

## M 1940 Enlisted Man Ushanka Fur Hat, circa 1940-1941.

In "fish fur" wool pile with cloth top. The color of "fish fur" is a slightly brownish grey, quite distinct from the more modern ushankas. Features a characteristically low-cut back portion. Comes complete with an early WW 2 hat badge, a two-piece version in bronze-plated steel and high-quality enamel, with a separate hammer & sickle emblem. The quilted liner shows a clearly legible stamp of the Lozovskogo Headgear Factory, (city of) Odessa, NKLP (Narkomat of Light [Consumer Goods] Industry), Ukrainian SSR. The size is not marked but appears to be an approximately European 56 (US Size 7 / Medium).

Although there is no date of manufacture as is very often the case with the Soviet hats of pre-WW2 - early WW2 vintage, the maker's stamp provides some important clues. First of all, the reference to the Narkomat clearly indicates that the hat was made no later than in 1946: in March of that year, all Soviet Narkomats - i.e. People's Commissariats - were renamed ministries and were called that henceforth. Moreover, the factory's location in the city of Odessa means that almost for sure, the hat was produced prior to the German siege of 1941: Odessa is located relatively close to the Romanian border; it was invested by Romanian and German troops in early August, within a month and a half after the start of the Operation Barbarossa and was captured in October 1941. Lastly, there are several Russian- and Ukrainian-language websites mentioning that the Lozovskogo Headgear Factory (Фабрика Головных Уборов им. Лозовского) opened in Odessa at some point in the late 30s, but there are no definitive records of it still operating after the war. In any case, it seems highly unlikely that it would restart production within two years from the German occupation (the city of Odessa was liberated by the Red Army only in April 1944; by then much of its industrial infrastructure had been severely damaged or utterly destroyed). All of these factors strongly indicate that the hat was produced during the one-year period from its introduction in the Red Army in the summer of 1940 and the siege of Odessa in mid-summer of 1941.

The hat is in excellent condition, absolutely outstanding for a piece of Red Army soldier's headgear manufactured prior to the Patriotic War. The fur is nice and tight, without noticeable soiling; there is just a very light "splatter" of water stains which is visible under bright light but not really detractive at all. There are no significant threadbare areas, although there is a slight wear to the upper edge of the fur section on the back at the top of the fur portion and on the right earflap (left to the viewer), as well as minor losses of fur in a few small spots elsewhere. None of the wear is easily noticeable at a normal viewing distance or really detractive. The quilted liner is extremely well-preserved and sound, showing only a minimal amount of soiling, mostly on the forehead. The factory stamp is fully labile. The ties for ear flaps are original and intact.

Overall, an exceptionally rare and well-preserved early WW2 example. This ushanka is a superb opportunity for the advanced collector of Red Army gear.

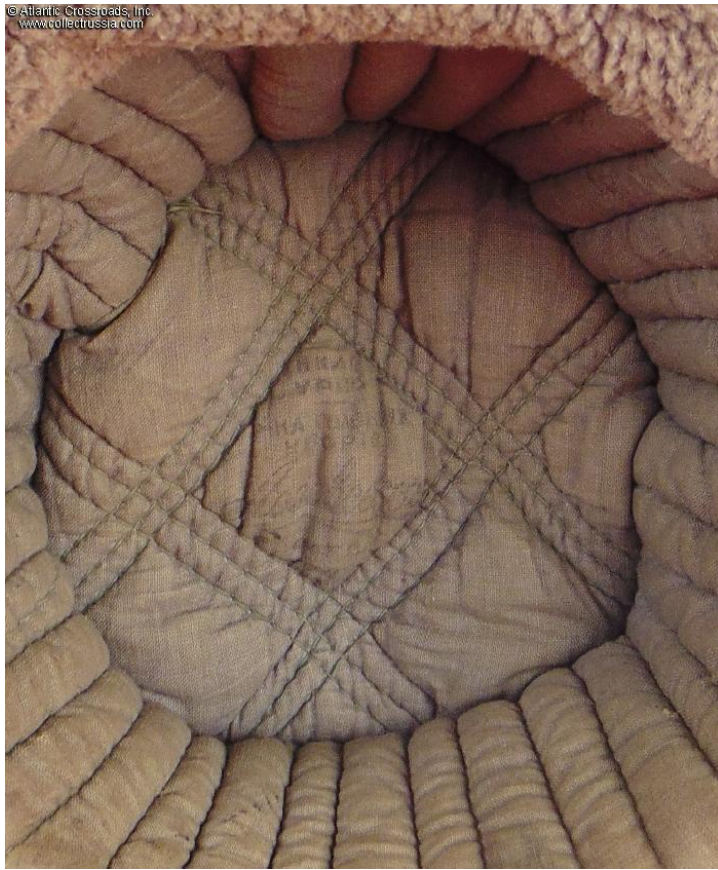
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