Mexican War battle description! Battle of Buena Vista

Saltillo March 1st 1847

Dear Uncle

After all the noise and smoke of the Great Battle of Buena Vista is over and I have time for reflection I will write you a few lines to let you know what part your relations and friends took in it I am proud to inform you that one of them had the honor of firing the first gun at the enemy and one of them was the last to fire the fight commenced on the evening of the 22d Feb with three companies of Kentuckians. Capt Shawhans a portions of Capt Gillards and all of my own and with feelings that I scarcely know how to express to you I must tell you how the men under my command acted the fight was upon some heights on our left flank and we had two full regiments of Mexicans to contend with we had four or five men wounded but only one from my company while we killed sixty of them and wounded a good many. Uncle if you were ever in a severe hail storm you can form some idea how thick the bullets fell only they come with a good deal more force the firing was kept about four hours and ceased at dark when we retreated down the hill and mounted our horses and remained in our saddles during the night. and at daylight on the 23d we were on the march to engage the enemy and the 23d will be a day long remembered by History as having one of the hardest fought Battles on record fought on that day and shows with what spirit freemen go into a fight where they have such odds to contend with and old Santa Anna said that he did'nt mind fighting men in earnest but when a whole army every time they were repulsed threw up their hats and shouted and came again with greater force than ever he could understand it at all we dismounted from our horses and ascended the hills again with

Shawhans, Fields, Mclanns Pennington and my own all under the Comm-
-and of Lieut Col Field our whole number amounting to about 150 men
and we Kept up a continual fire for about hours when it became
general all over the field we were ordered to retreat and then
commenced a scene of Slaughter scarcely without a parallel in the
annals of warfare about four thousand Lancers with about as
many infrantry tried to cut of our retreat from the main body and
nearly succeeded because we had to climb precipitous banks in single
file with our horses and here it was that six of my company was
butchered. in not more than fifty yards of me for my horse threw me
at the ravine and a lancer was in thirty yards of me at one time and
but for Jack Jowell taking me up behind him I would a have suffered
the same fate but a Kind Providence looked over me and I was spared
as soon as we croped the ravine the regiment was halted and about
seventy of us Brought the whole column to a halt. I re Baseback and made
about twenty of bite the dust Young Bayles was killed at this point
but tell his father that he died like a man. and shot a Mexican
officer who was not more than steps from Lowry and loaded his
and fired until he fell Covered with wounds The other five fought
equally as well named Major AJ Morgan Nathaniel Ramy Clement
Henry Carty and my Preserver. William Thwaits who fought like
a man and in his death I lose one of my dearest and best friends
and will cherish his memory through long years to come side by side I laid
I laid them in their cold grave and although I could not get Coffins
for them I had them covered with blankets, we continued the retreat about
a mile when Charles Sheppard was shot with an ounce Ball in
the side which will not prove fatal and Lowry and myself Conveyed

away amid a shower of Balls and he is now in this place doing very well and will be able to travel in six weeks about this time nearly all our forces was routed and the enemy still crying no quarter we determined to make one more stand against the enemy and drew up our little regiment amounting to about three hundred and awaited their charge and on they come like a thunderbolt about fifteen hundered of their choice troops and we met them and completely routed them killing some thirty or forty and in this charge E McVaughn fell covered with twenty four wounds and also Col Yell of Arkansas Gen Sayler sent over an aid to col Marshall to convey his gratefull to him for the gallant manner in which his regiment acted and that it turned the fate of the day all the army was routed at this time but the Illinois and McKees Regiment that still maintained their ground and I wish you could have heard the shouts that greeted our return I then felt it was an honor to be a Kentuckian for Kentuckians Brought on the fight and they closed it Gen Sayler has since taken two of our Regiments out of the Brigade which they belonged to and has taken them under his special command and we have been ordered to Monterey with Sayler and says he will send us home on first of May Uncle Frank I really feel proud that all my Brothers escaped through the fight and both of them have earned a name that most any body might be proud of William received five Bullets in his coat but escaped unhurt Col McKee was killed as also Col Clay and Cap Willis and all died like Kentuckians My company suffered more than any company in the regiment having 6 Killed four wounded eight horses killed and lost eighteen guns but enough you will see the official report give my love to Aunt and the girls and tell Mother you have heard heard from me all of us are well and will be with her about the 9th June Yours Truly

Col J McLean

Oliver P Beardsley

Captain's description Battle of Buena Vista

Sattillo March 7th 1847

Dear Uncle

After all the noise and smoke of the Great Battle of Bueno Vista is over and I have time for reflection I will write you a few lines to let you know what part your relations and friends took in it. I am proud to inform you that one of them had the honor of firing the first gun at the enemy and one of them was the last to fire. the fight commenced on the evening of the 22nd Feb with three companies of Kentuckians. Capt. Shawhams a portion of Capt. Sillards and all of my own and with feeling that I scarcely know how to express to you I must tell you how the men under my command acted. the fight was upon some heights on our left flank and we had two full regiments of Mexicans to contend with. we had four or five men wounded but only one from my company while we killed sixty of them and wounded a good many. Uncle if you were ever in a severe hailstorm you can form some idea how thick the bullets fell only they come with a good deal more force. the firng was kept about four hours and ceased at dark when we retreated down the hill and mounted our horses and remained in our saddles during the night and at daylight on the 23rd we were on the march to engage the enemy and the 23rd will be a day long remembered by History as having one of the hardest fought battles on record fought on that day and shows with what spirit freeman go in to a fight where they have such odds to contend with and old Santa Anna said that he didn't mind fighting men in earnest but when a whole army every time they were repulsed threw up their hats and shouted and came again with greater force than ever he couldn't understand it at all. We dismounted from our horses and ascended the hill again with Shawhans ,Fields, Milands, Penningtons and my own all under the command of Lieut. Col. Field our whole number amounting to about 150 men and we kept up a continual fire for about hours when it became general all over the field. we were ordered to retreat and then commenced a scene of slaughter scarcely without a parallel in the annals of warfare about four thousand Lancers with about as many infantry tried to cut off our retreat from the main body and nearly succeeded because we had to climb precipitous banks in single file with our houses and here it was that six of my compnay was butchered, in not more than fifty yards of me for my horse threw me and the ravine and a lancer was in thirty yards of me at one time and but for Jack Jouett taking me up behind him I would have suffered the same fate but a kind Providence looked over me and I was spared. as soon as we crossed the ravene the regiment was halted and about seventy of us brought the whole column to a halt on bareback and made about twenty of (them) bite the dust. Young Bayles was killed at this point but tell his father that he died like a man, and shot a Mexican officer who was not more than steps from Lowry and loaded his and fired until he fell covered with wounds. the other five fought equally as well namely Major A.G. Morgan Nathaniel Ramy Clement Henry Carty and my Preserver, William Thwaits who fought like a man and in his death I lose one of my dearest and best friends and will cherish his memory through long years to come side by side I laid them in their cold grave and although I could not get coffins for them I had them covered with blankets. We continued the retreat about a mile when Charles Sheppard was shot with an ounce Ball in the side which will not prove fatal and Lowry and myself conveyed away amid a shower of Balls and he is now in this place doing very well and will be able to travel in six weeks about this time nearly all our forces was routed and the enemy still crying no quarter we determined to make one more stand against the enemy and drew up our little regiment amounteng to about three hundred and awaited their charge and on they come like a thunderbolt about fifteen hundred of their choice troops and we met them and completely routed them killing some thirty or forty and in this charge E. M. Vaughn fell covered with twenty four wounds and also Col. Yell of Arkansas Gen. Taylor sent over an aid(e) to Col. Marshall to convey his grateful to him for the gallant manner in which his regiment acted and that it turned the fate of the day. all the army was routed at this time but the Illinois and McKees Regiment who still maintained their ground and I wish you could have heard the shouts that greeted our return. I then felt it was an honor to be a Kentuckian for Kentuckyians brought on the fight and they closed it. Gen. Taylor has since taken both of our Regiments out of the Brigade which they belonged to and has taken them under his special command and we have been ordered to Montry with Taylor and says he will send us home of the first of May. Uncle Frank I really feel pround that all my brothers escaped through the fight and both of them have earned a name most any body might be proud of. William received five Bullets in his coat but excaped unhurt Col. McKee was Killed as also Col. Clay and Capt. Willis and all died like Kentuckians. My Company suffered more than any compnay in the regiment having 6 killed four wounded eight horses killed and lost eighteen guns but enough you will see the official report ....Oliver P. Beard