



AUSTRALIA'S oldest WW1 veteran, Sgt Ted Smout, has died at 106 in 2004.

Edward David Smout was born on January 5, 1898, in Brisbane.

In 1915, when he was 17, he joined AAMC, carrying cans in the sanitary section, lying about his age in order to join friends who had enlisted.

But for Ted and thousands of other Australian boys, the great adventure turned into the nightmare of the trenches.

When asked about his impressions of the Great War, his answer was succinct: "mud, cold and near death".

Sgt Smout was one of four Australian veterans who travelled to Europe in 1998 to receive France's highest military distinction, the Legion of Honour.

Active in the Red Cross, Legacy and Meals on Wheels, Ted was also a dedicated fisherman. He was awarded an OAM in 1978.

In a 2001 biography, *Three Centuries Spanned*, written by his brother Arthur, Ted recounted the day German flying ace Baron Von Richtofen – the Red Baron – was shot down by an Australian machine gun.

"I happened to be one of the first on the spot," he recalled.

"I admired his fine leather knee boots, but resisted the temptation to souvenir them, or the Iron Cross he was wearing on a chain around his neck."