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"The Navy Airship: More Ship Than Air"

E. Myers, pp. 40-42, May 1995
(Proceedings)

...*Van Treuren, Producer, Naval Airship Association Video History Project*—Myers's trip in a futuristic fleet airship was respectfully conservative when it appreciates the technological advances in the more than 30 years between the EZ-1C and the proposed ZP-2A. With a modern avionics suite, the EZ-1C (formerly known as the ZP-14) would be capable of many of the missions—even though steam locomotives were being manufactured when it was designed. Money the Navy has set aside to study a return to the efficiency of airship flight may be squandered if Myers's point is missed. There is no historical precedent for establishing airships as fleet units rather than the children of naval aviation.

...when the Navy admired Zeppelins' ability to shadow the British fleet with impunity, it built large rigid airships. Captain Don Mackey, who served in both rigid airships and rigid airships, found their operation to be surprisingly similar. Vice Admiral C. E. Rosendahl tried to get the Navy to accept the airship as a vessel, not a wingless airplane. He wrote in 1947:

...We need first reclassify airships . . . as 'displacement vessels' whose normal field of operation is the lower reaches of the atmospheric ocean . . . countless varieties of surface vessels can operate on the surface of the sea without all being herded together under one banner; comparably, there surely is room for two kinds of craft in the atmospheric ocean above the sea.

...Fate's gift of helium was utilized during World War II in what could be considered Coast Guard actions; some anti-airmarine commands simply ignored the airships. In its Mediterranean de-

ployment, ZP-14 was used mainly for minesweeping. Later, the ASW airship operating off of escort carriers was accepted by the fleet. Then, with the rotating-crew ZPG-2 and its gasoline-bag refueling method, lighter-than-air aviation became independent of flight-deck support. Experiments were under way to develop a high-speed airship capable of meeting the nuclear submarine threat when the Navy decided to retire its airships, seaplanes, and most anything else that did not fit into its plans for projecting power ashore.

It's not enough for a new generation to reacquaint themselves with the advantages of LTA. We don't have to remember the developmental debt modern systems owe the R&D airship. We can imagine what systems gravity's only known antidote might levitate today. We will never utilize the amazing potential of the modern fleet airships—in fact, they may not be built at all—unless we realize the airship is not just a type of big slow airplane, but, as Admiral Rosendahl suggested, a displacement vessel. □

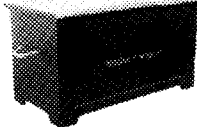
"Submarine Engines for the Future"

(See R. M. Adams, pp. 61-65, June 1994; I. D. Spassky and V. P. Semyonov, pp. 24-25, May 1995 *Proceedings*)

Captain Richards T. Miller, U.S. Navy (Retired)—This article reminded me of work with which I was associated in 1976 and reported in a paper I wrote with Robert E. Thompson and presented to the 1977 Spring meeting of the Society of Naval and Marine Engineers: "Maritime Applications of an Advanced Gas-Cooled Reactor Propulsion System."

The paper described the results of studies by Westinghouse engineers and scientists, begun in 1972, to determine the feasibility of a lightweight nuclear propulsion system (LWNP) for marine applications. The power plant design concept was based on existing technologies—e.g.,

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the nuclear rocket reactor. It consisted of a gas-cooled nuclear reactor and integrally packaged gas-turbine propulsion system. The selected closed Brayton power cycle used helium at 1700° F and 1,500 psia. The reactor used technologies developed and demonstrated in both the nuclear rocket and the land-based gas-cooled commercial reactor programs. Conceptual designs were presented to demonstrate the feasibility of—and the advantages to be gained by—substituting the LWNP for LM-2500 aircraft gas turbines in a destroyer and FT4A gas turbines in a Euroliner-class container ship. Further development of the project for naval ship propulsion was discouraged by the Navy Nuclear Reactor Division, and Westinghouse dropped work on it soon after the paper was published. □

"How the Egyptian Navy Fought the October War"

(See A. Refaat, pp. 94-96, March 1995 *Proceedings*)

Lieutenant Brendan W. Tully, U.S. Naval Reserve—I was considerably surprised