

This was now about six o'clock in the evening and the ground was held with a further loss of eighteen killed and forty-six wounded, until the attack ceased about nine o'clock at night.

By this time the overwhelming numbers of the enemy rendered it improbable that the troops under Custer could undertake to rejoin those with Reno, so the latter began to dig rifle-pits, baricaded with dead horses and mules and boxes from the backs, to prepare for any further/ 55  
attack which might be made the next day. All night long the men kept working, while the Indians were holding a scalp dance, within their hearing, in the valley of the Little Horn below.

About half-past two o'clock in the morning of June 26, a most terrific rifle-fire was opened upon Reno's position, and as daylight increased hordes of Indians were seen taking station upon high points completely surrounding the troops, so that men were struck on opposite sides of the lines from where the shots were fired. The fire did not slacken until half-past nine o'clock in the morning, when the Indians made a desperate charge upon the line held by Troops H and M, coming to such close quarters as to touch with a "coup-stick" a man lying dead within the lines. This onslaught was repulsed by a charge from the line assaulted, led by Colonel Benteen.

The Indians also charged close enough to send their arrows into the line held by Troops D and K, but they were driven back by a counter-charge of those troops, accompanied in person by Reno.

There were now many wounded and the question of obtaining water was a vital one, for the troops had been without any from six o'clock the previous evening, a period of about sixteen hours. A skirmish line was formed under Benteen, to protect the descent of volunteers down the hill in front of the position to reach the water. A little was obtained