

# WW1 Centenary Tour



This Centenary Tour takes in many of the major battlefields in France and Belgium, and a number of the actual airfields used by Allied Forces. You may use any single-engine aircraft however, you may have an old WW1 relic in your hangar which you could dust off, check over and fly for a bit more realism. You may also use autopilot, NDB's & radio, but for a more challenging tour, note that those brave lads of the period did not have those luxuries, so do try without them, and where they exist, do try to use grass strips (just recommendations; no penalties!) You may also want to limit your altitude to no more than 4000ft to benefit from the view. Most aircraft entered service at Farnborough, and that's our starting point. Each of the flights has something of interest, and while you should always plot your course, in some instances we shall be veering off, so it is essential that you read the following Flight Notes. Enjoy the tour and the history!

**August 1914** (*Skytrack will not log your flights if you set the sim time to 1914 use 2014!*)

FLT 1: Leaving EGLF we follow one of the [BEF's](#) routes to Dieppe, and this was one of the [RFC's](#) initial bases.

FLT 2: This route takes you over the (future) Somme Battlefields (LFAQ) and Cambrai to Maubeuge, where the BEF prepared for their first engagement with the enemy at Mons, just a few miles further north.



FLT 3: French and British Forces failed to halt the Germans' advance, and so began the famous Retreat from Mons. We follow one of their routes to the area just north of Paris, where, with new units arriving, the Allied Armies halted the German advance at the River Marne, east of Paris.

FLT 4: The Allies fought their way north to the River Aisne, and we join them at one of their crossing-points - Courmelles. After a 3-week battle just north of the river, stalemate set in, and the start of trench warfare began with what became known as The Race for the Sea, as each side tried to outflank the other.



FLT 5: While the French fought their way eastwards, the BEF moved n/w towards the ports of Boulogne, Calais and Dunkirk. We fly first to Amiens where a major military base was set up, and where it remained throughout the war. After T/O, turn due north, then follow the river course west, passing over Compiègne on the way to Amiens. This entire area to the west and north of Paris and the coast was the largest "city" in the world due to Allied troops occupying almost every town and village. There are over three thousand Commonwealth cemeteries spread over the area!

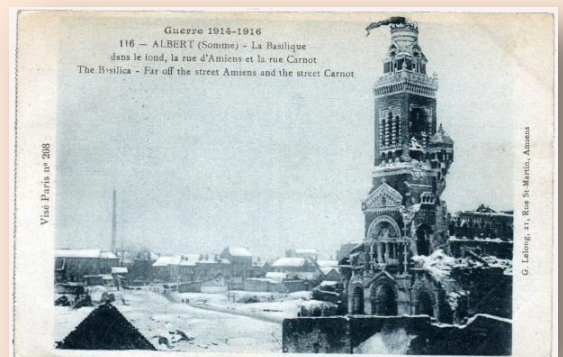
FLT 6: Next, we fly to Koksijde, just a mile south of the Front Line at Nieuport - the River Yser was the dividing line between the opposing forces, and ran straight to Ypres. Ypres was surrounded on the north, east and west for the duration of the war, and was shelled every day for over four years!

FLT 7: We now take in an important stretch of Front Line, so be careful with your navigation as we do a circuitous route. Plot a DCT Course to LFQL, but after T/O, fly HDG147. As you climb to about 3,000 feet, you'll see small areas of the River Yser on your left. As soon as you're at height, descend to 1800

feet maintaining a strict HDG of 147, level off and reduce speed to about 90kts. Ahead, you will soon see the dark patch of Ypres, and a glimpse of two lakes on the city's s/e side. Make sure you head for the one on the left (Zillebeke Lake - triangular shape). As you pass over the western edge of the city, watch for the roundabout ahead and slightly left. This is the area of the Menin Gate and the start of the famous Menin Road. As you begin to pass over the lake, turn to a HDG of 180. Remain at 1800 feet and bring your speed back up. In a few minutes you'll see some lakes appearing ahead; this will be the town of Armentieres on the Belgian/French border. Just before you reach the lakes you'll see a wooded area directly in front. This is Ploegsteert Wood, scene of the 1914 Christmas Truce. Once past the town, you are entering the area of the 1915 Battles of Bois Grenier, Fromelles, Aubers and Neuve Chappelle. As you prepare for your approach to Benifontaine, the airfield and all around is the Battlefield of Loos - with one of the man-made slag-heap hills to the east. This is the coal-mining and industrial area of Lens.



FLT 8: We now take off for the 1916 Battles of the Somme, landing on the Front Line at Bray (Albert). About 10 minutes after T/O, you should see the first stretches of water - the River Sambre - which gradually forms a string, and you will soon cross this as it starts to course to your left. The aircraft factory at Bray today makes parts for the A380, but in 1916 was the Allied Front Line base, famous for its "[Leaning Virgin](#)." Troops often claimed that when the virgin finally fell, the war would end; it did!



FLT 9: We now fly to the n/e, passing over the Hindenburg Line and Cambrai - scene of the first great tank battle in 1917.

We are heading once again for Maubeuge, just south of Mons. It was in Mons that the war ended in precisely the same place for the British as it started! Only this time, we were the victors. Only a mile or so from this airfield lies the small cemetery of St Symphorien. Here rest the first and last British soldiers killed during the war.



FLT 10: We could not leave the war unfinished! So we fly to Compiègne to sign the Peace Treaty (Armistice) in 1918.

FLT 11: Before leaving for home, we should take a look at the British training fields at Etaples and the base hospitals at Berck. Plot your course to LFAT via LFAM, following the River Somme (you can follow it from Bray (LFAQ) if you wish), then continue north following the D940 to Etaples. On the north shore corner, was the much-hated Bullring, training centre for British troops, and from here to Boulogne were several Allied base hospitals.

FLT 12: The tour is almost complete, so set your course for Blighty, and hope you enjoyed!

FLT	From	To	Route
1	EGLF (Farnborough)	LFAB (St Aubin, Dieppe)	DCT
2	LFAB	LFQJ (Elesmes, Maubeuge)	LFAQ LFYG
3	LFQJ	LFPP (le Plessis, Paris)	DCT
4	LFPP	LFJS (Courmelles, Aisne)	DCT
5	LFJS	LFAY (Glisy, Amiens)	LFAD (or inc' deviation)
6	LFAY	EBFN (Koksijde, Belgium)	LFRT
7	EBFN	LFQL (Benifontaine)	circuitous
8	LFQL	LFAQ (Bray, Albert)	DCT
9	LFAQ	LFQJ (Elmes, Maubeuge)	LFYG
10	LFQJ	LFAD (Margny, Compiègne)	LFOW
11	LFAD	LFAT (Paris-Plage, Le Touquet)	(opt' deviation) LFAM
12	LFAT	EGLF (Farnborough)	EGKA

