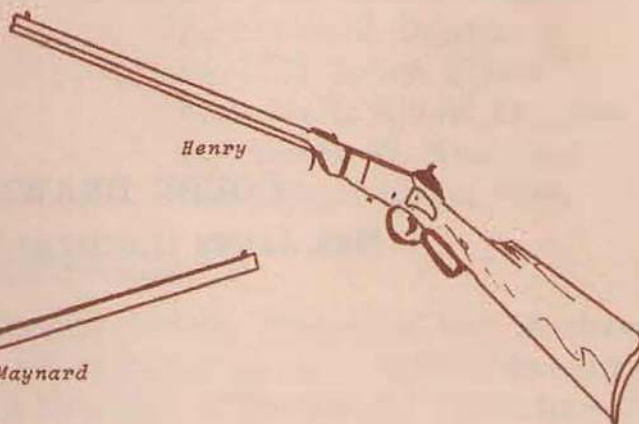


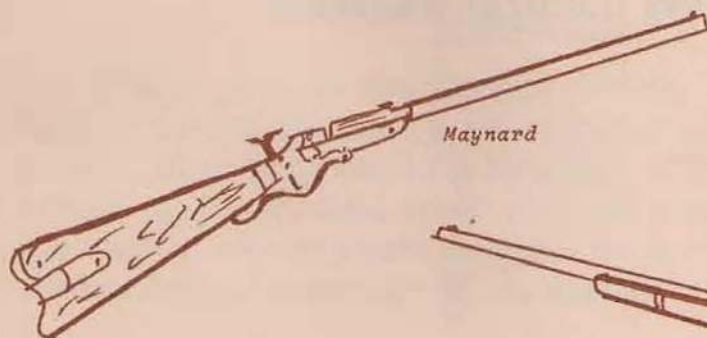
# THE COCHISE QUARTERLY

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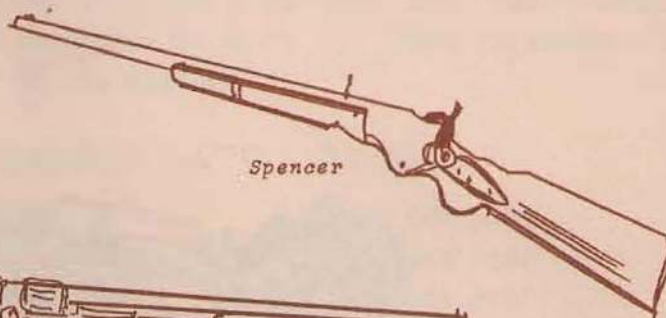
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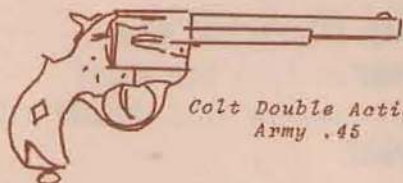
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GUNS OF  
THE 1800'S



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## BULLETS ACROSS THE BORDER

### Part III-Intrarevolutionary Troubles

by Larry D. Christiansen

Huerta's abdication failed to bring peace and reform to Mexico, instead it plunged the country into a period of naked civil war worse than any previously experienced. Off and on for about a year Mexico toyed with anarchy as the various rebel leaders struggled for power. The two main contenders were Venustiano Carranza and Pancho Villa. They had disliked each other from the very beginning of the struggle to eliminate Huerta. For a year they avoided any open quarrel, but their mutual suspicions grew with the actions of the other. Villa had a hard time swallowing Carranza's self-proclaimed title of First Chief of the revolutionary movement, while Carranza disliked Villa's military successes and his reorganization of Chihuahua's government. The open rift between the two men arose in early 1914 when Carranza left his previous base in Sonora and moved into Chihuahua. Villa considered this a direct infringement on his territory and believed Carranza was trying to get part of the credit for Villista victories. Soon the two former allies plunged into a classical struggle for power that plagued Mexico for the next several years.

When Huerta's Federal forces started to fold in early 1914, two large rebel armies—Obregon's and Villa's—raced south for Mexico City. Villa and his Army of the North had the advantage in any race since they were astride the railroad which ran for eight hundred miles from the plateau from Chihuahua City to the capital. However, Obregon won the race because Carranza had Villa's coal supply cut, forcing Villa to wait and fume at Zacatecas with no fuel for his trains. Villa telegraphed Obregon to play fair and wait for him so they both could take the capital but to no avail. Instead, Obregon took Mexico City and installed Carranza in the national palace where the First Chief assumed the executive powers of his country. Villa, feeling betrayed, repudiated the authority of the First Chief and swore vengeance, while Carranza took the precaution of arresting people he suspected of being Villistas. Huerta's flight left two armed rebel factions, both shouting the rhetoric of the revolution, confronting each other. After a brief pause the civil war erupted in its full fury as the two chieftains struggled to be the master of Mexico.

At the border, as expected, Chihuahua supported Villa, but the surprise came in Sonora. The state had given Carranza recognition, a safe place to reside and push his Constitutionalist plan, and Obregon's army that installed him on the seat of power now became a thorn in his flesh. Jose Maytorena, governor of Sonora, had taken a leave of absence and moved into the United States a week after Huerta seized power, but in the summer of 1913 he returned to Sonora. He found Carranza's men in control of his state and reluctant to share any authority. Shortly after Carranza moved into Chihuahua, Maytorena recruited an army



and began to regain control of the state. Constitutionalist General Elias Calles tried to prevent Maytorena's return to power and assailed the governor as a foe of the revolution and a friend of Huerta. The war of words soon degenerated into military actions. Villa sided with Maytorena and sent Calles a telegram warning him to lay off the governor. Calles, ignoring Villa's warning, continued his criticism of Maytorena and enlisted the support of General Salvador Alvarado to put power behind his words.

However, Maytorena moved first and arrested General Alvarado and his staff, and prepared to take on Calles for interfering with his governing of Sonora. In August of 1914 Maytorena moved towards Nogales, Sonora where Calles had a Carranzista army. Maytorena took the city without a shot as Calles retreated to the southeast. Maytorena's triumphant soldiers wore hat bands with "Viva Villa" on them reflecting the deep partisanship of the revolution. Next, Maytorena moved on Naco, Sonora where some of the Carranzistas had taken up positions. Maytorena invested the town and initiated the second siege of Naco. People of both sides of the border expressed a fear of Maytorena's Yaqui troops and expected the worst of them. The belief prevailed that the Yaquis could not be controlled.<sup>1</sup>

In the meantime, Obregon persuaded Carranza to allow him to travel to Chihuahua and confer with Villa, hopefully to heal the breach in the revolution and solve the immediate problem at Naco. Late in August 1914 Obregon met with Villa. After much discussion, they compromised to the point that Carranza should not become president of Mexico, but a convention should meet in October to determine the form of government for the country. Then Villa and Obregon journeyed to El Paso, Texas and through the United States to Naco where they held a conference with the opposing factions. They agreed to a settlement or truce of sorts in that General Obregon replaced Calles with General Benjamin Hill with instructions not to move his troops or provoke hostilities. Maytorena agreed to lift the siege and withdraw his army to the south.<sup>2</sup>

In spite of Obregon's and Villa's attempted settlement, the situation in Sonora seemed almost beyond compromise. Shortly after the departure of the two leaders, the settlement disintegrated. Early in September General Hill tried to move his army out of Naco, but Maytorena's force met him and drove him back into the town and besieged Naco again. At the beginning of the siege, people on the United States side were curious spectators until wild shots from across the border dampened their interest. It soon became apparent that not all the shots were wild. American eye-witnesses saw the Carranzistas take deliberate aim and shoot into the United States instead of shooting in the opposite direction

<sup>1</sup> Bisbee Daily Review (Bisbee, Arizona), Aug. 24, 25, 26, 29, 30, 1914. Hereafter cited as Review.

<sup>2</sup> Review, Aug. 31, Sept. 1, 1914.



at the besieging foes. Several Americans received wounds, a couple of them being mortally injured from the bullets shot out of Mexico. On October 4th Hill's Carranzista troops fired on some U.S. troops across the border with a burst of machine gun fire and rifle shots. In an interview the following day, Maytorena claimed all the shooting had come from the Carranzistas as his men had not taken any offensive action on Naco.<sup>3</sup>

Why did the Carranzistas holding Naco, Sonora shoot into the United States? It could have been a matter of getting even with the gringos for every offense—real or imagined—since the Mexican War. However, immediate events provided the catalyst. The Carranza supporters felt President Woodrow Wilson should have immediately recognized the Carranza government, but instead followed a pro-Villa policy. They viewed the convention to meet in October at Aguascalientes as the last straw. They saw the convention as against Carranza, and in their present situation they could not help their leader as a fighting force. Perhaps, if they provoked an international crisis at the border, it would somehow help Carranza.

The shooting into Naco, Arizona from south of the border continued throughout October and November. During this time, American diplomatic officials in Washington, D.C. and local commanders pleaded with the two Mexican forces to change their tactics so the shooting into the U.S. would stop. By December the adobe houses and buildings of Naco, Arizona were almost as deeply pitted and pocked by bullets as those in Naco, Sonora. More Americans had been wounded, including a number of American soldiers. Still the leaders of the two revolutionary factions refused to take any action that would compromise their military situation.

Relief did not come from the larger councils. The convention at Aguascalientes debated for five weeks in attempting to solve the differences among the various revolutionaries. All it could do was to eliminate both Villa and Carranza, and appoint Eulalio Gutierrez as provisional president of Mexico. When Carranza chose to disregard the decision of the convention, it selected Villa to remove Carranza from the national palace and install Gutierrez. Villa moved on the capital from the north, while another anti-Carranza leader—Emiliano Zapata—moved in from the south. Carranza fled to Vera Cruz where he established himself under the protection of Obregon's army. Early in December of 1914 Villa and Zapata arrived in Mexico City as conquering heroes. Gutierrez took over the machinery of government, only to discover that he was virtually the prisoner of Villa. Villa called the shots and would only allow the president to do what the military chieftain wanted. With such a situation the parties in Sonora would not back off. The Villistas felt that one or two more blows would destroy Carranza for good, while the Carranzistas believed they had to hold on or the leader would sink.

<sup>3</sup> Review, Oct. 4, 6, 7, 1914.



Because of this stalemate, someone else would have to force the situation into some solution. By December of 1914 the United States had had it. Nineteen months earlier when Naco suffered its first siege, Washington, D.C. shackled the local American commanders with orders not to return any fire into Mexico under any circumstances. Now the United States not only reinforced Naco, Arizona with more infantrymen and three batteries of artillery, but gave orders to local commanders to return any fire from across the line. Local commanders relied primarily on diplomacy instead of using the new order as a license to shoot back into Mexico. On December 9th the U.S. sent identical notes to Carranza and Gutierrez complaining that local Mexican commanders at Naco were failing to control their men, and unless corrective steps were taken at once, the United States would be compelled to "employ such forces as may be required." This direct threat of intervention caused Carranza to act indignant that Americans might violate Mexican soil, but Gutierrez wired Maytorena to take immediate steps to prevent trouble with the United States even to breaking off the siege if necessary. Maytorena did not wish to give up the struggle after so much cost and with victory so near.<sup>4</sup>

When the initial warning failed to solve the problem, General Hugh L. Scott, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, traveled to Naco, Arizona. Scott arrived on December 19th and immediately issued a sharp statement to both Mexican factions that no more firing across the border would be tolerated. He also arranged a series of conferences with the opposing Mexican commanders and on December 26th they reached an agreement along the border as suggested by General Scott. It called for Maytorena's force to back off from Naco and allow General Hill to evacuate his Carranzista army to Agua Prieta. The Villistas were to continue to hold Nogales, but with only a limited number of men, while the Carranzistas could possess Agua Prieta with a prescribed number of troops. Neither faction was to attack the other in its assigned Sonoran border town. Being situated between these two towns, Naco was to be neutral until there was a government in Mexico recognized by the United States or until one side or the other gained undisputed supremacy in Sonora.<sup>5</sup>

At the last minute Maytorena refused to sign the agreement, either from lack of authority or not wanting to bind himself. Then Villa telegraphed orders to withdraw so Maytorena began backing his troops off, but on December 30th his Yaquis were again in their trenches and the firing resumed. General Scott wanted to see Villa personally and vice versa, so the two men met on the International Bridge between El Paso and Juarez on January 7, 1915. Villa argued for permission to stage a hurricane attack on both Agua Prieta and Naco, promising to take both in a single day. Scott refused and insisted that the December

<sup>4</sup> Review, Dec. 10, 1914.

<sup>5</sup> Review, Dec. 20, 21, 29, 30, 31, 1914.



recruited workers for his army then turned north to seek out Villa. He had studied reports of the war in progress in Europe and decided to implement some of their practices. Obregon decided to wait for Villa at Celaya where he had trenches dug, threw up barbed wire entanglements, and posted machine guns to sweep all approaches just like the English, French and Germans. In mid-April Villa came down and attacked Obregon's strong defenses three times on three successive days. Villa met defeat and lost the heart of his army, his Doradas. This golden mobile cavalry had never faced the likes of such defenses in any of their previous charges. The battle ranked as the bloodiest in Mexican history and severely damaged the Villistas.

Villa retreated northward in his long trains of freight cars, pulling up the track behind him. Obregon laid track and pursued Villa. Villa suffered further defeats at Leon, Aguascalientes and Zacatecas. Villa's armies grew smaller and smaller as battle casualties and desertions took a heavy toll. By October of 1915 Villa still controlled Chihuahua, but his power and prestige had fallen considerably and in fact were still on the wane. He needed to restore his image; a fresh victory would do it plus draw new recruits to him. Yet Villa did not wish to move south and engage Obregon again until he could regroup his forces and fortunes sufficiently. He decided it would be best to cross the mountains and join with Governor Maytorena in Sonora.

Specifically Agua Prieta was Villa's goal and almost everyone concerned knew it. The capture of this strategic border town would eliminate the threat to Villa's rear and destroy the only vestige of Carranza's authority in northern Sonora. It would also secure for Villa four ports of entry—Agua Prieta, Naco, Nogales and Juarez—the prime and essential source of money and supplies in northern Mexico. Anyway Pancho Villa looked at it, Agua Prieta was his last good hope. He must have it at all costs or his fortunes would fail for good and he would be back where he started five years earlier—just another Mexican bandit chieftain.

Villa regrouped his forces and prepared to move over the mountains. During this preparation a large part of the Villistas camped in the vicinity of Casas Grandes and Colonia Dublan. The Mormon colonies in Chihuahua had suffered repeated incursions for the past two years by rebel bands seeking food, supplies and arms. This time the Villistas went one better as they "requisitioned" all the Mormon wagons and horses they could lay their hands on. Villa offered the owners of the horses the chance to accompany his army and care for their horses, and then return with their animals after the campaign. Three Mormons availed themselves of this offer.

In mid-October 1915 Villa and his men disappeared into the mountain fastness and for days they were lost from view. But Carranza in Mexico City knew where Villa would show up. The United States granted de facto recognition to the Carranza government on October 19th. Four days later Carranza requested



the U.S. to allow him to reinforce Agua Prieta by way of American soil. When the United States agreed, General Obregon sent men, livestock, equipment and supplies toward the Texas border where American railroads could pick them up and deliver them to Douglas, Arizona opposite Agua Prieta, Sonora. Carranza did not want to lose his only stronghold in the area, so no cost was spared to strengthen the border town.

General Calles, in Agua Prieta, also anticipated Villa's moves and abandoned Naco on October 21st and moved all his men into Agua Prieta. In mid-October Calles ordered the Mormons in their Sonoran colonies to cease harvesting their crops, the Lilywhites to close their flour mill, and all Mormons to leave the colonies. As insurance, Calles went to Colonia Moreles and dismantled part of the Lilywhite mill and took the equipment to Agua Prieta. If Calles could prevent it, Senor Villa would not be able to replenish his food supplies in Sonora prior to attacking Agua Prieta.<sup>9</sup>

Calles also busied his men digging deep entrenchments around Agua Prieta. They strung aprons of barbed wire entanglements and established machine gun emplacements to sweep all approaches to the town. On October 25th an armed force of about 200 men approached Agua Prieta, they offered to surrender and were so allowed. They were Major Cervantes and men of Villa's advance force who had deserted Villa and after a sharp fight with pursuing Villista cavalry, made good their escape and surrendered to Calles. Calles accepted many of them into his service to man the trenches against their former comrades. In the same trenches were Lazaro Cardenas and 300 to 400 men who had deserted the Villistas back in March. These desertions hurt Villa but helped Calles.<sup>10</sup>

The local Mexican authorities had done much to make it difficult for Villa to arrive physically prepared for strong battle. They also had made Agua Prieta a strong defensive position, but still valuable outside help came from other points in Mexico. With Carranza's use of American railroads, Agua Prieta was no longer isolated. On October 28th a train arrived in Douglas with twenty cars of livestock for the Agua Prieta defenders. Late on October 30th the first troop train arrived bringing 850 soldiers, a second train brought 800 more troops plus 300 women and children. In all, nine special trains arrived before the night of October 31st. They came from Laredo, Texas and carried soldiers, livestock, field guns, ammunitions, arms, vehicles and other military equipment. The arrival of this timely aid made Agua Prieta next to impregnable, certainly Villa no longer had overwhelming force to crack Agua Prieta easily. Carlos Randall, the new Villista governor of Sonora—Maytorena had abandoned Villa and moved into the U.S.—protested the transporting of Mexican troops across American soil. He received no satisfaction, in fact the only reply he received came from the president of the Southern Pacific

<sup>9</sup> Dispatch, Oct. 22, 1915.

<sup>10</sup> Review, Oct. 26, 1915. Dispatch, Oct. 30, 31, 1915.



Railroad, who notified the governor that his railroad would henceforth be unable to serve the Villa faction with trains in Mexico. Carranza had told the Southern Pacific that further service to Villa would be viewed as an unfriendly act toward Mexico.<sup>11</sup>

North of the border the American civil and military authorities prepared for the side-effects of any fighting. Mayor C. C. Ellis of Douglas wired the U.S. State Department as early as October 25th asking for assurances that the United States would not allow a battle for Agua Prieta to be fought. Anticipating heavy fighting, notwithstanding diplomatic endeavors, the American garrison at Douglas received reinforcements to include three regiments of infantry, a regiment of field artillery and several troops of cavalry. The American soldiers totalled over 6,500 men. They dug the first trenches on American soil adjacent to the border. The trenches comprised a series of mutually supporting strong points instead of a continuous trench, and extended from the eastern city limits to the first range of hills to the east. A much smaller series of trenches protected the area near the custom house. As the American troops constructed their trenches "practically the entire" civilian and military population of Agua Prieta crowded against the barbed wire fence comprising the international line to watch on Saturday the 30th. The following day General Thomas Davis issued a warning to all Americans in Douglas to keep off the streets and stay home until the fight ended. But with so many things to see and expectations running high, too few took the general's advice as American sightseers' curiosity was just as great as their Mexican counterparts.<sup>12</sup>

Villa's approach caused hundreds of Mexicans from the non-border area of Sonora to flee to the border. Several bands of Villistas roamed the area forcing men to join Villa's army. The peasants disliked conscription from Villa as much as they had from Huerta earlier. Their safety valve was to move to the border and as a last resort cross into the United States. The refugees began arriving in Agua Prieta on October 25th, shortly after Major Cervantes and his men arrived and surrendered to Calles. The following day the refugees came in larger numbers and continued to arrive until Villa attacked the town. On October 27th some cowboys reported Villa's advance guard some eighteen miles east of Agua Prieta. Three days later some of Calles' scouts exchanged shots with an advance party of Villistas and took a wounded sixteen year old Villista prisoner. His captors took him to the temporary hospital in the U.S. operated by the Douglas Red Cross. The young lad told reporters that Villa's men had suffered greatly in crossing the mountains. They had been out of beans and flour since they left Casas Grandes. The prisoner commented, "our food has been just plain vaca—cow." Villa's men were in desperate straits—hungry, thirsty and worn out—and Senor

<sup>11</sup> Dispatch, Oct. 31, 1915. Review, Oct. 29, 31, 1915.

<sup>12</sup> Dispatch, Oct. 26, 31, 1915. Review, Oct. 31, 1915.



Calles' actions in the Mormon colonies ensured that Villa's army did not improve their condition.<sup>13</sup>

The tension mounted on both sides of the border in the Douglas-Agua Prieta area during the last week in October. All the preparations pointed to a big bloody battle for the small Mexican town; the question of when and how it would come added to the anxiety. On the night of October 30th the residents of the two border communities heard a "mysterious aeroplane" flying overhead. Most of the people knew that General Calles had a plane, but they also knew his aviator—Roy Brown—deserted two weeks earlier and Calles had no one to replace him. This unidentified airplane created a scare and caused imaginations to soar. Since it was not Calles' plane, whose was it? Villa's? Yes, it must be Villa's or so many of the people thought. Was it going to bomb Agua Prieta? Could it or would it strike Douglas by mistake? Although airplanes of the time were unable to do much in military operations, the people envisioned them as super-destructive weapons and called the few engaged in the revolution as "war machines" or "war aeroplanes." This particular unidentified plane dropped no bombs, the only damage the plane caused was to frayed nerves.<sup>14</sup>

Villa's army left Chihuahua ill-prepared to cross the Sierra Madre mountains into Sonora. He had been unable to secure the necessary food since one of his old comrades made off with his treasure chest, and Villa had overworked his printing press to the point that his currency had no market value whatsoever. Compounding the problem, his foraging parties had secured only beef in their raids. With inadequate foodstuffs Villa pushed his men to arrive before they were weakened from the lack of food, but he drove them to the point of exhaustion. When they reached the area near Slaughter's Ranch they had had little or no food or water for the past twenty-four hours. At John Slaughter's place they helped themselves to some corn and fifty head of beef,<sup>15</sup> but they did not find adequate water for men or animals.<sup>16</sup>

On October 30th an American patrol near Slaughter's Ranch met and talked to members of Villa's staff. The Villistas explained they were locating the international boundary, while Villa, still ten miles east, expected to camp for the night opposite the ranch. The Villistas needed water and asked the American troops if they could cross the border to obtain water. The Americans refused. At

<sup>13</sup> Dispatch, Oct. 26, 27, 31, 1915. Review, Oct. 31, 1915.

<sup>14</sup> Dispatch, Oct. 31, 1915.

<sup>15</sup> Fred Moore reported that his old friend John Slaughter saw the Villistas taking some of his cattle. John ordered his horse saddled with his shotgun in the saddle scabbard. One of Slaughter's men asked the boss what he was going to do and John answered, "I am going down and jump old Pancho Villa." Slaughter went by himself and talked to Villa, and when he returned to his ranch house he had U.S. twenty-dollar gold pieces which Moore claimed were in payment for the cattle. Moore called this John Slaughter's "nerviest deed."

<sup>16</sup> Dispatch, Oct. 31, Nov. 2, 1915.



this time or the following day the Villistas learned for the first time that the United States had granted official recognition to the Carranza government and allowed the heretofore isolated Agua Prieta garrison to be reinforced by way of U.S. soil. The next day American reporters went to Villa's camp and interviewed him, and they found him very angry and threatening to fight the United States. Then Villa said, "Agua Prieta is going to be mine, Americans or no Americans. I am through with them, all and forever...."<sup>17</sup>

In spite of Villa's intemperate words, he did not give serious thought to military action against the United States. He felt he had to strike Agua Prieta immediately before his army deteriorated further from lack of food and water. The time factor caused Villa to strike before he had scouted the defenses of Agua Prieta. His whole preparation was to assemble his men and address them with "stirring words" as a captured Villista recollected it. The same soldier claimed Villa had 14,000 men, but a more realistic figure cited by the newspapers put the number between 8,000 and 10,000. At least part of the difference between the two figures can be explained by desertions and loss of men by fatigue in crossing the mountains from Chihuahua to Sonora. As the moment of truth came, could words, however stirring, make up for serious deficiencies—tired hungry Villistas, no reconnoitering and attacking a strongly held position?<sup>18</sup>

Shortly before daybreak on November 1, 1915 some 3,000 American soldiers manned the trenches on their side of the border, while another 3,500 were divided between manning artillery pieces, guarding the custom house-border crossing area, patrolling the boundary on both sides of Douglas, and a few men held as support troops. Their assignments made them close observers to the unique battle. On the opposite side of the border Calles' men likewise occupied their trenches, manned machine guns and artillery pieces, and held other defensive assignments. Everyone in the two border towns felt certain the battle would begin that very day. At the last minute, Calles sent some 1,600 horses over to the American side for safety. He had had absolutely no plans of any offensive actions whatsoever, his sole purpose being to defend Agua Prieta.<sup>19</sup>

At daybreak the Villistas came into view east of Agua Prieta and advanced across the open plains to within two miles of Calles' trenches. Villa stopped his men in a draw and deployed his troops into a skirmish line that stretched a mile long, and readied his forty-five artillery pieces before noon. A little after 1:00 p.m. a Villistas cavalry detachment moved up to a point opposite the quarantine slaughterhouse east of Douglas. By this time hundreds of American spectators lined the dirt road that paralleled the border in the area. A Villista officer rode toward the sightseers

<sup>17</sup> Dispatch, Oct. 31, 1915 (7 p.m. Extra).

<sup>18</sup> Review, Nov. 2, 3, 1915.

<sup>19</sup> Review, Oct. 31, Nov. 2, 3, 1915. Dispatch, Nov. 2, 3, 1915.



and shouted for them to fall back as the shooting was about to begin. When the Americans stood their ground some of the Villistas came to the border fence and begged for a drink of water. F. E. Storm, manager of the slaughterhouse, and his employees along with a few of the spectators began filling canteens and other containers with water and passed them across the border to the thirsty Villistas. American troops moved in and stopped this activity when General Calles protested to the United States authorities. The U.S. troops moved the sightseers back from the border as best they could, but the task proved endless as the spectators kept drifting back.<sup>20</sup>

At 1:30 p.m. Calles' batteries opened fire at the extreme eastern end of Agua Prieta. Villa's guns returned the fire for about fifteen minutes, then both sides ceased the heavy shelling and only fired occasionally. At 3:15 p.m. the Villistas closed to within a half a mile of the Agua Prieta trenches with a resultant exchange of small arms fire. Villa sent sharpshooters forward to snipe at Calles' men in the trenches, but they made little headway and soon backed off. Villa's batteries opened up again with heavy shooting at 5:00 p.m., and both sides shelled each other for a short time. The rifle fire continued until sundown, at which time Villa had extended his line south and west to surround Agua Prieta on its Mexican sides.<sup>21</sup>

When the sun went down, all the firing paused for a brief respite, for the defenders of the town knew the worst was still to come. The defensive preparations of the past week had proven effective, still extreme caution dominated Calles' plans. Probably the biggest problem in Agua Prieta during the first hours of fighting came in getting the non-combatants over into the United States. Calles had earlier received permission from American authorities to reconcentrate his civilians in Pirtleville, Arizona, but the actual removal did not begin until the shooting began. As a result the refugees fled their homes and dashed for the border crossing with little semblance of order. Calles felt he could not spare soldiers to assist the civilians and no transportation was furnished to carry needed supplies to the reconcentration point. For a little over an hour chaos reigned among the refugees moving to the border and grouping there. Otherwise, the first hours of the battle went as Calles had expected and planned.<sup>22</sup>

Across the border on the American side, the first day of shooting produced both excitement and death. School officials, watching the approaching Villistas, closed the school at 2nd Street at 10:30 a.m. Then about 1:00 p.m., with Villa's men deploying into a skirmish line, the grammar school, high school, Pirtleville school, C & A School, Sunnyside School and 15th Street school also closed. The "Villa vacation" lasted from Monday until Thursday. The school closings swelled the ranks of spectators gathering near

<sup>20</sup> Review, Nov. 2, 1915. Dispatch, Nov. 2, 3, 1915.

<sup>21</sup> Review, Nov. 2, 1915. Dispatch, Nov. 2, 3, 1915.

<sup>22</sup> Dispatch, Nov. 2, 4, 1915.



the border primarily on the road near the quarantine slaughterhouse and near the cemetery. U.S. troops moved about a hundred observers in the vicinity of the cemetery back one block when stray bullets began hitting United States soil. Both Mexican forces were guilty of shooting into the U.S. Calles' men, firing at Villistas near the border, had their bullets frequently strike in the area of the Douglas cemetery and the quarantine slaughterhouse; while Villista bullets hit near the custom house and the smelters. At one point in the battle Villa changed the angle of his fire after being requested to do so by the U.S. military, still a lot of bullets fell on American soil. The Copper Queen Smelter closed at 3:00 p.m. after being peppered with small arms fire, and many other businesses closed due to the fighting. The curious crowded as close as possible to the border to view the fight up close, some even watched the battle from the roof tops of the taller buildings. S. F. Taylor received a mortal wound as he stood near the U.S. Custom House. A bullet struck letter carrier, Herbert K. Jones, as he stood in front of his home on 5th Street. Corporal M. Jones of Company "G" 7th U.S. Cavalry had the misfortune to be the first American soldier shot in the engagement. As his unit patrolled the border west of the custom house, a Mexican rose up from hiding and yelled "Viva Carranza" and fired six shots at the U.S. cavalrymen. The bullets struck only Jones, wounding him in both legs.<sup>23</sup>

The evening respite to the battle ended at 8:00 p.m. when general firing resumed including artillery, machine gun and small arms fire. Then the shooting stopped after thirty minutes and all became deathly quiet until Villa launched another artillery barrage at 10:00 p.m. of the same duration as the one two hours earlier. When the firing stopped this time and things became quiet and dark, Villa made his next move. He assigned his infantrymen to move as close to Calles' trenches as they could without being detected, and then at the right moment join his cavalry in a massive assault on Agua Prieta. So the Villista infantrymen crawled on their stomachs toward the trenches. They had approximately three hours to get themselves into the best position to storm Calles' outer defenses. At 1:50 a.m. of November 2nd Villa launched his heretofore famous night assault that had become his trademark. The infantrymen, who had crawled toward the trenches, and Villa's ferocious cavalry led the charge followed by the remaining Villistas. Villa gambled all on this night assault, nothing was held in reserve. They slammed into the defenses of Agua Prieta with all the might they could muster.<sup>24</sup>

In spite of the massiveness of the attack, it was against imposing odds of crossfiring machine guns, barbed wire entanglements, trenches full of defenders, and strategically placed mines which the defenders exploded electrically from their trenches—all wreaked havoc on the charging Villistas. Villa's

<sup>23</sup> Dispatch, Nov. 2, 1915. Review, Nov. 2, 1915.

<sup>24</sup> Review, Nov. 2, 3, 1915. Dispatch, Nov. 2, 1915.



night assault also ran into a tactical first in Mexican history—a battlefield illuminated by three powerful searchlights—which not only revealed the attackers but blinded those charging the defenses. Three times Villa assaulted Calles' defenses but could not break through and had to back off each time. After the last try, some Villistas climbed up on some roofs near the border and in the early morning light began to take pot shots at Calles' men in the trenches. The Agua Prieta defenders and almost everyone on the American side of the border assumed this action was to be the signal for another full scale attack. The defenders returned the fire until the shooting stopped completely about 6:30 a.m. of November 2nd. The Battle of Agua Prieta was over after just eighteen hours, but at the time only Pancho Villa knew it. Nobody realized or imagined how completely crushing Villa's defeat had been. Everyone waited and expected Villa to renew the fighting at any moment.<sup>25</sup>

Calles' men held their ground and left the Villistas lying in heaps on the ground or their bodies hanging on the barbed wire entanglements. Calles' pre-battle preparation had proven deadly for the ill-prepared Villistas. If Villa had reconnoitered Agua Prieta before the assault, he would have probably agreed with later military assessments that the town was almost impregnable, and only complete surprise by Villa could have turned the tide of battle without a long siege. The defenders did not let down their guard, and Calles personally checked his defenses the morning of November 2nd to ensure all points remained at full strength. Calles admitted to American reporters that the battle had hurt him, leaving casualties of forty-five killed and seventy-five wounded. He also admitted that his men were tired and the Villista shelling had damaged the town considerably. By 10:00 a.m. Calles asked the U.S. reporters, "Where is the visit that Senor Villa was going to pay me?" Still Calles believed caution to be the better part of valor, and he did not bring his horses back from the United States or plan any sort of offensive against the battered and beaten Villistas. If Calles had ventured out, he would have found Villa in his most vulnerable position of his short career. Villa's force was worn out and impotent and in no shape to fight or run.<sup>26</sup>

Bullets fell on the American side of the border during the heavy night fighting. The stray bullets fell heaviest in the same areas as during the day shooting, but they also hit in the center of Douglas. Several bullets even struck the roof of the Gadsden Hotel, and the best explanation for why bullets would be hitting so high was that they were deliberately aimed. The United States suffered nine casualties during the Battle of Agua Prieta, five civilians and four soldiers. One civilian and one soldier died, the latter being Private Harry J. Jones of Company "C" 11th U.S. Infantry.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Review, Nov. 3, 1915.



Jones had been assigned to the area near the custom house. He and his comrades had been sprayed with shot during the day shooting, but they had sufficient protection with their trenches. The two early night barrages kept the U.S. soldiers on alert late into the night. When quiet came at last after 10:30 p.m., the men welcomed the chance to get some sleep after a long and uncomfortable day. The men tried to sleep in their trenches, but it was too crowded to be comfortable. Pvt. Jones climbed out of the trench sometime after midnight and wrapped his blanket around him and went to sleep. When the Villistas launched their massive assault a stray bullet struck Jones in the abdomen and he rolled down into the trench mortally wounded. Some of his buddies rushed him to the YMCA where the regimental hospital had been temporarily established. They transferred Jones to the Calumet Hospital where he died during the afternoon of November 2, 1915. Two days later during a funeral service Jones was given full military honors; after which, his comrades placed his coffin on a gun caisson and escorted it to the railroad station accompanied by the army band and several hundred soldiers and spectators. Mount Greenwood, Illinois became the final resting place for the earthly remains of Pvt. Jones. A short time later Camp Douglas was renamed Camp Harry J. Jones in honor of the dead infantryman.<sup>28</sup>

Early on November 2nd Major General Frederick Funston arrived in Douglas and immediately took command of the American forces. He inspected the U.S. trenches and positions before the firing stopped at 6:30 a.m. He decided that the trenches outside the town were okay, but felt the trenches in town offered inadequate protection. He ordered the soldiers in the latter trenches recalled to positions along 5th Street. The civil and military officials in Douglas issued orders for everyone south of 6th Street to immediately abandon the area. The belated policy, reminiscent of the one adopted in 1911 during the first battle for Agua Prieta, came as a result of the nine casualties suffered in Douglas plus the expectation that Villa would resume the battle. The excitement of battle had attracted hundreds of spectators who jeopardized their personal safety by trying to get as close as possible to the battle. Some cautious people stayed inside their homes and away from the border area, while a few took the precaution of going to Bisbee for the duration of the battle. However, a lot more Bisbeeites and county residents flocked to Douglas to see the fighting. Many of the spectators collected along 6th Street waiting for Villa to renew the attack. Some of the sightseers grumbled about the orders that restricted their grandstand viewing area. During the morning of November 2nd, at Villa's request, General Funston held a ten minute conference with Villa on the border a mile or so east of Douglas. Funston's only comment about the meeting was that Villa's "attitude was

<sup>28</sup> Review, Nov. 3, 1915. Dispatch, Nov. 3, 1915.



quite satisfactory." However, even Funston expected Villa to resume the battle as the general closed the border at 2:30 p.m. <sup>29</sup>

Villa did not renew the attack nor was he capable of besieging the defenders of Agua Prieta. Instead he moved west screening the town while he passed his force around the town. Just before sunset of November 2nd Villa's rear guard disappeared from the view of eyes in Agua Prieta and Douglas. Villa had lost the battle and suffered approximately 900 casualties—400 killed and 500 wounded. He also lost a lot of horses, supplies and thirteen cannon he could ill-afford to lose. He experienced even greater losses from desertions. Prior to the battle his army dwindled as many tired and hungry Villistas abandoned Villa. Two days after the battle 300 Villistas cavalry returned to Agua Prieta and surrendered. Others came in and surrendered in small groups or individually so that by November 10th some 600 Villistas had returned to Agua Prieta and asked for amnesty. Undoubtedly others left Villa but went elsewhere. They had been pushed too hard without supplies, and perhaps the deserters left realizing that Villa could not possibly overthrow Carranza. Why should they stick with a lost cause? <sup>30</sup>

Villa's decline from national leadership and the severe loss of men in his army did not lessen his potential to cause damage. If anything he became more dangerous, doing things out of desperation and no longer trying to court public opinion inside the United States. However, the amount of damage that Villa could inflict had been greatly reduced. As Villa rode into the sunset on November 2nd his attitude toward Americans took a decided turn for the worse. He blamed them for his loss, claiming incorrectly that the Americans furnished the spotlights that blinded his charging men, and damning Gringos for allowing Carranza to reinforce Agua Prieta via American soil and railroads. On November 6th four Americans, who had been captured and held by Villa after his loss at Agua Prieta, returned to Douglas and told of harrowing experiences of threatened execution. They also told of Villa enroute to Naco, Sonora the day he left Agua Prieta becoming so angry at his losses that he talked of returning and turning his big guns on Douglas, Arizona to get even with the Americans. The last episode received a replay when Dr. T. H. Thigpen, chief surgeon of the Cananea Consolidated Copper Company, and Charles Miller along with two chauffeurs met Villa enroute to Naco on November 2nd. The four men left Naco in two automobiles loaded with medical supplies and intentions of treating the wounded Villistas. Villa received them with much coolness, then requested them to ask American authorities if he could have his wounded Villistas transported to Juarez via U.S. railroads. Even when the four men agreed to try, Villa launched into a tirade saying, "Turn the artillery on Douglas. Treat the Americans as they ought to be treated." The four men felt lucky to

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Dispatch, Nov. 5, 1915. Review, Nov. 10, 1915.



get away from Villa alive; at least one of the men felt that if they had remained in Villa's camp until after the U.S. refused to transport Villa's wounded, that their luck would have run out. Four months later Villa's anger would be vented in part on Columbus, New Mexico.<sup>31</sup>

Villa usually had doctors accompany his army and, for the most part, they were Americans but after the disaster of Agua Prieta, this changed. Shortly after the fight, Villa gave Dr. Harle a fine horse and advised him to leave due to the bitterness of his men. Near Naco another American doctor or two also left Villa. The three Mormon teamsters, James Whipple, Charles Turley and Lynn Hatch, had followed Villa from Chihuahua to care for their horses that the Villistas had "requisitioned." Villa promised the return of their animals after Agua Prieta had been taken. When Villa lost, the Mormons left Villa and moved east to the San Bernardino and tried to cross into the United States, but American troops would not allow their entry. Then they returned to Villa's army and went to Naco, Sonora where on November 8th they crossed the border after twenty days with Villa. They came of course without any of their horses.<sup>32</sup>

Villa stayed at Naco, Sonora with some 3,000 of his men while those with horses swept further south trying to get food and supplies. Villa only obtained a small part of what he needed since the sellers wanted hard money. In the meantime both Nacos shivered with fear of atrocities. The Mexicans feared rape and plunder, and the Americans expected Villa to carry out his threatened revenge on them. The U.S. Army quickly reinforced Naco, Arizona but Villa soon left the border heading south for Hermosillo. He did not have the least intention of returning to Agua Prieta; he had already visited that city once too often.

However, Agua Prieta thought the Villistas would return. The day after Villa left the area, Calles' men worked on their defenses. They stayed near or in their trenches, and although they counted the bodies of 336 dead Villistas near the trenches, they made no immediate attempts to get rid of the bodies. The next day American reporters ventured further out onto the battlefield and counted forty-seven more bodies and a lot of dead animals. On the second day after the battle, the Agua Prieta soldiers dragged 200 dead and smelly horses out of the town and dumped them in a pile west of town and left them. At the same time Calles dispatched a small detail to dispose of the dead Villistas. They piled a little straw on the bodies and set fire to them. The hasty attempt failed as only the victims' clothing burned. Finally on November 10th a burial detail went to the battlefield to do the job right. At first they dug one big trench and tried to move the bodies to it, but this failed because the deteriorated condition of the bodies prevented their movement very far. The men then dug several small trenches and

<sup>31</sup> Dispatch, Nov. 7, 1915.

<sup>32</sup> Dispatch, Nov. 10, 1915.



rolled the nearby bodies into it. By November 12th the bodies had been buried; but only after a week and a half since Villa departed. Clearly the Agua Prieta soldiers feared a return visit from Pancho Villa.<sup>33</sup>

However, the Carranzistas were not the only ones who kept on the alert. Although the shooting stopped at 6:30 a.m. on November 2nd and Villa left the same day, the American troops continued to man their positions day and night. Finally on November 4th the men received their first relief in three days. The men received two hours off duty to bathe, get a hot meal in camp or to see families. The troops manned the trenches and other positions for a couple of more days before they returned to a normal watch and patrolling of the border. Newspaper reporters and influential individuals entered Mexico immediately after the battle, while other curious Americans had to wait until Sunday, November 7th to see first hand the effects of the fight. On that day hundreds of spectators went to the battlefield searching for "battle relics."<sup>34</sup>

At Pirtleville, Arizona the Mexican refugees spent this period of uncertainty. The camp for the refugees came as a result of General Calles requesting American authorities to allow his non-combatants to wait out the battle in the United States. On October 30th General Thomas Davies granted permission and officially designated Pirtleville as the "reconcentration camp of the civilian non-combatants of Agua Prieta." The American and Mexican authorities agreed that the refugees would come to the border where U.S. officials and troops would escort them to Pirtleville where they would be kept under guard in a specific location. This agreement showed advance planning and preparation for almost any eventualities of the upcoming battle, but it was the only bright spot in an otherwise dreary situation.<sup>35</sup>

The problems developed early, for the refugees waited until the shooting started in the early afternoon of November 1st before they moved to cross the border. Then confusion reigned as the refugees dashed for the border bringing little except themselves and their children. When they arrived at the border, they milled around while U.S. troops attempted to get them into a moveable formation to march north to Pirtleville. In Agua Prieta four women and two children were killed in the first couple of hours of fighting. Probably an earlier removal would have prevented these deaths. However, there were many non-combatants who refused to leave their homes. The first group of refugees taken to the reconcentration camp numbered some 2,200. By nightfall many more joined them including ninety wounded men from the Agua Prieta military hospital. Stragglers kept coming in, a group of 200 was admitted to the camp as late as November 4th "making about 3,000" in the camp. The refugees suffered greatly for they

<sup>33</sup> Dispatch, Nov. 4, 5, 6, 1915.

<sup>34</sup> Dispatch, Nov. 5, 9, 1915.

<sup>35</sup> Dispatch, Oct. 31, 1915.



departed Agua Prieta in such haste that they failed to bring adequate clothing, bedding, shelter, or cooking utensils.<sup>36</sup> A local reporter visited the camp the first evening and recorded the following:

The plight of the refugees last night was pitiful. Out in the open, huddled around small fires and practically without water....<sup>37</sup>

The first day Calles sent over a truck load of flour and a truck load of beans, but without pots and pans most of the people still went hungry. To make matters worse, there existed two factions in the camp. One group contained some of the best families of Agua Prieta and northern Sonora and persons wishing no trouble, just relief from warfare. The other faction possessed rowdies, "soldier women," camp followers, disabled soldiers and troublemakers. This second group or "Amazon faction" raided the camp commissary twice the first night and carried off all the available food. They also physically took away the few tents and blankets that a few of the families did bring. The American troops guarding the camp finally stopped the overt aggressive actions of the Amazons, but they subtly continued to bully and intimidate the peaceful factions.<sup>38</sup>

The Mexican refugees camped near the stockyards of the El Paso and Southwestern Railroad where the nearest water hydrants were a quarter of a mile away. A Douglas City water department employee laid a water line to the camp by 11 p.m. the first night. The next day members of the Douglas Traction and Light Company installed electric lights for the camp. On the second day donated cooking gear allowed the refugees to solve their most pressing hunger problems. But it took until the third day before blankets and tents came to the camp. On the third evening 5,000 blankets were issued due to the efforts of Douglas residents and the Mexican consul. The same evening Calles sent over several hundred tents and American troops worked far into the night helping the refugees pitch the tents. Calles also sent firewood and beef.<sup>39</sup>

American troops escorted the Mexican refugees to the camp and kept them under guard ostensibly "to prevent any from escaping and possibly spreading disease." On the second day hundreds of friends and relatives of the refugees came to the camp and wanted to visit the refugees, but the U.S. soldiers prevented it. This has been the most criticized aspect of the reconcentration camp. However, it should be noted that no other country has been as generous in allowing aliens access into it to escape troubles at home as the United States—maybe even the more remarkable since that country had experienced a tremendous illegal alien problem with Mexicans. Above all else, it

<sup>36</sup> Dispatch, Nov. 2, 4, 1915.

<sup>37</sup> Dispatch, Nov. 2, 1915.

<sup>38</sup> Dispatch, Nov. 3, 4, 1915. Review, Nov. 4, 1915.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.



must be remembered that it was a very abnormal situation. As soon as Villa left Naco, Sonora heading south instead of east, Calles sent word to the refugees that they could safely return home. Once again American troops escorted them to the Mexican border.<sup>40</sup>

The Battle of Agua Prieta had been costly for all concerned. It hurt Villa the most and resulted in his demise as a serious threat to Carranza. The cost to Agua Prieta came in loss of people and physical damage to the city. For the U.S. the losses came in the massacre of its citizens by angry Villistas and Villa's raid on Columbus, New Mexico. The last battle also caused the United States Army to realize that the troops sent to the U.S.-Mexican border in November of 1910 were going to be around long enough to establish a permanent army camp. In Douglas, Arizona the camp immediately experienced the erection of substantial buildings. The troops built a Brigade Amusement Pavilion on the north side of the "10th Street road" and opposite the already established camp. This 170 by 60 foot structure opened on December 15, 1915 with a seating capacity of 1800. An Enlisted Men's Club went up directly in the center of the old camp in late November and early December of 1915 at a cost of \$6,100 exclusive of labor which the troops provided. Camp Douglas was growing in size and soon the army renamed it Camp Harry J. Jones, and it was no longer thought of as a temporary camp. The camp remained active eighteen more years. The army poured money into other permanent facilities at this post and others along the border.<sup>41</sup>

It is usually presumptuous to state the final word on anything, but a close simile came two weeks after the battle in the form of an advertisement in the local newspaper. Carson's Studio advertised five-cent picture post cards of the battle and as a come-on the ad stated:

The Battle of Agua Prieta will be a red letter day and night for hundreds of Douglas citizens. There is no better way of remembering the event than a few pictures.<sup>42</sup>

Pancho Villa continued to experience his own kind of red letter days as he suffered another disaster. He regrouped his men after Agua Prieta and moved south on the capital of Sonora. On November 22, 1915 he launched an attack on Hermosillo and once again ran into machine guns, trenches and disaster. He lost his army by way of massive desertion and death. The defeated Villistas drifted north and east acting simply like scattered bands of bandits rather than an army of the revolution. They stole, raped and committed wholesale atrocities on the very people they had earlier tried to lead in a reforming revolution. Villa's personal band or "army" numbered about 400 when he finally arrived at his base in Chihuahua City. He could only claim to control two

<sup>40</sup> Dispatch, Nov. 2, 3, 1915.

<sup>41</sup> Dispatch, Nov. 21, 25, Dec. 15, 1915.

<sup>42</sup> Dispatch, Nov. 14, 1915.



other cities of importance—Nogales, Sonora and Juarez, Chihuahua.

When Governor Maytorena of Sonora fled into the United States in the last days of October 1915 and while General Calles prepared Agua Prieta for battle, the Villistas moved in and took over Nogales. Since Juarez was all but closed to American goods due to the animosity of American custom officials to Villa, Nogales was really the only port of any value to the Villistas. This soon changed as relations with the United States deteriorated quickly. The Villa supporters blamed the Americans for their recent losses and their hatred flared into open violence. November 24 saw the situation turn decidedly ugly. Villa had just been all but crushed at Hermosillo and a Carranzista Army moved toward Nogales. The Villistas in Nogales openly challenged the United States soldiers in Nogales, Arizona to a fight. When the Americans ignored the offer, the Villistas taunted them as being women and cowards. The following day two Villista colonels seeing the U.S. Consul and the U.S. Collector of Customs standing near the American Custom House, moved to the border and shouted insults and names at the American officials. The uproar attracted twenty to thirty mounted Villistas who added their insults and even pulled their weapons and threatened the Americans. During this scene several Villistas excitedly rode their horses across the border into the U.S. shouting and waving their guns. Colonel William B. Sage, commander of the American troops at Nogales, Arizona, moved to the border and repeatedly asked the Mexican intruders to respect the international boundary. The Villistas finally returned to Mexico, but the insults and taunts to fight continued into the night and the next day. On November 26 a report of an approaching Carranzista Army caused most of the Villistas to leavetown; however, they left some snipers who began firing at the American soldiers across the border. Colonel Sage reacted by deploying his men—some lying prone along International Street facing Mexico and a few sharpshooters on top of the nearby buildings. When the snipers continued shooting, Colonel Sage ordered his men to return the fire—"Pick your man and fire," Sage ordered. The American soldiers vigorously returned the fire for about half an hour.<sup>43</sup>

In the meantime, the Carranzistas, nearing the town, heard the shooting and dispatched a cavalry detachment to investigate the situation. When the mounted men dashed into Nogales, Sonora, the American troops mistook them for returning Villistas and turned their fire on them. The Carranzistas suffered one killed and two wounded. The Americans suffered three casualties at the hands of the snipers, among them Private Stephen Little who died. A short time later the military camp at Nogales, Arizona honored him by renaming the camp—Camp Little. The Villista snipers had some forty men killed. Later, after the Carranzistas had secured the town, Colonel Sage and General

<sup>43</sup> Dispatch, Nov. 25, 26, 27, 1915.



Obregon met and exchanged apologies for the unfortunate happenings at Nogales.<sup>44</sup>

Within a month the Carranzistas took Juarez and controlled most of Chihuahua. Villa and a small group of followers disappeared into the mountains to hide. Pancho no longer possessed the physical force to challenge Carranza directly, but he had one more trick up his sleeve and it was at best a long shot inasmuch as it involved provoking the United States and Mexico into war. Villa reasoned that several atrocities against American citizens would cause American intervention in Mexico, since their relationship had been seriously strained for the past three years. Villa felt that Carranza, who had always jealously guarded Mexican sovereignty, would resist the Americans and cause war, and somehow or other through this Villa would return to national importance and regain power. So on January 10, 1916 the Villistas massacred seventeen Americans at Santa Isabel. Then on March 9, 1916 they raided Columbus, New Mexico. Villa's strategy worked to the point of United States intervention in the form of General John Pershing's Punitive Expedition, but the hoped-for war between the neighboring countries never materialized. As Pershing chased, Villa had to run and hide and run some more, and his force grew smaller and weaker daily. Although Pershing did not capture Villa, Pancho lost the contest for he was weaker militarily than when he started some six years earlier as a leader of the revolution. He had fallen to the station of a small bandit capable of only a few small raids in Chihuahua and no longer a threat to the Carranza government or the United States. Pancho Villa lost strength in everything except as a myth and a legend, for he instantly became a popular idol in Mexico for seeking revenge and death on gringos and evading the American army chasing him.

Finally Carranza gained supremacy and undisputed title as President of Mexico. He believed that since Madero had been avenged and constitutional order re-established that the revolution was over. He proceeded to ignore all the promises of reform that he had pledged during the civil war. Mexico did settle down to something resembling peace, although a few Villistas and Zapatistas were still being shot. But the peace came as a result of exhaustion and disillusionment, not due to fulfillment or the accomplishments of President Carranza. Mexico would wait and endure Carranza's corrupt elitist regime because it could only stay in power constitutionally one term. The majority of the people would wait for General Obregon, who they believed would deliver the promises of the revolution.

During this period the only serious border incident occurred at Nogales during the summer of 1918. For once the trouble did not begin with warring Mexican factions, but came about over American-Mexican animosities. Past antagonisms were largely to blame and included old hostilities going back decades. The

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.



revolutionary activities of the past eight years added fuel to the flames of passion, culminating with the Mexican resentment of Pershing's Punitive Expedition, while the Santa Isabel massacre and Villa's raid on Columbus, New Mexico did not endear Mexicans to their northern neighbors. Also inflammable were the mysterious Plan of San Diego whereby some Mexicans announced their intention to take back California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas, and the famous Zimmerman Note in which Germany tried to enlist Mexico against the Americans in World War I.

More immediate to Nogales, Arizona was the death and damages caused by Mexican bullets shot into the United States. The sniping incident in the fall of 1915 particularly soured relations locally. The mounting local tensions reached a crisis in August of 1918 when American border guards shot a Mexican ammunition smuggler as he tried to crawl under the border fence with his contraband near Nogales. The Mexicans denied that the man was a smuggler and charged the Americans with killing a peaceful Mexican. Accusations flew both ways across the border and a short time later a Mexican and an American custom guard fired at each other. Soon citizens on both sides of the border were taking pot shots at each other, and the soldiers stationed in both Nogaleses also joined in the struggle. For four days—August 25-28—sporadic fighting racked the two border towns. The fighting caused both sides to send reinforcements—General Calles with Mexican troops and General Cabell with U.S. soldiers—who actively entered the foray. Finally Calles and Cabell arranged an armistice, but not until the war of the Nogaleses resulted in thirty-two Americans killed and seventy to eighty Mexicans killed including the mayor of Nogales, Sonora. In September of 1918 General Calles and Governor Hunt of Arizona agreed to a permanent armistice. Only slowly did passions subside and something like normal relations return between the residents of the two Nogaleses.<sup>45</sup>

The next border incident came in 1920, the year of Mexico's presidential election scheduled for July. The masses wanted Obregon to succeed Carranza as president, but Carranza had no intention of relinquishing power. Carranza, faced with the no re-election rule, had determined to impose a puppet president. Since effective suffrage still eluded Mexico, Carranza appeared to be able to retain power and become dictator. However, Obregon's home state of Sonora seethed with resentment over Carranza's underhanded maneuvers. Carranza correctly saw that Sonora was a thorn in his flesh and sought to bring it to terms. He had General Dieguez ready to invade Sonora from Chihuahua by March of 1920, but Carranza wanted some pretext for his invasion. On April 3rd the railroad workers in Sonora went out on strike, and Carranza saw this as his opportunity to move into Sonora. President Carranza, trying to camouflage his real intent, issued a statement threatening to operate the railroad with soldiers if the

<sup>45</sup> Dispatch, Aug. 28, 29, 30, 1918.



workers did not go back to work voluntarily. He knew the railroad would not give in to the workers' demands. But before Carranza could make his move, the Sonoran state officials seized the railroads and quickly conceded to the strikers' demands so the railroads resumed operations. Sonora then proclaimed its independence from the federal government. The newly constituted Republic of Sonora proclaimed to the rest of Mexico that it intended to exist until the rights of the state be assured and be guaranteed that it would not be invaded.

Shortly the Sonoran officials seized the Agua Prieta Custom House and post office and garrisoned state troops in the town. Carranza immediately requested that the United States allow him to move his troops from Juarez-El Paso area to Douglas, Arizona via U.S. railroads as he had in late 1915. This time the United States refused Carranza's request. Obregon's supporters took Carranza's request to the United States as the last straw and on April 23, 1920 Governor Adolfo de la Huerta of Sonora and General Calles issued the Plan of Agua Prieta declaring that Carranza must give up his power and that a provisional president be appointed until a regular election could be held. Six days later federal troops, loyal to Carranza, entered Sonora from Chihuahua and made a feeble pass at Agua Prieta. Sonoran troops easily turned the federals back at Pulpito Pass south of the town. Shortly the army of Sonora proceeded south toward Mexico City gathering strength as it advanced as military chieftains quickly joined the movement against Carranza. Obregon, who had fled Mexico City, met the armed force and led them in their march. This rebellion proved more parade than fighting, and Carranza fled the capital in May of 1920 only to be assassinated. Adolfo de la Huerta became the provisional president until the people's choice—Alvaro Obregon—assumed the power and presidency in November of 1920.<sup>46</sup>

The Revolutionary Plan of Agua Prieta produced a regime which began to enforce reforms, and Mexico became more nearly united than it had been in any of its previous history. Still Mexico made little perceptible advance as elections remained a farce and one man embodied the power of the federal government; and his position continued to be virtually dictatorial. Even during Obregon's rule a new elite class continued to seek wealth and power via traditional Mexican politics. However, under Obregon, Mexico began to move in a different direction, its change more evolutionary than revolutionary. Mexico had peace. A peace that lasted until the next election when she experienced another rebellion, short but violent. The trouble came when Obregon hand picked Plutarco Elias Calles to be his successor against the hopes of other ambitious men. In this 1924 rebellion the border areas remained faithful to Obregon and Calles. The rebellion failed and Calles became the president. He enjoyed peace notwithstanding

<sup>46</sup> Dispatch, April 23, 24, 25, 30, May 1, 1920.



all his troubles with the Catholic Church, capitalists and foreigners. But in 1928 with the next presidential election, like clockwork, came the next military rebellion. Calles amended the Mexican constitution so he could restore the presidency to Obregon plus extending the term of office from four to six years. Ambitious men, fearing a perpetual rotation in office between Obregon and Calles and their followers, pronounced against the scheme. Calles used the army to quickly put down the rebellion. In the summer of 1928 Obregon was re-elected, only to be assassinated three weeks later. Calles appointed Emilio Portes Gil as provisional president to replace Obregon.

A group of discontents formed the Plan of Hermosillo which did not recognize the new provisional president, and declared General Jose Gonzales Escobar as Supreme Chief of the liberating movement. The new rebels claimed that President Gil was nothing but a puppet of Calles who still ran Mexico. Most of the Sonoran state officials joined the rebel movement including General Francisco Manzo who signed the plan and became second in command to General Escobar. Therefore the rebels controlled most of Sonora but they did not immediately garrison the border towns. In early March 1929 General Manzo dispatched his subordinate General Augustino Olochea and Yaqui chieftain Roman Tucupicio north to the border to take and hold Naco, Sonora, while General Manzo garrisoned Nogales with some 2,000 troops, but then things became confusing. Olochea arrested and jailed nine rebel civil officials who had authority over customs and immigration for the rebels. Olochea then announced he had seized the town for the federal government. He told American reporters he would possibly attack Nogales, held by his former superior General Manzo. Nevertheless, when Manzo was interviewed by reporters, he maintained that Olochea had followed his orders explicitly. However, Manzo and Olochea then engaged in telegraphic communications for some time after the defection before the rebels would admit that Olochea had joined the federals and given them Naco.<sup>47</sup>

Olochea hastily constructed fortifications around Naco and manned his trenches day and night expecting the rebels to try and retake the border town. On the U.S. side of the border Fort Huachuca dispatched a troop of cavalry and a "machine gun battalion" to Naco, Arizona. The rebel attempt to retake Naco came early in April when General Fausto Topete, Governor of Sonora, moved an army up the border and besieged the Mexican town. Topete hurled a railroad car loaded with dynamite against Naco's defenses, but it stopped a kilometer short of the defensive trenches by another railroad car derailed by the federales. On April 8, 1929 Topete launched a formidable assault on Naco led by seven "armored tractors" protected by cavalry and infantry. The struggle lasted for twenty-four hours with the rebels being repulsed. Both sides made some use of planes for bombing, but the

<sup>47</sup> The Bisbee Evening Ore (Bisbee, Arizona), March 12, 1929.



"war aeroplanes" proved largely ineffective and did not contribute to the outcome of the battle. When their attack failed, the rebels withdrew and soon their rebellion collapsed.<sup>48</sup>

Progressively the periodic rebellions in Mexico grew weaker and Mexico gradually achieved stability in her government. The international border with the United States no longer served as the focal point for revolutionary activities. American troops had come to the border in late 1910 and for the first decade their job was next to impossible. In the 1920's they were not nearly as busy and by 1930 Mexico had few caudillos left save those in power, and soon the military chieftains became a thing of the past. So it appeared safe to remove the American troops from the border. In 1931 the military abandoned Camp Little at Nogales, Arizona. In January of 1933 Camp Harry J. Jones at Douglas, Arizona also closed. With the closing of these two camps, an unhappy era of tension along the Mexico-Arizona border ended. No longer did stray bullets fly across the border.

<sup>48</sup> Review, April 9, 10, 11, 1929. The Bisbee Evening Ore, April 8, 9, 10, 11, 1929.



## THE SOUTHWEST'S MOUNTED POLICE

An Article by  
Phyllis W. Heald

"They always get their man" is a slogan that brings the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to mind. Yet it is equally applicable to the **Arizona Rangers**—a group of frontiersmen, organized in 1901, to discourage a scourge of rustlers whose activities threatened to destroy the cattle industry of the southwest.

By the turn of the century Arizona Territory was a region of vast ranches and proud cattle kings. The lord of any of these empires could look east, west, north, south and know he was monarch of all he surveyed. Cattle by the thousands roamed from valleys to the foothills and each owner had to trust God and his cowboys to watch over them.

Then suddenly rustlers moved in. They came from Mexico, New Mexico and far-off Texas. These usurpers of other men's cattle found it easy to tempt "honest" cowhands into aiding and profiting by their nefarious activities. So, in time, only God could be counted on to protect the herds.

This was a period when the West was wild and sheriffs, along with their posses, were 100 percent busy keeping law and order in such places as Tombstone, Galeyville and Willcox. They had little time (and no inclination) to chase cattle thieves across half the land. So, finally, when the situation looked hopeless the cattle barons began to give thought, and verbal expression, to the idea of moving elsewhere.

This would touch the heart and the economy of the territory so Governor Murphy took action. He asked his friend Burt Mossman to draw up a bill for Congressional approval that would provide some type of patrol for the rangeland. Mossman, with the help of a Phoenix lawyer, Frank Cox, drafted what was to become Act No. 74 of the Laws of 1901 and provided for an organization to be known as **The Arizona Rangers of Arizona**.

The bill gave great latitude to the Rangers. They could act independently of other law enforcement agencies. Their one responsibility was to "control outlawry of every type". They had to account to only one man—their captain.

Burt Mossman of Bisbee was their first leader. Working with him was a sergeant and 12 privates. Unmarried men were preferred because of secrecy, danger and the need to be away from home-base for weeks at a time. Each ranger had to know the cattle business, speak some Spanish, stay physically fit, and be of a caliber who sticks to his job. He had to supply his own 30-40 carbine and a 45 six-shooter. He had to own a good saddle horse, pack mule, and camp outfit (ammunition was furnished). The captain received \$120.00 per month; the sergeant \$75.00 and the



privates \$55.00. Each was allowed \$1.50 per day for feed and food.

When Mossman was asked by the Governor to serve as captain of the Arizona Rangers, he accepted reluctantly. "All right, but I want to pick my own men. And I'll do it just one year." So, on August 20, 1901 Mossman took over and all the good citizens of our future Grand Canyon State breathed a mite easier.

Headquarters for the Rangers was established at Bisbee because it was close to the border where much of the trouble originated and, too, it was the captain's home town.

During that first year the Rangers imprisoned 75 major criminals. These outlaws consisted of rustlers, highway robbers and murderers—and included Arizona's Public Enemy No. 1, the Mexican bandit, Augustino Chacon.

Much of Mossman's success was due to the fact he was an expert rider, roper and shot, although he never wanted to be considered a gunman. Throughout his life he managed to put the "fear of God" into law-breakers without ever killing a man.

Mossman knew his hand-picked rangers well and when a crime was reported, he'd select the best men for that particular job. He never allowed a man to go alone and he never gave advice unless asked. The Rangers would check in when their missions were accomplished, then return to their own work until called again. There is no record of failure. Sometimes the thieves got away, but the cattle would be saved. Once, two rangers trailed a band of seven horse thieves up into Utah before they could maneuver a surprise attack. The bandits escaped but the Arizonans brought all 150 horses safely back to their owner.

In 1902 Second Lieutenant Thomas H. Rynning was selected by the Territorial Governor to succeed Mossman. Rynning had been a Rough Rider under Teddy Roosevelt and had served in the Apache Wars, so was familiar with the land and its law problems.

Acting under the proviso of the Ranger Bill that stipulated "the captain shall select for his base the most unprotected and exposed settlement of the frontier", Rynning moved headquarters to the border town of Douglas, 25 miles east of Bisbee. He also insisted his force be increased to 26 men—a much needed addition because, as the fame of the rangers grew, demands for their services increased rapidly.

Rynning served until 1907 and was followed by Harry Wheeler who joined the Rangers in 1903 and worked up from private.

Wheeler was an intense and loyal American. Lawlessness, to him, was unpatriotic and deserved severe punishment. He was always in the front when trouble occurred but never shot first and even worried about the desperadoes he wounded.

By the time Wheeler took office most of the big bands of rustlers had been driven off or broken up. Douglas was properly tamed, too, so the captain moved his headquarters to Naco, the border town south of Bisbee. However, horse thieves were still



active so Wheeler and his men made a trip south into Sonora, Mexico where they discovered the country to be literally filled with horses bearing Arizona brands. The captain contacted Mexican authorities and with their cooperation, returned hundreds of animals to their owners.

Late in 1908, following an extensive trip over the territory, Captain Wheeler reported conditions as "good." There were no hot spots of trouble and no rustlers harassing the ranchers. So, in 1909 an Act of the 25th Territorial Legislature gave honorable mention and discharge to the 91 men who had served as Arizona Rangers.

Thus these three captains, with the magnificent support of 88 unsung heroes, brought an era of terror to a close. And while they weren't as colorful, romantic nor famous as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police they served their country just as conscientiously—not only "getting their man" but "getting their animals" to boot.

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## **GOOD GUYS 'N BAD GUYS**

**Jeanne L. Graham**

Two of the most fantastic, whimsical myths from the old west are the legends of the "outlaw" and the "law enforcement officer" such as the sheriff, marshal and or ranger.

We picture the typical western lawman as a Gary Cooper, John Wayne, Gene Barry, or Hugh O'Brian—six feet tall at least, approximately two hundred pounds in weight, muscular, handsome with soft understanding blue eyes.

We visualize the bad man or outlaw as being mean, rugged, quarrelsome, cold, steel blue eyes, sneering, heartless, tough, a loner, heavily armed, and ready to shoot anything and anyone standing in his way.

Let us contrast the types of lives led by these two types of people. The first element is that of loneliness and to some degree melancholy. For the outlaw, mistrust plays a big role in his life. He tells no one his plans for fear of being turned in. Thus he remains a loner. For the lawman, his life takes on the element of seriousness. He doesn't seek out love and or companionship, but is prepared to accept it and makes a point of never asking of it more than it can give. For the most part, we see this man in a situation where love, at best, is irrelevant. Hollywood depicts the only type of woman that truly understands the lawman as being a barroom entertainer or a prostitute—someone who has come to understand in a practical way how love can be an irrelevance. Violence is a part of his everyday life and he, therefore, feels that he cannot ask an ordinary woman to share this way of life with him.



Another common factor for these types of men was the easy availability of employment. For the good guy, there was a variety of positions he could easily fill—banking, ranching, law enforcement—he also loved poker and had the ability to remain cool and calm under stress. The bad guy was usually pictured as a gambler, a cow poke employed at one of the nearby spreads, or maybe an owner of a small spread of his own that would provide the necessary protection for his operation.

In his book entitled *THE BAD MAN OF THE WEST*, George D. Hendricks tells of a study made of the typical lawman of the west and it was found that the average, typical lawman weighed about one hundred seventy-four pounds, was approximately six feet tall, had blue eyes and light colored hair.

We need not search too far in our own Cochise County history before coming to a contrast in character study of lawmen. The most famous lawman of Cochise County was none other than John Slaughter. Mr. Slaughter was of small stature, standing about five feet six inches, had black hair and very expressive hard, black eyes. For the most part he was grim, silent and quite business-like in almost everything he did. Mr. Slaughter did not let his small stature stand in his way as he had a way about him and in his expressions that won him the respect of everyone with whom he came in contact and was feared by those who were outside of the law or on the borderline of being an outlaw.

The question has been asked over and over again as to just who were the bad men of the West? They were Mexicans, Negroes, Chinamen, Indians, Americans. They came in all colors, sizes and shapes and were found in all degrees of badness, braveness and cowardice. The greatest number were Americans of Caucasian race background.

The American badman had the knack of getting into scrapes all by himself but had the nerve to see the whole thing through. He lived by the "Ten Commandments of the Old West" which went something like this:

1. Thou shalt not appear too inquisitive about one's past.
2. Thou shalt be hospitable to strangers.
3. Thou shalt give thine enemy a fighting chance.
4. Thou shalt not shoot an unarmed man.
5. Thou shalt not make a threat without expected dire consequence.
6. Thou shalt not practice ingratitude.
7. Thou shalt defend thyself whenever self defense is necessary.
8. Thou shalt not rob.
9. Thou shalt honor and revere all womankind, ay, shalt thou never think of harming one hair of a woman.
10. Thou shalt look out for thine own.

For the most part, he was not so bad to look at. He is sun-tanned, his cold steel-gray expressive eyes seem to read your



mind and thoughts. Handsome he was or, at the very least, good-looking. He may wear a handle-bar mustache with long sideburns and maybe will add a goatee and or chin whiskers to cover up a square jaw and or a chin that was like a rough hewn oak block that was usually considered to be evidence of determination and fierceness. He may wear a pleasant expression or even a smile.

He is usually well built physically and very healthy. He stands approximately five feet nine and one-half inches tall and weighs approximately one hundred sixty-nine pounds. His small, slim, supple and nimble hands play a vital part in the desperado's mechanism.

His body movements have been described as being furtive, stealthy, panther-like, soft, surefooted, agile, lightning quick. His muscles, hard as brick and quick as a steel spring, frequently saved his life and spilled another man's life.

He talks very little, but when he does, his voice is low, well-modulated, even in the face of danger.

Although he has little or no schooling, he is intelligent, majoring in equestrianism, the science of scouting and in their own peculiar indelicate vernacular. In his lighter moments, he is jovial and carefree and considered to be an excellent companion of fair weather.

Frequently, he was violent with the anger showing in his eyes but if he was considered cold blooded, tradition asserts that he followed his routine—killing as calmly as if he were shuffling a deck of cards and doing so without remorse.

In a sense, religion played a role in the life of the bad man in that he followed the maxim of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. Strange as it may seem, the bad man fears death—death by disgrace such as hanging by the law, vigilantes or by a mob.

He was also quite superstitious about dying with his boots on which was considered to be an evil omen. It was tradition, too, that when dying, the bad man was either quiet or spoke the truth.

The bad man's first misdeeds usually happened in his youth and these serious misdeeds were too often condemned by the best people of the community. One misdeed led to another and another and soon society finally turned against him and refused to accept his gestures of reforming. When questioned as to why he was committing these misdeeds, he claimed he was forced into the act and was a victim of circumstance. He may also claim to have been treated wrong and that no one was going to walk all over him and trample him or his kin into the ground.

When an outlaw or bad man planned his robbery, it was done as effectively as a military high command plans an important campaign. Take for instance the planning of a train robbery. This involved three functions and usually two men were assigned to each task.



One duty was to mount the engine and not only cover the engineer and fireman, but also extinguish the fire in the fire box. Another duty was to intimidate and cover all passengers and the remaining train crew. The last duty was not only the most important but also the most dangerous and this was the tapping of the express car which was usually heavily guarded. Needless to say, the success of the train robbery depended on each and every member of the gang.

One of the biggest things that the bad man feared the most was capture. All of a sudden his life becomes very dear to him. Maybe it was his sudden fear of dying a death of disgrace and dishonor and or being branded a knave. Once he had been jailed, tried for his misdeeds and told of the death sentence, he was quite willing to resort to the more brutal means of escaping.

Escape from jail was simply a matter of technique. The jail or place of confinement was usually a flimsy structure that consists of one room that was poorly guarded by one old man. His keeper could, and often times was, bribed as the salary was small and inadequate. The prisoner could have visitors freely and the visitors could, and did, smuggle in fire arms, to be used during and after the escape.

If the prisoner was really ambitious, he could dig his way out or set fire to the building. However, he might be able to pull some political wires thus gaining his freedom.

With each gun fight, the bad man knew that someday, somewhere, one bullet will hit a vital spot; his luck would not hold out forever. This fact alone makes the bad man all the more desperate. He realizes his death could be a violent one. When he did die, he was buried unceremoniously in "boothill" so called because most of the people buried there died with their boots on; a few were lucky enough to have had funerals, tombstones with epitaphs.

A few of the bad men did die with their boots off as the result of dying of natural causes and illness.

What became of the so called "Bad Men of the West"? Some were able to reform themselves and become good citizens. Others, well, society kept them in the field of crime by refusing to allow them to reform.

"He was an extreme individualist by nature and by necessity. Typically he was man among men. It does not seem likely that he will ever be forgotten—there never was and never will be another man exactly like the typical bad man of the West". (The Gunfighters p. 208)

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