

France: Zulu War: Death of Napoléon, Prince Imperial, in Zululand

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Form: Circular with attached loop

By: ?

Date: 1879

Ref: AM2: 26; Laidlaw: 0481;

Variations:

Size	Metal	Mass	Value
32.5 mm	Bronze	8.6 gm	\$140

Edge: Plain.

Obverse: Bareheaded bust of the Prince in uniform, front. In an arc around: "PRINCE (left) IMPERIAL (right)". Legend: "EUGENE JEAN, JOSEPH, NAPOLEON".

Reverse: Within a continuous circular wreath, across: "NÉ AUX TUILERIES A PARIS (in an arc) / LE / 16 MARS / 1856 / (ornament) / MORT / AU CHAMP D'HONNEUR / A ITELEZI / (ZULULAND) / (ornament) / LE 1 JUIN 1879 (in an arc (Born at Tuileries Paris on 16 March 1856, died on the field of honour at Itelezi in Zululand on 1 June 1879)".

Notes: Napoléon, Prince Imperial (1856-1879) was the only child of Emperor Napoleon III of France. Born in Paris, he was baptised 14 June 1856, at Notre Dame Cathedral. His godmother was Queen Victoria.

His father was dethroned in 1870 and the Prince move to England with his family. He was proclaimed Napoleon IV in exile after the death of his father in 1873.

In England he trained as a soldier and, at the outbreak of the Anglo-Zulu war in 1879, was sent to South Africa as a lieutenant in the British Army. While on a scouting expedition he was killed in a skirmish with a party of Zulu warriors.

His death, at the age of 23, was a shock to Europe and ended any hopes for the restoration of the Bonapartes to the throne of France. Queen Victoria was greatly distressed and the Zulu King Cetshwayo is said to have personally apologised to the British, claiming that the Prince would not have been killed had his impi known who he was. The Prince's body was transported to Britain (reportedly preserved in a barrel of rum) and finally buried there next to his father. Queen Victoria ordered and paid for a memorial cross to be erected where he was killed about 30 km east of Dundee towards Ulundi.