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Camp Butler, New York News Va.

Saturday June 15th 1861

Friend Harding:-

You have probably by this time read a great variety of accounts of the battle of Great Bethel. You will probably never hear all the facts, or rather nine tenths of what you do hear will not be just. The newspaper accounts that we have seen here thus far have not come within gun shot of the truth. All sort of absurd mistakes are made. From the N. York papers you would suppose that Col. Bendix had command of the detachment that went from this post. They fall into the mistake by supposing that a Lieut. Col. cannot rank a Col., not knowing that Lieut. Col. Washburn is acting as Col. and that he in fact had the command of the expedition from here. Col. Bendix had but three companies and they were stationed at the forks of the road and made the fatal mistake of firing into their friends - tho' perhaps Bendix and his men are not to be too much blamed for that. Among other little items I saw that one man was wounded with a bayonet! The fact is there was no bayonet fighting, and none of our men came near enough to the enemy to be bayoneted, unless the enemy had guns from four to six rods long. Our boys engaged them nearer than anybody else, for we were not more than four or five rods off. You will see that the