



## **NIKOLAI KASTANAEV**

*(1904-1937)*

*Co-pilot / Test pilot*

Kastanaev was Levanevsky's right hand. Born in Moscow in 1904, he had to leave school and begin working as a machinist at 15 when his father died. His first exposure to aircraft when he became a driver at Osoaviachim flight base. When he became a Komsomol All-Union Leninist Young Communist League member in 1923 he was sent to Yegoryevsk Flight School, and upon graduation, to the Red Air Force Flight school where he became a fighter pilot. His excellent performance led to a transfer to the Air Force Research Institute where he worked as a test-pilot with light aircraft and flying boats until 1934. Starting 1935, he becomes a test-pilot at the aircraft production facility and becomes involved with testing and being the first to fly the DB-A N-209.

He is remembered as a very strong and kind man. A story people remember is about him single-handedly removing a large stone three people before couldn't push aside to clear the way.

# biography