



He Jianghua (inset) and his team members prepare for the balloon release in Beijing. — Zhou Yulin

When 80,000 carefully chosen balloons took flight in the sky!

Hu Min

The sight of 80,000 balloons soaring into the sky at the V-Day military parade in Beijing commemorating the 80th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War left a deep impression on many people.

The instructor guiding the balloon release is He Jianghua, a post-90s living in Shanghai's Jiading District. "The moment 80,000 balloons rose into the air together, I burst into tears," He said.

Behind the tears was not only the shock of the scene but also the inheritance of a "sky-bound mission" spanning a decade.

"Release!" At 10:27am on September 3, He led over 50 technical backbones and more than 400 volunteers to complete the key technical support task of releasing 80,000 balloons.

"That sense of accomplishment is irreplaceable by any honor!" Recalling that moment, He still couldn't hide his excitement. "Standing at the scene and witnessing that sight was truly shocking. Even now, when I see videos of the balloons ascending, I still almost cry."

To ordinary people, inflating and



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tying balloons might be no more than a childhood game. However, for He and his team, this seemingly simple task is far more complex.

"We had to inflate, tie and cage 80,000 balloons within 90 minutes. If inflated balloons are stored for too long, their air pressure changes, which will ultimately affect the overall effect," he explained.

This March, he led his team in intensive training. Due to their inexperience, over 400 volunteers struggled to tie a balloon in 10

seconds. Through constant exploration and practice, He developed a standardized operation process to help everyone quickly master the basics, greatly improving efficiency.

He recalled that in the sweltering summer of Beijing, the high temperature made the balloons extremely "delicate," as thermal expansion and contraction made it difficult to control their size.

He and the volunteers persisted in training day after day. "The latex chafed many people's hands raw, sun-burning their cheeks and arms red, but no one gave up."

Their efforts yielded positive results. In just a few weeks, team members grew from being flustered at first to stably handling more than two balloons in 10 seconds in compliance with standards.

However, speed was only the starting point, and the team's quality requirements for the balloons were even more stringent.

Each balloon must be 25cm wide with a 5mm margin, he said. To achieve this, they created a simple but effective "balloon measurer." Volunteers could only tie balloons that passed a customized caliper.

During preparation, He and his team visited factories, checked sample balloons, repeated experiments,

adjusted colors and tested ascent speed dozens of times between Shanghai and Beijing to achieve the best visual effect.

Finally, they settled on six colors — red, orange, yellow, green, dark blue and light blue. All balloons were made of 100 percent degradable latex and filled with high-purity helium, ensuring safety and environmental protection alongside their splendor.

On September 2 night, He was unable to sleep. At 3:30am, the inflation of sample balloons began, and at 4am, all personnel entered the operation state.

Over 400 volunteers worked in groups, inflating, measuring and tying each balloon one by one, gradually filling the white metal cages. At 6am, the team pushed the cubic cages filled with balloons slowly toward the square. At that moment, the air seemed to stand still, with tension and anticipation surging silently.

"The audience sees the romance of balloons ascending, but what I feel most deeply is the rigor and responsibility that have never slackened in these 10 years," He said. "I'm just an ordinary person in the balloon industry. Being able to contribute my professional skills to the country is both a great honor and the most precious memory in my life."