

Mass shooting in Florida not the deadliest

(Just a warning, there are graphic descriptions of violence in this article, please be advised.)

By Jim Windle

The senseless shooting in Orlando Florida Sunday morning has been described by U.S. media as "the worst mass shooting in American History." Some news outlets later amended the headline with "by a single shooter."

As horrific as that incident which killed 50 and wounding another 56 is, it pales in comparison to another mass shooting that took place on December 29, 1890.

That is when the United States Army, turned their guns on Lakota Indian men, women and children at Wounded Knee Creek, South Dakota.

In that case, more than 150 men, women and children of the Lakota Nation were killed and 51 were wounded (four men and 47 women and children, some of whom died later); some estimates placed the number of dead at 300. At least 20 soldiers were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honour for their part in the mass murders.

Black Elk, (1863 to 1950), was a young Oglala Lakota medicine man when the massacre took place and recalled the horror many years later.

"I did not know then how much was ended," he said many years later. "When I look back now from this high hill of my old age, I can still see the butchered women and children lying heaped and scattered all along the crooked gulch as plain as when I saw them with young eyes."

American Horse: (1840-1908); chief, Oglala Lakota:

"There was a woman with an infant in her arms who was killed as she almost touched the flag of truce ... A mother was shot down with her infant; the child not knowing that its mother was dead was still nursing ... The women as they were fleeing with their babies were killed together, shot

right through ... and after most all of them had been killed a cry was made that all those who were not killed or wounded should come forth and they would be safe. Little boys ... came out of their places of refuge, and as soon as they came in sight a number of soldiers surrounded them and butchered them there."

Other eye witness accounts were recorded from soldiers who carried out the Wounded Knee atrocity.

"I know the men did not aim deliberately and they were greatly excited," said Edward S. Godfrey; captain; commanded Co. D of the 7th Cavalry, "I don't believe they saw their sights. They fired rapidly but it seemed to me only a few seconds till there was not a living thing before us; warriors, women, children, ponies, and dogs ... went down before that unaimed fire."

"General Nelson A. Miles who visited the scene of carnage, following a three-day blizzard, estimated that around 300 snow shrouded forms were strewn over the countryside. He also discovered to his horror that helpless children and women with babies in their arms had been chased as far as two miles from the original scene of encounter and cut down without mercy by the troopers. ... Judging by the slaughter on the battlefield it was suggested that the soldiers simply went berserk. For who could explain such a merciless disregard for life? ... As I see it the battle was more or less a matter of spontaneous combustion, sparked by mutual distrust ..."

And as for as 9/11 being the worst act of terror on American soil is concerned, the U.S. government recorded 4,000 deaths on just one of many re-location marches among the Cherokee alone; estimates of the total death toll range from as low as 5,000 to as high as 25,000.

Scholarly estimates say that at least nine million Natives died from violent conflict or Euro-

pean disease, sometimes inflicted on purpose as a tool of genocide, since European contact. High counters, as they are called in the academic community, suggest 10 times that amount, some 90 million have died (including Central and South America).

On November 29, 1864, 700 militia from Colorado and the surrounding territories surrounded a peaceful encampment of

so-called "Peace Chiefs," predominantly from the Cheyenne and Arapahoe, who had been invited to end the "Indian Wars." Without warning or cause, they opened fire and slaughtered approximately 150 Indians from various "western" tribes. Colonel Chivington and his men cut fetuses out of the women, slaughtered infants by stepping on their heads with their boots, cut the genitals

off men and women, and decorated their horses and wagons with scalps, genitalia, and other body parts, before parading through Denver.

Then there is the Gnadenhutten Massacre when Colonial militia slaughtered 96 Lenape Native Americans on March 8, 1782. Despite being singled out as a neutral Native American tribe by Colonel Broadhead, they were still

rounded up and placed into two killing zones by American militia, who scalped men, women and children.

Although the event in Florida was an inexcusable and senseless act of terror that stole the lives of more than 50 and seriously injured another 56, it certainly was not the worst mass shooting in American history.