

Lewis Flemister (1747-1807) P-159304

Sergeant, Virginia Line

Brothers Lewis and James Flemister joined America's young revolution February 1st, 1777 at the Chesterfield County Courthouse in Virginia. Virginia born, both were enrolled as Privates in William Moseley's Company of the 7th Virginia Regiment. James would later serve in the 5th and 11th Virginia Regiments, surviving to see the war won. Lewis' career took a different path from that of his brother.

In March of 1776 a special unit was formed with the express purpose of protecting the payroll of the Continental Army, its papers, and the life of General George Washington. Appointment to the Commander-in-Chief's Guard, or "Life Guard" was quite an honor. However, Irish-born Private Thomas Hickey saw it as an opportunity. Shortly after joining the unit, Hickey was arrested for passing counterfeit money. While in prison, he told other prisoners of a plot to kidnap or kill Washington upon the arrival of the British invasion of New York. Among those implicated but not convicted were the loyalist governor of New York and Mayor of New York City. Hickey would state at his trial that he had only joined the plot to get some money and never planned to join the actual plot. Despite his claims, he was convicted by court martial, reduced to the lowest rank, and sentenced to death. On June 28th Thomas Hickey was hung in front of 20,000 onlookers in New York City.

In light of the plot, the existing guards were dismissed from the unit and new men brought in. Of the 50 new men assigned with these vital duties, one was Private Lewis Flemister. He served under Captain Caleb Gibbs and remained in the service until November of 1783. By the time of his discharge, Lewis had risen to the rank of Sergeant.

During his service, Lewis had participated in many campaigns. Among the battles were:

- Brandywine, PA 1777
- Germantown, PA 1777
- Monmouth, NJ 1780
- Connecticut Farms, NJ 1780
- King's Bridge, NY 1781
- Yorktown, VA 1781

At war's end, Lewis Flemister returned to his native Virginia with discharge papers signed personally by General George Washington. In Virginia on February 27, 1790, he married young Ellender "Ely" Chism (Chisum). The coming years saw their family grow to include 2 boys and 5 girls. The family moved and eventually settled on a farm in rural Georgia.

In 1807, at 60 years of age, Lewis passed away in Wilkes County, Georgia. Buried on his farm near Tignal, the marker for his grave wore away with the years. In 1929, Lewis' great-granddaughter Johnie King Rankin (wife of Vance O. Rankin) applied for and received a

veteran's headstone from the War Department. It was installed with ceremony by his descendants and the Joseph Habersham Chapter DAR on June 22, 1930 at the Kettle Creek Battlefield Cemetery near Washington, Wilkes County, Georgia. His family remained in Georgia and his widow was eventually granted 100 acres of Bounty Land in lieu of pension for his service. Ellender Chism Flemister passed on to her reward in 1855.

Submitted by Roland Washington Clements
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