

Excellent Machine Gunner badge, variation with separate superimposed hammer and sickle emblem, circa 1942.

Brass, enamels; 45.1 x 37.8 mm, weighs 16.6 g without the screw plate. Features superimposed hammer and sickle emblem attached by wires, star pattern under the red enamel of the center medallion, and vertical dash pattern under the enamel in the lower part of the shield. Only three badges of the "Proficiency" series - Sniper, Machine-Gunner and Artillery Man - have the two-piece variation (with the possible addition of the two-piece Tanker Badge that was apparently a prototype which probably never went into serial production). The badges with superimposed hammer and sickle were manufactured only very early on, most likely for less than a year after the start of production in mid-1942.

In excellent condition, practically unheard of for a badge of the early version. The enamel on the center medallion has a few tiny thin scratches and a few minuscule contact marks, but is otherwise perfect and shows beautiful luster. The enamel is completely free of chips, flaking, rubbing or any other significant wear.

All the raised details are magnificently well-preserved and crisp, including the wreath and the machine gun. Some of the silver plating on the reverse is still present in the area around the screw post. The attachment wires are intact and perfectly tight. The screw post is full length measuring well over 11 mm. Comes with the original early screw plate of the NKPS Mechanical Stamping Factory.

Overall, a superb piece! From our experience, the first version of the Excellent Machine Gunner badge is even harder to find than the similar Excellent Artillery Man badge and is pretty much on par with the Variation 1 of the Sniper badge. The example offered here, being as incredibly well-preserved as it is, represents a truly unique opportunity for the advanced collector of Soviet badges.

/Airapetyan, Breast Badges of the Red Army, 1941-1945, p. 83, fig. 2/

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