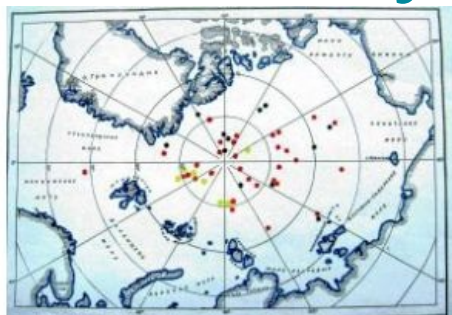


# Hydrographic Society Russia



## 50 Years in the Arctic

On 22 October 2012, members of the Russian Geographical Society (RGS) met with HSR members to mark the 50th anniversary of the beginning of regular mapping of the Arctic basin with a session by the RGS Commission on geographical and mathematical cartography.

The session was opened by rear admiral (ret.), corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Science, professor, and deserved HSR member Aleksandr I. Sorokin. One of the last chiefs of the Northern Hydrographic Expedition (NHE), Nikolay A. Zamyatin, gave the first report. He reminded everyone that research at the Arctic pole from ice was carried out earlier. But it was only the single drifting stations and the data received from them

that allowed the presentation of a general picture of the bottom relief. The first dimensional research on bottom relief, sediment structure, gravitational and magnetic fields using modern devices and exact measurements began in 1961. This research was carried out by NHE specialists in co-operation with experts from the Scientific Research Institute of Arctic Geology. These expeditions would certainly have been impossible without the participation of pilots and technicians of the Soviet, and the Russian polar aircraft.

The lecturer explained about structure of the NHE and illuminated the contribution of the predecessors – the chiefs of the expedition, including Leonid I. Senchura, Serguey K. Nemilov, Vladimir A. Baranov, Semen A. Fridman, Nikolay K. Timoshenko and Aleksandr P. Makorta. They were responsible for the very difficult organisation of research at high-altitudes .

Former general director of the Hydrographic Enterprise (St. Petersburg Transport Ministry), Viktor I. Medvedev, explained the achievements of its employees in the Arctic regions being studied.

Aleksandr I. Sorokin, in turn, noted the major contributions by experts from the Arctic and Antarctic Institute (St. Petersburg) and the polar pilots.

Prof. Stanislav G. Mikavtadze (Navy Academy, St. Petersburg) emphasised the outstanding contribution to science by hydrographers in the Arctic regions. He also reminded everyone of the assignment of the USSR State premium to a number of experts, including Aleksandr I. Sorokin.

An employee of the Cartographic division, Valentina Agerova, mentioned the long-term work on assigning names of the Soviet and Russian hydrographers to underwater objects in the Arctic regions and showed a map detailing the positions of such objects.

At the end of the session A.I. Sorokin suggested starting a petition for the establishment of a memorial board in St. Petersburg, where the outstanding Soviet geodesist, astronomer and cartographer rear admiral Vladimir V. Kavraysky lived, in connection with the 130th anniversary of his birthday (2014). Participants unanimously supported this initiative.

After the session ended, some veteran participants of the Arctic research expeditions shared memoirs of the work in difficult polar conditions. Thus the amusing moments of a life were also not forgotten. Participant of the 1962 Arctic expedition, Viktor Rybin, recounted that besides necessary tools and books he also brought along his ice skates. During the rare free time he had, he cleared away a small surface of the ice and 'wrote' simple figures on the ice. This tiny skating rink which he named 'Polar pleasure', was at that time probably the most northern rink in the world (latitude 87° N) and could be recorded in the Guinness Book of Records.