

A SOLDIER'S LIFE REPORTS

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DEMONSTRATION SPECIMEN — This is a demonstration specimen. The soldier is fictional and his “file” is a typeset reconstruction of the document types found in real pension files. The process, tables, flags, and sourcing shown here are exactly what a real report contains.

A CIVIL WAR PENSION FILE REPORT

Elias Thornedale

Private · Co. C (Capt. Lofland's Company) · 12th Regiment Delaware Infantry

Widow's pension (Act of July 14, 1862)

Family Keepsake Edition · Automated Edition

Prepared July 29, 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).

Elias Thornedale

Private, Co. C (Capt. Lofland's Company), 12th Regiment Delaware Infantry

Short Biography

Elias Thornedale was a 24-year-old farmer from the Smyrna area of Kent County, Delaware, when he enlisted in the Union army in August 1862 and joined Company C of the 12th Delaware Infantry. He never died in battle; instead he was sick in hospital more than once, first with typhoid fever in 1863 and finally with chronic diarrhoea, dying at the army hospital at City Point, Virginia, in June 1864. He left a young widow, Margaret (born Haslet), and two small children, Sarah Ann and William. Margaret, who could not sign her own name, applied for a widow's pension in January 1865, proving her marriage and her children, and drew that pension for years — her monthly payment rising from \$8 to \$12 in 1886 when the law changed. (The file gives two slightly different death dates, June 12 and June 14, 1864, which is normal since Margaret only learned of his death by official notice.)

How to Read This Report

This report summarizes a **widow's Civil War pension file** for the family of Private Elias Thornedale. Every fact is tagged with a reliability **Tier**:

- **Tier 1** — sworn statements (declarations, affidavits, the minister's certificate).
- **Tier 2** — official government records (muster rolls, casualty sheet, Adjutant General's letter, certificate/rate cards).
- **Tier 3** — paperwork about the claim process.
- **Tier 4** — file jackets, index cards, and digitization pages (bookkeeping, not evidence).

Where two documents disagree, both readings are shown and marked **[SOURCE CONFLICT]**. Where a witness testified to something they did not personally see (such as a death they learned of by official notice), that is marked **learned by notification**. Nothing hard to read has been silently turned into a confident guess — uncertain items are listed in the Flags section.

Note: this is a clearly labeled demonstration specimen for a fictional soldier, not a genuine National Archives record.

The Soldier and His Service

Elias Thornedale enlisted as a **Private** in **Capt. Lofland's Company (Company C), 12th Regiment Delaware Infantry**. At enlistment he was recorded as **age 24** and a **farmer** (Muster-in Roll, p. 2).

- **Enrolled:** August 9, 1862, at Smyrna, Delaware, for 3 years (Muster-in Roll, p. 2; confirmed by AGO Report, p. 8).
- **Mustered into U.S. service:** September 4, 1862, at Camp Brandywine, Wilmington, Delaware (Muster-in Roll, p. 2; confirmed by AGO Report, p. 8).
- **Bounty:** the amount is blotted and unreadable (see Flags).

His present/absent record (Muster Roll abstract, p. 3) shows him present through early 1863, then **absent sick from June 21, 1863** in the U.S.A. General Hospital at Chester, Pennsylvania, where he was treated for **typhoid fever** and **returned to duty September 30, 1863** (Hospital Muster Roll Card, p. 4). He was present again in spring 1864, then **absent sick at the depot hospital, City Point, Virginia, from June 4, 1864** (Muster Roll abstract, p. 3).

He **died of disease (chronic diarrhoea)** at the depot field hospital, City Point, Virginia. The **Casualty Sheet (p. 5)** and the **Adjutant General's Office Report (p. 8)** both give the date as **June 14, 1864**; his widow's sworn declaration gives it as "**on or about the twelfth day of June, 1864**" (see Flags — source conflict).

Marriage and Children

Marriage: Elias Thornedale married **Margaret Haslet** on **April 15, 1858**, at **Odessa, Delaware** (New Castle County), performed by the **Rev. Jonas Colburn**, a minister of the gospel. This is stated in the widow's declaration (p. 6) and independently certified by the officiating minister himself (Officiant's Certificate of Marriage, p. 7), giving two Tier 1 sources for the marriage.

Children under sixteen named in the widow's declaration (p. 6):

- **Sarah Ann Thornedale**, born February 2, 1859.
- **William H. Thornedale**, born November 30, 1861.

The children's births are stated only in the widow's sworn declaration; no separate birth or baptismal record appears in the file (see Research Gaps).

The Widow and the Pension

Margaret Thornedale (maiden name **Haslet**) applied for a widow's pension on **January 19, 1865**, before a Justice of the Peace in Kent County, Delaware. She was recorded as **aged 26** and a resident of **Smyrna, Kent County, Delaware**, and signed with **her mark (X)**, indicating she could not write her name (Widow's Declaration, p. 6). She swore she remained his widow (had not remarried).

- **Widow's Application No.** 187,902; **Widow's Certificate No.** 218,443 (Jacket Cover, p. 1; certificate number repeated on the 1886 rate card, p. 9).
- The claim was filed under the **Act of July 14, 1862** (Jacket Cover, p. 1; Widow's Declaration, p. 6).
- **Rate increase:** effective **March 19, 1886**, her pension rose from **\$8 to \$12 per month** under the Act of March 19, 1886 — the card explicitly notes "**No new evidence required or filed**" (Rate Increase Card, p. 9). This is a statutory rate step, not the result of any new family evidence or change in circumstances.

The file does not record when or how Margaret's pension ended (see Research Gaps).

Named Social Network

People named in the file, besides the immediate family:

- **Capt. Lofland** — commander of Company C, 12th Delaware Infantry (Muster-in Roll, p. 2).
- **Rev. Jonas Colburn** — minister who performed the 1858 marriage and later certified it (pp. 6, 7).
- **D. P. Register, J.P.** — Justice of the Peace who attested the widow's 1865 declaration (p. 6).

- **E. D. Whitcomb, Assistant Adjutant General** — signed the War Department / Adjutant General's Office report (p. 8).

Timeline

- **April 15, 1858** — Elias Thornedale marries Margaret Haslet at Odessa, Delaware (pp. 6, 7).
- **February 2, 1859** — daughter Sarah Ann born (p. 6).
- **November 30, 1861** — son William H. born (p. 6).
- **August 9, 1862** — Elias enrolls at Smyrna, Delaware (pp. 2, 8).
- **September 4, 1862** — mustered in at Camp Brandywine, Wilmington (pp. 2, 8).
- **June 21, 1863** — admitted to U.S.A. General Hospital, Chester, Pa., with typhoid fever (pp. 3, 4).
- **September 30, 1863** — returned to duty (pp. 3, 4).
- **June 4, 1864** — absent sick at depot hospital, City Point, Va. (p. 3).
- **June 12 or 14, 1864** — dies of disease at City Point, Va. (pp. 5, 6, 8 — see Flags).
- **January 9, 1865** — Rev. Colburn signs his marriage certificate (p. 7).
- **January 19, 1865** — Margaret files her widow's declaration (p. 6).
- **February 21, 1865** — Adjutant General's Office reports the service and death facts (p. 8).
- **March 3, 1865** — War Department certifies the Casualty Sheet (p. 5).
- **March 19, 1886** — pension rate raised from \$8 to \$12 per month (p. 9).

Research Gaps

The file does not establish the following; the record that would resolve each is noted:

- **The bounty amount** paid at muster-in is blotted and unreadable (p. 2). A clean copy of the company muster-in roll or the Compiled Military Service Record might supply it.
- **The exact death date** is given two ways (June 12 vs. June 14, 1864). The original City Point hospital register or the surgeon's report might settle it.
- **Independent proof of the children's births.** Only the widow's declaration lists Sarah Ann and William H.; a church baptismal record or civil birth record would corroborate.
- **When and why Margaret's pension ended.** No "pensioner dropped" notice, death record, or remarriage record appears. A pension payment card or the death/dropped notice would show the end date.
- **Margaret's own later life** (residence changes, date of death) — later depositions, arrears applications, or census records would be needed.

Document Inventory

Page	Document Type	Summary
1	Jacket Cover — Widow's Pension	File jacket: Widow's Certificate No. 218,443, Application No. 187,902; Elias Thornedale, Pvt., Co. C, 12th Delaware Infantry; widow Margaret Thornedale; Act of July 14, 1862; 9 papers herein.
2	Company Muster-in Roll	Records Elias Thornedale, Pvt., Capt. Lofland's Co. (C), 12th Del. Inf., age 24, farmer;

		enrolled Aug 9, 1862 at Smyrna for 3 years; mustered in Sept 4, 1862 at Camp Brandywine; bounty amount blotted.
3	Company Muster Roll abstract card	Present/absent history Jan 1863–June 1864: present most periods; absent sick from June 21, 1863 (Chester, Pa.); returned Sept 30, 1863; absent sick at City Point depot hospital from June 4, 1864.
4	Hospital Muster Roll Card	Admitted June 21, 1863 to U.S.A. General Hospital, Chester, Pa., with typhoid fever; returned to duty Sept 30, 1863.
5	Casualty Sheet	States Elias Thornedale died of disease (chronic diarrhoea) June 14, 1864 at depot field hospital, City Point, Va.; source hospital record and Surgeon in charge; certified by AGO March 3, 1865.
6	Widow's Declaration for Pension (Act of July 14, 1862)	Margaret Thornedale, aged 26, of Smyrna, sworn Jan 19, 1865; widow of Elias; states he died at City Point on or about June 12, 1864; married Apr 15, 1858 at Odessa by Rev. Jonas Colburn; maiden name Margaret Haslet; children Sarah Ann (b. Feb 2, 1859) and William H. (b. Nov 30, 1861); signed by mark; attested by D. P. Register, J.P.
7	Officiant's Certificate of Marriage	Rev. Jonas Colburn certifies he joined Elias Thornedale and Margaret Haslet in marriage on April 15, 1858 at Odessa, New Castle County, Del.; signed Jan 9, 1865.
8	Adjutant General's Office Report	War Dept./AGO letter Feb 21, 1865 to Commissioner of Pensions confirming Elias Thornedale enrolled Aug 9, 1862, mustered in Sept 4, 1862, died of disease June 14, 1864 at City Point, Va.; signed E. D. Whitcomb, Ass't Adj't General.
9	Act of March 19, 1886 — Rate Increase Card	Widow's Certificate No. 218,443; rate increased from \$8 to \$12/month effective March 19, 1886 under the Act of March 19, 1886; no new evidence required or filed.
10	Fold3-style Source Page	Provider-added source/citation

	(digitization divider)	page, not part of the original file; states the specimen corresponds to no actual NARA file. No evidentiary content.
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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
Elias Thornedale served as a Private in Company C, 12th Regiment Delaware Infantry.	Jacket Cover — Widow's Pension (p. 1)	2	—
Elias Thornedale served in Capt. Lofland's Company (C), 12th Delaware Infantry.	Company Muster-in Roll (p. 2)	2	corroborated by second source
At enlistment Elias Thornedale was age 24 and a farmer.	Company Muster-in Roll (p. 2)	2	—
Elias Thornedale was born about 1838 (derived from age 24 at Aug 1862 enlistment).	Company Muster-in Roll (p. 2)	2	calculated/derived
Elias Thornedale enrolled August 9, 1862 at Smyrna, Delaware, for 3 years.	Company Muster-in Roll (p. 2)	2	corroborated by second source
Elias Thornedale was mustered into U.S. service September 4, 1862 at Camp Brandywine, Wilmington, Delaware.	Company Muster-in Roll (p. 2)	2	corroborated by second source
Enrollment (Aug 9, 1862) and muster-in (Sept 4, 1862) confirmed by the Adjutant General's Office.	Adjutant General's Office Report, Feb 21, 1865 (p. 8)	2	corroborated by second source
The bounty amount paid to Elias Thornedale is recorded but	Company Muster-in Roll (p. 2)	2	reading uncertain

blotted and unreadable.			
Elias Thornedale was absent sick from June 21, 1863 and present again by spring 1864, per the company muster roll abstract.	Company Muster Roll abstract card (p. 3)	2	—
Elias Thornedale was admitted June 21, 1863 to the U.S.A. General Hospital at Chester, Pa., with typhoid fever, and returned to duty September 30, 1863.	Hospital Muster Roll Card (p. 4)	2	corroborated by second source
Elias Thornedale was absent sick at the depot hospital, City Point, Va., from June 4, 1864.	Company Muster Roll abstract card (p. 3)	2	—
Elias Thornedale died of disease (chronic diarrhoea) at the depot field hospital, City Point, Virginia, on June 14, 1864.	Casualty Sheet, certified March 3, 1865 (p. 5)	2	corroborated by second source
Elias Thornedale died of disease June 14, 1864 at City Point, Virginia, per the Adjutant General's Office.	Adjutant General's Office Report, Feb 21, 1865 (p. 8)	2	corroborated by second source
The widow stated Elias died at City Point on or about June 12, 1864, of disease contracted in service.	Widow's Declaration for Pension, sworn Jan 19, 1865 (p. 6)	1	learned by notification
Elias Thornedale married Margaret Haslet on April 15, 1858 at Odessa, Delaware, performed by Rev. Jonas Colburn.	Widow's Declaration for Pension, sworn Jan 19, 1865 (p. 6)	1	corroborated by second source
Rev. Jonas Colburn certified he joined Elias Thornedale and Margaret	Officiant's Certificate of Marriage, signed Jan 9, 1865 (p. 7)	1	corroborated by second source

Haslet in marriage on April 15, 1858 at Odessa, New Castle County, Delaware.			
Sarah Ann Thornedale was born February 2, 1859.	Widow's Declaration for Pension, sworn Jan 19, 1865 (p. 6)	1	—
William H. Thornedale was born November 30, 1861.	Widow's Declaration for Pension, sworn Jan 19, 1865 (p. 6)	1	—
Margaret Thornedale's maiden name was Margaret Haslet.	Widow's Declaration for Pension, sworn Jan 19, 1865 (p. 6)	1	corroborated by second source
Margaret Thornedale was aged 26 in January 1865 and a resident of Smyrna, Kent County, Delaware.	Widow's Declaration for Pension, sworn Jan 19, 1865 (p. 6)	1	—
Margaret Thornedale was born about 1838–1839 (derived from age 26 in Jan 1865).	Widow's Declaration for Pension, sworn Jan 19, 1865 (p. 6)	1	calculated/derived
Margaret Thornedale signed her declaration with her mark (X), indicating she could not write her name.	Widow's Declaration for Pension, sworn Jan 19, 1865 (p. 6)	1	—
Margaret Thornedale swore she remained the widow of Elias (had not remarried) as of January 1865.	Widow's Declaration for Pension, sworn Jan 19, 1865 (p. 6)	1	—
The widow's claim carried Application No. 187,902 and Certificate No. 218,443 under the Act of July 14, 1862.	Jacket Cover — Widow's Pension (p. 1)	4	—
Widow's Certificate No. 218,443 is repeated on the 1886 rate increase card.	Act of March 19, 1886 Rate Increase Card (p. 9)	2	corroborated by second source
Margaret's pension rate rose from \$8 to \$12 per month effective March 19,	Act of March 19, 1886 Rate Increase Card (p. 9)	2	—

1886 under the Act of March 19, 1886, with no new evidence required or filed.			
The widow's declaration was attested by D. P. Register, Justice of the Peace, in Kent County, Delaware.	Widow's Declaration for Pension, sworn Jan 19, 1865 (p. 6)	1	—
The Adjutant General's Office report was issued by order of E. D. Whitcomb, Assistant Adjutant General, on February 21, 1865.	Adjutant General's Office Report (p. 8)	2	—
Captain Lofland commanded Company C of the 12th Delaware Infantry.	Company Muster-in Roll (p. 2)	2	—
Page 10 is a digitization provider's source page, not part of the original pension file, and corresponds to no actual NARA record.	Fold3-style Source Page (p. 10)	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 edition is available if you'd like a second set of eyes on them.

- **Page 2** - flagged as hard to read (The bounty amount on the Company Muster-in Roll is obscured by a blot and cannot be read with confidence. No tentative reading is possible). We did not guess at it; it's worth checking against the original image.

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.

- **Page 6** - the documents disagree here (The widow's declaration (p. 6) states Elias died 'on or about the twelfth day of June, 1864,' while the Casualty Sheet (p. 5) and Adjutant General's Office Report (p. 8) both give June 14, 1864. The widow was not present and learned of the death by official

notification, which explains a small discrepancy). Both readings appear in the report; the record itself does not decide between them.

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 (The birth dates of children Sarah Ann and William H. Thornedale rest solely on the widow's sworn declaration; no independent baptismal or civil birth record is in the file). The Research Gaps section points to the records that might.
- **Page 9** - the file does not answer this (The file's latest document is the 1886 rate card; it does not record when or how Margaret's pension ended (death, remarriage, or otherwise)). The Research Gaps section points to the records that might.