

Danger on the Gun Team: John Wentworth's Story

[Source: National Archives and Records Administration, RG 15, War of 1812 Navy Invalid file #1610]

The undersigned, John Wentworth 2d of Orrington, State of Maine, Respectfully represents That I enlisted into the U.S. service as a Seaman at the City of New York on the 2d day of April A.D. 1811 for the term of two years. I was carried to Washington Navy Yard, put on board the Frigate Consalation [sic, Constellation]. Thence to Annapolis and put on board the Constitution, Commanded by Isaac Hull Esq. then sailed to France, with the American Minister Joel Barlow on board, and after touching at various Ports in Europe, returned to Washington in the U.S.- repaired, and receiving the Declaration of War of June 18th 1812 sailed on a cruise, when on the 12 day of August 1812 being then in the North Atlantic Ocean, I was engaged in exercising Gun No. 12 in the 3d Division the Britching [breech tackle] caught over the Quarter Bolt, and stepping to clear it so that the Gun might come in, one Truck [wheel] of the Carriage run over my right foot so severing the chords and muscles between my ankle and toes as to render my toes and foot in front of the track of the truck stiff and useless [rest of line illegible] where I remained in the sick Bay intill the 19th August 1812 when I took my station at the Gun at the commencement of the action with the British Frigate Guerriere. I continued on board said Constitution untill the 2d day of April A.D. 1813 when I was Honorably Discharged by William Bainbridge Esquire the then Commander of said Constitution. As I advance in years the inability increases and it is with much pain and difficulty that I can walk or stand for any length of time or keep it from freezing in the cold season of the year. [H]aving had no occupation but that of a sailor by which to support myself and family, and my lameness added to my advanced age preventing following that occupation, it is with great difficulty that I can gain a scanty subsistence for myself and family. I therefore pray that the government of the U.S. would grant me such a Pension as my case properly deserves.

(signed) John Wentworth

Penabscut: Subscribed and Sworn to this 16th day of March A.D. 1846
Before me A.D. Atwood Justice of the Peace.