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Ruff Landing: Russia Tests Dog Parachutes

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“After landing, all four-legged test participants felt well and were ready to follow commands,” a test parachutist said. **Screenshot Tekhnodinamika**

Russian paratroopers and rescuers could soon be parachuting to earth with four-legged assistants by their side.

State-owned aviation components holding Technodinamika said Tuesday that it was in the final stages of testing Russia’s first canine parachute system. Footage broadcast on state media Tuesday showed a doberman pinscher and a German shepherd flying from 4,000 meters and making a soft landing in an open field.

“Four-legged law enforcement officers are often involved in military and rescue operations, but sometimes it takes too long to reach the destination on foot and it’s impossible to land by helicopter or plane,” the company said in a press release.

“That’s when you need a special suspension system.”

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Test parachutists Yury Mironov and Andrei Toropkov said the test subjects "felt good" but had to undergo additional preparations ahead of the eight jumps they performed, such as not being fed or given water for some time.

"We didn't know how their bodies would react," they said.

The most surprising discovery was the dogs being able to see the earth and trying to "land" from as high as 3,000 kilometers despite the previous understanding that they couldn't see that far away, Mironov and Toropkov said.

"The most important thing is to get the dogs into the aircraft. They adequately tolerate the flight and even watch the clouds through the porthole," Toropkov said. "After landing, all four-legged test participants felt well and were ready to follow commands."

Technodinamika's parachute harness is designed for both single jumps involving dogs weighing up to 45 kilograms attached to parachutists as well as tandem jumps involving a parachutist, a dog handler and the dog itself.

"The animals get tense when the door opens and there's wind and noise, but they calm down thanks to the dog handler. It's more difficult without them," Toropkov said.

Technodinamika said it is working on doubling the maximum altitude for dog parachute jumps to 8,000 meters with special canine oxygen equipment.

State tests are planned to be completed by the end of 2021 and then be submitted to the military and, potentially, to emergency crews.

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