

Source 9 (LAP 1/2/14)

Extract from a letter from Sir Lawrence to his mother Mary Pattinson in which he discusses an encounter he had with a sausage captive balloon.

25 Jan 1916

I had a very busy day especially as the machines played up badly. I had rather an amazing go at a sausage captive balloon. We went up at a moment's notice after some Huns but did not get to them but saw a Balloon about 6 miles over the lines. I saw that there was a bank of low clouds which crossed the trenches and came to within about 2 ½ miles of the sausage so we got as near as we could to it over the clouds, crossed the open and dived at it and fired with the gun. We had 3 dives altogether and Morris got rid of about 300 rounds at it at ranges varying from 400 to 200 yards. They were hauling it down so to get the last go we went down to 3,500 feet. We bolted for our lives after that and though we got some pretty hot shots after us on the way back we only got one piece of shell through the planes and crossed the trenches at about 4,000 feet through the screening mist. The sausage was then right down after we left it.

Dear Mother.

No letter from you today. I had a very busy day especially as the machines played up badly. I had rather an amusing go at a sausage captive balloon. We went up at a moments' notice after some flares but did not get to them & saw a balloon about 6 miles over the lines. ~~We~~ I saw that there was a bank of low clouds which crossed the trenches & came to within about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles of the sausage so we got as near as we could to it over the clouds, crossed the open & dived at it & fired with the gun. We had 3 dives altogether & Morris got rid of about 300 rounds at it at ranges varying from 400 - 200 yards. They were banking it down so to get the last go we went down to 3,500 feet. We belted for our lives after that & though we got some pretty hot shots after us on the way back we only got one piece of shell through the planes & crossed the trenches at about 4,000 ft over the screening mist. The sausage was taken right down just after we left it.

Morris

Key Words

Sausage captive balloon - A balloon used for observation in World War I, shaped like a sausage and held 'captive' by a rope