

Ely Dorsey (1744-1821) Patriot # P-149417
Captain / POW, 2nd Regiment Maryland Middle Militia

Ely Dorsey was son to Ely and Deborah Dorsey and born July 23, 1744. They were both from the Maryland Colony themselves and lived in Ann Arundal County at this time. Ely Jr. continued to live in Maryland all of his life.

Ely Dorsey was commissioned a Lieutenant in the service of the United States in January 1776. He commanded an independent company until October and was then became a Lieutenant in the 2nd Maryland Regiment. In November 1776, at the fall of Fort Washington, Ely was among the almost 3000 patriots captured by the British. Of these, only 800 or so would survive their captivity.

While a prisoner, Lieutenant Dorsey's promotion to Captain was issued. He signed parole and was release from captivity to return home – honor bound to not take up arms again. During his captivity and later parole, the treasury of the Continental Army withheld his pay. In response to Ely's petition, General George Washington wrote a letter to the Colonel Thomas Price on August 14, 1777 ordering issuance of back pay and renewed salary for Captain Ely Dorsey going forward "in the same manner, that he would, if he was at liberty to act in service". Though unable to rejoin his regiment, Ely remained active in service of the patriot cause as a member of the Committee of Observation through at least August of 1781.

After his parole, Ely found his bride in Frederick County. On November 26, 1778 he married Ms. Sara (Ruth) Worthington of Frederick County in Arundal County, Maryland. They had several children including Edward, Ignatius, Ruth, and Allen. There is some doubt as to the actual date of Captain Ely Dorsey's passing. Some records indicate he died in March 14, 1803 and others give the date as September 9, 1821. In either case, it is said that he died around Frederick County, Maryland and was laid to rest in the Zion Episcopal Church Cemetery near Urbana.

Submitted by William Waters "Bill" Edgeworth
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- NOTE: Letter from George Washington to Colonel Thomas Price is held by the National Archives. An online transcription may be found at <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-10-02-0605>