

and down the last named stream to its mouth. At the same time General Terry moved with his main force up the south bank of the Yellowstone River and formed a junction with a column under Colonel John Gibbon, consisting of four troops of the 2nd Cavalry and six companies of the 7th Infantry, which had marched eastward along the north bank of the Yellowstone from Fort Ellis, Montana. During Major Reno's scout, a large Indian trail was discovered along the Rosebud, but as Reno's orders did not contemplate an attack with his small force, the trail was only followed a sufficient distance to definitely locate the Indians in the vicinity of the Little Big Horn River, after which Reno returned to the mouth of the Rosebud.

General Terry was now satisfied as to the location of the Indians, and at a conference between himself, Colonels Gibbon and Custer, on June 21st, he communicated the following plan of operations: Gibbon's column was to cross the Yellowstone, near the mouth of the Big Horn, march for the mouth of the Little Big Horn and thence up the latter, with the understanding that it would arrive at the last named point by June 26th: Custer, with the whole of the 7th Cavalry, should proceed up the Rosebud until he ascertained the direction taken by the trail found by Reno; if this led to the Little Big Horn, it should not be followed, but Custer should keep still further to the south, before turning toward that river, in order to intercept the Indians, should they attempt to slip between him and the mountains, and also in order, by a longer march, to give time for Colonel Gibbon's column to come up.

This plan was founded upon the belief that, at some point on the Little Big Horn, a body of hostile would be found, though it was impossible to arrange movements in perfect concert, as might be done were there a known fixed objective point. It was believed impracticable to unite both Gibbons and Custer's forces, because more than half of those of Gibbon were infantry, who could not keep up with the rapid movement of cavalry; whilst taking away the mounted troops from Gibbon, to unite with those of Custer, would