

Gunner Robert Buie

53 BATTERY

AUSTRALIAN FIELD ARTILLERY

“BARON BEWARE!”



Lead up.....

- ▶ 23 Years old when he enlisted on 27 Oct 1916
- ▶ Oyster Farmer and Fisherman from Brooklyn, NSW
- ▶ Allocated as a reinforcement to the 1st Pioneer Battalion
- ▶ Deployed to England to finish training on the Salisbury Plain
- ▶ Transferred to Field Artillery Nov 1917
- ▶ Proficiency on Lewis Light Machine Gun noted
- ▶ Selected to undertake anti-aircraft training,



The Faithful Day - Sunday 21 April 1918

- ▶ **1045 hours**
- ▶ **53 Battery deployed near the Bray - Corbie Road,**
 - ▶ **In vicinity of Villers-Bretonneux and the village of Vaux-sur-Somme.**
 - ▶ **Part of a larger force of Australian infantry, artillery, support troops**
 - ▶ **In defence of vital rail hub of Amiens**
- ▶ **Height of the German major offensive of March/April**

The major players.....

Second Lieutenant
Wilfred 'Wop' May
209 SQN RAF



Captain
Arthur Roy Brown DSC
209 SQN RAF



Cavalry Captain
Manfred von Richthofen
'Flying Circus'



The major players.....



Gunner Bob Buie



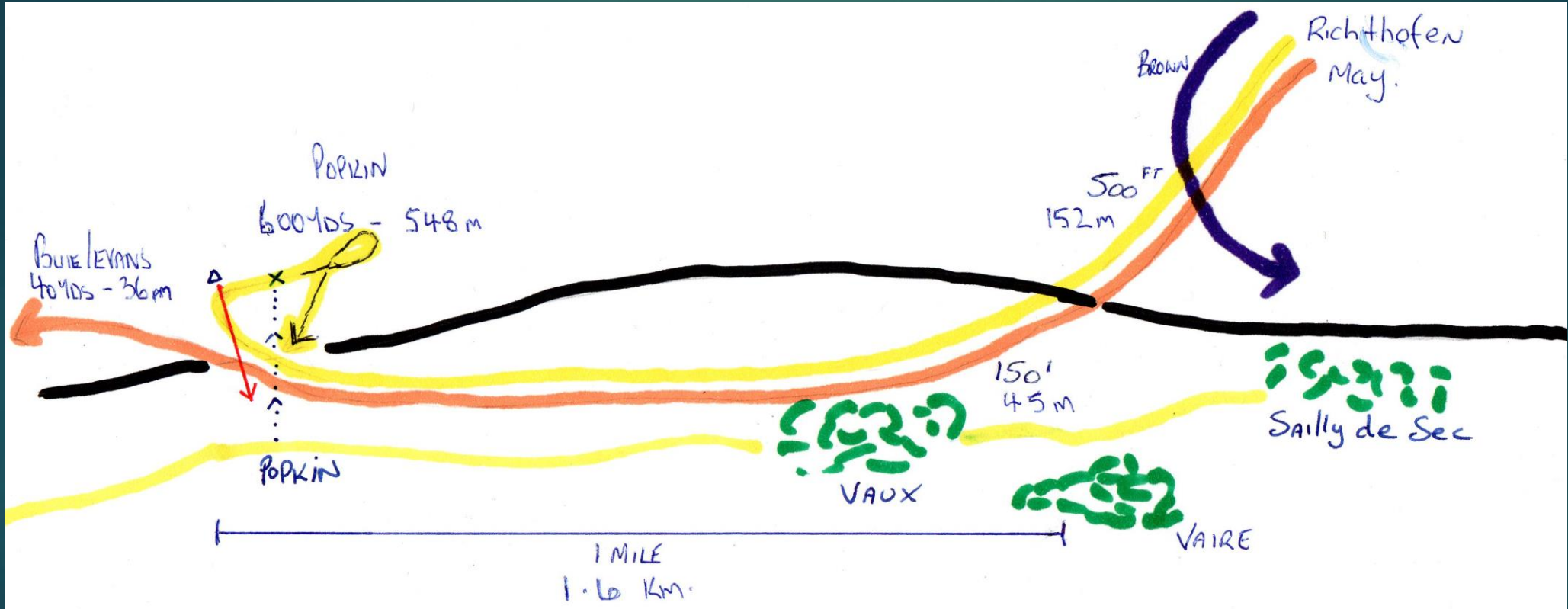
Sergeant Cedric Popkin



Gunner Snowy Evans

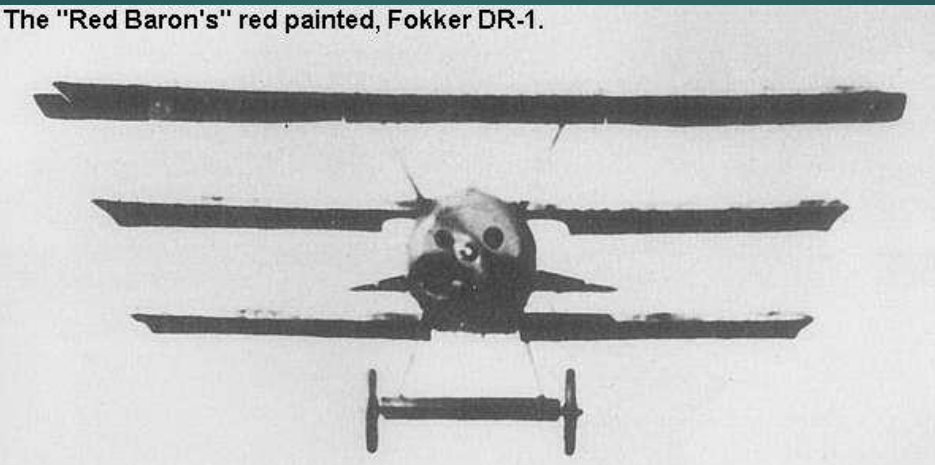




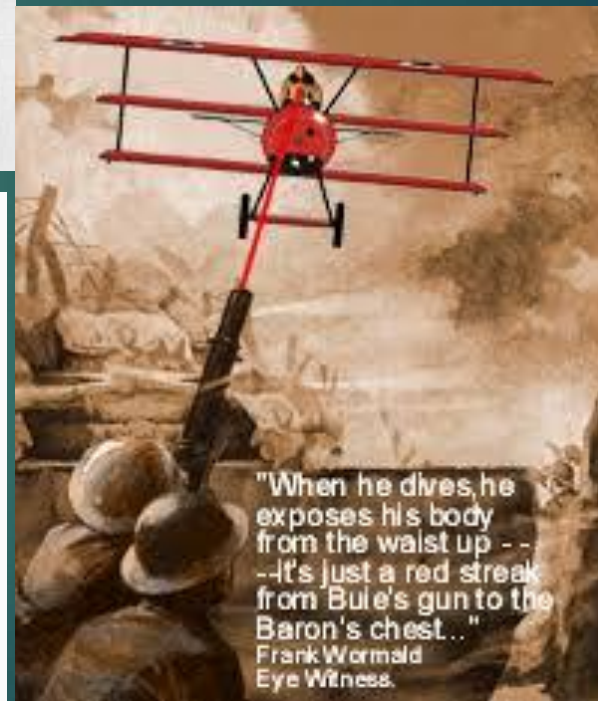


Buie , Evans and Popkin

The "Red Baron's" red painted, Fokker DR-1.

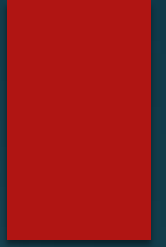


..At about 11am a dogfight started above the front line. Two planes seperated from the fight and dived. Sgt Popkin.



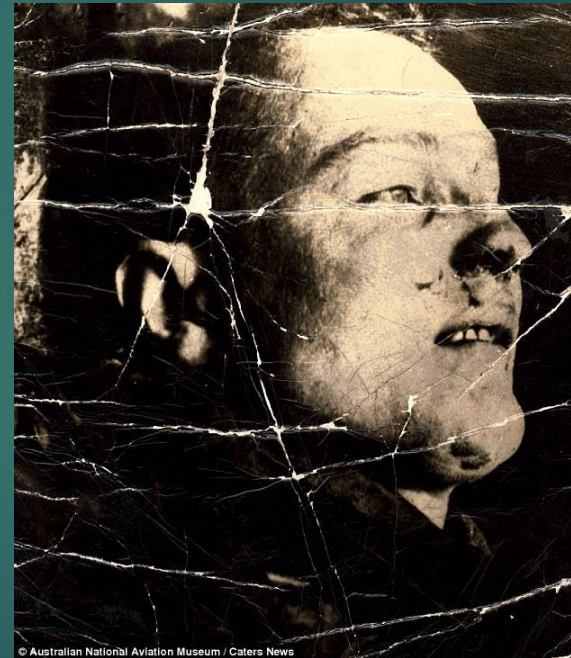
"When he dives, he exposes his body from the waist up -- --It's just a red streak from Buie's gun to the Baron's chest..."
Frank Wormald
Eye Witness.





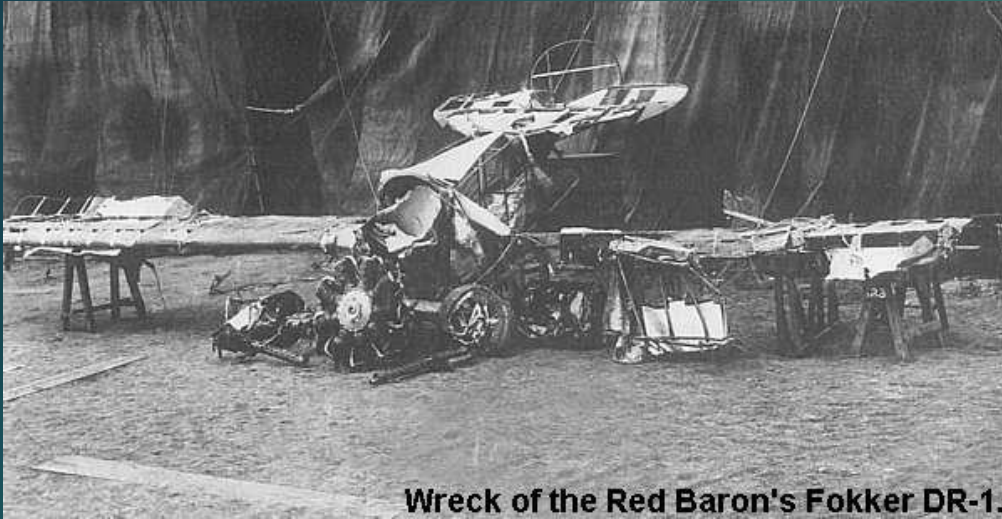
On goings.....

- ▶ The wound to the Baron was fatal
- ▶ He would bleed out in mere minutes
- ▶ He brought his plane in for a bumpy but basically effective landing
- ▶ Eye witnesses state that the plane then flipped
- ▶ Frank Wormald pulled Baron from the cockpit
- ▶ Fuel and starter switches both switched off
- ▶ Fractured jaw from hitting the dash
- ▶ Several minor splinter wounds
- ▶ Mutter final words, "Alles Kaputt" then died

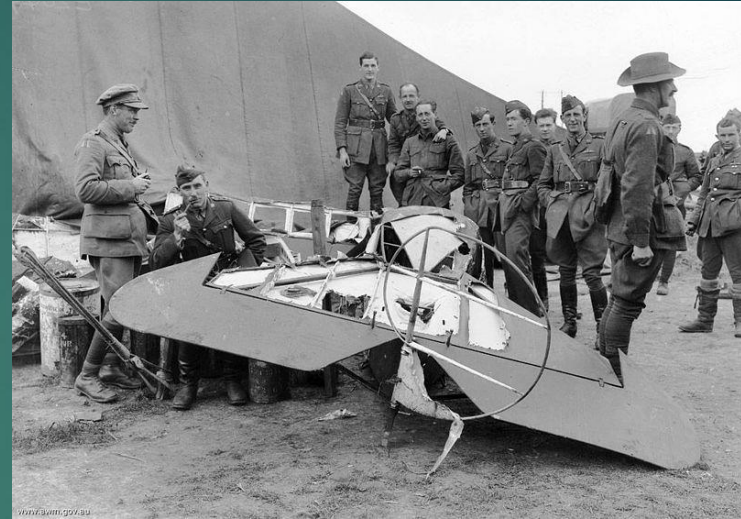


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The Digger impact.....



Wreck of the Red Baron's Fokker DR-1.



Hot wash of the action.....

- ▶ Buie and Evans credited by General Rawlinson with firing the fatal shot
- ▶ Congratulated by General Birdwood and Buie presented him with the sight
- ▶ Both recommended for the Meritorious Service Medal (MSM). Not awarded
- ▶ Royal Airforce and flying fraternity adamant that Brown receives the credit. Brown received Bar to his DSC
- ▶ Bean conducts his own investigation and deems that SGT Popkin delivered the fatal hit
- ▶ 14 FAB War Diary has a one and half line entry of the action.

The wound.....

- ▶ The fatal wound hit under right armpit and exited near left nipple. Projectile was found in clothing and souvenired
- ▶ The angle depicts that the projectile was fired from the ground.
 - ▶ Ascertained by use of a piece of fencing wire
- ▶ Eye witnesses - Buie and Wormald stated that they saw a bullet wound in the Baron's chest
- ▶ Independent examinations continue to this day and will probably continue for decades to come but Buie was adamant
- ▶ One of the latest theories is that it was a low velocity round, fired at it's extreme range.

Buie Family's Biggest Battle.....

- ▶ Hospitalised in 1918 with Myocarditis
- ▶ Not granted a full military pension even as being medically unfit,
- ▶ Onset of Great Depression placed considerable strain on the Buie family. They survived on handouts and stringy vegetables grown in the family garden
- ▶ Met and married Laurel and had three children
- ▶ Though suffering extremely poor health, Bob travelled to find work
- ▶ Ex-Soldiers had priority for employment but needed proof of war service
- ▶ Bob lost his discharge papers twice, once as a result of a fire in which he also lost his war medals
- ▶ Bob requested a replacement set of medals
 - ▶ 1 pound, 23 shillings, 2 pence - totally out of his reach financially. **No replacements provided**
- ▶ Despite his increasing health issues he returned to fishing in order to feed his family.

Buie Family's Biggest Battle.....

- ▶ **ANZAC Day 64** – the final fishing trip.
 - ▶ Found dead in boat.
 - ▶ The best catch he'd experienced in years
- ▶ **28 Apr 64** – Laurel was left destitute
 - ▶ Appeals to the Army for any documents or assistance
 - ▶ Also requested information on the V.C. that she believed that her husband was reported to have received. **False**
- ▶ **23 Mar 67** – Son Douglas tried to obtain a replacement set of medals.
 - ▶ Regulations had changed and the right to replacement had now died with Bob.
- ▶ **6 Mar 73** – Daughter Merleine visiting VB-S, told Bob was awarded the DCM and had never claimed it. **False**
- ▶ **2001** - The good news and our part.

His final resting place.....



The Baron's last words.....

'Alles Kaputt' - 'Everything
Broken'