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**War of 1812
Military Bounty Land Warrants
1815—1858**



NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE
GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON: 1975

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Records of the Bureau of Land Management

Record Group 49

WAR OF 1812
MILITARY BOUNTY LAND WARRANTS
1815-1858

On the 14 rolls of this microfilm publication are reproduced 105 bound volumes containing two series of military bounty land warrants issued between 1815 and 1858 to veterans of the War of 1812, and four volumes of indexes to the warrants.

Military bounty land warrants were certificates issued to eligible veterans giving them rights to free land in the public domain. Applications for warrants were processed by a succession of administrative units of the War Department until 1849. In 1841 the Secretary of War placed the responsibility for bounty land matters with the Pension Office, which was transferred in 1849 from the War Department to the newly created Department of the Interior. A warrant was redeemable at any local office of the General Land Office (GLO), the agency of the Treasury Department that was in charge of disposition of public lands. Like the Pension Office the GLO was transferred to the Department of the Interior in 1849.

The first series of warrants resulted from acts passed December 24, 1811 (2 Stat. 669), January 11, 1812 (2 Stat. 672), and May 6, 1812 (2 Stat. 729), in which Congress provided that noncommissioned officers and soldiers serving for 5 years (unless discharged sooner), or their heirs, would be entitled to 160 acres of land from the public domain in partial compensation for military service. A total of 6 million acres of land were to be surveyed and reserved for this purpose, 2 million acres in each of the Territories of Michigan, Illinois, and Louisiana (present-day Arkansas).

The second series resulted from an act of December 10, 1814, by which Congress doubled the acreage offered to soldiers enlisting after that date (3 Stat. 147). Warrants issued under the act were called Double Bounty Warrants.

The Secretary of War was authorized by the above acts to issue military bounty land warrants to eligible veterans. Unlike other military bounty land warrants issued by the United States, warrants issued under these acts could not be transferred or "assigned" to another person, except by inheritance. In addition, warrants were not actually delivered to the veteran, but were retained by the GLO. The veteran received a document of notification attesting that a warrant had been issued in his name. Two series of GLO copies of notifications, which are further discussed below, are part of the National Archives.

Because of unfavorable surveyors reports concerning the land reserved in Michigan, Congress passed an act in 1816 authorizing

the survey of 1½ million additional acres in Illinois and 500,000 acres in Missouri to be distributed to War of 1812 veterans instead of land in Michigan (3 Stat. 332). It was not until 1842 that Congress removed the requirement that warrants be used to locate (select a site) in one of the three reservations prescribed by the act of May 6, 1812, and modified by the act of 1816. Under the 1842 act a veteran could use his warrant to choose land anywhere in the public domain open to private entry (5 Stat. 497). The prohibition against assigning these warrants was continued under the act of 1842 and was not rescinded until 1852 (10 Stat. 3).

The warrants reproduced in this microfilm publication are originals from both series, with two exceptions. First, warrants 1 to 2519 under the act of 1812 (160 acres) and warrants 1 to 79 under the act of 1814 (320 acres) were detached from the volumes and are now included in the two series of notifications mentioned above. For these warrants the record kept on stubs remaining in the volumes is reproduced. The information on the stubs includes warrant number; veteran's name, rank, and regiment; and in many cases date of location and the citation from the Abstracts of Military Bounty Land Warrant Locations. The Abstracts, which were kept by the GLO, are chronological lists of locations of sites for which patents (documents conveying title to land) were granted on the basis of bounty land warrants.

The second exception is that warrants 27116 to 28085 under the act of 1812, and warrants 1077 to 1101 under the act of 1814, are neither in bound volumes nor in the two notification series, and their location, if they have not been destroyed, is unknown. In the case of warrants 27116 to 28085 under the 1812 act, copies from Records of the Veterans Administration, Record Group 15, have been filmed.

The warrants contain the following information: (1) name of the veteran; (2) his rank on discharge from military service; (3) his company, regiment, and branch of service; (4) date the warrant was issued; and (5) usually the date the land was located and the page on which the location is recorded in Abstracts of Military Bounty Land Warrant Locations. They are arranged according to warrant number and are in chronological order. For warrants appearing in this microfilm publication, issue dates of the first series (act of 1812, 160 acres) extend from August 19, 1815, to June 2, 1858, and for the second series (act of 1814, 320 acres) from August 23, 1815, to April 1, 1839.

Four indexes, applying to both series, have been included on roll 1. They are (1) "Alphabetical Index of Missouri Patentees," in which entries are arranged alphabetically by name of patentee and include date of patent, warrant number, warrantee's military rank, company in which he served, and legal description of the land (in terms of township, range, section, and fraction of

section); (2) Index of Arkansas Patentees, in which entries are arranged alphabetically by first letter of surname of patentee and contain GLO patent book citation (the patent books remain in the custody of the Bureau of Land Management, successor agency to the GLO), legal description of the land, and warrant number; (3) Partial Index of Illinois Patentees, containing entries only for those whose surnames begin with letters "C" and "D," each entry including the veteran's name, company and regiment of service, warrant number, and Abstract citation; and (4) Index of Patentees Under the Act of 1842, in which entries are arranged alphabetically by first two letters of surname of patentee and include GLO patent book citation, legal description of the land, and warrant number.

No complete index of Illinois patentees has been found among the GLO records. For any bounty land reservation, if the date (at least the month and year) of the location of the land and the State in which it was located can be determined, the warrant number and information about the veteran can usually be found in the Abstracts of Military Bounty Land Warrant Locations. For Illinois, a resolution of the U.S. House of Representatives on April 6, 1839, required the GLO to prepare a list of names of veterans to whom patents were issued for land in the Military Bounty Land District in Illinois for service in the War of 1812. The list, taken from the Abstracts, was transmitted to the House July 21, 1840, and published as H. Doc. 262, 26th Cong., 1st sess. The entries are arranged by date of patent and include name of patentee, warrant number, rank of patentee, corps or regiment of service, legal description of the land, name and place of residence of the person to whom the patent was delivered, and delivery date. This published document is available in most large libraries.

The land entry papers of the GLO, of which the indexes and most warrants copied in this microfilm publication are a part, are among records in the National Archives designated as Records of the Bureau of Land Management, Record Group 49. The records reproduced in this publication are in the General Archives Division, located in the Washington National Records Center. This record group also includes the two series of notifications referred to above, which are identified as "Military Bounty Land Warrants, 160 acres, Act of 1812," and "Double Bounty Warrants, 320 acres, Act of 1812." As previously indicated, a number of early warrants issued under these acts were detached from the volumes and are deposited with the notifications. Some War of 1812 veterans, including both commissioned officers and noncommissioned officers and soldiers, received warrants under acts of 1850 (9 Stat. 520), 1852 (10 Stat. 3), and 1855 (10 Stat. 701), which were general acts applying to veterans of several wars. Warrants issued under these acts are not included in this publication.

A file of warrants duplicating the GLO sets was kept by the

Bureau of Pensions and is now in the National Archives as part of Records of the Veterans Administration, Record Group 15. The Bureau of Pensions in 1930 was made part of this newly created agency. Some of these copies have been included in this microfilm publication to fill a gap in the GIO sets. This record group also includes a series of volumes identified as "Records of Land Warrants, Act of 1812," which serves as an additional index to the warrants. Entries in the volumes are arranged alphabetically by first letter of surname of warrantee and thereunder by regiment, and include warrant number, number of acres received (160 or 320), name of original claimant, and company with which he served.

The records reproduced in this microfilm publication were prepared for filming by Edwin D. Anthony, who also wrote these introductory remarks and provided the other editorial material.

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