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Prelude...

It was hot that day. With the temperature hovering near 100 degrees, the thin blue line of cavalry troopers moved in a northwesterly direction. Just off a forced night march, they were weary, but the sense of imminent battle ignited a combination of fear and excitement that so often accompanies men into combat.

They were confident. Led by the golden haired "Boy General", the man who never sounded a retreat, their victory was certain. With the sun past noon, the Seventh Cavalry and George Armstrong Custer moved forward to their appointment with glory...and death.

In the dusty Sioux-Cheyenne village things moved slowly, the children played as usual. It was a large village, the largest village in Indian history. There were many warriors here, perhaps two thousand. They too were confident. Their tribal elder, Chief Sitting Bull, had told them that victory would be theirs and like the cavalry approaching, they were also led by a charismatic warrior, the enigmatic Crazy Horse.

Now, the sound of gunfire erupted to the South. The music of the blue coats drifted on the air. Warriors by the hundreds mounted their horses. It was hot that day. It was a good day to die...

Game Scale

-20 yards per hex / 5 minutes per turn (Abstracted)
-20-30 men per Cavalry or Sioux-Cheyenne unit.

Starting a New Game

To start a new battle, select File then Start New Battle from the Menu Bar selection panel. You'll next see the new battle selection screen which will be present you with a series of simulation options as follows:

Game Options

Computer Is

The Computer Is group determines what the computer's function will be for the selected battle.

Sioux-Cheyenne

The computer will command the Indian Warriors

US Cavalry

The computer will control the forces of the United States Cavalry

Neither

The computer "referees" the battle. Choose this option for a 'hot-seat' head to head game.

Both

The computer commands both forces and plays against itself.

Play By E-Mail (PBEM)

When a Player vs Player' game is selected, the system allows for PBEM games. Just click on the PBEM option and DG will automatically generate a PBEM file at the end of each turn segment.

AI Style

The AI Style group sets the style of game played by the computer in Human Vs Computer games.

Aggressive

The computer plays a more aggressive "attacky" style of game and basically takes more chances and is more willing to suffer losses to achieve a greater victory.

Cautious

While one couldn't call the cautious style timid, in this AI mode, the computer holds back a bit, and plays a more defensive game while trying to minimize losses.

Balanced

The balanced mode is a random combination of the Aggressive and Cautious AI modes. Select this mode for more of an "off the cuff" computer opponent.

Visibility

Always

With visibility set to Always, an entire faction's units will always be visible on the map and to the opposition for the entire game.

Upon Detection

Each individual unit becomes visible only when an opposing unit can see it. Units can "see" other units on the battlefield when they are able to trace a line of sight (LOS) to the unit. Whether an LOS exists between units is mostly determined by terrain type and distance. In the game, units never block LOS. When Upon Detection mode is selected, the computer automatically calculates the LOS and determines unit visibility.

Visibility Range

This allows you to change the distance in yards at which the units on the battlefield can "see" each other.

Fog of War

When turned on, the Fog of War (FOW) option, in essence hides some of an opponents statistics from being viewed until contact (combat) is made with the unit. It represents the situation where you may see a group of warriors armed with bows and war clubs but at the same time, you don't know their morale, level of training, or experience etc. As the saying goes, there's only one way to find out...

When the FOW option is turned off, all of an enemy unit's statistics will be open to you whether you've previously met them in battle or not.

Variants

Historical Setup

Click on the Historical Setup button to set ALL game variants to the closest agreed upon historical setup.

US Cavalry: Disposition

Custer Divides The 7th

During Custer's historic approach to the Little Bighorn Valley, he divided the 7th into three separate battalions plus the slow moving pack-train. Capt. Benteen and companies H, D, and K, were sent on a "scouting" mission to the left and behind the main attack force. Custer then commanding companies C, E, F, I, and L, and Maj. Reno commanding A, G, and M, moved swiftly up the trail to attack the Indian village. The pack-train, guarded by B Company, lagged further behind.

In this historic variant, Custer and Reno begin the game ready to attack the village while Benteen and the pack-train are approaching from the rear.

Check **Historical Move Patterns** to force the AI to move the Cavalry Companies to Historical locations as the battle unfolds.

The 7th United

What would have happened if Custer had never split his command and was able to bring the full force of the elite 7th Cavalry against the village concurrently? In this variant, the entire 7th Cavalry stands poised to strike the village in full force.

The 2nd Rides With The 7th

During the Cavalry's approach to the Little Bighorn, Lt. Col. Custer was offered the aid of the 2nd US Cavalry. Custer dismissed the offer, believing the 7th could handle anything it ran up against. In retrospect, adding the 2nd Cavalry might not have been a bad idea. In this variant, five companies of the US 2nd Cavalry are added to the mix.

US Cavalry: Weaponry

Rifles: Carbine or Repeating

The US Cavalry of 1876 used the standard issue Springfield Carbine rifle. The weapon was fine for long range fire and most cavalymen were happy with its performance. The problem at the Little Bighorn however, was that some of the Indian warriors had taken to using repeating rifles like Henry's or Winchester's. These rifles were deadly in close range combat. Some wonder what would have happened if the cavalry were issued repeating rifles instead of Carbines. Select Repeating Rifle to arm them.

The US Cavalry's standard issue close combat weapon of the period was the 6 shot Colt revolver. If repeating rifles are selected as a ranged fire weapon, they will also supersede the Colt as a Close Combat weapon.

UnBox the Sabers

In most operations the US Cavalry carried a standard issue saber. The 7th, wanting to approach light, fast, and as noiseless as possible, did not carry sabers into the Little Bighorn Battle. They might have come in handy to a platoon that was out of ammo and unable to reach the pack-train. Select 'Unbox the Sabers' to bring them along.

Roll Out The Gatlin' Guns

Custer was also offered the use of two gatling guns for his approach and possible attack on the Indian village. Custer refused claiming that the gatling guns would have only slowed him down. In this variant, the 7th stand ready to attack the village with the inclusion of two gatling guns.

Cavalry Notes:

-Gatling Guns, Henry Rifles, and Sabers are a cumulative variants and may be added to any of the basic setups.

-One clear advantage that the cavalry held over the Sioux-Cheyenne warriors was in ammunition level. The cavalymen were well supplied and always begin the battle with a high level of ammunition.

Sioux-Cheyenne Options

Warriors in Village

Another great area of debate concerning the Little Bighorn.... How many Sioux-Cheyenne warriors did Custer and the 7th actually face? We've included ranges from (500-2000) which lead to interesting results.

Rifles

The Sioux-Cheyenne warriors, having no upper command war directives, carried a rag tag mix of Repeating Rifles, Carbines, and Bows. Although on that day in June of 1876, they were pretty well armed. The game defaults to generally accepted percentages of Indian "rifle" weaponry, but you can change these to different settings and see what results.

Indian Notes:

The main Indian close combat weapons were the Warlance and Warclub. The game defaults to a random mixture of both. Indians armed with repeating rifles however, will use them as both their ranged fire and close combat weapons.

Ammunition Level

When compared to the ammunition carried by each member of the cavalry, the Indian's ammunition level must be considered low. You can however, change this to high or a random setting if you like.

Readiness

Some say that Custer had reached his objective and had achieved a total tactical surprise when Maj. Reno initially closed with the village. Others say Sitting Bull knew there would be a battle and the Indian warriors were ready. The historical setting defaults to the tactical surprise scenario (0% Readiness) , but you can change this to High or Random to create powerful variants.

Medicine Break Point

The army morale point (10-70) at which the Sioux-Cheyenne would attempt to give up the fight and yield the field to the US Cavalry. The lower the breaking point, the more likely the Sioux-Cheyenne press the battle.

Menu Bar Functions

The Windows menu bar provides access to the system level functions one may perform or set in the game. The menu bar groups are as follows:

File

The File Group Menu Bar functions include:

Start New Battle

Allows you to begin a new game.

Save Game

Saves the current game in progress

Save Game As...

Saves the current game in progress under a different name

Load Game

Loads a previously saved game

Load PBEM Game

Loads a Play by E-Mail game

Exit

Exits the game

Command Group

Withdraw

Allows the Sioux-Cheyenne player to withdraw and end the battle under certain circumstances.
See Indian Withdrawal.

End Turn

Ends the current turn segment and passes the initiative to the opposing faction.

Replay Turn

Immediately replays the events of the current turn segment.

Battle

The Battle Group Menu Bar functions include:

Turn Report

Provides a combat report indicating gains and losses that have taken place *during the current turn segment only*.

Battle Report

Provides an overall report on the progress of the battle

Tribune Extra

If the battle has ended, select Tribune Extra to re-display the Victory screen.

Army

The Army Group Menu Bar functions include:

Standing Orders

Control settings affecting your units behaviour when not under direct control.

Sioux-Cheyenne Order of Battle

Shows the current order of battle and status of the Indian Warriors.

US Cavalry Order of Battle

Shows the current order of battle and status of the United States Cavalry.

Display

Show Map Grid

Toggles the map hex grid on or off. The hexagonal grid overlay helps to discern individual terrain sections.

Show MapText

Toggles map text on or off.

Show Carnage

Toggles the 'carnage' map markers on or off

Show Fallen Markers

Toggles the fallen unit location indicators on or off

Show Unit Strength

Toggles the Unit Symbol [Atk-Fire-AP] indicators on or off

Display Elevation is: On/Off

Toggles the elevated hex display on or off. With Elevation Display On, hexes with higher elevations appear slightly raised on the map, giving a clearer indication of uphill and downhill hexes.

AI Display Level

Select the zoom level at which the battle map should be displayed during the computer's (AI) turn.

Preferences Group

Set Message Delay

Allows you to set the number of seconds a game message will be displayed on the information panels and action log before proceeding.

Sound Effects: On/Off

Allows you to turn sound effects on or off.

Ambient Sound: On/Off

Allows you to turn ambient sound on or off.

Help Group

Help

Calls up this help file.

About Desperate Glory

Displays Desperate Glory Credit, Copyright, and Version information.

Register Desperate Glory

If you're using a demo version of the game and decide to purchase it, use this option to enter your registration Name and Unlock Code to convert the demo into the full registered version.

Game UI Elements



Group Command Panel

Enables one to give orders to an entire Cavalry Battalion or Village/Warband groups with a single mouse click. In order to control a Cavalry Battalion or Warband group, a leader must be the currently selected unit.



Cavalry Command Panel

Faction Indicator and current overall Morale Level

Display Group

Map Zoom In/Out, Map Grid Toggle, SOP Settings, Action Report Toggle and Battle Report

Battalion Level Control

Advance, To Leader, Pursue, Attack, Ranged Fire, Mount/Dismount, Rally, Retreat, Next Battalion

Unit Level Control

Current Unit Stats
Charge, Range Fire, Rally, Mount/Dismount, Change Facing, Last Stand, Next/Prev Unit



Sioux-Cheyenne Command Panel

Faction Indicator and current overall Medicine level

Display Group

Map Zoom In/Out, Map Grid Toggle, SOP Settings, Action Report Toggle and Battle Report

Battalion Level Control

Leaders, To Leader, Pursue, Attack, Ranged Fire, Mount/Dismount, Rally, Escape, Withdraw

Unit Level Control

Current Unit Stats

Charge, Range Fire, Rally, Mount/Dismount, Change Facing, Last Stand, Next/Prev Unit

Display Group

[Zoom In]

Zoom In changes the view level of the map to the next highest level.

[Zoom Out]

Zoom Out changes the view level of the map to the next lowest level.

[Map Grid Toggle]

Toggles the map hex grid on or off

[SOP Settings]

Displays the Faction's SOP Settings form

[Action Log]

Toggles the Action Log on or off

[Battle Report]

Displays the current Battle Report

Cavalry Battalion Level Control

[Advance]

The battalion advances in the direction of the leader's facing.

[To Leader]

Units will move towards their battalion leader.

[Pursue]

Units in command move to close with the nearest enemy.

[Attack]*

Units in command and able to launch an attack-- either charge or standard, will do so.

[Ranged Fire]*

If capable, units in command will fire at enemy targets.

[Mount/Dismount]

Units in command will mount or dismount horses.

[Rally]

Orders all units of Disrupted or Routed status to attempt to Rally

[Retreat]

Orders all units to attempt to fallback to the nearest high ground

[Cavalry Next Battalion]

Selects the next cavalry battalion leader

**Battalion Attacks and Ranged fire are subject to current SOP Settings*

Indian Village/Leader Level Control

When an Indian Leader is selected, the control panel allows for issuing orders to only those warriors within the leader's command radius. Otherwise it allows for issuing orders at the 'village' level.

[Leader]

Selects the next available Indian leader.

[To Leader]

Units will move towards the selected or closest Sioux Cheyenne leader.

[Pursue]

Units in command move to close with the nearest enemy.

[Attack]*

Units in command and able to launch an attack-- either charge or standard, will do so.

[Ranged Fire]*

If capable, units in command will fire at enemy targets.

[Mount/Dismount]

Units in command will mount or dismount horses (Not available in Village Command Mode)

[Rally]

Orders all units of Disrupted or Routed status to attempt to Rally

[Escape]

Orders all units to attempt to fallback to the valley exit point at the lower left hand corner of the map

[Withdraw]

The Sioux-Cheyenne may withdraw from the battle if there are no cavalry units in the village and all encamped units have been mobilized or destroyed.

**Group Attacks and Ranged fire are subject to current SOP Settings*

Unit Level Controls**[Charge]**

Orders the selected unit to Charge Attack the nearest/best enemy target (Cavalry Only)

[Ranged Fire]

Orders the selected unit to fire at the nearest/best enemy target

[Rally]

Orders the selected unit to perform a Rally Attempt

[Mount/Dismount]

Orders the selected unit to attempt to Mount or Dismount

[Facing]

Orders the selected unit to change facing

[Last Stand]

Orders the selected unit to enter 'Last Stand' mode (Cavalry Only)

[Next Unit]

Selects the next available unit.

[Previous Unit]

Selects the last available unit.

Turn Segment Controls**[Replay Turn]**

Replays the events of the current turn segment

[End Turn]

Pass the current turn segment to the opponent.

Battle Report

The Battle Report displays the following statistics for each faction:

Active	Total currently active
KIA/WIA	Total killed or wounded in action
Brkn/Quit	Total broken/Left battle
Escaped	Total escaped
Captured	Total captured

Fire Power

The aggregate ranged fire power of remaining active units.

Combat Strength

The aggregate combat strength of remaining active units.

Army Morale

The average morale of an army.

Victory Points

The total number of victory points held by a faction.

Cavalry Battalion % Losses

Percentage of US Cavalry losses by battalion

Victory Level Status

Current victory level status

Turn Report

The turn report displays the following statistics of each faction for actions taken place *during the current turn*.

Men

Lost:	Total killed/wounded or left battle
Escaped:	Total number of Indian warriors Escaped
Total Lost:	Total number of men lost (KIA/WIA, Escaped)
%Lost:	Percentage of men lost

Victory Points

The number of victory points gained or lost *during the turn*.

Standing Orders

AI Assisted Attack Threshold

Sets the minimum attacks odds for your units when launching AI assisted attacks (group attack commands or counter attacks).

AI Fire Threshold

When selected, units will only fire at enemy units within the effective range of the rifle or bow,

AI Assisted Command (Cavalry Only)

When selected, at the start of a faction's turn segment, any units beyond the command range of their leader will attempt to move back within command range.

Game Concepts

Sequence of Play

Desperate Glory was designed to be a fast turn based game. Players may perform any available action at any time during their game turn. The cavalry always begin the game with the initiative (turn segment).

The sequence of play for Desperate Glory is as follows:

US Cavalry

- Rally Sequence (Optional)
- Routed/Broken Unit Movement
- Resupply Sequence
- Leader Replacement
- Movement and Combat
- Crazed Units Check

Sioux-Cheyenne

- Activation
- Rally Sequence (Optional)
- Control
- Movement and Combat
- Escapes
- Crazed Unit Check

Winning the Battle: Victory Conditions

The Battle of the Little Bighorn continues until one of the following conditions are met:

- US Cavalry are Destroyed
- Sioux-Cheyenne Warriors are forced to Withdraw
- Sioux Cheyenne Warriors voluntarily Withdraw

Should none of the above conditions occur, the battle ends at about 8:00 when darkness sets in.

Point Schedule:

- Each faction receives 1 point for each % of enemy losses (Killed, Wounded, Broken)
- Sioux-Cheyenne receive 1 point for each % of Warriors who escape the battle.
- US Cavalry receive 1 point for each % of Warriors captured after a *forced* Sioux-Cheyenne withdrawal

Additional Points:

Sitting Bull	10
Crazy Horse	5
Gall	5
Lt. Col. Custer	10
PackTrain	10
Capt. Benteen	5
Scattered Horse Herds	1

Winning The Battle

Unless the Sioux-Cheyenne are forced to withdraw, the faction with the highest number of points wins the battle. You can always refer to the Battle Report (even after a battle has ended) to see exactly what transpired during a battle.

Victory Levels

Decisive	Winning faction holds 2:1 greater advantage in points awarded
Substantive	Winning faction holds 1.5:1 or greater advantage in points awarded
Marginal	Winning faction has less than a 1.5:1 advantage in points awarded
Debatable	Winning faction has less than a 1.25:1 advantage in points awarded

Forced Victory Level Changes:

Winning Faction has sustained greater than 30% Losses Reduces Victory Level

You can check the current victory status during play by entering the Battle Report Screen.

Leaders Command and Control

Cavalry Battalion and Sioux-Cheyenne Tribal Leaders aid subordinate units under their command in rally attempts, morale checks, recovering morale/medicine points, and combat effectiveness-- IF the leader's rating is positive. Leaders with negative ratings will actually hinder units in the above categories.

Rating and Command Range (Rtg/Rng)

A measure of the leader's ability. Leader ratings may be positive or negative. Range represents the distance in *hexes* at which a unit may be from a leader and still be under influence.

Display

When a Cavalry unit is selected, its Battalion members are indicated with a gold dot overlay and with its leader indicated with a gold star directly on the battle map. When a Sioux-Cheyenne Tribal Leader is selected, warbands under command are indicated with a gold dot overlay.

Leader Replacement

If a US Cavalry leader is destroyed, its battalion will automatically replace him with the next best available unit at the beginning of the next turn segment. The Sioux-Cheyenne warriors do not replace fallen leaders.

Notes:

-Cavalry units that have moved outside the radius of their battalion commander may still operate normally, but no longer receive any benefits (morale and combat modifiers) associated with the leader and begin the turn segment with a reduced number of APs

-Sioux-Cheyenne units operating without the influence of a leader, receive no penalty, but have a higher chance of being Uncontrolled for the duration of a turn segment.

Zones of Control

A unit's zone of control (ZOC) is usually described as the six hexes that surround it. This also holds true for the game system system, with one exception. Units can only project control into their three frontal hex sides. Units NEVER exert an influence into rear hex sides. See Facing

Notes:

- Broken or Routed units never project control over ANY hex sides.
- Encamped Warriors of less than 100% ready status never project control over ANY hex sides.
- Whenever units move into an enemy ZOC
 - they may move no further for the rest of the turn segment.
 - they may be counter attacked by the enemy units controlling the ZOC.

Movement

Each unit is allotted a number of action points (APs) per turn which it expends in order to move on the battlefield. The cost of APs per move depends upon on the terrain, distance covered, and the type and status of the unit moving.

Selecting a Unit

To select a unit for movement and or combat, move the cursor over the unit and left-click the mouse button. The selected or "hot" unit is outlined with a gold hex border and its statistics are displayed on the info and unit detail panels.

Once selected, the unit's legal movement range is displayed. To move the unit, click on the hex that you want to move the unit to. The unit will then move to the new location and the cost of the move will be subtracted from the unit's APs. Note that hexes within the movement radius which are hi-lighted in red, indicate that close combat can take place as a result from moving there.

Factors Influencing Movement Rates

Terrain Effects

- Each hex terrain has a cost per move (CPM) value which a unit must "pay" in order to enter it. A terrain's CPM value is listed in the Terrain Stats line on the Information Panel.
- Units cannot move to terrain with base elevations greater than their current elevation plus one.

Unit Type

- Supply units expend a greater rate per move than Foot or Mounted units.
- Supply units may not enter enemy ZOCs
- Gatling Gun units expend a greater rate per move than Foot or Mounted units.
- Gatling Gun units may not enter enemy ZOCs
- Units moving into Carnage hexes pay an additional MP

Unit Status

- Routed and Broken Units may not enter enemy ZOCs

Unit Formation

- Units in Last Stand mode may no longer move at all.

Fatigue Level

- Fatigued units expend a greater MP per move rate than rested units.

Enemy Zones of Control

- Moving into an enemy ZOC increases the MP movement cost.
- Once a unit has moved into an Enemy ZOC, it can not move any further for the rest of the turn segment and may be open to counter attack
- A unit beginning its turn in an enemy ZOC may not reenter another enemy ZOC for the duration of turn segment.

Rout Movement

Unit's that become routed or disrupted from taking casualties during close combat or ranged fire, are sometimes forced or pushed back from their currently occupied hex. Units unable to "fallback" suffer additional losses.

If a routing unit passes through a friendly unit as it falls back, that unit(s) may become disrupted or routed itself if it fails a morale check.

Close Combat

Close combat refers to an attack that takes place between adjacent units on the battlefield. There are two types of close combat in the game, Charge Attacks and normal close combat. Units may only initiate one combat action (close combat or ranged fire) per turn segment.

Cavalry Charge Attacks

The charge attack is the most powerful form of close combat in the game. A cavalry unit's combat strength is increased if it is able to charge an enemy unit.

To initiate a charge order, a unit must:

- not be more than 25% Fatigued
- must be of Ready status
- must have a clear path to the enemy unit
- must pass a morale check before beginning the charge

Note: Due to terrain conditions at the Little Bighorn, Cavalry units can only perform charge attacks in the Little Bighorn valley, below the river.

Starting a Charge

When charge conditions are met, a charge icon will be activated on the unit level command panel and on the battle map. Click on the command panel icon to automatically charge the nearest target, or left click the enemy unit on the map to charge.

Morale Check

Before units begin the actual charge, they must pass a Morale Check. Units failing the morale check become disrupted and can not complete the charge.

Normal Close Combat

To initiate a close combat attack, move the unit adjacent to the enemy unit to be attacked. The game system indicates which hexes an attack may be launched from with a red overlay. Next move the cursor over the enemy unit. The probable attack odds will be displayed on the info panel. Next, click on the enemy unit to begin the attack.

Note: Moving into an enemy controlled ZOC may not be a casual affair as enemy units capable of launching a counter attack may do so once you've entered their ZOC. See Counter Attacks.

Counter Attacks

Counter attacks are a form of close combat initiated by units when an enemy unit moves into their frontal hex side. With the single exception of charging units, any time a unit enters an enemy controlled frontal ZOC, it runs the risk of being counter attacked. Whether units launch a counter attack or not, is influenced by their combined combat strength versus the combat strength of the unit entering the ZOC and the status of their AI Assisted Attack Threshold.

Units may not launch counter attacks if they:

- are not of Ready status
- have previously attacked or fired during the turn
- have fatigue rating higher than 50%
- occupy terrain with a negative defense rating
- are a Gatling Gun or Supply unit

Crazed and Uncontrolled Attacks

Any unit left adjacent to an enemy unit at the end of a turn segment without initiating an attack has a chance of launching an uncontrolled or crazed attack. Crazed units will immediately launch a close combat attack on the nearest enemy unit. Crazed attacking units receive a momentary morale boost but also becomes disrupted.

Cavalry Last Stand

Kill the horses and make your final stand! If chances for survival start to look grim, cavalry units have the ability to declare a Last Stand. A Last Stand order is issued by clicking on the **Last Stand** icon in the unit control panel. A Last Stand order costs 8 APs.

Effects of Last Stand declaration:

Cavalry unit receives an instant moral boost.

Cavalry unit receives a positive shift in combat actions and all attacks are considered 'frontal'

Cavalry unit is "frozen" and cannot move for the rest of the game.

Units may not declare a Last Stand if:

-Routed, Mounted, or Gatling gun unit

Ranged Fire

Units capable of ranged fire (non close combat rifle and bow fire) may target enemy units within their weapon's range-- if they can see them. Certain types of terrain may block the LOS.

Desperate Glory automatically determines if an LOS exists between units. Units NEVER block LOS .

Issuing a Fire Order

If a selected unit can target any enemy within its fire range, the missile fire icon will be activated. Click on the icon to start the fire order. All enemy units capable of being fired upon will be highlighted with the attack overlay symbol. Next move the cursor over the unit that you want to fire at. The probable losses for the target will be displayed on the info panel. Lastly, click on the enemy unit to begin the missile fire. Watch for the actual results on the info panel.

Notes:

-Gatling Guns require 8 APs to fire.

-All units may only initiate one combat action (close combat or ranged fire) per turn segment.

Reaction Fire

Ranged fire capable units that have not fired or been involved in close combat during their active turn segment, may now fire at approaching enemy units during the enemy turn segment. Units will always perform reaction fire if capable, but will follow the AI assisted fire guidelines set in Standing Orders.

Notes:

-Gatling guns never perform reaction fire.

-All reaction fire shots receive an accuracy reduction.

Combat and Ranged Fire Strength

The measure of a unit's raw close combat ability. The higher the rating, the stronger the unit. Mostly derived from a unit's weapon type, number of men, morale, and class.

Combat Strength Modifiers

There are conditions and situations that occur within the game where combat strength shifts are added (or subtracted) to an attackers or defenders base strength.

Positive Combat Modifiers

- Mounted unit is attacking foot unit
- US Cavalry is charging
- Unit is attacking through an enemy unit's flank or rear hex side
- Unit is uphill of enemy
- Crazed Attacks (See Uncontrolled Attacks)
- Adjacent to friendly units during attack

Negative Combat Modifiers

- Unit is infantry attacking cavalry
- Unit is defending attack through its flank or rear hex side
- Unit is downhill of enemy

Ranged Fire Strength Modifiers

The measure of a unit's raw fire power. The higher the rating, the deadlier the unit. Mostly derived from a unit's weapon type, number of men, morale, class, and whether mounted or dismounted.

Positive Fire Modifiers

- Unit is firing within the effective range of its weapon

Negative Fire Modifiers

- Unit is firing beyond the effective range of the weapon
- Unit is firing "over the heads" of other units (Bows)
- Unit is mounted
- Unit is performing Reaction Fire
- Unit has moved prior to firing
- Unit is firing into a lower density target

Defensive Strength Modifiers

Positive Defence Modifiers

- Unit is not mounted
- Unit is in defensive positive active terrain
- Adjacent to friendly units during attack

Negative Defense Modifiers

- Indian unit is encamped
- Unit is in defensive negative active terrain
- Unit is not In Command

General Modifiers

- Unit Status, Class, Morale, Fatigue, Command Status

Ammunition Level

The aggregate measure of close combat and ranged fire ammunition a unit has left. Indicated by:

X	Unit has no ammunition and may not fire
1	Unit may fire one shot before running out of ammunition
Lo	Unit is low on ammunition and has a 25% chance of having one shot left with each shot fired
Hi	Unit is high on ammunition but has a 10% chance of reaching low status with each shot fired

Depletion

-Once a unit has depleted its ammunition, it is no longer capable of performing ranged fire or performing close combat with a 'firing' weapon. Unless the unit is resupplied, all subsequent close combat actions are performed with the next best available weapon. For US Cavalry units this is most likely the saber or knife. For Indian war bands this is most likely a war club or axe.

-US Cavalry units NEVER run out of ammunition during the first 12 turns of the game.

Mount/Dismount

Use the Mount/Dismount command to mount or dismount a unit's horses. A unit must first pass a Morale Check in order to successfully mount or dismount. In general, Mounted units move at a faster rate but fire with less accuracy, while Dismounted units fire with greater accuracy and move at a slower rate.

Notes:

- Units may perform only one mount or dismount per turn
- Units in an enemy ZOC may not mount or dismount

Indian Escapes

At the end of a turn segment, a check for escaping Indian Warbands is performed. Indian units that occupy the trail hexes along the south west corner of the map at the end of a turn segment are considered to have "escaped" and are removed from the battlefield map.

Indian Withdrawal

The Sioux-Cheyenne may voluntarily withdraw and end the battle if:

- A) All encampments have been activated and
- B) There are no 'In Command' US Cavalry units operating within the village

Note: The Sioux-Cheyenne are forced to withdraw if their collective morale (Medicine) falls below the Medicine Break Point.

Morale/Medicine

Cavalry Morale and Indian Medicine are key concepts in the game. A unit's morale represents its combat efficiency and willingness to fight. Virtually every action that a unit may take is influenced to some degree by its morale level. Morale for all units is rated between 0 (lowest) and 100 (highest).

Morale Decreases

All units experience decreases in morale as a direct result of taking combat losses.

Morale Increases

Morale is increased at the beginning of each turn segment for all units that did not move and or were not involved in any combat during the previous turn.

Notes

- Units within command range of a Leader recoup morale points at a greater rate.
- A unit's morale can never exceed its Class morale max.

Low Morale

When a unit's morale level falls below 30, it is considered Broken and will be severely hampered in any operations.

Morale Checks

A unit's morale or willingness to fight is tested at various stages during a game. Unit's passing the morale check are able to carry on as normal. Units failing a morale check are penalized to a degree depending upon the cause of the morale check.

Situations that cause a Morale Check:

- Attempting to Rally
- Attempting a Charge Attack
- Disrupted units attempting to fire missiles or initiate combat

Rally

As a result of combat casualties, units may become disrupted or routed. When this occurs, a unit's ability to function becomes hampered. Disrupted or routed units may attempt to remedy this situation by trying to rally.

A rally attempt "costs" only 1 AP but a unit may attempt only 1 rally per turn. Click on the Rally icon to issue a rally command. If the Auto Rally option is enabled, all disrupted or routed units will attempt to rally at the start of the turn segment.

Successful rallies are largely dependent upon a unit's morale and whether or not they are within the command range of a "good" leader.

Facing

There are two facing modes in the game. Those are left and right or east and west. A unit may only sight through its frontal hex sides. Anything behind the direction that a unit is facing cannot be seen. Units are greatly hampered in their ability to defend if successfully attacked through their rear hex sides. Most units may change their facing at anytime during their turn segment without cost.

Notes:

Supply units pay a 2 AP cost per facing change

Gatling Gun units pay a 1 AP cost per facing change

Line of Sight

A Line of Sight (LOS) determines if units can see, and consequently, fire upon each other. The game system automatically calculates whether a line of sight exists between units.

LOS Effects and Restrictions

-LOS is either blocked or unblocked. Blocked LOS do not allow rifle/bow fire or spotting to occur between the two units in question.

-Units have no effect on whether an LOS exists between units, however only bows, are capable of firing over the heads of intermediate units to reach a target.

-LOS is never blocked into hexes adjacent to a unit.

-Units can always fire into or out of, but never through a hex with a height greater than its elevation. For example, a forest hex with a base elevation of 1 might have a total height of 2 due to the height of the trees in the hex. A unit would be able to fire into or out of this forest hex but never through it.

Unit Types

There are four basic unit types in Desperate Glory.

Foot

-Units fighting or moving on foot

Horse

Units fighting or moving on Horse

Supply

Supply bearing units (US Cavalry Pack-Train) these units are able to resupply other units

Gatling Gun

Automatic ranged fire capable units

Unit Class

A unit's class represents its level of training and morale. The levels of unit class in Desperate Glory are as follows:

Poor

Morale Max:50

Untrained soldiers or warriors added to fill out a fighting force.

Average

Morale Max:70

Average trained soldiers or semi-experienced warriors

Crack

Morale Max:80

Highly experienced and trained soldiers or highly experienced warriors

Elite

Morale Max:100

The best of the best. Highly experienced, trained, and proven.

Unit Status

A unit's status represents its current operating level. The four status levels in Desperate Glory are as follows:

Ready

Unit is fully functional.

Disrupted

Unit has lost some measure of order and coordination.

- Cannot Mount or Dismount Horses
- Attacks, defends and fires missiles at a reduced level of efficiency
- Must pass a Morale check before initiating combat or firing missiles

Routed

The unit has lost all sense of order and coordination.

- Cannot mount or dismount horses
- Cannot enter enemy ZOCS
- Cannot initiate attacks
- Cannot perform ranged fire

Broken

A severely hampered unit nearing destruction.

- Cannot Mount or Dismount
- Cannot enter enemy ZOCS
- Cannot initiate attacks
- Cannot perform ranged fire

Note: Routed and Broken units can no longer be controlled

Unit Statistics

Men

The number of active men in the Unit.

Morale/Medicine

A measure of the unit's training and willingness to fight. (0-120)

APs

A unit's current Action Point total. See Movement

Class

Classification of a unit's training and morale.

Status

A unit's current status

Fatigue

The measure of a unit's fatigue level.

Leader

-If the unit is a Battalion or Tribal leader, its rating and command range are indicated

-If the unit is a "regular", its leader's name and rating are indicated

-Regular units not in command are designated with an "X"

Combat

The current combat strength of the unit.

Fire

The current ranged fire strength of the unit

Ammo

Indicates a unit's ammunition level.

Value

The number of victory points that the unit is worth. See Victory Conditions.

Terrain

Terrain statistics are displayed along the bottom of the of the screen on the terrain stats panel.

The terrain stats displayed represent that of the currently selected unit, or that of the hex pointed to by the cursor.

The following terrain statistics are modeled in the game:

Hex

The number of the hex.

Type

The type of terrain represented in the hex as in valley, river, woods, etc.

Elv (Elevation/Height)

The elevation of the base terrain and the height (if applicable) of any secondary terrain in the hex. For example, a hex containing a base elevation of 2 with a secondary terrain of type Woods with a height of 3, would be represented as Elv:01/04. Height is always measured as the height of the secondary terrain *plus* the base elevation of the hex.

CPM (Cost Per Move)

The base movement cost of the hex. Note that if the hex is part of a selected unit's move overlay, CPM then represents the total APs required to move into the hex from that unit's current position.

Def (Defensive Modifier)

Active hexes may have positive or negative defensive modifiers. Units battling from an "active" terrain hex receive a defensive shift depending on the type of terrain occupied. For example, a unit occupying a forest hex with a defensive modifier of two will receive a 20% increase in its defensive capabilities if attacked.

ZOC (Zone of Control)

Owner of the Zone of Control

Dist (Distance)

The distance in hexes from the currently selected unit.

Carnage

Whenever a unit is destroyed or a location has 'seen' significant losses due to close combat or ranged fire, a carnage marker is overlaid on the battle map cell.

- Units entering carnage hexes pay an extra AP
- Carnage hexes cannot be part of a charge attack path

Indian Encampments And Horse Herds

Encampments

The Indians begin the game encamped and cannot begin to react until the cavalry have been sighted. Once the cavalry are sighted, word of the "blues coats" arrival moves thru the village and the War bands prepare for battle.

Once aware of the cavalry, Indian camps will begin to "ready" for battle at a rate of 25% per turn. A war band may not exit a camp site until 100% ready. War bands at less than 100% readiness may fire and defend themselves from within the camp at a reduced level of efficiency.

-An encampment's level of readiness is indicated by the number of rings circling the teepee. Once all of the rings are removed, the war band 'activates' and leaves the encampment, which is then removed from the field of battle.

-Encamped Warbands that are disrupted or routed also receive a decrease in their readiness level

Horse Herds

-When a war band activates, it will exit the camp mounted if it is within 4 hexes of a horse herd.

-Once a horse herd is depleted, its indicator is removed from the battlefield and it may no longer be scattered by US Cavalrymen.

-US Cavalry may attempt to scatter a horse herd by launching a close combat attack against it. Units attempting to scatter a herd must be of ready status and *must begin the their turn segment adjacent to the herd they are attempting to scatter.*

Fatigue

During battle units become fatigued. With each level of fatigue that a unit carries, its abilities to perform on the battlefield become degraded. If afforded no rest a unit will become 100% fatigued (exhausted) and will barely be able to function. Units may recover from fatigue by not moving, not being involved in close combat, or not taking fire casualties.

-Fatigue is measured in increments of: 0,25,50,75, and 100%

Cavalry Resupply

As units fire or engage in close combat, they deplete ammunition. US Cavalry units may be resupplied at the start of their turn segment by being within a 3 hex radius of a supply wagon.

Weapon Statistics

Desperate Glory models the following weapons.

Close Combat Weapons

<u>Weapon</u>	<u>Rating</u>
Knife	10
War Club	15
War Axe	17
Cavalry Saber	18
Colt Revolver	25
Henry Rifle	33

Ranged Fire Weapons

<u>Weapon</u>	<u>Max Range</u>	<u>Rating</u>	<u>OHF</u>
Carbine	4	25	No
Repeating Rifle	2	33	No
Bow	2	15	Yes
Gatling Gun	3	50	No

OverHead Fire (OHF)

Bows have the capacity to fire over other units

Effective Range

-Measured in Hexes

-The effective range of a weapon is defined as its Max Range divided by two.

Play By E-Mail

The Play By EMail option allows you to play a head to head game against an opponent anywhere in the world via electronic mail. All you have to do is send a turn segment file to your opponent after completing your game turn.

Setting Up A PBEM Game

When starting a human Vs human game, click on the PBEM box to turn on the Play By E-Mail option. The first player (player commanding the US Cavalry), is responsible for setting the game variations and starting the first turn.

Saving a PBEM Game

Once the game variations are set, the player commanding the US Cavalry starts the game and begins play. Desperate Glory will begin saving a PBEM file at the end of every turn segment. You'll receive a message indicating that the PBEM file will be saved and you can enter the name of the file. At this point, you should exit the game and send the file to the second player.

Loading a PBEM File

Upon receiving a PBEM file from your opponent, copy it into your Desperate Glory \Games directory. Then start the game. From the menu bar, select File, then Load PBEM Game. After loading the file, you'll receive a turn segment report alerting you to the losses and gains that took place during your opponent's turn. Select OK when finished with the report and continue the game with your turn segment. When done with your turn, send the new PBEM file to your opponent.

Registering Desperate Glory

After you purchase the game, you'll receive a Name and 'Unlock Code' via e-mail. Select 'Register Desperate Glory' from the Help File group on the Menu bar, and enter your Name and Unlock code. The game will be unlocked and you'll have full access to all the features and game turns. Be sure to keep your Name and Unlock Code in a safe location in the event you need to reinstall the game.

For information about purchasing Desperate Glory, visit the digital Gameworks web site at:
www.digitalgameworks.com

Designer's Notes

When it comes to Custer and the Battle of the Little Bighorn, it seems there's never the last book on the topic or participants, just the the next one. And so it is with Desperate Glory, the latest major upgrade to the original Custer's Last Command simulation.

The battle remains one of the most debated in American history. To this day, there still exists a great amount of differing speculation about what actually happened there, and why it did.

Desperate Glory, like all historical simulation games, must walk a line somewhere between historical reality and playability. A strictly historical treatment of the Little Bighorn Battle would be very limited in many ways. When you run the game for the first time with the historical setup on, you'll quickly realize the gravity of Custer's situation.

To this end, Desperate Glory contains a large amount of user definable options, not only to increase the replay value of the game, but to also give one a chance to check out your own theories. Don't feel that you have to work your way through the historical setup before moving on to other variations and settings. DG is purposefully designed to allow you to experiment with all the variations and see what results.

I've tried to stay historically true to most of the major aspects of the battle, but of course, have erred on the side of game play.

Best, Jeff
digital Gameworks LLC

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Desperate Glory Credits

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Game and Scenario Design, Programming, Art, and Sound

Greg Lapkoff

Historical Essays

Dennis Bishop

Additional Development and Testing

Sources

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Historical Essays



The Custer Fight Charles Marion Russell 1902

The Battle of The Little Bighorn

The period leading up to the centennial year of 1876 was a tumultuous time in the United States. The industrial revolution was in full bloom, steam power drove the railroad, the game of Baseball was gaining in popularity, and millions of immigrants poured into the East coast. The country was exploding.

The problem however, was that there was only one direction into which the country could explode, West. A railroad was being built, one that would ultimately link the East and West coasts of the United States.

One of the biggest proponents of this rail system was George Armstrong Custer. Some of the biggest opponents were the Indian tribes of the western plains.

Years of westward movement and expansion had pushed the continent's Indian population ever further. Treaty upon broken treaty littered the history of relations between the two societies. The white man was bound and determined to dominate this continent from sea to shining sea, and after all, the Indians really didn't have any rights, they were "just savages" weren't they?

Adding insult to years of injury, the government of the United States was about to break yet another treaty with the Native American. After having promised the Indian Nations large amounts of land rights in the Black Hills of the Dakota Territories an unfortunate thing happened, gold was discovered. Once again, the white pushed. This time the Indians shoved back. The stage was set for the final phases of the white and red conflict on the North American continent. Taking their places center stage in the unfolding drama, were three charismatic men, George Armstrong Custer, Chief Sitting Bull, and Crazy Horse.

In the winter of 1875 the US. government issued a proclamation that all Indian peoples were to return to their designated reservation by January 31, 1876 or they would be declared "hostile" and the matter would be resolved by the department of the Army. It was a hollow proclamation. Most Indians had never even seen it, and even if they had, they were bound and determined to be free. They were not afraid of the consequences, if it meant war, then so be it. A quote from Sitting Bull gives testimony as to the Indian mindset regarding the conflict, "I will not be hiding, you will know where to find me."

The place that he would be found was in the valley of a sluggish meandering river, the Little Bighorn. In the Spring of 1876 a major military campaign was under way. The United States Army, lead by Generals Crook, Terry, and Colonel Gibbon, would once and for all crush the Indian resistance.

Terry and his forces moved from the east, Crook from the south, and Gibbon from the northwest. Gibbon would move with about 500 men, Terry would lead about 900, and Crook would head 1300. The location, number, and disposition of the warriors were all unknown. Expectations were that there would be, at most 800 warriors, and that the only real problem was to find them and make them fight. Any one of the three columns it was thought, could easily destroy the Indian encampment.

Included in Terry's command of 900 men were the six hundred horsemen of the 7th Cavalry and their famous leader George Armstrong Custer. Controversy had swirled around Custer's post Civil War career. There was a court-martial and serious questions raised about the outcome at the battle of Washita, where a sleeping Indian village was wiped out early one Winter morning. There were many noncombatants killed along with warriors.

Just before the current expedition, Custer was embroiled in a serious encounter with the Grant administration. He had testified against what he considered to be fraudulent frontier schemes, even implicating members of Grant's family. Grant was outraged and did not want Custer to be a part of the upcoming campaign. Intervention by old pal Phil Sheridan convinced Grant to let him take a part. Now in this centennial year "Old Curly" would ride hard to regain his good name.

General Crook was the first to find out about the disposition, number, and placement of the Indians. He did not have to search out the 'red men', they found him. On the morning of June 17th, the Sioux and Cheyenne launched a surprise attack on Crook's column which had just broken camp on the banks of the Rosebud river. The engagement evolved into a free wheeling six hour battle of multiple cavalry charges and counter charges. It is estimated that 1500 warriors may have engaged Crook's 1300. He barely held the field, but he survived it. What he didn't do however, became paramount. He did not continue his march, and he did not get word to the other columns about the size and strength of the enemy.

Meanwhile General Terry and General Gibbon rendezvoused on the steamboat Far West which was ferrying supplies down the Yellowstone. Major Reno of the Seventh Cavalry, was sent on a scouting mission. Although he managed to totally disobey orders, he did find signs of a large amount of Indians on the move. On June 21st another conference was held on the Far West. The fateful orders were issued.

Terry would send Custer on a mission to proceed up the Rosebud in the pursuit of the Indians. He was to pick up the trail where Reno had left it. Meanwhile, Terry himself would join Gibbon's column and march down the Bighorn toward the intersection of the Little Bighorn. They would both "hook" towards each other and meet near the Little Bighorn. Ideally, but not expectedly, the forces of Custer, Terry, and Gibbon would converge on the Indian positions and crush them in a "hammer and anvil" type operation.

Although many detractors would say that Custer disobeyed orders in his attack on the village, contemporary scholars disagree. It becomes apparent that Terry fully expected either Custer or Gibbon to strike the fatal blow against the Indian encampment but his letter to Sheridan on June 20th clearly shows that he was not expecting a concerted attack by both Gibbon and Custer. This could only have happened by luck. Terry's June 20th letter explains:

"Gibbon's column will move this morning on the north side of the Yellowstone for the mouth of the Big Horn... and thence it will proceed to the mouth of the Little Bighorn and so on. Custer will go

up the Rosebud tomorrow with his whole regiment... and thence down the Little Horn. I only hope that one of the two columns will find the Indians..."

Custer was offered the use of a Gatling gun and had the offer of additional troops from the 2nd Cavalry. He refused both. This was to be a Seventh Cavalry operation. They, he said, could handle anything that was thrown up against them. Custer's orders also left him with much leeway in which to operate, reading in part, as follows:

"The Brigadier General Commanding directs that as soon as your regiment can be made ready for the march, you will proceed up the Rosebud in pursuit of the Indians whose trail was discovered by Major Reno a few days since. It is impossible to give you any definite instructions in regard to this movement, and were it not impossible to do so, the Department Commander places too much confidence in your zeal, energy, and ability to impose upon you precise orders which might hamper your action when nearly in contact with the enemy..."

Although it was a "crack" outfit by contemporary standards, the Seventh was not one big happy family. Unfortunately for Custer, his two senior officers despised him. Captain Frederick W. Benteen, who had known Custer for nearly ten years, had disliked him from the moment they had met. Perhaps it was Custer's flamboyant career and national reputation. Perhaps it was just one of those instances of dislike for no real reason, but this intense dislike of Custer would weigh heavily on the troops and would possibly be a major factor in the debacle to follow. Benteen himself was a very capable and fearless soldier who had proven himself in battle.

This was not the case for the other lead player in the drama, Major Marcus A. Reno. Having just been chastised by Custer over his recent scouting mission, Reno carried a fresh and serious dislike for Custer. In the upcoming battle he would display a total loss of control of his troops, overt fear, cowardice, and possibly dereliction of duty. He refused Captain Thomas Weir's pleas that he and Benteen move to aide Custer, who was obviously engaged with the Indians at the time.

Custer's nepotism did nothing to alleviate the bruised feelings of his two officers and was also a factor in factionalizing the Seventh. His brothers Tom and Boston Custer, nephew Autie Reed, and brother-in law Thomas Calhoun, were the main players in the Custer camp. Each would die with him on that hilltop in Montana.

Custer and the Seventh left the temporary encampment at the Far West on June 22nd, sans Gatling guns and reinforcements. There were approximately 600 men in 12 companies, 35 scouts and various other packers and guides. They were a jaunty group. Each man carried 24 rounds of ammo for his Colt Six Shooter and 100 rounds for his Springfield Carbine.

They started at a leisurely pace, but it wasn't long before the Reno trail was picked up. Out front were two sets of Indian scouts, first the Arikawa, including one who had grown quite close to Custer, his "brother" Bloody Knife. Even further out were the Crow scouts, led by the loyal mixed blood Mitch Boyer.

On June 23rd, signs of abandoned lodges were clear. First one, then two, now three distinct past camp grounds were evident. One of the three, although Custer could not know it, was the site of the Sundance ritual. It was during this Sundance that Sitting Bull had a great vision of slain cavalry troopers falling upside down into the Indian encampment. Soon, this vision would become a grisly reality.

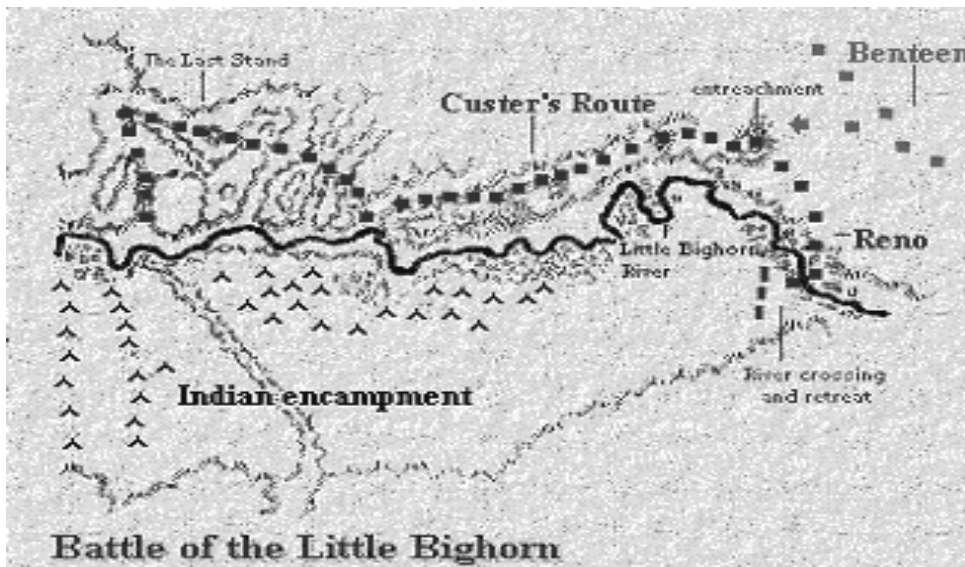
The march was a solemn one, with Custer seemingly in a despondent mood. At one officers call he extended an olive branch to Reno and Benteen, asking for their loyalty, support, and any suggestions they might have. He even told Benteen that he could not remember any instance when Benteen had not been loyal to him. At another officers call, Custer's HQ flag blew down. Several troopers took this as an omen that they would be defeated.

Now, on the 24th, the scouts were confirming that the large trail they were following was not breaking up. It was almost certain that an extremely large village would be found on the lower Little Bighorn, much closer to Custer than had been anticipated. That same evening Custer sent Charles Varnum and "Lonesome" Charley Reynolds to accompany the Indian scouts to a high vantage point, a place now called the "Crows Nest." Although Custer was never able to see it, the Indian scouts insisted that the village was visible in the distance.

Concurrent to sending Reynolds and Varnum to the Crows Nest, Custer ordered a night march designed to place the entire regiment at the Crows Nest the next morning, June 25th, 1876. The night march proved tiring to both men and horses. That was okay. Custer's intentions were to fix the position of the village, rest that night, and launch a multi-directioned "Washita" style attack the next day, the morning of the 26th. With a little bit of luck, Terry would be in place and a crushing "hammer and anvil" could be achieved.

It wasn't to be. High on the divide, perched in the Crows Nest, Custer could not see the village. The scouts insisted that it was there. Bloody Knife tells Custer "...we'll find enough Sioux to keep us fighting two or three days." A distracted and distant Custer replies "I guess we'll get through them all in one day." Now bad news came in. A small band of Indians was discovered on Custer's trail eating hardtack that had fallen from the mule train. The Seventh was discovered! There could be no surprise attack now.

Custer had to make a quick decision. Risk letting the entire village escape and suffer the ridicule and consequences of what could only be perceived as a major failure. Or, attack now! There could be no doubt as to his decision. The hero of Yellow Tavern, Aldie, Waynesboro, Appomattox, and a dozen more battles could do only one thing. The "Golden Cavalier" would attack.



At about 12 noon he made another momentous decision. He split his command into four columns, three combat and one supply. Major Reno would command A, G, and M troops, about 130 men. He would proceed on the south side of what is now called Reno Creek. Captain Benteen would command Companies H, D, and K, and proceed along a left oblique, further south and west of Reno. His mission would be to search for signs of scattering villagers and to seek out any additional Indian encampments. Custer himself would lead the largest group, commanding C, E, F, I, and L companies, about 220 men all told. He would ride parallel to, and in sight of Reno, just across the creek. The pack train and young Boston Custer, would bring up the rear.

This phase of movement amounted to a reconnaissance in force. They had a good idea as to the place of the village. They did not know, however, the size of the enemy force, the battle terrain, or if there were any outlying villages that could attack them from behind.

Moving ahead at about 2 PM, on the north side of Reno Creek, they came along a lone tipi. Yet another abandoned lodge. The tipi contained the remains of a warrior killed in the Rosebud fight. They halted while the scouts began to strip for battle. Then it happened. Indian interpreter Fred Gerard noticed a cloud of dust rising on the plain. It was caused by 40 or 50 braves, looking for all the world to be in full flight from the cavalry troopers. "Here are your Indians, he cried, running like devils!"

Custer could only believe that the Indian camp was either breaking up, or would shortly be. They were going to escape! He had to attack now, right now! The men of the Seventh Cavalry readied themselves to march into history.

He issued orders to Reno. He was to move forward at a trot and charge the Indians as soon as he found them. He would have Custer's "full" support. How the support would come and from what point was unclear. It would add to Reno's uncertainty, putting one more ounce of pressure on a man who didn't need much stress to break completely.

Custer himself would move up through the bluffs on the east side of the River, once again paralleling Reno's position. It appeared for all intents and purposes that Custer planned to employ a flanking attack while Reno "lured" the warriors out of position.

Now, at approximately 3PM, Reno approached his appointment with destiny. Trotting down the valley of the Little Bighorn, Reno began to order his men into a charge line. Immediately to his right was the twisting Little Bighorn, shaded by stands of timber, and bordered by the ravines and bluffs on the eastern shore. Somewhere in those bluffs Custer was maneuvering for his own attack.

Reno sounded the charge, the men of the Seventh Cavalry spurred their horses and cheered wildly, firing their revolvers as they sped toward the Indian encampment. It soon became apparent the village wasn't running. Warriors began to advance to meet the coming threat. Now dust clouds obscured the huge village. Reno was beginning to understand the immensity before him. It sent shock waves into his brain. Was the dust being caused by innumerable mounted warriors? Would his small command be swallowed whole by this force? Where was Custer? Was this a trap? Too many questions for this indecisive man. He ordered a halt to the charge and formed a skirmish line. Now he would lose all surprise, cut his effective force by a quarter, as every four horses were assigned one man as a holder, and give the Indians time to organize an assault to boot.

At just about this time, Custer's men could be seen riding along the bluffs. Some of the skirmishing cavalry saw a man waving his hat. It must be Custer!

All along Reno's tiny front, which was anchored on one side by a stand of timber but was flapping in the breeze on the other, Indians began to attack in force. It wasn't long before the warriors began to turn the unprotected left flank. Reno, seeing this, ordered a pivot on his right flank into the protection of the timber. It was here, in the timber, that all semblance of resistance and order began to disintegrate. Although the position seemed the best defensive placement, Reno panicked as Indians infiltrated here and there. He decided to order a retreat to the bluffs on the far side of the river.

Suddenly, the fateful scout Bloody Knife was shot through the head. He was right next to Reno. Blood and brain matter splashed into Reno's face. It was too much for him. He ordered a dismount, then a mount. Then with out any rear guard action he "led" what he called a "charge" across the river. The Indians would later liken this charge to a buffalo hunt.

Reno's chaotic retreat left men stranded in the woods and exposed the cavalry to attacks along both flanks as the men splashed pell-mell into the river. It was a scene of much carnage to the battered regiment. It was also the scene of much individual courage and various one man last stands. The men of the Seventh Cavalry were not cowards. Several urged Reno to stop the retreat and make a stand. It was folly to flee from mounted plains warriors. Several did make their stand, alone.

"Lonesome" Charley Reynolds, shot off his horse after being left in the timber, would be found with numerous expended cartridges near his body. Isaiah Dorman, the only black man on the mission, would be seen coolly shooting his rifle from a kneeling position as the Indians closed in on him. He would shout out a good bye to a friend as the cavalry retreated. Lt. Hare was heard urging the soldiers to "Die like men" punctuating his urgings with the cry, "I'm a fighting son of a bitch from Texas!"

Finally, after losing about a third of his men, Reno made the bluff, it was 4 PM. The Indians could easily have destroyed this tiny command now, but they did not press their attack. Something downstream was attracting their attention. The men in Reno's position, and those still hiding in the timber, could hear heavy firing from a point to the north. The direction that Custer was heading in.

At the time of Reno's charge, Custer and his men were moving north along the bluffs. They could see the initial advance of the Seventh and a round of cheers broke out among Custer's men. Custer flamboyantly waved his hat and continued his movement in search of a suitable place to make a river ford, presumably to support Reno with a flanking attack into the village. At this point he sent Sgt. Kanipe to tell McDougall to bring up the pack train.

Now he led his men quickly along the bluffs. From another high point, he could see that Reno had not charged into the village, he could also now discern the immensity of the village. He must have realized that the forces soon to be brought against him would dwarf his command. He sent a second message, to Benteen, reduced to writing by W.W. Cooke:

Benteen.
Come on. Big Village. Be quick.
Bring Packs.
W.W. Cooke.
PS Bring Packs

The messenger was Trooper Martin, a recent immigrant whose real name was Giovanni Martini. His broken English would add to the fog of war that was beginning to engulf the Seventh Cavalry. He told Benteen that the Indians were "skedaddling" from Custer. On his way to Benteen, he was passed by young Boston Custer on his way to rendezvous with his brother and death. Boston was supposed to be with the pack train, but his loyalty to George would get him killed that hot day in June.

We now begin to enter the area of conjecture. Perhaps the most plausible recent reconstruction of Custer's battle plan and movements from Weir Point on, were made by the historian John S. Gray. Using the testimony of one of Custer's Indian scouts, Curly, which he supported by extensive time motion analysis and by artifacts found along the projected Custer route, Mr. Gray was able to provide a compelling and even heroic tabulation of the final hour of Custer's life.

Aware that Reno's charge had failed, that the size of the enemy force was much larger than anticipated, and that Reno would be destroyed unless something was done quickly, Custer decided to initiate a "feint" on the village. Moving into a depression along the bluffs called Cedar Coulee, Custer searched for a way to approach the river. He found it at Medicine Tail Coulee. Now he sent two Companies under Captain Yates down the coulee to feint an attack on the village. Custer and the three remaining companies moved to a position of high ground, now called Luce Ridge to observe the action, and perhaps, keep an eye out for Benteen.

Yates did a good job of it. Exchanging light gunfire with Indians across the river, and causing general alarm in the village. Yates was "driven" off with light casualties, one trooper's horse bolted and carried him headlong into the village. He was never seen again. Yates then moved along the bank as warriors began to swarm across the river in pursuit. They also moved up Medicine Tail to attack the troopers there. Custer pinned them down with heavy volley fire. Reno's men could hear this clearly as they hid in the timber or huddled on the bluff. Hundreds of previously unexplained cavalry rifle rounds have been found along Luce Ridge supporting this scenario, while the relative lack of rounds or casualties along the river proper, attest to the supposition that no great cavalry charge took place there. Custer now moved briskly to reunite his two battalions, firing to his left as he did so in order to keep the Indians at bay. Yates moved north and up the bluff to rejoin Custer, very near the location of the present Calhoun Hill. Custer and the Seventh had minutes to live. Where was Benteen?

Following Custer's order, Captain Benteen reconnoitered on a left oblique. He moved roughly parallel and to the west of Reno. He then once again merged with Reno's path but behind him by several miles. His travel was leisurely for a regiment wholly knowledgeable that battle was imminent for at least a part of the overall command. He stopped to water his horses for about twenty minutes. This despite the fact that several men thought they heard gunfire downstream. He met the first of Custer's messengers and moved forward at a trot. Now he came across Trooper Martini who gave the totally erroneous impression about the Indians "skedaddling." As he quickened his pace he came across the bluff position of Major Reno. He moved no further, despite the fact that most of the besieging Indians were moving downstream towards the "sound of the gunfire."

Custer, having just reunited with Yates began to come under heavy attack as more and more Indians arrived from both the camp and the Reno battlefield. Most of them were unmounted, scurrying up through the various ravines, which gave them excellent cover. Many were well armed, better actually, than the men of the Seventh.

Recent archaeological digs at the sight of the Little Bighorn and testimony of the period, have led some researchers to postulate as many as 800 rifles in the hands of the attacking warriors. Half of these may well have been repeating Henrys or Winchesters. This would mean that Custer and his men would be facing an enemy possessed of superior fire power in addition to superior numbers. The soldiers themselves were armed with single shot Springfield Carbines and Colt revolvers.

The Carbines were excellent long range weapons, but were prone to misfires and jamming after repeated intense use. They were far inferior when the fighting got close, as it did that day in June. The terrain also was extremely poor for cavalry tactics, consisting of ravines, hills and knolls. It was infantry turf, and the Indians would instinctively fight an infantry battle today.

What could Custer do now? Perhaps he should have tried to cut his way back towards Reno. It may or may not have worked. The accepted tactic of the day was to never flee from plains warriors. Maybe he followed this dictate, or maybe the attack from his south had already grown too strong for him and his tired men and horses to effect a running escape.

He searched for a place to make a stand. He might possibly hold out until help arrived, although the situation must have looked grim even to the "Boy General." If we look at the distribution of markers on the Custer battlefield we can see that they form a rough "V" angle. Thirty three markers anchor the southwest at Calhoun Hill, eighty markers on the east, run northerly and southerly at Custer Ridge, fifty three markers arcing southwest, called the "south skirmish line", all anchored at the northwest by Last Stand Hill, where Custer and fifty three others died. Finally, there are widely scattered markers to the western most position, where fourteen men died, possibly fleeing the final onslaught.

Contrary to Benteen's statements, which were to the effect that the whole area looked chaotic, like a pattern made by "scattered corn", the outline suggests some strategy.

Perhaps the battle went like this. Seeing no hope of retreating to Reno now, Custer decided to try to hold out until help arrived. Under heavy attack from the rear, he couldn't even make a search for high ground without being overrun from behind. In order to counter the building assault, he laid out a rear guard. This holding position was put in the capable hands of Lt. James Calhoun and company L. Calhoun, Custer's brother in law, once told the General that he wouldn't fail him if things ever got bad. Calhoun did not fail him now. Archaeological evidence shows that some of the fiercest fighting took place at Calhoun Hill, where a determined group of soldiers made a strong and organized stand.

With Chief Gall and his warriors pressing the attack from the west and south, Calhoun held on. Gall was a particularly enraged warrior that day, Reno's charge had killed two of his wives and three children. "It made my heart bad," he was to say later.

Custer and his men moved in a counterclockwise direction on the battlefield, returning fire on horseback and possibly fighting several reverse sorties to aide Calhoun. Custer's main force may have arrived enmasse on Last Stand Hill. Seeing Calhoun in desperate need of support, he directed Captain Myles Keogh and Company I to support them. It would not work. Indian numbers were overwhelming, perhaps 1600 by now.

Large concentrations of Henry and Winchester repeating rifle casings have been found just to the southeast of Calhoun Hill and another to the southwest. The Indians were able to lay down a torrent of fire from these two positions against both Calhoun and Keogh. Finally, Gall overwhelms Calhoun. Keogh and his men make a desperate fight of it. Some bullets fired from Keogh's position have been determined to have come from the same weapons fired at Calhoun Hill, suggesting a retreating group of survivors from that position. Now Myles Keogh of the "Wild" I Co. goes down.

The Indian fire power and their expeditious use of cover gives them an immense advantage. There is no circling band of Indians on horseback. This would have played into the soldiers hands. No, the warriors use a mode of fighting more akin to infantry and guerrilla tactics. Pour fire on the enemy, then duck for cover, work your way in, shoot and duck, shoot and duck. In this way the law of averages worked beautifully in their favor. There was never a moment when a deluge of bullets and arrows wasn't streaming towards the cavalry positions.

Either simultaneously to Keogh's positioning or shortly thereafter, Custer was faced with the arrival of Crazy Horse, who had swept up to the northeast and around Custer's flank. Ironically, it is now Custer who is caught between the "hammer" of Crazy Horse and the "anvil" of Chief Gall. Custer positions companies C and E to thwart this threat. They form a skirmish line arcing in a southwestern direction from Last Stand Hill. It is too little. Crazy Horse is reinforced by Lame White Man's Cheyennes moving up Deep Ravine. The "south skirmish line" is also overwhelmed.

What now went through "Old Curly's" mind. The "Son of The Morningstar", the "Boy General", the man who thought "Custer's Luck" would never run out. There have been many things written about George Armstrong Custer. Much good and also much bad. No one, however, has ever called this man a coward. One can only assume, that he met his death like a soldier, fighting to the last breath of his body.

The soldiers on Last Stand Hill now knew that all was lost. They had killed their horses and were using them for breastworks. Perhaps they stole a furtive look to the south, was that Benteen out there? They were taking heavy fire from the Indian positions now encircling them. The Custer brothers, George, Tom, Boston and nephew "Autie" Reed, fought closely together. Stripped of all its "glory", the scene is one of immense pathos and tragedy. A closely knit family of brothers, all knowing that they would die together this day. An Indian nation, knowing deep in their hearts that, despite the victory today, their way of

life would soon be over.

The combined forces of the Sioux and Cheyenne now rushed the remaining few on the hill. The final fighting was hand to hand as Indian warriors tried to count coup against crazed cavalrymen. It is said that Custer was the last man to die.

Reno and Benteen would live through a harrowing night and day and their men would be rewarded with 26 medals of honor. They would hear a great celebration in the village below. Then, as had been their custom, the Indians would break camp and slip away. It has been said that the advance of Terry's troops caused the Indians to flee. This is debatable. The Indian force could probably also have crushed Terry's men.

No, the Indians left because it was their way. These nomadic plains warriors did not really want to wage war against the white man. They were defending their home. Now, like some group of ghosts in a mist, they melted away. They would be hunted down later, suffering total surrender and defeat, but today, June 25th, 1876, was their day, a good day to die.

The white markers stand mute against the darkening sky, sentries of oblivion. A sweeping wind comes across the prairie and a chill is in the air. It doesn't feel like a glorious battle took place here. It feels stark, sad, and lonely.



George Armstrong Custer

He was, perhaps, the most star crossed personality in American military history. The young man from America's heartland, became, arguably, one of its greatest Civil War soldiers, a Brvt.

Brigadier General at age 23, the hero of dozens of battles, where he displayed both unbelievable courage and the uncanny knack to make the right battlefield decision at the right time.

Yet he is not remembered for his great victories, his name has become synonymous with the only defeat that he had ever known, the infamous Battle of The Little Bighorn. On that bloody day in 1876, George Armstrong Custer, along with his brothers Tom and Boston, nephew Autie Reed, brother in law James Calhoun, and 265 men of the Seventh Cavalry regiment, was killed in battle with the Indian Nations along the banks of the Little Bighorn River.

Ever since that day, the reputation of George Armstrong Custer has been both vilified and glorified. His story has become the political pawn of whatever popular war or anti-war sentiment happens to be in vogue at the time.

Born in New Rumley Ohio on December 5, 1839, he spent much of his youth growing up in Monroe Michigan. He seemed destined to be a soldier from the start. As a young boy he would attend local militia meetings with his father. Dressed in full military regalia, he would entertain the local militiamen by performing a perfect manual of arms ceremony. He was known as "Autie," his own mispronunciation of his middle name. This nickname, along with several others, would follow him all the way to the Little Bighorn.

He attended the Stebbins Academy in Monroe Michigan, where he did quite well. Upon graduation at the young age of sixteen, he was appointed principal of a small school in Hopedale Ohio.

His real destiny and love, however, was the military. He applied for admission to West Point via the Honorable John A. Bingham. Bingham, a Republican, was struck by the simple and direct honesty of the self proclaimed "Democrat" Custer. He decided to sponsor the young man's admission.

Custer's West Point career is a story in itself, marked by many episodes of practical jokes and the voluminous demerits that went along with them. He graduated 34th in a class of 34 with training cut short because of the looming Civil War. Custer was actually delighted to be graduating last in his class. He stood out from the rest of the cadets, and he may very well have been striving for this dubious distinction.

It is at this point that "Custer's Luck" began to assert itself. The man was in the right place at the right time throughout his Civil War career. Reporting for duty in Washington, he was lucky enough to, on the spur of the moment, be introduced to General Winfield Scott, Chief of Staff of the United States Army. Scott needed someone to ride with field dispatches to General McDowell and Custer was the man. Three days after leaving West Point, Custer's assignment led to his being present at the first Battle of Bull Run. It was a sad day for the Union Army, but it was here that the military career of G.A. Custer began its ascent. His name was mentioned in several accounts for bravery and leadership in reforming the broken troops during the Union retreat.

Almost as if following a preordained plan, his military career unfolded along all the right paths, with all the right contacts. He was appointed adjutant to General Philip Kearny, and found himself aide to Generals Cooke and Stoneman, both instrumental in the formation of the Union Cavalry. Later, he was asked to join General McClellan's staff as a Captain. McClellan was, at the time, the Supreme Commander of the Union forces. Still mere political maneuvering (if that's what it was) would not be enough to carry the young Custer as far as he went. The man was a true warrior. He often volunteered for the most dangerous assignments, never making much of his actions (except in private correspondence with his wife, Libby).

Custer's battle record in the Civil War is almost too good to be true, but it's true, attested to by both friend and foe alike. Early in his war career at Williamsburg, he captured a large Rebel flag and six Rebel prisoners. The flag was the first Confederate color captured by the Union army. In

June of 1862 his actions on the banks of the Chickahominy River came directly to the attention of General McClellan:

"He was reported to me as having accomplished an act of desperate gallantry on the banks of the Chickahominy. I sent for him at once, and after thanking him, asked him what I could do for him. He seemed to attach no importance to what he had done, and desired nothing."

At Chickahominy Custer led a successful raid on Confederate positions across the river. He caused disarray in Rebel pickets and captured a railroad terminal. He was reported as the "first to cross, first to fire, and the last to leave." Afterward McClellan was to promote Custer to Captain and offer him a position as staff officer. Custer gladly accepted as he was a strong McClellan supporter.

McClellan however, fell out of favor and was removed from his position by President Lincoln. Custer's career however, did not skip a beat. The Union cavalry was to be commanded by Brigadier General Alfred Pleasonton. Custer was to quickly become his favorite officer.

In June of 1863 at the battle of Aldie, Custer rallied the flagging troops of General Kilpatrick by galloping to and fro shouting "Three cheers for General Kilpatrick!" Thus rallied, the troops made a mad dash sweeping everything before them. Custer was in the lead when, cut off from his own supporting troops, he engaged in mounted saber to saber combat with a Confederate cavalryman, emerging the victor.

Not long afterward at 23 years old, Custer was promoted to Brigadier General by General Pleasonton, who stated that "Custer is the best cavalry officer in the World."

He was given a command in the 3rd Michigan, the Wolverine Brigade. The flamboyant side of Custer's personality began to emerge. He outfitted himself in a velveteen jacket with five gold loops on the sleeves, a conspicuous red scarf graced his throat. The finishing touch was the flowing gold locks that softly draped his collar. The "Golden Cavalier" was born.

Now Custer's promotion to full command was to pay huge dividends. In July of 1863 the pivotal battle of Gettysburg raged on. Jeb Stuart, one of the South's most brilliant cavalry generals put his horse soldiers into play. His plan was to go around the extended Union flank and to create havoc in the rear just as Pickett was making his historic charge. Custer and the unbloodied Wolverine brigade opposed the movement. With only 500 men to oppose approximately 2000, Custer immediately intuited the danger of Stuart's movements. He committed his men to a full blown charge, and of course, he led them. Just as he was about to disappear into the Confederate lines, he was heard to shout "Come on you Wolverines!" Their spirits stirred, the Wolverines smashed into Stuart's lines and routed them.

Now, the men of the 3rd Michigan began to copy his look. Many sported the red scarf and quite a few grew shoulder length hair to boot. These were good soldiers with a tremendous amount of 'esprit de corp'. The men that Custer would soldier with after the Civil War were a far cry from this quality.

Custer's feeling on war itself can be gleaned from a letter he wrote to Libby about some of his actions in a large battle at James City.

"Yesterday we passed through the greatest cavalry battle ever witnessed on this continent. The entire force of Rebel cavalry under General Stuart attacked two divisions of ours, commanded by Pleasonton. Oh, could you but have seen some of the charges that were made! While thinking of them I cannot but exclaim Glorious War!"

In February 1864, Custer was married to Elizabeth "Libby" Bacon. Elizabeth's father, Judge Bacon had long opposed the marriage. Mr. Bacon, however was slowly but surely overcome by Custer's

engaging personality and his rapid rise to prominence in the Union army. Custer and Judge Bacon were to exchange warm letters on a regular basis until the death of Mr. Bacon in 1868. Libby was to become Custer's friend, confidante and protector of his reputation long after he died on that hot day in June. She survived him by 57 years, never remarrying and tirelessly campaigning to insure his rightful place in history.

As the tide of war began to inexorably turn in the Union favor, Custer's Civil War career turned incandescent. General Grant had assumed full command of the Union forces. He in turn placed Philip Sheridan in charge of the Union Cavalry. Custer lost the 3rd Michigan for a while, being given command of the 1st Cavalry. This was not to slow him one bit.

General Sheridan had decided to challenge Jeb Stuart and the Confederate Cavalry head on. Perhaps with the severity of the upcoming battle in mind, Custer wrote his wife, explaining his mental and spiritual preparation for battle:

"...on the eve of every battle in which I have been engaged, never have I omitted to pray inwardly and devoutly. Never have I failed to commend myself into God's keeping, asking him to forgive my past sins, and to watch over me while in danger, and to receive me if I fell, while caring for those near and dear to me. After having done so, all anxiety for myself, here or hereafter is dispelled."

And now, Custer and the other Union cavalry regiments again faced the great Jeb Stuart and the Confederate Cavalry at Yellow Tavern. The battle was to be furiously fought, then Custer and the Michigan Brigade were to bring an end to Jeb Stuart. Spotting a weakness in the lines of Stuart, Custer attacked and, personally leading the charge, routed the Confederates, a fellow Wolverine mortally wounded General Jeb Stuart in the process.

In Sheridan's own words, "...Custer supported by Chapman's Brigade attacked the enemy's left battery in a mounted charge. Custer's charge was brilliantly executed. Beginning at a walk, he increased this to a trot, then at full speed, rushed the enemy. After Custer's charge the Confederate Cavalry was badly broken up."

After being given some time off for rest and recuperation, Custer was given another promotion, Major General. He found himself ordered to the Shenandoah Valley, once again under the command of Phillip Sheridan. At the Battle of Winchester, Union forces faced the Confederate forces of the redoubtable General Jubal Early. Custer proceeded to route 1600 infantry with only 500 of his own men, taking 700 prisoners in the process. Shortly thereafter, he was given full command of the 3rd Michigan Cavalry Division.

Soon afterward Armstrong had a run in with one of his old West Point classmates, General Thomas L. Rosser. Just before the battle was to begin, Custer rode regally to the front and gracefully bowed towards his old friend in the Confederate lines. Then, executing a bold attack against superior forces, Custer routed Rosser's three cavalry brigades with his own two.

At Cedar Creek he chased the fleeing enemy for over ten miles capturing various cannon, supplies, and General Rosser's own personal wardrobe. Being a personal friend of Rosser's, Custer left him a note. In it George explained that the uniform fit well. Rosser should however, order the next one a trifle shorter in the tails!

At the conclusion of this battle Sheridan was so overjoyed that, upon seeing Custer, he threw his arms around Custer's neck and hugged him! Custer responded by lifting the man off his feet and waltzing him around the campfire! Custer was heard to exclaim "By God Phil, we've cleaned them out of their guns and got ours back!"

History shows that, in this war at least, Custer was a humane captor. There are many letters attesting to his compassionate treatment of prisoners of war, particularly former West Pointers and officers. He was known to have given his boots to a Confederate officer so that he could be

presentable to General Sheridan. He stayed with an old West Point companion, comforting him until he died, then arranged for his return thru Confederate lines. He shared his own blankets with a Confederate Officer captured near the end of the war. The officer remembers:

"The sun had gone down, a peaceful evening settled on the scene of recently contending armies, when a cavalcade rode up briskly. A spare lithe, sinewy figure, bright, dark, quick moving blue eyes, florid complexion, wavy curls, and a jaunty close fitting cavalry jacket announced the redoubtable Custer. "Why General," Custer took my hand with a kindly smile, not without humor. "I'm glad to see you here, I feel I ought to know you." With soldierly hospitality our host made us feel welcome, and despite our misfortune, we enjoyed not a little of the camp luxuries..."

The General goes on to describe Custer's departure the next day. "He shook my hand and mounted a magnificent charger, and rode away, followed at a round gallop by his splendid escort bearing the fallen flags (captured Confederate colors). As he neared the conquering legions, cheer after cheer greeted his approach. Bugles sounded and sabers flashed as they saluted. I thought no Roman victor ever had a more noble triumph."

With Union forces having slowly ground down the South, the war moved to its inevitable conclusion. Custer, of course, would be present at the heart of history.

In the Spring of 1865 Grant and Sheridan were in hot pursuit of Lee's fleeing army. Custer, once again in the vanguard saw more than his share of battle. During the first four days of April he had captured 31 Confederate battle flags, each representing the destruction of a regiment. On April 8, 1865 he cut off retreating Rebels at Appomattox Station seizing various supplies meant for Lee's army. The Confederates tried to blast him out of his position with artillery, but he responded with a series of lightning attacks capturing two dozen of the attacking pieces. On April 9th Custer received the flag of truce announcing Lee's surrender.

A summary of the exploits of Custer and his beloved Wolverines was dramatically rendered by Custer himself in an address to his troops:

"During the past six months, although in most instances confronted by superior numbers, you have captured from the enemy in open battle, one hundred eleven pieces of field artillery and thirty seven battle flags, and upwards of ten thousand prisoners, including seven general officers. Within the past ten days and included in the above, you have captured forty six pieces of field artillery and thirty seven battle flags. You have never lost a gun, never lost a color, and have never been defeated..."

After the signing of the surrender by General Lee, Philip Sheridan purchased the small table upon which the momentous document was signed and had it shipped to Libby Custer as a gift. Sheridan said in a note to Libby, "...Madam, there is scarcely an individual in our service who has contributed more to bring this about than your very gallant husband."

Had Custer's life ended now, he would probably go down in history as one of the United States greatest heroes. Alas, it was not to be.

An unfortunate thing now happened to George Armstrong Custer. Peace was thrust upon him. This brilliant hero of war was not cut out to soldier in peace. So bored was he with the cessation of fighting, that he considered accepting an offer to fight as a mercenary General for the government of Mexico. He turned it down after Sheridan told him that the government was extremely weak. So he stayed in the US Army, his rank reverting back to Lt. Colonel.

He spent some time in Texas during the reconstruction period and quickly became aware of the fact that the post war army was not the same as the Civil War army. There were many desertions

as men who enlisted for a set time thought that the war's end meant that they could now leave. Many deserters, took to "foraging" for food and supplies on their own, with "foraging" becoming a handy euphemism for theft, and worse.

Custer dealt sharply with these men. There were floggings and "head shavings." In turn there were snipings and accusations thrown at Custer, including one of shady dealings regarding his purchase of a horse. Most of what happened in Texas appears to be the correct response of an officer to a bad situation. Still, the Boy General's luster began to show a bit of tarnish. It would seem that from the end of the Civil War on, "Custer's Luck" would be all bad.

Custer was next assigned to Ft Riley Kansas and the Seventh Cavalry. He spent the Spring of 1867 in a futile and frustrating hunt for marauding Sioux and Cheyenne. Lonely for his wife, awaiting his return at Ft. Riley, he made a bad decision. With a small detachment of men, he simply "bolted" his command at Ft. Wallace and headed pell-mell back to his wife at Ft. Riley. He ended up court martialled for this, and for firing on deserters during the previous July. He was suspended for a year.

Recalled to service in 1868, he was hungry for a victory. He would get it, and it would be pyrrhic. Military strategy in 1868 called for the introduction of Sherman's version of total war against the Indians. An invigorated Custer was itching to carry it out.

On November 27th the Seventh Cavalry found itself just outside of a Cheyenne village on the Washita River. Lt. Colonel Custer heard a dog barking, and he thought that he could hear a baby cry. He hesitated. Later reflecting, he stated, "Savages though they were, I could not but regret that in a war such as we were forced to engage in, the mode and circumstances of battle would possibly prevent discrimination." Other soldiers felt no such hesitation. The plains Indian War was a war without mercy on both sides. Mutilations performed on various white victims were incomprehensible to the white soldier and caused a deep desire for vengeance to beat in his heart.

Custer split his command into four groups and directed them into separate positions for a simultaneous attack at dawn. And just before dawn, the "Son of The Morningstar" earned his name. The battle was short with total confusion reigning in the Indian camp. When it was over 103 Cheyenne men, woman, and children, were dead. There were 53 prisoners, the village was destroyed.

Contrary to many reports however, it was not a one sided massacre. Indians were arriving from various outlying villages in support of the Washita band. A group of seventeen troopers under Major Joel Elliot were missing. Rather than look for the missing men, Custer decided that the better part of valor would be to retreat. The men, and their commander, Major Elliot would later all be found...dead.

This critical decision turned the 7th Cavalry upon itself. It never recovered from the factionalism engendered that day. Captain Benteen was incensed and never forgave Custer. Eight years later Benteen would fail Custer on the Little Bighorn.

Eastern press attacks also assailed Custer for the savagery displayed by the men of the Seventh, and a little more tarnish was added to the former shining star.

Custer spent the next few years in more reconstruction duty. The Seventh was scattered in the South, with Custer spending much time in Kentucky, buying horses for the Cavalry, of all things.

In early 1873 the regiment was reassigned to the Dakotas for further action against the Sioux. Custer took part in the Yellowstone expedition of 1873 and saw action in two battles. His comments and those of some others regarding the action seemed to make light of the Indian's

fighting capability. It seemed to be a sort of "sport." It was fun and provided some thrills, but there was never really any danger.

In 1874 Custer led an expedition into the Black Hills looking for future military fort sites and to explore the area for gold. Gold was discovered, and the ensuing rush that it caused would break the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 with the Sioux Nation. The government attempted to purchase the disputed land from the Indians. When the Indians refused, the government basically threw up its hands and issued an ultimatum. All Indians not on the declared reservation by January 31, 1876 would be declared hostile and would be dealt with by the military.

Custer, now seemingly unable to escape negative publicity and politics, was embroiled in a controversy with President Grant. Testifying at a congressional probe he earned the president's enmity by attacking the administration's policies. A furious Grant did not want Custer to be a part of the upcoming military expedition.

Sheridan intervened and Custer was given command of the strike force, the Seventh Cavalry. For once Custer would have been better off had he remained on the sidelines.

He longed for a major victory, one that would show Grant a thing or two. One that would insure his promotion to Brigadier General when Grant was swept out of office by the Democrats. Promotions and victory were not to be his however, only death, ashes, and immortality on the banks of The Little Bighorn River.



Sitting Bull

A fierce warrior and Hunkpapa Sioux Medicine Man, he was the mystic whose vision of the Battle of The Little Bighorn turned prophetic.

Born in the early 1830's Sitting Bull was an accomplished warrior at an early age. He was known by the nickname of "Slow" as a youth, not for any lack of intelligence, but for his deliberate and taciturn ways. Counting coup as a young teenager, he was given the name "Sitting Bull" by his father.

Soon he became a member of, and then a leader in a Sioux warrior society called the Strong Hearts. He would walk thru life with a pronounced limp that he acquired after being shot in hand to hand combat with a Crow Chieftain.

His relationships with the ever present white men were varied, always honorable, and never subservient. He maintained peaceful relations with the whites until 1862. It was then, while camping with the Santee Sioux, who had previously killed hundreds of settlers, Sitting Bull and his Hunkpapa Sioux were attacked by the US Army. While an explainable error to the Army, it put Sitting Bull on a long standing war footing with the pony soldiers. Paradoxically, he took no part in the general uprising led by Red Cloud against the Bozeman trail incursion. Red Cloud in a turnabout, would not participate Sitting Bull's uprising in 1876.

In 1873 he had several skirmishes with Custer himself. By 1876, Sitting Bull was getting on in years, for a warrior at least, but he was as defiant and confident a leader as the Indians could ask for, his stature growing as the years passed by. In June of 1876 the Hunkpapa Sioux initiated their famous Sundance. Sitting Bull, now a revered holy man, took on a central role in this deeply religious rite. The ceremony called for numerous bits of flesh to be cut from the extremities. The participant would then be connected to a central pole by passing small rods thru the fleshy part of the chest. The ecstatic dancing would then ensue, and the participant would gaze directly into the light of the sun seeking a vision.

Sitting Bull achieved this mystical state of consciousness and had a famous vision. Bluecoats were coming, there would be a great battle. The soldiers were falling "upside down" into the Indian camp. This signified a great victory to the Sioux. In a matter of weeks, the vision would be realized.

Sitting Bull did not participate in the actual fighting at the Little Bighorn. He rallied the warriors as best he could, and gathered the old and the lame to remove them from the scene of potential attack. After the battle was over, he was quick to realize that the village must be moved before the wrath of the soldiers fell upon them.

He would spend the next few years fleeing the soldiers and avoiding army retribution by moving across the Canadian border. He remained on the run until 1881 when he surrendered and, for a short time, was held as a prisoner of war. In 1885 he toured with the Wild West Show of "Buffalo" Bill Cody. Photographs of him, taken during the 1880's, show a dignified man projecting enormous peace and spiritual power.

The life of Sitting Bull came to a sad and tragic end in December of 1890. Once again a mystical Sioux dance called the "Ghost Dance" would play a pivotal role in the life of Sitting Bull. In 1889 a new Indian visionary burst upon the scene, a Paiute holy man named Wovoka had a vision. All the Indians who had ever lived would once again return to the Earth, and all the white men would die. In order to bring these apocalyptic events about, the Indians must dance the "Ghost Dance". The Indian agents, fearing any sort of uprising, acted to put an end to this new ritual and ordered it stopped.

At Standing Rock agency, where Sitting Bull now lived, Indians who took part in the Ghost Dance were to be arrested. On the morning of December 15, 1890 Indian police attempted to arrest Sitting Bull for defying the order. Protesting the indignity of his arrest, he sparked a violent gunfight

between his supporters and the policemen. Fourteen men would die in the exchange of gunfire, sadly, including Sitting Bull.



Crazy Horse

A mythic, "Zen like" warrior who also happened to be real. Born in the early 1840's, he was about 34 years old at the Little Bighorn, and as in the case of his well known enemy, he had already led a distinguished career as a warrior. Ironically, he too had been called by the name "Curly." The same nickname that the man fighting desperately on Last Stand Hill had been called.

Crazy Horse got an early taste of conflict with the white man fighting under the War Chief Red Cloud. It was Crazy horse, some say, who was responsible for leading a diversionary tactic that led to the entrapment and slaughter of eighty cavalymen under Lt. Fetterman in 1866.

He was known as a fierce warrior in combat. Much like Custer, he was invariably in the lead when battle ensued. He also had a reputation for both his generosity and kindness among the Oglala Sioux. Called "Our Strange Man" by his fellow tribesman, he would cover himself with glory at the Battle of The Little Bighorn.

There are no confirmed pictures of Crazy Horse. Unlike many of his contemporary Chieftains, he refused to have his picture taken by the white man's camera. He has been described as youthful looking, with waist length brown hair. A small scar graced his handsome face, caused, it is said, by a jealous husband.

Crazy Horse, like Chief Sitting Bull, and other plains warriors, was guided by a mystical vision. In it he saw a magnificent warrior. Wearing no warbonnet, the warrior's body was decorated in a hailstone pattern, he had lightning bolts on his face. This warrior was invincible in combat and moved like a ghost amongst his enemies, wreaking havoc while never being wounded himself. This mythic warrior and Crazy Horse were to become one and the same.

At the battle of the Little Bighorn, Crazy Horse was everywhere. He led the first Indians out of the village in the repulse of Reno. He then whirled to meet the threat of the bluecoats maneuvering in the hills. Leading the assault around and to the Northeast of Custer, he put the cavalry in a pincer, with Chief Gall's warriors attacking from the South. This maneuver doomed the men of the Seventh Cavalry. It was probably Crazy Horse who ended the final resistance on Last Stand Hill.

Crazy Horse's victory was short lived. He surrendered in 1877, and was ultimately bayoneted while being led to the guardhouse. The sight of Crazy Horse's final resting place is unknown.

Although there have been several Indian leaders who have done more for their people's material needs, there has never been a more noble and gallant warrior. He may have been forced to surrender physically, but he was never defeated in his heart.



Frederick William Benteen

Born in 1834, he was a son of Virginia who fought for the Union despite his father's strong support of the rebel cause. He took part in numerous engagements and fought primarily with the 10th Missouri Volunteer Cavalry.

In July of 1866 he was appointed a Captain in the 7th Cavalry. He had an undying jealousy of his commanding officer that slowly grew to a searing hatred by the Spring of 1876.

Custer, although not evidencing a mutual hatred for Benteen, did show a certain contempt for the man early on in their relationship. In a somewhat amusing note to his wife in 1867 Custer mentions Benteen:

"Yesterday Captains Hamilton and Benteen went Buffalo hunting. Captain Benteen shot his favorite horse dead, also a large buffalo dog belonging to Company E just as it had a buffalo by

the nose."

Their relationship deteriorated steadily. Custer thought that Benteen wanted to be his friend, and that his own rebuttal to the friendship may have been a cause for the trouble between the two men.

Benteen took part in the infamous battle at Washita, and was later to severely criticize Custer, behind his back, regarding the death of Major Elliot and eighteen other men. Chasing some fleeing warriors, Elliot led his party away from the battle proper, never to be seen alive again. Benteen thought that Custer should have organized search parties to find the men. Custer, in a conservative frame of mind, thought the situation required that the Seventh withdraw quickly from the scene. Custer believed that there was a danger of Indian reinforcements arriving to jeopardize the operation.

In any event, Elliot and his men were killed and the Seventh Cavalry was forever divided as to what the right course should have been. Benteen fanned the flames of this disaster up until the time of the Little Bighorn fiasco.

Although he may have been short on manners and had a drinking problem, Benteen was always long on courage. His coolness under fire at the Little Bighorn probably saved the day for Major Reno. He took control of the confused scene and organized a proper defense, repeatedly exposing himself to Indian gunfire as he patrolled the perimeters. He personally led a skirmishing "charge" to drive off some Indians who had closely penetrated the cavalry positions.

The only problem was, he didn't obey Custer's command to "Come on." Only after following Weir's lead, did Benteen make a half hearted move in the direction of General Custer. Benteen always said he could see nothing of Custer's battlefield from the point where his troop stopped (Weir Point) but it was visible, and others said that they could see Indians firing into Custer's position.

Benteen took part in further skirmishes with the Indians after the Little Bighorn and distinguished himself in the war on the Nez Perce. Later, however, his career, like Reno's, began to come unraveled in the face of drinking problems and constant reminders about the Custer defeat. He was court martialed in 1887 for drunkenness on duty and ultimately sentenced to a one year suspension. Benteen requested, and was granted, a medical discharge in 1890. He died in 1898 and was interred at the Arlington National Cemetery. He was later awarded the rank of a Brevet Brigadier General for his gallantry... at the Little Bighorn.

History will always wonder what would have happened if Benteen had just "Come on!"



Capt. Myles Keogh

The handsome and dashing Keogh was an Irish soldier of fortune. Born on March 25th, 1842 in County Carlow, Ireland, Keogh had already been a Lieutenant in both the Papal Army and the Papal Guards by the time he was 18 years old!

Keogh emigrated to New York in April of 1862 and promptly enlisted in the Union army. He served with his usual bravery and distinction, taking part in over thirty engagements, including Antietam and Gettysburg. He was brevetted three times for gallantry and service.

After the Civil War, Keogh briefly served, as a 2nd Lt. with the 4th Cavalry, before transferring to the 7th, where he was commissioned a Captain on the day that the unit was formed. The proud Irish Captain was instrumental in influencing Custer to make that old Irish drinking standard, the Garry Owen, the regimental song.

On that fateful day in June, Keogh commanded Company I. He held the ridge that "connected" Custer's position to Calhoun's. The "why" of his position is debatable, he could have been hastening to the aid of Calhoun, or he could have been falling back from the Calhoun position. Either way, the positioning and density of the bodies, along with Indian testimony, suggest that Keogh and his men also effected an organized and determined resistance.

They came under the same repeating arms fire that engulfed Calhoun, and it appears that they died after Calhoun's troop was destroyed, with some of Calhoun's men falling back to the Keogh position. In all likelihood, they were "rolled up" towards Custer by Gall and Lame Whiteman's warriors as the disintegration of the regiment flowed from Calhoun to Custer.

Captain Keogh was found still wearing a silver Catholic medal around his neck, which the Indians must have thought was big medicine. His body was found almost exactly central to his troop's overall extended "skirmish line," suggesting a command presence of mind throughout the fight. Chief Gall lavished praise upon both Calhoun's and Keogh's men.

Miraculously, Keogh's horse, Comanche, was found alive, the only army survivor of the Custer battle.



Lt. James Calhoun

One of Custer's "inner circle," he was born in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1845. Calhoun spent much of his early career as an infantryman. He joined the army in January of 1864, and became a soldier in the 14th Infantry.

Calhoun stayed a "grunt" until 1871 when he requested a transfer to the 7th Cavalry. It just so happened that he was engaged, at the time, to Margaret "Emma" Custer, George's sister. Custer apparently pulled a few strings for Calhoun in effecting his transfer to the 7th and Calhoun was not ungrateful. He wrote Custer in 1871...

"My Dear General, I have just received my commission as a 1st Lt. in the 7th Cavalry, and it reminds me more vividly than ever how many, many, times I am under obligations to you for your very great kindness to me in my troubles. I shall do my best to prove my gratitude. If the need ever arises, you will not find me wanting..."

He took part in several skirmishes with the Indians while serving alongside Custer in 1873. By this time he was one of Custer's favorite officers.

On that hot day in June 1876, Calhoun was assigned a position of honor. Ordered to dismount and provide a rearguard cover while Custer looked for defensible ground, evidence shows that Calhoun and his troopers provided some of the most fierce resistance put forth by the soldiers that fateful day. His troops came under heavy repeating arms attack from Indian positions southeast and southwest. His return fire was also intense. Chief Gall stated that Calhoun's "L" troop fought on the ground, in formation, and never wavered in the battle.

Calhoun's body was found with thirty two of his men. He had fulfilled his promise to Custer, he was not found "wanting" when the need arose.



Capt. Tom Custer

Lt. Col. Custer's heroic younger brother was 31 years old at the time of his death on the Little Bighorn. Thomas Ward Custer, like his older brother George, already had a sterling military career.

He enlisted in the Army as a sixteen year old youth and served in the 21st Ohio Volunteer Infantry. Tom Custer always idolized his older brother George and his spectacular Civil War record, but not even "Old Curl," himself would equal Tom's accomplishments.

Before the Civil War was over, Tom Custer would have the distinction of being presented with two medals of honor. One each for his conspicuous gallantry in the battles of Namozine Church and Saylor's Creek.

He served General Sherman on his infamous march to the sea, and participated in battles from Chattanooga to Alabama. He always wanted to serve alongside his brother however, and was to get his chance in 1864, when he accepted a commission as a Second Lt. in the 6th Michigan Cavalry.

While fighting along with his brother, Tom Custer's daring gallantry would earn him the two medals of honor. George Armstrong Custer wrote of his brother's exploits:

"Tom led the assault upon the enemy's breastworks mounted, and was the first to leap his horse over the works on top of the enemy while they were pouring a volley of musketry into our ranks. Tom seized the rebel colors and demanded their surrender. The color bearer shot him thru the face and neck. So close was the muzzle to Tom's face that he was spotted with gunpowder. He retained the colors with one hand, while with the other he drew his revolver and shot the rebel dead. This was the second battle flag Tom had captured within the week. The other was in the cavalry battle at Namozine Church. Tom led the charge, captured the flag, and fourteen prisoners (3 officers). His horse was shot, the second in three days. With blood pouring from his wound he asked if someone might take the battle flag while he continued with the assaulting column."

Unlike George Custer, Tom was more of a "regular guy," with a taste for liquor (although no drunkard) and a "salty" tongue to match. Many of George's letters evidence a concern for this side of Tom's personality, although, George may have been overplaying his concern a bit, to assuage his wife's adamant stance against the demon rum.

All in all, Tom seemed like just the type of man that you would want at your shoulder in a life and death fight, and that's where his life ended, fighting at the side of his brother, on the Little Bighorn.



Maj. Marcus Reno

Born in Illinois in 1834, his military career gave no apparent hint of the disgrace that would befall him at the Little Bighorn and after.

He was a West Point graduate of the class of 1857 and served in the Pacific Northwest until the outbreak of the Civil War. Reno was awarded commendations for gallant and meritorious service at Kelly's Ford and again at the battle of Cedar Creek. Brevets received for his gallantry included Lt. Colonel, Colonel, and Brigadier General.

He was promoted to Major in the 7th Cavalry in December 1868 and played a significant role in the Little Bighorn debacle. Although one cannot entirely fault him for not continuing his charge into the village, it was his actions afterward that marked him with the stamp of a coward. He failed to hold his skirmish line for any length of time, he displayed extreme panic in the timber, ordering his troops in rapid succession to mount, dismount, and mount again. Finally he lead a disorderly route (he called it a charge) up into the bluffs on the opposite river bank.

His actions were a big factor in his losing approximately one third of his command in rapid order. His command disintegration was to continue. Reno lost control when Captain Weir insisted that they advance to the "sound of the gunfire" to aide Custer. Instead, under no severe pressure from the Indians at the time, he chose to keep seven of the remaining twelve companies out of action, very possibly dooming Custer to his death.

Captain Weir in a gallant but reckless act, rode towards the battle to the north. Later Benteen joined him, but it was too little too late and they turned back to join the laggard Reno on his lonely hill.

Reno's career after the Bighorn battle was one of total disgrace. Court martialed in 1877 for conduct unbecoming an officer and for "taking improper and insulting liberties with a fellow officer's wife," he was sentenced to dismissal, but President Hayes commuted the sentence to a two year suspension. Haunted by the Custer proponents he demanded a hearing on the Little Bighorn fiasco in 1879. Reno's name was "cleared" in that he was not condemned by the board of inquiry. Apparently the officers of the Seventh, having had enough of the Bighorn slaughter, closed ranks and refused to attack Reno. Benteen was enigmatic. In his post "trial" comments, he said

"the court knew something was being held back by me, but they didn't know how to dig it out by questioning."

So Reno had his pyrrhic victory, damned by faint praise, he became an obnoxious drunk, finally court martialled again, this time for peeping in the window of an officer's daughter. He was dismissed from the service. He died, a broken man, in 1889. In 1967 Reno's great grand nephew petitioned the army to have his name cleared. Without much investigation, they cleared his record. Ironically, Reno was then interred at the Custer Battlefield National Cemetery, probably the last place on Earth that he would choose to spend eternity.

Captain Thomas Weir

The courageous man who would try to save Custer, Thomas Weir was born in Nashville Ohio on September 28, 1838. A college graduate, he joined the Union Army and served along with Custer in the famed 3rd Michigan Cavalry. He was held as a prisoner of war by the Confederate Army for about seven months in 1862 and received two brevet promotions for his meritorious service during the war.

After the Civil War, Weir once again served with Custer. He was appointed Brevet Major General and served as George Armstrong's Acting Inspector General during Custer's reconstruction service in Texas.

Weir continued to follow Custer, and eventually became a Captain in the Seventh Cavalry, commanding Company D during the Little Bighorn battle. Assigned to the Benteen battalion, he showed conspicuous gallantry during the hilltop fighting, exposing himself to enemy fire again and again as he rallied his men.

Given his long friendly relationship with the General, and his own deeply ingrained courage, it is no wonder that Weir urged both Benteen and Reno to advance to the sound of the gunfire that could be heard coming from Custer's direction. First, on the trail with Benteen prior to the Hilltop fight, he became impatient with Benteen's leisurely watering of the horses despite the fact that some men said they heard gunshots in the distance. Then, on the hilltop itself, he argued fiercely with Reno, requesting that the battalion move to the sound of the gunfire to aide Custer.

Ultimately, in a state of rash bravado, he set out with his own company, making it as far as the high ground that now bears his name, Weir Point. From there he could see the guidons of Custer, swirling in the clouds of dust and smoke, evidencing the dying throes of the Custer command. He was joined by Benteen who quickly decided that they should retreat back to Reno, now waiting forlornly on his lonely hill.

Weir never recovered emotionally from the events of June 25, 1876. Perhaps he blamed himself, perhaps he just could not deal with what happened that day. In any event, Weir's health began a drastic deterioration aided by the heavy consumption of alcohol that would end in his death only six months after the battle. One more casualty of the battle of the Little Bighorn.

Weapons of the Little Bighorn

The soldiers of the Seventh Cavalry were issued the Model 1873 Springfield Carbine, and most carried a Colt single action Army revolver as a sidearm.



Springfield 1873 Carbine

The Carbine was a single shot firearm that could throw its 45 caliber slug for an effective range of about 300 yards with an outside range of 600 yards. A good soldier could pump out 15 to 18 rounds per minute, but probably a lot less under heavy pressure. The Carbine did have a jamming problem, with shell casings failing to be properly ejected after sustained use. Although this problem was pointed to as a major factor in the outcome of the Custer battle, subsequent investigation has failed to show this as a material problem that day.

The Colt sidearms played no significant part in the story on June 25th, save for perhaps, Calhoun Hill, where Chief Gall testified to the fact that the soldiers resorted to the six shooter after throwing down their Carbines.

Contrary to the florid paintings depicting soldiers brandishing sabers on Last Stand Hill, no sabers were carried into battle on the Little Bighorn.



Henry Repeating Rifle Circa 1860

Indian weapons ran the gamut from bow and arrow to Winchester repeating rifle, covering almost all the bases in between. Evidence has been found for muzzle loaders, Sharps Carbines, Henry repeating rifles, a Remington sports rifle (possibly Custer's own), Colt revolvers, flintlocks and percussion muskets. In fact, approximately 40 different firearm types have been identified as having been available to the Indian warriors at the battle's beginning.

There may have been 700 to 800 firearms in the possession of the Indians on that day in June. A significant portion, maybe 200 to 400, were repeating rifles of the Winchester and Henry variety. These rifles, mainly the 1860 and 1866 models, had an effective range of 150 to 250 yards. The magazine held 12 to 15 shells and could fire up to 30 rounds per minute in the hands of a competent shooter.

The Indians may have been outgunned at long range, but as the battle moved to close quarters, they held an awesome firepower advantage over the soldiers. This is not to denigrate the effectiveness of the bow and arrow in the hands of the Indian warrior. Trained in the art of martial archery from childhood on, a Sioux or Cheyenne brave could fire from his quiver at a faster

rate than the soldier could discharge his Carbine, and, he could fire an arching shot from cover without ever having to expose himself. The men on Custer and Calhoun Hills may well have been pelted with a deadly "rainfall" of death from the discharge of a thousand or more Indian bows, as they crouched behind their dead horses.

Custer had the option of taking one or two Gatling guns along with him. He gave them serious consideration but eventually declined because towing a Gatling gun would slow him down considerably. The Gatling gun, operated by a handcrank, and capable of firing up to 200 rounds per minute at that time, was a phenomenally accurate weapon at ranges up to 1000 yards, albeit at rather stationary targets. What its effect would have been at that battle remains open to conjecture.