Napoleon's Coffin Pennant

Sold

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Height: 0.8 cm (0.3")

Width: 0.8 cm (0.3")

Depth: 2.5 cm (1")

Description

Napoleon's Coffin Pennant

A small gilt brass and enamel Coffin Pennant with a wreath to the top surrounding a 'N'.

The Pennant has a hanging ring to one end and a clip to open the coffin to the other. The hinged clip has a pin that fits to a hole to the front of the coffin. On releasing the clip, the coffin lid springs up and an enamelled figure of Napoleon stands up. A blued steel bar acts as the spring to rise Napoleon from the dead.

Napoleon died in exile on St. Helena in 1821 but in 1840 King Louis-Philippe transferred his remains to Les Invalides, Paris. It took 21 years before he was finally laid to rest in the Dome which had to undo go major works to accommodate the Imperial tomb. It is probable that this Pennant was made around this time, with the Emperor returning to France and in the public's eye once more. It is not unique in its suggestion that Napoleon lives on as a micro mosaic picture after Horace Vernet is part of The Army Museum collection, not far from Napoleon's tomb. It draws parallels with the resurrection of Christ as the Emperor emerges from his grave with a halo of light behind him.

This Pennant would have been symbolic to Napoleon's followers suggesting he was always with them. The surprise of him suddenly springing to attention when the coffin lid is opened is wonderful. Mid 19th Century.

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