



Codford

In The News

Search begins for the Codford Spitfire

Two young Welshmen are on a quest to discover the whereabouts of a Spitfire aircraft that crashed somewhere close to Codford during World War II.

Ian Hodgkiss and Gareth Jones are part of the British Aviation Council, a group dedicated to plotting air crashes of the period for future generations.

The plane was piloted by an American, 2nd Lt. Robert Humphrey of the USAAF, who took off at 2.15 in the afternoon on 6th November 1943 on a test flight.

He climbed to 7,000 feet and as he began a series of steep turns he noted engine problems, after increasing and decreasing speed in an attempt to correct the problem the engine cut out completely.

Lt. Humphrey, fearing an internal glycol leak and the consequent danger of fire he abandoned the aircraft.

The report of the aircraft accident to the Commanding General IX Fighter Command US Army records that a Spitfire BM-540 crashed at Codford in Wiltshire.

The Spitfire must have crashed in the fields around the village, as initial inquiries of locals in the village in 1943 have failed to produce anyone who remembers the incident.

However Ian and Gareth are determined to continue their investigation, as the pilot survived the crash the site will not be a war grave, and as such could be the subject of an archaeological dig.

After more than 60 years the missing Codford Spitfire could yield invaluable information.

Anyone who remembers the incident or has heard about the accident are asked to contact Ian Hodgkiss, 36 Warwick Street, Grangetown, Cardiff, CF11 6PW.

(BBC Home 12th August, 2004)

Search for WWII Spitfire Launched

An appeal is being made for information about a Spitfire aircraft which came down in Wiltshire during World War II.

It is believed the plane crashed somewhere near the village of Codford, near Warminster, in November 1943, after the American pilot ejected.

After experiencing engine problems, 2nd Lieutenant Robert Humphrey abandoned the aircraft, BM-540, which then crashed.

As the pilot survived the crash, the wreckage is not a war grave and could be excavated.

Initial inquiries among people who lived in the area in 1943 have failed to find anyone who remembers the incident.

Villagers hope that 60 years on someone will come forward with the information needed to locate the Spitfire.

(BBC News 13th August, 2004)

Recovery of Spitfire

In England the shattered remains of a Spitfire were recovered from a field at Codford, Wiltshire. The plane was piloted by an American, 2nd Lt. Robert Humphrey of the USAAF who took off at 2.15 in the afternoon on 6th November 1943 on a test flight. He climbed to 7,000 feet and as he began a series of steep turns he noted engine problems. After increasing and decreasing speed in an attempt to correct the problem the engine cut out completely. Lt. Humphrey, fearing an internal glycol leak and the consequent danger of fire he abandoned the aircraft.



The outline of the Spitfire as defined by detector readings. It had dived vertically into the ground at full power after the engine re-started.

The aircraft was recovered in September 2005. A somewhat 'portable' Merlin engine was found - every fragment could be picked up by hand. The propeller hub and gun button from the control column were found at a depth of 2m in the solid chalk.

[\(Aviation Archaeology\)](#)

