

## ARMY OF INDIA MEDAL

**ARMY OF INDIA 1799 TO A 1ST FOOT OFFICER WHO DURING THE CANADIAN REBELLION OF 1837 WAS MENTIONED IN DISPATCHES FOR HIS GALLANTRY AT THE BATTLES OF ST. EUSTACHE AND ST. BENOIT. SIX WEEKS PREVIOUS TO THIS, HE HAD TAKEN PART IN A DUEL AGAINST A PROMINENT PATRIOTE, WHICH AT THE TIME, CAUSED A SENSATION**



**ARMY OF INDIA 1799, CLASP AVA 'LIEUT A. H. ORMSBY, 1ST FOOT'**

Augustus Howard Ormsby was born circa 1800 and was Commissioned Ensign of the 1st (Royal) Regiment of Foot on 29 June 1824. Taking part in the Burma War of 1824 – 1826, with the 2nd Battalion, he was promoted Lieutenant on 22 March of the latter year. After a period in Scotland and Ireland, the 'Royals' embarked for Canada in 1836. On 31 October 1837, Lieutenant Ormsby took part in a duel that occurred, just days before the outbreak of the Canadian rebellion. At the time, the duel caused a sensation, due to one of the duelists being a British Officer, the other a prominent Patriote. Six weeks later, he mentioned in dispatches for his gallantry at the battles of St. Eustache and St. Benoit. Promoted Captain on 3 February 1843, he was placed on Half-Pay on 9 April 1847. In 1859, he was appointed Captain of Invalids at the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham and died there on 30 May 1863.



Army List entry:

*'Captain A. H. Ormsby served in the Burmese war from Sept. 1824 to Jan. 1826, and was present at the siege and capture of Aracan, and in the Talack expedition. Mentioned in Col. Wetherall's despatch for distinguished gallantry in action with the rebels at St. Eustache and St. Benoit, in Canada, 14th Dec. 1837.'*



#### **LIEUTENANT ORMSBY DUEL, 31 OCTOBER 1837**

*"Edward Rodier was thirty-two years old in 1837; he was a lawyer, full of talent and wit, a handsome fellow, amiable, gallant, a gentleman and brave. He was one of the leaders and the beloved speaker of the Sons of Liberty. It was he who was speaking at the great assembly in the Rue Saint-Jacques on November 6, when the members of the Doric Club attacked the Sons of Liberty. "They are attacking us!" he cried. it's good, soon we will not only be called the "Sons of freedom", but also the "Sons of victory".*

*He had proven, a few days before, that he was as brave in deeds as in words. Finding himself, on October 29, in a hotel with some friends, someone told him that the sentries posted at the guardhouses of the old prison and at the corner of Notre-Dame and Gosford streets had received orders not to let anyone pass on the pavement.*

*"It won't be like that," said Rodier.*

*He went out—dressed as any good patriot was, in country cloth—and taking the sidewalk northwest of rue Notre-Dame, began to walk around as if nothing had happened. Returning to the main guardhouse, he was stopped by a sentry,. He persisted in wanting to pass and during the discussion which ensued, a sergeant seized Rodier by the collar and wanted to throw him into the*

street. (Meanwhile, the guard had sought advice how to respond from Lieutenant Ormsby, who instructed him to use the bayonet if necessary.)

Rodier, addressing the commanding officer,, shouted to him:

"Order that man to let me go.

- Who are you ? asked the officer.

-

— I am Édouard Rodier, member of the bar of Montreal and of the parliament; here is my card, and you who are you?

—

'I am,' replied the officer, Lieutenant Ormsby, of the Royals.

"Very well," said Rodier, "you'll hear from me."

The next day, Mr T S. Brown and another friend were going to offer a card to Lieutenant Ormsby on behalf of Rodier. The latter sent them back to Captain Mayne of the same regiment. Mayne found that Mr Rodier's request was unreasonable, that his friend Ormsby thought he was doing his duty, and that what had happened was a pure accident. Mr Brown replied that if soldiers had duties, citizens had rights and that his friend needed satisfaction.

The duel ended up being accepted, and it was decided that the meeting would take place on the course of the races of the Saint-Pierre river. Rodier learned with pleasure the result of his challenge. He had just fought in Quebec and had only scratched the surface of his adversary; he assured that this time he would not miss his shot. "I only ask one thing," he said to Mr. Brown, "that you place my opponent so that he is a little higher than me."

The next morning, early in the morning, the duellists and their witnesses arrived at the appointed place. After measuring the ground, it was agreed to leave it to fate to decide which of the two would have the choice of places. Captain Mayne tossing a penny in the air, Mr. Brown shouted "Head" and the penny turned his head.

"Now," said Capt. Mayne, let's see about the choice of guns—and he tossed the penny again. "Head," cried Mr. Brown, and the penny turned his head again.— It's going well, said Rodier, the spell is mine, I'm sure he'll be faithful to me until the end. He was in a charming mood and showed admirable coolness.

When the two combatants were ready, the witnesses gave the signal and two pistol shots rang out. Neither was hit. While the weapons were being reloaded, Capt. Mayne made his friend change places. Mr. Brown immediately protested against the conduct of Mayne, who persisted in saying that he was right. Mr. Brown said that, following the rules of the duel, the question was now between Capt. Mayne and himself. Rodier wanted to continue the fight, but he was made to understand that he had to go through with it.

The next morning, Mr. Brown instructed Mr. Duvernay to carry a card to Capt. Mayne. M. Duvernay returned with the following reply:

" Sir, In response to your challenge, I inform you that my conduct has been approved by the officers of my government. and that I no longer want to incur any responsibility in this matter.

" T. S. Brown, Esc, "Your obt. serves. John Mayne , Capt. Regiment of Royals."



*Thus ended the affair which caused a sensation at the time and increased Rodier's reputation for bravery. The patriots were delighted to see with what success he had stood up to the soldiers, and the latter were the first to praise his courage and coolness. The citizens could, after this affair, circulate on the sidewalks as much as they wanted."*

#### **DESPATCH FOR THE BATTLE OF SAINT-EUSTACHE, DECEMBER 14, 1837.**

"SIR, Montreal barracks, Dec.21, 1837

IN obedience to the orders of the Lieutenant General commanding, I have the honour to report the progress of the brigade under my command comprised as per margin in the operations against St. Eustache and St. Benoit.

The brigade assembled at St. Martin on the 13th instant. On the following morning, the 14th, Globinsky's Volunteers were detached on the upper road to St. Eustache, the woods bordering on which were occupied by some picquets of the rebels, and which the volunteers drove in or dispersed. The other troops of the brigade proceeded with the rest of the force by the La Rose-road, crossing the Ottawa on the ice, about three miles below the village of St. Eustache.



At about six or seven hundred yards from Saint Eustache the artillery were found in position, battering the church and adjoining houses. I was here directed to follow the 1st Brigade, which was making a detour of the village , for the purpose of cutting off the retreat of the rebels by the

St. Benoit road ; but on arriving opposite the centre of the village I was directed to enter it, which I did, and having advanced up the main street, occupying the most defenceable houses, and meeting with no opposition, I reported the circumstance to the Lieutenant- General, who desired me to detach an officer to bring up the artillery ; in executing this duty the officer was driven back by a fire from the church, and the artillery entered the village by the rear, and opened their fire on the church door, at the distance of 230 yards, while some companies of the Royal Regiment and the Rifles occupied the houses nearest to the church ; after about an hour's firing, and the church doors remaining unforced, a party of the Royal Regiment assaulted the Presbytery, killed some of its defenders, and set it on Fire.

The smoke soon enveloped the church, and the remainder of the battalion advanced ; a straggling fire opened upon them from the Seigneur's house, forming one face of the square, in which the church stood, and I directed the Grenadiers to carry it, which they did , killing several, taking many prisoners , and setting it on fire. At the same time part of the battalion, led by Major Gagy, Provincial Assistant Quartermaster General, and commanded by Major Warde, entered the church by the rear, and drove out and slew its garrison, and set the church on fire : 118 prisoners were made in these assaults.

Lieutenant Ormsby's conduct was very conspicuous; Major Gagy was severely wounded , and the Royal Regiment had one man killed, and four wounded ; and no other casualty occurred in the brigade.

On the morning of the 15th, Globinsky's corps was left at Saint Eustache, in charge of prisoners, and the remainder of the brigade, with the force under his Excellency's orders, marched to Saint Benoit, where no opposition was offered . On the 17th the brigade returned to Montreal, bringing with it the prisoners.

I have the honour to be, &c.  
G. W. WETHERALL , comd.  
2d Batt. the Royal Regt.”



Condition, Reconstituted; broach marks to edge around 6-7 o'clock. 'H', 'O' and 'Y' weak, 'RM' pretty much erased. Obverse/reverse unaffected. A most interesting and rare medal but priced accordingly