

Jared Mundell

(22 Dec 1839 – 7 Nov 1921)

Mundell. Monday, November 7, 1921 at 8:20 p.m. at his residence, 649 E street s.e., Jared Mundell, beloved husband of the late Mary Elizabeth Mundell. Funeral services will be held at his late residence, Wednesday, November 9 at 3 p.m. Interment in Congressional cemetery.

The Evening Star, September 28, 1915, p. 3

Beat Drum For U.S.; Seventy Years Old

Jared Mundell Claims to Be the Oldest Drummer Boy Now Living

Entered Marine Corps During Mexican War

In Charge of Museum at Washington Navy Yard and Is an Authority on Naval Relics

When it comes to drummer boys of the military services of the early days of the countries, there can be no denial to Washington, D.C., of the honor of having the oldest drummer boy, living right within her bounds. He beat his drum in the United States Marine Corps when some of the drummer boys of the civil war were not heard of; he beat in Washington during the Mexican war days; was with Perry when Japan's doors were opened to the trade of the world; shouldered a musket and fought through the civil war, and played "Yankee Doodle" when the corner stone of the Washington Monument was being laid in place. In fact, since he was seven years old, he has been under the finger of Uncle Sam, answering his every beck and call, and is still answering it.

This veteran is Jared Mundell of 649 E street southeast, and he is employed at the Washington navy yard. He is in charge of the museum containing hundreds of naval war relics and trophies, dating from the revolution down to the war with Spain. And when a reporter for The Star called on him for some information about "his" museum he got down his lists and read various articles, cherished sentimentally by a proud government, and read from them without the aid of glasses. Born in Washington, D.C., December 22, 1839, he has claimed it as his residence every since, leaving it only "under orders" to help in defending the nation. He is a member of Kit Carson Post, No. 2, G.A.R.

Mr. Mundell has under his charge hundreds of relics and trophies, and he watches over them every day, explaining every phase of the advance of naval ordnance from the revolution to today to the many visitors who annually visit the naval museum, which is located in the western part of the Washington navy yard.

Enlisted at Seven Years

When but seven years old, the country was embroiled in the Mexican troubles, and the then patriotic young Mundell was imbued with the military spirit. The marines which then garrisoned Washington were needed at the front. They were sent, and then they needed more to garrison the post here. The officials were willing to accept young men for the post here while the older and more trained men went to the front. So Mr. Mundell enlisted as a drummer boy. When the regular garrison returned the youngsters were mustered out. But Mr. Mundell remained out only a short time. He liked the Marine Corps so well that he reenlisted when he became a few years older. After a tour of shore duty he was assigned to the Macedonian. In 1853 the vessel, one of the type of "wooden ships and iron men," under Commodore Perry, went to Japan to open that country to the world's trade.

"Not even a few schemes to intimidate the Americans could be worked," said Mr. Mundell. "I remember one morning when I was on deck a quartermaster on watch saw what looked like a fort on

shore. The ship was turned broadside on, and every gun was loaded for eventualities. The quartermaster said to the officer of the deck:

"What's that?"

"Hand me your glass," said the officer of the deck.

"Looking for a moment through the long glass, he replied:

"Only a bluff."

"And it was," said Mr. Mundell, "for it turned out that during the night the Japanese forces had obtained a very large piece of canvas, put gun ports in it and erected it, so as to make the American forces believe that they were facing a formidable fortress. But the Americans couldn't be scared away."

Re-Enlisted in Union Army

After quite a term of service in Asiatic waters, Marine Mundell returned to the states, December 22, 1860, which happened to be his birthday, he was discharged by expiration of his enlistment. When he had been out but three months the internal troubles of the United States started, and the soldier Mundell enlisted, always on the side of the Union. He entered the 1st District of Columbia Infantry to serve three months, but remained for fourteen before he was discharged. He couldn't stand the strain of being away from the battle lines, so he again re-enlisted, this time in the 15th New York Engineers, serving then until the end of the war when he was mustered out. But he did not participate in the grand review by President Johnson fifty years ago, because he was with Scofield in North Carolina, which forces were the only ones in the vicinity which were not called to Washington to participate in the review.

From Harpers Ferry to Cedar mountain, the soldier, Mundell, fought during the civil war. He was with Terry at Fort Fisher, was with Scofield at the surrender of Johnston--in fact, there were few battles in which this "oldest drummer boy" did not participate. A trained soldier and a veteran when the war broke out, and with a hearty desire to be always on the firing line when the country was endangered, he was in every battle in which the Army of the Potomac participated.

And since he was mustered out in '65 he has been in Uncle Sam's service. When the war ended he obtained a place in the Washington navy yard, and has remained ever since. He is well known to many officers and men of the navy who have served at the yard, and when there is any question about relics or early war-time days every officer and man first thinks of Mr. Mundell to settle it.

Drums Monument Stone Into Place

The boy Mundell drummed the corner stone of the Washington Monument into place, and would have had the honor of riding with it into place had not his boyhood timidity prevented it. Mr. Mundell said that with his drum he went down to the Monument to witness the exercises. With him was a fifer. When everything was in readiness for the lowering of the stone one of the officials spied the drummer boy and the fifer. He asked him to get on the stone and ride with it into place. He was timid, he said, and refused, and his partner was told to do it. But he, too, did not like the idea. So they were both told to play "Yankee Doodle" as the stone was being lowered, and they did with all the vim that was in them.

Though he missed the grand review of fifty years ago, because "orders" kept him in the battle territory, he is going to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of this event by marching up Pennsylvania avenue with Kit Karson Post No. 2, G.A.R. tomorrow.