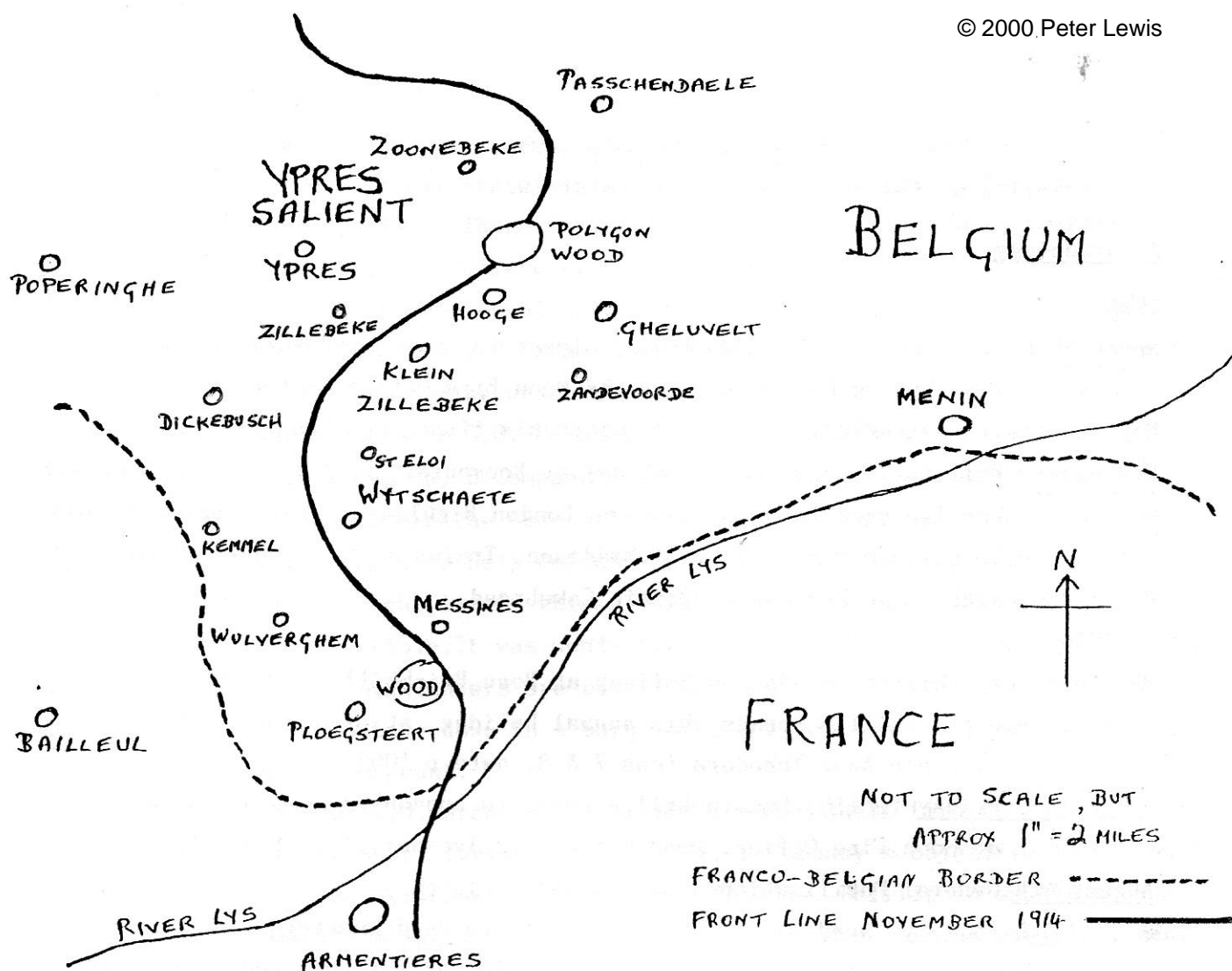
# HOW DEAR IS LIFE

## AN INDEX









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For those with little or no knowledge of the composition of the various army units in the Great War I provide a rough guide. An 'army' (there were at least five British 'armies' in France, not necessarily all at the same time), commanded by a General, consisted of two or more 'corps' each consisting of anything up to 120,000 men, commanded by Lieutenant Generals. A typical corps consisted of a small number of 'divisions', each of some 10,000 men, commanded by Major Generals. A division consisted of two or more 'brigades', each of some 1,000 men, commanded by Brigadiers, or (usually) senior Colonels. A brigade might consist of two or more 'battalions', commanded by Colonels. A battalion consisted of from four to ten 'companies', each of up to 120 men, commanded by Majors or senior Captains. In war time all these figures varied considerably, depending on circumstance. A Company of 'poor bloody infantry', such as the one in which Phillip Maddison served, would have been commanded (usually) by a Captain, supported by three or four subalterns (First and Second Lieutenants, the former being the senior), with a Company Sergeant-major, two or three sergeants, half a dozen corporals and lance-corporals, and up to 100 'private' soldiers, usually making up three or four 'platoons', which themselves might be split up into 'Sections' or 'Squads'.

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How Dear is Life (1954)

covering period March 1913 to November 1914

A Chronology

1913

March 25th (Ladyday) Phillip Maddison, almost 18, commences work at the Wine Vaults Lane Branch of the Moon Fire Office in the City (ch 1)

May 6th (half-quarter day) Phillip receives his first pay cheque (p 33)

September Phillip has his annual holiday at Rookhurst, with cousin Willy (p 58)

October Phillip aged 18½ yrs joins the London Highlanders Territorials (p 67)  
He becomes 9689 Pte P.S.T.Maddison. Trains at the School of Arms with another cousin Bertie Cakebread

1914

May (Whitsun) Phillip spends his holiday at Beau Brickhill (pp 85-87)

July, middle of Phillip spends his annual holiday at Lynmouth, staying with his Aunt Theodora (chs 7 & 8, date p 106)

July 31st, Friday (p 116) Cousin Willie comes to London to commence work at Moon Fire Office, Head Office, on Tuesday, August 4th (p 122)

August 4th General Mobilisation ordered, War declared

5th Phillip aged 19 yrs 4 mos reports to Head Quarters (location not given).(p 158) He is issued with rifle and bayonet, and trains with new comrades at Hyde Park (pp 146-147)

by August 30th London Highlanders march through Wandsworth to Wimbledon Common, in B Company, onward through East Horsley to Reigate, saluting the King (George V), to Camp Hill Camp, Crowborough, Ashdown Forest, Sussex. (p 176) Some military training at 'Bleak Hill' there.

September (2nd week) Phillip's parents visit Crowborough and take him out to lunch.(p 195)

Phillip spends short embarkation leave at home. (pp 199-208)

September (3rd week) London Highlanders march off to railway station (not identified) and entrain to Southampton.(pp 210-214)

Embark on board troopship (not named) to Le Havre, France, camp in a field overnight (p 217), then entrain to Villeneuve, south of Paris, billeted for week in an empty school (p 218), sorting out old rusty shells, and helping wounded French soldiers.

October, early Entrain for Orleans, where the London Highlanders organise a new military camp (p 220)

October, 4th week) Entrain for the Front (p 221), through Beauvais and Amiens to St Omer (p 226). There Phillip receives letters and parcels from home. (p 227)

1914 (continued)

October, late B Company, commanded by Captain 'Fiery' Forbes, march out of St Omer to billet in a convent, location not given. Bussed to Ypres (p 231). There Phillip comes across cousin Gerry Cakebread and the three Wallace brothers. (p 234)

The London Highlanders territorials support the 'regulars' defending Ypres. B Company march out of Ypres through Hooze towards Gheluvelt, coming under shell-fire for first time, where General Haig meets the C.O. Colonel The Earl of Findhorn.(p 239)

October 31st(Hallowe'en) B Company return to Hooze Chateau, divisional H.Q. (p 242) where the General inspects them. They march back to Ypres with orders to help defend the Wytschaete- Messines ridge.(p 245) 'This is the life!' thinks Phillip (p 243), and 'This was War! It was terrible.It was wonderful!' (p 245) 'All fear was gone.'(p 262) London Highlanders are bussed to a nearby village, St Eloi,(p 246). Phillip beds down in a barn loft, and meets up with Bertie Cakebread, now a sergeant.

At dawn L.H.march out of St Eloi, under shell-fire (p 250) to 'Whitesheet' (Wytschaete).(p 252) B Company's objective is a windmill between Wytschaete and Messines (p 255). Phillip is unable to load his rifle magazine. Company under rifle and machine-gun fire, men, including the 'Iron Colonel' (p 259) and Captain 'Oats' McQuaker p 263) being killed around him.

B Company is ordered to reinforce the Dragoon Guards (the 'Carabin-eers') (pp 260 & 265) in the trenches (here mentioned for the first time) under heavy shell-fire (p 269). Phillip is half-buried by collapsed trench walls following a near miss, his rifle destroyed. They repulse an attack by waves of cheering Bavarians 'supported' by their brass bands coming south from the Ypres-Menin Road. Phillip's replacement rifle's <sup>barrel</sup> is red-hot, on Hallowe'en. Shell-fire continues, with machine-gun fire from Messines. Phillip and Pte Martin are ordered to fetch more ammunition. Martin, previously injured (broken ribs, see p 278) is unable to help carry the heavy ammo boxes. Phillip leaves Martin and the ammo and arrives back at the trench to find B Company virtually wiped out in a bayonet duel.Peter Wallace killed.(p 278) Colonel the Earl of Findhorn killed (p 277) 'Fiery' Forbes , now a major, the new C.O. Field Marshal Sir John French chats briefly with the L.H. (p 280), who now advance towards Messines but soon withdraw towards Wulverghem from where they are bussed back to Bailleul, congratulated by the C.in-C. and General Allenby. (p 282)

1914 (continued)

November, early At Bailleul, Phillip's request to be transferred to the safer Transport, because, he said, he liked horses, is received with contempt. (p 291) When on guard duty at Bellewaarde farm, where the Company is digging trenches, Phillip's greatcoat is ripped by a bullet. (p 293) Remnants of Companies A and B now merged into No 1 Company under Captain Ogilby. (p 294) Phillip now exhausted (p 295) but is cheered up by meeting Horace Cranmer of the old Bloodhound Patrol (of Boy Scouts). 'Up the ole Blood'ounds!' 'This was the life!' (pp 297-298)

November 5th (p 299) Phillip (and Cranmer of the Grenadier Guards whose brother has been killed earlier, p 301) stand guard near Zandvoorde (p 300), again under shell-fire, and another German attack is repulsed. 'Up ve ole Blood'arnds!' Cranmer leaves with the Guards and is eventually reported as Missing. (see Fox p 59) The London Highlanders occupy trenches, behind the new barbed-wire fences, beating back occasional half-hearted German attacks, hoping for peace. Phillip becomes 'lousy', like the 'old soldiers'. (p 310) No 1 Company is relieved by French troops, and withdraw towards the Ypres-Menin Road north-west of Gheluvelt.

November 11th (p 321) The B.E.F. (Old Contemptibles') face further attacks by the Germans who break through the defence lines near Ypres, the B.E.F. suffering heavy losses, the Guards Brigade decimated. The last reserve battalion is the L.H. Phillip, unafraid now, facing thousands of Germans, including the dreaded Prussian Guards, does not care whether he is killed or not. (p 324/325) A bullet bursts in the breech of his rifle, and knocks him out. General Fitzclarence V.C. is killed near him. (p 327) The London Highlanders take cover in the woods (possibly Polygon Wood)

November 14th News is received that Field Marshal Lord Roberts, the Boer War C.in-C., has died at St Omer (this was 14/11/1914). (p 328)

November, (3rd week) The Guards Brigade (including the supporting L.H.) is relieved. (p 329) They march, with many halts, for eight hours, down the Menin Road to Ypres, many men, including Phillip, losing their boots in the mud. The London Highlanders, after nine days of continuous action, number less than 300. Phillip, excused duties with blistered feet, reflects 'This was the life!' p 321) Phillip, behind the lines, considers applying for a commission (p 332), but without much hope of success. Although the 'veteran' with the gaping tear across his greatcoat writes cheery letters

1914

November (3rd week of) continued

home he fears that his real donkey-boy cowardice will be discovered by his comrades (p 333). But after weeks of being cold, wet, hungry, under fire and mostly in fear for his life, he has survived 'First Ypres' practically unscathed.

November 21st (circa) Thomas Turney and his daughter Hetty Maddison watch the funeral procession of the late Lord Roberts. In St Paul's Cathedral Hetty prays for the continued safety of her son Phillip, and Thomas prays for all his children and grandchildren.

\* \* \* \* \*

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