

Apaches Without and Enemies Within: The U.S. Army in New Mexico 1879-1881

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Apaches Without and Enemies Within: The US Army in New Mexico, 1879–1881

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Abstract

When attempting to confront hostile Apache guerrillas in New Mexico between 1879 and 1881, the US Army encountered a style of warfare which took merciless advantage of its weaknesses. However, the failure of the army to defeat its enemies can be only partially ascribed to this factor. Its efforts were further hampered by the political context within which it had to operate. Nevertheless, these factors occasionally worked in the army's favour. When these political constraints did undermine efforts to defeat the Apaches, the US Army demonstrated that it was sometimes capable of turning this political context to its advantage.

Keywords

Buffalo Soldiers, insurgency, logistics, nineteenth century, political constraints, US Army

The US Army in New Mexico Territory undertook a series of campaigns against Apaches led first by Bi-du-ya (Victorio) from 1879 to 1880 and then by his lieutenant Kaz-tziden (Nana)¹ from 1880 to 1881. The 9th US Cavalry Regiment, made up of African-American troops officered by Anglo-American officers, bore the brunt of the campaign. Other US Army units provided support at various stages of these campaigns and included the 15th Infantry Regiment and detachments drawn from the 4th, 6th, and 10th Cavalry, 13th and 16th Infantry Regiments, and various Navajo and Apache scout detachments. Despite the deployment of these forces, the US Army was unable to fulfil its political goal of defeating the hostile Apaches: the latter only surrendered to General George Crook in 1883.

1 'Victorio' and 'Nana' were names given to these leaders by the Mexicans and how they were known to the US authorities.

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The guerrilla strategies and tactics deployed by the Apaches proved effective indeed, but these techniques were only one of a number of obstacles facing the US Army in New Mexico between 1879 and 1881. These further obstacles can be categorized into two factors: the internal organization and political goals of the US Army, and external US Army political relations with other US and Mexican actors and institutions.

Studies of the Victorio campaign in general, for example Thrapp (1967 and 1974), Stout (1974), and Lekson (1987),² need to be updated in the light of new archive material and recent archaeological evidence.³ The Buffalo Soldier literature falls into two categories: where this literature recounts Apache campaigns of 1879–81 as a historic narrative, such accounts are often inaccurate owing to an over-reliance upon secondary sources.⁴ The literature which accounts for the experience of the African-American troops 1866–90 tends to focus upon specific individuals or issues.⁵ Indeed, their Apache opponents almost become a means through which undisputed bravery and endurance is highlighted. However, this misses two key issues: first, such feats were as a direct result of tactics deployed by Apaches who had gained the upper hand over their 9th Cavalry opponents. Second, the overall effect of the internal and external political constraints upon the 9th Cavalry is omitted. Moreover, specific US Army memoirs sometimes note the effect of some of the political constraints but do not reflect upon them in great depth.⁶ Apache recollections of the Victorio campaign do not focus upon the effect of Apache warfare techniques because their interviewers did not realize the significance of such questions.⁷

- 2 Dan L. Thrapp, *The Conquest of Apacheria* (London, 1967) and *Victorio and the Mimbres Apaches* (London, 1974); Joseph A. Stout, *Apache Lightning: The Last Great Battles of the Ojo Calientes* (New York, 1974); Stephen H. Lekson, *Nana's Raid: Apache Warfare in Southern New Mexico 1881*, *South-western Studies* 81 (El Paso, Texas, 1987).
- 3 Karl W. Laumbach, *Hembrillo, An Apache Battlefield of the Victorio War: The Archaeology and History of the Hembrillo Battlefield* (prepared for the White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico, 2001); K. W. Laumbach, D.D. Scott, and J. Wakeman, *Conline's Skirmish: An Episode of the Victorio War. Archaeological and Historical Documentation of an 1880s Skirmish Site on White Sands Missile Range* (prepared for the White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico, 2005); Robert N. Watt, 'Raiders of a Lost Art? Apache War and Society', *Small Wars & Insurgencies* XIII (2002), pp. 1–28.
- 4 William H. Leckie, *The Buffalo Soldiers: A Narrative of the Negro Cavalry in the West* (Norman, 1967); William H. Leckie and Shirley A. Leckie, *The Buffalo Soldiers: A Narrative of the Black Cavalry in the West*, rev. edn (Norman, 2003); Monroe L. Billington, *New Mexico's Buffalo Soldiers, 1866–1900* (Niwot, 1991).
- 5 Charles L. Kenner, *Buffalo Soldiers and Officers of the Ninth Cavalry, 1867–1898* (Norman, 1999); William A. Dobak and T.D. Phillips, *The Black Regulars, 1866–1898* (Norman, 2001); Frank N. Schubert, *On the Trail of the Buffalo Soldier: Biographies of African Americans in the U.S. Army, 1866–1917* (Wilmington, 1995), *Black Valor: Buffalo Soldiers and the Medal of Honor, 1870–1898* (Wilmington, 1997) and *Voices of the Buffalo Soldier: Records, Reports, and Recollections of Military Life and Service in the West* (Albuquerque, 2003).
- 6 Charles B. Gatewood, 'Campaigning against Victorio in 1879', *Great Divide* (April 1894), pp. 102–4; Thomas Cruse, *Apache Days and After* (London, 1987).
- 7 Eve Ball, *In the Days of Victorio: Recollections of a Warm Springs Apache* (Tucson, 1970) and *Indeh: An Apache Odyssey* (Norman, 1980); Sherry Robinson, *Apache Voices: Their Stories of Survival as Told to Eve Ball* (Albuquerque, 2000).

Individual components of these political constraints are also covered in literature on the post-Civil War experience of the US Army: Utley gives an excellent outline of many of these constraints in general terms but does not apply them to his account of the Apache war of this period.⁸

The secondary literature on the Apache wars of 1860 to 1886, while acknowledging the 1879–81 conflict, does not emphasize this period. The reasons for this can be put down to a combination of the army's wish to forget a period of warfare in which they were unsuccessful and an uncritical acceptance of the accounts of at least one early historian, John P. Clum, who portrayed the period as one of trouble with a few renegade Apaches.⁹ While Clum played a very honourable role as an Apache agent in the 1870s, he was also a passionate advocate of the 'concentration policy' which caused the Victorio War and later warfare between 1882 and 1886. Clum the historian refused to address this issue, preferring to place all blame upon the US Army rather than his employer, the Department of the Interior, which attempted to implement this policy. The role of Mexico¹⁰ and the territorial press¹¹ are also covered, but as single issues. Therefore, the aim of this article is to combine these factors to argue that, while the Apaches outfought the US Army in New Mexico in 1879–81, there were a number of other factors which combined to frustrate the US Army's efforts to defeat the Apaches. It should also be noted that very occasionally some of these factors were used by officers to facilitate their efforts to combat hostile Apaches. Thus, the US Army was by no means rendered helpless and managed to perform its duties to a level of service well beyond that which could be reasonably expected of it.

I. Origin of the Victorio War

The policy of concentrating various Apache tribes on one reservation by the Department of the Interior through the Office of Indian Affairs was the key cause of conflict between the United States and the Apaches between 1876 and 1886. This broke several treaties made with various groups of Apaches between 1871 and 1874. The policy was born of an erroneous assumption that, as these various groups were categorized as Apaches by the US authorities, they could be more economically grouped together on one reservation located

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- 8 Robert M. Utley, *Frontier Regulars: The United States Army and the Indian, 1866–1891* (London, 1973); Peter Cozzens, *Eyewitnesses to the Indian Wars, 1865–1890*, vol. I: *The Struggle for Apacheria* (Mechanicsville, 2001).
 - 9 John P. Clum, 'Geronimo', *New Mexico Historical Review* III (1928), pp. 1–40, 121–44, 217–64; 'The Apaches', *New Mexico Historical Review* IV (1929), pp. 109–27; 'Apache Misrule', *New Mexico Historical Review* V (1930), pp. 138–53, 221–39; and 'Victorio', *Arizona Historical Review* II (1930), pp. 74–90.
 - 10 Ana Maria Alonso, *Thread of Blood: Colonialism, Revolution, and Gender on Mexico's Northern Frontier* (Tucson, 1997); Bruce J. Dinges, 'The Victorio Campaign of 1880: Cooperation and Conflict on the United States–Mexico Border', *New Mexico Historical Review* LXII (1987), pp. 81–94; Shelley Bowen Hatfield, *Chasing Shadows: Apache and Yaquis along the United States–Mexico Border, 1876–1911* (Albuquerque, 1999).
 - 11 R.L. Hart, 'Colonel Hatch and the Territorial Press during the Victorio War', *Southern New Mexico Review* VI (1997), pp. 44–9.

around San Carlos in Arizona. Unfortunately, this did not account for the often unfriendly relations between different groups of Apaches, which were only exacerbated by forced close proximity to one another. The process of concentration was actively resisted by some of the Chiricahua Apaches when their Arizona reservation was closed in June 1876. Their eastern relations, the Warm Springs Apaches of New Mexico, accommodated the raiding activities of these Chiricahua Apaches and found themselves the next target for closure in May 1877. Transported to San Carlos under the leadership of Victorio, Nana, and Loco, they tried to adapt, but poor living conditions and fatalities inflicted and sustained in a feud with other Apaches caused Victorio to lead a breakout in September 1877.

Most of the Warm Springs Apaches surrendered at Fort Wingate, New Mexico. Their clearly stated intent was that they would not return to San Carlos without a fight and that they would live peacefully at Ojo Caliente. While the US authorities debated their fate they were allowed to return to Ojo Caliente. A second attempt to remove the Warm Springs Apaches to San Carlos was made in September 1878. This time Victorio and most of his warriors took to the hills, and it was mainly women and children who were sent back to San Carlos. Victorio made two further attempts to negotiate a reservation at Ojo Caliente in February/March 1879 and at the Mescalero Reservation in July/August 1879, without success. The first ended with a botched effort to detain Victorio at Ojo Caliente, and the second was terminated when Victorio (probably in error) suspected that representatives of the civil US authorities had entered the reservation to arrest him. On 21 August 1879 he fled from the reservation with his warriors, and effectively declared war on the USA.

II. The Apache Campaign of 1879 to 1881

The Victorio War can be divided into eight phases.

- 1: *January to June 1880.* Victorio 'surrendered' at Ojo Caliente in January/February 1879 and fled in April 1879. After some long-drawn-out pursuits of Victorio, with one skirmish between him and the 9th Cavalry in May, he arrived on the Mescalero Reservation in late June/early July.
- 2: *4 September to 3 November 1879.* After fleeing the Mescalero Reservation on 21 August, Victorio fought a number of fierce battles with those 9th Cavalry units in the immediate vicinity of the Black Range and San Mateo Mountains, which culminated in a long pursuit by Major Albert P. Morrow, 9th Cavalry, with a mixed detachment of 6th and 9th Cavalrymen and Apache scouts, into Mexico, where they were rebuffed by Victorio and Juh in the Guzman Mountains.
- 3: *2 January to 20 February 1880.* Victorio returned to New Mexico as a result of pressure from Mexican federal and state troops. Once again Morrow, having spent November and December 1879 preparing his command, engaged in a long pursuit of the Apaches with all the available strength of the 9th Cavalry and Apache and Navajo scouts. There were a number of skirmishes, and two attempts were made to negotiate Victorio's surrender. However, by 20 February, Morrow had lost contact with the Apaches in the vicinity of the Mescalero Reservation.

- 4: *20 February to 30 April 1880.* The failure to end the Apache war brought Colonel Edward Hatch, commander of both the 9th Cavalry Regiment and the District of New Mexico, into the field. He reorganized the troops in New Mexico into three battalions, and attempted to rest his troops and horses. In the meantime, Victorio launched a sustained attack on the settlements in the Rio Grande Valley in March 1880. Hatch organized a two-stage operation to attack Victorio and to disarm the Mescalero Apaches, who were believed to be actively aiding and abetting Victorio's resistance. This operation witnessed a hard battle for the 2nd Battalion in Hembrillo Canyon on 6–7 April, and was completed when Hatch concluded that the Mescalero Reservation had been subdued and sent the 9th Cavalry in pursuit of Victorio, who had once again eluded Hatch after Hembrillo Canyon.
- 5: *3 May 1880 to 5 June 1880.* Victorio, having managed to gain ground on the 9th Cavalry, turned his attention to the herders, miners, and settlers in the Mogollon Mountains and San Francisco Valley. Hatch and Morrow were drawn into a long-drawn-out and largely unsuccessful pursuit of the Apaches. The situation was only rescued when, on 24 May 1880, one Anglo-American, leading a strong company of Apache scouts, inflicted the only serious defeat suffered by Victorio in the USA during the campaign. The slow response by the 9th Cavalry allowed Victorio and his followers to escape to Mexico, but not before Victorio's son was killed in a running battle just below the border on 5 June 1880.
- 6: *5 June to 20 October 1880.* The previous two phases left the 9th Cavalry largely dismounted and unfit for field service. A major refitting operation was organized. Fortuitously, Victorio's decision to engage the 10th Cavalry in western Texas allowed this refit to proceed unmolested. Colonel George P. Buell was brought in by General John Pope to head a major expedition, which included additional detachments from the 4th Cavalry and 16th Infantry. With the cooperation of US troops from Arizona and Texas and Chihuahuan state forces, a major operation to trap Victorio was undertaken in mid-September, which involved the entry into Mexico of significant numbers of US troops without the official sanction of either republic. The 'Buell Expedition', as it is known, at least in the United States, failed to engage any Apaches, but the pressure of eluding these US forces, combined with a critical ammunition shortage sustained by the Apaches in their earlier operations against the 10th Cavalry, allowed Chihuahuan state troops to trap and kill Victorio at Tres Castillos on 14–15 October 1880.
- 7: *14 to 31 January 1881.* After a 'phoney war' of rumours and false reporting of Apache activity in New Mexico, the Apaches, having regrouped under Nana after Tres Castillos, renewed hostilities by mounting a series of raids in January 1881. By the beginning of February the Apaches had returned to Mexico.
- 8: *17 July to 21 August 1881.* The final phase of the 9th Cavalry's campaign is now popularly known as 'Nana's Raid'. This involved the coordination of several small 9th Cavalry detachments in a high-risk strategy of trying to find the Apaches and then vector in the other detachments to contact the hostile Apaches. A number of defeats were suffered by individual detachments, but the broader strategy probably worked, as Nana returned to Mexico on 21 August.

III. Killing Horses: The Effect of Apache Strategies and Tactics, 1879–1881

In terms of human casualties the 9th Cavalry Regiment clearly bore the brunt of the campaigning against Victorio and Nana during this period. Out of 49 US servicemen¹² killed and 45 wounded, the regiment sustained 27 fatalities and 28 injured.¹³ Yet it was the Apaches' tactic of targeting horses and mules when ambushing their opponents, and their technique of killing and crippling the same by drawing the US Army into long-drawn-out pursuits over the deserts and mountains of New Mexico and Arizona, which proved most effective. The regiment's monthly regimental returns (Figure 1) demonstrate that between January and June 1880 the numbers of unserviceable horses steadily increased in proportion to serviceable horses until the former exceeded the latter by the end of June 1880. The strategies employed by the Apaches had effectively neutralized the 9th Cavalry.

The regiment's monthly returns show that increased horse fatalities can be associated with periods when the 9th Cavalry was active in the field against the Apaches in May–June and September–October 1879, January–February, April–May, and September–October 1880, and January and July–August 1881 (Figure 2).

Moreover, we may compare these losses of horses with those for the US Army as a whole. It emerges that the total number of US Army horses lost for July 1879 to June 1880¹⁴ and 1880/81 comes to 1181 and 569 respectively.¹⁵ Figure 2 shows that, in the same periods, the 9th Cavalry sustained losses totalling 395 and 120 respectively.¹⁶

12 'Servicemen' also includes Indian scouts who were taken into the US Army's overall muster roll for the duration of their service. The scouts used in the Victorio War were variously recruited from the Apaches, the Navajos, and the Pueblos.

13 Derived from 4th, 6th, 9th and 10th Cavalry Bi-monthly Muster Rolls, 1879–81, National Archives, Washington, DC (hereafter referred to as NA), RG94. Returns from Regular Army Cavalry Regiments, 1833–1916, NA, 6th Cavalry, 1875–80, M744, roll 63; 9th Cavalry, 1873–80, M744, roll 88, and 1881–7, M744, roll 89; 10th Cavalry, 1873–80, M744, roll 96. Returns from US Military Posts, 1800–1916, Ojo Caliente, New Mexico, May 1879–March 1882, NA, M617, roll 877; Fort Davis, Texas, January 1879–June 1891, NA, M617, roll 298; Fort Bayard, New Mexico, 1866–December 1879, NA, M617, roll 87. Humphreys Bayard to AAAG SF, 19 January 1880, NA, RG393, Records of US Army Continental Commands, part 3, entry 439, [pp. 519–21]. Telegrams Sent, District of New Mexico (hereafter referred to as DoNM), vol. 3, January–November 1880, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 431, pp. 61 and 104. Personal file, Adam Kramer, NA, RG94, entry 297, box 33; see also personal file, Augustus P. Blocksom, NA, RG94, entry 297, box 463; Buell to AAG, Department of Missouri (hereafter referred to as DMO), 20 November 1880, Lettres Received by Headquarters, DoNM, September 1865–August 1890, M1088, roll 42. *Note:* for RG393, part 1, entries 183 and 2546, and part 3, entries 439 and 440, I have photocopied all the material cited and numbered each photocopy in the order that I discovered them. They are cited as follows: sender to recipient with date, NA, RG393, part number, entry number, [page number]. The page number refers to the number that I have assigned to the telegram copy in my own files.

14 The US Army's financial year at this time ran from July to June. Thus its annual reports to Congress follow this time frame.

15 Derived from Annual Reports of the War Department, 1877, 290; 1878, 348; 1879, 307; 1880, 421; 1881, 324; NA, RG94, M997.

16 Derived from NA, M744, rolls 88 and 89.

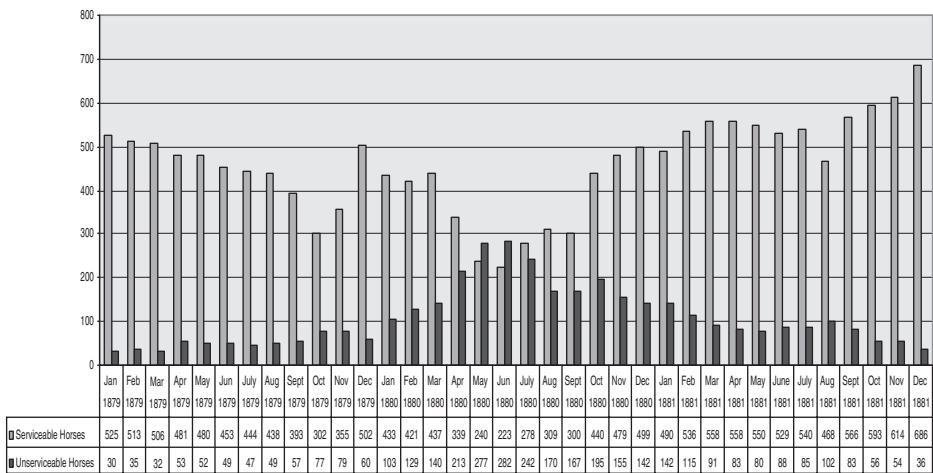


Figure 1. Ninth Cavalry, regimental monthly summary of serviceable and unserviceable horses, 1879–81
Source: derived from National Archives, Washington, DC, M744, rolls 88 and 89. See also Ninth Cavalry, Bi-monthly Muster Rolls, 1879–81, NA, RG94.

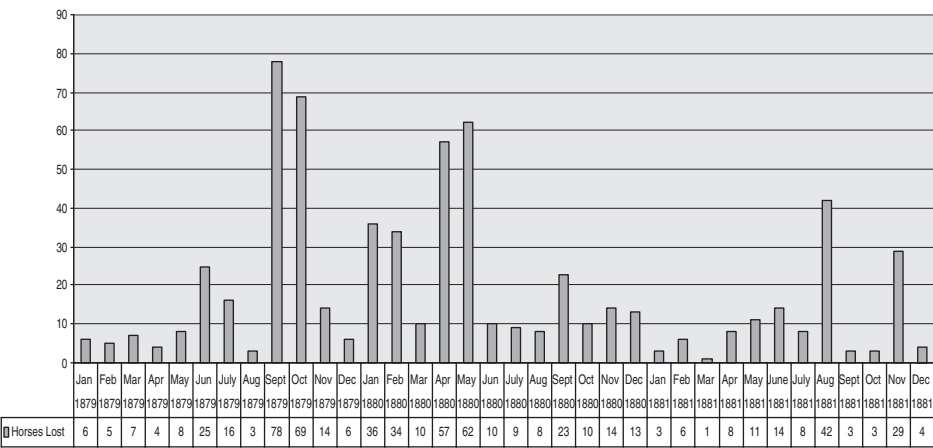


Figure 2. Ninth Cavalry, monthly returns: horses lost, 1879–81
Source: see Figure 1.

Thus, the 9th Cavalry, one of ten US cavalry regiments, sustained 33.4% of the US Army’s losses of horses in 1879/80 and 21.1% in 1880/81. This strongly suggests that the Apaches’ focus upon inflicting equine rather than human losses was very effective.

Yet these monthly returns also reveal that the Apaches were not the only influence upon the numbers of horses available to the 9th Cavalry (see Table 1). Between January 1879

Table 1. Ninth Cavalry, monthly returns: serviceable horses (SH) to available men (AM), 1879–81^a

Company	A		B		C		D		E		F		G		H		I		K		L		M	
	SH	AM	SH	AM	SH	AM	SH	AM	SH	AM	SH	AM	SH	AM	SH	AM	SH	AM	SH	AM	SH	AM	SH	AM
Jan 1879	44	43	25	40	32	29	48	57	56	48	52	49	37	35	44	45	45	42	53	42	42	42	47	45
Feb 1879	34	57	25	36	37	31	42	55	56	51	51	46	35	37	44	46	48	44	52	53	42	48	47	48
Mar 1879	40	50	24	53	37	47	42	52	56	53	50	55	34	52	44	50	39	46	52	50	41	52	47	45
Apr 1879	34	54	24	57	34	53	40	51	56	62	48	53	32	55	44	59	32	57	52	54	40	55	45	54
May 1879	30	58	27	59	38	52	40	53	56	57	48	54	30	56	42	53	33	58	51	51	40	56	45	56
Jun 1879	28	58	22	55	32	50	37	49	54	59	47	52	28	53	43	58	28	57	51	53	38	56	45	56
Jul 1879	27	59	20	55	28	49	38	49	53	58	47	53	28	55	41	55	35	55	48	53	35	55	44	55
Aug 1879	26	55	24	52	28	47	38	45	53	60	47	52	28	55	37	56	33	55	47	46	35	57	42	54
Sep 1879	12	59	19	57	39	59	39	57	11	55	47	54	37	57	37	60	33	51	45	57	31	56	43	52
Oct 1879	26	59	19	59	30	59	0	55	11	55	47	56	3	59	15	61	35	50	47	55	25	60	44	55
Nov 1879	7	54	22	56	19	55	53	57	11	50	46	56	18	57	23	56	35	47	47	57	30	57	44	56
Dec 1879	31	59	32	57	33	54	53	55	51	50	56	56	35	54	37	57	35	47	47	51	39	55	53	58
Jan 1880	33	54	36	58	41	60	53	56	10	48	50	55	35	54	17	61	35	51	47	51	35	55	41	60
Feb 1880	31	57	17	55	39	60	53	55	25	52	38	55	35	54	17	54	57	56	63	62	34	57	12	54
Mar 1880	42	49	27	60	21	53	25	45	29	53	33	45	47	58	25	56	57	66	63	62	34	57	34	60
Apr 1880	18	40	22	56	16	48	16	46	29	58	20	43	40	67	24	60	40	59	50	60	34	64	30	67
May 1880	18	44	22	51	21	51	16	48	1	54	12	44	30	68	24	59	30	58	13	61	23	64	30	66
Jun 1880	18	44	24	52	19	50	16	49	0	54	12	45	30	65	18	53	23	55	9	61	21	63	33	64
Jul 1880	14	47	26	55	28	43	16	46	1	55	16	41	19	61	22	60	23	57	45	58	29	61	39	63
Aug 1880	20	42	29	50	29	44	26	51	16	51	14	42	39	57	25	49	23	57	30	55	25	57	33	66
Sep 1880	24	45	29	55	26	44	4	53	17	49	20	44	44	57	36	44	17	57	30	54	20	56	33	64
Oct 1880	45	55	14	57	34	56	14	61	41	53	40	57	62	51	45	48	20	53	44	58	48	54	33	63

Table I. (Continued)

Company	A		B		C		D		E		F		G		H		I		K		L		M	
	SH	AM	SH	AM	SH	AM	SH	AM	SH	AM	SH	AM	SH	AM	SH	AM	SH	AM	SH	AM	SH	AM	SH	AM
Nov 1880	40	55	45	53	40	56	14	60	40	49	34	46	63	47	54	48	17	54	49	50	50	52	33	60
Dec 1880	37	55	46	60	46	53	18	54	40	56	35	40	61	53	50	58	17	56	40	55	50	48	59	62
Jan 1881	24	51	50	61	44	54	18	58	40	58	40	39	61	50	40	63	28	54	48	52	47	50	50	60
Feb 1881	40	53	54	58	43	53	42	53	40	56	38	39	61	47	34	58	38	50	46	50	47	48	53	61
Mar 1881	40	56	58	56	43	56	40	55	43	62	40	61	60	59	50	60	38	52	43	56	50	55	53	57
Apr 1881	38	53	58	59	43	48	38	54	40	42	40	57	63	61	50	61	38	52	46	52	49	55	55	58
May 1881	37	53	54	58	43	58	41	55	40	56	40	54	62	47	48	63	39	56	43	52	48	55	55	60
Jun 1881	37	53	53	51	39	52	38	54	44	49	35	47	59	55	44	54	39	58	40	53	48	52	53	60
Jul 1881	38	48	46	52	46	56	38	57	43	53	50	59	60	54	43	55	39	55	43	56	42	53	52	62
Aug 1881	30	48	32	50	48	43	33	56	45	55	48	60	59	54	32	54	23	55	40	55	25	52	53	63
Sep 1881	27	54	38	57	53	54	43	59	47	53	48	53	58	62	48	51	63	55	46	58	41	45	54	52
Oct 1881	40	54	42	56	53	55	43	60	47	56	63	58	57	61	50	61	53	59	47	63	44	49	54	62
Nov 1881	43	62	42	53	62	52	43	39	47	52	63	50	55	61	32	55	65	54	62	58	46	60	54	59
Dec 1881	68	53	51	57	57	52	49	54	54	52	63	51	60	52	44	60	65	58	68	52	53	56	54	59

^a Italics denotes serviceable horses equal or above available men.
Source: derived from National Archives, Washington, DC, M744, rolls 88 and 89. See also Ninth Cavalry, Bi-monthly Muster Rolls, 1879–81, NA, RG94.

and December 1881, it was only on rare occasions that the number of available men in each company matched the numbers of serviceable horses. During this period the regiment as a whole did not have enough serviceable horses to mount the available cavalymen. This situation *pre-dates* initiation of hostilities between Victorio and the 9th Cavalry in April–May 1879. This indicates the existence of an already inefficient system of remounts which was almost immediately stretched beyond breaking point by the Apaches. Poor logistics aside, the units in New Mexico also found their effectiveness hampered by General William T. Sherman's drive to create an army which could stand up to European opponents, a fragmented command structure, and scarce resources (see Figure 3).

The latter issue indicates the first of several factors external to the US Army which also impaired the ability of the troops in New Mexico and Arizona to campaign successfully against Apaches. Limited resources derived from the numerical and budget constraints directed by Congress. The army may have been directed by the Department of War, but US Indian policy was directed by the Department of the Interior. The Department of State directed diplomatic negotiation between the United States and the Republic of Mexico over permission for each country's forces to pursue Apaches across their borders. This diplomacy was complicated by the divided nature of the Mexican Republic. The federal government was often at odds with its state governors, over whom it had little control, and who often had very different opinions from their federal government concerning permission for US troops to enter their territory (see Figure 4 below).

Last but certainly not least were the citizens and press of New Mexico Territory. The local press generally vilified the efforts of the 9th Cavalry, its favourite target being Colonel Hatch. Unsurprisingly, the ethnic origin of the regiment's rank and file was also subject to hostile comment by the press. Some New Mexicans also engaged in a number of dubious practices which ranged from false reporting of Apache activity through to selling arms and ammunition to the Apaches.

These internal and external political constraints will be examined in turn to illustrate their malign influence upon the effective campaigning against the Apaches, but it will also be argued that the troops in New Mexico were not powerless in the face of such obstacles.

IV. Internal Constraints: The Pursuit of the 'European Army', Fragmented Command Structures, and Inefficient Logistics

The necessity of creating a United States Army which could hold its own against any of the European powers was one of General Sherman's clearest post-Civil War goals.¹⁷ This desire probably dated back to the War of Independence but had been reinforced by the political statement of the Monroe Doctrine¹⁸ and its popular expression in the concept of

17 See Uteley, *Frontier Regulars*, pp. 44–58.

18 See John W. Foster, *A Century of American Diplomacy: Being a Brief Review of the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1776–1876* (Cambridge, 1900), pp. 438–78; Carl Russell Fish, *American Diplomacy* (New York, 1923), pp. 203–19, 324–35 and 384–95; John Holladay Latané and David W. Wainhouse, *A History of American Foreign Policy*, 2nd edn (New York, 1940), pp.

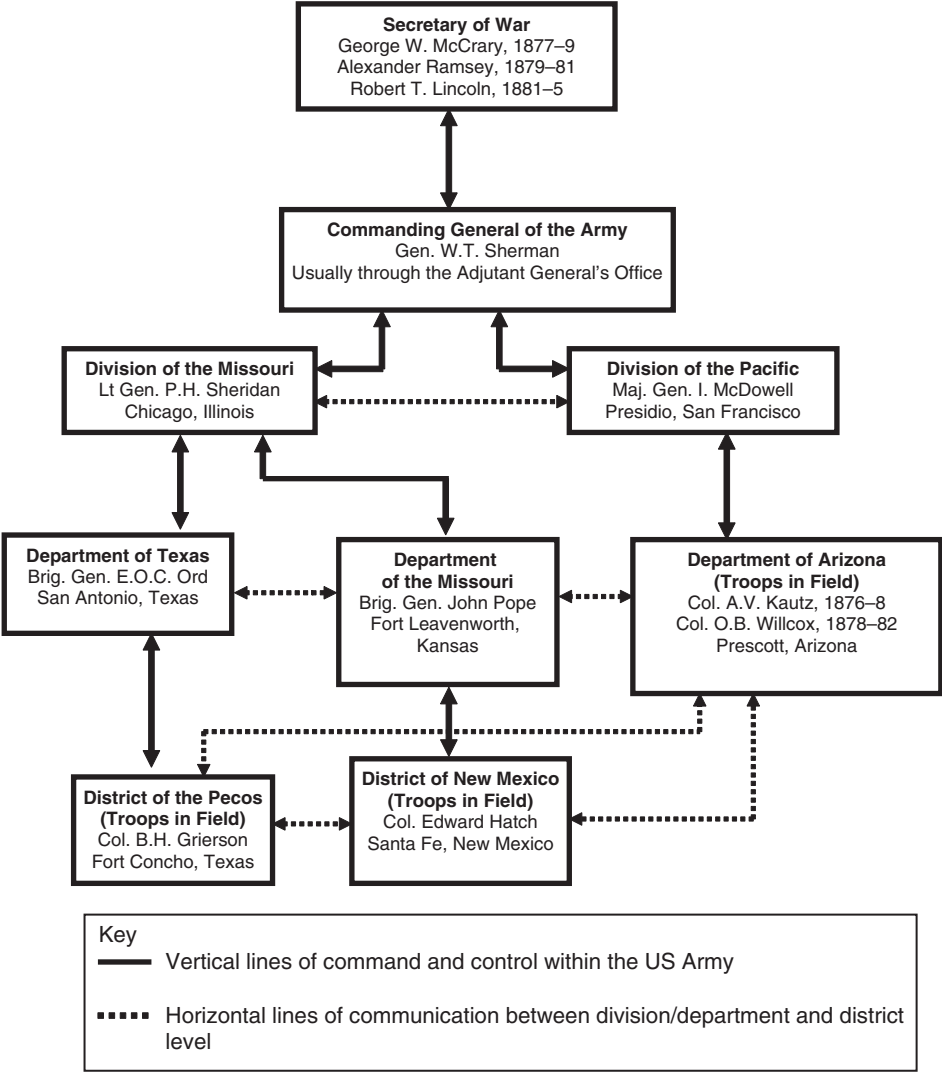


Figure 3. US vertical and horizontal military chains of command and communication, 1879-81
Source: Annual Reports of the War Department, 1876-81, NA, RG94, M997; Nigel Bowles, *Government and Politics of the US* (Basingstoke, 1998), pp. 22-3; Alan Grant, *American Political Process*, 5th edn (Aldershot, 1994), pp. 326-7; C.K.S. Chun, *U.S. Army in the Plains Indian Wars* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 12 and 26; Philip Katcher, *U.S. Cavalry on the Plains* (London, 1985), p. 20; 'Rutherford Birchard Hayes', *POTUS: Presidents of the United States*, <http://www.potus.com/rbhayes.html>; 'James Abram Garfield', *POTUS: Presidents of the United States*, <http://www.potus.com/jagarfield.html>; 'Chester Alan Arthur', *POTUS: Presidents of the United States*, <http://www.potus.com/caarthur.html>.

169-96; Richard W. Van Alstyne, 'The Monroe Doctrine', in A. De Conde, ed., *Encyclopedia of American Foreign Policy: Studies of the Principal Movements and Ideas*, vol. II (New York, 1978), pp. 584-96; Eugene V. Rostow, *A Breakfast for Bonaparte: US National Security Interests from the Heights of Abraham to the Nuclear Age* (Washington, DC, 1993), pp. 144-9.

'manifest destiny'.¹⁹ The potential threat posed by a European army had been reinforced by the French intervention in Mexico between 1862 and 1866. Indeed, in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War, the US Army had demonstrated in strength along the Rio Grande frontier, and large amounts of US Army surplus had 'mysteriously' ended up in the hands of the Mexican Republican Army.²⁰ The 'Third Empire' took the hint and rapidly withdrew from Mexico,²¹ though the rise of the Prussian state and its implications for the French may have had as much influence on this decision.²²

However, the desire for the capability to defend the interests of the United States from European powers had to be balanced with the demands facing the US Army when dealing with American Indians. In 1878 this was outlined by George W. McCrary, secretary of war, as comprising two elements: 'fair and just treatment of the Indians' and 'prompt and effectual punishment of all acts of war on their part'.²³

Where this attitude affected the troops in New Mexico was that the modes adopted to combat Apache guerrillas undermined the troops' efficiency. This loss of efficiency was, on several occasions, expressed by General John Pope as stemming from the fact that his soldiers were not gaining any experience of manoeuvring together as a regiment. In other words, 'loss of efficiency' reflected concerns that the experience gained fighting Apaches would avail the 9th Cavalry little should it have to be deployed against any of the European powers. General Pope usually appreciated that the 9th Cavalry had to operate in scattered detachments to stand any chance of catching, or at least limiting, its opponents' freedom of action.²⁴ However, he clearly thought that the long-term effects of the

19 See David M. Pletcher, 'Manifest Destiny', in A. De Conde, ed., *Encyclopedia of American Foreign Policy: Studies of the Principal Movements and Ideas*, vol. II (New York, 1978), pp. 526–34; Maldwyn A. Jones, *The Limits of Liberty: American History, 1607–1980* (Oxford, 1983), p. 177.

20 See Clarence C. Clendenen, *Blood on the Border: The United States Army and the Mexican Irregulars* (London, 1969), pp. 57–8; Foster, *Century of American Diplomacy*, pp. 402–3.

21 See Foster, *Century of American Diplomacy*, pp. 402–3; Jones, *Limits of Liberty*, p. 394; Samuel Eliot Morison, Henry Steele Commager and William E. Leuchtenburg, *A Concise History of the American Republic* (New York, 1977), p. 345; Rostow, *Breakfast for Bonaparte*, pp. 171–2.

22 Latané and Wainhouse, *History of American Foreign Policy*, pp. 415–16.

23 Report of Geo. W. McCrary, Secretary of War, in Annual Reports of the War Department, 1878: RG94, M997, roll 30, 1878, vols. I–II, p. iv.

24 General Pope did not quite appreciate some of the basic principles of Apache strategy and tactics and thus, on at least two instances, asked Colonel Hatch, if there were only about 50 Apache warriors and Hatch had at least 10 times as many, what the problem was and why more troops were required. Pope to Hatch, 7 August 1881, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 439, [pp. 137–8]. See also later comments in Pope to R.C. Drum, Adjutant General, Washington, DC, 21 August 1881, Letters Rec'd by the Office of the Adjutant General (main series), 1881–9 (correspondence and reports mainly concerning efforts to capture hostile Apache Indians who were terrorizing the border region of the District of New Mexico, July–December 1881), NA, M689, roll 44. Pope also criticized Hatch for spreading his detachments too wide, leaving them unable to counter the Apaches, not appreciating that the Apaches would make every effort to avoid larger concentrations of troops (see Pope to Sheridan, 1 July 1880, NA, RG393, part 1, entry 2546, [pp. 521–7]).

implementation of such tactics had a very detrimental effect on the ability of the 9th Cavalry to engage a 'modern' opponent. He argued that both the 9th Cavalry and the 15th Infantry should be transferred away from Apacheria in order 'to re-establish discipline and tactical knowledge, which have been considerably impaired by the service they have had to perform for a number of years past'.²⁵ The troops in New Mexico were put under some pressure by their superiors to finish off a 'handful of Apaches', but in trying to do so they were then criticized for failing to maintain a peak of basic 'European' military efficiency. Ironically such efficiency could only be achieved by abandoning any pretence of defending the citizens of New Mexico from the Apaches. It is clear that personnel within the US Army were aware of the problem created by specific frontier requirements not being in line with Sherman's long-term goals.²⁶

Fragmented Command Structures

Command and communication structures were also crucial elements of this campaign (Figure 3). The US Army's command structures were split between three 'field' headquarters: District of New Mexico, the Department of Arizona, and the District of the Pecos. The task of coordinating the troops from these different command structures did not make the job of countering their elusive foe any easier. Both the District of New Mexico and the District of the Pecos reported to the Division of the Missouri via the Departments of the Missouri and Texas respectively. The Department of Arizona reported to the Division of the Pacific. As the Apache campaign progressed, all three field headquarters found themselves having to combine their forces in an effort to combat the hostile Apaches, though such coordination did not always run smoothly.

For example, as part of the 'Buell Expedition' against Victorio in September and October 1880 (phase 6), Colonel Eugene A. Carr with 289 6th Cavalrymen and 77 Apache scouts²⁷ was supposed to coordinate the right flank of the operation with Buell's force of 209 4th and 9th Cavalrymen, 150 15th and 16th Infantrymen, and 111 Apache scouts in New Mexico.²⁸ The juncture was not made, and both commanders engaged in a rather acrimonious exchange concerning who was to blame.²⁹ In more general terms,

25 General Pope, Headquarters DMO, Annual Report for Year Ending September 22 1881, NA, RG393, part 1, entry 2546, [p. 850]. See also Pope to Sheridan, 1 July 1880, NA, RG393, part 1, entry 2546, [pp. 521–7]. Pope's Annual Report Year Ending September 22 1880, NA, RG393, part 1, entry 2546, [p. 613].

26 See, for example, 'The Arizona Outbreak', *Army and Navy Journal*, 10 September 1881, p. 120.

27 Carr to AG, Department of Arizona, 19 September 1880, Troops in Southeastern Arizona, Department of Arizona, NA, RG393, part 1, entry 232, vol. 8, 6 September 1880 – 12 December 1880, letter no. 569, pp. 19–20.

28 Buell, Fort Stanton, to AAG, DMO, 20 November 1880, Letters Received by Headquarters, DoNM, September 1865–August 1890, NA, M1088, roll 42, file 658-1658, January–April 1881.

29 AAAG Department of Arizona to Carr, 9 October 1880, NA, RG393, part 1, entry 169, vol. 10, p. 449. Carr to AG, Whipple Barracks, 10 October 1880, NA, RG393, part 1, entry 169, vol. 10, pp. 456–7. Carr to Hatch, 7 October 1880, Troops in Southeastern Arizona, Department of Arizona, NA, RG393, part 1, entry 232, vol. 8, letter no. 579, pp. 25–6. Carr to AG Department of Arizona, 25 September 1880, NA, RG393, part 1, entry 232, vol. 8, letter

once troops were committed to field service, a great deal of luck governed the coordination of, for example, Department of Arizona troops sent to intercept Apaches currently being pursued by troops from the District of New Mexico.

There were also apparent frictions within the 9th Cavalry itself. During January 1881, Warm Springs Apaches led by Nana launched a series of attacks in New Mexico. Lieutenant Colonel Nathan A.M. Dudley became convinced that the District of New Mexico headquarters was ignoring him during the operation aimed at catching these Apache guerrillas.³⁰ Whether his suspicions were true or not, communications between Dudley's station at Fort Cummings and both detachments in the field and district headquarters were not very effective.³¹

To be fair, each of the field headquarters made sterling efforts to communicate with each other as well as up their own chains of command, but such efforts could be painfully slow once detachments in the field moved away from the telegraph lines, considerably undermining their ability to coordinate their efforts quickly enough to keep pace with their constantly moving opponents.

Inefficient Logistics

The situation concerning horse casualties has already been outlined, but the replacement of these losses was slow. When Company E, 9th Cavalry, had most of its horses stolen by Apaches on 4 September 1879, these horses were not replaced until December 1879, and it was thus unavailable for Major Albert P. Morrow's pursuit of Victorio in September and October 1879.³² Not only was the rate of replacement slow, some replacement horses purchased by the army were found to be, for various reasons, unsuitable for service in New Mexico. In September 1879 Colonel Hatch reported that most of the horses recently sent to him were too small to serve as cavalry mounts.³³ The following year he noted that

no. 571, p. 21. Carr to AG Department of Arizona, 26 September 1880, NA, RG393, part 1, entry 232, vol. 8, letter no. 572, pp. 21–2. Carr to Hatch, 7 October 1880, NA, RG393, part 1, entry 232, vol. 8, letter no. 579, pp. 25–6. Carr to Buell, 17 October 1880, NA, RG393, part 1, entry 232, vol. 8, p. 30. Carr to Buell, 17 October 1880, NA, RG393, part 1, entry 232, vol. 8, p. 30. Carr quoting Buell telegram of 11 October 1880 to AG Department of Arizona, 12 October 1880, NA, RG393, part 1, entry 232, vol. 8, p. 30. Carr to Willcox, 16 October 1880, NA, RG393, part 1, entry 169, vol. 10, pp. 460–1.

30 Dudley to AAAG, 19 January 1881, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 439, [pp. 680–4]. Dudley to AAA General, Dist. of New Mexico, Santa Fe, 19 January 1881, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 440, [pp. 4–5].

31 See Dudley to AAAG, 27 January 1881, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 439, [pp. 775–7]. See also Dudley to General Hatch, Comd'g District, Fort Craig, NM, 26 January 1881, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 440, [p. 15]. Loud to Hatch, Colorado, NM, 27 January 1881, Telegrams Sent, DoNM, vol. 5, February–December 1881, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 431, p. 73.

32 Special Order 111, paragraph 2, 3 November 1879, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 450. See also Hooker to Lt F.B. Taylor, Order no. 9, In the Field, Ojo Caliente, New Mexico, 28 November 1879, Special Orders Rec'd from Sub Commands, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 453.

33 Hatch to AAG, DMO, Fort Leavenworth, 3 September 1879, Letters Sent by the 9th Military Department, the Department of New Mexico, and the District of New Mexico, 1849–90, NA, M1072, roll 6, January–October 1879, letter no. 438, p. 312.

the main difficulty with replacement horses was that they had not been acclimatized to conditions in New Mexico, and on arriving were often immediately required for field service in the harsh terrain of New Mexico.³⁴

The provision of fodder for horses and mules was also inefficient. This relied upon a system of local ranchers who were contracted by the army to hold stocks of forage on their property. Throughout the Victorio War there can be found orders hiring³⁵ or revoking contracts with,³⁶ or the receipt of resignation from,³⁷ New Mexican forage agents. Colonel Hatch noted that this system of forage agents was open to abuse by these contractors charging exorbitant prices for their produce.³⁸ On one critical occasion an inability to supply sufficient forage delayed the deployment of the 1st Battalion of New Mexico troops to the Hembrillo Canyon operation. Had Colonel Hatch been able to relay this information to the commander of the 2nd Battalion, elements of the latter might not have spent the night of 6–7 April 1880 pinned down by hostile Apaches.³⁹ Immediately after this battle Colonel Hatch revoked the forage contracts of the two agents closest to Hembrillo Canyon, but the damage had already been done.⁴⁰

Another example of inefficient logistics can be seen in the state of repair of mountain howitzers available for field service in 1879. On his return to Fort Bayard on 3 November 1879 at the end of phase 2 of the campaign, Major Morrow renewed⁴¹ his earlier request for mountain howitzers made on 5 October.⁴² It was then discovered that various posts had relevant equipment but it was either not in good condition or not complete⁴³ (see

34 Report of Maj. James Biddle, 10 September 1880, in Annual Reports of the War Department, 1880, NA, RG94, M997, roll 35, 1880, vol. I, p. 214.

35 Special Order (SO) 12, 11 February 1879; SO 29, 2 April 1879; SO 38, 18 April 1879; SO 48, 17 May 1879; SO 67, 21 July 1879; SO 104, 20 October 1879; SO 17, 5 February 1880; SO 66, 11 June 1880; SO 114, 23 September 1880; SO 19, 16 February 1881; SO 80, 29 June 1881; SO 101, 25 August 1881, in NA, RG393, part 3 entry 450, DoNM, Printed Special Orders, 1869–88.

36 SO 96, 30 September 1879; SO 71, 28 June 1880, in NA, RG393, part 3, entry 450, DoNM, Printed Special Orders, 1869–88.

37 SO 80, 29 June 1881, in NA, RG393, part 3, entry 450, DoNM, Printed Special Orders, 1869–88.

38 See, for example, Loud to Hatch, Tularosa, 20 May 1880, Telegrams Sent, DoNM, vol. 3, January–November 1880, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 431, p. 414.

39 See Loud to General Hatch, Tularosa, 12 April 1880, Telegrams Sent, DoNM, General and Special Field Orders, Letters and Telegrams, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 475, vol. 5, pp. 118–21 and 136, and *Thirty Four*, 31 March 1880.

40 Hatch to Loud, 11 April 1880, DoNM, General and Special Field Orders, Letters and Telegrams, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 475, vol. 5, p. 145.

41 Loud to Hatch, 3 November 1879, Telegrams Sent, DoNM, vol. 2, January–December 1879, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 431, p. 393.

42 Hooker to Loud AAG, 5 October 1879, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 439, [pp. 320–4]. See also Loud to Hatch, 6 October 1879, Telegrams Sent, DoNM, vol. 2, January–December 1879, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 431, pp. 288–9.

43 Loud to Morrow, 3 November 1879, Telegrams Sent, DoNM, vol. 2, January–December 1879, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 431, p. 395. Hatch to CO Fort Bliss, 5 November 1879, Telegrams Sent, DoNM, vol. 2, January–December 1879, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 431, p. 400.

Table 2. Summary of the condition of mountain howitzers held in the Department of the Missouri, November 1879

Posts	Guns	Carriages	Condition	Remarks
Ft Garland	2	2	Serviceable	2 sets of harness for wheel horses; no ammunition
Ft Bliss	2	2	Good	No harness; sufficient ammunition
Ft Wallace	1	1	Serviceable	No harness; sufficient ammunition
Ft Dodge	4	4	Seats badly worn	3 sets of harness, badly worn; plenty ammunition
Ft Hays	5	4	All old and worn	2 sets of harness for wheel horses; sufficient ammunition
Ft Sill	4	4	Serviceable	No harness; sufficient ammunition
Ft Elliott	1	1	Bad wheels	4 sets of harness, all worn
Ft Stanton	2	1	Bad carriage	No harness; sufficient ammunition
Ft Supply	5	5	Serviceable	12 sets of harness; sufficient ammunition

Source: Reilly, Capt. of Ordnance, to AAG, Mil. Div. Missouri, 6 November 1879, in 'Victorio Campaign Special Files', NA, M1495, roll 14.

Table 2), and it was concluded that none of these guns 'could be depended on for field service, owing to the condition of carriages and harness'.⁴⁴

One mountain howitzer was eventually delivered to Major Morrow in time for it to be used in the field against the Apaches in January 1880. However, despite the requests for a second mountain howitzer, this was not delivered until just after the Hembrillo Canyon operation in early April 1880.⁴⁵

V. External Constraints

Four sets of external constraints confronted the US Army in Mexico (see Figure 4).

Congressional Financial and Personnel Constraints

At least some of the logistic problems encountered by the troops in New Mexico found their origin in the role of Congress in the maintenance of a standing army. The reason for this constraint on the part of Congress lay in its suspicion of the threat such an army might pose to the basic freedoms outlined in the constitution.⁴⁶ Therefore, Congress kept a close eye on the situation, with a view to reducing the numbers maintained in the

44 Reilly, Capt. of Ordnance, to AAG, Mil. Div. Missouri, 6 November 1879, in 'Victorio Campaign Special Files', NA, M1495, roll 14.

45 Loud to Hooker, 2 April 1880, and Loud to Operator Fort Craig, 2 April 1880, Telegrams Sent, DoNM, vol. 3, January–November 1880 NA, RG393, part 3, entry 431, p. 273. Loud to Hatch, 3 April 1880, Telegrams Sent, DoNM, vol. 3, January–November 1880, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 431, p. 276.

46 James Kirby Martin and Mark Edward Lender, *A Respectable Army: The Military Origins of the Republic, 1763–1789* (Wheeling, IL, 1982), pp. 8–9.

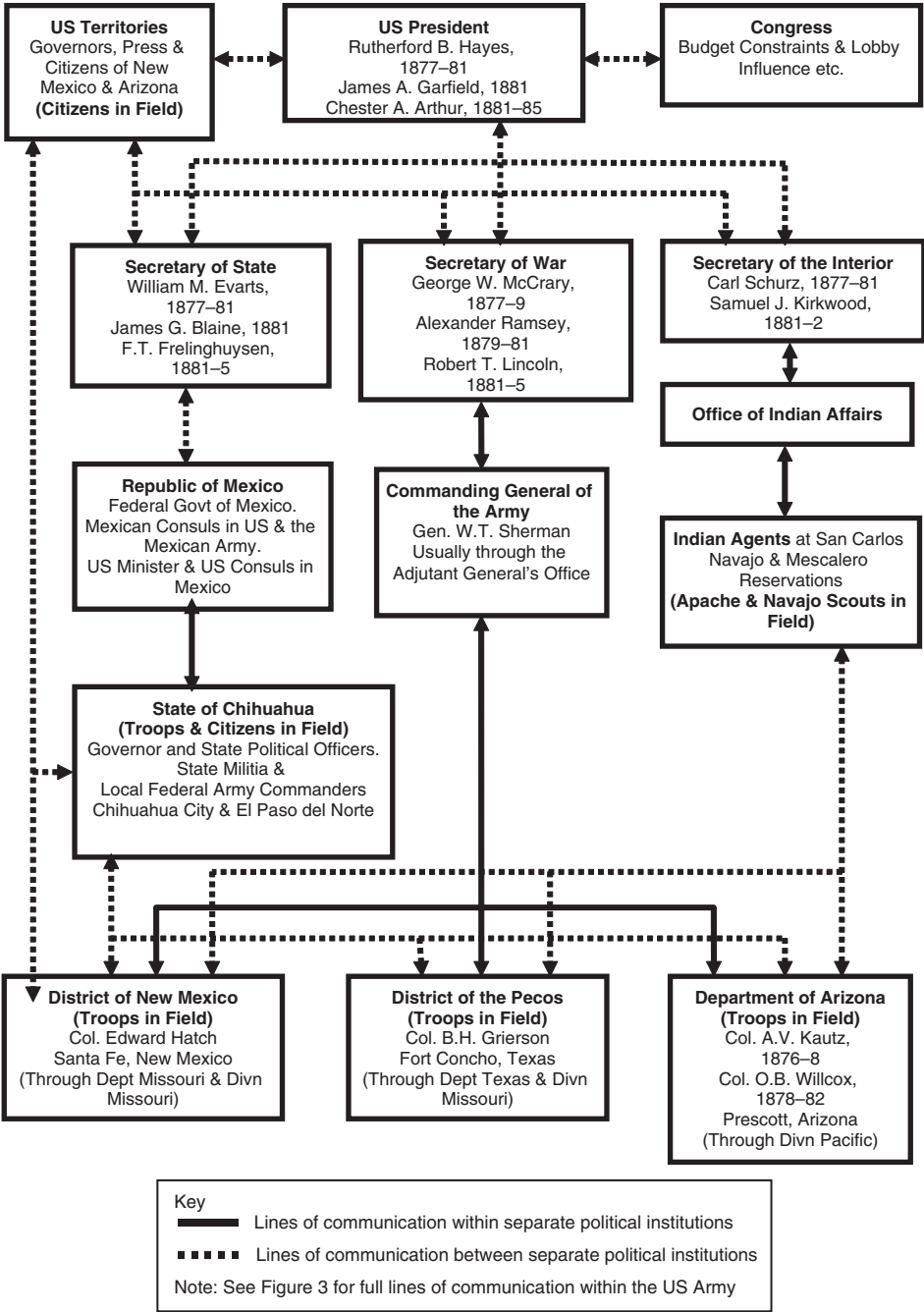


Figure 4. Official US and Mexican political/military chains of command, communication, and influence, 1879–81
Source: see Figure 3.

regular US Army and holding a tight rein on the annual allocation of money to the army, often described as 'niggardly' by officers.⁴⁷ These constraints most clearly affected the army's ability to pursue the Apaches in New Mexico in two key areas.

First, the strict adherence to the limit of 24,000 men in the US Army made it very difficult for additional Apache scouts to be raised. While there was some dispute between field commanders as to the role played by Apache scouts when confronting hostile Apaches, most officers serving in the campaign did not dispute the necessity for the scouts. However, the cap on numbers serving in the US Army imposed by Congress made it very difficult to authorize *additional* Apache scouts during such a major confrontation as the Victorio campaign. Thus, when experienced field commanders such as Colonel Hatch and Major Morrow were pleading with their superiors for more Apache scouts,⁴⁸ they encountered obstacles deriving from this constitutional control over the US Army. They were officially informed by their superiors, from military department headquarters up to the commanding general and the secretary of war, that such recruitment would exceed the 24,000 men authorized by Congress.⁴⁹ The only official solution was to reduce the numbers of scouts employed in other military departments.

Second, the budget restraints imposed on the US Army also directly affected the 9th Cavalry's ability to confront the hostile Apaches. The 9th Cavalryman operated under a system where, if he could be mounted, he left his station on one horse. The budget assigned to the US Army did not account for a type of campaigning which required either the stabling of a large number of remounts at the various posts in the war zone or each cavalryman being accompanied by several remounts while on campaign. The existing system did not usually break down when facing Plains Indians, but it could not bear the additional strain imposed by the very nature of Apache warfare. However, the targeting of horses and mules by the Apaches was clearly affecting the army's budget. In late May 1880 Sherman informed Hatch that there was no money available to buy additional horses and mules until Congress approved the army's funding for the next financial year that July.⁵⁰ The budget for the previous financial year could not be stretched to take account of the numbers of replacement horses and mules required for campaigning against Victorio.

The annual report of the secretary of war in 1880 recommended that the army be raised from 24,000 to 25,000 enlisted men to increase its efficiency.⁵¹ Yet, this increase was not inspired by the need to combat hostile Apaches but to 'tend to the more thorough drill and discipline of our small Army, by bringing together full regiments and fostering

47 'The Arizona Outbreak', *Army and Navy Journal* XIX, 10 September 1881, p. 120.

48 As early as 15 June 1879 Morrow contacted the AAAG District of New Mexico, Santa Fe, to ask for more Apache scouts: Letters Received by Headquarters, DoNM, September 1865–August 1890, NA, M1088, roll 37, file 658-1658, April–June 1879.

49 Sherman to Sheridan, 31 May 1880, NA, RG393, part 1, entry 2546, [pp. 479 and 480].

50 Sherman to Pope, 29 May 1880, NA, RG393, part 1, entry 2539, Press Copies, Military Division of the Missouri (hereafter referred to as Press Copies, MDMo), vol. 13, pp. 290–1. Loud quoting Sherman's letter to Hatch, Fort Craig, 31 May 1880, Telegrams Sent, DoNM, vol. 3, January–November 1880, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 431, pp. 452–3. Sherman to Sheridan, 28 May 1880, in 'Victorio Campaign Special Files', NA, M1495, roll 14.

51 Annual Report of the Secretary of War, 1880, RG94, M997, p. v.

a proper *esprit de corps*'.⁵² It would appear, from General Sherman's recommendation that Hatch seek extra horses and mules from other military districts and departments, that the Apache 'problem' was not seen as significant enough to warrant a change in the army's budget.

US Government Departmental Politics

Three government departments were involved in running the Victorio campaign: the Department of the Interior, the War Department (representing the US Army), and the State Department. The first was responsible for the direction of US Indian policy through the Office of Indian Affairs. Nevertheless, the US Army, through the War Department, engaged in an interdepartmental wrangle over the fate of the Warm Springs Apaches. Broadly the War Department favoured the establishment of a reservation at Ojo Caliente, while the OIA continued to support the concentration policy. This particular wrangle represented an ongoing debate as to which department was more qualified to implement Indian policy. The dispute translated into often obstructive and acrimonious relations between employees of the OIA, stationed on Apache reservations, and the 9th Cavalry, which had the task of trying to catch Apache raiders on and off those reservations.

The Department of State also became entangled in the Victorio campaign as a result of the direct involvement of the Republic of Mexico. The Warm Springs Apaches and the associated Mescalero Apaches claimed territory on both sides of the international line.⁵³ However, elements within the Mexican political system were deeply suspicious of US motives concerning the integrity of Mexican territory, approximately one third of Mexican territory having been lost to the USA after the Mexican-American War of 1846–8. More recently the United States, through the 'Ord Order', had declared its right to engage in 'hot pursuit' across the border on the heels of brigands and hostile Indians. This was in response to Mexico's apparent failure to prevent such miscreants from either raiding across the border from Mexico into the United States or seeking refuge from the US Army below the border.⁵⁴

During the Apache campaign of 1879–81, this general state of affairs focused on the issue of cross-border cooperation between the United States of America and Mexico. It was the State Department's responsibility to hold such negotiations with the Republic of Mexico. For its part, the United States offered to recognize the recently emerged regime

52 Ibid., p. vi.

53 Some Mescalero Apaches allied with Victorio's Warm Springs Apaches against both the United States and Mexico; other Mescalero Apaches elected to fight independently.

54 Secretary of War to the General of the Army, 1 June 1877, in Papers relating to the Frelinghuysen–Romero Agreement of 29 July 1882, providing for reciprocal crossings of the international boundary by troops of the United States and Mexico in pursuit of hostile Indians, February 1882–June 1887. Letters Rec'd by the Office of the Adjutant General (main series), 1881–9, NA, M689, roll 81. Hatfield, *Chasing Shadows*, pp. 23–4. See also Dinges, 'Victorio Campaign', p. 84; Robert Wooster, *The Military and United States Indian Policy, 1865–1903* (London, 1988), pp. 95 and 186; Stephen Sayles, 'The Romero-Frelinghuysen Convention: A Milestone in Border Relations', *New Mexico Historical Review* LI (1976), p. 296.

of Porfirio Diaz if the latter allowed the US Army to cross the border to deal with Victorio and other hostile Apaches should the need arise. However, the Diaz government was deeply conscious of the integrity of the Mexican Republic and held out for reciprocal permission to cross the border.⁵⁵

As a result of this state of affairs, the Mexican government refused to allow detachments from the 9th Cavalry to pursue the Apaches across the border during the campaign. At the end of phase 5 of the Victorio campaign, Colonel Hatch was convinced (probably erroneously, considering the general operational state of the 9th Cavalry by that time) that he could finish off Victorio's resistance if given permission to cross the border.⁵⁶ This was not granted – though, to be fair to the State Department, it was vigorously lobbying the Mexican government for such permission.⁵⁷ It should also be noted that both the Mexican and US authorities recognized a mutual enemy in the Apache guerilla. Therefore, while denying US forces official permission to cross the border, the Mexican authorities were more than happy for their troops to cooperate with the same forces in pursuit of hostile Apaches, as long as both countries' forces remained within their own territory while official negotiations continued. However, local contacts between both the Mexican state and federal troops and the US Army were encouraged to facilitate such cooperation.⁵⁸

The Republic of Mexico: Federal Government vs State Warlord

However, there was another dimension to the tension between the United States of America and Mexico concerning the pursuit of hostile Apaches across the international line. The federal government of Mexico at this time had, at best, a loose hold over its border territories. In the state of Chihuahua the governor was in effect an independent warlord running his own private feudal state. There was a widespread belief that certain towns near the US border had an unofficial but lucrative understanding with the Apaches,

55 See Ruelas to Morgan, 23 July 1880, and Morgan to Ruelas, 24 July 1880, in 'Victorio Campaign Special Files', NA, M1495, roll 14. See also Dinges, 'Victorio Campaign', pp. 81–94.

56 Loud (citing telegram from Hatch, Fort Craig, 31 May 1880) to AAG Fort Leavenworth, 1 June 1880, Telegrams Sent, DoNM, vol. 3, January–November 1880, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 431, p. 459. Hatch, Fort Craig, to AAG, DMO, Fort Leavenworth, 10 June 1880, in General and Special Field Orders, Letters and Telegrams, DoNM, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 475, vol. 7, p. 34. Hatch to AAAG, Santa Fe, 12 June 1880, General and Special Field Orders, Letters and Telegrams, DoNM, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 475, vol. 7, p. 338. Hatch to AAG, Headquarters, MDMo, 31 May 1880, Pope to AAG, Headquarters, MDMo, 14 June 1880, and Drum, Adjutant General, Commanding General, MDMo, 19 June 1880, in 'Victorio Campaign Special Files', NA, M1495, roll 14.

57 AG to Gen. Pope, 19 June 1880, NA, RG393, part 1, entry 2539, Press Copies, MDMo, vol. 13, p. 377. Pope's Annual Report Year Ending September 22 1880, NA, RG393, part 1, entry 2546, [p. 612].

58 See Ruelas to Morgan, 23 July 1880, and Morgan to Ruelas, 24 July 1880, in 'Victorio Campaign Special Files', NA, M1495, roll 14. See also Dinges, 'Victorio Campaign', pp. 81–94.

independent of their governor, that the Apaches could trade their plunder, with no questions asked, in return for guns, ammunition, and so on.⁵⁹

The federal government perceived that it was in its interests to maintain friendly relations with the United States of America and to encourage US investment in Mexico, particularly over railway construction. The development of a rail network within Mexico would make it easier for the central Mexican authorities to curb the power of the state governors. However, as noted earlier, the Mexican government had to steer a tight course between encouraging US economic investment and provoking the nationalist element within the Mexican legislature.⁶⁰

In practical terms the army commanders in New Mexico found that the most effective Mexican forces in the border area were usually Mexican state troops rather than the often absent federal troops. Thus the most effective Mexican contacts for the US Army to make were at the state, rather than federal, level.

Hostility and Prejudice: The Governor, Territorial Press and Individual Citizens of New Mexico

To varying degrees the governor, press, and citizens of the Territory of New Mexico presented a number of difficult obstacles for the 9th Cavalry to overcome in their campaign against Victorio and his successors. It has to be noted that the input of these actors was not wholly negative. Governor Lew Wallace did make an effort to negotiate cross-border pursuits with his counterpart in the state of Chihuahua. However, Wallace had no right to negotiate independently with a foreign power, no matter how laudable his motives were, though he did receive encouragement from Alexander Ramsey, the secretary of war.⁶¹ Wallace had also involved the 9th Cavalry directly in his attempt to resolve the Lincoln County War. This clashed with the recently passed 'Posse Comitatus' Bill, reinforcing the point that the army should not be used to settle disputes between citizens. His attempt was described as 'of doubtful legality' by General Sherman, and 'objectionable' by then Secretary of War George W. McCrary. These sentiments had already been

59 Report of General Pope, in Annual Reports of the War Department, M997, roll 30, 1878, vol. I-II, p. 81.

60 Sayles, 'Romero-Frelinghuysen Convention', pp. 296, 298 and 308. Report of the General of the Army, pp. 55-6, and Report of Major O.M. Poe, Aide-de-Camp, General of the Army, 2820, in Annual Reports of the War Department, NA, RG94, M997, roll 38, 1881, vol. I-II. Poe had been commissioned by General Sherman to survey the progress of railway construction in Texas and southern New Mexico, and this was carried out between 20 December 1880 and 22 February 1881.

61 Wallace to Ramsey, 10 January 1880, and Ramsey to Wallace, 14 January 1880, in 'Victorio Campaign Special Files', NA, M1495, roll 14. Hatch transmitting Governor Wallace's invitation, with endorsement from the Secretary of War to Governor Terrazas, Maj. Morrow and CO Fort Bayard, 12 January 1880, in Telegrams Sent, DoNM, vol. 3, January-November 1880, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 431, pp. 38-9 and 41-2.

expressed by General Pope, and the 9th Cavalry was expressly forbidden to operate under Wallace's direction.⁶²

The more serious challenge came from local citizens, with the active support of the territorial press. This challenge had three facets. First, the press was highly critical of the conduct of the campaign by the US military. Second, the press tended to transmit what turned out to be either exaggerated or utterly false reports of Apache raids. Finally, a number of nominally US citizens, of both Anglo-American and Hispanic origin, were willing to put guns and ammunition into the hands of hostile Apaches.

VI. Criticism

The criticisms aimed at the US Army during the Victorio campaign fell into three categories: personal attacks on Colonel Hatch, condemnation of the US Army in general, and the dismissal of the 9th Cavalry as an effective fighting force. After February 1880, when Hatch took direct control of the campaign against Victorio, he rapidly became the subject of a sustained and vitriolic press campaign.⁶³ It must be noted that Hatch bears much of the responsibility for provoking this campaign and its continuation. As Hatch took control, he made the mistake of publicly stating that press reports of Apache atrocities were exaggerated. As we shall see below, the false or inaccurate reporting of Apache activity was a major problem for the 9th Cavalry's operational efficiency. However, Hatch's public playing down of the effect of the Victorio campaign on the citizens of New Mexico provoked understandable outrage among those citizens, and was given full vent in the territorial press.⁶⁴ From this point onwards Hatch was accused of misrepresenting the state of affairs in New Mexico to his superiors.

Thus, even *before* Hatch launched his first major operation against Victorio at the beginning of April 1880, he was being condemned for failing to stem Apache raiding in the Rio Grande Valley while concentrating on building up 'supply camps'.⁶⁵ As noted earlier, the US Army had a less than efficient logistics system, and the form of warfare adopted by the Apaches posed a direct challenge to opponents' logistics. Hatch was merely trying to place his command in a better position to combat the Apaches effectively, but such measures did not make good press copy.

As the campaign continued into the spring and summer of 1880, these accusations were renewed and in this case they had some foundation. Hatch had a tendency to

62 See various correspondence received between 21 March and 2 April 1879 in Letters Received by Headquarters, DoNM, September 1865–August 1890, NA, M1088, roll 37, April to June 1879.

63 It should be noted that Hatch came under attack from one of the New Mexican papers, *Thirty Four*, in November 1879 for his alleged mismanagement of the campaign up to that point. See *Thirty Four*, 19 November 1879. In fact *Thirty Four* took credit for starting the campaign against Hatch in the first place (see edition of 28 April 1880).

64 Hatch to AAG, DMO, Fort Leavenworth, 14 February 1880, in Letters Sent by the 9th Military Department, the Department of New Mexico, and the District of New Mexico, 1849–90, NA, M1072, roll 6, January 1880–August 1881, letter no. 82, pp. 58–65.

65 See 'Indian News', *Thirty Four*, 17 March 1880; 'Hatch vs Breechclouts [Veni Vidi Vici]', *Grant County Herald*, 20 March 1880.

claim significant victories over the Apaches which were exaggerated, and the press was very quick to pinpoint and condemn these statements as a gross misrepresentation of the situation in New Mexico.⁶⁶ The papers accused Hatch of lying, cowardice, being in league with corrupt businessmen in Santa Fe, and so on. For example, there were at least 41 anti-Hatch comments and articles in the *Grant County Herald* between 20 March 1880 and 10 September 1881.⁶⁷ *Thirty Four* also produced a 'spoof' version of an Apache newspaper to attack and pour ridicule on Hatch's efforts.⁶⁸ Indeed, by early July 1880, General Pope, while acknowledging that Hatch and his men could have done no more in their efforts, also noted that Hatch had not handled the citizenry very effectively.⁶⁹

Condemnation of Hatch sometimes developed into a wider critique of the US Army. A common criticism was that General Pope and the federal government in faraway Washington, DC, were indifferent to the plight of citizens in New Mexico Territory.⁷⁰ The 9th Cavalry itself came under some attack but nowhere near the extent that its commander sustained. The term 'Buffalo Soldier' was used rarely and usually as a term of quiet contempt within the local press. The *Army and Navy Journal* reproduced a letter from Silver City to the *Philadelphia Times* in which the correspondent refers to the 9th Cavalrymen as 'Buffalo Soldiers', a rare, and in this case complimentary, use of the term.⁷¹ Yet there was little positive usage of this term.⁷² Officers were occasionally criticized, the most obvious example being Captain Charles D. Beyer, whose relatively successful skirmish with Victorio in May 1879 was dismissed as a defeat on the word of a single prospector who was not present at the fight.⁷³ *Thirty Four* later acknowledged that some of the original story might not have been true, but reiterated the story that Beyer was 'ignominiously defeated'.⁷⁴ Locally, the site today is still known as 'Beyer's Run'.⁷⁵

66 Ashenfelter, Editor, *Grant County Herald*, 3 April 1880.

67 On 23 April 1881 the *Grant County Herald* became the *New Southwest and Grant County Herald*.

68 'The Apache Chronicle' published by *Thirty Four*, 7 April 1880.

69 Pope to Sheridan, 1 July 1880, NA, RG393, part 1, entry 2546, [pp. 521–7]. See also Pope's Annual Report Year Ending September 22 1880, NA, RG393, part 1, entry 2546, [p. 613].

70 See, for instance, Ashenfelter, Editor, *Grant County Herald*, 27 March 1880; *Thirty Four*, 12 May 1880.

71 'The Apache Campaign', *Army and Navy Journal* XVII, 3 April 1880, p. 705.

72 See 'From Georgetown', *Grant County Herald*, 8 May 1880: Occasional, 'How to Fight Apaches', 10 June 1880, Georgetown, New Mexico, letter in the *Grant County Herald*, 12 June 1880.

73 See *Thirty Four*, 18 June 1880.

74 See *Thirty Four*, 25 June 1879. See also comments made in *Thirty Four*, 9 July and 17 September 1879 and 24 March 1880.

75 The Chloride Museum displays a caption giving a brief description of the fight which does not tally with Beyer's own very detailed report to be found in Letters Received by Headquarters, DoNM, September 1865–August 1890, NA, M1088, roll 37, file 658-1658, April–June 1879. See also Hatch to CO Fort Bayard, 8 June 1879, Telegrams Sent, DoNM, vol. 2, January–December 1879, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 431, p. 148.

Most criticism levelled at the 9th Cavalrymen labelled them as ineffective in comparison to white troops,⁷⁶ though early in the campaign at least one paper argued that the 9th Cavalry should be given the chance to prove itself.⁷⁷ However, as the campaign progressed, positive feeling towards the 9th Cavalry largely disappeared. One article took comfort in the fact that at least the failure to defeat the Apaches had shown that use of 'the African' as a soldier had finally been shown to be a failure.⁷⁸ Under a section titled 'Not Prejudice',⁷⁹ it was argued that the 'African' was not temperamentally suited to warfare.⁸⁰ The 9th Cavalry was even accused of throwing away cartridges and being chronically insubordinate.⁸¹ Hostile citizens not only published various resolutions in the local press trumpeting their dissatisfaction, they also sent at least one such communication directly to the President of the United States of America.⁸²

It should be noted that some positive comments continued to be made concerning the 9th Cavalry. One account argued that a white regiment would have been hard pushed to maintain its morale and willingness to fight to the level maintained by the 9th Cavalry during the campaign.⁸³ Indeed, in November 1880 there appears to have been an attempt by an Anglo-American to join the 9th Cavalry as a recruit at Fort Cummings, prompting the commanding officer to contact the adjutant general in Washington to verify whether this was possible.⁸⁴

VII. Misinformation

During the Victorio campaign misinformation fell into two categories. The more common of the two categories could be ascribed to panic. The second category was less common but can only be described as deliberate.

The nature of Apache warfare was that, while the actual damage inflicted was relatively limited, the psychological threat posed by these expert guerrillas could, and often

76 See *Thirty Four*, 11 February 1880 and 24 March 1880; 'Mystery and History', *Grant County Herald*, 10 April 1880; 'Victory?', *Grant County Herald*, 17 April 1880; 'Town & County', *Grant County Herald*, 24 April 1880; *Thirty Four*, 5 and 12 May 1880; *Grant County Herald*, 19 June 1880; 'Town & County', *Grant County Herald*, 31 July 1880; 'Town & County', *New Southwest* and *Grant County Herald*, 16 July 1881.

77 *Thirty Four*, 19 November 1879.

78 'In the Name of the Prophet! Figs!!', *Grant County Herald*, 27 March 1880.

79 Ashenfelter, Editor, *Grant County Herald*, 27 March 1880.

80 See also Ashenfelter, Editor, *Grant County Herald*, 3 April 1880.

81 *Thirty Four*, 9 June 1880.

82 Citizens Bailey etc. to President RB Hayes, Washington, DC, 10 May 1880, in 'Victorio Campaign Special Files', NA, M1495, roll 14. See also Silver City, 7 June 1880, Resolution in *Grant County Herald*, 12 June 1880; *Thirty Four*, 16 June 1880; Hart, 'Colonel Hatch', p. 48.

83 See *Thirty Four*, 2 June 1880.

84 Dudley to AG Washington, DC, 13 November 1880, letter no. 148, Letters Sent, vol. 7, 25 October 1880 – 24 June 1881, in HQ Records of Fort Cummings, New Mexico, 1863–73 and 1880–4, M1081, roll 1.

did, paralyse the economic activity in the area. This state of affairs positively encouraged the production of scare stories, which exaggerated the effect of an attack in reported casualties and number of Apaches involved. Other reports were completely erroneous sightings where parties of mounted miners, traders, or even US cavalry patrols were mistaken for Apache warriors.⁸⁵ Another relatively common trigger for a false alarm was citizens involved in hunting or target practice being mistaken by other citizens for attackers.⁸⁶

Officers from the 9th Cavalry raised complaints about the level of false reporting of Apaches throughout the campaign.⁸⁷ To see their already limited resources being wasted in pursuit of non-existent Apache raiders was extremely frustrating. It also seriously hampered the 9th Cavalry's ability to use even relatively accurate reports to move its forces into the area where Apache warriors were actually operating.

A much more insidious form of misinformation was deliberate false reporting of the presence of Apaches. This was usually accompanied by vociferous demands that US troops be stationed in the locality. The motive can sometimes be ascribed to genuine panic, but often the aim was to exploit such detachments by charging exorbitant prices for poor quality food and fodder.⁸⁸

Apache guerrillas were notoriously difficult to combat for they would very rarely stay for any length of time in one place. The misinformation, whether panic driven or deliberate, provided an additional and major obstacle to the effective prosecution of a campaign against the Apaches.

85 See, for instance, Morrow to Loud AAAG, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 439, [p. 9]. See also comment Hatch to Loud AAAG, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 439, [p. 129]. Lt Emmett to Post Adjutant, Ft Bayard, 30 November 1879, in Letters Received, DoNM, October–December 1879, NA, M1088, roll 39. Ord to the Adjutant General, MDMo, 30 March 1880, NA, RG393, part 1, entry 2546, [p. 365]. Loud to CO Fort Bayard, 6 May 1880, Telegrams Sent, DoNM, vol. 3, January–November 1880, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 431, p. 387. Taylor to AAAG, Troops in the Field, Fort Cummings, 16 November 1880, and Humphrey to Dudley, 24 November 1880, in Reports of Scouts, 2 November 1880–1 August 1882, HQ Records, Fort Cummings, NA, M1081, roll 8, pp. 2–3 and 5.

86 See, for example, Gardner to the Adjutant Batt. Ninth Cavalry, Separ S.P. R.R., New Mexico, 31 October 1881, DMo, Letters Received, 7320 DMo, 1881 (copy of document provided by William A. Dobak).

87 See, for instance, Loud to CO Fort Wingate, 18 August 1881, Telegrams Sent, DoNM, vol. 5, February–December 1881, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 431, p. 340. Bradley to AAAG Dist NM, 19 August 1881, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 439, [pp. 148 and 149]. Smith? to Loud, AAAG Santa Fe, 17 August 1881, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 439, [p. 152]. Loud to Asst Adjt General, Fort Leavenworth, 18 August 1881, NA, RG393, part 1, entry 2546, [p. 900].

88 See Dudley to Chief Quartermaster, District of New Mexico, January 1881, where he registered a protest at a claim of \$1568 submitted by one J.A. Miller for hay supplied to Fort Cummings. Dudley described the fodder as of 'very inferior quality'. Letters Sent, vol. 7, 25 October 1880 – 24 June 1881, HQ Records, Fort Cummings, NA, RG93 M1081, roll 1.

VIII. Illegal Activity

However, there was an even more sinister aspect to the activities of some of the local citizenry.⁸⁹ This was the existence of illicit trade networks where the Apaches were able to trade their plunder for guns and ammunition. If necessary, individuals involved in this trade were willing to take steps to protect their interests, and a small number of US troops were killed or wounded at the hands of such people. Samuel Brown of F Company, 9th Cavalry, was murdered by unknown persons in Tularosa on 13 or 18 April 1880 near to the Mescalero Reservation.⁹⁰ The assailants were suspected of being of Mexican origin. Corporal Samuel Myers was killed on 21 October 1880 while investigating the illegal sale of US government property at Upper Plaza in the San Francisco Valley. He was believed to have been killed by Mexican-American civilians.⁹¹ A third 9th Cavalryman, Charles Cunningham, was badly wounded, on or around 1 January 1880, by a 'Mexican assassin'.⁹²

The Apaches suffered from two key threats to their ability to wage effective warfare: the willingness of other Apache warriors to serve in the US Army and the lack of a regular supply of rifles and cartridges. Some of the residents of New Mexico, of both Mexican and Anglo descent, were more than willing to alleviate the Apaches' shortage of modern munitions for personal gain. Almost certainly, some of the fatalities sustained by the 9th Cavalry came from weapons placed in the hands of Apache warriors by illicit traders. Many of these traders would have been civilians whom the regiment was supposed to be protecting from these same Apaches. It is only fair to mention that other civilians in the territory did take steps at the very least to intimidate those suspected of trading with the Apaches.⁹³ US Army post commanders were also warned to be very careful to whom they sold obsolete arms.⁹⁴

89 See US Attorney General for Territory of New Mexico to Hatch, 11 July 1879, in Letters Received, DoNM, July–Sept 1879, M1088, roll 38.

90 Record of Events, April 1880, in Ninth Cavalry Regimental Returns, 1873–80, M744, roll 88.

91 Humphreys to AAAG Santa Fe, 1 November 1880, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 439, [pp. 650–2]. Bi-Monthly Returns for Company M, Ninth Cavalry, September/October 1880 in Bi-monthly Muster Rolls, NA, RG94, M744, rolls 88 and 89. It was decided to send a 9th Cavalry company out to Parson Williams Rancho from Fort Cummings and to pull out all 9th Cavalry detachments stationed along the San Francisco River. The officer in charge of the company was charged with investigating the death of Corporal Myers and ordered to submit a report to district headquarters. Once the investigation was completed the company was to return to Fort Cummings. (Loud to CO Fort Cummings, 10 November 1880, in Letters Rec'd, 1880–1, HQ Records of Fort Cummings, New Mexico, 1863–73 and 1880–4, NA, M1081, roll 5.)

92 Bi-Monthly Returns for Company K, Ninth Cavalry, May/June 1880, Bi-Monthly Muster Rolls in NA, RG94.

93 Report from Andrew Kelley concerning illegal trade with Apaches at Canada Alamosa, as reported in *Thirty Four*, 5 May 1880.

94 Field Order no. 10, HQ, Department of Arizona in the Field, Camp Thomas, 15 September 1881, Special Orders 1879–81, Department of Arizona, NA, RG393, part 1, entry 184.

Aside from illegal trade there was also the occasionally very unhelpful attitude of certain citizens when requested to assist the 9th Cavalry. There were instances where individual telegraph operators were reluctant to give military telegrams priority.⁹⁵ There was even an instance where Colonel Hatch had to contact the general manager of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad on the matter of a distinct lack of cooperation on the part of its agent at San Marical concerning the transport of 9th Cavalrymen in response to Nana's Raid in August 1881.⁹⁶ Captain John S. Loud, acting assistant adjutant general (AAAG), District of New Mexico, contacted the postmaster in Santa Fe about the failure to deliver letters to recipients, complaining of this 'embarrassment and inconvenience to the service' and saying that it 'was not the first instance of the kind'.⁹⁷ Equally, it has to be noted that other telegraph operators did their utmost to keep the line open for military traffic.⁹⁸

The 9th Cavalry's attempts to overcome these obstacles produced varying success but show that the regiment was not necessarily a helpless victim of circumstance, and on occasion could find that some of its opponents could prove to be surprising allies.

IX. Solutions

Limited resources dominated the choice of tactics adopted by the 9th Cavalry to counter Apache guerrillas. During phases 1–3 of the campaign, Major Morrow attempted to coordinate a number of US cavalry and Indian scout detachments (depending on what was available) in an effort first to find the Apaches. The detachment which made the discovery would attempt to follow the Apaches, while news of their pursuit would be used to guide the other detachments into the area. As troops and animals became exhausted they were replaced by fresh troops (if available) summoned by courier or telegraph. The main problem was the size of the geographical area utilized by the Apaches. Even had the 9th Cavalry been able to mount all of its available troopers it still had to cover a huge area. Once the Apaches were discovered, the time taken to send in such

95 Capt Carroll, Ft Craig to AG, District of New Mexico, Santa Fe, 12 October 1879, in Letters Received, DoNM, October–December 1879, NA, M1088, roll 39. Loud to Joseph M. Gough, Manager Western Union Telegraph Company, Santa Fe, 12 February 1880, in Letters Sent by the 9th Military Department, the Department of New Mexico, and the District of New Mexico, 1849–90, NA, M1072, roll 6, January 1880–August 1881, Letter no. 71, p. 51. Acting Chief Signal Officer to Lt Allen, Santa Fe, 16 September 1880, NA, RG393, part 1, entry 2546, [pp. 608–9]. Loud to Robinson, ATSF RR, 19 August 1881, Telegrams Sent, DoNM, vol. 5, February–December 1881, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 431, p. 345. See also Loud to Hatch, Nutt Station, 19 August 1881, Telegrams Sent, DoNM, vol. 5, February–December 1881, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 431, p. 345.

96 Hatch to General Manager, A.T. and S.F. Railroad, 13 August 1881, Miscellaneous Records, 1868–89, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 453.

97 Loud to Postmaster, Santa Fe, 15 June 1880, in Letters Sent by the 9th Military Department, the Department of New Mexico, and the District of New Mexico, 1849–90, NA, M1072, roll 6, January 1880–August 1881, Letter no. 290, p. 187.

98 Will C. Barnes, *Apaches & Longhorns: The Reminiscences of Will C. Barnes* (Tucson, 1982), pp. 37–8.

intelligence would often render that information obsolete as the Apaches had already moved on.

Despite these handicaps Morrow had, at first glance, an excellent record of maintaining contact with the hostile Apaches, maintaining the pursuit well beyond the limits that could have been expected. He commanded more engagements with Apaches than any other individual 9th Cavalry officer, but he failed to defeat them. It must be noted that there are grounds to believe that Morrow's success in maintaining contact with Victorio (phases 2 and 3) may have been exactly what the latter wanted, for exhausted men and high equine casualties were the only results of these pursuits.

Colonel Hatch tried to improve on Morrow's tactic by organizing three battalions of New Mexico troops,⁹⁹ but failed to trap the Apaches at Hembrello Canyon (phase 4) owing to poor communications and insufficient logistics. He was then forced to adopt a larger scale version of Morrow's earlier tactics (phase 5) without success, and by the end of this period the 9th Cavalry had been effectively crippled by its losses in horses and mules. The significant victory scored against Victorio on the headwaters of the Palomas River in May 1880 was inflicted by an Apache scout company. This company had double the number of authorized scouts and was by that time operating independently of the 9th Cavalry. The victory was marred by poor communications and limited resources. The expected additional ammunition and support from the 9th Cavalry did not materialize because of the slow rate of supplying additional ammunition and the exhausted state of the regiment by that time.¹⁰⁰

Colonel Buell's expedition into Mexico in September and October 1880 (phase 6) involved six companies of infantry, two companies of Apache scouts, nine companies of cavalry (three from the 4th and the balance from the 9th Cavalry),¹⁰¹ plus support from approximately six companies of cavalry and three companies of Apache scouts from Arizona.¹⁰² While this expedition made a significant contribution to Colonel Joaquin

99 Hatch to AAG, DMo, Ft Leavenworth, Kansas, 23 February 1880, DoNM, General and Special Field Orders, Letters and Telegrams, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 475, vol. 5. See also similar comments: Hatch to AAG Fort Leavenworth, 25 January 1880, Telegrams Sent, DoNM, vol. 3, January–November 1880, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 431, p. 77. Hatch to AAG, DMo, 16 March 1880, in 'Victorio Campaign Special Files', NA, M1495, roll 14. Hatch, General Field Order no. 1, 23 February 1880, General Orders, Circulars and Court Martial Orders, 1870–81, NA, RG393, part 1, entry 183. General Field Orders no. 1, 23 February 1880, Printed Special Orders, 1869–88, DoNM, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 446.

100 'The Fight on the Headwaters of the Palomas', *Grant County Herald*, 29 May 1880. For a rather different version, see Hatch to AAAG, Santa Fe, 25 May 1880, in General and Special Field Orders, Letters and Telegrams, DoNM, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 475, vol. 5, p. 270. See also Telegrams Sent, DoNM, vol. 3, January–November 1880, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 431, p. 436. Hatch to AAG, Headquarters, MDMo, 27 May 1880, in 'Victorio Campaign Special Files', NA, M1495, roll 14.

101 Buell to AAG, DMo, 20 November 1880, in Letters Received by Headquarters, DoNM, September 1865–August 1890, NA, M1088, roll 42, file 658-1658, January–April 1881.

102 Carr, Fort Bowie, to AAG Department Arizona, 12 September 1880, letter no. 552, pp. 12–13; Carr to AG Department Arizona, 19 September 1880, letter no. 569, pp. 19–20, in Troops in Southeastern Arizona, Department of Arizona, NA, RG393, part 1, entry 232, vol. 8, 6

Terrazas's¹⁰³ subsequent defeat of Victorio at Tres Castillos, the US troops failed to make any contact with the hostile Apaches. The Apaches could easily detect and avoid such large detachments. The monthly returns show a general improvement in the balance of serviceable to unserviceable horses and only a slight increase in horses lost during September and October 1880. This hints at instructions from above to be more conscious of the cost of replacement horses and mules, but in doing so the 9th Cavalry was far less likely to contact Apache guerrillas. There is also ground to suspect that during this period ammunition shortages did not allow Victorio to adopt his usual decoy tactic of drawing his pursuers after a group of warriors in a long pursuit designed to cripple and kill horses and mules, while his dependants slipped away. He therefore made every effort to avoid any contact with his pursuers, and during the Buell Expedition the 9th Cavalry did not engage in any such pursuits, as it did not find a clear enough trail. This by default led to lower equine casualties.

During the last two phases of the campaign, Hatch returned to sending a small detachment in pursuit of Apache raiders while attempting to guide other detachments into the area from other posts. Again, owing to scarce resources, and the ability of Apache guerrillas to move very quickly through the territory, these detachments were often dangerously small. Indeed, during the final phase of the campaign, three 9th Cavalry detachments were mauled¹⁰⁴ by the Apaches before other detachments managed to home in on the raiders and encouraged ('forced' being too strong a term) them to retreat into Mexico.

Poor communications and misinformation also played a role throughout the Apache campaign of 1879–81. Once these small detachments passed out of easy range of the telegraph lines, transmitting the news of the latest Apache movements was painfully slow. Throughout the campaign, attempts to guide various 9th Cavalry detachments towards their elusive opponents were also somewhat impeded by exaggerated or even false reports of Apache raids.

The 9th Cavalry adopted various approaches in response to the obstacles raised by the US Army and Congress. For the 9th Cavalry to attempt to balance the desire for the creation of a European army with fighting Apache guerrillas was completely impossible and was effectively ignored. The 9th Cavalry eventually gained authorization to employ two Apache scout companies which were deployed in 1881. In the meantime, various 'unofficial' measures were used to employ additional Apache scouts, such as recruiting more scouts but entering them into the roll as 'mule packers'.¹⁰⁵ The poor logistical and financial support of

September 1880 – 12 December 1880. Special Orders no. 58, HQ, Troops in the Field in S.E. Arizona, Camp near Fort Bowie, A.T., 17 September 1880, Special Orders, October 1879–January 1881, Department of Arizona, vol. 2, NA, RG393, part 1, entry 239, pp. 28–9.

103 Commander of the Chihuahua State troops.

104 Captain Charles Parker lost 2 men killed and 3 badly wounded out of a detachment of 19 men on 12 August 1881, at Carrizo Canyon. Lieutenants George R. Burnett and Gustavus Valois were very lucky to suffer no fatalities and only 2 men seriously wounded on 16 August 1881, in the Cuchillo Negro Mountains. Lieutenant George W. Smith and 3 men were killed and 3 men wounded in Gavilan Canyon on 19 August 1881. See Lekson, *Nana's Raid*; Thrapp, *Conquest*, pp. 211–16.

105 See, for example, Hatch to CO Fort Cummings, 29 September 1880, and Maney, Fort Stanton, 10 November 1880, in Letters Rec'd, DoNM, July–December 1880, NA, M1088, roll 41.

Table 3. Summary of acting adjutant general/acting assistant adjutant general (AAG/AAAG) personnel and station, 1879–81

	AAG	AAAG	Station
Divn of the Missouri	Col. W.D. Whipple	–	Chicago, Illinois
Dept of the Missouri	Maj. E.R. Platt	–	Ft Leavenworth, Kansas
Dept of Texas	?	–	San Antonio, Texas
Dist of New Mexico	–	Lt/Capt. John S. Loud	Santa Fe, New Mexico
	–	Lt M.W. Day ^a	In the field
		Lt Davis ^b	
Dist of the Pecos	–	Lt R.G. Smithers	Ft Concho, Texas
	–	Lt W.H. Beck ^c	In the field
Divn of the Pacific	Maj. J.M. Norvell	–	Presidio, San Francisco
Dept of Arizona	Major J.P. Martin ^d	–	Whipple Barracks, Arizona
	–	Lt John B. Kerr	Ft Lowell, Arizona
	–	Lt John B. Kerr ^e	In the field

^a 2nd Lt M.W. Day was Major Morrow's AAAG in the field, January/February 1880.

^b Davis was Col. Buell's AAAG in the field during the expedition into Mexico. See Buell to AAG Dept of the Missouri, 20 November 1880, Letters Received by Headquarters, District of New Mexico, September 1865 – August 1890, NA, RG393, M1088, roll 42, file 658-1658, January–April 1881.

^c Beck accompanied Col. Grierson during his field operations against Victorio in July/August 1880. See Grierson's Report of the Campaign in Western Texas, July–August 1880, submitted 22 September 1880, NA, RG393, part 1, entry 2546, [pp. 639–44].

^d This officer cannot be identified with confidence from Francis Bernard Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, 1789–1903* (Washington, DC, 1903). See entry for James Porter Martin in Constance Wynn Altshuler, *Cavalry Yellow & Infantry Blue: Army Officers in Arizona between 1851 and 1886* (Tucson, 1991), p. 221.

^e Lt Kerr accompanied Col. Carr into the field during the Buell expedition into Mexico. See Carr to AG Dept Arizona, 19 September 1880, Troops in Southeastern Arizona, Dept of Arizona, NA, RG393, part 1, entry 232, vol. 8, 6 September 1880–12 December 1880, letter no. 569, pp. 19–20.

Source: derived from Altshuler, *Cavalry Yellow*; Heitman, *Historical Register*.

the 9th Cavalry were problems endemic in the US Army in general, and while the Apaches' strategies and tactics were very effective, they did not produce defeats which would sting Congress into action as had happened after Little Big Horn in 1876. The Apaches were simply too few, nor did their 'principles of war' incline them to inflict such a reverse. Barring aid sent from other military divisions, departments, or districts in the form of additional cavalry, scout, and infantry detachments, the 9th Cavalry was very much left to its own devices.

The problem of a fragmented command structure did not appear to be solved at all, though the role of the AAAGs and acting adjutant generals (AAGs) in facilitating the coordination of the tactics and strategies adopted by the 9th Cavalry and other US Army units must not be underestimated. The practical function of the AAAG and AAG was to coordinate the flow of information and orders up and down the chain of command, usually in letter or telegraph format. Thus, if we refer to Table 3, each district (New Mexico and Pecos), department (Missouri, Texas, and Arizona) and Division (Missouri and Pacific) would have either an AAAG at district level or an AAG at department or division level.

If the commanding officer of the district/department/division was in the field coordinating operations, he sometimes appointed a temporary 'AAAG in the field'. If the

commander was absent for other than field operations the AAAG/AAG would remain at headquarters to coordinate communication between the absent commanders and both his superiors and subordinates. Such a role carried a great deal of responsibility for the successful direction of field operations, including the transmission of requests for additional logistic support, coordinating the movements of a number of individual detachments, and communicating reports from individual detachment commanders.

There was also a political element to the job of AAAG/AAG. On at least one occasion Captain John S. Loud, AAAG, District of New Mexico, decided *when* to pass information up the chain of command to the Department of the Missouri. He contacted his commander, Colonel Hatch, the latter being absent coordinating the pursuit of Nana and his raiders (phase 8), to inform him of an inconclusive skirmish with the Apaches at Monica Springs.¹⁰⁶ Loud offered to delay the transmission of information up the chain of command, and asked: 'do you [Hatch] wish me to repeat to department headquarters and Genl Pope at Ft Garland will not do so until I hear from you'.¹⁰⁷ Despite the apparent failure of the US Army to tackle the fragmented command structure in Apacheria, the troops 'on the ground' did at least attempt to institute as efficient a means of command and communication as such a system would allow.

The response to the constraints imposed by various external factors on the US Army's ability to prosecute a successful campaign against the Apaches also highlights the informal or unofficial links between various actors (see Figure 5). It should be noted that detachments in 'hot pursuit' of Apaches usually had no qualms about crossing the border during the Victorio campaign. The most obvious example of such an incursion was Major Morrow's pursuit of Victorio into Mexico, which ended in a prolonged firefight in the Guzman Mountains on the night of 27–8 October 1879.¹⁰⁸ Thomas Duke, a 9th Cavalryman, was killed by Apaches in the Boca Grande Mountains on 30 April 1881 while participating in a scouting mission into Mexico.¹⁰⁹ The US Army was also prepared

106 This skirmish occurred on 3 August 1881. See Guilfoyle to AAAG Santa Fe, 6 August 1881, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 439, [pp. 165–6]. Loud to CO Fort Wingate, 10 August 1881, Telegrams Sent, DoNM, vol. 5, February–December 1881, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 431, p. 318. Loud to Hatch, 10 August 1881, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 439, [pp. 734–5]. See also Whipple to Sheridan (citing a report from Lt Guilfoyle posted on 6 August from Ojo Setiemera?), 16 August 1881, NA, RG393, part 1, entry 2539, Press Copies, MDMo, vol. 14, p. 584.

107 Loud to Hatch, 10 August 1881, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 439, [p. 735]. See also Loud to Hatch, 12 August 1881, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 439, [p. 746].

108 See Morrow to AAAG, District of New Mexico, 5 November 1879, in Letters Received by Headquarters, DoNM, September 1865–August 1890, NA, M1088, roll 37 (October–December 1879). See also Pope to AAG HQ, MDMo, 4 November 1879, and Humphreys to AAAG, DoNM, 5 January 1880, in 'Victorio Campaign Special Files', NA, M1495, roll 14. See also report by Lt C.B. Gatewood to AAAG in the Field, Fort Lowell, A.T., 20 December 1879, NA, RG393, part 1, entry 240.

109 Dudley to AAAG Santa Fe, 4 May 1881, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 439, [p. 230], and unsigned and undated note, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 439, [p. 231]. Hatch to AAG Fort Leavenworth, 5 May 1881, Telegrams Sent, DoNM, vol. 5, February–December 1881, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 431, p. 192.

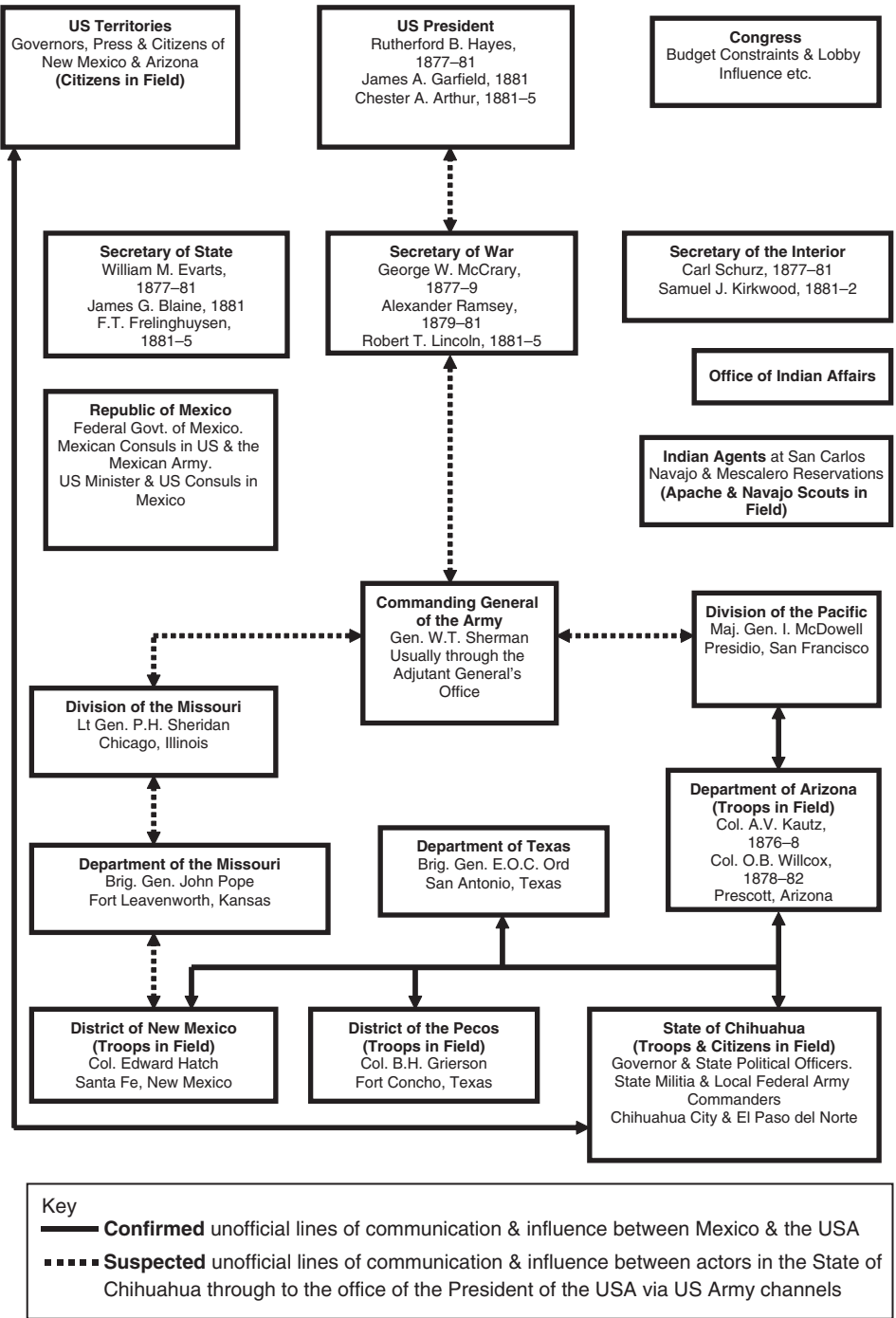


Figure 5. Unofficial US political/military chains of command, communication, and influence, 1879–81
Source: see Figure 3.

to send civilians as scouts across the international line, without necessarily notifying the Mexican authorities, in an effort to keep track of the movements of hostile Apaches.¹¹⁰

A far more interesting development concerns the 'unofficial' cooperation between local actors on both sides of the border to circumvent the deadlock at the federal level over granting official reciprocal rights for each country's forces to cross the border in pursuit of Apaches. By June 1880 Hatch was confident that he could obtain the blessing of the local Chihuahuan authorities to pursue Victorio across the border.¹¹¹ This 'cooperation' culminated in the organizing of a joint effort to trap Victorio by US forces and Chihuahuan state troops in the 'Buell Expedition' (see phase 6). As noted earlier, this involved significant numbers of troops from New Mexico, Arizona, and Chihuahua. It also involved a small detachment of 10th Cavalrymen acting as scouts¹¹² and a similar number of state troops from Texas.¹¹³

The expedition was organized on the basis of the informal contacts maintained between certain actors/institutions on both sides of the border. It was driven by the sentiment held by local actors that they were faced by an urgent problem that could not wait for both federal governments to solve. Therefore, elements of this informal network appear to have colluded in order to present the US State Department with a temporary *fait accompli*. Correspondence was forwarded to the State Department by the US Army which claimed that permission to cross the border had been granted by the Mexican government. By the time the State Department realized that the letter gave no such permission, the Buell Expedition was in the field and beyond recall. The army personnel involved were able to pass this incident off as being due to a mistranslation of the letter in question.¹¹⁴

110 See, for example, Pope to Sheridan, 1 July 1880, NA, RG393, part 1, entry 2546, [pp. 521–7]. See also Pope's Annual Report Year Ending September 22 1880, NA, RG393, part 1, entry 2546, [p. 613]. Brinkerhoff to AAA Genl SF, 11 September 1880, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 439, [pp. 405–8]. Bradley to Van C. Smith, 13 October 1881, Letters Received, 1880–1, HQ Records Fort Cummings, NA, M1081, roll 5. Van C. Smith to MacKenzie, 19 November 1881, Letters Sent, vol. 8, 26 June 1881–2 April 1882, HQ Records, Fort Cummings, NA, M1081, roll 1.

111 Hatch to AAA General, Santa Fe, 12 June 1880, in General and Special Field Orders, Letters and Telegrams, DoNM, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 475, vol. 7, p. 338. Loud to AAG Fort Leavenworth, 13 June 1880, Telegrams Sent, DoNM, vol. 3, January–November 1880, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 431, p. 515. Pope to AAG, Headquarters, MDMo, 14 June 1880, 'Victorio Campaign Special Files', NA, M1495, roll 14.

112 Grierson to AAG, Department of Texas, 31 December 1880, in Letters Sent, 23 August – 31 December 1880, HQ Records of the District of the Pecos, 1878–81, NA, M1381, roll 1, letter no. 168 (note: this latter report contained as letter no. 3 in Letters Sent, 1881); Nolan, Fort Quitman, 21 September 1880, in Register of Letters Rec'd, 23 March 1878 – 30 January 1881, HQ Records of the District of the Pecos, 1878–81, NA, M1381, roll 2, p. 54, letter no. 190; McLaughlan to Grierson, 21 September 1880, in Register of Telegrams Rec'd, 11 October 1879–8 October 1880, HQ Records of the District of the Pecos, 1878–81, NA, M1381, roll 2, p. 220, letter no. 389.

113 James B. Gillett, *Six Years with the Texas Rangers, 1875 to 1881* (London, 1976; first published New Haven, 1925), p. 183.

114 See Brinkerhoff, Ft Bliss, to AAAG Santa Fe, 15 July 1880, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 439, [pp. 542–7]. See also Pollack, Capt Ninth Infantry, AAA General, Santa Fe, to Col. Buell, CO

In effect, local US Army commanders, Hatch and Buell through Generals Pope to Sheridan,¹¹⁵ took apparently independent action in an attempt to solve the 'Victorio problem'. It was cleverly done, allowing the participants to deny any charge of political intrigue or malpractice in launching just such an intrigue. The operation had the active cooperation of Chihuahuan state forces commanded by Joaquin Terrazas, cousin of Luis Terrazas, governor of Chihuahua. It also had the tacit support of at least one State Department official (the consul in Chihuahua city) who had been advocating this sort of cross-border operation since 1879.¹¹⁶

The operation may also have had tacit support from the highest levels of the US political establishment. The one agent not really mentioned so far is the President of the United States (see Figure 4). The only direct intervention of the President in the Victorio campaign was his tour of the area in October 1880.¹¹⁷ This posed a genuine security risk for the US Army as the route taken passed right through the war zone. In September 1880, after the army knew that the President was due to visit the area, Apache raiders wiped out a stagecoach and ambushed the pursuing army detachment.¹¹⁸ The stagecoach was destroyed on the very route chosen for the presidential party. The Apaches struck again on the same route to destroy a second stagecoach and a wagon in January 1881.¹¹⁹ One can only speculate as to whether the Buell Expedition was timed to make a major push

Fort Cummings, 17 July 1880, Telegrams Sent, DoNM, vol. 3, January–November 1880, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 431, pp. 621–3. See also Ord to AG Chicago, 21 July 1880; translation of Valle's letter to Capt Brinkerhoff, 9 August 1880; Hunter Acting Secretary, Department of State, to Ramsey, Secretary of War, 20 September 1880, in 'Victorio Campaign Special Files', NA, M1495, roll 14. Hatch to AAG Fort Leavenworth, 17 July 1880, Telegrams Sent, DoNM, vol. 3, January–November 1880, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 431, p. 629. Sheridan to Adjutant General Washington, DC, 20 July 1880, NA, RG393, part 1, entry 2539, Press Copies, MDMo, vol. 13, p. 451. Brinkerhoff to Act Asst Adjt General Santa Fe, 31 July 1880, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 440, [pp. 96–7]. Department of State to Ramsey, Secretary of War, in Letters Received by Headquarters, DoNM, September 1865–August 1890, NA, M1088, roll 41, July–December 1880.

115 The very same officer who was willing to 'interpret' the strict rules of neutrality towards Mexico by 'unofficially' passing US Army surplus to the Republican forces arrayed against Maximilian in 1865. See Clendenen, *Blood on the Border*, pp. 57–8.

116 W.M. Evarts, Secretary of State, to G. McCrary, Secretary of War, 14 December 1879, citing letter sent by Louis M. Scott, US Consul in Chihuahua, 14 November 1879, in Letters Received by Headquarters, DoNM, September 1865–August 1890, NA, M1088, roll 37, October–December 1879.

117 Letter to Gen. Hatch, 26 August 1880, Press Copies, MDMo, NA, RG393, part 1, entry 2539, vol. 13, pp. 544–6.

118 Buell, Fort Stanton, to AAG, DMo, 20 November 1880, in Letters Received by Headquarters, DoNM, September 1865–August 1890, NA, M1088, roll 42, file 658-1658, January–April 1881.

119 Dudley to AAAG Santa Fe, 15 January 1881, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 439, [pp. 89–92]. Dudley to AAA General, DoNM, Santa Fe, NM, 15 January 1881, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 440, [pp. 62–4].

into Mexico against Victorio around the same time that the President was passing through south-western New Mexico.¹²⁰

There was a broad level of support for such actions among the citizens on both sides of the border. Moreover, both federal governments had given permission for their representatives to cooperate in exchanging relevant information concerning hostile Apaches. A regular conduit for communication was therefore set up between the state of Chihuahua and the District of New Mexico, centred on Captain Henry R. Brinkerhoff at Fort Bliss and Dr Manuel Samaniego, based just across the Rio Grande in El Paso del Norte (now known as Ciudad Juarez). General Geronimo Trevino, during his offensive against Victorio in December 1879 and January 1880, maintained some contact with the United States through this conduit and also sent at least one courier to La Mesilla in New Mexico Territory.¹²¹ At the same time, Lew Wallace, the territorial governor of New Mexico, with the support of the secretary of war, invited Trevino's forces to cross the border if pursuing Victorio.¹²²

The largely hostile reaction from residents of New Mexico Territory expressed through the local media cannot have encouraged the officers and men of the 9th Cavalry to campaign against Apaches to protect those same citizens. Yet the melodramatic manner in which it was usually expressed in the territorial press played into the hands of the US Army. Even where the press may have had a case against Colonel Hatch's representation of events, such misgivings were expressed in such a vitriolic and personal manner that it actually facilitated a counter-attack by senior commanders in Washington, DC, to dismiss such claims. They discredited such criticisms by noting the widespread unreliable and false reports of Apache activity.¹²³ As noted earlier, at least one petition was sent to the President of the United States, but the army was quick to append its own version of events to this petition.

The flow of misinformation, whatever its motivation, continued throughout the war and proved to be a persistent obstacle to the 9th Cavalry's ability to prosecute a successful campaign. Where illegal trade was concerned, it must be noted that the 9th Cavalry, aided by detachments from the 6th and the 10th Cavalry, probably closed one of the Apaches' surest sources for illicit munitions and so on when they mounted a major operation to disarm, dismount, and temporarily imprison the Mescalero Apaches in April

120 See letter from Sherman to Sheridan, 11 September 1880, NA, RG393, part 1, entry 2546, [p. 596], where the former encourages the latter to pursue the hostile Apaches with all due vigour.

121 Cisneros to Col. in Chief SF, rec'd 9 January 1880, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 439, [pp. 496–8]. See also Loud (citing letter from Cisneros from Stony Ford on the Guzman River, 7 January 1880) to CO Fort Bayard to forward to Major Morrow, 9 January 1880, Telegrams Sent, DoNM, vol. 3, January–November 1880, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 431, pp. 28–9.

122 Hatch transmitting Governor Wallace's invitation, with endorsement from the Secretary of War to Governor Terrazas, Maj. Morrow and CO Fort Bayard, 12 January 1880, in Telegrams Sent, DoNM, vol. 3, January–November 1880, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 431, pp. 38–9 and 41–2. Osborne to AAAG Dist NM, 12 January 1880, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 439, [p. 500]. Humphreys to AAAG SF, 12 January 1880, NA, RG393, part 3, entry 439, [pp. 502–5].

123 Pope to Col. W.D. Whipple, Asst Adjutant General, Chicago, 5 May 1880, NA, RG393, part 1, entry 2546, [pp. 428–38].

1880.¹²⁴ The illicit trade in guns and ammunition for plunder was not completely stamped out, but this operation almost certainly did significant damage to the Apaches' ability to replenish their arms and ammunition stocks.

X. Conclusion

We can see that the US troops in New Mexico faced a number of significant obstacles between them and a successful conclusion to the Apache campaigns of 1879–81. Many of these obstacles were not created by the Apaches, and other factors were only exacerbated by the Apaches. Their root cause lay beyond any intent on the part of these adept guerrillas. This is not to dismiss the Apaches as fearsome opponents; their principles of war made them very effective insurgents.¹²⁵ However, while the New Mexico troops were a component of a much wider collection of actors and institutions whose attitudes, organization, and actions usually served to impede rather than facilitate the army's efforts to combat the hostile Apaches, the military were by no means powerless. Therefore an understanding of the constraints facing the army should be tempered with the awareness that a political obstacle, whether it be a law or an institution created by one group of actors, can be challenged by other groups of actors. The role of power politics is central to understanding how, despite the presence of significant internal and external obstacles, the US Army in New Mexico was able to function more effectively than might have been expected in the face of such constraints.

This was still not enough to bring a successful conclusion to the campaign against the Apaches between 1879 and 1881. In many circumstances, political actors from within the US and Mexican political systems proved to be as formidable opponents of the New Mexico troops as the Apache guerrillas without. Equally, under certain deniable circumstances, they occasionally proved that they could be as effective an ally as Apache scouts.

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124 See Grierson's report of his expedition to the Mescalero Agency, March–May 1880, submitted 21 May 1880, NA, RG393, part 1, entry 2546, [pp. 635–7]. Hatch to Assistant Adjutant General, DMO, Fort Leavenworth, Kas, 23 August 1880, NA, RG393, part 1, entry 2546, [pp. 514–20].

125 See Watt, 'Raiders', pp. 1–28.