



0. HINDENBURG: FIRST TRANS-ATLANTIC FLIGHTS - Story Preface

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Arriving at Lakehurst Naval Air Station, during her first transatlantic crossing from Germany to America, the *Hindenburg* (LZ 129) is escorted by a Coast Guard RD Spica. The picture was published in *Coast Guard Magazine*, Vol. 9 (July, 1936), at page 4. Public Domain. Click on the image for a full-page view.

In 1936, during her first full year of service, the *Hindenburg* became the first trans-Atlantic "airline." At least three more years would pass before commercial airplanes began to transport people across the ocean. Ahead of everything else, the *Hindenburg* made ten round trips to the United States in 1936. She also flew to South America.

Although passage was expensive, it was relatively fast. (Follow the link to view an actual ticket from the 1936 season.) Only the wealthiest citizens could afford the \$720 round trip fare for a seat aboard this marvel of technology. And only a few air stations were equipped to recover and launch the great Zeppelin.

In North America, Lakehurst Air Naval Station in New Jersey was a natural fit. Crews based at Lakehurst were experts at launching and recovering aircraft. They still are. But a huge hangar was required and elaborate, special procedures had to be developed for the *Hindenburg* which was pulled to the ground by mooring lines. The ground crew alone exceeded 200 men.

Because the *Hindenburg* used hydrogen, not helium like U.S. airships, hydrogen had to be transported to the Air Station. A railroad line, located near Hangar One where the Zeppelin was berthed during U.S. visits, served that purpose.

The Lakehurst crew knew all the procedures on the evening of May 6, 1937. Although this was the first *Hindenburg* landing of the season, the ground crew (92 Navy personnel and 139 civilians) had been through it before.

The mooring mast was in place. So were lots of spectators and the media. Many had been there for hours, waiting for the storms to pass.

Herb Morrison, who was recording on site for the Chicago radio station WLS was describing the scene as the great air ship descended. Suddenly, Morrison's voice changed. Shocked, he described what he saw. The *Hindenburg* - now a huge ball of fire - was falling out of the sky!

More than 70 years later, Morrison's broadcast (aired for the first time the following day) is still the most recognized description of the *Hindenburg* disaster. (This link takes you to the longer version of Herb Morrison's broadcast. The most famous part of the broadcast starts at around 3:30 into the tape.)

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

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/HINDENBURG-FIRST-TRANS-ATLANTIC-FLIGHTS-Hindenburg>

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

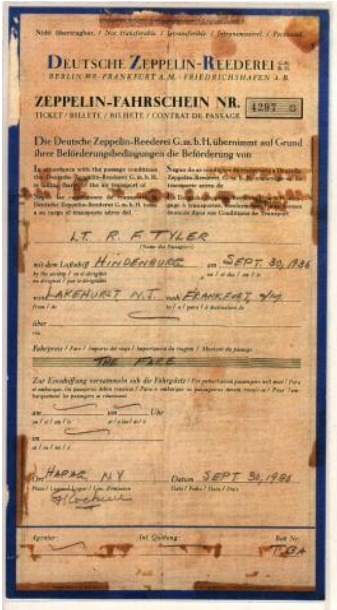
<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/HINDENBURG-FIRST-TRANS-ATLANTIC-FLIGHTS-Hindenburg>



Hindenburg - First Arrival in America

U.S. Coast Guard photo, by an unnamed photographer, online via the U.S. Coast Guard. Public Domain.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Hindenburg-First-Arrival-in-America>



Hindenburg Passage Ticket

Image online, courtesy the Navy Lakehurst Historical Society website.

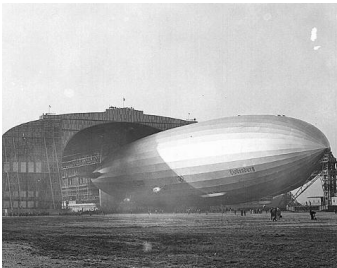
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Zeppelin Air Station

Image online, courtesy zeppelinfan.de website.

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Hindenburg Hangar

Image online, courtesy the Navy Lakehurst Historical Society.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Hindenburg-Hangar>

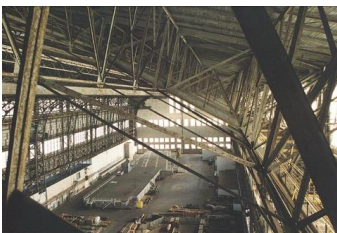


Rails Delivered Hydrogen to Fuel Hindenburg

Image online, courtesy the Navy Lakehurst Historical Society.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Rails-Delivered-Hydrogen-to-Fuel-Hindenburg>



Hindenburg - Hangar One at Lakehurst Air Naval Station

Image online, courtesy the Naval Lakehurst Historical Society website.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Hindenburg-Hangar-One-at-Lakehurst-Air-Naval-Station>



Lakehurst Press Pass - Report on Hindenburg

Image online, courtesy the Navy Lakehurst Historical Society.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Lakehurst-Press-Pass-Report-on-Hindenburg>



Herb Morrison - Hindenburg Crash Reporter

Photo, by WLS, originally appearing in *Stand By* magazine - May 15, 1937. Image online, courtesy U.S. National Archives.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Herb-Morrison-Hindenburg-Crash-Reporter>



Herb Morrison - At the Hindenburg Crash Site

Image online, courtesy the airships.net website.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Herb-Morrison-At-the-Hindenburg-Crash-Site>



Airship Hindenburg on Fire

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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

Hindenburg - Successful Recovery Procedures

When Germany's rigid airships were able to travel long distances, the *Hindenburg* became the first trans-Atlantic "airline." It was 1936, during her first full year of service.

If the *Hindenburg* traveled to America, where would she land? Only a few air stations were equipped to recover (when she arrived) and launch (when she departed) the great Zeppelin. Lakehurst Air Naval Station, in New Jersey, was a natural fit. Crews based at Lakehurst were experts at launching and recovering aircraft. (They still are.)

But ... the German airship needed a huge hangar and required elaborate, special procedures to land. Why was that? Because she was pulled to the ground by mooring lines. The ground crew alone exceeded 200 men.

This historical footage, from the U.S. National Archives, shows the *Hindenburg* making a successful landing at Lakehurst Air Naval Station during 1936. This was the procedure that Lakehurst's ground crew was about to use when the *Hindenburg* fatally exploded on the evening of May 6, 1937.

Historical footage, described above, online via the U.S. National Archives.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Hindenburg-Successful-Recovery-Procedures>

