

# Happy 100th Birthday, Goodyear Blimp! [B1]

Il famoso dirigibile a elio, nato come stravagante annuncio pubblicitario e oggi simbolo degli USA, solca i cieli di oltre cento città per celebrare il suo centenario.

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It's a bird! It's a plane! No, it's the Goodyear **blimp**! The Goodyear **blimp** is an American icon that has **hovered** over some of the world's biggest events. **Spotted** over the Olympics, the FIFA World Cup and the Super Bowl, it is easy to forget that the helium-filled airship started life as a **flamboyant** advert for a US **tyre** and **rubber** firm. This year, in celebration of the 100th birthday of its first launch, a Goodyear **blimp** will fly over sporting, cultural and music events held in over one hundred cities across North America and Europe, capturing live aerial **footage** of these events.

## INTRODUCING THE PILGRIM

Founded in 1898, the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company is an American multinational that specialises in **tyres** for all kinds of vehicles. During the 20th century, it constructed various types of airships and **balloons**, mostly for the US Navy. In 1925, it introduced the first Goodyear **blimp**, called the **Pilgrim**. This non-rigid airship was used as an enormous floating **billboard**, publicising the firm to millions of Americans. Blimps began appearing all over the country: over **parades**, during holidays and major events, **capturing the imagination** of the public. The Goodyear **blimp** became famous, and has been the subject of songs, books, films and more.

## SPORTING EVENTS

In 1955, the US TV network NBC asked Goodyear to use its **blimp** to help it capture live **footage** of the Rose Parade and Rose Bowl football game, held every New Year's Day in Pasadena, California. Goodyear agreed, and soon its **blimps** were filming major events all over the US from the sky. The company introduced its first international **blimp**, Europa, in 1972. After debuting in the

UK, it travelled to Italy to capture iconic **landmarks** such as the Tower of Pisa and the Colosseum in Rome. In Frankfurt, Germany, it flew over the opening ceremony of the 1974 World Cup. Today, Goodyear has a **blimp** permanently based in the German city of Essen. It captures aerial **footage** of major events across Europe, and unlike the US-based **blimps**, it can also carry commercial passengers.

## **NEW MODEL BLIMPS**

Goodyear's **blimps** ordinarily fly at around one thousand [300m] to 1,500 feet [450m] and at 40mph [64kph]. The original **blimp**, the **Pilgrim**, was just over a hundred feet [30m] long and only had space inside for a pilot and two passengers. It was later replaced with larger models. Then, in 2014, Goodyear began replacing its non-rigid airships with the four semi-rigid airships that it uses today. These new airships are almost 250 feet [76m] long and have seating for eight passengers. Although they are not technically **blimps** (because they are semi-rigid) the company continues to refer to them as such.

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# Glossary

- **flamboyant** = stravagante
- **rubber** = gomma
- **balloons** = palloni aerostatici
- **Pilgrim** = pellegrino
- **parades** = parate
- **capturing the imagination** = catturare l'immaginazione
- **blimp** = dirigibile
- **hovered** = librarsi, volare
- **Spotted** = avvistare
- **tyre** = pneumatici
- **footage** = video, filmato
- **billboard** = cartellone, annuncio
- **landmarks** = monumenti