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Return of the Native
Swiss-American Missionaries
for the Church of Jesus Christ of
Latter-day Saints in the Nineteenth Century

by Cindy Brightenburg

Introduction

In the fall of 1888, Gottfried Buehler left his home, wife and small children in Utah for a two-year return to Switzerland. He had been assigned by his church to serve a mission in the land of his birth with the goal to preach the tenets of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (also known as the Mormon church, and hereafter referred to as “the church”) to the people of Switzerland, baptize them into membership, and encourage them to emigrate to the land of Zion, or the Utah Territory. From the mid- to late-nineteenth century, the church sent many Swiss-born men who had emigrated to the United States back to their homeland as emissaries of this American-founded religion.

Religious Freedom

The second half of the nineteenth century brought significant changes in Swiss government, and new laws facilitated the introduction of religions other than entrenched Catholicism and Protestantism. Recorded statistics show that in 1860 Switzerland had 1,479,000 Protestants, 1,022,000 Catholics and only 10,066 people listed as believers of “other” religions.1 After years of political unrest and civil war, the

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Federal Constitution of Switzerland was created in 1848. The constitution, also known as the Helvetic Compromise, provided for a federal government, standardized the mail and currency system, and organized a military and judicial system, all while maintaining the sovereignty of each canton. Regarding this time in Swiss history, Bonjour, Offler and Potter historian asserted, “More than ever, Switzerland, transformed by her own will and patriotic action, came to feel herself a nation. Not by language, race or culture; her nationhood was based on common historical experience and general consent to the Democratic-Republican order. The people had reached maturity.”

The constitution of 1848 also stipulated freedom of religion as a fundamental right and allowed for freedom of religion throughout Switzerland. Among other rights, article fifty clearly pronounced the tenant of progressive liberty that existed in the minds of the Swiss people: “The free exercise of religious worship is guaranteed within the limits compatible with public order and good morals.”

Switzerland underwent multiple changes during the second half of the nineteenth century, including a change in legislation that allowed an “increased mobility of people” that in turn made “communities [become] gradually more religiously diverse.”

The fervor of religious freedom was also felt in other countries. Around the same time of these events, a new religion in America was beginning its missionary program in earnest. In 1850, “Mormon” missionaries arrived in Switzerland, Germany, Italy, and Austria.

**Church Missionary Program**

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized in 1830 in the state of New York. One of the beliefs of this church is that the full gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored to the earth

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through the young prophet Joseph Smith and members have an obligation to spread this truth to all nations. After several years of active proselyting in the United States, the conversion effort branched out to Europe. The first church missionaries arrived in England in 1837. These early missionaries had relative success, and “by the time they returned home in April 1838, church membership had grown to about 1,500 people in Britain.”

By 1850, missionaries had spread out over Europe, proselyting in the countries of Denmark, Sweden, and the Netherlands and later appearing in Switzerland, Germany, and Italy. As the message of the church was taught, many Swiss citizens were baptized into membership, and by 1857, there were 581 members in Switzerland. Baptisms and church membership fluctuated for the next fifty years; by 1900, there was a total of 859 Swiss citizen members and fourteen branches, or congregations, spread throughout the cantons.

During the nineteenth century, the geographical boundaries and name of the mission would change, beginning with the “Swiss and Italian Mission” in 1850, the “Swiss, Italian, and German Mission” in 1864, the “Swiss and German Mission” a few years later, and the “Swiss Mission” in 1898.

The first English-speaking missionaries that were sent to Switzerland struggled to learn the German language and Swiss culture, receiving no formal language training before their arrival. They were expected to learn the language the first few weeks of their service with some help from the local population or from other missionaries who had been in the country longer. Further complicating their learning was the fact that the languages used in Switzerland at this time included French, German, Italian, and Romansch. William Budge, a missionary working in Switzerland in 1854, struggled with the German language and customs. One mission report lamented that “he could do practi-

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6 Andrew Jenson “Switzerland Mission History circa 1841 to 1942”, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.

https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/sahs_review/vol55/iss2/7
cally nothing in the way of missionary labors until he prepared himself so that he could give expression to his thoughts.” Missionary Daniel Tyler, who arrived in 1854, wrote, “I was totally ignorant of the languages, laws, manners, and customs of the people.” Over time, the Swiss citizens who were converted were encouraged to gather with the members of the church by emigrating to the United States. As a result, many Swiss-born men and women began a new life in the Utah Territory, often creating their own Swiss communities and becoming US citizens. Although baptisms increased, due to emigration, the membership of the church in Switzerland decreased. Thus, there were fewer Swiss members to preach this new religion to their neighbors. It was not long before presidents of European missions were requesting “able and good men be sent from Zion, who were born in these countries . . . and who at once could enter with their whole energy upon their performance of their duties as missionaries.” It was the native-born, immigrant members the church leaders would call on to return as missionaries.

**Swiss-American Missionaries**

![John U. Stucki](image.png)

John U. Stucki, born in 1837 in Thurgau, “embraced the Gospel of Jesus Christ” at the age of nineteen, and three years later emigrated to Utah with his wife, Margaretha. At the age of thirty-six he was asked by church leaders to return to Switzerland and work as the Swiss-German

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9.“Switzerland Zurich Mission Manuscript History and Historical Reports, vol. 3, 1854-1860”, October 4, 1854, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.
10.“Switzerland Zurich Mission Manuscript History”, February 2, 1856, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.
11 *Millennial Star*, 31 (September 11, 1868), 597, as cited in Kirby, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Switzerland*, 80.
mission president from 1874 to 1876. Leaving his home, family, and farm, Stucki traveled by train and ship to fulfill the assignment in his native homeland. He traveled extensively throughout Switzerland, attending meetings and organizing conferences for the missionaries in his capacity as a mission leader. Not only did he fulfill this assignment, he was also called in 1888 to return and serve as president of the mission a second time, thus returning twice to preach to the people in his mother country.

In 1844, in the town of Zwischenflüh Diemtigen, Bern, Switzerland, John Kunz Jr. was born, the oldest of ten and “the son of respectable and God-fearing parents.” He was converted and baptized into the church at the age of twenty-five with his wife, Magdelana, and in 1873, left Switzerland with his wife, grandmother, and three children to join the members of the church in the Utah territory. He eventually moved to and settled in Bern, Idaho, where he started a dairy business. The news of his mission call to return to his homeland came to him while chopping wood in a local canyon with his son. He records that he was “told by Bro. Walter Hoge, Marvin Allred and some others that my brother David and myself were called to go on a mission to Switzerland to preach the gospel.” In 1884, Kunz also left his home and family to return to Switzerland as a missionary for the church.

Gotffried Buhler was born in Gunten, Bern, Switzerland in 1854, the...
Swiss German Missionary Conference in Bern, Switzerland, 1884.

Courtesy Early Mormon Missionaries Database.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
same year his father, Ulrich Buehler, invited church missionaries to preach in his home. His father, mother, and sister were soon baptized into the church as well. At the age of eight, Gottfried was baptized as his brothers, sisters, and grandparents had been before. Wanting to join with other members of the church in America, his father prepared to emigrate with his family by selling their home and many of his belongings. However, because of his good standing in the community and adeptness in preaching his new religion, Ulrich was able to convert many of his neighbors and friends, which prompted the church leaders to instruct him to delay his emigration a few more years. The delay was a disappointment for the family, and Gottfried wrote with regret regarding the sale of their home that they “left a nice three-story house to one old farm house that looked like an old stable.” Gottfried went on to say that it was “a full eighteen years that father was a missionary in Switzerland bringing several hundred converts to the Church of Christ.” Ulrich finally emigrated to the United States in 1872, leaving the village of Gunten with his wife and children, including eighteen-year-old Gottfried, and settled in Midway, Utah. Sixteen years later, in 1888, Gottfried returned to Switzerland as a missionary.

As missionaries, these men travelled to various cantons searching for converts. Buehler wrote, “I was appointed to labor in Thur and Simenthal Conf. (Kanton Berne) until March the following spring . . . then I was called to go to Germany to the city of Munich Bavaria, there I labored for eleven months with fairly good success.” John Kunz Jr. served his mission mostly in the Canton of Bern, but he also traveled through the towns of Postgasse, Thun, and Oberstocken and spent the final portion of his time preaching in Berlin. The mission journal entries of John U. Stucki describe him spending most of his time preaching in the northeast areas of St. Gallen, Zurich, and Winterthur, where his parents and extended family resided. As expected, all of these mis-

sionaries were able to converse with the people of Switzerland and easily convey the message of their religion.

Visits to Family

Many native missionaries had family who had not converted to the church and were still living in Switzerland. Their mission service afforded them an opportunity to visit their Swiss family members. Parents, siblings, and other relatives welcomed them into their homes. John U. Stucki mentions visiting his “Sister Katharine’s daughter Elisa” in the hospital in 1888. Toward the end of his mission in 1890, he wrote, “I bid farewell to my folks today, they felt pained at my leaving and the thought of perhaps never seeing each other again in this life. My brother Conrad and my sisters Barbara and Margaret accompanied me a short distance and wept at parting neither could I withhold my tears.”

Another Swiss-born missionary A. A. Ramseyer, who returned to Switzerland in 1893, noted how he “went to Villeret to see my folks. I had spoken so little French during my six and a half years absence that I was hardly able to speak it at first. I was well received by my brothers and sisters. I stayed with my brother-in-law.” During his mission, John Kunz Jr. briefly wrote of meeting two of his cousins in the town of Wampfluh and a few days later spending a day visiting his uncle and aunt who “shed tears” as he “bid them a last farewell.” However, not all relatives were as welcoming. A Utah newspaper reported that Octave Ursenbach, who returned to Switzerland as a missionary in 1868, had “visited the home of his boyhood, but his relatives have shut their doors against him on account of his religious faith.”

While revisiting their childhood country, the missionaries often reminisced of old times. Ursenbach described a visit to St. Imier, “It

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is fourteen years since I left the place, well things have changed very much; large high stone buildings have taken place of humble cottages, the iron horse has dug up its furrows through the mountains and its steam whistle echoes everywhere.” In his 1897 journal, missionary John T. Miller explained that he “went to Württemburg Germany, the birthplace of my parents” and later, referring to his time in Stuttgart, noted, “In this city my father learned the shoemakers trade in 1855 and spent many a day without sufficient food.”

Trouble with Authorities

Although native missionaries benefited greatly from their language skills and cultural knowledge, Swiss citizenship did not guarantee that they would be treated with respect. Preaching their religion was not easy, and many missionaries were rejected or even arrested. In spite of the religious-freedom laws, many Swiss were suspicious of this new American religion and actively tried to put a stop to the missionary work. As early as 1854, missionary George Mayer reported, “The preachers, finding that their craft was in danger, commenced publishing many lies against me, such that as I spoke against their laws.”

John U. Stucki was told to report to the Consul at Bern regarding his passport, as they would not accept his naturalization papers. While appearing before the American Legation, he writes, “this morning is a positive refusal unless I declare that I am not a Mormon, which of course I can and will not do.” Gottfried Buehler describes holding meetings in groves to escape police interference: “One Sunday in the month of July we were holding a meeting in the afternoon when a lot of detectives and policemen rushed in on us while holding the meeting. They took what books I had, a Bible and a songbook.”

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26 John T. Miller, “Diary”, entry for Monday, January 4, 1897, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT.
27 Millennial Star, 16 (July 1, 1854), 415.

https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/sahs_review/vol55/iss2/7
During this time, the church supported the practice of polygamy, which was viewed as an immoral practice in western civilization. Sensationalized stories of “Mormon” missionaries seeking to convert young women to the church, only to trap them into a polygamous marriage, flooded Europe. These publications alarmed the Swiss authorities and caused further persecution for the missionaries. In 1876, John U. Stucki was “arrested because of a short article on polygamy contained in the pamphlet Ein Wort der Vertheidigung. A district judge had called the article immoral, fined Stucki fifty francs, and confiscated the whole edition . . . based on a law which forbids the spreading of obscene literature.” Regardless of these setbacks, the missionaries, native-born and others, were able to convert and baptize many Swiss people into the church. From 1850 to 1894, church missionaries in Switzerland carried out several baptisms ranging from 55 to 211 per year.

Immigration/Gathering

Once converts were baptized, they were encouraged to leave their homeland and emigrate to Utah to gather with the other members of the church, so they could be free to live their religion without persecution. Emigration for church members was aided by church agents who arranged for them to be transported through various European cities until they met in Liverpool, England, to continue their journey, first to New York and then west to Utah. Emigration trips of new church members from European countries to Utah were typically made once or twice a year, and missionaries often returned to the United States with their fellow church members. From 1855 to 1899, there were a total of 2,907 converts who emigrated to the United States from Switzerland, thus perpetuating the pool of potential native-Swiss missionaries for the coming years. As with many immigrants, the Swiss converts

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30 Kirby, “History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Switzerland,” 43.
31 Kirby, “History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Switzerland,” 51.
32 Kirby, “History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Switzerland,” appendix B.
tended to coalesce in their new homeland, and the Swiss population in the Utah towns of Midway, Providence, and Santa Clara and the Idaho towns of Bern and Geneva grew significantly during the latter half of the nineteenth century. At the beginning of the twentieth century, there were a total of 1,469 Swiss born natives living in Utah alone.33

Post-Mission Life

Missionary service was completed when the natives were officially released by a church leader either through a letter or in person. After receiving their release, they prepared to return to their loved ones in the United States. Shortly before leaving from his mission, John Kunz Jr. met his replacement and noted in his journal that “it was a full treat to me again, to meet again an Elder from Zion, and to speak the English language once more.”34 Missionaries were eager to resume life as US citizens and embrace the American way of life. Their thoughts were often on their families in America. John U. Stucki, for example, indicated a longing for his family by recording these lines in his mission journal:

_Do they miss me at home, do they miss me_  
At Morning, at Noon, or at night  
Which brings one gloomy shade round them  
That only my presence can light  
Are joys less invitingly welcome  
And pleasures more rare than before  
Because one is miss’d from the circle  
Because I am with them no more._35

Gottfried Buehler returned to start a cheesemaking business, opened a dry-goods store, served for a time as the town judge, and increased his family to eleven children. John Kunz, Jr., one of the found-

ers of the town of Bern, Idaho Territory, also provided for a large family and returned to his cheese manufacturing business there. In June 1876, John U. Stucki joined a group of immigrants on their way to Utah and arrived home by July of the same year to his large family, cattle, and wheat ranch, later becoming mayor of the town of Paris, Idaho.

**Conclusion**

The beginning of the twentieth century brought a significant change in church policy. New converts were no longer encouraged to emigrate to Utah but were supported in remaining in their homelands to continue missionary work in their own countries. A 1907 church publication stated, “Church members in Europe were told that the church . . . is not using any influence to persuade its members or others to emigrate but desires that many of them shall stay and build up the work abroad.” The church missionary program would continue in Switzerland, with both American and local Swiss missionaries serving there. However, it was no longer necessary for Swiss-American members of the church to be singled out for missionary service to Switzerland. By the twentieth century, the days of first-generation Swiss-Americans returning to preach in their homeland were coming to an end, yet their accomplishments were significant.

~ Cindy Brightenburg, Brigham Young University

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36 *Millennial Star*, vol. 69 (May 23, 1907), 329, as cited in Kirby, “History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Switzerland,” 68.
The Wonderful Swiss Touch

by C. Naseer Ahmad

Famous Swiss chocolate brands like Toblerone and Lindt are hard to miss because modern consumers will find them at checkout counters, airport gift shops and so many places. Likewise Swiss cheese products adorn the grocery store shelves in the United States. While many people might be familiar with some Swiss products they might not have a good understanding about what Switzerland is about in the modern world. This is because a few products or nuggets of information cannot really tell the whole story about a country. For example, those consuming Jack Daniels Whisky overseas might be familiar with the taste of a beverage originating from a southern state Tennessee but their understanding about America would be incomplete.

To meet the challenging task of presenting the national story or message in a cohesive manner, the Swiss Embassy in the United States has come up with a brilliant way to share the country’s message
via the Swiss Touch. It is an information dissemination campaign that communicates the message in a beautiful way covering a host of topics ranging from drones, 3D printing, performing arts, sports to cyber security. This effort is “at the heart of the public diplomacy” in US, says Sarah Shafik, Swiss Touch, Project Manager.

On May 3, 2019, a Swiss Touch campaign event titled “Swiss Touch in Aerial Futures” was held at the home of Switzerland’s Ambassador to the United States. The discussion in this event focused on the drone technology. This event brought together leaders and pioneers in drone technology and its adaptation. Each speaker had something interesting to share and their input validated the key point that Switzerland has in fact, through the policies and business climate, become the home of the drones.

There were a number of takeaways from the discussion on drones and aerial futures. The first point is that the world has seen more than a century of aviation with ever more powerful planes taking increasingly large numbers of people with longer non-stop flights to the far corners of the earth. The second point is that approximately a half century has passed since humans set foot on the Moon. The third point is that many people might not know that Switzerland—the tiny alpine country has been making increasingly important contributions to aviation as well as space exploration.

The speakers\(^1\) and their views helped those with familial, business or intellectual connections to Switzerland cement their attachment to the Alpine country, while also getting educated about the drone technology—its challenges as well as opportunities. For instance, one learned that drones in Switzerland have been used to deliver critical and life-saving things such as blood for patients in need.

\(^1\) Christian Simm, Chief Executive Officer, swissnex Boston/New York; Lisa Ellman, Co-Founder, Commercial Drone Alliance; David Hose, Chief Executive Officer, AirMap; Reinaldo Negron, Head of UTM, Wing; Andreas Raptopoulos, Chief Executive Officer Matternet; Klaus Meier, Chief Information Officer, Skyguide; Francine Zimmermann, Head of Strategy, Policy & International Affairs, Federal Office of Civil Aviation of Switzerland; Dr. John Langford, Chief Executive Officer, Aurora Flight Sciences.
Swiss Touch at Matterhorn—Climate Change discussion in Zermatt, Switzerland.

To familiarize the audience with the Swiss Touch campaign, during the welcoming remarks, at the “Swiss Touch in Aerial Futures” event at his residence Ambassador Martin Dahinden shared some personal anecdotes and mentioned some of the landmark events.

He said that the first event\(^2\) took place around January 2017 in the commanding but frigid heights in famous winter skiing resort Zermatt near the Matterhorn. He mentioned that the discussion at the Swiss Touch Table in Zermatt was about climate change and the effects of this phenomenon on the business or daily lives of people in the area.

As Ambassador Dahinden talked about the Swiss Touch opening event in Zermatt in the context of climate change, it brought back some personal memories. I started my professional career in 1974 with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency with Mobile Sources Enforcement Division. My work involved enforcement of environmental laws, which brought about the unleaded gasoline at the fuel pumps across the United States. I had arrived two years earlier as a foreign student

\(^2\) Swiss Touch Campaign; YouTube link published February 3, 2017 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=onaY6FZspDY

https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/sahs_review/vol55/iss2/7
and was very fortunate to have a very kind supervisor named Jim Sakolosky. He and his lovely wife Dixie would often invite me to dinner at their house. At one such dinner, the Sakoloskys told me about skiing in Zermatt. Those remarks by Ambassador Dahinden took me back to the ski slopes in Zermatt, even though I was still sitting in his beautiful residence in Washington. I feel that these remarks might have touched other members in the audience as well.

Ambassador Dahinden then mentioned that in the United States, this campaign started from the iconic surroundings near the Lincoln Memorial on the Mall on a bright sunny day on May 15, 2017. People from different walks of life came up to the Swiss Touch table to converse with H.E. Ambassador Martin Dahinden about whatever question they could think of at the moment. For those people, who might have travelled to Switzerland or might have a family connection, the Lincoln Memorial event would have been evocative.

Using two identical tables known as the Swiss Touch tables as vehicles for discussion, the campaign embodies the “duality of con-
temporary Switzerland as a nation that embodies tradition and a fertile ground for innovation.” This sets the stage for a “neutral ground for free discussion.”

These tables are made of aged wood from the old Hörlihütte at the foot of the Matterhorn. Skilled Swiss product designers handcrafted these tables of the material from the Swiss ash tree and are sustainable—as defined by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.4

Built with quintessential Swiss innovative methods, these tables serve as a medium to both tell the Swiss story as well as having a meaningful and stimulating conversation. These tables can project images and live stream content enabling the wood surface to act as a touch screen thereby encouraging interaction from users both online and offline. Under the banner, “One table, countless ideas,”5 the Swiss Touch tables cover enormous ground.

These tables travel across the United States for events organized by the network of Swiss Diplomats meeting and discussing various topics with experts in different fields. Sometimes these events are hosted by quasi-governmental organizations like SwissNex.

During March through June 2019, in San Francisco the campaign showcases “Swiss Touch Builds a House.”6 This interesting effort provides “a visual journey through research on the digital transformation of architecture and construction”. Through a very informative video, the Swiss Touch tells us how to build a house with “architectural research in the digital age.” Dr. Dillengburger, Chair, Digital Building Technologies, ETH Zurich explained that currently the computer can serve as a drafting tool but “future designers can solve problems we cannot solve problems without computers anymore.” Mary Ellen Johnson, Head of Exhibitions, SwissNex Boston tells us that the “de-fab house exhibition recreates the site of construction.” These experts communicate the simple but powerful ideas coming to us through the Swiss Touch table.

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4 https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300
5 https://www.swisstouchusa.org/one-table
6 How to Build a House: Architectural Research in the Digital Age; YouTube Link published April 1, 2019 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=twyMlmLguY4

https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/sahs_review/vol55/iss2/7
We live in an era when digitalization is rapidly redefining the world of journalism. Costly print media survival is becoming doubtful when the push technology is distributing breaking news notifications almost instantaneously from mobile phones. To understand their perspective, the Embassy of Switzerland and International Arts and Artists at Hillyer in Washington D.C. welcomed, in March 2019, the co-creators of Immersions for a journey to French-speaking Switzerland, a place that cherishes its traditions while ceaselessly innovating. Through this illuminating exchange, the audience received an understanding about their views and motivations in producing a 180-page biannual printed magazine about Switzerland. Maxime Fayet said that “by introducing those different formats and mixing the different genres, we hope to bring something special into the world of journalism.” Delphine Riand mentioned that “another thing is that there are no advertisements in our magazine. We do not want to break the content by advertising something, but rather have our content flow. It is sort of an uninterrupted journey and story for our readers.”

On December 7, 2018, United States and Switzerland signed a Memorandum of Understanding strengthening their cooperation in the Apprenticeship field in the USA. As part of the Swiss Touch campaign, the Consulate General of Switzerland in New York City stated that “Switzerland’s Vocational Education and Training System ensures a sustainable and skilled talent pool, and also allows both companies and workers to flourish.” Earlier in the same year on June 6, 2018, sitting at the Swiss Touch table, René Steiner, CEO Bühler North America explained how his company is implementing this program. Matt Schweizer, a Bühler employee was drawn to this program with the idea of “earn while you learn” and the “easy transition from the classroom to the jobsite.” Virginia Pearson learned about the apprenticeship program from a friend and so she applied for a position. The beauty of the apprenticeship programs is that it allows the students to further their education or even change their occupational fields, when desirable or appropriate.

7 https://medium.com/@SwitzerlandUSA/interview-with-the-cocreators-of-immersions-255001ef65ab
8 https://www.facebook.com/swissconsulatenewyork/videos/1180668308740620/
On October 24, 2018, the Consulate General of Switzerland in Atlanta held an interesting Swiss Touch event on “Building sustainable cities”\(^9\) at the Center for Civil and Human Rights. A distinguished panel of experts including Dr. Tina K. Reuter, Ciannat Howett, Nadine Al-lal, and Reese McCranie shared their views—seated around the Swiss Touch table—on building sustainable cities that address social justice, economic opportunities, and other important goals outlined in the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

A conversation held on September 12, 2018, under the Swiss Touch campaign that gastronomes would love to know about was the one with Chef Daniel Humm,\(^10\) who spoke about his passion and his four fundamentals for creating a dish:

“Number one is the dish has to be delicious. And that sounds very obvious, but it’s not always that obvious. Secondly, it has to be beautiful. For me, beautiful is minimal. It’s also effortless, not forced. Number three, it has to be cre-

\(^9\) https://www.facebook.com/SwissConsulateAtlanta/videos/2390519844298467/

\(^{10}\) Chef Humm is the Chef of the New York City restaurant called “Eleven Madison Park,” which rated the best restaurant in the world in that year.

https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/sahs_review/vol55/iss2/7
ative. Every dish has to add something to the conversation. It could be an element of surprise; it could be a new flavor combination; it could be a new technique, but something that’s not been done before. And then, number four, is it needs to have intention. Every dish needs to have a story.”

And, through Swiss culinary history and with people like Chef Humm, the Swiss Touch campaign tells a wonderful story about food.

Quite different from the frigid heights near the Matterhorn is the Ashokan Reservoir, elevation 585 feet above sea level, New York State. Ambassador André Schaller, Swiss Consul General New York invited experts for an important discussion on sustainable water management. Seated at the Swiss Touch table were Paul Rush, Deputy Commissioner of New York City’s Bureau of Water Supply and Kristopher McNeill, Professor of Environmental Chemistry at ETH Zurich at Ashokan Reservoir in Upstate New York. Oliver Haugen from Swiss-

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12 Swiss Touch presents: Sustainable Water Management in Switzerland and the U.S.; YouTube link published August 21, 2017 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ivT3InBx80
nex New York Outpost moderated the discussion which was looking into the future. Innovative, multifaceted projects which lower the level of pathogens were among the topics of discussion.

“Keeping up with Digital Information,” a unique event on June 16, 2017, at the National Archives in Washington addressed the “challenge of storing, preserving, and securing mountains of record - both digital and physical.” Emphasizing the magnitude of the work involved, Archivist of the United States, David S. Ferriero mentioned that “our records start with the Oath of Allegiance signed by George Washington at Valley Forge . . . and go all the way to the tweets being created in the White House.” For this fascinating discussion the Swiss Touch table had a panel of four experts on data retention and cyber security. Each expert presented some food for thought. For instance, “how do you keep digital information safe and secure?”\(^{13}\) H.E. Ambas-

\(^{13}\) Swiss Touch at The U.S. National Archives; YouTube link published August 3, 2017 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BcB8e9Bc1yU
https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/sahs_review/vol55/iss2/7
sador Dahinden asked “how to collect, how to preserve and how to categorize all this information to make it useful for future generations?"
the solution because an equally important part is community engagement and education for preventing violent extremism.

Assisting in the Swiss Touch campaign effort are “Swiss Ambassadors,” such as famous tennis players like Stan Wawrinka and Belinda Bencic as well as experts in many specific fields—such as Christophe Guberan, Industrial Designer and Developer of 3D printing technology; Amanda Mascarelli, Science Journalist, Managing Editor, SAPIENS; and Kerstin Vignarr, UN Institute of Disarmament Research and Eva Galperin, Director Cybersecurity at the Electronic Frontier Foundation.

A wide range of ideas have been explored and discussed at the Swiss Touch events throughout the United States. For instance, the Swiss Touch joined the Center for Civil and Human Rights along with the Swiss Consulate General and the UN to discuss the idea of building sustainable cities in Atlanta. “Empowering Young Voices in Foreign Policy” in New York City brought together key stakeholders to discuss how to inspire the next generation. “Humanitarian Protection in the Digital Age” in San Francisco and “Innovation and Humanitarian Aid” in New York City were great events for discussing topic that are most relevant today.

Through these series of events centered on the Swiss Touch table, the information provided is timely, useful and is often critical. This is truly a wonderful way to reintroduce Switzerland; a country that ranks high in so many categories from top ranked universities to the happiness index of its citizens not to mention the list of Nobel Prize winners and technical innovation. The leaders of the country recognize the lack of natural resources and coming devastating effects of climate change. And, the Swiss diplomatic team in the United States has proved to be trail blazers with the wonderful Swiss Touch campaign.

It is truly a daunting task to cover all the wonderful ideas highlighted by the Swiss Touch campaign. Many of these ideas have real impact on the lives of many people and often they strengthen bilateral

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14 The concept of sustainable cities follows the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/sahs_review/vol55/iss2/7
ties between United States and Switzerland. For instance, the apprenticeship program under the auspices of Bühler North America opens the doors for economic opportunities and professional advancement for youth in America. Likewise, the sustainable water management discussed around Ashokan Reservoir in Upstate New York helps ensure clean water to the residents of the area. The innovations in the usage of drones in the efficient and timely delivery of blood or human organs will play a key role in saving lives.

In all the topics discussed through the Swiss Touch campaign, one will notice a history of cooperation between the sister republics—the United States and Switzerland. A little know fact is discovered by reading the remarks by H.E. Ambassador Dahinden at the American Swiss Foundation 74th Annual Gala Dinner when he described his personal memories:

... We meticulously observed how the two astronauts put the American flag on the moon. That picture has remained iconic to the present day and has often been used in popular culture. Decades later during a lunch, the director of the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C., told me something I certainly was not aware of in 1969. She asked me whether I knew that there was a Swiss flag on the moon even before the stars and stripes. At first I thought she was kidding. But she wasn't. The first item the astronauts unfolded on the moon was the solar wind panel, which was produced in Switzerland—the only foreign experiment on the Apollo 11 mission. The solar wind panel had a little Swiss flag. ...15

These memories epitomize the wonderful Swiss Touch.

~ C. Naseer Ahmad, Oakton, Virginia
“Why Does it Always Have to be Switzerland?”

Daniel Silva’s Treatment of Swiss Society and Culture in Selected Mossad Spy Novels

by Brian Champion

The title quote is uttered by Mossad operative Eli Lavon, who, upon being tasked to assist in the illegal penetration of a sovereign country, despairs of the mission’s success, whose two-fold metric is the apprehension of an existential threat to the State of Israel, and his safe return to his adjunct professorship in Jerusalem, all while avoiding detection or incarceration. His angst is well-placed, as Switzerland is well-known in both real and imaginary intelligence circles as a formidable environment in which to conduct secret missions of any kind. Silva and his fictitious Mossad team struggle with their own Helvetiphobia—fear of Switzerland—while concurrently indulging their Helvetophilia—love of Switzerland—thereby creating a palpable tension typified in the title-quote.

When, exactly, Switzerland became a hub for intelligence gathering and covert operations has been lost to the mists of time. Despite centuries of implicit and declared transnational neutrality, Switzerland, by the cruel ironies of geographic fate, couldn’t help being at the confluence of the intelligence realpolitik in Europe and, later, in the world. From the early nineteenth through the twentieth centuries, facets of the history of the foreign use of Switzerland and the Swiss neutrality ideal in the tectonic power politics of international intrigue. Spying and associated covert operations in Switzerland—then as now—are illegal,

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of course, as they are in all countries. But regardless of legality or even probity, the Swiss history of clandestine or subreptitious actions or of how Switzerland accommodates covert enterprise is rich and significantly worth investigating.\textsuperscript{2} This article suggests that in addition to heroes and villains, Silva uses Swiss society and culture as characters that are essential to advancing the story while also providing authentic socio-political commentary.

Though the entire movie \textit{Casablanca} was completely filmed on a sound stage at Warner Brothers studios in Burbank, California, the award-winning cinema resonates with its viewers as they identify with either the hero, the heroine, or their circumstances. One of the lesser known movie characters is the actual city of Casablanca itself, sandwiched as it was between the puppet Vichy regime in France, and the German \textit{Wehrmacht} gamboling towards the European Mediterranean. The cosmopolitanism of Casablanca two years after the fall of Paris mingles expatriates of several countries with German enforcers in a believable tale of intrigue, danger, and passion, all while the terror of global war swirls around them. Casablanca’s role as a city under Nazi-sympathizers’ control advances the believability of the story

simply by its presence. Made in November 1942, the tension of finding an anti-Nazi Czech resistance fighter relentlessly pursued by a Nazi sympathizer is all the more authentic given the Moroccan geography of the plot. The city itself contributes meaningfully to the story and is as much a character as Rick or Laszlo.

Similarly, Daniel Silva’s sixteen (so far) Gabriel Allon novels that deal with Mossad operative Gabriel Allon and his crack team of Mossad operatives focus on the existential threat the State of Israel believes it faces, and with recurring regularity situates the continuity of Israel in western Europe. In the novel series, one of the most frequently used geographies is that of Switzerland, and, in similarity with Casablanca, uses specific Swiss locations as an opportunity to buttress Switzerland in its role as a character within the novels.

Silva created Gabriel Allon as a Mossad operative recruited to hunt and to eliminate the Palestinian perpetrators of the 1972 Munich Olympics massacre which killed eleven Israelis during a botched West German rescue attempt. This three-year mission, code-named Operation Wrath of God, describes Allon as an assassin, but also as a covert operator, a surveillance specialist adept at coded communications, and an effective tip of the Israeli spear seeking global justice for Israelis and Jews. For the state of Israel, there is no geographic limit to Mossad’s operations, and thus Gabriel is assigned to liquidate threats from enemies of Israel wherever they are be found. Most often, this elimination occurs in western Europe, mostly in France and Germany, but with extensions into the United Kingdom, Italy, Denmark, and Cyprus. But unique among the locations Silva describes are the portraits painted of Switzerland, usually its cities. For the hitman and his team, and probably for real Israeli operatives, too, Switzerland is both a blessing and a curse: it provides the usual amenities of secure banking and covert

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operations, but at the same time such liberties are also afforded its enemies. In addition, the vigilance of the Swiss authorities is a constant Gabriel is forced to consider and calculate. Several passages from his novels, as demonstrated below, reveal this ying and yang of attraction and resistance to Switzerland, and not just the topography, its urban anonymity or financial opacity, but also of Swiss values and ethics. And just like Casablanca is essential to the movie’s storyline, so, too, is Switzerland a silent but obvious character in Silva’s novels.

While Silva (and other novelists of this genre) fabricate or utilize Helvetic assistance, neither he nor they do so in factual isolation. Real spies really use Switzerland and Swiss institutions for their own peculiar benefit. Particular to Silva and other Mossad novels is the stated premise that Israel, alone among the nations, is perpetually faced with existential threats which must be locally, regionally, or globally...
combatted by means overt and/or secret. Given the uncontested fact pattern of Israeli self-interested operations abroad, it is a blank canvas on which Silva is permitted to craft his own interpretation.

But not Silva only. American writer Brad Thor’s inaugural espionage/intelligence/terrorist thriller pivots on Switzerland. The Lions of Lucerne deals with the kidnapping of an American president and his daughter who can only be rescued by Thor’s protagonist, a former SEAL named Scot Harvath. The novel documents Harvath’s various attempts to free the president, but the denouement is approached only through his interactions with the Swiss. At one point, Harvath is expecting to meet a source who can assist his rescue, but when met is not the reliable asset he was hoping for. Instead, Harvath uses a Swiss federal agent who self-describes how to understand the Swiss:

“Getting up, Jackie patted the place on the bed where she’d been sitting next to Scot. Claudia stood up and set the guns from her lap onto the chair and made her way to the bed. She took a roll of clean gauze from Jackie and began wrapping Scot’s arm. Jackie closed the door behind her. ‘As I said, I work for the Federal Attorney’s Office in Bern, which is called the Bundesanwaltschaft. I was following a suspect in an ongoing investigation who had been using a post office box in Interlake—‘ ‘Wait a second, are you or are you not “Aunt Jane”?’ ‘I am not.’ ‘Then what the hell were you doing at the Ice Palace?’ ‘I think I can make the situation somewhat clearer if you’ll allow me.’ ‘Be my guest.’ ‘Once a week, my suspect travels to the post office to check for mail. He is a creature of habit, typical Swiss, very methodical and always come on the same say at normally the same time.’”

Later, the investigator also discloses: “Like my suspect, I am also methodical and of course I am Swiss, so I’ll take your questions in order.”

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6 Thor, The Lions of Lucerne, 312-313
It is possible that both within and without Silva’s novels Switzerland reifies cosmopolitanism, and from James Bond forward, successful spies are often urbane and contemporary. Silva makes this transparent:

“Few countries had played a more prominent role in the life and career of Gabriel Allon than the Swiss confederation. He spoke three of its four languages fluently and knew its mountains and valleys like the clefts and curves of his wife’s body. He had killed in Switzerland, kidnapped in Switzerland, and exposed some of its more repulsive secrets. One year earlier, in a café at the base of the glacier at Les Diablerets, he had taken a solemn vow never to set foot in the country again. It was funny how things never seemed to go according to plan.”

And again: “What flavor of passport is he carrying these days?” “Swiss. He has a Swiss wife, too.” “Which variety?” “German speaking.” “How cosmopolitan.”

In another novel, The Rembrandt Affair, Silva dilates on some repulsive secrets which generate perpetual Israeli angst over Swiss actions (or not) during World War II:

“Did he ever publically talk about the war?” Lavon gave a faint smile. “You might find this difficult to believe, but Voss actually granted an interview to Der Spiegel a few years before his death. As you might expect, he maintained his innocence to the end. He denied ever deporting anyone. He denied ever killing anyone. And he denied ever stealing a thing.” “So what happened to all that money Voss didn’t steal?” “There’s general consensus among Holocaust restitution experts, myself included, that he was never able to get it...

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out of Europe. In fact, the exact fate of Kurt Voss’s fortune is regarded as one of the great unsolved mysteries of the Holocaust.” “Any ideas where it might be?” “Come now, Gabriel. You don’t need to ask me that.” “Switzerland?” Lavon nodded. “As afar as the SS was concerned, the entire country was a giant safe-deposit box. We know from American OSS records that Voss was a frequent visitor to Zurich throughout the war. Unfortunately, we don’t know who he was meeting with or where he did his private banking. While I was in Vienna, I worked with a family whose ancestors had been fleeced by Voss at the Zentralstelle in 1938. I spent years knocking on doors in Zurich searching for that money.” “And?” “Not a trace, Gabriel. Not a single trace. As far as the Swiss banking industry is concerned, Kurt Voss never existed. And neither did his looted fortune.”

Admittedly a long passage, but it weaves historical fact with novelistic intrigue. And fundamentally, it illustrates Gabriel Allon’s nearly consuming displeasure with Swiss banks and their bankers—the basis for his Helvetophobia. It is a recurring theme: expanding on one of the great counterfactuals of the twentieth century, Silva posits that without the Swiss institutions of faceless financial transactions, the oxygen on which the Nazi regime depended may have been cut off, thus saving millions from miserable suffering and death. Silva speaks to this façade in his second novel, The English Assassin, where he stipulates to the physicality of Zurich but also analyzes Swiss attitudes:

“Gabriel knew too much about terrorism and security to enjoy traveling by airplane, so he rode the Underground to Waterloo Station and caught a late-afternoon Eurostar to Paris. In the Gare de l’Est he boarded a night train to Zurich, and by nine o’clock the next morning he was strolling down the gentle sweep of Bahnofstrasse. How gracefully Zurich conceals her riches, he thought. Much of the world’s gold and silver lay in the bank vaults beneath his feet, but there

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were no hideous office towers to mark the boundaries of the financial district and no monuments to moneymaking. Just understatement, discretion, and deception.”

Again to underscore Silva’s point, in a dinner conversation with London art dealer and sometime Israeli covert associate Julian Isherwood, he attempts to comprehend Swiss roles in asset protection:

“Tell me about the Swiss connection.” “Neutrality left the dealers and collectors of Switzerland in a unique position to capitalize on the rape of Paris. The Swiss were permitted to travel throughout much of Europe, and the Swiss franc was the world’s only universally accepted currency. And don’t forget that places like Zurich were awash in the profits of collaborating with Hitler. Paris was the place to buy looted art, but Zurich, Lucerne, and Geneva were the places to unload it.” “Or stash it?” “But of course. The banking secrecy laws made Switzerland a natural dumping ground for looted art. So did the laws covering the receipt of stolen property.” “Explain the laws to me.” “They were brilliant, and thoroughly Swiss in subtly. For example, if a person takes possession of an object in good faith, and that object happens to be stolen, it’s rightfully his after five years.” “How convenient.” “Wait, there’s more. If an art dealer finds himself in possession of a stolen work, it’s the responsibility of the true owner to reimburse the dealer in order to reclaim his painting.” “So Swiss dealers and collectors could receive stolen works without any fear of the law or of losing money?” “Exactly.”

Swiss banking practices have remained largely unchanged to the present time; small, incremental laws have been enacted to help reveal a bank’s customer but only in the face of another potential 9/11 catas-

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Silva portrays such attitudes with candor and then asserts this is typical of both the Swiss population and their banker neighbors. At one point in *The English Assassin*, Silva constructs a conversation between uber-industrialist Otto Gessler and Gerhardt Petersen, the Swiss counterintelligence official on Gessler’s payroll, in a self-congratulatory dilation on the added value Swiss banks provide to humanity:

“Our detractors say that the drug trade has been very good to Switzerland. I’m afraid I would have to concur. I’m certain my own bank contains accounts of the so-called drug kingpins. But what is the harm? At least if the money is deposited in Switzerland it is put to good use. It is loaned to legitimate enterprises that produce goods and services and employment for millions of people.” “So they can go out and buy more drugs?” “If that’s what they wish. You see, there is a circular quality to life on earth. Nature is in harmony. So is the global financial system. But just as nature can be thrown out of balance by seemingly small occurrence, so can business. Imagine the destructive consequences if the profits of the drug trade were not recirculated back into the world economy. The bankers of Switzerland are performing a valuable service.”

For Silva, this binary, simultaneous coexistence of understatement and utilitarianism produces its own tensions. Today’s Israelis are both the literal and spiritual heirs of the Holocaust and as such struggle to reconcile benign self-preservation with malignant existential threats. While the bankers are sanguine about their profession, others are not, and these Silva focuses on. For example,

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“Professor Emil Jacobi was the self-appointed guilty consciences of Switzerland. He believed that in order to save his country he first had to tear it down, and he devoted his life to unearthing and exposing the unsavory elements of Swiss history. His explosive book, The Myth, had ignited a firestorm by detailing the extensive economic and trade links between Nazi Germany and Switzerland throughout the Second World War. Jacobi outlined the process by which Swiss banks accepted looted gold—and gold ripped from the teeth of Jews on the way to gas chambers—and converted it into hard currency Hitler used to buy the raw materials needed to keep his war machine running. Professor Jacobi’s conclusion shocked the country and made him a national pariah: Switzerland and Nazi Germany were allies in everything but name, he wrote. Hitler could not have waged war without the help of Swiss bankers and arms makers. If not for Switzerland, the Wehrmacht would have ground to a halt in the autumn of 1944. Millions of lives would have been saved but for the greed of Swiss bankers. Soon after the publication of The Myth, life for Professor Jacobi in Switzerland became increasingly uncomfortable. He received death threats, his telephones were tapped, and officers of the Swiss security service monitored his movements. Fearing for his safety, he resigned his professorship in Lausanne and accepted a position in the history department of the University of Lyons.”

Silva further burnishes this view with the professor explaining to Gabriel Allon why he was in France, and not in Switzerland.

“He wore a frayed tweed jacket, and his rimless spectacles were pushed up into his bird’s nest of unruly gray hair. There were clips on the legs of his trousers to keep the cuffs from becoming entangled in the chain of his bicycle. “Welcome to exile,” he said, leading Gabriel wearily up the staircase to his flat on the fourth floor. “We Swiss revere the right to free speech, but only if that speech refrains from criticism of

Silva, The English Assassin, 163-164.
Switzerland. I committed the mortal sin of a good Swiss, and so I find myself here, in the gilded cage of Lyons.”

And then, the professor offers a warning to Gabriel, and by extension, to all covert operators who slide in, around, and out of Switzerland:

“It sounds as though you’ve run up against the great conspiracy of silence [back in Switzerland].” “What do you mean by that?” “When you’re dealing with Switzerland, Mr Allon, it’s best to keep one thing in mind. Switzerland is not a real country. It’s business, and it’s run like a business. It’s a business that is constantly in a defensive posture. It’s been that way for seven hundred years.” “What does that have to do with Rolfe’s murder [August Rolfe was a wealthy businessman an art collector who wanted to repatriate some of his art to the rightful Jewish owners]?” “There are people in Switzerland who stand to lose a great deal if the sins of the past are exposed and the sewers of the Bahnhofstrasse were given a thorough flushing they so desperately need. These people are an invisible government, and are not to be taken lightly, which is why I live here instead of Lausanne. If you choose to pursue this matter, I suggest you watch your back.”

Ten minutes later Gabriel was walking down the stairs with his copy of The Myth tucked beneath his arm. He paused in the foyer for a moment to open the cover and read the words the professor had scrawled on the title page. *Beware the gnomes of Zurich—Emil Jacobi.*

Which raises the question, of whom should Gabriel and, by extension, all spies be aware?

Silva poses and then answers his own question. Actually, he provides two answers. The first is a warning about the closed nature of Swiss society and its unofficial interest in preserving the status quo:

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“Petersen was the last to arrive. The others were already there. They had come from Zurich and Zug, from Lucerne and Bern, and from Geneva and Basel. As was their custom, they had traveled separately and arrived at unevenly spaced intervals so as not to attract attention. They were all Swiss. Foreigners were not permitted. Foreigners were the reason the group existed.”

In addition, the Swiss populace is a vigilant sort:

“The Swiss are an insular and tribal people, possessing an almost animal instinct to spot outsiders. Anything out of the ordinary is reported to the police, no matter how insignificant. Indeed, the Swiss citizenry is so vigilant that foreign intelligence agencies operating inside the country regard them as a second security service. With this fact in mind, Gabriel was careful to project an image of familiarity as he walked from his care to Augustus Rolfe’s villa. He thought of an Office operation a few years earlier. A team of agents had been sent to Switzerland to bug the flat of a suspected Arab terrorist living in a small town outside Bern. An old lady spotted the team outside the Arab’s apartment house and telephoned the police to report a group of suspicious men in her neighborhood. A few minutes later the team was in custody, and the fiasco was reported around the world.”

Here Silva again weaves reality with fiction. According to press reports, this really did happen: a Swiss woman observed Mossad agents attempting to enter a building and she called the cops:

“Israel apologized to Switzerland yesterday after a Mossad secret service agent was caught planting an electronic listening device on a private telephone terminal in the capital, Berne. The Swiss federal prosecutor, Carla Del

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Ponte, said Switzerland was holding one Israeli agent and had issued warrants for four others on charges of breaking into an apartment building in Berne and planting bugging devices. For unexplained reasons, the four fugitives, who are assumed to have left the country, were released after being held briefly by police. The police had been called to the scene at 2 am by a woman who could not sleep and saw strangers behaving suspiciously. “We have enough elements to prove Mossad is involved,” Ms Del Ponte said. She added that the target of the eavesdropping operation was a foreigner but not a diplomat.\(^\text{19}\)

Secondly, Silva describes the official binary counterespionage apparatus in Switzerland: The DAP, Dienst für Analyse und Prävention, which, since Silva wrote, has been refashioned into a much broader security service:

“As of 1 January 2010, there is a new security policy instrument in Switzerland, the Federal Intelligence Service (FIS) (German: Nachrichtendienst des Bundes, NDB; French: Service de renseignement de la Confédération, SRC; Italian: Servizio delle attività informative della Confederazione, SIC; Romansh: Servetsch da las activitads informativas da la Confederaziun, SIC). The new service was created by merging the Service for Analysis and Prevention (DAP) with the Strategic Intelligence Service (SND). Through the use of synergies and consistent adjustment to the needs of the service recipients a powerful intelligence service was created which is adapted to meet modern requirements and which forms the future contact for all levels of the Confederation and the cantons.”\(^\text{20}\)

\(^{19}\) Silva, The Rembrandt Affair, 327; see also “Mossad fiasco in Switzerland shames Israel”, Eric Silver in Jerusalem; Friday 27 February 1998; The Independent; see https://www.independent.co.uk/news/mossad-fiasco-in-switzerland-shames-israel-1147153.html (last accessed 13 November 2018)

\(^{20}\) See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swiss_intelligence_agencies (last accessed 13 November 2018)
Regardless of iteration, in Silva’s writing, it was DAP of whom the Israelis need to be consummately aware:

“The only way we’re going to get them back is to make a deal.” “With whom?” asked Navot. “At this point, our options are rather limited. Either we call Swiss security or we deal directly with Martin.” “Have you ever stopped to consider they might be the same thing? After all, this is Switzerland we’re talking about. The DAP exists not only to protect the interests of the Swiss Confederation but of its financial oligarchy as well. And not necessarily in that order.” “And don’t forget,” Shamron said, “Landesmann owns Zentrum Security, which is filled with former officers of the DAP. That means we can’t go to Martin on bended knee. If we do, he’ll be able to rally the Swiss government to his defense. And we could lose everything we’ve worked for”\(^21\)

Later, despite a hero’s efforts, his tradecraft was not impeccable, and super spy Gabriel Allon is arrested by Gerhardt Peterson.

“That’s Peterson [Gabriel’s associates want to know]?” “Gerhardt Peterson works for the Division of Analysis and Protection.” “What the hell is that?” “The new name for Switzerland’s internal security service. It has responsibility for national security matters, counterintelligence and investigating Swiss citizens suspected of treason. Peterson is the number-two man in the division. He oversees all operations.”\(^22\)

But even in this cryptic description of a security bureaucrat, Silva paints a picture of Swiss propriety:

“Within the Division of Analysis and Protection, Gerhardt Petersen was regarded as a man on the rise. Superi-


ors handled him with care. Subordinates withered under his cold stare. His colleagues looked on in wonder and jealousy. How had the schoolteacher’s boy from Erstfeld risen to such heights? Look at him! Never a hair out of place! Never a loose tie! He wears power and success like expensive after-shave. Petersen never made a move that wasn’t calculated to advance his career. His family life was as neat and orderly as his office. His sexual affairs were discreet and appropriate. Anyone foolish enough to stand in his way quickly discovered that Gerhardt Petersen was a man with powerful friends. Friends in Bern. Friends in the banks. He would be the chief soon—everyone agreed on that. Then a senior posting in the Federal Office for Police. Someday, perhaps, control of the entire Department of Justice and Police. Petersen did have friends in the banks. And they did do favors for him. The Swiss financial oligarchy had been like an invisible hand on his back, nudging him up each rung of the ladder of power. But it was not a one-way street. Petersen did favors for them, too, which is why he was behind the wheel of his Mercedes sedan, racing through the gloomy forest of Kernwald.”

Turns out, Petersen is a more complex Swiss than first imagined. Once official diplomatic contact had been made from Tel Aviv to Bern, and Gabriel avowed by Mossad, diplomacy and bilateral treaties limited Petersen, and DAP had no alternative but to let Gabriel go. To arrest Gabriel in the first place, Petersen was simply following orders, as most good Swiss did. But Petersen’s Swiss preference for following orders takes a personal twist just before Gabriel is released when Gerhardt Petersen divulges to Gabriel a burdensome family secret whose weight he can no longer bear.

“And then Petersen told him the story of what happened in his village during the war—the story of the Jews who had crossed in to Switzerland from France in search of refuge only to be expelled across the border into the arms of the Gestapo. “After my father’s death [Petersen tells Gabriel], I was going through some of the papers in his study, trying to put his affairs in order. I found a letter. It was from the federal police. A commendation. Do you know what the commendation was for? It was my father who had reported the presence of Jews in our village. It was because of my father that they were sent back to the Germans and murdered. I don’t want any more Jewish blood on the hands of my family. I want you to leave this place alive.”

Silva retells this story slightly differently in a later novel, The Confessor: “How many?” “Usually about a dozen. Sometimes more. Sometimes fewer.” “Why fewer?” “Some moved on to other conventi. One family tried to make it to Switzerland. They were caught at the border by a Swiss patrol and handed over to the Germans. I’m told they died at Auschwitz.”

Petersen’s personal anguish at his family’s complicity in the Holocaust is illustrative of the underlying reasons Silva pits Israel against Switzerland. He later make what is opaque more transparent, when Gabriel confronts a Swiss industrialist named Otto Gessler:

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24 Silva, The English Assassin, 357.
25 Silva, The Confessor, 90.
"Mr Allon, no one is ever going to find out what’s in this room. We Swiss take our privacy rights very seriously. No one will ever be able to open these doors without my consent. But just to make certain of that fact, I’ve taken an additional step. Using a little known loophole in Swiss law, I declared this entire property a private bank. These rooms are part of the bank—vaults, if you will. The property contained in them is therefore covered by the banking secrecy laws of Switzerland, and under no circumstance can I ever be forced to open them or reveal their contents.” “And this pleases you?” “Indeed,” he said without reservation. “Even if I was forced to open these rooms, I could be prosecuted for no wrongdoing. You see, each of these objects was acquired legally under Swiss law, and morally under the laws of God and nature. Even if someone could prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that a work in my collection had been stolen from their ancestor by the Germans, they would have to reimburse me at fair market value. Obviously, the cost of repatriation would be astonishing. You and your friends in Tel Aviv can screech as much as you like, but I will never be forced to open the steel doors that lead to these rooms.” “You’re a son of a bitch, Gessler.” “Ah, now you resort to curses and foul language. You blame the Swiss for this situation, but we are not to blame. The Germans started the war. We had the good sense to stay on the sidelines, and for this you wish to punish us.” “You didn’t sit on the sidelines. You collaborated with Adolf Hitler! You gave him guns and you gave him money. You were his servants. You’re all just servants.” “Yes, we did reap a financial reward for our neutrality, but why do you raise this now? After the war, we settled with the Allies and all was forgiven, because the West needed our money to help rebuild Europe. Then came the Cold war, and West needed us again. Now, the Cold War is over, and everyone from both sides of the Iron Curtain is beating down the Swiss door with the cap in hand. Everyone wants an apology. Everyone wants money. But someday you’re going to need us again. It’s always been that way. The German princes and the French kings, the Arab sheiks and the American tax evaders,
the drug lords and the arms merchants. My God, even your intelligence agency utilizes our services when it needs them. You yourself have been a frequent client of Credit Suisse over the years. So please, Mr Allon—please climb down off your moral high horse for a moment and be reasonable.” “You’re a thief, Gessler. A common criminal.” “A thief? No, Mr Allon, I’ve stolen nothing. I’ve acquired through smart business tactics a magnificent private collection of art along with staggering personal wealth. But I am not a thief. And what about you and your people? You bleat about the supposed crimes of the Swiss, but you founded your state on land stolen from others. Paintings, furniture, jewelry—these are just objects, which are easily replaced. Land, however, is an entirely different matter. Land is forever. No, Mr Allon, I’m not a thief. I’m a winner, just like you and your people.” “Go to hell, Gessler.”

This testy exchange illuminates the foundation of Gabriel’s antipathy towards the Swiss. The novel from which this passage comes is The English Assassin, which delves into the connection between fleeing Nazi officials and the Vatican, and is reiterated in the subsequent volume called The Rembrandt Affair, where Gabriel and his Mossad team hunt for Jewish assets purloined from occupied Europe. While descriptive, it fails to answer the question in the title of this article—Why does it have to be Switzerland?

Perhaps four theories might explain Silva’s occasionally excruciating dissection of Switzerland and Swiss culture. First, it might just be the thing to do. In the early twentieth century, for example, several British writers wrote the prototypical spy novel about an immanent invasion of the United Kingdom by the Kaiser and his army. As David Stafford points out, such writing led to a popular and financial rewarding (for the publishers) Germanophobia.

“[William] Le Queux’s main importance as a spy novelist was in popularizing the notion of a German spy

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26 Silva, The Confessor, 350-351.
menace in Britain and stirring up anti-German feeling. Although this sentiment had been growing steadily as the German navy expanded, it was not until after about 1905-06 that the Germans replaced the French as targets of popular hostility.”

In other words, simply, it’s Switzerland’s turn, a form of Helvetophobia.

A second theory is more substantive because it speaks to Silva’s buttressing the greater issue of justice. This theory suggests that because there is no statute of limitations on complicity in crimes against humanity, which is how Israel and other countries view Swiss actions in the Second World War, that the State of Israel, on behalf of Israelis per se and for Jews around the world, diligent good faith efforts must be made to bring the culpable to account. In the course of pursuing a Palestinian terrorist plot, Gabriel discovers that Swiss federal counterintelligence official Gerhardt Petersen is in the subreptitious employ of a dirty Swiss industrialist named Otto Gessler. Gabriel wants to know why Petersen, a high Swiss official of sound reputation, would psychemotionally capitulate to such a corrupt Swiss billionaire and asks, “Do you do anything for principle, Gerhardt, or do you do things only for money? For example, why do you work for the Council of Rutli? Do you do it only for the money, or do you do it because you believe in what they are doing?” “Both”, responds Peterson, to which a skeptical Gabriel responds, “Oh, really?” and then asks, “Which principle compels you to work for Otto Gessler?” And then the conversation turns towards justice.

“I work for Otto Gessler because I’m sick of watching my country being dragged through the mud by a bunch of damned foreigners over something that happened before I was born.” “Your country turned looted Nazi gold into hard currency. It turned the dental gold and wedding rings

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https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/sahs_review/vol55/iss2/7
of the Jewish people into hard currency. Thousands of terri­fied Jews placed their life savings in your banks on the way to the death chambers of Auschwitz and Sobibor, and then those same banks kept the money instead of handing it over to their rightful heirs.” “What does this have to do with me? Sixty years! This happened sixty years ago. Why can’t we move on from this? Why must you turn my country into an international pariah over the actions of a few greedy bankers six decades ago?” “Because you have to admit wrongdoing. And then you have to make amends.”

For Silva, this is the Quixote windmill towards which he must tilt—Gabriel Allon and Mossad must defend the state of Israel, true, but they must also, perhaps even simultaneously, seek justice for the millions who did not survive the Second World War, and for those thousands who had their possessions summarily confiscated to the personal enrichment of Nazis and various like-minded hang­ers-on.

A third theory for why Silva includes Switzerland as a charac­ter in his novels may reside in the fact that Switzerland’s geopolitical reality makes it the crossroads of a variety of international relations, legitimate and questionable, much like Casablanca. In the novel A Death in Vienna, Silva uses Zurich banker Konrad Becker validate Israeli spymaster and Gabriel Allon’s boss Ari Shamron’s interna­tion­alism, and give voice to both Gabriel’s Helvtophilia and to a Swiss perspective:

“‘I prefer to think of myself as a citizen of the world,’ replied Shamron. ‘I reside in many places, speak the languages of many lands. My loyalty, like my business inter­ests, knows no national boundaries. As a Swiss, I’m sure you can understand my point of view.’ ‘I understand it,’ Becker said, ‘but I don’t believe you for a minute.’”

29 Daniel Silva, A Death in Vienna (New York: GP Putnam’s and Sons, 2004), 305.
It is no secret that the CIA’s predecessor, the Office of Special Services, under Alan Dulles during the Second World War used Switzerland as a base of its intelligence operations in Europe, mirroring efforts by the Soviets and their proxies. And has been pointed out, Swiss institutions were very good at keeping secrets. Thus, the evidence is clear that Switzerland has been near the epicenter of world affairs for centuries. The ease with which Israeli (and other nationalities’) operatives, both in fiction and in real life, transit or operationalize in Switzerland is another evidence of Helvetophilia. A facile conversation between the head of Mossad special operations and Gabriel in the first novel The Kill Artist, reveals the usefulness of Swiss accounts to their mission:

“The following morning Shamron and Gabriel net in Hampstead Heath. They walked along a footpath bordered by two rows of dripping beech trees. Shamron waited for a pair of joggers to pass before speaking. “You have your money—five hundred thousand American. Usual account in Geneva.”

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30 See footnotes 2 and 4 above. Additionally, “The OSS officers attached to Dulles’s Swiss headquarters (they were officially serving as ‘military attachés’, or in some such other innocuous capacity) had spotted the mountain areas that had been fortified by the Swiss—and they were not even [325] at war. The Swiss carved out a fortress system in the Alps that was most impressive. ‘And if the Swiss can do it,’ reasoned the OSS types in Bern, Geneva, and Zurich, ‘so can the Germans.’ Even more important, this R&A [Research and Analysis] report, although predicting an end to hostilities in Europe by mid-1945, warned that if the enemy managed to become entrenched in his mountain redoubt, it could cost more Allied casualties than all of the ground fighting in Western Europe up to that time. And the war could stretch on for an additional six months or more.” Edward Hymoff, The OSS in World War II (New York: Ballantine Books, 1972), 325-326. See also Louis Hagen, The Secret War for Europe: A Dossier of Espionage (London: Macdonald, 1968), 35; Tom Bower, The Paperclip Conspiracy: The Battle for the Spoils and Secrets of Nazi Germany (London: Michael Joseph, 1987) especially 299-309 on Swiss role; Thaddeus Holt, The Deceivers: Allied Military Deception in The Second World War (New York: Scribner, 2004), especially the section on ‘Swiss Navy’, 84 ff; on Swiss counterintelligence, see Richard Aldrich, The Hidden Hand: Britain, America and Cold War Secret Intelligence (London: John Murray, 2001) 98. All of which merely substantiates the impression that the Swiss have been involved in world affairs, at a fairly complex level, for quite some time.
That the details of this deposit were unremarkable confirms that the Israelis greatly appreciated Swiss banking for their own ends. Ying and yang.

So, "why does it always have to be Switzerland?" In short, because the Swiss are compact and water-tight, traits useful and essential in surreptitious affairs. A tradition of keeping financial and other transactions oblique and confidential also makes Switzerland an ideal locale for both spying and for being spied upon. Thirdly, Switzerland offers arms-length distance from accountability, which distance lubricates the wheels of covert operations and false identities. Lastly, as when Gabriel Allon is released from Swiss custody without any criminal charges and with his espionage cover intact, the Swiss can occasionally be counted upon as friends. All of which melt together in the alchemy of Silva's explications on the journey to international justice, not only for acknowledged historical generations, but also for prophylactically for future ones. As much as any human character, for good or ill, Silva's novels are impressed with a larger-than-life character whose name is Switzerland, who is, at one and the same time, private, vigilant, wealthy, insular, xenophobic, with an incredible facility for a selective and self-serving memory. The Swiss people, too. The character Gabriel Allon is used to portray the Mossad's earnestness in state self-preservation, very much like the Swiss, but through entirely different means. In both countries, it seems that perpetual state-centric ends justify chronically unorthodox means.

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Panic, Erratic Behavior, and the Psychological Impact of the Battle of the Little Bighorn on the Soldiers, Including the Swiss Troopers

by Albert Winkler

Introduction

Twelve men born in Switzerland were in the Seventh Cavalry at the time of the Battle of the Little Bighorn. Of these, five were on detached service at that time and did not participate in the campaign and battle. The other seven participated in the encounter. Also, many other men in the Seventh Cavalry at that time had at least some Swiss ancestry, and all of them likely suffered from the psychological effects of the battle as did numerous other participants.¹

Combat stress first became a subject of much academic inquiry in the twentieth century, but soldiers certainly suffered from mental problems in the nineteenth century as well as a result of military service and battle, including the Little Bighorn. Recently, P. Willey and Douglas D. Scott have published a ground-breaking study The Health of the Seventh Cavalry, which includes a chapter entitled “Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and the Seventh Cavalry.” While this section does much to define PTSD and to describe its symptoms, the study deals more with the nature of the condition than how it affected the troopers at the Little Bighorn.²

The purpose of this study is to examine how the stress of the Little Bighorn disturbed the participating troopers mentally and to present more details on how the men suffered from symptoms similar to combat neurosis such as panic, insanity, and irrational behavior which the men demonstrated during and after the battle.³

**Problems and Perspectives**

Several factors hamper a proper understanding of how the Battle of the Little Bighorn influenced participants mentally. In the late nineteenth century, the scientific study of mental disorders was only in its infancy, and the medical profession in the United States was incapable of giving Custer’s troopers a proper diagnosis or to treat their problems adequately. According to the historian Michael C. C. Adams, doctors in this “prepsychiatric era” often “misdiagnosed mental wounds as cowardice, character loss, or lack of patriotism.”⁴

Additionally, the social stigma placed on persons suffering from depression, erratic behavior, or other mental disorders was harsh. Frequently, those with mental problems faced ostracism, criticism, and persecution, and the soldiers could be punished for being weak, insubordinate, or cowardly. Under these circumstances, many men would be reluctant to discuss their mental conditions or even admit they had problems. Likely, the occurrence of mental problems among the troopers at the Little Bighorn was vastly under reported.

Another obstacle in studying the mental impact of the Little Bighorn on the troopers is isolating the causes of the men’s disorders. General health, injuries, prior military service, and medical conditions could influence the men’s mental health. For example, at least nineteen of the men in the Seventh Cavalry had syphilis, including Major Mar-

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Panic . . . Impact of the Battle of the Little Bighorn on the Soldiers

cus Reno, the second in command at the battle, which often damaged the men’s mental stability.\(^5\) The historian Louise Barnett has suggested, “that the effects of [his] tertiary syphilis . . . could have contributed to the erratic behavior that characterized the last phase of Reno’s army career,” which probably included his conduct at the Little Bighorn.\(^6\) An additional four men were listed as having had gonorrhea some time in their lives, included the commander of the Seventh Cavalry, George Armstrong Custer.\(^7\)

Perhaps the most significant factor compromising the men’s mental balance was former severe combat experience, including seeing other troopers killed nearby, and men with lengthy military careers could have suffered from the consequences of campaigns before and after the Little Bighorn. Probably, the most trying battle experience for the men prior to the Little Bighorn was the Civil War. Roughly 640 men were with the cavalry and fought at the Little Bighorn. Yet of that number, only 613 troopers were formally in the army. The others included doctors, scouts, and citizen packers. Of the men engaged at the Little Bighorn, about 110 of them also participated in the Civil War. In addition, nineteen of these men also had the trauma of being wounded in that conflict. Also, some of the men had been in the army well before the Civil War began. Professor Michael Adams has argued that men who fought in the Civil War eventually lost their mental stability. Men “often could not face battle because they had been there too often.” Dr. Adams added, “Only in myth do soldiers get used to combat and always stay steady under fire after surviving their first exposure.”\(^8\)

Whatever the origins of these men’s mental problems, the Little Bighorn could only have added significantly to them, and every participant in that battle probably payed a significant psychological price

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\(^8\) Adams, *Living Hell*, 111 and 115.
for that experience. Often even single tragic events can trigger mental problems in combatants, and many men witnessed numerous such painful experiences during the two days of intense fighting at the Little Bighorn. However, the experience of combat in the Civil War helped some of the veterans to put the Little Bighorn in perspective. Sergeant John Ryan, who “was in forty-four engagements” and wounded three times in the Civil War, stated, “I served through the Civil War and saw
many hard sights on the battlefield, but never saw such a sight as I saw there [at the Little Bighorn].”

Major Marcus Reno was the second in command of the Seventh Cavalry at the Little Bighorn, and he was also an experienced soldier having graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1857. He had participated in some of the heaviest fighting in the Civil War including the battles of Antietam and Cold Harbor, and he also placed the fighting at the Little Bighorn in a special category. Reno reported on the intensity of firing on the morning of the second day of battle, June 26, 1876. “I heard the crack of two rifles. This was the signal for the beginning of a fire that I have never seen equaled. Every rifle was handled by an expert and skilled marksman, and with a range that exceeded our carbines and it was simply impossible to show any part of the body before it was struck.”

Custer’s Mental Condition

George Armstrong Custer may have been among the men who had already experienced psychological damage before the Little Bighorn, and he could have suffered from some kind of mental disorder, which was either caused or made worse by his military service. The psychiatrist, Vincent J. Genovese, has argued that Custer may have suffered from either “a bipolar disorder” or “manic depression.” Charles K. Hofling, M.D., also a psychiatrist, has stated that Custer “exemplified a form of narcissistic personality disorder.”

Not only did Custer have extensive combat experience in the Civil War, but he was also wounded at least three times in that conflict, which could have contributed to his mental condition. Custer worked

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9 John Ryan, *Ten Years with Custer: a 7th Cavalryman’s Memoirs* (Terra Haute, IN: AST, 2001), 305.
to extinguish a fire over a creek, and "burned his hands in doing it." He suffered a wound to his shin bone from a "shell fragment [which] killed his horse under him." But his most serious injury took place in March 1864 when "Custer was thrown from his carriage when it collided with a horse and rider... [which] threw Custer over the dashboard, rendering him insensible for ten or twelve hours... Custer was up and around five days later, though not perfectly well. He recalled nothing of the accident or his subsequent delirium."

The severe concussion Custer suffered in 1864 could have caused brain damage and other long-term problems, as recent studies on American football players have demonstrated, and he might have lost some of his mental strength and judgment by the time of the Little Bighorn. This mishap could have caused Custer’s famous sharp temper, rapid speech, talkativeness, stuttering, and stammering, and it is also noteworthy that some of the most brutal actions of his career took place after the accident. This included his participation in the murder of prisoners of war in the Shenandoah Valley in September 1864 and his brutal treatment of his men in 1865 and 1867.

Lieutenant George Wallace saw something different in Custer at the very beginning of the Little Bighorn campaign. After receiving some instructions from their commander on the evening of June 22, 1876, Lieutenant Edward Godfrey recorded, “I walked back with Wallace who said that he believed Genl Custer would be killed as he had never heard him talk as he did, or his manner so subdued.” In his diary of the campaign, Sergeant Charles White (Henry Charles Weihe) stated that Custer was “insane.” Red Feather, a Sioux warrior, had a

14 Williams, Military Register, 91.
similar opinion. "We have always thought Custer was either crazy or drunk to attack us without knowing more about our camp." If these assessments are accurate, Custer was lacking in mental vigor at the beginning of the campaign, which could help explain some of his failures in judgment at the outset of the battle.

Some Premonitions

Recent studies of premonitions have often associated such precognition with mental disorders. In the case of the men in the Seventh Cavalry, premonitions may be associated with extreme fear, and some of the men with Custer’s command were so anxious about the campaign that they had premonitions of their deaths. As Otto Durselew said to Stanislas Roy, “Roy we have bin good friend and we had our hardships together and I want to tell you that I am going to be killed and don’t expect to even see you again holding out his hand to me which I took saying Dureslew what is coming over you, for I knew him to be anything but a coward the tears was in his eyes.” Durselew survived the Little Bighorn, but he was killed at Snake Creek on September 30, 1877.

Daniel Newell saw Henry M. Cody’s diary the day before the battle. Newell stated, “What in the hell are you thinking about, you don’t count on dying do you?” He said to me, “Dan if anything happens to me notify my sister Mary.” Newell added, “I think he had a premonition . . . in less than 24 hours, he was lying dead.” Charles Reynolds reportedly “lost his head” and became “unnerved” before the battle. He told Frederic Girard “that he had never felt so [worried] in all the days of this life and he felt depressed and discouraged.” He also said, “that he had a presentment of his death, that he would never return from the

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18 Red Feather, Indian Views, 118.
20 Stanislas Roy to Walter Mason Camp Dec. 8, 1909 in the Camp Collection in the Office of Special Collections at Brigham Young University Provo, Utah.
expedition.” Reynolds was killed in the valley fight at the outset of the battle on June 25, 1876.

**Custer’s Battle Plan**

After Custer’s men located the Indian village on June 25, 1876, the commander of the Seventh Cavalry divided his forces in an attempt to encircle the camp and to attack its inhabitants from several directions. He sent Captain Frederick Benteen with a battalion comprised of Companies H, D, and K over some hills to the left of the main column with vague orders to “pitch in” when the opportunity arose. Additionally, he gave Major Reno the command of another battalion comprised of Companies A, G, and M, while Custer led the largest battalion including Companies C, E, F, I, and L. The commander also ordered Company B to remain behind to protect the pack train with its additional supplies and ammunition. While all of these units were heavily involved in the battle, only Custer’s column was wiped out. Most of the rest of the men survived the battle.

**Erratic Behavior in Reno’s Valley Fight**

Custer ordered Reno to cross the Little Bighorn River and advance on the village while the commander took his battalion to strike the village farther down the stream. The troopers in Major Reno’s column were the first to engage the Indians in the battle when his force crossed the river and advanced on the Indian village. There were three Swiss soldiers in his command. This included Private John Lattman, who was in Company G, and Privates Frank Braun and Robert Senn, who were both with Company M. These Swiss troopers soon faced the ordeal and potentially the mental problems of all the men involved in this advance on the village.

Major Reno clearly became mentally unhinged during this attack. Aside from the possible effects of syphilis, Reno had also participated in at least twenty engagements in the Civil War, and his mental state might

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22 Girard “Testimony” *Reno Court of Inquiry*, 88 and 127.

have already been compromised even before the battle began. The immediate cause of Reno’s loss of mental equilibrium at the Little Bighorn was apparently the death of men near him including Bloody Knife, an Indian scout with the cavalry. George Herendeen stated. “I was near to Major Reno and knowing that Bloody Knife was killed near to where we were in the timber, I asked him [Reno] if he remembered anything about that fact... He said, ‘Yes, his blood and brains spattered over me.’” Herendeen added, “I thought at the time it demoralized him a good deal when Bloody Knife was killed in front of him, and that another soldier was killed and hollered. The Indians were not over thirty feet from us when they fired. When the soldier was hit, he cried out, ‘Oh, my God! I have got it!’ This scared a good many of the men.”

Lieutenant Charles F. Roe stated, “In that emergency, Major Reno lost his head; an officer told me that he gave the command to mount and dismount three times in quick succession. Finally he [Reno] said, ‘Get back to the top of that high hill and every man for himself.’” Lieutenant Mathey later testified that he heard other officers including Lieutenant DeRudio state that “Major Reno lost his head” during the battle.

![Figure 2: Marcus Reno.](https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/sahs_review/vol55/iss2/7)

Figure 2: Marcus Reno.
Courtesy, Library of Congress.

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24 George Herendeen, “Testimony,” Reno Court, 284.
26 Charles Francis Roe, *Custer’s Last Battle* (New York: R. Bruce, 1927), 9.
27 Mathey “Testimony,” Reno Court, 551.
Other troopers showed signs of mental instability in the valley fight. As Herendeen testified, “I saw one man throw his gun away as he was going out of the timber. He got left behind and I don’t supposed he knew what he was doing.”28 Another trooper, Henry Petring, was so frightened and confused that he contemplated suicide. When he fell back to the trees with most of Reno’s command, he wondered if it would be best “to shoot myself.”29

The Indian accounts of the fight with Reno’s column also maintained that some of the troopers in that engagement became erratic. White Bull stated that the warriors pursued two of Reno’s men. “The Indians killed one and the other killed himself.”30

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28 Herendeen, “Testimony,” Reno Court, 256.
stated, “The soldiers were very excited. Some of them shot [helplessly] into the air.” Soldi er Wolf affirmed, “Reno’s men were frightened and acted if they were drunk—as I think they were.”

The Indian accounts for Reno’s valley fight and the other parts of the battle frequently state that the troopers had been drinking when they described the soldiers’ erratic or unexpected behavior. Some of the men in the Seventh Cavalry may have been at least partially inebriated during the battle, but the Indians were inclined to believe that alcohol was a big factor in the soldiers’ unstable conduct, while panic or confusion were equally likely explanations.

At the end of Reno’s valley fight, when the troopers retreated from the valley, the Swiss, John Lattman, got separated from the rest of the command. He faced a very challenging ordeal trying to hold out when he was surrounded by the enemy which caused him great fear and anxiety before he was able to survive and find his way to the top of Reno Hill where he joined the command once again. The other two Swiss with Reno’s command, Frank Braun and Robert Senn, had already successfully retreated to Reno Hill.

Panic in Custer’s Battalion

While Reno’s men were under attack, Custer’s battalion of five companies advanced toward the village farther down the river. This group included three Swiss: Frederick Lehman in Company I and John Rauter and John King both in Company C. These three men faced the same trials and similar experiences as the rest of Custer’s column who were annihilated when the Indians counterattacked in large numbers.

When Custer’s column was overwhelmed, many of the Indians stated that the troopers panicked and seemed to become erratic.

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in their behavior. Flying By observed, “[in the Custer fight] soldiers [became] excited and shot wild.” 34 The Indian named Lights stated that “the soldiers in running away, became so demoralized that they would fire in the air, making them easy victims when they were caught.” 35 White Bull added that a trooper was unable to focus his attention on his enemies, “[There was] a soldier on foot and pointing gun in all directions.” 36 Low Dog stated, “A great many of their shots went up in the air and did us no harm.” 37 Thunder Bear added, “Many soldiers shot wild into the air.” 38

Standing Bear’s drawing of the destruction of Custer’s column depicts thirty-four soldiers. Of these, four troopers, three with pistols and one with a rifle, were firing their weapons directly up and harmlessly into the air. Standing Bear also drew a picture of six men apparently trying to escape by running to “Deep Ravine.” Some of these men carried a weapon in each hand, and they were depicted as firing eight

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37 Low Dog in *Indian Views*, 65.
38 Thunder Bear in *Indian Views*, 91-2.
times. Five shots seemed to go harmlessly into the air and another three went harmlessly into the ground.39

Red Horse observed, “The soldiers became panic-stricken, many of them throwing down their arms and throwing up their hands. No prisoners were taken. All were killed; none left alive even for a few minutes.”40 Other troopers showed signs of panic. As Iron Hawk stated, “I think they were so scared that they didn’t know what they were doing. They were making their arms go as though they were running very fast, but they were only walking. Some of them shot their guns into the air.”41 Two Bulls added that “it was like fighting boys,

39 Standing Bear’s drawing of the Custer fight is on display in the American Wing at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. See also Standing Bear in Rodney G. Thomas, Rubbing out Long Hair, Pehin Hanska Kasota: the American Indian Story of the Little Big Horn in Art and Word (Spanaway, Washington: Elk Plan, 2009), 189 and 193.
the men were so tired, and their rifles so poor.”

Red Cloud and American Horse stated that some of the soldiers were so terrified when they were in battle that they appeared to be paralyzed by fear and offered little resistance before they were killed. Luther Standing Bear agreed, the soldiers “did not shoot at us. They seemed so panic-stricken that they shot up in the air. Many of them lay on the ground, with their blue eyes open, waiting to be killed.” Kate Bighead saw a soldier “just sitting there and rubbing his head, as if he did not know where he was nor what was going on in the world.” The trooper offered no resistance when “three Sioux men ran to him and seized him. They stretched him out upon his back. They went at this slowly, and... Two of them held his arms while the third man cut off his head with a sheath-knife.” Little Knife stated, “In firing their carbines and later their pistols they were wild, and in retreating they fired over their shoulders, killing their own comrades as they went.” These men “fell prey to... the careless and reckless shooting among themselves.”

As was the case when the Indians engaged Reno and his men in the valley fight, many of the Indians believed that the men in Custer’s column were either drunk or their conduct was so erratic as to suggest they were inebriated. Iron Hawk said “Custer’s men in the beginning shot straight, but later they shot like drunken men, firing into the ground, into the air, wildly in every way.” Red Feather stated, “All the soldiers were drunk. They didn’t know what they were doing.” Soldier Wolf affirmed, “The soldiers seemed to be drunk (probably

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42 Two Bulls in Edward A. Milligan, ed., *High Noon on the Greasy Grass: the Story of the Little Big Horn by Indians who were there* (Bottineau, N.D.: Milligan, 1972), [21].


45 Kate Bighead in Paul Andrew Hutton, ed., *The Custer Reader* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1992), 371.

46 Little Knife in *Indian Views*, 54.


they were panic stricken); they could not shoot at all.”

49 Two Moons added, “Something was the matter with his [Custer’s] men. They did not run nor seek shelter, but stayed right out in the open where it was easy to shoot them down. Any ordinary bunch of men would have dropped into a watercourse, or a draw, where they could have fought for a long time. They acted and shot their guns like something was wrong with them. They surely had too much of that whiskey. That bunch of men should have fought for a long time, but it did not take long to kill them all.”

50 Wooden Leg also stated that the troopers with Custer’s column had been drinking: “Numerous canteens taken by warriors from the bodies of dead soldiers were found to contain whiskey; and it was believed by many of them that strong drink had so crazed the soldiers as to cause them to shoot each other, or to kill themselves, instead of turning their weapons against the Indians.”

51 Turning Hawk affirmed, “Lots of soldiers [were] drunk ... and shot each other. Some smelt [of liquor] after [their] deaths.” Shoots Walking agreed, “Many of the soldiers acted as though they were drunk. Many of them threw their guns down.” The troopers were so confused, “They did not know enough to shoot.”

52 Wooden Leg also reported that many of the soldiers in Custer’s battalion were mentally unstable. They “went crazy. Instead of shooting us, they turned their guns upon themselves. Almost before we could get to them, every one of them was dead. They killed themselves.”

53 White Bull, Brave Wolf, and Hump stated that “There were several soldiers in the fight who, seeing no escape, shot themselves.” These witnesses added, “One soldier started to run back on the trail, but being cut off, [he] jumped in a ravine and shot himself.”

52 Turning Hawk, *Indian Views*, 145.
Kate Bighead gave more details on the troopers’ suicides. “Just then I saw a soldier shoot himself by holding his revolver at his head. Then another one did the same, and another. Right away, all of them began shooting themselves or shooting each other. I saw several different pairs of them fire their guns at the same time and shoot one another in the breast.” Yet Lone Bear stated that only “one man committed suicide.” The men who killed themselves likely panicked probably remembering the oft-repeated warning that they should save the last bullet for themselves to avoid the possibility of capture and torture.

The great chief, Sitting Bull, thought that fatigue was a big factor in why the troopers in Custer’s column acted in an unstable manner. “When they rode up their horses were tired and they were tired. When they got off from their horses they could not stand firmly on their feet. They swayed to and fro . . . like the limbs of cypresses in a great wind. Some of them staggered under the weight of their guns.” Sitting Bull added, “They were so exhausted and their horses bothered them so much that they could not take good aim.”

Sitting Bull indicated that Custer became unstable just before he was killed. “He [Custer] killed a man when he fell. He laughed.” The interviewer tried to correct the chief, “You mean he cried out.” But Sitting Bull clarified his statement, “No, he laughed; he had fired his last shot.” Was the shot “From a carbine?” “No, a pistol.” “Did he stand up after he first fell?” The chief affirmed, “He rose up on his hands and tried another shot, but his pistol would not go off.”

Wooden Leg told about the unusual conduct of another trooper shortly before he was killed. When it appeared that all the soldiers had been killed, one of the men raised himself onto his left elbow. “He turned and looked over his left shoulder, and then I got a good view of him. His expression was wild, as if his mind was all tangled up and he was wondering what was going on here.” He held a “six-
Perhaps the most famous example of panic and irrational behavior in Custer’s column took place when a soldier probably had escaped the destruction of the command, but he then killed himself. Red Feather stated that a trooper fled on horseback. “The Indians took after him, and shot and shot at him, but couldn’t hit him or catch him. They saw some smoke and the report of a gun, and saw him fall off his horse. The Indians went over and [concluded] he had shot himself.”  

Luther Standing Bear gave a similar account: “In a few minutes every one [of Custer’s men] was killed, all but one man. He had a very fine horse and had started away. Several of our chiefs started after him, but his horse was much faster and better than the Indian ponies, and he was gaining ground. We were beginning to talk of turning back, when this man pulled out his six-shooter, pointed it to his head, and fired.”

Figure 6: Shooting Himself by Amos Bad Heart Bull. A Pictographic History of the Oglala Sioux, [233].

shooter” in his hand. An Indian took the pistol away from him and killed him with it.  

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60 Wooden Leg, A Warrior, 238.

61 Red Feather, Lakota Recollections, 86.

62 Luther Standing Bear, My People the Sioux, 83.
away. He was the third Indian to give chase. The soldier rode like the wind and appeared to be getting away from them, when he killed himself.” The trooper who thus failed to survive was perhaps Corporal John Foley.

Irrational Behavior and the Defense of Reno Hill

Some of the troopers who took up the position on Reno Hill were initially disoriented. As Herendeen observed, “Everyone was a good deal frightened when I first got there, but we had plenty of time to cool off as nobody was molesting us.” At least one of the troopers who fled to the hill was so frightened and disturbed that he could not speak coherently. As Henry Jones stated, “Gustave Korn joined ‘I’ Co. Packs near ‘Reno Hill’ on the 25th. Sergt. DeLacy accused him of deserting the Company (I) telling him that Capt. Keogh would prefer ‘General Charges’ against him. Korn could scarcely speak when we met him, his voice trembled and seemed to choke when he uttered these words, ‘My horse ran away with me.’”

Captain Benteen’s battalion of three companies soon arrived to aid in the defense of Reno Hill. Among these men was the Swiss, Vincent Charley, from Company D. Charley was one of the first men killed in defense of the hill. He was shot through the bowels. He then fell from his horse, and cried out for help in his fear and anguish. Unfortunately for the Swiss, no soldiers came to his aid, and some warriors soon killed him. As tragic as was his fate, he was spared the ordeal of the remainder of the battle.

When Captain Benteen arrived on Reno Hill with his battalion to aid the defense of that position, he soon noticed that Captain Myles Moylan, a Civil War Veteran, seemed to be losing control of his senses. He was “blubbling like a whipped urchin, tears coursing down his cheeks.” Moylan later conducted himself well at the Snake Creek

64 Herendeen, “Testimony,” Reno Court, 257.
65 Henry Jones “Letter” to Camp June 2, 1911. Camp Collection, BYU.
Fight on September 30, 1877, and his actions there won him the Medal of Honor.

Lieutenant Edgerly arrived with Benteen’s column, and he saw Major Reno acting erratically. “He was in an excited condition. As we came up he turned and discharged his pistol towards the Indians,” even though the Indians were “about a thousand yards away,” and his pistol only had an effective range of one hundred yards. Edgerly also saw Lieutenant Varnum who appeared on the verge of losing complete control of himself. “He was excited and crying and while telling us about what had occurred he got mad and commenced swearing and called for a gun and commenced firing at the Indians,” also at very long range.\(^{68}\) Varnum also conducted himself better at White Clay Creek on December 30, 1890, and he was awarded the Medal of Honor for his conduct in that battle.

The Swiss, Frank Braun, was among the casualties on Reno Hill on June 25. He was shot twice. Once in the left cheek and another time in the left thigh. The bullet in his thigh lodged in the bone. No doubt, he suffered great physical and mental anguish from his wounds and the subsequent infection. He died early on the morning of October 4, 1876, the last trooper to die of wounds received in the battle.\(^{69}\)

After fighting ended on the first day, some of the troopers defending Reno Hill were so tired and frightened that they became delusional. As Lieutenant Godfrey stated, “Soon after all firing had ceased [on June 25, 1876] the wildest confusion prevailed. Men imagined they could see a column of troops over on the hills or ridges, that they could hear the tramp of the horses, the command of officers, or even the trumpet-calls.”\(^{70}\)

After the firing ceased because of darkness on June 25, John Frett, a citizen packer, saw Major Reno approaching. The packer saluted the officer and said, “Good evening.” Reno shot back with the question, “Are the mules tight?” When Frett asked, “Tight? What do you mean by tight?” Reno then lost his composure, became erratic,
and said, “Tight, God damn you!” As Frett later testified, the officer then “slapped me in the face with his hand. Then he took a carbine and leveled it at me and said, ‘I will shoot you.’” A fellow teamster, Benjamin Churchill, pulled Frett away and probably prevented a bloody encounter. Frett added that Reno “had a bottle of whiskey in his hand and as he slapped me the whiskey flew over me and he staggered. If any other man was in the condition he was, I should call him drunk.”

Even though Reno later denied he was drunk at the time, he confirmed that he had struck and threatened Frett. The major testified that he could not remember the exact words he exchanged with the citizen packer, but Frett’s response, “angered me more, and as I thought that was not exactly the time for moral suasion, I hit him, and I may have told him that if I found him there again I would shoot him.”

Exhaustion and the lack of sleep could have contributed to the men’s mental state, and the soldiers suffered from extreme fatigue during the battle. As Captain Benteen noted on the campaign, “1st night’s loss of sleep.” He also stated, “2nd night’s loss of sleep.” Benteen gave his opinion on the fatigue of his men. “I judged the condition of the men of my troop somewhat by my own condition; though that is one of almost physical never tire; but not having had sleep for two nights previous to this one, was getting just a trifle weary myself; so up and down the line of ‘H’ Troop I & Lieut. Gibson and myself tramped, the night of June 25th & 26th, doing our very best to keep the sentinels awake, but we just could not do it. Kicking them; well, they didn’t care anything about that. However, we two kept awake on our end of the line.” He added that he was short “three nights of sleep.”

Major Reno agreed that the men were exhausted. “It had been harder on the men than on the horses. The men were badly in want of sleep because they had been up in the saddle.” Lieutenant Edward Mathey later testified that he “was so tired that I went to sleep standing

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71 Frett, *Reno Court*, 505.
74 Reno, *Reno Court*, 569.
"Panic . . . Impact of the Battle of the Little Bighorn on the Soldiers" 67

up" in the evening of June 25. Lieutenant Varnum also stated that he was exhausted, “As for myself I was completely exhausted and nothing but the excitement of going into action kept me in the saddle at all.”

According to the trooper, George W. Glenn, Lieutenant Gibson lost his nerve later in the battle. “Lieutenant Gibson was trying to get out of sight in a pit too shallow and was acting so cowardly that he was in the way of men passing back and forth. Benteen got ashamed of him and told the men to run over him if he persisted in lying there.”

During the siege of Reno Hill on June 26, 1876, hundreds of Indians pressed close to the defensive position held by the troopers. The warriors were in a position to overwhelm the soldiers, unless desperate action was taken. In what must have been one of the boldest actions in any of the Indian battles in the American West, Captain Benteen ordered some of the troopers to charge the enemy on foot to drive them off. When the troopers attacked the Indians, one of the soldiers lost his nerve. As Lieutenant Godfrey explained, “And away we went with a hurrah, every man of the troops ‘B,’ ‘D,’ and ‘K’ but one, who lay in his pit crying like a child.” “The one man who did not go out was shot in the head and killed instantly. The poor fellow had a premonition that he would be killed, and had so told one of his comrades.” This trooper could have been Patrick Golden.

In another version of his death, Golden was very frightened after the first day of battle on June 25 and asked a sergeant, probably Thomas Murphy of Company B, if he thought that the Indians would return the next day. The sergeant “said they would probably come back at daylight, when Golden commenced to cry.” The sergeant asked what the matter was, and he replied, “Tom if they come back they will kill me.” The next day, June 26, a bullet hit the crest of the rifle pit were Golden lay, and it “threw dirt over us all and entered the brain of Golden,” who died instantly. “His presentment had been fulfilled.”

75 Mathey, Reno Court, 523.
76 Varnum, Reno Court, 146.
77 Glenn, Custer in ’76, 136.
Some of the men took grim humor in their situation. When the men in Benteen’s battalion started to make barricades out of boxes containing hard bread, one of the troopers threw himself down to gain some little protection from enemy fire. “He had hardly gotten his head against the box when a bullet came tearing through it, killing the man instantly. Strange as it may sound here, nearly every man who saw this laughed.”

The demanding circumstances challenged many men’s mental abilities. As Godfrey explained, “The excitement and the heat made our thirst almost maddening.” The condition of the wounded was so pitiful that some men found it disturbing. As Theodore W. Goldin wrote, “It was a Scotsman named McVey (sic) [McVay], shot through the hips, and as we laid him down and started to return, the poor fellows all around us, feverish from their wounds, and exposed to the full rays of that hot, June sun, were begging so piteously it almost broke us down.” Some of the men probably felt sorry for another trooper, Julius Helmer, who “was shot through the bowels and died in great agony begging of his comrades to kill him and end his misery.”

The condition of the men defending Reno Hill became so harsh that Cornelius Cowley, a Civil War veteran, became completely deranged. As Stanislas Roy stated, “Cowley went insane from thirst and did not recover for some time. We had to tie him fast on June 26.” The unbalanced trooper suffered from ailments associated with the battle for the rest of his life. “Cowley believed his attack of heart disease was due to over fatigue and exhaustion and the overpowering effect from the vast number of corpses both human and animal, in various states of decomposition and putrefaction lying on the field during and after the battle.” He died in a hospital for the insane in 1908.

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80 Edgerly, Gibson and Edgerly Narratives, 13.
82 Theodore W. Goldin, With the Seventh Cavalry in 1876 (Brian, Texas: Carol), 32.
83 Luther Hare, Custer in ’76, 67.
85 Williams, Military Register, 84-5 and Nichols, Men with Custer, 65.
A soldier, only known as Tony from Company A, also showed signs of combat stress. This trooper could have been Anton Seibelder, a Civil War veteran. He “was lying in the place best suited for the shelter and the men called to him to get out of the way. But he never moved. One of the men began to kick him and yelled for him to get up. He struggled to his feet; his face bore tokens of great fear. He said he was sick. A more miserable looking wretch it would be difficult to find. The man was almost frightened to death. He walked a few steps and fell to the ground heedless to the heat of the sun or anything else around him.”

**Psychological Problems after the Battle**

The distress of the men at the Little Bighorn was demonstrated by how much relief they felt when the battle was over. According to Captain McDougall, when the warriors withdrew, and the Indian camp moved away on the afternoon of June 26, 1876, “We gave them three cheers.” The men were also relieved when General Terry’s command approached the next day. “Genl Terry & staff soon came upon the scene & was greeted with hearty cheers by all. . . . The oppressiveness of our situation was fully realized and tears filled nearly every eye.” Daniel Newell agreed, “When word got around [of Terry’s approach] it seemed as though every man in the outfit broke down and cried.” Edward Mcguire added, “There were shouts and there were enlisted men and also officers crying. That is some had tears rolling down their cheeks and others showed it in their voices.” Even though the men were elated to have survived the battle, for many of them, their mental ordeals were just beginning.

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86 Peter Thompson, *Thompson’s Narrative of the Little Big Horn* (Stillwater, OK: Cross, 2007), 73.
87 McDougal, *Reno Court*, 534.
90 Maguire, *Reno Court*, 12.

https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/sahs_review/vol55/iss2/7
A week after the battle, July 3, 1876, Luther Hare wrote a letter to his father and gave an assessment of how the combat at the Little Bighorn had hurt the troopers mentally: “It has thrown us into such a stupor that we can’t yet realize the terrible ordeal through which we have just passed.”\(^9^1\) Writing to his wife on August 7, 1876, Lieutenant Frank D. Baldwin observed, “Col. Weir is very much broken from the use of liquor and it will not be strange if he soon goes under. Capt. French is also in a very bad fix and unless he soon stops drinking he will go under also.”\(^9^2\) It is unclear precisely what Baldwin meant by “go under,” but he could have been stating that Weir and French might die, collapse entirely, or go completely insane.

Captain Thomas Weir was a Civil War veteran who, according to his physician Dr. Orten, suffered from “physical and nervous exhaustion presumably due to the exposure and fatigue of that summer’s campaign” at the Little Bighorn. The captain “seemed to be suffering form a chronic depression that continued day after day, staying pretty much in his room and avoiding all contacts with other officers.” Dr.

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\(^9^1\) Luther Hare as cited in, Ray Meketa, *Luther Rector Hare: a Texan with Custer* (Mattituck, New York: Carroll, 1983), 40.

Orten came when Weir suffered his fatal collapse on December 9, 1876. The physician said he “entered Weir’s room just as he died. His death was due to melancholia [mental depression].”

Weir’s obituary in the New York Times stated that he died of “congestion of the brain” which was probably a brain aneurysm.

Other troopers at the Little Bighorn also suffered mentally. Louis Baumgartner was discharged from the army in 1894 from “progressive paralysis of insane, contracted in the line of duty.” Reportedly, he later died in an insane asylum. Andrew Conner, a Civil War veteran, died in 1911 in a Washington, DC, hospital for the insane.

John J. Fay was diagnosed for being insane in 1877. Henry Haack was diagnosed as having melancholia (mental depression) in 1881 and he died in the Washington, DC, hospital for the insane in that same year.

Joseph Kretchmer was slightly wounded in the fight on Reno Hill, and he later suffered from “epilepsy contracted in the line of duty.” He was also known to have seizures, which are consistent with symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. John C. Wagoner was a Civil War veteran and the chief packer with the Seventh Cavalry. He was hit in the forehead by a spent bullet on the evening of June 25, 1876, and he fell unconscious from his horse. He remained comatose until the next day when he finally awoke. Wagoner was treated for his wound on the battlefield, but the bullet remained in his head for years. His wounds could have contributed to his drinking problem and may have been a factor in his divorce. He “died from an overdose of powdered morphine in 1899,” either by accident or suicide.

Thomas F. McLaughlin is another example of a trooper who became deranged after the battle. He had been shot in the forearm on

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95 Williams, *Military Register*, 37.
96 Williams, *Military Register*, 70.
100 Nichols, *Men with Custer*, 343.
June 26. “After the 1876 campaign, McLaughlin was not the same man either in body or mind. On one occasion he struck his wife across the forehead with his saber scabbard, blackening both [her] eyes. He was much troubled with nervousness, all the time talking about Gen. Custer and Indians and would ask do you not see them, there they are. He used to carry the book ‘A Life of General Custer.’ When he saw Custer’s picture he would seem to get excited and talk incoherently, nearly going into spasms over it. His constant talk was about the fight at Little Big Horn, and he would point out on the prairie at some rocks and say there the Indians are, do you not see them. He was sent to the Jamestown Hospital for the Insane in April 1885.” He died there one year later.

Frederick Benteen, a distinguished Civil War veteran with extensive campaign and combat experience, also developed mental problems after the Little Bighorn, and he suffered from chronic drunkenness. He was charged with drunk-and-disorderly behavior at Ft. Duchesne, Utah, in 1886, and he retired from the army in 1888 for medical reasons which were “contracted in the line of duty.”

At least seven or eight men committed suicide after the battle. George Blunt died of “gas asphyxia, suicide.” and Charles Fischer

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102 Williams note 33, p. 209. “From statement in various affidavits in pension file.”


104 Williams, *Military Register*, 41.
also died of “asphyxiation from inhalation of illuminating gas.”\textsuperscript{105} John R. Steinker killed himself from an overdose of opium, “being found in bed . . . an empty vial of laudanum [opium] in his pocket . . . presented appearance of poisoning by opium.”\textsuperscript{106} John C. Wagoner died from an “overdose of powdered morphine.”\textsuperscript{107} John W. Burkman and George Loyd shot themselves.\textsuperscript{108}

Drunkenness was a problem for many of the survivors of the battle, and some men probably drank themselves to death, but their demises were not listed as suicides. The desertion rates also remained high for the 350 survivors of the Little Bighorn, and at least fifty-six men chose this means of escaping military service. A major factor in their decisions to desert may have come from the mental impact from their participation in the battle. The desertion rates could have been higher except for the fact that some of their terms of enlistment were short. Within one year of the battle, eighty-two men were discharged and likely felt no need to leave early.

Two Swiss survived the battle. They were Robert Senn and John Lattman, both from Zurich. Each of them remained in the army for years. Lattman died on October 7, 1913, but the date of Senn’s death is unknown.\textsuperscript{109} Very likely, all of the men who fought at the Little Bighorn suffered mentally from their experience, including Senn and Lattman.

**Conclusion**

The men in and with the Seventh Cavalry at the Little Bighorn faced one of the most traumatic combat experiences in the history of the Indian Wars of the American West. Badly outnumbered, frequently outmaneuvered, and often facing superior weapons wielded by an able and determined adversary, the troopers did their best under the most trying of circumstances. The fact that some of them became erratic in

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\textsuperscript{105} Williams, *Military Register*, 125.
\textsuperscript{106} Williams, *Military Register*, 277.
\textsuperscript{107} Nichols, *Men with Custer*, 343.
\textsuperscript{108} Nichols, *Men with Custer*, 43 and 199.
\textsuperscript{109} Winkler, “Germans and Swiss,” 95.
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no way reflects negatively on their accomplishments, and the survival
of most of the command is ample evidence of their prowess. After an
extremely trying ordeal, many troopers simply had reached the end of
their endurance, and many of them paid a high price mentally for the
rest of their lives. These men did the best they could or perhaps as well
as anyone could under the circumstances, and they deserve high praise
for what they had to endure and for how well they performed in battle.

~ Albert Winkler, Brigham Young University