

0. THE HINDENBURG - Story Preface

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The only place where the huge German airship *Hindenburg* could land, while visiting the U.S., was at the Lakehurst Naval Air Station in New Jersey. This public-domain image depicts a photo of the *Hindenburg* which an unnamed photographer, working for the U.S. Navy, took on or about January 25, 1937. Online [via the U.S. National Archives](#).

When Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of Germany, the Zeppelin Company was building rigid airships again.

Dr. Hugo Eckner—the man who had believed so much in airships that he flew LZ127, the *Graf Zeppelin*, around the globe in 12 days, 12 hours and 13 minutes of flying time during August of 1929—was in charge of the company. (Move the video forward, to 17:00, to learn the story.)

In 1930, Eckner wanted to make a significant change.

Instead of using hydrogen to lift the great dirigibles, Dr. Eckner wanted to use helium. But America, the only country with significant helium stockpiles, could not sell it to Eckner. A law, passed by the Congress in 1924, would not allow the sale of helium to Germany. The new airship, LZ 129, would be forced to use hydrogen.

Work commenced on the massive ship in 1931. At 803.8 feet long, with a diameter (at its largest point) of 135.1 feet, it was about 78 feet shorter than the *Titanic*. It held 7,062,100 cubic feet of gas. Its 16 gas cells were individually coated to prevent leaks.

LZ 129 was powered by four 16-cylinder diesel engines. Each could achieve 1300 horse power for five minutes at take off and 850 HP for cruising.

Her control car included three separate areas, while all 50 passengers could simultaneously observe spectacular views from the promenade. Intended to rival luxury ships that crossed the Atlantic in 1-2 weeks, LZ 129 offered customers suitable rooms and quick passage (2½ - 3 days).

Flying over Frankfurt, it was a sight to behold.

The great rigid airship was ultimately named the *Hindenburg*, after the country's former President who, although he had defeated Hitler in 1932, gave in to Nazi pressure to make Hitler Chancellor.

When von Hindenburg died in 1934, Hitler was the unchallenged ruler. And the new airship, bearing the name of the former President and the symbol of the Third Reich, was the pride of Hitler's government.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/THE-HINDENBURG-Hindenburg>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/THE-HINDENBURG-Hindenburg>

## Media Stream



### Hindenburg at Lakehurst Naval Station in 1937

Photo by unnamed photographer from the Department of the Navy; online via the U.S. National Archives, [ARC identifier 518856](#). Public domain.

View this asset at:

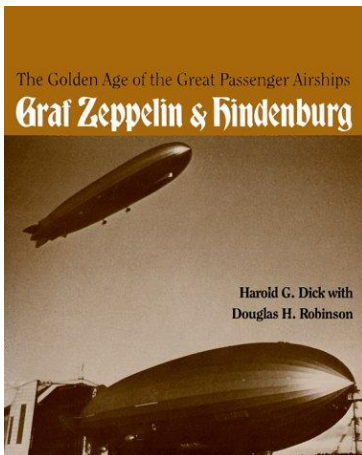
<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Hindenburg-at-Lakehurst-Naval-Station-in-1937>



### Dr. Hugo Eckner

Image online, courtesy [airships.net](http://airships.net) website.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Dr.-Hugo-Eckner>

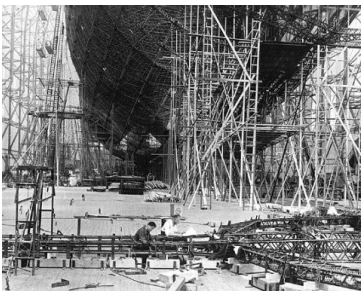


### The Golden Age of the Great Passenger Airships

Image online, courtesy the [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) website.

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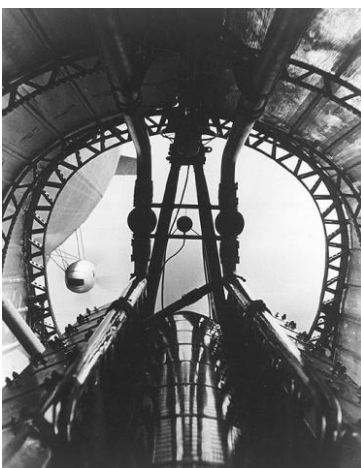
<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/The-Golden-Age-of-the-Great-Passenger-Airships>



### Construction of Airships

Image online, courtesy the [Navy Lakehurst Historical Society](http://Navy Lakehurst Historical Society website) website.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Construction-of-Airships>

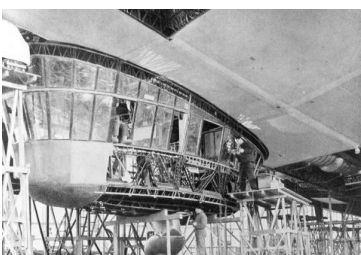


### Airships Powered by Diesel Engines

Image online, courtesy the [Navy Lakehurst Historical Society](http://Navy Lakehurst Historical Society website) website.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Airships-Powered-by-Diesel-Engines>



### Airship Control Car

Image online, courtesy the [Navy Lakehurst Historical Society](http://Navy Lakehurst Historical Society website) website.

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### Airship Promenade

Image online, courtesy the [Navy Lakehurst Historical Society website](#).

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Airship-Promenade>



### Airship Passenger Rooms

Image online, courtesy the [Navy Lakehurst Historical Society website](#).

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Airship-Passenger-Rooms>



### Airship Flying Over Frankfurt

Image online, courtesy the [altfrankfurt.com website](#).

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Airship-Flying-Over-Frankfurt>