

Russian Air Force Receives First Russian-assembled II-76MD

Aviation Week

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Aviastar

The Russian air force has taken into service the first modernized Ilyushin II-76MD-90A heavy airlifter.

The aircraft, serial number 0105, was handed over to the military at the Aviastar-SP assembly facility, a subsidiary of United Aircraft Corporation (UAC) in Ulyanovsk, on Dec. 2. It was flown to the 610th Combat and Conversion Training Center of the military transport aviation in Ivanovo, in central Russia, the next day.

This airframe, named after Viktor Livanov, a former CEO and chief designer of the Ilyushin design bureau, became the third serial II-76MD-90A variant assembled in Ulyanovsk.

The first two aircraft (MSN 0103 and 0104) were delivered to another UAC subsidiary, Taganrog-based Beriev Company, in November 2014 and April 2015. They will serve as platforms for future airborne early warning systems.

The II-76MD-90A became the first Russian-built military transport.

The basic II-76 was designed in the 1970s and assembled at a TAPO facility in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. After the Soviet Union's breakup, Russia failed to reach an agreement with Uzbekistan on control of the TAPO facility. So production of the modernized variant, initially dubbed II-476, was launched in Ulyanovsk.

Compared to the basic II-76MD, the modernized airlifter received an improved wing and reinforced landing gear that enabled the takeoff weight to increase from 190 to 210 tons. The payload grew from 47 to 60 tons. The older D-30KP2 turbofans were replaced by more powerful PS-90A-76 engines, allowing the aircraft to use shorter runways. The Russian-built II-76MD-90A prototype made its first flight in September 2012.

The program was backed by the Russian military, which placed an order for 39 II-76MD-90As valued at 140 billion rubles (about \$2 billion under the current exchange rate) in 2012. Deliveries are expected to be completed through 2020.

According to Aviastar-SP CEO Viktor Dementyev, his facility plans to deliver more freighters to the military by the end of this year. Ten more airframes are on the assembly line.

Military Transport Aviation Cmdr. Vladimir Benediktov says the II-76MD-90A "will serve as a basis for the development of other modifications such as air tankers or other special mission aircraft that will be taken into service in the air force and aerospace force."

Dementyev earlier confirmed that Aviastar-SP is already assembling the first II-78M-90A air tanker. It will be sent to the military for evaluation trials in 2016. The program also has a civil variant – the II-76TD-90A – that can potentially be of interest for current II-76TD operators in Russia and other countries. The first order for the civil freighter was signed by Russia's Emergency Relief Ministry in November. It contracted with Aviastar-SP for six II-76TD-90A aircraft. Delivery is scheduled for 2018-2020.