

One of our great American Specialties

Here is a subject philatelists have been enthralled with for over 100 years.



The Confederate Post

By Patricia A. Kaufmann

Brothers: Gen. John Hunt Morgan and Sergeant Frank Key Morgan

I struggled to make out the last name of the General on the newly acquired cover, but it didn't come easily. Since it was addressed care of a general, I started with the soldier, who was addressed without rank, as is often the case. I could clearly make out "Frank – Morgan" so I did a search of military records for that name. Fortunately, only a handful came up and one of them was "Frank Key Morgan." My heart skipped a beat when I saw the regiment – the famous 2nd Kentucky Cavalry, also known as "Morgan's Raiders."

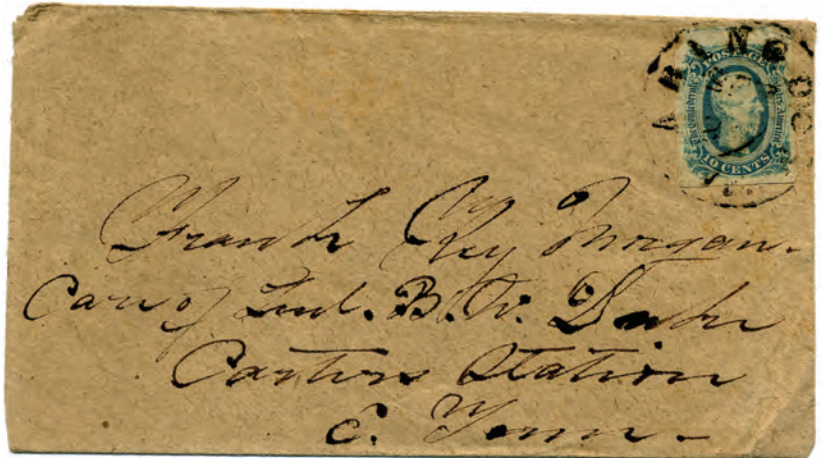


General John Hunt Morgan

The homemade cover is franked with a 10¢ blue type II, Scott #12, nicely tied by an Abingdon, Va. circular date stamp and by now I had deduced that it was addressed to "Frank Key Morgan, Care of Genl. B.W. Duke, Carters Station, E. Tenn."

Morgan! Could it be? Yes! Francis "Frank" Key Morgan was a younger brother of the illustrious Gen. John Hunt Morgan. Frank Morgan joined the Confederate Army only after his older brother John promised his mother to send him to the commissary department and not to be engaged in combat. He was detailed as a Quarter Master sergeant.

A leading Confederate raider, John Hunt Morgan found it difficult to comply with the constraints placed upon his activities by his superiors. Even though his state never seceded, he joined the Confederacy and held a variety of cavalry assignments in Kentucky and Tennessee. He led his squadron in central Kentucky and at Shiloh and was then promoted to colonel. He led his regiment during the Corinth siege and then took two regiments on a raid through Kentucky during July 4-August 1, 1862. That raid, together with that of Nathan Bedford Forrest profiled in my last column, greatly hampered the advance of Buell on Chattanooga. During the Murfreesboro Campaign, he led a mounted division into Kentucky against Rosecrans' supply lines. Having been promoted to brigadier general, he received the thanks of the Confederate Congress for his exploits.



Following the Tullahoma Campaign, he again received permission to enter Kentucky. On the raid July 2-26, 1863, he violated Bragg's instructions not to cross the Ohio River. Crossing over into Indiana, he moved into Ohio, skirting Cincinnati which went into a panic. Pursued by cavalry and militia, he was finally captured near New Lisbon, Ohio on July 26th after most of his command had been taken prisoner. Confined in the Ohio State Penitentiary, he escaped in November by digging a tunnel with pilfered kitchen knives. Placed in command in East Tennessee and southwestern Virginia the next year, he was surprised and killed at Greeneville, Tennessee, on September 4, 1864 at age 39. His wife was pregnant with their second child.

Upon Morgan's death, Basil Duke was promoted to brigadier, taking over Morgan's Cavalry. Despite Frank Key Morgan's commissary status, he fought in several battles and served as a member of Jefferson Davis' escort during his flight from Richmond in 1865 along with Gen. Duke, who was related by marriage to Gen. Morgan. Frank had been a sickly child and died in 1876 at only 33 years of age.

Gen. Morgan's guerrilla tactics inspired the Confederacy's Partisan Ranger Act of April 21, 1862 which authorized President Davis to commission units of Partisan Rangers for detached guerrilla operations. Morgan was legendary for his raids in which he would not only disrupt enemy communications by tapping into Union telegraph lines, but also round up fresh troops and supplies. Morgan's raids thrilled Southerners throughout the Confederacy and struck fear in the heart of many a Yankee. Northern newspapers called him "The King of Horse Thieves, a bandit, a freebooter, no better than a thug." In the South, he was widely admired as the "Thunderbolt of the Confederacy." ☒

[Editor's Note: For information on the Confederate Stamp Alliance, contact Trish Kaufmann, 10194 N. Old State Road, Lincoln, DE 19960, trishkauf@comcast.net, or visit www.csalliance.org.]