

**Guide to the Union Soldier Letter Detailing Transport from
Alexandria, VA to Fort Monroe, 1862 April 3
MS0329**

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at
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Processed by Bill Barker, 2011

DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARY

Repository: The Mariners' Museum Library

Title: Union Soldier Letter Detailing Transport from Alexandria, VA to Fort Monroe

Inclusive Date: 1862 April 3

Catalog number: MS0329

Physical Characteristics: 1 7-page letter (correspondence)

Language: English

SCOPE AND CONTENT

This collection consists of a single letter dated April 3, 1862 from an unknown Union soldier written near Newport News, Virginia. Addressed to "Dear Brother," the letter describes the regiment's movement from Alexandria, Virginia to Fort Monroe, Virginia aboard the steamer *Vanderbilt*. The *Vanderbilt* was built in 1857 as the flagship for Cornelius Vanderbilt's fleet. Chartered by the U.S. Army in April 1861, *Vanderbilt* was nominally transferred to the U.S. Navy in March 1862 and used primarily in the defense of Hampton Roads against the CSS *Virginia* during the summer of 1862. However, according to the *Dictionary of Transports and Combatant Vessels Steam and Sail Employed by the Union Army 1861-1868*, *Vanderbilt* was also used "as a War Department vessel assigned to guard transports by order of Secretary of War Edgar M. Stanton" (p. 46). In all likelihood, in April of 1862 *Vanderbilt* was being used to transport men and equipment in preparation for the Peninsular Campaign.

The letter mentions passing Mount Vernon and the batteries at Aquia Creek. Additionally, it recounts the author's impression of the US Steam Battery *Monitor* off Fort Monroe: "In the harbor we saw the ~~steamer~~ *Monitor*, lately so famous, since her engagement with the *Merrimac*. She didn't look very formidable being quite inferior in size and looking in the distance something like a large black ~~washtub~~ plank with a washtub on one end and a stovepipe on the other."

The letter concludes by describing the regiment's move from Fort Monroe towards "great Bethel" and from thence to an encampment near Newport News. The letter is signed, but the signature is mostly illegible; it does contain the initials "D.A.B."

The collection is organized into one folder.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Accession Number

A2001.15.2

Accession Date

2001

Restrictions

The collection is open to all researchers.

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Preferred Citation

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April 3, MS 0329, The Mariners' Museum Library

Note to Users

Due to the fragile and rare nature of the collection, researchers are requested to handle the materials with caution and in accordance with prescribed archival practices. When using these materials, please preserve the original order of the collection.

FILE GUIDE

Folder 1 Correspondence, 1862
 April 3, 1862
 7-page manuscript letter from unknown correspondent

SOURCES CONSULTED

Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships. Vol. 7. Washington, DC: Naval Historical Center, 1981.

Dictionary of Transports and Combatant Vessels Steam and Sail Employed by the Union Army 1861-1868. Camden, ME: Ensign Press, 1995.

The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies. Series I, Vol. 11, 156-161. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1884.

Official records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion. Series II, Vol. 1: 230. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1897.

Sears, Stephen. *To the Gates of Richmond. The Peninsula Campaign*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1992.

SUBJECTS

Vanderbilt (Sidewheel steamer : 1857)
Fort Monroe (Va.)
Monitor (Ironclad : 1862)
Peninsular Campaign, 1862