

## Confederate Ten Cent Soldier's Due Mourning Cover (Paul Bearer)

The Confederate post office allowed active duty military personnel to send letters postage due if the cover were annotated with the sender's name, rank, and unit. This was not a free frank privilege. On such items, the recipient had to pay the necessary postage. In retrospect, this policy made good sense, as soldiers in the field did not have easy access to postage stamps.

I have owned this cover for about 20 years, but only recently decided to research the people involved.



Endorsed "Capt Ed O. Williams, Co. G, 1<sup>st</sup> Texas Legion", and postmarked at Rodney, Mississippi on April 6, 1863. Addressed to Mrs. Lucy Halley at Parks, Arkansas and rated with a manuscript '10' for ten cents due from Mrs. Halley. Even though there is no year date present in the circular cancellation, 1863 is a certainty as I will explain later.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Texas Legion served as an informal name for the 27<sup>th</sup> Texas Cavalry. This unit also was called Whitfield's Legion or Whitfield's Cavalry after its commanding officer, Colonel John Wilkins Whitfield. Although termed a Legion, it never contained either infantry or artillery units, the true definition of a Legion. It only consisted of cavalry companies.

Captain Edwin O. Williams served as the commander of Company G, recruited primarily from men living in and around Paris [Lamar County] Texas.

Now for a bit of background information, necessary for the remainder of the story:

From February to May 1863, the 27<sup>th</sup> Texas Cavalry was assigned to (Brig. Gen. William H.) Jackson's Division, (Major Gen. Earl) Van Dorn's Cavalry Corps as part of the Army of Tennessee, commanded by Braxton Bragg. The unit saw extensive action in the battle of Thompson's Station [Williamson County, Tennessee] on March 5<sup>th</sup> 1863, resulting in a Confederate victory. In the battle, General Jackson dismounted the cavalry units under his command and they functioned extremely effectively as foot soldiers, attacking the front of the Union position; while General Nathan Forrest's mounted cavalry circled around the back, surrounding the enemy and cutting off any escape route. The Union commander, Colonel John Coburn, surrendered his regiment, the 33<sup>rd</sup> Indiana Infantry.

The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies published in 1889 by the Government Printing Office gives the casualty results of General Van Dorn's Corps for the battle of Thompson's Station on page 119. On the 31<sup>st</sup> of March, General Bragg's Army of Tennessee Headquarters sent a message to the Confederate War Department describing the army's activities during March, and included the casualty figures.

The arrows point to the data for Whitfield's Legion, a part of Jackson's 2<sup>nd</sup> Division. Note that by the time of this March 1863 engagement, John Wilkins Whitfield had been promoted to Brigadier General, and commanded "Whitfield's Brigade". Also note that among the officer casualties for Whitfield's Legion (the 27<sup>th</sup>), is listed Lieutenant Francis P. Halley, who had been wounded.

At the end of March, the 27<sup>th</sup> Texas Cavalry was redeployed to Mississippi in preparation for the defense of Vicksburg, although not formally transferred administratively from the Army of Tennessee until early May 1863. Since central Tennessee and northern Mississippi were still firmly under Confederate control at this time, the journey to Rodney [south of Vicksburg on the Mississippi River] would have been made by rail.

No. 18.

Return of Casualties in the Confederate forces.

[Compiled from nominal list.]

Command.	Killed.		Wounded.		Missing.		Aggregate.
	Officers.	Enlisted men.	Officers.	Enlisted men.	Officers.	Enlisted men.	
<b>Forrest's brigade:</b>							
Bifle's regiment <i>a</i> .....	1	5		15			21
Cox's regiment <i>b</i> .....		1	1	8			10
Edmondson's regiment.....				9			9
3d [4th] Tennessee.....		2	2	18			22
McCann's battalion.....				3		2	5
Body-guard <i>d</i> .....			1				1
<b>Total</b> .....	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>53</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>MARTIN'S (FIRST) DIVISION.</b>							
<b>Cosby's brigade:</b>							
1st Mississippi.....				1			1
28th Mississippi.....				2			2
<b>Total</b> .....				<b>3</b>			<b>3</b>
<b>JACKSON'S (SECOND) DIVISION.</b>							
<b>Armstrong's brigade:</b>							
3d Arkansas.....	3	3	4	24			34
4th Mississippi <i>f</i> .....		9	2	35			46
Sanders' battalion <i>g</i> .....	1	6		14			21
Jenkins' (Alabama) squadron <i>h</i> .....		2	2	10			14
<b>Total</b> .....	<b>4</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>83</b>			<b>115</b>
<b>Whitfield's brigade:</b>							
3d Texas.....	1	6	1	24		2	34
6th Texas <i>j</i> .....		2	4	30			36
9th Texas <i>k</i> .....	1	2	4	15		1	23
Whitfield's legion <i>l</i> .....	2	9	5	54	1	6	77
<b>Total</b> .....	<b>4</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>170</b>
<b>Grand total</b> .....	<b>9</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>357</b>

27th Texas Cavalry

- a* Lieut. J. R. Johnson killed.
- b* Lieutenant-Colonel [E. B.] Trezevant mortally wounded.
- c* Capt. A. A. Dysart mortally wounded, and Lieuts. Tilman A. Boyd and [John B.] Poston wounded.
- d* Capt. Montgomery Little mortally wounded.
- e* Col. S. G. Earle, Capt. S. Jester, and Lieut. E. D. Ward killed, and Capts. William H. Blackwell and [J. F.] Earle and Lieutenants [D. F.] Hines and H. C. Cleaver wounded.
- f* Capt. John Gaddis and Lieut. A. J. Hamilton wounded.
- g* Capt. L. E. Hill killed.
- h* Lieuts. W. J. Moncrief and D. C. Whitley wounded.
- i* Lieut. R. S. Tunnell killed.
- j* Capt. R. A. Rawlins and Lieuts. James McWilson, P. S. Taylor, and R. C. White wounded.
- k* Lieut. S. L. Garrett killed, and Lieuts. W. H. Boyle, J. C. Hensley, W. P. Hicks, and S. McAnear wounded.
- l* Capts. J. W. Bayzer and Lieut. Cornelius H. Roberts killed. Capts. James A. Broocks and B. H. Norworthy, and Lieuts. Adam Adams, Francis P. Halley, and J. L. Nance wounded.

At this point, I needed to make some assumptions and interpretations of the casualty data. Referring to the footnotes on page 119, there are three types of casualties mentioned: killed, mortally wounded, and wounded. Killed meant died on the battlefield. I infer that mortally wounded signified the individual was wounded, and at a later point died from his wounds prior to the report being submitted on March 31<sup>st</sup>. Just wounded is self explanatory – the officer was still alive on the 31<sup>st</sup> of March. Such was the case with Francis P. Halley.

Francis P. Halley, born July 31<sup>st</sup> 1840 in Arkansas, married Lucy M. Caviness who was a year younger than him. The Caviness and Halley families resided in Scott County in western Arkansas, where census records from 1850 and 1860 show that the two were nearby neighbors. In 1860, Francis Halley, aged 19, is listed as a farmer in Parks, with personal assets of \$500.

I therefore conclude that sometime between March 31 and April 6 1863, First Lieutenant Francis Halley of Company G, 27<sup>th</sup> Texas Cavalry died of the wounds he received at Thompson's Station a month earlier. His company commander, Captain Edwin Williams, undertook the sad task of informing Lucy of her husband's death. Unfortunately, the letter did not remain with this mourning cover.

In 1864 Lucy M. Halley re-married, to Richard C. Walker in Lamar County, Texas.

As an interesting side note, although not a central part of this story, Francis's father, Robert H. Halley served as First Sergeant in Company H of the 19<sup>th</sup> Arkansas Infantry. The regiment's muster rolls record his name as Robert H. Holly. On January 11<sup>th</sup> 1863 he was captured at the battle of Arkansas Post and sent to Camp Douglas, a prisoner of war camp near Chicago. Robert died there of pneumonia sometime between 21 and 24 March 1863.

Father and son died within 2 weeks of each other.