

From the Port Arthur News

June 9, 1942

12 MISSING AS 2 NAVY BLIMPS COLLIDE

ONLY ONE SURVIVOR OF CRASH REPORTED

Mid-Air Collision Occurs Over Sea Off Jersey

ON TRAINING MISSION

Naval Officers And Civilian Aides Feared Dead

LAKEHURST, N. J., June 9 (INS). Twelve navy officers, enlisted men and civilian technicians were believed killed today in the mid-air collision of two Navy non-rigid training airships off Manasquan, N. J. One man survived the crash, and three bodies have been recovered.

The accident occurred shortly before midnight while the two navy blimps were making an experimental flight, the navy announced.

Ensign Howards Fahey of Scarsdale, N. Y., co-pilot of one of the airships, was the only man aboard the two craft able to save himself. He smashed the glass of the ship's cabin as it struck the water and struggled to safety

He was the 13th man aboard the blimps.

Three Bodies Recovered

The blimps were cruising at 400 feet when the collision occurred, the cause of which was not revealed. The body of Lt. Comdr. Clinton S. Rounds, an outstanding naval expert on lighter-than-air craft, and two other fliers were recovered today from the wreckage of the two blimps.

Naval authorities identified the other known victims of the crash as Aviation Chief Machinist Mate R. C. Poteet, of Langdon, Kansas., and Dr. A. B. Wyse, of San Diego, Calif., a civilian technician.

Rounds Was Pilots

Navy authorities disclosed that Commander Rounds was piloting one of the blimps, the L-2, when it collided with another, the G-1, about five miles off Manasquan, N. J. The wreckage of both airships settled at once to the ocean.

Discovery of the three bodies was made by the crew of a Coast Guard patrol boat sent to the scene shortly after dawn. There was no trace of the other missing men.

Among the missing was Lt. Frank Trotter, pilot of the G-1 and a veteran since 1929 of flying in lighter than air craft.

Commander Rounds, 39, a native of Interior, S. Dak., was commissioned an ensign in the navy in 1927 and came to the Lakehurst air base in 1930. He served as an officer aboard the ill-fated Los Angeles and is survived by his widow and a daughter.

Flew On Hindenburg

Lieut. Trotter served as an official navy observer aboard the German airship Hindenburg in 1936, making several Atlantic crossings on that ship. He also was well known as a competitor in free balloon races.

The airships were of a training type and had no connection with air patrol of the Atlantic coast.

Naval authorities said they were engaged in an experimental mission "involving some hazard." They settled to the water immediately after the collision. All men wore lifebelts, naval authorities said, and would have stayed afloat indefinitely if the crash had not killed them. Discovery of bodies in the wreckage indicated, however, that chance for escape was slim. Lieutenant Fahey escaped by leaning out of the gondola just as the blimp struck the water, thus avoiding the crashing impact with the sea.

BLIMP DEAD

LAKEHURST, N. J., June 9 (UP) Among the dead or missing in the collision last night at sea of two navy blimps, were announced the following:

Lieutenant Commander Rounds, listed as a pilot.

Ensign Trotter, lighter-than-air pilot since 1929 and observer on several of the dirigible Hindenburg trans-Atlantic flights. Survived by wife, Marjorie. Pilot of the G-2.

Ensign Clarence C. Ross, 27, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Ross, Jacksonville, Fla. Commissioned here less than a month ago. Co-pilot of G-1.

Ensign K. G. Lee, New London, Conn., attached to bureau of ordnance and doing research work.

Ole V. Roos, 39, aviation chief machinist's mate, Lakewood; wife, Mary.

R. C. Poteet, 28, aviation chief machinist's mate, son of Mrs. Rosa Maypowell, Langdon, Kas., where he made his home.

W. H. Herndon, Jr., boatswain's mate, first class, Lakehurst. Born Jacksonville, Fla.; wife, Bessie.

Dr. Charles R. Hoover, Middletown, Conn.; Wesleyan university chemistry professor; wife and two sons.

L. S. Moyer, Minneapolis, Minn.

I. H. Tilles, San Diego, Calif.

Dr. F. C. Gilbert, New London, Conn.

One man survived out of the two crews totaling 13 men."