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Partisan Medal, 1st class, circa 1940s-50s.

In silver; measures 37.5 mm in height incl. eyelet, 32.4 mm wide; 2.7 mm thick at the edge; weighs 21.3 g not including the suspension and connecting link. Variation with a raised border around the edge of the obverse. Features "snub-nosed" portrait of Lenin with the beard turned down at the tip. The hammer and sickle emblem on the reverse has a small projection over the edge of the sickle, above the handle.

Very fine condition. There are a few tiny, barely noticeable dings and scratches to the bas-relief portraits, but the raised details of the artwork and writing are overall exceptionally well-preserved and crisp on both sides. The raised edge has only a few barely noticeable dings, no bumps or significant wear. On the reverse, there are several small scratches near the edge, not affecting the raised lettering and well hidden from view due to a beautiful dark patina to silver.

Comes on an original WW2 period suspension device, a two-layer model in steel with self-locking pin. The ribbon is old but perfectly clean and sound. The silver connecting link appears to be original; its ends are still joined with solder. Overall, a very nice example.

The Soviet Partisan Medals, both 1st and 2nd class, were instituted during the war; some were even delivered by airplane to partisan units that were still operating in the enemy rear (there are some Soviet wartime photos showing partisans wearing these medals.) Contrary to popular belief, these medals were not issued to every man and woman who fought behind the enemy lines - far from it! Although often viewed as WW2 campaign medals - similar to medals for the defense or capture of major areas or cities - partisan medals were more akin to the Medal for Valor or Medal for Combat Service. The qualifications for the medal included personal heroism or at least distinction in combat behind the enemy lines, and one had to be recommended by a trusted partisan commander to be considered for the award.

Out of hundreds of thousands of Soviet citizens who had served in a partisan unit or were members of urban underground resistance, only a small fraction got awarded with either of the two Partisan Medals: some 71000 and 56000, respectively, with the 2nd and 1st class. These are tiny numbers by Soviet standards: to put this into perspective, some 1.5 million people received the Medal for the Defense of Leningrad and well over 750 thousand the Medal for the Defense of Stalingrad. During WW2, millions of Red Army servicemen got awarded with decorations such as the Medal for Valor or Order of the Red Star. The main reason for such a small number of partisan awards is probably the fact that partisans were viewed with suspicion by Soviet authorities. After the war, many former partisans were interrogated and even prosecuted on suspicion of desertion or collaboration with the enemy, and very few got awarded with anything at all. Consequently, original Partisan Medals of either class are among the hardest to find among Soviet WW2 medals, and they are very frequently faked.

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\$575.00







