

# NATIONAL ARCHIVES CATALOG

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## Military Pension Files

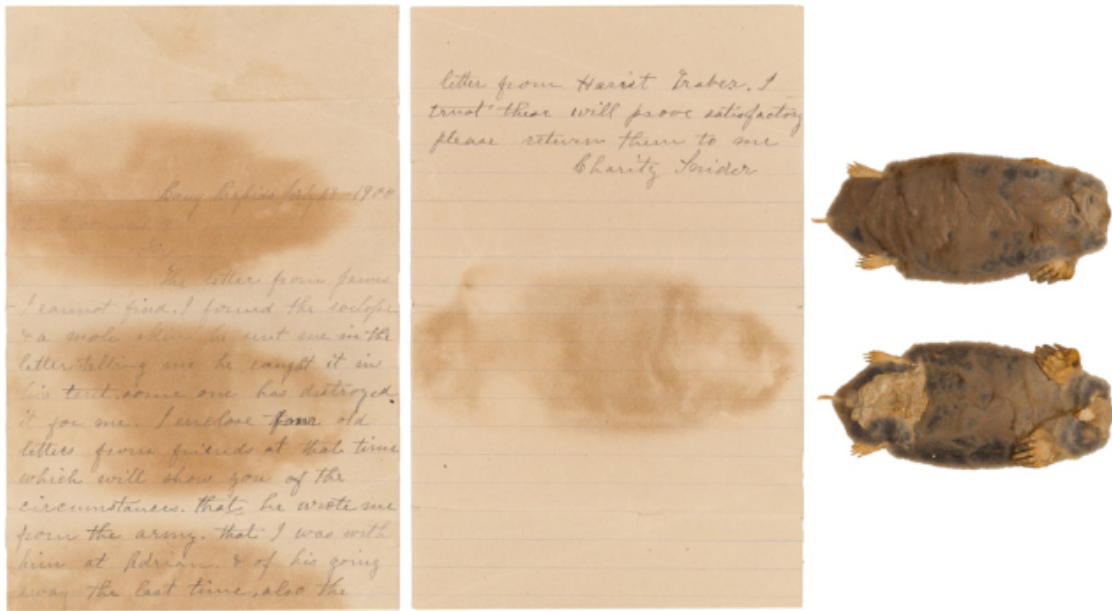
Did you know that military pension files may contain valuable details about family history? While military veterans who applied for benefits had to provide evidence of service, widows or dependents had to provide evidence of their relationship to soldiers. As a result, some military pension files in the National Archives contain very interesting, and sometimes surprising items.



For example, this [beautiful Fraktur](#) illustrating a family record was found within the file documenting the military service of Peter Hunt, who served during the American Revolutionary War. You can [browse more frakturs](#) like this that illustrate family history in our Catalog.

In [another pension file](#), a soldier, James J. Van Liew, didn't care to share his tent with this uninvited guest and captured it. Van Liew sent the skin to his wife, Charity. She kept it for years but lost his original letter. In July 1900, Charity applied to the government for a widow's pension. In these applications, the widow had to establish her relationship with the soldier, and in an era before consistent recording of marriages, the women often had to be creative. Charity had no marriage certificate, but she did have this mole skin. She sent the Pension Bureau four testimonials from friends who had seen Van Liew's letter—addressed to "Dear Wife"—and the surprising enclosure. Whether the mole tipped the

scales in Charity's favor or not, she received a pension based on her late husband's Army service. The mole remains in her application file, preserved between polyester sheets.



The [pension file](#) of Civil War veteran Corporal Charles F. Sulzberger details a “no, yes, no” response regarding a widow’s pension. His widow, Lisbeth Sulzberger, applied for a widow’s pension following her husband’s death in 1937 while living in Germany. This pension file indicates that Lisbeth was initially denied a pension because she and her husband were not married prior to 1905, which was a requirement at the time. But then, Public Law No. 471 of the 78th Congress of 1944, granted widows' pensions to women who had been married to the soldier for at least ten years, so Lisbeth would be eligible to receive a widow's pension. However, in 1946, Public Law No. 622 of the 79th Congress prohibited the payment of pensions to citizens of Germany or Japan, or to anyone residing in Japan or Germany, where Lisbeth was living at the time of her application. In the end, Lisbeth was denied a widow’s pension.

March 26, 1948

PERSONAL ATTENTION

TO: Deputy Administrator  
Branch Office # 2  
New York, New York

KG-2 503 999  
SULZBERGER, Charles F.

SUBJ: Entitlement to widow's pension

1. This is with reference to the recent telephonic request of Mr. T. R. Powers, Director of Claims Service of your office, for information as to whether Mrs. Elisabeth Sulzberger who resides in Dresden, Silesia (Prussia, German Empire 2, Germany, may be entitled to pension as widow of the above named Civil War veteran.

2. The records show that Mrs. Sulzberger filed claim for widow's pension on July 12, 1937, shortly after the veteran's death on May 2, 1937, which claim was disallowed for the reason that the date of her marriage to the veteran, July 12, 1929, was not prior to June 27, 1905, which was a bar to entitlement under laws existing then. Public Law No. 471, 76th Congress, Act of December 8, 1946, provides for payment of pension to the widow of a veteran of the Civil War provided she married the veteran ten or more years prior to his death and lived with him continuously from the date of marriage to the date of death except where there was a separation which was due to misconduct of or precluded by the veteran without the fault of the widow. However, under the provisions of the Act of August 7, 1946, Public Law No. 622, 79th Congress, the widow in this case is without title to benefits for the reason that no payments shall be made to German or Japanese citizens or subjects residing in Germany or Japan".

R  
R. J. HAYTON  
Director  
Dependents and Beneficiaries Claims Service

*Let's present this  
to the office with  
a copy of the  
Public Law 622  
and see what  
can be done.*

No. 101 130/17

Verständnis Unterschrift  
wird beglaubigt.  
Dresden, den 26. März 1948  
Der Reichsstatthalter in Sachsen  
Landesregierung  
Ministerium des Innern  
im Auftrage

Fey

BEZAHLT

Service No. 2055  
No Fee prescribed.

Witness my hand and the seal of the State of Saxony at Dresden, this 26th day of March, 1948.

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MAR 29 1948  
MAR 30 1948  
MAR 31 1948

Jan 4, 1948

S. & B.

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SURGEON'S CERTIFICATE

IN CASE OF

Charles F. Sulzberger

Reg't 22.4 Corps.

Applicant for

No. 111087

DATE OF EXAMINATION:  
Feb 3rd 1948

Post office: *Chemnitz*

County: *Saxony*

State: *Germany*

P. S. - Write your Post-office address plainly and in full.

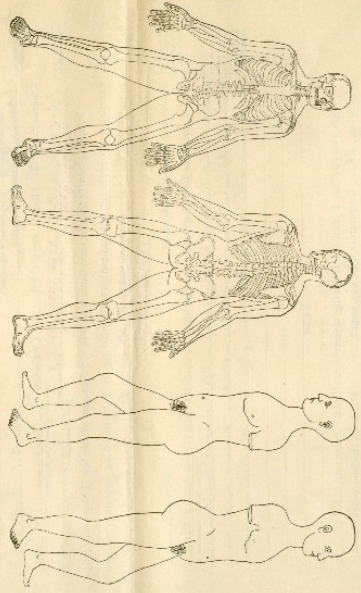
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with this sworn statement before me, and I hereby certify that I am personally acquainted with the above named doctor and know that his reputation for skill and integrity is good.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 20th day of April, 1948.

Notary Public for the State of New York

*Charles F. Sulzberger - 113 Grand*



Thoroughly examine. Final examination shall be thorough and searching, and the certificate contain a full description of the physical condition of the applicant at the time which shall include all the physical and medical signs and a statement of all the structural changes. (See Regulation Section 4, Act of Congress approved July 25, 1925.)

VETERANS ADMINISTRATION  
 FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
 OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
 (Consulate of the United States of America at Dresden)

### DECLARATION FOR WIDOW'S PENSION (Civil War)

The State of Missouri County of St. Louis  
 I, Lilbeth Sulzberger, who makes the following declaration in an application for pension under the provisions of the act of Congress approved May 1, 1920, July 8, 1920, or July 9, 1920.  
 This claim is for 1920 years of age, but she was born 28 August 1894  
 Her birth is recorded at St. Louis, Missouri  
 That she is the widow of Charles F. Sulzberger who was the name of Charles F. Sulzberger in Germany under the name of Charles F. Sulzberger in Germany and was honorably discharged as Private in Germany and was discharged for, or died in service of the United States of America in the service of the United States during the CIVIL WAR, and who died on 21 June 1921 at St. Louis, Missouri  
 That he also served in Germany in Germany and was discharged for, or died in service of the United States of America in the service of the United States during the CIVIL WAR, and who died on 21 June 1921 at St. Louis, Missouri  
 THAT SHE WAS MARRIED to said veteran 21 June 1921 under the name of Lilbeth Sulzberger geb. Conrad in Germany and was previously married, to Charles F. Sulzberger in Germany and that, except as herein stated, said veteran was employed in the military or naval service of the United States.  
 This certifies that the veteran was first married otherwise than as stated above) that she was not married to said veteran from the date of his death; that she was not divorced from him; and that she was not remarried since his death.  
 That the following are the ONLY children OF THE VETERAN who are now living and are under sixteen years of age:  
 \_\_\_\_\_ born \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ born \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ born \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ born \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_  
 That said \_\_\_\_\_ served in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard of the United States between April 6, 1917, and July 2, 1921, or at any time during said period.  
 That \_\_\_\_\_ member of his family served in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard of the United States between April 6, 1917, and July 2, 1921, or at any time during said period.  
 That she \_\_\_\_\_ dependent applied for pension, the number of her former claims being 42-54 a pensioner, the number of his pension certificate being Charles F. Sulzberger No. 2, 18, 544  
 (1) Lilbeth Sulzberger  
 (2) Charles F. Sulzberger  
 (3) Charles F. Sulzberger  
 (4) Lilbeth Sulzberger geb. Conrad  
 (5) Charles F. Sulzberger  
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 (100) Charles F. Sulzberger

GERMAN EMPIRE  
 CONSULATE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AT DRESDEN

### AFFIDAVIT OF ATTENDING PHYSICIAN

IN CLAIMS FOR THE \$72 RATE UNDER THE ACT OF MAY 1, 1920.

In the matter of the pension claim of Charles F. Sulzberger No. 425078  
 State of Germany County of Dresden as:

On this 17th day of February 1926 personally appeared before me, a Physician of the United States of America within and for the County and State aforesaid, Dr. Martin Reuter aged 61 years, whose post-office address is Dresden-Neubauer Kirchhof, who states in relation to the aforesaid claim as follows:

The undersigned knows the Charles F. Sulzberger born on 28 August 1894

The left ear is absolutely deaf, the right ear is hearing only very loud and distinct voices within the nearest neighbourhood. In the patient's case a wait he must be expected and carried by his wife. - He requires this care since March 28, 1925.

and according to both these reports this patient's condition requires daily treatment by hot compresses of his severe deafness. The left ear

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 17th day of February 1926; and I certify that the contents of this affidavit were fully made known and explained to the affiant before the oath was administered, and that I have no interest, direct or indirect, in the prosecution of this claim.

Service No. 247  
 No fee prescribed

This 186-page pension file was scanned in our Innovation Hub by citizen scanner Lauren Souther and is now [available in full in our Catalog](#). Thank you, Lauren!

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## Big Record Challenge

Help us transcribe the record that we featured this week, [Approved Pension File for Corporal Charles F. Sulzberger, Company B, 1st Regiment of New York Engineers \(XC-2501599\)](#). Can you meet our challenge and help us transcribe all 186 pages in two weeks?

|   |   |                 |                   |       |                   |               |                 |                   |  |
|---|---|-----------------|-------------------|-------|-------------------|---------------|-----------------|-------------------|--|
| VETERANS ADMINISTRATION<br>Finance Form 285<br>Rev. Mar. 1934   | Claimant: <u>Mrs. Lisbeth Sulzberger, widow as heir,<br/>         Strauss Strasse 2, Dresden-Weisser Hirsch,<br/>         Germany</u><br>NOTICE OF DISPOSITION TO BE MADE OF CHECK  |                 |                   |       |                   |               |                 |                   |  |
| FROM: Accounting Division, Veterans Administration  |   |                 |                   |       |                   |               |                 |                   |  |
| TO: Division of Disbursement, Treasury Department.  | <u>December 16, 1937</u><br>(Date)  |                 |                   |       |                   |               |                 |                   |  |
| <u>Former Record</u>  | <u>DAG-B</u> (Date)<br>Corrected Record - Remarks, etc.   |                 |                   |       |                   |               |                 |                   |  |
| Payee <u>Charles F. Sulzberger</u>  | (Include definite stmt. as to disposition)<br><u>As the pensioner lived through the period covered<br/>         thereby, the check is an asset of the estate.<br/>         The check and attached Claim Form 1055 executed by<br/>         Mrs. Lisbeth Sulzberger together with photo-<br/>         static copy of will and translation thereof<br/>         should be forwarded to the General Accounting<br/>         Office for settlement.<br/>         There is no record of the burial allowance<br/>         having been paid in this case. The pensioner<br/>         died May 2, 1937 as shown by the death certi-<br/>         ficate on file.</u> |                 |                   |       |                   |               |                 |                   |  |
| Address <u>Bautzner Str 21</u><br><u>Weisser Hirsch Sax Germany</u>   |   |                 |                   |       |                   |               |                 |                   |  |
| Claim or File No. <u>XC-2,501,599</u><br><u>Civil War</u>   |   |                 |                   |       |                   |               |                 |                   |  |
| <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Check No.</td> <td>Symbol #</td> <td>Amount</td> <td>Month</td> </tr> <tr> <td><u>21,153,309</u></td> <td><u>11-561</u></td> <td><u>\$100.00</u></td> <td><u>April 1937</u></td> </tr> </table> | Check No.   | Symbol #        | Amount            | Month | <u>21,153,309</u> | <u>11-561</u> | <u>\$100.00</u> | <u>April 1937</u> |  |
| Check No.   | Symbol #  | Amount          | Month             |       |                   |               |                 |                   |  |
| <u>21,153,309</u>   | <u>11-561</u>   | <u>\$100.00</u> | <u>April 1937</u> |       |                   |               |                 |                   |  |
| Please dispose of checks listed as indicated above.   |   |                 |                   |       |                   |               |                 |                   |  |
| Signature <u>EKF:alcn EKF</u>   | <u>H. A. BRADEN</u>   |                 |                   |       |                   |               |                 |                   |  |
| Title <u>Assistant Chief of Subdivision</u>   |   |                 |                   |       |                   |               |                 |                   |  |

As you read through this pension file, you might encounter a few pages written in German. When transcribing, we ask that you transcribe the text as it is written. Please do not translate the German into English. Citizen archivists who are adept at reading both German and 19th century handwriting will enjoy transcribing this document!

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