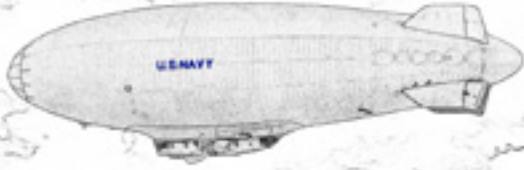
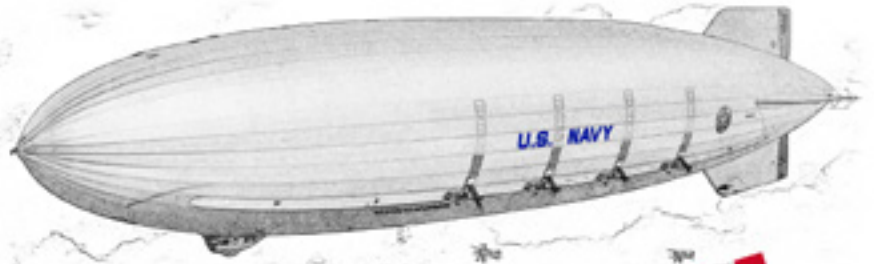


**THE  
NOON**



**BALLOON**

The Official Publication of THE NAVAL AIRSHIP ASSOCIATION, INC.

No. 118

Summer 2018

# RICHMOND MUSEUM OPENS







Now and Then... K-112, first K ship to land in Continental Europe, comes in to test mooring facilities at “the Rock” on July 18, 1944, is contrasted with what the “Pillars of Hercules” looks like today. Below, an N2Y-1 basic trainer, still Pensacola yellow but with “skyhook” added, is ready for hook-on testing with the ZR-3 in 1930. This colorful Fleet Model Two, a previous show winner, was spotted at Oshkosh Airventure in 2016 by Ed.

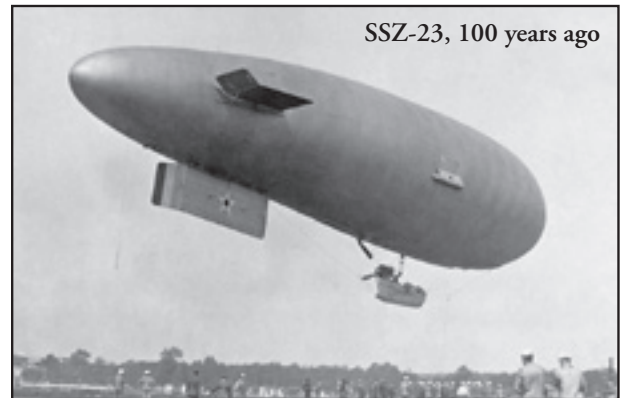


# THE NOON BALLOON

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**ISSUE #118**                      **SUMMER 2018**

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I talk to myself: Sometimes I need the expert advice.

On the Cover: The former NAS Richmond's Administration building is about to reopen, see "Shore Establishments" Ω



**THE NOON BALLOON**  
Newsletter of the NAA

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# EDITORIAL

Richard G. Van Treuren, PO Box 700, Edgewater, Florida 32132-0700, rgvant@juno.com

As we continue our celebration of 100 years of USN LTA, History Chair Mark Lutz helped put together an informative piece revealing more details about our first airshipmen. Training overseas as America struggled to build a credible ASW airship force of its own, they joined a struggle that was already years long. The initial research had been started by past Chair Al Robbins, who'd worked it right up to his death, including with correspondence with our shipmates in England. More effort was added by Janet Estes; our NMNA Library liaison Steve Kozlovski, publisher David Smith, the late 'Hep' Walker and member Eric Brothers all added images. Enjoy, this material has never been put together like this before.



Also in this issue's history section, we offer our best reformatting of the scrapbook (above) images donated to NAA several administrations ago. Lacking a cover sheet or other clues, we did our best to share its photos

and extrapolate what was going on from the published historical record.

This year's Lakeland, Florida Sun N Fun was based on 44 years of volunteer-built, steadfast airshow experience, with LTA represented with hot-air balloon dawn lift-offs. Thousands of aircraft, great food, and engaging entertainment made it a special experience. You could climb inside a B-17 bomber and talk to an F-18 pilot about his career in the military. (Photo, bottom of page) You heard the sweet rumble of some of history's most legendary fighters just before the sky split with the thunder of modern technology's most powerful jets. Yours truly gave his airship spiel at the Aerospace Center for Excellence (ACE), SUN 'n FUN's onsite STEM education complex. Your Sec-Tres. volunteered in the composite workshop all week. It was also a perfect time to stroll through the small but potent Florida Air Museum, where you'll notice our own Jack Hunt in the Hall of Fame, and touch artifacts like a ZR-1 propeller (photo above). What's lovingly called the "Spring Break For Pilots" promises to be even better next year.



– R G Van Treuren



## VIEW FROM THE TOP – PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Fred Morin, PO Box 1926, Lecanto, Florida 34460-1926, frmorin@verizon.net

The 2018 Reunion is right upon us and much work has been done by our team to make this a very good event. We have sent complete details and registration info to all members. Please return your registration as soon as possible. The Holiday Inn Express Akron South has presented us with a very attractive package deal for rooms and a Ready Room. The hotel is very conveniently located across from the Akron-Fulton Airport and Lockheed-Martin (formerly Goodyear) airdock, a notable and historical landmark. As usual, attendees must make their own reservations directly with the hotel. Please be sure to mention the NAA Reunion to receive the special rate. Hotel info is available in the 2 page announcement later in this edition and in the details we sent to all members.

Attendance at the Reunion is very important to us as our Executive Council needs to determine if there is sufficient interest from the membership to continue planning Reunions. If attendance continues to decrease, we may have to cancel future Reunions as our contributing expenses increase and we do not have the membership dues to cover those expenses and reduced attendance puts us at a disadvantage in negotiating pricing for hotels, admission fees at attractions, as well as banquet facilities and food costs. Rest assured that your Executive Council is doing all that is possible to provide the maximum benefit to every member and still hold the line on membership costs.

Saturday, September 29<sup>th</sup> still looks good for the banquet in conjunction with the Lighter Than Air Society. A visit to their Work Shop is also a distinct possibility. It is a treasure trove of LTA history and memorabilia. I was there about two and a half years ago and was completely amazed at the scope of their collection. I am sure attendees will be equally impressed.

We have tried to keep our dues schedule constant for several years but, as I have noted before, we have also begun a general belt tightening beginning with our general expenses and *The Noon Balloon*. Over the past few years, our page count has increased and the printing and postage costs have also increased proportionately and from general economics. I have no doubt that the new issues will continue to provide world class coverage of all things LTA, solid historic coverage of Navy LTA from our members and contributors, and a good assortment of technical articles of interest. The goal is still to publish the best LTA magazine at a reasonable cost, not to just fill pages. We count on our members to assist by submitting articles of interest from

their personal experiences. Please continue to share your stories and photos.

Thank you for your continued support of the Naval Airship Association. I hope to see many of you at the next reunion.

– **Frederick R. Morin**

### TREASURER’S STRONGBOX

It gives me pleasure to inform the Membership and Board of Directors that we are solvent. We have enough funds to carry us through the year with a healthy balance in the Savings and Checking Accounts. Even though membership has declined, we have been fortunate in that our Members recognize this and have stepped up to the plate with donations and continuing support of our Small Stores operations.

On December 1, 2017, our very convenient, close-by branch bank closed its doors in favor of branches in larger cities, a colossal inconvenience. The cost to change banks would be prohibitive, so for now, no change.

In the last few months, we have had some expenses to continue our website presence in the way of domain renewals, discreet forwarding and the email address we use for Paypal. These expenses have been paid for the next two years, so we can breathe easier for that. The Subscription Software we use- Wild Apricot - will have a price increase in November of \$300. This is still quite a bit less than other firms charge for these services and it is a good way to keep our web services and renewal services up to date. I have been checking into alternatives and don't like what I see. We would have to reestablish the same things as the bank deal and start over with someone else's idiosyncrasies. We'll stay the course.

As of this juncture, we are in good shape with all bills covered and a remaining balance of \$7817 in Checking and \$18,857 in Savings. The checking account balance will give us enough to cover the remaining two issues of *The Noon Balloon* for the year and the subscription to Wild Apricot without dipping into savings. We are extremely fortunate that our publisher continues to print such a beautiful newsletter for us, and our Editor continues to find interesting content to print. We're likewise lucky for our Board of Directors, who continue to watch the Bridge and keep a firm hand on the rudder.

– **Deborah Van Treuren, Secretary/Treasurer**



## PIGEON COTE



Longtime NAA member Alan Gross passed last May after a prolonged illness. (See Black Blimp, page 32.) Alan's e-mail handle, "airshipal," hints about his lifetime fascination with LTA. A young man eagerly tackling employment as a line handler whenever the Goodyear blimp came near his Flushing, New York home, Alan fought to keep mooring sites open and even started a campaign to establish an easily accessible blimp port for airships to work nearby New York City. An avid collector, he had recently divided his many airship keepsakes between various worthy LTA institutions.  $\Omega$

AIAA LTA TC member Prof. Rajkumar S. Pant e-mailed, "As you may be aware, the Lighter-Than-Air (LTA) systems lab was set up in 2003 in Aerospace Engineering Department at IIT Bombay to encourage young students, and researchers to design, develop and flight test various types of LTA systems.

We have created a YouTube channel to showcase our trials, projects and activities. The link is given below:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMLW0lvJWhcmR2lWwXdvUhw>

This is to request you to please subscribe to this channel, view our videos, and give your comments and remarks. Our (highly outdated!) website also gives some description of our earlier projects and programs, please check it out:

<http://www.aero.iitb.ac.in/~ltasy>  $\Omega$

NAA Pres Fred Morin received an inquiry from the Greentown, Ohio FD through the Lighter-Than-Air Society, seeking info on a blimp lost in the fog. The

details are quite scant, but I hope an NAA member has some knowledge of this incident and can help.

The inquiry reads, "We are trying to find factual information about a story we heard. It involved a blimp getting lost in the fog in Greentown, OH. The firetrucks came out with their lights and sirens and guided it to a safe docking. We think this might have been late 1940's after the war. Heard this story from a man who was involved. Any ideas? We are part of the GVFD and are tracking history."

If anyone has any knowledge of this info, please let us know. This appears to be an interesting story and it would be great if we could help. Thank you.  $\Omega$

Annette Slate e-mailed, "Every year we have renewed our Uncle Tom's *Noon Balloon*, but this year, as he turns 100 in August, we thought that maybe it wasn't such a good idea. Well-I-I, we sure heard about it when we went to see him in Washington..."

(Tom Slate is now renewed!)  $\Omega$

Wick Elderkin forwarded a message from a non-member trying to i.d. parts: "Thanks for your interest in getting me connected and helping to identify these early blimp and airship original items and parts. I have a few items to send today. This is the first:



I was told by the person who had it in their very old early aviation collection that it may be a girder from a US Army blimp. But he was not really sure. I understand if you can't answer any of these difficult questions, but I appreciate your effort regardless. Can you tell me if it is from a US Army/Navy blimp? Can you tell me what part of the ship it is from? Specs: Approximate Dimensions: 12" X 5" X 2.5" ;Color: Army Green Over Light Green Primer Base; Exact Weight:  $\hat{A}$  .5015 Lbs."  $\Omega$

Past NAA Pres Ross Wood forwarded some clipping copies from renewing member Tom "Larry" McCann that told of his uncle, Richard McCann. From local papers during and just after WWII, the clippings show

Richard McCann and tell of his entering the Navy after three years at Charlton Junior College, and his graduating from Lakehurst LTA school. Obviously his squadron assignment could not be mentioned, but the postwar clipping mentioned he “returned from Blimp Squadron Forty One, which was based in Brazil.”

Extrapolating a bit from the two clippings, we see then- LTJG McCann was apparently involved with several rescue demos out of Key West. “The Commander of the blimp detachment issued orders to demonstrate a complete sea rescue and to omit no detail. At 2:15 p.m. Lt. McCann, wearing a Mae West, was lowered from the crash boat into the waters of the base to a life raft. After floating for a time he fired colored rockets from a Very pistol to attract the blimp hovering overhead. The commander of the blimp dropped smoke floats to determine the wind velocity and direction. The nose of the airship was then headed into the wind and a second run was made over the raft. When about 100 yards from it a sea anchor was dropped. This is a large canvas bag, which fills with water and serves the double function of slowing down the aircraft and aiding it in holding a constant altitude. With anchor secured, a rescue ring was lowered to Lt. McCann. [Some 2500 Navy Day] Spectators saw objects drop from the airship as the Lieutenant was hoisted aboard. These were sand bags, used as ballast and were to offset the weight of McCann. After being “rescued,” McCann was returned to his base and the Navy’s demonstrations continued.... McCann... had been similarly picked up by airships on two separate occasions. The first of these pickups was effected from the deck of a fleet submarine underway at sea, and was the first of its type in Naval history.” (Emphasis added). We have little reason to doubt these accounts were accurate, though no such demo with a sub is recorded in any “legitimate” US Navy history. Of course the British had demonstrated sub rendezvous and personal pick-up in WWI. (See page 23) Anyone remember any details? Ω



Speaking of items not being recorded by the respected histories, our hardworking NMNA Library liaison Steve Kozlovski found this photo and sent it along. The sequence of several has only the hand-scrawled caption “Here she is,” “try again” and the like on their borders.



Seemingly, it’s just another K-ship operating with a CVE, in this case the -113, USS *Puget Sound*. Routine? According to WikiPedia, CVE-113 had barely launched from its namesake shipyard about V-E day, and spent only a brief period in San Diego before shipping out to Japan. The flight deck’s complete lack of airplanes suggests this period was its shakedown cruise, and it therefore follows the K-ship was out of NAS Santa Ana (today’s Tustin) or its southerly mast base(s). Of course we are familiar with “Buzz” Llyod’s first CVE carrier landing with K-29, on the USS *Altamaha*, earlier in 1944. However, the “legit” histories make it sound like K-29’s first was a one-of-a-kind event in the Pacific theatre. These photos prove otherwise, and begs the question how many more times such deals between more junior officers were cut, ignored by the official record keepers and senior leadership which might have employed same, say, off Hawaii, even if used as nothing more than airplane guards or for search and rescue. Whenever this sort of thing comes up, the same obvious question arises, particularly with the range and capabilities of the M-ships that were sent to California at that time: Why were airships not employed much more west than the Farallon Islands? Again, we have nothing official or legitimate, just the scuttlebutt that the senior area commander had taken a real hatred of C. E. Rosendahl somewhere along the way and successfully refused to have airships in his area. Ω



Member Alan Barber of HAV kindly summarized his recent correspondence with stateside members:

The core of this article is a group of recollections from NAA member and ZPG-2W and 3W pilot Ross Wood, but it has come about by a slightly circuitous route, so if you will indulge me, before I get to the point here is some context. My name is Andrew Barber and I am a 52-year-old British engineer. I have spent my career in the UK aviation and automotive industries. Since October 2015, I have been an airworthiness and flight test engineer at Hybrid Air Vehicles. In 1983(ish), I did visit Cardington to see [Skyship] G-BIHN fly, but between then and 2015, I knew no more about LTA history than any other aviation obsessive. Since arriving at HAV, I have slowly and piecemeal become aware of the successful (and therefore forgotten because popular history prefers to recall failures) aspects of airship history. Recently, my boss, our technical director, asked me to try to find some technical details of the 11 day *Snow Bird* flight in 1958. I found some materials on line but not the deep technical detail the boss wanted, so I contacted Richard van Treuren who I had met briefly when I gave a short presentation at the 2017 Airship Association meeting in Bedford. Richard put me in email conversation with Ross. Below is my edited version of that conversation. The essential words are from Ross although any errors introduced in the editing are mine. I am guessing that you all know Ross Wood far better than I do, but here is the brief insight into his life that he gave me at the start of our email conversation:

*After going through Pensacola in 1956-7 and getting my wings in a multi-engine program, in Jan. of 1958, I ended up at Lakehurst N.J. on squadron ZW-1. I loved flying the big airships, the ZPG-2W at a million cu. ft. and the 3W at 1.5 million cu. ft. I was one of two LTJGs to make Aircraft Commander in both the -2W & -3W. I'm 84 years old (spring 2018) but still have most of my physical and mental senses. I stopped flying privately, in the Cessna 4 years ago.*

I started our email conversation by asking Ross whether he knew anything about the eleven day *Snow Bird* flight:

*You have asked about Commander Jack Hunt's flight in a ZPG-2 totalling 264.2 hours of unrefuelled flight time. An event I have virtually no knowledge of! Now, having said that, I can take some guesses as to what was going on. Using the -2 rather than the -2W would make sense, because of our total weight, due to multiple radar stations & related equipment. The -2 had a total fuel capacity of 3,220 U.S. gallons or 19,320 lbs. I can't tell you what the normal burn rate, per engine, was. The -2W would fly very well on one engine set at*

*a fairly low power. I am guessing that Hunt had everything removed that could be removed and probably plumbed in some auxiliary tanks inside the car. At ZW-1 we had a rule that we never valved helium, unless it was a dire emergency. Prior to leaving station on a 36 hour flight, we would pick up sea water from 800-1000 feet, and pump it into an empty fuel tank. Usually 1000 lbs. would do it. That would bring us back to Lakehurst 1500 lbs heavy which was our desired landing weight. In Hunt's case, he would have simply valved helium, on final, until the ship was heavy enough to land. Regarding ballonet ceilings, depending on outside air temperature, that would be something around 5000 feet. We would fly our entire 36 hour flight between 1000 and 2000 feet. I have commented back and forth between the -2 and -2W. ZW-1 was the only USN Airship Squadron to be strictly an Airborne Early Warning Squadron and used the -2W. Our sister squadron at Lakehurst, ZP-3, was strictly ASW Anti-Submarine and they flew the ZPG-2, nothing else.*



I asked Ross about what sort of heaviness they flew the ZPG-2 and 3. He told me this story:

*There was one flight out of Lakehurst in a -2W covered with snow. On 27th March 1959, ship 137832 was on stand-by for barrier patrol and had been undocked in the morning. By the afternoon, sleet and snow covered the envelope. The winds were too strong to attempt docking so a fly-away crew of four officers and four enlisted men took-off in a very heavy condition (perhaps 9,000, or maybe even 12,000, pounds). Taking off, at 2000 in the dark, we used up all of the mat in front of us. The forward ballonets had been adjusted to maintain an even trim, but as we got airborne, dragging the tail fins through the snow, the snow on top shifted aft and hung up in the tail fins so that the nose kept rising until we were at a 65-70 degree angle, just hanging on the props, at full power. Then to my horror, our rate of climb instrument began to go negative. We were slowly*



backing down, and the altimeter was at 500 feet. I had my finger on the main fuel tank valve switch when the aircraft commander Lundi Moore yelled to dump fuel. I dumped 2000-2500 lbs of fuel in less than 30 seconds and amazingly enough the rate of climb indicator very slowly gave us a slight positive read. We figured that the tail was no more than 100 feet from the ground, or the buildings, under us. We were right over the top of the Marine barracks. We could also have dropped the slip tanks from the belly of the ship but that could have been catastrophic to those in the buildings. As it was, I got off a quick transmission to the tower to advise the base Fire Department that we were dumping fuel. There was no visibility in the snow. We finally got control of the ship, although our 45 degrees nose up attitude continued. The ship was in the air in this condition for some 18 hours with the crew sitting on the backs of their seats. Warmer air to melt the snow on the envelope could not be found. We spent the whole night in an extreme nose up, tail down, position. We were able to hold a course, but our speed over the ground was like 20-25 kts. Two things happened simultaneously. We arrived over Delaware Bay, and the sun came up. As we began to get the nose down, it was like being parked under a waterfall. The snow and ice were melting, rapidly. With minimal fuel still on board and a light crew load, we rapidly approached E.Q. We did several water pick-ups, 2000 lbs, but still had to valve helium for 1 minute before landing at Marine Corps. Cherry Point, North Carolina. Shortly after landing, we got a ladder down, and 25-30 Marines scrambled on board, to keep us on the ground. A check of the catenary cables found them a little out of limits.

I am particularly interested in long-endurance missions:

For a normal 36 hour flight on the -2W airship, what we called a "Barrier" flight, we would be towed, on the mast, into T.O. position at the Lakehurst "mat" which was approx. 8000 feet in diameter. Our heaviness was 8000 lbs. Crew weight could vary that by a few hundred pounds. Take-off at 8000 lbs involved coming off the mast, tripping the long lines from the "mules", advancing the throttles to their take-off power of 44 inches of manifold pressure. At approximately 40 knots indicated, back pressure was applied to the control yoke and somewhere around 45 knots we would be lifting off. Our normal barrier flight would take us 200 miles east of the New Jersey coast. This was about a 3 hour flight. At this point, our CIC (Combat Information Centre) would be talking to Air Force Radar controllers. All of our radar operators had been trained at Air Force schools to run intercepts with Air Force aeroplanes, F101s and F102s from bases on central New Jersey and Long Island, New York.

Regarding water pick-up, fuel burn back to base would be determined, with a desired ship heaviness of 1500 lbs, on final approach. Water pickup would typically occur 3 or 4 hours before departing for home base. Our heaviness would be somewhere between 1000 and 2000 lbs heavy. Our water pick-up gear consisted of a high speed hydraulic winch loaded with stainless braided wire. A neoprene bag, held open at the top with a titanium cross tree was at the end of the wire. This was deployed, by the ship's Rigger, stationed at the clam-shell doors at the rear of the car. The Command Pilot and Rigger were in continuous communication. The pilot turned into the wind and slowed the ship to a point just above a stall. The rigger would drop the bag into the water, where it would snag a wave top or two, and the cross tree would help the bag to fill with 700-800 lbs of water. The bag would be winched up to the clam-shell doors and a hose inserted into the bag and the water pumped into an all-purpose tank, which may have been used for fuel at take-off. A second bag pick up was sometimes required. A wind, at 1000 feet of 15-20 knots was always helpful. Andrew, you mentioned being at E.Q., in my 2½ years at Lakehurst, I only had an opportunity to fly a ship at E.Q., once. It was very uncomfortable. Of course, in the event of a total power failure, you will set the ship up for E.Q. ASAP. You are flying a very big free balloon! In Commander Hunt's flight, I would guess that he might have been close to E.Q. many times. Blipping the helium dump switch, a total no-no for us, is a quick fix for E.Q.



I asked Ross about domestic life on the long patrols:

Regarding life aboard the -2W - it was pretty good. On Barrier flights, we had a crew of 25: the Aircraft Commander and two sections of 12 men each. Hence, 5 pilots total. The second deck of the -2W car, accessed by a ladder fore and aft, had the galley and a bunk room with 13 bunks. The Aircraft Commander had his own bunk. On the day of the flight, the crew met, in the hangar, at 0500. Take-off was at 1000. When I became an Aircraft Commander I had two

main objectives: one was to depart at 1000 not 1001. Two, was to accompany the rigger, who was also the cook, to the Commissary, to pick up our meals for the next 36 hours. Even a lowly LTJG carried enough clout to ask for some special items. My crew always ate well. (Andrew's comment, this is in the finest traditions of naval officers looking after their people!). The galley in the -2W was not real big, room for 4 people to sit down. In the -3W we had seating for 8, plus a bigger cooking area. As Aircraft Commander I typically was in the left seat until we got on "station" Then we began a 4 hours on 4 off, watch system. This worked fairly well on a 36 hour flight. I did a lot of off shore sailing as a teenager and on some long passages more elaborate watch schedules were required. No one in ZW-1 would deny that there were occasions when both left and right seat pilots dozed off. We had very good auto-pilots, both for direction and altitude. Showers were non-existent and the heads were pretty primitive. Crew members were able to do their own cooking when it best suited them.

The conversation drifted into the specifics of Airborne Early Warning and I mentioned that the threat back then was high flying Russian Bears, Bisons and Badgers with free-fall bombs:

Regarding our AEW altitude, this was an interesting situation. Our ships would typically be at 1500 ft. Some 40 or 50 miles outside of us were Air Force AEW Lockheed C121s or Super Connies, flying at 7500 ft. When SAC would run missions toward the U.S. from the Azores in B-47s, we would typically pick up the target before the 121's would. It had to do with signal bounce or deflection. This was not always the case, but we were the winner, more often than not. There was also a theory that the airship was a better "platform" than the C121 was. You mention free falling bombs from Russian aircraft, I'm glad I never thought about that when I was still in the Navy!

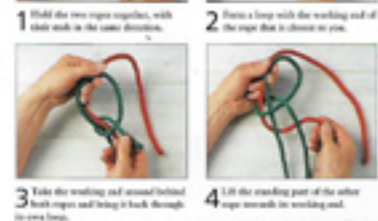
Finally, Ross told me one last story about the biggest non-rigid ever flown, the ZPG-3W:

When the 3W was produced, ZW-1 got all four of the ships. I left ZW-1 in late June of 1960, a week later, a -3W split from the nose cone to the height finder radar dome and plunged into the Atlantic killing 18 out of 21 men. I had been taken off the flight schedule in mid-June, but just before leaving ZW-1, our Commanding Officer asked me if I would take one last flight, since the crew Commander was on leave. It was in that ship and with that crew that I made my final flight. A week later they went down. That loss of the 3W, which was controversial, was the beginning of the end of Navy LTA. Ω

Last issue's query re: airship line handler's knots revisited what is shown to be a long standing controversy. Peter Cuneo responded with two illustrations from the books, "The Ultimate Encyclopedia of Knots & Ropework" (top) and "What Knot" (below), which both refer to as the "Zeppelin Bend," supposedly used by ZR-3 crewmen.

### Zeppelin Bend

This is one of a family of bends comprising two interlocked overhand knots. It is both strong and secure, and the fact that both working ends stick out at right angles to their standing parts is only a minor snag that may be somewhat unsightly but is rarely inconvenient. The American naval officer and aviator who first required his massive dirigible Los Angeles to be secured with this bend - and no other - in the 1930s, and the US Navy continued to employ it for lighter-than-air ships until as recently as 1962. Rosendahl's method of tying this knot was more awkward than the one illustrated, which was devised at a later date - sometime in the 1980s - by Emory W. Thomas. The knot is anything but heavyweight cables and hawsers to the structure of cords.



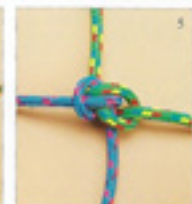
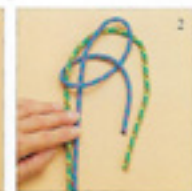
5 Pull the second working end forward to even standing part and back to the free end that is forward. Pull on both working ends and standing parts to remove any slack or tighten the knot.

### OVERHAND KNOTS, HALF-KNOTS & HALF HITCHES

#### ZEPPELIN BEND

This is a strong and secure bend that should be used more often. It is easily untied apart, even after heavy immersion or sustained loading. In the event of a load being introduced prematurely, however, while the knot is still loose, it tends to tighten itself rather than pull apart.

The honor U.S. naval officer and aviator, Charles Rosendahl, who in the 1930s commanded the massive dirigible, U.S.S. Los Angeles only allowed this bend to be used to join his ship's mooring lines to the ground ropes. The navy continued to use the knot for lighter-than-air ships until 1967.



1 Hold the two ends to be joined as shown.  
2 With the working end that lies on top (or in front), tie a half hitch around both standing parts.  
3 Next bring the lower standing part across to front of its own strand.  
4 Bring that strand up and back to down through the middle of the working loop, alongside the first strand but pointing in the opposite direction.  
5 Tighten the knot.

Pete also included pages from past BUOYANT FLIGHT issues with correspondence from VADM Rosendahl himself, in which he stated he was unaware of said knot carrying his name but had no objection. ZR-3 crewman John Iannacone also wrote in to say he had never heard of this knot, and was certain it had never been used with any rigid airship! Ω



CP Hall e-mailed, “In February, our local Kiwanis Club hosted a meeting of regional clubs. One of our members obtained helium-filled, neoprene balloons for centerpieces on the dinner tables. After the meeting ended, several centerpieces remained and, I was to visit my youngest grandson the following day, I took a two balloon centerpiece home with me. The next morning I left to visit the grandchild, but I forgot to bring the balloons, so they stayed in the nook of the window seat. I returned home and the balloons were still afloat and looking pristine. The following morning I came down and found the balloons still up and looking good. Feeling this to be quite expected were they Mylar balloons, but really unusual for neoprene balloons, I left them in place as an experiment.

Eventually they began to be less translucent and more solid in color. Each was tied to a ribbon perhaps 1.5 meters long with a small, common, weight on the end. Very slowly, more and more ribbon was on the seat, less and less in the air. On the same day in March, that I obtained the balloons in February, one short month later, the balloons finally touched cushion and the experiment ended.

Inquiring minds want to know! ... “Hi Float” and quickly found several references. If they claim that balloons will last as long as mine did; I did not find it. Perhaps my conditions: February, a south-facing window with light colored window shade over an off-set heating vent which only runs at night as the solar aspect warms the home effectively during the day, constitutes ideal conditions.

If only this product was available in the UK in the 1920s, then gasbags could have continued to be made with what Captain J. A. Sinclair described as stronger two-ply rubber construction and both R.100 and R.101 would have been successes, however, there is a caveat. The advertisement reads, “for indoor use only”. I do not know if out-of-doors but inside the outer cover of an airship qualifies?

Actually I doubt that this is applicable, either to rigid airships, or even Zeppelin NTs? I thought that, if you are unaware of the product, then you might be interested yourselves, or know someone who is? I shall be seeing my local florist at today’s Chamber of Commerce luncheon and shall pass this along to her.” Ω

Boyce Wilson e-mailed Fred Morin, “My father, Warren Savant of Winter Haven, Florida, a Navy LTA pilot in WWII, passed on to his heavenly home on February 17, 2018 at the age of 98. [See “Black Blimp”]



I know he enjoyed reading *The Noon Balloon* and had two articles published in it. (Fall 2006 and Spring 2008). As far back as I can remember, my Dad fascinated our family with his ‘blimp stories.’



We miss him greatly but are thankful for his godly life and impact on us! His good health enabled him to drive himself to church the week before his death and he only used his cane on occasion.” Ω

Renewing member James Yarnell e-mailed Sec-Tres., “Thank you so much for your kind reminder re: my lapsed NAA subscription and usual contribution renewal for 2018... I’ve been using many various computers, large and small, almost every day since 1965... (Navy IBM 360 Washington D.C. on active duty at the NAVAL AIR SYSTEMS COMMAND... next as a “Computer Specialist” using various CDC VAX configurations and others for years at the NAVAL OCEAN SYSTEMS CENTER lab in Point Loma) ... The last Reunion I attended was in 2000 in Pensacola. Sure brought back memories on my early days in the Training Command there. I was later a ZPG-2W Airship Commander in ZW-1 back in the day and one of the last few trained in the -3W also (the same one that crashed a few miles off the New Jersey coast back in 1960). I had then become a Helo driver in HS-9 (ASW) aboard the USS ESSEX, saw what was still visible of it above water from the Carrier deck, and then interviewed the only survivor rescued that day who was brought aboard the Carrier that day. The other guys (two, I think) were picked up by small boats in the area. What a terrible thing to happen to such a fine crew, many of which I had known well, and to the Airship itself. It was really a fun, powerful, Airship to fly also. Still feel so sad and sorry for all that were involved then and later. Respectfully...” Ω

Nigel Hills, an Airship Association officer in the UK, has been searching for information as to the disposition of British Airships sold to the U.S. during and after WWI. Nigel recently heard from the USAF AETC at Maxwell: "... we do not normally have maintain Air Service/Air Corps records before 1941 and the activities of the Air Service balloon units should be with the U.S. Army collections at the National Archives. [However] The history office of the Tactical Air Command, and later Air Combat Command, produced a few anniversary histories of Langley Field, which contain almost the same information. Copies of these publications, which cover LTA activities and have many photographs, are available from AFHRA on compact disc. I've attached some abstracts describing two of them, along with a manual on balloons produced at Langley by the Air Corps Tactical School. I would suggest that you also search an unofficial finding aid of our holdings at: [www.airforcehistoryindex.org](http://www.airforcehistoryindex.org).

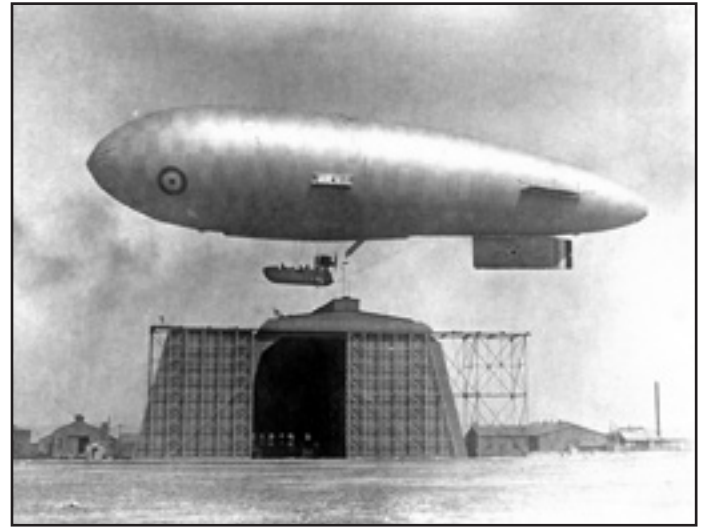
I have not completed my research on this topic, but by viewing the USN record card, it is certain that this airship was sent to Langley Field. However, it does not appear on the list of airships operated by the Air Service in any of the publications we have on the subject." NAA could follow up with that archive.

Doc. No. A- 45580		AIRCRAFT RECORD		Doc. No. A- 5590										
Contract No.	Req.	S. E.	By-	Cost Price	Est. Price									
Contractor British Government			Address											
Model Z-2-22			Type Dirigible											
Motor H. P.			Inspector											
PRODUCTION RECORD														
MS	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS	F.O.B.
Op. No.	Date	Wks	S. Order	Shipped	Destination	Accepted	Revised							
					Sheffield, Ohio									
					Hampton Roads									
Ammunition Loading at Shipment			Perman. Address			Ammunition Supplied								
Total Flying Time			Hours	Minutes	Sustained from Navy List		4/1/20							
TROUBLE REPORTS														
Date	Station	Remarks												
9-22-20	Hampton Roads	9:50-9:00 Turn over to Army -												
		at 9:22-20 - 6 Weeks ago 104 Bu 26												
		207-16												
		1-4-6/3A.												

On a happier note from this era, Nigel's research also turned up a card on airship serial number 5563.

Doc. No. A- 5563		Z-2 AIRCRAFT RECORD		Doc. No. A- 5590										
Contract No.	Req.	S. E.	By-	Cost Price	Est. Price									
Contractor British Admiralty			Address											
Model Z-2-22			Type Dirigible											
Motor H. P.			Inspector											
PRODUCTION RECORD														
MS	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS	F.O.B.
Op. No.	Date	Wks	S. Order	Shipped	Destination	Accepted	Revised							
					Cape May									
Ammunition Loading at Shipment			Perman. Address			Ammunition Supplied								
Total Flying Time			Hours	Minutes	Sustained from Navy List		4/1/20							

As one can see, this was the British SSZ-23, one of several airships purchased by the USN during the Great War. SSZ-23 (A-5563) was shipped to and erected in the US, with flights made at Akron, and Cape May, New Jersey (photo below).



A number of framed photos of SSZ-23 in flight at Cape May, New Jersey, visible along with contemporary B-types, were displayed on the walls of a Cape May seafood restaurant visited by Ed. back in 1999. When we inquired how we might obtain copies, we were told the owner had his negatives ripped off by some unnamed thief and refused to talk about even reproducing the remaining framed prints. James Shock had located the USN/NARA photo above of SSZ-23 aloft at Cape May date April 1919, all too brief a period for this Great War vet before its rotted hydrogen bag caused it to be junked in June of 1920. Ω

(See back cover and related WWI article beginning on page 18.)



## SHORE ESTABLISHMENTS:

### Richmond (Cover Story)



The restoration of the former NAS Richmond blimp base Headquarters south of Miami will complete this summer. Building 25 was built by the Navy in World War II to serve Navy airship anti-submarine warfare operations against the Nazi U-boats attacking the coast of Florida and the Caribbean. Fleet Airship Wing TWO and Airship Squadron ZP-21 were both housed in the building. From NAS Richmond airships sortied from the Gulf of Mexico to Brazil, patrolling the seas and escorting convoys.

After WWII, the hangars burned in a spectacular fire, ending airship operations, but the headquarters building remained in federal hands. During the upheaval of the Communist revolution in Cuba, the building was brought back into use as CIA Headquarters for anti-Castro freedom fighters. Known as JM-WAVE, the building hosted many clandestine operations of the Cuban exile community, such as Operation Mongoose. In the 1970s, the building served as an Army Reserve Center, and up until Desert Storm, it was the Marine Corps Reserve Center for Miami.

The building holds fifty years of our common military heritage. During this time, the Zoo Miami and Gold Coast Railroad Museum came into being on the old launch pad. The restoration has been undertaken by the State of Florida and Miami-Dade County. It will reopen as the Miami Military Museum and Memorial this Fall. The building has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places and awarded the level of National Significance. Exhibitory will tell the WWII story of NAS Richmond and our airship heritage. An Educational Center will host field trips for the young. Ω

– Anthony Atwood

### Lakehurst



The Joint Base Air Show “Power in the Pines” was presented May 5th and 6th. This moved the NLHS’s annual Remembrance Service, the 81st, to May 9th.

The Airship, newsletter of the NLHS, reprinted a report which read in part: “A piece of cloth recovered from the wreckage of the ill-fated *Hindenburg* that exploded over New Jersey more than 80 years ago recently sold for \$36,282 at auction... It was picked up by Rosemary Dowling, a teenager at the time, who was on the ground with her sisters. Their father Patrick was among the Naval crew working to dock the airship when it exploded on May 6th, 1937. The explosion at Naval Air Engineering Station Lakehurst killed 36. There were 62 survivors. “

General membership meeting of the NLHS will be held at the Cathedral of the Air Chapel on June 27th at 1900 hours. Ω

### Moffett Field



The Sparrowhawk, newsletter of the MFHS, reports progress on their BT-13 restoration, AH-1S Cobra washing, and volunteers also managed to clean years’ worth of grime from the P-3 Orion displayed at Air Ops - with a boost from the Ames Fire Department’s pumper. Ω

## The Lighter-Than-Air Society Creates New Display in Its Workshop

The Lighter-Than-Air Society has a new display of some of the historical items and memorabilia from its collection inside its Workshop in Akron, Ohio.

The initial display's centerpiece is a model of the internal structure of the USS *Akron* built in the late 1920's and used by Dr. Karl Arnstein to help explain the concept of the rigid airship that was built in the Airdock.

Other exhibits include:

The *Hindenburg* – a piece of the fabric from the airship's envelope, artifacts that were used inside the airship, newspapers that covered the crash of the dirigible, etc.

The *Graf Zeppelin* and its historic flight around the world (the first by any type of aircraft).

The USS *Shenandoah* – pieces of the airship recovered from the crash site, newspaper coverage, etc.

Artifacts from the U.S. Navy's airships used during World War II.

Items from Goodyear blimps.

The display was opened for the first time on April 13, during an open house held at the Bounce Innovation Hub (where the Workshop is located). Over 100 people visited the display that evening, expressing their amazement at the sampling of artifacts the Society owns.



Visitors are impressed by the LTAS exhibit and the collection of historical items the Society owns.

*Photo Cindy Slater*



A part of a girder and pieces of fabric from the envelope and a gas cell recovered from the *Hindenburg* crash. *Photo Alvaro Bellon*



A model of the Akron Airdock. These were given to Goodyear dealers for display in their stores. The doors open and an airship moves out of the hangar.

*Photo Alvaro Bellon*



Pieces of the USS *Los Angeles* recovered after the airship was decommissioned and dismantled.

*Photo Alvaro Bellon*



Memorabilia, including pieces of the USS *Shenandoah*, recovered from the crash site in Ava, Ohio.

*Photo Alvaro Bellon*



## **From NAS Glynco: Long Journey To Navy Championship**

by Commander John A. Fahey USN (Ret.)

When I was 6 years old, I took a greatly admired photograph of a rooster pulling a cart at Benson's Animal Farm in New Hampshire. It was to be my first and last photography venture until I encountered the U. S. Navy's K20 Graflex Aircraft Camera when I was a 20 year old new Navy Ensign and Aviator at Naval Airship Station, Glynco, Georgia.

Before I was commissioned a Naval officer on December 7, 1943, I had to make three choices of the airship squadron that I desired assignment. My first choice was ZP-11 in Massachusetts, my home state; second, ZP-12 in New Jersey, and third, ZP-15 in Georgia. My closest friends and I were assigned to my third choice, ZP-15, and I was happy to be based in my new state, home of the Golden Isles and the Marshes of Glen.

Flying as a new Navy commissioned officer and a junior airship copilot, other pilots paid little attention to me. For the first month and a half, I was not assigned to an airship crew and flew with several senior officers, spent hours on the elevator control, and made many landings. During one of my early flights, I noticed a fairly large case aft in the control car. I opened it and there inside was a U. S. Navy's K20 Graflex Aircraft Camera. I was fascinated by the find and asked the senior pilot if I was permitted to use it. He advised me to use my free time over the U-boat infested shipping lanes to be a visual lookout, but practice photographing objects of interest over land when we return to Glynco.

This advice launched me into an adventure which lasted a two decade Navy career in enjoyable, extremely important, and valuable classified photographic contributions to the Navy and our country. The enjoyment started with the first inflight picture of St. Simons Light and continued with photographs of the magnificent attractions of the Golden Isles. To get the best results, I learned to squeeze the K20's trigger very slowly as done with target shooting with a pistol. K20's camera trigger was amazingly similar to that of a gun.

In 1953, I was a student at the postgraduate Naval Intelligence School, Washington, D.C., and in 1954, a student at the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, where the earlier K20-squeeze-the-triggers-when-flying-airships-at-Glynco again came into play. Hundreds of us were taken to a firing range to fire 45

pistols to meet the course requirements to be awarded the Expert Pistol Medal. Only two of us qualified. Speed was a factor, but my accuracy, schooled by K20 experience in Glynco, ensured a winning score.



My training in intelligence and qualifications as an interpreter and translator of the Russian language led in May 1960 to my assignment to the Group of Soviet Forces behind the Iron Curtain in East Germany. The Soviet Group contained 6 armies, 22 divisions, and 150 regiments. My language ability was well known and extremely valuable at high level meetings and detentions for penetrating restrictive areas. Even the East German secret police STASI issued a report on my language proficiency [recovered from the STASI Museum, Berlin]. Ref: FAHEY

“On October 31, 1961, Fahey was in the eastern Prohibited Zone of Eiche College with the well traveled passenger car 27. Here it was proven, whereby ascertained, that he spoke good German and perfect Russian.”

While my language abilities surpassed all others in the Mission, I suffered a major weakness: free hand drawing. I could not draw an accurate picture of an important new military sighting. Fortunately, my memory returned to Glynco and its aftermath: I could photograph all intelligence targets. My intelligence

collection reports were enhanced by my photography. Analysts on the staff of the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Army Europe responded with considerable praise for all my contributions as illustrated in evaluation:

“RG 111-61 Usability-Outstanding. This the first information that we have received concerning existence of this site. Photographs confirm existence of site.. Any further information would be of value.”

“RG113-61 Usability-Contributive. Radio set is identified as R-104-MH. Photography of this type is of vast importance to the technical analyst. Continued effort should be continued to photograph the various radio sets in vehicles when possible.”



*Above: Check Point Charlie, Berlin*

No photographs were ever returned to me. I took over ten thousand a year on reconnaissance behind the Iron Curtain. However, during this assignment I did have an opportunity to photograph outside my Mission duties with my own camera. I fulfilled a U.S. Air Force intelligence request to find and bring back from East Germany Soviet chaff used to hide aircraft from enemy radar. The Air Force officer was so delighted with my delivery, he offered to grant any possible deed that the Air Force could provide personally to me. I expressed my wish to photograph the Berlin Wall from a helicopter at the lowest possible level. The small helicopter provided required photographing through plexiglass so I asked for a helicopter that I could hang into the open air. The pictures here were taken with a 35 mm Nikon camera and are the only low level altitude photographs of the Berlin Wall ever taken from the air.

During the second year, my last full year of active Naval service, I entered five photographs in the 1962



All Navy Photography Contest. Four won Honorable Mention Awards and one, taken in Berlin, won First Place Military Life color. I was awarded a Navy Championship watch and a Championship Certificate.

## ALL NAVY CHAMPIONSHIPS

THIS CERTIFICATE IS AWARDED TO

CDR JOHN A. FAHEY

IN RECOGNITION OF SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE

AS A PARTICIPATING MEMBER OF THE

1962 ALL-NAVY PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

FIRST PLACE

MILITARY LIFE

COLOR

A. S. SETYARD, JR., RADM, USN  
DEPUTY CHIEF OF NAVAL PERSONNEL

My two decade adventure with photography leading to an all Navy Photography Championship at the end of my Navy career was initiated at Naval Air Station Glynco in coastal Georgia where fellow Naval personnel and World War II home front residents supported and encouraged a young high school graduate to always do his best! Ω



## SHORT LINES



DARPA Selects Dynetics To Develop, Test “Gremlin” Air-Launched UAVs Aerospace America (4/19) reports that DARPA has selected a team led by Dynetics to develop and test elements of its “proposed concept for dispatching drones from C-130 transport planes” and recovering them using a “tethered capture device that resembles an aerial refueling boom.” By winning the “next phase of DARPA’s \$64 million Gremlin program,” they beat out rival General Atomics Aeronautical Systems. Team member Kratos Unmanned Aerial Systems is developing the clean-sheet UAS, which is powered by a Williams International turbojet, and will “build and test each drone.” The purposed-designed UAS itself will undergo flight testing ahead of the Gremlins demonstration. For those flights it will be ground-recoverable, by parachute and airbags, so that vehicles can be recovered, refurbished and reused, Keeter says. Sierra Nevada will provide the Gremlins’ navigation system, and Williams International of Michigan will provide their turbofan engines. The Dynetics team must demonstrate its “launch and recovery technique” with the UAVs and a C-130 by late 2019, with a goal of retrieving four Gremlins in less than 30 minutes. This final 21-month phase would be “worth \$38.6 million to the Dynetics team.” Gremlins is intended as an enabler for other Darpa programs that are developing technologies for swarms of cooperating unmanned aircraft. Several benefits are seen, including smaller airframes because the UAS do not need to carry extra fuel to launch from and return to an airbase. UAS with limited design lives that are selectively recoverable, but inexpensive enough to be attritable, will also reduce the cost per mission. The ability to launch and recover volleys of UAS will allow multiple high-fidelity sensors to be distributed over a large area and their data fused together. Ω

*Ed. comments: so much for the plan of using off the shelf UAVs. Illustrations continue to show two C-130s and nothing specifically states one plane will both launch and recover. The airplane would need considerable loiter endurance waiting around for the UAV missions to conclude - assuming return.*

US “Feverishly Working” To Complete \$100 Million UAV Base In Niger A front-page *New York Times* (4/22) analysis reports that the US Air Force is “feverishly working to complete a \$100 million” UAV base in Niger “that, when finished in the coming months, will be used to stalk or strike extremists deep into West and North Africa.” *The New York Times* (4/22, Subscription Publication) includes a video in its coverage that uses satellite imagery to detail the development of the base’s infrastructure. Ω

Elon Musk Proposes “Party Balloon,” “Bouncy House” For Recovering Rocket Upper Stage *TIME* (4/16) reports SpaceX CEO Elon Musk detailed plans that may “sound crazy” to “try to bring [a] rocket upper stage back from orbital velocity using a giant party balloon” and land it “on a bouncy house.” *Fortune* (4/16) reports that Musk “has said that the balloon would have a shape that allows it to withstand the supersonic descent back to Earth,” and he explained in a tweet that a balloon is “great for creating a giant object that retains its shape across all Mach regimes & drops ballistic coefficient by 2 orders of magnitude.” Ω

Former NASA Scientist To Lead National Air And Space Museum *The Washington Post* (4/4) reports a former NASA chief scientist “and a leader in the effort to send humans to Mars will make history as the first woman to lead the Smithsonian’s National Air and Space Museum [NASM].” Ellen Stofan “will become the John and Adrienne Mars Director of NASM starting April 30.” Ω

Boeing Considers Converting Used 777s Into Freighters *Bloomberg News* (4/4) reports that The Boeing Company is “considering whether to convert used 777 passenger jets into freighters, seeking to capitalize as booming e-commerce sales spur new demand for air freight worldwide.” Offering converted 777s would expand Boeing’s freighters options “but risk[s] cannibalizing sales of factory-fresh jets at more than double the price.” A “wave of retirements for Boeing’s older cargo haulers, such as the three-engine MD-11 flown by FedEx Corp. and United Parcel Service Inc., is expected to squeeze cargo capacity in coming years.” Ω

# Naval Airship Association Reunion

Please register now for the reunion using form and return envelope inserted

## READY ROOM

### 2018 NAVAL AIRSHIP ASSOCIATION REUNION and CONFERENCE

Held in conjunction with  
The Lighter-Than-Air-Society of Akron, Ohio  
September 26 - 30, 2018

#### Wednesday, September 26

Registration and Meet and Greet Reception at Holiday Inn Express and Suites, 898 Arlington Ridge East, Akron, Ohio

#### Thursday, September 27

Goodyear's Wingfoot Lake Hangar, Akron Fulton Airport, Lighter-Than-Air Society artifacts workshop

We will travel to Wingfoot Lake, site of one of the Navy's first Naval Air Stations and visit Goodyear's largest airship facilities where the last three Zeppelin NTs were assembled. We will observe the newest Goodyear NT airship (now called a "blimp NT" by the company), Wingfoot 3 and perhaps another NT which might also be in the area. From Wingfoot Lake, we will travel to the Akron Fulton airport for a special "behind the scenes" guided tour given by a life-long airport area resident and current FBO employee, Mr. Jim McGuire. We will stop for lunch near Wingfoot Lake. Lunch cost not included. We will conclude our day's visit to Akron with a visit to the Lighter-Than-Air Society workshop in downtown Akron.

#### Friday, September 28

MAPS Military Air Museum, Canton, Ohio, with option to visit Fanny Mae Factory or NFL Hall of Fame.

We will shuttle down the road a couple of miles to the Akron-Canton Airport where we will visit The MAPS Air Museum, an internationally known Museum of Aviation. MAPS serves as a center of aviation history for Northeast Ohio. The museum features educational displays of its collection of acquired artifacts, educational exhibits and historical acquired artifacts in its own library. The aircraft display features piston and jet fighters, bombers, trainers and helicopters. It also features the original car from the only turbine-powered airship ever operated, Goodyear's Spirit of Akron.



*MAPS is the home of 42 aircraft including the Goodyear GZ-22 Advanced Airship Control Car. To this day the the GZ-22 was the world's only turbine power airship.*

For those interested, we will offer the option of a visit to the Fanny Mae candy factory, also located at the Akron-Canton Airport. If anyone is interested, we will also offer a shuttle to the National Football League Hall of Fame, less than 5 minutes from the MAPS Museum.





# n Akron, Ohio ~ September 2018

and with this issue. Hotel reservations can be made by calling 330-644-5600.

## Saturday, September 29

Business Meeting, optional tours in Akron-area, Joint Banquet with Lighter-Than-Air Society.

Saturday at 9:00 AM, we will conduct our association's general business meeting at our hotel. We will offer additional Akron-area tour side trips (locations of tours will be posted at time of registrations) and sign ups and options will be facilitated at registration table. Joint Banquet will be hosted at the Greek Community, 129 Union Street (now incorporated in the University of Akron campus in downtown Akron).

Our program will run as follows:

-4:30 Shuttles depart for Banquet site.

-5:00 pm Social Hour. Bidding opens for Silent Auction, Displays by LTAS and private collectors will be available for viewing.

-6:00 pm Dinner.

-7:00 pm Silent Auction bidding closes. Formal program begins. The year in review. Awards, recognition of Theresa and the late Brian Rayner, who created and curated a fascinating museum of history and artifacts of the USS *Shenandoah* ZR-1 virtually at the site of where the U. S. Navy's first rigid airship came to a final rest. Our featured speaker for the evening will be Mr. Jerry Copay who will talk about his recent book, *The Wreck of the Naval Airship USS Shenandoah*, giving his unique perspective as a balloon pilot who has flown in the Noble County area where the airship crashed. Jerry will be selling and

autographing copies of his book at the banquet.

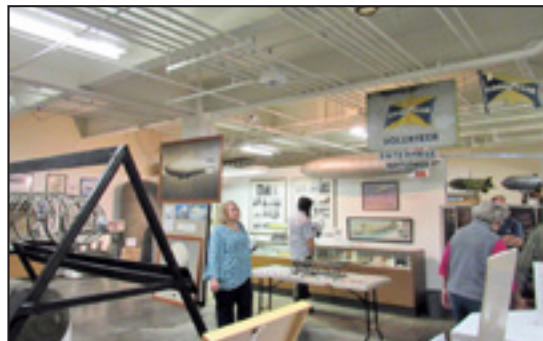
-8:30 pm Silent Auction results announced and check-out of purchases begin.

-9:00 pm Program ends.

We offer three dinner choices; a chicken dish, a beef dish, and a vegetarian dish. Great desserts included. The price is the same for all of them and includes shuttle service to and from the Greek Community downtown. Beer and wine by the glass are available at \$3.00 each. Tickets for beer and wine will be sold at the Banquet sign-in table.

## Sunday, September 30

As an option, we can attend a pancake breakfast at the MAPS Museum at the Akron-Canton Airport. Breakfast runs from 8:00 am until 1:00 pm. We will operate a shuttle bus for \$15.00 round trip from and to hotel. We can also take you to the airline terminals. Sign-up at registration desk.



*The workshop and display rooms of the Lighter-Than-Air Society in downtown Akron.*

*Photo by Keith Adams*



lin Air Dock at the Akron Municipal Airport will be on our tour schedule.

## HISTORY

### 100 years ago: WWI: US NAVY LTA in England

The infamous U-20's sinking of the British ocean liner *Lusitania* in 1915 off Ireland turned U.S. opinion against Germany, as amid the nearly 2000 victims, over 100 U.S. citizens were killed. To keep the U.S. out of the war, Germany agreed to limited U-boat warfare. However, as the stalemate of trench warfare dragged on through 1916, and with British mines blockading German ports, on 1 February 1917, Germany changed its policy, going to all out U-boat warfare. The Germans realized this would probably bring the U.S. into the war, but gambled the war would be won before the U.S. could train a large Army and send it over to Europe. Germany almost succeeded; in just the month of April 1917 over 500 ships were sunk. British Sea Lord Admiral Jellicoe worried Britain would be starved to submission by that November.

With nine U.S. ships sunk in British waters in February and March 1917, on 6 April 1917, the U.S. declared war on Germany. Over 800,000 US troops were shipped into the deep harbor at Liverpool, where many continued by train to Southampton, and then by a stream of smaller channel crossing boats to Le Harve, France. U.S. LTA men arrived in the British airship training base, RAS Cranwell, in December 1917. British records show these first likely included Baehr, Bailey, Barnes, Burnham, Goodspeed, Homer, Learned, Merrill, Norris, Piper, Pope, and Wolfe. There are also exactly 12 USN officers in the Cranwell photo below. Of these men, along with other Americans, we have only limited information.



Above: King Edward V and Queen Mary visit RNAS Cranwell during WWI.

The most produced airship of all time was the "SS" (Submarine Scout) series which first consisted of the fuselage and engine of one of either two tractor or one pusher airplanes, suspended from a 60,000 cu. ft. hydrogen filled envelope. By the time the Americans joined in, the greatly improved 70,000 cu ft 3-seat SSZ airships were in production. 77 were eventually completed. Its purpose-built boat-like car featured the noisy, oily engine in back, fitted with a radiator. When an engine quit, the mechanic climbed out of the car, squeezed suspension lines between his knees for stability, and pulled the prop over to restart in mid-air.







The U.S. Navy in all ordered twenty-four SSZ airships (car, above, imported into the US) in 1917. The first ten were to be constructed at Kingsnorth by June, 1918. However, “ZS 1” through “ZS 3” are known to have been constructed at Wormwood Scrubs. Apparently before the 3rd was finished, the order must have been cut, because only USN serial numbers A-1029 and A-1030 were assigned. What happened to these first two ships is unclear. A-1029 is shown as delivered to the New York Navy Yard on 1st March, 1918, then transferred to Akron for tests by Goodyear by 15th March. Shown as transferred to Naval Air Station Hampton Roads, Virginia, in June, 1918, its record stops. A-1030 supposedly trained Americans in France before showing to be at Cape May, NJ, on 2nd August, 1918, with no further info. We have many photos of SS ships in France, but none of SSZs.

Adding to the confusion are U.S. Navy Bureau of Construction and Repair records that suggest these two airships are actually SSZ-23 and -24, or that parts of -1029 figured into an airship designated SSZ-23.

British records show SSZ-23 was made by Frederick Sage Ltd, assembled at Wormwood Scrubs in November, 1917, and delivered to Cranwell in December. She first flew on 2nd January, 1918, and was then used to train U.S. Navy personnel who were to fly the ship operationally in the UK from Howden airship station starting 9 MAR 18. The first was Ensign Kiely, followed by Cadets (later ENS) Learned, Bailey, Burnham, Merrill, Goodspeed, Wolfe, Bailey, Baehr, Barnes, Piper, Homer, Norris and Pope. SSZ-23’s first war patrol was on 13th with Ensign Wolfe in command. SSZ-23 was then flown almost exclusively by some of the above named personnel and one Ensign Gardner. During her time in service in the UK she flew about 420 hours. Her longest flight was 25 hours 40 minutes on 29-30th May, 1918, with Ensign Barnes in command. This was a record flight for a Zero at the time.

On 13th August, 1918, SSZ-23 was flown from the mooring-out site at Lowthorpe to Howden and was packed up for shipment to the US. This SSZ-23 was allocated A-5563, and one record has her at Hampton Roads during the autumn of 1918.



Photos show SSZ-23 at Cape May alongside its contemporary, the B-ship. Its record card (see page 10) shows it stricken there as unfit envelope in 1920.

The original SSZ-24 also assembled at Wormwood Scrubs in November, 1917, but held in reserve at Howden as a spare for the U.S. Navy. On 16<sup>th</sup> August, while being rigged in the shed, spilt petrol caught fire and destroyed the ship, together with SSZ 38, SSZ 54 and rigid airship R 27. (Other records state the fire destroyed SSZ-23(!)

Seemingly rising from the ashes - though more likely replaced by another and given the same number, records show an SSZ-24, with possible shipment to France for training, was received at the New York Navy yard in March 1918, then shipped to Akron for tests. Its first flight was 6 April 1918; ripped, re-erected and flown 8 May 18. Supposedly shipped to Naval Air Station, Hampton Roads (Norfolk), Virginia, no record shows SSZ-24 having flown there, with one report that that an “O-SS” was destroyed by fire there in the summer of 1918. Author James Shock suggests there were actually four airships in total to yield the given flight record.

At any rate, following training at RAS Cranwell, most US crews were sent to RAS Howden where they flew at least 24 missions in one or the other of two SSZ airships. We will attempt to share all our team has learned about those American airshipmen, who served in England and France during the Great War.



This photo by London photographer F.N. Birkett dated 1 DEC 17 is captioned "A Detachment of Fifteen Aviators, United States Naval Reserve Flying Corps. August 20th, 1917, [enlisted as Seamen 2/c] they were enrolled in the Naval Aviation Detachment Corps, MIT, Cambridge Mass., at that time a ground school for Aviators. In October, 1917, they were sent to England, some of them going voluntarily to 'learn to fly 'blimps' (dirigibles)." What we know of them:

Back row standing left to right:

Eugene I. **Wolfe**, b. 8/20/1892, d.9/23/1945 NA(LTA) #1105 - Cranwell 1917 -- Howden 3/18 – Hon Discharge 23/7/21 as LTJG

Alfred **Gardner**, b.11/8/1896, NA(LTA) # 1093 - Cranwell 12/17 - Howden 3/18 - Paimboef  
Hon Discharge 2/4/21.

Ralph Hawthorne **Norris**, b. 3/29/1893, d. 4/29/1958  
NA(LTA) # 671; Akron; Cranwell 1/18 - Mullion 9/18 –  
Also HTA, Retired (Medical) 6/1/1937 as LCDR.

Max J. **Baehr** NA(LTA) # 1085, 7/8/17 Cranwell 12/17  
–Pulham 9/18 - Hon Discharge 30/9/21.

Donald Hersey **Merrill**, b.1/22/1896, Ser. # 35106,  
NA(LTA) #672 US Navy Attaché London – Mullion 3/18  
– Hon Discharge 9/30/1921 as LTJG.

John **Lawrence** ( R. L. ?) Piper Jr. (HTA?)

George Dana **Anderson**, b. 6/6/1895 Serial # 34997,  
NA(LTA) # 666 19/6/17 - Cranwell 12/17 – Ensign  
16/5/18 Longside 8/18 Hon Discharge 30/9/21 Recalled  
LT Oct. 1940, Retired 1 Jul 1957

Albert Adgate **Bailey**, Ser. # 1086 - Cranwell 1917 –  
Pembroke 3/18 - Hon Discharge 30/7/21.

Thomas R. **Punnett**, (HTA?)

Front row seated left to right:

Addison Center **Burnham Jr.**, b,10/28/1896, d. 4/11/1951  
Ser. #29775 NA(LTA) #1088 - Cranwell 12/17 –Polegate  
3/18 – Hon Discharge 24/6/21, LTJG

Thomas Everett **McCracken**, Cranwell 12/17 - East  
Fortune /18.

Phillip Jameson **Barnes**, (b.3/30/1894, d. 3/6/17/)  
Ser. # 35089 NA(LTA) # 670 -Cranwell 12/17 -- Howden  
3/18 – Pulham 9/18 - Hon Discharge 5/3/21

(Unknown British Officer)

Norman Jackson **Learned**, b.4/8/1896, Serial # 35207,  
NA(LTA) # 673 – Folkestone 3/18 - Hon Discharge  
1/8/21

Joseph Warren **Homer Jr.**, (b. 4/11/1897, d.11/9/1918  
(pneumonia) NA(LTA) #668 - Cranwell 12/17 –Polegate  
3/18



Harrison LaGrande (S?) **Goodspeed**, b. 8/23/1894, Ser. # 35096, NA(LTA) # 669 - Howden 3/18 - Hon Discharge 29/4/21 as LTJG

Additional USN Officers not in the picture serving in the United Kingdom during World War One include:

**Hamblen**, Warner Lee b.2/6/1894 d.2/5/1984 - East Fortune 1918. Granddaughters: Marian M. Hamlen b. July 25, 1953; Heidi J. Hamblen b. June 18, 1958

**Kieley**, Ralph (b. 5/22/1891, d. 4/15/1950) USNA, '15, Staff & Student in first Akron LTA class, NA(LTA) 1076 Retired 6/30/1939. Recalled as LCDR, XO USS DOBBIN, 10/29/1939, Retired as CAPT USN.

**Lansdowne**, Zachery NA #105 served at Wormwood, Howden and at Navy Hqtrs in Paris in 1918, died in breakup of the ZR-1

**Merrick** Mullion 1917 - Caldale 3/18

**Pope**, Loverne Arthur , b. 12/13/1894, d. Service # 39855 NA(LTA) #1032 Cranwell 1/18 - Howden 3/18 NA(HTA) in 1920, Retired as CAPT USN 1/7/1949

**Sinclair**, Frazer Vautin b. 11/30/1893, d. .6/14/1965 NA(LTA) #1313, Roehampton, Cranwell, Mullion 10/18 Hon Discharge 9/30/1921 Ensign

**Stoppel**, F.H. Pulham 9/18 -



Several of the US pilots were awarded Royal Aero Club certificates after qualifying. Sadly we know nothing about the many bluejackets (above) who trained and served 1917-1918 in the UK, and only a bit about those serving in France (previous issues of TNB.) British records show SSZ-23 served at the mooring out station of Lowthorpe. Literally cut from the coastal woods (as the one shown here), these stations offered rapid access to the nearby convoy routes. Little more than a few ground anchors, ballast bags, gasoline cans and hydrogen bottles, the men slept in tents. If the weather threatened a breakaway or damage in the trees, the envelope rip panel was pulled. Re-gluing it while the storm passed, the airship was re-inflated and rigged in the clearing.

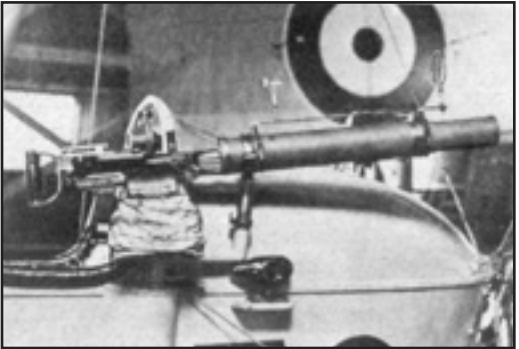




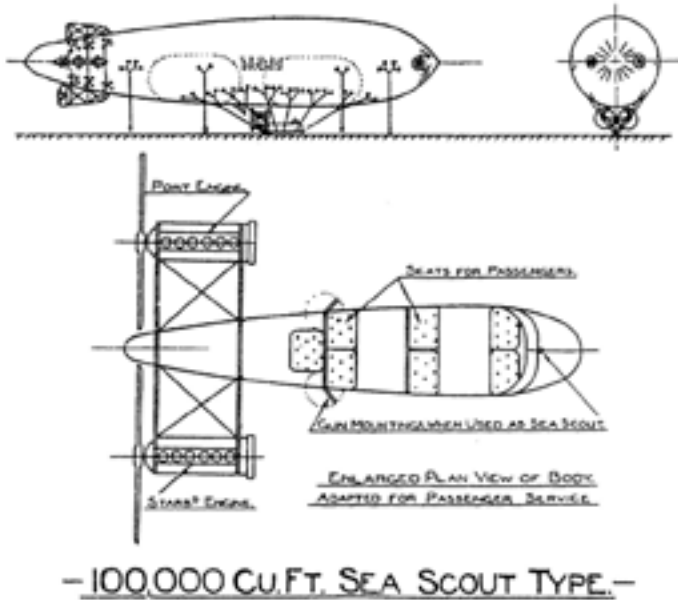
Cranwell, the base which trained most of the Americans.



Hydrogen stores at RNAS Polegate. The station was about the busiest airship base of the war. In 1918, its 200 men flew 11 airships 8,140 hours. At least a few Americans served there.





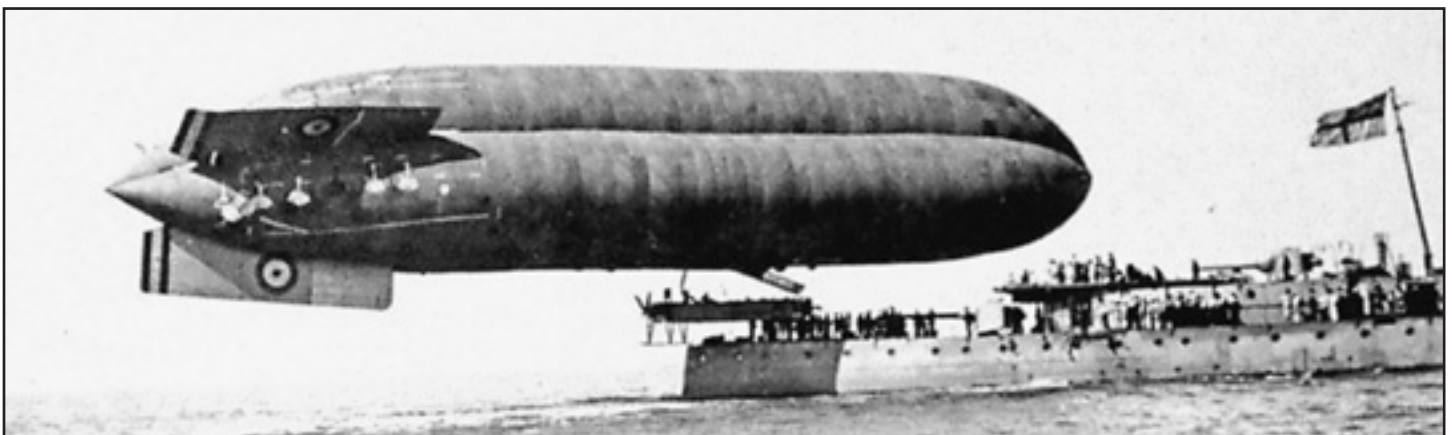


Enlarged twin engine “SST” models powered with two Sunbeam or Rolls-Royce engines of 75 horsepower each were also operated during the final months of the War. American’s experience with this airship lead to the U.S. Navy purchasing three, the SST-9, -11, and -12, and bringing them stateside in 1919. Immediately transferred to the Army, at least one was erected in Texas for Mexican border patrols (photo, above).

The U.S. Army ordered replacement envelopes from Goodyear and operated the SSTs until the forced use of helium made them impractical, with all three scrapped by 1924.

The British also built 35 larger Coastal Class airships, of 181,000 cu ft displacement, as well as the C\* (pronounced “C Star”) variant. Quickly produced by joining two airplane fuselages together back to back, the Coastals nonetheless went on to significant accomplishments during the war. For example, C-1 carried out underway refuelling and crew interchange with HMS *Canterbury*, 6 SEP 16, in the Thames Estuary (photo, bottom of page). Manoeuvring was conducted up to a speed of twenty-six knots. At twelve knots, the airship was brought to the deck for the crew interchange. It was felt rough seas could make deck landings hazardous, so crew interchange was also tried by means of a bosun’s chair with the airship holding at a height of 100 feet. In an exercise greatly underappreciated by convoy escort planners even decades later, sixty gallons of fuel was also fed up a hose to the airship via compressed air in a mere eight minutes.

It is certain Americans flew at least one Coastal airship on patrol. The SS airships, one of which had surpassed 10,000 feet of altitude while another had exceeded 24 hours on patrol, had been made by hanging an airplane fuselage under a hydrogen envelope. SS ships had given a visiting American inspiration that lead to the American B-type airship. Likewise, the greater performance of the Coastals certainly motivated the Americans to produce their own larger, twin-engine designs, the “C” and “D” types. It does not appear that the Americans pursued the acquisition of any Coastals or C\* airships during or after the War.



Airship service in the north off Scotland was hazardous. RNAS Caldale, in the Orkney Islands, (north of Scotland) was closed after SS-2 and SS-4 were lost in strong winds over the North Sea. RNAS Longside took over; it too lost an airship over the North Sea in July 1918. The much larger North Sea airship, originally designed as a stopgap while rigids were developed, took to the challenge.

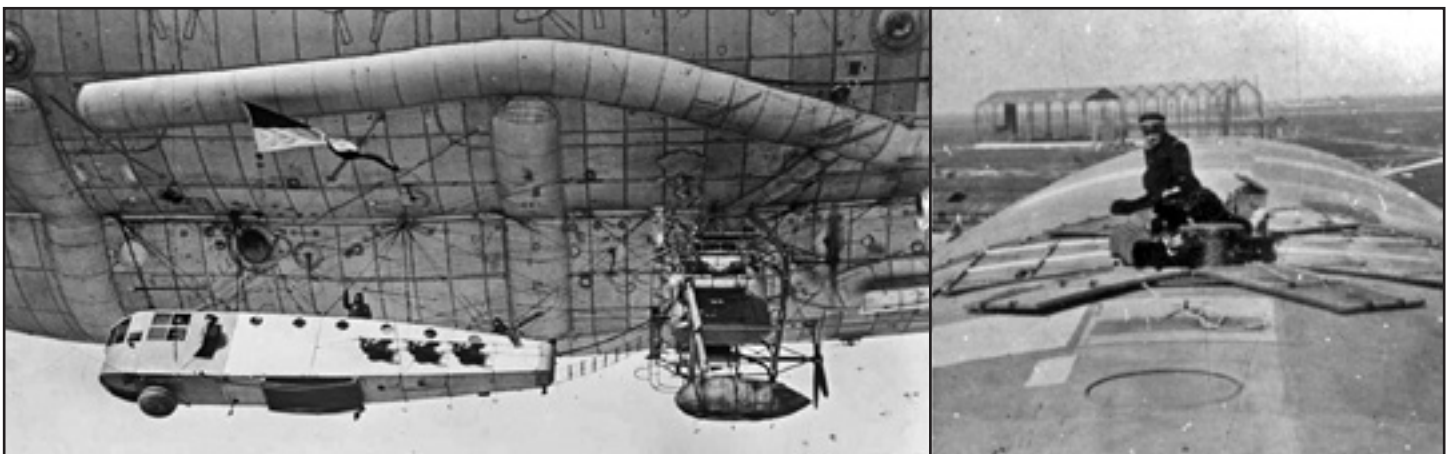
The 262 foot-long North Sea Class airships were buoyed by 360,000 cu ft of hydrogen. A crew of 10 manned a 35 foot-long machine-gun equipped main car, the first to be housed over against the bitter conditions. (The crew was: 2 wireless men, 2 engineers, 2 gunners, 2 coxswains, and 2 commanding officers; 5 men on duty, 5 off – somewhat similar to a WWII US Navy K-ship.) Two 250 hp 6- cylinder engines were mounted in a separate rear car accessible via rope ladder (later a catwalk). Gasoline tanks were originally mounted inside the hydrogen envelope. The NS's could carry more 230 pound bombs than the C's; note the 3 mounted per side, seen aft in the photo below. The photo also shows a vertical man-shaft through the envelope via a rope ladder inside which gave access to the top-mounted machine gun. (No photos are known to exist, but its trapdoor/floor and ring mount would have been similar to the French AT-type seen in the adjacent photo below.) Like the French ATs and British C's, the NS adopted the Spaniard Leonardo Torres Quevedo's tri-lobed envelope design.

The North Sea's long list of records and accomplishments impressed U.S. Navy men who trained in NS's in 1919 at RNAS Longside, East Fortune, and Howden. The NS-14 appears to be the one purchased by and brought to the U.S. (see page 10), however the Navy, then preoccupied by rigids, eventually gave it to the Army, who never gambled a king's ransom of helium to test its deteriorating envelope.



NS-7 touches down on HMS *Furious*, 7 July 1919

Also of note, kite balloons appear to have been increasingly favored by the British as the war continued. (See page 30) By War's end over 200 British vessels had been outfitted with winches and other equipment to handle Kite Balloons. The Kite Balloon station at Bershaven, County Cork, Ireland, opened 21 May 1918, was largely staffed by US Navy balloonists, and may have supplied US Navy ships with kite balloon services. Like the US Army's single known observation balloon fatality - LT Cleo Ross, whose burning envelope fell on his parachute - the Navy seems to have lost only one balloonist, Ensign Charles Reed. Kite-ballooning from HMS *Springbok*, he drowned 26 August 1918 off Bershaven. Ω





## “Brooklyn’s” Scrapbook

A donation of a photo scrapbook was made to a previous NAA administration and has since awaited resources to be properly shared. Sadly, no background information was included, so what we offer here is based on extrapolation from the few captions and the known historical record.



We assume the scrapbook was assembled by Peter ‘Brooklyn’ Zawatsky, an LTA sailor who served in Brazil. Peter and his shipmates are often the subject of the photos, since obviously mugging for a camera was not nearly as frowned upon as documenting wartime operations and/or equipment. Though these men are likely no longer with us, their photos can tell us a lot about airship operations in the remote areas of the South American continent.



This officer is identified as “Winnich.” Behind him, K-106 is undergoing some on-mast engine work via the squadron’s attached work platform. Judging from the catch bucket and the removed cowlings, perhaps it was a minor overhaul.



The air base was not only shared with HTA, but appears to have been a way station for Brazilian airliners. These German JU-52s, if not purchased from Deutschland before the war, were likely commandeered when hostilities began.



Peter thought it worth noting this piece of ground support equipment obviously handy for compacting runways and landing mat areas. A number of crashed airplanes are seen.





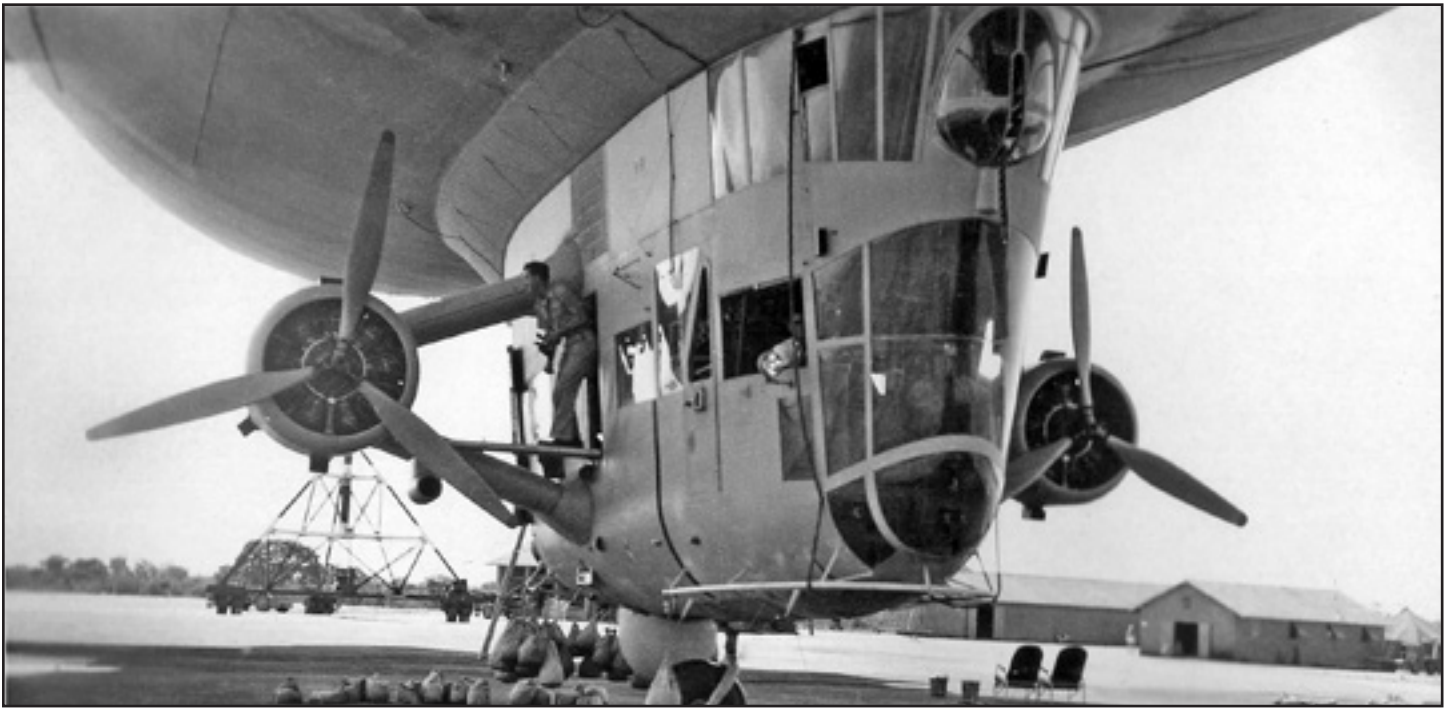
This ready-for-action CPO is identified as “Harper.” Not all the water pools are from tropical rainstorms; sometimes pressure height was mast elevation, with the fire brigade having to cool the masted bags to prevent excessive superheat from blowing off helium. Peter included this shot of the K-bottle shack, with even wartime resources strained to keep up to meet the demand for Texas helium. Brazilian vet Hepburn Walker, Jr. remembered “they issued helium like from a medicine dropper.”



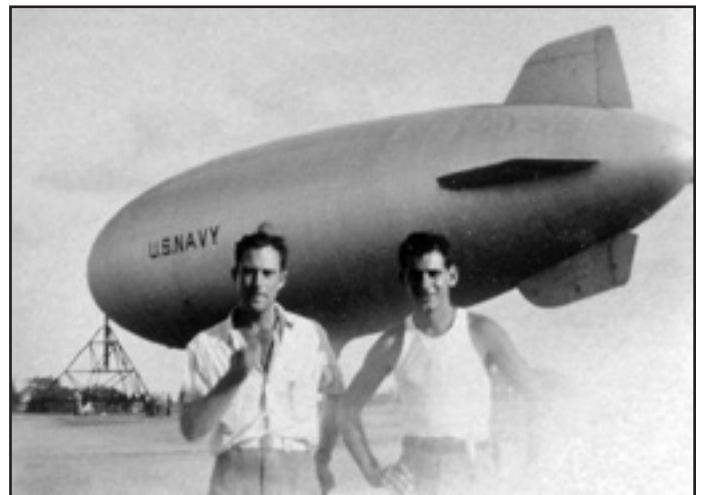
Surely the most exciting thing that happened at the station during hostilities was when the sailors suddenly found themselves in charge of some prisoners of war. Histories note that German blockade runner merchantmen had been sunk in the Atlantic and the survivors left to fend for themselves (not unlike U-boat victims). Blimps are known to have located some of the survivors and arranged for their rescue; how this curious group passed by Peter’s camera is not documented. Note the armed sailor guards at the ready, also as the foreigners are loaded into a PBV.







War consists mainly of waiting. A crewman uses the starboard engine service door while late the 1943 configured K-98 swings at her mast Below, Pete in a couple more “selfies”... wonder what the mobile crane was used for?



Light must have leaked into the camera here but one man is i.d.'ed as “Joe Needleman.” Below, Pete and his shipmates make their best “Big Three at Yalta” pose. Guys, we thank you for your service – and sharing. Ω

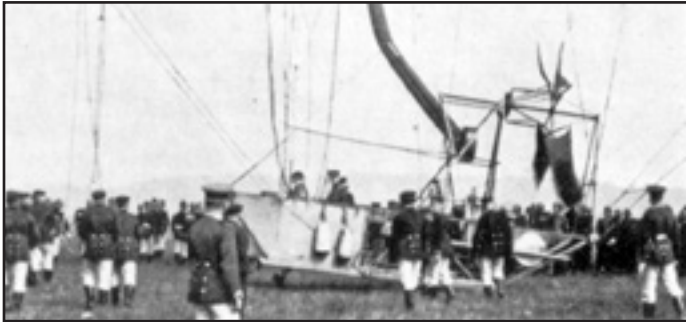


## The Historians' Letters (Part XI)

By Roy Schickedanz

July 30, 1969 from Dr. Doug Robinson:

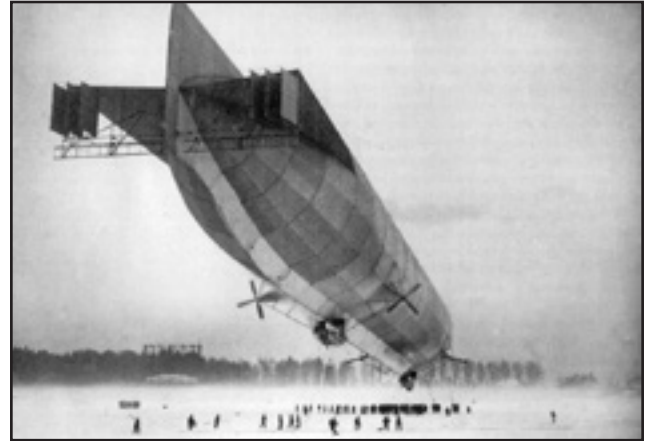
Our last letter crossed, and I have your money order for \$4.00. Thank you. Am glad that Zeppelin drawings are satisfactory. I haven't seen anything quite like them anywhere, though the Zeppelin Museum has recently been selling drawings of sorts; I have not asked about the WWI ones, and their "*Hindenburg*" drawing was a copy of one I already knew from the V.D.I. Magazine for March, 1936.



As for WWI German non-rigids, I would like to refer to *Cross & Cockade*, vol. 5, No 2, Summer, 1964, with an article on the German wartime non rigids written at the request of Tim Miller, who also did British and French non-rigids. My article is weighted in the direction of the German Navy non-rigids, as the Navy is always my chief interest, and there are good photos of PL 25, PL 26, PL 27, and M IV, with considerable data on the last two big Parsevals, some of which has not before been published. The M IV was flown in the Baltic for local reconnaissance in the western Baltic in the vicinity of her base at Kiel; PL 25 was flown in the eastern North Sea for reconnaissance; PL 26 and PL 27 were never accepted by the German Navy. The German Army accepted only five Parsevals, PL 2 [P I] of 4000 cbm. In 1909; PL3 [P II] of 6600 cbm. In 1909; PL 8 [Ersatz] of 8000 cbm. In 1910; PL 11 [P III] of 10,000 cbm. In 1911; and PL 16 [P IV] of 10,000 cbm. In 1913. The latter was stationed for a time early on the Eastern Front and made two attempts to raid Warsaw from Thorn, then was withdrawn for training. None of the Army M ships made any wartime flights.

As for Metzinger, I have some good news for you in that I have Photostat copy of the Hamburger *Fremdenblatt* for Sept. 11, 1913, covering the L 1 disaster and giving brief obituaries of the officers lost in her. Metzinger's obituary is the only source I have for information you desire and reads as follows in translation: "Korvettenkapitan Metzinger entered the

Navy on April 16, 1894. He became Leutnant zur See he was at first attached to the ships' trials command and in 1904 transferred to torpedo experimental command in Kiel; in 1905 he joined the battleship "Elaass," and in 1906 the battleship "Preussen." In 1909 and 1910 he was adjutant of the Main Dockyard Supervisor in Kiel and in 1911 became First Officer in "Hansa". From this post he came in 1912 to the newly created Section for Aviation in the Dockyard Department of the Imperial Admiralty."



The Germany Army gave up Zeppelins because of their very low utility and effectiveness in the bombing role, and their vulnerability as demonstrated by the loss of SL 11 over London in September 1916. Previously, their bombing performances has been very poor, with many ships making not even one combat flight per month due to bad weather, shed sitting, etc. HTA bombers were coming along and the Army, which had neither a Scheer nor a Strasser, was glad to make the switch.



We had the Goodyear blimp "Mayflower" (N 1A) here for nearly a week recently; I took several photos of her airborne from my Cessna, which should be back in a day or two. She aroused much interest in town, with articles reminiscing about the old days when they were more numerous.

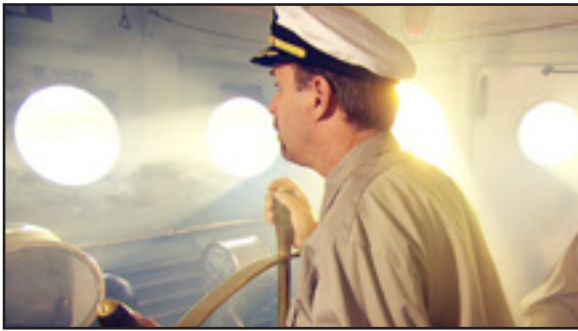
Thanks for the items about the Non-Rigid in Combat. I'll look them over with care. Ω



## MEDIA WATCH

### **National Geographic TV: Hitler's Secret Attack on America also Hell Below: Hitler's Revenge**

Commentary by R G Van Treuren



This cable channel is known for some very high quality, big-budget TV shows, which are replayed often so no one need miss one. These titles, made in previous years, were recently seen by this reviewer. We wondered what secret the first was referring to; turns out this “secrecy” was all on the U.S. side. The U-boats were doing their very best “shock and awe” greeting the American entry into the Atlantic war with what their leadership called “Roll on the Kettle Drums” - usually, as in these shows, sloppily translated as “Operation Drumbeat.” The first show concentrated mainly on Hatteras, with a local NC University joining NOAA in documenting wrecks using ROVs and color sonar. The second focused mostly on U-123.

In the highly competitive world of TV, there is little time to search for or purchase rights to correct, authentic footage, and high quality animation to fit today's 16:9 format is expensive. So in the flashbacks, we sometimes see fuzzy clips of whatever - German airplanes passing for American, WWI footage for WWII, and the like. As is commonplace with re-creations of late, we sometimes see goofy costumes passing off as uniforms. Would there be some mention or glimpse of LTA? Sorry, as usual there was movie footage *taken from* blimps, but no mention of LTA in the U-boat war. We are hooked into sticking through the commercial breaks via manufactured crisis - will they find the wreck before the time runs out, will the boat be rammed, and the like.

When focusing on the U-701, the first show's tone is one of new discovery, while in reality U-701 has been visited many times and little is not known about its case. The show missed some opportunities visited earlier in a PBS-style documentary in which our own past NAA President John Fahey participated. Those producers went to Germany to interview Horst Degen,



the U-701's Captain. In his interview, he recalled losing consciousness after days stranded in the water. Degen specifically mentioned that when he came to, “the blimp was there...”

The second show had no veteran interviews at all. To their credit, the first show's producers looked up Horst Degen's son, but then little of his interview was used. Ignored were the important details: Owing to a disabled air cleaner, U-701 had to periodically surface in daylight, run the diesels and suck fresh air into the boat. This routine worked until July 7th when an aircraft somewhat obscured by clouds was spotted too late. The Army history reads, “Lt Kane's patrol in A-29 no. 392 (call letters ZF9) from 396 Bombron of Bomgr 41 left Cherry Point at 1015ewt 7 JUL 42 flying reconnaissance patrol... at 1412 patrol flying at 1500 feet in low broken clouds sighted at 5 miles off port wing a U-boat on surface with decks awash... At 1414 attack made directly along course of U-boat which had submerged between 15 and 30 seconds before depth charges were released. 3 MK 17 dc's set for 25 feet were released in train... At 1424 airplane radio operator... sent message 'sub sunk position 393376.' ” Radio traffic and static prevented the message from being understood; out of gas, the bomber had to depart. The exact location of the valuable boat and its survivors was lost. Next day a massive search was instituted, but no one saw anything.

About noon on July 9th, George S. Middleton and his ZP-14 crew in K-8 found seven life-jacketed survivors about 110 miles off shore. Lowering a raft and provisions, they dropped smoke flares and hovered over the spot. Homing in on K-8 and landing his PH-2 seaplane in the choppy water guided by the smoke floats, CG pilot LCDR Richard L. Burke, CO of the CG Air Station Elizabeth City, got the DFC for picking up the few remaining survivors. Middleton and the blimp crew, initially finding and marking the survivors but without even the simple rescue harness and pulley that would come two years later, got nothing.

If that seems a bit unfair - indeed, all too typical of LTA's treatment - another story in print media this quarter reminds us of something not only left out of the TV show, but generally under-appreciated. Landing a flying boat in the open ocean was far from routine; in fact, the would-be rescuers would all too often wind up joining the victims struggling in the water. (The Coast Guard's eventual abandonment of even the larger, more sophisticated 1950s flying boats was for that very reason.)

The Spring issue of FLY-BY - newsletter of NMNA and its Foundation - carries the story of LT Frank Fisler. A few weeks after Pearl Harbor, Fisler and his PB5-5 crew landed in heavy seas to rescue B-17 survivors. Then, "... with many popped rivets, the crew began jamming pencils and rags into the holes..." but were successful in collecting the victims and again getting airborne. Fisler and AMM1/C Wagoner were awarded the Navy Cross and their shipmates were also awarded medals. This was the first of many stories of brave "Dumbo" and other flying boat's crews rescuing stranded fliers in WWII.

Not unlike the TV shows' limited by time and budget, histories generally de-emphasize how many times flying boats were lost trying to land or take off in the open ocean; how many well-meaning crews were lost in the process; or how many commanders were found negligent if they themselves were later rescued. Not that sheltered water was a perfect harbor, with many - in one case, a entire squadron at once - pounded to a pulp by stormy waves while at anchor. That's not to mention the reputation many of these "flying fuel tank" designs had for simply exploding and leaving no traces - like the famous Martin boat sent out to look for the "lost squadron" of Avengers, which was missing in the Bermuda Triangle.



Alighting an airship on open ocean swells is not necessarily a great idea either, though several early designs were constructed with boat-like hulls that demonstrated it was practical in fairly calm water, as the photo of the J-4 picking up a mail bag shows. The first hydrogen-filled B-ships, when retrofitted with floats replacing skids on what was essentially a stretched "Jenny" fuselage, were saved after engine failure by daytime EQ and simply bobbing on the water at night awaiting a tow. It's not rocket science to imagine modern airships being equipped with emergency floatation bags, similar to today's helicopters designed with calm water landings in mind. Besides, a B-ship demonstrated the ability to lower a ladder to rescue a stranded pilot almost 100 years ago.

So, by generally ignoring LTA, the mainstream misses the point that no deadly flying boat water landings need necessarily have been risked. In a pre-WWII dramatic exercise, not only the ladder method, and raft method (photo) but even a stretcher "patient" was recovered by the oldest airship in the inventory - originally designed back in WWI, and flying since 1927.

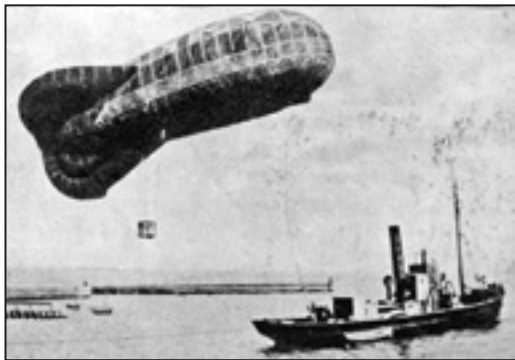


Unlike the 1919 B-ship towed underwater microphone that remained classified until forgotten, this "rescue" demo garnered a lot of media attention - in newsreels and in print media. Likely not initiated (or possibly even encouraged) by senior leadership, the hardware and the technique developed to employ it did not come through the military-industrial complex of the day. Rather than a proposal request, competitive bids, etc., the entire evolution was designed and built by innovative officers, men and skilled civilian workers at Lakehurst. It will likely take private imitative to see its likes again. Ω



The May 2018 Milton Keynes Aviation Society Newsletter ran this story, first published in The Times on 8-6-1918:

“The longer hours of daylight have enabled our sea planes, airships, and kite balloons materially to assist our surface craft in defending merchant vessels and in hunting out the U-boat. The summer conditions favour the submarine hunters, whose incessant searching of the seas forces the German craft to seek deeper waters in the hope of escaping their vigilance.



Particularly good work was performed recently by an observation balloon which was being towed by one of his Majesty's ships through a sector of home waters. The patrol was started at daybreak and the balloon had not gone far before the observer sighted something which indicated the presence of a submarine. Depth charges were dropped, which caused the submarine to change its position. An hour later, a submarine was seen by the balloon to break surface a considerable distance away and to begin shelling a small sailing vessel. The balloon was towed rapidly to the spot. In the meantime, the submarine was forced by the towing vessel to cease firing and to submerge. Aided by the balloon the towing ship was able to get over the track of the U-boat, and to drop nine depth charges, as the result of which large quantities of oil rose to the surface and gradually spread to an area of roughly a mile. One of our airships, also on an early morning reconnaissance, sighted a U-boat engaged in attacking a merchantman. Putting on full speed, the airship arrived on the spot just after the submarine had submerged, but the German had not got deep enough to be out of the vision of the airship crew. A bomb dropped about three feet astern on the U-boat's port evidently gave her a bad shaking, for streaks of oil rose to the surface and the submarine was seen to alter her course to starboard. The airship manoeuvred for position and with a second bomb scored a direct hit on the stern of the submarine, causing it to lift towards the surface and roll as though about to turn turtle. More oil rose and the submarine disappeared from the airship's view.” Ω

The [www.airshiphistory.com](http://www.airshiphistory.com) webmaster e-mailed, “I was watching “Pawn Stars” last night and they bought a piece of the super structure of the crashed Zeppelin *Shenandoah* for \$300 dollars with certification. You might want to call them, they may still have it if interested. According to site, they still have it, asking \$750, but you can probably talk them down.”

<https://gspawn.com/shenandoah-wreckage/> Ω

The June issue of AOPA PILOT features “A Balloonist for Aviation,” by Jordon Long. He laments the fact that, with hot air ballooning on the decline, it is increasingly difficult to find certificated hot air balloon repair stations and qualified instructors. Long states it is even harder to find designated pilot examiners, with the added complication the student cannot fly his craft to the DPE, who is typically a state or two away. In a scenario all too familiar to airshipmen and their 13-passenger toll of the LZ-129, Long regrets the fact the infamous July 2016 hot-air balloon accident that took the lives of sixteen people “...will define ballooning for an untold number of people, discouraging them from experiencing lighter-than-air flight and cutting off interested student pilots.” Long is not optimistic for the future health of general aviation and HAB in particular, but vows to do what he can to educate new students and promote the technology. Ed. believes NAA members can empathize. Ω

July's AIR & SPACE carries a short story of our own Curt Westergard's AirPhotosLIVE.com's employment to use his camera-carrying balloons to help NASA's Jim



Green determine how far Civil War balloonists could see across the Potomac River. Result: Union observers could have seen at least three miles into Virginia. Ω

The Spring FOUNDATION noted the 100th anniversary of the commissioning of NAS Paimboeuf, France, the only American LTA station finished before War's end. The photo spread included three previously unpublished photos of the station including one showing the American sailors playing football. Ed. send congrats. Ω

## **BLACK BLIMP**

Warren E. Savant, 98, passed 17 FEB 18. In 1940, he graduated from LSU and in the summer of 1941 he enlisted in the Navy. Warren served as a Navy blimp pilot on anti-submarine patrol and escorted ship convoys in the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico from Norfolk to Brazil. Postwar he received an M.S. degree in agricultural economics from LSU. Building a fresh citrus juice plant in New Orleans, then moved to Lakeland, FL in 1953 to continue in the citrus business. Warren is survived by his wife, Elsie Recker Savant; daughter, Cathy Savant Wilson; sons, Craig and David; grand- and great grandchildren. Ω



Alan Gross, better known to many as “Airship Al”, passed away on April 29, 2018 in Flushing NY from complications due to lung failure. At the age of 13, Alan became infected with a bug that would drive him for the rest of his life. He fell under the spell of airships after watching them from his upper apartment window as two Goodyear airships operated from the then Flushing Airport just below and over one block. The Columbia II N4A and Mayflower VI N2A, flew passengers and exposé flights over the New York’s World’s Fair in those years.



As can be seen in the photo on page 4 of this issue, Alan’s enthusiasm for the airship would almost totally consume his life. Along with childhood friend and fellow resident of that apartment building in Flushing, Lou Pearlman, Alan and Lou would have their mothers sew onto their white shirts, Goodyear airship patches that the airship crews would give them. Except when school started again, Alan and Lou were at the airship’s operational masts almost daily, with the pilots and crew adopting them into the operations as “Honorary Jr. Field Wage crewmen”. With delivery of cookies and cakes almost daily, Alan and Lou became an intricate part of the two Goodyear airships assigned for the two years, in 1964 and 1965, to the New York’s World’s Fair.

Later, Lou Pearlman would create an airship operations company and would encourage Alan to help out in crew positions with different airship clients. Pearlman convinced Theodor Wullunkemper to bring a WDL airship to the U.S. with Pearlman’s company as the operator and marketing

representative. Clients such as McDonalds, Fuji, and MetLife all signed on as clients and Alan’s dreams of working as an airship crewman came true. Once the Gulf Oil airship met its demise, so did Pearlman’s company and Alan funneled his energy into curating his one-of-a-kind airship mementos and artifacts collection. With the help of the internet, Alan created the Airship Al’s Museum and shared his airship experiences and collection with many enthusiasts around the world.

Like many New Yorkers, the tragedy of 911 hit Alan hard, both emotionally and physically. Alan could see the Twin Towers being destroyed from his apartment building in Flushing and knew some friends and associates were perishing before his eyes. Airships over New York City would become rare over the next few years, but Alan would pursue his dream of promoting a “Blimp Port” located in the Tri-State area of New York to try to entice airship operations to come to the New York area as the did in his youth. Alan’s presentations about his “Blimp Port” would bring him to the attention of the likes of Rudy Giuliani and Donald Trump, who all listened but never acted on Alan’s dream.

In recent year’s, Alan developed a blood disorder and the side effects of the medication he took scarred his lungs and complications arose. Alan knew his case was serious and chose to divest himself of his significant airship collection. He offered a great deal of his artifacts to the University of Akron and was very pleased that they were interested in assuming curatorial responsibility for it. In the Spring of 2018, the first of two shipments arrived at the U of A. Alan received a lot of nice recognition in the Cleveland-Akron media for his contributions and was getting ready to send the second shipment of 25 cartons to Akron, when his health failed him and Alan was gone. Fortunately, life long friends Susan Ornstine and Chris Jizi saw to it that Alan’s wish to get the remaining part of the “Airship Al Museum” to Akron, came about in May of 2018. Alan left us too soon and we are sure going to miss his infectious optimism and always good natured outlook on life.

Prepared by Noon Balloon Publisher David Smith with much appreciated input from Chris Jizi. Ω

## **READY ROOM**

- Naval Airship Association Reunion Akron, Ohio September 2018 (see centerspread)
- DGLR Lighter-Than-Air Workshop XV re-planned November, 3rd - 5th, 2018





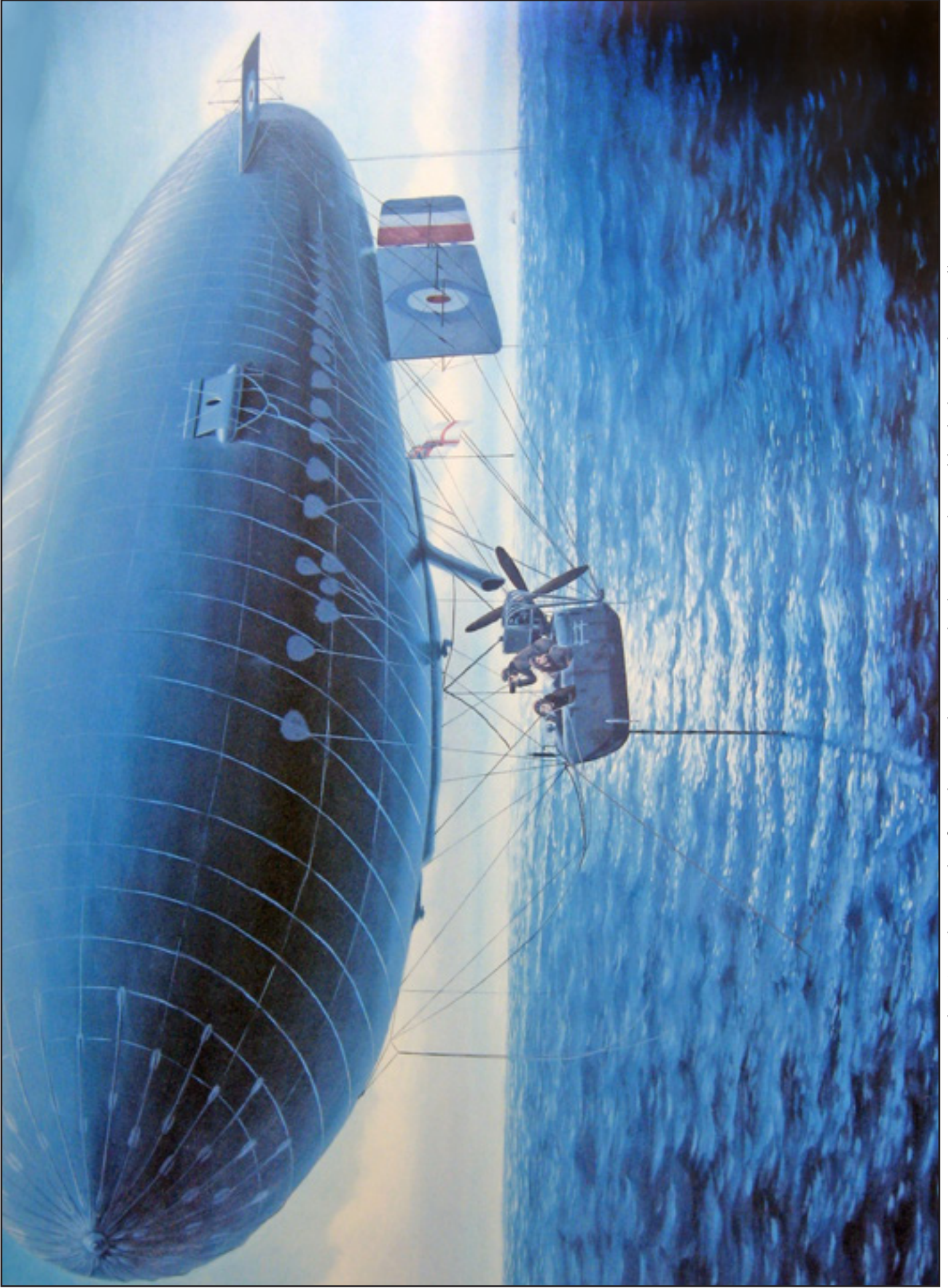


From the 2018 Friedrichshafen Air and Trade Show: If you weren't lucky enough to snag a ride on the Zep NT (continuing to carry the logo of partner Cat) then you could sip a Zeppelin Beer while walking the trade floor. Our thanks to UK friends Andy Sellars and Andy McKee for these photos.

Below: Artist's conception of the envisioned Canadian Airship Base, part of the proposal by Buoyant Aircraft Systems International, Inc. As we go to press, the CanInfra Challenge announced "ELECTRIC AIRSHIP TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM" won the People's Choice Award.







A British SS-Z airship searches for U-boats in this unaccredited painting donated by the late Hepburn Walker, Jr.