

Hand-Picked Kremlin Guard Held Assassin

The London Sunday Times

MOSCOW — A man wearing the uniform of the hand-picked Kremlin guard carried out last week's Moscow assassination attempt, it was learned Saturday.

He leaped from a sentry box within the Kremlin walls to blast five shots through the windscreen of the third car in motorcade—when it was a few yards inside the Borovitsky gate.

Moscow's official account of the shooting had implied the attempt took place as the cars approached the gate.

Now the major question is why the would-be assassin—who carried a gun in each hand and two cyanide capsules attached to his greatcoat—picked on car three. The answer seems to be that he miscalculated when the Cosmonauts and party leaders cars changed sequence just before crossing the Moscow River bridge leading to the Kremlin.

With Wednesday's heavy frost clouding the windscreens, it was virtually impossible to identify the occupants of the closed cars, all of them in fur caps and heavy overcoats. Only the four heroes of the occasion, Vladimir Shatalov, Boris Volynov, Alexei Yeliseyev and Yevgenyi Khrunov, of the Soyuz 4-5 dock-

ing mission, were in an open car, at the head of the procession.

They had switched to the convertible at the river, with their closed limousine lying behind to become car two. The original car two containing four other Cosmonauts, thus became No. 3. The following car with Communist party general secretary Leonid Brezhnev and President Nikolai Podgorny inside, became car four, and this may have confused the gunman, who is thought to have been aiming for the party leaders.

He fired point-blank into the third limousine, hitting the driver with three bullets and narrowly missing Cosmonaut Georgy Beregovoi, who was reportedly scratched by flying glass. The driver died Friday. A motorcyclist hit by a stray shot was still in critical condition Saturday.

The gunman was overpowered before he could swallow his suicide pills. Moscow has given no indication of his identity or motives beyond implying he was mentally unbalanced.

But there is no clue how he managed to infiltrate the select band of Kremlin guards, all of them presumably known to each other.

Dist. by the Los Angeles Times
Washington Post News Service

Valley's Times-Herald 26 Jan 69