

GRIEF STRICKEN SURVIVORS TELL OF CATASTROPHE

(Continued From Page One)

a burden from our hearts. I cannot talk about the Shenandoah, and only want to thank you for what you have done for us."

22 Survivors

Handley sat down. Tears filled his eyes. The survivors were then escorted to a train and left at 5:50 p. m.

The twenty-two men, many with broken fingers, sprained ankles and other external injuries were brought from the scene of the disaster in buses. The bodies of their comrades were laid out in the morgues at Caldwell, Ohio, near Ava, awaiting disposition by a board of army surgeons which will convene in the morning.

Cornfields and woods in two counties had become the grave yard of the huge hulk which fell to earth, a tangled mass of wreckage on the second anniversary of her first trial flight.

The Shenandoah carried no parachutes and harrowing scenes took place on board as the valiant crew, heroically facing death, stuck to their posts until death seemed inevitable.

Stories of survivors differ somewhat on events leading to the tragedy. Most of them agree, however, that the ship struck a squall, soaring at an altitude of about 3,000 feet. An engine stalled. Control levers sent her to 5,000 feet. A brilliant electrical display caused Commander Lansdowne to rescind this order and the ship was sent to a lower level in an attempt to pass under the gale.

Wind Was Terrific

The wind became more terrific. The remaining motors were quieted and the crew attempted to make the bag a free balloon. A still more terrific blast struck her amidships. She careened, and crashed to earth.

The fore section, torn free, shot heavenward carrying many of the crew.

The aft section dived like a plummet, crushing the life from the men who were caught under the ponderous motors in the control cabin.

The fore section soared upward drunkenly. Rigging ropes were

dropped over her side, and members of the crew, kicking and swirling dizzily grasped the ropes ready to swing to safety or death when the half bag came down.

A few moments later, carried at a terrific pace by the gale, the fore section plunged down 10 miles from the scene of the first crash, side-swiped a woods, came to a halt, then rolled lazily down to earth.

I am alive tonight because I stopped to look at my watch a few minutes before the Shenandoah broke in two, said W. L. Richardson, photographer on the Shenandoah.

I got out of bed at about 4 a. m. Thursday and went after a drink. I intended to go forward to the control car, which was on the front end of the ship to see if weather conditions would be right for making pictures.

After getting a drink, however, I looked at my watch and saw it was too early so I decided to go back to bed.

This decision undoubtedly saved my life. Instead of entering the control car, I returned to my berth. The control car dropped clear of the ship and dropped through space like a comet, killing all who were in it.

After I returned to my berth the pitching of the ship became more violent and it started nosing downward.

Suddenly a cool gust of wind came down from the keel of the ship, probably caused by its sudden rise from 3,000 feet to 7,000 feet altitude.

What is called a twister line squall, caused the sudden rise. It also caused a drop back to the 2,500 foot altitude a second later.

Then the ship started straight up again and broke in two. One section, the forward part, carrying the control car, shot straight up.

The other section on which we were, dropped rapidly downward.

It seemed to flutter down like a falling leaf. First the front end, then the rear end would be on top. A part of our section was torn away before we finally landed.

I managed to save myself from sliding off into space by grabbing hold of wires and girders near my berth. Then, as soon as possible I started to the after part of the section.

I got hold of a gasoline tank, but it broke loose from its moorings and I caught some girders again.

Through an open hatch I could see trees speeding under as a few feet away. Then I saw the ground.

I started down a folding ladder, which had been used by an after engine car which had been carried

away. Both of my hands were caught in an angle and I broke them loose tearing my fingers, slightly. Then I dropped to the ground and a wire caught around my leg, dragging me down hill under the end of the ship.

I finally got loose and ran up the hill out of the way of the rolling bag.

"We heard the ship crack in two—we knew then that all control was gone and all hope of saving it."

Lieut. J. B. Anderson at Hyattsville, Md., one of the Shenandoah survivors, told the United News Thursday night his experience of the disaster. Anderson was in the control car when the part of the great ship supporting it broke loose and shot into the air.

When the ship cracked, he said every one knew it was doomed.

"We figured the best chance to save our lives," Anderson continued, "was to get into the main rigging of the ship and let the control car take the shock when it came down."

"Col. Hall, the army observer who was with us, went up the ladder to the 'cat walk'."

"Others may have followed him, but there was so little time to think that I don't recall whether they did."

"Lieut. R. G. Mayer of Seattle, was just ahead of me on the ladder and there may have been men just behind me, when it broke."

"I had just reached the upper structure, when the ladder and struts were torn loose and the control car with the men in it plunged to the ground."

J. E. Malak, aviation machinist's mate and one of the survivors aboard the train was walking within a few feet of the place where the ship broke. After a wild ride through the air on the front end of the bag he was caught on a cable and dragged over the ground suffering a sprained ankle. His whole body was stiff from bruises.

"It was lucky for me the ship didn't roll over on me and kill me," he said.

Lieut. J. B. Anderson, owes his life to a western style lariat thrown by Lieut. R. G. Mayer. Anderson

who was the last man to leave the control car, was standing on the portion of the "cat walk" which broke loose at one end and swung downward.

Just before it broke away Mayer

threw a noose over Anderson's deraon caught it under his arm and was pulled to safety by R. G. Wilson, a private.

(Continued on Page Seven)

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