



Maurice Guillaux...

An Introduction



The dashing, elegant aviator Maurice Guillaux was born in France in 1883. We know little of his early career, but by 1911 he was the chief pilot of the Caudron factory, giving many aerial displays. He was successful in the Pommery Cup competition for long-distance flights, as the aircraft were doing up to 1000 km a day, and measurements



The competition was very popular.

He then designed the 'Bleriot monoplane', a 'loop', a feat. After demonstrating in France

he left on a world trip, aiming to make lots of money by giving

After a brief stop in Egypt, the team came to Australia, landing in Sydney on April 4, 1914. He gave displays in Sydney and Newcastle. In May and June he also performed in Melbourne, and regional centres such as Wagga Wagga, Albury, Bendigo and Ballarat. These displays were hugely successful: hundreds of thousands of people paid to see him fly. Other pilots, including the American Arthur B "Wizard" Stone

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Guillaux was not only active as a showman, but took an interest in aviation matters. Lebbeus Hordern, a member of the wealthy Hordern family, had purchased a Farman seaplane, and Guillaux made many flights in it, sometimes with rather attractive lady passengers. He was involved in the development of the Ham Common airfield, which is still an air base and gave advice to the fledgling Australian Flying Corps. Guillaux's arrival in Australia had an enormous effect on Australian aviation history. By August, the news was dominated by the outbreak of war. Guillaux had a major crash, damaging his aircraft and injuring himself. The aircraft was repaired, and Guillaux recovered in a few weeks. His flying displays was over. Guillaux returned to France on 22 August. He was an aviator attached to the First Australian Division. He eventually returned to France and was killed in an aircraft crash, while test-flying a Bleriot, on 15 May 1917.

A re-enactment flight will take place in 2014, between Melbourne and Sydney, using a Jabiru, a modern Australian lightweight sports aircraft, of similar weight and engine capacity to Guillaux' Bleriot. The flight will be accompanied by a number of other historical aircraft and will be a celebration of the pioneering by Guillaux, with major celebrations at each end. The event's conclusion will be the centrepiece of Sydney's Bastille Day celebrations.

To find out more, go to www.australiasfirstair.com.au

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