This Day in Naval Aviation - Month of January

January 2, 1942, the first organized lighter-than-air units of World War II, Airship Patrol Group 1, Commander George H. Mills commanding, and Airship Squadron 12, Lieutenant Commander Raymond F. Tyler commanding, were established at NAS Lakehurst.

January 6, 1917, a board of Army and Navy officers recommended to the secretaries of the War and Navy Departments that an airship of the Zeppelin type be designed and constructed under the direction of the Chief Constructor of the Navy.

January 14, 1957, (through 1/24) in an evaluation of their all-weather capability, ZPG airships of ZW-1, operating in relays from South Weymouth, maintained continuous radar patrol over the North Atlantic 200 miles off the New England coast through some of the worst storms experienced in the area in years.

January 17, 1906, the second zeppelin (LZ-2) makes its first successful flight over Lake Constance achieving a speed of 25 mph.

January 19, 1915, the first German aerial bombing of Britain, by two Zeppelins, thereby opening up a new era in the exploitation of aeronautics. During World War I, a total of 56 tons of aerial bombs were dropped on London and 214 tons on the rest of Britain. One airship, the L.6 had to turn back but the L3 and the L4 continued on to drop their bombs on Great Yarmouth and King's Lynn.

January 24, 1925, twenty-five aircraft carried scientists and other observers above clouds in Connecticut to view total eclipse of the sun, while airship Los Angeles carried Naval Observatory scientists over Block Island, R.I.

January 25, 1918, the Supervisor, Naval Reserve Flying Corps requested that Dr. Alexander McAdie, Director of Blue Hill Observatory, Harvard University, be enrolled as a Lieutenant Commander in the Naval Reserve and be assigned to the Aviation Office in CNO to organize a Naval Aerological Organization.

January 26, 1960, the first of two giant unmanned balloons was launched from Valley Forge, at sea south of the Virgin Islands. Almost as high as a 50-story building and with a cubic capacity greater than that of the rigid airship Akron, the balloons carried a weight of 2,500 pounds including 800 pounds of emulsion sheets to record cosmic-ray activity. The first balloon achieved an altitude of 116,000 feet and remained aloft 8 hours but the second reached 113,000 feet and made a flight of 26 1/2 hours. The balloons were tracked by early-warning aircraft from the carrier and shore base and the instruments were recovered by a destroyer. The project was under the joint sponsorship of the National Science Foundation and the Office of Naval Research.