That’s Revolutionary (War)!

Answers to Basic Questions
Genealogists are Afraid to Ask
Questions About The War

19 April 1775
To
26 Nov 1783

Colonists (“Whigs,” “Patriots”) Vs
British (“Tories,” “Loyalists,” Indian Allies)
Questions About Military Structure

The Continental Line
Questions About Military Structure

The State Line
Questions About Military Structure

The Militia
Questions About Military Structure

Continental Line Ranks

Commissioned Officer
(Maj Gen > Brig Gen > *Col* > Lt Col > Maj > *Capt* > Lt > Ens)

Staff Officer
(Doctor, Aide de Camp, Quartermaster, Chaplain, etc)

Non-Commissioned Officer
(Sgt Maj > Sgt > Cpl)

Mus, Private
Questions About Military Structure

State Line Ranks
(same)

State Navy Ranks
(Adm>Capt>Cdr>Lt>Mid>Mate>Smn)

Militia Ranks
(Col>Lt Col>Capt>Lt>Ens>Sgt>Cpl>Pvt)
Questions About Military Service (Cont & State Lines)

Terms of Service
- Enlistment
- Draft
- Substitution

“Kinds” of Service
- Infantry
- Artillery
- Cavalry
- Staff Officers and Mus
Questions About Military Service

Drummer
Boys
Age, Occupation and Origin

Ages in a 1780 Virginia Size Roll (917 men)

13-19 (37.3%)
20-29 (45.8%)
30-39 (11.0%)
40-49 (4.8%)
50-60 (1.1%)

Age, Occupation and Origin

Occupations in a 1780 Virginia Size Roll (917 men)

1. Farmer/Planter – 582 men
2. Shoemaker – 42 men
3. Carpenter – 36
4. Blacksmith – 27
5. Sailor – 25
6. Weaver – 24
7. Tailor – 21
8. Bricklayer – 11
9. Wheelwright – 10
Just for fun: Taxter – 1

Desertions in a 1780 Virginia Size Roll (917 men)

Did not desert – 90.1%
Deserted – 9.9%
The Chesterfield Supplement
Chesterfield Supplement
Didn’t All Men Serve in the Militia?

Statutory Militia Requirements:

Connecticut: 16-50; Alarm List up to 60 [Hoadly, Pub Recs of CT, vol 1, 91-2]

Delaware: 17-50 [DE Arch, vol 1, 543]

Georgia: 16-60 (1765-1778); 15-60 (1778-1784) [Backgrounds of the Selective Service, vol II, part 4, 55, 118, 122]

Maryland: 16-50 [Clements & Wright, MD Militia in the Rev, 222]
Questions About Military Service (Militia)

Statutory Militia Requirements:

Massachusetts: 16-50; Alarm List to 65 [Selective Service, vol II, part 6, 220, 226, 231, 243]

New Hampshire: 16-50; Alarm List to 65 [NSDAR, African-American & American Indian Patriots, 1st ed., 123]

New Jersey: 16-50 [Militia Act of 15 March 1777]

New York: 16-50 [Militia Act of 8 Jan 1781]

North Carolina: 16-50 [NSDAR, 83, 159]

Questions About Military Service (Militia)

Statutory Militia Requirements:

Rhode Island: 16-50 [Selective Service, vol II, part 12, 87, 126, 144-154]

South Carolina: 16-60 (1775-82); then 16-50 [Selective Service, vol II, part 13, 67, 94]


Vermont: 16-50 [Haraty et al, Put the Vermonters Ahead, Chapter 5, 47]
Important Considerations for Military Service

How old was your ancestor?
Where did he live?
What was his socio-economic status?
Was he educated?
What was his religion?
Are you prepared for the possibility that your ancestor did nothing?
Questions About Military Sources

Continental Line

Or

Militia?
National Archives

Muster Rolls

Capt Yelles Mead’s company, 1st NJ Regt, Nov 1778
[NARA, M246; digitized at sites such as fold3.com]

Samuel Marsh>
Questions About Military Sources (Continental Line)

National Archives

Compiled Military Service Records (aka CMSR’s, M881)
[NARA, M881; digitized at sites such as fold3.com]
Want a quick lookup in book form?
Questions About Military Sources (Continental Line)

National Archives
Pensions
[digitized at such sites as fold3.com; ancestry.com]

Want a quick lookup in book form?

Virgil White,
*Genealogical Abstracts of Revolutionary War Pension Files*, 4 vols.
Federal Pensions: Some Thoughts

1. Do you always check the pensions?
2. Several pension acts (1818, 1832; 1836) Do you have a basic understanding of the provisions of each act? [Rose, Military Pension Laws 1776-1858]
3. Did your ostensible soldier live beyond the date of the pension act under which he would have qualified?
Questions About Military Sources (Continental Line)

Bounty Land

Federal or State bounty?

States that promised bounty land: GA, MD, MA,* NY, NC, PA, SC, VA
States that did not promise bounty land: CT, DE, NJ, RI, VT

*MA was the only state that did not allow veterans to claim both the federal and the state bounty

[Christine Rose, Military Bounty Land 1776-1855, 1-58]
Questions About Military Sources (Continental Line)

Bounty Land

U.S. Military Tract (1796)
Bounty Land: Pitfalls

1. Searching for bounty land for a militiaman
2. Searching for state bounty land when it was actually federal, and vice versa
3. Assuming that any land acquired immediately after the war was bounty
4. Assuming that a man who settled in a bounty land tract was a soldier
Questions About Military Sources (Militia)

Where do I Look?

Connecticut: Johnston, *Connecticut Men in the Revolution*

Delaware: *Delaware Archives, vols I-III*

Georgia: Davis, *Georgia Citizens and Soldiers of the American Revolution*

Maryland: Clements & Wright, *Maryland Militia in the Revolution*

Massachusetts: *Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors of the Revolutionary War, 17 vols.*

New Hampshire: Hammond, *Rolls of the Soldiers in the Revolutionary War, NH State Papers, vols 14-17*
Questions About Military Sources (Militia)

Where do I Look?

**New Jersey:** Stryker, *Register of Officers & Men of New Jersey in the American Revolution*

**New York:** Roberts, *New York in the Revolution as Colony & State*

**North Carolina:** NC State Arch, *North Carolina Revolutionary War Pay Vouchers*, 73 microfilm rolls

**Pennsylvania:** Egle, *Pennsylvania Archives*, especially Series 5-6

**Rhode Island:** Smith, *Civil & Military Lists of Rhode Island*, vol 1
Questions About Military Sources (Militia)

Where do I Look?

South Carolina: SC Arch, *Accounts Audited Growing out of the Revolution*, 164 microfilm rolls

Vermont: Goodrich, *Rolls of the Soldiers in the Revolutionary War*

Virginia: Eckenrode, *List of Revolutionary Soldiers of Virginia*, vol 1


Also “Women in the Revolutionary Era” and “Forgotten Patriots: African American and American Indian Patriots”
Questions About Non-Military Service and Sources

Committees

Hollis, NH Town Meeting, 4 March 1776, “Capt Reuben Dow, Capt Noah Worcester, Ens Stephen Ames […]” a Committee of Safety for this year.
Questions About Non-Military Service and Sources

Public Claims

1 Jan 1781, NC to Joshua Mabry of Warren Co, for 59 pounds of pork
Supplied to the County Commissioner
Questions About Non-Military Service and Sources

Public Claims

Virginia to break open “any house, barn, outhouse, mill, or storehouse, or other outhouses where any such enumerated articles may be suspected to be”
Questions About Non-Military Service and Sources

(Supply) Taxes

Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, 1779

Margaret Anderson
Other Groups

Loyalists

United Empire Loyalists http://www.uelac.org/
Clark, *Loyalists of the Southern Campaign* (3 vols.)

Hessians

Dulfer, *Hessische Truppen im Amerikanischen Unabhängigkeitskrieg* (6 vols., aka HETRINA)