



IN HONOUR: Sgt Todd Ramsey, from RAF Mildenhall, with the plaque that will remain in Lavenham's Church of St Peter and St Paul in permanent remembrance of the American servicemen who lost their lives while serving at the village's air field

Photograph:
MICHAEL HALL

Servicemen remembered on 60th anniversary

SCORES of American airmen who lost their lives after setting up home in Suffolk during the Second World War were remembered yesterday, when a special plaque was unveiled in their honour.

Villagers and dignitaries in Lavenham, near Bury St Edmunds, which played host to the

487th Bombardment Group from March 1944 onwards, gathered for a service of commemoration alongside colleagues from the nearby air base at Mildenhall.

The plaque, listing the names of all 230 young Americans who lost their lives, will now take its place in the Church of St

Peter and St Paul next to the Lavenham Roll of Honour, which remembers the local servicemen who died in the two world wars.

"It is fitting that we mark the 60th anniversary of the end of the war by putting in church the names of the young Americans who died while serving here,"

said the Rev Nick Woodcock, Lavenham rector. "It is a sobering thought that while 85 Lavenham men died in the two world wars, 230 American airmen based at Lavenham died in less than 15 months."

The Americans who died all flew B-24 Liberators and B-17 Flying Fortresses during

a 15-month period from March 1944, when RAF Lavenham became operational.

A total of 185 missions were flown from the base and 48 planes lost, with the largest air raid of the war led from Lavenham on Christmas Eve in 1944 when nearly 3,000 bombers and fighters flew to Germany.