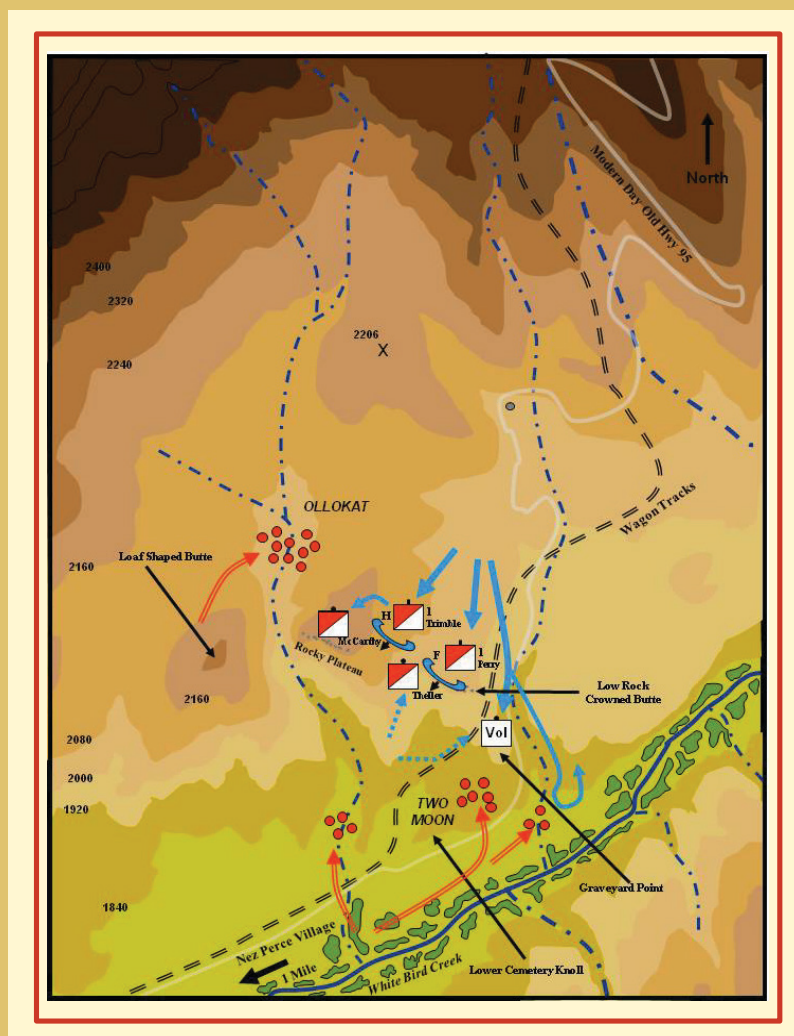


# Staff Ride Handbook and Atlas

## Battle of White Bird Canyon

### 17 June 1877



Charles D. Collins, Jr.



Combat Studies Institute Press  
US Army Combined Arms Center  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas



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## Foreword

White Bird Canyon is the first of CSI's 12 staff ride handbooks to combine the traditional handbook format with the format of CSI's *Atlas of the Sioux Wars* (2006) and *The Cheyenne Wars Atlas* (2010). This new volume details the tragic road to war between the US Army and the Nez Perce Indians, and analyzes the Army's disastrous first engagement in the war. This staff ride focuses primarily on the tactical level of war. However, it also provides significant room for discussion of Army values, cultural awareness concerns, operational issues, and training requirements, making this staff ride a superb tool for developing Army leaders from platoon to division level.

*White Bird Canyon* is also CSI's fifth work pertaining to the US Army's post-Civil War Indian campaign experience. Together with CSI's previous atlases, *The Ute Campaign of 1879* (1993), and *In Search of an Elusive Enemy: The Victorio Campaign* (2004), CSI continues to offer historically-based analyses of discrete events during the latter part of the 19th Century that offer relevant insights to current and future Army leaders.

Like their antecedents 135 years ago, today's Soldiers are immersed in a complex battlefield environment facing potential and actual enemies whose cultures, military capabilities, and methods of warfare differ greatly from their own. Our Army also faces resource constraints similar to those under which the Army suffered in the decades following 1865. A study of the Indian Wars offers an opportunity to compare, contrast, and discover the threads of continuity that link the US Army of the 19th Century with that of the 21st, expanding upon pertinent discussions of the Range of Military Operations and how the Army seeks to influence human behavior by the application of Strategic Landpower. Military professionals, for whom this handbook was written, will find a great deal to consider, analyze, and discuss when studying this first battle of the Nez Perce War of 1877.

*CSI—The Past is Prologue!*

Colonel Thomas E. Hanson  
Director  
Combat Studies Institute



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I wish to acknowledge the many people who made the publication of this work possible and thank them for their efforts. First, I express my gratitude to the National Park Service (NPS) personnel, who maintain and support the historical sites at the Nez Perce National Historical Park, Fort Lapwai, and the White Bird Canyon Battlefield. Second, I would like to thank the many historians who have researched and published so many great works on this exciting period in our country's history. Without their efforts, my modest endeavor would not have been possible. The handbook's bibliography shows the many publications that I used in my research. However, I would be remiss if I did not note some of the outstanding works that I especially depended upon: Jerome Greene's *Nez Perce Summer 1877*, John McDermott's *Forlorn Hope*, Robert Utley's *Frontier Regulars*, Elliott West's *The Last Indian War*, and Cheryl Wilfon's *Following the Nez Perce Trail*. Third, I would also like to thank the Combat Studies Institute leadership and my colleagues at the institute. I first walked the battlefield in 2003 with Dr. William Glenn Robertson, a former CSI director, who mentored me for many years in the study of the Indian Wars. Also on the battlefield with me was my good friend Dr. Curtis King whose insights and contributions are always highly valued. I visited the battlefield again in 2009 with Dr. Rick Herrera and Lieutenant Colonel (Ret) Scott Farquhar. Without doubt, their contributions were instrumental in building this staff ride. Special thanks to Lieutenant Colonel (Ret) Kevin Kennedy for helping me to incorporate current doctrine into the staff ride analysis questions. I must also thank Colonel Roderick Cox (Ret), late CSI Director, for allocating the time to finish the project, which is somewhat a divergence from the institute's more recent writings on contemporary operations. I also want to thank Lieutenant Colonel Matthew Dale, Staff Ride Team Chief, for gently nudging me along to get it done and many valuable comments on the initial draft.

Last, on a personal note, I offer my heartfelt thanks to my family for always supporting me through my many staff rides and research trips not only to the Nez Perce battlefields but to many other historical sites across our nation. Such great opportunities and experiences are hard for me to think of as "work."

Charles D. Collins, Jr.  
Historian  
Combat Studies Institute





## Introduction

A staff ride to a battlefield is an excellent tool for the historical education of members of the Armed Forces. Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, has been conducting staff rides since the 1900s. Captain Arthur L. Wagner was an instructor at Fort Leavenworth in the 1890s, and he believed an officer's education had become too far removed from the reality of war. He pondered how to get the experience of combat to officers who had only experienced peace. His answer was the staff ride, a program in which students studied a major battle and then went to the actual field to complete the study. Wagner did not live to see staff rides added to the curriculum at Fort Leavenworth but in 1906, the first staff ride was added to the Fort Leavenworth "experience." Major Eben Swift led 12 students on a study of the Atlanta Campaign of 1864. On and off, staff rides have been a part of the curriculum for over the last 100 years.

Staff rides are not just limited to schoolhouse education. For years, unit commanders have conducted numerous staff rides to varied battlefields as part of their officers' and Soldiers' professional development. In support of these field commanders, the Combat Studies Institute at Fort Leavenworth published staff ride guides to assist personnel planning and conducting staff rides worldwide.

In 2002, General John Abrams, US Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) commanding general, recognized the impact and importance of staff rides and revamped the Staff Ride Team. TRADOC assigned personnel full time to Fort Leavenworth to facilitate staff rides for the Army. As part of this initiative, the Staff Ride Team is also dedicated to publishing staff ride handbooks in support of the Army.

The *Staff Ride Handbook and Atlas for the Battle of White Bird Canyon, 17 June 1877* provides a systematic approach to the analysis of this opening battle of the Nez Perce War. A staff ride consists of three phases including the Preliminary Study Phase, the Field Study Phase, and the Integration Phase. Accordingly this staff ride handbook is divided into three parts. Part I provides instructions on how to conduct the "Preliminary Study Phase." This phase is conducted before the visit to the battlefield and prepares the students for the visit. Part II covers the "Field Study Phase." This phase is conducted on the battlefield and enables students to understand historical events through analysis of the actual terrain. Part III provides instruction on the "Integration Phase." No staff ride is complete without an integration phase because it is critical for the students to understand what happened, why it happened, and most importantly, what can be learned from the study of the battle or campaign.

Supporting appendixes provide additional information to assist in the conduct of the staff ride. Appendix A provides detailed information on the suggested routes for conducting a staff ride. Appendix B shows a suggested list of key historical participants in the battle and provides information for obtaining additional information on these personalities. Finally, Appendix C provides some key administrative information on the conduct of the staff ride. An annotated bibliography suggests sources for further study.



## Staff Ride Handbook and Atlas

### Battle of White Bird Canyon, 17 June 1877

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## I. Preliminary Study



## The Preliminary Study Phase

### IA. Definition and Guidance

**Definition.** The first phase of the staff ride is the preliminary study. The preliminary study phase is the research and learning conducted by the staff ride participants to prepare themselves for the visit to the site of the selected campaign or battle. The preliminary study phase is critical to the success of the follow-on field study phase and therefore equally critical to the success of the staff ride as a whole. If the students in the staff ride do not participate in the study process, then the exercise becomes more a historical battlefield tour than a staff ride.

**Guidance.** The optimum preliminary study phase combines individual study, lecture, and group discussion. The Combat Studies Institute recommends participants be assigned specific leaders or portions of the campaign to research and then brief the group, either in a classroom setting or during the field study phase. The mini-experts on particular subtopics will virtually guarantee lively discussion and divergent viewpoints among participants. Once created in the preliminary study phase, this involvement carries over into the field study phase with decidedly positive results.\* A recommended list of specific leaders and subjects is provided in Appendix B.

The recommended reading for the preliminary study is the book *Nez Perce Summer 1877* by Jerome A. Greene. The US National Park Service has made the book available to the public on the internet at [http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online\\_books/biho/greene/contents.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/biho/greene/contents.htm). At the minimum, the staff ride participants will only need to read chapters 1 and 2. The participations should read the material and be prepared to discuss the events from the perspective of their assigned character.

If the unit schedule allows time, they should include lecture and group discussion as part of the preliminary study phase. The unit should plan and execute these professional development classes to best meet their own training and education requirements. As an example, the Chief Joseph role-player could summarize the Nez Perce people and the events leading up to the conflict. The participant assigned to study General Oliver Otis Howard might then familiarize the group with the government and Army actions associated with the road to war. The Captain David Perry and the Nez Perce warrior Yellow Wolf role-players might then briefly summarize the Battle of White Bird Canyon. Other role-players would then provide their overviews and analysis of their assigned topics on the battlefield.

\* William Glenn Robertson, *The Staff Ride* (Washington, DC: US Army Center of Military History, 1987), 11.

## **IB. The Battle of White Bird Canyon**

**17 June 1877**

The Battle of White Bird Canyon was the first fight of the Nez Perce War. The war traces its origins back to years of injustice heaped upon the Nez Perce people and a series of cultural misunderstandings between the Nez Perce people and the white settlers who moved into the region.\* The clash of cultures sparked into open conflict in June of 1877 when three young Nez Perce Warriors killed several white settlers in revenge for many past offenses inflicted upon their people. General Oliver Howard, commanding the Department of the Columbia, immediately sent Captain David Perry with two companies of US cavalry, to the Grangeville, Idaho area to protect settlers.

Captain Perry arrived in Grangeville on 16 June and discovered that the trouble with the Nez Perce had escalated. A larger group of Nez Perce Warriors had killed more white settlers and raped several women. The Nez Perce feared the Army's reprisal and chose to flee to White Bird Canyon. Captain Perry, a veteran of the Civil War and experienced Indian fighter, believed the Nez Perce were attempting to cross over the Salmon River into the mountains. He decided to pursue the Indians before they could escape. Perry's command arrived at the head of the canyon on 17 June with his Soldiers and horses nearly exhausted as they had ridden over 70 miles and been in the saddle for two nights and two days.

The Nez Perce were aware of the Army's approach and some of the tribal elders hoped to negotiate with the Soldiers. However, they positioned their Warriors to fight and protect the village if needed. The Army column descended into the canyon and moved toward the village concealed behind a ridge. Unfortunately, Perry's advance guard opened fire on the Indian peace party. Then the Warriors positioned to block and flank the Army's movement toward the village opened fire on the Army advance guard. Captain Perry hesitated on what course of action to take and then reluctantly decided to form a defense line along a ridge. The Nez Perce maneuvered against the Army flanks and quickly occupied a position that allowed them to pour deadly fire into the Army's left flank. On that flank, one of Perry's companies and citizen Volunteers broke under the heavy enfilade fire and decided to retreat. Perry's whole line then quickly disintegrated and joined in the retreat. Perry and other leaders tried to bring some order to the retreat but the majority of the troops simply ran away. The Army's losses totaled 34 killed and the Nez Perce had only three wounded. The battle was a disaster for the Army and only the first in many other embarrassing defeats. It would take another three months and a 1,500-mile pursuit before the Army eventually forced the Nez Perce to surrender.

\* The field discussion in Stand 1 provides a more detailed study on the Nez Perce tribe and their road to war.

## **IC. Warriors and Soldiers At The Battle of White Bird Canyon**

### **The Nez Perce**

**The Nez Perce Warriors.** There were five individual bands within the Non-Treaty confederation. If you included every able-bodied male from 16 to 60 years old, they would have fielded approximately 200 fighters. According to Chief White Bird, about 42 of these were veteran Warriors, having achieved that status either in the Yakima War (1855-58) or in raids against rival tribes. The Nez Perce encampment at White Bird contained only three of the five bands. They were: White Bird's Lamtamas (50 Warriors), Joseph and Ollokot's Wallowas (55 Warriors), and Toohoolhoolzote's Pikunans (30 Warriors). White Bird claimed that 20 of his 50 Warriors were veteran fighters.\* The number of veteran Warriors in the other two bands is not known.

The individual bands tended to fight under their own leaders, so there was no true battlefield commander. The Nez Perce also had no fixed tactical organization. The Warriors fought as individuals, not as part of an organized combat unit. They were a horse-based society and preferred to fight mounted. Nevertheless, they were skilled at fighting on foot and adept at using cover and concealment. It was not uncommon for the Nez Perce to dig rifle pits and erect stone fieldworks. However, these were not used at White Bird Canyon where the Nez Perce attacked instead of defending. Whether, mounted or on foot, they commonly fought in loose groups of four or five Warriors. Unlike the Sioux and Cheyenne who tended to avoid close fights with the US Army (notable exceptions being the Battles of the Rosebud and Little Bighorn), the Nez Perce were contemptuous of Army firepower and consistently showed a willingness to close with the Soldiers. At White Bird Canyon, several of the young Warriors taunted the troops with red blankets to attract fire and demonstrate to the other Warriors the soldier's poor marksmanship.

The lack of unity of command and discipline should have been a major handicap for the Nez Perce. These weaknesses should have hampered their ability to shape battle plans and mass forces against enemy weaknesses. Nonetheless, they did both at White Bird Canyon with a simple but effective battle plan and the massing of forces against the Perry's flanks, precipitating a retreat. They also massed forces against isolated detachments, defeating Sergeant Michael McCarthy's rear guard and annihilating Lieutenant Edward Theller's detachment. Another cultural trait of the Nez Perce Warriors was their unwillingness to take prisoners. The 1st Cavalry callously abandoned 34 Soldiers on the battlefield. Without doubt many of these were wounded and helpless. Nevertheless, the Nez Perce choose to take no prisoners. They did, however, not engage in the ritualistic mutilation of the dead common among the Sioux and Cheyenne.

**The Nez Perce Weapons.** At White Bird, the Nez Perce fought with an assortment of weapons. These ranged from modern repeaters, effective breach loaders like the Sharps .50-cal. rifle, to older muzzle-loading rifles, muskets, and pistols. Many of the Warriors also fought with traditional bows and arrows. Modern repeating weapons, like the .44-cal. Henry and Winchester rifles, lacked the heavy hitting power and range of the Army's single shot carbines but the Nez Perce could overwhelm the Army's single shot weapons at close range with a heavy volume of fire. Additionally, Nez Perce proved to be better shots than the Army. Post war analysis indicated that they were twice as likely to hit their target when compared to the Army. Ironically, the Nez Perce gained 63 Springfield carbines, Colt Revolvers, and civilian firearms from the defeated 1st Cavalry at White Bird Canyon. All things considered, the Nez Perce were competent and a deadly foe for the US Army. They were excellent horsemen, skilled marksmen, and aggressive fighters.

\* The Army officers of 1878 (and modern historians) most times referred to the Nez Perce leaders and Warriors by their English translation names. The best example being Heinmot Tooyalakekt is better known as Chief Joseph. However, Ollokot (Frog) and Toohoolhoolzote (Antelope or Sound) are consistently addressed in contemporary writings and by historians with their Nez Perce names.



## **The US Army**

**Soldiers.** The US Army deployed almost 2,000 Soldiers for the three-month campaign against the Nez Perce. These included elements of the 1st, 2d, and 7th Cavalry Regiments, the 5th, 7th, and 21st Infantry Regiments and the 4th Artillery Regiment. The Army enjoyed a great numerical advantage over the Nez Perce and supplemented that advantage further with the employment of Gatling guns and artillery. However, the combined arms columns of cavalry, infantry, and artillery that characterized the long pursuit and several of the battles seen later in the campaign were not present at the Battle of White Bird Canyon. Instead, only two small companies of the 1st Cavalry Regiment fought at the first battle.

The 1st Cavalry was part Brigadier General Oliver Otis Howard's Department of the Columbia. The department encompassed the states of Oregon and California and the territories of Washington, Idaho, and Alaska. The size of the department dictated a dispersion of troops throughout the area. The Army units of the department had significantly less combat experience than those stationed on the Great Plains fighting against the Sioux and Cheyenne. In general, Howard's troops were settled into a relatively comfortable garrison lifestyle and not accustomed to hard campaigning. The 1st Cavalry proved to be a very poor unit. It performed badly at White Bird Canyon and compiled a mediocre record throughout the Nez Perce War. The average field strength of the 1st Cavalry's companies was about 50 Soldiers. The two companies at White Bird Canyon were close to the average strength. Company F, commanded by Captain David Perry, had 49 enlisted men, and Company H, commanded by Captain Joel Trimble had 54. Both companies were short one of the two lieutenants authorized for each company. Each of the companies also lacked many of the authorized sergeants. All of the officers and many of the non-commissioned officers had combat experience in the American Civil War and on the frontier but the units lacked the relevant field experience needed to fight with a clever and determined enemy such as the Nez Perce.

The enlisted men of the two companies typified the Soldiers of the Frontier Army. They came from all walks of life and a significant number were foreign born. Most were from the northern states, with only a few southerners in each company. They were older than today's volunteer Soldiers, with many in their 30's and 40s. The Army focused most of their training on parade ground drill and they lacked many of the basic skills of riding and shooting. They were reasonably outfitted for campaigning. Each man had the issue black campaign hat, regulation dark blue uniform coat and sky blue trousers, and the standard Army boots. Individual equipment also included a canteen, carbine sling, haversack, saddlebags, and a shelter half tent. Many modified the equipment with a more comfortable civilian style hat and a non-standard cartridge belt in lieu of the issued cartridge box.

**Cavalry Tactics and Weapons.** The tactical manuals available to the 1st Cavalry emphasized that the true value of the cavalry was its ability to charge and overrun an enemy force. However, the cavalry charge was rarely conducted on the frontier. Captain Perry did consider charging at White Bird Canyon. Nonetheless, he instead opted to form a dismounted skirmish line. The dismounted skirmish line was the most common tactical formation for the US Cavalry. The skirmish line was used in both the attack and the defense. The small cavalry companies dismounted to fight with every fourth man holding the horses. They fought in a dispersed skirmish line with about three to five yards between each man. The goal was to mass firepower to create a "kill zone" to the front of the company. The tactic worked well in the Civil War but proved to be less effective against the nonlinear fighting methods of the Nez Perce. The Nez Perce fought in small groups. Warriors avoided the kill zone in front of the skirmish line and instead maneuvered against the flanks of the linear army formations.

Theoretically, the firepower available to the US Cavalry should have been formidable. Each soldier had the Model 1873 Springfield .45-caliber single-shot carbine and a Model 1873 Colt .45 revolver. The Model 1873 Springfield was a trapdoor-breech-loading carbine. It could accurately fire a .45/.50 caliber bullet out to 300 yards. A trained company, fighting from a dismounted skirmish line, should have been able to fire over 250 rounds per minute into the kill zone in front of the company. However, the 1st Cavalry (and the Army as a whole) was not trained well. Budget constraints limited the Soldiers to as few as 20 rounds per year for target practice. The limited marksmanship training was usually conducted at short-range and did not approximate the conditions found on the battlefield. Post-Indian War studies showed that most troops lacked the skill to hit targets beyond 50 yards. In theory, the Army should have been able to dominate the battlefield with disciplined and deadly firepower. However, at White Bird Canyon the cavalry skirmish lines produced a lot of smoke and noise but few enemy casualties.



## II. The Field Study Phase



## Field Study Phase

### IIA. Definition and Guidance

**Definition.** The second phase of the staff ride is the field study and it is this phase that most readily distinguishes the staff ride from other forms of systematic historical study. The field study phase is the visit to the site of the selected campaign or battle and the discussion of key events on the terrain where those actions took place. An integral part of the discussion is how the terrain effected the actions and decisions in the campaign or battle. The purpose of the field study phase is to gain an understanding of selected historical events, to analyze the significance of those events, and to derive relevant lessons for professional development.

**Guidance.** The Battle of White Bird Canyon, the first battle of the Nez Perce War, was fought in less than four hours. Essentially, the main part of the battle not including the disorderly retreat of the US forces took less than two hours. The one-day field study is designed to examine not just the tactical fight but also the events leading up to the fight and some key events after the battle. Groups should carefully examine this guide and plan their visit, adjusting the routes and stands as required to meet their needs. The field study requires driving from the Lewiston, ID area to the battlefield, walking the battlefield, and then finishing the staff ride in the Cottonwood, ID vicinity. In short, it requires a full 8 hour day to execute the field study for the staff ride in its entirety.

The route traveled includes a section of gravel road and a partially improved road over White Bird Hill. Additionally, the gradients over the mountain and into the canyon are extreme. Combat Studies Institute recommends the use of large passenger vans or four-wheel drive vehicles. Alternate routes for busses could be arranged by the unit.

### IIB. Methodology\*

**Methodology.** The Field Phase of the Staff Ride consists of moving to various locations along the campaign route and the battlefield, and conducting “stands” at these locations. A stand is a location at which the students discuss events of the campaign and battle. The acronym ODA (Orientation, Discussion, and Analysis) provides a good framework for the conduct of the stand.

**Orientation.** The purpose of the orientation is to ensure that the students understand where they are on the ground and what the ground looked like at the time of the battle/campaign. The orientation does not have to follow a particular format. Here are some items that can be covered in an orientation. You do not have to cover all of these items in every orientation.

- A. Your last location. If you can see back to the last stand, point it out. If you cannot see it, use a map. Also, before you leave for the next stand, point it out to the students on the ground or map as needed.
- B. Your current location on the map. Point out cardinal directions if needed.
- C. The key terrain features in the area both natural and man-made. For example, hills, streams, forests and other vegetation, buildings, and roads.
- D. Differences in the terrain between the time of the battle and today (i.e. describe how the ground looked at the time of the battle).
- E. Weather (climate) at the time of the battle.
- F. Try to set up the description part of the stand and help the students get comfortable to join the discussion by pointing out the locations of units on the ground.

**Discussion.** The purpose of the discussion is to make sure the students know the events that occurred at the stand location. The most common content in the discussion is a chronological narrative of the main events. These may include:

- A. Unit movements (who moved where and when).
- B. Combat actions (who attacked, defended, advanced, and retreated).
- C. Leader movements, actions, decisions. In addition, you may describe meetings between leaders, councils of

\* This section is heavily based upon a working paper written by Dr. Curtis S. King in September 2008. Dr. King wrote the paper as a guide to teach instructors on how to conduct staff rides using the Combat Studies Institute method.

war, and the issuing (and receipt) of both written and verbal orders.

D. Individual soldier actions (e.g. acts of heroism or cowardice).

Although instructor lecture is sometimes necessary, it is generally better to try to get the students to provide the description information. Role playing encourages student involvement. After orienting the student, simply ask him or her to describe their character's actions (and the character's unit's actions) at this location. You can also ask the student to explain the character's thought process and what information the character had when making the decision. As students are describing the action, the instructor needs to listen, make corrections, and fill in blank spots as needed.

**Analysis:** The purpose of the analysis is to develop critical thinking, get the students to look at the 'how' and 'why' of the events at the stand, and gain insights into timeless aspects of warfare. Although there are many aspects of analysis that can be explored, these aspects often fit into two categories: historical evaluations and modern relevancies. Note that you do not have to have both types of analysis at every stand.

A. Historical. These are examinations of leaders, their units, and systems in their own historical context. Some examples are shown below:

- a. Evaluation of leaders and units. Did they make reasonable decisions and show good leadership? Avoid the blame game. Instead, ask "why" a leader made a certain decision and not just focus on whether it was a good or bad decision. Similarly, students can evaluate unit performances and the "whys."
- b. Examination of systems. This might include a discussion of how did Captain Perry exercise command and control at White Bird Canyon, and why did the system work or not work? Other examples of systems include; weapons, and training.

B. Modern Relevancies. These are insights that are of value to the students in their military profession. The simple open-ended question: "What insights (aspects) from this action do you find that still apply today?" This question is good, but do not overuse it. Other examples are shown below:

- a. You can use current doctrine to draw insights. For example: "What does the Army leadership manual tell us about where a commander should locate on the battlefield and what factors go into this decision? Are some of these factors applicable to Army leaders at White Bird Canyon?"
- b. Usually the best method for analysis is to pose questions to the students. These questions need to be more than just factual, yes and no, type questions. Here are some ideas:
  - 1) 'Why' questions are always useful: "Why did F Company fail to hold battle ridge?"
  - 2) Somewhat related to a 'why' question, you can ask students to name the most important reason for some event or action: "What is the main reason for the Army's failure at the Battle of White Bird Canyon?"
  - 3) Strive for questions that allow for multiple points of view: "Who fired the first shot of the Nez Perce War – the Nez Perce in the revenge raids or the Army at White Bird Canyon?"
- c. Encourage debate and disagreement among the students. Push the staff ride participants to justify their answers and make sure their arguments are logical. Be ready to play "Devil's Advocate," especially if the students are constantly agreeing with each other. For example, if all of the students blame Captain Perry for the defeat at White Bird Canyon, make a case against General Howard for failing to set the conditions for success. Remember that your job is not to sell some historical agenda or your particular view on debatable issues—you want to facilitate critical thinking. Listen to the student responses and be prepared to ask follow-up questions and probe deeper aspects of the original question.

## **II.C. Suggested Routes**

The suggested route for the staff ride includes 14 stands and requires considerable driving time (See Figure 1). The full itinerary, with discussions at each stand, takes approximately eight to 10 hours. Be aware that not all of the stands cited in the itinerary are designated by signs or monuments. For this reason, directions are as specific as possible in terms of mileages, road names, and landmarks. Even so, roads and landmarks may change over time and mileage numbers are no more accurate than the odometer of the vehicle. Each of the stands has detailed instructions

on the route to follow and strip maps are provided in Appendix A. Nevertheless, a set of detailed road maps will help prevent unintended detours that will adversely affect timelines and detract from the staff ride.

The first group of stands (1-3) focuses on the events leading up to the battle and why the US Army and Nez Perce fought on 17 June 1877 at White Bird Canyon. The next group of stands (4-6) deal with the Army's approach march to the battlefield and the Nez Perce preparations for battle. The main part of the field study is focused on the tactical fight at White Bird Canyon. These stands (7-11) are primarily conducted along a walking trail at the battlefield. Two other stands (12-13) along the retreat route require a short drive. A final stop (14) on the return route to Lewiston looks briefly at another set of skirmishes in early July and then provides an overview of the remainder of the Nez Perce War.

As stated earlier, the majority of the field study is focused on the events and actions on the battlefield at White Bird Canyon. Despite the small size of the forces in the battle, about 100 US Soldiers fighting against slightly less than 100 Nez Perce Warriors, the battlefield itself is very large. The field study requires a significant amount of walking. Physically, the area where the majority of the fighting took place encompasses an area comparable in size to where Longstreet's Confederate Corps battled against several Union Corps for control of the Round Tops, Devils Den, the Wheat Field, and the Peach Orchard at Gettysburg (See Figure 2). The recommended walking trail is just short of a two mile round trip. The appropriate individual stands have detailed instructions on where to conduct the discussions along the walk trail. The trail climbs 460 feet in elevation and passes over uneven terrain. Along the route there are significant cliffs, Poison Ivy, and the danger of rattlesnakes. There are no facilities on the battlefield and summer time temperatures can reach over 100 degrees. Field study participants should bring plenty of water and take appropriate care in accordance with the environment.

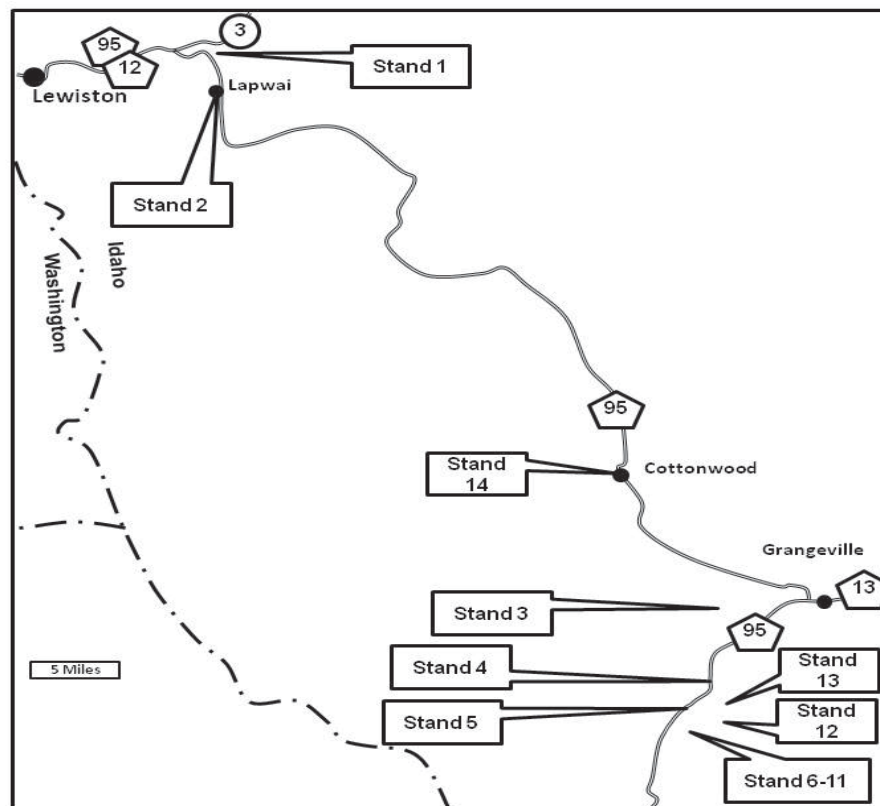


Figure 1: Route Map for the White Bird Canyon Staff Ride.



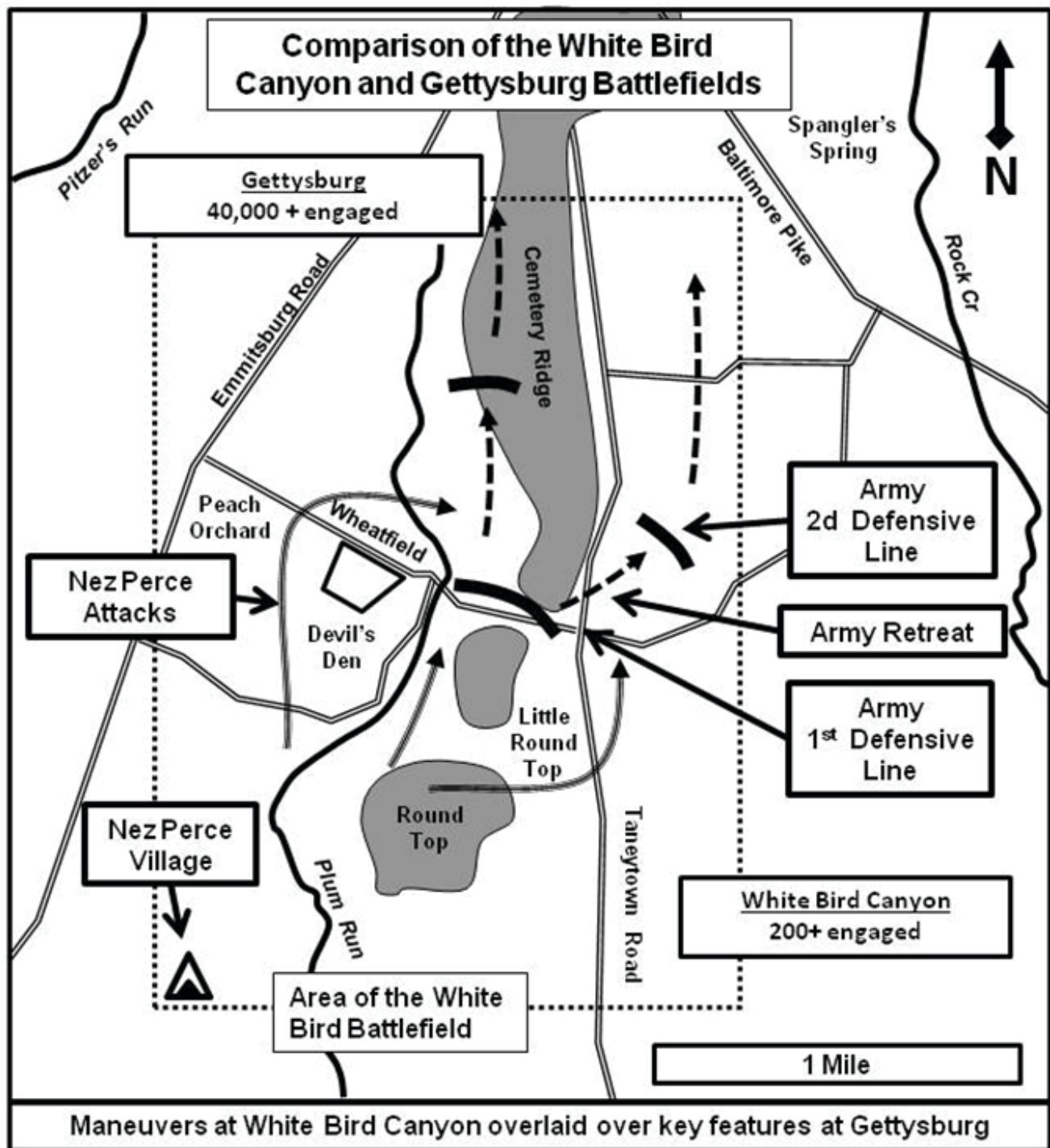


Figure 2: Comparison of the White Bird Canyon and Gettysburg Battlefields.

### IID. Visuals and Map Key

The primary visual aids for the White Bird Canyon Staff Ride are the maps provided for each stand. These maps, referred to as visuals in the staff ride, enhance the learning experience of the students by adding another media to the instruction in the Field Phase. Each stand has a map especially for that stand's discussion. The instructor can provide copies of this guide's maps to the participants as paper handouts or enlarge the maps and mount them on poster board. CSI has found that a standard format for large-sized visuals is approximately 20x30 inches. The maps are very useful in orienting the participants to the ground and in the conduct of the discussion. However, be careful to not overuse the maps. Whenever possible use the terrain visible from the stand in the discussion. The Map Key (See Figure 3) provides many of the standard symbols used on the maps.

## Map Key




















	Approximate location of field discussion
	Creek or River
	Ranch or Homestead
	Road
	Wagon Track
	Town
	Approximately 4 to 6 Nez Perce Warriors
	Intermittent Water Course
	Army Advance
	Army Retreat
	Nez Perce Movement
	Nez Perce Village Site
	Modern-day road (not present at the time of the battle)
	Contour Line and Height in Feet
	Brush
	Army Cavalry Battalion (2 companies at White Bird Canyon)
	Army Cavalry Company
	Volunteer Detachment
	Approximately 4 to 6 dismounted Army soldiers

Figure 3: Map Key.



### **III. The Stands**

The stand discussions are the core the Staff Ride field phase. At the stand the instructor and students discuss events of the campaign and battle. The follow-on pages are the stands for the Battle of White Bird Canyon Staff Ride. Each stand is set up in a standard format to assist the instructor in the conduct of the field study phase. On the left (the even page #) is the staff ride map. On the right (the odd page #) is the stand narrative.

The stand narrative is standardized to support the instructor's presentation. The methodology discussion at the beginning of this section provides additional ideas on facilitating the orientation, discussion, and analysis.

**Vignette:** At the top of the page is a primary source vignette. This vignette provides an overview of that stand's discussion. Vignettes are usually human interest stories that may be used to illustrate the face of battle, show the humor or the pathos of warfare, or elicit some other reaction from the students. The vignette can be interspersed at various locations within the stand as appropriate (or sometimes at the end for a more powerful effect). Vignettes usually come from a primary account (letters, diaries, memoirs, etc.). Some of the stands have additional vignettes within the narrative or at the close of the stand. There is no requirement to use all the vignettes provided. The instructor can pick and choose those that seem most appropriate for supporting the direction of the group's discussion.

**Directions:** The directions provide instructions for driving or walking to the recommended discussion location or stand. There are maps to support the driving directions in Appendix A.

**Orientation:** The orientation paragraph provides specific information for the stand. It helps the instructor ensure that the students understand where they are on the ground, and what the ground looked like at the time of the battle (campaign).

**Discussion:** This paragraph provides a narrative of the key events associated with the ground that is being stood upon or observed.

**Analysis:** The analysis offers questions or issues to consider related to the stand's discussion. The instructor and unit leadership should feel free to add additional analysis questions that are specific to their unit. The key is strive for critical thinking and get the students to look at the 'how' and 'why' of the events being discussed.



Map 1.

## Stand 1

### The Road to War

*Eight years later (1863) was the next treaty council. A chief called Lawyer, because he was a great talker, took the lead in this council and sold nearly all of the Nez Perces' country. My father was not there. He said to me, "When you go into council with the white man, always remember your country. Do not give it away. The white man will cheat you out of your home. I have taken no pay from the United States. I have never sold our land."<sup>1</sup>*

- Heinmot Tooyalakekt (Chief Joseph)

**Directions:** The Spalding Visitor Center, Nez Perce National Historical Park is located 11 miles east of Lewiston on US Hwy 95. The address is 39063 US Hwy 95. Conduct the stand on open ground in the vicinity of the visitor center.

**Orientation:** For countless generations, the Nimiipuu or Nez Perce called the rivers, canyons, prairies, and mountains of the inland Northwest home. Before white settlers arrived, the tribe roamed an area of roughly 17 million acres covering parts of Idaho, Oregon, Washington, Wyoming, and Montana. Their semi-nomadic life style and small population had a very light impact on the land. For hundreds of years the land remained relatively untouched. Henry Harmon Spalding, a Christian Missionary, established his home and mission on these grounds in 1836. It was the first white settlement in today's state of Idaho. The mission station and the cultural changes it entailed would have a significant impact on the Nez Perce and on their land.

**Discussion:** Centuries ago the Nimiipuu tribe established themselves in central Idaho along the Clearwater River. Overtime, the Nimiipuu occupied a homeland covering parts of today's Washington, Oregon, Montana, and Idaho. It was a bountifully rich land covering between 13 and 17 million acres. Nimiipuu, the Real People, are now more commonly known as the Nez Perce, meaning 'pierced nose' and pronounced Nezz Purse. It was the name given to them by French Canadian fur traders in the 18th Century. Ironically, nose piercing was a common practice among some of the tribes of the Northwest but not a common culture trait of the Nimiipuu.

Anthropologists classified the Nez Perce into two geographic divisions: Upper Nez Perce and Lower Nez Perce. The different goals and aspirations of these two divisions would play a major role in the road to war with the US Government. The seasonal travel of the Lower Nez Perce was primarily to the north and west of the Blue Mountains and along branches of the Snake River. The land of the Upper Nez Perce was primarily along and north of the Salmon River country in Idaho. Both divisions of the Nez Perce had a subsistence economy based upon salmon fishing, hunting, and gathering camas roots. The need to gather food forced the Nez Perce to spread out and divide into bands instead of establishing one large tribal village. In the 18th Century there may have been as many as 50 bands spread throughout the Nez Perce homeland. These groupings numbered only a few hundred each and lived in semi-nomadic villages. They moved along the water courses on the open prairies in the spring and summer and then relocated to the mountain valleys in the fall and winter.<sup>2</sup>

Their first contact with Americans was when the Lewis and Clark expedition passed through in 1805. For the next 30 years, contact with Americans was limited but friendly. Then in the late 1830's, tensions between the Nez Perce and the newcomers increased as fur traders, missionaries, and settlers moved onto Nez Perce land. However, despite these tensions the Americans and Nez Perce remained peaceful toward each other. This hesitant relationship between the two cultures was evident in 1847 when the Nez Perce passively supported the Americans against a neighboring tribe in Cayuse War.

The Cayuse War precipitated the establishment of the Oregon Territory and much of the Nez Perce land fell under the jurisdiction of the US Government. Then in 1855, the governor of Oregon Territory attempted to prevent future conflict with the tribes of the Northwest by designating tribal lands that were not open to settlement. The 1855 treaty dealt harshly with the defeated Cayuse and several other Columbian Plateau tribes. However, the cooperative Nez Perce retained control of most of their traditional homeland with the establishment of a 12,000 square mile Nez Perce Reservation.

The nominal jurisdiction of the US Government was probably less of an impact on the Nez Perce people than the influence of Christian missionaries. By the late 1850's, many of the Nez Perce people began a transition from their traditional ways and began to adopt the white man's religion and ways. The Christian influence and treaty process resulted in a split among the Nez Perce people. Many of the Christianized Upper Nez Perce, led by Lawyer (Hallalhotsoot), supported the treaty. The Upper Nez Perce, already deeply pressured by white immigration onto their lands, decided that the best course of action was a spirit of cooperation. The treaty required them to give up some of their land in eastern Oregon but overall they retained most of their homeland. On the other hand, most of the Lower Nez Perce had experienced only limited contact with the white man. They were traditionalists and wanted to retain their current way of life. This group, heavily influenced by Chief Joseph the elder (Tuekakas) of the large Wallowa band, were reluctant to sign away any of their land. A small number of the Upper Nez Perce, primarily Chief Looking Glass and Chief White Bird, sided with the traditionalist. Some of the other Columbian Plateau tribes also refused to accept resettlement onto reservations. In the resulting Yakima War (1855-1858) the Upper Nez Perce openly supported the US Government and provided scouts to the US Army. The Lower Nez Perce remained neutral in the conflict.

The discovery of gold on Orofino Creek in October of 1860 further amplified the divide between the Nez Perce people when thousands of unauthorized miners moved onto Nez Perce land. The US Army established Fort Lapwai and tried to halt and police the illegal movement of gold seekers onto Nez Perce lands. However, the small garrison proved to be totally inadequate to the task. In just a few short months, the influx of settlers and miners into the region soon outnumbered the Nez Perce. There were over 60,000 white settlers and gold seekers surrounding and squatting on the reservation occupied by only 3,000 Nez Perce.

Again, government officials pressured the Nez Perce into meeting at Fort Lapwai to discuss a new treaty. The American commissioners deceitfully stated that a new treaty was needed because the 1855 reservation was too large for the Fort Lapwai garrison to patrol. The US government supposedly wanted to reduce the size of the reservation so that the Army could better protect the Nez Perce from illegal immigration. In truth, the government was bowing to the inevitable that the American people wanted to take away the gold regions from the Nez Perce and open more land for settlement. The Treaty of 1863 reduced the Nez Perce reservation to a fraction of its original size. A number of Nez Perce leaders, led by Lawyer – a pro-American, agreed to the plan and signed the treaty. Ironically, those leaders that signed the treaty gave up no land. Their people were primarily Christianized and many lived on fenced farm land. All of Lawyer's land and the land of the faction that supported him had their holdings enclosed within the new reservation boundaries.

The Lower Nez Perce leaders, including the younger Chief Joseph (Heinmot Tooyalakekt) speaking for his father, walked away and refused to participate in the negotiations. White Bird and Looking Glass, two of the Upper Nez Perce Leaders who still held to the traditionalist ways, also rejected the treaty. Those Nez Perce leaders that did not sign the Treaty of 1863 referred to it as the "Thief or Steal" Treaty. The Nez Perce were now divided into two distinct factions. The majority, known as the Treaty Nez Perce, lived on the reservation and the non-treaty Nez Perce who continued to live on the lands destined to be opened for settlement. There were five non-treaty bands: Looking Glass's Alpowai on the Clear Water River, Chief Joseph's band in the Wallowa Valley, Toohoolhoolzote's people on the Snake River, White Bird's band on the Salmon River, and the fifth band was the Palouse led by Chief Hahtalekin. The Palouse were a small tribe closely related to the Nez Perce. The non-treaty bands altogether numbered less than 1,000 persons and maybe a few hundred Warriors.

Despite the divisions and antipathy caused by the Treaty of 1863 the area remained hesitantly peaceful for the next 12 to 13 years. Young Chief Joseph took over leadership of the Wallowa band (numbering about 200 persons) upon the death of Old Chief Joseph in 1871. Joseph, along with the other four non-treaty Nez Perce Bands, continued the passive noncompliance policy of his father and refused to give up any land. However, he recognized the futility of open conflict with the settlers and encouraged his people to cooperate with growing number of whites moving into the region. Nevertheless, over time, hundreds of settlers started to encroach upon the land that the non-treaty Nez Perce refused to cede. Those settlers pressured the government to enforce the provisions of the Treaty of 1863.

In June of 1876, the situation became volatile when two settlers killed a young Nez Perce Warrior during an argument over a stolen horse. The settlers claimed it was self defense and the Nez Perce insisted it was murder. General Howard sent an officer to investigate the situation. The Indian Agent and the Army representative assured

Chief Joseph that two settlers would be tried in a court of law. After 10 weeks on no action, Joseph became frustrated with the process and his younger brother, the respected Warrior Ollokot, issued an ultimatum to the settlers in the Wallowa Valley. He demanded that they hand over the murderer and that all the settlers leave the valley. Ollokot gave them one week to comply or they would be driven out of the valley by force. The settlers refused the ultimatum and assembled a volunteer militia to protect their homes and ranches. Open conflict was avoided when Howard sent a cavalry company, commanded by Lieutenant Albert G. Forse, to keep the antagonists separated. The lieutenant, kept his company well to the rear and rode ahead with only two guides into the potentially hostile village to forge a compromise. Lieutenant Forse assured the Nez Perce that the two defendants would be brought to trial. Unfortunately for the Nez Perce, not much came of the trial which was held in September of 1876. The Nez Perce had no confidence in the US government's legal system and did not participate. No one testified against the settlers and both were acquitted and released. Joseph's band, based upon their established migratory patterns left the area and the tensions in the Wallowa Valley subsided. Even so, Howard was determined to avoid future trouble. He was under considerable pressure from both the local government and the Federal Government to enforce the conditions of the 1863 Treaty and he believed the best course of action was to move the non-treaty bands onto the reservation. He called for the Nez Perce leaders to meet in council with him and the Indian commissioners at the Lapwai Agency on 13 November 1876.

### Analysis:

1. Evaluate Chief Joseph's and Lieutenant Albert G. Forse's handling on the 1876 Wallowa Valley crisis.
2. What did General Howard need to plan for and implement to set the conditions for success at his planned council? Compare and contrast your thoughts with the actual conduct of the council at the next stand.
3. Does the current or possible operating environment involve similar challenges in negotiating with totally different cultures as faced by General Howard and Lieutenant Forse?

### Additional Vignettes

*The white man has more words to tell you how they look at him but it does not require many words to speak the truth. What I have to say will come from my heart, and I will speak with a straight tongue.*<sup>3</sup>

- Heinmot Tooyalakekt (Chief Joseph)

*The first time I ever met Joseph was in September 1876, the day upon which he had told the settlers in the Wallowa Valley, in northeastern Oregon, and Volunteers from Indian and Grande Ronde Valleys that he would meet them and decide the question then in dispute, the right to the Wallowas Valley. Fortunately I succeeded, by making a forced march of eighty-eight miles in a little over twenty-five hours, in arriving in time to prevent hostilities; feeling satisfied that if I could get an interview with Joseph he would give up his hostile intentions... As Joseph rode out and dismounted, I thought he was the finest looking Indian I had ever seen, not only physically, but intelligently. He was about six feet in height, powerfully built, and strength of character [was] written on every feature. After a parley of two hours, we came to terms, and during my stay with him of nearly three weeks, in which time we had several councils, I became more and more impressed with his worth.*<sup>4</sup>

- Lieutenant Albert G. Forse

*It was bad men on both sides who made the trouble.*<sup>5</sup>

- Captain Joel G. Trimble

*They told us we had to give up our homes and move to another part of the reservation... Told us we must move in with the Nez Perces turned Christians, called Upper Nez Perces by the whites. All of the same tribe, but it would be hard to live together. Our religions different, it would be hard. To leave our homes would be hard.*<sup>6</sup>

- Himin Maqsmags (Yellow Wolf)





Map 2.

## Stand 2

### Fort Lapwai

*Will the Indians come peaceably on the reservation or do they want me to put them there by force?*<sup>7</sup>

- Brigadier General Oliver Otis Howard

**Directions:** From the Spalding Site/Visitor Center area, proceed south on US 95. Drive approximately 3.9 miles to the south side of Lapwai and turn west onto Parade Avenue/Agency Drive. Continue three blocks west to the old parade grounds, then south one block on C Street. The duplex on the corner, west of the parade grounds, was the officer's quarters.

**Orientation:** Unable to stem the tide, civilian authorities called on the military to establish a fort on the reservation to protect the Nez Perce from the invading miners. In addition, negotiations began that would ultimately lead to the Treaty of 1863 that would shrink the reservation, placing the gold fields outside of the reservation boundaries.

In the fall of 1862, two companies of Volunteers arrived on a site two miles above Lapwai Creek to establish an Army post that would become Fort Lapwai. Until 1885, the fort was garrisoned and provided the Army presence for the reservation. The fort played a key role in the events leading to the 1877 conflict when General Howard, commanding officer of the Department of the Columbia, ordered Joseph's band to move from their homeland in the Wallowa Valley of northeast Oregon to the reservation. When war broke out in June of 1877, Fort Lapwai was the center of operations until the Nez Perce crossed the Bitterroot Mountains into western Montana. One of the few buildings still standing is a set of officer's quarters. This was built as a duplex and could house two families. The fort was closed not long after the structure was completed.

**Discussion:** General Howard had narrowly avoided a crisis with the non-treaty Nez Perce in the 1876 Wallowa Valley incident. He was now determined to avoid a future crisis and determined that the best course of action was to enforce the 1863 Treaty. He sent word to the non-treaty leaders to meet with an Indian Commission at the Lapwai Agency on 13 November 1876. The commission was nominally chaired by political appointee David H. Jerome. However, he had no experience in Indian Affairs and he allowed General Howard to take the lead. Howard had a clear mandate from President Grant that the Nez Perce were to move onto the reservation. At the council, Howard informed Joseph and the other leaders that they would have to move their bands onto the Lapwai Reservation. Chief Joseph, acting as spokesman for the other bands, replied that he would not cede the Wallowa Valley and refused to comply with the treaty provisions. The council ended with no mutually agreed upon decision. The Secretary of the Interior wanted the Army to force the Indians onto the reservation. Howard's instructions from the Secretary of War were to do everything "*in the interest of peace.*"<sup>8</sup> Therefore, Howard chose to avoid open conflict and then hesitated for the next six months on what course he should take.

The Nez Perce leadership wanted a peaceful solution but failed to recognize the US Government's determination to enforce the treaty. Nevertheless, they decided on their own to seek a second council with General Howard. They traveled to Fort Lapwai on 3 and 4 May 1877 and asked again to discuss the situation. Unfortunately, the Nez Perce allowed the belligerent Toohoolhoolzote, instead of diplomatic Joseph, to act as their spokesman. Howard was uncompromising in his decision that the Nez Perce must give up their land and move onto the reservation. Toohoolhoolzote was equally uncompromising in his position that they would not give up their land. Howard quickly grew tired of Toohoolhoolzote's aggressive and repetitive narrative. He later referred to Toohoolhoolzote as "*growler of growlers*" and "*an ugly obstinate savage of the worst type.*"<sup>9</sup>

On 7 May, Howard ended the negotiation and demanded that the non-treaty bands move onto the reservation or he would use force to put them there. Again, Toohoolhoolzote refused and continued to argue. Howard lost patience in the fruitless discussion and had the combative Toohoolhoolzote arrested and thrown into the guardhouse. On 14 May, Howard released Toohoolhoolzote and reconvened the council. There was no further discussion. Howard reiterated his position that the Nez Perce would give up their land and move to the reservation. He also issued an ultimatum that they would comply no later than 15 June. Joseph and the other leaders reluctantly agreed to comply.

**Analysis:**

1. Compare and contrast your thoughts on how to set the conditions for a successful council with the actual conduct of the council?
2. The views and desires of the two opposing sides at the council left little room for compromise. Could Army officers face similar challenges today and how should they best proceed?



## Additional Vignettes

*If I had had the power and the management entirely in my hands, I believe I could have healed that old sore and established peace and amity with Joseph's Indians. It could only have been done, first by a retrocession of Wallowa (already belonging to Oregon) to the United States, and then setting that country apart forever for the Indians without retention of any government authority whatever; and second, by the removal there from of every white settler, making to each a proper remuneration for his land and improvements but this power I did not have, and the Indian management did not belong to my department.<sup>10</sup>*

- Brigadier General Oliver Otis Howard

-

*You are always talking about Washington. I would like to know who Washington is. Is he a Chief, or a common man, or a house, or a place? Every time you have a council you speak of Washington. Leave Mr. Washington, that is if he is a man, alone. He has no sense. He does not know anything about our country. He never was here.<sup>11</sup>*

- Toohoolhoolzote (Antelope or Sound)

-

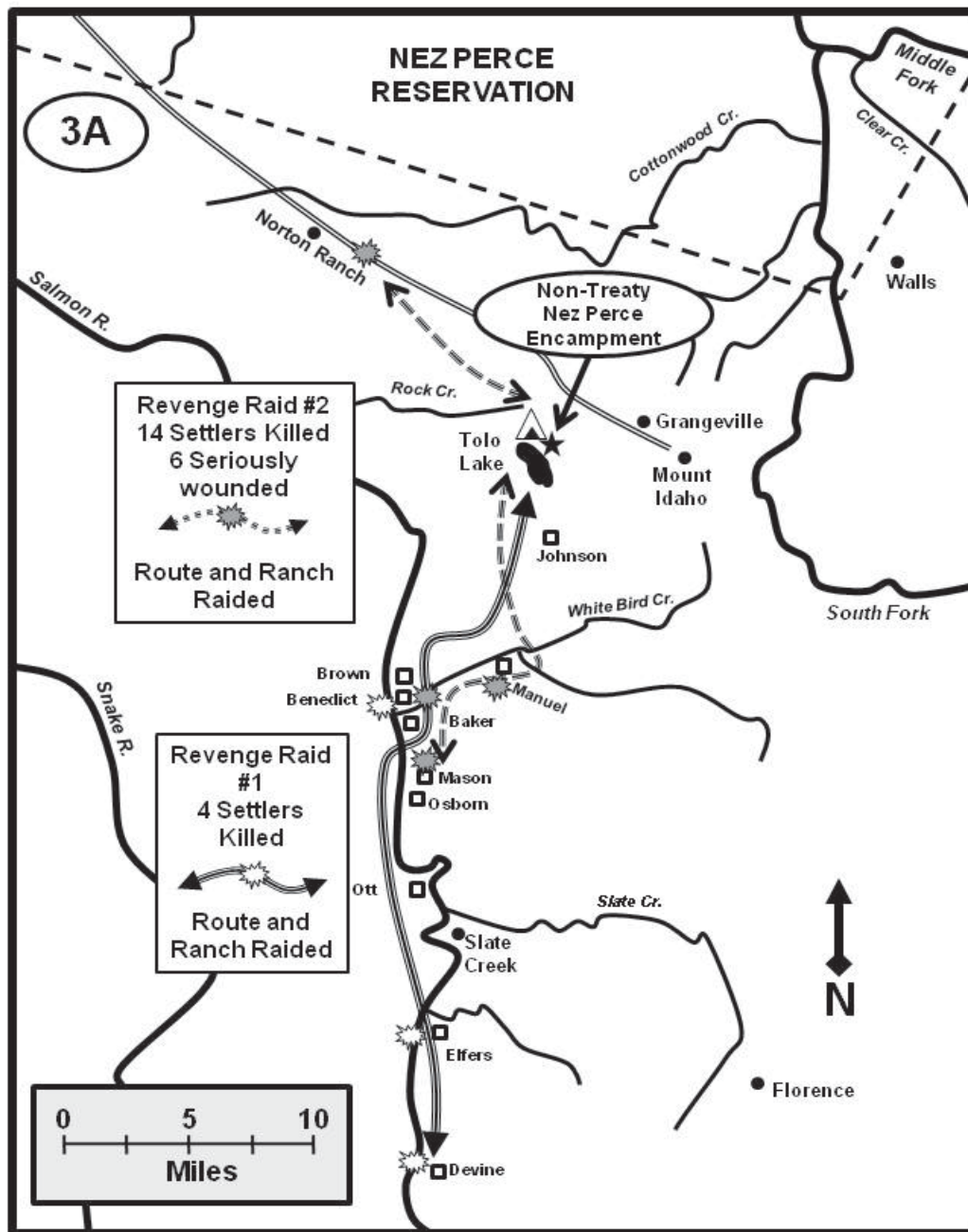
*If you are not here in that time [30 days], I consider that you want to fight, and will send my Soldiers to drive you.<sup>12</sup>*

- Brigadier General Oliver Otis Howard

-

*I said in my heart that rather than have war, I would give up my country. I would give up everything rather than have the blood of white men upon the hand of my people.<sup>13</sup>*

- Heinmot Tooyalakekt (Chief Joseph)



Map 3A.

## Stand 3A

### Tolo Lake

*I would have given my own life if I could have undone the killing of white men by my people. I blame my young men and I blame the white men. I blame General Howard for not giving my people time to get their stock away from the Wallowa at any time. I deny that either my father or myself ever sold that land. It is still our land. It may never again be our home, but my father sleeps there, and I love it as I love my mother. I left there, hoping to avoid bloodshed... I would have taken my people to the buffalo country without fighting, if possible.<sup>14</sup>*

- Heinmot Tooyalakekt (Chief Joseph)

**Directions:** Return to US 95 and go south toward Grangeville, ID. After traveling approximately 51 miles, turn right onto Lake Road (this is about five miles west of Grangeville). Continue about three miles on Lake Road to the recreation area at Tolo Lake.

**Orientation:** Tolo Lake is the largest natural water body on the Camas Prairie. The shallow lake covers about 35 acres. The Nez Perce name for Tolo Lake is *Tepahlewam* or Split Rocks. The Split Rocks themselves are a rocky canyon just to the west of the lake. The lake was a traditional rendezvous site used by the Nez Perce. The Nez Perce used the prairie around the lake as a camp site. They dug camas roots, raced horses, played games and socialized during tribal gatherings. In June of 1877, it was the gathering place for the non-treaty Nez Perce during their final preparations to move onto the reservation.

**Discussion:** General Howard interpreted the results of the May conference as a success. He failed to recognize the humiliation he had imposed upon the non-treaty leaders. The Nez Perce chiefs depended on their power of persuasion to lead their people. However, Howard had completely discredited Joseph's policy of cooperation and accommodation. Joseph's and the other chiefs' authority over their people was seriously compromised. The Nez Perce people were frustrated with the turn of events. Talking and the path of accommodation had failed and now many began to discuss violence as a possible solution.

Nevertheless, the chiefs convinced their bands they had to submit to the ultimatum and started to gather their people at Tolo Lake, a traditional gathering spot for summer religious observances. By 3 June, the five non-treaty bands had gathered about 600 of their people. The chiefs hoped to use the days before the ultimatum expired to gather the remainder of their people and property. It was also an opportunity to savor their last few days before moving on to the reservation. Unfortunately, many of the men also took the opportunity to indulge in a drinking spree.

The events of the Lapwai Conference had discredited the chiefs, and they lost control of their young men. Also, the Warriors impaired their own judgment due to an indulgence in a week-long alcohol binge. Shore Crossing (Wahlitits), a young Warrior from White Bird's band, was one of those intoxicated young men. A miner named Larry Ott had killed Shore Crossing's father, Eagle Robe (Tipyahlanah), two years earlier. Other inebriated Warriors taunted Shore Crossing that his honor was stained and that he must avenge his father's death. On the morning of the 14<sup>th</sup> of June, Shore Crossing decided to take that revenge. He rode south into the White Bird Canyon with his friends Red Moccasin Tops (Sarpsis Ilppilp), and Swan Necklace (Wetyetmas Wahyakt) to kill Mr. Ott. They failed to find Ott and decided instead to take their revenge on others. They killed Richard Devine and three other settlers and seriously wounded Samuel Benedict, all of whom were believed by the Nez Perce to be guilty of past offenses against the Nez Perce.

Shore Crossings actions emboldened other Warriors to seek revenge for past offenses. The next day, Yellow Bull (Chuslum Moxmox) led 15 Warriors from the White Bird's band on two-day spree of murder, rape, and plunder. They killed 14 more American settlers, including two infants and brutally raped as many as four women.<sup>15</sup> It was one of the worst Indian raids in the post-Civil War West. In 1805, the first contact with the Lewis and Clark Expedition established a mutual relationship of trust and respect between the two cultures. Over the years, repetitive incidents against the Nez Perce had gradually eroded the relationship. In May and June of 1877, the hesitant but semi-cooperative relationship between the two races finally collapsed after years of frustration. Joseph, White

Bird, and Toohoolhoolzote recognized that the shedding of so much blood would more than likely lead to war. They decided to lead their people to White Bird Canyon. The canyon offered good defensive terrain, access to the mountains if they needed to escape, and bought time for a decision to be made on what course action should be taken. Looking Glass, whose Warriors had not participated in the revenge raids, moved his people back to their holdings on the reservation.

**Analysis:**

1. What leadership challenge did the Nez Perce Chiefs face at the June 1877 gathering at Tolo Lake? Evaluate their handling of a difficult situation.
2. Why as leaders is it important to avoid discrediting the authority of our subordinate leaders?

### Additional Vignettes

*It is the old story of aggression by the whites on lands which the savages believed to be by right their hunting grounds; of unavailing efforts by the Government to induce roving bands to live upon a reservation; of threats to employ force; and of a sudden revengeful outbreak on the part of the Indians, attended by horrible massacres of settlers and their families.<sup>16</sup>*

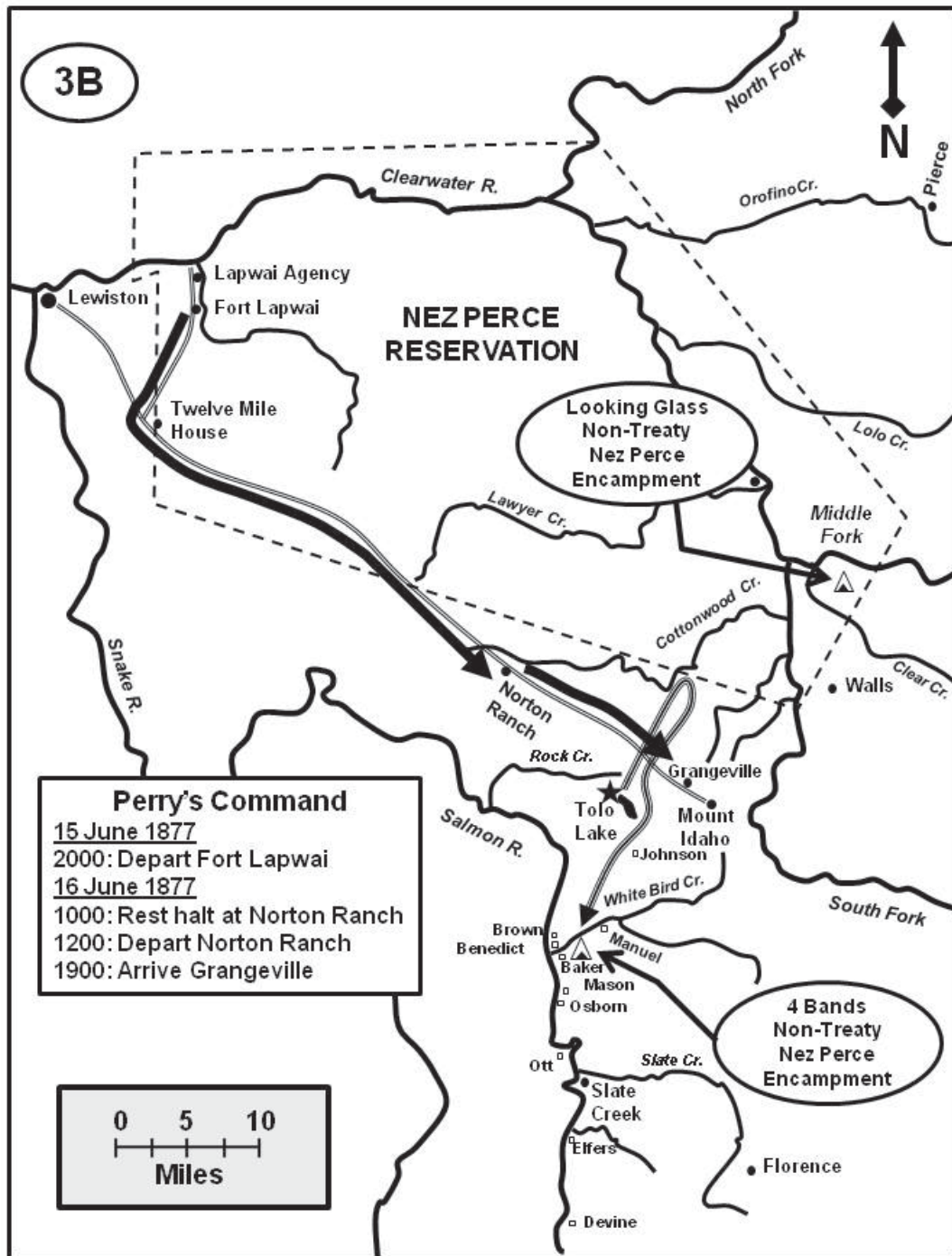
- The London Times Paper, July 3, 1877

*If you're so brave, why don't you go kill the white man who killed your father?<sup>17</sup>*

- Heyoom Moxmox (Yellow Grizzly Bear)

*I know that my young men did a great wrong, but I ask who was first to blame? They had been insulted a thousand times; their fathers and brothers had been killed; their mothers and wives had been disgraced; they had been driven to madness by the whiskey sold to them by the white men.<sup>18</sup>*

- Heinmot Tooyalakekt (Chief Joseph)



Map 3B.

## Stand 3B

### The Army's Response

*It was decided to make the attempt to overtake the Indians before they could affect a crossing of the Salmon River was not only the best, but the only thing to do[sic]. It was also suggested that the Indians would most likely begin crossing at once and I would thus strike them while divided... I saw at once that if I allowed the Indians to get away with all their plunder without making any effort to overtake and capture them, it would reflect discredit upon the Army and all concerned.<sup>19</sup>*

- Captain David Perry

**Directions:** Conduct the stand at the same Tolo Lake location as Stand 3A.

**Orientation:** Fort Lapwai and the town of Grangeville are two distant locations important to this discussion. Fort Lapwai is approximately 45 miles to the northwest and Grangeville is about five miles to the east.

**Discussion:** General Howard arrived at the Lapwai Agency on 14 June. He wanted to be on hand to witness the arrival of the Non-Treaty Nez Perce onto the reservation. On 15 June, he learned about the first murders which had occurred the day before. At first, General Howard and John Monteith, agent of the Lapwai Agency, believed they were isolated incidents. Mr. Monteith agreed to send emissaries from the Treaty Nez Perce to advocate constraint and compliance with Howard's ultimatum. The peace envoys traveled only a small distance before returning with additional messengers coming from the Mount Idaho/Grangeville area. These messengers brought word that the violence had escalated, "We are in the midst of an Indian war... Don't delay a moment... The Indians are in possession of the [Camas] prairie ... Give us relief, and arms and ammunition... Hurry up; hurry!"<sup>20</sup>

Howard had limited resources immediately available to deal with the outbreak of violence and understandably hesitated to ask for reinforcements until he had a better understanding of the situation. In the area, he had two companies of the 1st Cavalry at Fort Lapwai, another two companies of the 1st Cavalry in the Wallowa Valley, and three companies of the 21st Infantry at Fort Walla Walla. He ordered a concentration of forces at Fort Lapwai to be on hand if needed. He then directed Captain David Perry to take his two companies from Fort Lapwai to Mount Idaho to protect the citizens in the area. The general wanted Captain Perry to contain the outbreak and protect the local citizens until additional forces could be gathered. Howard then notified Major General Irvin McDowell, commander of the Military Division of the Pacific, of the situation and requested permission to hire more scouts. His closing comment to General McDowell was, "Think we shall make short work of it."<sup>21</sup>

Captain Perry's command consisted of Companies F and H, 1st Cavalry. He had four officers including himself, 103 Soldiers, Scout Joe Rabusco, and 10 to 12 Nez Perce scouts from the agency. These Nez Perce scouts gave Perry the opportunity to open a dialog with the non-treaty leaders and if possible, avoid open warfare. The Soldiers carried three days' rations in their saddlebags and a small mule train carried an additional two days of rations along with reserve ammunition. All the officers were veterans of the American Civil War and had experience fighting Indians in the Northwest. However, the companies as a whole lacked field experience and contained many recent recruits.

Captain Perry departed Fort Lawpai, Idaho at about 20:00 hours on 15 June 1877. He pushed his men throughout the night down the Lewiston-Mount Idaho road. The overall situation of the outbreak of hostilities was still uncertain. He therefore moved at times with skirmishers to the front and small groups of Soldiers protecting the flanks. At about 10:00 on the 16th, the tired column stopped briefly at Benjamin Norton's abandoned ranch and way station. After a scanty breakfast and short two hour rest, they pressed on across the prairie toward Mount Idaho. Evidence of the Nez Perce uprising was soon seen as the column marched past dead horses and burnt ranch buildings. They also came upon Lew Wilmot's and Pete Ready's abandoned freight wagons. The Nez Perce raiders had pillaged the wagons and nearby there was an empty whiskey keg. Another mile down the road, the column met a group of mounted citizen Volunteers from Mount Idaho led by Arthur "Ad" Chapman. Chapman told Perry that the Nez Perce had abandoned their camp at Tolo Lake about five hours earlier and were headed toward White Bird Creek on the Salmon River. Chapman also urged Perry to pursue the Nez Perce before they crossed over the Salmon River and disappeared into the mountains.



Perry closed onto Grangeville at sundown. The frightened citizens of Grangeville provided details on the Nez Perce raids. Perry had intended to rest his troops that night and then move toward the troubled area the next day. He therefore had the column bivouac in a nearby field. However, Perry changed his plan when the Grangeville citizens and Chapman convinced him of the need to catch and punish the Nez Perce before they escaped over the Salmon River. Perry called his officers together along with several of the more vocal citizens. The decision was made to make an attempt to catch the Nez Perce before they escaped. Lieutenant William Parnell later recorded that the citizens had convinced them that it would be an *“easy victory.”*<sup>22</sup> Perhaps Perry agreed to the change of plans believing he would receive significant reinforcements from the citizen Volunteers. Chapman promised 25 to 30 men.

**Analysis:** General Howard provided no written order to Captain Perry. However, most sources seem to agree that Captain Perry’s orders were to obtain additional information on the magnitude of the outbreak of hostilities, protect the citizens in the region, and to contain the outbreak until more forces could be marshaled.

1. Place yourself in the role of General Howard and formulate a ‘Mission Order’ for Captain Perry’s detachment.
2. Two of the principles of Mission Command are to ‘Exercise Disciplined Initiative and ‘Accept Prudent Risk.’ Evaluate Captain Perry’s decision to pursue the Nez Perce. Did he exercise disciplined initiative? In the decision to pursue, what risk did Perry assume and did he take measures to mitigate the risk?



## Additional Vignettes

*The first news that came in was rambling, disconnected information.*<sup>23</sup>

- Lieutenant William R. Parnell

*We didn't anticipate fighting when we started from Lapwai. I think the command was sent up there more as a safeguard for the citizens about Mount Idaho.*<sup>24</sup>

- Sergeant Michael McCarthy

*I proposed to General Howard to move at once to the relief of the citizens of Mount Idaho carrying three days rations in my saddle bags. The General acceded to my proposition and at 8 o'clock p.m. on the 15th of June I left Fort Lapwai.*<sup>25</sup>

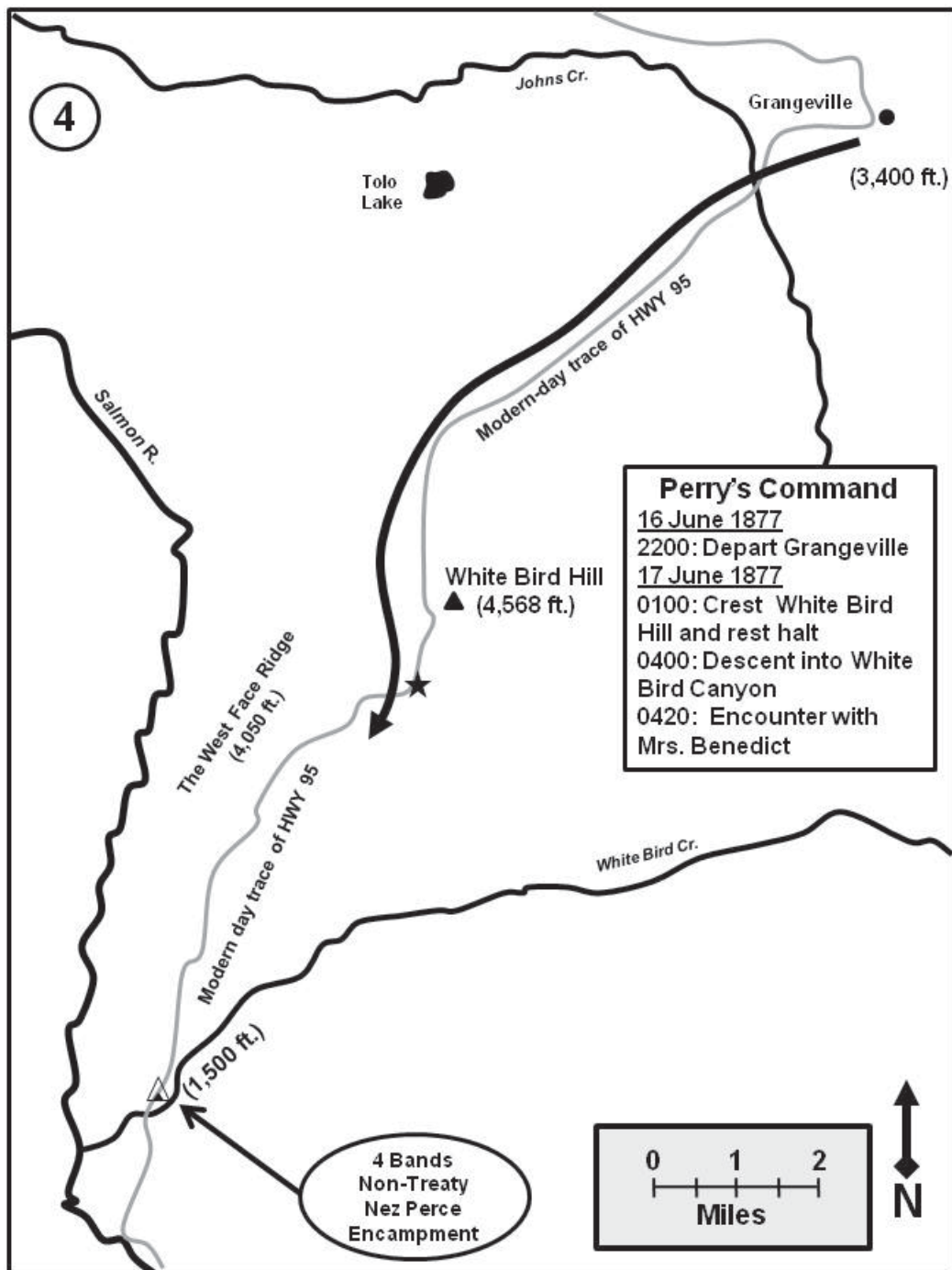
- Captain David Perry

*General Howard had ordered the command to the scene of the outbreak to protect the distressed settlers from further depredations, it appears that Perry, once in the field, was swayed by the ever-voluble Ad Chapman and others who urged him to follow up the "cowardly Injuns" and administer a crushing defeat before they could place the raging Salmon between them and their pursuers.*<sup>26</sup>

- Private John Schorr

*That up to the time of the fight at White Bird Cañon every precaution that good judgment dictated was taken by Captain PERRY.*<sup>27</sup>

- Opinion of the Court of Inquiry  
(Convened 16 December 1878 to 1 February 1879)



Map 4.

## Stand 4

### White Bird Hill

*We plodded along in the dark until about one o'clock in the morning when we reached the head of White Bird Cañon, where we made a halt until dawn. Colonel<sup>28</sup> Perry ordered perfect quiet and under the circumstances no light of any kind was to be made, yet one man of his own troop lighted a match to light his pipe... Almost immediately the cry of a coyote was heard in the hills above us, a long, howling cry, winding up, however, in a very peculiar way not characteristic of the coyote. Little heed was paid to it at the time, yet it was a fatal cry to the command. It was made by an Indian picket on the watch for the Soldiers who they knew were already on the march.<sup>29</sup>*

- Lieutenant William R. Parnell

**Directions:** From Tolo Lake continue south on Lake Road. The road will cross over Rock Creek at about 0.3 miles. Lake Road continues to the south but then transitions to the east. Drive to the intersection with US 95 at approximately 3.9 miles. Proceed south on US 95 and at eight miles, pull into the turnout on the left side of the road. The turnout is in the vicinity mile marker 230 and the intersection with old US 95.

**Orientation:** The summit of White Bird Hill marks the divide between the Camas Prairie to the north and the Salmon River Canyon to the south. Captain Perry's route from Grangeville paralleled US 95 on the west side of the road. Early on the morning of 17 June his column crested the hill and camped in this vicinity.

**Discussion:** The trumpeter<sup>30</sup> sounded "Boots and Saddles" at 21:00 and the fatigued Soldiers and their weary horses prepared for a night march. The two companies, reinforced with only 11 citizen Volunteers, moved out at about 22:00. The column soon crossed over Johns Creek and started the more than 1,000 feet ascent over White Bird Hill. They crested the ridge at about 01:00. Captain Perry, soon after passing over the rise, ordered the men to dismount and allowed the men to rest. Both men and horses were exhausted. First Sergeant Michael McCarthy later noted in his diary that the horses were so fatigued that they laid down beside their riders to rest. Perry planned to wait for sunrise before making the difficult descent march into White Bird Canyon. At the halt, he specifically forbade fires and smoking during the brief halt. However, one Soldier foolishly lit his pipe and it is believed that this may have provided a warning to the Nez Perce scouts that the Soldiers were approaching.

At sunrise, about 04:00 on Sunday morning, 17 June 1877, Perry ordered the column to move out. Company F led the column with Company H following. The old wagon road into the canyon was steep and frequently passed through narrow gorges and heavy underbrush. The difficult terrain was worrisome to Perry. However, he reasoned there was little possibility of ambush. Both he and his senior civilian volunteer, Ad Chapman, believed the Nez Perce were more concerned with escaping over the Salmon River than fighting. Additionally, Chapman counseled that the rugged terrain would soon give way to an open valley. About a mile into the canyon, they came upon Mrs. Isabella Benedict and her two small children hiding in a ravine. The Nez Perce had killed her husband on 14 June in the first revenge raid. One of the children had a broken arm and all were exhausted, hungry, and suffering from exposure. Mrs. Benedict informed Perry that there were many Warriors in the valley and warned that they would be massacred if they continued into the valley. She begged Perry to return to Mount Idaho and give up the pursuit. Nevertheless, Perry was determined to carry on. He offered to have one of the friendly Nez Perce scouts to take her to safety. However, the distraught Mrs. Benedict refused the offer and selected to continue hiding in the ravine. Perry provided food and blankets and told her that they would pick her up on the return trip. The column then resumed its march down the canyon.

**Analysis:** The frontier Army's accepted technique for fighting Indians was to force them into battle by attacking the village. The proven formula for success was to use a night march to close on the village and then attack at sunrise. These methods had been honed by fighting the Indians on the Great American Plains and for the most part had been highly successful. The Nez Perce had many customs in common with the Plains Indians but they are Mountain Plateau Indians of the Northwest and not Plains Indians. The Army had limited experience fighting the Indians in the Northwest and had not yet tried the tactics of the Great Plains against the Nez Perce.

1. What was Captain Perry's estimate of the situation, his tactical and situational awareness? Based on his understanding of the situation and experience, was his decision reasonable?
2. What key assumptions influenced Perry's decision making at this point?
3. What were the risks and rewards associated with the attack at dawn?
4. What are the challenges of maintaining standards and discipline when both leaders and Soldiers suffer from high levels of fatigue? How do we meet and overcome those challenges today?

## Additional Vignettes

*Perhaps the vision of a cherished brevet had something to do with the Captain's decision to pursue and deliver an early morning surprise attack on the camp while its "savage" occupants were still sleeping, unconscious to their pending doom.<sup>31</sup>*

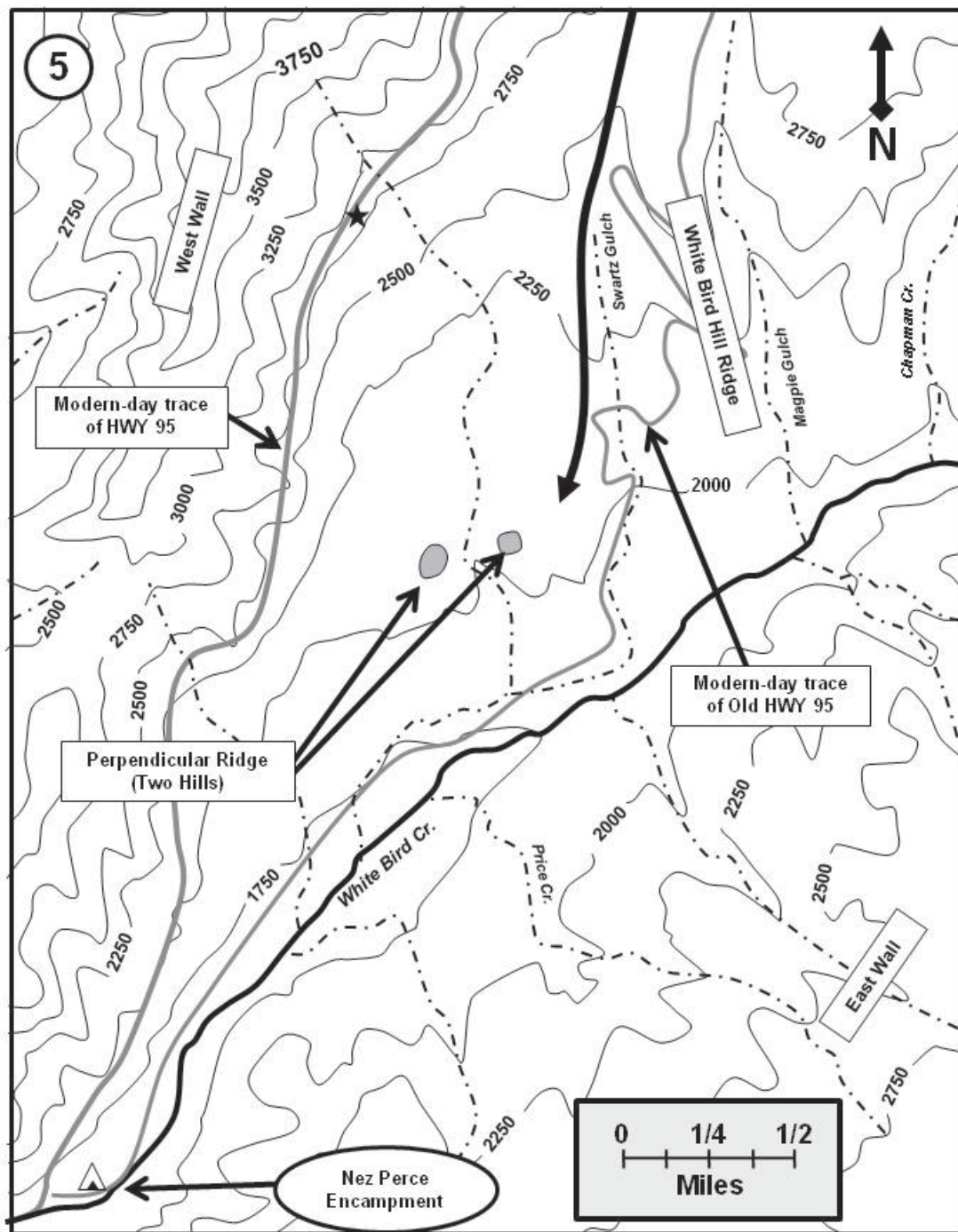
- Private John Schorr

*About three o'clock that fatal morning, as we passed in single file along the side of the hill, a sad and pitiable sight presented itself to us. We discovered an unfortunate woman, whose husband had been killed by the Indians, concealed in the gulch below us with a little four year old girl in her arms.<sup>32</sup>*

- Lieutenant William R. Parnell

*About nine o'clock that night I started for White Bird crossing of [the] Salmon River. We reached the summit of the dividing ridge between the prairie and the river at midnight and halted there waiting for daylight. At dawn I started again, following the road which I saw led down a narrow gorge, but upon commenting upon this, I was assured by the guide that it opened out into a comparatively smooth valley. This proved to be a mistake or misstatement as it was very rough and broken all the way.<sup>33</sup>*

- Captain David Perry



Map 5.



## Stand 5

### White Bird Canyon

*About four miles, as nearly as I can judge, from the summit where we had halted lay a point where two high ridges ran diagonally across the low ground we were traversing. This was flanked on the left by two round knolls of considerable heights, and on the right by a high ridge running parallel with our road. Between this last ridge, however, and the two referred to lay a long, deep valley of considerable width, and beyond the knolls on my left ran White Bird Creek, the banks of which were covered with thick brush. On the more distant of these ridges Lieutenant Theller halted, deployed his advance-guard and at the same time sent me word "that the Indians were in sight."*<sup>34</sup>

- Captain David Perry

**Directions:** Return to US 95 and continue 2.9 miles to the south. Park the vehicles at the Nez Perce Wayside Exhibit Shelter on the east side of the road and conduct the stand at overlook sight looking down into the White Bird Valley.

**Orientation:** The surrounding terrain dominated the battlefield and significantly affected the course of the fight. The steep west wall of the canyon (our current location) hindered any Army maneuver to the right. The less dramatic east wall of the canyon is miles distant and played no significant role in the fighting. Instead, it was a major spur of White Bird Hill that descended due south into the center of the valley that framed the east face of the battlefield. That same ridge gives way at the bottom of the valley to White Bird Creek. The tree and brush lined creek flowed southwest towards the Salmon River. The Nez Perce village was located along White Bird Creek a short distance upstream from the confluence with the Salmon River. The Soldier's view of the village and their pony herd was blocked by an east-west ridge that was perpendicular to their line of march. Two small hills help to define the perpendicular ridge. These two hills are just over one mile to the southeast of the Wayside Exhibit Shelter. It was upon the left hill and the small ridge that the majority of the fighting in the Battle of White Bird Canyon took place.

**Discussion:** After leaving the Benedict family, Captain Perry and his two small companies continued their movement into White Bird Canyon. About two miles from the summit, the difficult descent opened into an expansive valley several hundred yards wide. Lieutenant Parnell described it as a "rolling prairie ... dotted here and there with wave-like swells."<sup>35</sup> During the move into the valley, Captain Perry took the precaution to send Lieutenant Theller one hundred yards to the front with a small advance guard of eight men from F Company. Ad Chapman, the leader of the civilian contingent, and some of the friendly Nez Perce scouts also joined the advance guard. Next in the column was Perry with the other civilian Volunteers and the remainder of F Company. Captain Trimble and his H Company brought up the rear. Along with the more tactical formation, Perry also took action to prepare his command for battle. He ordered the troopers to remove their bulky overcoats and to load their carbines. Perry, despite his precautions, was unaware that many of the key Nez Perce leaders were watching the Army movement from concealed positions near the creek.

**Analysis:** According to Field Manual 3-21.8, *The Infantry Rifle Platoon and Squad*. 28 March 2007, OAKOC is the military acronym used in terrain analysis by today's Army. It is used for describing the military aspects of a piece of land in a way that clearly identifies the locations necessary to defend or seize a particular area. When using the OAKOC method, you analyze a piece of land in terms of each aspect for both sides – what are your observation posts, what are your enemy's observation posts, etc. These points of analysis will have an effect on each side, which can be used to determine what action and counteraction to take.

- a. O = Observations and Fields of Fire – Where would you place your troops to gain the maximum visibility and fire cover? How would you overlap them?
- b. A = Avenues of Approach – Where would troops normally come from when approaching the position? Where would they expect resistance?
- c. K = Key Terrain – What must be held and what can be given up?
- d. O = Obstacles – What natural or artificial barriers to movement exist, and what can be constructed?

e. C = Cover and Concealment – What can be used for cover, and what for concealment? What caliber would be necessary to defeat each? If no natural cover exists, what can be improvised?

Neither the US Army of 1877 nor the Nez Perce used this modern acronym in their planning process. However, both antagonists attempted to use the terrain to achieve a tactical advantage.

1. What advantages and disadvantages does the terrain offer to the attackers and the defenders?
2. The next group of stands will be on the battlefield. Be prepared to compare your impressions of how the terrain looks from this overview position with how the terrain looks at ground level on the battlefield.
3. On the battlefield, discuss how the two sides used or failed to use the terrain to their advantage.



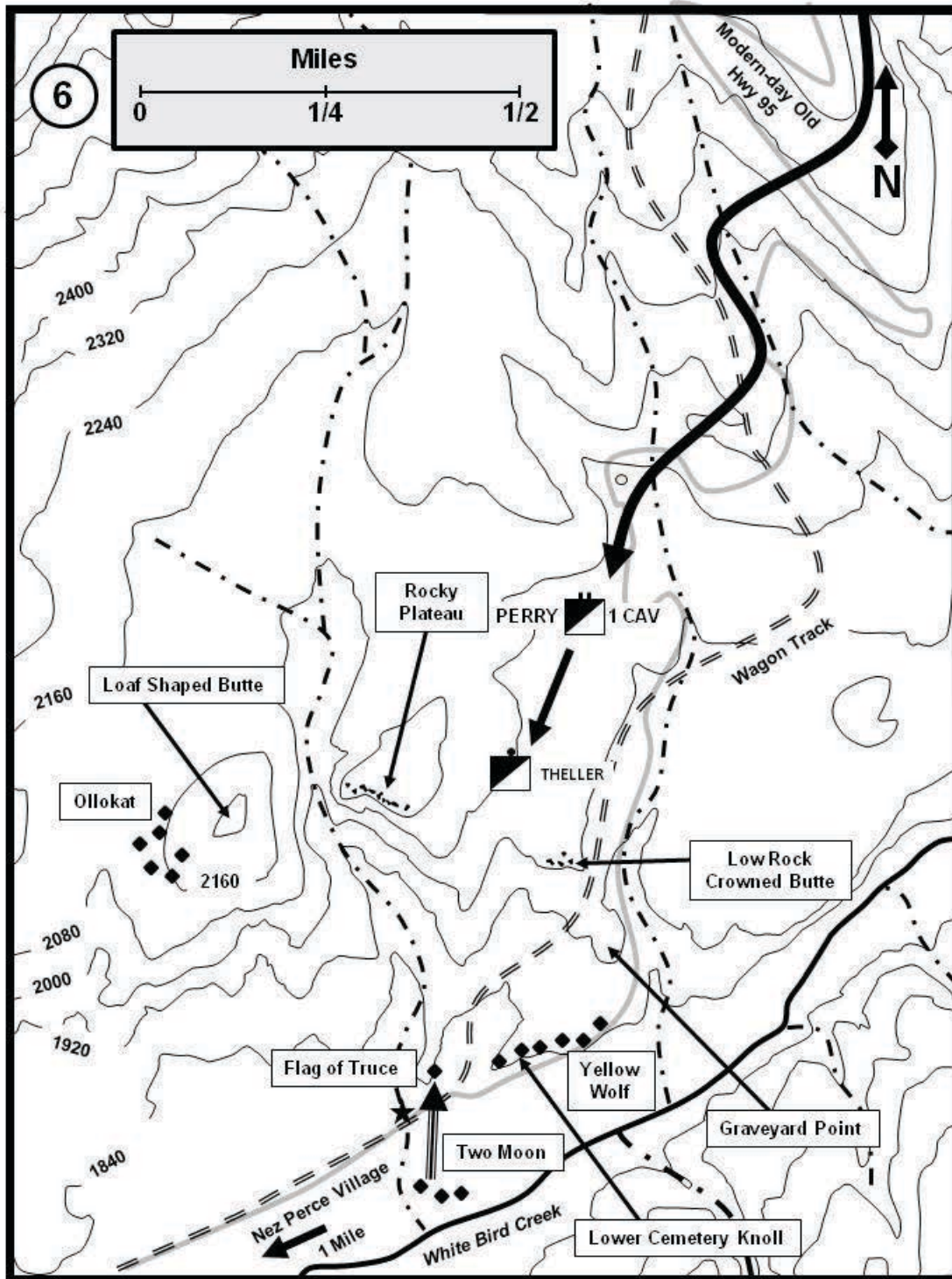
### **Additional Vignettes**

*In a short time we found the cañon widening out as we descended, the bluffs on either side appeared to grow higher and higher; bearing around to the east was a valley four or five hundred yards wide.<sup>36</sup>*

- Lieutenant William R. Parnell

*We moved over to White Bird Creek, sixteen miles away, and there encamped, intending to collect our stock before leaving; but the Soldiers attacked us, and the first battle was fought.<sup>37</sup>*

- Heinmot Tooyalakekt (Chief Joseph)



Map 6.

## Stand 6

### The Nez Perce Village

*When my young men began the killing, my heart was hurt. Although I did not justify them, I remember all the insults I had endured, and my blood was on fire. Still, I would have taken my people to the buffalo country without fighting if possible. I could see no other way to avoid war.<sup>38</sup>*

- Heinmot Tooyalakekt (Chief Joseph)

**Directions:** Continue south on US 95 toward White Bird, ID. At White Bird, exit onto Old US 95 (River Road) and follow the River Road to the north. The River Road soon changes into the Old White Bird Grade Road. Approximately two miles north of the town pull into the White Bird Battlefield turnout. Conduct the stand at the head of walking trail.

**Orientation:** Currently we're located on the White Bird Canyon Battlefield. From this location you can see many of the key landmark features that are important to the Nez Perce preparations for the fight and will also be important landmarks for the battle itself. As stated in the preliminary study, this battlefield is extremely large. It is comparable in size to the southern half of the Gettysburg National Battlefield site. White Bird Creek is about 200 yards to the south. Almost 900 yards to the northwest is the loaf shaped butte. Moving to the right is the Rocky Plateau about 700 yards to the north. Continuing to the right is battle ridge with the Low Rock Crowned Butte approximately 600 yards to the northeast. To our direct right is Cemetery Ridge. The Nez Perce Village was located in the vicinity of the modern town of White Bird which is just less than two miles to the southwest.

**Discussion:** The Nez Perce chiefs regrouped their non-treaty bands on White Bird Creek area late in the afternoon and evening of 16 June. The village was located along the creek in the area of present day White Bird, ID. The encampment consisted primarily of White Bird's Lamtamas (50 Warriors), Joseph and Ollokot's Wallawas (55 Warriors), and Toohoolhoolzote's Pikunans (30 Warriors). It was altogether about 135 Warriors. However, because most sources say there were only 30 lodges, there may have been fewer Warriors in the village. Another possibility is that some of the fleeing Nez Perce either moved without their lodges or elected not to erect them or, many of the woman and children of Joseph's band moved north with Looking Glass's Alpowais, and only Joseph's Warriors gathered on White Bird Creek.

The Nez Perce chiefs were aware the Army was in the area. Their scouts had reported the Army column arriving in Grangeville on the evening of 16 June but they were unaware that Perry continued his march at 22:00 toward White Bird Canyon. The Nez Perce scouts discovered the Army's approach again very early on the morning of 17 June. Some of the Nez Perce leadership, probably led by Chief Joseph, wanted to avoid battle and planned to negotiate. However, what they hoped to discuss is unknown. It is unlikely they would have turned over the Warriors who had killed and raped during the revenge raids. Nevertheless, a group of six Warriors was designated to talk with the Soldiers and all the Warriors were instructed not to fire unless fired upon.

Other Nez Perce leaders, probably with White Bird being one of the more vocal, recognized that the killing of 18 American citizens which included two children and the reported rape of four women, meant that there would be war. One challenge the war chiefs had to overcome was that many of their Warriors were drunk. A significant amount of whiskey had been captured during the revenge raids and after several days, the drinking spree left many of the Warriors unavailable for the initial defense of the village. Nonetheless, White Bird, Ollokot, and Two Moons were able to rouse 60 to 80 Warriors to prepare to resist the Army. Nez Perce participants claimed that about 50 of the Warriors had firearms. These would have been a mixture of repeating and quality breech loading weapons and some muzzle loaded rifles and muskets. The remaining Warriors would have had the more traditional bows and arrows.

The chiefs and war leaders positioned the Warriors behind knolls and in cover in order to attack the Army's flank if the peace parley failed. Ollokot, Joseph's younger brother and war leader for the Wallowa band had about

40 Warriors hidden behind a loaf-shaped butte on the west side of the canyon. Two Moons had about 20 Warriors in the brush along the creek and Yellow Wolf had another group behind Cemetery Ridge. All were stripped for combat and ready to fight. They recognized that they had to delay the Army long enough to allow old men and boys to gather the horse herd and the women time to move the village to safety.

**Analysis:**

1. How did the division among the Nez Perce leadership influence the decision to fight?
2. Now that you have had a chance to see the battlefield from ground level, compare and contrast the ground with what was seen from the highway overlook position.
3. The Nez Perce leadership did not have access to Field Manual 3-21.8, *The Infantry Rifle Platoon and Squad* or use the military acronym OAKOC. Nevertheless, evaluate their use of the terrain in positioning their Warriors to defend the village.
  - a. O = Observations and Fields of Fire.
  - b. A = Avenues of Approach.
  - c. K = Key Terrain.
  - d. O = Obstacles.
  - e. C = Cover and Concealment.

## Additional Vignettes

*I was drunk the night and morning of the battle as were a great many of the young men and even the older men.<sup>39</sup>*

- Whylimlex (Black Feather)

*I was about twenty-one snows of age and unmarried when the war broke. The first battle was on Sapalwit [Sunday] early in the morning. Many of the young men were drunk but, never a whiskey drinker I was cold sober.<sup>40</sup>*

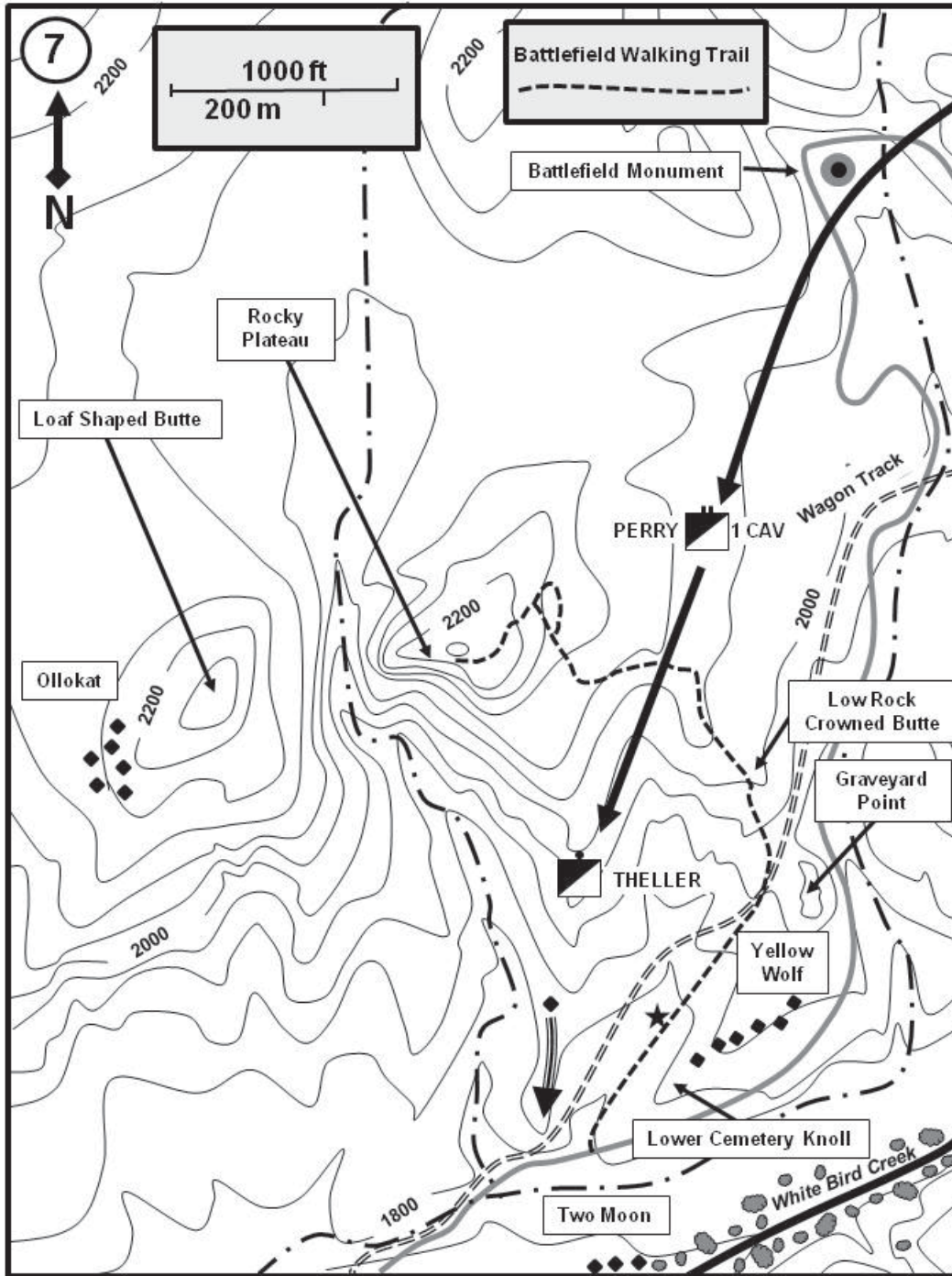
- Tipyahlahnah Elasanin (Roaring Thunder Eagle)

*It was not yet the break of day when scouts came to the village with word that Soldiers were coming. There was stirring in the tepees, Warriors preparing to meet the Soldiers before they could reach our camp. The sun was up when mounted Soldiers were seen. Mounted Warriors rode to flank the enemy while others hurried to the attack in the front and near sides.<sup>41</sup>*

- Eelahweemah (About Asleep)

[A 14 year-old boy who served as a horse holder during the fight]





Map 7.

## Stand 7

### Opening Shots

*Five Warriors, led by Wettiwetti Houlis (Vicious Weasel or Mean Person) had been sent out from the other side of the valley as a peace party to meet the Soldiers. These Warriors had instructions from the chiefs not to fire unless fired upon. Of course they carried a white flag. Peace might be made without fighting... From the north echoed a rifle report and right away a white man on a white horse came riding swiftly south... He did not look like a Soldier, A big white hat, he was dressed more like a citizen. When he came closer, we knew him... It was Chapman, called by the whites squaw man! Having an Indian wife was why he had been friends. He and my uncle, Old Yellow Wolf, had lived in the same house, just as brothers. Now he was the first enemy we see. Changed, and trying to kill each other. It was he who fired the first shot we had just heard, fired on our peace party.<sup>42</sup>*

- Himin Maqsmags (Yellow Wolf)

**Directions:** Continue along the walking trail. Conduct the stand approximately 1/3 of the way up the trail toward the low rock crowned butte also known as volunteer knoll.

**Orientation:** Review again the key terrain features of the battlefield. White Bird Creek is about 300 yards to the south. The loaf shaped butte is 800 yards to the northwest. Moving to the right is the Rocky Plateau just over 600 yards to the north. Continuing to the right is battle ridge with the Low Rock Crowned Butte approximately 300 yards to the north. To our rear is Cemetery Ridge. Lieutenant Theller's advance guard came over the ridge to the front advancing toward our present location. The Nez Perce peace party would have come from the brush along White Bird Creek and then advanced up the spur to our west.

**Discussion:** Arguably the Nez Perce fired the first shots of the war during the revenge raids on 14 and 15 June 1877. The Nez Perce leadership then failed to defuse the situation by disavowing the actions of few angry young men and moving immediately to the reservation. Now, the last chance for restoring peace and negotiating a settlement rested with Captain David Perry. Unfortunately, he was losing control of the situation.

Lieutenant Edward Theller led the eight-man advance guard. At about 06:15 hours, they passed over the last of the east-west ridges. As his small group passed over the ridge, they probably saw signs of the Nez Perce village further down the canyon. Most importantly, he would have seen the Nez Perce peace party approaching with the white flag. Ideally, the lieutenant should have halted the advance, allowed his friendly Nez Perce scouts to make contact with the Nez Perce peace party, and called his captain forward to take charge of the parley. Instead, he lost control of his small command and allowed a civilian volunteer, Arthur 'Ad' Chapman, to take action. Chapman, for reasons never fully explained, opened fire on the peace delegation.

The peace party immediately turned about and raced for cover with the Warriors in the brush along the creek and those on cemetery ridge providing covering fire. Lieutenant Theller tried to deploy his men into a skirmish line but lost control when his trumpeter was shot. He then made the decision to retreat back to the ridge.



**Analysis:** Tactical patience is giving a situation enough time to develop and unfold before trying to determine its meaning, significance and how to react to the situation.

1. Was the formation of a small advance guard under the direction of the officer a reasonable COA during the conduct of a movement to contact? Should Perry have employed a larger force based upon his lack of knowledge of the enemy situation?

2. Did the decision to use an advance guard set the conditions to allow the commander the opportunity to exercise tactical patience? How much of a factor was fatigue when the key Army leaders lost control of their formations?

3. Why is it important to balance the motivations of allied forces (the civilian Volunteers) with the mission of the US Army force (Captain Perry's Battalion)?

## Additional Vignettes

*Five Warriors had been sent out from the other west side of the valley as a peace party to meet the Soldiers. These Warriors had instructions from the chiefs not to fire unless fired upon. Of course they carried a white flag. Peace might be made without fighting.*<sup>43</sup>

- Lepeet Hessemdooks (Two Moons)

*Several, maybe twenty, Soldiers followed closed after Chapman. There was a bugler and when the party all stopped, this bugler rode a little ahead of them. He began calling orders on his trumpet. Otstotpoo [Fire Body] said to me, 'you now watch! I will make a good shot and kill that bugler.' He did make the long-distance shot, and dead dropped the bugler from his horse. Chapman and his Soldiers whirled and rode rapidly away from there ... It was good to get the bugler who called the General's orders to his fighting Soldiers.*<sup>44</sup>

- Lepeet Hessemdooks (Two Moons)

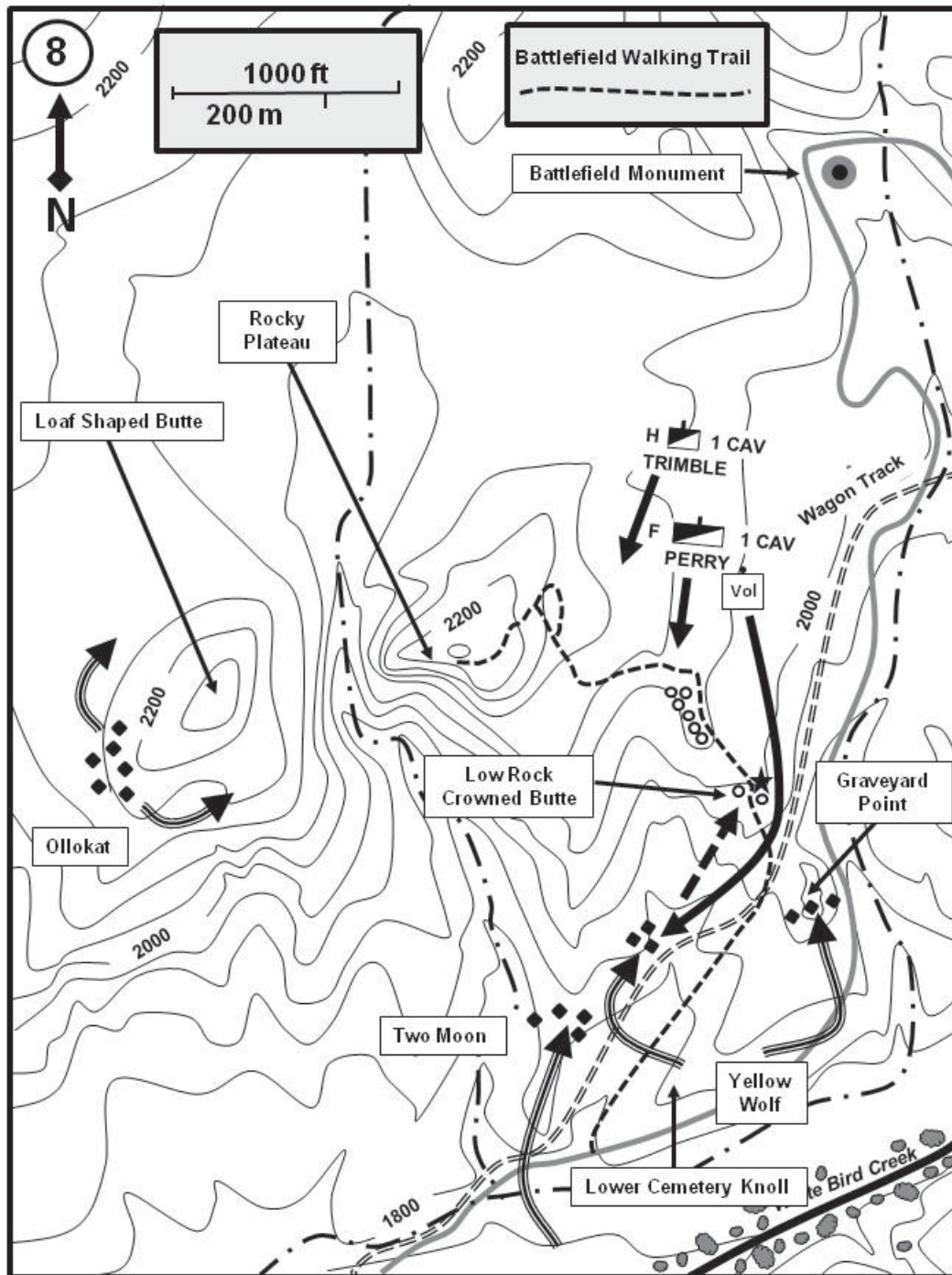
[Neither Lieutenant Parnell or Captain Perry mention the peace party]

*We had advanced about a hundred yards when I noticed Perry's Troops moving into line at a trot. It was now fairly daylight, the Indians were seen advancing and firing commenced at once.*<sup>45</sup>

- Lieutenant William R. Parnell

*On the more distant of these ridges Lieutenant Theller halted, deployed his advance-guard and at the same time sent me word that "the Indians were in sight."*<sup>46</sup>

- Lieutenant William R. Parnell



Map 8.

## Stand 8A

### Captain Perry's Decision

*I saw the Indians coming out of the brush, and realized that to charge would only drive them into the brush and under cover while my command would be in the open, exposed to their fire. I took the situation at a glance; that the ridge I was on was the most defensible position in that vicinity. I accordingly dismounted my troop and deployed on the ridge, sending my horses into the valley between the two ridges before described. At the same time I directed the eight civilians to occupy the round knoll on my left and ordered Trimble – to take care of my right.<sup>47</sup>*

- Captain David Perry

**Directions:** Continue up the trail to the vicinity of the interruptive sign on Volunteer Knoll.

**Orientation:** The key terrain features of the battlefield can now be viewed from the perspective of the US Army position. We are currently occupying what was the extreme left flank of the Army's first defensive line. To the immediate south is Cemetery Ridge and beyond that is White Bird Creek. The loaf shaped butte is 900 yards to the west. The Army right flank was on the Rocky Plateau just over 500 yards to the northwest. Between the Rocky Plateau and this location is battle ridge. The low ground to the northwest is where the Army held their horses.

**Discussion 1:** Captain Perry was several hundred yards to the rear when he heard the shots and observed Lieutenant Theller's advance guard forming a dismounted skirmish line on the ridge. He immediately formed F Company into a line and gave the order for the troopers to draw pistols as he intended to charge over the ridge. At the same time, George Shearer led the Volunteers forward into the attack ahead of the regulars. They swung around the east side low rocky butte on the ridge and dashed toward White Bird Creek. Warriors, led by Two Moons and Yellow Wolf, easily countered the civilian's hasty and uncoordinated attack. Mr. Shearer recognized the futility of his unsupported charge and attempted to form a dismounted line. However, most of his men decided to withdraw and rejoin the Soldiers on the ridge.

Meanwhile, Captain Perry's company advanced rapidly toward the ridge. Perry turned to his trumpeter and directed him to sound the charge only to find that the Soldier had lost his trumpet during the decent in White Bird Canyon. He also re-evaluated the situation as he reached the crest of the ridge. To his front, there were Warriors firing from covered and concealed positions along the creek and from Cemetery Ridge. He decided that the ridge offered the best defensible position and directed his company to dismount and fight on foot. Their position was about midway between the low rocky butte on the east end of the ridge and the Rocky Plateau on the west end.

Every fourth man took the horses to the rear and the remaining Soldiers deployed with about three yards between each man. A few scattered rocks and waist-high grass provided minimal cover and concealment. However, for the most part, the Soldiers were silhouetted along the crest of the ridge. The non-commissioned officers quickly organized the skirmish line and the Soldiers engaged the Nez Perce Warriors to the front with long range fire. Perry then turned his attention to his exposed west flank and sent a courier to Captain Trimble to deploy H Company to the right of F Company.

## Stand 8B

### Volunteer Knoll

*I was in command of them [the Volunteers]. That was just before the action commenced. I saw Captain Perry forming his line. I went down on the extreme left that carried me under some hills that hid his line completely from my view. On arriving on the flat to the left of those hills, I saw some Indians running on low ground, toward us and we opened fire on them. Those Indians then immediately took to the brush on the bank of the creek which was about 75 yards to my left. From there they opened fire upon us. I ordered the men to dismount. Some of them obeyed this order. Others turned round and put out. In the meantime firing had been going on to our right beyond the line of hills. I could hear the firing but could not see the troops. I then called upon my men to follow me to the top of the hill between me and Captain Perry's men.<sup>48</sup>*

- Mr George Shearer

**Direction:** Conduct the discussion at the same location as Stand 8A.

**Orientation:** This is the same as Stand 8A.

**Discussion 2:** After their abortive advance, the Volunteers retreated back to the small rocky knoll (location of Stand 8B). Captain Perry observed their position at the knoll and believed the citizens secured the left flank of his defensive line. He provided instructions to Lieutenant Theller to take command of the F Company line and then galloped toward H Company to confer with Captain Trimble.

Unfortunately, the volunteer's position was threatened by fire from Cemetery Knoll. Two Moons, Yellow Wolf, Fire Body, and other Nez Perce poured taunts and fire into the citizens. A Warrior called out to Charles Crooks: "You, Charley Crooks: Take your Papa's hoss [horse] and go home."<sup>49</sup> More damaging than the heckling was the accurate fire of the Nez Perce. The Indian fire wounded Theodore Swarts in the hip and Herman Faxon was shot in the thigh. The situation was much more dangerous than the Volunteers had bargained upon and would soon have serious consequences on the fight.

#### Analysis:

1. What is your evaluation of Captain Perry's actions on contact?
2. What is your overall assessment of the terrain that Captain Perry selected as his defensive line?
  - a. What are advantages of defending from this ground?
  - b. What are the disadvantages?
3. Today's Special Forces units use several unofficial criteria when determining if it is feasible to work different indigenous groups. These include:
  - a. Are the indigenous force's goals the same or similar today to the US forces?
  - b. Are the indigenous forces willing to kill or be killed for the goals?

Analyze the Idaho volunteer's motivation to fight based upon these criteria.

## Additional Vignettes

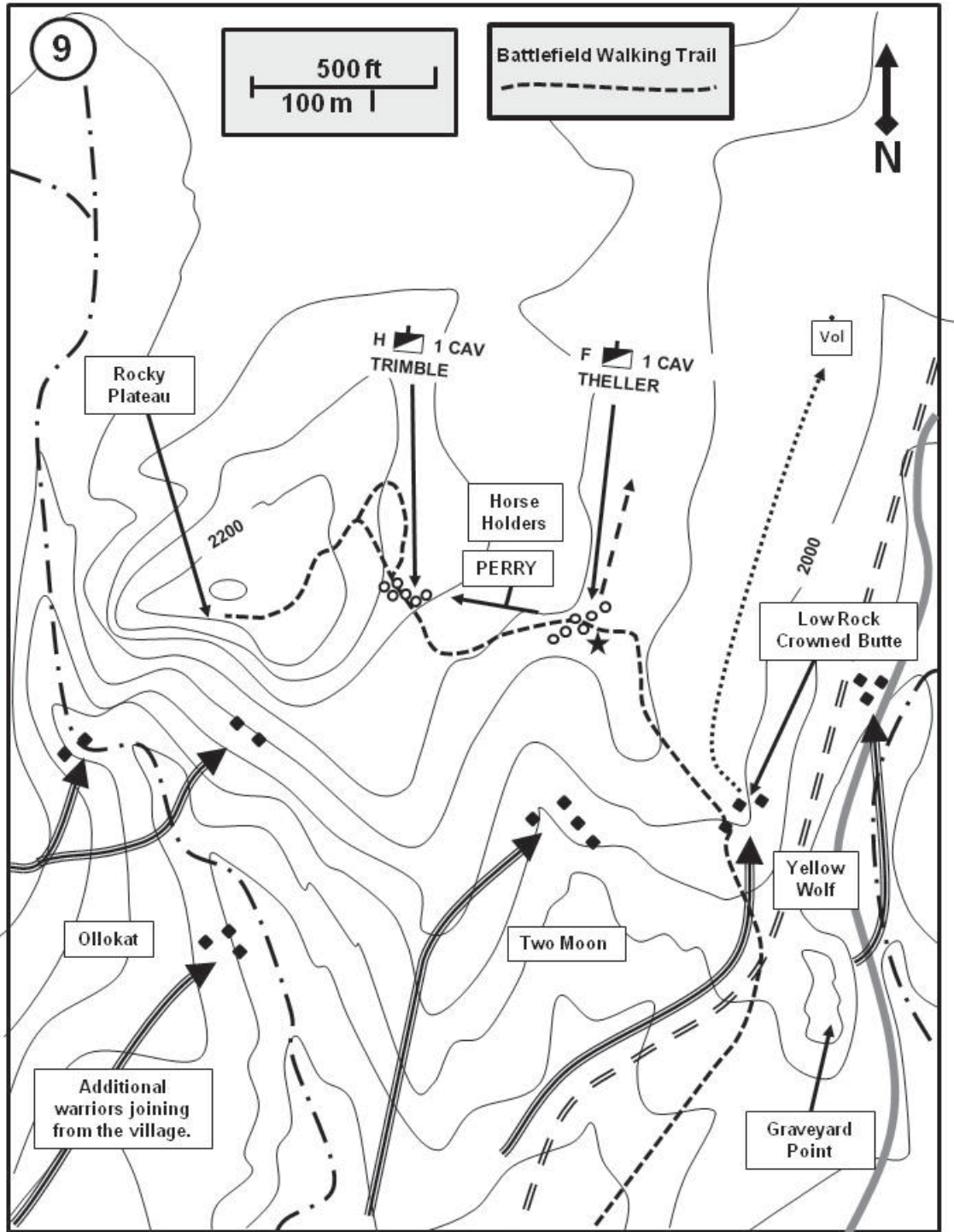
Question by Recorder: *“Was the position taken up by the command an advantageous one, where the Indians were met?”* Answer by Lieutenant Parnell: *“Yes, I think it was, as far as the right of the line was concerned, our position was a good one.”* Question: *“You have mentioned a knoll, occupied by citizens on the left. Was that not key point to the position?”* Answer: *“It was the key point to that section of the line... The knoll was the most important point. It covered the low ground on both sides.”*<sup>50</sup>

### - Proceedings of the Court of Inquiry

*As the first shot was fired Company “F” formed right front into line... and Company “H” formed on the prolongation and deployed as skirmishers on “F” Company right, and the citizens placed themselves on the line as it was formed... The line after it was formed advanced and inclined a little to the left and halted overlooking the Indian Camp and commenced opening fire upon the Indians in camp, quite a distance from them though too far to do any execution.*<sup>51</sup>

### - First Sergeant Michael McCarthy





Map 9.



## Stand 9

### F Company's Fight

*I attribute it [the breaking of F Company's line] to the citizens giving way and the Indians getting a cross fire on us. Of course the Indians getting in rear of the company and several men being killed there, had a demoralizing effect upon the men.*<sup>52</sup>

- Sergeant Charles Leeman

**Directions:** Continue down the Battlefield Walking Trail approximately 250 yards. Conduct the stand in the vicinity of where the trail bends back to the east. This is the vicinity of the F Company position.

**Orientation:** Again, the key terrain features of the battlefield are viewed from the US Army perspective. We are currently standing in about the center of the US Army defensive line. To the southeast is the Army left flank at Volunteer Knoll. The Army right flank was on the Rocky Plateau to the west. The vastness of the terrain swallows the small units that contended the ground. The Army line was not continuous. There was a gap of about 80 yards between F Company and the Volunteers and on the east flank the gap between F and H Companies there was at least another 150 yards. The ground to the front was the Army's engagement area and the cavalry mounts were collected in the low ground to the rear.

**Discussion:** Captain Perry directed Lieutenant Theller to assume command of Company F and then moved to the right to confer with Captain Trimble. He not only wanted to direct the battalion fight, he also wanted to obtain a trumpet to assist in the command of control of the two companies. He latter stated, "A cavalry command on a battlefield without a trumpet is like a ship at sea without a helm, perfectly unmanageable (sic)."<sup>53</sup> At the time, Perry believed his position to be relatively strong. The position dominated the ground to the front and there was the large swale in which the wagon road ran to the east of the Volunteers' position. The ridge also protected the horse holders and their led horses gathered behind the company. Unfortunately the situation worsened rapidly during Perry's absence.

The F Company stand on the ridge lasted only a few minutes. Yellow Wolf stated, "Those Soldiers did not hold their position ten minutes."<sup>54</sup> The Volunteers held the knoll only a few minutes and quickly retreated. Yellow Wolf and about 16 Warriors charged up the swale and occupied the position vacated by the citizen Volunteers. From the knoll, the Warriors enfiladed Perry's line and poured in a devastating crossfire. Perry later testified that he wanted to execute a charge to retake the knoll. However, by the time he returned to the company, it was too late. He instead ordered the company leadership to refuse the line back to the rear. Perry then attempted again to link up with Captain Trimble to discuss the deteriorating situation. First Sergeant Leeman stated that the fire was "very hot" and caused six to 10 casualties in F Company. The Indians also fired onto the led horses causing many of the frightened horses to yank free of their holders and scatter over the field. Lieutenant Theller and the non-commissioned officers attempted to withdraw the line to the right and rear. However, according to Sergeant Leeman, most of his men were young and experienced and it was impossible to get them to stand. Some Soldiers interpreted the fallback-fighting tactic as an order to retreat. In a short time most of the Soldiers on the left side of the skirmish line panicked and fled from the field. Captain Perry and few NCOs managed to rally some of the Soldiers on the company right flank and join up with H Company.

**Analysis:** The area to front was Captain Perry's selected engagement area. Field Manual 3-21.10, *The Infantry Rifle Company*, states that one of the key steps of engagement area development was to determine the enemy scheme of maneuver. The FM recommends the following steps: (the staff ride leader should consider making the following steps into a handout for discussion)

- Determine how the enemy will structure the attack. In what formation will he attack? How will he sequence his forces?
- Determine how the enemy will use his reconnaissance assets. Will he try to infiltrate friendly positions?
- Determine where and when the enemy will change formations and establish support-by-fire positions.
- Determine where, when, and how the enemy will conduct his assault and breaching operations. Determine likely OPs and what terrain the enemy is likely to employ for supporting fires.

- Determine where and when he will commit follow-on forces.
- Determine the enemy's expected rates of movement.
- Assess the effects of his combat multipliers.
- Determine what reactions the enemy is likely to have in response to projected friendly actions.

Another consideration in the engagement area development is the capabilities of the available weapons systems. The Cavalry's Model 1873 Springfield trapdoor-breech-loading carbine had an effective range of 400 yards. However, post-Indian war studies show that most Soldiers lacked the skill to hit targets beyond 50 yards.

Based upon the steps shown above and the available weapon systems, evaluate Captain Perry's consideration of the enemy's scheme of maneuver.

Discuss the Command and control (C2) challenges encountered by the US Army leaders after 1st contact and the means by which C2 was conducted? What procedures do we have today to ensure effective C2 on the battlefield today?

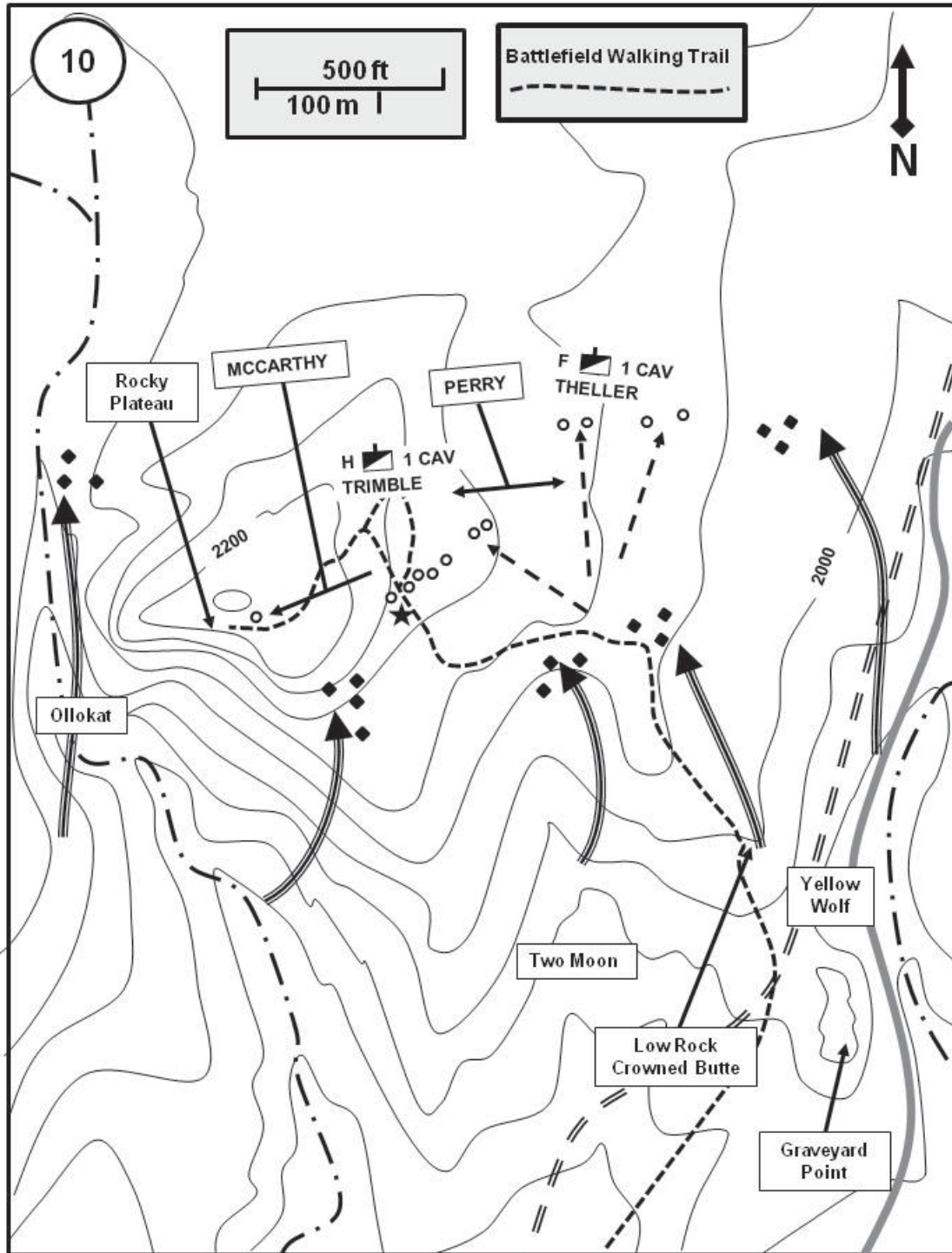
### **Additional Vignettes**

*I was drunk that night. Next morning they missed me, and I must have lain out all night in the bushes where one woman found me, My wife said to me, "What are you doing here? Everybody has gone for the fighting... I jumped on my horse and hurried away without my weapon."<sup>55</sup>*

- Husis Owyteen (Wounded Head)

*We ran our horses to where the fighting was getting under way. There were about sixteen of us and we struck the Soldiers' left flank. Those Soldiers, some of them in citizen clothes, were on a low rocky butte, other edge of the regular Soldiers. They did not stay there any time, and I, Two Moons, hardly saw them at all. <sup>56</sup>*

- Lepeet Hessemlooks (Two Moons)



Map 10.

## Stand 10

### H Company's Fight

*It was bad judgment and certainly not tactical to put the entire command on the line, leaving no reserves whatever in either troop, and, to increase the danger of such a fatal error, the men were in the saddle in and exposed position, while the Indians were on foot, taking cover in the grass and behind rocks. Very soon the men dismounted of their own account. Some were shot off their horses, and as the firing became hotter many loose horses were soon galloping away in the rear of the line.<sup>57</sup>*

- Lieutenant William R. Parnell

**Directions:** Continue west along the battlefield walking trail to the point where it bends to the northwest and then walk approximately another 80 yards. This is roughly the center of the H Company skirmish line.

**Orientation:** Initially H Company formed the right of the Army skirmish line with approximately a 150 to 200 yard gap between them and F Company. The H Company right flank did not extend all the way to the Rocky Plateau. Another key terrain feature is the ravine between the Rocky Plateau and the loaf shaped butte. The ravine provides a route around H Company's right flank. The ravine, slightly less than 400 yards to the front and flank, is well beyond the effective range of H Company's firing line. What would become the rocky plateau flank position is 130 yards to the west.

**Discussion:** Captain Joel Trimble deployed his H Company to right of the F Company line and kept his men mounted in anticipation of an order to charge. His company formed a mounted skirmish line with approximately five yards between each man. Trimble assumed a position to control the right side of the company and directed Lieutenant Parnell to take responsibility for the left side of the line.

Almost immediately, the Nez Perce maneuvered to threaten the company's right flank. Some Soldiers later testified that the Nez Perce attempted to drive a herd of wild horses through the company line which then veered around the west end of the Army line. Instead, the movement was a demonstration of the Nez Perce's tactical and horsemanship skills. Yellow Wolf, a prominent Nez Perce Warrior, stated, "The Warriors... hanging on the side of their horses where [were] not seen... No wild horses were in this battle... Every horse carried a rider."<sup>58</sup> The Warriors leaned to the opposite sides of their ponies to protect themselves from the Soldier's fire. Among the Warriors that swept by H Company's flank were Shore Crossing and Red Moccasin Tops the two young braves responsible for the initial revenge murders. Both wore red blankets to demonstrate their bravery and contempt for the Soldiers. Quickly, Ollokot maneuvered most of his Warriors to threaten the company's flank and rear.

The Indian flanking movement panicked some of the H Company Soldiers. Several retreated from the threatened flank and bunched together behind the company line. To protect the flank, Captain Trimble personally positioned First Sergeant Michael McCarthy and six men to hold a rocky outcrop on the company's right flank. The position dominated the ravine in which the Indians were maneuvering around the flank.

Captain Trimble then returned to the main line and met with Captain Perry. Trimble suggested a charge toward the village to regain the initiative. Perry overruled the suggestion and stated that the only way to avoid catastrophic defeat was to retreat. He directed Trimble to move his company to the rear and find a more defensible position.

**Analysis:**

1. Evaluate the three major options available to Captain Perry

- a. Trimble's suggestion to charge the village (who has the better grasp of the situation, Trimble or Perry?)
- b. Continue to defend.
- c. Retreat.

2. Lieutenant Parnell, an experienced and competent officer, stated that the right of the line (H Company) was a good position. What is your evaluation of the H Company position and Captain Trimble's command and control (C2) of the fight?

- a. What are the strengths of the position?
- b. What are the weaknesses?

## Additional Vignettes

*I, Two Moons, saw Sarpsis Ilppilp, Wahlitits, and Tipyahlahnah Kapskaps, all three wearing full length red blanket coats and two of them on fine-looking grey horses, come [sic] riding side by side at head of the charge. Those three Warriors came through that wild charge and mixing up the Soldiers, untouched by the hail of enemy bullets. They did not pay attention to enemy bullets that must have been as hail about them. Shooting from horseback, these three noted Warriors drove the Soldiers back. Never stopping, the Soldiers gave way before them. Turned and rode hard from that deadly mixing. After this battle these three men were known as the "Three Red Coats."*<sup>59</sup>

- Lepeet Hessemducks (Two Moons)

*These [Red] coats were to show their contempt, their fun making of the Soldiers, to draw their rifle shots, of which they were not afraid."*<sup>60</sup>

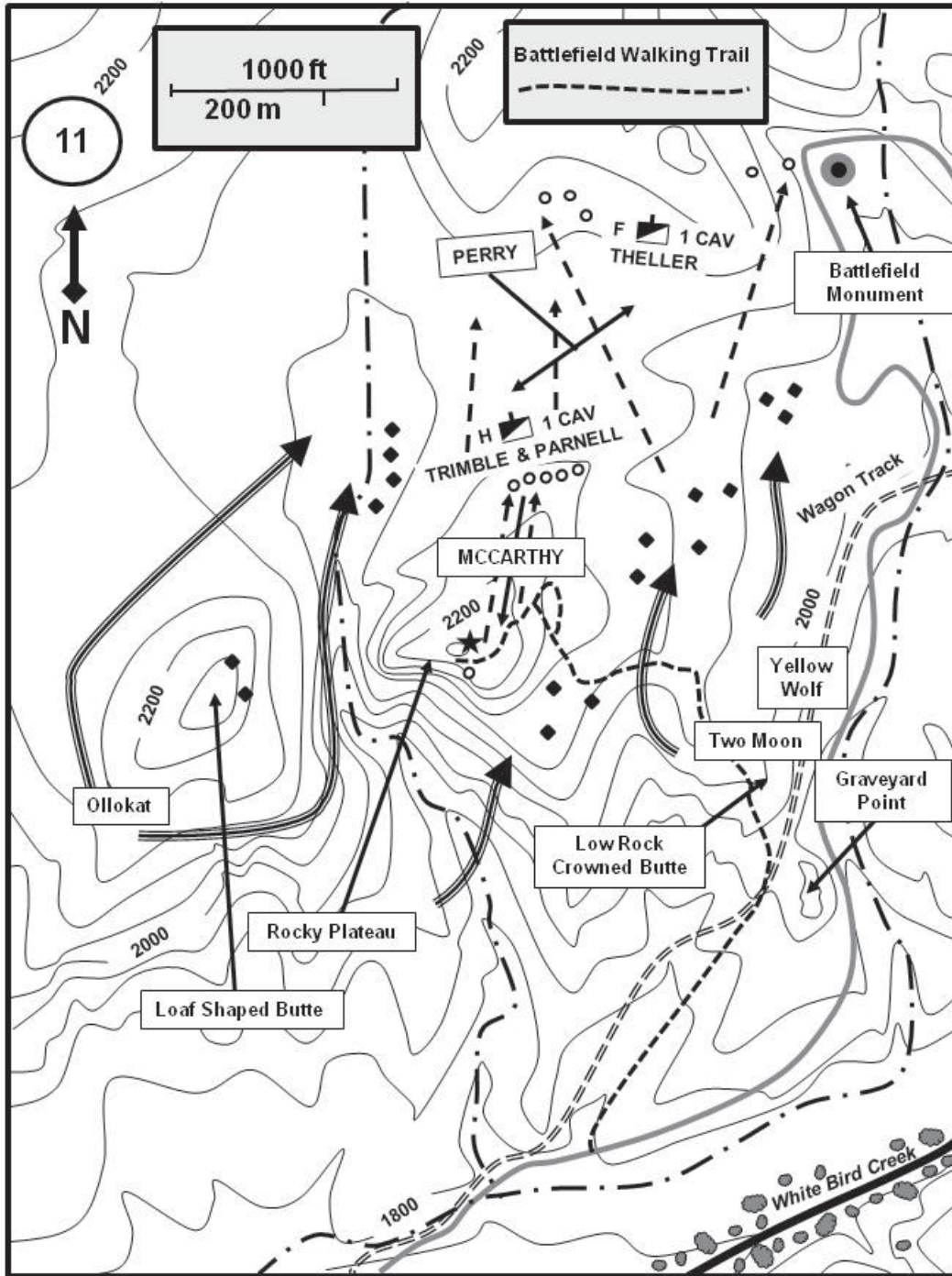
- Weyahwahtsitskan

(Friendly Nez Perce scout known to the whites as "John Miles")

*I formed left front into line and deployed by the right flank at five paces interval and advanced to the ridge, taking post on the right of "F" Company – some several hundred yards on the right, 200 or more yards... After taking position, I discovered and it was reported to me, that the Indians were moving around on our right and driving stock. Several of my men had commenced firing them off their horses. I cautioned the men to remain steady as they were and detailed 1st Sergeant and six men to take post on a high point on the right and went with them to this point, a high point commanding the whole situation."*<sup>61</sup>

- Captain Joel Trimble





Map 11.

## Stand 11

### First Sergeant Michael McCarthy's Fight

*There was a bluff near where the right of our line rested, and I was detached by Captain Trimble with five or six men to occupy the right front of the bluff. I dismounted and secured the horses and commenced firing upon some Indians that were in my front taking up a position on a round knoll in front. For a few minutes I lost track of the movements of the rest of the command. I was firing whilst there several minutes.<sup>62</sup>*

- First Sergeant Michael McCarthy

**Directions:** Continue west along the battlefield walking trail to the Rocky Plateau. Conduct the stand in the vicinity of the interruptive sign at McCarthy's Point.

**Orientation:** We're currently located at the rocky plateau. This was the far right flank of the Army line. The squad position at the rocky plateau was separated from the H Company line by perhaps as much as 100 yards. Further to the east is the Army left flank at the low rock butte. This 450 yard long line was occupied by slightly more than 100 Soldiers and civilian Volunteers. The key terrain visible from this position is the loaf shaped butte at 300 yards to the west and the ravine which is 300 yards to the south and west.

**Discussion 1:** First Sergeant Michael McCarthy occupied a position he described as a "natural breast-work." His detachment of six men was responsible for securing H Company's right flank. Arriving at the position, McCarthy dismounted his men and secured the horses to the rear. Almost immediately, they commenced a long range firefight with Indians on and near the loaf-shaped butte. They also repeatedly engaged Warriors slipping through the ravine and around the flank into the company rear area. The sergeant's attention was focused upon the Warriors to his front and flank and he failed to notice that his company was retreating. By default, McCarthy's flank position transitioned into the company rearguard and succeeded in delaying Ollokot's wide flanking maneuver for several minutes. By the time he noticed the retreat, the unit was about 200 yards to the rear.

**Discussion 2 (Move the group to the loop in the walking trail approximately 125 yards to the north-east.):** First Sergeant McCarthy had his men mount and ride for the company but Captain Trimble ordered him to return to the position. In the confusion, McCarthy only succeeded in bringing back three men. When he returned the second time, he again dismounted his men and sheltered the horses behind some boulders. The Nez Perce sensed an opportunity to destroy the detachment and greatly increased the pressure against his position. Small parties of Warriors galloped up the ravine on his right and took position among the rocks between the detachment and the rest of the line. McCarthy decided it was time to abandon the position. He directed his men to mount and make a dash to rejoin the company. The small group took heavy fire and only McCarthy survived the hasty retreat. McCarthy then linked up with a group of Soldiers commanded by Lieutenant William Parnell.

**Analysis:**

1. Appraise the ground Captain Trimble assigned First Sergeant McCarthy to defend.
2. Evaluate the mission assigned to First Sergeant McCarthy and his execution of that mission.
3. Discuss how we train and educate our non-commissioned officers to operate independently with disciplined initiative in the small-unit fight.

## Additional Vignettes

*Somebody called to my party on the rocks to get back, we were going to charge. I mounted my party and started them back, and somebody called out to go back again Sergeant and hold that bluff. I only succeeded in bringing back three men with me; the rest had gone out of my control. When I got back a second time I dismounted and sheltered the horses behind some boulders. It was then that the Indians commenced to advance. Previous to that time they seemed to be acting on the defensive. They then commenced to ride in small parties by my position up towards the right in the direction the herd had gone before. A small party coming under the shelter of this bluff got between me and the rest of the line. I could see the men through the smoke. Their position also sheltered them from the fire of the line. We had then fired about ten rounds apiece, the men firing singly. Then there were signals for me to get back again. Soon as we stood up and showed ourselves, shots came obliquely from the right as they had been coming from the left. I mounted my party as before and started back with a rush. Two of the party must have been killed as I never saw them anymore.*<sup>63</sup>

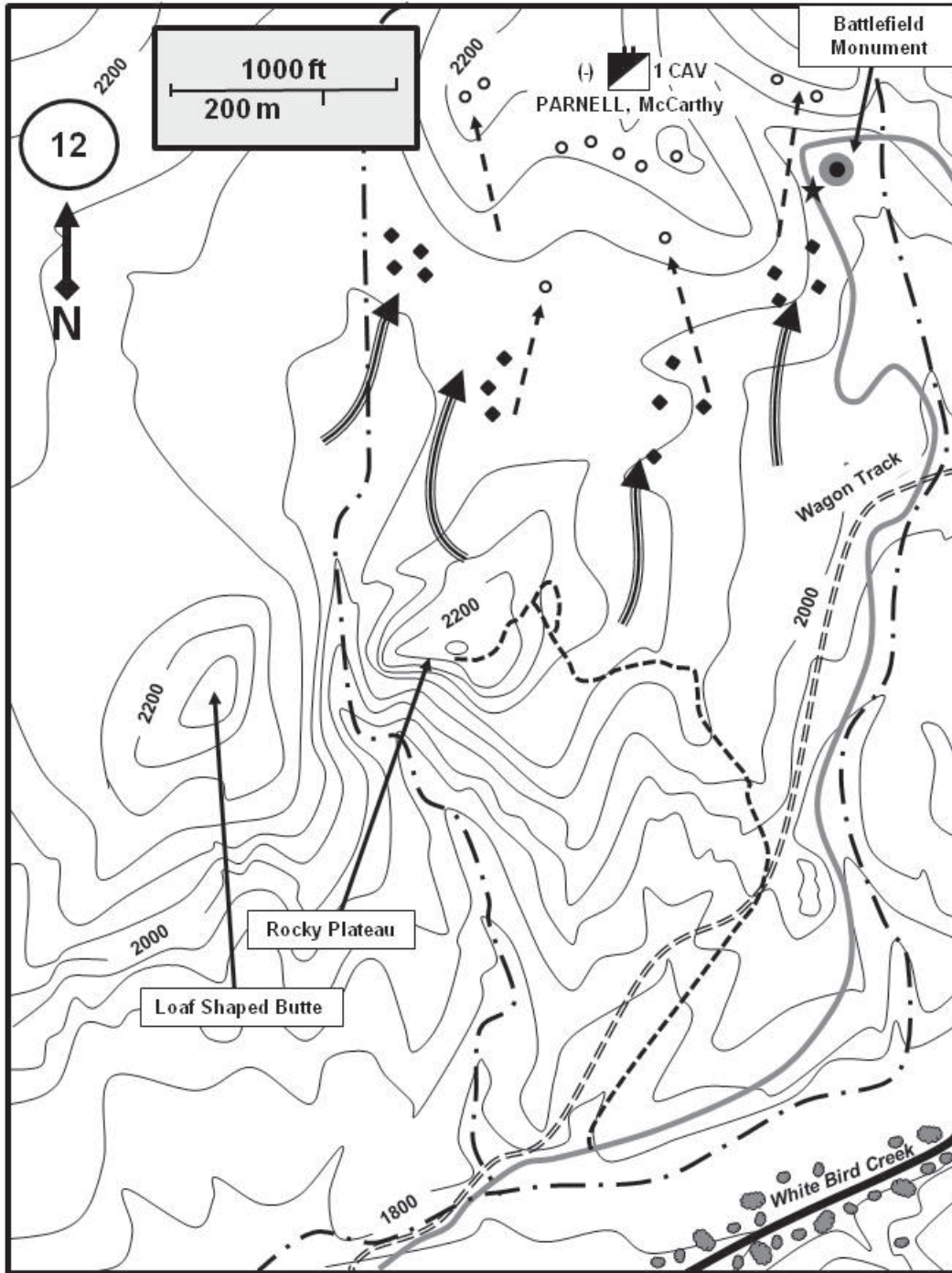
- First Sergeant Michael McCarthy

*Lieut. Parnell remarked to me are you going to leave those men out on that point. I said if we had to abandon that place we would have to call them back to go with the command. We both rode out of the column and hollered to them a number of times to join the command.*<sup>64</sup>

- Captain Joel Trimble

*Medal of Honor Citation: The President of the United States of America, in the name of Congress, takes pleasure in presenting the Medal of Honor to First Sergeant Michael McCarthy, United States Army, for extraordinary heroism on (sic) June, 1876 to January, 1877, while serving with Troop H, 1st US Cavalry, in action at White Bird Canyon, Idaho. First Sergeant McCarthy was detailed with six men to hold a commanding position, and held it with great gallantry until the troops fell back. He then fought his way through the Indians, rejoined a portion of his command, and continued the fight in retreat. He had two horses shot from under him, and was captured, but escaped and reported for duty after three days' hiding and wandering in the mountains.*<sup>65</sup>

- General Orders: Date of Issue: November 20, 1897



Map 12.



## Stand 12A

### The Collapse of the Army Line

*The troops seemed to break from this position at this time. I heard no order to retreat. I don't know by whose order it was made. We had fallen back some distance I should say some 30 to 40 yards. I there again saw Captain Perry try to rally these men on the ridge. They would only stand for a very short time and still keep retreating.*<sup>66</sup>

- Sergeant Richard Powers

**Directions:** Return to the vehicles and drive approximately one mile north on Old White Bird Road to the Battle-field monument. Conduct the first part of the discussion looking west and southwest onto the retreat route of the Army units.

**Orientation:** We are currently located along the retreat route of some of the Army units. Slightly less than 800 yards to the southwest is the back side of the rocky plateau. Battle Ridge is to the left of the rocky plateau. The two companies retreated to the north with some of the units passing over this ground. Other units retreated over the ground directly to the west of this position. Lieutenant Parnell and First Sergeant McCarthy organized a defensive line on the hill directly to the west.

**Discussion 1:** Captains Perry and Trimble hoped to organize an orderly retreat. However, about 45 minutes after the first shot had been fired, their defensive lines were completely broken and the men were scrambling to the rear. Captain Perry later testified that the men were “seized with a panic that was uncontrollable.”<sup>67</sup> The panicked Soldiers galloped away if they could find a horse or simply ran away from the fight if they could not get to horse. Many left their weapons behind in an effort to hasten their movement.

Not all the Soldiers panicked. Lieutenant Parnell managed to fall back with 10 to 15 men, maintaining a disciplined skirmish line. About 200 yards to the rear, he encountered Lieutenant Theller. Parnell later testified that Theller was, “dismounted and seemed somewhat confused and excited.”<sup>68</sup> Parnell provided the agitated lieutenant with a horse, who then galloped off to the rear. Lieutenant Parnell’s firing line provided the opportunity for some Soldiers to rally. Mr. Chapman recommended to the two captains that the best place to make a stand was the rocky outcrop held by First Sergeant McCarthy. It was during this brief conference that Captain Trimble signaled McCarthy to return to the rocky outcrop. The three remaining officers rallied a few dozen Soldiers and attempted a charge toward the rocky outcrop. Nez Perce fire and threats to both flanks scattered the half-hearted Army attempt to regain the initiative. Again the Soldiers turned to the rear in a disorderly retreat. Only Lieutenant Parnell managed to make a stand with a handful of men. The two captains then moved to the rear and again attempted to organize another stand.

It was during Parnell’s second stand that First Sergeant McCarthy linked up with the lieutenant. Parnell once more provided a disciplined firing line for other Soldiers to rally upon. Lieutenant Parnell directed McCarthy to take charge of the line while he attempted to rally some of the Soldiers that were running to the rear. Again, McCarthy found himself in charge of a desperate rear guard action. McCarthy slowly pulled back but his skirmish line eventually collapsed and joined in the pell-mell retreat. In the retreat, McCarthy’s horse was shot and he was left behind. Fortunately, Privates Charles Fowler and Abraham Brooks noticed the absence of the popular sergeant and returned for him. At this point, the retreat broke into two groups. Captains Perry and Trimble took one group up the west wall of the canyon. Their group contained some of the Volunteers who followed a cattle trail to the high plateau above. The second group, led by Lieutenant Parnell, retreated up the route of the wagon trail.

## Stand 12B

### Sergeant Gunn

*[I] saw the beautiful shaft beside the highway erected to the memory of a Soldier who fell on that spot the fatal day of the White Bird Fight. The Soldier was an old gray-headed sergeant, one who had, no doubt, passed through many campaigns against hostile Indians. He was killed in as fair a duel as ever was fought.*<sup>69</sup>

- Civilian Volunteer, Frank Fenn

**Orientation:** Reorient the group towards the monument. Civilian Frank Fenn fought as a volunteer at the battle of White Bird Canyon. He returned to the area to visit the battlefield in 1926 and saw for the first time the small monument erected here.

**Discussion 2:** When the Nez Perce captured the knoll held by the Volunteers, they were able to bring fire onto the horse holders sheltering behind the ridge. The Indian's fire caused many of the detailed Soldiers to lose control of their horses and many of the mounts ran away. When the Army line on battle ridge collapsed, most of the Soldiers lost all discipline and were primarily concerned with self-preservation. The same panic overcame the men detailed to hold the horses. Some galloped away and left others to fend for themselves. Many of the Soldiers were left on foot. Some escaped and others were overtaken by the well mounted Indians. Sergeant John P. Schorr, fighting with F Company that day, wrote of one of those overtaken. He stated, "The brave old sergeant who fell with his face to his foe, fighting heroically, gray headed and on his fourth enlistment, was Sergeant Patrick Gunn of Troop F."<sup>70</sup> Schorr went on to say that Gunn, "was as fine a 'non com' as anyone could wish for as a comrade. I know, for I was under his instructions as a young recruit."<sup>71</sup>

Both Mr. Fenn and Sergeant Schorr wrote about Sergeant Gunn's last fight. They stated that Sergeant Gunn fought an individual rear guard action that allowed others to escape. In the fight, the sergeant dueled with a Warrior who had dismounted about 15 paces away. The sergeant would fire and fall back a few steps and the Indian would simultaneously fire and advance a few steps. Each combatant fired four or five shots before the sergeant was hit and fell. Even though Gunn lost the duel, Fenn and Schorr felt indebted to him for providing the few minutes they needed to make their own escape. Sergeant Schorr related that many panicked and ran that day, However, Sergeant Gunn and others "answered their last call by never flinching in the line of duty."<sup>72</sup>

**Analysis:** The Army Value of Personal Courage states:

Face fear, danger or adversity (physical or moral). Personal courage has long been associated with our Army. With physical courage, it is a matter of enduring physical duress and at times risking personal safety. Facing moral fear or adversity may be a long, slow process of continuing forward on the right path, especially if taking those actions is not popular with others. You can build your personal courage by daily standing up for and acting upon the things that you know are honorable.

1. How does a unit mitigate the danger of panic and rout in a combat situation?
2. Lieutenant Parnell, First Sergeant McCarthy, and Sergeant Gunn all demonstrated *personal courage*. What was the significance of their actions for the units of the 1st US Cavalry at White Bird Canyon?



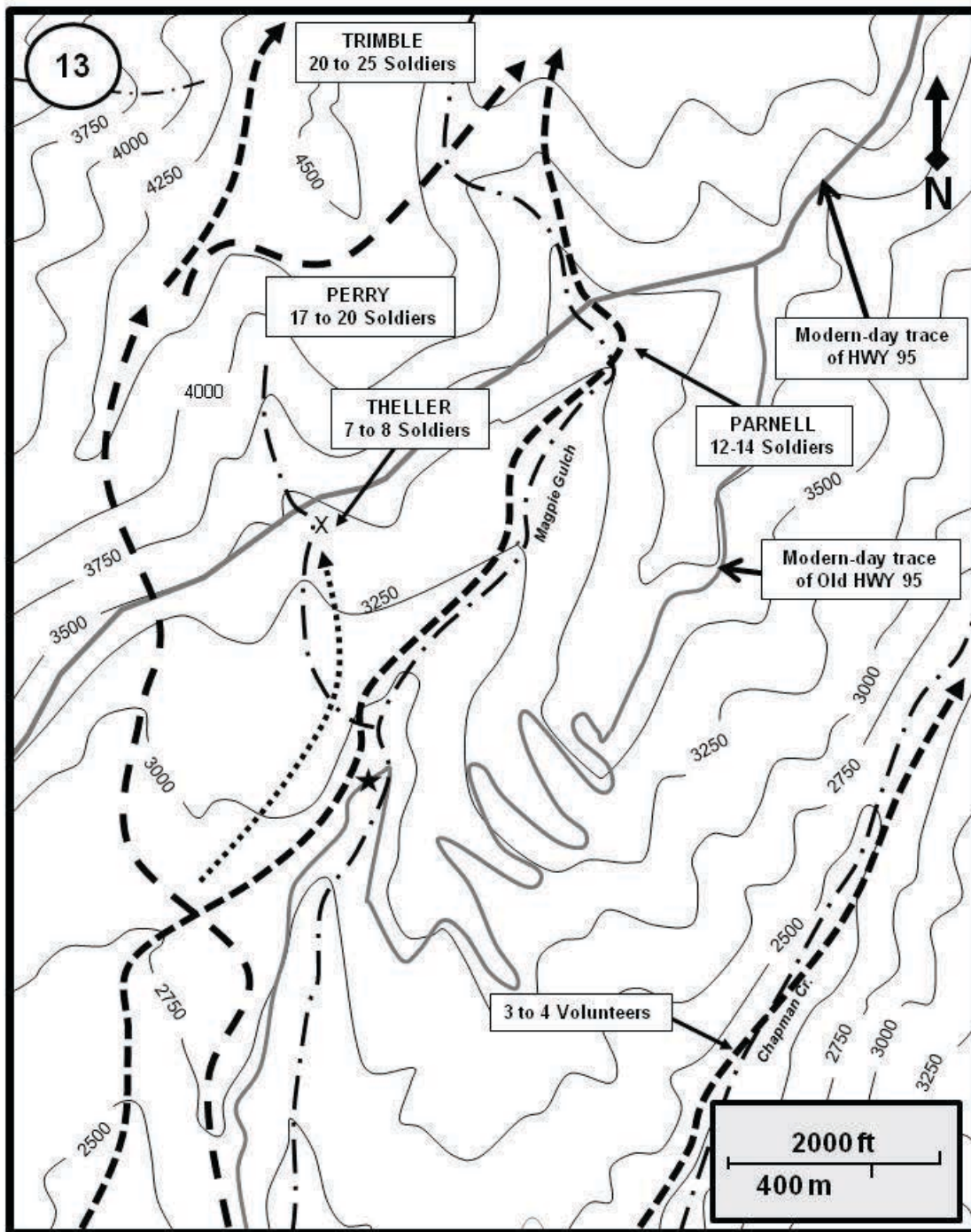
### **Additional Vignettes**

*When the line broke and Soldiers started back pell mell, the holders of the horses seemed to be animated chiefly with a desire to get to the front of the retreating men, and largely, they did so, thereby leaving their comrades afoot to shift for themselves.”<sup>73</sup>*

- Civilian Volunteer, Frank Fenn

*When I got to where the line had been, I found only Lieut. Parnell with a platoon deployed and he was about ten yards in advance of them towards the enemy and he was urging the men to advance and get out some wounded and dismounted men in his front.”<sup>74</sup>*

- First Sergeant Michael McCarthy



Map 13.

## Stand 13

### The Retreat and Lieutenant Edward Theller's Last Stand

*Keeping after the runaway Soldiers, we made a stop to fight seven or eight who had dismounted. Their horses were played out. They were in a ravine where grew thorn bushes. Those Soldiers put up a fight.<sup>75</sup>*

- Himin Maqsmags (Yellow Wolf)

**Directions:** Continue north three miles on Old White Bird Road to where the road makes a significant loop back to the south. Park the vehicles and conduct the discussion along the side of the road.

**Orientation:** We're currently located about two miles northeast of the White Bird Canyon Battlefield. Groups of retreating Soldiers followed two different routes in their attempt to escape from the battlefield. Two groups, one led by Lieutenant Theller and another led by Lieutenant Parnell, passed along this ground. Lieutenant Parnell's group passed through here and continued northeast toward the summit of White Bird Hill. Lieutenant Theller's detachment drifted more to the north up the draw visible to the northwest. He made his last stand in the vicinity of where the draw passes under Highway 95 about 800 yards to the north. Groups led by Captains Perry and Trimble moved up the escarpment about 700 yards to the west.

**Discussion:** Captains Perry and Trimble, along with majority of the retreating Soldiers, followed a cattle trail up the west wall of the canyon. The bulk of the Nez Perce Warriors pursued the Soldiers up that route. Captain Perry tried repeatedly to organize a rear guard and bring order to the panicked troops. His efforts were unsuccessful and he later stated, "The Indians were all this time, pressing us in front and flank and from this time, getting around in our rear. I could only make a show of resistance by galloping in front of the men and facing them about to defend such positions as I could for a short time."<sup>76</sup> At times, he brandished his pistol and threatened to shoot them if they failed to comply. However, the pursuing Nez Perce continued to herd the Soldiers off the battlefield. Weyehwahtsistkan, a Nez Perce Warrior, stated, "It was a wild, deadly racing with the Warriors pressing hard to head them off."<sup>77</sup>

Other Soldiers retreated up the route of the wagon trail. A group of panicked Soldiers and Volunteers led the group up the mountain. Fortunately, Lieutenant Parnell commanded a disciplined rear guard at the rear of the retreat. Parnell had several seasoned non-commissioned officers in his group including First Sergeant Alexander Baird of F Company and the resilient First Sergeant Michael McCarthy of H Company. Their steady leadership allowed the detachment to provide significant resistance to the Indian pursuit. Parnell later recalled, "We slowly retreated up the ravine, holding the Indians in check from knoll to knoll."<sup>78</sup> Each time, Parnell's men held their ground until the Indians gained their flanks and threatened to cut them off. During one of the dashes back to the next knoll, First Sergeant McCarthy again found himself left behind. The sergeant's horse was shot (his fourth horse that day). McCarthy feigned death as the pursuing Warriors rushed past him and then hid when the Warriors scavenged the battlefield. He eventually walked back to Grangeville and rejoined his unit. He later received the Medal of Honor for actions that day.

In the move up the canyon, Parnell's detachment came upon the exhausted Mrs. Isabella Benedict and her two small children. They provided a horse to Mrs. Benedict and tied the children up behind two Soldiers. In the ascent of the steep terrain, Mrs. Benedict lost control of her mount and tumbled into a ravine. Lieutenant Parnell was unable to rescue her when the distraught woman ran away to avoid the Indians closing on the location. She was captured by the Nez Perce but released that same day and eventually walked to Grangeville. In the vicinity of White Bird Hill, Parnell's detachment joined with Captain Perry's group. The two officers organized an orderly withdrawal toward Mount Idaho. The Nez Perce gave up the pursuit when the Soldiers neared the settlements. Perry and Parnell's exhausted Soldiers rode into Grangeville at about 10:00 about four hours after the first shots of the battle were fired. There, they found Captain Trimble and many men from both companies.

On the slopes leading down to White Bird Creek the final Army debacle of the day had already played out. During Parnell's retreat, Lieutenant Theller and seven Soldiers strayed away from the wagon trail and attempted to move up a ravine. The climb proved too much for their blown horses and the pursuing Nez Perce surrounded the group. The lieutenant was forced to form a small perimeter at the bottom of the ravine. He and his men probably hoped for rescue but Captain Perry and Lieutenant Parnell were both unaware that the Indians had isolated Theller's group. Exactly what happened is unknown but Nez Perce sources indicate the Soldiers fought back hard. Days later, a burial party discovered many empty cartridge cases on the ground around the Soldier's corpses. The battlefield evidence and Nez Perce accounts bore testimony of the Soldiers' desperate last stand. It appears that the Soldiers kept the Warriors from closing until lack of carbine ammunition and accumulating casualties ended effective resistance. Eventually, the Warriors closed in and finished off the wounded. No prisoners were taken. Theller's hopeless last stand more than likely bought time for others to escape the Nez Perce pursuit.

After the fight, the surviving officers and non-commissioned officers assessed the losses to their companies. The losses were severe. Perry rode into White Bird Canyon with four officers including himself, 103 Soldiers, Scout Joe Rabusco, and 11 citizen Volunteers. Perry's F Company sustained 21 men killed, including Lieutenant Theller, and H Company had 13 killed. Each company had one wounded. Most of the wounded had been left behind and killed by the Nez Perce. The Volunteers also had two wounded. The final tally was 34 dead and four wounded or 30% casualties. The Nez Perce casualties amounted to only three wounded. The Nez Perce also recovered 63 Springfield carbines, Colt revolvers, and civilian firearms from the defeated 1st Cavalry at White Bird Canyon.

**Analysis:** The Battle of White Bird Canyon was a significant tactical triumph for the Nez Perce and an unmitigated disaster for the Army.

1. What factors contributed to the tactical success of the Nez Perce?
2. What factors contributed to the Army defeat?

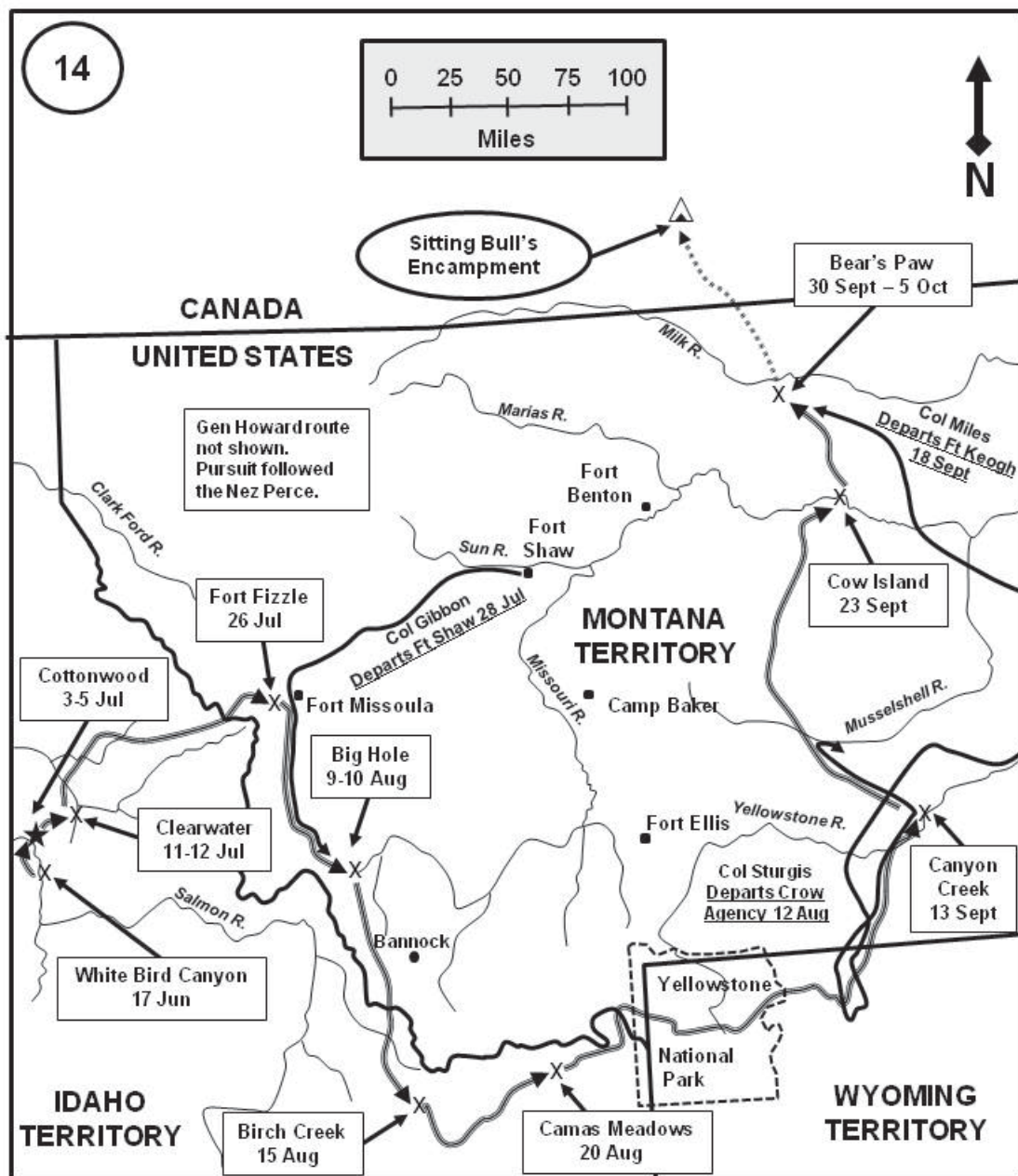
## Additional Vignettes

*It is still a mystery that any of us escaped, for out of ninety men from Troops F and H, First US Cavalry, thirty-three comrades fell in less time than it takes to tell it.”<sup>79</sup>*

- Sergeant John P. Schorr

*I moved to the next rise. We halted a few moments and dismounted and fired, a few shots at the Indians following and a little further on I overtook Lieut. Parnell on the road. He had a few men with him, and they were marching in columns of files up the road, the men occasionally wheeling out and firing as they retreated. I continued on with him until we reached where the road is graded. Here I was riding as the last file of the column of the files. The Indians were riding on our right and on our left and some were coming up the road. My horse was disabled. The column was then moving at a trot and I dismounted and tried to keep up by running. The column was disappearing around a curve in the road. I fell down two or three times from fatigue. I halted and fired my pistol at the Indians who were not more than 50 yards from me at the time.”<sup>80</sup>*

- First Sergeant Michael McCarthy



Map 14.



## Stand 14

### The Nez Perce War

*He who led the young men is dead. It is cold and we have no blankets. The little children are freezing to death. My people, some of them, have run away to the hills and have no blankets, no food; no one knows where they are, perhaps freezing to death. I want time to look for my children and see how many of them I can find. Maybe I shall find them among the dead. Hear me, my chiefs; I am tired; my heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands, I will fight no more forever.<sup>81</sup>*

- Heinmot Tooyalakekt (Chief Joseph)

**Directions:** Continue on Old White Bird Road toward Highway 95 and then go north on the highway to Grangeville. At the intersection of Highways 13 and 95 in Grangeville, go west toward Cottonwood on Highway 95. From the intersection, proceed 13 miles to the Nez Perce National Historic Park turnout (it is approximately 2.5 miles south of Cottonwood).

**Orientation:** Cottonwood, ID is the site of the Norton Ranch at the time of the Nez Perce War. The Army and civilian Volunteers fought several skirmishes with the Nez Perce in the vicinity of Norton Ranch. The Army entrenched the ranch and established a logistical base there during the opening days of the war. On 3 July 1877, the Nez Perce ambushed and destroyed a 13-man reconnaissance patrol commanded by Lieutenant Sevier Rains about three miles north of the ranch. On 4 and 5 July, the Nez Perce skirmished with the Soldiers in the entrenchments while their families bypassed to the north and continued to the northeast toward the Clearwater River. Then on 5 July, the Nez Perce mauled a civilian volunteer detachment going to Norton's Ranch to reinforce the Army position. That skirmish occurred in this area where the monuments are located.

**Discussion:** Some of the young men felt their victory at White Bird Canyon would cow any Army response to the revenge murders and the noncompliance to the decisions of the 1876 Lapwai Agency Conference. However, most of the Nez Perce realized the magnitude of their situation. They recognized that the Army would not only seek retribution for the revenge murders but also punish the Nez Perce for the Army's disastrous defeat at White Bird. They quickly broke camp and crossed the Salmon River to avoid the inevitable Army pursuit. At the same time, General Howard gathered his forces and made plans to punish the Nez Perce and force them onto the reservation.

Unfortunately for the Army, the defeat at White Bird was the first of several embarrassing encounters with Nez Perce. In a series of skirmishes near Norton's Ranch, the Nez Perce fixed Captain's Perry's battalion and easily bypassed his forces. The fights at Norton Ranch included the annihilation of a 13-man reconnaissance patrol commanded by Lieutenant Sevier Rains on 3 July 1877. Then on 5 July, several non-commissioned officers overruled Captain Perry's decision to remain of the defense at the ranch. They forced the reluctant captain to send a relief effort to rescue a civilian detachment that had been isolated and severely mauled by the Nez Perce just to the south of the ranch.

On 11 July, Howard's pursuit caught the Nez Perce on the Clearwater River. In the fight, the Nez Perce kept the Soldiers away from the village and affected a safe withdrawal from the area. The nine-hour battle saw Howard's column of 350 Soldiers with canons and Gatling guns forced onto the defensive by about 100 Nez Perce Warriors. The Army pursuit from 23 June to 12 July also included several failed river crossings by the Army. Several times the Nez Perce were able to seemingly sprint across rivers with all their village equipment, woman, children, and horse herds. While the Army forces fumbled at the river edge sometimes taking days to cross the river.

After the fight at the Clearwater River, the Nez Perce crossed over the Bitterroot Mountains into Montana. In the mountain crossing, the Nez Perce were temporarily delayed at a fortified blocking position manned by 50 Soldiers and 150 citizen Volunteers. The Nez Perce poor understanding of the white culture led them to believe that they were only at war with the Soldiers in Idaho but would be safe if they passed into Montana. The Indian leaders negotiated a safe passage with the local Montana populace which resulted in the 150 citizen Volunteers abandoning the position. The Nez Perce then easily bypassed the remaining 50 Soldiers. The locals dubbed the Soldier's entrenchments as 'Fort Fizzle.' The Nez Perce leisurely moved through Montana buying food and ammunition from the locals. Their slow pace allowed another Army column, commanded by Colonel John Gibbon, to close on the Nez Perce. On 9



August, Gibbon executed a surprise attack on a sleeping Nez Perce village at Big Hole. The attack was initially successful but the Nez Perce counterattacked and pushed the Soldiers out of the village. They then forced the Soldiers to take up defensive positions while the village escaped. Gibbon's 7th US Infantry suffered heavy casualties and played no further role in the pursuit. Despite their tactical success at Big Hole, it was a Pyrrhic victory for the Nez Perce. Their casualties in men and material were heavy and their morale had taken a considerable blow. The Nez Perce logistical situation greatly improved when they captured a wagon train of supplies at Birch Creek on 15 August. Nevertheless, the Nez Perce leaders now recognized that their only hope of safety now lay in escape to Canada.

Howard's column took up the pursuit after the battle of Big Hole. On 19 August, the Nez Perce raided Howard's Camp at Camas Meadows and succeeded in driving off most of the Army's pack mules. The successful raid significantly delayed the Army pursuit. Then on 12 September, a third Army column consisting of elements of the 7th US Cavalry caught up with the Nez Perce near Canyon Creek. A successful Nez Perce rear guard at Canyon Creek bloodied Colonel Sturgis' 7th US Cavalry and allowed the fugitives to continue their dash for Canada. Then on 23 September, a small Army detachment (12 men) guarding a supply depot at Cow Island on the Missouri River skirmished with the Nez Perce. The Soldiers, outnumbered 10 to 1, were unable to prevent the Nez Perce from pillaging the supplies. More importantly, the guard force was unable to block the Nez Perce from fording the Missouri River and making their final dash to Canada.

The Nez Perce's string of successes and their 1,500 mile bid for freedom came to an end in late September. Despite their string of victories, the Nez Perce were exhausted by their long marches and accumulating casualties. The tribal elders stopped to rest their people at Snake Creek near Bear Paw Mountain. The camp was just 40 miles short of the international border with Canada. They were unaware that a fourth Army column commanded by Colonel Nelson Miles was rapidly closing on the resting camp. Colonel Miles a dedicated trainer, experienced tactician, and aggressive battlefield leader had assembled a combined arms strike force of 520 men. His force included battalions from the 2d US Cavalry, 7th US Cavalry, and his own 5th US Infantry. He also had a section of artillery. Miles was determined to catch the Nez Perce and mounted his infantry on ponies recently captured from the Sioux to increase his rate of march.

Colonel Miles's initial attack on 30 September captured the Nez Perce horse herd and greatly hindered the Indian's ability to escape. The loss of the horse herd forced the Nez Perce to fight a defensive fight to protect their families. Both sides suffered heavy casualties in the first day of fighting. The Nez Perce dug in and hoped that Sitting Bull's Sioux, hiding out in Canada, would come to their rescue. Miles switched over to siege tactics to fix the Nez Perce in place. General Howard arrived with some of his weary column during the siege but allowed Colonel Miles to continue to command the tactical fight. During the siege, Chief White Bird and his followers were able to escape into Canada with about one-third of the Warriors and a fraction of the non-combatants. Chief Joseph, one of the few surviving tribal elders, surrendered the remainder of the people on 5 October 1877. General Howard and Colonel Miles had great respect and admiration for the conquered enemy and in good faith offered lenient conditions of surrender to the Nez Perce. However, their superiors wanted the Nez Perce punished and overturned the conditions of the surrender. The Nez Perce were sent into exile, first to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas for eight months, and then on to the Indian Territory in Oklahoma. In 1883 a small number were allowed to return to the Lapwai Reservation. The remainder returned to Idaho in 1885.

**Analysis:** Part of the US Army Warrior Ethos states, "I will always place the mission first, I will never accept defeat, I will never quit."

1. What can our Army today learn from the experiences of those Soldiers that fought at White Bird Canyon?
2. What can we learn from the Nez Perce?

## Additional Vignettes

**Cottonwood Skirmishes:** *If your officers won't lead you, I will''<sup>82</sup>*

- Sergeant Simpson

**Clearwater:** *The Indian way of fighting is not to get killed. Killed today, there can be no fighting tomorrow.<sup>83</sup>*

- Roaring Eagle

**Fort Fizzle:** *In the meantime that portion of the Volunteers, some 100 or more, representing Bitterroot Valley, hearing that the Nez Perce promised to pass peaceably through it, determined that no act of hostility on their part should provoke the Indians to a contrary measure, and without leave, left in squads of from one to a dozen.<sup>84</sup>*

- Captain Charles Rawn

**Big Hole:** *Our attack was a complete surprise, and we gradually forced them back to the opposite side of their camp... We supposed at this time we were masters of the camp. I was not so, however... They rallied from all directions and soon every bush and tree covered an Indian.<sup>85</sup>*

- Captain Charles Rawn

**Camas Meadows:** *I did not know how many mules we got. All were kept for packing and riding, but the Warriors did not ride them.<sup>86</sup>*

- Yellow Wolf

**Canyon Creek:** *During all this time their herd was moving slowly across our front in the direction of the Canyon, Evidently being driven by the Squaws and children, the Warriors between us and their herd, standing us off.<sup>87</sup>*

- Scout S.G. Fisher

**Cow Island:** *They attacked this party (which had been increased to 12 enlisted men joined by four citizens) about 6 p.m., charged seven times upon their rifle-pits, but were repulsed.<sup>88</sup>*

- Colonel John Gibbon

## Endnotes

1. Peter Cozzens, *Eyewitnesses to the Indian Wars 1865-1890, Vol 2, The Wars for the Pacific Northwest* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2003), 302-303.
2. <http://www.aaanativearts.com/nez-perce/nez-perce-reservation.htm>
3. Cozzens, 300.
4. Cozzens, 332.
5. John D. McDermott, *Forlorn Hope* (Boise, ID: Idaho State Historical Society, 1978), 1.
6. L.V. McWhorter, *Yellow Wolf, His Own Story* (Caldwell, ID: Caxton Press, 2007), 35.
7. Jerome A. Greene, *Nez Perce Summer 1877* (Helena, MT: Montana Historical Society Press, 2000), 21.
8. Elliot West, *The Last Indian War* (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 2009), 115.
9. West, 116.
10. Cozzens, 316-317.
11. West, 62.
12. Cozzens, 307.
13. Cozzens, 307.
14. Cyrus Townsend Brady, *Northwestern Fights and Fighters* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday Press, 1907), 63-64.
15. One woman and one child died in the raids. Mrs. Jennet Manuel and her son John were kidnapped by the Warriors. Their exact fate is unknown, but are assumed to have died sometime during the course of the war. The records clearly indicate that the Warriors raped at least one woman and probably raped 2 others. The records also show that a fourth may have been raped. Elliot West, *The Last Indian War*, 129.
16. McDermott, 1.
17. Merrill D. Beal, *I Will Fight No More Forever* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1963), 45.
18. Cozzens, 308.
19. Cyrus Townsend Brady, *Northwestern Fights and Fighters* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday Press, 1907), 113-14.
20. Copies of the two dispatches sent by L.P. Brown (a resident of Mount Idaho) are found in: John D. McDermott, *Forlorn Hope* (Boise, ID: Idaho State Historical Society, 1978), 52-53.
21. Greene, 34.
22. Cozzens, 348.
23. McDermott, 176.
24. McDermott, 182.
25. Townsend Brady, 112.
26. L.V. McWhorter, *Hear Me, My Chiefs*, (Caldwell, ID: Caxton Printers, LTD. 1952), 232.
27. Townsend Brady, 120.
28. Captain David Perry was brevetted to Colonel on 5 April 1868 for gallantry in an engagement with a large band of Indians on the Malheur River, Oregon, 5 April 1868. It was the custom of the frontier army to refer to fellow officers by their brevet rank. The brevet rank was an honorary rank and used as a means of recognizing bravery in action.
29. Cheryl Wilfong, *Following the Nez Perce Trail, 2d Edition* (Corvallis, OR: Oregon State University Press, 2006), 73.
30. The contemporary title for the company musician was the trumpeter. The trumpeter's instrument was referred to as a trumpet and the commands were referred to as bugle calls. Today's Army refers to the 1878 trumpet as a bugle.
31. L.V. McWhorter, *Hear Me, My Chiefs*, (Caldwell, ID: Caxton Printers, LTD. 1952), 232.
32. Wilfong, 78.
33. Townsend Brady, 114.
34. Townsend Brady, 114.

35. Greene, 36.
36. Townsend Brady, 101.
37. Cozzens, 309.
38. Cozzens, 309.
39. L.V. McWhotter, *Hear Me, My Chiefs*, 241.
40. McWhotter, 251.
41. Wilfong, 83.
42. L.V. McWhorter, *Yellow Wolf, His Own Story* (Caldwell, ID: Caxton Press, 2007), 54-55.
43. Wilfong, 84.
44. Wilfong, 85.
45. Townsend Brady, 101-102.
46. Townsend Brady, 114.
47. Townsend Brady, 115.
48. McDermott, 189.
49. McDermott, 87.
50. McDermott, 179.
51. McDermott, 183.
52. Townsend Brady, 115.
53. McDermott, 198.
54. L.V. McWhorter, *Yellow Wolf, His Own Story*, 57.
55. L.V. McWhotter, *Hear Me, My Chiefs*, 249.
56. McWhotter, 247.
57. Townsend Brady, 102.
58. L.V. McWhorter, *Yellow Wolf, His Own Story*, 57.
59. L.V. McWhotter, *Hear Me, My Chiefs*, 247.
60. McWhotter, 249.
61. John D. McDermott, 8), 166.
62. McDermott, 184-185.
63. McDermott, 184.
64. McDermott, 166.
65. Military Times web site at - <http://projects.militarytimes.com/citations-medals-awards/recipient.php?recipientid=2362>
66. McDermott, 188.
67. Jerome A. Greene, *Nez Perce Summer 1877* (Helena, MT: Montana Historical Society Press, 2000), 39.
68. McDermott, 178.
69. Jerome A. Greene, *Indian War Veterans* (New York, NY: Savas Beatie LLC, 2007), 263-264.
70. Greene, 263-264.
71. Greene, 263-264.
72. Greene, 263-264.
73. Greene, 265.
74. McDermott, 185.
75. L.V. McWhorter, *Yellow Wolf, His Own Story*, 60.

76. McDermott, 198-199.
77. McDermott, 99.
78. Greene, 350.
79. Greene, 265.
80. McDermott, 186.
81. Elliot West, *The Last Indian War*, 284.
82. Bruce Hampton, *Children of Grace, The Nez Perce War of 1877* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 102.
83. Wilfong, 125.
84. Aubrey Haines, *An Elusive Victory* (Helena, MT: Falcon Publishing, 1999), 29-30.
85. Greene, 271-272.
86. Wilfong, 269.
87. Wilfong, 347.
88. Wilfong, 366.

### III. Integration



## The Integration Phase

### IIIA. Definition and Guidance

**Definition.** No matter how detailed the preliminary study or how carefully crafted the field study, a truly successful staff ride requires a third and final phase. This integration phase is a formal or informal opportunity for students and instructors to reflect jointly upon their staff ride experience. It is important to keep in mind that the integration phase is *not* an after action review (AAR) of the ride itself (i.e. ways to improve the ride). Instead, the integration phase is the closing discussion of the staff ride and the opportunity for the students of the campaign to integrate their preliminary study with the fieldwork to gain insights that are relevant to their current duties and enhance their overall professional development.

**Guidance.** Several positive effects stem from the integration phase. First, it requires students to analyze the previous phases and integrate what they learned in each into a coherent overall view. Second, it provides a mechanism through which students may organize and articulate their impressions of both the selected campaign and the lessons derived from its study. Third, students may gain additional insights from sharing these impressions with their peers. Finally, the instructor team may use the integration phase to solicit student comments on its performance and suggestions for improvement.<sup>1</sup>

### IIIB. Methodology<sup>2</sup>

There are several factors that the staff ride leader should consider when planning for and conducting the integration phase. First, the leader must work with the organization that is participating in the ride and select a time and location for the integration session. Occasionally, units may have to depart shortly after the last stand of the field phase and the staff ride leader must conduct the integration phase on the battlefield immediately after completing the field study phase. However, when possible, students should have some time for personal reflection and thought before the integration phase. Thus, the integration phase is best if conducted that evening or the day after the field study phase ends. Even if you cannot wait, it is best to do the integration session at a location different from the last stand, a place comfortable and dry that will encourage open discussion from all the participants.

The staff ride leader should organize the integration phase based on the unit, time available, and training objectives. The leader can conduct the integration phase in a format similar to an AAR or may simply lead a discussion with participants on what they learned. You can have specific students brief particular items or just have an open discussion with minimal structure.

One method that often produces a fruitful integration phase is to conduct the session in three parts based on three broad questions. Sometimes, the leader need only present the general question and let others carry the conversation or the leader may have to ask more follow-up questions to prod the discussion. Each of the three questions is discussed below.

**What aspects of the campaign and battle had you developed in the preliminary study phase that changed or were strongly reinforced because of your study of the ground?** This is a crucial question because seeing the terrain is central to a staff ride, otherwise the campaign could simply be studied in the classroom. Of course, students may develop a wide range of answers based on personal study and observations in the field. Some of the more popular aspects of the discussion of terrain for the Battle of White Bird Canyon are the small size of the forces involved and vastness of the battlefield. The staff ride leader can ask a related question, which may also generate good discussion: *Did seeing the terrain alter your opinion of any of the leaders and their decisions?* A common response to this question is that Perry placed himself in an unwinnable situation based upon the terrain and weapons systems of the day.

**What aspects of warfare have changed and what aspects have remained the same since the Battle of White Bird Canyon?** The answers to the “changed” aspects will probably seem more obvious to the modern military professional and often will be related to technology. This may include changes in weapons, transportation systems, communications, and numerous other pieces of equipment. The aspects that have “remained the same” may not seem as numerous at first, but the students will often build on some initial answers and find many good items. The role of personalities, command relationships, the importance of logistics, the need for strong and positive leadership as well as an ability to motivate Soldiers, determination, courage, and fear are just some of the items of warfare that seem to have changed little since 1877.

**What insights can the modern military professional gain from the study of the Battle of White Bird Canyon which are relevant today?** Clearly, the participants can take this discussion into a vast number of arenas. Once again, the type of unit participating in the staff ride might help to guide the discussion. For example, a military intelligence unit might focus on the commander’s situational awareness, intelligence gathering, and the



importance of reconnaissance. Depending on the group, you may want to ask a few more focused questions. For example, does our current Officer Education System (OES) preclude or mitigate another disastrous defeat like the one the Army suffered at White Bird Canyon? If answer is not positive, what changes should we make to the system to improve it?

The three suggested integration phase questions are to aid in sparking discussion, not to provide hard and fast “rules” of warfare. Note that the handbook provides examples of possible answers to the questions but it does not attempt to provide a list of “right” answers. The staff ride leader should take time before the session to write down his or her answers to these questions to have some potential ideas to generate student discussion. At the same time, the staff ride leader should strive for the participants to develop their own answers, and thus be prepared to let the discussion roam many different paths. Whatever method the staff ride leader chooses to employ, the most important thing to remember is that the participants should do the majority of the talking.

### **Endnotes**

1. William Glenn Robertson, *The Staff Ride* (Washington, DC: US Army Center of Military History, 1987), 17-18.
2. This section is a slight modification of Section IV of *The Staff Ride Handbook for the Overland Campaign, Virginia, 4 May to 15 June 1864*, by Dr. Curtis S. King. The handbook is a 2009 Combat Studies Institute publication.



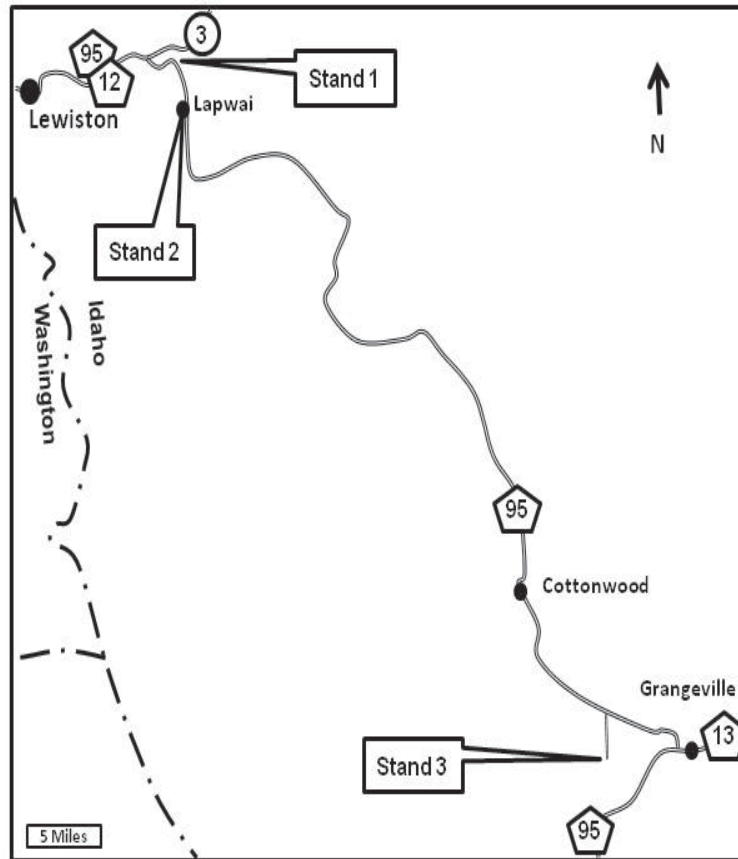
## Appendices



## Appendix A

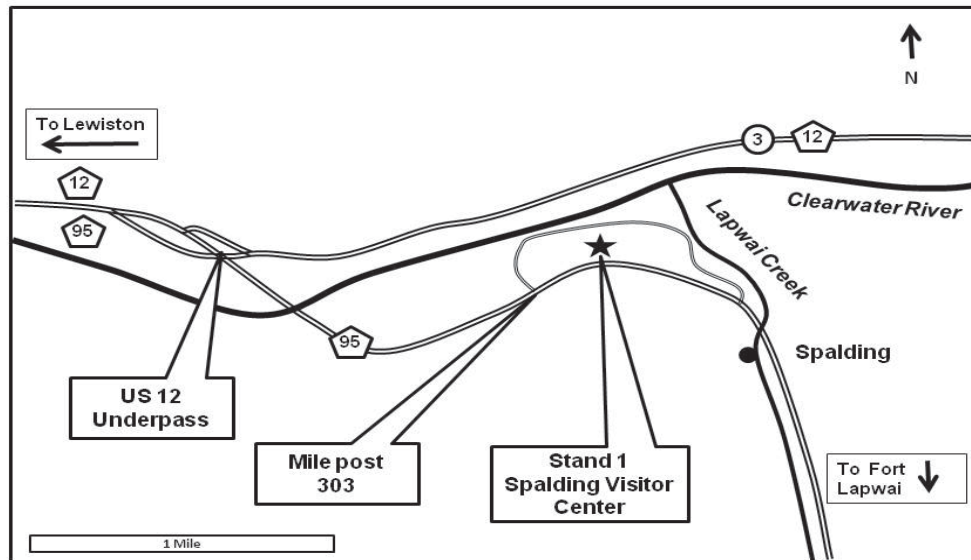
### Route and Stand Maps

**Road to War:** The first group of stands (1-3), focus on the events leading up to the battle and why the US Army and Nez Perce fought on 17 June 1877. This map provides an overview of the route.

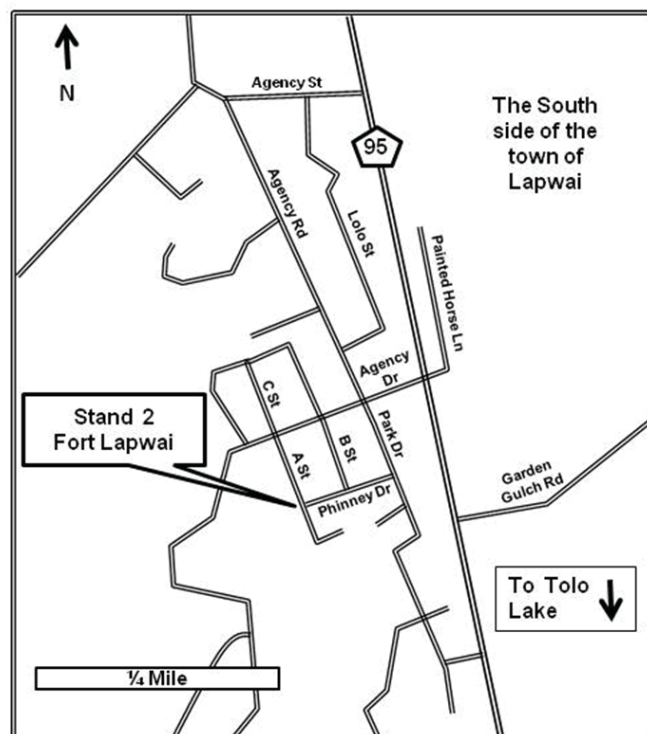


Stand 1 and Stand 2.

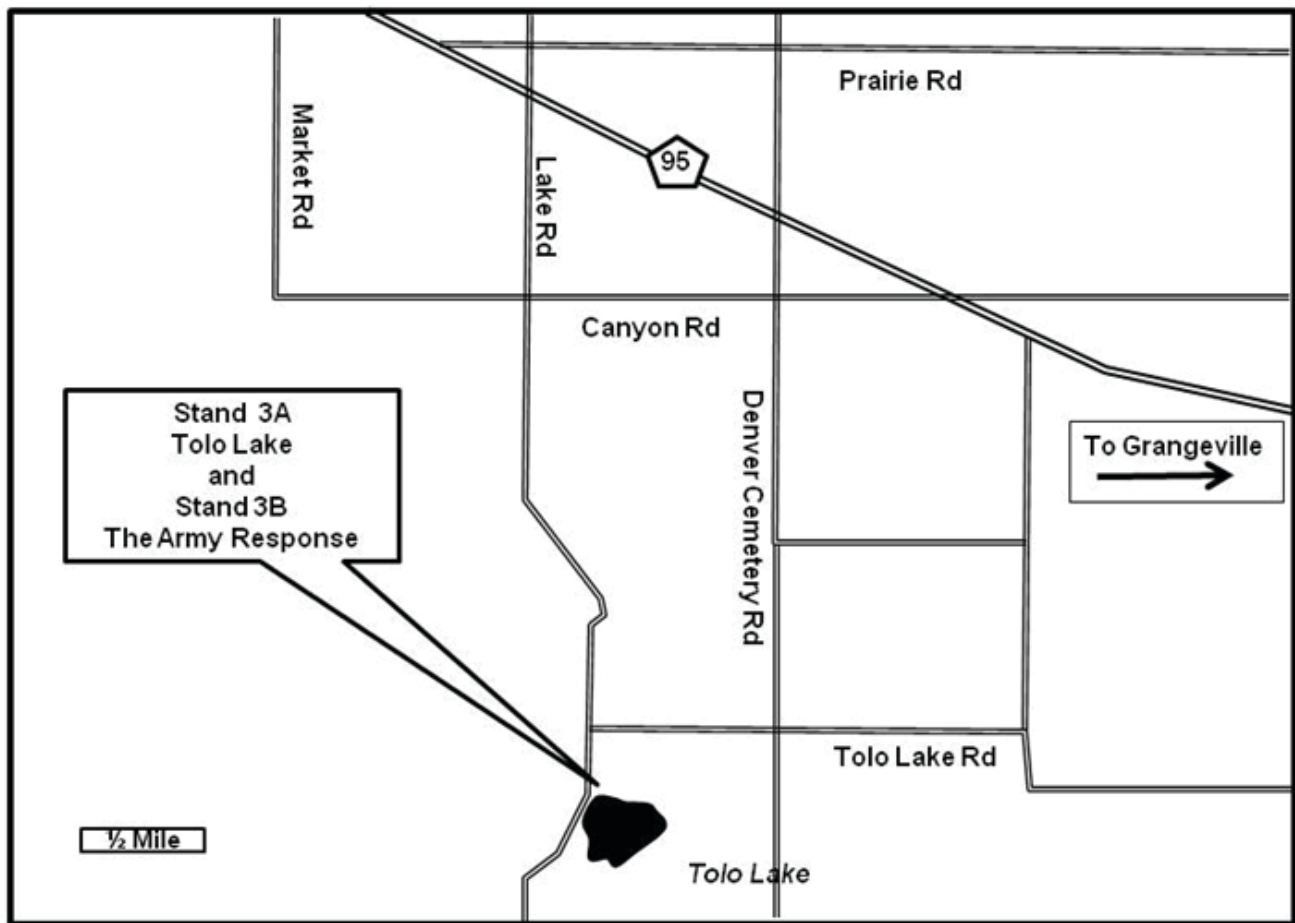
**Directions to Stand 1:** The Spalding Visitor Center, Nez Perce National Historical Park is located 11 miles east of Lewiston on U.S. Hwy 95. The address is 39063 US Hwy 95. Conduct the stand on open ground in the vicinity of the visitor center.



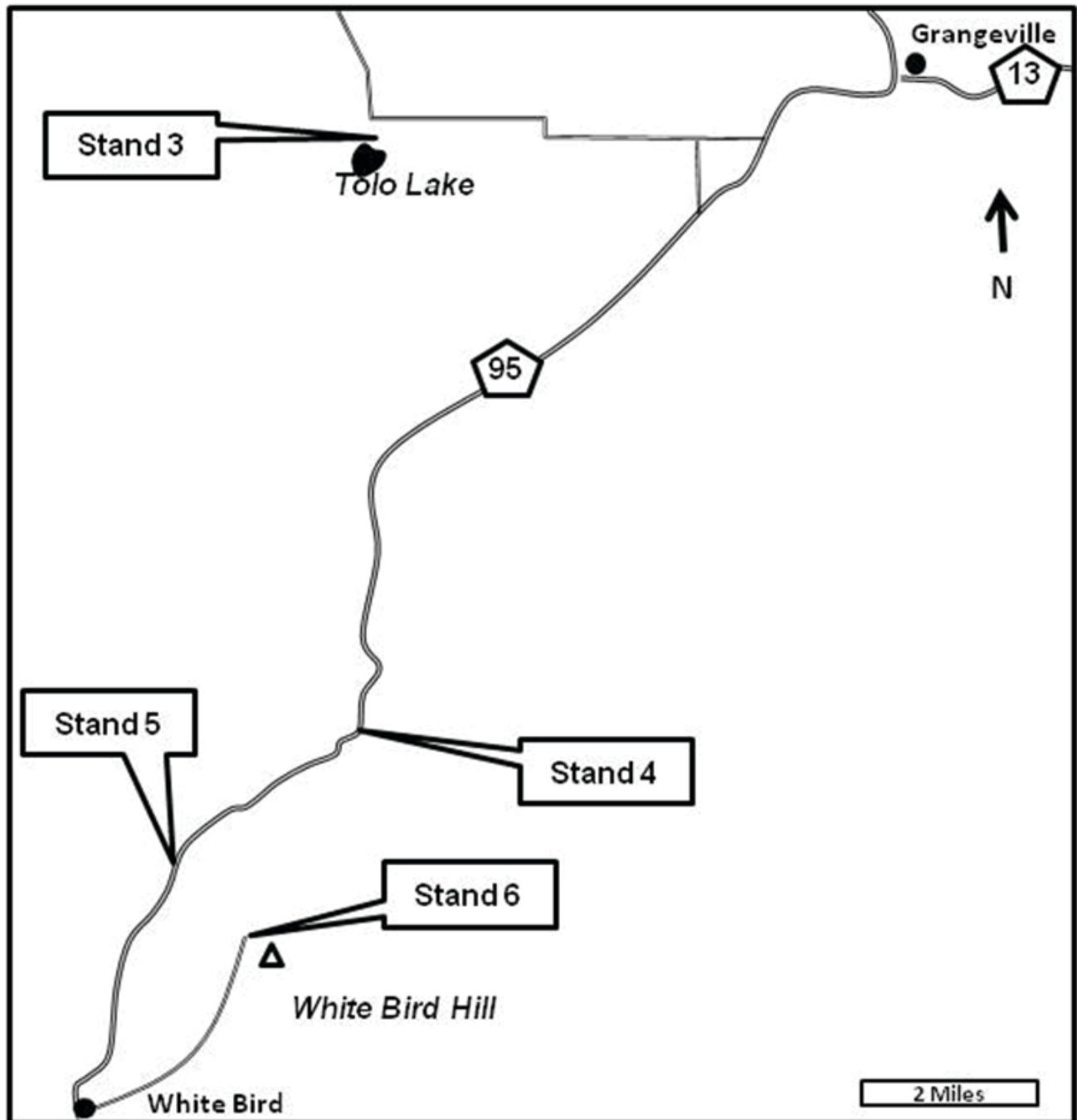
**Directions to Stand 2:** From the Spalding Site/Visitor Center area, proceed south on US 95. Drive approximately 3.9 miles to the south side of Lapwai and turn west onto Parade Avenue/Agency Drive. Continue three blocks west to the old parade grounds, then south one block on C Street. The duplex on the corner, west of the parade grounds, was the officer's quarters.



**Directions to Stand 3:** Return to US 95 and go south toward Grangeville, ID. After traveling approximately 51 miles turn right onto Lake Road (this is about five miles west of Grangeville). Continue about three miles on Lake Road to the recreation area at Tolo Lake.

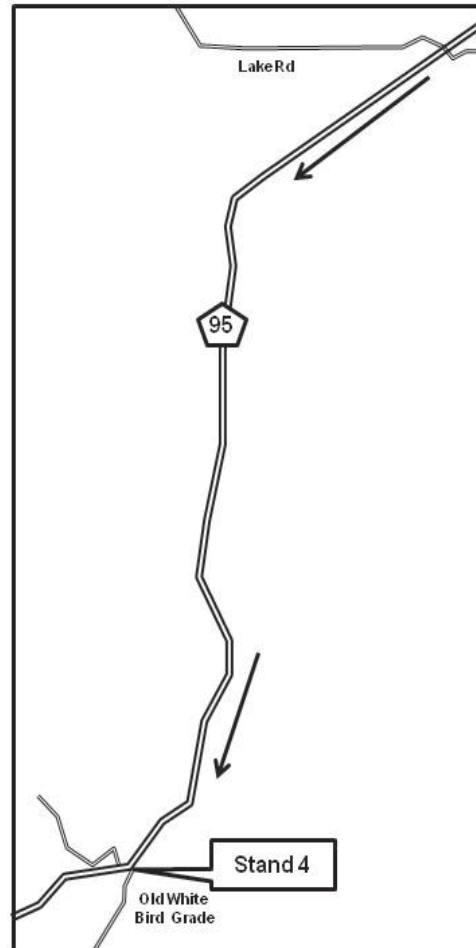
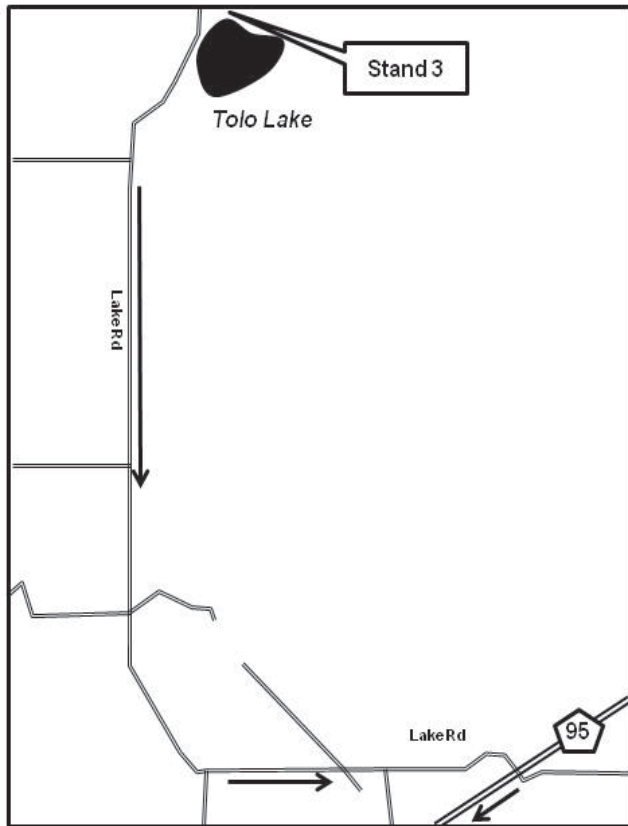


**The Approach March:** The second group of stands (4-6) focus on Army's approach march to the battlefield and the Nez Perce preparations for battle.

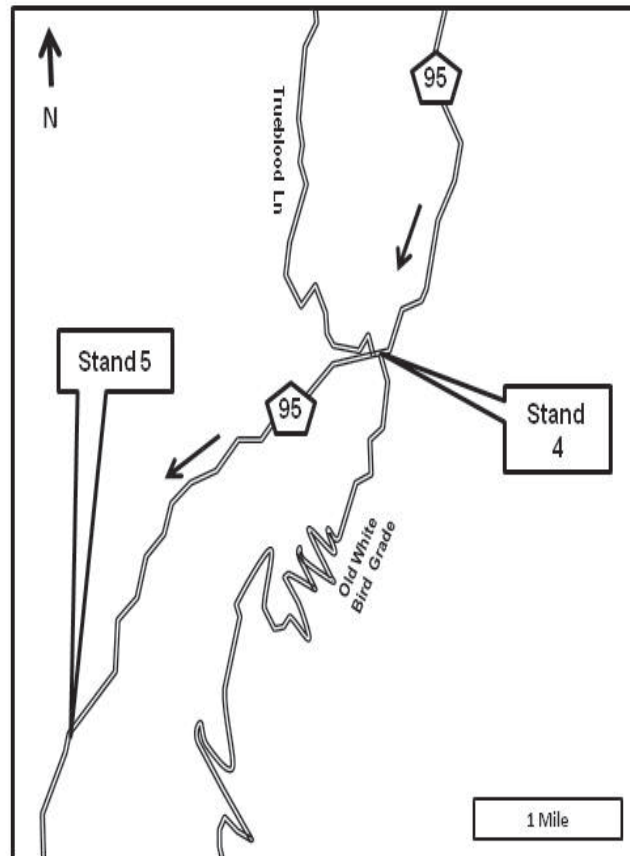




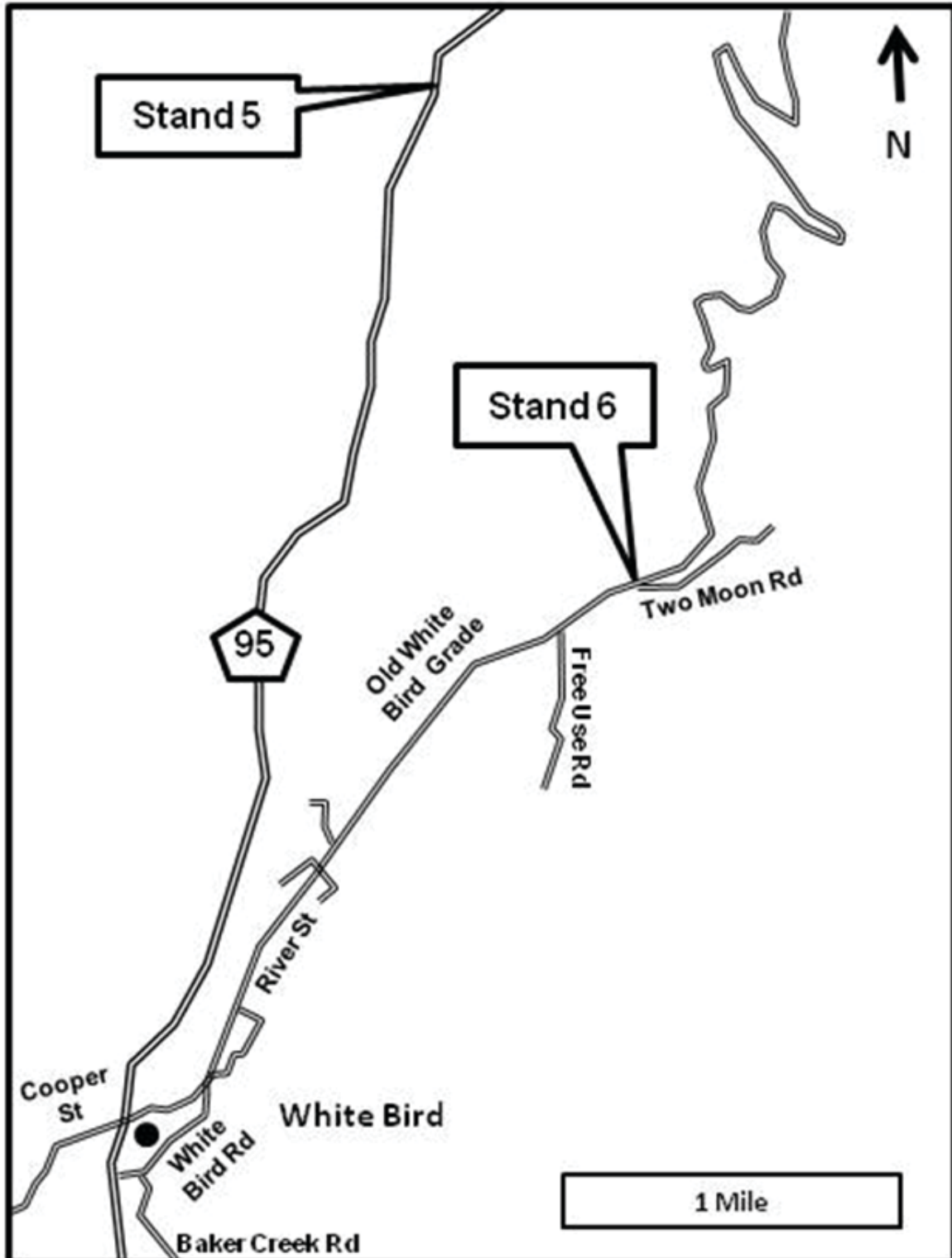
**Directions to Stand 4:** From Tolo Lake continue south on Lake Road. The road will cross over Rock Creek at about 0.3 miles. Lake Road continues to the south but then transitions to the east. Drive to the intersection with US 95 at approximately 3.9 miles. Proceed south on US 95 and at eight miles pull into the turnout on the left side of the road. The turnout is in the vicinity mile marker 230 and the intersection with old US 95.



**Directions to Stand 5:** Return to US 95 and continue 2.9 miles to the south. Park the vehicles at the Nez Perce Wayside Exhibit Shelter on the east side of the road and conduct the stand at overlook sight looking down into the White Bird Valley.

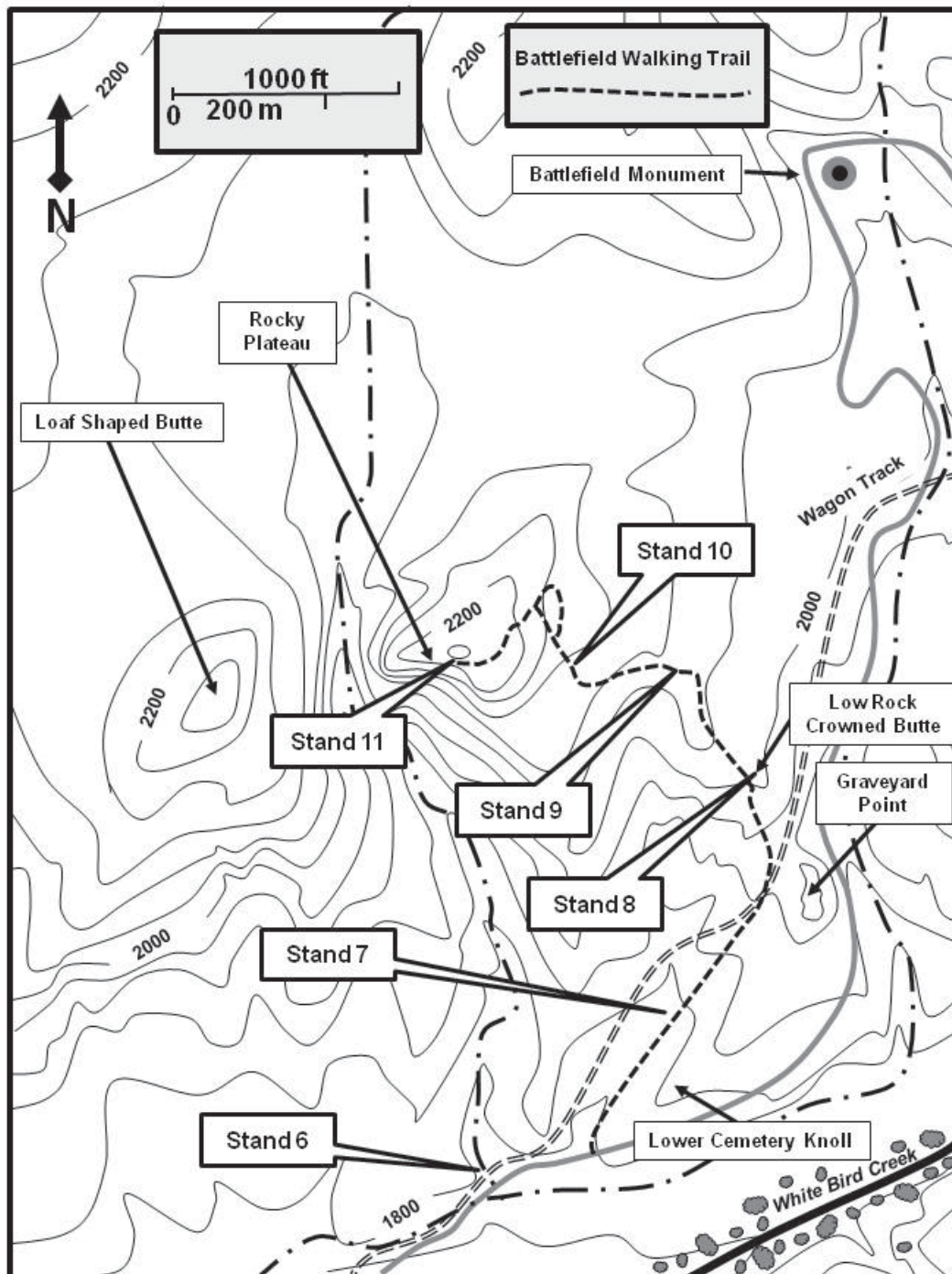


**Directions to Stand 6:** Continue south on US 95 toward White Bird, ID. At White Bird, exit onto Old US 95 (River Road) and follow the River Road to the north. The River Road soon changes into the Old White Bird Grade Road. Approximately two miles north of the town pull into the White Bird Battlefield turnout. Conduct the stand at the head of walking trail.

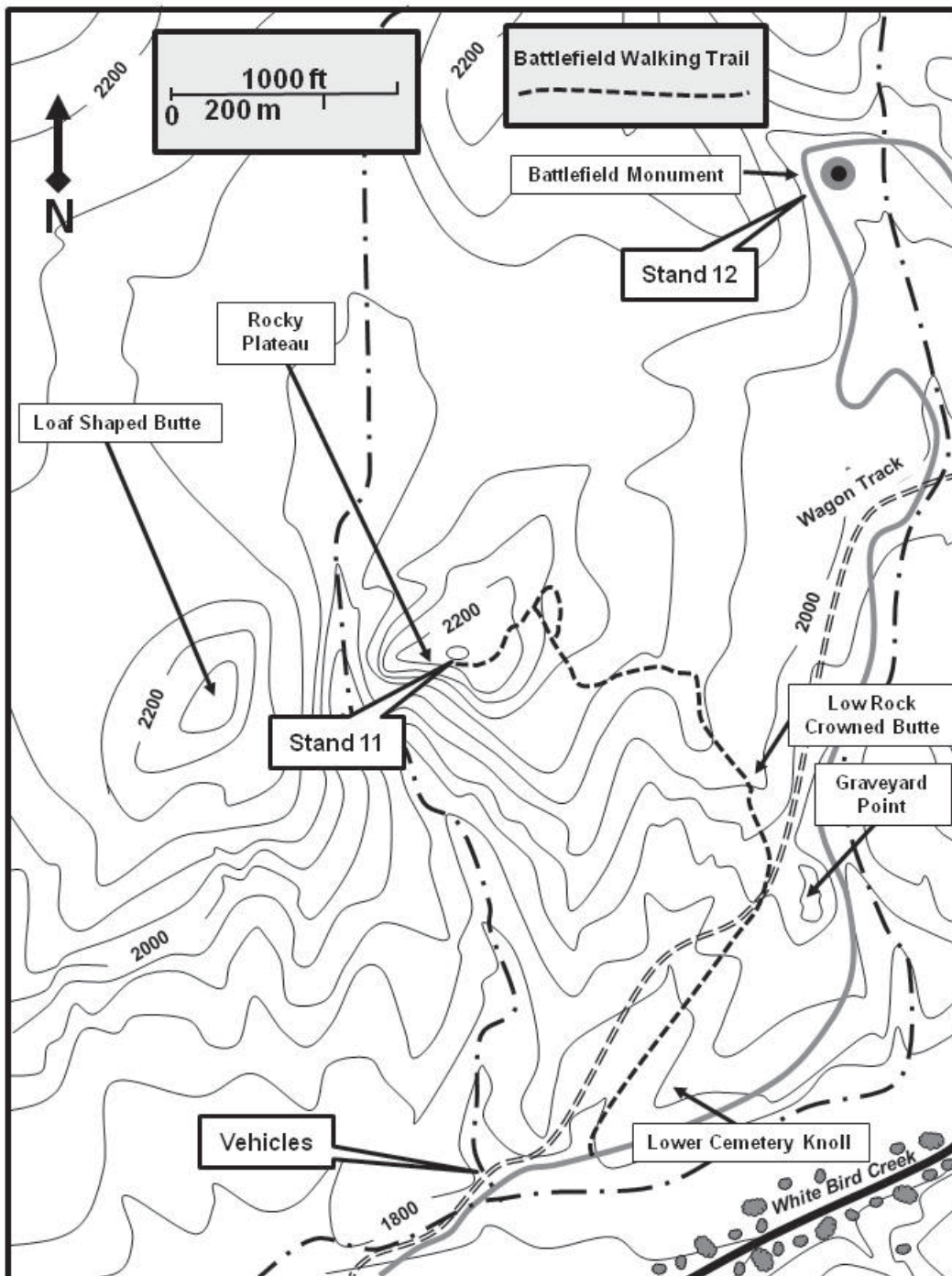


**The Approach March:** The second group of stands focuses on Army's approach march to the battlefield and the Nez Perce preparations for battle stands (4-6).

**The Battle:** The third group of stands (7-11) focuses on Battle of White Bird Canyon. The narrative directions and the maps with each of the stands provide the information needed to conduct the discussion at the correct location. The map below provides an overview of the battlefield stands.

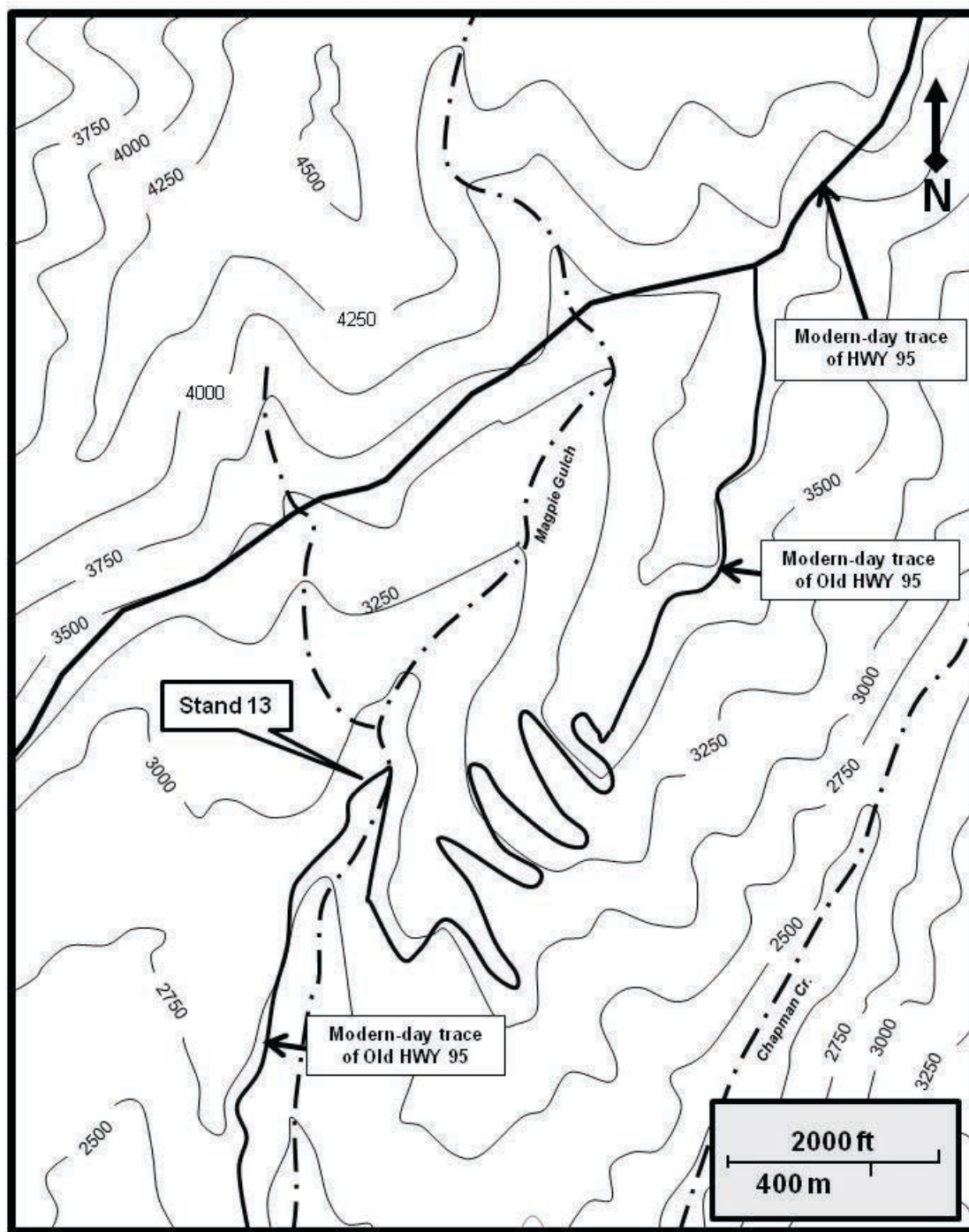


**Directions to Stand 12:** Return to the vehicles and drive approximately one mile north on Old White Bird Road to the Battlefield monument. Conduct the first part of the discussion looking west and southwest onto the retreat route of the Army units.

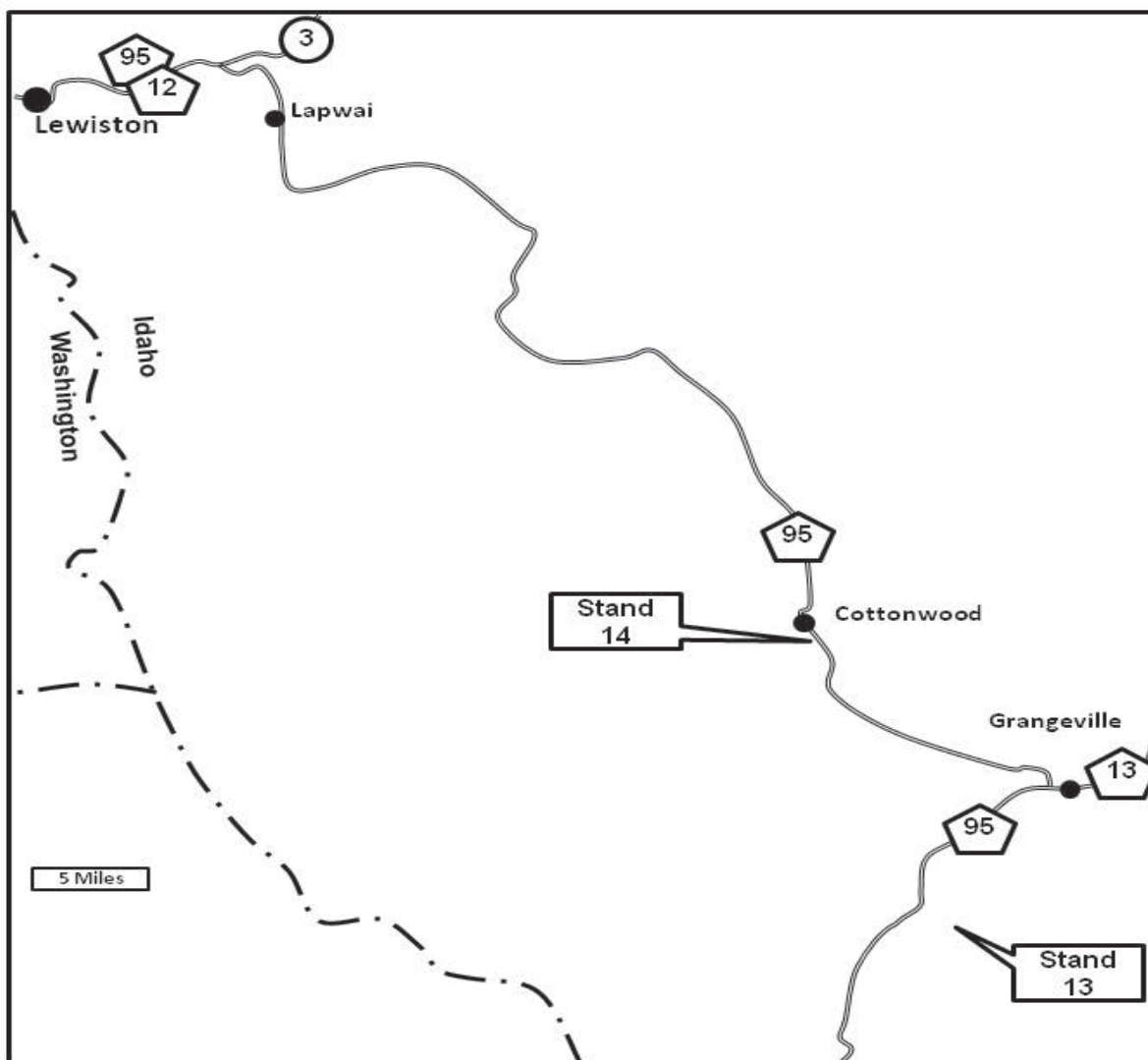




**Directions to Stand 13:** Continue north three miles on Old White Bird Road to where the road makes a significant loop back to the south. Park the vehicles and conduct the discussion along the side of the road.



**Directions to Stand 14:** Continue on Old White Bird Road toward Highway 95 and then go north on the highway to Grangeville. At the intersection of Highways 13 and 95 in Grangeville go west toward Cottonwood on Highway 95. From the intersection proceed 13 miles to the Nez Perce national Historic Park turnout (it is approximately 2.5 miles south of Cottonwood).





## Appendix B

### Characters

1. Brigadier General Oliver Otis Howard, Commander of the Department of Columbia.
  - a. Biographically sketch. John D. McDermott, *Forlorn Hope* (Boise, ID: Idaho State Historical Society, 1978), 47. \*
  - b. Howard, Oliver Otis. *My Life and Experiences among our Hostile Indians*. 1907. Reprint New York: Da Capo Press, 1972.
2. Captain David Perry, Commander US forces at the Battle of White Bird Canyon.
  - a. Biographically sketch. John D. McDermott, *Forlorn Hope* (Boise, ID: Idaho State Historical Society, 1978), 57-58.
  - b. Court of Inquiry Testimony. John D. McDermott, *Forlorn Hope* (Boise, ID: Idaho State Historical Society, 1978), 196-200.
3. Captain Joel Trimble, Commander H Company, 1st US Cavalry.
  - a. Biographically sketch. John D. McDermott, *Forlorn Hope* (Boise, ID: Idaho State Historical Society, 1978), 62-64.
  - b. Court of Inquiry Testimony. John D. McDermott, *Forlorn Hope* (Boise, ID: Idaho State Historical Society, 1978), 165-176.
4. Lieutenant William Parnell, 2d in command, H Company, 1st US Cavalry.
  - a. Biographically sketch. John D. McDermott, *Forlorn Hope* (Boise, ID: Idaho State Historical Society, 1978), 64-66.
  - b. Court of Inquiry Testimony. John D. McDermott, *Forlorn Hope* (Boise, ID: Idaho State Historical Society, 1978), 176-183.
5. Lieutenant Edward Theller, Acting commander, F Company, 1st US Cavalry.
  - a. Biographically sketch. John D. McDermott, *Forlorn Hope* (Boise, ID: Idaho State Historical Society, 1978), 58-59.
  - b. Review testimonies of Perry, Trimble and Parnell in the Court of Inquiry Testimony.
6. First Sergeant Michael McCarthy, Senior Sergeant in H Company, 1st US Cavalry.
  - a. Biographically sketch. John D. McDermott, *Forlorn Hope* (Boise, ID: Idaho State Historical Society, 1978), 66.
  - b. Diary Extract. John D. McDermott, *Forlorn Hope* (Boise, ID: Idaho State Historical Society, 1978), 106-107.
  - c. Court of Inquiry Testimony. John D. McDermott, *Forlorn Hope* (Boise, ID: Idaho State Historical Society, 1978), 183-187.

\* Forlorn Hope. Available at [http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online\\_books/nepe/shs/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/nepe/shs/index.htm) (The NPS web-site for the Battle of White Bird Canyon).

7. Mr. Arthur Chapman, Commander of the civilian Volunteers at the Battle of White Bird Canyon.
  - a. Biographically sketch. John D. McDermott, *Forlorn Hope* (Boise, ID: Idaho State Historical Society, 1978), 73-74.
  - b. Court of Inquiry Testimony (of Mr. George Shearer, 2d in command for Mr. Chapman). John D. McDermott, *Forlorn Hope* (Boise, ID: Idaho State Historical Society, 1978), 189-192.
8. Chief Joseph the Younger (Heinmot-Tooyalakekt), Chief of the Wallowa Band, Common warrior at the Battle of White Bird Canyon. Biographically sketch at [http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/people/a\\_c/chiefjoseph.htm](http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/people/a_c/chiefjoseph.htm)
9. Chief White Bird, Chief of the Lamtamas Band, Possible War Chief at the Battle of White Bird Canyon.
  - a. Biographical sketch at <http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h3858.html>
  - b. Painter, Bob. *White Bird, The Last Great Warrior Chief of the Nez Perce*. Fairfield, Washington, Ye Galleon Press, 2002.
10. Ollokot (Frog), Younger brother of Chief Joseph and the war leader of Wallow Band's Warriors. Biographically sketch at <http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h3892.html>
11. Yellow Wolf, War leader at the Battle of White Bird. McWhorter, L.V. *Yellow Wolf*. Caldwell, Idaho, Caxton Press, 2000.

## **Appendix C**

### **Staff Ride Support**

#### **Information and Assistance**

The Staff Ride Team, Combat Studies Institute, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, has conducted numerous staff rides and can provide advice and assistance on every aspect of the Battle of White Bird Staff Ride. The Staff Ride Team can also provide facilitators to lead the staff ride. Visit the Combat Studies Institute website for information on obtaining staff ride assistance and/or support. Staff Ride Team support includes background information, detailed knowledge of the battle and battlefield, and familiarity with the campaign area. Address:

Combat Studies Institute

290 Stimson, Unit 1

Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027

Telephone: DSN: 552-2137, 2127, 2080, 2082

Commercial: (913) 684-2137, 2127, 2080, 2082

Combat Studies Institute website: <http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/CSI/>

The White Bird Canyon battlefield belongs to the Nez Perce National Park. The *Spalding Visitor Center, Nez Perce National Historical Park* is 11 miles east of Lewiston on U.S. Hwy 95. The address is 39063 US Hwy 95. The Fort Lapwai and White Bird Canyon battlefield do not have visitor centers. Although there is no visitor fee to any of the sites it is important to contact the staff of the NPS and let them know you are conducting a staff ride.

Nez Perce National Historical Park

PO Box 1000

Lapwai, ID 83540

(208) 843-7001

[www.nps.gov/nepe](http://www.nps.gov/nepe)

<http://www.nps.gov/frsp/>

## Logistics

Lodging and Meals. There are numerous hotel and restaurant locations in Lewiston, WA that are convenient and should take care of breakfast and dinner. An alternate location would be Grangeville, Idaho. The Staff Ride group should plan on a box lunch carried on the vehicles. There are no restaurants or fast food in the vicinity of the battlefield.

Other considerations.

- A. Check the weather forecast in the winter months. At times deep snow could impact the conduct of the staff ride.
- B. A reconnaissance of the stands and route just prior to execution of the ride is recommended.
- C. Ensure that every member of the group has water.
- D. Ensure that your group has proper clothing for inclement weather. Thunderstorms can occur in any season. Significant walking is required on the battlefield. Comfortable boots or hiking shoes are recommended. We recommend that you do not wear sandals or running shoes.
- E. There are no bathrooms on the battlefield.
- F. Poison Ivy, rattlesnakes, uneven terrain and high cliffs pose a hazard at the battlefield.

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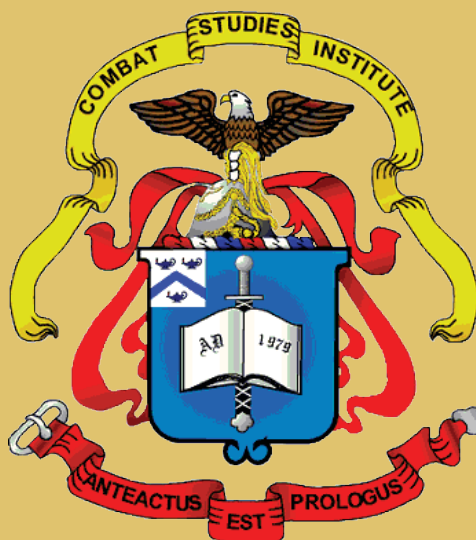
### **About the Author**

Mr. Charles D. Collins, Jr. is an assistant professor of history at the Combat Studies Institute. He is the author for numerous courses including: The Sioux Wars and Cheyenne Wars courses, Operation Anaconda Virtual Staff Ride, and the Price's 1864 Missouri Raid Staff Ride. He received a B.A. in History from Southwest Missouri State University and a master's of military arts and sciences (MMAS) in History from the US Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. While on active duty, Mr. Collins served in various armor and cavalry assignments. He retired from the Army in 1996. Mr. Collins' published works include: *The Corps of Discovery: Staff Ride Handbook for the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, *The Atlas of the Sioux Wars, 2d Edition*, *The Cheyenne Wars Atlas*, and numerous articles on a wide variety of military topics.









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