

RELEASE IN FULL

From: Reines, Philippe I <reinesp@state.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, March 16, 2011 10:50 AM
To: H
Subject: Chernobyl Heroes

• Nikolai Melnik (born c. 1954) is a former Soviet pilot known for placing radiation sensors at the Chernobyl's Nuclear Power Plant, Reactor 4, after the 1986 explosion. For his work, he was awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

• Anatoly Grishchenko, Pilot at Chernobyl, 53 SEATTLE, July 3, 1990 — A Soviet helicopter pilot who contracted leukemia after trying to douse the fire at the Chernobyl nuclear plant in 1986 has died, a hospital spokeswoman said today.

Anatoly Grishchenko, 53 years old, had been in critical condition with a lung infection for more than two weeks at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, where he received a bone-marrow transplant April 27.

He died of cardiopulmonary failure late Monday, according to a spokeswoman, Susan Edmonds.

Mr. Grishchenko repeatedly flew his heavy-lift helicopter through the intensely radioactive gases spewing from the Chernobyl plant, dumping sand and cement in an effort to cap the crippled reactor.

He and a handful of others in the operation were designated heroes of the Soviet Union, the country's highest honor.

Despite lead shielding on the aircraft and other protective gear, Mr. Grishchenko suffered radiation sickness and was found to have radiation-related leukemia last year.

He arrived in Seattle on April 11 for the marrow transplant, which was performed after chemotherapy and radiation treatment.