

GENERAL CROOK AND COUNTERINSURGENCY WARFARE

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LTC WILLIAM L. GREENBERG  
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THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

Name of Candidate: LTC William L. Greenberg

Thesis Title: General Crook and Counterinsurgency Warfare

Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_, Thesis Committee Chair  
James H. Willbanks, Ph.D.

\_\_\_\_\_, Member  
Jerold E. Brown, Ph.D.

\_\_\_\_\_, Member  
LTC William J. Hadfield, M.A.

Accepted this 1st day of June 2001 by:

\_\_\_\_\_, Director, Graduate Degree Programs  
Philip J. Brookes, Ph.D.

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## ABSTRACT

GENERAL CROOK AND COUNTERINSURGENCY WARFARE: by LTC William L. Greenberg, USA, 101 pages.

This thesis investigates the operational and tactical procedures in counterinsurgency warfare developed by General George Crook while commanding U.S. Army forces in southwest and the northern plains. This work includes a brief introduction of General Crook's career before and during the Civil War. The study examines the capabilities of the U.S. Army and its Apache and Sioux opponents during Indian campaigns, which Crook participated in. Inherent in the study is an in-depth examination of Crook's campaigns against the Apaches in the 1872-75, 1882-86, and against the Sioux and Cheyenne in 1876-77.

This study concludes that General Crook, through trial and error, developed a distinct brand of operational and tactical procedures to conduct effective counterinsurgency warfare. Though lacking a coherent strategic national policy concerning the Indians, Crook was capable of successfully developing and executing a coherent counterinsurgency policy at the operational and tactical levels. This comprehensive program produced victories against his enemies in the field and an integrated acculturation policy for the Indians who resided on the reservation. Crook's use of Apache scouts and the pack mule train revolutionized the Army's ability to track down the insurgents and defeat them. His use of population controls coupled with economic development provided his Indian opponents an alternative way of life for their societies.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The topic of this thesis concerns the career of General George Crook and his development of counterinsurgency procedures at the operational and tactical level. The U.S. Army spent a vast majority of its time, resources, and effort conducting counterinsurgency operations against Native Americans, commonly called Indians, through the first one hundred and thirty years of our nation's history. General Crook was one of the few senior officers who spent the majority of his military career conducting counterinsurgency operations and who has left an impact on how those operations should be conducted. This thesis will focus on General Crook's career and the development of his tactical and operational procedures dealing with counterinsurgency. Emphasis will be placed on his role in the two major campaigns conducted in the southwest against the Apaches and his actions in the Sioux Campaign of 1876-77. The thesis will show that General Crook developed a set of comprehensive operational and tactical procedures while conducting operations against the Indians in these three major campaigns.

This topic is important for a number of reasons. The antecedents of how the U.S. Army conducts its stability and support operations in the present day can be directly related to how the military conducted operations against the Indians in the nineteenth century. The current emphasis in stability operations on mobility, continuous operations, small unit leadership, and self-sufficiency are all directly related to the U.S. Army's experience fighting the Indians. This continuity of experience needs to be understood by the military. Further it is important for the current leadership within the U.S. Army to understand the circumstances and situations that their predecessors found themselves in

when conducting counterinsurgency operations against the insurgent Indians. This thesis will provide future leaders with a historical background concerning counterinsurgent operations to help them when dealing with similar situations in such diverse places as Bosnia, Kosovo, or Columbia.

One of the keys to this thesis is understanding what constitutes counterinsurgency. First, there have been many different definitions and names given to the term called counterinsurgency. Numerous individuals and groups, including the U.S. Army, have given their definition of counterinsurgency. This thesis will use the definition for counterinsurgency which is found in *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine* by Andrew J. Birtle. Birtle's definition is: "Counterinsurgency: All of the political, economic, social, and military actions taken by a government for the suppression of insurgent, resistance, and revolutionary movements."<sup>1</sup>

This thesis will initially discuss General Crook's early career in the West, through his Civil War actions, and his subsequent campaigning against the Indians in the Northwest. This will then lead to a discussion concerning the environment in which General Crook operated in while in command, concentrating on his Apache campaigns of 1872 and 1882-86 and on the Sioux Campaign of 1876-77. This second chapter will further describe the capabilities and limitations of the participants in these campaigns and the differences within operational areas in which Crook conducted his campaigns. Chapter 2 will further describe the similarities and the differences between engaging the Apache in the southwest of the United States, fighting the Sioux on the high plains or the Bannocks and Piauxtes on the broken and mountainous terrain of Idaho. In order to

understand General Crook's accomplishments, it is crucial to understand the environment that the campaigns were conducted in.

The next three chapters will describe in detail Crook's actions while conducting the 1872 campaign against the Coyotero and Yavapai Apaches in Arizona Territory, his participation in the Centennial Campaign of 1876-1877 against the Sioux, and his participation in the campaign conducted against Geronimo and the Chiricahua Apaches in 1882-86.<sup>2</sup> These campaigns show Crook in a senior leadership role, where he developed and refined his key innovations in counterinsurgency tactics and techniques.

The final chapter will then examine General Crook's innovations at the operational and tactical levels of war in counterinsurgency operations. This chapter will concentrate on innovations General Crook developed as part of his counterinsurgency doctrine. At the operational level Crook conducted his campaigns using all elements of political, economic, physiological, and military power to defeat and ultimately pacify his enemy. General Crook also made a tremendous impact on the tactical level with his development of a series of tactical solutions for unique counterinsurgency problems. His use of Apache scouts, as the preponderant tracking and striking force, was crucial to his ability to find and defeat the insurgent Apaches. This research will show that Crook's tactical solution of using Apache scouts was correct and possibly was the only means that could have achieved victory against the elusive Apache. Crook's other innovations, such as use of the pack mule train, used in lieu of the standard supply wagon train, were crucial in raising the mobility of the forces who were placed into the field to find the insurgents. Crook's ability to keep his mixed columns of scouts and cavalry in the field,

relentlessly pursuing his enemy, even in inhospitable terrain of Northern Mexico, was crucial to his success.

Since this thesis is based on the historical model, the research focuses on primary and secondary sources dealing with the U.S. Army and the West. There are generally four broad areas of literature, which cover General Crook's career and operations that he conducted against the insurgent Indians. The first area of literature that is available is the extremely small number of primary sources. General Crook was a complex person who hid his thoughts and emotions from external public view. He provides the researcher with limited primary sources. *General George Crook: His Autobiography*, edited by Martin F. Schmitt, covers his early life through the Battle of the Rosebud in 1876. His austere style of writing hides the tumultuous events in which he participated. Crook also provided some insight into his tactics and techniques in two published articles found in the *Journal of Military Service Institutions of the United States*. His "Resume of Operations Against the Apache Indians from 1882 to 1886" and "The Apache Problem" are two articles published in 1886 and written as a form of apology for his failure to subdue Geronimo and his band and to end the Apache insurgency in 1886.

The second categories of sources are books and articles written by individuals who served with or for General Crook. The primary source in this category is John Bourke, who served as General Crook's aide through most of the Apache and Sioux campaigns. Bourke's seminal work *On the Border with Crook* is an in-depth study of Crook from his arrival in the Arizona territory in 1872 through his death in 1890.

A third category of secondary sources deals with the organizations that fought in Indian Wars on the frontier. A prime example of this is Robert Utley's *Frontier*



*Regulars*, which describes in detail the Frontier Army's organization and history from post-Civil War to the close of the Frontier in 1890. Utley's *The Indian Frontier* provides further insights into the Frontier Army. *Soldiers West*, a compilation of short biographies edited by Paul Hutton, gives a short biographical sketch of Crook, which includes his operations against the Apaches and Sioux. A fourth category of sources concerning General Crook includes numerous books dealing with the campaigns that Crook fought in as a major participant. One of the most useful of the campaign series is Dan L. Trapp's *The Conquest of the Apacheria*.

The majority of references mentioned is available in the Combined Arms Research Library (CARL), Eisenhower Hall, at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Other sources have been procured through the interlibrary loan process. Though there is limited primary source material available for this thesis, the secondary sources are adequate to fully research this topic.

### General Crook's Early Career

George Crook was born at a time of opportunity, in a nation that was on the move westward. He was the ninth of ten children born on 8 September 1828 to Thomas and Elizabeth Crook of Taylorville, Ohio. His father was a yeoman farmer, who had emigrated from Maryland to Ohio after the War of 1812.<sup>3</sup> The Crooks were a quiet, respected family who were hardworking and conscientious. In a very crowded family, George was often lost. His taciturn self-confident phlegmatic character, coupled with his rural upbringing, seemed to portend to a life as a farmer for George Crook. Academically undistinguished, Crook was prepared to follow his father on to the farm. However, Whig Congressman Robert Schneck needed to find a candidate for an

appointment to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. The Crook family had a number of sons available who could fill the position. George was selected by his father to interview with Congressman Schneck. The Congressman remembers Crook as being exceedingly noncommunicative to the point of reticence. When the Congressman asked Crook whether he thought he could handle the rigorous curriculum, he replied tersely "I'll try." This reply seemed to be sufficient for Congressman Schneck to appoint George Crook to fill the West Point appointment.<sup>4</sup>

Arriving at West Point in early June 1848, Crook began what was to become a totally unremarkable academic career. Crook, though diligent and hardworking, struggled with the curriculum. Ranking near the bottom of his class throughout his tour at West Point, he eventually graduated thirty-eighth out of forty-three. Though on the surface Crook's performance looks totally undistinguished, this can be somewhat deceptive. Having entered the Academy somewhat older than his classmates, Crook displayed a higher level of maturity, confidence, and self-assurance than his fellow cadets throughout his stay at West Point. Though slow to pick up on concepts, once these concepts were learned they would never have to be relearned.<sup>5</sup> His personal conduct was exemplary, but he made few friends. One of the few friends he became close to at the Academy was Philip H. Sheridan. This friendship became crucial later in Crook's career. Crook and Sheridan's careers would cross many times in the next forty years. Upon graduation of West Point, Crook's character traits were clearly evident. Self-assured, unflappable, and emotionally remote, Crook had begun to prepare himself for the lonely life of command.

Crook was commissioned in 1852 into the Infantry (given his low class rank) and was initially assigned to the 4th Infantry at Governors Island, California. After a harrowing trip from New York to San Francisco, where he almost died crossing the Nicaragua peninsula, Crook arrived to take up his initial posting with the 4th Infantry.<sup>6</sup> Crook was in for a shock when he arrived at his new unit. The frontier army in California of the antebellum period was a drunken caste-ridden organization, prone to have its enlisted soldiers desert, and its officers speculating wildly in the ongoing Californian gold rush. Crook was initially assigned to the San Francisco garrison, but was quickly dispatched with B and F companies to Humbolt Bay in the Pacific Northwest to help pacify the local Indians. Upon arrival at Humbolt Bay, Crook came under the command of Brevet Lieutenant Colonel R. C. Buchanan. Crook immediately participated in a number of actions against the local Indians, who were being overwhelmed by the great influx of white settlers and miners. During this campaign Crook began to show the dichotomy in feelings that he felt towards the Indians. Though sympathetic towards the horrible plight of the local Bald Mountain Indians, Crook's innate assumption of cultural and racial superiority would drive him to the ruthless execution of the assigned mission, ultimately to the detriment of his foes. These dual attributes of empathy for the insurgent Indian and relentless discharging of his duties to defeat these same insurgents can be discerned throughout Crook's career on the frontier.<sup>7</sup>

In October 1853, Crook was transferred to E Company, which was stationed at Fort Jones near Yreka, California.<sup>8</sup> He spent the next two years in the normal frontier duties of policing local Indians, surveying routes for the planned railroads, and keeping a watchful eye on the ever-expanding white settlements.<sup>9</sup> In 1855 Crook became involved

in trying to subdue the Shasta Indians as part of the Rogue River War. The Shastas, who were harassing miners and settlers in the area, inhabited some of the most inhospitable terrain in all of North America. Crook spent the next two years on almost continuous expeditions trying to subdue these warriors. As part of these operations Crook began to develop some of the tactical techniques which would distinguish his unique approach to counterinsurgency warfare. Due to some very poor leadership displayed by his superiors, Crook was forced on numerous occasions to set out on his own with a small scouting party to try to find the enemy in the formidable terrain. These extended reconnaissance missions helped Crook learn to visualize the terrain and developed his knowledge of enemy tactics and techniques.

During one of these reconnaissance expeditions in June 1857, Crook found an insurgent Shasta village in a secluded area near the Lower Kamath Lakes. Leading his company in a charge to destroy the village, Crook was seriously wounded in the hip by an arrow. Having no medical services available in the area, Crook was moved back 120 miles to Fort Jones to receive medical aid. The medical personnel at Fort Jones showed little concern for Crook's injury, which forced Crook to eventually administer medical aid to himself. This lack of medical attention slowed his recovery and required Crook to remain inactive until July 1857.<sup>10</sup> Once recovered Crook participated in the winter campaign of 1859, which finally forced the insurgent Shasta and Pitt Indians onto a designated reservations.

During this campaign Crook began to understand the fundamentals of counter-insurgency warfare. On the operational level Crook began to realize that to defeat the insurgent Indians his forces would have to make war on the insurgents economy.

Destroying their villages, which held their supplies of food and clothing was an effective way to strike at a decisive weakness of Indian society. Indian societies usually had no means to externally procure the logistical requirements of food or clothing. Most commodities had to be produced within the community and transported to a new location if the community moved. Crook observed that if key commodities were destroyed, the tribes could not replenish their stocks, forcing them to starve, move, or ultimately surrender. Secondly, Crook realized that persuasion was often more effective than force. Negotiating with the insurgents, with overwhelming force readily available, was often the most effective technique to a successful conclusion of a campaign. Further Crook found that internal differences within tribes could be exploited to achieve the Government's objectives without the use of force. Internal tribal disagreements could also be used to gather intelligence about dissident tribal members. Crook started to experiment with using Indians to fight Indians. On the tactical level Crook saw that the relentless pursuit of the enemy, despite inhospitable terrain or weather, was crucial in wearing down the enemy force with the ultimate objective of forcing his surrender. However, he also realized that the frontier army of that day did not have the tactical mobility to stay on the trail of the insurgents and either force the enemy to surrender or destroy them. Crook, in his future assignments, would continue to experiment with different techniques to achieve greater tactical mobility of army forces.

Crook continued to participate in standard frontier soldiering through the end of the 1850s, but the advent of the Civil War forced Crook to initially change his mind-set from counterinsurgency operations to more standard conventional warfare. In 1861, Crook returned to his native Ohio to look for a command in one of the regiments being

raised by the state. Having successfully lobbied the governor, Crook obtained a commission as the colonel of the Thirty-sixth Ohio Regiment.<sup>11</sup> Crook found a regiment and an Army that was untrained and ill disciplined, totally unprepared for war. Crook immediately began to instill discipline and train the soldiers for combat. Crook's first assignment in his new command was to clear the southern portion of Ohio, in the vicinity of Summersville, of bushwhackers, robbers, and other Southern sympathizers. Crook used the tactic of small self-sustaining columns, which relentlessly pursued the enemy, which he had learned during counterinsurgency operations in California, to clear the countryside of the Southern insurgent forces.

As the war deteriorated for the North in 1861 and 1862, Crook and his regiment were called to the east, and he was ordered to form a provisional brigade with several additional units. This new brigade consisted of the Second West Virginia Cavalry and the Thirty-sixth and Forty-fourth Ohio Infantry Regiments.<sup>12</sup> Crook's brigade was attached to the Army of the Potomac, where it acted initially as security for the Army headquarters. Later Crook's force participated in a number of major engagements, to include the Battle of Antietam. Following this battle Crook's brigade was detached from the Army of the Potomac and assigned to West Virginia where it was tasked to reoccupy the Kanawha Valley. Crook found that to accomplish his mission his force would have to conduct a counterinsurgency operation at the tactical level to clear Rebel forces from the occupied valley. This counterinsurgency operation was conducted while the majority of Union Forces was participating in the second Manassas Campaign. Crook, using mobile columns consisting of infantry and cavalry units, relentlessly pursued and destroyed

Southern stay-behind forces, successfully clearing the Kanawha Valley by December 1862.

In January 1863, Crook's brigade was transferred to the Army of the Cumberland, which was assembled in the vicinity of Nashville.<sup>13</sup> Upon his arrival at Nashville, Crook was promoted to command a cavalry division in the Army of the Cumberland. While in command of the division, Crook participated in the disastrous Battle of Chickamauga. During the battle, Crook's division fought initially dismounted on the right flank and facilitated the retreat of the Army back to Chattanooga. Crook and his division became part of the besieged force within Chattanooga. His force then participated in the Battle of Missionary Ridge and in the pursuit of Bragg's defeated force after the battle. In 1864, Crook was transferred back to the Army of the Potomac and sent with his cavalry division, as part of General David Hunter's force, into the Shenandoah Valley. General Hunter, the overall Union Commander in the valley, initially moved his force southward down the Valley with the mission to clear the valley of Confederate forces. However, Confederate forces under General Jubal Early drove Hunter and his forces out of the valley, forcing the Union Forces back to Harper's Ferry. Crook was forced again to cover the retreat of a disorganized force from a pursuing Confederate force.

On 18 July 1864 Crook was promoted to Brevet Major General and given command of the newly formed Army of West Virginia. This relatively small force was placed under the command of General Phil Sheridan, who had replaced the relieved Hunter and who was now responsible for the campaign in the Shenandoah Valley. Crook initially participated in Sheridan's successful conquest of the Valley; however, Crook and his forces were eventually transferred back to West Virginia to conduct the now familiar

counterinsurgency operations against Southern guerrillas. During these operations Crook became a target of a Confederate guerilla band known as the McNeill's Rangers. On 19 February 1864 the Confederate Rangers captured Crook and another Union general at the Revere Hotel in Cumberland, Maryland. General U. S. Grant, knowing Crook and believing in his excellent leadership ability, insisted that Secretary of War Edwin Stanton work to get Crook exchanged for held Confederate prisoners.<sup>14</sup> Crook was eventually exchanged within the month. However, this incident was terribly embarrassing to Crook, and it remained with him for the remainder of his military career. Upon his release, Crook was given command of a cavalry division in the Army of the Potomac. He concluded his Civil War experience by participating in the closing campaign against the Confederates around Appomattox Courthouse. Overall Crook's experiences in the Civil War would exemplify his whole career. Crook was totally committed to victory for the Union, and he was relentless and often ruthless in operations in which he participated. Crook was also extremely critical of the incompetent senior leaders who were placed over him, and he was very uncomfortable in the highly politicized atmosphere of the Army of the Potomac. The frontier was the locale where Crook could flourish, and with the Civil War concluded, Crook would return to soldiering on the frontier.

In January 1866 Crook was mustered out of the volunteer service of Ohio, and he reverted back to his pre-Civil War rank of captain.<sup>15</sup> In July of 1866, Crook was lucky enough to be promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel and given command of the newly formed Twenty-third Infantry Regiment, intended for duty in the northwest. He proceeded to the District of Boise, in the Idaho Territory, where he was immediately involved in Indian disturbances. Crook conducted numerous campaigns in the next three



years against the Paiutes and Klamaths in northern California, eastern Oregon, southern Idaho, and Nevada.

Placed in a position of command Crook refined previously developed operational and tactical techniques for use in counterinsurgency warfare. Crook experimented with the use of Indian scouts to try to track down the insurgent Indians. In the campaigns in Idaho Crook used Wasco, Warm Springs, and Shoshone scouts to conduct the tracking of the insurgent Paiutes and Klamaths. In the Apache campaigns of the 1870 and 1880s, Crook would refine the technique of using Indian scouts by recruiting scouts from the insurgent tribes themselves to conduct the tracking and destruction of their insurgent brothers. Crook also began the use of mobile pack mule trains, in lieu of the standard Army logistic wagon train, with the goal of trying to improve the mobility of his columns during the campaigns in the northwest.

On the operational level of war Crook culminated his campaign against the Paiutes in July of 1868 by conducting several hard-line diplomatic sessions with the insurgent Paiutes. Crook's heavy-handed diplomacy would set the conditions for a lenient peace treaty offered to the insurgents. During peace negotiations conducted at Camp Harney in Oregon, General Crook threatened the Paiutes with complete destruction if they did not immediately surrender. The Paiutes were so taken aback by Crook's pronouncement that they proceeded to plead with Crook to let them return to the reservations that they so recently fled.<sup>16</sup> This was Crook's intention all along. Crook's ability to understand his adversary and their culture gave him a great advantage during subsequent negotiations with other insurgent Indians. He understood the environment the insurgents operated in, and the goals that the enemy was striving to achieve. This

situational and cultural awareness was a cornerstone of Crook's counterinsurgency techniques.

Crook's experiences in California, West Virginia, and Idaho, when conducting counterinsurgency operations, prepared him to command in the future counterinsurgency campaign in the Arizona Territory. From his austere upbringing in Ohio, Crook gained the confidence to act on his own without the need for constant supervision. West Point gave Crook a basic military education and further molded his character into an austere, self-contained individual, capable of leading soldiers. His assignment in California and the Northwest gave Crook his first taste of "frontier soldiering." On the frontier Crook learned that endurance and self-sufficiency were crucial in tracking down and subduing the insurgent Indian. Crook also saw that the frontier army of antebellum era did not have the mobility to track down the insurgents. A solution would have to be found to improve tactical mobility. Crook, experienced in the counterinsurgent campaigns conducted in Ohio and West Virginia during the Civil War, knew that conventional units could conduct effective counterinsurgency campaigns if properly organized. Finally in his campaigns against the Paiutes in the northwest, Crook began to develop certain tactics and techniques centered on the Indian scout and pack mule train which could be extremely effective in subduing insurgent Indians in other parts of the frontier. Crook's "apprenticeship" in counterinsurgency war fighting had prepared him to conduct effective warfare against his next foe, the Apache.

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<sup>1</sup>Andrew J. Birtle, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine 1860-1941* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1998), 3.

<sup>2</sup>Jerome A. Greene, *Soldiers West*, ed. By Paul Hutton (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), 119.

<sup>3</sup>Peter Aleshire, *The Fox and the Whirlwind* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2000), 41.

Ibid., 43.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>5</sup>Greene, 46.

<sup>6</sup>George Crook, *General George Crook: His Autobiography*, ed. Martin F. Schmitt (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976), 6.

<sup>7</sup>Aleshire, 47.

<sup>8</sup>Crook, 6.

<sup>9</sup>Aleshire, 49.

<sup>10</sup>Crook, 42.

<sup>11</sup>Aleshire, 77.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 80.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 85

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 117.

<sup>15</sup>Greene, 117.

<sup>16</sup>Aleshire, 99.

## CHAPTER 2

### TERRAIN AND FORCES AVAILABLE

Throughout his career General Crook conducted operations against diverse enemies and in varied terrain. The terrain and enemy in the southwest where Crook operated against the Apaches were radically different from the terrain of the northern plains and the Sioux and Cheyenne who inhabited the area. This chapter will describe the terrain and enemy of the southwest, where General Crook conducted campaigns from 1872 to 1875 and 1882 to 1886 against the Apaches, and the environment of the high plains; the location of the 1876-77 campaign was conducted against the Sioux and Cheyenne. A portion of the chapter will analyze the friendly force, which was available to General Crook to conduct these campaigns. The examination of the terrain and friendly and enemy forces will lay the groundwork for further analysis of General Crook's campaigns.

The Apaches tribes resided throughout the U.S. states and territories of New Mexico, Arizona, and Texas and in the Mexican states of Chihuahua and Sonora.<sup>1</sup> This area, known as the Apacheria, was sparsely populated: semidesert area with limited vegetation and water. South of the international U.S.-Mexican border, the Sierra Madre Mountains loomed as a vast series of rugged sparsely vegetated set of peaks, which were extremely hard to traverse. This area of the southwest provided limited sustenance for local inhabitants, with the exception of the Apache tribes. Due to its topography and weather, the Apacheria was a sparsely populated region through the end of Civil War. The conclusion of the Civil War in 1865 saw a large-scale immigration of white settlers to the southwest from the eastern and southern United States.

The Apaches were a major subdivision tribe of the Southern Athapascans tribes, the other major subdivision being the Navajo tribes. The Apache were divided into six distinct tribes, the Lipans, Mescaleros, Kiowa-Apache, Chiricahua, and the Western Apache. The two largest tribes were the Western Apache and the Chiricahuas. The tribes were subdivided into bands, which were further subdivided into groups. A hereditary chief led each group, and his function was to coordinate hunting, planting, and raiding activities. As an example, the Western Apaches were divided into five major groups, fourteen bands, and six semibands. Total population for the Western Apaches was approximately 4,800 individuals before their eventual relocation onto the reservations. Each Apache tribe had a similar organization, though a smaller population.<sup>2</sup> Though all the tribes were known as Apache, the Apache tribes themselves did not have an overall encompassing Apache identity. Crook would exploit this lack of Apache cohesion during his campaigns in the southwest.

The Apaches arrived in the southwest approximately A.D. 1200. The Apache tribes immediately clashed with the established pueblo cultures of the area. The Apaches also encountered another new arrival in the sixteenth century, which had a drastic effect on their culture.<sup>3</sup> The Spanish arrived in Apacheria in the 1560s, and through almost constant warfare, forced the Apache tribes away from the fertile areas of region into the more inhospitable areas of the southwest. This forced movement permanently changed the Apache tribe's lifestyle. After the movement, the Apache tribes were forced into surviving on a mixed economy of hunting, gathering, limited agriculture, and most importantly raiding. Driven into the barren territories of Apacheria, which could not economically support them, the Apache tribes became dependent on raiding for survival.

Apache raiding was unique compared to other Indians conducting similar operations throughout the continent. An average Apache raiding party would usually consist of fifteen to twenty warriors from a band of an Apache tribe. This raiding party was extremely mobile, being capable of covering hundreds of miles with a need for minimal logistical support. The raiding parties were capable of conducting an extended raid for up to seventy days.<sup>4</sup> The objective of these raids was to usually capture horses, livestock, or women from an unsuspecting village. Mexicans, Pueblo Indians, or Americans could inhabit the targeted villages; it did not matter to the Apache raiders. The average Apache raiding party could move either by foot or horse. Though initially foot mobile when they arrived in the region, the Apache quickly adapted to the horse after its introduction by the Spanish in the sixteenth century. The horse provided the Apache with increased mobility and range for both raiding and war parties.

Intimate knowledge of the terrain throughout the Apacheria gave the Apache a tremendous advantage. This unique terrain awareness was complimented by the average Apache's superb physical condition, which he acquired after long years living in a sparse environment. The two attributes of terrain awareness and physical ability, facilitated by an uncanny ability to move stealthily through the arid terrain made the Apache warrior almost impossible to find and then defeat. Tracking an Apache raiding or war party was almost impossible by non-Apaches. The raiding party would attack its objective, secure the required loot, and then move hundreds of miles away from the objective before the pursuit could be organized. Horses would be ridden till they dropped dead from exhaustion, then eaten. Fresh horses would then be stolen from another isolated settlement and the cycle would be started again.<sup>5</sup> The small size of the raiding or war

parties also lent themselves to stealthy travel throughout the Apacheria. Normal counterinsurgency tactics and techniques were not effective against this type of unique warfare. Neither Spanish, Mexicans, Navaho, nor American forces could catch a Apache raiding party once it attacked its target and began its escape. Tracking the Apache party was almost impossible without some type of Apache assistance. When an Apache party was tracked down and engaged in a fight, the pursuing party was often placed in a tactical disadvantage due to the Apaches positioning themselves in the most tactically favorable terrain to repeal the attack. Crook would analyze all these factors when he developed a viable counterinsurgency operational plan to combat Apache insurgents.

The enemy and terrain that Crook fought in during the Sioux Campaign of 1876 and 1877 was very different from the enemy that he engaged in the southwest. The Sioux Campaign of 1876 and 1877, highlighted by Custer's debacle, is probably one of the most well-known events in American history. Custer's "Last Stand" stands out as the Indian's final attempt to stop the westward expansion of American settlers and to maintain some semblance of their culture. The overall landmass that the Sioux campaign was conducted on was somewhat smaller than the area of operation that Crook commanded in the southwest. The Treaty of Fort Laramie of 1868, negotiated after the annihilation of the Fettermen column, stipulated that the army would abandon Forts C. F. Smith, Phil Kearney, and Reno along the Bozeman Trail in Montana. The Sioux received from the treaty the western half of South Dakota as a reservation and retained permanent hunting in the Powder River country of Montana and Wyoming.<sup>6</sup> This area provided enough living space for the Sioux and the Cheyenne to maintain their way of life.

This land that the Sioux and Cheyenne inhabited was known as the “high plains.” This term was somewhat misleading. Though the overall area was generally high-rolling plains, numerous streams and rivers that were surrounded by vegetation broke this same plain. The broken terrain of the Black Hills dominated the northern portion of the operational area and gave the Sioux and Cheyenne defenders ample area to maneuver in when conducting operations against army forces. The weather also lent itself to providing an advantage to the defender. All of the high plains were trafficable during the spring and summer months; however, the fierce winter weather forced major adjustments in military operations. Normally the Sioux and the Cheyenne remained in their villages on their reservations during the winter months. High snow and brutal winds degraded Sioux and Cheyenne mobility. Horses could not graze during the winter due to the heavy layer of snow on the ground. These same conditions also limited large-scale army operations on the high plains during the winter months.

The enemy that Crook faced on the northern plains was radically different from what he faced in the southwest. The Sioux Nation, the major Indian participant, was divided into three distinct divisions. The Northern “Teton” division consisted of the Oglala, Brule, Hunkpapa, Miniconjou, Sans Arc, Two Kettle, and Blackfoot bands. This division provided the majority of the warriors who fought the army during the 1876-77 Campaign. The middle division of Yanktons and Yanktonnais also provided a limited number of warriors who fought against Crook. The Eastern division for the most part did not join in with their brethren against the settlers and the army in this campaign. The Sioux nation was also divided between those who chose to remain on the reservation and accept the U.S. government restrictions, and those who roamed outside of the reservation



confines, refusing to accept the government's directions. This lack of cohesion within the Sioux, to a lesser extent the Cheyenne, resulted in a smaller warrior force than could otherwise have been mobilized. In the final calculation, the Sioux and the Cheyenne mobilized approximately 2,000 warriors to fight in the 1876-77 Campaign<sup>7</sup>.

This ability to put large numbers of warriors in the field was vastly different when compared to the force the Apaches could muster. Where an Apache campaign would consist of tracking down ten to fifty warriors involved in a raid, the Sioux and Cheyenne could field hundreds and on a couple of occasions thousands of warriors to swarm against army columns. The circumstances that initiated the Sioux Campaign of 1876-77, which will be described in chapter 4, place the Sioux and Cheyenne on the operational defensive throughout most the campaign. However, the army's campaign plan, which centered on three converging columns who had limited ability to mutual support, allowed the Sioux and Cheyenne the tactical advantage of being able to pick the time and place where to engage the army columns lead by Crook, Gibbon, and Terry.

One of the keys to the Sioux and Cheyenne initial success in the campaign was the tremendous mobility of their war parties on the northern plains. The introduction of the horse radically changed Sioux and Cheyenne society. A basically sedentary society was transformed by the horse into a mobile warrior culture built around the horse and buffalo. Armed with modern weapons, such as the repeating rifle, purchased through the government system, the Sioux and Cheyenne fielded forces that were as well armed and more mobile than U.S Army forces sent against them. In the operations on the northern plains conducted against the Sioux and Cheyenne, Crook fought an enemy that was

substantially better armed and more numerous than any Apache force the he operated against in the southwest.

Crook's forces were not designed to fight the Indian insurgents. The army had been quickly downsized from approximately a million and one-half men at the end of the Civil War to 54,000 as provided by the "Act to Increase and Fix the Military Peace Establishment of the United States" passed by Congress in 1866.<sup>8</sup> However, Congress continued to reduce the force, for reasons of economy; until by 1874, the total army personnel strength was approximately 27,000 men, consisting of 2,000 officers and 25,000 enlisted soldiers. All were volunteers.

The post-Civil War Army was also divided functionally and geographically. The force was functionally divided between the "staff and line." For administration of the army the Act of 1866 provided for a series of staff bureaus manned by officers and enlisted soldiers who functioned and advanced strictly within their specific specialty corps. For example, the Corps of Engineers functioned totally separate from the rest of the army and was funded directly by the Congress.<sup>9</sup> To a lesser degree the Adjutant General, Quartermaster, Signal, Pay, Medical, and Ordnance corps all worked directly for their staff bureau chiefs, who resided in Washington. The staff bureau chief, such as the Adjutant General, worked directly for the Secretary of War. The operational commander of the army, the commanding general, had limited authority in the dealing with these senior bureau chiefs. The commanding general was only supposed to deal in operational matters which dealt with the "line" units. This lack of unity of command would cause endless bureaucratic infighting, which hindered the army in its ability to organize and ultimately fight.

The sections of the force that were tasked to conduct operations on the frontier were the units of the line. The line units consisted of the infantry, cavalry, and artillery formed to fight in combat. The Act of 1866 designated that the army would consist of ten cavalry regiments, forty-five infantry regiments and five artillery regiments. Each infantry regiment was to consist of ten companies, while the cavalry would have twelve companies or troops. Each company in both the cavalry and infantry was supposed to have the strength of between fifty to one hundred soldiers. These strength numbers were never reached due to the continued parsimony on the Congress and the constant desertion of numerous soldiers before their enlistment were completed.<sup>10</sup> Eventually, Congress reduced the number of infantry regiments still further in the Army Appropriation Act of 1869, which authorized the manning of twenty-five infantry regiments, down from forty-five authorized in the Act of 1866. The continued reduction of personnel authorized in the army over and above the downsizing structural changes mandated in previous Congressional acts eventually “hollowed out” the army. With four hundred overall companies required to man approximately two hundred posts spread over the vast expanse of North America, the army was basically only a skeleton organization, which could only operate at the company level.<sup>11</sup> This lack of ability to work in larger formations on a habitual basis was detrimental to both unit cohesion and tactical ability.

As stated earlier the army was also divided geographically. The headquarters for the post-Civil War Army was in Washington, D.C. The area west of the Mississippi was divided into two military divisions, the Division of the Missouri headquartered in St. Louis and the Division of the Pacific, with its headquarters in San Francisco. These divisions were subdivided into numerous departments, with the Division of Missouri

responsible for the troops assigned to reconstruction duties in the defeated south.<sup>12</sup>

Though this seemed on the surface to be a sensible way of dividing responsibility, it was found on numerous occasions that the bureaucratic lines of the divisions and departments were impediments to the efficient execution of operations. The campaign against the Nez Perce in 1877 and the Sioux Campaign of 1876 and 1877 crossed departmental boundaries, causing numerous coordination problems between the two divisions. Though in theory the two division commanders could provide overall coordinating leadership, given their ability to communicate between the division headquarters by telegraph, they were unable throughout the campaigns against the insurgent Indians to coordinate their actions effectively on the ground.

To further compound the problem the army lacked an overarching doctrinal theory to conduct effective counterinsurgency operations. Campaigns against the insurgent Indians were executed on an ad hoc doctrinal basis. The army received pressure from state and local governments to station its limited force in numerous small garrisons throughout the west, which gave an illusion of protection to the constantly expanding settlements. However, when an Indian uprising occurred, the army was forced to concentrate widely separated units, who did not normally operate together, to conduct the campaign. These temporary composite formations, lacking cohesion and having never trained together, were forced to conduct complex counterinsurgency operations with little chance of success against an elusive insurgent. Crook's force that participated in the Sioux Campaign of 1876 and 1877 is a typical example of a thrown-together force lacking in cohesion and training.<sup>13</sup> This composite force, which was thrown together for the campaign of 1876 and 1877, was made up of units from five different regiments,

stationed in multiple locations. The expansion of the railroad system in the west made this dispersion in peacetime, concentration for campaign strategy viable, due to the ability of the army to concentrate forces from throughout the west for an campaign using the new rail system. An example of this is shown when General Sheridan moved Colonel Mackenzie and his 4th Cavalry by rail from Texas to the northern plains to reinforce Crook after the Battle of the Rosebud.

During the nineteenth century the nation continued to believe in the militia-volunteer system for national defense, which had been developed in the Revolutionary War and had continued through the Civil War. Having the tradition of the citizen-soldier facilitated the intellectual logic in keeping a small-standing army. Further, the army itself looked upon counterinsurgency operations against insurgent Indians as an aberration from preparing for full-scale combat. The post-Civil War Army, encouraged by Sherman, saw a rise in professionalism throughout the force. This new professionalism was personified by the founding of a number of instructional facilities, such as the Artillery School, Engineer School of Application, and the School of Application for Infantry and Cavalry.<sup>14</sup> However, this intellectual ferment was not directed towards solving the Indian problem. The military intellectuals of the army, such as Colonel Emery Upton, were focused on the organization of the major armies of Europe and how these armies conducted warfare in the post-Civil War period. The army in the west, lacking a clear doctrinal system for fighting the Indians, was forced to execute operations using experience gained in previous campaigns against the Indians as its doctrinal system. Crook would develop his system of counterinsurgency warfare without much help from current doctrinal manuals or institutions.

To further complicate the problem of conducting counterinsurgency operations, the army as a whole was not well trained. A soldier upon his enlistment was given a small amount of basic training, usually at Jefferson Barracks in St. Louis and then shipped to his unit. Once he arrived at his unit, the soldier spent the vast majority of his time conducting daily housekeeping chores within the garrison. Training for field operations was secondary to maintaining the garrison itself. Caring for horses and livestock and gathering fuel and water were extremely manpower intensive and time consuming. These basic life-sustaining functions left the unit little time to train for war.

Rifle marksmanship, the cornerstone of the army's firepower potential, was often neglected by the line units.<sup>15</sup> Soldiers were armed with the single-shot, 1872-modified Springfield rifle (or carbine for the cavalry). Units rarely conducted marksmanship training throughout the year. Compounding the marksmanship problem, the Indians were often better armed than the average infantry or cavalry unit that they fought. The Indians were initially surprised by the improved small arms firepower of the post-Civil War units. After sustaining bloody defeats at the Wagon Box and Hayfield fights of 1867, the Indians began to procure single shot-rifles to combat the army's increased firepower. Eventually, the Winchester repeating rifle began to make an appearance with a number of Indian tribes. This mismatch in small-arms firepower was cited by the Little Bighorn survivors as a contributing factor in the outcome of the battle.<sup>16</sup> The Army's Ordnance Department stubbornly refused to replace the outmoded Springfield rifle with an improved repeating rifle throughout the time period of the Indian Wars. The army finally replaced the venerable Springfield rifle with the magazine-fed Krag-Jorgensen rifle in 1892.

The army's mobility was also a key component in the success or failure of a planned campaign against an insurgent Indian tribe. Forced to try to match maneuver speed with an elusive foe, the army of the frontier depended on its cavalry units to act as the mobile shock force in a counterinsurgency campaign. However, the average cavalry unit, mounted on large horses bred in the east, was no match for the agile insurgent Indian, whether the Sioux on the northern plains or the Apache in the southwest. The eastern-bred horses, not being bred for the harsh frontier, were easily worn-out during the counterinsurgency campaigns of the west, further slowing down the army's mobile columns. The cavalry's mobility was further inhibited by the slow-moving horse- or oxen-drawn supply columns that followed the cavalry to logistically support the cavalry in the field. The mobile columns of a designated expedition had to be self-contained due to the distance that they operated away from supply depots and forts. The supply wagon trains that provided the needed logistics had to have the capability to carry all the supplies needed for an operation and maintain some semblance of a reasonable rate of march. Far-ranging cavalry and infantry columns were tethered to the slower-moving supply columns. This dichotomy between the operational maneuver force and the slower logistics trains allowed the more nimble insurgent Indians to "dodge" away from a ponderous mobile column, which was pursuing it.

The army's only solution to the mobility problem was to attack the insurgent Indians during the winter months, when the insurgents were the least mobile. This operational solution could only be applied where there was a significant seasonal change in the weather, as seen on the northern plains during the fall and winter. With grazing areas for horses covered by snow or frost and with supplies stored in villages and camps,

the Indians were susceptible to being surprised in their camps during the winter months. The Battle of the Washita in 1868 was an example of the army, in this case Custer's 7th Cavalry, surprising an element of the Cheyenne in winter villages where they had limited mobility.<sup>17</sup> However, this technique of winter attack was only a partial solution to the mobility problem. In theaters of operations where there was limited seasonal change, such as in the southwest, this technique was not effective. Eventually Crook would have to tackle this mobility problem before an insurgent Apache force in the southwest could be defeated.<sup>18</sup>

Crook faced an enemy in the southwest and the northern plains that was more mobile and better armed than Crook's army forces. On the northern plains the Sioux and Cheyenne could place in the field a large warrior force to protect their land. Crook's forces were widely scattered throughout the west, poorly trained, and inadequately equipped. However, given the almost unlimited assets of the United States, once war was decided upon and a force mobilized, the insurgent Indians could be defeated in a grinding war of attrition, which could possibly take years. Crook saw that there was a better way to conduct counterinsurgency operations against the insurgent Indians and would develop in his future campaigns operational procedures to more efficiently defeat and ultimately subdue an insurgent force.

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<sup>1</sup>Lisle E. Reedstrom, *Apache Wars, An Illustrated History* (New York: Sterling Publishing Co., 1990), 12.

<sup>2</sup>Joseph C. Porter, *Paper Medicine Man* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986), 7. The White Mountain Apaches numbered 1,500, San Carlos Apaches 900, the Southern Tonto 900, and the Northern Tonto, 450

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 5.



<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 7.

<sup>5</sup>John G. Bourke, *On the Border with Crook* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1891), 125.

<sup>6</sup>Porter, 25.

<sup>7</sup>John S. Gray, *Centennial Campaign* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988), 357.

<sup>8</sup>Robert M. Utley, *Frontier Regulars* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1973), 11

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 28.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 15.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 13.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 12.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>14</sup>Neil C. Mangum, Battle of the Rosebud: Prelude to the Little Bighorn (El Segundo, CA: Upton & Sons, 1987), 26.

<sup>15</sup>Utley, 70.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 72.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 48.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 149.

## CHAPTER 3

### APACHE CAMPAIGN OF 1872-3

The Apache Campaign of 1872 to 1873 was the culmination of the continuing pressure placed on the native Indians by an expanding settler population. This pressure constantly pushed the Apaches further away from the profitable lands of the southwest. In Arizona itself the non-Indian population expanded over 300 percent during the 1860 to 1870 time frame.<sup>1</sup> In 1860 there were 2,421 settlers of non-Indian decent. This figure rose to 9,658 settlers in 1870. Though these numbers seem miniscule compared to the rapid growth in the rest of the country at the time, the increase is significant given the limited amount of useable land in the Apacheria region. As stated in chapter 2 the continued influx of settlers into the region forced the Apaches to move to the less-productive areas. Further, at the time of the start of this campaign in 1872, most Apaches and other tribes in the region were not living on fixed reservations. This lack of designated areas for Apache and settler caused constant friction between the two groups. The white settlers wanted the Apaches restricted to small reservations, which would ultimately free up the land for development. The Apaches and other tribes, who depended on small-scale farming and raiding for survival, were committed to maintaining their freedom of movement. These two conflicting attitudes were the crux of the conflict in the Apacheria.

The U.S. Government's policy on restricting the Apache and other tribes in the southwest was only partially developed. At the outset of the Tonto Basin Campaign in 1872, the Indian Bureau, as part of the Department of the Interior, controlled the reservations that had been previously established. There was clear lack of coordination

and synchronization between the army who had to maintain the peace and the civilians who ran the reservations for the Department of the Interior. The army leadership viewed themselves as the true protectors of the Indians, trying to protect the same Indians from the incompetent and on occasion dishonest representatives of the Indian Bureau. The Indian Bureau personnel's perception was that they were enlightened representatives of a rapidly progressive society who were trying to civilize these uncivilized heathens. Further these enlightened individuals viewed the army as being both brutal and clumsy in its dealing with the reservation Indians. The product of this lack of coordination and trust between the two branches of the U.S. government was a disorganized and unsynchronized policy towards the Apaches and other tribes in the southwest. Given the violent nature of the frontier society in the southwest, it is not surprising that there was a rise in the number of violent incidents between settlers and Apaches during the 1860s.<sup>2</sup>

The number of army units available to the military command to conduct operations in the southwest was extremely limited, especially given the large amount of area encompassed by the Apacheria. In 1867 there were only twenty-seven company-sized units available to police the Apacheria. This limited operational force was widely scattered in over fourteen active installations throughout the Arizona and New Mexico territories. In the annual report of the army published in 1867, General Halleck, one of the key leaders of the Army, stated that: "Military operations would probably be more effective in reducing the hostile Indians if the troops could be concentrated in large posts, so as to have available a greater number for active campaigning in the country. . . . But for this to be done, with the small forces at our command, it would be necessary to withdraw all protection from the many small settlements."<sup>3</sup>

The culmination of the growing animosity and friction developing between the Apaches and the settlers occurred in what became known as the “Camp Grant Massacre.” Apache raids in the area south of the Gila River had created a fevered pitch of furor among the citizens of Tucson against approximately five hundred Aravaipa Apaches who resided in the vicinity of Camp Grant, situated south of Tucson.<sup>4</sup> An Apache raid on an isolated ranch at San Xavier, in the vicinity of Tucson, killed one rancher and abducted a Mexican woman. The citizens of Tucson perceived the attack on the San Xavier ranch as a continuation of series of raids conducted by the Apaches living near Camp Grant. The citizens further blamed the commander of Camp Grant, Lieutenant Royal Emerson Whitman, for not being able to control the Indians under his charge. On 28 April 1871, a mixed group of approximately one hundred thirty-eight Anglo-Americans, Mexicans, and Papagoes Indians under the loose command of William S. Oury attacked the Apache ranchario five miles south of Camp Grant. The Apaches in the camp were slaughtered. In total one hundred and forty-four Apaches were killed, with all but eight being women and children. A further twenty-seven Apache children were captured and sold into slavery in Sonora, Mexico, by the Papagoes.<sup>5</sup> Word of the massacre quickly spread through the Apache tribes, causing the Yavapsi and Tonto clans of the Apache to move into the Tonto Basin-Mogollon Rim area north of Tucson, away from the enraged citizens of Tucson. From there the Apaches, under the leadership of a tribal chief named Delshay, began an intensified raiding campaign throughout western Arizona. The Camp Grant incident also caused the relief of the military commander of the Arizona territory, General Stonemen, who was replaced by Lieutenant Colonel George Crook, Brevet Major General.

Initially Crook did not want the assignment. At the time of the appointment he was completing the grueling counterinsurgency campaign against the Paiutes in the northwest. When first approached by General Sherman to take the position of military commander of the Arizona Territory, Crook was extremely reluctant. He stated that he had, had his fill of “Indian Fighting”; however, it seems that Crook identified the situation in Arizona as possibly nonsolvable and chose not to get involved.<sup>6</sup> However, Governor Safford of Arizona, who saw in Crook the most-accomplished Indian fighter in the U.S. Army, persuaded him to accept the assignment. Crook agreed and arrived in Tucson in late June 1871, accompanied by his aide Lieutenant Nickerson and scout Archie Sanford.

Crook quickly analyzed the situation. At the strategic level, the U.S. Government was continuing the “peace policy” of restricting the Indians to designated reservations with the ultimate objective of trying to peacefully transform the Apaches and other Indians of the area into “useful” citizens. This translated at the operational level of trying to convince the dissident Apache tribes to accept the government’s policy while using force when needed. Crook saw that the basic way of life for the Apache would have to change, transforming the Apache from a culture depending on raiding for sustenance to a more pastoral type of society. He further realized that the Apaches would only be pacified and accept the naturalization process if the tribes saw that they had no other choice but to accept the government’s policy.

On the tactical level Crook faced basic structural problems. The overriding tactical problem at first glance was lack of manpower to conduct mobile operations. The vast majority of assigned units in the territory was tied down in fixed installations with

the mission of guarding mines and ranches. This left few units available to track and destroy the raiding Apaches. To compound the problem the units that were available to conduct mobile operations were incapable of consistently tracking the Apache raiding parties. The Apaches were extremely elusive and knew the terrain too well to be caught by the slower-moving columns sent out to catch them. Finally, the unit's ability to remain in the field and to stay mobile was severely restricted by the lack of mobility in its logistics trains.

Upon assumption of command, Crook and a small escort party from the Third Cavalry conducted a thorough reconnaissance of his operational area to gain familiarity of the terrain. He traveled from Camp Lowell near Tucson through the Gila and Salt River Basins and ended the reconnoissance at Fort Apache. Immediately upon arrival at Fort Apache, Crook ordered all officers within his department to the fort, so he could continue to make his assessment of the situation and give his initial guidance to his command. Crook, not having served in the southwest before, was open to alternate means of pacifying the insurgent Apaches. He had identified that the insurgents consisted of approximately three thousand total personnel from the Tonto and Yavapsi Apaches, joined by a small number of Chiricahua Apaches under the leadership of Cochise. The vast majority of these insurgents was raiding from the Mogollon Rim-Tonto Basin area, west of Fort Apache and south of Fort Verde. Crook knew that finding the insurgents was a key to the success against the insurgent Apaches at the tactical level. The army's mobile columns, as they were configured at the time of Crook's assumption of command, could not find the Apache raiders as they moved from their clandestine bases in the Tonto Basin to their prospective objectives. Governor Safford had recommended that Crook

use local Mexicans as the scouting elements for his columns. Crook hired fifty Mexicans as an experiment, but they proved to be a dismal failure on their first operation and were fired. Another approach would have to be tried.

On the operational level Crook realized that the insurgent Apaches had to be totally defeated and demoralized before they would accept being confined on a reservation. Placing the insurgent Apaches on the reservation would begin the process of acculturation of the Apaches to blend into American society. However, once placed on the reservation, this habitat had to be made a viable place for the Apaches to live. The tribes had to be provided an opportunity to prosper on the reservation. Crook encouraged the Apaches to take up stock raising and farming and to sell their products to the army. Further Crook made arrangements for the Apaches to police themselves by developing a salaried police force for the reservation. He also established a judicial system within the tribes on the reservations, so the friendly Apache leadership could decide lower-level criminal cases. All of these actions were aimed to eventually remake the insurgent Apache into American citizens.<sup>7</sup>

However, the insurgent Apaches would first have to be totally defeated on the tactical level. To achieve victory on the tactical level, the participating military forces would have to be able to solve the tracking and mobility problems. Crook tried to solve these problems by using a two-pronged approach. He realized, after his initial effort in using Mexicans to track the insurgent bands proved to be a failure, that only an Apache would be able to track down another Apache. The Apache had the unique ability of being able to track a designated enemy band throughout the southwest. Using Apache scouts, especially if they were from the same tribe as the insurgent bands, further

demoralized the insurgents. Realizing that they could no longer move freely throughout the territory without being tracked and that their own kinsmen were the ones tracking them, the insurgents would ultimately accept defeat and move back to the reservation. Crook began to recruit scouts from the Apaches who had settled on the reservations. He formed mobile columns composed of fifteen to thirty Apache scouts, a small contingent of non-Apache scouts and one to three company-sized army elements, with each column commanded by a lieutenant or captain.

To further increase the mobility of the columns, Crook discarded the cumbersome road-bound wagon trains for a more mobile mule-pack train. Crook had used the mule-pack train as the basis of his logistics in the campaigns that he fought in the northwest against the Paiutes, Bannocks, and Shoshonnes. On his assignment to Arizona, Crook transferred the organized pack trains with their assigned packers to his new command. His chief packer Thomas Moore reorganized the trains brought from the northwest and formed additional trains for the mobile columns.<sup>8</sup> There were multiple advantages in using a mule-based pack train. The first major advantage of a mule-based pack train was its capability to move throughout the operational area of the Apacheria. Even in the mountainous terrain of southern Arizona and northern Mexico, such as the Sierra Madre Mountains, the pack trains could continue to follow the mobile columns.<sup>9</sup> This widened the operational area that the mobile columns could operate in and opened up formally restricted areas, where the insurgent Apaches had often hid.

The mule-based pack train also had the advantage of being able to carry more supplies quicker than a horse-drawn wagon train, with less of the supplies having to be used as forage for the animals themselves. The mule could carry on the average between



200 to 250 pounds of supplies. The pack train could travel at an average rate of speed of thirty miles a day on flat terrain and fifteen miles a day in the mountains. The mules mostly ate the grasses that grew in the region. This was not the case for the horses used in the wagon trains. Fodder for the horses had to be carried in a portion of the wagons, which further diminished the overall carrying capability of a horse-based wagon train. During an operation a number of pack trains would follow a column, keeping the column supplied during its operation. When a pack train had diminished its supplies, it returned to a nearby fort to be resupplied, and another pack train, which had been following the column, was designated as the primary supplier for the column. This constant availability of supplies provided the logistical support, so that the mobile columns could remain in the field, constantly chasing and harassing the insurgent Apaches.

As Crook was preparing to launch his campaign against the insurgent Apaches, the U.S. Government intervened to try to solve the insurgency through peaceful means. A representative from the Department of the Interior Vincent Colyer was dispatched from Washington, D.C., to try to negotiate a settlement with the insurgent Apaches. Colyer was the secretary for the permanently established Board of Peace Commissioners, established within the Department of the Interior, whose mission was to try to negotiate peaceful settlements with recalcitrant Indians. This was a part of the overall “Peace Policy” which Grant and his administration were trying to implement in dealing with the Indian problem. Colyer arrived at Fort Apache on 2 September 1871, with the power to negotiate a peaceful settlement.<sup>10</sup> He immediately began negotiations with the leaders of the insurgents, and upon conclusion of successful negotiations, a number of reservations were established within Arizona and New Mexico Territories for the insurgents to reside.

However, as soon as Colyer left the Apacheria in October 1872 to finalize the treaties in Washington, D.C., the insurgents went back to raiding.<sup>11</sup>

Crook, anticipating the failure of the Colyer Mission, prepared his command to take the field against the insurgent Apaches. In December 1871, Crook sent word to the insurgents that they must move to their designated reservations by 15 February 1872 or that they would be destroyed. Hundreds of Apaches moved to the designated reservations at Forts Apache, Grant, McDowell, Verde, Date Creek, and Beale Springs to escape the Army and to receive the government winter rations. As Crook was about to launch the campaign, he was again halted by a message from Washington stating that another representative of the Department of the Interior would attempt to peacefully negotiate a settlement with the insurgents. This time the Department of Interior's representative was Brigadier General Oliver Otis Howard. Howard had risen to be a corps commander during the Civil War and upon conclusion of the war had been the successful administrator of the Freedmen's Bureau, which had helped former slaves throughout the defeated South. General Howard was also a deeply religious man, who thought his actions were divinely directed. Given his military background, Howard had a great deal more credibility than Colyer with the insurgents and the military. Howard was successful in negotiating a peaceful return to the reservation for Cochise and his band of Chiricahua. He also established the reservation at San Carlos for the Apaches who agreed to return to the reservation. However, he was unsuccessful in persuading the Tonto and Yavapsi Apaches, who had fled to the Mogollon Rim, to accept a peaceful settlement. Howard was forced to agree with Crook that the time for negotiation had

passed and only a ruthless counterinsurgency campaign could defeat the insurgents and bring them onto the reservation.<sup>12</sup>

Crook was now prepared to initiate his campaign to defeat the insurgent Apaches who were hiding in the Tonto Basin-Mogollon Rim area. He organized his force initially into five mobile columns. The concept of the operation was to move the mobile columns south from Fort Verde and west from Fort Apache. Three columns from Fort Verde would scout south along the Verde River moving towards the Tonto Basin. Two columns would move west from Fort Apache, scouting along the southern portion of the Mogollon Rim with their final objective also being the Tonto Basin. Crook would be using exterior lines to work his columns from the outer area of operation to the inner objective, which was the Tonto Basin. Crook's goals on the tactical level was to capture or destroy the insurgent bands in the designated operational area or to force the bands to continue to move, which would ultimately either wear down the band, forcing it to surrender or drive it into another converging column. Crook also wanted the columns to destroy all logistical supplies that they captured, which would further hinder the insurgent Apache's ability to maintain themselves off of the reservation during the winter months. Crook's instructions to his columns specified that they were to engage the insurgents when contact was made and to maintain that contact with the insurgent band at all cost. Crook would accept no excuses for a halt in operations by a column once positive contact had been made with an insurgent band. Crook also specified that the columns should avoid killing women and children and that any male prisoners captured should be offered the opportunity to join the column as an Apache scout.<sup>13</sup>

The three columns from Fort Verde moved out on 16 November 1872, under the commands of Captains Adam, Mason, and Montgomery to begin a reconnaissance down the Verde River. Adam's column made contact with a small band of insurgents in the vicinity of the Chino Valley, southwest of Fort Verde, where it killed eleven Apaches and captured three. Montgomery's column made one contact, killing two Apaches and destroying two Apache rancherios. Mason's column made no contact. The columns continued scouting along the Verde until they were resupplied on 30 November 1872. After the resupply was completed, Crook ordered the columns to continue scouting south along the Verde to Fort McDowell.

Crook next organized two columns to scout west from Fort Apache to the Tonto Basin. Captain George Randall commanded the first column, and it consisted of elements of the 23rd Infantry and a party of Apache Scouts. After the Apache scouts had identified the rancheria of Delshay, one of the leaders of the insurgents, the column conducted a difficult dismounted march of thirty-two miles and attacked the insurgent's rancheria (village). Delshay escaped, but the column destroyed the rancheria, killing twenty-five insurgents during the action. The column continued on its scout. However, no further contact was made, and the column moved on to Fort McDowell for resupply.

The second column that Crook organized at Fort Apache was commanded by Major William Brown and consisted of two companies of the 5th Cavalry and thirty Apache Scouts. This column's mission was to scout through the Mescal, Pinal, Superstition, and Mazatzal Mountains, all which are south of the Tonto Basin.<sup>14</sup> This strong column was provisioned for thirty days, and it was expected to make contact with the major insurgent bands.

Brown's column moved out from Fort Apache at the beginning of December and moved with the Apache scouts travelling in advance of the column. The mobile columns had worked out an operating procedure where the scouts would travel in the lead, approximately twenty-four hours in the advance of the column, with their mission to track down the elusive insurgents and then send word back to the main column. The column would be brought forward to strike the major blow against the designated target. However, the Apache scouts often would become engaged with the insurgents before the main body would arrive. The Apache Scout's lack of patience was noted by Crook, which would force him in the future to change his operational concept.

This Brown's column had limited contact with the insurgents, until 15 December 1872, when its scout element made contact with an insurgent band. The majority of the insurgent band got away, to include its leader Chunz, but the column destroyed the band's rancheria. Bourke, who was accompanying this column, thought that the operations conducted by Crook were starting to affect the insurgent Apaches. The constant harassment by the columns and the winter weather were starting to wear the insurgents down. Bourke stated, "These incorrigible devils must feel keenly every deprivation, and more that they are without an article of clothing, a particle of food, or any necessaries, the bitter winter winds will cause them to perish upon the tops of the Mountains."<sup>15</sup>

On 27 December Brown's column reached the Salt River in the vicinity of Four Peaks. Brown knew that a large number of Apaches were in the area. After passing an abandoned rancheria, the scouts made contact with a party of six insurgents. These six were killed, and a rancheria was spotted on the side of a cliff, about five hundred feet

above the Salt River. The rancheria was built in front of a small cave, which would provide protection for the insurgents against anyone trying to attack the position. The scouts sent word back to the main body, and Brown brought his force forward. The scouts and the 5th Cavalry companies laid siege to the cave. Brown sent a force above the cave, which tried to fire into the cave from above. This proved ineffective, but this party began to roll large boulders down onto the entrance of the cave. Finally Brown ordered a charge, and the cavalry companies attacked and captured the cave. Indian casualties were heavy. Fifty-six warriors were killed, with a number of women and children captured. The results of this action had a dramatic effect on the campaign. The insurgents had been cleared out of the Salt River area, but more importantly, it showed that a combined column composed of Apache scouts, a military striking force, and a mule-equipped pack train could track, find, and ultimately defeat an insurgent band in the most inhospitable terrain.

Crook's force had achieved an outstanding success at the Salt Creek Cave battle; however, there was a significant number of insurgents who remained in the field. Immediately Crook reoriented his columns to track down the remaining insurgents. Major Brown's column was augmented by three additional companies of the 5th Cavalry (the total column consisted of five companies of 5th Cavalry and thirty Apache scouts) and ordered to clear the Superstition Mountains of all insurgents. As Brown's column was clearing the insurgents south of the Salt River, other columns were dispatched to continue clearing between the Verde River and the Tonto Basin.

Contact was made by Brown's column on 15 January 1873 with a large band of insurgents in the Superstition Mountains. After being tracked continuously for three

days, the band decided to surrender. The size of Brown's column and its ability to track so efficiently in rugged mountains were the determining factors in the band's decision to surrender. One hundred and ten Apaches surrendered and were escorted to Fort McDowell. This operation completed the operational phase of Crook's plan to clear south of the Salt River.

In late 1872 and 1873 Crook had seven different columns scouting east of the Verde River and north of the Salt River. Contact was almost continuous with the columns and the insurgent Apaches, with the Apaches suffering numerous casualties. The most successful column was lead by Captain Randall of the 23rd Infantry. Randall and his column had been working in a northeasterly direction from the Verde River to the edge of the Mogollon Rim. The terrain had become increasingly rough as the column moved towards the Rim. As signs of insurgent activity increased, Randall sent his scouts forward, while hiding his column during the day. The scouts captured an Apache woman, whom they forced to lead them to the insurgent camp. The scouts and the column clandestinely moved through the broken ground until they reached Turret Mountain. The column continued to climb up the mountain until they gained the summit, which they reached at dawn. There the scouts found a rancheria, which the column immediately attacked. The insurgents were totally surprised, and they panicked--a very rare occurrence in the Apache campaigns. Eyewitnesses stated that the panic was so great within the rancheria that some Apaches jumped off the mountain, ultimately to their death, to try to escape the on-rushing soldiers. Overall forty-seven insurgents were killed in what became known as the "Turret Mountain Fight."

The action at Turret Mountain was the decisive event in the Tonto Basin campaign. Throughout the spring of 1873 the word of the Turret Mountain action slowly traveled through the Apacheria. Insurgent bands, realizing that no place was safe from the roving columns, proceeded to slowly move to the nearest fort to surrender. The insurgent Apache-Mojave chief Cha-lipun, who surrendered with twenty-three hundred members of his tribe, complained “that he surrendered not because he loved Crook, but because they were afraid of him. The Americans alone never frightened him, but now there were his own people, as well, to fight. Cha-lipun said his people could not sleep at night because they feared a murderous dawn attack. They could not hunt because a rifle’s crack would bring the soldiers. They could not cook mescal because the flame and smoke would draw the enemy. They could not remain in the valleys, and when they withdrew to the snowy mountaintops the troops tracked them there. They wanted to surrender to the Gray Fox (Crook).”<sup>16</sup>

Though Turret Mountain was the turning point in the campaign, there was still a number of insurgents left in the field, to include the key Apache leader Delshay. Crook decided to concentrate operations against Delshay and his Tonto Apache band. Captain Randall’s column, fresh from their victory at Turret Mountain, was given the mission to track Delshay’s band and either force it to surrender or destroy it. Randall moved his column along the Mogollon Rim, until he reached Canyon Creek. He then moved his column south following Canyon Creek until the column reached the confluence of Canyon Creek and the Salt River. Here Randall’s Apache scouts finally tracked down Delshay and his band. Contact with the band was made on 25 April with Randall maneuvering his companies to surround the camp. Delshay had often surrendered in the



past, but had also on numerous occasions gone back on his word and had fled the reservation. Randall, being aware of Delshay's past history, was extremely careful in not leaving Delshay a chance to escape. Randall's columns fired into the camp, which immediately forced Delshay's surrender. Delshay had started the campaign with 125 warriors; after a year of constant harassment by Crook's columns, Delshay was left with twenty disheartened and starving warriors.<sup>17</sup> This weak band of warriors was escorted to the White Mountain Reservation, where they were forced to reside.

Though the capture of Delshay closed the Tonto Basin campaign of 1872 and 1873, there were still a number of minor Apache leaders who were off of the reservation. Crook was forced to mount another campaign starting in January 1874 to finally subdue the last insurgents. Organizing for what he believed would be the final operation of the campaign, Crook formed his mobile columns to track down the last bands. Columns from Forts Whipple and Verde were to scout the Tonto Basin. Another column from Fort Lowell was to comb the Superstition Mountains. Captain Randall commanded a column consisting of elements from five companies of the 5th Cavalry and a number of White Mountain Apache scouts, with the mission to move through the almost unassailable Pinal Mountains. Randall's column moved through the horrendous terrain of the Pinals until contact was made with the remaining insurgents. Twelve Apaches were killed and twenty-five were captured. Operations continued in the Pinals, and on 2 April 1874, a subcolumn of Randall's, led by Lieutenant Bache, killed thirty-one insurgent warriors and captured fifty women and children.

Slowly but surely this final campaign was coming to a successful conclusion. By 29 July 1874, all the remaining insurgent leaders Chunz, Cochinay, and Chan-Desi had

been captured or killed.<sup>18</sup> Crook had accomplished his objectives for the campaign. His mobile columns had defeated the insurgent Apaches, and the survivors were now living on designated reservations. Of even greater importance, the Apache tribes now knew that there was no place safe within the Apacheria where they could hide from the roving mobile columns of General Crook.

Crook's methods at the operational and tactical levels had proven effective. On the operational level Crook had forced the insurgent Apaches to accept defeat. This was the very first time in Apache history that a large portion of the tribes had been defeated. This acceptance of defeat, even grudgingly, opened the way for Crook to move the Apaches away from their old nomadic way of life to a more-settled existence on the reservation. By providing a secure means of livelihood on the reservation, centered on farming and stock trading, Crook gave the Apache an alternate and productive way of life. This holistic approach was a hallmark of the Crook counterinsurgency strategy.

On the tactical level, Crook solved the interrelated problems of mobility, tracking, and logistics. By forming columns built on Apache scouts, mobile infantry-cavalry units, and mule pack trains, Crook provided the column commanders with the means to track the insurgent, fix the insurgent once contact is made, and destroy the insurgent if needed with the overwhelming firepower of the columns. Further the columns could stay longer in the field due to the improved logistics proved by the mule pack train. Crook's overall leadership was also a key in his success. Though he had some preconceived notions on what might succeed against the Apaches in the southwest, he was willing to listen and learn from subordinates and other interested parties involved in the campaign. It was crucial to the campaign's success that Crook not only placed multiple columns in the

field, but that he directed those columns to remain in the field until they were successful. Though pushed to the limits of endurance, these columns eventually wore the insurgent Apache bands down until they were forced to accept defeat. Crook had developed a system to defeat insurgents in the southwest. He would now take his system north to face a different foe in the Sioux and Cheyenne.

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<sup>1</sup>Dan L. Thrapp, *The Conquest of Apacheria* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), 79.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 53. Lack of continuity in policy between the Department of Interior and the War Department concerning the handling of the Indians continued until active operations against the Indians ceased in 1890.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, 219 (see map).

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>6</sup>George Crook, *General George Crook: His Autobiography*, ed. Martin Schmitt (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1946), 160. Crook claimed in this passage that he did not want the assignment, but was ordered to the position by General Sherman. However, most other sources state that Governor Safford of Arizona Territory convinced Crook to accept the position.

<sup>7</sup>Jerome A. Greene, *George Crook in Soldiers West*, ed. Paul Andrew Hutton (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), 122.

<sup>8</sup>E. Lisle Reedstrom, *Apache Wars: An Illustrated History* (New York: Sterling Publishing Company, 1990), 155.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, 155.

<sup>10</sup>Trapp, 103.

<sup>11</sup>Trapp, 105. The outbreak of hostilities referred to in this note is usually known as the Loring Massacre. A stagecoach with eight passengers was ambushed eight miles east of the Loring mining camp on 5 November 1871. Seven of the passengers were killed.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>13</sup>John G. Bourke, *On the Border with Crook* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1891; reprint Time-Life Books, Inc, 1980), 182.

<sup>14</sup>Trapp, 126.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 125.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid, 212-214.

<sup>17</sup>Trapp, 142.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 161.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE SIOUX CAMPAIGN OF 1876 TO 1877

The Sioux Campaign was an aberration in General Crook's career. It was the only Indian campaign in which he commanded that was not judged a success. Crook's participation in this most famous of Indian campaigns is often overshadowed by the climatic defeat of Custer at the Little Bighorn. However, in the Sioux campaign of 1876 Crook would command in one of the largest single battles ever fought during the Indian Wars at the Battle of the Rosebud. The enemy force arrayed against him in the Battle of the Rosebud was one of the largest Indian contingents ever assembled in North America for a single engagement. Crook's lack of success during the Sioux Campaign would shadow the rest of his military career. His operational and tactical techniques, which he had developed in the Apacheria, were not as successful in the northern plains against the more numerous and formidable Sioux and Cheyenne. One would not have foreseen these events at the beginning of the campaign in 1875.

In March 1875, Crook was reassigned and moved from Arizona to command the Department of the Platte, which was headquartered in Omaha, Nebraska.<sup>1</sup> This department encompassed the states of Utah, Nebraska, and Iowa.<sup>2</sup> Crook's transfer to the northern plains coincided with a concentration of the Army in the Departments of Platte and Dakota. This concentration of forces in the northern plains was caused by the advancement of railroad construction and the opening of farming and grazing land in the areas of North and South Dakotas, Nebraska, Wyoming, and Montana in the post-Civil War period. The Sioux and Cheyenne had been continually pushed into a smaller areas to inhabit, forcing the tribes into a reduced area to migrate and hunt buffalo. Though the

tribes had fought the constricting bands of western railroads and white settlers, ultimately the Sioux and the Cheyenne in 1868 were forced onto reservations, which were situated in South Dakota and Nebraska. Also an area between the North Platte River and the Yellowstone River was declared as “unceded Indian Territory” where the Sioux and Cheyenne could reside, but the white settlers were excluded.<sup>3</sup>

The signing of the Treaty of 1868 did not stop settlers and miners from trespassing on now-designated Sioux and Cheyenne land. Discovery of gold in the Black Hills, situated in the western portion of the Dakota Territory, caused a massive invasion by prospectors. Initially, the army tried to halt the massive influx of whites into Sioux land. Eventually the government ceased trying to quarantine the Black Hills area and tried to negotiate a sale of the Black Hills region with the Sioux. The Sioux refused the sale, and clashes between advancing miners and roaming Sioux multiplied. The Indian Bureau, under pressure from the western mining interests, wanted to restrict the Sioux to the reservations established in the 1868 treaty and to not allow them to roam in the unceded area within the Black Hills, violating the 1868 Treaty. Finally the Indian Bureau demanded that the army round up all free-roaming Sioux in the Black Hills, and place them on the reservations in South Dakota and Nebraska.<sup>4</sup> Bourke quotes Crook’s disapproval of the government’s policy when Crook states, “It is hard to make the average savage comprehend why it is that as soon as his reservation is found to amount to anything, he must leave and give it up to the white man.”<sup>5</sup> Crook saw that the long-term policy of negotiated settlement concerning reservations followed by renegotiation over the same reservations was counterproductive and would lead to war. Crook served as an instrument of government policy even though he totally disagreed with that policy.

The operational plan to defeat the insurgent Sioux and Cheyenne was formulated by Lieutenant General Sheridan in his capacity as commander of the Division of the Missouri. On 8 February 1876 Sheridan passed to his key subordinates Brigadier Generals Crook and Terry that the War Department had ordered that operations be conducted against the roaming Sioux in the area of the Northern Plains. Sheridan's plan centered on three large columns moving from Forts Fetterman, Ellis, and Abraham Lincoln converging in the vicinity of the confluence of the Yellowstone and Tongue Rivers. The designated column commanders Crook, Terry, and Gibbon were to move their columns towards the center of the area of operations, trying to track down the roaming Sioux. Gibbon's column would consist of six companies of the 7th Infantry and four companies of the 2nd Cavalry with the task of driving the insurgent Sioux into the other columns and not allowing the insurgents to escape across the U.S. and Canadian border. General Terry's force consisted of twelve companies from the 7th Cavalry and three additional infantry companies from an assortment of regiments. Terry's column, moving east from Fort Abraham Lincoln, was to be the main effort and key component in chasing down the roaming Sioux.<sup>6</sup> Crook's column, starting from Fort Fetterman, was to drive north and be the anvil for Terry's hammer.

The perception among all the commanders participating in the campaign, which they had acquired in previous campaigns against insurgent Indians, was that Sioux and Cheyenne bands could not coordinate their actions for a synchronized defense of their disputed lands. This led to the second perception held by the column commanders since the Sioux and Cheyenne could not organize a proper defense, then it was probable they could not mass a force larger than any of the converging columns. A third perception

that was common among the column commanders and the rank and file was that the insurgents would not stand and fight, and since they would not provide the army a stationary target to destroy, then the roaming Indians would have to be chased down and forced to submit. These three perception molded the operational plans of all the column commanders and would have a crucial effect on the battles fought by Crook and Terry.<sup>7</sup>

In March 1875 Crook arrived in Omaha to assume his new command. Crook, as he had done in the southwest, began to analyze his new command and the deteriorating Sioux situation. Crook was able to see some of his new area of operation while he was involved with some protracted negotiations between intruding miners and roaming Sioux in the Black Hills region. Crook began to form an impression of his opponent and the nature of his operational area. However, as will be shown at the Battle of the Rosebud, Crook's perception of the enemy was false. Crook had assumed, like the other commanders within the Department of the Missouri, that the insurgent Sioux and Cheyenne would not stand and fight. As part of a developing campaign plan, Crook had planned to recruit Sioux scouts to help his column find the roaming Sioux and Cheyenne. Crook's tactical operating procedure, developed in the Tonto Basin campaign, depended on a large-scout contingent that could track down the insurgents. Further he depended upon splitting his opposition from within by recruiting Sioux and Cheyenne to chase down their brethren from the same tribes. In this situation Crook was disappointed. He was not able to recruit any Sioux or Cheyenne to be scouts, and he had to depend upon recruited Crows and Shoshones to scout for his column. The lack of Sioux and Cheyenne scouts was to haunt Crook throughout the Sioux Campaign of 1876 and 1877.



Crook formed his force carefully for the upcoming campaign. He knew that once launched his column would receive minimum support from other forces due to the inability of the columns to coordinate their actions, based on the great distances and the inability to communicate quickly between columns and higher headquarters. This lack of a synchronized operational plan forced Crook into fielding a much larger column than he had fielded in his previous campaigns. Crook's command consisted of twelve companies of cavalry and infantry, drawn from the 2nd and 3rd Cavalry and 4th Infantry Regiments. With logistical support consisting of a number of pack mule and wagon trains, the total column was approximately nine hundred in strength, a much larger column than Crook had commanded in previous counterinsurgency campaigns.<sup>8</sup> Crook also wanted to conduct his campaign during the winter time frame, as he had done previously in the Tonto Basin campaign of 1872. He was convinced that it would be easier to track down and defeat the insurgent Sioux and Cheyenne during the winter months, due to their decreased mobility caused by the severe northern plains winter weather.

Crook started his column, named the Bighorn Expedition, from Fort Fetterman on 1 March 1876. The column moved north through the Powder River country towards the Tongue River.<sup>9</sup> The weather was brutal, but the column continued northward. Crook had placed tactical command of the column in the hands of Colonel Joseph J. Reynolds, commander of the 3rd Cavalry, while he maintained overall control of the campaign. On 3 March while the column continued to move north, Crook ordered a small number of white scouts forward to find the insurgents. On 6 March the scouts returned and reported finding a large Indian village. Crook ordered Reynolds with ten companies of cavalry, for a total of 374 personnel, to attack the village, defeat the insurgents, and capture any

usable items for use by the expedition. Crook also ordered Reynolds to strip down his logistics train to the bare minimum to increase mobility. The assigned mule pack trains would carry only the essentials for the men's survival. Crook planned to remain with the uncommitted troops, and continue scouting for other insurgent concentrations.<sup>10</sup>

Reynolds moved his command through extremely rough terrain during the night of 16 March. Low cloud cover shielded the moon, further concealing the column. Reynolds's column reached the bluffs west of the Powder River at dawn on 17 March, at the base of the bluffs stood the column's objective. The village was occupied mostly by Northern Cheyenne under Chiefs Old Bear and Little Wolf, with a small sprinkling of Sioux. The total population was approximately seven hundred inhabitants, with about two hundred warriors available to defend the village. Reynolds subdivided his column into three task forces, which would conduct converging attacks from north, west, and south, respectively.<sup>11</sup>

The attack began at 0900 on the seventeenth of March with each task force converging on the village. The task forces quickly overran, with the villagers and warriors scattering north of the village. However, no immediate pursuit was ordered to destroy the warrior contingent. Reynolds then entered the village, which he found consisted of one hundred lodges, tons of dried meat and vast quantities of ammunition.<sup>12</sup> Reynolds's orders from Crook had specified that Reynolds should return all seized goods to Crook's column for future use in this campaign. However, Reynolds felt he was under the threat of renewed attack from the scattered inhabitants, so he ordered his troops to burn the village and all its contents. The destruction of the village began at 1100; however, the Cheyenne and Sioux warriors started to infiltrate back to the village and

resumed the battle with Reynolds column. Pressure from the Cheyenne and Sioux warriors continued to build, forcing Reynolds to order a retreat, which commenced at 1330. The warriors continued to pursue the column, keeping pressure on Reynolds throughout the retreat. Though the column was under constant pressure throughout the retreat, the number of casualties for the column, due to the retreat, were minimal. Indian pressure finally slacked, and the column moved into camp, which the troops quickly dubbed “Camp Inhospitability.”

The Cheyenne and Sioux warriors had slowed their pursuit, but had maintained contact with Reynolds column. The troops, during the attack on the village, had captured seven hundred horses. During the night of 17 March, the warriors recaptured their lost ponies, adding a final insult to Reynolds column. On 18 March Crook arrived at Camp Inhospitability with the remaining troops of the column. Crook quickly realized that Reynolds had failed in his mission to destroy the large contingent of insurgents, but more importantly, Reynolds failed to secure the needed supplies for the upcoming campaign. This lack of supply forced Crook to cease the campaign and return the column to Fort Fetterman.<sup>13</sup>

After the debacle at Powder River, Crook began to realize that campaigning on the northern plains was different from operations he had conducted in the southwest. Due to the large number of warriors that could be mobilized by the insurgent Sioux and Cheyenne, Crook was forced to operate with a larger force than was normal in the Apacheria. This required a larger logistical train, which ultimately slowed down the overall operational tempo of the campaign. Crook also realized that it was extremely

hard to maintain columns in the field during the brutal winter months on the northern plains.

Crook reorganized his command at Fort Fetterman. First he renamed his command the Big Horn and Yellowstone Expedition. The column would now consist of ten companies of the 3rd Cavalry commanded by Major Alexander W. Evans, and five companies of the 2nd Cavalry under Captain Henry Noyes. There were an additional five companies of infantry drawn from the 9th and 4th Infantry Regiments; with Major Alexander Chambers commanding these units. Captain George Randall was appointed chief of scouts, a somewhat meaningless position at the start of the campaign since there were no scouts enlisted at that time. The usual mule and wagon pack trains were organized under the leadership of Mr. Thomas Moore. Total strength of the column was approximately eleven hundred men.<sup>14</sup> By 29 May 1876 Crook's command was prepared to resume the campaign against the insurgent Sioux and Cheyenne.

As he was about to commence operations, Crook was still short a key component which he required to conduct an efficient counterinsurgency campaign. Crook finally realized that he would not be able to recruit Sioux or Cheyenne to act as scouts for his column. There was no interest from the nonroaming Sioux and Cheyenne, residing on the reservations, to fight against their insurgent brethren. Tribes hostile to the Sioux and Cheyenne would have to be recruited as scouts for this campaign. Effort was made by Crook after the engagement at Powder River to recruit scouts from the Crow and Shoshone tribes. However, as the column prepared to depart Fort Fetterman at the end of May, the recruited Crow and Shoshone scouts had not yet joined the column. Crook was

forced to send two companies from the 3rd Cavalry to scout towards Fort Reno in hopes of finding the late arriving scouts.

Crook decided to begin the campaign without the recruited scouts. His column left Fort Fetterman on 29 May 1876, moving northward in the direction of the South Cheyenne River. Crook had formed an advanced guard of two companies and sent it to scout ahead of the column, looking for signs of the insurgent Indians. Having found no signs of the roaming Sioux and Cheyenne, the advanced guard rejoined the main body on 1 June, in the vicinity of Dry Fork of the Powder River. The column moved in a northwesterly direction towards the old abandoned Fort Reno. The column reached the old abandoned fort on 2 March and was met by the two companies that were sent out to find the missing scouts. The two companies had been unsuccessful. This left Crook in a quandary. He needed the Crow and Shoshone scouts to find the insurgent Sioux and Cheyenne. However, precious time would be lost if the column remained stationary, waiting for the scouts to arrive. Crook decided that the column had to continue to move and that he would send a three-man party of white scouts to the Crow Agency, located in the vicinity of Livingston, Montana, to try to find his wayward scouts.

For the first ten days of June the column continued northward, searching for any signs of the roaming insurgents. The white scouts, sent out to find the recruited Indian scouts, had not returned. Without the Indian scouts to direct and scout for the force, Crook and the column became misoriented in the vicinity of the confluence of the Tongue River and Prairie Dog Creek. The column veered off its planned course for eighteen miles, traveling a southwesterly direction along Prairie Dog Creek. On 7 May while Crook was trying to find out his location, the initial contact of the campaign was

made, and shots were exchanged with a small hunting party of Cheyenne. Crook decided to move the column back to the confluence of Prairie Dog Creek and the Tongue River for the purpose of awaiting word concerning his missing scouts.<sup>15</sup> Without his usual contingent of scouts Crook's operational and tactical modus operandi was severely inhibited. His ability to gather intelligence and find his foe was extremely limited without the Indian scouts. As had been previously experienced in the southwest, the U.S. Army forces had difficulties gaining and maintaining contact with the insurgent Sioux and Cheyenne without Indian scout support. Crook realized that he needed the recruited Crow and Shoshone scouts to find and fix the insurgents if he was to be successful in this campaign.

On the eleventh of June, Crook moved his column north to a camp located at Goose Creek, hoping to be in a closer position for a linkup with his missing scouts. Finally on 14 June, the Crow and Shoshone scouts arrived, and the column is finally complete. The total number of scouts (both Crow and Shoshone) was 260 individuals. Total personnel strength for the column was 1,325.<sup>16</sup> Crook stripped the column of all useless materials and sent the wagon train back to Fort Fetterman. The column was now prepared to move quickly to catch the insurgents.

On the sixteenth of June, Crook started the column towards the Rosebud Valley. The scouts were placed as an advanced guard, and almost immediately the scouts made contact with a small Cheyenne hunting party which had been tracking a large herd of buffalo. The Cheyenne party broke contact and moved back to their villages, located on Reno Creek, to tell the other warriors that the army was very close. This Cheyenne village on Reno Creek was approximately thirty miles north of the column's encampment

on Goose Creek. Though the total number of inhabitants in the cluster of Cheyenne villages is unknown, most historians believe that the total number of warriors, which fought in the Battle of the Rosebud, was between seven hundred fifty to two thousand.<sup>17</sup>

Crook was also not pleased with his new scouts. The Crow and Shoshone scouts were not performing at the same level of expertise as the Apache scouts Crook had used in the Tonto Basin campaign. The Crows and Shoshone scouts were more concerned with shooting buffalo than finding and tracking the enemy. Howeverm Crook had little choice in his options concerning the scouts. He knew that he needed scouts to find and track the roaming Sioux and Cheyenne, and the Crow and Shoshone scouts were the only Indians available for this campaign. If Crook wanted to replace the scouts that were currently available, he would probably have to wait a considerable time for other scouts to be recruited. This type of delay in Crook's column would further unhinge the Army's campaign plan for 1876. Crook decided to use the scouts that were present, given their shortcomings, to try to win this campaign.<sup>18</sup>

At 0600 on 17 June, Crook moved his column out of their campsite at Goose Creek, with the objective of finding a possible Cheyenne village in the vicinity of Rosebud Creek. By 0800 the column had reached Rosebud Creek, where Crook decided to halt the column for a rest. Crook sent a party of Crow and Shoshone scouts forward to find the suspected village. While the scouts were forward, Crook positioned his command with the remaining scouts under Major Randall forward in a screening role, protecting the resting column. Two battalions of cavalry, commanded respectively by Captains Mills and Noyes, were resting on the eastern flank with the battalions straddling the Rosebud Creek. The infantry, under Major Chambers, was north of the Rosebud in

the center of the position. Four companies of cavalry were positioned on the western flank, and two companies, under Captain Van Vliet, were protecting the rear.

The scouting party of Crow and Shoshone had move forward eleven miles, where they made contact with a combined Sioux and Cheyenne party on Corral Creek. The enemy party that the scouts made initial contact with was small. However, more insurgents joined the skirmish from nearby villages, until the Crows and Shoshone scouts decided to break contact and return to the column. The scouts had difficulty breaking contact and the Sioux and Cheyenne started to drive the scouts back into Crook's encampment. The scouts rode into the camp shouting and gesturing. The advancing Sioux and Cheyenne pursued the scouts and began to fire shots into the camp. On his own initiative Major Randall deployed his remaining scouts in an arch, forward of the camp. The charging Sioux and Cheyenne hit this thin line of Indian scouts and a general engagement began to take place.

Crook was slow to realize the magnitude of the engagement that was taking place five hundred yards in front of his position. Crook moved to a bluff in the forward portion of the position to survey the engagement. The scouts were holding the enemy, but slowly their skirmish line was starting to be driven backward into the camp. To stop this rearward movement Crook moved the infantry forward, with the orders to reinforce the screening force. Realizing that his column had made contact with a major insurgent element, Crook became convinced that a major Cheyenne or Sioux village must be in the vicinity and that the insurgents were protecting their village against his advancing column. This perception by Crook was key in the unfolding Battle of the Rosebud.



As the infantry began to reinforce the screening force in the center, the Sioux and Cheyenne tried to envelop the column on its eastern flank. This forced Crook to deploy six companies of cavalry, under Noyes, to protect his eastern flank. Crook also ordered Van Vliet with his two cavalry companies to cover the rear of the encampment. He also ordered Captain Guy Henry with two cavalry companies across the Rosebud to the west to protect the column's western flank. Crook's column was now deployed in an arch which covered approximately one mile, battling an unknown but large number of insurgents in a conventional fight.<sup>19</sup> Crook began to realize that this battle had much more in common with battles he had commanded in the Civil War than any type of engagement he had conducted against other Indian insurgents.

Trying to regain the initiative, Crook ordered Captain Mills with six companies of cavalry to attack around the eastern flank of the skirmish line and to drive the attacking Sioux and Cheyenne back. Mills's ultimate objective was to try to encircle the attacking Indian force. Mills attacked and drove the attackers back, forcing the Sioux and Cheyenne to retreat to a large hilltop called Conical Hill. Meanwhile, Lieutenant Colonel Royall, second in command of the expedition, saw an opportunity to envelop the attacking Cheyenne and Sioux on the western flank of the skirmish line. Without informing Crook, Royall gathered five companies of cavalry from units, which were guarding the west and rear of the formation. He then attacked in a northwesterly direction and eventually secured Andrew's Point, which was approximately one mile in front. This maneuver caused Royall's command to be exposed and unsupported in front of Crook's skirmish line. The Sioux and Cheyenne that had been driven back by Mills

now turned on Royall's force. Royall was forced to retreat back the direction he had come, positioning his forces behind the skirmish line of infantry.<sup>20</sup>

Crook saw that the battle had turned into a stalemate. His attempts to envelop the attacking Indians had not been successful. His line of contact stretched for a mile along the Rosebud Creek. Pressure was continuing to build on his western flank, due to Royall's failed attack. Crook still believed that a large Cheyenne or Sioux village was in the vicinity, so he decided to make one more bid to try to envelop the attackers on the eastern flank, and ultimately find and destroy the Indian village. Crook ordered Mills to gather another task force of cavalry, and attack the Sioux and Cheyenne on the eastern flank.

Mills organized a force of three cavalry companies and attacked in the east. He initially drove through a force of approximately fifty warriors and continued to circle around the flank of the attacking Indians looking for their supposed base. Pressure on Crook's skirmish line was continuing to build, forcing Crook to send an aide, Lieutenant Nickerson, to recall Mills' force. Mills received the message and began his withdrawal back to the original line of departure. As Mills and his force were returning to their original position they came across a large concentration of Sioux and Cheyenne who were preparing to renew the attack on Crook's main force. Mills' force charged through the concentration of Indians and scattered them. The impact of Mills' force was so great, that the attacking Sioux and Cheyenne realized that they could not destroy Crook's force and decided to retreat back to their villages. Crook initially decided to pursue, but was eventually convinced by his white scouts that the Sioux and Cheyenne were trying to draw Crook and his force into a trap. Crook reconsidered his decision and decided not to

pursue. He then began the task of regrouping his force and taking care of his casualties. For a battle that lasted over four hours, the casualties for Crook's force were relatively light. Crook's column suffered nine soldiers killed, and twenty-one wounded. Sioux and Cheyenne casualties were unknown, though also considered light.<sup>21</sup>

Crook started his force south to Goose Creek on the eighteenth of June to tend to his wounded and resupply of his column. The column arrived at the planned encampment on the nineteenth of June. While at Goose Creek, Crook sent a terse message to General Sheridan explaining circumstances of the Battle of the Rosebud, elaborating on how his force had driven the Indians from the field, but that the column could not pursue the insurgents due to the casualties sustained and lack of supplies.<sup>22</sup> Crook and his command would stay at Goose Creek for six weeks awaiting resupply and reinforcements.

The Battle of the Rosebud had been a completely different experience in counter-insurgency operations from that Crook had experienced previously. The Rosebud Battle resembled more closely a Civil War battle, than any type of recent engagements in the Indian Wars. Over two thousand soldiers and warriors fought a nonlinear fluid battle in a relatively confined space, similar to a Civil War cavalry engagement, like Brandy Station. Just the sheer number of participants dwarfed anything that Crook had experienced in his previous counterinsurgency experience. The perception that the Army's leadership held when they formed the operational campaign plan, based on using the converging columns to track down fleeing insurgent bands, was totally shattered. The insurgent Sioux and Cheyenne came looking for a fight. Crook barely held his own on the Rosebud against an aggressive opponent, and Custer was annihilated when he met a

similar insurgent force at the Little Bighorn. Crook's operational and tactical techniques, which had proved effective in the southwest, were not appropriate in the combat environment of the northern plains. If finding the enemy was the key to the problem, as it was with the Apaches, then pack mules and scouts were a solution to the problem. However, if the enemy could produce overwhelming numbers on a chosen battlefield and attack aggressively, then Crook and the other commanders would have to develop new operational and tactical techniques to defeat this new type of foe.

Crook's was forced to reevaluate his campaign plan after the Rosebud fight. Initially, Crook was very cautious after the Rosebud battle. Crook felt that his column needed resupply and more importantly, needed reinforcement before further action could be contemplated. His actions after the battle illustrate a commander who had participated in a very close-run engagement and who would not place his command in another precarious position against the insurgents until his column was reinforced.

As Crook's command was reorganizing at Goose Creek, the Crow and Shoshone scouts abandoned the campaign. Both Crook and his Indian scouts were dissatisfied with each other's performance. The departure of the scouts was a serious blow to Crook's operational and tactical techniques and forced him into trying to recruit another group of scouts, further slowing down the operation. Finally in early August Crook's column was reinforced with elements of the 5th Cavalry. With these reinforcements Crook's column now numbered over two thousand in strength.<sup>23</sup> Crook has also recruited another contingent of scouts, this time consisting of scouts from the Ute and Shoshone tribes. Having reorganized his command, Crook ordered the column north, and on 10 August,

Crook's column linked up and combined with Brigadier General Terry and his column in the vicinity of Rosebud Creek and Yellowstone River.<sup>24</sup>

Crook's and Terry's combined column ponderously moved in a northeasterly direction, following the Yellowstone valley, looking for any signs of the insurgent Sioux and Cheyenne. Both Terry and Crook were now extremely cautious in their movements, due to the large size of the combined column and to the recent debacles on the Rosebud and Little Bighorn. Neither wanted to place their commands in a disadvantageous position, as Custer did on the Little Bighorn, in a fight with the combined forces of the Sioux and Cheyenne. Crook also was chafing under the restricting confines of working with Terry in a dual command. Finally on 23 August, Crook, on his own initiative, broke away from Terry's column and started to move eastward towards the Little Missouri River.<sup>25</sup>

Crook's column marched eastward in deteriorating weather conditions, plagued by logistical shortages. By 7 September, Crook's column had consumed all of their rations and was surviving on slaughtered cavalry horses and mules. In what has been aptly labeled the "Starvation March," Crook doggedly kept his column in the field looking for any signs of the still-roaming warriors. On 9 September Crook's perseverance was rewarded when an advanced guard element of his column, commanded by Captain Mills, found and attacked and destroyed an insurgent Sioux village in the vicinity of Slim Buttes, South Dakota Territory. Minneconjou Sioux tribe, who had fought at the Little Bighorn battle, inhabited the village. The Slim Buttes battle grew fierce when insurgent Sioux, lead by Crazy Horse who inhabited a village nearby, joined the battle. Mills' force eventually drove off the insurgent warriors and destroyed the

village. Though the battle was a prolonged affair, each side suffered few casualties. Mills' force had three soldiers killed and twelve wounded. Indian casualties in the Slim Buttes fight were estimated at seven to eighteen dead.<sup>26</sup> Though the battle in overall terms was a small affair, it provided the campaigning army forces with their first victory in the 1876 Sioux campaign.

Upon completion of the Slim Buttes Battle, Crook moved his weathered and famished column to Camp Robinson in Nebraska, arriving in late October. The Bighorn and Yellowstone Expedition was declared over, and Crook began to reorganize for another expedition against the still-roaming Sioux and Cheyenne. Crook's force was reinforced with elements of the 4th Cavalry, commanded by Colonel Ranald Mackenzie. Mackenzie was an outstanding cavalry commander, who had campaigned extensively against the Comanche and Cheyenne in Texas and the Indian Territory (modern-day Oklahoma). Mackenzie provided Crook with an extremely competent tactical commander, who could command the tactical-level operations, leaving Crook with the overall direction of his portion of the Sioux Campaign.<sup>27</sup>

Crook's reorganized command, numbering two thousand two hundred personnel, was now prepared for a renewed campaign, which was to be conducted during the winter of 1876 and 1887. Starting on 14 November, Crook moved his command, named the Powder River Expedition, in a northwesterly direction from Camp Robinson in search of the remaining Sioux and Cheyenne insurgents. Crook's newly recruited Ute and Shoshone scouts found a large Cheyenne village in the southern Bighorn Mountains in the vicinity of abandoned Fort Reno. Crook immediately sent Mackenzie forward with the majority of cavalry to destroy the village, which he accomplished on 25 and 26

November. Mackenzie's triumph on the Powder River forced the majority of the remaining insurgent Cheyenne back onto the reservation. Severe winter weather forced Crook to conclude his campaign earlier than planned, and he moved his column back to Fort Fetterman in late December 1876.

Throughout 1877 Crook's major emphasis was dealing with the recalcitrant Sioux on Red Cloud and Spotted Tail reservations. Crook also tried to further the peace process by sending first Chief Spotted Tail and then Chief Red Cloud in April 1877 to try to convince the war leader Crazy Horse to come to the reservation and surrender. Crazy Horse finally decided to surrender, due more to the defeat his band suffered at Wolf Mountain, than any amount of persuasion by Crook. Crazy Horse and his band finally surrendered to Crook on 6 May 1877, at Camp Robinson, Nebraska. The total number of personnel surrendering was over 899 warriors, women, and children.<sup>28</sup> The majority of remaining insurgent Sioux and Cheyenne, lacking supplies and relentlessly pursued by columns lead by Colonels Miles and Mackenzie, was moving to reservations and forts to surrender throughout the northern plains. The Sioux War of 1876 and 1877 was near termination.

Crook's last act in the Sioux War centered on the war leader Crazy Horse. Once Crook had established his command at the Red Cloud and Spotted Tail Reservations, he began to recruit for scouts from within the Sioux and Cheyenne tribes. This was the usual practice of Crook, trying to recruit within the tribes that he was in conflict with, causing a further breakdown in cohesion within the tribe. He knew that Sioux scouts would facilitate his tactical operations and further fracture the internal cohesion of the insurgent Sioux. Crook's effort to recruit scouts infuriated the newly surrendered Crazy

Horse. Crook realized that Crazy Horse could ignite a renewal of hostilities if he continued to agitate against Crook's recruiting plan. To forestall further hostilities, Crook ordered Crazy Horse's arrest on 5 September 1877. Crazy Horse resisted arrest; a brawl ensued, in which Crazy Horse was stabbed to death.<sup>29</sup> Crazy Horse's death was a major blow to the continued resistance of the Sioux and Cheyenne, leaving the majority of the insurgents leaderless. This last incident also ended Crook's major participation in the Sioux War on the northern plains.

Crook spent the next four years executing administrative duties concerning the Department of the Platte. While in command of the department Crook ordered small expeditions to be conducted against insurgent Bannocks and Northern Cheyenne. He was also intensely involved in the court case of the small Ponca tribe, where he tried to protect the tribe from being forced off of their land by corrupt government officials. Eventually he was successful in winning compensation for the Poncas and having them returned to their original land. Crook was eventually recalled to Arizona in 1882 to serve as department commander, with the task of again subduing insurgent Apaches.

Crook's overall performance as commander in the Sioux War was disappointing. His tactical and operational techniques, which he had developed in his previous commands, were shown to be less than effective against the Sioux and Cheyenne on the northern plains. On the operational level Crook was acting in a subordinate role as a column commander, which was radically different from his position in the Tonto Campaign, where he was the overall commander and coordinator of the campaign. Sheridan's operational plan left Crook little discretionary room to develop a coherent campaign to defeat the Sioux and Cheyenne. Crook seemed to operate more effectively



when he was solely in charge, than when acting in concert with other commanders. Crook was also guilty of totally underestimating the war-fighting capability of the insurgent Sioux and Cheyenne. Crook and his officers did not believe that the roaming Indians could mobilize the number of warriors that he eventually faced on the Rosebud. Further Crook, using his experience gained against the Apaches and Bannocks, did not believe that the insurgents could organize to mass and maneuver on the battlefield when in contact with the army. This perception was also proved false on the Rosebud.

Crook's tactical techniques, centered on Indian scouts, constant patrolling, and mule pack trains proved ineffective against the insurgent Sioux and Cheyenne. Throughout the campaign Crook could not recruit sufficient Indian scouts to facilitate the tracking of the insurgents. Crook, whose tactical system depended on the scouts to increase mobility and tactical flexibility, was sadly disappointed in his inability to recruit Sioux or Cheyenne warriors to fight in the campaign. In lieu of Sioux and Cheyenne scouts, Crook was forced to recruit Crow, Ute, and Shoshonne to act as scouts in the 1876 and 1877 campaign. Crook quickly became disenchanted with these scouts, even though these same scouts performed well in the initial phases of the Battle of the Rosebud. Crook was expecting the same level of expertise in his northern plains scouts as he had experienced with his Apache scouts in the southwest. Neither Crow, Shoshonne, nor Ute scouts performed up to the level of the Apache scouts in their ability to track the insurgents, or meld into the column and become a key-disciplined contingent.

Crook's other key tactical component, the mule pack train, proved largely ineffective in this campaign. Forced to mass forces due to the large number of warriors that could be placed in the field by the insurgent Sioux and Cheyenne, Crook's logistical

requirements were far greater than could be handled by a small mule pack train. Unlike the small columns with their trailing pack trains, which he had in the southwest, Crook's column of over one thousand personnel could not be solely supplied by a series of small mule pack trains. This forced Crook to slow operations, so he could carefully manage his logistical requirements. The great impact of logistical resupply on the campaign was evident after the Battle of the Rosebud, when Crook was forced to suspend operations until his column was resupplied and reinforced.

Crook was also not successful in keeping a force in the field that would keep constant pressure on the insurgents, eventually wearing down the insurgents and forcing them to surrender. Unlike his previous campaign in the Tonto Basin where he could maneuver multiple small columns, Crook was forced to mass his force, due to the large number of warriors the Sioux and Cheyenne placed in the field. This large number of troops required in column slowed his force's movement, giving the initiative to the insurgents. A small detached column was vulnerable to being overwhelmed by a massed insurgent force, as experienced by Custer's command on the Little Bighorn. Crook was caught in the quandary in wanting to maintain the initiative, but knowing that he must mass his force to avoid being defeated in detail. Throughout the campaign Crook never found the answer to this tactical problem. Ultimately Crook did not change his techniques to match his new foe, and his performance during this campaign demonstrated this inability to find the tactical and operational answers to defeat the northern plains warriors.

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<sup>1</sup>Jerome A. Greene, *George Crook, in Soldiers West*, ed. Paul Andrew Hutton (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), 122.

<sup>2</sup>Neil C. Mangum, *Battle of the Rosebud: Prelude to the Little Bighorn* (El Segundo, CA: Upton & Sons, 1987), 18.

<sup>3</sup>Peter Aleshire, *The Fox and the Whirlwind* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2000), 191.

<sup>4</sup>Greene, 123.

<sup>5</sup>John G. Bourke, *On the Border with Crook* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1891; reprint Time-Life Books, Inc., 1980), 244. Crook was placed in the awkward position of executing a government policy that he believed was detrimental for long-term Indian relations.

<sup>6</sup>Paul L. Hedren, ed., *The Great Sioux War, 1876-1877* (Helena, Montana: Historical Society Press, 1991), 13.

<sup>7</sup>*ibid.*, 12.

<sup>8</sup>Mangum, 93.

<sup>9</sup>Greene, 123.

<sup>10</sup>John S. Gray, *Centennial Campaign: The Sioux War of 1876* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976), 53.

<sup>11</sup>Mangum, 5.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, 10. Crook was beginning to realize that campaigning on the northern plains was vastly different from the campaigning in the Apacheria. Weather and scarcity of supplies would play a greater role in the Sioux Campaign of 1876, than in the Tonto Campaign of 1872.

<sup>14</sup>Mangum, 27.

<sup>15</sup>Gray, 383.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, 161.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, 118.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 122.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., Appendix B.

<sup>22</sup>Bourke, 319-320. Bourke states in this passage that Crook has no choice but to remain stationary until reinforced. Many of Crook contemporaries see a clear connection between Crook's inactivity and Custer's defeat on the Little Bighorn.

<sup>23</sup>Greene, 125.

<sup>24</sup>Gray, 384.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 230.

<sup>26</sup>Hedren, 16.

<sup>27</sup>Greene, 184-5.

<sup>28</sup>Hedren, 21.

<sup>29</sup>Greene, 125.

## CHAPTER 5

### GENERAL CROOK'S PARTICIPATION IN THE GERONIMO CAMPAIGN

General Crook's last active campaign was also his most famous. The operations against the Apaches conducted from 1882 to 1886, usually called the "Geronimo Campaign," were some of the most famous of all Indian campaigns in American history. It was one of the final chapters in the closing of the western frontier. The campaign has been romanticized in film and print, with the name of Geronimo being immortalized in American lore. Crook's operational and tactical expertise was crucial in the successful conclusion of the campaign. Ironically, Crook was not a participant in the campaign when it was completed in 1886.

General Crook was recalled to command the Department of Arizona on the fourth of September 1882.<sup>1</sup> Since his departure from the Department of Arizona in 1875, the situation in the southwest had deteriorated rapidly under his successors Brigadier General August Krautz and Major General Orlando Willcox. In 1877 the reservations had again been turned over to the Department of Interior's Indian Bureau. The majority of Chirichauas and Warm Spring Apaches had been concentrated in the reservation at San Carlos under the leadership of the civilian agent John Clum. The overcrowding on the San Carlos reservation and the vacillation within the government over the policy towards the Apache caused unrest among the Apache inhabitants. The government policy towards the Apache centered on concentration of the majority of Apaches on a smaller number of reservations, usually in hospitable areas. Further the Apache were not provided with the means to become self-sustaining, forcing the Apaches to become wards of the state. This bleak situation ultimately caused a major breakout of three hundred and

ten Warm Spring Apaches, under the leadership of Victorio in September 1877 from the San Carlos reservation. Victorio led the insurgents east to the Department of New Mexico in the vicinity of Fort Wingate, where he and his followers killed a number of ranchers and generally caused havoc throughout the territory. Victorio and his band continued to harass the white settlers until finally Victorio and his group were forced to surrender to pursuing Army columns in the vicinity of Hot Springs, New Mexico. on 8 October 1878.<sup>2</sup>

Victorio and his band did not remain prisoners for long. As the escorting soldiers were moving the band back to San Carlos, Victorio's band broke free and fled south into Mexico. While in Mexico, Victorio was joined by a number of renegade Chiricahua and Mescalero Apaches. It took another two years of campaigning by U.S. forces to force Victorio's renegades back onto the reservation. However, Victorio himself never returned to the reservation, because he was killed by the Mexican Tarahumari scout Mauricio on 14 October 1880 in the Mexican State of Chihuahua.<sup>3</sup>

With the death of Victoria, the inhabitants of the southwest thought that a period of peace had ensued. The peace was short-lived due to the advent of a religious revival movement that swept through the Apaches reservations. In 1881 a White Mountain medicine man named Nakaidoklini preached that if the White Mountain Apaches returned to the "old ways of their ancestors" that the dead of the tribes would be resurrected. To help in the resurrection process, the Apaches would have to conduct a ceremonial "ghost dance," very similar to the resurrection revival movement experienced by the Sioux in 1889 and 1890, which ultimately lead to the incident at Wounded Knee in 1890. The civilian authority on the San Carlos Reservation, J. C. Tiffany became

alarmed with the rising religious fervor on the reservation. On the fifteenth of August 1881 Tiffany informed Colonel Eugene Carr, acting commander of the department of Arizona, that he wished Nakaidoklini arrested or killed, which Tiffany felt would halt the religious movement. Carr attempted on 30 October, to capture the medicine man in the vicinity of Cibecu Creek, San Carlos Reservation. In a confused engagement Nakaidoklini was killed, and Carr's detachment was chased back to the confines of neighboring Fort Apache by a large contingent of angry White Mountain Apaches.<sup>4</sup>

The engagement at Cibecu triggered additional breakouts of Apaches throughout the Arizona Territory, due to the perception held by the Apaches that they would be punished for the Cibecu incident. A large contingent of White Mountain Apaches under the leadership of Natiotish, who had been at the center of the Cibecu Creek controversy, escaped from the San Carlos Reservation. The insurgents moved east towards New Mexico Territory, attacking unsuspecting ranches and travelers. The military forces from the Arizona and New Mexican territories, totaling fourteen companies, chased the Apaches into New Mexico. The pursuing cavalry and infantry companies eventually tracked the Apaches to the vicinity of Chevelon Fork where they defeated them on 17 July 1882 at the Battle of Big Dry Creek. The Natiotish's Apache band suffered twenty-two warriors killed in the battle and were forced back onto the reservation.<sup>5</sup> However, while a large portion of the available military in the territories was tied up chasing the insurgent White Mountain Apaches, the Chiricahua Apaches lead by Geronimo, Juh, and Nachez fled the reservation in September 1881 and moved south to the Sierra Madre Mountains in Mexico. The Chiricahua's breakout caused a further deterioration of the situation throughout the southwest.

The Cibecu incident was the catalysts for the recall of Crook to the southwest. On 2 September 1882 Crook assumed command of the Department of Arizona.<sup>6</sup> He was immediately faced with a rapidly deteriorating situation. On the operational level the trust which Crook had fostered between the Apache on the reservations and the U.S. authorities had deteriorated since his departure in 1875. Incompetent and corrupt civilian agents had forced the reservation Apaches into a state of destitution. In the early 1880s the Apaches on the reservations throughout the southwest were faced with the choice of becoming wards of the government with no hope of being self-sufficient or of breaking out from the reservations and U.S. control and being forced to survive in the inhospitable areas of the U.S. southwest and Mexico.

The so-called “Tucson Ring” of government contractors saw a self-sustaining Apache as a threat to their further profits. This powerful interest group of southwest businessmen placed pressure on Congress to continue the policy of limiting opportunities to further the self-development of the reservation Apaches. The U.S. Government’s policy towards the Apaches was still vacillating between allowing the Apaches to remain separate on small reservations, where they could continue to maintain their culture, or having the government develop a plan for the long-term acculturation for the Apaches into American society.<sup>7</sup> The “Tucson Ring” hoped to sway the government into keeping the Apache destitute, so they could continue to reap profits from ongoing contracts dealing with the military and reservations in the southwest. To compound the problem the Apaches themselves did not have a clear vision of how the tribes should approach the future. A large number of Apaches throughout most of the tribes, especially after the Big Dry Creek battle, had resigned themselves to living under the control of the American



authorities. However a small hard-core minority, centered on the Chirichua tribe, refused to accept the authority of the U.S. Government and was prepared to fight to defend their old way of life. These were the Apaches that had broken out from the San Carlos reservation during the Cibecu Incident. This complex situation faced Crook when he arrived from the northern plains in September 1882.

Upon his arrival in the Arizona Territory and assumption of command, Crook realized that he would have to develop a comprehensive plan at the operational and tactical level to defeat the Apache insurgency. This campaign plan had to accomplish the twin goals of reestablishing control of the Apaches who remained on the reservations and the defeat of the insurgent Apaches, which numbered approximately six hundred persons, who were loose in northern Mexico. Crook could not pressure the Departments of the Interior and War--agencies that had direct control of Apache matters--to establish a clear long-term strategic policy concerning the Apaches, a situation which forced Crook to develop a campaign plan that only encompassed the operational and tactical levels of the Apache problem in the southwest.

At the operational level Crook quickly realized that he had to reestablish control on the reservations, which had deteriorated since his departure in 1875. Crook saw the key to this problem was trying to regain the confidence and trust of the reservation Apaches, which had eroded under his predecessors. This erosion can be directly attributed to the vacillating policy of the administration and the implementation of that vacillating policy by the corrupt officials of the Department of Interior's Indian Bureau. Vast amounts of graft and corruption were tied to the sale of food and implements to the reservation Apaches. The local contractors, who sold goods to the reservation Apaches

and the Army, made fortunes in short-changing the Apaches in food and items that were allocated to them by the Congress. As Bourke states, “The ring was determined that no Apache should be put to the embarrassment of working for his own living; once let the Apaches become self-supporting, and what would become of ‘the boys’? [Agreements that Indians respected] were all swept away like cobwebs, while the conspirators laughed in their sleeves. They had only to report by telegraph that the Apaches ‘were uneasy’ ‘refused to obey the orders of the agents,’ and a lot more stuff of the same kind, and the Great White Father would send ten regiments to carry out the schemes of the ring, but he would never send one honest, truthful man to inquire whether the Apaches had a story or not.”<sup>8</sup> Crook saw the initial solution to breaking the Apache’s chain of dependence, prorogated by the “Tucson Ring,” was to remove the Department of Interior’s appointed Indian agents, who resided on the reservations, and replace them with trusted Army officers. Due to the critical situation on the reservations, Crook received authorization to do just that.

The officers that Crook recalled to take over the reservations were ones that he believed could regain the trust of the Apaches on the reservation, while also organizing and leading detachments of Apache scouts when called upon. The first key officer that was recalled by Crook was Captain Emmet Crawford. This outstanding officer, who was assigned to the 3rd Cavalry, had previously served with Crook in the Tonto Basin and Sioux Campaigns. Crook assigned Crawford to assume command of all the Apache scouts recruited throughout the territory and to report directly to Crook’s headquarters. Another key officer that Crook recalled was Lieutenant Britton Davis. Davis was assigned to command the San Carlos Agency and the scouts assigned there. These scouts

would eventually assume the titles of the reconstituted B and E companies, Apache Scouts.<sup>9</sup> The final officer, which Crook would depend on heavily during this campaign, was Lieutenant Charles Gatewood. Gatewood, a 6th Cavalry officer, had spent more time leading Apache scouts than any other army officer stationed in the southwest.<sup>10</sup> His mission was to command the White Mountain Apache Reservation. All of these officers were experienced in Apache affairs and could be counted on by Crook to execute his counterinsurgency policy.

Crook began to reestablish trust with the reservation Apaches by issuing General Order No. 43 on 5 October 1882, which stated, "Officers and soldiers serving this department are reminded that one of the fundamental principles of military character is justice to all--Indians as well as white man--and that a disregard of this principle is likely to bring about hostilities, and cause the death of the very persons they are sent here to protect."<sup>11</sup> Crook realized that a key component of his campaign plan at the operational level was the transformation of the negative attitudes held by the Apaches towards the white authorities. This change of attitude could only begin if the Apache felt that they were being treated fairly by the commanders of the reservations.

Crook also reestablished a number of procedures that he had implemented during his previous command of the Department of Arizona in the 1870s. After a number of conferences with key Apache leaders at the major Apache reservations, Crook informed the Apache leaders that the military commanders of the reservations would reestablish population control within the reservation by the use of a personnel-numbering system. He also took steps to reestablish the Apache reservation police, with the objective of turning over mundane policing duties to the Apache inhabitants. To relieve the

overcrowding on the main populated area of the San Carlos Reservation, Crook allowed the tribes to spread out throughout the reservation, which eventually opened up further areas of the reservation for farming and grazing.<sup>12</sup>

Another aspect of Crook's campaign plan that was essential for his success was the authority to operate against the insurgent Apaches throughout the southwest to include northern Mexico. Though there had been informal agreements between the United States and Mexico concerning the pursuit of insurgent Indians crossing the U.S.-Mexican borders, the governments of Mexico and the U.S. had finally established a formal working agreement on 29 July 1882, to allow hot pursuit of Apache raiders across the international border. To facilitate coordination Crook met with the Mexican commanders from the northern portion of Mexico during the latter portion of 1882. This face-to-face coordination would be extremely beneficial for Crook's column commanders when they were chasing Geronimo and his bands.

On the tactical level Crook developed a twofold program to defeat the insurgent Apaches. Having established that almost all of the insurgents were in hiding south of the border in the rugged Sierra Madre Mountains, Crook knew from his Tonto Basin experience that the major strike force for this campaign would have to center on the Apache scout contingents. The Apache scout detachments provided Crook with the ability to track and defeat the insurgents in the rough Northern Mexican terrain. The Apache scout units, which Crook had diligently organized, had languished under Crook's successors. Since the insurgent Apaches were only from the dissident elements of the Chiricahua tribe, Crook could recruit scouts from a larger manpower pool of reservation Apaches, which included both Chiricahua and non-Chiricahua Apaches. Upon

assumption of command, Crook began to build up the Apache scout contingents, with the scouts eventually organized into two loose battalion-sized formations. Captain Crawford was in overall command of the Apache scout contingents, with Lieutenant Davis commanding the 1st Battalion and Lieutenant Gatewood commanding the 2nd Battalion.

This formation of Apache scout units, which would concentrate on tracking and destroying the insurgents, allowed the available U.S. Army units to be used to form a protective screen along the U.S.-Mexican border. The purpose of the screen was to seal the border from insurgent Apaches trying to raid into the United States territories of Arizona and New Mexico. The army units were formed into two screening lines stretching along the border, with the task of watching the most likely avenues that the insurgent Apache raiders could travel into the U.S. The assigned army units were also tasked to patrol the scarce-watering holes scattered across the southwest territories. By cutting the raiding Apache off from available water sources, Crook hoped to channel the raiders into his protective screen. Crook would use this two-tiered approach to defeat the Apaches at the tactical level.

As Crook was initiating his plans to reorganize the reservations and the military posture within his area of responsibility, the situation within the territories continued to deteriorate. An Apache raiding party crossed the Mexican-American border on 20 March 1883. The party was led by the Chiricahua warriors Chatto, Bonito, and Chihuahua. This raiding party consisted of twenty-six warriors, who immediately struck a mining camp ten miles south of Tombstone, Arizona, killing four miners. The raiders slashed through Arizona and New Mexico attacking unsuspecting travelers and miners. The culmination of the raid was an attack on a buckboard wagon carrying Federal Judge H. C.

McMomas and his family. The raiders slaughtered the Judge and his family, causing a national outcry due to the Judge's prominence throughout the country. There was now tremendous pressure placed on Crook to capture the raiders and exact retribution.<sup>13</sup> The forces patrolling the border tried to catch the raiding party; however, the raiders eluded the army patrols and slipped back across the border on 27 March 1883. The final tally for Chatto's raid was twenty-six American civilians killed versus two Apache casualties. Crook decided not to immediately pursue the raiders into Mexico. Crook decided that a more far-reaching operation would have to be conducted south of the border if the insurgents were going to be defeated or captured. This type of cross-border operation would take additional time to prepare.

Crook formed a task force built around his Apache scouts. The task force consisted of 193 Warm Spring Apache scouts, one troop of cavalry totaling 45 troopers, a number of white scouts, and a pack train consisting of 350 pack mules.<sup>14</sup> Crook decided that the decisive point of the expedition would be the relentless pursuit of the Chiricahua leader Geronimo and his band until they were destroyed or forced to surrender. Crook concluded that Geronimo was the key warrior within the Chiricahua tribe, and if Crook could force the surrender of Geronimo and his band, then this might influence all the other insurgent Apaches in Mexico to also surrender and return to the reservation. Once Crook crossed the border into Mexico, the remaining U.S. Army forces would try to seal the border, to stop the insurgents from dodging Crook's column and raiding back into the United States.

Crook's column crossed the border into Mexico on 1 May 1883. Crook placed a large number of Apache and white scouts forward to try to pick up the trail of

Geronimo's band. By 3 May, the column had reached thirty miles north of the town of Bavispe, at the base of the Sierra Madre Mountains. The column continued in a southeasterly direction for eight days, steadily moving higher into the mountains. On the eleventh of May, Captain Crawford, commander of the Apache scout detachment, sent back a note to Crook stating that they had discovered a trail, which was possibly Geronimo's, and were following it. On the fifteenth of May, the first contact was made between the column's scouts and the now fleeing insurgents. Crook hurried the main column forward to support Crawford's scouts. Later on the fifteenth of May, Crawford linked up with Crook and the main column. Crawford reported that in the morning of the fifteenth the Apache scouts had attacked an Apache rancherio, which had housed the insurgent leaders Bonito and Chatto. The scouts had killed nine warriors and captured five women and children. The action was totally fought by the scout detachment, with no regular cavalry involved, as noted by Bourke.<sup>15</sup>

This fight had badly shaken the faith of the insurgent Apaches. The U.S. Army had attacked them in their most secure hideaway in the Sierra Madre Mountains. To further compound the problem for the insurgents, it was their own brethren, the White Mountain Apaches, who had found and defeated them. On 17 May the defeated Apaches started to make their way into Crook's camp. Chihuahua, one of the key leaders in the insurgency, surrendered on 18 May, with forty-five of his Apache followers. On 20 May Geronimo moved to Crook's camp to see what surrender terms he could obtain from Crook for himself and his band. Crook believed that if he could force Geronimo and his band to surrender, then there was a high probability that the remaining insurgents would also surrender. Other key leaders, such as Nana and Loco, drifted into Crook's camp on

the twenty third of May. Crook now had all of the key leaders of the Chiricahuas in his camp negotiating for the best terms for surrender for their followers. It was an extremely tense time for Crook, whose force was extended deep into Mexico, with no immediate means of reinforcement available.<sup>16</sup>

Crook eventually convinced all of the Chiricahua to return to the reservation at San Carlos. He also allowed Geronimo and his band to return to the reservation without escort. Crook broke camp on 30 May and started to move towards the international border with a number of surrendered Apaches in tow. This group of surrendered Apaches continued to swell until it eventually reached 325 Apaches. Crook crossed the border and arrived at the San Carlos reservation with his party on 10 June 1883. However, Crook was extremely worried that Geronimo and his band would renege on the agreement that they made between them in Mexico. Crook sent a number of scouting parties out to find Geronimo; however, all were unsuccessful. Finally Geronimo and his band began to straggle into San Carlos at the beginning of February 1884, with all the band finally arriving by the end of the month. With Geronimo at San Carlos it seemed that the insurgency was finally concluded.

After the surrender and return of Geronimo, Crook was criticized in many quarters for the lenient terms that he had given to the insurgent Apaches. Crook had allowed the insurgent Chiricahua to return to the reservation with the only stipulation that they give up their weapons to the authorities. These lenient terms were part of Crook's overall policy, which had been developed to combat the Apache insurgency. Crook believed that a lenient surrender policy coupled with relentless pursuit of any insurgent that had left the reservation would force the Apaches to remain on the reservation. This



psychological factor of “carrot and stick,” which Crook hoped to place in the Apache’s collective mind, would help to keep the Apaches on the reservation and further the acculturation process that Crook had reestablished.

Crook stated in his annual report of 1884 to the Secretary of War “that for the first time in the history of that fierce people, every member of the Apache tribe is at peace.”<sup>17</sup> However, this peaceful situation was only temporary. Crook continued to concentrate his efforts on spreading the Chiricahua tribe throughout the San Carlos Reservation. He tasked Lieutenant Britton Davis to move the surrendered Chiricahua of Geronimo’s band to a remote portion of San Carlos at a location called Turkey Creek. This would lessen the pressure of overpopulation among the Apaches within the San Carlos Reservation. Davis was ordered to help promote farming and cattle raising with the newly surrendered Apaches. As part of another aspect of the acculturation process, Davis was ordered by Crook to prohibit the Apaches from drinking the alcoholic beverage tizwin and to stop the Apache males from beating their wives, a long-standing Apache custom. The Apaches at Turkey Creek soon became disenchanted with pressure being placed on them by Crook’s administration to change their traditional ways.

Throughout the latter portion of 1884 tension at San Carlos Reservation continued to mount. Lieutenant Davis was forced to arrest one of the key leaders of the Chiricahua, Kayetenay, when it was found that Katetenay had plotted to murder Davis. The Apaches also continued to beat their wives and brew and drink tizwin on the reservation, clearly flaunting Crook’s established policies. The Arizona newspapers, controlled by the “Tucson Ring,” continued to lambaste Crook for his initiatives to make the Apaches of San Carlos self-sufficient. Crook’s lenient counterinsurgency policy was also receiving

little support from his superiors, especially the Commanding General of the Army, Lieutenant General Sheridan.<sup>18</sup> Sheridan felt that the Apaches should be beaten into submission and that no effort should be made to improve the lot of the Apaches once they were defeated. Crook willingly took criticism from all quarters, knowing that his policy was correct, but that it would take years to implement the policy properly and complete the acculturation process of the Apaches.

However events would overtake Crook's carefully thought-out plan. The Apache leaders at Turkey Creek--Juh, Mangus, Geronimo, Chihuahua, Natchez, and Loco--decided to bring the situation to a head by directly challenging Crook's policies. On 15 May 1885, Lieutenant Davis was confronted by a group of Apache leaders, who claimed that they had drunk tizwin all night. These leaders wanted to know what Davis was going to do about their clear violation of Crook's policy concerning tizwin. Davis, realizing the seriousness of the situation, decided to play for time, and he told the leaders that he would wire Crook for instructions.<sup>19</sup> Due to a mix-up in communications between Davis and his immediate supervisor Captain Pierce, Crook did not immediately receive the telegraph message from Davis, forcing Davis to continue to stall the Apache leaders at Turkey Creek concerning his future actions. By the morning of the eighteenth of May, there had been no reply received from Crook, causing great consternation within the Apache leadership. The Apache leadership was extremely concerned with a possible severe reaction by Crook. The leadership decided that they could not remain on the reservation, waiting for Crook's possible retribution. In the early afternoon of the eighteenth as Lieutenant Davis was umpiring a baseball game, a large number of Chiricahua Apaches, to include Geronimo, broke out from the reservation and headed

towards Mexico. The total number of insurgents that had fled included forty-two warriors and approximately ninety women and children.<sup>20</sup>

Davis immediately organized a force to chase the insurgents. Davis's force consisted of twelve Apache scouts and two troops of the 4th Cavalry. Davis was later joined by Lieutenant Gatewood, who had arrived from Fort Apache with an additional fifteen Apache scouts. Davis and Gatewood tried to track the runaway Apaches for sixty-five miles, but eventually the chase was given up after the insurgent's trail was lost. Geronimo and his insurgents traveled one hundred and fifty miles without stopping, easily outdistancing the pursuing units. However the stress of the chase caused internal dissension within the ranks of the Apaches, forcing a split within the group. Half of the insurgents, under the leadership of Chihuahua, remained north of the international border in the vicinity of Morenci, Arizona, north of the Gila River. Geronimo and Mangus lead the remainder of the insurgents south of the international border, with Mangus leading his band into the Mexican state of Chihuahua, and Geronimo continuing with his group south into the Sierra Madre Mountains. This lack of synergy within the Apache insurgents compounded Crook's task of capturing or destroying the insurgent bands, due to the large area in the Apacheria Crook's forces had to operate in trying to track down the divergent insurgent bands.

Crook and the outside world were finally informed of the Apache breakout from San Carlos Reservation on 20 May 1885. It immediately seemed to most outside observers, to include Lieutenant General Sheridan, that Crook's operational strategy towards the Apache had failed. His attempt to acculturate the insurgents in the relatively short period of time since his assumption of command in 1882 had not proven effective.

The local newspapers within the territories were inflamed with stories of supposed Apache deprivations. Crook knew that he had to act immediately to retrieve the situation, or suffer failure of his counterinsurgency plan. On 21 May Crook ordered eight different columns to scout throughout the southern portions of the Arizona and New Mexico Territories to try to catch the insurgents before they crossed the border.<sup>21</sup> The War Department gave Crook operational control over forces in the New Mexico Territory to help in the pursuit of the insurgents. Crook moved his headquarters to Fort Bowie, Arizona Territory, so he could be centrally located along the Southern Pacific Railroad to facilitate the control of his moving forces that were now in pursuit of the insurgent Apaches.

However, the multiple military columns gravitated to the trail of Chihuahua's band which was hiding in the Chiricahua Mountains, south of Fort Bowie. This left Geronimo and Mangus's bands free to infiltrate freely into northern Mexico. Chihuahua's band was chased remorsefully, with contact being made on 23 June in the vicinity of Bavispe, Mexico, just south of the international border. Chihuahua's band suffered minor casualties, but lost most of their horses. Chihuahua then moved his band northward, across the international border, where he continued to raid throughout the southern portion of the Departments of Arizona and New Mexico.<sup>22</sup>

Crook now had to reconsider his operational and tactical plan. The initial thrust of multiple columns blanketing the southern areas of the Arizona and New Mexico territories had come up empty handed. Crook faced an enemy with at least one band marauding through the southern portion of his command. Also Crook had to assume that at least two other known bands of insurgents had moved into the northern states of

Mexico, with the possible destination being the extremely inhospitable Sierra Madre Mountains. Crook was also receiving increasing pressure from his superiors in Washington, D.C., and local government authorities to capture the runaway insurgents and ship the whole tribe to some prison in the east. Finally the local media was heightening hysteria throughout the southwest by publishing lurid tales of the Apache raids. Crook realized that at all levels positive action was required immediately.

Crook decided to repeat his two-prong approach that he had used in his previous campaign against Geronimo. He would reestablish his screen along the border, covering key avenues of approach from Mexico and maintaining surveillance on the crucial watering holes. Crook would then form mobile task forces, composed mostly of Apache scouts, to track and destroy the insurgents in the inhospitable regions of Mexico. Crook's tactical concept for capturing the insurgents was outlined in the following message:

The four troops 4th Cavalry from Fort Huachuca left on the fifth (of July) for their stations on the border and will be placed at Copper Canyon, Song Mountain, Solomon's Spring and Mud Springs. I expect on the ninth to send four more troops of the 4th Cavalry from here, to be stationed at Willow Springs, San Bernardino, Skeleton Canyon and Guadalupe Canyon. Two companies of the 10th Infantry are en-route to San Luis Pass. Three troops 6th Cavalry left Separ today for the line in New Mexico. The stations have been selected with the greatest care so as to give open country between these stations and the line. With each detachment of troops there will be stationed (five) Indian scouts who are to be used exclusively in watching and scouting in advance of the line to prevent as nearly as possible the approach of any hostiles without the troops being notified. These dispositions will cover the line as thoroughly as possible from the Rio Grande as far west as it is thought probable the Indians will attempt to recross into the United States.

In the rear of the advance line I shall place the troops of the 10th Cavalry to intercept parties should they succeed in sneaking through the first line. These dispositions are the best that can be made, in my judgement. I have given orders for the search in the Sierra Madre to be most vigorous and to pursue any party which may attempt to return so closely as to endeavor to drive them towards the troops and force them to cross in daylight.<sup>23</sup>

Once Crook felt that his forces were securely screening the border, he then formed his two task-force columns to track down the insurgent bands in Mexico. The first task force to move against the insurgents was under the command of the ever-efficient Captain Crawford. His force consisted of one cavalry troop from the 6th Cavalry, ninety-two Apache scouts under the command of Lieutenant Davis. He received orders from Crook on 11 June, to move south and scour the Sierra Madre Mountains looking for the fleeing insurgent Apaches. Captain Wirt Davis commanded the second task force. This task force was formed around a troop of cavalry from the 4th Cavalry, one-hundred Apache scouts under the leadership of Lieutenant Day, and two mule pack trains. Wirt's force received its orders from Crook on 13 July. His column was also to scout the Sierra Madre Mountains thoroughly, working in conjunction with Crawford's column to maintain constant pressure on the insurgents in their safest sanctuary.<sup>24</sup>

Crawford moved south into Mexico following the trail that Crook blazed in 1883. Crawford's column swept through the Mexican towns of Bacerac, Estancia, Huachinera, and then into Oputo looking for signs of Apache insurgents. Crawford was deploying a smaller scouting party under the leadership of Apache scout Chatto as an advanced guard, forward of the column to try to track down the insurgents. On 23 June Chatto's party made contact with the insurgents in the foothills of the Sierra Madres. Most of the insurgents got away; however, Chatto's detachment did capture fifteen Apaches, mostly women and children. Crawford's command continued to scout the western portion of the Sierra Madre range in the vicinity of Nacori. After the initial skirmish with the insurgents, Crawford's column eventually lost their trail and was forced to resupply and refit in the town of Bavispe.

Davis' column had crossed into Mexico and had begun to scout the eastern portion of the Sierra Madre Mountains. His column made contact with Geronimo's band on 28 July and again on 7 August, killing five Apaches and capturing fifteen. Davis tried to maintain contact with Geronimo's band, but Geronimo was too wily as an insurgent leader. He led the Davis command down the eastern side of the Sierra Madres into the state of Chihuahua, then northward into the U.S, all the time stealing fresh mounts from isolated farms. Davis' column eventually lost the trail of Geronimo's band and moved back into the mountains looking for other insurgent bands. On 23 September Davis's column made contact with an unknown band and sustained one casualty.

As both columns were scouting deep into the mountains, small groups of insurgents tried to infiltrate past the two columns and reenter the United States. These small-raiding parties went north for the dual purpose of gaining supplies and more importantly, to persuade other Chiricahua Apache, who remained on the reservation, to join the insurgents in Mexico. The first group of insurgents, with a strength of twenty warriors, crossed the international border on 28 September and tried to infiltrate through Crook's screen line in the vicinity of the San Simon Valley. The insurgents were initially turned back by the screening force but eventually made it through the screen line by traveling through the high Chiricahua Mountains. Once by the screen line the insurgent party began to raid in the vicinity of the Tombstone, Arizona. Crook put his reserve forces in motion and two troops of 10th Cavalry chased the insurgent band back across the border on 30 September. However, the raiding party had killed three Americans and stolen numerous horses.<sup>25</sup>

Upon the conclusion of this first insurgent raid into the U.S., Crook decided to bring his two task forces back across the border to resupply and refit. Crook, after conferring with his subordinates, decided to continue to place the major effort of the campaign south of the international border. Crawford and Davis were ordered to Fort Apache and San Carlos Reservation, respectively, to reorganize their commands. Most of the Apache scouts in both commands had completed their enlistment and were immediately discharged upon arrival at their respective forts. During October and early November Crawford and Davis began to recruit a new contingent of scouts for the next expedition into Mexico. While his commands were refitting, Crook met with Governor Luis E. Torres of Sonora, to map out the next steps in his campaign plan. The meeting with Torres seemed to be successful, with Torres issuing an order for the Mexican forces to fully cooperate with the American task forces.

As Crook was preparing his forces to continue the campaign in the southwest, another band of Apache insurgents swept out of the deep reaches of the Sierra Madre Mountains, crossed the border, and began raiding in the southwest. The insurgent band numbered only ten warriors, led by a young Chiricahua named Josanie. Josanie's band crossed into the Florida Mountains in New Mexico in early November 1885, where he was joined by sixteen additional warriors. He and his band began a furious series of raids that terrorized the population of the southwest. In a period of a month and one-half Josanie's band killed thirty-eight Americans and stole two hundred fifty horses with the loss of one warrior.<sup>26</sup> The southwest was in an uproar, and Crook was under great pressure to stop the raiding Apaches.



By the beginning of December 1885 both of the task forces were prepared to resume the campaign south of the border against the insurgent Apaches. Crawford's column, designated the 2nd Battalion of Indian Scouts, consisted of one hundred Chiricahua and White Mountain Apaches and two complete mule pack trains with twenty-five civilian packers. Crawford's column was unique, due to the fact that no army units were assigned to the column. This force composition was the culmination of Crook's tactical thinking concerning mobility and the ability to stay on the insurgent's trail. Crawford's column would show that the only truly effective force in this type of campaign was an all-Apache scout force lead by army officers, supported logistically by the mule pack train. Davis' column was organized similarly to Crawford's with the exception that Davis was also given one troop of cavalry to round out the force. Crook met with both commanders on the twenty-sixth of November, at Fort Apache to give them their final instructions for the campaign in Mexico. On the eleventh of December, Crook launched both columns into Mexico with the hope that this final expedition would be the culmination of the "Geronimo Campaign."<sup>27</sup>

Crawford had received information that an insurgent band was located in the vicinity of Oputo on the Bavaispe River. Davis also had recent intelligence that another band was located in the vicinity of Casas Grandes, in the foothills of the Sierra Madre Mountains. Crawford's column picked up the insurgent trail at Oputo and followed it south to Haros River. Positive identification of an insurgent band was made on 9 January 1886, by the advanced guard of Crawford's column. Crawford pushed his column remorselessly for forty-eight hours to reach the location of the insurgent camp. After a tortuous movement Crawford's column attacked the rancharia, located sixty miles north

of Nacori, at daybreak on 10 January. Surprise was lost when a mule began to bray, but Crawford decided to continue on with the attack. Geronimo and his band occupied the rancharia that had been identified by Crawford's scouts. Geronimo, seeing that he was outnumbered and in an indefensible position, ordered his followers to scatter. Almost all of the warriors, women, and children got away without being captured, so Crawford destroyed the camp and all of the supplies that had been stored there.<sup>28</sup>

Though the attack had not produced any insurgent casualties, it had made a great psychological impact on Geronimo. Crook's forces, lead by Chiricahua and White Mountain scouts, had found Geronimo and his band in the most remote area of the Sierra Madre Mountains. It now seemed to Geronimo and the other Apache leaders that no location in the Sierra Madre Mountains was safe from the relentless American task forces. On the evening of the tenth of January, an emissary from Geronimo's band came into Crawford's camp requesting that Crawford meet with Geronimo and Nachez to discuss terms of surrender. However, as Crawford and his command were moving towards the location for the conference they had a chance contact with a Mexican para-military group that had also been tracking Geronimo and his band. This chance encounter led to a firefight between Crawford's Apache scouts and the Mexicans troops. Crawford was killed during the firefight and it took two days of negotiations by Lieutenant Maus, Crawford's second in command, to calm the situation between the two forces.

Geronimo, hearing the firing between the Americans and the Mexicans and fearing some sort of treachery, moved his force further away from the proposed conference location. However Geronimo still wanted to hold the conference with the

Americans, and a meeting was coordinated to take place between Maus and Geronimo. Geronimo and Maus met on 13 January, and it was agreed at the conference that Geronimo would meet with Crook in “two moons” to try resolve the insurgency. The location of the conference between the Chiricahua leaders and Crook was established at the Canyon de los Embudos, just south of the international border. Maus also arranged for the Chiricahua leader Nana and seven of his followers, who had been travelling with Geronimo’s band, to return to the reservation at San Carlos under Maus’s escort. On 10 February, Crook was informed of the results of the negotiations between Geronimo and Maus, and he quickly agreed with the terms. Crook informed his superiors of the proposed conference and the opportunity to end the campaign.

Crook continued to be under tremendous pressure from Washington and the local populace to capture the insurgent Chiricahua and end the insurgency. However Crook’s superiors, President Cleveland and Lieutenant General Sheridan, allowed Crook very limited flexibility in a negotiation position when dealing with the Chiricahua leadership. Crook was not given specific guidance on terms to offer to the Chiricahua insurgents, only that unconditional surrender was preferred by the government.<sup>29</sup> Crook’s negotiating strategy would center on convincing the Chiricahua leaders, especially Geronimo, that he was willing to wage war on the insurgents as long as it took to subdue them. However, he knew in actuality that he did not have either unlimited time or resources to pursue an extended campaign. During the negotiations Crook would have to convince the insurgents to surrender and be placed in captivity in the east. Crook prepared his party to move to the negotiation site. The party consisted of his aides Lieutenants Bourke and Roberts, the Chiricahua scouts Alchise and Katetenay, a

Tombstone photographer C. S. Fly, a small escort of troops, and the omnipresent mule pack train.

On the twenty-second of March 1886, Crook and his party crossed the international border. The party arrived at the Canon de los Embudos on 25 March. The Apache leaders were already present, to include Geronimo, Nachez, Chihuahua, Nana, Josanie, Caytano, and Noche. Negotiations began with the Apaches explaining their grievances. Crook countered by stating, "You must make up your own mind whether you will stay out on the warpath or surrender unconditionally. If you stay out I'll keep after you and kill the last one, if it takes fifty years."<sup>30</sup> Negotiations continued off and on between the parties for the next three days. As the negotiations continued Crook sent his Apache scouts, Alchise and Kayetenay, to gather intelligence from the insurgent side, and secretly persuade certain wavering insurgent leaders to accept Crook's terms. Finally on the twenty-seventh of March, all of the insurgent leaders agreed to unconditionally surrender and be placed into captivity in the eastern part of the United States for two years. Upon completion of their sentences the insurgent Chiricahua would be returned to San Carlos Reservation to reside. Crook was satisfied that he had secured an equitable agreement with the insurgents which they would abide by and that he had conducted these negotiations within the vague instructions received from his superiors. Crook hoped that when the incarcerated insurgent Apaches were sent back to their reservation his ongoing program of acculturation would continue. However, in all cases concerning the insurgent Chiricahua, Crook soon found that he was mistaken.

Crook ordered Lieutenant Maus and a small party to escort the surrendering Apaches back to the reservation at San Carlos. Crook and the remainder of his party

returned to Fort Bowie on the twenty-ninth of March, to prepare for the arrival of the surrendered insurgents. Maus began escorting the Apache party, which numbered approximately one hundred and six warriors, women, and children, back towards the international border. As Maus' party neared the border at Contrabandista Springs, they met a trader named Bob Tribollet, a bootlegger and friend of the Tucson Ring. During the morning and afternoon on the twenty-ninth of March, Tribollet had sold whiskey to Geronimo and his friends. He also told the soon-to-be-drunk group that once the surrendered Chiricahua had crossed the border, Maus and his Apache scouts intended to kill all of the prisoners. It is not clear what Tribollet's motive was in telling Geronimo and friends this story. It is possible that Tribollet told Geronimo these rumors as part of an overall scheme planned by the Tucson Ring to keep the insurgency going, which would help the Ring continue to make money from ongoing military and reservation contracts. However the results were predictable, once Geronimo sobered up later in the day, he gathered his band numbering twenty-two individuals and secretly escaped in the darkness and ran back to his hideouts in the Sierra Madre Mountains.<sup>31</sup>

Maus proceeded to give chase to Geronimo's band and immediately informed Crook of Geronimo's departure. Crook then sent the sad news to Sheridan in Washington of Geronimo's breakout. Sheridan was furious and wired back to Crook on the thirty-first of March, blaming Crook's Apache scouts for allowing Geronimo to get away. Sheridan also concluded that the Apache scouts were possibly in collusion with the insurgents.<sup>32</sup> This last accusation was more than Crook could take from his superior, with Sheridan's accusation bearing a direct reflection on Crook's operational and tactical procedures. A series of acrimonious telegrams were sent between Sheridan and Crook on

the thirty-first of March and the first of April, with the final message from Sheridan requesting that Crook explain his future plans. Crook immediately wired back to Sheridan requesting relief if the President and War Department did not have confidence in his conduct of operations against the insurgent Apaches. On 2 April 1886, Crook received orders relieving him of his command in the southwest and reassigning him to the command of the Department of the Platte, headquartered in Omaha. Crook's active participation in Indian fighting campaigns was finished.

General Miles assumed command from Crook and initially developed a different operational and tactical approach than Crook had executed during his campaign. Miles, discounting the validity of the Apache scout concept, concentrated on forming mobile cavalry task forces, which were composed solely of army personnel. Miles' plan consisted of blanketing the territories with small outposts, connected by a heliograph system, with the purpose of leaving no area uncovered within the southwest. Once the insurgent Apaches were sighted by these outposts, a message would be sent to the closest task force to begin pursuit. These cavalry forces were not to quit the pursuit until they had run down the insurgents and destroyed them. On the operational level Miles insisted on unconditional surrender with no conditions being offered to the insurgents. Miles reorganized the command in accordance with his vision. Apache scout units were disbanded, and the commanders sent to other duties. Miles began his campaign to hunt down Geronimo and his band, but quickly realized the futility of using all-army task forces to chase the insurgents. Time and again the Apaches of Geronimo's band would slip away from a pursuing force.

Miles also quickly realized that by offering only unconditional surrender as the only option to the insurgents, he had provided no incentive for the insurgents to surrender. After six months of futile campaigning, Miles came to the conclusion that his operational and tactical techniques, which he had initiated in beginning of his campaign, would not be effective in concluding the operation and that he would have to reinstate certain practices used by Crook. Apache scouts were reenrolled and sent in pursuit of Geronimo. Further Miles tasked Lieutenant Gatewood and two Apache scouts to go find Geronimo's band and try to negotiate some type of surrender terms with the insurgents. Gatewood successfully negotiated the surrender of Geronimo, which took place on 3 September 1886 at Skeleton Canyon, Arizona. Geronimo's band, along with numerous other Chiricahuas, was shipped to Florida to begin a long period of internment. Crook, though no longer responsible for the conduct of the campaign against the Chiricahuas, tried to exert influence within the government to ease the hardship of the Apaches jailed in Florida. Eventually the surviving Chiricahua Apaches, who had been placed in captivity were moved to the Indian Territory in 1894 to permanently reside.

Violence concerning the Apaches in Arizona and New Mexico continued to plague the southwest up through the turn of the century, but with the capture of Geronimo, the large-scale Apache insurgency had finally ended. Though Crook was not in command when the campaign was completed, his methods, which he had developed during his two major campaigns in the southwest, were proved to be the only tactical and operational techniques that were effective against an enemy as formidable as the Apaches. Other methods were tried but only Crook's methods were proved to be effective in the long term in dealing with the Apache insurgency.

<sup>1</sup>Odie B. Faulk, *The Geronimo Campaign* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), 34.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>3</sup>Dan L. Trapp, *The Conquest of Apacheria* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), 209. It was finally established that the Tarahumari scout Mauricio was the individual that killed Victorio. For his accomplishment Mauricio was given a fancy nickled rifle by the Mexican State of Chihuahua.

<sup>4</sup>Faulk, 24.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>6</sup>Trapp, 254.

<sup>7</sup>Faulk, 35.

<sup>8</sup>John G. Bourke, *On the Border with Crook* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1891; reprint, Time-Life Books, Inc, 1980), 437.

<sup>9</sup>Thomas W. Dunlay, *Wolves for the Blue Soldiers* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 175. Davis would eventually resign his commission during the Geronimo Campaign, due for the most part to the trying circumstances of the numerous chases in the Apacheria which he participated in.

<sup>10</sup>Faulk, 35.

<sup>11</sup>Bourke, 443.

<sup>12</sup>Thrapp, 262.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, 270.

<sup>14</sup>Bourke, 453.

<sup>15</sup>John G. Bourke, *An Apache Campaign in the Sierra Madre* (New York: 1886), 53-54, quoted in Dan L. Trapp, *Conquest of the Apacheria* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), 287.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, 292.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, 302.

<sup>18</sup>Faulk, 51.

<sup>19</sup>Thrapp, 312-313. Captain Pierce had only been stationed at San Carlos for two months. Being inexperienced in Apache affairs, Pierce turned to the famed Indian scout



Al Sieber for an opinion on Davis' telegraph. Sieber was in the process of sleeping off a drunk and quickly read the message and told Pierce, "Oh it was nothing but a Tizwin drunk, and that Davis will handle it."

<sup>20</sup>Faulk, 56.

<sup>21</sup>Thrapp, 322.

<sup>22</sup>Faulk, 65.

<sup>23</sup>Thrapp, 327.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 328.

<sup>25</sup>Faulk., 68.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 73.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 75.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 79.

<sup>29</sup>George Crook, *Resume of Operations Against the Apache Indians, 1882-1886* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1887), 12, quoted in Dan L. Trapp, *The Conquest of Apacheria* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), 345.

<sup>30</sup>Bourke, 475.

<sup>31</sup>Charles F. Lummis, *General Crook and the Apache Wars*, ed. Turbese Lummis Fiske (Flagstaff, Arizona: Northland Press, 1966), 138. Lummis was a newspaper correspondent from the *Los Angeles Times* and traveled with Crook through most of the "Geronimo Campaign." Lummis's reporting was one of the first instances of first-hand reporting in a counterinsurgency campaign.

<sup>32</sup>Bourke, 482.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSION

General Crook, during his long years of campaigning against the native Indians, developed a unique operational and tactical system to conduct counterinsurgency operations. Though Crook was not the only army officer to successfully campaign against an insurgent Indian force, Crook's comprehensive program of tactical innovation, coupled with the shrewd strategy of acculturation, was a unique approach which would eventually defeat a portion of the remaining insurgent Indian warriors living on the frontier. Crook developed these techniques while participating in almost thirty years of fighting and negotiating with the insurgent Indians throughout the west.<sup>1</sup>

Crook's background would not have given any inclination that he would develop into an unconventional thinking commander. His boyhood in Ohio, followed by his career at West Point, would have seemed to indicate a future of stolid and steady performance in the U.S. Army. However, Crook's early experience in California, fighting the tribes of the northwest, changed Crook's outlook on the army and molded his operational and tactical thinking towards counterinsurgency. On the tactical level he experienced the folly of slow-moving army columns trying to find and catch the elusive Indian insurgents. Crook's exposure to abysmal leadership in his first postings instilled in him the necessity for aggressive, clear-thinking, and sober commanders, if the military was going to be successful in a counterinsurgency campaign. On the operational level, Crook witnessed the cruel and arbitrary treatment of the northwest Indians by the white settlers, which was the key factor in almost all outbreaks of violence concerning the whites and the northwest Indians. Crook realized that once the government forces had

subdued the insurgents, it was up to that same government to provide a better way of life on the reservation for the former insurgents.

Crook's actions during the Civil War provided additional experience in counterinsurgency operations. Though most of the campaigns he participated in during the Civil War were standard conventional operations, Crook gained some valuable experience in the execution of counterinsurgency operations during his endeavors to rid the Kanawha Valley in West Virginia of Rebel "bushwhackers" in 1862. Crook's experience in the Kawaha molded his thinking on the tactical level concerning the use of cavalry and infantry forces to pursue insurgents. As he had seen previously in the northwest, the Kawaha Campaign in West Virginia showed Crook the need for equal mobility of a pursuing force in relation to an insurgent. If the pursuing force is going to be capable of chasing down a fleeing insurgent, it must be as mobile as the fleeing enemy or the pursuit will be ineffective. He also realized that the mobile columns must pursue relentlessly to wear down the retreating enemy. Crook also began to experiment with special scout detachments whose function was to find the insurgents. He had seen a small number of Indian scouts used successfully during the northwest campaigns. Crook had often experienced the frustration of relying on regular forces to track down the insurgent bands. By organizing a special scout detachment to be used specifically for tracking, Crook saw a solution to the problem of finding the insurgents.<sup>2</sup>

Upon the termination of the Civil War, Crook was again placed in a position to gain additional experience in counterinsurgency operations. Crook's operations against the Paiutes and Klamaths in the Idaho Territory became a testing ground for his developing operational and tactical techniques dealing with counterinsurgency. On the

tactical level Crook made extensive use of Wasco, Warm Springs, and Shoshone scouts to track down the Paiute insurgents. His continued experimentation with Indian scouts was a key component in his success during the Paiute Campaign. The scouts, though not native to the area of operations, were able to track down the elusive Paiutes until the main-striking force was in range to attack the insurgent band. Crook refined his theory of relentless pursuit of the insurgent bands by adapting his forces so they could continue the pursuit during the bleak winter months of the Idaho Territory. Since the Paiutes were more vulnerable during the winter months, due to their decreased mobility, Crook's ability to continuously operate against the insurgents in all weather proved to be decisive in this campaign.<sup>3</sup> Crook also sought to improve the mobility and logistical flexibility of his striking forces by establishing the mule pack train as his primary logistic component of his mobile columns. By organizing his logistics around the vastly more mobile mule train, Crook freed his forces from the mostly road-bound army supply wagon train.

During the campaign in Idaho, Crook's thoughts on Indian management at the operational level were to become more coherent. Crook's campaign in Idaho featured a campaign of relentless pursuit of the insurgents until they were defeated, followed by a hard-line negotiating approach. However, once the insurgents were placed on the reservation, Crook planned to begin a process of acculturation, with the goal of making the Indian, in this case the Paiute, a responsible American citizen. This acculturation process would further facilitate the breakdown of tribal bounds, which was a crucial component in bringing the individual Indian into American culture. In Idaho, Crook could only begin the process of acculturation towards the insurgent Indians, due to the short period of time he was in command. In his next assignment where he would

command the Department of Arizona, Crook had greater influence in the process of Indian management at the operational level.

Crook's counterinsurgency procedures matured during his first tour as the commander of the Department of Arizona. Given the authority to operate on the operational and tactical levels against the insurgent Coyotero and Yavapai Apaches, Crook's concepts dealing with counterinsurgency were proven effective. On the tactical level Crook was now convinced of the effectiveness of relentless pursuit of an insurgent to accomplish the insurgents capture or destruction. He admonished his commanders to remain on the insurgents' trail no matter what the circumstances.<sup>4</sup> However, to find and stay on the trail Crook now took full advantage of his authority as department commander to recruit a large number of Indian scouts. After experimenting with different tribal and ethnic groups in his scout detachments, Crook concluded that only groups of volunteer Apaches would be effective in finding their fellow tribesmen. Using fellow Apaches, especially if they could be recruited from the actual tribe that had revolted, would also expedite the growth of dissension within the insurgent ranks. This divide and conquer strategy, using internal dissension to break down tribal unity, facilitated Crook's operational concept of promoting Indian acculturation. By destroying tribal unity Crook's policy helped push the Indian into further integration within the predominate American culture.

The mobile columns that Crook unleashed on the insurgents, consisting of large Apache scout detachments, small army cavalry units, and supported by mobile pack mule trains became the key maneuver forces within Crook's tactical procedures. Less mobile army forces were used to guard key facilities and watering holes. This two-prong

approach developed by Crook during the Tonto Basin campaign was proven to be effective, and was used as the model for future campaigns in the southwest.

On the operational level Crook began the process of acculturation with the deliberate development of a comprehensive economic plan to improve the quality of life on the reservation. Crook tried to develop a mutual economic relationship between the army and the reservation Apaches, with the Apaches providing basic products for the army garrisons throughout the territory.<sup>5</sup> Crook also obtained additional land on the San Carlos reservation for the resident Apaches, which provided more space for the tribes to live and raise cattle and horses. He also began the process of local self-government by organizing a local police force and courts for the resident Apaches, giving them a greater stake in running their daily lives. These positive programs helped to further break down the cohesion within the separate Apache tribes by developing a self-governing system tied to the reservation administration. Crook also tried to further bind the Apaches to their individual reservation by organizing a series of population controls, with the most important being an identity tag, which was required to be worn by all resident Apaches of an individual reservation.

Crook realized that the process of breaking down the tribal allegiances and recasting the Apache into useful American citizens was a long-term endeavor. His comprehensive program focused on this long-term process; however, Crook was not the only major influence on the Indian insurgency in the southwest. Interest groups, like the Tucson Ring and eastern Indian rights organizations, hindered Crook's attempts to further the interests of the Apache. Infighting and inertia within the U.S. Government agencies further hindered Crook in his effort to acculturate the Apache in the southwest. The

bureaucratic tug of war between the Department of Interior and the Department of War over control of the reservations ultimately hindered Crook's efforts to solve the Apache problem in the southwest. Only in the near-chaotic conditions of the Department of Arizona after the Cibecu Creek disaster was Crook finally given overall authority to administratively run the reservations. Even this triumph was short lived, and by the end of the Geronimo Campaign in 1886, the reservations were back under the control of the Department of the Interior. This conglomeration of outside influences would hinder Crook's attempts to end the Apache insurgency by diluting and diverting his operational acculturation plan.

By the conclusion of the Tonto Basin Campaign in 1875, Crook had developed a coherent scheme to conduct a comprehensive counterinsurgency campaign against an insurgent force. Crook tried to use the tactical and operational techniques, which he had developed in the southwest, in a completely different situation on the northern plains. Crook's effectiveness during the Sioux Campaign of 1876 and 1877 was hindered by his previous experiences. His thoughts at the tactical level were shaped by the image of an enemy who operated in small groups and who would disperse and avoid contact with a counterinsurgent force. This type of "guerrilla" warfare had typified Crook's experience with insurgent Indians in California, Idaho, and Arizona. Crook brought this intellectual background to the northern plains, where he eventually was jolted out of his intellectual complacency by the ferocious Sioux and Cheyenne response on the Powder River and the Rosebud.

Small mobile columns, built around Indian Scouts and pack mule trains, were not an effective force mix against a well-armed and numerous Sioux or Cheyenne main

force.<sup>6</sup> As stated previously, the Battle at the Rosebud resembled more closely engagements conducted during the Civil War, than any type of previous counterinsurgent action in the Indian Wars. Though Crook can be faulted for not changing his perception and operating techniques against the Sioux and Cheyenne, he was not the only commander caught in the same intellectual straitjacket. All the major commanders in the Sioux Campaign of 1876 and 1877 misread the threat that their forces would have to face. All the major commanders, to include Crook, Gibbon, Terry, and Custer, thought that the major problem of the campaign would be finding and fixing the insurgent Sioux and Cheyenne. The participating commanders on the whole felt that with the forces available once the insurgents were fixed, they would be forced to surrender and return to the reservation or be destroyed. The Battle of the Rosebud and Custer's destruction on the Little Bighorn proved the participating commanders' perceptions were wrong. In one of the rare times in long-running Indians wars, an Indian force was able to mass forces and act in a scynronized fashion to stalemate a large army force on the Rosebud and then move against another converging column and totally annihilate it at the Little Bighorn.

Crook's performance during this campaign was extremely uneven. His tactical handling of his force at the Rosebud was adequate to achieve a draw with the attacking Sioux and Cheyenne. However, his inaction after the battle, leaving his column stationary for six weeks, desynchronized the overall campaign plan by allowing the insurgents the ability to mass on each of the converging columns on an individual basis, without having to worry about being attacked in the rear by the other columns. After the shock of the Rosebud and Custer's demise on the Little Bighorn, Crook was forced to operate in large, slow columns that were tied to an even-slower logistical train. This total



reversal of the tactical procedures, which he had previously developed in Idaho and Arizona, was forced upon him by the enemy's ability to mass and synchronize operations.

Crook's other key tactical principle, the heavy emphasis on Indian scouts, was also found wanting in this campaign. Despite Crook's best efforts, his forces could not recruit the quantity or quality of Indian scout needed to fight the Sioux and Cheyenne on equal terms. Though the Indian scouts performed well during the Battle of the Rosebud, their overall performance in the whole campaign was substandard. Further, the mutual trust between commander and Indian scout, that was needed to conduct effective operations against the insurgents, was totally lacking in this campaign. The Shoshone and Crow scouts had little faith in the ability of Crook to defeat the hated and feared Sioux and Cheyenne. Crook reciprocated this disdain after he viewed the scouts' lack of expertise before and after the Battle of the Rosebud.<sup>7</sup> Crook never developed a cohesive combined force of army and Indian scout forces as he had done previously in the southwest. Without a viable scouting force available to find the insurgents, Crook's column wandered aimlessly throughout the northern plains looking for signs of the mobile insurgent. Crook had fallen back to the tactical technique of using his large column as a movement to contact force, which was pointed in a particular direction with the hope of stumbling into an insurgent force. This was the same tactical technique used by the other army commanders, to include Custer, in trying to find the elusive insurgent. Crook was forced to abandon his refined and effective tactical techniques that he had developed in previous campaigns, due to a lack of an effective Indian scouting force.

Though the overall conclusion to the Sioux Campaign of 1876 and 1877 was satisfactory to the United States Government, no senior military commander gained additional martial laurels from this campaign. Crook was happy to be reassigned back to the Department of Arizona as the commander. Due to the deteriorating situation in the territory Crook had to immediately implement a comprehensive counterinsurgency plan to first regain the confidence of the reservation Apaches and regain control on the reservations. These operational actions would have to be executed in conjunction with tactical operations, which centered on the capture or defeat of the insurgents that had fled from the reservations into Mexico.

On the operational level Crook reestablished the population control procedures and economic initiatives that he had initiated in his first tour as commander in the Department of Arizona. He again saw that the breakdown of tribal bonds coupled with the acculturation process would lead the Apache away from the nomadic-raiding lifestyle to a more sedatory culture, which he felt would benefit the Apache as a whole and pacify the southwest region of the United States. Though Crook's second tour as commander of the Department of Arizona was relatively short, his acculturation process, which he put into action, was continued by his successors with an eventual degree of success.

The tactical-level problems Crook faced in 1882 were similar in most aspects to the tactical situation faced in his previous tour in Arizona. Crook, however, had the advantage of having previously developed a series of sound tactical solutions to the Apache insurgent situations. The major differences between the campaigns conducted from 1872 to 1876 and the operations from 1882 to 1886 were twofold. In the earlier campaigns the insurgents centered their resistance in inhospitable areas within the

Departments of Arizona and New Mexico. Though the insurgents slipped back and forth across the international border to raid and then hide, the center of resistance was in the U.S. southwest. In the 1882-86 campaigns the center of gravity of the Apache resistance was based in the Sierra Madre Mountains in Mexico, with Apache raiding parties, such as Josanies' raiders, moving clandestinely from deep in the Mexican mountains to attack targets north of the international border. This change in Apache tactics caused Crook to modify his procedures to adapt to the new situation.<sup>8</sup>

Crook developed a tactical plan, which encompassed using the U.S. Army forces, augmented by a small number of scouts, in an extended layered screen line parallel to the international border. These forces would conduct surveillance on key avenues of approach running north and south between the U.S. and northern Mexico and on the crucial watering holes that a raiding force would have to stop at to gather water. Crook formed mobile columns, which would act as the main striking forces, used to hunt down the insurgents in Mexico. The columns that Crook formed for the campaigns in the 1880s consisted of a large Apache scout contingent, augmented by a small army element, and supplied by a series of pack mule train. Command of these columns was given to officers, who were trusted by Crook and who had previous experience leading Apache scouts.

The key shift in composition of the mobile columns from the campaign in the 1870s when compared to the columns formed in the 1880s is the substantial increase of the Apache scout contingent, with a parallel decrease in the number of army troops in the columns. Crook had come to the final realization that the Apache scout was the key instrument in defeating his fellow Apache insurgent. A mobile column with the army

forces as a majority was less effective than an Apache scout-dominated force in successfully tracking and defeating of an illusive Apache raiding party. This realization by Crook determined the force structure for pursuing forces throughout the campaigns in the southwest during the period of 1882 to 1886. Even Miles, after assuming command from Crook, was forced to change his tactical plan when his mainly army forces could not find or subdue Geronimo and his band. It was Gatewood and a couple of Apache scouts, not Lawton and his all army column, that found and convinced Geronimo to surrender. Crook's operational and tactical policies and procedures were vindicated by the subsequent history of the Apache in the southwest, even though Crook was not in command to see that success.

This thesis shows that Crook had a clear and definitive set of operational and tactical procedures to conduct counterinsurgency operations that he developed through experience and experimentation. These counterinsurgency procedures, though never written down or codified, were passed on to following generations of army officers as a successful way of conducting a counterinsurgency campaign. Whether it is MacArthur on Luzon or Pershing in Moroland and Mexico, one can see the outline of Crook's techniques in these successful campaigns. A generation of officers served with Crook in the southwest, where they gained an appreciation of the complexities of combating an insurgency and the knowledge on how to solve those complexities and gain success in a counterinsurgency environment. This is the legacy that Crook left the United States Army.

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<sup>1</sup>Andrew J. Birtle, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1860-1941* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1998), 69-71.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 46.

<sup>3</sup>Billy J. Orr, *General George Crook, The Indian-Fighting Army, and Unconventional Warfare Doctrine: A Case for Developmental Immaturity* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 1992), 36-37.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 36.

<sup>5</sup>Birtle, 85.

<sup>6</sup>Jerome A. Greene, *George Crook, in Soldiers West*, ed. Paul Andrew Hutton (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), 125.

<sup>7</sup>Greene, 121.

<sup>8</sup>Dan L. Thrapp, *The Conquest of Apacheria* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), 334.

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