

Massacre site tells tragic tale

By Sharon Corcoran

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Visitors can get a glimpse of what the open prairie pioneers moved to in the 1860s looked like and view the site of a tragic and bloody massacre nearly 142 years ago in Sherman County.

The Kidder Massacre site northeast of Goodland is marked with silhouettes of a cavalryman with a gun and an Indian on a horse, shadows of the battle that prevented Lt. Lyman S. Kidder and his men from delivering messages from Gen. William T. Sherman to Lt. Col. George Custer in July 1867.

A Goodland man fashioned life-sized silhouettes out of metal for the Historic Preservation Alliance, a group that had wanted to add a visual element to the site for over 10 years.

Lloyd Harden of rural Sherman County finished the silhouettes in spring 2003, said Marilyn Cooper, a member of the alliance and a Kidder historian, but they were not put up until a committee chose just the right spot in August.

The site is north of Edson on County Road 28, where a memorial marker flags drivers at

the corner of road 77. The silhouettes, 1 1/2 miles east of the marker on the north side, are best viewed with binoculars, since they are over 100 yards from the road.

To reach the site from I-70, take exit 27 at Edson to old U.S. 24 and go west about one mile to County Road 28 and turn right (north) and go about 12 miles. The marker is on the east side of the gravel road just south of Beaver Creek.

There are no services at Edson. To stop for food, gas or lodging, take Exit 17 at Goodland. Services at Exit 17 are along K-27, which intersects with U.S. Business 24 north of the Interstate. To get to the site, take U.S. Business 24 east to the edge of Goodland, where it curves to go back south to the Interstate. At the curve, turn onto old U.S. 24 heading east and continue for about eight miles and turn left (north) on County Road 28.

One of the most important campaigns for the post-Civil war army was to put an end to the atrocities committed by plains Indians, specifically in Colorado, Kansas and Nebraska.

See "Kidder," Page 11



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A memorial marker flags drivers at the corner of County Road 28 and road 77 about 12 miles north of Edson. The site of the Kidder Massacre is about 1 1/2 miles east of the marker on the north side and is marked by metal silhouettes of a cavalryman with a gun and an Indian on a horse, which are best viewed with binoculars, since they are over 100 yards from the road.

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