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Russian, US pilots to fly secret route used to send warplanes to Soviets during WWII

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MOSCOW, December 10. /TASS/. A commemorative flight to retrace and create a documentary film of the secret World War II Alaska-Siberia Air Route (ALSIB) will take place in 2015, Sergey Baranov, general director of the Russian Aviation Company (RUSAVIA), said on Wednesday.

In 2013, Rusavia, one of the largest suppliers of aviation parts, instruments, and equipment for Russian-built aircraft worldwide — partnered with the US BRAVO 369 Flight Foundation to produce a factual flight recreation and documentary about the secret delivery of nearly 8,000 military aircraft from the United States to the Soviet Union during World War II along the ALSIB. Approximately 6,000 miles (9,700 kilometers) long, the route was part of the massive US Lend-Lease Program, running from Great Falls, Montana through Canada and Alaska, across the Bering Strait, and through Siberia to Krasnoyarsk, Russia.

“There are plans to recreate certain historical episodes that took place from 1942 to 1945,” Baranov said, adding that the project had received approval from Russia's federal air transport agency Rosaviatsiya and the Defense Ministry.

The 2015 flight will feature both US and Russian pilots flying together from Ladd Army Airfield in Alaska across the entire route from Great Falls to Krasnoyarsk. The team will then fly on to Moscow to participate in the International Aviation and Space Salon (MAKS-2015), celebrating the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe, also known as The Great Patriotic War in Russia.

The aircraft that will be used for the flight re-creation and celebration of the ALSIB programme will be North American AT-6 Texans. RUSAVIA also plans to acquire a North American B-25 Mitchell, exactly as was used for the ferrying missions, as well as some other authentic WWII planes, including a Douglas C-47 Skytrain and a Bell P-39 Airacobra.

“The aircraft may be used later for exhibitions and various air shows,” Baranov said.

The culmination of this massive undertaking will become a documentary, Warplanes to Siberia, bringing history alive by showcasing the personal stories from 70 years ago and following the modern-day pilots, both American and Russian, as they become the first to fly the historic route since World War II.