

● ***After Action Report – Wilderness 2014***

By Mark Adler, Lt. Col. National Regiment

Dear Sirs:

I arrived on site at approximately 2pm Friday afternoon. I met with Sgt. Major Chris Sedlak who had already started setting up the camp in a new location due to the heavy rains.

I set my tent in the headquarters area and started to discuss with Sgt Major Sedlak which companies were to be posted where. With that Mark McNierney came into camp. I asked him if he had a second in command. He said he did. At that point I told him that he was promoted to Major. At 6 pm we were ordered to General Markijohn's headquarters for a meeting. Myself, Mark McNierney and Chris Sedlak went to the meeting. Various battle scenarios were discussed. Right after the meeting, the three of us met with General Daniels. We had met the head Topographical Engineer. He brought us into the woods to show us where the NR was to be deployed. We were the extreme left of the line, next to the Mifflin Guard. In our direct front, was a steep gorge made by Wilderness Run. Then, General Daniels and the Engineer brought us around this gorge and across the stream and about 50 yds ahead of our original position. To our extreme left was a swamp just left and front of the steep gorge. I told General Daniels there was no way that the Confederates could try to outflank us on the left with the swamp and gorge there. There was a small notch in the woods with dry ground. I told General Daniels that that was where the Confederates would come from. With that, he told me to get a party of men to put up breast works in this area. At approximately 8pm that evening, Major McNierney and Captain Martinello took out a body of men to throw up some breast works and to stay in them until approximately 10pm that night. This was all done with great enthusiasm. Approximately 10 pm that night extinguish lights was sounded by a bugle from the Headquarters Company. I went to sleep.

About 4am I was awoken by a drummer playing drummer's call. Approximately 20 minutes later, reveille was sounded. It started from one end of the camp and continued through the whole camp to the other side. The men got up. The role was taken. Morning reports came in. The reports were tallied and sent to headquarters. R. McNerney was breverded to Adj. Sgt. Major Sedlak did a fantastic job the whole weekend. At approximately 6:30 am I had the battalion formed on the road and was awaiting final orders from General Daniels. The General came, we marched out of camp and into the woods with the Mifflin Guard. We were deployed at our first position. In the distance we heard skirmishing and then we were ordered to move to our second position across Wilderness Creek. We were moving into position when the attach by the Confederate forces started. I have never seen so many confederates in a small place like that since I am in the hobby. The fighting was vicious. The Confederates started to flank us on the left. I ordered Major McNierney to take the two extreme left companies and to check the confederate advance. We were just about wiped out by overwhelming confederate forces. The confederates moved back. I was able to reestablish the battalion without the two left flank companies. After about 20 minutes they finally returned. We were ordered to move by the right flank to another part of the woods. Again I deployed the battalion and fierce fighting started.

Again the Confederates tried to flank us on the left. I had Major McNierney order the left two companies to have the men fix bayonets and charge the rebels trying to flank us on the left. The rebels broke and ran. The two companies came back and I reestablished the line. No sooner did I do that, the Generals aide came

riding us and told us that we had Rebels in our rear. I had the men face by the rear rank; about face forward at the double quick and march. We came up quickly on the Rebs and stopped them dead in their tracks. Then they tried to flank us on the left again. I detached the same two companies with Major McNierney, had them charge, they broke and ran. With the Rebel force in check, I had the men face by the front rank, about face, where we were ordered to leave the field.

General Daniels was very pleased at the way the NR handled itself. We went back to camp and rested up to be ready for the afternoon fight. At approximately 1pm I formed the battalion and had them stack arms waiting for General Daniels. At approximately 2pm we started to march towards the battle. We were deployed at approximately 2:45 pm in a supporting role of an advance battalion. Within 15 minutes of our arrival, we were ordered to advance and relieve the forward battalion. We advanced to within 75 yds of the enemy and we found them thickly masses behind stout earth works, supported by artillery on the flanks. We exchanged several volleys before receiving the order to charge. The men advanced to the forward side of the enemy works, all the while enduring a murderous fire. Unsupported and outnumbered, we were forced back to our original position. Showed only 13 officers and men unhit. We received an order to silence a battery on the left of the line. We advanced at the double quick and in short order silenced the battery, took several prisoners and held a section of the enemy works. We poured steady fire into the enemies right flank until they were reinforced overlapping our flank; compelling us to fall back to our original position. We maintained a steady rate of fire until ordered to retire from the field, which was done in good order. We went back to camp and I had the men rest.

I was so exhausted from Saturday's actions that I was unable to command the men on Sunday. We had lost half of our numbers and I had Maj. McNierney take command of the company. I have to commend Maj. M. McNierney, Adj. R. McNerney and Sgt Major C. Sedlak for the exemplary job that they did the whole weekend. I would also commend the line officers and men of the NR for their steadfast bravery on the field at Spotsylvania.

Your Obedient Servant,

Lt. Col. Mark A. Adler