



THRILLING TALES
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**AN
ASTONISHING
AIRSHIP!**

**VICIOUS
VALKYRIES!**

**A TEUTONIC
TERROR!**

**DAVID
LARKINS**

PULP VILLAINS

Von Krieger

Scourge of the Skies!



A SUPPLEMENT FOR

**THRILLING
TALES**



PULP VILLAINS

Von Keiner

by David Larkins

A CITIZEN OF THE AIR

THE MAN KNOWN AS Captain Nikodemus von Keiner was born with a much different name: Anton Niedzielski. Niedzielski was of Polish extraction, and at the time of his birth, his home town of Czersk was part of the Prussian state of Pomerania, shortly thereafter being absorbed into the newly-formed German Empire.

Young Anton was a difficult, precocious child, and left home shortly after his 14th birthday to seek adventure in lands beyond his little provincial village. He served at sea aboard a variety of merchant vessels, traveling the world, abandoning his posts as whim dictated. He picked up a dozen languages, dipped his toe into a variety of spiritual practices, and left a string of broken hearts—and illegitimate children—from Peru to Japan to Cameroon.

Anton returned to Germany at the turn of the century, intrigued by the Imperial German Navy's aggressive expansion under the direction of the Kaiser. Knowing that he needed an advantage if he wished to climb the ladder, Niedzielski constructed

an assumed persona, that of a young *junker* named "Nikodemus von Keiner."

Von Keiner put his extensive real-world sailing experience and sharp mind to work, and quickly rose through the ranks of the *Kaiserliche Marine* (the Imperial German Navy), picking up an extensive education in engineering and mathematics as he did so. By age 40 he had attained the rank of *Korvettenkapitän* and commanded his own cruiser.

Around this time, the military's adoption of rigid airships for warfare caught von Keiner's interest. With the coming of the Great War, he petitioned to join the nascent German Naval Airship Division and was soon captaining his own dirigible, the *L 30*.

This was a new model of airship, dubbed a "super zeppelin," and von Keiner put it to good use, flying ten bombing raids over Britain and 31 reconnaissance missions over land and sea. Von Keiner helmed the *L 30* for 18 months until it was retired and he was assigned to

KAPITÄN NIKODEMUS VON KEINER



A man of later-middle years, his dark hair shot through with flecks of white. Wears a modified version of the dress uniform of an Imperial German zeppelin captain.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d12+2, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Battle) d12, Knowledge (Science) d12, Notice d8, Persuasion d6, Piloting d8, Repair d12, Shooting d6, Swimming d6, Taunt d8

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

Hindrances: Code of Honor (civilians only), Stubborn,

Vengeful (Major), Vow ("Citizen of the Air"), Wanted (Major)

Edges: Ace, Command, Linguist, McGyver, Strong Willed, Tactician, Trademark Vehicle

Gear: Dress uniform, leather watch-coat (+1 Armor), German Naval Officer's Saber (Str +d8), with a single-charge electrical blast (12/24/48, 3d6, AP2, Conductive, Spasms).

train younger zeppelin crewmen. A year later, the war was over.

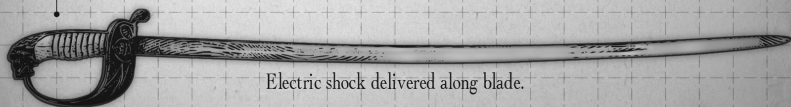
The once-rootless von Keiner had found a home with the Imperial German Navy; as with many veterans of the war, he felt that Germany had been dealt a bad hand. Particularly infuriating were the provisions in the Treaty of Versailles calling for the transfer of the entire German zeppelin fleet to the victorious Allies. Von Keiner watched helplessly as his beloved *L 30* was sent off to Belgium, where it was dismantled for scrap.

With the war's end, von Keiner's

hometown of Poland once again became a sovereign nation. At something of a loss of what to do now that his military career lay in ruins, von Keiner returned to Czersk for the first time in 35 years. His parents were both dead, but many of the other village elders remembered him and welcomed him back, anxious to hear his many tales of daring adventure.

When the villagers heard about von Keiner's service in the Airship Division, they excitedly told him about an old zeppelin located in an airfield not far away.

Tesla Power Cell
(Housed in hilt;
one charge only.)



Von Keiner's Saber

Modified Imperial German Navy Officer's Saber

Unbelieving, von Keiner hitched a ride on a hay wagon and headed off to investigate.

To von Keiner's stunned disbelief he found a crumbling hangar where inside, its duralumin frame starting to bend and collapse, sat an Imperial German airship! It was the *LZ 20*, forced to land by Russian machinegun fire during the Battle of Tannenberg in 1914. Stored in this hangar, it had apparently been forgotten about by both sides and left to rot.

Barely able to contain his joy, von Keiner immediately dashed off a dozen letters to former mates and crew, then began drafting plans to put the airship to use. The *LZ 20* was an early model of zeppelin, but its frame was solid and presented a skeleton to build upon.

After two years of work, including laying in supplies of helium from refineries around the town of Odolanów, the newly-rechristened *Himmelhexe* ("Sky Witch") took to the air for the first time. Von Keiner chose to name his new ship after a fairy tale creature from his childhood—a witch that lives in the clouds, spreading woe across the countryside.

As the *Himmelhexe* rose into the air with its captain at the helm, von Keiner made a solemn vow: "I

hereby state that never again shall my feet touch solid ground until the glory of the German Reich is restored in full. I am now a citizen of the air."

VON KEINER'S REIGN OF TERROR

Captain von Keiner and his crew of airship pirates range all across Eurasia and Africa, plundering as they go. With the *Himmelhexe's* ability to stay hidden amidst clouds, it is extremely difficult to locate. Any time things become too heated, the airship simply moves on to a new area. National governments have thus far been unable to effectively counter the *Himmelhexe's* threat.

Von Keiner is well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of his ship, and has so far masterfully played to the former while minimizing the latter.

Standard operating procedure is as follows: the *Himmelhexe* uses its cloud-generating machines to disguise itself in the sky, dangling its observation car below the mist and using its planes to scout for vulnerable prey.

Captain von Keiner prioritizes targets of military and governmental significance to the Allied nations, but particularly Britain, France, and Russia. Under no circumstances will

the *Himmelhexe* attack a German target.

Von Keiner is ruthless when it comes to what he considers legitimate targets, nor does he shy away from attacking civilian territory (though in such cases, he always gives his victims a chance to surrender peacefully).

Once a suitable target is located, the next phase of the raid begins. Using a combination of its wailing sirens, bolts from its lightning guns, and swooping attacks from its airplanes, the *Himmelhexe* falls upon its prey.

Von Keiner cares little for loot and gold (though his raiding parties show no such qualms), aiming instead to spread as much terror and destruction as possible. He does have a weakness for collecting works of art, and his massive stateroom aboard the *Himmelhexe* is stacked with captured paintings and statuary.

Once the dust has settled from an attack, and if the area is sufficiently subdued, the *Himmelhexe* lingers for a short time (anywhere from a few hours to a few days, though never more than a week) to allow crewmen to descend to the ground and look for food, water, spare parts, valuables, and other necessities—and to allow potential new crew to petition for a berth aboard the airship.

If crew attrition has been particularly high, von Keiner will order his landing parties to press men into service; local jails and prisons are filled with men and women capable of violence and eager to punish society, and as such are preferred sites for recruitment efforts.

On occasion, the

Himmelhexe must refill its gas bags with helium; Von Keiner refuses to use hydrogen, having seen far too many of his compatriots fall to their burning deaths. He has friendly contacts with helium refineries in Poland and Siberia. Indeed, the *Himmelhexe*'s base of operations, as it were, is the village of Belogorsk, not far from the Manchurian border in far-eastern Siberia and site of a large helium reserve.

Captain von Keiner, recognizing the dictates of practicality, has formed a criminal alliance with the anti-Bolshevist refinery workers, who are happy to keep supplying him with illicit helium in exchange for a percentage of his plunder.

THE HIMMELHEXE

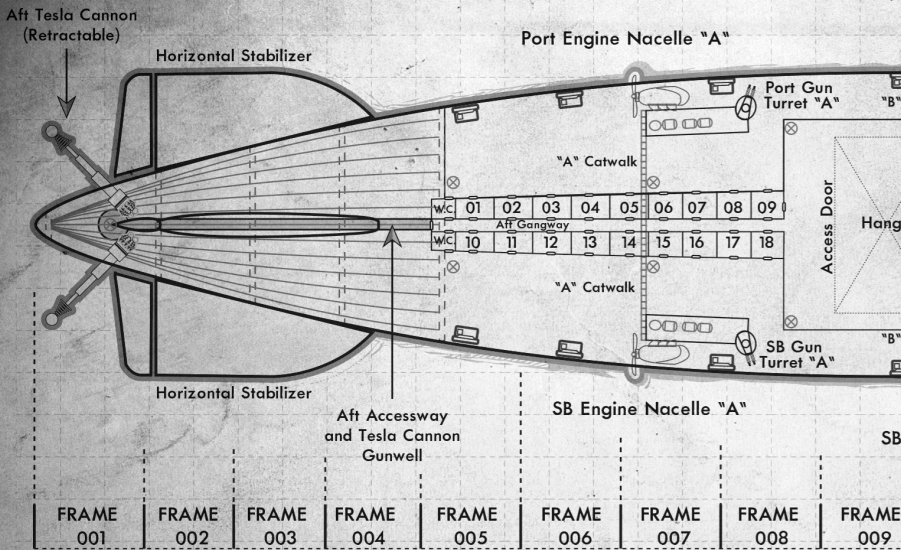
Built around the frame of a Class H zeppelin, the *Himmelhexe* is 720 feet long and 80 feet in diameter. It uses 17 gas cells to provide lift via helium gas, with Blaugas providing propulsive fuel. It sports a single gondola suspended towards the front of the airship frame, as well as platforms on top and at the rear for mounting lightning guns. Four engines mounted in nacelles as well as an engine at the rear of the command gondola provide propulsion. The entire craft

is painted midnight black and bears no markings (though occasionally, von Keiner flies a large banner emblazoned by the Imperial German Navy's war ensign).

The *Himmelhexe* may lower an observation car to a distance below of up

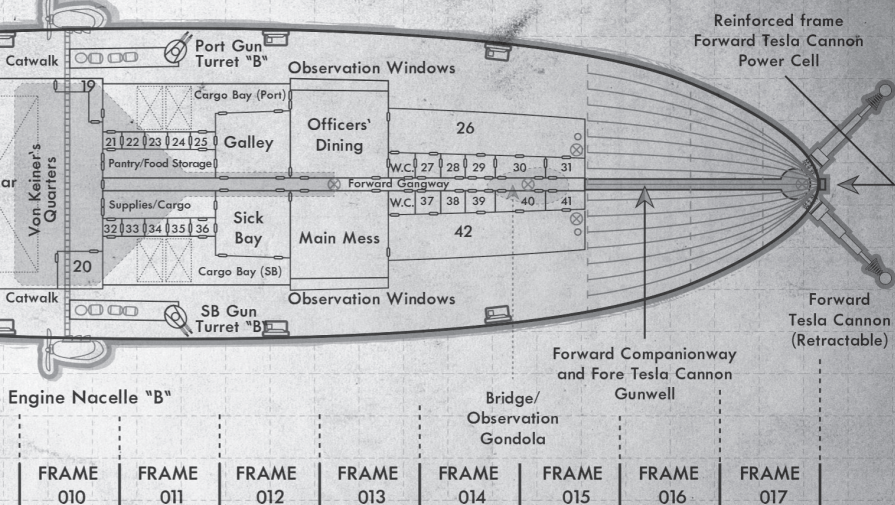


Von Keiner's Insigne.



- 01.-05. Mechanics Crew Quarters
- 06.-07. Landing Crew Quarters
- 08.-09. Explosives and Turret Ammunition Lockers
- 10.-14. Crew Quarters
- 15. Aft Small Arms Locker
- 16. Water Storage
- 17-18. Explosives and Turret Ammunition Lockers
- 19. Flight Operations Office
- 20. Pilot's Briefing Area / Ready Room
- 21. Midship Portside W.C.
- 22.-24. Landing Crew Mustering Areas
- 25. Portside Cargo Bay Entry Lock
- 26. Dr. Kasun's Quarters and Laboratory
- 27. Officer's Quarters-"Himmelhexe-G"
- 28. Officer's Quarters-"Himmelhexe-F"
- 29. Officer's Quarters-"Himmelhexe-E"
- 30. Navigation
- 31. Radio Room
- 32. Midship Starboard W.C.
- 33-35. Landing Crew Mustering Areas
- 36. Starboard Cargo Bay Entry Lock
- 37. Officer's Quarters-"Himmelhexe-D"
- 38. Officer's Quarters-"Himmelhexe-C"
- 39. Officer's Quarters-"Himmelhexe-B"
- 40. Officer's Quarters-"Himmelhexe-A"
- 41. Secondary Bridge/Gondola Controls
- 42. Tesla Machinery Shop

Port Engine Nacelle "B"



Ballast tanks and internal framework omitted for clarity.

HIMMELHEXE

Acc/Top Speed: 2/46

Toughness: 16 (0)

Crew: 5 (Captain, 1st Mate, Navigator, Wireless Operator, Bombardier) plus 1d6+2 fighter pilots and 2d6 assorted pirate-crew who serve as mechanics, riggers, and gunners.

Climb: -2

Weapons:

4 Twin Vickers Machine Gun Turrets (2 port, 2 starboard, Range 30/60/120, ROF 3, Damage 3d8+1, Weight 35, Shots 250 (each), Notes: AP 2, +1 to Shooting)

2 Tesla Lightning Cannons (1 fore, 1 aft, Range 100/200/400, ROF 1, Damage 5d10, Shots 1 (20 rounds to recharge), Notes AP 10, Heavy Weapon, Large Burst Template)

KEY

Not To Scale



Hangar/Cargo Access Doors



Hatchway



Oil/Water Tanks



Ladder



Fuel Tanks



Smoke Projectors

"BREMSSEN" SUPPORT AIRCRAFT

The *Himmelhexe* carries four support airplanes, an unusual "quad-wing" modeled on the Wight Quadruplane (an experimental British design that never saw widespread production).

Von Keiner acquired a copy of the construction plans for the aircraft after the Great War and used his engineering acumen to modify and construct his own variant. Notable for their compact size (their wingspan is less than the plane's overall length!) and extreme maneuverability, they are perfect for aerial raids. Von Keiner calls them his *Bremsen* ("gadflies").

Two of the planes—his "A" flight—are equipped with twin Spandau machine guns. The "B" flight act as bombers, each carrying three 12.5kg explosives.

Typically, A Flight strafes a target area to clear it of anti-aircraft emplacements or civilians, then falls back to cover B Flight's attack runs.

In addition, von Keiner has designed and equipped the *Bremsen* with a unique capture hook system, allowing the planes to land on solid ground or to be recovered by the airship while in flight.

BREMSSEN

Acc/Ts: 15/40

Toughness: 8 (0)

Crew: 1

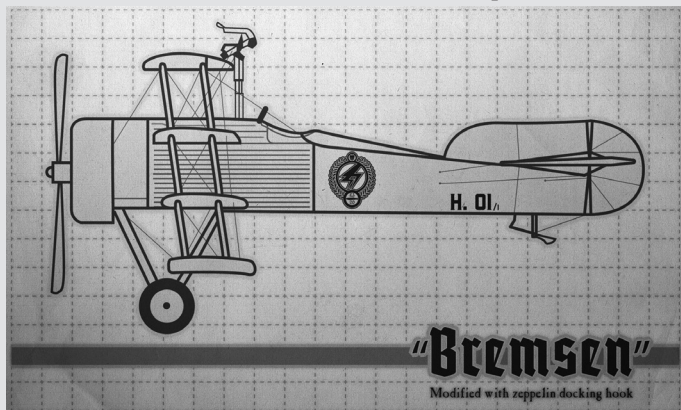
Climb: 3

"A" Flight Weapons:

2 LMG 08/15 machineguns
(2 forward— Range:
30/60/120 Damage: 2d8
ROF 3 Weight 25 Ammo 150
Notes: AP2)

"B" Flight Weapons:

3 12.5kg P.u.W. Aircraft
Bombs (wing and fuselage
mounted) (3d8, Medium
Burst Template, AP5, HW)



to 100 yards. This small cab, shaped like a miniature zeppelin with a domed glass front, contains enough space for a single observer and his equipment, as well as a telephone line back to the gondola.

A dozen smoke projectors line the *Himmelhexe's* sides, allowing it to create artificial clouds in just 10 minutes (less if already in a cloud bank). These clouds provide the ship with Medium (-2) cover under most circumstances; the cover modifier increases to Heavy (-4) at night, or Near Total (-6) on moonless nights.

Amidships is a small hangar for the zeppelin's four single-seater fighter planes. (See "Bremsen," on page 8.) The *Himmelhexe* sports 16 large public-address megaphones that broadcast a terrible whining noise whenever the ship is on the attack. Those within 500 yards of the sirens' wail and not wearing ear protection or enjoying similar sonic isolation must make a Fear check at -2. Wild Cards who fail roll on the Fear Table, while Extras are Panicked, as with the fear power.

Perhaps the most remarkable weapons on the *Himmelhexe* are its two lightning guns (retractable, mounted fore and aft). Each lightning gun consists of twin projections ("charge bars") which telescope outward. When they receive sufficient charge from their power cell, they arc, forming a lightning bolt that is directed toward the target.

There is significant recharge time required between bolts; typically, von Keiner plans his attacks so the *Himmelhexe* uses the forward Tesla cannon as air-to-ground artillery, then comes hard about to deliver a second lightning blast (allowing the first cannon time to recharge), and clearing a path for his fighter support.

Treat attacks with these guns as Weird Science using the bolt power. The skill roll is Shooting, and the guns have unlimited Power Points, but a "1" on the skill dice still indicates a malfunction as per the regular Weird Science rules.

HIMMELHEXE: KEY INTERIOR LOCATIONS

The following are descriptions of various cabins and ship functions (as numbered on the schematic, pages 6-7).

01.-05: MECHANICS' CREW QUARTERS

Small, cramped, and overcrowded, these aft compartments are routinely unlocked. Very little can be found in these spaces beyond tools, and small personal effects.

06.-07: LANDING CREW QUARTERS

Slightly larger than the mechanics' quarters; these are the living spaces for the landing crews. Weapons (mostly rifles and shotguns) are secured near the entry to the room, though it is against von Keiner's orders to store them loaded; ammo is kept secure in the Aft Small Arms Locker.

08.-09: EXPLOSIVES AND TURRET AMMO LOCKERS

All heavy weapons and explosives are locked in these compartments; additional armor has been added to the walls, floors, and ceiling, and the door is always locked and guarded.

10-14: CREW QUARTERS

Standard crew compartments (3-4 per compartment). Bunk beds, footlockers, and a single communal wardrobe can be found in each cabin.

15.: AFT SMALL ARMS LOCKER

Contains the ships' small arms: captured sidearms and ammunition of various types. Locked at all times, requiring two keys (one held by von Keiner, the other by *Himmelhexe-A*) to open.

PULP VILLAINS: VON KEINER

16. WATER STORAGE

Contains the crew's potable water supply in steel drums. Fluid pumps move the water through the superstructure to various spigots throughout the airship.

17.-18.: EXPLOSIVES AND TURRET MACHINEGUN AMMO LOCKERS

All heavy weapons and explosives are locked in these compartments; additional armor has been added to the walls, floor, and ceiling, and the door is always locked and guarded.

19.: FLIGHT OPERATIONS OFFICE

The ready room for pilot operations (including a small radio set for communicating with pilots and direct hardlines to the bridge, observation gondola, and von Keiner's quarters). The cabin also includes a desk containing various charts, maps, flight plans, and so on.

20. PILOT'S BRIEFING AREA / READY ROOM

Mustering area for pilots including several wall maps, tactical map tables, as well as a small area for flight prep. Often doubles as a private rec room for the *Himmelhexen*.

21. MIDSHIP PORTSIDE W.C.

Contains small head and shower.

22.-24. LANDING CREW MUSTERING AREAS

For cargo loading crews and ground assault teams to prep their gear and weapons before entering the Cargo Bay.

25. PORTSIDE CARGO BAY ENTRY LOCK

Provides access to Portside Cargo Bay.

26. DR. KASUN'S QUARTERS AND LABORATORY

One of the largest cabins on the ship, this cabin is in a constant state of chaotic disarray—tools, machinery, and various papers and schematics are scattered across work tables, desks, filing cabinets, and so on. A small cot, lamp, and

writing table form the bulk of Dr. Kasun's personal comforts.

27. OFFICER'S QUARTERS—HIMMELHEXE-G

Dagmar's personal cabin. In addition to her footlocker, wardrobe, and bunk, there is a small collection of bomb making tools, and designs for various explosives have been scrawled on the walls.

28. OFFICER'S QUARTERS—HIMMELHEXE-F

Gudrun's cabin. The room is spare, and appears to be occupied sporadically; often, Gudrun sleeps in Dr. Kasun's lab or in the Tesla machine shop (42.). Neat and organized, with a collection of engineering manuals lining one wall.

29. OFFICER'S QUARTERS—HIMMELHEXE-E

Siegrid's cabin. On one wall is a dartboard, pocked with impacts from her throwing knives. A small personal journal is concealed in the bunk's mattress.

30. NAVIGATION

Steel shelving containing hundreds of navigational maps and charts line the fore bulkhead. A modified bomb sight and periscope apparatus (which extends through the bottom of the airship's frame) can be used to verify landmarks and navigational markers.

31. RADIO ROOM

Primary communications system for ship-wide comms, as well as external signals. Also houses the controls for the external speaker system.

32. MIDSHIP STARBOARD W.C.

Contains small head and shower.

33.-35. LANDING CREW MUSTERING AREAS

For cargo loading crews and ground assault teams to prep their gear and weapons before entering the Cargo Bay.

36. STARBOARD CARGO BAY ENTRY LOCK

Provides access to Starboard Cargo Bay.

37. OFFICER'S QUARTERS-HIMMELHEXE-D

Hildegard's room. She has removed the standard bunk, preferring to sleep on a thin floor mat. In addition, she has added a large punching bag, and various handles and pegs bolted into the bulkheads to allow for various exercises (pull-ups, etc.).

38. OFFICER'S QUARTERS-HIMMELHEXE-C

Gerda's cabin is messier than her fellow *Himmelhexen*, with smudges of grease from the engines smearing much of the room. Machine parts in various stages of repair are often tossed on her small desk. Stained rags are tossed haphazardly around the cabin.

39. OFFICER'S QUARTERS-HIMMELHEXE-B

Magda's cabin is extremely tidy—she often ribs Gerda about the state of her living quarters—and well organized. A small portrait of von Keiner hangs on the wall near her bunk (concealing schematics for the airship, neatly folded and concealed between the picture and the back of the frame).

40. OFFICER'S QUARTERS-HIMMELHEXE-A

Elfriede's quarters. As von Keiner's First Officer, she allows herself some small luxuries: a landscape painting hung on one bulkhead, a small plant on her desk, and a small wooden model (allegedly crafted by von Keiner himself) adorning her desk. She keeps a loaded Luger P-08 in a concealed clip on the underside of her bunk.

41. TESLA MACHINE SHOP

Contains rows of workbenches and tool racks that Dr. Kasun and Gudrun use to create power cells for the Tesla Cannons. Much of the experimental equipment contained in the room is dangerous, delivering electrical charges or exploding if

handled improperly. This room is always guarded by two guards when combat operations are not underway.

42. SECONDARY BRIDGE/GONDOLA CONTROLS

Small cabin that can replace the gondola as primary control center for the airship in the event the gondola is deployed or incapacitated. One bank of controls lowers the primary gondola.

HIMMELHEXE: OTHER KEY LOCATIONS

These are locations that appear on the schematic (pages 6-7), but are not numbered.

AFT TESLA CANNON

The rear-facing "Tesla Cannons" project from the midline, just below the horizontal stabilizers. (They are shown retracted on the schematic; they can extend outward for approximately 30 meters.) When deployed, they can be fired by gun crews in the gunwell below them. Electric current arcs between the "bulbs" at the end of each cannon "bar," combines, and is then redirected toward its intended target.

AFT ACCESSWAY AND TESLA CANNON GUNWELL

Runs along the midline of the interior structure, culminating in a circular compartment directly below the cannon. Contains the firing controls, a hardline phone link to the bridge, and an access ladder leading up to the cannon mechanism.

"A" CATWALK

Contained in the superstructure, with ladders on both the port and starboard side of the midline. This catwalk runs between the gas cells between frames 006 and 007, and allows mechanics to access the "A" nacelles and their support platforms (containing fuel, oil, and water tanks).

PULP VILLAINS: VON KEINER

GUN TURRETS

There are two mechanical "ball" turrets on both port and starboard sides of the airship. Each is armed with twin Vickers machine-guns (seized during a raid on a British armory). The mechanism is powered by battery (the battery lasts for 60 minutes before requiring replacement), but can be hand cranked into position should power fail. The ball turrets can traverse downward 90 degrees, but have limited left-right mobility, to prevent accidental strikes on the airship's nacelles and envelope.

"B" CATWALK

As with the "A" catwalks, "B" allows access to the Port and SB side nacelles and gun turrets.

HANGAR

Contains the ship's four "Bremsen" aircraft. In the center of the hangar is a large door that hinges open, allowing each plane to launch simply by dropping into open air. In the overhead superstructure of the hangar is a crane and hook mechanism that allows planes to dock with the *Himmelhexe* while in flight.

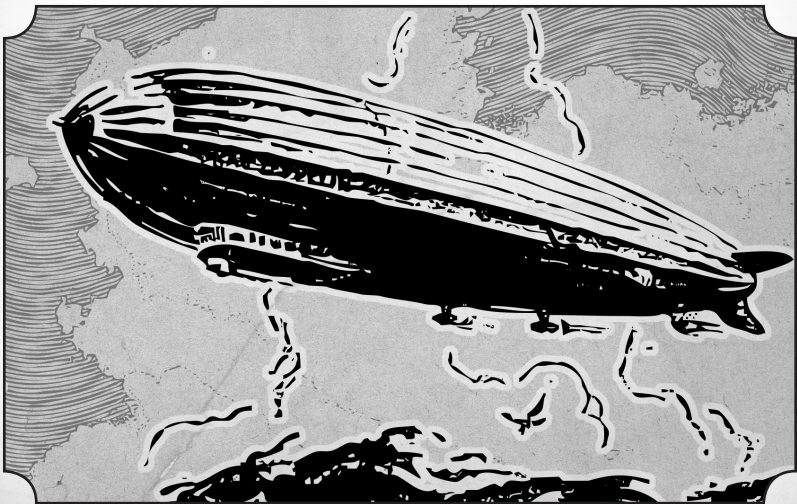
VON KEINER'S QUARTERS

Von Keiner's living quarters extend over the open hangar bay. The aft wall is lined with windows so he can observe hangar activity; rich red velvet curtains can be drawn for privacy, however.

The cabin contains a surprisingly large library, a walled-off sleeping area, private bathing/lavatory facilities, and von Keiner's copious journals and notes. Hidden beneath an ornate Persian rug is a trap door/chute that can send the unwary flying out over the hangar bay door. Von Keiner has used this to eject unruly/mutinuous crew or intruders, on occasion.

BRIDGE/OBSERVATION GONDOLA

Accessed by a ladder/hatch in the decking of the forward gangway, the gondola contains the vehicle controls, and can be lowered by motorized, reinforced chains. When the *Himmelhexe's* smoke projectors are employed, the gondola can be lowered below the artificial cloud cover to allow navigation and maneuvers.



VON KEINER'S INNER CIRCLE

THE HIMMELHEXEN

Von Keiner's closest confidantes are his hand-picked cadre of officers: seven young women he calls his "Himmelhexen." Each is fanatically loyal to von Keiner, who treats them like beloved daughters. Many were "rescued" from groundside life (most from orphanages) and others sought out von Keiner specifically. Only they—and von Keiner—know

their old identities and lives; each took a German name to honor their new leader.

Long-time crew view the *Himmelhexen* with a combination of fear and awe, and those foolish enough to disrespect them are quickly shown the door, usually at an altitude of 5,000 feet. No attempt to bargain with, seduce, or coerce the *Himmelhexen* into betraying von Keiner will be successful.



HIMMELHEXE-A, "ELFRIEDE"

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Piloting d10, Repair d4, Shooting d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

Edges: Ace, Command

Hindrances: Wanted (Major)

Gear: Flying jacket (+1), Luger P-08 (12/24/48, 2d6, Shots 8)

Background: Von Keiner's second in command, Elfriede is ruthless and uncompromising, and quick to violent and decisive action.

Elfriede is von Keiner's most talented combat pilot. Fierce in combat, she maintains the crew's discipline through constant vigilance and an almost supernatural ability to be in the right place at the right time.

PULP VILLAINS: VON KEINER

HIMMELHEXE-B: "MAGDA"

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d4, Lockpicking d10, Notice d6, Piloting d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d8

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5 (1)

Edges: Thief

Hindrances: Wanted (Major)

Gear: Flying jacket (+1), Luger P-08 (12/24/48, 2d6, Shots 8), Lockpicks, map case (with various maps, charts, blueprints, lock schematics, and so on).

Background: A planner, lockbreaker, and master thief. Third in command to von Keiner, and—along with Elfriede—helps plan raids and missions. Magda leads the B flight on bombing runs, and is occasionally chastised by Elfriede for recklessness and audacity.

HIMMELHEXE-C: "GERDA"

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Repair d6, Shooting d10

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7 (1)

Edges: Brawny, Brawler, Steady Hands

Hindrances: Wanted (Major)

Gear: Flying jacket (+1), Walther PPK (12/24/48, 2d6, Shots 8, AP1), toolbelt (with various ratchets, screwdrivers, wrenches), "Gram" (Str+d4)

Background: Tall, muscular, and broad-shouldered, Gerda runs the zeppelin's gun crews. She carries "Gram," a large steel wrench,

engraved with Viking runes (named after Siegfried's sword), which she frequently uses to bash in the heads of her foes. A brawler, with a legendary appetite for bad men, good drink, and terrible singing. Though prone to cursing out crew members she deems lazy or slow, she is nonetheless fiercely protective of her people.

HIMMELHEXE-D: "HILDEGARD"

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d10, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Piloting d4, Shooting d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

Edges: Block, Bring It On!*, Martial Artist, Iron Jaw

Hindrances: One Eye, Wanted (Major), Quirk (Silent)

Gear: Flying jacket (+1), eyepatch, Mauser C96 (10/20/40), 2d6+1, Shots 8)

*Indicates a Hindrance or Edge found in the *Thrilling Tales* core book.

Background: Hildegard was recruited from an underground fighting ring near Corsica—a figure of some loval notoriety for being the most successful fighter the region had ever seen. Though her fighting cost her an eye, she was undefeated in numerous contests.

Now, she commands boarding and raiding parties for von Keiner, a task she undertakes with singleminded determination and cruel efficiency. She never speaks, except directly to von Keiner (and then, only in whispers); during operations, she uses hand signals to direct her crew.

HIMMELHEXE-E: "SIEGRID"

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d10, Notice d6, Piloting d4, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Throwing d8

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

Edges: Assassin, Counterattack, First Strike, Florentine, Two-Fisted

Hindrances: Wanted (Major)

Gear: Flying jacket (+1), Walther PPK (12/24/48, 2d6, Shots 8, AP1), switchblade (Str +d4, -2 to Notice if hidden), brass knuckles (Str +d4), 3 matched stilletos (Str +d4, Parry +1), 3 throwing knives (3/6/12 Str +d4).

Background: Silent and sullen, and known for her occasional dark moods. (Many veteran crew members speak in hushed tones of encounters with Siegrid, drinking brandy and sharpening her knives to the strains of Brahms in the darkened galley.) Siegrid is von Keiner's chief of "internal security" and his personal assassin; she is highly adept in hand weapons, preferring knives.

HIMMELHEXE-F: "GUDRUN"

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d10, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Knowledge (Engineering) d8, Notice d8, Piloting d4, Repair d10, Shooting d4, Weird Science d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5 (1)

Edges: Arcane Background (Weird Science), McGyver, Mr. Fix It

Hindrances: Wanted (Major)

Gear: Flying jacket (+1), tools, various blueprints and technical journals, slide rule, Walther PPK (12/24/48, 2d6, Shots 8, AP1).

Background: Quiet and awkward, but incredibly skilled engineer of the *Himmelhexe*, tasked with keeping the various electrical weapons systems functioning. She has an affinity for the Weird Science weaponry, and quietly worships Nikola Tesla.

HIMMELHEXE-G: "DAGMAR"

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Knowledge (Demolitions) d10, Knowledge (Chemistry) d6, Notice d6, Piloting d6, Repair d6, Shooting d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5 (1)

Edges: Brave, Steady Hands

Hindrances: Habit (Practical Jokes), Wanted (Major)

Gear: Flying jacket (+1), tools, Walther PPK (12/24/48, 2d6, Shots 8, AP1), 3 grenades (5/10/20, 3d6), wire cutters, various timers, detonators, and fine tools.

*Indicates a Hindrance or Edge found in the *Thrilling Tales* core book.

Background: Dagmar is adept at demolitions, constructing bombs for the Bremsen B flight, as well as crafting specialized explosives for use in breaching bank vaults, safes, prisons, and other hardened targets.

Dagmar is a practical joker, occasionally hazing new crew members by lobbing dummy bombs toward the helium cells while in flight.

DR. ANTO KASUN

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d12, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Knowledge (Engineering) d10, Knowledge (Physics) d10, Knowledge (Chemistry) d10, Knowledge (other Science) d8, Notice d8, Repair d10, Weird Science d12.

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

Edges: Arcane Background (Weird Science), Brilliant Scientist*, Font of Information*, Gadgeteer, McGyver, Scholar.

Hindrances: Bad Eyes (Minor), Elderly, Hard of Hearing (Minor).

Gear: Tools, labcoat, monocle, personal journal.

*Indicates a Hindrance or Edge found in the *Thrilling Tales* core book.

Background: Dr. Anto Kasun is a Serbian scientist and engineer and a noted devotee of the work of Nikola Tesla (who once gifted Dr. Kasun

with an old journal of designs and notes). Held captive by Russian forces during the Great War—tasked with developing weapons and munitions—for the war effort, a task he steadfastly refused.

During a raid on a Russian prison camp, von Keiner rescued Kasun from captivity, and in return, Kasun has helped create, maintain, and upgrade the *Himmelhexe's* exotic lightning cannons.

Forgetful, hard of hearing, and with failing eyesight, he nonetheless can be found scurrying along dangerous gangplanks and catwalks throughout the airship, and is constantly tinkering with machinery in his workshop. Currently, he is working to develop an “atmospheric global electrical lens,” hoping to harness the Earth’s magnetic field as a form of fuel-free propulsion of virtually unlimited range. Thus far, the experiment has only yielded a series of small electrical fires.

Kasun is particularly fond of Gudrun, and the pair work closely together on various esoteric projects.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

INTERNATIONAL WAR

This hook works best as an introduction to Captain von Keiner and his ship onto the world stage. The *Himmelhexe* is making targeted attacks on Soviet, French, and British ships and airplanes, leaving behind naught but corpses and flaming wreckage.

With no suspects in these attacks, tensions are at a high boil. The latest attack, in which several high-ranking French ministers were killed when their plane was shot down *en route* to London, threatens to shatter the Anglo-French alliance, with both sides blaming the other for not doing enough to stop these terroristic attacks. The League of Nations is in an uproar, and Germany is looking to exploit the situation.

The Player Characters are called in to help smooth over the crisis. As duly-appointed troubleshooters acting on the authority of the League of Nations, it is up to them to find out who is behind these attacks. They must follow the trail of clues leading back to the mysterious airship... and survive their first encounter with its fanatical captain.

CAPTURED!

The Player Characters have boarded a passenger ship and are bound for another adventure when a massive black zeppelin descends from the clouds amidst a shrieking cacophony. Although the Player Characters may be armed, they are aboard a civilian vessel without the means to effectively defend itself—the captain strikes colors and surrenders. As the Bremsen

buzz the ship, pirates from the *Himmelhexe* rappel down from the hangar bay, the zeppelin hovering just over the ship and the crests of the waves.

Thanks to the passenger ship's quick surrender, she is not sunk. Instead, Captain von Keiner has issued orders to his men to take hostages—he is interested in seeing whether ransom could prove to be a lucrative revenue stream.

The Player Characters, naturally, are among the 10 folk “volunteered” for the Captain's little experiment. Once aboard the *Himmelhexe*, the Player Characters will find the Captain the very picture of a congenial host and may have an opportunity to find out a little about his backstory. But what will they do when the *Himmelhexe* comes under attack by a squadron of British seaplanes?

INFILTRATING THE HIMMELHEXE

This hook may be used as a stand-alone adventure, or in conjunction with “Captured!”

The Player Characters are asked to infiltrate the crew of the *Himmelhexe* and find out as much as they can about the Captain, his motives and methodologies, and any potential weaknesses of the zeppelin. They may come aboard as either crew or pilots (as von Keiner is looking for replacement crew following a particularly brutal raid).

The first trick, of course, is figuring out where the Captain does his recruiting. But that turns out to be the easy part. Between the hazards of air piracy and the group's deadly secret, surviving long enough to bring a report back to their patrons may well be the

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challenge of a lifetime. Possible outcomes include the capture of the *Himmelhexe* or the “rescue” of Dr. Kasun (who can act as a gadgeteer for the group).

CONFLICTING LOYALTIES

For all his German imperialist nationalism, Captain von Keiner, like many of his age and background, is no great fan of the Nazi party or Adolf Hitler. Germany’s obvious designs on the Polish Republic are particularly noisome to his sensibilities. As the clouds of war gather over Germany,

there are some in the League of Nations who see the *Himmelhexe* as a potential ally in the coming conflict. The first part of this hook involves landing an audience with von Keiner.

Assuming the Player Characters can convince the Captain to turn against Germany in the interest of saving her, the next portion of the hook involves the Player Characters participating in raids against Nazi targets—everything from attacking a Kriegsmarine cruiser on patrol in the North Sea to foiling Nazi plots in far-away locales such as Tibet or Antarctica.



THE HIMMELHEXE MUST BE DESTROYED!

Use this hook as the resolution to Captain von Keiner's arc, or as a one-off adventure if you wish to introduce and destroy the *Himmelhexe* in one fell swoop. Working in concert, Soviet and Anglo-American spy networks have pinpointed the *Himmelhexe's* secret base in Siberia. A task force is assembling on Sakhalin Island, a mix of Soviet, American, and British planes loaded for bear with explosive rounds in their magazines, bombs on their wingmounts, and just enough fuel to get to Belogorsk and back...

Arriving there, the attack wing will find the *Himmelhexe* just casting off its moorings. Can they down it before it gains enough altitude to launch its own planes? The helium plant is well-defended by anti-aircraft emplacements, adding an additional element of risk to the operation. For groups that enjoy political intrigue, the aftermath of the attack could provide just as many opportunities for twists and turns as the dogfight against the zeppelin, with the Soviet and Anglo-American factions locking horns over salvage rights, jurisdiction over any members of the crew captured after the battle, damage to the helium refinery, and so on.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David Larkins was born in Santa Fe, New Mexico, in 1978 and, after 20 years in California, is living there once again with his lovely wife Desiree and resident wonder-mutt Edie. He has worked off and on in public and private libraries since 2001, though nowadays he devotes himself full-time to writing. He fell in love with tabletop adventure gaming in 1990 and never looked back.

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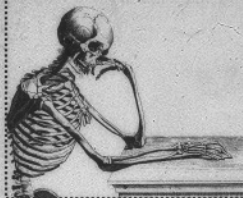
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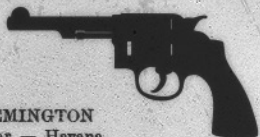
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