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Letter to Margaret E. Cahill, 1862 February 26

Thomas W. Cahill

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Ship Island Feb 26th 1862

My Dear Wife: since my last letter to you by the
Constitution and by the way. The Naval Mail
steamer "Rhode Island" has arrived bringing
your welcome letter of Jan 30th "by the way" how did you
happen to address it in care of Quarten Master Tompkins
whether it was owing to this direction or not I cannot say but
it came safely to hand; I admire your idea of sending
letters by both Boston and New York. Though if there
be any truth in the reports that reach us of the large
number of troops destined for this point, they must
certainly send a great many vessels down here from
the Port of Boston; and they must come pretty close to
gether; I cannot understand what the War Departm^t
ent intends to do with us all down here on these bar-
ren sand banks; I mean with a force of 15,000 men.
There is not room on this Island for more than 5,000
and even then they should put some of them on the East
End where the mud is so ~~much~~ ^{deep}. I won't say what you
recollect the story about the old man and his ash cart
when the boys pulled out his End board and he did not
swear because he could not do the subject justice
so by these horrible little tormentors; on the West End
^{of the Island} where we are encamped the Island is not more than $\frac{1}{4}$
of a mile wide and on the South Beach the surf
breaks with a tremendous roar and the full force

of the wind from the Gulf, in the right time this
sounds like thunder; and notwithstanding this and
the clean strong air the Mosquitoes are plentiful
and how they bite; I suppose I need say anything
in my letters with reference to affairs here as we
have the celebrated "Puffed" reporter for the
New York "Herald" out here so that you will
have the small amount of material the place
affords dished up in the highest style of art
What an appropriate name for a newspaper
Correspondent yet he says it is his proper natural
name; by the way I have a terrible dislike to
the whole fraternity of newspaper reporters. I
think they expect every body to pay Court to
em and they intrude themselves everywhere
and I presume write in accordance with
the manner in which they are personally received
We have had a very busy time for the last
week with a couple of United States Paymas-
ters who have come down here to pay off
the troops they say but it would seem to me
that their mission was to torment us and ma-
ke all the trouble they possibly can they came
down here with a couple of volumes of Prin-
ted Orders that none of the officers from the
Commanding General down have even seen
or heard of; and there is not an officer on
the Island they have not bothered; I got along
with them very well until yesterday when

they sent me a note saying that some of my
Companies had not men enough in them
to Entitle them to a Captain and I "durst"
and that they would discharge them
after the 28th. Now it has been very evident
to my mind that our State has treated us
very shabbily from the first with reference
to our Equipment and recruitment
but the Cool insolence of these fellows
is positively refreshing: if they escape
being thrown into the Gulf Stream which
runs temptingly near us, it will be won-
derful; but the manner we have been
treated is a disgrace to the State of
Connecticut. I see by the papers that
our State authorities are going on raising
regiment after regiment without paying
any attention to filling up those already
in the field, and I am left and here-
after from all means of ascertaining what
is going on in the outside world
and liable to be imposed upon by every
huffy with a shoulder strap who may
chance to stray down here to loaf a
round a few months at the expense of
the Government but I am strongly incli-
ned to think it would be as well for them
to keep out of my way; they have not attempt-
ed any thing personal to myself yet

and if they do I may give them something
to think about. I would be doing the Country
good service to drown some of these Vaga-
bond Officers; who are fattening on the Carcass
of the Badly Politic. It does my heart good
to hear our Brigadier General give them his
opinion of them. I positively make me
love the "Old Mainstancien" to hear him
pour out his invectives he is probably the
most stern old soldier in the service of
the United States a sincere honest man
who does his duty most thoroughly by the
Government. I am sorry that he issued
that "Proclamation" and am glad that
I made him no trouble about as he is pro-
bably at this time the best friend I have
in fact it is the current talk ~~that~~ among
the other regiments that he holds us up
as an example to them and that he has
taken us completely under his wing;
although there is something overstrained in this yet
he has certainly shown us many marks of affec-
tion just while I am writing the paymaster sends me word
that he will pay my regiment off first and on Sunday
next this being Thursday so I must quit writing to you
for which I am sorry, but I have a big job before
me to muster for payment we it is said will be
the first paid off and this paymaster has some
of our allotment Rolls and here with him and
will pay off in full and we must send our money on
by Adams Express Miss Thylvalves for me
your loving husband
Thos M Cahill