

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

GENERAL THOMAS NELSON'S CORPS OF LIGHT DRAGOONS, BALTIMORE, 29 JULY 1778

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris

[Robert Bolling's pension application (S6689) gives the following account of the brief existence of Nelson's Corps of Light Dragoons: "Early in the spring of 1778 I enlisted as a private Soldier to the best of my recollection for a Term of twelve months, in a volunteer Corps of Calvary under the command of General Thomas Nelson as Captain, George Nicholas as first Lieutenant and Hugh Nelson as Second Lieutenant all of the State of Virginia. the said Corps of Cavalry amounting to one hundred men was embodied organized and trained at a small Town in the County of Caroline Va. called Port Royal, this corps was raised by Captain Thomas Nelson of York Town Va in pursuance of the recommendation of Congress of the 2nd March 1778, after remaining at Port Royal about 4 months we about the first of August 1778 marched to Philadelphia where we remained several days, & where on the 8th of August 1778 we were discharged after receiving the thanks of Congress, which was then and there sitting."

Thomas Nelson, Jr. (1739-1789) was briefly a Colonel of the 2nd Virginia Regiment in 1775, signed of the Declaration of Independence, and in Aug 1777 was appointed Brigadier General and commander of state forces. He raised the Corps of Light Dragoons at his own expense and took the command at the rank of Captain. After the corps was disbanded he was active in organizing the Virginia militia. On 12 June 1781 he succeeded Thomas Jefferson as Governor. At the Siege of Yorktown it was said that he directed that his own house be used as a target to aim the cannons.

Most of the names in the roster are preceded by the number 1, 2, 3, or 4, which appears to have been added after the original roster was written. The highest numbers precede the highest ranks, possibly indicating the number of rations allowed. Also added to the name of each Private are two pairs of numbers, the first number of each pair being 4, 5, or 6, and the second being a fraction between 0 and 12. The first pair is higher than the second pair. In several places the letters F and I appear over the integer and fraction, suggesting feet and inches. These appear to be heights, but if so, it is unclear why there are two heights for each soldier.

The original list is arranged in two columns on both sides of one page. In the transcription ranks and numbers are aligned for clarity. Names and numbers in brackets are alternative spellings and pension applications.]

A proper and regular list of Gen'l. Nelsons corps of Light Dragoons, Baltimore July 29th, 78

4	Thomas Nelson Jr.	Capt
3	Robert Lawson	1 st Lieu.
3	Hugh Nelson	2 ^d —
3	Geo Nicholas [George Nicholas]	3 ^d —
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3	Robert Nelson	Adjutant
1	Phillip Tabb	Quartermaster
3	Rich'd Randolph [Richard Randolph]	1 st Sergeant
2	Thos Peyton [Thomas Peyton]	2 ^d —
2	David Randolph [David Meade Randolph S36252]	3 ^d —
3	John Nelson	4 th —
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2	Wiliam Fountain [William Fountain] 1 st Pt	5-11 — 4-11½
3	Robt Bolling Sen'r [Robert Bolling, Sr]	5-10¼ — 4-10
2	Frederick Victor	5-6¼ — 4-9½

2	Robt Bolling Jr [Robert Bolling S6689]	5-6	— 5-1
1	Jno Gibbons [John Gibbons]	5-5¼	— 4-8
2	Nat L Savage [Nathaniel L Savage R17665]	5-5½	— 4-8¾
1	Thos S Savage [Thomas S Savage]		
3	James Ruffin	5-9¾	— 5-1½
1	Thos Dixon [Thomas Dixon]	5-5½	— 4-9
	Wm Cocke [William Cocke]	6-½	— 4-11
	Lewis Burwell		
1	Geo Carter [George Carter]	5 8½	— 4-11
	Geo Lyme [George Lyme]	6 2½	— 5
	Christopher Harwood	5-11¾	— 4-11
‡	Stephen Pettus	6-4	— 5-1
1	Jo Gwathmey [Joseph Gwathmey]	5-10	— 4-11
	Phillip Tabb		
1	John Cary	5-6	— 4-7½
1	Cornelius Dabney	6-1½	— 4-8½
1	Humphrey Brooke [S6763]		
1	Miles Cary	5-8	— 4-9¾
1	Thos Landrum [Thomas Landrum]	5-9	
1	John Tankersley	5-10	— 5-2
1	John Taylor	5-9½	— 4-10½
1	Hubbard Taylor	5-9½	— 4-10½
	Geo Prince [George Prince]	6-1	— 4-11½
1	Rhuben Baxtor [Reuben Baxter]	5-5¾	— 4-8¾
1	James Brown	5-6½	— 4-10
1	James Fraizer [James Frazier]	5-6½	— 4-10½
1	William Barret	6-1½	— 5
1	Benj Tomkins [Benjamin Tomkins]	5-7	— 4-9
1	Wm Hawes [William Hawes]	5-6½	— 4-9½
1	Richard Bridges		
1	Ellison Armstead	5-9½	— 4-10
1	Rich'd Tunstall [Richard Tunstall]	5-7½	— 4-10
1	Nat Pope [Nathaniel Pope]	6-¾	— 4-9¾
1	Charles Ballow	5-8½	— 4-8
1	Ralph Graves	5-9½	— 5
1	Geo Turnpaugh [George Turnpaugh]	5-9	— 4-9
1	Henry Nicholson	5-10	— 4-10
1	Jno Just [John Just]	6-3½	— 4-11¾
	Thomas Dawson		
1	Merrit More	5-9	— 5
1	David Mossum		
1	Chandley Towne	5-8	— 4-11
1	Thos Mallory [Thomas Mallory]	6	— 4 10
1	Rich'd Shipp [Richard Shipp]		
1	John Vaughn	5-11	— 4-11
1	Joseph Tunstall	5-5	— 4-9
	William Merideth [William Meredith]	5-8	— 4-8
1	Paul Mecsic[?]	5-9¼	— 4-8½

1	John Clarke	5-7½	—	4-9¼
1	Thos Hill [Thomas Hill]	5-11	—	4-8
1	Lemuel Ship	6	—	4-10
1	William Dabney	5-11½	—	4-8
1	Jasper Rowe	6-½	—	4-11
1	William Riding	5-10½	—	5
1	Tully Whitehouse	5-5¼	—	4-10¾
1	Robt Curtis [Robert Curtis]	5-7¾	—	4-10¾
1	Samuel Minzies [Samuel P Menzies W25713]	5-8½		4-11
1	Anderson Thomson			
1	William Winstone	6-½	—	5
1	Humphrey Temple	5-5½	—	4-9
	Augustine Smith			
1	Robt Kirby [Robert Kirby]	6-½	—	4-11½
1	Joseph Vaughn	6	—	4-11
	William Rose			
1	William Marshall	5-9¾		5
	Dudley Vaughn			
1	Green Clay	5-10½		4-11
1	Randolph Jefferson	5-6½		4-11
	Withers			
	Cole			
1	Samuel Buchner	5-8½	—	4-9¾
1	Phillip Knight	5-5¾	—	5
1	Andrew Carlanan	5-6½	—	4-11½
2	John Edmanson	5-8		5-2½
1	Thomas Smith	5-7		
1	William Bankes	5-8¾	—	4-10½
1	Chevalier de Chef lion	5-6½		5 11½
1	Thos Meadows [Thomas Meadows]			
1	Wm Mayo [William Mayo]	6-½	—	4-11
1	Field Archer	6 ¼	—	4-11½
1	Luelling Hudson [Llewellyn Hudson]	5-6	—	4-7¾
1	Jno Mellon [John Mellon]	6-1	—	4-9½
1	Elisah Mellon [Elijah Mellon]	6	—	4-10
1	Andrew Finkstall	5-8½	—	5-½
1	Jno Smith Jun'r [John Smith S6114]	5-10½	—	4-10½
1	Jno Conrad [John Conrad]	5-9	—	4-10
1	Jno Throuston [possibly John Throuston R18489]	5 6		4 9
	Jno Smith Sen'r [John Smith, Sr]			
	John Allen	5-5½	—	4-8¼
	James Lyme	5-7	—	4 8½