

In der australischen Zeitschrift vom 1. November 1914, aus der wir schon verschiedentlich berichtet, lesen wir folgendes unter der Überschrift:

"WHAT CAN THE ZEPPELIN DO?"

In view of the recent cable announcements that Germany is feverishly pushing on with her Zeppelin fleet and has been indulging in nightly practice at torpedo-dropping into Lake Constance, a summary of the latest achievements in air-ship development may be of special interest at this stage.

Three main disabilities handicapped the Zeppelin dirigible as a fighting machine, and, in overcoming these, vessel after vessel came to grief till both the Kaiser and the Count were reported to have reached the limit of their patience. These disabilities were lack of speed; limit of elevation to, say, 4000 feet, and inability to deliver effective attacks or defend themselves from attack.

Details of construction have been preserved in strictest secrecy, but records of trials have been freely published of late, and the extent to which the handicaps referred to above have been eliminated, may be judged by the following striking, not to say disquieting, facts:

The new naval airship L III. flew over 2000 miles in 34 hours, and carried enough fuel to remain aloft for three days and nights. She averaged 62 miles an hour, and at one stage reached 94 miles an hour with the wind astern.

Very fine hangars for the accommodation of air-ships have been constructed at Berlin, Cologne, Dresden, Düsseldorf, Königsberg, Friedrichshafen, Munich and Wilhelmshaven. These hangars are built on turntables, so that the vessel may enter or leave regardless of the direction of the wind.

All the latest Zeppelins are fitted with 40,000 c.p. searchlights, that illuminate the ground from a height of 4500 feet, and with wireless apparatus capable of sending messages over 450 miles.

The modern Zeppelin can remain for four hours at an altitude of from 6500 to 9000 feet, and at a pinch can climb to 10,000.

All Zeppelins are now coated with aluminium paint as a protection against sun-expansion and rain; this also renders them practically invisible at great altitudes.

For offence and defence the L III. carries steel-capped torpedoes that will pierce

*Bild aus dem Jahre 1914.*

*No. 1: "The modern raiding Zeppelin..."*

*No. 2: "The non-rigid dirigible air-ship of "Parseval" type..."*

six inches of armour-plate; two quick-firers throwing two-inch shells, and two machine-guns of latest pattern in the cars, two adjustable swivel-guns on platforms above the balloons, and one below the cars.

Zeppelin V. recently scored a fair percentage of shots at a suspended aeroplane 6000 feet across the air, and claims to shoot accurately at any lesser distance.

It stands to reason that if Germany possessed

a fleet of, say, twenty-five of these aerial monsters it would be a force to be reckoned with. As a matter of fact, she is reported to possess two naval air-ships (the huge L III. mentioned and a Schütte-Lanz II., with a speed of 50 miles and an altitude record of 7500 feet), and eight military Zeppelins (including for remodelled and lengthened vessels). In addition it is certain that the adaptation of the three famous "Delag" passenger air-ships, and the "feverish activity" reported in the cables, may have brought Germany's air-fleet up to twelve or perhaps twenty vessels. On paper this is a formidable weapon, and, according to the "Daily Telegraph", it constitutes the surprise which Germany boasted it had in reserve for the allies. We can only hope that the preparations being made by the allies to meet it will be an equally effective surprise.

...France has a few assorted air-ships which are quite insignificant in comparison with the German air-cruisers.

...In Great Britain, the navy has completed, and made tentative flights with two dirigibles, one a "rigid" of a modified Zeppelin pattern, and the other a semirigid of the Italian order. The best of these, the "Gamma", made some very satisfactory flights at the time of the recent naval manoeuvres, attaining an alleged speed of forty-five miles an hour. These are the first of fifteen air-ships which were planned for completion about the end of 1914.