



## **Imber Honours War Casualties**

Nearly 40 people attended a war memorial service in Wiltshire's ghost village on Saturday almost 60 years to the day since it was evacuated during the Second World War.

Imber, on the Salisbury Plain, was taken over for military training purposes on December 17, 1943, but its villagers were never allowed to return.

Among those gathering at the village war memorial was Ken Mitchell who was born in the village and had been among the evacuees in 1942. It was also the first service conducted by new vicar Rev. Dr. Graham Southgate who took over The United Benefice of Bratton, Edington-with-Imber, Erlestoke and Coulston in September.

Rev. Southgate said: "It was a small service to remember the three villagers who lost their lives in the war. There were prayers, bible readings and a procession.

"It was the nearest opportunity to December 17 we could hold the service as the Army opened the roads at 6am that morning."

Rev. Southgate will also be officiating at a special service at St. Giles' Church in Imber at 2pm on January 3 to mark the 60th anniversary of the evacuation.

The service will feature Christmas carols sung for the first time since 1943 and has been organised by the Friends of Imber Church.

*(This is Wiltshire – Friday 26 December 2003)*