

500 yards apart, we could see he was doing his best to make for his own lines. However, he came to earth about fifty yards behind our front trench and then Fritz put over 96 big shells in quick succession in order to destroy the machine. This was after they got the range, and the occupants had time to get out. The pilot was killed and the observer turned out to be lad of 18, quite gentlemanly, who had received a commission from the ranks and had an iron cross of the second grade. He was quite upset over the death of his comrade and he evidently expected to be shot immediately and had to be reassured on that point. That night I saw a casualty being brought away from that vicinity and recognized a former Commerce boy named Blacklay, who had been shot, dying almost immediately while doing duty beside the aeroplane. I remembered his coming into our orderly room at Winnipeg to enlist and being told that the battalion was filled up. I arranged to have him taken on. This war is a cruel, dirty, dastardly, useless business and no Hell eternal can be devised sufficient to expatiate the suffering and sorrow caused by those responsible.

"I was fortunate enough to be selected for some rather daring reconnaissance work extending over three days and nights in company with another officer and 'The excitement was intense' to quote a well worn phrase. Our orders direct from the Brigadier-General were to get all necessary information. My companion, who is very hot-headed, and I found ourselves about fifteen yards from a German listening post and he proposed rushing it. I argued against it, having that Head Office fear of disobeying instructions and he called me a damned fool. This resulted of course in hot words which the Germans heard and for once I blessed my brevity of form as I had to lie pretty close to the ground for a while. After the firing stopped we found they were firmly ensconced behind their barbed wire so it turned out my caution was the better course. I enclose you a copy of a letter the Brigadier gave me addressed to him from the General Officer commanding 1st Division, not for the purpose of 'tooting my own horn,' but as I know you will be pleased at any slight token of merit any of your staff receive.

"I have run across quite a number of Commerce boys over here, in fact I officiated at a banquet in Shorncliffe the night before I left at which there were 60 bank men, of whom 40 or 45 ex-Commerce. The Bank may have made undue sacrifices but I can assure you the need is great. Lovett was in my platoon here but is now taking a cadet course and I am glad to say is getting a commission. Young Fraser, one of our ledger-keepers, is in the orderly room here. I have heard about the brave death of poor old John Low and little Bean, and my C.O. but needs to know that a man is from the Commerce to feel assured that any promotion concerned is warranted."

Letter enclosed from G.O.C., 1st Canadians, A. W. CURRIE, Headquarters, France, dated 29th October, 1915, referred to in the foregoing :

"I have read with much pleasure and interest, the truly excellent reconnaissance report on the area of . . . and . . .

"I wish to congratulate you and all concerned.

"Will you please extend to Lieuts. Morly and McLaurin, 16th Battalion, my thanks for and appreciation of their work."