

## Alexander Fedotov, First Commander of the 392<sup>nd</sup> ODRAP

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The history of the airfield at Kipelovo and of its air garrison is inextricably linked with the name of Alexander Fedotov, the First Commander of the 392<sup>nd</sup> ODRAP and the First Commander of the Garrison Fedotov.



*Photo: Lieutenant-Colonel Alexander Sergheyevich Fedotov*

Alexander Fedotov was born on October 26<sup>th</sup>, 1926, in the village of Chekovo, Vladimir Region, Russia. Later the family moved to Moscow, where he began his schooling. But with the beginning of the Great Patriotic War, the family was evacuated, so Alexander graduated from High School in the Urals, in the city of Nizhnyy Taghil.

In November 1943, when he was only 17 years old, he volunteered to go to the Draft Board to call on to serve in the army. On November 20<sup>th</sup>, 1943 he was conscripted into the Armed Forces and sent for training to the 3<sup>rd</sup> School of Basic Training for Pilots of The Naval Aviation (which had been evacuated from Kursk to the city of Sarapul, Udmurtia), where one of his classmate was Pavel Ivanovich Belyaev (born in the Vologda area), one of the first future Soviet cosmonauts.

In June 1944, to further his studies, A.S. Fedotov was sent to the Levanyevsky Naval Aviation School in the city of Nikolayev, which he completed successfully in December 1946. As one of the best graduates, Lieutenant Fedotov went on to serve in the school as a pilot instructor.

The aviation regiment in which A.S. Fedotov began his marching career, in December 1947, was the 569<sup>th</sup> Aviation Regiment of the Naval Aviation of the Black Sea Fleet (his new position: Senior Pilot of Pe-2 dive bombers). In February 1951, A.S. Fedotov was conferred the military rank of Senior Lieutenant. In March of that year he continued his service in the 1676<sup>th</sup> Mine and Torpedo Aviation Regiment of the NA-BSF, where he served in various positions until August 1955 (till June of 1951 as Senior Airman, 1951-1954 as Flight Commander, 1954-1955 as Deputy Squadron Commander) flying the IL-28. In July 1953, A.S. Fedotov was awarded the military rank of Captain.

In 1955-1958, Captain A.S. Fedotov was trained at the Command Department of the Air Force Academy of the Red Banner. After graduating with honors from the Academy, he was promoted in rank to Major, and assigned to the post of Squadron Commander of the 981<sup>st</sup> Mine and Torpedo Aviation Regiment of the NA-BSF (Djankoy, Crimea, Ukraine).

Until July 1962, A.S. Fedotov served as Squadron Commander in several regiments of the Black Sea Fleet Naval Aviation:

1958-1959: 981<sup>st</sup> Mine and Torpedo Aviation Regiment (Djankoy, Crimea, Ukraine), flying the IL-28.

1959-1960: 819<sup>th</sup> Guards Mine and Torpedo Aviation Regiment (Vesyoloe, Crimea, Ukraine), flying the IL-28.

1960-1962: 124<sup>th</sup> Maritime Reconnaissance Aviation Regiment (Gvardyeyskoe, Crimea, Ukraine), flying the TU-16.

In December 1961, A.S. Fedotov was awarded the military rank of Lieutenant Colonel. At the same time, he was assigned the class qualification of Military Pilot 1<sup>st</sup> Class. In July 1962, Lieutenant Colonel Fedotov was sent to the post of Deputy Commander of the 943<sup>rd</sup> OMRAP (Separate Maritime Missile-carrying Aviation Regiment) of the NA-BSF (Oktyabr'skoe, Crimea, Ukraine), flying the Tu-16. Retraining took place in Nikolayev, at the 33<sup>rd</sup> Center for Military Training of the NA-BSF.



*Photo: AS Fedotov as Flight Director of the 943<sup>rd</sup> OMRAP. October 1962.*

On October 5<sup>th</sup>, 1963, by order of the Commander of the Soviet Navy, Lt. Col. A.S. Fedotov was appointed Commander of the 392<sup>nd</sup> ODRAP, which was fundamentally a new regiment of the Naval Aviation of the USSR, and which at that time was based in Severomorsk. At that time was formed the first squadron of the new regiment. Fedotov personally selected the command staff and the flight instructors, which soon became a strong team of associates.



*Photo: Officers of the first command of the 392<sup>nd</sup> ODRAP. Left to right: Shishov A.S. (Dep. Com. for Political Affairs.), Runyets V.H. (Dep. Com. for Engineering), Fedotov, A.S. (ODRAP Commander), Hayarov Yu.V. (Deputy ODRAP Commander), Afanasyev G.N. (Com. 1<sup>st</sup> Squadron), Zakharov, G.I. (Com. 2<sup>nd</sup> Squadron), Gladkov I.F. (Deputy ODRAP Commander). Severomorsk, 1964*

Under the direction of A.S. Fedotov the personnel of the regiment proceeded to the development of a completely new aircraft system. On November 5<sup>th</sup>, 1964 the first TU-95RTs (Bear D) entered the regiment, and by early 1965, two of the crews prepared to fly in IMC. Until that time, the flight crews kept their flying skills by flying on the Tu-16 (Badger). On May 27<sup>th</sup>, 1965, the crew of the Regiment Commander, Lt. Col. Fedotov together with the instructor Lt. Col. Gladkov, who had experience piloting TU-95 bombers, made the first flight on the full range of a Tu-95RTs. On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1965, by decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, the regiment was given its Unit Battle Flag.

Along with the development of new aviation technology, the regiment leadership, led by Lt. Col. Fedotov, solved major problems caused by the relocation of the 392<sup>nd</sup> ODRAP to its permanent home - the airfield at Kipelovo, and the construction of new military and residential townships. The regimental commander was at the same time the head of the garrison. On August 31<sup>st</sup>, 1965, the relocation of the regiment to the site of its permanent deployment was completed. The first dwellings were built, and the high school started its first academic year. A.S. Fedotov had to give a lot of effort and energy to the organization of the economic life and activities of the garrison still under construction.

Having established close contacts with the local authorities, he solved a number of everyday problems and issues.

1965 was characterized as a year completely dedicated to training crews. The well-planned training of the flight crews laid the foundations of the combat preparedness of the 392<sup>nd</sup> ODRAP, and on December 6<sup>th</sup>, 1965, the flight crews of I.F. Gladkov and A.P. Nikonov performed the first flight on active duty in the North-East Atlantic, to identify the US Navy aircraft carrier “USS America”.

On January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1966, during a flight to the Military Council of the Naval Aviation of the Northern Fleet, during the landing approach at the airfield at Lakhta, an AN-8 transport and cargo plane of the 912<sup>th</sup> Separate Transport Air Regiment, commanded by Captain V. Kropanyev, crashed while carrying the leaders of the Kipelovo garrison.

Among them was the Commander of the 392<sup>nd</sup> ODRAP, Lt. Col. A.S. Fedotov.



In a little more than two years, A.S. Fedotov established himself as the commander of the first Soviet Long-Range Reconnaissance Aviation Regiment, designed to solve problems of strategic importance, and earned the sincere respect of his comrades in the service. Under his leadership, the foundations were laid for the 392<sup>nd</sup> ODRAP as a fighting unit of the Naval Aviation of the Northern Fleet. A.S. Fedotov and his friends were the beginning of the best traditions of the Fedotov Air Garrison.

A.S. Fedotov was buried at the memorial cemetery of the village of Fedotov.

*Photo: The first monument to the officers of the first command of the 392<sup>nd</sup> ODRAP and Kipelovo airbase, who died in a plane crash on Jan. 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1966. Kipelovo, 1966.*

On February 12<sup>th</sup>, 1966, by decision of the Vologda Oblast Council of Deputies, the garrison was given the name “Fedotovo” in honor of its first commander, Lt. Col. Alexander Sergheevich Fedotov.

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Valery Fedotov, son of Alexander Sergheevich, continued a glorious aviation dynasty. After the death of his father, he enrolled in the Sasovsky Flying School of Civil Aviation, from which he graduated in 1970. In 1978 Valery graduated from the Academy of Civil Aviation. He worked as Leader, then as Chief Pilot-Inspector of the Ministry of Civil Aviation of the USSR. He is a Pilot 1<sup>st</sup> Class in Civil Aviation.

Since 1982, after graduating from the test pilots school at Zhukovsky, Valery continued his flying career as a test pilot of the Ministry of Aviation Industry of the USSR. In May 1986 Valery Alexandrovich took part in the cleaning operations caused by the accident at the Chernobyl NPP. In 1992, V.A. Fedotov was promoted to Test Pilot 1<sup>st</sup> Class.

After years of work in the Civil Aviation, Valery Fedotov has mastered more than 15 types of aircraft, logging more than 7000 flight hours. Valery lives in Moscow.

**Photos from the archives of Valery Alexandrovich Fedotov:**



*Alexander Fedotov as student of the Third School of Basic Training for pilots of the Naval Aviation. Sarapul, Udmurtia, 1943*

*Students of the Levanyevsky Naval Aviation School. First from right – A.S. Fedotov. Nikolayev, Ukraine, 1944-46*



*Senior Lieutenant A.S. Fedotov as pilot of the 1676<sup>th</sup> Mine and Torpedo Aviation Regiment of the NA-BSF. 1952*