

OSNAV Water Rescue Society Member Badge, 1928-1931.

Brass, enamels; 26.4 mm in height, 26.9 mm in width; weighs 4.1 g not including the screw plate. Two-piece construction: the crossed anchors are a separate part attached by wires to the enameled ring-buoy with the hammer & sickle emblem. The inscription on the ring-buoy reads "USSR Society for Water Rescue".

Very fine to excellent condition. The enamel shows rubbing in the most exposed areas but is otherwise completely intact, free of chips, flaking or repairs. Some of the original silver finish is present on the obverse, especially on the anchors, and on the reverse of the badge. The original attachment wires are intact and perfectly tight. The screw post is of full length of nearly 12 mm and includes the original unmarked screw plate with completely intact threads.

The Soviet OSNAV (Russian acronym for Water Rescue Society) had its origin in the pre-revolutionary Russian Society for Water Rescue. Like most other volunteer organizations, it was taken over by the state immediately after the socialist revolution in 1917, while many towns and rural districts continued to maintain and finance their own lifeguard and water rescue volunteer groups. By the mid-1920s, all of those had been brought under central control as would be the prevalent tendency throughout the rest of the Soviet era. The new OSNAV society was still ostensibly a volunteer organization, but it was now fully controlled by the state and financed by dues from rank-and-file workers who were "encouraged" (i.e. coerced) to join the society. In 1931, the society was reformed and renamed the Union of Societies to Promote the Development of Water Transport and Preservation of People's Lives on the Water Routes of the USSR. Rather than its unwieldy full name, it would be henceforth universally referred to by its acronym OSVOD. Unlike the Soviet OSVOD that would remain a massive organization with millions of members for many decades, its predecessor OSNAV existed for only a few years, was relatively limited in its scale, and issued member badges only from 1928-31. Any badges of this early society are quite rare, especially in good condition.

/Avers 8, p. 348, fig. 1701.b/.

Please note, the penny in our photo is for size reference.

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