

Wounded Knee Massacre must never be forgotten

Attention, white society! When you hear the Wounded Knee Massacre mentioned, does your heart become heavy and does your mind become riddled with shame and anguish over the deaths of 300 children, women and men?

It should. For the "Wounded Knee Campaign" — as the U.S. military has named it, represents one of the most atrocious, horrendous and shameful acts in U.S. military history.

On Dec. 29, 1890, as Sioux warriors were putting down their weapons, shots rang out — due (perhaps) to a struggle between the U.S. military and Black Coyote who was deaf and refused to surrender his rifle when the gun accidentally discharged — and the firing continued until 300 Sioux were killed or were later to die by freezing on the South Dakota plains in that bitterly cold winter.

Most of the 25 U.S. soldiers that died that

day were killed by friendly fire.

How did the U.S. Army justify this as a tough military campaign?

It awarded 21 Congressional Medals of Honor to the U.S. soldiers involved.

There has never been another battle or campaign in U.S. military history that was over within an hour, resulted in the slaughter of so many innocent children and women and for which 21 Congressional Medals of Honor were awarded — not even close.

Bob Smith, on the May 19-26 Opinion Page of *Indian Country Today*, wrote that there were 20 troopers of the 7th Cavalry who

GUEST COLUMN



By Dolph Hatfield, Ph.D

received our nation's highest military honor, the Congressional Medal of Honor, for the Wounded Knee Campaign. Or, as Mr. Smith pointed out, for "nothing short of wholesale butchery."

The World Wide Web, www.army.mil/cmhp/mohind.htm, lists 18 individuals who received the Congressional Medal of Honor at Wounded Knee Creek, S.D., 29 December 1890.

One of these individuals was not included in the list by Mr. Smith: Hamilton, Mathew H. — Rank and organization: Private, Company G, 7th U.S. Cavalry.

Place and date: At Wounded Knee Creek, S.D., 29 December 1890. Entered service at: New York, N.Y. Birth: Australia. Date of issue: 25 May 1891. Citation: Bravery in action.

Two individuals, Jetter, Bernard and Nedar, Adam are listed by Mr. Smith and the U.S. Army as receiving the award at Sioux Campaign, December 1890 and one individual, Wilson, William O., as receiving the award Sioux Campaign, 1890.

The reason why the latter three individuals are not listed as receiving the award at Wounded Knee Creek, S.D., 29 December 1890, is not clear.

However, the despicable fact remains that 21 troopers were given the highest military honor for murdering innocent children and women.

As noted by Mr. Smith, an equivalent acknowledgment for "bravery" in battle

would be awarding Lt. William Calley and the other men in Charlie Company, Congressional Medals of Honor for the March 16, 1968, My Lai massacre of 400 Vietnamese children, women and elderly men.

Mr. Smith suggested stripping the U.S. soldiers involved in the Wounded Knee Massacre of their medals.

In addition, the grave error made in awarding these medals should be acknowledged in the same way President Bill Clinton recently acknowledged the infamous Tuskegee study on syphilis.

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