

The Most Desperate Acts of Gallantry

**GEORGE A. CUSTER
IN THE CIVIL WAR**

by Daniel T. Davis

EMERGING CIVIL WAR SERIES

Footnotes

Prologue

Just several yards ahead of them....¹

"Courage boys, we will get them...."²

Terry hoped to trap Sitting Bull's village in a pincers.³

¹ Kenneth Hammer ed. *Custer in '76: Walter Camp's Notes on the Custer Fight* (Norman, OK 1976) 100. Ronald Nichols ed. *Reno Court of Inquiry: Proceedings of a Court of Inquiry in the Case of Maj. Marcus A. Reno* (Hardin, MT 2007) 387-388.

² Col. W.A. Graham ed. *The Custer Myth: A Source Book of Custeriana* (Mechanicsburg, PA 1995) 345. James Willert *Little Big Horn Diary: Chronicle of the 1876 Sioux War* (El Segundo, CA 2014) 254. Nicholls, *Reno Court*, 388-389.

"...I hope to have a good report to send you by the next mail."⁴

... "No, I will not" as he rode away.⁵

...but probably no more than fifteen hundred.⁶

"Because I have never heard Custer talk in that way before."⁷

...after covering around thirty three miles.⁸

Shortly after sundown, the regiment made camp.⁹

...as the summer sun peeked over the eastern horizon.¹⁰

...to mount up and follow on to the divide.¹¹

"Well, I've got about as good as eyes as anybody...."¹²

He immediately ordered an officers call.¹³

...toward the valley of the Little Big Horn.¹⁴

...Custer and Reno marched on.¹⁵

This immediately caught Custer's attention.¹⁶

...accompany Reno and observe his progress.¹⁷

...Reno was charging down the valley toward the village.¹⁸

Wheeling about, Custer rejoined his battalion.¹⁹

"Benteen. Come On. Big Village. Be quick, bring packs...."²⁰

³ John Gibbon. *Last Summer's Expedition Against the Sioux and Its Great Catastrophe in Custer Catastrophe at Little Big Horn: Early Rare Accounts and Publications by Writers that For the basis for Much of the Current Books and Publications Today* (El Segundo, CA 2012) 160, 162.

⁴ Edward S. Godfrey *Custer's Last Battle* (Golden, CO 1986) 14. Marguerite Merington ed. *The Custer Story: The Life and Intimate Letters of General George A. Custer and His Wife Elizabeth* (Lincoln, NE 1987) 307-308.

⁵ Gibbon, *Last Summer's Campaign*, 163.

⁶ Godfrey, *Custer's Last Battle*, pg. 16. George Clark ed. *Scalp Dance: The Edgerly Papers on the Battle of the Little Big Horn* (Oswego, NY 1985) 24.

⁷ Godfrey, *Custer's Last Battle*, 17.

⁸ Godfrey, *Custer's Last Battle*, 17-18. John Carroll ed. *General Custer and the Battle of the Little Big Horn: The Federal View* (Bryan, TX 1986) 65.

⁹ Godfrey, *Custer's Last Battle*, 18.

¹⁰ Richard Hardorff ed. *On the Little Bighorn with Walter Camp: A Collection Walter Mason Camp's Letters, Notes and Opinions on Custer's Last Fight*. (El Segundo, CA. 2002) 49. Godfrey, *Custer's Last Battle*, 19.

¹¹ Glendolin Damon Wagner, *Old Neutriment* (Lincoln, NE 1989) 148-149. Hardorff, *On the Little Bighorn with Walter Camp*, 51-52.

¹² Hardorff, *On the Little Bighorn with Walter Camp*, 50-53.

¹³ Edgar and Jane Stewart ed. *The Field Diary of Edward Settle Godfrey* (Portland, OR. 1957) 10. Godfrey, *Custer's Last Battle*, pg. 19.

¹⁴ Hammer, *Custer in '76*, 74-75. Nicholls, *Reno Court*, 511. John M. Carroll ed. *Camp Talk: The Very Private Letters of Frederick W. Benteen of the 7th U.S. Cavalry to His Wife 1871-1888* (Bryan, TX. 1983) 22

¹⁵ Hammer, *Custer in '76*, 75. Nicholls, *Reno Court*, 528, 560. Carroll, *Camp Talk*, 22-23.

¹⁶ Nicholls, *Reno Court*, 84. Sandy Bernard ed. *Ten Years with Custer: A 7th Cavalryman's Memoirs* (Terre Huate, IN 2001) 290.

¹⁷ Nicholls, *Reno Court* 46, 560-561.

¹⁸ Hardorff, *On the Little Bighorn with Walter Camp*, 7. Orrin G. Libby ed. *The Arikara Narrative of Custer's Campaign and the Battle of the Little Bighorn* (Norman, OK. 1998) 172-173. Nicholls, *Reno Court*, 157, 174, 388-389. Graham, *Custer Myth*, 249.

¹⁹ Hammer, *Custer in '76*, 92-93. Graham, *Custer Myth*, 249, 289. Nicholls, *Reno Court*, 337.

²⁰ Hammer, *Custer in '76*, 100. Graham, *Custer Myth*, 289-290. Carroll, *Camp Talk*, 22

Chapter 1: First Charge at Catlett's Station

A fight was imminent.²¹

"...I feel thankful for such noble parents."²²

...the young man wanted more for himself.²³

Bingham had appointed him to the academy.²⁴

He did not adjust well.²⁵

...he would support his class as a solid base."²⁶

"My career as a cadet had but little to commend it...." ²⁷

"...was one of the best horsemen of his day."²⁸

...Southerners from each seceding state resigned from the academy ²⁹

...Custer ranked thirty-fourth in a class of thirty four.³⁰

...reprimanded in orders and soon left for Washington.³¹

...they reached Arlington Heights and the safety of Washington. ³²

...Custer's regiment was re-designated as the 5th U.S. Cavalry.³³

...Johnston began to pull his divisions out of their encampments and march south.³⁴

...McClellan dispatched Brig. Gen. Stoneman to ascertain Johnston's whereabouts.³⁵

²¹ William Brooke-Rawle *History of the Third Pennsylvania Cavalry* (Philadelphia, PA 1905) 36. Frank Moore ed. *The Rebellion Record: A Diary of American Events* (New York, NY 1862) Vol. IV, 296

²² Sandy Barnard *Digging Into Custer's Last Stand* (Wake Forest, NC 2003) 95. Lawrence A. Frost *Let Us Have a Fair Fight!: General George Armstrong Custer's Early Years* (Monroe, MI 1965) 1. Marguerite Merington ed. *The Custer Story: The Life and Intimate Letters of General George A. Custer and His Wife Elizabeth* (Lincoln, NE 1950) 6.

²³ W. Donald Horn *Witnesses for the Defense of General George Armstrong Custer* (Short Hills, NJ 1981) 24. Frost, *Let Us Have a Fair Fight* 1.

²⁴ Frederick Whitaker *A Complete Life of General George A. Custer* (New York, NY 1876) 13-17. Charles B. Wallace, *Custer's Ohio Boyhood* (Cadiz, OH 1987) 28, 31, 36-39.

²⁵ Edgar Dudley, "Discipline at the United States Military Academy" in A. Noel Blakeman, ed. *Personal Recollections of the War of the Rebellion, Addresses Delivered Before the Commandery of the State of New York, Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States* third series (New York, NY 1907) 393-394

²⁶ Peter S. Michie, "Reminiscences of a Cadet and Army Service" in A. Noel Blakeman, ed. *Personal Recollections of the War of the Rebellion, Addresses Delivered Before the Commandery of the State of New York, Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States* second series (New York, NY 1897) 194.

²⁷ *Skinny: The Delinquency Record of Cadet George Armstrong Custer United States Military Academy Class of June 1861* ed. W. Donald Horn (Short Hills, NJ 1980) ii-iii. *Custer in the Civil War: His Unfinished Memoirs* ed. John M. Carroll (Mattituck, NY 1977) 86.

²⁸ Morris Schaff *The Spirit of Old West Point, 1858-1862* (Boston, MA 1907) 26, 86. James Wilson *Under the Old Flag: Recollections of Military Operations in the War for the Union, the Spanish War, The Boxer Rebellion, etc.* (New York, NY 1912) Vol. I 101

²⁹ Carroll, *Custer in the Civil War*, 80-83.

³⁰ Alice Tomlinson O'Neill *My Dear Sister: An Analysis of Some Civil War Letters of George Armstrong Custer* (Brooklyn, NY nd) 11-12. Carroll, *Custer in the Civil War*, 85-86.

³¹ Carroll, *Custer in the Civil War*, 86. Jeffrey D. Wert *Custer: The Controversial Life of George Armstrong Custer* (New York, NY 1996) 39-40.-

³² Carroll, *Custer in the Civil War*, 89-94, 102, 105. Catherine Creary ed. *Dear Belle: Letters from A Cadet & Officer to His Sweetheart, 1858-1865* (Middletown, CT 1965) 105

³³ Carroll, *Custer in the Civil War*, 114-115, 118. Creary, *Dear Belle*, 107. *Across the Continent with the Fifth Cavalry* co. George F. Price (n.p. 1883) 12

³⁴ Creary *Dear Belle*, 105. O'Neil *My Dear Sister*, 19. Joseph Johnston *Narrative of Military Operations During the Civil War* (New York, NY 1959) 96-97, 102-103.

...in the confidence that he had just led his first mounted assault.³⁶

Chapter 2: Fight at New Bridge

...and carefully waded into the water.³⁷

The Army of the Potomac was on the precipice of the spring campaign.³⁸

"...I would lay down my life for him."³⁹

...the Chief Engineer on the staff of Brig. Gen. William "Baldy" Smith.⁴⁰

These small engagements reinforced the true cost of war in Custer's mind.⁴¹

"General McClellan is here to lead us...."⁴²

...found them in a new position outside Williamsburg.⁴³

...leaving the old colonial city in Union hands.⁴⁴

The experience haunted Autie in the days ahead.⁴⁵

...in an effort to find a place for the army to ford.⁴⁶

... the Chief Engineer decided to report directly to McClellan.⁴⁷

"I felt I could have died for him...."⁴⁸

"All Monroe boys, follow me; stick to me and I'll stick to you! Come!"⁴⁹

...the blue infantry withdrew back to the east side of the river.⁵⁰

Chapter 3: Brothers Meet at Bassett Hall

Standing over his right shoulder was George Armstrong Custer.⁵¹

...for a stronger position south of Boatswain Creek.⁵²

...and pushed the Federals back across the Chickahominy.⁵³

Their sudden charge stunned the gray troopers, who surrendered to a man.⁵⁴

³⁵ Stephen W. Sears ed. *The Civil War Papers of George B. McClellan Selected Correspondence* (New York, NY 1989) 200-201, 210.

³⁶ Moore, *The Rebellion Record*, 296. Carroll, *Custer in the Civil War*, 129-130.

³⁷ Whitaker, *A Complete Life*, 108-109

³⁸ Merington, *The Custer Story*, 27.

³⁹ Price, *Across the Continent*, 106. Merington, *The Custer Story*, 27-28.

⁴⁰ Price, *Across the Continent*, 106. Carroll, *Custer in the Civil War*, 136, 143.

⁴¹ Carroll, *Custer in the Civil War*, 144.

⁴² Merington, *The Custer Story*, 27, 29.

⁴³ Carroll, *Custer in the Civil War*, 145, 149, 150-151.

⁴⁴ OR 11, part 1, 536-541. Carroll, *Custer in the Civil War*, 151, 154

⁴⁵ Merington, *The Custer Story*, 30. Whitaker, *A Complete Life*, 126.

⁴⁶ OR 11, part 1, 23-25, 111, 651.

⁴⁷ Whitaker, *A Complete Life*, 111-112.

⁴⁸ Whitaker, *A Complete Life*, 112-114.

⁴⁹ Whitaker, *A Complete Life*, 116-117. OR 11, part 1, 652.

⁵⁰ John Robertson co. *Michigan in the War* (East Lansing, MI 1882) 225. OR 11, part 1, 652, 664-665.

⁵¹ Whitaker, *A Complete Life*, 127

⁵² Whitaker, *A Complete Life*, 115. OR 11, Part I 38-52, Part II 490-491

⁵³ Sears ed. *The Civil War Papers of George McClellan*, 320. OR 11, Part II, 75, 493

...and was content to keep a close eye on his foe.⁵⁵
 ...and the small force made their way back to the river.⁵⁶
 ...who turned and escorted his prisoner back to the regiment.⁵⁷
 These enemy reinforcements prompted Averell to withdraw back to the Federal lines.⁵⁸
 ...Lea made him promise to come back and spend the night.⁵⁹
 ...McClellan responded that he could remain in Williamsburg if he chose.⁶⁰
 Not saying a word, he headed back to war.⁶¹

Chapter 4: Across Beverly Ford

...until the air was filled with the sharp reports.⁶²
 ...with McClellan in overall command.⁶³
 ...rode in the company of his fellow staff officers to meet him.⁶⁴
 Similar to his field duties on the Peninsula, Custer accompanied Pleasonton.⁶⁵
 He studied the enemy position for a time before he returned to the Union line.⁶⁶
 ...he decided to abandon his position and return to the safety of Virginia.⁶⁷
 "...I only speak of my own interests and desires perfectly regardless of all the world besides."⁶⁸
 ...and replaced him with Maj. Gen. Ambrose Burnside.⁶⁹
 ...he managed to keep in contact with Libbie through winter social engagements.⁷⁰
 The next day, he was assigned to Alfred Pleasonton's staff.⁷¹
 ...who Hooker replaced with Pleasonton.⁷²
 ... and then move on Culpeper and defeat Stuart.⁷³

⁵⁴ OR 11, Part I, 60, Part II 494-495. Whitaker, *A Complete Life*, 120-121.

⁵⁵ OR 11, Part I, 70, Part II, 495-496

⁵⁶ OR 11, Part II, 947-948

⁵⁷ OR 11, Part I, 75-76, Part II, 954. Whitaker, *A Complete Life*, 122.

⁵⁸ OR 11, Part II, 955. Whitaker, *A Complete Life*, 122-123

⁵⁹ OR 11, Part I, 76. Whitaker, *A Complete Life*, 126.

⁶⁰ Whitaker, *A Complete Life*, 126-128.

⁶¹ Ibid, 128-129.

⁶² Henry Norton ed. *Deeds of Daring or History of the Eighth New York Volunteer Cavalry* (Norwich, N.Y. 1889) 64-

65

⁶³ Whitaker, *A Complete Life*, 128-129. OR 12, Part II, 552. Sears ed. *The Civil War Papers of George B. McClellan* 423, 428.

⁶⁴ Sears ed. *The Civil War Papers of George B. McClellan*, 431, 439. Whitaker, *A Complete Life*, 129.

⁶⁵ Sears ed. *The Civil War Papers of George B. McClellan* 456, 458-461. OR 19, Part I, 210-211

⁶⁶ Abner Hard *History of the Eighth Cavalry Regiment Illinois Volunteers During the Great Rebellion* (Dayton, OH 1996) 178-179. Sears ed. *The Civil War Papers of George B. McClellan*, 463, 465

⁶⁷ Whitaker, *A Complete Life* 125.

⁶⁸ George A. Custer to Augusta Frary, October 3, 1862. Copy in the Rochester Public Library, Rochester NY.

⁶⁹ Whitaker, *A Complete Life* 125, 130.

⁷⁰ Whitaker, *A Complete Life* 134. Lawrence A. Frost, *General Custer's Libbie* (Seattle, WA 1976) 55. Jay Monaghan, *Custer: The Life of General George Armstrong Custer* (Lincoln, NE 1959) 109-112

⁷¹ Wert, *Custer*, 66, 69-70, 112. Roger Williams, *Military Register of Custer's Last Command* (Norman, OK 2009) 77, 90.

⁷² Monaghan, *Custer* 113, 115-117.

“...I want all my letters burned.”⁷⁴
 ...a lone Confederate officer surprised and shot him dead.⁷⁵
 ...and the two men rode off and reported to Pleasonton.⁷⁶
 ...high ground that rose above Brandy Station called Fleetwood Hill.⁷⁷
 He likely could not fathom the changes that lay ahead.⁷⁸

Chapter 5: A New Brigadier

...a shell came screaming down into the midst of Custer’s position.⁷⁹
 Custer rode with Pleasonton to the vicinity of Manassas Junction.⁸⁰
 ...in the saddle and headed out in search of Lee.⁸¹
 An emboldened Munford launched a counterattack.⁸²
 Darkness finally brought an end to the fighting.⁸³
 From there, they moved on to Frederick.⁸⁴
 ... armed with new Spencer seven-shot repeating rifles.⁸⁵
 There was much to be done.⁸⁶
 ...in a ride around the Army of the Potomac and through Maryland.⁸⁷
 “...and his upper lip was garnished with a blonde mustache.”⁸⁸
 The Third Cavalry Division was needed there to cover the army’s right flank.⁸⁹
 ...Kilpatrick led his tired division southwest and camped at Two Taverns.⁹⁰
 ...and report back on any enemy activity.⁹¹
 ...Stuart ordered several artillery shots to be fired in the direction of the road junction.⁹²

⁷³ OR 27, Part I, 1044, Part II 305, Part III 5, 8, 27.

⁷⁴ Alice Tomlinson O’Neil ed. *My Dear Sister*, 32-33.

⁷⁵ OR 27, Part I, 1044, Part II 748. Merington ed. *The Custer Story*, 58. Norton ed. *Deeds of Daring*, 65

⁷⁶ OR 27, Part II, 749. Merington ed. *The Custer Story*, 59.

⁷⁷ OR 27, Part I, 1045, Part II, 680-681. Frederick Newhall, “Battle of Beverly Ford” *The Annals of War Written by Leading Participants North and South* (Leesburg, VA) 140-141.

⁷⁸ OR 27, Part I, 903, 905. Newhall, “Battle of Beverly Ford”, 144.

⁷⁹ *Michigan in the War*, 582

⁸⁰ OR 27, Part I, 905, Part III, 88, 117

⁸¹ OR 27, Part I, 952, Part III, 172

⁸² Henry C. Meyer, *Civil War Experiences with New York Cavalry Under Bayard, Gregg, Kilpatrick, Custer, Raulston and Newberry 1862-1864* (NY, New York 1911) 33. OR 27, Part I, 952-953, Part II, 739-741.

⁸³ Edward P. Tobie *History of the First Maine Cavalry 1861-1865* (Boston, Mass. 1887) 161-163. Whitaker, A *Complete Life*, 156-158.

⁸⁴ OR 27, Part I, 906-913.

⁸⁵ OR 27, Part III, 373-374, 376. Michael Phipps, “Come On You Wolverines!”: *Custer at Gettysburg* (Gettysburg, PA 1995) 13-15.

⁸⁶ Phipps, “Come On You Wolverines!”: *Custer at Gettysburg* (Gettysburg, PA 1995) 11-12

⁸⁷ Merington, *The Custer Story*, 60. *Michigan in the War*, 572-573. OR 27, Part I, 992, Part II, 692-695.

⁸⁸ J.H. Kidd, *Personal Recollections of a Cavalryman with Custer’s Michigan Cavalry Brigade in the Civil War* (Ionia, MI 1908) 128-129.

⁸⁹ OR 27, Part I, 992, Part II, 696

⁹⁰ Kidd, *Personal Recollections*, 134-135. Whitaker, A *Complete Life*, 173-174. OR 27, Part II, 724.

⁹¹ *Michigan in the War*, 582

...Armstrong replied and Gregg acquiesced.⁹³
 ...he ordered the 5th Michigan in to relieve their comrades.⁹⁴
 ...Gregg ordered Custer into the fight.⁹⁵
 ...long enough for the 7th Michigan to return to their position.⁹⁶
 ...“sabering all who came within reach.”⁹⁷
 An uncertain future lay ahead.⁹⁸

Chapter 6: Buckland Mills

Night descended as the Federals neared South Mountain.⁹⁹
 ...Emack managed to hold off several assaults.¹⁰⁰
 ...along with some 1,300 prisoners which were sent on to Frederick.¹⁰¹
 Kilpatrick immediately turned the column “in hot haste” and galloped off.¹⁰²
 ... little to impede the enemy withdrawal and Lee was able to reach Virginia.¹⁰³
 ... with five regiments and two batteries in the direction of Newby’s Crossroads.¹⁰⁴
 Unbelievably, he only lost fifteen men during the fight.¹⁰⁵
 ...remain close to Custer and play inspiring airs to encourage the men.¹⁰⁶
 ...their retreat covered by Brig. Gen. Lunsford Lomax’s brigade.¹⁰⁷

⁹² William Brooke-Rawle, *The Right Flank at Gettysburg: An Account of the Operations of General Gregg’s Cavalry Command* (Philadelphia, PA 1878) 15. Kidd, *Personal Recollections*, 142-143.

⁹³ *Michigan in the War*, 583. David M. Gregg “The Second Cavalry Division of the Army of the Potomac in the Gettysburg Campaign Addresses Delivered Before the Commandery of the State of Pennsylvania, Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States (Philadelphia, PA 1907) 9

⁹⁴ Brooke-Rawle, *Right Flank at Gettysburg*, 18-20. OR 27, Part II, 698. *Michigan in the War*, 583. Henry R. Pyne, *The History of the First New Jersey Cavalry* (Trenton, NJ 1871) 164

⁹⁵ *Michigan in the War*, 583. Brooke-Rawle, *The Right Flank at Gettysburg*, 21-22. Phipps, *Come On You Wolverines*, 40.

⁹⁶ *Michigan in the War*, 583. Kidd, *Personal Recollections*, 146, 151-152. William O. Lee, *Personal and Historical Sketches and Facial History Of and by Members of the Seventh Regiment, Michigan Volunteer Cavalry, 1862-1865* (Detroit, MI no date) 155. Phipps, *Come on You Wolverines*, 44-45.

⁹⁷ *Michigan in the War*, 583. Brooke-Rawle, *Right Flank at Gettysburg*, 23. William Styple ed. *Generals in Bronze: Interviewing the Commanders of the Civil War* (Kearny, NJ 2005) 256. Kidd, *Personal Recollections*, 154.

⁹⁸ Phipps, *Come on You Wolverines*, 49-50. *Michigan in the War*, 584.

⁹⁹ OR 27, Part I, 993-994. Kidd, *Personal Recollections*, 166-167.

¹⁰⁰ Eric J. Wittenberg and J. David Petruzzi “Thunder on the Mountain: The Battle of Monterey Pass July 4-5 1863” *Blue and Gray Magazine* (Columbus, OH Vol. XXVI) 26-29.

¹⁰¹ Wittenberg and Petruzzi, “Thunder on the Mountain” 30-31. Samuel Gillespie, *A History of Company A, First Ohio Cavalry* (Washington, OH 1898) 157-158. OR 27, Part I, 994. Kidd, *Personal Recollections*, 171.

¹⁰² Walter H. Taylor, *General Lee His Campaigns in Virginia 1861-1865 with Personal Reminiscences* (Lincoln, NE 1994) 212-213. Kidd, *Personal Recollections*, 183-184. Eric J. Wittenberg ed. *One of Custer’s Wolverines: The Civil War Letters of Brevet Brigadier General James H. Kidd, 6th Michigan Cavalry* (Kent, OH 2000) 51.

¹⁰³ Kidd, *Personal Recollections*, 185-186. Wert, *Custer*, 100

¹⁰⁴ Ide, *History of the First Vermont Cavalry*, 117, 126. Boudrye, *Historic Records of the Fifth New York Cavalry* 73-74. OR 27, Part I, 1001-1002. Taylor, *General Lee*, 218.

¹⁰⁵ OR 27, Part I, 1002-1003.

¹⁰⁶ Taylor, *General Lee*, 218. Ide, *History of the First Vermont Cavalry*, 131. Merington, *The Custer Story*, 63. Wert, *Custer*, 117.

...the Federals captured Culpeper.¹⁰⁸
 ...Pleasanton granted his old protégé's request.¹⁰⁹
 His leave soon coming to an end, Custer returned to Virginia.¹¹⁰
 "...I let nothing swerve me from my purpose."¹¹¹
 ...who had withdrawn in the face of an advance by Fitz Lee.¹¹²
 ... over the Rappahannock and out of the grasp of Stuart's cavalry.¹¹³
 That night, Custer bivouacked around the village of Gainesville.¹¹⁴
 Kilpatrick relented and spurred away to join Davies.¹¹⁵
 "The Confederates displayed a line of dismounted skirmishers...."¹¹⁶
 Lee followed but broke off the pursuit once the blue cavalry reached the village.¹¹⁷
 ...he continued on until he reached Custer at Gainesville.¹¹⁸
 "Under very distressing circumstances I turn to you and her for consolation...."¹¹⁹

Chapter 7: Facing Stuart at Yellow Tavern

...and galloped back to the Union line.¹²⁰
 ...the army went into winter quarters outside Culpeper Court House.¹²¹
 "...and the band played hymns."¹²²
 ...preparations were made for the coming campaign.¹²³
 "...gave him the appearance of one of the Vikings of old."¹²⁴
 ... and that night bivouacked at Catherine Furnace.¹²⁵
 ...the gray horsemen still held the Brock Road.¹²⁶

¹⁰⁷ OR 29, Part I, 124. Robert J. Trout, *Gallop Thunder: The Stuart Horse Artillery Battalion* (Mechanicsburg, PA 2002) 348-349. William N. McDonald, *A History of the Laurel Brigade* (Baltimore, MD 2002) 171-172.

¹⁰⁸ OR 29, Part I, 124-125, 127-128. Boudrye, *Historic Records of the Fifth New York Cavalry*, 77. Trout, *Gallop Thunder*, 350-352.

¹⁰⁹ Wert, *Custer*, 109-110. Theodore Lyman, *With Grant and Meade from the Wilderness to Appomattox* ed. George Agassiz (Lincoln, NE 1994) 17.

¹¹⁰ Wert, *Custer*, 112-113.

¹¹¹ OR 29, Part I, 389, 410. Merington, *The Custer Story*, 65.

¹¹² OR 29, Part I, 390, 463.

¹¹³ OR 29, Part I, 381, 390-391. Boudrye, *Historic Records of the Fifth New York Cavalry*, 79-80.

¹¹⁴ OR 29, Part I, 391, 411.

¹¹⁵ Kidd, *Personal Recollections*, 213-214.

¹¹⁶ Kidd, *Personal Recollections*, 215-216, 220-221. OR 29, Part I, 391.

¹¹⁷ Kidd, *Personal Recollections*, 222, 225. OR 29, Part I, 391-392.

¹¹⁸ OR 29, Part I, 387-388.

¹¹⁹ Merington, *The Custer Story*, 68-69.

¹²⁰ OR 36, Part I, 818. Kidd, *Personal Recollections* 303.

¹²¹ OR 29, Part I, 10-11, 13-20, 812-813. Wert, *Custer*, 127

¹²² Merington, *The Custer Story*, 73, 81, 86-87.

¹²³ Philip Sheridan, *Personal Memoirs of P.H. Sheridan* (Boston, Mass. 1992) 183, 189-191, 193-194. Merington, *The Custer Story*, 89. OR 36, Part I, 14. Wilson, *Under the Old Flag*, Vol. I, 359, 361-362.

¹²⁴ OR 36, Part I, 189, 815-816. E.R. Hageman ed. *Fighting Rebels and Redskins: Experiences in Army Life of Colonel George B. Sanford, 1861-1892* (Norman, OK 1962) 225-226.

¹²⁵ OR 36, Part I, 816.

¹²⁶ OR 36, Part I, 190-191, 816-817.

...preparations for an expedition to engage the Confederates.¹²⁷
 ...Brig. Gen. James Gordon's brigade from Maj. Gen. W.H.F Lee's division.¹²⁸
 Custer then bedded down for the night.¹²⁹
 Col. Devin would lead the advance the following day.¹³⁰
 ...Devin's troopers hove into view.¹³¹
 ...Lomax withdrew to reform on Wickham's left. ¹³²
 Merritt agreed and Custer formed for the attack.¹³³
 "...charged it with a yell that spread terror before them."¹³⁴
 He died the following evening.¹³⁵
 Rain drops began to fall as darkness spread across the countryside.¹³⁶

Chapter 8: Trevilian Station

..."where in hell is the rear?!"¹³⁷
 ...and settled in for a well-deserved rest.¹³⁸
 This time he would move southeast to the Pamunkey River.¹³⁹
 ...Hampton held nominal command of his mounted forces. ¹⁴⁰
 By nightfall, the Federals held the field. ¹⁴¹
 "...we had driven the enemy from his position."¹⁴²
 ...a mounted charge that sent the gray soldiers running for the rear in confusion.¹⁴³
 ...Grant launched an army-wide attack two days later but the Southerners held. ¹⁴⁴
 ...and the divisions rendezvoused at New Castle Ferry.¹⁴⁵

¹²⁷ OR 36, Part I 191. Sheridan, *Personal Memoirs*, 198-200.

¹²⁸ OR 36, Part I, 811, 817. Asa Isham "Through the Wilderness to Richmond" A Paper Read Before the Ohio Commandery of the Loyal Legion of the United States, September 3, 1884 (Cincinnati, OH 1884) 10. Report of Major General Fitzhugh Lee of the Operations of His Cavalry Division, A.N.V from May 4th 1864 to September 19th 1864. Eleanor S. Brockenbrough Library, The Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, VA. 10-11. Henry McClellan / *I Rode with Jeb Stuart: The Life and Campaigns of Major General J.E.B. Stuart* (New York, NY, 1994) 409-410.

¹²⁹ OR 36, Part I, 817.

¹³⁰ Ibid, 817.

¹³¹ Report of Major General Fitzhugh Lee, 12-14. McClellan, *I Rode with Jeb Stuart*, 411-412. Jeffry Wert *Cavalryman of The Lost Cause: A Biography of J.E.B. Stuart* (New York, NY 2008) 351.

¹³² OR 36, Part I, 813, 828. Kidd, *Personal Recollections*, 300, 302. Newel Cheney *History of the Ninth Regiment New York Volunteer Cavalry, War of 1861-1865* (Jamestown, N.Y. 1901) 165. McClellan, *I Rode with Jeb Stuart*, 412-413.

¹³³ OR 36, Part I, 818. Kidd, *Personal Recollections*, 303.

¹³⁴ Lee, *Personal and Historical Sketches*, 224-225 . OR 36, Part, 818.

¹³⁵ McClellan, *I Rode with Jeb Stuart*, 413-417.

¹³⁶ Isham, "Through the Wilderness to Richmond"15. Horace Ide, *History of the First Vermont Cavalry Volunteers in the War of the Rebellion* (Baltimore, MD 2000) 167.

¹³⁷ OR 36, Part I, 823. Lee, *Personal and Historical Sketches*, 230.

¹³⁸ OR 36, Part I, 791, 819. Report of Maj. Gen. Fitzhugh Lee, 18.

¹³⁹ OR 36, Part I, 192-193, 819-820.

¹⁴⁰ OR 36, Part I, 804, 820, Report of Maj. Gen. Fitzhugh Lee, 19.

¹⁴¹ OR 36, Part I, 821, 854. Wittenberg ed. *One of Custer's Wolverines*, 88.

¹⁴² OR 36, Part I, 821-822

¹⁴³ OR 36, Part I, 822.

¹⁴⁴ Kidd, *Personal Recollections*, 332-335. OR 36, Part I, 194, 822.

"To-morrow morning two Divisions...."¹⁴⁶

He directed Custer to turn the enemy flank and capture the station.¹⁴⁷

...and after sunrise mounted his command and headed out.¹⁴⁸

...the 6th Michigan came under fire from a detachment of Confederate troopers.¹⁴⁹

...only to find this regiment was also embroiled in the fight.¹⁵⁰

"They...captured my all...."¹⁵¹

...his personal actions a source of inspiration.¹⁵²

...and stuffed it inside his uniform coat to keep it from being captured.¹⁵³

... Sheridan set up camp around the station.¹⁵⁴

...which forced Torbert to retreat back to Trevilian Station.¹⁵⁵

With a heavy heart, he rejoined his command.¹⁵⁶

Chapter 9: In the Shenandoah

...he swept it from his left shoulder across his body and bowed.¹⁵⁷

...they returned to the James and encamped at Light House Point.¹⁵⁸

"...a plentiful supply of forage contributing to the result."¹⁵⁹

...events elsewhere in Virginia would soon put Custer back in the field.¹⁶⁰

Grant chose Philip Sheridan for the assignment.¹⁶¹

Wesley Merritt once again assumed command of Torbert's division.¹⁶²

"...be guided in your course by the course he takes."¹⁶³

Sheridan followed, but decided not to test the strength of Early's line.¹⁶⁴

...and the Union commander decided to withdraw.¹⁶⁵

¹⁴⁵ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant* (New York, N.Y. 1885) Vol. II, 279-282. Sheridan, *Personal Memoirs*, 227.

¹⁴⁶ Sheridan, *Personal Memoirs*, 227. Merington, *The Custer Story*, 103.

¹⁴⁷ OR 36, Part I, 796, 823.

¹⁴⁸ OR 36, Part I, 823, 1095.

¹⁴⁹ OR 36, Part I, 823

¹⁵⁰ OR 36, Part I, 823, 1095.

¹⁵¹ OR 36, Part I, 823, Merintgon, *The Custer Story*, 103.

¹⁵² Lee, *Personal Recollections and Historical Sketches*, 53.

¹⁵³ Merington, *The Custer Story*, 105. Henry R. Pyne, *The History of the First New Jersey Cavalry*, (Trenton, N.J. 1871) 263. Whitaker, *The Complete Life*, 230

¹⁵⁴ OR 36, Part I, 850, 1095. Merington, *The Custer Story*, 104.

¹⁵⁵ Sheridan, *Personal Memoirs*, 230. OR 36, Part I, 824. Report of Maj. Gen. Fitzhugh Lee, 31.

¹⁵⁶ Sheridan, *Personal Memoirs*, 231. Merington, *The Custer Story*, 104-105.

¹⁵⁷ Whitaker, *A Complete Life*, 258.

¹⁵⁸ Kidd, *Personal Recollections*, 369. Merington, *The Custer Story*, 111. OR 36, Part I, 825, 831.

¹⁵⁹ Kidd, *Personal Recollections*, 370.

¹⁶⁰ *The Civil War Memories of Elizabeth Bacon Custer* Reconstructed from her diaries and notes by Arlene Reynolds (Austin, TX 1994) 98.

¹⁶¹ Sheridan, *Personal Memoirs*, 251-254

¹⁶² OR 43, Part I, 40-41, 421, 516.

¹⁶³ Sheridan, *Personal Memoirs*, 256.

¹⁶⁴ OR 43, Part I, 41, 422-423.

¹⁶⁵ OR 43, Part I, 43, 423. Kidd, *Personal Recollections*, 375-376

...Torbert decided to disengage and fall back.¹⁶⁶
 ...and the march continued.¹⁶⁷
 ...forming a “horseshoe” around the blue troopers.¹⁶⁸
 ...the regiments crossed one at a time into Maryland and safety.¹⁶⁹
 ...securing the upper fords of Opequon Creek and covering the army’s right.¹⁷⁰
 ...and Custer established a bridgehead on the south bank.¹⁷¹
 ...and advanced south to the sound of the guns.¹⁷²
 “Most, if not all of the brigades moved by brigade front....”¹⁷³
 ...heading south along the Valley Pike.¹⁷⁴
 ...to New Market south to Harrisonburg.¹⁷⁵
 In turn, Sheridan chose Custer to lead the Third Cavalry Division.¹⁷⁶
 “Am I not fortunate?” he wrote Libbie.¹⁷⁷
 Reinforced, Early had decided to follow Sheridan at a distance.¹⁷⁸
 ...while engaged with Custer’s Wolverines.¹⁷⁹
 Pennington’s brigade led the advance as Custer trotted south.¹⁸⁰
 Custer soon recognized his old friend and extended a cordial salute.¹⁸¹
 ...before they were driven back.¹⁸²
 This pressure, combined with that to his front, caused Rosser’s line to crumble.¹⁸³
 ...sending him scampering back toward New Market.¹⁸⁴
 ...Custer walked through their camps and greeted them in the Virginian’s uniform coat.¹⁸⁵

¹⁶⁶ OR 43, Part I, 440. Kidd, *Personal Recollections*, 379.

¹⁶⁷ James Bowen, *Regimental History of the First New York Dragoons* (Privately Published, 1900) 217-19

¹⁶⁸ Kidd, *Personal Recollections*, 379-382.

¹⁶⁹ Kidd, *Personal Recollections*, 382.

¹⁷⁰ OR 43, Part I, 45-47

¹⁷¹ OR 43, Part I, 454-455

¹⁷² OR 43, Part I, 455-456

¹⁷³ OR 43, Part I, 456

¹⁷⁴ OR 43, Part I, 47, 456-458

¹⁷⁵ OR 43, Part I, 47, 441, 467.

¹⁷⁶ Sheridan, *Personal Memoirs*, 304-305. Jubal A. Early *A Memoir of the Last Year of the War for Independence in the Confederate States of America* (Columbia, SC 2001) pgs. 102-103. OR 43, Part I, 49, Part II, 77, 218.

¹⁷⁷ OR, 43, Part I, 130. A *Vermont Cavalryman in Love and War: The Civil War Letters of Brevet Major General William Wells and Anna Richardson* ed. Elliott Hoffman (Lynchburg, VA 2007) 340. Norton, *Deeds of Daring*, 93. Merington, *The Custer Story*, 119.

¹⁷⁸ OR 43, Part I, 50. Early, *A Memoir*, 104-105.

¹⁷⁹ Early, *A Memoir*, 105. *Custer and The 1873 Yellowstone Survey: A Documentary History* ed. M. John Lubetkin (Norman, OK 2013) 177. Ezra Warner, *Generals in Gray: Lives of the Confederate Commanders* (Baton Rouge, LA 1959) 264-265

¹⁸⁰ Sanford, *Fighting Rebels and Redskins*, 283. OR 43, Part I, 520.

¹⁸¹ OR 43, Part I, 520. William N. McDonald *A History of the Laurel Brigade, Originally the Ashby Cavalry of the Army of Northern Virginia and Chew’s Battery* (Baltimore, MD 2002) 305.

¹⁸² OR 43, Part I, 130, 520-521.

¹⁸³ Louis Boudrye *Historic Records of the Fifth New York Cavalry* (Albany, NY 1868) 178. OR 43, Part I, 521, 541, 544.

¹⁸⁴ OR 43, Part I, 51, 521.

¹⁸⁵ OR 43, Part I, 521. Merington, *The Custer Story*, 122.

Chapter 10: Closing the Door at Appomattox Station

... face to face with Bvt. Maj. Gen. George Armstrong Custer.¹⁸⁶
“We will go back to our old camps tonight...”¹⁸⁷
...and left the Federals in firm control of the Shenandoah Valley.¹⁸⁸
...he’d found redemption.¹⁸⁹
...and with Libbie, traveled back to Michigan.¹⁹⁰
...Custer accepted Christ as His Lord and Savior.¹⁹¹
...as the blue horsemen snaked out of Winchester on February 27.¹⁹²
...he reigned up in front of Early’s line.¹⁹³
...barely escaping the grasp of Custer’s victorious troopers.¹⁹⁴
... and went into camp behind the Union lines at Petersburg.¹⁹⁵
...Sheridan was to continue on and destroy the railroad.¹⁹⁶
... then woke to find myself in a puddle about two inches deep.”¹⁹⁷
...and the Second Cavalry Division, under Maj. Gen. George Crook.¹⁹⁸
...Custer ordered them back to the safety of the Federal position.¹⁹⁹
“The pursuit was maintained over a distance of six miles....”²⁰⁰
...Custer called off the pursuit after encountering a strong infantry line.²⁰¹
Custer rode on the next day and encamped at Prince Edward Court House.²⁰²
...informing him of his intentions and spurred away.²⁰³
... darkness did not even bring an end to the fighting.²⁰⁴
“The enemy’s position was abandoned....”²⁰⁵

¹⁸⁶ Ide, *History of the First Vermont Cavalry*, 263-264. Whitaker, *A Complete Life*, 305.

¹⁸⁷ OR 43, Part I, 522-523. Early, *Personal Memoir*, 105, 111-113. Lee, *Personal and Historical Sketches*, 180.

¹⁸⁸ OR 43, Part I, 524-525.

¹⁸⁹ Merington, *The Custer Story*, 125-126.

¹⁹⁰ Wert, *Custer*, 199-203. Isaac Gause, *Four Years with Five Armies* (New York, New York 1908) 344-347.

¹⁹¹ Frost, *General Custer’s Libbie*, 124.

¹⁹² Wert, *Custer*, 204-206. Sheridan, *Personal Memoirs*, 354. Sanford, *Fighting Rebels and Redskins*, 314.

¹⁹³ Sanford, *Fighting Rebels and Redskins*, 312. Roy Morris Jr. “Last Stand in the Shenandoah” *America’s Civil War* March 2001, 44-45.

¹⁹⁴ Morris, “Last Stand in the Shenandoah”, 44-45. Gause, *Four Years with Five Armies*, 357.

¹⁹⁵ Sheridan, *Personal Memoirs*, 347-350. Merington, *The Custer Story*, 142.

¹⁹⁶ Frederick Newhall *With Sheridan in the Final Campaign Against Lee* ed. Eric J. Wittenberg (Baton Rouge, LA 2002) 27-28

¹⁹⁷ Henry Tremain, *Last Days of Sheridan’s Cavalry: A Reprint of War Memoranda* (New York, New York 1904) 15.

Ide, *History of the First Vermont Cavalry*, 257. Merington, *The Custer Story*, 146.

¹⁹⁸ OR 46, Part I, 1117, 1130. Tremain *Last Days of Sheridan’s Cavalry*, 49.

¹⁹⁹ Whitaker, *A Complete Life*, 284. Merington, *The Custer Story*, 147-148. OR 46, Part I, 1130.

²⁰⁰ OR 46, Part I, 1130-1131

²⁰¹ OR 46, Part I, 1131-1132

²⁰² OR 46, Part I, 1132. Tremain, *Last Days of Sheridan’s Cavalry*, 145-153. Ide, *History of the First Vermont Cavalry*, 263.

²⁰³ Whitaker, *A Complete Life*, 305. OR 46, Part I, 1109, 1132.

²⁰⁴ OR 46, Part I, 1132. Chris M. Calkins *The Battles of Appomattox Station and Appomattox Court House April 8-9, 1865* (Lynchburg, VA 1987) 32-33. Ide, *History of the First Vermont Cavalry*, 264. J.J. Sutton *History of the Second Regiment West Virginia Cavalry Volunteers During the War of the Rebellion* (Portsmouth, OH 1892) 223

²⁰⁵ Tremain, *Last Days of Sheridan’s Cavalry*, 225, 227-228.

...while blue infantry was closing in from the south.²⁰⁶
...a courier to inform Sheridan of the proposed truce.²⁰⁷
...he set out to find Alexander Pennington.
...at Wilmer McLean's house inside the village.²⁰⁸
"...than your very gallant husband." ²⁰⁹

Chapter 11: After the War

Custer was found guilty and suspended from rank for one year with no pay.²¹⁰
...he skillfully maneuvered his command out of danger and returned to his base camp. ²¹¹
...remain and continue the search, Custer withdrew.²¹²
...and induce them to return to their reservation.²¹³
...military matters continued to draw Custer back into the field. ²¹⁴
Thousands of Lakota and Oglalla, under Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse, never reported.²¹⁵
... the commander of the Department of Dakota, Brig. Gen. Alfred Terry.²¹⁶

Epilogue: Until the Dead Give Up Their Secrets

Along with Company I, Captain Myles Keogh was assigned Companies C and L.²¹⁷
With the route below him blocked, Custer determined to move north.²¹⁸
These warriors steadily pushed up the ridge and overwhelmed the troopers.²¹⁹
His remains were eventually reinterred in the National Cemetery.²²⁰
Hope slipped away and soldiers shot their horses for cover.²²¹

²⁰⁶ Tremain, *Last Days of Sheridan's Cavalry*, 218-219, 230-231. OR 46, Part I, 1121.

²⁰⁷ OR 46, Part I, 1121, 1131-1132. Merington, *The Custer Story*, 157-158.

²⁰⁸ Schaff, *The Spirit of Old West Point*, 169-170

²⁰⁹ Merington, *The Custer Story*, 159.

²¹⁰ Williams, *Military Register of Custer's Last Command*, 77. Lawrence Frost, *The Court Martial of General George Armstrong Custer* (Norman, OK 1968) 99-102, 245-246

²¹¹ Frost, *The Court Martial of General George Armstrong Custer*, 266. John M. Carroll ed. *General Custer and the Battle of the Washita: The Federal View* (Mattituck, NY 1968) 37-39.

²¹² Graham, *The Custer Myth*, 211-213. Sandy Bernard, *A Hoosier Quaker Goes to War: The Life & Death of Major Joel H. Elliot, 7th Cavalry* (Wake Forest, NC 2010) 263-273.

²¹³ Louis Kraft *Custer and the Cheyenne* (El Segundo, CA 1995) 168-169, 181

²¹⁴ Merington, *The Custer Story*, 111. Wert, *Custer*, 289. Robert Utley, *Cavalier in Buckskin: George Armstrong Custer and the Western Military Frontier* (Norman, OK 1988) 109-110, 152-155.

²¹⁵ John S. Gray, *Centennial Campaign: The Sioux War of 1876* (Norman, OK 1976) 16-17, 31.

²¹⁶ Utley, *Cavalier in Buckskin*, 158-163.

²¹⁷ Ronald Nichols ed. *Men with Custer: Biographies of the 7th Cavalry* (Hardin, MT 2000) 177, 365

²¹⁸ Gregory F. Michno *Lakota Noon: The Indian Narrative of Custer's Defeat* (Missoula, MT 1997) 138, Richard A. Fox *Archeology, History and Custer's Last Battle* (Norman, OK 199) 279-280.

²¹⁹ Sandy Barnard *Photographing Custer's Battlefield: The Images of Kenneth F. Roehen* (Norman, OK 2016) 154. Michno, *Lakota Noon* 191-192, 209-211.

²²⁰ Williams, *Military Register of Custer's Last Command*, 74. Richard Hardorff ed. *Walter M. Camp's Little Bighorn Rosters* (Spokane, WA 2002) 190.

²²¹ Richard Hardorff, *The Custer Battle Casualties: Burials, Exhumations, Reinterments* (El Segundo, CA 2002) 33.

...“until the dead are called upon to give up their secrets.”²²²

²²² James S. Brust, Brian C. Pohanka, Sandy Barnard *Where Custer Fell: Photographs of the Little Bighorn Battlefield Then and Now* (Norman, OK 2005) 131-132. Kidd, *Personal Recollections*, 131-132.

Daniel T. Davis
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