

Centre County Torch Meeting Minutes  
November 13, 2024 Ramada  
Inn State College, PA

President Terry Engelder opened the meeting at 5:45 PM.

Approximately 35 members were in attendance.

Annual dues are currently \$75 a year. Dinner is \$25.

This year's officers:

President: Terry Engelder

Vice President: Carolyn Wilhelm

Recording Secretary: Charles Maxin

Treasurer: Peter Jurs

Correspondence Secretary and Torch International representative: Art Goldschmidt Webmaster:  
John Golbeck

Guests:

John Dillon introduced Barbara Vanderbergh wife of John Vanderbergh. She was at North Carolina State in Raleigh North Carolina for 50 years. John is a retired zoologist and provided monkeys for testing the polio vaccine.

Old business

Please provide Terry Engelder with a short biography of your training and expertise for inclusion on the Torch website

Tonight's presenter is Jeff Wert, retired high school teacher. He is the author of numerous books on General Custer and the Civil War. The title of the presentation is: **Custer and Little Bighorn**

George Armstrong Custer was born December 5, 1839 and died June 25, 1876 at Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument, Montana.

General Custer's father was a blacksmith in southeast Ohio. Two older brothers died and George was the spoiled third son. He attended West Point after becoming a teacher at age 20. While at West Point he accumulated 103 demerits in one year that set a record. He cleaned up his act and was able to graduate in 1862 from West Point but was ranked last in his class. He became a Brevet Major General at age 23. He graduated when one year at West Point was compressed to 6 weeks because of the Civil War.

Custer was able to gain a position as leader of a cavalry unit. He led a charge at the Gettysburg battle in Pennsylvania leading a Michigan unit, defeating General JEB Stuart. He captured a flag of a Confederate unit and received two medals of honor. He commanded the 7th Army and at the time was the fourth most famous person of the Union. In 1865 he led the parade of the 3rd Army and wore a red tie. Every member of the army also wore a red tie indicating their affection for Custer. He was a superb Cavalry commander.

Custer was courtmartialed after implicating President Grant's brother. There was intense dislike between the two generals. Custer was removed from his command.

The story begins with the Panic of 1873 and the search for gold in the upper midwest.

After the civil war, the focus of the United States was to go west. The treaty of Laramie was made that limited Plains Indians to reservations. However gold was found in the Black Hills of the Dakotas and Montana Territories. The Sioux and Cheyenne believed the Black Hills were sacred to the Indians and were prepared to fight to keep their sacred lands. The Sioux and other tribes resisted the influx of settlers and gold hunters. Custer was reinstated as a General to lead the army. In 1876 the US army was mobilized with General Custer as their leader to move the Indians back to their reservations sparking marked resistance.

The Valley of Little Big Horn in the Montana Territories was the site of a battle between 7000 Indian warriors and 5 companies of the US Army led by General Custer. It was a 30 minute battle. 263 US Army soldiers died including George Custer. Custer was 36 years old and was buried at the site of the battle. Later his remains were moved to West Point. There is some controversy as to the actual site of his burial.

Respectively submitted,

Charles Maxin, Recording Secretary