

## New Developments – Soyuz-5 (1969) Incident

The Soyuz-5 near-disaster (January 18, 1969) was kept a deep dark Soviet state secret for decades, and only leaked out after the collapse of the Soviet regime. Interviews and press reports allowed a fairly detailed reconstruction of the sequence of events and of the thoughts of participants. My own narrative is on my home page.

In October 2005 I met with Volynov for more than an hour at the cosmonaut training center outside of Moscow. He showed a recent made-for-Moscow TV movie reenactment of his adventure, and narrated and discussed it, remarking on where it was accurate and where it had been over-dramatised. I intend to write up my notes of that meeting for publication shortly.

Volynov did say that my version of his post-landing survival was not correct. Long ago, while in the US Air Force, I had learned of an embassy gossip account of a mid-winter off-course landing of a cosmonaut who had had to hike a few miles to a nearby settlement to survive. At the time, I knew of no solo winter off-course Soviet manned spaceflight landing, and filed it away as ‘garble’ or even ‘tall-tale’.

Later, when I learned that Soyuz-5 had in fact performed just such a feat, and added odin and odin together to get dva, and postulated that the story was about Volynov. But he told me it wasn’t – and gave me another even more miraculous account of how he had avoided freezing to death within hours back in January 1969. That story will be in my new published account, along with other highly personal details such as how he had to fight the flight surgeons who subsequently grounded him – spaceflight, jets, all – on the grounds that he had been too terrified to ever face flight dangers again with any semblance of rationality. But he did fly again, and fly into space again – and faced an even MORE serious danger on his next return to Earth, a story he promised to tell me about ‘next time’.



Boris Volynov, Star City, Russia, October 2005



Volynov and Oberg discuss Soyuz-5 near disaster

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