CHAPTER XXXVII.

The Arizona Campaign. (I.)

Problem Presented by the Situation — Opinions of Citizens — The Obstacles to Success Presented by the Natural Conditions — Aid from the Signal Corps at Washington — The Heliostat — Arrangement of Stations — Number of Messages Sent — Districts of Observation — Captain Lawton — Captain Wood — Other Officers of the Command — Breaking out of Hostiles — Details of the Campaign against the Apaches.

UCH being the circumstances the problem that presented itself to me was this: There were forty thousand Indians in New Mexico and Arizona the main portion of whom were peaceable and well disposed, yet in nearly all the different tribes there were disaffected and turbulent elements ready to assume hostilities if an opportunity occurred, or if the hostiles then at large were not brought under control. Over a vast area of country of rugged mountains and narrow valleys, with water only at scattered points and difficult to find and obtain, roamed one of the most desperate, cruel and hardy bands of outlaws that ever infested any country, who were to be hunted down and captured. A few criminals will keep the entire police force of the great city of London occupied; and, as a matter of fact, it has always been found most difficult to arrest the leaders in any particular field of crime.

The mountain labyrinths of the Apaches may be compared to the criminal dens and slums of London, though on an immensely greater scale, and the outlaws to be tracked and subdued, for cunning, strength and ferocity have never been surpassed in the annals of either savage or civilized crime. A band of Indians that had roamed over that country for generations believed themselves to be masters and unconquerable, and many of the white people living in that country also believed it to be impossible to run them down and capture them. I was advised by many well-informed people of the uselessness of undertaking to subjugate the hostiles as, they stated, it had been tried for so many years without success. "Those Indians could go over mountain country better than white men;" "they could signal from one mountain range to another;" "they could

conceal themselves;" and "when they turned upon their enemy they were utterly ruthless and cruel."

I listened to all this with a degree of patience, and the only reply that suggested itself was that though all that was said about their skill and enterprise and energy was true, yet with our superior intelligence and modern appliances we ought and would be able to counteract, equal, or surpass all the advantages possessed by the savages. As to the rapidity of their movements, we had the power of steam to aid us in moving troops, munitions and provisions, and the telegraph for communication. As to their being able to signal by the use of fire and smoke and the flashes of some bright piece of metal for a short distance, I thought we could not only equal, but far surpass them in a short time.

I had it in my mind to utilize for our benefit and their discomfiture, the very elements that had been the greatest obstacles in that whole country to their subjugation, namely, the high mountain ranges, the glaring, burning sunlight, and an atmosphere void of moisture. I therefore requested the chief signal officer at Washington, General Hazen, to send me a corps of skilled officers and men, and the best instruments and appliances that were attainable. I also directed my engineer officer to block out the country in such a way that we might establish a network of points of observation and communication over that entire country. Posts were established over the country most frequented by the Apaches, a district some two hundred miles wide by three hundred miles long, north and south. On the high mountain peaks of this region, I posted strong guards of infantry supplied with casks of water and provisions enough to last them for thirty days in case of siege. They were provided with the best field glasses and telescopes that could be obtained, and also with the best heliostats.

The heliostat is a little invention of an English officer which had been used in India many years before. My attention was first directed to it nearly twenty years ago when in the office of the chief signal officer of the army, General Myer, who then had six of these instruments. As they were not being used, I suggested that he send them to me at the cantonment on the Yellowstone, now Fort Keogh, Montana, and I there established the first line in this country, from Fort Keogh to Fort Custer. I afterward used them experimentally in the Department of the Columbia between Vancouver Barracks and Mount Hood a distance in an air line of fifty miles. I now determined to test them to their full extent and make practical use of them in the Department of Arizona.

I was much gratified to receive the hearty support of General Hazen in sending me skilled men ; and within a short time these stations were fixed on the high mountain peaks. It was remarkable what advantage they gave us in observing the movements of the Indians or of the troops in the valleys below, and in reporting it promptly to the central station or headquarters; also in communicating with the various commands, posts and stations in the field. At one time, when the system was in full operation, to test its efficiency a message of twenty-five words was sent from the extreme eastern to the extreme western station, over a zigzag course of four hundred miles, and the answer was received in four hours, the total distance traversed being about eight hundred miles. Between these two points for a part of the distance there was telegraphic communication, yet the

Heliograph Station.

message could not have been sent by telegraph and courier and answer received as quickly as it was by this method.

The importance of the work done by the heliostat in the Apache campaign makes it worthy of a more extended notice than has as yet been accorded it. The method of signaling by it is very simple. By alternately interposing and removing some object in front of the mirror which forms the principal part of the instrument, long or short flashes of light are made which indicate words and letters to the eye in the same way the telegraph indicates them to the ear. The mirrors are usually mounted on a tripod, and the distance through which this method of communication may be carried depends on the clearness of the atmosphere and the size of the mirrors.

At the beginning of the campaign, Lieutenant A. M. Fuller of the Second Cavalry was placed in charge of the division of Arizona, and Lieutenant E. E. Dravo of the Sixth Cavalry, in charge of the division of New Mexico for the purpose of establishing heliograph stations at suitable points, and the

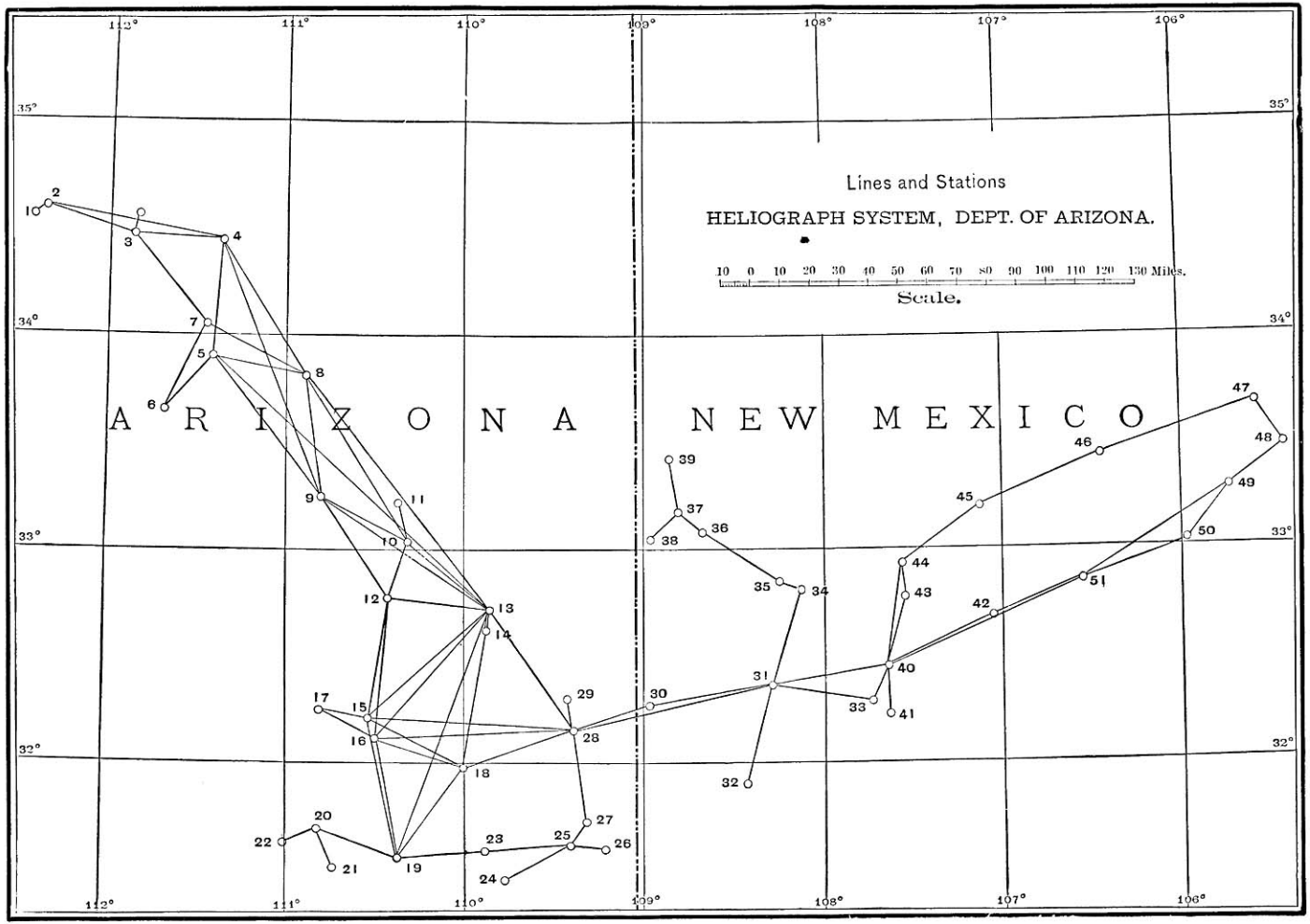
success of the system was largely due to the able and judicious manner in which these officers performed their duties. The stations were generally situated on high mountains, some of them being six or seven thousand feet above the level of the sea. They were manned by two or three operators according to the amount of work to be done, and were usually provided with from one to five guards, according to the dangers of the situation. Couriers were also furnished wherever needed. Sometimes it was necessary to establish these stations a mile or two from water, which in that case was brought to them on the backs of mules. Rations were usually supplied by the month from the most convenient military post.

Besides the heliographs these stations were fitted out with field glasses, and usually also with a telescope, and all day long the lookout scanned the country for signals from undetermined points. Whenever possible the station was so situated as to afford a dark background, as it was found that a flash from such a station could be much more easily seen than from one where the sky formed the only background.

In the division of New Mexico there were thirteen of these stations, and in that of Arizona there were fourteen. The work was systematized from the very beginning. All details, changes and instructions were made by regular orders, and each station was provided with the necessary material for keeping records. Weekly reports were rendered by each station as to the number of messages sent and received, and weekly reports of the weather were also required. As the number of members of the signal corps was limited, much work was performed by enlisted men, who proved themselves to be very intelligent and apt, some of them being competent to go on a station after but two weeks' instruction. Naturally, telegraph operators found it much easier to learn the system than others did.

Some of these stations communicated with but one other, while some communicated with as many as five, as in the case of the one at Bowie Peak, Arizona Territory, or the one at the extreme northern point of the Swisshelm Mountains. The average distance between these stations was in a direct line about twenty-five miles, but Fort Huachuca, which communicated with three other stations, was thirty-one miles distant from the nearest.

In the division of Arizona the total number of messages sent from May 1, 1886, to September 30, of the same year was 2,264. The greatest number of messages from one station (802) was from Fort Bowie, and the next greatest numbers (284 and 241) were from the stations at Rucker Cañon and at Antelope Springs, near the south end of the Dragoon Mountains.


Lines and Stations
HELIOGRAPH SYSTEM, DEPT. OF ARIZONA.
10 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 110 120 130 Miles.
Scale.
ARIZONA
NEW MEXICO
112°
111°
110°
109°
108°
107°
106°
35°
34°
33°
32°

From Cochise's stronghold on the west side of the Dragoon Mountains, there were only eighteen messages sent, though this station repeated one hundred and twenty-five messages. The station at Bowie Peak repeated 1,644 messages, and the whole number of messages repeated was 4,463. The average number of words contained in these messages was about fifty, though there were cases where there were more than two hundred.

The country was subdivided into districts of observation, and each district was occupied by an efficient command fully supplied with transportation, field equipment, guides, scouts, trailers, etc., and Captain Thompson, of the Fourth Cavalry, an experienced and efficient officer, was appointed adjutant-general in the field.

For the instruction of the troops in the department, I issued the following orders:

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT ARIZONA, IN THE FIELD,
FORT BOWIE, A. T., April 20, 1886.

GENERAL FIELD ORDERS No. 7.

The following instructions are issued for the information and guidance of troops serving in the southern portions of Arizona and New Mexico.

The chief object of the troops will be to capture or destroy any band of hostile Apache Indians found in this section of country; and to this end the most vigorous and persistent efforts will be required of all officers and soldiers until the object is accomplished.

To better facilitate this duty and afford as far as practicable protection to the scattered settlements, the territory is subdivided into Districts of Observation as shown upon maps furnished by the department engineer officer, and these will be placed under commanding officers to be hereafter designated.

Each command will have a sufficient number of troops and the necessary transportation to thoroughly examine the district of country to which it is assigned, and will be expected to keep such section clear of hostile Indians.

The signal detachments will be placed upon the highest peaks and prominent lookouts to discover any movements of Indians and to transmit messages between the different camps.

The infantry will be used in hunting through the groups and ranges of mountains, the resorts of the Indians, occupying the important passes in the mountains, guarding supplies, etc.

A sufficient number of reliable Indians will be used as auxiliaries to discover any signs of hostile Indians, and as trailers.

The cavalry will be used in light scouting parties, with a sufficient force held in readiness at all times to make the most persistent and effective pursuit.

To avoid any advantage the Indians may have by a relay of horses, where a troop or squadron commander is near the hostile Indians he will be justified in dismounting one-half of his command and selecting the lightest and best riders to make pursuit by the most vigorous forced marches, until the strength of all the animals of his command shall have been exhausted.

In this way a command should, under a judicious leader, capture a band of Indians or drive them from one hundred and fifty to two hundred miles in forty-eight hours through a country favorable for cavalry movements; and the horses of the troops will be trained for this purpose.

All the commanding officers will make themselves thoroughly familiar with the sections of country under their charge and will use every means to give timely information regarding the movements of hostile Indians to their superiors or others acting in concert with them, in order that fresh troops may intercept the hostiles or take up the pursuit.

Commanding officers are expected to continue a pursuit until capture, or until they are assured a fresh command is on the trail.

All camps and movements of troops will be concealed as far as possible, and every effort will be made at all times by the troops to discover hostile Indians before being seen by them.

To avoid ammunition getting into the hands of the hostile Indians every cartridge will be rigidly accounted for, and when they are used in the field the empty shells will be effectually destroyed.

Friendly relations will be encouraged between the troops and citizens of the country, and all facilities rendered for the prompt interchange of reliable information regarding the movements of hostile Indians.

Field reports will be made on the tenth, twentieth, and thirtieth of each month, giving the exact location of troops and the strength and condition of commands.

By command of Brigadier-General Miles:

WILLIAM A. THOMPSON, Captain Fourth Cavalry, A. A. A. G.

In making these dispositions the argument in my mind was that no human being and no wild animal could endure being hunted persistently without eventually being subjugated. Therefore in establishing these districts of observation, and making each one of them untenable, I believed that it would also be necessary to have a force to continue the pursuit when the Indians should retreat south of the Mexican boundary. At that time our government had a treaty with the Mexican government by which our forces were authorized to follow the trail of the hostile Indians or continue the pursuit in their territory, and that they would afford us whatever facilities they could in the way of information and assistance against these hostiles.

For some time I was undecided as to the personnel of this pursuing command. I visited several military posts—Fort Bowie, Fort Grant, Fort Huachuca and other stations,—before I fully made up my mind as to the officers and men I should choose to constitute such a force. At length I selected from Fort Huachuca an officer by the name of Captain H. W. Lawton, Fourth United States Cavalry, who, I thought, would fulfill all the requirements as commander. First of all, because he believed that these Indians *could* be subjugated. Officers who do not believe in success and

are always ready to show how a thing cannot be done and give labored and logical reasons and arguments why it would be useless to attempt to accomplish a purpose, as a rule are not the kind of men to be selected for any hazardous enterprise. While some men may be over zealous and unduly confident, yet where you find a man of sterling ability and clear strong will power who believes that a thing can be accomplished, the chances are that, given an opportunity, he will be more likely to succeed than one who has no faith in what he may be called upon to do, or required to undertake.

Captain Lawton was of that class who believed that the Indians could be overcome. Although he recognized their great skill, cunning and physical strength, he believed they could be met and defeated by studying and improving upon their own methods. He had made himself a splendid record during the war of the rebellion, had also a fine record on the frontier, had been one of General Mackenzie's most zealous supporters, and possessed all the experience necessary to the command of such a force. He was physically, perhaps, as fine a specimen of a man as could be found. He weighed at that time two hundred and thirty pounds, was well proportioned, straight, active, agile, full of energy, stood six feet five inches in height and was without a superfluous pound of flesh. His bone, muscle, sinew and nerve power was of the finest texture. It was said that he could at that time take up an ordinary man and throw him a rod. A giant in stature, he had a bright handsome face, and was in the prime of life. I informed him of what I desired and he was delighted at the opportunity for making the effort and undertaking the enterprise, although it involved hardship and labor and required reckless courage to meet the dangers to be encountered.

I also found at Fort Huachuca another splendid type of American manhood, Captain Leonard Wood, Assistant Surgeon, United States Army. He was a young officer aged twenty-four, a native of Massachusetts, a graduate of Harvard, a fair-haired, blue-eyed young man of great intelligence, sterling, manly qualities, and resolute spirit. He was also perhaps as fine a specimen of physical strength and endurance as could easily be found. He had a perfect knowledge of anatomy and had utilized this knowledge of physiology in training himself and bringing every part of his physique to its highest perfection, and seemed to have the will power and energy to keep his own physical mechanism in perfect condition and activity. I said to him:

"We have heard much said about the physical strength and endurance of these Apache Indians, these natives of the desert and mountain. I

would like to have you accompany Captain Lawton's command, and as you are probably in as good a condition as anyone to endure what they endure, you can make a careful study of the Indians at every opportunity and discover wherein lies their superiority, if it does exist, and whether it is hereditary, and if hereditary, whether the fiber and sinew and nerve power is of a finer quality, and whether their lungs are really of greater development and capacity to endure the exertion of climbing these mountains than those of our best men."

Captain Wood entered into the spirit of this most heartily, and his services and observations and example were most commendable and valuable and added much to the final success of the enterprise.

The other officers of the command were selected for similar considerations.

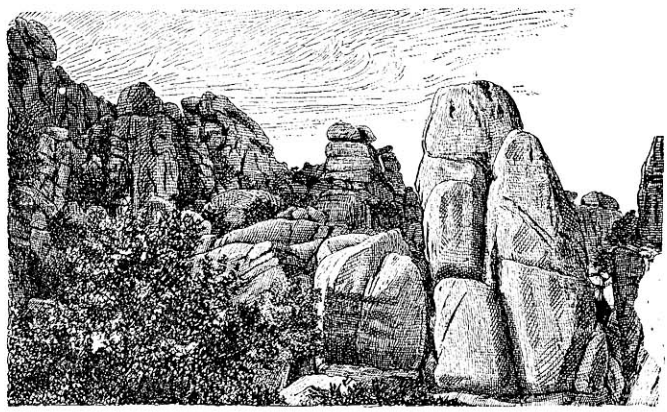
Captain Lawton's picked infantry, Indian scouts and cavalry were at times under the immediate command of Lieutenants Henry Johnson, Jr., Eighth Infantry, H. C. Benton, R. A. Brown, R. S. Walsh and A. L. Smith, Fourth Cavalry, and Leighton Finley, Tenth Cavalry. Lieutenant Finley, now dead, rendered very efficient service in command of the scouts during the first two months of the campaign. He was a gallant officer and had distinguished himself the preceding year (1885) in an affray with the hostiles in Arizona during an attack which they had made upon a command to which he was attached. Lieutenant Brown commanded the scouts during the last two months of the pursuit and rendered valuable service. They are all entitled to great credit for the zeal, judgment and fidelity with which they carried out his instructions.

The soldiers of this command were also carefully selected and I doubt whether there was ever a finer collection of men and officers, for the number, gathered in one command. It was a question of fidelity, of endurance, of tenacity of purpose; for when the troops north of the boundary had driven the hostiles over the border, this command was expected to take up the chase and continue it until the hostiles were either worn down and brought to bay, or driven back again to our territory. Well did they accomplish this duty, as will be seen by every reader who follows to the end the narrative of this five months' campaign.

The command was perfectly equipped and abundantly supplied, and in such a way as to be independent of wagon transportation. The pack-train was the best in the country, and, in addition to the supplies carried by it, I moved by trains down the valleys practicable for wagons, abundant supplies, in order that this movable command could have a movable base for their stores and military supplies.

Before we were fairly ready the hostiles themselves precipitated the campaign. They could have quietly remained in their mountain fastnesses in the Sierra Madres and forced us to hunt them, which might have consumed from twelve months to two years, but with reckless bravado they opened the campaign by committing depredations south of the boundary in northern Mexico. This was to us a welcome signal, for it gave us a positive knowledge of their whereabouts, and enabled me to immediately put my plans into effect and initiate the operations I had blocked out for their subjugation.

The hostiles were under the leadership of the chiefs Geronimo and Natchez, the last named being the hereditary chief of the Chiricahuas, and their raid spread terror throughout that district of Mexico. They then swept northward, and on the 27th of April invaded our territory, passing up the Santa Cruz Valley, stealing stock and killing a few citizens, including the Peck family. Of this family the mother and one child were murdered, and a girl, some ten years of age, was captured and subsequently recaptured by the troops. The Indians, disregarding their usual custom, released the father after holding him in captivity for several hours.



MOUNTAIN FASTNESS—COCHISE'S STRONGHOLD.

Although at this time they struck a section of country further west than they had appeared in for many years, yet Captain T. C. Lebo, an energetic officer, and almost an ideal leader for such service, with his troop, Tenth Cavalry, was quickly on the trail, and after a hot pursuit of two hundred miles brought the Indians to bay in the Pinito Mountains, some thirty miles south of the boundary in Sonora, Mexico. In spite of the fact that he was obliged to meet the enemy on ground of their own choosing, and with every natural obstacle against him, this officer made a good fight, and while he sustained very little loss himself, inflicted considerable upon his opponents. During this fight a brave soldier, Corporal Scott, was so severely wounded as to be completely disabled. As he lay on the ground under a sharp fire from the Indians, Lieutenant Powhatan H. Clarke, a gallant young officer

fresh from West Point, dashed forward to the rescue of the disabled soldier, and at the imminent peril of his own life, lifted and carried the veteran to a place of safety. Though knights clad in armor have long since faded away into the dim past, and the clash of sword on shield is heard no more, with deeds like this before us who shall say that the days of chivalry are no more? We could write a volume describing the heroism of this splendid young officer previous to his untimely death, but must pass on to other events and heroic deeds.

After this engagement the Indians continued their retreat, and the trail was soon after taken up by Lieutenant H. C. Benson of the Fourth Cavalry. They were then pursued south and west, until their trail was again taken up by Lebo's command, and later by that of Captain Lawton. The command of Captain C. A. P. Hatfield, Fourth Cavalry, had been placed to intercept them, east of Santa Cruz, Sonora, and on the 15th of May succeeded in completely surprising the savages at that place. In the engagement which followed, the hostiles lost their entire camp equipage and about twenty horses, as well as their first deserter, who, having been wounded and having had his horse shot under him, crawled into the rocks and continued his retreat for forty-five days, surrendering at last at Fort Apache, 250 miles to the north, on the 28th day of June. This man was afterward of value to us, as will be explained when an account is given of the condition of the Indians, he being used to aid in opening communications by which their ultimate surrender was effected.

Unfortunately while passing west through a deep and narrow cañon towards Santa Cruz, embarrassed with his captured horses and other Indian property, Captain Hatfield's command was in turn attacked by the hostiles and a sharp fight ensued. In this fight there were numerous instances of conspicuous bravery. John H. Conradi, one of the soldiers of the troop, lay severely wounded on the ground, and though unable to move himself beyond the fire of the Indians, continued to use his rifle with telling effect. Two of his comrades, First Sergeant Samuel Adams and citizen packer George Bowman, seeing his helpless condition bravely exposed their own lives in the effort to reach him. But just as they were bearing him to a place of safety he received another and this time a mortal wound, thus meeting the very death to save him from which his comrades had risked their lives. Many heroes have died, yet there are many still living.

After Hatfield's fight Lieutenant R. A. Brown, Fourth Cavalry, struck the trail and pursued the hostiles in an easterly direction. The Indians

then divided into two bands. One, moving north, was intercepted by Lieutenant Brett of the Second Cavalry, who displayed great energy and determination in his pursuit. The Indians going over the roughest mountains and breaking down one set of horses, would abandon them and pass straight over the highest ranges and descending to the valleys below would steal others and continue their retreat, while the troops in order to pursue them were obliged to send their horses around the impassable mountain heights and follow the trail on foot, climbing in the ascent and sliding in the descent. On this occasion, at one time the troops continued the pursuit for twenty-six hours without a halt, and were without water during eighteen hours in the intense heat of that season. This was the second occasion in which a part of my commands were suffering so intensely from thirst—an agony fortunately unknown to the mass of mankind—that the men opened their veins to moisten their burning lips with their own blood. This band of hostiles under Natchez swept north as far as Fort Apache, then turned south pursued by one commanding officer after another who took up the pursuit. The Indians were turned to the south again, and finally recrossed the Mexican boundary.

The other band was followed west by Lieutenant Brown, until their trail was struck by Captain Lawton. The Indians were first driven north and then south, and in passing through the Patagonia Mountains were intercepted by Lieutenant Walsh, of the Fourth Cavalry. He surprised their camp on the evening of June 6, and captured nearly all their animals, baggage and supplies. The hostiles scattered, and by the time the scouts could work out the trail it became too dark to follow. At daylight the pursuit was again taken up and carried on so vigorously that the Indians were obliged to abandon all the remaining animals they had with them and scatter again on foot. Captain Lawton, who had meanwhile joined this command, was convinced from the fact that the Indians had entirely disappeared from the border, and from the direction in which their trail led, that at last they were going toward their stronghold, the Sierra Madres, and a pursuit was at once inaugurated for a campaign in those excessively rugged mountains. The infantry command was at this time replaced by another detachment of equal strength and with these new troops Captain Lawton pursued the savages from one range of mountains to another for three months, sometimes scaling peaks nine thousand or ten thousand feet above the level of the sea, and then again descending into the depths of the cañons where the heat was almost intolerable. During this time the troops marched 1,396 miles. Most of the country

had been burned over leaving no grass, and water was so scarce that the troops frequently suffered intensely. One portion of the command was without food, with the exception of such game as they could kill, for five days. At one time when the pack-train had been delayed by the roughness of the trail, the troops were obliged to subsist on two or three deer killed by the scouts, and on mule meat without salt.

Sonora, the part of Mexico in which the operations of the troops were now being carried on, is a rough, mountainous country, presenting obstacles of an extremely serious nature. It is a succession of rugged mountains, broken here and there by a steep cañon, and producing nothing but a few wild fruits, cacti, and some game. There is but little water and that often of a poor quality. Grass is almost entirely wanting during the dry season.

This section of country was very thinly populated, but here and there would be found a small town built within a walled enclosure. Inside this wall were one story adobe houses and scores of children and adults who wore but little superfluous clothing. Nothing could speak more eloquently of the fear and dread in which the Mexicans held the Apaches than these little walled towns; but in spite of the many lessons they had received, they were still poorly armed and in a condition to fall ready victims to the hostiles. The intelligent and liberal construction given by Governor Louis E. Torres, of Sonora, to the terms of the compact between the two governments was of very great assistance to our officers in moving troops and supplies through that portion of the country, and was acquiesced in by other Mexican officials. Every assistance within his personal and official powers was rendered by the governor to aid in arresting the common enemy that had for many years disturbed the peace of the two republics.

During the early days of the expedition much of the difficult work was done by the cavalry in southern Arizona and northern Sonora. Forage could then occasionally be obtained, but as the mountains grew more and more impassable that arm proved inadequate, and the chief dependence was necessarily placed upon the infantry. In some of the companies there were men who had seen service in India and in South Africa, and in their opinion this campaign in Arizona and far down in southern Sonora was the hardest, most exacting service they had ever endured. The heat was so intense at times that the men could not place their hands on the metal work of their guns. Pack-trains could, in the middle of the day, move only five or six miles before the animals became

overheated and unable to travel. The food was not what it should have been to sustain the strength and vitality of men under long-continued fatigue.

By the 5th of July the Indians had been driven south of Oposura, Mexico. A supply camp had been established at that point, and the command was equipped ready to continue operations. Until now the hostiles had been accustomed to separate into small parties which would make sudden and bloody raids upon settlements when unexpected, but after this time they were so closely pursued that they could derive no further benefit from their raids, as they were obliged to abandon their animals or else fight to protect them, which latter alternative they carefully avoided. Sometimes the Indians would scatter, but in that case the trail of a single man was followed until he again joined the rest of the band. The march was taken up toward the mouth of Tepache Creek where it was learned that the hostiles had passed, committing depredations on their way. But after a couple of hours' march in that direction the command was overtaken by a courier with the information that a man had been wounded by the Indians at Tonababu the evening before. Captain Lawton immediately changed his course and on reaching the place discovered the trail of the savages who had been doing the shooting.

The scouts under Lieutenant Brown were pushed ahead of the command, and on the 13th of July a runner was sent back to say that the Indian camp had been discovered, that the scouts would attack it at once, and asking that the infantry be sent forward to their support. Unfortunately the surprise was not an entire success for the Indians escaped, but their animals, camp equipage, a large amount of dried meat, and other provisions fell into the hands of the troops. The trail was again followed until supplies were nearly exhausted, when a halt was reluctantly called. After a short rest scouts were sent out to discover the whereabouts of the hostiles, and on the 13th of August information was received that they were moving toward the Terras Mountains. Captain Lawton immediately started to head them off, and by making forced marches arrived in the neighborhood of Fronteras on the 20th, where he learned that the hostiles had communicated to the Mexicans a desire to surrender.