

General Philip H. Sheridan



As Portrayed By Ron Zaroni

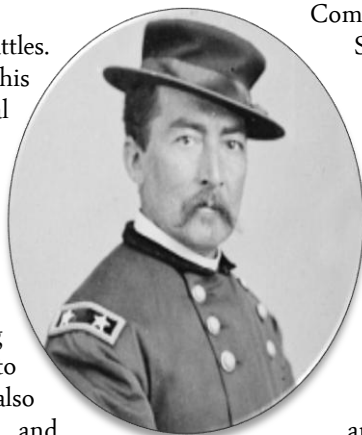


Philip Henry Sheridan claimed he was born in Albany, NY on March 6, 1831. He was the third child of six by John and Mary Sheridan of Killinkere, County Cavan, Ireland. Shortly after he was born, his family moved to Somerset, Ohio and upon graduating from mandatory schooling he worked as a clerk at several dry goods stores. He was only five feet five inches tall, a stature that led to his nickname, "Little Phil." Abraham Lincoln described him as "A brown, chunky little chap, with a long body, short legs, not enough neck to hang him, and such long arms that if his ankles itch, he can scratch them without stooping."

In 1848, he obtained an appointment to the United States Military Academy. In his third year at West Point, he was suspended a year for fighting with a classmate. He graduated in 1853, 34th in his class of 52 cadets. Upon graduation, he was assigned to the 1st Infantry at Ft. Duncan, TX. At the outbreak of the Civil War, he was transferred to St. Louis and promoted to Captain in the 13th Infantry under Col. W.T. Sherman. Not wanting to be a staff officer and looking for action, he petitioned Halleck and ultimately was promoted as Colonel in the 2nd Michigan cavalry. He said, "If I could get into line duty I believe I could do something."

He fought in a number of Western theater battles. His first was Boonesville, Mississippi where his actions were recognized by Brig. General William Rosecrans who recommended him to be promoted to Brigadier General. He was then assigned to command the 11th Division, III Corps under Maj. General Don Carlos Buell's Army of the Ohio. He led his Division at the battle of Perryville, Kentucky which led to the Confederate forces abandoning Kentucky. For his actions, he was promoted to Major General of Volunteers. His division also participated in the Battles of Chickamauga and Chattanooga. In six months, he had risen from captain to major general.

When General Ulysses S. Grant went east as the general-in-chief of the Union armies, he requested Sheridan to come east to command the Cavalry Corps. His cavalry corps participated in the Overland Campaign with mixed success. His biggest accomplishment was at the Battle of Yellow Tavern which resulted in the mortal wounding of Gen. J.E.B. Stuart. Because



of the raids into Maryland and Pennsylvania as well as the threats to Washington, D.C. Sheridan was appointed commander of the Middle Military Division with orders to defeat Jubal Early's army and close off the Northern invasion route as well as deny the Shenandoah Valley as a productive agricultural region. This destruction presaged the scorched earth tactics of Sherman's March to the Sea. The residents referred to this destruction as "The Burning". After the war, he was sent to Texas and Louisiana to assist in the Reconstruction efforts. When asked what he thought of Texas, he replied, "If I owned Hell and Texas, I would rent out Texas and live in Hell." President Grant appointed Sheridan to head the Department of Missouri in an attempt to pacify the Plains Indians. His department eventually subdued the Indians after the Red River War, the Ute War and the Great Sioux War resulting in the death of Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer.

In 1869, Sheridan was promoted to Lt. General. In 1871, Sheridan was present in Chicago during the Great Chicago Fire where his leadership assisted in providing security to the city. In 1883, Sheridan succeeded W.T. Sherman as Commanding General of the U.S. Army.

Sheridan, while a proponent of destroying all buffalo as an incentive for Indians to return to their reservations, was instrumental in establishing the Yellowstone National Park.

He married in 1875 at the age of 44 to Irene Rucker, 22. She was the daughter of Quartermaster General Daniel Rucker. They had four children including a set of twin girls. They lived in Washington, D.C. in a house given to them by the Chicago citizens in appreciation of Sheridan's protection of the city during the Great Fire. Sheridan suffered a number of heart attacks and at 57 years of age, after years of hard living, hard campaigning, love of good food and drink took their toll, he died at his summer cottage in Nonquitt, Massachusetts on August 5, 1888. He is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

General Philip H. Sheridan was a motivating, daring and courageous leader. General Grant thought highly of Little Phil and said that, "...Sheridan had no superior, living or dead, as the commander of the army



General Sheridan is portrayed by Ron Zaroni.