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WW2 captain of a freighter, Hero of the Soviet Union Ivan Afanasyev, photo portrait, 1942-45.

Measures approx. 4.5" x 5.5", printed on thin glossy photo paper. Based on the orders on Afanasyev's jacket, the photo was taken between July 1942 and August 1945. The verso features Afanasyev's handwritten last name and initials, possibly by his own hand.

The photo is in very good condition, showing just minor loss of emulsion at the left bottom corner and a faint trace of a paper clip near the left top corner. The discoloration along the right-hand side was incurred during developing the photo print, not an uncommon phenomenon for amateur photos and not too intrusive to the eye.

Ivan Afanasyev (Иван Иванович Афанасьев, 1901-1952), began his maritime career in 1918 as a sailor of the Petrograd Shipping Company. By 1931 he was already captain of a freighter with the Baltic Shipping Company. During WW2 he was the captain of the Staryi Bolshevik ("Old Bolshevik") timber carrier which was re-fitted and went to Great Britain on a military supplies run, followed by a run to the USA with a load of apatite.

At the end of May 1942, Staryi Bolshevik was en route from Reykjavik to Murmansk as part of allied convoy PQ-16, carrying a load of military materiel, fuel and ammunition. The ship was hit by German bombers and was severely damaged. The British vessels in the convoy approached the burning freighter and offered to pick up the crew. Afanasyev refused, and only transferred to the British vessel a few severely wounded crewmen who required complex surgery. For the following eight hours the crew fought the fire and other damage, and eventually was able to deliver the cargo to the port of Murmansk. For that, Afanasyev was given the title Hero of the Soviet Union on 28 Aug. 1942; he was also awarded with the Order of the British Empire by the British government. In the photo, he is wearing the Gold Star Medal of a Hero of the Soviet Union, Type 1 with a small suspension.

Afanasyev's other decorations included two Orders of Lenin, Order of the Red Banner, Order of the Red Banner of Labor, and several medals.

Ivan Afanasyev died in October 1952 but his name lives on in the name of a boarding school in St. Petersburg, a rescue vessel with the Murmansk Shipping Company, and a street in the town of Sosnovyy Bor in the St. Petersburg Region.

The PQ-16 convoy preceded the infamous PQ-17 convoy from Iceland to Arkhangelsk that was almost completely destroyed by German forces, leading to a lengthy suspension in the operation of northern convoys.

Research Materials: Xerox copy of the article about Afanasyev in the official Russian-language catalog Heroes of the Soviet Union (contains his photo). Ample information about Afanasyev can be found in a number of Russian-language online sources, e.g., warheroes.ru. Information in warheroes.ru is available in many languages; the language selector button is under the photo.

Please note that the penny in our photo is for size reference.

Item# 41768

\$80.00









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В. С. Афанискея

В. М. Афанискея

В. И. И. Афанискея

В. В. В. Вестрания подализи (Самосторна)

Ватериа Сол. Солово прием.

Ватериа Стол. Солово прием.

Ватериа Стол. Столик (Верг. С. 2017)

В. Образовате инференция учеторна пределения магизима, пределения учеторна пределения учеторна пределения пределения учеторна пределения пределения учеторна пределения пределени





