



Pilot's Companion Guide to  
**The Western Front**  
Flanders & Northern France

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## Introduction

Air fighting was born during World War I. The chaotic fighting in the air stood in stark contrast to the stalemate in the ground war. Both sides had dug in. The attacker was at such a disadvantage when assaulting a dug-in opponent, that a protracted stalemate resulted.



Since the actual location of the front lines did not move often, quickly or very far during the four years of war, the designers of Bullseye Software's Flying Circus opted to leave the front stable, in a position that approximates the front lines in 1916 and again in 1917 and 1918. BSFC is more concerned with the air war.

Armies of hundreds of thousands fought for control around Ypres and in the flatlands of the Somme River region. Because of the huge stakes involved, both sides concentrated their air forces in the same area in determined efforts to control the skies.

It was there, in 1917 and 1918, that Manfred von Richtofen commanded his Jagdgruppe I. The British nick-named JGI "The Flying Circus" because of the color paint schemes the German pilots used.

The BSFC "world" for flying in is 60 miles wide (east/west) and 110 miles long (north/south). In the interest of performance, no land is modeled beyond those bounds. For the time being, this means you will not be able to fly to Paris or London from the "world."

The terrain in Flying Circus is based on, but is not a slavish re-creation of the Flanders/French countryside. This region is very flat in reality. More and higher hills were included, especially near the edges of the 'world' to make for a more interesting flying environment.

The designers have included three pairs of air bases, one each Allied and German, in the north, middle and south. Also included are several landmark towns and villages. There were, of course, hundreds of tiny villages dotting this area, and many dozens of actual airfields, but in the interest of performance, only a select few were chosen for inclusion.

A few notes about the landmarks and features of the BSFC "world" follow the map. The descriptions should help you get to know the area and get a feel for the history.

# Map of the WESTERN FRONT for use with Bullseye Software's Flying Circus





*Mont Kemmel  
as seen from the  
south.*

## Allied North Sector

**Cassel-Kemmel Ridge** - A row of hills west of Ypres that command the countryside for miles around.

**Ypres** - Ancient cloth weaving town of Flanders. Scene of three fierce battles during the war, as the Allies fought to hold on to the Ypres “bastion” and break through to Lille, and the Germans fought to close the ‘salient’.

**Hazebrouck** - Market town and important railway junction. Allied troops and supplies landed at the coast were redirected from here to the front lines.

**Neuve-Eglise** - Small village at the foot of Mont Kemmel. Allied supply center, communications and traffic crossroads.

**Armentieres** - Linen-weaving town nearly wiped out by fighting. It formed another salient in the German lines.

**Le Gorgue** - Allied airfield.

**Bethune** - Factory town and supply center, especially coal. Allied staging areas for attacks on La Bassée salient.

**Vimy** - Tiny village famous for the high ground near it, “Vimy Ridge” which the Germans held and the Allies paid dearly in capturing.

## German North Sector

**Passchendaele** - Small Flemish village that sits atop a low ridge. Scene of massive assault by Allied armies seeking to break German lines. The huge loss of Allied lives here became legendary.

**Tourcoing** - Wool-weaving, industrial city and supply center for attacks on the Ypres salient.

**Lille** - Major industrial and fortress city. Capital of the French Nord Department. Important communications and transportation center. Goal of many Allied attacks.

**Phalempin** - German airfield.

**La Bassée Salient** - Former small industrial village shelled into oblivion by Allied artillery. This salient proved one of the strongest in the German line, resisting repeated Allied attacks.



*The low rolling plains of the Somme region, as seen near Albert, looking northeast*

## Allied Middle Sector

- Artois Highlands** - Hilly uplands reaching from Arras to the channel. Formed a natural barrier and funneled armies into the flat Somme plains.
- Doullens** - Ancient fortified village south of the Artois highlands, in the Authie Valley. Served as Allied HQ and staging area for Somme battles.
- Arras** - Capital city of the Pas-de-Calais Department, near the head of the Scarpe River. Strongly held by Allied troops, it formed a salient in the front. Scene of fierce and bloody fighting as the Allies sought to break out.
- Bouzincourt** - Allied airfield, in BSFC.
- Albert** - Small industrial town in the Ancre Valley. Heavily damaged in the war. Served as the Allied near-front distribution point.
- Corbie** - Small village on north bank of the Somme River. Rail junction between Albert and the rear. Richtofen was shot down just east of here.

## German Middle Sector

- Douai** - Industrial town and major rail transportation junction. Situated in the Scarpe River valley.
- Scheldt River** - (Fr. *Escaut* ) Major river starting south of Cambrai and running to Atwerp and the North Sea. Heavily canalized.
- Sensee Valley** - A marshy small-river valley with canals connecting to the Scheldt canal.
- Gommecourt** - Small village and chateau, forming one of the strongest German defensive points in its sector.
- Croisilles** - Tiny village and scene of fighting in Battle of Arras.
- Grandcourt** - German airfield, in BSFC.
- Bapaume** - Small market village, but became central German distribution point near the Somme battlefields.
- Cambrai** - Very ancient city dating to Roman era. A prosperous industrial city famous for its textiles. Sits astride the Canal de St. Quentin running south and the Canal du Escaut running north. Cambrai served as major transportation center and German HQ.
- Bridge at Hem** - Village of Hem on north bank of Somme River whose marshy banks served as significant barrier to troop movement. North/south road from Roye to Bapaume.



*South of the Somme plain, the land rises to the hills of the Champagne.*

## Allied South Sector

**Montdidier** - Village and Allied rail junction linking Albert and Compiègne.

**Lassigny** - Allied airfield, in BSFC

**Compiègne** - Chateau town on the Oise River, which formed one of the outer defense points for Paris. Used by Allied armies as an HQ.

**Ribecourt** - Natural bend in Oise River. Army staging area in BSFC.

**Verberie** - Small village on the Oise River which, in BSFC, serves as a supply center.

**Soissons** - Picturesque old cathedral town which became a center for Allied activity in the sector. The town commanded the Asine Valley.

**Oise River** - Significant river flowing south west, to the Siene. Formed a natural defensive line.

## German South Sector

**St. Quentin** - Major transportation center situated at the headwaters of the Somme River and the Canal de St.Quentin running north to Cambrai.

**Roye** - Trading and agricultural village on the trade routes between St. Quentin and Compiègne. Heavily damaged by Allied fire.

**Ste. Simone** - Very small village on the north side of the Guiscard valley which, in BSFC, is used as a supply and troop staging area.

**Tergneir** - Small village on the south side of the Guiscard valley. A significant rail junction for traffic of supplies headed to the front.

**Noyon** - German airfield, in BSFC.

**Guiscard Valley** - Splits the Noyon Uplands east/west. These hills form the first traces of the rugged Ardennes.

**Nampoel** - Small village and scene of fierce fighting over control of the Aisne valley.

## Reference

This Pilot's Guide was created for use with Bullseye Software's Flying Circus. Flying Circus is a Macintosh platform World War I flight simulator



game, which can be played offline — with or against computer-controlled pilots, or played online against other human opponents. Flying Circus captures the look and feel of WWI air combat. With the

custom mission editor, you can create a nearly infinite variety of situations to challenge your skills.

## Printing a Map

To help you navigate, you may wish to print a copy of the map on page 4 to take with you in your 'cockpit.' If you have a lower-resolution printer, you may wish to enlarge the image and print selected portions.

## Watch for Updates

For more information about Flying Circus, check Bullseye's web site at: <http://www.nauticom.net/www/website/bullseye/>  
Updates and additions to Flying Circus will be posted on the website.

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