

Russian General Who Had Korean Jet Shot Down Dead at 74

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General Anatoly Kornukov gave the order to shoot down a Korean Air Boeing 747 passenger plane that had twice crossed into Russian air space without proper authorization.

A former Air Force General whose order to down a New York-bound passenger plane in 1983 killed hundreds and cast a pallor over U.S.-Russian relations has died, a news report said.

Anatoly Kornukov, 74, was hospitalized in Moscow late Sunday night. It was unclear what illness he had been suffering from.

"Doctors were unable to save him, and he died overnight," RIA Novosti reported Tuesday, citing the news service of the Almaz Central Marine Design Bureau, Kornukov's employer later in life.

Kornukov had served in the Baltics and the Far East throughout his career. In 1980, he took over command of the 40th Air Force Fighter Division in the Far East Military District.

In September 1983, Kornukov gave the order to shoot down a Korean Air Boeing 747

passenger plane that had twice crossed into Russian air space without proper authorization.

The plane, which was en route from Seoul to New York, had flown off course by more than 500 kilometers and was crossing through an off-limits military area when it was shot down.

Of those killed in the incident, 246 were passengers and 23 crew members. A member of the U.S. House of Representatives was among the passengers.

The U.S. was outraged by the affair, which then-President Ronald Reagan referred to as a "crime against humanity."

Kornukov retained his position after the incident and only left the Air Force in 2002, when he became the head adviser to the general director of the Almaz Central Marine Design Bureau, an engineering company in the shipbuilding industry.

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