

Sgt. Alfred Joseph Childs
R/68206 RCAF

Alfred Childs was a Canadian wireless operator/air gunner whose damaged Wellington crashed close to the Dutch coast

while attempting to return from a bombing raid on Cologne, killing him and three others of his crew.



He was part of the crew of Wellington W5379 PH-O, of No. 12 Squadron (*this Wellington is pictured here before it was delivered to the squadron from the factory at Aldergrove in Northern Ireland*), which had taken off from RAF Binbrook at 0020 hours on 11 October 1941.

W5379 was part of a force of 69 aircraft taking part in the raid with five Wellingtons lost, including a second from 12 Squadron whose crew were killed when their bomber hit a mine while crash-landing on a beach in Norfolk.

Alfred's Wellington lost an engine during the bombing attack and had managed to limp back across from the Rhine before it finally crashed at Haamstede in Zeeland, very close to the Dutch coast. Four of the crew, including Alfred, died in the crash with two others becoming prisoners of war.

Alfred was born at Woodstock, Ontario, in September 1919 and was educated at St Mary's Separate School and Woodstock Collegiate Institute before taking a correspondence course in banking accountancy. Alfred, who had also spent four years in the Cadet Corps, later worked in the Dominion Bank, at Woodstock, as a ledger keeper before enlisting in the RCAF in July 1940.

The others who died with Alfred were the pilot P/O Douglas Faint, observer P/O Garth Frew and wireless operator/air gunner Sgt. Kenneth Price. All are now buried in Bergen-op-Zoom War Cemetery in Holland. The survivors were the 2nd pilot P/O Wilfred Wise (who was later to receive an MBE for his part as the 'bellows-man' in the Great Escape) and rear gunner Sgt. William Morton.

Alfred's name can be found on panel 019.

Sources: IBCC/Aviation Safety Network/ Bomber Command Losses 1941 by Bill Chorley.