

In Memoriam:

Yevgeny Anatolyevich Cheblakov (1931-2001)

Dr Lee Hunt, President, IADC

THE HEADQUARTERS OF the Russian Association of Drilling Contractors sits on a broad and busy avenue in central Moscow. You enter through a large courtyard, surrounded by an imposing structure that once housed the former Soviet Union's esteemed Scientific Institute.

Here, most, if not all, of the Soviet Union's geologists and drillers learned to explore and drill for oil and gas. In Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, in the Republics that lie beyond the Caucasus and across the Steppes of central Russia, to the fringes of the frozen Arctic in Siberia, you will find its former students are running the oilfields. Ask if they knew Professor **Alexandre Mnatsakanov**, the Armenian, and they will reverentially claim that they once were his student. Over the past decade, from the Association's small office, **Yevgeny Cheblakov** and Mnatsakanov, now in retirement, worked tirelessly to unite the drillers of Russia and the newly independent Republics.

An Association of Drilling Contractors, dedicated to uniting the drilling industry, was the vision of Dr **Boris Nikitin**, Executive Vice President of **Gazprom**. When the Association was formed 10 years ago, in 1991, he chose as his right hand man Yevgeny Cheblakov.

Yevgeny Cheblakov had graduated from **Groznenskiy Petroleum Institute** in 1953. He subsequently worked as a driller, engineer and director at several companies, including **Tatburne**, **Almet'yevneft** and **Belorusneft Association**.

In 1978 he was appointed manager of Drilling Department, **Ministry for the Oil Industry**. Later, he was named chief production engineer for **Rosneft State Enterprise**.

Along the way, he was winner of the Academician **J M Gubkin Prize**, winner of silver and bronze medals from the Exhibition of National Economic

Achievements and Honorary Oil Man. He was the perfect man for the job of first Executive Director in the newly created Association of Drilling Contractors.

One of his first tasks was to contact the International Association of Drilling Contractors and seek advice on forming a western style trade association. Early delegations exchanged visits in the US and in Russia. The fledgling Russian Association took root and began to grow.

The beginnings of IADC and the Russian Association are strikingly similar.

In 1940, **J E Brantley**, the visionary first President of IADC (originally the American Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors) selected as his right hand man **Brad Mills**. Mills had worked for

his arm around your shoulder and guide you to where you were needed.

In 1993, the Russian Association of Drilling Contractors became collective members of IADC as an Affiliated Association. IADC Chairman **Chuck Hinton** formally welcomed them at a ceremony held during the Directors Meeting in Amsterdam.

The Russian Association continued to grow. Numerous publications were created, centralizing information on regulations governing drilling in Russia. With Yevgeny Cheblakov's urging, the Russian Association and **Gazgortekhnadzor**, the State regulatory authority, recognized IADC's Daily Drilling Report as an official document for use in Russian oilfields.

At their request, IADC published the exclusive English version of Russian Safety Regulations for the Oil and Gas Industry.

This summer, on a warm June day, Yevgeny Cheblakov strolled through the gates leading into the courtyard of the Institute one last time. He took the elevator, which rattled and banged against its guide rails before stopping at the stairway leading to the Association's office. He climbed the stairs and entered a long hallway. The wooden planks squeaked beneath his steps, their echoes reverberating along the corridor.

Entering his office, he greeted his long time secretary and assistant, took a cup of "chi," Russian tea, and settled into the chair at his desk. To his left, through a large opened window, the spires of the University of Moscow could be seen in the distance, beyond the rolling hills and forests on Moscow's perimeter.

Sometime during the day, it's not exactly certain when, he rested his head on his desk and closed his eyes.

Yevgeny Cheblakov left this world doing what he liked best—working for the drillers of his native land. ■



Yevgeny Cheblakov (l), the first Executive Director of the Russian Association of Drilling Contractors, with IADC Chairman Chuck Hinton in 1993.

several drilling companies in Dallas and East Texas since the 1930's and was familiar with the day-to-day needs of drilling contractors.

Half a century later, Yevgeny Cheblakov trod this same path. Like Mills, Mr Cheblakov cajoled, bartered, organized and encouraged his compatriots to join a fledgling association, to unite as one to improve the contracts, technology and safety of the industry.

He was a doting and nurturing Russian "uncle," quick to smile, ready to drape