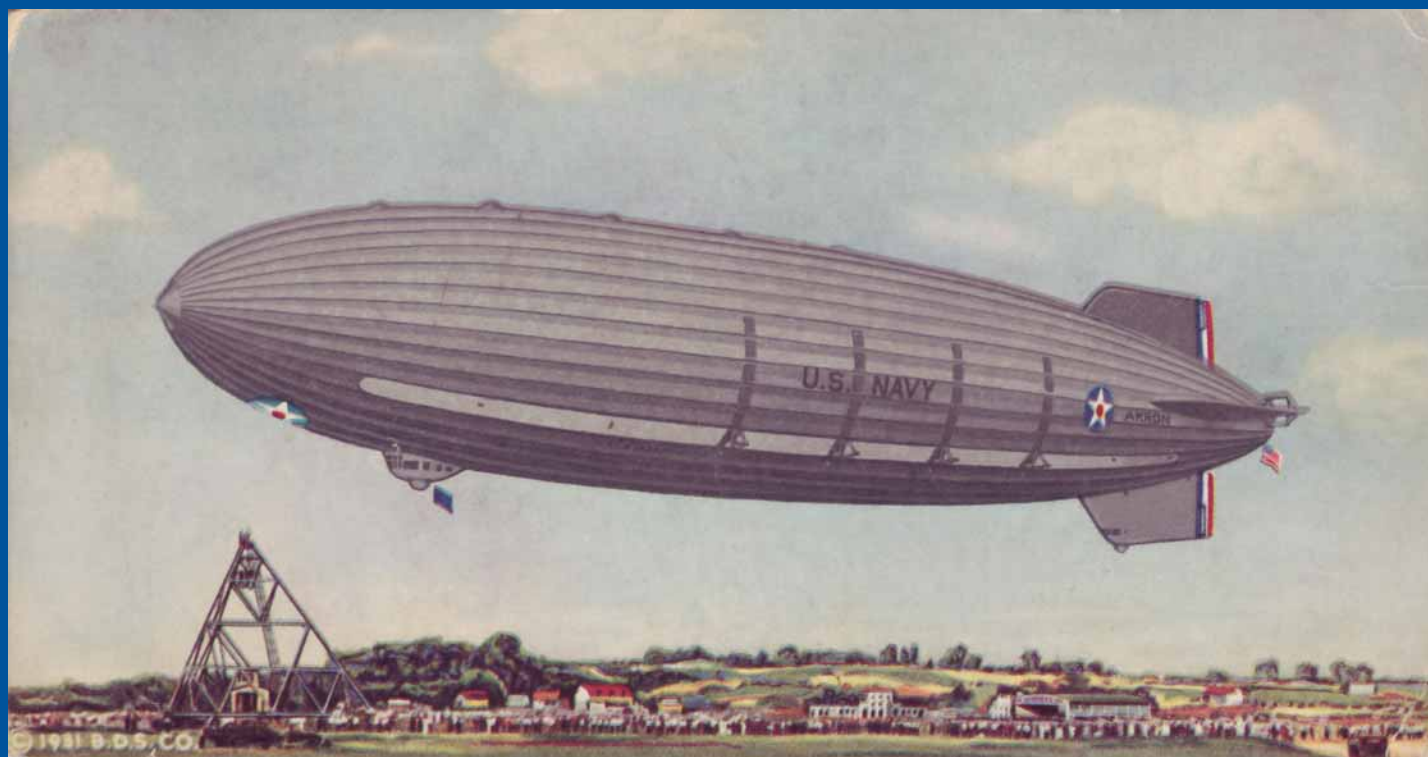


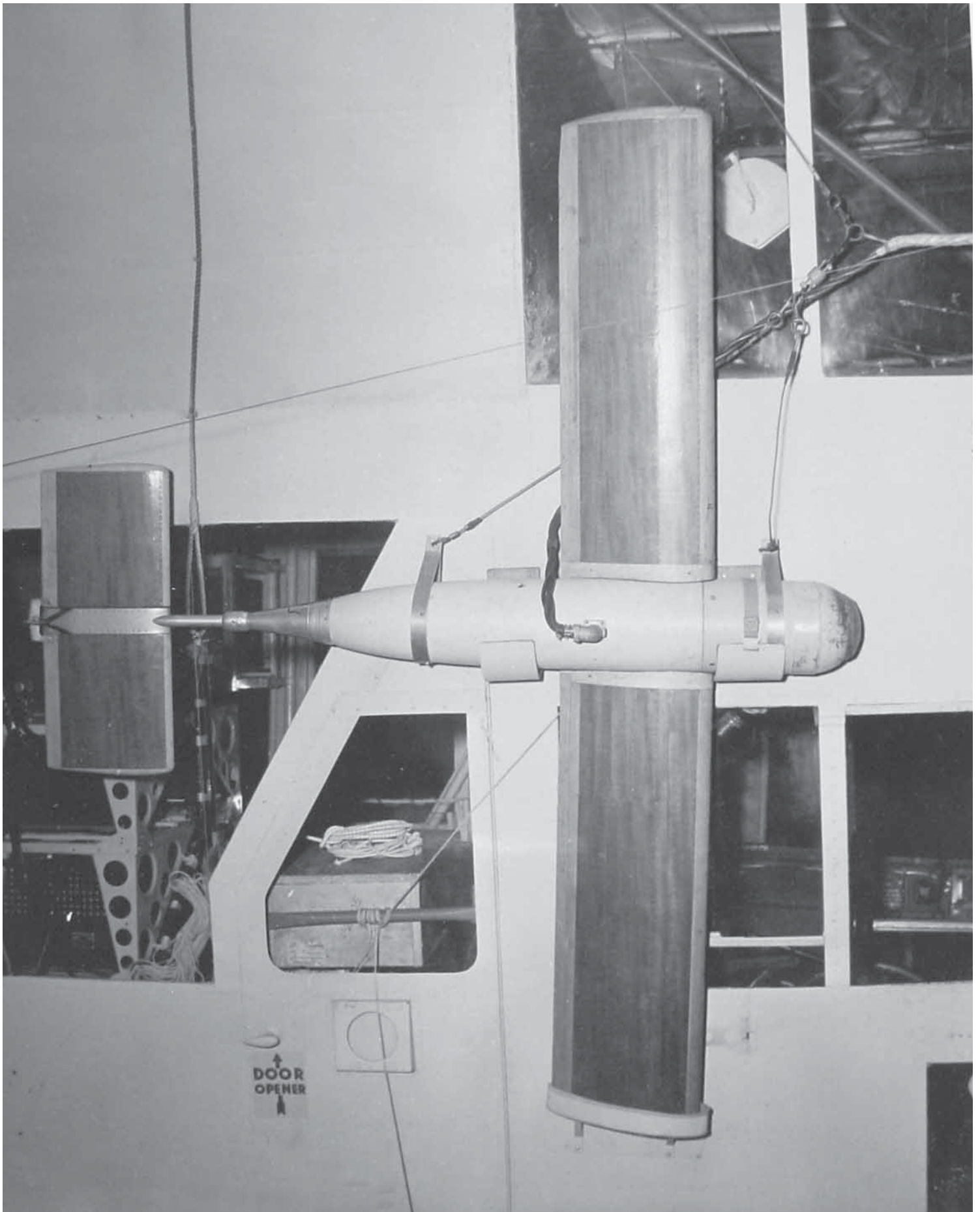
The Official Newsletter of THE NAVAL AIRSHIP ASSOCIATION, INC.

No. 72

Winter 2006



USS AKRON ZRS-4 1931-2006
75TH ANNIVERSARY



What is going on here? See "History Committee" inside.

THE NOON BALLOON

Official Publication of the Naval Airship Association, Inc.

ISSUE # 72 Winter 2006

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On the Cover of TNB #72: USS *Akron*, built by the Goodyear-Zeppelin Corp., leaving the mooring mast on her maiden voyage, 23 SEP 1931. This colorful trade card capturing the moment was produced by the Bessler Disappearing Stairway Co. of Akron, Ohio. (Pg 14)

New Masthead Artwork by **Bo Watwood** with respect to our founders' concept: "The NOON BALLOON leaves promptly for Rangoon" is the original inspiration for the newsletter title.

Inside covers: There are no captions because your team does not know what to say. Help us out... see "History Committee" inside.

Back cover: Thanks to our publisher's use of color we can appreciate the brilliance of *Macon's* airplane fabric, unbowed after 70+ years at 1500 feet below sea level. (Pg. 15)

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.



At NAS Moffett during filming of
'This Man's Navy' (MGM)

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EDITORIAL

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Delays encountered during our California mission to support Shuttle *Atlantis* were converted to LTA purposes by your lucky editor this past September, here as a guest of the crew of balloon *Aerostat Tiffany II*.



New NAA member and balloon pilot extraordinaire **Jerome Guenther** (holding flag) was so kind as to let me join in on one mission. His friend **Paul Campanella** (under burner) working as crew also joined NAA on the spot. Welcome aboard, gents, and thanks for the experience!

The flight reminded me how a hot air balloon, while unable to fight the wind, can change its aerostatic condition simply by consuming fuel. By contrast even today's most advanced airship cannot exercise control of its static condition, though it can fight the wind. I think we need one vehicle that can do both. Next stop? Lockheed's new P-791, a hybrid aircraft written up in AVIATION WEEK last spring. I will report on my observations as soon as I am permitted to do so. This image is all that is said on their website.



Likewise, my next visit, to the Sanswire group, was also most cordial, but I am likewise bound by a non-disclosure agreement concerning the

details. Suffice it to say both new project teams are tackling old problems with new and innovative ideas. Circumstances later allowed me to inspect Moffett Federal Airfield and the excellent MFHS Museum, as the guest of NAA's reporter in the MFHS, **Ben Debolt**, and his wife **Carol**. I was introduced to the museum's curator, **Bill Stubbjaer**, and learned of their plans to expand the already impressive museum into spaces vacated by the recently moved computer museum.

You can't imagine my delight when the *Atlantis* mission concluded safely in time for me to board the NOAA ship R/V *Fulmar* and transfer via Zodiac boat to the MBARI's R/V *Western Flyer*. This issue is graced with exclusive reports on the historic mission to explore the USS *Macon's* resting place. I'll be forever grateful to the NOAA and MBARI folks who so kindly included me. I hope I was able to adequately represent our Historical Committee, as we continue to help i.d. debris.

Nelson Grills's passing notice came too late to devote proper space to his place in airship history, but we plan on that for an upcoming issue. All this admiration for the rigids on the *Akron's* 75th anniversary hasn't drawn our attention away from uncovering classified WWII combats.

Dave and I greatly appreciate your kind messages of support, it makes all the effort worthwhile.

THE NOON BALLOON Volunteer Staff

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View From The Top: PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It hardly seems possible that three months have gone by since I last wrote to you in this column. Needless to say, time flies when you are having fun, but our time has been filled with moving from Maryland to our new home in Naples in the southwestern tip of Florida. However, a lot of my time has been spent working with Rick Zitarosa and other members of the NAA Executive Council on the preparations for our next NAA Reunion to be held in Lakehurst, NJ. I will say no more about the reunion here except to call your attention to the change in dates – the reunion will be held in Lakehurst/Toms River, with the Quality Inn in Toms River as the reunion headquarters, on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, the **4th, 5th, and 6th of September 2007**. Please note the change in dates from the previous announcement and refer to the 'Ready Room' section of this NOON BALLOON for all of the reunion details.

As I wrote in my previous message to you, I am very concerned about the dwindling membership roll of the Naval Airship Association. You don't even need to gaze into a crystal ball to recognize the fact that the NAA will be history in about a decade if we don't concentrate on getting really significant help in the member-ship area. In the previous TNB I suggested the idea of giving gift memberships to our sons, daughters and grandchildren. With Christmas fast approaching, what a great gift it would be to give memberships to our children. If all of you would respond to this gift idea, we could more than double our membership within a couple of months. I know this might put an additional burden on our Treasurer, Pete Brouwer, but he has already told me that he would welcome the challenge. Attached to this TNB you will find forms to fill out for these gifts, so do it today; it will make a fun gift(s) and be invaluable to the future of the NAA.

On Monday the 9th of October the NAA Executive Council held our meeting at the dome home of Richard Van Treuren in Edgewater, Florida. In addition to the unique experience of meeting in a "dome" home and enjoying an exceptional luncheon put on by Richard's wife

Debbie, we held an "all-day" meeting [see Treasurer's Strongbox]. In addition to considerable discussion and planning for the 2007 reunion, we agreed with a suggestion made by Gordon Vaeth that we have an appropriate plaque inscribed for the U.S.S. *LOS ANGELES* and forward it to the Zeppelin Museum in Germany where it will be displayed with a rare remaining artifact from the airship, an engine telegraph. The "LA," originally constructed as the LZ-126, amassed a remarkable flying record, second only to the *GRAF ZEPPELIN*. It was literally the backbone of U.S. Navy LTA activity for many years in the late 1920s and early 1930s. When the plaque is completed we will make sure that a replica is published in TNB.

One major item of discussion was the matter of annual dues. For about 15 years our dues have been held constant at \$15 per year; AND we did not require any more than that to keep our "heads above water" until now. One of our most significant expenses has become the publishing of TNB. We have calculated that the TNB cost to your association is nearly \$5 per person per issue to publish, print and mail to you. This issue is the third in our new series of TNBs and we are determined to get a new issue to each member at least four times a year. One solution might be a reduction in size and quality of TNB, but the overwhelming response to "the new look" has been astounding and we don't want to do anything to diminish the quality or quantity of TNB. We promise you that we will continue with the outstanding quality of our newsletter and, in turn, the Executive Council will recommend to the membership at our biennial reunion business meeting in September 2007 that our annual dues be raised to \$20 per year. Please note, this change will not take place until you approve the change at our next business meeting; the gift memberships (and your 2007 membership) will be \$15.

In a brief closing, may I wish you and your families a most wonderful and glorious Holiday Season and may the New Year bring you loads of joy and happiness.

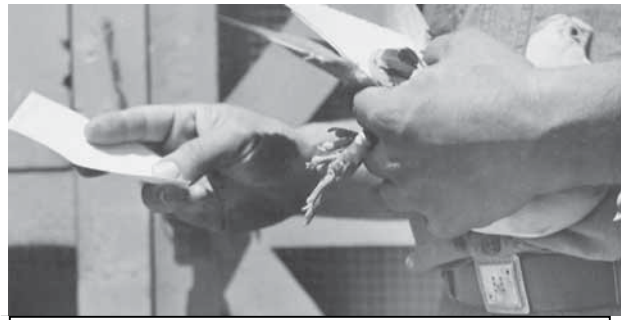
- Bob Ashford, NAA President

Pigeon Cote

Andrew Papageorge, Escondido, CA: “I have just finished reading the Summer 2006 edition of the *Noon Balloon* – a really superior publication and one we should all be proud of. There were two references to ZP-11 (of which I was a member) and ZP-14, with which I was associated for the trans-Atlantic Ferry Flights in 1944 and 1945. These flights, by the way, were the first ones made by a non-rigid airship across the Atlantic. I never expected to be writing about these flights, but now I realize that time marches on and that those of us who participated may not be around much longer to make a contribution to the wartime history of LTA – **John Kane**’s recent passing brought this home to me in spades particularly since, as stated below, he was one of the navigators for those flights.

John Kane, Bill Gasner, Fred Miehe, Ben Leavitt and I were all classmates at the US Naval Academy and were selected for LTA flight training upon graduation from the Academy in June 1943. We didn’t know it then but we were destined to be 5 of 6 Naval Academy graduates selected at that time to be, after we finished LTA flight training, the navigators for the trans-Atlantic flights. Another Naval Academy LTA pilot who was senior to us was also selected. Later we were told all this and were also told that the main reason we were selected was that we were already trained in celestial navigation whereas the regular training for LTA pilots did not include this subject matter.

Upon graduation from flight training at Lakehurst in the class 1-44 which graduated in March, 1944, we were each assigned to a regular Patrol Squadron – I was sent to South Weymouth, Mass to ZP-11. In a few months I was ordered to Lakehurst where I joined the other 5 pilots for briefings and preparations for the flights. We 6 were quite surprised by all this because the operations were classified Top Secret and we knew nothing of this until we arrived at Lakehurst. The operation consisted of 6 K ships which were to be flown two at a time in sequence.



Letters to the Editor via e-mail (preferred), or wrapped on avian legs, are edited for length and content.

The routing was to be as follows: The first leg was to be Lakehurst to Argentina, Newfoundland; the second leg was Argentina to the Azores; the third leg was from the Azores to Port Lyautie, Africa. There were detachments of ZP-11 personnel at Argentina and the Azores and LTA Squadron 14 was in Africa to receive the 6 ships. (This positioning of ZP-11 personnel answers the question asked on page 21 in TNB #70 about ZP-11 being stationed abroad.) Air crews also specially trained from ZP-14 were assigned to fly one leg of each ferry trip. They flew the same leg of the trip each of the three times it was done. One of the 6 navigators was assigned to each crew for the flights and also flew the same leg each time. My leg was Argentina to the Azores, some 1800 nautical miles. When we reached the Azores we were given a couple of days rest then flown back to Argentina. A similar program was followed for the crew who flew the other two legs.

As ZP-14 lost two ships the first year, this same kind of flight was repeated in 1945 to replace them. This flight was done once only. Again, the two ships flew together, but the routing was Lakehurst to Bermuda, Bermuda to the Azores, and then on to Africa. On this rout the middle leg was somewhat longer – if my memory serves correctly about 200 nautical miles. However, the weather was much better!

By the way it might be desirable if I explained what this was all about. The reason the Navy wanted an LTA squadron in North Africa to establish a barrier patrol across the entrance to the Mediterranean, the Straights of Gibraltar, by utilizing the blimps to fly night and day low level flights using Magnetic Airborne Detection equipment as well as other tools (i.e.

sonobouys etc) to prevent the Germans from bringing submarines into the Mediterranean from their homeports in France. To the best of our knowledge it worked!

[Ed. Note: Bravo Zulu for CDR Papageorge's solving that mystery. Anyone else have amplification re: when sonobuoys were used in the Med? We have found no 10th Fleet action reports from the area. We also need to answer critics who insist the U-boats were beaten by the time ZP-14 was finally deployed, and that no U-boats were in a position to challenge their barrier patrols.]

E-mail from our cover banner artist **Bo Watwood**: "Well, you guys really did it this time. What a great issue. How can you top this? Ya know, **George Allen** was the pilot in command on our ill - fated, storm blown trip to Bermuda on Dec. 7, 1957. We sort of "crash landed" there after 6 or so days. I sent him a newspaper clipping showing a photo of the crippled 2W. He might recant that tale for you....by the bye, a few years ago I did a correct to scale, two view drawing showing the cut-away innards of a K ship. If you might want to use it in an upcoming publication, let me know. Again, great job!"

[Ed. Note: Readers, Bo has obviously forgotten NAVY is actually an acronym, Never Again Volunteer Yourself. You bet we'll take those drawings!]

E-mail from **Stan McNabb** via Bob Ashford: "Many memories were re-activated from several of the e-mails in the TNB issue #71. Robert F. Martin talks about the crash of ZPG-3W # 144242. Our crew in the ZPG-2 #126716 with PAC Lt. **Bud Harsh** was asked along with the 242 to search for a missing sailboat that was participating in a race from NY to Bermuda. We were in the SE quadrant of the search area while the 3W was in the NW quadrant. When our radioman could not raise the 3W after several attempts, we proceeded at max-continuous until we located crash site. Only some helium remained in the tail section when we arrived. A chopper was either on the

scene or arrived very shortly after we got there as I recall.

Robert G. Duff brings up several memories. I was at NAS Glynco flight training in a ZS2G at the time of **Jim Kissick's** adventure. We observed the control problem which caused a "close" pass by the hangar and then later we were out on the runway where the ship was abandoned. Jim popped up in our life in the early 1960's when he bought the house next door to us in Key West.

Jim had a twenty-one foot fishing boat. He built an underwater sled of marine plywood with depth and directional control to be towed behind his boat. Jim had previously been diving on the reefs and found a cannon and some cannon balls. He brought the cannon balls home but could not relocate the cannon...hence the need for a diving device. I drove the boat on the first trial run. Jim had his scuba gear on and would steer the diving sled back and forth over the reef looking for the cannon. When he would find something of interest, he would use an old seat belt release to free the sled. Jim would role off the sled and investigate, the boat would surge with the release of the drag and the sled would float to the surface to mark the spot. We never did find the cannon, but the cannon balls were another story.

Jim would sometimes shot-put the cannon balls into my back yard over the fence. One day Jim called me over to his shop to show me a cannon ball that he had been filing, sanding and polishing. When he took it in to his helicopter squadron HS-1 (?) to "show and tell", someone said that it might have dry powder in it. So, off to Fleming Key ordinance facility where the cannon ball was place in an oven. That night Jim showed me the fragments after it had exploded.

Robert also mentions a ZPG-2 that hit hangar 3 at NAS Lakehurst. That was our crew in the # 135448. The entire East coast was "socked in" causing several civilian and military crashes that day and night. I made the dumb statement

that if we landed safely, we would make the only safe landing on the East coast. Lt(jg) **Dave Lloyd** died in that crash and if I had not gotten up in the last few seconds from the metal sonar seat, I would have been cut in two by the metal table and seat as they were crushed together. The pilot was flying towards what he thought was the landing party, but it was the crash truck by the side of the hangar 3. As the pilot tried to go over the top of hangar, he gave the engines full power. I had never heard reciprocating engines turning at that high of rpms and for months thereafter high rpms would cause immediate remembrance of that accident. I was the first to go down an old wooden extension ladder placed inside the hangar from a hole that was made in the side of the hangar--about 70 to 80 feet above the deck.

Robert missed a crash that involved myself and a 3rd class mech. I was called at home at 2:00 am by Lt. **Jerry Bracket**, GHO who said that the skipper had requested that I be on the ZPG-2 # 126716 for undocking in 45 minutes. Driving in to NAS Lakehurst, the wind was so strong it would push me to the other side of the road. I knew that we would not undock, but the skipper told Jerry that he had to come out, period. The skipper went to bed and as we were being pulled passed ZP-2, I waved to several who were watching and said, "It's been nice knowing you guys"!! Moments later a 45 mph wind gust blew the mast over tearing off the APU and tearing a hole in the nose. We drifted backwards where the tail just missed the corner of the hangar by inches. We crashed in the woods. The only injury was to Lt(jg) **Phil Dawson** who fell on the ice, cutting his knee while running to the crash site.

Why was I called out. Well, I had gotten married since putting in for Regular Navy and my wife and I decided to raise a family. When I turned down Reg. Navy, the skipper was very upset with me and I was scheduled for discharge in less than two months."

E-mail from past NAA Pres. **John Fahey**: "Reading about George Allen's memory of **Jerry Denton** as a possible **Lieutenant X** in Issue No. 71 of The Noon Balloon, I can

provide some clarification. Graduating from the U. S. Naval Academy in 1946, of course he could not be Lieutenant X.

In the late 40's and 50's I was in contact briefly with Lieutenant Denton when I served in ZP-1. Denton was in ZP-2 and occasionally ZP-2 crews flew to Weeksville for fleet exercises. Later CDR Jeremiah Denton flew in a fixed wing squadron from NAS Oceana in Virginia Beach. We attended the same church. His squadron went to Viet Nam where he was shot down and taken as a POW. I met frequently with his wife, Jane, and other POW wives and helped with the seven Denton children. (One son, Jeremiah A. Denton III, has seven children and fifteen grandchildren, now is a close friend and my attorney.) While in prison he was promoted to captain and in April 1973 promoted to Rear Admiral. Denton was a U.S. Senator from Alabama, his native state, from January 1981 to January 1987. He now lives in Alabama. A neighbor of mine, Captain Jim Mulligan, visits him in Alabama often. If you are interested in any updated information, I can provide it. (My web site has changed to: www.johnfahey.net) Congratulations! A great job of editorship and publication of The Noon Balloon!"

E-mail from **Vern Stinson**: "I have in hand the most recent NAA publication, TNB #71. Your comments following my former e-message to you indicate that you did not receive one of the attachments that I sent earlier, the article I wrote several years ago for a veteran's edition of our local newspaper. I am not sure the article will in any way illuminate the incident, and I sent it to you simply for you to have in your files for whatever uses you might have for it..."

[Ed. note: Vern attached "Navy Blimp Menaces Air Lane" that added details, In part:]

"...Accidents such as this were common in the airship wing. Whether they were a contributing factor in the Navy's decision to do away with blimps is unknown. But by November, 1959, all training and operational flights out of NAS

Glynco were terminated; and three years after that the Navy deactivated its last airship squadron, closing the curtain on a colorful and significant aspect of Naval aviation. The last flight of the last Navy blimp took place on August 31, 1962, at Lakehurst, New Jersey. The sight of a Navy blimp thrumming across the sky is something that our children will likely never experience.”

[Ed note: Our thanks to Vern for following up. Happily, years later there is again a Navy airship thrumming across Lakehurst skies.]

e-mails from “**Red**” **Layton**: “You have really put some life in the NOON BAL-LOON. There are a million LTA stories, all with some degree of truth (0 to 100%) and as an old fud, I enjoy them all. Keep up the good work. **Jeremiah Denton** would not have been “**Lieutenant X**”. In 1942-43 he was a senior in High School. He entered the Naval Academy in 1943 (We were in the same Company during his Plebe Year). We were in the LTA class that started in January 1948. After duty in ZP-2 Jerry was involved in Airborne Early Warning projects that culminated in the ZPG airships. He later went to Pensacola, then to VA-84. He returned to the Training Command for jet transition and then became CO of VA-84. He was shot down over Vietnam, a long-time POW and was the first man off the plane that brought the first POW’s home. His famous remarks after he got off the plane ended with “God Bless America”. It was later announced that in his televised appearance while in the Hanoi Hilton, he sent a message to the Intelligence community by blinking his eye in Morse Code! Jerry was promoted to Rear Admiral and had a tour as the President, Armed Forces Staff College before retiring. As though he had not done enough for his country, he served a term as U. S. Senator from Alabama.

This is probably more than you wanted to know about Jerry, but let me add one personal note. My wife and I were married in the Cathedral of the Air (also named the ‘Shenandoah Memorial Chapel’) on the 23 anniversary of the crash of the *Shenandoah*, Jerry was our marriage license witness.

Another item brought to memory by the NOON BALLOON, #71, Pg 28. The “OUTLAW” G-Ship shown in the photo was flown by **Jack Hunt** for **Howard Hughes**. After the publicity tours were finished, Jack bought the airship and kept it in the hangar at Santa Ana (later Tustin). The Navy commissioned a Naval Reserve Training Unit (NARTU) at Santa Ana in the early 1950’s and sent two K-Ships by rail to be inflated and used by the NARTU. While they were waiting for the K-Ships, they leased Jack’s airship. This is probably the only case on record where a Naval Reserve Officer was called to active duty AND BROUGHT ALONG HIS OWN AIRCRAFT!”

[Ed.: Okay, so we know who Lt. X wasn’t, we still need to know who he WAS! Readers, help!]

E-mail from the editor of DIRIGIBLE, magazine of England’s Airship Heritage Trust (AHT), **Giles Camplin**: “The Noon Balloon arrived and it is terrific. Packed with stuff that is new to me. Well done, you! I hope you get a better result with your mystery pictures than I did. Not a single response so far. And you have my sympathy in terms of getting too much stuff and having to wield the axe. I have got masses of material and have been asked to cut back to 28 pages for the next one. Something is going to have to go! Keep up the good work...I am thinking seriously about giving a paper in Belfast... So hopefully we will see you there!”
[Ed: see ‘Ready Room’ for details of Belfast]

Letter from **Warren Winchester** following up e-mails and photos, in part: “After completing Lighter-Than-Air training in December 1955, I had received orders to report to Airship Anti-Submarine Squadron 2 at Naval Air Station Glyco, Brunswick, Ga... In February 1956, I was assigned to my first operational ASW flight, a training exercise with a diesel submarine off the coast of south Georgia. As the junior aviator, I was assigned the role of navigator. We used Loran primarily, though we had radio direction finders, radar and several other methods of navigating. We were supposed to get airborne just before dawn and proceed to the area about 60 miles southeast. I

carefully got out my chronometer and got an accurate time check with the Navy radio station in Washington, D.C., laid out my charts on the navigation table, plotted my course to our ops station... Immediately after take-off and throttling back the engines from take-off power, the plane captain would walk back through the gondola and check for any problems. The Navigator, me, would log the times, headings etc. Well everything went smooth for an uneventful take off, we climbed to about 500 feet as we turned and within 4-5 minutes everyone was settling in for a lazy and slow trip to the ops area... All of a sudden, I hear a voice very loud saying "look out for the trees!" I turned to my right to look forward, and since it was now at that time of the morning where one can see shapes and objects with the rising sun in the background, it literally looked like I was looking up through a forest. No sooner did I see the view of those lovely Georgia pines than we hit them, very hard!

Now, we didn't just hit them, but when the cockpit crew saw their dilemma, someone immediately hit both throttles full power. Alas, a check pilot, two guys getting checked and the plane captain all had failed to see that when they throttled back after take-off they had pulled off too much power and set up a gentle rate of descent that took us quickly back to the ground!

Now, what I didn't know was that I was to become famous on this little incident which came to be known as the "Crash of the King 100". We cut down, with the props, eleven trees the size of a person's body, the nose cone of the airship ended up lying on the elevator and rudders, the car or gondola was left nose up against some large pines about 12 feet in the air and leaning to the starboard. To put it delicately, we had a mess!

Though we were leaking aviation fuel everywhere and had a totally demolished airship, we suddenly found we were in pretty good shape and started finding ways to get out of the dead machine. I jumped up on the nav table and

kicked out a small Plexiglas window just aft of the port engine and fell 6-8 feet to the ground.



Others found their own ways out... Needless to say, the three pilots in front were severely reprimanded, not only failed their check rides but were demoted in rating. Me, I just became famous as the navigator of the ill fated K-100. One of my squadron mates wrote a song called the "Ode to the K-100" and people will still talk about my ill fated first flight and wonder what happened to my chronometer. Today, when I go to a meeting of old airship pilots someone will bring up that incident. And of course, I still have pictures of the crash site which my kids will get some day.

Several years ago we put together a small packet of materials for the archives at the National Naval Aviation Museum in Pensacola. Unfortunately, the packet seems to have been lost, but the story lives on!"

[Ed. Note: Some readers might argue it is not very positive to reprint every blimp crash. On the other hand, the fact that there are people around to relate the history says something positive about LTA!]

Letter from **F.R. 'Doc' Toline**, "In the fall of 1943, I reported to Headquarters Squadron TWO at NAS Richmond Florida. I had duty there through 1944. Commander **J. B. "Johnny" Rieker** was commanding officer of the Hedron. The Hedron performed Interim overhauls on airships operating in the South Atlantic and the Carribean areas. We had ground handlers and maintenance personnel at many of the fields operating in and around the Carribean and Gulf of Mexico.

Lt **B.B. Bothwell** was maintenance officer for the Hedron and I was his engineering officer. Rieker designated three of us Hedron officers to have Command Duty. We stood twenty four-hour watches every third day.

I had the duty the night that the message came through that Warrant Boatswain **Calhoun** had died in an accident at Chorrera in the Canal Zone. He had attempted to use a jury rig to enter the helium chamber of a masted airship. Supposedly the makeshift hood had a hose leading to an air compressor.

As Calhoun moved in the helium chamber, his leading chief was to be in the air ballonet near him. They were to maintain voice contact. If Calhoun got into trouble, the chief was to cut through the air ballonet and get him out. The rig failed and Calhoun had to be brought out. He lived for a short time.

Boatswain Mate Second Class Calhoun was the senior man in our enlisted ground school that graduated in December 1939 at NAS Lakehurst. I am enclosing a scanned copy of our class picture. Calhoun is the man on the left in the third row. I believe his initials were W. C. It had been four or five years since an enlisted ground school had been convened. Eleven men in the class were volunteers from Aviation Mechanics School, B-20-1939 graduating class at N.T.S. Norfolk, VA. Four men of this enlisted ground school class became APs during WWII. Eleven men in this class were volunteers from the following Aviation Mechanics School B- 20- 1939 Graduating Class N.T.S Norfolk, VA ."



AIRSHIP TRAINING SCHOOL DEC 23, 1939

Back Row: F.R. "Doc" Toline, E.L. "Bud" Lindsey, D.W. Kiebel, unknown

Fourth Row: __Cronauer, unk, M. "Mike" Spark, unk, unk, H.T. "Pete" Chambliss, unk, unk

3rd row: __Calhoun, unk, K.A. "Cowboy" Northness, J. "Joe" Angelieri, unk, "Pappy" Gage, __Moses

2nd row: L. Willett, F.R. Peckarek, unk, H.W. "Tex" Dukes, unk, unk, J.S. Davis

1st row: ACMM David Patzig, LCDR C.W. Roland, Ch Bos'n W.A Buckley, CBM L.E. Schellberg

TREASURER'S STRONGBOX

December, 2006

The renewal forms for 2007 memberships were mailed out the first week in December by first class mail. The only members who will be receiving the 2007 form will be those whose dues are current until December 31, 2006. All remaining members whose dues are paid thru 2007 and later, please wait until you are notified. We would appreciate your promptness upon returning your renewal form and check. This will help keep our cost of mailing reminder cards to a minimum. If you have any questions regarding your membership status, please feel free to call.

The N.A.A. Treasury needs your support in order to maintain our existence and to provide good communication among our members. We must all work together to attract new members. We would like to welcome our newest members since May 2006:

Frank J. Maxymillian, No. Adams, MA.; John F. McGillicuddy, Rye, NY.; Paul Campanella, Chadsworth, CA.; Jerome Guenther, Tarzana, CA.; Eugene C. Wensman, Port St. Lucie, FL.; Roy P. Gibbens, Meridian, MS.; Jack E. Walter, Dallas, TX.; Charles A. Gray, Chesapeake, VA.; William Sargent, Plymouth, MA.; Forrest S. Lilley, Weed, CA.; Roland F. Anderson, Glendale, CA.; Robert C. Kiefer, Tomball, TX.; Russell E. Magnuson, Southington, CT.; Bo Watwood, Jackson's Gap, AL, Jerry Gehl, FL. Welcome Aboard!!

And Welcome Back:

Robert F. Martin, NY, NY.; Kevin W. Pace, Toms River, NJ.; Clayton H. Janecky, Hudson, FL.; Michael T. Voorehees, Albuquerque, NM. Herman Van Dyk, Peabody, MA.; John C. May, Hilton Head, SC.; Guy E. Moore, Raleigh, NC.; Thomas J. Wilson, Ypsilanti, MI.; James Rusk, Welaka, FL.; Robert H. Killion, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Mrs. Helen Francis of San Angelo, TX, a "H" Member enjoys her Noon Balloon but after she is finished reading it she donates it to her local library for others to enjoy reading it. This is a good thought it might inspire others to do the same, to help give the N.A.A. some exposing. Helen told me that the library enjoys receiving it.

I'm getting excited about our upcoming reunion, September 4, 5 and 6 of 2007 at Lakehurst. I'm sure that it will be a very exciting time for all. This was the starting point for many of you and your Navy careers. It's always good to go back to your roots. My wife Betty and I want to wish you and yours:

A Happy and Joyful Holiday Season.

-Peter F. Brouwer, Treasurer

1950 SW Cycle St.

Port St. Lucie FL 34953-1778

Phone: 772-871-9379, Fax: 772-621-8769

E-Mail: peterfbrouwer@bellsouth.net

WE THANK ALL OF YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS TO THE N.A.A.!!

\$5 - \$50. :

Cecelia Staley, James Crowley, Alfred Hoffman. Betty Gustafson, Bradley Dobbins, David Thoen, Paul Stolar, Manuel Sturges, William Hillgaertner, Lowell Weaver, John Robson, Harold Eberly, Gale Boyer, William Reed, Norman Larson, Edward Pearson, Michael Vinarcik, Eugene Wycoff, Eugene Sones, Burch Hadley, Dorothy Dannecker, Robert Mall, Matthias Pfeiter, Wilford Stone, Raymond Pettigrew, Connie Dehler, Jim Curless, John Hammond, Ben Harris, Helen Horan, Harris Smith, Phillip Iannone, Arnold Ayers, Joseph Hannam, Lorraine Perkins, Harley Pierce, William Langen, Norman Scurria, Ross Wood, Alan Foster Robert Foulke, Ruth Hartwell, Alfred Hoffman, Donald Meyer, William O'Hea, Norman Peterson, Gusti Simmons, Woodrow Smith, G.R. Anderson, Mrs. Gordon Burke, David Hayes, Myra Jennison, Laurence Karadin, Don Nassiff, Kent VonFecht, Eugene Albro, Edward Clark, James Yearley, Helen Franks, William Harkins, C.T. Hoselton Jr., Anna Jean Minnick, Robert Oerzen, Pat Seal, G.M. Binengar, Harry Benoit, Jr., Raymond Braun,

Robert A. Clark, Paul Cyr, Hillard Donner, Harvey Gladstone, James Gosnell, William Koll, Mary Lansdowne, John Leyden, Larry Overson, Berda Allen, Milroy Brandel, Girard Calehuff, August Dobert, M. Martini, William Polster, John Roche, Hubert Tolford, Robert Anderson, Eppi Azzaretto, Robert Keene, Arnold Robeck, David R. Smith, Mrs. Dale Topping, Edward McMillan, Gloria Newman, Jerome Amphein, Roy Lyon, Peter McNamee, Edmund Kasner, Frances Klingbiere, Marion Koscica, George Roberts, James Yarnell, Don Morris, Donald Mauer, Charles Modzinski, Charles Perkins, Paul Reinhardt, Louis Rinkus, Rolf Anderson, David Brennan, W.D. Jones, Charles McDougall, Paul Meyn, Edward Pietrzak, George Simon, Bud Wartman, Franklin Yule, Rick Zitarosa, Lucille Byram, Wayne Hastings, Dorothea Kronmiller, Elinor Leone, Stanley Owen, William H. Smith, Walter Swistak, Kathryn Wall, Robert Appleby, J. P. Curless, William Whitbread, J. J. Haggerty, Jr., Waldo Jones, Patience Walters, Bart Donohue, Lloyd Savage, Clayton Janecky, John May, James Rush, Arthur Sullivan, William Sargent, Harlan Wilson, Meyer Myers, Virginia Dee Cawley, Woodrow Smith, Gorden Bodek, Bill Campbell, Barry Coats, D. A. Frecker, Dominic Fucile, Bill Gibson, Paul Hawley, Charlie Herbert, Bill Himstreet, Lawrence Hurley, Harold Johnson, Edmund Libera, W.W. Linkenhoker, John McCarthy, Gloria Molander, Pauline Nevin, J.H. Parrish, Bob Patrone, Bill Riley, Russell Scherer, Ed Shamonsky, Mike Szot, John Williams, Jack Brooks, Jack Freedman, Bob Smith, Francis Zapke, Bill Wright, Roseanne Belsito, Richard Mathis, Bob Sparks, Bud Keller, Don Barker, Marvin Moffie, F.R. Toline, Gordon Dieter, Wilbur Sohn, Don James, Ralph Jeffers, Alan Leubbert, Louis Pouliot, John Rice, Charles Shriver, Fay Voda, Will Woosnam, Harvey Gladstone, Charles Pearman, Bobbie Sherrill, George Stadter, Paul Wagner, Ralph Waldron.

\$50-\$100:

Robert Suhr, John McGillicuddy, Beverly Gantz, Stephen Ulrich, Jerrold Omundson, Orris Fry, Julio Fuentes, William Zidbeck.

\$500.00 Plus

Peter Yerkovich, of Campbell, CA.

N.A.A. EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING - OCTOBER 9, 2006

The meeting was called to order by President Bob Ashford at 9:10 AM, at the home of Richard Van Treuren in Edgewater, Florida.

Members present: Bob Ashford, President; Don Shorts, Vice-President; Peter Brouwer, Treasurer; Richard Van Treuren, TNB Editor; Norman Mayer, Past President; George Allen, Small Stores. Absent: Margaret Hinrichson, Secretary.

The minutes of the February 9, 2006 meeting were read and accepted as read. The treasurer reported a balance of \$43,733.02 in all accounts. Membership count for 2006 was as follows: 676 members, 217 honorary members, total 893. 21 of these were new members, 10 re-instated, and 5 thru the web page. The treasurers report was accepted as read.

A motion was made and accepted that Don Shorts chair the Membership Committee. He will be responsible for procuring new members. Pete will be mailing out 2007 renewal dues notices and letters to honorary members in December. George Allen suggested we have a column in the TNB to acknowledge donations in groups such as: \$5-50, \$50-\$100 etc. This was accepted by all. All letters are to be sent out on official stationery.

Norman Mayer, Tech Committee stated that someone had red fabric, possibly from the *Hindenburg*. He also discussed air cushion principle landings. Bob Rist built a 120' long hybrid airship. Norman also discussed the new fabric used on the ships. Richard VanTreuren reported on his participation in the dive expedition off the coast of California for the *Macon*. He is counting on Noon Balloon members to submit their stories of their adventures while in the service. Memorial Service information needs to be collected before the next meeting. Also a list of the obituaries will be needed for the reunion. A bell will be needed at Lakehurst for the services.

Regarding the request of funds, it was reaffirmed that the NAA will not be supporting other activities.

NEW BUSINESS:

Gordon Vaeth requested a memorial for the *Los Angeles*. A brass plaque was suggested. Norman will check on the size and cost information.

All agreed that reimbursement for traveling will not be necessary. It was decided that to bond the Treasurer and George would not be necessary. George stated that Small Stores should always be advertised in the Noon Balloon and also on the web page. George recommended that only caps and the Naval Airship patch be replenished.

The cost of publishing the Noon Balloon #70, which included postage, was \$3,641.44, 1200 issues, 28 pages. It was suggested that we keep up the quality, which will benefit our members. To increase membership it was suggested that we join with another LTA group, recruit sons, daughters, grandchildren, etc., US Postage stamp with airship photo (can become collectors item) leaving copies of Noon Balloon at libraries, VFW, DAV, local airports, newspaper.

The funding for the L-8 patch has been completed and needs to be advertised. A motion was made by Norman and seconded by all that we donate ball caps and patches as a token of appreciation to those who worked on the L-8 restoration.

REUNION 2007: The reunion will be held September 4, 5, 6 - 2007 at Lakehurst, NJ. 75 rooms are available at the Quality Inn, Toms River, NJ for \$79 per night. The Comfort Inn will be used for extra reservations. Reservations will be made thru the Lakehurst LTA Historical Society to get a non-profit rate. We will need a Ready Room, bus service to the Lakehurst Museum, (this might be provided by the Navy). Quality Inn requires a \$500 deposit by January, 2007. Bob Ashford will set up the registration letter and get it in the mail by Nov. 10. George will contact all publications to advertise the reunion.

Regarding Foundation Memorials, (funded by individuals within the organization) to memorialize John Kane. It was suggested a chair at the museum or plaque. Norman will get more information from Mort Eckhouse on this matter. Mort Eckhouse wants to be relieved of the liaison to the NMNA. He has suggested Joe Hajcak. Bob will check with Joe regarding this.

Gordon Vaeth letter of 10/15/05 suggested having 2 reunions, one on east coast, one on west coast. This was decided by the group as not a practical solution. The Nominating Committee is in need of candidates to head up the various committees. Bob will call members. A motion was made by George Allen and seconded by Bob Ashford to raise dues to \$20 per year. All were in favor. The membership will vote on this issue at the 2007 reunion. The outcome will affect the 2008 year dues.

Trading memberships in the future will depend on the viability of the organization. A long range planning committee was advised. The group would like to suggest Richard VanTreuren.

OTHER NEW BUSINESS

Executive Council meeting, 1PM, on Tuesday, September 4, 2007

Designate who will receive registration and monies for reunion 2007.

Need guest speaker for Reunion.

Next Executive Council Meeting: Tuesday, March 6, 2007 - 9AM - Pensacola, FL

Respectfully Submitted, George W. Allen

[Ed. caption: Exec Council, spouses and visitor Joe Lundy enjoy Debbie's screen dome lunch.]



[Ed note: as we go to press the decision was made to produce the 75th anniversary postage stamp. Order yours from Small Stores on this issue's wrapper.]

Helium in the News



*(Member **John McClean** was instrumental in saving this WWII-era Helium Tank Car from the NASA scrap heap. Its permanent home is now the Gold Coast Railroad Museum, and it is sitting on track originally laid into one hangar at NAS Richmond, Florida. That's the one remaining door tower in the background.)*

At the 6th International Airship Association Convention in London this past August, Mr. Peter Ward, of Linde Gas AG Int'l Helium Group, gave his paper, "Helium: A Challenging Resource." Ward explained there are five countries where helium is mined. Demand is still increasing. As the price increases, large consumers are finding more ways to recover used helium and waste less in their processes. He stated most of LTA's consumption is in toy balloons, with airships using but 0.52 percent annually - and the overall share is decreasing even at this time of airship growth. Concluding, Ward thought "that there would be enough helium to keep pace with the increased demand from the LTA industry, albeit at an increased price."

A matter of days later came this AP piece via Eric Brothers: "Shortages Are Ballooning the Cost of Helium" By Thomas J. Sheeran, AP, which reported (in part): "The world's supply of helium has taken a hit because of delays in getting plants on line, U.S. officials say. Suppliers of the lighter-than-air gas have raised prices, and some party-supply stores have had to cut back on their balloon business. A key issue in the shortage involves contracts for

helium from a Qatar plant and two in Algeria that been off line, said Hans Stuart, a spokesman for the U.S. Bureau of Land Management. One overseas plant has been involved in lengthy maintenance and two are behind on construction schedules. The BLM, which manages more than 400,000 square miles of public land, mostly in the West, provides more than one third of the world's crude helium, selling it to private plants for processing. The U.S. government has put off maintenance on its own equipment to avoid further supply disruptions, but its production will be reduced for up to two weeks in the fall so the work can take place, said Leslie Theiss, who manages the BLM office in Amarillo, Texas, the heart of U.S. helium production. She said the problems should be resolved by November, when millions of people will enjoy a particularly high-profile use of the gas. "We've had questions if the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade is going to happen," she said. Meanwhile, companies that use helium have started to feel the pinch in industries including aerospace, electronics, fiber optics, metals, medical imaging or just filling balloons.

Praxair Inc., a leading helium supplier based in Danbury, Conn., announced a 10 percent to 15 percent price increase Friday, and said Monday that supply issues, high demand and high energy costs have left it unable to handle any business beyond its regular customers. "Given the fragile nature of the helium supply system, we are not able at this time to supply spot, backup, or unplanned volume," the company said. Most helium is used in industry. Inflating - "lifting" in industry lingo - represents less than 7 percent of helium use...A high-profile helium user, the blimp fleet of Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. in Akron, said it was concerned about price increases. About 10,000 cubic feet to 20,000 cubic feet of replacement helium is pumped yearly into the blimps, which have capacities of 170,000 cubic feet to 180,000 cubic feet. Blimps lose more helium in hot, humid weather, said Roger Rydell, a Goodyear vice president. He said the company would not disclose what it pays for helium." Ω

Cover Story: First flight of USS *Akron* celebrated



CAPT Bill Keller, USNR (Ret) Photos: Bruce Ford

The 75th anniversary of the maiden flight of the Navy's rigid airship USS *Akron* was celebrated this past September by The Lighter-Than-Air Society, which hosted a public event not far from where the first flight took place. Nearly one hundred people gathered at the Akron Airport on Friday 22 September to mark the occasion. Among those present were several persons who had had been eye witnesses to the USS *Akron*'s launch on 23 September 1931.

Also on hand was the blimp *Spirit of Goodyear*, which circled overhead before the program began. The crowd was thrilled when the Goodyear public relations airship, piloted by Jim Maloney, Jr., made a low-altitude fly-past down the north-south runway.



Attendees had an opportunity to admire some 1920s-1930s vintage Ford autos and airship history exhibits before taking their seats in a

tent erected beside two LTA-themed Ohio Bicentennial markers dedicated in 2003. One marker honors Dr. Karl Arnstein and the German engineers who came to Akron to form the Goodyear-Zeppelin Corp., which later evolved into Goodyear Aircraft, builder of most of the U. S. Navy's blimps. The companion marker recognizes the engineering achievement of the Airdock, birthplace of the ZRS airships.

The program opened with the Presentation of Colors by sea cadets from the Akron Navy Operations Support Center. David Osterland, Associate Vice President of the University of Akron and a board member of The L-T-A Society, introduced the guest speakers.

Mark Williamson, Communications Director, City of Akron, talked about "What Lighter Than Air Means to Akron and its Residents."

The local president of the Navy League, William R. Keller, Captain, U.S. Naval Reserve (Ret.) remarked on the USS *Akron* and the Navy's LTA Program, and compared the rigid's size with a modern naval surface vessel.

Scott Baughman, Director of Global Airship Operations, The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company, spoke about the history of Goodyear-Zeppelin and the present day operations of the Goodyear blimps. Within sight of the Airdock where the USS *Akron* and *Macon* were constructed, Clark Reed, Director of Technical Operations, Lockheed Martin, focused on the Future of Lighter Than Air and the company's plans for building High Altitude Airships in the historic hangar.



Before the Retiring of Colors, David Osterland brought those present up to date on The L-T-A Society's airship history exhibit at a city-provided space in downtown Akron. Ω

LONG LINES



USS *Macon* Expedition 2006

By Dr. Robert V. Schwemmer, NOAA
(With contributions from Bruce Terrell and Chris Grech; NOAA, MBARI, photos)

In September 2006, a five-day archeological investigation was conducted at two major debris fields associated with the submerged wreck site of the rigid airship USS *Macon*, a U.S. Navy dirigible lost off California's Big Sur coast on February 12, 1935. Principal Investigators included Bruce Terrell, Senior Archaeologist for NOAA's National Marine Sanctuary Program (NMSP), Robert Schwemmer, West Coast Regional Maritime Heritage Program Coordinator for NMSP, Chris Grech, Deputy Director for Marine Operations at the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute (MBARI), and Steve Rock, Professor of Aeronautics and Astronautics for Stanford University. Other members of the science team included an historian, educator, biologist and pilots who navigated the remotely operated vehicle (ROV).

Today the USS *Macon* and its associated aircraft are located within the boundaries of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. The National Marine Sanctuary Act mandates the NMSP to manage and protect submerged archaeological resources within the sanctuaries, including those owned by the U.S. Navy. The sanctuaries are also responsible for the development of education and outreach initiatives that include maritime heritage resources.

The Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary's draft Maritime Heritage Action Plan (2001) emphasizes the characterization and assessment of archaeological resources as a sanctuary priority.

Since the discovery of the submerged remains of the Navy dirigible in 1990, NOAA and the sanctuary have designated personnel to develop a program to document archaeological resources and assess their eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places.

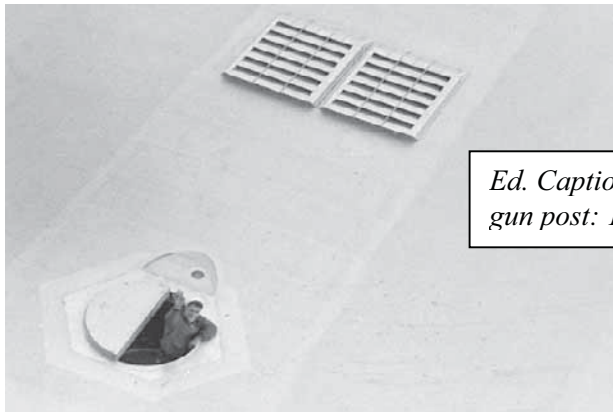
USN photo via Jim Shock



At the time of the loss USS *Macon* (ZRS-5; above, with planes) was the nation's largest and the last U.S. built rigid lighter-than-air (LTA) craft. The 784-foot *Macon* was completed in 1933 as part of the U.S. Navy's LTA aviation program and championed by Navy Chief of Aeronautics Admiral William A. Moffett, who died in 1933 as a result of the USS *Akron* crash, sister ship to the *Macon*. The airship was constructed with a built-in aircraft hangar and a trapeze launch and recovery system to facilitate the Sparrowhawk biplanes. The aircraft were intended to protect the airship in war and to extend the ship's scouting abilities. The Curtiss aircraft company adapted their diminutive F9C-2 Sparrowhawk biplane fighters to be used aboard the "flying aircraft carriers." The planes carried arresting hooks above the top wing to capture a "trapeze bar" that would lift them into the ship. Their landing gear was removed when in operational status. This permitted the attachment of large belly-type fuel tanks that extended their range. The *Macon* conducted many successful launchings of the aircraft including an infamous mission to clandestinely locate President Franklin Roosevelt at sea in the Pacific aboard the cruiser USS *Houston*. Two of the *Macon*'s Sparrowhawks delivered a morning newspaper and a bag of mail to the *Houston* to the total surprise of the ship's commander. Their consternation was such that it almost resulted in the court's marshal of the *Macon*'s commander. The *Macon* was never to be tested in battle and many have speculated that our surprise defeat at Pearl Harbor might have been avoided had *Macon* been on station.

USS *Macon* Loss

The *Macon* and its four Curtiss F9C-2 Sparrowhawk aircraft were lost during severe weather offshore of Point Sur on a routine flight from the Channel Islands to its home base at Moffett Field. The bow of the airship had been forced to starboard by a wind gust during a rainsquall, which caused *Macon* to lurch and roll. The aluminum-frame ring that supported the upper tail collapsed puncturing three of the airship's helium cells. Point Sur Light-Station keeper Thomas Henderson witnessed the event and recalled seeing the tail fin fly into several pieces. Orders were given to jettison the fuel and water ballast tanks in attempt to take control of the airship. At an altitude of 4,850 feet above the Pacific Ocean, the pressure release valves automatically vented helium from the cells as designed when exceeding 2,800 feet. The *Macon* plummeted tail first into the Pacific, floating forty minutes before foundering stern first. The accident took the lives of two of the eighty-three man crew. They were radioman First Class Ernest Dailey and mess attendant Florentino Enquiba. Today the *Macon* site is considered a military grave site.



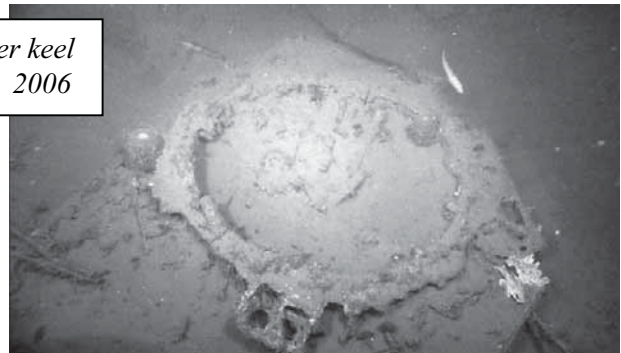
*Ed. Caption: Upper keel
gun post: 1933 & 2006*

USS *Macon* Discovery

Interest in locating the resting place of the *Macon* had been ongoing since 1988, when the first attempt to locate the *Macon* using side scan sonar technology proved that she was not lying at her recorded crash location. This initial effort had spawned the interests of Dick Sands of the National Museum of Naval Aviation Foundation in Pensacola, Florida as well as David Packard, founder of the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute. They asked Chris Grech, a ROV pilot for MBARI, who participated in the search for the *Macon* in 1988, to head up another expedition to investigate several recorded sonar anomalies from the 1988 trip.

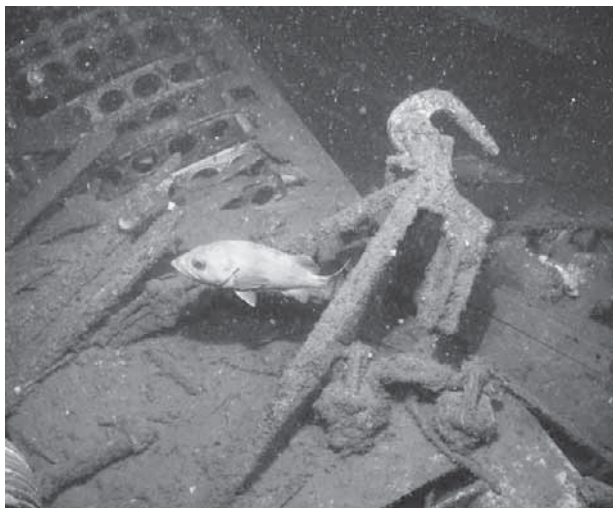
A section of airship girder that had been snagged in commercial fisherman Dave Canepa's trawl net was on display in a Moss Landing seafood restaurant. It was unrecognized until noticed by Marie Wiley Ross, daughter of *Macon*'s commander Herbert V. Wiley who recognized it for what it was, having seen such girders in her childhood. Grech and Sands were able to trace the object back to Canepa and learn of the wreck's location. In June 1990 Grech coordinated with the U.S. Navy's three-man deep submergence vehicle (DSV) *Sea Cliff*, to locate and document the *Macon*'s remains at a depth of 1500 feet.

MBARI returned to the site in February 1991 and videotaped the site using a ROV. The team located debris fields that included girders, gasoline tanks, the nose-mounted mooring assembly and the dirigible's German-made Maybach engines. Although it was flattened, MBARI was able to record windows, chairs, and chart tables. The four Curtiss F9C-2 Sparrowhawk hook-on airplanes were also located revealing their aluminum frames along with deteriorated wing fabric still intact. The 1990/91 surveys recorded the bow and mid-section debris fields. During these survey missions MBARI worked with the Navy to collect artifacts which included one of the arrestor hooks lying on the sea floor next to a Sparrowhawk. This artifact was conserved at East Carolina University.



At least two interviews have been documented with witnesses or their relatives tangential to the *Macon* and its Sparrowhawk aircraft. An interview was conducted with Gordon Wiley, son of Lt. Comdr. Herbert V. Wiley, master in command of the *Macon* at the time of its loss before his death. An additional series of interviews were conducted in 1995 with the late ret. USN Chief Lew "Woody" Williamson of Richmond, Virginia who flew in a "utility" squadron at Norfolk, Virginia in the 1930s and wrote performance manuals for aircraft. Williamson tested a Curtiss F9C-2 Sparrowhawk that was not on the *Macon* at the time of its crash. His interest in the craft led him to communicate at

length with ret. Admiral Harold Blaine “Min” Miller who, as a Lieutenant, commanded the Sparrowhawk squadron on the *Macon* and who survived the crash.



Ed. Caption: Remarkably, the airplane handling assembly is still visible, upside down, holding on just forward of the hook; pinned, the carrier wheeled the airplane to a corner of the hangar bay inside Macon.

USS *Macon* Expedition 2006

The remains of the *Macon*'s assemblage provide an opportunity to study the relatively undisturbed archaeological remnants of a unique period of aviation history. These remains are a significant resource both for the U.S. Navy and the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. Dirigibles were an important development in the history of aviation. There are no other known examples of these craft that can be studied. While there is one known example of a Sparrowhawk in existence, it is a composite airplane built from the parts of the last two surviving F9C-2s. Future aviation historians and the public will benefit from the comprehensive documentation and management of these craft.

In preparation for the expeditions regional museums and historical societies have also contributed towards the research effort, providing historic imagery and primary source documentation. The Monterey Maritime and History Museum, which has an exhibit on the *Macon*, has assisted with research. The Moffett Field Historical Society, which is associated with interpreting the *Macon*'s hangar in Sunnyvale, California, was also involved in early project planning.

The project was designed in two phases, Phase I recommended an updated survey of the debris field areas using state-of-art side-scan sonar to determine the extent of the wreckage. A side-scan-sonar survey of the site was successfully conducted by the sanctuary in collaboration with the U.S. Geological Survey, MBARI and Moss Landing Marine Laboratories on May 1-3, 2005 aboard the NOAA R/V *McArthur II*.

The Phase II 2006 expedition encompassed several objectives. The technical component involved video and photo documentation of the physical remains of the airship and four aircraft utilizing a ROV tethered to MBARI's R/V *Western Flyer*, a 117-foot (35.66 meter) SWATH oceanographic ship with a small waterplane-area twin hull. [Below.] The vessel provides a stable platform for deploying, operating, and recovering the tethered ROV *Tiburon* and capable of working at the required depth of the *Macon* site. *Tiburon* has a maximum working depth of 13,123 feet (4000 meters). With a 30 meter/minute descent rate the ROV was quickly deployed six times to the *Macon*'s two debris fields over the course of the five day mission.



Underwater navigation of the ROV is achieved through a Sonardyne USBL navigation system which produces nearly 1 meter accuracy at the depths of the *Macon* site. This position data is logged on the vessel, and coordinated with other data sources such as sub-sea environment data, ship's position, Greenwich Mean Time (GMT), video time code, camera positions, etc.. The ROV also incorporates a Doppler Velocity Log (DVL) system for tracking and station keeping controls of the ROV, in addition to basic Auto heading and Auto Depth controls.



ROV *Tiburon* [Above, with Grech (L) and Schwemmer on top; below on folding deck 3rd from right, Terrell; standing next to Doughty, in white T-shirt] incorporated the newly developed Stanford University control software, which utilizes a real time HDTV low resolution feed to build a computer based video-mosaic. This system provided close-loop control of the ROV using the vision (HDTV camera) and/or DVL device which enabled the computer to control the ROV. The Stanford control system can receive position data from both devices (DVL and HDTV) along with existing auto altimeter functions to control the ROV path. This allows the ROV pilots to see and build an accumulative mosaic image by the overlap of video tiles, which provides strategic tools in completing the mosaic survey. [closeup, right] The pilot can control image overlap, distance, station keeping, and velocity can all be driven by computer commands via the pilots. The photo-mosaic will provide for the first time a comprehensive site map showing the distribution of artifacts on the surface of the two debris fields.

An outreach component included the hosting of a live web uplink from *Tiburon* during the operations to educate students and the community about the deepwater technology used to conduct an archaeological survey. Noah Doughty, an educator from Mission College Preparatory High School in San Luis Obispo, California served as the teacher-at-sea and provided daily mission updates posted to the internet.

The primary goal of the mission was to conduct a comprehensive survey of the wreck site of the USS *Macon* and four aircraft that can be used to evaluate the archaeological context of the craft's remains. This will allow NOAA/NMSP and the U.S. Navy Historical Center to determine the condition of the site, the level of preservation of the archaeological remains and the potential for future research at the site. It also provided an opportunity to identify the remaining elements of the aircraft.

During the 2006 expedition, more than 40 hours of deepwater surveys were completed utilizing the ROV *Tiburon*. The surveys recorded the visual wreckage through high-definition videotape and still imagery that will be used to create a photo-mosaic of the two debris fields. One dive included verifying whether 2005 side-scan sonar targets were newly discovered debris fields or geologic features. No new debris fields were discovered, but two additional fuel tanks were located during transit of this exploration phase.

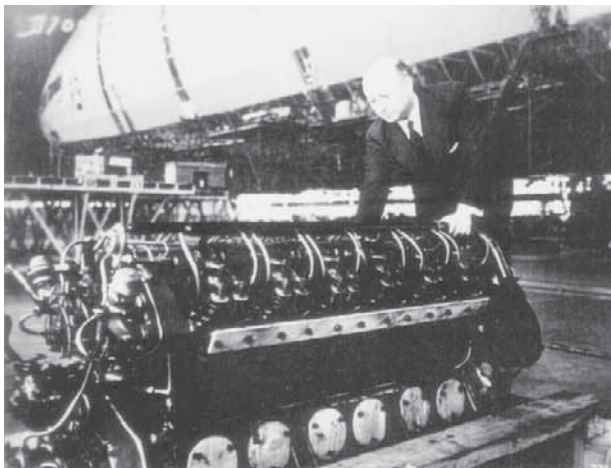


The two major debris fields, designated A and B, measure 60 meters (197 feet) in diameter and are elevated several meters above the seafloor. The fields are separated by a distance of 250 meters (820 feet) and show an accumulation of several centimeters of sediment since initial surveys conducted in 1990. Scientists have concluded that sections of the aluminum girder show signs of degradation after 71 years in the marine environment.

Some of the distinguishable features in Debris Field A include the airship's hangar bay containing

four Sparrowhawk biplanes; two were identified by individual color striping on their wings (bureau numbers 9058 & 9061). The wing fabric of the other two Sparrowhawks was too deteriorated to provide identifiable color features. Other visible features on the Sparrowhawks included the telescopic gun sites, skyhooks, detached landing gear, floatation bags, and one engine was exposed with propeller still attached. The wings in most cases showed exposed spars, ribs, ailerons, but one of the biplane's wing fabric had a partial U.S. star with the red, white and blue color pattern clearly visible [see back cover].

Five of the *Macon's* eight German-built Maybach VL-II 12 cylinder gasoline engines were identified, including one of the Allison propeller transmissions with 19.5-foot connecting shaft. The Maybach engines [below, with Dr. Karl Arnstien, and right, in 2006] were easily distinguishable since the 12 spark plug wires were still visible and are in some cases still attached to the distributor.



Objects from the ship's galley were recorded, including plastic serving ware, two sections of the stove with propane tanks, and the enlisted men's dining table and bench.

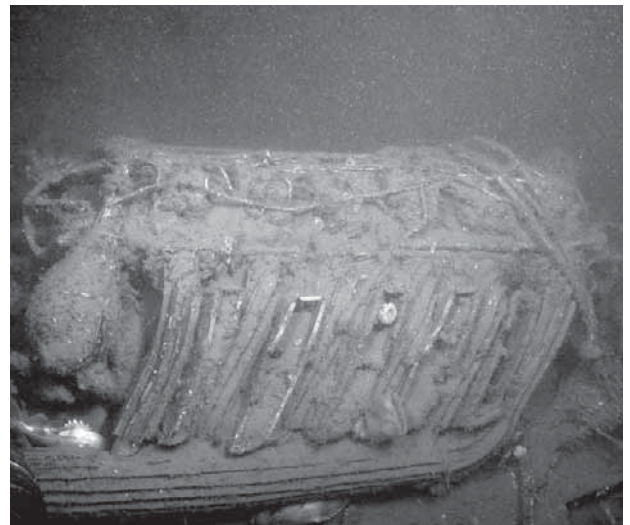
Debris Field B contained the *Macon's* bow section including the mooring [spindle, see back cover] assembly. This field also contains aluminum chairs, file cabinet, and desks that may have been from the officers' or meteorologist's office. Both debris fields contained duraluminum girders, several gasoline fuel tanks and portions of the eight water-recovery condensers.

The expedition was a collaborative venture involving NOAA's National Marine Sanctuary Program, NOAA's Office of Exploration, NOAA's Preserve America Initiative, NOAA's Maritime Heritage Program, Monterey Bay Aquarium

Research Institute, Stanford University, University of New Hampshire, U.S. Navy, state of California, Monterey Maritime and History Museum, and Moffett Field Historical Society and Museum.

Next Steps

Process the high-definition video stills into a seamless photo-mosaic to assist in identifying and assessing artifacts and their distribution, and to create a poster for public outreach. The team will also use the mosaic to try to determine the wrecking process of the *Macon*. Create elevation profiles of the debris fields to determine the concentration of wreckage beneath the two fields. Prepare a final archaeological assessment to guide the future management of the site and work towards nominating the USS *Macon* and four Sparrowhawk F9C-2 biplanes to the National Register of Historic Places.



Special thanks to Richard Van Treuren who joined the USS *Macon* expedition and provided his expertise to the science team during the deepwater survey of the airship and four Sparrowhawk biplanes.

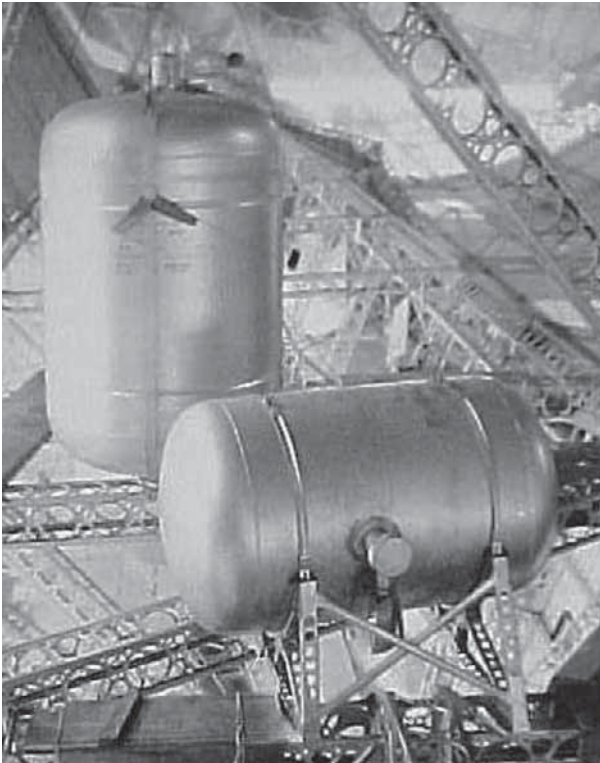
[NAA's Historical Committee's] investigative efforts are continuing after the archaeological expedition, assisting the principal investigators in identifying some of the artifacts that require further research.

Ω

The Significance of the USS *Macon* Archaeological Survey

By Bruce G. Terrell, Senior Archaeologist
NOAA/Nat'l Marine Sanctuary Program

In a sense, NOAA's 2006 mission to the site of the USS *Macon* began with the MBARI and US Navy's 1990 and 1991 expeditions. NOAA was, at that time, in the final stages of designating the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS) and the *Macon* news alerted the program that there was a significant



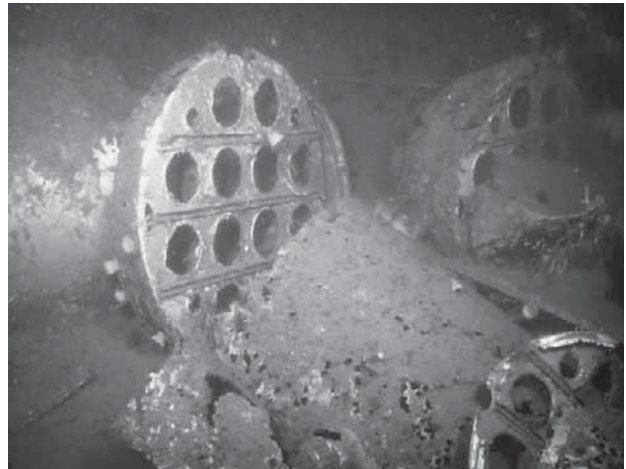
resource in the new sanctuary's waters.

The USS *Macon* is perhaps the best-protected archaeological resource in U.S. waters today. It rests in the waters of NOAA's MBNMS and is protected by the National Marine Sanctuaries Act. It is owned by the U.S. Navy and is also protected from looting by the Sunken Military Craft Act. Finally, it rests on California state bottomlands which also entitles it to protection from illegal disturbance.

The Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, like all of NOAA's fourteen sanctuaries, is responsible for the identification, protection and management of historical and archaeological resources. The USS *Macon*

mission provides the first comprehensive documentation of all of the known distribution of wreckage. When completed, the video mosaic will allow NOAA to interpret the archaeological context and inter-relationship of the site's features. At over 1500 feet, the depth of the *Macon*'s wreckage has kept it safe from salvage and pilferage, as well as from the bottom dragging nets of fishing boats. Commercial fishing can be devastating to submerged archaeological remains. *Macon* is also in an area of the California coast where bottom dragging is presently prohibited.

[Ed. Caption: With 110 gasoline tanks, and a host of others for cooling water, lube oil and ballast water, the ocean floor is littered with lightweight tanks. Some as little as 22 lb, held by the Macon belle on the back cover. There, one is barely crushed; here, horizontal mounted, badly imploded, baffles visible.]



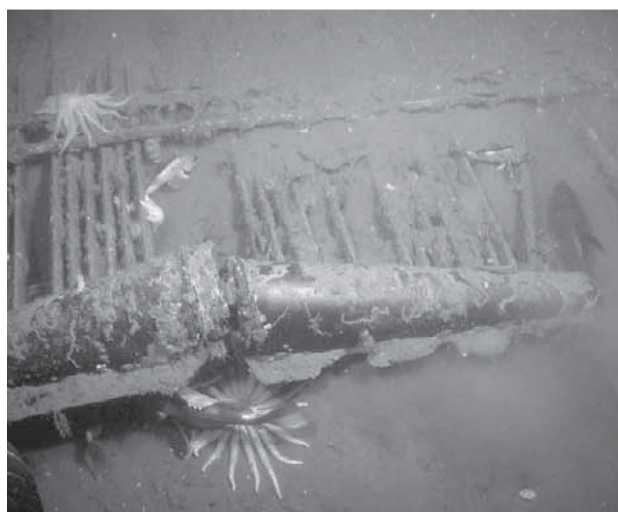
Feature identification has already begun with NOAA and MBARI consulting with the airship experts from the Naval Airship Association. The construction of airships was well documented and the many contemporary photographs are now useful in identifying objects.

The archaeological team expects to publish a final mission report by the end of summer '07. The report will contain a final assessment of site features and distribution. It will also present site management recommendations for both the Navy and the sanctuary to consider. Finally, the team expects to begin the process of nominating the USS *Macon* to the National Register of

Historic Places. Since the *Macon* site most likely holds the most complete archaeological record of a unique naval aviation resource, it should be considered to be unique and of national significance.

Although the *Macon* mission was actually a standard archaeological assessment project for the National Marine Sanctuaries Program, the uniqueness of the subject created international interest. The project had a useful education and outreach value and brought many new constituents an awareness of the varied ocean issues that are addressed by the sanctuaries everyday. Ω

[Ed. Caption: one water-recovery condenser is laid out on the ocean floor as if a railroad track. We do not know why half of the pipe appears bright brass and the other darker, as if dissimilar metal.]



For more information on USS *Macon* expeditions visit:
<http://www.montereybay.noaa.gov/research/macon/welcome.html>

<http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/missions/2006macon/welcome.html>

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2006/10/061018150459.html>

Wreck of the *Graf Zeppelin* Found!

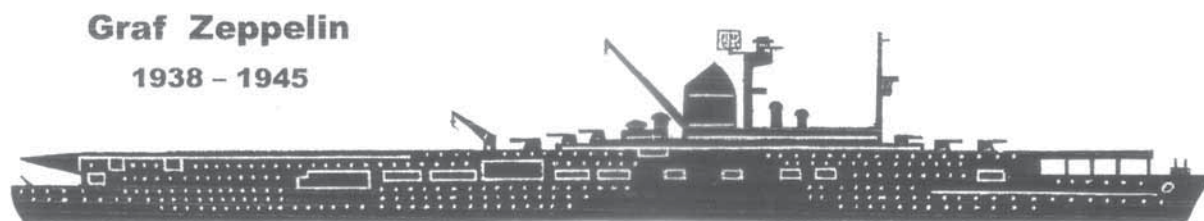
by Herman Van Dyk

A Dutch newspaper (P.Z.C.) reported last month that the wreck of the *Graf Zeppelin* was found on the bottom of the Baltic Sea. Polish geologists, searching the Baltic Sea for oil deposits, discovered the wreck. The ship was launched in December 1938 in the presence of Adolf Hitler and many other high Nazi officials, at the "Deutsche Werke in" Kiel. The reader who may have wondered how the *Graf Zeppelin* could have ended up at the bottom of the Baltic Sea, may now realize that this story is not about the LZ-127, but about the aircraft carrier *Graf Zeppelin*, built for the German Navy before WWII.

In spite of high priority, the ship was not yet completed at the outbreak of WWII on Sept. 3, 1939. If completed, the ship could have played an important role during the invasion of Norway in April 1940. After Norway had been occupied, priorities shifted for the benefit of the U-boat construction program and all work on the *Graf Zeppelin* was stopped. Despite the frequent and heavy Allied bombardments of all German port installations, the ship was still afloat close to the end of the war. To prevent Russia from taking the ship as a war prize, the Germans scuttled the ship off the port of Stettin just before its capitulation.

The ship had a displacement of 34,000 tons; a length of 862 ft and it could carry a mixture of 40 Junkers Ju-87 Stuka divebombers and a special version of the Messerschmitt Me-109 fighter. After the German capitulation on May 8, 1945, the Russians raised the ship and towed it to Leningrad (now St. Petersburg). They removed the engines and returned the hulk to the bottom of the sea in August 1947, approximately 15 miles north of the Island of Ruegen. Ω

[Enjoy Herman's drawing below.]



SHORT LINES

Frank Hudner of Potomac Falls, VA, sent along a 7 AUG 06 Washington *Post* clipping carrying an AP story about renewed interest in military LTA. Your editor is currently trying to make head or tail of the many new LTA efforts and reports, and hopes to have a summary ready for an upcoming issue. Problem is there are many players in the arena, NAA committee members are sometimes bound by non-disclosure agreements, and the Governments' own efforts are fragmented and seemingly competitive. Your editor and your Tech Com Chair have personally visited several of the new airship efforts, but in some cases the result was becoming more fully aware of how little is known. Stay tuned. Ω

Aviation Week's 22 MAY 06 issue reported the USAF had awarded two contracts worth \$1 million to Northrop Grumman to investigate the possibility of a surveillance airship operating in the stratosphere 43 miles above the earth. The article suggests such a ship would require large lightweight phased-array radar antennas to be integrated in the airship. One contract involves a direct-current efficient transceiver while the other seeks light, efficient electronically scanned array technology. Ω

The October issue of POPULAR MECHANICS devotes its cover to "The Return of the Airship" and even features a previously unseen photo of the Lockheed P-791. NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC's Nov. issue also has a mention of the *Dynalifter*. Likewise the October POPULAR SCIENCE has several LTA mentions, not the least of which carries the persistent rumor that a large airship/hybrid aircraft had been built and operated by the Government. The Fall issue of INVENTION & TECHNOLOGY magazine carried a nice article on the Nat'l Geographic high altitude balloon flight of 1935, possibly the only demonstrable instance of an actual LTA hydrogen explosion, in the editor's opinion. Responding to the previous issue's two airship articles, readers negated the

author's careful avoidance of the two usual LTA topics, the origin of the word 'Blimp' and the checkered past of the L-8, but the response mentioned our efforts at Pensacola to restore and display the famous car. Ω



TV News: "Hood Blimp Crash Lands In Manchester-By-The-Sea" (Sept 26, 2006 - CBS4) "The Hood Blimp, a fixture in the sky over the Boston area, crash landed in the woods in Manchester-By-The-Sea Tuesday afternoon. The pilot, Leigh Bradbury, lost control of the rudder shortly after takeoff, then tried to land the blimp on nearby Singing Beach just after noon, but he didn't make it. The blimp ended up on top of several trees about 30 feet above the ground. Bradbury was doing "exposure flying" -- or recreational flying -- and was not on a business run, said Mickey Wittman, director of client services for Lightship Group of Orlando, Fla., which owns the aircraft. It rents advertising space to Hood. Bradbury was not hurt but it took rescue personnel two hours to free him. The wooded area was inaccessible to rescue vehicles. Bradbury put on a harness, which was attached to a rescue rope and rappelled to the ground, State Police Lt. Dermot Quinn said. A 12-man team from Beverly Airport is working to deflate the blimp so it can be removed from the area, which is near the airport and an elementary school. This process could take a few days.

The A-60 Airship was manufactured by American Blimp Corp., the parent company of Lightship Group, Wittman said." Ω

[From Internet] – “Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR) is flight-testing a unique spherical airship to gauge its value for future surveillance applications. Under a U.S. Navy contract with Cyber Aerospace of New Orleans, the 62-foot diameter SA-60 spherical airship has undergone several days of flight-testing at St. Mary's County Airport in Maryland, just a few miles from Naval Air Station Patuxent River. The main goals of the flight tests were to reach 10,000 feet and stay aloft for three hours, both of which were achieved in a June 28 flight. **Stephen Huett**, director of airship programs for NAVAIR, was onboard June 28 and piloted part of the flight. The SA-60 is the product of teamwork between four small companies. Techsphere Systems International Inc. holds the manufacturing rights, based on a design by 21st Century Airships Inc. of Canada. Cyber Aerospace, a subsidiary of Proximity Digital Networks Inc., holds the global government marketing rights, and Sierra Nevada is the systems integrator. After spending several hours aloft in the sun, the SA-60's helium gas heated and expanded, making the vehicle extra buoyant and leaving it underweight. Without sufficient ballast onboard, landing the airship took several tries while crewmembers vented the onboard helium. The spherical design boasts several advantages over traditional, cigar-shaped airships, according to **Hokan Colting**, designer of the SA-60 and CEO of 21st Century Airships Inc. "It's more maneuverable than a traditional airship," Colting said. "It's amphibious, it can land and take off from water. And it can go to high altitudes. Traditional, cigar-shaped airships can go to 5,000-6,000 feet ... We have been up to 22,000 feet with [a spherical] airship, and that's the absolute world record in altitude for airships." The SA-60 can be transported in a truck and set up by a small group of people in roughly 24 hours, according to the companies. Although it requires a pilot, the companies plan to make the airship unmanned to allow for longer flights...”

Ω

The House chose May 11 to authorize \$5 million for the U.S. Air Force's High Altitude Airship (HAA) Program, offset by an equal amount taken from the Space Based Space Surveillance (SBSS), as well as require a comprehensive analysis of future airlift and sealift mobility requirements as part of the Defense Department's 2006 update to the Mobility Capability Study.

Ω

The 25 SEP AV WEEK reported Techsphere, (mentioned left) partner of Canada's 21st Century Airships for high altitude communications work, has tested a "paint-on" antenna. Polymer based dielectrics and highly conductive paint is to be applied to their spherical airships antenna nodes for use as communications relay.

Ω

Once again an LTA mention is part of FLY-BY, the NMNA newsletter. While there is only an internet photo, (we had a member's local photos!) mention is made of the new Navy airship effort. The work of conservators are lauded in that active-duty Navy officers visited the library and obtained copies of flight manuals and other materials deposited there by thoughtful airshipmen of the previous generation (likely NAA members as well). History committee, you stand commended.

Ω

New member and author **Ed Sinclair** sent info about a novel we hadn't heard of before:

DISTANT MEMORY By Danny Zahner
Pages: 40 ISBN: 0-595-27935-X

Published: May-2003

"The fate of a huge research ship, 13 million dollars in equipment, and thousands of lives all depend on one 70-year-old man!"

Book Description

“Off the coast of California lies an enormous operation to salvage four extremely rare aircraft from one of the largest airships ever built... The USS *Macon*. Unfortunately for the crew of the salvage ship the *Macon* keeps a deadly secret that is about to be unleashed upon the entire world, unless one 88 year old man can stop it.”

Ω

HISTORY COMMITTEE



Robert F. Martin wrote and included a number excellent laser copies of ZPG-3W photos, other historical data and illustrations.

He writes in part: "...I am interested in finding the first name of the AE1 Bennett (or more likely AE1 Bennett) who was a member of the ZPG-3W Sub-BIS flight test team in May of 1959, and who shows up in one of these photographs..." [above]

Can someone help out Robert with first name(s)? A Goodyear *Wingfoot Clan* caption labels these techs "[l to r] AE2 Woolfe, AE2 Cook, AE1 Bennet, and ATC Frundenberg" as if they knew the lower fellow was promoted after the photo was taken...?) Don't forget Robert's request from last issue! Ω

E-mail from **Steve Finnigan**, US Navy Submarine Force Museum (NAVSUBASE NLON Groton, CT 06439 860-694-3558 FX:860-694-4150 www.ussnautilus.org) via **Eric Brothers**: "Do you have any info on Blimps that did Co-Operative Anti Submarine Warfare exercises with US Subs... usually the K-1 K-2 K-3 (*Bass, Barracuda, Mackerel*)... Hunter Killer subs that were designed and built in the 1950s. I know of one story where a blimp was used to evacuate a sub sailor some 200 miles off Nassau who became ill during exercises and a Blimp cable picked him up, flew to Nassau then a prop plane flew him to Florida."

Any stories from members would be greatly appreciated, even sea stories... we have one tale of a Helicopter landing on the deck of the *USS Nautilus*. and I believe it was filmed from the *USS Leyte*... but a blimp might have been involved during that operation as part of the Hunter-Killer team. Many thanks for any help." Steve then forwarded a message from former sub-mariner named **Al Charette**, aboard the *Nautilus* as an S01 and retired as a CDR in 1979: along with clippings with a date: June 9, 1954. [Ed.: *K-1 is a sub, not blimp.*]



"I was on the *USS K-1*, (SSK-1)...We were out in the Atlantic somewhere doing an ASW exercise. On board was a fireman by the name of **Robert Seldon**. He developed appendicitis. We had to MEDEVAC him, but the nearest capable aircraft was a blimp from Lakehurst NAS flying as part of the exercise. We removed a mess hall table, took it topside, rigged a harness, strapped him to it, attached the hook and away he went. But, as we weren't directly under the blimp, even though he took off from the main deck aft, he wasn't high enough to stay out of the water. So, as the table swung out at the end of the hauling cable it lowered to the water's surface. It never went under, but rather slid across the waves until it was under the blimp and then Seldon took off like he was superman. He survived and returned to the boat, but I don't know any more than that. His departure was just before sunset."

There you have it, postwar LTA guys, let's hear our side of this unpublished hunter-killer story, featuring a rescue. Ω

What is going on here? Mystery Photos

First off, in Issue #70 we ran the photo submitted by **Bob Vales** but had not received any guesses as to who the rest of the officers were, until **Joe Lundy** found a duplicate of the photo in his collection - with names on the back! Joe lent it to us; it's faded somewhat but we think it reads:

First Row: Roy Belotti, Eighrtinger (?), Berquist, Joe Lundy, James, Reeder, Gavigan(?) Nesbitt, Caser, Groover, Ward;
Lower Row: Petty, R. Vales, Roguts, Martin.

Second, last issue's mystery photos... remain mysteries. Several guesses included **Stu Chipman**, who wrote in with some ideas from one **Bill Novak**, with a sketch of how the towed minesweeping rig might have worked, tongue-in-cheek suggesting the wrapped object on the CVE was the Admiral's barge being shipped somewhere. Hopefully the people who can tell us what's what are just a bit slow in jumping up to their writing desk. We need to hear from you!

This issue, front inside Cover: the date is '45 in this photo labeled '___ MAD head.' If this is what it seems, a MAD sensor head mounted in a miniature towed glider, the implications are rather fantastic – the first UAV, albeit tethered, from an LTA craft since the rigids! One wonders how this remained classified forever, never being mentioned in the literature. Are we to assume the airship would pay out this winged sensor head on the line in order to increase the effective MAD sweep width? If so, how wide? Was the experiment successful but dried up for lack of continuation funding, or was its benefit not in keeping with the trouble? Worse yet, did it fly back and hit the bag? We thought this important development warranted the full page. Wish we could on the back cover... it's obviously very busy, so we'll start at the top:

Inside back cover, Top inset: member **Roy Gibbens'** father served with the first Naval Aviation unit to arrive in Europe during The Great War. He was HTA, but he photographed

various airships during operations. Roy was so kind as to drop by recently and allow us to scan his Dad's stuff, and this photo was included. A while back there was some e-mail traffic about wearing the half-wings; anyone out there up on the World War One insignia enough to tell us what we are looking at here?

Top photo: This one may be related to the inside front cover, but ignoring the central focus of removing the door (is it still tethered?), notice *inside* the ship- that is not the radio shack nor even a dismounted mechanic's panel. Was it a special instrument set for the MAD sensor experiment, or something else? Also, we had noticed the US Army LTA guys had developed roller-style hook on weight back in the 30's, yet the seemingly obvious roller-ball weights seen here are not photographed in most locations. We'd only seen the clumsy square style (also in the photo) and the ever popular sandbag. Anyone know who is holding the door? Who came up with the idea of rolling weights that could be pulled along? Did it work out?

Lower left: This photo is on an internet website labeled as South Weymouth's steel hangar under construction in 1942. We think those look more like wooden trusses, and 16 of the 17 timber hangars were not that far along without their door towers also being visible under construction. The exception of course is Houma, with its separately built moving wooden half-dome doors. Anyone recognize details that would prove the website needs to be corrected?

Lower right: The seemingly obvious focal point of this National Archives photo has been questioned. A wire or rod protruding from the *Graf* model is anchored in the mast mounted on the ship model. It would be easy discount this *Patoka*-like setup based on the published literature, which never mention any plan to gas up the LZ-127 at sea. From the design of the swastikas on the model tail, this was obviously later in *Graf's* life – 1935 or later – so, what gives? Ω

THE READY ROOM

**Naval Airship Association Reunion
Tues-Thurs September 4, 5 and 6, 2007
Toms River, (Lakehurst), New Jersey**

Yes, the above dates are correct. The previous **Noon Balloon** announcement was premature and incorrect. Our apologies for any inconvenience this may have caused.

The Chair for the NAA Reunion 2007 is **Rick Zitarosa**, a member of NAA as well as a member and Historian of the Navy Lakehurst Historical Society (NLHS). Rick and his committee, along with the entire NAA Executive Council, are planning a special program of interest in order to celebrate our "returning to our roots" for a good old time reunion. There have been many changes at what used to be "NAS" Lakehurst, but the hangars are still there and LTA is back.

We need an early commitment from you for attendance at the 2007 reunion so that we can confirm our food, beverage and room contract with the Quality Inn in Toms River. Normally, it would be left to you to make your own room reservations for the reunion, but the NLHS has graciously offered their sponsorship in order to secure the rooms at the Quality Inn without having to pay the New Jersey State Taxes amounting to 12%. In other words, if you make your reservations for your room at the Quality Inn via the NLHS, you will save approximately \$10 per night on your room bill.

A block of at least 75 rooms has been reserved for the NAA Reunion at a cost of \$79 per night. Of course, we hope there will be many more than 75 room reservations and what cannot be accommodated at the Quality Inn, will be handled at the Comfort Inn just up the street. There is an incentive for you to get your reservation in as soon as possible since NLHS must pay up the room charges by July 1, 2007 and it will be "first come, first served" at the Quality Inn, our reunion headquarters. In addition to the very attractive cost for rooms, the Quality Inn is offering a splendid banquet

menu, a "ready room" with coffee and snacks, and heavy hors d'oeuvres for the "Welcome Aboard" cocktail party in the Rosendahl Room, all included in the NAA Reunion 2007 Registration Fee. Also included is a tour of NAES Lakehurst facilities and the LTA museum established by NLHS. It is anticipated that the program will include a bus trip to Atlantic City for those interested in attending a "Financial Seminar" at one of the special establishments resident in that resort city.

Attached to this issue is a Registration Form. Please sign up as soon as possible so that you will not miss out on the room "discount." Look for more details in the next issue of The Noon Balloon.

Preliminary (very preliminary) Schedule:

Tuesday Afternoon – NAA Executive Council Meeting. Time TBD. Registration after noon. 1800, Welcome aboard cocktail party, heavy hors d'oeuvres, cash bar.

Wednesday, Sept 5 – NAA business meeting at 9:00 AM

Bus trip to and tour of NAES Lakehurst.

Lunch served at NAES Lakehurst

Memorial Service at the Cathedral of the Air
Thursday, Sept 6 - Bus trip to appropriate establishment(s) in Atlantic City for refreshment, pleasure and Financial Planning
Wednesday's and Thursday's schedules may alternate depending on the number of attendees and availability of buses.

Thursday Evening – No host cocktail party followed by Reunion Banquet.

Hope to see you all at **NAA Reunion 2007**.

- Bob Ashford, President, NAA

(If the form is missing by the time you are holding this magazine, and you will stay at the reunion hotel, send \$307 for one or \$377 for two persons total reunion package including hotel, trips, etc.; indicate choice of beef, chicken or fish for banquet meal. Please make check payable to **NAA**, and mail to:

Rick Zitarosa, Chair, NAA Reunion, 2213 Rogers Road, Point Pleasant, NJ 08742-3837)

THE READY ROOM (CON'T)

17th Lighter-than-Air Systems Technology Conference - Belfast, Northern Ireland

The LTA 2007 LTA Technical Symposium will be held in conjunction with the 7th Aviation Technology, Integration, and Operations (ATIO) Forum, and the 2nd Center of Excellence for Integration of Aircraft Technology (CEIAT) International Conference. ATIO and CEIAT have come together to create this unique international event with the theme of: "Aviation: Industry without Borders."

The event will take place in Belfast, Northern Ireland September 18 - 20, 2007. The conference venue will be the newly built Waterfront Hall in Belfast which is close to the City Center, and overlooks the river. Local administrative support will be provided by Queen's University Belfast, School of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering. An interesting Spouse and Delegate Social Program has also been set up.

This international venue provides the LTA TC with an opportunity to solicit specific papers that can be edited later on for inclusion in the AIAA Progress Series edition on LTA Advances that is being developed. Each paper can be expanded to provide a chapter in the LTA edition, which will present the latest current advances in LTA technology. We therefore need to be thinking about what those LTA Industry advances are and what paper topics can best capture information on them.

Because of meeting conflicts and limitations on international travel the AIAA Balloon TC will not be able to join us in Belfast. However, we can expect plenty of LTA papers to fill out a full slate of sessions. AIAA is estimating at least a couple hundred participants. This venue should attract a large attendance from the UK and Europe for our LTA sessions. To maximize participation by our AIAA LTA TC and other LTA organizations we need to start making plans for our 17th LTA Technical Symposium. Ω

THE BLACK BLIMP: Final Flights

Nelson Grover Grills, 93, passed away on October 18, 2005. Born in Decatur, Illinois on April 26, 1912, he was admitted to the Indiana Bar in 1937, and practiced law for 68 years. His colorful career was full of a wide variety of clients and causes; he practiced law until the day he died. He married Reva McMahon who remained his wife, friend, and supporter for the next eventful 64 years. In 1940 he received a fellowship to study at Columbia University for a further qualification in legislative and constitutional law. An "old man" of 31 when he traded duty with another ZP-21 crew to fly a routine patrol where he'd been briefed there were 'no enemy subs anywhere around,' his K-74 was shot down by the U-134 on the night of 18-19 July 1943. *[Ed. note: The results are hotly debated, but the K-74 is still the only blimp named by the Navy as having attacked a sub. Rated "G" by the 10th Fleet {meaning "miss"} and never officially changed, the crew eventually received commendations, and Grills the DFC, following volunteer efforts many years after the fact. VADM C. E. Rosendahl later acknowledged Grills' action in returning to the sinking car to destroy the confidential folder was laudable in light of Grills' perception the depth charges were still attached to the sinking car, and commendable since it's known the U-134 returned and actually examined the sinking blimp.]* After the war Nelson returned briefly to Chicago to practice law, and then moved to Indianapolis where he taught at the Indiana University Law School between 1946 and 1952. Nelson served in the United States Naval Reserve from 1945 to 1965, retiring with the rank of Commander. *[Awarded DFC before retirement.]* Nelson helped dedicate the original effort to establish a museum at Richmond, and in 2004 was invited to lay a wreath at sea to commemorate the loss of his crew member Isadore Stessel. Nelson served with honor and distinction in the Indiana Senate from 1958-1962 and in 1964-1967. Ω

DRIFTING TOWARD THE LIGHTER SIDE OF LTA



If you think "jumbo shrimp" or "military intelligence" were good oxymorons, you got to love the media's current doozy: "Zeppelin Blimp." ☺

In the heyday of sailing ships, all war ships and many freighters carried iron cannons. Those cannons fired round iron cannon balls. It was necessary to keep a good supply near the cannon. However, how to prevent them from rolling about the deck during heavy seas? The best storage method devised was a square-based pyramid with one ball on top, resting on four resting on nine, which rested on sixteen. Thus, a supply of 30 cannon balls could be stacked in a small area right next to the cannon.

There was only one problem... how to prevent the bottom layer from sliding or rolling from under the others during storms. The solution was a metal plate called a "Monkey" with 16 round indentations. However, if this plate were made of iron, the iron balls would quickly rust to it in the salty atmosphere. The solution to the rusting problem was to make the monkeys out of brass.

Even solution has a problem: Few land lubbers realize that brass contracts much more and much faster than iron when chilled. Consequently, when the temperature dropped too far, the brass indentations would shrink so much that the iron cannonballs would come right off the monkey during heavy seas. Thus, it was quite literally, "Cold enough to freeze the balls off a brass monkey." All this time, you thought that was an improper expression, didn't you!

Gifts "Helium Heads" Won't Be Giving This Year:

Hydrogen-Burning Fireplace

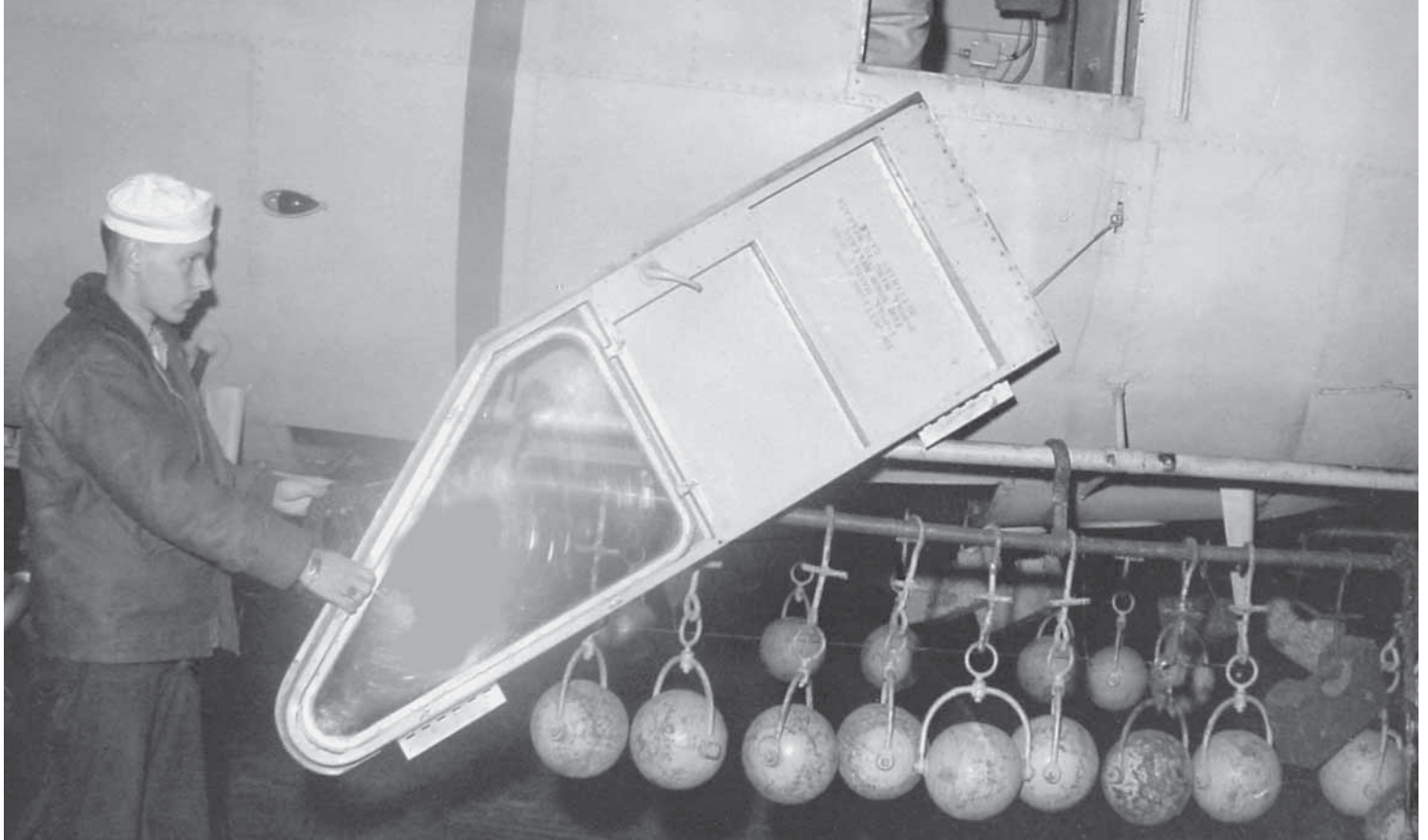
Last year Heat & Glo won an industry Gas Fireplaces award with its new *Aqueon* hydrogen-burning fireplace. Unlike the new propane-powered fuel cell designed for electric power generation while camping outdoors, the *Aqueon* is the world's first commercially available in-home hydrogen appliance. It revolutionizes fireplace design, operation and enjoyment by extracting hydrogen fuel from water, then mixing it with the released oxygen to burn with color and radiance. Needing only good water and 220 volt electric power, the *Aqueon* does not require ducting outside, since it emits no pollution. Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th Edition, states "Hydrogen burns with a pale blue non-luminous flame, but will not support the combustion of ordinary combustibles." All the same, we wouldn't drape any nitrate-doped fabric over one's furnace. ☺

Hydrogen-Powered Model Rocket

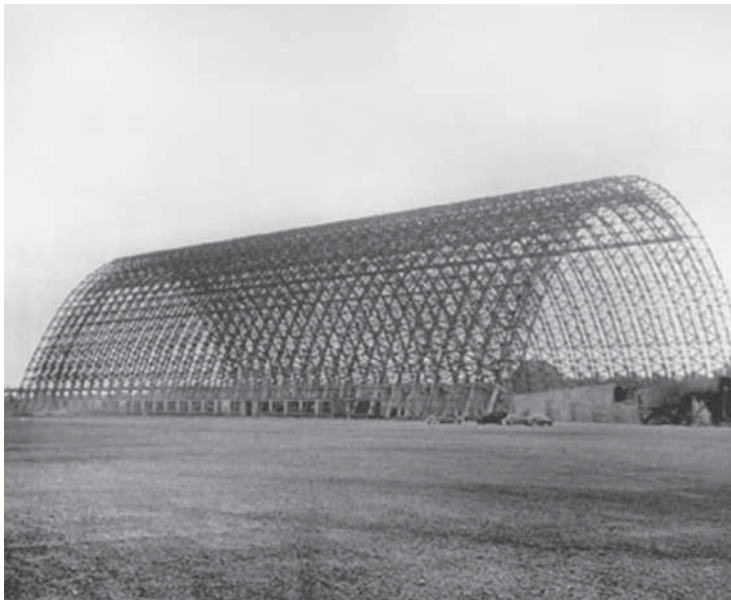
[from Estes web site] "Now you can generate the fuel of the future and launch a rocket into orbit!

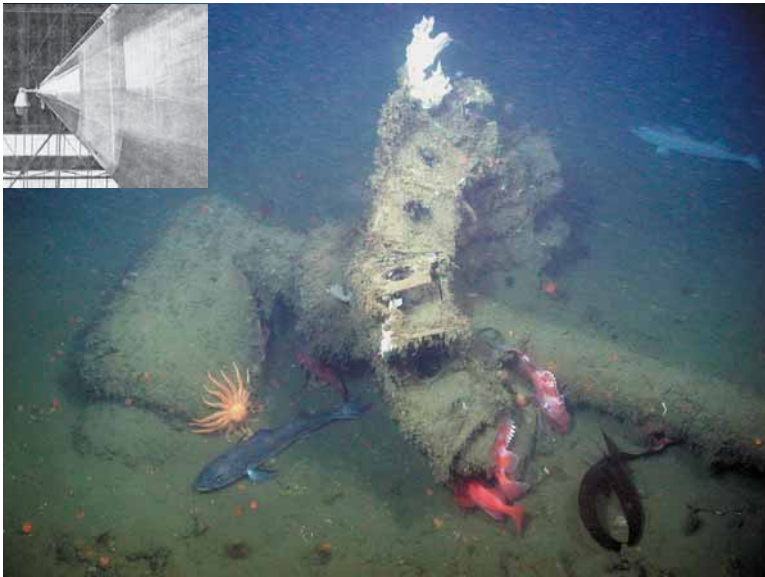


The Estes hydrogen fuel technology uses water to generate the hydrogen fuel needed to blast a sleek rocket 200 feet into the sky. This set comes complete with a hydrogen fuel generating launch system, a four-point system check, a remote push-button ignition, propellant crystals, mixing bottle and two ready to fly rockets. Minor assembly required. Recommended for ages 10 and up with adult supervision for those under 12." (Your editor received one of these for Christmas last year and despite lack of adult supervision, try as he might he hasn't managed to blow himself up, yet, during local altitude attempts.)



What is going on here? See “History Committee” inside.





In this issue, NOAA and MBARI return to the resting place of the mighty USS Macon (ZRS-5) and her four embarked F9C-2 Sparrowhawk airplanes. The NAA History Committee played a role in identifying debris. These photos taken in the 1930s and at NMNA in 1991 are compared with her remains today.

Photos: NOAA; MBARI; staff's collection.