

Indian Casualties of the Little Big Horn Battle 25-26 June 1876

The number of warriors fighting against the 7th Cavalry has always been in question. Estimates have ranged from a ridiculous high of 30,000 to a very conservative 800 or so. The truth lies closer to the original Army estimates in the first three months of 1876 – 2,000-3,000 warriors to be expected in the field. It is this number that led Major General Terry to ask for the entire 7th U. S. Cavalry Regiment to be assembled for the coming campaign. Terry argued that the number of warriors would be too much for only 550 cavalymen to handle. 550 was the all he had in the Department in February 1876. Terry's combat estimate of "not enough" proved only too correct as the entire Regiment under Custer on 25 June 1876 numbered 565. Most modern analysts place the number of warriors between 1000-1500.

Even more difficult to determine was the number of casualties sustained by the warriors who stoutly defended their families. Not only have the numbers by tribe been available but so have the names. The entire foundation of this listing is based on Indian testimony, soldier testimony, and the impeccable research and analysis of Richard G. Hardorff. Hardorff's contributions to the study of this battle and the people in it are without parallel. He is one of the very few non-Indian scholars who have used the Indian testimony with skill and understanding. Father Peter Powell is also noteworthy especially in the life history of the Cheyenne Nation. His work

cited here, **People of the Sacred Mountain**, won several major literary and historical recognitions and remains today one of the most sought after references on Indian history. Dr. Kenneth Hammer's "Custer in '76" was the first major publication of any of the Walter Camp collections. Walter Camp spent years talking with participants and survivors from both sides and his notes and observations remain fertile ground for research.

31 warriors, six women, and four children were killed on 25 and 26 June 1876. These numbers are stated with a fair degree of certainty. Estimates have ranged from 11 to "hundreds" but once all the different names are reconciled with all the known listings and testimony "30 some" appears more often than not. Other names remain in research and even if verified will increase the number only by a few.

Ethnologist George B. Grinnell working with the Northern Cheyenne people after their return to the north thought about 40-45 Northern Cheyenne people died of disease and sickness in Oklahoma. This was one of the major reasons for their flight from there. The point he goes on to make is that this number of deaths exceeded the number who lost their lives in the Great Sioux War. Cheyenne battle deaths are recorded as two at the Rosebud, seven at the Little Big Horn, six at Slim Buttes, and 25 at the destruction of Dull Knife's village.¹

Recent efforts to incorporate more Indian oral history into battle interpretation at the Little Big Horn Battlefield National Monument tried to locate rock cairns of warrior death sites. These cairns are small piles of rocks supposedly associated with individual deaths. Over 200 such cairns were located by survey flags. Nowhere in any testimony or any art is such a large number mentioned. Previously only about 20 some such cairns had been identified and in some cases linked to specific individuals. For now, art and word from those who were there do not support such a large number.

Lieutenant Oscar Long, in an interview with Brave Bear Hump and White Bull in June 1878, was told that 38 Indians were killed in the battle. That testimony is not well known and sums up Indian descriptions completely. The last two columns in the listing indicate where on the battlefield the death occurred and in what Indian art of the battle the individual's death appears.

The main or better known name of the slain individual is in bold text and the other names he was known by are indented below it. Some names given in the literature are Cheyenne names for Lakota warriors and vice versa. Naming conventions often saw some men with several names such as the many different names associated with the Cheyenne leader **Lame White Man**. Several White writers have included all the names found in testimony that led to inflated numbers. Some names were written down incorrectly and these inconsistencies were further repeated as if they were also among the dead. Hardorff's research mainly put to rest most of these discrepancies and the list below is the result.

The table below concentrates on the Lakota and Cheyenne casualties only. There were three Arikara scouts killed during the actions involving Reno's attack and retreat. Bob Tail Bull, Bloody Knife, and Little Brave's deaths are described in the artist sections that show their demise.

Reference citations are at the end of the list.

NAME	TRIBE	REFERENCES	DEATH SITE	PICTOGRAPH
Bad Yellow Hair	Oglala	White Bull Roster, Camp, 1912 (Custer in '76, p. 267)	Unknown at Custer fight. but Kicking Bear shows his death site as northern slope of Custer Hill.	Kicking Bear
Bad Light Hair Save Himself		Hardorff, Hokahey, page 82 Kicking Bear pictograph, Southwest Museum; Hardorff, Hokahey, page 131-132.		
Bear With Horns	Hunkpapa	Hammer, page 267	Around Calhoun Hill. Kicking Bear shows his death site as on western slope of Calhoun Hill.	Kicking Bear
Bear Horns		Hardorff, Hokahey, page 132 Kicking Bear pictograph, Southwest Museum;		

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Black Bear Charcoal Bear Closed Hand Cripple Hand Crippled Hand Fist Young Bear	Cheyenne	Hardorff, Lakota, page 122-23 Hardorff, Memories, page 132 Powell, Sacred Mountains, pp. 1007, 1028,1033 Hardorff, Hokahey, page 148 Powell, Sacred Mountains, pp. 1007, 1028,1033 Powell, Sacred Mountains, pp. 1007, 1028,1033 Hardorff, Hokahey, page 71	North slope of Custer Hill	White Bird
Black White Man Black Wasichu	Oglala	Hardorff, Lakota, 29; DeMallie, Grandfather, 196 Hardorff, Hokahey, 143; Black Elk, 194 Kicking Bear pictograph, Southwest Museum;	West slope of Custer Hill	Kicking Bear
Breech Cloth	Minneconjou	Hardorff, Hokahey, 86; Memories, 172	East side of Reno Hill	
Chased by Owl Chased by Owls	Two Kettle	Hardorff, Lakota, page 110 Hardorff, Hokahey, page 41, 43, 57.	Between timber and river	
Cloud Man	Sans Arc	Hammer, page 267 Hardorff, Hokahey, page 82	Unknown at Custer fight	
Cut Belly Open Belly Has Sorrell Horse Owns Red Horse	Cheyenne	Michno, Noon, 198 Hardorff, Hokahey, page 82 Hardorf, Hokahey, 147; Hammer, 267 Hardorf, Hokahey, 147; Hammer, 267	Near present Visitor Center	White Bird
Deeds Acts Thunder Earth Business Noisy Walking Plenty Trouble One Hawk	Sans Arc	Hardorff, Lakota, page 123 Hardorff, Hokahey, page 17-30 Hardorff, Hokahey, page 17-30 Hardorff, Hokahey, page 17-30 Hardorff, Hokahey, page 17-30 Hardorff, Hokahey, page 17-30 Hardorff, Hokahey, page 17-30	East side of River near Reno Creek mouth	

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		Two Bears	Hardorff, Hokahey, page 143		
Dog's Backbone	Minneconjou	Backbone of Dog Dog Back	Hammer, 267; Hardorff, CC&LBH, 90, 92; Michno 123; Hardorff, Hokahey, page 91-93 Hardorff, Hokahey, page 132 Kicking Bear pictograph, Southwest Museum;	Northeast of Reno Hill	Kicking Bear
Dog With Horns	Minneconjou		Hammer, 267; Hardorff, Lakota, 110; Hardorff, Hokahey, page 41-42	Front of first Reno skirmish line	
Elk Bear	Sans Arc	Bear Elk	Hardorff, Hokahey, page 134 Hammer, 267	Unknown at Custer fight	
Elk Stands Above	Sans Arc		Hardorff, Hokahey, pages 48-49, 57	North of Reno Hill. Kicking Bear shows his death site in agreement with most Indian and Cavalry testimony.	Kicking Bear
Elk Standing			Hardorff, Hokahey, pages 48-49, 57	Bad Heart Bull shows death site east of river.	Bad Heart Bull
Elk Standing Alone			Hardorff, Hokahey, pages 48-49, 57		
Elk Stands on Top			Hardorff, Hokahey, pages 48-49, 57		
Elk Standing High			Hardorff, Hokahey, pages 48-49, 57		
Elk			Hardorff, Hokahey, pages 48-49, 57		
High Elk			Graham, Myth, page 54 Blish, page 247 Kicking Bear pictograph, Southwest Museum;		
Hawk Man	Hunkpapa		Hardorff, Lakota, page 93 Hardorff, Hokahey, page 43,57	Between timber and river	
Kills Him	Sans Arc	Kill Him Kills	Hardorff, Hokahey, page 82 Hardorff, Hokahey, page 82 Hammer, page 267	Unknown at Custer fight	
Lame White Man	Cheyenne		Hardorff, Lakota, page 122;	Halfway down Custer Ridge	White Bird

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Black Body	Hardorff, Memories, page 63
Full Beard	Hardorff, Hokahey, page 147
Crazy Wolf	Hardorff, Hokahey, page 148
Cripple Man	Hardorff, Hokahey, page 148
Bearded Man	Hardorff, Hokahey, page 65, 147, 149
Mustache	Hardorff, Hokahey, page 140, 147
Walking White Man	Hardorff, Hokahey, page 68
Mad Wolf	Michno, Lakota, page 200 footnote 364.
Mad Hearted Wolf	Michno, Lakota, page 200 footnote 364.
Rabid Wolf	Michno, Lakota, page 200 footnote 364.
White Man Cripple	Michno, Lakota, page 200 footnote 364.

Limber Bones	Cheyenne	Hammer, page 267	North slope of Custer Hill	White Bird
Flying By		Hardorff, Hokahey, page 71		
Limber Lance		Hardorff, Memories, 58; Michno, Noon, 200		
Limber Hand		Michno, Noon, 200; Powell, 1032		
Long Road	Sans Arc	Hammer, 267; Hardorff, CC&LBH, 87,90,92	South side of Reno Hill	Kicking Bear
Eagle Hat		Hardorff, Hokahey, page 143		
Thunder Shield		Hardorff, Hokahey, page 90		
		Kicking Bear pictograph, Southwest Museum;		
Noisy Walking	Cheyenne	Hammer, 267; Hardorff, Lakota, 122;	Big bend in Deep Coulee	Red Horse
Left Hand		Hardorff, Hokahey, page 76		
Left Handed Ice		Hardorff, Hokahey, page 139		
Left Hander		Hardorff, Hokahey, page 142		
		Red Horse, National Museum of Natural History		
One Dog	Sans Arc	Hammer, page 267; Hardorff, Hokahey 134, 142	Unknown at Custer fight	Kicking Bear
Lone Dog		Hardorff, Hokahey, page 82	Kicking Bear shows his death site near Calhoun Hill	
		Kicking Bear pictograph, Southwest Museum;		
Plenty Lice	Oglala	Hammer, page 267; Hardorff, Lakota, 192	Unknown at Custer fight	

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		Hardorff, Hokahey, pp. 134,137,139, 143, 144 Kicking Bear pictograph, Southwest Museum;	Kicking Bear shows his death site near Calhoun Hill.	Kicking Bear
Rectum	Hunkpapa	Hammer, page 267	Unknown at Custer fight	
Guts		Hardorff, Hokahey, 143		
Large Wound With Guts		Hardorff, Hokahey, 143		
Open Belly		Hardorff, Hokahey, 143		
Red Face	Hunkpapa	Hardorff, Hokahey, page 82,	Unknown at Custer fight	
		Kicking Bear pictograph, Southwest Museum;	Kicking Bear shows his death site down the hill from Black White Man wounding site. This would make it in the Deep Ravine and clearly identifies him as the second of two Indian casualties seen there by many participants after the battle.	Kicking Bear
		Red Horse, National Museum of Natural History	Red Horse drawing of casualties in Deep Ravine clearly shows two Indian dead mixed in with the soldier dead.	Red Horse
		Standing Bear, St. Augustine's Center	Standing Bear clearly shows an Indian casualty in one pictograph and two in another.	Standing Bear
Roman Nose	Cheyenne	Hardorff, Lakota, page 110	West bank of river near ford	White Bird
Crooked Nose		Hardorff, Hokahey, page 70		
Hump		Hardorff, Hokahey, page 148		
Hump Nose		Hardorff, Hokahey, page 70, 148-149		
Old Man		Hardorff, Hokahey, page 148		
Black Coyote		Hardorff, Hokahey, page 147; Hammer, 267		

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Swift Bear	Hunkpapa	Hammer, 267; Hardorff, Lakota, 110 Kicking Bear pictograph, Southwest Museum;	Between river and timber	Kicking Bear
Three Bears Geneny	Minneconjou	Hammer, 267; Hardorff, Lakota, 29, 109 Black Elk, Grandfather, 196	Near Hunkpapa lodges	
Whirlwind Little Whirlwind Swift Cloud	Cheyenne	Hardorff, Lakota, page 103 Hardorff, Hokahey, page 149 Hammer, page 267 Blish, page 246	East bank of river near Reno retreat crossing	Bad Heart Bull White Bird
White Bull White Buffalo White Buffalo Bull	Hunkpapa	Hardorff, Lakota, page 110 Hardorff, Hokahey, pages 36, 44, 57, 139 Hardorff, Hokahey, pages 36, 44, 57, 139	Between timber and river	
White Eagle	Oglala	Hammer, 267; Hardorff, Lakota, 38, 110	On west slope of Reno Hill	
Young Black Moon Flying Charge	Hunkpapa	Hardorff, Hokahey, page 42, 54, 57 Hardorff, Hokahey 134-135	Second skirmish line	
Young Skunk Standing Rabbit	Oglala	White Bull Roster, Camp, 1912 (Custer in '76, p. 267) Hardorff, Hokahey, pp. 42-44; 131-132 Blish, page 246 Kicking Bear pictograph, Southwest Museum;	Unknown at Custer fight but Kicking Bear shows him on the northeast slopr of the last stand hil.	Kicking Bear Bad Heart Bull
Noncombatants 6 Women & 4 children	Hunkpapa	Hardorff, Hokahey, pages 32-35	South of Hunkpapa lodges near river	

References

References below are the most available to scholars today. Many of the references used by researchers, especially Hardoff, are hard to find even today. Some of these references are not that easy to find and usually only via Interlibrary Loan. Blish's

Blish, Helen H. **A Pictographic History of the Oglala Sioux.** University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1967.

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_____. **Markers, Artifacts and Indian Testimony: Preliminary Findings on the Custer Battle.** Don Horn Publications, Short Hills, New Jersey, 1985.

_____. (Compiler and Editor.) **Cheyenne Memories of the Custer Fight: A Source Book.** The Arthur H. Clark Company, Spokane, Washington, 1995.

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book about Amos Bad Heart Bull's ledger and Father Powell's two volume set on the Cheyenne people are in the hundreds of dollars if available for purchase. Some references are found only in secondary research.

_____. (Compiler and Editor). **Camp, Custer, and the Little Big Horn: A Collection of Walter Mason Camp's Research Papers on General George A. Custer's Last Fight.** Upton and Sons, Publishers, El Segundo, California, 1997.

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Michno, Gregory. **Lakota Noon: The Indian Narrative of Custer's Defeat.** Mountain Press Publishing Company, Missoula, Montana, 1997.

Neihardt, John G. **Black Elk Speaks: Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux.** William Morrow & Company, New York, 1932. Reprinted under the same title by the University of Nebraska Press in 1979 and by Bison Books, University of Nebraska Press, 1988.

Powell, Father Peter John. **People of the Sacred Mountain: A History of the Northern Cheyenne and Warrior Societies, 1830-1879, With an Epilogue 1969- 1974.** Volumes I and II. Harper & Row Publishers, San Francisco, 1981.

Table ___ below shows all known casualty listings and this display clearly shows the name confusion, errors, etc. that have confounded the history of this aspect of the battle.

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<u>KICKING BEAR</u>	<u>WHITE BULL 1</u>	<u>WHITE BULL 2</u>	<u>WHITE BULL 3</u>	<u>WHITE BUFFALO</u>	<u>HARDORFF</u>	<u>MILLER</u>	<u>CAMP</u>	<u>STANDS IN TIMBER</u>	<u>POWELL</u>	<u>MYERS</u>	???
Save Himself (1)	Bad Yellow Hair Bear Elk	Bad Light Hair Elk Bear	Bad Light Hair Elk Bear	Bad Light Hair Elk Bear		Bad Light Hair Elk Bear <u>Bearded Man (C)</u>	Bad Light Hair Elk Bear			Bad Light Hair Elk Bear <u>Beardedman (C)</u>	
Bear Horn	Bear With Horns	Bear With Horn	Bear With Horn	Bear With Horns	Big Design <u>Black Bear (C)</u>	<u>Black Bear (C)</u> <u>Black Cloud (C)</u>	Bear With Horns		<u>Black Bear (C)</u>	<u>Black Bear (C)</u> <u>Black Cloud (C)</u> Black Fox (C/D?) Black Moon	<i>Black Sun</i>
Black White Man (2)		Chased By Owl	Chase By Owl	Chased By Owls	Breech Cloth	Black White Man Chased By Owls	Black White Man Breech Cloth Chased By Owls	<u>Closed Hand (C)</u>		Black Wasichu Chased By Owls	
	Cloud Man	Cloud Man	Cloud Man	Cloud Man	<u>Cut Belly (C)</u>	Cloud Man	Cloud Man	<u>Cut Belly (C)</u>	<u>Open/Cut Belly (C)</u>	Cloud Man <u>Cut Belly (C)</u>	
Dog Back	Deed (Act) Dog's Backbone Dog With Horns	Dog Backbone Dog With Horn	Business Backbone of Dog Dog With Horn	Deeds Dog's Backbone Dog With Horn		Deeds Dog's Backbone Dog With Horns	Deeds Dog's Backbone Dog With Horns			Deed Dog Backbone Dog With Horns Eagle Hat Flying By <u>Flying By (C)</u> Elk Standing High <u>Hair Lip(C)</u>	
Elk Standing Alone	Elk Standing High	Elk Stand on Top	Standing Elk	<u>Flying By (C)</u> Standing Elk	<u>Limber Bones (C)</u>	<u>Flying By (C)</u> Standing Elk	<u>Flying By (C)</u>	<u>Limber Bones (C)</u>	<u>Limber Bones (C)</u>	High Horse High Elk High Horse Kills Him <u>Left Hand (C)</u> Left Handed Ice <u>Noisy Walking (C)</u> <u>Limber Bones (C)</u>	
	Killed	Kill Him	Kill Him	Kills Him	<u>Lefthanded Ice (C)</u>	<u>Noisy Walking (C)</u> <u>Limber Bones (C)</u>	<u>Left Hand (C)</u>	<u>Noisy Walking (C)</u>	<u>Noisy Walking (C)</u>		
Lone Dog	One Dog	Lone Dog	Lone Dog	Lone Dog		Long Dog (3) Long Elk	Lone Dog			Lone Dog	
Long Road	Long Road	Long Road	Long Robe (4)	Long Robe <u>Mustache (C)</u>	<u>Lame White Man (C)</u>	Long Robe <u>Lame White Man (C)</u> <u>Mustache (C)</u>	Long Road <u>Full Beard (C)</u>	<u>Lame White Man (C)</u>	<u>Lame White Man (C)</u>	Long Robe <u>Lame White Man (C)</u> Mustache <u>Old Man (C)</u> Owens Red Horse Plenty Lice Rectum Red Face <u>Red Horse (C)</u> <u>Hump Nose (C)</u>	
Plenty Lice	Plenty Lice Rectum	Many Lice Rectum	Plenty Lice Guts	<u>Owens Red Horse(C)</u> Plenty Lice Guts		<u>Owens Red Horse(C)</u> Many Lice Rectum	<u>Has Sorrel Horse (C)</u> Many Lice Guts			Red Face <u>Red Horse (C)</u> <u>Hump Nose (C)</u>	
Red Face	Red Face	Red Face	Red Face	Red Face	<u>Roman Nose (C)</u>	Red Face	Red Face	<u>Black Coyote (C)</u>	<u>Roman Nose (C)</u>	<u>Roman Nose(C)</u>	
Swift Bear	Swift Bear	Swift Bear	Swift Bear	Swift Bear <u>Swift Cloud(C)</u>		Swift Bear	Swift Bear <u>Swift Cloud (C)</u>			Standing Elk Swift Bear <u>Swift Cloud (C)</u>	
	Three Bears (5)	Three Bears	Three Bears	Three Bears		Two Bears	Three Bears			Three Bears Two Bear (Deed) <u>Walking White Man (C)</u> <u>Whirlwind(C)</u>	
	White Bull	White Bull	White Bull	White Buffalo Bull	<u>Little Whirlwind (C)</u>	<u>Whirlwind (C)</u> White Buffalo	White Buffalo	<u>Little Whirlwind (C)</u>	<u>Little Whirlwind (C)</u>	White Buffalo Bull White Bull White Eagle <u>Young Bear (C)</u> Young Black Moon	
White Eagle	White Eagle	White Eagle	White Eagle	White Eagle <u>Young Bear (C)</u> Young Black Moon		White Eagle	White Eagle <u>Young Bear (C)</u> Young Black Moon			Young Black Moon Young Skunk	
Standing Rabbit (6)	Flying Charge Young Skunk	Young Skunk	Young Skunk	Young Skunk		Young Skunk	Young Skunk			Young Skunk	

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¹ George H. Grinnell. *Fighting Cheyennes*. Page 385.