

# THE LIMNER COMPANY



**GEORGE ENGLEHEART (1750 - 1829)**

**Portrait of an officer of The Royal Regiment of Horse Guards; circa 1782**

Circa: Circa 1782

*Watercolour on ivory*

Oval, 57 mm (2 1/4 in) high

Gilt metal frame with hairwork reverse

This sitter can be identified as a junior officer in the Royal Regiment of the Horse Guards. In *A History of the Uniforms of the British Army* (1966), C.C.P. Lawson not only wrote about the different uniforms being worn in the army but also sketched many of them, taking copies from known portraits, including those by Engleheart. It appears that this miniature was used for exactly this purpose, in the fourth volume of Lawson's work, to illustrate the officer's uniform of the Royal Horse Guards of about 1782.[1] In the supporting text for the figure, Lawson provided a history of the sitter, stating that he was '...an officer, who was Cornet in 1775, Lieutenant 1780, and left after 1782...'. Therefore, he must have been aware of the identity of the officer in this portrait. Unfortunately, that information has since been lost.

George Engleheart was an extremely talented and prolific miniature painter. First trained at the age of 19 in the Royal Academy Schools, Engleheart's ability to capture personality in the format of miniatures would soon be recognised, and he became a popular option for those who wished to commission a portrait of themselves, or a loved one.

The artist's use of lighter shades to create the effect of metal thread within the sitter's epaulette is just one example of Engleheart's painting skills in this form. We also get a glimpse of the sitter's character - his left eyebrow is slightly peaked, and his mouth is held in a subtle smirk. Given the handling of the portrait, and the hairstyle worn by the sitter, it can be suggested that this miniature was painted in 1782 at the earliest, hence towards the end of the career of the officer that Lawson describes. If it was painted later than this, it is possible that Lawson was mistaken in the information he was given about

the miniature.

We are grateful to Stephen Wood for his advice about the uniform in this portrait.

[1] C.C.P Lawson, A History of the Uniforms of the British Army, vol.4, London, 1966, fig. 38A, p.50.