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 a gave chase. He at once took his gun and made off away from us over the country we were after him at about 9000 feet, which seemed a terrific angle of descent. We got off about 130 rounds at him. We had a good go at us as well. He went up to 2000 feet so we could not follow him as we should have been hopelessly "scraped". We got as low as 4000 feet and returned. On the way back we got pretty well shelled on our way 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 and only jagged points actually came in my leg. A very small hole with a great burn. However, I can honestly say I have done my country through very little. I cannot say being hit had not 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 flung through one of the struts of my speed indicator head, which is mounted on the struts. It was altogether quite thrilling. Very my many thanks a tremendous comfort.
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