

Diary of a Tar Heel Soldier: Lesson 9

May 5 - Moved this morning, feeling for the enemy, and came up to them at noon, five miles from the Run, in the Wilderness. It certainly is a wilderness; it is almost impossible for a man to walk, as the woods are thick with an underbrush growth and all kinds of shrubbery, old logs, grapevines, and goodness knows what. My corps of sharpshooters was ordered to the front. We formed in line and advanced to the enemy. We fought them very hard for three hours, they falling back all the time. Our sharpshooters' line got mixed up with Gordon's Brigade, and fought with them. In one charge we got to the most elevated place in the Wilderness. We looked back for our brigade, but saw it not. Just then a Yankee officer came up and we took him prisoner. Some of Gordon's men took him to the rear. Six of our regiment, sharpshooters, myself included, went to the right to join our regiment, but were picked up by the Yankees and made prisoners. We were run back in their line on the double quick. When we got to their rear we found about 300 of our men were already prisoners. The Yankees lost very heavily in this fight, more than we did. Although we lost heavy enough, but, my Heavens! what an army they have got. It seems to me that there is ten of them to one of us. It looks strange that we could deliver such fearful blows when, in fact, if numbers counted, they should have killed us two years ago. In going to their rear we passed through four lines of battle and reinforcements still coming up, while we are satisfied with, or at least have no more than one line of battle.

May 6 - Fighting commenced at daylight, and lasted all day. So did it last with their everlasting reinforcements. If General Lee only had half their men, and those men were rebels, we would go to Washington in two weeks. When he has fought such an army for four years it certainly shows we have the generals and the fighting-stock on our side, and they have the hirelings. Look at our army, and you will see them in rags and barefooted. But among the Yankees I see nothing but an abundance of everything. Still, they haven't whipped the rebels. Several of our boys came in as prisoners to-day, with them Engle of our company. They think I was killed, so does my brother, but as yet the bullet has not done its last work for your humble servant.