It is finally upon us. The day that some had called for since spring training is here. Lonnie Chisenhall, universally regarded as one of the top two position

prospects in the Indians system, has been called up to the active roster. Veteran utility infielder Adam Everett is the 25-man casualty, designated for assignment and flying back East as the team prepares for another interleague series in Arizona. Everett hit .217 in his 60 at bats with the Indians this year, with one double and one RBI. He will not be missed on the field or in the clubhouse.

Chisenhall is of course the real story here, as his hot spring with the bat had some calling for him to be the opening day third baseman. Those calls only intensified when Jason Donald got hurt, but the job went to veteran journeyman Jack Hannahan. Chisenhall was sent down to AAA Columbus to continue his seasoning, a move that made sense considering he had not had a single AAA at bat prior to 2011. The move made even more sense when Chisenhall hit just .247/.347/.395 in April with 2 HR, hardly setting the world on fire. He picked things up in May though, going for a .278/.374/.444 line with 3 HR and 14 RBI. He went on the DL in mid-June with concussion-like symptoms after banging his head sliding headfirst. In his 5 games since returning from the DL, Chiz went 9-21 with 2 HR, a 3B and 14 RBI. That, combined with a dreadful teamwide offensive slump at the big league level, convinced Indians brass that it was time to give the kid a shot.

Chiz is being thrust into a difficult spot in Cleveland. His minor league numbers suggest that he should find success vs. RHP, but will likely struggle against lefties. He's shown almost a platoon-level split in AAA, with a .292/.380/.455 line against righties but put up just a .200/.282/.360 line against lefthanded pitching. And that's in AAA, not against major league pitching. His overall line of .265/.352/.427 with 7 HR and 44 RBI is solid, but his numbers weren't as good as those of switch hitter Cord Phelps, who has found major league pitching poses quite a challenge. Chiz is going to be asked to not just tread water, but to step right in and contribute offensively at the big league level. Jack Hannahan's .214/.304/.333 line should be too difficult to live up to, but Hannahan did that while playing outsanding defense in the field. If Chisenhall comes up and is worth an extra win with his bat but takes away two wins with his glove, then what? Chisenhall's glove has been getting better reviews this season, but he's far from a gold glover at the hot corner. Will his bat make up for it? I sure hope so.

We've seen Alex White, Cord Phelps and now will see Chisenhall at the major league level this season. Vinnie Pestano had virtually no major league experience before 2011. Kipnis is hitting well in Columbus and will be in Cleveland before the end of the season. Relivers Zach Putnam and Josh Judy are at the cusp of an extended major league audition. The cavalry is coming, there's no doubt about that. But how effective will they be? Will they be like Patton's tanks rolling through the Ardennes Forrest against the Germans? Or will the be more like the Polish lancers that futily rode against the Panzers in September 1939? One way or another, we're going to find out. And before anyone feels the need to "correct" me, I'm well aware that is George C. Scott to the left astride his Sherman tank and not actually General Patton.

Whether Chiz, Phelps and any other prospects who are called up this year manage to stem the tide and keep the Indians in first place remains to be seen. Regardless though, there's a benefit to the club down the road. Even if they have limited success this year and the Indians miss the playoffs, the kids will be gaining valuable experience that they will be able to use next year when the Indians should again be contending for the Central Divison crown. The only way to learn how to hit major league pitching is to get reps hitting major league pitching. Phelps looked overwhelmed for a week or so, and then settled in at the plate and started looking much more comfortable. I expect it will be much the same for Chisenhall. He should continue to find success against righthanded pitching, but will likely struggle against lefties at the major league level. The key to his long-term success will be overcoming those struggles and figuring out a way to hit lefties. If not, I'm afraid this could be more Poland than Patton.