

Guide to the Letter from Corporal Francis Ronien of the 2nd Rhode Island Infantry to his brother Henry C0366

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July 15, 1861



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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

C0366

Unit ID

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Unit Date

July 15, 1861

box

1 (folder)

Language

English

Abstract

Letter from Corporal Francis Ronien of the 2nd Rhode Island Infantry to his brother Henry, written on July 15, 1861.

Creator

Ronien, Francis, Corporal

Extent

.01 Linear Feet 1 folder

Physical Location

R 72, C 3, S 4

Repository

George Mason University. Libraries. Special Collections Research Center

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

There are no access restrictions.

Use Restrictions

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Historical and Biographical Information

The First Battle of Bull Run, also known as the First Battle of Manassas, was the first major battle of the American Civil War. Fought on July 21, 1861 in Virginia, the battle was ultimately won by the Confederates, led by General Pierre G.T. Beauregard. Union forces, led by Brigadier General Irvin McDowell, attempted numerous tactics to overtake the Confederates, but to no avail. Defeated, the Union army left Manassas for Washington, D.C., which led many to conclude that the war they were fighting was far from over.

Corporal Francis "Frank" Ronien (also spelled Ronian, Ronan, Ronain, and Romain) was a soldier and machinist in the 2nd Rhode Island Infantry during the Civil War. Ronien was from Pawtucket, RI, where his family - including a wife named Mary, and two sons named Francis Thomas and James Henry - presumably still lived while he served for the Union. He died during the First Battle of Bull Run: "As the battle raged, Corporal Ronien 'was struck by a shell,' according to another officer in the regiment, 'which took off his leg between the knee (ampersand) hip.' He died a short time later, perhaps at Sudley Church or at Confederate soldier John Thornberry's small house or another Federal hospital nearby. 'He was a promising soldier,' a regimental history noted, 'and fell with his captain bravely fighting'" (Banks).

Scope and Content

Letter from Corporal Francis Ronien (other variant spellings) of the 2nd Rhode Island Infantry to his brother Henry, written on July 15, 1861, six days before the First Battle of Bull Run. Ronien, who signs his letter as "Frank," was writing from Camp Clarke in Washington, D.C., not far from the site of the upcoming battle in Manassas, VA, in which he would eventually fight and die. In the letter Ronien writes about a number of things, including the presence of President Abraham Lincoln at his regiment's dress parade, and being photographed by a Mathew Brady photographer (see Related Materials note for more information on this photograph). Ronien also writes about sightseeing in Washington, D.C. and military camp life.

A transcription of this collection is available upon request.

Related Material

The Providence Public Library holds the aforementioned [Brady photograph of Cpl. Ronien](#). Photograph citation: VM013_FIC0267, Rhode Island General Photograph Collection, Special Collections, Providence Public Library.

The Special Collections Research Center holds other collections pertaining to the Civil War and Civil War-era Virginia, including the [Alexander Haight family collection](#), the [Randolph H. Lytton Historic Virginia collection](#), and the [Northern Virginia Civil War images collection](#).

The Rhode Island State Archives holds the full records for all RI companies in the Civil War. You can access the finding aid [here](#).

The National Archives and Records Administration holds Ronien's widow's approved pension application. You can access it [here](#).

Keywords

Bull Run, 1st Battle of, Va., 1861

Correspondence

Military camps

Photography

Presidents -- United States

United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865

United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Personal narratives

Virginia, Northern

Virginia, Northern -- History

Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865

Brady, Mathew B., approximately 1823-1896

Alternative Form Available

A digitized version of this letter can be found here: [Letter from Corporal Francis Ronien of the 2nd Rhode Island Infantry to his brother Henry](#).

Bibliography

Banks, John. "On The Eve Of First Blood: Rhode Islanders Before First Bull Run." *Military Images* 35, no. 1 (2017): 18-21 <http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/24865790> (accessed July 8, 2019).

"Bull Run First Battle." American Battlefield Trust. <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/civil-war/battles/bull-run> (accessed July 8, 2019).

"First Battle of Bull Run." *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/event/First-Battle-of-Bull-Run-1861> (accessed July 8, 2019).

Luebke, Peter. "First Battle of Manassas." *Encyclopedia Virginia*. https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/manassas_first_battle_of (accessed July 8, 2019).

Arrangement

This is a single item collection.