

**Sgt. Percival Alfred
Dowding Lawrence
1850459 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 Percy Lawrence and his fellow crew members who died on what is understood to be their first operation with 626 Squadron.

He was the air 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.

Percy was part of an unusual all-sergeant crew. His home was in the Wiltshire village of Great Bedwyn, near Hungerford and he was the 20-year-old son of Percival and Evaline Lawrence.

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 rear gunner Sgt. Eric Kirby.

His name can be found on panel 062.

Sources: 626 Squadron's Lost Lancasters/Aerosteles,

