

Flown U.S. Navy Blimp Mail by Cheryl Ganz

The original article and listing was published in *The Zeppelin Collector*, January 1998 with updates ongoing.
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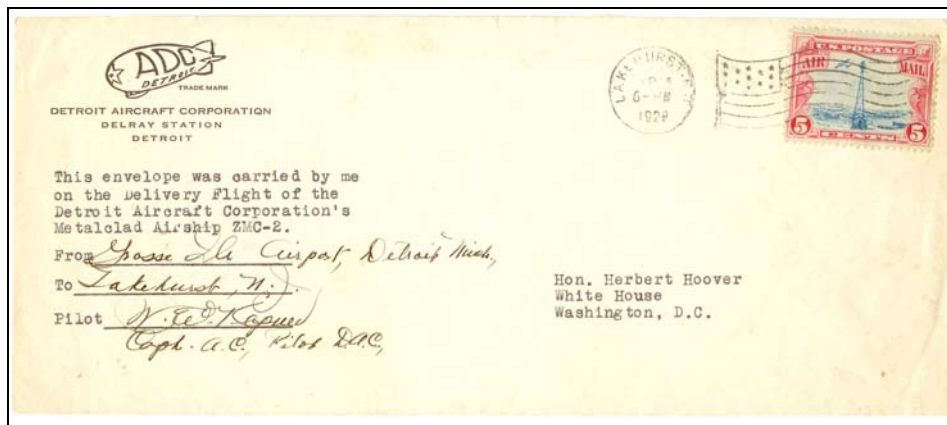
Zeppelin posts have been documented in many philatelic catalogs, but no catalog lists mail from United States Navy pressure airships. Pressure airships include both non-rigid blimps and the rigid metalclad ZMC-2. Many of these flown items exist in very low quantities as they are unofficially carried mail. Crew members would send mail or carry mail as a courtesy for fellow crew members or for collectors. Only the September 13, 1961, flight was authorized by the U.S. post office.

Goodyear built the blimps for the U.S. Navy's airship program, primarily for anti-submarine warfare and the airborne early warning system. The Navy terminated its fleet airship program on October 31, 1961. Types of flights represented include trial, test, delivery, local flights, fleet exercise, endurance, Arctic, final, and the resented resumed airship flights. In 2007, the Navy experimented with the airship MZ3A but terminated the program.

Please review this listing and send additions and corrections to cherylganz@yahoo.com. Please send scans of unlisted items. Please note that the postmark date does not always match the date of flight. I have tried to give actual flight dates when possible. Most data is taken from the covers and therefore airship numbers are sometimes incomplete and pilot names could be misspelled.

Note: BuNo = Bureau Number.

Flight Date; Airship; Route; Pilot or Signature; Additional information



September 14, 1929; ZMC-2; Grosse Ile near Detroit to Lakehurst; William E. Kepner, pilot
October 15, 1933; J-4; Moffett Field area to welcome *Macon*; signed by postmaster J.A.

Matthews; 40

March 12, 1935; J-4; Concord to Port Chicago; 15

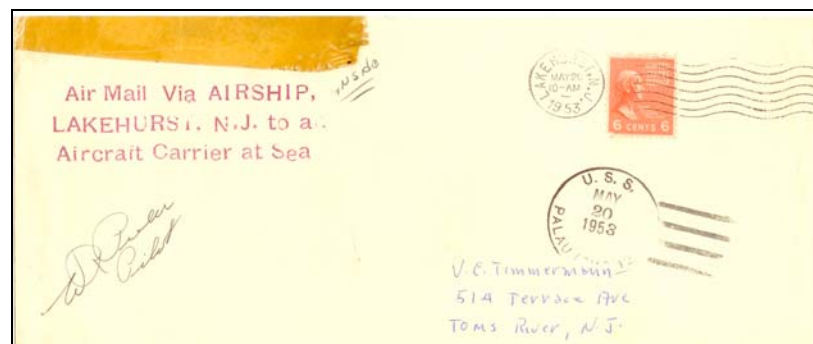
October 6, 1935; TBD

January 16, 1939; K-2; Lakehurst trial flight; Emmett J. Sullivan, pilot

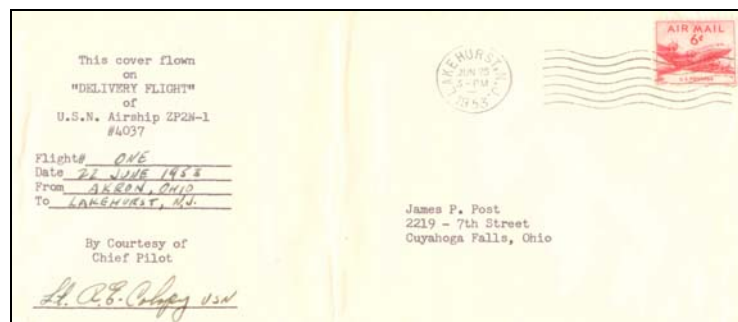
May 28-29, 1944; K-123; NAS South Weymouth, MA to NAS Port Lyautey, French Morocco
via NAS Argentina, Newfoundland and the Azores; LTJG Robert Kersey,

pilot/commander; W.H. Ireland on crew; John Kane was navigator on first leg; Lt. Homer B. Bly on final leg; no cachet*

March 6-7, 1947; XM-1; Lakehurst to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba; Howard R. Walton
March 10-11, 1947; XM-1; 31.6 hour flight; Howard R. Walton, pilot; Bill Gunther, Art Weisman, Walter Bjerre, and Lou Prost, co-pilots
September 23, 1948; XM-1; Lakehurst to Minneapolis; name of pilot not clear; 1 known
June 18, 1951; ZPN-1; Akron trial flight; Walter L. Massic, pilot; 3 known
February 12, 1952; ZPN-1; Akron to Grosse Isle, MI; Walter L. Massic, pilot
March 26, 1952; Guantanamo Bay to Roosevelt Roads fleet exercise; W.W. Skinner, pilot
April 17, 1952; Weeksville, NC fleet exercise over Atlantic; D.R. Richardson, pilot
May 21, 1952; ZP2K-33; Dartmouth, Canada to Lakehurst; William R. Peeler; landed on *HMCS Magnificence* during exercises with Canadian Navy; also with mixed franking
May 22, 1952; ZP2K-58; Weeksville, NC area; Robert E. Miller, pilot
May 26, 1952; ZPN-1; Akron to over Lake Erie; Hank H. Nettling, pilot
June 16-17, 1952; XZPN-1; Akron to Lakehurst delivery flight; Walter L. Massic, pilot; 4 known
October 9, 1952; K-69; Lakehurst participation in NATO operations; R.J. Davis, Jr., pilot
October 27, 1952; ZPN-1; Lakehurst to Mt. Pocono and return; Douglas L. Cordiner, pilot
December 17, 1952; ZPN-1; Lakehurst area; D.L. Cordiner, pilot
February 12-14, 1953; ZP3K-124; Guantanamo Bay to Lakehurst; R.W. Keene, pilot
March 20, 1954; ZP2N-1; Akron to Akron; Walter L. Massic, pilot
April 23, 1953; ZP2N; Akron to Cleveland; Walter L. Massic, pilot
May 19, 1953; ZP2N-1; Akron to over Lake Erie; Walter L. Massic, pilot

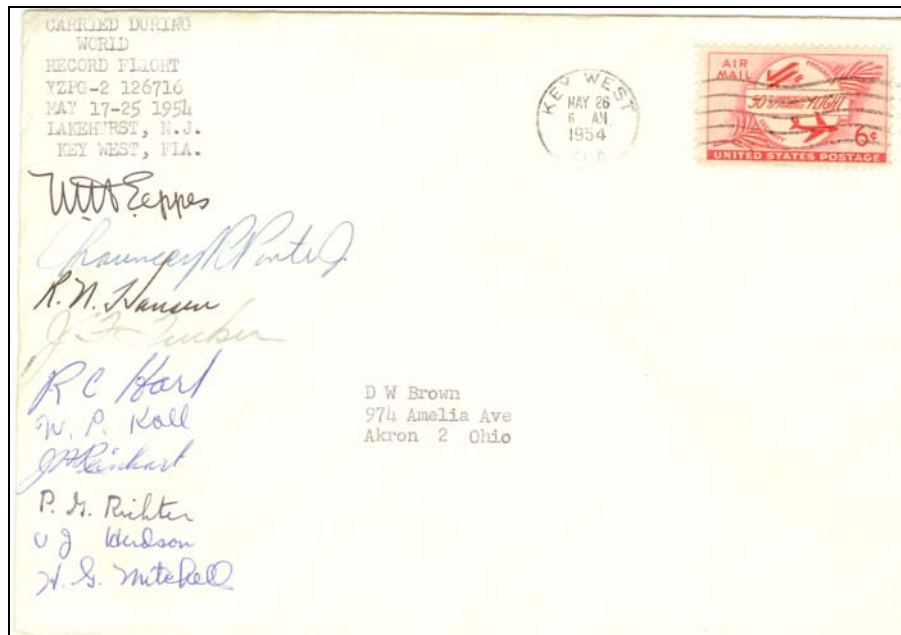
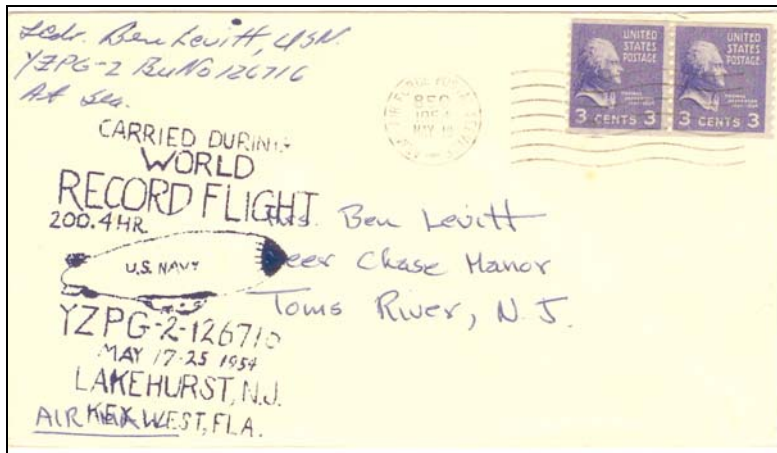


May 20, 1953; ZP3K-47; Lakehurst to *USS Palau* at sea; William R. Peeler, pilot



June 22, 1953; ZP2N-1; Akron to Lakehurst; R.E. Colopy, chief pilot
October 30, 1953; ZP2N-1 BuNo 4038; Akron to over Lake Erie; Walter L. Massic, pilot

December 17, 1953; K-125; Santa Ana to Los Angeles; William R. Peeler, pilot
 January 24, 1954; ZP2N-1; Akron to Weymouth, Mass; R.E. Colopy, chief pilot



May 17-25, 1954; YZPG-2 BuNo 126710; endurance flight Lakehurst to Key West, with mail carried or dropped at several points by the crew of 14: Pilots: Marion H. Eppes, Ben B. Levitt, Chauncey R. Porter, Richard E. Duncan, James F. Tucker, Crew: Russell N. Hansen, Ralph C. Hart, William P. Koll, Paul G. Richter, Herschel G. Mitchell, John A. Reinhart, Vincent J. Hudson, John E. Regier
 -drops over Kindley base in Bermuda; San Juan, Puerto Rico; Windsor Field in Nassau, Bahamas; Masters Field, Miami [postmark Key West on arrival; Lakehurst on return]

July 22, 1954; ZP5K-1; Akron area; Walter L. Massic, pilot
 July 27-29, 1954; ZSG-2 BuNo 125; Santa Ana to Seattle; C.E.F. Miller and P.R. Brooks, pilots
 September 9, 1954; ZPG-2, Lakehurst trial flight; Marion H. Eppes, pilot
 September 29, 1954; ZPN, Lakehurst training flight; R.A. Bernstein, pilot

October 8, 1954; ZSG-4; Wingfoot Lake (near Akron) to Cleveland and return; Dean R. Mealy, pilot

November 15, 1954; ZPG-2; Akron to over Lake Erie; Walter L. Massic, pilot

March 4-15, 1957; ZPG-2; Weymouth, MA endurance record flight; Jack R. Hunt, pilot

May 18, 1957; 40; Oakland area armed forces day flight; G.R. Barker, pilot

May 30, 1957; K-120; Brunswick, GA to Oakland, CA via nuclear test area in Nevada; Joe T. Katz, pilot

June 5, 1957; XZS2G-1; Lakehurst test flight; Richard W. Widdicombe, pilot

August 21, 1957; ZPG-2 BuNo 719; Lakehurst to over Asbury Park; W. Millison, pilot

September 17, 1957; ZPG-2W; Akron area; James C. Maloney, pilot

October 26, 1957; K-43; Lakehurst area; D.D. Crawsler, pilot

February 15, 1958; ZSG-4 BuNo 134020; Lakehurst to Five Island, NY in search for *SS Savannah*; Dewey D. Crowder, pilot

April 14, 1958; ZPG-2W BuNo 137918; Lakehurst to NYC; Richard D. Nye, pilot

May 1, 1958; ZPG-2 BuNo 641561 *Snow Bird*; Lakehurst to Barnegat light test flight; C.H. Pearman, pilot

May 10, 1958; ZSG-4 BuNo 134021; Lakehurst to Fire Island, NY; W.E. LeGrande, pilot

May 17, 1958; ZSG-4 BuNo 134021; Lakehurst to Raritan, NJ; D.D. Crawsler, pilot

May 17, 1958; K-120; Moffett Field area; Donald P. Ventow, pilot

May 17, 1958; BuNo 137489; Lakehurst over southern NJ; Richard W. Widdicombe, pilot

May 17, 1958; BuNo 141568; Key West area; C.U. Briegel, pilot

May 18, 1958; ZSG-4 BuNo 134024; Pensacola, FL to Brunswick, GA; J.R. Hill, pilot

July 21, 1958; ZPG-3W; Akron test flight; Dean R. Mealy, pilot

July 24, 1958; ZPG-3W; Akron to Lake Erie area test flight; Dean R. Mealy, pilot

August 8, 1958; ZPG-2 BuNo 126719 *Snow Goose*, Resolute Bay to T-3, Henry Collins, pilot

August 9, 1958; ZPG-2 BuNo 126719 *Snow Goose*, Fort Churchill, Canada to T-3, Henry Collins, pilot; Canada dispatch

August 19, 1958; ZSG-4 BuNo 134020; Lakehurst to NYC for parade and return; William J. Hanley, pilot

September 22, 1958; ZPG-2W BuNo 144242; Akron to over Lake Erie on test flight; Dean R. Mealy, pilot

October 2, 1958; ZPG-3W BuNo 144242; Akron to over Lake Erie; Dean R. Mealy, pilot

March 20, 1959; K-43; Lakehurst final flight of 134 K-class, Charles E. Rosendahl, Vice Admiral

May 14, 1959; ZSG-4 BuNo 131923; Brunswick, GA to Pensacola, FL; J.R. Hill, pilot

May 16, 1959; ZPG-2 BuNo 126719; Brunswick, GA to Fall River, MA; Paul W. Muehlen, pilot

May 16, 1959; ZSG-4 BuNo 131923; Pensacola to Mobile; J.R. Hill, pilot

June 19, 1959; ZPG-3W; Akron to Lakehurst; J.R. Van Evera, pilot

June 19, 1959; ZPG-3W; Lakehurst training flight; Walter Bjerre, pilot

May 14, 1960; BuNo 146296; Lakehurst area; Richard W. Widdicombe, pilot

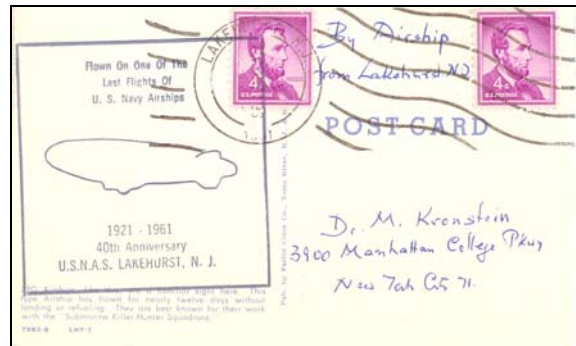
May 20, 1960; ZPG-3W; Lakehurst area; Clement G. Williams, pilot

May 21, 1960; UF-1 BuNo 131900; Key West area; R.R. Stoinoff, pilot

March 20, 1961; ZPG-2; Lakehurst area; Gerald J. Krueger, pilot

June 26, 1961; ZPG-3W; Lakehurst; not flown as operations discontinued

September 12, 1961; ZPG-2 BuNo 141561; Lakehurst area; Gerald J. Krueger, pilot



September 13, 1961; Lakehurst area for press as final “official” flights; 3PM, 4PM (rare), and 6PM cancels

February 20, 1962; ZPG-2 BuNo 141559; Lakehurst area; R. Shannon, pilot

May 16, 1962; ZPG-2 BuNo 141559; Lakehurst area; R. Shannon, pilot

August 31, 1962; ZPG-2 BuNo 141561; Lakehurst area; R. Shannon and Ash, pilots on final flights

May 2, 2007; MZ3A #167811; Lakehurst area; Jim Dexter and two other pilot autographs; few flown on resumed airship test flight but not postmarked until December 18, 2007 when reflown with other prepared mail

December 18, 2007: MZ3A #167811; Lakehurst area on first official flight; with 3 pilot autographs or without autographs; c. 500 flown total

* flown item not seen by author, listing based on published accounts

Contributors: Karl Wacker, Ronald Dobrowolski, Richard Duncan, Richard Hovish, Robert Hunter, John C. Kane, Greg Leugers, Mel Miller, Ford U. Ross, Richard G. Van Treuren, Rick Zitarosa.

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