

Flt Lt Alfred Ellis Prior DFM 115734 RAFVR

Alfred was born on 1 November 1915 in Liskeard, Cornwall, the third son of Alfred Prior and Florrie Prior nee Ellis. In December 1940 he married Joyce Lilian Saward in Coventry, Warwickshire. Their daughter was born 6 weeks after his death.

Before joining the RAF at the outbreak of war, Alfred was employed by the British Thompson Houston Engineering Company in Coventry and in his spare time he learnt to fly at the Coventry Aero Club.

Alfred served as a Sgt Pilot on 51 Sqn at RAF Dishforth, Yorkshire, where on 17 Nov 1940 he survived a crash landing at RAF Usworth, Durham, although hospital admittance was required for facial injuries

In April 1941 Alfred was awarded the DFM whilst serving on 51 Sqn *"for gallantry and devotion to duty in bombing flights over enemy and occupied territory"*. The award was made in special recognition of the "Colossus Raid" in February 1941. Following a full tour of 30 ops, Alfred was posted to instructing duties.

Commissioned in January 1942, in October 1942 Alfred was posted to 161 Sqn at RAF Tempsford, Bedfordshire from 19 OTU.

On 14 March 1943, Alfred and the crew were tasked with "Operation Iridium", the sixth attempt to insert the 4 man Czechoslovakian SOE Iridium team to Bohemia. The team was tasked to organize the resistance, carry out intelligence surveillance activities, and transmit information back to London. The group radio was codenamed "Anna" .

At 20:00 Alfred, the crew and 4 man Czech team departed RAF Tempsford, Bedfordshire, in Halifax V DG245 (MA-W).

Whilst in the region of Sušice, now in the Plzeň Region of the Czech Republic, the visibility deteriorated and the group could not be dropped as planned. The decision was made to return to base. Whilst flying to the south of Munich, the aircraft was hit by German anti-aircraft fire and crashed in the Perlacher Forest, killing all on board.

Also Killed: FO Alfred John Kingham (Pilot); FO Richard Winter Taylor DFC* RCAF (Nav/AB); PO George McWilliam (WOp/AG); Sgt Felix James Mowles (FE); Sgt Francis Douglas Bell (AG); Sgt John Henry Kempton (AG); Lt Miroslav Špot (Agent); Lt Miroslav Kříčenský (Agent); Platoon Leader Bohumír Kobylka (Agent); Sgt Vladislav Soukup (Agent)

Originally buried in Munich West Cemetery, in November 1947 Alfred was moved to Durnbach War Cemetery, Bayern Germany

Alfred is commemorated on Wall Panel 228

Photo Source: IBCC

