

Badge for the Construction of the Great Fergana Canal, Uzbek SSR version, 1940-41.

Silver-plated and gold-plated brass, enamels; measures 44.2 mm tall (from the top edge of the banner to the bottom point), 32.5 mm wide; weighs 13.5 g without the screw plate. Riveted two-piece construction: the bas-relief of Stalin is a separate superimposed part.

In very fine to excellent condition. The enamel on the banner has only a couple of microscopic contact marks that are completely unnoticeable to the naked eye, otherwise perfect and shows a beautiful luster. The red enamel on the star and blue enamel near the bottom are flawless. The white cotton flowers - that are usually damaged on nearly all surviving examples of this badge - have just a couple of tiny surface flakes on the upper left visible only at a very close examination. The details of the workers and Stalin's bust are nicely preserved and crisp, with some of the original silver finish still present in their recessed areas. The gilt finish in the center, although largely obscured by patina, is still present and visible. The silver finish on the reverse is nearly pristine.

The copper screw post is original and full length, over 10.5 mm long. Comes with the original screw plate in nickel-plated steel showing mint logo and stamped serial number 51570.

Intended for irrigation of the southern areas of the USSR to boost cotton production, the Great Ferganskiy (or Fergana) Canal in three Soviet Central Asian republics - Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan - was built largely by prison labor supplied by the GULAG Central Asian Correctional Labor Camps. The construction of this massive irrigation system, appropriately named after Stalin, started on 1 August 1939 and its first, Uzbek, portion was completed in record time, within a month and a half. During the following year the canal was extended into the Tajik Republic. In the same year of 1940, two versions of the Fergana Canal badge, Uzbek and Tajik, were established for all participants of the effort. Unlike some other badges for the construction projects conducted by GULAG labor, the badge was issued not only to construction engineers, supervisors and NKVD prison guards, but also many of the surviving prisoners. Some 170000 of the Uzbek version of the badge were awarded in total.

[/History of Awards and Insignia of Russian MVD](#) p. 112, fig. 1.2.3.50; [Breast Badges of the USSR of the Era of Labor Victories, 1920-1940](#) , p. 106, fig. 148, Avers 8 p. 80, fig. 470b/

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