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Belgium remembers: Commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the First World War in Liège on 4 August 2014

The First World War (1914-18) transformed the history of Belgium and the world. During this conflict, which saw dozens of countries fighting on Belgian soil, the courage shown by the Belgian people had a mobilising effect for others and bore witness to the importance of international cooperation. Although the last of those to have lived through the hostilities are no longer with us, this war remains etched in Belgium's collective memory.

On 4 August 2014 in Liège, Belgium will commemorate the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War. The events will be attended by representatives of all the levels of power in Belgium and delegations from many countries from all over the world. The national ceremony remembers the numerous victims of the war – both soldiers and civilians, from both Belgium and abroad – who lost their lives on Belgian soil and also pays tribute to the bravery of the resistance offered by Belgium and in particular the Liège forts after Belgium's neutrality was breached.

National commemoration

Before the ceremony, His Majesty King Philippe and Her Majesty Queen Mathilde will welcome the attending heads of state and government. The ceremony itself will be held at the Allies' Memorial in Cointe (Liège), a monument that was built in honour of the Allied soldiers who had fought in the First World War. This event will be a solemn affair in which the focus will be on reconciliation. The King will inspect the troops and salute the Colours. A short film made by the Ministry of Defence will then be shown, followed by speeches by His Majesty King Philippe, by the President of France, François Hollande, the President of Germany, Joachim Gauck, and His Royal Highness Prince William, Duke of Cambridge (representing Belgium's partner countries in this commemoration) and by the Prime Minister of Belgium, Elio Di Rupo.

Subsequently, in the afternoon a ceremony will take place at Liège Town Hall to commemorate the award of the French Legion of Honour to the City of Liège, which was the first city outside France to be distinguished with the most prestigious French national honour for its resistance. This event will be marked by a flypast over the city by the Patrouille de France (French Acrobatic Patrol) and the Belgian Air Component.

Activities for the general public in Liège

As the space available is very limited, the general public will not be able to take part in the ceremony at the Allies' Memorial, but it will be broadcast in full on big screens in the centre of Liège and on television by the RTBF and various channels outside Belgium.

The commemoration of the First World War will be a running theme of the whole weekend of 1-4 August 2014 in Liège, with activities being organised for the general public throughout the city centre. These will include a true-to-life 14-18 village set up by the Ministry of Defence, various military bands from Belgium and beyond parading through the city and a ball on Saturday, 2 August. The full programme of activities can be found on the [Province of Liège website](#) (in French).

Publicity campaign

To get the whole of Belgium involved in this commemoration, the FPS Chancellery of the Prime Minister has launched a publicity campaign under the motto *Belgium remembers*. Since last week, advertisements have been broadcast on television and on the radio, while posters are on show in airports and railway and metro stations. You can find more information on the website www.be14-18.be.

Further national commemorations

On 4 August 2014, we will be commemorating the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War. Then on 28 October 2014, Ypres (Ieper) and Nieuwpoort will host the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Ypres, with a particular focus on the refusal to surrender and the flooding of the Yser plain, and special tribute being paid to Albert I of Belgium, the Soldier King. Finally, on 11 November 2018, festivities for the public in Brussels will mark the 100th anniversary of the signing of the Armistice, centring on the themes the end of the war, the return to peace and reconstruction.

For further information about the activities being organised for the general public in Liège, please go to the [Province of Liège website](#) (information in French).

For further details of the dates of official events being organised to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the World War, please see the website www.be14-18.be.

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