

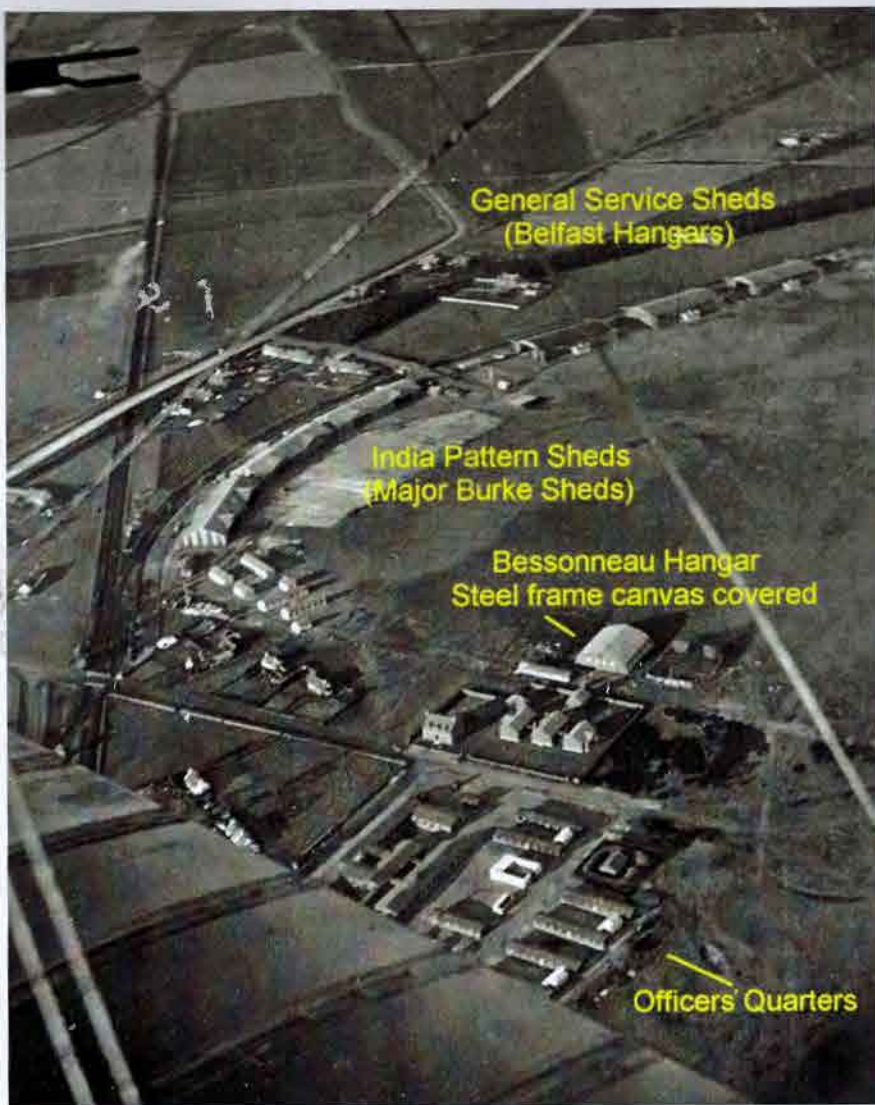
good in 2004. The line is commemorated by an artwork at Uphall close to where it diverged from the main line.

Aeroplane Depots

A number of Aeroplane Depots or Aerodromes were directly served by the NBR, including that situated at East Fortune in East Lothian which gained world-wide recognition as the starting point of airship R34 on 2 July 1919 when it made the first east-to-west crossing of the Atlantic by air, making landfall on Long Island, USA, on 6 July. Other bases served were at Gullane, Turnhouse, Aberdour, Donibristle, Crail, Leuchars, Dundee, Aberdeen and Montrose. To and from these centres there was a daily flow of officers and men, while trains with partially dismantled aeroplanes had frequently to be run when squadrons changed their quarters.

Montrose was the first operational military air base in the UK when it opened on 26 February 1913 upon the arrival of No. 2 Squadron Royal Flying Corps. It was originally situated at Upper Dysart Farm but that site proved unsuitable and the base was relocated to Broomfield Farm, north of the town in January 1914. The first pilot to land in France after the declaration of war in August 1914 was Lieutenant H.D. Harvey-Kelly of No. 2 Squadron RFC Montrose. He was followed by the remainder of the squadron before the end of that month. Montrose took on an important new role as a training base for pilots and it continued to be active throughout both world wars as a major centre for training pilots. In August 1914 the RFC had less than 100 aircraft. When the war ended in November 1918 the RAF had over 20,000 aircraft. Another of the squadron's pilots, 2nd Lt. W B Rhodes-Moorhouse, became the first pilot to be awarded the Victoria Cross. Unfortunately it was awarded posthumously on 26 April 1915.

An excellent aerial view can be seen of the aerodrome in the photograph above. Rail connection to the base was on a siding – known locally as 'Aerodrome Siding' – where the route of the Montrose to Bervie line (seen behind the General Service sheds) deviated from the Montrose to Dubton section whence connection was made with the Bridge of Dun to Kinnaber Junction section on the Caledonian's Strathmore route. A train can just be discerned heading what appears to be north on the Montrose



Montrose Air Base.

Photo courtesy of Montrose Air Station Heritage Centre.

to Dubton line just before that line passes under the line from Montrose to Kinnaber Junction. Unlike many wartime air bases, which have long disappeared under concrete or plough, the site of Montrose aerodrome is now the location of the Montrose Air Station Heritage Centre.

Passenger Traffic

Despite the closure of stations, reduction in services and a dramatic increase in fares, workmen's trains, put on to serve wartime conditions, helped restore and increase the proportions of passenger traffic. The construction of the dockyard at Rosyth was still far from complete on the outbreak of the war, and twenty-four workmen's trains per day, conveying between the dockyard station and Edinburgh, Dunfermline, Kirkcaldy etc., the workers who were still engaged

thereon, were continued right up until the end of hostilities. Numerous workmen's trains had also to be run on various parts of the system in connection with the setting up of aerodromes and munition works. The National Munitions Factory at Gretna was served off the Edinburgh and Carlisle mainline by a branch from Longtown, formerly the property of the NB but taken over for the purposes of the war as a Government railway. During the construction period, the NB provided special trains for the conveyance of workers between Longtown and Langholm, and also between Longtown and Carlisle; and when production at the factory commenced extra trains were put on to accommodate the munitions workers, the majority of whom were women. A 2 ft. narrow gauge military railway was used to move materials and