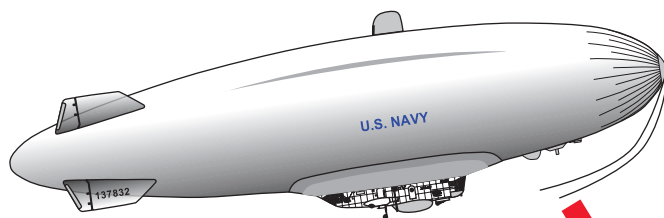
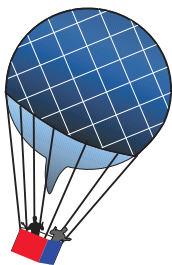


THE

NOON



BALLOON



The Official Newsletter of THE NAVAL AIRSHIP ASSOCIATION, INC.

No. 92

Winter 2011



50 Years Later



Lockheed-Martin (Akron) High Altitude Airship scale prototype launching from the Airdock and climbing out. Below right, following a controlled descent into an unpopulated area, the envelope is spotted by media helicopters before the fabric caught fire. See page 23.



THE NOON BALLOON

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Instead of complaining about the dark, how about lighting a candle?



THE NOON BALLOON

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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.

Cover photo credit: NAVAIR

EDITORIAL

R.G. Van Treuren, Box 700, Edgewater, FL 32132-0700, rgvant@juno.com



Your Editor's elder brother Ralph David had targeted the island of Spitsbergen as his summer destination, hoping to see some spectacular scenes and wildlife. His poorer brother (Ed.) also wanted to visit there, because it was the jumping off site for early North Pole expeditions. American Walter Wellman in 1906 and 1907 was unsuccessful. The Italians split their two missions: First across the top of the world in 1926, the second airship expedition in 1928 became the basis for the movie *THE RED TENT*. All this was chronicled in the Spitsbergen Airship Museum located in one of the historic buildings in Longyearbyen, as we reported earlier in TNB; the museum had contained Wellman's first lifeboat. Imagine how disappointed Ed. would have been, when upon arrival, Dave found the little airship museum now closed, disassembled and looking for a cheaper location. Nonetheless Dave is seen with the plaque erected on the Italian airship mast – yes, the mast is still there (back cover), since 1926, in the same general area also used by Wellman and the “motor balloon” *America*. Among the guides and experts was one man who had studied the history of Polar Exploration. He gave an accurate accounting of the LTA portion of the history, opening the book (below) that shows the landscape there hasn't changed much since the *Norge* and *Italia* moored to that mast. What a way to touch airship history!



On a recent birthday cruise Debbie & I went ashore to the small Bar Harbor museum featuring an easily missed display of a downed K-ship being recovered, captioned:

The Dirigible K-14, being salvaged after being shot down by a German submarine July 2, 1944, near Mount Desert Rock. The Coast Guard from Southwest Harbor assisted in the salvage operations.

These folks don't seem to accept the Navy's version of events, even without an understanding of LTA physics.

Meanwhile for whatever reasons, the great rigids continue to inspire real action. **Charles O'Brian** sent along copies of yet another periodical's covering of Jack Clemens' magnificent *Macon* flying miniature, this time from Model Aviation magazine. As I have mentioned here before, my wife Deborah and I lead a team effort to bring the historical fiction novel *ZRS* to the big screen.



Member **George Diemer** has created a simulation of the novel's alternate 1939 history showing the SBD here practicing with USS *Macon* that, in the novel, lasted until she was bombed at Ewa by Japanese carrier planes. George, who created a working K-ship simulator (see “Shore Establishments”) has shown that even rigids can largely be created in the computer. Yet Debbie and I are convinced we have to actually build and fly the airship's defensive dogfighter. So, we have invested in, and started to build, what we hope will play the role of the movie's bantam airship-stowable hook-on fighter. From German sailplane maker Silence Aircraft, our “Twister” has interesting similarities to the planned BuAer #124 design and has the same wingspan as the Sparrowhawk. Needless to say this effort is scary, but we're determined. See you in Tucson!

- R. G.
Van Treuren,
Editor



View From The Top: PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Once again, I am devoting most of this letter to our Reunion, May 2-4, in Tucson, Arizona, at the DoubleTree Hotel. Elsewhere in this issue, you will find registration forms, prepared by your NAA Secretary/Treasurer, Peter Brouwer. Peter and I have been fine-tuning the Reunion arrangements and since I live, part of the year, in the Phoenix, Arizona, area, it is easy for me to make frequent visits to Tucson.

Getting to Tucson - All the major airlines fly into Tucson, although non-stop flights are rare. Southwest Airlines (southwest.com) is one of my favorites, and their "internet specials" can be very attractive. The DoubleTree offers a \$25 per couple, round-trip shuttle, from Tucson International to the hotel. All the major rental car companies are available. For many of you, driving your own car to Tucson is an interesting trip, with weather in the Southwest U.S. being very pleasant in May. The DoubleTree offers large, free, parking areas.

Reunion Schedule - NAA members will be arriving at the DoubleTree on Wed. May 2nd, and greeting old friends at a Wed. evening reception with hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar. At 0900 on Thur. May 3, we will depart the DoubleTree in air conditioned coaches, for Davis-Monthan AFB, a group photo in front of the last remaining ZPG-3W car, and a 1½ hour tour of the air base and some 4,500 aircraft. This tour was arranged with the help of Teresa Pittman, Business Affairs Manager of the 309th Aerospace Maintenance & Regeneration Group (AMARG). Our lead guide will be Mark Seitz, the Technical Manager of the 309th AMARG. Following our tour we will go to the Pima Air and Space Museum, with over 300 aircraft on display. Prior to touring the Museum we will pick up pre-ordered box lunches and drinks, of your choice, from the Pima Air Flight Grill. We will return to the DoubleTree at 1415, to enjoy the hotel pools and 14 acres of grounds. Friday, you are free to enjoy Tucson and the surrounding area. We will have a closing banquet, Fri. evening. Sat. most of you will depart for home or other travel destinations, however, be aware that the DoubleTree is offering our group, a \$105, all inclusive, room rate for two days before the Reunion and two days after the Reunion.

Other sites to see - If you cross the street from the DoubleTree you will be in Reid Park, containing two 18-hole, par 72, golf courses, a zoo, and a rose garden. The zoo and the rose garden are on the other side of the golf courses, but you can walk to them.

I have previously mentioned Kartchner Caverns State Park, a world-class cavern, bought from the founders by the State of Arizona, who then spent \$30 million to develop it. It is a one-hour drive from Tucson. The guided tours are 1½ hours long, with no stairs. It is wheelchair accessible. I highly



recommend it. Reservations are required. Another site, well worth seeing, is the Titan Missile Silo & Museum. A tour starts every hour on the hour. Going further afield, you have the towns of Tombstone & Bisbee. Tombstone, of the O.K. Corral Shootout, has kept the main street much like it was in the 1800's. Bisbee, with the Copper Queen Mine is 1½ hour drive from Tucson, passing through Tombstone, on the way. Go to Google - "Wikipedia" on the internet to read about both places.

I have talked to Peter & Betty Brouwer about northern Arizona, and the Grand Canyon & Monument Valley, in particular. Monument Valley, with a new hotel, is about a 7-hour drive from Tucson. The South Rim of the Grand Canyon, an hour closer, and has several hotels. Reservations can be difficult, although early May should not be a problem. If you rent a car in Tucson to drive north, you may want to drop the car in Phoenix, AZ and fly home from the Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport. If you should fly into Phoenix, it is about 1½ hour drive to Tucson. If I can be of any help to you, regarding the Reunion, please feel free to e-mail me at rfwood@cox.net. I will be out of the country from late Dec. until Jan. 20th, but will contact you ASAP.

Time does fly by, and it is time to present a Nominating Committee for 2012. David Smith, publisher of "The Noon Balloon" and longtime NAA member, has agreed to Chair the Nominating Committee assisted by George Allen, Mort Eckhouse, Donald Kaiser, & Al Robbins.

As always, I want to thank the people who are managing our website, Peter Brouwer, Don Kaiser, & Bo Watwood. They, and Fred Morin, NAA Vice President & Membership Committee Chairman, continue to bring new members into the organization.

Ross Wood, NAA President

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE UPDATE

I'd like to elaborate a little on a couple of items from my last article. Don Kaiser's excellent article was published in the spring issue of **Naval Aviation News**, not Naval Air News as appeared in the article. It is available on the NAA website; a must read for everyone.

If you haven't lately, please look at the History section on our website. Don Kaiser, Al Robbins, and Bo Watwood are making great strides in adding new and interesting material as well as graphics to the site. There is still much more to be done, but there's a lot of interesting information already on the site. The ambitious goal is to make our website THE source for Navy LTA. It can be done with your help. Please look at the history section and see how easy it would be for you to provide an article or personal experience or photograph to be shared. The more information we can publish the more attractive our site and organization becomes to other LTA veterans, historians, researchers and those interested in aviation. This has a positive influence in attracting new members. If you have a story to share, please contact any one of us listed inside the front cover and we will gladly assist in getting your thoughts down on paper. No story is too small or irrelevant, no photograph too insignificant, someone will find your experience educational or enlightening!

Small Stores is doing well and Donna Forand continues her outstanding efforts. The new ball caps and shirts have been well received. Shirts are currently available in Navy blue, but white will be introduced by Reunion time. Women's sizes in a variety of colors will also be added by then. Finally, the NAA lapel pin/tie tack is in stock and makes a great addition to that jacket lapel, ball cap or as a tie tack. Many of you have asked about them as yours were lost or broken through the years.

As always, we welcome any comments, suggestions or help in recruiting new members to the NAA. It is a cliché, but if everyone signed up one new member our membership would double.



Looking forward to the Reunion, greeting old friends and touring the fabulous Pima Air Museum and the Davis-Monthan "Boneyard."

Let's have a tremendous turnout.

- **Fred Morin, Chairman**

TREASURER'S STRONGBOX

By now, most of you are aware that our next NAA Reunion is planned for 2012. The reunion will be held at the DoubleTree Hotel in Tucson, Arizona, May 2, 3 and 4, 2012. Please read our President, Ross Wood's "View from the Top" message. Ross lives in Arizona and he has a hands-on approach for the reunion and has put a lot of work and effort into the project.



By now, all of our 2011 members that needed to renew to 2012 have received their notices. For those that have paid ahead to 2012 and above, no action is required. Please refer to the website as the current dates are posted as well as members' profile info.

Please continue to keep our T.N.B. Editor Richard Van Treuren's post office mailbox and e-mail buffer full of your LTA stories and pictures. REMINDER: If you are a "Snowbird" and have headed to warmer climates, please be sure to change your address on the roster. You will not miss a single copy of "The Noon Balloon."

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Brian Turpin, Saffron Waldon, Essex, UK
David Moyer, Mechanicsburg, PA
Myra P. Jennison, Newmarket, NH
Tom Martin, Englewood, OH
Richard M. Rosenbloom, Palo Alto, CA
Evan T. Mathis, Jr., Atlanta, GA
Grant Whitman, Smyrna, TN
James H. (Jim) Smith, Aurora, CO
J. V. (Jay) Burnham, Houston, TX
Harry Beverlin, Lynchburg, VA
Per Lindstrand, Shropshire, UK
Bob McKesson, Newport News, VA
Larry Wagner, California, MD
Francis Govers, N. Richland Hills, TX
Harold Gielow
Jim Hudson

DONATIONS

Robert L. Ashford

- **Peter F. Brouwer Secretary/Treasurer**

PIGEON COTE

Correction: Following some correspondence between **CP Hall** and **Herman Van Dyk**, we report the caption on page 9 of issue #90, is misleading. The poster is actually a standard German-language Zeppelin Service advertisement poster. Just the local Dutch agent has been overprinted on the bottom. Only Herman Van Dyk spotted this error and spoke up. Ω

We'd heard some rumors something LTA was going on at the airship hangar of Ecausseville, near the city of Montebourg, 20 miles south of the harbor of Cherbourg.



Our own **Robert Feuillo**y checked it out and got this response from one Philippe Paris: "The French hangar is located in Normandy, not far from the 1944 Landing beaches, "Utah Beach" in particular. This hangar is unique in the world to be fully built in concrete (roof and walls): in addition, its section follows a catenary curve exactly as the Gateway Arch of St. Louis, Missouri.

It is owned by the Montebourg town community (group of towns of the Montebourg area) and operated by a very active association named "Les Amis du Hangar À Dirigeables du Ecausseville" (Fellows of the Ecausseville Airships Hangar). This association has preserved the hangar from the destruction. In a side building an exhibition explains the purpose and the building of the hangar, the history of airships and mainly those of the French Navy. I would suggest you to visit the web site <http://www.aerobase.fr/>, through the pictures you can get some idea about the hangar, its history, and what we do today. Note that it was used during the WWII by the US Army as a depot for vehicles and store for various equipment: some graffiti in English (but also in German) are still visible on the walls. Regards

Philippe Paris
philyves@club-internet.fr
Fellow of the Ecausseville Airships Hangar" Ω



NAA Pres. **Ross Wood** flew his 172 down to Marana, AZ to visit *Eureka* at the last stop of her cross-country tour before returning home to Moffett. Ross e-mailed, "There were 3 crew present, when I was there - Matthew, wearing dark glasses & Mark.



The third crewman was on a platform working on the port nacelle. Matthew was very friendly and was present at Moffett when we were there in Sept. 2010. I was there with my 172 on Sat. the 15th. Matthew said they were leaving the next morning to make the flight back to Sunnyvale. WX has been excellent, out here, so they made it home in one day." Ω



Member **Walter Lion** called **Fred Morin** to say that he was in ZP-751 which was formed at Lakehurst in 1948. When it got too big it was split into (3) reserve squadrons: ZP-751, 752, 753. He was in ZP-751, but occasionally flew with the others to meet his reserve obligations. He has absolutely no recollection of ever seeing the cartoon in TNB 91. Fred suggested it may have been a cartoon someone drew and passed around, possibly dating the young lady depicted. He got a kick out of that theory and thought it was probably true as some guys liked to sketch or just doodle to kill time. Ω

Past NAA Pres. **Herm Spahr** e-mailed, "Recently I received a letter from Evan T. Mathis Jr. containing a photograph dated April 13, 1949, of the LTA Class at Lakehurst. All but two officers were identified and he thought one of the unidentified officers might be me..."

It brought back a disturbing memory to me regarding a well-written article published in TNB by Keith Culbertson who indicated he was "in the first HTA class of LTA officers at Lakehurst". I did not remember Keith. However, I sent him a letter questioning his statement and included a complimentary copy of my LTA Memoirs. I never received a response. I knew several of the officers in the photograph. Between Evan and I, I believe we have solved the problem.

In the summer of 1948, BuPers issued an ALNAV request for fixed-wing pilots to apply for transitional training into airships. Apparently 40 officers were selected. However, Lakehurst did not have the facilities to accommodate 40 officers at the same time in their academic spaces nor were there enough airships available for such purposes. It appears the group was divided into two sections; one section reported for training July 19, 1948. Upon completion of their academic ground training they were transferred to the flight section. The second group (of which I was a member) reported for training 15 January 1949. We were assigned the academic

phase. The first group completed their flight training May 27, 1949, and was dispatched to various squadrons. My group then began our flight training. On Sept 15, 1949, my group was divided and sent to various squadrons for "duty involving flying under operational training". Our LTA designations were delayed until January 3, 1950, when "training status was terminated".

LT Harry Bednoit was the senior officer of the first group; LT Sidney Overall was the senior officer of my group. Each group was evenly divided with LTJGs and Ens. However, for various reasons there were only 17 officers in the first group and 18 officers in the second group. In my group, one officer was a CIC officer on a carrier involved in an operation and his orders were cancelled. Another assignment was killed in an aircraft crash. LT William Spooner was the Avionics Officer for the Naval Air Station and requested permission to attend the class on a non-interference basis. His request was approved. I am not certain if he was ever formally designated LTA. I have asked Evan to pursue this matter and write an item for TNB, clarifying this information. He is a new member to our NAA. I have given him your names as a possible source of additional information. Evan and I have both served with John Fahey." Ω



THE LAST LTA CLASS FROM THE FLEET (NON PILOTS)
Fall of 1948 to August 1949

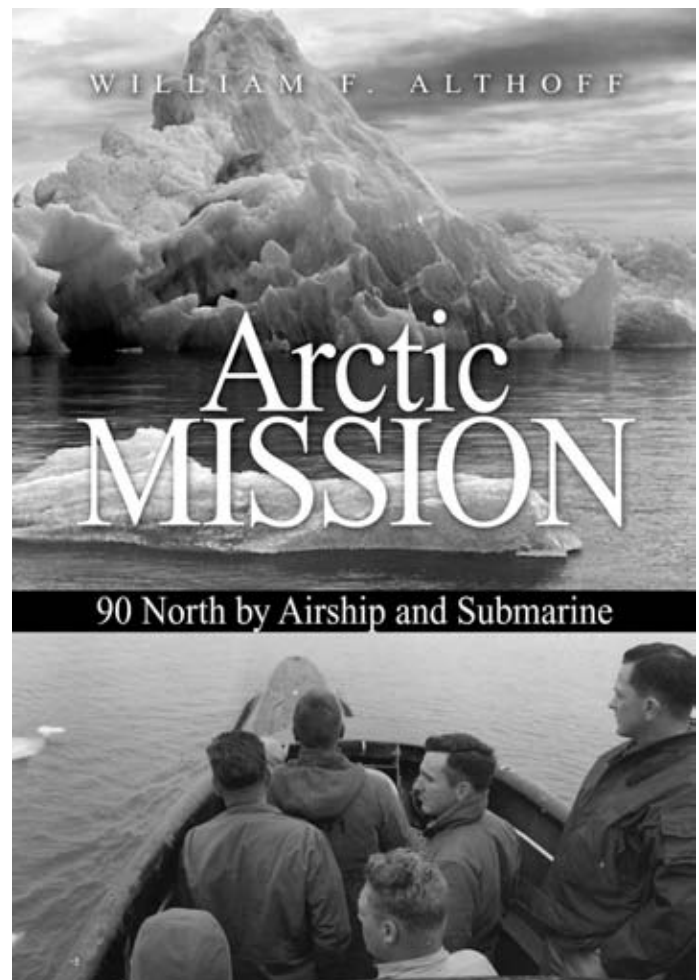
John A. Fahey, e-mailed, “Recently I came across some items related to my carrier landings during 1949, 1950, and 1951. During that period, I made 171 aircraft carrier landings and take-offs. I do not believe that any naval airship pilot ever came close to the number of carrier landings I made in the history of airships. To promote the value of the airship to the Navy at a time when the Chief of Naval Operations, Commander of the Atlantic Fleet, and Commander of Fleet Air Wings were considering whether to retain airship squadrons in the U.S. Navy, I was chosen to demonstrate the value of the airship in carrier operations and hunter-killer groups.

On May 23, 1950, the Chief of Naval Operations boarded the escort carrier USS *Mindoro* to observe a demonstration of landing by my crew and also to witness an in-flight refueling. I flew the ZP2K- 93 on the same day from NAS Weeksville to rendezvous with the CVE-120 and conduct the demonstration. The Chief of Naval Operations was so favorably impressed with the demonstration on May 23, the following month, June 26, 1950, he boarded the USS *MIDWAY* with the Commander Atlantic Fleet and Commander Air Atlantic to observe a second carrier landing demonstration with an added ASW tactics demonstration. He sent the Commander Air Wings Atlantic to NAS Weeksville to board the ZP2K-80 and view the demonstration from inside the ship. The Commander Airship Wing One, Captain Herbert Graves, also joined the flight.

With three senior flag officers aboard USS *Midway*, the ship includes this memorable event in the ship’s history. I was permitted to choose my own crew and I chose as co-pilot, past NAA President, Herman Spahr, who flew the rudder for the historic landing which helped convince the U.S. Navy to retain Navy airships in the fleet. Quoting from “The History Of Midway’s Magic:”

MIDWAY deployed to the Mediterranean for a third time in January, 1950, with Air Group Four. Port calls included Istanbul, Cyprus, Malta, Cannes, Oran and Lisbon. She returned to Norfolk in May of that year. On June 25, a naval airship piloted by Lt. John Fahey, landed and then took off from the *MIDWAY* during a demonstration for the Chief of Naval Operations and the Commander in Chief, U.S. Atlantic Fleet who were aboard *MIDWAY*. With less than two months to turn around, *MIDWAY* redeployed in July, exchanging Air Group Four for Air Group Seven. She arrived in Gibraltar with an upgraded fighter capability consisting of F9F-2 Panthers, and F8F-1B Bearcats. On October 17, LTJG H. Urban, a pilot from VC-4 became *MIDWAY*’S first Centurion. He made his 100th *MIDWAY* trip (his 207th career carrier landing) while flying an AD-3N. On this cruise *MIDWAY* served as the flagship.” Ω

Member **William Althoff** e-mailed that his 2000 book *ARCTIC MISSION* is about to be reissued by Naval Institute Press. It has been revised and updated – now 256 pp., and 110 b/w images.



To salve the sting of orbiting Sputniks, the United States needed a dramatic demonstration of technological prowess. Early in 1958, the White House ordered a secret under-ice transit of the Arctic Ocean--Pacific to Atlantic--via the North Pole. That spring, the Office of Naval Research (ONR) initiated a unique project: to assess whether nonrigid airships could support field parties deployed in the Arctic.

“ARCTIC MISSION: 90 North by Airship and Submarine” recounts two singular penetrations. On 3 August, the nuclear submarine *Nautilus* (SSN 571) reached 90 North; continuing under ice, the boat logged the first deep-ocean transit of the polar basin. Meantime, enroute to rendezvous (on 9 August) with an IGY base on T-3, an ice island adrift off Canada, ZPG-2 BUNO 126719 became the sole military airship to cross the Arctic Circle. The work is based on archival research and interviews, including participants from each naval expedition--and, as well, researchers then deployed onto drift station T-3. Ω

Fabio Pena e-mailed Ed., “As for the “Flying Carriers” DVD, I can only say: Excellent! It has a wealth of technical and historical detail that one would only expect to find in separate, top-of-the-line reference works, and a richness of images that immediately suggests a long, painstaking research and careful editing--not to mention the narrator’s terrific work ;-). Bravo Zulu to the production team...by the way, have you seen our new Rigid Airship pages on navsource? <http://www.navsource.org/archives/02/99/029901.htm>”

Dean Nelson e-mailed, “While in ZP-2 in 1950s I remember a tale about a blimp pilot who had a monkey. He claimed that a blimp was so easy to fly that even his monkey could fly it. One day when they came in for a landing he had put the monkey in the rudderman’s seat and chained it to the rudder control. Someone else was in the aft compartment using ‘come alongs’ to do the steering. I mentioned it to John Kane at one time and he knew the name of the pilot involved, unfortunately I don’t remember who it was. It would be an interesting story to put in the magazine if you could find someone to verify it. Ω

Paul Roales e-mailed Ed. asking for information on a K-ship pilot named Reed rescuing a downed B-29 crew, to which Ed. responded with a clipping from Jim Shock’s USN A/S book and told him, “Blimp location and rescue of B-29 crash victims would have been more common had the airships been allowed in the Pacific, where the B-29s were killing their crews about as fast as the Japanese were.” Paul responded, “In Reed’s log book there are two dates where his remark is “Contact made” but nothing further: On Sept 7, 1943, while in K-17 piloted by “Grace”, and on Nov 22, 1943, in K-104 piloted by “Hargrove.” Reed flew a lot of different K-blimps and M-2, 3, 4 at Richmond. He also flew L-8, 9, 10, 11 and TC-14 while training at Moffett... I’ll consider joining NAA if I really get into the research.” Ω

Ed. was e-mailed, “Hello, I am trying to write about the use of William Pick’s “inverse loran” (for which he received a Congressional Medal) in locating German U-boat submarines during World War II. His daughter told me the first U-boats were destroyed this way by blimps. Do you have any information on that, that you could send me? I understand that during the war false information was intentionally given out about how the U-boats were located to mislead the Nazis, so it may be hard to track down its actual use in defeating the Axis in WWII. I appreciate any help you can give. The source does not want to be identified. Karen Lee for Judy Pick.” Ed. responded, “An internet search turns up a William B. Pick having received Congressional recognition for the “inverse loran,” but you will find no official source stating any blimp ever sank a U-boat. I have devoted more than a decade to research on the title subject and believe there was one victory,

perhaps two, but neither involved using equipment aboard to home-in on a U-boat’s radio transmissions. While LORAN was eventually carried on blimps, no radio-transmission locator system was part of regular airship equipment. It might have been carried as an experiment out of Lakehurst; we have some vets left that flew the experimental K-ship there. “Tenth Fleet” author Larrago credits HF-DF with sinking many U-boats but again it was not installed in any fleet blimp to our knowledge. In my book I detail many instances of what was called “a fountain of phony information.” I only wish that, even by accident, an airship had been given credit for a submarine sinking just to boost morale. It was certainly done in the airplane world - “Sighted sub, sank same!” did not, actually - but I have never located an official statement to the effect a blimp was victorious. Just the opposite, after the K-74 lost a gunfight with the surfaced U-134, SECNAV Knox specifically stated he was pulling airships back from where U-boats were suspected. Like your person who did not want to be identified, in his WWII memoir, Vice Admiral C.E. Rosendahl mentions a “Lt. X” who was instrumental in fitting technology into the K-ships, and we have never been able to i.d. this Lt. X. (Ed. continued a considerable correspondence with these folks but so far they declined joining NAA. We spotted this poster, with its inaccurate airplane, in a Virginia air museum.) Ω



Don Layton e-mailed, “Volume 26, Number 2, the Journal of the League of World War I Aviation Historians, Over the Front, has just published my article, The ‘Lesser; Airships of the Great War.” This is a companion piece to the article “The Great Airships of the Great War” which was published in Volume 25, Number 1 of the Journal. This is the rationale behind my referring to the World War One Blimps as Lesser.” The article runs 15 pages with a lot of pictures. Ω

Don Geiger e-mailed with an attachment recalling Black Dog: “Attached is the story of what actually happened at Glynco NAS. I do not recall the publication from which I cut this out. I was recalled to active duty in May 1952. I was to replace Leo Gentile as Squadron Maintenance Officer at Glynco. I remained there until November of 1953, at which time I had to return to Akron, Ohio, due to the death of my father. I was a protégé of Leo Gentile having attended the first “Bag School” in Akron in August of 1944. Being raised in Akron, my father would take me out to the airdock to watch the construction of the *Akron* and the *Macon*. I also watched their maiden flights. I have more trivia about the men from Akron and other stories. As an engineering student, I worked at the Guggenheim Airship Research Institute at Akron in 1942 when I enlisted. Ω



Marc J. Frattasio e-mailed, “Fellow NAA member John Yaney and I spent a very enjoyable day with CAPT E. M. Rodgers, former NADU commanding officer, this past weekend. Among the photos that we scanned I believe shows the ZPG-2 “Snowbird” blimp (NADU Planner 12) configured with the Project Clinker radiometer (not the odd-angled flat section at the bottom of the blimp’s AN/APS-20 radome) flying somewhere over the California coast. Photo credit USN Photo via CAPT E. M. Rodgers (USNR-R). Ω

John Willoughby e-mailed remembering William (Bill) Barker (rt): “Bill was a member of NAA for many years. A number of years ago he wrote an article for the TNB about his being the “Youngest Poopy Bag Sailor,” having joined the Reserves while still a high school junior. He and I attended the reunions in Pensacola and Portland. We met at “Boot Camp” at NAS (LTA) Santa Ana in 1955. Bill became a radio operator and I joined the



weather geniuses. In 1957 we helped with the folding up of the blimps for shipment to that place where folded up blimps go after their years of service. Bill and I transferred to NARS Los Alamitos where Bill took the radio seat in a P2. I remained with the weather gurus. Bill’s experience mirrored that of Lt Daniel R. Cavalier as mentioned in his memoir printed in the Fall 2011 TNB. In 1958 Bill’s crew was to fly a night patrol on the Saturday of our regular drill weekend. Nellie, his bride-to-be, called him on Friday night and suggested that they go out on Saturday night. He was able to find a replacement for his seat on the scheduled flight. Bill directed the flight out of its parking space and went to the squadron office to change his clothing. By the time he had finished changing the flight had collided with an Air Force flight out of Long Beach. All but one or two of his crew were lost.

Even 50 years after the event Bill was not able to talk about the crash and the friends he lost. We did attend a memorial held in Norwalk, CA, that commemorated that anniversary. Bill was not able to complete his 8-year reserve obligation. He was diagnosed with diabetes before that time and discharged. Bill had been active in community affairs in Mission Viejo, CA, where he and Nellie had lived for many years. He was on the November 2, 2010, ballot as a candidate for City Council. He did not see the results of that election, having died early that morning. Needless to say, with Lt. Cavalier’s memoir and the review of David Crawley’s book, the Fall 2011 TNB brought back many memories.



John Craggs e-mailed, “This letter was carried on the USS *Akron* on its coast-to-coast air mail trip in May 1932. As you can see, it was postmarked at Lakehurst on May 6, 1932, at 5 pm, left Lakehurst on May 8, and is postmarked in San Diego on May 11 at 7 p.m. The letter has never been opened. The letter belonged to Robert Tryon of 3 W. Caribbean, Port St. Lucie, FL. 34952 Port St Lucie, who was in a group of men assigned to the port of New York, guarding shipping and maintaining tight security of troop movements in WWII. He worked closely with the FBI and Secret Service. Dick Trusty gave it to the New England Air Museum, where he is a frequent and welcome visitor. Ω

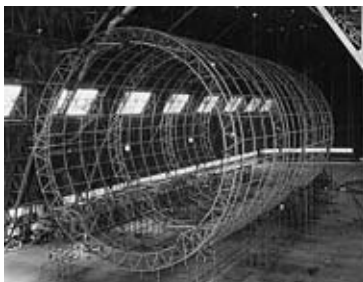
Herm Spahr sent along a clipping from the Indianapolis Star covering the Conner Prairie exhibit which includes a 350-foot balloon ascension ride. It covers John Wise's 1859 balloon "Jupiter" launch in which he attempted to carry mail. (The balloon went more south than east and he landed, putting the mail on a train to make the trip to New York.) The article does not mention the accompanying photo that is said to be the oldest in the NASM collection.



Herm also sent a package of copies from materials sent him by Captain Newsom. Various clippings included a wartime mention of the K-60, on a training mission from Hitchcock, Texas, was giving Army lads a chance to learn ground-handling a K-ship. The area was called "Blackland" and command pilot LT R. N. Clark complemented the men of the Army 873rd. One of his ZP3K photos of operations off Cuba, clearly shows the 3K had trim tabs.



Eric Brothers sent several items calling attention to the USS *Akron's* 80th anniversary this year, from first flight to commissioning. The Akron Beacon Journal's Mark Price wrote a story "Communist sabotage or setup? Dirigible mechanic from Hungary is accused of evil plot to down USS *Akron* in March 1931".



Florence Magoto wrote, "Since Zackarey Lansdowne's hometown has never done anything to honor him, this (sign shown below) is the second thing I have done. A friend of mine did the artwork - it is 20 ft long and 4 ft high. It has been attached to an outside wall of a building here (Greenville OH) close to downtown. The building's owner gave permission as she is as proud as I am - I think it's great. The sign was delivered to my house for inspection before it was put up."



Florence also enclosed a photo of a *Shenandoah* model moored on a high mast... "The ZR-1 model was on display at Ava for the 85th anniversary... it has lights, props go around, etc. His name is Jerry Hangey, 2320 Elm Ave. Quakertown PA 18951. I really enjoy Noon Balloon, keep up the good work. P.S. My family was second family to live in the old family home here in town. Peg, Zack's daughter, and I were like sisters." Ω

Mark Lutz e-mailed some links to previously unseen photos of wind tunnels used in airship research.

<http://museum.nist.gov/panels/gallery/windtunnel.html>

<http://museum.nist.gov/panels/gallery/airplane.html>

<http://www.dlr.de/100Jahre/en/Portaldata/37/Resources/images/luftschiff1.jpg>

http://www.dlr.de/100Jahre/en/Portaldata/37/Resources/images/1910_luftschiff.jpg

"1910 photo of "Luftschiff" in "Gottinger Windkanal," I assume this is kanal #1."



SHORE ESTABLISHMENTS – LAKEHURST (Cover Story)



The U.S. Navy MZ-3A (above, NAVAIR photo) advanced flying laboratory has new markings and colors celebrating the Centennial of Naval Aviation. Historic Hangar One at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., was the setting where Navy officials re-dedicated the only airship currently in Navy active-flying service. The MZ-3A is used as a testbed for Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) sensors requiring a stable and vibration-free testing environment. The Navy used the MZ-3A to help during the Deepwater Horizon oil spill recovery operation from March 2010 to July 2010. The airship and crew operated out of Jack Edwards National Airport in Gulf Shores, Ala., transporting the U.S. Coast Guard investigating the waters over the Gulf of Mexico. Observers report excellent results when searching vast areas like the Gulf due to the slow travel speed of the airship. "Airships also bring affordability to testing," said Steve Huett, program manager for the MZ-3A. "You can operate an airship for 40 percent of the cost of fixed-wing aircraft or helicopters."

The airship is assigned to Naval Research Laboratory Military Support Division Scientific Development Squadron ONE (VXS-1). The Navy Airship Program is managed by the Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division. Both organizations are at Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Md. Integrated Systems Solutions, Inc. is the contractor responsible for maintaining and operating the airship in many locations throughout the country. The MZ-3A is 178 feet long, capable of flying up to 9,500 feet and cruises at 45 knots. The ship is fitted with two Lycoming engines and has space for one pilot and nine passengers. Ω

NEAM

In a project that took 5 months and about 1000 hours, NAA member **George Diemer** has created a K-28 Flight Simulator model based on the NEAM restoration of the Goodyear *Puritan*/K-28 blimp car. It contains a visual model of the car, inside and out, as well as the large envelope with fins and control surfaces. The model is created using a simplified CAD program which creates all the model parts and applies colors and textures to them. There are about 2,200 parts in the interior and exterior models. The dimensions, colors, and textures of the model parts were derived from hundreds of photographs and measurements taken in and around the NEAM restoration project. You can position yourself inside the cockpit, or outside the aircraft. You can look around left, right, up, down in either position. In the cockpit you can see flight gauges and other controls, and outside you can see moving rudders, elevators, landing gear, and so on. You can also move around left, right, up, down to look at items in other parts of the aircraft.



John Craggs of NEAM explains how to check it out: log on to flightsim.com. about halfway down the screen click on "search," enter "K-28," double-click on "Blimp K-28 --- flightsim.com" you'll see three pictures of the simulated K-28, followed by a link to a video of it flying.

For people interested in flying the K-28 simulator, they need Microsoft Flight Simulator 2004 (also called FS2004 or FS9) or Microsoft Flight Simulator X (FSX). Microsoft FSX is about 5 years old and is still available for around \$30 at some stores or online at sites like Amazon. FS2004 is about 8 years old and harder to find, but still can be purchased from Amazon or eBay. Ω

HAPPY 90th BIRTHDAY! LT. CMDR. BOB FORAND,
U.S.N. RET. (as told to Ruth F. Fanelli)



December 7, 1941, Pearl Harbor Day, I was 18 years of age and very young at heart. Airships? I was unaware that the Navy had airships. I was familiar with the Goodyear blimps that appeared over Boston occasionally and the rigid airships that flew over Boston on their voyages to and from Lakehurst. I am of the belief that I have seen all the great rigid airships, which include the *Shenandoah*, *Los Angeles*, *Akron*, *Macon*, and the German zeppelins, the *Graf Zeppelin*, and the *Hindenburg*. The Navy airship program was dormant for several years.

I remember Pearl Harbor Day well as I drove up to Gardner to visit Aunt Mamie with Mary and her mother in my parents' '34 Ford coupe. It was about early afternoon when we got word about the air raid at Pearl Harbor over the radio. All the way home we listened to the radio. Being young, and never having been through a war period, I really did not know just what the impact of this event might have on my life. It turns out that this was the most talked-about event for the next four years.

The suddenness of finding us at war was a shock to everyone. Negotiating had been going on in Washington in recent weeks, and was not even on the front-page headlines. By losing the majority of our Pacific Fleet in the matter of a couple of hours, we find ourselves declaring war on Japan. To add greater impact to the situation, the next day Germany declares war on us. No, we weren't caught completely with our "pants" down, because the past two years we were producing arms and munitions to mainly Great Britain, who had been battling Germany. Since 1939, our shipyards and manufacturing plants were running at a fair speed. Also, we had a "draft" status in effect. Men were being drafted for a year's service. So, when war broke out, there were many of the military men who were about to be released from active duty. At this time I was working as a carpenter apprentice on the new "First National Store" warehouse in Somerville. (It's now the location of a mall). Within a few weeks, we started

having "air-raid" drills. At work we would stop working and evacuate the area. When the air-raid sirens would go off. How that would benefit anyone, I don't know. It was close to panic that was settling in across the country.

At the outbreak of the war we were ranked 14th in the world in military strength, behind even Turkey and Argentina. However since we were building ships and arms for our allies, it meant to increase our production by several times. The "draft" was in effect for two years. Draftees were serving for one year. So, we did have a small number of men to call up. Young men by the thousands were volunteering. Some waited until they were drafted, then they would enlist in the service of their choice. Defense work became very plentiful. Working overtime became standard.

I enlisted in the Navy on July 31, 1942. I received some indoctrination classes in Boston during the month of August. I volunteered for Civilian Pilot Training at Middlebury College, Vermont. In September and October, I attended Civilian Pilot Training, located at Middlebury College, with flight lessons at Rocks Flight School located at Bristol, Vermont. We flew the 65 hp and the 80 hp Aeronca. My first flight was on September 5, 1942 and I soloed on October 7, with 11 hours. The syllabus consisted of take-offs, landings, stalls, and spins. My last flight was on November 4, accumulating a total of 33 hours.

About this time, the Navy opened up the aviation pilots training to high school graduates. Formerly it was only available to students with at least two years of college. My high school buddy, Dick Gorman, suggested we try for that. (Dick was the one responsible for me meeting my Mary). I passed the aptitude test. Several in the group of about 20 did not, including some college students. I was accepted. I was originally given the rating of Seaman 1st, but within a couple of months the Navy came up with the new rating of Aviation Cadet. I still have the "V-5 Aviation Pin" presented to me at that time to wear on my civilian clothes to show that I was a Naval Aviation Candidate.

Waiting to be called up, I continued to work on construction projects and a couple of nights a week I would attend night classes in Boston. The subjects would be on Navy regulations, navigation and weather. In my class was Ted Williams and Rico Patricelli of the Boston Red Sox. It was the first of September that I was sent to Middlebury College in Vermont for Civilian Pilot Training. Here I received aviation courses. There were 10 navy cadets and 10 army air corps cadets in the class. We would have a half day of ground school instructions at the college, then a half day of flying instructions at Rock's Flying Service in Bristol, Vermont. There were two students washed out

in this program. I soloed with 11 hours and accumulated 35 hours of flying time in a 65 hp Aeronca. This A/C did not have any wing flaps so it was common practice to slip it in on landing. On solo flights we would practice stalls and three turn spins. My boyhood chum, Tony LaScola took his C.P.T. training in Laconia, N.H., while Dick Gorden took his C.P.T. training locally. It was here in Vermont that I met up with Jack King. Jack and I stayed together through C.P.T., Preflight at University of Ga., and L.T.A. training at Lakehurst and South Weymouth. We were even married on the same day and remained close friends for about 40 years, until his untimely death about 1981.

It was on September 14, 1942, that I had my first flight while attending Middlebury College, located in Vt., We were training in Aeronca's trainers. On October 9 the log book remarks were "stomach stronger now, took a loop; split "S": and a three turn spin without a murmur." My last flight took place on November 4, 1942. I had accumulated 35½ flighthours, 22 hrs. duo and 13½ hours solo.

Returning home I went back to work on a construction project in Somerville as a carpenter apprentice. Then on Tuesday of Thanksgiving week I reported for active duty in Boston. Our group of recruits left by train in the p.m. and it took two nights on the train to reach Atlanta, Ga. The rear wheels of the engine went off the track and that delayed us about six hours. We arrived about 9 p.m. on Thanksgiving at the University of Georgia. All we got to eat was a turkey sandwich. My active-duty time had begun. The reason for preflight training was to get you into good physical condition. Doing construction work, I believed that I was in good physical condition. We had classes in boxing, wrestling, football, swimming, track, and running the obstacle course. Along with physical education programs, we also had two hours each day drilling, including the

manual of arms. Marching in the rain through the red clay of Georgia, then given a short time to clean up and be back in formation ready for inspection was a trying task. Half of our day was in class studying military rules and regulations, math and navigation. A big emphasis was placed on Naval History. Time went by rather quickly, as we were anxiously awaiting our next assignment, which would be Primary Flight Training.

The day finally arrived with the assignments listed on the bulletin board, however, my name was not on it. The problem was that there was a backup at P.T. and there were about 50 cadets that had to wait for the next opening in two weeks. Most of the primary training sites were in the west or south locations. A week went by, then a notice appeared that they were accepting cadets for airship training at Lakehurst, N.J. We traveled by bus from Athens, Ga. to Atlanta, then by train to Philadelphia, and by Navy bus to N.A.S. Lakehurst. Therefore, the start of my LTA career.

So, I was a WWII Naval Aviator, 20 years serving with the Naval Reserve. Former member of Hanscom "Civil Air Patrol" and as an aircraft owner doing volunteer medical flights in the New England area for "Air Lifeline." My civilian work was as a building contractor in light construction. Employed at Tufts University for 20 years as Assistant Director of Buildings and Grounds. Qualified as Licensed Massachusetts Construction Supervisor, (1962), holder of a Boston Builders License. About 10 years with the B.P.D. on work under the supervision of Helen Bulman. On December 16, 2011, I will be 90 years of age, but I am still playing golf. My wonderful wife, Mary and I have 8 children, 22 grandchildren, and 16 great-grandchildren. Besides Mary and my family, LTA will always be my love. Ω



(Bob is far left in this 1957 photo.)

Bombs Away - On The Ground

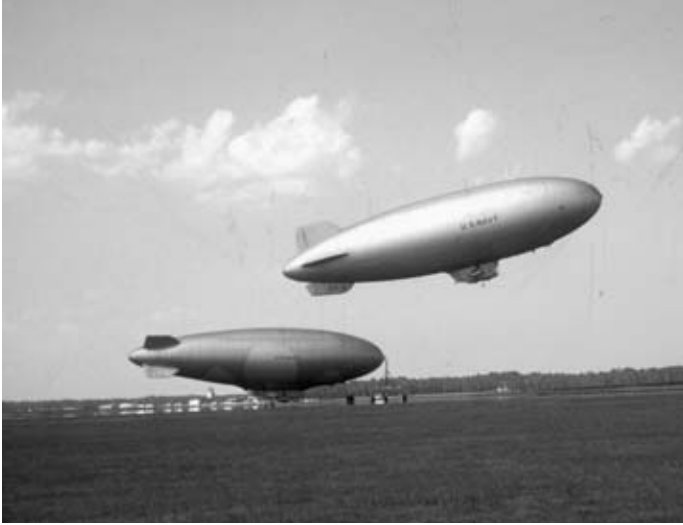
By Dean Nelson

In 1956 or 1957, Airship Squadron 2 (ZP-2) was selected to demonstrate the capability of a blimp to deliver a special weapon. I was never quite sure what type of weapon it was as everything was very secretive. It was a large bomb, at least three feet in diameter and several feet long and weighed a couple thousand pounds as I remember. It was brought in several days before the delivery exercise by a special team that kept a close eye on it at all times monitoring it with various instruments. Rumor had it, that it was a simulated nuclear weapon and the purpose of the exercise was to demonstrate that a blimp could drop a nuclear weapon and safely get away. I figured about the only way that could happen would be if the bomb had about an hour-delayed fuse. On occasions we did drop 250 and 500 pound bombs and depth charges, we would release them from about 700 feet altitude heading downwind as fast as we could go - about 75 knots (90 mph). They were set to detonate 200 feet under water so dropping at 700 feet and then penetrating 200 feet of water gave us a little time to move away. Even at that, the effect of the blast was a thrilling experience in a blimp. The blast would send up a shock wave that would strike the large surface of the blimp and sort of give it a boost upward. The gondola is attached to the balloon by long cables fastened to the inside top of the balloon. Therefore, when the blast pushed the large envelope upward, there was a delayed reaction as this force was transferred from the bottom of the envelope, to the top, to the cables and finally to the gondola which was then tugged upward, almost into the envelope. So, as impressive as a 500-pound bomb was, I certainly would not want to be around for anything larger. Finally the big day arrived for us to demonstrate our stuff. There were several Navy Brass present to witness the event, so this wasn't just another day at the squadron. This was what I guess you would call an admiral's test. Strange how things always go awry for an admiral's test and today was to be no exception. Since this was a special event, the CO elected to go on the flight as an observer. The weapon was loaded on board, the blimp was moved into take-off position and when all was ready they begin their take-off run across the matt. The blimp was picking up speed nicely and was at the point where normally the pilot could pull back on the yoke and the blimp would lift into the air. But because of the extra weight, the blimp could not get off the ground. Instead, by pulling back on the yoke, it raised the nose of the blimp up and the tail down to such a degree that it prevented the blimp from gaining the additional speed. The pilot continued to pull back on the yoke harder yet which only aggravated the situation. At the same time, the throttles were pushed to maximum to get more power. These engines, actually

the propellers, had a strange quirk and it had to pick now to occur. The pitch of the propeller (that's the angle of the blade) is adjusted to control the amount of thrust obtained. The pitch was controlled electronically by a system called the Beta System. When the pilot flipped a toggle switch, the Beta System would adjust the propeller pitch. The quirk was that every once in a while for no apparent reason the Beta System would pop a circuit breaker and when that happened the propellers would go to zero pitch, that is, they would quit developing thrust. The result was that the engines would over-speed and could quite possibly become damaged if the circuit breaker wasn't reset immediately or the throttle pulled back to idle. They had lost power but their momentum continued to carry them forward to the edge of the matt where a runway intersects the matt. Since they still had sufficient speed to steer the blimp they headed down the runway. If they were unable to regain power, the blimp would continue to slow down until all control was lost and it would be at the mercy of the wind. And the nearest obstacle in their route was the blimp hangar where I was standing. The hangar is about a quarter mile long and couple hundred feet high so it is a big target and hard to miss. The pilot decided they needed to get rid of some weight in order to get the blimp into the air and to avoid colliding with the hangar. The fuel tanks were provided with emergency dump valves. These valves were opened and aviation fuel was dumped on the matt behind the gondola. The blimp was now in such a nose-high position that the tail was dragging on the ground, creating a path of sparks. As I watched, I was certain the fuel would ignite at any moment from the sparks and the blimp would burst into flames. It never happened, and the loss of the fuel still was not sufficient to lighten the blimp so it could get off the ground. The blimp had slowed sufficiently by this time that it was starting to drift off course towards the hangar. Now two things happened, the pilot decided to jettison (release) the special weapon and the CO and one other officer decided to jettison themselves. All three left the blimp together and with this large loss of weight, the blimp lifted almost straight into the air just clearing the roof of the hangar. After some time in the air the crew was able to restart the engines and return to base for an uneventful landing. The Navy personnel that brought in the weapon, loaded it back on their truck and hauled it away and no more was ever heard, at least at my level, about blimps delivering special weapons. An old saying in the Navy is that the captain is always the last to leave a sinking ship. The joke around the squadron after that was that the captain was also the first to leave a rising airship. His reasoning was that he was the heaviest and probably the least useful so his departure would be most beneficial to all concerned. No one disagreed with that. Ω

Memories Of A Farm Boy Who Flew Blimps

By David R. Odor, LTJG



I now live in Kentucky near the farm where I grew up and I vividly remember driving a tractor up a hill and making a sharp turn downhill pretending to fly a wing-over. In the horse country, I have a belt like the horse trainers have. It is made of leather used on the halters and has a brass plate with my name on it, just like the racehorses. I tell folks that if I wonder off, I know who I am, by looking to my belt. My memory of events in LTA is spotty after 54 years, but some flights stand out above the rest. I will relate a few of them to you now.

I was at Eastern Kentucky State Teachers College when a Naval aviator with a shiny set of gold wings visited the campus. He had a big poster that said "Come Fly With Me!" My first flight in an airplane was from Lexington Kentucky to N.A.S. Columbus Ohio. The plane was an old Bomber (I don't remember the designation) that had a 'green house' nose where the bombardier rode. I made that to be my home as I observed the passing scenery. From Lexington, Kentucky, to Cincinnati, Ohio, I knew every crossroad as I had traveled the route many times. It was on the occasion of my flight, to start testing for the Navy Cadet program, that the fires were set. The small farms that covered the area were of a density of about five per square mile. That is how many fires glowed on the ground in the early night of that first flight. I called the fires, "Fires of Hope," for each farmer had hope for his coming crop. I had hope for becoming a Naval aviator.

After completion of basic flight training in T-34s, SNJs, and SNBs, just a few days after the launch of "Sputnik" in 1957, I arrived at the Big Hangar at N.A.S. Glynco. I was absolutely amazed at the size of the building. (Opposite

When I stepped inside and looked around my mind could not comprehend, as I was in awe. I was awakened by the call of someone calling to me, "Hey, grab hold of this line". A uniform bearing four stripes on the sleeve accompanied the voice. I instantly knew that if a Captain was struggling on a line, something was terribly wrong. I joined in and helped the Captain pull the line and we got the ship secured. I learned that the ship had hit the pylon of the hangar during a docking maneuver. The four stripes on the sleeve belonged to Captain Smith, who was the man who had more flight time than any other in the world. He was making a visit to the training command. What an introduction to 'lighter than air'!

The training at Glynco was exciting and I welcomed the ease and camaraderie that it offered. I learned how to fly a Charlie pattern in an SNB; I fantasized about picking up water from the Cloister swimming pool. (The Cloister is a luxury resort on Sea Island, Georgia.) Without the wisdom of our good instructors, some of us wild and crazy cadets would have tried it. I learned to play Acey-Ducey in the Ready Room. And I learned to respect the aviator professionalism of the instructors. They had lived in the time of Roosevelt and Truman, and were a breed of their own. One particular instructor, in particular was a little strange, having absolutely no military bearing and it was said that he could fly a perfect Charlie pattern in an SNB while drinking coffee sitting sideways in the seat smoking a cigarette. On our first flights out of Glynco in the SNB we were to learn to instantly recognize the alternative landing fields in the area.



On one of the flights (I was in the rear seat) the other student said "Mr. J, I don't recognize that field over there, what is it? Mr. J replied, "I don't know either, I will find out, where upon he promptly took controls and made a rapid approach and landed. He taxied up to the small service building and telling us that he would be right back. He left the engine running and went inside. Soon

he emerged and said, "let's go." The student took off and climbed out to altitude. Then he asked Mr. J.... what was that field? He responded that the guy in the building had only been working there one week and didn't know either. What we didn't realize at the time was that Mr. J was only out of cigarettes, but we never forgot the field pattern of Waycross, Georgia.

Armed Forces Day, 1958, there was to be a big air show at Pensacola. Four students and an instructor from Glynco took a ZSG-4 blimp to fly around the airshow and to make a downwind run in front of the crowd with a dramatic nose-high pull-up at the end. We arrived the day before and attached to a mobile mast on the old seaplane field below Admirals Row at NAS Mainside. The cadets stayed aboard with good food and good bunks. The daughters of officers that lived in houses on Admirals Row visited we cadets. The instructor visited with a friend of his in town. The airshow went well and we headed back to Glynco at dusk. After takeoff we flew through a rain shower that only lasted a few minutes. Then we were out of the rain into clear air. The instructor had made arrangements to fly over his friend's house. He decided to descend from 1,000 feet to 100 feet. We were of course heavy on takeoff; we had also picked up the weight of the rainwater on the bag. We also had developed negative superheat by the evaporation of water. Combining these factors made our leveling off at 100 feet difficult. With full power and nose high we attempted to climb. The aft docking lines dragged some power lines, sparks flew and no one, but us, ever knew what caused the power outage over half the city of Pensacola.

That same flight continued and a head wind had us in its grip. After a time we lost an engine due to a massive hydraulic leak. To get 10 knots ground speed, we dropped to treetop level. All radio navigation was lost and we started following a road map. I seemed to be the one with the road map. The railroad track that I was following ended at a sawmill in the middle of nowhere and we had no idea where we were. The lights of a small town gave us an idea; we would find the water tower and shine the landing light on it. IT WORKED! I thought I would never forget the name of that little town in Georgia, but I can't recall it just now. We set a course from there to Glynco.

The next week I received a great honor at a ceremony in that big hangar; my flight-training class of young officers and cadets received our Wings of Gold. For we cadets,

it was a special honor; we were commissioned as officers of the United States Naval Reserve. As the Admiral was pinning on my wings, he asked if I had met his daughter the previous weekend. I was certainly glad conversation was all that was exchanged with those girls who had come down to visit the pressure watch.



After completion of CIC School at Glynco, I was assigned to ZWI at Lakehurst, NJ. As new Naval Aviators, the welcome that we received was beautiful. The excitement of learning the ZPG-2 brought a real pride, we had arrived. We were flying operational missions in this wonderful aircraft and we were flying with the most skillful pilots of all times, Clem Williams, Lundi Moore and Dick Widdicombe had knowledge and skills that were shared willingly with us young pilots; we felt honored.

One of our duties as pilots was to act as supervisors of the ground crew for landing and takeoff. A gigantic snowstorm had come upon Lakehurst and we had one ship still outside on the circle. A strong crosswind prevented its getting into the hangar. The decision was made to fly it out to prevent collapse. There was a Lt. Commander who was the Command Duty Officer and he decided he needed to be someplace else. He instructed me to launch the ship piloted by the most skilled, Lundi Moore. The snow was falling in large flakes and a great amount was already on the ground and atop the ship. I gave Lundi the 'power up' signal and as soon as he started to move, I gave the signal to cut loose 'the mules'. I had never imagined the blur of snow that would be generated by those big engines. Swirling white was all that went by. Then to my great surprise, under the tail of the heavy airship, in the midst of that white cloud of snow, came a Model A Ford. No doubt that was our skipper, Cdr. Charles Mills. He loved flying blimps, free balloons and driving Model A Fords. I hope that soon I can read an

article written by Ross Wood about that flight; all night long, hanging on the propellers, at 45° noseup, with a snowdrift on the tail. We loaded aboard an R-4-D and flew to Cherry Point, N.C. to receive that flight. We found that to train Marines to pull on the landing lines, is much easier than training them to ease the pull as the nose neared the ground.

After a change of command, our new skipper, Clem Williams, conducted my checkride as Patrol Airship Commander. My instruction was to conduct the operational flight as if I were commander of the ship. I felt confident as the skilled and able Dick Widdicome skippered my crew 103. He had schooled me on all the systems and the example of his leadership of the crew gave me skills that could be gained no other way. Our mission was to transport and serve as a platform for a crew of photographers to record the surface parts of the sea trials of the new nuclear submarine "Patrick Henry". Our instructions were to hold 1/4 mile east of where the sub was to make a highspeed surfacing maneuver. The event was to occur at 0800. We arrived ahead of our designated rendezvous point around midnight. There was a 600-foot overcast and the wind at approximately 1,200 feet gave us the capacity to hover into the wind in a very relaxed state. We noticed on the radar a surface ship that was north of us moving on a course of 180° at 12 knots and then it would stop for 20 minutes, then 180°, 12 knots, stop and so on. The same pattern went all night. At dawn, we worked our way easily toward the erratically moving ship. We stayed in the clouds until we were exactly on top of him. I was in the left seat and Cmdr. Williams was in the right seat. When we dropped out of the clouds we were shocked at the scene. The ship was dead in the water and all manner of gear was tethered out in the water. Immediately we recognized it to be a spy ship and the things tethered in the water were listening devices; listening for the new nuclear sub. I got on the speaker and called for the photographers who were in the upper deck galley eating breakfast, to record the action. Immediately, a man on the spy ship came out of the pilothouse and ran to the bow of the ship. He reached down and pulled up what appeared to be a hatch and from it unfolded a big gun. He swung it around and we then saw a projectile cross in front of the blimp. There was no sound at first, then came a massive boom and the whole ship shook. The concussion was so intense that the helium pressure relief valve popped. I immediately turned downwind and Cmdr. Williams got on the radio to the 'On Scene Commander' of the test. The call sign of the blimp in that operation was

Alpha 62. Cmdr. Williams in his call to the On Scene Commander called out "this is Zero Zero Alpha 62. We have been fired upon from a ship"; and gave our location. The OSC called in two destroyers and instructed them to make flank speed and pull up close aboard making smoke. The destroyers came in within 50 feet on each side. The crews were at General Quarters in the gun tubs and they escorted the "Russian Fishing Trawler" out of the area. As the destroyers came in, we became very brave and joined in at 100 feet overhead. The next day in the Security Counsel of the United Nations, was scheduled a debate called by the Russians who were intending to make a complaint about US Navy P-2 V's making harassing flights over Russian fishing trawlers. The Russians abruptly canceled the scheduled debate. The Cold War was driving every part of American life.

After the Russian trawler was dealt with, it was back to business. We took up our station and had the cameras rolling toward a blank space in the ocean. Suddenly, surging out of the depths, the submarine came up amidst a torrent of white foam and water. The bow of the sub was nearly 40° up. The power involved was apparent. It slammed back down upon the water like an overweight man doing a belly flop off a diving board. I was told that Cdr. Williams complimented Dick Widdicome on my training. Yes, I had done a good job on my checkride and I was proud to join the ranks of those skilled pilots with which I had been flying.

On another occasion, we carried photographers to record the first firing of a Polaris missile from a submerged submarine. The surge of a giant air bubble and then the missile came up nearly horizontal. It fired and the way that it turned immediately to vertical was an amazing event for a farm boy from Kentucky to be privileged to see. There were many flights that had special events where new and exciting things were seen and felt. We all have our sea stories and two people on the same flight will have different tales to tell.

After a tour with the Blue Angels a pilot could say that he had flown with the best. After a tour with LTA any of us can say with equal authenticity, "I flew with the best". Those Navy wings were never given; they were earned. If they were polished, by being rubbed on a piece of neoprene-coated cotton, they shone especially bright. **Ω**

2012 NAA Reunion

Hotel DoubleTree by Hilton Tucson-Reid Park

May 2, 3 and 4, 2012

The landmark DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Tucson-Reid Park is conveniently located just four miles from downtown Tucson and minutes from all Tucson has to offer, including the University of Arizona, Tucson Desert golf and much more. If you want to take advantage of world-class shopping, award-winning dining, Tucson's vibrant nightlife and prized attractions, this will be a great place to stay.

Features and Highlights

- Cactus Rose Steakhouse with patio fireside dining serving breakfast, lunch, dinner and brunch, voted Best Sunday Brunch in Tucson
- Javelina Cantina serving contemporary Southwestern cuisine in a casual setting for lunch and dinner
- Fitness center with Precor® fitness equipment
- Three tennis courts
- Massage therapy provided by Peaceful Spirit
- Across the street from Reid Park, featuring 25 tennis courts, two LPGA golf courses, and Reid Park Zoo



Our headquarter hotel and spacious pool.



Breakfast buffet included with room.



Banquet and reception room.



The DoubleTree is conveniently located on 14 acres of lushly landscaped grounds. Directly across from Reid Park featuring two LPGA golf courses.



Large whirlpool located beside the spacious heated swimming pool.



The atrium lobby bar where our flights become longer and our attitude achieved becomes higher.

Please use the registration form enclosed with this issue for the banquet dinner choices.
If you are not staying at the DoubleTree, you must call the DoubleTree to make reservations for the dinner.

2012 NAA Reunion

AMARG- Davis Monthan , Pima Air and Space Museum Tour

Thursday May 3, 2012

On Thursday May 3 we will depart the DoubleTree in air conditioned coaches, for Davis–Monthan AFB. We will be given a guided tour of the aircraft storage area containing 4500 retired US aircraft and have a group photo taken in front of the last remaining ZPG-3W car. Following that we will go to the Pima Air and Space Museum, with over 300 aircraft on display. Prior to touring the museum we will pick up pre-ordered box lunches and drinks of your choice, from the Pima Air Flight Grill.



ZPG-3W Car at AMARG Storage



Main Entrance of Pima Museum



Out Door Display Area at Pima features the last production model B-36.



The Pima Air Flight Grill offers a relaxed view of aircraft in the air park.



The worlds only WW II PBM patrol bomber sea plane in the newest display hangar.



USAF Phantom II in Thunderbird markings.

Please use the registration form enclosed with this issue to register for the Davis-Monthan AFB & Pima Air & Space Museum Tour. Cost is \$48.00 per person.

Memories of ZP-911

by Francis A. MacIntire (trans. by Marc J. Frattasio)

ZP-911 was the USNR blimp patrol squadron based at NAS South Weymouth, Massachusetts, when I served there as a fulltime Navy Reserve stationkeeper between 1953 and 1956. I was a Second Class Aviation Machinist's Mate (reciprocating engines) or ADR2 at that time. Like me, ZP-911 was transferred to NAS South Weymouth in December 1953 when the Navy concluded operations at nearby NAS Squantum.

ZP-911 was an unusual unit from a number of perspectives. For one thing, ZP-911 had no blimps! It was the only blimp patrol squadron among the nearly two dozen Navy and Marine Air Reserve units in Reserve Air Wing 91 based at NAS South Weymouth. To this day I really do not understand why there were no blimps kept in the reserve aircraft pool at NAS South Weymouth for ZP-911 to use. The Naval Air Reserve Training Command shared the gigantic steel blimp hangar on the base, known as "Hangar One," with a regular Navy R&D command called the Naval Air Development Unit or "NADU" for short. NADU provided various types of aircraft to flight test radars and other military equipment developed by the Lincoln Laboratory, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and other defense contractors. NADU kept one or two ZPG-2 type blimps at NAS South Weymouth while I was there and despite the fact that all the aircraft in the reserve pool were also housed inside Hangar One in those days it seemed to me that there was still plenty of room for a ZSG-2 or ZSG-3-type blimp for ZP-911.

Like most other reserve units at NAS South Weymouth, the members of ZP-911 came on the base to drill one weekend per month. On Friday night before the scheduled ZP-911 drill weekend officially began, whenever the weather forecast for Saturday and Sunday was favorable, a ZP-911 flight crew would be flown down to NAS Lakehurst, New Jersey, on board an R5D operated by one of the four reserve transport squadrons (VR-911, VR-912, VR-913, and VR-914) based at NAS South Weymouth at that time. The ZP-911 personnel would spend the night at NAS Lakehurst and then fly a ZSG-2 or ZSG-3-type blimp borrowed from the Naval Air Reserve Training Unit at NAS Lakehurst up to NAS South Weymouth on Saturday. They would try to get it there by noon or so. After the blimp arrived, ZP-911 personnel would practice ground handling, connecting to and disconnecting from the mooring mast, docking and undocking from the

hangar, servicing and minor maintenance, etc., for the rest of the day. Of course, the reservists had to maintain a pressure watch for the blimp throughout Saturday night. On Sunday morning a different ZP-911 flight crew would fly the blimp back to NAS Lakehurst and be returned home by a reserve transport aircraft from NAS South Weymouth or another reserve base (NAS Lakehurst had no reserve VR squadrons until 1961).

When the members of ZP-911 went on active duty for their twoweek annual training cruise, which was normally done sometime during the summer, they typically went to NAS Lakehurst where blimps were always available for them to use. I don't recall ZP-911 ever performing an annual training cruise at NAS South Weymouth. I know that while they were at NAS Lakehurst for annual training ZP-911 flight crews would participate in training exercises with surface units and submarines and the squadron often sent detachments to NAS Glynco, Georgia, and NAS Weeksville, North Carolina. One summer I remember that ZP-911 sent a few blimp crews from NAS Lakehurst across the Caribbean Sea to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Navy Reserve aircraft squadrons tended to be very small in those days... ZP-911 did not have anything near the number of people required to launch, land, and ground-handle a blimp. Whenever a ZP-911 flight crew had a blimp up and was expected to land it at NAS South Weymouth, all the fulltime stationkeepers on the duty section were alerted and had to be prepared to come out to the airfield immediately to serve as a ground-handling crew when the blimp came in to land. In fact, when a ZP-911 crew called the control tower to report that they were inbound, a graypainted Navy school bus was sent around the base to grab anybody who happened to be on duty and bring them to the airfield!

I remember one very cold and windy Saturday afternoon we were expecting a ZP-911 flight crew to bring a blimp in from NAS Lakehurst. The Air Operations Department had the blimp crew fly around in circles at "Point Option", an offshore holding area off Nantasket Beach in Hull, Massachusetts, for several hours waiting for the winds to die down but they never did. Eventually, the men onboard the blimp became worried that they were going to run out of gas and end up getting blown out to sea! So, even though it was still very windy at NAS South Weymouth the order was given for the blimp to come in to land. When the ground handlers were being rounded up I was walking down Shea Memorial Drive, which was the main

road at NAS South Weymouth. The gray bus appeared and slowed down as it approached me. It came to a stop, the door opened, a Chief Petty Officer leaned out, and he shouted “MacIntire.” That’s all he needed to say! I climbed aboard the bus and after a few more stops to pick other people up we headed over to the airfield.



Everybody had a specific job to do when landing a blimp. On that day I was the “Lead Spiderman” in charge of a team of men who were supposed to grab the so-called “Spider Lines.” I always dreaded groundhandling blimps because I did not feel comfortable being so close to the huge blimp itself and, especially, to its spinning propellers! Perhaps the worst job of all, in my opinion, was being the “Top Man.” This was the person who had to climb up to the top of the pyramidal steel mobile mooring mast, grab the metal fitting that dangled from the nose of the blimp, and secure it to the locking mechanism at the top of the mast. That job took a lot of bravery and skill, since not only were you high up off the ground but you had the blimp’s nose coming right at you and you had to grab that dangling pendant, guide it into a socket, and then clamp it down. I’m glad that I never had to do it!

The ZP911 crew made a number of unsuccessful attempts to come in for a landing that windy afternoon. The blimp would come in over the airfield, trying to fly

into the wind, and then we’d all run out towards it under the direction of the Landing Officer, who shouted orders to us with a bullhorn. The blimp’s pilots were having a really bad time of it because of the strong winds, which kept gusting and changing direction. On the last approach we all somehow managed to grab the lines and hold the bucking blimp on the ground. As we were manhandling the blimp towards the mooring mast, it was hit by a powerful downdraft that forced its nose down onto the vertical pipe at the very tip of the mast. The impact with the mast broke several of the thin wooden battens that helped the blimp’s nose maintain its streamlined shape. Luckily, the rubberized cotton gasbag was not torn when it struck the mast... The main landing wheel on the bottom of the car was apparently damaged by one of the rough touchdowns as the pilots tried to land the blimp. The wheel would not freely caster like it was supposed to. As we were pulling the blimp towards the mooring mast for a second attempt at securing it, a very strong sustained gust of wind hit it on the port side. Since the main landing wheel would not caster, the wind caused to car to heel over at a sharp angle. The whirling propeller on the starboard side of the blimp, which was the side I was on, struck the ground bending the tips on all three blades. There were two stationkeepers onboard the blimp that day to augment the reserve crew, my friends ADR2 Ernie Kirby and ARM2 Eddie Murphy. Ernie was serving as the blimp’s mechanic and Eddie was serving as the radio operator. As soon as the starboard engine hit the ground, Ernie shut it down. We really had to fight with it but eventually we were able to bring the blimp under control. On the second attempt we were able to secure it to the mast and get it towed into Hangar One for repairs so it could be returned to the NARTU at NAS Lakehurst the following day. As I recall we had to replace the blimp’s starboard engine and propeller, replace several nose battens, and fix the main landing wheel under the car and the smaller landing wheel under the bottom fin. At one point during the landing operation the bottom fin had struck the ground with sufficient force to push the small wheel mounted under the fin right up inside the doped fabriccovered fin itself! After the blimp had been secured to the mooring mast, I looked up into the open doorway on the starboard side of the aft section of the car. Ernie was standing in the doorway waiting to disembark. When he looked down and saw me staring up at him he rolled his eyes upwards. Eddie had suffered terribly from airsickness as the pilots tried to land the blimp. He was standing in the back of the car right behind Ernie and when he climbed down to the ground he was white as a ghost. That landing was certainly one to remember! Ω
[See back inside cover photo]

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

The two airships being manufactured for the Army (LEMV) and the Air Force (Blue Devil 2) are progressing towards flight status. The Blue Devil 2 envelope was inflated with helium (below) in October.



A net was not used to control the inflation. Instead, lines were bridled to the envelope and weighted. Component parts such as fins and cars are under construction.

Recent information that revealed more details concerning the *Blue Devil 2* has been released. The 370 ft. nonrigid airship will have two cars attached at the bottom of the envelope. The forward one will provide a 1,610 cu. ft. area for payloads and flight controls for either manned or unmanned flight.



Payload installation can be done without modification of the airframe. Payloads will be packaged and delivered to the airship by ground vehicles and installed in 4 hours.

Payload options will include a communications pallet, a GMTI radar pallet and wide-area earth observation or synthetic aperture radar, high definition motion video and a processing pallet. These systems will enable automatic sensor-to-sensor cueing, near real time tactical dissemination of fused ISR, available from onboard sensor data processing and full-motion video sensor control handoff. Two diesel engines driving propellers are located in the aft car. In addition, turbine engines and a maneuvering engine will be mounted on the envelope. An 80-knot dash speed will be available although normal mission flight at 20,000 ft. will be much

less. Endurance will vary between 72 and 216 hrs. depending on the payload weight. Unmanned flight, when it occurs, will be under the control of a local ground station. Nothing has been published concerning a ballast recovery system which will be required to compensate for the weight of fuel burned during the long period aloft.

The LEMV program includes manufacture of three airships. These will be similar in envelope volume to the Blue Devil 2, but total lift will include 40% static heaviness. Assembly of the hybrid airship is taking place at Lakehurst. A first flight date was planned for November, but delays may extend this date.

A hybrid aircraft also employing helium lift and aerodynamic lift is proposed by Solar Ship in Toronto, Canada. The aircraft would employ a delta-shaped hull plan form, on the top of which would be mounted solar panels. These would develop sufficient power for forward flight. A prototype, called Caracal, will be developed to carry one metric ton of cargo. According to the founder's claims, the aircraft would be capable of landing in very small areas which indicates that sufficient lift will be available and/or from vertical thrust to do this. It is expected that a late 2012 demonstration will be possible.

The Airship Ventures' Zeppelin, *Eureka*, has completed a six-month round trip, traveling more than 11,000 miles to the US East Coast and stopping at 23 cities.

Aeros, a California firm, has a contract from the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) to develop a demonstrator hybrid rigid airship named *Pelican*. It is now under construction. This has a lightweight lattice-girder structure and a rigid skin. The shape is chosen to provide better aerodynamic lift. Engines and fins are attached to the structure. Helium is compressed into lightweight tanks to decrease the lift and released to fill diaphragms to increase



lift. The *Pelican* will carry about a 2,000 lb. payload. The flight tests will include demonstrations of vertical takeoff and landing and show that transfer of gas and air can be done fast enough. Earlier experiments indicate that it is feasible. Future plans call for 60-ton payload prototype.



Hybrid Air Vehicles in London, one of the teams on the LEMV airship project, has contracted with Discovery Air Innovations to begin construction in 2012 of an airship capable of a payload of 50 tons. (Artist's conception above.) It will resemble the LEMV but be designed to meet various civil mission requirements. It will have a top speed of 100 kts. Cargo could be carried in a central bay or slung below the aircraft.

The HALE-D, high-altitude long-endurance airship built by Lockheed Martin, was launched from its Ohio base in September to attempt to reach 60,000 ft. The flight was terminated at 32,000 ft. due to a helium leak. It was recovered in Pennsylvania but damaged beyond repair. (See inside front cover for photos.)



A more successful aircraft was demonstrated by JP Aerospace in October when it achieved an altitude of 95,085 ft. This aircraft, named *Tandem*, consisted of two spherical balloons on either end of a 30 ft. carbon-fiber truss. Maneuvering was accomplished by two, six-foot propellers driving electric motors. Recovery consisted of releasing the balloons and inflating five parachutes.

- Norman Mayer

19th AIAA LTA Technology Conference co-located with Centennial of Naval Aviation Forum "100 Years Of Achievement and Progress" 22 SEP 2011, Virginia Beach, VA.

After opening remarks AIAA LTA TC Chairman **Curt Westerguard** kicked off the first tech session, in which Robert Mitchell of the Air Force Aeronautical Systems Center at Wright-Patterson AFB made a presentation on their study of using hybrid airships to haul cargo. Our own member **Dr. Rajkumar Pant** presented his University's design for a UAV airship mooring mast that includes drag-force measurement. Following lunch the session was chaired by Dr. Pant and started with Dr. Zang of the Shanghai Jiao Tong University, who gave a presentation on nonrigid airship equilibrium configuration. Next came Gordon Schimdt of Akron Lockheed Martin, whose paper discussed buoyancy gradients of superpressure airships. Dr. Pant presented on behalf of two colleagues; Sawan Suman of Texas A&M and Sunil Lakshmipathy of the German Aerospace Center. Next Prof. Shoji Maekawa of the Shizuoka Institute of Science and Technology discussed properties of envelope materials they had tested for small airships. Dr. Pant made three additional presentations on the behalf of student teams. The day's sessions was wound up with the presentation of Lee Brooke of Tensys from Bath, England, who discussed future developments in lifting body forms in LTA hulls.

Wednesday morning the regular LTA sessions were combined with the scientific ballooning folks. Three presentations concerning fabric studies were offered. Then came the surprise presentation of the team that won first place in the AIAA undergraduate heavy-lift airship design competition. First after lunch was a slide program covering the Hi Sentinel 80 airship program, whose disposable ships have repeatedly surpassed 60,000 ft. Anuj Kumar Gard from the Indian Institute of Technology in Kampur made two presentations on behalf of investigative teams including a method of optimizing solar cell installation size for high-altitude airships. His next talk covered their study of envelope permeability to model the performance of a high-altitude airship. James Noll of the Southwest Research Institute also discussed the leak rate of high altitude airships. Closing the Wednesday session was the Brazilian, Bruno de Azevedo, who spoke on the operation of a balloon network in lieu of expensive satellites. Bruno was from the Technological Institute of Aeronautics in Sao Jose Campos.

- Ed. attended Conf.

SHORT LINES

Navy, Marine Corps Tests Autonomous Zero-Power Bathythermograph Sensors

With an ultimate goal of producing simple, small, power-efficient data-harvesting nodes with variable buoyancy the Naval Research Laboratory Bioenergy and Biofabrication Section developed Zero Power Ballast Control (ZPBC) is a technology that relies on microbial energy harvesting developments to enable unsupervised underwater sensing with subsequent surfacing and reporting capabilities. The bacterial fuel source (inoculated-gas production vessel) was attached to the two ZPBC devices, which were then deployed. "Preliminary trials were successful in many ways," said Dr. Justin Biffinger. "The device surfaced and submerged periodically as designed via hydrogen gas produced from the microbial inoculum and growth medium, proving the device generated gas in sufficient quantity to produce buoyancy." Ω



On 11 June 2011, AIAA's Historic Sites Program designated the site of Thaddeus Lowe's balloon flight in 1861 on what is now the National Mall, Washington, DC. The ceremony included Civil War reenactors, including a portrayal of Thaddeus S.C. Lowe (in basket), in front of a replica of Lowe's balloon from 1861. Ω



AFP (5/25) reports, "Nearly one-third of airplane accidents worldwide occur on the ground due to poor runway designs or air traffic control miscues, the ICAO said Tuesday." [Ed. note: Not noted if airship data was folded into that study...?] Ω

"Cosmic Log" blog writes, "NASA is working with a little-known Oregon company, Near Space Corp., on a variety of trial balloons, ranging from suborbital near-spacecraft to a

probe that would float through the smoggy atmosphere of a Saturnian moon," Titan. (Also from internet) How many giant experimental spy blimps does the military need over Afghanistan, exactly? That's one of many questions the Senate Armed Services Committee is asking after an intramilitary battle has erupted over what many expect to be the future of aerial surveillance... Ω

Wired (11/2) "Autopia" blog writes that JP Aerospace is using "airships" to develop a private spacecraft. The company "sent an unmanned powered airship soaring 95,085 feet above Nevada last month, an altitude they claim is the record for a (remotely) piloted airship." This airship would then be used as a "launch platform for rockets or hypersonic aircraft sent into space." Paur noted the concept is not new... JP Aerospace hopes its relatively simple and inexpensive system could be a cost-effective way to put payloads into orbit."

The UK's Daily Telegraph (9/4, Gray) reported NASA "is developing the new generation of airships, which it believes will replace lorries, trains and ships as means of carrying freight." A prototype airship is currently scheduled to make a test flight next year. Ames Research Center Director Simon Worden said, "...we hope to fly at the end of next year..." Ω

Appointed Head of DARPA Gave Millions In Contracts To A Family Firm (excerpt from internet)

It took Regina E. Dugan nearly 15 years to rise through the ranks to become director of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA). But now her climb to the top has been endangered by a financial scandal... The Bush administration's DARPA director, Tony Tether, reportedly had strict policies when it came to fiscal accountability... One of the targets of the probe is airship builder Aeros, who counts Tony Tether as a member of its board of advisors. The irony here is that under Mr. Tether's rules that relationship would likely have precluded Aeros from the contract, but Mr. Tether appears to be happily taking advantage of the new rules, now that he's gone..." Ω

Flight International (7/20, Gubisch) reported, "Airbus has partnered Parker Aerospace to develop a hydrogen-based replacement system for the auxiliary power unit..."

Aerospace Daily and Defense Report (8/4, Norris) reported, "ULA and PWR are developing short- and longer-term solutions to prevent the cloud of burning hydrogen that envelopes the base of the Delta IV Heavy during liftoff." Even though the article noted this is a "harmless side effect of the standard launch procedure, the burn-off phenomenon has garnered attention and initially will be solved by igniting one of the three RS-68s slightly earlier than the others..." Long-term changes could involve "alternate chill-down methods using cooled helium..." Meanwhile, Gasworld reports the world is again dealing with a shortage of helium. Ω



Government's US \$15M Blimp For Sale (Nalinee Seelal)

The Ministry of Finance has placed on the open market an advertisement for the sale of the US \$15 million blimp, which has been grounded at Camp Cumuto since September last year... the implementation committee set up to restructure the Special Anti-Crime Unit of Trinidad and Tobago (SAUTT), and to dispose as well as redistribute the unit's surveillance equipment and other resources, recommended to the Ministry of National Security two months ago that the blimp be put up for sale on the open market. Ω

Global Near Space Services and Bye Engineering Partners have completed phase two of their solar-electric high-altitude, long-endurance airship unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) dubbed Star2Flight. The UAV is being developed as an intelligence and surveillance platform. The "lighter-than-air" ship includes a "recoverable solar electric lower-stage flying vehicle (see rendering at right) The unique GNSS "StarLight" LTA system is predicted to persist on station against prevailing winds at very high altitudes for four months for a fraction of the cost of a satellite. Solar electric energy provides the necessary power for all systems including both motors for station-keeping and customer surveillance payloads. Past efforts—including high-altitude airships and cigar-shaped blimps—have either failed, are cost-prohibitive, require too much infrastructure or are stuck in long development cycles. Ω



MEDIA WATCH

The September 2011 issue of AEROSPACE AMERICA has its cover and many interior pages & ads devoted to the Nav Av Centennial. Not surprisingly there is scant mention and no illustrations of the LTA segment of the history. Readers see the Battle of the Atlantic involved various Navy airplanes opposing U-boats. One thing is surprising, the candid discussion of the safety record: "Between 1947, when we got our first jets, and 1988, the Navy lost about 13,000 aircraft to accidents and killed about 9,000 aviators. That's the price we paid."

In a C4ISR Journal article entitled "A Tale of Two Airships" Erik Schechter details, the emergence of two seemingly competitive, seemingly parallel long-endurance airship development efforts led by the Army on the one hand and the Air Force + Joint IED Defeat Organization (JIEDDO) on the other. While at first blush it might appear that DoD is wasting money on redundant programs, there is a compelling logic behind the decision to invest in two airship efforts.



Goodyear's coming retirement of blimps and their adoption of Zeppelins got more ink in periodicals. Airships Ventures/Farmers Zeppelin NT cross-country tour generated massive media attention, typically one story per city as local reporters were offered rides.

AEROSPACE AMERICA October 2011 ran an extensive six-page article by J.R. Wilson on current LTA efforts. It concludes, "Airships have a long and successful history with the military. Moreover, the new-generation, low and high altitude, tethered aerostats, balloons, and unmanned blimps has shown that LTA can address both immediate and long-term battlefield requirements. Yet the future remains uncertain."



The intriguing Canadian airship situation with its rapid developments also generated a considerable buzz. The Financial Times reported that Hybrid Air Vehicles, of the United Kingdom, announce a deal with Canada's Discovery Air to develop a new airship with the capability of carrying a 50-ton payload today. Sylogist Ltd. (TSX-V:SYZ), a provider of intellectual property solutions, announced in March that it has led a financing in Aviation Capital Enterprises, Inc. (ACE) with participation from Emirates Associated Business Group of the United Arab Emirates and other investors from Canada and the United States. Total amount of the financing was not disclosed.

Incidents with the *Hangar 1 Vodka* blimp, ranging from its unscheduled stop to its breakaway, fit many outlets' "man bites dog" definition of news. In many reports the Akron division of Lockheed-Martin tried to put a positive spin on their high-altitude airship prototype's unsuccessful test flight. (See inside front cover.) "U.S. Army's \$150m 'super-blimp' high-altitude airship in crash landing just hours after launch." "Combustible Fluid Leaks From Crashed Airship: Pennsylvania Stream Affected After Akron Prototype Crashes And Burns" screamed the headlines. Few details have been forthcoming but one message indicated first responder's understandable action to disconnect the batteries for safety purposes lead to the overheating of the then loadless solar panels, which ignited the fabric. Ω



L-M California was featured in other articles including coverage of Sky Tug, its Canadian customer, and "ISIS Poised To Become The Ultimate Eye In The Sky." Ω



History Chair **Al Robbins** noted this page in *Air & Space*, "Wonderful insight - Damaging winds cause damage. (So can sleet, hail, and volcanic ash.) As they learned at this year's Fun & Sun, high winds can and will destroy airplanes, houses, outhouses, trailers, trees, and anything else that is exposed to the full brunt of strong winds. Such losses are accepted as Acts of God; only airships are faulted when they're torn loose in a storm. Even though there has been vast improvement in weather forecasting since the 1930's, we continue to expect a nose-mounted airship to instantaneously follow a rapidly shifting wind." Ω

NASA Issues Awards For Green Flight Challenge

The Los Angeles Times (10/4, Hennigan) "Technology" blog reports NASA awarded \$1.35 million to Pipistrel-USA.com as part of the Comparative Aircraft Flight Efficiency (CAFE) Green Flight Challenge. Teams were required to "fly 200 miles in less than two hours and use less than one gallon of fuel per occupant, or the equivalent in electricity." The article notes Pipistrel and the second place team eGenius doubled the fuel efficiency requirement. NASA "said that the \$1.35 million award was the largest in aviation history." Parabolic Arc (10/4, Messier) notes Joe Parrish, NASA acting chief technologist, said, "Today we've shown that electric aircraft have moved beyond science fiction and are now in the realm of practice." Meanwhile, eGenius also won the quietest aircraft competition. Ω

Hot Air and Pipe Dreams:

The Tale Of Britain's Last
Two Great Rigid Airships

by Ces Mowthorpe

With original artwork

by Geoff Pleasance

A review by C. P. Hall II



The author, Ces Mowthorpe, having made previous contributions to lighter-than-air history, passed away in the spring of 2008 having completed the final draft of this book. Apparently there remained final details to be attended to for in 2011 the finished work is offered as a limited edition, softbound, (A.4 in the UK) 8 x 11 volume of just over 200 numbered pages. The first five chapters are the requisite origins of lighter-than-air (Montgolfier?, but of course!) quickly moving to early rigid airship development in Germany, France, and the United Kingdom, ending with R38. These preliminaries taken care of; the title topic is addressed.

Unlike many histories, the following chapters are not organized in strict chronological order. This allowed the author the advantage of covering a sub-topic in considerable detail over a period of development. While this often results in a readable, informative text; the reader doubling back to confirm a detail may learn that a passage out of order is a passage hard to find.

This central text contains most of the main points found in the major works on topic which preceded it. Some points are better dealt with than others. This analysis of the R100's gasbag problems seems spot on; R101's gasbag problems are almost right there as well. The analysis of both ships outer covers is less detailed as are the discussions of the frameworks of both hulls.

As is often the case, there are a few errors of fact which will amuse the knowledgeable reader. More bothersome are the inclusion of certain myths that seem indestructible. The one that will grate the hardest, upon the eye of the German reader and Americans familiar with Dr. Karl Arnstein's work, is repeated several times.

The photos are interesting and useful but not reproduced to the highest standard of clarity seen in other 21st century books. While most are familiar to the knowledgeable reader, several caught my eye as unique and three are mentioned for cause.

Page 65: remarkable photograph of the interior of the hull of R100 showing one of the huge gasbags fitted into

place. Passing centrally through this gasbag is the central girder, which went from nose to tail, a unique Barnes-Wallis feature of this airship. There is no inflated gasbag; however, at least two can be seen, deflated, installed and "hammock-bound" around the central girder. The corridor and the suspension system between central girder and corridor are visible as well.

Page 76: The starboard promenade deck of R100 prior to being partitioned-off from the framework. Looking aft we see the frame including the interior framework of the fins. Note that, when this photo was taken, the central girder has not been installed. The corridor is not installed.

Page 167: ten-foot scale model of the Airship Guarantee Co's (Vickers) proposed R105. made by Mr G. Brevitt. After 82 years of obscurity, new information about Burney's proposed Elliptical Airship is revealed in this volume.

Documentation is sparse, (almost non-existent) but several ex-airshipmen from Howden have related to the writer that plans were well advanced for costing to be undertaken regarding two huge new rigids based upon R100. The word "huge" is as it was described to the writer. Logically these projects must have been accepted by the Air Ministry, because Messrs. Vickers designated them R104 and R105.

I have to question some of this until further evidence is found. Barnes Wallis declared that he would have nothing to do with Burney's Elliptical Airship scheme dated in 1929. According to Masfield, R102 and R103 were designations for the next two ships, based upon R101 and to be built at Cardington, dated from the end of August 1930. I have never seen R104 and R105 designations. Could they post date the crash of R101 in the early period when it was remembered that two ships were built so if one crashed, all would not be lost? Is there any documentation at Kew, at Vickers, in the Mowthorpe papers? It is an avenue open for further research.

I like the book. I am pleased to add it to my collection. I hope that someone with the cash to spare will obtain copies for The Lighter-Than-Air Society collection, the Akron Public Library collection, and the University of Akron collection; it is that good.

Cash to spare is the fly in the ointment. The price is £15 (UK) plus postage to the USA is £8.50 additional. Copies can be ordered by e-mail from mandy.walters@walters.co.uk For we traditionalists, orders may be mailed to Mandy Walters, The Hunmanby Press, 166 Thorpe Road, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire PE3 6JJ, United Kingdom. Phone +44 1733 347815. Checks should be made paid to the order of A. Walters. Ω

HISTORY

A Correspondence of Forty-Two Years

By William W. Walker

My father, Hepburn Walker, Jr. had given me some of his old Rosendahl letters when I moved to Florida. I had known the Admiral when we lived in Toms River. I would visit with him often, but usually it was to spend time with wife Jean and aide Washington, while Dad and he discussed LTA or I would crab from his dock. Many times we would stop in by boat and the Admiral would sometimes help us tie-up after he took a ride. It's fascinating to me how long 'Hep' and Rosendahl maintained a relationship - going back to 1935, when Dad first wrote him as a 17 year old student at Choate prep school (about when this photo was taken), until the Admiral's death in 1977.



29 AUG 1935

To: Hepburn Walker, Brookline, Mass.

Dear Sir:

I appreciate your recent letter on the subject of airships and I am glad to know that there are others who agree with me as to the value of lighter-than-air craft. In my opinion you have summed up the situation as to the utility of airships in a very clear way.

I am now at work on an article of a general nature trying to cover the broad subject of airships, for popular consumption. Of course it is very difficult to place such an article these days, but I am hopeful of laying some of the real facts before the public. With many thanks for your interest in the matter, I am

Very sincerely yours,

C. E. Rosendahl, Commander, U. S. Navy

Two years later Hep wrote Rosendahl to alert him to a disparaging letter published in the Boston Herald, which the Commander then responded to, with carbon copy to Hep:

U.S. NAVAL AIR STATION Lakehurst, N. J.

14 MAY 1938 To: The Editor, The Boston Herald:

My attention has just been called to a rebuttal of my earlier letter on the subject of airships, published in a recent edition of your paper under the title of "Zeppelin Mortality," prepared by Dr. George B. Cutts... There is no doubt at all in my mind but that Mr. Cutts is sincere in believing the figures and facts that he has put forth... Whether Mr. Cutts' information comes only from his

recollections or from some other source, I can only say that they are inaccurate to a considerable extent.

My statement in regard to the safety record of commercial lighter-than-air craft is that up to the time of the loss of the *Hindenburg* by fire there had been carried in commercial airships 354,265 passengers without as much as a scratch to a single one. Considering the size and number of airships engaged in commercial operations, this record is indisputably excellent, and actually perfect. If the record has been unimpressive as Mr. Cutts would infer, it must be because there were so few airships in operation; but there is no other form of transportation that can show a comparable record, and hence it must be Mr. Cutts' opinion that all forms of transportation have unimpressive records.

If Mr. Cutts wishes to criticize the operation of the very first passenger airships because they flew in only favorable weather, then he must have a very poor opinion also of early commercial airplanes. I trust he is also aware that even today the commercial airplanes are realizing that there is still weather which is not only unfavorable but even dangerous to their operations. That Mr. Cutts' knowledge of the situation is faulty is evidenced by his lack of recollection of the small post-war airship *Bodensee* which operated very successfully for the few months before the Allies seized it, even though it was a private ship... When Mr. Cutts insists that only 33,000 passengers were carried in perfect safety in rigid airships in the twenty-four year period following 1914, he is definitely in error for he has forgotten some 18,000 carried by the few commercial airships operating after the war, bringing the total number of passengers carried by commercial rigid airships, in perfect safety, up to the time of the *Hindenburg* loss, to 51,837. Up to the end of 1937, the Goodyear commercial helium-filled blimps had carried 301,426 passengers with a perfect safety record, and with the only loss of life being three crew members lost through "ground" accidents.

It may surprise Mr. Cutts to learn that in airplane operation, now an accepted form of travel, in figures taken from metropolitan newspapers in the year 1936 in two out of every three airplane crashes, the loss of the craft and all on board was complete. One does not have to be a pessimist to predict that as soon as airplanes can carry the same number of persons as airships, we can standby for and realize loss of life in a single airplane accident just as great as any that has occurred in airship history.



Rosendahl (right) with Zep Captain Hans Von Shiller during a visit to Germany

Mr. Cutts refers to an occasion when he says the *Graf Zeppelin* was “nearly lost over France,” when three of its five motors cut out. There is a much better story than that, if such an event that he mentions really occurred. In starting across the North Atlantic westward in 1929, four of the *Graf Zeppelin*’s motors, failed, from causes since completely eradicated, and nevertheless the ship returned safely and landed without as much as a scratch to itself or any passenger. Airship proponents are only too happy to have Mr. Cutts select such examples, for they reveal the inherent safety of the airship.

Mr. Cutts joins in the common practice the airship critics have of merely sighting the airship casualties without to the slightest degree trying to indicate the reason for such accidents. Does Mr. Cutts condemn trans-continental airplane services because one of our latest planes flew into a mountain with a 100 percent loss of life, or because a commercial flying boat making an emergency landing at sea recently, sank very shortly thereafter? Does he condemn the oceanic flying-boat in general because the late Captain Music and his entire crew were mysteriously lost in the Pacific? After all, the airship has not had the benefit of near the development that the airplane has had, and I trust Mr. Cutts does not believe there is any royal road to success in any new endeavor... I have recently spent a great deal of my otherwise leisure time putting out in book form the answers to the very criticisms that Mr. Cutts has made of airships... The title of the book is “What About The Airship?” and it is published by Charles Scribner’s Sons. Very truly,
C. E. Rosendahl

30 AUG 1940 Dear Commander Rosendahl:

Several times, previously, you have been kind enough to answer my letters and I hope I am not imposing too much on your good nature to ask you a few questions again. The first question I should like to ask is just how many non-rigids have been authorized under the recent naval expansion acts? I have been carefully perusing newspapers and aeronautical magazine but without much enlightenment. They vary from fourteen to forty-eight non-rigids authorized. Another question I should like to ask is how many have been appropriated for, and also if appropriations for the previously authorized rigid have materialized. Thirdly, I should like to know if any new lighter-than-air bases are planned for construction or recommissioning and if so, where? Finally I should like to know if it is possible to take lighter-than-air training for the naval reserve. I should like very much to get into the lighter-than- air branch of the Bureau of Aeronautics in the Navy, but I am not sure what way I should best do this. Sincerely yours, Hepburn Walker Jr.

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY, OFFICE OF THE ASST. SECRETARY, WASHINGTON 4 SEP 1940

My Dear Mr. Walker:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of August 30th... Naval legislation for the expansion of the Navy includes authorization for 48 non-rigid airships. In earlier bills there were various numbers mentioned but the final figure so far is 43. However, I suppose you realize the enormous difference between authorization and appropriation. Up until recently there was authorization for but two blimps. However, in the recent five-billion-dollar Defense Bill the Senate was reported to have included contract authorization for another million dollars which will enable purchase of about four more patrol type non-rigids. If the powers-that-be wish, however, it is possible to order additional ships since money that has been appropriated for “airplanes” may be expended for “non-rigid airships.” The 1938 Naval Expansion Bill included authorization for a three million cubic feet training rigid airship. However, no appropriation is at the present moment available for beginning construction of this ship... it is of course perfectly obvious that if we acquire the 48 blimps or any considerable part of this number there will be required additional bases and facilities for certainly we could not operate them all from Lakehurst. However, there has been no announcement of any action along the line of obtaining additional blimp bases or facilities.

Just recently the Navy Department authorized either eight or ten naval aviation cadets for lighter-than-air. In view of the great interest in airships in that community, all of this particular group was selected from the 9th

Naval District which includes the city of Akron. I believe these lads will begin their training at Lakehurst on about 1 October. So far there is nothing definite in the wind about additional aviation cadets for lighter-than-air but again obviously we shall need more personnel if we are going to have considerably more airships. If I were you I would contact either personally or by mail, the office of the Commandant, 1st Naval District in Boston, Mass. The paper work for all reserve commissions must originate within the district of which the applicant is a resident. Even though there is no immediate prospect of another lighter-than-air cadet class, it might be advisable for you to get your application in for such time as another class is started. I shall be very much interested in learning of the progress you make in this regard.

One of the Navy's old wartime airship pilots who has maintained continuous contact with the organization as a naval reserve officer lives in Boston. He is Lieut. Commander Carl E. Shumway and his address is 453 Washington Street. I am not certain just where Duxbury is located with reference to Boston but should you have an opportunity, I am sure you would find it of interest to talk with Shumway about the general proposition.

Very sincerely, C. E. Rosendahl, CDR, USN

Hep's stepdad William McCarthy forwarded Hep's mail with this note just after Hep had started boot camp:

40 WATER STREET BOSTON 22 SEP 1941

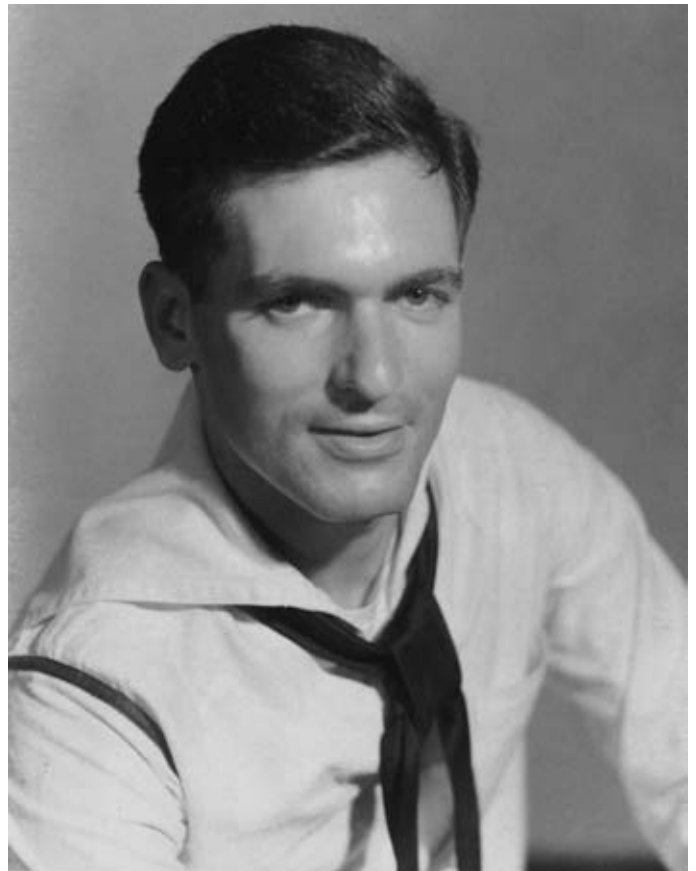
Dear Hep:

I enclose the letter from Rosendahl, which I think you wanted, together with the only other mail I found from the Navy Department. I have just received a letter from Lt. Commander Stonemetz to whom I wrote in accordance with the duplicate letter I showed you at luncheon yesterday. He says it is quite probable that you will be ordered to the Naval Air Station at Lakehurst at the conclusion of your training period. He mentions that since you attended Bowdoin for four years, you might qualify for an Aviation Cadet for lighter-than-air training and get a reserve officer's commission, subject to passing a more rigid physical examination. I am going to acknowledge Commander Stonemetz' letter today and ask for more details as to how you might qualify as an Aviation Cadet for lighter-than-air training. It was grand to see you, and we all enjoyed having a chance to be with you over the week end. The only thing that occurred to me that might be helpful to you would be to cut out the swearing and cussing. Naturally those words jump to anyone's lips whenever they think their will is being thwarted or some

plan is not going to be able to be accomplished. I am sure you would agree that you neither accomplish your will nor change the plans as a result of swearing. Therefore, if it is useless, better cut it out and it is much nicer for other people when you do.

Remember that we all are thinking of you and want your progress and development and growth to bring you to the place where you will be most useful and therefore most happy. You seem to have gotten away to a very good start, and the opportunities for you to serve your country and increase your own learning certainly looks good. Keep doing your best and I am sure things will work out as well as we could hope for in the long run.

Yours, "Uncle" Bill



Hep was assigned Lakehurst. First job: time keeper, noting aloft time of the TC-14, L-1, and other airships. Rising to Airship Rigger First Class, he was crew captain for the K-91 and M-1, and flew with Rosendahl on occasion, when they would discuss the hopeful future of the rigid airship. On 9 JUL 45 Hep wrote to Com. Atlantic Fleet from the Boston Station requesting LTA Duty:

...My present rating is Airship Rigger First Class. I am especially anxious to remain in LTA because of my lifelong interest in airships. It is my desire to make a career in the

rigid airships commercial field after the war, in preparation for which I have read and studied virtually every book and article obtainable on rigid airships. During the war, my experience has included L, G, TC, K and M-class non-rigid airships and I have well over 1,000 hours flight time in K ships on anti-sub patrol and convoy from December 1941 to May 1943. Subsequently I spent ten months on duty in the Airship Training Division and nine additional months in the Airship Experimental Division as a leading rigger. I have just returned from six months LTA duty in the South Atlantic.

The Navy made Hep a civilian instead. Returning to college, Hep immediately wrote to Rosendahl, who replied:

NAVAL AIRSHIP TRAINING AND EXPERIMENTAL
COMMAND U. S. NAVAL AIR STATION LAKEHURST.
N. J. 20 NOV 1945

To: Hepburn Walker, Bowdoin College, Brunswick, ME
Dear Walker:

Thanks very much indeed for your recent letter containing the clipping about the Russian dirigible flight. We had already seen it, but I appreciate your thoughtfulness and I hope you will continue to keep in touch with me on such matters.

Under separate cover, I am sending you copies of some airship material that may be of interest to you. I agree that it is most probable that the Russian dirigible mentioned is a semi-rigid type for we do know that at one time the Italian designer Nobile had a contract with the Russians and helped them with semi-rigid construction. I particularly remember that one of the ships flew into a mountain in the fog.

The situation is too lengthy to describe by letter, but I have hopes that you will see some activity in the big airship line in this country before too long. Also, it looks as though commercial blimp operations may soon start up on a scale much larger than anything we have seen in the past. This demobilization is certainly a tough period for those of us remaining in LTA. We certainly miss all you chaps tremendously and you are going to be very difficult to replace. While I regret that you did not get pilot training while you were with us, nevertheless I am sure you will agree that you did have a lot of excellent airship experience. Also, you more than pulled your weight in the boat and I am certainly appreciative of your contributions. I hope you do not find it too difficult to get back to your studies again. With best wishes to Mrs. Walker and yourself, I am,

C. E. Rosendahl

Trying to find the answers to certain questions, including what happened to the rigids after hostilities began, Hep wrote to Hugo Eckener, who replied via Fritz Koeller:

Friedrichshafen, June 1, 1946

Dear Mr. Walker:

Your kind letter from April of this year to Dr. Hugo Eckener, containing various questions concerning the fate of our airships has been handed to us to be answered. Your interest in Zeppelin-aeronautics has very much pleased us and we are therefore glad to answer your questions as follows: LZ 127 - last trip, May 1937 (South America trip and transfer to Frankford on the Main)

LZ 130 - last trip, August 1939

LZ 131 - at the beginning of the war was still in construction, same size as LZ 130, that is to say 200,000 cbm gas content. Between Germany and Russia, there has at one time existed a regular airship connection. LZ-127 in September undertook a visiting trip to Moscow and in July 1931, it landed for a few hours in Leningrad on the occasion its famous trip to the North Pole region.



At the outbreak of the war, the two airships, LZ 127 and LZ 130, were stationed in their halls in Frankford on Main. LZ 127 was taken out of commission since May 1937 for the purpose of overhauling or for a possible change to the usage of helium. LZ 130 was emptied at the beginning of the war, that is to say the hydrogen was removed from the gas cells. LZ 127 and LZ 130 were dismantled in the spring of 1940 (at the order of the Air-Ministry), having been lying unharmed in their halls up to that time. The use of the airships in war action had not been intended and it also had not occurred. LZ 131 was still in its initial stage of composition at the airship yard in Friedrichshafen. At the beginning of the war, the construction was discontinued.

We hope to have answered your questions in the above statements. Dr. Eckener wants to express his thanks to you for your good wishes cordially and sends his kind regards in turn. With best wishes to you, we are

Sincerely yours,

Luftschiffbau Zeppelin (Airship construction firm Zeppelin Limited) Ltd.

Signed: H. Eckener W. Hurtle

NATIONAL AIR TRANSPORT COORDINATING
COMMITTEE 606 WEYLIN BLDG. NEW YORK

16 May 1961

Hep-

Thanks very much. I have just received word that I am to appear before the House Appropriations Defense Subcommittee on 24 or 25 May. Regards CER

C. E. ROSENDAHL FLAG POINT, TOMS RIVER,
NEW JERSEY 27 May 1968

Dear Hep:

Thanks for your letter of the 25th which arrived this morning. In the same mail I had one from Prof. Morse who says he does not know for sure just who wrote the *ESQUIRE* article but it might have been Neil Koeningsberg who talked to Morse occasionally by phone. I have not had any word from Dale Topping on it ... With respect to the high mast, I will grant that a number of airships used it in one form or another, but that does not prove its superiority to the low mast. Anyone who has experienced rough air while at a high mast knows what I mean about the subject. Furthermore, even the best crew could not keep up with static changes on a calm hot day. No, I sincerely hope that when rigids are revived, no aim will try to resurrect the high mast. and this is one point I must bear down on in my coming book *SNAFU*.

I think you should most assuredly write *ESQUIRE* and point out the misplaced decimal point; such comments will get more attention coming from someone else than me. So please do it and send me a copy. If you like I will then send a copy to Morse, but he seems not to have caught the errant decimal.

Yes, I saw and read that *NavInst ASW* article and believe it to be a good current picture of the state of the art but I am going to check with some of my *ASW* friends as to what the Navy thinks about it. I too am looking forward to seeing the *WLTAS Bulletin* which will carry the *Goodyear Airship Study* story. I have not asked for a copy and Topping hasn't said anything to me about it. If you get a copy or any info on it please let me know. I will ask Don Woodward for a copy of his study.

There is so much poppycock which is appearing and has appeared on the airship subject that I have decided to include in my *SNAFU* a chapter headed *AIRSHIP ATROCITIES*, meaning not those done by airships but done against them. If you have a select list of some of the wild stuff such as the Fischer *NavInst* story, the *Airship Saga* in our Navy, and any others please pass them along so that my list will not overlook any glaring ones.

When will you be up this way? Our very best to Shirley and you. Sincerely, CER

21 SEP 1968 Dear Admiral:

Here are the answers to your questions on the *USS MACON*...

(a) The *MACON* was delivered to NAS Lakehurst on Saturday, June 24, 1933. Her nose cone was locked in the cup of the rail mooring mast at 0423. She had unmoored from the Akron mobile mast at 2021 on June 23rd. for the flight to Lakehurst.

(b) Lakehurst was the home base for the *MACON* until her departure for Sunnyvale on 12th of October, 1933... On the 6th of July, she made her first flight from Lakehurst at 2144 and her nose was locked in the cup on July 7th at 1954. Now for the item I am in doubt about. The New York Herald Tribune carried an item about her making a twelve hour training flight on July 8th and her 4 planes making 153 hook-ons. But, Dick Smith in his excerpted *MACON Log* makes no mention of this flight. I would have to personally examine her log at National Archives to determine if the July 8th flight did take place or if there was a typographical error on the date in the Tribune item. On the 10-19th July, she made her second (or 3rd) flight. She was scheduled to fly again on the 24-26th July, but this flight was cancelled. Again, she was scheduled to fly 31st of July to August 3rd, but this flight was also cancelled. I might mention that Dresel, who was skipper at the time, did not have the reputation of being a "gung-ho" commander. He seemed content to fly the ship merely once or twice a month. Wiley really flew the ship when he took over in 1934. Her third flight from Lakehurst (I am ignoring the possible flight of July 8th from here in) was August 30th to 31st. She made her 4th flight from Lakehurst on August 31st. Her 5th Lakehurst flight was Sept. 12th-13th. A scheduled flight for September 18th-20th was cancelled. Her 6th flight from Lakehurst was October 2nd-October 3rd. Her final and 7th flight from Lakehurst was her departure for Sunnyvale when she unmoored from the mobile mast at 1805 on October 12, 1933.

(c) She left Lakehurst at 1805 on October 12th, 1933 and moored at Sunnyvale on October 15th at 1622. The N.Y. Times stated that the flight took 70 hours and 17 minutes. But that figure may differ from the official flight log. The unmooring and mooring times I quote are from the ships log. The Times figures seem to jibe OK. (d) The *MACON* never visited Lakehurst after her October 12, 1933 trip to Sunnyvale. After the Caribbean exercises in April-May 1934 (not 1939), she returned directly to Sunnyvale from Opa-Locka. There had been talk of repairing the *MACON* at Lakehurst, but the idea was abandoned. Hope I can make it up the 18th. Sincerely, Hepburn Walker, Jr.

28 SEP 1968 Dear Hep:

Thanks very much for your prompt reply with the MACON info. It will help me piece out that chapter.

I noted the other day an item which says the Navy is going to celebrate next year the 50th anniversary of the first transatlantic air crossing, made by the NC-4 Navy flying boat in May 1919. As you know, the Navy blimp C-5 flew from Montauk to St. Johns, Newfoundland on 14-15 May 1919 and landed there to refuel for a transatlantic flight to Ireland. But on the afternoon of the 15th, a severe squall tore the C-5 from the hands of the ground crew who tried to jury-rig the mooring, and the blimp flew off to sea and was never again seen. Had there been better ground facilities, the C-5 might easily have been the first craft to fly the Atlantic. I wrote the Public Information office and suggested that they not overlook the C-5 and of course the R-34's round trip over the Atlantic in July, and also offered to write them up if PubInfo wished. I have not yet heard in reply, but in the event they do accept my offer I want to have full info available, as well as to straighten out some incorrect impressions. In this you may be able to help me.

In the October 1964 issue the WLTAS Bulletin, Hugh Allen has a story on the C-5 but he has some mistakes in it, and hasn't yet answered my letter about them -- if indeed he plans to answer at all. He says, for/example, that it was LTs Little and Peck who tried to pull the ripcord (which parted) whereas from another source it appears that Peck was NOT involved in this, but I can get no corroboration for either. Also, Hugh says that LT Little "reached for his knife" but had to jump out of the car. Little was subsequently lost in the R-38, but Peck lives in California. For reasons which I will explain to you when I see you, it is better that I myself not try to get this information out of Peck, but I feel sure he would answer a letter from you, a fellow WTLAS member, a former LTA man, and an airship historian. So if you don't mind, I'd appreciate your writing him, in your own language, something along the lines of the enclosed slip.

Jean and I are driving to Washington on 3 Oct. to attend a get-together of some of my *Minneapolis* shipmates... (*Follow-up letter*) When I wrote you on the 28th, I forgot to mention an interesting item I have picked up in starting a study of the C-5 flight in 1919. I assume you have a copy of John Toland's SHIPS IN THE SKY...you will note one labeled - "The C-5 arrives unexpectedly at St. John's, Newfoundland, on May 15, 1919. Below lie three rivals: the Navy seaplanes NC 1, NC-3, and NC-4." The photograph is credited to Goodyear.

There is something phony in this "photograph" either it is a composite or it was taken at some other time and at some other place. The NC boats did not go to St. John's but to Trepassey Bay, the northerly extremity of which is some 60 miles about south southwest of St. John's. Furthermore, this shot could not have been taken of the C-5 over Trepassey Bay, for the C-5 would have had to be over there on the morning of 15 May but Lt. Comdr. Emory Coil, in charge of the C-5 flight and on board from Montauk says in his report that the C-5 proceeded up to the northerly end of PLACENTIA BAY (to the westward of Trepassey Bay) and then headed for St. John's... kindest regards, CER

30 NOV 1968 Dear Adm. Peck,

For some time now I have been working on two books concerning airships. The first book is tentatively titled "rigid airships" and deals with the history of all 161 rigid airships built and flown in the world from 1897 through August 1939.

The second book deals with pressure airships and it is in connection with this work that I am writing you. While I realize that you were actively involved with both our non-rigid and rigid airship programs during your career in the Navy, it is specifically the non-rigid C-5 that I am concerned with in this letter.

You were an officer at Newfoundland attached to the C-5 attempt to cross the Atlantic in 1990. The ship tore away from the ground crew in a squall and drifted out to sea with the wind. Hugh Allen has written that you and Lieut. Little tried to pull the rip cord but that it parted in your hands, and that Lieut. Little then pulled out his knife and hoped to slash the envelope open. However, he had to jump out of the car instead, as you did.

This is a real "human interest" item, and I hope you will be willing to give me some more details of the whole flight, the riding-out at St. John's, the tearing away of the airship, etc. Were you a member of the flight crew, or in what capacity were you present? It is my understanding that towards the end of the flight near Ireland after most of the gasoline was consumed that provision had been made to use hydrogen from the envelope through the carburetors as an exhilarating role to extend the range of C-5. Was this feature ever tried during a test flight to your knowledge, or on the flight from Montauk? Also, I'd appreciate any other comments you might care to make for me on what you consider the chances of the C-5 to get across the Atlantic, etc. Can you tell me of any book or accurate account of this attempt by the C-5 to fly the Atlantic?

One other question on C-5: was the ship ever found at sea? One rumor has it that she was later found on the Atlantic, but I cannot find that substantiated. As one delves into airship history it becomes a problem to separate fact from fiction. I hope to have both my airship histories as factually accurate as is humanly possible so that they will be the best reference works available about their respective subjects. Enclosed please find a s.a.s.e. for your convenience.

Sincerely yours, Hepburn Walker Jr.

26 APR 1970 FLAG POINT, TOMS RIVER, NJ

Dear Hep:

I am glad to have your letter of the 23rd and thus to learn that you are still in there pitching. I do not subscribe to Armed Forces Management magazine but do see it occasionally when Pundy brings me a copy. I immediately got in touch with Pundy but he refuses to get excited about the items you mention, as apparently they have been repeated for years in the same summaries.

In any event, Pundy will write you his impressions. Also I hope he will tell you about the flurry down in Cape May where a fellow has announced that this summer he is going to build several advertising airships modeled on the *Graf Zeppelin*, believe it or not. He phoned me and asked me to attend a press conference several weeks ago, but I couldn't make it and he promised to send me his "press kit," which he has not done despite a follow-up letter to him. Several of his announced dimensions etc. for his ships do not add up, but we cannot get a chance to talk with him. So we shall see what we shall see, but none of us is excited about it. Last week I was out in Ohio and spent overnight with Karl Lange, in Akron. Goodyear was on strike, and Dale Topping was on Florida on his vacation, so I didn't get to talk to any of them. However, in the GAC spring edition of PROFILE magazine, Goodyear had a story about a proposed blimp transport service between cities using blimps landing on rooftops etc. Pundy is going to get some copies, so if you want one ask him. I won't give you my comments on the project until you have had a chance to form your own opinions. Incidentally, while in Akron I did learn that Hank Nettling is in Germany but what for? I am indeed looking forward to seeing you when you come up in June, to catch up on the scuttlebutt. Incidentally, Jimmy Johnson has just bought a "stud" bull for a hundred grand, and our State sales tax has gone up to 5%. Dick Deal died about a month ago from a massive heart attack and damage, and I had a week of helping his widow out. He is buried beside his first wife in Arizona. Personally, I have been concentrating on my Pearl Harbor

book and am making progress. I think it will be revealing. Let me hear from you and do plan to see me in June. Meanwhile Jean and I send our best to you both. Hope your golf is good. Sincerely, CER

19 AUG 1970 FLAG POINT TOMS RIVER, NJ

Dear Hep,

I am sorry we did not have more time together when you were up for your son's wedding but I hope that in October you will not be so rushed. Please let me know the approximate dates you will be in these parts. I am going to be in the Washington area 3-8 October for the Secnav Symposium for Retired Flag Officers and for some research at the archives etc. I recall your writing me that you knew of some mistakes in the French list of Zeppelins that I got hold of perhaps two years ago, and you said you would send me the corrections...Doug Robinson said he too would like to have them. Several years ago someone sent me a copy of the log of one of the rigids, that of the *MACON* I believe, and since for some reason I was not particularly interested at that time, you took the copy. Now I wish I had kept it, but I cannot remember what airship it was. If it was that of the *MACON*, when you get time I'd very much appreciate your looking through it to see if it contains any mention or entries pertaining to the spy basket or subcloud car, as I believe they called it, I imagine they entered any "flights" it made, who rode it, the time out, cable let out, etc. etc. and any comments as to its performance. I am stressing the value the spy basket might have been to any ZRCV we might have had out in the Pacific just prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor, but it is very difficult to find anything on the subject. I do have, of course, what RK Smith has in his book but that actually isn't too much.

I don't know if you heard about the six old blimp cars over near Red Lion that were to be sold. That night before the scheduled sale Mahalchik got the court to stop the sale. When Jimmy Johnson, Pundy, Gulsdorf and I went over there on the scheduled Sunday, the place was still locked up but Mahaichik himself let us in to look over the material. The blimp cars are in bad shape, and there is practically nothing else there in the airship line worth having. We still have not heard what the eventual outcome may be. Our summer up here continues to be a miserable one, generally very hot, high humidity, and lack of rain. Our best to you all and many thanks for any help you can give me.

Sincerely, CER

There are also letters pertaining to Hep's attempt to influence Kennedy about the importance of retaining ops at Lakehurst, which will be featured in the next TNB. Ω

BLACK BLIMP

James William Francis Kietl, 91, passed July 29, 2011. During World War II, Jim served in the U.S. Navy and was stationed in Lakehurst, New Jersey. He attended flight school at the University of North Carolina and later flew airships in the Atlantic theater. Following the war, Jim attended New York University and began a successful sales career at Gray Envelope Manufacturing Company. He was a fourth degree Knight of Columbus and a member of the Holy Name Society. Jim is survived by his wife of 67 years, Dorothea, and their 6 children many grand and great-grandchildren. Ω



Harley J. Pierce, 90, passed August 8, 2011. Harley was commissioned at Lakehurst NAS and married Dorothy in 1943. In WWII he served in ZP-42 at Maceio and Bahia, Brazil, and in ZP-33 at Tillamook, OR. In post war years, he served as pilot crew member aboard M-4 on a ferry flight from Santa Ana, CA, to Lakehurst NAS. He served in Airship Experimental Command as well as ZP-2, ZP-3, and other LTA squadrons. After HTA training in Pensacola, FL, and Hutchinson, KS, Harley flew P2Vs in VP-7 and Constellations in WWII. He was one of the BUWPS representatives to Goodyear Aircraft in Akron, Ohio, 1959-1962. Harley retired at Lakehurst in '64. He is survived by his wife, 3 children, 9 grandchildren, and 11 great-grandchildren. Ω



Leonard B. Pouliot of Arlington, Virginia passed August 25, 2011. He served in the U.S. Navy as an officer blimp pilot. During his training, he was stationed at the Naval Air Station Lakehurst. Leonard served in the North African Theater in 1944 and Southern France in 1944 and 1945. While stationed in French Morocco at Port Lyautey, he met Marguerite M. Dormieres. They were married on August 25, 1945. They returned to Lakehurst



and he was mustered out of full-time active duty in 1947, to pursue an active civilian life. He retired to Arlington where his wife still resides. Ω

Rocco Fred Iacobelli, 88, passed November 2, 2011. Fred graduated from Lebanon High School and was appointed to the United States Naval Academy, Class of 1946. While a Midshipman, Fred was the manager of the Fencing Team. His 20-year career included service aboard destroyers, serving as a lighter-than-air ("Blimp") pilot, weather reconnaissance, and flying seaplanes. In April 1947, the USS *Eaton* ported in Norfolk, Virginia, where a shipmate arranged a blind date and Fred met Doris Schmoele who would be his wife of 63 years. He retired from the Navy in 1965, and the family settled in Phoenix where Fred went to work for Air Research. Fred is survived by his wife Doris, sons, a daughter and grandchildren. Ω



Harry Titus once again shares some clippings from his vintage newsletter Poopy Bag Ballonet:

Bob Wilson, here in California, sent a card telling of Ashby Harper swimming the English Channel at 65 (oldest yet). Bob and others of Class XV think that this is "Bud" Harper who was a well-known Princeton man. I didn't see the article... "Chris" Christopher has another athletic story. He tells of Pete "Ace" Culbertson winning the boxing and wrestling championships for his weight and age this past July at Los Angeles. Atta boy, Ace. Hey! In the last newsletter I called Chris a horse rancher. He says he's a cattle rancher. Sorry, Chris. I wouldn't know the difference. They both have four legs. John Sciambra, formerly of ZP-21 and now an attorney in New Orleans, tells of a great time he and Benny King (Wasn't Benny OIC of the skeet/trap range at Boca Chica?) had at Benny's daughter's wedding in N.O. John also states that he remembers me at Caimanera with a dark-eyed lady friend who thought so much of me that she painted her fingernails with my name on them. All right, you guys. Who's been using my name? Jere Santry reminisced about old times in his letter. Jere was with ZP-21, serving as OIC at Isla de plus other assignments. He was also Flag Sec to CARDIV 17 and had a lot to do with those carrier landings back in January 1949. I believe his last LTA assignment was as CO of ZP-4. One funny incident he related was the establishing of a world's record for the 100 yard dash over a grass field when, somehow, a Torpex was substituted for a water-filled bomb and was dropped to hit the stone circle at the Isle of Pines landing field. Jere has flown in just about all of the airships the Navy has had as well as those old Army TCs. I flew in the TC 13 and 14 at Moffett Field. On the first flight, I spent nearly the entire time computing ground speed. I can't remember if I ever handled the controls. Ω

READY ROOM

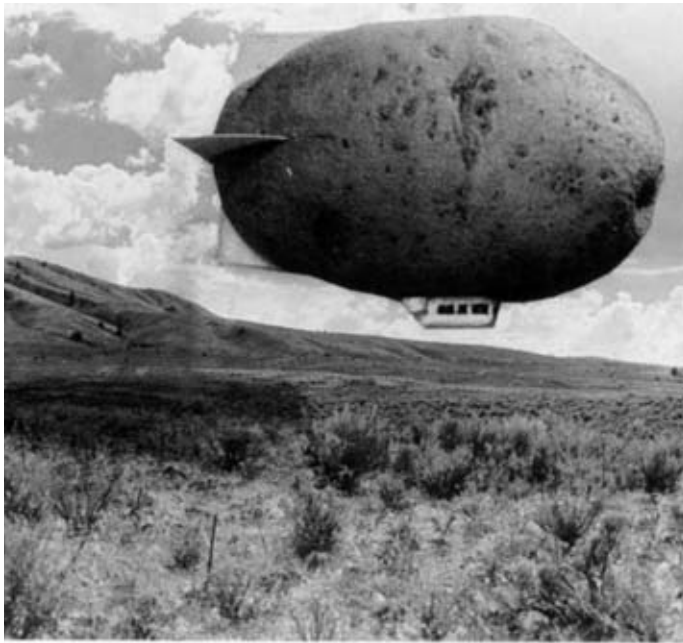
May 3-6 2012 NAA Reunion (See pages 18-19)

20th-23rd June 2012 9th International Airship Convention & Exhibition - Ashford, England



Since 1996 the International Airship Convention has moved locations between Bedford, Friedrichshafen (twice to each), Cambridge, Oxford and London. This year something different: The Ashford International Hotel in Ashford, Kent, is advantageously located in South Eastern England with a very modern station on the Eurostar high-speed railway line to Paris and Brussels, Notable attractions in this area are the ancient city of Canterbury and Leeds Castle. In addition there will be a model airship regatta featuring races and performance competitions for remotely controlled airships from all over Europe. Price depending on options will be approx. £200.

LIGHTER SIDE OF LTA



Idaho's Famous Spudyear Blimp

Where can we get "one blimp of a sandwich?" No joke – "The Zeppelin" – at The Pumpernickel restaurant and deli in Titusville, FL. ☺

Green Design Will Save the World
...The ship is built, filled with hydrogen, and launched. The engines burn hydrogen as fuel which propels the ship causing wind-powered generators to generate electricity which is used to break down water into hydrogen and oxygen. If water runs low, fly through some rain and pick up more. If hydrogen consumption exceeds production, just tie up in a windy spot and let the breeze turn the wind generator(s) until production catches up to consumption... ☺



Blimp Mobile Mooring Mast Type IV-A Expeditionary Type (1948 - 1962)

This 46,900 pound (with ballast) Temporary, Towable, Transportable Mast was in service with NADU in 1958 and used to dock ZPG-2 series airships. It was constructed with a steel alloy frame and had three orange colored, hollow outriggers containing enclosures designed to hold stabilization ballast obtained at the expeditionary sites. Each outrigger had a positional dual wheel assembly at their outer end with tow attachment. There was an electric winch and auxiliary gasoline driven electrical power generator mounted on one of the outriggers. A center vertical steel mast with circular platform near it's upper end and a mooring mechanism at the top was supported by three turn-buckle adjustable steel cables. There were also three steel cables with pulley systems for erecting and dismantling the mooring.



This photo of the Type IV-A portable mooring mast was taken sometime in 1958 at NAS South Weymouth outside the west end of Hangar One by Don Peterson, AT3 USN, a member of NADU. This fact sheet was supplied by Bill Sargent and John Yaney via Fred Morin. A rare one, this mast escaped Jim Shock's otherwise definitive book *AMERICAN AIRSHIP BASES & FACILITIES* and does not appear in any known Navy training film. Behind it in the background is a standard Type IV mast. The aircraft in the middle is a North American JB-45C Tornado (Serial Number 48-009) that had been bailed from the Air Force for use by General Electric at Schenectady to test jet engines. It was last used prior to arriving at South Weymouth to test GE's J79 engine. The aircraft had a special device in its bomb bay to which a jet engine could be attached. After taking off and reaching the desired altitude, the jet engine under test could be lowered into the airstream and started. At the conclusion of the flight, the engine under test was then retracted. This aircraft remains a great mystery. Below: *SWey* airship lifting off – photo provided by Marc Frattasio. Back Cover: Contrast the very mature mobile mast of the US Navy with the original Italian high mast still standing near Longyearbyen, Spitsbergen. This is the same mast that moored both the *Italia* and *Norge*. See page 2 for details. Photo by Ralph David Van Treuren. Ω





**Marker on Italian airship mast
commemorates
Amundsen-Ellsworth-Nobile
Transpolar flight 1926**

