

A SOLDIER'S LIFE REPORTS

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REAL ARCHIVAL FILE - This report reads the genuine Revolutionary War bounty-land file of Robert Dailey (also written Dayley), a matross - an artillery private - of the New York Continental Line, discharged from the American Army at Head-Quarters in June 1783 (National Archives, RG 15; B.L.Wt. 440-100). The file also holds a warrant card belonging to a different man of the same surname, Solomon Dailey of Rhode Island, apparently filed here on name similarity alone. The report gives that card its own section and keeps the two men apart.

A REVOLUTIONARY WAR PENSION FILE REPORT

Robert Dailey (also spelled Dayley)

Matross (artillery soldier, private grade) · Regiment not legible on the discharge;
New York service per the file cover; the rank "Matross" indicates artillery
*Bounty-Land Warrant (B.L.Wt. 440-100, Act of Sep 16, 1776); warrant assigned/withdrawn
1809*

Family Keepsake Edition · Researcher-Reviewed

Prepared September 2, 2026

Every fact in this report is traced to the page that states it.

Prepared from the original records of the United States National Archives (Record Group 15).

Robert Dailey (also spelled Dayley)

Matross (artillery soldier, private grade), Regiment not legible on the discharge; New York service per the file cover; the rank "Matross" indicates artillery

Short Biography

This is a Revolutionary War bounty-land file for Robert Dailey (his name is also written Dayley), who served as a matross "for the War only" and was discharged in June 1783 under a certificate bearing George Washington's name. His service earned a 100-acre bounty-land warrant, numbered 440. The file's papers show that after the war Robert conveyed away land, and that the warrant was eventually withdrawn in 1809 in favor of two assignees, John Harris and John Richardson. The papers are heavily worn and faded, so his regiment and exact service dates cannot be read with confidence. One page in the file — a modern index card naming Solomon Dailey of Rhode Island under a different warrant number — appears to belong to a different soldier entirely and should not be read as part of Robert's record. The file is a land-warrant record, not a pension application: it tells us about his service and his land, but says nothing about a wife, children, or the date of his death.

The Story of Robert Dailey, Matross

The heart of this small file is a printed discharge certificate — the kind issued from the army's headquarters at the close of the Revolution — that carries George Washington's name at the bottom (page 3). It certifies that the bearer, having **faithfully served the United States** and **"being inlisted for the War only,"** was **hereby DISCHARGED from the American Army**, and was **"Given at Head-Quarters" in June 1783**. The soldier's name, his regiment, and the exact span of his service are written into the printed blanks in a hand that has faded badly; the regiment and the starting date (which appears to read a year in the early 1780s) cannot be made out with confidence, so they are flagged rather than guessed (see the notes).

Who was he? The file cover names him **"Dailey, Robert — or Dayley"** and marks his service as **New York** (page 1). The inner docket calls him **Robert Dayley** and records his rank as **Matross** (page 2) — a matross was an artillery soldier, the equivalent of a private serving the guns. His service earned him a bounty of **100 acres** of land, recorded as **Bounty-Land Warrant No. 440 (B.L.Wt. 440-100,** pages 1 and 2).

The reverse of the discharge (page 4) carries the printed reminder that the certificate would **"not avail the Bearer as a Discharge, until the Ratification of the definitive Treaty of Peace,"** again over Washington's name. Below and around that printing, later hands recorded what became of Robert's land. In an entry dated **1784** he **"set over"** his land — and what appears to read as enslaved people (the word is uncertain and is flagged) — **unto Isaac Slaughter**, signed with his own name; the witnesses include **John Slaughter** (by his mark) and a man named **Christopher** (surname illegible). A further note dated **June 1788** records that **Isaac Slaughter sold the rights of lands unto Obadiah Brown**, witnessed by **Edward Comfort** (reading of some names uncertain). These are private conveyances, worn and only partly legible, but they name a small circle of people around Robert after the war.

The last event the file documents is administrative: the inner docket notes the warrant was **"Withdrawn 7th Jan'y 1809 in favor of John Harris & John Richardson,"** described as assignees (page 2) — meaning the land right had passed out of Robert's hands and was drawn from the office by others. One page does **not** belong to this story. Page 5 is a twentieth-century National Archives index card for **"Dailey, Solomon,"** a **Private of the Rhode Island line**, holding **Warrant No. 3087** for **100 acres, issued June 17, 1794** — a different first name, a different state, and a different warrant number from Robert's No. 440. It is treated here as a different soldier's record that happens to sit in the scan, not as evidence about Robert (see the notes).

The file ends there. It never states when Robert Dailey was born or when he died, and it names no wife or children — it is a record of a man's war service and the land it earned him, and of the papers that carried that land away from him.

Service Strands

Continental service — "for the War only," as a matross (artillery), discharged June 1783. *Basis: documented.* The Washington discharge certificate (page 3) states the bearer served faithfully and was enlisted "for the War only," discharged in June 1783; the docket (page 2) records his rank as **Matross**. The file cover assigns the service to **New York** (page 1).

- The **regiment** and the **exact enlistment date** are illegible on the discharge and are not asserted here.
- No muster or pay roll, and no state service certification, is present in this file to corroborate the strand independently. The discharge itself is the sole service document — a permanent evidentiary ceiling for what the surviving papers show.
- The rank "Matross" points to an artillery unit rather than a line infantry regiment, but the specific artillery organization is not stated.

The Law Behind the Pension

This is a **bounty-land** file, not a pension file, so the governing law is the Revolutionary bounty-land line rather than the 1818/1832 service acts.

- **Resolution of Sep 16, 1776 (bounty land for service to the war's end).** This is the provision that granted **100 acres** to a Continental enlisted man who served to the close of the war. Robert's warrant is for exactly **100 acres** (B.L.Wt. 440-100, pages 1–2), and the discharge certifies service **"for the War only"** to June 1783 (page 3) — the qualification this resolution required. *(This tie is an inference from the acreage-and-service pattern; the file does not print the statute citation.)*
- **Administration acts of 1788 / 1803 / 1806.** These governed the issuance, registration, and assignment of the Revolutionary bounty-land warrants — the machinery under which Warrant 440 was issued and, in 1809, withdrawn by assignees (page 2).

No pension act (1818, 1828, 1832, or any widow's act) is invoked anywhere in this file; there is no survivor's or invalid declaration and no widow's claim present.

Claim Timeline

- **ca. early 1780s** — Enlistment (exact date illegible on the discharge). *Documented but unreadable* (page 3).

- **June 1783** — Discharged "from the American Army" at Head-Quarters under the certificate bearing George Washington's name; effective as a full discharge only on ratification of the peace treaty (pages 3–4).
- **1784** — Robert Dailey "set over" his land (and, by an uncertain reading, enslaved people) to Isaac Slaughter; witnessed by John Slaughter and Christopher [surname illegible] (page 4).
- **June 1788** — Isaac Slaughter sold the rights of lands to Obadiah Brown; witnessed by Edward Comfort [reading uncertain] (page 4).
- **7 January 1809** — Bounty-Land Warrant No. 440 withdrawn in favor of John Harris and John Richardson, assignees (page 2).
- **Death — UNRESOLVED.** No ledger, probate, or downstream filing in this file states when Robert Dailey died; his death cannot be inferred from the date of the last paper.

Documented Negative Results

- **No service roll or state certification is present.** The file contains the discharge and the warrant papers but no muster/pay roll or state archival certification of Robert Dailey's service — the discharge stands alone.
- **The 1800 War Department fire.** The printed note on the bounty-land warrant record card (page 5) states that the records of the *applications* for these warrants "appear to have been destroyed in the War Department fire of November 9, 1800," with the issuance registers surviving in volumes 2–4 of "Land Warrants Issued Prior to 1800." This is a documented archival loss, not a defect in the claim — though note that this particular card belongs to a different man (Solomon Dailey).

The People in the File

- **Isaac Slaughter** — grantee of Robert Dailey's land in the 1784 conveyance; later seller of the same rights to Obadiah Brown, 1788 (page 4).
- **John Slaughter** — witness (by his mark) to the 1784 conveyance (page 4).
- **Christopher [surname illegible]** — witness to the 1784 conveyance (page 4).
- **Obadiah Brown** — purchaser of the land rights from Isaac Slaughter, 1788 (page 4).
- **Edward Comfort** — witness to the 1788 sale [reading uncertain] (page 4).
- **John Harris** and **John Richardson** — assignees in whose favor Warrant 440 was withdrawn, 7 January 1809 (page 2).
- **George Washington** — his name appears as signer of the discharge certificate (pages 3–4).
- **James Bradford(?)** — named as the regimental adjutant who "registered" the discharge (page 3; surname reading uncertain).

Family in the File

The file establishes **no marriage, no spouse, and no children**. As a bounty-land record it contains no widow's declaration and no proof of marriage. Any wife or descendants of Robert Dailey must be sought entirely outside this file.

Research Gaps & the Identification Boundary

What this file proves. It establishes that a soldier named **Robert Dailey / Dayley**, a **matross** whose service is indexed to **New York**, served "for the War only" and was discharged in **June 1783**,

and that this service earned **100-acre Bounty-Land Warrant No. 440**, which was withdrawn by assignees in **1809**. The identity anchors it offers a family are: the name (with the Dailey/Dayley variant), the rank of matross, the New York service, the 1783 discharge, the warrant number 440, and the post-war associates named in the land conveyances (the Slaughters, Obadiah Brown).

What it cannot prove — the identification boundary. This file does **not** give a birth date, a death date, an age, a residence beyond the New York service designation, or any named kin. Matching this Robert Dailey to a specific family line requires correlation with records **outside** this file — New York state service and land records, county deeds and probate, church and census records. Same-named soldiers of this era are common, and this file cannot by itself confirm any particular descent.

A live identity caution inside the file. Page 5 names **Solomon Dailey of Rhode Island**, Warrant 3087 — a different given name, state, and warrant number. It should be read as a different soldier's card, and a family should not merge the two men on the strength of a shared surname.

Records that would extend the story: - **Death date:** NARA payment ledgers do not apply here (no pension); look to New York county probate/estate records and land records naming Robert Dailey. - **Service unit:** the surviving Revolutionary bounty-land issuance registers ("Land Warrants Issued Prior to 1800," vols. 2–4) and New York state artillery/line rolls, plus NARA M881 compiled service records, may recover the regiment the discharge left illegible. - **Land:** General Land Office records (referenced on the warrant card) for warrants surrendered to the federal government, to trace where Warrant 440's 100 acres went after the 1809 withdrawal. - **Post-war circle:** deed books recording the 1784 and 1788 conveyances among Dailey, the Slaughters, and Obadiah Brown.

The Service in Context

Few Revolutionary companies received a published history, and none exists for Dailey's own unit, whose regiment is not legible on the discharge (his rank of "Matross" marks him as artillery, and the file cover places his service in New York). Rather than invent one, this section gives the verified picture of the service this tour was part of. New York stood at the strategic center of the Revolution, and its militia—organized by county under laws that enrolled nearly every able-bodied man—was repeatedly called out to meet threats close to home. By law all male inhabitants from fifteen to fifty-five had to be enrolled in militia companies, later known by the names of their commanders, and by the 1700s the militia of the Province of New York was organized by county, with officers appointed by the government.

When the British seized New York City, militia were summoned to help defend it: the Battle of Long Island was fought on August 27, 1776, the British gaining the strategically important Port of New York, which they held for the rest of the war. The most sustained demands fell on the frontier. In 1777 the militia turned out against General Burgoyne's invasion that ended at Saratoga, and thereafter the Mohawk and upper valleys endured years of raiding.

The 1778 Cherry Valley massacre, an attack by British and Iroquois forces on the village in eastern New York, was one of the most horrific frontier massacres of the war, and the frontier war continued even after the 1779 Sullivan Expedition destroyed over forty Iroquois villages in central and western New York.

Service typically came in short tours: militiamen expected to serve for short periods and only when absolutely necessary, with companies dividing their men into classes so that, when a number of men were required, each class would provide one man or pay a fine. Men marched when the alarm came,

then returned to their farms, rotating alongside Continental troops through repeated brief enlistments across the war years.

_Sources: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albany_County_militia;
<https://www.britannica.com/event/Battle-of-Long-Island>; https://military-history.fandom.com/wiki/Cherry_Valley_massacre;
<https://kaderr.org/NorthJerseySkinners/NJMilitiaDetails.htm>; https://military-history.fandom.com/wiki/Sullivan_Expedition_

(This section was verified by web search. Everything else in this report is drawn only from the soldier's own file.)

Artifacts in the File

The file holds more than paperwork. These pages are reproduced here exactly as they were filed — a caption beneath each tells you what the record itself says about it, and nothing more.

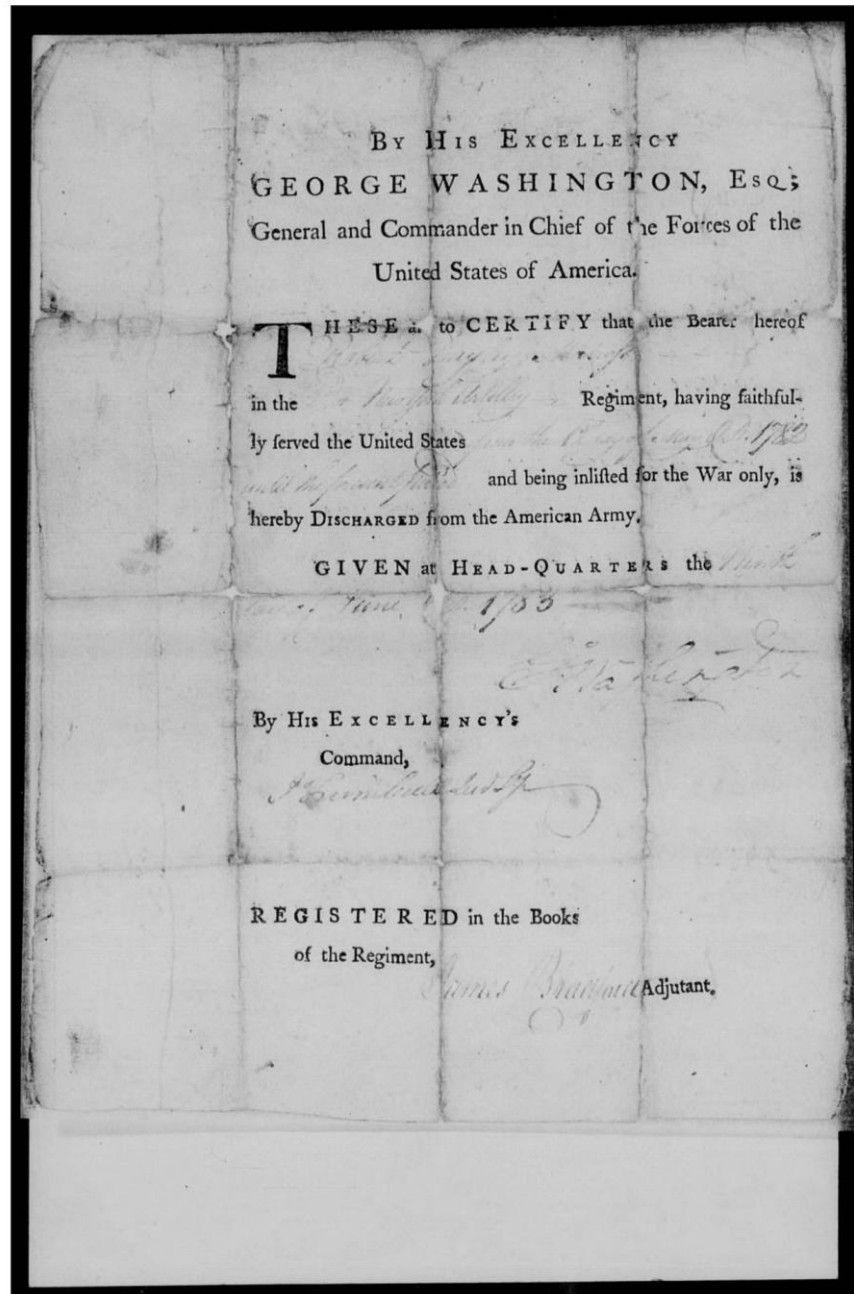


Plate 1 — Discharge certificate bearing George Washington's name (page 3). inscribed/captioned: "By His Excellency GEORGE WASHINGTON, Esq; General and Commander in Chief of the Forces of the United States of America. THESE are to CERTIFY that the Bearer hereof ... in the ... Regiment, having faithfully served the United States ... and being inlisted for the War only, is hereby DISCHARGED from the American Army. GIVEN at HEAD-QUARTERS the ... June ... 1783". Printed Revolutionary War discharge form completed in manuscript, over Washington's name and registered by the regimental adjutant; a keepsake-grade document for the family.

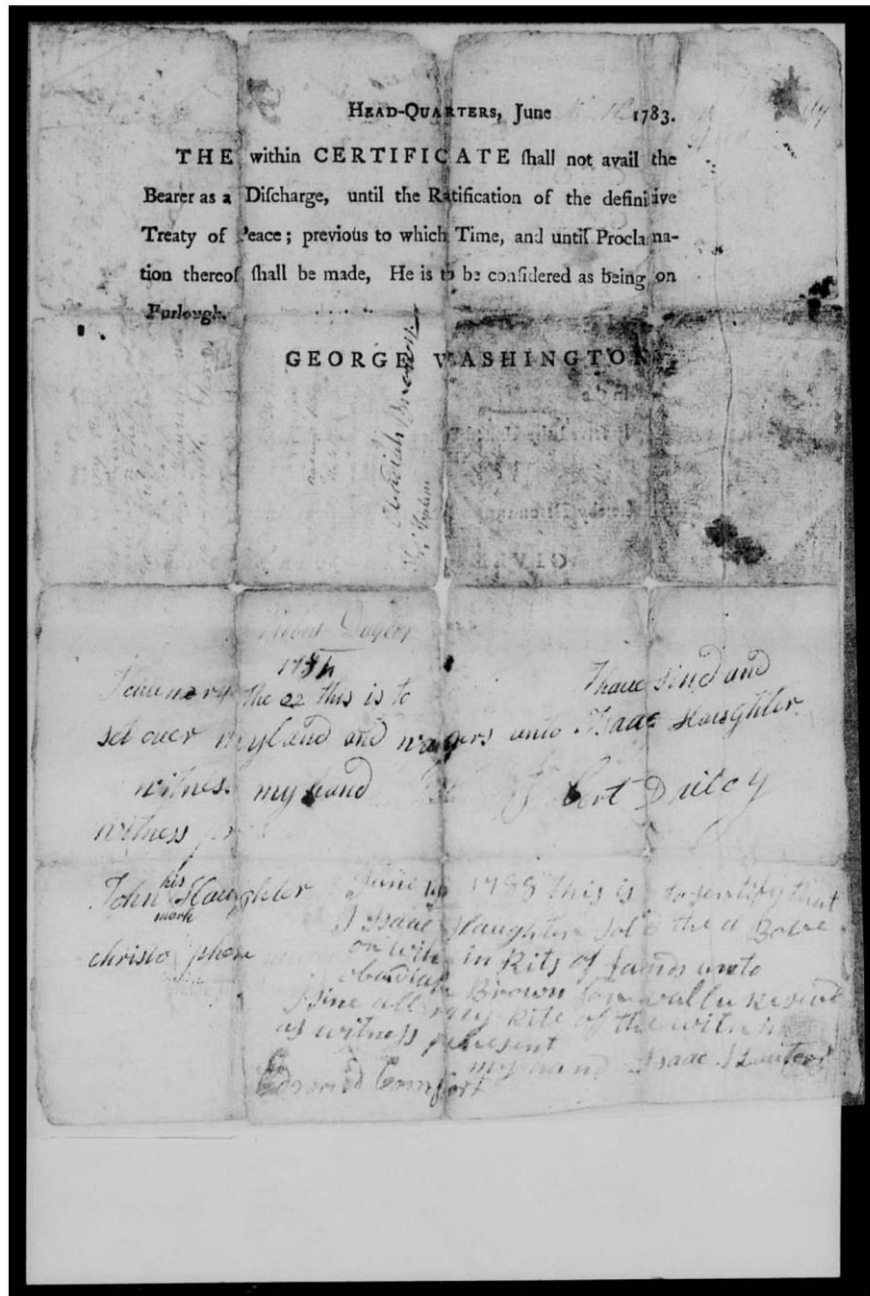


Plate 2 — Discharge reverse with post-war land conveyances (page 4). inscribed/captioned: "HEAD-QUARTERS, June ... 1783. THE within CERTIFICATE shall not avail the Bearer as a Discharge, until the Ratification of the definitive Treaty of Peace ... He is to be considered as being on Furlough. GEORGE WASHINGTON". Reverse of the discharge carries the treaty-ratification proviso over Washington's name plus handwritten 1784 and 1788 land conveyances involving Robert Dailey, the Slaughters, and Obadiah Brown.

Document Inventory

Page	Document Type	Summary
1	File jacket / cover (Fold3)	Printed cover: SERVICE "New York"; name "Dailey, Robert —

		or Dayley"; NUMBER "B.L.Wt. 440-100"; contents lines blank.
2	Warrant docket / wrapper	Endorsement "No. 440 — Robert Dayley — Matross"; note that the warrant was "Withdrawn 7th Jany 1809 in favor of John Harris & John Richardson," assignees (some readings uncertain).
3	Discharge certificate (over George Washington's name)	Printed Head-Quarters discharge certifying the bearer, enlisted "for the War only," faithfully served and is discharged, Given at Head-Quarters June 1783; regiment, name, and service dates written in a faded, largely illegible hand; "Registered in the Books of the Regiment" by the adjutant.
4	Discharge certificate reverse + post-war land conveyances	Printed proviso that the certificate is not a discharge until treaty ratification (over Washington's name); handwritten conveyances — Robert Dailey sets over land (and an uncertain reference to enslaved people) to Isaac Slaughter, 1784 (witnesses John Slaughter, Christopher [—]); Isaac Slaughter sells rights of lands to Obadiah Brown, 1788 (witness Edward Comfort).
5	Bounty Land Warrant Record Card (NARA Form VAM-51, 1941)	Names "Dailey, Solomon," Private, Rhode Island line, Warrant No. 3087, 100 acres, issued June 17, 1794, assignee not shown — a DIFFERENT soldier from Robert Dailey; printed note references destruction of application records in the 1800 War Department fire.
6	Source information page (Fold3)	Metadata: State New York; Veteran Dailey, Robert; Service New York; Pension Number B.L.Wt. 440-100; US Revolutionary War; Publication M804; NARA Catalog 300022; Record Group 15.

Every Fact and Its Source

Each substantive fact in this report, with the document that states it. Tier 1 = sworn or own-hand documents; Tier 2 = official contemporaneous records; Tier 3 = claim-process paperwork; Tier 4 = administrative material. Notes mark facts a witness learned second-hand, values worked out by calculation, and uncertain readings.

Fact	Source document (page)	Tier	Notes
The soldier is recorded as Robert Dailey, also spelled Dayley, with service indexed to New York.	File jacket / cover (Fold3), undated (p. 1)	4	source conflict
His rank is given as Matross (an artillery soldier of private grade).	Warrant docket / wrapper, undated endorsement (p. 2)	4	—
The bearer was "inlisted for the War only," faithfully served the United States, and was discharged from the American Army at Head-Quarters in June 1783.	Discharge certificate over George Washington's name, June 1783 (p. 3)	2	—
The regiment and exact enlistment date are written into the discharge but are illegible.	Discharge certificate over George Washington's name, June 1783 (p. 3)	2	reading uncertain
The certificate would not serve as a full discharge until ratification of the definitive treaty of peace; until then the bearer was considered on furlough.	Discharge certificate reverse over George Washington's name, June 1783 (p. 4)	2	—
The service earned Bounty-Land Warrant No. 440 for 100 acres (B.L.Wt. 440-100).	File jacket / cover and warrant docket (p. 2)	4	corroborated by second source
Bounty-Land Warrant No. 440 was withdrawn on 7 January 1809 in favor of assignees John Harris and John Richardson.	Warrant docket / wrapper endorsement (p. 2)	4	reading uncertain
In 1784 Robert Dailey conveyed	Post-war land conveyance on	2	reading uncertain

("set over") his land — and an uncertain reference to enslaved people — to Isaac Slaughter, witnessed by John Slaughter (his mark) and Christopher [surname illegible].	discharge reverse, dated 1784 (p. 4)		
In June 1788 Isaac Slaughter sold the rights of lands to Obadiah Brown, witnessed by Edward Comfort.	Post-war land conveyance on discharge reverse, dated June 1788 (p. 4)	2	reading uncertain
A National Archives bounty-land warrant record card in the file names a different soldier — Solomon Dailey, Private, Rhode Island line, Warrant No. 3087, 100 acres, issued June 17, 1794.	Bounty Land Warrant Record Card (NARA Form VAM-51), 1941 (p. 5)	4	source conflict
Records of the applications for Revolutionary bounty-land warrants appear to have been destroyed in the War Department fire of November 9, 1800.	Bounty Land Warrant Record Card (NARA Form VAM-51), printed note (p. 5)	4	—
The file is catalogued as a Revolutionary War pension and bounty-land warrant case file, NARA M804, Record Group 15, veteran Dailey, Robert, New York, B.L.Wt. 440-100.	Source information page (Fold3) (p. 6)	4	—
No document in the file states Robert Dailey's date of death; it is unresolved.	Entire file (no ledger, probate, or downstream filing present) (p. 6)	4	—

Hard-to-Read Entries

These are original handwritten records, in places faded or damaged with age. Where a word could not be read with confidence, it is flagged here rather than guessed at - nothing in this report is invented. A researcher reviewed each entry below against the original scans; some were made out on a closer look, and the rest remain genuinely unclear.

- **Page 3** - flagged as hard to read (The manuscript entries in the printed discharge are heavily faded and worn; the regiment and the starting date cannot be read with confidence). A researcher re-checked it against the original scan; it remains genuinely unclear, which we note honestly.
- **Page 4** - flagged as hard to read (The word following "land" is partly obscured; it may read as a reference to enslaved people or to another asset, but the reading is not secure). A researcher re-checked it against the original scan; it remains genuinely unclear, which we note honestly.
- **Page 2** - flagged as hard to read (The docket is faded and the ink bled; the assignees' names and the date "7th Jany 1809" are legible only in part). A researcher re-checked it against the original scan; it remains genuinely unclear, which we note honestly.
- **Page 3** - flagged as hard to read (The signature of the registering adjutant is faint and only partially legible). A researcher re-checked it against the original scan; it remains genuinely unclear, which we note honestly.

Where the Documents Disagree

Here two or more perfectly legible documents say different things. That is a finding about the record, not a reading problem - both versions are shown, and neither was silently preferred. Where the evidence clearly favored one reading, the story above follows it, and the note here says why - a visible weighing, never a silent one.

- **Page 5** - the documents disagree here (The index card on page 5 gives a different given name, a different state line, and a different warrant number from the subject of the rest of the file). Both readings appear in the report; review confirmed the disagreement is in the record itself. Our read: These appear to be two different soldiers; page 5 documents Solomon Dailey of Rhode Island and is treated as unrelated to Robert Dailey of New York (Warrant 440) — not adjudicated as the same man.
- **Page 1** - the documents disagree here (The file itself records both spellings of the surname for the same soldier). Both readings appear in the report; review confirmed the disagreement is in the record itself. Our read: Both spellings refer to the same man; "Dailey" is used as the primary form because it appears on the cover and source metadata, with "Dayley" noted as a variant.

What the File Does Not Establish

The file is silent on these points. No document states them, so the report says so rather than filling them in.

- **Page 6** - the file does not answer this (No document in the file states Robert Dailey's date of death, birth, age, or any family; as a bounty-land file it contains no pension ledger, probate, or widow's filing to supply them). The Research Gaps section points to the records that might.

About this report: it was produced from the file provided, read page by page. It does not search records beyond that file - the Research Gaps section points to the outside records that could carry the story further.