

# USS *Los Angeles* (ZR-3)

The second USS *Los Angeles* was a rigid airship, designated **ZR-3**, that was built in 1923–1924 by the Zeppelin factory in Friedrichshafen, Germany, where its original designation was **LZ-126**. The airship was given to the United States by the German Government, as partial war reparations from World War I.

## Operational history

After the October 1924 transatlantic delivery flight from the Zeppelin works in Friedrichshafen to the US Naval Air Station at Lakehurst, New Jersey, the airship was commissioned into the US Navy on November 25, 1924 at Anacostia, D.C. Its lifting gas was switched from hydrogen to helium, which reduced payload but improved safety.

The airship went on to log a total of 4,398 hours of flight in 331 flights, covering a distance of 172,400 nautical miles (319,300 km). It served as an observatory and experimental platform, as well as a training ship for other airships.

The *Los Angeles* took part in Fleet Problems XII (1931) and XIII (1932), although as was the case with all U.S. Navy rigid airships, demonstrated no particular benefit to the fleet.

The *Los Angeles* was decommissioned in 1932 as an economy measure. It was re-commissioned for a period after the USS *Akron* crashed in April 1933. Soon returned to storage, the airship was finally struck off the Navy list in 1939 and dismantled in its hangar, thus ending the career of the Navy's longest serving airship. Unlike the ill-fated *Akron*, *Macon*, and *Shenandoah*, the *Los Angeles'* career did not meet a disastrous end.

## Specifications (As built)

**Air displacement:** 2,764,461 ft<sup>3</sup> (78,280.8 m<sup>3</sup>)

**Dimensions:** length 658 ft. (200 m); hull diameter, 90' 8" (27.5 m); total height, 104' 5" (31.8 m)

**Gas volume:** 2,599,110 ft<sup>3</sup> (73,598.6 m<sup>3</sup>) of helium; 14 gas cells

**Power plant:** Five Maybach VL-1 12-cyl water-cooled inline engines mounted in external cars (400 hp each), driving two-bladed fixed-pitch wooden propellers

**Speed:** 65 knots (120k/h) at sea level (max); 48 knots (89 k/h) (cruising)

**Cruising range:** 5,770 miles (9,286 km) at cruising speed

**Useful lift:** 67,000 lbs. (30,400 kg)

**Flight Crew:** 40