



POIGNANT MOMENT: Main picture, Bill Baughman lays a wreath on the new memorial stone at Kessingland. Above, co-pilot Elmer Meier, seen here with his wife Maxine.

Ceremony pictures: ANDY DARNELL

Yes, buddies, we will always remember you

By HAYLEY MACE
hayley.mace@archant.co.uk

FOR decades, the tragic series of events that unfolded in the skies above wartime Kessingland on April 22, 1944, has remained in the village's collective memory.

Now, the bravery and sacrifice of 10 US airmen killed when their bomber crashed near the coastal community 66 years ago has been officially marked at a memorial dedication service.

More than 200 people, including dozens of United States Air Force servicemen and women, gathered at St Edmund's Church for a service led by the Bishop of Norwich, the Rt Rev Graham James, and Canon Lyndy Domoney, Rector of Kessingland, in memory of the plane's crew.

Twenty-six USAAF planes took off from Seething airfield to bomb targets in Nazi Germany, but B-24 Liberator 843 "Repulser" was hit as it returned to base and crashed in fields near Kessingland.

Part of the 715th Squadron, the men on board were on their third mission after arriving at the south Norfolk air station in the early spring.

But Hitler's Luftwaffe took full advantage of its unusually late return to the UK on that fateful night, caused by poor weather before take-off, and sent a force of heavily-armed ME 410 fighters to intercept the bombers.

Villager John Blowers saw the plane crash as an 11-year-old boy. He joined forces with Kessingland Parish Council and the St



PATRIOTIC TRIBUTE: Clockwise from left, a United States Air Force bugler from Mildenhall base at the dedication ceremony; crash victim James Hardin; and Bill Baughman, nephew of pilot Eugene Pulcipher, rests by the memorial stone.



Edmund's parochial church council to raise money to pay for a memorial stone to be inscribed in memory of the airmen and put in place at St Edmund's Church.

Bill Baughman, nephew of the Repulser's pilot, Eugene Pulcipher,



was at the church for the service on Thursday last week and was moved to see so many locals paying their respects.

Mr Baughman, who lives in the state of Oregon, said: "It's very touching to be here, and I'm

extremely grateful to all the people involved. It has been great to hear the complete story of what happened to the Repulser. All my grandmother got at the time was a telegram, which didn't really explain anything.

"We always thought they had been shot down over the Channel and crashed somewhere nearby, so it has been incredible to hear the memories from the village."

Military standards were raised and bugles were sounded in the churchyard for the formal dedication of the stone, which bears the names of: 2nd Lt Pulcipher; 2nd Lt Elmer P Meier (co-pilot), 2nd Lt George S Fahr (navigator), 2nd Lt William Carcelli (bombardier), Staff Sergeant Chester J Romanosky (radio operator), S Sgt James R Hardin (gunner), Sgt William H Durant (gunner), Sgt William S Davis (gunner), Sgt Maynard H Young (gunner), and Sgt Carl E Spellman (gunner).

Twelve other relatives had planned to travel from across America to be at the memorial ceremony but could not come because of the nationwide ban on flights caused by volcano ash. Instead, a film crew from the US base at Mildenhall recorded the service so it could be sent to the families.



REMEMBRANCE AND PRIDE: From top, standards and flags are paraded at the ceremony, and the Cambridge war grave of pilot Eugene Pulcipher (pictured left).