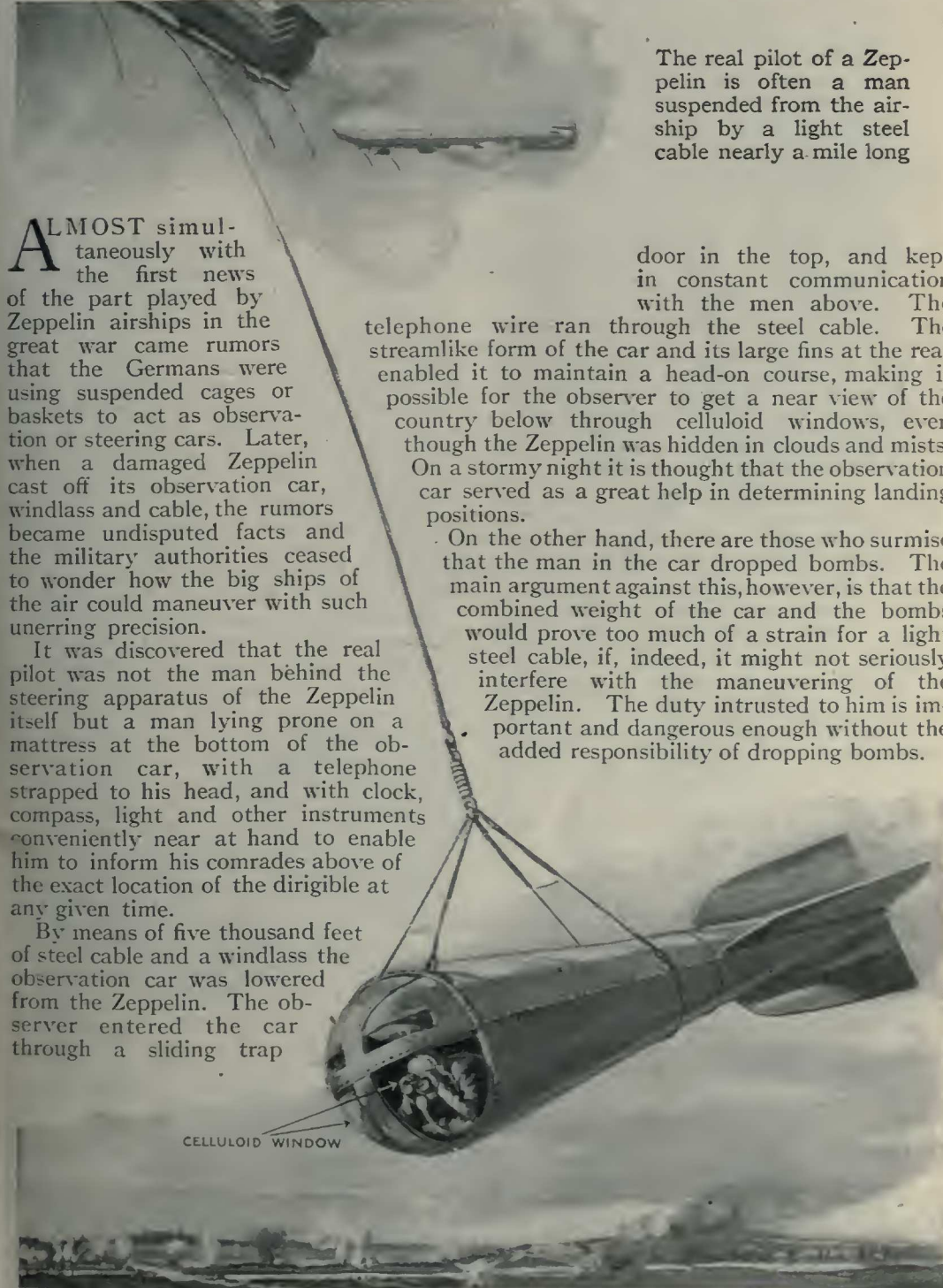


Dangling 'Twiixt Earth and Sky from a Zeppelin



The real pilot of a Zeppelin is often a man suspended from the airship by a light steel cable nearly a mile long

ALMOST simultaneously with the first news of the part played by Zeppelin airships in the great war came rumors that the Germans were using suspended cages or baskets to act as observation or steering cars. Later, when a damaged Zeppelin cast off its observation car, windlass and cable, the rumors became undisputed facts and the military authorities ceased to wonder how the big ships of the air could maneuver with such unerring precision.

It was discovered that the real pilot was not the man behind the steering apparatus of the Zeppelin itself but a man lying prone on a mattress at the bottom of the observation car, with a telephone strapped to his head, and with clock, compass, light and other instruments conveniently near at hand to enable him to inform his comrades above of the exact location of the dirigible at any given time.

By means of five thousand feet of steel cable and a windlass the observation car was lowered from the Zeppelin. The observer entered the car through a sliding trap

door in the top, and kept in constant communication with the men above. The streamlike form of the car and its large fins at the rear enabled it to maintain a head-on course, making it possible for the observer to get a near view of the country below through celluloid windows, even though the Zeppelin was hidden in clouds and mists. On a stormy night it is thought that the observation car served as a great help in determining landing positions.

On the other hand, there are those who surmise that the man in the car dropped bombs. The main argument against this, however, is that the combined weight of the car and the bombs would prove too much of a strain for a light steel cable, if, indeed, it might not seriously interfere with the maneuvering of the Zeppelin. The duty intrusted to him is important and dangerous enough without the added responsibility of dropping bombs.

CELLULOID WINDOW

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