

agree that the film itself is first-class entertainment. Its objectives, point-of-view and production quality have been defended through letters-to-the-editor by some prominent members of the cultural community. At the same time, it would not be an exaggeration to say that it has outraged groups and individuals as diverse as veterans' organizations, associations of the graduates of the Royal Military College, historians of the air war, newspaper columnists and ordinary citizens, as well as those who knew Billy Bishop as wartime colleagues, friends and members of his family. Having viewed the film, studied the transcript and heard testimony, your Committee believes there are at least four legitimate grounds for criticizing the film: 1) the historical contentiousness of the suggestion that Billy Bishop's record was substantially fraudulent; 2) the film techniques used to convey and reinforce this suggestion; 3) the existence of many errors of fact and chronology in the film and its transcript, many of which serve to win acceptance of the film's theme; and 4) the description of the film in promotional material as a "full-length documentary". The following is an illustrative discussion of these concerns, rather than an exhaustive one.

Most of the controversy surrounding Billy Bishop's military record is focused on the single-handed attack on a German airfield which he carried out at dawn on 2 June 1917, and for which he was awarded the Victoria Cross. Bishop's combat report for the action written on his return to his airfield gave the locality as either Esnes aerodrome or Awoingt. His description was brief — the term H.A. refers to "hostile aircraft", the arrows "↓" mean less than —

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I fired on 7 machines on the aerodrome, some of which had their engines running. One of them took off and I fired 15 rounds at him from close range 60 ft. up and he crashed. A second one taking off, I opened fire and fired 30 rounds at 150 yds, range, he crashed into a tree. Two more were then taking off together. I climbed and engaged one at 1,000 ↓ finishing my drum, and he crashed 300 yds. from the aerodrome. I changed drums and climbed E. A fourth H.A. came after me and I fired one whole drum into him. He flew away and I then flew 1,000 ↓ under 4 scouts at 5,000 ↓ for one mile and turned W. climbing. The aerodrome was armed with one or more machine guns. Machines on the ground were 6 scouts (Albatros type I or II) and one two-seater.