

the inconvenience of approaching in bad order. At all events, they did not deem it prudent to follow up their cautious pursuit for more than one or two hundred yards, and, as soon as the command reached a small stream where a good defensive position was found, they were effectually checked, and the men were given a halt to blow and cool off by its side in the heart of the Wilderness.

After a short rest, the command was visited by an aid and conducted still further to the rear, and occupied a line of breastworks near the Lacy House, connecting with Crawford's Division. It was about noon when the battle opened, and about 3.30 P. M. when the breastworks were occupied. They had been hastily thrown together of logs. The dry leaves had taken fire from the burning cartridge papers, and the flames had caught the works. After putting out this fire, a field return was taken, showing but 278 of the Seventh present. These, with about one company of the Eighth, included all that was left of the Maryland brigade, until the missing regiments and men came up from the rear later in the evening, surprised to find their comrades alive. There being no space for them in the line as formed, they were placed in a second line.

#### Loss.

The loss of the Seventh Regiment on the first day of the Wilderness (5th May, 1864) was eleven killed, two officers and forty-one men wounded, and seventeen missing. The missing included men killed or wounded, but not heard from, and a few prisoners taken. The officers wounded were Capt. David T. Bennett and Adjutant George L. Tyler. Sergeant Noble H. Creager, afterwards first lieutenant, was twice wounded before retiring. These three were all from Frederick County. Colonel Phelps had several bullets through clothing and horse killed under him. Captain Bennett, for conspicuous gallantry in this action, was promoted lieutenant-colonel. He was shot in the face while engaged in a revolver duel with a Confederate officer, both in advance of their lines, and refused to leave the field until ordered to the rear by the colonel. The loss of the entire Maryland brigade (including the 7th) was two officers and eighteen men killed, six officers and ninety-three men wounded, and one officer and sixty men missing. The brigade went into action about 1300 strong.

#### Wilderness—Second Day.

Before daylight of the 6th of May, the Maryland brigade was relieved in the works by the Pennsylvania Reserves, and stacked arms in close column by regiment (Seventh, as usual, by wing) on the Lacy clearing, near Grant's headquarters.

About 7 A. M. a New York regiment, the 14th Brooklyn, came up from guard duty in the rear, and by order reported to the Maryland brigade, its Colonel (Fowler), by seniority, taking command. He commanded the brigade for that day only, his regiment being then ordered elsewhere. It was thought at the time to be an extraordinary performance—in the midst of a great pitched battle, to place an entire stranger, with a strange staff, in command of troops, who had been ably handled the day before by their own commander (Denison), who had shown himself brave, self-possessed, cool-headed and judicious. It was an error, and in direct consequence of it, later in the day, the command narrowly escaped a great disaster, as will shortly appear.