

## Excellent Mortar Man badge, circa 1942-43.

Brass, enamels; 45.5 x 37.5 mm; weighs 17.5 g not including the screw plate.

This is one of the first variations of the Mortar Man's badge, featuring a crude, asymmetric wreath, low embellishment above the shield, and relatively low center medallion. The 120-mm mortar is the 1941 model.

In very condition. The red enamel on the center medallion shows surface rubbing and a single small chip in the upper portion which does not penetrate to metal and is not very noticeable. There is no significant flaking or any other glaring damage to the enamel. The mortar and wreath have a moderate wear to the top points, but their details are overall well-defined. The fragile dark-grey finish on the edge of the shield is intact. Some of the original silver finish on the reverse is present around the screw post. The screw post is full length, approx. 13 mm long. The screw plate marked "Pobeda Factory, Moscow" is roughly of the period and fits perfectly, although it is not original to this particular badge.

The Excellent Mortar Man badge was established in May 1942, one of the initial seven badges that started the "Proficiency" series. Its earliest versions produced by the Shcherbinskiy Stamping Factory (ShchShZ) are quite scarce, especially in a decent unaltered condition, and are rated from 3 - 4 out of 5 for rarity in the Khlamkin's catalog.

/B. Airapetyan, Breast Badges of the Red Army, 1941-1945 p. 86 fig. 1; Khlamkin, Red Army Breast Badges of Excellence (1942-1957), Type 3/.

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**\$230.00**

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