

## Memorial Day 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2010.

Since the last update in October 2009 a group was formed to move this event forward and plan for April 2010. The group was made up from representatives from the Church, including the Rector Canon Lyndy Domoney, representatives from the Parish Council, members of the Royal Air Force Association and British Legion, a representative from the United States Air Force Mildenhall, John Blowers and a representative from Seething Airfield Museum.

Through Canon Lyndy Domoney, the Lord Bishop of Norwich the Rt. Rev. Graham Jones agreed to conduct the service.

The military protocol for the event was overseen by the RAFA and British Legion representatives in liaison with the Royal Air Force and United States Air Force.

So the date was set, the invitations had been sent out and there was a good response from those wishing to attend.

From the families perspective, they were very keen on attending and in all 13 people said they would come to Kessingland for the Memorial Service, this included the researcher who had helped us to locate to families and his son.

In the weeks leading up to the day of the event numerous emails passed back and forth across the Atlantic keeping everybody informed of all the latest developments of travel plans and places to stay, everybody was looking forward to the day.

For the families it would bring closure to an event 66 years ago, which they knew very little about.

It was also decided beforehand that on the evening prior to the Memorial Service that there would be an informal "meet and greet" dinner at a local Kessingland Restaurant.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> April 2010, a volcano located in Iceland erupted and this was to change everything that had been planned in the months previous. Because this eruption affected the air space throughout parts of Europe and the United Kingdom, flights

from America were cancelled leaving all but one of our American visitors stranded at home.

Bill Baughman was the fortunate one, he was the nephew of the pilot Eugene Pulcifer, had been on a tour of Europe, and was in the UK when the volcano erupted.

The emails that were received over the next few days told a story of despair and disappointment, it was heartbreaking for those family members who were looking forward to attending being grounded in America.

Dinner on the evening before the Memorial Service went ahead with Bill Baughman attending. Before the dinner 10 red roses each bearing the name of one of the crew members, were blessed by Canon Lyndy Domoney. This was at the request of Ted Kuhnen, the nephew of crew member George Fahr. The rose petals were to be scattered over the crash site after the Memorial Service the following day.

During the dinner a number of presentations were made, which included a letter from the local MP, Bob Blizzard This was read out and presented to Bill Baughman to be copied and given to family members.

Bob Collis, a member of the Lowestoft Aviation Society, who had made many trips to the crash site, had over the years collected a number of very small pieces of aircraft wreckage. He did a wonderful job in mounting these pieces onto wooden plaques for presentation to family members, who would have been in attendance. Only Bill Baughman was given his, the other will be forwarded to the remaining family members by post.

That then brought us to the day 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2010, 66 years after the aircrew of B24 Repulser were shot down in 1944.

Kevin Birch of BBC Look East met and interviewed Bill Baughman and John Blowers before the service, this was shown later during the day on BBC TV Regional News.

The service conducted by the Lord Bishop of Norwich and the Rector of St Edmunds was flawless. The military protocol was carried out by service men and women from

the United States Military and Royal Air Force supported by standard bearers from the British Legion.

The service inside the Church lasted about 45 minutes before moving out to the Village War Memorial.

The Memorial was dedicated and blessed by the Bishop of Norwich, this was followed by a 3 volley salute, followed by two buglers, one from the RAF sounding the "Last Post" and one from the U.S Military playing "Taps". There was a 2 minute silence in between.

Wreaths were laid by Bill Baugham for the families, Liam Martin Chairman of Kessingland Parish Council for the Parish Council and Community of Kessingland, John Blowers on behalf of the Royal Air Force Association, Brian Vousden on behalf of the Royal Air Force and a wreath was laid on behalf of the Lowestoft Aviation Society.

In the Church Centre afterwards there was a buffet / reception which was attended by nearly everybody who had attended the Church Service.

The following day Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> April, Bill Baughman accompanied by John Blowers and Liam Martin, went out onto the marshes to the crash site where Bob and John scattered the rose petals that had been blessed previously by Canon Lyndy Domoney on the Wednesday night.

There is a photo gallery for this event which is still being worked on and will contain a large number of photographs.