

While the combined command was being reorganized, heavy and continuous firing was heard from down the river. The reorganized force then moved in the direction where Custer was supposed to be. The Indians then began to turn upon Reno and Benteen in constantly increasing numbers. Finally, the whole command dug in for the night. In the morning the Indian attack upon the position was renewed, but soon after midday the Indians began to withdraw and soon had entirely abandoned the field. Nothing could be seen of Custer, but it did not occur to anyone that he had suffered complete disaster until Gibbon's advance brought the news. The losses of Reno's, Benteen's, and McDougall's troops totaled 32 killed and 44 wounded, but Custer's command, consisting of 231 officers, enlisted men, civilians, and Indian scouts, was destroyed to a man.

^{some} Gen. George A. Custer

Custer was well known to the American people as a daring and gallant Indian fighter long before the newspapers of the Nation printed the shocking story of his death. Born in New Rumley, Ohio, on December 5, 1839, he had distinguished himself in the War Between the States as a capable and courageous officer. Before the war had ended he had been made a major general. After the war, with the rank of lieutenant colonel of cavalry, he was engaged in the Indian campaigns in Kansas and the Indian Territory. Today his name is associated with those Army leaders who played an important part in the westward expansion of our country.

The Monument

The Custer Battlefield and the cemetery were set aside by Executive order in 1886. Custer Battlefield National Monument now contains 765.34 acres and, in addition to the national cemetery, includes that portion of the battlefield where Custer and his immediate command died, as well as the scene of the Reno-Benteen engagement. With the exception of Custer and his officers, those killed in the battle are buried around the base of a granite memorial on the Custer Battlefield. Custer's remains now lie among those of the Army heroes at West Point. In the cemetery, about one-quarter of a mile west of the Custer Memorial, are interred many who died in other Indian wars or have served later in the Armed Forces of the United States. The Reno-Benteen Battlefield, the site of the terrific 2-day engagement between the Indians and Reno and Benteen, is located about 5 miles southeast of the Custer Battlefield. There is also a memorial here commemorating that engagement.

A modern museum presents the story of the battle and its participants through dioramas, maps, and pertinent artifacts.

Location

The monument is less than 1 mile east of U. S. 87 and about 15 miles south of Hardin, Mont.

Administration

Custer Battlefield National Monument is administered by the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is Crow Agency, Mont., is in immediate charge.

The National Park System, of which this area is a unit, is dedicated to conserving the scenic, scientific, and historic heritage of the United States for the benefit and inspiration of its people.