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ZEPPELIN ADVENTURES



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ZEPPELIN ADVENTURES

by
Jackson Kuhl

INTRODUCTION

Nothing epitomizes the pulp era like the zeppelin.

They were aspirational: in a world of economic depression, totalitarianism, war, and a creeping sense of wider conflict to come, the hulls of the rigid airships reflected everything good and noble in mankind. Simply seeing one pass overhead was an awesome and memorable moment, a flagged experience in a person's lifetime.

They were glamorous: for a \$400 one-way ticket, Hindenburg passengers could enjoy two-and-a-half days of cards, liquor, and five-course dinners 2,000 feet above a storm-tossed Atlantic.

They were exciting -- and not just because

they often came to spectacular and fiery ends. The first regular transatlantic pas-

senger flight was not aboard an airplane but rather a zeppelin.



Both nonfiction and fiction of the period sensationalized zeppelins, an expression that echoes down to us today: who can forget the daring escape of Drs. Jones from the zeppelin in *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, *The Rocketeer's* climactic battle, or the opening sequence of *Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow*, in which a Hindenburg III moors to a

mast high atop the Empire State Building?

The romance of zeppelins includes not only what was, but what could have been. Britain planned -- and partially built -- a global network of zeppelin bases across

their empire, from Egypt to South Africa to India to Australia and beyond, each site complete with mooring masts, sheds, and hydrogen plants. The Soviets produced zeppelin propaganda posters and postage stamps but never got around to actually developing the real thing. And some historians conjecture that had the US Navy's rigid-airship program not ended in 1935 with the crash of Macon, the 1941 build-up of Japanese forces in the Pacific would have been impossible, thereby preventing the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Zeppelin Adventures includes three scenarios:

- “Operation Zephyr,” a straight-forward action adventure mixed with light intrigue;
- “Ghouls of the Gasbags,” a brief horror/suspense adventure meant to be played in a single gaming session; and
- “Where Zeppelins Dare,” an espionage adventure in the spirit of spy-novelist Alistair MacLean.

In addition, we present game information on airships, including full D20 system stats, and deckplans.

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OPERATION ZEPHYR

“Operation Zephyr” is an adventure for heroes of 3rd to 5th level. A party consisting of at least four heroes is recommended. Combat ability as well as skills such as Gather Information, Hide, Move Silently, Search, and Spot may be useful.

The scenario begins at Naval Air Station Sunnyvale, California, located 35 miles south of San Francisco. For those running an East Coast campaign, this location can easily be switched to NAS Lakehurst, New Jersey, 75 miles south of New York City, or NAS Anacostia in Washington, D.C. NAS Pensacola or NAS Miami, both in Florida, may be used by those with a campaign along the Gulf coast or in the Caribbean.

Use the plans and statistics for ZRS-4 *Akron* (found in the Appendix) for the fictional *Hoboken*.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The player-characters (PCs) are approached by US Naval Intelligence to accompany a Naval zeppelin to investigate an outpost on a remote island in the north Pacific, dubbed “Outpost Z-1.”

The Navy recently lost contact with Outpost Z-1, which for the past week had complained of mysterious animal attacks and an increase in local volcanism. Naval Intelligence does not wholly trust Navy personnel with the mission as they have

intercepted undecipherable radio transmissions directed to the island originating from the Naval base where the airship is housed. Believing there is a spy within the Navy’s ranks, the PCs are asked to accompany the mission, discover why contact has been lost with the island outpost, and determine the source of the radio signals.

For most of the trip, the PCs are left to interact with the crew in an effort to determine who among them is the spy. As they arrive over the island, the airship is attacked by a swarm of prehistoric birds called teratorns, which eat their way into the interior and attack. In the confusion, the spy, Kessler, attempts to smash the zep’s controls before parachuting into the forest below. The investigators must fend off the teratorns and save the zep from colliding into the slopes of the island’s simmering volcano.

On the ground, the Naval outpost is found deserted and destroyed. Clues direct the PCs to the volcano. Inside, past a hidden entrance, the PCs discover a secret Japanese base where Japanese geologists are experimenting with methods of causing volcanoes to erupt on cue. Their target: the Hawaiian islands, where they plan to destroy the American naval base at Pearl Harbor with a catastrophic eruption! The PCs must foil the Japanese plot and bring Kessler to justice.

CHAPTER ONE: UNCLE SAM WANTS YOU

The PCs are approached by a man who identifies himself as Lieutenant Commander Thomas McCormick with the United States Navy. Exactly how he introduces himself is left to the GM; McCormick can contact the heroes either individually or collectively, in person or by phone call. One dramatic way: a 1934 Ford V8 pulls up beside the PCs while they are on the street, the back door opens, and McCormick asks them if they'd like to hear what he has to say.

Regardless of how the introduction takes place, McCormick asks to meet with the PCs together to make an offer he believes will interest them.

Lt. Commander McCormick

Stern and humorless, McCormick isn't above intimidation if it gets him what he wants. He is a clean-cut, fit-looking man with the bearing of someone accustomed to telling people what to do.

Strong Hero 2/Smart Hero 2/Investigator 2: CR 6; Medium-size human; HD 2d8+1 plus 2d6+1 plus 2d6+1; hp 39; Mas 12; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 15, touch 15, flat-footed 10 (+1 Dex, +4 class); BAB +4; Grap +6; Atk +6 melee (1d4+2, pistol whip) or +5 ranged (2d8, S&W); Full Atk +6 melee (1d4+2, pistol whip) or +5 ranged (2d8, S&W); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL Naval Intelligence; SV Fort +3, Ref +3,

Will +5; AP 3; Rep +2; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Occupation: Investigative (class skills: Search, Sense Motive).

Skills: Decipher Script +3, Drive +1, Gather Information +2, Intimidate +7, Investigate +7, Jump +2, Knowledge (current events) +3, Knowledge (tactics) +5, Listen +6, Read/Write English, Search +5, Sense Motive +6, Speak English, Spot +4, Swim +4.

Feats: Combat Expertise, Double Tap, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Simple Weapons Proficiency.

Possessions: Smith & Wesson Model 29, 30 rounds of .44 ammunition, average business clothes.

Lieutenants Byrne and Callahan

McCormick is accompanied by two lieutenants, also in plainclothes, who don't say much but follow McCormick's orders implicitly.

Fast Ordinary 3/Dedicated Ordinary 2: CR 4; Medium-size human; HD 3d8-1 plus 2d6-1; hp 25; Mas 8; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 16, touch 16, flat-footed 10 (+2 Dex, +4 class); BAB +3; Grap +4; Atk +4 melee (1d3+1 nonlethal, unarmed strike) or +5 ranged (2d6, Colt); Full Atk +4 melee (1d3+1 nonlethal, unarmed strike) or +5 ranged (2d6, Colt); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL Naval Intelligence, McCormick; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +5; AP 0; Rep +2; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 8, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 10.

Occupation: Military (class skills: Navigate, Swim).

Skills: Craft (mechanical) +4, Drive +8, Knowledge (earth and life sciences) +3, Knowledge (physical sciences) +5, Knowledge (technology) +4, Listen +3, Navigate +7, Pilot +10, Read/Write English, Speak English, Spot +3, Swim +3, Treat Injury +2.

Feats: Aircraft Operation (airships), Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Vehicle Expert.

Possessions: Colt M1911A1, 28 rounds of .45 ammunition, average business clothes.

If the PCs agree to listen to Lcdr. McCormick, read the following aloud:

“What I am about to tell you is crucial to the security of the United States. Three days ago, we lost radio contact with a Naval outpost on a remote island in the Pacific Ocean. We are sending our ship USS Hoboken to investigate.

“Ordinarily we would blame a blackout on equipment failure. However, prior to losing contact, we intercepted coded messages directed toward the island. We don’t know what’s in the messages -- our cryptologists are working on them now -- but we must assume they are hostile to the interests of the United States. We don’t even know who the intended recipient was. What we do know is this: the messages originated at



the very base where Hoboken is stationed. We believe the sender is among the crew of Hoboken.

“We don’t have another ship we can send, nor do we have a replacement crew for the Hoboken. I’m too short-staffed to go myself. I need someone from the outside, civilian investigators to accompany the mission. People who I know are not involved. That’s where you come in. Your nominal role would be as observers, taking orders from the captain. However, I would like you to investigate the crewmembers and report back your findings. I want you to find the spy.

“Your recent--” here he gives you a meaningful look “--actions have drawn the interest of my department. For your trouble, the United States government would be willing to compensate you well.”

A successful Sense Motive check (DC 20) suggests that McCormick is not being entirely forthcoming, though it’s left to the PCs to determine what he’s hiding: McCormick actually works for Naval Intelligence.

The outpost McCormick mentions, Outpost Z-1, was only established six weeks ago and is the first in an intended series of bases from the Aleutians to the South Pacific to support airship surveillance of the Pacific region. This top-secret plan is called “Operation Zephyr.”

McCormick believes the rigid airship

Hoboken may be sabotaged during the course of the mission, which is why he will not accompany it. McCormick has voiced his suspicions to Hoboken’s skipper, Commander Gregory, but Gregory thinks McCormick is paranoid.

Since Gregory outranks McCormick and their commanding officers have sided with the skipper, McCormick has instead secretly planted one of his agents, Lt. Dwyer, among the crew. The PCs are to draw attention away from Dwyer while Dwyer locates the spy and finds incriminating information about Gregory for McCormick to use in his personal vendetta.

If Byrne or Callahan is isolated from McCormick, or if McCormick is otherwise distracted, a Bluff check (DC 15) can trip either lieutenant into revealing one of the above facts, depending on the line of questioning. Once spilled, however, the lieutenant realizes his mistake and becomes flustered and angry, refusing to speak to the PCs again.

If the PCs agree, McCormick tells them to meet him at Naval Air Station Sunnyvale at 0600 hours the following morning. He tells them to pack for a week but their bags must weigh less than 20 lbs. McCormick offers no further details about the mission or *Hoboken*. Each PC will be compensated with a +2 Wealth bonus upon his or her return but McCormick refuses to advance any money beforehand.

CHAPTER TWO: INTO THE GREAT WIDE OPEN

The next morning, the PCs should have no problem entering the Naval base. McCormick is not on the base, however; Lt. Byrne greets the PCs and escorts them to *Hoboken*. If asked, Byrne tells them McCormick was called away at the last minute. The truth is that McCormick and the skipper of *Hoboken*, Cdr. Gregory, do not like each other and McCormick wanted to avoid a confrontation over the PCs' presence on the mission.

Lt. Byrne drives the heroes to a wide airfield where an enormous Naval rigid airship is moored by its nose to a framework mooring mast. The morning sunlight glints off the airship's silver envelope, on which is clearly printed, "Hoboken." Ground crew swarm beneath the zep preparing for its flight while men ride an open-air elevator up the mast, then board *Hoboken* across a gangway.

Hoboken's crew of 80 men includes 14 officers and 66 enlisted men.



Commander Gregory

A graduate of the US Naval Academy and a career officer with an impeccable record, Gregory is the skipper of *Hoboken*. He is tolerant but brusque with the PCs, suspecting them of being agents of McCormick who mean to undermine his authority. He allows them free run of the ship as long as they don't cross him.

Dedicated Hero 4/Soldier 3: CR 7; Medium-sized human; HD 4d6+1 plus 3d10+1; hp 28; Mas 12; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 17, touch 17, flat-footed 10 (+2 Dex, +5 class); BAB +5; Grap +5; Atk +5 melee (1d3 nonlethal, unarmed strike) or +7 ranged (2d6, Colt); Full Atk +5 melee (1d3 nonlethal, unarmed strike) or +7 ranged (2d6, Colt); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL US Navy; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +8; AP 3; Rep +3; Str 11, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 18, Cha 12.

Occupation: Military (class skills: Navigate, Pilot).

Skills: Jump +2, Knowledge (current events) +3, Knowledge (earth and life sciences) +2, Knowledge (physical sciences) +9, Knowledge (tactics) +9, Knowledge (technology) +5, Listen +9, Navigate +10, Pilot +12, Spot +12, Survival +2, Swim +5.

Feats: Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Aircraft Operation (airships), Alertness, Educated, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Vehicle Expert, Weapon Focus (Colt M1911A1), Weapon Specialization (Colt M1911A1).

Talents: Skill Emphasis, Aware.

Possessions: Colt M1911A1, 28 rounds of .45 ammunition, Naval khakis.

Lieutenant Kessler

A veteran pilot of the Great War now in his late 30s, Kessler has a cocky attitude and a habit of mouthing off to his superiors which have repeatedly kept him from promotion beyond lieutenant. Navy brass has transferred him to the airship program as a way of keeping him out of trouble. Insulted and frustrated, Kessler began spying for the Japanese Navy, telling them everything he could learn about Operation Zephyr.

Kessler has destroyed his radio transmitter and plans to sabotage *Hoboken* once it arrives at the island, then defect to the Japanese base. There he intends to collect the payment promised to him for his treachery and retire to Tokyo.

Kessler is jealous of Cdr. Gregory and thinks Lt. Dwyer is a dumb rookie. He's very chummy with the enlisted men, encouraging an underdog camaraderie with them. He acts friendly and gregarious with the PCs but is secretly suspicious of their presence on the mission. He subtly attempts to discover why they are along.

Fast Hero 4/Charismatic Hero 2/Air Ace 3: CR 9; Medium-sized human; HD 4d8+1 plus 2d6+1 plus 3d10+1; hp 56; Mas 13; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 22, touch 21, flat-footed 11 (+3 Dex, +8 class, +1 leather jacket); BAB +6; Grap +7; Atk +7 melee (1d4+1, pistol whip) or +9 ranged (2d6, Colt); Full Atk +7 melee (1d4+1, pistol whip) or +9 ranged (2d6, Colt); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL himself; SV Fort +5, Ref +10, Will +2; AP 4; Rep +4; Str 12,

Dex 16, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 9, Cha 15.

Occupation: Military (class skills: Navigate, Pilot).

Skills: Balance +1, Bluff +7, Craft (mechanical) +8, Drive +8, Gather Info +8, Hide +7, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (current events) +3, Listen +3, Move Silently +5, Navigate +7, Pilot +12, Read/Write English, Repair +8, Search +3, Speak English, Spot +4.

Feats: Aircraft Operation (airplanes), Deceptive, Defensive Martial Arts, Heroic Surge, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Stealthy, Vehicle Expert.

Talents: Evasion, Opportunist; Charm (women) +2.

Possessions: Colt M1911A1, 28 rounds of .45 ammunition, leather jacket, Naval khakis.



Lieutenant (Junior Grade) Dwyer

Dwyer actually works for McCormick and Naval Intelligence. McCormick has assigned Dwyer to Hoboken not only to root out the spy but also to uncover any kind of compromising information on Cdr. Gregory. McCormick plans to use any such material in his personal feud with Gregory.

Lt. Dwyer knows why the PCs are on the mission and resents their presence, believing he can identify the spy alone, but he is too inexperienced to know how to proceed. He tries to keep close to the PCs so that he learns what they know about the spy. He also makes ham-handed attempts to dig for dirt on Gregory. Dwyer carries a tiny spy camera to photograph any documents that might incriminate Gregory.

Fast Ordinary 3/Dedicated Ordinary 2:

CR 4; Medium-size human; HD 3d8-1 plus 2d6-1; hp 25; Mas 8; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 19, touch 18, flat-footed 11 (+2 Dex, +6 class, +1 leather jacket); BAB +3; Grap +4; Atk +4 melee (1d3+1 nonlethal, unarmed strike) or +5 ranged (2d6, Colt); Full Atk +4 melee (1d3+1 nonlethal, unarmed strike) or +5 ranged (2d6, Colt); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL Naval Intelligence, McCormick; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +5; AP 0; Rep +2; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 8, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 10.

Occupation: Military (class skills: Navigate, Swim).

Skills: Craft (mechanical) +4, Drive +8, Knowledge (earth and life sciences) +3, Knowledge (physical sciences) +5, Knowledge (technology) +4, Listen +3, Navigate

+7, Pilot +10, Read/Write English, Speak English, Spot +3, Swim +3, Treat Injury +2.

Feats: Aircraft Operation (airships), Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Vehicle Expert.

Possessions: Colt M1911A1, 28 rounds of .45 ammunition, leather jacket, Naval khakis, spy camera.

Officers (11)

The remaining 11 officers of *Hoboken* are all lieutenants, four of whom (along with Kessler) double as heavier-than-air pilots for the F9-C2 Sparrowhawk fighters carried in the airship's hangar bay (see Appendix). Some of their regular responsibilities include construction and repair, navigation, and meteorology.

The officers include Haggerty, Mitchell, Simmons, and Yates.

Fast Ordinary 3/Dedicated Ordinary 2: Same as Lt. Dwyer except AL US Navy.

Possessions: Colt M1911A1, 28 rounds of .45 ammunition, leather jacket, Naval khakis.

Enlisted Men (66)

Some of the enlisted men are named Jensen, Linder, Nolan, Richards, Stefanowski, and Walsh.

Tough Ordinary 1/Smart Ordinary 1: CR 1; Medium-size human; HD 1d10+2 plus 1d6+2; hp 14; Mas 15; Init +1; Spd 30

ft.; Defense 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10 (+1 Dex, +1 class); BAB +0; Grap +1; Atk +1 melee (1d6+1, Brawl) or +1 ranged (2d6, Colt); Full Atk +1 melee (1d6+1, Brawl) or +1 ranged (2d6, Colt); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL US Navy; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +1; AP 0; Rep +1; Str 13, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Occupation: Military (class skills: Navigate, Swim).

Skills: Climb +5, Concentration +3, Craft (mechanical) +5, Knowledge (streetwise) +2, Knowledge (technology) +3, Navigate +3, Read/Write English, Repair +7, Speak English, Spot +2, Swim +3.

Feats: Brawl, Gearhead, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency.

Possessions: Colt M1911A1, 28 rounds of .45 ammunition, mechanical tools, Naval khakis.

Crewmembers do not normally carry their sidearms during flight, instead stowing them in the lockers by their bunks. Kessler and Dwyer both keep their Colts hidden on them.

Lt. Byrne introduces the heroes to Lt. Dwyer as "civilian observers" before departing. Dwyer then escorts the PCs aboard *Hoboken* and shows them to their bunks. Each hero is issued a flashlight and told to keep it in his or her possession at all times. At night, a flashlight is needed to navigate the dimly lit catwalks of the airship.

The airship departs NAS Sunnyvale at 0800 hours (8 a.m.).

CHAPTER THREE: TO CATCH A SPY

The journey to the island, which takes about 40 hours, is uneventful. Hoboken travels at about 56 knots (65 mph) at an altitude of 1,500 ft. The weather is clear.

The heroes should use this time to acquaint themselves with the crew to discover the whereabouts and identity of the spy. This part of the adventure is a free-form role-playing opportunity.

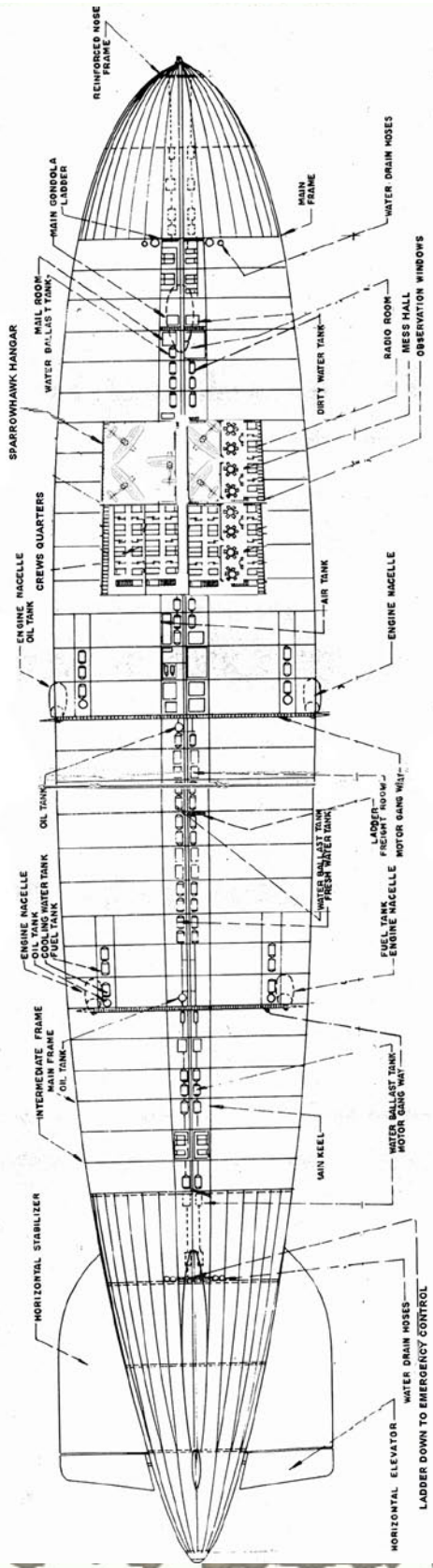
The deckplans of *Hoboken* can be found on the following page.

In the course of their inquiry, the following facts may be revealed (parentheses indicate which individuals know each fact):

- Lcdr. McCormick tried to ground Hoboken's mission to the island but Cdr. Gregory went over his head to their superior officers. They sided with Gregory, which humiliated McCormick (entire crew).
- Gregory and McCormick do not like each other. Gregory thinks McCormick is paranoid, while McCormick thinks Gregory should be forced to follow Naval Intelligence's security recommendations even though Gregory outranks McCormick (officers only).
- In letters to her husband, Gregory's wife complains of being unable to pay several debts the family owes, including car payments and doctor's bills. The wife also says

she has been giving money to her sister, whose husband is out of work. A successful Disable Device (DC 20) is needed to open the lock on the footlocker in which Gregory keeps these letters. A Spot check (DC 15) shows scratches on the lock's face as if someone has already made a clumsy attempt to pick it; Dwyer surreptitiously opened the locker before as part of his mission to incriminate Gregory. Prints made of the film in Dwyer's spy camera show that he photographed the letters from Gregory's wife (Gregory, Dwyer).

- Lt. Kessler is actually older than Gregory and has been passed over for promotion twice because of his poor attitude (Gregory, Kessler, Dwyer).
- Kessler keeps a packed parachute in his footlocker. This is the same parachute he uses in Chapter 5. Disable Device (DC 20) needed to open the locker (Kessler).
- This is Lt. Dwyer's first mission. No one knows much about him except that he's a disciplinarian. Dwyer is disliked since he seems more interested in rules than in airship operation (enlisted men).
- A Gather Information check (DC 20) with Richards, an enlisted man who works in the galley as the airship's cook, reveals that Dwyer was briefly assigned to Naval Intelligence under McCormick but that he was soon transferred to Hoboken. Richards happened to see the paperwork for the transfer while in Gregory's office one day submitting a promotion request (Richards, Gregory).



U.S.S. HOBOKEN

Deck Plan

Scale: 1 inch = 90 feet

- The officers are sworn to secrecy about Operation Zephyr. However, a Gather Information check (DC 20) together with some alcoholic lubrication reveals the plan. Alcohol is forbidden onboard so the PCs have to supply it themselves (officers only except Gregory and Dwyer).

CHAPTER FOUR: FIGHT AT FIFTEEN-HUNDRED FEET

Around midnight on the second night, *Hoboken* reaches the unnamed island somewhere southwest of the Alaskan peninsula.

Looking out into the moonlight, you see a rocky cinder cone rising up steeply in front of the airship, thick trails of smoke wafting overhead. Its slopes disappear down into a dark carpet of pine. Breakers crash onto a salt-and-pepper shore of white snow and black stone. There is no sign of habitation whatsoever, only a lonely and unfathomable wilderness.

Cdr. Gregory orders *Hoboken* into a hovering position over the island. At daybreak, the crew steers the ship to the Naval outpost and its mooring mast once it can be spotted.

An hour passes uneventfully. During this time, a PC looking out into the night either through the airship's windows or from either of the lateral catwalks and making a Spot check (DC 18) sees dark shapes glid-

ing past. They move too quickly to discern clearly. These are some of the island's fauna -- teratorns.

Suddenly, the PCs hear bloodcurdling screams from somewhere along one of the catwalks. If they rush to investigate, read or paraphrase the following:

A cold wind blows down the gangway toward you. The bouncing beams of your flashlights showcase an enormous rift in the airship's outer envelope, its tattered edges flapping inward. Then a thrashing mass on the deck of the catwalk appears in the cone of your lights. You recognize the bloody corpse of one of the crewmen beneath. Atop the man's chest swarms a horde of enormous vulture-like birds, their curved beaks scarlet with giblets of hanging flesh. They stop their feasting and, as one, turn their beady eyes to you. Beyond, more of the cackling beasts rush into your lights, scrambling along the catwalk toward you on long legs.

The teratorns, attracted by the scent of prey, have cut their way through *Hoboken's* outer envelope with their talons. Two teratorns attack for every 3rd- or 4th-level PC and three teratorns for every 5th-level PC. To avoid a lot of dice-rolling, the GM should exclude the GM crewmembers from the fight, although Gregory or 1-3 enlisted men enter the fray if it goes badly against the PCs.

Teratorn

CR 1; Small animal; HD 1d8; hp 6; Mas 10; Init +3; Spd 20 ft., fly 40 ft. (good); Defense 14, touch 14, flat-footed 11 (+3 Dex, +1 Size); BAB +0; Grap -4; Atk +0 melee (1d4, beak); Full Atk +0 melee (1d4, beak) and -4 (1d3, 2 claws); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft. SQ blood in the air, scent; AL none; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +1; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 6, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 5.

Skills: Climb +8, Listen +3, Move Silently +6, Spot +9.

Teratorns (*Teratornis merriami*) are carnivorous, condor-like birds that went extinct at the end of the last Ice Age. Standing 30 inches tall, they weigh about 30 lbs. with 14-ft. wingspans. Equipped with sharp beaks and wicked rear talons, teratorns probably ate small game and carrion, but for game purposes they are blood-crazed raptors slaving for PC flesh.

Blood in the Air (Ex): Teratorns are attracted to blood. When a PC or GM character receives his or her first wound in combat with a teratorn, the scent of blood attracts an additional 1d4 teratorns, which arrive on the scene three rounds later and attack that character. Only a character's initial wound summons teratorns; further wounds do not.

Scent (Ex): A teratorn can detect approaching enemies, sniff out hidden foes, and track by sense of smell.

Skill Bonuses: Teratorns receive a +4 species bonus on Listen and Spot checks.

While hundreds of teratorns roost in the cliffs of the volcano, only one wave attacks *Hoboken* tonight.

Optional Encounter: If the PCs survive the fight, a breathless enlisted man stumbles toward them, saying *Hoboken's* four Sparrowhawk pilots are injured (the man doesn't know where Kessler is) and 2d6 teratorns are ripping apart the top of the airship.

Someone needs to pilot one or all four of the Curtiss Sparrowhawks or go topside on foot and kill the teratorns before they pierce the gas cells. Every 10 rounds (1 minute) that the teratorns are left unmolested, *Hoboken* takes 5 hp damage (see Table 1: New Aircraft, in the Appendix).

However, once the heroes engage the teratorns (with the Sparrowhawks or otherwise), the birds break off from *Hoboken* and attack them. Note that overshooting the teratorns while they are on top of or near the airship may cause damage to *Hoboken*.



CHAPTER FIVE: COLLISION COURSE

While the heroes are battling the teratorms, Kessler, if he hasn't been killed or restrained, seizes the opportunity to defect. He makes his way to the bridge where he knocks out the helmsman and the elevator man (the crewman who controls altitude) from behind. The officer on watch, the radio man, and other personnel have left the control car to fight the teratorms.

Kessler then puts Hoboken on a course toward the slopes of the volcano, jams the rudder and engine controls, smashes the radio and internal telephone line, and parachutes into the forest below through one of the control-car windows. From there, Kessler makes his way to the secret Japanese base within the volcano.

Upon discovering this news (perhaps the helmsman, conscious but dazed, comes running to tell them), the PCs have 30 rounds (3 minutes) to stop or change the airship's course before it collides with the volcano, utterly destroying Hoboken. The GM can schedule this encounter either immediately after the teratorm battle or, for a greater challenge, while the battle is still occurring. The GM may want to utilize a stopwatch while the PCs discuss their options, then stop it when they announce their plan of action. Subtract the discussion time from the 30-round time limit (6 seconds equals 1 round) to determine how much time the heroes have to implement their strategy.

Some possible solutions:

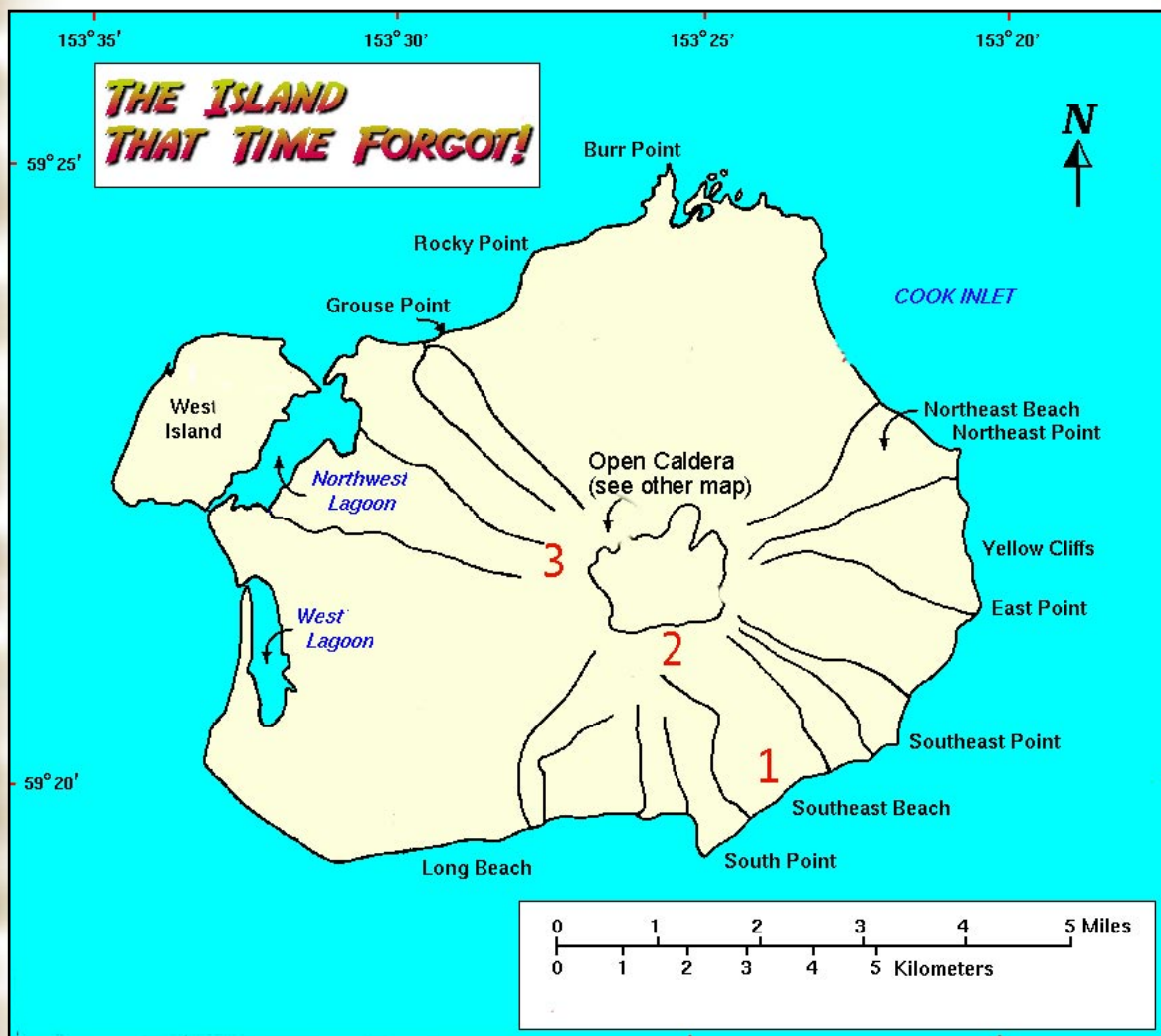
- A hero can attempt a Jury-Rig Repair (DC 20) on the helm and/or elevator controls, enabling the PCs to steer the airship away from the volcano long enough to avoid destruction. Three Jury-Rig Repairs are necessary and each takes 1 round. A full Repair of the controls is required later. A Concentration check (DC 10) is also required to make a Repair if teratorms are loose in the control car.
- The heroes can attempt to manually shut off all eight of the airship's engines, which are arranged four along each side of Hoboken. Alternatively, they can shut off just the engines along one side, causing Hoboken to veer away from the volcano. For a hero moving 30 ft. per round, it takes 1 round to climb out of the control car and another 6 to reach the forward-most engine on either side and tell the mechanic on duty to cut power. From there it takes another 3 rounds per engine to reach each of the other three engines and their mechanics on that side. Total time for an individual to reach all four engines on one side from the control cabin: 16 rounds (1 minute, 36 seconds).
- The heroes can manually override the controls by accessing the emergency control cabin located in Hoboken's bottom tailfin. It takes a hero moving 30 ft. per round 21 rounds (2 minutes, 6 seconds) to climb up from the control car, run along either of the lateral gangways, and climb down into the emergency control cabin. It takes an additional round to take control of the ship and steer it away from the volcano.

Neither the helmsman nor the elevator man recalls what happened, only that the ship was stopped when they were struck from behind. If a head count is done, 1d8 enlisted men and 1d4 officers were slain in the battle and Kessler is missing.

CHAPTER SIX: THE ISLAND THAT TIME FORGOT

(Area Numbers correspond to the map that appears in this chapter.)

The island is ringed by surf-battered rocks that make landfall impossible for anything bigger than a kayak. A rolling and verdant tundra leads uphill from the ocean, pock-marked by pools of meltwater and boulder piles. Large stands of juniper and spruce



break the terrain. At the center of the island is the blunted cone of the volcano, its rocky slopes bare of vegetation but dotted with huge teratorn nests.

The fauna of the island is Pleistocene, although with the exceptions of the teratorns and a saber-toothed cat, it's left to the GM to populate it with megafauna.

Cdr. Gregory brings the damaged Hoboken to the outpost's mooring mast at first light. Although Gregory forbids the heroes from leaving Hoboken before then, there is nothing to prevent them except the obvious physical difficulties. Personnel attempt to forcibly stop the heroes from hijacking the Sparrowhawks.

Once moored, Gregory and a 30-man contingent from Hoboken disembark to survey the outpost. They do not explore the rest of the island, including the volcano, with the exception of Dwyer, who makes sure to stick close to the PCs. Instead, Gregory and the rest concentrate on repairing Hoboken.

1: Outpost Z-1

A collection of Quonset huts have been established in a shallow depression about 300 ft. from the high-tide line on the southeast side of the island. The huts include barracks, a mess hall, offices, workshops, a small infirmary, and a radio shack equipped with a radio tower. To the north of the outpost, a strip of land has been cleared to allow light aircraft (like the Sparrowhawks) to land on the spongy tundra. There is also a short "stub" mooring mast for airships.

The outpost is deserted. The two dozen men operating the outpost were attacked by the Japanese from the secret volcanic base and captured. The Japanese have made efforts to conceal the nature of the attack, going so far as to brush away footprints, collect spent bullet casings, and leave the carcasses of teratorns to suggest that the birds attacked the outpost. However, a few clues may suggest to the heroes that appearances are deceiving:

The radio room has been smashed. While the outpost radio is inoperable, there are enough parts here to repair the radio system onboard Hoboken.

The outpost's offices have been ransacked. Documents in the offices pertain to requisitions and other day-to-day operational procedures. There is nothing regarding Operation Zephyr; these files have been removed by the Japanese. However, among the papers (Spot (DC 15)) is a line graph comparing predicted daily volcanic activity on the island to actual observed activity. These two lines match identically until two weeks ago, when the actual activity becomes much greater than the predicted activity. Although the personnel of Outpost Z-1 didn't know it, this increased activity is due to the tampering of the volcano by the Japanese geologists.

In another office, an incomplete report still in the typewriter can be Spotted (DC 10). Its author, Lt. Colbert, reports that during a patrol near the western slope of the volcano, his men discovered several fresh cigarette butts. Colbert reports there was no

sign of who left the butts.

Cold, half-eaten meals still sit in the mess hall. Many of the bunks in the barracks are unmade.

Someone examining the Quonset huts may Spot (DC 15) one of them pockmarked with bullet holes. Further, a Search (DC 20) of the area uncovers a few bullet casings overlooked by the Japanese. The casings are 8mm. A PC making a successful Knowledge (technology) check (DC 20) knows that this unusual caliber is used by Japanese-made firearms.

In one of the workshops lies the rotting carcass of a teratorn that was obviously being dissected. Nearby is a journal describing the process. The unnamed author describes the teratorn as being an extinct bird not seen since the Ice Age, and that the teratorns roost on the slopes of the island's volcano. The journal also notes that the teratorns seem agitated by the volcano's increased activity and have attacked the outpost at all hours of the day and night, but that no outpost personnel have been killed by the birds.

Heroes with the Track feat may be able to follow traces of the retreating Japanese soldiers and their prisoners from the outpost, through 3. A Survival check (DC 10) is required between areas 1 and 2, and another between areas 2 and 3.

2: Teratorn Totems

Indigenous sailors from the surrounding islands erected a half-dozen wooden totems carved to resemble stylized teratorns in the hope of keeping the deadly birds from straying too far from their home isle.

The totems, 15-ft. tall, stand arranged in a boulder-strewn glade at the southern base of the volcano. On the solstices, the islanders also revisit the totems to make offerings which usually consist of fish and whale meat. Searching (DC 20) through the old bones around the totems, PCs discover another kind of gift left by the islanders: a fistful of pearls (+4 Wealth).

A saber-toothed cat lurks in the nearby boulders, seeking to scavenge the islanders' meat or even an actual islander. The PCs fill the menu nicely.

Smilodon

CR 4; Large animal; HD 6d8+18; hp 45; Mas 17; Init +2; Spd 40 ft.; Defense 14, touch 11, flat-footed 12 (–1 size, +2 Dex, +3 natural); BAB +4; Grap +14; Atk +9 melee (1d8+6, claw); Full Atk +9 melee (1d8+6, 2 claws), +4 melee (2d6+3, bite); FS 10 ft. by 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ pounce, improved grab, rake 1d8+3, low-light vision; AL none; SV Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +3; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 23, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills: Balance +6, Hide +5 (+9 in tall grass or undergrowth), Listen +3, Move Silently +9, Spot +3.

Pounce (Ex): If a smilodon leaps upon a foe during the first round of combat, it can

make a full attack even if it has already taken a move action.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, the smilodon must hit with a claw or bite attack. If it gets a hold, it can rake (see below).

Rake (Ex): A smilodon that gets a hold of its target can make two rake attacks (+9 melee) with its hind legs for 1d8+6 points of damage each. If the tiger pounces on an opponent, it can also rake.

Skill Bonuses: Smilodons receive a +4 species bonus on Balance, Hide, and Move Silently checks. In areas of tall grass or heavy undergrowth, their Hide bonus improves to +8.

Saber-toothed cats (*Smilodon fatalis*) are similar to African lions, though shorter (3 ft. at shoulder) and much heavier (700 lbs.). Their weight makes them ambush predators since they are too bulky to run long distances. Bobtailed and lacking a mane, a smilodon's most notable feature is the 7-in. canines curving out of its upper jaw.

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE JAPANESE BASE

(Area numbers described correspond to the map that appears in this Chapter.)

Built offshore of the American territory of Alaska, the clandestine Japanese Imperial Navy base was established about two years ago within the volcano's caldera to research volcanism as a weapon. When the US Navy scouted and built Outpost Z-1, they overlooked the Japanese presence.

The Japanese are aware of Hoboken's arrival to the island, either from reconnaissance or from Kessler. They intend to keep a low profile, with no air or land scouting missions, until Hoboken departs. They maintain strict light discipline at night.

In addition to six civilian geologists, there are 39 Japanese soldiers manning the base.



Commander Fujita

The base's commandant ordered the attack on Outpost Z-1 when scouts from the outpost began investigating the volcano's increased activity; fearful they might discover the base, the Japanese attacked Z-1 by surprise and took the sailors prisoner. Frustrated he has been given such a backwater assignment, Fujita is a strict, merciless officer who finds satisfaction in his study of kendo, the martial art of Japanese swordsmanship.

Strong Hero 2/Dedicated Hero 2/Martial Artist 2: CR 6; Medium-size human; HD 2d8 plus 2d6 plus 2d8; hp 30; Mas 11; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 19, touch 19, flat-footed 10 (+3 Dex, +6 class); BAB +5; Grap +7; Atk +7 melee (2d6+2/19-20, katana) or +8 ranged (2d4, Nambu); Full Atk +7 melee (2d6+2/19-20, katana) or +8 ranged (2d4, Nambu); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL Imperial Japanese Navy; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +4; AP 3; Rep +1; Str 14, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 14, Cha 8.

Occupation: Military (class skills: Demolitions, Move Silently).

Skills: Balance +2, Demolitions +2, Jump +3, Knowledge (tactics) +1, Listen +4, Move Silently +5, Read/Write English, Read/Write Japanese, Sense Motive +1, Speak English, Speak Japanese, Spot +3, Tumble +2.

Feats: Combat Martial Arts, Defensive Martial Arts, Exotic Melee Weapons Proficiency, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Weapon Focus (katana).

Talents: Ignore Hardness, Skill Emphasis

(Move Silently), Living Weapon, Flying Kick.

Possessions: Nambu Type 14 pistol, 30 rounds of 8mm ammunition, katana, uniform.

Japanese Pilots (8)

Half of these men operate the A1N2s; the others pilot the airship *Hirohito*. Since the arrival on the island of the US Navy six weeks ago, all aircraft have been grounded so the secret base isn't discovered. Now the pilots are waiting for Hoboken to clear out before resuming their scouting patrols. Sitting around with nothing to do has made the pilots irritable, leaving them to take out their aggression on the enlisted soldiers.

Fast Ordinary 3/Dedicated Ordinary 2: CR 4; Medium-size human; HD 3d8-1 plus 2d6-1; hp 25; Mas 8; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 19, touch 18, flat-footed 11 (+2 Dex, +6 class, +1 leather jacket); BAB +3; Grap +4; Atk +4 melee (1d3+1 nonlethal, unarmed strike) or +5 ranged (2d4, Nambu); Full Atk +4 melee (1d3+1 nonlethal, unarmed strike) or +5 ranged (2d6, Colt); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL Imperial Japanese Navy; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +5; AP 0; Rep +2; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 8, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 10.

Occupation: Military (class skills: Navigate, Swim).

Skills: Craft (mechanical) +4, Drive +8, Knowledge (earth and life sciences) +3, Knowledge (physical sciences) +5, Knowledge (technology) +4, Listen +3, Navigate +7, Pilot +10, Read/Write Japanese, Speak Japanese, Spot +3, Swim +3, Treat Injury +2.

Feats: Aircraft Operation (airships), Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Vehicle Expert.

Possessions: Nambu Type 14 pistol, 30 rounds of 8mm ammunition, leather jacket, uniform

Japanese Soldiers (30)

Duty for the common soldiers at the secret base gravitates between tedium and torment from their officers. The recent attack on the US outpost was the most action these green soldiers have ever experienced. All of them have rudimentary training in jujitsu.

Tough Ordinary 2: CR 1; Medium-size human; HD 2d10+2; hp 16; Mas 15; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 13, touch 13, flat-footed 10 (+1 Dex, +2 class); BAB +1; Grap +3; Atk +3 melee (1d4+2, Combat Martial Arts) or +2 ranged (2d6, Arisaka); Full Atk +3 melee (1d4+2, Combat Martial Arts) or +2 ranged (2d6, Arisaka); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL Imperial Japanese Navy; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +1; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Occupation: Military (class skills: Hide, Move Silently).

Skills: Climb +1, Craft (mechanical) +3, Craft (structural) +2, Hide +2, Knowledge (popular culture) +1, Knowledge (street-wise) +1, Move Silently +1, Read/Write Japanese, Speak Japanese, Spot +3, Survival +1.

Feats: Combat Martial Arts, Exotic Firearms Proficiency, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency.

Possessions: Arisaka Type 38 rifle, 60 rounds of 6.5mm ammunition, uniform.

The base consists of three dozen buildings of varying sizes built on pilings driven into the uneven rocky floor of the caldera (+4 Hide bonus beneath the buildings).

The GM can sketch out a map of building placement or roll 1d20 whenever the heroes enter a building to determine its occupants:

| | |
|--------|--|
| 1-7: | Empty. |
| 8-10: | 2d4 soldiers. |
| 11-12: | 1d4 pilots. |
| 13-14: | 1d6 soldiers plus 1d4 pilots. |
| 15-18: | 2d4 soldiers plus Cdr. Fujita. |
| 19-20: | 1d6 soldiers plus 2 pilots plus Cdr. Fujita. |

If shots are fired or explosives set off, soldiers or pilots in adjacent areas set off the base alarm. See chapter 8.

3: Tunnel

About 50 ft. up the western slope of the volcano is a cave mouth, about 10 ft. in diameter, which leads through the volcano to its caldera and the secret Japanese base. A series of switchbacks lead up to the mouth. It is disguised by camouflage netting, easier Spotted (DC 10) from land than from air (DC 20).

Four soldiers patrol the area in six-hour

SECRET JAPANESE BASE (WITHIN VOLCANO'S CALDERA)



shifts. Though sometimes sent out on scouting missions, generally the guards spend their time hidden behind a couple of boulders out of sight of the cave, smoking cigarettes, gossiping, and discussing their favorite Hollywood actresses.

4: Commandant's Office and Quarters.

A steep, narrow staircase leads up from this Spartan office to Cdr. Fujita's sleeping quarters. The file containing orders (in English) detailing Operation Zephyr and the establishment of Outpost Z-1, which the Japanese raiders stole from the outpost, rests on Fujita's desk.

5: Kessler's Quarters.

If Kessler successfully escaped *Hoboken* in Chapter 5, he is here in this storeroom, which has been outfitted with basic furni-

ture for him. His treachery complete, he is waiting for *Hirohito* carry him to Tokyo. Otherwise, this is just a storeroom filled with sacks of rice and other dry foodstuffs.

Kessler doesn't speak or read Japanese, so he has no contact with any of the other men in the base save the commandant, who is polite but uninterested in entertaining his American guest. The Japanese soldiers, pilots, and geologists ignore him. Bored, Kessler spends most of his time in his quarters trying to amuse himself.

Upon sighting the PCs -- and assuming his last encounter with them wasn't hostile -- Kessler leaps up and thanks them for rescuing him. He tells them he was in the control car the night the teratorms attacked, and that Lt. Dwyer, whom he suspects is a

Japanese spy, jumped him and threw him out the window. Trees broke his fall but he was captured by the Japanese and has been held hostage ever since.

Kessler, still armed with his Colt, avoids direct conflict. Instead he tries to bluff his way out of his quarters, with or without the PCs, where he can raise the alarm. Failing that, he stalls for time, hoping someone passes by who may notice the situation. If asked why the door to his room is unlocked, Kessler replies that since he would never make it past the guards at the cave's entrance, there's no reason to keep him locked up. A Spot check (DC 15) reveals the bunched-up parachute he used to escape *Hoboken* lying on a shelf in the storeroom.

Kessler bolts from the heroes as soon as possible. If a fight appears inevitable, Kessler attempts to shoot and run. If the PCs chase or attack him, Kessler fires back with his Colt or climbs into one of the A1N2s, starts it up, and rolls around the caldera, shooting at them maniacally with its twin machine guns. He cares nothing for the Japanese or their mission; his only concerns are self-preservation and self-enrichment.

Additionally, the Japanese keep mining and digging equipment in the storeroom, including drills, augurs, and three cases of dynamite, each containing a dozen sticks.

6: Laboratory.

The six civilian Japanese geologists recruited by the Imperial Navy work toward

triggering volcanic eruptions at will. If successful, the Imperial Navy intends to use this project to reawaken the two "dead" or dormant volcanoes on the Hawaiian island of Oahu, thereby destroying the US Naval base at Pearl Harbor. The geologists' research has made progress: the island's volcanic activity has been increasing within the last two weeks, disturbing the local teratorms which roost on the volcano's slopes.

Being civilians, the geologists do not fight the heroes. They each have sworn an oath of loyalty to the Japanese emperor and carry a cyanide suicide pill which works instantaneously. If possible, the geologists eat their pills rather than give up the secrets of their research. Four of the geologists are present in this area; the other two are in area 7. If statistics for the geologists are needed, use those for the Mid-Level Smart Ordinary 3/Dedicated Ordinary 3 given in the Core Rulebook.

The lab is crammed with weird equipment. Pipes and wires run from the floor to area 7. A Search (DC 10) of the papers in the room turns up a large map of the Hawaiian Islands. Though labeled in Japanese, Oahu and its two volcanoes are clearly marked as is the US Naval base at Pearl Harbor.

If all of the controls in the lab and those in area 7 are put to the maximum and left there for at least 60 rounds (10 minutes), a volcanic eruption begins to occur. The eruption does not destroy the whole island, but it does demolish the Japanese base 10 minutes after it initiates.

7: Testing Area

A large pit, steaming with hot noxious vapors, is surrounded by gauges, monitors, and other large pieces of equipment. Various rods, tubes, and pipes run from the equipment and from area 6 into the depths of the pit, where lava simmers 100 ft. down. Two geologists monitor the equipment.

If all of the controls in this area as well as those in area 6 are put into the red and left there for at least 10 minutes, a volcanic eruption begins to occur. The heroes have 10 minutes to escape the base or be destroyed along with it.

8: Radio Control Tower

The outpost monitors Japanese, Russian, and American radio transmissions. The radio room is also used to communicate with the A1N2s and *Hirohito*. Two soldiers and one pilot are present.

9: Runway

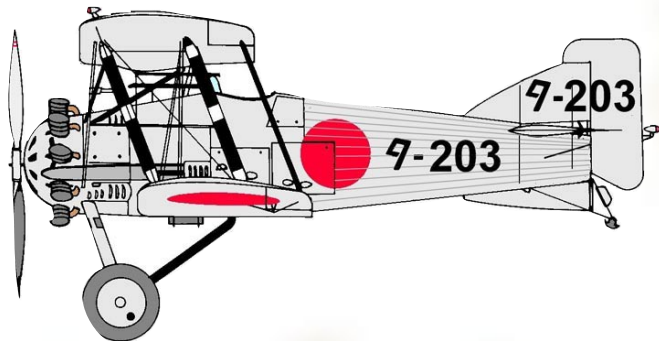
The short runway is only capable of supporting small airplanes which can take off in brief distances. Arresting wires catch landing planes. Four Nakajima A1N2 airplanes are parked on the eastern side of the runway. The GM should add an extra A1N2 for each additional PC in the party. (See Appendix for statistics on the A1N2)

Moored to a stub mast adjacent to the runway is the Japanese zeppelin *Hirohito*,

emblazoned with a gigantic rising sun. It is hidden under a canopy of camouflage netting, making it obvious from the ground but hard to Spot (DC 20) from the skies. Use the statistics and description for ZR-1 *Shenandoah* on Appendix Table 1: New Aircraft for *Hirohito*; however, *Hirohito* is armed with Nambu Type 92 machine guns instead of Lewises. Also, unlike *Shenandoah*, *Hirohito* is inflated with hydrogen. Igniting the hydrogen causes 10 damage to the zeppelin per round (Hardness modifier does not apply), killing anyone still on-board when *Hirohito* is totally consumed.

10: Brig

A lone, windowless hut sits in the shadow of *Hirohito*. Locked within are the 24 men from Outpost Z-1, guarded by a pair of Japanese soldiers sitting outside. The prisoners tell the heroes that the Japanese attacked them by surprise and overwhelmed them. All of the men are unarmed and too exhausted to fight; use the statistics for the Enlisted Men (CR 1, hp 14) for the prisoners. If *Hirohito*'s hydrogen is ignited in its moored position, it collapses on top of the brig, killing anyone inside.



CHAPTER EIGHT: HITTING HIROHITO WHERE IT HURTS

There are a number of ways the heroes can thwart the Japanese plot, including causing a volcanic eruption or judicious use of the dynamite in area 5.

The heroes may also wish to attempt a full-scale assault using *Hoboken* and its crew. Cdr. Gregory refuses on the grounds that his men are not combat infantry. However, he grants support of the four Sparrowhawks and their pilots if the heroes' plan is reasonable.

In the case of a such a large assault or if the alarm is activated during the heroes' infiltration of the base, the Japanese retreat to *Hirohito* while the Japanese pilots scramble their planes. Both *Hirohito* and the A1N2s counterattack before turning their guns on *Hoboken* in an all-out aerial battle. The heroes may attack the Japanese zeppelin from *Hoboken* or from the ground, by piloting any of the airplanes, or by boarding *Hirohito*. Note that special incendiary bullets (unavailable on *Hoboken*) are needed to ignite the hydrogen filling *Hirohito*, so the heroes may need to devise another way of setting fire to the Japanese zep if that's their goal.

If a volcanic eruption is provoked, the entire volcano begins shaking violently and the Japanese base crumbles. The whole island trembles but the heroes should have little difficulty once they are outside of the caldera. The Japanese pilots attempt to

launch their airplanes (Kessler, if alive, is sure to shoot one of the pilots and take his plane) and attack the heroes or *Hoboken*. The GM may want Kessler to escape to fight another day.

Hoboken is repaired and ready for flight as soon as the heroes return from the Japanese base. Back at NAS Sunnyvale, Lcdr. McCormick awards each PC a +2 Wealth bonus and 2 AP if the Japanese plot was foiled, the prisoners rescued, and Kessler was correctly identified as being the spy.

McCormick may commission the PCs for future missions -- perhaps by forming an exclusive "United States Zeppelin Corps." If the heroes failed, however, then the Japanese evacuate the island aboard *Hirohito* before the Navy returns with reinforcements. With their volcanic research completed, it is only a matter of time before Japanese saboteurs descend upon Oahu to reawaken its sleeping giants.

GHOULS OF THE GASBAGS

“Ghouls of the Gasbags” is an adventure for heroes of 5th to 7th level. Skills such as Climb, Move Silently, and Read/Write German may be helpful. Use the statistics and deckplans for *Hindenburg* found in the Appendix for the fictional *Nietzsche*. Because of its brevity, this scenario dispenses with the “Adventure Summary.”

The GM should emphasize the suspenseful nature of this scenario -- intended for a single gaming session -- by playing it at night under poor lighting. Also, the GM should feel free to stress sensory descriptions throughout: the battered zeppelin, the awful smells aboard, the fetid flesh of the ghouls, etc.

CHAPTER ONE: MISSION BRIEFING

The heroes are contacted by Lieutenant Commander McCormick (see “Operation Zephyr”) for a new mission. If the PCs agree to meet with him, read or paraphrase the following:

“Three months ago, the German passenger zeppelin Nietzsche disappeared en route to Rio de Janeiro. The last radio transmission from Nietzsche stated that the vessel had suffered damage in a storm over the Atlantic Ocean and was losing gas. They said were going to attempt an emergency landing. No one ever heard from them again.

Ships sent to search the area of the last radio contact discovered no sign of wreckage or survivors. Nietzsche was presumed lost at sea.

“However, two days ago, a severely distressed zeppelin with the same markings as Nietzsche was sighted off the United States coastline heading full-speed toward New York City. The airship is completely dark and all radio queries have gone unanswered. We want you to rendezvous with Nietzsche, go aboard, and discover who, if anyone, is piloting it. We also want you to take control of the ship and redirect it toward our Naval Air Station at Lakehurst. Good luck.”

The PCs should formulate a strategy for accessing *Nietzsche*. Methods include parachuting onto *Nietzsche*, then cutting the outer envelope and climbing inside; or hooking onto the zeppelin’s flying trapeze with an airplane and climbing up (this trapeze, unlike that of *Akron* or *Macon*, does not retract into the airship).

The Navy provides support -- passage in one of their airships, an airplane, parachutes -- but does not provide weapons, explosives, or personnel who actively participate in boarding *Nietzsche*. The GM should examine the PCs’ plan and devise appropriate Skill checks (Balance, Climb, Jump, etc.) necessary for success.

CHAPTER TWO: GHOST SHIP

When the heroes attempt to rendezvous with *Nietzsche* based on its last observed course and speed, the ship cannot be found. Searching for it proves fruitless until sunset, when it is finally spotted:

As the sun sinks behind the horizon, you sight your prey. It is unlike any zeppelin you've ever seen. Large sections of the outer fabric covering have ripped away, exposing the bare ribs of its frame. Pieces of envelope flap in the wind like a torn shroud. And although all four propellers are spinning at top speed, no life is discernible, and the whole -- including the control car -- is pitch black.

With the exception of two areas described below, the ship is deserted. The heroes detect signs of a struggle -- claw marks, overturned furniture, large splashes of dried blood -- as they approach the passenger section, but no bodies. The engines, meanwhile, are unmanned but in perfect condition. The interior is completely dark, necessitating the use of flashlights. Flares or other open flames ignite the hydrogen in the gas cells if the cells are ruptured by gunfire or other means; ignition causes 10 rounds of damage to *Nietzsche* per round.

Passenger Stateroom:

The passenger areas of the airship show the most signs of conflict: doors and even walls are buckled, blood and dried gore coat the walls, and a stifling smell over-

hangs it all. However, one stateroom has not been breached, although its door is severely dented and battered. A combined Strength of 50 is needed to break through the barricaded door.

Inside, the heroes find the huddled corpse of a male passenger clutching a kitchen knife. He is bruised and dressed in rags. The man died about three days ago from dehydration. On the wall, written in his own blood from a cut finger, the man has written, "*Sie werden mehr bilden*" (Translation: "They're going to make more").

Lounge:

Three ghouls, all former crewmen, crouch around the remains of a rotting passenger, gorging themselves. They attack upon sighting the heroes.

Ghouls (3)

Tough Ordinary 1/Smart Ordinary 1: CR 3; Medium-size undead; HD 2d12; hp 14; Mas --; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 15, touch 15, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +1 class, +2 natural); BAB +0; Grap +2; Atk +2 melee (1d3+2, claw); Full Atk +2 melee (1d3+2, 2 claws) and +0 melee (1d6+1 plus disease, bite) or +2 ranged; FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ create spawn, darkvision 60 ft., disease, scent, undead; AL chaos, evil; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +1; AP 0; Rep +1; Str 15, Dex 14, Con --, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Occupation: Blue collar (class skills: Climb, Drive, Repair).

Skills: Climb +6, Concentration +3, Craft (mechanical) +5, Drive +3, Knowledge (streetwise) +2, Knowledge (technology)

+3, Navigate +2, Read/Write German, Repair +8, Speak German, Spot +3.

Feats: Brawl, Gearhead, Multiattack, Simple Weapons Proficiency.

Possessions: Tattered uniform.

Create Spawn (Su): If a ghoul's prey contracts advanced necrotizing faciitis (see below) from the wounds it has sustained and dies from the disease, it rises 1d3 days later as a ghoul. A remove disease spell cast on the corpse can prevent it from rising.

Disease (Su): A ghoul's bite infects the victim with advanced necrotizing faciitis (injury; Fort DC 14; incubation period 1d3 days; initial damage 1d3 Con; secondary damage 1d3 Con; if Con damage is sustained, a second saving throw at the same DC is required; failure indicates that 1 point of the Con damage becomes Con drain instead). The disease can be arrested completely through amputation of the affected limb or surgical removal of all the affected tissue as well as some nearby healthy tissue. A cure disease spell or a successful Treat Injury check (surgery, DC 25) halts the disease. The GM should roll the check secretly; if it fails, the disease returns again in 1d3 days.

Scent (Ex): This ability allows a ghoul to detect approaching enemies, sniff out hidden foes, and track by sense of smell.

Undead: Ghouls have the traits and immunities common to undead.

Radio Room:

The radio is completely and irreparably smashed. A chart on the floor shows the course of Nietzsche from its base in southern Germany (the town of Gletschertal; see "Where Zeppelins Dare"), across the Atlantic toward Rio de Janeiro, then ends over the Amazonian jungle. From here, another line written in a shaky, clumsy hand runs to New York. Next to the city, the same hand has written, "*Todes... dann Leben!*" (Translation: "Death... then life!"). This note was written by Capt. Schwarz after his transformation into a ghoul.

Captain's Quarters:

This small room, like every other area on the ship, has been completely ransacked. However, Searching (DC 10) the mess uncovers Capt. Schwarz's log (see handout), written in German. A hero may Spot (DC 10) an English-German dictionary lying on the floor, enabling non-fluent PCs to decipher the log, the bloody graffiti in the passenger stateroom, and the message on the radio-room chart.

Gas Cells 14, 15, and 16:

The three forward-most gas cells of Nietzsche are filled with hydrogen permeated with advanced necrotizing faciitis, the airborne bacteria which causes transformation into a ghoul. Exposure to this gas is the same as being bitten by a ghoul (see ghoul description). All three cells show extensive repair work.

Control Car:

The ghouls have bolted shut the hatchway leading into the control car. The heroes

have to cut through it, exit the airship and Climb (DC 15) down the car's side and through the windows, or use some other method to enter the car.

Within the car, Capt. Schwarz, the skipper of *Nietzsche*, directs the actions of eight of his crewman on their course toward New York. All of them are ghouls, dressed in the ripped and bloodstained remnants of their uniforms. Their darkvision allows them to work in complete darkness.

Captain Schwartz

A veteran zeppelinier from the Great War, Schwartz was an outstanding commander of *Nietzsche* until he was bitten by one of his own ghoulish crewmembers deep in the Amazon. Having been resurrected into undeath, now his driving ambition is to marshal his recalcitrant subordinates and pilot *Nietzsche* into the streets of New York, releasing the tainted gas in its forward cells and infecting scores of people with advanced necrotizing faciitis.

Ghoul Captain (Fast Hero 3/Air Ace 2): CR 7; Medium-size undead; HD 5d12; hp 23; Mas --; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 21, touch 21, flat-footed 12 (+4 Dex, +5 class, +2 natural); BAB +4; Grap +6; Atk +6 melee (1d3+2, claw); Full Atk +6 melee (1d3+2, 2 claws) and +4 melee (1d6+1 plus disease, bite) or +8 ranged; FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ create spawn, darkvision 60 ft., disease, scent, undead; AL chaos, evil; SV Fort +1, Ref +9, Will +3; AP 2; Rep +2; Str 14, Dex 19, Con --, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 11.

Occupation: Military (class skills: Climb, Navigate).

Skills: Balance +2, Climb +4, Craft (mechanical) +7, Hide +6, Knowledge (technology) +2, Listen +3, Move Silently +4, Navigate +4, Pilot +7, Read/Write English, Read/Write German, Repair +4, Speak English, Speak German, Spot +3.

Feats: Aircraft Operation, Defensive Martial Arts, Elusive Target, Heroic Surge, Multiattack, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency.

Possessions: Tattered captain's uniform.
Ghoul SQ: see ghoul description.

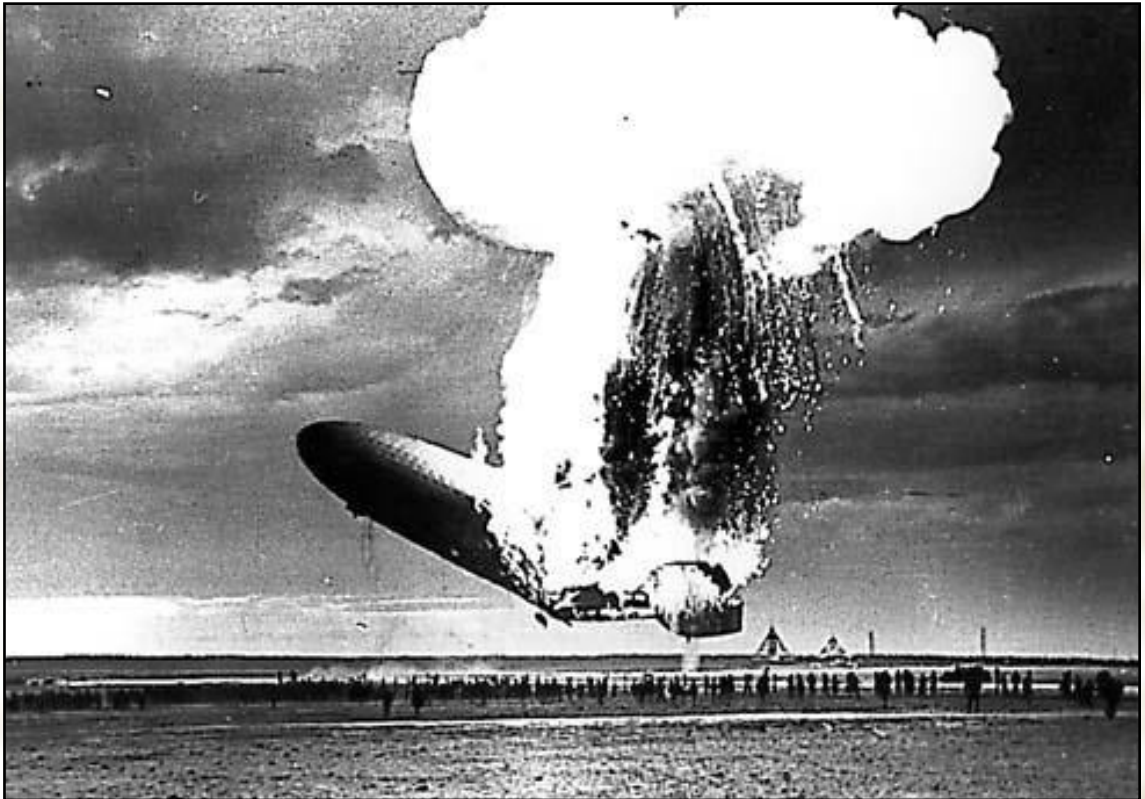
Ghouls (8): CR 3, hp 14. Use the same stats as the crew in the Lounge.



If the heroes don't stop Schwartz and divert *Nietzsche* from its course within six hours of boarding it, then the ghouls succeed in crashing the zeppelin into Times Square, releasing the poison gas in its forward cells and infecting 20d10 New Yorkers with ghoullism (Schwartz and his crew jump free at the last moment to revel in the destruction). These new ghouls, of course, can infect others in turn, so an epidemic may follow.

However, if the heroes seize control of *Nietzsche* and divert it to NAS Lakehurst where the gas can be safely dispersed, McCormick rewards them with a +1 Wealth bonus. They receive no bonus if the ship was destroyed during the adventure.

If one of the PCs becomes infected during the adventure, he or she may have to seek a cure. Research (DC 10) into advanced necrotizing faciitis points to a legend that an artifact known as the Splinter of St. Boniface is rumored to heal any disease (see "Where Zeppelins Dare").



HANDOUT: CAPTAIN SCHWARTZ'S LOG

The following are the last few pages of the logbook of Captain Schwartz of the zeppelin *Nietzsche*, written in German:

August 7: All is well. Left Africa behind us this afternoon, beginning crossing of Atlantic.

August 8: Altered course to ESE toward S America to avoid storm to S.

August 9: Unable to outrun storm. Very bad weather. Damage to rudder, envelope torn in many places. Losing gas in cells 14, 15, 16. Radio damaged. Up all night.

August 10: Made emergency landing in jungle clearing. All hands & passengers unharmed. Cells 14, 15, 16 completely deflated. Unsure of exact position.

August 12: Have assigned Farber, Heinz, Weber to scout area to find water, what food they can. All other hands repairing rudder & gas cells. Radio impossible without parts. Trying to make passengers comfortable.

August 19: Farber reports finding stone pyramid 3 km away. Says there are gas fissures inside. May be able to use gas to reinflate cells 14, 15, 16. Will investigate tomorrow.

August 20: Farber took me to pyramid. Progress slow; jungle very thick. Pyramid covered in vines, trees. Appeared to be pre-Columbian temple of some kind. Decorated with carvings of skulls & monsters eating people. Dark stains on altar at summit. Sense of unnatural events having occurred here. Inside, Farber pointed to a wall of horrific carved faces, their mouths fashioned as if they were whistling or blowing. From these came steady streams of gas. Hydrogen! But how to transport the gas to *Nietzsche*?

August 22: Farber has ingenious plan of using fuel hoses from the engines to pipe gas from the pyramid. Ordered him to set to work immediately. I worry he is overworked. Has developed bright red rash on his chest. Dr. Lustig says it is probably due to heat & exhaustion.

August 25: Farber's plan going well. Began reinflating cell 14. Progress slow.

August 26: Farber collapsed. Rash on chest has become deep purple w/ blisters. Trouble breathing. Lustig has him in sick bay. Assigned Heinz & Weber to continue reinflation of cells. We need that gas!

August 28: Buried Farber today. Died early this morning, his flesh consumed by blisters. Lustig baffled. Reinflation continuing.

September 1: One of the passengers attacked last night. Completely mauled, half-eaten, almost unrecognizable. Jaguar? Have ordered sentries in perimeter around ship. Heinz & Weber both sick w/ rash on chest & throat. Assigned Baum & Dietz to reinflation duties.

September 3: Richter attacked & killed last night while standing watch. Saltzmann heard noise, fired, killed it. I heard gunfire, ran out. Saltzmann pointed at what he had shot. I held up my lantern to look -- it was Farber! Distorted, perverted, with enormous jagged teeth & claws, flesh a pustulant violet, but it was him nonetheless. Had he been not dead but comatose? Did we bury him prematurely? Lord have mercy on our souls.

September 7: Heinz & Weber both dead, Heinz this morning, Weber last night. Cell 14 completely inflated; have moved on to cell 15.

September 10: Baum & Dietz in sick bay with rash. Lustig has no cure.

One month since landing in this godforsaken place. What is happening to us?

September 13: Three passengers attacked last night. Their assailants crept past the sentries and into the ship. Have ordered everyone to stay close to Nietzsche. Dietz dead. Others want to burn body. I agree & order it done.

September 15: They're in the jungle. I shot & killed Richter while on watch. Attacked from behind, clawed my left shoulder. Same as with Farber -- it was him, but altered into a deformed beast. How can I have killed him when he was already dead? Baum missing from sick bay.

September 18: Impossible to get any work done. We're under constant attack. Two more crewmen attacked & killed. Ammunition running low. Lustig treating shoulder but it itches terribly.

September 19: Something tried to get into my quarters last night. I knew it was one of them. It was talking to me, telling me about resurrection & new life, free of morality & the laws of men. Asked me to open the door, embrace death and then live again unencumbered. It was Heinz's voice. I ordered it to leave & it did. If only we could finish re-inflating the gas cells and leave this evil place. Surely we are in Hell itself. Rash has appeared down my left arm.

The log abruptly ends.

WHERE ZEPPELINS DARE

“Where Zeppelins Dare” is an adventure for heroes of 5th to 7th level. A small party of 2-3 individuals is recommended. Skills such as Bluff, Demolitions, Disguise, Hide, Move Silently, and Speak German may be helpful. Use the statistics and deckplans for *Hindenburg*, found in the Appendix, for the fictional *Karl der Grosse*.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The player-characters are commissioned to destroy a Nazi radio-relay station high atop an inaccessible mountain in the Bavarian Alps. The easiest way to gain entry to the station is aboard a civilian zeppelin, which regularly reprovisions the station.

The heroes voyage across the Atlantic Ocean aboard the German zeppelin *Karl der Grosse*. Along the way they are befriended by a beautiful woman who is actually a Soviet spy on a mission to steal Nazi radio technology from the station. The zeppelin’s European terminus is the Bavarian town of Gletschertal, where the passengers disembark before *Karl der Grosse* ferries supplies to the nearby relay station. Once there, the heroes must somehow destroy the station and make their escape. Along the way, they may be helped or hindered by the Soviet spy.

CHAPTER ONE: MISSION BRIEFING

Some suggestions as to how the heroes may become involved in the adventure: Due to the mission’s covert nature and their experience with lighter-than-air craft, the mission to destroy the base is being directed by Naval Intelligence. Lcdr. McCormick, perhaps familiar with the heroes and their actions in “Operation Zephyr,” requests that they undertake the task in return for a +1 Wealth bonus.

The PCs are traveling to Europe and have secured passage on *Karl der Grosse*. Along the way, they encounter Katarina Zimmerman, a Soviet spy posing as an American agent, who attempts to recruit them to her mission to steal the Nazi radio for the United States. She doesn’t reveal that she’s actually stealing it for the USSR.

The heroes have learned that the mountain base, which was once a monastery, contains a medieval artifact known as the Splinter of St. Boniface. Motivated by either patriotism or profit (or perhaps as a cure for ghoullism), they set out to relieve the Nazis of the artifact.

However the PCs become involved, read or paraphrase the following to them, either at the beginning of the mission or during Zimmerman's recruitment efforts:

The Nazis have established a series of relay stations using the new FM radio technology stolen from the US Army's Signal Corps. The relays pick up and pass on radio signals further down the line, allowing effective communication between Berlin and Nazi agents throughout Europe. If this network is allowed to continue, it will only contribute to Germany's growing militarism and belligerence toward its neighbors.

The linchpin in the Nazis' relay network is a tiny base situated high atop a mountain in the Bavarian Alps, called Der Mönchenhaus. Built by Trappist monks in the 17th century, this small monastery was originally accessible only by ladders or baskets lowered down by the monks. The development of lighter-than-air technology now allows access to the monastery by zeppelin. The Nazis have recently occupied the abandoned monastery and established their radio base there, complete with a docking spar for zeppelins to bring supplies and personnel.

The Mönchenhaus is situated near the Bavarian town of Gletschertal, which is also the eastern terminus for the Merkur Zeppelin Company -- and Merkur is the sole contractor to re-provision the Mönchenhaus.

How the heroes approach the mission is left to them. The objectives may vary according to how they became involved in the mission: Naval Intelligence wants them to destroy the base, radio and all; Zimmerman wants them to help her steal the radio; and heroes after the Splinter of St. Boniface may not be interested in the radio at all.

The heroes may cross the Atlantic on the Merkur zeppelin *Karl der Grosse* or travel in some other fashion to Gletschertal. Tickets (Purchase DC 15) are available at the airship's American terminal at NAS Lakehurst, New Jersey; if the PCs are commissioned by the US military, tickets are provided.

If they request explosives from the military to destroy the base, arrangements are made to meet an agent in Gletschertal who will provide them with plastic explosives and detonators. The military refuses to provide dangerous materials that may destroy the hydrogen-filled zeppelin and all onboard before it reaches Gletschertal. A rendezvous is established for a particular time and date at a secluded pub ("*Die Drei Blinden Mäuse*") in Gletschertal; the GM may make up some cloak-and-dagger passwords for the PCs to memorize. All other equipment the heroes must provide themselves.

Optional encounter:

Prior to boarding, the PCs are attacked by a Nazi spy who has learned of the heroes' mission. Use the statistics for a Nazi officer below (CR 5, hp 43). The assassin is in plainclothes and carries a German passport, but no other details about his identity or why he attacked are available.

CHAPTER TWO: OVER THE ATLANTIC

Prior to boarding the hydrogen-filled *Karl der Grosse*, passengers' luggage is searched and all matches, lighters, and the like are confiscated, to be returned after disembarking in Gletschertal (as are personal handguns; anyone with larger firearms or explosives is detained and the police are called). Seized items are kept in a safe in the captain's quarters during the voyage.

The flight to Gletschertal takes 60 hours; the heroes enjoy the full freedom of the passenger sections of the airship. Casual discussion with any of the crewmembers (who speak both English and German) reveals that after disembarkation of the passengers at Gletschertal, *Karl der Grosse* is to be loaded with supplies and fresh personnel and then flown to the Mönchenhaus. During a four-hour layover, the supplies will be unloaded and personnel swapped. Then the zeppelin will return to Gletschertal to prepare for its flight back to Lakehurst. While the crew knows that the Mönchenhaus is a military base, no one knows its true nature as a radio relay station.

If statistics for any of the 60 crewmembers are needed, use those for the Enlisted Men (Tough Ordinary 1/Smart Ordinary 1) given in "Operation Zephyr" (CR 1, hp 14). They have no firearms.

During the voyage, one of the male PCs

is approached by Katarina Zimmerman, ostensibly a German tourist returning from the States alone. Zimmerman is actually a Soviet spy out to steal the FM radio technology from the Mönchenhaus. After some small talk, Zimmerman attempts to recruit the PC to her mission:

If the PCs have been sent to destroy the base, Zimmerman says she is a US Naval Intelligence agent dispatched to assist them. She cooperates long enough to gain entry to the Mönchenhaus, after which she attempts to steal the radio and flee by herself, leaving the PCs to be captured or killed.

If the PCs are after the Splinter of St. Boniface or have no fixed goals in mind, Zimmerman says that she is an American spy and asks for their assistance in stealing the radio for Uncle Sam. She is uninterested in the Splinter.

Zimmerman's plan to enter the Mönchenhaus is to present herself as the secretary of an accompanying Nazi officer, then travel in *Karl der Grosse* when it makes its re-provision mission. At the Mönchenhaus, she and the false officer will steal the radio and escape. What she lacks is a male companion who can play the part of the officer. If the PCs agree, Zimmerman urges them to acquire Nazi uniforms and identification papers (by mugging, theft, etc.) while in Gletschertal. In turn, she uses her forgery skills to doctor identifications. Then they may board *Karl der Grosse* and fly to the Mönchenhaus disguised as Nazis.

If the heroes refuse her offer, Zimmerman doesn't disembark *Karl der Grosse* with the rest of the passengers; instead, she hides in the framework of the zeppelin until it docks at the Mönchenhaus. She then sneaks off and tries to steal the radio by herself.

Katarina Zimmerman

Idealistic and self-assured, Katya Zhirnovsky left her native Leningrad soon after graduating university to join the Spanish Civil War. In Spain she used her gams, good looks, and natural felicity with languages to extract sensitive information from the Nationalists. She was soon recruited by NKVD (Soviet intelligence), who gave her combat training and further developed her linguistic skills for Mother Russia. Zimmerman is an exceptional forger, able to alter or create identification papers, passports, and the like.

Charismatic Hero 5/Infiltrator 3: CR 8; Medium-sized human; HD 5d6+1 plus 3d8+1; hp 46; Mas 12; Init +2; Spd 35 ft.; Defense 17, touch 16, flat-footed 11 (+2 Dex, +4 class, +1 leather overcoat); BAB +3; Grap +3; Atk +3 melee (1d4, pistol whip) or +5 ranged (2d6, Luger); Full Atk +3 melee (1d4, pistol whip) or +5 ranged (2d6, Luger); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL USSR, godless communism; SV Fort +5, Ref +8, Will +2; AP 4; Rep +4; Str 11, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 11, Cha 15.

Occupation: Investigative (class skills: Forgery, Sense Motive).

Skills: Bluff +6, Disable Device +3, Disguise +6, Escape Artist +2, Forgery +10, Gather Information +3, Hide +6, Knowl-

edge (art) +2, Knowledge (current events) +3, Knowledge (popular culture) +2, Listen +5, Move Silently +6, Read/Write English, Read/Write German, Read/Write Russian, Read/Write Spanish, Search +7, Sense Motive +4, Sleight of Hand +3, Speak English, Speak German, Speak Russian, Speak Spanish, Spot +4.

Feats: Defensive Martial Arts, Dodge, Meticulous, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Run, Simple Weapons Proficiency.

Talents: Charm (men) +5, Favor, Captivate; Sweep, Improvised Implements.

Possessions: Luger P08 (smuggled onboard), 24 rounds of 9mm ammunition, false identification papers (as Katarina Zimmerman, a German citizen), leather overcoat, women's clothes.



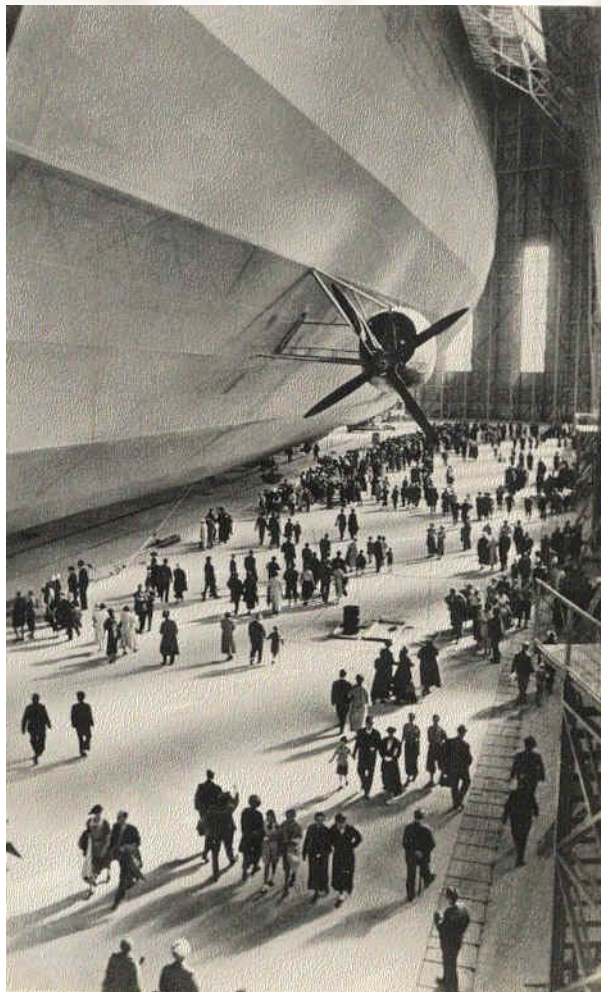
CHAPTER THREE: THE HILLS ARE ALIVE... WITH THE SOUND OF BULLETS

The town of Gletschertal (population 8,000) is an idyllic alpine town full of half-timber buildings and gingerbread window-boxes, marred only by the swastikas of Nazi flags hanging along its narrow streets. Snow-capped mountains limn the southern horizon. A train station and railway connect Gletschertal to other parts of Europe. There are numerous beer gardens and restaurants where the heroes may dine as well as pensions and inns where they may overnight. Most regular goods and services are available (including mountain-climbing and skiing gear) but not guns, weapons, or explosives.

Optional encounter:

If the PCs agreed to meet an American agent at “*Die Drei Blinden Mäuse*” to provide them with explosives, the agent never appears. He has been intercepted by Nazi spies. In his place, four Nazis arrive to arrest the PCs (use the statistics for Nazi Radio Operators; CR 3, hp 20). Note the pub offers many flammable brands of alcohol and features a roaring fireplace and a lit candle on every table. If they are captured, the PCs are taken to a Nazi base; the GM will have to ad-lib the rest. If the heroes escape, their stay in Gletschertal may become a little hot depending on how noisy and violent the encounter is.

Set in a large airfield east of town is the Merkur Zeppelin Company. Among the



airfield are several mooring masts, four hangars, and a number of offices, workshops, and equipment sheds. A chain-link surrounds the field with access monitored at guard booths; otherwise, there is little security (use the statistics for Nazi Radio Operators below for the guards; CR 3, hp 20). Buses ferry passengers and their luggage between the Merkur airfield and Gletschertal.

The Merkur fleet consists of six identical airships, one of which is under construction in the hangars. Another is also in the

hangars, undergoing minor adjustments but ready to fly. The final three are currently on voyages elsewhere.

Merkur is a civilian corporation that primarily runs passenger flights. Their proximity to the Mönchenhaus has led to an exclusive contract (an offer they couldn't refuse) with the Nazis to provision the base with supplies and personnel from Gletschertal.

Karl der Grosse docks at a Merkur mooring mast at 11 a.m. After the passengers and their cargo disembark, the ship is checked for any damage, repairs are performed, and supplies for the Mönchenhaus are loaded onto the airship. At 10 a.m. the following morning, *Karl der Grosse* leaves for the Mönchenhaus with a crew of 45 (stewards, cooks, and the like are not needed). It docks at the Mönchenhaus spar at 12 p.m. Supplies are unloaded. The airship leaves Mönchenhaus at 4 p.m., returning to the Merkur airfield at 6 p.m. This process is repeated every month.

The airship also carries 2d6 Nazi radio operators and 1d4 Nazi officers to and from the Mönchenhaus. These rotating personnel are strangers to the crew; they make small talk but otherwise don't discuss what occurs at the base. The Nazis are in uniform and are not asked for identification by the crew but they must show papers to the Merkur guards when entering the airfield. Likewise, PCs in disguise or presenting false identification papers must get past the guards' Spot and Forgery checks.

Optional encounter:

One of the officers flying to the Mönchenhaus has intelligence about the PCs planning to infiltrate the station. Somehow the PCs learn of this and must neutralize the officer before he reaches the Mönchenhaus. If he does, the station's Nazis are forewarned and gain +4 on all Forgery, Listen, and Spot checks.



CHAPTER FOUR: DER MÖNCHENHAUS

Meticulously carved from the mountain face, the “Monk’s House” never held more than a dozen men at the same time. Now its drafty halls teem with Nazis. A few of the monastery’s buildings jut from the rock and snow of the mountaintop, 5,000 ft. from the mountain’s base. The Mönchenhaus is nearly impossible to reach by any means other than zeppelin or from ropes or lines lowered down, but an experienced mountaineer making three consecutive Climb checks (DC 15) can reach its summit just as the original monks did. From the mountain, climbers can enter the monastery through its windows or the trapdoors in areas 1 and 4 (see map on following page).

The Nazis of the Mönchenhaus come in two varieties:

Nazi Radio Operator

Promising soldiers are hand-selected for the signal corps. Not only are these men in peak physical condition, they have been extensively trained in radio operation.

Strong Ordinary 2/Smart Ordinary 2:

CR 3; Medium-size human; HD 2d8+1 plus 1d6+1; hp 20; Mas 13; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 14, touch 14, flat-footed 10 (+1 Dex, +3 class); BAB +3; Grap +5; Atk +5 melee (1d4+2, Combat Martial Arts) or +1 ranged (2d6, MPE); Full Atk +5 melee (1d4+2, Combat Martial Arts) or +1 ranged (2d6, MPE); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL Nazi Germany; SV Fort +3, Ref +1,

Will +2; AP 0; Rep +1; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 10, Cha 8.

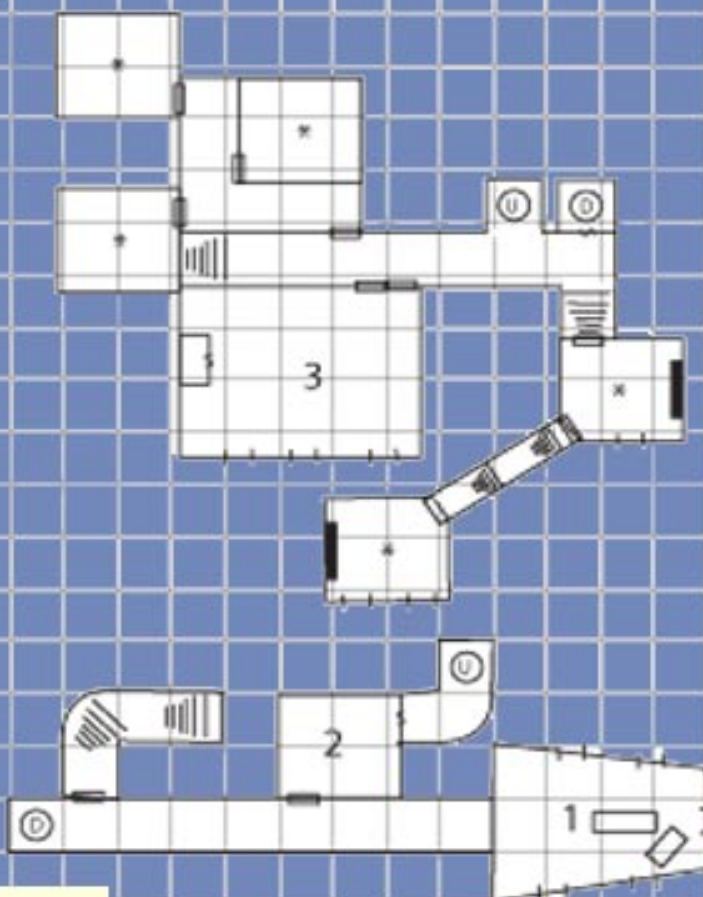
Occupation: Military (class skills: Hide, Move Silently).

Skills: Climb +4, Craft (electronics) +7, Craft (mechanical) +3, Disable Device +3, Hide +4, Knowledge (tactics) +4, Knowledge (technology) +4, Knowledge (popular culture) +1, Move Silently +4, Read/Write German, Repair +9, Search +2, Speak German.

Feats: Combat Martial Arts, Gearhead, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency.

Possessions: Maschinenpistole Erma, 64 rounds of 9mm ammunition, identification papers, winter overcoat, Nazi uniform.





Der Wönnenhaus

1 square=10 feet

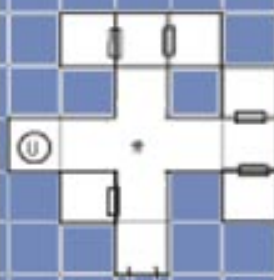
⊙ = Spiral stairs going up

⊕ = Spiral stairs going down

▬ = Fireplace

■ = Window

S = Secret door



Nazi Officer

The radio operators do all of the work; these thugs keep them in line.

Strong Ordinary 3/Tough Ordinary 3:

CR 5; Medium-size human; HD 3d8+2 plus 3d10+2; hp 43; Mas 15; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 15, touch 15, flat-footed 10 (+1 Dex, +4 class); BAB +5; Grap +7; Atk +7 melee (1d4+2/19-20, knife) or +6 ranged (2d6, Luger); Full Atk +7 melee (1d4+2/19-20, knife) or +6 ranged (2d6, Luger); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL Nazi Germany; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +2; AP 0; Rep +1; Str 15, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Occupation: Military (class skills: Hide, Move Silently).

Skills: Climb +6, Drive +2, Hide +6, Intimidate +4, Jump +4, Knowledge (tactics) +2, Move Silently +4, Read/Write English, Read/Write German, Speak English, Speak German, Spot +6.

Feats: Combat Martial Arts, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Simple Weapons Proficiency.

Possessions: Luger P08, 24 rounds of 9mm ammunition, knife, identification papers, winter overcoat, Nazi uniform.

The frigid hallways and chambers of the Mönchenhaus are lit by strings of bare electrical bulbs installed by the Nazis. The doors are made of heavy oak and windows are covered only by a pair of inner shutters.

Areas of interest:

Asterisked Rooms: Before play, roll 1d8 and check the following chart for each

room's occupants:

- 1-4: Empty.
- 5: 1 Nazi radio operator.
- 6: 1d4 Nazi radio operators.
- 7: 1-2 Nazi officers.
- 8: 1d4 Nazi radio operators plus 1-2 Nazi officers.

1: Basket Room

The eastern 30 ft. of this room overhangs the ground 5,000 ft. below. From here, a large basket (big enough to carry two adults) attached to a rope can be lowered and raised through a trapdoor in the floor using an enormous hand-operated winch. All pieces of the mechanism are still operational, though the Nazis do not use it.

The Nazis have bolted a zeppelin mooring spar to the side of the mountain, extending it through the room's roof and out into space. A reprovisioning zeppelin attach its nose to the end of the spar. Personnel and supplies carted on dollies may then move from the zep along the spar and down a ramp into the basket room.

An officer inventories supplies unloaded from *Karl der Grosse* by a team of ten radio operators, who disperse the equipment throughout the outpost. Exiting personnel board the ship as soon as it docks while fresh troops immediately head for their stations. The crew of *Karl der Grosse* are forbidden from entering the outpost.

2: Storeroom

Searching (DC 10) through this room's crates of canned food and supplies reveals

a box containing 10 blocks of the plastic explosive Nobel 808 (use statistics for C4/Semtex in the Core Rulebook) and an equal number of timed detonators. An additional Search (DC 10) reveals another containing 12 Stielhandgranates. Meanwhile, a Search (DC 20) along the eastern wall reveals a secret door leading to a cobwebbed spiral staircase disappearing upwards into darkness.

3: Chapel

The monastery's old chapel has been converted into a bunkroom. At any time there are 2d4 radio operators getting some shut-eye between shifts.

The altar has been defiled with cigarette butts, garbage, and German pornography, but a Search (DC 25) along its front face reveals a secret compartment containing the Splinter of St. Boniface.

Splinter of St. Boniface:

While introducing Christianity to Germany, Boniface chopped down a tree sacred to the god Thor to build the first Christian church. This is a splinter from that tree. The fragment, about 12 inches long and an inch thick, allows anyone with a good Allegiance (GM's discretion) to cast Cure Disease once a month. It also allows the user to cast Lightning Bolt once per month. Each bolt deals 5d6 points of electricity damage, or half if a Reflex save (DC 14) succeeds. Using the Splinter's lightning ability is an attack action and does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

Type: Wondrous Item (magic); Caster Level: 5th; Purchase DC: 32; Weight: 1 lb.

4: Radio Room

The large common room where the monks spent most of their time meditating and transcribing holy texts is now the Nazis' radio room. Heavy tables packed with radio equipment fill the room, manned by 12 radio operators and 4 officers at all times. A large fireplace along the northern wall keeps the chill away; a ladder bolted to the west wall leads to a trapdoor and the room's roof with its dozens of radio antennae.

The central FM unit Zimmerman needs is along the south wall; it weighs 10 lbs. and requires 10 rounds (1 minute) to disconnect it from surrounding devices. The room itself is destroyed and utterly inoperable if it sustains more than 24 hp of Concussion damage.

CHAPTER FIVE: ESCAPE FROM NAZI MOUNTAIN

Zimmerman works with the PCs as long as they cooperate toward her goal of stealing the radio unit from area 4. If the heroes hinder her at any time, she attacks or abandons them quicker than she can say, “Das vadanya, comrades.” Alternately, she may betray them to the Nazis by using her Bluff and Speak German skills to claim she is a Nazi spy.

Upon seizing the radio, Zimmerman proceeds to the control car of *Karl der Grosse* (with or without the heroes) and orders the unarmed crew at gunpoint to return to the Merkur airfield. She shoots the zeppelin’s onboard radio so they cannot communicate with authorities in Gletschertal. As soon as *Karl der Grosse* is moored, Zimmerman rushes from the ship as a truck crashes through the fence surrounding the airfield. Zimmerman jumps in with the stolen radio and the truck speeds for the Austrian border. The truck is driven by a Soviet agent while a gunner, armed with an MPE, shoots at pursuers (use the statistics for Nazi Radio Operators; CR 3, hp 20).

Besides commandeering the zeppelin, several possible exits from the relay station present themselves:

- Assuming they haven’t alerted the entire station to their presence, the heroes may simply leave on *Karl der Grosse* when it departs at 4 p.m., four hours after arriving. The heroes could somehow evade pursuers

by hiding within or on top of the zeppelin and escape when it leaves.

- The heroes may use the winch and basket in area 1 to lower themselves to the ground. They can barricade the door to the room against pursuers, but someone will have to stay behind to operate the winch. Perhaps that person could then climb down the rope (5,000 ft. of it!) to the ground.

If alarms are activated at any time throughout the adventure by Nazis in adjacent areas hearing gunfire, explosions, or other loud sounds (by making successful Listen checks), or if the radio room is destroyed with explosives while the PCs are still present in the Mönchenhaus, 2d4 Nazi radio operators plus 1d4 Nazi officers attack the heroes until the PCs either escape, are captured or killed, or slay their pursuers.

How the heroes return to the States is left to the GM. Perhaps a military pick-up has been prearranged, or the GM may want to keep the heroes on the Continent for further European adventures. They may even travel on *Karl der Grosse* on its return voyage to Lakehurst.

If their mission was to destroy the relay station and they succeeded, Lcdr. McCormick gives each hero a +1 Wealth reward; if they successfully thwarted Zimmerman’s attempt to steal the radio, each hero also receives 2 AP.

APPENDIX

Table 1: New Aircraft

| Name | Crew | Pas | Cargo | Init | Maneuvr | Top Speed | Def | Hard | HP | Size | DC | Rest |
|------------------------------------|------|-----|---|------|---------|-----------|-----|------|----|------|----|----------|
| Curtiss F9C-2 Sparrowhawk | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1 | 0 | 0 lb | -1 | -2 | 308 (31) | 8 | 8 | 30 | H | 40 | Mil (+3) |
| Nakajima A1N2 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1 | 0 | 0 lb. | -1 | 0 | 261 (26) | 8 | 8 | 40 | H | 40 | Mil (+3) |
| LZ-129 Hindenburg | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 61 | 50 | 124 ton | -6 | -4 | 148 (15) | 2 | 8 | 55 | C | 50 | Res (+2) |
| ZR-1 Shenandoah | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 22 | 0 | 27 ton | -6 | -8 | 106 (11) | 2 | 8 | 60 | C | 50 | Mil (+3) |
| ZR-3 Los Angeles | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 45 | 0 | 30 ton | -6 | -6 | 137 (14) | 2 | 10 | 55 | C | 50 | Mil (+3) |
| ZRS-4 Akron and ZRS-5 Macon | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 81 | 0 | * | -6 | -4 | 148 (15) | 2 | 10 | 65 | C | 50 | Mil (+3) |
| | | | * 91 tons for Akron; 95 tons for Macon. | | | | | | | | | |



Table 2: US Naval ZR (Zeppelin Rigid) Airships

| | ZR-1 Shenandoah | ZR-3 Los Angeles | ZRS-4 Akron | ZRS-5 Macon |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Commissioned | Oct. 10, 1923 | Nov. 25, 1924 | Oct. 27, 1931 | June 23, 1933 |
| Lost | Sept. 3, 1925 | See below | Apr. 3-4, 1933 | Feb. 11, 1935 |
| Length | 680 ft. | 658 ft. | 785 ft. | 785 ft. |
| Diameter | 79 ft. | 90ft. 6 in. | 132.9 ft. | 132.9 ft. |
| Volume | 2,115,000 cu ft. | 2,472,000 cu ft. | 6,500,000 cu ft. | 6,500,000 cu ft. |
| Power | Five 300 hp Packard engines | Five 400 hp Maybach engines | Eight 560 hp Maybach engines | Eight 560 hp Maybach engines |
| Maximum Spd | 60 mph | 76 mph | 84 mph | 84 mph |



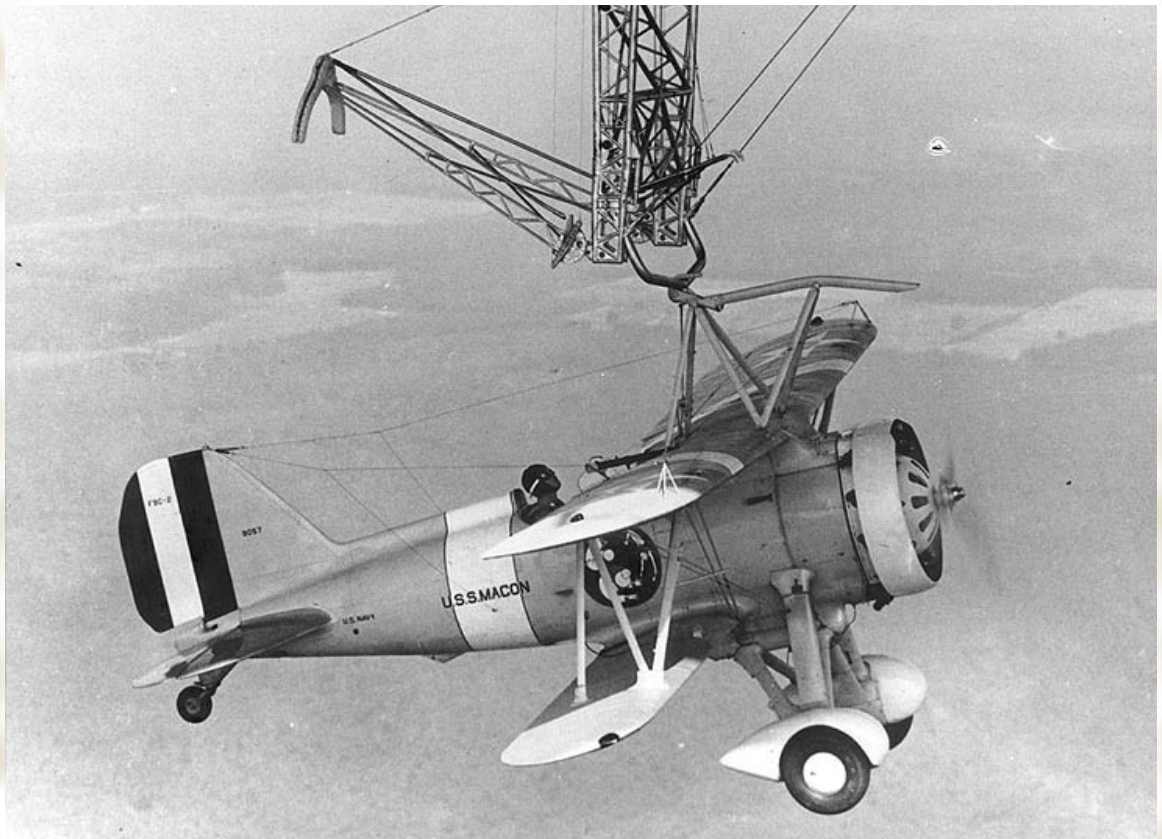
Curtiss F9C-2 Sparrowhawk

This small but fast fighter was made exclusively for the Navy's airship program by Curtiss Aeroplane & Motor Company, Buffalo, NY.

First delivered in 1932, the Sparrowhawk featured a hook mounted on top of the plane to catch the trapeze beneath the airship. Once suspended, the plane could be raised into the ship's interior. Armament consists of two .30-caliber machine guns fixed on its nose (use the statistics for the Lewis machine gun in Table 3: New Weapons). The Sparrowhawk is 4 squares long with a wingspan 5 squares wide; the fuselage is 1 square wide.

Nakajima A1N2

The A1N2 were carrier fighters for the Imperial Japanese Navy. First introduced in 1930, they were biplanes equipped with an arresting-cable hook and two 7.7mm forward-firing machine guns (use the statistics for the Nambu Type 92 in Table 3: New Weapons). The A1N2 is 4 squares long with a wingspan 6 squares wide. The fuselage is 1 square wide.



LZ-129 Hindenburg

The most famous airship in history was also the largest: 804 ft. long and 135 ft. in diameter, with space to carry 72 passengers (but only enough bunks for 50 transatlantic passengers). Its inaugural flight across the North Atlantic from Friedrichshafen to Lakehurst took place in April 1936; in May 1937, it crumbled in flames, probably the result of a build-up of static electricity and a leaking gas cell.

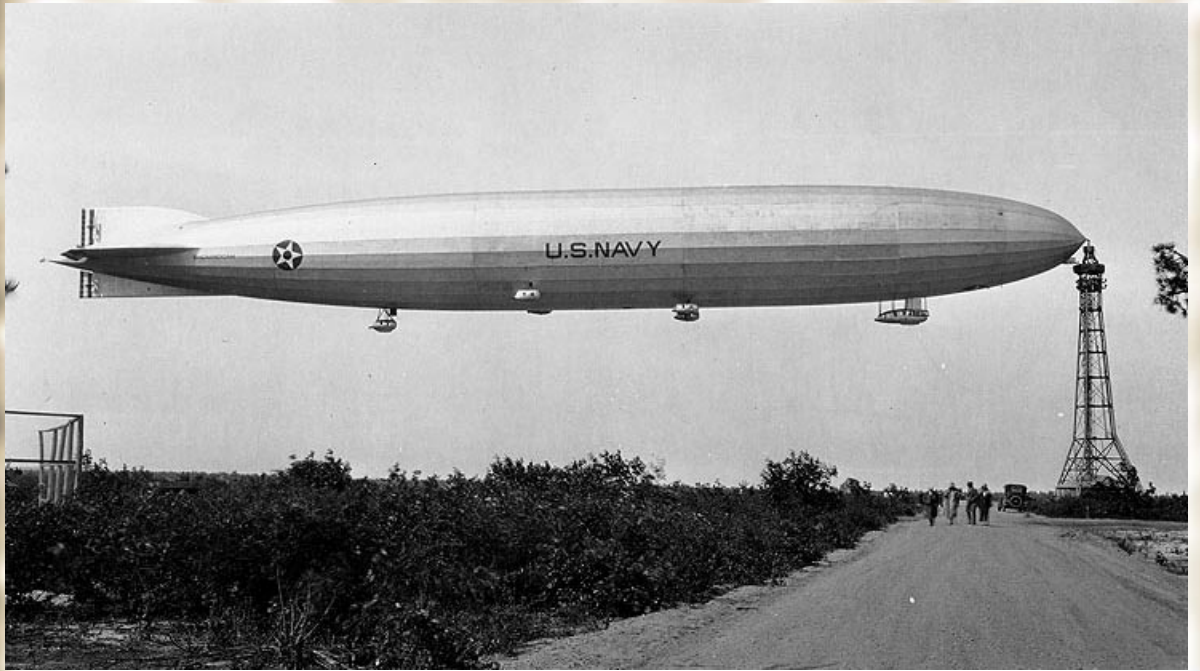
Although its passenger staterooms were tiny -- 6 1/2 ft. long by 5 1/2 ft. wide -- Hindenburg was the contemporary pinnacle of luxury, with five-course meals, showers, and even a pressurized smoking lounge situated underneath nearly seven-million cubic feet of flammable hydrogen.

Hindenburg is 161 squares long and 27 squares wide.

Complete deckplans of *Hindenburg* are provided at the end of this section. These can be used for the interiors of the fictional airships *Neitzche* and *Karl Grosse*, presented in the adventures in this book.



A photograph of the Passenger Lounge on board LZ-129 *Hindenburg*



ZR-1 Shenandoah

In 1919, Congress approved an appropriations act providing for the construction of a Naval rigid airship and the purchase of another from England. This latter airship, the hydrogen-inflated ZR-2 (designated R-38 by the British), broke and caught fire in 1921 during a trial flight, never reaching American skies. After this disaster, the Navy used helium instead of hydrogen in all of its airships.

Shenandoah had a successful two-year lifespan, being the first rigid to fly across the United States and the first to moor to a moving sea vessel, before disintegrating in a 1925 windstorm over Ohio. Outfitted with six mounted Lewis machine guns, *Shenandoah* is 136 squares long and 16 squares wide.

ZR-3 Los Angeles

Built in Germany by Luftschiffbau Zeppelin GmbH as part of war reparations to the United States, *Los Angeles* was originally designated LZ-126 by the Germans. *Los Angeles* was the first airship to successfully dock with an airplane in midair using a special trapeze system to which the pilot hooked his plane.

Of the five rigid airships utilized by the US Navy, only *Los Angeles* had a nonviolent end: after completing 331 flights, it was decommissioned on June 30, 1932 for economic reasons in favor of Akron and Macon.

In December 1934, *Los Angeles* was re-inflated and used in tests (while continuously moored) until 1939, when it was finally dismantled. *Los Angeles* is 132 squares long and 18 squares wide.

ZRS-4 Akron and ZRS-5 Macon

These two airships were physically identical except for structural refinements on *Macon* which reduced its weight by four tons.

Having successfully tested docking airplanes to airships with *Los Angeles*, both *Akron* and *Macon* were designed as the world's only airborne aircraft carriers, capable of stowing up to five airplanes in a special hangar in each ship's belly (though each typically only carried four).

A pilot would catch a trapeze lowered beneath the airship with a hook on top of his airplane. The plane would then be

lifted through hangar doors into the airship, where it was connected to an X-shaped track on the hangar's ceiling. Planes could then be moved along the track to storage positions or back to the center to ready them for launch. The Curtis F9C-2 Sparrowhawk was the plane used in this capacity.

Both airships are 157 squares long and 27 squares wide and each was armed with seven Lewis machine guns.

A cut-away of the USS *Akron* is available at the end of this section.

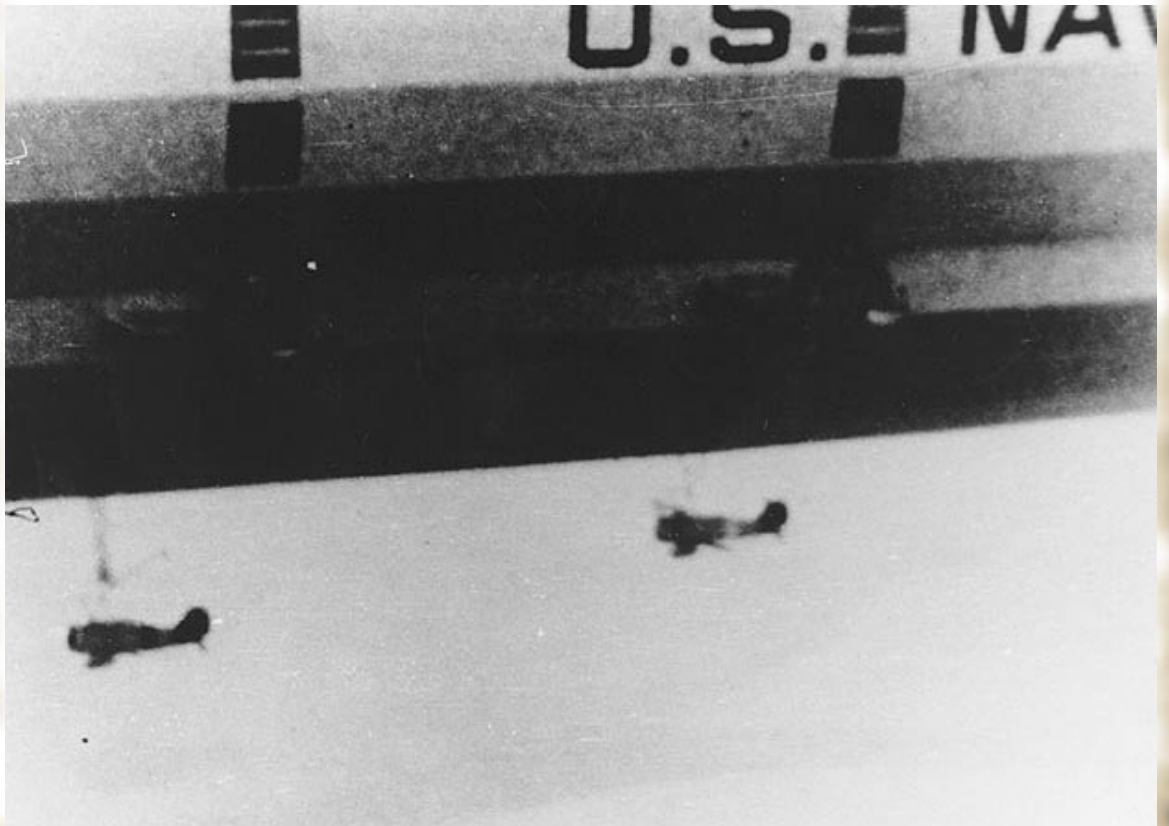


Table 3: New Weapons

| Weapon | Damage | Critical | Damage Type | Range Increment | Rate of Fire | Mag | Size | Weight | Purchase DC | Restriction |
|--------------------------------------|--------|----------|-------------|-----------------|--------------|---------|-------|--------|-------------|-------------|
| Arisaka Type 38 Rifle (6.5mm) | 2d6 | 20 | Ballistic | 70 ft. | S | 5 box | Large | 9 lb. | 16 | Mil (+3) |
| Colt M1911A1 (.45 autoloader) | 2d6 | 20 | Ballistic | 30 ft. | S | 7 box | Small | 3 lb. | 15 | Lic (+1) |
| Lewis Automatic Machine Rifle (.303) | 2d10 | 20 | Ballistic | 100 ft. | A | 47 box* | Large | 28 lb. | 22 | Mil (+3) |
| Luger P08 (9mm) | 2d6 | 20 | Ballistic | 30 ft. | S | 8 box | Small | 2 lb. | 15 | Lic (+1) |
| Maschinenpistole Erma (MPE) (9mm) | 2d6 | 20 | Ballistic | 40 ft. | S, A | 32 box | Med | 7 lb. | 17 | Mil(+3) |
| Nambu Type 14 (8mm) | 2d4 | 20 | Ballistic | 30 ft. | S | 8 box | Small | 2 lb. | 14 | Lic (+1) |
| Nambu Type 92 Machine Gun (7.7mm) | 2d8 | 20 | Ballistic | 660 ft. | A | Linked | Huge | 122 lb | 22 | Mil (+3) |
| Stielhandgranate | 4d6 | -- | Slashing | 10 ft. | 1 | -- | Small | 2 lb. | 15 | Mil (+3) |

* The Lewis can also be outfitted with a 97-round drum. See below.

Arisaka Type 38 Rifle

The standard rifle of the Japanese Imperial Army, the Type 38 was introduced in 1905, used extensively during Japan's war in Manchuria, and eventually phased out in favor of the Arisaka Type 99 in 1939. While the Type 38 functioned well, its caliber of ammunition was mild compared to other military rifles.

Colt M1911A1

This is a slightly redesigned version of the Colt M1911 based on experience with its use during the Great War. For all practical

purposes it is identical to the M1911. The M1911A1 was the standard service pistol for United States Armed Forces between 1926 and 1985.

Lewis Automatic Machine Rifle

The gas-powered Lewis features a pistol grip on the stock and fires a 47-round drum loaded horizontally on top of the weapon. Its weight allows it to be carried by one person, although two gunners are generally required to operate it efficiently. Lewises were commonly used in aircraft as well: many World War I aces took down

their foes using a Lewis mounted on a swivel just forward of the cockpit. Mounted Lewis machine guns could be fitted with a 97-round drum which was too heavy for infantry use.

Luger P08

The distinctive Luger was standard issue to the German Navy beginning in 1904 and to the German Army in 1908. Renowned for its accuracy, the Luger P08 saw action in both World Wars.

Maschinenpistole Erma

Introduced in the 1920s, the MPE has a barrel jacket with long slots, a 32-shot detachable box magazine entering from the left, and a wooden pistol grip in the stock. It was replaced in 1938 by the MP38.

Nambu Type 14

The Japanese-made Nambu Type 14, introduced in 1925, was a common sidearm for officers of both the Imperial Japanese Army and Navy. It suffered from a weak caliber of ammunition and such poor design that it would often backfire or break in combat. On a critical miss (a natural roll of 1), a Type 14 explodes in the user's hand, causing him or her 1d4 damage.

Nambu Type 92 Machine Gun

The enormous Type 92 requires three people to use it on the battlefield: two just to carry it, and another to haul the ammunition consisting of 30-round strips.

Still, once it is set up on a tripod, it can spit death for alarming distances: it even saw use as an anti-aircraft gun in World War II. Made in Japan, the Type 92 was introduced in 1932.

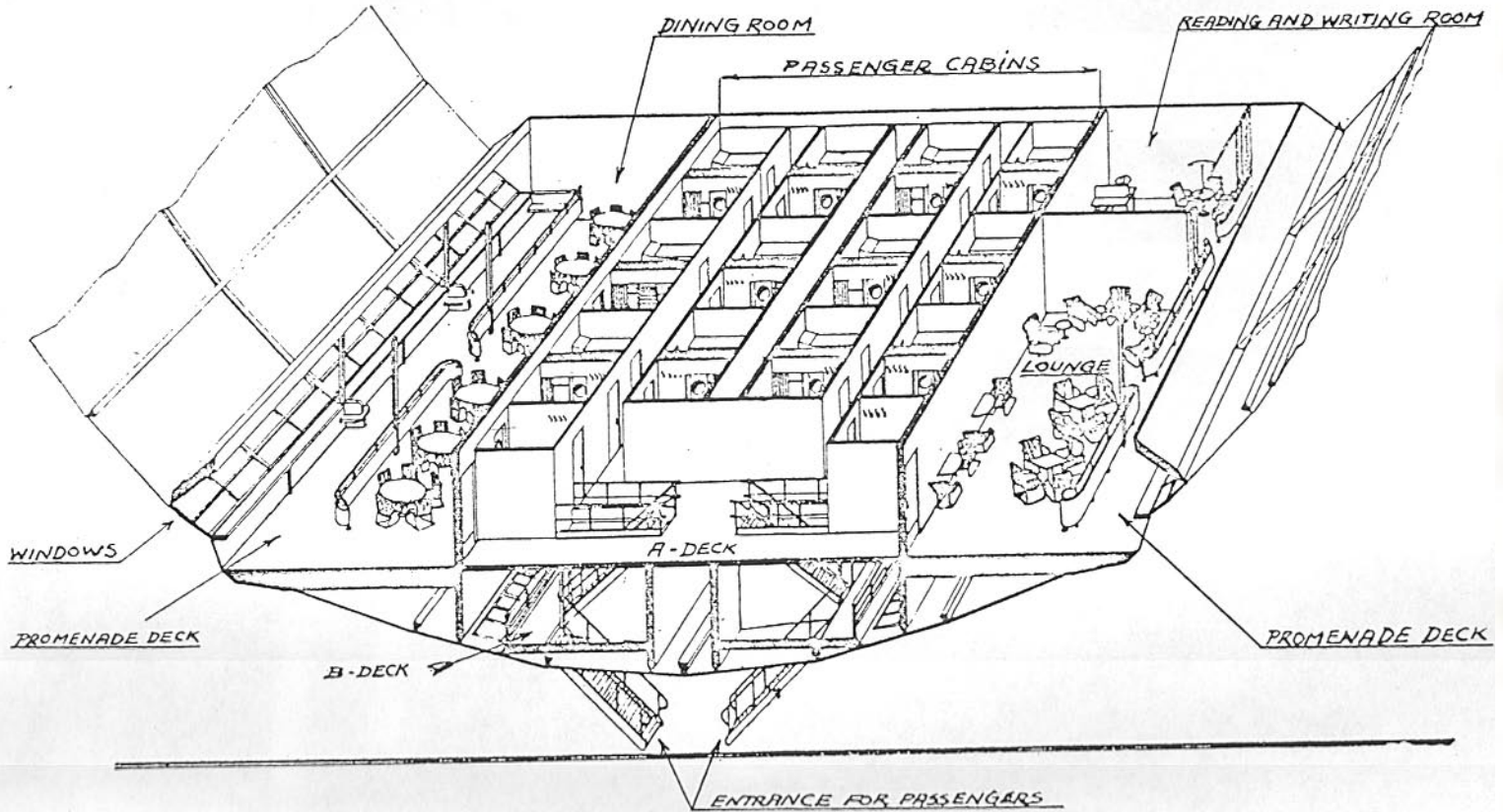
Stielhandgranate

The well-known "potato masher" German hand grenade. When the Stielhandgranate explodes, it delivers 4d6 points of damage within a 20-ft. radius (Reflex save DC 15 for half damage).

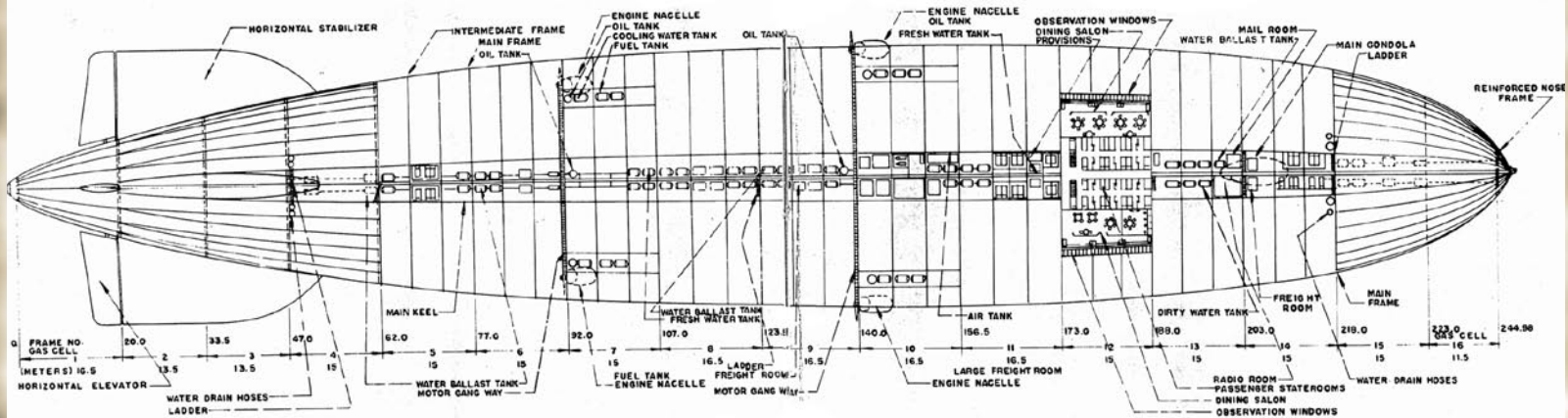
The pages that follow feature deck-plans and cut-aways of Zeppelins, for use in your **Thrilling Tales** campaigns (or any other pulp-era gaming!).

These are not gridded for D20 combat, but the scale information provided in the plans and in the descriptions found in this appendix should suffice.

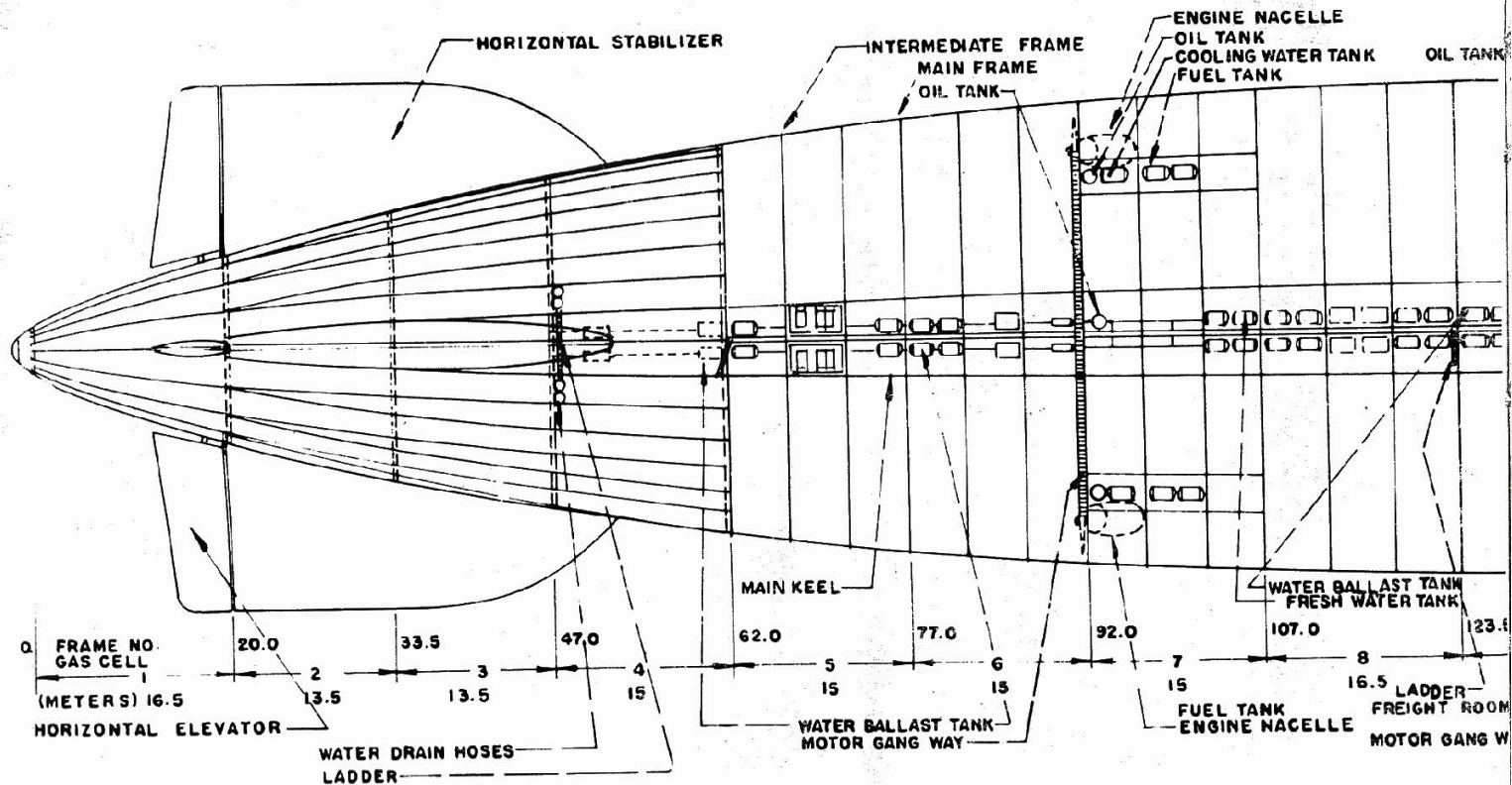
Cut-Away of the Passenger accommodations on board *Hindenburg*



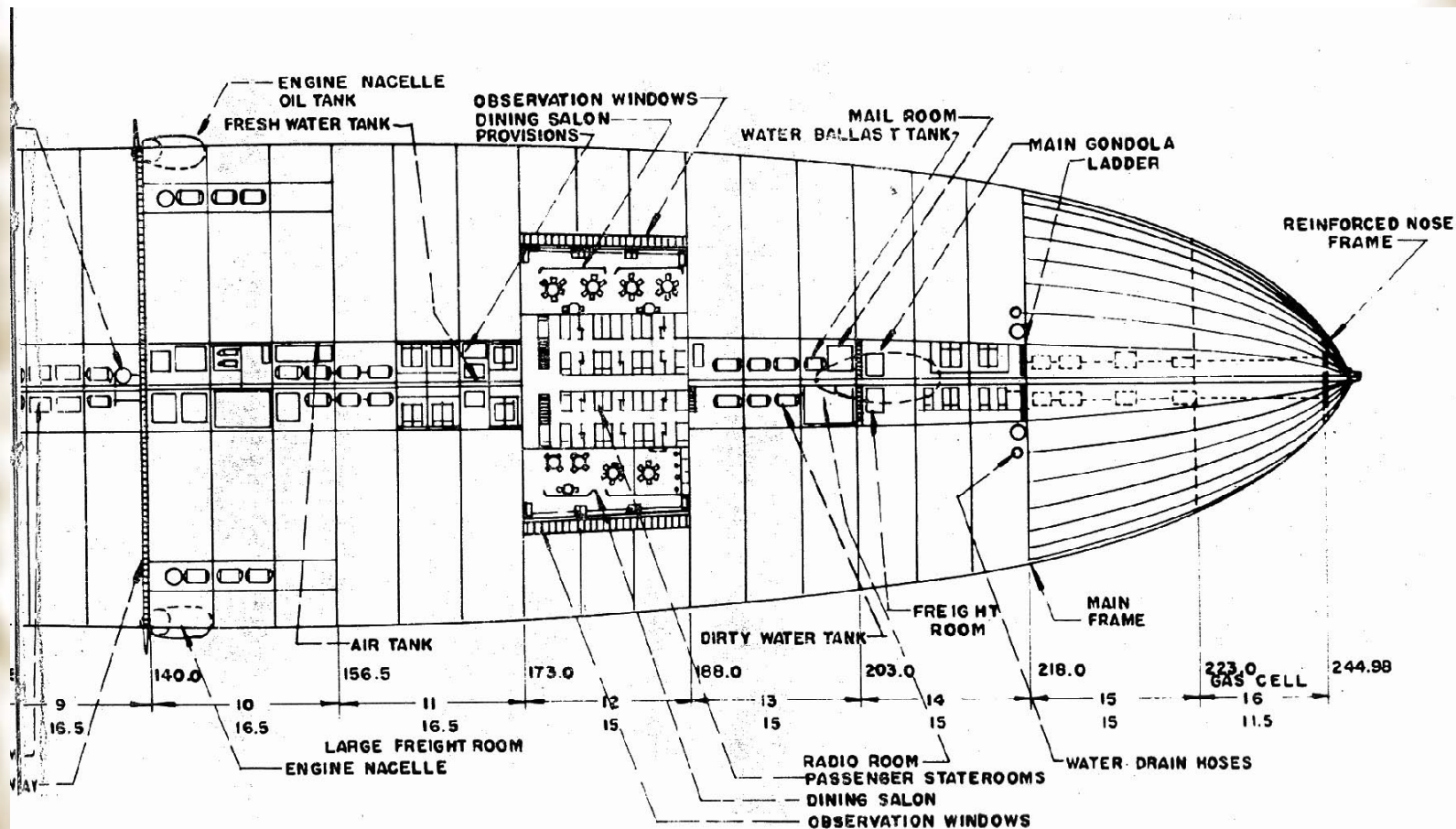
Top-down deckplan of *Hindenburg* (close-up follows)

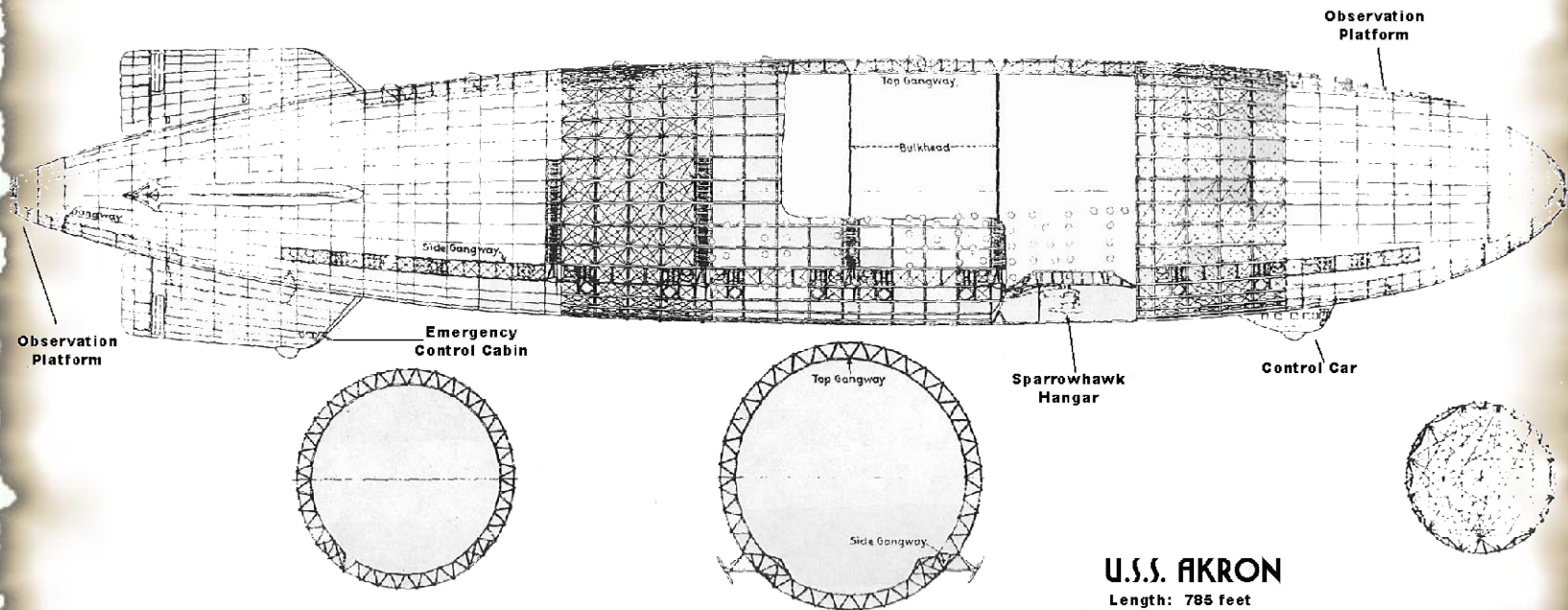


Top-down deckplan of *Hindenburg* (AFT)



Top-down deckplan of *Hindenburg* (FORE)





U.S.S. AKRON

Length: 785 feet
Max. Diameter: 132.86 feet
Max Width: 144.4 feet
Max Height: 155.03 feet

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