

Account by Robert H. Pickford (Letter to Peter Gulliver, 1997)

We set off on our final adventure on March 17/18 1944. All was going well and I believe we had dropped our bombs and were on our way home. Apparently we were hit by anti-aircraft fire and our skipper, F/Sgt C Seaman ordered us to abandon aircraft by emergency method, we were on fire. The escape hatch was just in front of the R/Op's position and on the starboard (right) side. I remember seeing our Bomb Aimer [Edward A. Glover] standing by the hatch when something hit my head and knocked me out. The next thing I remember on regaining consciousness was falling in space. It is my belief, although I cannot swear to this, Ed Glover somehow pushed me out of our downed aircraft and saved my life. Another thing I remember was seeing our navigator Bill Robson floating towards earth. I called out to him "See you down there, Bill!".

Anyway, I eventually landed, hid my parachute and unbuckled and started heading West in the hope of getting back to England. I didn't walk far when I reached a wood and forest and I was a little bit scared. I didn't know what I would meet in there, however a few minutes later I heard someone calling for help. I investigated and found an airman in what I thought was a shed of some description. I'm pretty certain now that it was the centre section of an aircraft. You must remember it was very dark. However, this airman was in awful pain and was asking for morphine which we carried in the aircraft. I could not find any so I told him I would get help, which I did eventually.

The Germans whoever they were brought a long ladder on which they placed the injured. They then took him to a building of some sort and placed him on a table. I was then told to undress him. Now again remember he was wearing flying boots, parachute harness and coated suit, ? suit, battle dress. I hurt him as I did this. Then he was taken away somewhere, I believe it was to a hospital. We never heard anymore until Bill Powell and yourself got in touch with me. That is the account of the happenings of that night in 1944.

Now Peter you will have noticed I have not mentioned your father's name throughout this account. The reason being he had only been in the squadron a matter of a few days as far as I know. So when he flew with us in the mid upper turret I could not say for sure who he was, so obviously I could not recognise him when we crashed. But I am 99 % sure it was your father.



Account by William A. Robson (Letter to Peter Gulliver, 2009)

Regarding the event of 18 March 44, we were flying homeward after a bombing mission to Frankfurt when our aircraft was struck with what sounded a very short burst of machine gun fire. Our pilot immediately gave an order to bale out.

As navigator my position was over the front escape hatch, which I opened and baled out. The wireless fellow [Robert H. Pickford] followed me and I heard him call to me as we parachuted to the ground but I could not see him in the darkness. On the ground patches of white showed up. I investigated several but found they were only snow and not parachutes as I hoped they would be.

I could do nothing in the darkness but wait for dawn and enough daylight to see where I was walking. Later in the day I was cap-

tured by German soldiers, who took me to a place where I was interrogated. They then told me about the remainder of the crew. They said the plane had broken into three sections and that a gunner had fallen to earth in one of the sections. Amazingly he had survived and had been taken to hospital.

I was then reunited with Bob Powell (engineer) and Robert Pickford (wireless op). The other crewmembers (Seaman, pilot), E. Glover (bomb aimer) and L. Baldwin (gunner) had died in the action.