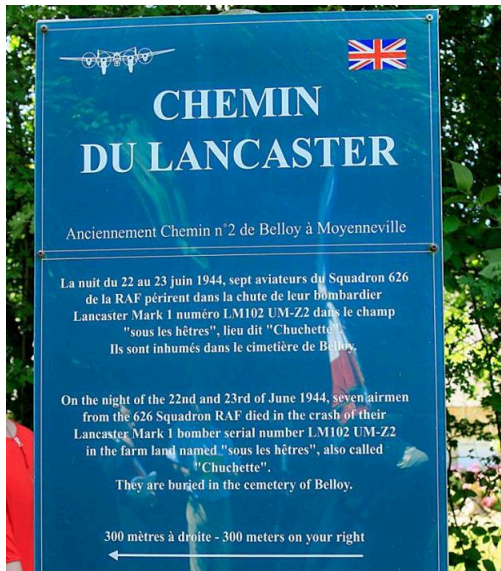


**Sgt. Eric Raymond Sydney
Kirby 1860956 RAFVR**



An ancient road between the villages of Belloy and Moyenne in the Oise region of France has now been renamed Chemin du Lancaster in honour of Eric Kirby and his fellow crew members who died on what is understood to be their first operation with 626 Squadron.

He was the rear gunner on board Lancaster LM102 UM-Z2 which was shot down during an attack on marshalling yards in Rheims on the night of 22/23 June, 1944 as the Allies attempted to consolidate the landings in Normandy.



His Lancaster had taken off from Wickenby in Lincolnshire at 2222 hours, one of 221 Lancasters and Halifaxes sent to attack rail targets in Rheims and Laon. The attacks were very successful at a cost of eight bombers.

LM102 crashed and exploded on farmland close to Belloy, killing all on board. Exactly sixty years later villagers renamed the road and erected this plaque honouring the crew, who were all buried in the churchyard 300 metres from this spot.

Eric was part of an unusual all-sergeant crew. He came from Herne Hill in south London and was the 21-year-old son of Sydney and Elizabeth Kirby.

The others who died were the pilot Sgt. Robert Woolley, flight engineer Sgt. Alfred Hawkins, navigator Sgt. Frank Goddard, bomb-aimer Sgt. Ernest Lewis, wireless operator Sgt. Herbert Browne, and mid-upper gunner Sgt. Percival Lawrence. His name can be found on panel 059.

Sources: 626 Squadron's Lost Lancasters/Aerosteles,