

The vessel finally departed on its trip.

The first ice fields were encountered in the vicinity of Kanin Nos. At first the vessel managed on its own, and later the nuclear-powered "Arktika" became its guide. This time, the "Arkhangelsk" was to unload at two points on the Yara-Yakha R. The shortest way would have been via Yugorsky Shar, but helicopter reconnaissance showed that there were vast ice-hummock fields at the approaches to the channel. A course was set for Karskiye Vorota. At this time of the year, the strait is rarely free of ice.

An ice breaker was called upon to smash through the hummocks and to cut a path around the vessel. This continued mile after mile. Open water was reached at the Bolvansky Nos traverse. The shore lead was soon replaced by continuous ice fields. On the third day, we spotted the lights of the icebreaker "Kapitan Dranitsyn", which was waiting at the entrance to the channel which had been cleared to the shore ice unloading site.

The nuclear-powered "Arktika" had completed its role of guide; the depth did not allow it to go farther. First mate S. Slavgorodsky stood on the bridge of the "Arkhangelsk" with second mate D. Yelokhov and helmsman A. Rybakov. A searchlight skimmed over the hummocks. Only the keen eye of a seaman could distinguish the channel blocked with crushed ice.

"The Kapitan Dranitsyn could have made a better channel," remarked S. Slavgorodsky, "our motor vessel is like an ice breaker itself, but has difficulty cutting through, always having to back up."

The "Kapitan Dranitsyn" finally advanced and cut around us, renewing the channel. We got word from shore that an all-purpose vessel was heading our way.