Source 6 (LAP 1/2/10)

Extract from a letter from Sir Lawrence Pattinson to his mother Mary Pattinson in which he describes dealing with a seemingly broken engine.

17 Nov 1915

I had a most amazing experience today, one of my machines came down near the lines but not under shell fire and they sent in a message that a new magneto was wanted. I went in myself to try and get it in by dark and when I got there neither pilot nor observer were there and they had left a message that they weren't quite certain what was wrong with it. I got in to try the engine and found it running quite alright, so simply brought it home just in time to get a difficult but not impossible light to land in. The other two are now on their way back in the car I went out in I expect. Rather a humorous episode "de guerre" wasn't it. You notice that I am now such a French scholar (sic) that I automatically break into it now and then. I am changing machines tomorrow and hope I shall pick a winner this time.
I had a most amusing experience today. One of my machines came down near the lines but not under shell fire. They sent in a message that a new magneto was wanted. I went out myself to try to get it in my dock. When I got there neither pilot nor observer was there, they had left a message that they weren't quite certain what was wrong with it. I got in to try the engine. I found it running quite all night, so simply brought it home just in time to get a difficult but not impossible fight to land in. The other two were now on their way back in the car. I went out in the dusk. Better a humorous episode, “De guerre” wasn’t it. You notice that I am now such a French scholar (sic).

Key Words

“De guerre” - French for “of war”
Sic - Latin for ‘so’ or ‘thus’
Magento - an electrical generator