THE NOON BALLOON

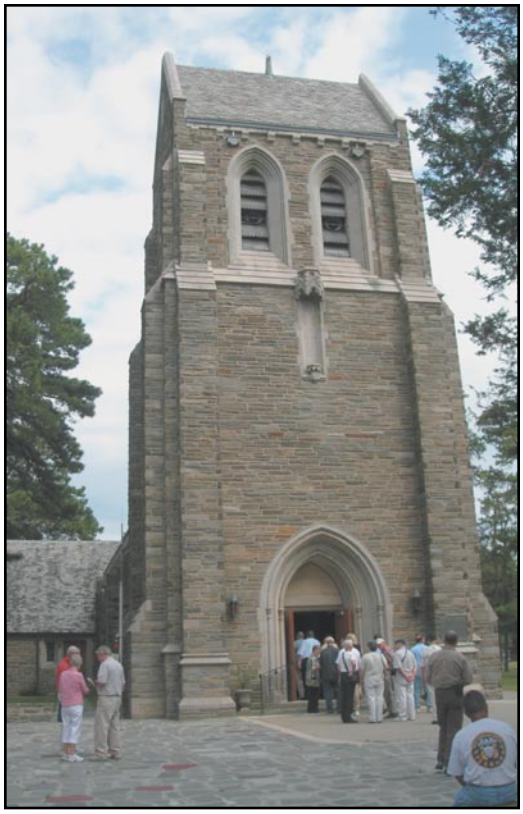
The Official Newsletter of THE NAVAL AIRSHIP ASSOCIATION, INC.

No. 76 Winter 2007

New Kid in the Dock

Inside: Reunion 2007 Report and Photos

Views of the
NAA
Lakehurst
Reunion
September 2007
Toms River, NJ



Naval Air Engineering Station Lakehurst

(Above): NAA Member Paul Adams took this picture as he piloted a Light Ship A -60+ over Lakehurst several years ago. *(Right)*: The Cathedral of the Air where our memorial service was held on Thursday. *(Below)*: Attendees gather at the site where the Hindenburg control car came to rest. *(Bottom Left)*: The more than 200 reunion attendee's seem almost lost in the gigantic Lakehurst Hangar #1. *(Right Center)*: At the Hindenburg site, Noon Balloon Editor Richard Van Treuren (left) Publisher David Smith (center) visit with Langdon Fulton (right) about the design and construction of the American built rigid airships. *(Bottom Right)*: Rick Zitarosa, Reunion Chairman and Navy Lakehurst Historian, receives his "Chairman's Medallion" from outgoing President Bob Ashford.

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Official Publication of the Naval Airship Association, Inc.

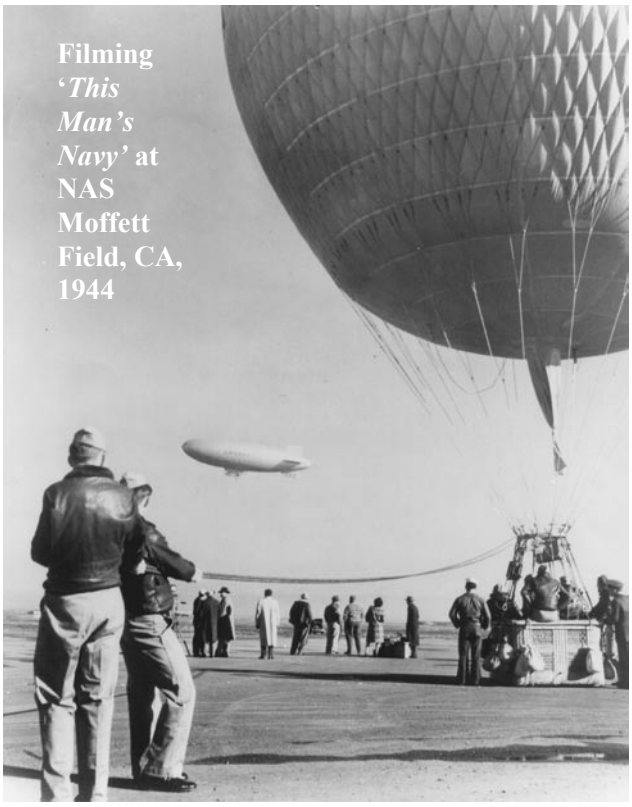
ISSUE # 76 WINTER 2007

On the Cover of TNB #76: The late LT Frank Klingberg directing refueling of a ZP-2 K-ship in NAS Guantanamo Cuba in 1952. Thomas R. Cuthbert photo; see his cover story on page 21.

Inside Front and Back Covers: Sights of the NAA Reuion 2007. Also see pages 15-16 for additional Reunion coverage.

Back Cover: Some 40 years after the Admiral made his final revisions, members of the History Committee have finally gathered the resources to bring Rosendahl's long lost WWII Airship history to light.

All material contained in this newsletter represents the views of its authors and does not necessarily represent the official position of the Naval Airship Association, Inc., nor its officers or members.



Filming '*This Man's Navy*' at NAS Moffett Field, CA, 1944

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EDITORIAL

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Sure was great seeing many of you at the Reunion at Lakehurst. It can't be said too often what a terrific job Chairman Rick Zitarosa and his team did hosting the event. (Even the Atlantic City bus trip was graced with a Lightship fly-by.) Dave and I were also grateful for the many folks who shook hands and reassured us they liked the NB and its mix of old and new, experience and innovation. With so much LTA happening in, say, the Arctic these days, for example, it's good we have such quality submissions from members like **Herman Van Dyk** for the historical perspective along with members delivering first hand accounts from the front lines.

If I had to grouse about something, it would be the members' seeming lack of interest in correcting either old or new. The record of K-14 or K-72, for example, will stand, just as surely as aeronautical students today have no institutional course. Even the Jack Hunt Memorial Library at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University contains no LTA textbook!

Your editor (in NAA hat) volunteered for the Energy Whiz Olympics again, helping students compete their fuel-cell powered model cars. If it were in my power to translate the German LTA textbook, I could, for example, point the students in the direction of considering hydrogen power for airships.

While we may not be in the mood to act collectively, individual members might help the LTA cause just by depositing their old NOON BALLOONs at a library or learning institution instead of the wastebasket. If you hang on to yours, consider the suggestion by **Don Shorts** - sign up your alma mater or other favorite school or library for a gift membership: they will receive TNB. (I am happy to report our magazine is going to the Smithsonian's NASM as of this issue.) At least we are coming to grips with the checkered past of the ZP5K, issue by issue, if only **Gordon Vaeth** alone seemed moved to write me about calling the Navy wrong on ZP-15's history last issue. **Jeff Cook** is fairly sure the ripped 5K in the photo is Bu No 141567, from the recorded accident at Kindley AFB on 14 FEB 58. The burning envelope is definitely Bu No 137490 because **Andy Kohut** took the time to zerox the caption of the photo and send it in. Its fabric caught fire in pouring rain at Glynco on 26 JUL 56. (Bags must have been flammable!)

Speaking of historical action, a team of NAA member volunteers have finally brought VADM Rosendahl's long lost WWII history to print. Since it was not an official NAA sponsored project it will not be offered at Small Stores. Since it is LTA history, it won't be offered in commercial bookstores, either. If you can't visit Lakehurst or Moffett or negotiate the internet to the sites listed at the end of **CP Hall's** review herein, then just drop Dave or myself a line or call, and we'll tell you how to obtain a copy.

Right on the heels of the NAA Reunion was the AIAA LTA Tech Committee meeting with its technical paper presentations. The late **Hepburn Walker, Jr.** was recognized by the AIAA for his lifetime of LTA achievement. I had the privilege of accepting the beautiful crystal vase for Hep on behalf of the Walker family. Amid the technical wonders and achievements shown was Ron Hoschstetler's proposal to establish a non-profit "Z" prize. Like the "X" prize before it which resulted in actual tourist space flight hardware, the Z prize would foster competition between large companies and garage-base business alike to build the LTA craft that have always been possible but have awaited some influx of major cash. Stay tuned. **–R G Van Treuren**

View From The Top: PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Following in the footsteps of Bob Ashford and other past Presidents presents a tremendous challenge. I'm a firm believer in the saying "if everything works satisfactorily - don't change". The Chairmen of all Committees have been invited to continue in office - and all have accepted. It is anticipated that some Committees may be strengthened with the addition of new members. Letters of appointment and appreciation will be sent to all Committee Members upon recommendation and confirmation by their Chairmen.

The Executive Council has agreed that maintaining and increasing our NAA membership is of primary importance. Don Shorts has agreed to spruce this important task. He will be assisted by Fred Morin, a successful businessman with a strong interest in aviation and having an extensive marketing back-ground.

In truth – *every* member of the NAA should be a Membership Ambassador. Wouldn't it be wonderful it each of us could encourage just one new member to join!

Vice President C. C. Moore has been charged with the responsibility of continuing a close and personal relationship with key personnel at the Lakehurst Naval Facility.

Richard G. Van Treuren will continue as Editor of the NOON BALLOON and Chairman of the History Committee. In addition to the continuing members, Al Robbins will also serve. Al is an aviation enthusiast with a particular interest in airship history.

Joe Hajcak has accepted the huge responsibility of being Chairman of the Reunion Committee. M. A. "Mort" Eckhouse has agreed to assist. It is gratifying to know that the success of our next reunion is in the hands of two such capable persons.

Ed. caption: NAA member Ross Wood atop his ZPG-2W at NAS Lakehurst in 1959.

Although two other east-coast sites have expressed an interest, the majority opinion of the Executive Council agrees that NAS Pensacola is the most suitable location in keeping with the purpose of our organization.

As your President for the next two years I pledge my best efforts to promote and maintain our organization. I have a strong sense of satisfaction in knowing that I can always rely on past presidents, old friends and shipmates such as Bob Ashford, Norm Mayer, George Allen, John Fahey, Herb Biedebach and others I knew during my more than ten years flying airships.

- Herm Spahr

*[Ed. note: As we go to press, **Fred Morin** has also volunteered for the History Committee.]*

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Pigeon Cote

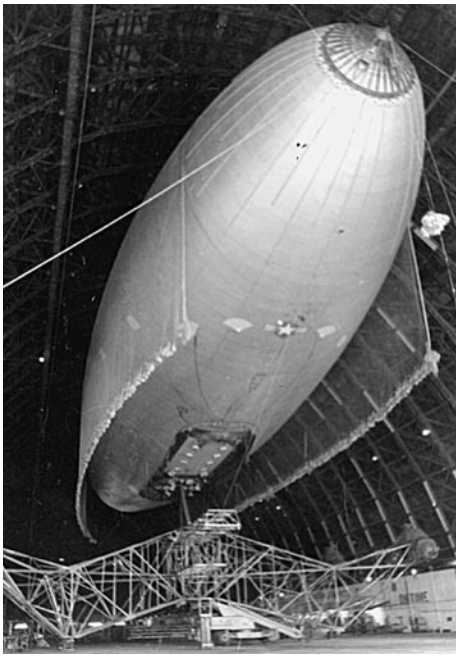
We sent a copy of TNB #74 to renowned author and U-boat historian Prof. ***Dr. Jurgen*** *Rohwer who thanked the editor, responding*, 'Yes, the fate of the **K-14** or the reason for its loss seems to be still unclear. But a German U-boat was not there at the time. U-869 was departing Kristiansand in Norway only on 22 JAN 45. The problem was that this U-boat had the order to operate off Gibraltar, but really sometime in January going west and was sunk on 11 FEB 45 in 39,30N/72.58W by US DE's *Howard D. Crow* and *Koiner*, as Mr. Alex Niestile, our best expert in U-boat losses, found after the wreck was found some time ago..." *The Professor goes on to mention his "Chronology of the War at Sea" was updated with previously unavailable Soviet documents and has been reprinted by the Naval Institute. As we reported, after much previous study the U-869 was thought to be a victim of its own torpedo, its proximity to Lakehurst and the possible experimental use of a "Fido" by a long dead K-ship crew not withstanding.* **Ω**

New member ***Juergen Bock*** *e-mailed our treasurer from Germany*: "Thank you for mailing me a membership card and the sticker. As a proof of eligibility I am transmitting you a photograph *[above]* of 1976, taken at the Cedar Inn, Toms River, N.J.-From left to right Charlie Mills, myself (with cigar and sunglasses on account of a miserable summer cold), VADM Rosendahl, Frank Piasecki, Jim Punderson, Hep Walker. Too bad, only two of this group are still alive! About at that time I started to become a consultant in the Helistat project, yet both Charlie and I kicked ourselves out of the project within a few years. (Con't)

E-mail, fax, hand scribble and snail-mail, or wrap it on a bird's leg, just get it to your editor. Remember, we can't print it if you don't send it in!

Consultants have the strange habit of trying to implement their own knowledge and experience. I am about ready to attend the AIAA-LTA conference in Belfast and hope to meet Rich Van Treuren. We are both looking out for support in translating our German LTA book of 2003 into English; so far no success. Professional translators would charge in the order of 10,000 EUROS. Besides, most translators are not familiar with the specific terminology of LTA. Best regards, Juergen" **Ω**

Michael Osinski of Memphis, Indiana, writes*:* "This is a photo of an aircraft I worked on in my first aviation job, when I was 21. The year was 1985 and I was a mechanic on the Helistat, a heavy lift aircraft design for the forest department. Unfortunately it crashed during testing and had one fatality. Ironically, it crashed in Lakehurst, New Jersey [where the *Hindenburg* went down]. I have since moved on, and am now an aircraft maintenance instructor and commercial helicopter pilot. Yet I still look back on that project with amazement." **Ω**



CAPT **H.E. "Ed" Mayfield, Jr**. USNR wrote: *"*My mother (Frances Mayfield) asked me to send you a photo of my father in his uniform. This photo *[see Black Blimp, pg 32]* was taken around 1976 when my father was promoted to CDR. I don't have any photos of his days in blimps as that was before my time. Both my brother and I continue to serve in the Navy. My brother is a pilot / intel officer (LCDR Chuck Mayfield) and I am a naval flight officer (NFO) in the Navy Reserve. It was 27 years ago this past week that my father flew me up to Newport, RI, to attend the Naval Academy Prep School. We miss him very much. He was a good man and a patriot." **Ω**

(Above) Member ***Dan Lindsay*** *(*Dynamo32@msn.com*) e-mailed a number of excellent color images from his days in HS-3 at Weeksville. Included was a great shot of the K's first postwar configuration, the ZP2K, with its water ballast bag dangling on the winch cable at the aft end of the car. We sure appreciate Dan sharing those images.* **Ω**

CDR ***J.W. Kissick, Jr****. e-mailed:* "A recent copy of TNB contained several comments regarding my duties as AC of ZS2G-1 #141570. It is too bad that the entire story of that fateful day, 9/16/58, as related in my aviation autobiography, "A Flyers Dash", has never been revealed. A copy of Chapter 7 ("…..AND EVERYONE THOUGHT LIGHTER-THAN-AIR WAS DULL") therefrom had been forwarded to NAA so that factuality could be known. I still hold the accident report. Little has ever been said about the 2 1/2 hour unbelievable ordeal, nor that we survived by Divine intervention. Nor has a comment ever been made regarding my instructions to my crew that the sonar fish, hanging some 60 feet below on its cable, would dig into the mud, causing the ship to heel-over to its downwind side, and I would, accordingly, order "Abandon ship....port or starboard... whichever is appropriate." Nor has there ever been any mention of the fact that, when so ordered, and as I expected, the ship, anchored briefly by its sonar fish, would swing, violently, back to port, at which extreme I grabbed the ripcord, threw myself out of the port cockpit window, bounced off the searchlight mount and holding onto the red line, tried to rip the ship so it would not swing back and come down on my crew. I am here to state this fact only because the people at Goodyear, who blatantly misriveted the control tubing in the tail, which caused the first crash, also had double-glued the rip panel, and my 200-pound body only pulled-out the bottom plug, and the ship did not rip. I was, later, presented the red chord from the wreckage, and still have it. To my knowledge, I was one of only two LTA pilots having served in jet fighters on our previous sea duty tour. I was to become a quad-qualified pilot, props, jets, LTA and helicopters, before going on to more important duties. While an AC in ZP-2, however, may I relate yet another unusual "experience": It was very dark with a low overcast. We were quite far out over the Atlantic as usual, looking for cold-war submarines. My radar operator reported a surface contact almost directly below us, but there was nothing to be seen, so I reversed course, and again got a report the contact was, now, directly ahead. Seconds later, a P2V dropped out of the cloud in front of the nose, shot beneath us, and, presumably, pulled up behind us into the soup. No ship below! Again, Divine intervention!!!! You may guess to whom the "...DASH" is dedicated. The VA asked for one of the few copies, and had it placed in the Library of Congress. CDR James W. Kissick, Jr 104 5th St. So., Bradenton Beach, FL 34217-2500 - (941)778-1154." **Ω**

'Red' Layton e-mailed*:* "The Summer 2007 Noon Balloon brings to mind two L-8 stories. When the Carrier *Hornet* left San Francisco bay with Jimmy Doolittle's B- 25s aboard, it was before a critical piece of "navigation gear" had been loaded. The missing equipment was placed on a Navy blimp that made a drop to the Hornet outside of the Golden Gate. The blimp was the L-8. A good many years ago a 'Pulp' magazine carried a Clover and a story about the "**Mystery of the L-B**". They had obviously lifted the story and the pictures from another source and failed to notice that the 'block' 8 was, indeed, a number, If you look at the picture on the back cover of the Noon Balloon, you can see how they made this mistake. I have a copy of this magazine in my 'files' and if I devoted several days full time, I might be able to find it." **Ω**

Always wear your NAA hat... your editors' elicited a comment at a Dunkin' Donuts by a fellow who recommended talking to a neighbor who'd remembered hearing about a blimp being shot down off Maine during WWII. When I finally met **Ralston H. Spenser**, living less than a mile away from me all these years, he explained he'd served with ZP-2 mostly at Glynco. He did not have any specific recollection of how he might have heard about the **K-14**. He did say as an HTA CPO he did not feel much like part of the group and did not object when he rotated back to HTA. Anyone who remembers Spenser might also know the source of the K-14 story, so don't hesitate to speak up. Sadly, Spenser refused NAA membership. **Ω**

Charlie Bennet called to point out errors in the obit of **James L. Sinquefield** last issue. James served with ZP-41, then HQed at Sao Luis. Other Brazilian mast sites worked were Amapa and Fortelaza. While he and Charlie visited Richmond, they also were assigned to NAS Houma following a hurricane. Like helicopters following the recent storm Katrina, the airships spotted stranded folks out in the bayous and lowered supplies when needed, calling in the CG for rescue when possible. Charlie said Houma housed a number of German POWs at that time and they may have been employed to ground-handle ships, as in France. Charlie also mentioned there was a mast base on the Western tip of Cuba, San Huleon (sp?) and missions to the Yucatan were flown – and the base was not the one on Isle of Pines. (Anyone else serve at these stations?) Says **Bill Baker** was aboard the blimp that lost both engines and had to be towed in by the submarine to Key West. **Ω**

Mark Lutz e-mailed: Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Airship claims: "In November 2006, the US Army purchased an A380+ *[sic]* airship from American Blimp Corporation through a Systems level contract with Northrop Grumman and Booz Allen Hamilton. The airship will start flight tests in late 2007 with a primary goal of carrying 2,500 lb of payload to an altitude of 15,000 ft under remote control and autonomous waypoint navigation. The program will also demonstrate carrying 1,000 lb of payload to 20,000 ft. The platform could be used for Multi-Intelligence collections. Northrop Grumman (formerly Westinghouse) has responsibility for the overall program."

Bob Slaff sent some hard copies and e-mailed*: "*Quite a few years ago we stopped en route south and chatted about my WWII service in Squadron 22 & 51. I am one of 13 WWII veterans selected by Maryland Public Television to participate in a corollary to Ken Burns, THE WAR. In the live video section I speak about LTA escort and anti-submarine service. (The website is http://www.mpt.org/thewar/profiles/slaff.html) go to profiles, click on biography, photos and video. Life's lottery makes me the 'survivor' of our crew who served in both **ZP-22** & **-51**. **Ω**

Ford Ross sent an attachment of a postwar tech order concerning loading and pressure of K-type airships. Sadly as with most the print is too small to be readable unless we devoted a page to it. **Ω**

The passing of **Richard Widdicome** (see **Black Blimp,** noting he is not wearing CAC wings) has ironic timing since, as a young enlisted man, he was on the crew of the K-6 when it encountered the U-94 early in 1942. Members of the History Committee have just now published VADM **C. E. Rosendhal's** WWII Airship History. Rosendahl had uncovered this otherwise un-published combat and told the assembled LTAS banquet about it back in the 1950s, but no other author since mentioned it in their works. Enjoy **C. P. Hall's** review herein. **Ω**

Robert F. Martin has completed his exhaustive research and put together an extensive etymology of the word 'blimp.' He has assembled it in an illustration-rich printout that is most enjoyable but sadly rather difficult to make compatible with our TNB format. Perhaps when he completes his major work on the 3W crash we can persuade him to rework the blimp etymology into something we can reformat for TNB readers. **Ω**

TREASURER'S STRONGBOX

Betty and I have returned to Florida after an enjoyable reunion and extended vacation. We were very happy to hear the comments of the folks attending the reunion who had not been to Lakehurst in 40-50 years. This was a very special event for all! Special thanks to Rick Zitarosa and associates of the Navy Lakehurst Historical Society for hosting our reunion.

Renewal letters will be mailed the beginning of November to only those of you who need to renew for 2008. If you have paid ahead, you will not be receiving this notice. NOTE: Dues are now $25 per year.

When you send in your renewal, please correct any pertinent information (i.e. phone, e-mail, address, zip codes, etc.) A new roster/directory will be printed after the first of the year and we would like all information updated.

If you are not scheduled to receive a renewal and your address, etc. has changed, please notify me.

We would like to welcome the following new members to the N.A.A.:

Zanghi, Keith – Graham, WA
Onago, James – Allen, TX
Spahr, William R. – Hickory, NC
Spahr, James M. – Hawthorne, NC
Spahr, Philip M. – Grand Haven, MI
Hanneld, Michael R. – St. Simons Island, GA
Sohn, Irving – Wellington, FL
N. England Air Museum, Windsor Locks, CT
Rogal, Joseph W. – Hastings, PA
Lansdowne, Zachary - Carmel Valley, CA
Balestri, William – Henderson, NV
Cyr, William – Lake Placid, FL
Eckert, Charles – Alexandria, VA
Keneipp, Robert – Lakehurst, NJ
Manuel, Jim D. Jr. – Lakewood, NJ
Madigan,Thomas W. – Denver, CO
Sheft, Laura Lynn – Sanibel, FL
Scroggs, Theodore D. – Marlborough, CT
Udvar-Hazy Education Center, Smithsonian Air & Space Museum, Chantilly, VA

Ed. Note: Can anyone i.d. these hard working troops from NASL in early 1942?

We would also like to thank the following for their generous donations and support of the N.A.A.:

$5 - $49 -
Salvatore D. Vacanti
Ira Schwarz
Ernest Clark
Herman Spahr
Michael R. Hanneld
David J. Laurel
Patricia Bracy
in Memory of "Pete" Chambliss
Belle Bell
Frederick R. Morin

$100-$499 – Ross F. Wood

In closing, we would like to wish you and yours a very Happy Holiday Season.

- Peter F. Brouwer

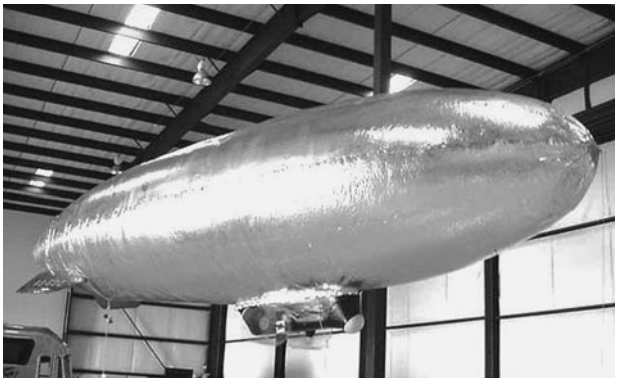
WITH OUR MEMBERS IN THE FIELD

Member **Dominique Manière** reports: "This is the Au-30 Airship. It is owned by the Electricity Company who wants to use it for power line surveys in Russia and Siberia (which is part of Russia, actually). Now, pooling up with Gazprom for pipelines surveys, that might give it a boost....

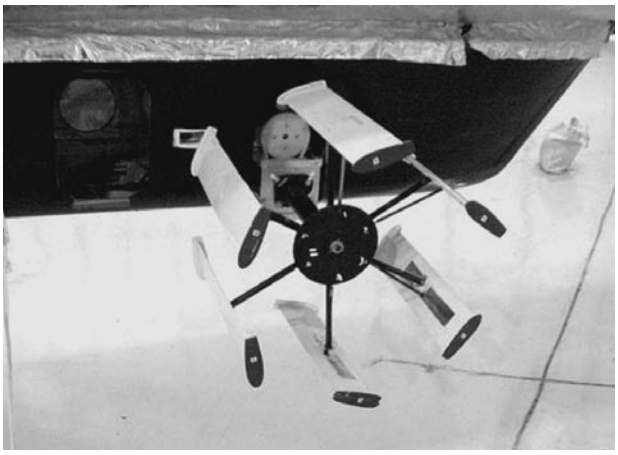
In the mean time, Airship #3 is being finished (mainly the gondola), with a Jean-Louis Etienne team of half a dozen working in conjunction with the Moscow Institute of Aviation. I order to save more time, Jean-Louis Etienne has had some parts being manufactured by Dassault (manufacturer of the "Mirage," "Rafale," as well as of the "Falcon" line of business jets.)

All the AU-30 parts will be delivered in Marseille-Marignane airport, in a hangar owned by Eurocopter. First flight should be in early Oct., followed by training of 8 pilots.**"**

(Related Story) Venezuela Goes for Russian Zeppelins By **Sergei Balashov** June 2007, in part: Cutting edge pipeline technology arrived on a zeppelin which landed on a cornfield a short drive away from VNIIGAZ headquarters just outside of Moscow. "We hope this zeppelin will be exported to Venezuela and we're going to work on the technical and commercial details of our agreement. PetroChina is also expressing great interest. We're currently trying to work out an agreement to sell them a zeppelin of this kind," VNIIGAZ general director Roman Samsonov told OGE." **Ω**



Roy Gibbens pointed out an error of omission last TNB: "The propellers were installed on a 26 foot 'Airspeed' envelope that had been used by a major gas corporation advertising their product in the UK. The airship was one of several manufactured and operated in the UK by Nigel Wells. He 'donated' an envelope to me for testing the cycloidal propellers. (Con't)



These photos of my Airspeed airship modified for Cycloidal propellers being tested in the Peavey Electronics hangar in Meridian, MS."**Ω**

17th AIAA LTA Tech Com Conference Belfast, Northern Ireland, 18 – 20 Sept 2007

The AIAA's AITO conference convened its LTA TC meeting, chaired by Dr. Bernard Sträter, recently retired from ZLT Zeppelin Luft-schifftechnik GmbH. Papers were presented covering progress and developments in the "buoyant" state of the art in several countries.

AIAA-LTA-TC Chair Mike Conners presents George Spyrou of Airship Management Services with etched vase commemorating a lifetime of LTA. Editor's photo.

The first night's gathering found NAA/TC members gathering to honor two of their own: **George Spyrou** of Airship Management Services and the late **Hepburn Walker, Jr**. were both presented lifetime achievement awards by the LTA TC Chairman, Mike Conners. The AIAA President later announced the awards to the entire assembly, and your editor accepted the etched vase on behalf of the Walker family.

Session 1, "Airship Design and Propulsion," was chaired by Dr. R. Pant of the Indian Institute of Technology. Papers presented were "LTA Aircraft Undercarriages: The Author's Experience" by C. Luffman; "Measurements of Drag/Propulsion Interaction Effects on a Spherical Airship Model" by J. Ottmann; "Improvement of Propulsive Efficiency by Dedicated Stern Thruster Design" by A. Hirner; and "Feasibility Studies for a Bionic Blimp with a Fish-Like Propulsion System" by the team of S. Michel, A. Bormann, M. Bernasconi, M. Zobel and E. Fink. That last paper featured the new idea of using electrostatic pressure panels to warp an airship envelope like a fish body for steering while other panels propelled the ship with a "bionic, swimming" fin – a unique noiseless propulsion method demonstrated in model form.

The second session "Low Altitude Unmanned Airships" was chaired by M. Burns of Booz Allen Hamilton. Papers presented were "Studies and Applications for LTA" by the team of K. Tanaka, Y. Hamaguchi, and S. Maekawa of the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency; "Design Fabrication and Operation of Low Cost Remotely Controlled Airships" by the team of A. Gawale; R. Pant and Y. Jahagirdar. Tanaka's paper contained a unique historical review, including little known observations – like the Chinese invention of paper remaining a secret for 600 years.

Session 3, "HALE Airship Technologies and Operation," was chaired by Dr. G. Camplin, Airship Heritage Trust, Cambridge. Papers presented were: "Precision Navigation of Airborne Vehicles Using Pseudolites Mounted on Stratospheric Airships" by the team of B. Chandu and R. Pant; "Comparison of Propulsion Technologies for a HALE Airship" by the team of P. Hendrick, D. Verstraete, and L. Halet; "HiSentinel Airship Effort" by the team of M. Lee and I. Smith; "Flight Approval of SPF- 2 Low Altitude Flight Test Vehicle" by the team of M. Nakadate and S. Maekawa; "Developing a European Research Strategy in the High Altitude Aircraft and Airship Sector," by the team of P. Hendrick, T. Tozer, and B. Sträter. Lee's paper included a video of their experimental plastic airship, launched vertically and limp, reaching over 70,000 feet and returning video from that altitude, only the second such success in LTA history.

Session 4, "Unmanned Airship Design and Control" was chaired by P. Hendrick of Brussels, Belgium. Papers presented were: "Multi-disciplinary Design Methods for the Hybrid Universal Ground Observing (HUGO) Airship" by the team of T. Kuhn, C. Rößler, and H. Baier; "Nonlinear Control Approaches for an Autonomous Unmanned Robotic Airship" by the team of E. de Paiva, Centro de Pesquisas, Renato Archer, F. Benjovengo and S. Bueno of Brazil and J. Azinheira and A. Moutinho of Lisboa, Portugal; "Flight Autonomous System Integration for LTA Remote Operation" by the team of C. Lin, C. Hsu, and J. Lee, Taiwan. The Brazilian/Portuguese co-operative paper included details on their joint venture environmental observation airship, operated by a remote pilot. The Taiwanese' paper included a demonstration of their airship control electronics, which directed the vehicle via GPS signals but switched to an internal INS if the signal was lost or corrupted.

Session 5, "Airship Buoyancy Systems," was chaired by your TNB editor. Papers presented were: "New Insulation for Thermal Balloons and Airships" by the team of A. Bormann, S. Skutnik, J. Llado and P. Duvoisin; 'Airship Hybrid Power System Design Using Evolutionary Programming for Seeking Neutral Buoyancy" by C. Severns; and "HEIDAS UH: Flying with Super-Heated Steam" by the team of A. Bormann, S. Skutnik, and M. Fischer. Bormann's paper closed with the revelation their first steam-lift balloon, made possible by Aero-X insulating fabric, would have its maiden flight just days after the conference.

Session 6, "Aerostat and Airship Structures" was chaired by: Dr. A. Bormann of Germany. Papers presented were: "Tear Propagation of a High Performance Airship Envelope Material" by the team

of S. Maekawa, K. Shibasaki, T. Kurose, Y. Sasaki and T. Yoshino; "Multidisciplinary Shape Optimization of Aerostat Envelopes" by the team of C. Vijayram and R. Pant; "Nonlinear Analyses of Aerostat Behaviour" by P. Rawat; "Design and Fabrication of an Aerostat for Wireless Communication in Remote Areas" by the team of V. Gawande, P. Bilaye, N. Agrawal, A. Gawale, R. Pant, and U. Desai. Dr. Pant ran a video showing their student team filling a plastic balloon with hydrogen, running it up on a tether, then purposely putting a hot flame to the plastic skin. As a hole burned opening the skin, the balloon quickly settled and collapsed without explosion, a few orange flames visible from the plastic burning.

Right after lunch on Thursday a panel discussion was held. "Environmental Advantages of Transport Airships" was moderated by Gregory Gottlieb representing the UK's Airship Association. The panel discussion examined the many advantages of modern technology Transport Airships providing transport of goods and materials in an environmentally sustainable way. The panelists were Richard Smith of Shell, Ron Hochstetler of SAIC, and Grant Carichner, deputy program manager for buoyant systems, Lockheed-Martin.

Minutes before the final session, CEO Brandt of ZLT Zeppelin Luftschifftechnik GmbH was called away owing to an incident with the South African ship. "Transport Airship Developments," was chaired by Dr. R. Boyd, Lockheed Martin, Palmdale. Papers presented were: "Zeppelin NT as a Platform for Remote Sensing for Environmental and Industrial Applications" (presented by Brant's predecessor, Bernard Sträter); "Optimization of Airship Routes for Weather" by A. Sarma (presented by R. Hoschstetler); "Experimental Investigation of Drag on a High Altitude Airship" presented by N. Chokani, a Swiss professor, was a last-minute substitution; "Establishment of A Transport Airship Competition" by R. Hoschstetler; "Comparing 1928 Technology and Operation: USS *Argonaut* (SS-166) and *Graf Zeppelin* (LZ-127)" by your TNB editor. Hoschstetler's proposal to create a "Z" prize to foster team effort to be the first to achieve various LTA goals was possibly the most important at the conference., and everyone has been listening closely for word of its development. Dr. Sträter's paper showed the real-world accomplishments of the Zeppelin NT fleet, but was saddened by the breaking news the African NT had been pummelled by a tornado (See "News from Friedrichshafen" pg 15.)

The meeting adjourned with everyone promising to meet again on the 100th anniversary of the formation of the original Zeppelin company. (See "**Ready Room**.") **Ω**

"Airships and ice roads: Global warming forcing a re-think of how best to supply remote communities" by NAA member Dr. Barry Prentice: Excerpt from the Winnipeg *Free Press*, Tue Oct 23 2007

Most discussions of climate change, melting ice caps and global weather events are focused on measurement. The debate needs to shift to consider how we are going to cope with these changes. In no case is this more critical to Canada than the failing of the ice road transportation system. Over the past 10 years, the network in Manitoba has gone from 55 to 60 days of usage to 20 days or less in some years. If we fast forward another decade or so, ice roads may not be worth building. How do the remote communities that depend on this transportation system obtain fuel, construction materials and food supplies?

Airplanes could also be used to supply remote communities but in addition to their high operating costs, landing strips would have to be improved to accommodate larger aircraft. This idea is so easily dismissed that no estimates of using cargo airplanes to replace ice roads exist.

Airships are faster, more flexible and less expensive than hovercraft. Very little investment is required in fixed facilities to operate airships because "the vehicle is the infrastructure." Airships can go where the elevation is below 2,000 metres and can be operated amphibiously like hovercraft.

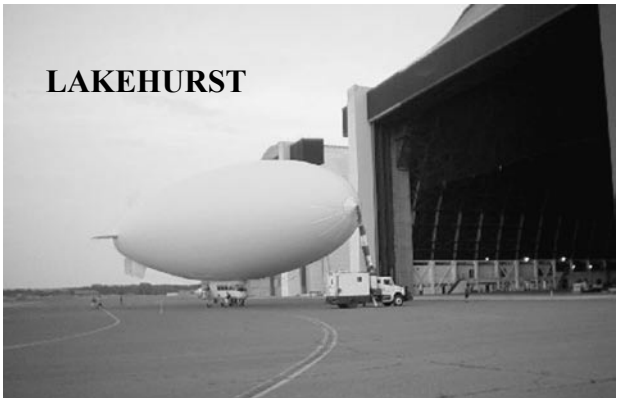
The limitations of hovercraft and airships are no longer technical. The only important questions are economic. How do their costs compare to the construction of all-weather roads and airports? In the case of hybrid airships the business case has been researched. A 50-tonne lift airship could compete with the costs of trucks over the ice roads in Manitoba.

The experience with activist governments during the 20th century has made voters skeptical of bold public initiatives. Politicians have become very cautious and generally try to lead by following. No one is arguing for more public intervention, but governments must play a role when the business sector either cannot or will not do so alone.

The situation of Canada's ice roads is receiving less media attention than the melting ice cap, but the process is happening with similar speed. It is time to accept the problem, and move from measurement to solutions.

[Ed. Note: watch for Dr. Barry Prentice's report on the Fourth Annual 'Airships to the Arctic' Conference being held at press time at the Fort Garry Hotel.]

SHORE ESTABLISHMENTS

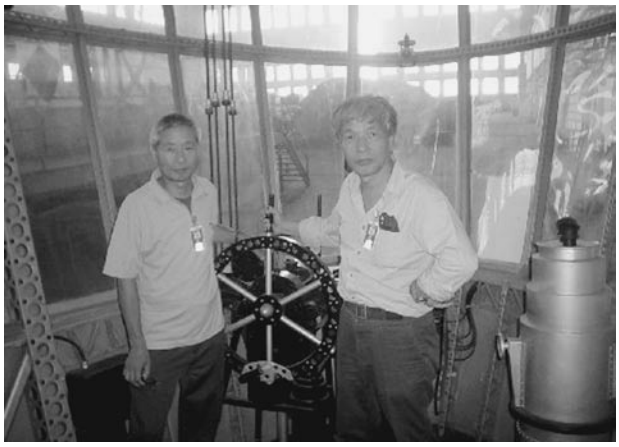


I received a phone call from the Beltway area to inform that Navy MZ3A airship #167811 will be turned for use by the Army, with the latter taking custody of the airship in approximately the next quarter. Apparently the airship will still be *technically* still owned by the Navy..... whether it will still carry its Navy serial # or place on the inventory is not known. (The original short-lived civil registration # was "N157LG" when the first test flights were made under the auspices of Lightship Group.)

Lakehurst's role in any future military LTA projects is not known at this time. When the MZ3A project first surfaced, it appeared that it would lead to at least some money being made available to stabilize/upgrade the airship hangar facilities on the base, particularly wooden-arch Hangar #6, which served as the operational headquarters for the MZ3A and the short-lived revival of the Navy LTA program.

The reasons why the Navy chose to terminate their first-active LTA project in over 40 years are perhaps best known only to the individuals who pushed for the decision; the "official" version is that the Navy determined that they "do not have a mission for the airship at this time." That somebody else now has a mission for this airship at this time is apparent; the nature and location of that mission are vague at this time. Indications are that the ship will be in the Southeastern United States and will be operated for the Army by a private contractor, at least in the beginning.

Japanese aeronauts visited Lakehurst 7/24 as part of a business trip to the U.S. regarding LTA/Ballooning matters. A great deal of paperwork and permission had to be secured through Base Security and the NCIS in order to allow them to visit Lakehurst due to their "Foreign Nationals" status and this was handled graciously (and flawlessly) by Larry Lyford of the Navy Lakehurst Public Affairs Department.



Michio Kanda (left) and Saburo "Sabu" Ichiyoshi visit the LZ129 Hindenburg control car replica at the Navy Lakehurst Historical Society display area in Historic Hangar #1. (Zitarosa photo)

"Sabu" Ichiyoshi is currently manager of LTA operations for Lightship Group operations in Japan and President of the Buoyant Flight Society of Japan. Among his LTA achievements was an attempt to fly over Mt. Everest in a hot air balloon. He also has extensive gas balloon experience, having first trained in hydrogen balloons in Augusburg, Germany in the 1970's. Michio, an employee in local Japanese regional government, is planning for an upcoming balloon flight across the Pacific Ocean, with Sabu as his principle technical/logistics advisor. The two men toured the historic exhibits and displays and we took them up a few ladders and along a few corridors to see some of the mechanical-structural details of the hangar more closely. Japanese LTA prospects are especially exciting these days with the arrival/operation of a Zeppelin NT in the country right now as we speak ("the best airship available in the world at this time" they feel.) The visit was all-too-short but enjoyable nonetheless. As a parting gift, we presented them with a small piece of fabric skin from the LOS ANGELES to be taken along as a "good luck charm" on the trans-Pacific balloon journey.

Meanwhile, judging from their enthusiasm and experience, we hope to be hearing more from Sabu and Michio and hope they stop in again... next time with their own balloon or airship, perhaps.

- Rick Zitarosa

MOFFETT:

GROUP SEEKS TO SAVE HISTORIC STRUCTURE By Melanie Carroll, San Jose Mercury News: 08/27/2007 *[In part]:*

With the U.S. Navy just months away from announcing its decision on whether to demolish Moffett Field's Hangar One, a group of citizens dedicated to saving the edifice has launched a campaign to replace its contaminated siding with fabric. The Save Hangar One Committee late last week vowed to circulate petitions and fliers and give out "Re-skin Hangar One" stickers in coming weeks to build support for the plan originally proposed by architect Linda Ellis.

Ellis' $12 million plan calls for covering most of the former home of the 785-foot-long USS Macon in a Teflon-coated Fiberglass fabric much like that used at Shoreline Amphitheatre…Under the re-skinning proposal, the Navy would pay $12 million to put up the fabric…The Navy in November is scheduled to release an environmental evaluation and cost analysis which will determine if the 1930s-era hangar will be demolished, said John Hill, the Navy's base closing manager for Moffett Field… Hill said the new environmental evaluation is being revised to reflect public comments and that "nobody should assume the same recommendation" as last year.

"NASA is interested in reusing" the hangar, said Sandy Olliges, the deputy director of safety and environmental and mission assurance for the NASA Ames Research Center at Moffett Field. "The Navy has looked at a similar skin to what's on it now (corrugated steel) . . . and evaluated this type of (fabric cover) skin. We have not seen that type of analysis." A University of California-Santa Cruz proposal still under development calls for a "solar energy center" inside the hangar, said Bill Berry, director of the University Affiliated Research Center. An exposition center or public gathering place could be housed in the facility, Berry said."

–Ben DeBolt

GOODYEAR/WINGFOOT LAKE

In October of 2007, Goodyear completed a major update of its 800-foot long Wingfoot Lake airship hangar in Magador/Suffield, ten miles southeast of Akron, Ohio.

The hangar covering was more than 70 years old. It was entirely replaced with new baked enamel blue, silver and maize steel siding by Butler Steel Buildings Systems. Insulation and natural light window panels were also added.

Begun in August, 2007, the renovation is the first major construction work carried out on the hangar exterior since 1942. The result is beautiful, bright and shining as befits this landmark in the Portage Country countryside.

The project emphasizes Goodyear's commitment to its airship operations and has revitalized the crew that builds, maintains and operates the company's fleet of public relations and community service airships.

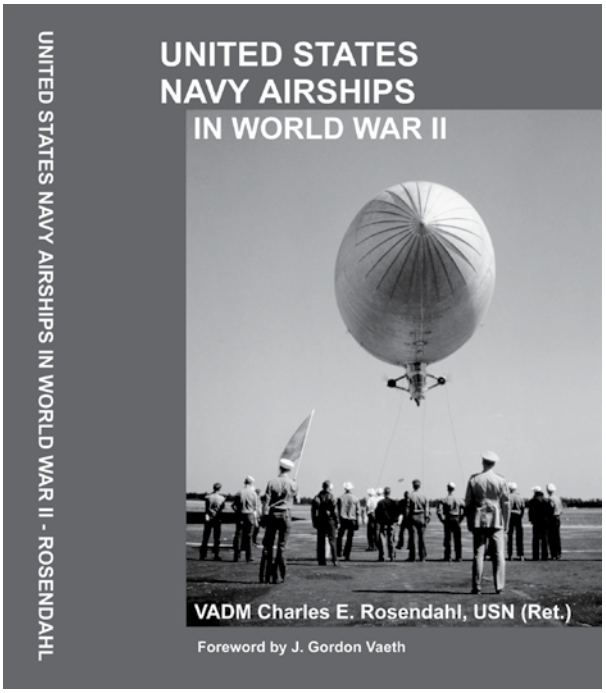
The NAA salutes Nancy Ray Jandrokovic (Director, Global Airship Operations) and her associates who preserve and extend Goodyear's airship heritage at "Blimp Base One" and Wingfoot Lake.

(Color photos of the completed project will appear in our next issue.)

Workers place insulation on the existing steel frame before bolting new steel siding to the hangar.

–David Smith

MEDIA WATCH



UNITED STATES NAVY AIRSHIPS IN WORLD WAR II By Vice Admiral Charles E. Rosendahl, U. S. Navy, Retired (Atlantis Productions, Edgewater Florida, 2007)

Reviewed by C. P. Hall II, Brookfield, IL

When I was asked to review this newly surfaced Rosendahl manuscript, it caused me to contemplate just how long it has been since first I read a book by this author. I concluded that it has been just about 50 years. There is no doubt in my mind that I read the first (but not the last) book entitled "UP SHIP!" by Lieutenant Commander Charles E. Rosendahl before I departed Mrs. Roeske's sixth grade class at Old Trail School in Akron. I remember enjoying "UP SHIP!" unreservedly as Rosendahl was a teller of tales, a storehouse of anecdotes, and a yarn spinner extraordinaire. This is what makes his works so readable but it is a weakness in some respects as well.

This new volume is, in fact, an old manuscript. Judging from the footnotes, it seems likely that it was finished about 50 years ago. The subject matter is more specific than the title indicates. The focus of the book is the front line blimp squadrons of World War II. If that is your area of interest, if you would read about incidents from each of these squadrons' operations, if you wish an anecdotal view of the difficulties of operating LTA craft in various climatic conditions from Maine to Brazil; then this book will please you. If you would like to learn more about the structural details about K-ships, any details at all regarding M-ships, then you may be disappointed. Information regarding Rosendahl's wartime assignment as Chief of Naval Airship Training and Experimentation is also conspicuous by its absence as it is only mentioned in J. Gordon Vaeth's modern FORWARD and Rosendahl's original PREFACE.

The manuscript, as presented for review, has several sections of photographs. The photos are an initiative of the publisher and were not selected by the author. The photo selections were made by Eric Brothers, Editor of *Buoyant Flight,* and they are outstanding. Many of the photos may be recognized as previously published; however, they supplement the text excellently. The early photos are of pre-WW II Navy LTA efforts. A kite balloon, which appears to be a whale climbing the mast of the Armored Cruiser USS *Huntington,* (ARC-5) in June 1917, is followed by examples of non-rigid types from the inter-war years. Soon come the photos of wartime ships of all classes, airship bases, arcane equipment, and the requisite photo of unmanned L-8 drifting into Daly City, CA on 16 AUG 42. Several photos are of individuals mentioned in the text. The climactic photo is an M-ship (M-3) escorting surrendered U-858 into captivity.

One interesting statement of omission in Rosendahl's PREFACE reads, "The greatest part of the history recorded herein was assembled while it was distinctly fresh in my mind. There have not been included herein many of the reported but unverified airship contacts and attacks on submarines, although every one was made in all sincerity, and testifies to the continued alertness of blimp crews." This is surely a disappointment to the publishers and does not help their quest to identify and reveal all blimp submarine engagements of World War II.

In some ways the first chapter, "Naval Balloons and Blimps up to WW II", is the most interesting. Throughout Rosendahl's naval career, he was an advocate for Lighter-Than-Air who was loyal to the service and the Bureau of Aeronautics establishment. He made the case for LTA both publicly and within the service, accepted what he and LTA received, and did not attack publicly competing programs. "Go along and get along" is the Army cliché and Rosendahl, who did not rock the boat in public, left the Navy a Vice Admiral. Once retired, he seems to have felt freer to reminisce about the history of negative and prejudicial attitudes, within the Navy's Heavier-Than-Air establishment, against LTA. To me, Chapter One represents an interesting, observable moment of transition in his public position.

In conclusion, the story of LTA activity in WW II remains incomplete. This volume is a valuable addition to that history. It is limited in scope, but, none-the-less, informative and quite readable. It is typical of 'shortly-after-the-war' books by veterans as it is primarily anecdotal in nature. As a result it may be unfavorably compared to the more recent and more detailed histories such as "Blimps & U-Boats" by J. Gordon Vaeth which was published by the Naval Institute Press in 1992. Had it been published shortly after the war, it would now be considered a contemporary part of the literature regarding LTA. That a well-known retired Vice Admiral with a literary track record did not get his manuscript published, either by the obvious publisher, or by a 'commercial' publisher, is curious indeed. **Ω**

Ed. Note: The NAA has no financial interest in sales of this book, publishing costs of which were borne entirely by History Committee members. Rick Zitarosa preserved a late version of the manuscript for decades and other members have also donated resources to make it happen. Commercial book sales outlets have no interest in LTA or small publishers, so copies must be obtained locally from NLHS, MFHS, or on-line at ***www.gyzep.com*** *and* ***www.airshiphistory.com****.*

AIR & SPACE SMITHSONIAN published a series of "10 new ideas," including: "Spy Blimps and Heavy Lifters" By Ben Iannotta. Your editor found little 'new' in the piece, and in fact most of the illustrations were anything but new. Selections from the piece:

"All these scenarios envision important new missions for aviation's historic under-achievers…Techsphere Systems was born the day Mike Lawson got a call from Hokan Colting, a Swedish-born hot-air balloonist famous in the airship community for advocating spherical designs….The Navy tested the spheres, and now the Army has awarded a contract to spy equipment manufacturer Sierra Nevada Corporation of Sparks, Nevada, to test a 94-foot-diameter Techsphere prototype, the SA-90… Under a research effort called ISIS (Integrated Sensor Is Structure), engineers at DARPA hope to build a stratospheric airship containing a giant radar antenna. The antenna will double as the interior support structure—a weight-saving design. "We're really a radar program," says electrical engineer Tim Clark, DARPA's ISIS program manager. "The platform just turned out to be a stratospheric airship. And that's because we wanted big antennas. You can't get much more surface area than a stratospheric airship. …It's probably not going to be easy to nudge any of these concepts into the real world. …"I've heard—seriously—people say 'Well, we shouldn't have much problem doing something like that; you just take a gas bag and put a couple of engines on,' " Hokan Colting says, laughing. But if the design challenges can be mastered, the decidedly low-tech aircraft could become a critical part of the 21st century fleet." **Ω**

TV SHOW: Last TNB we reported on NAA members working with a BBC TV contractor for an airship TV show. As we go to press we learned it was to be shown on the History Channel on 7 NOV 07, but as you read this the program should be repeated. Check local listings for "Lost Worlds: The Age of Airships." **Ω**

NAMF FOUNDATION ran member **James Shock's** L-ship history in the Fall 2007 issue. (History Committee Chairman assisted with formatting and Past NAA Pres. **Lou Prost** added his postwar L-ship photo scrapbook.) Other NAA members are encouraged to submit LTA stories to NAMF, which has a much larger reader base than TNB. (Your Editor has a small piece in the Jan. AIR & SPACE mag, but sadly it's not LTA.) **Ω**

NEWS FROM FRIEDRICHSHAFEN
Composed & Submitted By Sig Geist

Damaged stern. Copyright_ZLT_Hecktriebwerk nach dem Aufkommen.jpg

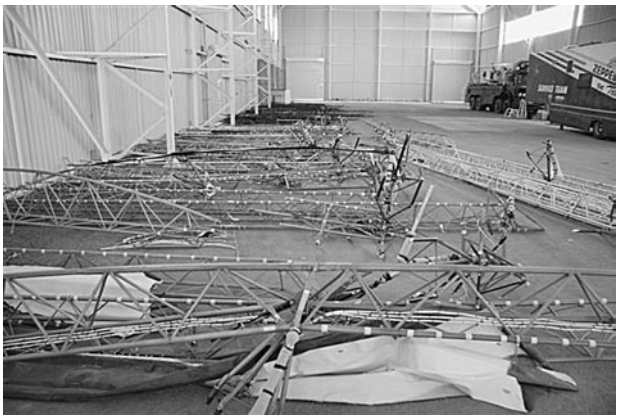


Photo Copyright ZLT

Photo Copyright ZLT

Experts arrived in Botswana: Airship irreparable Friedrichshafen, 22 SEP 2007:

The moored Zep NT airship was considerably damaged by a sudden whirlwind on Thursday. Experts assess damage to be beyond repair. After disassembly first parts will be transported to Gaborone.

The damage makes it impossible to repair the airship. At the time of the occurrence the prototype was moored at the mast. The airship was not operated. The aft section hit ground first. The incident is classified as damage on ground by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) Botswana.

The CAA Botswana has released the airship documentation without objection. The authorities have released the airship for transport to the hangar in Gaborone. After detail assessment the ZLT will decide on a possible use of part of the airship.

Following the release by Botswana's Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), salvage is already underway with parts taken to the hangar in Gaborone where upon closer examination ZLT will decide over further use of parts from the prototype airship. **Ω**

History Committee note: Whirlwinds were also known to the 'Africa Squadron,' ZP-14, as a page from their history attests. K-109's gasoline ignited, and only the bow stays remained from the envelope. (USN Historical Center)

REUNION 2007

Robert L. Ashford
NAA Reunion 2007 – Report

Wow, what a reunion! About one year ago the NAA Executive Council elected to hold our 2007 reunion in Lakehurst/Toms River, New Jersey. In addition the council decided to hold the reunion mid-week instead of incorporating it within a weekend. The dates selected were September 4, 5, and 6, 2007, with the reunion banquet to be held on Thursday evening, September 6th. The primary reasons for this selection of dates were the availability of motel services during the week immediately following Labor Day, and the ease of travel on non-weekend days. If the enthusiastic response and attendance at the reunion can be taken as an indication of the membership satisfaction with the dates and location, then NAA Reunion 2007 was most certainly successful.

Many of us arrived at our reunion headquarters, the Quality Inn in Toms River, on Monday, September 3, 2007, Labor Day. The early arrival gave some of us a chance to assist our Reunion Chair, Rick Zitarosa, in setting up the "Ready Room" and other last minute details. Not surprising, many of the attendees took advantage of the Labor Day holiday to travel and quite a crowd checked in on Labor Day evening. Events were off to a roaring start.

The entire NAA Executive Council, with the exception of Margaret Hinrichsen traveling from Arizona, arrived in time for our scheduled meeting on Tuesday morning. We were able to greet our new President -elect Herm Spahr and Vice-President-elect C.C. Moore as we conducted a few outstanding items of business. The official check-in started on Tuesday afternoon as 217 persons arrived and were assigned rooms in either the Quality Inn or the overflow accommodations at the Comfort Inn (just up the road). Tuesday evening witnessed the "Welcome Aboard" gathering in the spacious Ballroom/Ready Room/ Meeting Room of the Quality Inn.

On Wednesday morning outgoing President, Bob Ashford, presided at the biennial business meeting. The two major items of business were the election of the officers to serve for the next two years and the increase in annual dues. The officers elected are:

President – Herman Spahr
Vice-President – C. C. Moore
Treasurer – Peter Brouwer
Secretary – Margaret Hinrichsen

Peter Brouwer has been serving as Treasurer since the untimely death of John Kane in October 2005; he has now been officially elected as Treasurer.

The President described the need for an increase in dues to cover the costs associated with the publishing and mailing of "The Noon Balloon" as well as other administrative costs of the NAA. It was the overwhelming consensus of the membership present that they were pleased with the "new look" of TNB and that an increase in dues to continue with the present quality and frequency was justified. The membership voted to raise the annual dues to $25.00 per year beginning in 2008. For those who have already paid their 2008 dues in advance, the increase will become effective in 2009. However, all contributions will be greatly appreciated.

Immediately following the business meeting, the membership boarded buses for a tour of the hangars, a look at the navy's one and only airship, the MZ-3A and a delicious lunch at (we all remember as) the Naval Air Station, Lakehurst, NJ. On Thursday about 70 people boarded busses for the trip to the casinos in Atlantic City. This was the only slight disappointment of the entire reunion since we had enough transportation for more than 120 people. However, those who went to AC had a great time and arrived "home" in plenty of time to pretty-up and suit-up for our gala banquet.

George Allen dressed to the gills for the occasion and sported his tuxedo as the Master-of-Ceremonies, and, as usual, George spiced things up with some of his humor. The speaker for the evening was Mr. Ron Bendlin, the Manager of Design Engineering at TCOM, L.P. who gave

a very enlightening presentation about the great strides that have been made in the exotic new fabrics that are now in use to build airship envelopes and tethered aerostat flexible structures. His comparison of the old with the new demonstrated that today a K-ship envelope could be built with fabric that weighs about half as much but about 10 times as strong as the WWII bags.

The reunion and the banquet closed with Bob Ashford swearing in the new officers to serve until our next reunion and the singing of the final stanza of the Navy Hymn, "Eternal Father Strong to Save……in peril in the air."

And so ended my term as president of the NAA. I wish the new officers all the very best. May they serve the NAA well and may we continue to expand with youth and remain a viable organization for many years to come. It was a great pleasure to serve.

Bob Ashford

Phyllis and Bob Ashford.

Frank Arcidiacono, Peter Brouwer, George Allen.

Attendees enjoyed the heavy Hors d'oeuvres dinner provided by ZW-1 hosts and crews.

Wally Turner, Ron Anderson and Ross Woods discuss ZW-1 adventures as they reflect on photos brought to the reunion by Wally.

New NAA officers being sworn in by outgoing President Bob Ashford.

NAA officers for 2008-2009. Peter F. Brouwer, Treasurer, C.C. Moore, Vice President, Herman Spahr, President, Margaret Hinrichsen, Secretary.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

A large part of lighter-than-air developments that have occurred during the past year involve systems remotely flown, hence the classification of 'unmanned systems.' Tethered aerostats are providing valuable services in war zones and along the U.S. border including surveillance, communication and intelligence; they represent a major portion of the funding for lighter-than-air programs. Several government and privately supported projects for unmanned airships have been established. Manned airships are finding greater use in scientific projects as well as continuing to be a valuable means of aerial advertising and sightseeing.

Unmanned Systems

Lockheed Martin continues to work with the Missile Defense Agency (MDA) following the Agency's decision to rescind the High Altitude Airship (HAA) program termination. The effort continues under the Prototype Build and Demonstration phase (Phase 3) with the appropriated 2007 funds. Work on the HAA includes pre-production runs of fabrics that exhibit higher strength/weight ratios and longer life times than required. Pre-production runs of solar cells and batteries also meet or exceed requirements. The MDA exercised the HAA Technology Improvement Project contract option with L-M in February 2007 to evolve key technologies for the Operational Vehicle.

L-M photo.

Lockheed Martin was awarded a $77.5 million contract by the Army for additional tethered aerostat systems to be deployed in Iraq. The Persistent Threat Detection Systems (PTDS) include multi-mission sensors to provide continuous surveillance, detection and communications for coalition forces. Contract deliveries will occur during 2007.

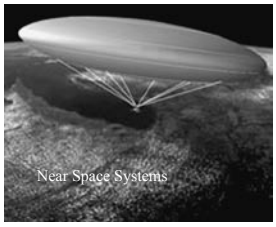
The U.S. Army awarded TCOM a contract to develop and demonstrate a Cellular Aerostat Platform System (CAPS) that will provide emergency cell phone service within 3 hours over an area of 600 square miles.

17M inside Weeksville hangar. TCOM LP

TCOM, L.P. has received a second order from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) for its Off-Road Tactical Aerostat System (ORTAS). The 17M system is flown from a military truck and provides continuous surveillance even when mobile. The UAE also awarded TCOM a contract for a transportable 32M aerostat equipped for maritime surveillance. Two 71M systems, each carrying over 5000 lbs. of electronic surveillance equipment, have been delivered to India.

DARPA

Raytheon Space and Airborne Systems is developing, under an $8 million contract from DARPA, an active electronically scanned array antenna to be bonded to the hull of an unmanned airship. This largest X-band antenna would be flown at 65-70,000 ft. altitude on geostationary airships measuring 150 to 300 meters in length with lenticular hull configurations.



CollaborX and Multimax are two small companies in Colorado that joined forces to develop a platform called Maxflyer. The design is a 220 ft. diameter lenticular shaped airship lifting a gondola and equipped with electrically powered thrusters. It is intended to operate at 100,000 ft. altitude to provide communication and surveillance functions. This is a trade off between the higher average wind velocities and increased sensor coverage.

ILC Dover in Delaware manufactured the envelopes for the Lockheed Martin PTDS. Two 420,000 cu ft. aerostat envelopes for U.S. border surveillance also were delivered to TCOM / LM.

The U. S. Air Force has funded a contract with AurAayan Aerospace, a division of the D-STAR Engineering Corp., to develop a high altitude 200

knot hybrid semi-buoyant vehicle with an endurance of one year.

A group at the NASA Langley Research Center has developed a three layer thermoelectric material which when applied to the envelope of a 152 meter long high altitude airship will generate 3.84 MV of power. The hull geometry would include an elliptical cross section to maximize the solar flux.
The Blackwater Company has established Blackwater Airships LLC. Design work on the first Polar 400 airship was completed at the end of 2006. The remotely piloted vehicle will accommodate a wide variety of state-of-the-art surveillance, communication and detection equipment. It will operate for 48 hrs. between 5000 to 15000 ft altitude at 50 knots speed.

Telford Aviation Inc. in Bangor, Maine has produced its prototype Skybus 30K a remotely piloted 90 ft. long airship for SAIC. It will be equipped with cameras and sensors for monitoring border security and other types of surveillance. It recently received the FAA's first Special Airworthiness Certificate. Telford's Dothan, Alabama branch has received an $11,195,164 contract from the U. S. Army's Communications-Electronics Command that will include all operational support for the Skybus and a later 80,000 cu. ft. vehicle.

The Remote Aerial Tripod Specialists in Alberta, Canada completed a three-month tour of three Canadian provinces with their 35 ft. long unmanned nonrigid airship. It is powered by two 4 hp methane fueled engines with vectorable propellers. The airship covered 7000 miles while photographing crops and advertising Horizon, a farm product produced by Syngenta, the sponsor of the flights.

Another Canadian firm, Advanced Hybrid Airships has developed the Wasp RPB/AF an unmanned 43.5 ft. long nonrigid. It is powered by two 5.5 HP engines with an endurance of 6 hrs. while carrying 30 lbs. of equipment.

Venezuela has purchased an unmanned 15 meter long nonrigid built by HanGIS, a South Korean firm. It is the first of three such craft to be used by the Caracas police.

The Shanghai Solar Power Engineering Technology Research Center has designed an unmanned solar and fuel cell powered airship to be flown at the World Expo in 2010. It will fly up to one kilometer altitude at a top speed of 20 km/hr.

The University of Manitoba in Canada is engaged in an 18 month project to measure riverbank erosion on two local rivers using a tethered 7 m long aerostat flying at 40 m altitude. The aerostat was chosen for its low purchase and operating cost.

A Swiss organization, StratXX launched its X-Station test balloon that ascended to 21 kilometers carrying a camera and communication equipment. A full scale prototype airship is under development to be launched in 2008.

The HEI Group in Coral Springs, Florida is developing a combination helicopter/airship called a Blicopter. Two configurations have been tested. One uses a conventional helicopter rotor and the other employs cycloidal blades. Tests included 30 and 40 ft. airships powered by batteries. Complete autonomous flight with telemetry control has been demonstrated.

Manned Airships

Zeppelin Luftshifftechnik has announced that its fourth NT-07 semi-rigid airship, now under construction, is optioned by Airship Ventures, a U.S. firm, for sightseeing over the San Francisco area and other special mission flights beginning in mid-2008. ILC Dover manufactured the envelope for the airship. The NT-07 that was sold to the Japan Nippon Airship Corp. has now been licensed for commercial passenger operation in Japan. In Germany, over 65000 passengers have been carried since operations began in 1997.

An NT-07 was fitted with 350 kg of measuring devices mounted topside and an additional 500 kg in the car during July to determine the distribution of trace gases and radicals in the lower atmosphere over southern Germany. Special modifications also were made to the NT-07 used by the DeBeers company for geological surveys of possible diamond bearing strata. This airship was equipped with gravity gradient measuring equipment and with magnetic field detectors mounted on outriggers attached to the car. The airship was damaged beyond repair in September after being hit by a severe whirlwind while moored at its operating site in Botswana.

RosAeroSystems in Russia is supplying an AU-30 nonrigid airship to a team of French and German scientists who will conduct continual measurement of ice thickness in the Arctic in 2008. The airship will fly from Spitsbergen in Norway to Canada and Alaska via the North Pole. The 179000 cu. ft. airship has a number of advanced features including vectored thrust and will be fitted with

electromagnetic sensors. It is one of several types of lighter-than-air vehicles produced by RosAero.

The A170 airship built by American Blimp Corp. (ABC), delivered to the U. S. Navy in 2006 and designated the MZ3A, completed a year of operation at the Lakehurst Naval Experimental Station. Integrated Systems Solutions, Inc provided servicing and flight training of Navy crews. Flight operation has been discontinued until future plans are finalized. *[See Shore Est. NASL]*

Another A-170 was leased to the Australian firm Holden by the Lightships division of ABC. This airship was equipped with ABC's 21 meter wide LED screen mounted on its envelope. It completed a year of operation advertising Holden's automobile business. After receiving complaints, it was prohibited from flying over events sponsored by other organizations. It will be returned to the U.S. An A-150+ ABC airship has been added to the Metropolitan Life Insurance fleet of two A-60+ airships. ILC Dover has delivered an A60+ and an A170 envelope to ABC during 2007.

Worldwide Aeros Corp. completed construction, flight testing and FAA certification of its latest model 40D nonrigid airship. This 153 ft. long airship has a volume of 100,032 cu. ft. and is equipped with a digital control system and can carry various camera systems, SAR radars and data link equipment. It has been delivered to a Chinese customer and has received China certification. WW Aeros continues development of its Aeroscraft ML 866 hybrid airship. This included successful testing of the Dynamic Buoyancy Management System, which controls lift and off-loading of payload without taking on-board ballast.

Techsphere Systems, a subsidiary of Cyber Defense Systems, has constructed its first SA-60 68 ft. diameter spherical airship. An SA-90, 94 ft. diameter model will follow. Both models will fly between 8,000 and 20,000 ft. altitude to provide surveillance and other functions.

A French airship project known as Windream One will attempt a transatlantic flight early next year. The vehicle consists of a 93.5 ft. 900 cu. meters airfoil shaped envelope supporting a small car. Its flight depends on wind currents, solar electric propulsion and a device in the water acting as a centerboard attached to the car with a long cable. The two person crew expects to make the trip in 10 days flying from Senegal to Martinique.

-Norman Mayer, Chair, Technical Committee

Membership Director

In 1942, at age 18, I reported aboard an old four-stack destroyer as a Radioman 3rd class. The ship was left over from WWI. At my age I was one of, if not *the*, youngest crewmember aboard. In 1996 some of the crew got together to plan our first reunion… and we were told there were *not enough survivors to warrant their planning such a reunion.* They would put us together with a group of 4 other such ships and plan a combined reunion… we called the organization "Fourstackers" and we had a grand time for another four years until we were told there were not enough left to warrant the companies' involvement. So, why not set up our own reunion without the professionals? So, I started calling around – and there were only *six of us left to answer the phone.*

The Navy has seen fit to preserve several types of ships… but not the fourstacker. There were 193 of these destroyers built; no one can see one today. How can there be any interest when there is nothing to see or touch? Thus, the organization died. Can anyone relate?

When they rolled up the last airship, the parallel ends because we are **not totally without a survival mechanism; we have interest beyond nostalgia.** We have people like Rich Van Treuren, who was never in Navy LTA but is interested in the aura and spell of LTA and is capable of learned and inspiring contribution to our future, as his many writings have demonstrated. We have people like Rick Zitarosa, who has a long time and devoted interest in LTA and was willing to put forth the effort to arrange and plan the reunion. We have artifacts which are wonderfully displayed at the NMNA, in the capable hands of Mort Eckhouse and Joe Hajcak. We must continue to do whatever we can to ensure that the display continues.

We have a wonderful publication. It is professional, it is interesting, it is a treasure. It is a wonderful recruiting tool. It must survive and grow. For about $25 a year we can put a copy in a library. If each member would contact his local public library and when interest is found members might individually subscribe to a copy for their hometown library.

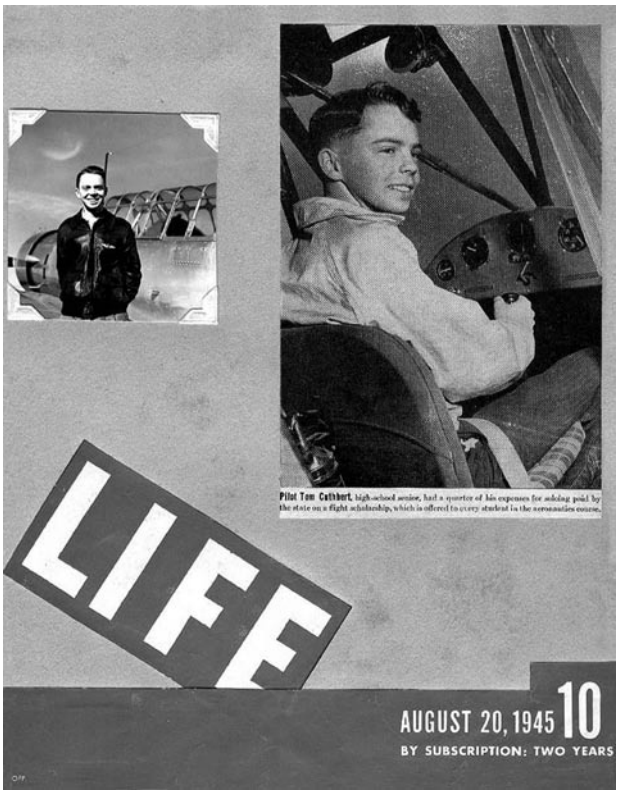
LET'S SWAP CURIOSITY FOR NOSTALGIA. The members should ponder the question, "What brought you here?" Perhaps the replies might lead to a clue to a major method of how to instill CURIOSITY.

- Don Shorts, Membership Director

LONG LINES / COVER STORY

NEW KID IN THE DOCK

By Thomas R. Cuthbert, Jr., Ph.D.



Tom Cuthbert at age 16 was featured in the August 1945 issue of Life magazine as the youngest pilot in Tennessee in a story about aviation in Chattanooga.

These are some highlights of my six years in Navy Lighter Than Air (LTA). I was in the first class of 16 Heavier Than Air (airplane or HTA) pilots put through three-month LTA pilot training in Lakehurst, New Jersey, and six of us were brand-new Ensigns who had just earned our HTA wings at Corpus Christi, Texas (see above right). I was certified as Naval Aviator No. V-1228 on August 2, 1950. Several months before the Korean War started in late June 1950, I had volunteered to go to LTA in spite of NAS Corpus Christi's Commanding Officer (CO) CAPT Ellis' considerate warning that such a duty tour could jeopardize a successful naval career. Frankly, I wanted to be involved with all the electronic equipment associated with LTA, and that did materialize as well as my accidentally missing combat in Korea, which befell most of my HTA classmates. Blind luck.

NAS Corpus Christi CO CAPT Ellis pins HTA wings on ENS Tom Cuthbert on August 2, 1950. He considerately had advised him that an LTA tour could jeopardize successful naval career.

Starting in August 1950, our LTA class attended ground school, flew free balloons, several small G-ship flights, and many interesting K-ship training flights. I logged three flights in the K-47 airship, and that car is now on display in the National Museum of Naval Aviation in Pensacola Florida. In November 1950 I was certified as Naval Aviator No. L-1254 (Airship), so I suppose that I have two pairs of Navy wings.

I was then assigned to Airship Squadron Two (ZP-2) based in wooden Hangar 5 in Lakehurst. Squadron CO CDR Fred Klein interviewed me immediately, found that I had a radio background, had attended M.I.T., and promptly made me officer in charge of the Electronics Division, since incumbent LTJG Harley Cutshall didn't like that job anyhow. Suddenly I had an Assistant Electronics Officer, three Chief Petty Officers, and 27 sailors reporting to me. I reported to Maintenance Officer LCDR Leo Gentile, who had been a Seaman on the Navy dirigible *Macon* when it fell into the sea near Monterey California in 1935.

I flew K-ships in LT John Dawson's crew with pilots LT Dewey Crowder (both recalled WWII LTA pilots) and ENS Pete Ausbrooks. John taught us even more about landing blimps under all kinds of conditions, including landing on aircraft carriers in 1951-1952.

First class of 16 Heavier Than Air pilots put through three-month LTA pilot training in Lakehurst, New Jersey, November 1950. Ensign Cuthbert in third row on the left end.

A day flight on July 1951 took us 15 miles out in the Atlantic off Montauk point at the east end of Long Island, New York to practice tracking with a US submarine from its nearby base at Groton, Connecticut. I was in the left seat (elevator, throttles, valves), my crew commander was in the right seat (rudderman), and our ZP-2 CO was in the jump seat just behind and between us. The drill was for the sub to submerge a mile or two away and we would use radar to fly low and fast (50 feet and 57 knots) to the spot ("swirl") and drop markers and sonobuoys in a tracking pattern. Arriving over the swirl, I held the two electric switches forward to put the propellers into flat pitch (high RPM). Suddenly it became obvious that the K-ship was coming to a stop, dropping so far that the sailor in the rear of the car called out on the intercom that the tail was almost in the ocean. John told me to pull the nose up even more, and I answered "Okay, but it is going to stall!" So I didn't pull up more, because the 4:1 shaped bag was a flying airfoil, which allowed us to get airborne even when we were perhaps 2000 pounds net heavy, and to stall certainly was to fall into the sea.

(Right) ZP-2 CO CDR Fred Klein commends LT Dawson's crew. From left – ENS Bob Lowry, ENS Tom Cuthbert, LT Dawson, CDR Klein, and the enlisted crew in the second row.

Hangars 5 (left) and 6 at NAS Lakehurst in 1950. Hangar 5 was home to ZP-2. Hangar 6 and a K-ship was leased to NY advertiser Douglas Leigh then rescinded when the Korean War was declared in 1950.

Other HTA experience that helped was my recent four-engine bomber training, which was to find a bad engine by first looking at the cylinder head temperature gauges. It was then that I saw that the temperature of the left #1 engine was increasing (I was expecting rapid cooling). That didn't make sense, but I had to do something, so I pulled the #1 throttle back to idle, and we barely cleared the ocean and began a slow climb. Shutting down #1 revealed that the propellers were in reverse – and later it was found that the mechanical forward-pitch limit stops had broken so the prop blades just went through flat pitch and into reverse. We dumped an unarmed homing torpedo on an eastern Long Island Air Force base (they did not trust us) and then slowly flew across New York Harbor with newspaper planes circling the one-engine blimp limping home to Lakehurst.

The new Navy policy of sending all blimp pilots (formally shipboard officers) through HTA pilot training and only HTA pilots through LTA pilot training resulted in just the few ZP-2 HTA pilots flying the F6F Hellcat fighter and SNB twin Beechcraft transport provided to maintain proficiency. I was then age 22 but had flown Cub and acrobatic airplanes since I was 16, so ready access to a fighter and transport was heavenly. Those of us young single officers even were invited to Atlantic City to escort Miss America contestants, but I confined my thrills to the Hellcat airplane.

ENS Cuthbert reveled in all the proficiency and transport HTA flying while assigned to Airship Squadron ZP-2, here in an SNB transport. He was one of just a few ZP-2 HTA pilots until the 1950 Navy policy change eventually made flying blimps just another Naval Aviator assignment.

In late 1951 ZP-2 was split in two, with new squadron ZP-3 remaining at Lakehurst and those of us in ZP-2 transferred to the Naval Air Facility (NAF) Glynco near Brunswick and Sea Island Georgia on the Atlantic coast.

ZP-2 mascot Blackdog leading a K-ship into the wind at Lakehurst in 1951. He was getting old and mostly slept until airships were preparing for takeoff. Blackdog came to life when he heard the mast release trip and unerringly reacted to any shift as he ran into the wind.

We took six K-ships and the ZP-2 mascot 'Black Dog' on one, and it was messy. I'm also told that we took the entire stock of toilet paper with us, perhaps starting a rivalry with the new ZP-3 squadron.

Looking west at the ZP-2 Hangar at NAF Glynco near Brunswick, Georgia. A light K-ship is being pulled down by a ground crew. A helium supply sphere is to the left of the Hangar.

While in Glynco in ZP-2 a few accidents relieved the boredom of long patrol flights, especially those to and from Guantanamo (Gitmo) Cuba. The metal strip at the bottom of the rudderman's side window occasionally separated and flew back into the prop, which then propelled it up into the bag. That happened on one night flight when about 20 miles offshore Glynco, cutting a one-foot right-angle hole in the bag. We reduced helium pressure, eventually threw overboard the radar and other heavy equipment, and lined up downwind of the Glynco landing mat only to discover that the bag was so wrinkled that the control cables to the rudder were slack. We had to climb about 1000 feet to expand the helium, extend the bag, and get the airship pointed toward the landing mat to then steer with the engines. The lower rudder dragged on the ground during the landing roll. An umbrella patch and a lot of added helium saved the airship.

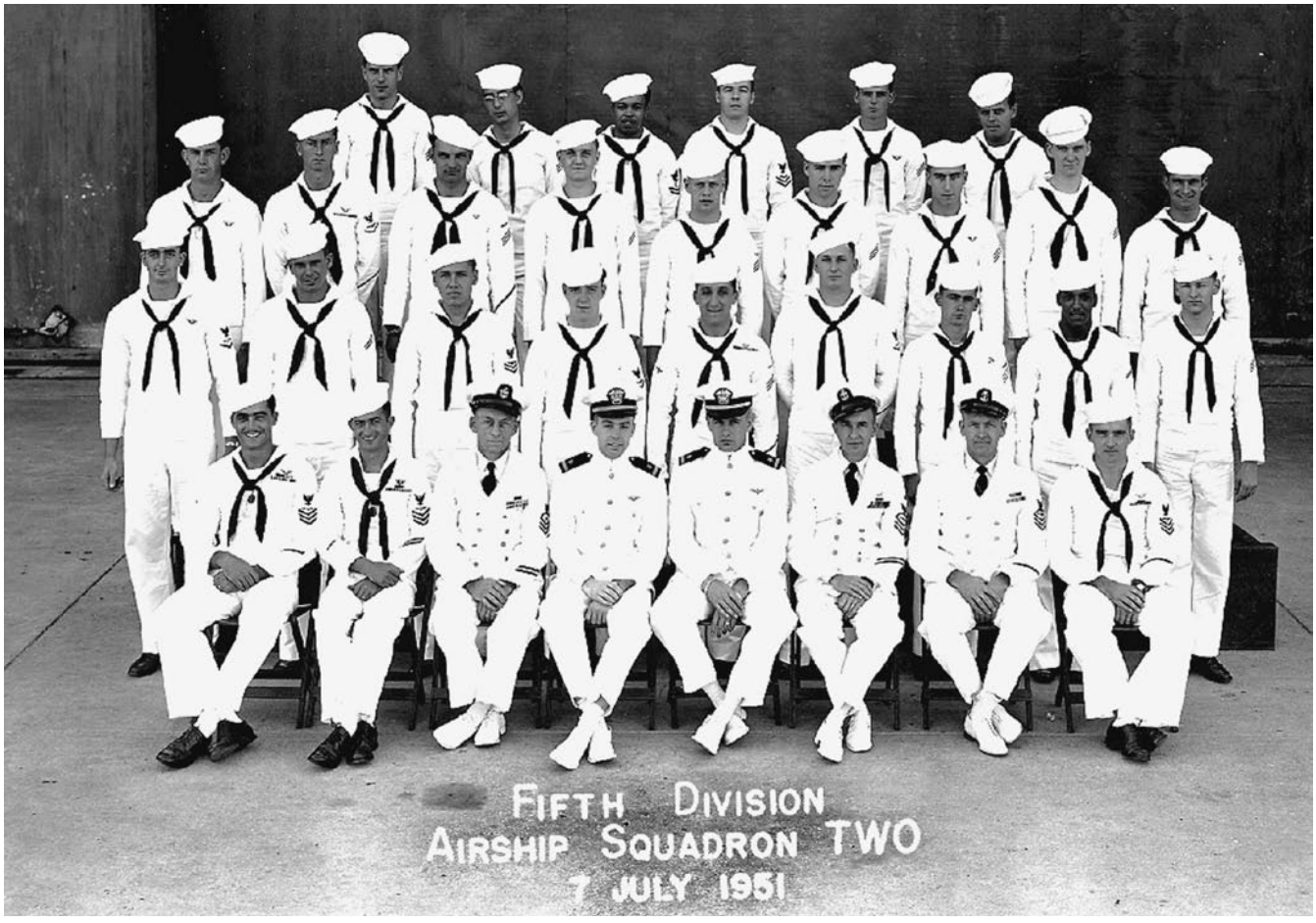
I had been made crew commander in April 1952 and was also the duty officer one day when one of our K-ships radioed an SOS that they were ditching in the Atlantic some 25 to 50 miles off the Georgia coast. CDR Hill ordered me to fly him to the scene. When we

arrived the blimp was in the ocean with the nose at a 45° angle, the car half submerged, and the tail assembly one big sea anchor. The crew was in several life rafts, and someone was on the radio singing Yo Ho Ho and Airship Squadron Two, Detachment Number One. Commander Hill was quite upset and ordered the merriment to stop. The submarine our blimp had left earlier after practicing together had arrived in response to the SOS, and radioed to Commander Hill that they could perhaps secure the car to the submarine for salvage. Our CO anticipated the headline (Sub Gets Blimp) and told the sub skipper: Never mind, salt water had ruined the car. It was agreed that the sub should fire incendiary 20-mm rounds into the blimp gas tanks. We watched as fire consumed the cotton neoprene bag in less than two minutes, and there were thousands of little ashes floating down to the ocean. We never carried parachutes (LTA operated too low to jump anyhow) and I had occasionally shut down an engine due to oil leaks to avoid a fire. Now I really knew how quickly one must ditch a blimp should an engine catch fire.

Near the end of my three-year tour in ZP-2, the K-ship bomb bays were lengthened to accommodate nuclear depth charges. I knew then that I needed to move on. In fact, only the bomb assembly was actually carried, but it included a 600-pound TNT detonator. One day a ZP-2 K-ship lost both engines on takeoff and dropped the A-bomb assembly in order to balloon clear of our Glynco hangar. It didn't explode, but the hangar was evacuated until the nearby wreckage was removed.

I spent my shore duty from 1953-1956 in the Airship Training Unit (NZTU), which also had been moved to NAS Glynco. I had asked to be transferred to NAF South Weymouth near Boston (and M.I.T), where an experimental K-ship had a side-beam over-the-horizon radar antenna inside the bag, but my request was denied – and some jokers white-walled a wheelbarrow tire and wanted to roll me across NAF Glynco to my new duty station in the NTZU hangar.

ENS Cuthbert is on the left. His assistant ENS Ausbrooks is on his left and Chief Pappy Mann (age 52) is on his right. The three CPOs and crew were outstanding.



Aerial view of NAF Glynco in 1953 showing the ZP-2 Hangar on the left, the NZTU Hangar, airship landing mat, and the two HTA runways. The jet strip for a CIC School had not yet been constructed to the back right.

I mainly taught electronics and airship construction in the ground school, flew a few blimp-training flights with each class of HTA pilots, and continued flying the Hellcat and transport. The teaching experience was invaluable in my subsequent engineering career. One day the NZTU skipper remarked that we really needed a safe hurricane evacuation base, so I casually mentioned that my hometown of Chattanooga, Tennessee had never experienced a hurricane. Amazingly, he instructed me to fly a K-ship there to check it out using an advanced-base stick mast crew. So I took a blimp home to Mama, TV coverage and all, utilizing Naval reservists for ground crew. Blind luck.

I left active duty and LTA in September 1956, to attend Georgia Tech and flew P2V patrol planes in the reserve at NAS Atlanta until January 1959. Sadly, a ZPG-3W Nan ship ripped and crashed off shore New Jersey in July 1960, and that ended the saga of Navy LTA.

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Crew Commander LTJG Cuthbert with his NZTU 3K-127 on a stick mast at Lovell Field in Chattanooga, TN about 1955. Local Naval Reservists are mustered below the ship. Cuthbert learned to fly at age 16 from the Hangar seen to the back left of the blimp car.

I have always treasured my life in Navy LTA, the unique opportunities, and most especially the wonderful people who guided and taught such a feisty young man. One example: My first child was born in Brunswick Georgia with a severe clubbed foot.

Ensign Cuthbert with daughter Nancy on the St. Simons Island beach in 1954. Her foot was put in a new cast weekly for many months at the Navy Hospital at NAS Jacksonville, 75 miles from Brunswick, Georgia.

My CO, CDR Harold Van Gorder, gave me every Monday off for many months to carry her to NAS Jacksonville, Florida for treatment at the Naval Hospital. Then about 30 years later at my first NAA reunion in Scottsdale, CAPT Van Gorder immediately asked: "How is your daughter's foot?" I could never have been luckier than to have volunteered for LTA duty. **Ω**

"Unmanned Spy Blimp" as shown on internet (Telford)

Is US Army ordering robot spy blimp?

Inflatable airborne Peeping Tom flotillas forecast - By Lewis Page - 23rd August 2007

The US Army seems to be moving to acquire a robotic spy blimp, able to float high in the sky for lengthy periods and monitor activities on the ground below. According to a routine Pentagon summary dated yesterday, Telford Aviation of Dothan, Alabama was awarded an $11,195,164 contract for "operational support for Medium Airborne Reconnaissance Surveillance Systems." The contract was awarded by the US Army's Communications-Electronics Command.

Telford Aviation is a company which provides leased aircraft, maintenance and parts to the civilian market. It's central operations are based in Maine: but it also has a "Government Programs" arm based in Dothan, Alabama.

The Telford Government Programs office webpage has a section titled "Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS)," under which it says:
"Today Telford Aviation provides all operational support for a 30,000 cubic foot airship and is part of a research and development team developing a 80,000 cubic foot airship designed for counter terrorism, port security and border patrol. Telford Aviation expects to build and operate this system within the near future." The 30,000-cubic-foot ship is presumably the unmanned Skybus 30K, whose consortium of producers is headed by Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC), the well-connected behemoth government tech provider. The Skybus 30K is described as a "testing and demonstration platform for a series of large airships," and was developed by SAIC and Telford at the Loring UAS Test Centre in Maine under a Navy contract. It was given an experimental FAA airworthiness certificate last month.

SAIC says that the Skybus "can loiter for 30 to 40 hours, can travel up to 35 knots, and has faint visual, radar, infrared, and acoustic signatures." The Loring Development Activity, the business park operating on the old Loring airforce base, says that the Skybus "has the potential to support military surveillance operations." Putting all this together, it seems clear that the US Army's "Medium Airborne Reconnaissance Surveillance Systems" - not a term it normally uses - will be robot spy airships intended for ground surveillance. The US Army already operates tethered aerostat balloons for this purpose, and has previously trialled manned blimps. But now it appears to be moving forward with self-propelled robot aircraft. One might hope that the Army's interest is in spying on Iraqi insurgents and Taliban gunmen, using cheap-to-run airships which can lurk in the sky for days on end above the range of handheld anti-aircraft missiles. The manned airship in the 2004 trials was said to be able to comfortably exceed 10,000 feet if required, which would keep it safe from shoulder-launched missiles even if they could lock on to its feeble signatures. "The airship platform can provide a clear and detailed view of the activity on the streets below and yet stay out of the range of many weapon systems," according to a contractor involved in that trial. "The military could fly a controlled, quiet orbit over an area like Fallujah, day or night, and be able to locate insurgents placing explosive devices or setting up ambushes," added another. But other US government customers could fly a nice quiet orbit over other areas closer to home, too. SAIC thinks its baby would be good for "a variety of security and intelligence operations including border patrol, port security, survivor search, wildlife management and sports event monitoring." Of course, a blimp isn't all that different from police helicopters or - if you're very important to the Yanks - spy satellites that we're all quite used to being watched by. If we live in Southwest Asia, we're also quite accustomed to a variety of robot planes too. But it costs like crazy to monitor people from above with most of those - especially for any sustained period - and in many cases a target will know that the spy platform is there. (Even secret spy satellites are often tracked by enthusiastic amateurs.)

Robo-blimps, by contrast, should be cheap, persistent and quiet, very hard to notice at night, and thus could bring with them an explosion in aerial spying activity. Analysts have been predicting their advent for some time. It appears that the day may be here." **Ω**

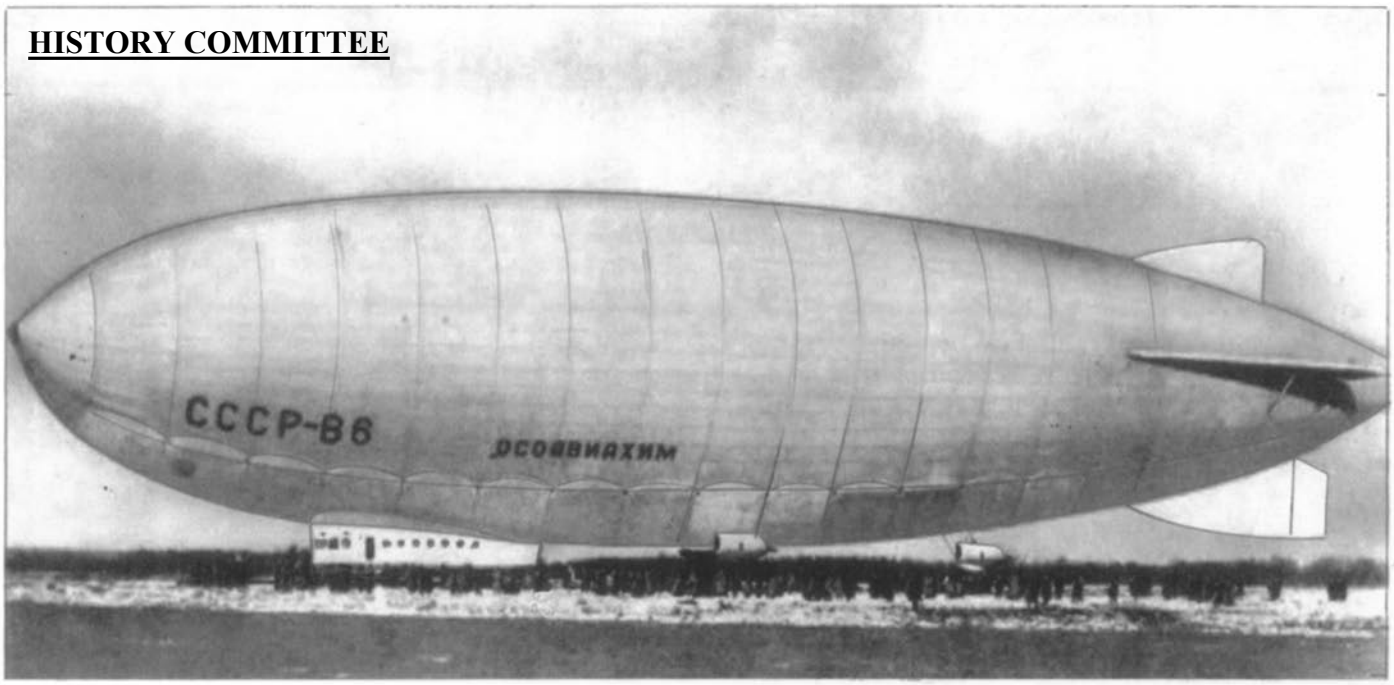
VANCOUVER, British Columbia (internet) - A hot air balloon burst into flames over western Canada, burning a woman and her adult daughter to death… Eleven passengers were seriously injured when the balloon crashed in a recreational vehicle park near the U.S border in Surrey, British Columbia, a suburb of Vancouver… "The crew loaded 12 passengers and was preparing to launch when a fire erupted. The pilot asked the passengers to get out of the basket," Bill Yearwood, an investigator with the Transportation Safety Board of Canada said. "The balloon was tethered at the time, but then broke and came loose," he added. After most of the passengers escaped, the balloon exploded in a fireball and shot up into the air. Shortly after, the burning balloon plunged to ground in the RV park, leaving a tail of thick black smoke in its wake… The cause of the accident was not immediately known. Weather conditions were clear at the time of the sunset flight. "We're exceptionally lucky that nobody in any of these three trailers or in the vehicles that were destroyed were caught in them," Morrow said. The hot-air balloon, operated by Fantasy Balloons Charters based in Langley, British Columbia, was one of several balloons in flight at the time. There was a similar accident earlier this month in the central Canadian province of Manitoba, where 12 people were injured. **Ω**

Fred Morin sent a clipping from the 8 JUL 07 Boston Globe entitled "After a fall, blimp soars again" in which Johnny Diaz reports the Hood Dairies have once again leased a G-60 Lightship for the summer. The Hood airship had by that time flown over the Tall Ships Rhode Island celebration and several baseball games. BostonChannel.com. reported the Hood Dairies Lightship had newsworthy trouble again in a piece entitled "Low-Flying Blimp Alarms Residents: High Winds Force Craft To Hover Over Towns." **Ω**

From the birthplace of Aeronautics: 16 JUL AVIATION WEEK reported the French Government is creating new clusters to supplement those making up "Aerospace Valley" created last year in southwestern France. "One of these new clusters, Pegase, will be devoted to the use of unmanned aerial vehicles, airships, helicopters and other light vehicle for surveillance, telecommunications, transportation and security applications." **Ω**

Al Robbins reports: "RATSINC has completed its first major Remotely Piloted Airship commercial contract (First flight on 23 April, above Kindersley, Saskatchewan, final flight at Portage La Prairie, Manitoba on 21 July): Several hundred 30 - 45 minute flights with a single ship in ninety days. (Does anyone know of a previous RPA performance contract lasting longer than a week?)

The three man team crossed the Canadian wheat belt, stopping at 28 other villages and towns along the way to advertise a leading wheat fungicide and to take aerial photographs for wheat farmers that had won Syngenta's contest. (Only the Hummer and the RPA trailer were wrapped for the contract; their other vehicle and trailer carried no advertising.) RATSINC successfully completed their contract without accident or incident. Unfortunately accident-free operations don't make news, so GOOGLE only cites the press release. www.ratsinc.net/HorizonImagesforClients.htm includes press accounts from a dozen of the larger villages visited as well as a few airborne photos, and numerous photos of the RATSINC crew, their equipment and the farms and villages that they visited. (The figure is from the first page of the link.) Steve has assured me that he is going to add a couple more pages and that he will maintain the link for at least a few more months. **Ω**



CCCP-B6 "OC_B_AX_M"

By Herman Van Dyk

By far, the Soviet Union's most successful airship was the V6 (B6 or W6) *Ossoaviachim*. It was designed by Umberto Nobile during his stay in the Soviet Union in the mid-thirties. It was a further development of the N1, *Norge*, the first aircraft to fly over the North Pole on May 12, 1926, and the N2 *Italia*, which, on May 24, 1928, crashed in the Arctic, after having flown over the North Pole.

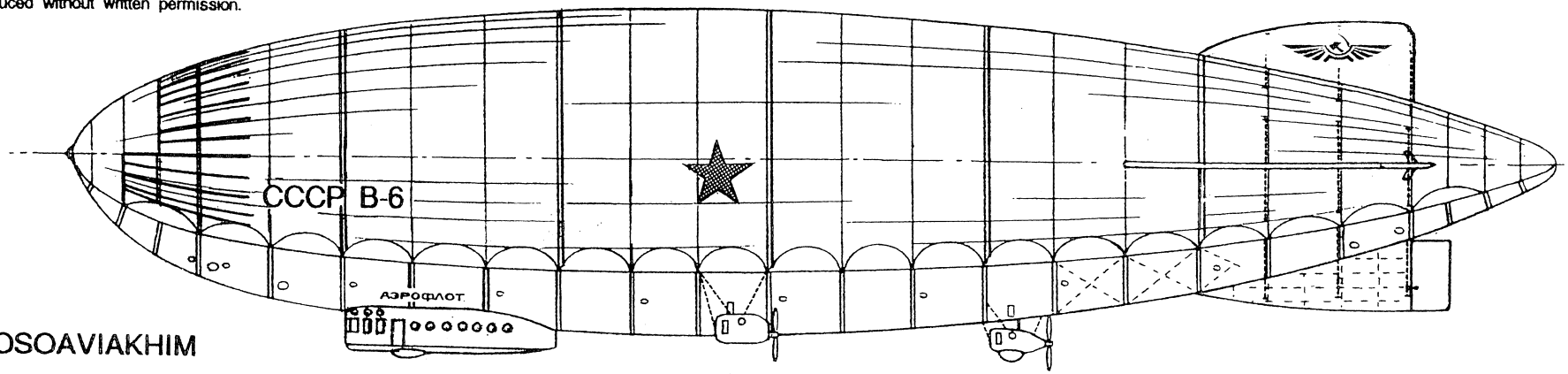
The *Ossoaviachim* was designed as a passenger ship to be used on the route from Moscow to Sverdlovsk, an important mining and industrial center located on the Eastern slopes of the Ural Mountains, 1200 miles East from the capital. The airship was equipped with separate passenger cabins, a smoking room and an electric kitchen. It had a length of 345 ft (106 m), a volume of 64,200 cu ft (19,400 m3) and was propelled by 3 engines of 265 hp each, which gave it a speed of approximately 64 mph (103 km/hr). The envelope was divided in 6 separate hydrogen cells. The regular crew consisted of 15 - 16 people.

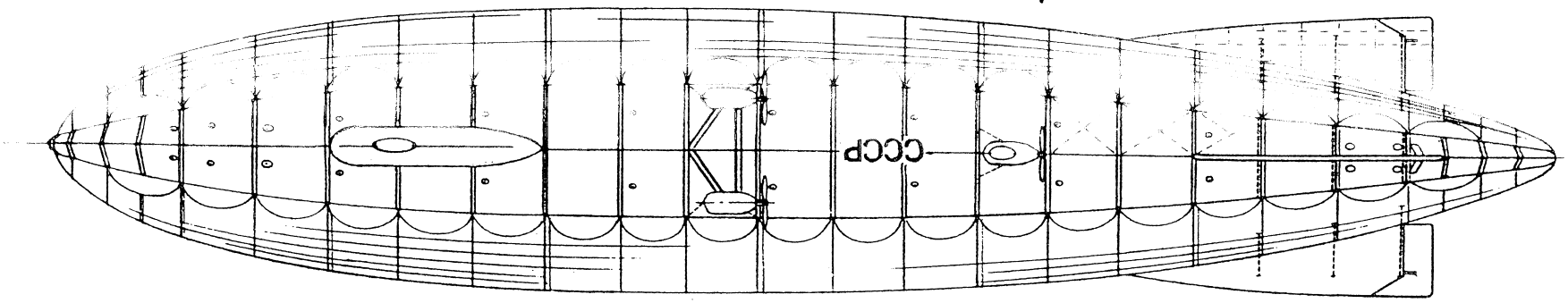
Two days after its first flight, on November 5, 1934, it already flew over Moscow in commemoration of the October communist revolution. Delays with the construction of an airship shed and/or a mooring tower in Sverdlovsk, prevented the initiation of a regular passenger service between the 2 big cities. Training and familiarization flights, however, continued. On October 19, 1937, it set a new world record duration flight of 30 hrs, 27 min., covering a total distance of approximately 3200 miles (5200 km).

During the late 20's, and early 30's, the Soviet government organized many scientific expeditions to the Polar regions. In 1938, one of those teams, under the leadership of Prof. Papanin, had become marooned on a drifting ice pack, which was floating towards Greenland and had started to break up. It seemed that the best way to rescue the team was by air, so, the *Ossoaviachim* was ordered to fly from its base Dolgaprudnaja, near Moscow, first to Murmansk and then to pick up the members of the research mission on the ice pack.

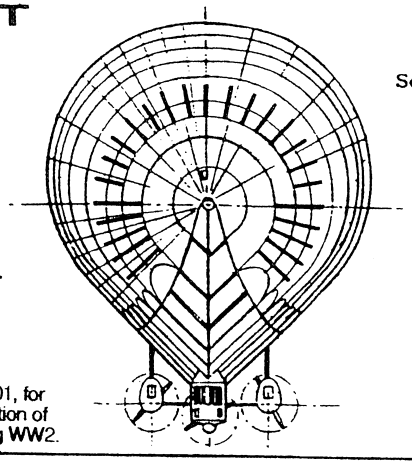
The airship left its base on February 5, 1938, but on its way to Murmansk, in bad weather, the airship crashed into the mountain Neblo, killing 13 of its crew. Three crewmembers survived unhurt. The members of the Arctic expedition were rescued by the ice breakers *Taymir* and *Yermak*. The victims were buried in the Novodevichy Cemetery in Moscow. In 1968, on the 30th anniversary of the disaster, a large monument was erected at the crash site in honor of the victims.

Ref.: Nobile, Umberto, "My 5 Years with Soviet Airships
Floss, Clive, "History Today", Dec. 1997
http://info.dogopa.org/album/06 (in Russian). **Ω**

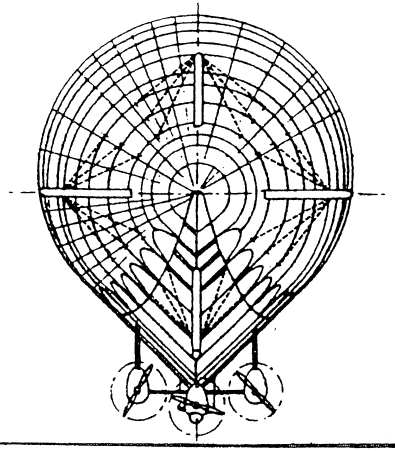




АЭРОФЛОТ



Scale : 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 ft
5 10 15 20 25 m



Dirizhablestroy V-6

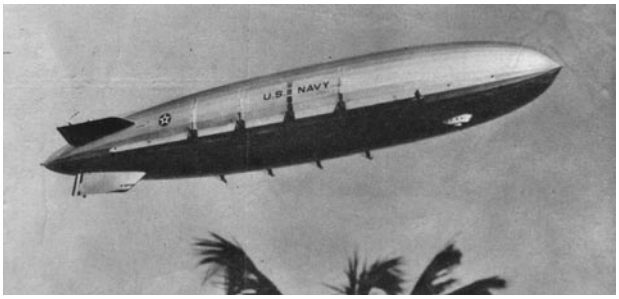
Designer	:	Umberto Nobile	
1st Flight	:	August 1934	
Length	:	104 m ,	342 ft
Width	:	18.5 m ,	61 ft
Volume	:	18,500 cm ,	653,250 cft
Speed	:	93 km/h ,	60 mph
Engines	:	Osoaviakhim, 3 x 265 hp	

Drawn by : H. Van Dyk, July 31, 2001, for Hepburn Walker, AR 1, in appreciation of his lifelong service to LTA and during WW2.

USS *Akron* 75th Anniversary Noted With Postage Stamp only from NAA

The Naval Airship Association chose to mark the USS *Akron's* Silver Anniversary with a unique offering: a commemorative US postage stamp. No airship has graced a USPS stamp since the *Graf Zeppelin* some 80 years ago, and the NAA officers felt it long overdue to have a US Navy Airship grace the US mails.

Seventy-five years ago, in the winter of 1932, the USS *Akron* was coming of age. She had a full complement of fighter airplanes, and had developed a limited ship-to-shore capability with her N2Ys. Most every flight had been a 'test' flight, with various propulsion parameters being tweaked and results carefully measured. By the time *Akron* again escaped the Lakehurst winter to visit Opa-Locka, Florida, engineers had replaced many of her original exhaust-water condenser units with the NASL-developed Mark IV models. Photographs of ZRS-4 following this quite visible modification are rare, however our member **Roy Gibbens** has provided a photo of her port side, which, during that visit, showed a good comparison between old and new. (Starboard below)

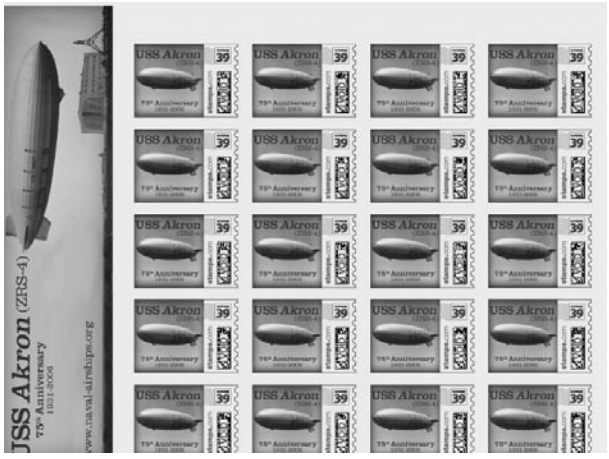


(For some unknown reason, the motion picture cameraman took little if any film of her after the West Coast trip, so no such movies are known to exist. The editor has not even located such film, which one would have thought to have been taken at the 1933 Miami Air Races, to be available from the stock footage archive houses, given its typical $3,000.00 per minute price tag.) The Mark IV units weighed a great deal less than the G-Z condensers, and they delivered more water per pound of gasoline. While they also had to be soot-free to function, the Mark IVs were much more practical to clean – the job was not as cruel a punishment.

THINK BEYOND THE ENVELOPE

Buy your AKRON stamps *now* for XMAS
TEN sheets=$150, + postage $4=$154
Please include a return address label so George won't have to write every one out. You can also pay your 2008 $25 membership at the same time; George will forward your renewal money to Pete.

So far the response to our unprecedented stamp offer has been uninspired. Worse, our Shore Establishments have chosen not to mark the 75th anniversary with us in this manner. Our Treasury was heavily burdened to make this tribute possible, and if we have to wind up just using them for NAA correspondence, you can bet there will be no second offering of new rectangular-oriented models with, say, a color ZPG-2 picture thereon. Members are urged to visit 'Small Stores' and order a few sheets. It would be a gift people would actually use, you'd be helping the NAA, and showing your respect for the pioneers of the rigid airship all at once. See ya' at the Small Stores! **Ω**



Howard Edward Mayfield, 74, of Orange Park, Florida passed away 15 MAR 07. 'Ed' was born in Biloxi, MS 21 MAR 32. As a boy he was involved with 4-H and earned a trip to visit President Truman. He joined the Naval Reserve in 1949, working his way through U of F Agriculture Program, graduating in 1955. Earning his wings in 1958, Ed served in LTA, Hurricane Hunters and on carriers before retiring as a CDR in 1980. Member of NAA, QBs, Florida Farm Bureau and Mandarin United Methodist Church. He is survived by his wife of 46 years, Frances; sons CAPT Edward and LCDR Charles, sister Eleanor Hollingsworth, and five grandchildren. **Ω**

Edward Eugene Bell, 72, of Westernport, MD, passed away 23 JUN 07. Born in Lonaconing 11 OCT 34, Gene graduated from Central high school and joined the Navy in 1952. He retired from the Westvaco Co. in 1990. He was a member of the NAA, American Legion Post #13 and Cresaptown Eagles. Gene is survived by his wife C. Belle, one sister and brother, two daughters and two grandchildren. **Ω**

James W. Hickerson passed away 27 July 2005. **Ω**

Bob Waterson, a Goodyear employee before the war who served at Moffett and Santa Ana during WWII, passed away in July 2007. **Ω**

Richard 'Dick' Widdicombe, 87, passed away 13 OCT 07. Enlisting and assigned to NAS Lakehurst in 1940, he went through the LTA school in the last class to receive Rigid Airship instruction as part of the course syllabus. Dick had an LTA career that spanned five decades; he was named Chief Navy Test Pilot for the ZPG-3W project (Seen at right.) Continuing in Goodyear service in 1965, Dick was selected as pilot-in-charge for the prestigious European operation beginning in 1972 at historic Cardington, England and a new purpose-built base facility at Capena, Italy. After Europa's 15 years and retirement from Goodyear, Dick was a consultant on various LTA projects, notably Jim Thiele's early LIGHTSHIPs. Dick was a member of the Naval Airship Association, and Honorary Life Member both of the Lighter than Air Society and Navy Lakehurst Historical Society. When the Navy re-started its LTA program in 2006, Dick offered to help any way he could. He is survived by his wife, Mary.

Cdr. Charles Duncan passed away July 12, 2007. He was a NAA member. **Ω**

THE READY ROOM

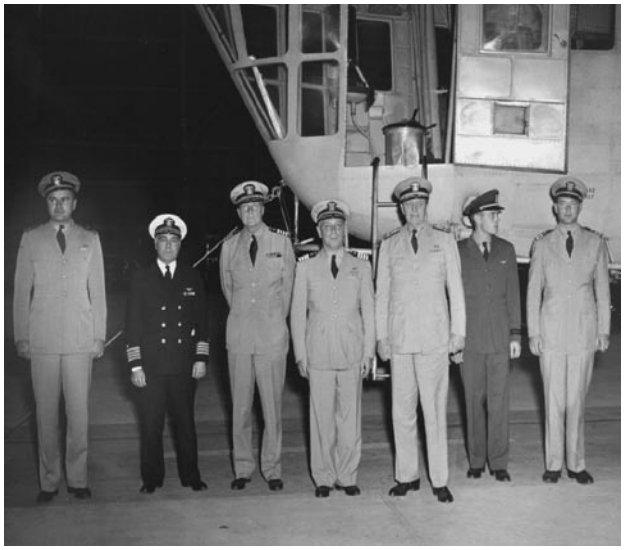
April 3-6, 2008 – Balloon Federation of America's National Convention, "Unbridled Flight 2008" at Louisville, Kentucky.
www.bfa.net

October 9-11, 2008 - 6th Airship Association International Conference, combined with LTA Convention: Celebrating the Centenary of Luftschiffbau-Zeppelin. 9-11 October 2008 (Thurs-Sat) Friedrichshafen, Germany
www.airshipconvention2008.org

DRIFTING TOWARD THE LIGHTER SIDE OF LTA

[and bringing up the rear...] Larry Rodrigues (expert.larry@gmail.com) wrote: "Here is an old Navy blimp toilet story: Back in 1954 when I was assigned to ZP-3 at Lakehurst my first flight was a day flight in a K-ship. As the second radioman flying that day just for training, there wasn't much to do except try to stay out of the way and drink coffee. Soon I had enough coffee to start looking for the "latrine." I asked my buddy, sitting at the radioman's position on the starboard about midship, where I could relieve myself. He pointed, behind his position, to a rubber hose approx. 3 ft long with a black plastic funnel (approx. 2" diam and 6" long) hanging on a hook on the bulkhead. That was the "urinal" and it simply drained outside into the ocean (hopefully). No privacy. No place to wash. Just enough equipment to get the job done with Navy efficiency. For more serious jobs there was other equipment with no unnecessary frills (Thank you, Goodyear).

In the aft of the car was a galley area with a couple of places to sit plus a round (approx 12" dia. x 15" h) can-like thing with lid. (I can see where the term "can" came from.) No screen or privacy was provided, for space was very limited. To operate this utility (should one be so unfortunate as to need it), one would place a waterproofed paper bag (with some sort of plastic or waxed interior) in the "can" and hope the earlier bombing practice would help to hit the target. During [my] brief period of K-ship operations before the squadron received the ZPG-2N "Nan" ships there were a few incidences involving the operation of the K-ship "can" that produced stories to re-tell at the bar endlessly. (Con't)



Perhaps the photographer's mate was having his own joke by framing the visiting Admiral below the can of this ZP-11 ship at S. Weymouth in 1943.

One story involved one of our enlisted radiomen who had some serious gastrointestinal problems after a rough night at the Airship Tavern not far down the road outside the Lakehurst main gate. The mission that day was to take some "high-ranking Navy wheel" for a short ride in one of the last k-ships. During the flight, lunch was prepared in the "galley" for the "wheel." With most inappropriate timing, the radioman had to use the can, which was in the "galley" area. No two people ever ignored each other so tactfully while each went about their business.

The ZPG-2N "Nan" ships that replaced the K-ships had great improvements for crew rest and survival on the long flights." **Ω**

Dabs Greer, character actor in endless TV and movie appearances, died last July at the age of 90. Greer appeared in the 'origin' episode of THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN as a blimp line handler who was carried aloft. The blimp was "unable to land" and Greer dropped from 1000 feet, to what seemed like certain death until the Man of Steel streaked across the sky and caught him. Your editor, as a small boy, was so enamored with Superman he never thought to ask why the blimp couldn't just valve gas and come down. **Ω**

(Top): Movie mock up control car from The Hindenburg was featured on the Hangar # 1 tour. *(Upper right and right)*: The A-170 MZ-3A airship was the featured attraction on the stop to Hangar 6. *(Below right)*: Past president George Allen and his wife Dottie. *(Bottom right)*: Our reunion hosts and facilitators from the Navy Lakehurst Historical Society, Carl Jablonski and Rick Zitarosa. *(Below left)*: Outgoing NAA president Bob Ashford and newly elected president Herm Spahr. *(Bottom left)*: Jim Brodes (left) and Joann McOmber (right) seem to be having too much fun with NMNA liaison Joe Hajcak (center). Joe will be chairman of our 2009 reunion at Pensacola.

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UNITED STATES NAVY AIRSHIPS IN WORLD WAR II

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