

= Alexander Novikov =

Alexander Alexandrovich Novikov (Russian : ?????? ? ??? ?????? ? ??????? ?? ? ?????? ; November 19 [O.S. November 6] 1900 ? December 3 , 1976) was the Chief marshal of the aviation for the Soviet Air Force during Russia 's involvement in the Second World War . Lauded as " the man who has piloted the Red Air Force through the dark days into the present limelight " and a " master of tactical air power " , he was twice given the title of Hero of the Soviet Union , as well as a number of other Soviet decorations .

A gifted air force commander and one of the leading men of the Soviet armed forces , Novikov was involved in nearly all exploits of the air force during World War II and was at the forefront of developments in command and control and of air combat techniques . After the war , Novikov was arrested by order of the Politburo , and was forced by NKVD chief Lavrentiy Beria into a " confession " which implicated Marshal Zhukov in a conspiracy . Novikov was then imprisoned until the death of Joseph Stalin in 1953 , whereupon he became an avionics teacher and writer until his death .

= = Early life and career = =

Novikov was born in Kryukovo , a village in Nerekhta , in Kostroma Oblast . In 1919 he became an infantryman in the Red Army , and in 1920 became a party member .

He served in the 384th regiment of the Russian 7th Army , helped put down the Kronstadt uprising in March 1921 , and he served as a platoon commander during anti @-@ guerrilla fighting in the Caucasus in 1922 . Having graduated from the Frunze Military Academy in 1930 , Novikov moved to the air force in 1933 , and served as chief of operations until 1935 , when he took command of a light bomber squadron .

Novikov was expelled from the party and the armed forces in 1937 ; however he was re @-@ admitted by the Commissioner of the Belarussian Military District , A. I. Mezis , who was in turn arrested . Novikov served as chief of the air force staff of the Leningrad Military District prior to serving in the Soviet @-@ Finnish War during 1939 and 1940 . For his service in the conflict he was promoted to Major General and earned the Order of Lenin . He continued to command the Air Forces of the Leningrad Military District until the outbreak of World War II .

= = Second World War = =

During the early setbacks of the Russian army at the hand of Nazi Germany , Novikov and the Leningrad air forces took part in a number of strikes against the advancing German armies , including the first Soviet air operation of the war , from June 25 ? 30 , 1941 , which cost the Germans 130 aircraft . During this time , Novikov was noted for his skill in command and for his innovation , particularly the then unknown use of radio to coordinate bomber flights . In July 1941 , Novikov expanded his command from Leningrad to include air forces of the Northern Front , Northwestern Front and the Baltic Fleet , and as the Germans approached Leningrad , Novikov and his forces flew 16 @,@ 567 sorties .

Novikov briefly held the position of First Deputy to the Air Force Commander from February until April 11 , 1942 . He then became Commander of the Red Army Air Force ? Deputy to the People 's Commissar of Defense of the USSR for Aviation , a position from which he began to reorganize the Soviet air force . He worked specifically for the creation of separate divisions and air corps , as well as the improvement of front line coordination . During the siege of Stalingrad , Novikov successfully persuaded Marshal Zhukov and in turn , Joseph Stalin that the air force was not ready for a planned counter @-@ offensive , an argument to which both commanders eventually conceded . After a substantial period of development , Novikov was able to provide Zhukov with an aerial blockade of the German forces at Stalingrad , along with the destruction of 1 @,@ 200 enemy planes . Later operations over Kuban destroyed another 1 @,@ 100 planes .

At the Battle of Kursk , Novikov introduced new innovations such as shaped @-@ charge bombs , night fighters and ground @-@ attack aircraft . The Battle of Königsberg saw 2 @,@ 500 combat

aircraft under Novikov being made available to the besieging armies , with the Soviet air marshal recommending low level heavy night bombers being used . 514 of these dropped 4 @, @ 440 tons of bombs on the beleaguered city . For his part in the operation Novikov was made Hero of the Soviet Union , and on June 24 , 1944 the United States awarded him a Legion of Merit . Novikov then transferred to the Pacific Theatre to fight against Japan , where he was made Hero of the Soviet Union a second time for his work in forming large air armies to bomb Japanese forces in China and Korea .

= = Post @-@ war career = =

On January 16 , 1946 Novikov submitted to Stalin plans that would lay the groundwork for the modern Soviet air force and the industry that would supply it . On April 22 , 1946 however , before these could be enacted , Novikov was stripped of his rank and titles and then arrested . The reason for this was that at the Potsdam conference it was discovered that the United States had better spy planes than the Soviet Union . He was interrogated and tortured the next day and again between May 4 and May 8 , 1946 by Lavrentiy Beria before being forced to read a confession to the Politburo implicating Marshal Zhukov . Novikov was tried by the Military Collegium and sentenced to fifteen years in a labor camp .

Novikov was released six years into his sentence following Stalin 's death on June 29 , 1953 , and reinstated as Chief Marshal of Aviation , where he was able to put his ideas into practice . A plan for using newly available jet aircraft and nuclear weapons to wage a possible future war with the United States was laid out by Novikov and shown to Nikita Khrushchev , who turned the proposal down in favor of ballistic missiles .

Following his retirement in 1958 , Novikov accepted an offer to become head of the Higher Civil Aviation School in Leningrad , where he worked for ten years . He became a professor , and was awarded the Order of the Red Banner in 1961 .

In retirement , Novikov wrote a number of works on aviation and warfare , which were used to educate new Soviet air force pilots . He died , aged 74 , on December 3 , 1976 .

= = Honours and awards = =

Twice Hero of the Soviet Union
Three Orders of Lenin
Three Orders of the Red Banner
Three Orders of Suvorov 1st class
Order of Kutuzov 1st class
Order of the Red Banner of Labour
Two Orders of the Red Star
Jubilee Medal " For Military Valour ? In Commemoration of the 100th Anniversary since the Birth of Vladimir Il 'ich Lenin "
Medal " For the Defence of Leningrad "
Medal " For the Defence of Stalingrad "
Medal " For the Victory over Germany in the Great Patriotic War 1941 ? 1945 "
Jubilee Medal " Twenty Years of Victory in the Great Patriotic War 1941 @-@ 1945 "
Jubilee Medal " Thirty Years of Victory in the Great Patriotic War 1941 @-@ 1945 "
Medal " For the Victory over Japan "
Medal " For the Capture of Königsberg "
Medal " For the Capture of Berlin "
Medal " Veteran of the Armed Forces of the USSR "
Jubilee Medal " XX Years of the Workers ' and Peasants ' Red Army "
Jubilee Medal " 30 Years of the Soviet Army and Navy "
Jubilee Medal " 40 Years of the Armed Forces of the USSR "
Jubilee Medal " 50 Years of the Armed Forces of the USSR "

Medal " In Commemoration of the 250th Anniversary of Leningrad "
Chief Commander of the Legion of Merit (USA)
Grand Cross of the Order of the Legion of Honour (France)
Order of Red Banner (Mongolia)
Order of the Polar Star (Mongolia)