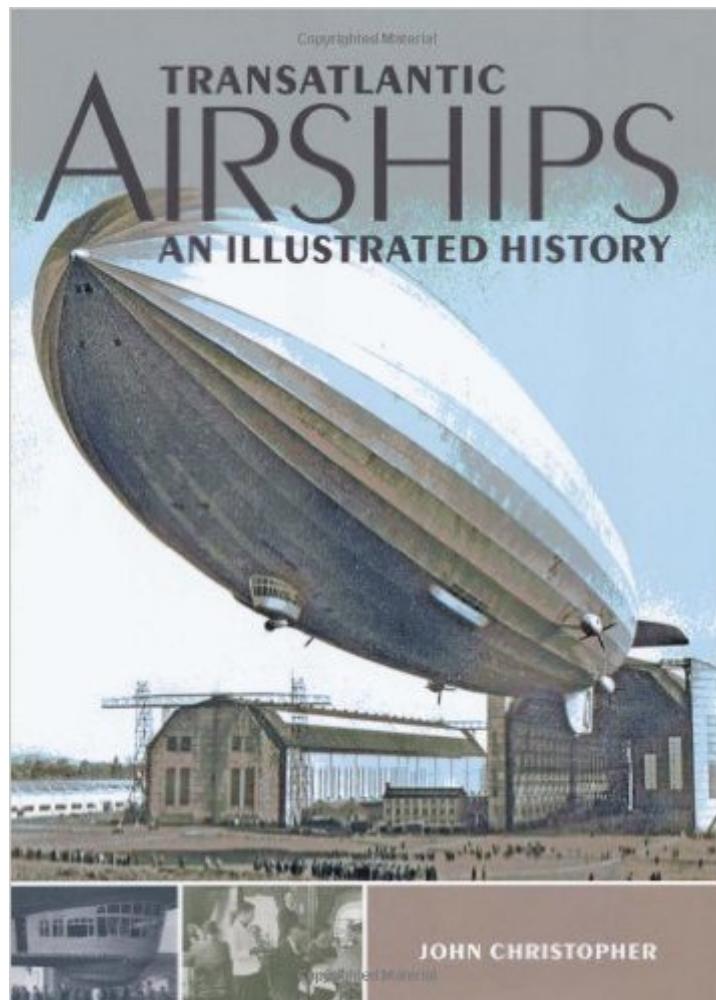


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Transatlantic Airships: An Illustrated History



Synopsis

In Transatlantic Airships, John Christopher recounts the fascinating story of the lighter-than-air "pond hoppers" from the earliest schemes and bold pioneering flights, including the triumphant double-crossing by the R34. The book goes on to describe the rise of the Zeppelins and the ambitious British scheme to connect its far-flung Empire, the U.S. Navy's lighter-than-air craft, and the incredible post-war proposals for colossal atomic-powered leviathans. It is a story of fantastic visionaries, incredible flying machines, great moments of triumph and, ultimately, of spectacular disaster.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I've read several books on rigid airships and blimps and this is one of the best. The author describes the development of these lighter-than-air vehicles in a sequential, interesting way, from the early failures to some modest successes. The pinnacle of the Zeppelins and the crash of the Hindenburg are well documented. The role of blimps during World War II is also explained in interesting detail. The excellent and numerous illustrations and pictures add to your understanding of the text. This is a worthy choice for anyone interested in exploring the history of the airship.

If you have any interest in airships this book is a must have. It covers the history of transatlantic lighter-than-air flight from the beginning to the present with plenty of pictures and detailed information about the failures and successes. In my mind airships represent the space age of a

century ago - the goal was to make a self propelling ship that had an average weight of less than that of air with the knowledge and material limitations of 100 years ago. Aluminum was the new wonder material. Virtually all plastics were in the future, steam was the main force of transportation, the internal combustion engine was in its infancy, and stress analysis and other tools were just being developed. It's a relative miracle that using cloth, leather, ox intestines, wire and a lot of guts and skill that they succeeded at all. Yet most people remain unaware that the British R34 made 2 successful transatlantic flights in 1919 with these limitations. Also to be learned here is what happens when people with no technical knowledge are put in power over such enterprises and allowed total control - this turns out to be the source of most of the worst disasters. The book ends with the current revival of the Zeppelin company along with other new airships. I think there must be a place in the world for something as majestic as these ships but perhaps the time wasn't right. Certainly the materials and knowledge today are generations beyond the first efforts. A great read about a great era in aviation.

A delightful easy to read book with plenty of illustrations and extra information. While the book does not go into deep details on any one airship, save the Hindenburg and the two Graf Zeppelins (which were the most successful and advanced of the airships) it provides an excellent overview of this often overlooked chapter of aviation history, providing a glimpse of the dreams and ideas that grew out of the airship era, and the reality of the airships, from their crude beginnings to their days of glory before they faded away. Definitely a must for anyone trying to complete a library on aviation in all its many forms.

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