



Davie Reid with the engine from "Blue Peter".

Final landing for crashed Spitfire at Dumfries museum

A WARTIME Spitfire which crashed in the Galloway Hills of South West Scotland has arrived at its last resting place — the Dumfries Aviation Museum.

More than 50 per cent of the plane which was buried on the hills has been recovered by members of the Aviation Museum who will display parts of it at their headquarters on the former wartime airfield at Heathhall, Dumfries.

Other parts will be copied to complete another Spitfire they are rebuilding and which was covered a few miles away at Loch Doon, also in the Galloway Hills.

Escort duty

The latest find took around 20 years of searching by members and it was found exactly 51 years to the day when it plunged into the hillside at Cairnmore of Carsphairn.

The pilot of the plane was 19-year-old David Hunter-Blair whose relatives still farm in Galloway and South Ayrshire. He parachuted from the stricken plane but died later from his injuries. He was on escort duty at the time as the Queen Mary arrived in Clyde with some of the first American troops to join the war.

Museum spokesman Davie Reid said yes-

terday: "The great thing about this plane is that much of the fuselage and panelling has been recovered along with the engine and other parts."

"Many aircraft are found but usually the fuselage is completely destroyed. We will be able to make parts for our other Spitfire which was recovered from Loch Doon 10 years ago."

"The Spitfire was named Blue Peter and was bought by the town of Newmarket for the war effort. It was named after a famous race horse."

"It has taken a lot of effort to locate the plane. We started first in the early 1970s but it was not until May that we finally found it. Since then we have been recovering the parts which were mostly two or three feet under ground."

"Now we have managed to transport them all to Dumfries and work will start restoring and cleaning them," he added.

The museum members got permission from the relatives of the dead airman and the landowner to dig for the Spitfire and BBC's Blue Peter programme have been filming the dig and recovery for use in a future programme.

"We had almost given up hope but someone came forward who managed to give us good clues and we came across the plane," said Davie.