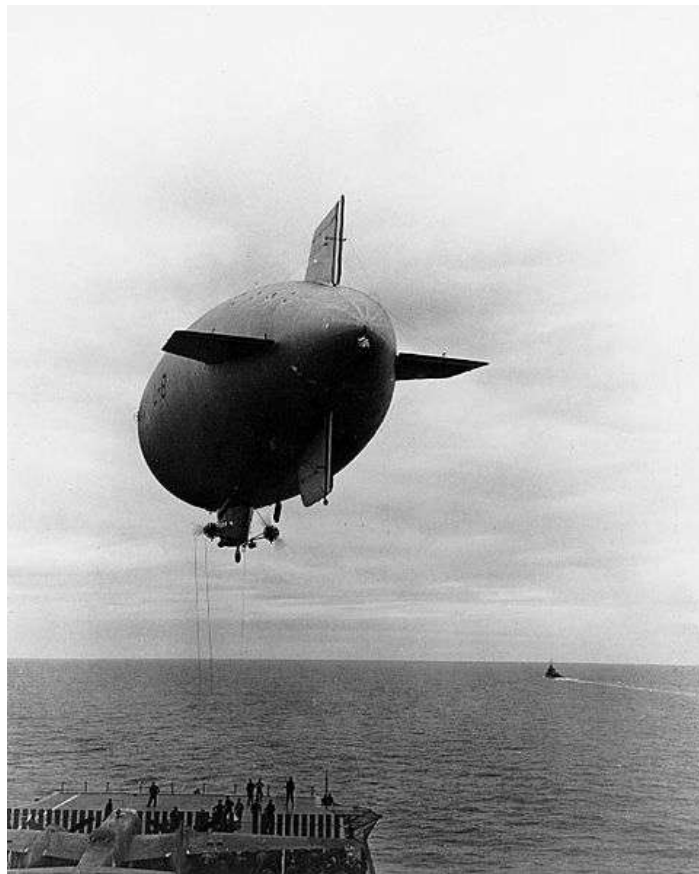


The Ghost Blimp

On August 16, 1942 two US Navy pilots vanished into thin. They were flying the Navy's L-8 blimp. The airship took off on scheduled patrol off the California coast near San Francisco. They were patrolling in search for Japanese submarines which had previously been sighted in the. A few hours later the blimp floated back to the shore and crashed with no one on board.

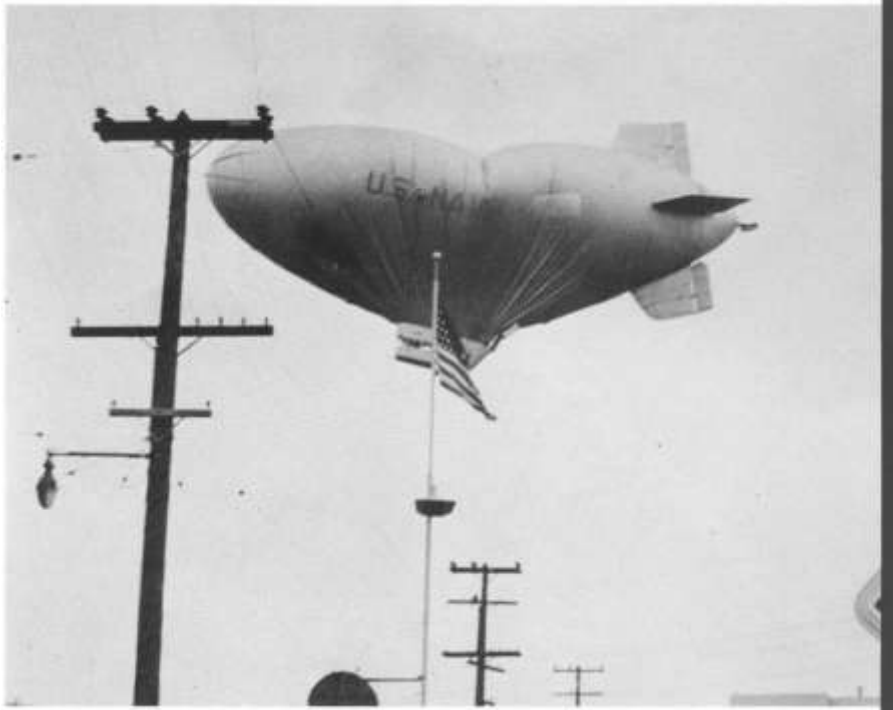


*US Navy L-8 Blimp delivering supplies to the
USS Hornet during the Doolittle Raid*

The blimp took off from Treasure Island near San Francisco with two experienced pilots at the controls. Lt. Ernest DeWitt Cody, pilot and Ens. Charles Adams, copilot headed out to the Farallon Islands for their patrol.

About one hour into the flight, Lt. Cody radioed flight controller to inform about an apparent oil slick on the water, and said they would investigate. That was the last communication with the blimp.

Shortly before noon bathers on a beach near the area of San Francisco saw the blimp lodged against a cliff. As rescuers approached, the airship broke free and floated inland.



As it continued to drift, it lost helium, started to buckle and lost altitude. It gently settled at an intersection in Daly City. No one was aboard the L-8, and no one has ever been able to account for the disappearance of Cody and Adams. The throttles were at idle, everything was working normally, there was fuel in the tanks and the cabin door was open. Some local volunteer firemen slashed the envelope, completely destroying it, in the mistaken belief that the crew might be trapped inside. Only the car was saved.



The two crewmen were never found and no definitive explanation has been found. One theory is that the crew noticed something amiss and climbed out to fix it. The second crewman tried to help and they both fell into the ocean.

The control car was later used on the Goodyear blimp *America* which was based in Houston. After retiring the *America*, Goodyear donated the control car to the National Museum of Naval Aviation at Pensacola, Florida, where it was restored and is now on display.



Other memorabilia from the L-8 is displayed by The Lighter-Than-Air Society and National Lighter-Than-Air Historical Center at the Military Aviation Preservation Society (MAPS) Museum located on the grounds of the Akron-Canton airport.