



# Tom Custer: Ride to Glory (Frontier Military)

*Carl F. Day*

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There are few names in American History so recognized as Custer. The fame, or infamy, of George Armstrong Custer is as hotly debated now as it was during his lifetime. His overwhelming notoriety all but overshadows everyone in his circle of family, friends, and enemies. One of those who has been obscured by Custer's presence is his younger brother, Thomas Ward Custer.

Tom Custer was a hero in his own right. He is the first man in our history to receive two Medals of Honor for heroism on the battlefield. And yet this is the first book to document his life.

More than a tale of military exploits, this biography reveals the private lives of Tom Custer and his family. From private correspondence we gain an intimate glimpse into the complex relationships between the Custer brothers and sisters, and their partners. Information is given on the son he fathered in Ohio following the Civil War.

Tom was very much his own man. Although he did live in the shadow of his older brother, that was a place with which he was quite comfortable. He was not jealous or envious of brother Armstrong, as Tom called him, except perhaps for his brother's relationship with his wife, Libbie. Much of Tom's life was spent trying to find a suitable companion, but sadly this never happened. From childhood to his death at the Battle of the Little Big Horn, this biography illuminates the Custer story from a new perspective, revealing a story of love, honor, and devotion. It is the tale of a man who went "above and beyond the call of duty."

Civil War: Tom Custer enlisted in September 1861 in the Union Army. He saw action in Kentucky and Tennessee before being transferred in late 1864 to his brother George's command in Virginia. It was during that service at the end of the war that he received the Medal of Honor twice--the first man in American military history and the only Federal soldier in the Civil War to do so.

Post-Civil War service in Texas and, later, in South Carolina during the Reconstruction period, saw Tom engaged in clashes with night riders and civil unrest.

Service on the Plains in the Army's campaigns against the Indians and explorations are fully recounted. They include the Battle of the Washita, Stanley's Yellowstone Expedition, the Black Hills expedition, and of course the final march to the Battle of the Little Big Horn. Life at Fort Abraham Lincoln is discussed at length.

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