THE LIMNER COMPANY



JOHN WRIGHT (d.1820) (- d.1820)

Portrait miniature of Lieutenant-Colonel Godfrey Basil Mundy (c.1780-1848) of the 3rd (King's Own) Dragoons, wearing scarlet coat with dark blue standing collar, gold lace and epaulettes, his hair powdered

6.8 cm (2 $^{5}/_{8}$ inches) high

Watercolour on ivory

Ivory registration number: ZDBL1F8L

Gold frame, the reverse with blue glass border surrounding gold-mounted aperture, glazed to reveal plaited hair

This portrait of Godfrey Basil Mundy was likely painted, as with many of Wright's portraits, after an oil painting (whereabouts now unknown). Godfrey was the third son of Edward Miller Mundy and his first wife, Frances Meynell. In 1794, Mundy was appointed Cornet in the 24th Light Dragoons. Later that same year, he was promoted to Lieutenant in the 3rd (King's Own) Dragoons and by 1797, he attained the rank of Captain. He also served as Aide-de-Camp to Major-General Lord Charles Fitzroy between 1797-1802 and was in Ireland during the Rebellion of 1798.

This portrait may have been commissioned for Mundy's new wife Sarah Brydges, who he married on the 26th November 1801. She was the daughter of the first Baron Rodney (1718/19-1792). After less than two years of marriage, Munday was sent to New Zealand and Australia as a Lieutenant-Colonel in the 3rd Dragoons – possibly another reason to commission a portrait miniature. Mundy served at Walcheren 1809 and after this suffered poor health, perhaps a recurrence of 'Walcheren fever'. This was the name given to the devastating disease combination, likely including malaria, typhus, and typhoid fever, that crippled the British expedition to Walcheren Island during the Napoleonic Wars.

Mundy was appointed lieutenant colonel 2nd Foot 2 July 1812, but his continued ill-health obliged him to relinquish the cavalry service, and to exchange to the infantry. His legacy was partly the collection of

standing orders he compiled for the Third King's Own Dragoons and ‘in which the duties of every rank of officer, and non-commissioned officer, as well as private soldier, in all situations of service, whether at home or abroad, are ably and minutely defined’.[1][2] Mundy was later promoted to Major-General on 4 June 1814, Lieutenant-General in 1830 and finally General in 1846.

Later in his life Mundy used his father in law as the subject for a two volume biography entitled ‘An account of the life of British Royal Navy officer George Brydges Rodney, Baron Rodney (1719-1792)’. Although he had died before he saw his daughter marry Mundy, Rodney was a significant military figure, remembered primarily for his command during the American War of Independence, and his victory over French forces at the Battle of the Saintes in 1782. The work was first printed in two volumes in 1830.

[1] The couple had five sons, of whom their eldest, Godfrey Charles Mundy (1804-1860) was also a successful army officer, commissioned as a Colonel in 1854 and appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Jersey in 1857, where he also held the local rank of Major-General.

[2] Historical record of the Third, or King's Own Regiment of Light Dragoons. 1847. See footnote, p. 51.