

Il-14 pointed out the general direction, while the helicopter led the boats through the areas of open water and conducted tactical reconnaissance. Soon the polar explorers were settling down on an ice island in the ocean. The pilots also helped with the unloading. In five days, they made almost three hundred trips transporting 762 tons of cargos.

...A look at the pilot's operating map in an ice reconnaissance plane reveals that the course traced upon it is similar, in configuration, to a multi-mile comb. Its teeth - the tacks - span enormous areas. An aerial photographic survey, in combination with radiolocation (radar), yields data on the ice cover that lies under the aircraft's wings. The standard of the survey is unusually high.

The electronic instruments of the reconnaissance airplanes - the unique aircraft systems "Led" and "Toros" - are capable of "seeing" not only the operative picture of ice over large areas, they can also measure the thickness of ice and do it with precision of up to several centimetres. All this is helping the crews of icebreakers and ships to plot the ice conditions ahead of the ships. The information received from above is arranged in computation columns for the ships' pilots. The ships are guided by it along the most favorable course. This facilitates the transportation of thousands of tonnes of cargo along the Northern Seaway, as well as the location of ice fields for drifting polar research stations. Moreover, many captains have to thank the pilots of reconnaissance airplanes for freeing them from "icy captivity"...

There was a time, for instance, when navigation was practically closed in La Perouse Strait. Heavy ice had immobilized several diesel-powered ships. They were waiting for an