

POW report of Sgt R Cooper of Fortress HB767 BU-A that crashed into the sea off Calais on 12 September 1944

I was the starboard waist gunner of Fortress HB767 BU-A on 12 September 1944. We took off from Oulton at 18:45hrs for an attack on Frankfurt.

We had trouble with the Port Outer engine and had difficulty maintaining our operational height of 19,000ft. This engine had to be feathered about 20 minutes before reaching Calais on the way home. At this time our height was 2,000ft. The Port Inner engine then developed trouble and our Captain told us to take up ditching stations. After passing Calais the Port Inner engine stopped and the aircraft tipped up violently throwing me across the aircraft. As a result, I lost consciousness.

The next thing I remember was floating in the sea. I saw a dinghy which appeared to be empty, but I was unable to reach it. A few minutes later I was picked up by two German soldiers in a small boat.

I was suffering from cuts to the face and body bruises and was taken to hospital in Calais, where my wounds were attended to. My flying clothes, identity discs, Pandora and purse were taken from me.

I was transferred from the hospital to a prison in Calais, where I was kept until the prison received a direct bomb hit on 27 September 1944. I was then transferred to the cellar of a house where I remained until the entry of the ODN troops (Canadian?) at 18:15hrs on 30 September 1944 .

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