The Red Baron & His Flying Circus
A Historically Significant Album of Photographs

Important Historically Significant Private Album of Photographs of Manfred Albrecht Freiherr von Richthofen (Red Baron) and of the Members of the Famous “Flying Circus” – Jagdeschwader 1 (No 1 Fighter Squadron), which was formed by Richthofen and commanded by him until his death on April 21, 1918.

Spring 1917 – March 1918. 27 photographs on 14 leaves. Quarto (17.5 x 26.8 cm). Full bright red elaborately gilt tooled morocco with elaborate black and white leather in lays of Iron Crosses in center and corners of front cover and with white silk moiré endpapers. Every image is described with manuscript ink notations.

Presumably from the estate of the Red Baron’s personal doctor – Professor Kraske who in July 1917 treated him in St. Nicholas Hospital (Feldlazarett 76), not far from the Marckebeke castle – a base of JG 1 on the southwest outskirts of the city of Coutrai.

The photographs were taken during a period of one year, from spring 1917 until March 1918; the earliest were most likely made in April 1917 (famous “Bloody April” called so by the British who lost ⅓ of their airmen at the Front – 912 pilots and observers in 50 Squadrons), and the latest – in March 1918.

$32,500 US

Manfred Albrecht Freiherr von Richthofen (2 May 1892 – 21 April 1918) - better known as the Red Baron, was a famous German fighter pilot with the Imperial German Army Air Service (Luftstreitkräfte) during World War I. He is considered the ace-of-aces of that war, being officially credited with 80 air combat victories, more than any other pilot. Originally a cavalryman, Richthofen transferred to the Air Service in 1915, becoming one of the first members of Jasta 2 in 1916. He quickly distinguished himself as a fighter pilot, and during 1917 became leader of Jasta 11 and then the larger unit Jagdgeschwader 1 (better known as the "Flying Circus"). By 1918 he was regarded as a national hero in Germany, and was very well
known by the other side. In January 1918 he was awarded with the Pour le Mérite, Prussia’s highest bravery award.

Richthofen was shot down and killed near Amiens on 21 April 1918. There has been considerable discussion and debate regarding aspects of his career, especially the circumstances of his death. He remains the most famous fighter pilot of all time, and has been the subject of many books and films (Wikipedia).

The Jagdgeschwader 1 (JG 1) of World War I, was a fighter unit comprising four Jastas or ‘fighter squadrons’, originally raised by combining Jastas 4, 6, 10 and 11, on 24 June 1917 with Manfred von Richthofen as commander. JG 1 became known as "The Flying Circus" or "Richthofen's Circus" because its fighter planes were painted in bright and distinctive color schemes for easy identification during dogfights (Wikipedia). JG 1 quickly developed into a most effective air weapon.

"It became known everywhere that the English had put a price on my brother's head. Every flier over there knew him, for at the time he alone flew a red plane. For that reason we decided to paint every plane in our squadron... The request was granted, for through our many victories we had shown ourselves worthy of the colour. The colour red signified certain arrogance. Everyone knew that. It attracted attention. Hence, one had to accomplish something. We looked with pride on our red birds. My brother’s crate was glaring red. The rest of us each had his own special mark painted in other colours. In the air one cannot see another flier’s face, so we chose these colours as recognition insignia. For example, Schäfer had the elevator, rudder and rear part of the fuselage in black, Allmenröder had the same in white, Wolff had green, and I had yellow... Each had a different mark. In the air the entire machine appeared red to those on the ground as well as to the enemy fliers, for only a small part of the machine was painted a second colour" (Lothar Freiherr von Richthofen. Memoirs of my brother/ The Red Baron/ Translated by P. Kilduff. Plymouth, 1974. P.112).
1. **Rittm. Frh. v. Richthofen.** 11,2x7,6 cm.

The image shows Rittmeister Manfred von Richthofen, recovering in St. Nicholas hospital in Coutrai after he had been severely wounded on the 6th of July 1917, during combat with a formation of F.E.2d two seat fighters of the No. 20 Squadron RFC, near Wervicq.

“I had quite a respectable hole in my head, a wound of about ten centimetres across which could be drawn together later; but in one place clear white bone as big as a Taler [large-size coin] remained exposed... My thick Richthofen head had once again proved itself. The skull had not been penetrated. With some imagination, in the X-ray photos one could notice a slight swelling. It was a skull fracture that I was not rid of for days [and] was not very comfortable” (Bodenschatz. Jagd in Flanders Himmel. 1935. P. 125, 196).


Lothar-Siegfried Freiherr von Richthofen (27 September 1894 – 4 July 1922) was a younger brother of Manfred von Richthofen and a fighter ace, credited with 40 victories. He joined *Jasta 11* on 6 March, 1917 and was awarded with Pour le Mérite (awarded May 14, 1917), Iron Cross First and Second Class. Considering the amount of time Lothar von Richthofen spent on the front and in hospitals; he was one of the most combat efficient and prolific flying aces of the war, perhaps even more so than his brother Manfred. Of his total of 40 confirmed victories, Lothar scored 33 in just three months: 15 in April 1917, 8 in May 1917, and 10 in August 1918 (Wikipedia).


Leutnant Kurt Wüsthoff (27 January 1897 - 23 July 1926) was a fighter ace credited with 27 victories. He served for Jasta 4 and was the second youngest winner of Germany’s highest decoration for valor, the Pour le Mérite or “Blue Max” (awarded Nov. 22, 1917).
Wilhelm "Willi" Reinhard (March 12, 1891 – July 3, 1918) was a fighter ace credited with 20 victories. Served in Jasta 11 and Jasta 6; following the death of Manfred von Richthofen, Reinhard assumed command of Jagdgeschwader 1 on 22 April 1918. In July 1918, he attended aircraft trials near Adlershof. After Hermann Göring finished test flying a Zeppelin-Lindau D.I, Reinhard took it up for a test flight but was killed when a strut broke and the top wing collapsed. Following Reinhard's death, Göring assumed command of JG 1 on July 8, 1918 (Wikipedia).

Leutnant Erich Löwenhard (? – August 10, 1918) was a Silesian born fighter ace credited with 53 victories. He served in Jasta 10 and died in battle.


The photograph was taken in St. Nicholas hospital in July 1917, where Manfred von Richthofen and Kurt Wolff were recovering from their wounds at the same time. Wolff was wounded on the July 11, 1917 over Ypres during a fight with twelve Sopwith Triplanes: his left shoulder and hand were injured, as we can see in the photograph.

More pictures were taken when members of the squadron came to present their leader with what they thought was a souvenir that would cheer him up – a seven-foot propeller from a downed observation plane. He also posed for photos with Kätie Otersdorf, Lieutenant Reinhard and others (Burrows W.E. Richthofen: True history of the Red Baron. New York, 1969. P. 165).

Kätie Otersdorf was a nurse specially appointed to look after Manfred von Richthofen when he was wounded in July 1917. She “was as strong willed as he, and followed strict orders not to let Richthofen do anything to imperil his recovery”. The
version about a romance between the Red Baron and Kätie was very popular for a long time and was shown in the recent film “The Red Baron” (2008).

On one occasion Obltn Bodenschatz brought Manfred from the hospital to JG I’s airfield by old Maj von Richthofen, Ltn Kurt Wolff and nurse Kätie Otersdorf. The Kommandeur was a 20th-century man with 19th-century ideals, as demonstrated by his visible displeasure at having to expose a woman to the dangers of the front. Bodenschatz recalled that, for her part, “the nurse... paid little notice that the Rittmeister grimaced. Showing up at an aviation facility with a nurse was not at all to his liking. But he was up against a brick wall. The nurse declared sternly that if the Rittmeister should try to make any mischief with his head still not completely healed, she would be there”.


Eberhard Mohnicke (? – October 17, 1930) was a fighting ace credited with 9 victories. He served in Jasta 11. In the photograph he stands in the upper row, left, with a little dog in his hands.

Leutnant Hans Joachim Wolff (24 September 1895 – 16 May 1918) go to # 19.
Oberleutnant Kurt Wolff (February 6, 1895 – September 15, 1917) was one of Imperial Germany's highest scoring fighter aces during World War I. Served for Jasta 11. After achieving 33 confirmed victories, he was killed in action at the age of 22. Wolff, known as “Wölfchen” (wolfcub) or the “zarte Blümlein” (gentle little flower) owing to his slender, boyish demeanour and mild-mannered good humour, was immensely popular. Despite his youthful, almost frail appearance, Wolff had been the victor in 33 combats. As most pilots he was very superstitious and never flew without his lucky nightcap.

"Jasta 11: Leutnant Kurt Wolff. At first glance, you could only say 'delicate little flower'. A slender, thin little figure, a very young face, whose entire manner is one of extreme shyness. He looks as if you could tip him backwards with one harsh word. But below this friendly schoolboy's face dangles the order Pour le Merite. And so far, these modest looking eyes have taken 30 enemy airplanes from the sky over the sights of his machine guns, set them afire, and made them smash to pieces on the ground. This slender youth is already one of the best men of the old Richthofen Staffel 11."

Leutnant Karl Allmenröder (3 May 1896 – 27 June 1917) was a fighter ace credited with 30 victories. Served in Jasta 11, was awarded with Pour le Mérite, Knights Cross of Royal House Order of Hohenzollern, Iron Cross First and Second Class. His career as a fighter ace was spectacular but short. He achieved his victories flying a scarlet Albatros D.III with white nose and elevators. Allmenröder was popular with his squadron mates and was widely mourned. He was just 21 years old at his death.

Manfred von Richthofen wrote about “Karlchen” (as he was called by the friends) to his father: „I myself cannot wish for a more beautiful death than to fall in aerial combat; it is a consolation to know that at his end Karl felt nothing...“ (Kiduff. Ibid. P. 129).

The photograph was possibly taken on April 29, 1917 in Roucourt near Douai. It was the new airfield of Jasta 11 where the squadron was located from April 15, 1917 until June 9, 1917. Major Frh. von Richthofen visited Jasta 11 and personally watched the air battle where his sons crushed the British planes.


On the 29th April 1917 der alte Herr (The Old Gentleman) paid his first visit to Roucourt (he commanded a garrison near Lille only 30 km from Jasta 11’s airfield). He came just at the moment when the morning patrol returned. As Manfred recalled, “The old gentleman was happy; one could see that he was amused [by his report]. He is not of the fathers who is worried about his sons; on the contrary, he would just as soon have got into the machine and shot one down – at least I believe that. We had breakfast with him and then flew again” (Kilduff. Ibid. P. 99).

Kavallerieoffizier Albrecht Phillip Karl Julius Freiherr von Richthofen (1859-1920), the father of the Red Baron, was a Prussian noble man and army man. He served in Leibkürassieren-Regiment # 1 in Breslau, reached the rank of Mayor and retired in Schweidnitz (Swidnica, Poland). During World War I he was assigned to the Ortskommandantur of Lille; from November 20, 1917 until the end of the occupation he was Ortskommandant of Kortrijk (Courtrai).

Konstantin Krefft was a Jasta 11 Technical officer, Leutnant der Reserve.
Ltn Georg Simon was a member of Jasta 11 and served as Richthofen’s pupil / wingman for flights.
Lt. d. R. Hans Hinsch (March 30, 1894 – May 24, 1917) was a member of Jasta 11.

6. Leutn. Esser, Leutn. Schäfer, Rittm. Frh. v. Richthofen talking on the air field. 8,6x10,6 cm

Karl Emil Schäfer (December 17, 1891 – June 5, 1917) was one of the major German flying aces of World War I, with 30 confirmed aerial victories. Served in Jasta 11, later was a Commander of Jasta 28. In intensive operations during Bloody April he became a flying ace, being credited with 21 victories and awarded the Pour le Mérite. While a member of Jasta 11, "Karlchen" became known as the squadron's prankster and recorded many vivid incidents in combat and at play. He flew an Albatros D-III with red and black markings (Wikipedia).
7. **Rittm. Frh. v. Richthofen, Leutn. Mohnicke.** Richthofen is in fur flight clothing. 10,1x7,7 cm. 11,8 cm

8. **Ein von Rittm. Frh. v. Richthofen abgeschossen englisches Flugzeug [One of English planes shot down by Richthofen].** 10,9x9 cm


10. **Engl. Dreidecker... zum Landen... [A captured English plane that was repainted with German insignia ... just landed].** 9x14 cm

11. **Deutsche Fokker-Dreidecker [German Fokker triplane].** The number of the plane is clearly visible: Fok. Fl 102/17. August-September 1917. 9x14 cm.

   Fokker-Dreidecker Fl 102/17 was Richthofen’s first triplane in use at the front. He first flew this triplane on August 31, 1917. After Richthofen’s 60th and 61st victories on September 1st and 3rd with this triplane, it was taken over by Kurt Wolff (in original factory colours, they had no time to repaint it) and was totally destroyed when Wolff crashed on September 15, 1917. Wolff died and the triplane was never repaired.
12. **Fokker-Dreidecker beim aufsteigen [Fokker triplane taking off]**. 8,1x11,2 cm
   The Fokker Dr. I Dreidecker (triplane) was a World War I fighter aircraft built by Fokker-Flugzeugwerke. The Dr. I saw widespread service in the spring of 1918. It became renowned as the aircraft in which Manfred von Richthofen gained his last 20 victories, and in which he was killed on the 21st of April 1918 (Wikipedia).
   The first Fokker Dreideckers were used by German pilots in October 1917.

13. **Fokker Dreidecker beim Landen [Fokker triplane landing]**. 8,4x11 cm

14. **Dreidecker beim Landen [Triplane landing]**. 8,2x11 cm

15. **Dreidecker im Fluge [Triplane in flight]**. 8,3x11,1 cm

16. **Deutsches Grosskampfflugzeug (Bombenflugzeug) [German Bomber]**. 9x14,1 cm

17. **D.F.W. Doppeldecker [Double-decker]**. 3,8x4,6 cm.
   Deutsche Flugzeug-Werke, usually known as DFW was a German aircraft manufacturer of the early twentieth century. The company was established by Bernhard Meyer and Erich Thiele at Lindenthal in 1910, and initially produced Farman designs under licence, later moving on to the Etrich Taube and eventually to their own designs. One of these, the DFW C.V reconnaissance aircraft, several thousand aircraft produced, including licensed production by other firms. Plans to develop civil aircraft after the war proved fruitless, and the company was bought by ATG shortly thereafter.

18. **Fokker-Dreidecker [Fokker triplane]**. 3,9x4,4 cm.

19. **Leutn. [Hanns] Wolf with a dog near the plane**. 11,3x8,4 cm
   Leutnant Hanns Joachim Wolff (24 September 1895 – 16 May 1918) was a fighter ace credited with ten aerial victories. He served with FA (A) 216 until the 6th of July 1917, when he was reassigned to Jasta 11. He was wounded in action on the 14th of August, and again on the 23rd of
November. On the 18th of March 1918, Wolff shot down and killed his first victim, John McCudden. Wolff then steadily scored for the next two months, downing his tenth on the 15th of May. He and his Fokker Dr.I were shot down the following day, most probably by Horace Barton (Wikipedia).

20.  Leutn. Wolf im Flugzeug. [Leutenant Hanns Wolf in the cockpit of his plane]. 10,7x8,2 cm

21.  Leutn. Mohnicke im Flugzeug [Leutenant Mohnicke in the cockpit of his plane]. 8,4x11,3 cm

22.  Vize.-Feldw. Scholtz in a fur coat next to his plane. 10,8x8,1 cm  
Visefeldwebel (Sergeant  Major) Edgar Scholtz (September 21, 1898 – May 02, 1918) scored one victory before joining Jasta 11 in January 1918. After scoring five more victories he was killed when his Fokker DR I was shot down by 209 Squadron.

23.  Die Jagdstaffel 11 (...?) Vize.-Feldw. Scholtz und Leutn. Gussmann. 5,4x8,4 cm  
Siegfried Gussmann (1896-?) was a member of Jasta 11 credited with 5 victories. Gussmann was wounded in action on April 7, 1918.

24.  [The Officers of the Squadron in front of the planes]. Leutn. von der Osten und Steinhäuser, Rittm. Freiherr v. Richthofen und Leutn. Couta. 5,4x8,4 cm  
Leutnant Hans-Georg von der Osten (September 09, 1895 – March 27, 1987) was a fighter ace credited with five aerial victories. Joined Jasta 11 in August 1917. He later rose to command of all Luftwaffe bases in Germany, during World War II.

Lieutenant Werner Steinhauser joined Jasta 11 in the end of 1917. He scored ten victories before he was killed in action in his DR I over Neuilly in June of 1918.

25.  Rittm. Frh. v. Richthofen im augenblick des abfliegens von der Erde [Rittmeister Baron von Richthofen taking off]. 5,4x8,4 cm

26.  [Inspection of Richthofen’s Jagdstaffel by (Kommandeuer der Luftstreitkräfte) General Höppner]. March 17, 1918. 8,3x11,2 cm.

General of the Cavalry Ernst Wilhelm von Höppner (14 January 1860 – 26 September 1922) served as the Commanding General of the German Air Service (Luftstreitkräfte) during World War I. Von Höppner was given the title of Kommandierender General der Luftstreitkräfte (Commanding General of the Air
Service), holding the rank of Lieutenant-General. He reorganized the fragmented air services, greatly increasing the number of Jastas and forming them into Jagdgeschwader. Priority was given to the development of strategies for massed air attacks (Wikipedia).

Von Höppner inspected Richthofen’s JG 1 on March 17, 1918, just before the spring offensive of the German Army which started several days later. Richthofen reported a full state of readiness for the offensive (Kilduff. Ibid. P. 186).

Awoingt, March 1918. 11,8x16,8 cm.
On March 13, 1918 Lothar von Richthofen was shot down near the city of Awoingt in the vicinity of Cambrai by a Sopwith Camel flown by Captain Augustus Orlebar of No. 73 Squadron. Nursing his crippled Fokker Dr1 Triplane into a landing, Lothar clipped a high-tension wire and crashed heavily, suffering serious head injuries. He was still recovering when he learned of his brother Manfred’s death.

Awoingt is a village some 3 km east-south-east of Cambrai. Awoingt Airfield was made the Forward Airfield for JG 1 especially for the "Battle of France" which started on March 20, 1918. JG 1 used Awoingt Airfield until the March 26, 1918 when it moved to Le Chelle Airfield. The Red Baron scored his 67th victory on the 20th of March 1918 while based at Awoingt Airfield.

Awoingt also houses a British Cemetery which was first used in the latter half of October 1918 and then was used until the middle of December 1918. Awoingt British Cemetery contains 653 Commonwealth graves and commemorations of the First World War, including a special memorial to one casualty whose grave in the cemetery cannot now be found. The cemetery also contains 63 war graves of other nationalities, most of them German.