

General George A. Custer's Headquarters Command Flag 3rd Division, Cavalry Corps

Date: 1864

Media: Wool bunting and cotton; hand-sewn.

Comment: In 1864 when General Sheridan came East with General Grant and assumed command of the Cavalry Corps of the Army of the Potomac, he instituted a special headquarters flag for the commanders of each of his three cavalry divisions. The flag imitated the pre-War traditional cavalry guidon in that it was swallow-tailed in form and divided horizontally, red over white. On each of the two horizontal bars, the respective division number was applied in the color of the opposite bar.

The 3rd Cavalry Division of Sheridan's Cavalry Corps was first commanded by General James Wilson until September 1864, when Wilson was transferred to the western theater to command his own cavalry corps, see ZFC0227. General George A. Custer then assumed command of the 3rd Cavalry Division until the close of the War. Custer's orderlies carried this flag along with his personally designed flag ZFC0489, in the campaigns, until the 3rd Division guidon became too worn from battle damage for further use; on 31 March 1865, when it was retired, souvenirs were taken by Custer's staff.

Provenance: Acquired by the Zaricor Flag Collection (ZFC0490) in 1995 from the descendants of G. A. Custer, through Butterfield & Butterfield Auction House of San Francisco, CA. www.FlagCollection.com