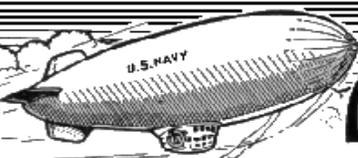


THE AIRSHIP



Navy Lakehurst Historical Society P.O. Box 328 Lakehurst, NJ 08733

<http://www.nlhs.com>

June 2016

Breakfast Membership Drive Meeting, Sat. June 18, 2016

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How True

When the President calls 911, the aircraft carriers answer!

When the aircraft carriers call 911, Lakehurst answers!

View from the Top Presidents Message

Our 2nd Membership Drive meeting will be held on Saturday, June 18, 2016 at 8:30 AM at the Lakehurst Diner, Rt. 70 & Rt. 547. All members are invited to attend and are urged to bring a potential new member as a guest. Breakfast is on NLHS. Hopefully we will be able to gain several new members. Please return the "Yes I will attend with a guest" attendance coupon printed in this newsletter. We need a head count for the restaurant.

Officers Meeting

Our next Officers & Trustees meeting will be Saturday, June 18, 2016. This will be a short meeting right after the Breakfast Meeting.

Volunteer Hours

Volunteer hours for March, April and May for the NLHC and Ready Room, tours, work projects and outside speaking engagements totaled over 1150 hours. Many thanks to our volunteers for your support: Don Adams, Carl Larsen, Rick Zitarosa, Frank Dennis, Nick Rakoncza, Ron Montgomery, Charlie Bish, Ron Stryshak, Frank Smith, Kevin Mulligan, Pete Lovering, Pete Murphy, Kevin Pace, Howie Sjursen, Elizabeth Rossell, Peter Larkin, Susan K. Koller, Roger Jordan, Jim Morano, Robert Hull, Sharon Adams, Diane Chierchie and Carl Jablonski.

Tours

Our tours continue to be a very popular attraction. Our tours will be given every Wednesday and every 2nd and 4th Saturday of the month from April through October from

1	<u>President's Message</u>
1	<u>Officers Meeting</u>
1	<u>Volunteer Hours</u>
1	<u>How True</u>
1	<u>Tours</u>
1	<u>Battle of Midway</u>
2	<u>Change of Command</u>
2	<u>Hangar One 95th Anniv</u>
2	<u>Save the Date</u>
2	<u>Navy Ball</u>
2	<u>Welcome Aboard</u>
2	<u>Hindenburg Ceremony</u>
3	<u>Air Show</u>
3	<u>Taps</u>
3	<u>1st Female Infantry Officer</u>
3	<u>80 yrs Ago this Spring</u>
4	<u>Airship MZ-3A Update</u>
5	<u>1st Woman to lead Combat</u>
	<u>Command</u>
5	<u>Blimp Grounded for Good</u>
5	<u>Calendar of Events</u>
6	<u>Midway Coupon</u>
6	<u>Breakfast Coupon</u>
7	<u>Hangar One Anniv. Coupon</u>

10 am to 1 pm. Don Adams, Nick Rakoncza, Frank Dennis, Carl Larsen, Ron Montgomery, Carl Jablonski, Kevin Mulligan, Elizabeth Rossell, Susan K. Koller and Rick Zitarosa continue to serve as tour guides.

Battle of Midway Friday - June 3, 2016

The Annual Battle of Midway Observance is scheduled for Friday, Jun 3, 2016 at 11:30 AM at Joint Base Lakehurst in Hangar One. Our guest speaker will be Mr. John Dorrity, Ocean County Director of Veteran Services. All members are invited. Please fill out attendance coupon in the newsletter.

Change of Command USCG

On Friday, June 17, 2016, Lt. Ken Sauerbrunn, CO of our sponsored USCG Cutter the "Sturgeon Bay" will be relieved by Lt. Forster. The ceremony will be at 2 PM at the Coast Guard Base, Slip 3, Port Terminal Blvd., Bayonne, NJ (Old Former MOTBY Facility). All members are invited to attend.

Hangar One 95th Anniversary

NLHS will observe the 95th Anniversary of Hangar One on Tuesday, June 21, 2016 at 11 am at Joint Base Lakehurst. Our guest speakers will be Capt. Christopher Bergen, USN, Dep. Cdr. JB M-D-L and CO Naval Support Activity JB Lakehurst and NLHS VP & Historian Rick Zitarosa. NLHS members are invited to attend. Please fill out the attendance form printed in this newsletter. Light refreshments will be served.

Save the Date

Our Annual NLHS Picnic will be held on Saturday, Aug 20, 2016 at Joint Base Lakehurst from 12 noon to 4 PM. More info in the next newsletter.

Navy Ball

This years Navy Ball will be on Friday, Oct 7, 2016 at Caesars Atlantic City. (6 PM cocktails). More info in next newsletter.

Welcome Aboard

NLHS cordially welcomes aboard CDR Bob Williams, USN, XO Naval Support Activity Joint Base Lakehurst. A bio of CDR Williams will appear in our next newsletter.

Hindenburg 79th Anniversary May 6, 2016 *Hindenburg still casts shadow over Shore*

Seventy-nine years after the Hindenburg ignited into an inferno

and crashed in Lakehurst, that moment in history continues to haunt those who gather each year to commemorate the anniversary.

On Friday night, the Navy Lakehurst Historical Society held its annual memorial service to the victims of the May 6, 1937 disaster. As the wind howled and rain fell for most of the day, organizers decided to move the ceremony inside the immense structure of historic Hangar No. 1 for only the second time in almost 30 years. The ceremony is normally staged at the crash site itself, where there is a modest marker on the ground in the shape of the airship's control car.

The 36 people who died in the crash of that giant Zeppelin were Germans, Americans and a Swede, but after all these years there remains an emotional awkwardness in remembering the destruction of an airship that was after all a Nazi propaganda tool, complete with the swastika-emblazoned black, white and red flags of the Third Reich draped over its tail.

Because of that awkwardness, the occasion is supplemented as an opportunity to also pay tribute to the men and women of the U.S. armed forces who have perished during the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Towards the end of the service, a soldier, a sailor, a Marine and a Coast Guardsman all take solemn turns laying a wreath for their fallen comrades.

"We do not honor an airship," said Navy Capt. Christopher Bergen, commander of Naval Support Activity at Lakehurst and deputy commander of Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, who addressed the small crowd. For security reasons, those who wish to attend must be invited. "But rather we honor the heroism of those who lost their lives in that disaster; those who took great risk and gave the final measure on that fateful night 79 years ago."

Rick Zitarosa, vice president of the Navy Lakehurst Historical Society, observed that the bad weather outside Friday was similar to the conditions that led to the Hindenburg's destruction on that night eight decades ago.

"Thunderstorms that night creating static electricity, which probably played the major part in causing leaking hydrogen to ignite and the Hindenburg to fall burning," Zitarosa said. "Normally, we have the ceremony out on Mat No. 1, and that requires a little bit of theater of the mind. While in here, you actually have true scale. Because the Hindenburg was actually put in this hangar, twice, during her flights of the 1936 season when she came here 10 times. And to give you an idea of how big this thing was — the Hindenburg fit in here with 7½-inches of clearance on each end, with the doors closed. ... It's 187 feet from the floor to the ceiling arches and the Hindenburg came within about 25, 30 feet of that."

Dr. Horst Schirmer, a physician in Maryland, was five-years-old when he flew on the Hindenburg as a child during a trial test run over Lake Constance in Switzerland. Schirmer's father, Max Schirmer, was an aerodynamics engineer for Zeppelin.

Schirmer faithfully attends the memorial service each year and sounds defensive when speaking about the ship's design, noting that it was Congress who refused to allow non-flammable helium gas to be sold to Germany, forcing engineers to use highly-combustible hydrogen as a lifting gas.

During the ceremony Friday night, Schirmer spent his public remarks criticizing the theory of a retired NASA scientist about what caused the Hindenburg to self-immolate. Addison Bain, a former NASA employee, has argued that aluminum powder applied to the fabric of Hindenburg — a component in some rocket fuels — was the real culprit, not hydrogen, in starting the blaze. Bain's theory has been largely debunked by the scientific community, but it still offends Schirmer.

"An electrical spark, the proposed ignition source, does not have sufficient energy to ignite the Hindenburg's paint," Schirmer said. "In a model test, it would take 23 joules, which is the heat energy that set the paint on fire. But the energy time it took to ignite the paint in the Hindenburg was only 0.01 joule. ... It would have been a thousand times

too slow for this theory to hold true and set this magnificent, terrible fatal fire to the Hindenburg."

Carl Jablonski, president of the Navy Lakehurst Historical Society, said the organization was already preparing for next year's big 80th anniversary. A dinner and exhibitions are planned, in addition to the annual memorial service which is expected to attract international media attention.

Air Show

This year's Air Show held at JB McGuire on May 14-15, 2016 was a huge success. Our display and our artifacts were very well received. Our sales were very brisk. Many thanks to Don & Sharon Adams, Tom & Marion Kuchler, Susan Koller, Kevin Pace, Robert Hull, Frank Dennis, Mark Lamb and Carl Jablonski.

Taps

On March 12, 2016 Morris "Lil Mc" McConnell, 88, passed away in New Hampshire. Mac was a USN LTA Veteran and a caring and kind soul. "Lil Mac" was a big part of our building program and Gondola Restoration and a dear friend as well.

The Officers, Trustees and Members of NLHS extend deep sympathy and condolences to the McConnell family. May he Rest In Peace.

*In Memory of
Morris R. McConnell*

Morris R. (Mac) McConnell, age 88 passed away peacefully in New Market, Hampshire. Mac was born in Lee County, VA on August 9, 1927 to parents John Sherman McConnell and Florence Almira (Morris) McConnell. He was grandson to the legendary Pearl Morris McConnell and the youngest of 12 brothers and sisters. Mac was a WWII Navy veteran stationed at Naval Air Lakehurst from 1945 to 1948. After service, Mac worked for the Navy's "Lighter Than Air" program in overhaul & repair at Lakehurst as a rigger and helium diver. Here he mastered his skills in airship/blimp

building, which was his true love. When the Navy ended the "Lighter Than Air" program, Mac was hired at the Naval Air Test Facility (N.A.T.F.) Lakehurst, as an A.L.A.D. (aircraft launch & arresting device) test mechanic. After 37 years he retired as a foreman in 1982. As a Master Airship/Blimp builder Mac was hired by Piasecki Aircraft as head rigger on the Helistat Project at Lakehurst. Mac then worked for Integrated Systems Solutions as a caretaker of the Navy's first airship to be commissioned in over 50 years, the MZ-3A docked in Hanger #5 Lakehurst. Mac was a senior member of the Lakehurst Historical Society and part of the initiative that established the Navy Lakehurst Heritage Center.

Mac loved music and played acoustic bass for many years with the Jersey Ramblers as "Pee Wee" McConnell at Rac's Hut, a popular country western nightclub in Jackson, NJ. As a member of the house band, he had opportunity to play with many popular country music stars including Roy Clark, Patsy Cline and George Jones. He later started his own band called Mac McConnell & The Virginians where he finished an illustrious music career. He was also an avid outdoorsman who enjoyed hunting and fishing.

Mac is preceded in death by his wife of more than 50 years, Wanda McConnell. Surviving are his sons, Richard and wife Deb McConnell of Epping, NH and John and wife Debbie McConnell of Forked River, NJ. He is also survived by two grandsons, Christopher and Jon McConnell, and two great-grandchildren Carson and Violet.

A Celebration of Life Service was held on Thursday, March 31, 2016 from 6 to 8 pm at the Cathedral of the Air, Rt. 547, Lakehurst, NJ 08733. Burial services were on Friday, April 1, 2016 at 10:30 at the Brigadier General William C. Doyle Memorial Cemetery, 14 Chesterfield Arneytown Road, Wrightstown, NJ 08562.

Donations may be made in Mac's name to the Navy Lakehurst Historical Society, PO Box 328, Lakehurst, NJ 08733-0328.

First female infantry officer

When Capt. Kristen M. Griest made history last summer by becoming one of the first two women to graduate the Army's legendary difficult Ranger School, she made her intentions clear: She was considering joining a Special Operations unit. Now, she has accomplished another first with some similar demands: becoming the U.S. military's first female infantry officer.

Griest, 27, requested a transfer to become an infantry officer, and it was accepted Monday, said Lt. Col. Jerry Pionk, an Army spokesman.

On Thursday, she will graduate from the Maneuver Captains Career Course at Fort Benning, Ga., which teaches students how to do tactical planning for infantry companies and battalions and lead as a company commander.

Griest, of Orange, Conn., entered the Army as a military police officer after earning her commission in 2011 at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y. A former high school cross-country runner, she was one of 19 women who attempted Ranger School last year beginning in April as the service opened it to women for the first time while researching how to more fully integrate women in the military.

Eighty years ago this Spring,

It had been a year since the Navy's last operational rigid airship, USS MACON, had crashed into the Pacific. The expensive, futuristic new airship base at Sunnyvale-Mountain View, California was already transferred to the Army Air Corps.

All airship hardware, support equipment and personnel from Sunnyvale were being transferred to long-term storage at Lakehurst against the day when the Navy might operate another giant rigid airship. Lighter-Than-Air (LTA) wasn't completely dead; the Navy still had the obsolescent rigid airship LOS ANGELES, which was not authorized to fly anymore but was still often seen out on the Lakehurst field for mooring/docking experiments. Last

actually flown in 1932, the LOS ANGELES shared Hangar space with a few small training blimps.

The Depression had taken its toll; were only 50 or 60 Civilian employees, 100-120 Officers and Men to run the near-dormant Rigid Airship Training Officers & Enlisted Men's Training School, the Parachute Rigger School and few utility planes that constituted the base's "Heavier Than Air" (HTA) Detachment.

While things were generally quiet at Lakehurst, such was not the case in Germany where a brand new state-of-the-art passenger airship made its first flight on 4 March 1936. LZ-129 HINDENBURG was the culmination of three decades' operating experience with over 110 Zeppelin airships; they had carried their first paying passengers on "Champagne Excursion" flights prior to World War One, and for the past eight years the LZ-127 GRAF ZEPPELIN had carried paying passengers over a million miles and more than 110 ocean crossings, including several visits to Lakehurst and a flight around the world, all in the role of "Aerial Ambassador/Demonstration Ship" as a "proof-of-concept" vehicle.

Now, with the financial backing of the new Nazi government, the HINDENBURG was Germany's bid to dominate transoceanic commercial air travel at a time when airplanes still had great difficulty covering long distance routes. At 804 feet in length, lifted into the sky by 7-million cubic feet of hydrogen gas, she could easily carry 50-70 passengers as well as freight and mail with the necessary reserves of fuel and horsepower to maintain a 55-65 hour flight time between Germany and North America. Plans were ambitious; the old GRAF ZEPPELIN would soon be relegated to a cruises around Europe and use as a training ship, while it was anticipated that four or five HINDENBURG-class ships would shuttle between Europe and North/South America by 1940, 40 or 50 Zeppelins linking the major destinations of the globe as part of a German-led International conglomerate by 1945.

The first steps being the most essential ones, it was necessary to

lay the initial groundwork for a North American service. With only a few options available on the East Coast Lakehurst, with its giant hangar, extensive facilities and close proximity to New York City was the most desirable initial choice. This posed some difficulty; as per German civil aviation guidelines since 1933, all aircraft operating under German civil registry were required to display the "swastika" emblem on their tail fins and this was no small source of controversy. In fact, a permit was granted mainly by virtue of a respectful friendly admiration that President Franklin D. Roosevelt felt for Dr. Hugo Eckener, head of the Zeppelin Company and the driving force behind the German airship movement (until the Nazis shunted him aside and increasingly "plugged in" their own people, that is.)

Extra Navy personnel were transferred to Lakehurst but it was clear that for handling a large airship the size of the HINDENBURG the U.S. Navy could not solely provide the 250 ground crew personnel necessary for regular landing operations. An American subsidiary, The American Zeppelin Transport (AZT) Company, was formed for the purpose handling ticketing, servicing, publicity and staffing arrangements for the North American operation. For every arrival of the Zeppelin, AZT recruited a pool of around 100 local men and boys with the understanding that they would be paid \$1 to be available at Lakehurst for approximately 1-2 hours to land the Zeppelin (to launch the ship from the mooring mast typically took considerably less personnel.) In the interest of efficiency and economy, it was figured that landings could take place at 6-7am and launchings could take place around midnight when atmospheric/weather conditions were generally the most suitable. Each time the Zeppelin used the Lakehurst facility it was specified that the German Zeppelin Transport Co (DZR) would pay a stipend of \$5000 "user fee."

Commander Charles Rosendahl, the Navy's foremost Lighter-Than-Air operator and advocate, was currently serving as Commanding Officer at

NAS Lakehurst. He was very anxious to see the base take an active role, to see his men keep their skills honed and to see that the HINDENBURG had a successful operation....which he hoped might lead to a new lease on life for the moribund American rigid airship program that he held so dear.

Surpassing almost expectations in speed, comfort and performance, the new HINDENBURG made headlines on her six trial/demonstration flights over Germany that March. Then, on 26-29 March the new giant lifted off in company with the GRAF ZEPPELIN for four days the two ships sailed grandly over Germany dropping Propaganda leaflets in support of a plebiscite supporting the re-Annexation of the Rhineland (a direct violation of the Treaty of Versailles.)

Navy Airship Update

June 2016

Navy MZ3A Buno #167811 airship continues to operate into June. So far no further word on whether she will return to Lakehurst at the end of the month to be deactivated. As always, the big factor is MONEY. As an "Airship Airborne Flying Laboratory" for the past ten years, the history of this airship remains nothing other than fascinating and will certainly make a good chapter (or two) in any upcoming histories written about modern Lighter Than Air flight.

As recently as two weeks ago she had transited from her operating site at the Goodyear Airship hangar in Pompano up to the hangar at Elizabeth City, NC to have a giant antennae on top of the ship repositioned. After a relatively brief stay the Government's only operating airship was sighted heading back down the coast over the beaches of South Carolina and Georgia.

Reports of the ship's operating progress indicate that she remains in relatively good condition, helium purity/lift remain good and she is in overall excellent operating condition. It is hoped that the necessary funding is found to keep the project alive. Meanwhile, the MZ3A continues her "day to day" tasks as an airborne research vessel.

First woman to lead top-tier U.S. combat command

Air Force Gen. Lori J. Robinson on Friday became the first woman to lead a top-tier U.S. warfighting command when she took charge of the North American Aerospace Defense Command and U.S. Northern Command in Colorado.

Robinson — one of just two female four-star generals in the Air Force — was "the clear and obvious choice," said Defense Secretary Ash Carter, who attended the change of command ceremony in a vast hangar at Peterson Air Force Base. Outside, a row of cannons fired a 19-gun salute.

Carter praised Robinson's extensive experience and her skill as a strategic thinker capable of making split-second, life-and-death decisions. Her promotion shows the U.S. has female officers qualified for the most senior positions, he said.

"I do hope — well, I know — there are more in her wake, more female officers in her wake," Carter said.

Robinson is an inspiration to female cadets at the nearby Air Force Academy, said Academy Superintendent Michelle Johnson, a three-

star general and the first woman to head the school. "They appreciate seeing somebody that they can aspire to," Johnson said after the ceremony.

Robinson's family has deep roots in the Air Force. Her husband, David Robinson, is a retired two-star general and was a pilot in the Thunderbirds demonstration team. A daughter, 2nd Lt. Taryn Ashley Robinson, was fatally injured in a pilot training crash months after graduating from the Air Force Academy.

Surveillance blimp grounded for good

The runaway military surveillance blimp that captured America's attention last year during its lumbering flight across Pennsylvania may be grounded for good.

A defense policy bill that will begin moving its way through the House next week would cut almost all funding for the program.

The blimp, which is officially known as the Joint Land Attack Cruise Missile Defense Elevated Netted Sensor System, was designed to help detect missile and enemy aircraft threatening the United States. While the military has used the

lighter-than-air technology in conflict zones to help with surveillance activities, this particular blimp was still in the test phase when it broke free of its tethers at a base in eastern Maryland in October.

2016 Calendar of Events

Jun 3 – Battle of Midway Observance – 11:30 AM Hangar One

Jun 17 – Change of Command, USCGC Sturgeon Bay – 2 PM Bayonne, NJ

Jun 18 – Breakfast Meeting Lakehurst Diner – 8:30 AM

Jun 30 – Joint Base & NavAir Picnic 11AM – 3 PM at JB Lakehurst

July 4 – Happy Birthday USA

Aug 20 – Officers Meeting 9:30 AM



NLHS June Breakfast Meeting – Saturday, June 18, 2016 - 8:30 AM
Meeting Location: Lakehurst Diner, Rt. 70 & Rt. 547 Lakehurst, NJ

_____ Yes, I will be attending Number of Guests you are bringing: _____

Your Name: _____

MAIL TO: Navy Lakehurst Historical Society P.O. Box 328 Lakehurst, NJ 08733
Or e-mail information to : NAVLAKE@PRODIGY.net

ATTN: June Meeting
DEADLINE: June 15, 2016 by 12 noon
You must fill out this coupon if you plan on attending the meeting
so we will know how many are coming.

Battle of Midway Observance, Friday, June 3, 2016 11:30 AM
Location: Joint Base Lakehurst in Hangar One

FULL NAME in following format: *(please print) Make copies for each person attending*

Last Name _____ **First Name** _____

Full Middle Name *(not maiden name)* _____

Phone (with area code): _____ **Date of Birth** _____

Drivers License #: _____ **State:** _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ **STATE:** _____ **ZIP CODE:** _____

MAIL TO: Navy Lakehurst Historical Society P.O. Box 328 Lakehurst, NJ 08733
ATTN: Battle of Midway
Or e-mail information to : NAVLAKE@PRODIGY.net

DEADLINE: May 31, 2016 noon - No reservations will be taken after this deadline date
NO PHONE CALLS – MAIL RESERVATIONS ONLY!
NOTE: Your NLHS Membership card IS NOT a base pass.

NLHS June 21, 2016 Hangar One - 95th Anniversary

ATTENDANCE COUPON

I WILL ATTEND THE FOLLOWING EVENT ON Tuesday, June 21, 2016 at 11 AM

Each person Attending must fill out a coupon.

FULL NAME in following format: *(please print)* Make copies for each person attending

Last Name _____ First Name _____

Full Middle name (not maiden name) _____

Drivers License #: _____ State: _____

PHONE (with area code): _____ Date of Birth _____

MAIL TO: Navy Lakehurst Historical Society P.O. Box 328 Lakehurst, NJ 08733

ATTN: Hangar One Anniversary

Or e-mail to: NAVLAKE@PRODIGY.NET

DEADLINE for registration: June 16, 2016 by 12 noon

You must fill out this coupon if you plan on attending this event and don't have a pass for the base.

NOTE: Your NLHS Membership card IS NOT a base pass.