

WATCHPRO

Raketa Ekranoplan watch aims to save one of the Soviet era's most extraordinary flying machines

By Rob Corder - July 2, 2023



Little was known about the Lun-class Ektranoplan in the later days of the 1980s Soviet Union as the Russian navy developed a craft, designated as a warship, but looking like a seaplane, which “flew” a few metres above the water assisted by the ground effect.

Ground effect refers to the force that keeps a craft airborne when it is travelling a few metres above the ground or water, at which point drag is greatly reduced by the proximity of the surface, allowing it to fly with less power and smaller wings (or more weight at higher speeds) than a normal aircraft.

You and I know the ground effect as it kicks when planes come into land and seem to silently glide for the final few seconds along a runway.

The Lun-class Ektranoplan aimed to combine the best characteristics of a ship and a plane.

It could carry as much cargo as a ship and fly as fast as an airplane at speeds of up to 500kmh over distances of up to 2,000km, just four metres above the surface of the water where it expected to be undetectable by radars.

Only one Lun-class Ekranoplan was ever built.

It now lies stranded on a beach of the Caspian sea near the city of Derbent, Russia, as a reminder of former Soviet-era experimentation and innovation.



The only Ekranoplan lies stranded on a beach of the Caspian sea near the city of Derbent, Russia. (Picture by Fred Schaerli – Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org>)

Raketa Watch Factory is paying tribute that extraordinary flying machine, which it describes as a half ship, half plane Soviet era hybrid machine, with a special tool watch in its honour.

Raketa will also raise funds through the sale of the timepiece that will be donated to a Derbent-based team hoping to save it from being consumed by the elements.

Raketa Ekranoplan



The Raketa Ekranoplan watch has an insert of its rotating bezel made from a piece of metal from the craft, officially given by the city of Derbent which is in charge of safeguarding the Ekranoplan.

Compass markings on the bezel are designed to look exactly the same as the compass on the control panel in the cockpit.



The 41.6mm watch has a double 0 on the dial, which is a nod to the front view of the Ekranoplan where two circular containers are positioned above its cockpit and there is an embossed image it printed on the dial.

It is powered by a Raketa 2624 automatic movement, produced by the Raketa Watch Factory in Saint-Petersburg, which can be enjoyed via an exhibition case back.



<https://www.watchpro.com/raketa-ekranoplan-watch-aims-to-save-one-of-the-soviet-eras-most-extraordinary-flying-machines/>