

with their arrows. The bravery of our bugler is much spoken of, he having killed several Indians by beating them over the head with his bugle. They say that there were only 16 Sioux and four Cheyennes killed on the field, but after they encamped 94 warriors died from their wounds, and of 300 others wounded, half of them were expected to die. One "big" Sioux chief was among the killed.

"The bravery of our bugler is much spoken of, he having killed several Indians by beating them over the head with his bugle."

Those words seemed to leap out from the page. Instantly my mind raced back to a summer afternoon in Buffalo, Wyo.—to the sight of a battered bugle hanging on the walls of the little office in Tom Gatchell's drug store and his quiet remark, "O, that was picked up on Massacre Hill—you know, the place where Fetterman and his crew were wiped out back in '66."

But who was this heroic musician?

His bravery, which was "much spoken of" by the Sioux, is not mentioned in any of the books which tell of Fort Phil Kearney's tragic history—with one exception. That is the autobiography of Malcolm Campbell, a famous Wyoming sheriff who had been a bullwhacker on the Oregon Trail in 1867. He heard the story of the "Fetterman Massacre" from the lips of men who were at Phil Kearney the previous year and refers to the incident thus:

The Indians mutilated every body in Fetterman's command with the exception of the bugler who fought so courageously that his remains were left untouched but covered with a buffalo robe.

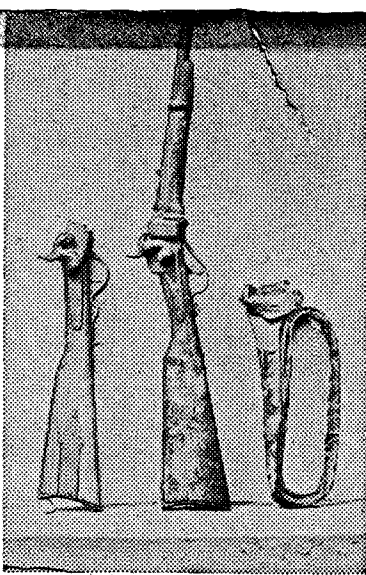
But what was this bugler's name?

Although the dull, dry pages of the "Report of the Secretary of War for the Year 1867" gives the names of the officers who were killed near Phil Kearney, it does not identify any of the enlisted men who were victims of the Sioux scalping knives.

So, back to the New York Semi-Weekly Tribune and there on page one of the issue for January 17, 1867, appears an item headed "The Massacre at Fort Phil Kearney." It reads:

FORT LARAMIE, Jan. 14.—The following are the names of the cavalry killed in the recent massacre at Fort Phil Kearney:

Second Lieut. Horatio S. Bingham, killed on the 6th. of December; Sergeant James Baker, Corporal James Kelly, bugler Adolph Metzger, saddler John McCarty, and privates Thos. Anderson, Thos. Brogdon, Wm. S. Bugbee, Wm. L. Cornog, Chas. Cuddy, Patrick Clancey, Harvey S. Denning, Hugh B. Doran, Robert Daniels, Anderson M. Fitzgerald, Nathaniel Foreman, John Gister, Daniel Green, Chas. Gampel, Ferdinand Homer, Park Jones, James P. Maguire, John McCarty, George W. Nugent, Franklin Payne, James Ryan, Oliver Williams, all killed December 21.



Relics from the "Fort Phil Kearney Massacre" in the collection of T. J. Gatchell of Buffalo, Wyo. At the right is the bugle carried by Adolph Metzger of Troop C, Second U. S. Cavalry.

ans attacking the woodchoppers camp on Piney Island", came to Fort Phil Kearney that morning. We know that he was one of the 26 troopers who accompanied the force of 50 picked men from the Eighteenth infantry and two civilian volunteers, led by Lieut. Col. W. J. Fetterman, Capt. Frederick H. Brown and Lieut. G. W. Grummond, who were acting under these orders from Col. H. B. Carrington, commander of the fort:

"Support the wood train, relieve it and report to me. Do not engage the Indians at its expense; under no circumstances pursue them over Lodge Trail Ridge."

We know that Fetterman disobeyed those orders and allowed himself to be drawn into an ambush. Then more than 2,000 Sioux and Cheyennes came boiling out of the ravines and coulees beyond Lodge Trail Ridge and, like a red wave of destruction, engulfed the 55 doughboys and their officers. Then the Indians swept up the icy slope of the ridge to which the cavalymen retreated, leading their horses and shooting back at the savages as fast as they could load and fire their single-shot carbines.

When they reached the end of the ridge and saw the hundreds of warriors swarming up the other side, sudden panic struck them. They let their horses go, and with them went their last chance to cut through the circle

of gray wolves attacking a buffalo bull, pulled him down at last.

We know that his was one of the 81 bodies, stripped naked and frozen solid (for the mercury dropped to 25 below zero that afternoon of December 21), which were brought in by searching parties from the fort the next day. So bitter was the weather that the grave-diggers at Phil Kearney were forced to work in short relays and it was not until three days later that a great pit, 50 feet long and seven feet deep, was hewn out of the frozen ground inside the stockade to receive the victims of Fetterman's tragic disobedience.

There these doughboys and troopers "shared one tomb, buried, as they had fought, together"—thus, Colonel Carrington's official report to his department commander—until several years later when a national cemetery was established on the Little Big Horn in Montana. Then their bodies were transferred to this new resting place where their dust now mingles with the dust of the victims of another famous frontier tragedy, "Custer's Last Stand."

And today the winds come sweeping down from the snow-capped peaks of the Big Horn range — the same mountains which once echoed to the haunting strains of "Taps," blown at old Fort Phil Kearney by Bugler Adolph Metzger—to play a wild requiem over his grave. His name is carved on the simple headstone that gleams white in the bright sunlight of that "barren land and lone" where sleep the dead of Custer's command. It is also written in the dusty records of the adjutant-general's office and it is printed on the yellowed pages of an old New York newspaper. Except for these, there is little else to remind his fellow-Americans that he once lived.

But there is something to recall to them the manner of his dying. On the walls of a drug-gist's office in a little Wyoming city hangs what was once a cavalry bugle. It is the bugle which blared out its summons to the 81 members of Fetterman's doomed command to keep a rendezvous with death one cold December morning more than 70 years ago. It was carried by "one Adolph Metzger" and it is a symbol of and a monument to the stark courage of an American soldier.

