**Krasnoyarsk Story of War**

**(Krasnoyarsk Air Route, Krasnoyarsk-Uelkal Air Route)**

The building of the Krasnoyarsk Air Route of the civil aviation was an important milestone in the Great Patriotic War history. It was renamed to Krasnoyarsk-Uelkal Air Route of the long-range Air Force of the Red Army on July 15, 1943. Nowadays it is world-known as the Alaska-Siberia Ferry Route or ALSIB.

In the initial stage of the war the USSR suffered from the lack of aircrafts, ammunition, industrial vehicles, food supply and strategic materials. That is why the agreement signed in the autumn of 1941 had a great significance for the USSR. According to that agreement, the United States and the Great Britain undertook to deliver everything wat is needed (partly on a payment basis) to the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union and the United States signed the Lend-Lease agreement on gratuitous supplies. The program of these deliveries also included the US allies such as Great Britain and Canada.

One of the ways for delivering of the American aircrafts to the Soviet Union was Krasnoyarsk Air Route which is an air route via the Bering Strait, the central regions of Chukotka, Yakutia and some Siberian territories.

The aerodromes in Yakutsk, Krasnoyarsk and Kirensk were reconstructed and the new ones were built in Uelkal, Markovo (Chukotka), Seymchan (Kolyma). The alternate and stage airfield were constructed in Olekminsk, Vitim, Tyoply Klyuch (Khandyga), Oymyakon, Omolon, Zyryanka. The route was supplied with communication centres, radio navigation equipment, and meteorological stations. The flight maps were upgraded.

The period of construction was extremely tense due to the front needs. The civilian workers were hired to construct aerodromes in the south of Yakutsk. In the north and east of Yakutsk the construction was carried out by the Dalstroy NKVD trust, using prisoners’ labor.

In an unbelievably short period, less than a year, an air route of nearly five thousand kilometers was constructed. The construction of aerodromes of the Ferrying Route went on until the completion of the project. A number of 17 aerodromes were built in the USSR, 15 were conctructed in the USA and Canada. ALSIB was the largest project of the Soviet-American cooperation.

The formation of the Route and Ferry Regiments Directorate and military units that were supposed to deliver aircrafts from the United States to the Soviet Union began in Ivanovo in August 1942. This town was located near the front line and had relatively good aerodromes and infrastructure of the Air Force training base. A number of 5 aviation ferry regiments were formed that were based in Fairbanks (Alaska, USA), Uelkal, Seymchan, Yakutsk and Kirensk. The air bases were established for aircrafts ground transportation in Uelkal, Markovo, Seymchan, Oymyakon, Yakutsk, Olekminsk and Kirensk. The administrative center of the Ferry Route was Yakutsk as it was located relatively in the middle of the route. Three thousands of personnel served the route.

Colonel Ilya Mazuruk, the Hero of the Soviet Union was appointed the Chief of the Krasnoyarsk Air Route by the decree of the State Defense Committee dated August 3, 1942.

The formation of the Route and Ferry Regiments Directorate was finished by September 1, 1942. The first US aircrafts landed in Krasnoyarsk on November 11, 1942.

Krasnoyarsk was the terminal point of the route for the ferry pilots of the Mazuruk’s division. But it was not the final destination of the aircraft ferrying. The aircrafts were handed over to the Military Acceptance of the Red Army Air Force in Krasnoyarsk. The aircrafts were delivered from Krasnoyarsk to the frontline airfields by air as well by railroad by the military personnel of the 45th Reserve Aviation Regiment (since June 1943 it became the 9th Ferry Regiment) and the pilots of the sustainer aviation regiments who were retrained in Krasnoyarsk.

About 8,000 aircrafts, dozens of tons of cargo, 307 tons of post, as well as a number of international passengers were delivered along the route during the war. The heroic work of the aviators was highly esteemed by the High Command. By the decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of February 5, 1944, the 1st Ferry Regiment was awarded with the Order of the Red Banner for excellent accomplishment of the command tasks on delivering of the combat aircrafts, and 551 people of the military personnel were awarded with combat orders and medals.

There were losses as well. During the work of the ferry route there were 279 flight accidents such as 131 structure failures, 60 emergency landings, 49 survivable crashes, and 39 crashes where 114 people died. The incidents happened also while ferrying the aircrafts from Krasnoyarsk to the frontline airfields. The search work at the sites of the air crashes is held till today.

The supply of aircrafts from the United States ceased due to the end of the war, and the phased disbandment of the ferry route structures began in September 1945. At the beginning of 1946, the Krasnoyarsk-Uelkal Air Route ceased operations.

The functioning of the ferry route was ensured by the selfless labor of not only Soviet ferry pilots, but also Siberian railway workers and employees of transport military commandant's offices who delivered American planes to the frontline along the Transsib, ground personnel and rear workers who ensured the construction of airfields, the operation of the air route and the transportation of aircraft, diplomatic and military cargo, as well as the leaders of ALSIB, who organized the creation of the route and its uninterrupted operation in extremely difficult conditions.

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