

60th Anniversary of the Moskovskiy Border Guard Unit, commemorative badge, 1992.

Aluminum, paint, lacquer; pendant is 49.9 mm tall (incl. eyelet), 34.1 mm wide. No maker mark to the reverse, but the quality of the badge is fully on par with the period badges produced by the Moscow Mint. Excellent condition. Based in the village of Moskovskiy on the border of Soviet republic of Tajikistan and Afghanistan, this unit was formed in 1932. In the pre-WW2 years, it was often engaged in aggressive actions to seek and destroy bands of local insurgents. During the Patriotic War, many of its border guards were transferred west to fight the Germans with the other NKVD troops and the commander of one of the checkpoint detachments even earned the Title of Hero of the Soviet Union during the storming of Berlin.

The Moskovskiy Unit was frequently in action again during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, when many of its highly trained cadres formed mobile reconnaissance groups operating on the Afghan territory. Although they were very effective, the border guards suffered significant losses in the war in Afghanistan: as many as 47 members of the Moskovskiy Unit lost their lives in combat from 1980-89.

Following the disintegration of the USSR in 1991 and dissolution of the Central Asian Border Guard District, Moskovskiy Border Guard Unit stayed in Tajikistan by the mutual agreement between Russian and Tajik governments. In the early 90s, it was engaged in almost non-stop actions against infiltrating Muslim militants and narcotic smugglers. One particularly infamous incident happened in 1993 - one year after the 60th anniversary of the unit marked by the commemorative badge - when the 12th Checkpoint of the Moskovskiy Unit was overrun by a massive and heavily armed mujahid force. Despite losing their commander and the only armored vehicle in the first minutes of the well-planned assault, the border guards fought on heroically; the few survivors only withdrew when they ran out of ammunition. The 12th Checkpoint was taken back almost immediately by reinforcements from a neighboring checkpoint with heavy losses to the insurgents. The Moskovskiy Border Guard Unit remained operational in the area until 2005.

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