

Flags of the 28th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry



*“Then raise the harp of
Erin, boys, the flag we all
revere.
We'll fight and fall beneath
its folds, like Irish
Volunteers! “*

Flags of the Fighting Irish

During the Civil War, each US Army (Federal) infantry regiment was generally issued two flags: a National color and a Regimental color. The 28th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment was distinct in that their regimental colors were not the typical infantry dark blue. To mark their Irish heritage, the 28th Mass carried green regimental colors — these are known as the “Pilot” and Tiffany” flags.



The **National colors** were the familiar stars and stripes. They featured 34 stars early in the war, with additional stars added as new states entered the union after 1863. The stars, often gold in color, were positioned in a variety of ways on the blue canton. The regimental name was typically printed in gold or white lettering along the fourth, or middle, red stripe.



The **Pilot Flag** was carried for much of 1862 (and afterward, despite the Tiffany flag being available). A gift from the city of Boston, its name comes from a descriptive article in the Boston Pilot newspaper. The 28th carried this flag in fighting at Seccessionville, 2nd Bull Run, Chantilly, South Mountain and Antietam. The flag was resplendent with patriotic and Irish symbols.



The **Tiffany Flag** was designed for the 28th’s assignment to the Irish Brigade. Called for its creators (Tiffany & Co, NY), this flag was carried first at the Battle of Fredericksburg (Dec 1862). The upper scroll identifies the unit as “4th Reg’t Irish Brigade.” The lower scroll reads, in Irish: “*Riam Nar Dhruid O Spairn Iann*” or “Those Who Never Retreated From the Clash of Spears.” This flag saw service throughout 1863 and 1865.