

Blériot XI Replica Flies

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Replica 1909 Blériot XI

A Spanish group of airplane enthusiasts called Foundation Valencia (Fundación Aérea de la Comunidad Valenciana - FACV) have successfully flown a historically accurate replica of a 1909 Blériot XI. Being such an early design, the Blériot is not an easily flown airplane, and only a handful are still in flyable condition. The Spanish appear to be taking a very conservative approach in the first flights of the wood and fabric machine.

A pilot by the name of Sir Javier del Sid took the airplane through several runs on and over the runway at Albacete Airport (LEAB), located at Los Llanos Air Base in southeastern Spain, eventually lifting up to about 16 feet and flying above most of the 8,858-foot runway. Enrique Creus of FACV said the Blériot XI is an exact replica of the model with the exception of the radio equipment and the engine, in this case a Verner motor designed for light sport aircraft.

The FACV Blériot was unveiled in September 2009 in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the first motorized flight in Spain. Since then, the airplane has been fine tuned to become

flyable. After additional flight testing, Creus hopes the Blériot replica will eventually fly from Albacete to Requena, about 46 nautical miles northeast, where FACV is based.