



Christopher Clarke Antiques

Dealers in Campaign Furniture
& Travel Items

Thomas Vaughan London Volunteers, 1803

Sold

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REF: 82773

Height: 54.59 cm (21.5")

Width: 27.29 cm (10.7")

Depth: 1.9 cm (0.7")

Description

A small watercolour portrait of Thomas Vaughan framed with his First Regt. London Volunteers Certificate of Line Card and a printed letter to attend the Hyde Park review by the King on Wednesday the 26th of October 1803.

Volunteer Regiments were springing up all over the country with the fear of an invasion by Napoleon foremost in their minds. The Volunteer Act was passed in 1794 as a reaction to the public's requests to form militia. After the 1802 Peace of Amiens, infantry regiments were disbanded only to be reformed a year later as the invasion threat increased. The hierarchy of the volunteers tended to follow the class system with the gentry as the officers supplemented by some professional or middle class junior officers. The ranks were made up of the lower middle classes.

It is tempting to believe that Thomas Vaughan was the vocalist born in Norwich in 1782. He was admitted a member of the Chapel Royal in May 1803 and became vice-choral of St. Pauls and lay vicar of Westminster Abbey, where he is buried. The letter to assemble for the review gives Vaughan's address as St. Michael's Alley, Cornhill which is only a short walk from St. Paul's. It might also be the Thomas Vaughan who was first assistant and then clerk of the Royal Academy for 45 years and was painted by John Prescott Knight RA in 1852. There are similarities in the two portraits. It is probable that we will never know for sure.

Lieut. Colonel Birch commanded the 1st Regiment of the Loyal London Volunteers at the time but it fell to the Adjutant, Captain Bate to assemble the volunteers. Vaughan and his fellow volunteers were given specific instructions in Bate's letter as to their dress and equipment for the General Muster along with the assembly time and meeting point. Such was the number of Volunteer Regiments in London at the time that a second review was held two days later on the 28th October as there were too many to muster in one go.

These three framed pieces of ephemera are a very interesting group and take us directly to a soldier at a set place, date and time: Thomas Vaughan of the First Regiment London Volunteers in Hyde Park, after 6.30am on the 26th October 1803 to be reviewed by King George III. The water colour is well painted and the Card and letter rare survivors. From the Jack Webb collection. Circa 1803.

Frame Size Is Given

Watercolour Image Size H 3 3/4 W 3 inches