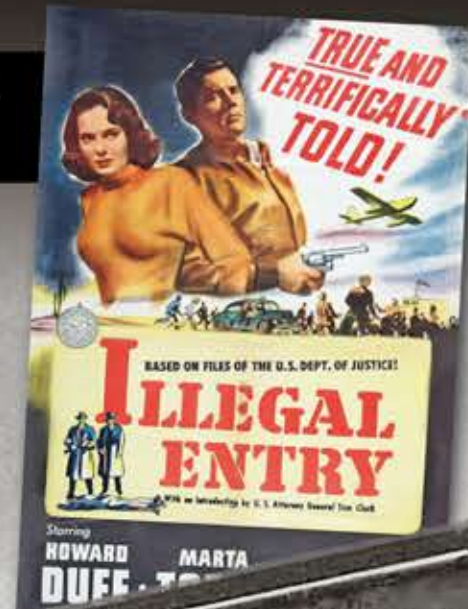


RUBBER DUCKS

IN AN ATTEMPT TO CASH IN ON WHAT WAS PREDICTED TO BE A MASSIVE POST-WAR INCREASE IN PRIVATE AIRCRAFT, GOODYEAR SWITCHED FROM CORSAIRS TO THIS ATTRACTIVE PRIVATE AMPHIBIAN- BY HOWARD CARTER

Goodyear GA-2 Duck NC5506M prior to its European tour of 1948. With its bright yellow and deep blue scheme, large Goodyear logo, the Duck attracted a lot of attention.

Duck NC5506M had a starring role in the film *Illegal Entry* even though the aircraft depicted on the poster did not look anything like Goodyear's product!



Today, the name Goodyear is most often associated with the manufacturing of tires. However, the company had a very active aviation department that saw its beginnings with the end of the Great War. Germany had to settle massive war debts to the Allied powers and the creative German aviation industry was pretty much completely destroyed in the process. During that war, Germany had pioneered the use of rigid-structure lighter-

than-air vehicles that came under the generic name of Zeppelin. These aerial monsters initially traveled through the night skies over Britain, dropping bomb loads on terrified citizens. Improved aerial defenses would greatly weaken the combat effectiveness of these machines but Goodyear saw a post-war commercial potential in such craft.

The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company's Aeronautics Department was created in 1924 and the company

obtained a two-thirds interest in *Luftschiffbau Zeppelin* while the Germans held the remaining one-third ownership. Thus, Goodyear was able to freely use the Zeppelin patents and many German engineers and technical staff were relocated to the United States as employees of the Goodyear Zeppelin Corporation. This company would go on to create a number of rigid and non-rigid airships for the military and for civilian usage — including today's

famous Goodyear "blimps."

The Great Depression slowed down aviation business so the company diversified to design and construct the high-speed Comet streamlined train that ran between Boston and Providence. During 1939, the company name changed to Goodyear Aircraft Corporation after receiving a contract from Martin to build the empennage for its new B-26 Marauder medium bomber. Goodyear had previously built its huge Airship

Dock near Akron, Ohio, and was able to handle many contracts for license-building aircraft subassemblies as a possible world war moved closer. It was not until 1941 that the joint German-US venture was dissolved and Goodyear's airship operations were transferred to the new company.

Even though the company had many subcontracts, when it came to wartime aviation its most famous product was license-building the Vought F4U-1 Corsair

as the Goodyear FG-1D. Goodyear employees quickly established a very efficient Corsair production line and turned out a stunning 4017 of the vitally needed fighters along with ten experimental F2G "Super Corsairs." In fact, Goodyear became a model of how American industry could switch from commercial to war-time products.

When it became obvious that America was going to win the war in the Pacific, Goodyear Aircraft management began to visualize how