

THE medal of a First World War pilot who was shot down by the infamous Red Baron has been sold for £945.

Lt James Power-Clutterbuck was the young heir to Newark Park estate near Dursley when he was killed in June 1917 by Von Richthofen, better known as the Red Baron.

His death left Newark Park without an heir, and so his mother Annie Power-Clutterbuck left the house and grounds to the National Trust in 1949.

Now his sought-after First World War star medal has been sold for £945 on eBay.

James Power-Clutterbuck joined up as a private soldier in October 1914 before becoming a Second Lieutenant in the Royal Field Artillery in 1915.

He served and was wounded both in the Gallipoli campaign and on the Western Front before transferring to the Royal Flying Corps.

He had only been with the 53 Squadron for three weeks when he was shot down and killed on June 26, 1917.

He is buried in Strand Military Cemetery, Ploegsteert, Belgium; he was just 23 years old.

"He was the heir to Newark Park, and it was in his memory that his mother left Newark Park to the National Trust in 1949," said Stefanie van Stokkom, house and visitor experience manager at Newark Park.

She said that the National Trust was not able to bid for the medal.

"However, we would certainly be interested to keep track of the whereabouts of this medal and delighted if its new owner might like to keep in touch with us."

The medal was sold by collector Richard Steel who also painstakingly



● Newark Park. Below, the medal

researches the lives of those who were awarded medals.

"In 1917 a Royal Flying Corps pilot's life expectancy could be measured in hours rather than weeks or months," he said.

"In April 1917 the German Army Air Service managed to destroy more than a third of the Royal Flying Corps's strength, 254 aircraft were shot down and 211 aircrew were either killed or missing. Life expectancy for a pilot was just over 17 hours in the air.

"Yet this proved no deterrent to thousands of young men who volunteered to join the RFC to pit their wits against their German Foes. James Edward Power Clutterbuck of Newark Park was one such man."

Despite already serving in Turkey and Egypt he was determined to join the elite band of men who

joined the RFC and he survived flying training.

"This was no mean feat given that flight was still in its infancy and most fighter aircraft was still made from wood, canvas with aluminium and 8,000 pilots died in training," said Mr Steel.

On the June 25, 1917 he set off from his base in Bailleul. Clutterbuck was in the rear of the aircraft as an observer; he would be clutching the machine gun as the pilot, Leslie Spencer Bowman headed toward the trenches at Le Bizet, only to be met by Von Richthofen's Fokker.

The 'Red Baron' described what followed in his combat report of the encounter.

"I was flying together with Lieutenant Allmenroder. We spotted an enemy artillery flyer whose wings broke off in my machine gun fire.



● James Power-Clutterbuck



The body crashed burning to the ground between the trenches," he wrote.

It was Von Richthofen's 56th out of 80 victories.