

## M1943 Dagger of a Diplomat (Officer of the Narkomat for Foreign Affairs), circa 1945-1946 issue.

Includes leather-wrapped scabbard with gilded brass fittings. Overall length in scabbard is 13 ½" (34 cm); the blade is 8 ½" (21.5 cm) long. The highly polished brilliant blade lacks manufacturer's marks or serial number, which is standard for this and other types of Soviet daggers produced for "specialized" agencies in very limited numbers during 1940s-50s.

Attractive orange-toned Bakelite grip. All the brass elements of the scabbard and handle are gold-plated. The handle guard is very elaborate, much more so than on any other serially produced Soviet dagger, having a Soviet Empire-style sculptured ornament and endings of a claw grasping an orb. The etched artwork is of the 2nd pattern featuring a dark background. It includes beautifully executed Soviet national emblem, goose feathers, and florals. Note that the state emblem is of pre-1947 style, having 11 scrolls representing the number of republics in the Soviet Union. The black leather has a very characteristic grainy finish of the kind usually observed on Soviet naval daggers from the first half of 1940s (as opposed to scabbards of post-war daggers that had shiny smooth leather.)

The dagger is in excellent condition. The factory-sharpened blade exhibits only the minimal in-and-out wear and is completely free of significant oxidation spots, tarnish, nicks, or scratches; there is but a couple of tiny areas of oxidation to the cutting edge on the opposite sides located approximately 3 and 6 inches from the tip - neither of them very noticeable or detractive. The scabbard leather has a single minuscule surface tear at the edge between the upper and middle (band) fittings which has not resulted in any losses of leather and is not very noticeable due both to its tiny size and location. There are also a few almost microscopic scuffs on the opposite edge of the scabbard that can be found only at very close inspection. The leather is otherwise pristine, showing a very attractive "healthy" sheen..

All the brass fittings are beautifully preserved, fit tightly, and have just a few tiny contact marks here and there, all of them either barely noticeable or completely invisible to the naked eye. The brass has acquired an attractive even patina, while the original gilt finish is intact and bright throughout, showing only the mildest wear to the exposed beading of the pommel. The Bakelite grip has a few surface scuffs and light scratches but is otherwise perfect: clean and completely free of cracks, chips or other significant wear.

Overall, a beautifully preserved and very rare piece of history. A dagger for Soviet diplomats was introduced in 1943 at the same time as the new Diplomatic Corps (Commissariat for Foreign Affairs) ceremonial uniform. Like some other contemporary daggers for senior officials of Soviet civil and law enforcement agencies, it remained in use only until the end of the Stalin period and was abolished in 1954. Although complete production numbers for the diplomatic dagger are currently unknown, the reference guide by Boldyrev states that only 100 of them were manufactured in 1946 and 101 in 1947. In all likelihood, there were even fewer made in the first couple of years of production. From our experience, an original Soviet diplomatic dagger of WW2 era is an exceedingly rare find and can be a shining "crown jewel" in the most advanced collection of edged weapons.

/Soviet Dirks, E. Boldyrev et al, pp. 76-81./

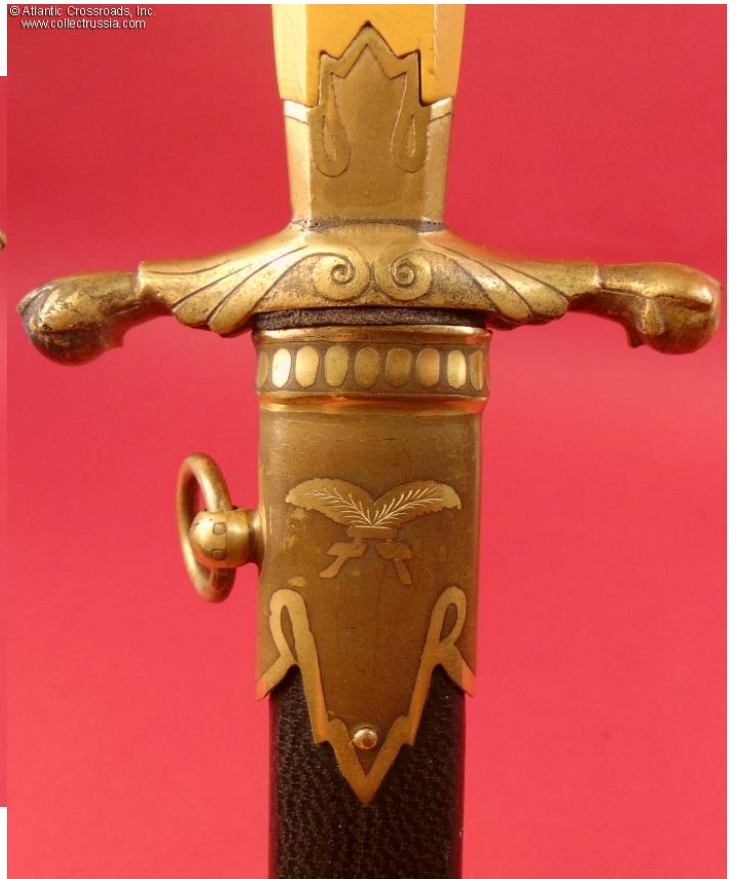
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