



SIGIZMUND ALEKSANDROVICH LEVANEVSKY

(Russian: Сигизмунд Александрович Леваневский) (1902-1937).

Flight Commander of N-209

Graduated from the Sevastopol School of Naval Pilots (1923) and remained there as an instructor until 1933 when he transferred to Glavsevmorput, as a polar pilot. That year he rescued American pilot James Mattern who had crashed in the Arctic and flew him to Alaska. In the winter of 1934, Levanevsky took part in the rescue of the “Chelyuskin” crew which was cut short when he crashed his aircraft. He and six of his colleagues became the first Heroes of the Soviet Union for their heroic efforts in that event.

Levanevsky was a bold and decisive pilot, always finding a way out of difficult situations due to his original approaches. He liked to fly; his style was elegant and beautiful, according to many witnesses. He also liked to drive motorbikes, to hunt and to fish, and was an avid lover of music. He knew the planes he piloted very well. Whenever he landed, even in the most inhospitable places of the Arctic, he always managed to return safely. In

four years between 1933 and 1937 he managed to make more transcontinental flights than any other pilot. In 1935, along with co-pilot G.F. Baidukov and navigator V.I. Levchenko, he attempted to fly from Moscow over the Pole to the US but was forced to return from the Barents Sea region and put down near Novgorod. In August – September 1936, together with navigator V.I. Levchenko he flew N-208 “Waltie-1-A” from Los Angeles to Moscow, a total of 19,000 km.

On August 12, 1937 during his third Moscow—North Pole—USA flight, DB-A N-209 with five man crew his luck ran out and he and the crew vanished somewhere in the arctic after crossing the North Pole. The extensive multi-national search for the airplane and crew was unsuccessful.

In his life he co-authored: ‘How We Saved the “Chelyuskin” Crew’ (1934) and ‘My Element Rostov-on-Don’ (1935).

biography