

Good Evening,Everybody:

(This is indeed a black letter day for the country at large, and for Uncle Sam's Navy in particular. While everybody was still in the throes of the shock of the disaster to the Akron, came the news that another naval aircraft had come to grief. A bulletin from the Reporters of the National Broadcasting Company covering the story at a point on the Jersey Coast near Barnegat City brings the information that the Navy's semi-dirigible J-e crashed early this afternoon while searching for the survivors of the Akron.) This crash occurred about eighteen miles north of Barnegat City, and a hundred feet off shore. The crew of the J-3 in their anxiety to find survivors of the Akron, took their blimp just a little too low. Exact details of this wreck are not yet available. But we do know that a sudden gust of wind was her undoing. A still later bulletin from the N.B.C. men on the spot indicates that four of the J-e's crew of six were

rescued by a police amphibian plane -- but 2 perished, one of them her C.O., Lieut. Commander Cummings. (This brings the total of gallant seamen lost as a result of the Akron catastrophe to seventy-five.)

Probably many of you who are listening in have already heard some of these details, as the National Broadcasting Company has had a large staff of reporters covering the story, not only on the spot of the disaster, or fairly close to it at Barnegat, but also at the other sources of news in Washington, D.C., and New York City.

One remarkably graphic item in tonight's newspapers, unless my memory fails me, a unique item, is the eye-witness account of the destruction of the Akron by Lieutenant Commander Herbert Wiley, the executive officer of the vessel and the only officer to survive. Commander Wiley's message was in characteristically terse Navy talk. It was radioed to the Secretary of the Navy from the Coast Guard destroyer Tucker, and intercepted

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by the radio stations of the National Broadcasting Company.

The message read as follows:

"Sighted thunder storm about thirty miles south of Philadelphia about two zero four five ^{(which means -} (8:45 P. M.) and proceeded on east and northeast course. Light night, mostly to south. Ground obscured by fog. Ship in good static condition. Approximately 5,000 pounds. Heat heavy. In vicinity of Jersey shore at 10 o'clock.

"Surrounded by lightning at Light. Night atmosphere not very turbulent. Ran east course until about 23.00 ^{(which means} (11 o'clock) then crossed to west at 24:00 ^{(which means} (midnight.) Sighted light on ground and changed course to 130 degrees. Ship began to descend rapidly from flying altitude, 1,600 feet. Dropped ballast. Became entirely surrounded by lightning.

^{--(meaning 3 mins after midnight)}
"About 003. _λ Ship began to descend rapidly from flying altitude 1,600 feet. Dropped ballast forward and regained altitude. Three minutes later, seemed to be in centre of storm.

WILEY

(Lieutenant Commander Wiley and the two enlisted men, ^{the Akron's} the only survivors out of seventy-six, who were rescued by the German tanker Phoebus, came ashore at Brooklyn late this afternoon.)
They were brought into the Navy Yard aboard the Coast Guard destroyer Tucker. One other man, Robert Copeland, the chief radio operator of the Akron, was also rescued by the Phoebus, but he only lived a few minutes after being pulled out of the water.

It was a dramatic scene when Lieutenant Commander Wiley walked off the Tucker ^{in Brooklyn.} He wore an unlaced pair of high shoes too big for him, a shrunken khaki jacket that was too small for him, wrinkled pants, and around his throat was knotted a frayed scarf. But the rigid discipline of the Navy held him erect, although he was obviously suffering from shock and exposure. On his face was a set smile. When the reporters asked him for an interview he begged off, saying he could not talk until he had made out his official report. One reporter said: "How long were you

in the water, Commander?" And the ^{Wiley}~~Commander~~ replied with
one hand outstretched: "Please, please." And so saying,

he got in beside the driver ^{on the} seat of ^{the} Navy ambulance ^{that was}
^{taking his men to a hospital.}

SWANSON

Those of you who were not able to listen in this afternoon will be interested in the gist of the address delivered over the National Broadcasting Company's network by the Honorable Claude Swanson, Secretary of the Navy. But first, Secretary Swanson, at the request of President Roosevelt, read the President's communication on the subject of the tragedy. Mr. Roosevelt said:

"The loss of the Akron with its crew of gallant officers and men is a national disaster. I grieve with the nation, and especially with the wives and families of the men who were lost. Ships can be replaced, but the nation can ill afford to lose such men as Rear Admiral Moffat and his shipmates who died upholding to the end the finest traditions of the United States Navy."

The Secretary of the Navy then said on his own behalf:

"The tragic end of the Akron is one of the greatest peace time blows the Navy has ever experienced. No details are

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available at this hour to show how the disaster occurred. We only know that she crashed at sea and then caught fire. Latest reports indicate that some wreckage is still afloat, but whether any more survivors will be picked up is problematical. Reports ~~from the area~~ indicate that visibility is bad, but an intensive search of the whole area is being carried on by naval and coast guard vessels and airplanes and will be continued as long as

there is any possibility of rescue. Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Colonel ^{Henry} Roosevelt, ^{by order of Pres. Roosevelt,} has gone to the scene of action by

airplane to assist in every way the work of rescue." *Then Secy. Swanson continued: -*

[^]"At this time it is futile to speculate as to the cause of the disaster. A careful investigation will later determine all the facts that are available. The Akron has been operated with notable success for a year and a half and had proved her sturdiness under severe weather conditions. This ~~xx~~ should effectively refute the early allegations that sabotage and excess structure weight has anything to do with this disaster. It is still too

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early to venture to outline the department's future policy in reference to airships, a development which the Navy has been carrying on for a number of years and one with which the name of Rear Admiral Moffet has been immediately associated." ~~That~~
That in part is what Mrs. Swanson had to say.

ADD SWANSON

It is a tragic piece of irony that in all the controversy that has raged around the Akron all these years Rear Admiral Moffet was the staunchest defender of the doomed ship. Disaster had been predicted for her by engineers and other critics almost ever since construction on her began. But always Admiral Moffet maintained "The Akron is all right." In fact not much more than a year ago he published an article defending her in an issue of the National Aeronautic Magazine.

I wonder if you heard Commander Wiley speak over the radio a few moments ago? It was one of the most dramatic talks in the history of radio.

"We left Lakehurst about seven-thirty last night on a regular scheduled flight, intending to work with a radio direction finding stations in New England today. Since it was foggy over the coast of New Jersey and we were not due in New England until morning, it was decided to cruise inland to Philadelphia and south around the edge of the fog.

"About eight-thirty last night when we were some twenty or thirty miles south of Philadelphia, lightning was seen ahead and

the course was changed to the east very shortly thereafter. When we received a report by radio that there was a thunderstorm at Washington.

"We continued to the northeast and to the east ahead of the storm and observed it, seeing for a while lightning only to the south, but after a few minutes, the lightning was again seen to the west, and finally after we had passed the coastline, the lightning extended in all directions.

"By the time we had reached the coastline, the fog was general and extended up to about 1600 feet, which was the altitude we were flying.

"We cruised to the eastward for nearly an hour and with lightning all around us the captain changed the course back over the land. We sighted some lights which we considered to be the coastline at midnight and the course was again set to seaward to the southwest. The ship was in good condition and everything was routine except that we could not get very good weather reports on account of the heavy static which was, of course, present in the neighborhood of this severe electrical storm.

"About thirty minutes after we left the coast, that is about 12:30, Admiral Moffett came into the control car and spoke to me about the severity of the storm and compared it with one which we had encountered when he was on board a year ago January in Alabama.

"The air was not very turbulent and the storm appeared to be more of an electrical disturbance than an active disturbance with turbulent atmosphere.

"About 12:30, or soon after I spoke to Admiral Moffett, the ship began to descend rapidly, almost on evenkeel, but with the nose down slightly. It descended within a few seconds from 1600 feet to 800 feet, during which time the engines were speeded to full speed, and I dropped about 3000 pounds of ballast, mostly from the forward part of the ship to ~~in~~ lift the nose.

"We rose rapidly once we started up, but had no difficulty in levelling off at the 1600 foot altitude again, and when we reached that altitude, I observed the controls and the captain ordered the engine reduced from full speed to standard speed.

#About three minutes later, the air became exceedingly

disturbed and the ship was struck by a gust from starboard which almost threw us off our feet. Immediately after that, the rudder control cable snapped and I noticed that the top rudder cable was hanging loose at the steersman's stand.

"I had stationed myself on the starboard side, the right hand side of the control car near the window, where I could observe the steersmen. Captain McCord was on the left side, at what we call the captain's stand, and he supervised the operation of the wheel which controlled the engines and directed the dropping of ballast.

"I disconnected the upper rudder control from the steering wheel and had the steersmen steer with the lower rudder. However, within less than a minute afterwards, I heard a popping noise and the lower rudder control rope was also broken.

"By this time I had heard the elevator man reporting that we were falling, and the ship had taken an inclination upward. When it took this inclination, the Captain speeded the engines, in order to ~~lift~~ lift us up, but we continued to fall.

"All at once I saw the water and I asked the altitude, and the reply came back promptly, 300 feet. The order was given to

stand by to crash, and the signal was given to the engine rooms which heretofore had answered every signal correctly and quickly.

"It seemed to me about 30 seconds before we hit the water, and although I thought that the stern was lower than the bow, it seemed to me that the control car hit first and went under the water. The water rushed in the window on my side of the control car and swept me across the control car backward and out the other window. I swam as hard as I could to get from under the ship and finally came to the surface, clear ~~xx~~ of the ship.

"In the flashes of lightning, I could see the ship on the water being blown away from me rapidly. I could see that she was a general wreck, torn and shambles.

"Looking to my left, I saw some lights which, when I got up on the top of the wave, I identified as the lights of a steamer. I started to swim toward these lights and at one time I thought I could see Barnegat Light on the shore of New Jersey.

"After about ten minutes, I found a board to which I clung and continued swimming for **what** I judged to be a half an hour, when I came up alongside a German tanker which threw a life ring to me and

hauled me on board.

"I was very weak and was put to bed and warmed up, and in about an hour I was able to stop shivering and I visited the other men who were on board and sent a dispatch with the names of the survivors."

EDITORIAL

An editorial in tonight's New York Evening Post calls the roll of a long series of accidents to the lighter-than-air ships. At the same time the Post ~~remarked~~ remarks: "The percentage of airplane fatalities has dropped like a plummet," *decreased.*

The editorial then adds up the most spectacular of *lighter-than-air* these accidents: The crash of the Shenandoah in 1925; the fall of the Roma in 1922; the British dirigible ZR-2 which fell into Humber River in 1922; the crash of the Italia in the search for the North Pole; and the mysterious disappearance of the Dixie ~~which~~ ~~sailed~~ sailed off with fifty-two French sailors aboard and was never heard of again.

The Post also points out that the British have had just as bad luck as we ~~have~~ with their airships. For instance, there was the NS-11 struck by lightning; the R-34 destroyed by gales while tied up to a mooring mast; and finally the crash of the R-101 which smashed into a hill in Normandy two years ago.

After ~~that~~ disaster to the R-101, Britain abandoned

the building of giant dirigibles, and decided to save much precious money and even more precious lives by allowing other nations to continue the pioneering work on airships.

An editorial in the Jersey Journal draws an even blunter inference from the disaster to the Akron. The Jersey Journal emphasizes the following facts: Of the three largest dirigibles Uncle Sam has put into service, two have gone. Both were built in America. The only surviving airship, the Los Angeles, was built in Germany.

Then the Journal makes the following statement: "The survival of the Los Angeles taken together with the long list of trips made by the Graf Zeppelin will cause speculations as to whether the Germans have got something that we still need to learn in the building of giant craft of the skies.

Incidentally, it was interesting to read the comment of Dr. Hugo Eckener on the Akron catastrophe. After expressing his

horror at the loss of life, Dr. Eckener, the greatest living authority on this type of airship, declares: "Nothing will shake my complete faith in airships."

In this connection it is significant that ^{some of} the best naval experts in the country believed the Akron to be accident proof. ~~It~~ ^{This} is more significant than the fact that the Naval Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives investigated the building of the Akron and pronounced her of sound design and construction.

~~As a matter of fact, sinister rumors have been flying around this craft ever since the construction work was begun.~~

And that's as far as we can go at present. You'll find columns and columns on this great disaster in your newspaper.

GERMANY

Now for a bit of news of a different sort, from Germany.

The Hitlerites have issued orders that a long list of musicians headed by the names of Arturo ~~R~~ Toscanini and our own Walter Damrosch, are to be barred from the air of the Fatherland.

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The musicians in the list sent out an appeal in behalf of certain Jewish musicians in Germany. To punish them for making this appeal the Supervisor of the Broadcasting stations in Germany, which are all under government control, has directed that no music composed, conducted, or played by these artists shall be heard in dear old Deutschland. In addition to Signor Toscanini and Dr. Damrosch, the proscribed musicians are Sërge Kussewitzky, Artur Bodanzky, Harold Bauer and Ossip Gabrilowitsch, *son-in-law of the late Mark Twain.*

And I bet that will just about break their hearts.—

Ja wohl.

EVEREST

There's an aftermath of bad luck to that sensational flight over Mt. Everest. One of the two planes which achieved the feat yesterday had to make a forced landing today. In fact, it's difficult to make out exactly whether it was a forced landing or a crash. Reports indicate that this plane piloted by P. F. M. Fellowes, the technical advisor of the expedition, was trying to fly over Kanchanjunga, a mountain near Everest and almost as high.

Details are lacking. Presumably he's high up amid the snows of Nepal or Tibet, and that's a dangerous place to be.

REPEAL

(The wets throughout the U.S.A. are chuckling over that Michigan election, the one to select delegates for the Convention to consider the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment. The anti-prohibitionists were victorious to the tune of three to one.)
That is, considering the popular vote. Actually in that convention which meets next Monday, more than eighty out of a hundred votes will be cast for repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment.

The victory was even more sweeping in the Michigan cities. In Detroit, for instance, the bailiwick of that stand-pat prohibitionist, Mr. Henry Ford, his fellow citizens did not agree with him. Detroit went ten to one for repeal.

This overwhelming victory surprised even the strongest opponents of prohibition. Leaders of the wet cause were watching Michigan with great anxiety. It was generally considered one of the so-called doubtful states which might possibly have gone dry. But the result bore out last year's Literary Digest poll to the fraction of one per cent.

Pretty much the same sort of thing is going on today

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in the state of Wisconsin, where the voters are also electing delegates to a repeal convention. But this election, it is believed, will not prove so exciting. Even dry leaders consider that Wisconsin, of which Milwaukee is the principal city, is overwhelmingly wet.

Then too, the Democratic State Committee of New Jersey today announced the list of delegates^{at large} to the repeal convention which will be held at Trenton in June.

In Maryland, too, a measure creating the machinery for a convention has been put through the legislature and is now up to Governor Albert Ritchie for signature.

ADD REPEAL

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Meanwhile Thursday midnight will see the return of beer, that is to say, lawful beer, in several states. Among them New York and New Jersey, where the legislatures have not yet agreed upon measures to control the distribution and sale of the seidel that cheers, but where also at present there's no law to prevent it.

In several parts of the Union the wise lawmakers are still squabbling as to the best regulations for control of the white collared fluid. But as ^{many} ~~the~~ State Prohibition measures ~~in many parts of the Union~~ have been repealed, the legalization of beer by Congress makes it possible ^{for} anybody to sell the stuff until ~~the~~ states erect legal machinery to control it.

TALL

Here's a prize-winning whopper from Albert Team,
of the Veterans Hospital of Oteen, North Carolina. Al writes
as follows:-

"The other night after listening to Lowell Thomas I
jumped in my car, with a tank full of Blue Sunoco, and drove from
North Carolina all the way and reached Memphis, Tennessee, in
time to hear Amos 'n' Andy."

That's a good idea, think I'll try it too, and-SO LONG
UNTIL TOMORROW.