

Source 2 (LAP 1/2/5)

Extract from a letter from Sir Lawrence Pattinson to his mother Mary Pattinson in which he discusses being on patrol and having a fight with a German plane, during which he received a small wound to his leg when his plane was shelled. He also describes the damage to his plane.

10 Sep 1915

I had a most exciting patrol about which I am going to give you full information as I trust you to understand what war is and not to get worried over it. We sighted a Hun just over the lines and gave chase. He at once nosed dived away from us over his own country and we all went after him at about 90mph and what seemed a terrific angle of descent. We got off about 130 rounds at him and he had a good do at us as well. He went right down to 2000 feet and we could not follow him as we should have been hopelessly "strafed". We got as low as 4,300 then returned. On the way back we got pretty well shelled and one piece came through the fabric of the body of the machine and hit my leg. Fortunately it was not going very hard and though it went through my leather trousers the lining was almost too much for it and only jagged points actually came to my leg. A very small hole and a fair bruise. However, I can now say I have "bled for my country" though very little. I must say being hit rather interested me till I had had time to find out how little damage had been done, as I thought any bit of shell would go straight in. I also got a rifle bullet plunk through one of the struts on my indicator head, which is mounted on the strut. It was altogether quite thrilling.

I had a most exciting patrol about which I am going to give you full information as I trust you to understand what war is & not to get worried over it. We sighted a plane just over the lines & gave chase. He at once nose dived away from us over his own country & we all set after him at about 90 mph. & what seemed a terrific angle of descent. We got off about 130 rounds at him & he had a good go at us as well. He went right down to 2000 feet & we could not follow him as we should have been hopelessly "strapped". We got as low as 4,300 & then returned. On the way back we got pretty well shelled & one ^{piece} came through the fabric of the body of the machine and hit my leg. Fortunately it was not going very hard & though it went through my leather trousers the lining was almost too much for it & only jagged points actually came to my leg. A very small hole & a fair bruise. However I can now say I have "bled for my country" though very little. I must say being hit rather interested me till I had had

time to find out how little damage had been done, as I thought that any bit of shell would go right in. I also got a rifle bullet flunk through one of the struts & my speed indicator head, which is mounted on the strut. It was altogether quite thrilling.

Key Words

Hun - a derogatory term used by British officers in the First World War to describe the German armed forces.

Strafed - attacked repeatedly with bombs or machine gun fire from low flying aircraft

Plunk - hit abruptly