

Did you know?

East Fortune Airfield was used for storage during the Cold War and many buildings were used to store biscuits, sugar, flour and peanut fat.

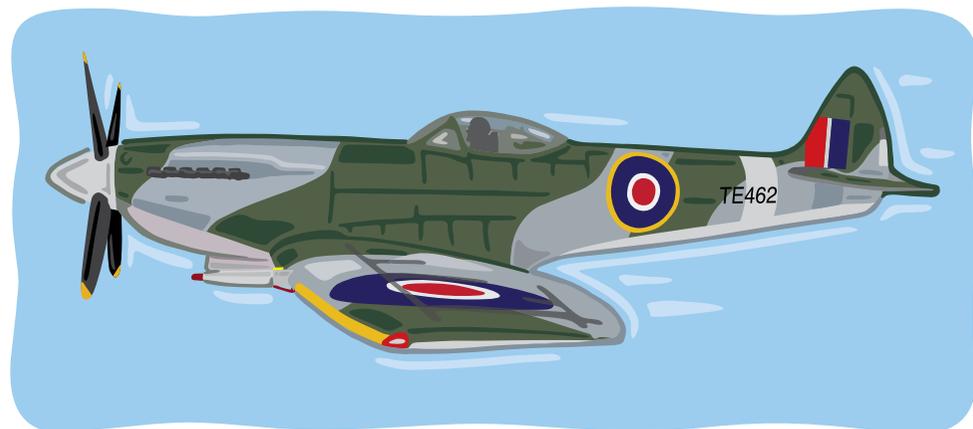
They also stored 'Green Goddess' fire engines. It was believed that Britain would need these things in the event of a nuclear war.



Did you know?

In 1971 the Ministry of Defence donated a Supermarine Spitfire to what was then the Royal Museum in Edinburgh. Due to lack of space, permission was granted for one of the hangars at RAF East Fortune to be used as a storehouse, and so the seeds

were sown for the development of the National Museum of Flight. The museum officially opened to the public on 7 July 1975. The Supermarine Spitfire can now be found in *Hangar 2, Military aviation*.



This trail has been produced by members of the local community, who selected their highlights and shared personal stories of the site.

Did you know

Before there was a museum here it was an active airfield set up by the Royal Naval Air Service in 1915 during the First World War. In 1919, after the war, the R34 airship set off from this

site for the first flight ever from Britain to America. If you make your way to the *Fortunes of War* exhibition you can see a stone commemorating this flight.



Highlight

“The East Fortune staff telling their stories of their time in the force”.

Patsy and Sandra, Musselburgh

Listen to ex-service personnel recount their experiences at East Fortune Airfield during the Second World War in *Fortunes of War*.

Bristol Beaufighter Second World War



Did you know?

The *Fortunes of War* building is a Nissen hut built in 1944 and is the annex to *Hangar 3, Civil aviation*. It was used as an administrative block incorporating offices and crew rooms.

Throughout the Second World War, the Royal Air Force Station, East Fortune, served as an operational training base. The first crews to pass through were of Australian, Canadian, New Zealand and Polish origin. Accidents were frequent, often fatal, and the surrounding countryside became littered with aircraft

crash sites. The Air Training Corps held camps locally for young cadets which provided them with their first experience of flying.

On 24 November 1942, the airfield was transferred to No. 17 Coastal Command Group and became an anti-shipping-strike training unit with Bristol Beaufort and Beaufighter as its principal machines. To accommodate the new arrivals a new hangar was built adding a fourth to the south side of the complex.

Hot and cold

The Second World War ended in 1945. From September 1946, 30th Fighter Command Group took over the site and stayed until the end of the year, when the RAF departed.

Soon there were plans afoot for East Fortune to be used by the United States Air Force. A new conflict was developing in the late 1940s which would come to be called the Cold War. One side was a group of democratic countries in Western Europe and America. The other was a group of communist countries led by Russia and China. It was called the “Cold War” because the threat of all out nuclear war kept the countries from fighting each other openly. Instead the two sides supported opposing sides in civil wars in other countries such as Korea and Vietnam. They also constantly tested each other’s defences. Russian bombers would fly over Scotland just to see how quickly RAF aircraft, such as the English Electric Lightning, would chase them away. In the end the United States Air Force never came to East Fortune.

Must see:

“Cold War outfit”

Rob, North Berwick

This is the clothing typically worn by an English Electric Lightning pilot in the 1960s. You can see this in *Hangar 2, Military aviation*.

