

Russian UAV Regiment Stationed in the Arctic

OE Watch Commentary: The accompanying passage from *Na Strazhe Zapolyarya*-- Russia's Northern Fleet's newspaper-- discusses Russia's first (and so far its only) UAV regiment which is part of the Northern Fleet. According to the article, the location was chosen based on the goal of ensuring security for Russia's economic activity in the Arctic region and for "developing, guarding, and defending strategic areas of the Arctic Ocean."

As the article notes, there are two types of systems in service with the Northern Fleet's UAV regiment: the Forpost-1, and the mobile Orlan-10. These systems have been in the force for several years and Russia is developing UAVs particularly for the Arctic. These include long-distance UAVs, helicopter UAVs, cargo UAVs, scientific UAVs and even a nuclear-powered underwater drone [autonomous underwater vessel-AUV]. UAVs, perhaps from this regiment or the Central Military District, supported the riverine landing exercise at the river port of Dudinka on the Yenisei River last August. The first career UAV officers will be commissioned from the prestigious Zhukovskiy and Gagarin Aerospace Academy this year and some graduates will be assigned to the regiment. **End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)**

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Mobile Orlan-10 UAV.

Source: Mil.ru, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3AITC-UAV_01.jpg, CC BY 4.0.

Source: Anna Korolkova: "The First and Only," *Na Strazhe Zapolyarya* [On Guard at the Polar Region], 15 December 2017.

In essence, UAVs are first and foremost reconnaissance devices. Using them makes it possible to instantly obtain appropriate and relevant information, assess the situation, and make decisions when executing combat and training missions....

UAV detachments and squadrons have been formed throughout the Russian Federation Armed Forces but Russia's first and so far only UAV regiment is in the Northern Fleet. Its location was not chosen at random. Our state has been paying particular attention in recent years to ensuring security for Russia's economic activity in the Arctic region, and to ... developing, guarding, and defending strategic areas of the Arctic Ocean. Unmanned aviation is an essential tool in this process....

The Northern Fleet's UAV regiment was formed just a year ago. Since then a training facility has been established, cubicles and hangars for the equipment have been made ready, and the airfield has been reinstated after being closed for 20 years. It launched its first UAV on 7 July 2017. There are two types of system in service with the Northern Fleet's UAV regiment: the Forpost-1, which operates from a fixed location, and the mobile Orlan-10. The aircraft in the Forpost system can remain airborne for up to 18 hours, and those of the Orlan for 12 hours. New UAVs will arrive in the future. By 2019, the regiment will be equipped with the specialized training simulators needed to maintain and improve the UAV operators' skills.

Regimental Commander Colonel Sergey Stepanov states that his subordinates are already a cohesive military team capable of accomplishing any mission assigned to them. The Northern Fleet regiment's UAVs are used for reconnaissance, observation, and surveillance of the fleet's zone of responsibility, inspecting the coastline, topographical surveys of the terrain, checking the condition of military infrastructure sites, assessing the quality of troops' camouflage, visual monitoring of combat training events by the fleet's subunits, detection of targets for preparation of their coordinates, artillery fire adjustment, and guiding combat aviation.

The Northern Fleet regiment's UAV combat crews provided security this year for the "Arctic -- Territory for Dialog" international forum, held in Arkhangel'sk in March. They helped assess the effectiveness of fire at the main operational and combat training event of the Northern Fleet's forces and troops for the 2017 training year -- a performance-appraisal command and staff exercise by the fleet's mixed forces under the leadership of Vice Admiral Nikolay Yevmenov, Commander of the Northern Fleet. The regiment's UAVs were also used for information support in a unique tactical-operational exercise to erect and defend a bridge across the Kola River in the settlement of Shonguy.... UAV support is irreplaceable also for peaceful purposes, like detecting oil spills and monitoring the condition of electrical transmission lines and pipelines.

This year, the regiment will receive its first officer graduates from the Unmanned Aviation Faculty of the Aerospace Academy named in honor of Professor N. Ye. Zhukovskiy and Yu. A. Gagarin.