

# **1st North Carolina Volunteers /11th Regiment North Carolina Troops**

We are honored that you are interested in joining with us to preserve the memory of North Carolina's brave soldiers and to educate the public about the role played by the common soldier from the Tar Heel State during the American Civil War. We have prepared this brochure to answer some of the many questions that interested individuals may have about the First North Carolina Volunteers / 11<sup>th</sup> North Carolina Regiment and the activities associated with reenacting.

Founded in 1975, our regiment was organized and chartered as a nonprofit organization by six history-oriented individuals from Edenton, North Carolina. Today, it remains as the oldest continually operating Civil War reenacting unit in North Carolina with approximately seventy-five members representing a wide spectrum of occupations, experience and backgrounds, who reside mostly in eastern and central North Carolina and Virginia.

The First/Eleventh was formed to authentically portray a Confederate military unit as it would have appeared during the years, 1861-1865. Since its origin, the unit has grown tremendously in number and authenticity, and we continue to strive for still greater proficiency. We are bound together by a common interest and admiration of North Carolina's soldiers from this time period as well as the appreciation of our forefathers who fought and died in the great "War Between the States". We have dedicated ourselves to portray them as authentically as possible utilizing uniforms, weapons, and equipment that have the highest degree of historical accuracy available to achieve this means.

The unit's namesake was the first regiment to be organized by the State of North Carolina and mustered into service for six months in May of 1861. The regiment won distinctive honor when they fought and won the first land battle of the war at Big Bethel, Virginia. Adopting the title "Bethel Regiment", the unit was re-organized in November 1861 as the 11<sup>th</sup> Regiment North Carolina Troops. The unit participated on such fields of valor as Gettysburg, the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, Petersburg, and to the end at Appomattox.

Our organization has two major goals with the main emphasis being to portray the soldiers from NC during the period 1861-1865. The military units we represent to accomplish this impression are the 1<sup>st</sup> North Carolina Volunteers (the Bethel Regiment) and the 11<sup>th</sup> Regiment North Carolina Troops. This allows us the flexibility to adapt to any reenactment period and still remain historically correct. Our other goal is to educate the general public about the many dimensions of a soldier's life and what he might have endured including living conditions, drill, combat, weapons, food, and other aspects of his life from this period. We often coordinate our efforts with those of state and national historic sites to increase public awareness regarding the preservation and recognition of those invaluable treasures and assist in events to aid in preservation efforts.

These events are primarily of two types: Living histories and battle reenactments. Living history events attempt to portray the camp life of a Civil War soldier as it would have been in 1861-1865. Small skirmishes and tactical demonstrations are typical and are included in this type of event, but are not necessarily a predominant feature. The other type of event is that of a "battle" reenactment. The primary focus of this type of event is a "scripted" scenario of a specific portion of a particular battle, usually on a large scale. Gettysburg, Bentonville, and Shiloh are all examples of this kind of event.

**We do require you, as a prospective member, to attend at least one event.** This allows you an opportunity to meet our membership and familiarize yourself with the type of activities that you would experience as a regular member. You may come in “modern” clothing as a spectator, or when possible, make arrangements to attend an event as a “guest participant”. Please note that sometimes logistics (availability of clothing, weapons, boots, etc) may not allow you to take advantage of this situation. However, if you like what you see and the members you meet, you’ll be in the ranks with us quickly enough anyway! **Please ask your unit contact person for information and directions to the next convenient event.**

Upon becoming a new member of the First-Eleventh North Carolina you will be required to fulfill a minimum of six months as a “probationary member” learning the safety rules, regulations, and regimental procedures. At the end of the probationary period, you may be accepted as a regular member in good standing, with full voting rights and privileges, upon a vote by the regular members at an organized meeting. Afterwards, you will have one additional year to complete the assembly of your uniforms, both early and late war, to the satisfaction of the Commander and/or Inspector General.

Additionally, new members in the unit are expected to learn close order drill techniques and procedures according to *Hardee’s Rifle and Light infantry Tactics* by William J. Hardee. Assistance will be offered by drill instructors at a later date prior to your participation. Although you will not be expected to learn this immediately, it is hoped that you will do so as quickly as possible. Any member will be glad to assist you whenever asked.

We are asked many times why we participate in such an activity as reenacting. Perhaps the late Bruce Catton, author of many books on the subject, best sums up our collective feelings:

“We are the people to whom the past is forever speaking. We listen to it because we cannot help ourselves, for the past speaks with many voices. For out of that nowhere, which is the time before we were born, men who were flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone, went through fire and storm to break a path to the future. We are a part of the future they died for; they are a part of the past that brought the future. What they did – the stories they told and the songs they sang, and finally, the deaths they died make up a part of our own experiences. We cannot cut ourselves off from it. It is as real to us as something that happened last week. It is a basic part of our heritage as Americans.”

The Regiment sincerely thanks you for your interest in our organization. Please find attached an application for membership as well as other information regarding our unit and materials to guide you in the selection of some of your equipment. For additional information about membership in the First-Eleventh North Carolina Infantry or historical programs, you can call or write to the following members or access our website: **<http://www.the11thnc.com/>**

We look forward to seeing you, with us, around the campfire soon.

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