



Washington, D.C. 20535

MAR 16 1989

Subject of Request: The Hindenburg

FOIPA No. _____ /190-_____

Dear Requester:

Enclosed are copies of documents from FBI records. Excisions have been made to protect information exempt from disclosure pursuant to Title 5, United States Code, Section 552 and/or Section 552a. In addition, where excisions were made, the appropriate exempting subsections have been cited opposite the deletions. Where pages have been withheld in their entirety, a deleted page information sheet has been substituted showing the reason or basis for the deletion. The subsections cited for withholding information from the enclosed documents are marked below.

Section 552

Section 552a

(b) (1)

(b) (2)

(b) (3) T26USC6103

(b) (4)

(b) (5)

(b) (6)

(b) (7) (A)

(b) (7) (B)

(b) (7) (C)

(b) (7) (D)

(b) (7) (E)

(b) (7) (F)

(b) (8)

(b) (9)

(d) (5)

(j) (2)

(k) (1)

(k) (2)

(k) (3)

(k) (4)

(k) (5)

(k) (6)

(k) (7)

(See Form 4-694a, enclosed, for an explanation of these exemptions.)

~~Per your request~~, 363 pages(s) were reviewed and 337 page(s) are being released.

(Preprocessed)

During the review of material pertinent to the subject of your request, documents were located which

- originated with another Government agency(ies).
These documents were referred to that agency(ies) for review and direct response to you.
- contain information furnished by another Government agency(ies). You will be advised by the FBI as to the releasability of this information following our consultation with the other agency(ies).

EXPLANATION OF EXEMPTIONS**SUBSECTIONS OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, SECTION 552**

- (b) (1) (A) specifically authorized under criteria established by an Executive order to be kept secret in the interest of national defense or foreign policy and (B) are in fact properly classified pursuant to such Executive order;
- (b) (2) related solely to the internal personnel rules and practices of an agency;
- (b) (3) specifically exempted from disclosure by statute (other than section 552b of this title), provided that such statute (A) requires that the matters be withheld from the public in such a manner as to leave no discretion on the issue, or (B) establishes particular criteria for withholding or refers to particular types of matters to be withheld;
- (b) (4) trade secrets and commercial or financial information obtained from a person and privileged or confidential;
- (b) (5) inter-agency or intra-agency memorandums or letters which would not be available by law to a party other than an agency in litigation with the agency;
- (b) (6) personnel and medical files and similar files the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy;
- (b) (7) records or information compiled for law enforcement purposes, but only to the extent that the production of such law enforcement records or information (A) could reasonably be expected to interfere with enforcement proceedings, (B) would deprive a person of a right to a fair trial or an impartial adjudication, (C) could reasonably be expected to constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy, (D) could reasonably be expected to disclose the identity of a confidential source, including a State, local, or foreign agency or authority or any private institution which furnished information on a confidential basis, and, in the case of a record or information compiled by a criminal law enforcement authority in the course of a criminal investigation, or by an agency conducting a lawful national security intelligence investigation, information furnished by a confidential source, (E) would disclose techniques and procedures for law enforcement investigations or prosecutions, or would disclose guidelines for law enforcement investigations or prosecutions if such disclosure could reasonably be expected to risk circumvention of the law, or (F) could reasonably be expected to endanger the life of physical safety of any individual;
- (b) (8) contained in or related to examination, operating, or condition reports prepared by, on behalf of, or for the use of an agency responsible for the regulation or supervision of financial institutions; or
- (b) (9) geological and geophysical information and data, including maps, concerning wells.

SUBSECTIONS OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, SECTION 552a

- (d) (5) information compiled in reasonable anticipation of a civil action proceeding;
- (j) (2) material reporting investigative efforts pertaining to the enforcement of criminal law including efforts to prevent, control, or reduce crime or apprehend criminals, except records of arrest;
- (k) (1) information which is currently and properly classified pursuant to Executive Order 12356 in the interest of the national defense or foreign policy, for example, information involving intelligence sources or methods;
- (k) (2) investigatory material compiled for law enforcement purposes, other than criminal, which did not result in loss of a right, benefit or privilege under Federal programs, or which would identify a source who furnished information pursuant to a promise that his/her identity would be held in confidence;
- (k) (3) material maintained in connection with providing protective services to the President of the United States or any other individual pursuant to the authority of Title 18, United States Code, Section 3056;
- (k) (4) required by statute to be maintained and used solely as statistical records;
- (k) (5) investigatory material compiled solely for the purpose of determining suitability eligibility, or qualifications for Federal civilian employment or for access to classified information, the disclosure of which would reveal the identity of the person who furnished information pursuant to a promise that his identity would be held in confidence;
- (k) (6) testing or examination material used to determine individual qualifications for appointment or promotion in Federal Government service the release of which would compromise the testing or examination process;
- (k) (7) material used to determine potential for promotion in the armed services, the disclosure of which would reveal the identity of the person who furnished the material pursuant to a promise that his identity would be held in confidence.

SUBJECT THE HINDENBERG

FILE NUMBER 62-48190

SECTION NUMBER ONE

SERIALS 1-42

TOTAL PAGES 216

PAGES RELEASED 193

PAGES WITHHELD 23

EXEMPTION(S) USED b1; b7C; b7D; b3

FOR
INVESTIGATION
DEPT. OF JUSTICE

Record of Telephone Call or Visitor

May 8 1937

10:27 AM

Name [redacted] of Johns Hopkins Hospital

Telephoned from Baltimore.

Referred to Mr. Quinn.

Details:

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 9-15-89 BY SP1A/GUM

Asked to speak to Mr. Hoover and was advised through the operator that Mr. Hoover was out of town. He then asked to speak to the man acting in Mr. Hoover's absence; he was accordingly transferred to Mr. Quinn.

Mr. Quinn advised that [redacted] desired to offer his services in connection with any investigation that the Bureau was conducting into the Hindenberg disaster. Mr. Quinn advised [redacted] that the Bureau was conducting no investigation in that matter.

N 62-48190-1

RECORDED
&
INDEXED

RECORDS SECTION

MAY 10 1937

DEPT. OF JUSTICE

FOUR
MAYN
TRACY

FILE

8

Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice
Washington, D. C.

PEF:RP

May 10, 1937

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 7-15-88 BY SP1A/66m

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

RE: HINDENBURG DISASTER

Mr. Connelley called with reference to this matter and stated that Commander Rosendahl has been very favorable to us as has the Department of Commerce Committee. He stated that there are two representatives of Senator Copeland's committee at Ikehurst, Colonel Hartney and Roger Williamson, Hartney having been appointed as Technical Adviser. Mr. Connelley stated that he does not believe Commander Rosendahl or the Commerce Committee is particularly favorable to them, but they have not taken any action against them except to listen to their suggestions. Mr. Connelley said that the first thing they had in mind was the foot tracks which came in from the back gate on the west side of the reservation. There is a road running along there to which the public has access but there is a barbed wire fence between the road and the reservation itself. At the time of the landing of the ship there were many spectators and automobiles outside of the fence, but after the crash the general public swarmed over the field from all directions and it was some three or four hours before a military patrol was established and the public was excluded. These tracks were found leading from this gate in the back where two persons had undoubtedly climbed over the fence and walked into the reservation. Mr. Connelley stated that it was first believed that these tracks were made by two boys who were picked up on the seventh, but it was further learned that the boys have no part in the picture and that they did not leave the tracks in question. The tracks were apparently made by some of the people who swarmed over the field. However, Williamson has talked with Senator Copeland and has put emphasis on the fact that these prints are there and evidently Senator Copeland has become interested in it. Mr. Connelley stated that they have photographed the prints and also taken plaster casts of them and that we could undoubtedly make an identification if we could find the persons to whom they belonged. However, Mr. Connelley stated that there must be numerous other tracks of this kind in every direction from the reservation, and he does not believe that they bear any significance but again they might lead to someone who went to the post and did something there. Mr. Connelley stated that one of the ideas advanced is that somebody went to the post and possibly shot the ship down as it has been indicated that a survey is being made of the ground with a possibility of finding some empty shells.

Mr. Connelley stated that Commander Rosendahl has been approached with the suggestion that he assign a number of enlisted personnel to make a very careful check of the field and it was suggested that we be put in charge of the investigation

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10 OCT 16 1964

to instruct the men what to look for. Mr. Connelley stated that that check could be made anywhere in an area of 25 to 50 miles if a very careful check was to be conducted as the ship circled around the field for some time before trying to land due to the lightning and the storm.

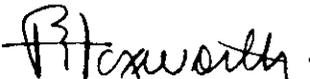
Mr. Connelley stated that there is nothing to show that the ship ever touched the ground in the United States on the last trip before catching fire, and that perhaps this point will be played up to Senator Copeland. Mr. Connelley stated that Roger Williamson, the supposed investigator for himself and Hartney, suggested the matter of the Bureau directing the search of the field to him, Connelley, and he told Williamson what our position was and suggested to him that as the Department of Commerce was making the investigation and the scope and extent of the r investigation had not as yet been indicated, any auxiliary investigation carried on should be submitted to them and their plan of action determined to see how far they were going into it.

Mr. Connelley stated that the field has been pretty well cleared off and the possibility of finding anything besides tracks is very limited. He stated that he could see nothing being accomplished in searching the field any more than any other area over which the ship passed during the two hours it was traveling around waiting to land. He stated that he has not discussed this with the Commerce Department as our position has been purely an observatory one with the possibility that something might come up in the future. He also stated that he doesn't feel that the Bureau should take the initiative to suggest to the Commerce Department that we conduct any investigation of the type set out. He stated that he was transmitting this information to the Bureau so that it would be available in case any calls are received from Senator Copeland, as these men will probably communicate all this information to the Senator tonight.

Mr. Connelley stated that he was having stenographers write up everything that has happened to date and also Commander Rosendahl's statements of what occurred, he being the man in charge. Mr. Connelley stated that it is to be noted that Hartney and Williamson did not request any investigation but just went to Commander Rosendahl and tried to get him to assign these men. Connelley stated that the Commander indicated to him confidentially that he was not particularly pleased with the activities of Hartney and Williamson and Mr. Connelley also understands that the Department of Commerce Committee also is not particularly favorable toward them.

Mr. Connelley stated that he feels that the Commerce and Navy Departments are going on all right with the investigation. He said there was some friction on Saturday between the two departments, but that was caused by some of the ranking officers and the Commerce Department is now actually conducting the investigation.

Respectfully,


P. E. Foxworth.

JAN EDGAR HOOVER
DIRECTOR

PEF:CDW

Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice
Washington, D. C.

May 6, 1937.

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 9-15-88 BY SP1A GCM

Time -

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SAC Devereaux of the Newark Division telephoned me and said that a flash had just come over the wires to the effect that the Hindenburg had blown up in midair just as it was about to land at Lakehurst, New Jersey. Mr. Devereaux said that inasmuch as this is on a reservation, he thought he had better go down there and look the situation over.

RECORDED

62-48146-3

I told Mr. Devereaux that he could go down there, but under no circumstances should he start any investigation without notifying the Bureau of the facts involved so that a determination might be made as to whether the Bureau is justified in making an investigation. I told Mr. Devereaux that after he gets down there and looks the situation over, he should call us and advise us of the situation.

Time - 11:55 P.M.

Mr. Devereaux telephoned me from Lakehurst, and said that the Hindenburg started to circle the field for a landing at about 6:19 P.M., standard time. After dropping the landing ropes at 6:25 P.M., the ship came in for a landing, and when about 210 feet from the ground, fire broke out, due to an explosion approximately 100 feet in front of the rear fin. The dirigible was demolished by the fire. Of the 61 members of the crew and 36 passengers, 44 of the crew and 20 of the passengers are alive. Twenty-six unidentified bodies have been recovered, and seven bodies are still missing. The explosion was due to a hydrogen explosion. The American Zeppelin Transport operated the airship, which was in command of Captains Lehmann and Pruss.

Secretary of Commerce Roper is en route and is due to arrive in about 15 minutes. Several high officials of the Navy are also coming there. There appears to be nothing the Bureau can do at the present time.

Mr. Devereaux wanted to know whether he and Mr. Connelley, who went down there with him, should get a list of the crew so that the information would be available for future reference. I told him that he should do nothing further on this matter at this time; that if we need the names of the crew, that information will undoubtedly be available from a number of sources later on. I told him that at this time, there is nothing to indicate that the Bureau has any investigative jurisdiction, and consequently, nothing should be done in the premises. Mr. Devereaux and Mr. Connelley are returning at once to Newark.

Respectfully,

P. E. Foxworth
P. E. FOXWORTH.

XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXX

**FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
FOIPA DELETED PAGE INFORMATION SHEET**

2 Page(s) withheld entirely at this location in the file. One or more of the following statements, where indicated, explain this deletion.

- Deleted under exemption(s) b1 with no segregable material available for release to you.
- Information pertained only to a third party with no reference to you or the subject of your request.
- Information pertained only to a third party. Your name is listed in the title only.
- Documents originated with another Government agency(ies). These documents were referred to that agency(ies) for review and direct response to you.

_____ Pages contain information furnished by another Government agency(ies). You will be advised by the FBI as to the releasability of this information following our consultation with the other agency(ies).

_____ Page(s) withheld for the following reason(s):

For your information: _____

The following number is to be used for reference regarding these pages:
62-48190-4

XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
X DELETED PAGE(S) X
X NO DUPLICATION FEE X
X FOR THIS PAGE X
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

- Mr. Nath
- Mr. Tolson
- Mr. Brand
- Mr. Clegg
- Mr. Coffey
- Mr. Egan
- Mr. Fox
- Mr. Glavin
- Mr. Ladd
- Mr. Nichols
- Mr. Rosen
- Mr. Tracy
- Miss Gandy

POSTAL

MAY 1 0 1937

W15 DPR PAID

PUNR NEWYORK NY 10 236P

DLYDE TOLSON,

ASST DIRECTOR FBI JUSTICE WASHN DC

SIXTEEN MILLIMETER PRINT HINDENBURG SHIPPED EASTERN AIR LINES
FROM NEWARK TWO TEN SAFTERNOON ARRIVING WASHINGTON THREE THIRTY
 WAYBILL NINE FIVE TWO NINE SIX TRIP ELEVEN REGARDS

Handwritten signature: Frank L. ...

b7c



245P

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 HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
 DATE 9-15-80 BY SP111560m

RECORDED
 &
 INDEXED.

62-48190-5
 FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

MAY 17 1937

ackd
 5-12-37
 FOUR
 RES. DIV.
Handwritten initials: lmb

BHH:JD1F

May 12, 1937.

62-48190-5

RECORDED

[REDACTED]
Universal Pictures Corporation,
Rockefeller Center,
New York, New York.

Dear [REDACTED]

My attention has been called to your telegram of May 10, 1937, addressed to Clyde advising that you had forwarded a sixteen millimeter print of the Hindenburg.

It was thoughtful of you to wire as you did and I appreciate greatly your courtesy in sending the print.

Sincerely yours,

J. Edgar Hoover

CC-Mr. Tolson

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
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DATE 9-15-88 BY SP1/ACM

Mr. Nathan
Mr. Tolson
Mr. Egan
Mr. Clegg
Mr. Glavin
Mr. Ladd
Mr. Nichols
Mr. Rosen	.....
Mr. Tracy	.....
Mr. Carson	.....
Mr. Coffey	.....
Mr. Hendon	.....
Mr. Pennington	.....
Mr. Quinn	.....
Mr. Nease	.....
Miss Gandy	.....

RECEIVED
MAY 16 1937

✓

✓

JOHN EDGAR HOOVER -
DIRECTOR
PEF:CDW

Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice
Washington, D. C.

May 8, 1937.

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 9-15-88 BY SP1AG/cum

ag
+ Time -

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. TAMM

Re: "Hindenburg"

[Handwritten signature/initials]

I telephoned Mr. Connelley at Newark, New Jersey, and informed him that Senator Copeland had telephoned the Bureau upon receiving a call from Lakehurst from one of his men, Roger Williamson, who, Mr. Connelley informs, is a clerk on the Air Commerce Committee. Williamson informed Senator Copeland that about 1,000 feet down from where the accident occurred, they found certain footprints which were suspicious, but that the G-Men were not interested in these at all, or were not impressed with the footprints. Mr. Connelley said that he knows about this, having gotten the information from Lieutenant Commander Reicheldorf, who said that two young boys, who had been down in the swamp from the field there, climbed over the fence and were within about 1,000 feet of the scene of the accident when one of the guards accosted them and took them down to headquarters where Lieutenant Commander Reicheldorf gave them a lecture about coming into the field by climbing over the fence and turned them loose.

Mr. Connelley said that Commander Reicheldorf saw nothing in this incident to get excited about, and he personally sees nothing in it. The incident in question occurred more than 36 hours after the ship had gone down, and before that time, the field was covered with tracks of people who were there and who gathered at the time of the accident.

Mr. Connelley said that he explained to both Williamson and Colonel Hartney the position of the Bureau as observers in this situation, and told them that if they had anything they wanted us to look at, we would, of course, be glad to do that, but in so far as any investigation is concerned, they would have to see Commander Reicheldorf. Mr. Connelley said he is sure that these tracks were made on the 7th, for the reason that he personally heard Commander Reicheldorf tell the man in charge of the change of watch about the incident. Mr. Connelley said that he further referred Williamson and Hartney to Commander Reicheldorf for any further information about the tracks. He said he is sure that the Bureau can be subjected to no criticism at a later date in the event sabotage does arise by reason of our not conducting an investigation relative to these tracks. Mr. Connelley is going to get the names and addresses of these boys just for our general information.

RECORDED & INDEXED

162-48190-6

Mr. Connelley said that nothing of interest has developed today. The Navy Department and the Department of Commerce had a little squabble today over which was going to hold its hearing first, and it was finally decided that the Department of Commerce would proceed first, and accordingly, the ship has been turned over officially to the Department of Commerce for use.

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3 C OCT 16 1964

TAMM

TWO MORE

FILE

Hindenburg document

Memo for Tamm

-2-

5/8/37

they may care to make of it in so far as an investigation is concerned. The investigation and the hearings will start Monday.

The Chief Radio Operator died this morning, and Captain ~~Lehmann~~ died last night about 6:10 P.M.

Respectfully,


P. E. FOXWORTH.

Mr. Nathan	
Mr. Tolson	
Mr. Boardman	
Mr. Clegg	
Mr. Coffey	
Mr. Dawsey	
Mr. Egan	
Mr. Foxworth	
Mr. Glavin	
Mr. Harbo	
Mr. Joseph	
Mr. Lester	
Mr. Nichols	
Mr. Quinn	
Mr. Schilder	
Mr. Tamm	
Mr. Tracy	
Miss Gandy	

Wage

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DATE 9-15-88 BY SP1/...

CORRECTED COPY

TELETYPE

FBI NEWARK 5-8-37 7-45 PM NL

DIRECTOR

REFERENCE WRECK AIRSHIP HINDENBERG THERE WERE NO MATERIAL DEVELOPMENTS TODAY IN ACTION AT LAKEHURST. TWO OF INJURED CREW, CAPT. ERNEST LEHMANN AND WILLEY SPECHT - RADIO OFFICER - HAVE DIED SINCE WRECK SEVEN BODIES OF VICTIMS ACCOUNTED FOR BUT NO IDENTIFICATION POSSIBLE AS YET. BALANCE OF DEAD HAVE BEEN PASSED BY CORONER OF OCEAN COUNTY AS IDENTIFIED AND READY FOR BURIAL. USA QUINN SUGGESTED TO COMMANDER ROSENDAHL THAT THEY HAVE ALL BODIES IDENTIFIED TO A NAVAL REPRESENTATIVE BEFORE THEY ARE REMOVED TO UNDERTAKER AT NEW YORK CITY. AS TO THE SEVEN UNIDENTIFIED USA IS TO ADVISE THEM FURTHER. MAJOR R W SCHROEDER AND SOUTH TRIMBLE OF DEPT OF COMM. WILL START OPEN INQUIRY MONDAY AT 10 AM AS TO WRECK. THE NAVAL INQUIRY WILL BE HELD IN ABEYANCE PENDING DEPT. OF COMM. INQUIRY.

RECORDED & INDEXED

62-48190-7
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
MAY 13 1937 P.M.
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
TAMM FOLLOWED ONE FILE

FORMER LT. COL. HAROLD E HARTNEY AND CLERK ROGER WILLIAMSON OF US SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMM. SENATOR R S COPELAND CHAIRMAN ARE AT LAKEHURST. TODAY THEY STATED THEY HAD FOUND TRACKS OF TWO MEN LEADING OVER A BACK FENCE OF RESERVATION ALONG THE ROAD ABOUT ONE THOUSAND

2..

FEET IN ON RESERVATION, WHICH THEY PHOTOGRAPHED. THEY INSISTED ON SHOWING THESE TO DEVEREAUX AND MYSELF. ONE WAS WEARING RUBBERS AND TRACKS WERE VERY SELF-EVIDENT. HARTNEY AND WILLIAMSON ADVISED THEY HAD BEEN SEARCHING FIELD FOR EXPLODED GUN SHELLS APPARENTLY BEING OF THE OPINION PERSONS HAD COME ON THE FIELD AND FIRED UPON THE SHIP. THE SHIP LANDING CREW AND ALL NAVAL OBSERVERS WERE ALL OVER THE FIELD TO LAND THE SHIP AT THE TIME OF THE ACCIDENT. WE OBSERVED THESE TRACKS AND REFERRED THEM TO LT. COMDR. REICHELDERFER FOR INFORMATION AS TO NAVY YESTERDAY MAY SEVENTH PICKING UP TWO BOYS WHO HAD CLIMBED FENCE AT THIS POINT AND WERE PICKED UP AND REPRIMANDED, AT HEADQUARTERS, FOR THE FOLLISH ENTRY ON THE RESERVATION.

WE WILL TO COMPLETE RECORD GET NAMES OF THESE BOYS AND INTERVIEW AND IDENTIFY TRACKS AS BEING THEIRS. THE SHIP DISASTER WAS ON MAY SIXTH AT SIX TWENTY FIVE P.M. THE ENTIRE RESERVATION WAS OVERRUN FOR A TIME BY SIGHT SEERS ON MAY SIXTH.

WE ADVISED ALL PERONS CONTACTED AS TO OUR PURPOSE IN BEING AT LAKEHURST. THAT WE WERE THERE TO OBSERVE AND PENDING SUCH INFORMATION WHICH WOULD SHOW A VIOLATION OVER WHICH WE WOULD HAVE JURISDICTION WE WOULD CONTINUE AS SUCH. THAT WE DESIRED TO COOPERATE IN ANY WAY POSSIBLE WITH ALL. WE WILL CONTINUE IN THIS MATTER AND COVER DISCREET ANY SITUATION OF INTEREST AND KEEP THE BUREAU ADVISED

CONNELLY

END

**Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice**
1300 Liberty Trust Building
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Mr. Nathan	
Mr. Tolson	
Mr. E. A. Tamm	
Mr. Clegg	
Mr. Coffey	
Mr. Glavin	
Mr. Ladd	
Mr. Nichols	
Mr. Rosen	
Mr. Tracy	
Mr. Carson	
Mr. Egan	
Mr. Gurnea	
Mr. Hendon	
Mr. Jones	
Mr. Lester	
Mr. Quinn	
Mr. Nease	
Miss Gandy	

May 7, 1937.

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES
AND FIELD OFFICES
ADVISED BY ROUTING
SLIP(S) OF CLASS
DATE 10-17-81
TRB

PERSONAL AND
CONFIDENTIAL

Director,
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Washington, D. C.

DECLASSIFIED BY SP1 AG/um
ON 10-15-81
9-15-88

RE: DESTRUCTION OF THE DIRIGIBLE
"HINDENBERG," Lakehurst, N. J.

Dear Sir:

The press this morning and this afternoon contains reports to the effect that there is a possibility that the "Hindenberg" was sabotaged.

In connection therewith, it was felt that the following information might be of some interest to the Bureau.

"The Daily Worker," official organ of the Communist Party of America, in its issue of April 24, 1937, spoke of a contemplated meeting to be held at the Mecca Temple, Friday evening, April 30, 1937, at which meeting it was advertised that Major-General Smedley Darlington Butler would speak, along with a Miss Tony Sender, who had been a member of the German Reichstag for fourteen years, and Heinrich Mann, and that the meeting was to be a benefit rally and concert, sponsored by the supporters of the Anti-Nazi German Seamen.

"The Daily Worker," in its issue of April 27, 1937, printed another article, headlined, "German Seamen's Union Organizer Speaks Friday." The article states, in part, that the organizer will tell how Anti-Nazi seamen do perilous

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62-48190-8

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&
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39
October 1964

Handwritten signature

Director

- 2 -

May 7, 1937

underground work aboard giant Reich liners plowing between New York and Germany, and that the meeting would take place at the Mecca Temple, 133 West 55th Street, New York City, and that it would be a mass meeting, and that the organizer, who was then (April 27, 1937) in New York Harbor aboard a Nazi steamship, would come to the meeting, guarded by American sailors, and that he would speak, hidden by a mask. It was again stated that General Butler would speak.

"The Daily Worker," issue of April 29, 1937, printed an article entitled, "Seamen Who Fight Hitler," by Rex Pitkin, which tells more of the contemplated Mecca Temple meeting. The Pitkin article speaks of the masked man, how Pitkin met him and called him "Karl," and that Karl was a seaman on a Nazi liner, and how Karl offered him, Pitkin, a cigarette, and, after Pitkin had lit it, it went out, and how Karl smiled and said, "Break it open," and that, upon the cigarette's being opened, there was found contained in it a tightly rolled, thin piece of paper. Pitkin opened it and read a message to German soldiers, workers, and peasants, telling them to unite against the sending of Hitler's soldiers to Spain, etc. It was signed by Heinrich Mann, brother of Thomas Mann, head of the newly-formed German Liberty League in Germany.

The article then states how "Karl" told of how these cigarettes were distributed among the members of German crews on German liners, and how Karl then exhibited a copy of the organization's underground seamen's paper, "Schiffahrt," and told of many such underground papers being distributed in Germany in many industries, and how the successful strike of fifty thousand American seamen in the United States was forced, and how eight thousand German seamen each month who entered the Port of New York, left the Schiffahrt" and other literature where they could be picked up by the crews, and how they are able to recognize the Gestapo agents (German secret agents) who are on board every German liner.

The Pitkin article will be found attached.

Director

- 3 -

May 7, 1937.

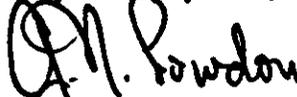
In the April 30, 1937, issue of the "Daily Worker," front page, there was published a picture of a man with his face covered by a mask, called "Hans Schmidt." Underneath is a news article relating to the picture, with the heading, "Fight of Anti-Nazists in Germany. Masked German Speaks at Rally Tonight." The news article quotes Schmidt as saying, "We use a hectograph with wax impressions. We get the news by radio from the underground stations in Germany and from the Spanish Government stations in Madrid and Valencia."

Continuing, the article states that Hans Schmidt is not the masked man's correct name, but that he is merely using it this week -- that Schmidt was interviewed by members of the New York press and that he explained to them the means by which the underground German Seamen's Union regularly issues news bulletins aboard hundreds of German ships, saying, "We have such hectographs on every important ship flying the German flag."

It stated that Schmidt stood in the center of a room in the home of Professor Margaret Schlauch, of New York University, number 2 Horatio Street, his face fully masked to shield his identity, and told of the workings of the underground system; that Schmidt was to be protected at the meeting by sixty members of the International Seamen's Union; that Schmidt's voice would be the first authentic voice of underground Germany to be heard in America. It stated that the interview lasted ninety minutes, and that there was present a reporter of the "New York Sun," who constantly kept firing questions at Schmidt.

Every issue of the "Daily Worker" since the first announcement of this meeting has been carefully scrutinized at this office, but nothing has appeared therein indicating that the meeting ever took place.

Very truly yours,



G. N. LONDON,
Special Agent in Charge

BC
Enc.

SPECIAL DELIVERY

Daily Worker 4-19-37
**SEAMEN WHO
FIGHT HITLER**

By Rex Pitkin

MY friend, Karl, a seaman on a Nazi liner, and I sat in a little cafe on the lower East Side, drinking beer, and talking about the wonderful victories the people of Spain were winning against Franco and Hitler and Mussolini.

Karl held out a package of cigarettes. "Have one?" he asked. I told him I didn't smoke.

"But you'll enjoy this cigarette," he insisted. "It's made of anti-fascist tobacco."

Hesitatingly and curiously I lit the cigarette and puffed on it. It didn't taste any different than other cigarettes. Suddenly it went out.

I looked at Karl in surprise. He smiled. Was this one of those trick exploding cigarettes—which had failed to explode?

"Break it open," he suggested, sipping his large schooner of beer. "Find out why it doesn't burn."

I tore the cigarette apart, and in its center between the tobacco and its ends was a tightly rolled piece of thin paper. I unraveled it and in amazement read:

"German soldiers! German workers and peasants! Hitler's crime has reached its apex. He is now sending German soldiers to Spain. This foreign adventure is for the benefit of the traitor Franco.

"You will be slaughtered to benefit Franco and the rich men of Spain. Why should the German people—who are Franco's enemies—be made to fight for Franco against the Spanish people who are defending their democracy?

"Hitler sends troops to Spain not alone in the interests of Spanish reactionaries but also in the interests of the German capitalists. Hitler has embarked on the Spanish venture because he hopes for a way out—but his defeat is inevitable."

For four small pages the leaflet went on explaining in concise, succinct sentences the reasons why German troops should not fight Hitler's and Franco's war in Spain. It was signed by Heinrich Mann, brother of Thomas Mann, distinguished novelist who just left America last week-end. Heinrich is head of the newly formed German Liberty Party, the People's Front movement.

I looked at Karl in amazement.

"There are many of us," he said, "who are very polite. We offer our colleagues in the crew cigarettes at every opportunity. Our colleagues like our cigarettes very much. They are very anxious for them, and we see that they receive them regularly.

"After we give our friends cigarettes a few times," he continued, "we carefully make it a point to leave one of these in a place where they are sure to find them." He held up a small paper.

"This is the Schiffahrt, the underground paper of German seamen. There are many such papers in many industries." He read from the tiny sheets:

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DATE ~~10-15-81~~ BY ~~SP1 ASH/~~

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Encl.

"MADRID.—The government troops on the Guadalajars front have as their opponents exclusively Italian troops. The panic created by their defeat resulted in the exit of these troops in the entire province.

"Our people's army propaganda through the loud speakers every evening is the menu for the enemy and it has remarkable effect on the troops of Franco."

Here on page three was a whole page of letters from German seamen describing the miserable living conditions aboard the German ships. Here on page four was an article entitled "Die Deutsche Opposition," written by Heinrich Mann, and here was an article recounting the successful strike of the 50,000 American seamen with a listing in detail of the demands that they forced from the shipowners. And on the back two pages were articles describing briefly but clearly Hitler's war against the Catholic and Protestant churches.

"Eight thousand German seamen come to New York harbor every month," Karl told me. "And there isn't a single boat that leaves this harbor that doesn't have the *Schiffahrt* and other leaflets scattered about in places where members of the crew are sure to find them.

"We are, of course, unable to hold large union meetings. They are strictly forbidden. It is difficult sometimes to even talk to members of the crew. Walls have ears.

"So papers and magazines are our best organizers. They are the best, the quickest, the surest way to reach German seamen. And believe me German workers are hungry for our literature."

"But isn't it a dangerous business, distributing underground material?" I asked.

"Of course. We are at all times very careful. Every piece of literature, every leaflet and every paper that is put aboard a boat is carefully counted. There are Gestapo agents on every boat and we have to watch our step.

"When I say 'we' I don't mean just the German anti-Nazis aboard the ocean-going liners. We includes all the American supporters of the fight against Hitlerism. It costs money to make trick cigarettes and to print the *Schiffahrt*. We seamen don't make much, and even a third of that is directly taxed by the government.

"So our anti-Nazi friends here have gotten together in an organization called the Supporters of Anti-Nazi German Seamen to raise the dollars to keep our activity going.

"What's more, they're running a benefit concert and rally Friday night at Mecca Temple to keep the ball rolling—as you say here in America.

"Will you be there?" I asked.

"Oh, no, that's a ticklish business. I don't want the Gestapo agents to find me at an anti-Nazi rally in New York. It would do my health no good when I get back to Germany.

"But one of our leaders will be there, masked and protected by sixty American seamen. He will tell the story of conditions in Germany, the real story."

Karl lifted his stein of beer. "Prosit," he said.

In his eyes was a faraway look, and I was sure that he was thinking of tomorrow—when the people of Germany will unite in the new Liberty Party and will again establish a free land.

TELETYPE

FBI NEWARK

NJ T 5-9-37 9-8 PM EDST RBT

DIRECTOR

PHONE. REFERENCE WRECK AIRSHIP HINDENBURG. FURTHER CHECK AT LAKEHURST REVEALS NAMES OF TWO BOYS PICKED UP BY MARINE GUARD AT SIX PM. THEY HAVE BEEN MISLAID AND ARE PRESENTLY UNKNOWN. NAVAL OFFICIALS STATE BOTH INDIVIDUALS GAVE RESIDENCE AS GERMANTOWN PHILADELPHIA PENNSYLVANIA. AUTHORITIES STATE THESE TWO BOYS CAUGHT COMING THROUGH RESERVATION FROM NORTHERLY DIRECTION. SITUS OF ~~FOOT PRINTS~~ FOOT PRINTS REFERRED TO BY COPELAND COMMITTEE INVESTIGATOR ARE LOCATED IN A WESTERLY DIRECTION AND IN THE MOST OPEN PORTION OF RESERVATION. LANDING CREW PERSONNEL INFORM THAT AT TIME OF HINDENBURG APPEARANCE AND ATTEMPTED LANDING THE FENCE AND ROAD BOUNDING SOUTH AND WEST SIDES OF RESERVATION WERE THICKLY POPULATED BY SPECTATORS IN AUTOMOBILES AND IT WAS ON WEST SIDE OF RESERVATION THAT ~~FOOT PRINTS~~ FOOT PRINTS WERE NOTICED BY COPELAND INVESTIGATORS. PHOTOS TAKEN OF THESE PRINTS AND TOMORROW EFFORTS WILL BE MADE TO MAKE CASTS THEREOF. NAVY PERSONNEL STATE THAT ON CRASH OF HINDENBURG ENTRY WAS MADE TO THE RESERVATION FROM ALL SIDES BY SPECTATORS AND THAT THIS ENTRY INCLUDED THAT LOCATION WHEREIN PRINTS WERE ~~FOUND~~ FOUND, ALSO THAT IT WAS SOME THREE OR FOUR HOURS BEFORE SENTRY PATROLS WERE ESTABLISHED AND MAINTAINED AND ALL OUTSIDERS EXCLUDED FROM THE RESERVATION. DEVEREAUX, VETTERLI AND MYSELF LEAVING NEWARK SEVEN THIRTY AM TOMORROW ARRIVING LAKEHURST NINE AM. CAN BE REACHED THROUGH COMMANDER ROSENDAHL.

- Mr. Nathan
- Mr. Tolson
- Mr. Baughman
- Mr. Clegg
- Mr. Coffey
- Mr. Downey
- Mr. Egan
- Mr. Foxworth
- Mr. Glavin
- Mr. Harbo
- Mr. Joseph
- Mr. Lester
- Mr. Quinn
- Mr. Tamm
- Mr. Tracy
- Mr. Egan
- Mr. Glavin
- Mr. Harbo
- Mr. Joseph
- Mr. Lester
- Mr. Quinn
- Mr. Tamm
- Mr. Tracy

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62-48190-9

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
MAY 12 1937
U.S. DEPT. OF JUSTICE

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CH. CLK. OFFICE

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OK FBI WASHINGTON CKS

TOLSON

EAT:CDW

Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice
Washington, D. C.

May 11, 1937.

Time - 11:15 A.M.

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DATE 9-15-88 BY SP1A/BG/UM
MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

Re: Hindenburg.

I telephoned Mr. Connelley at Newark and told him that when I had trans-
mitted to you his comment last evening about the above entitled matter,
you wanted to make sure that Mr. Connelley had made our position clear
to Captain Rosendahl. Mr. Connelley said that he has by all means made
perfectly clear to all parties concerned down there the exact position
of the Bureau. I told him you wanted the Captain to know with reference
to his indication he might want the Bureau to make the search of the field
that, of course, the Bureau could not conduct such investigation at the
request of a Congressional Committee; that if the Captain himself had some
interest in the matter, we perhaps would take a different attitude towards
the situation and would give it consideration.

I mentioned to Mr. Connelley that while the office was at Trenton, we
conducted some kind of an investigation or received complaints that
people in that vicinity were taking shots at the various blimps and
dirigibles around there, and that I recalled the shots were probably
coming from fishing boats out on the sea. Mr. Connelley said that
while he did not see the actual ship, he understands that someone has
taken a shot at one of the Army all-metal ships. Mr. Connelley said
that it will possibly develop later in this investigation that someone
will say that they saw flames coming out of the ship as she came over
the field the first time. One of the officers to whom Mr. Connelley
talked indicated that he thought he saw flames coming out of the ship
as she came over the field. Mr. Connelley further said that some farmer
down there took a shot at one of the Army ships there, and then called up
the airport and told them that if the planes came over his place again, he
was going to shoot at them again.

RECORDED & INDEXED

62-48190-10

Mr. Connelley said that the Commerce Committee and Captain Rosendahl and his
men look upon the Congressional Committee with some ridicule. He said that
Captain Rosendahl was very much incensed over the fact that the Congressional
Committee would even suggest to the Bureau men what we should do. In other
words, he feels that if there is any Agency capable of doing anything on
the situation, the Bureau is the agency which would be capable of doing it
without any outside suggestions. However, Mr. Connelley said that he is
keeping his relations with all parties concerned in this matter on a friendly
basis.

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3 OCT 10 1964

FOXWORTH
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5/11/37

Mr. Connelley said that Hartney of the Congressional Committee got himself appointed as adviser on the Commerce Committee, and in that capacity is privileged to propound questions of various kinds to the witnesses. This he has done on occasions, bringing in a bunch of theories which he personally has as to how this matter could have happened.

I told Mr. Connelley that of course, the Bureau cannot conduct any investigation for the Congressional Committee for the reason that the Bureau is without power to do so, but the relations had with the Bureau men by these other persons should at all times be kept on a friendly basis.

b7c
Mr. Connelley said that the hearings are apparently going to be held every other day, and we will keep in touch with those. He said he will probably have Vetterli and Devereaux attend these sessions while he attends court at Newark on the [redacted] matter.

Respectfully,



E. A. TAMM.

TELETYPE

FBI NEWARK NJ 5-13-37 8-15 PM EDST RBT

54365

DIRECTOR

PHONE. REFERENCE WRECK AIRSHIP HINDENBURG. HEARING CONTINUED TODAY. NAVAL EMPLOYEES AND SEVERAL MEMBERS OF CREW HINDENBURG TESTIMONY GROUND CREW INDICATES MIGHT HAVE BEEN MECHANICAL FAILURE OPERATION OF RUDDER AT TIME OF SHIPS APPROACH TO MOORING MAST. ALL MOTORS WERE USED IN REVERSE IN HIGH SPEED TO CHECK FORWARD MOMENTUM SHIP WHICH HAD APPROACHED MOORING MAST AT UNUSUAL RATE OF SPEED. MEMBERS OF CREW TESTIFIED TRIP ACROSS OCEAN ENTIRELY SATISFACTORY AND NORMAL IN EVERY RESPECT AND THEY KNEW NOTHING CONCERNING ACCIDENT UNTIL REFLECTION OF FLAME SEEN ACCOMPANIED BY DETONATION. REFERRING TO MY CONVERSATION WITH MR. TAMM OF THE BUREAU LAST NIGHT, SOUTH TRIMBLE, DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, ADVISED SPECIALS AGENTS IN CHARGE VETTERLI AND DEVEREAUX TODAY THAT THEIR OWN INVESTIGATORS HAD COMPLETED PRACTICALLY ALL INTERVIEWS WITH CIVILIANS AND FRIENDS OF PASSENGERS AND ACCORDINGLY SERVICES BUREAU AGENTS NOT NECESSARY NOW ON THIS ANGLE. HOWEVER, HE UNDERSTANDS THAT OUR SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE ON THIS ANGLE IF DESIRED LATER. TESTIMONY TO DATE INDICATES ACCIDENT APPARENTLY CAUSED BY SOME STRUCTURAL DEFECT. NO EVIDENCE OF SABOTAGE AS YET. FURTHER HEARINGS BEING OBSERVED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

CONNELLY

END

RECORDED

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62-48190-11

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

MAY 14 1937

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

TAMM
DNEB
FILE

Sir:-

Could the ^{system} enclosed
caused the disaster of the
Hindenburg.

Retired Soldier

b7c



U.S. 5-17-37

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MAY 18 1937

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ILLUSTRATED CRIMES

by SPOOKS ALLEN

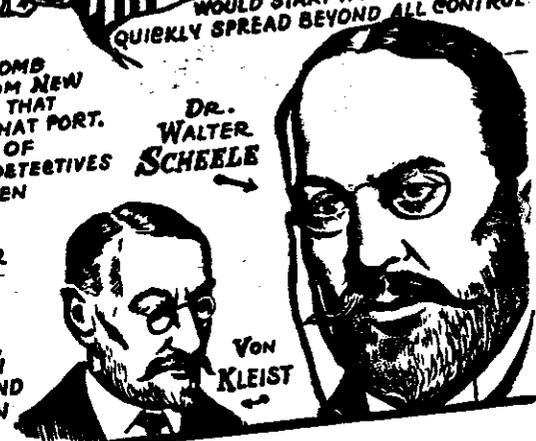
The Bomb Wizard

IN 1916, A YEAR BEFORE AMERICA ENTERED THE WORLD WAR, THE SECRET SERVICE WAS SEEKING TO UNCOVER A RING OF CONSPIRATORS WHO WERE PLACING "FIRE BOMBS" ABOARD SHIPS LEAVING AMERICA WITH SUPPLIES FOR THE ALLIES. THERE HAD BEEN MYSTERIOUS FIRES AT SEA ON THESE SUPPLY SHIPS, BUT INVESTIGATION HAD BEEN FRUITLESS UNTIL THE DISCOVERY OF ONE OF THE INCENDIARY CONTRIVANCES ABOARD THE FREIGHTER, KIRK OSWALD.

A SAILOR OF THE OSWALD'S CREW FOUND IT IN THE SHIP'S HOLD THREE DAYS OUT FROM NEW YORK - JUST BEFORE THE ACIDS AND CHEMICALS IN IT COULD FUSE TO SET IT OFF. THIS BOMB PROVIDED THE SLEUTHS THEIR FIRST CLUE, AND IT PROVED THE UNDOING OF THE PLOTTERS. CONTRIVED BY SOME MASTER MIND OF CHEMICAL WIZARDRY, THE BOMB CONSISTED OF A PIECE OF PIPE WITH SEVERAL COMPARTMENTS. THE ACIDS WOULD EAT THROUGH THE PARTITIONS IN 3 DAYS, AND BY MIXTURE, WOULD START A FIRE WHICH WOULD QUICKLY SPREAD BEYOND ALL CONTROL.



SINCE MOST OF THE BOMB SHIPS HAD SAILED FROM NEW YORK, IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT THE DEVICES WERE MADE NEAR THAT PORT. SO CAPTAIN THOMAS TUNNEY, OF NEW YORK'S BOMB SQUAD, GOT DETECTIVES TO CHECK CHEMISTS WHO HAD BEEN SELLING A CERTAIN ACID. BY A PROCESS OF ELIMINATION, THEY CENTERED ATTENTION ON A PAIR OF SUSPECTS, CHARLES VON KLEIST, A RETIRED GERMAN ARMY CAPTAIN, SKILLED IN CHEMISTRY, AND HIS EMPLOYER, DR. WALTER SCHEELE, ALSO AN EX-OFFICER FOR THE KAISER AND HEAD OF A CHEMICAL CONCERN IN WEHAWKEN, N. J.



DR. WALTER SCHEELE

VON KLEIST

Coming Next Week—

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62-48190-12



A DETECTIVE DISGUISED AS A "LOYAL GERMAN" STEVEDORE GOT INTO VON KLEIST'S CONFIDENCE AND DREW FROM HIM DETAILS ABOUT THE ARSON BOMB PLOTTERS.



DR. SCHEELE, WORKING WITH A \$10,000 FUND HAD MEMBERS OF AN INTERNED GERMAN SHIP'S CREW CONTRIVE LEAD PIPE INTO SMALL SECTIONS SUITABLE FOR THE BOMBS, USING THE WORKSHOP ON THEIR STEAMER. VON KLEIST AND DR. SCHEELE WOULD ADD THE CHEMICALS, THEN HIRE INTERNED GERMAN SEAMEN TO PLANT THEM ON SHIPS. WHEN THE AGED VON KLEIST DUG UP ONE OF THE BOMBS FOR THE SLEUTH IN HIS BACKYARD, HE WAS PUT UNDER ARREST. CONFESSING, HE NAMED NINE CONFEDERATES. ALL WERE CONVICTED UPON CONCLUSIVE EVIDENCE LINKING DR. SCHEELE WITH GERMANY'S PROPOGANDA HEADS IN AMERICA.

LATER, WHEN HE WAS CAPTURED AFTER ELUDING ARREST FOR TWO YEARS, DR. SCHEELE GAVE THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT THE SECRETS HE KNEW OF THE GERMAN SPY SYSTEM. HE ALSO TURNED OVER SEVERAL INVENTIONS, ONE OF WHICH RELATED TO THE LOADING OF HIGH EXPLOSIVE SHELLS. BECAUSE OF THIS AID, DR. SCHEELE WAS GIVEN A LIGHT SENTENCE -- HE HAD TO SERVE ONE DAY IN THE CUSTODY OF A UNITED STATES MARSHAL.



The Assassins of Sirdar

26

When Murder Calls

By Robert W. Sneddon

Author of "The Living Target," "Death Drives in Paris," etc.

A Child Must Touch the Fire, Says the Legend, but a Touch of Murder Was Not Enough for Reginald Percival.

ON July 28, of the year 1923, a Saturday night, a middle-aged woman entered the police station in Lambeth, that district of London on the Surrey side of the Thames, facing Parliament.

She gave her name as Mrs. Norris, and told the sergeant in charge that she was worried about the continued absence of her landlady, Mrs. Mabel Edmunds, who kept a three-story



TRUE SHORT
DETECTIVE PICTURE WEEKLY

rooming-house in York Road. She had left suddenly and her rooms were now padlocked.

Mrs. Norris occupied the room next to Mrs. Edmunds', and since they were separated only by a folding door, she could not help hearing what went on next door if voices were raised.

On Saturday afternoon a week past she heard Mrs. Edmunds having a fierce argument with her nephew, Frank Jesse, who had been living in the house since January. The quarrel was concerning the sum of forty pounds which Jesse owed his aunt. They hurled bitter names at each other and were still heartily at it when Mrs. Norris had to go out to have tea with a friend.

She returned to the house at eleven. The first thing she noticed was that



Something drew him there every day to watch his friend plead for his life

"I'll get you for this!" he shouted. "Damn you! I—" And then blood-tinglingly, a change came, as the finger-print men went to make a pretense of comparing these new prints with the ones magnified on the photograph. "You—got—prints—from—inside—loves?" Axel gasped, tiny bits of white foam appearing at the corners of his trap mouth.

"Yes, there they are! Do they correspond with yours?"

"Yes, damn you all, they *do!*" he screeched, his heavy voice suddenly breaking to an almost falsetto pitch. "I hated her! I wanted Canute dead too! I hated all of them—ignorant fools who could make money!"

And then, still struggling frenziedly, he tried to throw himself on the ground. For a minute the police tried to hold him up. Then at a sign from Masters they dropped him with a thump and fell on top of his threshing arms and legs. Tremblingly, Lieutenant Connor snicked the bracelets.

"Well, there is your murderer, Mr. Canute Rygaard, your own half-brother!" said Jigger gravely then. "He had the knowledge of an encyclopedia at his command—and the up-to-date information about poisons and bombs which the experts who wrote for *Columbian Senior*, would give him verbally, without a thought!"

"Axel!" cried the publisher, his voice breaking piteously.

"Go to the devil, you ignorant hypocrite!" snarled Axel from the ground. "Just because you were lucky enough to make money, you could patronize better men!"

"Never mind him. He's almost insane, but not near enough so he won't go to the chair," snapped Masters. "He wasted your fortune, and that of your wife. He planned to kill you both, and

then have Louie Melchior supposedly commit suicide—with all the incriminating evidence carefully placed in his basement workshop!

"Of course, when Melchior was dead, too, that extra million would go to Axel also. His attempt to kill Mrs. Severn and Mrs. Ackerman by poison, you can lay to personal hatred. I think he is a twisted sort of Puritan, ingrown."

"Yah, those—" And the cultured Axel delivered himself of a word for women which came straight from the Greek—but which might better have stayed back there in classic Athens.

But Mrs. Ackerman only flicked the ash from the end of her little cigar, down into the livid face on the ground. Then she turned away with a shrug.

"All right, you can take him away," said Jigger. "He will be one of the very few criminals I've encountered, whom I'll be glad to know is electrocuted! He—"

"Well, that pleasure will be denied you!" snarled Axel, but in a fainter voice. "Did you imagine a man of my caliber—would—embark on—crime—without—certain—precaut—?"

That last word was never finished. Shudders suddenly attacked the recumbent editor, and all the strength of three police could not prevent his back from arching, and the death struggle from going its twenty seconds to the end.

Later, on the little finger of his left hand they found his cameo ring had been twisted and the flat-cut gem depressed. There had been a tiny needle, and a rubber sac. More poison.

No one ever was sorry that instead of a frenzied, contemptuous half-madman prisoner, a corpse was carried to the police car, and out of the grounds of Canute Rygaard's estate.

ENC:SCS

May 15, 1937.

RECORDED

62-48190-13

Johns Hopkins University,
Baltimore, Maryland.

Dear [redacted]

I desire to express to you my appreciation for your telephone call to Mr. Quinn, of this Bureau, in my absence, in which you offered your services in connection with the air disaster involving the destruction of the Hindenburg.

Although this Bureau has no jurisdiction whatsoever over this matter, and the investigations are being conducted by representatives of the Department of Commerce and United States Navy, I do want you to know that I feel it was a splendid offer on your part to be of service, and I wish to express to you my sincere appreciation for your thoughtfulness and kindness.

With assurances of my best wishes and highest regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

Walter Hoover

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COMMUNICATIONS SECTION
MAILED
MAY 17 1937
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Handwritten initials and scribbles, including a large 'K' and other illegible marks.

JOHN EDGAR HOOVER
DIRECTOR

Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice

TDQ:RCL

Washington, D. C.

May 8, 1937.

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. TOLSON.

b7C

R. W.
[redacted] of the Johns Hopkins Hospital of Baltimore called (he, incidentally is on the training school staff) and wanted to tender his services in connection with the air disaster which took place recently.

He was informed that, of course, the Bureau had no jurisdiction in this matter; that the investigations in this regard were under the supervision of the Naval authorities, but that he could be assured that if any inquiries were made of the Director for a person well qualified to act in this manner he would surely keep his services in mind.

b7C

[redacted] stated that, of course, he did not want to appear forward and he realized he would have to be sponsored by someone else other than himself, but that he was very much interested in the matter; had certain ideas and thought possibly his services could be utilized.

Respectfully,

T. D. Quinn.

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62-48190-13

b7C
Call to [redacted]
5-15-37
#4C

Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice
Washington, D. C.
May 12, 1937.

131
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Time - 5:10 P.M.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

Re: Hindenburg.

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Mr. Connelley telephoned me from Newark, New Jersey, and said that Mr. Vetterli and Mr. Devereaux had just returned from Lakehurst where they had attended the hearings. During the course of the hearings, South Trimble of the Department of Commerce suggested that the Department of Commerce committee could possibly use the Bureau in conducting some investigation relative to this matter. He suggested that the Bureau could get a list of the passengers, find out from them who was there to meet them, and then interview those persons as to what they saw. Then, too, some news photographer took some color pictures of the disaster, and they want the various photographers interviewed to determine what they saw. In other words, they want the Bureau to go out and do the leg work for them, while they sit inside and ask the witnesses a bunch of theory questions. Mr. Trimble said, however, that if the Bureau could not cover this investigation, he could probably get his own inspectors to do it. Mr. Trimble made this request orally but formally of Mr. Vetterli today, and wants to be called back today.

RECORDED & INDEXED

62-48190-14

Mr. Connelley is of the personal opinion that we should not accept this situation for investigation, but that the proper parties to conduct the investigation are the inspectors of the Department of Commerce.

I told Mr. Connelley that we would be talking with you on the telephone in a few minutes, and that I would discuss this situation with you and get your decision in the premises.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
MAY 17 1937
FOLSON
FOLMERT
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ONE
FIVE
FILE

Time - 8:30 PM

I telephoned Mr. Connelley back and told him you had suggested that Mr. Vetterli get in touch with Mr. Trimble and suggest that the Commerce Committee can get a list of the passengers from the zeppelin people themselves. I told him that you are somewhat hesitant about saying "no" point blank to the request for the reason that the President has requested all Governmental agencies to cooperate, but that you believe if someone talks to Trimble and tells him that the Bureau will be glad to work with the inspectors of the Department of Commerce, thus indicating a cooperative attitude but not offering to accept the entire responsibility, it will be all right; that if they want to put a couple of Commerce inspectors on the job, we will put a couple of our men on the situation to work with them

84
OCT 16 1964

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Memo for Director

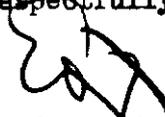
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5/12/37

and interview as many of these people as we can.

Mr. Connelley believes this is an excellent idea, and said that he would have Mr. Vetterli see Mr. Trimble the first thing in the morning before the hearings start and put the proposition up to him as outlined above. Mr. Connelley believes that Mr. Trimble will think this is all right, and will undoubtedly agree to it.

Respectfully,



E. A. TAMM

Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice
936 Raymond-Commerce Building,
Newark, New Jersey.

May 17, 1937.

Director,
Federal Bureau of Investigation,
Washington, D. C.

RE: WRECK OF AIRSHIP HINDENBURG.

Dear Sir:

There is transmitted herewith the original and four copies of a memorandum prepared by me regarding the testimony of various witnesses who appeared before the Board of Inquiry representing the Department of Commerce at Lakehurst, New Jersey in connection with the instant case. This testimony was given on the dates of May 12, 13, 14 and 15, 1937.

Very truly yours,

W. S. Devereaux
W. S. DEVEREAUX,
Special Agent in Charge.

WSD:ML
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ENC. - 5

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62-40195-15

W. S. Devereaux
W. S. DEVEREAUX
Special Agent in Charge

MEMORANDUM FOR THE REPORT

Newark, New Jersey
May 16, 1937

Following is the testimony of the various witnesses who thus far have appeared before the Board appointed by the Department of Commerce of the United States, which Board is headed by South Trimble, of the Department of Commerce. It will be recalled that the testimony given before this Board on May 10, 1937, was previously submitted to the Bureau by cover letter of Inspector E. J. Connelley. The following represents the testimony given before the Board under date of May 12, 13, 14 and 15, 1937.

On May 12, 1937, Lieutenant Raymond F. Tyler, First Grade, U. S. Navy, presently stationed at the Naval Base, Lakehurst, New Jersey, was heard before the board, and he testified as follows:

That he was on duty on May 6, 1937, at Lakehurst, New Jersey, acting in capacity of being in charge of the ground crew, which was made up of Navy personnel and civilian personnel.

Lieutenant Tyler stated that, regarding his background insofar as lighter-than-air ships are concerned, he can point to nineteen years' association therewith. He informed that during the World War, he served as hydrogen officer at the American Air Station on the French Coast, and was in charge of the manufacture of hydrogen for five blimp type balloons which were being used in coastal patrol work. After the war, Lieutenant Tyler continued as an officer in France for one and one-half years, and he then became qualified as a pilot in non-rigid airships, and was subsequent thereto stationed at Pensacola, Florida, at the Navy Base. Following this assignment, Lieutenant Tyler was assigned to the Balloon Corps that was affiliated with the Atlantic Fleet, and on the completion of this duty he was ordered to Lakehurst, New Jersey, for active duty with the American Airship Shenandoah. He states that he observed on this ship from the time of its conditioning in the fall of 1923, to the spring of 1924, at which time he was again transferred to Lakehurst, New Jersey, for duty, which duty had to do with a smaller type airship.

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Lieutenant Tyler stated that except for a 2-1/2 years' sea cruise, he has been associated with lighter than air ships in some form or other since the year 1916. During this time he served five years on the Airship Los Angeles and in the fall of 1935 he went to Europe with the Navy Balloon Team, at which time this Team competed at Warsaw, Poland in the International Balloon races. Following the Balloon races, he stated he went to Friedrichshafen, Germany, where the Hindenburg Airship was built, and at that time, he was taken on a tour through the Hindenburg by the son of Dr. Hugo Eckener, the German Airship technician. During this tour, Tyler informed that he was observing and obtaining information on the operative apparatus of the ship, as well as its general mechanical features. On this tour, he stated that he was given free access to all parts of the Hindenburg.

Regarding the crash of the Hindenburg at Lakehurst, New Jersey, on the evening of May 6, 1937, Lieutenant Tyler related that word had been received at the Naval Base, Lakehurst on May 5 that the time of the landing of the Airship Hindenburg had been changed from 6:00 a.m. on the morning of May 6. Prior to the receipt of this information, all of the ground equipment at Lakehurst had been retested and found to be in satisfactory condition. It was decided that the Hindenburg was to land at 6:00 p.m. on May 6, rather than at 6:00 a.m.; that this 6:00 p.m. was Eastern Daylight Saving Time, and at 5:00 p.m., Daylight Saving Time, general quarters was sounded, and the ground crew assembled to receive final instructions for the grounding of the Hindenburg.

According to Tyler, the ground personnel was broken up as follows:

Six men making up the mast crew, ten men making up the yawl line captains, two men on the number one yawl guide, two men on the number two yawl guide, six men on the main wire guide, four men on the yawl guide coupling party, forty men on the forward car yawl guide, thirty men on the stern yawl guide, thirty-four men on the forward landing lines of the port side and thirty-four on the forward landing starboard side, thirty-three on the stern landing port side, twenty-three on the stern landing starboard side, one on the passenger exit, one a truck driver, and five on the tractor that was mounted on rails.

According to Tyler, each of these details ^{were} supervised by commanding officers and all of these group leaders had had previous experience with the landing of lighter than air craft, and all of them were at least of the rank of chief petty officer.

Regarding the civilian personnel which helped make up the ground crew, Lieutenant Tyler revealed that a majority of these individuals had made up the ground crew that operated at Lakehurst during the summer of 1936 and which ground crew had grounded the Airship Hindenburg during that period of time. However, none of the civilians were placed in key positions, these positions being maintained by Navy personnel.

On the afternoon of May 6, 1937, Lieutenant Tyler states that he recalls that the wind was light and variable and that it was blowing from two to four knots an hour. After the ground crew took up their position, it was necessary for them to shift to 60 degrees to conform with the wind. At this time, the sky was threatening and light winds had set in. Due to the fact that the Hindenburg had not yet hove into sight and rain had started to fall, the ground crew was recalled to shelter. When the rain slackened, the ground crew was re-assembled and again assumed their positions. After a twenty minute period, heavier showers set in and while the Hindenburg had already passed over the field, she was then out of sight, and it was deemed advisable to again recall the crew to shelter. This last shower lasted approximated forty-five minutes. At the end of the forty-five minutes, the rain practically ceased and the sky indicated a third clearing. The ground crew was then again ordered to take up position on a heading of 70 degrees. Shortly thereafter, the Hindenburg approached on a northerly head, maintaining a height of from five hundred to six hundred feet. At this time, the wind again shifted to a southerly direction and the ground crew was re-formed, accordingly. The Hindenburg swung to the left, making off toward the south, then turned to the west of the field and swung left to a position over the Officers' quarters, and she then made her approach towards the mooring mast in a southerly direction. In the meantime, the Neon indicator which indicates the wind direction, showed another shift of wind and the ground crew was moved accordingly. It was noted by Tyler that during the ship's approach to the mooring mast, the after motors gave the appearance of being operated at full speed in reverse in an effort to check the forward momentum of the ship. The ship was brought to a standstill approximately four hundred yards outside of the outer Hindenburg circle that surrounds the mooring mast. Tyler also is of the opinion that the forward engines were used in reverse for a short period of time, but that he does not recall that they were used just prior to the time that the forward momentum of the ship was checked. During the approach of the ship, Tyler testified that he noticed that she apparently was heavy in the stern, and that water ballast was dropped aft. He stated that the starboard trail rope was

dropped at exactly 7:21 D.S.T., and this was followed immediately by the port trail rope. These ropes which were dropped from the forward part of the ship appeared to be very dry and gave off dust at the time that they fell to the earth, even though the ground itself was soaking wet. At the time of dropping these trail ropes, Lt. Tyler is of the opinion that the Hindenburg was two hundred feet in the air. The port trail rope, upon striking the ground, was immediately taken up by the ground crew, and was coupled to the port yawl guide line. The port yawl guide line rope was then passed around the niggerhead of the yawl guide tower and a slight strain was taken up. The forward group took hold of the guide ropes pending attachment of the yawl guide ropes. After dropping the trail ropes, Lt. Tyler states that the ship appeared to rise and started to drift, but that this drift was checked by taking up the slack on the port trail rope. The starboard yawl guide nose was still unattached but was being manned by the grounding crew.

According to Lt. Tyler, the list aft in the stern is not a condition that is unusual in airships at the time they are attempting to land, but usually every effort is made to trim an airship upon landing, so that it is on even keel.

He did state that he noticed all of the ballast discharged from the Hindenburg upon her approach was discharged aft and it was his recollection there was only one discharge of ballast.

He also stated that to his recollection the rear trail ropes are attached at a point forward of the lower fin and are used primarily in hauling the stern down to the ground after control of the ship is gained at the nose. Tyler states that he is positive that no lines or ropes were dropped aft from the Hindenburg nor had any portion of the ship aft touched the ground prior to the explosion.

Getting back to the landing operations, he stated that the starboard trail rope was about to be attached to the starboard yawl guide, and that in connection therewith, it was in the process of being attached to the niggerhead.

In his opinion, the ship was definitely under control of the ground crew at the forward points, and he states that the ground crew was ready to land the ship.

Regarding his position at this time, Lt. Tyler related that he was forward and slightly on the port side of the ship facing aft. While

in this position, he noticed a burst of flame just forward of the port fin - and just above the longitudinal axis of the ship and further that this burst of flame was followed by a report or detonation. The fire spread rapidly forward according to Tyler, and soon the entire ship was enveloped in flames.

He stated that he is positive that the main cable which is dropped from the very nose of the ship was unattached at the time of the explosion, and further that as the ship fell to earth, he remembers giving orders to those under his immediate command to the effect that all hands were to stand clear. As soon as the control car had touched the ground, and while the ship was blazing fiercely and even though it seemed likely that there were to be further explosions, according to Lt. Tyler, various members of the ground crew rushed to the area about the passenger compartment and attempted to effect rescue work. He states that upon the fire being placed under control, the rescue parties were organized for a sectional search of the wreckage for bodies, and that he recalls the last body was recovered early on the morning of May 7.

Lt. Tyler, upon being queried as to static electricity, informed that in his opinion the dry trail ropes which were the only parts of the ship touching the ground could discharge static electricity, as they were manila lines and non-conductive.

He stated further that the approach of the ship for landing was normal and, in his opinion, was satisfactory in technique.

He stated also that the only means of communication that the ship personnel had with the ground crew was through the medium of a megaphone which would be controlled by the Captain of the Hindenburg. He stated that the megaphone was not used and he felt that if any procedure being carried out by the ground personnel on landing did not meet with the approval of the airship personnel, the ground crew would have received notice of this fact from the Captain of the ship by the use of the megaphone.

At this time, a diagram of the Hindenburg was introduced as well as a map showing the landing field at Lakehurst and the immediate vicinity, and Lt. Tyler marked thereon the anchoring ring and the landing circle of the Hindenburg, as well as the location of the Hindenburg at the time that she met disaster. Under further interrogation, Tyler stated that he first noticed the burst of flame and that this was followed almost simultaneously with a detonation.

He recalls that there were a number of detonations and he could not state positively whether there was a muffled explosion before the appearance of the flame. He stated he had a direct view of the flame and that he would describe it as being approximately of the area of 10 feet long and 5 feet in width, and that it burst outwardly from the ship; further, that, immediately thereafter, flames almost covered the whole stern of the ship and then spread progressively forward. The pressure behind the first flame appeared to be of explosion pressure. He also stated that the left port motor at this time was turning over but that he cannot recall the approximately revolutions that it was making. He also recalls that the trail ropes aft had not as yet been dropped and that he is also positive that there was no radio antenna trailing from the ship. He did state, however, that the ship was making a high landing but that this was orthodox procedure in every way.

He stated that due to the drying out process of the superstructure of the ship which had become wet due to the previous rain, it was both possible and practical to assume that the ship was valving off hydrogen gas.

He was positive in his statement that at the time of the fire and explosion, the Hindenburg had definitely checked its forward momentum and was more or less stationary. He did state, however, that he is quite positive there was no backward movement to the ship.

Upon being questioned as to what was his basis for estimating the height of the Hindenburg at the time of the explosion, Tyler informed that the trail ropes were 417 feet long and that due to the fact that approximately half of this trail rope was still uncoiled after striking the earth, he estimated that the ship was approximately 200 feet in the air.

In reply to a question concerning the valving off of gas, Tyler stated that once the landing lines are properly connected to the niggerheads and after the main mooring cable is attached to the main cable of the ship, the ship is then drawn down mechanically by the main mooring cable, and that once this process is under way there is no further need to valve off hydrogen gas, due to the fact that the ship loses altitude by force being applied through the means of the mooring cable.

Lt. Tyler states that to his recollection the Hindenburg first appeared in sight of Lakehurst shortly after four o'clock p.m. on the afternoon of May 6, 1937, and that it was his understanding that the ship was scheduled to depart again for Germany as close to 10:00 p.m. as possible that night. He also stated that even though the Germans might have been attempting to make as

much haste as possible in order to depart by 10:00 p.m., he was not of the opinion that they would be hasty or careless for speed's sake, due to the fact of their wide experience with lighter-than-air craft.

Again referring to the explosion, Lt. Tyler stated that he was of the opinion that it took place in the area between the port fin and the port aft engines and that he felt that the subsequent detonations heard by him were caused by each cell catching fire subsequent to the first outburst. He also stated that the first explosion sounded to him as though it was a gas detonation. However, he stated that if one of the gas cells had had a purity of 85% or less, the explosion upon having this concoction ignited would have been terrific.

In Lt. Tyler's opinion, static electricity could only have been grounded by means of allowing a metal cable to touch the ground from the ship or that the manila ropes could have grounded the static electricity if they had been soaking wet.

He stated that the color of the fire first observed by him appeared to be of a reddish tint, and that it maintained this color. He also stated that he could not observe the extreme top of the Hindenburg due to his position.

He also stated that the Hindenburg did not appear to be particularly tail-heavy after the discharge of ballast, and in connection therewith, he stated that it would appear inconsistent to discharge ballast at the same time as valving off hydrogen gas, for the simple reason that one operation is to correct or equalize the other.

He also stated that to his recollection there were no landing or running lights or passenger cabin lights lit on board the Hindenburg. He also stated that he did not observe any propellers or motors behaving oddly, but he is of the impression that the two forward motors were running, and that the aft engines were operating at full speed shortly before the crash.

He stated he is of the opinion that the flames observed by him were hydrogen flames.

Lt. Tyler admitted to the Board that he is possessed of only a limited amount of experience or knowledge concerning electricity and static electricity, and further that he is not an authority on motor operations. He

stated that he did not notice any of the motors on the Hindenburg backfiring and discharging flame in the exhaust, but he states also that he did not have a full view of the exhausts.

He stated that to his knowledge the fabric used on the Hindenburg was referred to as "doped" fabric.

The testimony of Tyler was wound up by his referring to the fact that he has never heard of a charge of static electricity being given off by a dry manila rope.

On May 12, 1937, Lt. Benjamin May, of the United States Navy, stationed at the Naval Base, Lakehurst, New Jersey, testified before the Board representing the Department of Commerce, and stated that he was assistant mooring officer stationed atop the mooring mast on May 6, 1937, at the time that the Hindenburg was attempting to land on May 6.

Lt. May stated that he had been associated with lighter-than-air craft since 1928; that he had performed duty on the Airship Los Angeles as well as small non-rigid airships; that he took a round-trip passage on the Hindenburg as an observer for the United States Navy during the summer of 1936, and that in connection with this trip, he was allowed to roam the entire ship, to observe the methods of operation as well as the mechanics and structure of the same.

On May 6, he stated that he received orders to prepare the top of the mast to receive the Hindenburg and that he was then instructed to carry out the function of taking up the main wire cable which was to be played out of the nose of the Hindenburg.

He stated that at the time the Hindenburg approached the mooring mast and prior to the explosion that this main cable had at no time touched the ground, although he does recall that it had been played out slightly to a limited distance from the earth.

He also revealed that the Hindenburg had approached the landing field from the south, had passed over the mooring mast and proceeded north and then to the port side and headed into the wind to make her approach to the mooring mast; that the Airship then passed over the Officers' quarters at

Lakehurst and at this time, he noticed that she was apparently heavy in the stern and that quite a bit of ballast was dropped at the stern of the ship.

He was also of the opinion that the approach of the Hindenburg towards the mooring mast seemed rather fast for such a big airship, and that it was a faster approach than had been made during her previous voyages during the summer of 1936, and that it is to be noted in connection therewith that Lt. May was stationed at the mooring mast during this period of time in the same capacity that he had assumed on May 6, 1937.

He states that the Hindenburg, upon approaching the Hindenburg circle, had put her forward motors as well as her aft motors in reverse. He states that the ship came to a stationary position and that as she was dropping her trail ropes, he felt a cold wind come in from the west. He states that a shift of wind caused the nose of the Hindenburg to fall off the mast position and drift slightly to the starboard; that as the ship started to drift, he noticed that the crew handling the port line seemed to be having a little trouble but that this line was immediately thereafter hooked on to the yawl guide line which was attached to the mast engine, and he observed that three or four turns were taken on the niggerhead of the port yawl guide motor and that these turns took out all of the slack on the port line. He stated that he was closely observing the Hindenburg at this time for the purpose of ascertaining the proper way to handle her at this time; that the mast crew would then handle her accordingly at the time they would receive the main wire cable. He stated that it was about this time that he noticed just aft of the power car and just ahead of the port find in about the middle of the bag that this area seemed to collapse outwardly and he noticed small streaks of flame; further that this was followed almost immediately by a muffled explosion, and a blast was noted about the time of the first outward burst on the superstructure. He stated that he was approximately 600 feet from the outburst noted on the port side of the ship and that probably due to this distance he felt no concussion from this explosion. Lt. May was of the opinion that there was another explosion immediately thereafter and at this explosion, it appeared that the entire stern became enveloped in fire and that the flames progressed rapidly forward. At this time, the stern settled to the earth and anchored the ship so that she stopped her drifting and also ceased her upward motion, which apparently had been caused by the first of the explosions, and the entire ship settled to earth and by the time that she had settled, the entire ship was consumed with hydrogen flames.

Lt. May stated that he immediately rushed toward the ship and by the time he had reached the wreckage, the Hindenburg was still burning, but that the hydrogen flames had subsided and it appeared that only the fuel oil was burning.

As to the color of the flame that he noticed prior to the explosion and along therewith, he stated that it appeared to be bright yellow in color and that this tint was maintained until the settling of the ship, at which time it took on a more reddish hue. According to Lt. May, the first outburst that he noticed was of a mild nature and it appeared that the framework parted and came out in sections, and that this was followed immediately by a detonation.

He stated that he observed no radio antenna trailing from the ship, and he does recall that the trail ropes had been thrown prior to the explosion and that the coils upon reaching the ground had emitted dust, indicating that they were quite dry. He also informed that at no time did he observe any after lines being dropped.

At this time, there was introduced into evidence a diagram of the ship along with a designation by Lt. May thereon showing the position of the first outburst noted by him.

Lt. May states that at no time did he notice a glow or flame on board the Hindenburg prior to the outburst and that in connection with the noting of the structural outburst, he heard a sound that seemed to be the cracking of metal and also that he is of the opinion that the structure was virtually shot out at the area of the outburst, and that flames seemed to follow this eruption of structure. He stated that the muffled detonation that followed seemed to be unconfined in nature and that immediately thereafter a flame shot out of the side of the superstructure, and this was followed by a flame that flared from the top of the ship. This flame at the top of the ship was dartlike in appearance and extended from the ship some thirty feet into the air and was accompanied by other fingers of flame, 6 or 8" in width, all being 20 to 30 feet long. He states that his position at the time was one that was below the ship and also below the area of the explosion.

Upon being questioned further concerning the sound of the outburst, he stated that it seemed to be hollow and of a metallic nature, and was similar to the cracking of timbers.

He also testified that it was his recollection that all of the motors on the Hindenburg were functioning in reverse at the time. He also recalls that the exhaust of the aft port engine gave off some discharge, but he cannot relate as to the exact time relative to the explosion that this discharge was noticed by him.

He stated that it has been his observation that the Germans have

a tendency to utilize a method of backing the engines in landing more so than the Americans.

Also, in response to a question, the Lieutenant informed that he does not know the amount of gas pressure maintained in the gas cells of the Hindenburg at the beginning of her voyage, but he did state that it is his opinion that there is a diffusion of gas through the fabric covering at all times.

He also stated that he does not recall seeing any landing lights or any light of any nature aboard the Hindenburg at the time that she approached for landing.

On May 12, 1937, the following record was made of the testimony of Lieutenant Richard S. Andrews, who is a Junior Grade Lieutenant, U. S. Navy, presently assigned at the Naval Base at Lakehurst, New Jersey.

According to Lt. Andrews, he has been stationed at Lakehurst for the last ten months and he was on active duty on May 6, 1937, that date being the day of the arrival of the Airship Hindenburg; further that he was in charge of the detail that was to handle the landing of the control car of the Airship and in connection therewith it was the duty of this detail to physically catch hold of the control car and properly moor her to the earth.

He states that he saw the Hindenburg approach the landing field; that she circled the field and then went in the general direction of Seaside, New Jersey; that at this time, the ground crew took up stations at 130 degrees off the landing flag on the field. He also stated that the Assistant Mooring Officer had stationed a detail at 70 degrees following the appearance of the Hindenburg over the field; that it was at this time that there was a slight shower of rain and the crew was placed under shelter and a short time again took up positions and again, due to the occurrence of showers and the fact that the Hindenburg had not returned, the landing crew was again placed under cover. The last rain lasted but a short while and that as it lessened, it was noted that the sky was clearing in the west. The ground crew then again took up their stations and the Hindenburg was observed approaching the landing field from the general direction of Lakehurst, New Jersey, and that

she crossed the field at approximately five hundred feet in the air, made a sharp turn to the left and that at this time the observing officer on the field, due to the change of the wind, had the ground crew change position to due north, in view of the wind change, and that the order was changed for position to be assumed at 320 degrees off the landing flag. At about this time, the Hindenburg proceeded, approached the mooring mast, made a right turn and there was again a change on the part of the landing crew in order to take up more favorable stations based upon the position of the approaching airship.

Lt. Andrews noticed that the Hindenburg was approaching at a higher rate of speed than usual and that the motors both forward and aft were being raced and that he thought this was unusual at the time. He stated that the forward momentum of the ship was checked, and that the guide lines were dropped from the forward part of the ship. It is interesting to note that at this time, according to Lt. Andrews, he, along with his detail, was located practically directly below the airship.

Andrews stated that he noticed the port line was dropped and that at first it seemed to foul, but that later it straightened out and it was then properly connected with the port yawl guide rope. At this time, he noticed that the ship's nose began to rise and the bow fell off to the starboard. He also recalls that the engines of the Hindenburg had become quiet at this time, but that he feels the two forward motors were still running, turning over slowly, and that the aft engines, port and starboard, had either stopped or had stalled.

Upon further inquiry, it was revealed that Lt. Andrews had clear observation of only the port motor and that, therefore, he could only give an opinion as to the condition of the port aft engine.

Lt. Andrews stated that he noticed that sparks were being discharged from the exhaust of the port aft motor and upon being questioned as to whether he was watching the ship, Lt. Andrews informed that his entire detail had been watching the ship intently, due to the fact that one of the lines that was cast off by the Hindenburg previously had almost hit one of his detail and he had called out orders that all hands were to observe the ship in order that none of the landing lines should cause an accident, and in order that none of the duties of his detail should be inefficiently performed.

Shortly thereafter, Andrews stated that he saw a burst of flame that appeared to be horizontal in nature and was located on the port side of the ship ahead of the fin and slightly below the longitudinal axis of the superstructure. He noted that the flames spread over the stern rapidly and a detonation was heard. He recalls feeling no concussion as a result of this explosion, but does recall that he issued orders for his entire detail to run clear of the ship. He stated that his entire party ran in the direction of the port bow and that he looked over his shoulder and went out of range of the ship. He stopped and noticed that the ship was settling forward to the ground.

Lt. Andrews states that he does not recall seeing any persons leave the ship prior to the time that she struck the earth following the explosion and he recalls seeing the control car strike the earth and the superstructure settle over her in a flaming mass. It was at this point that he proceeded immediately to the wreckage and engaged in rescue work and the record will reflect in some detail the various acts performed by Lt. Andrews and the various members of his crew.

Lt. Andrews was recalled to the stand on the morning of May 13, 1937, at which time he was further interrogated as to his observation on the evening of May 6, and in connection therewith, he states that in his opinion, he saw the flash of flame and fire prior to the time that he was conscious of hearing the detonation and further, that the sound seemed to him to be more like a shot or the discharge of explosives.

He stated that, to his knowledge, the bow of the ship was steady at the time of the fire and explosion, but that there was a strain on the port bow trailing line. He again reiterated that the first flame that he had seen aft on the ship appeared to go out horizontally from the Hindenburg and that he does not recall seeing any structure being discharged from the ship and further, that he did not see, to his knowledge, any structural failure on the Hindenburg prior to the time of the explosion. He clarified this, however by stating that he had a limited view of the ship due to the fact that his position caused him to take up station directly under the ship. He feels he can state positively, though, that the Hindenburg was stationary at the time of the fire and explosion, and that the stern of the ship was slowly swinging to the starboard. He also feels that the aft port engine was idling and that the forward motors were also turning over slowly.

Regarding the sparks that he noted at the port aft motor, he

informed that they seemed to be going out in the exhaust stream and further that in his opinion, Diesel engines give off sparks in the exhaust stream when they have been raced and also that he is of the opinion that the aft motors of the Hindenburg were still in reverse at the time of the blast and fire. He also stated that in his opinion if a motor was in reverse, sparks from the exhaust stream would be thrown forward, rather than backward.

He also stated, in response to a question, that he is of the opinion that to shift the cams in the transmission of the Diesel engines being utilized by the Hindenburg, it is necessary that the main crankshaft or screw had to be stopped from her forward rotating motion before she could be thrown into the reverse motion.

On May 13, 1937, Frank W. Knox, civil engineer, Senior Grade, who performs certain duties at the Naval Air Station, Lakehurst, New Jersey, gave testimony before the Board for the purpose of laying foundation for the introduction into evidence of charts showing the exact position of the wreckage of the Hindenburg and its relation to the other physical structures on the reservation at Lakehurst.

Knox stated that the diagram was based on tangent measurements and that they were exact to within six inches.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE REPORT

Newark, N. J.
May 16, 1937.

On May 13, 1937 Bos'n Officer W. A. BUCKLEY testified before the Board, and in connection therewith he informed that on May 6, 1937 he was acting as Assistant Mooring Officer and had taken up position away from the mast.

Insofar as his background was with lighter-than-air craft, Officer Buckley informed that during the period of time from the years 1918 to 1921 he was on active duty in connection with lighter-than-air craft, and that subsequent thereto he had been on active duty on the Airship Los Angeles, as well as the Shenandoah, and that he had performed temporary duty on the U.S.S. Akron and had put in two years aboard the Macon, as well as having previous experience at the Naval Base at Lakehurst, New Jersey. Officer Buckley stated that he can point to 19 years of continuous service with lighter-than-air craft, and that insofar as the Airship Hindenburg is concerned, he informed that he made a short flight aboard her during the fall of 1936 and that this gave him a slight knowledge of the general construction of this ship.

Getting back to the date of May 6, 1937 Buckley informed that as Assistant Mooring Officer it was one of his duties to check all of the moving equipment on the field that was to be utilized in the landing of the Hindenburg, and that he distinctly remembers making a thorough check of this equipment and he found it all to be in satisfactory condition, and further, that at the time the Hindenburg approached the landing field everything was in readiness to properly handle her at the time she attempted to land. He stated that the zero hour was set for 5 P.M., Daylight Saving Time, on May 6, 1937, and that all of the men were congregated in the main hangar, and subsequent thereto they assumed their proper positions on the field. At this time there was a slight rain, according to Buckley, and along with the rain the Hindenburg hoveled in sight, coming apparently along the New Jersey coast line. When the ship came over the landing field the ground crew was immediately put into position, but the zeppelin continued on over the landing field, and inasmuch as a heavier shower set in, it was deemed expedient to give orders for the ground crew to take shelter. In the meantime the Hindenburg had disappeared from the horizon. Very shortly the Hindenburg again came into sight and the ground crew again took their places on the field. According to Buckley, when the Hindenburg was 350 to 400 yards from the mooring mast he recalls that the motors both forward and aft were idling and appeared to be in reverse gear, and during this procedure she was decreasing her altitude.

He recalled seeing the trail ropes being dropped from the forward part of the ship, and he also recalled that the ship tended

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to drift to the starboard and at the same time assumed a gentle rise upward. The zeppelin, according to Buckley, was approximately 100 feet in the air when her trail ropes were dropped, and that subsequent thereto he would estimate that she rose to an altitude of 250 feet. It was about this time that Buckley recalls seeing fire appear on the superstructure between the fin, port side, and the port after engine, as well as seeing fire burst out along the entire center line of the ship about two-thirds of the way up. Buckley stated that he did not recall seeing the bow running light having been lit, and it should be noted that this light is situated near the cone on the nose of the ship.

Buckley informed that the mooring operations up to the time of the accident appeared to him to be normal in every respect, and in his estimation the landing would have been properly made had it not been for the subsequent accident.

He recalled that after the trail ropes were let out from the Hindenburg at the time they made impact with the earth, a cloud of dust arose, indicating that these manilla trail ropes were quite dry. He also stated that the trail ropes were properly tied into the port and starboard yawl guide ropes, but that only the port yawl guide ropes had been taken in to reduce the slack.

Upon further questioning, Buckley informed that the trail ropes were not used in the same manner that they were used on May 6 1937 as they were used during the summer of 1936, and further, in his opinion the Hindenburg was making what he would term a "high landing." Last year, according to Buckley, the trail ropes were usually not used until the Hindenburg had been otherwise fastened in some way to the landing field, and after she had been made fast the trail ropes would be brought into use.

According to Buckley also, he had never seen the Hindenburg make a landing during the summer of 1936 at Lakehurst in such stormy conditions as those conditions which prevailed on the evening of May 6th.

Buckley informed that at the time of the fire he was standing ahead of the ship about 100 to 150 feet to the port side; that as he saw the fire he believes that it was followed by a sort of a puff or muffled explosion; that at the time of the fire he was not looking at the particular spot at which the fire broke out, but

the breaking out of the fire attracted his attention at once to that portion of the vessel.. He also informed that he noticed no structural failure that he can recall prior to the time he saw the first flame, followed by the muffled explosion, but he does recall that the motors had been in reverse and that at the time of the appearance of the fire it is his recollection that the motors were idling, and that at the time he saw the first outburst of fire he believes that the motors had been slowed down for approximately one half minute.

At this time there was marked for identification a diagram of the field at Lakehurst as well as the diagram of the Hindenburg itself upon which appears the markings of Officer Buckley which indicate the position that he assumed at the time of the ship's approach for landing on May 6th.

Upon further questioning he stated that he did not recall whether the motors were started or stopped several times during the manoeuvres performed in the ship's attempted landing, due to the fact that he was more concerned in getting the ground crew under his direct supervision into the proper position so that the ship could be properly received at the time that she was ready to be moored.

He described the first flame seen by him as being fifteen to twenty feet in length and five to ten feet in width, and that it appeared two-thirds of the way up on the ship's back. Upon further questioning Buckley informed that he does recall that the Hindenburg had moored under more difficult conditions during the last year of 1936 than the conditions prevailing on May 6th, and that he wanted to clarify his previous statement regarding the conditions on May 6th to read "that stormy conditions certainly prevailed and that the conditions were more stormy than any under which she had previously landed at Lakehurst, but that the Hindenburg had landed under more difficult conditions at Lakehurst, which conditions were produced not by stormy weather but by strong prevailing winds."

He also stated that he did not feel that there were any difficulties encountered in the landing on May 6th up to the time that the accident occurred. Further, that the ship appeared to be making a usual landing, and further, that even though the Hindenburg was slightly heavy at the stern he is of the opinion that for a lighter-than-air craft to show a slight list in the stern is not an unusual condition at the time she attempts to land. Further, he stated that the discharge of water ballast to correct this list aft was most certainly the orthodox manner in correcting such a condition.

This officer stated that last year the Hindenburg had usually utilized what they called "spider lines" in landing at Lakehurst, but that for some reason or other on her initial trip for this year she preferred to use the guide line form of landing.

Officer Buckley also stated that to his knowledge nothing has been found on the field in the vicinity of the wreckage of the Hindenburg that would indicate that it had been removed from the wreckage in the manner that it was blown as if from an explosion. He also stated that to the best of his recollection the flame and detonation heard and observed by him seemed to occur almost simultaneously, and further, that he does not recall feeling a concussion on the ground at all.

On May 13, 1937 there also appeared before the Board representing the Department of Commerce in connection with the instant investigation, CHIEF BOS'SN'S MATE FREDERICK JOSEPH TOBIN, who informed that he had been associated with lighter-than-air craft since the year 1922, at which time he was stationed at the Navy air field at Pensicola, Florida. This officer was a member of the crew of the ill-fated Shenandoah, and was one of the crew on board at the time that the Shenandoah crashed in the middle west. He was also a member of the crew of the Los Angeles, and was attached to the ground crew that took care of the landing operations of the Airship Akron, as well as the Airship Hindenburg.

On May 6, 1937 Tobin was assigned to the duty of assisting in the mooring the Hindenburg, and in connection therewith his duty was to have his men attach the ground ropes (the yawl guide lines) to the guide lines which were thrown out from the ship. Besides this he also had more or less of a roving commission in that he was to observe the entire landing field and see that all of the operations were functioning properly, and be of any assistance possible in the event the lines fouled or one of the landing crews became confused and performed their work in an inefficient manner.

According to Tobin the Hindenburg on May 6th passed over the ground crew in more or less of a manoeuver and proceeded across the field, making a left turn. It was at this time that he noticed that one of the rudders at the rear of the Hindenburg on the port side was

two degrees off from the rudder on the starboard side. According to Tobin these two rudders should be properly synchronized, and therefore, if working properly, should be in relatively the same position. He stated that the Hindenburg continued to make a left turn and slowly approach the mooring mast for the landing operations, and at this time he would estimate that she was approximately 300 feet in the air and upon checking her forward motion it appeared that she started to gradually shift to the port side. He states that the trail ropes were dropped from the ship and he recalls that the port trail rope was attached to the yawl guide line by the grounding crew and that the starboard rope was also taken up by the grounding crew on the starboard side, but apparently was not long enough to attach to the starboard yawl guide line. He is of the opinion that the starboard trail rope was never attached to the starboard yawl guide line.

It was at this time that Officer Tobin noticed a burst of smoke and flame, accompanied by a crackling sound, and further, that the sound heard by him was quite similar to the sound that he remembered hearing at the time that the Shenandoah cracked up in the middle west, at which time he was a member of the crew. He stated that the ground crew, while taken by surprise, immediately followed orders and attempted to get out from under the bow of the ship, inasmuch as the ship was settling rapidly towards the earth.

He was of the opinion that the flame noticed by him started in the aft part of the ship near the rear port fin, and a little below the equator of the superstructure. He also recalls that shortly after running away from the wreck, the tail of the Hindenburg enveloped in flames and crashed to the earth.

Upon being questioned concerning his observance at the time of the outbreak of the fire, he informed that he saw the flames and heard the detonation but he could not recall exactly how the engines, either forward or aft, were functioning. However, he does recall that just prior to the explosion the engines were working a little more rapidly than usual, and further, he recalls that they were making a little more noise than they usually made during the process of landing manoeuvres; however, there appeared to be nothing irregular about the engines. He also stated that he did not see any of the engines idling from the position that he had assumed, which position was directly under the mooring cone at the nose of the ship.

Upon further inquiry regarding the rudder positions, he clarified the rudder appearance by stating that the lower rudder ap-

peared to be placed hard to the left, and that the upper rudder was three or four degrees to the right. He stated that he did not follow the operation of the ship after she passed over the landing field the first time with respect to the rudders.

Subsequent to the accident he has viewed the wreckage of the Hindenburg and has observed what he deems to be an emergency tackle setup which has been placed on the operative equipment from the control car to the rear port fin, and it appears that this tackle is attached to the lower fin and it might have been so attached as a temporary arrangement for the taking up of slack in the controls of this fin. He stated this would not, in his opinion (the slack) cause undue vibrations in any of the other parts of the ship. However, he cannot definitely state whether this temporary tackle was in fact attached to the controls of the lower fin.

With regard to the rudders, Tobin stated that in his opinion one could be free to roam, due to the fact that her controls were not working properly, yet the other rudder, if properly set, would be sufficient to keep the ship on its course. He also stated that due to his position he had a limited view of the Hindenburg at the time that she began her mooring operation, and that, therefore, he might not be in a position to see a smaller flame higher up on the ship's superstructure, but he does recall seeing the larger flames appear on the port side aft, and that he was first concerned about the safety of the ship at the time he saw the smoke and flames. Further, that he was of the opinion that the sound of the crackling noise, which reminded him of wires being broken, as well as broken girders, seemed to precede the appearance of the flame.

Upon being questioned as to why he did not report the apparent defect in the rudders of the Hindenburg, he replied that he was of the opinion that this defect was merely an optical illusion on his part and that he considered the Hindenburg under control at all times up to the time of the fire. He also stated that there is a clutching device which is utilized on a great many American ships which makes it possible to steer the ship in a satisfactory manner even though one rudder is not functioning satisfactorily, but he does not know whether or not the Hindenburg was equipped with this device. He also stated that the damage to the rudder wire would not necessarily damage the gas cells or the superstructure, in his opinion, and that he has never heard of such a thing in his experience. However, he does consider that the rudder defect noted by him might be considered one of the probabilities

in connection with the causes of the wreck. He also stated that the rudder defect was noticed by William Bishop, a member of his detail, and that Bishop made mention of the defect to him at the time that the Hindenburg passed overhead.

Also on May 13, 1937 the statement of WILLIAM F. BISHOP, a member of the ground crew, as well as a member of the U. S. Navy, stationed at the Naval base at Lakehurst, New Jersey, was heard by the Board of Inquiry.

He testified that he had been associated with lighter-than-air craft from August 1923 until October 1930, at which time he was assigned to general field duty at Lakehurst, New Jersey; that the first association he had had with the Airship Hindenburg was on May 6, 1937 on her initial voyage of this year from Germany. Further, that he was assigned to the mooring section of the ground crew, and that his immediate superior was Officer F. J. Tobin.

He testified that one of his duties was to take in the guide ropes after they were fastened to the yawl guide lines and tie them around the niggerhead, and after they were so fastened, see that all of the slack was reduced in these lines. He testified that he recalled seeing the Hindenburg approach the landing field at Lakehurst, and as she passed over the field and proceeded off, he noticed that the top rudder was a little to the starboard side and the lower rudder was a little to the port side and that they appeared not to be properly synchronized. He stated that he was about 200 feet from the mooring mast at the time that the ship passed directly overhead, and that he observed the rudder at the time she passed. He stated that at the time the ship approached the mooring mast to effect her landing, he was, of course, primarily interested in the handling of the trail ropes that were dropped from the ship; that in connection therewith he picked up the port line that he was thrown out from the forward part of the Hindenburg, and fastened it to the yawl guide line, and in turn fastened it to the niggerhead, and that upon completing this operation he proceeded over toward the starboard trail rope. At this time he noticed that the ship was starting to drift slowly at the stern in a starboard direction. He could see all of the port side of the ship from the bow to the fins. He recalls seeing the flames appear on the after port side of the ship, and it appeared to him as though these flames were coming from the inside of the superstructure and that the flames, when they

burst out of the port side, appeared to be a little above and aft of the rear port motor and ahead of the rear port fin. Further, that this blaze was four or five feet wide and was a good sized one, being reddish in color. He believes that after he saw the flame he heard an explosion.

At this time Bishop informed that his job on most lighter-than-air projects had to do with gas cells. He stated that upon examining the wreckage of the Hindenburg in a prefatory manner, he noticed what appeared to him to be a temporary tackle installed on the horizontal rigging on the after part of the ship. He also stated that in his opinion cross rudders can be dangerous if one fouls the other.

In response to inquiry he stated that the Hindenburg appeared to be under control, but in connection therewith he stated that it is his opinion that the ship could have been steered with only one rudder being operated properly. Also in response to inquiry he stated that the starboard rudder appeared to him to be fifteen degrees out of line with the other rudder. He also stated that neither of the rudders appeared to move while he was watching them. He further stated that the ship did not appear to him to be getting into the wind as she came in to land the way that she should have.

Upon further interrogation Bishop stated that it is true that the zeppelin made a sharp turn to the left, and that such a maneuver should not indicate that there was any rudder difficulty being encountered on the part of the ship's crew, and that the approach to the mooring mast made by the Hindenburg was a rapid one and he admitted that it would be likely that if a steering difficulty was being encountered, that the ship's approach would be slow.

Bishop informed that due to his position at the time of the attempted landing of the ship, he was not qualified to comment on the condition of the aft port motor.

There was also called to testify before the Board of Inquiry, Department of Commerce, on May 13, 1937, MAX HENNERBERG, who was a room steward on board the Hindenburg at the time that she arrived at Lakehurst on May 6, 1937. At the time that this individual testified it was necessary to utilize the services of Sydney B. Smith as interpreter. Smith is a representative of the State Department from Washington, D. C.

Hennerberg testified that in his estimation the fire broke out on the port side of the ship in the beginning, and that the flames were behind him; that he is of the opinion that he first saw the flame or the reflection of the flame, and subsequently heard the explosion or detonation.

He stated that there were no lights burning on the ship, at least in the section in which he was located, at the time of the fire, and in clarification thereof stated that he was in the passenger dining salon observing the landing operations from the window in the dining salon. He stated that after the appearance of the flame he heard a dull detonation followed by several others. He stated that he could not see much of the superstructure in the aft part of the ship, nor could he see the port after motors. He did not recall feeling any vibration immediately before the fire broke out or immediately after the fire broke out, and neither can he estimate the lapse of time between the appearance of the fire or the reflection thereof, and the hearing of the detonation.

He stated that he had been a room steward upon the Hindenburg since the time of her commissioning, and that he had been with the German Zeppelin Transport Company since March 6, 1936 and that at no time has he assumed the position of anything but room steward during this time.

He stated that after the appearance of fire and the detonation he stayed at the window of the dining salon, and when the ship was approximately 50 feet above the ground he jumped out the window, and upon alighting on the ground he scrambled to safety.

He also informed that to the best of his knowledge he is of the opinion that the Hindenburg prior to the outbreak of fire was operating in a satisfactory manner, and that her crossing had been normal in every respect.

At this time he recalled that the detonation heard by him subsequent to the appearance of fire was of sufficient force to throw him headlong to the floor, and further, that this detonation reminded him of the bark of a heavy artillery piece. He was first concerned about the safety of the ship and of his personal safety at the time he first saw the reflection of flame.

In response to inquiry he stated that at no time prior to the accident had he overheard any conversation about a mechanical

or structural difficulty of the Hindenburg, and also in response to inquiry he stated that upon the ship's arrival in America airplanes were constantly flying within full view of the zeppelin, but that none of these planes behaved in such a manner that it gave him any concern whatsoever.

Hennerberg stated that he could give no information of value concerning the accident, inasmuch as he was without knowledge of same.

There also appeared before the Board of Inquiry on May 13, 1937 FRITZ DEEG. In connection with this testimony the services of Sydney B. Smith, of the State Department, were utilized as the State interpreter.

Deeg informed that he was one of the crew personnel aboard the Hindenburg at the time that she met her accident on the evening of May 6th, and that he was performing in the capacity of cabin steward. He stated that he had previously worked on board the Graf Zeppelin in the year 1934, and that upon securing this position as steward aboard the Graf Zeppelin, this marked the beginning of his association with lighter-than-air craft.

He informed that he went aboard the Hindenburg as a member of her crew in August 1936 and that he was on board the Hindenburg on all of her voyages henceforth with the exception of missing the last trip to America in 1936.

He stated that on May 6, 1937 at the time that the Hindenburg was approaching the mooring mast he was standing at an open window on the port side in the passenger's dining salon. He stated he recalls seeing Max Hennerberg also standing at one of the forward windows in the dining salon. Deeg testified he recalls seeing the guide ropes being dropped from the forward part of the Hindenburg, and that it was shortly thereafter that he felt a blast that shook the ship and that this blast had apparently emanated from the stern portion of the ship. He also recalls that he had a difficult time maintaining his footing subsequent to the blast, and that he was able to tumble out of the window of the dining salon.

He stated that after the ship settled most of the flames appeared on the starboard side of the wreckage, and within the brief period of twenty minutes the entire ship was consumed by fire.

At this time he outlined in detail his various rescue activities, and in connection therewith he stated that he jumped from the ship when she was a little over thirty feet from the ground. Deeg stated that he had no idea whether he heard the blast or detonation before he saw flames appear. He also informed that he felt or heard nothing unusual prior to the detonation and appearance of the flames. He did testify that he recalled talking to Captain Lehmann on the starboard side of the vessel, and that during this conversation Captain Lehmann instructed him to move to the port side of the vessel, which was more or less unoccupied.

He also testified that insofar as he knew the entire trip from Germany had been most satisfactory, and that he was of the opinion that the mechanical as well as the operative functions of the vessel were normal. He recalls that after the detonation all of the furniture in the dining salon started to roll backwards and the ship canted to a fifty to sixty degree angle.

He also testified that after the Hindenburg had sighted land in America the various airplanes were observed flying in the air in the vicinity of the Hindenburg, and that he recalls that one news airplane, apparently containing newspaper photographers, flew along with the Hindenburg for about forty-five minutes. He also stated that none of the antics of any of these airplanes caused him undue concern; further, he had no concern for his own safety or the safety of the Hindenburg until after the appearance of fire and the sound of the explosion.

SEVERIN KLEIN, a steward aboard the Hindenburg on May 6, 1937 testified before the Board of Inquiry on May 13, 1937. He stated that he made all of the voyages with the Hindenburg as a room steward during the season of 1936, but that prior to 1936 he had had no previous experience with airship travel.

He stated that on May 6th at the time the Hindenburg came to a stationary position during her approach to the mooring mast to begin mooring operations, he was standing in the dining salon on the

port side of the ship at window number three. He stated that this is situated in the aft part of the dining salon. He also recalls that Fritz Deeg and Max Hennerberg were also at windows in the dining salon. He stated that at no time did he lean out of the window, and therefore his observation of the ship itself was quite limited. He recalls seeing the reflection of fire, but does not recall from what portion of the ship it seemed to emanate from. He also testified he heard the explosion at approximately the same time he noticed the reflection of flames and cannot recall exactly when he felt a jolt or vibration, but he does recall feeling a strong vibration which threw him headlong into a corner along with other passengers as well as objects of furniture. He stated further that he cannot recall the exact color or texture of flame or the reflection of flame, but that his mind is at blank except that he recalls he jumped from the ship at the time that the zeppelin was from ten to twelve meters above the earth. He informed further that he experienced nothing unusual prior to the feeling of the jolt or vibration, or prior to the observation of the reflection of fire or the fire itself.

He informed that insofar as he was concerned the trip from Germany had been normal in every respect and had been most satisfactory insofar as operative and mechanical phases were concerned.

He also stated that at no time did he hear any discussion amongst the passengers or crew concerning faulty mechanical condition, and also testified that he heard airplanes circling in the sky at the time that the Hindenburg passed over land in America, but that the antics of none of these ships gave him any concern whatsoever.

He testified that he could give no helpful information to the Board of Inquiry as to the cause of the fire or the accident itself, and further, that he heard no unusual sounds prior to being conscious of the explosion or blast.

The next witness to appear before the Board of Inquiry on May 13, 1937 was WERNER FRANZ, cabin boy, who resides in Frankford, Germany. He is 14 years of age and was a member of the German crew that was operating the Hindenburg on May 6, 1937.

He informed that at the time of the accident he was stationed in the officer's mess. Further, that he could see out of the

ship by utilizing a window in that compartment, and that as he was peering out of the window he recalls hearing a detonation; that immediately thereafter he proceeded to the gangway of the superstructure and he was conscious of the ship falling to the earth and that all was in flames. He remembers jumping clear of the wreckage and that he was afterward towards the bow of the ship, and that as he looked on the ground a water tank above him burst and drenched him with water and that this was more than likely one of the reasons why he was not severely burned. He stated that he recalls that he jumped from one of the hatches from the front of one of the smoking room compartments, where he proceeded after he had reached the gangway. He informed that after alighting on the ground he ran clear of the wreckage, and as he turned around he saw the entire vessel settle to the earth and that it was shortly thereafter consumed by fire.

He also informed that he noticed nothing irregular about the operations of the Hindenburg on her last voyage, and further, that at no time did he hear the crew or any of the passengers in a discussion concerning any irregularities or any abnormalities on the part of the actions of the ship.

EUGENE NUNNENMACHER testified on May 13, 1937 before the Board of Inquiry, Department of Commerce, to the effect that he was a member of the German crew that was operating the dirigible Hindenburg at the time she met her disaster on May 6, 1937 and that he was performing in the capacity of dining room steward.

He stated that at the time of the accident he was stationed in the passenger's dining salon and had just finished preparing a table for the Customs agents in the middle of the salon. He stated that he was looking out of the window on the port side of the ship and that the window from which he was peering was closed, and therefore, a view of the entire superstructure was limited. He stated that he had just gone to get a silver plate of sandwiches; that he had just placed this silver plate containing the sandwiches in the pantry and proceeded back into the dining salon, where he watched the guide ropes thrown to earth and he observed the ground crew take up the ropes on the ground. It was immediately thereafter that he saw flames shoot out on the ship and heard and felt a detonation. The force of this detonation was so great that it threw him to the floor, and upon arising he noticed that passengers were scrambling for the windows. He remembers assisting in the open-

ing of one of the windows and that he observed two passengers jump from this window and he then jumped also, but does not recall exactly how high the flaming ship was from the ground at that time. He then described in detail how he scrambled clear of the falling wreckage, and also described in detail the various rescue activity engaged in by him.

Getting back to his observations prior to the accident, he stated that the first fire noticed by him was a glare which he noticed by looking out of the windows, and that this glare appeared to be in the after part of the ship. He stated that he felt an explosion or detonation at the same instant he observed the glare of the fire. In his opinion the detonation wasn't so terribly strong in nature, and the glare of the flames observed by him appeared to be white.

He stated that he has been a member of the crew of the Hindenburg since the time of her commissioning, and that he has never been employed by any other airship. He stated that to his knowledge lights were lit on board the Hindenburg in the sleeping quarters of the passengers, but that he is of the opinion that this mechanism was functioning properly, and he further stated that in his opinion most of the passengers were located on the starboard side of the passenger section of the ship.

He informed that during the voyage he was of the opinion that it was a normal voyage and that at no time did he note or hear anything unusual insofar as the operations of the ship were concerned.

On further interrogation he estimated that^s the time he jumped from the ship, the ship was ten to twenty meters from the ground, and further, that he does not recall seeing any actual flames but only the glare thereof.

He informed the Board that he had no comment whatsoever to make insofar as the accident was concerned as he was possessed of no knowledge that would be of assistance in ascertaining the reason for the accident.

ALFRED GROETZINGER, 24 years of age, testified before the Board of Inquiry on May 13, 1937. He stated that he was a member of the crew of the Hindenburg on May 6, 1937, and that he was a cook. He stated that he had been a cook on board the Hindenburg since the ship had been

commissioned. Prior to that time he had been a cook on board the Graf Zeppelin since the year 1932.

He stated that at the time the ship came to a halt on the approach to the mooring mast at Lakehurst, he was located in the forward part of the ship in the frame. He stated that he was more or less assisting the trimming of the ship, and that his usual landing station is in the kitchen. He informed that he was looking out of the ship at the time, and that he is the only member of the six or seven of the crew that were forward toward the bow that escaped with his life. He stated that at the time of the accident he must have either dropped out of a hatch or was blown out. He cannot recall exactly what happened nor how he reached the earth. He did state that he has a vague recollection of a vibration being felt. This was accompanied with a muffled explosion. He also stated that he recalls a feeling as though the bow of the ship was lifting upward and this evidently either fell or was blown through the ventilation hatch at the bow.

Upon further questioning he stated that he was to the left of the lower gangway in the forward part of the ship and that he first observed fire just above him, but he cannot state from whence this fire had progressed. He also testified that he saw no evidence of fire prior to the feeling of the explosion, and that the explosion occurred prior to the fire insofar as he was concerned. He also does not recall hearing any subsequent explosion after hearing the first, and that it was entirely possible that he could have been unconscious at the time the ship crashed to the ground. He stated that he has no recollection of seeing the ship on the ground or noticing any fire.

He stated that before the detonation, by looking through the ventilation hatch, he could see the mooring chain at the cone of the ship which is located on the foremost portion of the bow, but he does not know whether this mooring chain ever touched the ground before the accident happened. He stated, however, that he is sure the guide ropes, both starboard and port, reached the ground after they were thrown clear by the crew.

He informed that for the purpose of cooking, aboard, the Hindenburg used stoves which had electric plates, and that two of these electric plates were in operation for the purpose of heating water at the time of the accident, but to his knowledge the electric stoves on board had always functioned properly.

He stated that the reason for his taking up position forward was due to the fact that he was usually directed to that portion of the ship that was lightest in weight at the time that mooring operations began. He also stated that he had not been called to assume the position in the forward part of the ship for the purpose of landing for quite a lengthy time, but he does believe that he had assumed that position once before during one of the trial flights of the Hindenburg.

He stated that the voyage from Germany had been a successful one as well as a normal one, and that he was in possession of no information that would be helpful to the Board in ascertaining the cause or causes for the accident.

On May 14, 1937 the first witness to appear before the Board of Inquiry was HENRICH KUBIS, of Frankford, Germany. Kubis advised that he was a member of the crew of the Hindenburg on May 6, 1937 in the capacity of Chief Steward.

During the approach of the Hindenburg to the mooring mast Kubis came from the lower deck to the upper deck, making sure that the passengers were all on the upper deck, where there were only a few passengers. He saw through the window that the landing lines were dropped, and he then proceeded to prepare the tables for the Immigration authorities. He observed the ship to take an angle of inclination to the rear, and at that time the center windows closed and Kubis jumped to open them and called to the others to keep the windows open. Everything happened so fast that he was not sure whether he first observed the fire or the accompanying shock. As he noticed that the ship was too high above the ground he cautioned others not to jump. When the ship reached about the height of five meters above the ground he told others to jump and he did so himself. Upon landing on the ground he ran from the ship about fifty meters and turned around to see if he could help any of the others.

The first time that he thought something was wrong was when he noticed that the bow of the ship had risen at an unusual angle. At this time Kubis was looking to the center of the cabin on the upper deck and did not notice the fire before he noticed the angle of inclination. He first felt a jar from an explosion at approximately the same time that he noticed the angle of inclination.

He further advised the Board that during the trip he did not notice anything unusual among the passengers or the crew, and that he did not know of any difficulty with the lighting system during the entire trip; further, the lights were burning at the time of the accident. He stated that the Hindenburg had experienced no trouble on prior trips with the lighting system or any of the fuses burning out.

Kubis advised the Board that he had been on the Hindenburg since the very first trip and has been on airships for the last twenty-five years. As the ship was approaching the mooring mast Kubis was opposite the center window on the upper deck and observed that the ship was about 120 feet above the ground, and at this time he saw the back port line drop and the landing crew take the line and bring it to a medium degree of tension. It was shortly after this that he felt the shock of an explosion and then noticed that the ship was afire at the stern. The nature of the explosion was that of a muffled report. The effect of the explosion did not cause him to lose his footing. At the time of the explosion some of the passengers on the upper deck were in the lounge and some in the dining room and connecting quarters. Before the explosion there had been no indication of any danger. So far as he knew there were no passengers in the smoking room at the time, and the only person there was the smoking room steward. The time interval in making the observation of the various locations, particularly from the dropping of the landing line until the lifting of the bow of the ship, according to Kubis, was approximately one minute.

Kubis advised that when the ship was in port at Germany he did not know of any visitors to the ship, but he did know that certain people have access to the ship while it is in port. During the trips of the Hindenburg the passengers are conducted on tours through the ship. Kubis conducted a few of the tours, but they are usually assigned to the ship's doctor and one of the stewards. So far as Kubis knows, while the ship was in port in Germany, no one was conducted through the interior of the ship. The ship, as is usual, is always closed to visitors one and one-half days before making a trip. The company regulations are that while the ship is in port visitors are only conducted through the ship by officers of the ship. Smoking is permitted only in the smoking room, and then only after a half hour from leaving port until a half hour before landing. The smoking privileges, however, may be denied by order of the Captain at any other time that he deems it advisable. All matches and lighters are taken from the crew and passengers before the trip begins. Kubis, however, stated that members of the crew

may have in their possession personal flashlights.

Kubis advised that the best person to determine how far back in the stern passengers were allowed would be the Chief Engineer, and as far as Kubis knows, no passengers were ever allowed back to the bulkhead to the rear of the passenger's quarters, and they were never allowed on the service catwalk of the ship. The baggage compartment is in the rear portion of the ship and Kubis was not aware of its exact position for it is often changed.

When Kubis was first concerned about the safety of the ship he was in a standing position, and as soon as he felt the strong angle of incident, knew there was something amiss, and at the time he did not see anything to cause alarm. Kubis was unable to determine whether it was his sense of feeling, hearing or sight that first warned him of impending danger, and he advised that he heard the explosion and felt the accompanying shock at the same time.

As Kubis was unable to furnish any further information he was excused by the Board.

The second witness of May 14, 1937 was WILHELM BALLA, who resides at Waldorf, near Frankford, Germany.

Balla advised that he was a member of the crew of the Hindenburg on May 6, 1937 in the capacity of night steward. At the time of the accident Balla was in the dining room and he suddenly heard a muffled explosion and felt a jerk of the ship. At that time two passengers slipped aft and pulled Balla with them. Balla is not aware of how high the ship was at the time of the explosion, and he did not know whether any part of the ship had at that time touched the ground.

Balla first noticed the fire after the explosion and then only by reflection as it suddenly became very light. Balla was standing in the dining room to one side and rather far forward at the time of the explosion and he could see aft only as far as the end of the dining room, as he was facing inward and was unable to see at that time any of the ship's windows. Balla advised that he first observed the reflection of the fire at about the same time of the explosion, and as to the color of the fire, Balla stated that it was merely a bright color. The explosion was in the nature of a detonation and gave him a scare

and started him sliding aft with the passengers.

Just shortly after the landing signal was given Balla was standing between the forward window and an adjoining one and observed the landing lines dropped. After observing the landing lines dropped Balla then made room for the passengers at the window. He was not able to estimate the time between the dropping of the landing lines and the explosion. After Balla had slipped aft with two passengers he heard another explosion and then started pulling himself along the handrail to one of the windows. He observed some of the passengers jumping out of the window of the cabin and pulled himself to position in front of the forward window and jumped out. At this time the ship was rather high from the ground as it was rising by the nose. During the approach to the mooring mast Balla advised that the ship was proceeding in a normal fashion.

As to his experience with airships, Balla advised the Board that he had been aboard the Airship Hindenburg since its first trial trip, but that he had no experience prior to his shipping on the Hindenburg.

Balla was excused by the Board when he advised that he had no further information with reference to the wreck of the Hindenburg.

The third witness on May 14, 1937 was EMIL STOECKLE, who resides at Frankford, Germany.

Stoeckle advised that he was aboard the Hindenburg on May 6, 1937 as a passenger, and is employed by the German Zeppelin Transport Company in its town office at Frankford, Germany. He is in charge of the freight and mail department. While on board the Hindenburg Stoeckle did not have any duties to perform during the trip, but after landing he was to be in charge of the freight and mailing department at Lakehurst for this trip.

Stoeckle advised that the landing signal was not within his knowledge, but he assumed that it had been given as they approached the mooring mast. Stoeckle did not make any special observations of the approach of the ship to the mooring mast. It was his impression that the ship was at rest when he first saw the landing lines dropped.

Stoeckle was on the starboard side of the ship at a window in the passenger lounge when he saw the right landing line dropped. After observing this, Stoeckle went to the cabin to get a coat out of his suitcase, which had been left in front of his cabin door. Stoeckle's cabin was No. 44 and was located on the upper passenger deck. While Stoeckle was standing in the corridor in front of his cabin he heard a muffled detonation, and due to the angle of incident which followed, he was pressed against the corridor wall. Stoeckle then worked his way to the stairway which went down to the port side of the deck. Half way down this stairway Stoeckle saw through a window that it was too high to jump. At this time he also saw a reflection of fire on the ground. He waited until the ship touched the ground and the jar burst a window from its frame, and he then realized that the passengers on the upper deck had noticed the danger due to his hearing them running back and forth. When the ship reached the ground Stoeckle used a broken window to get out of the ship, and on landing on the ground he looked over his shoulder and noticed that the ship was afire at the point he had just left. Stoeckle ran from the ship to escape falling girders, and shortly returned to the vicinity of the ship to assist those who were hurt. Stoeckle estimated the time between the dropping of the landing line and the inclination of the bow to be as long as it would require him to go from the passenger lounge down the corridor to the cabin corridor, to the location of his cabin, which was about half way down the cabin corridor. He was unable to exactly estimate the time that it required him to do this, but stated that he covered this distance in a hurry as he was anxious to get his overcoat. The explosion had no particular effect on Stoeckle, and it was the angle of inclination that caused him to be pressed against the corridor wall. At the time of the explosion Stoeckle noticed no unusual odor.

Stoeckle advised that his experience on airships prior to this trip had been limited to a fourteen hour flight over Germany. He estimated the height of the airship above the ground to be about eighty or one hundred meters, and drew this conclusion from his observation of the landing line, which is about one hundred twenty meters long, and when the line was thrown from the ship a portion of the line rested on the ground.

To Stoeckle's knowledge the freight aboard the ship was stored as follows: films in the control car; bags in the aft part of the ship, and as to other baggage - he had no knowledge.

Stoeckle advised that he did not maintain any record of the freight aboard the ship this trip, and does not know how much the freight weighed.

Stoeckle advised that as he observed the starboard line strike the ground he could not remember whether any dust arose from the line. Prior to feeling the shock of the explosion he did not hear any unusual sound, and further, he was in the aft part of the ship about 11 o'clock on the morning of May 6, 1937 and he had noticed nothing unusual there. He further advised the Board that the corridor from his cabin to the middle port staircase was not crowded, at the time of the explosion, with any of the baggage, and he estimated that the distance from his cabin to the window by which he made his escape was about thirty feet and he covered this distance in somewhat of a hurry.

As Stoeckle was unable to furnish any further information to the Board, he was excused.

Witness number four on May 14, 1937 was WILHELM STEEB, who resides at Waldorf, Germany, near Frankford.

Steeb advised that he was an Assistant Machinist in the capacity of apprentice aboard the Hindenburg in the trip ending May 6, 1937. He advised that he was an employee of the Zeppelin Company since January 7, 1937, but that he had no previous experience aboard an airship. He further advised that he came from Unlertuerckheim, Germany, and was employed there in the construction of engines, and in particular, engines used aboard the Hindenburg. He specifically pointed out that he was not a member of the crew but merely an apprentice, and his duties were merely to receive instructions as to how to operate the engines in flight. During the whole trip Steeb was only employed in Engine Car No. 3, the forward car on the starboard side. At the time of approaching Lakehurst, New Jersey, Steeb was in Engine Car No. 3.

As they approached the mooring mast Steeb suddenly saw that the stern of the ship was aflame, and at the same time heard a hissing sound and felt the stern of the ship sink. Before the ship hit the ground the flames moved forward through the ship. On first noticing the flames and feeling the shock of the explosion Steeb caught hold of

the strut in front of the control panel in Engine Car No. 3 and looked at the floor of the car and did not know whether to jump out at that time or wait, but he decided to do the latter. About this time Steeb's partner stopped the engine and fixed the brake over the stop lever. After the stop lever had been thrown Steeb heard the characteristic rough running of the Diesel engine. As the engine had not apparently stopped, Steeb again threw the stop lever, but by this time the engine had stopped. Steeb then jumped out of the car and ran from the ship. While running he felt the clothes on his back getting hot and he ran his hand over his back to see whether they were burning, but the only portion of his clothes that were burning was the back of his cap, which he took off and threw away. Steeb saw another member of the crew, Mr. Doerflein, lying on the ground, and Steeb asked him if he was hurt. Doerflein said "No" and got up and ran away, and Steeb did also.

Steeb advised that the other members of the crew in Engine Car No. 3 were Mr. Schaeuble, Mr. Zettel, and Mr. Doerflein. The first machinist was Mr. Zettel, but Doerflein was operating the engine at the time the ship was approaching Lakehurst. Mr. Schaeuble was the superior officer in charge of Engine Car No. 3.

Schaeuble came in the car shortly before approaching Lakehurst, and Steeb thinks this was prior to the blowing of landing stations. Steeb was at the operating levers of the radiator cowlings. These levers are located in the front end of the engine car. Steeb was standing in the engine car near the car levers and looking at the engine room telegraph dials. The only thing he had to do in the landing was to observe the action of the engines during the landing. It is always possible to look from the engine car to the rear of the ship. From the engine car one is able to see about half way back along the airship. Steeb was able to see the aft engine from his engine car. However, he was not able to hear the operation of this engine due to the great amount of noise created by his own engine No. 3. He was unable to see any of the port side engines.

As the airship approached Lakehurst, Steeb did not notice any of the ground activities. He did not know when the landing lines were dropped nor does he have any idea as to the approximate time these lines were dropped. Steeb does not know exactly when the ship became nearly motionless near the approach to the mooring mast, nor does he remember the exact time the engines were reversed, and based this lack of knowledge on the fact that he was so inexperienced in airship travel and operation.

Steeb advised that the order to reverse the engines came from the control cabin over the telegraph system, but he does not remember the exact speed used in reverse.

He advised that he first saw the fire at the stern of the airship and at the time he was standing by Engine No. 3 not doing anything in particular, but happened to be looking aft. He observed the fire only generally, due to the brightness of the flame throwing a considerable glare. Steeb was unable to describe the extent of the flame on the ship or its color. He saw the fire and at the same time heard a hissing sound. He is rather certain that he felt a crash after he saw the flames, and thought that this crash must have been caused by an explosion or that his engine car was being thrown from the ship. The explosion referred to had no great effect on him except a slight jar. Steeb was unable to estimate the distance above the ground when he first saw the flames.

When questioned as to the condition of the motors, Steeb advised that the motor in car No. 3 had always run well. He did not know whether there was an indicator in Engine Car No. 3 which would indicate fire in any other part of the ship. He was unable to remember whether Engine Car No. 3 was in reverse or not at the time he saw the fire. Steeb advised that the Diesel engines on the Hindenburg would make the same speed in reverse that they did in ahead, and that its rotation is about 1500 revolutions a minute. The usual cruising speed of the Hindenburg is 1300 revolutions, and this speed was maintained during this trip. The R.P.M. at this landing was not in the knowledge of Steeb as he was not looking at the R.P.M. indicator at the time of approaching Lakehurst. The R.P.M. of the motors is limited by a governor on the engine and a stop on the fuel jet which prevents over-speeds. If the engine is stopped, it is stopped only on order from the control car, and engine No. 3 ran continuously during the whole trip of the Hindenburg. The stopping of Engine No. 3 at the time of the accident was a voluntary action on the part of the man at the controls in Control Car No. 3.

Steeb advised that no smoking was permitting in the engine cars of the Hindenburg, and that the only place smoking was permitted was in the smoking room. He also stated that to his knowledge there was no welding equipment on board the Hindenburg.

With reference to the engine telegraph instructions, Steeb advised that with reference to indication to full speed ahead the in-

dicator shows full power and not 1500 R.P.M.

Steeb was unable to furnish any further information, and the Board excused him.

R. WEIGHTMAN, Meteorologist of the Weather Bureau, Washington, D. C., informed that he has had 21 years' experience with weather conditions and the charting of the same; that he made a general study of the weather on the northeastern Atlantic coast for around May 6, 1937 and this study included the immediate vicinity of the Atlantic seaboard. He stated he studied weather maps showing weather conditions prevailing on May 6, for the various vicinities for the northeastern part of the country, and also studied an hourly weather chart for the date of May 6, 1937 up until 7:30 P.M., Daylight Saving Time, for Lakehurst and the immediate vicinity. He has also taken brief extracts of the log of the Naval Station, combined with telegraphic weather reports received at that station.

He presented into evidence nine charts which showed weather conditions in the northeastern part of the country, including Long Island. Briefly, he stated that there were weather disturbances from New York and Northeastern Pennsylvania on May 6, 1937 and that a cold front was proceeding in from Northeastern Pennsylvania on a ten to fifteen mile wind, and that this cold front passed Lakehurst at 3:30 P.M. There were no thunderstorms of great magnitude on the evening of May 6th in the immediate vicinity of Lakehurst, but showers were reported along with a little thunder about 4:40 P.M. Thunder storms decidedly local and of no great severity.

On May 15, 1937 the first witness was HANS FREUND, of Eichlag, Germany near Frankford.

Freund advised that on May 6, 1937 he was a member of the crew of the Hindenburg in the capacity of a rigger, taking care of the gas shells in the ship. Since the commissioning of the Hindenburg Freund has made all voyages except one. Since January 1930 he has been active in lighter-than-air crafts, and up to 1932 he made short trips aboard lighter-than-air crafts. After 1932 he made sixteen long distance voyages on the Graf Zeppelin in the capacity of a rigger. Since 1936 he has been aboard the Airship Hindenburg. His duties cover the care of the gas shells, the outer covering structure repairs,

and maintaining the valves and water ballast. There were two more members of the crew so engaged, a Mr. Ludwig Knorr and Mr. Eric Spaehl. Freund advised that his superior officer was Ludwig Knorr. A Mr. Sammt was Freund's chief superior officer.

Freund advised that during the trip he did not notice anything wrong, and to his knowledge everything was in the best of order. After the landing signals had been blown, Freund proceeded to his post at rings 62 and 47 to let down the landing line there. The ring numbers gave the meters in relation to the length of the ship. Freund advised that he remained at his posts until after the landing signals were given. The landing line at ring 62 is approximately one meter to the starboard of the center line, and the landing line at ring 47 is approximately one meter to the port of the center line. Freund had let down the landing line at ring 62 and at this time the ship had come to practically a standstill. Freund was just ready to let out the cable at ring 47 when the accident happened. If he had gotten any of the cable out, it was no more than a meter or two. The landing cables were let down by hand through a vent in the side of the ship which was surrounded by a bushing. The landing rope consists of a steel cable attached to the ship, and the landing end has a Manilla rope attached with wooden cross pieces on it. The landing cable is wound on a drum and can be lengthened or shortened at will, and Freund was unable to state whether the entire length of the steel cable was out. He approximated the length of the steel cable as fifteen meters.

Freund advised that at ring 67 he had let out several meters of the steel cable and had not drawn any of the cable back. Although the ground was visible to Freund, it was hard to estimate the height of the ship as he was only observing the ground through a hole about a foot in diameter on the side of the ship. He thought, however, that the airship was approximately sixty to eighty meters above the ground. Having let out the landing cable at ring 67 he then proceeded to ring 47, the stern landing cable and let out a small portion of this cable, which he at no time pulled back into the ship.

At the time of getting the cables ready, which was about five minutes prior to letting out the cables, one of the ropes used to haul the cables from the lower fin, where they are stored during the trip, became fouled in the wires and Freund asked a colleague to free the rope. The rope was freed by merely pulling it out between the two wires, and at this time nothing unusual occurred in clearing this cable. The cable in lowering is run through a metal eye in the outer covering

of the ship so as not to tear this covering. To the right of the metal eye is a hatchway about a foot in diameter which may be opened so that the ground may be observed. Freund advised that it was possible that the ship could have been moving very slightly at the time he was at the ring positions. Freund had no knowledge of the time the forward lines were made fast.

With reference to the position of the landing cables aboard the Hindenburg, Freund advised that at ring number 33 there are two steel cables. At ring 47 there are two steel cables, starboard and port side. At ring 62 there is the spider which he had let out, and the after landing line. At ring 203 is a spider on the starboard and port side, and they are let down from the control car. At ring positions 203 and 218 there are two steel cables which are attached to the docking dollies. At ring 244.5 there are two landing lines and two spiders, one on the port side and one on the starboard side. There are at the bow, starboard and port sides, two cables to which landing spiders may be attached from ground positions, then there is a steel cable which runs through the mooring cone attached to the mooring tower. At this point Freund was excused by the Board, to be recalled on May 17, 1937.

Witness No. 2 on May 15, 1937 was CLAUS HINKELBEIN, of Schwaeschall, Germany.

Claus Hinkelbein advised that he was a First Lieutenant Flight Commander in the German Air Corps, and prior to this trip of the Hindenburg he had had no experience with lighter-than-air crafts. On this trip Hinkelbein was a passenger aboard the Hindenburg. He neither heard nor saw anything extraordinary during the trip or before the accident to the Hindenburg. The first he knew of impending danger was a slight jerk of the ship and the reflection of fire at the aft end of the Hindenburg. Hinkelbein saw fire shortly after the aft landing rope had been dropped. At about the time he observed the fire he heard a muffled detonation, but at the time he was not sure whether there was an explosion aboard the ship or not. He estimated that at the time of hearing the detonation the ship was about seventy or eighty meters above the ground. Hinkelbein was standing at the starboard side of the passenger quarters near the rear bulkhead, and more specifically, in the music room. From where Hinkelbein stood the ground was visible and he had observed the starboard landing line dropped. He also saw a line hit the ground, the ground crew run from the ship with the line, drawing it taut. He, however, did not notice whether the ground crew

connected this line to anything or not. The detonation did not have any particular effect upon Hinkelbein. He, however, noticed that the ship immediately was rising very strongly forward. He estimated the time between the first dropping of the landing line and the incident of inclination as about two minutes. It was practically about the same instant when the inclination of the ship took place that Hinkelbein noticed the fire. He ran to the first window on the starboard side of the passenger quarters and waited until the ship was close enough to the ground, and then jumped out.

Hinkelbein advised that the passengers were only allowed aft on tours conducted by members of the crew, and that the passenger's quarters were locked against any entrance aft. In fact, to get aft from the passenger's quarters, it was necessary to pass through the quarters of the Chief Steward.

This trip was Hinkelbein's first trip in an airship, and he advised that all prior experience was limited to heavier-than-air craft.

Hinkelbein's impression at the time the landing line was dropped was that the airship was standing still, and at no time did he have the impression that the ship ever backed up.

Hinkelbein was first concerned with the safety of the flight when he observed the reflection of the fire, and in his opinion this reflection was entirely a normal appearance of fire. According to his memory, the jerk, the sound of the detonation, and the reflected fire were all simultaneous.

Hinkelbein had had no experience with the type of engines used on the Hindenburg, but during the trip he had noticed nothing unusual in the running of these engines. At no time during the trip had Hinkelbein noticed any backfire of the engines. He had not observed anything unusual as to the passengers or the crew during the trip. He advised that the passengers were not examined before they made tours of the ship but that prior to getting aboard the airship they were requested to surrender all matches or lighters. It was also well known to the members of the passenger list that smoking was prohibited except in the smoking room.

As the airship approached Lakehurst, Hinkelbein observed that the ship was proceeding at a very slow pace, but due to his inexperience aboard airships he was unable to estimate the speed of the

approach. After passing over Lakehurst the first time, Hinkelbein advised that there was some rain and that he noticed lightning, but only on the horizon and at the time of landing he observed no lightning at all.

As Hinkelbein was unable to furnish any further information to the Board, he was excused.

It should be noted that the hearings on May 12th and 13th were attended by Acting Special Agent in Charge W. S. Devereaux and Special Agent in Charge R. E. Vetterli, and the hearings for May 14th and 15th were attended by Acting Special Agent in Charge Devereaux and Special Agent Lee F. Malone.

It is also well to note that beginning on May 14th, 1937 the Board of Inquiry representing the Department of Commerce was joined by a German commission that had been invited to sit in on the hearings. This German commission was composed of Dr. Hugo Eckener, Dr. Ludwig Duerr, Chief Construction Engineer of the German Zeppelin Transport Company, Dr. Guenther Bock, Professor of Aerodynamics at the Charlottenburg Technicological Institute, Professor Max Deickmann, Radio Expert, Walter Hoffman, of the National Research Bureau, and Lt. Colonel Joachim Breithaupt, of the German Air Ministry.

It is also to be noted that acting as interpreter for the German crew was Frederick W. VonMiester, 354 Fourth Avenue, New York City, who is Vice President for the American representative of the German Zeppelin Transport Company, which is incorporated under the name of the American Zeppelin Transport Company.

JOHN EDGAR HOOVER
DIRECTOR

C-161

Mr. Nathan	_____
Mr. Tolson	_____
Mr. Baughman	_____
Mr. Clegg	_____
Mr. Coffey	_____
Mr. Cowley	_____
Mr. Egan	_____
Mr. Foxworth	✓
Mr. Glavin	_____
Mr. Harbo	_____
Mr. Joseph	_____
Mr. Lester	_____
Mr. Nichols	_____
Mr. Quinn	_____
Mr. Schilder	_____
Mr. Tamm	✓
Mr. Tracy	_____
Miss Gandy	_____

Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice
Washington, D. C.

4:35 p.m.

TDQ:A

Date May 8, 1937

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. TOLSON

Senator Copeland of New York just telephoned and wanted to know if the Bureau was doing anything on the air disaster. He stated that he was Chairman of the Safety of the Air and had sent his expert to Lakehurst; that his expert had just 'phoned him and advised him that down the road about 1000 ft. from where the accident occurred foot prints of two men were found and that if sabotage was committed it was entirely possible that a bullet could have been fired from a gun with a silencer causing the ship to explode. He stated that he realized this was not a great deal to go on but that where the footprints were located was off of the road and he thought that inasmuch as it was a clue the footprints should be preserved.

I advised the Senator that the Bureau was not doing anything in connection with this matter but that from press reports various committees were created and are apparently functioning. He then stated that the "G-men who were there and saw the footprints with his expert were not impressed by them at all". He stated that he was of the opinion no stone should be left unturned and he merely wanted the Bureau to know what was discovered.

I then advised the Senator that if agents were present they were merely there as observers and in no other capacity. He stated that his man's name was Mr. Roger Williamson and that he was now in New York City and could be located at Butterfield 87574 and that he would return to Lakehurst tomorrow.

RECORDED & INDEXED

62-48190-14

I immediately advised Mr. Foxworth of this information and suggested to him that he call Inspector Connelley who was at Lakehurst and advise him the information the Senator had transmitted to the Bureau.

Signature _____

W. J. FORTE

W. J. FORTE

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HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 9-15-88 BY SP1866UM

**Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice
936 Raymond-Commerce Building
Newark, New Jersey**

May 11, 1937.

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

DECLASSIFIED BY SP1A/66m
ON 9-15-84

Director,
Federal Bureau of Investigation,
Washington, D. C.

Re: AIRSHIP HINDENBURG.

Dear Sir:

In connection with the activity of the Newark office as to the disaster occurring in connection with the airship Hindenburg on May 6, 1937, there is attached hereto, for the information of the Bureau, an outline of the activity to date. This is covered in the memorandum of Special Agent in Charge W. S. Devereaux of May 11, 1937, and the memorandum of myself, submitted as of May 11, 1937, and joint memorandum of Special Agents in Charge R. E. Vetterli and W. S. Devereaux which, in substance, covers the activity of the Newark office to date.

Reference is made to the suggested or contemplated inquiry by Colonel Hartney and Roger Williamson as stated by the latter to the effect that they were considering a search of the terrain inside the reservation for anything which would indicate the cause of the disaster to the Hindenburg. As stated in my conversation with Mr. Foxworth the travel of the airship on the afternoon of May 6, 1937 in the vicinity of the Naval Air Station would make an inquiry of such limited nature of little value. It is to be recalled that the ship was flying in the vicinity of the Naval Air Station for possibly two hours or more before it landed, and any direct action taken towards the ship from the ground could just as well have occurred anywhere within an area of possibly fifty square miles, more or less. In fact, it is my personal opinion that possibly any action, if it occurred, would have been by some person outside of the reservation rather than by somebody entering the reservation grounds for this purpose. It is to be noted particularly that numerous spectators surrounded the field in expectation of the landing of the Hindenburg on this date. Any direct action, of course, would have been subject to possible observation by the numerous spectators if it had occurred within the immediate vicinity of where the ship was landing.

RECORDED & INDEXED

Very truly yours,

E. J. Connelley
E. J. CONNELLEY,
Inspector.

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MAY 21 1937
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|--------------|---|
| Mr. Nathan | ✓ |
| Mr. Tolson | ✓ |
| Mr. Egan | |
| Mr. Clegg | |
| Mr. Coffey | |
| Mr. Dawsey | |
| Mr. Egan | |
| Mr. Foxworth | ✓ |
| Mr. Glavin | |
| Mr. Harbo | |
| Mr. Joseph | |
| Mr. Lester | |
| Mr. Nichols | |
| Mr. Quinn | |
| Mr. Schilder | |
| Mr. Tamm | ✓ |
| Mr. Tracy | |
| Miss Gandy | |
- Vogel*

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MEMORANDUM FOR REPORT

May 11, 1937

At approximately 8:00 P.M. on the evening of May 6, 1937, Acting Special Agent in Charge W. S. Devereaux was telephonically informed by Assistant Special Agent in Charge T. J. Donegan, of the New York Field Division, to the effect that former Special Agent in Charge E. L. Richmond, who is convalescing at his home, had heard a press dispatch given over the radio at approximately 7:40 P.M. to the effect that the Airship Hindenburg had exploded and had been completely demolished at Lakehurst, New Jersey, as it was attempting to land on its initial trip for the year 1937 from Germany.

Based upon this information, a telephone call was placed to the Bureau by Acting Special Agent in Charge W. S. Devereaux, and contact was had with Mr. Foxworth. Mr. Foxworth was informed that the news of the crash of the Hindenburg had been received, and that inasmuch as the Naval Air Base at Lakehurst, New Jersey, was a Government Reservation, Acting Special Agent in Charge Devereaux and Inspector Connelley were proceeding immediately to Lakehurst in an effort to ascertain whether or not the facts involved would constitute a situation that would be a crime over which this Bureau had investigative jurisdiction. Mr. Foxworth stated to Acting Special Agent in Charge Devereaux that it was satisfactory to proceed to Lakehurst, but that no active investigation was to be conducted; that the facts were to be obtained and that the Bureau was then to be immediately notified telephonically.

Shortly after midnight on the evening of May 6, 1937, the following facts were telephonically conveyed to Mr. Foxworth, of the Bureau, by Acting Special Agent in Charge Devereaux:

That the crash of the Hindenburg had occurred at approximately 7:25 P.M., as she was about two hundred feet above the ground, and that fire was first noticed at the stern of the ship; that the ship had then become enveloped in flames and had crashed to the ground; further that there were 97 persons on board, sixty-one of the individuals constituting the crew, and thirty-six individuals making up the passenger list.

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DATE 9-11-88 BY SP1A-66/aw

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The Bureau was informed that Commander C. E. Rosendahl, who is in charge of the Naval Base at Lakehurst, had indicated that he did not know the cause of the hydrogen explosion which had occurred aboard the Hindenburg, but that he was of the opinion that it should be classed merely as an accident, and that there was no evidence of sabotage or any illegal act in connection with the destruction of the Airship.

It was noted that during the brief interval of time spent at the Naval Air Base on the night of May 6, 1937, Captain Anton Wittmann, who was third in charge of the Airship Hindenburg and who was one of the survivors, made mention of the fact to Commander Rosendahl, in the presence of Inspector E. J. Connelley and Acting Special Agent in Charge W. S. Devereaux that a warning had been received by the Hindenburg, and it was indicated that only Wittmann, Captain Max Pruss, and Captain Ernst Lehmann had been in possession of the information concerning the warning. This fact was conveyed to Mr. Foxworth, as well as the fact that Commander Rosendahl and Captain Wittmann engaged in private conversation concerning the warning and also the fact that Wittmann was cautioned, in the presence of the Agents, to say nothing further concerning the incident.

Upon receipt of this information, Mr. Foxworth instructed that apparently there was no need of further activity on the part of the Newark Field Division at Lakehurst, New Jersey, and that all further action was to be discontinued.

Shortly after noon on May 7, 1937, Acting Special Agent in Charge W. S. Devereaux received a telephonic communication from Assistant Director Clyde Tolson, of the Bureau. At this time, Mr. Tolson informed that Special Agent James Fallon, of the Philadelphia Field Division, had been at Lakehurst following the accident on the night of May 6, 1937, and that at the time he left Lakehurst early on the morning of May 7, 1937, he had been informed that Commander Rosendahl was desirous of having a Bureau representative present at the inquest or at the hearing concerning the cause of the crash of the Hindenburg. Mr. Tolson informed that he was of the opinion that Acting Special Agent in Charge Devereaux, in company with either Inspector E. J. Connelley or Special Agent in Charge R. E. Vetterli, should proceed to Lakehurst and inform the Naval authorities that they were acting only in the capacity of observers, and that the

Bureau was taking no active part in the inquest insofar as investigative activity was concerned at this time.

In compliance with this telephonic communication, Inspector E. J. Connelley and Acting Special Agent in Charge W. S. Devereaux proceeded to Lakehurst on the afternoon of May 7, 1937, and the information obtained, as well as subsequent developments, are set out in the report of Inspector E. J. Connelley, dated at Newark, New Jersey, May 1937.

936 Raymond-Commerce Building,
Newark, New Jersey.

May 11, 1937.

THE FOLLOWING IS SUBMITTED BY INSPECTOR E. J. CONNELLEY:

On the night of May 6, 1937, together with Special Agent in Charge Devereaux, I proceeded to the Naval Air Station, Lakehurst, New Jersey, arriving there at approximately 10:15 p. m. The purpose of this visit was in accordance with the information set out in the memo report of Special Agent in Charge Devereaux, that is, to learn what the general situation was, and in the absence of anything warranting investigative effort by the Bureau, we were to appear in the capacity of observers only.

Contact was had with C. E. Rosendahl, Commander, U. S. Navy and Commanding Officer of the Naval Air Station. At this time, he indicated to us the substance of the details of what had occurred as to the wreck of the Hindenburg. Inasmuch as this information will be repeated later in his testimony before the Board of Inquiry of the U. S. Department of Commerce, it will not be repeated here. We offered to Commander Rosendahl our cooperation in anything that we could do to assist. At this time, there was more or less confusion in connection with the disposition of the dead and injured persons, and after further conference with Commander Rosendahl, we departed from the Air Station at approximately 12:15 a. m., May 7, 1937 for Newark. The substance of the above information obtained was telephoned to the Bureau to Mr. Foxworth by Special Agent in Charge Devereaux at approximately 1 a. m. from Freehold, New Jersey.

On May 7, 1937, together with Special Agent in Charge Devereaux, I proceeded to the Naval Air Station, Lakehurst, New Jersey, and again conferred with Commander Rosendahl as to the general situation and at this time Lieutenant Commander C. V. Knox, of the Naval Air Station, took us to the wreck of the Hindenburg and pointed out to us the various salient features as had come to his attention, together with his observations at the time of the wreck on the previous date, May 6, 1937. Lieutenant Commander Knox indicated that one

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peculiar circumstance, in connection with the flame which burst from the ship at various times while it was settling to the ground after the first appearance of fire and the later explosions, was one rather white hot flame, apparently spurting from the upper portion of the ship, having a somewhat similar appearance to the flame from an acetylene torch. He was not aware as to the nature of this and has indicated he will make some research. It is possible this might have been escaping hydrogen which, when not mixed with air, readily burns with an intense flame and heat. He also indicated there was some indication that other officers may have seen a similarly described flame in other portions of the ship. All this situation will be brought out undoubtedly in the hearings before the U. S. Department of Commerce. Lieutenant Commander Knox also indicated there was some reference, although he could not verify same, to the effect that there might have been flames appearing in the rear portion of the ship as the Hindenburg came over the field. This has not been definitely established and probably will also be covered in the interview of various witnesses who observed the airship as it came in to land. Lieutenant Commander Knox indicated that the two ropes which are reeled out from the bow of the ship to effect the attachment of the mooring cable to the mooring mast had been reeled out for possibly five minutes before the explosion occurred and were on the ground for this length of time. The ship was not much higher from the ground at this time than the height of the large hangar on the field, which would be approximately 200 feet, or less. The fire appeared at the rear of the ship above the fin. Lieutenant Commander Knox indicated that the landing ropes which were first cast out were very dry and this was apparent by reason of the fact that they threw out considerable dust when the large roll hit the ground. He advised that the ship came in from the West of the field and was tacking against the wind. There was some light rain at this time, although the rather heavy rain prior to that time had fairly well cleared up at the time of the attempted landing. Immediately after the fire appeared and the explosion thereafter, the tail of the ship hit the ground and apparently broke in two near the middle.

Lieutenant Commander Knox indicated that the ship apparently left Frankfort on the Main, Germany, at 3:16 p. m. on Monday, May 3, 1937 and if it had traveled on schedule, it would have landed at 6 a. m. on May 6, 1937. The reports from the ship indicated that this would be the landing time, till approximately

3 p. m., May 6, when they radioed that they would land around 6 p. m. The plan was that if the ship landed on May 6, they would take off for the return trip on the same day at 10 p. m., provided the passengers and freight would be loaded in time for such departure, otherwise it would have been later on this same night. At the present time, the passengers are gathered together at the Biltmore Hotel in New York City and brought to Newark, where they are shuttled to the field by plane. If the weather conditions are such as to prevent the plane getting through, they are then carried direct by automobile from New York to the Naval Air Station. The above-indicated information was informally given to us by Lieutenant Commander Knox for our information in order that we would understand the various proceedings taking place and is not an official report by him of the situation. He has been subpoenaed to appear before the Department of Air Commerce hearing and will, of course, at that time give an official statement of his opinions and what he observed.

On May 8 there was contacted, at Lakehurst, New Jersey, Mr. South Trimble, Solicitor, Department of Commerce, and Major R. W. Schroeder, Assistant Director, Bureau of Air Commerce, who indicated that they, together with Dennis Mulligan, Chief of the Regulation and Enforcement Division Bureau of Air Commerce, would open an inquiry into the wreck of the Hindenburg on Monday, May 10, at 10 a. m. It was also indicated that Commander Rosendahl, Lieutenant Colonel C. De. F. Chandler, U. S. Army, Retired, Colonel H. B. Hartney, Civilian Employee of the Safety Committee of the Commerce Committee of the U. S. Senate, Gill Robb Wilson, Director of Aeronautics for New Jersey, and possibly Lieutenant General Hans Von Boettiger, Military Attache of Hans Luther, German Ambassador to the United States, would act in an advisory capacity to the Board of Inquiry above indicated, together with possibly some others who were to be indicated later. Mr. Trimble and Major Schroeder were advised of our position, as previously indicated above, in connection with any inquiry which was to be instituted in this matter at the Naval Air Station.

On May 8, 1937, Colonel H. B. Hartney and apparently his assistant, Roger Williamson, identified themselves to us, they having a letter signed by Senator Royal S. Copeland, Chairman of the Committee on Commerce, U. S. Senate, and at this time Williamson and Colonel Hartney advised that they had been making an examination of the terrain within the confines of the reservation with the possibility

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that they might find some exploded shells and apparently they were definitely of the opinion that somebody had come upon the reservation and fired into the Hindenburg. They advised that in connection with their search, they had found the tracks of two persons who had climbed over the fence on the far side of the reservation and had walked in approximately 1,000 feet along the road, which leads towards the headquarters building and to the North of the place on the field where the Hindenburg had landed. They pointed out these tracks to us at this time and indicated they were making some investigation as to this. They were referred to Lieutenant Commander F. W. Reichelderfer, former Executive Officer at the Naval Air Station, for information, inasmuch as we had learned in the afternoon, from conversation at headquarters, that two boys had surreptitiously entered the confines of the reservation and had been picked up by the Naval Guard and brought to headquarters and it was suggested that possibly these tracks might have been made by these boys on May 7, 1935. Special Agents in Charge Vetterli and Devereaux took photographs of these tracks as made by these two individuals and on May 10, 1937, plaster of paris casts were made of these tracks by Special Agent in Charge Vetterli, as subsequently will be covered in more detail. They also made inquiry which indicates that at the point where entry was made, resulting in these tracks, a road runs along the outside of the fence of the reservation and numerous spectators were along this road in automobiles and on foot at the time the Hindenburg attempted to land. After the explosion and fire, numerous of these swarmed over the field from all directions and apparently for a period of three or four hours the people continued to roam over various parts of the reservation in an endeavor to get near to the wreck of the Hindenburg, after which they were all excluded from the reservation. The wreck of the Hindenburg itself has been under a constant military and naval guard and no one, other than the persons who went in to take out the injured and the bodies of the dead, were allowed to go into the wreck itself. Other persons have not been allowed to approach or touch anything in connection with the wreck and it has been maintained intact as such.

On the afternoon of May 7, 1937, I understand that the wreck was officially turned over by the Navy Department to the Department of Commerce for their investigation subsequently opened as of 10 a. m. on May 10, 1937. A Naval Board of Inquiry was convened at 10 a. m. Monday, May 10, and adjourned pending the investigation to be made by the board appointed by the Department of Commerce.

This adjustment of investigative activity was accomplished by conferences between the Navy Department and the Department of Commerce on Saturday, May 8, 1937.

On Monday, May 10, 1937, the first witness called before the Investigating Committee of the Department of Commerce was Commander C. E. Rosendahl. He first outlined his prior experience, showing him to be probably the best informed lighter-than-air man in the military and naval forces of the United States. He has been in command of the Los Angeles, the Akron, the training school for lighter-than-air men at Lakehurst, New Jersey and he has made trial trips and a trip around the world in the Graf Zeppelin. He is now the Commanding Officer of the Naval Air Station at Lakehurst, New Jersey.

The substance of the testimony of Commander Rosendahl was to the effect that an arrangement had been made whereby the Hindenburg would make approximately 18 trips during the period of 1937 from Germany to the United States, this being a revocable permit to the American Zeppelin Transport Company, who are the American Agents of the German Company operating the Hindenburg. This was more or less the commercial arrangement as between the Navy, Commerce and State Departments and the representatives of the Hindenburg whereby they were to take advantage of certain facilities at the Naval Air Station not in use at the present time; also similar service was to be arranged at the Naval Reserve Station at Miami, Florida. It was indicated that the operation was at the entire risk of the permittee and further absolved the United States from any damage. They were to pay the necessary fees for the services rendered. Commander Rosendahl indicated that the Hindenburg departed from Frankfort, Germany on May 3, on schedule, that communication was had with same by radio through Mackay and that frequent reports were received by the station from the Hindenburg during the trip.. During the latter part of the trip static was bad, although this did not seriously interfere with their communications. A few hours before the arrival, communication was received by the Naval Station at Lakehurst that they would arrive at 6 a. m. Eastern Standard Time, Thursday, May 6, 1937 unless they arrived sufficiently ahead of their scheduled time to provide for a landing before midnight of the previous night. The scheduled departure was to be 10 p. m., May 6, 1937 for Germany. A ground crew was arranged which consisted of 92 Navy personnel and 139 civilians arranged for by the American Zeppelin Transport Company, with the approval of the Naval Air Station. All of the above-indicated personnel were men who

had previously worked at the Naval Air Station and were familiar with the handling of airships. The plan was that the Hindenburg, when it arrived, would be moored at the mast unless it was necessary to take the ship into the hangar for repairs. The ship carried a total of 97 persons, 61 in the crew and 36 passengers. The ship had a head or retarding wind and it was evident they would not arrive at 6 a. m. May 6, 1937. Later during the day they set their time of arrival at 6 p. m., which would have been 12 hours late. Arrangements were made with the landing crew accordingly. The ship actually arrived in the vicinity of the air field previous to this time. The weather was unsettled and the various conditions of weather which he related indicated it was inadvisable to attempt a landing when the ship first appeared. There had been heavy showers and thunder. The depression was variable in the vicinity. At 3:40 to 4:45 p. m. there were showers and thunder. Between 5 and 6 p. m. the ship came over the airport and proceeded to the South and Eastward. Due to the fact the ship was late in arriving and the desire to depart on her regular schedule that night, it was desired to accomplish the landing at the earliest possible moment. They also wished, if possible, to service the ship during the daylight hours. At 5:45 p. m. the station sent a message to the Hindenburg that conditions were unsettled and recommended that they not land until further word was had from the station and requested the ship to advise them what they intended to do. At 5:53 p. m., Eastern Standard Time, they received a message from the Hindenburg saying, "We will wait until you report that landing conditions are better. (Signed) Pruss." At 6:12 p. m., Eastern Standard Time, the station sent a message to the ship that conditions were now considered suitable for landing and that the ground crew was ready. There was thunder over the station at that time. The ceiling was about 3,000 feet with visibility of about 5 miles. The ship, in the meantime, had disappeared out of sight due to the direction in which it had proceeded, having a ceiling of about 500 or 600 feet. At 6:15 p. m. a message was sent to the ship recommending that they land and that conditions were rapidly improving. Soon thereafter, the ship appeared on a Northerly course and passed over the station practically directly over the mooring mast. At one end of the station it turned to the left and circled the station and came in from the Westward. It turned to the right for the approach to the landing mast in a general Southerly direction. The weather conditions, at the actual time of the attempted landing, indicated a ceiling of 2,000 to 3,000 feet, with some clouds and very light rain. The wind was from the Southeast and about one knot. The wind velocity, at the

top of the water tower, 186 feet in height, was indicated at six knots. There was occasional lightning in the South and Southwest; the weather conditions were improving rapidly and Commander Rosendahl indicated, in his opinion, the weather was entirely satisfactory for landing. The ship made a sharp turn to the starboard, but this was not unusual. The approach, in his opinion, was normal for a ship inflated with hydrogen and they utilized the backing power of the engines to check the approach of the ship, which is customary. The ground crew was, in all respects, ready to receive the ship. The men of the ground crew had been instructed in groups, under their respective leaders, as to the handling of the ship on the ground. They dropped the landing ropes from the bow of the ship at a point about 700 feet from the mooring mast which were immediately connected to the ground lines. These lines are used to draw the ship into position for attaching the steel landing cable which is drawn into the mooring mast. The approach was made at an elevation of 200 feet or less. Commander Rosendahl was located at the mooring mast and gave the necessary instructions as to the handling of the ground crew at this point. He indicated the wind blew to the Westward when the ship reached the surface and he believed the conditions were satisfactory in general and that they were proceeding in a normal manner to land the ship. About four minutes after the control ropes had connected with the ground and while the mooring cable was being lowered, but which had not as yet reached the ground, certain events occurred which changed the normal landing procedure. The nose of the ship was about 50 feet from the circular track which is 671 feet from the mooring mast. The ship never got any closer to the mooring mast than this point. At this time he indicated he saw a small burst of flame on the top of the ship toward the stern and, in his opinion, this indicated to him the doom of the ship. Immediately, the entire stern took fire and after this initial burst of flame, the fire progressed forward. He expected more in the way of explosion than was apparent, although he had never seen an airship burn inflated with hydrogen. There were several mild explosions and the ship was generally consumed by fire. He had no knowledge of the origin of the fire. The ship continued to come down at the stern and thereafter the front portion of the ship settled to the ground at a moderate rate of descent. He ran from the vicinity and commanded the ground crew to do likewise in order to avoid their being caught under the ship as it fell. When the ship settled, the ground crew immediately returned to effect the possible rescue of the injured. They immediately arranged for the necessary fire-fighting apparatus, they using chemicals for this purpose. There is no water line in the immediate vicinity of the mooring mast and this necessitated the laying of considerable hose

to reach it. The wounded were immediately taken out and taken to the hospital until the available space was exhausted. A guard was immediately established to prevent anything being stolen from the ship. Of the 97 persons on board, 39 members of the crew survived and 24 of the passengers survived. Twelve passengers are dead and 22 members of the crew are dead. One member of the ground crew was burned and subsequently died on May 6, 1937.

Commander Rosendahl read into the record the various specifications of the Hindenburg which will be available and included, if desirable, in a later report. The Hindenburg normally carries a crew of about 40 and in addition, carries various trainees.

Commander Rosendahl indicated the ship had not touched the ground until the fire brought her down. The ropes had been on the ground at least four minutes before the fire and explosions occurred. As the ship approached, they had dropped water ballasts, but this water ballast does not come to the ground in a direct stream and would possibly eliminate the idea of being a static conductor. The control system of the gas valves is a manual operation located in the control cabin. There are also individual valves on the individual cells which could be released. These valves are only worked when instructions are given by the officer in charge of the control car. There is also an automatic alarm system which shows the exact pressure in the various cells. At times the gas is released from the various cells in order to maintain the equilibrium of the ship, such as occurs when the fuel oil is used up.

F. W. Von Meister was the second witness called at the hearing, he being located at 354 Fourth Avenue, New York City, and Vice-President of the American Zeppelin Transport Company, the Agents for the Hindenburg in the United States. He further elaborated upon the arrangements as made through the German Ambassador and the State Department for the 18 trips of the Hindenburg during the present year. He indicated he was present on the field on May 6, 1937 when the Hindenburg attempted a landing. He indicated the ship was to land at approximately 6 a. m. on Thursday, May 6, 1937; that it was delayed, and as a result of contact with the ship, they later arranged for a landing at 6 p. m. the same date. He referred to the storm conditions over the field in the afternoon of May 6, 1937. He advised the ship first appeared over the field between 3:30 p. m. and 4:00 p. m.;

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that it then proceeded to the Southeast of the station and they could have landed the ship at this time, he believes, if the ground crew had been available, but as indicated above, this had been arranged for 6 p. m. He advised the storm continued later until about 6:30 p. m. Daylight Saving Time and the ship endeavored to land at 7 p. m., Daylight Saving Time; that it came in from the Southwest, passed over the mooring mast and swung in a large circle to the left and approached the field from the West. The cable had been laid out in a Southeasterly direction; that the weather changed and the cable was moved to a Northeasterly direction and the ship came in at about 150 feet elevation West of the mooring mast. The ship has sufficient speed to steer, and reversed its engines and it was about 7:20 p. m. when they dropped the ground ropes. He indicated he was about 100 yards from the mooring mast between the bow and stern of the ship; that he observed the stern of the ship throw out water ballasts three times, which would indicate that possibly the ship was heavy in the after part. The handling ropes on the stern had been dropped. These do not, of course, touch the ground. The ship was settling to a landing when he observed a reflection of light on the entire edge of the upper fin and there appeared, at the same time, flames out of the port side, just above and forward of the port fin. The tail started to sink and the flames were traveling along the top of the ship and coming out in two or three places in spurts of flame. The ship broke in the middle and the nose was the last to fall. Water was discharged from the front of the ship and when it came down it was in total collapse. He thereafter ran in to help in the aid of people trying to leave the ship.

The above meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p. m. in order that the various members of the Board of Inquiry and the Technical Advisors could proceed to the vicinity of the wreck of the Hindenburg where they made casual observations from the sidelines and various photographs were taken by the newspaper fraternity.

In connection with my prior above reference to Lieutenant Colonel Harold B. Hartney and Roger Williamson, Mr. Williamson indicated to me that he had discussed with Commander Rosendahl the advisability of assigning numerous naval personnel to make a search of the terrain on the naval air station field and that he had discussed this with Senator Copeland who was very much surprised to learn that they had not made a search of the ground in the vicinity

of the ship and on the naval station. He has suggested to Commander Rosendahl that possibly we, as representatives of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, might care to direct the activities of these men. It was indicated diplomatically to Mr. Williamson that possibly his ideas and suggestions should be communicated to Mr. South Trimble as head of the Department of Commerce Investigating Committee for his opinion as to what their plans and objectives were in connection with the investigation they were making inasmuch as possibly they had already planned to consider any and all necessary inquiry of this nature and further, that they might feel that this was in conflict with the province of their investigative inquiry which, I understood, was to be for the purpose of determining all facts, causes and circumstances in connection with the disaster to the airship Hindenburg.

Newark, New Jersey
May 11, 1937.

- MEMORANDUM FOR THE REPORT -

The investigation reported in the ensuing memorandum was based upon the instructions of Inspector E. J. Connelley to the effect that Special Agent in Charge R. E. Vetterli and Acting Special Agent in Charge W. S. Devereaux were to proceed to the Naval Base at Lakehurst, N. J., on the date of May 9, 1937 for the purpose of ascertaining the names of the two individuals who had been taken into custody by the Naval authorities on the evening of May 7, 1937, at which time the Naval authorities found the above-referred to individuals on the Government reservation.

It might be well to note that the investigation requested by Inspector Connelley is based upon the fact that certain investigators for the Copeland Senate Committee had previously informed that footprint impressions had been located by them at a fence which enclosed the reservation at Lakehurst, and that it was the opinion of the investigators for this committee that these footprint impressions had something to do with the Hindenburg disaster on the evening of May 6, 1937.

It should also be noted that mention had been made to Inspector Connelley by the Naval authorities on a previous occasion that two intruders had been taken into custody on the evening of May 7th by the Marine Guard, at which time these two individuals were attempting to obtain a closer observation of the Hindenburg wreckage, and at the time they were taken into custody the Naval authorities had reprimanded them severely and had escorted them from the reservation. It was felt by Inspector Connelley that the two individuals referred to by the Naval authorities as being the intruders on May 7th might possibly be the individuals who had made the footprint impressions referred to by the Senate Committee.

Special Agent in Charge Vetterli and Acting Special Agent in Charge Devereaux upon arriving at Lakehurst, N. J., on May 9, 1937, contacted Lt. Commander F. W. Reicheldeffer and requested that he supply the names of the two individuals who had been taken into custody by the Marine Guards at the time that they had attempted to invade the reservation on the evening of May 7th. At this time Reicheldeffer referred these Agents to Lt. R. N. Antrim, who, according to Reicheldeffer, had been the interviewing officer.

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Lt. R. N. Antrim was subsequently contacted, and he informed that he is a Lieutenant in the U. S. Navy, being in the Junior grade; that he has been at the Naval Base at Lakehurst, N. J., for the last year; that he recalled that on the evening of May 7th at approximately 6 P.M., he was notified by a member of the Marine Guard to the effect that two young boys had been taken into custody at the time they attempted to enter the reservation for the purpose of gaining a closer observation of the wreckage of the Hindenburg. In connection therewith Antrim informed that he had these two young boys brought to the Administration Building at Lakehurst and had severely reprimanded them for their illegal entry, and had then accompanied them to their car, which was located near their place of entry, which, it should be noted, is situated at the northern side of the reservation.

Lt. Antrim stated that these individuals gained access to the reservation through a party by the name of CUBBINS.

According to Antrim, on May 7th he had obtained the names of these two young boys, but had subsequently mislaid the paper containing the names, but he recalled that they gave as their residence Germantown, Philadelphia, Pa., and he also recalled that one of the individuals is at the present time a student at the Wharton School of Accountancy, Philadelphia, Pa. Antrim informed that these two individuals were quite youthful, and he is positive that they had nothing whatever to do with the destruction of the Hindenburg. He stated, however, that if the necessity arose, he could proceed to the Wharton School of Accountancy, Philadelphia, Pa., and positively identify the young chap who had stated he had attended this institution.

Lt. Antrim took the Agents to the place of entry, and it was observed that the location of the entry was on the northern side of the reservation, while the footprint impressions referred to by the Cope-land Senate Investigating Committee were located on the western extremity of the reservation.

It might be here stated that the place of entry on the part of the two intruders on May 7th is located approximately one mile and a half from the situs of the footprint impressions referred to by the Senate Investigating Committee.

Agents were informed by Lt. Antrim that it would be impossible for the Naval officials to furnish the names of these two individuals due to the misplacement of the paper upon which their names had been recorded.

At this time Lt. Antrim was taken by the Agents to the location of the footprint impressions above referred to, and it should be here noted that these footprint impressions are situated in the most open part of the reservation upon which is located the Naval Base. Further, according to Antrim, he distinctly recalls that on the evening of May 6th, the date of the arrival of the Hindenburg, he was stationed on the mooring mast to which the Hindenburg was supposed to be tied at the time that she would land on May 6th, and Antrim recalls that he made the statement to the crew, who were also with him at the mooring mast, that there were a great number of automobiles and spectators lining the road and fence on the west side of the reservation, at which place the footprint impressions were located.

Lt. Antrim stated that he would be glad to give the Agents an opportunity to interview the remaining number of Navy personnel who were stationed with him at the mooring mast on the evening of May 6th, all of whom had a complete view of the location of the footprint impressions as well as the entire west side of the Federal reservation.

In connection therewith, W. H. HERDON, cookswain, S. W. HAWKINS, boatsmate, second class, and B. E. HARRINGTON, boatsmate, first class, were interviewed, and informed that they had assembled, along with the entire landing personnel, at the Naval Base at 5 P.M., in the main hangar on May 6th, at which time they received final instructions from their respective commanders, and that about ten after five P.M., these three individuals took up station on the mooring mast. They informed that approximately at 5:20 P.M., they were joined at the mooring mast by Lt. R. N. Antrim, who was to be their commanding officer during the landing of the Hindenburg airship.

All of these individuals definitely recall that the remark was made by Lt. Antrim to the effect that there were certainly a great number of people lining the western side of the reservation, and that all of these individuals noticed that a vast number of spectators in cars were parked on the west side of the reservation in clear view of the mooring mast, and were so situated that they would have a clear view of the entire terrain of the fence lining the west side of the reservation, and the landing position of the Hindenburg. Upon further interrogation Herdon, Hawkins, Harrington, and Lt. Antrim all stated that prior to the crash of the Hindenburg there were no individuals between the fence lining the western side of the reservation and the landing side of the Hindenburg insofar as they could ascertain, and further, upon the explosion of the Hindenburg, spectators converged

on to the field from all sides.

According to Lt. Antrim, the most that could be done by the Naval personnel was to care for the dead and injured who had been involved in the Hindenburg crash, as well as to keep the spectators back from the burning wreckage.

Lt. Antrim also stated that it was some three or four hours before the Marine patrols were established and maintained on the reservation and before all of the invading spectators could be excluded from the reservation proper.

It might be noted that owing to climatic conditions, there being a slight drizzling rain, the people in the automobiles on the west side of the reservation remained in their cars until after the crash.

At this time it might be suggested that if an individual were going to fire at the Hindenburg airship at the time that it attempted to land, this individual would have to run towards the airship, in full view of all of the spectators lining the west side of the reservation, discharge whatever type of gun he might attempt to use, and then run back to the fence towards the spectators and attempt to make good his escape. In this connection, the fence in question is approximately five feet in height, and there are a number of strands of barbed wire for a distance of about six inches of the fence, thereby making ingress or exit quite difficult.

It might also be herein stated that Lt. Antrim made the comment that a great many individuals residing in the vicinity of the Naval Base at Lakehurst appeared to be definitely airship-minded, and further, that the Naval officials had received numerous communications from these individuals reporting suspicious actions on the part of other individuals, as well as suspicious circumstances happening on the date of May 6th, but that at no time has the suggestion been made by any of the spectators that they had seen an individual discharge a rifle or a gun of any sort, nor has anyone made the suggestion that they saw anybody running from the wreckage, creating the appearance that they were attempting to flee from the reservation. Further, if one desired to fire at the Hindenburg they certainly could have accomplished their objective without ever entering the reservation at Lakehurst and without placing themselves in full view of the many spectators on the western side of the reservation, due to the fact that there is a growth of pine trees situated further to the right on the

western side of the reservation, in such position that this growth extends into the reservation so that a person could get much closer to the landing field of the Hindenburg than the situs of the footprint impressions. The terrain on the western side of the reservation affords no protection whatsoever. There is some small shrubbery which is practically leafless, and affords no protection or cover whatsoever.

On May 7, 1937 photographs were taken by Special Agent in Charge Vetterli and Acting Special Agent in Charge Devereau of the footprint impressions referred to by the investigators of the Senate Investigating Committee, as well as measurements of the footprint impressions, and measurements which will indicate their exact location and dimension as to their relation with the fence lining the western side of the reservation. These photographs are presently being enlarged, and at such time as these enlargements are forwarded to the Bureau the details as to dimensions and measurements will be forwarded therewith so that a clear picture can be had of the location and dimensions of the footprint impressions themselves.

On May 10, 1937 Special agent in Charge Vetterli, accompanied by Special Agent (A) W. D. Fay, again made certain examinations at Lakehurst. Twelve additional photographs were made by Special Agent in Charge Vetterli of the gate leading into the western part of the reservation showing two footprints just inside the reservation. These photographs of the footprints on the western side of the reservation are being enlarged by the New York Field Division and will be appropriately marked and forwarded to the Bureau at an early date. Several of the photographs taken on May 10th show the footprints after the plaster paris cast was placed in the impression in order that their location might be more discernible in the photograph. In addition thereto, on a road that leads from the Western gate of the reservation, approximately 1100 feet towards the hangar, there was pointed out additional footprints. Plaster paris casts were made of some of these prints by Special Agent in Charge Vetterli, assisted by Special Agent (A) W. D. Fay. The photographs and the impressions definitely indicate that the footprints in one instance were made by an individual who wore either rubbers or goulashes. One cast made is quite clear and bears a portion of the trade name on the bottom of the imprint, which may possibly be properly interpreted by further study. These casts temporarily are being retained at the Newark Division office.

A further detailed report will be submitted to the Bureau on the photographs made and on the casts in question just as soon as the enlargements are perfected of the photographs by the New York Field Division.

**Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice**

936 Raymond-Commerce Building,
Newark, New Jersey.

May 19, 1937.

Mr. Tolson	.....
Mr. Clegg	.....
Mr. Coffey	.....
Mr. Dwyer	.....
Mr. Egan	.....
Mr. Foxworth	.....
Mr. Glavin	.....
Mr. Ladd	.....
Mr. Nichols	.....
Mr. Rosen	.....
Mr. Tracy	.....
Miss Gandy	.....

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL
AIR MAIL
SPECIAL DELIVERY

DECLASSIFIED BY SP1A-66um
ON 9-15-88

Director,
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Washington, D. C.

RE: AIRSHIP HINDENBURG.

Dear Sir:

This is to advise you that during the evening of May 18, 1937, a telephonic communication was received from Commander C. E. Rosendahl, of the Naval Air Station at Lakehurst, New Jersey, to the effect that he desired that I proceed to Lakehurst, New Jersey and confer with him on the morning of May 19, 1937. He also stated at this time that he did not care to discuss the matter over the telephone, but that he would greatly appreciate it if the appointment for the next day could be kept.

It should be noted here, as revealed in my memorandum to Inspector E. J. Connelley dated May 17, 1937, copies of which are transmitted to the Bureau herewith, that I had withdrawn as observer from the hearing being conducted by the board appointed by the Department of Commerce in connection with the Hindenburg disaster that had occurred on May 6, 1937. At that time, arrangements had been made that if any information of value came to the attention of the authorities at Lakehurst and they desired to obtain the assistance of the Bureau, that they should communicate with the Newark Field Division and make their request known so that it could be given proper consideration.

On the morning of May 19, 1937, I proceeded to Lakehurst, New Jersey, accompanied by Special Agent Lee F. Malone. I contacted Commander Rosendahl at approximately 10:15 a. m. and he informed me of the following developments in connection with the instant case.

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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

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Commander Rosendahl stated he was a personal friend of Hugo Eckner, the German Airship Technician, and that engineer had stated to him, on numerous occasions, that the first opinion that he had formed of the disaster of the Hindenburg was that her wreckage was caused by sabotage. Further, that he now knew that he had made a mistake in expressing such an opinion to the journalistic fraternity in Germany and that to remedy this mistake he had made a statement to the press in this country that he did not feel that sabotage could possibly have been the cause of the instant disaster. According to Rosendahl, he has stated to him confidentially, however, that he is convinced that the airship Hindenburg met her ill-timed fate due to the employment of sabotage, either on the part of Communists or on the part of sympathizers with the Anti-Nazi movement.

Commander Rosendahl, on this occasion, also informed that he has always entertained the sabotage theory as being a logical cause for the destruction of the Hindenburg and further, that this opinion has gradually grown until, at the present time, he also is confident that there was sabotage present in connection with the destruction of this ship. He stated that on May 18, 1937, Helmut Lau, a member of the German crew who was functioning in the capacity of helmsman, as well as Rudolf Sauter, who held the position of Chief Engineer on the German crew of the airship Hindenburg, had stated that at the time of the catastrophe they were occupying positions in the stern of the ship and that they were located near the lower rudder. According to their testimony, the first evidence that they had that anything was wrong on board the Hindenburg was that they noticed a glow that appeared in the gas shaft that separates gas cells numbers 4 and 5. They testified further that immediately after the appearance of this glow, which reminded them of a Japanese lantern, that the entire section of cells numbers 4 and 5 seemed to burst and immediately flames enveloped the entire stern. This is the first testimony that has been given before the Board of Inquiry that has shown a definite origin for the fire and this, therefore, places the fire as definitely beginning in the gas shaft located between cells numbers 4 and 5.

For the information of the reader, it should be noted that there are 16 gas cells in the super structure of the airship Hindenburg; that each cell is filled with hydrogen gas and through the use of this hydrogen gas the airship obtains its lifting power. For the airship to lose altitude, it is necessary that this hydrogen gas be

valved off so that the airship gains weight and loses some of its buoyancy. In order to valve off this gas, there is located on each gas chamber what they call a maneuvering valve, as well as an automatic valve. The automatic valve is a valve that is more or less of a safety device and operates only as a result of pressure from within the gas chamber, as, for instance, in the event the gas cell becomes too full of hydrogen gas, this safety device will then function and enough gas will be valved off, through the automatic valve, so that the pressure of gas within the gas cell will again maintain its normal pressure. The maneuvering valve is the valve that is used by the operators of the ship to cause the airship to lose altitude and that maneuvering valve is controlled by apparatus which is located in the control car. It should also be noted that the position of both the maneuvering valve and the automatic valve is conveniently located along what they call the axial girder, upon which is placed what they call an axial catwalk. This axial catwalk runs the entire length of the super structure of the Hindenburg. However, due to the placing of these valves so that they are convenient to the axial catwalk, it necessarily involves the use of a gas vent or gas shaft, due to the fact that these valves are located in the very interior of the super structure. The gas shaft then is a shaft that runs from the top keel of the super structure to the very heart or axis of the structure itself. The valve then opens into this shaft towards the center of the ship and the gas is let out of the gas valve and it then hits this flue, or gas shaft, and proceeds upwards into the air through the shaft, which is covered by what they call a shaft hood. This shaft is open to the air at the top of the super structure of the Hindenburg and, naturally, there is air in the shaft itself.

It is well to note, at this time, that according to Commander Rosendahl, hydrogen is a gas that, when mixed with air, is highly inflammable, and mixed with a sufficient quantity of air, it is highly explosive. In further explanation thereof, it should be noted that 99% hydrogen, mixed with 1% air, will cause an inflammable mixture, however, you reduce the impurity of hydrogen to 80% hydrogen, and 20% air and you have a highly explosive mixture, and also if you reduce the hydrogen to 20% gas with 80% air, you have a highly explosive mixture. According to their explanation, any mixture of 80% of either air or hydrogen, mixed with 20% of the other element, will produce a highly explosive combination. They also state that if there is 1% hydrogen mixed with 99% air, you also have an inflammable mixture.

It will be recalled, therefore, that as soon as the gas is valved off into the gas shaft, there is immediately a mixture of hydrogen and air in the very internal parts of the super structure of the Hindenburg, and there is a certain area, therefore, in which these two elements are allowed to mix before they are carried off into the air through the gas vent.

For the sake of clarity, it should also be noted that the circular bands in the frame-work of the super structure of the Hindenburg are referred to as rings, and these rings are numbered and the gas shaft separating gas cells numbers 4 and 5 is referred to as ring 62. The number 62 is arrived at by computing the number of meters from the tail of the ship to that circular beam in the super structure, indicating that it is 62 meters from the tail of the ship. It is at this ring, number 62, that Lau and Sauter saw the first appearance of fire.

Commander Rosendahl stated that it is true that this mixture of air and gas in the gas shaft or vent could have been ignited by static electricity that could have been generated by the clothing of an individual or by the rubbing of two objects in the super structure, either by vibration or the presence of friction of any type in the immediate vicinity of this gas shaft. He also stated that it might be possible to even have two pieces of the fabric covering the super structure rub together, thus causing a shock of static electricity. He stated, however, that he is still of the opinion, due to various happenings that have been called to his attention, that there is a strong possibility that the fire, which was ignited in this gas shaft at 62 ring, was caused by an individual who attempted to perform an act of sabotage. In connection therewith, Commander Rosendahl stated that Doctor Eckner has personally interviewed every member of the German crew since his arrival here in the United States. He stated that the members of the crew naturally have talked more freely to Eckner in private than they have to the Board of Inquiry, which is a public hearing.

According to the information that Eckner has received from the various members of the crew, the rule that a passenger was not to be allowed out of the passenger quarters unless in company with a member of the crew was not strictly enforced in the case of a passenger by the name of Joseph Spach. According to Rosendahl,