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Yury Salnikov, Filmmaker and Co-Author of 'The Chelyuskin Adventure,' Dead at age 88

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Documentary Filmmaker Yury Salnikov. **Andrei Makhonin / TASS**

Soviet and Russian film director Yuri Salnikov, who made dozens of films about aviation history, has died at the age of 88, friends reported in Moscow today. The cause of death was a heart attack.

Salnikov directed more than one hundred film and television documentaries over his career. A graduate of the Moscow Gerasimov Institute of Cinematography, commonly called by its initials VGIK, Salnikov was inspired by the Soviet space program in the 1960s. His first documentary film was "Yuri Gagarin," made soon after the death of the Soviet cosmonaut.

In the 1970s Salnikov worked with then screen-writer (and later singer) Yury Vizbor to make the documentary film "Chelyuskin Adventure." The film told the story of the ship Chelyuskin that crashed on the ice during a 1934 polar expedition. All but one crew member survived and were rescued by a team of Soviet pilots.

In 1990 Salnikov was co-author with renowned US aviation historian R.E.G. Davis of a bilingual illustrated book called "The Chelyuskin Adventure." First published by Paladwr Press in 1990, it was reprinted in 2005.

As curator of the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum, Davis invited Salnikov him to work there as a research fellow.

Salnikov is survived by two daughters and a granddaughter. Information about funeral arrangements was not immediately available.

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