

## Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension application of Francis Webb R105.5<sup>1</sup>

f26VA<sup>2</sup>

Transcribed by Will Graves

8/19/11 supp'd 5/15/15

[Methodology: Spelling, punctuation and/or grammar have been corrected in some instances for ease of reading and to facilitate searches of the database. Where the meaning is not compromised by adhering to the spelling, punctuation or grammar, no change has been made. Corrections or additional notes have been inserted within brackets or footnotes. Blanks appearing in the transcripts reflect blanks in the original. A bracketed question mark indicates that the word or words preceding it represent(s) a guess by me. The word 'illegible' or 'indecipherable' appearing in brackets indicates that at the time I made the transcription, I was unable to decipher the word or phrase in question. Only materials pertinent to the military service of the veteran and to contemporary events have been transcribed. Affidavits that provide additional information on these events are included and genealogical information is abstracted, while standard, 'boilerplate' affidavits and attestations related solely to the application, and later nineteenth and twentieth century research requests for information have been omitted. I use speech recognition software to make all my transcriptions. Such software misinterprets my southern accent with unfortunate regularity and my poor proofreading skills fail to catch all misinterpretations. Also, dates or numbers which the software treats as numerals rather than words are not corrected: for example, the software transcribes "the eighth of June one thousand eighty six" as "the 8<sup>th</sup> of June 1786." Please call material errors or omissions to my attention.]

[Note: almost all the papers in this file relate to various legal arguments concerning the status of a midshipman of the Virginia Navy under the act of July 3, 1832, granting half pay to certain 'officers.' There is no application, per se, in the file. Consequently, I have elected to transcribe only the relevant portion of a letter dated December 21, 1907 responding to an inquiry regarding this veteran. That letter reads in relevant part as follows:

*Sir: In reply to your letter dated the 11th and received the 13th instant, you are advised that from the papers in the file (Rej. File 105) for half pay under the Act of July 3, 1832, it appears that Francis Webb of Essex County Virginia, served as a midshipman or subaltern Lieutenant in the Virginia Navy during the War of the Revolution, dates of service not stated; and died in Georgia in 1810. The administrators of his estate were Thomas and James Webb, relationship not given; and in 1850 his only surviving heirs were his sons James of Travis County Texas and John of Newton County Georgia. There is no further data on file in regard to his family.]*

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[From [Digital Library of Virginia](#)] Essex County legislative Petitions

To the Honorable the Speaker & Members of the House of Delegates

The Petition of Francis Webb humbly sheweth: That your Petitioner was a Midshipman on board the Ship *Dragon*,<sup>3</sup> and continued in her until she was destroyed by the British in the month of April 1781, having been left in her for the purpose of taking care of her, and being appointed to be turned over to the frigate *Thetis*<sup>4</sup> as an Officer, as soon as she should be completed; – that your Petitioner was discharged, at the time the said ship was destroyed as

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<sup>1</sup> Will Graves has assigned the file # R105.5 to this file for purposes of this database because the file # R105 duplicates one already assigned to [Thomas Allen R105](#). The actual file # at the National Archives is R105.

<sup>2</sup> Virginia Half pay

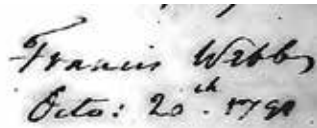
<sup>3</sup> <http://www.awiatsea.com/sn/VA/Dragon%20Virginia%20Navy%20Ship-Galley%20%5bCallender%20Markham%20Singleton%20Travis%20Chandler%20Joel%5d.html>

<sup>4</sup> *Thetis*. Coggins:102, VANavy:162, GMB:35, Dandridge:186, ship built for the VA Navy, 1778-81. Selby:255, Thomas Jefferson hoped to find some way to make the ship serviceable in the Chesapeake Bay, May 1780, but it was burned in 1781. Silverstone:20. Paullin:411. <http://www.awiatsea.com/Other/Hough%20List%20T.html>

abovementioned, by his Commander Captain Travis [Edward Travis]<sup>5</sup>; until such time as he should be required to return to his duty, which never happened; that your petitioner has never received any of the wages he was entitled to since the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 1779 to which time he was paid off – nor has he received a Warrant for the Land he was entitled to as a midshipman; that the causes why your Petitioner never obtained those Rights, were the death of Captain Travis, his last Commander and the only Officer on board at the time, older in Command than himself and also his inability to produce a certificate how long he continued in the Navy, until about twelve months ago, he found a Mr. Thomas Grant who had also been an Officer in the Navy. Therefore your petitioner prays that upon his producing such Vouchers of his Service as were required by the Act of Assembly providing for the Settlement of Officers Claims that the Accounts of your petitioner as Midshipman of the Ship Dragon may be settled by the Auditor of Public Accounts, and that he may be allowed his wages as Midshipman aforesaid from 1 April 1779 & the depreciation in his back wages from the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May 1778 to April 1779 when he was paid off last, and also the Land & Commutation to which he was entitled as well as other officers who served on board the Navy. And your petitioner will ever pray &c.

S/ Francis Webb  
Octo. 20<sup>th</sup> 1790

Vouchers enclosed<sup>6</sup>



Francis Webb  
Octo: 20<sup>th</sup> 1790<sup>7</sup>

[Reverse]

F. Webb's petition  
3<sup>rd</sup> November 1791  
Referred to Propositions  
Rejected  
HL  
repd [reported]  
Mr. Smith

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<sup>5</sup> TRAVIS, EDWARD VA: Captain, Virginia Navy Edward Travis was appointed as a Captain in the Virginia Navy in April 1776 and assigned to the Virginia Navy Galley *Manley*, [Stewart, 259] then under construction on the James River. Travis was commissioned on 8 June 1776. [NOAR, 314] On 6 September 1776 he was ordered to join Commodore JOHN THOMAS BOUCHER at New Point Comfort, Virginia. [NOAR, 314; Stewart, 16] An escort mission to sea was performed by this squadron. [Stewart, 16] On 9 September George Gooseley was paid £48.13.13 for supplying rum to the *Manley*. On 24 October 1776 he was appointed to command the Virginia Navy Brig *Raleigh*. On 17 April 1777 Travis received sailing orders to annoy enemy shipping. The *Raleigh* was captured in May 1777 by HM Frigate *Thames*. [NOAR, 314] He later commanded the Virginia Navy Ships *Thetis* and *Tartar*. He later lived on Jamestown Island. He died in 1784 while en route to Virginia Springs. [Stewart, 259] <http://www.awiatsea.com/Officers/Officers%20T.html>

<sup>6</sup> not in this file

<sup>7</sup> May not be the actual signature of the petitioner as the handwriting appears to be identical to the body of the petition.

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Addendum to Francis Webb R105.5

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris. 29 January 2023.

[From [bounty-land records in the Library of Virginia](#). The petition by heirs for bounty land is largely undeciphered. The following report in the handwriting of John H. Smith, Commissioner of Revolutionary Claims, is difficult to decipher.]

Petition for Bounty land.

The Heirs of Francis Webb – Midshipman – S. Navy.

This officer appears to have been in service July 12<sup>th</sup> 1778 (see Navy Journal of that date) In Sept. & Oct. 1779, he appears to have been midshipman on Board the Dragon. (see Vol. I Navy Papers – Payrolls, or prov[isions?]. Returns of ship Dragon) – Francis Webb is regularly enroll'd as midshipman in the only lists of officers & men of the Dragon, which have been preserved. The Dragon was in service until March 25<sup>th</sup> 1780 & from about April 1777.

On this evidence, and on the reasonable presumption arising from facts, which have been mentioned in Reports of other claims of warrant officers of the navy, – to wit – that other officers were bound for a service of 3 years – that the loss, or destruction, of the Books & papers of the navy renders it most difficult to prove the times of their service – That the State, & not the officers of the navy, ought to be in all respects chargeable with the loss, or destruction, of those Books & Papers – & that the officers of the navy left that service, unless compeld – that the midshipmen are not often mentioned in the navy Journals – that the midshipmen were appointed, by the Captains of vessels, and the Books & papers of the vessels have been destroyd, or lost, and thus the evidence from list of the dates of appointment, & times of service, of those officers. That even of the seamen in the State navy [undeciphered word] ever deserted, or left the service, unless compeld. I say, on the evidence referd to in the first part of this Report, &ca this [undeciphered word] the presumption arising from the facts aforesaid, I have Reported the claim of Francis Webb, as good, for a service of three years, as midshipman. I have seen no reason, to change that Report.

There is no evidence filed with the Petition.

Resp'ly submitted

May 20<sup>th</sup> 1834

To his Excellency/ Gov'r Tazewell