

[Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements and Rosters](#)

Pension Application of Thomas Armistead R12157

VA Half Pay

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris. Revised 5 May 2015.

[The following are from [Library of Virginia Legislative Petitions Digital Collection](#)/ King and Queen County.]

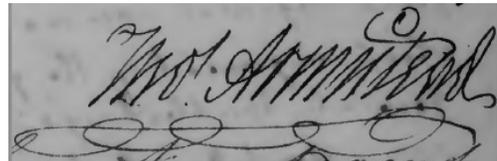
To the honorable, the general assembly of the commonwealth of Virginia

The petition of Thomas Armistead humbly sheweth:

That your petitioner, in the month of May, in the year 1775, was appointed an ensign of company of volunteers in the county of King and Queen commanded by Capt. George Lyne: that his company being united, by the order of the committee of safety, with a company of minutemen was in service at Hampton in September 1775, when it was attacked by the British: that your petitioner afterwards did duty, as a volunteer in the 7th Virginia regiment, in the company of Capt. Gregory Smith, at the time of the declaration of independence. that in the same year your petitioner was appointed third lieutenant of [undeciphered word], and performed yoman duty with the said regiment in York Town: that your petitioner was then turned over to the first Virginia state regiment, commanded by Colo. George Gibson which regiment in the year 1777 was attached to General Muhlenburg's [sic: Peter Muhlenberg's] brigade in the continental army: that the enlistment of the men having expired in the winter of 1780, your petitioner returned to Virginia to recruit; that from the frequent invasions of this country, your petitioner was detained [by] express orders upon various services of an active and exposed kind, until the siege of York [28 Sep - 19 Oct 1781], when your petitioner became a member of [Charles] Dabney's legion; that your petitioner afterwards was ordered to garrison Portsmouth, and was then permitted to retire, but under the special order of Executive, that he should be continued in service:

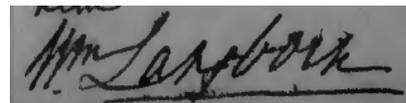
Notwithstanding the facts, contained in the foregoing representation: – facts, which can be now proved by many patriots of those days, yet living, your petitioner is among the few, who have not received the emoluments allowed to the army in general. He pretends not to boast of merit; but he dares to appeal to any test for the truth, and nature of his exertions in the cause of independence. Why your petitioner has not applied at an earlier day for the compensation, conferred on others, he can assign no better reason, than an inattention to his pecuniary affairs, in which he cannot now persevere, without essential injury to his family.

Your petitioner therefore prays, that he will be [one or two illegible words] in his rights, which have been earned with personal hazard, and, if they are forfeited, have been forfeited by no dishonor.



King Wm. County Decem'r 30th 1804

I believe myself authorised in the absence of the Marquis de la Fayette [Lafayette], to declare to the Assembly and my Country The confidence and respect the Gen'l. had for the zeal, activity, and patriotism, of Major Thos. Armisted. To my knowledge he has often been selected for dangerous and important interprises and I believe the Gen'ls. orders will certify his approbation of his Gen'l. conduct. For my own part I recollect with pleasure the services that Maj. Armsted rendered his Country and shall be gratified if this certificate should procure for him what the Legislature in their Wisdom & justice shall think just to grant him [William Langborn VAS825]



Dear Sir Richmond Jan'y. 3^d 1805

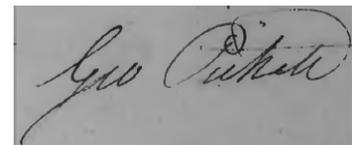
As my state of health & of the weather forbids my going before the Committee, to whom your case is referred I can only give you in writing the substance of what I could say were I to attend, as you had requested.

And that is, that I had often heard of your bold & enterprising spirit, & military skill, whilst I was in the Committee of Safety, & Council of State and remember upon an interesting occasion, during [Benedict] Arnold's Invasion, your assistance was called for by Col'l. [James] Innes, & readily afforded with ability; I mean on the night after Arnold had returned from his Expedition to Richmond, and had appeared off Jamestown, and it was apprehended that he would land and endeavour to cut off the militia under Gen'l. [Thomas] Nelson & Col Innes, which had, by a forced march been thrown into Williamsburg, & which, being too weak (without the aid of the Militia which had been ordered down from Holt's Forge, & was expected in the next day) to make a successful resistance, & then form the junction contemplated with the reinforcements expected, were removed in the night from Williamsburg, up the road, by which the communication, with the expected militia, was necessary to be kept open. I say that I remember that you formed the Militia that night, & acted as a Major & that Col. Innes mentioned to me your great military worth. But as I had not been in the Army, & could not recollect the rank, & even the names of but few of our Officers, I do not remember anything more of your Rank, than that you were called captain, & then Major Armistead & that you were very early in the Service, & that I witnessed your service at a late & interesting Period of the War. Major Langborn's certificate is confirmation of what I had heard respecting you & is highly valuable, as he was a favorite Aid de Camp of the Marquiss de la Fayette. I am dear Sir your obed't. Serv't.

John Page [Governor of Virginia]



In the Summer 1781 there was a Report that Genral arnold with a Large force of British Soldiers were coming to Richmond in Consequence of which all the vessells that Lay at and below Rockets [Rocketts Landing E side of James River about 1 mi below Richmond] fell down the River to a place Called Cox & dale. there they Met Genral Arnold the Enemy Commenced a fire with Cannon an an vessells from the South Side and in a verry little time they took possession of one of our armed vessells and turned the Cannon on the Remainder of our vessells – at this time the Commanding officer (Colo. Innes) ordered Major armstead with all the Troops under his Command to go to the waters Edge and to defend the vessells to the last Extremity. Major Amstead did take his post on the waters Edge and as near the vessell as he could get and continued there from about ten oClock in the forenoon till dark. he was Exposed to the Enemy fire the whole day and kept up a continual fire on the Enemy. near night Colo. Turner Southall came to me and said it was Colo. Innes orders that Major Armstead should Bring his men to the Ground and desired me to go to him with these orders. this I did and found Major Armstead Exposed verry much to the Enemyes fire and was told that several of his men were killed and wounded. I told Major Armstead that it was the Commanding officers orders that he should Bring his men of the ground as there was little or no chance to save the vessells. they at that time being abandond by the Capts and Saylor. Major Armstead answer was that he had hopes of saving some of the vessells that lay nearest the shore. he continued there untill I came away & left him there. Given under my hand this third day of Jan'y 1805



I do hereby Certify that during the Campaigns of 1778 & 1779 whilst acting as Aide Camp to Maj'r. Gen'l Lord Stirling [William Alexander] I became acquainted with Capt. Thos. Armistead then of the first Virg'a. Reg't. in Continental Service and I have a perfect recollection that his Zeal for the American Cause and promptitude for command on any Enterprize of Expedition of Emergency were frequently Evinced & that he was considered as a brave & active officer by all who were acquainted with him.

Richmond January 4th 1805

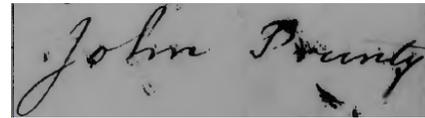
[John Pryor W12064]



This is to certify that some time, probably in the fall, of the year 1781, I conducted a number of Deserters, eighteen & six months men from Hampshire Jail to Winchester and delivered them to a certain Colonel Green. I also certify that I frequently understood about that time that a Major Armistead was a receiving Officer of the above description of men for the Army. Given under my hand at Richmond this 8th day of January 1805.

[John Prunty]

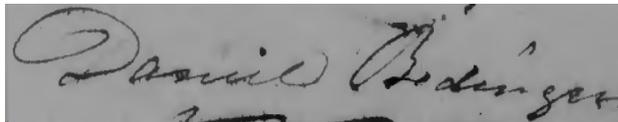
Sam'l. Coleman



I feel a pleasure in Stating that the Conduct of Capt. Thomas Armistead, whilst he resided near Norfolk, was, as far as came within my knowledge, such as became a sound & inflexible republican.

[Daniel Bedinger W8138]

Richmond Jan'y. 8th 1804 [sic]



to Claims Referd 19 Dec 1804/ Reasonable Jan 1805

[The following are from [Library of Virginia Legislative Petitions Digital Collection](#)/ Richmond (City).]

To the honourable the General assembly of the Common Welth of Virgina, the pittion of Jane Armstead of the City of Richmond and Marther [sic] B. Towles formerley Marther B. Armistead his Daughter Louisa Beartea, and octava Moodey Grand Daughtears of said thomas Armistead Deceased Respectfully Representeth to your honourable Body, that Captain Thomas Armistead was a Captian of infrentry in the Virgina Line on State Establishment Durring the Revolutionary war, and served his Country for Six years faithfully and Did not Durring his life Draw his half pay as was Provided by the Law of this Commonwealth nor his Commutation of five years full pay, as was also provided for, his said services so Rendered, your pettioners prays your honourable Body will pass and act to pay said Commutation of five years full pay; they are satisfied that your honourable Body will Grant your pittioners Request, When they Rember that By an act passed at the present Session of your honourable Body Capt Russell and Lieutenant Rucker or their heirs was paid their Commutation, who served under the same Col. and only for 3 years and Capt Armstead, served four, the year 1776 to 1782 when from wounds he Recived in Battles he Became, Supernumery]sic: supernumerary: having insufficient troops for a command]. and your pettioners will ever pray

Jane Armstead, Widow of the Deceased and

Marther B. Towles his Daughter

Louisa Beartea } GrandDaughter

octava Moody }

by their Representative/ Alexander Marr

I Do certify that Cap'n. Thomas Armistead is entitled to the proportion of Land allowed a Captain of Infantry in the Virginia State line for services from August 1776 to the 21st of May 1782, when Capt. Armistead became Supernumerary.

Council Chamber/ December 28th 1782
Benj Harrison

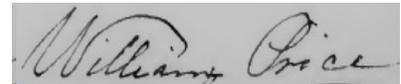
Thos. Meriwether

I do Certify that I was well acquainted with Capt Thos Armsted, in the Revolutionary army he was a Capt in the first Virg State Reg't. I believe it was Commanded by Colo Dabney I belonged to the first Virg'a. Reg't. first Commanded by Colo. P. Henry [Patrick Henry] and lastly by Colo. Rich'd Parker [Richard Parker], who was killed at C. Town [Charleston] S. Carolina – the first State Regt. which Capt Armsted belonged Volunteered, and joined us, the Continental Army at Valey Forge [sic: Valley Forge] in the Spring 1778 – in June of the same year we marched from V. Ford to the battle of Monmout which was the 28 June 1778 I was in the action with the s'd Armsted & his Reg't – after which we marched to Brunsick [sic: Brunswick], from thence to the white plains in New York, from thence to Robertsons Plains, on the North River, & return to, Middle Brook in New Jersey in Spring 1779. I left Capt Armsted at that place being Ordered to another section of the army, that is my last view.

Richmond 26 Jan'y 1826

William Price [BLWt1440-200]

Late Leut 1st Virg'a Reg't under Continental estab't.



Feby 2nd 1826 Referred to Claims/ Feby 7th reasonable

I do certify that Capt Thomas Armistead did on the 28 Dec 1782 draw a warrant from the Land Office of Virginia for 4000 acres as his proportion of Land allowed a Capt of Infantry in the Virginia State Line in Service from Aug't 1776 to the 21 of May 1782, when Capt Armistead became Supernumery

Wm Selden/ Reg L Office Va Feb 4 1826

On the 16th december 1784 Thomas Armistead a Captain of Infantry received a Certificate of Two hundred and twenty one pounds five shillings and seven pence it being the balance of his full pay – and on the 18th Geb 1782 he received a certificate for advance pay amounting to £360.

J. E. Heath aud[ito]r Feb 22 1826

I do hereby certify that I knew Capt'n Thomas Armstead during the Revolutionary War. He belonged to the Virginia line on state establishment & when Col's. [Charles] Dabney & [George] Gibson with their Regiments joined the Continental troops at Valley Forge, Capt Armstead was with them. He remained with those Regiments as long as I remained in that part of the Army viz: untill the Winter of 78-79 at which time I was detailed for another service – here my acquaintance with Capt. Armstead ceased. how long he continued in the State Service I know not. He was undoubtedly at the Battle of Monmouth [28 Jun 1778] & I remember him at that White Plains. I gave a certificate of the same character some time since –

Feby 22 1826

William Price

[The following are from the federal pension file. Written on the file jacket is the following: “Daughter Martha B. Towler also claims on account of the War of 1812 services of her husband, John Towler, and Rev. War services of her Uncle Gregory Smith.”]

To the Honorable General Assembly of the State of Virg.

The petition of Jane Armstead widow of Major Thomas Armstead [sic] deceased of this county, and Marther B Towles his daughter, formerly Marther Armstead and Louisa and Octava Bertua his two grand daughters per their representative Alexander Marr respectfully representith to your honourable body that Capt Thomas Armstead was formerly a Captain in the Virg line in the revolutionary war – that under an

act of the General Assembly volunteered and joined the Continental army under General Washington and served his country bravely in the capacity of Captain – after which he was placed on the supernumerary list in consequence of wounds received in three battles in said army and that it appears to your petitioner that the said Captain Armstead did not during his lifetime receive his commutation of five years full pay as they are informed was provided for by act of assembly prays your honourable body might pass an act that said commutation may be paid your petitioners if the same shall seem reasonable to your honourable body – your petitioners rely upon your honourable body of granting their petition as Lieutenant Rucker and Capt Russell received from your honourable body their commutation and pay by an act passed by the present session of the Legislature and that the above officers served under the same Colonel that Thomas Armstead served under which was Colonel [Charles] Dabney – and your petitioners will ever pray. 31st January 1826

Jane Armstead

Marther B. Towles

Louisa and Octava Bertua

I, Catharine Price heir at law of Thomas Armistead Lie't. do upon oath testify and declare, to the best of my knowledge and belief, that her above Father & Testator did enter in 1776, for the term of during the war, and served in the Regiment No. 1[?] under the command of Colonel George Gibson of the Continental line of Virginia and that he continued in the service aforesaid until the end of the Revolutionary war.

I further declare, that I have never received a warrant for the Bounty Land promised to my said Father on the part of the United States; nor do I believe that he ever received it, or transferred his claim to it in any manner whatsoever [the rest is power of attorney] Washington City May 11 – 1832

John Nicholas [S46397] this day made oath before me a Justice in the County of Washington & District of Columbia That Thomas armistead who he believes was the Father of Catharine Price entered the Revolutionary Army in 1776 as a Lieutenant in Col. George Gibsons Regiment, in which he the said John Nicholas was a Captain – that before the close of said war the said Armistead was promoted to the rank of Captain in which capacity he served as a brave & distinguished officer to the end of the war.

Sworn to before me this eleventh day of May 1832. J. Wells jr J. Peace

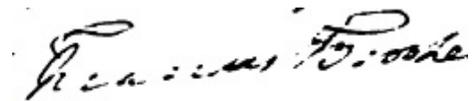
[The following are from [bounty-land files in the Library of Virginia](#). Online images of two documents in the file are not clear enough for transcription.]

To his Excellency the Gov of Virginia

Your Memorialists respectfully represent, that they are induced to believe that their late father Thomas Armistead who was a Captain of the Virginia State Line of the Army of the Revolution, became by Law entitled to a larger quantity of Bounty Land from the state of Virginia than has been rec'd. by himself or his heirs That they believe he was in service seven years or more, while he has only obtained a warrant for the proportion of Land allowed for a service of six years. And your memorialists being the devise under their fathers will, and entitled as such to all his property, therefore need humbly pray your Excellency to cause an investigation of the said claim for additional Bounty to be made, and if it should be shewn that additional land is yet due, that their said claim may be allowed, and an order to that effect issued to the Register of the Land Office. and you memorialists will ever pray &c

Catharine Hall [two names x'ed out]

February 7th 1838 I certify that I knew Cap'n Thos Armstead in the campaign of 1781 in Virginia, I think he then belonged to one of the light corps in the Marquis Lafayettes army – I believe that he was an officer in one of the State regm'ts he had the character and [undeciphered word] of a gallant and meritorious officer Francis Brooke [S8093]



NOTES:

A typed summary details Armistead's service as follows: "Thomas Armistead entered the service, place not shown, in August, 1776, and served as lieutenant in Captain John Nicholas' Company, Colonel George Gibson's Virginia Regiment; he entered the service in the spring of 1778, served as captain in Colonels Dabney and Richard Parker's Virginia Regiment and was in the battle of Monmouth. He received wounds in three different battles, names of these engagements not shown. He retired May 21, 1783."

The file includes a copy of Thomas Armistead's will dated 19 June 1809 leaving his wife Jane "no more than the laws of this Commonwealth will entitle her to as a widow, as she has been the author of & sorce of all my misfortunes since my intermarriage with her." The will also named daughters Abiah Albert, Ann Mitchell, Catharine, and Marther, as well as a daughter "of Mrs Jane Armistead my wife born in Wedlock, but such was & has been the conduct of my wife Jane, that that I have little or no knowledge of this child, I cald her Jane but understood her mother calls her Juli Ann – to this child I give five shillings to purchase her a bible." The file also contains other legal documents relating to a lawsuit among the children.

[Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements and Rosters](#)

Addendum to Thomas Armistead R12157

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris. 19 November 2023.

[From [Virginia Half-Pay pension records on fold3.com](#). The 92-page file consists mainly of correspondence relating to the letter transcribed below, much of it undecipherable. A typed summary adds the following:

Left the service May 21, 1782.

Died September 1, 1809.

At the time of his death he was a grocer at Brandywine, King William County, Virginia, and formerly of Richmond.

Daughters.

Abiah Albert

Ann Mitchell

Catherine F. Hall, widow of William Pearce later wife of Everard Hall. To her he gave all claims to lands in Catucky [sic] and Tennessee

Martha B. Towler

Jane, so-called by her father, but called Julia Ann by her mother.

Thomas Armistead had a brother Robert.]

I hereby notify to the Officers of the department in Washington not to pay to Mr Parker nor his agent or agents, nor to my sister Mrs Catharine Hall, formerly Mrs Catharine Pierce, nor her agent or agents any thing that is due me from Government for services rendered in the revolution by Capt Thomas Armistead my father Col. Gregory Smith my uncle and any thing that may be due Robert Armistead my uncle. It has been fully ascertained by Col Parker Land Register and a Mr Nate Shope[?] that there is an arrearage of six hundred dollars due my sister and self. I have revoked the power attorney given to Mr Parker and request that any thing due me may not be paid to him nor my sister Mrs Hall nor any one else except Mr. Joseph Mayo my attorney, or myself. you will please attend to this. Mrs Hall already owes me a large amount I particularly object to her, or any one receiving any thing due me except Mrs. [undeciphered].

Very Respectfully/ Martha B Towler

PS I have just this moment rec'd your letter. Our heirship and [undeciphered word] is already proved that we are the daughters of Capt Thomas Armistead and only heirs, That our father served in the revolutionary war until the conclusion Mr Nauthop has ascertained that in settling up and paying Capt Armisteads heirs, that six hundred dollars is due as arrearage or a deficiency or error in accounts he also states some money at half pay I presume the half pay tho' I do not know has been p'd and the claim is a deficiency in paying the half pay that the full amount of which was not p'd Mr Nauthop can explain it satisfactory. I have empowered Mr Mayo he has seen Mr Nauthops letter Mr Nauthop positively asserts that it is due Mr Paker the land register here says the same & I gave Col Parker a power of attorney to get it which I have canceled, Col. Parker knows also and wrote to me when I was in Baltimore and sent me a power attorney to sign. Please to look at what has been p'd and you will see I expect a lot is due by close examination and you will confer a great favor on yrs very Respectfully/ Martha B Towler

PS Mr Nauthop states in a letter to me that the only difficulty is that there ought to be a joint power attorney from my sister and self or else some one ought to Administer, I wrote him that the department in Washington had heretofore pd without any such proceedings and not thought that I could obtain any [undeciphered] due me for my fathers service by a power attorney without writing with my sister please let me know farther about my claim after you have examined closely and if you could see Mr Nauthop he will make my claim known. Very Respectfully Yrs &c/ M Towler

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