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TRANSLATION

THE DESYATKA* GOES UP INTO
THE STRATOSPHERE

By

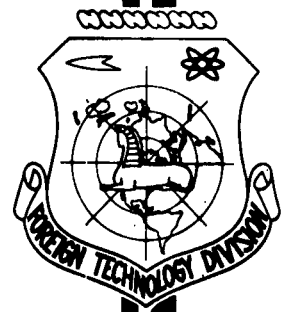
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The Desyatka* Goes Up Into The Stratosphere

By

Iv. Frolov

**GRAPHIC NOT
REPRODUCIBLE**

Here it is, the Desyatka from aboard which the correspondent of the Sovetskaya Rossiya is making his report. The crew of the aircraft is in constant combat preparedness

The young aviation general has a beautiful resolute face. He is eying me with a searching look, and I am thinking, will he give permission or won't he?

"All right, fly! You'll be the first of the civilian journalists aboard

*The word "desyatka" means the "ten-spot."

the intercontinental rocket carrier."

"Thanks" I spurted out.

"But mind, the flight will be difficult."

I was getting ready to say something, but the eyes of the general warmed up.

"Never mind. Don't be afraid. Our pilots know their business. Experienced people. With us they are heroes every day."

* * *

It was three-year-old Marinka's birthday, and how disappointing that daddy was flying away. He didn't get to make her a present of a new doll. And daddy was flying on a military alarm signal far, far away. With his crew he was to carry out a very important practice assignment. A body does no writing. Such indeed was his service.

But when daddy returned home Marinka was unspeakably glad. Also daddy commander was contented; on his tunic glittered the gold star of hero. He looked at the big globe in his cabinet and smiled. Clearly papa had flown well. And he flies quite often, winter and summer, day and night, in any kind of weather ...

The lights have gone out in the houses. Marinka has been asleep with her favorite doll for a long time already. And we with her daddy will fly through the night, our purpose being with a single rocket strike to wipe from the face of the earth the distant "enemy" target, just as with one sweep of the rubber on the Whatman paper the draftsman rubs out the pencil mark ...

And how to take off! Shafts of light from the projectors pierced through the night haze and played in patches on the silvery cigar of the rocket carrier. On the concrete now here now there evilly danced plumes of snowy powder. The storm over the airfield would not calm down.

Nevertheless the crew was ready for the flight. Each reported to the commander of the craft:

"The parachute is strapped in place; the oxygen valve is open!"

Under the fuselage of the aircraft there was hiding the terrible all-crushing weapon, the rocket. It now, as it were, silently, peacefully looked out like a little kangaroo from the pouch of the mother.

Suddenly there flared up in the sky, one after another, three green rockets. This was the signal: "Start the engines!"

A deafening roar fills the cabin. My place close to the second navigator on an ejection seat is "special" for the correspondent. I put on the parachute. The hose for the oxygen equipment and the cord for the helmet phone I also connected in place. Now I hear clearly all the commands.

"Desyatyy*, I am Landysh*; pressure is 748. Course of takeoff is 25 degrees..."

"I understood you. I am taxiing out."

"Landysh, I am Desyatyy, do you give clearance for takeoff?"

The airborne number of the rocket carrier is ten. So our giant was all ready for the impetuous shoveoff. The brakes were released. The machine like a whirlwind dashes forward. The lights blinking on the sides of the runway streak through the darkness like threads of gold. Piercing through the thick wadding of clouds like an arrow we go up to the stars! ...

We feel pain in our ears. Distinctly one senses the acceleration. The oxygen mask cuts into the face. A kind of "unholy" force presses one against the seat. I recall what Andriyan Nikolayev said about the excess loads.

"How are you feeling?" Krivtsov, the commander of the craft, asks me.

"Fine," I answer over the intercommunication system and adjust my

*"Desyatyy" means "tenth" and "Landysh" "lily of the valley," code names.

laryngophone--the other crosspiece with microphones closely pressed to the throat.

The commander has his hands full. He is the heart of the craft. In front of him are levers, tumbler and throw-over switches, ... In the blister--concave illuminator--there is reflected his tightly huddled figure. Krivtsov is a Siberian. He fought at the front. He studied. He flew almost every type of military aircraft. And now in his control is the strategic rocket carrier. Communist Krivtsov is a pilot first class, a capable trainer of his subordinates, and a considerate but exacting commander.

In addition to these characteristics, which were particularly pointed out to me, he is a splendid family man, a loving father. Right now with him on the flight is the photograph of his little daughter, the merry little Marinka.

Before lies a journey of several thousand kilometers. We strike out on our course. The pointer of the altimeter settles at a two-digit figure. We are riding in the stratosphere.

If the commander is the heart of the craft, then the navigator is its brain. He sits on the seat beside me. The navigator is the communist officer Badashin--a very experienced navigator. In front of him are hundreds of instruments, oscillographs, throw-over switches, little lights ...

Now he has laid aside the logarithmic rule and looked at the map, for convenience a bellowslike thing, and having provided himself with a sextant he determines the true course and sets it on the directional gyro. With the aid of the navigational instruments Badashin absolutely without making any error conducts the aircraft to the point for releasing the rocket, and on time. We won't bother him any more. Let's let him work.

And the second navigator Belyuk is following up on the electronic brain of the craft. His section is the realm of automation and electronics. As-

gregates of instruments mysteriously wink with the variously colored eyes of their little lamps. Here truly there is a whole stand of such aggregates. And each one of them in its details is more complicated than a television set. Beneath us there are three or four layers of stratified dense clouds. And all the same the all-seeing eye of the rocket carrier, the locator, "sees" the whole locality over which we will fly. Belyuk with gesture invites one to look at the screen.

There is just the same complicated setup for the flight engineer Ivanov. His hand rests on the control devices. I was permitted to exchange two or three phrases with him. But above us, over our heads, brightly shines the starry field, without twinkling, altogether different from what it is on the earth.

"I wish a body could run it through a sieve," jokes Ivanov.

But joking aside, soon the decisive moment in the flight is coming, the dropping of the rockets!

All the members of the crew all together, as it were, became concentrated and united. Their actions were united and carried almost to the point of automation.

And here follows a report:

"Equipment for release is ready!"

Numerous little lamps just shone, and all of a sudden they were all extinguished and only two glowed--green ones with a superscription "In order." The pointer of the speed indicator moved sharply to the right. The craft jerked forward. For the four powerful engines of the craft a fifth was added to the team--the engine of the rocket.

The gas was cut down and the speed of the craft went back to the normal. From the rear of the cabin clearly visible were the long tongues of blue

flame shooting out of the nozzle of rocket as if it were a miniature crater of a volcano.

"I see the target to the right two degrees," sounds the voice of the navigator-operator.

"I've turned," answers the commander of the craft. An announcement follows, "Commander, border!" New command, "Release!"

The craft suddenly rocked. The rocket impetuously rushed ahead of our craft. Its peacock, fire-breathing tail gradually melted away and soon disappeared completely in the dark burble of the sky. Now the rocket was only visible on the screen of the locator.

In the earphones there resounded the clicking of code. At the command post followed the announcement of mission accomplished.

The navigator refines the return course. Banking to the left. And again excess load increases. The radio operator announces to the commander of the craft about the radiogram received from the airfield: "Target destroyed."

This is it, the sum of the skills of the ground and air crews. In brief words, back of this operation is the enormous labor of the aviation people preparing the technology for military application. The guardians of our skies are always on the alert.

Now my new friends propose to me to partake of something contained in a cellophane package. This is the airborne ration--cool grape juice, crunchy lemon cakes, candy, biscuits, chocolate, preserves ...

Krivtsov asks, "Well, speak frankly. Are you tired?"

"To tell the truth, yes. It's a complicated flight."

"How shall I say to you? Of course, it's complicated. One isn't allowed to smoke."

Just imagine! Only for this reason is it complicated.

Our intercontinental Desyatka flies at great altitude. The hour hand of the clock has already run around the whole dial, and we keep on flying and flying. But now the navigator has turned over the last sheet of the map-bellows. One feels that soon we shall be home, and so it is.

The second pilot, the experienced aviator Patkulín announces, "cloudiness ten balls, visibility one thousand five hundred meters, course of landing twenty-five degrees ... "

We come down. In our ears it feels as if somebody had stuck nine burrs. Nothing is visible. We land blind, by instruments. The commander touches the steel giant skillfully and smoothly on the concrete strip. Before reporting in he thanks the crew for the excellent accomplishment of the mission.

"We are serving the Soviet Union," is the friendly answer from the military aviation people.

The ground wind is raging again and the snow flakes are flying in our faces.

The morning lights in the homes have been extinguished. The children are hurrying to school. In fact Marinka had waked up. In the garrison house of the officers the last pre-holiday rehearsals were in progress of a play about the Soviet warriors, which was going to be put on by a young regimental officer's wife, Sofia Zakharova. Over the globe there again leaned the commander of the unit with the golden star of hero ... And in the peaceful sky there again flew crews of intercontinental rocket carriers.

Yes, Comrade General, the flight was difficult. You are right, the military aviators are heroes every day.

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