

From *Astronautics* to *Cosmonautics*

Mike Gruntman

FROM *ASTRONAUTICS*
TO *COSMONAUTICS*

Mike Gruntman

Library of Congress Control Number: 2007904374
Publisher: BookSurge, LLC
North Charleston, South Carolina

ISBN-10: 1-4196-7085-9
ISBN-13: 978-1-4196-7085-5

Gruntman, Mike, 1954-
From *Astronautics* to *Cosmonautics* / Mike Gruntman.
Includes bibliographical references and index.

Copyright © 2007 by Mike Gruntman. Printed in the United States of America.
No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, or stored in a database or retrieval system, without the prior written permission of the author.



Fig. 4.3 Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR establishing the *Cosmonautics Day*. The Decree reads,

In commemoration of the first in the world flight of a Soviet man in space, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR decrees: Establish celebration of the “Day of Cosmonautics.” To celebrate the “Day of Cosmonautics” annually on 12 April.

Signed, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR L. Brezhnev; Secretary of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR M. Georgadze.

Moscow, Kremlin, 9 April 1962.

Pravda, 10 April 1962

scribed the new science as *astronautics* in an article celebrating the successful hit of the Moon by a Soviet space probe in 1959 (Ryabchikov 1959).

Finally, the word *cosmonautics* won supremacy. The flight of the first man — a cosmonaut — to space in April 1961 effectively ended any competition between the two words. The field of science and engineering would be uniformly called *kosmonavtika* (*cosmonautics*), with *kosmonavty* (*cosmonauts*) traveling in space.

Colonel-General Nikolai P. Kamanin headed training of Soviet cosmonauts since the inception of the space program. Kamanin kept extensive and unusually independent-minded — for a Soviet general — diaries, beginning 17 December 1960. Kamanin's family published his diaries only after the collapse of the communist regime (Kamanin 1995, 1997, 1999, 2001). Kamanin never used the words *astronaut* or *astronautics*. The word *cosmonaut* appears for the first time in the very beginning of his diaries in the entry of 6 January 1961 (Kamanin 1995, 12).

The first six cosmonauts — Soviet Air Force officers Yuri A. Gagarin, German S. Titov, Grigori G. Nelyubov, Andrian G. Nikolaev, Valerii F. Bykovsky, and Pavel R. Popovich — completed training and successfully

Cosmonautics Day

Today we celebrate for the first time the Day of Cosmonautics. It was necessary [for me] to put some work in order to arrange the decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR to establish this celebration. More than a month ago, I convinced [Commander-in-Chief of the Air Force Air Chief Marshal K.A.] Vershinin and [Chief of the Political Directorate Colonel-General A.G.] Rytov of the necessity to ask [the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union] CC CPSU to establish the celebration of the 12th of April. In the draft of the request I listed the establishing of the Day of Cosmonautics as the item number one. During obtaining the [endorsing] signatures, [Colonel General P.I.] Efimov ([first] deputy of [the head of the Chief Political Directorate of the Soviet Army and Navy] Marshal [F.I.] Golikov) persuaded Rytov and Vershinin to remove this suggestion. Then, simultaneously with the request [forwarded by the Air Force] I arranged a letter from [the second Soviet cosmonaut German S.] Titov [directly] to [Nikita S.] Khrushchev on the establishing of the celebration [Cosmonautics] day and it [Titov's letter] has worked.

Diary entry on 12 April 1962, N.P. Kamanin 1995, pp.101–102