

Von Richthofen and Brown

Von Richthofen and Brown, alternatively titled ***The Red Baron***, is a 1971 war film directed by Roger Corman and starring John Phillip Law and Don Stroud as Manfred von Richthofen and Roy Brown. Although names of real people are used, the story by Joyce Hooper Corrington and John William Corrington makes no claim to be historically accurate, and in fact is largely fictional.^[4]

Contents

Plot

Cast

Production

Reception

See also

References

External links

Plot

In 1916, Manfred von Richthofen is newly assigned to a German air squadron under the command of Oswald Boelcke. Across the lines, Roy Brown arrives at a British squadron under the command of Lanoe Hawker. The two pilots are very different; Richthofen is a gentleman who respects tradition and believes in a gentlemanly approach to war, while Brown is a cynical, cocky, ruthless rebel without a cause who doesn't believe in honor.

Boelcke is killed after a mid-air collision and Hawker is killed by Richthofen. Richthofen assumes command of the squadron and becomes outwardly energized by the war. Outraged by an order to camouflage his squadron's aircraft, he paints them in bright conspicuous colors, claiming that gentlemen should not hide from their enemies. Later, Richthofen dances with Ilse and even kisses her. Brown bullies his way to leadership and has his squadron hunt in packs with a plane as bait.

Richthofen suffers a skull wound during an aerial battle, and when he returns to combat, he begins showing troubling signs of memory loss and confusion. After Brown and his squadron attack Richthofen's airfield, destroying their aircraft on the ground, Richthofen, with the help of a batch of new fighters from Anthony Fokker, launches a counterattack on the British airfield. Back at their aerodrome, Richthofen rebukes fellow pilot Hermann Göring for strafing medical personnel.

Von Richthofen and Brown

On April 21, 1918, the Red Baron of Germany and the Black Sheep of the R.A.F met in the skies of France. One came for a gentlemen's duel, the other - to kill!



Theatrical release poster

Directed by	<u>Roger Corman</u>
Produced by	<u>Gene Corman</u>
Written by	<u>John William Corrington</u> <u>Joyce Hooper Corrington</u>
Starring	<u>John Phillip Law</u> <u>Don Stroud</u>
Music by	<u>Hugo Friedhofer</u>
Cinematography	<u>Michael Reed</u>
Edited by	<u>Alan Collins</u>
Production company	<u>The Corman Company</u>
Distributed by	<u>United Artists</u>
Release date	<u>July 28, 1971 (US)</u>
Running time	<u>97 minutes</u>
Country	<u>United States</u>
Language	<u>English</u>

In 1965 it was announced he had commissioned a script called *The Red Baron* from Robert Towne.^[5] He pitched the project to 20th Century Fox along with the *St Valentine's Day Massacre*; Fox decided to make the latter, as they already had *The Blue Max*.

Years later Corman signed a deal with United Artists who liked the idea of a film about the Red Baron but did not want the film to be too German, so Corman agreed to make it about Roy Brown and other characters from both areas of the battle front that could be added to the script.^[6]

Although the story of the two foes who meet in a fateful last flight, was essentially a historical subject, Corman's intention was to treat the subject as an allegory of the modern war machine in conflict with antiquated old world notions of chivalry.^[7]

Work on the film went ahead, with Corman able to work with a much larger budget than he enjoyed with his earlier features.^[8] Ex-RCAF pilot Lynn Garrison supplied the aircraft, crews and facilities, and personally coordinated the flying sequences; Garrison had purchased the collection of hangars, aircraft, vehicles and support equipment accumulated for filming 20th Century's top-grossing film, *The Blue Max*, after the production wrapped in 1965.^[Note 1] The collection included replica Pfalz D.IIs, Royal Aircraft Factory S.E.5s, Fokker D.VIIs, Fokker Dr.Is. A number of de Havilland DH.82A Tiger Moths and Stampe SV.4Cs had also been converted to represent other aircraft, for a total of 12 aircraft available for aerial scenes.^{[10][11]} As with "*The Blue Max*," flying sequences were based at Weston Airport in Ireland. Richard Bach, author of *Jonathan Livingstone Seagull*, was one of the film's stunt pilots, and wrote about some of his experiences at Weston during its production.^[12]

United Artists who were financing the picture turned down Bruce Dern who was Corman's original choice for Roy Brown. Don Stroud - whom Corman had selected to play Richthofen - was given the role instead and John Phillip Law was cast as the Baron. United Artists also insisted on re-dubbing the actors' voices with fake German accents in post-production.^[13]

Shooting

For the aerial sequences, Corman used an Aérospatiale Alouette II helicopter, along with a Helio Courier, for the photography, supported by a number of specialized camera mounts Garrison developed for use on individual aircraft. This allowed footage of actors, such as John Philip Law and Don Stroud "flying" the aircraft. Garrison trained Law and Stroud to the point where they could take off, land a Stampe, and fly basic sequences themselves from the rear seat, filmed with a rear-facing camera. Stunt pilots such as Bach were used for the more complicated sequences.

Corman used a filming schedule that included so-called "Blue Days, Grey Days and Don't Give a Damn Days" so that the aircraft were used no matter what the weather presented.



Camera crew (1970): Peter Peckowski and Peter Allwork in cockpit, Jimmy Murakami, Shay Corcoran and Lynn Garrison



Irish Air Corps pilots filming *Von Richthofen and Brown*, 1970. Lynn Garrison is second from right, front row.



Lynn Garrison, Don Stroud crash September 16, 1970 SV4.C Stampe