

the courageous crew, headed by USSR honoured Test Pilot Y. Ketov. On the flight, A. Strelnikova, master engineer of the design bureau, also performed the duties of sports commissar. On the return home she spoke with the journalists about some of the special facets of this unique flight.

"The data from this flight," Strelnikova explained, "once the oscillograms have been analyzed and the necessary documentation has been completed, will be sent to the International Aviation Sports Federation for registration as a world record."

This unprecedented flight "in one breath" across the entire country has added another item to the list of major specifications for this craft, which was designed for operation under severe Arctic and Antarctic conditions.

One of the correspondents called attention to the unusual and shiny emblem on the side of the plane.

"This is the emblem of the Transarctic Ski Expedition," explained A. Romanyuk, head of the air expedition. "In February our AN-74 was given the job of servicing a Soviet and Canadian group of skiers."

In April alone the AN-74 flew over 100 hours over the Arctic. It carried the ski enthusiasts to the official start site and then assisted them with information about ice conditions. On more than 30 occasions, with pinpoint accuracy, the crew dropped food and various equipment to the polar marathon participants. It was, by the way, an AN-74 which removed Dmitrii Shparo's group from an ice floe in 1986.