

COLONEL JOSEPH J. REYNOLDS AND THE SAINT PATRICK'S DAY
CELEBRATION ON POWDER RIVER: BATTLE OF POWDER
RIVER (MONTANA, 17 MARCH 1876)

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ABSTRACT

COLONEL JOSEPH J. REYNOLDS AND THE SAINT PATRICK'S DAY CELEBRATION ON POWDER RIVER; BATTLE OF POWDER RIVER (MONTANA, 17 MARCH 1876), by MAJ Michael L. Hedegaard, USA, 102 pages.

The Battle of Powder River occurred on 17 March 1876 in southeastern Montana. Historians and researchers have consistently overlooked the importance of this battle on the outcome of the Great Sioux War of 1876. Colonel Joseph J. Reynolds set out to destroy the Indian camp established by the combined Cheyenne and Oglala Sioux in order to push the Indians back to the reservations and allow miners to enter the Black Hills to mine gold. Reynolds failed to accomplish this mission. The intelligence from his Indian scouts was flawed. Logistically, the soldiers were not fed, clothed, armed, or supplied for actions against the Indian tribes during the winter months. There was no written doctrine for the soldiers to follow. Tactically, Crook was delinquent because of the overconfidence in his force against the Indians. Crook failed to support Reynolds with troops, ammunition, logistics, and supplies. The outcome of this battle contributed to the defeats of Crook at the Rosebud and Custer at Little Big Horn because it caused the Indians to form a massive nation for self-preservation. Historians estimate that Crook faced more than 1,500 warriors at the Rosebud and Custer faced more than 2,500 braves at the Little Big Horn.

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PREFACE

INTRODUCTION

The Battle of Powder River occurred on 17 March 1876 in southeastern Montana north of present-day Moorhead, Montana (figure 1). Historians and researchers have consistently overlooked the importance of this battle on the Great Sioux War of 1876 (also known as the Yellowstone and Bighorn Campaign, the Centennial Campaign, and the Bighorn Expedition). Because this battle occurred three months prior to the Battles of the Rosebud and the Little Big Horn, many fail to tie its significance into the rest of the campaign.

Colonel Joseph J. Reynolds (figure 2), commander of the Third Cavalry Regiment, set out from Otter Creek in the late afternoon of 16 March 1876, with the purpose of destroying the Indian camp established by the combined Cheyenne and Oglala Sioux. His mission, given him by Brigadier General George Crook (figure 3), was to attack the Indian camp, defeat the Indian braves, destroy their supplies, and steal their ponies. General Crook directed Reynolds to “shoot everything in sight.”¹ This strategy was meant to push the Indians back to the reservations and allow miners to enter the Black Hills and mine the gold without fear of Indian retribution.

This thesis will examine how the Battle of Powder River played a role in the operational losses in the battles of the rest of the Centennial Campaign. The Battle of Powder River began a series of mistakes, blunders, and lost battles, all directly or indirectly contributing to the massing of the Sioux and Cheyenne Indian tribes just prior to Custer’s fatal last day.

There has been a dearth of research conducted on the Battle of Powder River. Historians have generally ignored this battle for the past 125 years. This thesis will address questions about the leadership of the campaign. Did the debacle of the Battle of Powder River lead to the loss of Crook's force to Crazy Horse at the Rosebud and the destruction of the 7th Cavalry at the Battle of the Little Big Horn? Did Colonel Joseph J. Reynolds' prior soiled reputation affect his mental state? Did General George Crook, leader of the campaign, place Colonel Reynolds into the role of leader of the attack on the Indian camp in an attempt to save Reynolds' previously soiled reputation? Did the attitude of Reynolds and Crook have an effect on the outcome of the battle?

The leadership of the U.S. Army assumed an arrogant attitude that led to mistakes and overestimations of the U.S. Army readiness, training, and tactical posture. Was the attitude of the leadership that led to the refusal of arms, ammunition, rations, and more troops because they thought the Indians would not fight? What effect did the poor preparedness (clothing, food, and shelter) of the U.S. Army soldiers have on the outcome of the battle? Did this black mark in U.S. Army history occur because the soldiers were too cold and tired to continue to fight? Were the soldiers trained to fight or even to survive in the arctic-type temperatures?

Following the battle on 17 March, nothing was heard of this expedition until 22 March when General Crook forwarded a brief account of his Battle on Powder River. Crook stated in his dispatch that the result of this fight was the destruction of Crazy Horse's village of 105 lodges. It was, instead, the village of Two Moons (figure 4), the principal warrior. Many historians assert that the battle resulted in little else than a series of remarkable blunders that allowed the Indians to make their escape, losing only a small

quantity of their property. General Crook, in his dispatch, asserted that the total number of warriors would not exceed two thousand instead of the 15,000 or 20,000 hostile Indians in the Black Hills and Big Horn Country. It was upon this estimation that the remainder of the expeditions in the Centennial Campaign were prepared. Many of the nearly two hundred warriors at Powder River, along with their families and approximately 700 to 1,000 ponies, would live to fight again against the Army at the Battles of the Rosebud and the Little Big Horn.² This failed attempt to knock out the combined Sioux and Cheyenne Indian tribe served to warn the Indians of the intentions for a summer campaign by the U.S. government.

The Powder River skirmish remains obscure in history compared to the plethora of information on the Battles of the Rosebud or Little Big Horn. One can only speculate who the chief of the Indian tribe was at the Powder River camp. At the time, the troops believed the chief was Crazy Horse. Subsequent evidence strongly indicates that it consisted of Old Bear's Cheyennes and some visiting Oglala Sioux under He Dog. Old Bear and He Dog were older chiefs, relegated to leading the tribe as elders and the village was likely under the control of Two Moons, the principal warrior. The village was composed of approximately 200 warriors and their families.³ This scarcity of information on the Indian leaders and warriors compels this writer to focus on the perspective of the U.S. Army and its leaders.

Although this thesis will deal primarily with the U.S. Army perspective, Indian accounts will be used to illustrate key points. Most of the information will be taken from the accounts of the Indian scouts used by the U.S. Army. General Crook was well known for using Indian scouts to hunt and track other Indian tribes. In 1866, companies of

Indian scouts were organized by legislation and approved by Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton. There were two companies of fifty Indian scouts sent to fight hostile Indians, one being under Crook's command. Crook found that the Indian scouts already had the basic tracking, shooting, and hunting skills necessary to follow the trail of other Indians. Crook would also use the scouts as part of his fighting force. The Indian scouts that fought with Crook often initiated skirmishes and warned Crook of imminent danger.⁴

The U.S. Army officer's memoirs and the first-hand accounts tend to be dramatically enhanced when finally put to paper, often many years after the battle. This delayed and often self-glorifying view of the battle lends itself to inaccurate and exaggerated force sizes, body counts, and individual attendance. Thus, the modern researcher must compare personal accounts from differing perspectives to gain the ground truth, or at least the "consolidated lie." The reader must also take into consideration that many senior officers of the day surrounded themselves with aides and newspaper writers that they liked, and who liked them. This often led to one-sided stories and glorification of the senior officer.

Much has been written on the Battles of the Rosebud and the Little Big Horn, so much so that many people are not aware of the significance of the Battle of Powder River. This thesis is a critical view of leadership, preparedness, and the general state of the U.S. Army during the Indian wars, particularly how it applies to the Battle of Powder River.

While this thesis focuses on the Battle of Powder River, it will discuss some of the effects of this battle on the Rosebud and the Little Big Horn battles. This battle will be discussed from a tactical, logistical, and leadership perspective. All of these battles

will be used to illustrate certain points brought out at Powder River since the failures of the rest of the campaign could have been averted by using lessons learned from its first battle.

This thesis will be broken into six chapters. These chapters include the introduction, background, prebattle, battle, postbattle, and conclusion. Within these chapters, the battle will be examined from many different angles. These include, but are not limited to, leadership, command, intelligence, logistics, unit cohesion, planning, operations, training, legal issues, and morale. The leadership and command of both the U.S. Army and the Indian tribe will be assessed. The U.S. Army officers and noncommissioned officers (NCOs) that will be focused on include General Crook, Colonel Reynolds, Captain Noyes, Captain Mills, Captain Moore, and NCOs within the unit.

The intelligence collection came almost exclusively from the Indian scouts that General Crook had with him as guides. These scouts were not only the eyes of the Cavalry, but also the first line of defense against Indian attacks. Some of the intelligence that the U.S. Army overlooked during this entire campaign came from the census taken by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the actual agents on the reservations that estimated the Indian strength at over 20,000. It was also estimated that the tribes could gather more than 4,000 warriors at any time if pressured into fighting.⁵ Crook's response to these estimates was to rationalize, correctly, that the Indians would separate into small bands of less than 1,000 during the winter to forage over eastern Montana and western Dakotas. Of these tribes, the true target was the 8,000 "winter roamers" that held the majority of the staunchest rebels. This number included the Indians that refused to return to the

reservation at any time. This number also included both Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull. The goal was to drive these “hostiles” back onto the reservation, defeating the “summer roamers” desire to travel off of the reservation.

Logistics in the Great Plains during the time of the Indian Wars was a daunting task, to say the least. Dealing with the bitter cold, lack of water, distances traveled, and vastness of the territory was every quartermaster’s nightmare. There were many battles where the soldiers fought with little or nothing to eat or drink for days, extending their rations to lighten the load on their horses for more flexibility and stealth. Likewise, an examination of the status of the forces on the frontier, as well as the equipment they chose to use and not to use, will demonstrate the ingenuity and all too often ineptness displayed by the leaders and soldiers of the regiment.

This thesis will show an understanding of the morale of the unit at both its high and low points. The bonding of the soldiers throughout the Indian wars was nothing short of incredible, with the soldiers standing by each other until death, facing the trials and tribulations of battle together.

The planning, operations, and training of the U.S. Cavalry and Infantry soldiers left much to be desired. The units would often deploy from garrison with ill-trained soldiers, untested in the ways of combat with the Indians. These soldiers often learned from the school of hard knocks, with an NCO or harsh winter as their teacher. The relationship between the doctrine of the Civil War and the way the Cavalry and Infantry units attempted to bastardize it to fit into the Indian wars will be examined.

This thesis will paint a portrait of the Indian leaders in this battle and how they perceived the white man and U.S. Army soldier. Their doctrine pertaining to the land

they chose at the Powder River, why they were so hard to find, and the makeup of their village will be examined. This thesis will also examine their general preparedness and how they survived the long winters that often stopped the U.S. Army soldiers from deploying out of garrison due to the bitter, killing cold.

Finally, a careful study of Powder River will demonstrate that there is a probable cause and effect between the lost opportunity by Colonel Reynolds and his men, and the defeat suffered later by the U.S. Army in the remainder of the Centennial Campaign. This thesis will show that the mistakes that Reynolds is blamed for and carried to his death are ones of, in some cases, bad luck, poor reconnaissance, poor judgment, and all too often a result of the harsh conditions his soldiers were under.

¹Cornelius C. Smith Jr., "Crook and Crazy Horse," *Montana, the Magazine of Western History*, spring 1966, 14.

²Robert Marshall Utley, *Frontier Regulars: The United States Army and the Indian, 1866-1891* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 249.

³Utley, 249.

⁴Oliver Knight, *Indian Wars Beginning in the West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1960), 175.

⁵John S. Gray, *Centennial Campaign, The Sioux War of 1876* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press), 36.

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND

Any study of the 1876 Centennial Campaign must start with an understanding of the past and the backgrounds of the leadership. This leadership analysis includes General Phil Sheridan, Lieutenant General George Crook, Colonel Joseph J. Reynolds, Captain Anson Mills, Captain Henry Noyes, Captain James Egan, and Captain Alexander Moore. It also includes the Indian leaders Sitting Bull, Crazy Horse, Two Moons, and Wooden Leg, as well as Indian scouts that were paramount to the U.S. Cavalry during the Indian Wars. This section will also address equipment issues, morale, logistics procedures, training, and winter operations tactics that the U.S. Army and the Indian tribes faced.

In 1874, President of the United States, Ulysses S. Grant, on the heels of the 1873 financial panic and under the counsel of General William T. Sherman and General Phil Sheridan, proceeded to march troops into the region surrounding the Sioux reservation in South Dakota. In 1874 it was discovered that the region was rich in gold deposits, but the treaty of 1868 had given the rights to the land in the Black Hills to the Sioux tribe. The U.S. government needed to find a way to circumvent the treaty. In a letter to General Sherman, Sheridan painted an unbelievably rosy picture of the Yellowstone Basin, west of the Black Hills, to be so full of gold that one need just reach into the clear water and pluck out stones of gold.

This letter was intended for Sherman with the sole purpose of being printed by the National Press, causing a rush of miners and gold diggers to the area. The Sioux Indians had the only hunting rights on the Yellowstone River tributaries west of their reservation. Sheridan hoped an increase of miners would be an opportunity to destroy the available

game that the Indians hunted, driving the Indians off of the land. Sheridan was bound by law to enforce the treaty that did not allow whites the opportunity to settle or mine on the reservation itself, but he could encourage settlement in the surrounding area of northern Wyoming and eastern Montana. His plan was to encourage whites to settle heavily into the eastern Montana. This would drive down the wild game population and cause congress to change the hunting rights of the Sioux when the white population became too large to ignore.¹ This tactic was also designed to drive the Sioux back onto the reservation because of a lack of game to be hunted.

The stories in the press were well received by the white population. Because of a slump in the economy, people were willing to risk everything to mine for gold in the Black Hills and become rich, even if that meant encroaching on the reservation. Many groups of miners gathered to set off for the Black Hills. Their intent was to raid the Sioux reservation and illegally mine the region. Sheridan wrote a dispatch to the Armies in the territory stating “Should companies now organizing at Sioux City and Yankton trespass on the Sioux Indian Reservation, you are hereby directed to use the force at your command to burn the wagon trains, destroy the outfit, and arrest the leaders, confining them at the nearest military post.”² His true feelings were revealed in his closing line when he stated “Should Congress extinguish the Sioux claim to the region, I will give cordial support to the settlement of the Black Hills.”³

During the winter of 1874 the mining parties were able to slip past the Army patrols and reported the discovery of gold in the Black Hills. This report fueled the protests of miners since they were unable to stake claims in the Black Hills. Sheridan became aggravated by the audacity of the miners. He could not believe that they had

gone onto the reservation to mine the gold. He was so outraged that he sent two detachments of soldiers to arrest the miners, against the advice of Sherman. The detachments were unable to accomplish their mission because of bad weather and turned back. In April of 1875 the Army apprehended the renegade miners and escorted them off of the reservation. This only seemed to fuel the fire of the whites. They now, more than ever, wanted their chance at the gold that was seemingly all over the Black Hills.

In the summer of 1875, the Department of the Interior commissioned geologist Walter P. Jenney to survey the Black Hills to discern the relative worth of the ground of the reservation. They had hoped to get an idea of the worth of the land in order to purchase the property, along with all rights to it, from the Sioux tribe. In September of 1875, a formal U.S. government commission met with the Sioux council outside of the Red Cloud Agency. The Sioux nation was greatly divided on the proposal to sell the land of the Black Hills, and when the meeting ended, no settlement was agreed upon. The commission recommended that Congress set a fair price and force the Sioux nation to accept it.

This proposal led to a secret November meeting at the White House in Washington, DC. Sheridan, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and the secretary of the interior were summoned to the White House for council with the president. Knowing the possibility of a Sioux War on the northern plains, Sheridan gave Crook command of the Department of the Platte in April. Sheridan requested Crook's presence at the White House for this meeting. By the summer of 1875, Crook estimated that nearly 1,200 gold miners were in the Black Hills, trespassing on the Sioux reservation.⁴

Sheridan got everything he wanted from the November meeting. The president's order to protect the Sioux reservation would continue, but the Army was no longer responsible for it. The effort to purchase the Black Hills by the government had been shut down by the nomadic bands of Sioux from outside of the reservation. The president wanted to drive these Indian leaders onto the reservation in order to control them. If the Indians were unwilling to comply with his order, the president told Sheridan to initiate a winter campaign against Crazy Horse, Gall, and Sitting Bull.

Six days after the meeting at the White House, the Indian Bureau Inspector reported that the winter roamers, Indians that stayed off of the reservation year around, "were in possession of the best hunting ground in the United States"⁵ and the U.S. government should send Army troops to "whip them into subjection" in a winter campaign as soon as possible. The Secretary of the Interior sent word to Sitting Bull and all other winter roamers that they were to report to the Agency immediately. If they did not report by 31 January 1876, the Army would force the roamers onto the reservation.⁶ Only one month from the conference with the president, the U.S. government had waged war with Sitting Bull, Crazy Horse, and all other winter roaming Indians who were off the reservation. It seems unconscionable that the War Department, acting on orders from the President of the United States, would declare war on the Indian tribes when this is the sole responsibility of the Congress of the United States. The Treaty of 1868 set aside land for the Indian tribes to hunt and live on, and the whole Indian Nation was correct in disregarding the imposition by the War Department. The white population of the United States was angry that the Indians would not give up the Black Hills to mining. Greed and

disregard for the “savages” was surely the impetus behind the nearsightedness of the U.S. government.

Ulysses S. Grant chose General George Crook to lead the winter campaign into the Indian Territory in southwestern Montana. Crook was an Indian fighter with the reputation of, at least in Sherman’s mind, being the greatest Indian fighter and manager the Army ever had. He had fought the Apache in Arizona and the Shoshone, Paiute and Nez Perce on the west coast. During the Civil War he fought the Confederate with Ohio on the side of the Union forces. During the Civil War in 1861, Crook served in guerilla actions in West Virginia and at the battles of Second Bull Run and Chickamauga. After the war, Crook returned to the Pacific Northwest, where he fought for two years against the Paiute. Because of his success, President Grant personally placed Crook in charge of the Arizona Territory. Beginning in 1871 he waged a successful campaign to force the Apache onto reservations. Crook spent his entire military career, with the exception of the Civil War years, on the frontier fighting the Indians. He earned the distinction of being the lowest-ranking West Point cadet ever to rise to the rank of non-brevet major general.

In 1806 the Army began awarding brevet rank. Borrowed from the British service, brevet rank was honorary rank awarded to an officer for meritorious conduct. Rank was a confusing issue initially during the research for this thesis since a person would be referred to as a captain one day, and a general the next. In the early 1870s, brevets were on the way to extinction by permitting only actual rank to be referred to in orders and prohibiting the wearing of brevet uniforms. Gradually, brevets ceased to be awarded and medals replaced them as means of conferring honor.⁷

The winter of 1872-1873 found Crook's men chasing and harassing roving bands of Indians who refused to enter the reservation. Under Crook's *General Order No. 10*, all such Indians would “be regarded as hostile and punished accordingly.”⁸ Having completed his mission against the Apache in Arizona, Crook was transferred to the northern Plains in April of 1875 where he took command of the Army of the Platte. He was first given the impossible task of removing a rapidly growing hoard of gold miners from the Black Hills. By 1876, he was part of the winter attack designed to drive the roamers back onto the Sioux reservation.

Joining Crook on the Centennial Campaign was General Joseph J. Reynolds. He had been serving as the Regimental commander of the 2nd Cavalry Regiment and general of volunteers in the reconstruction of Texas. Reynolds was a veteran of the Civil War, where he fought with the Union in numerous battles, and of the Mexican War. The history of Major General Joseph J. Reynolds is a shaky one. From his command of a Union Division to his time as the general of volunteers, Reynolds seemed to draw attention as a poor leader of soldiers and as one who might have been the unluckiest and most misunderstood general officer of the nineteenth century.

Receiving an appointment to the United States Military Academy at West Point, Reynolds graduated in 1843, tenth in a class of thirty-nine. In 1845 he joined troops under General Zachary Taylor in Texas. He returned the following year to West Point as an instructor of history and geography and stayed until 1855. After a tour of duty in the Indian Territory, he resigned his commission to teach engineering at Washington University in St. Louis. In 1860 he resettled in Indiana to enter the grocery business with his brother. At the outbreak of the Civil War, Reynolds returned to duty as a Colonel in

the Tenth Regiment of Indiana Volunteers and was soon appointed brigadier general of United States Volunteers. He distinguished himself in the fight for western Virginia and was promoted to Major General in 1862. He commanded a division in the Army of the Cumberland at Chickamauga and in fighting near Chattanooga, organized the defense of New Orleans in 1864, and led the Nineteenth Corps in the capture of Mobile. In an abstract from his Master of Military Arts and Science thesis, Commander David M. Kapaun, Jr. cites the relative lackluster performance by Reynolds division at the Battle of Chickamauga.⁹

After the Civil War, Reynolds again resigned his commission in 1866 and accepted a commission as Colonel of the twenty-fifth Infantry before he transferred to the Third Cavalry. Reynolds took charge of the Department of Arkansas at the end of the Civil War and was subsequently transferred to Brownsville, where he assumed responsibility for the military sub-district of the Rio Grande.

In September 1867 he succeeded General Charles Griffin as commander of the Department of Texas in Galveston. Reynolds quickly became caught up in the turmoil of political reconstruction as he moved to seize control of the state by the Republican party. Before the arrival of democratic General Winfield S. Hancock as his superior in the Fifth Military District, Reynolds appointed more than 400 Unionists and Republicans to state offices. Reynolds organized the election of delegates to the Constitutional Convention of 1868-69 after completing a registration of Texas voters that disfranchised thousands of Democrats and former Confederates,

In March 1869 his former classmate, President Grant, appointed him to command the Fifth Military District, and apparently aroused Reynolds' interest in a United States

Senate seat. The Republican party in Texas, however, emerged from the 1868 convention split between moderate and radical wings. As Reynolds sought the favor of the moderate Republicans under A. J. Hamilton and subsequently the radicals under E. J. Davis, he split the party further and weakened whatever support may have existed for his senatorial candidacy. In February 1870 he stepped aside as a candidate due to opposition across the state and across party lines. The termination of military rule in Texas in April 1870 had effectively ended Reynolds' political career. Reynolds returned to military duties on the frontier in 1872.¹⁰

Reynolds' second-in-command during the Centennial Campaign was Captain Anson Mills (figure 5). During the Civil War, Mills served with the Union as a member of the 18th Infantry Regiment, part of 3rd Brigade, 1st Division, Army of the Ohio. Mills credits himself for the Army getting rid of "scales," which were shiny accoutrements worn as decoration during battle in days of fighting with short swords.¹¹ On Christmas day of 1862, Mills was transferred from General Steedman's Brigade to Rosecrans' Army of the Cumberland in General Shepard's "Regular Brigade" and fought at Murfreesboro against Bragg and Breckinridge. Mills also fought at Chickamauga where the "Regular Brigade" lost over 30 percent of their strength in killed, wounded, and missing. They lost an entire battery (taken by the Confederates) and all of the horses were killed. Mills participated in the capture of the 500 guns of the Confederate Army at Missionary Ridge, which laid siege to Chattanooga following the battle of Chickamauga. His own heroic account had him in the depths of the enemy artillery barrage, only moments from death.¹²

After the war, Mills was detailed as a recruiter based on his time in service. He and his wife were sent to Fort Aubrey, Kansas, via Leavenworth. Mills later wrote that

the weather was so cold that one of his men froze to death and several others got frostbite. Another notable event in Mills' memoirs includes spending time at Fort Douglas, Utah where he learned first hand of the Mormon religion from Brigham Young himself.

As commander of Company H, Mills was known for his strange sense of leadership and military bearing. He encouraged a different form of punishment for any man in need of discipline. Mills had the post carpenter construct a very unprepossessing wooden horse and a wooden sword about six feet long, with its business end painted bloody red. Any soldier reported for disorderly conduct had to ride this horse for a certain period of time, dismounting occasionally to groom it with a currycomb and provide it with a bucket of water. Most men came to dread "riding the horse" more than they did spending a month in the guardhouse.¹³

Upon arrival at Fort Bridger, Utah in 1866, Mills' two companies were equipped with Spencer breech-loading carbines. Although this was a definite step up from the Springfield muzzle-loaders that they were carrying, the Spencers had heavy metallic cartridges for 50-caliber ammunition. This ammunition was cumbersome and loud when carried in the old Springfield ammunition boxes. Mills designed a leather belt with 50 loops on it so the soldiers could carry their ammunition around their waist. The belt was easily constructed of leather by the post saddler. Mills quickly gained numerous patents for his ammunition belt and it was distributed throughout the U.S. Army and to numerous armies around the world. This invention made Mills wealthy and allowed him to continue to produce many other items of equipment, mostly for military use.¹⁴

In 1869, congress passed a law reducing the Army from 60,000 to 30,000 men. Mills traveled with his regiment to Atlanta for the reconsolidation, and in 1871, transferred from the Infantry to the Cavalry because he thought that the Cavalry would provide more opportunity for success. His first duty as a Cavalry officer was with the 3rd Cavalry Regiment in Fort Halleck, Nevada with follow on duty at Fort Whipple in Prescott, Arizona. In December of 1871, he moved to 2nd Cavalry Regiment at Fort McPhearson, Nebraska. When he arrived in January of 1872, he was under the new command of General Reynolds.

Another of Reynolds' battalion commanders was Captain Alexander Moore (figure 6), who was a native of Ireland and was appointed as a Lieutenant in the Thirteenth Wisconsin Infantry when the Civil War began. His service was categorized as distinguished and he was quickly brevetted Lieutenant Colonel of volunteers for gallantry and distinguished conduct in the Army of the Potomac prior to Gettysburg. He was also a brevet colonel of volunteers for gallant and highly meritorious conduct in the battle of Gettysburg. In 1867, he was appointed captain in the Thirty-eighth Infantry, and assigned to the Third Cavalry in 1870.

In the late 1860s, the Army was beginning the conversion to a standardized clothing, equipment, and quartermaster system. Change to equipment and clothing was a slow process. Because of the lack of experience of the U.S. soldiers fighting in the arctic type conditions, many of the troops were put in harms way due to their equipment. Many of the changes that were made were based on making the clothing look better, not more comfortable or warmer. The clothes worn by the soldiers were neither practical nor lightweight, though the over garments did offer warmth against the bitter cold of the

winter expedition. Prior to the Centennial Campaign, most of the force had never lived in or fought in temperatures as extreme as those experienced during the march into southeastern Montana. The uniformity was nonexistent in an organization that prided itself on uniformity. Many of the soldiers wore whatever clothing they could muster, often trading their buddies or the supply sergeant for a more effective barrier from the cold.

Understanding the clothing challenges provides insight into the plight of the troops in the regiment. A passage from the memoirs of Captain John G. Bourke, a member of Crook's staff, provides a description of the "typical" northern plains soldier during the winter campaign.

For underwear, individual preferences were consulted, the general idea being to have at least two kinds of material used, principally merino and perforated buckskin; over these was placed a heavy blue flannel shirt, made double-breasted, and then a blouse, made also double-breasted, then Mission or Minnesota blanket, with large buttons, or a coat of Norway kid lined with heavy flannel. When the blizzards blew, nothing in the world would keep out the cold but an overcoat of buffalo [figure 7] or bearskin or beaver, although for many the overcoats made in St. Paul of canvas, lined with the heaviest blanket, and strapped and belted tight about the waist, were pronounced sufficient. The head was protected by a cap of cloth, with fur border to pull down over the ears; a fur collar enclosed the neck and screened the mouth and nose from the keen blasts; and the hands were covered by woolen gloves [figure 8] and over-gauntlets of beaver [figure 9] or musk-rat fur.¹⁵

These soldiers bore the look of an underfed buffalo wandering around the prairie on the back of a horse. They were so bundled and encumbered by the heavy clothing they wore that they were not able to fight in their standard equipment. Many soldiers spent part of their own meager wages on warm clothing because the Army did not have a system to keep them equipped.

Doctrine used in the Indian Wars was generally gained by experiences of the individual soldiers. The doctrine learned during the Mexican War, the Civil War, and early Indian wars was not formally recorded. This lack of forethought ensured that the Army continually needed to “reinvent the wheel” every time they fought against irregular forces.

The U.S. Army fought against irregular forces throughout the entire nineteenth century. For example, it fought against more than 150 Indian tribes from the southeast to the northwest United States. Before that, it fought against Confederate raiders and guerrillas in Mexico. Following the Indian Wars, the Army fought against revolutionaries in the Philippines. Because of the Army’s ability to adapt, they were able to eventually win each conflict, even though the Army fought each engagement with irregular forces in what seemed to be a doctrinal vacuum. The Army was almost always successful, but never developed doctrine (or even just a written example of lessons learned) to aid in the next conflict.

Guerrilla activity during the American Civil War never amounted to much more than harassment. Although the uniformed forces on such battlefields as Shiloh, Antietam, and Gettysburg decided the war itself, the constant harassment by the irregular forces caused commanders on both sides to spend resources to protect the valuable supply stocks. Virgil Carrington Jones has stated that “gray ghosts and rebel raiders” operating in northern and western Virginia prevented Grant from implementing his plans for an attack against Richmond for the better part of a year. Even though this might have prolonged the war, there is no evidence that these guerrilla activities were decisive.¹⁶

Although the Indians of North America used guerrilla tactics, they were not necessarily participating in a guerrilla war. Unlike the guerrillas of Mexico or the Confederacy, they were not part-time soldiers hidden by a friendly population. They did not act in support of an existing regular Army. These were people under attack by numerous groups of settlers, gold miners, railroads, stockmen, trappers, and the military. They responded with violence in a sporadic fashion with no strategic plan. Often they resisted only because they saw no other choice. They fought as nomads or from unsecure bases, not like the Mexicans and Confederates that were hidden by a larger population living behind the lines of their enemies.

The Army's task in the west was more difficult because the Indians did not usually move on foot, nor did they stay on a relatively small possession of land. General William T. Sherman described the war against the Indians as the "hardest kind of war." The Indians would attack settlements on horseback, in small bands, and then ride off into the unsettled west. The Indians used wide expanses to travel and could make raids many miles from their tribe. This made the job of proving which tribe committed the crime almost impossible, and made catching up to the guilty warriors a difficult, if not impossible, task. The speed at which the Indians moved was unparalleled by any of the other guerrilla forces of the nineteenth century.

Much of the Army's work in the west during the Indian Wars was that of a federal police force. It served eviction notices on Indians and then forcibly removed them when required. If Indians were off of the reservations, the Army found them and forced them back. If the Army could not coax them back onto the reservation, it would attempt to arrest the Indians. This amounted to little more than an armed attack to force the Indians

to surrender. If these Indian bands raided white settlers, the Army's task was to track down the guilty parties and bring them back for punishment. These activities sometimes looked like war due to the numbers involved, but for the most part they were routine but difficult police work.¹⁷ The Indians of the west rarely engaged in what we would now refer to as a real war. Although most Indian tribes had a basic knowledge of tactics, they usually lacked discipline and chiefs that were able to control warriors in the heat of battle. Widely known for their stealth and ferocity, the Indians fought in a way that was significantly different from that of the other irregulars engaged by the Army in the nineteenth century. They were not attempting to wear down the enemy by harassment. They fought as they did because it was the only way they knew to fight. Their success in staying off the reservations as long as they did was more from the Army's small size and inability to learn from previous engagements than from the Indians' skill in fighting.

To keep up with the nomadic Indian warriors, the Army needed to change its strategy about how the soldiers would be armed and what they would carry. The soldier needed to lighten his load, carrying only the bare minimum necessary to be able to travel the great distances covered by the Indians when the Army was in pursuit. The typical soldier was burdened by an average of forty-two pounds less than the soldier that fought in the previous wars.¹⁸ This weight reduction allowed the Army horses to keep up with the Indian bands that carried no more than a weapon and ammunition in the summer months. Leaders realized that to win at irregular warfare, the Army needed to actively patrol and keep constant pressure on the enemy. This worked well against the Indians in the west, and by the mid-1890s, the Indians were driven back onto the reservations and subdued.

In military terms the Indian Wars have received far more attention than they deserve. Most historians would agree that the Indians were little more than a nuisance to the Army. Except for a few significant successes, such as that against the U.S. military in the beginning of the Centennial Campaign, the Indians merely fought to hunt on the land they had survived on for hundreds of years. Even though the Army fought nearly 1000 engagements with the Indians during the years encompassed by the Indian Wars, most of these conflicts were small-scale battles, lasting relatively short periods of time.

In the eye of the Indian, the soldier was often considered the least of his worries. In his book *Frontier Regulars*, Robert Utley states that the Army was only “one of many groups that pushed the frontier westward and doomed the Indian. Other frontiersmen--trappers, traders, miners, stockmen, farmers, railroad builders, and merchants . . . share largely in the process. They, rather than the soldiers, deprived the Indian of the land and the sustenance that left him no alternative but to submit.”¹⁹ The pressure of an expanding white civilization, not the campaigns of the Army, was the primary reason for the end of the Indian resistance. Even though the Indian Wars were fought over a longer time than any other wars fought by the Army, they might have been the least relevant of the Army's nineteenth-century experiences fighting against irregulars.

Robert Wooster, in his study of the Army in the West, found no significant connection between the Army's Civil War experience and its doctrine of irregular warfare against the Indians. Officers could not agree over such fundamentals as the timing of offensives, the optimum composition of forces, and the use of Indian scouts. Wooster observed, “Military success against Indians was thus not attributable to a national strategic doctrine understood and practiced by officers in the field. It was instead the

result of a commander's personal experiences in the west, his perceptions of Indians and the natural environment, the abilities of his subordinates, and simple good fortune.”²⁰

The Indian Wars in the nineteenth century taught the Army a lot about irregular warfare. Although these wars were fought throughout the United States against more than 125 distinctly different tribes, the most obvious similarity between the Indian tactics and that of other guerrilla techniques used against the Army in the nineteenth century is General George Crook’s observation that Apaches “only fight with regular soldiers when they choose and when the advantages are all on their side.”²¹ This observation might just as easily have been made about Mexican, Confederate, or Philippine guerrillas. Even this basic observation would have been helpful in training the young officers of the United States Military Academy. Young officers like Moore, Mills, Noyes, and Egan who would lead men in the futile, and often lethal, actions like the battle at Powder River.

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¹Paul A. Hutton, *Phil Sheridan and His Army* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), 291-292.

²Ibid., 292.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., 294.

⁵Ibid., 300.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Russell F. Weigley, *History of the United States Army* (New York and London: Macmillan Publishing Company, Inc., 1967), 110-111.

⁸Martin F. Schmitt, *General George Crook His Autobiography* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1960), 22-23

⁹David M. Kapaun Jr., “Major General Joseph J. Reynolds and His Division at Chickamauga: A Historical Analysis” (Thesis, Master of Military Art and Science, Fort Leavenworth, KS: US Army Command and General Staff College, 1999), Abstract.

¹⁰Charles W. Ramsdell, *Reconstruction in Texas* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1910), 276.

¹¹Anson Mills, US Army, *My Story* (Washington, DC: Press of Byron S. Adams by Anson Mills, 1918), 87-89.

¹²*Ibid.*, 92-93.

¹³*Ibid.*, 106.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 112.

¹⁵John G. Bourke, *On the Border with Crook* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1971), 252-53.

¹⁶Virgin Carrington Jones, *Gray Ghosts and Rebel Raiders* (New York: Holt, 1956), 35.

¹⁷John M. Gates, *The Army and Irregular Warfare* (Wooster, OH: The College of Wooster, accessed 19 November 2000) available at <http://www.wooster.edu/history/jgates/book-contents.html>; Internet.

¹⁸Albert Brackett, “Our Cavalry: Its Duties, Hardships, and Necessities at Our Frontier Posts,” *Journal of the Military Service Institution of the United States*, 4 (1883): 385-86; Archibald Forbes, *The U.S. Army*, *North American Review*, 135 (1882), 144-45, in US Army Command and General Staff College, *C600 Syllabus/Book of Readings*, (Fort Leavenworth: USACGSC, July 2000), 454.

¹⁹Robert M. Utley, *Frontier Regulars: The United States Army and the Indian, 1866-1891* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 410-411.

²⁰Robert Wooster, *The Military and United States Indian Policy, 1865-1903* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 213.

²¹George Crook, “The Apache Problem,” *Journal of the Military Service Institution of the United States*, 7 (October 1886): 263.

CHAPTER 2

THE LONGEST DAY

Most accounts of the Battle of Powder River totally disregard the days prior to the battle. Most of this chapter relies on J. W. Vaughn's book *The Reynolds Campaign on Powder River*. Vaughn gives the only account of the events leading up to the battle. Unless otherwise stated, the references for this chapter come from Vaughn.

On the bitter cold morning of 1 March 1876, 883 soldiers of the Big Horn Expedition set out from Fort Fetterman, Wyoming Territory, on the first leg of the Centennial Campaign. They began to search for villages of Sioux and Cheyenne "Winter Roamers," the Indians who refused to return to the reservations as required by the 31 January deadline.¹ The next twenty-six days would be the toughest of the soldiers' lives. With spirits high and morale set to do battle with the "hostiles," Crook was confident that his men were up to the task of destroying the will of the Indians who wished to remain free and off of the reservations.

Included within the column that cold March morning were 30 commissioned officers, 662 enlisted, 35 Indian scouts, 5 pack trains with 62 employees, 89 wagon train employees, and 5 ambulance employees. Transportation included 85 wagons, 656 horses, and 892 mules.² Crook knew that the soldiers would need nourishing food to aid them through the cold winter conditions. He ordered the cook to include seventy head of beef on the hoof to provide fresh meat to the cold and tired soldiers. The cattle would be slaughtered along the way as necessary.

The column traveled in long lines that stretched for miles into the distance. In the front of the column were the Indian scouts, led by the chief of scouts, Major T. H.

Stanton. The procession that followed the scouts was 10 troops of Cavalry, 2 companies of Infantry, ambulances, the wagon train, the pack train, and in the rear of the formation, the 70 head of cattle. The goal of the column commander was to travel twenty to thirty miles per day, reaching Montana by 9 March. Because of the bitter cold and excessive snowfall, the column would not reach Montana until late in the afternoon of 11 March.

On the second night after the departure from Fort Fetterman, hostile Indians from the northwest attacked Crook's column. Around two o'clock in the morning, Indians attacked the sleeping column and stampeded the cattle herd.³ After first light the next morning, Crook sent a team of scouts to track the lost herd. The scout team returned with news that the cattle were gone and that they would likely wander back to Fort Fetterman. Crook made the first mistake of the expedition by not sending his cavalry after the lost herd, effectively losing all of the fresh meat he had planned to use to feed his column during the long march into Montana. Ironically, Crook would later court-martial Reynolds for losing the captured pony herd, insinuating that Reynolds should have sent his cavalry after the ponies.

From this point on, the column was under constant surveillance from the native Indians. Smoke signals could often be seen warning the tribes of the arrival of the white soldiers to the area. Surprise was the decisive element of the Crook plan, but the Indians knew where he was and what his intentions were. Crook came up with a plan to slip through the Indian screening forces. He would hide his cavalry and march most of his infantry back towards Fort Reno, giving the impression that his forces were returning in defeat. On the morning of 7 March, his infantry departed, intentionally attracting the attention of the Indian reconnaissance while his cavalry hid in the valley, completing the

successful ruse.⁴ The cavalry remained unseen by the Indians for the next ten days, allowing them freedom to maneuver and regain the element of surprise.

Late in the morning on 16 March, Crook's column of five Cavalry battalions, pack trains, camp equipment, and the band of scouts spotted two horsemen riding slowly down Otter Creek. With the help of field glasses, now referred to as binoculars, the two horsemen were soon identified as Indians. This delighted the soldiers who were happy to see that their recent days of forced marching and cold food would be rewarded with a successful battle.

Crook sent Grouard out alone for speed to investigate the Indians. Although Major Stanton was the chief of scouts, Grouard was generally considered the head scout because he was favored by Crook. His experience as a tracker and scout was unparalleled. Grouard (figure 10), whose real name was Walter Brazeau and whose Indian nickname was "The Grabber," came upon the two Indians walking along Otter Creek. The Indians were tracking buffalo sign and did not see Grouard. As the two Indians continued tracking down Otter Creek, Grouard watched them and surmised that they were hunting and had recently come from their village. When the two Indians were directly across the creek from Grouard, they looked up towards him and quickly bolted into the wood line to the far side of Otter Creek. Grouard was sure he had not been seen, but was unsure what the two curious Indians were looking at. They seemed to be looking right at him.

Looking over his shoulder, Grouard realized that his scouts and the column of soldiers, which stretched over two miles, were fast coming upon his position. The two Indians had seen the scouts, but Grouard was unsure whether they could discern if his

scouts were another Indian party or white soldiers. He assumed that the Indians would think his scouts were a Crow war party and would return to their village to tell of the arrival of an unfriendly tribe. Grouard waited for the column to catch up to him. When General Crook arrived, Grouard expressed his displeasure with Crook for not keeping the scouts with the rest of the column. Crook reportedly stated that he attempted to keep the scouts with the column by ordering them to stay close, but the scouts disobeyed and continued ahead of the column. Grouard told Crook that the two Indians had seen the scouts, but that the column was probably as of yet unseen because of the large hill between the two Indians and Red Clay Creek.

Crook, an experienced Indian fighter, estimated the Indian strength in this area to be only seven to eight hundred braves and that they would be spread out in small bands to winter over the harsh season. This estimation, as well as the necessity for speed and the security of the pack train, drove Crook to divide his forces. He sent three battalions after the two Indians in an attempt to ensure surprise at the Indian village and two battalions with the pack train. Crook would also stay with the pack train, offering command of the troops attacking the Indian village to Reynolds. Lieutenant J. B. Bourke, the aide-de-camp to General Crook, would later surmise that Crook was offering Reynolds an opportunity to salvage his soiled reputation gained at Chickamauga and as the commander of the Department of Texas.⁵

The reasoning for splitting his forces and the orders he gave Reynolds are still unclear today. Reynolds reported that Crook told him to “capture the Indian village, kill or capture as many Indians as possible, run off their pony herd, and do them as much damage as possible.”⁶ Later, during the court-martial of Reynolds, Crook would state

that he also told Reynolds to “capture the pony herd and carry off the meat and provisions so that they could be used by the troops of the column.”⁷

After a hearty meal, Reynolds and his troops set out after the two Indians at about 5:20 P.M. The column had already been moving for an entire day in the bitter cold and was now going to track the two Indians with no sleep and weary legs. With Grouard and the scouts in the lead, the column could make good time, and Reynolds would have the best opportunity of following the two braves and finding their village.

The night would be cold and long, trailing the Indian tracks through a harsh, howling blizzard and no moonlight with temperatures colder than 30 below zero. The scout Grouard would prove his worth over and over, finding even the slightest hint of the Indian’s trail. He would often get down on all fours to squint at the ground, looking for the most indistinguishable impression. Frank Grouard would dart around, looking for the faintest sign of the trail, lose the tracks, then, just as quickly, pick them up again with what the others in the column could only consider divine intervention.⁸

Almost every hour, the call would come from the back of the column to halt in order to allow the column to close up. The freezing wind beat at their faces, but they continued after their prey. Grouard took turns with his best tracking scouts looking for sign. When one would get too cold from foraging for sign on his hands and knees, a fresher scout would take his place and continue the hunt. The snow seemed to lighten up as dawn approached and it brought crisp clear skies and bitter cold temperatures. This was a bone chilling cold that bit at the faces, hands, and feet of the scouts and soldiers.

Wintertime in Montana is bitterly cold. Although it is possible that the temperature reached the extreme low that has been reported in numerous sources during

this time period, it is highly unlikely. The temperatures quoted in the books by Vaughn, Bourke, and Werner of between forty and fifty below zero might be a stretch since all accounts tell of the thermometer mercury jelling in the bottom of the glass tubes. From records at the Western Regional Climate Center of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration of the time period between 1948 and 2000, the coldest temperature recorded on 17 March of any year was three degrees below zero in 1965. This reading was taken at Broadus, Montana, approximately thirty-two miles north of the battlefield. The coldest day in March between 1948 and 2000 was 8 March 1996 at twenty-six below zero. The coldest day ever recorded in Broadus, Montana is forty-seven below zero on 22 December 1972.⁹ Since the highest ground they traveled over was only one thousand feet higher than Broadus, the temperature can only be assumed to be two degrees colder than that recorded. If the wind chill is added, the temperatures could have appeared much colder. If the temperature was thirty below zero, and the wind was blowing between ten and fifteen miles per hour, the temperatures would have felt between fifty-eight and seventy-two below zero.¹⁰ Most references to the wind during the days leading up to this battle do not mention blizzard-like conditions, so the probability of the wind exceeding fifteen miles per hour is unlikely.

Reynolds again sent Grouard and a few of his other scouts to find the Indian village and a traversable trail off the steep mountainside. He ordered his troops to dismount and take cover within a narrow ravine. He did not allow the soldiers to build a fire for fear of being seen by any Indian camp nearby. The sides of the ravine would at least provide shelter from the freezing wind. The soldiers, tired from twenty-four hours of forced march, huddled together to keep warm. Some of the soldiers lay down on the

frozen ground to rest “just for a minute, you know,”¹¹ risking certain death from exposure and frostbite. The officers and NCOs that had experience with the damage caused by the bitter cold walked the line of soldiers, kicking and rousing them to keep them from falling into the eternal sleep, watching for signs of frostbite on faces, hands, and feet. This gesture of professionalism no doubt saved countless amputations and possible deaths of the soldiers of the column.

Grouard, one of the best Indian scouts to work for the U. S. Army, had tracked the hoof prints of the Indian ponies throughout the night. Through the driving snow and severe temperatures, Grouard crawled along the tracks left by the ponies until he came to the Powder River.¹² He had seen the valley that the Indian village was camped in and studied it through a thick fog that ascended from the riverbed. He had located the village by listening for the bells that the Indians kept around the necks of their ponies and stayed until daybreak to count the tepees. Grouard estimated that the village was between 50 and 100 lodges with as many as 700 to 1,000 Indians.¹³ Grouard was so close to the village that he heard an Indian trying to summon the support of the village. A small band of braves had already circled back to find the Reynolds column, but had taken the trail lower on the mountain than the one the column of soldiers took. The two parties missed each other in the dark. Meanwhile, Grouard sent another scout, John Shangrau, along with several other scouts, back to Reynolds’ column to bring the troops forward without delay.

It was an extremely cold Montana morning on 17 March 1876. Colonel Joseph J. Reynolds waited with his pack train four miles behind his Indian scout, Frank Grouard. Around six-thirty in the morning, Shangrau and the other scouts reached the column with

word that Grouard had found the Indian village near Powder River and the trail leading there. They also advised him that the river was still four to six miles away across some of the worst terrain they had yet encountered. Orders were immediately given to mount up and move out. As the daylight grew in intensity, the column marched faster and with more purpose. During the traversing of the difficult terrain, many of the horses strained muscles and injured their backs while sliding down the grassy, frozen slopes of the creek beds and ravines. The soldiers were excited to know that the Indian camp was close. They quizzed the scouts as to the size of the village and what they had seen. They would soon find out first hand the status of the Indian camp.

Colonel Reynolds gave orders to the adjutant, Lieutenant Morton, to assemble the regiment by companies of two abreast on line. With more than 300 soldiers plus their horses, the maneuver amazingly took less than thirty minutes to complete. By seven o'clock, the companies of the regiment were on line and prepared to receive their orders for the attack on the Indian village at the base of the mountain. As the regiment was being assembled, Reynolds and Moore planned the attack. The most amazing thing about this maneuver was the limited time necessary for the unit to accomplish the task. Later, the difficulty the individual commanders had in simple tasks prior to the battle will be discussed.

Many issues arose during the planning stage. Because of the fog that still hung in the air, the regimental commander could not see the village. He could only see some of the terrain that led down the mountain to the village, but he knew that there was at least three inches of snow on the ground. He asked Grouard for details on the best route to the village, but the incredible Indian scout was unable to explain a clear, concise route in

detail. Reynolds had to give broad guidance, with less-than-clear direction of movements necessary for the attack.

From most accounts, Reynolds used relative directions rather than cardinal directions that confused the battalion commanders when they realized the Indian village was not where the scouts told them it was. From the court-martial logs of Colonel Reynolds, the general understanding of the attack was that Moore's battalion was to screen to the northwest of the Indian village in order to defeat the Indians fleeing the attack. Mills was to establish a position to the south of Moore orienting due east in order to defeat any Indians fleeing the attack and to be the regimental reserve. Egan's company was to attack the village from the south to drive the Indians to the west, and Noyes' company was ordered to approach the village from the south, capture the pony herd, and drive them back to the south.

Reynolds actual orders, however, were riddled with relative directions. From the testimony of Lieutenant Morton at the trial of Captain Moore, Reynolds orders were: "Captain Egan was to go around on the right of the village which was supposed to be on the creek bottom (this was not visible from the point where Reynolds was giving his orders). Captain Moore, with his dismounted battalion, was to go around to the left of the village and capture the Indians as they fled the attack."¹⁴

Reynolds chose Egan's "White Horse" troop (figure 11) to make the cavalry charge through the village. Egan's troop was the only troop that was still in possession of their revolvers. The other companies were told that the attack on the Indian village would be made with carbines, so those commanders ordered their troops to leave their revolvers at the pack train that was with Crook miles behind the regiment. Mills later

stated that he did not think the cavalry charge was a sound plan since the revolvers were not very accurate and a cavalry charge on horseback would only serve to wake the Indians. The normal technique used by cavalry was to dismount and attack the Indians on foot to increase accuracy and increase the range of the carbines. This method was a well-established technique and was much more successful in this rough country where cavalry charges were difficult, if not impossible.

There was a state of relative boastfulness and overconfidence throughout the regiment in the hours leading up to the attack. This was the fight they had been looking forward to for the past seventeen days, ever since leaving Fort Fetterman. The combination of hard days of marching, sleepless cold nights, and lack of food had given the entire unit a sense of euphoria. Captain Moore told his troops that he “wanted the opportunity to crawl close to the enemy and give them a blizzard of lead and get a bucketful of blood.”¹⁵

The fifteen scouts were divided equally among the companies with Grouard leading Moore’s battalion into position for the screen. Reynolds dismounted Mills’ battalion under the insistence of Mills and Lieutenant Morton. Between the location of the mission brief and the village was a small bluff on the eastern edge of the mountain. The bluff was flanked by a deep ravine running northeasterly down the mountain on one side, and southeasterly down the mountain on the other side. By now the sun was above the horizon, and any hope of attacking a sleeping village had evaporated with the morning fog.

Frank Grouard led Moore’s battalion to the bottom of the mountain, stopping on the north side in the valley of Thompson Creek. The soldiers of the battalion led their

horses on foot since the terrain was too rough to ride down. They dismounted their horses and gave the reins of every eight horses to one rider to hold. Although their position at Thompson Creek was masked from the Indians, it was about one mile from the Indian camp. Soon Reynolds rode up and told Moore that he was too far away to be useful in the battle. Moore inquired with Grouard about the details of the village, and was told by Grouard “the whole caboodle was there--Sitting Bull, Crazy Horse, and all.”¹⁶ This was later proved wrong, but the promise of fame for capturing the two Indian warriors was tantalizing.

By now the regiment was in broad daylight, and Moore’s battalion realized that the village was not where they thought it should be. There would be no way for them to attack the village from the northwest. From their position this far south, Moore refused to move his battalion for fear of discovery by a few Indians that the soldiers saw among the pony herd. It is still unknown today why Moore had such a difficult time following the orders of Reynolds to screen the high ground to the northwest of the village.

It is the contention of this writer that there was a breakdown in communications between the scouts, Grouard and Shangrau, and Reynolds. From this writer’s research of the ground around the battlefield and the accounts of Shangrau recorded in interviews with Eli Ricker, the scouts could see both the deep ravine to the south of the high ground, Thompson Creek, and the ravine to the north, Flood Creek, the one that Moore should have led his battalion down.¹⁷ The scouts, upon returning from their last reconnaissance of the village, stated that they could see the village, and the ravine to the north and south. They also stated that they were looking down at the village from a vantage point of 1,000 feet above the village.

For these two statements to be true, they would have had to be on the high ground to the west of the village during their reconnaissance. This meant that when they communicated the position of the village in relationship to the surrounding terrain, Reynolds understood that he could send a force around the bluff to the northwest of the village. When the scouts returned to lead the column back to the east, Shangrau must have taken the regiment down the wrong ridgeline. From all accounts of the routes to the battle, the regiment traveled east across the ridge south of Thompson Creek (figure 12).

Reynolds sent Noyes' battalion down Graham Creek and Mills and Moore down Thompson Creek. From the reconnaissance information of the scouts, Reynolds must have assumed that the village was just east of Hospital Bluff. This mistake or misunderstanding between the Indian scout and Reynolds probably meant the difference between success and failure of the mission.

Looking to the southeast, Moore observed Mills' battalion advancing onto the same ridge as his own battalion. Concerned that the small ridge already held more troops than it could safely hide, Moore went to Mills to discuss other options. While Moore moved to Mills' position, Reynolds sent word to Mills to dismount where he was, use one holder for every ten horses, and follow and support Captain Moore. Captain Mills later testified,

When I got near the foot of the mountain, Captain Moore came halfway down and motioned me not to come forward; supposing there was danger of being discovered, I directed my men to halt and lie down. I went myself up the mountain to see what was the difficulty. I went about half way up the mountain and Captain Moore said to me, "there is no use of your command coming up here, you can't get into the village this way, there is an impassible ravine between me and the village." I replied that I was ordered to support him and asked him what I was going to do. He said take a position that overlooked the village, and there ought to be some way to get in.¹⁸

Mills decided to climb to the top of the ridge to get a look at what Moore could see. From that position, Mills got his first look at the Indian village (figure 13). He realized that it was not only a very large village, but also much further away than he thought. From this vantage point, Mills estimated the village to be at least one thousand yards away. He knew that from here even the best sharpshooters in the regiment would not be able to reach the village, let alone hit an Indian brave trying to escape the attack.

Mills moved his company down into the ravine and into position to follow and support Moore's battalion. Mills realized that the climb over the rough terrain would be extremely taxing, so he ordered his men to take off their overcoats and leave them in a pile. The overcoats were supposed to be recovered after the battle. In the confusion of the conflict, the forty-eight overcoats were never seen again. The next night, the temperatures would again drop well below zero, and Mills' company was left without the shelter of their warm overcoats for the rest of the mission. Mills later came under pressure for allowing his soldiers to be exposed to the bitter cold by not retrieving the overcoats from the mountain. His defense was that he asked Reynolds for permission to return to gather the coats, but Reynolds refused because it was too dangerous and the Indian force might capture or kill the supply party.

Reynolds had earlier instructed Mills to send a messenger if he needed Lieutenant Johnson's company to support his attack and, if so, whether he wanted them mounted or dismounted. While still in the valley below, Mills sent word to Reynolds that he did not need the extra company, and that he was prepared to attack, positioned only about one hundred and fifty yards from the village.¹⁹ This estimation would lead Reynolds to the

conclusion that both Moore's and Mills' battalions were prepared for the attack. Nothing could have been farther from the truth.

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¹J. W. Vaughn, *The Reynolds Campaign on Powder River* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), 204.

²J. W. Vaughn, *The Reynolds Campaign on Powder River*, 45.

³*Ibid.*, 204.

⁴Dr. William G. Robertson, Dr. Jerold E. Brown, William M. Campsey, and Scott R. McMeen, *Atlas of the Sioux Wars* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Combat Studies Institute, US Army Command and General Staff College, [1995]), Map 9 (description).

⁵John G. Bourke, *On the Border with Crook* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1971), 270.

⁶Vaughn, *The Reynolds Campaign on Powder River*, 61.

⁷*Ibid.*, 61.

⁸Jerome A. Green, *Battles and Skirmishes of the Great Sioux War, 1876-1877* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), 6.

⁹Western Regional Climate Center, Period of Record Daily Climate Summary for Broadus, Montana, Daily Records for Station 241127, Period Used 7/1/1948 thru 7/31/2000 (accessed 2 January, 2001); available from <http://www.wrcc.dri.edu/cgi-bin/cliRECT.pl?mtbroa>; Internet.

¹⁰A. J. Young, D. E. Roberts, D. P. Scott, J. E. Cook, M. Z. Mays, and E. W. Askew, Technical Note Number 92-2, Sustaining Health and Performance in the Cold: Environmental Medicine Guidance for Cold-Weather Operations (Wind Chill Chart, US Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine, Natick, Massachusetts, July 1992) Appendix A, 42.

¹¹Vaughn, *The Reynolds Campaign on Powder River*, 63.

¹²Robertson, Brown, Campsey, and McMeen, *Atlas of the Sioux Wars*, Map 10 (description).

¹³*Ibid.*, 65

¹⁴Ibid., 69

¹⁵Ibid., 73

¹⁶Ibid., 74

¹⁷Eli S. Ricker and Eli Ricker Tablets, “Narrative of John Shangrau” (Interviews, Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1906-07), Tablet 27, 70.

¹⁸Vaughn, *The Reynolds Campaign on Powder River*, 77.

¹⁹Ibid., 79

CHAPTER 3

THE ATTACK

Colonel Joseph J. Reynolds stood atop the frozen ground, knee deep in the snow, wondering why it was taking his battalions so long to get prepared and into position for the attack on the Indian village. It was almost nine o'clock in the morning, and it had already been light for more than an hour. Reynolds' plan was to attack the Indian village from the south with Egan's company and to use Noyes' company to capture the pony herd. Moore's battalion would establish a screen line to the northwest of the camp and pick off the Indians as they ran away from the attack. Mills' battalion would be held in reserve to either strengthen Moore's battalion or to reposition to assist Egan's attack (figure 14).

The soldiers of Moore's battalion had been waiting in hiding for more than half an hour. Many lay in the snow for fear of being discovered. The bitter cold was temporarily staved by the rush of adrenalin that the soldiers had built up, wanting to finish their mission. All waited for Captain Egan and his men to make their charge from around the bluff in the valley to the south.

Meanwhile, Noyes' battalion struggled to cross the frozen ground. Their movements were hampered by the deep ravines and gulches that were difficult in the summer months and almost impossible with the snow and ice during March of 1876. One of the horses broke its neck when it slipped on some rocks and crashed to the ground in the icy canyon. The men were forced to lead their mounts to the bottom of the mountain to get into position for the attack, a maneuver that took more than half of an hour in itself. From their position prior to the attack, Mr. Strahorn, a reporter and war

correspondent following the campaign and writing for the Denver Rocky Mountain News, estimated that they were still at least a mile from the village.¹

Noyes commanded the battalion to form two companies abreast and begin movement northward towards the village. Some men rode their mounts while others led them. Because of the difficulty of the traverse down the mountain, some horses fared better than others. The battalion crossed one more major ravine, the twenty-foot-deep, forty-foot-wide Thompson Creek (figure 15). This ravine was so dangerous that the unit had to lead their mounts in single file, picking their way down the steep ravine and slowing the column to a crawl. The ravine was hidden from the village, giving the troops the advantage of coordinating the crossing. Once across the ravine, the battalion moved swiftly toward the village, Egan's company on the right, Noyes on the left.

This set up Egan's company to continue into the village, and for Noyes' company to wait to take the pony herd. Most of Egan's men remained on foot as he ordered them to a company front, aligning the company with fifty men abreast, while Noyes' company remained in columns of two. Egan, about two hundred yards from the southern edge of the Indian village, commanded his men onto their mounts and ordered the charge. The men started the charge on line, at a brisk walk. The order he gave was to keep at a walk until they entered the village or until discovered in order to save the horses and allow the line to stay intact for the longest period of time. Once discovered by the Indians, they were to charge at a slow trot.

The animals were too fatigued to do anything other than walk or trot. The long, cold days with little food had taken its toll on the mounts. When the troops were close enough to the village to be within pistol range, they were to fire their pistols and storm

the village. Egan's company bisected the pony herd that was feeding south of the village. The ponies separated, allowing his company to pass through the center, then reformed behind the troops when they had passed.² The attack began.

Among the ponies was a young brave of about ten years old. As the company of forty-seven men passed the young brave, he made no motion to warn the tribe of the oncoming danger. The young brave stood stoic, blanket wrapped tightly around his body for warmth, staring at Egan. Lieutenant Bourke leveled his revolver at the young brave but Egan stopped him, saying that they needed to continue in silence and not alert the tribe.³ It is important to note that only Bourke tells of his attempt to silence the child, and only in his book. There is no mention of the incident by any other officer in the attacking company. After the company passed the herd, the young boy let out a "war whoop" to clear the village, and eventually the troops began to see movement in the village. As the attack began, Egan glanced at his watch and saw it read five minutes after nine.

As the village came into view, Egan was astonished to find that the orientation of the attack was slightly askew. His intent was to attack the village from southwest to northeast, but as he followed the Powder River with his right flank, the village rose to his left. It was not as close to the river as he had expected. The Indians had used the bluffs and ravines to the west of the river to place their teepees, keeping them sheltered from the harsh winter wind. This position of the village forced Egan's company to attack the village from southeast to northwest. Although a change from the original plan, this would allow the company to force the Indians into the planned screen line of Moore's battalion. With more time to assess the situation, Egan would have realized that the chance of fratricide would be increased exponentially between his unit and Moore's.

However, he would not have taken into account the incorrect position of Moore's battalion.

To the south of the village, Moore and his one hundred soldiers waited for the attack. Believing his screen line was in the correct place for the attack, Moore estimated he was about one hundred and fifty yards from the southern edge of the village. In reality, Moore's battalion was closer to one thousand yards from the village. Based on the author's personal knowledge of the battlefield and using the accounts of the soldier's sworn statements, Moore and his men were not close enough to effect fire into the village with any accuracy. From his position on the ridge behind Rawolle's ridge, Moore could not see more than one-quarter to one-half of the village. He would have been able to see the tops of the teepees, but not down to ground level where the Indians would have been. He also would not have been able to see any of the village to the north and northwest, the direction that was deemed his responsibility in the battle plan.

Mills, being held in reserve, saw Moore on the small ridge and held his battalion in the ravine south of Moore's ridge. Mills climbed near the top of the ridge to discuss the strategy with Moore. Moore told him that they were right on top of the village, about one hundred and fifty yards away. Mills climbed to the top of the ridge to see the village for himself. When he reached the summit, Mills was astounded that the village was closer to one thousand yards away. A possible reason for Moore misjudging the distance to the village is that depth perception is reduced when air temperature is below zero degree Fahrenheit and wind speed is over ten miles per hour. Visual acuity is reduced when air temperature is below twenty degrees below Fahrenheit and wind speed is over twenty miles per hour. These effects become particularly significant for viewing

distances greater than twenty feet.⁴ That morning, the temperatures were reported to be at least thirty to forty degrees below zero and the wind was blowing steadily. However, this does not account for Mills' lack of difficulty judging the extreme distance to the village.

In the distance, Mills could see more than one hundred teepees in the morning light. It was a very large village with the teepees spread out among the trees and ravines from the mountain on his left. The Indian chief had chosen a very good place for his people to camp. Mills became concerned that Moore's battalion would not be able to reach the village with their fires and told Moore that he needed to move his battalion forward. Moore told Mills that he could see the village fine from that vantage point, and that he had some of his most accurate sharpshooters forward that could reach the village. Moore was also concerned that there was no way to move his entire battalion forward without being seen by the village. This writer's personal walk of the battlefield supports Moore's concern as valid. With his horses, Moore would not be able to cross the steep ravine that was between his ridge and Rawolle's ridge. Without his mounts, he would be able to make it as far as Rawolle's ridge, but the ground north of that would offer him no cover or concealment for his movements (figure 16).

Moore's reluctance to move to his appropriate position might have been caused from dehydration or poor conditioning. Heavy physical work and sweating in cold weather leads to dehydration. Poorly conditioned soldiers are also more susceptible to cold injury, tire more quickly, and are unable to remain active to keep warm as long as fit soldiers.⁵ After retracing Moore's route, this writer was winded and fatigued upon reaching the top of the ridge. The walk from the valley floor at Thompson Creek took

seventeen minutes, crossing the same terrain Moore's battalion covered. With a lack of sleep, food, and shelter for three days, Moore might have been physically exhausted and unable to think clearly.

Mills told Moore he was going to move his unit north and get closer to the village because neither battalion could render assistance to Egan's attack from this ridge. He insisted that Moore promise to follow him and get closer to the village before firing. Moore confirmed that he would try to get closer. Mills testified later that he did not believe Moore would move his battalion closer, and asked him again to hold his fire and move closer to the village to assist Egan. Mills moved back down the ridge to the southeast and rejoined his battalion. He intended to move his battalion closer to the village using the low ground of the bluff as concealment from the Indians' view.

Reynolds continued to travel between his forces, commanding on the move with the intent of synchronizing his attack. Receiving a note written by Mills, he read that the two battalions were one hundred and fifty yards from the Indian camp and prepared to assist in Egan's attack. Mills had hastily written the note when Moore told him of the distance to the village and Mills sent a runner to keep his superior informed. Once Mills determined that the distance was closer to one thousand yards, he had no time to warn Reynolds.

Egan's company entered the village around ten minutes after nine in the morning. From most accounts, the Indians in the village were completely surprised. They had every reason to be since the treaty of 1868 allowed them to hunt and live on this land. They had not committed any crimes against white settlers during the past year. Nothing

led them to believe they were in any danger. As Egan's men rushed through the village, they were astonished to see that the Indians were putting up a fight.

This battle was not going like the plan Reynolds had briefed. The Indians were fighting the soldiers during their withdrawal. Soldiers were taking fire from what seemed to be all directions. The soldiers, armed with pistols, were riding through the village shooting at the teepees, running Indians, and virtually anything that moved. One soldier was shot through his cap, nearly mortally wounding him. As the soldier and a couple of his comrades, seeking revenge, entered the teepee where the round came from, they discovered that it was not a brave that fired the shot, but a few Indian squaws that were scurrying out the back of the teepee through a hole they had cut with their knives. A soldier was later quoted as saying, "If these Indians are cowards, they have a strange way of showing it."⁶

Reynolds' entire plan was predicated on the assumption that the Indians would not fight. Once they realized they were being attacked and surrounded by the United States Cavalry, they would lay down their weapons and surrender, returning to the reservation peacefully. The Indians were not cooperating with the Reynolds plan. These Indians were fighting for their lives. Totally surprised, they rallied to the bluffs and ravines to the west of the village, forming small bands of three to five warriors. Reynolds and Crook had underestimated the resolve of this tribe.

Egan's company continued through the village, pressing the Indians out of their teepees and up into the bluffs to the northwest and west of the village. After five minutes of fighting, Egan had received help only from a great distance from the southwest. The firing from the southwest was sporadic, with many of the rounds falling short of the

village into Egan's own lines. These shots were later thought to be Moore's battalion shooting from up to one thousand yards away. Lieutenant Morton later testified, "When attacking the village I saw some men to the left and front stooping and dodging as if bullets were falling among them. I moved out to the left and waved my hand and called out to cease firing."⁷ Reynolds asked Lieutenant Morton who fired the volley, and he answered that it must have been Captain Moore's battalion. Reynolds remembered the note from Mills stating that he and Moore were only one hundred and fifty yards from the village and knew that this could not be true.

After firing their first volley, Moore took his battalion down the south face of the ridge and pushed east and north to join the line of Egan and Mills (figure 17). This probably took about twenty-five to thirty minutes since it took this writer almost twenty minutes to walk it, fresh, in less snow than they had.

The Indians knew how to fight against mounted cavalry. Finding cover behind rocks, trees, shrubs, and nooks in the ravines, the Indians did not fire just at the soldiers, but found it much easier and more advantageous to shoot the soldiers' horses. This had the dual effect of slowing the cavalry advance and bringing the fight down to their level. The horses were easier to hit because of their size, and the soldiers were slower on foot, making them easier to hit when they were dismounted. The Indians also believed that the cavalry soldier was only half of a soldier without his horse, thus creating a morale advantage for the warriors.

Egan continued the attack through the village, establishing a line of dismounted soldiers facing west with his right flank near the bend in the river to the north. The soldiers dismounted because the ground was cluttered with branches from the trees

throughout the village and the terrain was too hard to cover on horseback. Although there may have been some ground clutter, the Indians would likely have had most of the branches cleared because of their extensive use of fire to cook and keep warm. It is more likely that the soldiers stopped due to the intense fire from the Indians, difficulty of navigation through the village, and command and control problems Egan experienced while pressing his company through the village.

Egan's men had been fighting unassisted through the entire length of the village. After twenty-five minutes of fighting, Mill's company joined Egan's company from the southwest when they reached the river on the north edge of the village. Mills quickly fell in with his right flank tied into Egan's left flank. The Indians continued to fire into the cavalry line, killing one soldier, Private Schneider, and wounding three others. Six horses had been killed and two others had been wounded. Up to this point, there had been only one confirmed Indian killed.

Meanwhile, on a bluff four hundred yards to the southwest of the village, Major Stanton led four soldiers to a point overlooking the village. From this point, Stanton fired into the resisting Indians, offering some relief to Egan's line. This gave Egan the opportunity to regroup, reorient his force, and once again press the attack.

By nine thirty in the morning, the Indians had been driven from their village and the cavalry regiment had established a screen line along the southern edge of the village facing north and west. The Indians attempted to cause confusion or trample the soldiers to death in the line by stampeding a herd of approximately two hundred ponies. Mills ordered his men to open a gap in the line and reform the line after the ponies had passed.

He expected an Indian counterattack as soon as the braves could lead their women, children, and elders to safety in the north.

To the south of the village, Noyes' company, with Lieutenant Hall's platoon, took a wide sweep to the east and south to capture the pony herds that were grazing across the river. The ponies were taken to the north side of Hospital Bluff and Noyes instructed the Indian scouts to hold the ponies there. Each time a small herd of ponies was thrown at the line of troops, the line opened, allowed the ponies to pass, and closed again. When the ponies had passed, soldiers at the back of the line would rush the herd to the south to Noyes' company and add them to the strength of the pony herd. The pony herd was estimated at between six hundred and eight hundred animals. By the estimates of Lieutenant Rawolle and Captain Noyes, the herd consisted of about 85 percent colts and yearlings, and about 15 percent war ponies used by the braves for battle.

When Reynolds was sure that the Indians were driven from the village, he rode to the screen line established by the three battalions, first stopping at Mills' battalion. Mills joined Reynolds and quickly briefed him on the situation. The two men's accounts of what was said during this discussion differ. Mills testified that he told Reynolds that they should destroy the village but save the supplies, which he later told the court-martial board were numerous and much needed by the hungry and cold men. He also said that the regiment should secure the village, select all of the valuables, and wait until General Crook came so they could carry it away on the pack train.

This testimony seems unlikely for several reasons. The first reason is that the numbers of fighting men on both sides was relatively equal, making the opportunity for the soldiers to hold the village remote. The regiment began with approximately three

hundred soldiers when they separated from Crook. Noyes' company of fifty men was near Hospital Bluff guarding the pony herd. Every eighth man (about forty men total) was holding the horses of the dismounted cavalry soldiers. This left about two hundred and ten men as a fighting force, including the men necessary to destroy the village and the fifteen scouts who were not expected to fight. The Indian warriors were estimated to be about two fighting men per Indian teepee, or about two hundred warriors. Given these odds (about one-to-one), it is unlikely that Mills would recommend they continue to hold the village and wait for Crook.

The second point that makes Mills' testimony unlikely is testimony by numerous officers that Mills was under extreme pressure. According to Reynolds, Moore, Rawolle, Johnson, Egan, and even Mills himself, Mills was continually begging for reinforcements from Reynolds. Moore testified that Mills came to him twice to ask for reinforcements because he could not hold his line from the Indian attack.⁸ Mills' assertion that the command could have held the village and waited for Crook seems unlikely since he could not hold his portion of the line.

The third point that would render Mills' testimony unlikely is his assertion that they wait for Crook. Crook's column of packhorses and infantry was fourteen miles to the west of the village (287 degrees) where the Reynolds column was. The shortest route to the mouth of Lodgepole Creek would take Crook almost due south (160 degrees) for twenty miles. The Indian village was over eighteen miles to the southwest (202 degrees) of Lodgepole Creek. There was no indication from any testimony that Crook had the intention of meeting Reynolds' column at the village. He would have had to travel a significant distance out of his way to come close to the village. Reynolds would have

had to send his scouts to the southwest to intercept Crook in order to get them to turn around. This seems nearly impossible since the scouts would have to go back the fourteen miles to Otter Creek and follow Crook's trail south. Crook would then have to turn his column to the northeast and march the cavalry and pack trains at least fourteen to twenty miles to the village. To expect this to happen in just fourteen to sixteen hours was unreasonable. Mills' testimony was suspicious, to say the least.

Reynolds testified that there was no mention of saving the supplies in his discussion with Mills or in his orders from Crook. He testified that he told Mills to gather a party of men to burn the village to the ground. He did allow the men to carry only the meat they could put in their pockets. Crook's assertion that he told Reynolds to "pack as much meat and valuables as he could carry out of the village,"⁹ seems made-up after the fact. Crook had all of the pack animals with him and Reynolds could not pack the rations on his own horses or the ponies of the Indian herd. The soldier's horses were in no shape to pack additional weight, having last eaten the day prior to the split of the two columns and having traveled overnight through some treacherous conditions. Packing the meat onto the Indian ponies without the assistance of professional packers was far too complicated and dangerous. Lieutenant Rawolle testified that when he attempted to place a lariat over one of the ponies it bolted to the center of the herd. If the feat of capturing a pony, subduing it, placing bloody animal meat on its back and leading it twenty miles could have been accomplished, it would have taken all night and into the next day.

As Reynolds supervised the destruction of the village, the Indian warriors continued to try to flank the cavalry line. From their position in the deep ravine to the

northwest of the village, the Indians moved across the mountainside to the west of the village in bands of five to ten warriors. Warriors on the east side of the village were also maneuvering against the remainder of Egan's line and the right side of Mills' line. This forced the cavalry line to fall into a horseshoe defense, with Egan and Mills facing east and north, and Moore and Rawolle facing north and west (figure 18). The Indians continued to lay suppressive fire into the village from the high bluffs to the west until the soldiers had completed the destruction of the village.

By eleven o'clock, most of the village had been destroyed, and Reynolds ordered Lieutenant Rawolle to send men after the horses that were being held in the rear. Moore's horses were on the south side of the major mountain to the west of the village. Mills' horses were over a mile away at the base of the hill where Reynolds gave his operations order for the battle. Rawolle testified that it took more than an hour to get his horses back,¹⁰ which would indicate that it would have taken two or more hours to retrieve Mills' horses.

During this lengthy delay, the Indians continued to press their counterattack, taking shots at the soldiers destroying the village and the men on the cavalry line. Reynolds testified that Mills continued to request reinforcements, sending runners to ask the regimental commander for help. Mills' line was not receiving more casualties than the other units but he had fewer and fewer soldiers on line. Reynolds testified that he was constantly reprimanding the soldiers for attempting to take articles of clothing, valuables, and non-life-essential trinkets from the Indian huts. Many of Mills' men had broken from the line and began looting the village for personal gain.¹¹ Mills was unable to keep his own men on the screen line, and even went so far as to take six of Moore's men that

had been sent after the horses and placed them within his own line for fear of being overrun by the attacking Indians.

Another reason for Mills' lack of confidence seems to stem from his lack of situational awareness. Three officers testified that the regiment had formed a horseshoe defense to stop the Indians from flanking the soldiers. The Indians were maneuvering along the river to the east and in the bluffs to the west. The horseshoe was arrayed so that the open end was to the south, away from the village, and Mills' unit was the only one left facing north. Mills misinterpreted this maneuver as the other two units pulling back leaving him to fight the Indians on his own.

Having no soldiers left that were not tasked, Reynolds made the decision to accept risk at the pony herd. He summoned Captain Noyes' company to the fight, telling them to leave the Indian scouts and a few soldiers to guard the herd. Much to the dismay of Colonel Reynolds and the court-martial board, Noyes' men were sitting around a campfire, cooking coffee and eating lunch. Their horses were unsaddled and it took a considerable amount of time for them to be saddled. Upon receiving the message from Reynolds to come to the village, Noyes sent the messenger back to Reynolds to tell him his horses were unsaddled and he wanted to know if Reynolds wanted his company mounted or dismounted. It took almost fifteen minutes for the messenger to return with orders to come dismounted and for Noyes' men to reach the skirmish line to relieve Mills. During his defense at the court-martial, Noyes testified that he had allowed his men to unsaddle their horses because it was standing operating procedure for his battalion. When not specifically engaged in fighting, the battalion would allow their mounts a respite from the weight of their saddles and allow them to graze. The men were

not expecting to enter the fight since the Indians were supposed to give up when surrounded by the cavalry. Once again, the soldiers underestimated the resolve of the Indian tribe. It appears that the soldiers of Noyes' company were delinquent in their duties since they could hear the shooting that lasted for almost five hours. Noyes' company finally reached the line and assisted in the skirmish until the end of the battle.

By noon, the regiment had three soldiers killed and one mortally wounded. Reynolds had his regiment establish a defense and prepare to withdraw from the village to the south. The death toll had registered one killed in action from each of Mills', Johnson's, Egan's, and Moore's companies. Six soldiers in the regiment were injured, three being from Egan's white horse company that made the pistol charge in the morning.¹² Two of the dead, Dowdy and Schneider, were brought off the picket line and placed in the hospital at Hospital Bluff. The other two, McCannon and Ayers, were left on the picket line and not seen again by their commanders. Word would spread later that one of the two soldiers left on the skirmish line when the regiment withdrew was possibly still alive and could have been saved.

Private Lorenzo E. Ayers, from Mills' battalion, was left on the battlefield with severe injuries to his leg and hand. Private Jeremiah J. Murphy, in his testimony at Reynolds' court-martial, described the scene of attempting to save Ayers. When Mills ordered the withdrawal of his line, he failed to ensure that all of his men had heard the orders. Mills had placed a four-man squad to the front of the skirmish line in a small gully, offering them cover and concealment from the enemy fire. The cover, however, also made it impossible for the squad to hear the orders of their commander. When Private Ayers was shot in the leg, the squad yelled to the company for help, but there was

no reply. Realizing that the company had already displaced, the squad attempted to join their company under heavy fire from the advancing Indians. Murphy heard the screams of Private Ayers and turned to assist his comrade. Murphy realized that Ayers was wounded in the leg and hand and could not walk on his own. He returned to Ayers and lifted the wounded man to his shoulders and began carrying him to safety. The Indians rained bullets onto the two soldiers. Another bullet struck Ayers and the stock of Murphy's rifle was shattered in his hand. Murphy dropped the dying soldier and testified that Ayers told him to leave so that both soldiers would not be killed.

To the amazement of the officers covering his retreat, Murphy stood and fired all six rounds of his pistol at the advancing Indians. When he was out of ammunition and could not save the dying Ayers, he turned to make his way back to the skirmish line three hundred yards away. As soon as he was far enough from the shooting Indians, Murphy hid behind bushes until the Indians stopped firing. From that point, he watched the fifteen Indians dance around his fallen comrade. When the Indians were preoccupied with their ritual around Ayers, Murphy finally made it back to the skirmish line uninjured but with bullet holes in his uniform. For his act of heroism and gallantry under fire, Jeremiah J. Murphy was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.¹³

During the squad withdrawal, blacksmith Albert Galvinski, another of the four soldiers left behind in the gully, showed heroism above and beyond the call of duty by assisting in the attempted withdrawal of their fallen comrade. Galvinski ran more than five hundred yards through scalding fire to his battalion commander to report that the squad was trapped. For his heroism and gallantry under fire, Albert Galvinski was also awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.¹⁴

The brutal death of Ayers seemed to tear at the morale of the soldiers as most of them wrote about it in their journals or talked about it in their testimony at the Reynolds' court-martial. Many attribute the large number of soldiers going absent without leave (AWOL) to the fact that dead and wounded soldiers were left on the battlefield to be scalped and dismembered by the “savage” Indians.¹⁵ Although this might have been a contributing factor, there seem to be numerous other reasons for the AWOL numbers. These soldiers had traveled almost five hundred miles in twenty-seven days.¹⁶ They had gone two days with no food or water and fought Indians with no sleep in the bitter cold. Many on the expedition would later call this mission a “failure.” To say that the soldiers deserted because dead and wounded were left on the battlefield would minimize that these soldiers had just gone through one of the most difficult missions in the history of the U.S. Army.

By two o'clock that afternoon, Reynolds was able to gather his regiment at the base of Hospital Bluff. He gave orders for the column to move out to a site at the convergence of Powder River and Lodgepole Creek. This move covered more than twenty miles and took the ragged soldiers into the evening to complete. During the traverse up the Powder River to the campsite stipulated by Crook, the column continued to receive sporadic fire from a small band of Indians following them. The Indians were attempting to recover their ponies and to exact revenge against the soldiers who had just attacked their homes and families.

Sensing a counterattack and harassing fire from the Indians, Reynolds ordered Doctor Curtis E. Munn, surgeon's assistant with the Third Regiment, to leave the two dead soldiers at the hospital and to hasten the movement of the wounded to safety. Munn

testified that Reynolds ordered him to leave the dead soldiers and haul the wounded out on impromptu travois, litters drug behind horses. Much was made at the court-martial about Reynolds leaving the dead and wounded on the battlefield and this was one of the charges leveled against him by General Crook. His response to the charge was that it was the responsibility of the company commanders to recover their dead and wounded. On this point, this writer agrees with Reynolds' assessment of where the blame lay. The company commanders should have kept track of their soldiers, even the dead and wounded. Mills was especially delinquent in failing to realize that he had left four of his soldiers behind when he withdrew, one of them wounded. It is much easier for a company commander to keep track of his fifty soldiers than it is for a regimental commander to keep track of three hundred. The testimony of Doctor Munn, that Reynolds ordered him to leave the two dead men there without a burial, remains unexplained to this day.

Reynolds failed to assign responsibility to any unit to herd the captured Indian ponies with the column. Major Stanton, head of the scouts, assumed responsibility for the spooked herd on his own. Stanton would testify at Reynolds' court-martial that the regimental commander had a total disregard for the importance of the pony herd. Upon reaching the herd at Hospital Bluff, Stanton sent a messenger to Reynolds to ask what to do with the ponies. The response brought back from Reynolds was to shoot as many of the ponies as he pleased. Stanton only had five of his scouts with him, each man with approximately ten rounds remaining. With the ability to kill only twenty-five to thirty ponies and the likelihood of spooking the remainder of the herd back to the Indians, Stanton decided to herd the ponies up the river to the campsite for the evening. Later at

his court-martial, Reynolds testified that he gave the messenger instructions that Stanton was to follow the column with the pony herd, and shoot any ponies that could not keep up. He also testified that he had already ordered the scouts to bring the pony herd along with the column.¹⁷ This information seems more sensible and would have allowed for Stanton and his scouts to move out and avoid capture by the advancing band of Indians.

The regiment trudged on throughout the afternoon and into the evening, stopping occasionally to put down horses that were too fatigued and hungry to continue. Rawolle testified at Reynolds' court-martial that his company trailed the column the entire way, establishing picket lines whenever the column would slow or stop. Occasionally the picket line would spot an Indian attempting to follow the column, but the soldiers would shoot at the Indian and either kill or scare the Indian into retreating. Mills' company arrived at the mouth of Lodgepole Creek at sundown, around six o'clock. Rawolle's company arrived behind the pony herd between eight and nine o'clock.¹⁸

Stanton and his scouts were tired and confused, having to continually chase ponies out of ravines and draws for two-to-three hours after dark. Upon reaching the campsite, Stanton and his scouts escorted the herd to the south of the camp, pushing them into a semiconfined area where it would take a minimum of personnel to guard them. At this point, Stanton turned the herd over to an unknown soldier, believing the person had the authority to assume possession of the herd. Reynolds stated later in his court-martial that he consulted Grouard about the best method to contain the herd. His account stated that Grouard told him that he knew many of the ponies and that they would be safe in an area a mile south of the campsite with a minimal picket line to guard them. Grouard denied this conversation took place, but seemed very evasive during the questioning.¹⁹

The next morning, soldiers and scouts woke at first light, around six o'clock in the morning.²⁰ Reynolds queried Grouard about the pony herd and the whereabouts of General Crook. Crook was supposed to have been established at the campsite the previous day when the column arrived, but had not been seen or heard from since the two columns separated the night before the battle. Reynolds was concerned about the lack of forage for the horses, since they had not eaten since they had oats from the pack train the night prior to the battle. The camp would have to move early to ensure the tired and hungry horses could sustain themselves on the sparse vegetation poking up through the deep snow. Reynolds instructed Grouard to take four scouts and search for General Crook and his column.

Around eight o'clock in the morning, it was discovered that over half of the pony herd was missing. Reynolds had established a "running guard" on the herd the night before, changing guards every hour to ensure everyone had the opportunity to sleep. The accepted theory about the pony herd's disappearance was that the Indians from the village must have followed the column the twenty miles up the river to recapture the herd. There is no mention of any other possibility for the loss of the herd. It seems more probable that the majority of the ponies were lost on the trek from the village to the campsite. Stanton testified that his scouts were slowed considerably by the necessity of herding ponies out of ravines all along the Powder River. He also told Captain Egan, whose company followed the herd, that he did not believe he could bring the ponies with the column because he did not have enough men.²¹ The scouts drove the ponies through three hours of darkness and snowfall. The opportunity for the ponies to wander off was overwhelming.

The men had been awake for the past seventy-two hours after completing a five hour battle, in the cold, with no food. Their overwhelming and consuming goal was to reach the campsite where Crook would be waiting with food, warm blankets, and an opportunity to finally sleep. The mental state of the soldiers and scouts would have limited their situational awareness immensely. The pony herd dwindled to less than half the original size, estimated at more than seven hundred ponies in the beginning and less than two hundred in the early morning.

In addition to the state of the soldiers, nobody heard or saw any Indians attempting to stampede the ponies or lead them away. The possibility of groups of Indians being able to quietly lead 400 to 500 ponies away from the column with even a light picket line is extremely remote. It is much more likely that the majority of the ponies wandered off during the long march in the dark and that the others wandered off from the campsite. The Indians might have taken some of the ponies from the cavalry picket line, but it is not likely that they took all 500 at once. In interviews with Wooden Leg, Black Eagle, Iron Hawk, and Kate Bighead, only two spoke of taking back their ponies from the sleeping cavalry picket line. Of these, only Wooden Leg proposed that he actually knew where the ponies were kept and went back to take back their personal ponies.²² It is more likely that the Indians took a small portion from the campsite the night after the battle and gathered more of their grazing ponies on the way back to their tribe.

Reynolds told Grouard to look for the ponies as well as Crook. Even though the accepted theory was that the Indians had retaken their herd, there was no plan to send a party of worn and weary soldiers after the ponies. Reynolds testified at his court-martial

that he knew that the majority of the herd was brood mares and colts and was convinced that the value of recapturing the small number of war ponies was not worth the risk to his troops. He also asserted that the loss of the pony herd to the Indians did not deliver the tribe a severe blow. Reynolds would later be tried and found guilty of “neglecting his duty by not making an effort to recapture the ponies.” There was no proof of the location of the pony herd, although Stanton later testified that he told Reynolds that the herd was only a mile to a mile-and-one-half from the camp.²³ How Stanton came to this conclusion is unknown, but he made no mention in his testimony that there were any hostile Indians with the herd only a short distance away.

The scouts never found Crook because he had taken a different route than he had agreed upon. Grouard testified that the scouts came upon a herd of seventy ponies being driven by two Indians and took the herd away from them. This is unlikely since John Shangrau recalled later that Grouard wanted to wait in hiding until the herd passed before continuing to search for Crook.²⁴ Since the scouts continued to look for Crook and traveled away from the campsite for more than ten miles after the reported recapture of the herd, Shangrau’s information is more believable. Vaughn reported that the scouts left the ponies when they came upon the trail of an Indian war party following the column.²⁵ This is also unlikely since the scouts had just herded the seventy ponies more than twenty miles and were only about two miles from the regiment. No report was ever made that confirmed that the scouts had a herd of seventy ponies with them when they returned to Reynolds’ campsite, although Crook brought in thirty ponies when he finally arrived.

Crook was credited with recapturing the herd of thirty ponies on his journey to join Reynolds at the campsite near the mouth of the Lodgepole. From Crook’s account,

Louis Richaud, the head scout of Crook's column, rode out in front of the column by himself to find the route to the new campsite. Upon reaching the Powder River ten miles north of the new campsite, the column turned south and immediately picked up the tracks of Reynolds' column. Shortly after this turn, Richaud supposedly spotted seven or eight Indians to the south of the column herding what he estimated to be seventy-five to eighty ponies traveling north up the river. He returned to Crook, briefed him on the disposition of the herd, and brought Crook to a spot at the top of the ridge offering them visibility of the Indians and their stolen herd.²⁶ Crook reportedly shot one of the Indians off of his horse. The Indian's comrades immediately picked him up and retreated into the bluffs surrounding the valley. By the time the rest of the column reached Crook and Richaud, only thirty ponies were in the valley and there was no trace of Indians. The scouts took control of the thirty ponies and the column continued up Powder River to rendezvous with Reynolds.

This account seems highly unlikely because only Crook testified to the presence of the eight Indians with the pony herd. It is more likely that Crook and Richaud came upon thirty ponies grazing near a ravine emptying into the river. These ponies probably wandered off from Stanton's scouts during the night in the heavy snowfall as they were herded along with the cavalry column. Crook might have wanted to give his column some life by shooting into the nearby riverbank to energize the slow moving, demoralized column of soldiers. The Indians had just fought Reynolds the day prior and followed him over twenty miles to recapture their lost herd. It is highly unlikely that they would have given up their herd without a fight and there was no report of the eight Indians returning

fire at Crook and Richaud. At the very least, returning fire at the two men standing on the hillside was practicable.

When Crook's column reached the campsite around noon, they must have been a sight for sore eyes. Reynolds men had been without adequate rations for almost forty-eight hours. They ate their last good meal prior to separating from Crook at Otter Creek. Their horses had gone without food other than what they could forage through the deep snow. The pack train carried the much-needed blankets that the troops had left behind because they were too bulky and cumbersome. With four fresh companies of cavalry, the force would be large enough to repel any probe by the following war party that the Reynolds' column fully expected.

Reynolds immediately briefed Crook on the attack, explaining in detail about the disposition of the village, the dead soldiers, the lost ponies, and everything else that had occurred since their separation at Otter Creek. Crook did not reprimand Reynolds for losing the pony herd or for burning the supplies in the village. He did not ask questions about leaving the dead on the battlefield. Crook immediately went to the campfire of Egan and Noyes, congratulating them on their part in the engagement the day prior.²⁷

This was a strange reaction from Crook if he, as he testified at Reynolds' court-martial, ordered Reynolds to pack all of the saddles, food, and valuables away from the village. Crook did not immediately mount the four fresh companies of cavalry and attempt to ride to the north in search of the lost ponies even though he later claimed their loss spelled defeat in this battle. Crook seemed almost disinterested in the facts of the defeated Reynolds' column. He testified in the Reynolds court-martial that he had expected the outcome of the fight to be so different, that Reynolds was to capture or kill

all of the Indians and was expected to pack all of the meat, robes, and supplies from the village. Reynolds finished briefing Crook on all of these “failures” but Crook did not tell him it was a failure or even get excited about the report.

Thus, one can conclude that Reynolds did everything that Crook had asked of him and his men. Crook must have realized that his orders to Reynolds were vague and at least partially ambiguous. Crook did not press charges against Reynolds until the twenty-sixth of March, a full week after their meeting at Lodgepole Creek, after he heard the grumbling of the officers in the regiment. When there arose a possibility of Crook facing the blame for the “failed” attack on the village, he quickly deflected blame to ensure his name was not soiled.

¹J. W. Vaughn, *The Reynolds Campaign on Powder River* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), 79.

²John G. Bourke, *On the Border with Crook* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1971), 273.

³Bourke, 274.

⁴A. J. Young, D. E. Roberts, D. P. Scott, J. E. Cook, M. Z. Mays, and E. W. Askew, Technical Note Number 92-2, *Sustaining Health and Performance in the Cold: Environmental Medicine Guidance for Cold-Weather Operations* (US Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine, Natick, Massachusetts, July 1992), 25.

⁵United States Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 31-70, *Basic Cold Weather Manual* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 12 April, 1968), 1-3.

⁶Vaughn, *The Reynolds Campaign on Powder River*, 83.

⁷*Ibid.*, 87.

⁸*Ibid.*, 91.

⁹Jerome A. Green, *Battles and Skirmishes of the Great Sioux War, 1876-1877* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), 14.

¹⁰Vaughn, *The Reynolds Campaign on Powder River*, 101.

¹¹Joseph J. Reynolds, Official Report to the Assistant Adjutant-General, Department of the Platte, Omaha, Nebraska (report from Fort D. A. Russell, Wyoming Territory) 15 April 1876.

¹²Vaughn, *The Reynolds Campaign on Powder River*, 212.

¹³W. F. Beyer and O. F. Keydal, *Deeds of Valor*, vol. 2 (Detroit: Perrien-Keydal Company 1903), 205-207.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 205-207.

¹⁵Green, 18.

¹⁶Reynolds, 15 April 1876.

¹⁷Vaughn, *The Reynolds Campaign on Powder River*, 136.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 141.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 141.

²⁰Directorate of Time, US Naval Observatory, Local Sun and Moon Data, Summary for Powder River County, Montana, Period Covered 17 March, 1900, (accessed 25 December 2000) available at <http://tycho.usno.navy.mil/cgi-bin/srss-post.sh>, Internet.

²¹Vaughn, *The Reynolds Campaign on Powder River*, 139.

²²Wooden Leg, *Wooden Leg, A Warrior Who Fought Custer*, interpreted by Thomas B. Marquis (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1931), 169.

²³Zenobia Self, Wayland Baptist College, "Court-Martial of J. J. Reynolds," *Military Affairs*, April 1973, 52-56.

²⁴Eli S. Ricker, *Eli Ricker Tablets*, "Narrative of John Shangrau," (Interviews, Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1906-07), Tablet 27, 77.

²⁵Vaughn, *The Reynolds Campaign on Powder River*, 145.

²⁶Ibid., 151.

²⁷Ibid., 152.

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CHAPTER 4

THE REPERCUSSIONS

On the morning of 26 March 1876, Crook's beleaguered column of soldiers stumbled into Fort Fetterman, having covered 485 miles in the twenty-six day deployment. The column was weary from travel and in need of rest and rations. Along the 190 miles of trail from the Indian village to Fort Fetterman lay ninety dead horses and mules of the regiment, as well as over 100 dead Indian ponies. These animals were either abandoned or killed to put them out of their misery from inadequate nutrition. This is in great contrast to the two horses that were reported as killed in action during the battle at the village.²

The men of the expedition fared only slightly better. Lost in the battle were their four comrades, Private Peter Dowdy, Private Michael McCannon, Private L. E. Ayers, and Private George Schneider. Only six soldiers were reported as injured during the battle, but many more suffered from sleep deprivation, hunger, cold injuries, and exhaustion. These soldiers had traveled 485 miles over some of the most difficult terrain and the most taxing weather conditions many had ever seen. All they had to show for their efforts was an Indian village burned to the ground, four dead soldiers, ninety dead horses, and a "failed" mission. The total casualties on the Indian side were unknown, with only one confirmed Indian kill and one wounded. The accounts from Wooden Leg's testimony confirm that only one Sioux Indian was killed during the battle.³

During the march back to Fort Fetterman, the column was continually harassed at night by a small band of Indians that attempted to recapture their pony herd. The remaining 200 ponies were a hindrance to the command, and Reynolds knew that the

safety of his troops would be compromised if he continued to herd the ponies with the column. He ordered all but ninety-six of the animals destroyed, the number that the officers and scouts agreed they would need to replenish their own lost horses.⁴

Realizing the Indians would not leave the column alone until they had recaptured all of their ponies, Crook ordered the scouts to kill fifty more of the Indian ponies. Unable to safely shoot the ponies while they were in the column's perimeter, the scouts used axes and knives, slaughtering the ponies and causing them to squeal and wheeze until they could no longer struggle for life. The horrific sounds made by the dying ponies seemed to have an extremely brutal effect on the soldiers of the column.⁵ The effective slaughter also made the marauding Indians realize that the soldiers would kill every last one of the ponies if the Indians continued to harass them, so they eventually disengaged from the column.

When the column reached Fort Fetterman, rumors of impending court-martials spread like wildfire. As the enlisted men got drunk and visited the Hog Ranch (famous as one of the best brothels near Fort Fetterman), the officers wrote their reports, detailing their accounts of the fight. On the afternoon of 27 March, Reynolds issued orders dissolving the expedition, retaining only one company of cavalry and two companies of infantry at Fort Fetterman. On the morning of 28 March, the two companies of cavalry from Fort Laramie returned to their home. The other seven companies of cavalry departed for Fort Russell on the morning of 29 March.

Because the battle failed to reap the rewards that Crook sought, he preferred court-martial charges against Reynolds. Reynolds immediately preferred charges against both Noyes and Moore. Stories told around campfires and accounts of the battle told in

drunken stupor caused the entire command to be divided. Half of the men supported Crook's charges against Reynolds of leaving his dead and wounded on the battlefield, allowing the Indians to recapture the pony herd, and disobeying the orders of Crook to keep the supplies that were captured from the Indian village. The other half of the men sided with Reynolds, saying that he had carried out the battle flawlessly, following Crook's orders, and that Mills and Stanton had turned Crook against Reynolds with their lies and deceit.

The first court-martial hearing was against Captain Noyes and was the simplest since Noyes admitted that he had unsaddled his company's horses to rest them after the past two days of marching. His testimony was that it was the company standing operating procedure to unsaddle the horses and rest them at any opportunity and that the battle was so small that it was merely a "skirmish."⁶ Reynolds did not press the issue since he called for Noyes and his company to reinforce Mills' line dismounted. Since Noyes' company did not need their horses, they were prepared to execute their orders. The court-martial board found Noyes guilty of the charge of disregarding his duties. At Noyes' sentencing, Crook, the Department Commander, stated that Noyes had merely committed an error in judgment and was not attempting to evade or shirk responsibility.⁷ Noyes was immediately released and returned to duty in time for the next deployment of his regiment to the Rosebud. At the Rosebud, Noyes commanded a battalion with five companies.

Captain Moore awaited his court-martial, requesting his trial occur next. Reynolds stated that Crook had signed the charge against Moore and was the accuser so the court-martial was delayed. Crook could not be both the accuser and the court martial

convening authority. The witnesses were discharged and the trial was rescheduled until the next general court-martial. The charge against Moore only included that he acted under neglect from duty in the face of the enemy. Since the next general court-martial would not be convened until the next year, Moore was placed under technical arrest and was not allowed to deploy and lead his battalion into battle at the Rosebud.⁸ Reynolds' son, Bainbridge Reynolds, a Lieutenant in Moore's battalion, would later command Moore's battalion and be decorated for his actions during the battle at the Rosebud.

Reynolds testified later that Crook told him if he could make a case with the charges against Moore and Noyes, nothing more would come of the charges against him. By the middle of May, Crook still had not filed the charges against Reynolds with the division. This fact alone seemed to confirm Reynolds' accusation against Crook.

Reynolds returned to commanding the Third Regiment at the end of April and prepared the regiment for the next deployment into the Montana territory. Reynolds outfitted ten cavalry companies of the Third Regiment, which was scheduled to leave Fort Fetterman at the end of May.⁹ Crook was about to deal the final blow to the long and distinguished career of Reynolds.

In a message to Lieutenant Colonel William B. Royall, second in command to Reynolds in the Third Regiment and stationed at Omaha, Nebraska, Crook stated that he wanted Royall to join the expedition at Fort Russell. With the message, Crook also sent a sealed envelope with an arrest warrant for Reynolds. Crook told Royall that there would be a telegraph waiting for him at Fort Russell telling him whether or not to execute the warrant. When Royall arrived at Fort Russell, the telegraph told him to arrest Reynolds and assume command of the Third Regiment.¹⁰ After the Battle of the Rosebud, Royall

would suffer a fate similar to Reynolds. He was accused of failure by Crook and received blame for the loss. Reynolds was confined to Fort Russell until his court-martial trial in January of 1877. He, like Moore, was not allowed to lead his men into battle during the remainder of the campaign.

Of more significance than the court-martial of a few officers present at the Battle of Powder River were the repercussions of the failed attack of the Indian village on the remainder of the Centennial Campaign. The court-martial divided the officers of the Third Regiment into cliques who supported either Crook or Reynolds. The aftermath of the battle also triggered a snowballing effect on the Indians of the Sioux and Cheyenne nations. This battle, fought on Saint Patrick's Day of 1876, tipped the hand of the United States government and foreshadowed the intent of the soldiers to drive the winter roamers back onto the reservations. The Indians would gather for protection, making an even more formidable fighting force.

The small individual tribes of Indians, scattered across the western plains, were forced to band together for self-preservation. Bands of 300 to 400 Indians that typically remained small to allow for grazing of their pony herds joined together, growing to more than 5,000. Crazy Horse, chief and prominent warrior of the Sioux tribe, issued a warning to Crook that the Army would be attacked if they crossed the Tongue River.¹¹ Instead of being the defenseless, roaming people of the reservations, the Sioux were becoming bold, threatening the Army with war if they continued to harass them. The Sioux camp was a combination of six different tribes including the Hunkpapa under Sitting Bull, the Oglala under Crazy Horse, the Cheyenne under Old Bear, the Miniconjou, the Blackfeet, and the Sans Arc.¹² These were the same Indian warriors that

would annihilate Custer's column at the Little Big Horn three months after Powder River and only a week after the Rosebud.

Another significant occurrence from the Powder River debacle was the full implementation of the "Sheridan Campaign Plan." Sheridan's plan called for General Alfred H. Terry to lead a column from the east out of the Department of the Dakotas. Terry's column held the ill-fated Custer Seventh Regiment. His plan also called for bringing Crook from the south and Colonel John Gibbon, Terry's subordinate commander of the District of Montana, from the west (figure 19). This plan, if coordinated, would cause a "Pincer movement," trapping and killing the Indians in the middle of the three columns.¹³

The warriors of the combined Indian tribes were estimated to number between 1,400 and 1,500 fighting men by the time Crook reached the Rosebud.¹⁴ Crook, estimating that his force would face a larger force than the 200 to 250 warriors Reynolds faced at Powder River, countered with 1,325 soldiers, miners, packers, and Shoshone and Crow Indians.¹⁵ Once again, as in the Powder River battle, Crook had lost the overwhelming odds advantage. This time he would fight on the Indian's ground and would also be out numbered. With Sitting Bull as the primary chief and medicine man of the tribe and Crazy Horse as the war chief, the Indian scouts found Crook's encampment on the Rosebud River. The night of 16 June, Sitting Bull gathered his force of more than 5,000 Indians for a council meeting. Armed with the intelligence from their scouts on the location of Crook's column and disregarding the advice of the elders of the council, the young warriors of the tribe prepared for battle. As soon as the council meeting ended, the

braves mounted their ponies and raced to the Rosebud, hoping to catch Crook the next morning at daybreak.

Crook's plan called for outnumbering the enemy and counted heavily on the element of surprise. Crook was without both on the morning of 17 June when the Sioux attacked. Having already marched more than five miles that morning, his column was arrayed in a swath up and down the Rosebud Valley. The Crow scouts, well out in front of the column and to the north, sounded the alarm at around eight o'clock in the morning.¹⁶ The Crow scouts had inadvertently made contact with the Sioux scouts, warning both parties of the impending battle and solidifying the ground of the Rosebud River as the place where the two armies would meet. Reconnaissance by the Indian scouts, once again, had shaped the battle for the Army commander. This time, however, the enemy scouts had painted the same picture for their commander, Crazy Horse. The Army had just lost the reconnaissance fight and the element of surprise.

Another factor that was a detriment to the Army column was the significance of the ground at the Rosebud. The Indian tribe had long considered the Rosebud the "Last stronghold in the West."¹⁷ The Rosebud country was rough and broken, making it easy to defend. Small forces could easily use the jagged hills and steep ridges to inflict debilitating fire down onto an enemy trapped in the deep canyons below. The Rosebud Mountains were considered by the Indians to be nearly impregnable by the invading white man.¹⁸ The column of Army cavalry and infantry met with a foe that was at least as strong of a fighting force as their own. Crook, fresh off the defeat of Powder River, would suffer another defeat at the Rosebud. Although some would consider the battle at the Rosebud a "draw" with the Army retaining the ground the battle was fought on, the

Army had, once again, failed in destroying the Indian force and capturing the village of Crazy Horse.

Crook suffered a loss of ten men killed, nine soldiers and one Indian scout.¹⁹ Once again Crook chose to withdraw his forces, as he had at Powder River, allowing the column to regroup and refit. Realizing his forces were greatly outnumbered, he also ordered five more companies of infantry forward from the forts to the south. The column of Army forces had, once again, underestimated the fighting strength and determination of a foe that was fighting for their home, their way of life, and the survival of their nation. Instead of pressing forward, attempting to destroy the Sioux villages while they celebrated their victory over the Army forces, Crook camped the column. Crook soon lost his Indian scouts. Both the Shoshone and Crow scouts returned to their homes, common following a battle, but promised to return in fifteen days.

While waiting for his reinforcements of infantry, ammunition, and fresh Indian scouts, Crook spent his days fishing and hunting in the wildlife-rich mountains of southeastern Montana, leaving Royall in command of the camp.²⁰ Because of the danger of the ground between his column and the Yellowstone River, he was unable to send a runner to warn Terry and Gibbon of the immense size of the Sioux tribes. Crook assumed that the generals would contact him through the telegraph at Fort Fetterman. The Rosebud battle occurred only twenty miles south of the crossing point for Custer's ill-fated eastern column. Crook made no attempt, while his men were hunting and fishing and acting as a sportsmen's club, to warn the other columns of the change in temperament and size of the Sioux Nation.

Crook failed to warn Terry, Gibbon, and more importantly, Custer of the extremely large Indian force that now massed in the southeast corner of Montana. This ineffective communication with the other units allowed the Custer column to attack the same Indians that Crook faced just one-week prior with insufficient intelligence about the enemy they were about to face. Along with the lack of lessons learned by the forces from the Powder River battle, this lack of information flow from one column to another was a major reason for the lack of intelligence gained by Custer's column while riding towards the Little Big Horn.

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²Joseph J. Reynolds, Official Report to the Assistant Adjutant-General, Department of the Platte, Omaha, Nebraska (report from Fort D. A. Russell, Wyoming Territory, 15 April 1876).

³Wooden Leg, *Wooden Leg, A Warrior Who Fought Custer*. Interpreted by Thomas B. Marquis (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1931), 168.

⁴John G. Bourke, *On the Border with Crook* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1971), 281.

⁵*Ibid.*, 281.

⁶J. W. Vaughn, *The Reynolds Campaign on Powder River* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), 168.

⁷Office of the Judge Advocate General, "Court-martial of Captain Henry E. Noyes," Records of the War Department, RG 153, GCM PP 5473.

⁸Office of the Judge Advocate General, "Court-martial of Captain Alexander Moore," Records of the War Department, RG 153, GCM QQ 27.

⁹Vaughn, *The Reynolds Campaign on Powder River*, 170.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 170.

¹¹J. W. Vaughn, *With Crook at the Rosebud* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1956), 10.

¹²Stanley Vestal, *Warpath* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1934), 187.

¹³Dr. William G. Robertson, Dr. Jerold E. Brown, William M. Campsey, and Scott R. McMeen, *Atlas of the Sioux Wars* (Fort. Leavenworth, Kansas: Combat Studies Institute, US Army Command and General Staff College, [1995]), Map 8 (description).

¹⁴Vaughn, *With Crook at the Rosebud*, 46.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 31.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 48.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 43.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 39.

¹⁹George Crook, "Official Report to the Assistant Adjutant-General, Headquarters Military District of the Missouri," Camp Cloud Peak, 20 June 1876.

²⁰Bourke, 321.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

“Understanding the past requires pretending that you don’t know the present.”¹

One hundred and twenty-five years ago, on Saint Patrick’s Day, 1876, Colonel Joseph J. Reynolds and his Third Cavalry Regiment failed to accomplish the mission of forcing the combined Sioux and Cheyenne tribe on Powder River back onto the reservation. Losing four soldiers and ninety horses, while inflicting only minor casualties on the enemy, this battle did not turn out to be the fatal blow that the U.S. government hoped would begin the Centennial Campaign. Most historians blame Reynolds for the failure, especially since he was found guilty on three counts at his court-martial. Had this battle been successful for the U.S. Army, there might never have been a defeat of Crook’s men at the Rosebud, or a slaughter of Custer’s men at Little Big Horn. To understand the true story, the reader must look at the battle and environment on that cold winter day from the perspective of the soldier.

Leadership can be a strong sword, enabling meek men to serve with authority and power. It can also be a shield, one that a weaker man might hide behind in the face of adversity. Crook, although serving a distinguished career as a Civil War veteran and Indian fighter in the western United States, tended to shirk the responsibility of command. He passed the blame of his failed battles to his subordinates. Reynolds at Powder River, and then Royall at the Rosebud, both felt the wrath of their superior officer. Crook would not accept blame for the failure that would soil his reputation as the “Greatest Indian fighter the Army had ever seen.”²

The intelligence given Reynolds by his Indian scouts from their reconnaissance was flawed because the communication between he and his scouts was unclear. Although the scouts conducted outstanding reconnaissance to be able to find the Indian village, they were unable to sufficiently relate the location of the village, causing Reynolds to issue faulty orders with his regiment approaching the village down the wrong valley. The failure to conduct a leader's reconnaissance prior to the actual battle led to Reynolds' defeat. Had Reynolds conducted a leader's reconnaissance, and seen the village himself prior to the battle, he would have known that he needed to send Moore's battalion one more valley to the north. The possibility for the Indians to escape into the rocks to the west of the village and mount a counterattack against the exposed cavalry soldiers would have been diminished. However, conducting a leader's reconnaissance would have been a risky proposition. There are numerous instances in history where leaders were killed and the plan foiled when an unprotected leader went forward of his troops to see the objective firsthand. However, a trusted junior officer could have conducted this task.

The intelligence from the Bureau of Indian Affairs was more accurate than the leaders of the beleaguered members of the Centennial Campaign gave them credit for. Told that the Indians could possibly mass as many as 4,000 braves to defend their way of life, the disbelief by the Army that the Indians could gather such a formidable fighting force eventually spelled the end of Custer and his men. At best, during the four battles of the Centennial Campaign, the U.S. Army fought the Indian tribes at even odds. Never having the numerical advantage, the soldiers could not capitalize on the element of

surprise. The Indians were not cowards as previously thought by most soldiers. They were prepared to fight and die for their families and each other.

Logistically, the soldiers of the beleaguered column were not fed, clothed, armed, or supplied for actions against the Indian tribes during the winter months. The column fought the battle at Powder River after a forced march of more than twenty-four hours and nearly twenty miles of the roughest terrain any had seen prior to this expedition. The temperatures were cold enough to freeze the mercury in the bottom of the thermometers, and the soldiers had been on half-rations for the previous ten days. The clothes the soldiers wore kept them warm, but the movement of the previous seventeen days precluded any sleep for the weary soldiers. Taking gloves and gauntlets off to fire the weapons was impossible due to the risk of frostbite. The soldier's weapons were cold and could not possibly work correctly. The soldiers' weapons were inefficient compared to the warm weapons the Indians pulled from their teepees. The soldiers, traveling light to conserve energy for their horses and to increase speed, carried only 100 rounds per man into the village. Since the battle lasted more than five hours, the soldiers were constrained by their rate of fire and amount of ammunition available.

The morale of the soldiers cannot be accurately portrayed to the reader who is sitting in his living room next to a warm fire, or even to one who is sitting in a climate-controlled library. These soldiers traveled almost 500 miles with their horses, on half rations, through one of the most difficult circumstances we can imagine for our troops. It must have been next to impossible for the weary gladiators to operate under these conditions. The poor condition of the soldiers and leaders in this battle, considering they were fighting around 5,000 feet above sea level and wearing heavy clothing and

bordering on malnutrition, contributed to the inability to fight effectively and for the leadership to make sound, rational decisions. The physical exhaustion evident by many soldiers and animals following the battle bore the proof that this column was in no condition to fight.

These untrained soldiers did as they were told, but learned the tactics, techniques, and procedures for fighting the Indians of the plains through the school of hard knocks. There was no written doctrine for the soldiers to fall back on. Simple tasks like rehearsals and after action reviews, procedures the modern soldier completes prior to and following every mission, were untried methods during the Centennial Campaign. Had Reynolds conducted a proper rehearsal prior to his attack, many of the mistakes and misunderstanding might have been remedied. Had they conducted a proper after action review following the battle, Crook's campaign into the Rosebud might have been successful.

Tactically, Crook was delinquent during this battle because he divided the command and only sent three of his five battalions with Reynolds, leaving Reynolds with approximately one soldier against one Indian warrior. Although Reynolds raised this question during his court-martial, it fell on deaf ears. Because of the over-confidence in his force against the small Indian village, Crook failed to follow and support his subordinate commander with troops, ammunition, logistics, and supplies. His excuse for not following the Reynolds lead regiment was that the mules would not be able to keep up with the horses over the rough terrain because the horses in the lead column would make the ground even more slippery and impassible. Had this been true, the horses at the back of Reynolds' column would have experienced this problem. It is not feasible for

two hundred horses to traverse over a given piece of terrain and then not expect the remaining 150 horses to be able to traverse the same site.

The primary question at the beginning of this thesis was if the results of the battle at Powder River caused, either directly or indirectly, the defeats of the U.S. Army during the next two battles of the Centennial Campaign. It directly contributed to the defeat of Crook at the Rosebud and Custer at Little Big Horn because it caused the Indian bands, often smaller than two hundred fighting braves, to come together to form a massive nation for self-preservation. Historians estimate that Crook faced more than 1,500 warriors at the Rosebud, and that Custer might have faced more than 2,500 braves at the Little Big Horn. These gatherings of massive numbers of Indians were not the result of bad luck or an annual tribal council by the Indians. They were a direct result of the threat the U.S. Army displayed at Powder River.

The indirect contribution of the battle of Powder River on the remainder of the campaign cannot be accurately measured. The mental state of the soldiers who participated in the failed capture of the Cheyenne and Sioux tribe carried over to the Rosebud. Many of the soldiers knew that the Indians would not roll over and allow themselves and their families to be captured. The underestimations of the Indian's will to fight by the leadership of the campaign was an injustice to their soldiers and personnel.

As for the effect this battle had on the soldiers of the campaign, Colonel Joseph J. Reynolds retired following his court-martial in 1877 and died in 1899 having never cleared his name. He was found guilty on three charges, charges of leaving his dead and wounded on the battlefield, allowing the Indians to recapture the pony herd, and disobeying the orders of Crook to keep the supplies that were captured from the Indian

village. He was sentence to be suspended from rank and command for one year. This is the same sentence Custer received following his posthumous court-martial. Reynolds' former West Point classmate and long time friend President Ulysses S. Grant remitted the sentence, stating that he did so because of Reynolds' long and distinguished career.

Captain Alexander Moore pled guilty and was found guilty of conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline in failing to cooperate fully with the attack. The court sentenced Moore to be suspended from command and confined to the limits of his post. President Grant also remitted Moore's sentence because of his previous record.

The court reprimanded General George Crook for taking the paymaster Stanton along as a newspaper correspondent. Crook was not punished, however, and continued to lead the southern column into Montana for the summer portion of the Centennial Campaign.

Reynolds died bearing the blame for the loss at Powder River. Today, the charges against him might be harder to prove. Crook's lack of support, Mills' lack of situational awareness, and Moore's positioning because of poor communications following the scout's reconnaissance were all contributing factors. The blame for losing the ponies should have fallen on Major Stanton. The blame for not pulling the dead soldiers off of the battlefield should have rested with his company commanders. And the blame for not following orders and packing out the meat from the village to feed his soldiers was impossible to execute.

Colonel Joseph J. Reynolds should be remembered for his long and distinguished career, spanning more than five decades. Instead, he is remembered as the bumbling

colonel of the Third Regiment that lost a small battle to an Indian force that should have rolled over when the United States Cavalry charged into their homes, a battle that preceded and effected the defeat of the U.S. Army at the Rosebud and Little Big Horn three months later.

This thesis raised many leadership issues. Today's leaders and professional officers can learn much from the study of the difficulty of command in harsh climates. It is easy to place blame on the senior leadership of the U.S. Army during the Centennial Campaign, but the reader must put himself in the shoes of the weary, fatigued, hungry, and cold warrior to truly gain the lessons learned from the Saint Patrick's Day Celebration on the Powder River.

History teaches much if it is studied with a critical eye. Lessons learned by the soldiers of the Centennial Campaign can be translated into our Army as we see it today. With our Army continuing to down size, a phenomenon experienced following every large war the Army has ever fought, parallels can be drawn between the soldiers and leaders of the Centennial Campaign and the soldiers and leaders of our current Army. The lack of funding by congress caused the soldiers to make due with what they had. Make shift clothing, poor equipment, lack of training resources were all as prevalent in 1876 as they are today. Leaders who can overcome these deficiencies and train the soldiers under these conditions can still have a confident and trained fighting force.

Learning about your enemy and his way of life, knowing your enemy, is a concept that has been around since Sun Tzu. The Army's attempt to fight the Indians on their ground with their knowledge of the terrain was the antithesis of knowing your enemy. Although the Indians were not expecting to fight that cold March morning, they were at

least rested and prepared to defend their village. We can expect nothing less as we train the soldiers and leaders of today's Army.

In a letter to the famous air power theorist Liddell Hart, Field Marshal Lord Wavell once wrote "If I had time and anything like your ability to study war, I think I should concentrate almost entirely on the 'actualities of war', the effects of tiredness, hunger, fear, lack of sleep, weather.... The principles of strategy and tactics, and the logistics of war are absurdly simple: it is the actualities that make war so complicated and so difficult, and are usually so neglected by historians."³ This is what the writer has tried to do.

4

¹Paul Fussell, *Thank God for the Atom Bomb and Other Essays* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1998), 24.

²John G. Bourke, *On the Border with Crook* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1971), vi.

³Dave Grossman, *On Killing* (Boston, New York, London: Little, Brown and Company, 1996), 51.

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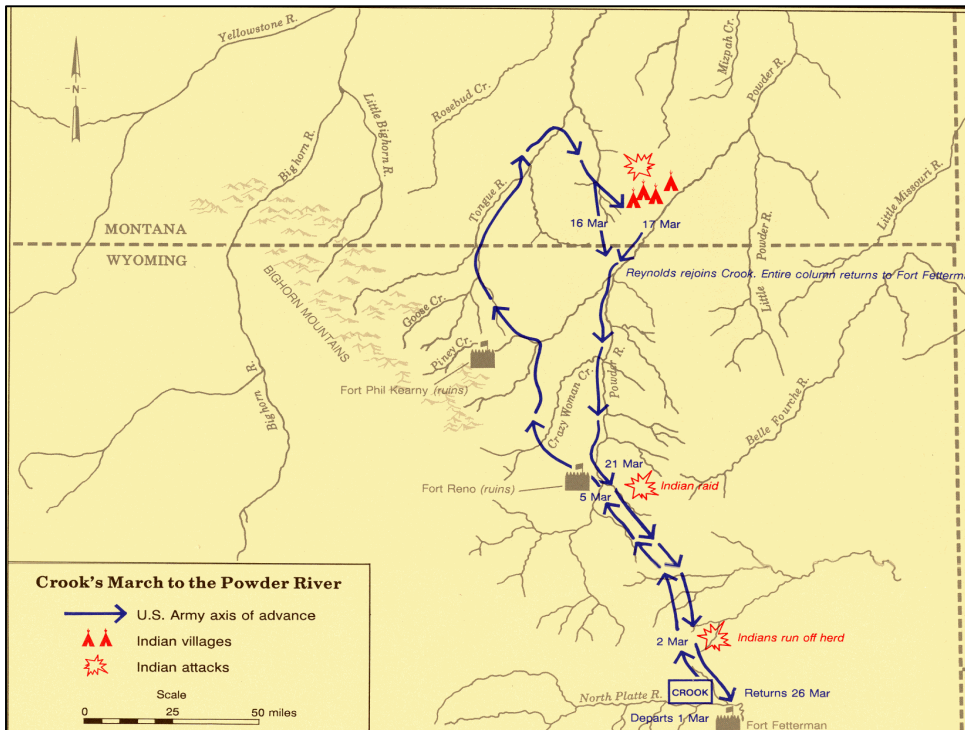


Figure 1. Route of Crook's Column at Powder River. Source: Dr. William G. Robertson, Dr. Jerold E. Brown, Maj. William M. Campsey, and Maj. Scott R. McMeen. *Atlas of the Sioux Wars* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Combat Studies Institute, US Army Command and General Staff College, 1995), 9.



Figure 2. Colonel Joseph J. Reynolds. Source: Terry C. Johnston, *Blood Song* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 1.



Figure 3. General George Crook. Source: Paul A. Hutton, *Phil Sheridan and His Army* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), 127.



Figure 4. Chief Two Moons.
Source: Martin F. Schmitt, *Fighting Indians of the West* (New York and London: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948), 134.



Figure 5. Captain Anson Mills.
Source: Anson Mills, *My Story* (Washington, D.C.: Press of Byron S. Adams, 1918), 2.

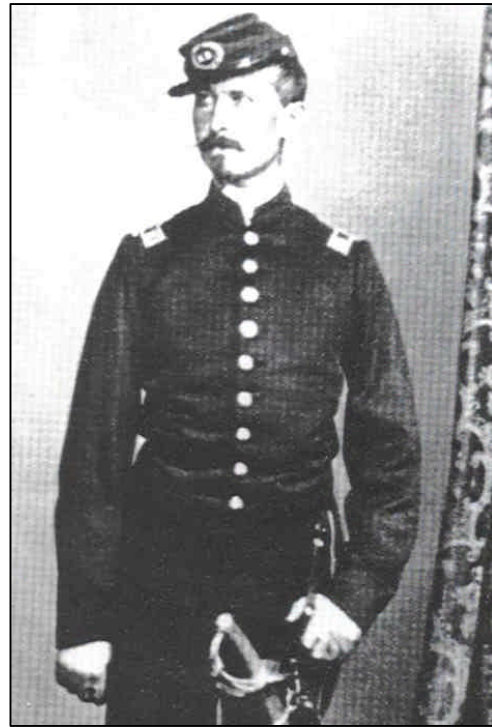


Figure 6. Captain Alexander Moore.
Source: Louise Barnett. "Powder River: Engagement Goes Awry; Reynolds Court-Martialed." *Greasy Grass* 16 (May 2000), 6.

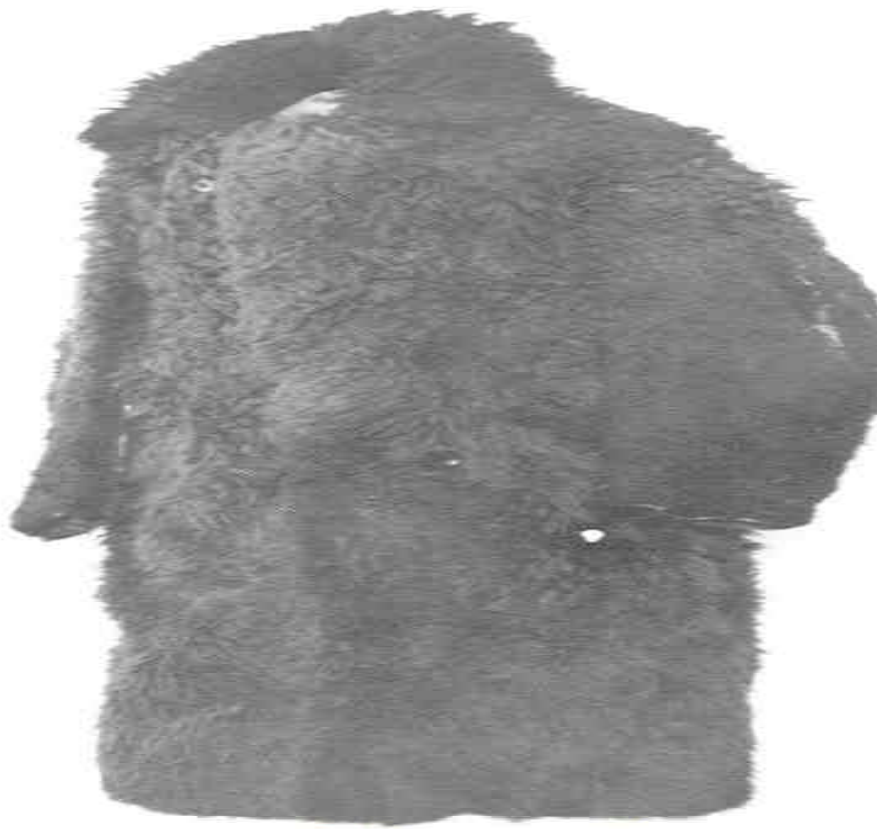


Figure 7. Buffalo Overcoat. Source: Douglas C. McChristian, *The US Army in the West, 1870-1880: Uniforms, weapons, and equipment* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), 177.

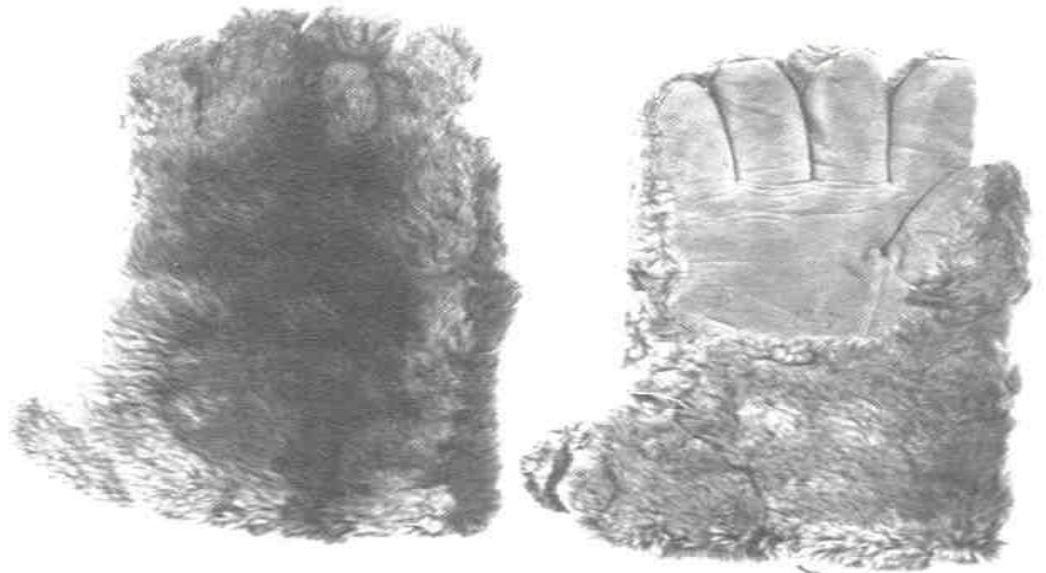


Figure 9. Muskrat Fur Gauntlets. Source: Douglas C. McChristian, *The US Army in the West, 1870-1880: Uniforms, weapons, and equipment* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), 176.

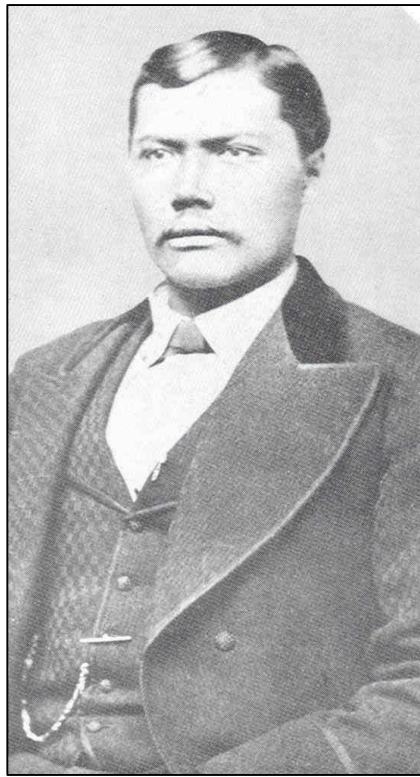


Figure 10. Frank Grouard, Scout. Source: Martin F. Schmitt, *Fighting Indians of the West* (New York and London: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948), 136.



Figure 11. Egan's "White Horse" Troop. Source: J.W. Vaughn, *The Reynolds Campaign on Powder River* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), Illustrations.

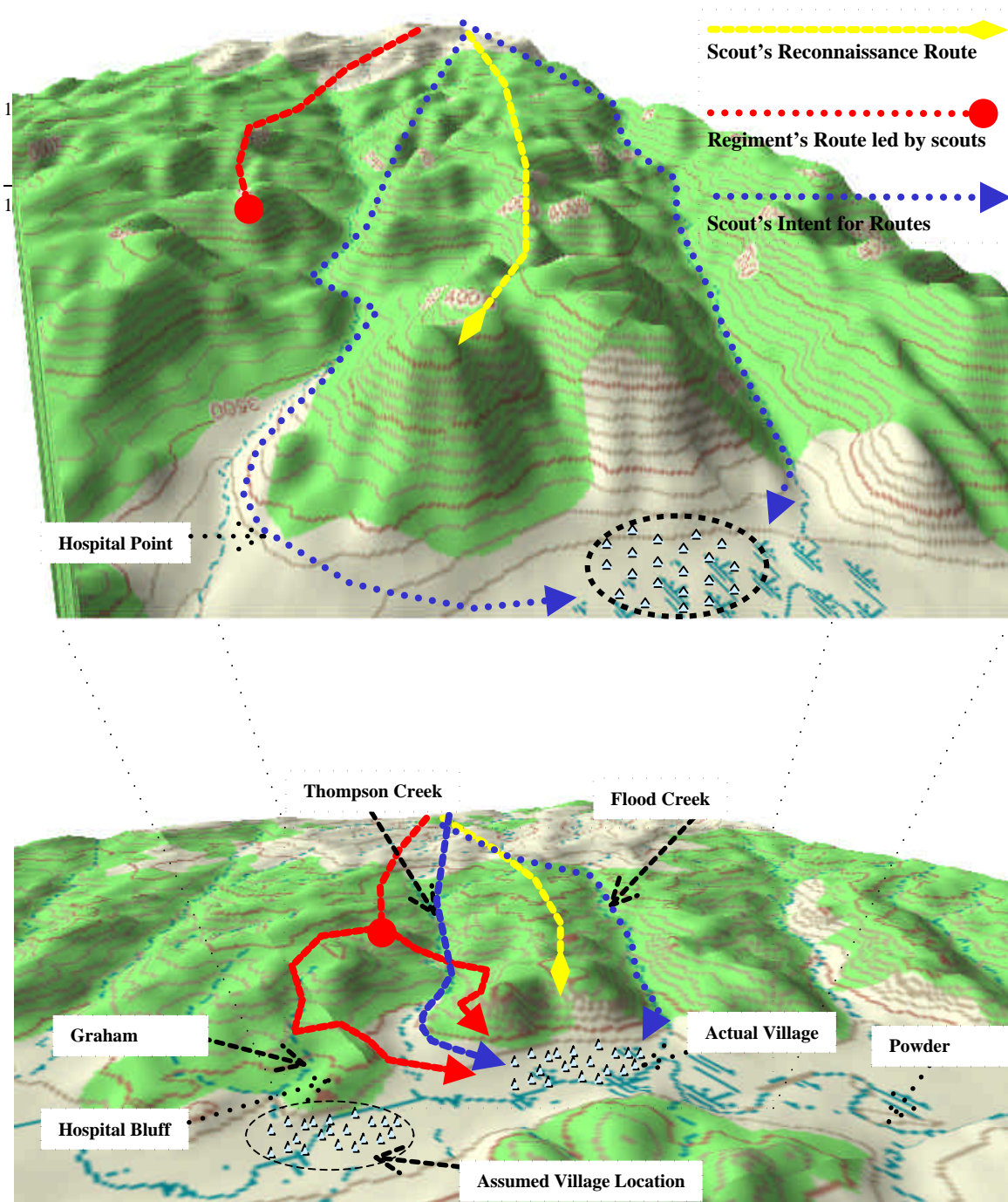


Figure 12. Reconnaissance Confusion. Terrain relief of the Powder River Battlefield with routes of scout reconnaissance, scout's intent for regimental routes, and actual regimental routes. Map graphics courtesy of DeLorme, Topo USA, version 2.0, Yarmouth, ME, 1999.

Rawolle's

Indian

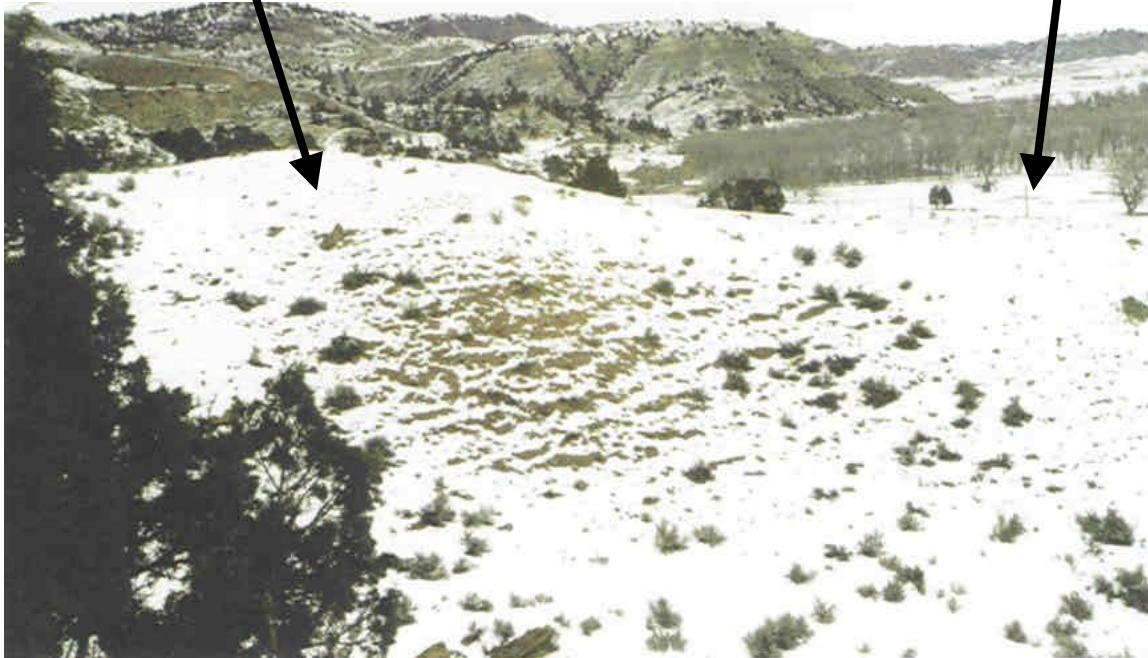


Figure 13. Looking Northeast from Moore's Ridge into the Indian Village. Rawolle's ridge can be seen in the foreground and the Indian villa village is in the trees to the right of the photo. Source: Author

Reynolds'

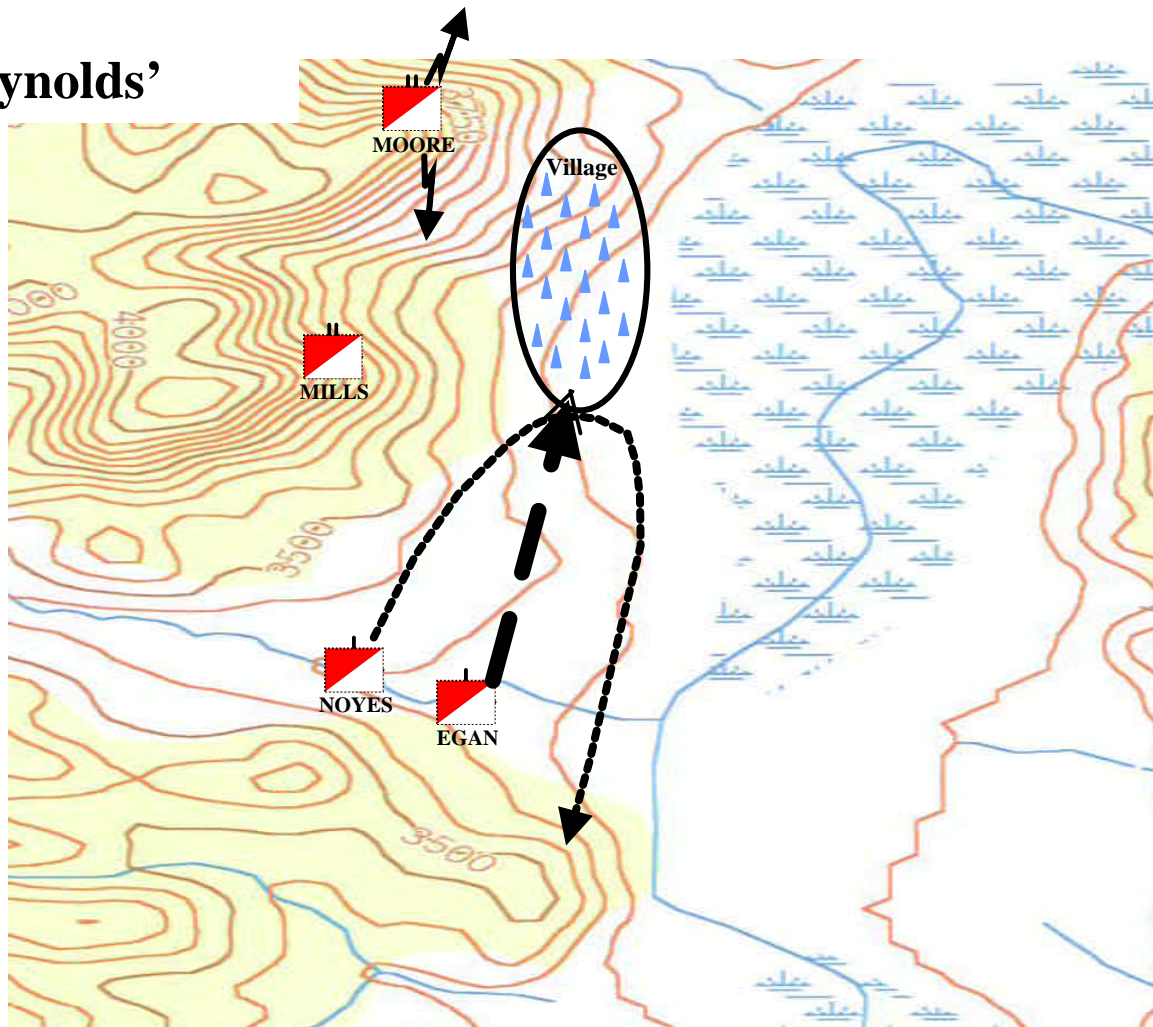


Figure 14. Reynolds' plan as he briefed it to his officers while they were still west of the battlefield. Map graphics courtesy of DeLorme, Topo USA, version 2.0, Yarmouth, ME, 1999.

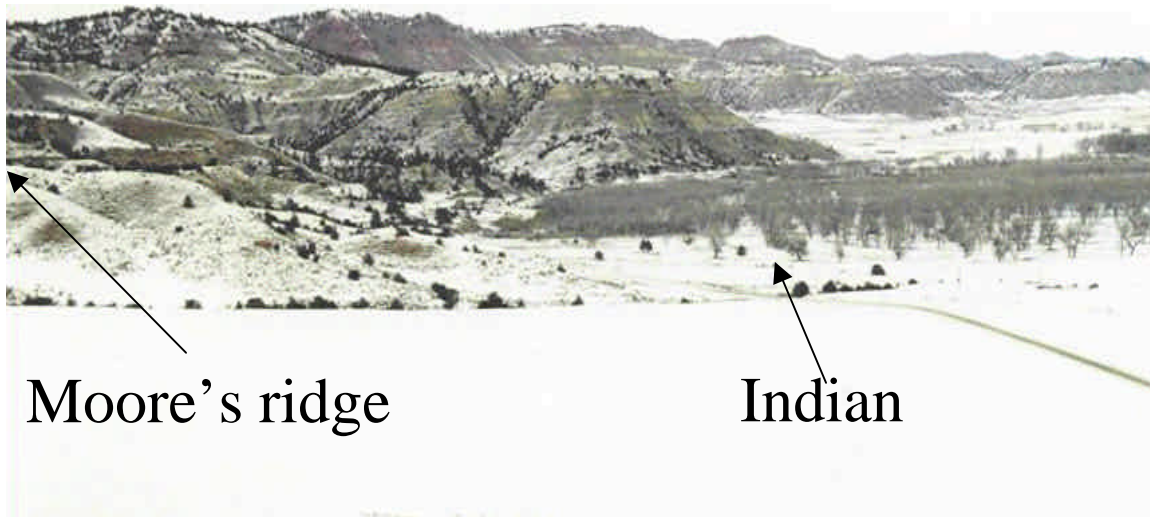
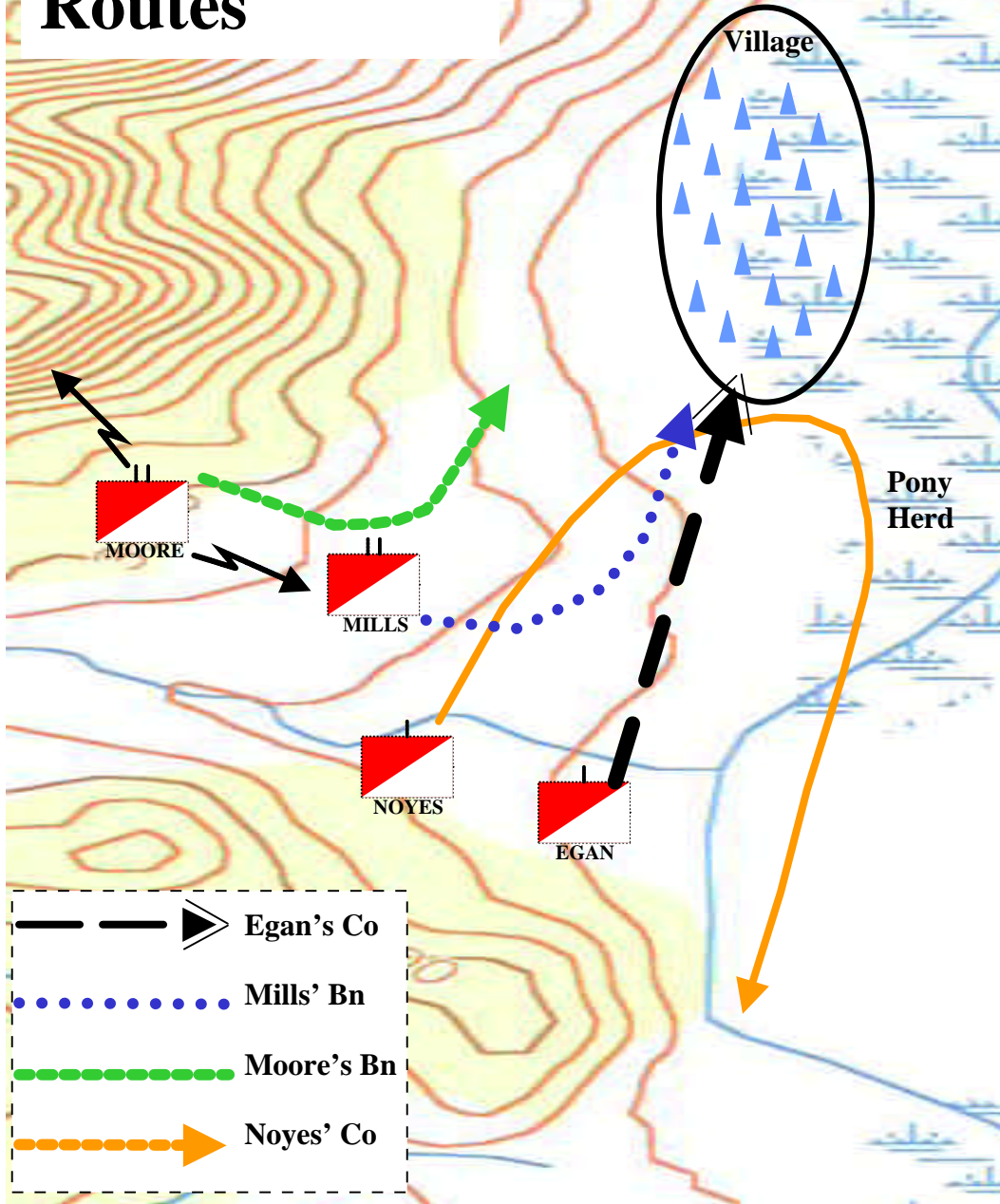


Figure 15. Looking North across Thompson Creek (not pictured) into the Indian village. Indian village was placed in the trees to the right of the picture. First ridge line to the left of the picture was Moore's ridge. Source: Author



Figure 16. Looking Southwest from the Indian Village. This is the view to the bluff west of the village. The terrain from Moore's ridge (left of the photo) to Flood Creek (northwest of the village) was impossible to cross without being detected by the Indian village. Source: Author

Actual Attack Routes



Indian Counterattack and “Horseshoe Defense”

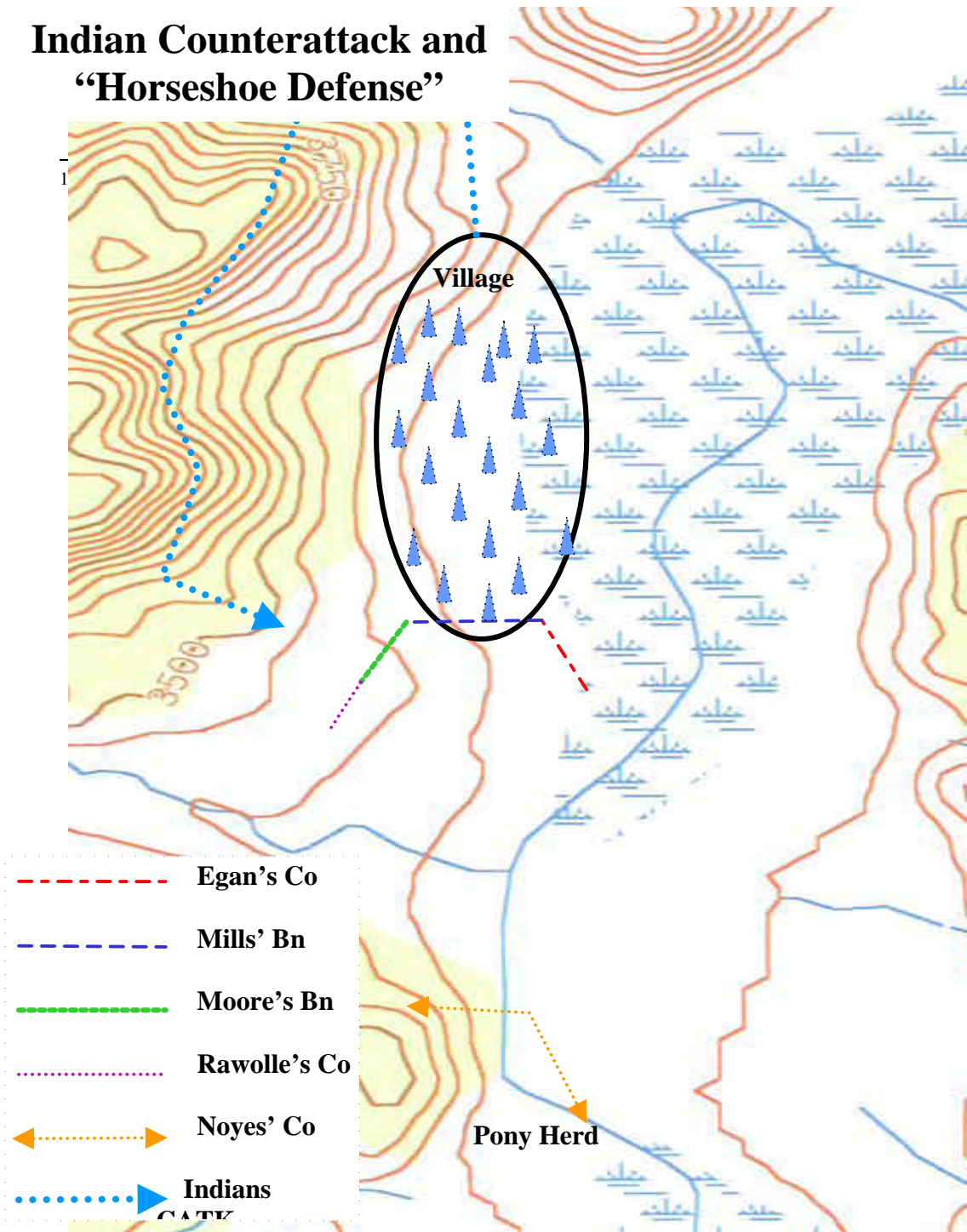


Figure 18. Indian counterattack into the regiment. Regiment established in a “horseshoe defense.” Map graphics courtesy of DeLorme, Topo USA, version 2.0, Yarmouth, ME, 1999.

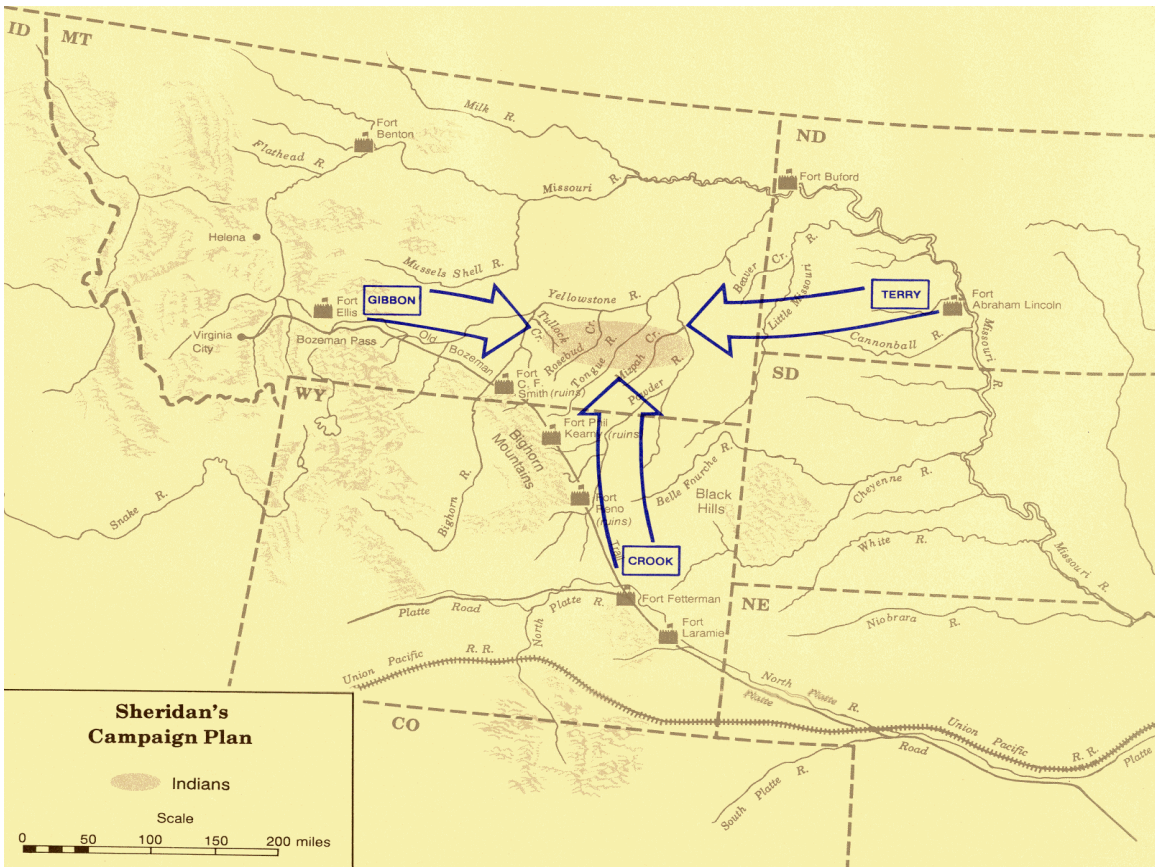


Figure 19. Sheridan's Campaign Plan with the Three-pronged "Pincer Movement." Source: Dr. William G. Robertson, Dr. Jerold E. Brown, Maj. William M. Campsey, and Maj. Scott R. McMeen, *Atlas of the Sioux Wars* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Combat Studies Institute, US Army Command and General Staff College, 1995), 8.

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