

A little more than 60 years ago, for the first time in history, a human being traveled into space. His name was Yuri Gagarin, and this is the story of his flight. In 1957, the Soviet Union opened the space race by launching the first artificial satellite – Sputnik 1.

After that, the Soviet officials started thinking about the next milestone – putting the first human into the Earth's orbit. In January 1959, the Soviets began to sort out candidates for this historical flight.

The future cosmonaut had to be male, between 25 and 30 years old, no taller than 1.75 meters, and weigh no more than 72 kilograms. Finally, Yuri Gagarin, a 27-year-old air force pilot, was chosen to become the first human in space. The spacecraft built for the mission was called Vostok 1.

As the Soviet Union was in a hurry to win the Space Race with the USA, some important components were not installed in the spacecraft in order to save time. For instance, Vostok 1 had no emergency escape system and soft-landing system. On April 12, 1961, Vostok 1 with Yuri Gagarin on board was launched from Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan.

As the spacecraft lifted off the ground, Gagarin said his famous catchphrase "Poyekhali!" that can be translated as "Let's go!". In general, the flight went quite well. One of the few moments when Gagarin felt really stressed was during the descending phase. When the spaceship entered the Earth's atmosphere, its hull started to melt due to air friction.

Gagarin saw hot metal flowing down his window and heard the spaceship crackle. In his own words: "To tell you the truth, that was no fun". The landing also didn't go quite as planned. Due to a failure in the braking system, Vostok 1 missed the originally intended landing site.

When Gagarin ejected from the capsule, he saw that, instead of dry land, beneath him was the river Volga. Fortunately, he was able to steer the parachute away from the water and land on the ground. After the flight, Yuri Gagarin became a national hero and a worldwide celebrity. Newspapers around the world published his biography and details of his flight.

He also visited about 30 countries in the years following the flight. Despite being such a famous person, Gagarin was very humble, always wearing his famous wide smile. Union."

He will be always remembered for his heroic flight that paved the way for further space explorations and proved that for a human anything is possible.