

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

Pension Application of Peter Bryan Bruin S42092

VA

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris. Revised 4 Jan 2018.

[Punctuation partly corrected. The last page is missing from Fold3.com and ancestry.com.]

It being necessary, by an Act of Congress of the last Session, making further provision for such of the Revolutionary Officers &ca as may stand in need of the Publick bounty, that, the several applicants shou'd state, on oath, or, affirmation, the nature and extent of their respective services, which statements are to be forwarded to the Secretary of War, whose province it is finally to decide, whether they be entitled, or, not, to the Provisions that their Country under certain conditions had thought proper to extend to the. Now, in compliance with this requisition, and with a view to avail myself of the benefit of the Act, I do most solemnly declare on Oath, that the following statement is founded on facts.

Sometime early in the summer of 1775 (I cannot be more precise as to time, having lost or mislaid my Commission) I was appointed an Ensign in Captain Daniel Morgan's Company of Riflemen, the first Corps, raised in Virginia, that was placed on the Continental establishment. So great was the enthusiasm of the moment that the difficulty did not depend then, as now, on raising the number of Men required, but in selecting from those who crowded to the Standard for admission; so that but a short time was employed in mustering and equipping the Company and We soon found ourselves in the Camp before Boston after a rapid march of 600 miles.

In the latter part of the September following, an expedition was designed against Quebec, and our Company formed part of a Detachment of 1000 Men who were to be conducted through an unexplored Region into Canada by the noted Benedict Arnold. I will not dwell on the complicated distress (arising from Cold, Hunger and fatigue) which this devoted Corps had to contend with on this dreadful expedition; Suffice it to say their sufferings excited a very general interest at the time, and it is hoped are not at this day entirely forgotten.

We had not entirely recovered our Strength and Spirits, when we were joined by the lamented General [Richard] Montgomery, who soon projected an attack on Quebec, which shortly after took place [1 Jan 1776]. In this disastrous affair, Morgan's Company led the attack on the side of Arnold. They planted the Ladders against the Walls and were the first to scale them in the face of a spirited opposition. We were instantaneously supported by the rest of the Detachment, and a warm but unequal contest was maintained in the Town (after the death of Montgomery) for several Hours, We being ignorant at the time of his fate and the consequent Retreat of his Troops. A surrender at length took place. In this action we lost our first Lieutenant Humphreys [sic: John Humphries VAS1670], and our Company was otherwise roughly handled. After a long close and painful confinement, we were sent round by Sea to New York, where a partial exchange took place in our favor.

On our Return to Virginia the Assembly were in Session and expressed (by a resolve) their entire approbation of our Conduct. In consideration of our manifold sufferings they unanimously appointed Captain Morgan to the command of the 11<sup>th</sup> Regiment then about to be raised; the 2<sup>d</sup> Lieutenant, Heth [William Heth BLWt1064-500], to a Majority [i.e. rank of Major], & myself to the first Company in s'd Regiment. The various & essential Services which this Corps afterwards rendered to their country are still fresh in the memory of thousands. I was present with the Regiment in the Actions of Brandywine [11 Sep 1777] and Germantown [4 Oct 1777]. In the first of these I was struck by a spent Ball, which for a time disabled me, and had it not been for a Horseman belonging to [Theodorick] Bland's Regiment, who took me up behind him, I must (a second time) have fallen into the hands of the Enemy.

General Sullivan [John Sullivan of NH] having lost both his Aids, (Colo. White and Major [Edward] Sherburne) in the action of Germantown, requested General Charles Scott to point out to him an Officer in the Va. Line to fill the place of one of them. That Gentleman's partiality led him to recommend me, and I was in consequence very unexpectedly invited into Gen Sullivan's Family [i.e. aides].

In the following Campaign [Siege of Newport RI, 11 - 29 Aug 1778], General Sullivan was

entrusted with the command of the Troops, which were destined to cooperate with the fleet & army under Destaing [sic: Comte d'Estaing] against the British Troops on Rhode Island. The failure of this Enterprize (by means of the desertion of Destaing with his force) is well known, the consequence was that General Sullivan found it necessary to abandon his Works near the Enemy's Lines and retreat abruptly to the other end of the Island [Battle of Quaker Hill, 29 Aug 1778]. In this Retreat his Rear Guard, under Colonel [John] Laurens, were warmly pressed, which brought on a partial Engagement in which the British were severely repulsed.

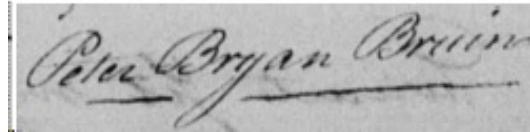
For my Conduct in this Action, and for my subsequent good fortune, (a night or two after) in eluding the vigilance of the Enemy while employed in the hazardous duty of bringing off the Out Guards of our Army, after the main Body had secured a Passage to the opposite Shore, I was particularly noticed in General orders, and the honorary rank of Lt. Colonel conferred on me on the Rhode Island Establishment.

In the subsequent Campaign, General Sullivan commanded against the Indians and their Allies, the Tories, on the head Waters of the Susquehannah [sic: Susquehanna; Aug 1779]. In this expedition I also accompanied him, and after its happy termination had the honor to bear his Dispatches to Congress. In the conclusion of his Letter to that Honorable Body, He was pleased to mention me in the following terms, too flattering almost to be repeated. "I beg leave to recommend my Aid Lt. Colonel Bruin to the particular notice of Congress as one who on this, as well as several other Campaigns, has proved himself to be an active brave and truly deserving Officer" This Letter, which was published by Authority at the time, is still within the recollection of many men living, and the original will (no doubt) be found among the Records of Congress.

After this Campaign the General's bad state of health wou'd not permit him to serve longer, and the last act of duty He requested me to wait on General Washington with his Letter of resignation [30 Nov 1779]. The General received it with apparent regret and spoke of General Sullivan in the most honorable terms, which I think he well merited. I received permission from his Excellency to visit my native place without any limitation as to time, and understood on my arrival that by a Decision of the Board of Officers appointed by the State, to adjust the Rank of different Officers, that I was the oldest Captain in the Line and wou'd (of course) be entitled to the next vacant Majority – but until that event I was considered as a Supernumerary, or, in other words, an officer without men. But I did not remain long in this situation, For General Morgan (who lived near me [Winchester VA], and who was at that time also on Furlough) received an unexpected order from General Washington to repair immediately to the South, there to take command of a select Corps to be chosen out of all the Troops, and to give what Protection he could to those most exposed to the Ravages of the Enemy. This was soon after Gates Defeat at Cambden [sic: Gen. Horatio Gates, Battle of Camden SC, 16 Aug 1780]. And the General (without much difficulty) prevailed on me to accompany him. We found our broken and dispirited Troops at Hillsborough [NC] not less (I believe) than 200 miles in rear of their late Defeat. No time was lost in selecting the Corps. Morgan knew the Officers, and the officers knew the Men best qualified to render active service. In this Corps I was third in Rank, that distinguished officer Colo. [John Eager] Howard of Baltimore being the Second. We had no sooner reached the neighbourhood of the Enemy than an Express from General Gates overtook us with information that the British under Arnold [see endnote] & Philips had invaded Virginia and that the Governor (Mr Jefferson) had requested him to send home all the Supernumerary officers of the Virginia line to take Command in the Militia in defence of their Native State. This order was a severe blow to my Ambition, but I felt it my duty to obey. After travelling several hundred miles over sandy roads through an exhausted Country, and in the hottest season of the year, I reached Colo. Banisters [John Banister] Seat near Petersburg, where I heard for the first time that Arnold (Philips was dead) had but the day before left the Coast, and that I had my journey for nothing. Here I met General Greene on his way to supersede Gen'l Gates in his Command [sic: see endnote]. I had (in the course of the War) received many marks of Attention from this accomplished officer, and he was polite enough on this occasion to offer me a place in his family, and his future Patronage, if I felt myself able to return with him. This Honor I was obliged to decline. myself and Horses were exhausted by the fatigues We had undergone. On my arrival at Richmond I reported myself to Governor Jefferson and to the Baron Steuben, who then commanded there, and was

received handsomely by each of these Gentlemen. The Baron gave me leave to retire until a vacancy shou'd happen in the line, or, I shou'd be otherwise called on: My Services were not required again until the Siege of York [28 Sep - 19 Oct 1781] when General Morgan solicited me, through a Friend, (whose Letter I have I believe in my possession, to act as Lt Colonel in a Regiment of Horse, which he was directed to raise for the immediate defence of the State but before any thing cou'd be done in the Business, Lord Cornwallis surrendered.

As this was, in fact, the closing scene of action, WarFare, in the Revolution, I cannot help thinking that I faithfully performed my duty throughout the War. Nothing now remains for me, but to pray for the Country, whose rights I have contributed to defend, and to exclaim with Father Paul) in all the extacy of Devotion, "Esto perpetua!



#### References

I can (with confidence) appeal to my Honorable and much esteemed Friend, Chief Justice Marshall [John Marshall S5731] for the truth of the greater part of the annexed Statement.

I can appeal with equal Confidence to my Fellow suffern[?] General Dearborn [Henry Dearborn S46354], for the truth of what is stated relative to the Campaign in Canada.

To Colonel Howard of Baltimore, with regard to what took place in the South.

To General Sullivan's Letter, on the files of Congress, relative to the Susquehannah Expedition.

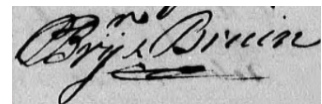
To Colonel John Francis Mercer [VAS647]. to Generals Miller and Stricker of Baltimore, or, in fact, to any other officer, of whatever Grade, with whom, I had the honor to serve, I do not hesitate to appeal, for my general standing in the Army, and am willing to risk the little reputation, I have earned by hard Service, on the report, they will make, on the subject.

Mount Hope May 1<sup>st</sup> 1818

State of Mississippi } Superior Court  
Claibourne [sic] County } September Term 1820

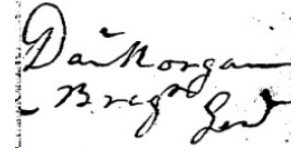
On this thirteenth day of September in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and twenty, personally appeared in open Court, being a Court of Record for the County aforesaid, Peter Bryan Bruin, aged sixty four years resident in said County and State, who being first duly sworn according to law, doth on his oath declare, that he served in the Revolutionary War, first as an Ensign in Captain Morgans Company of Riflemen, afterwards as a Captain of a company in the eleventh Virginia Regiment and as aid de camp to Maj'r. General Sullivan; and afterwards as Major in the Line of Regular Service, but not attached to any particular Regiment, which will more fully appear by the Oreginal Declaration of the said Peter made on or about the 23<sup>d</sup> day of May eighteen hundred and eighteen, on which he received a Certificate, Number [blank], and on which he has received a Pension. And I do solemnly swear that I was a resident Citizen of the United States on the 18<sup>th</sup> day of March 1818 and that I have not since that time by gift sale or in any manner disposed of my property or any part thereof with intent thereby so to diminish it as to bring myself within the provisions of an act of Congress entitled "an act to provide for certain person engaged in the land and naval service of the United States in the Revolutionary War" passed on the 18<sup>th</sup> day of March 1818 and that I have not nor has any person in trust for me any property or securities contracts or debts due to me nor have I any income but am in such indigent circumstances as to be unable to support myself without the assistance of my Country.

And I do also swear that I have no occupation not having strength of body to pursue any, nor any ability to do it, that I have no family residing with me, and that I reside among my friends and acquaintance.



[The following is from [bounty-land records in the Library of Virginia.](#)]

I do Certify that Major Peter Bryan Bruin serv'd in the line of this State on Continental establishment from  
SS[?] June 75 to Feb'y 81            Dan'l Morgan  
Richmond 23<sup>d</sup> Nov'r 82            Brig'r Gen'l



[The following are from [rejected claims in the Library of Virginia.](#) Other documents are illegible.]

To The Governor & Counsel of Virginia

Your petitioners the undersigned heirs at law of Peter Bryan Bruen dec'd would most respectfully represent unto your excellency & the Honorable Coincil, that on 15<sup>th</sup> day of June 1775, your petitioners father entered the Service of the Virginia Continental army and was an Ensign, and was promoted to the command of a Major in which capacity he Served untill the close of the war and received his commutation from the U States as such, your petitioners would therefore ask that bounty land be allowed unto them from the 15<sup>th</sup> of June 1775 untill the close of the war in Nov 1783 deducting therefrom the quantity heretofore drawn, and they will ever pray &c

Sept 1844            Sam Briscoe/ Wm Briscoe/ Rich'd Commins/ Mrs Watson, Heirs at Law  
by Wm H Todd their Atty in fact.

State of Virginia }        Personally appeared before me the Subscriber a Justice of the peace in and for  
Frederick County }        said County John Schultz [S6066] a very aged man and a highly respectable  
Citizen of the Town of Winchester in said County who being duly sworn according to Law saith that about  
the middle[?] of June in the year 1775[?] he Joined a Company under the Command of Capt Daniel  
Morgan afterwards General Morgan and marched to Boston and from thence to Quebeck and were in the  
engagement before that place at the time that General Montgomery was killed and he says that Peter Briam  
Bruin marched in said Company either as Cadet or Ensign that he [several undeciphered words] Ensign  
during the Campaign that he was with the Company at Quebeck returned with it and afterwards continued  
in the Service of the United States how long he does not know but probably as long as the war lasted and  
further he saith not

Given under my hand & seal this 6<sup>th</sup> day of August 1834.            Daniel Gold

NOTES:

Gen. Nathanael Greene and his Aide-de-Camp, Gen. Baron von Steuben, were near Richmond only in Nov 1780. Bruin must have met them then rather than after some of the events related in his first statement, as shown by the following chronology.

1780

Nov    Greene near Richmond VA with Steuben, who remains in VA

4 Dec    At Charlotte NC Greene replaces Gates in command of Southern Division

1781

Jan    Benedict Arnold, now General in the British Army, invades Virginia

Mar    Gen. William Phillips joins Arnold in Virginia

13 May    Phillips dies of typhoid at Petersburg

June    Arnold leaves VA

On 24 May 1845 in Natchez MS it was certified that the following were the only heirs of Peter Bryan Bruin, who died at Bruinsburg about 1827:

Eliza, only surviving child of Peter Bryan Bruin and wife of William Briscoe of Claiborne County;

Richard Cummings of Indiana, only surviving child of Matilda, daughter of P. B. Bruin;  
Caroline, wife of David W. Briscoe and only daughter of Mariah, another daughter of P. B. Bruin;  
and the following five children of Sophia, another daughter of P. B. Bruin: O. P. Watson; Louisa Tebbats  
(or Tibbetts); Mary, wife of Judge Roysdon (or Royston); Mariah Dix; and Minerva, wife of Samuel  
Walker of AR.