DISCOVER WORLD WAR I ON THE GREEN BICYCLE ROUTE

ROUND THE CAMP OF BEVERLO
practice grounds during WWI (44.4 km)
**LOOP 1: ROUND THE CAMP OF BEVERLO**

Length of the route: 44.4 km  
Difficulty level (max. = 3)  

1: CAMP OF BEVERLO MUSEUM WELCOME!  
The renovated army museum gives you a picture of life in the Camp during WWI. [www.museumkampvanbeverlo.be](http://www.museumkampvanbeverlo.be). Download from the App Store the FREE app “WW1 in Leopoldsburg”. Captain Jean-Pierre Goegemikj joins you for a stroll through Leopoldsburg at the time of WWI (with historical photos and films). RECOMMENDED!

2: CAMP OF BEVERLO DURING WWI. SOLDIERS AT WAR.  
The Camp of Beverlo had barracks for 40,000 soldiers and stables for 4,000 horses. In August 1914, all the Belgian soldiers were transported to the front by train and the camp was left deserted.

THE RESISTANCE BY GENERAL DESCHEPPER.  
General Deschepper, former commander of the 11th Line Regiment from Hasselt, was summoned back after the German invasion as military governor of Limburg. From his headquarters in Leopoldsburg, General Deschepper organised a guerrilla offensive against the German rearguard with a group of around 300 poorly armed state policemen and volunteers. The Germans were annoyed and soon deployed a detachment of almost 2,000 men to tackle these troublemakers. Early in October 1914, General Deschepper and his officers had to withdraw to the Achelse Kluis.

THE GERMANS IN THE CAMP OF BEVERLO.  
Under the German occupation, the Camp of Beverlo was expanded and modernised. New buildings were added, for which the Germans followed the plans made earlier by the Belgian troops. They completed the installation of an electricity grid in the camp. During WWI, 20,000 German soldiers were stationed here. The military hospital was used to receive and care for soldiers from the Iron Front. After the end of WWI, wounded and sick (Spanish flu) Belgian soldiers were still being cared for here.

3: PRACTICE GROUNDS FOR INFANTRY, ARTILLERY AND CAVALRY.  
Behind the poppies are the current firing ranges of the Camp of Beverlo. Access is strictly prohibited, as exercises are held here every day. The landscape during WWI was very open and desolate. German infantry, artillery and cavalry units practised here. The first tests and exercises with mustard gas were organised here. This gas was subsequently used by the Germans at the front.

4: THE BURNT FARMHOUSES OF DE LOCHT.  
(Deviating from the route! At junction 515, turn left instead of right. Via Sint-Lambertustraat 2.2 km). To the north of here you will find De Locht, a hamlet in the sub-municipality of Eksel. On 27 September 1914, a German Hussar was shot dead by General Deschepper’s resistance fighters during an ambush.

1: MILITARY ZONE OF CAMP OF BEVERLO (5341 HECTARES).  
Today, large sections of the Camp of Beverlo are heathland. The Camp of Beverlo is first and foremost a military area, but since the protocol (1999) between Defence and the Agency of Nature and Forests, agreements have been reached concerning military use and environmental management. Nature can develop fully on a surface area of more than 1500 hectares.

2: BOSLAND, IN DEN BRAND.  
(Deviating from the route! At intersection 515, turn left instead of right. Starting point of trail at the corner of Kamertstraat-Sint-Lambertustraat) If you have time, visit the dune area In den Brand. Here children can play in the sand to their hearts' content or climb over giant insects! Adventurous children can help Tommy Twijgman regain his superpowers during the treasure hunt. [www.bosland.be](http://www.bosland.be)

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in De Locht. In revenge, the Germans burned 27 farmhouses to the ground. Fortunately there were no casualties.

3: HECHTELSE DUINEN (SPORT COMPLEX DUINENSTADION).
During WWI, Hechtel was virtually devoid of trees and surrounded by an open dune landscape. Along the cycle path you will still see some dunes. The first major afforestations in this region actually date from just before WWI. The crown forest of Pijnven (situated to the north of here) was planted in 1904.

4: BOSLAND, RESTERHEIDE AND BEGINVIJVERS.
Resterheide is a former heath area that has now be forested with Scotch and Corsican pines. The Beginvijvers are also located here; they were former fish hatcheries. From the reception centre Begijntje, you can explore this nature area on foot, choosing from a variety of trails. The Reigerpad (Heron Path) is a special trail for children.

5: RECREATION AREA MOLENHEIDE: TIME FOR A BREAK?
Or ride on further towards intersection 309 and take a small detour to Ter Dolen Castle (star 6).

5: SPOIL TIP HEUSDEN-ZOLDER.
The coal and stone from the subsoil even allow Mediterranean plants to grow here. You can reach the top by the trail (2.5 km) and you will be rewarded with a great view.

6: VALLEY OF THE HELDERBEEK.
The Helderbeek (stream) springs at the foot of the spoil tip of Heusden-Zolder. Mining has caused the relief to drop by several metres. Pumps prevent the surroundings being turned into a large expanse of water.

1: CAMP OF BEVERLO MILITARY ZONE.
You are now cycling through the Koerselse Heide on the Camp of Beverlo Military Zone. During WWI, this military zone was an expansive heath area. This is where the use of mustard gas was tested. Thanks to the mining industry, the Koerselse Heide is now forested.

7: ‘T FONTEINTJE AND VISITORS’ CENTRE DE WATERSNIP
‘t Fonteintje is a recreational area with a playground and miniature golf. There is a watchtower, nearly 30 metres high, and it offers a wonderful view across the typical Kempen landscape. Nature trails are regularly organised by De Watersnip Visitors’ Centre. You can consult the calendar at www.dewatersnip.be.

7: VALLEY OF THE ZWARTE BEEK [BLACK BROOK].
You now cycle through one of the largest nature reserves in Flanders: the Valley of the Zwarte Beek. This brook runs from Hechtel-Eksel to Diest. It is 32 kilometres long and runs like a green string of pearls through valuable ecological habitats, such as heath, woods, fens, ponds and grass lands. The common snipe is the most distinctive inhabitant.

8: SPOIL TIP OF BERINGEN.
When you reach the top of the Beringen spoil tip, you realise just how vast the Limburg forests and heathlands are.

8: BE-MINE AND MINE MUSEUM.
If you have time, you can visit the nearby Be-mine and the Mine museum on the former site of the Beringen mine, www.bemine.be - www.mijnmuseum.be

9: VALLEY OF THE GROTE BEEK [BIG BROOK].
The Grote Beek springs in the Camp of Beverlo heath. Natuurpunt manages this nature reserve. You can find information about excursions at www.natuurpunt.be/natuurpunt-leopoldsburg-heppen

10: DOMEINBOSSEN VAN LEOPOLDSBURG.
You now cycle along the Grootdonckheide, part of the Crown Forests of Leopoldsburg. If you could teleport yourself back 150 years, you would be standing in the middle of the Grote Heide [Great Heath]. The famine in 1845, the construction of the military camp and the emergence of the mining industry caused a radical metamorphosis. The heathland gave way to fields, meadows and forests.

If you cycle in the direction of junction 515, you will arrive at the Tourist Agency departure point at the Museum of the Camp of Beverlo.

Or go straight on (instead of bearing right and following the Koning Leopold III lane) and you will reach the station of Leopoldsburg. The railway tracks here were used a lot during WWI.