



Tupolev Tu-4: The First Soviet Strategic Bomber

By Yefim Gordon, Dmitry Komissarov, Vladimir Rigmant

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After World War II, the Soviet Union and the USA, who had been allies in the war, started moving towards political and military confrontation. The Soviet Union urgently needed a strategic bomber capable of striking at the USA. Thus, the windfall of three battle-damaged B-29s forced to land in Soviet territory was most welcome. The Soviet Union kept them; a huge reverse-engineering effort ensued, resulting in a Soviet copy of the Superfortress (the Tu-4) and a major technology boost to the Soviet aircraft and avionics industries. From then on, the "Soviet Superfortress" evolved independently, some of the Tu-4 versions having no direct U.S. equivalent. These included the Tu-4K missile carrier, a wing-to-wing flight refueling tanker, and the Tu-4T transport. The Tu-4A was the first Soviet nuclear-capable bomber. Experimental versions included engine testbeds, a towed escort fighter program, and more. The book also describes the Tu-4's production and service history (including service in China—the only nation besides the USSR to operate the type) and touches on the Tu-4's transport derivatives, the Tu-70 airliner, and the Tu-75 military airlifter. The book is illustrated with many color side views and hitherto unpublished photographs.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Yefim Gordon is an aviation journalist and photographer who has been researching Soviet/Russian aviation history for more than forty years. He has authored and co-authored more than 120 books on the subject and published hundreds of features and photographs in Russian and foreign aviation magazines. Dmitry Komissarov is a translator and journalist whose work has been associated with aviation since 1993. He has translated or authored/co-authored more than seventy books on Soviet/Russian aircraft and written numerous features for Russian and foreign aviation magazines. Vladimir Rigmant started working in aviation engineering in 1963 and has been working for the Tupolev aircraft design bureau since 1986. He is the director of the Tupolev Joint-Stock Co. museum. He has authored several hundred magazine features on aviation and is also the author/co-author of more than twenty books on Soviet/Russian aircraft.

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