River Schenck

I am wring about the Hindenburg Disaster. I picked this engineering failure because in school I have heard so much about the disaster but have never been told any details on it. All I knew before researching it was that a big blimp had gone down tragically. The Hindenburg was flying on May 3, 1937 and had 35 passengers on board and 61 officers and crew members on board. The Hindenburg had flown 63 times before! The ship left the Frankfurt airport a little bit after 6:00. It was flying over the Netherlands and southern England. The arrival of the Hindenburg was supposed to be on May 6th early morning, 6:00 AM, but was pushed back to 6:00 PM.

The ship arrived at the Naval Air Station in New Jersey at 4:15 Pm. The weather out was not very good, and the commander became worried. They delayed the landing to wait until the weather got a little bit better. The captain maneuvered the ship out of the area near the coast to wait for the storm to pass. The storm passed by the evening. A little but after 6:00 the Naval Air Station sent the temperature, pressure, winds, and such to the captain letting him know it was safe to land. At 6:22 the Air Station radioed and told the captain it is recommended to land now. The ship didn’t land and at 7:08 they sent a message saying to land as early as possible.

To prepare to land they let out 15 seconds of hydrogen along the length of the ship to reduce the buoyancy for landing. The captain was turning to the left and reducing the power from the engines. A crew member saw the ship became heavy in the back and valve for hydrogen from cells 11-16 for 30seconds. This failed to level it out. The crew member then drops 2,420 lbs. of water ballast from the tail. They then valve for 5 more seconds of hydrogen from the gas cells. This did not work so crewmen were asked to go the front and add their weight.

The captain wanted to land quickly so he tried a tight S-turn. He ordered a sharp tight turn to starboard to line up for landing in the wind. Some experts think that the sharp turn overstressed the Hindenburg, which made a bracing wire break and slash a gas cell. This then made the hydrogen mix with the air to make a very explosive mixture. The landing ropes were tossed soon after the S-turn.

Some people say they saw a fluttering on the outer port. Flames then appeared at 7:25 PM. The fire spread very quickly taking the entire tail of the ship. The tail started to fall and the nose pointed upwards. The fire spread very fast and the whole ship was consumed within a minute.

The disaster could have maybe been avoided in a couple ways. I think that not having a smokers lounge could have helped. Having very explosive gases near a bunch of people lighting cigarettes doesn’t sound like a good combo. We don’t know exactly how this could have been avoided. But in my personal opinion, not having a smoking lounge would have possibly fixed it.