

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements and Rosters

Virginia documents pertaining to George Christian VAS2997
Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris.

[The following are from [rejected claims in the Library of Virginia.](#)]

I John Harman [John Harmon S18006] of Accomack County do hereby certify and declare that I was present at the Landing of the dead body of George Christian who was a coxswain in the State Navy of Virginia during the war of the Revolution; he was killed in service on board of a boat by one of the enemy in an expedition on the chesapeak [sic: Chesapeake] Bay about 1781.

Given under my hand this 1 day of January 1831.

John Harmon of H



Accomack county towit This day the above named John Harman of Henry made oath to the foregoing certificate

Given under my hand this the 1st January 1831

Jno B Revell

Accomack County towit. I Levin Hyslop [W7858] aged 76 do certify that I knew George Christian who was a coxswain in the Virginia State navy during the war of the Revolution – he was killed in service about 1781 and his body was buried at Onancock in this county. Given under my hand this 1st of January 1831.

Levin Hyslop hisXmark

NOTE: The claim was rejected possibly because George Christian may not actually have been in state service at the time of his death, but was a volunteer in the Battle of the Barges. The circumstances were given as follows in a letter dated 6 Dec 1782 by Col. John Cropper, Jr. (W3781), published in *The History of Virginia's Navy of the Revolution* by Robert Armistead Stewart (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1993 reprint, pp 131-132).

Dear Sir [William Davies BLWt597-500]:

On the 28th ultimo [28 Nov 1782], I received a letter from Commodore Whaley [Zedekiah Walley], requesting a number of militia to full man his fleet, in consequence of his intention to attack the enemy's barges then off Onancock. In compliance with which request, on the 29th I went on board his fleet myself, with twenty-five volunteers of the Accomac militia. On the 30th, at the head of Cagey's Straits (or Kedge's) we fell in with and engaged the enemy. When we approached them, within about three hundred yards, and the fire began to be serious, our barges all ran away except the Commodore's, the "Protector," in which were Major Smith Snead [BLWt2056-400], Capt. Thomas Parker [BLWt1741-300], Capt. William Snead, myself and five other volunteers. This dastardly conduct of our comrades brought on our barge the whole fire of the enemy, which was very severe, and it was as severely answered by the Protector, until the enemy's six barges were within fifty yards, when most unfortunately the cartridges of our short eighteen-pounders caught fire amidships; the explosion of which burned three or four people to death, and caused five or six more, all afire, to leap overboard, and the alarm of the barge's blowing up made several others swim for their lives. The enemy, almost determined to retreat from our fire, as they told us afterwards, took new spirit at this disaster, and pushed up with redoubled fury. On the other hand, our people opposed them with the most daring resolution. There was one continued shower of musket balls, boarding spikes, cutlass, cold shot and iron stay-sails, for eight or ten minutes, till greatly overpowered by numbers, and having all the officers of the barge killed and wounded, we struck to them, after having wounded their Commodore, killed one captain, wounded another, killed and wounded several

of their inferior officers, and killed and wounded fifteen of the Kidnapper's crew, the barge which first boarded us. Commodore Whaley was shot down a little before the enemy boarded, acting the part of a cool, intrepid, gallant officer; Captain Joseph Handy fell nigh the same time, nobly fighting with one arm after the loss of the other—Captain Levin Handy [possibly W9475] was badly wounded. There went into action in the Protector sixty-five men; twenty-five of them were killed and drowned, twenty-nine were wounded, some of whom are since dead and eleven only escaped being wounded, most of whom leaped into the water to save themselves from the explosion. At the foot you have a particular account of the loss sustained by the volunteers on board the Protector. After the surrender, I entered into an agreement with Commodore Kidd to take ashore such of his wounded as chose to go and to have them nursed and attended at the public expense, upon condition that he would parole all our prisoners, as well the unhurt as the wounded; which agreement I hope will meet the approbation of his Excellency in Council and the Assembly. Being very much disordered with my wounds, I am scarcely able to write, therefore I beg leave to subscribe myself,

Your most respected servant,
John Cropper, Jnr.

Major Smith Snead was wounded with a cutlass in the head, and boarding spike in the arm, and a contusion of a cold shot in his body.

Captain William Snead was wounded in the head with a cutlass, and had his arm broken with a musket ball.

Captain George Christian was killed with a musket ball.

Mr. John Reville was wounded in the arm with a musket ball, and on the head with a cutlass.

Captain Thomas Parker, Mr. William Gibb, and Mr. Evans, escaped being wounded, probably by leaping overboard at the alarm of the barge blowing up.

Myself was wounded by a cutlass on the head, slightly by a pike on the face and thigh, slightly by a cutlass on the shoulders, and after the surrender was knocked down by a four-pound rammer, the blow of which was unfortunately near upon the same place where the cutlass hit.

You will do me a most singular favor to excuse the sally I took in the barge, and have me exchanged as soon as possible.

Yours affectionately, / J. Cropper, Jnr.