

ACTIVITY SHEET D

The Red Baron - Manfred Von Richthofen

World War I's most legendary pilot was Manfred Von Richthofen also known as 'The Red Baron'. He served as an observer and later as a pilot. The Red Baron was soon recognised as a very good combat pilot. He said of his first victory: 'I gave a short series of shots with my machine gun... I had gone so close that I was afraid I might dash into the Englishman. Suddenly, I nearly yelled with joy for the propeller of the enemy machine had stopped turning.'

In January 1917, after shooting down his 16th airplane, Richthofen was given command of a German squadron. He celebrated by painting his biplane red and this is where he got the name the 'Red Baron' from.



A German Albatross D1 used by the Red Baron. (Credit: Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

Under Richthofen's leadership the squadron became one of the most successful flying units of World War I. In April 1917 its pilots shot down 89 British planes in the skies over the Battle of Arras. Richthofen would swoop down from above and unleash bursts of machine gun fire. 'There is no art in shooting down an aeroplane,' he wrote. 'The thing is done by the personality or by the fighting determination of the airman.'

Richthofen became a German hero and appeared in lots of newspaper articles and propaganda posters. On April 21st, 1918, after 80 victories his luck ran out and he was brought down and died in his plane. When Richthofen's body was taken to an airplane hangar and many allied airmen came to pay their respects. A wreath was placed on his grave that read: 'To Our Gallant and Worthy Foe.'

Manfred Von Richthofen quotes:

The murder of a man is still murder, even in wartime.

Find the enemy and shoot him down. Anything else is just nonsense.

Success flourishes only in perseverance, ceaseless, restless perseverance.