

The heirs of Mr Theophilus Field respectfully ask the usual allowance of Land Bounty
For the evidence of s'd. Field's Services in the Navy, the heirs respectfully refer to the printed
Reports made by the State agent. Saml. B. Servant/ 18th March 1834

This is to Certify, That it appears from a List in this Office of such Officers and Soldiers of the Virginia State Line, during the Revolutionary War, as settled their Accounts, and received Certificates for the balance of their Full Pay, according to an Act of Assembly, passed the November Session, 1781, that a Certificate issued on the 15th day of February 1783, in the name of Theo Field as a Lieut. in the Navy for £58.10.0, which Certificate appears to have been delivered to himself and was given for services prior to the 1st January, 1782.

Given under my hand at the Auditor's Office, Richmond, this 9th day of May 1834.
Jas E. Heath AUDITOR.

This is to Certify, That it appears from a List in this Office of such Officers and Soldiers of the Virginia State Line, during the Revolutionary War, as settled their Accounts, and received Certificates for the balance of their Full Pay, according to an Act of Assembly, passed the November Session, 1781, that a Certificate issued on the 30th day of May 1783, in the name of Theo Field as a Lieut. in the Navy for £170.17.1, which Certificate appears to have been delivered to himself and was given for services prior to the 1st January, 1782.

Given under my hand at the Auditor's Office, Richmond, this 9th day of May 1834.
Jas E. Heath AUDITOR.

I, the subscriber hereto, do declare and certify that during the Revolutionary War with Great Britain, by which the Independence of North America was established, I was acquainted with Mr Theophilus Feild; and do well recollect that I saw him dressed in the uniform of the Navy of the State of Virginia, or of the United States of America, and believe that the said Theophilus Feild was in the marine service, between the years 1777 and 1781, but I do not recollect how long he remained in public service, This Gentleman was the son of Doctor James Field of Prince George County, with whom I was intimately acquainted. I do not recollect to have heard the Mr. Theophilus Feild did quit the service; And I further believe from good information, that Mrs Margaret B. May, the consort of Judge John F. May, was the Daughter of the said Theophilus Feild. I cannot now recollect what rank Mr Feild held in the said Navy. Given from under my hand this 21st day of May 1834.

Robert Bolling

To his Excellency Gov'r Tazewell Petition for bounty land.
The Heirs of Theophilus Field Lieut. S. Navy.

This officer was commissioned Lieut in August 1779 – he was ordered on board the Ship Dragon. In oct. 1779 his name is on a provision [undeciphered word] of the Officers &c of the Dragon. He did not resign his commission. The navy Journals were complete records of Resignations. They afford no proof of his resignation. He probably remained in service to the end of the war – or if his not being on the list of officers of the Navy, reported by the Board of Officers in 1784, should induce the belief, that he was not in active service, at the end of the war: the presumption exists, of his being supernumerary to the end of the war. This presumption arises from the foregoing facts, which are provd by the Journals of the navy board & other public documents relating to the navy; and also from the fact, that his name is found on the army Register. He rec'd at different times £58.10 & .£170.19.6 The bal. of his full pay. which proves, he was in service a considerable time. The Board of Officers in 1784 did not report Supernumeraries. I have heretofore reported this claim good for the war. (see printed list No. 2.)

May 9th 1834

Resply subm'd John H Smith Com'r

Saturday the 15th of Feb'y 1783.

Navy.

Warrant to Theophilus Field for One years Int[erest] on a Cert[ificate] No 151 dated this day in part of the bal[ance] of his pay as a Lieut of the Navy of this State 1.16.–

D[itt]o to D'o for D'o No 152 in full &c 1.14.2.

Extracted from the Auditors Waste Book No 3. Jas E Heath Aud Off. July 8 1834

Richm'd. July 9th '34

Sir, I enclose two affidavits of Rob. Bolling & John Grammer Esq'r in support of the claim of myself & wife for the bounty Land to which the late Theo's. Field was entitled for naval services during the revolutionary war; also a transcript from the Waste book in the auditor's office – all which I will thank you to lay before the Governor. It may seem strange that I should make application at so late a period: and therefore I will submit, for what it may be worth, the only explanation in my power. I had heard, from the period of my marriage in 1809, that Mr. Field had been in the state or continental navy; but it never occurred to me that he had not obtained all the compensation to which he was entitled. He died in 1789, leaving a widow, & an infant of a few weeks old, who is now my wife. At the period when claims for revolutionary services became a subject of interest my time was engrossed with business of various kinds; and besides, my mind, so far as it had been turned to the subject, had received a bias against the principles in which most of them were founded Hence, altho' I was not ignorant of the law or the facts, I never combined the two; and never, for a moment, thought of the existence of any right on my part; and probably I never should have thought of it, if I had not, in April last, received an offer for my claim. I declined making any sale; and as soon as I could spare the time I began to seek evidence on the subject Unfortunately on the day that I rec'd. information of my right, I rec'd. intelligence of the death of Dr. Alex. S. Field of Mecklenburg, the last survivor of Mr. Field's brethren. It was obvious then, that I should have difficulty in obtaining my positive evidence of of his services. I came here early in May, to see what could be derived from the public offices; and to my surprise found that Mr. Servant had filed a petition for the heirs of Theo. Field, without naming them. I immediately wrote him on the subject and stated the evidences of my claim; upon which he determined to withdraw the pretensions of the persons for whom he had been acting. Mean time, the Com'r. [Commissioner John H. Smith] had reported in favour of the claim of Theo. Field's heirs. I have thus delayed presenting my claim, because I was loth to do so while there was any appearance of controversy about it. Satisfied now of its legality, I deem it proper to present such evidences of it, as I have been able to collect. I do not believe that I can obtain better evidence than that which I now transmit in connection with what the Com'r. has furnished. I can procure affid'ts from 2 or 3 other persons to the effect of Mr. B's & Mr. G's, but I presume that it cannot be necessary If the Governor shall think that others would strengthen the claim, and will have the goodness to say so to you, or to suggest any thing else as necessary on my part I will thank you to inform me.

Wm. H. Richardson esq.

With respect &c.

Sec'y of the Com'ttee of [undeciphered]

Yr. ob. servt. J. F. May

A Return of Sugar & Coffee to be drawn for the Officers on Board the Dragon

1779			Rank	Coffee	S'd Sugar	Loaf Sugar
Oct'r	7	James Markham [R72]	Capt	4	12	6
		Joshua Singleton [S7510]	Lieut	4	12	
		Lieut Fields		4	12	
		Jno Swope [John Swope (Swoope) R98]	Doct	4	12	
		John Moore [R78]	Master	4	12	

I hereby Certify the the foregoing is a true extract from a paper on file in this Office, which paper is to be found in the 1st Vol. of papers concerning the State Navy. I further certify that there is no

evidence in this Office of the Resignation of Lt. Theo Field.

Given under my hand at the Auditors Office Richmond this 28th day of December 1836
Jas E Heath Aud

Tuesday the 4th day of August 1779.

This Board do recommend to his Excellency the Governor and the honorable the Council Mr. Theophilus Field as a proper person to be appointed a Lieutenant in the Navy of this Commonwealth.

Friday the 6th day of August 1779.

Ordered that Lieutenant Theophilus Field do repair on board the Ship Dragon commanded by Capt James Markham [R72 and VAS488].

I certify that the foregoing extracts are truly copied from the Journal of the Board of War contained in the 1st Vol. of papers concerning the Army of the Revolution.

Given under my hand at the Auditors Office Richmond this 28th day of December 1836.
Jas E Heath Aud

To the Executive of Virginia

The petition of John F. May & Margaret Borthwick, his wife, respectfully sheweth

That in the year 1835 a petition was filed in the name of the heirs of Lieut. Theophilus Field, to obtain a warrant for bounty land, in consideration of his revolutionary services. This petition was not filed in the name, or with the assent or knowledge of your petitioners; but the person who presented it abandoned it, upon being apprized of the proof which they could adduce in support of their right. It having been filed, they thought it proper to avail themselves of it, as they did, with the consent of the person who exhibited it. for the name of as one was disclosed as the heir or heirs of Lt. Field.

Accordingly, they exhibited such proof as they could, at this distant period adduce, of the fact that Theo's. Field was a Lieut. in the State Navy from Aug. 4, 1779 to the termination of the war; and that the female petitioner is his only heir at law. To that proof and all the documents exhibited, they now beg leave to refer. In addition to it, they beg leave to exhibit two other documents marked A. & B. From these & the other papers, these facts appear. 1. That Lt. Field was appointed & ordered on board the Dragon in Aug. 1779. 2. That his name is on a provision list (or acco't. of provisions) of the Officers of the Dragon in Octo. 1779. 3. That he rec'd. pay up to Jan'y. 1782, a period of 2 years & 5 months; 4. That the navy journals (which both the Auditor & Commissioner state contain complete records of resignations) afford no evidence that he ever resigned. 5 That two of the oldest & best informed gentlemen of his neighbourhood, who knew him & his father well, never heard of his resignation; and do not believe that he ever resigned. Let it be known that the war was substantially at an end in Jan'y. '82. What motive had an officer then to resign? Especially a young man who had left Europe whither his father had sent him to be educated (& who is believed to have once had a Midshipman's warrant in the English navy which he abandoned) in order to take up arms in defence of his his native land? Ought his heir to be required, at this day, to prove that he did not resign? He must have known that there was no more real service for him to perform – no more privations to be encountered – and that the prospects of bounty & reward as well as honours, were held out to those who continued in the service. Can such a man, under such circumstances; & against such proof, be presumed to have resigned? If the fact were in issue before a jury, the result would be absolutely certain. And yet, this claim has been rejected, as your petitioners are informed, on the ground partly that the evidence of the original appointment was defective, and partly because, in a list of naval officers, reported by a Navy board in 1784, the name of Lt. Field does not appear. The first objection is removed by the documents A. & B. now exhibited. As to the second, it is to be remarked that the Navy board did not report a single supernumerary officer – so that if he had become one of that class, (which is highly probable, considering the deplorable state of our Navy,) his name could not be expected to appear there and 2. that forgetfulness & many other causes might as probably have prevented the insertion of his name, as a resignation, of which, no motive can be assigned, his neighbours never heard, and the navy journals afford no trace.

Your petitioners have compared the proofs in this case with those in other cases which have had a better fortune; they have consulted persons, who stand high, in all respects, on the propriety of presenting this subject again to your notice; for they are extremely reluctant to have the slightest appearance of impotunity in respect to it; and the best reflection which they can give to it, sustained by the concurring opinions of honoured & distinguished friends, has induced them, with all respect & deference to the former decision, to request of the Executive a reconsideration of the matter. If they err in doing so, it is not because they have not endeavoured to avoid the bias of self-interest, but because they have reposed too much confidence in the judgment of some, who have the confidence of all.

Jan'y 2^d '38

Most respect'y &c. J. F. May for himself & wife

This claim is allowed for a service from Aug 1779 to the end of the war 3^d Nov 1783

D. Campbell [Gov. David Campbell

NOTES:

“Officers of the Dragon, not long after she went into service were.... Later, Samuel Eskridge, Edward Eskridge, and James Tutt were midshipmen, and Theophilus Field was Lt., on the Dragon.”
Stewart, R. A. *The History of Virginia's Navy of the Revolution*.

Correspondence in the federal file indicates that Virginia did not pay the pension until 1847, because Field was supernumerary at the end of the war. The case appears to have been resolved by a four-page list of other supernumerary officers who were awarded bounty land. One letter is by Th. H. Bayly, son-in-law of “Judge May,” presumably John H. May.