



Custer at Hanover cover painting by Dale Gallon
www.gallon.com

THE ENEMY:

A dauntless, charismatic, plumed cavalier – a feared legend.

THE WILLING HERO:

The flamboyant leader, a man possessed with raw courage, rare gallantry, and reckless heroism, who loves the limelight and considers war the Devil's own fun, unexpectedly becomes the Union's youngest general three days before the battle.
And leads one of the greatest cavalry charges in the annals of warfare.

THE TEST:

When is defying a direct order justified? Or...is it never justified?
How do moral courage and character prevail?

Thundering Courage: George Armstrong Custer, The Union Cavalry Boy Generals, and Justified Defiance at Gettysburg is a compelling, historically accurate novel that weaves together the overlooked stories of the Union's 2nd and 3rd cavalry divisions and forever changes the vision of the cavalry's contribution to the Union victory at Gettysburg. Grounded in the words of the men who persisted, prevailed, and perished in the bloodiest battle of the Civil War, *Thundering Courage* takes you back in time to the moment when the tide turned toward the redemption of the Republic – and the rise of a 23-year-old national hero.

"Riveting, vivid, fiercely depicted, *Thundering Courage* is a beautifully crafted novel of authenticity and power tracing the meteoric rise of George Armstrong Custer from the rank of Captain to Brigadier General. The utterly engrossing story provides a remarkable inside view of Custer's towering personality as an impulsive and fearless daredevil. The battle scenes are brilliantly written, especially the Boy General leading the First Michigan in one of the greatest cavalry charges in military history. A Remarkable achievement. Like Custer's charging Wolverines, the reader is thrust into the story at a gallop, plunging from page to page. The book recreates a pivotal moment in history with extraordinary authority and insight. *Thundering Courage* is thoroughly compelling – an absolutely gripping read. Truly a great book!"

– James Stavridis, PhD, Admiral, US Navy (Retired), Supreme Allied Commander at NATO, 2009-2013, Dean, The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy (2013-2018)

"Until now, generations of Civil War enthusiasts have relied on Bruce Catton, Shelby Foote, and novelists like Michael Shaara and his son Jeff to be our story tellers. And although *The Killer Angels* brought the human emotions of Lee, Longstreet and Joshua Chamberlain out of the dark, the conflict of East Cavalry Battlefield remained hidden. That pivotal moment that took place three miles east of Gettysburg on the rolling rural fields July 3, 1863, lay yet to be explored. Enter Terry Pierce. Like a bold cavalry charge, he corrects this oversight with his unique insight breathing a fresh new voice to those who stood beside cannon and saved the Union flank at Cress Ridge and Rummel Farm. Terry's thorough research captures both the nuances of dialogue that's right on and the minute details even down to how Custer held his pen. This is the book that has been long awaited to be written. When I read the last page and closed the book, I knew Terry Pierce had accomplished and written the Last Word on the cavalry action of July 1863 with style, with impeccable research, correctness and with *Thundering Courage*."

–Steve Alexander – Foremost Custer Living Historian.

"*Thundering Courage* is the second book in author Terry C. Pierce's Gettysburg trilogy, building on the story and success of *Without Warning*. From the very first chapter, he takes you on a wild ride, telling the rest of the story of the Battle of Gettysburg and the rapid, unlikely ascension of one of American history's most controversial heroes, Boy General – George Armstrong Custer. From its opening pages, Pierce brings to vivid life what it feels like to be in the center of daring cavalry charges again and again. Along the way the reader is introduced to the nascent signs of Custer's greatness and the fatal flaws that would ultimately contribute to his eventual downfall at Little Big Horn. Throughout this exciting and thought-provoking novel, we are introduced to the concept of "Justified Defiance" and are left to ponder whether it is ever acceptable to disobey an order. It seemed to be for several Union cavalry officers on July 3rd. I loved *Thundering Courage* – an epic novel grounded in history and the timeless insights of why commanders should be leaders of character."

– Steven J. Rauschkolb – Managing Partner, The Crisfield Group, Board of Directors – Civil War Roundtable Congress

"*Thundering Courage* is truly a masterpiece of storytelling. It is both epic and meticulous in capturing personalities faced with critical decisions and actions while in the chaos of battle. I was totally absorbed by this historically accurate novel. I am sure almost everyone is familiar with George Armstrong Custer's inglorious last stand at Little Big Horn, but I, for one, was not familiar with Custer's glorious feats thirteen years before and during the Battle of Gettysburg. The character-driven story is fast-paced and totally engrossing. The writing is crisp and vivid, and the dialogs convincingly imagined. The battle scenes are graphically written, sometimes shocking, but always gripping. The reader feels as if they are riding with Custer's Wolverines during his daring cavalry charges. The novel is a must read for understanding the challenges of command and Justified Defiance. Superb!"

–Rear Admiral Ronald Christenson USN, retired – former Commander USS Theodore Roosevelt CVN-71

"*Thundering Courage* is a groundbreaking feat of historical fiction revealing the heroic role the Union boy cavalry generals and their troopers played in Gettysburg's overlooked cavalry battles. This well researched novel and powerful narrative reveals the challenges and pitfalls of promoting young cavalry Captains to Brigadier Generals three days before the Battle of Gettysburg. In this page-turning story, Terry Pierce focuses on a youthful George Armstrong Custer and brilliantly captures the whole of Custer's towering personality as he jumps from Captain to Brigadier General. Over the next four days, Custer challenges fate and leads three remarkable cavalry charges that skyrocket him to national fame. The searing accounts of these cavalry battles were nearly impossible to put down. *Thundering Courage* brilliantly reveals the flaws of Custer's passionate yet self-destructive character that will lead to his fate at the Battle of Little Big Horn eleven years later. Pierce is a skilled writer, with the rare ability to conduct meticulous research and create a captivating story. This gripping novel is a must read and should be on the Commandant's Reading List along with Terry Pierce's first novel in his Gettysburg Trilogy *Without Warning*.
– General Charles Krulak, USMC, Retired – 31st Commandant of the Marine Corps



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