



THE 1876 CAMPAIGN OF LITTLE BIG HORN IN PROGRESSIVE MAPS

By Richard Newman



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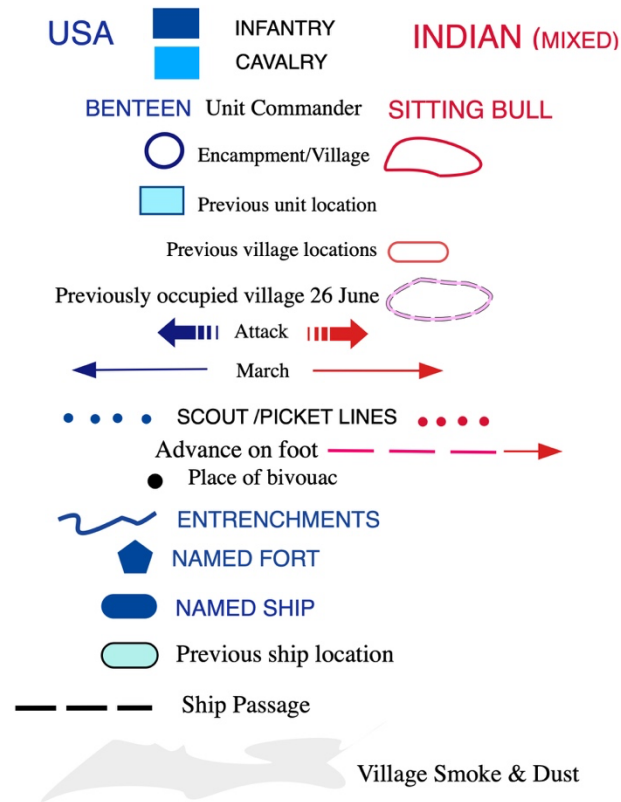
The campaign plotted and the action described from 30 March through 1 August 1876, on twelve new maps



Geographic Map Symbols



Military Map Symbols



INTRODUCTION

The times and participants shown in these maps are approximate with the best information available. After the last sighting of Custer's battalion surging north along the Little Big Horn's right bank bluffs and coulees, its times and locations are conjectural, and several theories exist. It has taken first-hand and second-hand trooper and Indian interviews, court transcripts, writings, and, since the 1980s prairie fire, substantial artifact findings, to arrive at the scenario shown here. All times in this narrative are based on estimates of officers' watches, not local times. I am indebted to the many authors who have researched and written about the campaign. This effort is dedicated to all those who fell in the campaign of the Little Big Horn . . . on either side, and to all those who now protect and interpret the battle. I want to thank my historically oriented friends for encouraging me to do this, and being an inspiration to gain more knowledge. Thanks, lastly, to the makers of Ortelius Software and Nikon cameras.

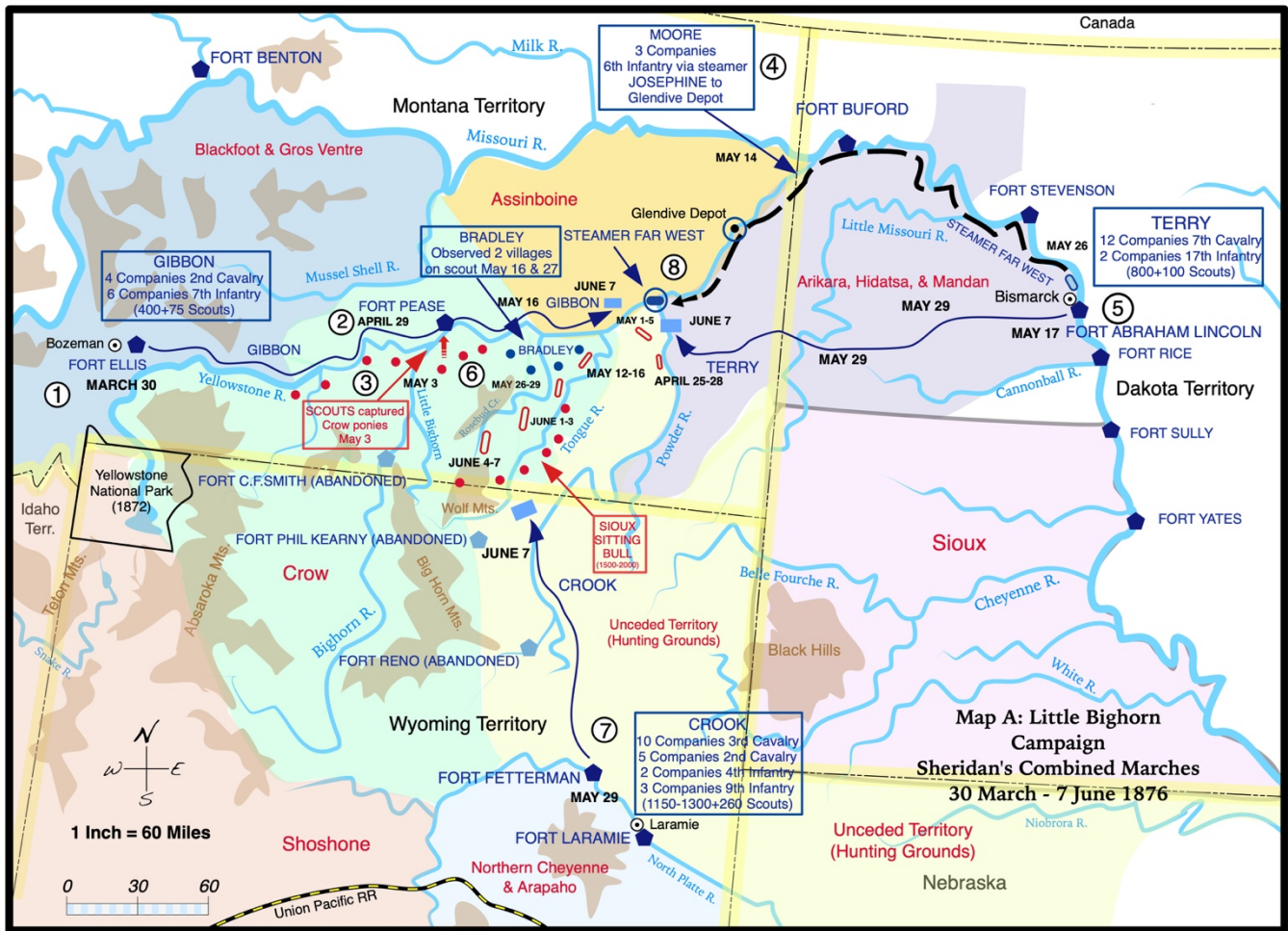
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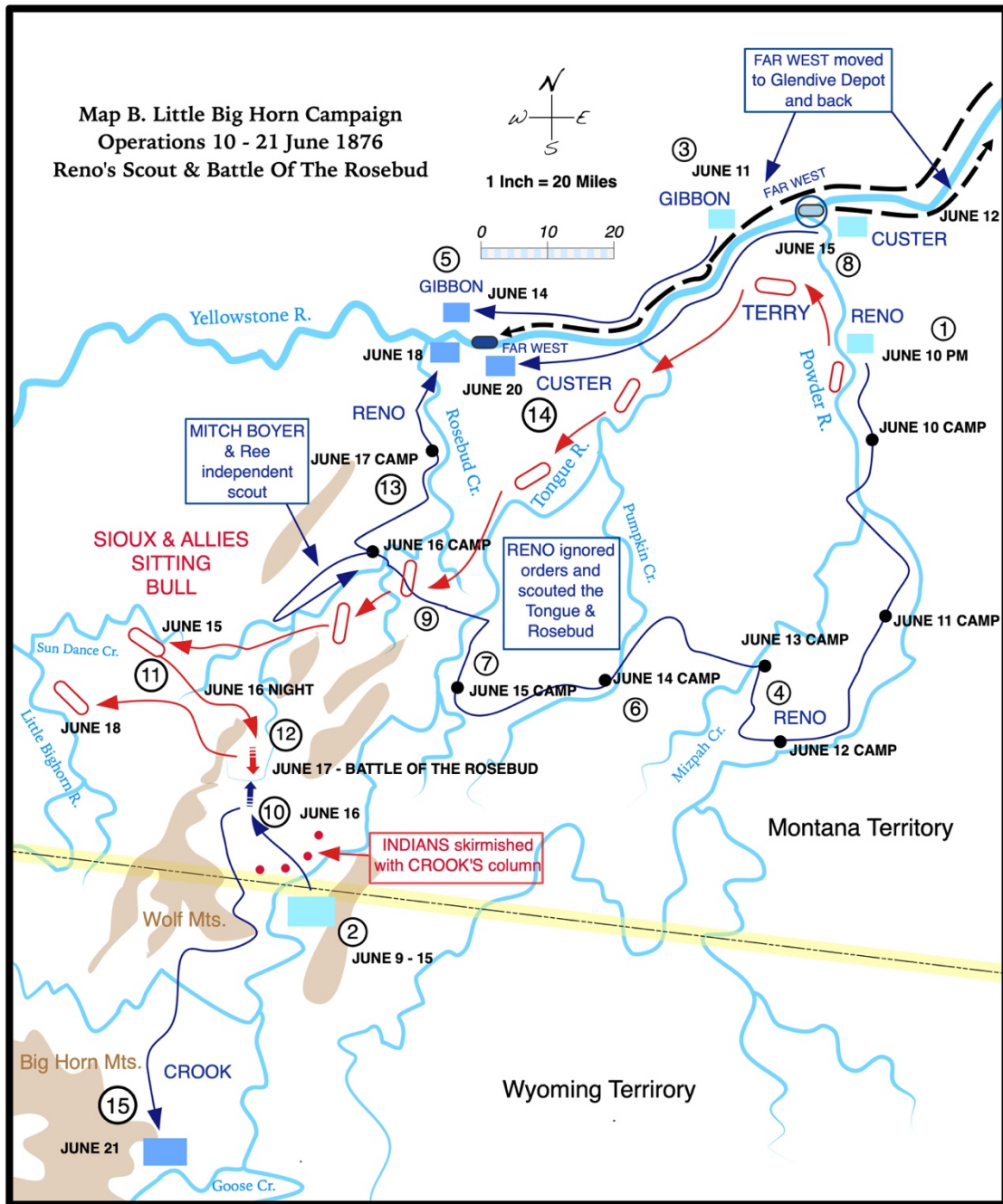
Map A: Sheridan's Combined Marches (30 March - 7 June)



Map Key:

1. 30 March: Colonel John Gibbon's column departed Fort Ellis, Montana Territory, marching east along the Yellowstone River. The column consisted of 6 companies of the 7th Infantry Regiment, plus 4 companies of the 2nd Cavalry, about 400 men plus 75 scouts.
2. 29 April: Gibbon's column reached Fort Pease on the Yellowstone and halted for supplies.
3. 3 May: A party of hostile Sioux captured Gibbon's Crow scouts' ponies after crossing the Yellowstone.
4. 14 May: Major Orlando Moore's small column of 3 6th Infantry companies proceeded to the Glendive Depot to secure a supply point, aboard the steamer *Josephine*.
5. 17 May: Brig. Gen. Alfred H. Terry's column departed Fort Abraham Lincoln, Dakota Territory, marching west toward the Powder River country. The column consisted of all 12 companies of the 7th Cavalry, under Lt. Colonel George A. Custer, plus 2 infantry companies of the 17th Infantry, plus a Gatling gun detachment, about 800 men and 100 scouts. The supply steamer *Far West* also departed up the Missouri River to the Yellowstone.
6. 16 – 23 May: Cavalry under Lieutenant James Bradley from Gibbon's column repeatedly scouted for and observed two Sioux villages, south of the Yellowstone, upon two occasions. Gibbon was unable to ford the Yellowstone in pursuit.
7. 29 May – 7 June: Brig. Gen. George Crook's column departed Fort Fetterman, Wyoming Territory, marching north northwest toward the Big Horn and Wolf Mountains along the upper Powder River. The column consisted of 10 companies of the 3rd Cavalry, 5 from the 2nd Cavalry, 2 infantry companies from the 4th Infantry, and 3 from the 3rd Infantry, some 1150 men plus 260 scouts. About 150 more men would join the column along the way. On June 7 Crook camped on the upper Tongue River near the Montana Territory border.
8. 7 June: Gibbon and Terry's columns arrived in the general area of the Powder's confluence with the Yellowstone, meeting the *Far West*. A supply point was set up.

Map B: Operations – Reno’s Scout & Battle Of The Rosebud (10 – 21 June)

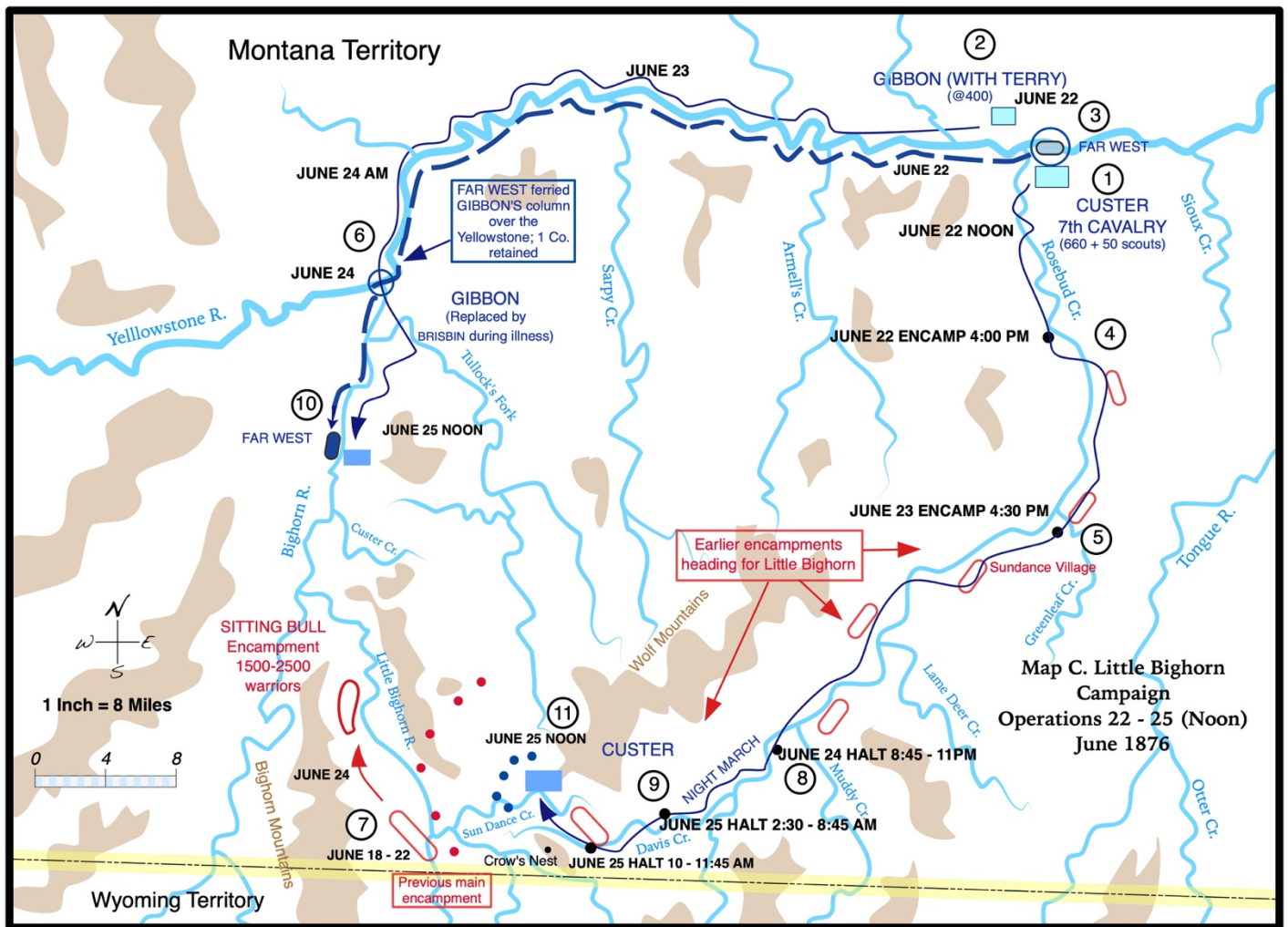


Map Key:

1. 10 June: Major Marcus A. Reno departed from the Powder River Camp with a 6-company wing of the 7th Cavalry plus the Gatling gun detachment, under orders to scout south up the Powder Valley, down Mizpah Creek, up Pumpkin Creek, and then down the Tongue River Valley to the Yellowstone.
2. 9 - 16 June: On June 9 Crook's column skirmished with a force of Indians along the Tongue, who then pulled back north. After Crook halted for several days of rain, a large scout force of Crow and Shoshoni, under Frank Grouard, joined the column. Finally Crook crossed the Tongue and advanced north, toward the headwaters of Rosebud Creek.
3. 11 June: Gibbon's column began to reverse its prior direction and march up the Yellowstone toward the confluence with the Rosebud, after Gibbon informed Terry of the presence of Indians south of the Yellowstone.
4. 13 June: Reno's wing completed scouting the Powder Valley and Mizpah Creek, and camped by the latter's banks. No Indians had been found.
5. 14 June: Gibbon's column reached the confluence of the Rosebud with the Yellowstone.
6. 14 June: Reno's wing briefly scouted Pumpkin Creek and camped near its banks. No Indians were discovered.
7. 15 June: Reno's wing reached the Tongue River and camped near its banks.
8. 15 - 20 June: Custer, commanding 7th Cavalry, marched up the Yellowstone from the Powder Depot with the regiment's other wing, including the infantry companies.
9. 16 June: Reno decided to disobey orders, and after scouting down the Tongue crossed over to the Rosebud Valley instead, discovering a prior Sioux village camp, and camped near the west bank. Scout Mitch Boyer led an independent scout 15-20 miles up the Rosebud. No Indians were discovered.
10. 16 June: Crook's column reached the area of the source of the Rosebud, 50 miles south of Reno's location and thirty miles southeast of the Indian village.

11. 16 June: Sitting Bull had determined to contest Crook's advance, and after a conference sent a strong warrior force thirty miles south southeast toward the source of the Rosebud overnight. Crazy Horse headed the largest group.
12. 17 - 18 June: Crazy Horse and Crook fought the Battle Of The Rosebud. The outcome was a standoff and both sides withdrew; Sitting Bull moved to a new camp on the upper Little Big Horn River. Crook withdrew into Wyoming Territory. The Indians gained in confidence that they could defeat a trooper force.
13. 17 – 18 June: Reno decided to return to the Yellowstone down the Rosebud. The wing camped along the stream, and the next day arrived at the confluence with the Yellowstone.
14. 20 June: Terry, Custer, and the *Far West* were at the mouth of the Rosebud, after *Far West* traveled to the Glendive Depot and back.
15. 21 June: As Terry led a conference with his subordinates on the Yellowstone, having been finally given a report by Gibbon mentioning Bradley's sighting of two villages, Crook returned to the Goose Creek area in Wyoming Territory, and began to call for reinforcement. There was no way to inform Terry of Crook's repulse easily. He played no more part in this campaign.

Map C: Operations – Custer & Gibbon’s Marches (22 – 25 June AM)



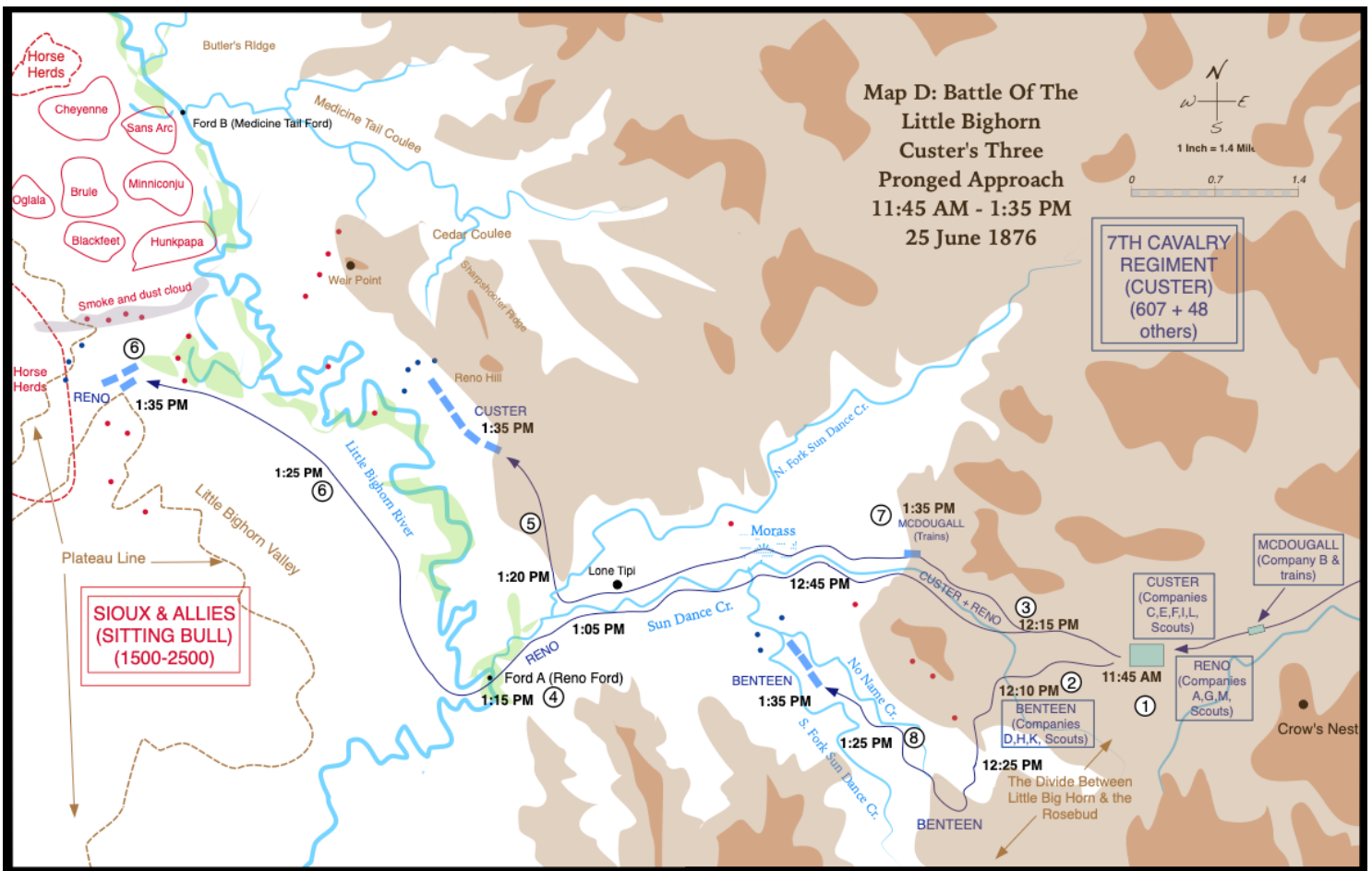
Map Key:

1. Noon 22 June: Custer departed with the 7th Cavalry from the Rosebud encampment, marching south along the Rosebud with the goal of discovering and destroying the Indian village and capturing hostile Indians. Terry’s predicted target was the Little Big Horn Valley. Custer took 660 men plus 60 scouts; infantry and the Gatling gun detachment were left behind, as Custer desired quicker moving units.

2. 22 June: With Terry, Gibbon's column marched west up the Yellowstone toward the confluence of the Bighorn River, with the goal of sealing off the lower valley of the Little Big Horn, assuming the Indians were there.
3. 22 June: The steamer *Far West* passed up the Yellowstone, with the goal of being able to ferry the Gibbon column across the river at the confluence with the Big Horn.
4. PM 22 June: Custer's column camped about 4:00 PM on the left bank of the Rosebud, having marched just 12 miles.
5. 23 June: Custer's column departed at 5:00 AM, crossed the Rosebud, and over the day discovered two previous Indian villages on the right bank. The column camped near the river at 4:30 PM after marching 33 miles, just past Greenleaf Creek.
6. AM 24 June: Gibbon's column reached the confluence of the Yellowstone with the Big Horn. After various delays the column was ferried across the river by the *Far West*. Gibbon fell ill and was temporarily replaced by Major James S. Brisbin.
7. June 24: Sitting Bull moved the still growing village 8 miles north down the Little Big Horn. A village this large needed to move periodically.
8. June 24: Custer's column departed at 5:00 AM and marched southwest further up the Rosebud. Three Indian village sites were discovered, including the one used by Sitting Bull during the year's Sundance. The column halted at 8:45 PM, having marched 27 miles, just past Muddy Creek.
9. June 24 - 25: Reacting to reports from scouts that the Indian village was not far away, Custer decided to march into the night to get to the divide between the valleys of the Rosebud and Little Big Horn before the column was discovered. The column marched until 2:30 AM, halting to temporarily camp along Davis Creek, the decision having been made to veer off the Rosebud. Custer sent scouts and 2nd Lieutenant Charles Varnum to the Crow's Next outlook in the Wolf Mountains to search for the village.
10. June 24 – AM June 25: Under Brisbin, Gibbon's column had difficulties with direction and terrain and only managed to march about 7 miles south along the Big Horn, till camping about 9 PM. The column began again early on June 25 and by noon was some 8 miles north of the mouth of the Little Big Horn. The *Far West's* progress upstream was also slow due to the characteristics of the stream.

11. June 25 AM: Custer received definitive word from Varnum's scouts that the large Indian village ahead was northwest on the left bank of the Little Big Horn. He ordered a march to a position near the Crow's Nest, with the goal of resting the command before the divide and planning an attack for June 26. The column marched at 8:45 AM and reached the intended halt at 10 AM.

Map D: Operations – Custer's 3-Pronged Approach
(11:45 AM – 1:35 PM June 25)



- Map Key:
1. 11:45 AM: Custer, suddenly receiving word of the sighting of hostile scouts, resolved to attack as soon as possible rather than waiting. The column crossed the divide and were separated into 3 battalions: 5 companies under Custer from Companies E, F, C, I,

and L (further divided into Left and Right Wings), about 215 troops; 3 companies under Major Reno from Companies A, G, and M, about 131 troops; and 3 companies under Captain Frederick Benteen from Companies D, H, and K, about 113 troops. The pack train in the rear was guarded by Company B, under Captain Thomas McDougall, and reinforced by several men from every other company, in addition to the pack train staff, totaling about 130 men. Custer's first decision was to order Benteen to first march southwest across several ridges to seek Indians and ensure none escaped up the valley of the Little Big Horn to the south, and then return as soon as possible.

2. 12:10 – 12:25 PM: Benteen left the main column, marched and scouted over one ridge, and was ordered to continue on over more of them by two dispatches from Custer. Over difficult terrain and three ridges, Benteen had no view of the village nor did he encounter any Indians. By 12:25 PM he was several miles from the main trail and the rest of the regiment, at the day grew hotter.
3. 12:15 – 1:05 PM: Custer's battalion marched west southwest down the right bank of Sundance Creek, Reno's down the left bank, toward the Little Big Horn. A single standing "lone tipi" near the creek, and its examination induced delay and speculation but offered little more information. But at 1:00 PM, after being told by interpreter Fred Gerard that some Indians just seen ahead were "running", Custer suddenly gave Reno orders to cross the river and sweep into the village. He advised that he would support Reno's advance. The two columns separated for the last time. Boston Custer rode to the rear to exchange for a new horse.
4. 1:05 PM – 1:25 PM: Reno's column found Ford A (Reno's Ford), and by 1:15 PM had crossed the river. They rode at a quick pace into the valley and by 1:25 PM it was possible to see Custer's column above the bluffs on the right side of the river, parallel to Reno's, moving quickly and throwing up dust. To the right were groves of trees along the river, and ahead was the hostile village. Already another cloud of smoke and dust had risen, obscuring it. This one was being intentionally created.
5. 1:20 PM – 1:35 PM: Custer's battalion had stopped to water horses and then turned north off Sundance Creek, riding up the bluffs rapidly. Custer was able to see Reno's battalion heading for the village. But by 1:35 PM, he had still not seen the village or its extent, though he was still passing along the bluffs.
6. 1:25 PM – 1:35 PM: Reno's battalion began to approach the south end of the village. By this time a warrior force was gathering, and the dust continued to obscure the scene.

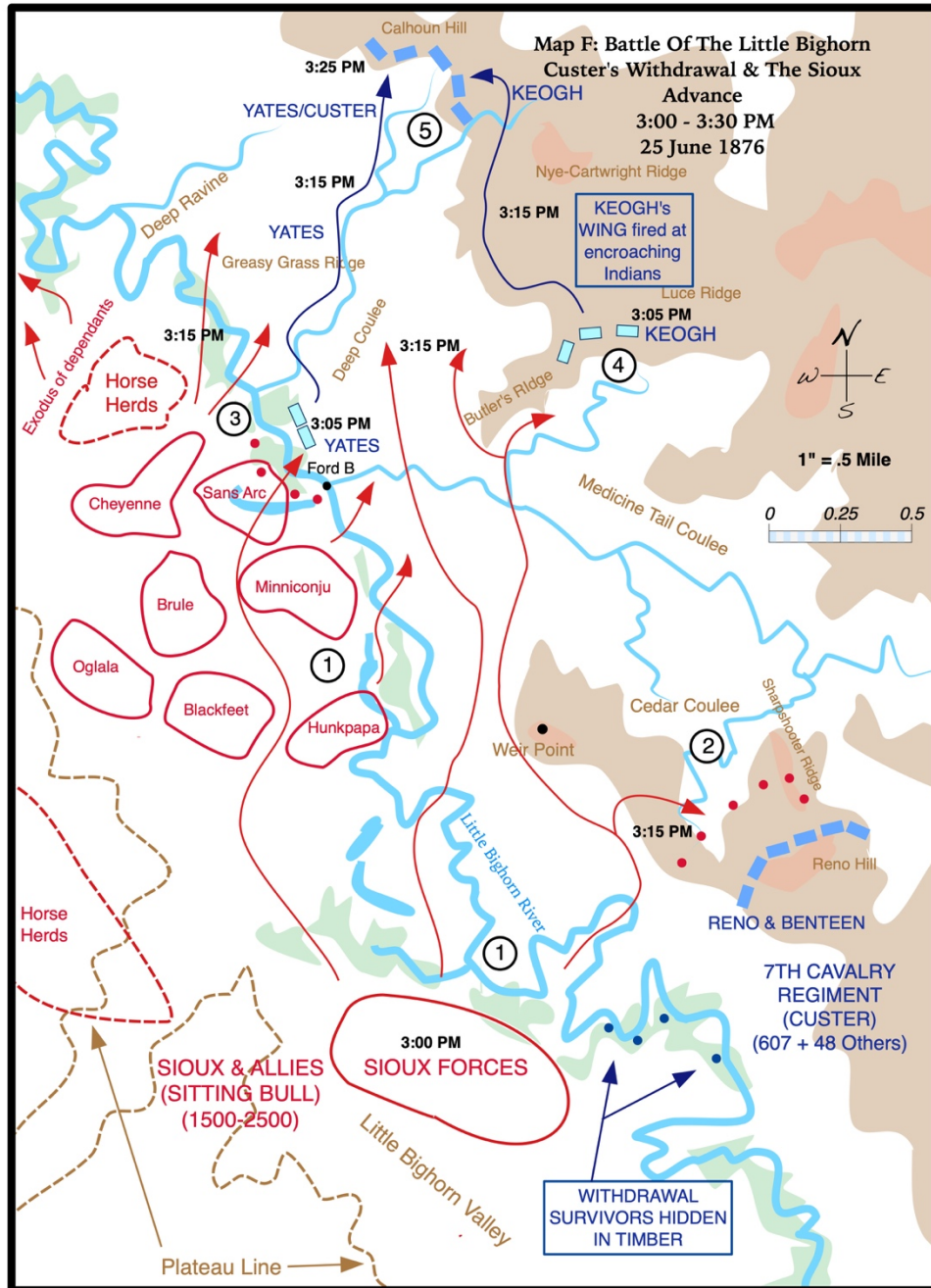
Map Key:

1. 1:40 PM – 2:00 PM: Reno's battalion formed a skirmish line, with Ree scouts on the left moving to capture Sioux ponies near the plateau bluff line, in the face of smoke and dust and growing numbers of warriors. There was Indian filtration into the woods on the right, and skirmishers of M company pushed through the woods and burned a few tipis at the edge of the village. Gunfire killed several of Gall's family. Reno also directed part of Company G into the trees, while firing from the Indians increased in front and a large group began to turn the left flank of the skirmish line. Other groups of warriors collected in the ravine to the north. Noncombatant Indians began to leave the area.
2. 2:00 PM – 2:30 PM: Reno decided to retreat to the woods along the river. By 2:15 PM a line was complete along a raised brow of ground. But the Indian pressure only built from the west and then, from the north on the right bank of the river, headed by Crazy Horse. As the position became more untenable, Reno decided to withdraw to the southeast, then east wherever the river could be crossed and high ground be reached. By 2:30 PM this order, poorly communicated, along with the Indian pressure dissolved the line into a panicked retreat. Large numbers of warriors moved around to the south and rode through the retreating troopers, increasing their flight. Casualties were heavy. Many troopers had lost their mounts in the confusion. Famed Arikara scout Bloody Knife was killed in the timber in Reno's presence.
3. 1:40 PM – 1:55 PM: Custer's battalion, moving north, passed Reno Hill. From Hill 3411 (elevation), Custer and his scouts could see Reno's battalion engaged against the Sioux some 3 miles to the west across the river, and also finally the extent of the village. About 1:45 PM Sergeant Daniel Kanipe was sent south with a message to Captain McDougall to speed the packs. Having fully abandoned the idea of supporting Reno directly, Custer instead decided to move further north through Cedar Coulee and into Medicine Tail Coulee, which led to the Little Big Horn and Ford B.
4. 1:55 PM – 2:25 PM: Custer, having finally seen the village's large size, sent another message, this time via Private Giovanni Martini (John Martin), to Benteen to take charge of the packs and speed them forward. Then the battalion rode north down Cedar Coulee and into lower Medicine Tail Coulee, away from Reno's predicament, in a reduced pace due to terrain. Most of the native scouts began to leave the column. By 2:25 PM the column was in the basin of the coulee and heading next north uphill onto Luce Ridge; Custer had made the decision to wait for Benteen and the pack reinforcement.

5. 2:25 PM – 2:50 PM: Despite this, next Custer next decided on a foray to Ford B, possibly as a feint to assist Reno, possibly to test the resistance with a view to enflaming the village from the northeast in order to capture the fleeing Indian dependents. Custer was still under the fearful impression the whole village would scatter. He split the battalion into wings: Captain George W. Yates to take Companies E and F toward the ford, and Captain Miles W. Keogh was to remain on Luce Ridge with Companies C, I, and L, in anticipation of Benteen's arrival and Yates' return. In the midst of this, Boston Custer, who was returning to the advance with his fresh horse, arrived with distressing news that he had seen Reno being driven to the timberline, but that Benteen had been met also and was on his way north.
6. 2:55 – 3:00 PM: Yates' Wing rode west down the coulee to Ford B, Custer observing from higher ground. Indians gathered at the crossing as E Company's Lt. Algernon Smith deployed a line of troopers on the right bank. Shortly, Smith was likely wounded.
7. 2:30 – 2:50 PM: Reno's routed battalion fled through trees and across the river, suffering more casualties and scrambling up the bluff, finding their way to the high point of Reno Hill. Some Indians followed, but about 2:50 PM Crazy Horse was alerted to Custer's northward movement, which had been seen by Gall, and began to divert warriors in that direction. Approximately 80 of Reno's battalion's 130 men who had entered the valley gained the hilltop, with four others trapped in the wooded area around the river.
8. 1:40 PM – 2:50 PM: Benteen's battalion marched north and reached Sundance Creek and the main trail, and also met Boston Custer, who was returning from exchanging his horse in the rear and passed on toward Custer. Benteen watered his horses at a low, swampy morass about 2:00 PM, reached the Lone Tipi 35 minutes later with sound of gunfire in the distance, and met Sgt. Kanipe, whom he directed toward the pack train. Next he met trooper Martini with his message; Martini told him Custer was on the attack but does not mention Reno's repulse.
9. 2:50 PM – 3:00 PM: Benteen continued on Custer's trail toward the firing, which had diminished after Reno's rout. Soon friendly Ree scouts were encountered, who directed the battalion toward Reno Hill. They arrived to find Reno's diminished battalion barely in place. The river valley was full of hostile Indians, and there was no sign of Custer.

10. 1:40 PM – 3:00 PM: McDougall, Company B, and the pack train marched west down Sundance Creek, arriving at the swampy morass to water their horses about 2:15 PM. By 3:00 PM, the lead elements of Company B were nearing the Lone Tipi, with the pack train behind.

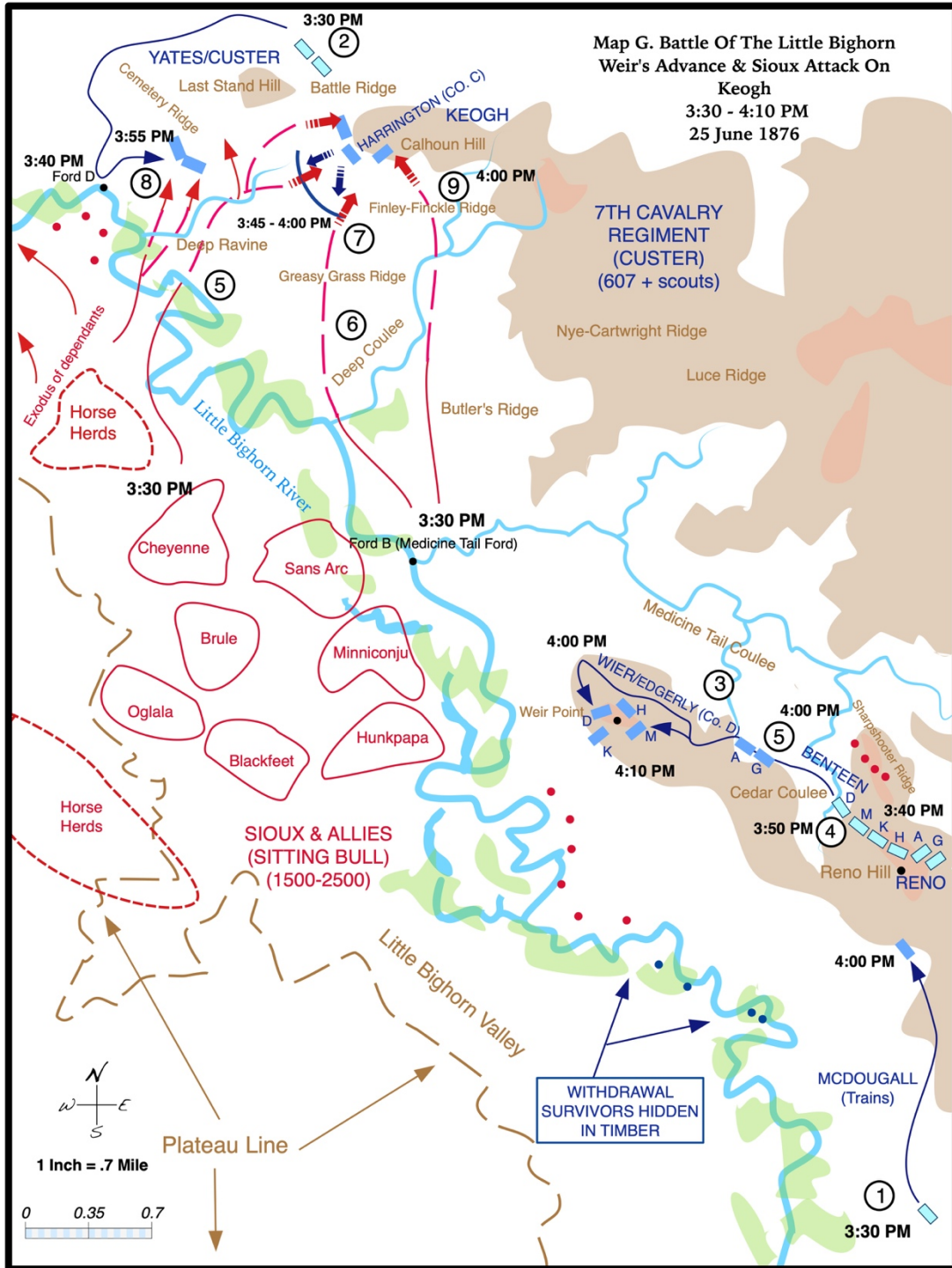
Map F – Custer’s Withdrawal & The Sioux Advance (3:00 PM – 3:30 PM)



Map Key:

1. 3:00 PM: Having defeated Reno's battalion, the Indians lost no time in galloping north, mostly down Medicine Tail Coulee, and all along the Little Big Horn south of Ford B. They did not discover the 4 survivors hiding in the woods.
2. 3:00 – 3:15 PM: The Indians left a covering and skirmishing force between Cedar Coulee and Reno Hill, and installed snipers on Sharpshooter Ridge, to occupy Reno and Benteen. The two began to organize their position and wait for McDougall and the pack train to arrive. Reno's battalion was very low on ammunition, and following Custer was not an option without more.
3. 3:05 PM – 3:15 PM: Custer ordered a withdrawal from Ford B after only a few minutes from Yates' Wing's arrival. There was little firing, but the warrior strength grew constantly. Custer and Yates withdrew up Deep Coulee, having suffered only a few casualties. They were followed, at a distance, by the first Indians to cross. Other warriors began to cross north of Ford B in strength. It was Custer's first retrograde movement, and the initiative began to shift to the Indian side.
4. 3:05 PM – 3:15 PM: Keogh saw Yates' withdrawal, and he also noticed the warrior groups heading north through Medicine Tail Coulee, which threatened his rear. From Luce Ridge northwest across toward Calhoun Hill, the wing moved to get to a place where it could meet Custer and Yates, and it fought a running gun battle with lead elements of Indians from the south.
5. 3:15 – 3:30 PM: Both Keogh and Yates were seeking high ground together, and they found that by 3:25 PM on Calhoun Hill. Custer felt the need to move north again, seeking the next Little Big Horn ford downstream by which to cut off what he still perceived to be an exodus, and capture or kill the inhabitants. He needed Keogh to once again remain the reserve, to connect with the oncoming Benteen and pack train. So in a quick conference Custer divided his battalion once again.

Map G: Weir's Advance & Sioux Attack On Keogh (3:30 PM – 4:10 PM)



Map Key:

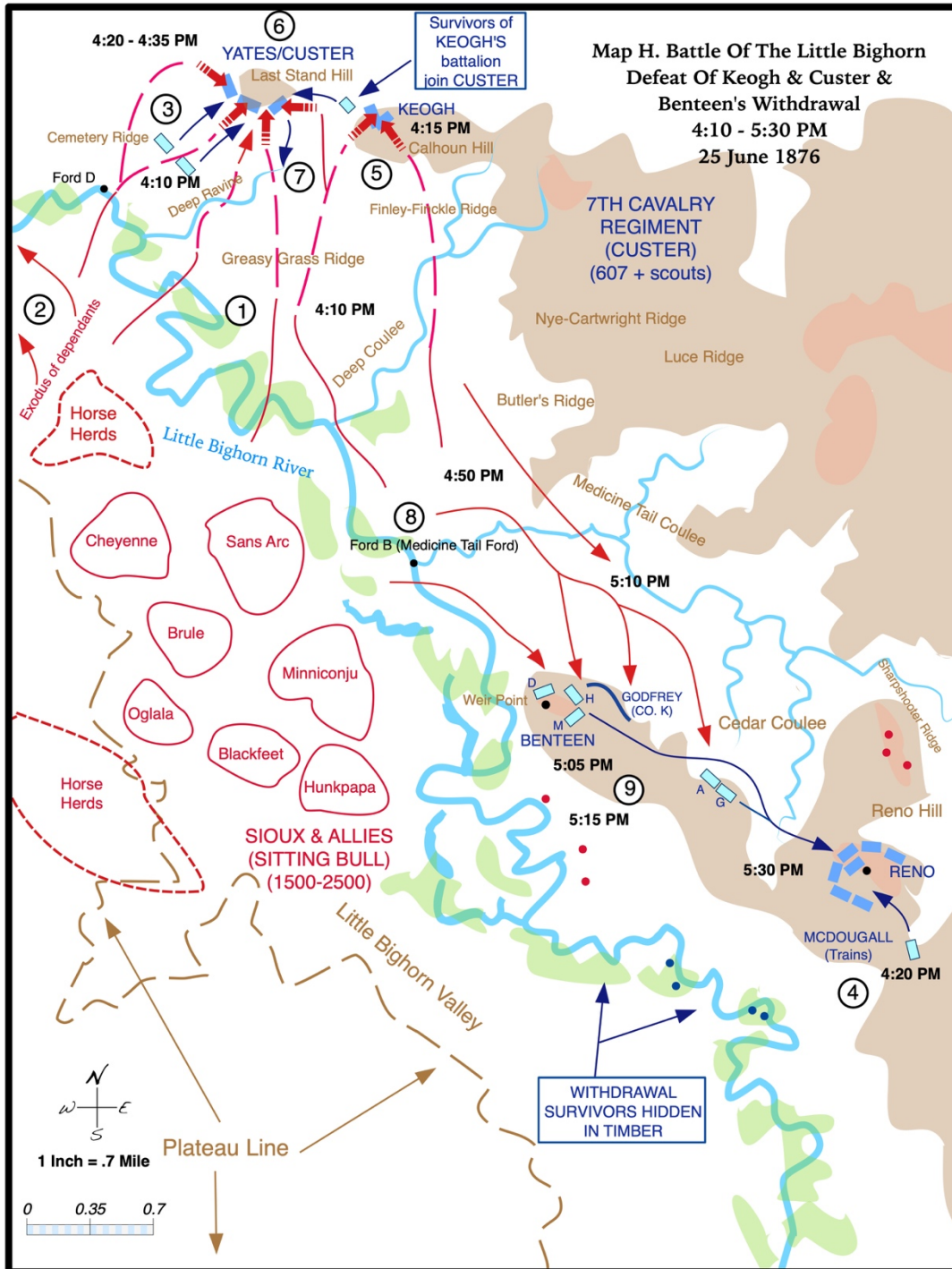
1. 3:30 PM – 4:00 PM: McDougall, Company B, and the pack train neared the Little Big Horn, then swung north onto the heights. By 4:00 PM they were almost to Reno Hill, oddly finding few troopers ahead on site.
2. 3:30 PM – 3:40 PM: Custer, with Yates' wing, rode northeast and then southwest, and ahead of them lay Ford D. Along the way they were seen, tracked, and when they arrived at the ford a substantial number of warriors had gathered. There was general skirmishing, but few casualties. Custer, at this late moment, decided to withdraw uphill away from the river, and find a suitable place to wait for Keogh and Benteen, still expected.
3. 3:30 PM – 4:00 PM: For awhile scattered firing had been coming from the far north and heard upon Reno Hill. All wondered about Custer's whereabouts. A 3:30 PM conference revealed that Captain Thomas Weir, commanding Benteen's Company D, wanted to ride north to investigate. Reno did not agree, nor did Benteen, but Weir moved off anyway. At 3:40 PM he was followed by 2nd Lieutenant Winfield Ederly with the whole Company D. They descended Cedar Coulee and then rode up northwest past Weir Point. Seeing them, Weir, standing on Weir Point, waved them back about 4:00 PM.
4. 3:50 PM – 4:10 PM: Benteen, seeing the pack train close by, decided to follow Weir in his quest with Companies H, K, and M. Riding northwest, by 4:10 PM they too had reached Weir Point. Benteen planted a guidon, hopefully to be seen by Custer ahead. It was his first view of the great village. The firing to the north, having diminished, picked up again.
5. 4:00 PM: With the pack train arriving, Reno decided to join Benteen in motion with Companies A and G, even attempting to carry his wounded. This did not go well, and in the end they would probably only get part of the way to Weir Point.
6. 3:30 – 3:45 PM: Hundreds of Sioux, having ridden or run north to combat Custer, continued to move up Deep Coulee and, to the north, Deep Ravine. Many were able to dismount to be less visible, and several areas were developed for storage of horses in the folds of the ravines. Thus the hostiles were able to slowly move closer toward Calhoun Hill, from the east and west as well as the south. This also would impact Custer near Ford D.

7. 3:45 – 4:00 PM: Indians were advancing close enough to Calhoun Hill to loose arrows upon Keogh's wing. Keogh sent Company C, under 2nd Lieutenant Henry Harrington, on a counter-charge to the south-southwest that advanced over a third of a mile, dismounted, set a skirmish line, and poured carbine fire into the advancing warriors, causing them to scatter.

8. 3:45 – 3:55 PM: Having been at Ford D for but a few minutes, Custer ordered Yates to withdraw his wing to Cemetery Ridge, where he now expected Keogh to receive Benteen and then move forward. However, to the east just over a mile away, Keogh was already under heavy attack, and warriors could be seen moving up the draws to the east. And Benteen was nowhere to be seen. The pressure began to increase against Cemetery Ridge as warriors infiltrated up Deep Ravine.

9. 4:00 – 4:10 PM: Despite their temporary setback, fresh warrior groups under Crazy Horse were pouring up Deep Coulee and beginning to flank Calhoun Hill from the southeast. The Company C skirmish line collapsed and headed northeast to a little rise in front of Calhoun Hill, Finley-Finkle Ridge. Most of these troopers were isolated and killed. Even worse, Crazy Horse was on the scene again and led a general attack from two directions. Warriors under Gall struck from the east. By 4:10 PM fighting continued on Calhoun Hill, but Keogh was being overwhelmed.

Map H: Defeat Of Keogh & Custer; Benteen's Withdrawal (4:10 – 5:30 PM)



Map Key:

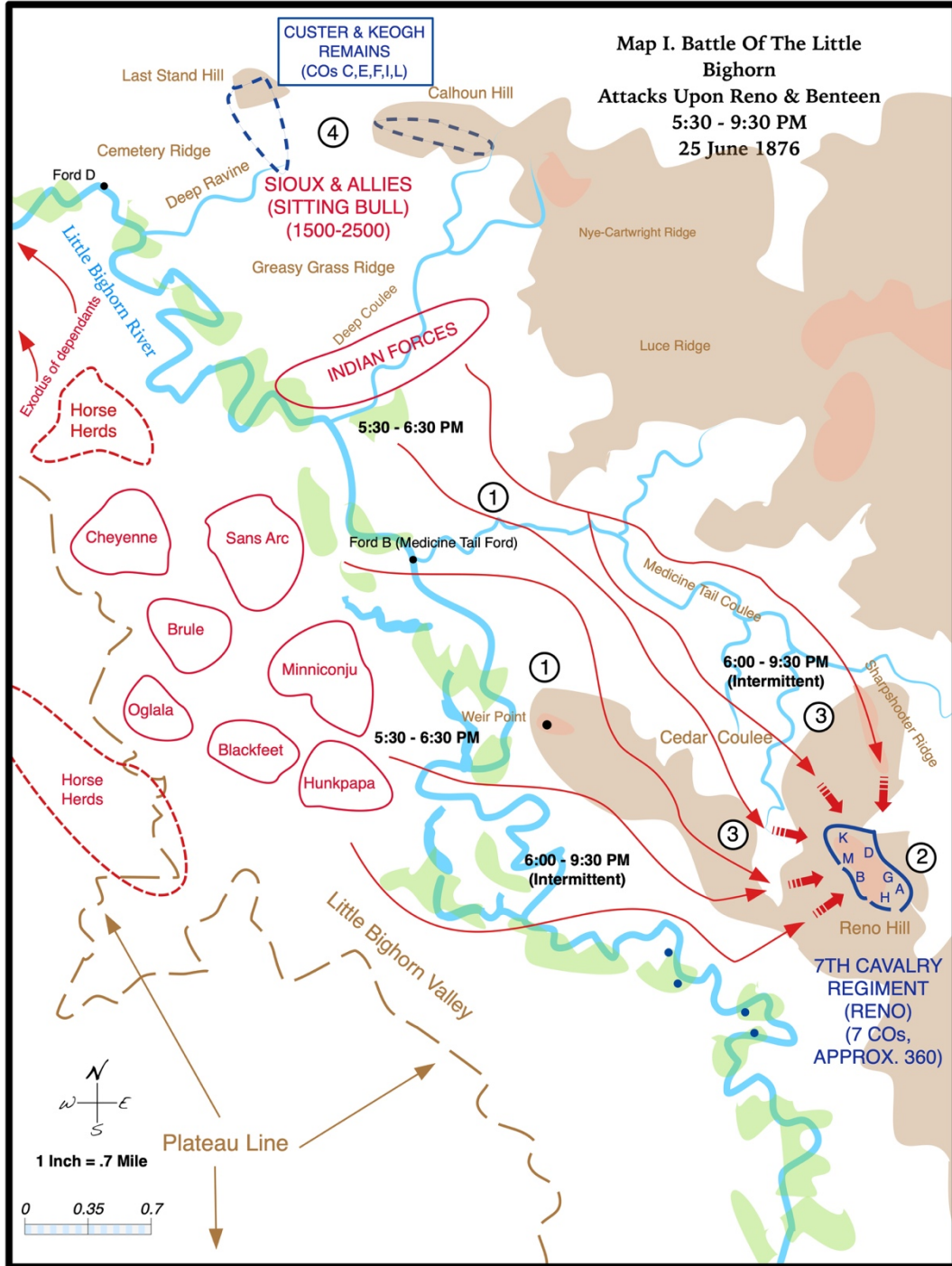
1. 4:10 PM – 4:35 PM: Indians, still mostly unmounted, continued to surge up Deep Coulee, Greasy Grass Ridge, and Deep Ravine. There were so many that some could not get into the fighting. All this directly threatened and would overwhelm both the Keogh and Yates battalions.
2. 4:10 PM – 5:30 PM: The exodus of native non-combatants intensified to the northwest, away from the fighting.
3. 4:10 PM – 4:25 PM: Warrior groups worked their way around Yates' battalion's flanks on Cemetery Ridge, pouring across Ford D. Yates' own Company E held the Indians at bay long enough for Custer and Company F to withdraw off Cemetery Ridge and up to Last Stand Hill. The cost was that E Company was overwhelmed, and all gathered horses were stampeded away, the last chance for escape as it were.
4. 4:20 PM: The tail end of the pack train, with needed ammunition, joined the defense of Reno Hill at last, following McDougall's B Company. At that point, Benteen and Reno had left and were either at or still on the way to Weir Point. The firing to the north had reached a climax.
5. 4:15 PM – 4:25 PM: As Keogh's wing was overwhelmed, some troopers tried to either get away or work across the spur of Battle Ridge to Last Stand Hill, but few made it, mostly from Company C. By 4:25 PM, the battle was over here and Companies I, L, and C were eliminated.
6. 4:25 PM – 4:40 PM: Horses having been shot for cover, the survivors of Companies E, F, and a few of Keogh's troopers, perhaps some 40-45 men, were overwhelmed in final Indian charges on Last Stand Hill. A group of teenage "suicide boys" also participated. All who stayed on the hill with Custer were killed. By 4:40 PM the firing was over, and noncombatants near the scene participated in ritual mutilation of the corpses, once all had been dispatched. The total loss to the battalion was 211 men. The only survivors were Privates James Watson and Peter Thompson of Company C, whose horses had given out early on and made their way back to Benteen on Weir Point, plus Private Gustav Korn of Company I, whose horse had stormed into the village during the advance upon Ford B, plus those detailed to the pack train. Watson, Thompson, and Korn would all make their way to Reno's command.

7. 4:35 - 4:40 PM: A small group of Company E. men were not killed on Last Stand Hill; they managed a breakout to the top of Deep Ravine, but were killed nevertheless.

8. 4:50 – 5:10 PM: Almost as soon as the battle on Last Stand Hill ended, large warrior groups reversed direction and began to stream south over Greasy Grass Ridge, through Deep Coulee, and up Medicine Tail Coulee. It was plain to Benteen that the firing had stopped from off to the north, and soon it would be apparent that the hundreds of approaching Indians could overwhelm the companies around Weir Point. Benteen rode half a mile south, found Reno, and secured permission to withdraw.

9. 5:15 PM – 5:30 PM: Weir's Company D led the withdrawal from Weir Point, which was closely followed by hundreds of warriors. Lieutenant Edward Godfrey assigned a skirmish line with members of Company K, allowing the withdrawal to be orderly and holding back the Indians. By 5:30 PM the unification of almost all regimental survivors was complete at Reno Hill, except for the battalion survivors in the woods plus Custer's three.

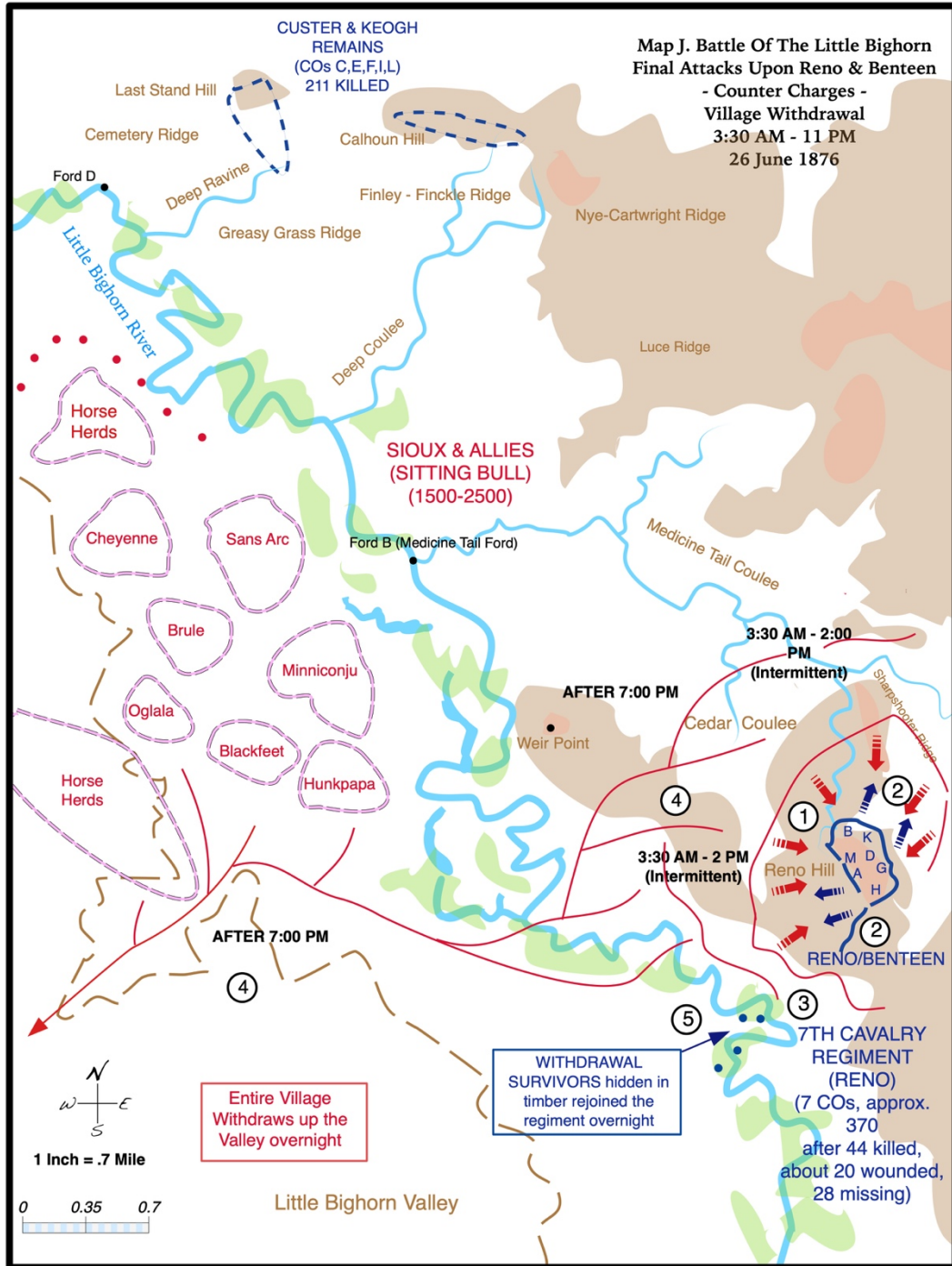
Map I: Attacks Upon Reno & Benteen (5:30 – 9:30 PM)



Map Key:

1. 5:30 PM – 6:30 PM: Warrior forces, released for action to the south, continued to march or ride up Medicine Tail Coulee, and from the west over the Little Big Horn and the bluffs toward Reno Hill.
2. 5:30 – 6:00 PM: Benteen and Reno organized an oblong defense line for the Companies A, B, D, G, H, K, and M, with about 360 troopers present and a medical area set up in the middle of Reno Hill. Benteen exercised general command over the northeast side, and Reno the southwest, regardless of battalion assignments. Throughout this time the Indian fire was increasing.
3. 6:30 PM – 9:00 PM: From Sharpshooter Ridge on the north to the bluffs lining the right bank of the Little Big Horn, the warrior groups fell into a rhythm of periods of rifle firing followed by mounted charges that surged toward the blue lines, before receding, trying the cavalry positions. Slowly casualties among the troopers increased. The Indians seemed to understand that they had time to be cautious and not unnecessarily expend their lives, while preventing an escape that would have had to carry wounded troopers. There were far more warriors available than could actually fight. When full darkness fell by 9:00 PM, the targets on both sides became more elusive and hard to see, and a miserable night began for Reno and Benteen's men. As it quieted, Reno ordered the companies to build minor breastwork barriers from various components and dead horses. They had lost 12 men killed and 21 wounded on the hill. Benteen, whose relationship with Reno had deteriorated, did not force his companies to comply, believing they needed rest.
4. Overnight June 25 – 26: The remaining noncombatants, those who had not departed, finished the job of stripping the bodies of Keogh and Yates' battalions and mutilating them in many cases, while numbers of warriors donned blue uniforms of the slain and returned to the village. In a short time, all the Indian dead had been removed from the scene, and both celebrations and mourning songs echoed in the village.

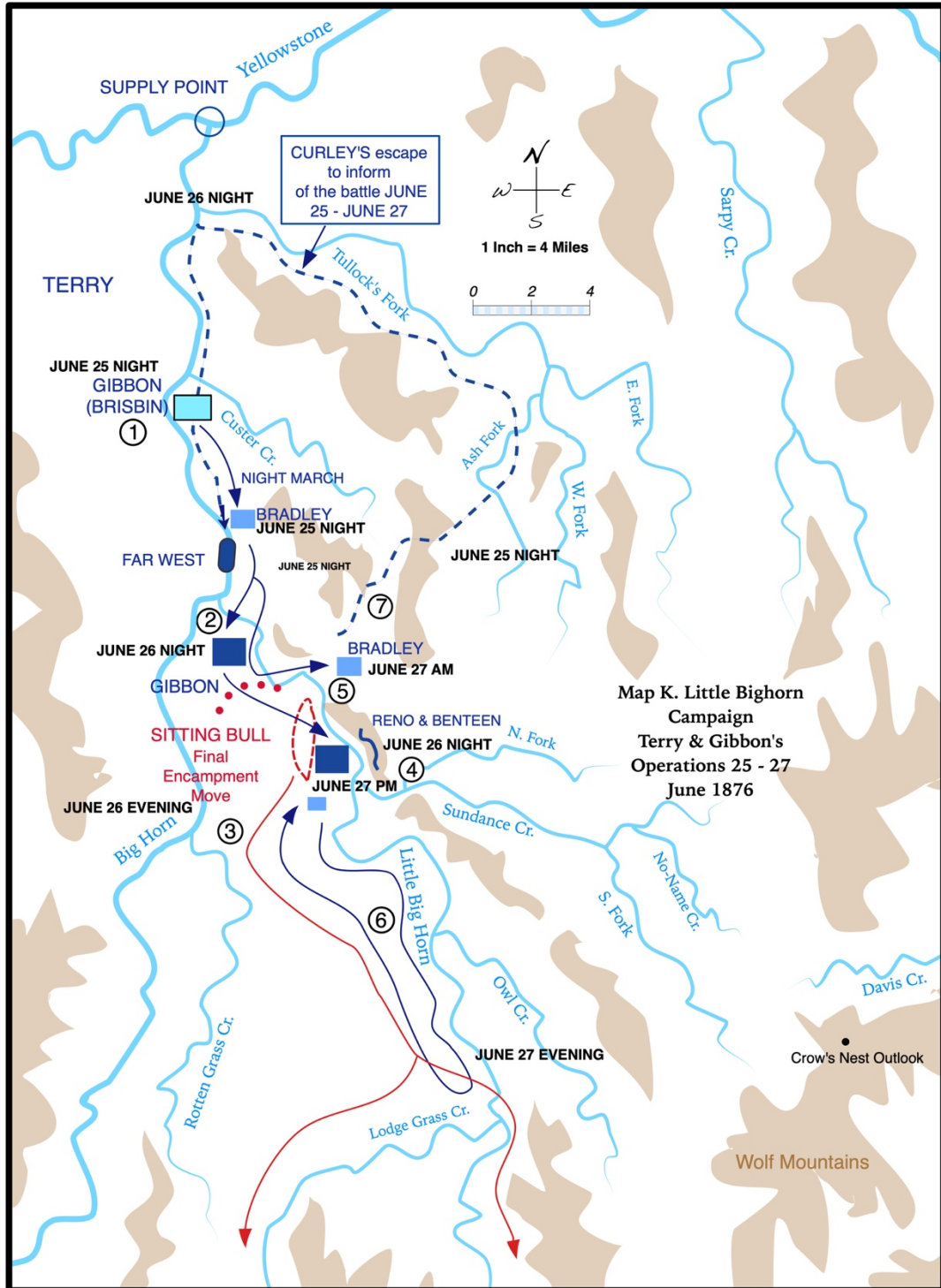
Map J: Final Attacks Upon Reno & Benteen, Counter Charges, and Village Withdrawal (3:30 AM – 11:00 PM 26 June)



Map Key:

1. 3:30 AM – 8:30 AM: Over the night, even more Indians had crowded closer to the Reno Hill position. Until first light, there was no firing, but shortly that changed. There soon was a steady firefight from both sides, but the warriors seemed to be content to inch forward, under cover, and simply fire but not charge significantly. They had to get fairly close to have much accuracy with their multi-shot carbines. Nevertheless, their number increased into the morning.
2. 8:30 AM – 10:30 AM: Soon the warriors were too close to an adjoining position held by Co. H, which had not entrenched significantly, and Benteen feared his side would be rushed by hundreds of hostiles. He found it necessary to briefly charge southwest down slope with as many men who would join him. This scattered the nearest warriors for a time. A second larger foray, also organized by Benteen, worked the same way about 10:00 AM on the northeast side, this one led personally by Reno. By 10:30 AM, the firing slackened and some Indians began to leave the front.
3. 10:30 AM – 2:00 PM: As the Indian fire diminished, an initial attempt to get water from the river by Lt. Godfrey's K company failed, as the area was still too dangerous, but in early afternoon Benteen was able to organize several more successful attempts. Water was given first to the wounded, and then to all.
4. 2:00 PM – 9:00 PM: About 2:00 PM there was another loud but brief flurry of firing, and then the warriors seemed to melt away, leaving only a token force of skirmishers here and there. There was no more firing at all after 4:00 PM. After 5:00 PM there rose great clouds of smoke across the Little Big Horn, where ground fires were being lit by the Indians to screen movement and prevent pursuit. As evening wore on, at Sitting Bull's direction the village disassembled itself rapidly and headed in a great column up the draw of an intermittent stream to the plateau above the river, where they camped before descending again and moving off toward the Big Horn Mountains. A strong screening force was left at the north end of the village, but it too would depart.
5. 9:00 – 11:00 PM: After darkness fell and the river was safer, the four survivors of the withdrawal on 25 June were able to make their way across and to the top of the bluffs, where they rejoined the command.

Map K: Little Big Horn Campaign - Operations By Terry And Gibbon (25 – 27 June 1876)



Map K. Little Bighorn Campaign
Terry & Gibbon's Operations 25 - 27 June 1876

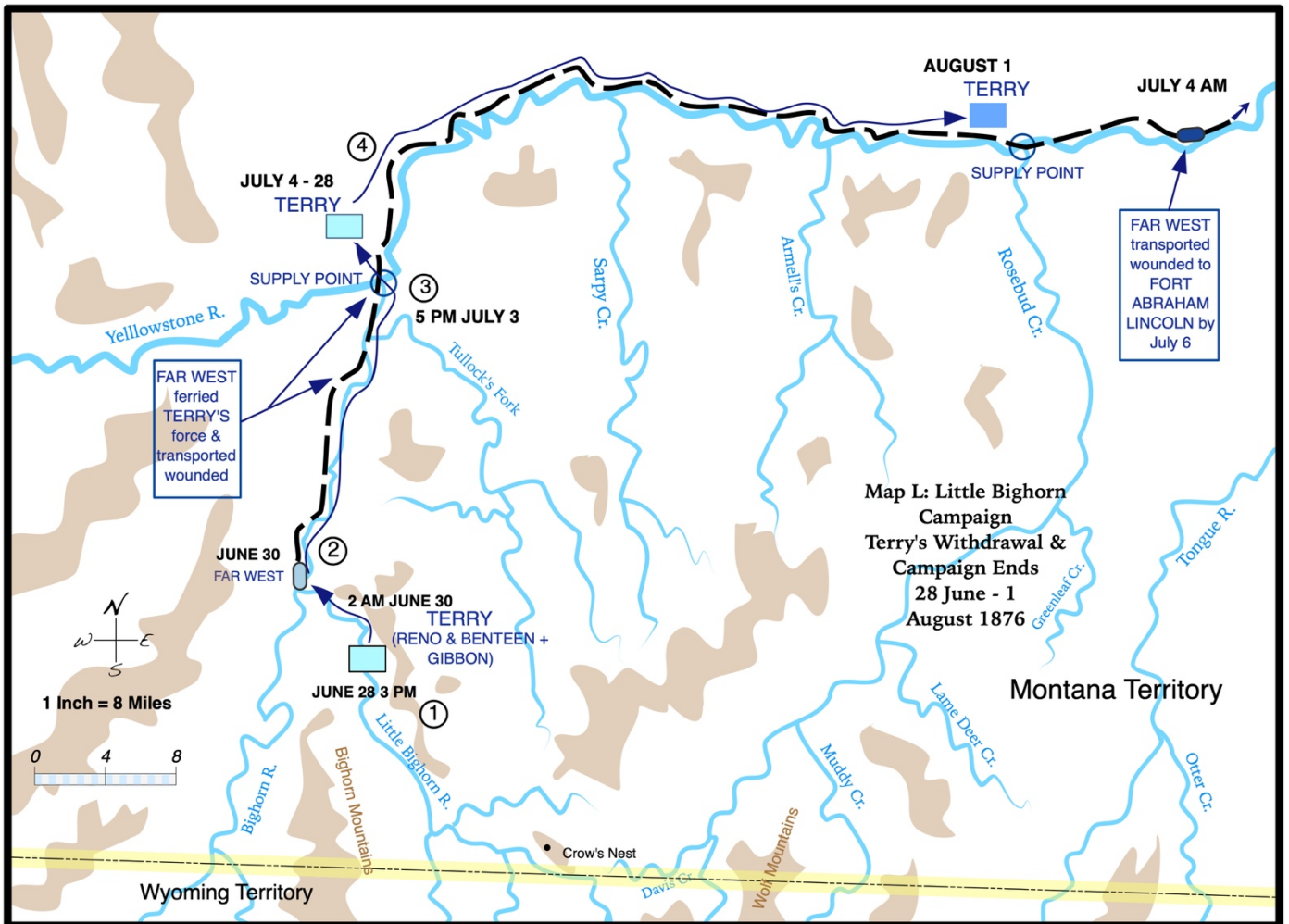
Map Key:

1. 9:00 – 11:00 PM 25 June: After a terrible, confused march up the Big Horn River, Gibbon's infantry (under Lieutenant Brisbin) camped in a cold rain near Custer Creek; Gibbon ordered his cavalry under Lieutenant Bradley to push on ahead. Before midnight, Bradley had reached a point just a few miles below the Little Big Horn's mouth. Gibbon, recovering, would resume command shortly. The *Far West* proceeded carefully up the treacherous Big Horn.
2. 26 June: Bradley marched toward the Little Big Horn, and in midmorning found 3 of Custer's battalion's Crow scouts, who had escaped after witnessing the beginning of Custer's battle and now told their tale. Reaching the rivers' confluence, in the evening Bradley's scouts could see far ahead the beginning of the village movement being witnessed by Benteen and Reno's men. The assembled rear guard of the Indians, including even some warriors dressed in blue captured clothing, contested their advance, at which Bradley stopped, uncertain of their identity. Gibbon's infantry caught up and the column camped.
3. Over the evening and through the night, the rear guard of Sitting Bull's force departed quietly, ending the Native presence in the valley of the Little Big Horn, and following the village. Meanwhile, the *Far West* arrived at the mouth of the Little Big Horn.
4. Night 26 June: Reno decided to move the battalions' position off Reno Hill, away from the dead combatants and horses with their repulsive odors, to a position along the bluffs fronting the right bank of the Little Big Horn. Before midnight, a new very basic trench line had been dug and the exhausted troops were bedded down. Reno was not convinced the Indians were gone.
5. 27 June: Bradley's cavalry took the lead up the valley, and scouted along both sides of the river. The rear guard of hostiles had vanished. The main infantry force moved behind into the deserted village, where there was evidence of combat, a few Indian corpses, and also trooper body parts. Bradley returned from the heights having counted over 190 bodies; in a short time contact was made with Benteen and Reno, who had been apprehensive of moving north that morning and were shocked at the story being told.
6. Evening 27 June: Bradley sent a 2nd Cavalry company south up the Little Big Horn to discover the native trail, but after marching 12 miles out and 12 back, it was found to

be dividing at the confluence of Lodge Grass Creek with the Little Big Horn, the new trails following the stream courses. The expedition returned without loss. This was the end of any pursuit of Sitting Bull during the campaign.

7. 4 PM 25 June –27 June: Before the battles of Calhoun and Last Stand Hills, perhaps the last to leave Custer's sight was the Crow scout Curley, who made his way northeast out of the battle area by nightfall. On June 26 he proceeded north with the idea of contacting Terry and Gibbon, but when he gained the juncture of Tullock's Fork with the Big Horn, the column had moved south. Following patiently, he found the steamer *Far West* at the river junction and was able to tell his story also on June 27.

Map L: Terry's Withdrawal & Campaign's End (28 June - 1 August 1876)



Map Key:

1. 3:00 PM June 28 – 2:00 AM June 30: By this time, hasty burials of varying quality were completed of most of the 260 dead troopers from all battlefield areas, dug by the survivors. Due to the difficulties in trying to transport the 52 wounded with blankets, only a few miles were made up the valley of the Little Big Horn by dusk. Hastily, litters had to be constructed for those who could not walk; this process was not finished until June 29. In the afternoon the column proceeded, but the way was torturous for the injured, and the process continued until 2 AM June 30, with arrival at the *Far West*, which was waiting with decks cleared for them.
2. June 30 – July 2: The *Far West* descended the Big Horn, which was twisted and narrow, and arrived at the supply point at the juncture with the wider Yellowstone. The survivors of the 7th Cavalry painfully made their way along the hard march north along the river, converging on July 1 to be ferried across to the north bank. By this time, 38 wounded remained not in condition to be released, and final preparations for departure were made for transport.
3. 5:00 PM July 3 – 11:00 PM July 6: The *Far West* began to negotiate the Yellowstone, passing the Rosebud supply point overnight and then the one on the Powder, dropping off a casualty who had died. The 710-mile downstream journey to Bismarck, Dakota Territory would end before midnight July 5 – 6, after averaging a very quick 12 plus knots in 54 hours.
4. 4 July – 1 August: Terry, Gibbon, and the 7th Cavalry marched leisurely along the north bank of the Yellowstone, back to the Rosebud supply point. Here they would reunite with comrades left behind, rest, acquire supplies and reinforcements, and get ready for their next campaign.