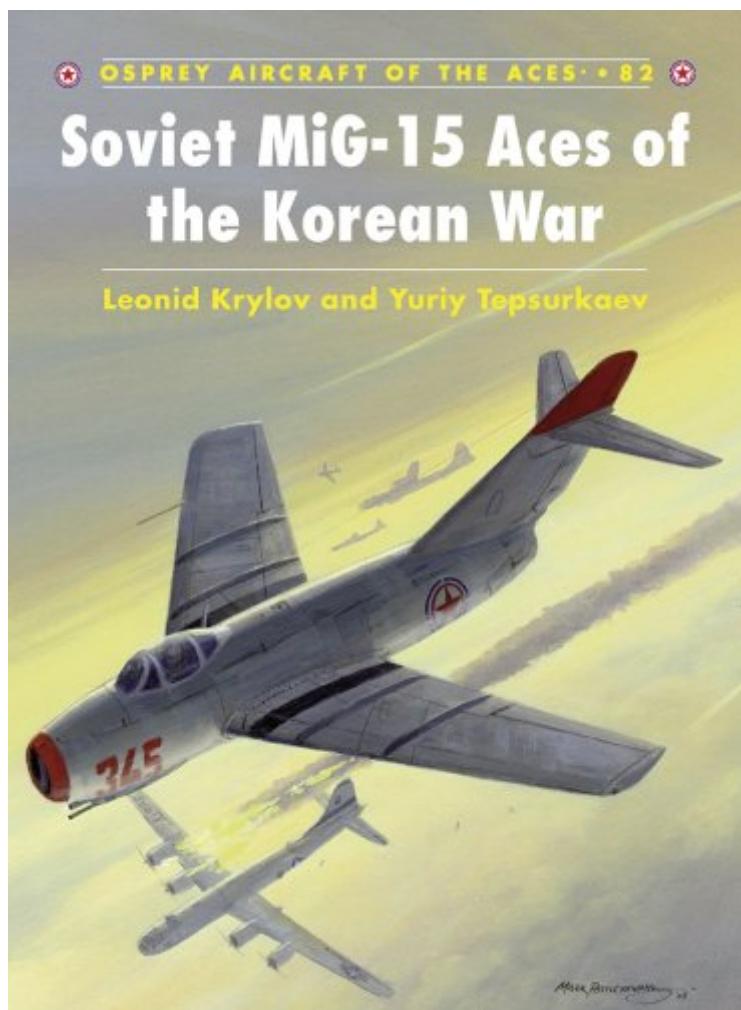


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# Soviet MiG-15 Aces Of The Korean War (Aircraft Of The Aces)



## **Synopsis**

The Soviet Union began assisting the People's Republic of China in its establishment of a modern air force in 1950, when Soviet Air Force regiments were sent to train local pilots. China's involvement in the Korean War in late October 1950 inevitably drew Soviet pilots into the war, with a total of 52 Soviet pilots scoring five or more victories there. The history of these covert actions has been a long-buried secret and this book is the first English publication to detail the only instance when the Cold War became 'hot'. This book uncovers Soviet combat experiences during the Korean War from detailed unit histories and rare first-hand account. With access to extensive Russian archives, the authors offer an enthralling insight into an air war that has been largely covered up and neglected. Illustrated with previously unpublished photographs and detailed full colour profiles, this book is a unique opportunity to read about an often-forgotten aspect of the Cold War.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

The story of the air war over Korea has been told and retold almost exclusively by US historians. Until the fall of the Iron Curtain we were led to believe that the exchange ratio of F-86 Sabres for MIG-15 fighters was an incredible 10:1, a figure that was later downwards adjusted by the USAF to

8:1. Modern research indicates the air battles over Korea were much less one sided than previously thought with the kill ratio now being downwards adjusted to as low as 1,3:1 in favor of the F-86 when opposed by Soviet flown MIG-15s. This book finally tells the story from the Soviet point of view and for that reason alone it is worth reading. As expected for such a condensed account, the book traces the highlights of air battles waged by the various Soviet units deployed to Korea. It is a somewhat tedious read, but by no means an uninteresting one. The artwork is nice and just for once, unlike other volumes in the Osprey e-books series, the orientation of the art work does not require you to turn your head by 90 degrees to properly admire it.

This is an excellent look at the MiG pilots who flew aircraft marked as PLA and North Korean fighters. During the Cold War the USSR never acknowledged the involvement of its pilots in Korea (despite the fact that Russian voice intercepts were monitored during aerial combat) and public acknowledgement of their accomplishments were not made. Many of these pilots were WWII veterans who had gained notoriety fighting the Luftwaffe. For the first time we learn the names of many of these pilots, we see their pictures and we learn what units they were assigned to. The artwork illustrating the paint schemes on the MiG-15s flown during the war is very well done as well. It's a pity that no map is included to outline the operational areas where the MiGs flew. Also, the Russian author never discusses the REASON for the secrecy surrounding these pilots or the great lengths the Soviets went to perpetuate the cover story that North Korean and Chinese pilots against UN forces. Political constraints put artificial limitations on the Soviet pilots, preventing them from flying over areas in which they might be captured if shot down. I would have liked to have learned what the pilots thought of all this. Nevertheless, a very good book.

We can see that in the beginning the MiG is a superb machine, while fighting against propeller driven planes and 1st gen fighter jets. But when the F-86 comes into play and by the end, with increasing number and advanced tactics, some of the MiG flaws starts to appear. There is a lot of combats and pilots narratives. The book does not get too repetitive by stating "combat took place on that day over that area, claiming "Y" UN fighters with "Z" losses, being "Y" confirmed/not confirmed by UN forces."

This book provides one of our first detailed - WONDERFULLY detailed - looks at Russian Mig pilots in the Korean War, including marvelous first hand accounts of combat as well as excellent unit records. This is the first book on the subject that I've ever seen with this level of detail - it wasn't

long ago when the Russians wouldn't even ACKNOWLEDGE they had pilots in Korea. When reading this book, it's important to keep in mind that Krylov and Tepsurkaev probably had to secure the goodwill of their Russian sources in order to get such great access. Obviously, these pilots aren't going to grant interviews to someone planning a hatchet job on their military careers. Thus, the reader shouldn't be surprised that the narrative advocates and honors not just the pilots themselves, but also their interpretation of the war. Thus, you will not see any mention that these guys weren't "supposed" to be there while at the same time field a lot of strident complaints about US conduct and kill claims (I still wonder why excess US claims couldn't have been North Korean or Chinese pilots?) This "bias" may be irritating to some, but the first person accounts and detailed Russian records make it a price abundantly worth paying. Furthermore, the authors weave their way through this political minefield by diligently researching and cross referencing both US and Russian records for every encounter. The results are a rather embarrassing parade of inflated claims by both sides, with people becoming great heroes and aces for stuff that simply didn't happen. Both sides were struggling to adapt to the new speed and range of jet combat, with afterburner smoke all too often being mistaken for a dying aircraft. If you haven't read Osprey books of this kind, you have to keep in mind that these books are about records, photos and paint schemes first and literature second. However, for those who want something dramatic, visceral insight is actually very easy to get: just skip to ANYTHING written in quotes. There you'll find a wealth of white knuckle accounts as flesh and blood as any: "There was no way out. I headed right into the shell bursts. The aircraft shook and was thrown from side to side as if it were taxiing on cobblestones. I gripped the control column tightly and sat there more dead than alive..." Obviously, the majority of encounters don't have the benefit of a personal interview, and are thus just what can be gleaned from combat reports: "Having fought his way past eight escorting Sabres, Snr Lt Evgeniy Stelmakh single-handedly attacked four B-29s and managed to shoot one of them down..." If you want to actually decipher who was where when, I strongly recommend that first you download a few maps of Korea. Even so, the majority of the book is a torrent of facts, names and unit numbers, and if you're not writing things down it'll make your head spin: "17th and 523rd IAPs joined battle with the attacking fighter-bombers, while 14 MiGs from 18th GvIAP, which had climbed to 10,000 m (32,500 ft), were directed towards the B-29s..." I truly feel this book is a fabulous, ground breaking first step towards an understanding of Russian pilots in the Korean War, and with the aforementioned caveats in mind, it can serve you wonderfully no matter what your interest. Here is where its true wealth lies.

Well written by Leonid Krylov, this is a rare look through its excellent narration, vintage photography and drawings of the Soviet air crews participation in the Korean War on the side of its allies North Korea and Red China. This historical and very descriptive book reveals the photographs, the Mig-15 jet fighters and some other Russian aircraft, names and rank of the Soviet pilots (some of them dead in dogfights) during this conflict 1950-1953. I highly recommend this book to all military aviation enthusiasts as well as military historians.

Book covers the Russian portion of the fighting by their migs. Piloted by Russians this book shows the unit rotation and the training these pilots did before coming to Korea. The number of aircraft shot down seems to be high but the effort the Russians put into their aircraft is a story worth telling.

This book has a lot of information and artwork but a lot of repetition.

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