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## BLIMP SQUADRON ELEVEN

## CHRONOLOGY

- 2 June 1942 Airship Squadron ELEVEN was placed in commission at the U.S. Naval Air Station, South Weymouth, Massachusetts in accordance with CNO commissioning orders. Lieutenant Commander Samuel M. BAILEY, USN, assumed command.
- Squadron ELEVEN's first airship, the K-3, was ferried to NAS South Weymouth from NAS Lakehurst on temporary loan from Airship Squadron TWELVE.
- 9 June 1942 K-3 enroute to pick up convoy observed from a distance the torpedoing of SS KRONPRINSEN. The airship then proceeded to the scene, directed the crew to reboard the salvageable freighter, and summoned surface support. K-3 stood by KRONPRINSEN until vessel was taken in tow.
- 13 June 1942 K-6 dropped two depth bombs on oil slicks and MAD contacts over Cashe's Ledge with no visible results.
- 29 June 1942 K-8 sighted suspicious V-shaped ripple, received sharp MAD contact, and dropped one bomb 50 yards ahead of wake. There were no apparent results from the bombing. Airship requested and received surface and air support. K-8 marked and buoyed the spot but obtained no further MAD contacts.
- 6 July 1942 K-6 was ripped from its mooring mast and deflated when a tornado struck NAS South Weymouth.
- 10 July 1942 A convoy was provided with all night air coverage for the first time by an airship (K-4) of Squadron ELEVEN.
- 20 August 1942 K-5 dropped four bombs on strong magnetic contact without apparent results. Began development of new contact but MAD failed.
- 4 September 1942 After MAD contact, K-4 sighted a periscope which immediately submerged. Airship marked spot with a slick, began intensive search of area, and twice sighted unidentified object in the water. K-4 received another MAD contact and supporting DD had repeated smar contacts which it depth charged without visible results.

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17 September 1942 K-11, first airship permanently assigned to Airship Squadron ELEVEN was delivered to NAS South Weymouth from NAS Lakehurst.

28 September 1942 Severe thunderstorm with high winds and hail damaged nose assemblies of three moored out airships of which two had to be flown to NAS Lakehurst for repairs.

30 September 1942 K-3 landed at Squadron expeditionary base at Bar Harbor, Maine to inaugurate use of that facility.

30 September 1942 to  
2 October 1942 K-3, based at Bar Harbor, provided special air coverage to USS WAKEFIELD being towed to Boston Naval Yard for repairs.

2 November 1942 K-11, located disabled trawler INCA adrift and directed another trawler, AL SMITH, to the scene. The AL SMITH took the INCA in tow.

3 November 1942 K-11, K-12, K-14 were docked in Hangar #1 at NAS South Weymouth; this marked the first time that the hangar had housed an airship.

1 December 1942 K-14 led SC 707 to oil slicks and stood by while vessel dropped three charges. Later a minesweeper dropped five charges at site of K-14 MAD contact. No apparent results from the two attacks.

8 December 1942 K-11 searched for and found disabled CGR 3032; airship dropped rations and stood by until arrival of surface craft.

28 April 1943 K-14 drifted without rudder control for 30 minutes due to locking key failure.

29 April 1943 Squadron expeditionary base at Bar Harbor began initial operations for 1943.

14 May 1943 K-38 dropped one bomb on MAD contact later evaluated as a wreck.

29 June 1943 Airship Squadron ELEVEN's Enlisted Lighter-than-Air school graduated its first class.

15 July 1943 Airship Squadron ELEVEN was redesignated Blimp Squadron ELEVEN.

29 July 1943 Rear Admiral Charles E. ROSENDAHL, USN, Chief of Naval Airship Training and Experimentation visited Blimp Squadron ELEVEN.

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- 31 July 1943 K-12 made an emergency landing in trees and was deflated; there were no casualties to personnel.
- 1 August 1943 K-42 dropped two bombs on oil slick with no visible results; target was later assessed as no submarine.
- 16 August 1943 K-14 searched for and found an overturned skiff with three men clinging to it. The airship marked the spot, dropped a life raft, and directed a fishing vessel to the skiff.
- 2 September 1943 Vice Admiral A. ANDREAS, USN, Commander Eastern Sea Frontier visited Blimp Squadron ELEVEN.
- 14 September 1943 Captain George H. MILLS, USN, Commander Fleet Airships, Atlantic accompanied by Commander Raymond F. TYLER, USN, Commander Fleet Airship Wing CNE conducted a military and material inspection of the Squadron.
- 24 September 1943 Commander Samuel M. BAILEY, USN, was relieved by Lieutenant Commander John SHANNON, USN, as Commander Blimp Squadron ELEVEN.
- 8 December 1943 Vice Admiral H. F. LEAFY, USN, Commander Eastern Sea Frontier, inspected the Squadron at NAS South Weymouth.
- 29 March 1944 Lieutenant Cecil A. BOLAM, USN, relieved Lieutenant Commander John SHANNON, USN, as Commander Blimp Squadron ELEVEN.
- 14 April 1944 K-69 lost all the fabric off the port side of its upper fin during flight.
- 18 April 1944 K-9 (Blimp Squadron ELEVEN) and G-8 (Airship Utility Squadron ONE) assisted in the rescue of survivors of a mid-air collision of training planes. The airships located the survivors and led surface craft to them.
- 7 May 1944 K-11 landed to make first use of Squadron expeditionary base at the Naval Air Station Brunswick, Maine.
- 9 May 1944 Squadron operations began at Bar Harbor for 1944 with the arrival of the K-12 from South Weymouth.
- 3 July 1944 K-14 crashed into the water in full flight during a special night LAD search. Of the crew of ten, one officer and five enlisted men perished.

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- 1 August 1944 K-25 located disabled fishing vessel, lowered messages to its crew telling them help was on the way, and began homing a Coast Guard vessel to the scene. K-25 was recalled to base when the Coast Guard vessel broke down. Surface craft relocated the fishing boat the following day.
- 13 September 1944 The Naval Air Station, South Weymouth, was struck by a hurricane, the center of which passed over the base shortly after 0100 on 14 September. All Squadron ELEVEN airships were docked and none was damaged by the storm.
- 16 September 1944 K-25 located VINEYARD HAVEN lightship sunk during the recent hurricane. MAD located the wreck within one half hour of when search began.
- 17-24 September 1944 K-69, Task Unit 22.3.2 was based at Argentia to assist in anti-submarine operations by use of its MAD gear.
- 30 September 1944 During landing of K-9 at Yarmouth, member of ground crew became entangled in handling line. Despite drift of airship, pilot decided to remain on ground to try to save man entangled in line. K-9 drifted into a mast and deflated. Man atop mast was overcome by helium and seriously injured when he fell to the concrete taxi strip; second man atop mast fell into deflating envelope and had to be cut out. One member of the K-9's crew was superficially injured.
- 23 October 1944 K-25 was diverted from patrol to search for plane crash survivors. Airship sighted two survivors on a raft being circled by planes. K-25 dropped life raft and led fishing vessel to the rescue.
- 31 October 1944 Lieutenant Commander John F. PEAR, USNR, assumed command of Blimp Squadron ELEVEN. Lieutenant Commander PEAR relieved Lieutenant Commander Cecilia A. BOLAM, USN.
- 5 November 1944 K-34 suffered probable material failure and fell into the sea when pressure dropped and could not be regained. One officer and one enlisted man were lost.

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24 January 1945

K-19 made annual bird count flight for Fish and Wildlife Service.

11 February 1945

Commander Fleet Airships, Atlantic ordered the temporary assignment to Fleet Airship Wing ONE of six additional airships of which two were destined for Blimp Squadron ELEVEN thus raising the squadron's strength from six to eight ships.

28 February 1945

K-50 searched for fishing vessel reported in distress, located it, and homed surface craft to it.

29 March 1945

K-100 established weak MAD contact which coincided with sound contacts of supporting SCs. Depth charge patterns were dropped by the surface craft without visible results.

30 March 1945

K-50 sighted what appeared to be a submerging periscope and laid down a sonobuoy pattern which picked up positive propeller beats. Intensity of sonobuoy reception diminished until contact was lost. MAD runs produced no contacts.

30 April 1945

K-69, while supporting the DD GLEAVES, laid a sonobuoy pattern and received possible propeller noises. The airship made an attack but no results were observed.

7 May 1945

Blimp Squadron ELEVEN conducted its last patrol flights; orders were received to fly only escort, single ship, or special missions.

14 May 1945

K-125 received many strong MAD signals in oil bubbles and dropped one bomb which did not detonate due to arming wire failure. Contact was later determined to be sunk Eagle Boat.

Last day of which Squadron ELEVEN provided air coverage to convoys or single

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ship movements.

CominCh and CNO confidential dispatch 141956 directed the decommissioning of Blimp Squadron ELEVEN.

16 May 1945

Blimp Squadron ELEVEN reported to Commander Air Force, Atlantic Fleet for operational control.  
(See Appendix A).

Commander Air Force, Atlantic Fleet directed Commander Fleet Airships, Atlantic to assume operational control of Blimp Squadron ELEVEN and proceed with its decommissioning.

17 May 1945

Blimp Squadron ELEVEN assumed those utility commitments of Airship Utility Squadron ONE requiring the services of K-type airships. This was in accordance with orders from Commander Fleet Airships, Atlantic, and was first carried out four days later.

24 May 1945

Blimp Squadron TWELVE was directed by Commander Fleet Airships, Atlantic to establish a detachment at NAS South Weymouth and upon the establishment thereof to assume the utility commitments of Blimp Squadron ELEVEN.  
(See Appendix B).

25 May 1945

K-92 photographed the USS WAKEFIELD as she brought the first large group of returning ETO veterans into Boston Harbor.

28 May 1945

Transfer of all Blimp Squadron ELEVEN airships to other commands was completed with the ferrying of the K-50 to NAS Lakehurst.

8 June 1945

Blimp Squadron ELEVEN was decommissioned in accordance with CominCh and CNO confidential dispatch 141956 May 1945. (See Appendix C).

BLIMP SQUADRON ELEVEN

NARRATIVE  
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Airship Squadron ELEVEN was commissioned on 2 June 1942 at the U.S. Naval Air Station, South Weymouth, Massachusetts, in accordance with commissioning orders issued by the Chief of Naval Operations.

Led by the prospective Squadron Commander, Lieutenant Commander Samuel M. BAILEY, USN, and the prospective Executive Officer, Lieutenant John J. McCORMICK, USN, a group of officers and men, newly assigned as Squadron personnel, were present at the ceremony which took place three months after the Naval Air Station, South Weymouth, had been commissioned on 1 March 1942.

The ceremonies were brief and proceeded as follows: Commander George H. MILLS, USN, Commander Airship Patrol Group ONE, read the orders placing the Squadron in commission, following which the Squadron was accepted by Lieutenant Commander BAILEY, USN, who read his orders and assumed command. Lieutenant McCORMICK, USN, posted the watch, and Airship Squadron ELEVEN was formally in the service of the United States Navy.

On 2 June 1942 the K-3 was ferried from the Naval Air Station, Lakehurst, New Jersey to the Naval Air Station, South Weymouth where it was to become the first airship to be based and operated there. At 0616 on the following day, the K-3 took off on Squadron ELEVEN's first anti-submarine patrol flight with Lieutenant W. R. PEELER, USN, as pilot.

Operations were routine and uneventful for Airship Squ on ELEVEN during the first six days of operation. On the seventh day, 9 June 1942 at 0650, the K-3 while proceeding from NAS South Weymouth for a regular anti-submarine mission, sighted a large eastbound convoy. With his binoculars on the distant convoy as it came over the horizon, the K-3's pilot, Lieut. W. R. PEELER, USN, saw a large column of water rise from the bow of the ship that was last in formation. Judging it to be a torpedo explosion, he headed for the scene at full speed and sent a plain language report to the base requesting support. Almost immediately a second explosion on the same ship was observed by Lieut. PEELER through his binoculars.

At 64 knots, the K-3 proceeded to the damaged ship which proved to be the Norwegian SS KRONPRINSEN out of Oslo, a large freighter loaded with Army motor cars and trucks, and one of a convoy of thirteen ships. When the K-3 arrived at the scene, the SS KRONPRINSEN'S crew was abandoning ship. A submarine search was begun immediately by the K-3 before the surface support, the British DD 174 and two corvettes 140 and 141, arrived and began their search for the suspected U-boat.

The KRONPRINSEN had stopped settling, was slightly down by the bow, and her stern almost blown off. After surveying the condition of the ship, Lieut. PEELER decided that salvage of the vessel was possible. Advising interested parties accordingly, the K-3 by radio requested that tugs be sent out. The airship was then instructed by the surface support commander to dire



the crew to return to their ship. This was done by rounding up all those lifeboats still in the vicinity. Upon boarding the KRONPRINSEN, the crew soon got up steam and set up communications with the airship by visual signals. The requested surface support arrived, took the vessel in tow, and headed for a Nova Scotia port. The K-3 then returned to South Weymouth where it landed with only 26 gallons of fuel remaining after over 26 hours in the air.

On 11 June 1942, the K-6 replaced the K-3 which had been ferried to the Naval Air Station, Lakehurst, New Jersey on the preceding day. The K-3 had been operating for Squadron ELEVEN on a temporary loan from Airship Squadron TWELVE at Lakehurst. It was not until 17 September that an airship was permanently assigned to Squadron ELEVEN; on that date the K-11 was received. Airships were intermittently and temporarily assigned to Airship Squadron ELEVEN from Airship Squadron TWELVE from 3 June 1942 to 3 October 1942; airships involved were the K-3, K-4, K-5, K-6, and K-8.

On June 13th, the K-6 investigated oil slicks and MAD contacts over Cashe's Ledge. Two bombs were dropped with no apparent results.

At 1300 on 29 June, about 3 miles south of Buoy 3 Jeffrey's Ledge, the K-8 sighted a suspicious V-shaped ripple off the port bow bearing 330 relative distant 150 yards. The ship obtained a sharp MAD contact and dropped one bomb 50 yards ahead of the wake with no apparent results. Surface and air support was requested.

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and received. The K-8 marked and buoyed the spot but no further RAD contacts were obtained.

Roaring in without warning, a tornado struck South Weymouth in the early evening of 6 July 1942. A twisting column of wind, with center velocity estimated at 60 miles per hour, swept across the landing field at the Naval Air Station, causing considerable damage. As far as could be determined, this particular kind of weather phenomenon had never previously been experienced in the South Weymouth area.

When the tornado struck the K-6 was moored out at Number TWO mooring circle and had landed from a flight only a half hour before. Ensign P. DOYLE, USNR, with a three man crew was in charge of the ship.

The twister ripped the K-6 from the mooring mast and carried it to the south edge of the field where it crashed into the trees and settled into the underbrush with envelope deflated. The force of the tornado simultaneously bent the steel supports of the crane at the site of Hangar #1 construction. Only two of the four members of the K-6 crew were injured, and these not seriously.

The K-4 made a noteworthy flight on 10 July 1942 when it provided a convoy with all-night air coverage. Twice the airship lost the convoy but each time regained contact with radar. The radar installation, with which the K-4 was one of the first airships to be equipped, was the main factor which enabled the blimp to provide this all-night coverage a feat which had been accomplished now if any times before.

On 20 August, the K-5 dropped four bombs on a magnetic contact

with no apparent results. The airship began development of another contact when the MAD gear failed.

At 1632 on 4 September, the K-4 established an MAD contact. After a surface craft search, the contact was evaluated as false. At 1750, while patrolling ahead of the convoy, the K-4 sighted a periscope about 150 yards forward of the blimp's port beam. The periscope immediately disappeared. The blimp made no attack because 3 minutes were required before the ship was in a position to attack. The spot was marked with a slick. An intensive search followed and a suspicious object was twice sighted by the K-4 but not identified. The K-4 received another MAD contact; a DD had repeated sonar contacts and released 4 depth charges without apparent results.

The K-11 was received on 17 September 1942; this was the first airship permanently assigned to the Squadron.

Winds of gale force which carried with them dense clouds of dust kept all Squadron personnel busy on the South Weymouth field caring for three masted airships on 27 September 1942. All ships successfully rode out the storm. On the following day a thunderstorm, accompanied by high winds and hail stones, swept across the mat. Three airships were moored out and were manned by pilot and crew to prevent them from being blown away. After the storm had passed, it was found that two ships had suffered sufficient damage to their nose assemblies to warrant their being flown to NAS Lakehurst for repairs. Hangar operations at NAS South Weymouth did not begin until completion of Hangar #1 on 3 November 1943.

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September 1942 was marked by the establishment of an expeditionary base at Bar Harbor, Maine. This base was set up during the last week of the month and first used on 30 September 1942 when the K-3 landed and was moored after executing a special mission of providing coverage to the USS WAKEFIELD.

The K-3, based at South Weymouth, was ordered on 29 September 1942 to proceed on the following day to a point 150<sup>miles</sup>/east of Digby Bay, N.S., to furnish air coverage to the USS WAKEFIELD being towed to the Boston Navy Yard for repairs after the fire which had swept her a short time before. The K-3 was to be based at the Squadron expeditionary base at Bar Harbor during the execution of this mission.

Ensign P. DOYLE, USNR, and Ens. E. L. McCARTNEY, USNR, were the pilots chosen to handle the three day assignment. Excellent weather and calm seas, while favoring the tow, were also on the side of the German U-boats, the determination of which to "get" the WAKEFIELD had been voiced by Hitler. The tow made a six knot speed all the way, with the blimps doing a weave patrol ahead and surface craft keeping a sharp lookout on the surface.

The K-3, which was based at Bar Harbor on 30 September and 1 October, provided air coverage all the way around Nova Scotia and down through the Gulf of Maine as far as Lewiston, Maine where it was joined by heavier-than-air units. With this added coverage, the WAKEFIELD was slipped down the inside coastal route safely into drydock at Boston. The K-3, its mission completed, landed at NAS South Weymouth on 2 October.

Inability to navigate in foul weather or to pick up definite

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...xes to enable them to ascertain their true position resulted in the K-14, Ensign R. D. FREEL, USNR, pilot, and crew having a harrowing experience. During a night flight on 5 October 1942, they were handicapped by bad weather with zero-zero conditions and lost all track of position. They set a course which they thought would bring them to South Weymouth. All night long, the airship drifted along the Atlantic Coast. When daylight came, the K-14 crew tried to find a hole in the fog.

At 0830 on the morning of 6 October, they spied the ground through a hole. The pilot circled the spot until the fog broke and finally saw an airfield which was identified as the field at Waterville, Maine. The base at South Weymouth was notified, and when the weather had cleared sufficiently to permit heavier-than-air operations, Lieutenant Commander John J. McCORMICK, USN, Executive Officer of Airship Squadron ELEVEN, boarded a small transport plane at the Naval Air Station, Squantum, Mass. and flew to Waterville. Gathering a ground crew from various military facilities in the vicinity, Lieutenant Commander McCORMICK directed the landing and refueling of the ship. The K-14 then proceeded to South Weymouth and landed without incident.

On 2 November, 1942, the K-11, while on routine mission, found the disabled trawler INCA adrift. Flying low over the vessel, the pilot was advised that there was no immediate danger to the INCA. Knowing that another trawler was in the immediate vicinity, the K-11 started out in an endeavor to locate it. After a short search, the airship found the second trawler, the AL SMITH, and led it back to

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the INCA. The AL SMITH then took the INCA in tow.

The following day, the Squadron's three airships K-11, K-12, and K-14 were docked in Hangar #1. This was the first time that the newly completed 1000 feet steel hangar had housed an airship.

The K-14 was executing a routine patrol on 1 December 1942 when it sighted an oil slick at 42-10N; 70-30W. The K-14 led the SC 707 to the spot and remained in the area while the vessel dropped three depth charges with no visible results. A short time later, the airship covered a minesweeper while it dropped five depth charges at the point of a K-14 MAD contact. There were no apparent results from the charges.

On the 6th of December 1942, the K-12 was enroute to meet its convoy when battery trouble developed which filled the car with fumes and created a considerable hazard to the members of the crew. The K-12 returned to base immediately.

The K-11 departed South Weymouth for routine patrol on 8 December but was diverted to search for CGR 3032 which the airship succeeded in locating after several hours search. The K-11 dropped rations and stood by until surface craft arrived to take the vessel in tow.

Operations during January 1943 were curtailed by New England winter weather which brought with it severe icing conditions and heavy snows. On one occasion during the month (1 January) a Squadron ELEVEN airship, the K-14 landed with a heavy snow load on the envelope. During January, 30 flights (7 escort, 18 patrol, 1 patrol and escort, and 4 others) were flown totalling 264.4 hours.

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Weather conditions continued unfavorable during February 1942 when 37 flights (338.2 hours) were made on 15 days of operations. Twenty-eight vessels were escorted during the month. Several photographic and one calibration flight were made by Squadron ELEVEN airships during February. On 18 February, the K-11 made an inventory of migratory waterfowl; a U.S. Game Management agent was aboard during this flight which followed the coastline from North River, Massachusetts to the Cape Cod Canal.

With improving weather, Squadron ELEVEN's number of flights during March 1942 increased to 96. Operations, however, were routine except for two MAD contacts by the K-14 and K-38 on 14 March; attempts to develop these contacts, however, were unsuccessful. A total of 337 vessels were escorted during the month.

The K-14 suffered a steering casualty due to a locking key failure and drifted helplessly in high winds without rudder control for approximately 30 minutes in the vicinity of the Naval Air Station, South Weymouth, Massachusetts on 28 April 1943. At first it was believed that the control wires had parted outside of the ship but Ensign P. DOYLE, USNR, Structure and Repair Officer of Squadron ELEVEN, took off in an SNJ, circled the K-14, and found that repairs could be made from within the ship. The pilot of the K-14, Ensign H. F. SMITH, USNR, was so notified and the mechanic aboard the ship made repairs by breaking off the small ends of files and inserting them as substitute keys in the keyways. As the result of this incident, Bureau Change Number Seven was ordered.

An airship expeditionary unit from the Squadron was dispatched

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to Trenton, (Bar Harbor) Maine on 29 April 1943. The K-42 landed, was serviced on the mast, and took off without incident. The ground handling party was made up of a few key men from South Weymouth plus personnel from Bar Harbor Section Base and Civil Air Patrol personnel at Trenton. The section base quartered and subsisted personnel from NAS South Weymouth. The Naval Air Station, Brunswick, Maine, provided subsistence, quarters, and servicing for the Squadron trucks enroute to and from Bar Harbor.

Operations for May 1943 were routine and uneventful except for an attack made by the K-38 on an MAD contact on the 14th of the month. The K-38 dropped one bomb on what was evaluated to be a wreck. During May, Squadron ELEVEN flew 140 flights totalling 1158.5 hours.

As part of its program for enlisted training, Airship Squadron ELEVEN established an Enlisted Lighter-than-Air School designed to train Squadron personnel to be "Qual LTA" (Qualified, Lighter-than-Air). This school was patterned upon the Enlisted Airship Training School at NAS Lakehurst. First class graduated from the Squadron school on 29 June 1943; 57 enlisted personnel were designated "Qual LTA" that date.

On 15 July 1943, in line with a general reorganization of the Atlantic Fleet lighter-than-air organization, Airship Squadron ELEVEN was redesignated Blimp Squadron ELEVEN.

The Chief of the Hingham, Massachusetts, Fire Department forwarded a very appreciative letter in connection with the discovery of a forest fire by a Squadron airship on the evening of 22 July 1943.



Pilot and co-pilot observed the fire, placed a message in a dixie cup, used an apple for a cover, and dropped this assembly on the lawn of a nearby farm house from which the message was forwarded to the Fire Department. As the fire was in an inaccessible location, it is doubtful whether it would have been otherwise discovered before the next morning. This was the same pilot who previously reported a fire in the town of South Weymouth; the question arose whether to appoint him a deputy fire chief or let him hang a bell on one of the blimps and paint it red.

Rear Admiral Charles E. ROSENDAHL, USN, newly appointed Chief of Naval Airship Training and Experimentation, and his staff conducted an inspection of Squadron personnel, material, and hangar spaces on 29 July 1943.

The K-11, Ensign W. L. QUIVEY, USNR, pilot, was on an escort mission on 31 July and at 2020 was ordered to return to base because of expected thunderstorms. The K-11 headed towards the base from Cape Anne, experiencing turbulence. Lightning was observed inland. At 2132, the K-11 recrossed the coast at Scituate, flying at 450 feet. Lights atop the hangar were visible. Lightning was observed to the north and south, but rain had not yet commenced.

At 2137, light rain began and RPMs on both engines were increased to 1300. The K-11 was flying normally and the ground speed was approximately 25 knots. At 2139 the rain became heavy with hailstones; the wind increased and began to shift to the northwest. The ship was becoming progressively heavier and the pilot decided to return to Cape Cod Bay to drop ballast. An attempt was made

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to gain altitude in order to make a turn. The K-11 was dropping at the rate of 150 feet per minute. Full up elevator and full throttle were applied and the rudderman was instructed not to turn the rudder lest he bring the nose down. The port engine responded to the throttle and turned up to 1800 RPMs. The starboard engine sputtered and never got above 1400 RPMs.

The ship was still settling at the rate of 150 feet per minute and was also drifting rapidly to port with practically no forward speed. It could be seen by use of the landing light that the ship was above the tree tops. The engines were throttled back. The elevator man then cut the safety and forward engine switches. At 2144, the car struck the tree tops, then the top of a two story barn, and came to rest on the ground 25 yards beyond the barn. Both ripcords were pulled, but only the after panel was ripped. In striking the trees, however, the underside of the envelope was torn causing it to deflate rapidly. No member of the crew was injured.

On 1 August 1943, the K-42 dropped two bombs on an oil slick without any apparent results. Target was assessed as "no submarine".

At 0615 on 13 August the K-69 deflated as a result of the starboard stabilizer striking the interior of the hangar and puncturing the envelope while the ship was undocking. Although two members of the crew received superficial injuries, no one was seriously hurt.

The K-14, in the control area at about 1500 on 16 August, was ordered to search the area off the mouth of North River for an overturned white skiff. The K-14, piloted by Ensign J. J.

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MELLON, USNR, proceeded to the designated area and searched the area with negative results. Extending the area of search, the K-14 sighted an overturned skiff at 1620, five miles east of Brant Rock. Three men were clinging to the boat. The airship dropped its life raft and marked the spot with a smoke flare; then it directed a fishing vessel to the rescue of the three men. A fourth man had previously drowned.

Vice Admiral A. ANDREWS, USN, Commander Eastern Sea Frontier, visited the Squadron on 2 September 1943, making a study of operations of the Squadron and HedRon. In the afternoon, the K-10 escorted the MIGRANT, carrying Vice Admiral ANDREWS from Boston Harbor to the Cape Cod Canal, the Admiral's plane having been grounded due to weather conditions.

The K-69, re-erected on the base after it was deflated during an undocking accident of August 13, made its first test flight on 9 September and was pronounced satisfactory.

On 14 September, Captain G. H. MILLS, USN, Commander Fleet Airships, Atlantic, conducted a military and material inspection of Blimp Squadron ELEVEN. Commander R. F. TYLER, USN, Commander Fleet Airship Wing ONE, and officers of various staffs formed the inspecting party.

In the first change of command since the commissioning of the Squadron, Commander S. M. BAILEY, USN, who had guided the destinies of the unit since its inception, turned over command on September 24th 1943 to Lieutenant Commander John SHANNON, USN, Executive Officer of the Squadron since May 1943 when Lieut. Comdr.

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J. J. McCORMICK, USN, had been detached to assume command of Airship Squadron TWENTY-TWO. The ceremony took place in Hangar Number ONE where Commander BAILEY read the orders which detached him. Lieutenant Commander SHANNON followed with the reading of his orders and both outgoing and incoming commanders inspected the Squadron personnel. Lieutenant Cecil A. BOLAM, USN, who had been Operations Officer, was named Executive Officer to fill the vacancy caused by the succession of Lieutenant Commander SHANNON to command.

On 31 October 1943, the K-12 was landed and docked without difficulty in the recently completed Hangar Number TWO. Although the K-69, after its deflation on 13 August was re-erected in Hangar Number TWO, the K-12 actually was the first ship to be docked there.

Operations continued routine during November 1943 with 89 missions and 35 training flights flown aggregating 1063.8 hours.

Vice-Admiral H. F. LEARY, USN, Commander Eastern Sea Frontier, inspected the Squadron and hangar spaces on 8 December.

Excellent ground handling by Ensign J. F. FALLON, USNR, and clever manipulation of the elevator controls by Ensign A. L. LOVING, USNR, pilot, saved the K-14 from serious damage or probably deflation during docking maneuvers at about dusk on December 9th. The ship, having just landed from a patrol, was being walked into the hangar when a gust of 30 knots from the northwest, struck it, causing it to kite to an angle of more than 60 degrees. The tail of the ship passed within a few feet of the hangar door,

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ising clear above it, and in this position, it paused momentarily. At this point, Ensign FALLON ordered the tractor to be backed away from the door, preventing the tail from striking the hangar in descent. The ship was then docked.

The months of January and February 1944 brought with them severe winter operating conditions grounding BlimpRon ELEVEN airships for 7 and 8 days respectively out of each month. No contacts, attacks, rescues, or other events of importance occurred during the two months.

Lieutenant Cecil A. BOLAM, USN, Executive Officer of the Squadron since 24 September 1943, succeeded Lieutenant Commander John SHANNON, USN, as Commanding Officer in appropriate ceremonies held on the deck of Hangar Number ONE on 29 March 1944. Lieutenant Commander SHANNON was detached to assume a post in the Bureau of Aeronautics in Washington. Lieutenant John F. PEAR, USNR, was named Executive Officer.

In the early afternoon of 14 April 1944, the K-11 called the tower from North River to say that there was an airship flying nearby with the insides of its upper fin exposed. A few minutes of blinker work between the two ships established the identity of the ship in trouble; it was the K-69, Ensign R. FORAND, USNR, pilot. Ensign FORAND was instructed to return to the field at once and circle so that the damage could be inspected from the ground. It was about 1530 at this time and the K-69 was already on its way back to base. The ship was apparently under good control and in no immediate danger. Gusts to 37 knots on the field made landing more dangerous than riding out the winds, so Ensign FORAND was ordered

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to hold upwind from the field until the sunset lull.

Ensign FORAND headed into the wind and ran his engines at low speed until 1730 when he made a landing with no trouble in gusts to 26 knots. All the fabric was off the port side of the fin, but none was torn from around the edges, nor was the rudder surface damaged. Surprisingly, the fabric on the port side had held without any sign of weakening, and there had been no jamming or binding of the controls although large bunches of fabric were draped over the fin brace wires and some were over the rudder control cable. The pilot said that he felt no loss of control, but detected a slight vibration of the rudder controls sometime before he knew of his fin damage. The most plausible explanation was that vibration causes a thin chafed area which developed into a small hole which in turn caused the fabric to give in the high gusty winds. The wind at one time during the flight was 36-40 knots with gusts to 55 - 60 knots.

On 18 April 1944, 35 miles south of Nantucket Island, as the result of a mid-air collision of two training planes flying from Charleston, R.I., two Navy fliers were lost while three others were rescued in a speedy and spectacular assemblage of surface craft and two blimps.

Squadron ELEVEN's K-9, under the command of Ensign J. C. BARTH, USN, was ordered to proceed to the crash location to assist in locating survivors. Homing on MOs being sent by a PBM at the scene, the K-9 arrived at 1630 and began an immediate search of the area. At 1655, a green dye slick was sighted in the water and two

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life rafts lashed together. At this time, the SC 630 was about 7 miles from the scene accompanied by another airship, G-8 (Airship Utility Squadron ONE). The K-9 radioed the finding of the survivors and hovered over them until the G-8 arrived leading the SC 630. The SC 630 took the two survivors aboard.

Resuming its search at 1725, the K-9 again swept the area, and at 1750, one of the crew sighted a small object in the water which proved to be a man, apparently unconscious, in a life jacket floating face up. The K-9 signalled a PT boat which was on the scene, and the PT picked the man up. Surface craft and airplanes then secured, but the K-9 continued the search until ordered back to its base at 1910.

The Squadron Commander, Lieut. Comdr. BOLAM, USN, piloted the K-11 on a training flight on 7 May 1944 the purpose of which was to inspect the recently established Squadron expeditionary facilities at the Naval Air Station, Brunswick, Maine. Despite extremely poor visibility due to fog, the K-11 landed at Brunswick, Maine, was refueled, and returned to South Weymouth the same day. This landing of the K-11 marked the initial use of the Squadron's expeditionary facilities at Brunswick.

Bar Harbor expeditionary operations got underway on 8 May 1944 when the expeditionary trailer and ground handlers were dispatched northward from South Weymouth under the command of Lieut. C. J. BURKE, USNR. On the following morning, the K-12, Lt. (jg) W. G. FRAZIER, USNR, took off for Trenton Airport (Bar Harbor) and landed there to begin 1944 operations from that base.

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The month of June 1944 was uneventful, and operations were routine except for three minor incidents which occurred to the K-69, K-38, and K-14. On 22 June, the K-69 earned a hole in the bag in an unexpected manner. In running down and investigating a radar blip, the K-69 hit its trailing antenna against the mast of a ship and hurled the antenna through the bag a few inches from the air tunnel just aft of the car. All of this occurred before the pilot could see the surface vessel and avoid the collision. The K-68 returned to base without difficulty.

The same day (22 June 1944), the pilot of the K-38 had a slight scare. During a patrol mission, he felt a sudden sharp jarring throughout the car. Fearing a parting of the suspensions, he headed home immediately, radioing his suspected trouble. The ship was inspected after it returned successfully and no trouble could be found. The probable explanation was that on that day there were extremely heavy calibre guns firing in his patrol area; the concussion probably gave the K-38 the violent jar.

Conducting an instrument search at night on 27 June 1944, on a special sweep of Penobscot Bay, the K-14 came close to striking a bridge between two islands. Standing at the windshield, looking forward, the pilot saw the obstruction in time to give a quick order for up elevator, then down elevator to get the tail over the bridge.

While conducting a special MAD search at 44-05N; 67-57W; and at an altitude of between 200 and 250 feet, the K-14 crashed into the water in full flight at 2205Q on 2 July 1944. During



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he MAD search, the K-14 was allowed to get too close to the water. The Flight Captain, who was aft in the car, chanced to look out of the port window and, startled at the proximity of the water, ran forward to order the ship to a safe altitude, but the K-14 struck the water almost immediately.

The car rapidly filled with water. Five members of the crew escaped from the car with difficulty and made their way to a floating fin surface. When the fin sank, they swam to a section of the envelope still partially inflated and afloat. One of the five became separated from the others and disappeared. At 0550Q, the four survivors were picked up by the USS PATRIOT. The bodies of the remaining six members of the crew were recovered.

Those who lost their lives in the accident were:

Lieut. Charles W. KLUBER, #118248, USNR.  
Edward J. DRZEWIECKI, #608 84 34, AR2c, USNR.  
William H. MUNRO, #607 95 29, ARM3c, USNR.  
John V. OLDAR, #224 81 75, AMM2c, USN.  
Walter P. OZESKY, #653 22 93, AEM3c, USNR.  
John B. POWLES, #258 35 87, ARM2c, USN.

Ensign M. F. CARLSON, USNR, in the K-25 participated in rescue work on the afternoon of 1 August 1944. He was diverted from a gunnery flight to the position of a fishing vessel reported in distress. He found the craft, the JOFFRE, adrift with no control about 130 miles ESE of Portland with her ensign flying upside down. The K-25 dropped two messages to her deck telling the crew of the JOFFRE that help in the form of a Coast Guard vessel was on the way and homing <sup>in</sup> on the airship's radio. However, the Coast Guard raft broke down and had to be towed back to base and the K-25 was recalled three hours after making contact with the JOFFRE. Surface

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craft located the fishing vessel the following day and towed it into port.

A hurricane swept the northeast coast, its center passing over the base shortly after 0100 on 14 September. The station warned in advance served as a port of refuge for heavier-than-air units up and down the coast and Squadron personnel turned out to handle the landing and berthing operations. Lieutenant Commander BOLAM, USN, Squadron Commander and Senior Fleet Naval Aviator at South Weymouth, assumed command of operations. It was at first expected that about 100 planes would be handled, but this number grew rapidly as the afternoon of 13 September went on. The first planes arrived at 1230 and after that, for six hours, a plane landed every minute until at 1830 there were 326 planes secured in the hangars.

The planes were SNJs, F4Us, SNBs, TBFs, TBMs, F6Fs, RB-1s, FMs, GHs, GB-2s, OS2Us, SBDs, R5Os, and PVs. They came from Westerly, R.I., Charlestown, R.I., Otis Field, Mass., Martha's Vineyard, Mass., Groton, Conn., Quonset Point, R.I., Charlestown, R.I., Lakehurst, N.J., and NAS New York. The south wind made it necessary for the planes to be landed across the East mat, so the longest stretch of runway, parallel to Hangar ONE was not usable. But during the whole operation, involving 652 landings and take-offs on a strange field, there were only two accidents. One F6F cracked up on the East mat probably because the rough ground caused a wing to dip and strike the ground. Later, when landings were being made in the same direction on the West mat, a PVL failed to get down soon enough and careened off the edge of the field into

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a rocky area where it had to be dismantled.

During the operation the experience of all squadron officers with previous Heavier-than-Air training was utilized. Officers were stationed with flags at key points over the field to keep the flow of traffic smooth and to route the various planes correctly so that they could be docked with their own outfits as far as possible. All F6Fs were docked first because their folding wings made it comparatively easy to maneuver them among the blimps on the hangar deck. In order to release as few as possible of the lines which secured the blimps, traffic lanes were set up in the hangars. In this way Dock Two was filled with F6Fs all the way to the North Doors even though all planes were brought in through the outh doors and five blimps were in the hangar.

At first the planes would cut their motors at the hangar doors, fold their wings, and be pushed into place by manpower, but this turned out to be too slow. Thereafter, planes kept their motors running and taxied to the center of the hangar under their own power. Although undocking operations on the 14th involved pushing all planes outside by hand, this was done even faster than the docking had been. Planes began taking off at 1000 and all were in the air by 1500.

The K-25, Ensign G. R. ANDERSON, USNR, pilot was sent to Vineyard Sound on 16 September to search for the Light Vessel "VINEYARD HAVEN" which was lost during the hurricane of 13 and 4 September.

Using MAD, the K-25 began the search in the NW quadrant of

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a circle of 10 miles radius from the original position of the vessel. This was considered to be the area in which the vessel was most likely to be found because, when the hurricane passed, the first severe gales were blowing from the SE.

In less than one half hour after the search was begun, the wreck of the "VINEYARD HAVEN" was located by the K-25 by means of MAD. The position of the wreck was approximately 1 1/2 miles NW of the original position, in 16 fathoms. A few days later, divers were sent down and the wreck was positively identified.

The K-69, Task Unit 22.3.2, Lieutenant R. T. CONNOR, USNR, pilot, took-off from South Weymouth at 1640Z on 16 September 1944 enroute to Argentia, Newfoundland to assist in anti-submarine operations by the use of MAD gear. The K-69 arrived at Argentia 17 September after having landed and refueled at Sidney, N.S. The K-69 was ordered to stand by at Argentia. From 17 September to 24 September, the airship was masted at Argentia and a watch was kept in the ship by members of the combat air crews. During this time the K-69 successfully rode out rain and winds which at one time reached a velocity of 60 knots and were often greater than 40 knots. On 24 September at 0750Z with Lieutenant Commander C. A. BOLAM, as pilot, the K-69 took-off from Argentia for South Weymouth and landed at NAS South Weymouth at 2238Z.

On 30 September the K-9, Lieutenant R. T. CONNOR, USNR, pilot, proceeded to Yarmouth, N.S. on a navigational and indoctrination flight. While landing at Yarmouth, the ship was blown off wind by a gust on the port bow. Simultaneously, a member of the ground handling crew became entangled in a holding line and fell.

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Lieutenant CONNOR decided to remain on the ground to save the man entangled in the line. The ship continued to drift off wind so fast, however, that it was not possible to bring it up into the wind before it hit the mast parked alongside the landing area. The K-9 deflated rapidly on the field.

One member of the crew of the K-9 was superficially cut. One of the men on the top of the mast apparently had unbuckled his safety belt to climb down. He was overcome by helium, fell to the concrete taxi strip, and was seriously injured. His Canadian assistant had also unbuckled his belt. He fell into the deflating envelope and had to be cut out.

The K-25, Ensign G. R. ANDERSON, USNR, pilot, during routine patrol on 23 October 1944 was diverted at 1200 Q and ordered to search for survivors of an SBD which had crashed at sea South of Nantucket. At 1551Q in 40-42N; 69-14W; a raft was sighted containing two apparently uninjured survivors. Planes were on the scene circling the raft. The K-25 dropped its own raft and the survivors were seen to change from their raft to the larger airship raft. By means of hand signals and megaphone, the K-25 led the fishing vessel JERRY & JENNY to the scene from a position three miles away. The survivors were taken aboard the fishing vessel at 1615Q. The K-25 then stood by the craft until the survivors were transferred to the Army Crash Boat #C-39069 at 1735Q.

Meanwhile at 1500Q, the K-27, Lieutenant Commander C. A. BOLAM, USN, pilot took-off for the scene with gear aboard to pick up survivors if crashboats could not reach the scene before

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dark. The K-27 arrived at the scene at 1725 by which time the survivors had been picked up by the fishing vessel.

After an inspection of the Squadron in front of Hangar Number TWO on 31 October 1944, Lieutenant Commander J. F. PEAR, USNR, assumed command of Blimp Squadron ELEVEN. Lieutenant Commander C. A. BOLAM, USN, who had been in command of Blimp Squadron ELEVEN since 29 March 1944, read his orders detaching him from the Squadron. Lieutenant Commander PEAR, the new Squadron Commander, had been Executive Officer of the Squadron.

The K-34 was lost on 5 November 1944 while returning to base from a night escort mission. The ship was flying in smooth air through a light drizzle at an altitude of about 350 feet when it lurched upward to 700 feet. The pilot applied full down elevator and returned to 350 feet after the turbulence had subsided. At 0745Q, the ship again lurched violently upward at the rate of 1200 to 1400 feet a minute until it reached an altitude of 1000 feet at which point the ascent was checked. During this time several members of the crew reported hearing a loud crack or snap.

Pressure at this time went down and was not regained in spite of efforts to raise it by increasing the throttle and starting the electrical blower. One member of the crew reported noticing wrinkles in the bag at this time. Slip tanks were dropped and the engines turned up at 1400 RPM but still the ship continued to settle. All hands were ordered to stand by for a crash and at about 0750 Q the car entered the water.

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All hands abandoned ship and successfully reached the inflated life raft. Due to heavy seas, the raft capsized and extreme difficulty was experienced in righting it.

At about 1500, a mast was sighted and Ensign LIVINGSTONE, pilot, fired all his signal flares in an effort to attract attention. The ship, the USS KLINE, approached and threw down lines by means of which all members of the crew were successfully pulled aboard except SPALDING, D.F. ARMLC, USNR, who was washed away by a large wave and was not seen again. Of the remaining members of the crew, all were suffering from mild shock or bruises with the exception of Ensign Arthur H. VOSS, USN, who died aboard the USS KLINE from exhaustion due to exposure.

At 1400 Q, the K-61, Lt.(jg) J.F. KING, pilot, was about to be undocked from Hangar #1 on 14 December prior to a ferry flight to NAS Lakehurst. As the ship was being taken out on the mast through the west doors, the ground party began to have trouble preventing the tail of the ship from kiting to port. Additional men were ordered to the starboard lines, but the movement to port could not be checked. The pilot applied full up elevator but the ship kited approximately fifteen feet before the effect of the controls was noticeable. The ship had begun to settle normally when the port horizontal fin struck the south west hangar door at 1405Q, resulting in a long tear in the port side of the envelope. After the impact the ship vaned clear of the hangar, deflating immediately, and crashing on the mat demolishing the underside of the car. No members of the crew were

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injured.

Operations during January 1945 were routine except for an annual bird count flight made by the K-19 on the 24th for the Fish and Wildlife Service.

During the month of February 1945 exceptionally heavy and frequent snowstorms, including one fall of 14 inches on 8 February, considerably reduced both the operational and training flight hours of the Squadron.

On 11 February, Commander Fleet Airships, Atlantic directed the temporary assignment to Fleet Airship Wing ONE of six additional airships and twelve crews from Fleet Airship Wing TWO. Two of these ships and four crews were destined for Blimp Squadron ELEVEN. Upon delivery of the airships, the Squadron's aircraft complement was temporarily increased from six to eight blimps. The increase was in effect until the Squadron's decommissioning orders were received on 14 May 1945.

In the latter part of the month new sonobuoy equipment arrived and was installed in the Squadron ships. An intensive ground and flying training program was put into effect to familiarize the crews with the equipment. A program of sending the crews in rotation to NAS Weeksville for two days of specialized training in the use of sonobuoys was inaugurated. In addition, arrangements were made to conduct sonobuoy training exercises with friendly submarines off Portsmouth.

On the 28th of February, the K-50, Lt. (jg) L. U. HURLEY USNR, pilot, took off at 1318 to search for a fishing vessel reported in distress. The airship located the vessel and homed



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surface craft to the scene.

From 1 March to 25 March, because of the threatened renewal of the U-boat activity, emphasis was placed on the sonobuoy training program and every opportunity was taken to send out training flights to work with friendly submarines in tracking exercises. During this time, a total of 21 training flights were sent out which logged approximately 25% of the squadron's flying hours for the period.

The K-69, Lt. (jg) G. J. DODGE, USNR, pilot, took off on 25 March for a special patrol in the area 43-35N, 67-50W, where surface craft had made what appeared to be a good sound contact with a U-boat. Upon arrival, the K-69 reported to ComDesRon 17 and was instructed to make an MAD search over the point of contact. The K-69 did so but obtained no signals.

Meanwhile, because of probable activity of enemy submarines in the Bay of Maine and the possibility of extended operations north of 43-00, two air crews had been sent from South Weymouth to the Advanced Base at Brunswick, Maine. The K-69 was ordered to land there where it was refueled and took off again at 2050Q, Lt. Grant PAUL, USNR, was the pilot and reported again to ComDesRon 17. At 0230, the K-69 sighted a long, narrow, oil slick extending 4-5 miles. An MAD Search produced no contacts; neither did a sonobuoy dropped at the southeast corner of the slick. The K-69 returned to Brunswick after a 7-8 hour search.

During the period of 26 to 28 March, ships operating from South Weymouth maintained barrier patrols at designated areas

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across the approaches to Massachusetts Bay and operated on several missions with DesRon 17 and CortDiv 35, investigating promising sound contacts by surface craft and other aircraft.

On 29 March the K-100, Lt. W. D. GRANT, pilot, was in the area of 43-07N, 69-03W, at 1800, standing by while SC1280 and SC1301 developed a sound contact. At 1830, the K-100 began making MAD runs over the area of the sound contact and dropped a float light to mark the spot of a doubtful signal which, however, coincided with the sound contacts of the SCs. Both SCs laid depth charges patterns over the area with no observable results. After a further search without obtaining a contact, the K-100 resumed patrol.

The K-50, Lt. (jg) L.U. HURLEY, USNR, pilot, proceeding from base to Cashe's Ledge on the 30th of March to report to CortDiv 35, sighted what appeared to be a submerging periscope at 1525<sup>00</sup> at a distance of about two miles. The airship altered course for the point of the sighting (42-52N, 69-08W) and laid down a sonobuoy pattern. Strong, positive propeller beats were clocked twice by Lt. (jg) HURLEY at 240 r.p.m. and 230 r.p.m. and the speed estimated at 8 knots. The intensity of the sonobuoy reception gradually diminished until contact was lost. MAD runs produced no contacts. At 1635, CortDiv 35 instructed the K-50 to stay with the contact and continue the search. At 2010, without further contact, the K-50 was relieved by the K-69 and returned to base. No further contacts were obtained in this area. Lt. (jg) HURLEY's sighting was evaluated by CESF and CominCh as probable.

Throughout the month of April, a heavy operating schedule

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and minimum personnel kept all hands in the Squadron fully occupied. The weather during the month, although suitable for flying on all but five days, was characterized generally by the high winds and heavy fog common to the area at this time of year.

Operations were remarkable for the large number of missions involving cooperation with surface craft. At various times, several surface Task Groups were working in the area and Squadron airships flew frequent search and patrol missions in coordination with them. Toward the end of the month, the frequency of these operations increased reaching its peak on the 30th, when six missions were flown in cooperation with surface craft.

During the evening of 5 April, word was received from Boston that the tanker ATLANTIC STATES, outward bound from Boston, had been the victim of a severe explosion very possibly caused by a torpedo. Surface craft were being sent to the area of the explosion northeast of Race Point. The weather at this time was extremely unfavorable; storm warnings were posted; small craft were for the most part sheltering in port, and winds of between forty and fifty knots existed at flying levels in the area. Gusts to 35 knots were experienced on the field.

A crew, however, was briefed at once and a ship manned in the hangar ready to take-off immediately. When it became apparent that the operation could not be undertaken at once, four ships were made ready for the morning and their crews briefed and instructed to stand by. On the morning of 6 April with the weather still unfavorable, no winds in the area approaching forty knots, the first ship the K-9 with Lt. (jg) J. J. [redacted] as pilot took-off

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at 0511Q. At 0542Q the K-82 with Lt. (jg) BUTLER as pilot followed; at 0618Q the K-69 with Lieut. GRANT as pilot, and then at 0637 the K-50 with Lieut. IGO as pilot took-off in succession. These ships patrolled and searched the area during the day and escorted the ATLANTIC STATES, which was still afloat and under tow, back to Boston.

Taking off at 0548Q on April 30th, the K-69, Lt. (jg) CHRISTOPHER, USNR, as pilot, conducted a special search from 4140N to 4210N off the east coast of Cape Cod, the area in which a training plane had reported sighting a surfaced enemy submarine at 2010Q on the preceding day. The morning was uneventful and the airship's search of this area produced no apparent results.

At 1312Q, the K-69 was informed by surface craft that the DD GLEAVES reported a sound contact 40 miles from Cape Cod Light on a bearing of 123 degrees. The GLEAVES was leaving formation to investigate the contact and the airship was instructed to proceed to the scene and assist. The K-69 gave an ETA of 1345 at the scene and arrived at 1343Q. The ship flew an MAD circle one mile in diameter over the spot of the sound contact, but no signals were received. After approximately six circles had been flown, the pilot decided that because of geological and electrical interference, the MAD equipment could not be used then for evaluation of the surface contact.

The GLEAVES then withdrew from the area to enable the airship to drop sonobuoys. The K-69 dropped an orange buoy at the point of the sound contact and began to pick up sounds which the pilot

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and sonobuoy receiver operator thought were probably propeller noises and not those of the departing surface craft which could be identified separately. The blimp then dropped a red sonobuoy 3000 yards south of the orange and the indications were picked up also on this one.

At this time, however, a surface craft was noticed approaching the area of the sonobuoy pattern and it was interfering with the reception. The K-69 called back the GLEAVES to resume sound tracking and attempted to enter communications with the other surface craft. By blinker the vessel was identified as CG-92004, and it was learned that both her transmitter and receiver were inoperative on the scene of action frequency.

As the GLEAVES and the accompanying DE PETERSON came into the area, the possible propeller noises from the sonobuoys ceased or were drowned out by the surface craft. The GLEAVES then reported a sound contact approximately 700 yards from the orange buoy dropped by the K-69. The GLEAVES proceeded to work this contact for some time.

At approximately 1540Q, the GLEAVES again cleared the area leaving the K-69 to resume sonobuoy operations. As the surface craft left the area, the original suspicious sounds were heard again over the sonobuoy receiver and the K-69 resumed laying its pattern which was completed at 1608Q. The sounds were diminishing on the orange buoy, were very slight on blue to the west, and were the strongest on red to the south. They seemed to be moving in a southerly and westerly direction. A purple buoy was dropped

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but no sounds were heard from it.

At 1727Q, with sounds being heard from the red buoy, the K-69 made an attack. No results were observed. The sounds ceased for some minutes after the attack, but about twenty minutes later they resumed reaching a peak at 1800Q. Sounds similar to the bleeding of ballast tanks were also heard for a time. The K-69 was relieved at 1957Q by the K-50 and returned to base, landing at 2130Q. No contacts were established or developed by the K-50.

During the first days of May, the last days of the European War, more enemy submarine activity was experienced in New England waters than at any time for many months. Large numbers of U-boats were estimated to be in or approaching American waters and later surrenders proved these estimates to have been substantially correct.

Despite continued fog and low visibility, Squadron airships maintained a day and night patrol across the approaches to Massachusetts Bay on all but one of the first seven days of the month. Both day and night escorts of convoys were conducted and special searches were carried out in cooperation with surface craft.

On 5 May, a merchant vessel was torpedoed and sunk off Point Judith. At 2204Q the K-82, Lt. (jg) J. JANDROWITZ, USN, pilot, took off from South Weymouth to conduct a search of the area in conjunction with surface craft and airships from Blimp Squadron TWELVE. The K-82 reached the area at 0305Q on the 6th, and

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reporting to the CTC, was told to stand by. Throughout the rest of the night in heavy fog, the K-82 patrolled the area assigned. At 0705Q surface craft could be heard making attacks.

At 0715Q, with visibility improving, the K-82 decided to investigate the area of the attacks. Two airships from Squadron TWELVE were seen laying markers with surface craft. This was in accordance with a previous assignment to BlimpRon 12 ships to the western sector and BlimpRon 11 to the eastern sector. The K-82 reported into the area and was ordered to stand clear. At a distance of 1 1/2 miles the K-82 observed surface craft and the airships from Squadron TWELVE making runs over the target area. The K-82 asked permission to make an attack and was told that the area would not be cleared for another hour. At 1050Q, the K-82 was told that the German submarine was believed sunk. At 1054Q, the K-82 requested permission from the CTC to depart. Permission was granted, and the K-82 received the message, "Thank you for cooperation" from the CTC. Divers later verified the sinking of the U-boat, the last of the war in North Atlantic waters.

On 7 May the Squadron conducted its last patrols. Henceforth only escort missions and single ship movements or special missions were to be flown.

On 14 May at 0923, the K-38, Lt. (jg) J. JANDROWITZ, USN, pilot, took off from South Weymouth to assist surface craft in investigating oil bubbles off Portland Light. On arrival at the scene, the K-38 dropped a sonobuoy over the bubbles, but no in-

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dications were received. The MAD gear at this time was inoperative but at 1226Q the source of the bubbles was evaluated as stationary.

At 1305Q, the K-125, Lt. (jg) CHRISTOPHER, pilot, which was diverted to the scene after the completion of an escort mission, arrived and within a few minutes reported good MAD signals. At 1423Q, the K-38 released a Mk 47 depth bomb in the middle of the continuously rising patch of oil bubbles on what the pilot considered a possible stationary target. Because of arming wire failure, the bomb did not explode. The source of the bubbles was later determined to be the wreck of an Eagle Boat which had sunk in that position a month previously.

In addition, the 14th of May was the last day on which the Squadron gave air coverage to convoys or single ship movements and was the day on which the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Fleet and Chief of Naval Operations issued his confidential dispatch 141956 directing the decommissioning of Blimp Squadron ELEVEN.

On 16 May, the Squadron reported to Commander Air Force, Atlantic Fleet for operational control in accordance with orders from Commander Eastern Sea Frontier; later on the same day, Commander Air Force, Atlantic Fleet directed Commander Fleet Airships, Atlantic to assume operational control of the Squadron and to proceed with its decommissioning.

Those utility commitments of Airship Utility Squadron ONE requiring the services of K-type airships were assumed on 17 May by Blimp Squadron ELEVEN in accordance with orders from Commander Fleet Airships, Atlantic. Four days later (21 May), the Squadron



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conducted its first such utility mission when it recovered torpedoes in both the inside and outside firing ranges at Newport and when it calibrated the Amagansett Coast Guard Station.

During the second and third weeks in May, Blimp Squadron ELEVEN received messages of thanks and congratulations from CominCH, ComAirLant, ComEastSeaFron, Commander Northern Group, and Commander Northern Air Group for its contribution to victory in the Battle of the Atlantic.

Commander Fleet Airships, Atlantic on 24 May 1945 directed Blimp Squadron TWELVE to establish a detachment at the Naval Air Station, South Weymouth, and upon the establishment thereof, to assume the utility commitments of Blimp Squadron ELEVEN.

On 25 May, the K-92, with Lt. H. BOGREN, USNR, pilot, took off from South Weymouth on a photography mission at the request of the U.S. Coast Guard. The K-92 proceeded to Massachusetts Bay where Coast Guard photographers aboard the airship filmed the transport WAKEFIELD as she made her way into Boston Harbor loaded with troops returning from Europe. This was the first large group of returning veterans.

During the last days of the month, the Squadron awaited the word to decommission.

The K-50, Lt. D. BOYD, USNR, pilot, took off from South Weymouth on 28 May to be ferried to the Naval Air Station, Lakehurst. This completed the transfer of all Blimp Squadron 11 airships to other units and was the last airship flight made by the Squadron.

On 8 June 1945, Blimp Squadron ELEVEN was officially decommissioned in accordance with CominCh and CNO confidential dispatch 141956 of May 1945.