



MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Minnesota State Archives

TREASURER

An Inventory of Its World War I Bonus Fund Warrant Record

OVERVIEW OF THE RECORDS

Agency:	Minnesota. Treasurer's Office.
Series Title:	World War I bonus fund warrant record.
Dates:	1919-1924.
Abstract:	Record listing warrant number, date, amount, when paid, who issued to, and application number.
Quantity:	2.25 cu. ft. (3 volumes and 1 folder, shelved loose).
Location:	See Detailed Description section for volume/folder locations.

STATUTORY HISTORY OF THE WORLD WAR I BONUS PROGRAM

On September 19, 1919, the Minnesota State Legislature approved an act for relief and assistance for Minnesota soldiers who had served in World War I [Laws Spec Sess 1919 c49]. These payments, known as bonuses, were \$15 for each month (or fraction thereof) that the individual soldier was in service.

As defined in the enabling law and amended in 1921 [Laws 1921 c471], soldier was defined as any officer, soldier, sailor, marine, nurse, student nurse, or dietitian who had served in the United States military or naval forces or those of any nation associated with the United States in the war, and who was a resident of the state at the time he/she was commissioned, enlisted, inducted, appointed or mustered into the military or naval service subsequent to April 6, 1917. Service had to have commenced by November 11, 1918. The soldier had to have received an honorable or ordinary discharge or continued to serve under honorable conditions. The definition was written to specifically exclude anyone who sought to avoid service because of conscientious objections to the war with Germany or alienage, or who had been found guilty of fraud or violation or evasion of the Selective Service Act or the regulations of the War Department. The amended act of 1921 specifically defined many other circumstances under which an individual may not have been eligible for a bonus.

The bonus laws provided for a minimum bonus of \$50 and stated that an individual's bonus payment would be reduced by a reimbursement for tuition as authorized under law [Laws 1919 c338]. The original act also authorized a surviving widow, if still single, to receive her husband's bonus. The amended 1921 law expanded survivorship to include children under 18, if

no widow survived, or widowed mother, if no widowed spouse or children survived. If the soldier died after discharge but before receiving a bonus, survivorship extended first to the widow, then to any children under 18, then to the mother, if living, and finally to the father.

A Soldiers' Bonus Board, consisting of the state auditor, state treasurer, and adjutant general, was created to oversee the operation of this program, to employ staff to carry out its functions, and to approve or disapprove claims. Application forms provided by the adjutant general were completed by the individual applicant and returned to either the adjutant general's office or the clerk of district court in the county of current residence or residence at the time of induction. The board defined procedures and added interpretations to what constituted eligible service. When a claim had been approved, a voucher was prepared and transmitted to the state auditor; the state auditor issued a warrant for the amount approved and forwarded it to the state treasurer who issued payment.

The bonus board expired in 1922 but was recreated in April 1923 [Laws 1923 c311] to function through September 1924. It was formally abolished in 1925 [Laws 1925 c426]. Approximately 120,000 claims were filed with the bonus board, of which about 110,000 were paid.

Claims rejected by the bonus board could be reviewed by the Soldiers' Bonus Board of Review, created by the Legislature in 1921 [Laws 1921 c471, subd4a]. Appointed by the governor, this review board operated between July 1, 1921 and March 1, 1922. After the review board's expiration, the bonus board created its own Department of Review which existed until June 1922. A total of 1,822 cases were reviewed by these bodies.

Requests for bonus payments submitted after the dissolution of the bonus board apparently went to the Legislature. Special legislative acts authorized payment of the bonuses [Laws 1927 c1333; Laws 1929 c368; Laws 1935 c260; etc]. The names of individual soldiers and/or their heirs are listed in the respective acts.

In 1935, the Legislature revisited this issue and formally transferred administration of the bonus program to the Adjutant General [Laws 1935 c213] and mandated that the Adjutant General report to the Legislature any payments made under the act. Payments were made until at least 1943.

ASSOCIATED MATERIALS

Other records relating to the World War I bonus payments, including the actual bonus files, can be found in the records of the Adjutant General, in same repository.

INDEX TERMS

This collection is indexed under the following headings in the catalog of the Minnesota Historical Society. Researchers desiring materials about related topics, persons or places should search the catalog using these headings.

Topics:

- Accounting.
- Bounties, Military—Minnesota
- Military pensions—Minnesota.

Veterans—Minnesota.
World War, 1914-1918—Veterans.

Organizations:

United States. Army—Pay, allowances, etc.
United States. Navy—Pay, allowances, etc.
United States. Marine Corps—Pay, allowances, etc.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Preferred Citation:

[Indicate the volume and page or folder and item here]. Minnesota. Treasurer's Office.
World War I Bonus Fund Warrant Record. Minnesota Historical Society. State Archives.
See the Chicago Manual of Style for additional examples.

Accession Information:

Accession number(s): None; 997-3

Processing Information:

Provenance: The oversize sheets containing numbers 117,801 – 118,009 were originally kept by the Auditor's Office.
Catalog ID No.: 1705368

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

Note to Researchers: To request materials, please note both the location and volume/folder numbers shown below.

Location	Volume	
139.D.4	1	Nos. 1 – 40,000, October 1919 – May 1920. 1 oversize volume, loose on shelf.
139.D.4	2	Nos. 40,001 – 80,000, May 1920 – February 1921. 1 oversize volume, loose on shelf.
139.D.4	3	Nos. 80,001 – 117,907, February 1921 – May 1926. 1 oversize volume, loose on shelf.
Location	Folder	
139.D.4	1	Nos. 117,801 – 118,009, September 1924 – January 1930. 2 sheets in oversize folder, shelved loose. Pages 379-781; originally kept by the Auditor's Office. There is some overlap between these and Volume 3.