

Custer men had not delayed so long, they could have gotten back to the other soldiers. But, by the time some of them (gray horses) did move toward the big ravine on the battlefield (E Co. ravine), it was too late, and the Indians were all around them in large numbers. When the gray horse soldiers moved south, they were confronted by a large number of Indians in and near the big ravine. Indians coming from the north and from the south forced these gray horse soldiers into the big ravine.

One soldier rode away from the rest (during the fight along the ridge) and went east. Low Dog and Little Son chased him. Low Dog dismounted, and taking careful aim, shot the soldier from his horse as he topped the second rise east of the Battlefield fence line.

Lame White Man (killed near top of Custer Ridge, on west slope, in about the center of the ridge) was not wearing his formal war clothes in the fight - per Wolf Tooth and Tall Bull - he had just come from a sweat lodge, wrapped a blanket around his lower body and taken his gun and ammunition with him. His hair was not braided, but loose. When found, a small scalp had been taken from his head.

The first (in the Battlefield vicinity) fighting was at the ford on the west side of the valley. Lame White Man and most of the Cheyennes crossed here after the troops were driven back.

All the soldiers except the gray horse men retreated afoot up the slope of Custer Ridge, driving the Indians east of the ridge. The soldiers in the ravine (Co. I and Co. F) had charged the Indians from near the river, but were outflanked by Indians from the north and some from the south. These men were quickly surrounded - though they fought hard and moved in a southerly direction to the last. A Ute (raised as a Cheyenne) named Yellow Nose, found a soldier's flag in the sage brush along the Custer Ridge. He wrapped it around his body as a prize.

The horses of the gray horse soldiers were frightened away by Indians coming up the big ravine on the Battlefield.

The Calhoun soldiers were facing west at the last, and were the last ones to be killed.

Beginning of the Battle: a band of 40 to 50 warriors, returning to the village, met the Custer soldiers on a high ridge east of the Battlefield. (As pointed out by Stands-in-Timber, this would be above and east of the Nye-Cartwright Ridge area - sholls have subsequently been found there, but more field work is needed to prove or disprove this account of fighting in that location.) After the first fighting, the soldiers came down in two lines to the Nye-Cartwright Ridge area. The gray horse soldiers acting as rear guards for about half an hour to hold off Indians attacking from the south - then they followed the other soldiers along Nye-Cartwright Ridge and on to the Custer Battlefield. They all went along Custer Ridge, then turned east to try and cross the river. Repulsed at the river, the soldiers then halted on the flats below the superintendent's house and below the cemetery.

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Note: Battle proper began below and west of the cemetery, moved to Custer Ridge - the troops were moving in a generally southerly or southeasterly direction, as seen from a Cheyenne viewpoint.

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The Reno-Bentzen phase:

The Reno soldiers moved north toward where the Custer soldiers were killed. (According to this informant, the move came after the Custer men were dead, or at least defeated.) The Indians then went up the ravines east of Weir Point, and seeing them, the soldiers retreated again. The troops seemed to sense an ambush, as the hostiles were just waiting for them to advance a little further, before falling on them from the flank.