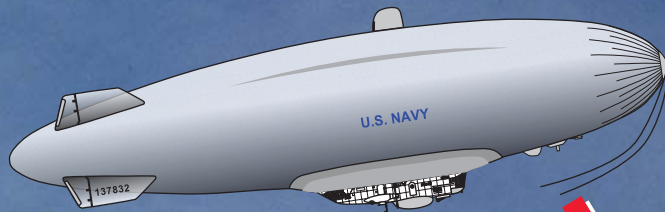
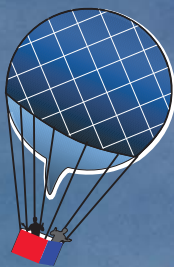


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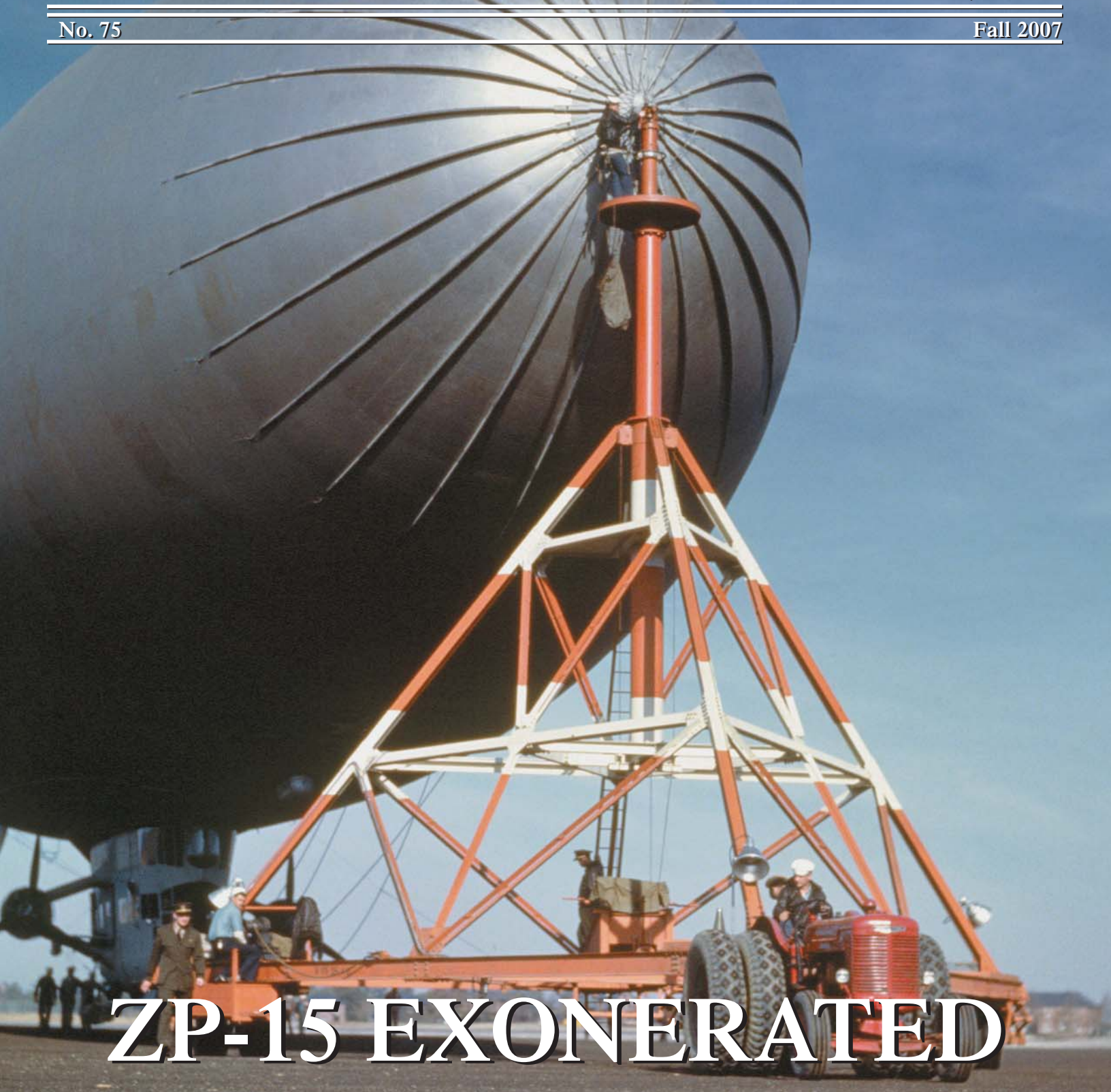
BALLOON



The Official Newsletter of THE NAVAL AIRSHIP ASSOCIATION, INC.

No. 75

Fall 2007



ZP-15 EXONERATED



"Pushing out to sea." The New Jersey shoreline as seen from the navy's MZ3A Airship.



Below: ZS2G-1 (K5) and other K-Ships at NAS Lakehurst about 1955.

THE NOON BALLOON

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ISSUE # 75 FALL 2007

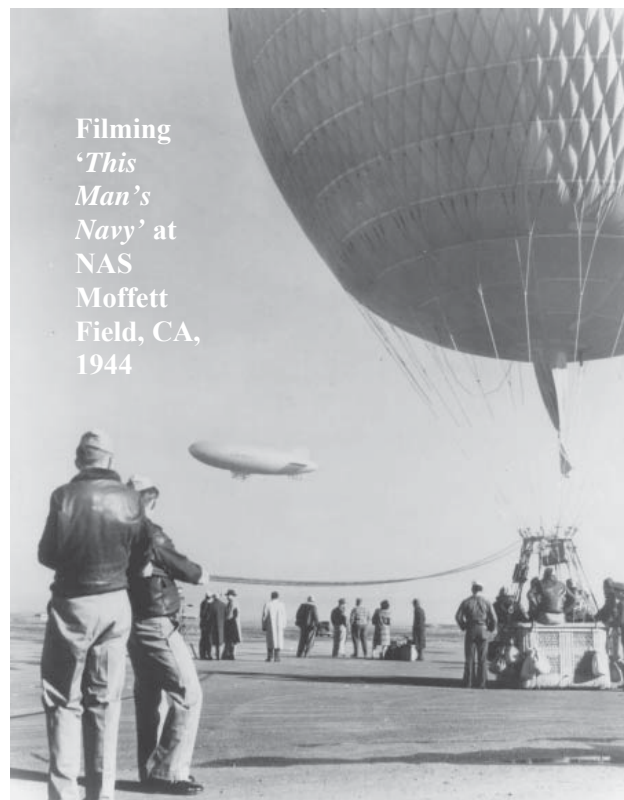
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On the Cover of TNB #75: A series of photos were taken with the still-newfangled color film as the K-16 was handled on the Type II mast. US Navy/NARA photo via David Smith and Eric Brothers.

Inside Front Covers: Top: Does the New Jersey shoreline look familiar? This view captured by Rick Zitarosa from the Navy airship of today, the MZ3A. **Below:** Ford Ross supplied this picture-postcard of yesteryear's Navy blimps at Lakehurst in the late 1950s. Read Ford's recollection of a "5K" incident in PEGION COTE.

Inside Back and Back Cover: Rick Zitarosa's montage of MZ3A operations. Here is a celebration of the first Navy airship in 44 years, operating while a visiting American Blimp leased by the Army is masted at Lakehurst (first time Army and Navy LTA at NASL in more than 60 years); and during Fleet Week 2007, the first time a Navy airship had worked with the Fleet since the late early 1960s. Sadly, shortly after the celebration of Fleet Week, the MZ3A was docked without the intention of flying again in the near future. Read about this sad state of affairs in SHORE ESTABLISHMENTS. All photos courtesy Navy Lakehurst Historical Society historian and NAA Convention Chairman Rick Zitarosa.

All material contained in this newsletter represents the views of its authors and does not necessarily



The Naval Airship Association
www.naval-airships.org

President - Robert L. Ashford
 389 Harvard Ct. - Naples, FL 34104
 Tel. 239-353-1306

Email: rlashford6@yahoo.com
Vice President - Donald E. Shorts
 1495 Main St. - Crete, IL 60417-0481
 Tel: 708-672--0136

Email: fourstacks@aol.com
Secretary - Margret M. Hinrichsen
 653 Alvarado Lane - Cottonwood, AZ 86326
 Tel.& Fax: 928-634-0727

Email: hinrich@comspeed.net
Treasurer - Peter F. Brouwer
 1950 S.W. Cycle St. - Port St. Lucie, FL
 34953-1778 Tel: 772-871-9379

Email: peterfbrouwer@bellsouth.net
NAME Liaison - Mort Eckhouse
Email: mortusn@yahoo.com
NMNA Liaison - Joe Hajcak
Email: jghajcak@juno.com

Webmaster - Michael Vinnarick
Email: michael_vinnarick@email.msn
Technical Committee Chair -
Norman Mayer

Email: normanmayer@juno.com
Small Stores - George W. Allen

EDITORIAL

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

In many of these editorials I have advocated action of one kind or another. Yet never have we had more deserving causes than right now. First and most important is of course the current Naval Airship Program. In SHORE ESTABLISHMENTS beginning on page 13 you'll read about the new airship's final day flying Navy. After a bit more than a year the parties involved have decided they can't find a mission for the MZ-3A (!) NAA veterans have the experience to list more than just a few missions for this fuel-efficient buoyant platform. It is hoped at least a few hundred of you will write to your Congress people to make some recommendations beginning with, for example, the 25 useful functions Rosendahl detailed about K-ships in WWII. You guys can come up with some more from the late 40s and 1950s, not to mention all the stuff that's going on today. So I urge to now to put your best words on paper and send them to your elected representatives. If we don't act, who will?

What we think we know about the role of the ASW Naval airship in WWII is based largely on the histories published before the turn of the century. Since the records of the 10th Fleet were not made accessible to the public until just before Y2K, the simple fact is none of our books contain anything about formerly classified combats. While German records were not classified nearly as long, our self-funded team can only proceed obtaining that side of the story as volunteerism allows. And lastly the events that went unrecorded... not secret, just lost in the fog of war. Haven't attended a Reunion where I did not hear a couple more unpublished events in LTA.

So I'll ask you to remember that a mind is like a parachute – it works best when open. Now that our team has pieced together the events transpiring off Georgia in the summer of 1943 you will see why the official history is wrong – and hopefully agree with my call for the NAA leadership to petition the Navy Historian's Office to not only have the record corrected, but to award commendations to the crew of the K-34, including the DFC for command pilot John P. Hely IV. Read the work starting on page 16 and see if you don't agree. If you know our revision is inaccurate, speak up.

Jim Plumber e-mailed how he'd liked the K-14 coverage last issue, but said "I don't think you'll ever get the 10th Fleet to acknowledge the part aviation did in World War II. They were all ship admirals." Jim might be right, but I don't think we should go down without a fight. How 'bout you?



Longtime Goodyear mechanic, my pal **Kenny Horton**, is seen here with new G/Y Pampano PR person Diane Silverman during my visit there in July. You'd have every reason to suspect folks who do airships for a living would be a bit leery of "helium heads" hanging around and spouting truisms. Yet Kenny and his co-workers are not only tolerant, they've been most hospitable when we have the chance to pal around. I haven't always found that with other airship crews and field operations. Sometimes it's more of a job, one they could advance from. The guys and gals at Goodyear have a different outlook – to them it's always special to work with such a uniquely American icon. Here's hope they go on forever.

Our friends and colleagues at [Airship Heritage Trust](#) report a museum in the north of England is very interested in the old ZP3K-88 hulk and negotiations have reached "an advanced stage." Rumors also persist that a private concern is poised to purchase the "R-100/R-101" sheds at Cardington, through no announcement has been made at press time. My "opposite number" in the UK, *Dirigible* Editor Giles Camplin, will keep us posted. See you all at the Reunion!

–R G Van Treuren

THE NOON BALLOON Volunteer Staff

Contributing Editors: **NAA Members**
Masthead Artwork: **Bo Watwood**
www.navyblimps.tripod.com
Editor: **Richard G. Van Treuren**
www.airshiphistory.com
Publisher: **David R. Smith**
www.gyzep.com

View From The Top: PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As you may (or may not) know, the Executive Council (EC) of the NAA continues to carry on the business of the association during the periods between our biennial reunions. At the outset of my term as President we had a goal to meet once every six months. We were successful in accomplishing this and the final meeting of this EC will be held in Toms River in conjunction with our Reunion 2007. How do you thank the faithful members who traveled to these meetings at their own expense – our Secretary, Margaret Hinrichsen all the way from Arizona, our VP Don Shorts from Illinois, our recent Past President, Norm Mayer, from Virginia and the rest of the troops (George Allen, Pete Brouwer, Mort Eckhouse, Joe Hajcak, Rich Van Treuren and myself) from the “four corners” of Florida? I think that the membership of NAA has expressed their thanks by the manner in which you have supported the Reunion 2007. In fact, the response has been so overwhelming that it threatens to become a problem. The very maximum number that can be handled in the banquet room at the reunion headquarters is 230 – and we are rapidly approaching that number. The overflow crowd will be housed at the Comfort Inn up the road. Our apologies to anyone who feels inconvenienced, but the Comfort Inn is just as nice a motel as the Quality Inn and everyone should be pleased with the accommodations.

One of the facts of life is that the biennial reunion demands that a hard-working, energetic person on-the-scene step up to be the Reunion Committee Chair. We have been blessed to have Rick Zitarosa, the Historian of the Navy Lakehurst Historical Society, take over that very difficult task. Thank you, Rick. One of the really neat things about Rick is his bubbling enthusiasm about LTA. In numerous e-mails, and in excruciating detail, Rick has lived the MZ3A saga, the navy's latest venture in LTA. He has agonized more than anyone I know over the unfortunate way that the navy once again launched off into an ill-conceived LTA program. In the beginning, it looked like the “new” navy airship program might survive, but alas, the shortage of funds, lack of navy interest and other factors combined to bring the MZ3A project to a screeching halt in June. By the time you read this issue of TNB, the MZ3A may be on other duty or even packed in a box. It had been Rick Zitarosa's dream to have the MZ3A on display in Hangar #6 for our reunion.

As a child I lived in Northeast Philadelphia and my father took us on family excursions to many places, especially on Sunday afternoons. I recall quite

vividly going to Lakehurst sometime in 1932 or 1933 to see the “big airships” which always fascinated my father as well as myself. On this particular trip I remember seeing the AKRON moored on the south side of hangar #1 with the skeleton of the LOS ANGELES hanging alongside on the north side of the hangar. There was also a non-rigid airship moored aft of the LA (don't know which one). We made other trips to Lakehurst in the ensuing years to see the MACON (on its only visit to Lakehurst) and the HINDENBURG. I specifically recall the HINDENBURG visit because it was one of the few times that they had docked the ship in hangar #1 (must have been 1936). It, too, was docked on the south side of the hangar, but it was so long it seemed they could not close the doors. Everybody smoked in those days and they made everyone deposit their lighters, matches and other inflammables before allowing them anywhere near the hangar. Those visits as a kid were what inspired me to get into LTA in 1943. So I owe a lot to my long departed dad for introducing me to the “Giants of the Air.” Little did I know then that LTA in one form or the other would consume most of my adult life. Fourteen years (1943 through June 1956) of my 30-year navy career were spent flying airships. Then after retirement from the navy in 1972 I started a career with TCOM, LP, which is still ongoing, although on a part time basis of late. Altogether, I can count a total of 39 years that I have spent on the LTA scene in airships and tethered aerostats, during which time my LTA employment has been my major source of income. Anyone match that?

In closing this letter to you, it is fitting as a parting tribute, to recognize Richard Van Treuren, and his team-mate David Smith, who have given new life to the glue that has held the NAA together year after year. When I took office in 2005 I made a pledge to the membership that I would do my utmost to try to get TNB published on a reliable schedule four times each year. In fact, I have had very little to do with this terrific publication of which we can all be proud. Rich and Dave have done it all and to them goes all the credit along with my heart-felt thanks for “pulling my chestnuts” out of the fire and making my pledge come true.

My fondest best wishes to all of you, the membership of NAA. I'm leaving as the President, but I will continue to serve NAA in whatever calls. Meanwhile, I hope I see many of you at the reunion in September and at many reunions in the future – God willing. God Bless America and all for which she stands.

Warmest regards to all,

- Bob Ashford

Pigeon Cote

Donald J. Donatt of Sun Lakes, Arizona (shirley0128@wbhsi.net) had e-mailed a question concerning the loss of a K-ship, which **Jim Shock's** book USNA '15-'62 indicates was the K-119: "Well, memories fade with age. I must have misremembered the number 128. According to your e-mail, the K-119 seems to fit the situation. It served at Richmond but Richmond did not exist after the hurricane of '45, so it had to be stationed with ZP-2, Glynco, Ga. The incident happened in Nov. '52, close to the date I thought it had happened. As I mentioned, if there is a list of crewmen, McKinney and Bachelor were the two radiomen in the crew. Thank you for your research. I'm sure K-119 fits the puzzle -- it's hard to imagine more than one like that." Ω

John Fahey e-mailed: "NAA Treasurer Peter Brouwer asked if any of us in NAA were with **Don Potts**. Don and I were in the same LTA class, graduating on December 7, 1943. Our training schedule was rather strange. We reported from our various Navy Preflight Schools to Lakehurst in July 1943 when it was decided to conduct basic instruction in L-ships at Moffett Field. We attended ground school classes at Lakehurst in July and then in mass traveled by train to Moffett Field to begin flight training in free balloons and L-ships. In August and September i flew 35 flights in L-ships including some in the L-8 which was back on line. Again the class traveled back again by train to Lakehurst to begin flying K-ships in September. Our class covered more distance by train in 1943 than we did by air in training. Most class members left the Navy after the war and achieve distinction in civilian life. I was in contact throughout the post years with two close friends who reached the highest level of their professions. Before the war ending Jim Poe with me at the North Carolina Preflight School was selected by the Navy to be the Navy's representative in Hollywood, CA. After the war he became a screen writer and received one Academy Award and three other Academy Award nominations. Jim died in 1980. (Con't)



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

Tom Quinn, my closest friend in the class, was assigned with me to ZP-15 at Glynco. After the war, Tom started a successful trucking business and then established a multi million dollar science corporation which placed instruments in our early satellites, one was the first to use X-rays. When serving aboard ship, I would see Tom on port calls to Boston and later when he visited NASA in Virginia. Both Jim and Tom with Don and me were among the other 85 or more members on the last LTA class to graduate in 1943." Ω

Eleanor Knox sent yet another package of priceless clippings and a Zep booklet, then e-mailed concerning our NAMF FOUNDATION article on her Dad: "Hi - Such a magnificent job! - The publication and especially the article about my father. You did such a good job, paid him a nice tribute and created a wonderfully woven story about both the development of LTA & my Dad's career. -- My brother & his 4 kids (now grown) are very pleased also. My brother's kids knew him well as a person but little about his professional career. Your story gave them a great snap shot about his Navy work and I thank you for that. Trust you are pleased with your article also for it reads well and is a great contribution LTA history. The Museum Foundation forwarded to me 5 copies of the publication which in turn I have sent off to the 4 kids and one to my brother. A great magazine under the Museum's publication. Again I thank you for all you interest, efforts and perseverance." Ω



Vern Stinson <vstinson@ctaz.com> e-mailed our Treasurer: "I'm attaching a photo [above] taken in 1957 inside the airship hangar at NAS Glynco. The division photographed is not known, nor are any of the persons pictured known to me. I was wondering if someone in the NAA membership might be able or willing to i.d. some of the men in the photo." Ω

Ford Ross e-mailed about his experience with ZP5K/ZS2G-1 at NAS Lakehurst in 1957: "When I was transferred from ZP-4 back to Lakehurst in 1954 I was assigned to the Airship Experimental Center, Electronics shop in Hangar #1 at the NAS I was there from July 1954 to July 1957. My job in the Experimental Electronics shop was working closely on various projects such as improving the MAD system with a fellow Chief and a towed Acoustical mine sweeping system. We even test fired a couple of Dummy head Tiny Tim rockets from a K ship. (Con't)

Most of the people in the shop were high GS rated civil service engineers. Many times I was involved with some rather strange or funny accidents or near accidents. This brief story is about just one of them. On 15 August 1955 I was walking towards the west end of hangar One. It was about 1700 hours, the end of the working day and I was headed home. I observed the following incident with the then new ZP5K BuNo 137811. The airship was being delivered by Goodyear to the Navy and attempted to land on MAT ONE at the west end of Hangar #1 but drifted into soft sand at North west side of the mat, not far from the old Navy Exchange and enlisted barracks building. The 5Ks had a single high-pressure tire which did not work well in soft sand, So it dug its own hole. This tore the wheel and landing strut off which allowed the props of both engines to hit the ground. The engines of course stopped dead, one prop tore off and fortunately cart wheeled away from the Control Car. The other engine just stopped but the tips of the prop were bent severely, so it was worthless. (C't)

With no engines running and no A.P.U. built in - there was no power available except for the batteries, which soon went dead after using the D.C. blowers once or twice.

The blimp then started to drift off to the west for about 25 miles across the south Jersey farmland... One crewmember jumped off and broke his ankle, the only injury. Of course all hell broke loose and the first vehicles to respond were two of our giant ground handling mules. These went out the gate and down the road chasing after the free-ballooning blimp. They were so big they almost straddled the two lane country roads. Following close behind were hundreds of base personnel, myself included, piled in trucks. The blimp crew could not valve helium because this model airship had no APU and therefore could not maintain enough pressure to do so. The batteries could not provide enough power to use the blowers and soon went dead. On the 5K, the helium valves were located near the bottom of the envelope so with no pressure, very little helium could be valved so the blimp free-ballooned across the New Jersey country side. The airship was finally forced down by a hovering helicopter near Imlaystown, NJ and across some power lines to a local dairy farm. The farmer was upset because his dairy products would surely spoil if he didn't have the power restored soon. Jersey Central Power Company arrived soon after dark and restrung new power lines across the collapsed blimp, without waiting for the Navy to remove it. This of course made the farmer very happy. Some sailors were told to start cutting the envelope to let the helium out. The another officer told them to stop. A real fiasco in the making. I only wanted to do one thing and that was to go back to the base. By now it was getting close to 2400 hours and I was going on leave at midnight. I finally got permission to leave and jumped on a returning truck. I found out when I returned from leave that the cut up envelope and the control car was trucked back the next day. O & R in Hangar Two got the job of rebuilding the control car and engines, so it was flying again in a few weeks.” **Ω**



[It was not your editor's intention to feature a different unpublished 5K accident every TNB, it has just worked out that way. Still unclear are the details of two other 5K accidents whose photos have no captions. One involves a said lightning strike that started a rapid envelope fire, seen in pouring rain (above); the other dramatic photo series appears to show a 5K (below, without rain) that can't be masted and gets a topside rip. Any details as to ship Bu No's, times, details and locations would be appreciated by your History Committee.]



New member **Karen Chambliss** of Petaluma, CA reflected on the lost of her Dad (see Black Blimp): “He was the Dad in the neighborhood who could repair anything. He must have repaired dozens of bicycles over the years. We always laughed about the fact he served in the US Navy and his eldest child, myself, retired from the US Army. I miss him terribly. (Cont)

Dad purchased the prop from the L-8 when it became surplus. That was the blimp they call the "Ghost Ship" This prop hung in our family home for nearly 50 yrs. I had the propeller authenticated by the company that manufactured it in the 1920s. I was not aware the L-8 car was being restored to put on display. My family owns the original prop and we have it on loan to the Moffett Museum at present. You might want to have someone contact my brother, Tom Chambliss, about the possibility of loaning or donating it to the group doing the L-8 reconstruction.



*Henderson Thomas Chambliss, Sr. b. 6-10-1918
Picture Early 1940*

I filed a FOIA with the Navy regarding their investigation of the incident. From this I obtained the transcript of the testimony from all the crew involved in the L-8 that day. I tracked down a few of the former Navy men who testified and sent them each a copy of it. It had been classified up until the time I asked for it. Following WWII the Navy surplused blimps and stored them up in Tillamook, OR. A company purchased them to use for advertising. Dad left the Navy in Dec 1946, following 10 years service, and flew for this company. My brother Tom, sister Margaret and myself would stand outside and watch the blimp pass over head. It was advertising Mobil gas and had a flying red horse on the sides of it. We were so proud of our Dad and bragged

to all the kids in school. I have Dad's albums with photographs of the blimps with their advertising. Wonder Bread and Rancho Soup are two I remember." **Ω**

PAGE 2

STATION BREAK



"WHO... ME? I'M NOT SMILING, JACK!"—These happy, smiling faces belong to the first members of the Lakehurst Aero Club, the only Navy flying club extant here in the states.

Lakehurst Boasts Only Navy Air Club In U. S.

Bob Kiefer e-mailed: You will hardly be able to read this scan of a very old newspaper. [above] The article may be of some interest to you. In 1958 serving under CDR Charlie Mills (in my book a wonderful man) I started the first State Side Naval Aero Club and was president of it for the duration of my stay on active duty and for some time afterwards when I served in NARTU Lakehurst. We subsequently REQUISITIONED a Navion from the military aircraft stores which I understand is still flying. All this again with Charlie's support. A couple of years ago I had a call from one of the club members who said that the Navion was still flying and the club had, I believe over three hundred members and several airplanes. Should this be of interest to you or any person that keeps track of Lakehurst history I have a copy of the whole Dec 11 1958 "Station Break" and if you are then still interested I'll get the original to you or whomever is the appropriate person. Some of my ZW-1 Squadron mates are going to attend the reunion and have made reservations at the hotel. I hope to meet you then." **Ω**

Likewise, [Bob, and the Navy Lakehurst history folks would love to have that paper, please bring it to the reunion.]

TREASURER'S STRONGBOX

At the time of this writing, 30 June, 2007, the balance in our (2) accounts, checking and money manager savings, is approximately \$38,000 and the special N.A.A. Reunion Fund is at \$26,873, slated for the Lakehurst Reunion. We are on track now with our quarterly issues of the HIGH QUALITY publication, "The Noon Balloon." In the near future, you will receive an updated membership roster-/directory.

The present annual N.A.A. membership dues have been held at \$15 per year for a very long time. In order to maintain our operating expenses for now and the future, it is recommended to increase the dues to \$20 per year. This will be voted upon at the reunion. These dues include quarterly issues of your Noon Balloon and a roster/directory. What a bargain!

I also am pleased to report some additional donations made by our membership to date. Thank you for your support!

\$5-\$49: Edward J. Ris

Salvatore D. Vacanti

\$50-\$99: William A. Wright

Welcome Aboard!! We are also pleased to introduce to our fine association the following **new members:**

Miefert, M.D. – Coral Springs, FL

Wahlberg, Stuart – Blythe, CA

Meyers, C. E. – Gordonsville, VA

Priest, Edward L, Sr- Ontario, NY

Cook, Jeffrey – Chandler, AZ

Nix, Kenneth C – Palo Alto, CA

Newton, Sidney, O. – Mableton, GA

Hill, David O, Memphis, TN

Cook, Eric – Sarasota, FL

Kumke, John B. – Surprise, AZ

Romans, Claudia – Boulder, CO

Bourassa, Frank J – Eastport, NY

Wood, Joseph V – Lynchburgh, VA

Reardon, John R – Holiday, FL

Fitzpatrick, John J – Stevensville, MT

Wills, Henry M Jr. – Durham, NC

Gordon, Walter O. – Snyder, NY (con't)



Fricke, George-Basking Ridge,NJ

Maniere, Dominic – Langenenargen, Germany

Gholson, Daniel H.L. – Huntington Valley, PA

Marland, David R – Rogue River, OR

Chambliss, Karen - Petaluma, CA

That's the news from the Treasurer's Strongbox for now! "Up Ship"

- Peter F. Brouwer

The 2007 slate of nominated NAA Officers are scheduled to be voted into office at the Reunion. These two have additional information not found in the current directory:

President-nominee:

Spahr, Herman G.

1032 N. 21st Street

Lafayette, In 47904-2217

Phone # 776-447-3676

E-Mail: herm1032@gmail.com

Vice-President Nominee:

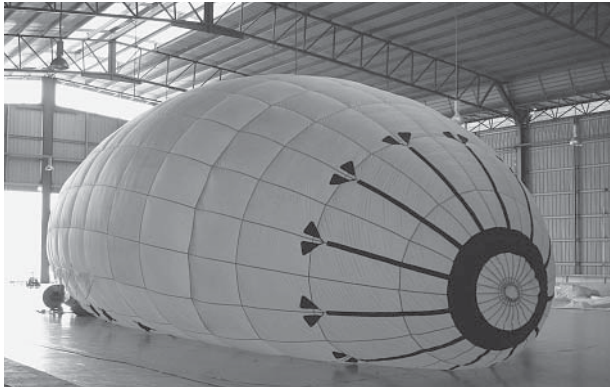
Moore, CC

141 A Azalea Dr

Whiting, NJ 08759-2950

Phone # 732 849 4478

WITH OUR MEMBERS IN THE FIELD



Steady progress is being made in the rebuilding of the ex-Cargolifter demonstrator airship “Joey” at TAG (The Airship Group) in Kuching, Malaysia. This “C” version of *Joey* is targeted to fly during the coming months and will have greater pilot comfort (less vibration and noise), very likely higher aerodynamic efficiency, much simpler maintenance, and simpler control with the incorporation of the patented fin propulsion and control system. Ground clearance will be greater and ground handling safer due to relocated props. At stage two we will be adding a bow thruster for up/down, right/left and reverse control, and automated mooring system. These and the load frame will allow testing on a small scale of a remote load/unload system, which is much simpler than the original system.

Other major works to date includes the reworking of the four internal gasbags to control surging by arranging them in series with three cross-sectional dividers. This reduces surface area, and suspension ropes pass through and firmly locate the gasbags, which also enhances safety. Unlike with the original configuration, a fan will be used to transfer helium fore/aft for pitch trim. The four cruciform tail fins of foam and carbon fiber materials covered with Stits fabric are being reconfigured as three in inverted “Y” with a reduced size upper fin and drive engines (25 hp twin cylinder Solos) moved to the lower fins, which will be located considerably further forward and incorporate reinforced structure, root extensions and fuel header tanks. Besides the batteries, the frame carried 65 kilos of electrical equipment. The electrical system was modified and is being much simplified for easy maintenance and reduced weight, with a pneumatic system to operate the two enlarged control surfaces. Maintenance and weatherproofing will be much better. Rain drip, envelope diagonal reinforcement, non-electrical automatic air pressure valve, internal view window and other “normal” features are being added. It is hoped that *Joey C* will be a true demonstrator airship and only the beginning of things to come. For further information contact info@tag-int.com.

- Jesse Blenn

NEWS FROM FRIEDRICHSHAFEN

Composed & Submitted By Sig Geist

Zeppelin Airships Return to the US

excerpts from <http://www.airshipventures.com> June 26, 2007: “Zeppelin Luftschifftechnik (ZLT) and Airship Ventures today announced that Zeppelin's fourth Zeppelin NT07, currently under construction in Friedrichshafen, has been optioned by California based Airship Ventures, Inc. It is projected to arrive in the US in the second quarter of 2008. Airship Ventures Inc, a corporation formed to bring passenger Zeppelin operations to the US, intends to conduct exclusive flight-seeing tours as well as carry scientific and other special mission payloads. Thomas Brandt, CEO of ZLT and Michael Schieschke COO of ZLT, announcing the agreement, said "We had previously identified the San Francisco Bay Area as a highly promising location in the world for a Zeppelin to operate....

“The Zeppelin NT07 airship, carrying up to 12 passengers, will be the largest airship flying in the US. At 246 feet in length, it is more than 50ft longer than the largest blimp. Using the inert gas helium for lift, and vectored thrust engines for flight, the Zeppelin NT has been flying with an unparalleled safety record in Germany, Japan and South Africa since 2001.

Brian Hall, President of Airship Ventures, commented “We are excited to be working with Zeppelin to bring this unique vehicle and its breathtaking passenger experiences to the US. The San Francisco Bay Area has a rich history involving airships in such locations as Treasure Island and Moffett Field and it will seem particularly appropriate to have the Zeppelin operating here.”



Montage: Niethammer/ Südkurier

Meanwhile, in addition to the news release above, people on both sides of the Atlantic may have learned from their respective media that the project is still in an early stage, but is taken seriously by both partners. ZLT reports discussions with Airship Ventures have been going on for a while. A preliminary sales contract with Airship Ventures

was signed and a down payment was received several months ago (reported to be in the five figures by the local media).

Understandably, questions remain and a number of important tasks lie ahead, jointly as well as individually. Among them are the completion of FAA certification, the airship transport scheme to the USA, but most importantly, the California company needs to secure funding for its enterprise. Based on one major daily in the US, the company is looking actively for investors to help pay project costs (including airship infrastructure, i.e. a mast truck, etc.) that could amount to around 12 million USD. While such funding normally takes time, it is conceivable that under current circumstances a final sales agreement could be in place by late fall 2007.

With regard to obtaining FAA certification for Zeppelin NT 07 in the USA, Zeppelin Luftschifftechnik (ZLT) reports: "We've been working with the FAA for about a year and have just recently had additional talks". ZLT anticipates no special problems in as much as the airship already enjoys European certification and has been flying successfully for the last 10 years.



Ed.: See TNB #73 pg 14 for Sig's report on this currently largest ever flying art project, bearing the colorful and unique artwork of Stefan Szczesny in support of an international art festival on Mainau Island, Lake Constance, Germany.

Logistically speaking, the transfer of the airship across the Atlantic presents a challenge. It doesn't have enough fuel capacity to fly non-stop across the ocean like the giants of the skies did in the early half of the last century. Two scenarios are under consideration: Ferry it in stages from the continent to Britain's Isles, from there to Iceland, to Greenland, to Canada's Goosebay and then on to the US. Alternatively, place Zeppelin NT aboard a so-called dockship and float it across the ocean to a suitable US East Coast location. Then, from there it can take off on an exciting trans-continental flight to San Francisco Bay, its future base of operations. Both schemes have their pros and cons. In the end the more costly

dockship route, though simpler, safer, quicker and proven twice before with the Japan and Africa-bound Zeppelins, may not be the one selected. Yet, Airship Ventures may not like the logistics and risks involved with an island-hopping scheme that spans wide bodies of open water across far-northern latitudes.

While the site for Airship Ventures daily operations base in the San Francisco Bay Area has not yet been selected, the new airship will also need a home base with a hangar, preferably close by. Both of them might be found at nearby Moffett Field. However, the burning question there is: will this site - with its roots so deeply embedded in airship history - be available at all? Can't do much without a hangar. Its interior is needed to shelter the airship from the elements, not to mention periods during which necessary tasks such as airship maintenance, yearly inspection, preparations for multiple missions, etc. must be provided from within.

Following the above joint news release, the Friedrichshafen press lost no time informing its readers about the importance of this development as their headlines read: "Americans want to buy Zeppelin NT", "A Zeppelin NT for California?" and "Americans cast an eye on fourth Zeppelin." In general, the press reports and comments were based on information from Zeppelin Luftschifftechnik (ZLT) at the time. Even though there are still some hurdles to be overcome, the feeling at ZLT is one of cautious optimism and that the project is for real. Airship Ventures wants to build its operations based on the multi-purpose use of the Zeppelin NT airship (commercial, scientific, media and advertising) That approach is well received by ZLT because it works for them and has shown to be absolutely necessary for airship operations to be profitable. To rely solely on just one type of activity is not going to work. Realizing how much is at stake with this project, it is clear Zeppelin wants the California company to succeed. Said ZLT's managing director: "We are very happy about this opportunity and are prepared to spare no effort to bring it to fruition."

Zeppelin's contract with Airship Ventures, Inc. is seen as an important step in the integration of 'hot spots', because next to Venice and Dubai, Zeppelin NT would love to be in New York. There the airship recognition factor would be that much greater than elsewhere; set-up and operations could be based on the California model. Whether Airship

Ventures wants to purchase additional NT airships is not known. "One step at a time," says ZLT. But make no mistake about it, Zeppelin builders want to spread as many airships as possible throughout the world, that is their top priority. After all, the more NT airships there are, the better Zeppelin will be able to fully utilize its capacity for maintenance and service as well as help defray plant and development costs.

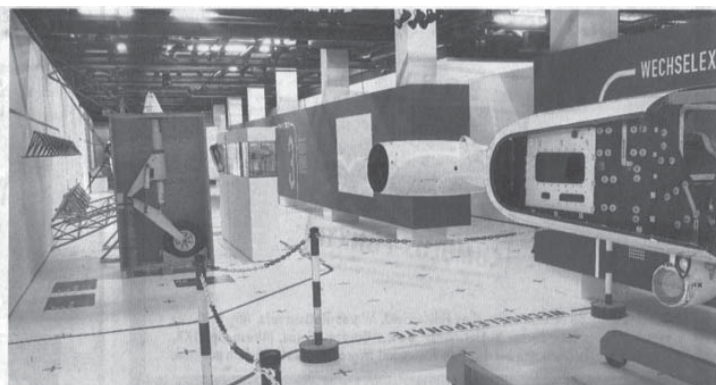
Meanwhile, construction of Zeppelin NT number four (internal W/N 4) in ZLT's hangar at Friedrichshafen is underway. The first of a total of 12 triangular frames are in place and hint at the ship's future contour. Given that by late fall 2007 a final sales contract with Airship Ventures were signed, then ZLT by agreement with its major shareholders would be authorized to start construction of Zeppelin NT number five (W/N 5). This would be in keeping with Reederei policy to have always "one Zeppelin in the pipeline," so that it could serve its customers in a manner more relevant to present times. Allowing about 18 months for construction and assembly, the fifth NT 07 could then be ready to take to the skies in the spring of 2009.

Regardless of where the fourth Zeppelin NT 07 is going to wind up by this time next year, it is not going to be an exact carbon copy of its forerunner. According to ZLT's director of development, no fewer than 86 improvements will be incorporated, each of them must be duly registered with the authorities. Among them are airship longerons (longitudinal beams) whose in service life was increased to 25 years thanks to a different manufacturing procedure.

Calculation procedures have been refined. Thanks to improved lift calculations and under favorable conditions, one additional passenger may be transported. Lycoming's decades-old, yet well proven engines are being outfitted by ZLT with electronic controls developed in cooperation with another enterprise.

What is also worth noting is that ZLT has managed to solidify its supplier base and brought them nearer. As an example, the aluminum longerons are now essentially manufactured in-house by Zeppelin Silos & Systems, a member of the Luftschiffbau Zeppelin family. With frame assembly underway, it is estimated to be completed during the second half of the year with engine mounting running in parallel. Lastly, the airship envelope (made by ILC Dover) will be pulled over the frame. Then, says ZLT "by early 2008 things are really going to get interesting" because a short while later, by spring 2008 Zeppelin NT Number Four is supposed to be up in the air. **Ω**

[Ed.: Sig had also reported (TNB #74 pg 18) about the Zeppelin Museum's exciting "Flying in Style - Fascination Zeppelin NT" exhibit. The newspaper Südkurier ran this article on 28 JUN 07 and we will blow up its two photos below. Also see Shore Establishments – Moffett Field, next page, for more news on the NT in CA.]



SHORE ESTABLISHMENTS

MOFFETT:

Moffett Field Hangar One is not out of the woods yet, and we won't know its destiny until later this year. A revised Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis (EE/CA) is anticipated to become available to the public in late fall or early winter. Then the anticipated remedial action should occur in 2008.

In the meantime, a new idea has surfaced - an architect's proposal to use a fabric cover to replace the toxic metal panels of the hangar's outer covering, the same white, translucent material used on many outdoor arenas. Its cost and effectiveness is being studied for the EE/CA.



Another recent and exciting item (But not directly connected with Hangar One) is the announcement that Airship Ventures is committing \$12 million for an NT07 Zeppelin to be used primarily for sightseeing (and advertising) here in the SF Bay area. Alexandra Hall, Airship Ventures' CEO and Moffett Field Historical Society member, said that "It would be ridiculous to bring a rigid airship to the Bay Area and not have any association with Moffett Field". (www.airshipventures.com)

At the July 12th Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) meeting it was announced that the 13 possibilities under detailed study since 2006 are now scheduled to be presented at the 8 November meeting. Additional public input will be sought. It seems our long wait is nearing an end for a decision on Hangar One's future.

—Ben DeBolt

Airship Museum Spitzbergen: During the decades before and after the turn of the previous century interest in the discovery or exploration of the North and South Poles was very high among scientists, as well as the general public. Many expeditions were organized, by ship, on skis, by air, by sled and even on horseback.

None were successful and in 1897, a Swedish scientist, Solomon Andrée, realized that an entirely different approach was needed. He suggested floating over the



North Pole in a gigantic hydrogen balloon. He claimed he could make the balloon "dirigible" within 30 degrees of the direction of the wind by the proper application of a sail, combined with a drag rope. On the 11th of June 1897, he took off from the island of Danskøye, Spitsbergen, never to be seen alive again.

In 1906, '07 and '09, Walter Wellman made three unsuccessful attempts from the same island with his airships "America" 1, 2A and 2B. (See TNB #74 page 1) Umberto Nobile was the first to navigate over the North Pole in the airship *Norge* on May 12, 1926, but a second attempt ended disastrously when the *Italia* crashed on the ice.

Information: books, magazines, articles, photographs and some surviving documentation and artifacts are spread over many countries. It will be the goal of the museum to collect as much as this material as possible, in order to conserve the history and development of airships and Arctic exploration. The city of Longyearbyen has made an area available in the heart of the city, and a preliminary design for the building has been made. The cost of the project is estimated at 2.5 million Euro. The project has been initiated by Mr. Ingunn Løying who issued a newsletter. He welcomes and inquires from anyone interested in the project. Contact:

Ingunn@spitsbergenairshipmuseum.com

— Herman Van Dyk

LAKEHURST



Last Day of Navy LTA... Again

Navy MZ3A airship #167811 had her final day in the air as an operational Navy airship May 31 2007 at NAES Lakehurst. An Army-leased A-60 (about one third her size – [see cover photos]) was on hand and riding at the mast for extra visual enhancement as a group of Squadron Test Pilot/VIP Officers from Patauxent River flew up for a 3 hour flight over the Jersey Shore and out to sea, followed by a 1.3 hour "final" flight which ironically turned into TWO flights following a wind shift and "wave off" from the Crew Chief. Final flight ended at 345pm, ship rode the mobile mast truck while fuel was off-loaded and entered Hangar #6 around 8pm. The airship will remain inflated and on "pressure watch" awaiting decisions on further disposition, but future as an operational Naval airship... so promising when the airship first flew just 1-year-and-29-days ago now seems surely at an end. Navy MZ3A airship #167811 will be maintained intact under a "pressure watch" status for 30-60 days thereafter pending disposal/further disposition, possibly as a "shared asset" with a different branch of the military.

When it appeared that the contract for The Lightship Group would not be extended and expired at Midnight 5/31, NLHS was in place to provide personnel to work alongside two experienced Senior LTA crewmen previously retained by ISSI. The Navy contract calls for 24/7 Pressure Watch. One of our men on the project, 80-year-old Morris "Mac" McConnell, worked for Lakehurst O&R in 1949-1962 and has extensive experience putting airships

together and taking them apart as well as maintaining them. He's thoroughly enjoying himself. Meanwhile, I'm getting something of a hands-on educational experience in LTA. I'm standing "B" watch in Hangar Six. Not sure how long it will last. The goal is to have the MZ3A ready for re-start/re-deployment as long as it remains inflated. Finding a mission/custodian for the airship is the NEXT challenge. That's where the Senators and Congressmen come into play, so your messages to them will be important.

(Photo, left) NAES Lakehurst Hangar #1 (northeast corner) seen from MZ3A airship #167811, May 2007. Photo taken from EAST end, doors of which are no longer capable of being opened. Note old sentry building (now the Credit Union) next to door tracks, former "Fabric Shop" building (now Fitness Center/Gym) across Lansdowne Road, wooden Hangars #5/#6 (World War II "temporary" wooden construction and no spring-chickens themselves) in the distance. Original HTA "airplane" hangar from which near Herb Morrison made his famous *Hindenburg* recording can be seen to far left of hangar, relocated since 1941... now used as a Metal Working Shop by the Naval Air Engineering Station. NAES Lakehurst Hangar #1, "The Big Barn" has seen all the Navy's rigid airships (*Shenandoah*, *Los Angeles*, *Akron* and *Macon*) and nearly all of the Navy's airship types housed inside at one time or another... except the current MZ3A, which resides in Hangar #6, upper left far left.

In May the Navy's Lakehurst-based MZ3A airship #167811 was flying "as usual." May 23 Navy MZ3A airship #167811 got the "GO AHEAD" for deployment to Fleet Week 2007 in New York Harbor and they were off for temporary deployment in support of the annual high-visibility event. This marks the first appearance of a U.S. Navy airship over a major news/media event since 1960/1961. The MZ3A has practically NO official marking (save for type/serial designation letters about 8 inches high on the bottom part of the lower fin and the "Force Aircraft Test Squadron VX-20" emblem on the side of the car, but at least she's "made it to the dance."

[Ed. note: See Rick's inside and back cover photos. Late breaking news con't next page]



"Low Miles, Hardly Used Airship" MZ3A #167811 awaits deflation in Lakehurst Hangar #6.

Navy MZ3A airship #167811 will possibly be deflated and stored by late July/early August as many efforts to find a way to keep the airship intact have run out of options. The Coast Guard announced this week that the money they had hoped to allot to operate the MZ3A for security patrol evaluations in the Florida Straits beginning in September would not be available. Intense lobbying went on personally and by e-mail/phone to members of Congress, the House Military Affairs Committee and a few sympathetic ears within the Navy Department itself which were willing to try to find a way to keep the Navy MZ3A airship intact and inflated pending future disposition. Dozens of people in official (and unofficial) capacity generously gave their time and effort to try to save the Navy LTAV program... or at least save the airship itself for possible use as a "shared asset."

In late June a Congressional aide called to give an update that the Navy was "very satisfied with the Test/Evaluation period conducted by the LTAV unit at Lakehurst but they have concluded that they do not have mission for the airship, but they would like to avoid deflation and see it possibly transferred to the Coast Guard " (I held my tongue rather than ask, " Then what the hell did they go out and buy it for in the first place? " After all, the airship never even deployed with its full allotment of Test Equipment on board, nor were the systems ever tried out.) If a history of this venture is ever written, it will probably show that the two major enemies of the "modern" Navy LTA program were POLITICS and MONEY. (Familiar blast from the past, isn't it?) Of course, some elements within the Navy Department were rather surprised (and unhappy) when word first came out in Spring 2006 that the Navy had purchased an airship and was going back into the airship business. Still, will have to say that the fact that it was done at all was rather remarkable. A genuine "presence" and operational doctrine was created from scratch. They flew every opportunity they were allowed (including

some pretty brutal cold winter weather) and they managed to keep the airship in one piece (they didn't even knock off the tail wheel, not once.) It was pretty plainly bizarre that any of it happened in the first place. I surely never thought I would see it.

It was fun to watch. Got to make on flight on the airship when it was still on builders' trials and have been a relief person on the civilian Pressure Watch crew that has maintained the airship since the contract with The Lightship Group expired on June 1. Even got myself a title "Airship Ground Support Specialist" and an actual PAYCHECK for working on an airship operation. Actually getting PAID to be around an airship. Pretty neat. Airship has remained "tight" (no helium added since May 27) and purity dropped about 1% over the last month. Because it was considered a "Military Test Aircraft" the airship cannot even be sold to a private operator. As of this issue going to press, the pressure watch is being maintained for possible return to flight status late summer/early fall."

--Rick Zitarosa

PENSACOLA:

The L-8 car itself is on display, on a dolly, still without engines. The engines have been restored, props ready, engine mounts fabricated, BUT still awaiting the steel tubing to fabricate the collector rings and exhaust system. The material has long been ordered and is still "expected anytime". Reminds me of something Captain Bob Rasmussen, USN (Ret), our Director, once said regarding his Restoration Department, "Progress there reminds me of slow honey" or words to that effect. He said this in jest (I'm sure). As a volunteer member of Restoration (I spend my time in the machine shop) I know what he's saying. Restoring these precious aircraft to their original spanking new appearance, both structurally and cosmetically is painstakingly slow anyhow. But, occasionally, material wise, we're at the mercy of our suppliers and, need I say, availability of funds. In this case, funding is not the problem with the tubing.

On the bright side, your NMNA is constantly improving by sprucing up existing exhibits and adding new ones. We've recently completed the restoration in the NMNA of the only SB2A Brewster *Buccaneer* (it's really a *Bermuda* since it was built for the RAF) left. The newest exhibit is World War One full scale diorama depicting seaplane and landplane bases in France. It is amazingly complete. You've gotta see it to appreciate it! In the works is an exhibit "marrying airplanes and ships" complete with an operable optical landing system from the USS John F. Kennedy (CV-67). See you in Lakehurst!

Blue skies,

-Mort Eckhouse

MEDIA WATCH



Several members of the History Committee and other NAA activists were tapped for expertise and on-screen interviews by a BBC-TV contractor working for History Channel, Atlantic Productions, in June. In the Editor's photo above, Goodyear crew members strap "The Inquisitor" into the bos'n chair harness to be hauled to the top of the *Spirit of Innovation* to observe a patch simulation. Extreme right is Steve Carrol, writer/director, and Kirsten Wilson, producer, inside Goodyear's ultramodern Pampano facility. The TV crew also visited Lakehurst, 'Richmond,' and Friedrichshafen. This looks to be one show that will keep the producer's promise they don't want to just "blow up the *Hindenburg*." They have asked for the color footage we found of the timber hangar construction, etc. At press time we have no idea as to title or airdate, so watch you History Channel listings for "Lost Worlds-Airships" sometime in the fall. Ω



Aerospace Testing magazine again devotes a few pages to 'Airship Testing', the current issue covering Ohio's *Dynalifter* with the title "Heavier Than Air-Ship" and says "... (not a blimp) using a combination of lifting body, wings and canards, all augmented by helium

lift... Being a hybrid, the aircraft is shunned by the LTA industries as an LTA craft, and is classified in a new related category." Ω



Al Robbins reports: "A 35 foot airship is conducting a three month photographic and advertising tour of the Canadian wheat belt. Interesting concept, the originator, an experienced assistant, and a trainee operating a small UAV across the Canadian prairie. I haven't found any mention on the internet since the initial press release. Steve Barkley (RATS Inc.) gave me permission to pass the link to friends interested in LTA.

<http://www.ratsinc.net/HorizonImagesforClients.html>

It includes a newspaper article and a number of photos. He promises more pictures will be added soon, including a picture of the back of the trailer. (I don't know if his website is capable of handling heavy traffic, there might be delays.)

I'm looking forward to seeing some of the hi-res video and still imagery from the blimp. I've attached a photo of their ground support system at one of the 'posh' motels along their route." Ω



Walt Lion sent along a clipping from the *New York Times* dated June 17th entitled "Best Seat Above The House," a nice profile of Goodyear's senior pilot Jim Maloney and his love of flying over major sporting events in the blimps. Ω

LONG LINES

ZP-15 Exonerated

By Richard G. Van Treuren, Chair, HC

The U.S. Navy had no official history of its LTA component until 1986, when the Historian's Office published *KITE BALLOONS TO AIRSHIPS*. Prior to that, the semi-official history by Rear Admiral Samuel Eliot Morison, *US NAVAL OPERATIONS IN WORLD WAR II*, including both *VOLUME ONE: THE BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC, SEPTEMBER 1939 – MAY 1943* (Little, Brown and Co. Boston, 1966) and a smaller, condensed version of the fifteen volumes, featured anecdotal references to airships.

Morison set the tone for the work with respect to LTA as he wrote, "An important if relatively ineffective component of the naval air arm was the lighter-than-air dirigible, the so-called blimp. Most naval officers, in view of the rapid development of planes, were very skeptical of these handsome sausage-shaped airships." (Morison's logic is circular, as if nature's evolution alone, with no input from Naval leadership or Congress, had somehow ignored LTA and concentrated on airplanes.) Morison continued, "The blimps patrolled at 45 to 50 knots, with a maximum speed of 65. They were radar-equipped early in the war and armed with depth charges and machine guns... It was hoped that the slow rate of flight would enable them to spot surfaced submarines that escaped lookouts in fast-flying planes and they could 'hold down' a submarine once contacted, following it under water with some sort of magnetic device in order to coach in a ship or bomber plane for attack. These expectations proved to be largely unfounded." During his brief visit to ZP-11 Morison obviously missed what MAD was – and was not – capable of doing. In another chapter, Morison states emphatically, "But most naval officers regarded them as inferior to planes for area patrol and worse than useless in convoy coverage because they could be sighted by a U-boat even further away than the most smoke-careless freighter." (More on this detail later.)



It seems no one saved a ZP-15 squadron patch. This monochrome representation was passed to the History Committee Chairman years ago.

Elsewhere, in complete disagreement with those initial statements, Morison seems to admit, if begrudgingly, the airship's unique defensive capability – precisely because they were so visible. He quietly acknowledges, "It is certain however that the blimps contributed to seagoing morale. Merchant seamen standing out of New York in slow transatlantic convoy with every prospect of nasty crossing, felt somewhat assured to see a stately blimp flying overhead. The crews of the bauxite shuttle ships between Trinidad and the Guianas, a route for which no surface escorts could at first be spared, are said to have threatened mutiny unless they were given protection; they were afforded blimp cover all the way and the men were satisfied." Furthering his inconsistency, Morison actually praises ZP-51 perhaps without explaining Blimprons or other organizational schemes, in discussion of the Trinidad corner. "In addition, several small bauxite freighters were constantly shuttling that precious ore from the Guianas to Trinidad; 77 on average cleared monthly from the Port of Spain between March and September 1943, and not one was molested by the enemy. The Navy blimps at Edinburgh Field, Trinidad, were useful escorts for the bauxite route, and for covering other convoys while forming up the Gulf of Paria." He even goes on to say, "There is nothing like a blimp to make a convoy feel easy at that critical moment." (!)

If the reader is confused by Morison's position on the usefulness of airships, he or she is not alone. Dr. Richard K. Smith said of Morison, "Any careful reading of Morison's NavOpsWW2 will reveal that he was not at home and even uncomfortable with 20th century technology; that he loves his surface actions but comes close to resentment when airplanes intrude upon the picture; and that he would have been most pleased with World War II if its actions had been fought with square rigged ships on the model of the Saints, the Nile or Trafalgar." Either way it is spun, "worse than useless" or "can't beat a blimp," Morison should provide examples supporting his position. In fact he shows *no* concrete examples of airship ASW effectiveness. Instead he cites three cases to support the negative side: all from the same un-named squadron (actually ZP-15) and those, only weeks apart!

Morison begins his specific ASW airship bashing in June of '43 with a German U-boat off the Georgia coast: "The case of the U-66 (the very boat Tenth Fleet would later expose fatally to the wrath of Commander Abel's Buckley) offers a dramatic demonstration of this deficient teamwork so perilously close to home. U-66 departed Lorient at the end of April and its arrival in American waters coincided with the establishment of Tenth Fleet..." Morison says he did attack some merchantmen: (Vol. X pg 182) covers the foray of the U-66 into ZP-15's patrol area, explaining that her June 9th attack on two tankers missed. He continues, "However, it evaded its surveillance for weeks, penetrated to Savannah and made its presence there known by sending two torpedoes into a heavily laden tanker, the *Esso Gettysburg*. Vicious fire lighted by explosions in the tanker's engine room and after holds quickly enveloped the ship, the burning oil wrapping Ensign John S. Arnold, USNR, who commanded the Naval Armed Guard, in a sheet of flames. Arnold extinguished them by rolling on the deck, then—although badly burned—manned his bow gun and fired a round at the U-boat. The *Esso Gettysburg* was supposed to be protected

by a blimp. But its cumbersome escort experienced difficulties with a thunder squall to which these lighter-than-air ships were very sensitive, and had trouble with both its radio and radar. It had left the scene when it did not receive explicit orders from shore to stay with the tanker. Consequently, the presence of U-66 off Savannah became known only on June 11 - nine days after its arrival in its operational area off the American shore, twenty-four hours after the sinking of the tanker—and then only from a report from an Army B-25 whose crew had spotted survivors from the *Gettysburg* and directed the transport *George Washington* to them. The signal from the B-25 sent the Eastern Sea Frontier into vigorous but disorganized action that produced no results, even though the U-66 remained in the area where the tanker had gone down and used its radio several times to report to Doenitz."

In another volume citing the U-66 being attacked on the 9th, Morison differs slightly, "Next day, *Esso Gettysburg*, a heavy-laden tanker escorted only by a blimp which was then dodging a thunder squall, steamed right into view of U-66...Two torpedoes exploded in her engine room and after holds and lighted a violent fire that quickly enveloped her stern. Ensign John S. Arnold, USNR, commanding the Naval Armed Guard, was sprayed with burning oil. After extinguishing the flames by rolling on the deck he led a party of bluejackets forward and managed to get off one round from his bow gun. As the blimp made off without reestablishing contact (*footnote on that page - 'It had radar and radio trouble and failed to receive an order from shore to continue mission') the sinking of *Esso Gettysburg* was not reported for over 24 hours, when an Army B-25 escorting transport *George Washington* sighted 15 pitiful survivors and homed-in the ship to pick them up..." TENTH FLEET author Louis Farago simply parrots Morison with respect to LTA: "The *Esso Gettysburg* was supposed to be protected by a blimp. But its cumbersome escort experienced difficulties with a thunder squall to which these lighter-than-air ships were very sensitive, and had trouble with both its radio

and radar. It had left the scene when it did not receive explicit orders from shore to stay with the tanker.” The Navy’s own Op-16-B-5 report on the combat states, “During the morning of June 10, the *Esso Gettysburg* received air coverage by US Navy blimp K-45 until 1700 GCT when dirigible was last sighted headed in a westerly direction, due to passing squalls and showers, although weather was clear from 1800 to the time of the attack.” Where was the airship then? In another black eye, even the ZP-15 diary is silent as to the morning after, as the hapless survivors swimming clear of the furiously burning wreck found only one charred lifeboat whose gutted remains collected only 13 men; 37 merchant mariners and 20 Navy crew had been lost. An Army plane directed surface craft to the rescue.



The supposed thunderstorm avoidance incident was a black mark against airships that circulated even amongst LTA men well after the war. While there is no explanation as to why the airships were not ordered out to the rescue, the more serious charge is that this case would challenge the long held belief that no escorted merchantman had ever been successfully attacked while escorted by an airship. In “Statistical Summary of United States Fleet Airship Operations in World War II,” a 15 FEB 46 document prepared by Naval Airship Training and Experimental Command, the record of ‘no escorted losses’ in World War One was noted as being continued in WWII, but... “The single possible – and debatable – exception was the torpedoing of one vessel while the previously escorting blimp had

temporarily departed the area to avoid a thunderstorm.” With CNATE in agreement, the failure would seem to be factual. By the time he wrote ‘SNAFU: The STRANGE CASE OF THE AMERICAN AIRSHIP, Vice Admiral Charles Rosendahl seemed to accept the black eye, but added the positive spin that, for whatever reason, the blimp *wasn’t there* when the ship was torpedoed; the record stands. Morison continues “On July 2, but forty miles from the spot where it sank the *Gettysburg*, the U-boat [66] returned to the fracas and torpedoed another tanker, the *Bloody Marsh*, that had also been abandoned by its supposed escort, another blimp caught in another thunderstorm.” Morrison’s other version is about the same, “Shortly after midnight after 1 July, Markworth selected another victim about 40 miles north of the spot where the *Esso* had gone down. This was the *Bloody Marsh*, steaming north unescorted, her blimp having departed two hours earlier because of thunderstorms, to which ‘lighter-than-air’ craft are very sensitive. The tanker was making 16 to 18 knots at 0008 July 2 when U-66 shot a torpedo into her aft engine room. She at once began to settle, and within three minutes her boilers burst...” Author Farago echoed Morison’s line again, “On July 2, but forty miles from the spot where it sank the *Gettysburg*, the U-boat returned to the fracas and torpedoed another tanker, the *Bloody Marsh*, what had also been abandoned by its supposed escort, another blimp caught in a thunderstorm.” Morison closes with, “Although this sinking took place only 90 miles southeast of Charleston and a signal from *Bloody Marsh* was received, and although Markworth surfaced to report to Berlin, eight ships, lead by a dozen blimps, Catalinas and Mitchells, nevertheless combed the sea in vain for the U-66.” In another version Morison decreased LTA participation in the follow-up: “If proof was still needed to show how little defenses in this area improved in the summer of 1943 over their dismal state in the disastrous spring of 1942, it was provided conclusively by what followed in the wake of the *Marsh’s* sinking. It took place ninety miles southeast of Charleston. An SOS from the *Marsh* was duly

received. The U-66 surfaced to report the sinking to Berlin. Nevertheless the U-boat remained undetected by a search group the Sea Frontier sent after it, consisting of a destroyer, a blimp and several Catalinas and Mitchells.”

With an extreme positive spin ala Rosendahl in ‘SNAFU,’ at least the ‘no attacks while actually being escorted’ is arguably supported in the quasi-official history. The ships were *not* attacked while the blimps were visible. The airships had to leave sometime, and the reader is lead to believe that when they did, bang, it was all over. Other histories do not even bring an airship and a sub this close together, excepting the K-74/U-134 case.

So, in his milestone history, Morison picks two examples where he claims merchant vessels were lost supposedly because their blimp escorts were cowardly. He then brings in a third case, where *in spite* of the blimp visible in escort, an actual attack is made, unsuccessful supposedly owing to an unusual simultaneous three-torpedo malfunction. Morison’s research showed this actual encounter between airship and sub, but his source is not specified. Since Morison died in 1976 (at the age of 89) there is no chance of learning his technique or his sources in this case, unique in published accounts because it specifies both the blimp and the submarine. He writes, “A third minelaying boat which departed Lorient in July and got through was 740-ton U-107, charged with mining Charleston harbor. It approached the Carolina coast slowly and circumspectly, moved inshore on the night of 26-27 August, laid 12 mines (so the skipper claimed) southwest of the harbor entrance, and promptly hauled off in hope of bagging same heavy traffic outside. On the morning of the 28th it sighted the *Albert Gallatin* off Savannah, escorted by the blimp K-34, and fired three torpedoes which hit but failed to detonate. The blimp radioed ashore promptly and held U-107 down while the freighter escaped and assistance winged its way to the spot. An Army B-25 sighted the boat at 1515 as it was heading north at high speed, and attacked through light overcast, dropping four depth bombs which

missed. Within an hour of receiving the B-25’s sighting report, Eastern Sea Frontier headquarters ordered eleven ships to make an extensive search, and K-34 stayed out to home them in. At dawn 29 August destroyer *Biddle*, Charleston-bound from Guantanamo, set up a search line with two destroyer escorts and nine small craft. They stuck to it all day and the next, with only three fruitless sound contacts... U-107 returned safely home, ignorant of the hullabaloo it has caused...” When composing SNAFU, Rosendahl evidently accepted this account as fact, even though it meant admitting a crack in the dam of the perfect escort record. He admits, “There was one case which did come close to damaging the escort record of blimps. That was the case of the S.S. *ALBERT GALLATIN* off Savannah on 28 July 1943, while under blimp escort. The U-107 succeeded in sending three torpedoes into the merchantman, but all three failed to detonate.”

Like the K-14, Rosendahl himself accepted this assessment as accurate, but is it? Your chair, with the help of several History Committee and other NAA members, can now finally show that Morison was in error in all three cases. The irrefutable evidence comes from actual translations of U-boat logbooks through the resources of member activist **C. J. Christ**. We will examine the cases in chronological order.

Clay Blair’s two-volume tome on U-boats in WWII covers U-66. (Vol. II, pg. 347): “Markworth in the aging U-66 had better luck. He gave the hostile Cape Hatteras a quick once-over, then proceeded farther south toward Savannah.” Upon arrival in the ZP-15 patrol area, we read the log of U-66 on 9 JUN 43: “16:12 –Airplane. 16:15 - At battle station! 16:39 - Tanker located rw. 355 degrees Position left 80 10 sm distant 2. (second) Tanker located rw. 165 degrees Position left 50 10 sm distant. Both tankers protected by Airships and Catalinas. Tried to some degree to approach the second tanker. 17:32 - To reach the first [tanker] is a hopeless prospect.” At 2021 he records “On bearing 290 degrees, a semi-rigid airship patrols on a course of 25 degrees. 20:50 Airship out of sight.” Markworth, who could not get into a favorable

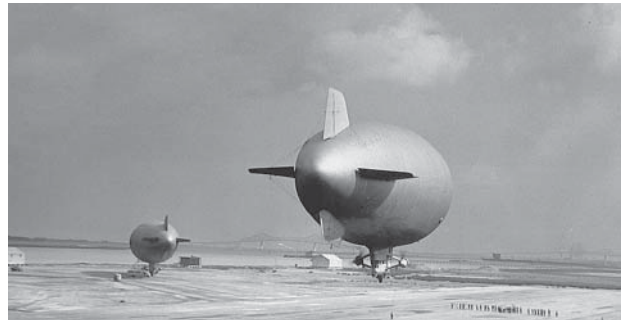
attack position, noted the blimp's dogged escort. Morison says he did attack: (X pg 182) but the actual log shows Morison to be wrong; when protected by airships and planes, skipper Markworth could not get a clear shot. (The reason Markworth might have thought the airship had a rigid keel is another story.) Morison's inaccuracy of the 9th is supported by the German High Command U-boat Record for 9 June 1943. It reads in part: "III. Reportsp on the Enemy: U 502: ED 8499 2 freighters, 1 tanker, 1 destroyer, course 2600. Another convoy of the same size, which she attacked by day. Hits on a freighter of 7,000 BRT and a tanker of 6,000 BRT. Both ships presumably sank. Well-placed D/C's (Asdic)." There is no mention of U-66 or an attack on it.

Morison's incorrect account is also disputed by *Esso* survivors who state in the company's own history, "On the morning of June 9, soon after daybreak, an air escort was picked up, consisting of several planes and a blimp. The escort was observed at intervals throughout the day and was again in contact on June 10, until about 1 p.m..." What happened next has been published in many versions. The company's own records reads, "...Shortly before 2 p.m. ... the weather was clear, the sea calm with moderate swell, and the visibility unlimited... Without warning, the ship was suddenly struck by two torpedoes on the port side... Immediately the vessel burst into flames and almost instantly settled by the stern." There is no mention of a thunderstorm or that a blimp suddenly ran for cover. But where was it?

The Navy's own Op-16-B-5 report does not mention an HTA escort on the 10th, as in the company record, but the four hours difference is important: if the weather that had supposedly chased away the K-45 had cleared, why had the airship not returned? VADM Rosendahl, researching his WWII volume, actually interviewed participants some time in the late 1950s. His further investigation showed the real story. Rosendahl explained the K-45 had actually been diverted away to investigate an airplane's sub sighting, later proved to be a false alarm. Further, by retrieving the logbook page from the U-66 for 10 JUN 43, Morison is

proven wrong. There is no mention of an airship until hours after the attack, when ZP-15 was looking in vain for survivors and their attacker. Contrary to Morison, the K-45 left per orders, not weather; the U-66 crew did not simply wait for the blimp to leave, then attack, as Morrison gets the reader to imagine.

The second case is similar. From the U-66 logbook, we read on July 1, 1943, Markworth logs airship sightings again. "15:14 - Airship in sight in range 42 degrees course 220 degrees at A-30. 15:58 - Airship in rw 175 degrees course 220 degrees. 16:38 - Airship out of sight in range 208 degrees." No attack opportunity with blimp protection, the U-66 lay low and waited until the 2nd. Clay Blair (II-347) details: "...on July 2, Markworth attacked with torpedoes and his deck gun another big American tanker, the empty 10,200 ton *Bloody Marsh*, about forty miles from the scene of his first success." On the 2nd, the U-66 logs no mention of an airship.



The massive Charleston Naval Base played host to an outlying detachment of ZP-15. US Navy / NARA photo courtesy David Smith.

Morison is the only author to claim the airship evaded a thunderstorm in this case, and it is not true. K-34 had dutifully escorted her charge until dark, and returned to base per doctrine. "The attack by the U-66 came after the tanker had settled down on a straight steady course," hours after K-34 complied with its orders. The company's history states the attack happened after midnight, "At 0008 EWT, a torpedo struck the ship on the port quarter, demolishing the engine room. The #6 lifeboat was also destroyed... All hands (save those killed in the engine room) got away in four lifeboats and three rafts." In his WWII history, Rosendahl also investigated, explaining the K-34 had actually carried out its orders, to escort the

Bloody Marsh until dark. Darkness fell about 2100. Indeed, ZP-15's own LCDR Jim Cruse lamented his orders to leave his charge during the night, as Gordon Vaeth related his statements in his book *BLIMPS & U-BOATS*. "I flew coverage for her all day but by nightfall I had to return to Glynco... I delayed my departure as long as I could, staying around until after dark so I could check her for lights and make sure she was blacked out... The next morning at the Squadron Operations Office I looked at the board. Listed was 'my ship,' call letters KOZT, with the word SUNK next to it. I was shocked. I felt I had lost a friend." Likewise the company's own record makes no mention of an airship until July 3, "A US Navy blimp had sighted the lifeboats earlier and signaled that a rescue ship was on the way. The blimp stayed with the boats until they were sighted by the SC-1048."

Indeed, not ignored as in the June 2nd case, ZP-15 airships were all over the area the morning after the *B.M.* sinking. The K-52 came upon four boatloads of survivors, totaling 50 persons, but U-66 was not to be found. K-34 came out in relief, but it was believed all survivors had been saved. The German High Command log for 3 July 1943 notes U-66's success without bragging about overcoming an airship in particular (it does in the K-74 case):

"III. Reports on the Enemy:

a) 1) U 641 sighted a destroyer, course W. high speed, in CF 7297.

2) U 66 sank a tanker, course 200, speed 15 knots in DB 62. Air activity as hitherto, little sea patrol.

3) U 406: Nothing of note to report on passage through Biscay.

4) U 199 bombed in GB 1815. Strong activity by day by sea planes and land-based a/c. Night attack repelled, a/c shot down. 2716. "Liberty-Schjal" hit twice, heavy gunfire. No traffic observed S E. of CA 37."

Case closed: Morison is proven incorrect in the first two actions. Admittedly, our investigation has shown that, while not completely wrong in the third case, the actual combat of the K-34 vs. U-107 with *Albert Gallatin* was a great deal more complicated than Morrison let on. Since

then-LT Gordon Vaeth had returned from Europe with at least some of the German side of that action, there is no obvious explanation why a go-getter like Rosendahl did not follow up and interview the K-34 command pilot, Jack Hely IV, as he had with George Lee in the K-6 vs. U-99 case. Fact is, the Admiral had nothing to tie it to – only 'confidential,' the ZP-15 squadron history notes on 28 AUG 43 there was an award ceremony for an earlier rescue by LTJG Louis P. Reeder. And whoever was interpreting the German grid locator system mistranslated the location as ZP-21 territory, so no match there either. Had Rosendahl met Hely, he would have easily found the official account to be lacking in important details, some of which this team uncovered decades later by lucky happen-stance. K-34/U-107 is certainly the most important of the three Morison-specified "failures," since it is probably the first modern LTA ASW combat, that is, an attack made *without* a visual target, aiming with *sensors alone*. Crude as it was, the system worked in this one case at least. Even more important to detractors, K-34 vs. U-107 does in fact nullify the long held belief no submariner would attack in sight of an airship. Further, it must be noted that, according to the U-107's logbook, the skipper, Volker Von Shimmermaker, did *first* sight the airship and suspect something was in the area; he *then* spotted the merchantman. While he probably would have seen the steamer eventually, this log entry sounds made to order for the oft-repeated misnomer that a highly visible blimp brought the submarines running to the attack. One notes, in these complaints, no examples are ever given. How this common refrain can exist in the same universe as 'merchant crews threatening mutiny if not protected by a blimp' is never explained. As well, if were true as some have charged, that the blimps were bait to bring the U-boats in where they could be destroyed by conventional means, the unseen powers that dreamed up such a scheme did a pretty lousy job of following through. U-134 spotting K-34 first, then the ship, is the single known case, but even airshipmen themselves have been beaten into submission on this issue. This common criticism, that the airship

provides a target marker, was hardly a new idea. British Major Struthers recalled the perception of blimp pinpointing the convoy's location dated to the earliest days of World War One. Struthers wrote, "The conventional naval outlook was that the bulky airship, visible from afar, gave away the convoy's position to the enemy. The airship operator's view that the airship constituted a threat to the submarine whose captain knew that any offensive action on his part would bring quick retaliation. The naval point of view naturally predominated and it was a very long time before the naval authority could be persuaded to let the [airship] station commanders know when convoys were expected."

Why had Von Shimmermaker planned an attack in spite of seeing the airship first, when most other skippers simply waited for a better shot? First and most important, the straggling *Gallatin*, owing to engine trouble, was moving so slowly it was practical for the submerged submarine to maneuver into firing position. Neither is there any record of it zigzagging, which would have made a long shot more realistic. Also, the U-107 had previously been under the command of Grand Admiral Dornitz's own son-in-law, G_nther Hessler, who had managed to rack up the most aggregate tonnage of any skipper in the war. Von Shimmermaker, Hessler's watch officer who then was promoted to command, literally had 'big shoes to fill' – in this case, the biggest. It's possible that explains how he had a "sore throat," as the crews referred to a commander who wanted the Iron Cross badly enough to take serious risks.

The author's combat study reveals only one other incident where a U-boat crew had the 'utzpa' to see a blimp about and attack anyway. (That case is also complex and will be dealt with in another issue.) While obviously brave, von Shimmermaker was not stupid; he kept his distance. This offers real-world weight to the argument that at the very least, the airship complicated the U-boat's attack. This 'complication' was verified both by a German magazine interview during the war, and emphatically in a letter to Gordon Vaeth, by

Admiral Dörnitz, after the war. Based on our research, we can flatly state that this 'complication' was the key to airship protection in actual fact: while we have the two cases where shots were fired, not even one ship was a total loss.



ZP-15's CAC-#28 at Glynco, 1943. L-R standing: WM Voelker; M. Mansur; A. M. Smith; H.E. Frank; I.J. Prosper (crew chief); J. P. Hely (CAC Comm.) Sitting: W.A. Sprinkle; Lafferty; R.A. Moss. Jack Hely photo.

Thanks to a phone interview with Von Shimmermaker by U-233 survivor Heinz Buckloc on our behalf, and the details Jack Hely wrote down for us, we were able to reconstruct the brief but furious combat of August 28 AUG 43, roughly as follows: Once sighted, it took more than half an hour to maneuver the U-107 into firing position even though the SS *Albert Gallatin* was moving very slowly. ZP-15's escorting K-34 crew had been called to attention by a MAD signal, probably false and too weak to be worthy of an attack, putting them on alert after nearly twelve hours of boring lazy-eight escort duty. The U-107 fired from what was thought to be a safe distance and recorded "boat cut under after fan of torpedoes fired. After 2 minutes, 25 seconds 2 detonations were heard in the conning tower and the underwater sound detector." In a few moments the soundman reported the steamer's engine nose stopped. Hits! They must have been overjoyed that two out of three hit from such an extreme distance.

However, unbeknownst to the U-boat, K-34's aft lookout had spotted the torpedoes and sounded the alarm. Ordering a radio warning to the steamer, command Pilot Ensign Jack Hely lined the K-34 up with the torpedo track. Again

getting a MAD signature, this time certainly false, Hely ordered two charges dropped. The U-107's torpedoes had missed completely. Coincidentally, the 700 pounds of Torpex exploding at 50 feet depth were mistaken for torpedo hits by the distant submarine. Following the report of the steamer's engine noise stopping, and from a seemingly safe distance, Von Shimmermaker chanced a look-see. He recorded, "When I am at periscope depth again, 2 depth charge detonations go off very near the boat. I assume I have been spotted from an airship and therefore go to A +20." (Vaeth's research in British intercepts recorded the entry as "As we came to periscope depth, there were two depth charge explosions in the vicinity of the boat. Presume we were spotted by the airship.")

In the only such instance we have verified during the entire war, MAD gear actually showed a strong signature in the presence of a submarine, and Hely had ordered the remaining two depth charges dropped. They were wide and only caused the U-107 to crash dive and run without raising the 'scope. By not doing so they missed the comedy of errors topside: The steamer crew, not listening to their radio, did not realize they were under attack, or they obviously would not have stopped dead in the water (as Morison suggested). The steamer had rung up 'all stop' so its crew could lower a boat and collect fresh fish killed by the blimp's depth bombs. When K-34's crew, trying to catch the sub, finally noticed the *Gallatin* was stopped and was lowering a boat, they rushed to flashing-light the message "you are under attack." Jack Hely recalls the merchant crew set some kind of record for stowing their boat, then found new strength for speed unknown before.

U-107 retreated at full speed for twenty minutes before risking a periscope look, then noting, puzzled, "Steamer showing no visible effect of damage. Observed on hydrophones to have stopped after the explosions and then continued after about 5 minutes." How the ship could have taken hits and started up again with no indication of damage was a complete mystery to them. Retreating, the U-boat kept a

watchful eye as the steamer quickly disappeared but the airship was visible for more than an hour and a half longer. Finally, an hour after losing sight, the U-107 "Surfaced. I want to try to keep [visual] contact with the airship in spite of the expected land-breeze, and then try to come up on the steamer again at night." Volker was blissfully unaware the K-34 had attracted the attention of a new DD, which was hedge-hogging the hell out of the area with such enthusiasm they almost hit the blimp with one salvo. His opportunity had passed; U-107 would not have another shot at anything before heading back to France.

Sister squadron ZP-21 history reads, "After each flight the pilot is interrogated to learn all the facts concerning his flight needed for the war diary and other records. After each patrol the track chart is checked and the pilot is interrogated regarding any unusual incidents which may have taken place on the patrol. If there has been anything unusual, the appropriate report is prepared by the ACI officer for forwarding to higher commands." And so it was in ZP-15: returning to Charleston, the crew's debriefing with the SAG commander's son, LT John Ames, was very positive. Nonetheless when the 10th Fleet got the news they evidently did not even assign a number and make a folder, since we are unable to find a report in the files declassified more than 50 years later. No 10th Fleet item with a code "36" (meaning airship alone) exists for 28 AUG 43. (There is one for the 29th, when the debriefing actually took place, and that is number 4527; however when we purchased a print of that one, we see it was another action, with airship K-26.) Too bad the evaluators could not read the German Command Log of 28 August 1943, which noted the attack:

"III. Reports on the Enemy: a) U 198 sighted steamer, course 1700, in FD 6455. No other boats in the vicinity. b) Aircraft sighted a light cruiser, course 3400, high speed at 0800 in CG 1331. c) 1) English units were located in CG 1840. 2) U-boat sighting: in CA 5832.

3) U-boat was attacked in DB 6371(U 107)."

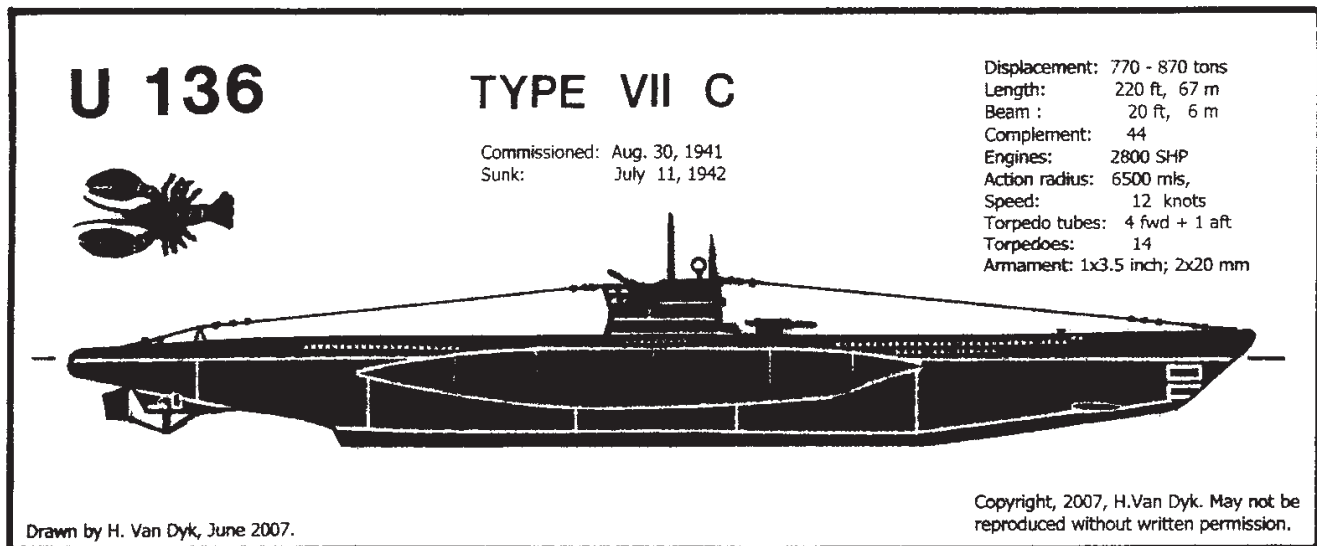
When we presented this revised history in NAMF *FOUNDATION's* Fall 2000 issue, the Naval Historian's office in Washington told the author they'd "put it in the ZP-15 file." Not even a thank-you to Hely and the other K-34 crewmen still alive at the time.

In the HC chairman's opinion, it is not enough to vindicate ZP-15 in the pages of this magazine. Command pilot Jack Hely and the crew of the K-34 should be commended. They ushered in the modern era of LTA ASW by aiming with the sensor alone; they fought their ship, drove off the attacker and saved their charge. Navigator-pilot Nelson Grills was only awarded the DFC and his crew commended more than a decade after the combat of K-74 vs. U-134, and then only following a German stepping forward with some photos showing what was left of the blimp taken from the sub. It's high time the late Jack Hely IV got the DFC and his K-34 crew their richly deserved commendations.

Ω



J. P. Hely IV seen in 1945 when part of ZP-11.



Know Thy Adversary By Herman Van Dyk

After WWI (1914-18) the Versailles Peace Treaty severely limited the size of the German military forces and completely prohibited Germany from possessing any submarines. Yet, it wasn't many years before German aircraft companies were building planes, pilots were being trained in Lipetsk, Russia, and new submarines were being designed in a clandestine office in the Netherlands. In the early 1930s, the Treaty's conditions were relaxed and Germany was permitted to resume construction of submarines. By the time WWII broke out on 3 SEP 39, Germany already had 54 U-boats in service of the Types II, VII and IX.

The "workhorse" during the war was the Type VII. A total of 709 Type VII boats of 7 different versions were built. 577 of these were of the Type VIIC, shown here. The Type VIIC/42 had the AA armament increased by 2X20 mm flak guns, which were positioned on an extended platform behind the conning tower. A total of 88 boats were built.

The great majority of all commissioned U-boats were sunk and of the 39,000 crewmembers who served aboard them, 32,000 were killed in action. No military service of any belligerent nation suffered a greater loss.

Short Lines



Spirit of Innovation was joined by the ABC A-150 operated for Ginn resorts at New Smyrna Beach airport to cover Daytona Races first week of July. Editor photo.

Goodyear renews vigor for LTA

Goodyear, after signing a new five-year contract to supply tires to NASCAR, got their blimps to the official TV race coverage as well. The Company kicked off its annual tire dealers' conference at Disney World by announcing a new marketing and advertising slogan -- "Get There," which prominently features its iconic blimps. The video and print advertisement features the Goodyear blimp with the video ad using two actors talking to each other in the gondola as the blimp flies.

Betty Lin-Fisher, Akron *Beacon-Journal* business writer reports: "What about shooting a basketball from the Goodyear blimp 500 feet up in the air? Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. of Akron said it would let four fans from each of the schools in this weekend's NCAA Final Four basketball tournament (Florida, UCLA, Georgetown and Ohio State) try to shoot a ball into a basketball target 100 feet in diameter -- from 50 stories up. A typical basketball hoop has a diameter of 18 inches. Winners will receive travel, accommodations and tickets for two -- via an airplane, not a blimp -- to a future sporting event where the Goodyear blimp will provide aerial coverage. Goodyear spokesman Ed Markey said '...pretty narrow... From an elevation of 500 feet, it's going to be all you can do to aim the ball... You can probably stick your head out to look down and get an aim and get your arm out and maybe get a look at the target.' Goodyear has received clearance from the Federal Aviation Administration for the contest, Markey said." Ω

Fuel Cell to Power Manned HTA Craft

The May 2007 *Aerospace Engineering* reports the first manned fuel cell aircraft will take to the Spanish skies summer 2007. The experimental one-person craft, being built by US aerospace company Boeing, will rely entirely on a 25-kilowatt fuel cell for propulsion once airborne. The fuel cells will provide electrical power for propeller motors. However, the aircraft will need to use batteries to accelerate to the required speed during take off. "If there was ever a way to demonstrate that fuel cells are safe and usable, this is it," says Judith Agar of Intelligent Energy, the UK company chosen by Boeing to build the fuel cells. "But it's essentially a modified glider, so it could glide back to the ground if the propulsion fails." Fuel cells use a chemical reaction to generate electricity from hydrogen and oxygen and the only by-products of the process are heat and water. The cells are considered a long-term alternative to the internal combustion engine, which produces greenhouse gases in its exhaust fumes. A US company, Lynntech, has already built fuel cells for uncrewed, long duration surveillance aircraft. But Lynntech's Craig Andrews says it is not feasible to propel anything larger than a light aircraft using current fuel cell technology.

"The fuel cells are not the problem, it's the hydrogen storage," he told *New Scientist*. Providing enough power for a heavier airplane would require more hydrogen than could feasibly be carried, he says. "Where primary propulsion is concerned, it's a matter of weight and power efficiency." However, Boeing does plan to introduce fuel cells on larger aircraft as a source of auxiliary power for lighting, heating and in-flight entertainment. Larger airplanes currently use batteries that are recharged by running the main engines. Agar says the use of fuel cells could therefore cut the pollution this produces. A spokesman for Boeing says: "Fuel cells are inherently cleaner and quieter than auxiliary power units, have fewer moving parts, and can generate more than twice as much electricity." Ω



AVIATION WEEK & Space Technology's JUNE 25, 2007 issue reports "Radars could be mounted on football-field-size plastic sheets" "A massive structure under construction by Raytheon will form one side of a three-football-field-long airship. About six million elements will make up the 6,000-sq.-meter antenna, says Mark Hauhe, a senior fellow working on advanced radar concept demonstrators... Raytheon engineers are exploring what they call the 'origami' antenna approach because flexible materials are heated and bent into long creases that can run uninterrupted... From 65,000 ft. the antenna could scan tens of thousands of square miles...The airship's proposed 65,000-ft. operating altitude was dictated by physics. To fly at that altitude, the airship has to be 300 yd. long and that's about the practical [antenna] size limit..." Ω



Roy Gibbens' Cy-prop demonstrator airplane model (above) should be flying about the time you read this. The revolutionary props have already propelled a model airship. Ω

The Tenth DGLR Workshop for LTA Tech, this one themed "Light Construction", was held 15-16 June in Germany under the auspices of Technische University Munchen. Ω

ISOPOLAR

Barry Prentice reports: Our demonstration flight has been delayed until August as final touches and tests are performed on Hokan's new airship. We will not know the exact flight time until the airship is inflated and put through a series of test flights. Apparently, as an experimental vehicle, it has to log a certain number of hours before it can leave its restricted area.



Above is the artist conception of the full airship. The experimental airship that we are using is a scaled prototype of the artist conception. The ISO Polar Airship Demonstration will seek to accomplish the first airship cargo delivery to a remote Northern Community; First measurement of Airship Greenhouse Gas Emissions; First Airship used for Mineral Exploration in Canada; and the longest flight of a Canadian-built Airship.

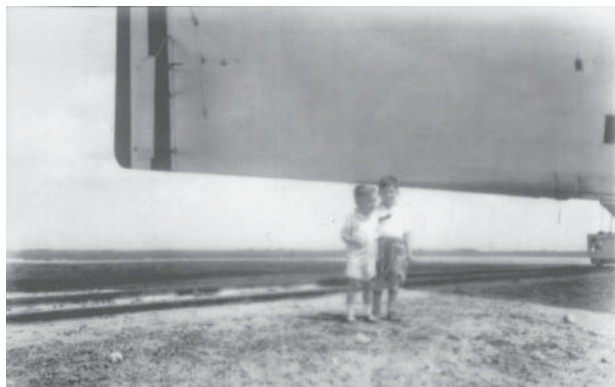
[Ed. note: Barry's presentation included maps we haven't the space for, suffice it to say it is an ambitious plan to fly across Ontario and most of the length of Manitoba, then back again.]



USS Akron 75th Anniversary Noted With Postage Stamp now offered by NAA

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

No less a publication than *Aerospace America* has a news item from 75 years ago: "May 9th: USS *Akron* airship leaves Lakehurst NAS N.J. for Sunnyvale, Calif... At San Angelo, Texas, it attempts a landing, but the entire male population of the town, which is mobilized for the task, is unable to hold the ship. The *Akron* drifts well off course and reaches the coast near San Diego..." Your editor can't imagine where that load of pap, credited to the May 18, 1932 issue of *The Aeroplane* came from, but the *Akron's* first cross-country flight had enough problems without inventing an imaginary landing attempt in Texas, let alone making it sound like the ship drifting uncontrollably managed to arrive at the intended destination. Their next issue marks July 14th as the date the "USS *Akron* carries its full complement of five Curtiss F9C-2 light single seat fighter biplanes." In fact interference with two girders prevented her from holding more than three planes inside. Modifications were planned to fix that, and add outside perches that would have allowed eight to be carried – had the ship not been lost before these could be completed.



Our own member **Roy Gibbens** was taken to Opa-Locka by his parents to see the mighty *Akron* swing at the mooring circle. In the photo above, he is the handsome one, on the right.

So far the response to our unprecedented stamp offer has been uninspired. Our Treasury was heavily burdened to make this stamp possible, and if we have to wind up just using them for NAA correspondence, you can bet there will be no second offering of new rectangular-oriented models with, say, a color ZPG-2 picture thereon. Members are urged to visit 'Small Stores' and order a few sheets. It would be a gift people would actually use, you'd be helping the NAA, and showing your respect for the pioneers of the rigid airship all at once. See you at the Small Stores! Ω

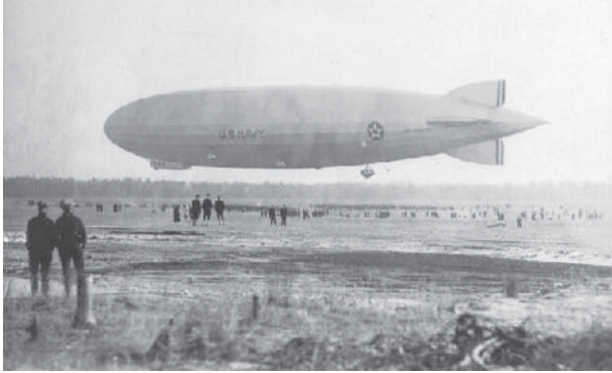


ATTENTION! COLLECTORS. PHILATELISTS, GRANDPARENTS

The ZRS-4 stamps are the best deal you will find. I bought each one of my six grandchildren a sheet of stamps for a Christmas present. Each child received a lengthy explanation on the value these stamps would have in years to come. They're also a history lesson. If you need talking points direct them to our web site www.naval-airships.org.
- George Allen



HISTORY COMMITTEE



75th Anniversary of ZR-3 Decommissioning

They called her "The Lucky Ship" and she was, for 4181 hours' flight time in 331 flights. Beginning at her birthplace at the Zeppelin Works in Germany in 1924 with a triumphant delivery flight westward across the Atlantic (only the SECOND aircraft ever to make the crossing in that direction), to most of the states in the Eastern and Southern U.S., North to the Canadian border, South to the Pacific side of the Panama Canal, Costa Rica, over the Atlantic seaboard, the startling blue waters and "cleanly villages" (as Commander Rosendahl put it) in the Caribbean, Bermuda. There were raucous Big City welcomes with sirens and factory whistles blaring, small-town greetings with everybody running out into the streets to wave. The LOS ANGELES was more than an airship, she was something of a phenomenon. At a time when people thrilled to see even the sight of a small "barnstormer" airplane, this was a giant aerial spectacle more than two football fields long, sailing through the skies at 60 miles per hour, her attractive red-white-blue trim and star-in-circle insignia proclaiming America's desire to be at the forefront of aviation technology in the 1920's. It was not always an easy "sell" for the LOS ANGELES and her keepers. Following the loss of the SHENANDOAH in 1925, there was a loud public outcry against spending millions of dollars on these "foolish big balloons." "Big Target." "Expensive" "Vulnerable!" said the critics. One news editorial bluntly concluded "The Dirigible is to the Airplane what the Circus Fat Man is to Jack Dempsey!" But the LOS ANGELES kept on flying, training new generations of Lighter Than Air Aviators,

developing new techniques and systems for the giant new airships AKRON and MACON which would be at the forefront of that next generation. As a training/experimental craft and "flying laboratory" to test new ideas, her value was beyond calculation. She had a total of SEVEN commanding officers...George W. Steele, Jacob Klein (Acting,) C.E. Rosendahl, Herbert Wiley, Vincent Clarke, Alger Dresel and Fred T. Berry. They used her for moorings at sea, testing new mooring systems on land, and the launch/recovery of airplanes from an airborne "trapeze" that led to the "Flying Aircraft Carrier" concept. Christened by First Lady Grace Coolidge, the LOS ANGELES is the only U.S. Navy airship ever to fly the POTUS flag when "Silent Cal" Coolidge stepped aboard for a brief inspection tour. Guest VIP passengers ranged from Admirals and Generals, Members of Congress, Captains of Industry, explorers and celebrities of radio and film, to one memorable flight in the summer of 1931 when they even hosted the King and Queen of Siam for a day's flight.

When the Germans delivered the LOS ANGELES, they had given a rule-of-thumb operational lifespan of "three to five years" but girder brittleness samples and other tests performed at regular intervals starting in 1929 revealed that there was no significant compromise of strength in the giant duralumin structure. Right to the very end, from a structural integrity standpoint, she was, as one of her men put it "Sound as a Dollar!" (Well, mostly true, though she did break her share of airframe shear wires as she got "long in the tooth" as well as having popped a rivet here and there.) This would ultimately be a prophetic analogy, because after the onslaught of the Depression in October 1929, DOLLARS became very scarce. The years 1930 and 1931 saw the LOS ANGELES busier than probably any time in her career, but this was the "lead up" to the AKRON entering service. Once the AKRON arrived, it was clear that the LOS ANGELES' further flying days were numbered. Admiral Moffett of course wanted to keep the LOS ANGELES in service at least until the MACON was finished. There was

still training work to do and there were a variety of experimental projects still on the drawing boards at Lakehurst. Yet with the country in the midst of economic strangulation in early 1932, the Navy Department budget came under scrutiny for any "unnecessary" expenditures and the allotted sum of \$270,000 to keep the LOS ANGELES in service for fiscal year 1933 seemed to fall under the category of the "unnecessary." No problem, said Admiral Moffett. He would "divert" the money from "other sources." This caused a stink which the usually-astute Moffett did not expect. Not only did Congress cut out the \$270,000, but they threatened to IMPOUND any money Moffett planned to "divert." They then proceeded to say to the effect that "This does not mean specifically that the LOS ANGELES cannot be operated, but it is believed that by taking the ship out of service a savings of at least a quarter-million dollars can be affected." LOS ANGELES was officially decommissioned on June 30, 1932 in a brief ceremony in Lakehurst Hangar #1. Commander Fred T. Berry, the seventh and final Commanding Officer, read his orders to take the ship out of service and take his new position as Commanding Officer, NAS Lakehurst with additional duty as "Commander, Rigid Airship Training & Experimental Squadron." Executive Officer Commander Frank McCord was ordered to the new AKRON as prospective Commanding Officer. (McCord would die in command of the AKRON the following April, as would Commander Berry, who was aboard as a passenger.) The crew dispersed. Many were assigned to the new MACON, a few went to the AKRON, several were assigned to duty at NAS Lakehurst.

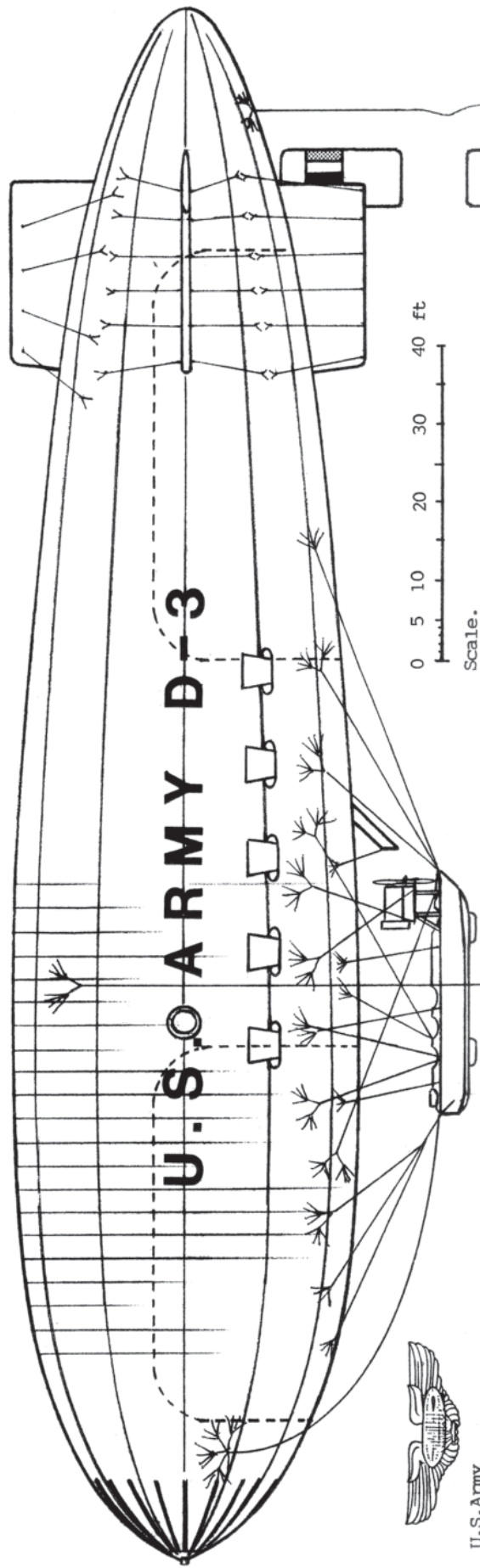
Gas cells and engines were removed, the giant empty shell was hung from above and supported from below by wooden shoring. Stored in the custody of the Commanding Officer, NAS Lakehurst with the understanding that she should be able to be made ready for flight in 30-60 days if needed, LOS ANGELES never flew again. This was not for lack of trying. Largely through the

tireless efforts of Commander Rosendahl, she would be reconditioned for a "Test Experimental" role as a grounded (non-flying) training ship, providing "hands on" training for scores of newcomers for several interesting years.

As an obsolete, non-flyable airship, she possessed remarkable powers of survival, but finally in 1939 while Commander Rosendahl was serving a stint at sea in the Pacific, the order was handed down that the LOS ANGELES should be broken up for scrap. They started in October, and finished right around Christmas. (One of her former devoted crewmen even got a special commendation for devising a giant hand-held metal shear which expedited the job of cutting the ship apart.) All scrap was separated and piled outside the Hangar by January 3, 1940. In the end, they got just over \$3000 for the ship's skeleton. Some pieces survived and can be seen on display today. Fabric, complete fuel tanks, gas cell material, pieces of girders made their way to display in Akron, Ohio and at Lakehurst. An engine telegraph resides at the Zeppelin Museum in Friedrichshafen after spending 5 decades in Gordon Vaeth's study. The ship's German Telefunken radio set, a propeller, gas valves, rudder wheel and other items are on display with the Rosendahl collection at the University of Texas at Dallas. Also there is the inscribed photo from First Lady Grace Coolidge which for years hung in the control car and then for decades in Admiral Rosendahl's study reading "To the Good Ship LOS ANGELES From Her Sponsor Mother. Go Forth Under The Open Sky And May The Winds of Heaven Deal Gently With Thee...Grace Coolidge."

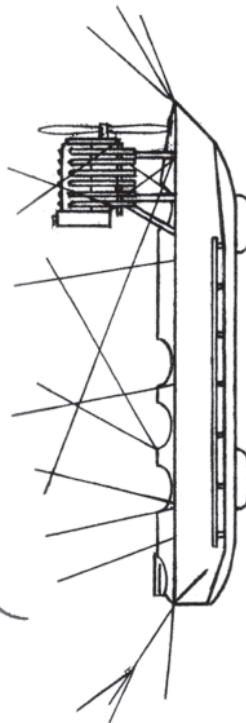
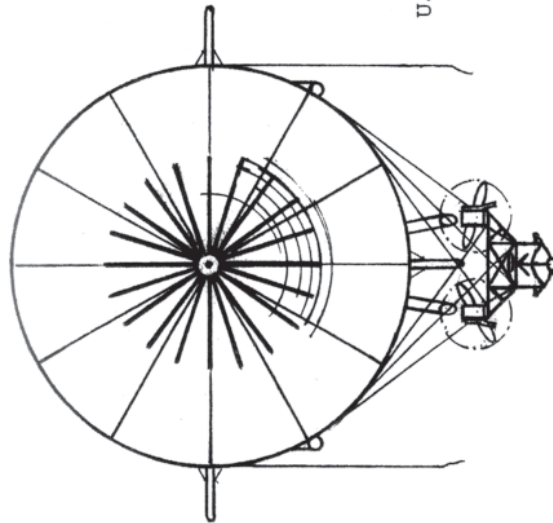
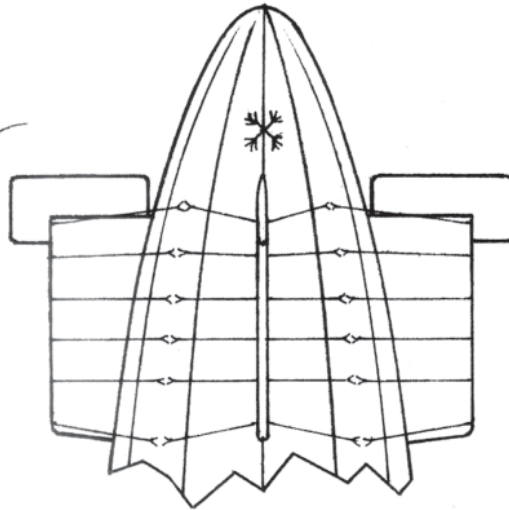
-Rick Zitarosa

This past July 2nd marks the 25th anniversary of urban legend Larry Walter's wild ride. The eccentric Californian attached 45 weather balloons to his lawn chair and took off from San Pedro using a BB gun for control of his static condition. During his 45 minute, 20 mile flight he entered controlled air space and surpassed 16,000 ft. altitude. **Ω**

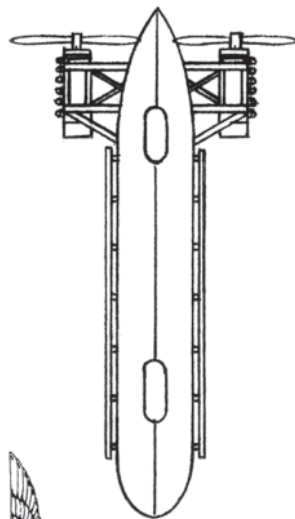


U.S. Army

Scale.



U.S. Navy



Manufacturer:	Goodyear
1st Flight:	13.7.1920
Length:	190 ft, 60.3 m
Diameter:	42 ft, 12.8 m
Height:	58 ft, 17.7 m
Volume:	190,000 cf, 5400 cm
M.Speed:	50 mph, 80 kmh
M.Range:	1500 mls, 2400 km
Engines:	2 Union, 125 hp
Crew:	4

U.S. NAVY & ARMY TYPE D

Black Blimp



Henderson 'Pete' T. Chambliss, Sr., 89, at rest on his birthday June 10, 2007 in Sunnyvale, CA. He descended from 13 patriots of the Revolutionary War and was the 12th generation of his family to serve the US beginning with the militia in colonial Virginia. Pete was a native of Texas. After joining the Navy in 1936 he was sent to Norfolk, followed by Naval flight training at

Pensacola, and Naval Airship training at Lakehurst. He picked up the nickname 'Pete' during his time in the service and it stayed with him his entire life. In 1937 he was assigned to VP-18, a flying boat squadron at Pearl Harbor. In 1941 the squadron received orders to the Philippines. He was re-accepted for LTA at Lakehurst. VP-18 was sent to the Philippines and most of the squadron was either killed or captured to be sent on the infamous Bataan Death March. He has said that re-volunteering for Lighter Than Air may have saved his Life.

During the war he flew anti-submarine patrol, trained new blimp pilots, and managed the erection of several blimps at different Air Bases along the west coast. He took part in Operation Crossroads, the testing of the atomic bomb on the islands of Eniwetok, Kwajalein, and Bikini. He decided to raise his family in Mountain View. He left the Navy and went to work for Douglas Leigh Sky Advertising Co. based in New York, flying advertising blimps. During this time with Formway he met Walt Disney; he helped with design work on several rides for the then new Disneyland. Following retirement he did a lot of traveling and found time to complete building a 1903 Oldsmobile. He had a passion for flying, as a civilian he logged over 5,000 hours. He was member of the LTAS, NAA, National Association of Atomic Veterans, and the Light House Society. Predeceased by wife Beth Chambliss (1997), survived by Karen Chambliss of Petaluma, Tom Chambliss of Mtn. View, Margaret Carroll of Sunnyvale, John Chambliss of Mtn. View, Robert Chambliss of San Leandro; 7 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren. **Ω**

James L. Sinquefield, 83, passed away June 21, 2007. Born April 27, 1924, in Birmingham, Alabama. Joined the Navy in 1942, enrolled in the

NAVCAD Program. Trained to fly Piper Cubs at University of Georgia, Athens; advanced training at Chapel Hill, NC. (Baseball athlete, Ted Williams, was in same training class.) Upon graduation he was sent to Moffett Field and trained to fly K-ships. Jim served with ZP-21, then stationed at Igarasu Besu, Brazil (still occasionally flew into NAS Richmond.) Stayed in the Reserves after WWII. Recalled for the Korean War. Retired from the Navy Reserve as an LCDR. Maintenance Supervisor for Miami Dade College. Survived by his son Duane. **Ω**

Charles H. "Champ" Pearman, 87, passed away 2 NOV 06. Born 6 FEB 19 in Morrison, Colorado, he was a longtime LTA pilot, veteran of Pearl Harbor and the Korean War. Preceded in death by son Spence Charles, "Champ" is survived by his wife of 68 years Edith Helen; daughters Jeanne Brady and Janice Boothe; two grand daughters and two great-grandchildren. **Ω**



George Robert 'Bob' Anderson, 86, died on July 4, 2007 in Akron, Ohio, where he'd traveled to for a family reunion. Born and raised in northern Ohio, he was a pilot with ZP-11 in WWII and with ZP-951, Naval Reserve, Santa Ana, post-war. He participated in many civic activities, serving in a leadership position in several. Later, he was involved in sales and marketing, which took him from California to New York and then to Michigan. He finished his business career by purchasing a company in Pennsylvania, from which he retired to New Bern. His last 20 years in River Bend, North Carolina, allowed him to pursue his interests. Bob was preceded in death by his wife, Marian, and his brother, Fred. Survived by a sister, and his children, Karen Anderson Seibert (Greg) of Ft. Myers, FL; Craig Anderson (Sue) of Decatur, IN; Debby Anderson Smith (Marshall) of Kannapolis, NC; ten grandchildren, 18 great grandchildren, Member of NAA and Garber United Methodist Church. **Ω**



DRIFTING TOWARD THE
LIGHTER [not darker] SIDE OF LTA



(Above, from BALOONING magazine) Hot air goes hand in hand with big heads. No doubt Zardoz is next. ☺

In 1937, as the story goes, an elderly woman booked passage on the *Graf Zeppelin* returning from South America to Germany. Hurrying aboard, she confronted Captain Hans Von Schiller, asking if the airship passenger liner, then almost ten years old and the highest-time of the rigids, was safe to fly. Von Schiller supposedly replied, "Sure, how do you think it got to be this old?" ☺



THE READY ROOM

Airships to the Arctic IV

October 28-31, 2007

Fort Garry Hotel, Winnipeg
www.isopolar.ca

Spring 2008 - International Symposium in Aerospace Valley: Inflatable Solutions for Aeronautic and Aerospace Applications, Acquaitaine, France.

July 2008 - 6th Airship Association International Conference, Friedrichshafen, Germany.



**The average Navy pilot,
despite the sometimes
swaggering exterior, is
very much capable of
such feelings as love,
affection, intimacy and
caring. These feelings just
don't involve anyone else.**

The situation was anything but 'Normal' when some blimps went out for a blast some fifty years ago. In the next TNB you'll read about ships of the desert during the tests of Operation Plumbob. It's sure to get glowing reviews! ☺ See you in #76!





RETURN TO FLIGHT



**United States Navy
Lighter - Than - Air**

Naval Air Engineering Station
Lakehurst, NJ

2006





Rick Zitarosa's montage of MZ3A operations. Here is a celebration of the first Navy airship in 44 years, operating while a visiting American Blimp leased by the Army is masted at Lakehurst (first time Army and Navy LTA at NASL in more than 60 years); and during Fleet Week 2007, the first time a Navy airship had worked with the Fleet since the late early 1960s. Sadly, shortly after the celebration of Fleet Week, the MZ3A was docked without the intention of flying again in the near future. Read about this sad state of affairs in [SHORE ESTABLISHMENTS](#). All photos courtesy Navy Lakehurst Historical Society historian and NAA Convention Chairman Rick Zitarosa.

