

William Robinson's award of the Victoria Cross was "gazetted" , as was customary, in the London Gazette just three days after the event.

Robinson went on to fly in France, but was not experienced in then current fighter tactics, and was shot down and captured with his observer. He made several unsuccessful attempts at escape, but was finally returned to the U.K. after the armistice of 11th. November 1918. He was already unwell, and contracted influenza in the pandemic, sadly dying on 31st. December that year.

The Sutton's Farm airfield of WW1 from which he had operated for home defence became famously better known in WW2 (and to date) as Hornchurch in Hertfordshire. Robinson's personal report follows:

From: Lieut. Robinson

Sutton's Farm

To: The Officer Commanding 39 H.D. Squadron.

Sir,

I have the honour to make the following report on Night Patrol made by me on the night of the 2nd-3rd instant. I went up at about 11.8 p.m. on the night of the 2nd with instructions to patrol between Sutton's Farm and Joyce Green.

I climbed to 10,000 feet in 53 minutes, I counted what I thought were ten sets of flares there were a few clouds below me but on the whole it was a beautifully clear night. I saw nothing till 1.10 a.m. when two searchlights picked up a Zeppelin about S.E. of Woolwich. The clouds had collected in this quarter and the searchlights had some difficulty in keeping on the aircraft. By this time I had managed to climb to 12,900 feet, and I made in the direction of the Zeppelin which was being fired on by a few anti-aircraft guns hoping to cut it off on its way eastward. I very slowly gained on it for about ten minutes I judged it to be about 800 feet below me and I sacrificed my speed in order to keep the height. It went behind some clouds avoided the searchlights and I lost sight of it. After 15 minutes fruitless search I returned to my patrol. I managed to pick up and distinguish my flares again. At about 1.50 a.m. I noticed a red glow in N.E. London. Taking it to be an outbreak of fire I went in that direction. At 2.5 a.m. a Zeppelin was picked up by the searchlights over N.N.E. London (as far as I could judge).

Remembering my last failure I sacrificed height (I was still 12,900 feet) for speed and made nose down in the direction of the Zeppelin. I saw shells bursting and night tracer shells flying around it. When I drew closer I noticed that the anti-aircraft aim was too high or too low; also a good many some 800 feet behind a few tracers went right over. I could

hear the bursts when about 3,000 feet from the Zeppelin. I flew about 800 feet below it from bow to stern and distributed one drum along it (alternate New Brock and Pomeroy). It seemed to have no effect; I therefore moved to one side and gave it another drum distributed along its side without apparent effect. I then got behind it (by this time I was very close-500 feet or less below) and concentrated one drum on one part (underneath rear) I was then at a height of 11,500 feet when attacking Zeppelin. I hardly finished the drum before I saw the part fired at glow. In a few seconds the whole rear part was blazing. When the third drum was fired there were no searchlights on the Zeppelin and no anti-aircraft was firing.

I quickly got out of the way of the falling blazing Zeppelin and being very excited fired off a few red Verrey lights and dropped a parachute flare.

Having very little oil and petrol left I returned to Sutton's Farm, landing at 2.45 a.m.

On landing I found I had shot away the machine gun wire guard, the rear part of the centre section and had pierced the rear main spar several times.

I have the honour to be
Your obedient servant
W. L. Robinson, Lieut.
No. 39 Sqdn. R.F.C.