

"Combat Path of 139th Road Construction Battalion, February 1942 - October 1945".

Unique photo history of a military unit that played major role in the defense of the Oranienbaum pocket during the siege of Leningrad. Includes over 160 photos and hand-drawn maps in color. A Soviet Army photo album of the highest quality.

The first pages show scenes from the blockade of Leningrad. Among the photos is the fire of the Badaevskie Food Warehouse Complex, which led to the catastrophic famine later during the siege. Two pages are dedicated to generals who were in charge of the defense of the city. These are followed by the excellent hand-drawn map of the Oranienbaum beachhead and few interesting photos including the Cruiser Aurora used in Oranienbaum as a floating battery, and a photo of an armored train in action.

The remaining 32 pages are dedicated to the troops in the Oranienbaum pocket and the battalion itself. These include some outstanding first generation photos with details of the uniforms and decorations clearly visible (note, for example, a Type 1 Red Banner of Labor "triangle" worn by the commissar of the battalion). There are some unique maps, one of them showing the network of roads within the pocket. Another map shows the ice road built by the battalion over the Gulf of Finland connecting the beachhead with the Baltic Fleet base of Kronshtadt and leading to the mainland and Leningrad.

One outstanding feature of the album is original pass issued in January 1943 to the battalion commander by the commandant of the Kronshtadt Fortress. It allowed unrestricted travel by the ice road at any time. Another interesting artifact is the telegram congratulating the battalion with the breaking of the blockade of Leningrad which coincided with the one year anniversary of the battalion.

In August 1943 the battalion was attached to the famed 2nd Shock Army, and with it took part in the January 1944 breakout to the Luga river and the city of Narva (operation Neva-2). During the last year of the war the battalion and its 2nd Shock Army were assigned to the 2nd Belorussian Front. The photos on the last pages show the battalion personnel in the occupied German cities, snapshots from the victory celebrations and some WW2 memorials.

13" x 10" binder is a postwar vinyl product, so the album has either been rebound, or more likely, collected and assembled from wartime documents as a presentation for a birthday, promotion or other special occasion celebrated by this veteran. Album is complete and lacks no photographs.

An extraordinary one-of-a-kind documentary with historic significance.

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