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## Thank You Letter from the St Petersburg Nobility to a Participant of the Battle of Chemulpo, 1904.

Encased in royal blue hard folder with gold impression of the coat of arms of St. Petersburg in the center and anchors in the corners representing the navy. Below the city emblem is gold impression "From the St. Petersburg Nobility, 1904". Measures 6 ¾" by 7 ½" (17 cm x 24 cm) when folded.

On the first interior page is photographic portrait of Emperor Nicholas II. On the opposite page is text of the letter embellished with florals, motif of oars and anchor, the badge of the Order of St. George and the emblem of St. Petersburg. In the upper portion of the page is nicely detailed depiction of the *Varyag* and *Koreets*.

Full text of the letter is as follows.

"Peaceful intentions of Russia were not destined to disperse the dark cloud of the war in the East. A handful of our warriors didn't tremble, refusing to lower the St. Andrew's flag when confronted by an entire enemy squadron.

Valiant participants of the battle of Chemulpo, you've proved to the entire world that ancient traditions are still alive in the Russian Navy, as well as the borderless bravery of old and the readiness to sacrifice oneself for the motherland.

The nobility of St. Petersburg is celebrating your safe homecoming. In these days of severe trials we pray to God our Lord that He may save all our beloved brothers who had been called to arms to defend the honor and dignity of the Russian nation.

With all of Russia we will calmly meet any sorrow. Will all of Russia we do not doubt the eventual military victory of the people who are selflessly devoted to the Tsar and the Motherland. May you have long lives our brothers, blessed with the serene feeling of having fulfilled your duty, with understanding that from now on, the names of *Varyag* and *Koreets* will forever remain in history books".

The original letter was signed by Marshal of the Nobility of St. Petersburg region and by Marshals of eight districts within the region. The document was then photocopied from the hand-written and hand-signed letter to make it available for presentation to some 700 survivors of the battle on their arrival to St. Petersburg (which was not only the capital of the Russian Empire but also the main base of its navy).

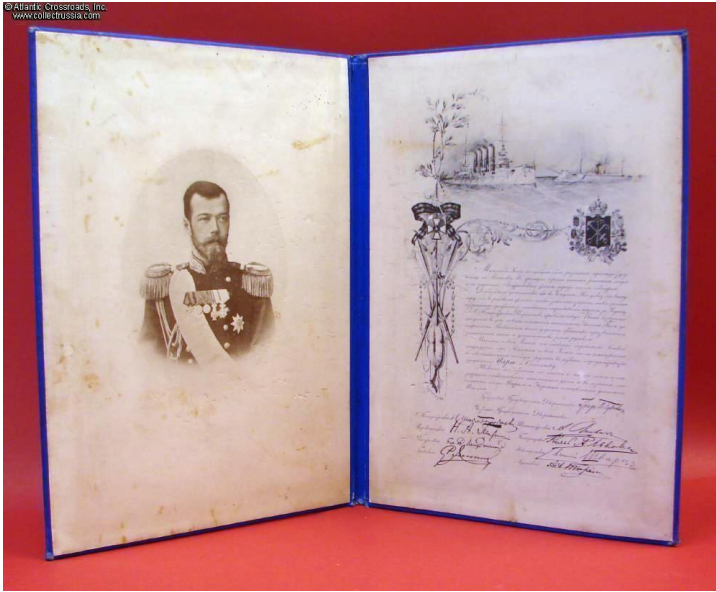
The folder is in good to very good condition. The front cover shows stains and blemishes to the blue background, however the gold leaf held surprisingly well and is practically intact. Minor wear to the corners, not detracting. The interior pages show occasional foxing and light stains, but are relatively clean overall and completely legible despite the tiny font of the letter. The artwork is beautifully crisp.

During the battle of Chemulpo Bay, at the start of the Russo-Japanese War, the cruiser *Varyag* and the gunboat *Koreets* faced a vastly superior Japanese squadron of six cruisers and eight destroyers. Instead of surrender, the Russian ships opened fire in a heroic gesture of defiance. The Russian artillery crewmen stuck to their guns despite the lack of splinter shields. When they were put out of action by notoriously accurate Japanese gunnery, the *Varyag* was scuttled. Although the battle ended in defeat, the event was celebrated as an example of Russian doggedness. For pressing a heroic attack in the face of certain destruction, the crews of both vessels were honored as national heroes and the epitome of the indomitable Russian fighting spirit. A special medal was struck for the enlisted and petty officers involved, whereas the surviving officers of both Russian warships received an Order of St. George.

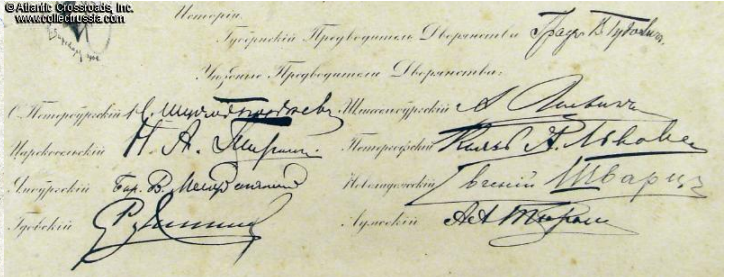
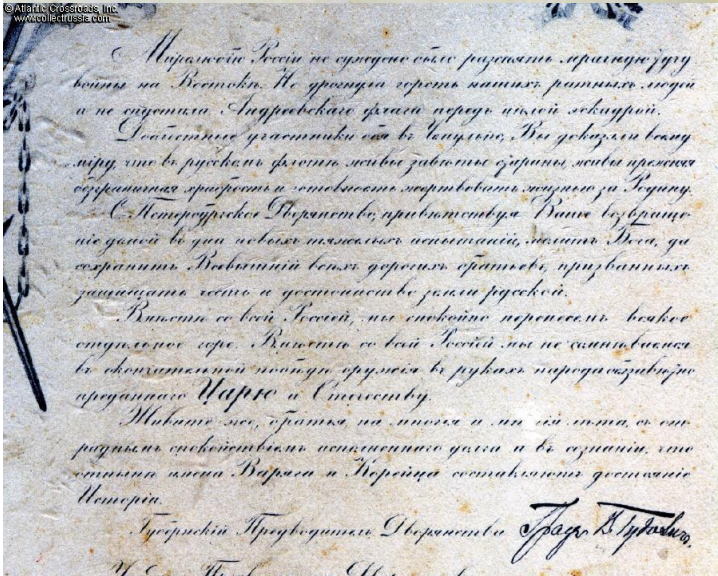
All-in-all, there must have been no more than 700 survivors who received this thank you letter when they returned home to Russia from the battle. Keeping in mind the turbulent and tragic history of Russia in the past century, one must assume that most other copies of the letter are now forever lost or destroyed. This document is a truly unique witness of a bygone era, a poignant reminder of Russia's heroic past and unfulfilled aspirations.

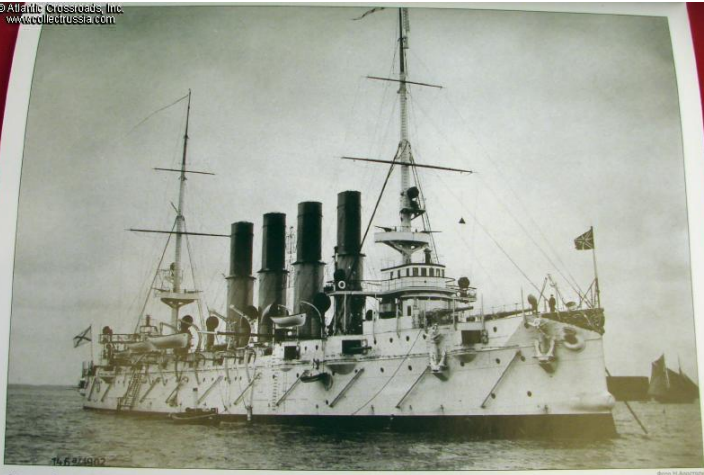
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**\$1,500.00**









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«Варяг» на Большом Кронштадтском рейде в ожидании приезда императора. Между второй и третьей дымовыми трубами и за грот-мачтой видны элементы электрической иллюминации, 18 мая 1901 г.

Варяг