

OGPU Rifle Marksmanship Qualification Badge, 3rd Class, late 1920s - early 1930s.

In steel with brass- and silver plating and enamels; measures 50.5 x 30.0 mm; weighs 8.0 g without the washer and screw plate, 10.1 g overall. The crossed rifles and plaque with the Roman numeral "III" are separate superimposed parts attached by wires to the diamond-shaped base. The enamels and the badge overall are of very high quality typical of the pre-WW2 Soviet manufacture.

The badge is in excellent condition which is nothing short of extraordinary for such a scarce and early piece. The enamels exhibit beautiful luster and are essentially perfect aside from the minute manufacturing imperfections mostly found on the white bull's eye target and blue border. The details of the artwork are perfect and crisp, including the high points of the rifles and scroll. On both the obverse and reverse, there is almost no wear to the silver finish detectable by the unaided eye; there are only a few spots on the more exposed parts of the rifles where the bronze primer is visible under a 10x magnification.

The original wires are intact and tight, so the superimposed parts of the badge do not rattle when it's shaken. The original copper screw post is full length, well over 9 mm. The badge comes with a washer and unmarked screw plate in silver-plated steel; both are of the period and believed to be original to the badge.

The badge was awarded exclusively to the OGPU servicemen for getting high marks at a shooting range. Although in theory it could be issued to a Border Guard of State Security trooper of any rank, the majority of the recipients were probably officers. That would explain the rarity of the badge: in the mid- to late-30s, the mid- to high-level leadership of NKVD (formerly known as OGPU) was decimated by repeated purges, so relatively few of the badges and their recipients were still around at the beginning of WW2. It is especially rare to see one of these badges without any damage or flaking to enamel, including the fragile blue border and the red star.

/Sysolyatin, [Soviet Badges, Volume 2: Law Enforcement Agencies](#), p. 45, fig. 2.35; Avers 8, p. 424, fig. 2007.b. Please note that both books state that the standard version of the badge is made in brass, which is probably an error; the piece offered here is definitely in magnetic steel with a bronze and silver finish. /

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\$975.00







