

Great Britain: Lord Roberts of Kandahar / Miniature Rifle Clubs

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Form: Circular with attached loop. Cast

By: Made in France / LH (?)

Date: 1900 and after

Ref: Laidlaw: 0038a;

Variations:

Size	Metal	Mass	Value
30.0 mm	Bronze	13.9 gm	\$8

Edge: Plain.

Obverse: Uniformed bareheaded bust of Lord Roberts facing right with a small lion rampant below. Signed, to the left of the lion, "LH / 1900" (there are slight variations in the position and appearance of this mark). Legend: ".FIELD.MARSHAL.LORD.ROBERTS.OF.KANDAHAR."

Reverse: A seated angel, with wings outstretched, holding a rifle target in her right hand and pointing to the bulls-eye with her left. Exergue: ".SOCIETY.OF.MINIATVRE./.RIFLE.CLVBS."

Notes: Before serving as the Commander-in-Chief of the British Forces during the Boer War, Lord Roberts had served with distinction in the Indian Army, eventually becoming its Commander-in-Chief. He was awarded the Victoria Cross for repeated bravery during the time of the Indian Mutiny. His defeat of the Afghan rebels, during his march from the capital, Kabul, to relieve the beleaguered city of Kandahar, cleaned the slate of previous British defeats and brought peace to the North-West Frontier region of British India.

During the South African War it became apparent to Lord Roberts that his British Troops, particularly the Volunteer Regiments, were far less accurate shots with their rifles than the Boers for whom the rifle had been a part of everyday life from boyhood.

On his return to Britain in 1900, Lord Roberts was instrumental in promoting rifle clubs with the aim of encouraging marksmanship skills so that the British people would be better prepared in the event of another war. The Society of Miniature Rifle clubs was formed in 1901, and by 1903 there were some 300 affiliated clubs throughout the country. Military rifles of the day, such as the Lee Enfield had a caliber of .303mm, but these clubs used small-bore .22mm rifles which were cheaper, used less expensive ammunition, and needed a shooting range of at most 100 yards.