

icebreaker that would help them to force their way to moorage in a port. But the icebreaker Khariton Laptev itself got caught in an ice trap. To get out from it, a map showing the ice situation was urgently needed. For five hours the crew of an Il-14 circled above the sea. The pilots prepared a detailed ice distribution chart and set the course for the ships. The information was dropped on the icebreaker's deck in a special package. The dropped message bag, containing a map drawn by air-hydrologists and some recommendations for the convoy's passage, landed with precision on the ship's deck. Soon the ships in the ocean started moving.

Long-term forecasts received from "flying laboratories" kept the diesel ships from drifting off course in the Tartar Strait, where the ice reached more than ten metres in thickness. Aviators guided the ocean ferryboat Sakhalin-6 to Magadan. It was carrying a huge transformer for the construction of the Kolyma hydroelectric power plant. The water was blocked with ice but the delivery of an important cargo could not be delayed. Without this unit, work on the assembly of the power plant could not have continued.

The polar flyers also like to reminisce about the time when the ice scouts on the Northern sea route discovered a mine embedded in ice - a left-over from the war. Convoys of ships were passing nearby and the mine was in their way. A helicopter took off from the deck of the icebreaker Kiev. The location was marked. Explosives experts were brought in. As soon as the Bickford fuse ignited, the helicopter flew up and away from the dangerous platform. The passage was free for the ships to go through...