

would volunteer to be the first to assure him that all orders were being carried out to the letter in my troop. However, my troop being right on top of us, as it were, I saw no way of evading the question as to whether we were a dutiful lot of officers in H Troop but by notifying him — that to my certain knowledge the requirements of the order he had alluded to were being carried out as a matter of course.

p. 14        With a slight stammer, General Custer said, 'Then, Col. Benteen, you have the advance, sir.' The last officer to report was to catch the pack-train to guard, as the penalty for not being more rapid in reporting; and this, I opine, few cared for.

After all had reported, I was notified by General Custer to move my troop to the right of the regiment, which was then in column of fours.

The regiment had moved but a short distance when Custer rode to the right of the column and remarked that I was setting the pace too fast. He then remained in front, halting the column after a mile or so had been passed over.

General Custer and the regimental adjutant, Lieut. Cooke, went a few yards in advance of the column, just out of earshot, and were diligently engaged in talking and making notes in a scratch-pad. After fifteen or so minutes of this work, I was called by the adjutant, and was informed by General Custer that I was to mount D, H and K Troops, which were then in column dismounted, and proceed to a line of bluffs about two miles off, at about an angle of 45 degrees; to send a well-mounted officer and ten men in advance; to pitch into any Indians I could see, and, in such case, to notify him at once.

I at once mounted my battalion and set out, sending Lieut. Gibson and ten men in advance. To say the country terrain was rough is but putting it mildly — expletives could be worked in front of 'rough' that would be more truly descriptive, and by no means exaggerative of the lay of the land. But on we went, with high intent, from embankment to embankment. Perhaps a mile or so had been covered when the chief trumpeter of the regiment overtook me with 'the compliments of General Custer to Col. Benteen;' that if I came across, or could see nothing, from the first line of bluffs, to go on to the second line of bluffs, pitch into anything I came across, and to notify General Custer of same at once.