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Article Summary: Twenty soldiers, survivors of the Battle of Wounded Knee, received the Medal of Honor for "gallantry in action and other soldierlike qualities." This article examines the low standards in effect at that time for the awarding of the medal and suggests the randomness of the process of choosing these medal recipients.

Cataloging Information:

Names: Big Foot, Red Cloud, Nelson A Miles, James W Forsyth

Seventh Cavalry soldiers awarded Medals of Honor: 2nd Lt Harry L Hawthorne, Lt John C Gresham, Lt Ernest A Garlington, John E Clancy (musician), Pvt Mosheim Feaster, Pvt Marvin C Hillock, Sgt George Loyd, Pvt Matthew Hamilton, Sgt Albert W McMillan, Sgt William G Austin, Pvt Hermann Ziegner, Pvt Thomas Sullivan, Cpl Adam Neder, Sgt Frederick E Toy, 1st Sgt Jacob Trautman, Sgt Bernhard Jetter, Pvt George Hobday (cook), Sgt James Ward, Cpl Paul H Weinert, Pvt Joshua B Hartzog

Place Names: Porcupine Butte, Pine Ridge Reservation, Nebraska

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Photographs / Images: Chief Big Foot, 1888; ravine at Wounded Knee, where so many of Big Foot's people died; map of the battlefield of Wounded Knee (James Forsyth papers); redrawn map of the battlefield with inset transcription on two pages of the legend from the Forsyth map; obverse and reverse of an original Wounded Knee medal engraved "The Congress to Captain E A Garlington, 7th Cavalry, for distinguished gallantry at Wounded Knee Creek, South Dakota, December 29, 1890"; formal portrait of General Nelson A Miles, wearing his Medal of Honor, awarded in 1892 for a Civil War exploit; Sgt Toy receiving his Wounded Knee Medal of Honor (*Harper's Weekly*, September 19, 1891); Buffalo Bill's Wild West troop, 1896, including Medal recipient Paul H Weinert as standard bearer

THE MEDALS OF WOUNDED KNEE

By Jerry Green

On December 29, 1890, a fight broke out between units of the United States Army and Lakota Sioux civilians. Over 250 Indians died, as did thirty-three soldiers. Twenty other soldiers would receive the Medal of Honor for their part in what the army has called the Battle of Wounded Knee, a tragedy subsequently known as the Wounded Knee Massacre.

The seeds of this conflict were sown earlier in the year, when a native religious revival commonly called the Ghost Dance swept through the Lakota reservations. It had a strong appeal to the Lakota, who were trying desperately to maintain their own culture. The new religion promised a return to the old free life and the disappearance of the whites. As fall approached, increasing numbers of converts practiced the rituals which would hasten the coming of the new world.

Although the Ghost Dance advocated peace, it was misunderstood by many whites. To many nearby settlers, and some inexperienced government officials, the movement caused great alarm. Fear swept the frontier that the Lakota were preparing for an uprising to drive the whites from the country. Mounting pressure from settlers and government agents brought troops to the reservations in an effort to stop the Ghost Dance ceremonies and prevent the expected outbreak. The first army troops arrived in mid-November 1890. Maj. Gen. Nelson A. Miles, commanding the Division of the Missouri, served as the overall commander.

Jerry Green, a private researcher from Fayetteville, Georgia, is currently editing for publication the Dr. John Lauderdale 1891 letters from Pine Ridge Reservation.



Chief Big Foot (center), 1888. Courtesy of Smithsonian Institution.

The arrival of the troops naturally alarmed the Lakota Ghost Dancers. Fear of reprisals for continuing their ceremonies led them to seek places of safety. One group led by Big Foot, a Miniconjou Lakota, decided to accept an invitation from Red Cloud, an Oglala leader on the Pine Ridge Reservation, and to move where they thought they would be safe from troops. Big Foot's followers numbered about 370, of which about 111 were "warriors."

During their move the band was encountered on the road near Porcupine Butte, a Pine Ridge landmark, by a unit of the Seventh Cavalry. Big Foot did not want a fight and promptly surrendered. Without further incident the Lakotas and their captors traveled to a camp on Wounded Knee Creek. During the night the remainder of the Seventh Cavalry arrived. One company of Indian Scouts under Capt. Charles W. Taylor and Light Battery E of the First U.S. Artillery provided

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additional support. The battery was equipped with four rapid-fire Hotchkiss breechloading mountain rifles. Col. James W. Forsyth assumed command of the entire force of about 490.¹

Of this number most of the enlisted men were new to the West and to the army. Many were recruits from the East with minimal training, and over 40 percent were immigrants.² A few did have considerable experience on the plains. At least eight officers and several noncommissioned officers were veterans of the 1876 battle at the Little Bighorn.

Forsyth's orders were to disarm Big Foot's band, which he attempted to do on the morning of December 29. During the confusion of the disarmament at the council circle, a shot was accidentally fired. Within moments everyone opened fire, and the troops and the Lakotas were plunged into bitter, close quarters fighting, followed by Indian survivors' attempts to escape. Once the fighting started the officers apparently lost control of the inexperienced troopers. The officers were unable, or unwilling, to stop their men from shooting at all retreating figures, and carnage ensued. If the officers did try to stop the soldiers from shooting women and children, as according to later testimony, they were wholly unsuccessful.³ No one can say for certain how many were killed or wounded. Some authorities have put the total number of Indians killed in excess of 250.⁴

By comparison the army's casualties were light. Soldiers had been placed in a hollow square surrounding the Lakota in the council circle (see map). The large number of casualties among the men of companies A, B, I, and K, who faced one another across the council circle, has led to the conclusion—then and now—that many soldier casualties were the result of cross fire.

In a confidential letter General Miles lamented the loss of life and severely criticized the placement of the soldiers:

Wholesale massacre occurred and I have never heard of a more brutal, cold-blooded massacre than that at Wounded Knee. About two hundred women and children



The ravine at Wounded Knee, where so many of Big Foot's people died. (NSHS-W938-45)

were killed and wounded; women with little children on their backs, and small children powder-burned by the men who killed them being so near as to burn the flesh and clothing with the powder of their guns, and nursing babes with five bullet holes through them. . . . Col. Forsyth is responsible for allowing the command to remain where it was stationed after he assumed command, and in allowing his troops to be in such a position that the line of fire of every troop was in direct line of their own comrades or their camp.⁵

Officers who were present offered further evidence that troops were injured by friendly fire. Asst. Surg. Charles B. Ewing stated:

I have reason to believe that some of our men were killed by the fire of others of our troops. I base it from the position of the troops. Most injury was inflicted upon Captain Wallace's Troop K. . . . Located as the troops were, and firing as they did, it was impossible not to wound or kill each other.⁶

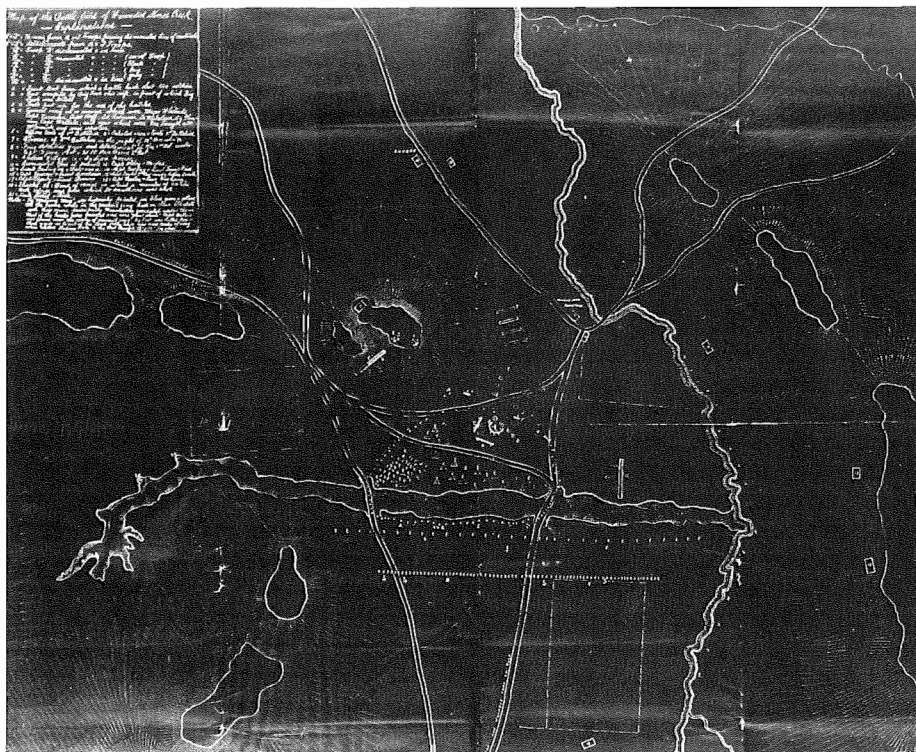
Lt. Alexander R. Piper, Eighth Infantry, who was stationed at nearby Pine Ridge Agency, expressed an opinion commonly held in the ranks: "The Cavalry began

shooting in every direction, killing not only Indians but their own comrades on the other side of the circle."⁷

Several years later Capt. Edward S. Godfrey, who commanded Company D of the Seventh Cavalry, wrote:

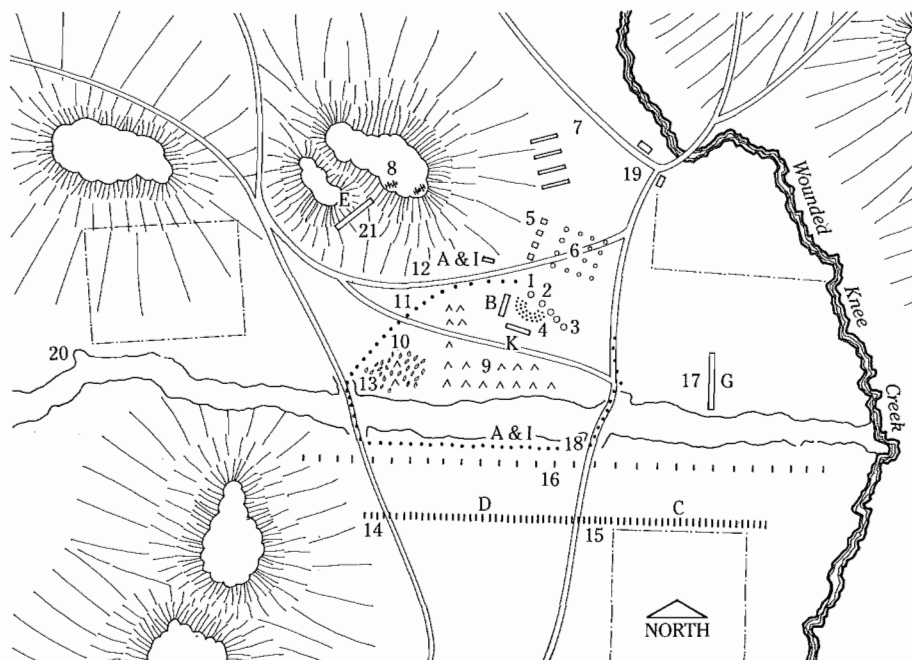
I know the men did not aim deliberately and they were greatly excited. I don't believe they saw their sights. They fired rapidly but it seemed to me only a few seconds till there was not a living thing before us; warriors, squaws, children, ponies, and dogs. . . . went down before that unaimed fire.⁸

Several days after the massacre General Miles relieved Colonel Forsyth and charged him with incompetence for putting his men in positions to suffer casualties from cross fire. Miles appointed a board of inquiry to investigate, but Forsyth was absolved of any wrongdoing and returned to his command. The decision had less to do with Forsyth's conduct than with the infighting between factions of the officer corps and Washington interference.⁹



Map of the battlefield of Wounded Knee Creek. Original with the James Forsyth papers, courtesy of Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

(Below) Redrawn map of the battlefield, with a transcription (right) of the legend from the Forsyth map.



Explanations

"A&I" = 76 Men from A & I Troops forming dismounted line of sentinels.

"A&I" = Detachments from A & I Troops.

"B" = Troop "B" dismounted & in line.

"C" = " " "C" mounted & " " (sorrel troop).

"D" = " " "D" " " " (black troop).

"E" = " " "E" " " " (bay troop).

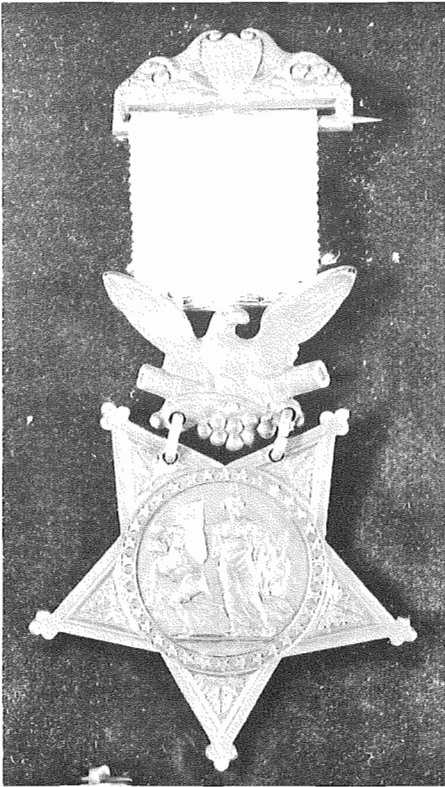
"G" = " " "G" " " " (gray troop).

"K" = " " "K" dismounted & in line.

1. Scout tent from which a hostile buck shot two soldiers.
2. Tent occupied by Big Foot & his wife, in front of which Big Foot was killed.
3. Tents put up for the use of the hostiles.
4. Council ring in or around which were Major Whitside, Capt. Varnum, Capt. Hoff, Lt. Robinson, Lt. Nicholson, Dr. Glennan, Capt. Wallace, and near which were Gen. Forsyth & Lt. McCormick, and some reporters.
5. Officers tents of 1st Battalion.
6. Enlisted men's tents 1st Battalion.
7. Bivouac of the 2nd Battalion on the night of 28th December '90.
8. Four Hotchkiss guns and detachment of the 1st Art. under Capt. Capron 1st Art. & 2d Lt. Hawthorne 2d Art.
9. Indian Village.
10. Indian Ponies.
11. Dismounted line of sentinels.
12. Capts. Ilsley & Moylan.
13. Lieuts. Garlington & Waterman.
14. Capt. Godfrey and Lieut. Tompkins.
15. Capt. Jackson & Lieut. Donaldson.
16. Lieut. Taylor 9th Cav., Comd'g. Indian Scouts.
17. Capt. Edgerly & Lieut. Brewer.
18. Capt. Nowlan & Lieut. Gresham.
19. Shacks.
20. Bend of ravine in which a number of hostiles took refuge, and from which Lt. Hawthorne was shot.
21. Lieuts. Sickel & Rice.

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Notes—The "Medicine Man" was hideously painted in blue, green & yellow. All the bucks while in the council ring had on their blankets with their guns, principally Winchesters, concealed under them. Most of the bucks were painted and wore "ghost shirts." Capt. Wallace was found near the centre of council ring. Big Foot was killed two-three yards in front of his tent. Father Craft was near centre of ring when stabbed. Indians broke to the West through "B" & "K" Troops.



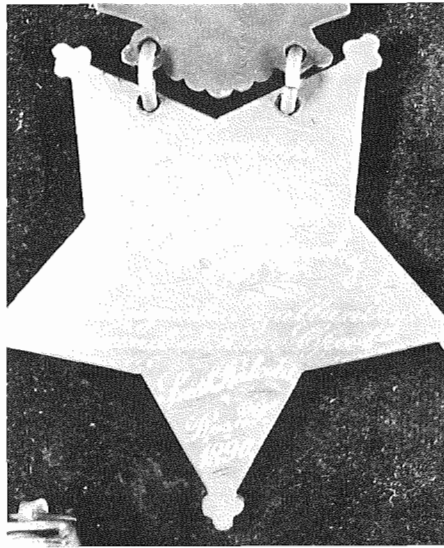
In spite of—or perhaps because of—the turmoil and debate surrounding the Wounded Knee operation thirty-two men were cited for their actions in the fight on December 29. This total does not include those officers recommended for brevet promotion. A total of twenty-five men were recommended for the Medal of Honor. Of these recommendations twenty were approved, and medals were issued.¹⁰

Circumstances surrounding these awards necessitate closer examination. The number of medals is considered excessive by many critics of the army's con-

duct. Taking into account the number of medals awarded, the duration of the fighting, total combatants, and the total casualties, the number of medals does seem disproportionate when compared to those awarded for other battles.

If it were assumed all of the Lakota men were armed (they were not), the odds against them would still have been five to one. Reports give the duration of the actual armed resistance from the Lakota at Wounded Knee as ranging from ten minutes to one hour.¹¹

One of the original Wounded Knee medals. The engraving on the reverse reads: "The Congress to Captain E. A. Garlington, 7th Cavalry, for distinguished gallantry at Wounded Knee Creek, South Dakota, Dec. 29, 1890." Courtesy of author.



By comparison the 1877 battle at Bear Paw Mountain, Montana, was a five-day siege. The army suffered a casualty rate of 30 percent, yet only nine Medals of Honor were awarded. The Battle of Wolf Mountain later the same year pitted about 600 Lakota and Cheyenne warriors against a force of infantry numbering 436 men. The fighting raged for five hours on snow- and ice-covered ground. The later stages of the battle were fought in a blinding snowstorm. Yet only three Medals of Honor were awarded for this action.¹²

At Wounded Knee all three officers

who were awarded the medal were wounded. These officers were recommended for medals years later in contrast to the enlisted men, who were recommended within a few weeks.

In February 1891 five officers from the Seventh Cavalry were recommended by Forsyth for *brevet* promotions, in other words, nominal, almost honorary, promotions to higher ranks without any of the material benefits. Absent from this list were two officers who would later be awarded the Medal of Honor. In March 1891 Forsyth submitted another letter asking for the honorable mention of certain individuals. This letter included the names of the two officers in question.¹³ Brevet considerations were turned over to Col. Edward M. Heyl of the Inspector General's office for investigation. He never recommended, nor were any of these officers accorded, a brevet promotion. General Miles disapproved forcefully in both cases:

The recommendations for brevets or for honorable mention for such field officers is, in the opinion of the department commander, an insult to the memory of the dead, as well as to the brave men living.¹⁴

Nevertheless, a Medal of Honor was granted to 2nd Lt. Harry L. Hawthorne, who was serving with Light Battery E of the First Artillery at Wounded Knee. His citation was for "the gallantry, coolness, discretion, and effect with which he handled and served his guns in action."¹⁵ According to one account Hawthorne was not a key factor in the battle.¹⁶ Hawthorne was also recommended for brevet promotion shortly after the fight. In fact, Capt. Allyn Capron, his commanding officer, recommended he be elevated two ranks.¹⁷ General Miles at that time made the statement cited above, yet almost two years later Miles forwarded the recommendation to the War Department and said he "concurred."¹⁸

Lieutenant Hawthorne's wound was so severe that he was forced to spend several years away from field duty. One of his assignments was as professor of military science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He eventually gave up that

post because of teasing he received from the students. This harassment was directed toward the army in general and at Hawthorne in particular. The students believed there had been a massacre at Wounded Knee and blamed Hawthorne and the army. Astonishingly, a man who was allegedly so courageous under fire was intimidated by the tormenting of college students to the point of quitting his post.¹⁹ Hawthorne's checkered career after Wounded Knee was not an exception among the other Medal of Honor winners.

Lt. John C. Gresham was awarded the medal in March 1895. The recommendation was made by Capt. Charles A. Varnum, the commanding officer of Troop A, who gave no reason for the delay. An unsigned, undated letter in Gresham's personnel file states that no records could be found of Gresham's wounds, and curiously, the regimental returns for January 1891 show him "on duty."²⁰ There is, however, mention elsewhere that during the fighting Gresham "received an abrasion on the nose from a passing bullet."²¹

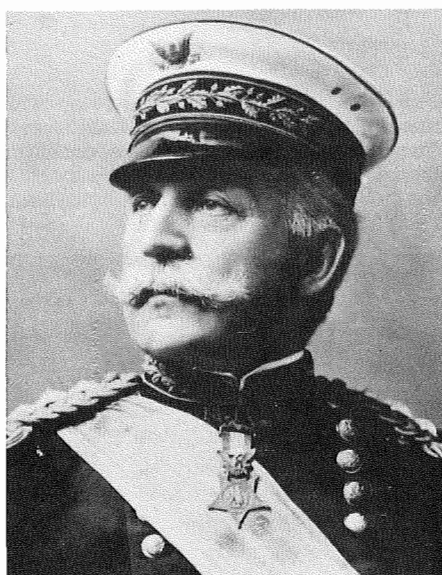
Some officers questioned saw nothing in Gresham's actions to warrant special mention.²² His citation was for going "into a ravine and dislodging Indians."²³ He apparently took twenty men and entered the ravine to the south of the Indian camp, in which many women and children were subsequently found dead or wounded.

Later in his career Gresham was implicated in a case where funds belonging to a student in his charge were missing. There is no record of the outcome, but he was ordered to retire within six months after these allegations were made.²⁴ A medical report tells of his "outbreaks of fury over trivial matters. . . [and] . . . mental depression objectively shown by a permanent expression of dissatisfaction."²⁵

Lt. Ernest A. Garlington of Troop A was also wounded in action and, like Gresham, was omitted from the first list of men who had distinguished themselves. Garlington's medal was not awarded until September 1893. Colonel Forsyth recommended Garlington in March 1893 after he learned that Lieutenant Hawthorne

had received a Medal of Honor.

According to his citation Garlington was ordered to prevent the Indians from escaping up the ravine. This was accomplished by taking a portion of his troop behind the cut banks at the road crossing and holding it. The Indians tried this route and could not escape this way "without leaving the ravine and exposing them to galling fire from other troops. As a conse-



Gen. Nelson A. Miles wore his Medal of Honor, awarded in 1892 for a Civil War exploit, in this formal portrait. (NSHS-P853)

quence only a very few did escape."²⁶ Two years earlier General Miles had said giving Garlington a brevet promotion "would be an insult." He now recommended the citation when he forwarded it to the commanding general of the army.

Seventeen enlisted men also received the Medal of Honor. The majority of the recommendations for the award were made by the troop commanders and corroborated by other officers. The recommendations then passed through the chain of command. Most of them went to Colonel Forsyth, then to General Miles, and then to the War Department in Washington. In ten of the seventeen cases Miles made "no remarks."²⁷ In cases where no officer actually saw the meritorious act, affidavits from other enlisted men were

used. The majority of the citations simply read "for gallantry," or "for bravery," with few if any details of the specific acts of heroism.

Musician John E. Clancy of Company E, First U.S. Artillery, was among the enlisted men awarded the Medal of Honor. He received his on January 23, 1892. His citation stated that he had rescued wounded soldiers. Clancy was court-martialed eight times during his career, twice between the fight at Wounded Knee and the receipt of his medal. A letter from Lieutenant Hawthorne, his commanding officer, stated Clancy was not recommended for a Medal of Honor or even honorable mention.²⁸ Is it possible Clancy was recommended to help him gain leniency from yet another court-martial?

Cases like Clancy's caused the army to review its policy on the Medal of Honor, and add paragraph 199-1/2 to its regulations. A soldier could no longer receive a Medal of Honor or a Certificate of Merit if he was court-martialed after he performed the service that warranted a medal and before it was officially presented.²⁹

In the case of Pvt. Mosheim Feaster, Company E, Seventh Cavalry, the officer who recommended him was more than a quarter of a mile away at the time of Feaster's heroic action. However, three affidavits were given attesting to his acts. The three men who signed these statements were friends of Feaster and fellow members of Troop E. These witnesses also received Medals of Honor. Feaster's citation was for "extraordinary gallantry."³⁰

Pvt. Marvin C. Hillock, Company B, Seventh Cavalry, was cited by Captain Varnum, who said he was "wounded but continued to perform duties."³¹

Sgt. George Loyd of I Company, Seventh Cavalry, a veteran of the Little Bighorn campaign, was on his sixth enlistment. He was presented his Medal of Honor on April 16, 1891, for "bravery." Two years, almost to the day, after the fight at Wounded Knee he committed suicide. The only mention in the regimental record is that he died "by shooting himself through the head."³² Upon being notified of Loyd's death the War Department or-

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dered his troop commander to return the Medal of Honor, but Lieutenant Garlington, the commanding officer, lost it.³³ The whereabouts of this medal is unknown.

Pvt. Mathew Hamilton of Company G was awarded the medal in May 1891 for "conspicuous bravery in rounding up and bringing to the skirmish line a stampeded pack mule" during the fight even though General Miles did not approve.³⁴ As can be seen on the map, Company G was not in a direct line of fire. Common sense would suggest animals frightened by gun-

fire would run away from the shooting. It almost seems Hamilton was awarded the Medal of Honor for riding away from the fighting.

Sgt. Albert W. McMillan, Company E, was cited for "exposing himself to the enemy."³⁵ He was promoted to sergeant major prior to April 6, 1891. For reasons not found in his records, he was demoted to private before his discharge on September 21, 1892.³⁶

In addition to Sergeant McMillan the names of four other men, all from Company E, appear on the original citation.

They include Sgt. William G. Austin, Sgt. John F. Tritle, Pvt. Hermann Ziegner, and Pvt. Thomas Sullivan. All are cited for bravery and for exposing themselves to the enemy. All except Sergeant Tritle were awarded a medal. McMillan's medal was for "conspicuous bravery."³⁷ No reason is known for the denial of a medal to Tritle.

Cpl. Adam Neder from A Company, Seventh Cavalry, was recommended for the Medal of Honor by Capt. Myles Moylan for "gallantry in action."³⁸ One of the citations says Neder was wounded; then that entry is struck through.

Sgt. Frederick E. Toy, a twenty-six-year veteran from Company G, was cited "for bravery displayed while shooting hostile Indians." This wording appeared on the original copy of the citation. It was changed on the final citation, after the original was returned by the War Department. Captain Winfield S. Edgerly, his commanding officer, said Sergeant Toy did "deliberately aim at and hit two Indians who had run into the ravine." Toy was presented the medal in a public ceremony, which a leading illustrated weekly found unusual enough to warrant its notice and praise (see photo).³⁹

Jacob Trautman, a first sergeant from Company I, was granted the medal for "distinguished conduct in killing one Indian." His enlistment expired shortly after the fight, and he volunteered to stay until the campaign was over. This was also given as a reason to award him a Medal of Honor.⁴⁰

Sgt. Bernhard Jetter of Troop K was awarded a medal for "killing an Indian who was in the act of killing a wounded man of B Troop."⁴¹ The ranks of both troops B and K were on the front line between the Lakota men and the Indian camp. At this point one can presume the Lakotas only wanted to escape. There is a mention of Jetter's bravery at the Drexel Mission fight (December 30) on his citation. This has caused some confusion about the action for which he was awarded the medal.

Pvt. George Hobday, a cook from Company A, was cited for "gallantry and was noticed by several officers." Information



The September 19, 1891, issue of *Harper's Weekly* ran a story with a photograph of Sgt. Toy receiving his Wounded Knee Medal of Honor.

from draft copies of his recommendation indicated his primary act of bravery was “voluntarily leaving his work as cook.” A government Medal of Honor publication gives the citation as “conspicuous and gallant conduct in battle.”⁴²

Sgt. James Ward, Company B, “fought one Indian while taking guns.”⁴³ Ward was also reported as having been wounded, though no other records, medical or otherwise, could be found to support this.

Pvt. Hermann Ziegner from Company E was awarded the Medal of Honor for “conspicuous bravery.”⁴⁴ No record of his original citation could be located, although his is mentioned on McMillans’.

Perhaps the most famous enlisted man to receive the medal for Wounded Knee was Cpl. Paul H. Weinert, the gunner from Battery E, First U.S. Artillery. Weinert was cited for “firing his howitzer at several Indians in the ravine.”⁴⁵ This ravine was adjacent to the Lakota camp, and many non-combatants sought shelter there. With his gun less than three hundred yards away,

Weinert’s firing inflicted terrible damage, undoubtedly killing and wounding many women and children.

It seems astonishing that Weinert was not wounded in the hail of fire from the besieged Indians. According to his own account the Indians in the ravine were firing furiously as he worked his gun: “Bullets were coming like hail from the Indians’ Winchesters. The wheels of my gun were bored full of holes and our clothing was marked in several places.”⁴⁶

Contrary to Weinert’s account, other sources state that a rear guard of only three or four Indian men were holed up in this “pit” or “pocket,” as it has come to be called.⁴⁷ Later in the decade Weinert, adorned with his Medal of Honor, toured with Buffalo Bill Cody’s Wild West show as a member of its color guard.⁴⁸

Pvts. Joshua B. Hartzog, John Flood, and George Green were the other members of this gun crew and were similarly recommended for the Medal of Honor.⁴⁹ Hartzog and Weinert received the medal,

while Flood and Green did not; they were only mentioned in orders.⁵⁰ General Miles did not recommend approval of any of these medals. There was never an explanation of why two of these men received the medals and the others did not.

In 1916 the U.S. Congress required the War Department to review all 2,625 Medals of Honor awarded to that date. A panel of five retired general officers was named to evaluate each case. Headed by General Miles, the board met approximately every two weeks for six months. Individual meetings were usually of short duration; in one meeting of two hours, the board examined cases involving hundreds of medals, calling into question the depth of its investigation.

In January 1917 the panel concluded its work. Some medals were disallowed because they had been awarded to civilians. In another case during the Civil War 864 medals had been given to the men of the Twenty-seventh Maine Volunteer Infantry. The medals, presented partly as an



Medal recipient Paul H. Weinert (standing, far left) as standard bearer for Buffalo Bill’s Wild West, 1896.
Courtesy of Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Cody, Wyoming.

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inducement to reenlist and partly due to a clerical error, were all revoked. None of the medals given for service at Wounded Knee was rescinded.⁵¹

In its report the review panel acknowledged that Medals of Honor had been awarded liberally in the past. By 1917 the guidelines for awarding a medal had been tightened. An act of June 3, 1916, limited the award of the Medal of Honor to acts demonstrating "conspicuous gallantry or intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty." The board recognized that some past actions would not have qualified for awards under the 1916 standards. Rather than revoke more medals the board decided to base its judgments upon "the standard established by the authorities at the time of the award." The original 1862 guidelines, still in effect in 1890, provided only that medal recipients should distinguish themselves by "gallantry in action and other soldierlike qualities."⁵² Had the board applied the higher standards in place by 1916 some of the Wounded Knee medals undoubtedly would have been rescinded.

The Wounded Knee medals have been a source of aggravation for a century, and the question of rescinding them surfaces periodically. At the same time the Medal of Honor has evolved into a far more prestigious and selective award than its status in the nineteenth century would indicate. We may never know the reasons for the issuance of all the Wounded Knee medals, though this examination has provided evidence of the almost random and capricious nature of the process. More elaborate speculations on the motivations of military leaders will have to wait.

Notes

¹ Examinations of the Ghost Dance began almost as soon as the smoke cleared over Wounded Knee and continue to this day. The first detailed study was James Mooney, "The Ghost-Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890," *Fourteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology*, 1892-3, Pt. II (Washington: GPO, 1896). See also Robert M. Utley, *The Last Days of the Sioux Nation* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1963); Raymond J. DeMallie, "The Lakota Ghost Dance: An Ethno-historical Account," *Pacific Historical Review* 51 (1982): 385-405; and Richard E. Jensen, R. Eli Paul,

and John E. Carter, *Eyewitness at Wounded Knee* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991). The figures for the army's strength come from the regimental returns for the Seventh Cavalry and the First Artillery, Dec. 1890. These figures do not include teamsters, traders, ambulance drivers, or reporters who are known to have been present. Had these men been included, the number of armed white men would well exceed 500. "Returns for Regular Army Cavalry Regiments, 1833-1916," *Microfilm Publication No. 744*, National Archives, Washington, D. C. (hereafter cited as *Microfilm Pub. No. 744*).

² Edward M. Coffman, *The Old Army: A Portrait of the American Army in Peacetime, 1784-1898* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 329-30. William J. Ghent, "The Seventh Regiment of United States Cavalry," manuscript in the Walter M. Camp Collection, Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, concluded that approximately 10 percent of the men at Wounded Knee had been under fire before. Approximately 50 percent of the enlisted winners of the Medal of Honor were born outside the United States. "Register of Enlistments in the U.S. Army, 1798-1914," *Microfilm Publication No. 233*, National Archives (hereafter cited as *Microfilm Pub. No. 233*). For biographical information on another foreign-born winner of the Medal of Honor, see Christer Lindberg, "Foreigners in Action at Wounded Knee," *Nebraska History* 71 (1990): 170-81.

³ Mooney, "The Ghost Dance Religion," 869-71.

⁴ Because surviving records do not always give sex and age, the totals are only approximate. Richard E. Jensen, "Big Foot's Followers at Wounded Knee," *Nebraska History* 71 (1990): 194-212. Colonel Forsyth put the number of armed "warriors" at 106, *Army and Navy Journal*, Jan. 24, 1891. However, the number of Indian men actually armed at the time of the first shots were far fewer. One eyewitness gave the number of armed Lakotas as equivalent to the Indian force at the 1882 fight at Big Dry Wash, or Chevelon's Forks, Arizona. There the army faced forty-two armed Apaches. See Charles B. Ewing, "The Wounded of the Wounded Knee Battle Field, with Remarks on Wounds Produced by Large and Small Caliber Bullets," *The Transactions of the Second Annual Meeting of the Association of Military Surgeons of the National Guard of the United States* (St. Louis: Becktold & Co., 1892), 49; George H. Morgan, "The Fight at the Big Dry Wash in the Mogollon Mountains, Arizona, July 17, 1882, with Renegade Apache Scouts from the San Carlos Indian Reservation," John M. Carroll, ed., *The Papers of the Order of Indian Wars* (Fort Collins: The Old Army Press, 1975), 253.

⁵ Nelson A. Miles to George W. Baird, Nov. 20, 1891, Baird Collection, WA-S901, M596, Western Americana Collection, The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Conn.

⁶ Charles B. Ewing testimony, "Reports and Correspondence Relating to the Army Investigations of the Battle of Wounded Knee and to the Sioux Cam-

paign of 1890-91," *Microfilm Publication No. 983*, National Archives (hereafter cited as *Microfilm Pub. No. 983*).

⁷ Lt. Alexander R. Piper, "Extracts from Letters Written by Lieutenant Alexander R. Piper. . . during the Sioux Campaign, 1890-1891," in John M. Carroll, ed., *The Unpublished Papers of the Order of Indian Wars Book Number 10* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Privately published, 1977), 5; the original account is found in the United States Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Pa.

⁸ Edward S. Godfrey, "Cavalry Fire Discipline," *Journal of the Military Service Institution of the United States* 19 (1896): 259. Godfrey received a Medal of Honor on Nov. 27, 1894, for action against the Nez Perce at Bear Paw Mountain on Sept. 30, 1877.

⁹ Miles to Baird, Nov. 20, 1891, Baird Collection. The matter of infighting among the officers is repeated by Dr. John V. Lauderdale to "Joe," his wife, Feb. 19, 1891, Lauderdale Collection, WA-S1317, Western Americana Collection, The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Conn.; Peter R. DeMontravel, "General Nelson A. Miles and the Wounded Knee Controversy," *Arizona and the West* 28 (1986): 23-44.

¹⁰ General Order No. 100, Dec. 17, 1891, Headquarters of the Army, Adjutant General's Office, RG 94. The author's study has been confined to the Wounded Knee medals awarded for the action on December 29 only. More came as a result of later skirmishes on Pine Ridge Reservation.

¹¹ Charles W. Allen, "In the West That Was: Memoirs, Sketches, and Legends," Allen Collection, MS2635, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln. Allen, a reporter for the *Chadron (Neb.) Democrat*, wrote, "Fighting continued for half an hour, and then continued in skirmish for another hour." Richard C. Stirk, a civilian eyewitness in an interview with Eli S. Ricker, Ricker Collection, MS8, Nebraska State Historical Society stated, "The main firing. . . did not last ten minutes." Brig. Gen. E. D. Scott, "Wounded Knee: A Look at the Record," *Field Artillery Journal* 24 (Jan.-Feb. 1939): 16, put the time at ten minutes.

¹² Brian C. Pohanka, *Nelson A. Miles: A Documentary Biography of His Military Career, 1861-1903* (Glendale, Calif.: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1985), 100, 107-8. The number of medals awarded at these engagements was compiled from the lists in *Medal of Honor, 1863-1968*, 90th Congress, 2d session, Subcommittee on Veterans' Affairs, Committee on Labor and Public Welfare (Washington: GPO, 1968).

¹³ Col. James A. Forsyth to the adjutant general (AG), Feb. 14 and Mar. 5, 1891. Most correspondence, applications, and citations relating to the Medal of Honor came from two groups of records. For the officers, information on their Medals of Honor was found in their Appointments, Commissions, and Personal (ACP) files, originally kept by the Adjutant General's Office and found at the National Archives. For the enlisted men, documentation came from their Medal of Honor files, which

consist of letters and documents received by the Adjutant General's Office, and found in RG 94, National Archives.

¹⁴ Miles to AG, Oct. 13, 1891.

¹⁵ Application for Medal of Honor, Sept. 6, 1892, Harry L. Hawthorne ACP file, #3881-1884.

¹⁶ Col. John Van R. Hoff interview with Walter M. Camp, Oct. 13, 1912, Camp Collection.

¹⁷ Capt. Allyn Capron to Forsyth, Jan. 7, 1891, Hawthorne ACP file.

¹⁸ Hawthorne ACP file.

¹⁹ Hawthorne to AG, Apr. 14, 1894, with enclosures, Hawthorne ACP file.

²⁰ John C. Gresham ACP file, #5087-1878; *Microfilm Pub. No. 744*; Mooney, "The Ghost Dance Religion," 871-72, also fails to mention Gresham as among the wounded.

²¹ Ghent, "The Seventh Regiment of United States Cavalry," another version of this essay repeats this statement. Maj. E. A. Garlington, "The Seventh Regiment of Cavalry," Theo. F. Rodenbough and William L. Haskin, *The Army of the United States* (New York: Maynard, Merrill and Co., 1896), 265.

²² Miles to AG, Oct. 13, 1891, with enclosures.

²³ Capt. Charles A. Varnum to AG, Feb. 14, 1891, Gresham ACP file. Varnum was awarded a Medal of Honor in 1897 for his part in a clash with the Lakota on White Clay Creek the day after Wounded Knee.

²⁴ AG to Charles M. Froshlich, July 27, 1915; AG to Gresham, Sept. 25, 1915, Gresham ACP file.

²⁵ Report of Sick and Wounded, Fort Huachuca, Ariz., Feb. 1914, Gresham ACP file.

²⁶ Application for Medal of Honor, Mar. 18, 1893, Ernest A. Garlington ACP file, #55574-1877.

²⁷ The specific letters of recommendation found in the Medal of Honor files are: 1st Lt. Horatio G. Sickels and 2nd Lt. Sedgwick Rice to AG, May 13, 1891 (recommending Austin); Hawthorne to AG, Jan. 7, 1891 (for Clancy); Capt. Charles S. Ilsley to AG, May 13, 1891 (for Feaster); Capt. Winfield S. Edgerly to AG, Apr. 1, 1891 (for Hamilton); Capron

to AG, Feb. 25, 1891 (for Weinert and Hartzog); Varnum to AG, Mar. 25, 1891 (for Hillock and Ward); Capt. Miles Moylan to AG, Mar. 28, 1891 (for Hobday); 1st Lt. Loyd S. McCormick to AG, Mar. 23, 1891 (for Jetter); Capt. Henry J. Nowlan to AG, Mar. 5, 1891 (for Loyd); Sickels to AG, May 13, 1891 (for McMillan); Moylan to AG, Mar. 28, 1891 (for Neder); Sickels and Rice to AG, May 13, 1891 (for Sullivan); Edgerly to AG, Mar. 18, 1891 (for Toy); Nowlan to AG, Mar. 5, 1891 (for Trautman); Rice to AG, Apr. 18, 1891 (for Ziegner).

²⁸ Hawthorne to Capron, May 23, 1891, found in the Clancy file. It is unclear why Hawthorne would first recommend Clancy for the Medal of Honor and later rescind the recommendation.

²⁹ General Orders No. 28, Mar. 12, 1903, War Department.

³⁰ The affidavits of William G. Austin, Albert W. McMillan, and Thomas Sullivan were attached to Feaster's file.

³¹ List of killed and wounded, Nelson A. Miles Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; also, *New York Times*, Jan. 1, 1891. Miles's papers list Hillock as wounded in action on Dec. 30, 1890, at Drexel Mission, a few miles north of the Pine Ridge Agency. Hillock was not on the list published in the *Army and Navy Journal*, Jan. 10, 1891, or in Miles to AG, Jan. 3, 1891, *Microfilm Pub. No. 983*.

³² Regimental returns, Seventh Cavalry, Fort Riley, Kan., Jan. 18, 1893, *Microfilm Pub. No. 744*.

³³ Nowlan to AG, Mar. 5, 1891. The lost Loyd medal generated considerable correspondence between Garlington and the adjutant general, Jan. 17 - Feb. 27, 1893.

³⁴ Edgerly to AG, Apr. 1, 1891.

³⁵ Sickels to AG, May 13, 1891.

³⁶ *Microfilm Pub. No. 233*; *Microfilm Pub. No. 744*.

³⁷ Sickels to AG, Mar. 26, 1891.

³⁸ Moylan to AG, Mar. 28, 1891. Captain Moylan was awarded the Medal of Honor in 1894 for gallantry at the 1877 Battle of Bear Paw Mountain.

³⁹ Edgerly to AG, Mar. 18, 1891; *Harper's Weekly*, Sept. 19, 1891, mistakenly calls him "Foy."

⁴⁰ Nowlan to AG, Mar. 5, 1891.

⁴¹ McCormick to AG, Mar. 23, 1891.

⁴² Moylan to adjutant, Seventh Cavalry, Fort Riley, Kan., Mar. 28, 1891; *Medal of Honor, 1863-1968*, 297.

⁴³ Varnum to AG, Mar. 25, 1891.

⁴⁴ *Medal of Honor, 1863-1968*, 332.

⁴⁵ Capron to AG, Feb. 25, 1891.

⁴⁶ W. F. Beyer and O. F. Keydel, eds., *Deeds of Valor* (Detroit: Perrien-Keydel Co., 1907), 2:325.

⁴⁷ Peter McFarland interview, Ricker Collection; Maj. L. S. McCormick, "Wounded Knee and the Drexel Mission Fights," *By Valor & Arms, the Journal of American Military History* 1 (Jan. 1975): 11; Allen, "In the West That Was," Allen Collection.

⁴⁸ Dexter W. Fellows and Andrew A. Freeman, *This Way to the Big Show: The Life of Dexter Fellows* (New York: The Viking Press, 1936), 79-80.

⁴⁹ Capron to AG, Feb. 25, 1891. All four men were recommended on the same citation. In *Medal of Honor, 1863-1968*, 295, Hartzog is cited for rescuing his wounded commanding officer by carrying him out of range of Indian gunfire.

⁵⁰ General Order No. 100, Dec. 17, 1891.

⁵¹ General Miles was awarded a Medal of Honor in 1892 for gallantry in the Civil War Battle of Chancellorsville. His most recent biographer noted that sixty-five other applicants also received medals that year, which somewhat diluted its prestige. Robert Wooster, *Nelson A. Miles and the Twilight of the Frontier Army* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 197-98.

⁵² *Medal of Honor, 1863-1968*, 3; U.S. Congress, Senate, *General Staff Corps and Medals of Honor*, 66th Cong., 1st sess., S.Doc. 58:112.