

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

Pension Application of William Graves R14570

VA Half Pay

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris. Revised 24 March 2020.

[The following copy was entered as evidence in a petition by James Quarles (pension application R17254). The issue was whether officers who had been discharged before the end of the war because they were supernumerary (lacked enough troops for a command) were entitled to the provision of a law granting half pay for life or full pay for five years (commutation). The court found in Graves's favor, but apparently he did not collect his pay.]

Virginia towit:

Pleas at the Capitol in the city of Richmond on friday the first day of April in the year of our Lord 1791, Before the Judges duly allotted to the District court directed by law to be holden for the District composed of the counties of Henrico, Hanover, Chesterfield, Goochland and Powhatan. Be it remembered that at this same term towit: On monday the eleventh day of April in the year aforesaid Wiliam Graves by his attorney presented to the said court his petition and appeal from a decision of the Auditor of Public accounts in the words following towit:

To the honorable the Judges of the District Court now sitting. The petition of William Graves, Cornet and Q master of the Cavalry of Col. Charles Dabney's [R13624] legion, humbly sheweth. That your petitioner engaged in the service of his country, among the State troops in the year 1779 and continued therein untill the ninth of February 1783, at which time he was a cornet & QM in actual service, and was then by an order of the executive discharged on half pay, that by the laws of this Commonwealth he is entitled as he conceives to half pay or to five years full pay in commutation thereof. Yet the Auditor of public accounts has refused to issue to your petitioner certificates or warrants therefor; from which decision of the Auditor your petitioner prays an appeal to this honble. court, and prays that the said judgment of the auditor may be reversed, and that he may be directed to issue to your petitioner such certificates or warrants, as he is by law entitled to and your petitioner will ever pray &c. &c.

I admit notice of the above petition

Audrs office 9<sup>th</sup> April 1791.

J. Pendleton.

[The following is from [Library of Virginia Legislative Petitions Digital Collection](#)/ Norfolk (City) – Graves, Euphan and others]

To the Honorable the Senate and the House of Delegates.

Your Petitioner Euphan Graves is the Relict of Wm Graves and lately administered on the estate of her said husband who died in 1799 very poor leaving your petitioner and two children William A Graves & James Graves your other petitioners who here beg leave to state that William Graves the husband and father of your petitioners very early entered into the service during the Revolutionary War and was a cornet in the cavalry under Captain William Armistead [R12155] troop of Horse Major John Nelson [W5414] was the major Commandant [“corrected” to “Commandment”] – that in the year 1782 by their arrangement he was transferred to Colo Dabneys Legion was it is said appointed Quarter master in the said Legion – that this House has paid Major Nelson his commutation and the Heirs of Captain Armistead – that the said intestate continued in the service until the end of the war that the Executive who had the power declared that your petitioners said father should retire on half pay with others of the said Legion –

Your petitioners appeal to the justice and magnanimity of this House to allow your petitioners the commutation of half pay for the life of your petitioners said husband & of your other petitioners said father or five years commutation in lieu thereof – Your petitioners believe the Board of Public officers reported that the said William Graves the elder was entitled to half pay for life – that they believe that Judge John Marshall [Chief Justice of the US Supreme Court, S5731] Colo George Muter [VAS803] & Colo Charles Dabney were appointed to make out the discrimination under the act of 1781 & that two of

them are still alive and can give to this House any further information if required so to do –

Euphan Graves                      William A Graves                      James Graves

by William DuVal their Friend & agent

[Certified at Norfolk Borough Court, 1 Sep 1826. James Barron (W12264) certified that he became acquainted with William Graves “at Hampton VA shortly after the siege of York and am inclined to think that he continued in the service, until the close of the war, when he received some civil appointment at Norfolk.”]

[From [Library of Virginia Legislative Petitions Digital Collection](#)/ Norfolk (City) – Graves, William. ]

To The Hon’ble the Speaker & Members of the House of Delegates.

The Petition of Wm. Graves humbly sheweth that your Petitioner served in the Corps of State Cavalry from the first raising of it & some time in the year 1781 was appointed a Cornet, that in that Capacity he continued in Service till the Month of Feb’y 1783 when the Executive thought proper to discharge the Cavalry on Acc’t. of the Expence of the same; your Petitioner tis true did not serve ‘till the Troops were discharged by the Governor’s Proclamation, but having been in actual Service ‘till within Eight Weeks of that Period he hopes this Hon’ble House will grant to him his Half Pay or five years full Pay in Consideration for his Services & he will as in Duty bound ever pray &c’a

I well remember Mr Graves acted as Lt of Marines in the State navy & was discharged by order of the Gov’r. & Council in consequence of peace taking place but do not recollect the day of discharge The marines & seamen were discharged & paid off at the same time, except a few men employd to take care of the vessels & to the best of my recollection Mr Graves took care of the Schooner Harrison [sic: *Harrison*] until she was sold which took place some time after their discharged.

Thos Newton Jr.

In Council April 19<sup>th</sup> 1783.

Gentlemen [To the Commissioners of the Navy],                      The confirmation of a General peace will for the strictest compliance with my former request to you that all the officers and men employed in your department should be discharged, in order to ease the State as much as possible of expences. If these orders have not already been executed I request that no farther time may be lost, and that all your stores may be safely lodged and with the vessels you may have on had, placed in the care of some discreet person till the assembly shall please to direct what shall be done with them. It appears to me necessary that the Boat Liberty and the other small Boat should be kept in service to enforce our Acts of trade but of this I am not to Judge, however it may not be amiss to suggest this to you that they may be ready to go on duty if the assembly should coincide with me in opinion. the approach of the time of the meeting of the Assembly, reminds me of calling on your for the accounts of your department, that I may be prepared to lay them before the assembly at the first of the Session.

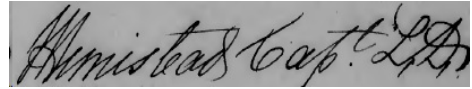
I am Gentlemen yours &c. (signed) Benjamin Harrison

A copy as recorded in the Letter Book      Attest Sam Coleman A.C.C.

We hereby Certify that Wm Graves served as Lt. of Marines on board the Schooner Harrison Capt Rich’d Baron [sic: Richard Barron R5] & that he was discharged by order of the Gov’r and Council in April 1783 when peace took place, at which time he & the Marines he had raised for the service were paid by the subscribers who then acted as Commiss’ar for the Bay defence  
Norfolk October 16<sup>th</sup> 1792                      Paul Loyall[?]      Tho Newton Jr

This is to Certify that William Graves entered, in the State Cavelry in the year 1779 and marched to the Southward under the Com’d. of Colo. Porterfield [Charles Porterfield BLWt1145-450] and Continued there untill the State Troops was Call’d for when this State was invaded he behaved as a good Soldier &

brave Officer and was discharged from the Cavalry belonging to Colo Charles Dabney's Legion in February 1783 after which he enlisted for the Navey a number of men that was Discharged from the Cavalry as marines to serve on Board the Schooner Harrison he was then appointed a Lieutenant of Marines Given under my hand this 6<sup>th</sup> Day of November 1792 W Armistead Capt. L.D. [Light Dragoons]



Octo 16<sup>th</sup> 1792 to Claims/ 7<sup>th</sup> November 1792 Reasonable/ rep[orte]d 27 Nov'r 92

[The following are from [bounty-land records in the Library of Virginia](#). Online images of two other documents are illegible.]

Monday the 5<sup>th</sup> of May 1783

Army D'r

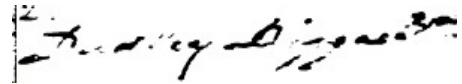
Warrant to William Graves cornet & Quartermaster to the State legion out of the Military fund in part for pay and subsistence from the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 1782 to April 22<sup>nd</sup> 1783 as p order of the Executive.

His ditto to ditto out of d'o in full for d'o from d'o to d'o as pr ditto

I hereby certify that the above is a true extract from a book in this office entitled "Specie Master Book &c"

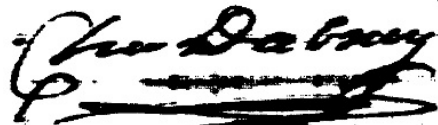
Given under my hand this 6<sup>th</sup> day of November 1851[?] at the Auditor's Office Richmond  
Ro. Johnston/ Asst. Aud'r

I Dudley Digges [S8328] certify that I was a Lieutenant in Capt F[?] company of Cavalry in the Virginia State Line during the revolutionary war. I further certify that I was well acquainted with William Graves of the same company who entered it Serj't. that the said Wm Graves behaved so well that on the death of our Cornet he was promoted to that office as well as Quarter Master of Major Nelson's Corps, and remained as Quarter master until we were discharged. Given under my hand in Louisa County this 30<sup>th</sup> 1832



[The following is from [bounty-land records in the Library of Virginia](#) indexed as Graves, Cornet.]

This may Certify that Cornet Graves has [illegible] in the service of this State from Aug't 1779 to the date hereof. Chas Dabney Lt Col



NOTE: The federal file contains many documents regarding the amount owed the heirs of Graves, from which it appears they were eventually granted \$17,166.78.