

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

Virginia documents pertaining to Henry Stratton VAS4509
Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris.

[From [rejected claims in the Library of Virginia](#) in two files.]

1776 Dr Lieut Henry Stratton
May 6 To Cash advanced for recruiting Seamen & a Months ½ pay £18.00.
See Accts of Safety Committee P98

Williamsburg Oct 25th 1776

Sir, the Board have received a letter from the first Lieut. of your company Mr. Pollard [Benjamin Pollard VAS224, a captain of marines] complaining that about the 25th of last month he gave you a Furlough for eight days, and that you have not yet returned to your duty and that he has lately been informed that you do not intend to return until four or five weeks time. We therefore order that you forthwith attend the Board to answer the above complaint. I am by order of the Naval Board

Yr hble servant/ Thomas Whiting

1st Com[?]

To Lieut Henry Stratton
Chesterfield
sent by Peter Elam

Williamsburg Oct 31st 1776

Sir The House of Delegates determine to take the Marines into the Land service but have since altered their resolution, so that no certificate is necessary. Lieut. Stratton this day appeared before the Board and alledges in excuse for his conduct that he has been sick ever since he left the Hero Galley, he is now returning to the Galley and will deliver you this Letter. I am by order of the Naval Board

Your hble servant/ George Webb 1st Comd. P.S

If you have any complaint against Mr Stratton it may be enquired into hereafter. The Board hitherto approve your conduct and will have no objection to promote you to the command of your company of Marines in the room of Captain Conway [Robert Conway VAS3121, who resigned in Nov 1776 as Captain of the *Protector* galley] G. W.

To Lieut. Ben. Pollard of the Hero Galley

Williamsburg February 22^d 1779.

Schooner Alliance p. order Mr. Smith Dr.

To 2 baggs at 12/

2 blankets 75/ £7.10.

Rec'd by Henry Stratton

Williamsburg 16 March 1779

Received of Benjamin Day agent for the State sixty pounds for the use of the Schooner Alliance now under my command Henry Stratton

Williamsburg April 22nd 1779

Schooner Alliance p. order Benja. Day reg'r Dr.

To 144 yds Oznaburgs @ 4^{lb} Twine @ 6/8^d

Rec;d by Henry Stratton

Williamsburg 23^d April 1779
Received of Benjamin Day Agent for the State Three hundred pounds for public use
Henry Stratton

1779 Dr Alliance Capt Henry Stratton
Apr To Cordage & to Capt Stratton
See a long acct ending in June 1780 Page 53 of a Book called "Rope Walk Ledger" and also P48 of the same an acct of Dec'r 1781

Williamsburg 24 June 1779. Received of Benja. Day Agent for the State Fifteen pounds on account
Henry Stratton

August 25th 1779
Capt. Stratton ord. B.D.L. pr Checks 48/- 13¼ yds linen &c
See a small book in Aud. Off Called "Cash Book"

Williamsburg Sept'r 28th 1779.
Schooner Alliance ord. B. D.
30 Gallons rum @ £8
21^{lb} Bro. Sugar @ 20/
1 Bag 15/
pr Henry Stratton Capt.

Octb'r 8th 1779. Received five hundred and thirty seven pounds nine shillings on account of the
Schooner Alliance, disbursements Henry Stratton

On board the Alliance 9th March 1780.
Received of Benjamin Day commercial agent for the State Nine hundred and ten pounds on account.
Henry Stratton

Saturday 3^d March 1781
Order to the State Commissary of Military Stores, deliver to Capt. Henry Stratton 16 Muskets with bayonets, 16 Cartouch boxes with 1 pound of Ammunition in each, to pay for the like articles furnished the Chesterfield Militia, as appears by Colo. Goode's Certificate
See War Office Journal Aud. Off P59

See Capt. H Stratton Petition to the Legislature in 1792 – he represents that he commanded the Alliance in 1780 & 1781, & prays to be paid sundry claims which were allowed

Henry Stratton entered the Navy on the 6th of May 1776 – see Accounts of the Committee of Safety P98. He was a Lieut. in the Navy & was promoted a Captain in the place of Captain Ro. Conway – See 1st Vol Navy Board Journal, among the letters under date of the 31st of Octo 1776 – was Captain of the "Alliance" April 23^d 1779. See old Acct. Book Parchment – was Paid on the [blank] day of Octo 1779 – see cash book P27 & 36 – was in service in 1781 – see Rope Walk Ledger P48 & 53

To the Gov & Council

The heirs of Henry Stratton pray an allowance of Bounty Land for 3 yrs services as Capt in the Va Navy. The file papers marked A. B & C. Document C shews that he was Lieut May 6th 1776
Page 1 of document A shews that he was Lieut of marines on board the Hero gally in october 1776
Page 2 of document A shows that he was Captain of the Alliance in 1779.

Page 3 of document A shews that he was Capt of Alliance to 9th March 1780.

Document B shews that he was Capt of Alliance in June 1780.

Synopsis – document C – May 1776
document B
1st page Oct 1776
2^d page 1779
3^d page Mar 1780
document B June 1780
respectfully submitted/ The heirs

Petition for Bounty land

Henry Stratton Captain S. Navy.

The Journals of the Committee of Safety shew Henry Stratton to have been, in May or April, 1776, engaged in recruiting for the navy. The large Journal of the Navy Board in pages 36 - 80 and 91 recognize him as Lieut of marines. The last date, at which he was thus recognized, was oct 25th 1776. He cannot be traced afterwards, on the several Journals of the Navy Board, & Board of war, which come down to Dec'r 1780. The absence of his name from the Navy Journals, taken together with the Documents A. & B. fil'd with the Petition, shew that he left the navy & entered the service of the Board of Trade, in the latter part of 1776, and continued in that service at least until June 1780.

The Board of Trade, or the Commercial agent of the State, appointed the officers employed in the Trading department. In the larger Journal of the navy Board, there is a case recorded, in which the navy Board recommended to Col. Wm Aylett, the Commercial Agent of the State, an individual to be appointed mate of the Greyhound.

There is no proof, that Stratton was ever an officer of the navy. He was Lieut of marines and probably resign'd. If he did not resign, he was engaged after 1776, in an employment perfectly distinct from the marine service, and incompatible with it. Documents A. & B. shew, that Stratton was Captain of the Alliance, a vessel belonging to the trading Department [sic: see first endnote], from Feby 1779 (and perhaps sometime before) to June 1780. He was (without a doubt) appointed by the Commercial agent, of the Board of Trade.

Although there is no proof of the resignation of his Commission of Lieut of marines, there is satisfactory proof, that he entered another service (that of the Board of Trade) and continued in it, for several years, and never did return to his former command as Lieut of marines.

There is no proof of three years service, as a marine officer. There is no proof (as before stated) that Stratton ever was Captain, or other officer, in the navy.

The note fil'd by this Council, for the Petitioners does not materially change the aspect of his case. It is ingenious, but does not remove the objections to this claim, which are above notic'd.

Resp'y submitted/ John H Smith Com'r &c

May 13th 1834

To his Excellency Gov'r Tazewell

N.B. This claim was rejected Nov'r 1833. It has been again taken up for reconsideration.

Since the case of Lt. Henry Stratton was under consideration by Mr. Smith, the following views have occurred to the Counsel for the heirs, which he begs leave respectfully to submit.

It is understood that the claim is disallowed by Mr. Smith, upon the ground that during a portion of the period for which the services of Lt. Stratton are proved, he was on board the Alliance, a vessel not in the state navy, but under the control of the Board of Trade, and that Lt. S. was never in the actual service of the State Navy for 3 years.

It is proved that Lt. Stratton was an officer of Marines in 1776 and 1777. No evidence of resignation can be discovered, and in 1779 '80, he is found acting as a Captain on board the Alliance. Had he been for this period on board any vessel belonging to the State Navy, there could be no hesitation in granting to his heirs the bounty land claimed by them. It is submitted whether Lt. Stratton should not under

these circumstances be regarded as a supernumerary, liable at any moment to have been called upon, and bound upon such call to resume his function as a Lt. of Marines. Never having resigned, nor from any impropriety of conduct been dismissed from the service, he was still an officer of Marines to all intents and purposes, and as such it would certainly appear entitled to the compensation now claimed by his heirs.

In support of this view, the Counsel begs leave to [part missing at bottom of page] been clearly recognised heretofore by the Executive Council. Lieutenant Samuel Waples [W6427] was Commissioned about the 1 January 1776.. He was captured at the battle of Germantown on the 4 Oct'r 1777 and imprisoned by the enemy from whom he escaped in Dec'r 1777. In the same month he was permitted to go home on furlough, to return the 1 May 1778. At that time he reported himself to General Washington who directed him to go home to Virginia, and wait for further orders. Lt. Waples was then in actual service only from the 1 Jan'y 1776 to the 4 October 1777. But he has drawn Bounty land from the United States for his services to the end of the war, is placed on the pay List under the Act of Congress passed 15 May 1828, to which no one is entitled who did not serve to the end of the war, and he has also been allowed 2666²/₃ acres Military Bounty Land by the State of Virginia for his services as a Lt. In principle, this case and that of Stratton, appear perfectly similar. There is another aspect in which Stratton's case may be viewed, as presenting a strong equitable claim at the least upon the State.

By an order of the Navy Board on the 10 July 1776 (See Journal from 1776 to 1779, p. 6) "Marines as well as all other men belonging to any vessel of war" were placed under the Command of the Captain or Commanding officer of such vessel, and were directed to do such duty as should be necessary." The order [undeciphered word] deprives the officers of Marines, and among others Lt. Stratton, of command, and without any consent on their part, and still less without the commission of any act for which such would have been the penalty, as completely threw them out of service as if they had been cashiered. The entering into this service may be regarded in the light of a contract, in which in consideration of the services to be rendered for a given time, the officer was promised a certain recompense. Ought he to be deprived of it, when whilst when proceeding in the honest discharge of his duty, an order of this sort is made, to which he was no party, and his assent to which was neither asked nor obtained. As applied to other contracts, there could be no doubt about the matter. It will scarcely be objected that the officers in accepting their commissions rendered themselves liable to this contingency. Enlistments in the Marines were like other enlistments, for the period of three years, and by the Law of the land, the officers of Marines like other officers were to serve for three years, and were forbidden to resign, except by permission during that period. The terms therefore were perfectly understood by both parties to the contract, and if the one was bound to perform his part of it, surely the other could not be absolved.

It is proper to state that while Mr. Smith had the case of Lt. Stratton under advisement, these views were not presented to him. Indeed it did not occur to the Counsel that the Alliance was not a vessel belonging to the State Navy until Mr. S. had decided and handed in his report to the Governor, and the services were reported as clearly proved. The Executive Council are respectfully asked to examine the claim and to give to the suggestions now offered such weight as they may deserve.

NOTES:

Thomas Dance R2643 testified as follows: "I enlisted under Capt. Stratton commander of the Schooner Alliance Belonging to the State of Virginia embarked at bull Hill and partly fitted out for a cruise from thence set sail for Richmond & there took in her Load, from thence set sail for sea, after getting to sea, she was Captured after a contest of 4 or 5 hours by Capt. Pickett a British commander of the privateer sloop, whale bone [*Whalebone*] were set on shore the same day after being taken. Captain Stratton returned to Richmond and took command of another Vessel, and was fitted out for sea and started; got as low down as Williamsburg and were waiting some time to get an opportunity to pass the enemies Blockading Guardion" According to E. M. Sanchez-Saavedra, *A Guide to Virginia Military Organizations in the American Revolution*, page 160, the schooner *Alliance* of the Virginia Navy commanded by Captain Henry Stratton was captured off the Virginia capes on 16 July 1779.

A document in the pension application of Robert Bolling R19363 indicates that Henry Stratton

resigned as lieutenant on an unspecified date.

Ezekiel Perkinson W5506 stated “that while in service he with some six or seven others under the command of one Henry Stratton made an attack upon a Sloop in James River near Warrick which had been captured by the enemy, and retook the same with several prisoners and a cargo of goods, but the same with the prisoners and most of the goods were again shortly retaken by a superior force of the enemy.”