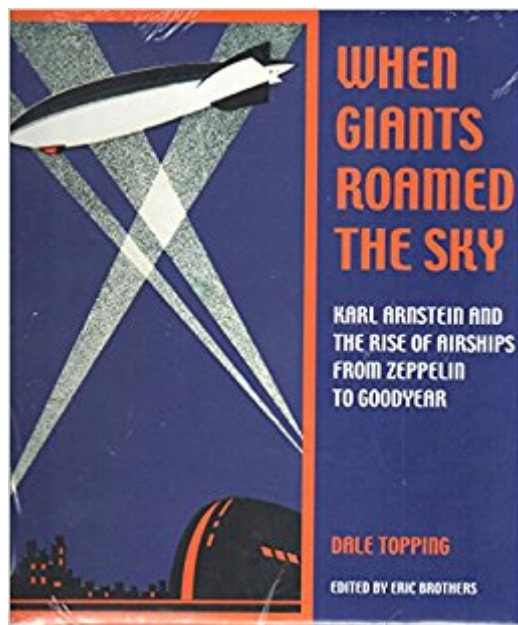


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When Giants Roamed The Sky: Karl Arnstein And The Rise Of Airships From Zeppelin To Goodyear



Synopsis

Karl Arnstein's life was defined by the world wars which shattered Europe. But for these cataclysmic events, his life's work might have been far different. From Zeppelin in Germany to Goodyear in Akron, Ohio, Arnstein participated in the design and development of more airships than any other engineer. He could have been a philosopher or mathematician, but a desire to be practical attracted Arnstein to civil engineering. This knowledge spared him from the horrors of trench warfare, and a favorable impression he made on airship pioneer Count Zeppelin unexpectedly took him from the front to an aircraft factory in Friedrichshafen, Germany. Here Arnstein adapted his analysis of utilitarian structures fixed firmly to the ground to examination of flying structures, the Zeppelins. And it is not just for his contributions to Zeppelin design that Arnstein should be remembered. His story is in many ways the story of airship building in the early decades of the twentieth century. And his legacy endures in the Goodyear blimps which are the tire company's corporate icons and symbols of Akron's important airship heritage. Appendices include a listing of Karl Arnstein's patents, a list of selected writings by Karl Arnstein, and statistics on Luftschiffbau-Zeppelin airships and U.S. Navy rigid airships.

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Customer Reviews

'Very readable and informative work Chr(45) a must for airship buffs.' --Armchair Auctions Jan 2010

Dale Topping (1917-1993) held a Ph.D. from the University of Illinois in theoretical and applied mechanics. During his career he worked for Bell Aerospace-Textron and Goodyear Aerospace Corporation. Eric Brothers is a native of Akron and freelance journalist. He succeeded Dale Topping as editor of Buoyant Flight.

Did you know that, during the 1920s, President Franklin D Roosevelt was Vice President of a Company planning to build or fly passenger airships such as the Hindenburg? The book describes the career of the German Zeppelin Engineer, Dr Arnstein, hired by Goodyear to design the US Navy Akron and Macon, 780 ft long flying aircraft carriers, each with 5 Curtiss F9C2 fighters inside. The man went to 2 different German Universities simultaneously and got a degree from each in the time most of us get just one degree at one University. You can see the N2Y trainer used with the airships in the National Museum of Naval Aviation at NAS Pensacola, Florida, and the F9C2 at the Smithsonian. The Airships themselves are on the bottom of the ocean. Even today, our ocean-surface Aircraft Carriers operate at maybe 35 knots. The Flying Carriers of the early 1930s operated at 70 knots - twice the speed of delivery of planes where needed. Their plane operations were 100% successful - never a plane lost in mid-air launch or recovery. My father flew US Navy ASW Airships during WW2, and knew of the Akron and Macon - the Macon had been flying just 7 years before he was trained in 1942, and the huge WW2 Blimp hangars still standing, for example at Lakehurst, NJ and Sunnyvale/Mountain-View, CA, were built to handle planned WW2 rigids even bigger than the Macon. When I showed Dad a photo of the Macon's crew, he was astonished to see almost 100 men. Dad's small K-type airships, enthusiastically supported by President FDR, flew with a crew of 10. I wanted to learn more about these airships; the book does a good job. My father had strong opinions about the fate of these airships. The book goes into that in some detail. It looks like military airships may be back. After 45 years with no airships, the US Navy recently (2006) bought an airship and is flying it out of NAS Lakehurst, NJ, as a trainer.

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