

In all those years of marching, fighting and trailing under the command of Maj. Frank North and Capt. L. H. North, the Pawnee battalion lost only a single warrior. If there is in the annals of frontier warfare a record equal to this, on the part of the commanders or the rank and file, I have never found it. And there were only a few wounded, where the enemy lost hundreds.

As I study the history of those frontier wars, one incident stands out above all the others because I had some knowledge of the event at first hand. I refer to the capture of Red Cloud's camp, about 3 miles from the present city of Chadron, Neb., on October 23, 1876, and the dismounting and disarming of Red Cloud's strong force. Not a drop of blood was shed on either side in that exploit, but the achievement stands out as one of the great events of the plains war.

Hostile Sioux and Cheyenne occupied the upper plains region in Wyoming and Nebraska. Red Cloud and his strong Ogallala band were bound by treaty to keep the peace, and fed by the hand of the United States in their camps in northwest Nebraska. But the young warriors from Red Cloud's band took the Government rations, rifles and ammunition and rode their ponies away at night to join the camp of hostiles. It was resolved to end this folly.

The Pawnee scouts on their way from the North Platte River received orders to make a night march, join the U.S. Cavalry between the present towns of Crawford and Chadron, locate and surround the Red Cloud villages on Chadron Creek. Under this order, the North brothers and 42 of their chosen scouts rode 100 miles without food or stop, joined the cavalry at midnight, encircled the Red Cloud villages, and at daylight stormed through the village camp, driving old Red Cloud's ponies from their owners.

Next morning he and his warriors took up their march for Fort Robinson under the guns of the cavalry. It was a bitter day when the proud chiefs of the Sioux nation saw their lifelong enemies — the Pawnees — drive their 700 ponies ahead of them, never to be returned. In his old age at Pine Ridge, S.D., the great chief Red Cloud told me with unrelenting grief the story of this crowning outrage of his life.