



FÉDÉRATION AÉRONAUTIQUE
INTERNATIONALE
Ballooning Commission

Hall of Fame

Salomon August Andrée

Inducted 1997



SALOMON AUGUST ANDRÉE

Sweden

Inducted 1997

Scientific balloonist.

18 October 1854, Gränna – 1897, Arctic

Salomon August Andrée acquired an interest in ballooning during a visit to the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia. In 1875 Andrée proposed to use a balloon to reach the North Pole. Despite its tragic end, the expedition is recognized as the first bona fide attempt to reach the North Pole by balloon.

Image courtesy Gränna Museum - The Andrée Expedition & Polar Centre

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SA Andrée was born in Gränna, Sweden 1854. He acquired an interest in ballooning during a visit to Philadelphia 1876 and later got the idea to reach the North Pole by balloon. He raised funds for a 1000m³ balloon and made 9 training flights. During these flights he collected meteorological data and made scientific experiments. He also made experiments with aerial photography. During 1895 he started raising funds for the polar flight and in a very short time he had collected the current equivalent of 5 million USD. His project was supported by the King of Sweden and Norway and by major Swedish industries. During the spring 1896 he built a balloon shed and a gas plant on the shore of north western Spitzbergen. When the balloon was inflated the remaining time was too short for a flight that year. Insurance limitations forced his ship to return to Sweden.

Next year he returned with a slightly larger balloon and could make use of the old shed. On July 11th the balloon Örnen (Eagle) was launched with SA Andrée and his companions Nils Strindberg and Knut Fraenkel. Nothing was heard until 1930 when Norwegian hunters found the remains of the team on a small island in northern Svalbard. The remains were brought to Sweden. Diaries and films were examined and developed.

The balloon had flown for 65h 35m before being forced to land on the ice after a flight of 400 km. The three men had then walked back until they found the White Island. They planned to spend the dark winter on the island but died within a few weeks, probably infected by trikinosis after having eaten polar bear meat insufficiently cooked.

It has been hinted that the Andrée Polar expedition was doomed from the start. That may be correct but Andrée was as prepared as anyone could be at that time. He had spent one year (1882-83) on Svalbard during the international polar research year. Some of his research gave far better results than any other nation could achieve. The balloon represented the state of the art and the duration of the flight of the "Eagle" was not surpassed until 1908 by a balloon of the Gordon Bennett race. The planning of the expedition was also a great achievement itself.

The Andrée Museum in Gränna is entirely devoted to the Andrée polar expedition and what was found at their last camp, including many unique photos taken from the flight and during the struggle back over the ice.





Hans Åkerstedt
CIA delegate