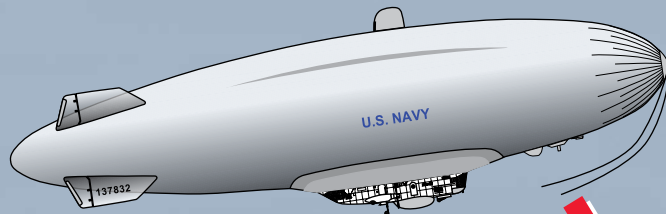
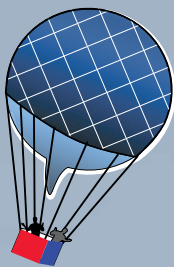


THE

NOON



BALLOON

The Official Newsletter of THE NAVAL AIRSHIP ASSOCIATION, INC.

No. 79

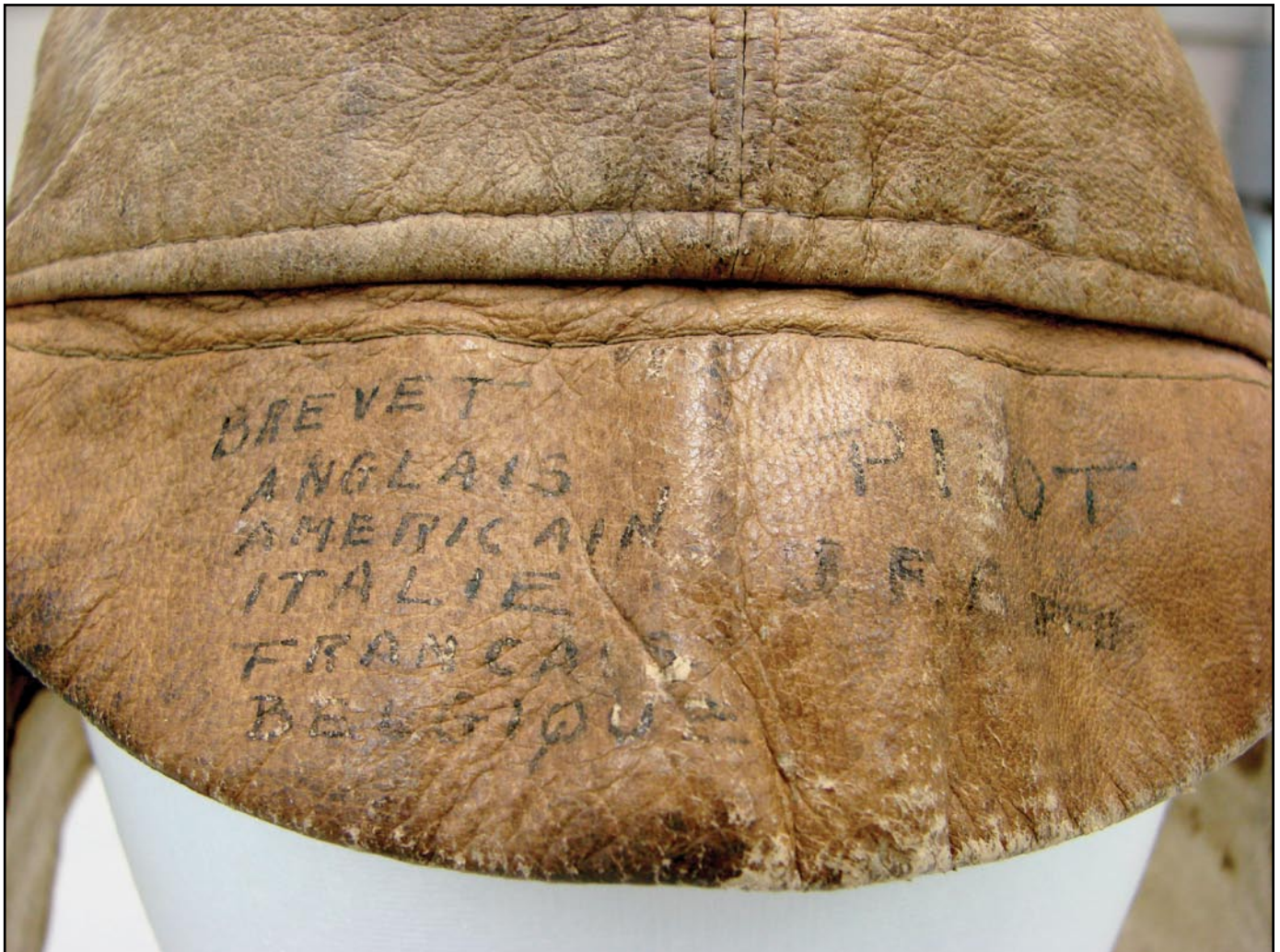
Fall 2008



USN LTA at Key West



(Above) Zeppelin NT 04 at ground level. Copyright ZLT/Airship Ventures.
(Below) The flying helmet of Altitude Pilot James Franklin Griffin. Joe Long photo.



THE NOON BALLOON

Official Publication of the Naval Airship Association, Inc.

ISSUE # 79 FALL 2008

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On the Cover of TNB #79: US Navy and Coast Guard try out an airship to work border patrol from Key West. Handlers from Airship Management Services race toward Skyship 600 blimp as it prepares to touch down, arriving for six weeks of marine surveillance. Oddly enough the press reported surface units capturing a drug smuggling submarine at sea elsewhere, releasing this photo:



Who knows, someone in today's Chain of Command might read this magazine and realize LTA has been in ASW before... why not again?

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



Above: Filming "This Man's Navy" at NAS Moffett Field, California, 1944.

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EDITORIAL

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

You can't imagine the roller coaster ride that began with Boeing's announcement - I was actually on my way to Chicago the next day - followed shortly by a phone call from merry old England. Our webmaster **Mike Vinnarick** had dutifully forwarded a routine request for information and I followed up by e-mail, prompting the phone call. It was another TV crew doing a show, but this time they didn't just want us to work for nothing finding free footage of the Hindenburg exploding to show hydrogen fireballs forming, as so often seems the case (see **Media Watch**). This Brit was different - he is doing a show on the U-boat war in the Caribbean.

Tony's crew had interviewed a veteran of the U-615, a sub sunk by US forces. In my effort to chronicle previously obscured or classified combats between airships and subs, I'd found two books that credited ZP-51's **K-68** as being the key to the sub's destruction. The orbiting blimp allowed bomber airplanes to hone in on the U-615 and attack, rather than lose it again as they had in previous encounters. The two references did not raise any eyebrows in our maintain-status-quo activist members. Recently, member and U-boat researcher extraordinaire **CAPT Jerry Mason** uncovered and translated the German Command report for the action which brags that while the submarine was sunk, they took a whole bunch of airplanes and even an airship with them. (K-68 was then out of fuel and ditched on an island, but no one was lost.) Even that would fail to inspire a new investigation that maybe, just maybe, airships had more combat credentials than history lets on.

Tony had called because the U-615 vet had told of an airship in the distance that kept allowing airplanes to find them. Not knowing how many people (even in NAA!) keep insisting only one airship ever saw a submarine, Tony called and told of his interview.

Now we're on, I thought. NAA member **William Voda** was K-68's ordinance man that fateful day. I'd arranged for Bill to tape with another Brit crew an interview at the Denver Reunion. That show was never finished, but I'd checked in with Bill every so often to tell him we were still trying. Now at last we'd be able to make good - we'd have vets from both sides of the action! Let 'em try to deny that! Not seeing Bill in the new roster, I asked our man in Mass., **Fred Morin**, to check on Bill Voda.

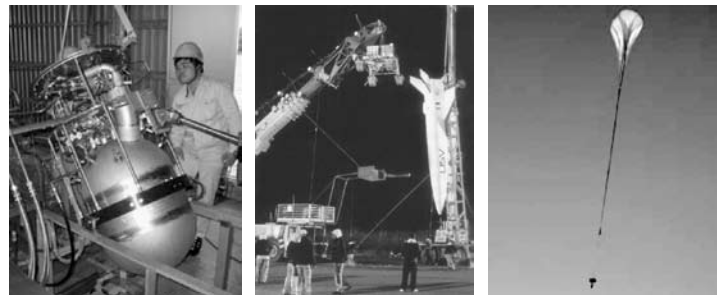
Bill Voda had died in 2006.

The status-quo crowd will win this battle, because they have a powerful ally: The Grim Reaper. Book or no book, I can't fight both forever.

On the upswing, Boeing's announcement to build a vertical-lift airship came first through longtime Canadian LTA advocate (and member) **Dr. Barry Prentice**. Read all about it on page 12. Likewise the Navy/Coast Guard joint operations of a Skyship 600 leased from Airship Management is as great a newsbyte as the Navy taking its own ABC A-170 out of caretaker status. Yet we've also been blessed with a very wide range of historical pieces this issue, enjoy! Also, by the time you read this we hope to have **Jeffrey Cook's** study of rigid airships' fin design - emphasizing the ZRS program - recreated.

What to do, what to do: the debate continues. If airships have no future when helium passes \$9, \$10, \$11 (or name your price), then why bother to design new airships? If we all begrudgingly accept that we will have to use hydrogen "someday," then why not use it today, at least as fuel, since it has three times the energy (by weight) than gasoline? What do we gain, exactly, by postponing the inevitable?

Happily one group in the AIAA LTA Tech Committee is doing something about it. See page 25 for some preliminary ideas about gathering sponsors for the "Z Prize." Other disciplines not beating themselves up about using hydrogen fuel are making great strides. In the case of hypersonic research, it's the only realistic way. The Italian team (left, the H2 tank; center, the DSV test vehicle; right, going aloft) is even LTA minded. Instead of spending millions on a fancy launch rocket, they loft their hydrogen-powered hypersonic test vehicle via balloon and let gravity do the hard work. The next test is scheduled for about the time you read this, in October 2008. A modern airship operation would not worry



about the helium shipment's whereabouts or what the price of av-gas was rising to. Both the airship's lift its fuel would be manufactured locally, anywhere there is sunlight and water, allowing competitively priced operations independent of OPEC or the Bureau of Mines. What are we waiting for, foreigners to beat us to it... again? Ω

- R G Van Treuren

View From The Top: PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I have been attempting to find a Nominating Committee to replace me at the end of my two-year term. It has been difficult. Originally it was the feeling of your leadership that the President would preferably be a qualified airship commander or someone with vast experience in LTA. Airship Commanders are quickly becoming a thing of the past. However, there are many enlisted NAA members who have served honorably and well in airship squadrons. They have left the service and have enjoyed becoming successful entrepreneurs. Our current Sec-Treasurer is a prime example.

In addition to demonstrating capable leadership qualities, a primary consideration should be an avid interest in history and continuation of the unique capabilities of airships. In our changing world, women certainly should not be overlooked. Our recently retired Secretary, Margaret Hinrichsen, is an example of one who has served long and well.

Members chosen for the Nominating Committee should be people who know the capabilities of our members. They will be performing a valuable service to our organization. The position does not require a great deal of travel, nor is

it too demanding of their time and effort. Their duties can be performed from a living room chair with the use of a telephone.

I will continue my search and hopefully can report in our next NOON BALLOON, those who have accepted appointment to our Nominating Committee. Ω

- Herm Spar

THE NOON BALLOON Newsletter of the NAA Volunteer Staff

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Publisher: **David R. Smith**

www.gyzep.com

Errata: In spite of the best efforts of your volunteer newsletter team, software incompatibility between Microsoft and Adobe products continue to insert artifacts into our columns. Last issue's Pigeon Cote featured a letter from "**Red**" **Layton** which should have read, "I was a LT(jg) and Admin Officer in ZP2 Detachment 6 at Key West when the squadron was re-designated as ZX-11 (I designed the ZX-11 Patch). I was subsequently transferred to ZX-11 Det 1 at Glynco, and reported in there day of Lou's crash. As I remember the story, the blimp took off from Key West in very heavy, pre-hurricane weather and was flying on auto pilot when they broke the rudder shaft in the cockpit. (This was the first airship at Key West to have an auto pilot). They returned to Key West and made a 'no rudder' landing using differential power for control. As I recall, one of the pilots was **George Richards**. After a long period during which they repaired the rudder shaft, they took off again with a new pilot crew and the same enlisted crew (who had been up for hours on the flight and the

repair). The new pilot was CDR **Ray Wiggins**, ZX-11 Operations Officer. He did not want to use the auto pilot because of the previous trouble, so he turned off the inverter. Unfortunately, the inverter also powered the gyro compass. After reporting that they were a couple of miles at sea southeast of Jacksonville, they broke out over NAS Cecil Field (west of Jacksonville). They headed to Jacksonville where it was planned to re-fuel the airship. LT **Ben Leavitt** of ZX-11 Det 1, with a couple of petty officers and a Barrett Coupling, drove to Jax, planning on using Station personnel to ground handle the airship. However, CDR Wiggins reported that he had enough gas to get to Glynco - and he almost did. I don't remember what happened to the car, but I believe that it was recovered and then scrapped. There was a lot of blimp cloth and I obtained a very large piece. I built a rack on a luggage trailer and covered it with the blimp cloth. It was still there when I sold the trailer in Monterey about 1975. Ω

TREASURER'S STRONGBOX

Greetings from South Florida! I hope everyone had a great summer.

It has been agreed upon that the office of the Secretary be combined with the Treasurer's position as it had been in the past. In the future, the two combined offices will be known as Secretary/ Treasurer of the N.A.A. Any correspondence, membership questions, or obituaries will now be forwarded to me.

Please note! Membership renewal will begin at the start of November for the 2009 membership renewals. Letters will be mailed out to only those who are due for renewal in 2009. Please make sure that all pertinent information is kept current. You may notify me of any changes and I will add them to our database. This will make your correct information available to others.

Our roster/directory was recently mailed to you. We were notified of the following changes after the printing of the directory. Please make adjustments to your records.

Allen, George W. (Spouse) Dottie
1182 Wild Ginger Lane (W) Orange Park, FL 32003-3227
Phone/Fax (904) 264-0903
e-mail Georgewallen@Bellsouth.Net

Joseph Garrison – correct e-mail: dl0987@socal.rr.com

James W. Kissick Jr. – correct e-mail: cdrusn1@verizon.net

Michael F. Connors – new box # and zip code:
PO Box 1436, Zip - 20177

Ford U. Ross – New address, phone, e-mail:
66062 Cambridge Road, Pinellas Park, FL 33782
Phone: 727-289-8467,
E-mail: zccaams@tampabay.rr.com

John C. Barth – new address and phone:
4011 Green Pond Rd. Apt #69, Bethlehem, PA 18020
Phone: 610-867-2635

Jerry Mason – (page 15, name inverted, should be in with the M's) 106-929 Esquimalt Road, Victoria, BC, Canada V9A 3M7. Phone: 250-381-8403.
E-mail: jerr@uboatarchive.net

WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS

May 02, 2008 – July 31, 2008

Michael Seck---St. Louis, MO
Edward A. Moore Jr. ---Kirkwood, MO

Tom Norris---Alexandria, VA
James V. Noone---Farmingdale, NY
William 'Bill' H. Garrett--- Battleground, IN
Richard F. Legg--- Keystone Heights, FL
James P. Flint --- Brandon, FL
Benjamin N. (Ben) Brigham--- Santa Monica, CA
Harry E. 'Hy' Blythe Jr. --- Paso Robles, CA
Richard R. Killion --- Moorpark, CA
George E. Wright Jr. --- West Covina, CA
Ivan Sampson, Stockport, Cheshire, England
Joe Long, Columbia, SC
Ethel Nepveux, Charleston SC
Keneth Klein, Wilmington, DE

Ω - Peter F. Brouwer, Sec-Tres.

Spring Executive Council Meeting

At the meeting of the Executive Council of the NAA held at the "Dome" in Edgewater, FL, on Wednesday, March 12th, the EC approved a written motion by Margaret Hinrichsen, Secretary, with language that in essence combines the offices of both Secretary and Treasurer into a single office of Secretary/Treasurer. Although the written request asked for the change to a single Article and Section of the NAA By-Laws dated 6 May 1998, it was apparent that several Articles and Sections of the By-Laws would require changes in order to accomplish the complete task of combining the two offices. The following are the changes that are required:

Article IV, Section 3. First sentence – Delete the words "Secretary or treasurer" and substitute the word "Secretary/Treasurer."

Article IV, Section 4. First and second sentences – Delete the word "Treasurer" and substitute the word "Secretary/Treasurer" in two instances.

Article VI, Section 5. Second, third and fifth sentences – Delete the word "Secretary" in three instances and substitute the word "Secretary/Treasurer" in each instance.

Article VII, Section 1. First sentence – Delete the word "four" and substitute the word "three." In the second sentence delete the word "eight" and substitute the word "seven."

Article VII, Section 3. First sentence – Delete the word "Treasurer" and substitute the word "Secretary/Treasurer."

Article VII, Section 4. Last sentence – Delete the word "Secretary" and substitute the word "Secretary/Treasurer."

Article VIII, Section 1. Change the entire first sentence to read, “The elective officers to serve a nominal term of two years shall be a President, a Vice President and a Secretary/Treasurer.” In the last sentence of this section delete the word “seven” and substitute “six.”

Article VIII, Sections 6 and 7. Combine these sections into one section titled “Section 6.” It is suggested that Section 6 be set forth in tabular form as follows:

“The NAA Secretary/Treasurer shall:

- a. Ensure that proper notice of all meetings, including those of Council, are promulgated in a timely fashion by electronic device, or in the NAA newsletter, or by mail, based on the recommendation (added word “of”) the Council;
- b. Ensure that proper records of proceedings of all meetings are maintained;
- c. Maintain the membership records and ensure the distribution of the NAA roster to be published annually on 1 March;
- d. Maintain the Secretary/Treasurer correspondence files or those of other elected officers if copies of correspondence are presented for record purposes.
- e. Maintain a record of all sums received by the NAA from any source, categorizing them if applicable by the purpose intended for their use by the grantor;
- f. Make distributions therefrom as authorized by the Council, subject to any limitation placed by an individual grantor;
- g. Receive initial dues from applicants and renewal dues from the membership, and donations either group may proffer;
- h. Distribute proper credentials of membership and periodically inform the Council of all membership transactions;
- i. Deposit all sums received in insured accounts of financial institutions specifically approved by the Council, to be withdrawn only upon the signature of the Secretary/Treasurer or secondarily by the President, both of whom are to be indicated on the financial institution’s records as those authorized to withdraw funds;
- j. Make available the status of funds, books and vouchers of the NAA Treasury upon request of the Council for its inspection and verification;
- k. Prepare, or cause to be prepared, and certify, or cause to be certified, the financial statements to be included in any financial reports;
- l. Perform other duties commensurate with the office, or as may be assigned by the President.”

Article VIII, Sections 8, 9 and 10. Renumber these sections 7, 8 and 9, respectively.

Article IX, Section 3. In the last and next to last sentences of this section, delete the word “Secretary” and substitute the word “Secretary/Treasurer.”

Article X, Section 1. In the first and second sentences of this section, delete the word “Secretary” and substitute the word “Secretary/Treasurer.”

Note: In the rewriting of Article VIII, Section 6, there have been some slight changes in order, punctuation and wording in order to accomplish the aim of this exercise. Ω

Membership Committee Update

Since our last message in The Noon Balloon #78, the membership committee has moved forward on the plan outlined there to attract new members. The new NAA brochures have been printed and distributed to some museums at former airship bases, a couple of aviation museums, during an appearance of the Goodyear blimp and some have been put on display at a local airport lobby. Your TNB editor is including some with his sale of airship DVDs and books and George Allen is including some with small stores sales. A targeted mailing to some college and university history departments and libraries is under way to attract attention to the role airships played in both WW II and the Cold War. Finally, we will be running a half page ad in the October, 2008 issue of The Journal of Military History, published by the George C. Marshall Foundation and the Virginia Military Institute for the Society for Military History. This is a prestigious group of military historians and they have about 3000 members. Our goal here is to expose military historians, college and university professors, and military museums to the NAA. A copy of the ad is shown below. We are looking into other publications that could provide us with additional exposure to not only former blimp crew members, but also airship enthusiasts and aviation historians and researchers. If anyone has any suggestions of potential publications please let us know.

Ω - **Fred Morin, Chair**

(See page 32 for a sample of the new NAA magazine advertisement. Don’t forget you can order recruiting brochures from any officer or add them free to any Small Stores order.) Ω

PIGEON COTE

Juergen Bock wrote, “If the L-19 is the “Underberg” ship of 1956-59, I was on it back in 1957 in stormy weather flying over my hometown Bremen. At that time I worked at Focke-Wulf being located adjacent to the Bremen airport. After a little talk with the dispatcher, I got a free ride. I met **Lou [Prost]** as kind of the first hippie in my eyes, because he had an archaic beard which was not “in” at that time; in other words, ten years ahead of time. The flight over Bremen was anything but comfortable, and I doubt that advertising flights would still be made at that time of weather. Anyway, anybody although being used to rocking rough car rides could experience strange upheavals of his stomach. What tickled me was the coincidence of names: “Prost” means in German a drinking toast like “cheerioh” and “Underberg” was a well-known liquor brand.

There was a large No Smoking sign in the cabin, but when I undressed in the evening, my shirt sparkled with electric discharges. It was the time of the synthetic “Nyltex” shirts and underwear which produced inch-size sparks! - the curse of synthetic fabric!!



I’m on the way to Berlin to “The Long Night of Sciences” Saturday night. Among others: r/c airship models regatta. Our “beachball” [above] will be presented, but not participate in the race. We found out that the inertia of 8 kg net plus 4 kg attached air = 12 kg effectively does not permit quick turns. For the October regatta in Friedrichshafen we will install reserves able props for braking airspeed to enable a precise turn around the pylons. Gunnar Traut, the pilot, is handling it nicely. He is working now for Airbus. Driven by four props with focusing slip streams, all maneuvers can be performed by only by thrust control. Ω

Art Argleben wrote **Pete Brouwer**: “In reminiscing about my LTA service, I was thinking about the experiment of landing blimps on aircraft carriers. I am probably one of the very few surviving former blimp pilots who have landed a blimp on a jeep aircraft carrier. I have never read anything about this experiment in TNB, but the results of the experiment are probably hidden somewhere in the Navy’s archives. If I remember correctly, the experiment took place about 1954-55. The blimps were from ZP-1 flown out of NAF Weeksville and were made on a jeep carrier. Everything went well for a time until one of the blimps crashed and burned. Fortunately, all of the crew escaped unharmed. If I remember correctly, Charles Napier was the pilot.

The cause of the crash was that the eye of the aft ground handling pendant caught on a bolt on a 40mm gun tube. This event can only happen rarely. I enjoy receiving the magazines, but am saddened when I read about the passing of men I served with such as **Ed Sheely, John McCalla and Si Siberlich**. I hope things are going well with you.”

*Ed note: We’d heard a blackshoe sailor had been assigned to paint the gun tub and the aft rope was dragging through his fresh application, so he hung the line up and departed the scene. At any rate, **James Shock’s** US NAVY AIRSHIPS (3rd ed.) states of K-58: “Revised to ZP2K/ZSG-2 type, during a carrier take-off 25 November 1952, the aft handling lines caught on a carrier gun mount causing a 12-foot hole in the stern of the envelope. K-58 settled into the sea; an engine fire was extinguished as it sank. Submarines USS *Bauer* and USS *Sea Poacher* rescued the crew.”*



*Perhaps it would be easier to call the first blimp landing on a CVE an experiment, made by “Buzz” Llyod and his K-29 crew in February 1944. However, as if on cue, **Tom Cuthbert** just sent in a CD of his photos that include many on CVE ops (above, and on back cover). Ω*

TNB artist Bo Watwood has an idea for an upcoming issue: “Many of us have experiences in flight/mission planning or physical jobs such as ground handling, weigh off, maintenance of flight systems and the many routine but necessary jobs necessary to get an airship flying. We want to share your knowledge of them in a single issue of TNB.

You might have never driven a “mule” or got to be “the mast top man” but you may want to learn about all these interesting LTA jobs from other members. Please write your own memories of your particular experiences and mail or email them to me. Up ship!

Contact: Bo Watwood, 209 Pier Point Dr. Jackson’s Gap, AL 36861, blwatwood@charter.net

Continuing the K-14 Case discussion, Fred Morin wrote: So far in our quest to solve the mystery around the crash of the K-14 of ZP-11 out of NAS So. Weymouth off Bar Harbor, ME on 2 July, 1944, we have presented the following:

- 1) Discrepancies in the official board of inquiry findings concerning the lack of testimony from military and civilian personnel on shore who heard and saw gunfire and detonations,
- 2) Refuted the contention of (2) depth charges falling free after impacting the water and detonating,
- 3) Testimony from salvage operations personnel concerning the quantity of spent shells collected on the cabin floor and the official US Navy photographer’s notations about, “photos of blimp shot down by German submarine.”,
- 4) Testimony from a Navy blimp pilot, first on scene in the early hours of 3 July, to the bullet holes in the K-14 envelope at the point where the 40 ft. after section was torn off and never recovered. Said fabric samples were sent to an investigative agency’s laboratory for testing, with no results ever presented for examination,
- 5) An interview in 2005 with the only K-14 survivor from the crash,
- 6) Testimony from a fellow blimp pilot being told by the squadron commander at a pilot’s meeting called at the time of the accident to not blame the pilot, but was unable to give more details at the time.

Finally, another piece of evidence that contradicts the official story and transcript of testimony. On the evening of July 4th the survivors were having dinner at the Bar Harbor Officer’s Club and decided to autograph a copy of the dinner menu for their commander, Ens. McDonnell. Among the comments are two significant remarks:

- 1) “Our first one, Buddy. It looks like staying together pays off.” Ens. Mike Levine, co-pilot

- 2) “Congratulations, Rb. (jg) MacDonald! Wishing you the best of everything, although you’re the only one (unreadable) a “boch” sub.” PhM-2 Victor Colby, USS Patriot (one of the responding vessels) (Note: spelling errors on original menu text, including McDonnell’s name.)

As we have reported in previous Noon Balloons, the one item needed to correct the erroneous verdict of this fatal accident and put history right is to identify the u-boat responsible. Official records do not show any u-boats in the vicinity of Bar Harbor on 3 July, 1944. However, there have been several instances of u-boats not being where official records state. The U-869 is sitting off the New Jersey coast rather than near Gibraltar as the official records state. Further, if a u-boat was successfully prevented from returning home, all log books and navigation charts would be lost. It is totally conceivable that a u-boat was discovered there and was either damaged beyond repair by the K-14’s depth charges and failed to return home or was sunk somewhere else in the Atlantic.

Finally, let’s look at (3) interesting episodes. 1) The U-233, sunk by the USS *Card* Task Group on 5 July, southeast of Halifax, NS, was inbound to lay mines, but why were the survivors told that the TG was looking for a u-boat already in the area and then questioned at length about the K-14? 2) In August, the USS *Bogue* TG successfully attacked and sank the U-1229 southeast of Newfoundland. Among the survivors was Oskar Mantel, a German agent that was supposed to be put ashore around Hancock Point, ME. 3) In November, the U-1230 did successfully put ashore (2) German agents, William Colepaugh and Erich Gimbel, at Hancock Point who were subsequently captured.

It seems totally beyond coincidence that in July, the K-14 is downed while investigating a reported sighting of a u-boat in the Bar Harbor area. One month later a u-boat is sunk inbound for Hancock Point with an agent aboard, and in November another u-boat successfully landed (2) agents at Hancock Point. That’s a pretty busy area in remote Maine for a 5 month period. By the way, the spot where the K-14 crashed is in the channel leading into Hancock Point, a town on the Bar Harbor islands. The coast line there is very rugged, in 1944 it was very sparsely populated, and has many deep water inlets and rivers. It was ideally suited for clandestine u-boat activity.

Not related to the K-14 but, I note that at the end of Tom Clancy’s “Hunt for Red October,” the captured Russian sub is taken to the Maine coast where it can be hidden from prying eyes. Ω

Rick Zitarosa writes, "A few interesting notes in this 1940 photo showing the NAS LAKEHURST Enlisted Aviation Unit Bowling Team. Photo is taken in the old 2-lane bowling alley in "Combined Services Building" on the base...location of much off-duty recreation.



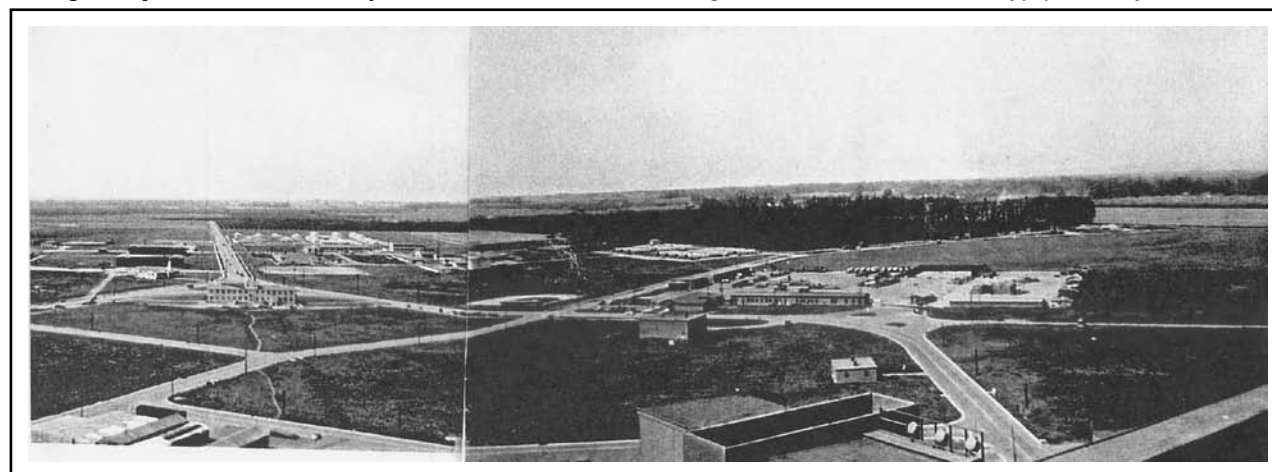
Two of the men in the photo [above] have a long history of involvement with Lakehurst and LTA. Rigger Clarence "C.C." Moore (far left) had come to Lakehurst from "four piper" destroyer USS LEARY (DD-158) and Boatswain's Mate 2nd Class Richard "Dick" Widdicombe had transferred to Lakehurst from Sea Duty as well; together, they went through the last class of the Enlisted Men's Rigid Airship Training School in 1940, both would fly aboard the prewar J4, the wartime K, L, M and every other type of airship the Navy owned in the next 22 years. "C.C." retired as a Chief Petty Officer in 1959, and became a civilian in Lakehurst's AT&D (Airship Test & Development) Department as well as several other DOD/Military Engineering jobs for another twenty years. Dick Widdicombe became an Aviation Cadet, was commissioned an officer, and piloted blimps through the rest of the Navy LTA era, including the job of Chief Navy Test Pilot on the

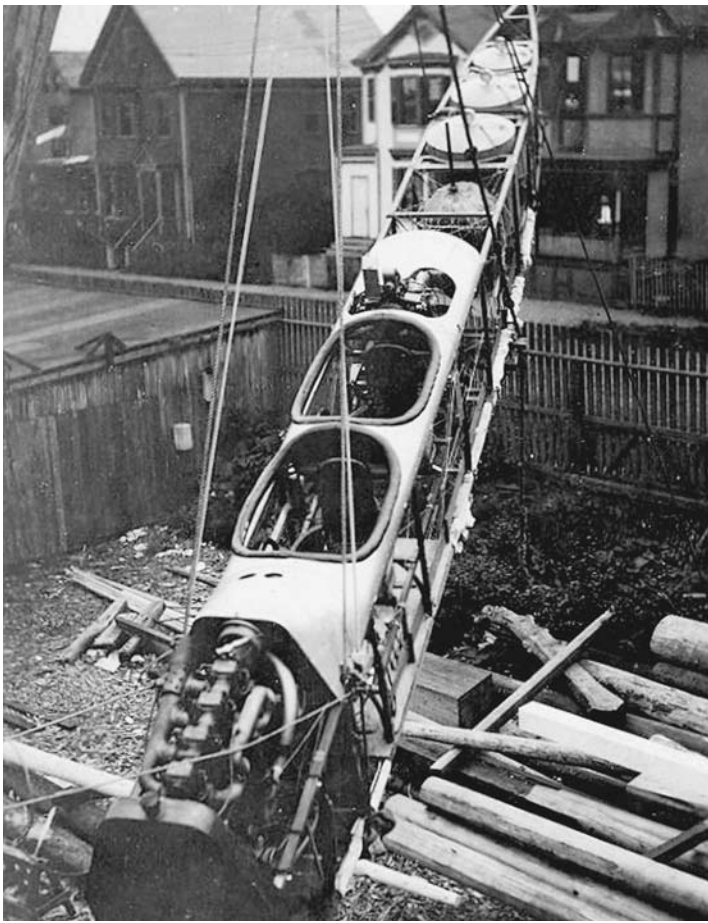
ZPG-3W Program (one of only four fully-qualified ZPG-3W Command Pilots.) Finishing his Navy career flying P2 NEPTUNE patrol planes, Dick took a job with Goodyear. Among the highlights of his Goodyear career, Dick was Pilot-in-Charge of the prestigious N2A EUROPA operation in Europe 1972-79. After retiring from Goodyear, Dick worked as a Pilot/Consultant for many other LTA ventures, with an LTA career that ultimately spanned five decades and over 20,000 hours of LTA flight time (I asked Dick if he had an exact tally of his LTA flight hours, as I believed he had probably surpassed the late Goodyear pilot Vern Smith's 22,000 hours which had been hailed as a "record" when Vern died.)

Both "C.C." and "Dick" stayed in touch over the years (witness the snapshot insert taken in the late 1960's at San Antonio, TX when C.C. was visiting the area for an Army Aviation conference and Dick was there as Pilot-in-Charge of the Goodyear blimp MAYFLOWER. Both gentlemen received Honorary Life Membership in the Navy Lakehurst Historical Society.....C.C. lives in nearby Whiting, NJ and Dick would visit once a year from his home in Ohio (in a rather upscale assisted-living complex of which he referred to himself as "an inmate.")

We lost Dick Widdicombe last fall, age 88. As far as we know, C.C. Moore is now the only one left from this photo. He stops out to the hangar at least once a week..... keeps us younger guys in line. Always a story....and always a good one especially when it begins "There was the time me and Dick Widdicombe....." Ω

Someone evidently lost their issue and had only the wrapper left. They sent the zerox of these photos (below) to our publisher, with no return address. Caption says taken from the Santa Ana hangar in 1944 but no other details. Whoever sent this, please scan the photos in high resolution and identify yourself! Ω





Fred Morin wrote to **Bill Deane**: “On the Sturtevant website they show 11 photos of B-class blimp cars at the Pigeon Spar company. Do you know why it appears like they are taking the cars into the shop? Did they do sub-assembly work in one place and then take them in to finish?

It appears like the Sturtevant website is being upgraded; I don’t recall these photos being there before now. And there appears to be more aviation content..... Fred

Bill responded:

On the Model B Airship control cars-- I worked with Vin Tocco on the ID of the pictures which, as he says in his website, were in the photo album he bought on E-Bay for \$888.00. Most all the photos on the site came from that album.

He could not place the location or what these “aircraft fuselages” were doing in the Sturtevant album. I knew from looking at them that they were airship cars-- I looked up the Class B Navy airships and saw that Sturtevant had built the engines and believing that the cars were built not far from the engine source. I went to the usual suspects and was able to exactly match the present houses on Coleridge St. in East Boston across from the Pigeon Hollow Spar Mast building and their lumber yard shown in the pictures.

The airship cars were built in and stored in the Mast Shed (long and reasonably wide) in 1917. I believe

they installed the engines one by one as the cars were finished--then they had to weight and balance them under the Conn. Aircraft contract. So they moved the finished product to the side door of the Mast building, attached it to the hoist used in the lumber yard, swung them out into the yard and placed them on wooden horses to determine the weight, balance point and center of gravity. Then because they have cockpit instruments and open cockpits to keep dry they moved them back in under cover after they were through.

Vin was also interested in the linkage between these MA companies--The Burgess, Lawley, Sturtevant and Pigeon Hollow Spar all knew each other, and subcontracted and recommended with each other. CMDR. Jerome Hunsaker, head of the Bureau of Construction and Repair in the Navy Department formerly (and later) at MIT, also knew and the players in these companies -- that is how Conn. Aircraft contracted with Sturtevant and Pigeon. Hunsaker also took Starling Burgess’s advice and put the innovative tail booms on the NC-flying boats to reduce overall weight and recommended Pigeon to build them - which they did for all the NCs.... Interesting story that we should write up some day....Bill. Ω



Let’s hope Fred and Bill do so! Speaking of early H2 airships, Ms. Ethel Trenholm Nepveux, our newest member, shared the C-ship photo seen here. We think it might be the C-1, in flight before the helium edict, but we do not know the exact date. She wrote, “The U.S. Navy dirigible encountered mechanical trouble over Georgetown, South Carolina, and made an unscheduled landing. Alfred Glover Trenholm [Ethel’s father], a businessman and free lance photographer of Georgetown, took the photo with a Press Graflex camera that used glass photographic plates. Prints from his pictures have appeared in magazines and have been published as illustrations for historical articles. They are often the only existing pictorial records of the time. He was a pioneer in photography in the Georgetown area.” Ω

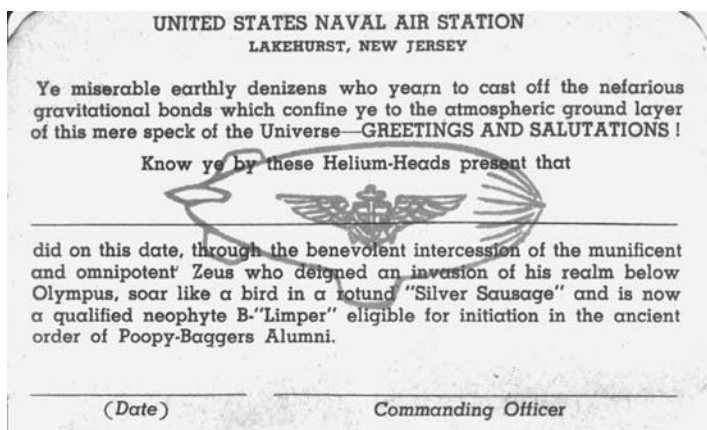
While researching Metalclads for an upcoming article, a member of the History Committee was looking for information from the Association of Balloon and Airship Constructors (ABAC). **Marc de Piolenc** piolenc@gmail.com helped out with details: “Archivale (<http://www.archivale.com>) is the current sales outlet for copies - paper and electronic - of technical documents from the A.B.A.C. collection, and from other technical collections that have found their way into my files over the years. Total number of documents is about 4,000 - about half of them balloon- or airship-related, the rest covering a variety of offbeat technical topics. The site has a full shopping cart system and credit cards are accepted through 2Checkout.com. Ω



New member **Harry E. ‘Hy’ Blythe Jr.** sent along copies of his Dad’s early licenses – you see the balloon pilot one above – and can clear up a mystery for the history buffs. In the Defender christening photo published in the Goodyear book, H. E. Blythe Sr. is the “unidentified” person standing next to P. Litchfield. (Arrow, below.) Ω



A bottle of liquid air explodes on the handrail of the Defender as Amelia Earhart christens the ship, with radio announcer standing by at the Cleveland Air Races, August 30, 1929. (Left) At right, Goodyear Chairman P.W. Litchfield and Amelia Earhart are flanked by the cream of women pilots of the period on the occasion of the Defender’s christening. From left to right: Bobby Trout, Ruth Nichols, Phoebe Omlie, Amelia Earhart, P.W. Litchfield, unidentified man, Gladys O’Donnell, Blanch Noyes and Thea Rasche.



Speaking of licenses, **Herm Spahr** dropped off a whole box of interesting photos, documents and other LTA materials we’ll need some time to go though. Surely everyone will recognize this wallet card... though most are already filled out! Ω

Mark Lutz asked, “WW-2 “character of flights” key in #78 Noon Balloon: When I think of WW-2 K-ship flights, I think of :

Convoy Escort	Patrol
Rescue	Mine Spotting

None of those words appear in the “Character of Flights” list on page 15 of N.B. #78. Does anyone know the “key to the key”? (Dad’s logbook uses those letter codes). Ω

A number of members e-mailed links or entire articles about the Boeing announcement and the continuing developments with the 4th ZEP NT. Airship Ventures, etc. **Walt Bjerre** mailed a clipping about ‘Skyhook’ from the Wall Street Journal. Thanks to everyone for staying on the LTA lookout and reporting everything so our members can share in the bounty. Ω



Pushing the Envelope

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

This responds to the question by **Mark Lutz** in TNB 77, page 5: “I’d be interested in some details of why a falling airship should NOT be pointed nose up and engines gunned.” My disclaimer is that it has been 52 years since I flew a K-ship and even longer since I studied physics. However, I did fly K-ships for 961 hours over six years, became an airship commander, and taught airship construction in NZTU (Glynco) LTA Ground School. Also, I flew airplanes from 1944 to 1995.

There is some relevant K-ship data as seen in TNB 77 page 14 drawings that show that the 43-foot car and 250-foot envelope weighed 9 tons. I recall that 60% of the car weight was supported by X and Y rigged cables attached to four curtains sewn to the upper envelope. The remaining 40% car weight was carried by “finger” patches glued to the envelope around the top of the car. Thus the K-ship car behaved like a weight attached to an embedded pendulum stick that rotated around a center of motion well up into the envelope above the car. The envelope was a 4:1 cigar-shaped airfoil and the lower vertical stabilizer had a tail wheel that was 135 feet aft of the pilot, which would strike the ground at 11 degrees nose up pitch on takeoff. The two geared engines could push the airship to the 57-knot speed limit based on when the nose battens might tend to puncture the envelope.

The car moved like a pendulum, rapidly sideways and more slowly fore/aft, the latter because there was a lot more mass farther away from the center of motion. (See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moment_of_inertia).

These movements often were observed over land when flying into thermals that pushed the nose up and aside, causing lateral and pitch oscillation very much like riding a drunk elephant. Another obvious pendulum effect was during a statically-heavy (normal) landing roll on the single main landing wheel: The pilot often applied reverse power to slow down, but only for about ten seconds, because the nose would increasingly pitch down until the 2-foot ECM antenna on the forward lower envelope would strike the ground. Conversely, rapid application of engine power on takeoff caused the nose to pitch up with no immediate airflow over the horizontal tail stabilizers (elevators) to prevent it. Steady application of power and attention to the pitch inclinometer were required to not exceed the 11-degree limit but still generate lift to overcome several thousand pounds of static weight. Many a tail wheel was scraped off.

Now consider the situation when the left engine suddenly went into uncontrollable reverse with a statically heavy K-ship in a turn at about 150 feet above the ocean. For reasons stated in my recent article (TNB 76 page 22) I shut off that engine about the time the lookout in the rear of the car shouted over the intercom that the tail was nearly in the water. So the remaining good engine DID provide full thrust with the nose up. The wing (envelope) was nearly stalled and there was little elevator control at that slow speed to prevent the engine thrust pitch-up pendulum effect. So I elected not to pull the nose up further by using the elevator, because the K-ship was about to land in the ocean.

I suggest that it is OK to add power with the airship nose pitched up under the right circumstances. Gunning the engines does cause the airship to pitch up, but slowly because a lot of mass is so far removed from the center of rotation. However, the elevators cannot control it if there is little airflow. The K-ship was slow to respond to control in any event, and the most challenging situation was landing on a heaving and rolling aircraft carrier deck. Navy airmen did that too. Ω

Ed. Note: Tom also donated two books from his training days, “Airship Electrical Systems” dated 1956 and a complete list of lesson plans offered at Pensacola, “Lesson Plans-Academic and Flight Support, Airship Phase” and a Training Command book he authored, “Airship Electrical Systems, CNABT P-251, Airship Phase, 1956.” Both will be sent to Pensacola’s Museum Library after HC learns from them. Ω

COVER STORY



Blimp joins anti-smuggling patrols off Florida

By Jane Sutton (Excerpt, Reprinted)

MIAMI (Reuters) - With oil prices rising sky-high, the U.S. Navy and Coast Guard will test a helium-filled blimp to see if it can supplement the fuel-hungry aircraft that search the Florida Straits for smugglers and boats in distress. The Navy is leasing a Skyship 600, about the size of a Boeing 747, for the six-week test mission between Florida's southern coast and Cuba, Coast Guard Lt. Matthew Moorlag said on Tuesday.

The manned ship is held aloft by nonflammable helium and propelled by two Porsche 930 engines that consume 10 to 12 gallons of regular gasoline per hour. "It's considered a very green machine," said George Spyrou, president of Airship Management Services Inc, which owns and operates the blimp. "A regular jet uses more fuel to travel from the gate to the taxiway than we would to fly for a whole week."

The airship has a bathroom and can stay aloft up to 52 hours without refueling but the surveillance flights off Florida will be limited to about eight hours to guard against crew fatigue, Spyrou said. His company in Greenwich, Connecticut, has a contract for a little under \$1 million for the test. It will supply two pilots to float the ship at an altitude of 1,500 to 3,000 feet while a crewman operates the radar and other scanning equipment.

Navy and Coast Guard technicians on the ground in Key West, Florida, will monitor the data and direct other vessels where they're needed to chase drug or people smugglers or perform rescues. "Basically it provides that eye in the sky for us so we can see who's out there," Moorlag said. The blimp can travel at about 57 mph (91 kph) and can fly in the same weather conditions as other aircraft. Unlike a helicopter, it does not vibrate, so it might provide a smoother platform for some monitoring instruments, Moorlag said. Ad-covered blimps are a

familiar sight over stadiums. Air Management Services' blimps also flew over the Athens and Atlanta Olympic Games, providing a platform for aerial filming and helping security officials keep an eye on the crowds. The Air Force has long used stationary blimps, [sic] all called "Fat Albert," in the lower Florida Keys to relay U.S. government, anti-communist broadcasts to Cuba and assist in coastal surveillance, but those are tethered to the ground. "This is different because it's mobile," Moorlag said. "We can move it into an area we'd like to concentrate on." Ω

Airships: Colonel Blimp's eco-flight credentials

By Jimmy Lee Shreeve (Excerpt, Reprinted)

...The Zeppelin over London is essentially a tourist attraction. But it could prove the beginning of a revolution in air transport. Airships are increasingly being touted as an eco-friendly form of flight. As environmentalist George Monbiot puts it, "The environmental cost [of airships] could be reduced almost to zero."...According to researchers at the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, the total climate-changing impact of an airship is 80-90 per cent less than that of ordinary aircraft - and that's even when they're burning fossil fuels. They also fly at a low altitude - around 4,000 feet as opposed to 35,000 feet - which means their water vapor emissions have very little impact on global warming. Another bonus is most airships don't need a runway and could operate without further airport expansion. Another big plus is airships are quiet. If they were powered by hydrogen fuel cells you'd hardly be able to hear them at all - which would make a big difference to residents living on flight paths. Although airships won't be gracing our skies as the main form of commercial air transport any time soon, their eco-friendly potential is raising some interesting possibilities. British airship firm, SkyCat, for example, says that airships could take off from the reservoirs bordering Heathrow airport - making use of existing land, rather than encroaching on already beleaguered green land.... But hundreds of millions would be needed to get the SkyCat into commercial production. Even to fill it up with helium would cost between £1 million and £3 million...For Professor Michael Northcott, professor of ethics at Edinburgh University, there is no doubt: flying by airships instead of the more polluting jet planes should be explored by airlines. Talking at the "Clouds Of Witness: Moral Responsibility On A Planet In Peril" forum, held in Kuala Lumpur in December last year, he said the benefits of flying at low altitudes in airships could go beyond global warming - it could bring a sea change in air passengers attitudes to nature. Ω
(Ed Note: See "Z" Prize in 'Short Lines,' pg 27.)



Boeing, Skyhook To Develop Airship Hauler Via Dr. Barry Prentice

CALGARY - A private Calgary company and the world's biggest aircraft maker plan to build a "blimp on steroids" - an airship filled with helium and powered by big rotors that can be used to haul heavy equipment to remote areas where there are no roads, including northern Canada. Calgary's SkyHook International Inc. announced it is teaming up with Chicago-based Boeing Co. (NYSE:BA) to build the so-called Jess Heavy Lifter, or JHL-40, which will haul steel, huge trucks and other equipment in remote areas where ground transportation may not be an option. The SkyHook JHL-40 heavy-lift rotorcraft looks like a blimp with four helicopter-like rotors underneath and will be able to lift a 40-tonne load slung from its belly and carry it 300 kilometres without refuelling. That's a big advantage in the Arctic, where the costs of developing oil and gas projects and diamond and base metal mines have soared because of the need to build roads or provide expensive airplane access to remote communities. Boeing and SkyHook hope to have the first JHL-40 in service by 2012.

SkyHook president Pete Jess first came up with the idea 25 years ago, after having encountered a number of logistical challenges during his work in the oil and gas industry. "It's a blimp on steroids because it's got more than 20,000 horsepower on it. It's a serious working machine." Once SkyHook secured the patent, the company took the design to Boeing, the commercial and military plane manufacturer which decided to develop and build the system. "Most people in the airship world try to be all things to all people. Every airship has tonnes of capability that it really may or may not need because it tries to please a broad audience," said Kenneth Laubsch, Boeing's chief engineer for advanced rotorcraft systems. The JHL-40 can be used in mining, forestry and oil and gas operations in inhospitable regions, where transporting heavy loads by boat, road or rail is often too costly and difficult. The technology could

be useful in Alberta's oilsands, where huge pieces of heavy equipment often need to be transported through places where road access can be an issue throughout much of the year. "If you've got a heavy load and you come to the end of the road and you need to move it a certain distance and that ground is soft or muskeggy, certainly there's an application for it," Jess said.

The aircraft also has an environmental twist, since it cuts down on the need to build and maintain new roads in remote regions. "When you weigh up the environmental impact of building a road and the fuel associated with maintaining a road and hauling snow... it's quite interesting to see how that adds up in comparison," Jess said.

Under the agreement, Boeing is designing and making two prototypes of the JHL-40 at its plant in Ridley Park, Pa. SkyHook will own, maintain, operate and service all of the aircraft. SkyHook and Boeing officials did not disclose the cost of making the initial prototypes, nor how much it will cost to bring the technology to a commercial level. They also did not provide specifics of who its customers would be, though Jess said in a statement that "the list of customers waiting for SkyHook's services is extensive, and they enthusiastically support the development of the JHL-40."

Other Media Excerpts on JHL-40

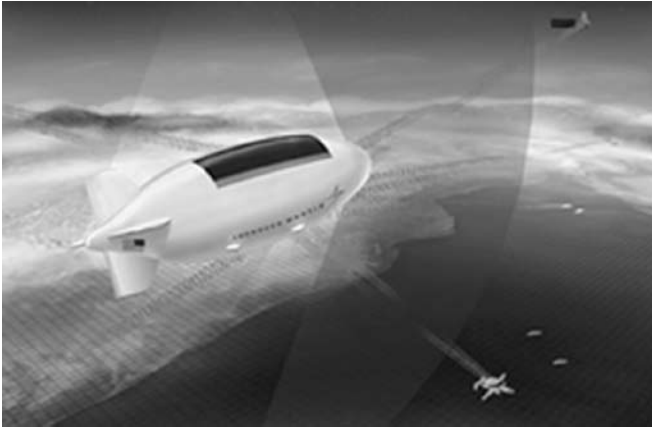
According to the Wall Street Journal, the JHL-40 "will break new ground by achieving what is known as neutral buoyancy," allowing "all the lift generated by the rotors [to] be available for lifting payloads."

Aviation Week (7/8, Warwick) noted that the JHL-40 is "[d]esigned to lift a 40-ton slung payload over a 200-mile range," and "is being aimed initially at transporting heavy equipment for the oil industry in the Canadian Arctic and Alaska, avoiding the need to build roads in remote areas." Skyhook, which "plans to establish an operating entity offering heavylift services to the oil and gas, forestry, mining and construction industries," says it "sees a near-term market for 50-60 aircraft."

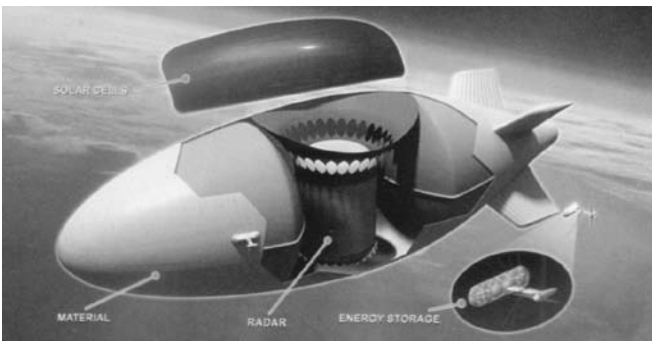
According to "Flight Global" (7/8, Trimble), The aircraft "will leverage rotor technology from the CH-47 Chinook, avionics and flight controls technology from the 787 and Boeing's experience as a...systems integrator." However, while "Boeing is leveraging the rotor technology of the CH-47," it may not be able to use its engine, the Honeywell T55, which "could face export control problems for a commercial aircraft." The Financial Post, Canada's CBC (7/8) and the St. Louis Post-Dispatch (7/8, Logan, 278K) also reported the story. Ω

High Altitude Airship In Transition

In April 2008, the HAA program transferred from the Missile Defense Agency to the U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command (USASMDC), located at Huntsville, AL. The USASMDC is continuing the development and demonstration of the HAA to align with the USASMDC mission. USASMDC is the Army specified proponent for space, high altitude, ground-based midcourse defense and serves as the Army operational integrator for global missile defense; and conducts mission-related research and development. USASMDC conducts space and missile defense operations and provides planning, integration, control and coordination of Army forces and capabilities in support of U.S. Strategic Command.



Lockheed Martin's unique experience with certifying commercial airships with the FAA gives it the understanding to address the concerns of flight through controlled airspace, especially with an unmanned airship.



23 June 08 issue of *Aviation Week* features this new graphic entitled "ISIS Also Rises" and states, "L-M and Northrop Grumman are to compete to build a subscale stratospheric surveillance airship demonstrator in the third phase of the US DARPA ISIS program... carrying a massive UHF/X band actively scanned array radar capable of tracking air targets out to 600 km and ground targets out to 300 km while simultaneously providing high-capacity communications directly to users in-theatre. The latest L-M design shows the AESA mounted internally, avoiding issues with the movement of radar arrays embedded within the flexible skin of the airship, which is the size of several football fields. Ω



Aeroscraft Technology Development Demonstrator Aeros 40D "Sky Dragon" Airship Enters the Final Assembly Stage

A press release made it into the 26 May 08 issue of *Aviation Week*. It says the FAA has accepted Aeros' application for a "buoyancy-assisted aircraft with adjustable static heaviness."

The company states, "With the Aeroscraft ML866 program rapidly moving forward, the technology demonstrator Aeros 40D will play a significant role in the overall process. The program will utilize the Aeros 40D Lighter-Than-Air vehicle as a flying test bed to accelerate and mitigate risks in the Aeroscraft program. Different flight experiments will be conducted to demonstrate and flight-qualify the key enabling technologies and systems such as the buoyancy managements system, low speed control system, flight management system and variety of flight critical subsystems.



The Aeros 40D is United States Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Type Certified airship and featuring the advanced technology package, which makes the airship a perfect platform to be utilized for variety of the Aeroscraft development and testing. The Aeros 40D will provide many overall advantages from risk reduction to ML866 program acceleration. The numerous advantages can be categorized by time savings through acceleration of the program; flight qualifying components prior to integration and the ability to modify components in parallel to main vehicle construction, all leading to overall cost reduction of the entire program and reduction in program risk in terms of time and cost. Ω

SHORE ESTABLISHMENTS: LAKEHURST

Navy MZ3A Airship #167811 will undergo helium purification/annual inspection in ten days preparatory to return-to-flight approximately July 10-15, 2008. Concurrent to this development, I am honored to announce that I have been selected to take the position of "Project Manager, Navy Airship Operations Support NAES Lakehurst Field Office" with I.S.S.I., Inc. (Integrated Systems Solutions Incorporated) in support of this initiative.

Many personal thanks to I.S.S.I. and their leadership under CEO Larry Wagner for their generosity and flexibility in making this wonderful opportunity available to me. It is my opinion that this is a *crucial* time for LTA (civilian as well as military), but that we have a wonderful group of people who will move purposefully forward and that we will insure that MZ3A has a safe, cost-effective, effective integration as an important component of Naval/Military aviation. I will certainly do everything I can to "make it happen" this time, as I joked even LAST year that this was "The Alamo For Navy LTA, Chapter 33-1/3."

So begins yet another chapter from the airship book (GIANTS IN THE SKY by Norman Richards) picked up by chance by a somewhat-chubby 10-year-old kid at "G. Harold Antrim Elementary School, Point Pleasant Beach, NJ" 36 years ago.

Alexander Pruss, grandson of Hindenburg Luftschiff-Kapitan Max Pruss, visited the *Hindenburg* crash site and the Navy Lakehurst Historical Society exhibits in historic Hangar #1 on Thursday, May 15th.



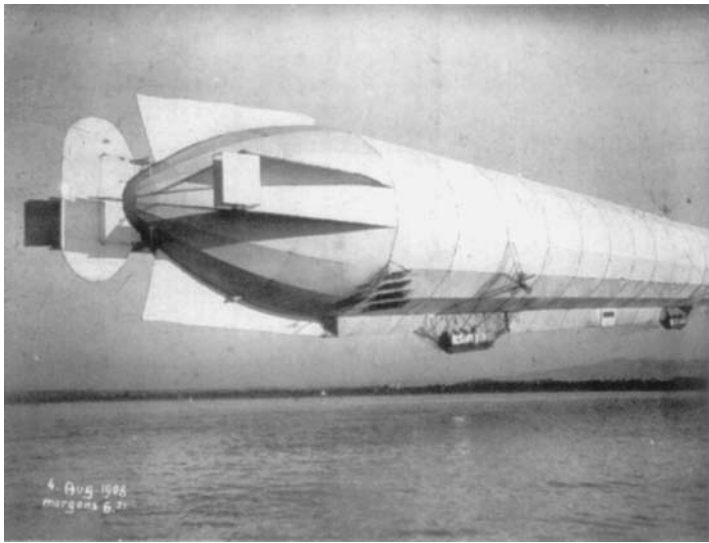
It was an interesting visit for Alexander and his wife, Astrid. Of course, his grandfather Max Pruss is best known as Commanding Officer (Pilot-In-Charge) of the *Hindenburg* on its last flight, May 6, 1937, but Hangar #1 is also the place where Max Pruss stepped down from LZ126/ZR-3 as a member of her crew when she was delivered in a triumphant flight from Germany, October 15, 1924 (only the SECOND East-West crossing of the Atlantic by air and a huge step

forward for German-American relations at the time.) Max also rose up through the ranks from Elevatorman to Watch Officer ("Wachoffiziere") to Commander ("Luftschiffkapitan" on 16 transatlantic flights) on the LZ127 GRAF ZEPPELIN, "coming into his own" and making just about every flight of the most successful of all rigid airships from 1928 thru 1935.

Having started lighter-than-air service in the German Naval Airship Division during World War One, Max Pruss had begun on the Parseval non-rigid PL6 in 1914. Moving over to rigid airships, he spent the war in the crew of Horst von Buttlar-Brandenfels and Hans von Schiller assigned to Zeppelins L6, L11, L30 (the first "super Zeppelin") L25, L57, L54, L72 (assigned but not flown) and L61 (under von Schiller, for a series of experimental/photo flights after the Armistice.) He went with von Schiller to employment with the Zeppelin Company after separating from service in the German Navy about 1921-22. His experience and skillful, sure handling of the elevator wheel soon earned Max Pruss a place on Hugo Eckener's "first string" team, a pattern which continued through his career at LZ/DZR. In 1936, with 16 transatlantic flights in command of the GRAF ZEPPELIN, over 20,000 hours total Rigid Airship Flight Time in his logbook Pruss became Executive Officer of the LZ-129 *Hindenburg*, under Ernst Lehmann. Eventually, he made a few flights in command of Germany's flagship Zeppelin later in the 1936 season and was designated as the *Hindenburg's* Commander for the 1937 season. (American observer Harold Dick would note years later "Whenever Pruss was in command, the ship was always under perfect control.")

Badly burned in the *Hindenburg* fire, Max Pruss almost didn't survive and underwent several months of skin-grafts/rehabilitation at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital in New York City. Still recovering, he had to remain on the sidelines when LZ-130 GRAF ZEPPELIN II flew in 1938-1939, had a Luftwaffe administrative post in charge of Rhein Main Airfield during World War II with the rank of Colonel and spearheaded the postwar push for German resurgence of Zeppelin airship travel in the 1950's. "It was not always easy for him. His injuries remained painful, flying in any type of aircraft was especially uncomfortable for him due to pressure changes." Alexander had been to Lakehurst many years ago.....the last time he was on a tour as a teenager, his host was Admiral Rosendahl. Most of his grandfather and father's artifacts/archives have been donated to the Museums at Friedrichshafen, Cuxhaven and Zeppelinheim, but Alexander did present the Navy Lakehurst Historical Society with a set of 1936 *Hindenburg* color postcards as a memento of his visit (The Pruss family still eats off of certain pieces of Zeppelin chinaware on special occasions!) It was also nice to be able to show Alexander a letter from his late father Klaus F. Pruss to me, dated 1974, with special greetings to "A young airship enthusiast!" Ω

- Rick Zitarosa, NLHS, NAA



100th Anniversary slipping past unnoticed, uncelebrated

By C. P. Hall II

The typical “Noon Balloon” reader is unique among Lighter-Than-Air aviators in at least one respect. Almost all of them flew in the same class of airships (K-ships) for most of their LTA flying careers. By comparison, if you started with LZ-1 and worked your way through a list of officers and crewmen of German, French, Italian, British, and even early American airships, I would venture that the majority flew in one, two, three or more individually unique craft instead of one or more sister-ships. The reason for this was succinctly observed back in the 20’s,

“Airplanes breed like rabbits while airships breed like elephants.”

In a universe of a few unique examples, there are some that are bad designs, doomed to fail. Others are good designs with ‘green’ crews that meet with early misfortune. A few are good designs with capable crews whose number comes up. There would be little history of an aircraft type that “. . . breed like elephants” were it not for a fourth example or category, the ‘lucky’ ship.

Eight years ago there was a substantial celebration on the 100th anniversary of the first flight of LZ-1. Count Zeppelin’s first craft, as revolutionary and imaginative as it was, surely falls into the first category found in the proceeding paragraph. Today there is very little recognition of the history of Count Zeppelin’s first ‘lucky’ ship, LZ-3.



Count Zeppelin’s third airship, the LZ-3, first flew October 9, 1906 carrying 11 people and flying for more than two hours. It flew once more in 1906, and then was stored for the winter. 1907 was a year of successful flying and numerous experimental modifications. No attempt will be made to list the changes here but an examination of vintage photos will reveal that it is a challenge to find two that are exactly alike.

1907 was such a successful year for LZ-3 that the Imperial German Army was successfully lobbied to purchase a Zeppelin. LZ-3 was judged less than was needed for military service so a larger LZ-4 was designed and built. After several successful flights, LZ-4 undertook an endurance trial and was destroyed due to engine failure and subsequent bad weather tearing LZ-4 from its temporary moorings.

LZ-3 kept flying in 1908, demonstrating to all that the nay-sayers were carping pessimists and that a Zeppelin could continue to operate without coming to a bad end. The Imperial Army ended up buying a rebuilt LZ-3 (Army designation Z.I) and a new LZ-5 (Z.II) in 1909.

LZ-3 soldiered on in the Army service for several years. It outlasted the first few commercial Zeppelins including the first ‘lucky’ commercial Zeppelin, LZ-10 *Schwaben*. The LZ-3 was finally dismantled as obsolete in 1913.



Now some may conclude that I have missed the boat regarding this “anniversary” as LZ-3’s first flight was in 1906. I must reply that, while you may be right about the first flight, I am still in the first half of LZ-3’s flying career and have several years to go before “anniversary” becomes completely meaningless. Too much of the ‘history’ of LTA focuses on disasters. It should be our goal and method to remember and emphasize a record of substantial success; and the potential for future successes as well. We should remember and celebrate the ‘lucky’ ships such as Germany’s LZ-3, Britain’s R33, and America’s *Los Angeles*. Ω

Ed. Note: See Sig Geist’s report on page 18

News from Friedrichshafen

Composed and submitted by Sig Geist

Fourth Zeppelin NT goes to USA was the title of an article that informed readers of TNB #78 that California-based Airship Ventures, Inc. (AV) had successfully financed the purchase of a Zeppelin NT 07 airship from Zeppelin Luftschifftechnik, GmbH (ZLT) in early May 2008. AV was formed to bring Zeppelin NT airships to the US for "flightseeing" tours, media and science mission operations. Pending final checkout, first flight achievement and anticipating a short but busy flying season while still in Europe, the new airship will be transported to the US (via dockship) during September 2008. Following its arrival in Galveston and subsequently taking to the air will be a dream come true for both companies when after a hiatus of 70 years, a Zeppelin airship will have returned to the US and cruise leisurely over its magnificent regions.

Meanwhile the dream got a lot closer to becoming reality as on May 21, 2008 the fourth and latest Zeppelin NT airship successfully completed its first flight over Friedrichshafen, Germany. ZLT and AV jointly announced the event via press release. Quoted here are a few excerpts, this from R. Gritzbach, Zeppelin VP of engineering: "Being the fourth ship in our series production, we were able to incorporate a number of design improvements - reducing weight while increasing lift and achieving a near doubling of airframe lifetime - that makes this our finest ship to date!" Alex Hall, Airship Ventures enthusiastic CEO declared: "What an incredible process we have witnessed over this past year - the assembly of the frame, fitting out of the gondola, helium being put in the envelope, the first start up of the engines, and now her maiden flight." Closing out the quotes, Fritz Guenther, Zeppelin Flight Operations Manager and the first pilot to fly the new airship stated: "This is the 3rd Zeppelin for which I have been part of the maiden flight and the feeling of pride in knowing all our hard work has resulted in success never diminishes. As a pilot, I look forward to confirming the new performance characteristics." Airframe assembly for the 246 foot long airship began in March 2007. For all involved it was a proud and long awaited moment when the new airship left the 360 foot long hangar and successfully achieved first flight. In the meantime, two pilots from Airship Ventures have arrived in Germany and are training with their new ship. One of them is England's 33-year old Katharine Board. Following certification, she will be the first woman to captain a Zeppelin airship.

As noted earlier, prior to the new Zeppelin departure to the US in September, it will be engaged in a number of passenger and advertising flight operations. In addition to Airship Ventures' own distinctive display on the envelope (see inside cover), the airship will until then - as has been learned in the interim - display banners also from different

sponsors on its side. Prominent among them will be InBev UK, an English brewery (part of Belgium-based InBev). It will not only advertise its "Stella Artois", England's most favorite lager on the airship's flank, but will also be the sole sponsor of Zeppelin passenger flights over London (see photo below) during a 6-week period from July 10 - August 21 this summer.



Zeppelin NT #4, Copyright InBEV UK.

InBEV, is the new parent company of Anheuser-Bush

Commenting that his lager qualities are synonymous with this project, InBev UK president Stuart MacFarlane said: "We are happy to offer Londoners and tourists the opportunity to enjoy such an unforgettable and unique experience on-board the 'Stella Artois: Star Over London' airship." Stating this entrance is a first for passenger flights with a Zeppelin airship over London, Deutsche Zeppelin Reederei CEO Thomas Brandt said: "We are proud that our Zeppelin NT can celebrate its debut for commercial round trips over this uniquely beautiful metropolis in Europe and we hope for regular engagements in the future." Zeppelin flights with the 'Stella Artois: Star Over London' airship costs 185 pounds for 30 minutes and 360 pounds for the one-hour flight. For individual bookings call: +44 (0)20 7183 3911/ 3912/ 3913. For companies or groups of 10 and more people call: +44 (0) 207 1833 024.

Following the above series of Zeppelin flights over London and prior to its shipment to the US, the new Zeppelin NT will be the star attraction for an exclusive channel-crossing flight tour that will take its passengers from the UK to Northern France, Belgium and The Netherlands. The first-time tour named AERWIN TOUR 2008 was organized by a Z-Team member in cooperation with Zeppelin Europe Tours (ZET) and is in keeping with the aims of promoting Zeppelin Tourism within the ZET concept. The tour will give passengers a taste of things to come with proposed 45-seater Z-airships in the future and the outcome will serve as a benchmark for testing VIP-flights. ZET chairman Wolfgang von Zeppelin speaks of an "Experiment in the high end market segment". Furthermore, he hopes for a breakthrough for his ZET project in the US, especially since California's Airship Ventures, Inc. (AV), now the owner of the new Zeppelin NT is also interested in a larger airship with a capacity for 45 passengers. Anyway, commencing

their exciting flight tour from the airship-historic grounds at Cardington, UK, AERWIN TOUR 2008 passengers will then enjoy bird's-eye views of London, Dover and after crossing the Channel, observe Calais and Dunkirk in France before setting down in Brussels, Belgium. After a one-day visit there, the aerial journey continues via Antwerp to Rotterdam and Valkenburg in The Netherlands. According to the ZET website www.zeppelin-europe-tours.com/ and its link to the AERWIN TOUR 2008, all tour-associated activities, including round-trip sightseeing flights over several locations are scheduled to take place between August 26 and September 07, 2008. Tour inquiries by interested persons are requested to be made to: AERWIN, Phone: +31 70 301 2700, Fax: +31 70 301 2707 or by mail to: AERWIN, Spoorlaan 6, 2495 AL Den Haag, The Netherlands.

Zeppelin Museum Friedrichshafen will show the exhibition “1908 - From Abstraction to Zeppelin Foundation” during the summer and early fall. The museum press officer sent this writer their press release announcing the exhibition and hastened to add: “We would be very pleased if you could write about our exhibition.” So here, verbatim is the museum's press release:



ZEPPELIN MUSEUM FRIEDRICHSHAFEN
TECHNIK UND KUNST

1908, From Abstraction to Zeppelin Foundation

Temporary exhibition 18 July - 12 October 2008

2008 is the centenary of the setting up of the Zeppelin foundation. Do we know in what context to place this unique foundation? What were the reasons for setting it up and what was the cultural and historical background at the time? What were the conditions in the region and beyond?

In Germany the Fleet Acts were being pushed through by Tirpitz, opportunities opened up for women to study at university and Sigmund Freud put markers down with a lecture at the first Psychoanalytic Congress in Salzburg. In Palestine the city of Tel Aviv was founded by Zionists. And beside all these events, in the town of Echterdingen near Stuttgart, the Zeppelin airship LZ 4 was destroyed by fire after landing as a result of a thunderstorm. Seen against the momentous events rather a sideshow, yet for the history of Friedrichshafen this has remained an event of great significance down to the present day. The disaster moved millions of Germans and gave rise to a willingness to give donations previously unknown. In just a few weeks more than 6 million Marks were collected, which formed the basis for the Zeppelin foundation that still exists today.



LZ 4 before destruction in 1908.

Photo courtesy Zeppelin Museum, Friedrichshafen.

The time before the First World War was a period of enormous change and great events, which still affect us today. For instance, there followed an industrialization in South-West Germany without parallel, which continues to play a major role for the town and the region. And elsewhere? 1908 saw not only the screening of the first animated cartoon, but Maggi brought the stock cube onto the market.

The aim of the exhibition is to vividly illustrate the many facets of the year 1908, and between 1905 and 1911, with selected exhibits. The content of the exhibition is not restricted just to the history of the town, but will also place this date, so important for the town down to the present day, in a European context. This is not an exercise in self-indulgence, but a critical reflection on an epoch that has left its mark at almost all levels because of the conflict between tradition and progress: be it in the field of technology or art and culture, in the economy or in politics, there always seems to be a struggle between preserving the old and throwing it overboard.

For more information about “1908” please contact Sabine Mücke, Exhibition Coordination, Zeppelin Museum Friedrichshafen GmbH, Seestr. 22, D-88045 Friedrichshafen, Tel.: ++49(0)7541 3801-37, Fax ++49(0)7541 3801-81, www.zeppelin-museum.de. muecke@zeppelin-museum.de.

Times of opening: during July, August and September daily from 9 am to 5 pm; in May, June and October daily, except Mon, from 9 am to 5 pm and in November until April daily, except Mon, from 10 am to 5 pm.

Note: Due to editorial and publishing needs for the Fall 2008 edition of TNB # 79, above articles were submitted prior to the normal deadline. Some content may appear ‘premature’ and/or ‘dated’ but can be viewed as “current” at time of submittal. Ω

LONG LINES



**Lighter-Than-Air *Croix de Guerre*:
James F. Griffin in the Great War**

By Joe Long, Curator of Education,
SC Confederate Relic Room and Military Museum,
Columbia, South Carolina

Drawing by Herman Van Dyk

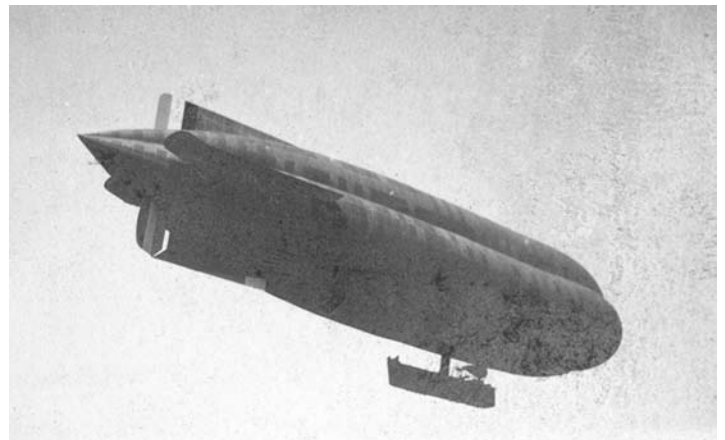
In the autumn of 1916, Columbia, South Carolina was far removed from the events of the Great War in Europe. Earlier that year the South Carolina militia had mustered and been shipped out – for the Mexican border, where they were stationed to guard against further depredations by “Pancho” Villa, so Fair Week lacked even the traditional military drill competition. And at the State Fair, James Franklin Griffin saw his first dirigible:

“Instead of an enclosed nacelle (car), the first one had just a frame-work for the ‘pilot’ to walk backwards or forwards to keep the bag on an even keel – it had no stabilizers. It did have a small motor and propeller. It carried water ballast that was sprayed out for the bag to ascend. It had a self-closing valve with cord to the ‘bag’ so that the hydrogen gas could be expelled to make it descend. The man who flew that thing was certainly a pioneer and was either senseless or extremely brave.”

Little did Griffin imagine that within two years, he himself would pilot a dirigible in combat service off the coast of France – and on one occasion, carry out an airborne exploit which would make that unnamed aeronaut’s exploits seem tame.

The U.S. Navy itself had not yet begun to experiment with lighter-than-air flight in 1916; its first airship, the DN-1, would not fly until April of the following year. In Europe, however, the belligerents were already employing LTA craft in a variety of roles.

(Below: French AT-type airship.)



On May 5, 1917, after the U.S. declaration of war against Germany, Griffin enlisted in the Navy. “I had a surge of instant patriotism,” he later wrote. “...I was sent to ‘boot camp’ at the Naval Training Station at Newport, Rhode Island.” He recalled a sign in a downtown park in the wealthy resort town: “Dogs and sailors keep off the grass!”

The 23-year old Griffin had enlisted as a Yeoman. Though classified a “landsman”, he expressed his pride in his new service in a traditional seafarer’s manner, with a tattoo on his right deltoid depicting an eagle with the legend “USN”. At the conclusion of his basic training, this fledgling eagle linked his own fate with that of American naval aviation:

“It was a happy day when I was chosen upon graduation from the training station to be sent with a small contingent to London after being transferred to the new Naval Air Corps.”

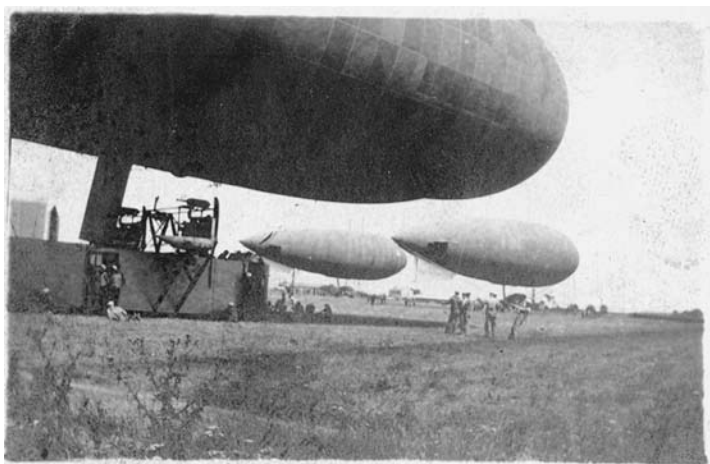
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Griffin and his fellows headed for Europe aboard the American Line steamer *Philadelphia*. On board, the contingent of aviation personnel were regarded dubiously by some of the regular service sailors. One Lieutenant Commander challenged a “crummy looking” seaman he saw reading book titled (as Griffin later recalled) “Aerodynamics and Aerology for the Advanced Student:”

“Get up from there, you gold-bricking dumbbell
– and stop faking, reading something
you couldn’t possibly understand!”

Griffin remembered hearing the officer shout. The reader came to attention, saluted smartly, and then explained that this was his first chance to look the book over since its publication – he had written it.

The book was more likely “The Principles of Aerography,” and its author was Professor Alexander McAdie – the director of Blue Hill Observatory at Harvard University, a renowned meteorologist who had decided to lend his formidable scientific talents to the Navy for the duration of the Great War. McAdie had been promoted to Lieutenant Commander himself early in 1918, and tasked with developing a Naval Aerological organization. He would play an important role in Griffin’s ensuing adventures.



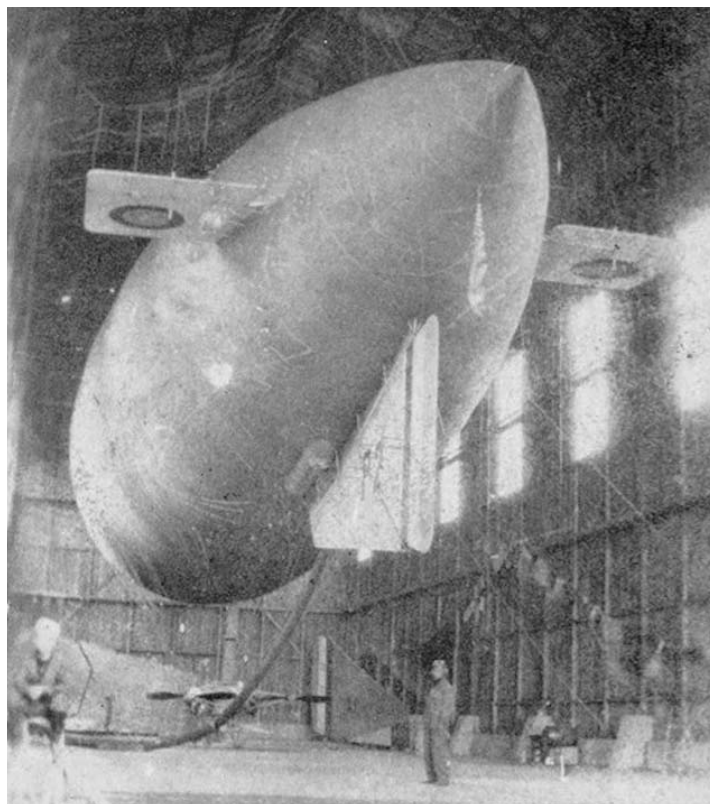
Three U.S. Navy airships at Paimboeuf in 1918.

McAdie had been training aerographers for the Navy; like other non-commissioned aviation personnel of the fleet, these men were rated “Quartermaster”. Griffin, however, while attached to the “Aerography subsection” of “Office of Operations”, was rated a Yeoman. However, he quickly found his way into aviation duties well outside his clerical job description.

April of 1918 found him attached to US Naval Aviation Headquarters in London; in May he moved to the air station at Dunkerque, France, to help McAdie open an aerographic office to support the proposed Northern Bombing Squadron which would employ heavier-than-air day and night bombers against German naval targets. A few days after his transfer, he formally applied to have his rating changed from Yeoman 2/C to Quartermaster (Aviation) 1/C, explaining:

“I have studied and have been trained under Lieutenant Commander McAdie for Aerography and Meteorological work and am to be sent to one of the Meteorological huts at one of our Aviation Stations for further training to be familiar with the work at the Stations.”

Professor McAdie, impatient with military bureaucracy or oblivious to it, began referring to Griffin (even in official correspondence) as “Quartermaster 1/C,” although his official rating change would not occur for some months – and his pay would not reflect his increased responsibilities. Still, McAdie’s intervention did secure flying orders for him, “as a regular part of his aerographic work.” Griffin became part-time flight crew, and was awarded the single-wing insignia of a gunner-observer.



AT-1 inside the Paimboeuf hangar which became a U.S. Naval airship station in March 1918.

Aerography duties or not, Griffin was still flying over contested airspace, and sometime in late May or early June, he was “wounded inaction against the enemy,” as his discharge certificate tersely notes. He left no record of the circumstances of his wound, but this action apparently occurred in a heavier-than-air craft. McAdie was a proponent of daily high-altitude observation of meteorological conditions, and by this time, Griffin had probably participated in aerographic missions in both airplanes and dirigibles. Shortly afterward, Griffin began flying from Paimboeuf Naval Air Station.



Participating in flights from Paimboeuf with French airmen, Griffin became part of a very successful and little-known strategic employment of LTA craft. While Germany’s rigid airships of WWI have been the focus of much attention over the years, the employment of both rigids and non-rigids (“blimps”) by the Allies in antisubmarine warfare has been largely ignored. In actuality, both in numbers (over 200 for the British navy alone) and in strategic effects, the Allied airships may have been more important to the course of the First World War.

Anti-submarine patrols were not at risk from German fighter planes, but these vital duties had their own perils, as Griffin would soon learn. During a June 1918 flight from Paimboeuf aboard the French airship AT-15, Griffin was acting as altitude pilot. (These craft had two designated “pilots”, one controlling ascent and the other, steering.) A mechanical malfunction caused a crisis aboard, and Griffin quickly displayed both courage and quick-wittedness in response.

As his letter of congratulations from USN Aviation Headquarters stated,

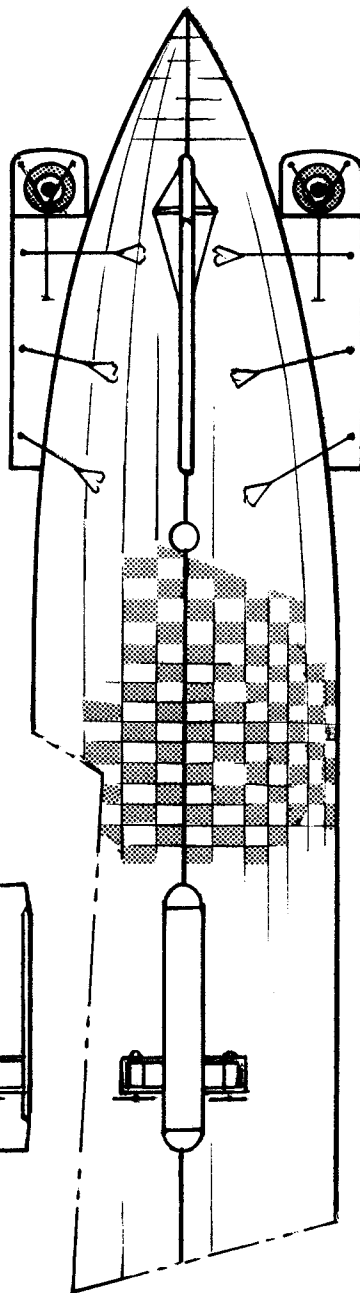
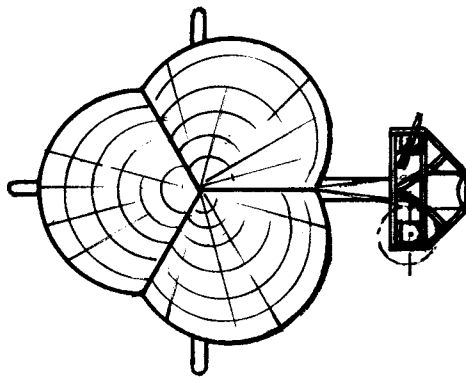
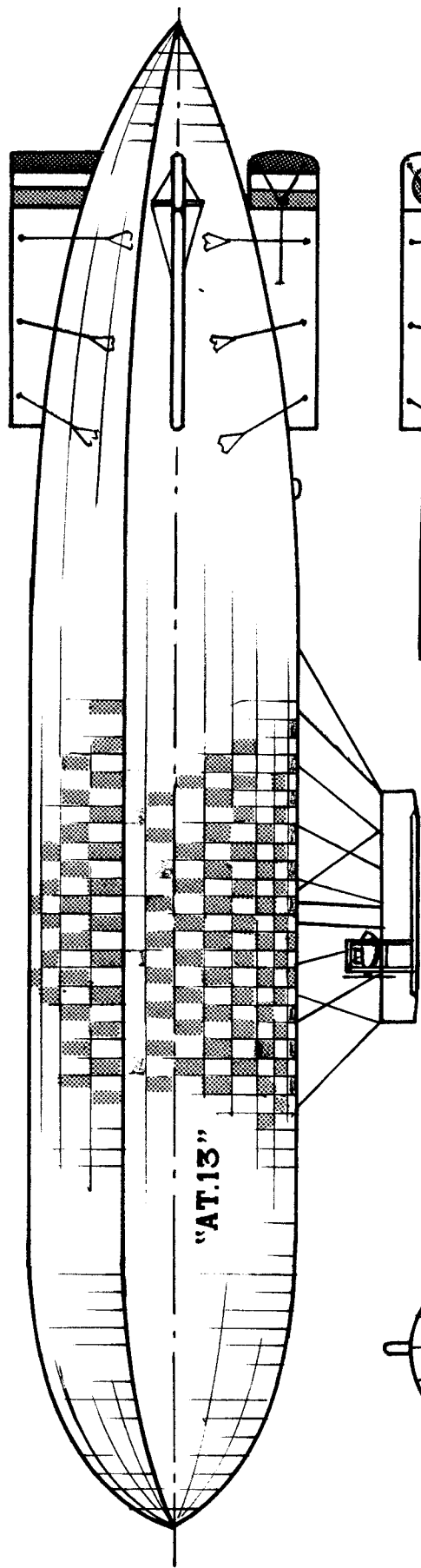
“The brave act that you performed by climbing out and up on the small cables and guy wires while the balloon (sic) was at an altitude of approximately 2500 feet and closing the gas valve that was stuck open and was causing the gas bag to settle fast thereby saving the lives of two of our officers and the French crew of nine men....was beyond the call of duty and you rightly deserve the honor of being among the first few men decorated with the French *Croix de Guerre* in the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps.”

Griffin continued to fly through the rest of the First World War, recording his various stations and airships with pen and ink on his leather flight helmet, which would become a treasured souvenir of his service. He tired of awaiting his coveted “Quartermaster: Aviation 1/C” rating, testing successfully for an interim promotion to Yeoman 1/C in the summer of 1918. He took photos of the hangers at Paimboeuf and the airships there, and was present for the visit of Assistant Secretary of the Navy Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who was taken on a flight on one of the Navy’s airships during his August 1918 visit. [See photo, next page.] After the end of the war, Griffin would be promoted again and have his rating changed, at last leaving service as a Chief Quartermaster (Aviation) in March, 1919.

His return to Columbia and civilian life was anticlimactic. “I remember in 1919, after we had done our bit overseas during WWI, Bill Rose, (Judge) Legare Bates and I went into the same store to buy our first suit of ‘civvies’ – all three bought the same type suit with wide pointed lapel – and all three were a ‘billious green’ color!...I also remember I had to wear my uniform for several weeks after my discharge and until I could sell the uniform and have enough money to buy a suit of clothes!”

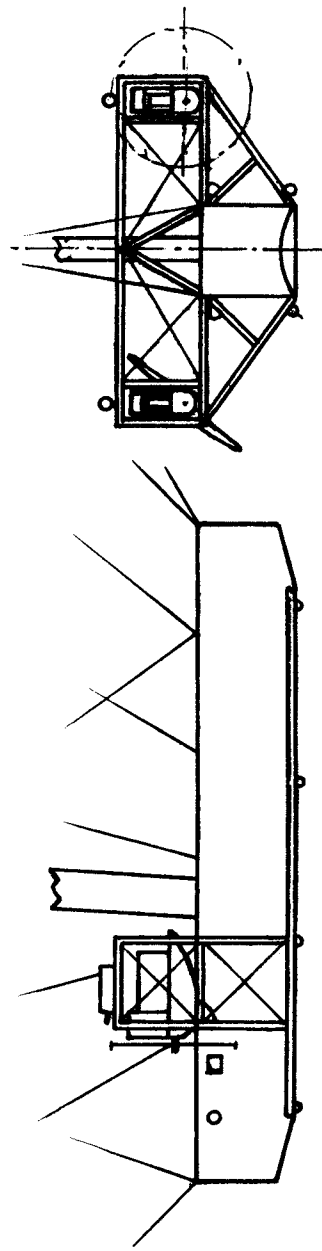
He retained, however, the flight helmet, his gunner/observers’ insignia, and a scrapbook of images of Paimboeuf Naval Air Station, its airships and sailors – a priceless legacy of LTA Naval Aviation in the First World War. In 2006, these items were donated to South Carolina’s official military museum, the Confederate Relic Room and Military Museum in Columbia, South Carolina, Griffin’s home town, where they have been featured in the exhibit “South Carolina Fights the Great War” and will be preserved for future generations.

(continues on page 23)



ASTRA TORRES

"AT.13"



AT Nr.	#10-#17	#18-#19
Length	246 ft, 75 m	262 ft, 80 m
Diam.	48.6 ft, 15 m	52.6 ft, 16 m
Volume	293.000 cu ft, — 8.300 m ³	377.800 cu ft, — 10.700 m ³
Speed	53 mph, 85 km/h	—
Engine	2 x 200 hp Hispano	2 x 250 hp Renault

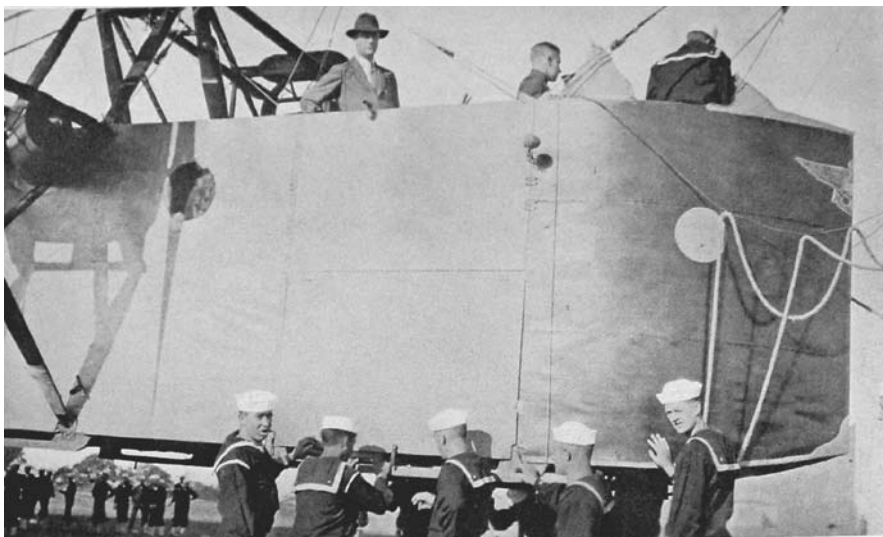
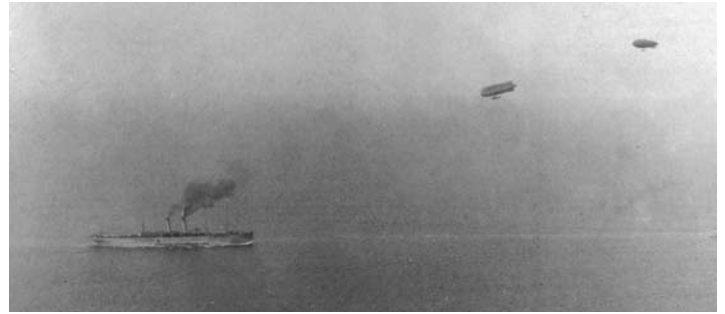
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(continued from page 21)

Griffin himself went on to a long and successful real estate career in Columbia, as well as writing a newspaper column and pursuing his lifelong interest in horticulture (he was president of the Camellia Society and editor of its journal). A deacon at Eastminster Presbyterian Church, he lived until 1971, publishing a book of his memories of local history before he died. He took no active part in the Second World War, but the antisubmarine successes of the Paimboeuf airships were remembered by the Navy planners who employed LTA craft again against the U-Boat menace of the 1940's. Ω

John S. Gibbens Scrapbook

NAA member **Roy Gibbens'** father also served in Europe in the Great War. His base operated HTA and LTA. Roy has been so kind as to also share his Dad's tiny snapshots and 1930's glossies. The photo below shows two types of airships escorting a troopship. After the Great War, John belonged to the "War Birds," an organization that has vanished save the photos below – and their signed helmets. If you have any information please contact Roy Gibbens. Ω



Courtesy Office of Naval Records and Library, Navy Department
A NAVAL BALLOON IN FRANCE, 1918, ALL READY TO LET GO
In the course of his inspection of naval activities abroad, Assistant Secretary of the Navy Roosevelt made a flight in a naval observation balloon from Paimboeuf, France, and is here shown in the car just before the take-off.



Ed. notes: Too bad the pre-polio FDR (seen in the airship car in the photo above) did not develop an appreciation, or even an understanding of airships in the anti-submarine war. Later as President he wrote that he would veto any large rigid airship such as "...the ill-fated Los Angeles" which was of course our most successful rigid. As Commander in Chief he oversaw the War Production Board's refusal to assign airship manufacture anything more than the lowest possible priority, 4. Even materials for the prototype M-ship – which was being designed and built at the same time – had to be taken from Goodyear's regular allocations. Ω



USN LTA in WWI France

By R. G. Van Treuren

Washington Navy Yard's History reads "... Meantime, graduates of the Akron school received duty assignments both at home and abroad. Some went to Rockaway, others to Montauk and Key West and some to the French station at Paimboeuf, which the Navy took over from the French along with three French 'AT' dirigibles. The Navy projected the establishment of additional LTA stations along the Bay of Biscay, but none were completed by the time of the Armistice.

"In the course of their normal operations, airship pilots ran up a notable record in the protection of convoys and in patrols designed to detect incursions by enemy submarines. Operating from the Paimboeuf station an airship piloted by Lt. Culbert established a world record in a sustained patrol of more than 25 hours, during which he escorted three convoys into French ports. On another occasion, credit was given Merrill Delano for the detection of an enemy submarine preying on a large convoy in the Bay of Biscay. Delano successfully guided a destroyer in an attack on the invader."

The first real American patrol flight was made on 16 APR 18 and lasted six hours. Nothing was seen until a big thrill on the 5th of April, a British submarine in distress. SSZ-23 intercepted a destroyer and lead her to the sinking sub. The rest of April allowed little flying with its poor weather.

As the Germans were driven back across Belgium, the Americans at England's Howden were dispersed to other European bases. LT Pope wound up at Kingsnorth, ENS Frazer at Mullion, with LTJG Baehr, ENS Piper and LT Goodspeed crossing to France at Paimboeuf. The property at Rochefort, ceded to the United States Navy for a dirigible station, was given back to the French government at its request in order to make room for dirigible hangars and workshops that were moved out of Paris by reason of the German offensive in March, 1918. The American station at this point was therefore abandoned.

According to the 1930 history, "The United States Naval Air Station, Brest, was located in the western

extremity of the French navy yard and consisted of both a seaplane base and a kite balloon station... La Trinite-sur-Mer was a kite balloon station for the supply of kite balloons to patrol vessels covering the sector from the Bay of Quiberon down to La Pallice. It was situated at the small fishing village of La Trinite-sur-Mer on an inlet in the Bay of Morbihan, 6 miles distant from La Trinite, the nearest railroad station. Construction of this station was begun about the middle of March, 1918, and was ready for operations two months before the cessation of hostilities. The first kite balloon did not arrive at the station, however, until October 18, and it was the 8th of November before the second balloon arrived. Hence this station had very little opportunity to participate in active war operations."

Paimboeuf became a US Naval Air Station on the first of March as the Americans took custody of the AT-1. Flying the AT-1, LT F. P. Culbert logged working three successive convoys for a flight of 25 hours and 43 minutes. The 1930 history reads, "Paimboeuf was a dirigible station which was originally constructed and operated by the French and was transferred to the United States Navy for manning and operation on March 1, 1918. The station was located near the city of Paimboeuf and its purpose was to supplement the patrols and escorts in the vicinity of the mouth of the Loire River and to give protection to troop ships. One dirigible, the Astra Torres (AT-1), was turned over to the Americans at the same time that the station was transferred and a second dirigible, the Zodiac Vedette (VZ-3), was obtained from the French on March 20. Three other dirigibles were obtained from the French Navy, the VZ-7 on June 8, the AT-13 on August 30, and the VZ-13 on the 25th of October. The AT-1 and the VZ-3 became unserviceable for further patrol work in September, 1918, and the former was deflated and sent to the United States while the latter was returned to the French Navy at Rochefort." Another source verifies the US acquired five French airships in all; two Astra-Torres and three Zodiac-Vedetts following the USN taking command at Paimboeuf. It is recorded ASW flights in the Bay of Biscay involved escort with only an occasional sub sighting.

On 3 March 18 the AT-1 made its first flight under the Stars and Stripes. The commanding officer of the Arcachon station was LT Zeno W. Wicks, who worked for Goodyear-Zeppelin after the war.

Guipavas was a dirigible station located in the Province of Finistere. The first United States Navy personnel arrived at this station on March 10, 1918, and although construction work was begun immediately an insufficient number of men and lack of material prevented completion of same before the armistice, and it never actually operated.

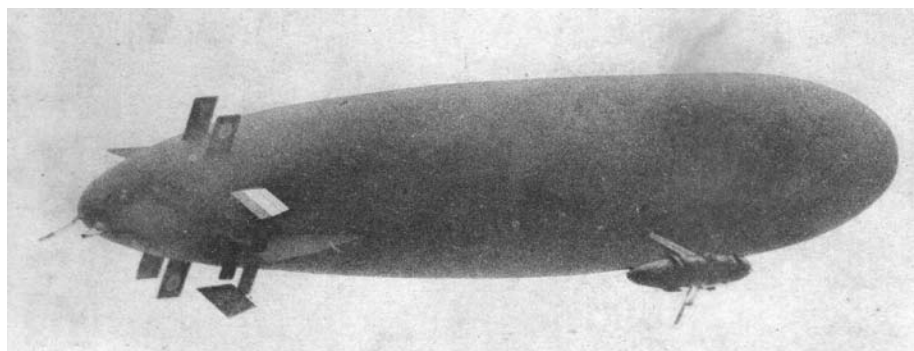
In April a periscope wake was sighted about 30 miles east of Kingstown by Lieutenant A. J. O. Farina and the SSZ-34 from an altitude of 400 feet. A 100 lb. bomb was dropped and appeared to impact metal, based on what the crew heard. However, the bomb failed to explode. A 230 lb. bomb was then dropped. The blast wave is claimed to have forced the airship from 1,200 feet to 2,000 feet. Thick fog was increasing and the crew was unable to locate wreckage after they descended again.

On April 18th, the French *Capitaine Caussin* (T-2) was flown from Paris to Paimboeuf. A twin-engine airship of approximately 335,000 cubic feet volume, it was to be used for training US Navy crews at Paimboeuf and Guipavas. On 25 April, after losing pressure due to a stuck hydrogen valve, T-2 struck the water and two men were thrown into the sea. CDR Lewis Maxfield jumped into the water and swam to the rescue of the two men as the T-2 drifted ashore. Maxfield was recommended for a gold life-saving medal; T-2 was ripped, then shipped back for repairs.

On 22 April the SSZ-30 under Lieutenant D. G. Heady spotted an oil streak seven miles south of Brighton. Oil bubbles were rising and advancing in a continual line from 0525 until 0710, when the airship pilot bombed the target. Oil quantity increased for five minutes, and then ceased. The 1908 French sub *Prairial* was sunk in collision with British ship SS *Tropic* off Le Havre on the 29th of April.

E. M. Emme, NASA Historian, "AERONAUTICS AND ASTRONAUTICS: An American Chronology of Science and Technology in the Exploration of Space," (US Gov't Printing Office, 1961) states that on "April 27, 1918, French built airship AT-1, commanded by Lt. F. P. Culbert, USN, completed a 25-hour 23 minute flight out of Paimboeuf, France, longest flight on record for an airship of this type." The crew, which included ENSs M. P. Delano, A. D. Brewer and T. E. McCracken, was officially commended by the French Minister of Marine. This record was nothing short of phenomenal when compared with airplanes of the day, which routinely killed pilots as their sewn-on fabric covering peeled off, or caught fire, or whose wood was incinerated from ignition of the gasoline and oil. Their very structures could rot and break even during the mercifully short patrol flights relatively short distances from the shore bases. Ω

(Below: A French airship looks for submarines.)



MEDIA WATCH

THE ZEPPELIN:

History of the World's Greatest Airships

A review by C.P. Hall II

Recently this subject title popped up as a new offering in the "Historic Aviation" catalog. As my curiosity is always piqued by such a title, I offered to review it for "Noon Balloon." These are my thoughts.

THE ZEPPELIN was manufactured in Germany about 10 years ago. It seems to have gone through several corporate hands since then. The narrator is identified as Jeremy Anthony who has one of those light, pleasant, understandable for the American audience, English accents. If it was not for the occasional word, example "aluminium" (sic) one might be fooled into believing Midwest, Northern Ohio.

Though Jeremy's voice is 'easy listening' the dialog that he reads is not. One begins at Lake Constance, the home of Zeppelin with early footage of an NT inflated model, wind tunnel footage, and an early trial flight. Next comes digression to the Montgolfiers brothers and 'history.' As word spreads from one "historic DVD producer" to the next; the mis-statement, that 19th century balloons were 'hot air' balloons, is repeated over and over; thus becoming 'revealed truth?'

The general problem with the dialogue is a lack of chronological coherence. Either one undertakes history in chronological order, or one proceeds topic by topic creating order within the topic sub-divisions. Beyond chronology, there are numerous errors of fact that will amuse and/or enrage the knowledgeable listener. Is everyone in this business too cheap to have someone who knows something about the topic proof-read their script?

The good news is the film editing and content for which someone deserves an award. With the exceptions of Zeppelin NT footage at the beginning and the CargoLifter® computer animation at the end, the experienced LTA buff will recognize most of the film footage and know from whence it came. The DVD's back cover even offers a disclaimer, "The use of genuine wartime imagery will not produce the visual quality expected of modern technology." The truth is that most of the vintage footage is black & white and in excellent condition. It is well edited and, for the most part, in smooth long sections. While a great deal may be familiar, there are some interesting, early sound newsreel footage which I found unique. For example the R101 sub-division includes R101 leaving the Cardington Tower; it says October 4, 1930. Later there is newsreel footage of an interview with George Darling, the first Englishman to arrive at the R101 crash site. He describes the action including finding Church and sending him to the hospital. Three survivors, Leech, Bell, and Binks (unnamed in newsreel) are interviewed but only speak of being well-treated in Beauvais.

The last sub-section involves blimps, U.S. Navy then Goodyear and others. Some of the Navy Blimp footage was new to me. Perhaps I am not as well-versed as I think? You will be pleased to learn that Blimps were assigned to Pearl Harbor!?

THE ZEPPLIN DVD comes in a standard plastic carrier. The photo on the back is captioned, "USS Akron leaving the Goodyear Airdock, Akron, Ohio circa 1931." It is a Margaret Bourke-White photo of Akron's first time out of the Airdock. The photo on the front is captioned, "COVER: LZ 129 Hindenburg cruises over Manhattan during its transatlantic journey from Frankfurt Germany May 6, 1937." The Hindenburg is apparently ascending at such an angle as to spill every drink in the smoking room, the lower fin is gnarled, and the Olympic rings (1936) are visible on the side. It looks like Photoshop® to me.

I recommend the DVD. Buy it for the unique footage and for the editing of the familiar footage. Look for errors in the dialogue for your own amusement.

The 2008 copyright holder is Allegro Corporation at www.allegro-music.com or Historic Aviation can be reached at 1-800-225-5575. Ω

Several members of the History Committee have been working with the Spiegel TV Media GmbH crew of Robert Wortmann on their work-in-progress USS Macon TV show. The producer e-mailed, "I returned yesterday from my journey to the United States. I think we were quite successful. We made interviews with Gerald Austen, Eric Brothers, Gordon Vaeth and William Althoff, we shot pictures in Akron and in Moss Landing with the people of the MBARI.

In August we are shooting the reenactments scenes in Prague. [Ed.: They are building a re-creation of the control car from plans and drawings we'd obtained from the NARA, and have promised photos of the set.] Are you familiar with the commands the Navy people used in the control car? I just want to be as precise as possible."

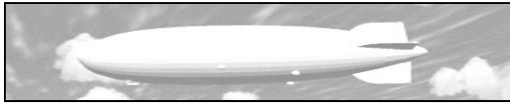
Ed.: We were not able to guess what was said but happily the first person interviewed for the project was William Clarke, the last surviving rigid airshipman, who was at the rudder wheel that fateful night. Ω

Several members of the History Committee answered questions and performed some research in support of a PBS show called "History's Detectives." The segment was about, what else, the Hindenburg, in particular the question of artifact authenticity. The show actually traveled to Lakehurst and interviewed Rick Zitarosa. Your Editor got screen credit though they did not use any of the photos submitted showing the instrument was not visible on the LZ-129 bridge in 1936. The segment aired on July 28th. As of this writing another British TV show maker has expressed an interest in the use of airships against U-boats (see "Editorial" page 3.) Ω

SHORT LINES

Z-PRIZE

(Zero Emissions Transport Airship)
Airship Competition Proposal



Why offer an airship competition?

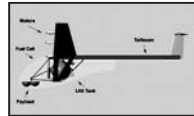
- No cargo airships currently exist
- Business risks for initial development are non-trivial
- Optimum design and critical technologies have yet to be defined
- Airship design and development expertise remains decentralized
- Need to create critical mass of airship development capability
- Prizes promote an efficient investment strategy
 - Sponsors pay winners when and if goal is achieved
 - Performance-based investment, not "best effort"
 - Competitors invest their own resources on tech development
- Prizes stimulate innovation
 - Competitors develop unexpected and unconventional concepts
 - Multiple technological approaches are developed
 - Competition produces one or more workable technologies
- Prizes inspire advancement
 - Prizes shift expectations from "can it be done" to "when will it be done"
 - Reshape markets more rapidly than prevailing market forces

An airship technology development prize provides the motivation for teams to compete in the development of modern cargo airships to meet growing needs

5

Why Zero Emissions?

- International demand is increasing for dramatic reductions in aviation carbon emissions
- Airships can provide an environmentally friendly alternative to conventional cargo transport technologies
 - Due to the airship's low propulsion requirements, non-petroleum propulsion can be effectively used
 - Airships can accommodate alternative fuels (like ethanol and hydrogen)
 - Large surface area easily accommodates photovoltaic collectors
 - Advanced airships could be powered by fuel cells and electric motors
 - Airship propulsion systems can be made to emit no greenhouse gasses
- Airships offer an early opportunity to develop zero emissions technologies that can be adapted to other types of aircraft
- Incorporation of zero emissions transport airships into air transport fleet would lower air transport fleet carbon emission average



Joint NASA/AeroVironment hydrogen propulsion program

6

Overall goal: To stimulate the development of practical and economical transport airships that can meet user demands

- **Primary goals of the Z-Prize include:**
 - Creation of at least one airship that provides affordable, reliable heavy lift
 - Demonstration of practical "low-to-no" carbon dioxide emission air transportation
 - Establishment of at least one sustainable transport airship developer
 - Creation of a new aviation technology sector
 - Provides new opportunities for current and future aerospace workers
- **Secondary goals include:**
 - Utilize airship competition to advance zero emissions propulsion for all types of aircraft
 - Encourage non-aviation disciplines to participate in airship prize efforts
 - Exploit airship competition to advance non-aerospace, zero emissions technologies
 - Reinvent public excitement in aerospace

Ed.: Ideas are welcome as the proposal matures.



Antarctic Ballooning Hits Milestone

Washington (UPI) The U.S. National Science Foundation reached a milestone in scientific ballooning by launching three Antarctica flights in a single summer. The milestone was reached in collaboration with National Aeronautics and Space Administration, NSF said Friday in a release.

Scientists from the United States, Japan, South Korea, France and other countries are using the long-duration sub-orbital flights to investigate the nature of ultra-high-energy cosmic rays and searching for anti-matter as air currents that circle Antarctica carry the balloons and their instruments at the edge of space, NSF said.

The report said unique atmospheric circulation over Antarctica during the Southern Hemisphere summer allows scientists to launch balloons from a site near McMurdo Station and recover them from nearly the same spot weeks later, after the balloons have circled the continent.

Antarctic flights are of a long duration because of the polar vortex and because there is very little atmospheric or temperature change. Constant daylight in Antarctica means no day-to-night temperature fluctuations, which helps the balloon stay at a nearly constant altitude for a long time.

The three balloons will ride the stratospheric winds in the polar vortex above the Antarctic continent for up to six weeks. Ω

Ed. take: At least the Texas helium is used for a few weeks before being trashed, as opposed to the usual practice of millions of cu.ft. discarded for unmanned, short-duration flights over sparsely populated remote regions of the earth.

Remote-Controlled Blimp Doing Rounds Of Prairie Towns

(via Al Robbins)



The mini-blimp is visiting 18 communities in Saskatchewan, eight in Alberta and four in Manitoba. The airship is a quarter-scale model - about 10.6 metres long and 2.8 metres in diameter - of an actual blimp. The remote-controlled craft can travel at about 80 km/h.



"It takes off like a helicopter, flies like an airplane and lands like a helicopter," says Barkley, president and owner of Lac La Biche-based Remote Air Tripods (RATS) Inc., which has been contracted by Syngenta to operate the tour. "So it takes off vertically, flies forward and lands vertically. "In each locale, Barkley and two other crew members guide it through acrobatic displays, including nosedives, hoverings and vertical takeoffs - weather permitting.

"We stay on the ground," he adds. "We're pilots with a very tall view, if you will. We have a camera system on it, so it allows us to see exactly what the airship is looking at. The clients or the interested party will stand beside us and we'll take a photograph, either of them or of their real estate, as they see fit. "Barkley's internet-based firm builds blimps for people around the world and demonstrates how to fly them. Ω

Why Fly When You Can Float?



Selected Media excerpts abuzz about NT and LTA

John Tagliabue wrote, "Imagine gliding in a floating hotel over the Serengeti, gazing down at herds of zebra or elephants; or floating over Paris as the sun sets and lights blink on across the city as you pass the Eiffel Tower. A New Age for Dirigibles. Such flights of fancy may one day be possible, if the dream of Jean-Marie Massaud, a French architect, comes true. As the cost of fuel soars and the pressure mounts to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, several schemes for a new generation of airship are being considered by governments and private companies. "It's a romantic project," said Mr. Massaud, 45, sitting amid furniture designs in his Paris studio, "but then look at Jules Verne." [Obligatory LZ-129 fire] But because of new materials and sophisticated means of propulsion, a diverse cast of entrepreneurs is taking another look at the behemoths of the air... In Germany, Deutsche Zeppelin-Reederei, the successor to the operator of the *Hindenburg*, has had success with a new generation of airship it uses to transport sightseers and scientific payloads. The trend is not entirely new. Zeppelin-Reederei carried 12,000 passengers on sightseeing tours over southern Germany last year. Aerophile, a French company that revived tethered balloons, which compete with dirigibles as carriers of passengers, advertising and scientific instruments, was founded by two young French engineers in 1993... "A dirigible is something magical," said Jérôme Giacomoni, who was 25 when he founded Aerophile with a friend. "But most of the ideas are crazy..." Thomas Brandt, the chief executive of Zeppelin-Reederei and its parent, ZLT Zeppelin Luftschifftechnik, in Friedrichshafen, Germany, jeers at the notion of airships as hotels or freighters. "Illusions," he said. "Airships are unstable, they depend on the weather, so we fly today from March to November."

Scott Deveau wrote, "Boeing Co. will unveil a new partnership today with a little-known Alberta company aimed at developing a state-of-the-art airship, which it hopes will provide a fuel-efficient and relatively inexpensive alternative for lifting heavy cargo to remote

oil and gas sites in the Arctic and Alaska... Certainly, heavy-lift “helicopters” are not a new idea, with aviation history littered with such failed attempts as the Piasecki Heli-Stat in the 1980s. However, two factors appear to be working to make short-haul, heavy-lift airships more feasible these days -- and they both involve the soaring price of oil. Not only has this spurred exploration into increasingly more remote areas, but it has also made the helicopters that bring supplies there more costly to operate. Barry Prentice, a professor of supply chain management at the University of Manitoba, estimates there is a demand for at least 90 airships in Canada by 2015. However, in a high-demand scenario, where the forestry sector and other resource exploration firms hop on board too, that number could jump to over 700. “The fact that Boeing is involved is fantastic news,” he said. “What we need is proper engineering and design, and to come up with a safe ship. We also, in fact, need their deep pockets to certify it.” While helicopters use up to half their fuel just lifting their own weight, airships use helium to lift the structure and only use their fuel to lift the cargo... JHL-40 would hit the market as soon as it receives certification from Transport Canada and the U. S. Federal Aviation Administration.”

George Monbiot wrote, “This means that if hydrogen planes are to fly commercially, they need much wider bodies than ordinary jetliners... But there is another use for this gas, though I am aware that it will go down like a lead balloon with most of my readers. The word airship elicits a fixed reaction in almost everyone who hears it: “What about the *Hindenburg*?” It’s as if, every time someone proposed traveling on a cruise ship, you were to ask: “But what about the *Titanic*?” Yes, there was a spectacular disaster - 71 years ago. It has lodged in our minds because, like the *Titanic*, the *Hindenburg* was bigger and plusher than any craft built before it, and it was carrying rich and prominent people. The conflagration was witnessed by journalists and broadcast all over the world. It also became the technology’s funeral pyre: the *Hindenburg* was doomed long before it burnt, as airships were already being displaced by aeroplanes...But they have one major advantage: the environmental cost could be reduced almost to zero. Even when burning fossil fuels, the total climate-changing impact of an airship, according to researchers at the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, is 80% to 90% smaller than that of ordinary aircraft. But the airship is also the only form of transport that can easily store hydrogen: you could inflate a hydrogen bladder inside the helium balloon. There might be a neat synergy here: one of the problems with airships is that they become lighter, and therefore harder to control, as the fuel is consumed. In this case

they become heavier. Michael Stewart of the company World SkyCat suggests burning both gaseous and liquid hydrogen to keep the weight of the craft constant... If they were powered by hydrogen fuel cells, they would be almost silent, greatly reducing the effects for people on the ground. Though they are much slower than jets, the cabin can be built much wider, which means that traveling by airship would be rather like traveling by cruise ship, but at twice the speed and using a fraction of the fuel. There are four small companies trying to get airships off the ground. Most of the new designs make use of aerodynamic lift as well as buoyancy (they are shaped like fat planes with stubby wings or tails), which means they are heavier and more stable than the old dirigibles and can land without help on the ground. They can alight on and take off from almost any flattish surface, including water. But all of them have a problem with flotation - of the financial rather than the physical kind. While the price of carbon stays low, companies have no financial incentive to switch to a different form of transport. The only help governments are prepared to provide is some development funds for military applications: raising money for killing people is always easier than raising money to save them... Airships are one of several green technologies that might be killed by a shortage of materials. A new generation of solar panels relies on gallium and indium, whose global supplies appear close to exhaustion. The price of platinum, which is used in catalytic converters, has tripled over the past five years. Beyond a few natural gasfields in Texas, economically viable supplies of helium are rare; even there they might be exhausted in 50 years at current rates of use, or much faster if airships take off. If there is a God, he isn’t green.”



In the Summer of 2008 “Stella Artois: Star Over London” takes to the skies, offering over 1500 intrepid passengers the experience of a lifetime. Stella Artois: Star Over London is a unique, timeless and memorable experience by providing an unrivalled birds eye views of the city on three different routes: (“L’Étranger” 30mins, “L’Origine” 45mins and “Le Courage” 1 hour duration) and will be airborne from 10th July - 21st August. On boarding the airship you will be amongst a very limited number of pioneering guests to take this unprecedented airborne journey over London’s iconic landmarks. Ω

Zeppelins To Fly Again Over New Jersey?

The German company, Zeppelin NT airships, that earlier this month announced its airship would in July begin Zeppelin air tours over London, Thursday announced that “the U.S. market is opened for the Zeppelin NT.” While something may have been lost in translation, “the type certification for the Zeppelin NT has been successfully completed,” according to ZLT Zeppelin, which provides a basis for the start of Zeppelin NT operations in the U.S. Airship Ventures (also involved in the Zeppelin air tours in London) is planning to expand its fleet in the U.S., seeing a market for a “further two or three” airships. While concerned citizens may not be relaxed by the wording that “the Zeppelin NT has already conquered Germany and Japan,” the statement refers to the airship’s ability to perform as a passenger carrier as well as providing service in “various special missions” in those markets. (AV WEB)

Better weather led zeppelin backers to Moffett Field

Katherine Conrad, Dennis G. Hendricks wrote, “Alexandra Hall stands in the historic Hangar Two at NASA Research Park at Moffett Field in Mountain View. Built to hold dirigibles, the hangar could soon house a new lighter-than-air vessel, now being built in Germany for Hall’s Airship Ventures. NASA also could benefit from atmospheric research data gathered by the aircraft on its flights. Moffett Field’s Hangar Two has a tenant lined up that not only harkens back to its historic roots but also will give scientists a new way to collect data. If all goes well, the Zeppelin NT, a dirigible under construction in Germany, will occupy the 322,500-square-foot hangar in October, says Alexandra Hall, who founded Airship Ventures with her husband, Bryan Hall, in 2007.

The couple, who have been working on the endeavor for two years, plan to offer tourist excursions on the 12-passenger airship. They became familiar with dirigible operations in Germany, where airships can fly only part of the year because of nasty weather. “The bold fact is that the business is already proven and profitable in Germany where they can’t fly the entire year,” says Hall, who as Alexandra Barnett ran the Chabot Space and Science Center in Oakland. “We have 16 million tourists a year coming to the Bay Area. Why not move it here where it’s a better market?” Where the Halls see dollar signs, directors at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration/Ames see data. For Steven Zornetzer, associate center director at Ames, the dirigible represents an opportunity for scientific exploration -- specifically, collecting atmospheric data that NASA now is unable to obtain. “We have stationary instruments located on the ground and others on high-flying satellites, but nothing

at 1,000 feet and certainly not over a wide geographic area,” he says. “This is another dimension.” On behalf of NASA/Ames, Zornetzer has been working since 1996 to find the right tenants for the sprawling 2,000-acre research center, which includes Moffett Field, decommissioned by the Navy in 1994...” Airship Ventures was an interesting opportunity,” he says. He calls the zeppelin a “platform of opportunity” that would allow NASA to mount instruments to collect data on temperature changes, humidity, cloud observations and fog. We could find out how much pollution is produced in the Bay Area and how much is coming from China,” he says. “It’s in all our best interests and the beauty of the partnership is that we’re getting the platform for free.”

Hall couldn’t be happier that negotiations for the hangar are going well, though they are not quite complete. She’s not concerned though; there’s plenty of time. While she hopes the airship arrives this fall, if the weather is not amenable to an Atlantic crossing the dirigible may not get here until spring 2009. But Hall is certain it will arrive and hopes its new home will be Hangar Two, built in the early 1930s to house dirigibles. “I think if the community is really looking for a simpatico use, this is it,” she says. “This is a massive piece of real estate crying out for sympathetic reuse.”

So far the only opposition Airship Ventures has encountered is some residents voicing concerns that allowing commercial aviation at Moffett Field opens the door to other business ventures, such as FedEx or even Southwest Airlines, that involve noisy air traffic. Hall says that is simply not the case. For one thing, the dirigible is extremely quiet. For another, the 250-foot-long vessel -- one of only three that size in the world -- can carry only a dozen passengers at a time...Hall, who is the author of “Black Holes and Other Space Oddities,” is passionate about traveling by dirigible and convinced it can be profitable -- despite the high costs. Bringing the dirigible to the United States will cost Airship Ventures about \$24 million, with 70 percent going to build the airship and transport it here. The plan calls for transporting it by ship to Galveston, Texas, then flying it to the Bay Area. Once its here, the Halls have promised to take several safety steps to prevent fires in the wooden hangar, which has no fire-suppression equipment because of its size and the high cost. Not only must all the fuel that powers its motors be removed before the airship is stored in the hangar, but a guard must be on duty at all times... offering flights on an airship to tourists who stay in the hotel is the ideal way to respect the history of the site, and create a profitable business venture.” Ω

Black Blimp



Ben B. Levitt, (above) 85, of Gaithersburg, MD passed on Monday, 23 June, 2008. He was born in 1923, entered the U.S. Naval Academy immediately after high school and graduated in 1943. He applied for lighter-than-air duty and served in several squadrons including ZP-11 and ZP-14. Squadron ZP- 14 was transferred to Port Lyautey in French Morocco initially to guard against German submarines operating in the Mediterranean and later for locating mines. This was accomplished by flying six K-ships across the Atlantic in flights of two in June 1944. Navigators (including Ben) on these 58 hr., 3,145 mile flights were chosen from Academy graduates because of their training in the subject. The flights originated at NAS South Weymouth, then to Argentina, New Foundland, the Azores, and terminated at Pt. Lyautey. It was the first time nonrigid airships had flown the Atlantic. Ben was a crew member on a 170 hr. flight on the XM-1 airship in October, 1946. In May 1954 he participated in a record-making 200.2 hr. ZPG-2 flight over part of the Atlantic from Nova Scotia to Florida in May 1954. He was awarded the Air Medal for his participation. Ben took heavier-than-air flight training and flew combat missions in Korea. Following this, he returned to lighter-than-air duty. During a tour in Washington, he served in the Air Branch of the Office of Naval Research.

While still in the Navy, he attended Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and received a Masters degree in Aeronautical Engineering. After retiring, he was employed by Cornell Aeronautical Laboratory. In the early 1970's, he formed the Summit Research Corp.

in Gaithersburg to specialize in Naval Warfare studies. Ben was a long-time member of the Naval Airship Association. He served on the Executive Council and the History and Membership Committees. Ben is survived by his daughter Paula and son, Martin and four grandchildren. Ben's wife, Gerry, (for over 60 years) died a few years ago. Ben was buried at the Parklawn Menorah Gardens, Rockville, MD. Ω

Robert H. Killion, 92, of Thousand Oaks, Calif., passed on May 18, 2008 following a fall in which he broke his back. He is survived by his wife Beverly. Ω



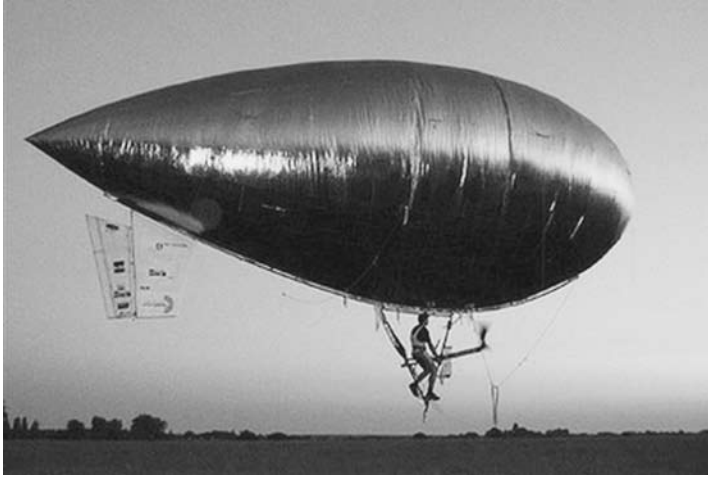
ZP-51 just prior to becoming the first LTA squadron to deploy overseas Bill Voda donated this photo.

William Voda passed on April 15, 2006. Membership chairman Fred Morin discovered his passing when a BBC crew expressed an interest in interviewing the ZP-51 veteran. Bill was the ordnanceman manning the K-68's machine gun as they circled the U-615. He is survived by his wife, who declined an 'H' membership. Ω



Ralph Waldron, Sr. (above) 82, passed on October 28, 2006. Ralph graduated from Salem High School in 1942. Joining the US Navy he served as an aviation metalsmith with ZP-21 in Cuba. He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Mary; three daughters, and son Ralph Waldron, Jr., an engineer working on aerostats at the Lockheed-Martin Airdock. Ω

DRIFTING TOWARD THE LIGHTER SIDE OF LTA



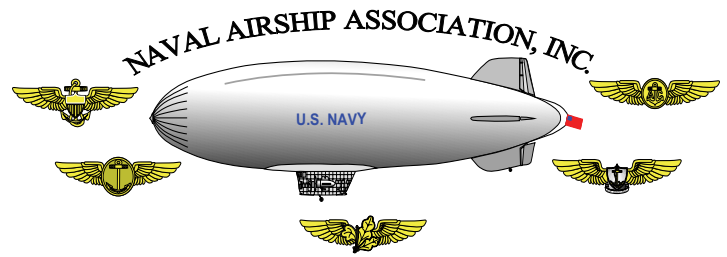
Frenchman to cross Channel in pedal-powered airship

LILLE, France (AFP) - A 39-year-old Frenchman is to attempt a world first Tuesday, June 10, 2008, by crossing the Channel on board a pedal-powered airship. Weather permitting, Stephane Rousson will leave Dungeness beach in southeastern England at 3:30 am (0230 GMT) and hopes to reach northern France, 55 kilometres (33 miles) away five hours later.

Gliding 30 metres (100 feet) above water, he intends to make the crossing in a semi-reclining position under the 16-metre (52-feet) long airship, steering it with two propellers on either side of the pedals. An extreme sports enthusiast and qualified pilot, Rousson said he hoped to achieve what adventurers had been trying to do for the past 100 years -- failing each time because the materials used for the airship were too heavy. He said it took him four years to prepare for the crossing. In 1979, US cyclist Brian Allen made the same crossing on board a pedal-powered aeroplane. *Ed. Followup: winds were too high and no attempt has been made at press time.* ☺

CAMBRIDGE, Idaho, July 5, 2008 - Using his trusty BB gun to help him return to Earth, a 48-year-old gas station owner flew a lawn chair rigged with 105 helium-filled balloons more than 200 miles, reaching 13,000 ft., across the Oregon desert Saturday, landing in a field in Idaho. After spilling off some cherry-flavored Kool-Aid that served as ballast, Couch got a push from the ground crew so he could clear light poles and soared over a coffee cart and across U.S. Highway 20 into a bright blue sky. This was Couch's third balloon flight. He realized it would be possible after watching a TV show about the 1982 lawn chair flight over Los Angeles of truck driver Larry Walters, who gained folk hero fame but was fined \$1,500 for violating air traffic rules. ☺

(Advertisement)



NAVAL AIRSHIP ASSOCIATION, INC.

Join us in exploring a little publicized, but vital part of 20th Century Naval Aviation. In WW II the infamous K-type airship provided coverage for convoys heading across the treacherous N. Atlantic. In fact, K ships also patrolled the waters of S. America, the Caribbean, the Gulf of Mexico, and later N. Africa and the Mediterranean. Their protection rate was perfect. During the Cold War, Navy airships served as platforms for detection of enemy missiles and submarine intrusion. Receive our NOON BALLOON journal with a membership. Contact us at: www.naval-airship.org

NAA REUNION

4 thru 6 MAY 2009, Pensacola, Florida

All members please note that the Naval Airship Association will hold its 2009 reunion at the Clarion Inn in Pensacola starting Monday, May 4 and concluding with a banquet dinner on Wednesday, May 6. Reunion chairman, Joe Hajcak, is working out details now and will have reservation information in issue #79, the fall issue of The Noon Balloon later this year. Joe is working to keep the costs very affordable, practically the same as they were at our 2007 reunion at Tom's River.

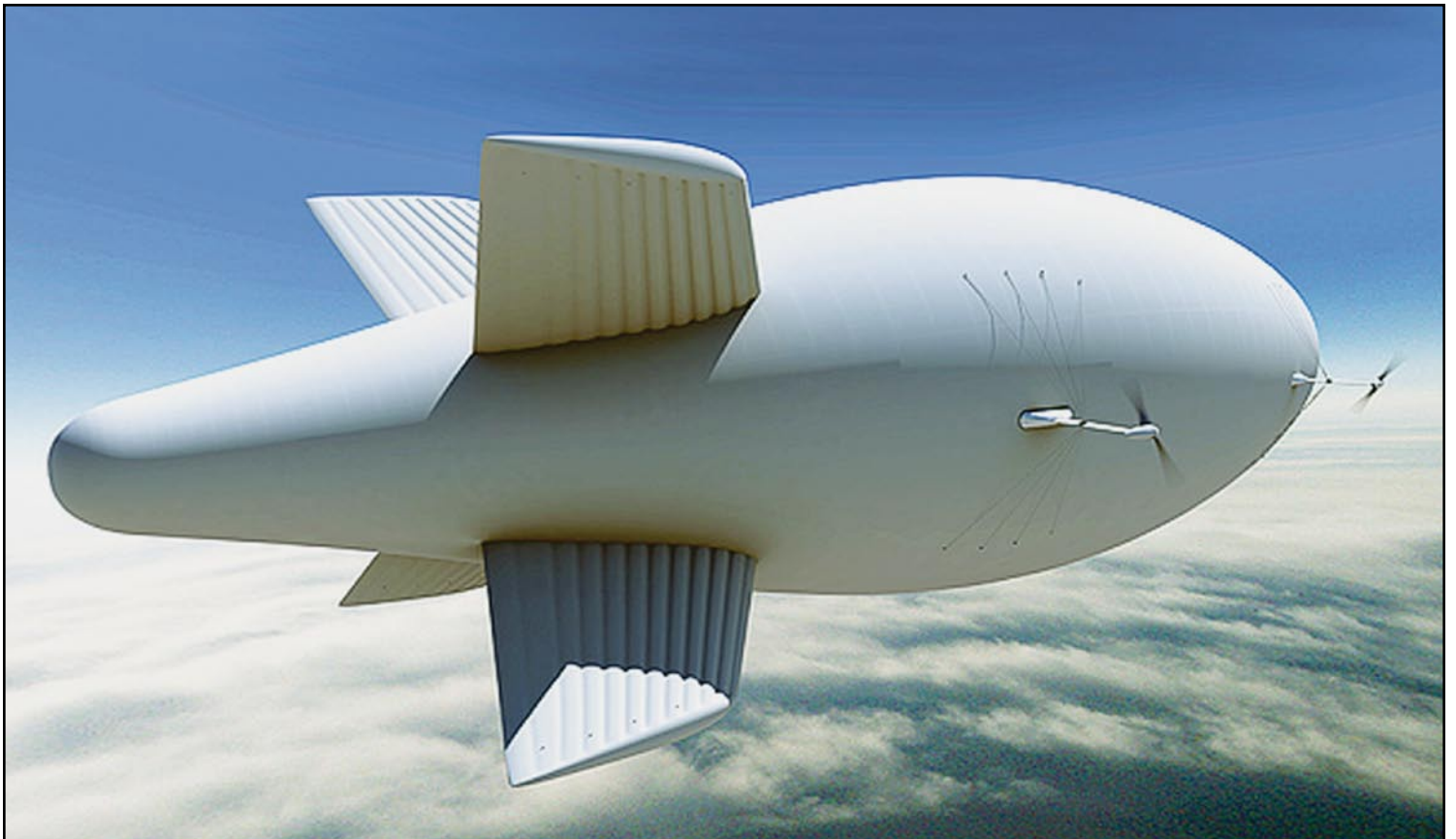
Weather permitting, we will have bleacher seats for a Tuesday air show presented by the Blue Angels. (Rain date for the Blue Angels is Wednesday). Tuesday and Wednesday will afford time to visit the National Museum of Naval Aviation. The naval airship display has been completely reworked with additions of the front portion of the Snow Bird car and the completed and restored L-8 car.

Trips to Pensacola Beach, the casino in Bolxie and a car caravan tour to Battleship Park in Mobile are possible options. ☺





(Above) Mid 1950's operations with CVE's utilized the hose refueling method. Photo Tom Cuthbert
(Below) Artist's concept of Lockheed-Martin's High Altitude Airship.





(Above) Artist Conception of proposed hybrid heavy-lift airship from Boeing and Skyhook.
(Below) Tom Cuthbert's photo showing refueling ops in Cuba mid-1950's.

