

"Entrenched Camp, near Norfolk, Virginia"

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For many years I have had a soldier's due cover from Norfolk, Virginia, bearing the imprint of the "Third Regiment Alabama Volunteers, Entrenched Camp, near Norfolk, Virginia." This particular imprint is one of three types originally designed for the Third Alabama and is illustrated on page 191 in the current *New Dietz Catalog*. As can be seen in Figure 1, the cover was postmarked at Norfolk, Virginia, on August 2, 1861, with the due postage indicated by the "10" handstamped in a blue ink. The postmark is also in blue ink while the envelope is an orange-yellow color.

The late Morris Everett considered that the few existing regimental imprints were very rare. One must assume that



Figure 1.

as only ten different basic regimental imprints are recorded the Third Alabama officers had funds to spare to produce for their regiment three of the ten known envelope types.



Figure 2.

An enclosed letter, written in pencil and dated August 22nd, 1861, mentions General McCulloch's Confederate victory at Wilson's Creek, Missouri. The writer goes on to describe "another fight on this side of the Potomac" in which three Confederate regiments were engaged, killing over 600 Federal troops.

At the 2000 CSA Convention in Dallas, I purchased a small cover bearing a pair of 5¢ green Confederate lithographs. The cover is postmarked "MONTGOMERY Ala. DEC 4 1861" and is addressed to Col Tennant Lomax - Entrenched Camp - near Norfolk, Virginia.

The Third Alabama Infantry Regiment was organized in April 1861 at Montgomery, Alabama. The regiment left Montgomery in late April, bound for Richmond by train.

They made their way to Lynchburg, Virginia, via Atlanta, where they were mustered into Confederate service on May 4, 1861, with a total of 1,000 men. En route through east Tennessee, the men sensed danger from Union sympathizers within a state yet to secede, and armed soldiers rode in the driver's cab to ensure no stops, aside from halts for wood and water, were made in the state. Their final destination was changed, however, and the regiment was detailed to Norfolk, Virginia, to assist in the defense of the captured U. S. Navy Yard. The troops were to stay in the "Entrenched Camp" for some months, moving to more comfortable winter quarters early in December 1861.

The Third Alabama remained within the Department of Norfolk until the general evacuation of the city in April 1862, at which time the unit was moved to the Richmond area, taking part in the Battle of Seven Pines on May 31 and June 1, 1862. Colonel Tennant Lomax, the addressee of the second cover illustrated, was killed in action at Seven Pines while at the head of his regiment. Throughout the rest of the war the Third fought with the Army of Northern Virginia, including actions at the Seven Days, Antietam, Fredericksburg, Gettysburg, the Wilderness, Cold Harbor, Cedar Creek, the Siege of Petersburg, and Fort Steadman. At the surrender of Lee's Army at Appomattox Court House, Virginia, in April 1865, only 9 officers and 93 men remained of the 1,000 men mustered in at Lynchburg four years earlier.

References:

1. Skinner, Hubert C., Erin R. Gunter, and Warren H. Sanders. *The New Dietz Confederate States Catalog and Handbook*. Miami FL: Bogg & Lawrence Publishing Company. 1989.
2. Crute, J. H., Jr. *Units of the Confederate States Army*. Midlothian VA: Derwent Books. 1987.
3. Beck, B. H., Ed. *Third Alabama! The Civil War Memoir of Brigadier General Julien Andrews Battle USA*. Tuscaloosa AL: The University of Alabama Press. 2000.