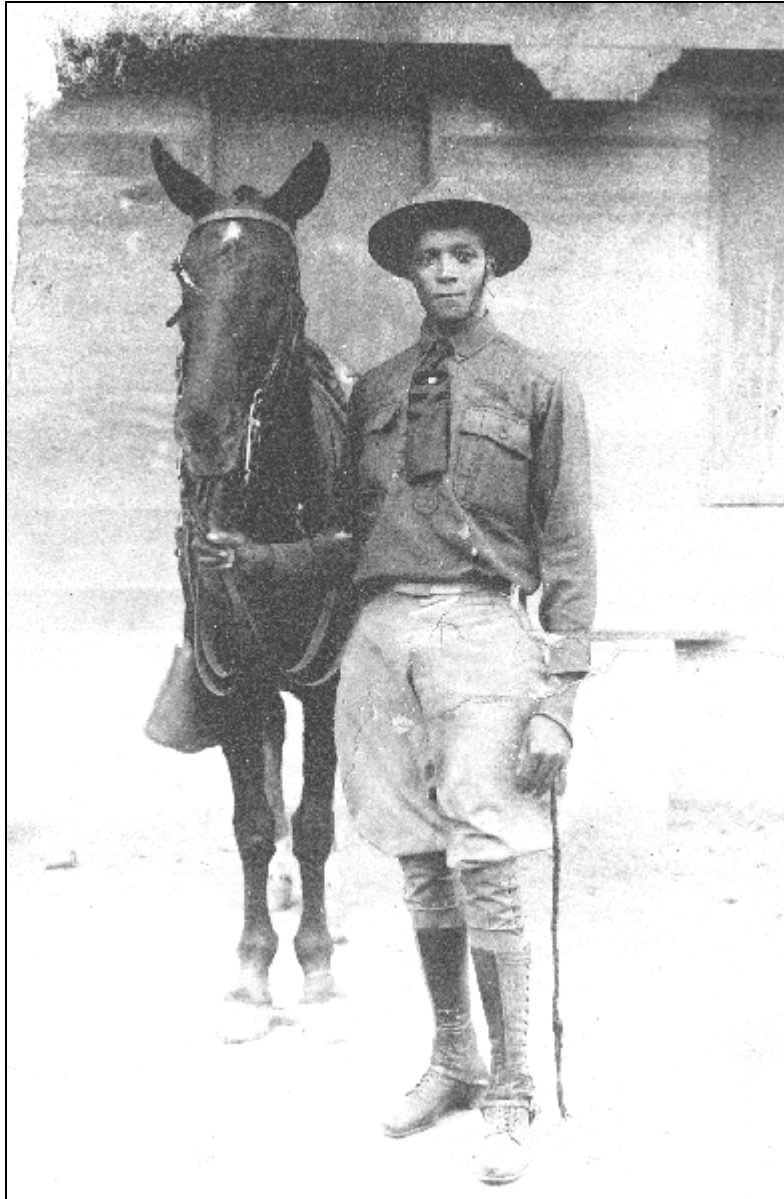


**THE AFRICAN AMERICAN SOLDIER
AT FORT HUACHUCA, ARIZONA,
1892-1946**



**The U.S Army Fort Huachuca, Arizona,
And the
Center of Expertise for
Preservation of Structures and Buildings
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Seattle District
Seattle, Washington**

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AT FORT HUACHUCA, ARIZONA,
1892-1946**

By

Steven D. Smith

**South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology
University of South Carolina**

Prepared For:

U.S. Army

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And the

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the history of African American soldiers at Fort Huachuca, Arizona from 1892 until 1946. It was during this period that U.S. Army policy required that African Americans serve in separate military units from white soldiers. All four of the United States Congressionally mandated all-black units were stationed at Fort Huachuca during this period, beginning with the 24th Infantry and following in chronological order; the 9th Cavalry, the 10th Cavalry, and the 25th Infantry. During World War II, both all-black Army Divisions, the 93rd and 92nd trained at this Arizona fort. This study clearly demonstrates that Fort Huachuca is the home of the African American soldier.

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At Fort Huachuca, I was ably assisted by two people who care very much about preserving the fort and its African American history. They are Drs. Charles Slaymaker and James P. Finley. Charles Slaymaker has recently taken over a tough job as post archaeologist and is doing very well. Charlie is probably the most patient man alive and I tested his patience to the limit—thanks Charlie. James Finley very, very generously allowed me access to his voluminous historical files, which saved a great deal of time and effort on my part. He also has produced four volumes of history on the Buffalo Soldiers, which are very well written and illustrated.

At the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology I want to thank various members of the Cultural Resources Consulting Division staff who got along well without me on other projects while this was being completed—hmm, maybe too well. Thanks Chris Clement, Mona Grunden, and Amy Joyce. Despite all this assistance, errors, omissions, specific and general bumbles in this study remain the author's responsibility.

PREFACE

If any one post of the United States Army might lay claim to being the home station of the Buffalo Soldiers, that post would be Fort Huachuca. Both all-black cavalry regiments served there, both all-black infantry regiments, and during World War II, both all-black infantry divisions.

Cornelius C. Smith, Jr.¹

Fort Huachuca is truly the home of the African American Soldier. Beginning in 1892, when the 24th Infantry Regiment first marched through its gates, until 1944 when the 92nd Infantry Division marched out on its way to Italy, this sun-baked outpost nestled in Huachuca Canyon of southern Arizona housed detachments of the 24th Infantry, 25th Infantry, 9th Cavalry, 10th Cavalry, and the 92rd and 93rd Divisions. Only during the year 1897, and from 1901 to 1911, were there no African American units on the installation. From tracking elusive Native Americans up forested mountain canyons to long dusty border patrols, from sunny polo fields to dry baseball fields, from stony machine gun ranges to concrete grenade pits, African American soldiers served with honor at this uniquely picturesque military installation located only 14 miles from America's southern border.

This short monograph relates the 38-year story of African American service at Fort Huachuca. During this service, African American soldiers were segregated into all-black units and were organized, trained, and housed in separate facilities apart from white soldiers. Despite this segregation, in peace and in war these soldiers compiled a distinguished record of service, one that has been widely ignored by both the American government and its citizens. This neglect was no less, and possibly even more, true of the record of Fort Huachuca's black soldiers, not only because of their race, but also because of the installation's location, apart from most centers of mainstream civilization. In addition, much of this service was in times of peace, when the American Army was much reduced in size, and interest in military affairs was quite low. The result was that few knew of the distinguished service of African Americans until very recently.

¹ Cornelius C. Smith, Jr., *Fort Huachuca: The Story of a Frontier Post* (Fort Huachuca, Arizona: Fort Huachuca, 1976), p. 197.

Over the last ten years the African American contribution to America's military history has been widely acknowledged and better documented in numerous historical studies. Where once only a handful of resources were available for scholars of the African American military experience, today it is nearly impossible to keep up with the new titles. Two such studies have had a significant impact on our understanding of the African American soldier experience at Fort Huachuca. In 1976, Cornelius C. Smith Jr. wrote a history of Fort Huachuca entitled, *Fort Huachuca, the Story of a Frontier Fort*, and in it he laid the foundation for all future historical studies of the fort and its people. From 1993 to 1996, Dr. James P. Finley, Fort Huachuca's post historian wrote and compiled a comprehensive and well illustrated series of issues of *Huachuca Illustrated* detailing African American soldier contributions at the fort.² With these previous studies as a solid base it is hoped that this monograph contributes to the on-going and much needed recognition of these African Americans men and women.

In 1996, the National Historic Preservation Act (P.L. 89-665, as amended) recognized that "...the preservation of this irreplaceable heritage [i.e. historic properties significant to the Nation's heritage] is in the public interest so that its vital legacy of cultural, educational, aesthetic, inspirational, and energy benefits will be maintained and enriched for future generations of Americans."³ This act and its subsequent regulations, require Federal agencies, like the U.S. Army, to inventory, preserve, and manage historically significant buildings, archaeological sites, and objects, collectively called historic properties. Those properties that are considered significant are placed on the National Register of Historic Places, a listing of sites and objects important to our national, state, and local history.

At military installations, past experience has demonstrated the value of detailing the installation history as part of the evaluation process that determines whether sites are considered significant enough for nomination to the National Register. These studies are called historic contexts and are defined as "organizational format[s] that groups historic

² Ibid.: James P. Finley, "The Buffalo Soldiers at Fort Huachuca," *Huachuca Illustrated*, Volume 1 (1993), Volumes 2, 3 (1996); James P. Finley, "World War II at Huachuca," *Huachuca Illustrated*, Volume 9 (1993).

³ National Historic Preservation Act, Section 1(b)(4).

properties that share similarities of time, theme, and geography."⁴ Historic contexts can be seen as "patterns or trends in history by which a specific occurrence, property, or site is understood and its meaning (and ultimately significance) within prehistory or history is made clear."⁵ With this in mind, the Department of Defense (DoD), Legacy Resource Management Program, funded a nationwide historic context for the African American Military Experience in the early 1990s.⁶ The goal of this general overview provided the base-line study for subsequent, more detailed, site-specific studies at DoD facilities. In 1999, the Center of Expertise for Preservation of Structures and Buildings (CX) of the Seattle District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), in conjunction with Fort Huachuca, Arizona contracted with the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of South Carolina to conduct a historic context study on the African American military experience at Fort Huachuca (DACW67-00-P-4028). This study represents the more detailed look at the African American Military Experience at Fort Huachuca originally conceived as part of the larger context study.

The goals of this monograph are simply to provide a history of the African American soldiers at Fort Huachuca from its establishment to integration⁷ with focus on their military, social, and religious heritage, including identifying any significant individuals that may have contributed to this heritage. The method for accomplishing this task was primarily archival research at various government and private archival facilities across the nation. This was accomplished through site visits, interlibrary loan, e-mail, and internet searches. An initial research effort was conducted by Paul Chattey at the National Archives branches in Washington, D.C. and at College Park, Maryland. By far, the bulk of archival research was conducted by the author during a week-long visit to the Fort Huachuca Museum, Fort Huachuca, Arizona (April 25 through April 28, 2000). Dr. James Finley and previous post historian, Orville Cochran, have compiled extensive files of primary and secondary resources regarding the post's history. These files are far more extensive than this author has ever seen at other military installations and greatly

⁴ Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the National Park Service, *The Section 110 Guidelines, Annotated Guidelines for Federal Agency Responsibilities Under Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act* (Washington, D.C.: Advisory Council, 1989), p. 7.

⁵ National Park Service, *How to Complete the National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form, National Register Bulletin 16B* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1991), p. 11.

⁶ Steven D. Smith and James A. Zeidler, editors, *A Historic Context for the African American Military Experience, Legacy Resource Management Program*, Department of Defense (Champaign, Illinois: U.S. Army Construction Engineering Research Center, 1998).

⁷ The contract states that the time period would be from 1877 to when the army "was integrated in 1958." Integration of the Army actually was mandated by Executive Order 9981 of President Truman on July 26, 1948.

condensed the research time since many documents had been acquired from other archives. Additional on-site research was conducted at:

Environmental Office, Fort Huachuca, Arizona
University of Arizona Libraries, Tucson, Arizona
Thomas Cooper Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia
South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia
South Carolina State Library, Columbia

Internet searches of library holdings and documents included:

U.S. Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania
Center for Military History, Washington, D.C.
Richland and Lexington County Libraries, South Carolina
Arizona Historical Society, Tucson, Arizona

The author has carefully avoided calling this work a history of African Americans at Fort Huachuca. When first contacted by the USACE regarding this effort, the author happily accepted this challenge but soon realized that a detailed history of African Americans at Fort Huachuca was a daunting task within the time frame allowed by the contract, which was three months. Faced with voluminous information at Fort Huachuca alone, and with the sure knowledge that the National Archives would provide at least an equal amount as was demonstrated by the USACE initial effort, it became clear that a book-length study of African Americans at Fort Huachuca during WWII *alone* could be developed given sufficient time. Thus, instead of a history, the author has endeavored to provide a thorough synthesis, but he cannot lay claim that this is a complete history. This summary clearly demonstrates the rich potential for additional research on this topic should that opportunity arise.

CHAPTER I: THE 24TH INFANTRY AT FORT HUACHUCA, 1892-1896

There are now two regiments of infantry and two of cavalry of colored men, and their record for good service is excellent. They are neat, orderly, and obedient, are seldom brought before court-martial, and rarely do they desert. *Secretary of War*, 1889-90¹

Introduction

It must have been no great challenge for Sergeant Benjamin Brown to form Company C, 24th Infantry, along the railroad siding at Huachuca Station, Arizona in preparation for its nine-mile march to Fort Huachuca (Figure 1.1). Certainly the march itself would have been routine for him and his veterans. After all, the regiment had endured much longer treks under much greater stress over the course of its distinguished 23-year history. A history that extended from 1869, when Congress established the regiment, to 1892 when it was ordered to Fort Huachuca. Eleven of those years had been spent in Texas chasing Kiowas, Comanches, Kickapoos, and Lipans. The 24th had survived the hostile Llano Estacado in northwestern Texas, and had crossed the Rio Grande into Mexico. The unit's troopers had spent another eight years in Oklahoma Territory, and then were detailed to New Mexico and Arizona.² At the conclusion of the Indian Wars the Secretary of War recognized their record in the quote above.

Five-foot, eight-inch, 36 year old, Sergeant Brown was among the more hardened veterans of the 24th. He had enlisted in 1881 at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and had been in and out of the 24th ever since. He served at Forts Leavenworth, Sill, Supply, Bayard, and New Mexico, and was known as a crack shot. He earned a Distinguished Marksman award in 1889 and 1890, and was recognized by the *Cleveland Gazette* for his marksmanship the year he and Company C came to Fort Huachuca. A year

¹Annual Report of the Secretary of War (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1889-1890), p. 5.

²Smith and Zeidler, *Historic Context*, pp. 102-105; Arlen L. Fowler, *The Black Infantry in the West* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996 ed.), pp. 74-87.

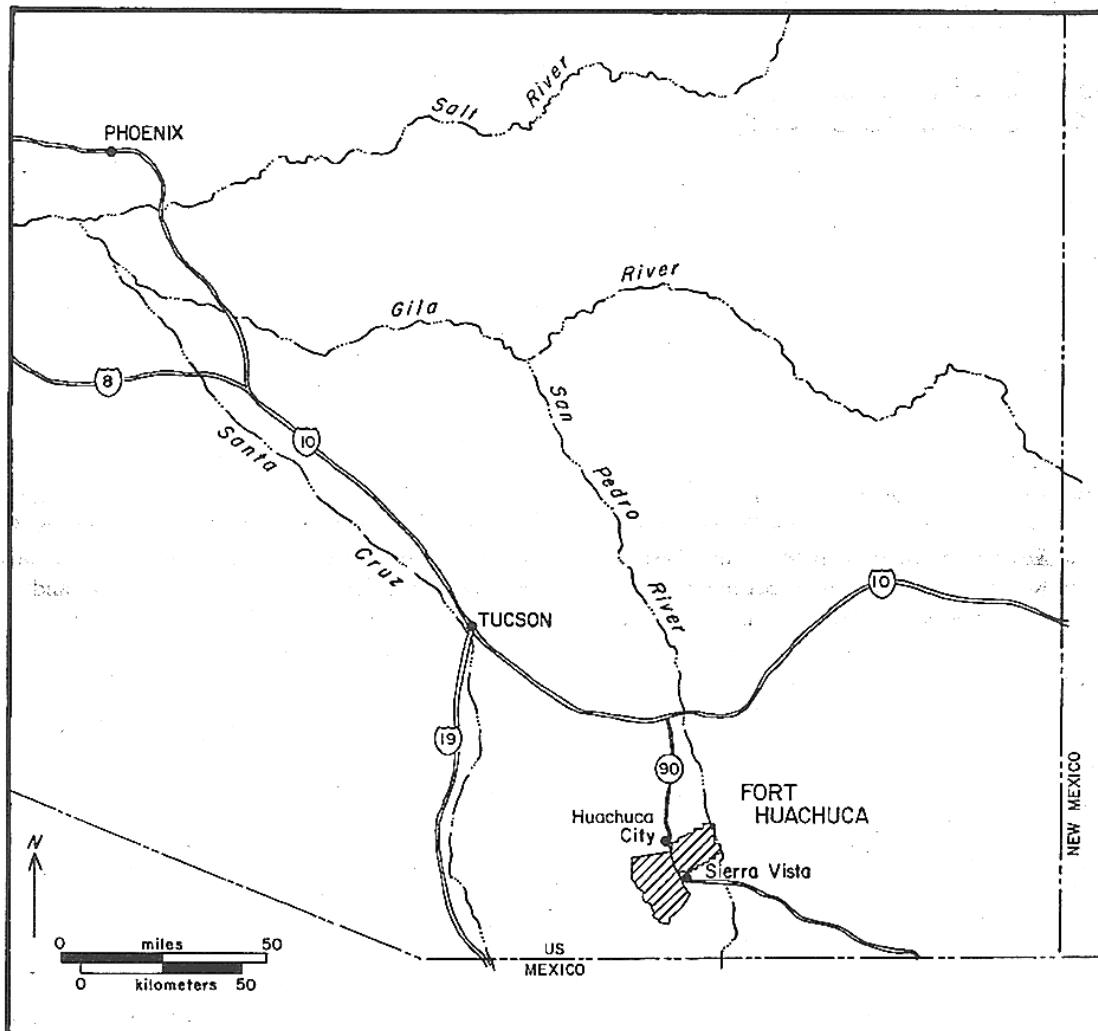


Figure 1.1 General Location of Fort Huachuca.³

later he would compete at the Department of the Army rifle meet in Arizona.⁴ As a sergeant, he was known for his command presence as well as his marksmanship. But perhaps he was best known among the troopers as a man who would protect his men no matter the cost. He had proven that only three years before, on May 11, 1889. That day, Sergeant Brown found himself on another routine mission. He was in command of a detail consisting of himself, Corporal Isaiah Mays, and nine troopers, who were providing escort for paymaster Major Joseph W. Wham traveling between Fort Grant and Fort Thomas, Arizona. On board the pay wagon was \$28,345.10. En route they came across a

³ Rein Vanderpot and Teresita Majewski, *The Forgotten Soldier: Historical and Archaeological Investigations of the Apache Scouts at Fort Huachuca, Arizona* (Tucson, Arizona: Statistical Research Inc., 1998), p. 2.

⁴ Frank N. Schubert, *On the Trail of the Buffalo Soldier: Biographies of African Americans in the U.S. Army, 1866-1917* (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1995), p. 57.

large rock blocking the trail. Brown and a few others approached the boulder to push it aside. From a nearby ledge a voice called for them to hold up their hands. It was an ambush. Before anyone could react shots zipped down from the ridge above them, hitting Paymaster Major Wham and two of the wagon's horses. Sergeant Brown was also hit in the abdomen, but as his troopers began to be picked off by the ambushers, Brown held his ground, returning fire until he was hit in both arms. Within those few seconds, eight of the eleven-man escort were wounded and were forced to retreat into a creek bed. The robbers, numbering between 15 and 20 desperadoes, came down off the ridgeline, grabbed the money and disappeared. During the fight, Corporal Mays, also wounded, made his way to Cottonwood Ranch to get help. For their bravery and action, Major Wham recommended both Brown and Mays for the Medal of Honor and the other troopers for certificates of merit.⁵ Soldiers from various Arizona forts were sent out after the robbers, and Fort Huachuca's men were sent to the Mexican border in an attempt to cut-off the bandits before they crossed to safety. Eventually eight men were captured and accused of the crime, but all were acquitted in Tucson.⁶ In the end, two years later, Brown and Mays got their Medals of Honor, certainly aided by Major Wham's testimony. He stated that "I served in the infantry during the entire Civil War and served in sixteen major battles, but I never witnessed better courage than shown by these colored soldiers."⁷

Now, three years later, his wounds healed, Sergeant Brown was forming C Company alongside Companies A, B and H, on their way to their new post, Fort Huachuca. Although the 24th would be the first African American unit to be posted to Fort Huachuca, they would be by no means the last. From 1892 until integration in 1948, the four Congressionally-mandated African American Army regiments--consisting of the 24th and 25th Infantry, the 9th and 10th Cavalry--and two WWII Divisions, the 92nd and 93rd--would all call Fort Huachuca home. Except for the year 1897 and the period between 1900 and 1911, Fort Huachuca would house one or more companies of African Americans from these units.

⁵ Arlan L. Fowler, *Black Infantry in the West, 1869-1891* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996), pp. 85-86; Thomas Truxtun Moebs, *Black Soldiers, Black Sailors, Black Ink: Research Guide on African-Americans in U.S. Military History, 1526-1900* (Chesapeake Bay and Paris: Moebs Publishing Company, 1994), pp. 1315-1316.

⁶ Bruno J. Rolak, "History of Fort Huachuca, 1877-1890," *The Smoke Signal*, Spring, 29 (1974)218.

⁷ Major Wham's report quoted from Clarence M. Hurtt, "The Role of Black Infantry in the Expansion of the West," *West Virginia History* XL(1979)2:156.

The 24th Infantry, 1869-1892

The posting of 24th Infantry (four companies) to Fort Huachuca in 1892 could be viewed as a veteran unit going to a veteran post. As noted, the 24th was established as part of America's tiny Regular Army in 1869. After the Civil War, the U.S. Congress recognized the need for a 'peacetime' army to protect settlers venturing west, but had also decided that it need not be large. One of the more contentious debates at that time was the role newly freed African American's would play in this peacetime army. Some Congressmen felt they should not be allowed to serve, especially since the small size of the planned army would not accommodate all the whites that wanted to enlist. Others reminded their fellow Congressmen that African Americans were now free citizens, deserved the opportunity to serve, and had proven themselves in segregated units during the war. The eventual compromise, passed in 1866, was that the new 60 Regular Army regiments would include four segregated black infantry units and two cavalry units. Black artillery units were not authorized for two reasons. First, it was believed that blacks were not intelligent enough to serve in artillery units (never mind their record during the Civil War), and second, artillery units were going to be placed in the eastern United States, near population centers. It would be better if African American soldiers were confined to the west. Out west the population was less dense and so there would be less opportunity for racial problems. The four infantry regiments designated the 38th, 39th, 40th and 41st, were short lived. Three years later, Congress reduced the number of Army infantry units from 45 to 25, and the 38th and 41st were consolidated into the 24th Infantry.⁸

The 24th was formed at Fort McKavett and quickly stationed along the Texas frontier at Forts McKavett, Bliss, Clark, Concho, Davis, Duncan, Stockton, and others, most along the sparsely populated Rio Grande border (Figure 1.2). These posts were far from practically everything. Fort Davis, for instance, except for the little settlement outside its gates, was 225 miles from Franklin, the nearest town of any size, and 90 miles from a tiny village across the Mexican border.⁹ Not only were these lonely, forgotten outposts, duties there were anything but glamorous. The infantry was usually left with garrison and fatigue duties, while the more mobile cavalry patrolled, or were sent after

⁸ Bernard C. Nalty, *Strength for the Fight: A History of Black Americans in the Military* (New York: The Free Press, 1986), p. 51; Smith and Zeidler, *Historic Context*, pp. 80, 101-102.

⁹ Fowler, *Black Infantry*, p. 22.

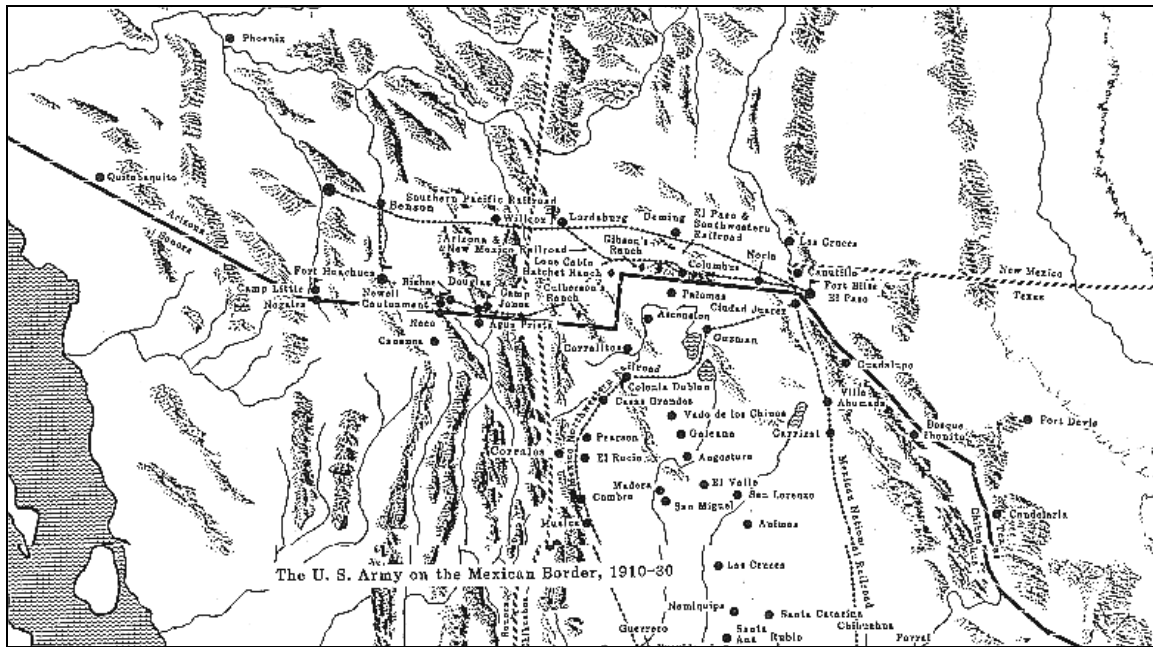


Figure 1.2 Forts and Towns Along the Border.¹⁰

border-crossing Native Americans. Duties for the infantry consisted of escorting slow moving supply trains and pay wagons, like Sergeant Brown's detail, or stringing and repairing telegraph wires, constructing roads, and protecting stage mount stations. At the latter, they began to meet passengers who refused to let off-duty soldiers have vacant coach seats. This became such a problem that Colonel William Shafter of the 24th threatened the stage companies that he would remove the soldier's protective presence if the companies continued to sanction this mistreatment.

Not only was the work dull and depressing, the posts themselves were in abysmal condition. Many had been built prior to the Civil War, and through time, neglect and lack of sufficient funding, they were deficient in every way. Fort Clark, for instance, was considered one of the better posts. Colonel Edmund Shriver described it in 1872:

The quarters are wretchedly [constructed] and therefore nothing beyond shelter and ordinary police can reasonably be looked for. All except two companies of cavalry are in huts. . . [there is an] absence of an administrative building for offices. The guard house is cramped; the regimental Adjutant's office is in a tent. There are no places for servants, they and the laundresses living in miserable

¹⁰ Finley, *Fort Huachuca Illustrated*, Volume 1(1993):41.

shanties. The public stores are imperfectly covered with paulins or put in insecure huts.¹¹

Oddly, the author of the 24th's regimental history looked back on the time at Fort Clark fondly, musing that "The duties of the troops were light, and while in thought we had troubles and privations, we now look back upon those times as the halcyon days."¹² Time heals much.

With tedious duties the norm, the regiment's occasional patrols must have been considered high entertainment. One of the most memorable patrols had to be the five-month trek into the Llano Estacado in 1875 to map the region and to clear it of Comanches. Companies D and F joined companies of the 25th Infantry and 10th Cavalry to explore the region. The infantry spent most of the time protecting the base supply camp, but still participated in some exploration and scouting. The following two years the 24th Infantry was part of several expeditions that crossed the Rio Grande into Mexico to rout out and destroy Kickapoo and Lipan Indian villages. Then in 1879-80, they participated in a campaign against an Apache Indian band under the command of Victorio.¹³ One company also participated in an experimental unit trained in the use of the Gatling gun. This training was never put to use in combat.

In the latter part of 1880, the 24th was transferred to the Oklahoma Territory. There duties were to keep various remnant Native American tribes on their reservations, along with the usual escort, telegraph, and road construction details. Although the Oklahoma Territory forts like Sill, Reno, and Supply, were in some ways more isolated than even the Texas posts (because settlers were not allowed on the reservations) the Oklahoma posts were newer and in better condition. Some had stone buildings and heated baths. But the lack of settlers meant few traders beyond those authorized by the post, and also a distinct lack of female company. Despite this, the 24th Infantry compiled the lowest desertion rate in the Army from 1880 to 1886.¹⁴ Then in 1888, the 24th began their service in the Arizona Territory, at Forts Apache, Grant, Thomas, and the San Carlos Indian Agency. The San Carlos and Thomas posts were considered to be "about as trying as life could hold. The winters were not bad, but the summers were intensely

¹¹ Quoted from Fowler, *Black Infantry*, p. 20-21.

¹² Captain William G. Muller, *The Twenty Fourth Infantry Past and Present*, The Regular Regiments Series (Ft. Collins, Colorado: The Old Army Press, reprint 1972).

¹³ Smith and Zeidler, *Historic Context*, pp. 103-104.

¹⁴ Fowler, *Black Infantry*, p. 78.

disagreeable, these posts being like the bottom of a box facing the sun....one wondered how he could get through the day, with a sky like brass, with a myriad of flies, warm water and atmosphere which threatened to make the skin crack open."¹⁵ Fort Huachuca would prove to be a welcome relief.

Fort Huachuca, 1877-1892

Like the 24th Infantry, Fort Huachuca had become an established institution by 1892. Fort Huachuca began as Camp Huachuca on March 3, 1877. At that time, Captain Samuel M. Whitside, of Company B, 6th Cavalry, chose a north-south running canyon in the Huachuca Mountains for the site of his base camp in the campaign to control the Apaches in the Arizona Territory from raiding south into Mexico and also protecting the increasing number of settlers. Only 14 miles from the border, the camp had an abundant water supply from Huachuca Creek and up the canyon walls could be found tall pine to construct the post. Looking east, north and west, the location offered a panorama from the Dragoon Mountains sweeping west to the Santa Ritas. It was an excellent location commanding a spectacular vista.¹⁶

Within the year, temporary buildings and tents on platforms were being constructed, although they fared poorly in the incessant rains that saturated them during the first years. In 1882, Camp Huachuca became Fort Huachuca, and with that designation came funding of some \$57,820.00 to improve living conditions. The railroad spur, from which Sergeant Benjamin and the 24th detrained, was constructed that same year and soon a little hamlet (now Huachuca City) was born. By 1884 the post had been well laid out with a hospital, Chapel, Surgeon's and Officers Quarters, boarding houses, guard house, corrals, stables, kitchens, granary, bakery, and of course, barracks--all arranged around a semi-rectangular parade ground that still serves marching soldiers today. The barracks were large and well built with hardwood floors, open bays, plaster and adobe walls, and coal oil heading stoves, all on stone foundations. Each barrack had a zinc washtub and the men all had washbasins. The men slept in iron bunks. As typical elsewhere, laundresses took care of the clothes.¹⁷ Living conditions continued to improve over the next few years and married soldiers began to bring their families to the post. A

¹⁵ Muller, *Twenty Fourth*, p. 17.

¹⁶ Rolak, "Fort Huachuca, 1877-1890," p. 206-211; Smith, *Fort Huachuca*, pp. 23-25.

¹⁷ Smith, *Fort Huachuca*, pp. 30-31.

telegraph and daily mail service helped break the post's isolation.¹⁸ Water came to Fort Huachuca from spring-fed reservoirs three miles away through iron pipes, perhaps not as tasty as at the spring, but palatable. By the time the 24th arrived, the Army had installed a sewer system, although it did not always work perfectly (Figure 1.3). For instance, the toilet facilities behind the barracks were temperamental. When water was available they worked fine, but when scarce the toilets had to be replaced by earth closets that required daily cleaning. Water would prove to be a persistent problem at Fort Huachuca.¹⁹ Still the system was sophisticated enough to include fire hydrants. By 1892, the post was considered among the "good stations, in the mountains, excellent climate, and cold water."²⁰ When Sergeant Brown settled the men of Company C into their new barracks at Fort Huachuca, it is likely he was pleased with the new housing. Although the forts in Oklahoma were very accommodating in comparison with the ones in Texas, Fort Huachuca offered equal if not better conditions. Certainly those that had been at Fort Thomas or at the San Carlos Indian Agency were well pleased with the change in billets.

But Fort Huachuca was not just a good station. The units that had served there, including the 1st, 3rd, 4th, 6th, and 8th Cavalry, and the 1st, 8th, 9th, and 12th Infantry had performed well in the numerous patrols and campaigns that occurred during the active 'Indian Wars.' The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo giving the lands of Arizona, New Mexico, and California to the United States contained the provision that the Americans would be responsible for the Native Americans living there, including any across the border raiding. Many posts, including Fort Huachuca and the Texas forts were built to enforce this provision and to protect the settlers living along the border. Within the Arizona Territory, Apache Indians recognized no treaty between the two European-founded nations and continued to do what they were incredibly good at, raiding up and down the long river valleys and high mountain ranges that ran generally north-south through the Arizona territory into Mexico. Establishing Fort Huachuca placed a block in the San Pedro River Valley between the border and Native Americans in the Arizona Mountains. From Fort Huachuca, patrols could spread out and cover many of the raiding trails.

¹⁸ Rolak, "Fort Huachuca, 1877-1900," pp. 206-211; Smith, *Fort Huachuca*, p. 28.

¹⁹ Carla R. Van West, Mark T. Swanson, and Jeffery H. Altschul, *Cultural Resource Management Plan for Fort Huachuca Military Reservation, Arizona* (Tucson: Statistical Research, Inc. Technical Series No. 67, 1997), p. 247.

²⁰ Muller, *The Twenty Fourth*, p. 17.

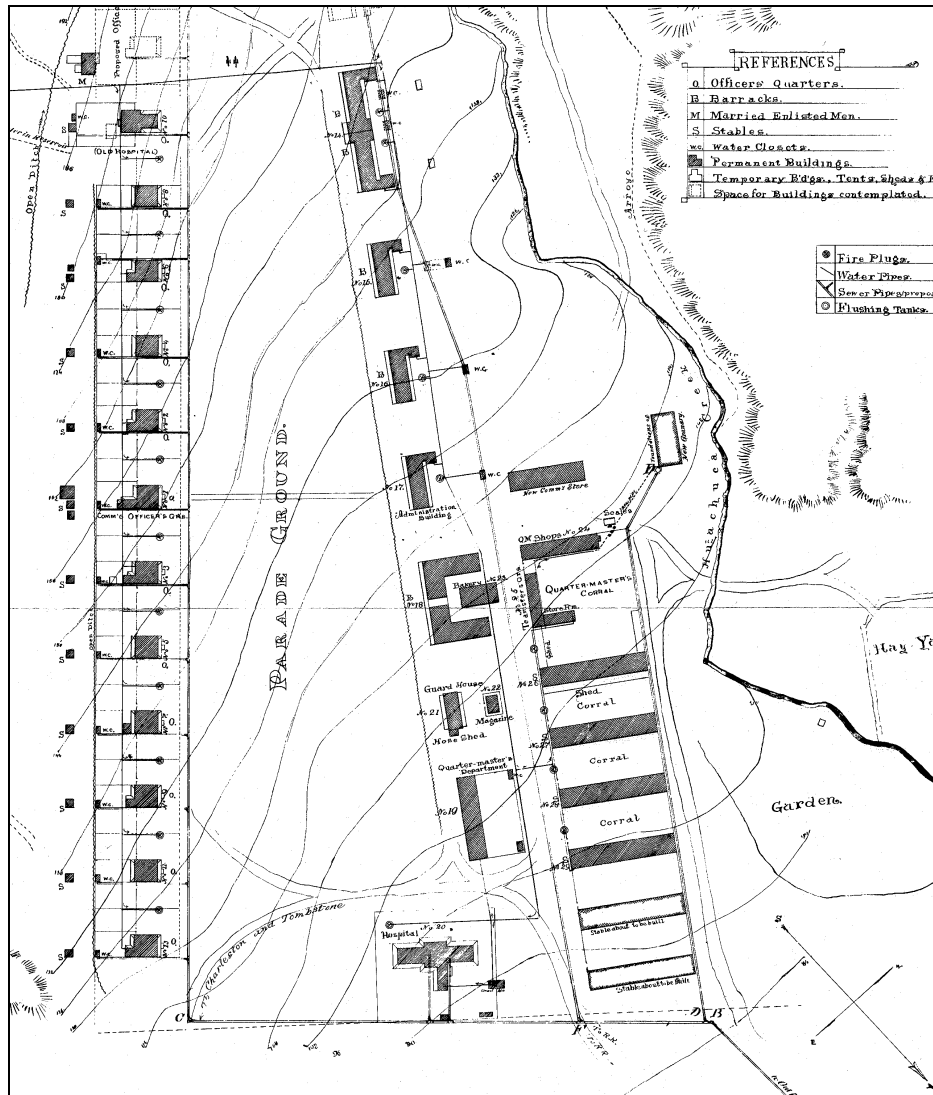


Figure 1.3 Fort Huachuca Sewage System, 1887.²¹

Once established, it was only a few months before the troops at Camp Huachuca were engaged in what would become a common assignment. In August 1877, Lieutenant Hanna and detachments from three companies of the 6th Cavalry along with a few Indian Scouts, engaged in a long running chase of hostile Apaches. For 22 days, Hanna and his men followed on the Apaches' heels, only once getting close enough to engage in a running skirmish that killed 10 Apaches and captured 13. But after nearly 700 miles, Hanna's men and supplies were exhausted---the Apaches slipped away.²²

²¹ Close-up of Lieutenant Jason E. Runice's map, Insert in Smith, *Fort Huachuca*.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 19-21.

Small patrols and actions from Fort Huachuca continued but the campaign that is best known was against Geronimo between May 1885 and September 1886. Elements of the 4th Cavalry and 8th Infantry stationed at Fort Huachuca were among the regiments sent to into Mexico while the Fort itself served as a supply base for the troops in the field. Captain Henry W. Lawton's expedition was launched from Fort Huachuca. The long campaign was a complex, frustrating one that eventually ended in Geronimo's surrender, but it was hardly a rousing success. Once again, a small number of Native Americans, numbering only 35 men, eight boys and 100 women and children managed to elude upwards of 6,000 American soldiers and 500 Indian scouts. In the end, Geronimo's run into Mexico cost 75 American citizens and eight troopers their lives. Uncounted Mexican citizens were killed, while Geronimo lost six men, two boys, two women and a child. Still, Geronimo's surrender signaled the beginning of the end of the Indian Wars. Although there would be additional fights, Native Americans had all but been subdued in the Southwest and Fort Huachuca's problems would now revolve around patrolling the border.²³

The 24th At Fort Huachuca

The period from 1892-1896, when Fort Huachuca was the home of Companies A, B, C, and H of the 24th Infantry, was a quiet interlude for the most part. It was a time of routine duties with rare occasions for dangerous exploits. So peaceful was this period for the 24th Infantry, that the regimental history dismisses it with the brief entry that:

The duties here were to guard the Indians, the different tribes of Apaches on the Reservations, and the settlers from outbreaks, should any occur. There was, however, no fighting to speak of. The redoubtable "Apache Kid" was out terrorizing the miners and settlers, who were about as bad as the Indians.

Here we remained with little to chronicle until 1896 or 1897, when the regiment was sent to Fort Douglas, Utah,...²⁴

Indeed, Fort Huachuca historians refer to this period of the fort's history as the "doldrums: there were no Indian campaigns, and Mexico was at peace under the iron rule of Porfirio Diaz."²⁵ Not only were the Indians and Mexicans tranquil, regional development slackened as the silver mining industry that had brought settlers collapsed. Only a few of

²³ For a detailed look at the Geronimo Campaign, see Smith, *Fort Huachuca*, Chapters 6 through 12.

²⁴ Muller, *The Twenty Fourth*, p. 17.

²⁵ Van West, et al., *Cultural Resource Plan*, p. 260.

the smaller silver mines remained open. The populations of the once burgeoning mining settlements of Tombstone and Charleston dropped dramatically—Charleston’s population drop was so severe that the post office closed. Adding to the region’s economic misery, the lumber industry also declined having exploited most of the virgin timber that once flourished in the Huachuca Mountains.²⁶

Very little is known about the lives of the 24th Infantry between 1892 and 1896 at Fort Huachuca. Nor do we know much about lives of the soldiers of the 1st, 2nd, and 7th Cavalry, or the 11th and 15th Infantry, all of which had detachments at the fort at one time or another during this period. Since it was so peaceful, little has been written about this period as peace makes dull military history. Furthermore, even when there was danger afoot, the cavalry was usually the unit called to the rescue. The 24th Infantry simply could not move fast enough to cover such a vast landscape and was needed for garrison duties when the cavalry was sent away. When the infantry was called upon, they were usually used in support of the cavalry, guarding the supply wagons and camps, holding positions exactly as they had done in Texas. For these reasons, when the cavalry rode out the gates, the infantry was, more often than not, left behind. Still there were a few actions that helped break the garrison routine, and frankly, must have been enjoyed simply for the variety and danger they offered.

One such incident involved a Pullman strike in Colorado in 1894. Pullman strikers seized the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe, and the Denver Gulf Railroads in a labor dispute. Around 52 U.S. Marshals were sent to guard railroad’s property but they were also seized and disarmed by the strikers. With more violence expected at any time the Commander of the Department of Colorado called out the Sergeant Brown’s C Company of the 24th Infantry, along with Company H, to move by rail to the strike hot spots like Trinidad, Colorado. The 24th arrived in July and spent the next two months on guard duty. But the adventure was short-lived. By the end of September they were back at Fort Huachuca.²⁷

In 1896, Company C was called out again, this time to the border. On August 12th, Lieutenant Colonel John M. Bacon, commander of the 1st Cavalry at Fort Huachuca, telegraphed the Commander of the Department of Colorado that the Mexican

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 260.

²⁷ Patricia Louise Lage, *History of Fort Huachuca, 1877-1913*, Masters Thesis (Tucson: University of Arizona, 1949), p. 37; Smith, *Fort Huachuca*, pp. 148-149.

Custom House at Nogales, Mexico had been attacked by filibusters, who were thought to have been organized in Arizona and led by Jose Gomez of Santa Ritas, Arizona. In the attack, three Mexican citizens and seven filibusters had been killed. The filibusters were rumored to have crossed into Arizona and were making their way to the village of Tubac. Shortly thereafter, the U.S. Marshall in Tucson telegraphed Colonel Bacon and asked for soldiers to capture the fanatics. Adding to the drama, Colonel Bacon heard that 50 Native Americans were also on their way to Nogales.

Colonel Bacon immediately called out two companies of the 24th, including Sergeant Brown and Company C, and put them on the train for Nogales. Meanwhile a troop of the 7th Cavalry headed for Harshaw, Arizona with the mission of intercepting the filibusters. The 24th and Colonel Bacon arrived in Nogales around midnight on the 12th. The next day more troops of the 7th from Fort Huachuca and Fort Grant were called into the field, converging on Tubac and generally making their presence known to the many worried settlers.

At Nogales, Colonel Bacon found chaos; armed vigilantes were guarding homes and stores. Colonel Bacon learned that raid on the Custom House had been the work of Yaqui Indians. The town's people on both sides of the border had banded together to repulse the attack, but the Indians had captured some arms and supplies. The consensus was that after the attack, the Yaquis had retreated northeast some nine miles, but were preparing to return. The 24th was dispersed throughout the town to keep the peace and wait for the expected attack. But Colonel Bacon then decided to pursue the hostiles and ordered a detail of the 24th to patrol north of Nogales.

Company C and other units including elements of the 7th cavalry got the order to go to Tubac to arrest "any and all parties engaged in violations of the neutrality laws or lending aid to other violators." In Tubac, they arrested three Yaqui Indians and one Mexican. A few days later, Colonel Bacon made plans to consolidate all the forces under his disposal for a march to the village of Greaterville, where the filibusters were thought to be hiding. But deputy U.S. Marshals scouted the village in preparation for the Army's march and found nothing. Captain Bacon then telegraphed the Department Commander recommending that the campaign be ended and, with concurrence, most troops returned to their posts. But as rumors persisted about another attack, Colonel Bacon ordered Company C to remain at Nogales, which they did until September 1st.

While the action at Nogales could be viewed as just another episode of the innumerable unheralded incidents in the life of a frontier soldier, the 24th and the other regiments performed their duty well. In the Department Commander's Annual Report, it was recorded that "every rumor and clew [sic] calculated to throw light upon the movements of the raiders were thoroughly investigated and the entire country in a radius of nearly 70 miles east, north, and west of Nogales was completely covered." It was the 24th Infantry that covered much of that area.²⁸ Indeed, the combined effort of the 24th and the other units in Arizona and New Mexico had done exemplary service during that year. Some 42,457 miles were marched (admittedly mostly by cavalry) in efforts to patrol the Mexican border along the New Mexico and Arizona line.²⁹

Besides these actions, there was little excitement around Fort Huachuca. The men settled into routine garrison life in the early 1890s and except for the above actions, nothing changed that routine. The day began at 5:30 A.M. or 5:45 with a cannon blast, and fatigue duties started at 7:30 and continued until 12:15 when lunch was served. Around 1:00 P.M. fatigue duties recommenced or classes were begun and this lasted until 4:30. Then there was drill from 4:45 to 5:15, guard mount at 5:30, dinner and tattoo at 9:00 and then taps.³⁰ Typical fatigue duties included carpentry, road construction, guard duty, maintaining the telegraph system, and cleaning barracks. The men also spent time in classes and on the parade ground. Men received training in estimating distances, signal practice, drill, bayonet practice, and guard mounting. Company C for instance, had an average of 3 drills per week. The men also practiced individual, skirmish and volley fire on the firing range.³¹ One of the more interesting and unusual duties was an order for the 24th to participate in a heliograph signaling experiment in 1893. A signal was sent from near Fort Grant, Arizona to Fort Bayard, New Mexico, via Table Mountain and Fort Huachuca. This signal covered a distance of 406 miles and the men were commended for a good job.³²

Black troopers also took the opportunity afforded them to improve or obtain an education. After the Civil War each African American regiment had a chaplain whose

²⁸ *Annual Report of the Secretary of War*, Volume 1, House Executive Document No. 2, 54th Congress (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1896), pp. 144-147.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.144.

³⁰ This was a typical day of frontier soldier duty as noted by Marvin Fletcher, *The Black Soldier and Officer in the United States Army, 1897- 1917* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1974), p. 80.

³¹ Secretary of War, *Annual Report*, Volume IV (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1893), pp. 404-405.

³² Fletcher, *Black Soldier and Officer*, p. 82.

duties were to provide the men with at least a basic education. Assigning chaplains to black regiments was one of the few Army concessions to African Americans. Usually chaplains were assigned to Army posts not to individual regiments. But the illiteracy problem in the African American regiments was widespread as a result of slavery and the Army recognized the need to educate these soldiers. By the time the 24th was posted to Fort Huachuca, it might be assumed that most of the soldiers had obtained some education. However, it was not until 1889 that soldiers without an elementary education were required by law to attend these schools. Thus, even in 1892, between 9 and 15 men of the 24th Infantry attended school daily. Company C's average attendance was 13.³³

Marching was, of course, a big part of the 24th's routine. During the year 1892, the 24th completed a single day's march of 25 miles. This was among the higher distances recorded by infantry regiments for that year, with the 10th and 21st Infantry exceeding the 24th by eight miles, the 25th by three, and the 18th by one mile. But within the 24th it was Company C who marched the most miles for the year, putting in some 18 days marching totaling 310 miles, compared to Company A with four days (50 miles) and Company B with six marches totaling 276 miles.³⁴ Company C's march record probably had to do with the Nogales affair.

The dull, isolated routine that was characteristic of frontier soldier life caused many a trooper to drift off the straight and narrow path. As Bruno Rolak notes: "Three related problems of garrison life were boredom, drunkenness, and desertion."³⁵ These three problems plagued the Army throughout the history of the western frontier, and Fort Huachuca was not spared. On post, off-duty 24th troopers had three rooms for leisure activities, a billiard room, a game room (checkers, chess, cards), and a reading room stocked with the *Army and Navy Journal*, *Leslie's Weekly*, *Sporting Life*, *Puck*, and *The New York Age*.³⁶ But off post, the soldiers often got into trouble. Payday, the day the men received their hard earned \$13 per month, provided the opportunity to blow-off steam and relieve the boredom. The Army acquiesced to the soldier's desires when payday came and only essential duties were performed. Thus, at Fort Huachuca, many

³³ Fowler, *Black Infantry*, pp. 102-104; *Secretary of War, Annual Report 1893*, Vol. IV, p. 436.

³⁴ While Companies C and A mileage was listed by days, Company B's mileage was for six "marches," their longest being 22 miles in one day. *Secretary of War, Annual Report*, Volume IV (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1893), pp. 404-405, 678. Cavalry regiments, of course, exceeded these totals, the 1st Cavalry going 68 miles in one day.

³⁵ Rolak, *History of Fort Huachuca*, p. 213.

³⁶ Fletcher, *Black Soldier and Officer*, p. 101.

men gathered in wagons for the bumpy but joyous ride to Tombstone where whiskey and women were available. The next day, just about as many men who left the fort returned either totally unfit for duty or pretty useless as a result of a successful furlough. The more wild individuals found themselves in the guardhouse. Payday also provided the opportunity for desertion and the rate increased at that time. At Fort Huachuca in 1877, desertions were as high as 10 percent.³⁷

But in 1877, the 24th was not at Fort Huachuca. How did their desertion rate compare? Indications are that the 24th performed better than most frontier regiments. Prior to their arrival at Fort Huachuca, black regiments had compiled an impressive record of low desertion and alcoholism rates. The Secretary of War's report in 1889, for instance, noted that black regiments had only a two percent desertion rate (as compared with a white regimental rate of 12 percent), and an alcoholism rate of 4.55 (compared to 43.97).³⁸ At Fort Huachuca, the 24th carried on this excellent record. In 1892, only four men deserted the 24th, the best record in the Army, and in the 24th there were only 24 days lost because of absences without leave, again the best record in the Army that year.³⁹ In 1894, 24th Infantry desertions were down to two.⁴⁰ As far as alcohol consumption at Fort Huachuca at this time, it is probable that their record was a significant improvement over their regimental comrades at Fort Grant, who were compiling a record of drinking and venereal disease that became a "serious problem."⁴¹

In 1895, records for the 24th are not as clear, but Fort Huachuca as a whole compared well against other military posts across the country. It had a "constantly non-effective" rate of .11, the Army average for 81 posts being .44 (with an additional eight posts not counted as they had no reported cases).⁴² During this period, only the 24th and 2nd Cavalry were at Fort Huachuca, so we can be assured that the 24th was a major factor in this record.

Unfortunately Company C was not among the better behaved companies, having as many as 24 incidents of absence without leave in 1892. Overall, 16 men of the 24th

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 214.

³⁸ Fowler, *Black Infantry*, pp. 137-138.

³⁹ *Secretary of War, Annual Report, 1893*, p. 304.

⁴⁰ Secretary of War, *Annual Report, Judge Advocate General, 1894-95* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 11895), p. 242.

⁴¹ Clarence M. Hurtt, "The Role of Black Infantry in the Expansion of the West," *West Virginia History* Volume XL(1979):155.

⁴² *Secretary of War, Annual Report, 1895* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1896), p. 563.

were discharged as a result of a general courts martial in 1892, two from Company C. Sergeant Brown was among those not always well behaved. On April 10, 1893 his furlough was rescinded "because he loafed around post most of the time since 1 Nov 1892." He also was caught at a house of prostitution and was present when another enlisted man of the 24th was killed there.⁴³ Curiously, such an incident was reported in the Tombstone newspaper, but the dates of the newspaper report, October 1893, do not coincide with Brown's loss of furlough. On the other hand, Brown was summoned to appear before civil court at Tombstone with two other men in November 1893, and this may have been in connection with the October incident. In that altercation, trooper West lost his life in a fight with a fellow soldier named Robinson; both had been drinking. Robinson asked a woman to drink with him and West took the woman's side when she declined Robinson's attentions. Later Robinson returned and shot West. It seems Brown was peripherally involved in at least one, possibly two crimes during this time.⁴⁴

Overall, the post in 1895 was a healthy one, although rheumatism was a problem. In 1895 Fort Huachuca (again these records include the 24th and 2nd Cavalry detachments only) made the list of 25 posts with the highest ratio of admissions for rheumatism at 108. There must have been an influenza outbreak at the fort also, as 40 men were admitted that year for flu, which was only exceeded by three other posts. The fort also had three cases of tonsillitis and 11 cases of bronchitis. But Fort Huachuca was absent from many lists of forts that had high diarrheal, venereal, or malarial diseases, and it had no cases of small pox, measles, scarlet fever, diphtheria, typhoid, or pneumonia. There were no deaths due to disease during that same year. In fact, overall, Fort Huachuca had one of the lowest daily averages for men in the hospital at 2.41 individuals. Perhaps their health was attributable to their cleanliness as the men of the 24th Infantry, Companies A, B, C, and H bathed twice weekly. They also averaged 10 days between guard duty, which meant that they usually got a good night's sleep. There was only one death at the fort, and that may have been due to an injury.⁴⁵

⁴³ Schubert, *On the Trail*, p. 57.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 57; "Tombstone Excavations" republished in the *Tombstone Epitaph*, October 31, 1963 from a newspaper article, (Fort Huachuca: On file, Fort Huachuca Museum). Its possible the month of the reprint has been confused with the month of the original article, and if so, this is one incident that happened in April.

⁴⁵ *Secretary of War 1895*, pp. 436-437, 543-562. There were no deaths for diseases excluding venereal diseases, vaccinia, and alcoholism, but one death reported due to unknown causes that included injury but also any others causes such as the previously listed diseases.

Like other African American regiments, the troopers of the 24th stayed with the service in far greater percentages than white troops. The 1893 Secretary of War's annual report indicates that the record of longevity for individual troopers in the 24th was among the highest in the Army and only the other African American regiments came close to the 24th's record. Only five men were discharged by purchase, the lowest of the African American regiments. The number of non-commissioned officers with over 20 years of service was 19, exceeded by the other black units, but the only white units with comparable records were the 8th Infantry (17), the 1st (19) and 2nd (21) Artillery. Privates with over 20 years experience in the 24th numbered 28, matched by the white 19th Infantry and exceeded by only the 4th Artillery (29). The 24th also had the greatest number of men with over five years experience within the same unit (124). The 24th also was among the top ten regiments with married men (61) and wives on post (40).⁴⁶ This probably contributed greatly to morale and low incidences of desertion and crime.

The above record points to a regiment composed of men with long service records, who knew each other well, and were loyal to their regiment. Certainly the record was partially due to the lack of opportunities for African Americans outside the Army. Getting a job was difficult for blacks and actually developing a career was almost unheard-of. The Army offered a career, housing, clothing and food. But service in the Army was also a source of pride within the African American community. Civilian whites looked down on soldiers regardless of race---African Americans did not. This helped build pride among African American soldiers as being part of something important within their own race.

Moving On

The year 1896 brought an end to the 24th Infantry's peaceful days at Fort Huachuca. Sergeant Brown and Company C found themselves forming once again along the railroad siding at Huachuca station. This time they were mounting the trains to leave Fort Huachuca and Arizona forever. The 24th was ordered to Fort Douglas, Utah near Salt Lake City. The move involved two firsts for the unit. It would be the first time the companies of the 24th were all together, serving as a regiment. It would also be the first time they were posted to a fort near a reasonable-sized city.

⁴⁶ Secretary of War, *Annual Report*, 1893, pp. 682-683.

African American units were generally posted to remote forts to avoid racial confrontations, but the move to Salt Lake brought them face to face with that very problem. Upon notification that the 24th was to be posted at Fort Douglas, a delegation of citizens from Salt Lake traveled to Washington to protest the stationing of the black unit there. It was to no avail. But this incident had a happy ending. On the one-year anniversary of the regiment's arrival, the city newspaper printed an editorial apologizing for the town's prejudice and praising the soldier's good behavior. When the 24th was ordered to Georgia in preparation for service overseas during the Spanish American War, the entire town closed business and turned out in appreciation.

The 24th would go on to exemplary service in the war. They would serve bravely in combat, and every man would volunteer to work in the highly contagious yellow fever wards at the Siboney field hospitals.⁴⁷ Thirty-one men would die from fever and many of them must have been former Fort Huachuca troopers. Among the men sick, possibly with yellow fever, was Sergeant Brown. It is known that he was with the 24th at the time and contracted a disease "in the line of duty" in 1898. He was also busted during that same year. But Brown stayed with the 24th, and the last known documentation on him indicates that he was a drum major with the unit in 1903, and was ranked 54th among expert riflemen in the Army.⁴⁸

Interlude: Fort Huachuca, 1898 To 1912

Between the 24th's departure and the 10th Cavalry's arrival in 1913, various small African American detachments were assigned to Fort Huachuca in brief intervals. If little has been documented about the lives of the 24th Infantry during the 1890s, even less is known about the succinct posting of Companies A and H of the 25th Infantry from 1898 to 1899 and the equally brief occupancy of Fort Huachuca by F Company of the 9th Cavalry from 1898 to around 1900. Elements of the 9th also had a brief assignment there in 1912. Again, peace makes poor military history, and the earlier period was a time that included the end of the Spanish American War and the Philippine Insurrection. The action was overseas, where most of the 25th's companies and 9th's troops were, and not along the Mexican-American border.

⁴⁷ Smith and Zeidler, *Historic Context*, pp. 134-137.

⁴⁸ Schubert, *On the Trail*, p. 57.

Company A of the 25th Infantry was at Fort Huachuca from late October 1898 through April 1899. It was then transferred to Fort Bliss, Texas, and remained there during the Philippine Insurrection. Company H arrived at Fort Huachuca at the same time and stayed on until June, when it was shipped to Manila. Prior to their arrival, both regiments had participated in the Spanish American War, the 25th had lost eight men and the 9th had lost three in action.⁴⁹ Besides combat there had been much sickness from Yellow Fever, and overall, the troops were in need of some rest and recreation. No doubt, Fort Huachuca was a welcome sight. Their service at the fort did have some stimulation. In August of 1899, some 400 tons of hay burned up despite the "heroic efforts of the troops."⁵⁰ But overall, the 25th Infantry regimental history sums up their stay with the following paragraph:

The last two months of 1898 and the early part of 1899 was a period of rehabilitation for the regiment. Officers that had been on leave or detached service rejoined the regiment, and several of the older enlisted men that had been absent sick or on detached service also rejoined. Recruits were being received in large drafts and the clothing, equipping, and training, of these men entailed a vast amount of work.⁵¹

The 9th Cavalry history at Fort Huachuca can be summed up equally quickly. Company F was posted there in 1898 and perhaps they left within the year. Companies K, L, and M joined them but the lengths of their assignments are not clear. For a short period in 1899 Companies K, L, and M were also stationed at Fort Huachuca. Captain Vance H. Marchbanks indicated that he joined the 9th Cavalry at Fort Huachuca on March 7, 1899 and Companies K, L, and M were there at that time, but he does not mention Company F, which is the only company that was there long enough to be counted in the Secretary of War's Annual Report. Marchbanks and Company L left in May of the same year and its possible that other companies did also.⁵²

⁴⁹ Schubert, *On the Trail*, p. 514.

⁵⁰ *Secretary of War, Annual Report, 1899* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1900), p. 27.

⁵¹ John H. Nankivell, *The History of the 25th Regiment, United States Infantry, 1869-1926* (Ft Collins, Colorado: The Old Army Press, 1927[reprinted 1972]), p. 86.

⁵² Captain Vance H. Marchbanks, Article in the *Apache Sentinel*, Volume II(March 9, 1945)27; Vance Hunter Marchbanks, Sr., "Forty Years in the Army," typewritten manuscript (Fort Huachuca: on file, Fort Huachuca Museum).

Possibly some 9th Cavalry detachments were still at Fort Huachuca in 1900.⁵³ Either in 1899 or 1900, a Mexican citizen shot an American cowboy in a card game and the 9th was called out to restore peace. "The prompt appearance of troops and the judicious action by Captain H.H. Wright 9th Cavalry, their commander, prevented further violence."⁵⁴ Some elements of 9th were also posted to Fort Huachuca for a very brief stay in 1912. This posting was probably in accordance with the increasing tension along the Mexican border, which would come to a flash point the following year. How long they were there is not known, but at least a troop was still at Fort Huachuca caring for horses when the 10th Cavalry arrived early in 1914.⁵⁵

During the time when the post was occupied by the 25th and 9th, circa 1899, the Army attempted to do something about the alcohol problem plaguing the Army nationwide. Legislation was passed abolishing the post-trader's store and forbidding of the sale of whiskey to the troops. The Post Exchange was established and beer was offered to off-duty soldiers as a method of controlling the desire to obtain bootleg alcohol. Even this was questioned, and with pressure from the Woman's Christian Temperance Union to abolish the canteen, the Secretary of War in 1899 asked Army officers their opinions of the following question and published the answers: "What in your opinion, would be the effect of an absolute prohibition of the sale of beer in the Army? Ninth Cavalry officer, Second Lieutenant C.E. Stodter responded that the men would simply obtain liquor from the outside and that there would be an increase in drunkenness. The Post Exchange would lose the profits from the sale of beer also, which would go to saloons off-post. Captain M.W. Day of Troop L agreed, as did First Lieutenant R. L. Bush of Company A, 25th Infantry, who added that the closing would be "very demoralizing, resulting in a return of the many vices that have been largely rooted out." Nevertheless, for a while the temperance union won out and beer was prohibited.⁵⁶

⁵³ Smith, *Fort Huachuca*, p. 392. The 1900 Secretary of War report does not officially list the 9th at Fort Huachuca, but a report of some minor action (see text) does mention they were at Fort Huachuca. They may have left in 1900 before the official list was compiled.

⁵⁴ *Secretary of War, Annual Report, 1900* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1900), p. 237.

⁵⁵ George Brydges Rodney, *As A Cavalryman Remembers* (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1944), p. 236.

⁵⁶ Extracts from the Secretary of War Annual Report of 1899 (Fort Huachuca, on file, Fort Huachuca Museum, 1899); "The Canteen and the W.C.T.U." typewritten manuscript on file, Fort Huachuca Museum, from Martha Summerhayes, *Vanished Arizona, Recollections of My Army Life* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1908) pp. 243-245.

Little more is known about the activities of the 25th and 9th at Fort Huachuca at this time. The 9th Cavalry would never return. From Fort Huachuca they were quickly dispatched to Fort Douglas in 1912 where they patrolled along the Mexican border and a year later were involved in a clash with band of Mexican and Yaqui Indians which resulted in one Indian death. From there the proud heritage of the 9th took a long-slow downward slide. In World War I, many of the unit's 'old guard' were used to train black recruits in the 92nd and 93rd, but the regiment itself was sent to the Stotsenberg Camp in Luzon, Philippines, probably to get them out of the way. Racial incidents around the turn of the century and the intense Jim Crow policies in place at this time made the War Department believe that the regular Army African American regiments might cause problems in France. When they returned to America after the war, the unit was reduced in size. With the advent of World War II, the unit was combined with the 10th Cavalry to form the 2nd Cavalry Division but once sent overseas it was disbanded, the troops sent to support units in the Mediterranean.⁵⁷ But the 25th Infantry would have an extensive stay at Fort Huachuca, beginning in 1928.

⁵⁷ Smith and Zeidler, *Historic Context*, pp. 158, 182; Lt. Colonel Michael Lee Lanning, *The African American Soldier From Crispus Attucks to Colin Powell* (Secaucus, New Jersey: Birch Lane Press Book, 1997), pp. 116-117, 154, 174, 177.

CHAPTER II: THE 10TH CAVALRY AND 25TH INFANTRY AT FORT HUACHUCA, 1913-1939

[The 10th] . . .has built some fine men. I say built, because I have seen them come in the rough---some from the city and some from the country, uneducated, uncultured---some almost hopelessly ignorant, and the writer assigns himself to the latter class. In three short years these boys not only straighten up but they improve in physique, manners, and education. They learn the importance of organization, and obedience to constituted authority. They learn to submit to discipline and controls. *Sergeant Vance H. Marchbanks*¹

Introduction

We can be assured that Sergeant Vance H. Marchbanks spoke with the voice of "constituted authority" when ordering C Troop, 10th Cavalry, to detrain as they arrived at Huachuca Station on December 19, 1913.² They had come all the way from Fort Ethan Allen, Vermont and were about to take up station at Fort Huachuca, which would be their home for the next 18 years. Like Sergeant Brown of the 24th Infantry 21 years before, Sergeant Marchbanks was a veteran soldier, having joined the Army in 1895 (Figure 2.1). He also would have a long career, spanning some 43 years, and in World War I achieve the rank of Captain. Like the 24th, the 10th Cavalry was a unit with an outstanding record in the Indian Wars, the Spanish American Wars, and the Philippine Insurrection. In fact, it was the 10th Cavalry who first earned the sobriquet "Buffalo Soldiers."

The 10th Cavalry

The 10th Cavalry was born as one of the segregated African American Regular Army units established by Congress in 1866 (Figure 2.2). Organized at Fort Leavenworth, "Ready and Forward" was an apt motto for this fighting regiment. Colonel

¹ Vance H. Marchbanks, manuscript on file Fort Huachuca Museum, quoted in Finley, *Fort Huachuca Illustrated* Volume 1(1993): 5.

² Schubert, *On the Trail*, p. 286; Major General John B. Brooks, Interview typescript on file, Fort Huachuca Museum, quoted in Finley, *Fort Huachuca Illustrated* Volume 1(1993):14-15.



Figure 2.1 Sergeant Vance Marchbanks.³

Benjamin H. Grierson was their first commander, and is today considered one of the best. Under his leadership, the 10th became the most famous of the African American units in the west. The 10th was first stationed on the Great Plains and compiled an excellent record over the course of seven years. Engaging both Native Americans and lawless cattle rustlers, and gathering up settlers intruding on reservation lands, the 10th was quite busy. It was during this service that they became to be known as the Buffalo Soldiers, a name that would eventually apply to all African American units. Several origins of the name exist. One plausible story is that Indians called them ‘buffalo soldiers’ because of their curly, buffalo-like hair. Another is that the Native Americans soon learned that they fought like buffaloes, standing their ground or charging when threatened. The latter may in fact relate to a specific action. In 1867 Private John Randall of G Troop, 10th Cavalry was escorting a hunting party in Kansas. Suddenly they were attacked by some 70 Cheyenne, who quickly killed two men and dispersed the rest, but Private Randall hunkered down in a washout under railroad tracks and despite a gunshot wound and 11

³ Finley, *Fort Huachuca Illustrated*, Volume 2:51.



Figure 2.2 10th Cavalry on Parade at Fort Huachuca, circa 1920.⁴

lance wounds, held the Indians at bay until help arrived.⁵

In 1875 the regiment moved to Texas where it was involved in countless skirmishes with Apaches, Lipans, Kickapoos, and played a major role in the Victorio War. Ten years later the regiment was stationed in Arizona and while not posted to Fort Huachuca, they worked hand in hand with units stationed there. They were part of the Geronimo Campaign and were sent on the trail of the Apache Kid. In 1891, their environment changed dramatically when they were ordered to move to Montana. The cold north was more peaceful, but in 1898 they were sent to Cuba and won new laurels in the Spanish American War. The regiment participated in the fighting at Las Guasimas and San Juan Heights, including the famous charge up San Juan Hill. At Las Guasimas, they were instrumental in saving the Rough Riders from certain catastrophe, charging the Spanish when the riders were in danger of being decimated by Spanish volleys. After

⁴ Finley, *Fort Huachuca Illustrated*, Volume 2(1996):56.

⁵ Smith and Zeidler, *Historic Context*, pp. 93-100.

their performance on San Juan Hill, John H. Hemment, photographer at the battle, noted that he would "never forget the coloured boys when they made the grand charge over the barb-wire fences and into the trenches filled with Spaniards."⁶ Major General John Pershing, at that time an officer with the 10th added, "We officers of the 10th Cavalry could have taken our black heroes in our arms."⁷ President William McKinley brought the regiment to Washington D.C. for a formal review in appreciation for their service in the war.

After the Spanish American War, troops of the 10th were scattered across the country, some going to Texas, others to Cuba, and still others found themselves in the Philippines. For the next ten years different troops had different experiences. Both in Cuba and in Manila, the 10th engaged in patrols and skirmishes with guerrillas. In Cuba, Troops A, B, D, and L engaged in several long practice marches that covered some 800 miles. By 1902 the unit was back in the states, again stationed in various posts on the plains and in the northwest. Then in 1907 much of the unit was once again on board ships bound for Manila. This tour was peaceful and much of their time was spent in inter-regimental athletic competition. In 1909, they returned to the United States and were temporarily posted to Fort Ethan Allen, Vermont.⁸

Fort Huachuca, 1913-1918

Enforcing Neutrality

After a short stay at Fort Ethan Allen, the 10th Cavalry took a long train ride across America during the first weeks of December 1913. All the troops except L, which was sent to Fort Apache, were on their way to make Fort Huachuca their home. For the first time Fort Huachuca became the Headquarters of an African American unit. However, just as soon as the troopers saw their new billets, they were on the move. The border situation caused most troops to be ordered immediately to various border towns

⁶ Quoted from Fletcher, *Black Soldier and Officer*, p. 41.

⁷ Richard O'Conner, "'Black Jack' of the 10th," *American Heritage*, Volume 18(1967):105-106.

⁸ Major E.L. N. Glass, *The History of the Tenth Cavalry, 1866-1921* (Fort Collins, Colorado: The Old Army Press, reprint, 1972), pp. 50-59.

and camps. Fort Huachuca would serve as Headquarters but more importantly it became the supply and logistical base for the border troops. Until the end of WWI it was not unusual for only a few troopers to be on post, and these men were usually members of the band, pack trains, or detached soldiers on special duty. Instead, many of the men were stationed at Forest Station, Osborn (Bisbee Junction), Naco, Lochiel, Nogales, Arivaca, and for a brief time, Yuma, coming home to refit and rest briefly before being sent out again to patrol the border.⁹

Upon arrival, the mission of the 10th was simple in theory but near impossible in reality---enforce the neutrality laws. The problem was that Washington had issued no clear orders as to exactly what enforcement meant and exactly how it was to be done. Furthermore, if anyone in the 10th thought they were going to get clarification, their hopes were doomed. The United States situation with Mexico was very complex and dynamic, and any little action of the 10th along this part of the vast U.S.-Mexican border might have knotty political ramifications far beyond their isolated border world. Even to attempt to summarize the situation here is fraught with danger, for the intricacies of Mexican internal politics, combined with U.S. interests, defy simplification.

Perhaps the root of the problem, or at least the visible origins of the border situation at the time, first appeared around 1910. Since 1877, when Fort Huachuca was established, Mexico had been under the iron fist of President Porfirio Diaz. Diaz had allowed heavy foreign investment in his country including a few United States oil companies. The year 1910 saw the beginning of a series of revolutions that continued over the next ten years, keeping Mexico in turmoil and the border volatile. As numerous rival and warring parties vied for control of the government, the United States played a complex political game, attempting to influence the ultimate outcome to its benefit, while at the same time attempting to keep the warfare and violence from spilling across the long border anywhere from Texas to California. That was the neutrality part. But United States policy changed as often as rival factions within Mexico gained tenuous control and then lost it to another party. Just to add to the flavor of this revolutionary period, rival factions within Mexico changed alliances and an American ally one day was more often than not, a sworn enemy the next.

⁹ Brooks, Interview, from Finley, *Fort Huachuca Illustrated*, Volume 1(1993): 42.

The first revolution overthrew President Diaz and U.S. investments were lost. The leader of this revolution, Francisco Madero, had only a short reign, being assassinated by agents of General Victoriano Huerta in 1913. President Wilson, shocked by the killing, refused to recognize Huerta's government. The United States would officially remain neutral in Mexico, but Wilson was pressured by American oil companies to get involved. An opposition party to Huerta arose in Mexico under Venustiano Carranza. Mexico became an increasingly volatile place. The U.S. got further entangled in Mexican affairs when the crew of an American vessel was arrested while attempting to protect American interests. Huerta quickly released the Americans, but the U.S. took the opportunity to justify occupying the Mexican port of Veracruz.

The future would bring increasing tensions between the United States and Mexico that would continue until after World War I. In 1914, Carranza and Huerta armies met at Zacatecas, Mexico and as a result Huerta was forced into exile. This left a political vacuum that Carranza quickly attempted to fill. But to gain control, he first had to control a number of regional factions, the most famous being led by Francisco 'Pancho' Villa, and Emiliano Zapata. To further complicate matters, World War I began overseas and while the U.S. proclaimed official neutrality in the European conflict, assistance was provided to the English and French, while the Germany courted the Mexican government.

Beginning as early as 1911, when violence first broke out in Mexico, U.S. troops had been engaged in maneuvers and shows of force along the border in an attempt to keep various revolutionaries on their side of the border. Some 30,000 American troops were strung-out along the border by 1912. As revolutionary armies maneuvered, and U.S. policies changed, arms and ammunition was sometimes smuggled, sometimes legally transported across the border to the revolutionaries.¹⁰

From 1911 to 1914, the Army was told to enforce neutrality along the U.S.-Mexican border, a long-standing policy since the days of Fort Huachuca's origins. But

¹⁰ The border situation at this time was extremely complex and this summary only scratches the surface of the international political situation that made life interesting for Fort Huachuca soldiers. This summary came from: Haldeen Braddy, *Perishing's Mission in Mexico* (El Paso, Texas: Texas Western Press, 1966); John S.D. Eisenhower, *Intervention!, The United States and the Mexican Revolution, 1913-1917* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1993); Finley, , *Fort Huachuca Illustrated Volume 1*(1993): 36-44; Samuel Elliot Morrison, *The Oxford History of the American People, Volume Three, 1869 to The Death of John F. Kennedy 1963* (New York: The New American Library, 1972), pp. 170-173; Richard B. Morris, *Encyclopedia of American History* (New York, Harper & Row, 1965), pp. 300-301. Colonel Frank Tompkins, *Chasing Villa, The Last Campaign of the U.S Cavalry* (Silver City, New Mexico: High-Lonesome Books, reprint 1996 [original 1934]).

adding to the delicacy of this issue, the Army had a constitutional problem that kept the generals, colonels, and captains second-guessing their every decision. The United States was not officially at war with anyone. Being Federal troops, Fort Huachuca soldiers could not act unless the state Governor asked the President for Federal intervention, or the President himself declared martial law. Such action would not come from a government that had declared neutrality. So, enforcing neutrality while at the same time intervening in the arms and ammunition flow when so ordered was an impossible directive.¹¹ In the time honored Army solution to such orders, Department Commanders left the details of the order's execution to post and regimental commanders, who left it to company commanders and on down the line to the individual trooper on the line. George Byrdes Rodney, who later joined the 10th Cavalry, relates a humorous anecdote as to how this played-out, as officers on down the line ordered strict enforcement of the laws, but had no idea what that meant. Eventually, the orders reached the front line where:

The Lieutenant takes his men to the hellhole where he's to stay and he calls his sergeant and tells him: "You take ten men today, Sergeant, and ride the border from Point O' Rocks to Sadler's Wells. You'll take note of all activities on the Mexican side of the line, especially any movement of troops and above all you'll see to it that the Neutrality Laws are strictly observed. Understand that?"

The Sergeant looks kind of dazed. He's heard the words but they don't mean nothin' to him. So he says, "Yes, sir. I'd like to ask the Lieutenant a question. What are these Neutrality Laws that we're to enforce?"

How the hell do I know what they are?" says the Lieutenant. "All I can say is, you enforce 'em."

"Yes Sir," says the Sergeant and passes the same on to his corporal.¹²

Thus, the men in the 10th found themselves mixed up in quite a few little unofficial incidents as soon as they arrived in Arizona. Again, as Rodney explains:

From time to time Mexican factions fought bloodless battles within twenty yards of the line and always one faction had its back to the American frontier so that all shots fired at them fell on the American side, driving families to shelter from the firing.¹³

¹¹ Rodney, *Cavalryman*, pp. 240-241.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 239-240.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 241.

Naco

Incidents like this increased and most everyone knew that eventually something larger would happen. It did in early October 1914, when Carranzista General Benjamin Hill arrived in the Naco region and decided to take a stand against the pressing forces of Jose Maria Maytorena, Governor of the state of Sonora and Villa ally. Hill was a military commander under General Alvaro Obregon, a man who once liked but now hated Villa, and a man loyal to the constitutionist government of Carranza. The legendary Pancho Villa, a peasant leader that controlled the Mexican state of Chihuahua, and had been at one time an American favorite. He sided with Francisco Madero in the revolution and when Madero's died, Villa took up arms against Huerta. At the height of his career he defeated the Huertistas at the battle of Zacatecas, but from there his career was a continuing roller coaster, constantly being defeated in battle but rising again and again due to his tremendous popularity. While Carranza rose in power, differences arose as to how the government would form, and what part revolutionaries like Villa and Zapata might have in a Carranza government. By July 1914 Carranza saw no need for Villa. Villa and Obregon met together over territorial issues in August 1914, but no resolution was reached and when Huerta was deposed, the two were destined to fight for control of northern Mexico. Obregon and Villa's armies clashed at Celaya and Leon, both battles ending in Obregon victories. Now smaller commands were moving into Naco, one of the many border towns south of Fort Huachuca, where a centerline in the middle of town divided American Naco from Mexican Naco.¹⁴

Hill threw up entrenchments and a siege began (Figure 2.3). Meanwhile on the American side of the border, Colonel William Carey Brown, who had recently taken command of the 10th on September 8th, was telegraphed to report immediately to Naco with four troops, including the machine gunners. Only a few weeks before, two other troops had been called out to Lochiel. The 10th marched out of the Fort Huachuca gates that evening within two hours of notice, and when they were within four miles of Naco they began to hear gunfire. The 10th spent the evening listening to the sounds of battle. The next day, the 9th Cavalry formed on the east section of the American town while the 10th took up positions on the west. Colonel Brown went to a store in town and bought a number of flags. He then had them placed along the border as a guide for the warring

¹⁴ Haldeen Braddy, *Perishing's Mission in Mexico* (El Paso, Texas: Texas Western Press, 1966), pp. 2-5; Finley, *Fort Huachuca Illustrated* Volume 1(1993): 38-39.



Figure 2.3 Mexican Sharpshooters Near Naco.¹⁵

factions to keep their fire parallel to the border and out of the American sector. But this did not stop more than the occasional round from crossing into U.S. territory.¹⁶

For the next two months the 9th and 10th was in the strange position of being under fire but not at war. The men were not to retaliate for the stray rounds that hissed around them, but were to keep the two factions on the Mexican side of the border. The 10th was at one time forced to retreat some four miles from the border because of the increasingly frequent ‘accidental’ rounds that crossed the line. The battle became a strange drama full of daily absurdities. Three armies were aligned, two fighting each other, the third watching and occasionally taking casualties from the crossfire. To add to the American troop's frustration the United States government in Washington, D.C. decided to support Carranza and lifted the gun embargo. So while the cavalry watched, arms and ammunition for General Hill's forces arrived by rail on the Arizona side and were shipped across the border. American citizens from local towns like Bisbee and Douglas flocked to Naco to watch the battle and one of the troop's main duties became

¹⁵ Finley, *Fort Huachuca Illustrated*, Volume 1(1993):47.

¹⁶ George Francis Brimlow, *Cavalryman Out West, The Life of General William Carey Brown* (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1944), pp. 324-327.

keeping the people from getting too close to the action.¹⁷ Once, a Mexican officer complained to Colonel Brown that the flags he had placed were on Mexican soil. Brown offered to have a survey done if both sides would desist, and that brought the matter to a close. American Generals Tasker H. Bliss and John J. Pershing stopped by for visits, while soldiers dug deeper and built bombproofs (shelters) against the artillery fire that ranged across the border. Colonel Brown's own tent was fired upon.¹⁸ As the situation seemed to grow more critical, General Bliss asked the President for additional troops. But by that time, things were drawing to a close. Major General Hugh L. Scott met with Villa and pressured him to call off General Maytorena's siege. Maytorena was losing the logistical war anyway and withdrew on Villa's order.¹⁹

Maytorena's withdraw was but a brief interval in the on-going border situation and incidents continued through 1915 as the political situation in Mexico continued in chaos. But as the siege drew to a dull close, 10th Cavalry troops began to be rotated out of their border camps for rest and then sent back to the line at Naco, Nogales, and Lochiel. At Fort Huachuca, the men kept sharp with rifle and pistol target practice and remained on alert. One problem exacerbated their ability to react quickly to border incidents--they were short 309 horses.²⁰ Supply hungry revolutionaries in Mexico constantly raided across the border into Texas, New Mexico and Arizona. In August K Troop caught one band of raiders rustling cattle and drove them back across the border.²¹

Agua Prieta

When the United States recognized Carranza and his party as the government of Mexico it allowed the Carranzistas to use American railroad facilities on American soil. This was one of the decisive elements of Villa's crushing defeat in November 1915 at the battle of Agua Prieta. After two defeats at Celaya and Leon, Villa as a power in the revolutionary struggle was about played-out. He decided to meet the Carranzistas at Aqua Prieta, another border town near Douglas, Arizona. American General Frederick Funston, aware of the upcoming battle, ordered three infantry regiments, an artillery unit, and several cavalry units, including the 10th, to Douglas in preparation. Unknown to

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

¹⁸ Brimlow, *Cavalryman Out West*, pp. 330-333.

¹⁹ Eisenhower, *Intervention!*, pp. 171-170.

²⁰ Brimlow, *Cavalryman Out West*, p. 336.

²¹ Finley, *Fort Huachuca Illustrated* Volume 1(1993): 47.

Villa, the United States also allowed Carranza's forces to use the railroad between Juarez (El Paso, Texas) and Douglas to move some 3,500 men to the trouble spot. After suffering significant casualties, Villa made a desperate night attack. Suddenly his troops were caught in the blazing light of three giant spotlights, the electricity supplied by the U.S.²²

During the battle, the 10th Cavalry watched from their positions in Douglas, Arizona.²³ Again, curious citizens flocked to Douglas to watch the battle and a few were killed. Colonel Brown recorded that "there was considerable fighting & some exciting cavalry charging. This was to cover the retreat of Villa's army which from noon till night was strung along the road to Aravachi Pas as shown by the dust."²⁴ The battle was over but Colonel Brown and the 10th were ordered back to Naco, where Villa was supposed to be heading and where, in another altercation, four Americans had been killed. The situation remained dangerous and tense. Villistas raided the border for supplies, others surrendered to American forces instead of Carranza's forces, and wounded from both sides constantly slipped across the border for American aid. Meanwhile for the 10th, it was back to border patrol.

Border patrol had to be less frustrating for the 10th Cavalry. At least when the Mexicans crossed the border, they could take action instead of having to watch and wait as they were required to do at Naco and Douglas. On November 22, 1915, for instance, two Mexican guerrillas were killed in a fight at a camp at Santa Cruz River. Three days later Mexicans attacked another camp and one Mexican was wounded while in Nogales two more Mexicans were killed in a skirmish there.²⁵ These incidents were just those in which the 10th was engaged. The 9th Cavalry, 11th Infantry and 12th Infantry were also involved in the border tensions and compiled their own list of skirmishes.

By December of 1915, Villa's men were on the run, having lost another major battle at Hermosillo, again running into devastating Carranzista machine gun fire. Raids

²² Finley states that the 10th directed the searchlights. Clarence Clendenen asserts that accusations that the U.S. supplied, emplaced, and operated the searchlights by American soldiers "contains not a grain of truth." But Eisenhower retorts that Douglas was a modern town while Aqua Prieta was a primitive barrio, so the electricity had to have come from the United States. See Finley, *Fort Huachuca Illustrated* Volume 1(1993): 48, Clarence C. Clendenen, *Blood on the Border: The United States Army and the Mexican Irregulars*, (London: The Macmillan Company, 1969), p. 194; Eisenhower, *Intervention!*, p. 209.

²³ Finley, *Fort Huachuca Illustrated* Volume 1(1993):48.

²⁴ Brimlow, *Cavalryman Out West*, p. 339.

²⁵ Glass, *Tenth, Cavalry*, p. 65.

continued but the immediate danger lessened. Colonel Brown was able to return to Fort Huachuca and reassume post command. He brought with him four troops of the 10th Cavalry, leaving one at Nogales. For a brief period, Brown "would have nothing more vexatious on his hands than a few drunken rowdies who fought off boredom."²⁶ That would soon change dramatically.

Throughout the period from 1912 to 1916, the 10th showed considerable restraint and professionalism, even while taking casualties. In total, the 10th suffered eight men wounded, while the 9th Cavalry actually had "some killed" during the Naco siege.²⁷ For their performance, the 10th received a commendation from the President. Said the Secretary of War in 1915, "By direction of the President, I take great pleasure in expressing to the officers and enlisted men of the Tenth Cavalry his appreciation of their splendid conduct and efficient service in the enforcement of the United States neutrality laws at Naco, Arizona, during November, December and January, last." Although they did not know exactly how to enforce neutrality, they had done it very well.

Punitive Expedition

With his loss at Hermosillo, Villa's army was defeated but Villa continued to maintain his popularity with the country folk. He returned to his home region of Chihuahua and disappeared into the hills to recover and plan his next move.²⁸ Meanwhile, his ally General Maytorena lost another battle and fled to the United States. Villa held the United States responsible for his recent defeats. Enflaming the situation, 16 miners were massacred in Santa Isabel, Mexico and Villistas were accused of the crime. Whether Villa was responsible and encouraged the massacre is not clear--he denied it. But the next border action was definitely his doing. Early in the morning of March 9, 1916, Villa attacked the village of Columbus, New Mexico. His motives for the attack remain clouded today. Perhaps he simply needed supplies for his new army, or it was an act of revenge against the Americans, or an attempt to incite a war between Mexico the United States. Whatever the case, this attack was a failure. Unfortunately for him the 13th Cavalry was guarding the town. Though his men killed 17 American

²⁶ Brimlow, *Cavalryman Out West*, p. 343.

²⁷ Glass, *Tenth Cavalry*, p. 64.

²⁸ Eisenhower, *Intervention!* p. 210.

citizens and soldiers, and enraged the nation, he lost perhaps over 100 of his 485 men, and got precious little loot (Figure 2.4).²⁹

Back at Fort Huachuca, Colonel Brown heard the news by telephone around noon the same day. Less than four hours later, the 10th Cavalry, minus Troops L and M, rode out of the fort on their way to Douglas, Arizona--the band seeing them off with rousing marching tunes. Among the men watching them leave was Sergeant Marchbanks, who as Post Sergeant had to remain behind. At that time there were no plans to enter Mexico, the regiment was just being alerted to assemble along the border. In Washington, however, larger objectives were being discussed. President Wilson had heard about the raid on the afternoon of the 9th and within a few hours decided to act. Reminiscent of modern warfare, the press heard about it before Major General Frederick Funston, commander of the Southern Department of the Army, was given his orders to "organize an adequate military force of troops, under the command of Brig. General John J. Pershing, and ... direct him to proceed promptly across the border in pursuit of the Mexican band which attacked the town of Columbus, N.M."³⁰



Figure 2.4 Captured Villistas at Columbus.³¹

Arriving in Columbus only five days after Villa's raid, General Pershing took charge of the expedition already assembling along the border. Plans called for two

²⁹ Eisenhower, *Intervention!*, pp. 217-227.

³⁰ Orders quoted in, Andrew Wallace, "The Sabre Retires: Pershing's Cavalry Campaign in Mexico, 1916," *The Smoke Signal*, Spring(1964):3.

³¹ Finley, *Fort Huachuca Illustrated*, Volume 1(1993):51.

columns to enter Mexico. At Columbus the first column consisted of the 13th Cavalry (minus one troop), the 6th Infantry, 16th Infantry, Battery C, 6th Field Artillery, 1st Aero Squadron (8 planes), and the 1st Battalion, 4th Field Artillery. The other column assembled at Culbertson's Ranch, New Mexico west of Columbus. There the 7th Cavalry, 10th Cavalry, and Battery B, 6th Field Artillery awaited the word to cross the border (Figure 2.5).³²

As the 10th assembled at Culbertson's Ranch through the 13th and 14th of March, President Wilson and Mexican President Carranza bickered over the proposed expedition. Both had much at stake. Wilson was under pressure to do something to avenge the attack and to look strong for the upcoming election. Carranza, tenuously holding onto power, had to appear strong also. He correctly foresaw that the Mexican people would look upon the expedition as an American invasion. Furthermore, Villa was still a real threat to Carranza and the U.S. invasion would only make Villa more popular as a folk hero defending Chihuahua from foreigners. Carranza wanted Villa stopped, but realized that it was his Carranzista forces that had to stop him. This political imbroglio meant that the 10th and its companions would never know if the Carranzista's operating in the same region as the Americans would cooperate with the expedition or would become an additional enemy. In the end, the Carranzistas would prove to be a significant hindrance to American objectives.

On the 15th of March, the expedition began, crossing into Mexico from Columbus and Culbertson's Ranch. Both columns converged on the villages of Casas Grandes and Colonia Dublan where it was rumored that Villa was camped. These marches today fade into the past unnoticed, but at the time were remarkable feats. From the 11th to the 17th, the 10th marched some 252 miles. John S.D. Eisenhower notes that:

This march broke all previous records for endurance. The Second Brigade [the west column] covered the longest distance ever recorded in the annals of the U.S. Cavalry. Moreover, the troops accomplished this under grueling conditions. The terrain was rough and parched, no rain having fallen since July of the previous year. White alkaline dust forced the men to cover their noses and mouths with bandanas. They even found it necessary to spread cloth over the noses of their mounts. The air was frigid, for it was only mid-March, and they were at an altitude of five thousand feet.³³

³² Braddy, *Pershing's Mission*, p. 9.

³³ Eisenhower, *Intervention!*, pp. 242.

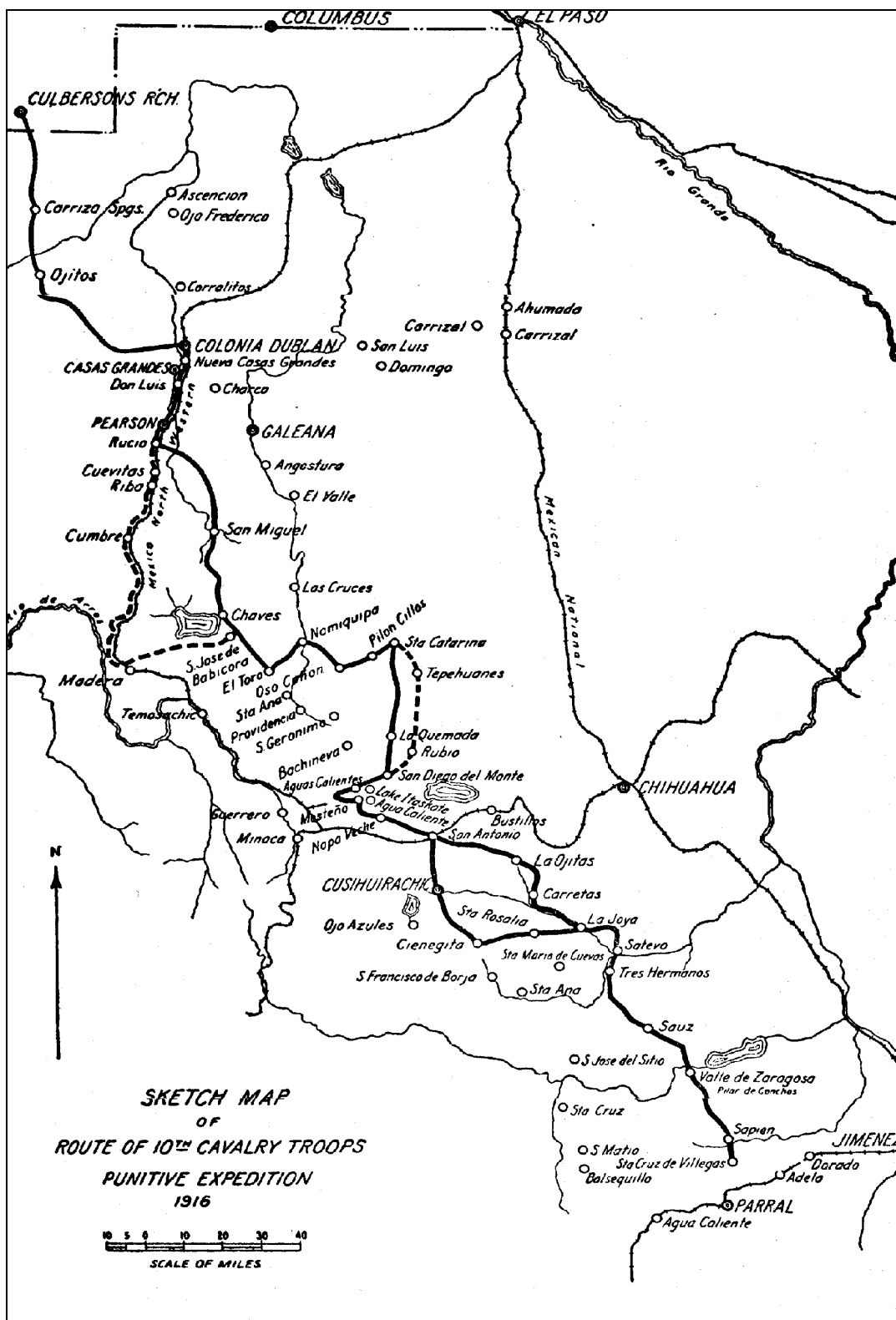


Figure 2.5 Sketch Map of the Punitive Expedition.³⁴

³⁴ Finley, *Fort Huachuca Illustrated*, Volume 1(1993):66.

Whether or not the 10th's march actually was the longest in U.S. Cavalry history is not known, but the troops arrived at Colonia Dublan exhausted and their lives would not be comfortable for a long time. After resting there for a day, they would be sent farther south and would live off the land for another month.

As U.S. forces arrived in Colonia Dublan it became immediately evident that Villa long ago had fled the area. In fact, on March 18th, he made his presence known at Namiquipa where he defeated a Carranzista force. This was some 120 miles south of the U.S. assembly point. But Pershing did not know this at the time and began operating on the intelligence that Villa was in San Miguel de Babicora, only 60 miles south of the U.S. camp. Pershing decided to take his west wing and divide it into three columns. The 10th was split into two forces, one under Colonel Brown (2nd Squadron) that was to proceed southwest by rail to Rucio and then march southeast to San Miguel. The other consisted of the First Squadron under Major E.W. Evans. His column was to proceed with Brown to Rucio and then continue on west and south to Las Varas. This would take the First Squadron southwest of San Miguel in an attempt to cut-off Villa's escape west.³⁵ A third detachment of the 7th Cavalry would maneuver east of the 10th's two columns, marching south, more directly to San Miguel.

On March 20th Colonel Brown's detachment managed to reach San Miguel and found nothing. The 10th had had a rough time of it. First the train that came to transport them to Rucio was unusable and had to be rebuilt. Then the men had to find fuel and water for the train. But eventually they made it to Rucio, detrained and marched on to San Miguel. Meanwhile Evan's detachment continued on south but had to detrain and march part of the way. They also had a derailment, which injured 11 men. In either case, Villa was missing. There were few reliable reports to follow, as the local population was either uncooperative or gave false information. Seventh Cavalry Commander Colonel George A. Dodd, the commander of the third column, found out just how unreliable they could be. The 7th marched down the Rio Santa Valley covering the operation's east flank. At a small village called El Valle, they heard of the battle at Nimiquipa and pressed forward in an attempt to get to the Villistas who were at Guerrero fighting yet another battle against the Carranzistas. However, Dodd's guide led them the long way, actually doubling the route, and then near Guerrero became rather vague in his directions.

³⁵ Braddy, *Pershing's Mission*, p. 11.

Not sure where they were, they were required to wait until daylight to pursue the attack. That morning the 7th attacked and in a running ten-mile battle managed to kill 30 Villistas and capture a machine gun and supplies. But most of the Villistas got away. In another brilliant cavalry march, the 7th had covered 55 miles in 17 hours, but unfortunately, the exhausted troops had engaged only Villa's rear guard. Villa was long gone. In a crafty move, one of Villas captains took the fragments of the army ever southward, while Villa, who had been wounded in the leg at Guerrero, hid in a mountain cave. American and Carranzista soldiers would pass by that cave over the next few weeks never suspecting that their goal was within reach.³⁶

While the 7th refitted and rested, the 13th and the old east column maneuvered ever deeper into Mexico. The 10th meanwhile, out of contact with the east column and Pershing, marched south and west, and around the 2nd of April found themselves at a ranch and community called Aguas Calientes where some 150 Villistas, remnants of the Guerrero battle, were resting. Here the 10th saw its first combat. Brown's van attacked immediately while the Villistas were having lunch. Unfortunately, this advanced force probably should have waited until Brown could have concentrated the attack, for while they killed three, the rest of the Villistas made off into the wilds. In that battle, Major Charles Young led a cavalry charge, with the Machine Gun Troop delivering advancing "overhead" fire for the first time (Figure 2.6). Brown continued southeast to San Antonio, Chihuahua where he was able to telegraph Pershing of his actions and whereabouts.³⁷

The day before Aquas Calientes, Major Frank Tompkins of the 13th Cavalry had been called to General Pershing for consultation. Pershing asked Tompkins where he thought the elusive Villa was hiding. Tompkins replied that he thought the guerilla was at Parral, a village in southern Chihuahua near the Durango border. He requested permission to take a small command consisting of two troops of the 13th and press all out for that village. The next morning Pershing called Tompkins back and told him "Go find Villa wherever you think he is."³⁸ In the final line of march, Tompkins was not alone, but instead in the van of a much larger force. One day behind him on his right rear were

³⁶ Braddy, *Pershing's Mission*, p. 16-18.

³⁷ Wallace, *The Sabre Retires*, pp. 13-14; Glass, *The History of the Tenth Cavalry*, pp. 71-72; Colonel H. B. Wharfield, *10th Cavalry and Border Fights* (El Cajon, California: privately published, 1965), pp. 88-89.

³⁸ Tompkins, *Chasing Villa*, p. 118



Figure 2.6 10th Cavalry Machine Gun Troop Charging.³⁹

elements of the 11th Cavalry, and on his left rear was Colonel Brown with the 10th. Three days behind were additional 11th Cavalry troopers.

As the 13th moved farther south, Chihuahua residents became increasingly hostile. Villistas disguised as Carranzistas harassed their line of march. Rumors of Villa's whereabouts were contradictory. But despite these obstacles, Tompkins decided that when he reached Parral, he would push on through in order to trap the Villistas on the Chihuahua side of the border before they escaped into Durango. According to Tompkins's memoir, a Captain from the Carranzistas garrison in Parral met them on April 10th and assured them of a friendly reception when they got to the village. But when they arrived the next day, no welcoming committee came out to meet them. Tompkins decided to enter the town with only a small advanced party. Once in town, he met General Ismael Lozano, who informed him that the townsfolk were of the exact opposite attitude and that the presence of American soldiers was very dangerous. The general offered to assist the Americans with a campsite elsewhere, if they would leave the town immediately. But even as they were talking, a crowd gathered outside of the General's headquarters. In the crowd was Elisa Griensen, a fiery native sympathetic to Pancho Villa. She turned out to be an effective rabble-rouser, shouting deprecations in Spanish and whipping the crowd to anger. Tompkins mounted his party and with the assistance of a Carranzista escort headed out of town. On the way out, shots rang out. According to a legend, Elisa fired the first shot at the retreating party and the Americans deployed along a railroad embankment but did not return fire. The Mexican general urged Tompkins to

³⁹ Finley, *Fort Huachuca Illustrated*, Volume 1(1993):71.

leave and even had his men fire a volley into the crowd to disperse them. Then an American soldier fell, hit by a round fired from the crowd. The Americans fired back. Meanwhile, Carranzista soldiers began to break away from Lozano's control and threaten the Americans. Tompkins regained control of his men, deployed eight as cover and retreated with the rest.

Tompkins and his command, now with two dead and six wounded, eventually made it back to the previous night's camp at Santa Cruz de Villegas, where he prepared for an expected assault. Two messengers were sent off to Colonel Brown for assistance. Upon hearing about the action, Colonel Brown immediately dispatched a squadron of the 10th to the rescue. Leading this detachment was again, Major Charles Young. One story claims that when Tompkins saw the 10th he yelled "I could kiss everyone of you." To which Young replied "Hello, Tompkins. You can start in on me right now" (Figure 2.7).⁴⁰ Despite the arrival of the 10th's squadron, a combined force of Carranzistas and Mexican citizens continued to fire on the Americans. The Mexican commander sent a message demanding the Americans move north or face continued hostilities, but no attack came. Colonel Brown and the rest of the 10th arrived and Brown, assuming overall command, ordered the soldiers to stop trading shots with the Mexicans. The Carranzistas also stopped shooting and set up camp. For two days, the opposing forces stared at each other until additional troops of the 11th Cavalry joined the 10th and 13th. There they sat for the next week until Pershing, in response to directives from higher up, ordered the troops to return north to San Antonio, Chihuahua. The cost of this engagement was three Americans killed, one missing, and five wounded. Tompkins reported that some 42 Mexicans died in the gunfight.⁴¹



Figure 2.7 Major Charles Young.

⁴⁰ Rodney, *As a Cavalryman Remembers*, pp. 262-263. Interestingly, Tompkins does not mention this exchange in his memoir *Chasing Villa*.

⁴¹ Braddy, *Pershing's Mission*, pp. 33-35; Eisenhower, *Intervention!*, pp. 273-276; Tompkins, *Chasing Villa*, pp. 142-144.

After Parral, the expedition entered a new phase. Unable to capture Villa, and meeting increasing hostility everywhere, Pershing decided that further maneuvering, flying columns, and quick dashes after rumors would not succeed. At the national level tensions were mounting between Mexico and United States. If war came, the Americans would be in a vulnerable position as they were scattered and their supply lines stretched. His solution was reminiscent of the United States in Vietnam. At the end of April, he withdrew all forces northward and closer to the U.S. border. Then he divided his area of operation into five districts, placing one regiment within each. Their orders were to establish a base and, operating within their jurisdiction, to run down the remaining fragments of Villistas. The 10th was sent to Namiquipa. From May 5 until June 9, the expedition engaged Villista forces three more times. Since April 29, they had battled ten times with one fight against the Carranzistas. During that time the Americans had lost 15 and had 31 wounded. Best estimates of Villistas casualties are that 251 were killed and 166 were wounded. Except for the capture of Villa, they had done well and done their job. As historian Haldeen Braddy noted, the Mexican guerillas had been punished, and American revenge satisfied. It was a good time to quit before their successes were marred or war started. Unfortunately, their luck ran out in the final confrontation at Carrizal at the end of June.⁴²

Carrizal

As Pershing put his new strategy in place, Carranzista forces increased in and around the Americans and blocked or harried U.S. forces as they attempted to patrol their areas of responsibility. At Casa Grandes, a Mexican general notified Pershing that any movement except north by American forces would be seen as an act of war. Both sides stubbornly refused to budge, and Washington notified the Mexican government that it could not "recede from its settled determination to maintain its national right . . . in preventing further invasions. . ." ⁴³ General Funston in Texas asked the War Department for 65,000 National Guardsmen to supplement those already along the Mexican border. It seemed that both sides wanted a confrontation.

At Casa Grandes with Pershing were Captain Charles T. Boyd and Troop C of the 10th Cavalry. On June 17th, Pershing ordered Boyd to scout out a suspected band of Villistas near Villa Ahumada, east of Casa Grandes. Unknown to Boyd, Troop K of the

⁴² Braddy, *Pershing's Mission*, pp. 42-46.

⁴³ quoted in Braddy, *Pershing's Mission*, p. 48.

10th under Captain Lewis S. Morey, was also sent to scout the same area, and unbeknownst to both, a third patrol of the 11th Cavalry was ordered to proceed quickly to the same region two days after they left Casa Grandes.

Between Boyd and Ahumada was another small village called Carrizal. It was known that Carranzistas were stationed there, but as will be seen, Boyd's actions seemed to indicate that he was determined to pass through the town regardless of the cost. Most records of the incident portray Boyd as a glory seeker. He supposedly told his guide that "if the Mexican troops fire on us without provocation. . . General Pershing will attack on the south all along the line."⁴⁴ George Rodney, who saw Boyd shortly after he received his orders from Pershing recorded that Boyd held up a piece of paper and laughingly stated that "I've got peace or war right here."⁴⁵ He boasted that the Mexican soldiers would not fight. But at least one historian presents quite a different picture, suggesting that Boyd was ordered to provoke an incident. Rumors to that effect passed through the ranks shortly after the battle and those who knew Boyd personally, testified to his carefulness and good judgement. No written orders to that effect exist, and for Pershing's part, he wrote after the battle that he told Boyd to avoid a fight if possible.⁴⁶ Whether Boyd acted alone or under orders, his actions clearly precipitated the disaster that lay ahead.

On June 20 Troops K and C met at a small ranch nine miles from Carrizal and discovered that they had the same mission. Boyd took command of both troops by right of seniority. In a meeting that evening Boyd told his party that he intended to go through Carrizal to get to Ahumada. Morey protested, stating that his orders were to go around the village. Boyd's assistant Lieutenant Adair was in favor of going through. Others at the meeting, a guide named Spilsbury, and the ranch foreman named McCabe, advised Boyd to avoid a "nasty trap" and go around the village.⁴⁷ Boyd would have none of it.

The next day the combined force of about 90 troopers proceeded toward Carrizal. They left behind their supplies and forage, intending to return that evening. About a mile from town they found an irrigation ditch, where they rested while Captain Boyd sent a

⁴⁴ Braddy, *Pershing's Mission*, p. 49.

⁴⁵ Rodney, *As a Cavalryman Remembers*, p. 275.

⁴⁶ In Boyd's defense see Wharfield, *10th Cavalry*, pp. 25-29; For the more traditional version see Clarence C. Clendenen, *Blood on the Border* (London: Macmillan Company, 1969), pp. 302-305.

⁴⁷ Braddy, *Pershing's Mission*, p. 50; Wharfield, *10th Cavalry*, p. 33; Tompkins, *Chasing Villa*, pp. 210-211.

courier into the village announcing that he planned to pass through. Some Mexican officers approached and the two parties talked for a while, the Mexican officers insisting that the Americans would not be allowed to pass through the village. Boyd mounted the troops and led them to a point nearer the village about 700 yards from another irrigation ditch located in front of the village. There, they dismounted and deployed in line of battle. At this time the a courier arrived with a message from General Felix U. Gomez, commander of the Carranzistas, inviting the Americans to come to the headquarters in the town to confer further. But Boyd apparently feared another Parral ambush and refused. At any rate, Gomez came out to meet Boyd and they met in the open for about an hour. At that point neither Boyd nor Gomez would concede their positions and Gomez broke off the conference with the final words that Boyd might go through the town but "you will have to walk over our dead bodies to do it."⁴⁸ That was alright with Boyd and he returned to his troops to prepare for the attack. By the end of the day, both Boyd and Gomez would be among the dead.

Boyd formed his men in a semicircle with Lieutenant Adair's C Troop on the left flank and Troop K a little farther out on the right. As they formed, increasing numbers of Carranzistas appeared in front of them, estimated to number as many as 400 men. Within three hundred yards of the enemy the 10th dismounted, some men rushing the horses to the rear. This action reduced Boyd's 90 rifles, and some speculate that this contributed to their defeat. Then, probably to the American's surprise, a Mexican machine gun opened up, which was followed by rifle fire. Captain Boyd charged the machine gun and as Boyd fell the Carranzistas began to flank the dismounted C Troop. Adair took over command and continued the attack, but he too fell. Now C Troop was without officers. Meanwhile, K Troop had to wheel in response to the Carranzistas flanking maneuver and in doing so, became disorganized. Captain Morey was wounded and both units of the 10th fell apart. No longer an effective fighting unit, the 10th disintegrated into small groups, each making their way back to the ranch as best they could.

Colonel Frank Tompkins blames the defeat on K Troop, who lost contact with Boyd's detachment, laid down in a depression, and "quit cold."⁴⁹ Captain Morey of K Troop admits that they went to ground, but countered that he was attempting to refuse the Mexican's flanking maneuver. Others defended the 10th citing Corporal Houston of Troop K, who stated that the men returned fire on the Carranzistas and inflicted heavy

⁴⁸ Braddy, *Pershing's Mission*, p. 52.

⁴⁹ Tompkins, *Chasing Villa*, p. 209.

casualties, but were simply overwhelmed. "At this stage the Mexicans were so close that it was impossible to miss them. They were about 30 yards from our right flank. I tried to swing my platoon around so as to help out the one on the right, but it was impossible," stated Houston.⁵⁰ Houston also insists that the retreat of Troop K was orderly, the men stopping at intervals and returning fire. It was Captain Morey who, wounded and fearing that he was dying, told the men to leave him and make their own way back to the ranch.

Throughout the rest of the day and night, the men of the 10th drifted back to the ranch and then on farther west to safety. First battle reports implied that the encounter had been a massacre and Troop M of the 10th and elements of the 11th retraced their comrade's route coming across more and more stragglers. As these men were rounded up, it became clear that although it was a humiliating defeat, casualties were not quite as high as first thought. Some 18 men were captured by the Mexicans and eventually returned (Figure 2.8). Besides Boyd and Adair, ten soldiers were killed, Morey and another ten enlisted men were wounded. One man remained missing and was presumed dead. Although they failed to hold the battleground, the men of the 10th did inflict heavy casualties on the Mexicans. Besides Gomez, 11 other officers were killed along with 33 enlisted men. Another 53 had been wounded.⁵¹ General Funston was obviously upset with Pershing for this "debacle" but Pershing, perhaps worried about his role in the defeat, defended the 10th with high praise and pointed to the courage of Boyd and Adair. He called the battle a deliberate act of war.

After Carrizal, the expedition's momentum was gone. Pershing moved his headquarters to Colonia Dublan, the village that he had first used as a rally point at the expedition's beginning, and ordered his forces not to extend beyond 150 miles from the border. Villa, meanwhile, had recovered from his wounds and returned to his raiding, slowly regaining supplies, men and morale. He even raided Chihuahua City. He lost it again, but persisted as a threat to the Mexicans. When Pershing heard of the city's loss he fumed, wanting to get back on the offensive. But Washington was having none of that, and in January 1917 ordered the expedition home. On February 5th, the last of the men crossed back into the United States south of Columbus, near where they had crossed almost a year before. The Punitive Expedition was over.⁵²

⁵⁰ Warfield, *10th*, pp. 37-38.

⁵¹ These figures are from Warfield, *10th Cavalry*, p. 39 and Clendenen, *Blood on the Border*, pp. 310-311. Braddy states that Mexican losses were 42 killed, 51 wounded, p. 57.

⁵² Clendenen, *Blood on the Border*, pp. 337-339.



Figure 2.8 10th Cavalry Prisoners Return. ⁵³

World War I

Among the few 10th Cavalry troopers who had been left behind during the Punitive Expedition and who greeted the returning veterans at Fort Huachuca was Sergeant Vance Marchbanks. Sergeant Marchbanks' duties during the expedition had not only included Post Sergeant Major but also he worked at the Post Commissary. He probably assisted in the post's security, protecting the civilians from possible Villistas crossing the border and attempting to raid the fort. Since the Army had such a difficult time locating Villa's men, the threat was real and taken seriously. During the hostilities, the post commander kept a train constantly in waiting should danger threaten. Women and children were ordered to be ready to flee to the guardhouse at a moment's notice where they would be escorted to the train and sent to safety. Civilians were also issued handguns and ammunition for personal protection and to assist in the fort's defense.⁵⁴

⁵³ Paul J. Vanderwood and Frank N. Samponaro, *Border Fury* (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico, 1987), p. 215.

⁵⁴ Vance Hunter Marchbanks, Sr., "Forty Years in the Army" (Fort Huachuca: manuscript on file, Fort Huachuca Museum, n.d.); Finley, *Fort Huachuca Illustrated* Volume 2(1996):5.

With the troop's return though, the Sergeant and his men had little time for rest and recuperation. Ominous rumors that the United States would soon join the world war were constantly circulated and border tension burned, fueled by the infamous Zimmermann message. During the previous January, British intelligence had intercepted a message from German Foreign Secretary Alfred Zimmermann to the German minister in Mexico instructing the minister to propose to Mexico an alliance between the two countries if the United States entered the war. Critically, Germany offered to assist Mexico in an effort to recover their "lost" territories along the border. Only two months after the 10th's return to Fort Huachuca, on April 2, 1917, President Wilson asked Congress for a declaration of war against Germany. While most of the war effort at the fort was focused toward preparing an army for overseas combat, the War Department immediately began preparations for the border's defense. This naturally included the movement of troops to old campsites along the line and the men of Fort Huachuca returned to their old mission---patrolling the border.

As rumors of war swept through the ranks in early 1917, it was fully expected that the 10th would be called to the join the effort in Europe. With a declaration of war, trenches were dug in the canyon and the men practiced trench warfare, gas attacks, and grenade throwing. But the call for overseas deployment never came. The 10th was destined for border patrol throughout the war. However, to say that the 10th did not have an effect on the war would be a mistake. Individually, the majority of the 10th's veterans were detached to become training cadre, officers, or the backbone for the mobilization of other African American units. In fact, 64 of the 10th's non-commissioned officers were commissioned during the war as captains (22), first lieutenants (23) and second lieutenants (19). In addition, some 600 men were detached into various African American units as sergeants and enlisted men. Considering that, for example, the post returns for Fort Huachuca at the end of February 1917 indicates that there were only 611 of 935 10th Cavalry enlisted men assigned to the fort at that time, it is obvious that much of the 10th's old guard at Fort Huachuca did participate in the war, if not as the 10th Cavalry. Among those who were commissioned was Sergeant Marchbanks. He began officers' school at the fort immediately upon the declaration of war. Colonel Charles Young was in charge of this school. But within six weeks Marchbanks was ordered to Fort Des Moines, Iowa, where the first officers' school for African Americans had been established and where he was commissioned a Captain. Marchbanks was placed in the

368th Infantry and served in France during the war. He would return to the 10th and Fort Huachuca after the war and continue his distinguished career.⁵⁵

What was left of the 10th was soon filled with 800 new recruits who joined the unit between April and June. First and Second Squadrons took turns rotating to camps Nogales, Lochiel, and Arivaca along the border, while the Third Squadron rotated its troops in and out of Naco. While there were no major incidents during their border defense, there were some minor ones (certainly major in the minds of those involved) and the sure knowledge that German rabble rousers were in Mexico attempting to create an incident that might spark a war between Mexico and the United States, kept the 10th in high war-time alert. In fact, Lothar Witzke, a German spy, was captured in Nogales on January 18, 1918.⁵⁶

For the rest of 1917, the 10th Cavalry continued their patrols unhindered by any problems. However, during that fall, ranchers near Nogales reported sightings of Yaqui Indian bands just across the border. The Yaqui's were crossing the United States to assist in cotton picking and then using their wages to buy arms and ammunition. The ranchers requested the Army to increase its patrols in the area. On January 9th, 1918 Captain Frederick Ryer and a 10th Cavalry patrol was riding through Atasco Canyon west of Nogales on the lookout for smugglers, who reportedly had slaughtered some cattle. The patrol spotted perhaps 30 Yaqui Indians riding along a ridgeline and the 10th began to chase them. Unable to find the marauders, but guessing they were nearby, Ryder ordered his men to dismount and form a skirmish line in a place called Bear Valley. As they headed up the sides of the steep canyon, the Yaqui's opened fire. For about an hour the two sides exchanged gunfire; the Yaqui's slowly retreating up the canyon sides with the 10th on their heels, both jumping from rock to rock for cover like a television western. Finally, a Yaqui man stood up and raised his hands above his head in surrender. Ryder ordered a cease-fire. Upon surrounding the Native Americans the 10th's troopers found only about ten men and a small boy. The rest had gotten away while this rear guard held-off the troopers. One of the Yaqui men was holding his stomach and when his hands were jerked away it was discovered that he had been shot. The Yaqui's excuse for the

⁵⁵ Glass, *History of the 10th Cavalry*, pp. 82-84; Finley, *Fort Huachuca Illustrated* Volume 2(1996) 51-55; Post Returns, February, 1917 (Fort Huachuca: on file, Fort Huachuca Museum). The post returns exclude Troop L, which was assigned to Fort Apache. Besides the 10th Cavalry, there were Hospital Corps, Signal Corps, Q.M. Corps, and Ordnance Department detachments on post amounting to around an additional 100 enlisted men and officers.

⁵⁶ Finley, *Fort Huachuca Illustrated* Volume 2(1996): 21.

skirmish was that they thought the 10th were Mexicans who they hated and would fight anytime. The 10th took their prisoners and the wounded man to Nogales where he later died in the hospital. The boy was his grandson. The prisoners turned out to be good workers and were so grateful for the Army's regularly scheduled prison rations they offered to enlist. But they were turned down. Eventually, the men were tried for smuggling and after some complications regarding possible deportation they were given 30 days in jail. The charges against the boy were dismissed.⁵⁷

Ambos Nogales

A more serious incident in August of 1918 occurred that involved American casualties. Army intelligence learned of armed Mexicans in and around Nogales on the Mexican side of the border. Reports included the presence of "white men," supposed Germans, addressing gatherings of Mexican citizens. An anonymous letter was also received from a man who identified himself as an ex-Villista. He was appalled by the atrocities the Villistas were committing and warned of a possible attack on Nogales around the 25th of August. As it happened, the 35th Infantry at Nogales was in the process of embarking for France, leaving two troops of the 10th Cavalry and guard units of the 35th Infantry as the only Army presence in the area. The commander there, Colonel Frederick Herman, requested reinforcements including the machine gun troop (Figure 2.9).

Around four in the afternoon on the 27th, infantry guards at the custom gates in town attempted to stop and interrogate a Mexican man on the American side who was crossing the border. When hailed, the man did not stop. The custom official drew his pistol and with a soldier's assistance went after the man. On the other side, a Mexican custom official fired, killing the soldier. Another soldier returned fire killing the Mexican custom official. More officials and soldiers from both sides began firing and a general melee broke out. Then from the surrounding hills on the Mexican side of the border a large Mexican troop, entrenched and well armed, began to fire. Colonel Herman arrived and took charge of the Americans, including Troops A, C, and F of the 10th and three companies of the 35th Infantry. Troop F was ordered to occupy Titcomb Hill on the American side. Troop A was ordered to a street near the border and told to prepare to cross. Troop C was placed in reserve while the infantry made up the American center

⁵⁷ Smith, *Fort Huachuca*, pp. 211-213; Wharfield, *10th Cavalry*, pp. 6-12.

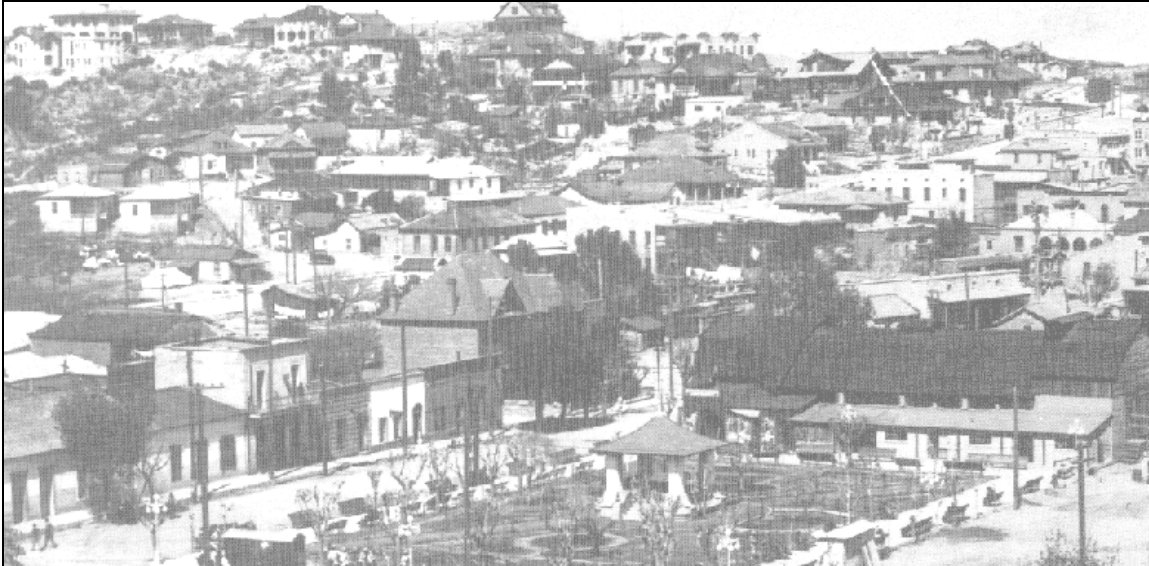


Figure 2.9 Nogales, Circa 1918-1920.⁵⁸

near the railroad depot but then moved up Reservoir Hill. As Mexican fire grew heavier, Troops G, F, and H arrived in support. At this point, the Americans began to take casualties, but were not returning fire. Instead, they maneuvered into positions necessary for an advance. Troop A was the first of the 10th to move, advancing into the Mexican side of town, clearing a line of houses and pushing through the town to take up a position on a rocky hill commanding the area. Captain Roy Morledge remembers:

I was sent down Morley Avenue. . . At the little park the troop was dismounted, and one trooper detailed to hold each group of eight horses. Those left behind pleaded with me to go along.

Dismounted I told the men to follow me. Not far along before we got a lot fire. There was so much it was hard to tell where it was coming from. Also it seemed as though everyone in Nogales was shooting from the windows toward the border.

Reaching the line in spite of the fire, we dashed into a big building on the Mexican side without resistance. But bullets from up on a hillside were hitting the place. We ran forward into another connecting building. It was the Concordia Club. In there were some frightened señoritas wearing kimonos. I got a laugh when one of them spoke to a trooper, saying: 'Sergeant Jackson! Are we all glad to see you.'

Colonel Herman ordered us to the top of the hill. Up we went in waves of a squad at a time, firing at Mexicans off to one side. We took a position near some old buildings and a barricade. Down below were the Mexican depot and buildings. . . . I hope

⁵⁸ Finley, *Fort Huachuca Illustrated*, Volume 2(1996):14.

we only hit those who were shooting. But there were a lot of bodies lying around.⁵⁹

At the same time Troop C was ordered to take the Mexican hill positions. Advancing under fire, their commander, Captain Hungerford was killed, but this was no repeat of Carrizal. The morale of the 10th was exemplary. The 10th moved steadily forward, capturing the entrenchments and driving out the Mexican bandits. One ill black trooper arrived on horseback still in his hospital gown, and begged for a rifle. He was given one and joined the fight.

By this time, around six in the evening, the Americans had captured the commanding positions around Nogales, and the Mexicans had taken significant casualties. While several 10th and 35th officers had been killed or wounded, the Americans were in control and the Mexicans raised a white flag. However, they did not stop firing. But despite the continuing fire, Colonel Herman and a Mexican representative met in an attempt to restore the peace. After some tense negotiations, they reached an agreement whereby all firing would cease until 7 A.M. Through the night, the machine gun troop, more troops of the 10th Cavalry and some artillery arrived as reinforcements. No additional shooting occurred the next day and the tensions eased. The Americans lost two officers, three enlisted, and two civilians killed. Two officers and 29 enlisted were wounded. Mexican casualties were not known, but Army Intelligence reported 129 Mexicans buried and 300 wounded. Two Germans were also identified among the dead.⁶⁰

Although there were no other major incidents during the war, there were occasional episodes of outlaw activity on both sides of the border and the 10th Cavalry or 25th Infantry were called out to investigate. One story, which is likely to be apocryphal, but sworn-to by veterans, concerned the kidnapping of Fort Huachuca's Commanding Officer. The kidnappers had taken the officer into Mexico and then notified the fort, demanding two mules as ransom. Unfortunately for the Commanding Officer, a young newly commissioned 2nd Lieutenant whom he had disciplined recently, had taken command of the post. When the note arrived, the lieutenant responded that as temporary commander of the fort in the Commanding Officers' absence, he would be subject to a

⁵⁹ Wharfield, *10th Cavalry*, pp. 18-19.

⁶⁰ Glass, *Tenth Cavalry*, pp. 82-86; Wharfield, *10th Cavalry*, pp. 16-23.

court-martial for giving away government property. The bandits supposedly turned the officer loose once it was known that their threats were going to be ignored.⁶¹

Racial Incident At Bisbee

Although the post settled into a relative quiet period after World War I, racial problems begin to surface. Up to this point in its history, the fort had avoided major racial incidents such as the Brownsville Riot in Texas (1906) involving the 25th Infantry and the Houston Riot involving the 24th Infantry (1917). But in 1919, racial harmony broke down in southern Arizona.⁶² The incident occurred on July 3rd, when 10th Cavalry troopers were camped outside of Bisbee, Arizona in anticipation of marching in the town's 4th of July parade, but its seeds may have planted two weeks prior. At that time soldiers from the 10th were engaged in a regular Sunday baseball game against a local Bisbee team. There had been a few seemingly friendly disputes and some of the local spectators showed unusual enthusiasm for the black team's cause. Their cheering did nothing to ease growing racial tensions between the locals and the soldiers that eventually erupted into violence the next month. On the evening of July 3rd, off-duty troopers traveled to the black section known locally as Brewery Gulch, for a night of fun before the parade. There to meet them were members of the International Workers of the World (I.W.W.) who attempted to stir-up trouble with fiery speeches about racism and unfair treatment. Unknown (or perhaps known) to I.W.W. agitators, Army Intelligence agents were in the crowd watching the incident develop and would later assist in getting help to the scene. As soldiers became more intoxicated and angry some drifted up town, out of the black section.

The "Bisbee Riot" began when Private Sullivan of the 19th Infantry, who was on duty as a Provost Guard, disarmed a soldier in the 10th Cavalry. For some reason that is not explained, the enlisted men were almost all armed with handguns, carrying them inside their shirts. While this might seem unusual, the 10th's commander was not alarmed when asked about it later. Still Sullivan had been ordered prior to his altercation with the soldier to disarm any soldiers found in Bisbee carrying weapons. Civilian authorities had already disarmed many soldiers. But after Sullivan stopped and disarmed

⁶¹ Letter of Colonel Emmett L. Nations to Colonel C.O. Brunner, 16 July 1958 (Fort Huachuca: typescript copy on file, Fort Huachuca Museum).

⁶² This summary of the "Bisbee Riot" is taken from a series of incident reports by Army Intelligence and Department of Justice reports that can be found in *Federal Surveillance of Afro-Americans, 1917-1925*, microfilm, Reel 21 (Frederick, Maryland: University Publications of America, 1986).

the 10th trooper, five other members of the 10th approached Private Sullivan and asked for the weapon back. Sullivan and his colleague, Private Ridgeley, panicked and ran from the scene. The soldiers gave chase and caught Ridgeley in a restaurant and according to Ridgeley, punched him on the chin, although investigators found no indication of a bruise. Private citizens in the restaurant got to a telephone and in an obvious overreaction, reported a "riot" to local authorities.

Meanwhile, most of the 10th and 19th's officers were at a dance and when informed of the chaos downtown, 10th Cavalry Commander Colonel George Phillip White dispatched a Lieutenant and six men to the scene. Documents indicate this show of force was way too small for the occasion and White is implicated for his seeming complacency in not acting sooner and with greater force. It is not known if Colonel White was unaware of the number of soldiers involved or simply had a lot of trust in the lieutenant. Meanwhile shooting had started in town, as civilian authorities reacted, and eyewitness citizen reports indicated that the firing came mostly from civilian police, not from the 10th. Many innocent black soldiers and civilians were arrested and taken to jail. Colonel White did not leave the dance until one of the intelligence agents in the town convinced him that the incident was serious, growing, and the Colonel was needed at the camp to control the men.⁶³ (One of the officers that assisted in controlling the men and getting them to go back to camp was Lieutenant Ryder of Bear Valley fame.) When the Colonel finally arrived on the scene, the arrested soldiers were released and the incident wound down. Civilian police had by that time just about exhausted their ammunition. Investigation of the matter blamed much of the violence not on the soldiers but on the local authorities, most notably Deputy Sheriff Joseph Hardwick, who was a reported member of the I.W.W.--although he denied it. But Hardwick had only been in Bisbee for ten days, and was assigned there for the upcoming celebration. Normally he was stationed at Douglas, Arizona. Witnesses stated he was overactive in his reactions, and prone to shoot first and ask questions later. Further, he didn't deny that he shot four men and in fact bragged about it. One investigator felt that Hardwick "is probably the man who shot every man who was injured in the firing." The exact number of casualties is not known, but at least one soldier was shot. The next day, on the 4th of July, the 10th Cavalry marched in the parade and the local citizens cheered as if nothing had happened.

⁶³ As noted, Intelligence agents had come to town three days before the incident, anticipating trouble because of I.W.W. activities. The fact that he already was there implies that there is more to the story than the reports indicate.

For what could have been a major altercation, Fort Huachuca had dodged a bullet, coming close to having a "Brownsville" incident as part of its own history.

Fort Huachuca, 1918-1939

The Battle of Ambos Nogales marked the end of major hostilities for the men at Fort Huachuca. Other than the crack of pistols and rifles at the ranges, and a few nasty murders, the 10th would never again fire in anger. Fort Huachuca would settle into a long peaceful period until World War II. In 1919 most of the 10th returned to Fort Huachuca. Pancho Villa was still alive and threatening trouble, but no incidents involving the 10th occurred. With peace, the threat of invasion from Mexico declined and the need to enforce 'neutrality laws' were no longer in effect. The 10th Cavalry still patrolled the border occasionally, but the camps at Douglas and Lochiel were closed. These camps were not only closed, but thoroughly dismantled--one officer was told, "Richmond. . .go to Lochiel and wash it off the face of the earth: add concrete footings to the temporary target range [at the fort]; take the pumping plant and the light plant and bring them on up here and relocate them on the target range."⁶⁴

Although there was never again an opportunity for the African American soldiers at Fort Huachuca to show their prowess in combat, there was in 1929, one final threat. Another revolution broke out in Mexico, and true to form, rebel and government factions found the border region to be an attractive location for expanding hostilities. It began again at Naco, where reports of fighting attracted 10th Cavalry off-duty officers and men, and local citizens, who watched the battle along the border. Eventually fighting spread toward Nogales, and the 25th Infantry, who were on duty there, requested the 10th's help. Off they went, with orders to hold the fighting south of the border. The day after they arrived and took position, a treaty was signed and the threat was over. While only a minor annoyance to the 10th, the importance of this incident in Fort Huachuca's history actually may have been very significant. The very fact that it happened quite likely convinced the Army of the fort's importance as an active post, just when discussions about its possible closure were being discussed.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Captain Clarence Richmond, Interview (Fort Huachuca: transcript on file, Fort Huachuca Museum, 1959).

⁶⁵ Captain Paul Matte, Manuscript (Fort Huachuca: transcript on file, Fort Huachuca Museum, n.d.).

These years between the two world wars would also prove to be a time of continual shrinkage of African American manpower within the United States Army. It began in 1921 when the Army went through a major reorganization. Over the course of the period from 1918 until 1940, the 9th, 10th, 24th and 25th gradually were reduced in size until African American's represented less than two percent of the Regular Army and National Guard's total strength. In the 1920s, the 25th was reduced to only 1,023 enlisted and 43 officers from a pre-1920 strength of 1,546 enlisted and 61 officers. And it continued to get worse. By 1934, the Adjutant General's Office reported that there were only 2,954 enlisted African Americans in the entire Army. Within the 25th Infantry there were only 692 African Americans. With an additional 89 African Americans in small detachments, the total enlisted strength at Fort Huachuca was only 781 at that time, or 26 percent of the Army's total number of African Americans. Still, Fort Huachuca held the largest number of African Americans at any one post. The 10th Cavalry had 328 at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 200 at West Point, New York, and 110 at Fort Meyer, Virginia. The 9th was down to 383 at Fort Riley, Kansas. The 24th Infantry had the largest number of men in the ranks at 715. They were posted at Fort Benning, Georgia.⁶⁶ In 1931 the War Department dismantled the 10th for good. Although they still existed, barely, as a unit, they lost their horses and were shipped out of Fort Huachuca. Their horses were turned in and the men were scattered across the land to the point where the 10th was a unit in name only.⁶⁷ Colonel Vance Batchelor remembered the scene:

One day the inevitable happened, the War Department decided that the horse cavalry was outmoded. One of the first regiments to be disbanded was the colored tenth. We loaded the horses on the freight cars and sent them away. Next day the Pullman sleepers backed quietly into the rail yard. The colored troops boarded the train with tears in their eyes and started their trip north to become service detachments at various military schools.⁶⁸

The 10th Cavalry never was the same again. Near the end of WWII on March 10, 1944, the unit was officially disbanded.

⁶⁶ Captain E. Reynolds, "Colored Soldiers and the Regular Army, (Fort Huachuca: typescript copy on file, Fort Huachuca Museum, 1934).

⁶⁷ Finley, *Fort Huachuca Illustrated* Volume 3(1996):23; Nalty, *Strength for the Fight*, p. 133.

⁶⁸ Colonel Vance W. Batchelor Papers, Finley, *Fort Huachuca Illustrated* Volume 3(1996):49.

The Twenty-Fifth Infantry

In 1928 the 3rd Battalion, Headquarters and Service Company of the 25th Infantry arrived at Fort Huachuca to share the post with the 10th Cavalry until 1931. Elements of the 25th had had a brief stay at the fort back in 1898. But this was the first time in its long history that a significant portion of the 25th was to be stationed at the fort. Still, throughout its history the 25th had had a close relationship with the 10th Cavalry, having had several companies stationed along the Mexican border during the early 20th Century. For years, the 25th and 10th had engaged in fierce but comradely rivalries in sporting events and military exercises. So when the 25th came to Fort Huachuca, the two regiments were old friends and many veterans knew each other.

The 25th was the final of the four Congressionally mandated African American regiments to make Fort Huachuca its home. It had made its reputation in the Indian wars in Texas, the Dakota Territories and Montana, sharing experiences with the 24th Infantry in garrisoning frontier forts and supporting the faster moving cavalry. It had the unusual opportunity at Fort Missoula in 1896 of being part of an experimental Bicycle Corps. Although the experience was a partial success, a corps was never established within the Army. Perhaps that was because the Spanish American War. Elements of the 25th were spread out across the great west but were soon assembled in Tampa, Florida at the war's beginning. There they ran into considerable trouble that would haunt them for many years. Camped temporarily at Tampa, many of these western soldiers met Jim Crow for the first time. Racial tensions mounted until on June 6, 1898 intoxicated troops from a white Ohio volunteer unit began amusing themselves by taking potshots at a black two-year-old child. Members of both the 24th and the 25th went on a wild rampage, storming streets, firing their pistols, wrecking saloons and restaurants that they had been denied access to previously. Overwhelmed, the town sent the white 2nd Georgia Volunteers into the riot and more than 30 blacks were injured. The Army quickly got the two regiments out of Florida and on to Cuba. There the 25th showed its military proficiency. In fighting at El Caney, the unit performed bravely, attacking and taking the Spanish entrenchments. The 25th lost seven killed and 25 wounded.⁶⁹

After the war, 25th was demobilized, units scattered to various forts across the west and the world. Some companies were transferred back to the states for a brief time

⁶⁹ Nalty, *Strength for the Fight*, pp. 69-70. Ziedler and Smith, editors, *Historic Context*, p. 131.

in 1898 and that was when small detachments saw Fort Huachuca for the first time. However, they were soon transferred overseas to the Philippines to suppress Filipino rebels. While there the regiment performed bravely in January 1900 when attacked by more than 1,000 revolutionaries at Iba, Zimbales. Eventually, the 25th returned home in the early 1900s, but its companies were scattered across the west again. In 1907 some companies were sent back to the Philippines, then back to the United States, and eventually to Hawaii for a longer posting that lasted from 1913 to 1918. During their stint back on American soil, the 25th again ran into Jim Crow racism at Brownsville, Texas. In 1906 a group of rowdies in the border town of Brownsville ran amuck firing randomly into buildings. Although witnesses claimed the men were members of the 25th, no one could identify any particular soldier. The soldiers stood firm, denying they were part of the riot and would not testify against each other. Inspector General E.A. Garlington never determined who committed the crimes but recommended that 160 members of the 25th be court-martialed as an example. It took 65 years for the Secretary of the Army to reopen the case and change the men's discharges to honorable.⁷⁰

The 25th did not see Europe during the world war either, but instead spent most of the war in Hawaii, and then in 1918 they were sent to Arizona, specifically Camps Stephen Little and Nogales. Unhappily for the veterans, they arrived just a few days after the battle of Ambos Nogales. The 25th spent the 1920s in camps in Arizona, participating in training and sports with and against the 10th Cavalry. In 1933 the 2nd Battalion and H and S Companies of the 25th moved from Camp Stephen D. Little to Fort Huachuca and the 1st Battalion and its H and S Companies moved to the fort from Camp Harry J. Jones. The 1st was almost immediately deactivated, its men transferred to other units within the 25th. For the next seven years the 25th had the fort to itself until its expansion in preparation for WWII.⁷¹

Training

The military has one mission in life-- to protect the nation from foreign enemies. As such soldiers are either actively defending the nation, or training for that mission. In peacetime, when they were not training or off-duty, they were either participating in recreational sports (organized and unorganized sports or games), or guarding, or keeping the physical plant (the fort) in shape. Each year the regiments set training goals and these

⁷⁰ Ziedler and Smith, editors, *Historic Context*, pp. 139-142.

⁷¹ Smith, Fort Huachuca, p. 243.

were spelled out in a training program. For example, in 1934, the 25th Infantry's training program included the objectives of: "1) maintain each unit . . . in a state of constant readiness for extended field service, including border defense missions; 2) secure technical and tactical proficiency; and 3) be prepared for missions under general mobilization plans." To achieve these goals the program called for all commanders to cut absentee lists that year, to conduct one field exercise per week, to conduct marksmanship training, combat practice and proficiency tests, and to conduct frequent short practice marches. A rotation system for junior officer was established to give command opportunities to all officers. Guard and labor duties were established on a monthly basis for each battalion. In other words, each year, the regiment's objectives, and when and how they were going to be met, were laid out for all to know. The soldiers knew what was expected of them and what they were going to be doing far in advance.⁷²

A typical day in 1893 had consisted of reveille at 5:45 A.M. After breakfast the men began fatigue duties at 7:30. Recall was at 12:15 P.M. and after lunch more fatigue duties or schools. The bugle for Recall from fatigue duties sounded at 4:30, then drill from 4:45 to 5:15, guard mount at 5:30, dinner, and tattoo at 9:00 P.M., followed by taps. By 1934 though, the Fort Huachuca schedule had changed slightly. At Fort Huachuca the day began at 6:15 A.M. with breakfast at 7:00 A.M. Fatigue duties still began at 7:30. Guard mounting was conducted in the morning at 8:20 A.M. rather than the afternoon. Recall was then at 11:30 and lunch at 12:00. After lunch there were more fatigue duties until recall, which was still at 4:30 P.M. Mess call was immediately after the 5:00 P.M. Retreat. Tattoo was still at 9:00 with Taps at 11:00 P.M.⁷³ This schedule continued Monday through Saturday with Sundays off.⁷⁴ Enlisted men had to attend post schools, qualify with weapons, and participate in maneuvers. In 1934, for instance, a 25th Infantry enlisted man could take courses in the Care of Animals, Civil Disturbance and Relief Work, Equitation (horsemanship), Horseshoeing, Chemical Warfare, Truck Driving, Mess Management, and Communications Intelligence. Basic educational classes in reading, writing, arithmetic, music, typewriting, and clerical work were all available.⁷⁵ The white officers were not left out either. Officers of the 10th were required to take 18

⁷² General Orders No. 35, "Training Program, 25th Infantry, 1934-1935," Headquarters, 25th Infantry (Fort Huachuca: typescript copy on file, Fort Huachuca Museum).

⁷³ Headquarters, Fort Huachuca, Memorandum No. 136, "Calls," October 22, 1934 (Fort Huachuca: typescript copy on file, Fort Huachuca Museum).

⁷⁴ Fletcher, *The Black Soldier and Officer*, p. 80; *The Rasp*, published by The Cavalry School, Fort Riley, Kansas, 1927 (Fort Huachuca: typescript copy on file, Fort Huachuca Museum).

⁷⁵ Finley, "Fort Huachuca," *Fort Huachuca Illustrated* Volume 3(1966):42-44.

examinations on Training Regulations. The also attended Public Speaking and Map Reading courses, and in the advanced school had to pass a 115 mile endurance ride through the mountains, and a charge at 20 miles per hour.

Fatigue duties took in a wide variety of activities. In the 1930s, the 25th Infantry was detached to do road maintenance, build sheds, paint anything that didn't move, and work in the various post support facilities like the carpenter shop, plumber shop, paint shop, electrical shop, officers' club, fire station, wood yard, or ice plant. Soldiers were detailed to drive trucks, act as librarians, janitors, telegraph operators, clerks, and linesmen.⁷⁶ For instance, the weekly schedule for Company M, 25th Infantry in December 1933 might be considered a typical one for soldiers at Fort Huachuca. At 7:00 A.M. for four of the six work days the men worked in the stables for an hour, and had an unscheduled hour except for Monday when they had a demonstration to attend. At 9:00 A.M. each day they had a variety of duties including demonstrations, close order drill, or calisthenics. Most afternoons they had demonstrations by the Machine Gun Company. Inspection was on Saturday, and a special inspection of the stables was on the schedule for Wednesday afternoon. Two nights that week they had to work in the stables.⁷⁷ Although drill was expected of all units it apparently was not always part of the routine. Colonel Paul Matte of the 10th Cavalry remembered "there didn't seem to be much time available for plain old ordinary drilling. They were always doing something else."⁷⁸ For new recruits, basic training was more rigorously controlled and hectic. The new men of the 25th took instructions in First Aid, Care of Animals, Drill, Mechanics, Pistol and Rifle Marksmanship, Machine Gun Drill, Military Courtesy, Field instruction, Correct Packing of Equipment, Chemical Warfare, Care of Weapons, and of course Drill and Physical Training (Figure 2.10). The schedule for the first two weeks of new recruit training indicates something going on each day, detailed down to the half-hour.⁷⁹

The men completed all the necessary duties required to keep the post self-sufficient. Assignments included acting as a strikers (personal servants) and cooks. Mrs.

⁷⁶ Headquarters Fort Huachuca, *Special Orders No. 196*, October 11, 1934 (Fort Huachuca: on file, Fort Huachuca Museum).

⁷⁷ Company M, 25th Infantry Schedule for week ending December 9, 1933 (Fort Huachuca: typescript copy on file, Fort Huachuca Museum).

⁷⁸ Colonel Paul J. Matte, "Fort Huachuca, Home of the Buffalo Soldier 10th United States Cavalry" (Fort Huachuca: typescript copy on file, Fort Huachuca Museum, 1981).

⁷⁹ Headquarters, 25th Infantry "Schedule of Recruits Instruction- Machine Gun Units, First Two Week Period, no date (Fort Huachuca: typescript copy on file, Fort Huachuca Museum).

Arnold, wife of Colonel Frederick Arnold of the 10th Cavalry describes their cook in 1918:

Our Cook, Freeman, is doing very well, he is a soldier from C Troop, wears white, and waits on table. He has cooked for five colonels here and is always telling us what the other colonels did. I sent him over to the commissary after some extra things and he drove over in his own car. He has a five passenger Studebaker car. Seems odd to have a cook with his own automobile.⁸⁰

While sounding patronizing to our ears, strikers, or paid enlisted servants and cooks were typical for the Army and the times and it is reasonable to assume that it was a job eagerly sought. There was extra money involved and opportunities to be excused from regular duties to attend the officers and their families.

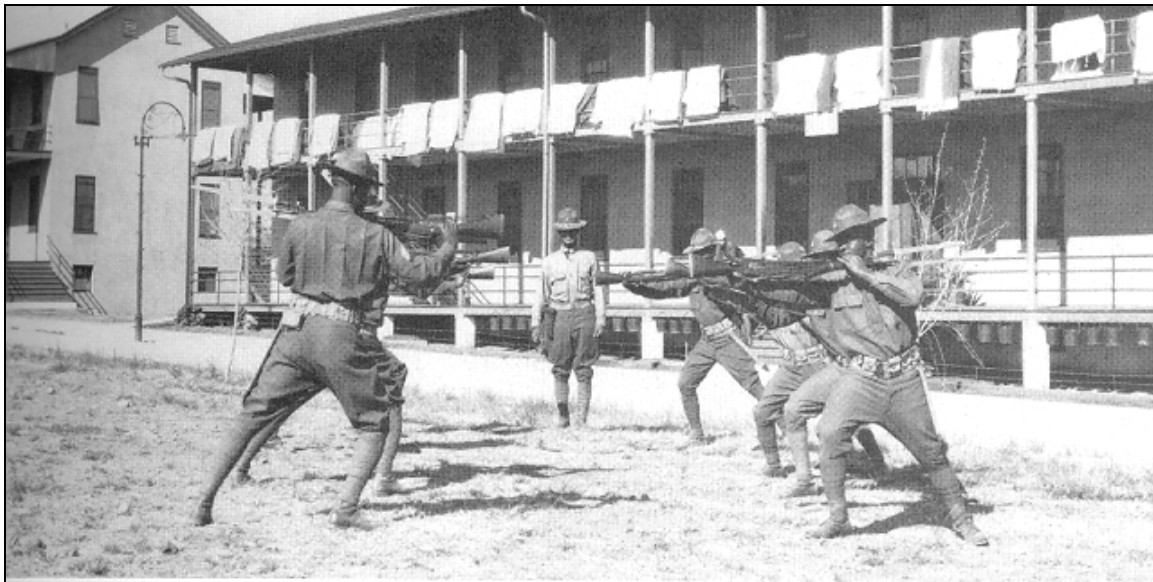


Figure 2.10 25th Infantry at Bayonet Practice, 1928.⁸¹

Military training included proficiency tests, small unit tactics, chemical warfare and basic infantry or cavalry tactics in the offense and defense. As the air arm developed, training in anti-aircraft and air defense tactics was added. Maneuvers for the 10th in 1925 included combined arms training with air support, a march to Douglas where they participated in Defense Day competitions, a 60-mile patrol, and a 72-mile "continuous problem." In another exercise in 1929, the 10th rode to Fort Bliss for a combined arms

⁸⁰ From a letter to the post historian, quoted in Smith, *Fort Huachuca*, p. 224.

⁸¹ Finley, *Fort Huachuca Illustrated*, Volume 3(1996):13.

field exercise.⁸² The 10th and 25th not only competed against each other in sports, they often maneuvered against each other in training exercises. Usually, the 25th took the role of the offense attacking the 10th, while the 10th practiced delaying actions. In joint competitive maneuvers with the 25th in 1926, the 10th were judged the winners for that year.⁸³ As mentioned, beginning in the 1920s, African American military units were continually reduced in size, to the point where some units had mere hundreds in their ranks and served only as support or household servants to white officers. For that reason, many African American soldiers were not receiving combat training. In fact, by the 1930s, after the 10th had left Fort Huachuca and the fort was occupied by the 25th, the 25th was the *only* African American unit in the Army receiving combat training.⁸⁴

Horse shows were held several times a month when the 10th Cavalry was at the fort, and were considered both training and sporting events. Winners of these competitions could not compete using the same mount in the same judging class during the remainder of the training year. This kept the competitions more interesting and made the outcome more reliant on the man rather than the mount.

Of course there were regular parades and turnouts for inspections. A 1934 Memorandum announcing an inspection of the 25th on June 3, 1934 indicates that they were thorough and long. The inspection started at 9:00 A.M. The men, in full dress, marched onto the parade ground in battalions, companies and platoons and passed in review. They then formed by unit facing front with their wagon trains behind. Each man displayed his equipment for inspection and also the equipment on each wagon was unloaded for display. Unit commanders walked down each rank, inspecting the equipment and noting any shortages. By noon each unit had to have a complete list of shortages and solutions to the shortages provided to the S-3. After the inspection there was more work. The men had to return to barracks, unpack their belonging and then go unload the wagons.⁸⁵ Parades were more fun though. Colonel Vance W. Batchelor, a captain in the 10th Cavalry describes a typical parade in the late 1920s:

⁸² 2nd Lieutenant Cecil C. Ricks, manuscript (Fort Huachuca: on file, Fort Huachuca Museum).

⁸³ Finley, "Fort Huachuca," *Fort Huachuca Illustrated*, Volume 3 (1996):37; *The Rasp*, Published by The Cavalry School, Fort Riley, Kansas, 1926 (Fort Huachuca: typescript copy on file, Fort Huachuca Museum).

⁸⁴ Gerald W. Patton, *War and Race: The Black Officer In The American Military 1915-1941* (Westport, Connecticut: The Westwood Press, 1981) p. 160.

⁸⁵ Memorandum, Review and Full Field Inspection, June 3, 1934 (Fort Huachuca: typescript copy on file, Fort Huachuca Museum).

The 10th Cavalry, being mounted, of course had a mounted band. The band horses were old, gentle, and easily managed. While the musicians were playing the reins were over the pommel and the riders guided their mounts with their legs and knees.

[At the end of the parade] the troops would form at the lower end of the parade ground, draw sabers and prepare for the charge. The trumpet in the band would blow 'Charge' and up the hill we would come at a dead run. That was fun for all. The fast horses got there first and there was great confusion. We had to reform before going back to the stables. That ended the band's part of the ceremony and all the band horses knew it. While we were reforming, the band departed for the stables in complete disorder. Every quiet and gentle horse became spirited, and had but one desire, and that was to gallop to the stables as fast as they could go. Imagine the scene, a bass drum player holding fast to his drum and with the other hand trying to control a runaway horse. The bass horn player had just as difficult a task. It was only the piccolo player that could put his instrument in his shirt and use both hands to hold his horse. We used to sit on our horses and watch that performance with glee.⁸⁶

Recreation

Besides training, competitive sports also took up much of the peacetime soldiers time. The soldiers took their sports seriously, and competitions between troops, regiments, and regional towns were part of the seasonal round. The men were able to choose from a surprisingly diverse list of sports activities. The cavalry, of course, was heavy into polo. Other sports included bowling, basketball, tennis, handball, boxing, track and field, football, and marksmanship. It must be admitted that not all of the sports were voluntary. The men were 'strongly encouraged' to join teams and sometimes ordered, since participation meant not only recreation but also exercise. Private Myles of the 25th, for instance, was forbidden any pass privileges for failing to attend Basketball School on November--his captain expecting "every man on the basket ball squad to do his best. Failure to try indicates a lack of company spirit."⁸⁷

Baseball was the most popular sport among the enlisted, which they enjoyed both as participants and as spectators (Figure 2.11). The games were avidly watched and seasons closely followed. The quality of play was very high and some of the best men

⁸⁶ Colonel Vance W. Batchelor, Batchelor Papers (Fort Huachuca: on file, Fort Huachuca Museum).

⁸⁷ Captain S.M. Prouty, Memorandum, November 22, 1933 (Fort Huachuca: typescript copy on file, Fort Huachuca Museum).

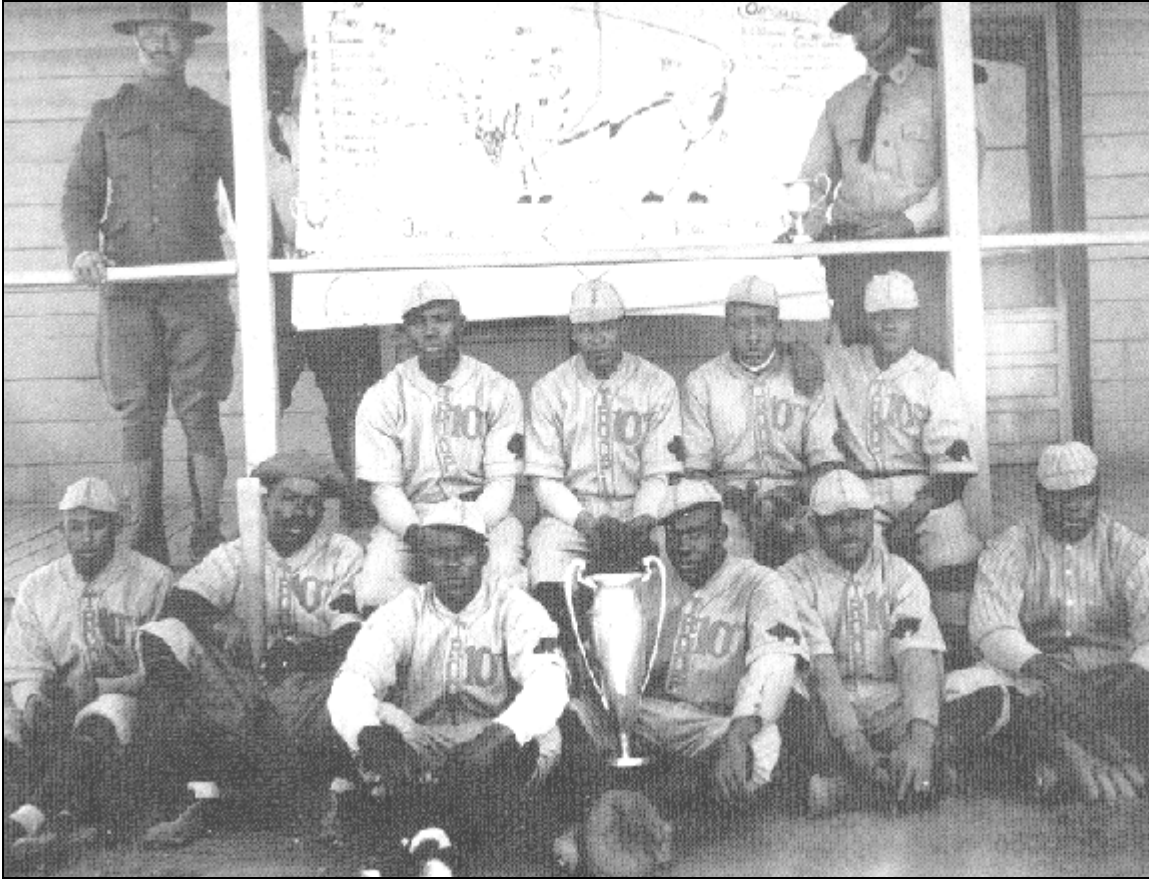


Figure 2.11 10th Cavalry Regimental Champions, 1921.⁸⁸

were recruited into the Negro Leagues. Fort Huachuca spectators may have had the opportunity to see two famous black baseball players, Doby Moore and Bullet Joe Rogan. According to one account, around 1919, both Moore and Rogan were discovered by Casey Stengel at Fort Huachuca. Walter "Doby" Moore was known to have huge hands and was a "great hitter, base runner, and a sensational short stop." Rogan was an exceptional pitcher, acquiring the nickname Bullet Joe--his real first name was Wilbur. Both later played with the Monarchs, probably the most famous of the Negro teams. But Moore's career was prematurely cut short in 1926 when his girl friend shot him in the leg.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Finley, *Fort Huachuca Illustrated*, Volume 29(1993):61.

⁸⁹ John Holway "Doby Moore and Bullet Joe," (Fort Huachuca: typescript copy on file, Fort Huachuca Museum, n.d.). Holway says Moore and Rogan were with the 25th at Fort Huachuca in 1919 when Stengel discovered them. The 25th was not stationed at Fort Huachuca at the time but were at Nogales. This same story is reported in Janet Bruce's *The Kansas City Monarchs, Champions of Black Baseball* (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1985), p. 21. The most likely explanation is that Stengel saw them at a game between the 25th and 10th Cavalry at the fort, or the original source, a *Chicago Defender* journalist, used the closest fort as point of reference for his story.

Polo, primarily an officers' sport, became especially interesting after 1920. Teams of 18 men each competed on Wednesdays and Sundays through the summer months. In 1925, the teams traveled to the West Coast, Fort Bliss, and Tucson for various tournaments, and at one competition won the Jessup Challenge Trophy. Their brand of polo was probably a rough one, as evidenced by the death of Captain Fabius Shipp who died of injuries when his pony fell that same year.⁹⁰ Death was unusual but injuries were common. In 1920 Major Robenson suffered a concussion in a collision with another player and returned to the game only to wrench his back.⁹¹ Since Fort Huachuca was a wide-open western fort with a strong cavalry history, it is not surprising to note that both civilians and soldiers had a close and enduring relationship with the horse. Being dare-devils the 10th men often challenged each other in various unofficial horse competitions. One favorite 'sport' was riding two, three, or even four horses at once, standing with their legs on the outside horses.⁹² Even after the 10th Cavalry left, horses still played a role in the recreational activities of the post occupants. Each company of the 25th Infantry had some horses that were available for pleasure riding. A 1930s sign-out sheet indicates that the riders were often officers' wives.⁹³

The 10ths athletes were very good. In track and field, a combined team of the 10th and 25th Infantry won the Southern Department meet in 1920. The 10th won the Pistol championship at the Eighth Corps Rifle and Pistol Competition in 1921.⁹⁴ Rifle competition was fierce. Each year the men were required to shoot for qualification as part of their normal training duties, so most men very familiar with their rifles and were excellent shots. In 1925 for instance, close to 96% of the 10th qualified with rifles, 100% with automatic rifles, 86% with pistols while dismounted, 98% with pistols while mounted, and 97% qualified with the saber. That same year the enlisted men's team won the state competition in the Adjutant General's Match, and Captain Victor W.B. Wales of the 10th won the individual rifle marksman title.⁹⁵ Qualifying records in 1927 indicates the consistency in the quality of their training. At that time 96% of the men qualified

⁹⁰ *The Rasp*, Published by The Cavalry School, Fort Riley, Kansas, 1926 (Fort Huachuca: typescript copy on file, Fort Huachuca Museum).

⁹¹ Smith, *Fort Huachuca*, p. 245.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 245.

⁹³ Pleasure Riding, June 1934 Company H, 25th Infantry (Fort Huachuca: sign-out sheet, copy on file, Fort Huachuca Museum).

⁹⁴ Glass, *Ten Cavalry*, pp. 86-87.

⁹⁵ *The Rasp*, Published by The Cavalry School, Fort Riley, Kansas, 1926 (Fort Huachuca: typescript copy on file, Fort Huachuca Museum).

with the Rifle, 99% with the Automatic rifle, 92% with the pistol while dismounted, 99% with the pistol while mounted, and 99% with the saber.⁹⁶

Another recreational sport was hunting. Officers (and perhaps men) were given ten days 'hunting and fishing leave' to go into the mountains and hunt, a practice dating to the days when the extra meat was very much needed to feed the men.⁹⁷ Hunters could find quail, rabbit, deer, and there were a few bear. Fishing was also popular, the men able to catch bass along the San Pedro and trout in the White Mountains.

Besides sports, off-duty soldiers looked to the usual recreational activities. Fort Huachuca had three rooms set aside for amusements, a billiard room, a reading room, and a combined game room for cards, dominoes, checkers and chess.⁹⁸ There were also the usual theaters, swimming pools, and exchanges. But the men often wanted to get off-post and that was a continual problem. White City, a small town just outside the gates offered little except the usual vices of prostitution and liquor. It would eventually become quite a problem for the Army during World War II. Prejudice and Jim Crow laws limited the recreational outlets for the troops in Tombstone and Bisbee, although Bisbee had a small segregated black population where the troops could see a friendly face. But getting to these towns was difficult. Captain Clarence Richmond remembered that: "We figured it was sixty-three miles to Nogales through Patagonia, out this West Gate over the unimproved road. It was sixty-one to Douglas, twenty-eight miles to Tombstone, then [1920-22] with a population of eight hundred. We had no taxi service."⁹⁹ Most men, if they had the time, traveled to Tucson with a larger black population. In 1933, Colonel Robert S. Knox improved morale by allowing soldiers of "exemplary conduct" to be issued Special Privilege Cards. These men were allowed off-post whenever they were off-duty.¹⁰⁰

Christmas was a big annual event around post. Dances were popular, the enlisted men acted in plays and of course the post was decorated. There was a traditional Christmas meal, (probably the highlight of the day) so festive that an annual program was produced describing the menu. Troop B, 10th Cavalry had on its 1922 menu: oyster soup,

⁹⁶ *Ibid...*

⁹⁷ Finley, "Fort Huachuca" *Fort Huachuca Illustrated* Volume 3 (1996):24.

⁹⁸ Fletcher, *Black Soldier*, p. 101.

⁹⁹ Captain Clarence Richmond, quoted in Finley, *Fort Huachuca Illustrated* Volume 2 (1996):58.

¹⁰⁰ Finley, *Fort Huachuca Illustrated* Volume 3 (1996):40.

roast turkey, baked ham, shrimp salad, creamed peas, baked corn, pickled beets, and giblet gravy. Desserts included pies of mince, pumpkin, and raisin, along with oranges, apples, bananas, candies, beer, cigarettes, and cigars.¹⁰¹ Competitions were held for the tastiest dishes, and the meals concluded with toasts all round. As was customary and traditional, the officers' were to make a modest appearance at the dinner and then make rounds of visits to other officers' quarters or homes.

Summary

During the period from 1913 to 1939 the black soldier found a home at Fort Huachuca. The era began with steadfast duty along the border, keeping the volatile revolutionaries and Mexican Federal troops on their side of the border. These duties were frustrating to perform, but the soldiers performed them well. Fort Huachuca and its black contingent performed well during the Punitive Expedition also, while the fort itself served as a logistical station for the troops in the field. While the Punitive Expedition has become a blurry memory in the American mind, it is clear that the 10th Cavalry's service was excellent under trying conditions. We will never know exactly what happened to the men at Carrizal, but it appears that they were led into an ambush by an ambitious man who paid for his rashness with his life, and taking several of his men with him.

While the 10th did not see combat during WWI as a unit, it is clear that the men of the 10th served in large numbers within other units. Fort Huachuca's black soldiers provided the backbone for the African American participation in that conflict. After the war, Fort Huachuca began a long interval of peaceful service. From what can be gleaned from historical sources of this period, a measure of racial harmony was achieved between the white officers and black enlisted. This harmony would change during WWII when men from all walks of African American life and experience were crowded into the canyon in preparation for the greatest world war.

¹⁰¹ Troop B, 10th Cavalry, Christmas Day, 1922 (Fort Huachuca: on file, Fort Huachuca Museum).

CHAPTER III: FORT HUACHUCA AND THE BUFFALO SOLDIERS DURING WORLD WAR II

The post is the oldest, continuously used, military reservation in the nation, but today in its isolated self-sufficiency it has new, unusual and fascinating aspects. It is used exclusively for the training of Negro troops.¹

Some came with scars of shackles stamped into their eyes. They came with college degrees and parole papers. They came with pockets full of loaded dice. They came damning America, her Jim Crow, and her lynch law. They came cursing Hitler and the Fascists and eager to do battle for human rights.²

Introduction

Since 1892 a black soldier's first view of Fort Huachuca was when he stepped off a railroad car into the Arizona heat and lined up for the march to the gates. For 49 years leading up to 1941, relatively little of that view changed (Figure 3.1). Through the years the march had become shorter, as when the railroad spur from Huachuca Station to the fort had been completed, and new buildings had been occasionally added or old buildings remodeled in the old cantonment area. But modification to buildings and grounds had been minimal. Besides a few years of dangerous patrolling along the border and expeditions into Mexico, overall the fort had been a fairly peaceful, isolated post in southeastern Arizona. After post-World War I demobilization, the remnant companies of the 10th Cavalry and 25th Infantry had called Fort Huachuca home. For the most part soldiering had come in the form of light training and sports. During this period the black soldiers were numbered in the hundreds. Rarely had a whole regiment been assembled there. But now, in 1941, everything at Fort Huachuca began changing with dazzling

¹ "Oldest Western Fort Turns to Modern Warfare," *The Arizona Daily Star* (Tucson: December 23, 1943).

² Nelson Perry describing the black men who came to Fort Huachuca during WWII, quoted in Maggi M. Morehouse, *Fighting In the Jim Crow Army: Black Men and Women Remember World War II* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000), p. 43.



Figure 3.1 Fort Huachuca, Circa 1929.³

speed. America was in the midst of full-blown mobilization for another World War, and across the nation large, expansive military installations were being built almost overnight. Meanwhile, old posts like Fort Huachuca were doubling and tripling in size and new barracks were literally being built within a matter of hours. Veteran members of the 25th Infantry who were preparing to be the core cadre to train thousands of African Americans, might even have been temporarily lost among Fort Huachuca's new buildings rising in a place that only a few days ago was a familiar, but empty, desert.

And if the 25th veterans were startled by the new buildings going up before their eyes, the thousands of new recruits that disembarked from the railroad over the next few years must have been stunned. Only a few short weeks ago, most had been civilians, recent graduates from midwestern high schools, young farm hands and city laborers. Now they were raw recruits in a strange new environment preparing for what might lead to a lonely death thousands of miles from home. Clarence Gains was one those who stepped off the train in March 1941 and found himself in the 368th Infantry Regiment, and among the first to arrive at the new Fort Huachuca.

³ Finley, *Fort Huachuca Illustrated*, Volume 3(1996):12.

I was drafted in the army in Cleveland, Ohio, on February 18, 1941. We were inducted into Fort Hayes in Columbus, uniformed, and placed upon a train for Fort Huachuca, Arizona. We arrived at Fort Huachuca on March 1st, 1941. We were the first to move into the new barracks which were then called the New Cantonment. . . My first memory of Huachuca is that when we got off the train there, the band from the Twenty-Fifth Infantry was there playing "South of the Border" for us. This was a very large train and all of the men who were going to make up the Three Hundred and Sixty-Eighth Infantry were arriving on March 1st and 2nd. This comprised of all of the men drafted out of what was then called the Fifth Corps, which was made up of Ohio, Indiana, West Virginia, and Kentucky. When we arrived we marched off to these new buildings which had never been occupied. And our first duty was to take our mattresses to a place where we were instructed to stuff them with straw.⁴

Gaines would spend the next year at Fort Huachuca and would rise to the rank of Sergeant before being sent away to Officers' Candidate School. He would have a successful career after the war, which he would credit his military service, including those first few months at Fort Huachuca. For him, Fort Huachuca memories are pleasant including those of the "fine Cadre who taught us well and were nice to us" and the "beautiful sunrises and sunsets..I left the reception center at Columbus [Ohio] feeling rather low with the knowledge that we were to be so far from home when our journey ended. But when I arrived at Fort Huachuca, I remembered being pleased with the camp because it was more beautiful than anything I had ever seen."⁵ Other African Americans though, would not have such cherished memories. Many found the same old prejudice and inequality at Fort Huachuca that they left behind at home.

The mobilization and training of millions of young men and women during WWII was a Herculean task that is widely overlooked today. The challenges facing Army planners, the construction of new and upgrading of older facilities, drafting and assigning men and women, transporting them across a vast nation, training them for an unknown kind of war of unparalleled geography and scale makes the mind boggle. At another level, the shock that these men and women experienced--uprooted from their home and

⁴ Letter from Clarence L. Gaines, July 8, 1971, on file, Fort Huachuca Museum, quoted from James P. Finley "World War II at Huachuca," *Huachuca Illustrated*, Volume 9 (1993):22, 29.

⁵ Robert F. Jefferson, *Making The Men of the 93rd: African American Servicemen in the Years of the Great Depression and the Second World War, 1935-1947* Ph.d. Dissertation (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan, 1995), p. 231.

society and sent to strange new places—was something from which they never fully recovered. The sheer vastness of the mobilization effort left wide room for mistakes, miscalculations and misunderstandings at every level. For everyone involved it was a time of tension, sacrifice and wonder. For African Americans, and those involved in turning them into soldiers, the added challenge of years of prejudicial treatment and inequality made for an even higher level of tension and complexity. In this setting the officers and cadre at Fort Huachuca were given the responsibility of training the only two African American divisions in the war and the most African American troops in one place. All of the personal baggage, preconceived notions, and (in hindsight) inappropriate policies that the Army devised with to deal with the race issue eventually saw their consequence at this heretofore quiet frontier post.

Establishing An African American Utilization Policy⁶

At the end of WWI, the Army began planning for the future use of black personnel and recognized two major concerns. The first was--what was the place of the black soldier in the rapidly shrinking peacetime Army? The second, closely related problem was how would blacks be used in future mobilization? Previous military policies, the perceived record of African American soldiers during WWI, intractable racial prejudice at all levels of society, and pressure from civil rights activists, all served to influence Army policy that, in retrospect, exacerbated the already difficult task of future mobilization and utilization of black manpower. It is within this complex web that Army policy during World War II must be understood, either as the best that the Army could offer given the attitudes prevalent at the time, or as would be judged today--wrong-headed and racist.

In attempting to answer the above questions, the Army unfortunately turned to its immediate past experience in the Great War. This limited perspective ignored the positive contributions of African American soldiers during the 19th century, especially the enduring service of black soldiers at frontier posts like Fort Huachuca. Colonel Charles Ballou, commander of the all-black 92nd Infantry Division in WWI and an

⁶ Portions of the background for this chapter and the next were originally prepared for a study of a black officers' club at Fort Leonard Wood and has modified here for Fort Huachuca. See Steven D. Smith, *A Historic Context Statement for a World War II Era Black Officers' Club at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri*, for the U.S. Army Construction Engineering Research Laboratories and The Legacy Resource Management Program (Columbia, South Carolina: South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, 1998), pp. 9-15.

influential spokesman on the subject, boldly ignored the record of the 24th and 25th Infantry and the 9th and 10th Cavalry stating that the use of African American soldiers during the Civil War and in the western campaigns was "not instructive."⁷ Instead, when the Army decided to set official policy on the future black troop employment, they looked very narrowly to the experiences of white commanding officers in the 92nd--not exclusively, but with much greater scrutiny than the record of other black military units.⁸ Indeed, the testimony of white commanders in the 92nd provided the bulk of both the opinions received by the War Department and the answers to questionnaires sent out by the Army War College. This testimony was overwhelmingly negative, concluding that the 92nd Division was a failure.

True, on the surface the 92nd's combat record pointed directly to such a conclusion; the division's performance in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive and in the Marbache Sector during World War I was uneven at best.⁹ But its failure was not the result of its soldiers' skin color. The 92nd consisted of draftees who never trained as a division in the United States. Some 40% of the men were illiterate and many were drafted despite being physically unfit.¹⁰ In France, the division was given inadequate preparation for trench warfare. Many 92nd units were given only two weeks indoctrination before being thrown into the frontlines, some were given only a few hours, and their initial duties and training had consisted of police duty. Meanwhile, the 92nd's staff officers were being shuffled in and out constantly, eliminating any opportunity to build unit cohesion. When ordered to the front, the 92nd marched without rifle-grenades, wire cutters, and even in some cases without maps. Poorly equipped and led by green, inexperienced officers, it should have been no surprise that the division's combat

⁷ Colonel C.C. Ballou to Assistant Commandant, General Staff College, "Use to be Made of Negroes in the U.S. Military Service," 14 March 1920, in Morris J. MacGregor and Bernard C. Nalty, editors, *Blacks in the United States Armed Forces, Basic Documents, Volume IV, Segregation Entrenched* (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1977), p. 321.

⁸ Ulysses Lee, *The Employment of Negro Troops*, United States Army In World War II, Special Studies, (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, United States Army, 1966), p. 16. This classic study, and the following other works were used in the development of this section: Bernard C. Nalty, *Strength For the Fight* (New York: The Free Press, 1986); Morris J. MacGregor, Jr., *Integration of the Armed Forces 1940-1965* (Washington: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1981); Steven D. Smith and James A. Zeidler, editors, *A Historic Context For the African American Military Experience*, Department of Defense, Legacy Resource Management Program (Champaign, Illinois: Construction Engineering Research Laboratories, 1998).

⁹ Keith Krawczynski, "Chapter 6, World War I," in Smith and Zeidler, editors, *Historic Context*, p. 237.

¹⁰ Lieutenants W.N. Colson and A.B. Nutt, "The Failure of the Ninety-Second Division," *The Messenger*, September (1919):22-25.

performance would fail to meet Army standards. And yet, despite this neglect, some 92nd units earned awards and citations. General John J. Pershing even remarked that the 92nd's record stood "second to none." But 2nd Army Commander General Robert Bullard's comments held greater weight--"Poor Negroes," he wrote in his memoirs, "they are hopelessly inferior."¹¹ Bullard was not alone in his disparagement. Repeatedly, white officers complained that black troops dawdled in combat and showed cowardice.¹²

To a large extent, the Army ignored the 92nd's sister division, the 93rd. This division's performance painted a different picture. During World War I, the 93rd was filled with members of National Guard units from New York, Illinois, Ohio, Maryland, Tennessee, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and the District of Columbia. Only one regiment was filled with draftees. The division lacked support units and in reality fought as individual regiments rather than as a single, coherent division. But the critical difference between the 92nd and the 93rd was that in France the 93rd was put under French Army command. Desperate for manpower, the French Army and people warmly welcomed these black reinforcements. The French reorganized the division along their own designs and provided its black regiments with French equipment. Furthermore, the division was given orientation time and training in trench warfare before being thrown into the frontline. Practically across the board, the regiments of the 93rd performed well, and the 369th and 371st regimental records were simply outstanding. The 369th was on the front lines for 191 days, five days longer than any other regiment in the American Expeditionary Force. They never lost a foot of ground, and essentially bled to death in the trenches before finally being pulled from the front. France awarded the entire unit the Croix de Guerre. The 371st was also awarded the Croix de Guerre, with palm, for their performance. Three officers of the 371st won the French Legion of Honor, 123 men won individual Croix de Guerre medals, and 26 won the Distinguished Service Cross.¹³

¹¹ Pershing quoted in Emmett J. Scott, *Scott's Official History of the American Negro in the World War* (New York: Arno Press, reprint 1969, original 1919), p. 167. Bullard quote from Lee, *Employment*, p. 15. Bullard was a reputed racist and further his memoirs were written to discredit his personal rival, General Charles C. Ballou, commander of the 92nd. See Arthur E. Barbeau and Florette Henri, *The Unknown Soldiers: Black American Troops in World War I* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1974), pp. 139-140.

¹² see Ballou, "Use, "; Lieutenant Colonel Allen J. Greer to Assistant Commandant, General Staff College, "Use to be Made of Negroes in the U.S. Military Service," 13 April 1920, in Morris J. MacGregor and Bernard C. Nalty, editors, *Blacks in the United States Armed Forces*, p. 329; Major General W. H. Hay to Colonel Greer, 13 April 1919, in Morris J. MacGregor and Bernard C. Nalty, editors, *Blacks in the United States Armed Forces*, p. 331.

¹³ Krawczynski, in Smith and Zeidler, editors, *Historic Context*, p. 218.

However, back in post-war America, the 93rd's record was ignored and the 92nd's ineffective record stood as the standard measure of black combat performance.

Who was responsible for the poor performance of black soldiers? Usually that responsibility is laid at the feet of the commander. But in the case of African American soldiers in WWI, the failure was blamed on the junior black officers. Colonel Fred Brown, commanding officer of the 92nd's 368th Battalion, concluded in his "The Inefficiency of Negro Officers," that black officers were cowards. Other white commanders agreed. Black officers were charged with failing to take care of their men. They lacked initiative and were not respected by black enlisted men. Lieutenant Colonel Greer, Chief of Staff of the 92nd Division, asserted, "I do not remember a single patrol report coming from an officer that gave sufficient information to base any plan thereon."¹⁴ In testimony after testimony, white officers complained that black officers were a disaster--regardless of their training as either Regular Army officers or as Officer Candidate School graduates. The evidence for their failure seemed to be bolstered by the improved performance of African American units that replaced its black officers with white. Undoubtedly black officers overall had a sub par record, but racial slander and personal prejudices are clear and unabashed in these reports. One white commander commented that, "The fact that a Negro holds a commission, leaves him still a Negro." Another went so far as to declare that black men never had the benefit of moral training at home and therefore did not know right from wrong.¹⁵

In reviewing the performance of black officers in WWI, white commanders not only ignored their own inadequate training of black soldiers and their own personal prejudices, but also the larger societal inequalities that clearly contributed to a black soldier's individual failure, either as an enlisted man or officer. First, there was the problem of years of inadequate education. Contrary to popular belief, a good soldier needs to have an education, or at the least, know how to read and write. Many drafted blacks were illiterate. Blacks also had been denied skilled labor positions in the civilian world--skills that would have given them the chance to succeed as specialists in the military. They also had been denied leadership opportunities that would have improved their chances to be successful officers. During the war, some 700 black men were chosen to train at the new black officer training school at Fort Des Moines, Iowa. But these men

¹⁴ Hay, "Use," p. 329.

¹⁵ Hay, "Use," p. 332; Brigadier General W.P. Jackson to Colonel Allen J. Greer, 14 April 1919, in Morris J. MacGregor and Bernard C. Nalty, editors, *Blacks in the United States Armed Forces*, p. 339.

were not chosen from the best candidates available--only 12 per cent were rated as above average. Once graduated, they were transferred to units irrespective of the special training they had received; for example, infantry officers were transferred to field artillery units. Upon entering a command new black officers found white officers reluctant to serve with them and white enlisted men were often openly contemptuous of their authority. Even with experience they were denied promotion and opportunities to build leadership skills. The bottom line during World War I was that Army commanders did not want black officers, but pressure from the African American community demanded the opportunity for blacks to serve at all levels. So black officers were commissioned with no sincere effort made to integrate them into the officer corps. Reluctantly, the Army eventually commissioned some 1,353 black officers to serve during the Word War I.¹⁶

In summary, the conclusions drawn from WWI were that the black soldier was an inferior soldier who required more intensive training than the white recruit. Blacks were not disposed towards aggressive combat, but if led by white officers, they could be useful in labor units and at unskilled jobs. The African American officer was a decided failure.

With these conclusions drawn and seemingly proven by WWI experiences, post WWI planning for the future use of blacks in the military put Army planners and policy makers in a complex bind. Consider for example the immediate problem of drastically downsizing the Army across the board. Congress had created the four all-black regiments after the Civil War and these regiments could not be disbanded. But with four black regiments swelling the post war ranks, it left the service with the very real and distasteful possibility of having a larger number of African Americans than whites in its post-war Army. The problem was exacerbated by the enthusiastic desire of blacks to reenlist and the close scrutiny of the black press. One quick solution to the possibility of a disproportionate number of blacks in the Army was to immediately and severely curtail black enlistment. Meanwhile the Army began reducing the all-black regiments to mere token size. As we have seen, during the 1920s, the once-proud all black regiments barely survived. The 10th was scattered as housekeeping units, and the 25th held on at Fort Huachuca but with many of its companies disbanded. When the Army Air Corps was

¹⁶ William H. Hastie, "Negro Officers in Two World Wars," *Journal of Negro Education* 12 (1943):312-323.

formed in 1931, blacks were excluded from joining. Adding to this insult, precious vacant personnel slots in the 10th Cavalry were allotted to the expanding air arm.¹⁷

The black soldier beyond Fort Huachuca became a rare sight during the 1930s (Figure 3.2). Furthermore, only at Fort Huachuca were any duties being given to African American soldiers that approached military training.¹⁸ Black enlistment was, for all practical purposes, limited to those all-black National Guard units in New York, Massachusetts, Maryland, Illinois, New Jersey, and the District of Columbia. For a black man to enter the Regular Army, he had to find an installation with a vacancy, apply to the base commander, and if accepted, get to the post at his own expense. Such opportunities were sparse. Further, these conditions would have been difficult in Depression-weary America for anyone, and for blacks they were a formidable challenge. The result was that by 1930, the combined black complement in the Regular Army and Army National Guard was only two percent of the total Army population. Thus, as we have seen, the men at Fort Huachuca in the 25th Infantry represented a significant portion of the black soldiers in America, and the largest concentration of African Americans in the regular army in any one place. In addition, throughout this period, the black officer corps was virtually invisible. In 1940, there were less than 10 active black Regular Army officers, around 300 Reserve officers, and around 200 black men commissioned in National Guard units.¹⁹ This figure included line officers of all ranks, medical officers, and chaplains.

At the end of the 1930s and as war approached, Army planners still struggled with the solution to the black mobilization problem. Few of the societal problems that had been at the heart of the problem with black soldier performance had been solved between World War I and 1940. Racial attitudes were the same. Educational and career opportunities had not changed. Thus when mobilization of African Americans came up again, the same illiteracy problems, lack of skills and leadership opportunities plagued the manpower pool from which the Army would draw its African American soldiers for World War II. Not surprisingly, the same issues, identical results, and similar conclusions would be drawn as part of the reason for the 92nd's World War II failures. As will be seen, many of those conclusions came as a result of an analysis of the division's training and experiences at Fort Huachuca.

¹⁷ Nalty, *Strength*, pp. 128-129.

¹⁸ Gerald W. Patton, *War and Race, The Black Officer in the American Military, 1915-1941* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1981), pp. 160-161.

¹⁹ Hastie, "Negro Officers," pp. 318-319.

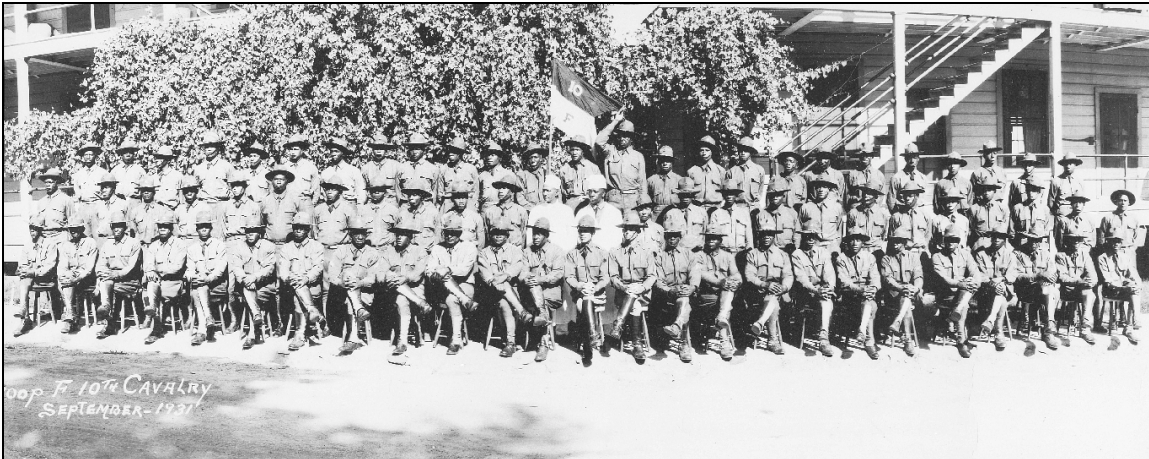


Figure 3.2 10th Cavalry, Circa 1931.²⁰

Back in 1922, after concluding that black soldier performance was below par, the War Department's Operations and Training Section developed a plan for black mobilization, and although it was modified and amended more than once, its fundamentals stood until 1938--and even then influenced the 1940 final pre-plan as mobilization began. Amazingly, given the discouraging reports by WWI commanders, the public attitudes prevalent at the time, and the treatment of blacks over the coming 20 years, Army policy makers began their 1922 plan with an enlightened, realistic perspective on the future use of blacks in the military. In precise clear language, the War Department addressed the military realities:

Briefly, these [military realities] are: that the Negro is a citizen of the United States, entitled to all of the rights of citizenship and subject to all of the obligations of citizenship; that the Negro constitutes an appreciable part of our military manhood; that while not the best military material, he is by no means the worst; that no plan of mobilization for the maximum effort can afford to ignore such a fraction of the manhood, especially in these times when war makes demands upon the physical defectives and the women; and finally, that in a democracy such as ours political and economic conditions must be considered, and that decision must rest upon these two considerations.²¹

²⁰ Photograph Courtesy Fort Huachuca Museum.

²¹ Lee, *Employment*, pp. 32-33.

The 1922 plan concluded that blacks soldiers should operate in smaller units than the divisions used in WWI. Generally, according to the perceived wisdom of that time, blacks worked well in regiments or smaller units, brigaded or otherwise attached to a white unit. Blacks would definitely have to be used in combat. The plan stated that as far as combat material went, about half the blacks in WWI were effective. The plan recognized that it also had to filter through white draftees to find suitable combat material. Some frank statements and recommendations concerning black officers were made also. Amazingly, it openly admitted that black officers performed well under the French. Further, it asserted that black soldiers were best led by white officers, but that qualified black officers could be found, and that African Americans could not be expected to serve and do their best if they were not offered the incentive of promotion within the officer corps. The solution to the officer problem was to hold black candidate officers to the same standard as the Army held white candidates and let the best rise to the top.

As noted, the Army revised, changed and debated different mobilization plans throughout the period between 1922 and the summer of 1940 when the great pre-war expansion began. Major revisions came in 1937 and again in 1940, the majority of which concerned the proportion of blacks to whites in various unit types. Historian Ulysses Lee has summarized these changes and the general policies that were in effect on the eve of WWII.²² First, blacks would be represented in the Army in equal proportion to their proportion of the total military age manpower available. It was suggested that they be mobilized early to allow their practically nonexistent pre-war numbers to grow to nine-plus percent of Army manpower. Second, blacks would serve in all service and combat units for which they could qualify. Third, blacks would be segregated into all-black units,

²² For the purposes of brevity, this section omits the complex and fiery political debate regarding black participation in the impending war. Readers should be aware that black leaders, black activists and the black press demanded equal representation in all service arms and full integration. The 1940 NAACP annual conference focused much attention on the armed forces and the coming war. Letters swamped the War Department with questions about the planned mobilization. Slowly, such efforts began influencing war policies although not to the full extent desired. President Roosevelt, in anticipation of the upcoming election, issued a series of press releases assuring black voters that there would be proportionate opportunities in the armed forces. He also issued an Executive Order banning racial discrimination in government employment at defense plants. In other efforts to assuage black voters, famous black Army officer Benjamin O. Davis was promoted to Brigadier General and black leader William H. Hastie was selected as a civilian advisor to the Secretary of War. Throughout the war, black leaders watched and questioned the military's treatment of black men and women. Meanwhile the black press began calling for a "Double V" campaign, meaning a victory over the fascists abroad and Jim Crow at home. These efforts would eventually result in the integration of the armed services. For detailed treatments of this complex issue see the above citations, and A. Russell Buchanan, *Black Americans in World War II* (Santa Barbara, California: Clio Books, 1977).

and attached to larger white units. Fourth, black soldiers would be trained, housed and provided for in the same manner as whites (but separate from whites). Finally, the black officer problem was resolved as follows: 1) officers for black units could be black or white; 2) black officer candidates would be held to the same qualification standards as whites; 3) black officers would only serve in black units (i.e., command only black troops); and 4) black officers would be confined to designated units, and at first this would consist of Reserve, National Guard and service units.²³

In September 1940, the Selective Training and Service Act was enacted and the great Army expansion began in response to world war. The act boldly forbade discrimination on account of race or color in the selection of volunteers and draftees. By December 1942, the number of blacks enlisted in the Army had increased from a 1939 level of 3,640 men to 467,883.²⁴ This trend continued throughout the war. Total African American representation in the military climbed as high as 701,678 in September 1944 and as high a total percentage as 8.81% in December 1945. Enlisted personnel reached the 10.29% figure that same month.²⁵

But as the expansion continued, the societal and institutional problems inherent in segregation and seen in WWI, once again became apparent. Again, there was the problem of unqualified black volunteers and draftees (either as a result of low scores on intelligence tests or because of physical limitations) being selected simply to fill quotas. Again, racial intolerance and resistance weakened the effectiveness of the Army's training programs. As will be clearly demonstrated at Fort Huachuca, separate but equal policies created quota difficulties, facility problems, and training problems regarding black soldiers. During the later years, from 1943 onward, as more and more black units were converted into service units and opportunities for advancement did not appear, black soldier and officer morale sagged as it had during WWI. Racial incidents on and off posts increased as a result of these tense circumstances. Possibly, some positive advances were being made simply by the fact that whites and blacks who had never worked together were being forced together to win a war. Conflict was inevitable, but so was a slow, growing acceptance, or at least exposure to other races, which must have affected and increased tolerance. Combat, the great equalizer, would prove again to a large number of Americans that blacks were like whites--some brave, some not so brave. But

²³ Lee, *Employment*, p. 50.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 415.

both bled red, and with proper training, both could soldier. There was, of course, still a long way to go at the end of WWII. At Fort Huachuca, where the two all-black divisions would train, there was a great learning curve to overcome.

Fort Huachuca and Mobilization of the Army Ground Forces

As plans for mobilization finalized in the months leading toward Pearl Harbor and America's entry into the war, Army planners had to solve the problem of where to train African Americans. Segregation policies created housing problems for African American soldiers at military posts cross the nation. Army policy dictated that African American units would be no larger than Brigades (two regiments or more). An exception had been made for Fort Huachuca.²⁶ But at the same time units had to be housed together for training and to maintain unit cohesion. Existing pre-war installation housing had been built with this in mind. Where new black units did not correspond in size and complexity to match the existing housing and recreation facilities available, the result would either be overcrowding, or underutilized space. Often, newly formed black units had to make do with make-shift facilities or tents until appropriate housing was built.

Another problem the Army had to solve or at least deal with was local community attitudes toward an influx of African Americans arriving in their neighborhoods. Army policy makers worried about the possibility that the black population at any given installation might reach a number higher than the total white population in the surrounding region. It was commonly believed that any large body of African Americans in one place would spell trouble. When black troops began showing up at military installations across the country, complaints poured into the Pentagon to the point that General George Marshall asked his staff to study the planned troop disposition with an eye toward redistribution so that blacks would be posted only to installations with a large black civilian population nearby. But when the study was completed in January 1942, his staff advised that further shifting of black troops would serve no useful purpose (apparently they had already studied the idea). The study reinforced the idea that only at Fort Huachuca should there be any African American unit larger than a brigade.

²⁶ Lee, *Employment*, p. 97-99.

Ulysses Lee summed up the challenges of housing African Americans during World War II:

Purely military considerations played but small part in determining the location of Negro troops in the early period of mobilization. The main considerations were: availability of housing and facilities on the post concerned; proportions of white and Negro troops at the post; proximity to civilian centers of Negro population with good recreational facilities that could absorb sizable numbers of Negroes on pass; and the attitude of the nearby civilian community to the presence of Negro troops.²⁷

Under these narrow policies it is easy to see why Fort Huachuca was chosen to house division-sized units composed solely of African Americans. Fort Huachuca had housed African American soldiers since 1892. It had plenty of open space for new segregated facilities. It had on hand a trained African American cadre in the form of the 25th Infantry. It had a small African American community, too small to accommodate the numbers of troops that would train there, but at least the beginnings of a civilian black community. Importantly, civilians in the nearby towns at least had some familiarity with an African American in uniform. It was also isolated. Out on the southern Arizona plains, there would be fewer whites to complain about large numbers of African Americans nearby.

The latter may have been seen as both a blessing and a curse for the Army. In the War Department's thinking, its isolation would hopefully not produce the volume of complaints that the War Department was getting from other white communities where black troops were stationed. It might also reduce the possibility of racial violence. On the other hand, the sheer number of African American soldiers would pose quite a problem. African Americans soldiers would have to blow-off steam somewhere while off-duty, and that meant not only problems for the few tiny regional villages, but also transportation problems for the fort. As will be seen, these problems became critical during the 92nd Division's training.

Regardless, Fort Huachuca became the installation that would have the responsibility of training the largest concentration of African American soldiers in World War II. Thousands of African American men and women would train there throughout

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

the war, the two largest units being the 92nd and 93rd. In addition to these large units, numerous smaller units transferred in and out as the war progressed. It is near impossible to know all of these units, many of which might have been in existence for only a few months. But as an example, during Brigadier General Benjamin O. Davis's Inspection in the summer of 1943, the following black units were at Fort Huachuca besides the two divisions: 336th Quartermaster Service Battalion; 560th Quartermaster Service Battalion; Detachment Quartermaster Corps; 310th Quartermaster Railhead Company; 406th Ordnance MM Company; 3417th Ordnance MAM Company; Ordnance Detachment SCU 1922; HQ and HQ Detachment, 70th Ordnance Battalion; 734th Military Police Battalion; 750th Military Police Battalion; Detachment, CMP SCU 1922; Detachment, Medical Department; Medical Department (Veterinary Service); 714th Medical Sanitary Company; 268th Station Hospital; 29th Special Service Company; 17th Special Service Company; 37th Special Service Company; Post HQ Detachment (DEML) 1922d SCU; Engineer Detachments, SCU 1922; WAC Section, SCU 1922.²⁸

The explosion of pre-war construction at Fort Huachuca began in late 1940 (Figure 3.3 and 3.4). By February 1941, 220 new buildings had been built. Construction accelerated thereafter so that by June, some 1,400 buildings were seen east of the old cantonment area. Over nine million board feet of lumber was used in building the new fort. Over the next few years, the post would grow in size to accommodate on average some 25,000 people, but with a peak population in 1944 of 42,500. Feeding these troops alone was a monstrous undertaking, the mess halls served some ten tons of turkey at one Thanksgiving. To understand the fort's impact on southern Arizona, the 93rd Division's post newspaper had the second largest circulation in the entire state, issuing 20,000 copies a week. The post itself was the third largest city in the state. Fort Huachuca would not only train African American divisions but also serve as a supply distribution center for all of Arizona's military units. The statistics concerning the building program are staggering, but even more impressive is that such posts were springing up all over the nation--Forts Polk, Leonard Wood, Bragg, Stewart, Benning, Campbell and Knox are just a few of the Army posts that were conceived or expanded during this mobilization, and the rapidity with which these posts were built is beyond comprehension. Between 1939 and 1946 some 20.2 billion dollars were spent for construction of military facilities.²⁹

²⁸ Brigadier General Benjamin O. Davis, "Special Inspection of Colored Troops at Fort Huachuca, Arizona, August 3, 1943, RG 107, Office of the Assistant Secretary of War, Civilian Aide to the Secretary, Box 107 (College Park, Maryland: National Archives II).

²⁹ John S. Garner, *World War II Temporary Military Buildings* (Champaign, Illinois: U.S. Army Construction Engineering Research Center, 1993), p. 11.

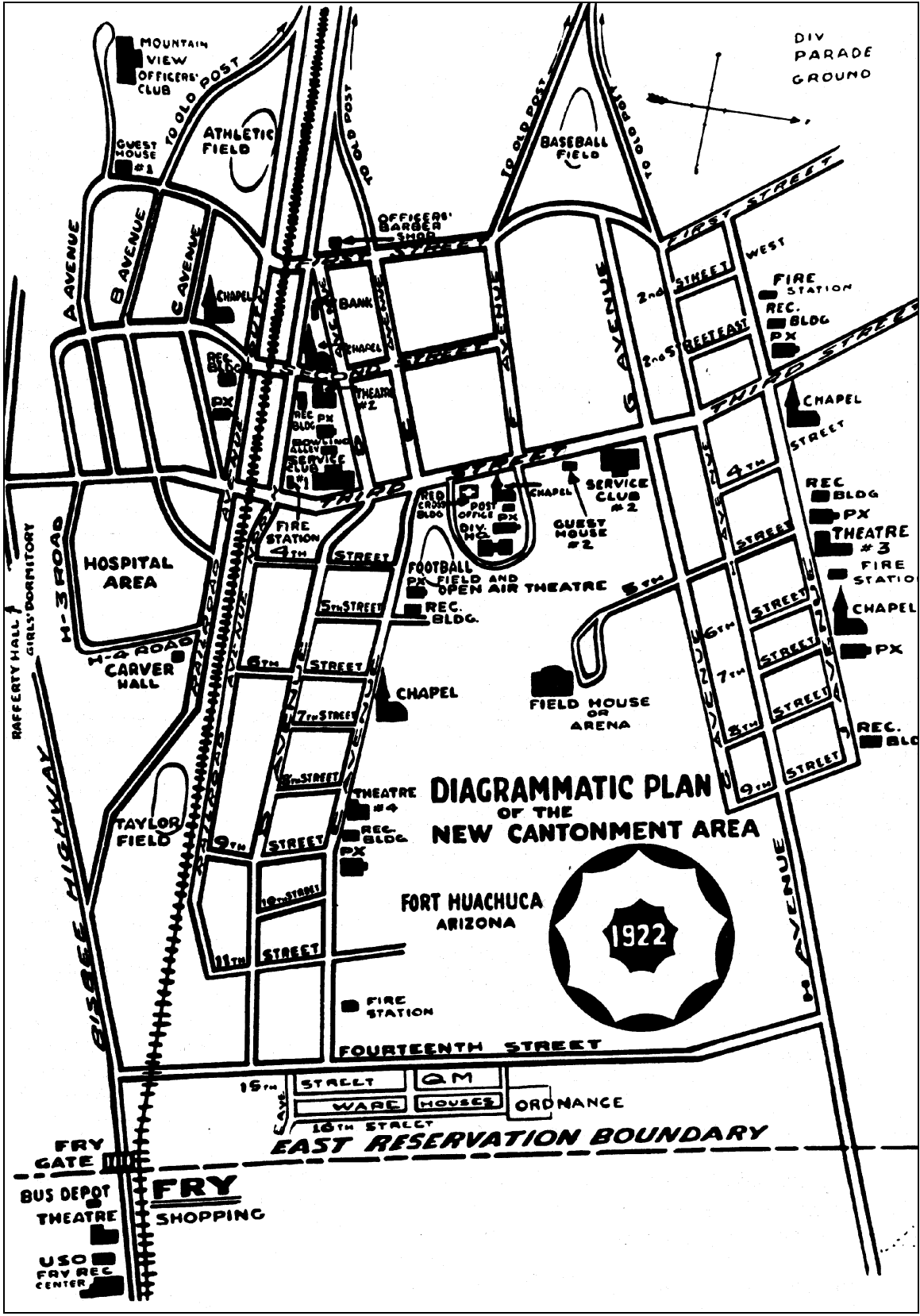


Figure 3.3 Segregated New Cantonment at Fort Huachuca.

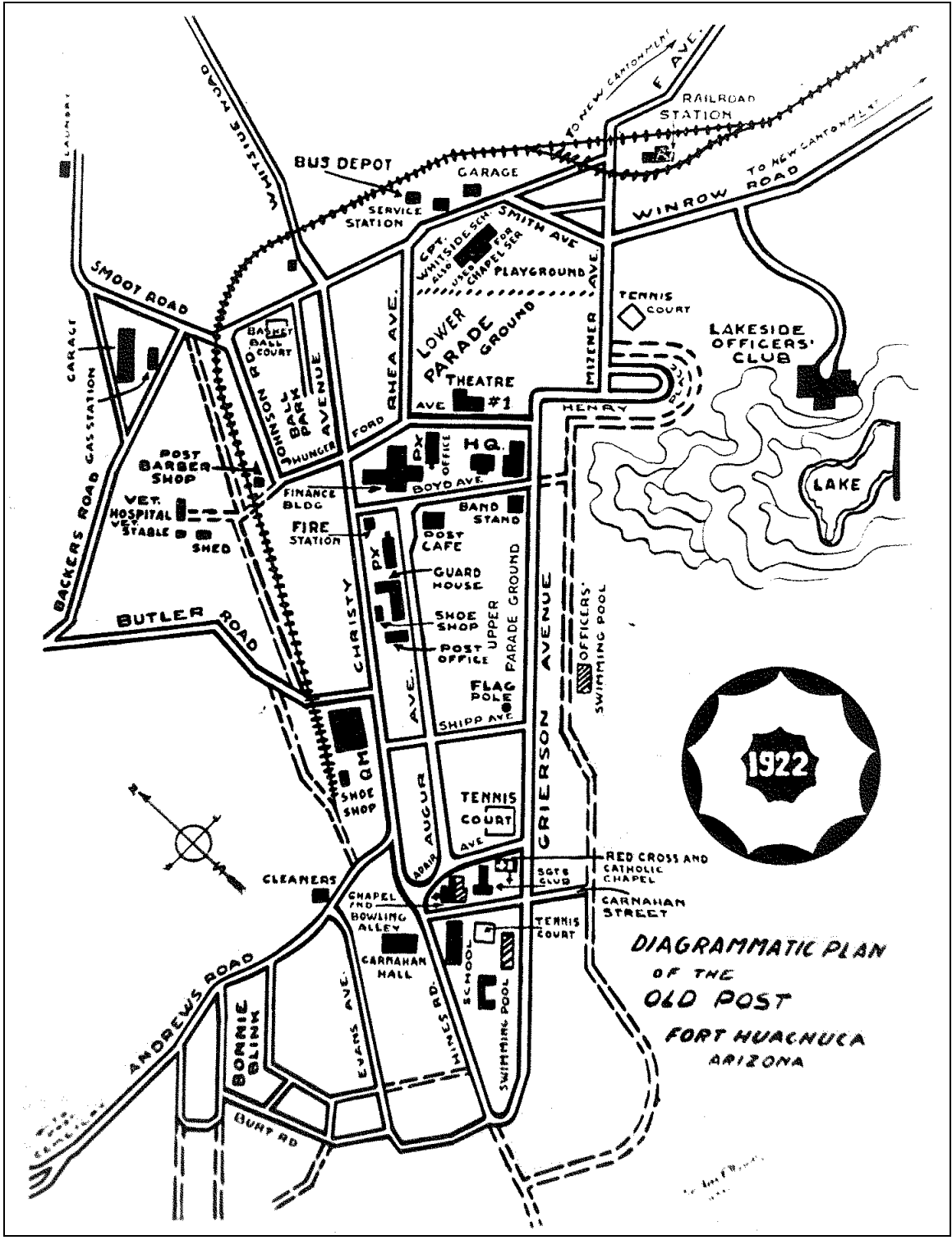


Figure 3.4 Map of Old Post With WWII Additions.³⁰

³⁰ Both WWII maps courtesy Fort Huachuca Museum. The “1922” is a unit designator not the map date.

Exactly how much of this was spent at Fort Huachuca is not known, but by January 1941 some six million dollars was already at work building the cantonment for the 368th Infantry, and when it was decided that a full division would train there, another 23 million dollars were spent to construct 1,242 buildings for housing, 58 facilities (clubs, recreational buildings, post office, churches, guest houses, headquarters', guard houses, hospitals) and 26 storage buildings on 75,000 acres of land. To support this city on the desert, over 1,400 civilians were employed.³¹

Because Fort Huachuca would house a division-sized African American unit, and segregation was the official policy, all facilities were built in duplicate. In fact, "At Fort Huachuca, . . . duplicate facilities were the rule; two complete station hospitals, one with a full white and the other with a full Negro staff; two sets of civilian quarters; a pair of officers' clubs, and so forth." The African American hospital was the only hospital in the Army commanded and staffed by African Americans. With its 946 beds it was also the largest African American hospital in the United States, the second largest in St. Louis had only 738 beds. There were also three dental facilities (42 chairs).³²

Fort Huachuca's reservation also expanded in size to some 117 square miles, adding a varied terrain and climate for training. An article in 1943 describes Fort Huachuca's training assets:

There are water courses where engineers may practice bridge building, but the artificial lake near the stadium is used for practice with pontoon bridges and inflated rafts. There are mesquite thickets that do very well as substitutes for jungles. There are miles of open semi-desert where troops learn to "freeze" beside yuccas when enemy planes are overhead, where cannon, trucks, and even foxholes offer special camouflage problems. Canyons and wooded mountain sides are training ground for other tactical lessons. And those "foot-slogging soldiers," as Gen. Dwight Eisenhower calls the infantry helping win this war, must

³¹ Matt C. Bischoff, *Determination of Eligibility and Historical Documentation for Building 66050, Performing Arts Theater, Fort Huachuca, Arizona* (Tucson, Arizona: Statistical Research, Inc., Technical Report 98-26, 1988), pp. 18, 22-27; *The Bisbee Daily Review*, January 24, 1941 and May 3, 1941, *The Apache Sentinel*, March 9, 1945, quoted in Finley, "WWII at Fort Huachuca," pp. 14-29; "Blue Helmet 2nd Largest in Arizona," *93rd Blue Helmet*, Friday, October 2, 1942.

³² Smith, *Fort Huachuca*, pp. 299-301; *The Arizona Daily Star*, December 23, 1943. Lee, *The Employment of Negro Troops*, p. 315.

know how to take care of themselves in any country from the Arctic to the tropics.³³

Even this was not enough, and when large units needed to practice maneuvering, private lands were sought. Cattlemen in the area became concerned with the Army's requests for private lands as they were in full beef production for the war effort and the maneuvers caused damage to their grazing lands. The War Department worked with the cattlemen to alleviate their fears.

If training the only two African American divisions for WWII was not enough responsibility for one post, the fort also took on other duties. The fort had throughout its history acted in some capacity as the logistical base for camps and other forts in Arizona. Now it became the central distribution center for food, equipment, and rations, and provided laundry service for some 30,000 soldiers and airmen stationed at various posts and camps in the state.³⁴

In charge of the post was Colonel Edwin N. Hardy (Figure 3.5). Colonel Hardy's name melts into obscurity when put up against the combat officers of WWII, but what he accomplished under wartime conditions and stress should be better recognized. The Colonel was a long time career soldier, having trained cavalry, infantry, and artillery units during WWI. He had also been a part of the campaign against Pancho Villa. Colonel Hardy would gain a reputation among the African Americans as being a fair man when it came to racial incidents. A man ahead of his time, he was proud of the effort he made to work on the problems of commanding African American troops. "I have the privilege," he once noted, "of helping to build the largest military Negro unit in the world. The American people are going to be proud of the war record of this outfit. Furthermore, the by-products of our work here now will find constructive expression during the reconstruction period after the war." The *Bisbee Daily Review* lauded his efforts with black troops exclaiming: "Colonel Hardy's greatest accomplishment at Fort Huachuca was his ability to coordinate the efforts of men of the colored race with those soldiers and civilians of the white race. His problem was greater than that of any post commander; he met it with intelligence, tolerance, sympathy, and understanding." The evidence is clear that he worked hard at Fort Huachuca's racial problems and also to establish recreational

³³ Bernice Cosulich, "Oldest Western Fort Turns to Modern Warfare," *The Arizona Daily Star*, Tucson, December 23, 1943.

³⁴ Finley, "WWII at Fort Huachuca," p. 13.

facilities for the large numbers of black troops. In at least one instance, he incurred the wrath of General Edwin Almond, the 92nd Commander, for attempting to ease racial tensions within the 92nd officer corps. Hardy remained as commander until July 17, 1945 when he retired. At his death in 1963, he was buried on post.³⁵



Figure 3.5 Colonel Hardy With Musical Director, Captain Joseph Jordan.³⁶

The 93rd Infantry Division

The first wave of new recruits arrived as early as November 1940, and the men were forced to sleep in old tents from the Arizona National Guard. But the real activity began on March 1, 1941. There to meet 1,600 selective service men as they got off the

³⁵ Finley, "WWII at Fort Huachuca," pp. 140-141; Smith, *Fort Huachuca*, p. 25.

³⁶ Photo Courtesy Fort Huachuca Museum.

train were 210 veterans of the 25th Infantry. The rest of the 25th, some 80 percent of the regiment, had already been scattered across the country to other posts to serve as cadre elsewhere. As had happened during WWI, once again Fort

Huachuca's African American veterans became the central core of experience around which the Army would train African Americans enlisted men for world war.³⁷ Unfortunately for the unit, this meant that the veterans of the 25th Infantry never had the opportunity to engage in combat as part of their old unit. When the 25th was shipped overseas, it was full of new recruits and was a veteran unit in name only. Those remaining behind to train the new recruits were among the best. As George Looney, a 25th veteran, noted: "These men [the veteran unit] were regulars, they were soldiers, they knew their jobs, and they were good."³⁸ Staff Sergeant Bill Stevens added, "They were professionals, well-trained and disciplined. They had no respect for officers, black or white, unless they were professionals, meaning from West Point or a military academy of some repute. Even officers from these academies got little respect if they did not measure up. Some of these men forming this cadre had been on the best rifle teams in the country, and the officers they worked with treated them with respect."³⁹ For the Army, that translated into the necessity of spreading their unique talents to every installation where African Americans would train and perhaps diluting that pool of experience that might have helped greatly in the training of African Americans at Fort Huachuca.

The new inductees from Kentucky, Indiana, Ohio, West Virginia, Maryland, and Virginia, were formed immediately into the reactivated 368th Infantry as the beginnings of the 93rd Division (Figure 3.6). Although they were unused to soldiering, these early inductees were a tough bunch. They were a diverse group; some from the rural mid-west, some young city-boys, others hardened men of the eastern coal mines. As George Looney related, "The young men who came to us at that time were predominately from the coal fields of Ohio and West Virginia. These were some rough troops."⁴⁰ The unit was sent to guard Boulder Dam after training but returned to Fort Huachuca during the spring of 1942 to assist in the reactivation of the 93rd.

³⁷ Finley, "WWII at Fort Huachuca," p. 22.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

³⁹ Staff Sergeant Bill Stevens quoted in, Mary Penick Motley, editor, *The Invisible Soldier, The Experience of the Black Soldier, World War II* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1975), pp. 74-75.

⁴⁰ Looney interview in, Mary Penick Motley, *The Invisible Soldier*, p. 82.



Figure 3.6 Probable Staged Photograph of Two 93rd Troopers Getting Acquainted With the Desert.⁴¹

Between April and May some 6,000 African American men detained at Fort Huachuca's siding.⁴² Eventually, some 60 percent of the division would be made up of draftees or fillers, and only 26 percent volunteers. These men were northerners from Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin and southerners from Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas.⁴³ They filled out the rest of the 368th, the entire 369th Infantry Regiment, 593rd, 594th, 596th Field Artillery Battalions, the 25th Infantry, and service units consisting of the 318th Combat Engineers, 714th Medical Sanitation Company, 93rd Division Signal Company, The Reconnaissance Cavalry Troop (Mech), the 318th Medical, the 646th Tank Destroyers, and a Station Hospital--all part of the 93rd Infantry Division.⁴⁴ They chose as their shoulder patch the blue helmet, harking back to the division's WWI days with the French. While training they were led first by Major General Charles P. Hall, then Brigadier General Fred W. Miller. But it would be Major General Raymond G. Lehman who would lead them overseas.

After basic training at Fort Huachuca, the 93rd headed east by train to Louisiana to be a part of the 3rd Army maneuvers in April 1943. For six weeks they engaged the

⁴¹ Photograph Courtesy Fort Huachuca Museum.

⁴² Robert F. Jefferson, "African Americans in the U.S. Army During World War II," in Smith and Zeidler, *Historic Context*, p. 229.

⁴³ Robert F. Jefferson, *Making The Men*, p. 226-227.

⁴⁴ Finley, "WWII at Fort Huachuca," p. 45.

85th Division, a Mississippi Division, in mock combat amid the rain-soaked swamps along the Louisiana-Texas border. While there, suffering snakes and chiggers, the men performed well and two even earned medals for bravery during training accidents. Black newspaper, the *Chicago Defender*, reported "there is a healthy race consciousness among the men of the 93rd. They know well the histories of their units and are determined to uphold their prestige in World War II."⁴⁵

From hot sultry Louisiana they moved to the hot arid California-Arizona border in July of 1943, and participated in the IV Corps maneuvers at the Desert Training Center. With General George S. Patton in charge of training, the center was devoid of any amenities like electricity or running water that might allow their attention to wander. As far as the black soldiers were concerned, they might as well have concentrated on training anyway, as the towns around the training area were off-limits to them.⁴⁶ This they endured for six months until Inspector General Major General Virgil L. Peterson declared them combat ready. In December of that same year, the men found themselves aboard troopships bound for the South Pacific ready to prove their mettle.⁴⁷

Eventually they did, but not as the 93rd. The unit was split up upon arrival in the Pacific Islands. The 25th Division Headquarters, Field Artillery, Medical and Service Battalions disembarked at Guadalcanal. The 368th, 594th, and attached medical units arrived at Banika in the Russell Islands. The 369th, 595th and detachments settled in at New Georgia. At Guadalcanal, the 25th was immediately assigned the dock duty. In fact, all of the 93rd started their overseas duties as stevedores. Already sensitive to racial slights, the men saw this assignment as another form of discrimination. Veteran Bill Stevens sarcastically noted, "They were put to work unloading ships under the guise of keeping them physically fit. If totin' that barge and liftin' that bale was a physical fitness program, the 93rd and 24th should have been in superb physical condition..."⁴⁸ Eventually the 25th, a reinforced combat team with the 24th Infantry, underwent a week of jungle training and then their time to prove General Peterson right was at hand. On Bougainville, they were split up again into battalions and assigned to white regiments within the Americal Division. Here the test was given, and in fact that was exactly what it was. The Japanese forces had already been defeated in an earlier battle. Higher

⁴⁵ Jefferson, *Making of the Men*, p. 279.

⁴⁶ Walter Green Interview in Motley, *Invisible Soldier*, p. 90.

⁴⁷ Jefferson, "African American in the U.S. Army," in Smith and Zeidler, *Historic Context*, p. 232.

⁴⁸ Nalty, *Strength*, pp. 169-171; Stevens Interview in Motley, *The Invisible Soldier*, p. 76.

command decided to use the mopping up operations on the island as the "test case" for black soldiers. As anyone familiar with the Pacific campaign knows, however, mopping up in the jungle against the Japanese was no cake walk. The units of the 25th were fed into the lines slowly to see how they performed. The 25th first saw combat patrolling along the Numa-Numa Trail and the Laruma River where they were under constant fire. "I was combat patrol leader," noted Walter Green, " We went on patrol every day, at least the lieutenants went out every day with different men. . . .We were in the combat situation of these patrols for about two months, every day, seven days a week."⁴⁹ Unfortunately, in one skirmish involving the inexperienced and unprepared Company K of the 3rd Battalion, the unit lost cohesion and panicked. Later on New Georgia, the 368th and 369th participated in security patrols. Late in the war the 93rd was put to garrison duties on various islands, processing Japanese prisoners. Occasionally, this led to rounding up Japanese who refused to surrender including Colonel Kisou Ouchi, one of the highest ranking Japanese officers to be captured during the war.⁵⁰ But, despite the division's overall good performance throughout the war, in which one man earned a bronze star another a silver star, it was the panicked retreat of the green Company K that was remembered, tarnishing the reputation of the 93rd.⁵¹

The 92nd Division

The 92nd Division's fate was similar to the 93rd's, only the men of this division met their destiny in Italy rather than in the Pacific. While the 93rd occupied Fort Huachuca, the 92nd's regiments formed separately in installations across the Eastern United States. Activated in October 1942, the division's 365th Infantry and 597th Field Artillery were established at Camp Atterbury, Indiana. The 370th Infantry and 598th Field Artillery were activated at Camp Breckinridge, Kentucky. At Camp Robinson, Arkansas, the 371st Infantry and 599th Field Artillery were organized. Finally, the division's Headquarters and support units like the Headquarters Special Troops, Military Police, 792nd Ordnance Company, 92nd Signal Company, 92nd Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop, 92nd Division Artillery, the band, 600th Field Artillery Battalion, 317th Engineer Battalion, 317th Medical Battalion, and 317th Quartermaster Battalion, all formed at Fort

⁴⁹ Walter Green Interview in Motley, *Invisible Soldier*, p. 91.

⁵⁰ Nalty, *Strength for the Fight*, p. 171.

⁵¹ Harry A. Gailey, *Bougainville, 1943-1945, The Forgotten Campaign* (Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press, 1991), pp. 169-183.

McClellan, Alabama.⁵² At each of these scattered locations, the division's various regiments and other units received basic training. When the 93rd left Fort Huachuca to participate in the Louisiana Maneuvers, the 92nd moved in.

Arriving from various points throughout April 1943, the 92nd division was finally assembled at Fort Huachuca in May. There to meet them was Major General M. Edward Almond, the division's commander, and 760 officers and 1,418 enlisted men of the 93rd acting as cadre.⁵³ General Almond had been Assistant Commander of the 93rd while it was at Fort Huachuca and was now responsible for turning the 92nd into a "first class battlefield unit." Ultimately, the 92nd's performance would be judged poor in Italy; and historians and veterans today lay the blame squarely at General Almond's feet.⁵⁴ In weighing the evidence there seems much to that accusation. For instance, he maintained even late in his life that "the undependability of the average soldier to operate to his maximum capability, compared to his lassitude toward his performing a task assigned. [.] . . the general tendency of the Negro soldier is to avoid as much as possible."⁵⁵ Almond was a southerner and it was the consensus among those higher up in the War Department that southerners better understood the African American. Almond's assistant was Brigadier General John E. Wood, with Brigadier General William H. Coburn, division Artillery Commander. All three would go overseas and remain with the division throughout the war. The division chose the buffalo as their unit symbol and carried on the name "Buffalo Soldiers."⁵⁶

It would appear that the 92nd got off to a bad start and never overcame its initial troubles. Besides the mistaken idea that southerners would better lead black soldiers, the unit was immediately prejudged according to its undeserved WWI reputation. It was widely expected to fail again. This attitude quickly spread to the men and rumors constantly floated through the training ranks that they were wasting their time since they

⁵² Finley, "Fort Huachuca in World War II," p. 56; Paul Goodman, "A Fragment of Victory, In Italy During World War II, 1942-43" (Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania: Army War College. U.S. Military History Institute, 1952), p. 1.

⁵³ "October 1942-June 1945, With the 92nd Infantry Division," Historical Committee, 92nd Infantry Division (Fort Huachuca: copy on file, Fort Huachuca Museum, n.d.), p. 5.

⁵⁴ For a list of such historians and discussion see, Dale E. Wilson, "Recipe for Failure: Major General Edward M. Almond and Preparation of the U.S. 92nd Infantry Division for Combat in World War II," *Journal of Military History* July(1992)56:473-488.

⁵⁵ "Conversations Between Lieutenant General Edward M. Almond and Captain Thomas G. Ferguson," (Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania: Senior Officers Debriefing Program, U.S. Army Military History Institute, 25 March 1975), p. 40, also see website: carlisle-www.army.mil/amhi, Digital Documents.

⁵⁶ Finley, "Fort Huachuca in World War II," p. 56.

would never be committed to combat. This rumor persisted and became such an irritation to General Almond that he called an officers' meeting to squelch the rumors.⁵⁷ But the idea had already been planted in the men's minds, and the rumor was only laid to rest when they moved into the front lines in Italy. Throughout training the notion never died, making it difficult to inspire the men to do more than was necessary or take training seriously.

Meanwhile, rumors were not the only strike against the unit. Whether or not they were just going through the motions or were training for real, no one had any doubt that the quality of the men, the raw material to weld the unit, was less than satisfactory. The Army routinely gave all soldiers entering service a standardized test called the Army General Classification Test to determine where they could best serve. The exam consisted of 150 multiple choice questions covering math, block counting, vocabulary, synonyms and antonyms. Based on this test the men were classified from I through V, Class I being the highest. Overall within a group of men the classes were expected to fall as follows: Class I (7%), Class II (24%), Class III (38%), Class IV (24%), and Class V (7%). For the 92nd no man scored in Class I, 10 % were placed in Class II, 15% in Class III, 41 % in Class IV, and 21% fell in Class V. Some 13 % did not receive a score at all because of illiteracy. For the record, the 93rd's were little better, with less than 1% in Class I, 1.4 % in Class II, 14% in Class III, and the rest in the lower classes.⁵⁸ What the test actually measured was the poor educational and economic opportunities available to African Americans at the time. Regardless, this was what the Army had to work with to forge the 92nd, combined with the problems previously discussed.

Having completed basic and individual training at the earlier posts the division began training on unit maneuvers at Fort Huachuca (Figure 3.7). Before it started the entire division assembled for a review. This was the first time the entire division had gathered on a large field, certainly making an impression on the men. Shortly there after, companies, battalions, and regimental-sized units blazed across the installation in offensive and defensive maneuvers. Meanwhile, some 800 illiterates were organized into a school for basic training in the three R's. The division participated in "D" or division-

⁵⁷ Lee, *Employment of Negro Troops*, pp. 341-342.

⁵⁸ Goodman, "Fragment," p. 5; Jefferson, *Making of the Men*, p. 195. For comparative purposes, the scores for all army replacements for March 1942 were as follows: Class I--6.9%, Class II--26.8%, Class III--31.1% and Classes IV and V--35.2%, see Robert R. Palmer, Bell I. Wiley, and William R. Keast, *The Procurement and Training of Ground Combat Troops*, (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1948), pp. 14-16.

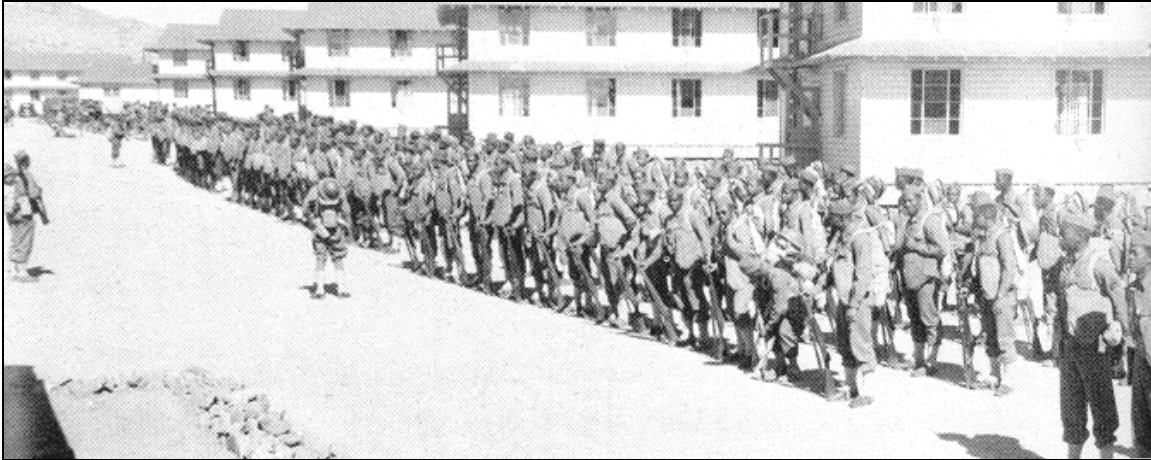


Figure 3.7 Black Soldiers Prepare For March.⁵⁹

sized exercises in December 1943. Then in January, the leading elements of the division headed east to Merryville, Louisiana, to meet the 'enemy' in mock combat. The 92nd participated in the Sixth Louisiana Maneuvers along with the 44th and 75th Infantry Divisions from January 20, 1944 to April 3, 1944. Upon completion the 92nd was rated as "satisfactory." General Leslie J. McNair, commander of the Army Ground Forces declared that the 92nd was better prepared than the 93rd had been when it was shipped overseas. But all the news was not good. Along with this ready status General Almond was informed of the Pentagon decision to break up the 92nd, sending a combat team made up of the 370th Infantry and the 598th Field Artillery overseas without the rest of the 92nd. General Almond vigorously protested this breakup. He had promised his officers that the unit would go overseas and would fight as a division. Amazingly Almond's protests were effective and the entire division was slated for overseas action, but the combat team would still precede the rest.

But first the division returned to Fort Huachuca for more intensive training. With the knowledge that overseas assignment was coming, preparations began in earnest, at least for the officers and staff.⁶⁰ The unit concentrated on correcting performance problems recognized during the Louisiana maneuvers. There was also special emphasis on combined arms, mountain operations, stream crossing, patrolling and combat

⁵⁹ Photograph Courtesy Fort Huachuca Museum.

⁶⁰ Wilson, "Recipe for Failure," p. 485; Goodman, "Fragment of Victory," pp. 10-12; Almond Interview, USAMHI, p. 83; "With the 92nd Infantry," p. 18.

problems.⁶¹ Despite this serious preparation, the division still had problems. A "casual camp" had been created for recalcitrant, undesirable, "impossible" and inept troopers early on in the division's training. Men were placed in this camp for special attention and simple training in military discipline, courtesy, and physical fitness. Although it was for inept troopers, some of the more intelligent African Americans gravitated there when their morale sagged to the point of indifference to any punishment. David Carlson, Jr. explains:

There was a group of fellows in the 92nd called the Casuals. Some of the guys in this unit were ASTP men. Now actually these guys were malingerers and there was nothing, I mean nothing, the army could do with them. They were actually an embarrassment to the military. Yet the 92nd had to carry them because they needed those high IQs for the division's files. That the command did not recognize a tremendous morale problem in the division with so many highly intelligent men in the Casual group gives you an idea of the brain power in charge of the 92nd Division. It seems that whites were completely blind at this point in history. The only sickness those Casuals had was one of morale. If they had been treated as human beings, as soldiers in the United States Army, they would not have become a problem.⁶²

As deployment overseas got closer, the number of men in the casual camp ballooned to up to 1,000 and more. This was partially the result of other African American units, not stationed at Fort Huachuca, unloading their rejects prior to overseas departure. When the division was finally ordered to move, some 850 men remained classified as "unfit for combat." Regardless, General Almond was directed by the War Department to take them with him overseas. After 19 months of training, as compared to an average of 12 months for white divisions, the 92nd moved out in September 1944.⁶³

⁶¹ "With the 92nd Infantry Division," p. 26.

⁶² Interview with David Cason Jr., in Motley, *Invisible Soldier*, p. 266. ASTP stood for Army Specialized Training Program, a program established to ensure a supply of technical and professional people for the war effort. These men, who scored high on Army tests, were sent to college for technical and professional training. The program was abandoned due to a variety of manpower problems and the men in the program suddenly found themselves privates in the ranks, see Palmer et. al., *The Procurement and Training of Ground Combat Troops*, pp. 28-39.

⁶³ Goodman, "Fragment of Victory," pp. 10, 13; Almond Interview, Section 3, p. 8.

The 370th Combat Team was placed in the line of the 4th Corps, 1st Armored Division, shortly after arrival at Naples, Italy. There they took part in the securing of the Arno River and occupation of Lucca. Joining the pursuit of fleeing German forces, the unit advanced along the Serchio Valley, reaching Lima. In October of that year, the rest of the 92nd, under General Almond became a part of Task Force 92. Along the steep sides of Mount Cauala-Castiglione the division encountered well fortified German emplacements and took heavy casualties. There the battle raged in close combat. Second Lieutenant Jefferson L. Jordan of the 371st recalled:

Our position on the mountain was exactly face-to-face with the Germans. The only thing separating us was a mound of rock. We could almost toss cigarettes back and forth, to give you an idea of the proximity. . . . Our field radio was not to be used for business except in an extreme emergency because they could hear the reply just as well as we could hear theirs. . . . The Germans appeared to have settled for this Mexican stand-off. Not our command, they kept calling to throw us into that meat grinder. The guys had tried at night, in the rain, in fog, and they had paid for it.⁶⁴

But to the Army's higher echelons the division was not performing up to par. Between October 1944 and May 1945, more than 1,800 courts-martial were held and some 1,500 officers and enlisted men were transferred out of the division in an effort to improve performance.⁶⁵ The Army was especially displeased with the division's offensive execution. In February 1945 General Almond decided to test the division in a limited attack in the Serchio Valley and the coastal area along the Cinghiale Canal. The attack made only limited progress and the Army decided to reorganize the entire division. Men considered capable of offensive action in the face of the enemy were culled from the ranks to reform as the 370th. The 366th was detached and the 473rd and 442nd Infantry were attached. The 442nd was made up of Japanese Americans and according to Almond, they "turned out to be the salvation of the 92nd Division combat capability."⁶⁶ The division returned to combat and performed better. Overall, despite incurring high casualties, the 92nd was judged "in the popular mind" to be the worst division in Europe. But another assessment by Lieutenant Colonel Marcus Ray, Commander of the 600th Field Artillery provides some insight into its failure, perhaps getting to the heart of the matter:

⁶⁴ Interview with Jefferson L. Jordan, in Motley, *Invisible Soldier*, p. 284.

⁶⁵ Robert Jefferson, "African American in the U.S. Army," p. 243.

⁶⁶ Almond Interview, pp. 23-24.

the 92nd was doomed to a mediocre performance of combat duty from its inception. . . I do not believe enough thought was given to the selection of white officers to serve with the 92nd, and further the common American error was made of assuming that Southern white men understand Negroes. . . . I do not believe the 92nd a complete failure as a combat unit, but when I think of what it might have been I am heartsick.⁶⁷

Training of the 93rd and 92nd at Fort Huachuca

The Army's training mission was to bring the individual soldier to a level of proficiency in all aspects of soldiering, such that he or she would operate efficiently within an ever larger unit to accomplish a variety of military missions. While the details of this training process changed throughout the war, there were three general training phases within what was called the Mobilization Training Program, beginning with Individual Training (basic), then Unit Training, and finally Combined Arms training. Within the Combined Arms Training the 93rd and 92nd maneuvered off post in Louisiana and the Mohave Desert. The 93rd took Individual Training at Fort Huachuca, but the men of the 92nd received their basic at the four camps in the east before moving to Fort Huachuca for the next two phases.

Individual or basic training, lasting about 13 weeks, started with subjects like military courtesy, discipline, sanitation, physical fitness, first aid, map reading, tank and aircraft identification, drill, and more drill (Figure 3.8). Lectures, films, demonstrations and hands-on practice accomplished these goals. After approximately one month the recruit progressed to marksmanship, individual soldier tactics, obstacle courses, grenade throwing, bayonet courses, weapons care and assembly, and of course, more drill. The final month of basic included weapons qualification and maneuvering at the squad and perhaps platoon level. At all phases the men were kept fit and marched many miles. The hard physical training paid-off for the 92nd; 92% of them were able to march 25 miles in eight hours by the end of the 11th week.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Letter of Lieutenant Colonel Marcus Ray, quoted in Motley, *Invisible Soldier*, pp. 346-347.

⁶⁸ Hondon B. Hargrove, *Buffalo Soldiers in Italy, Black Americans in World War II* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 1985), p. 6.

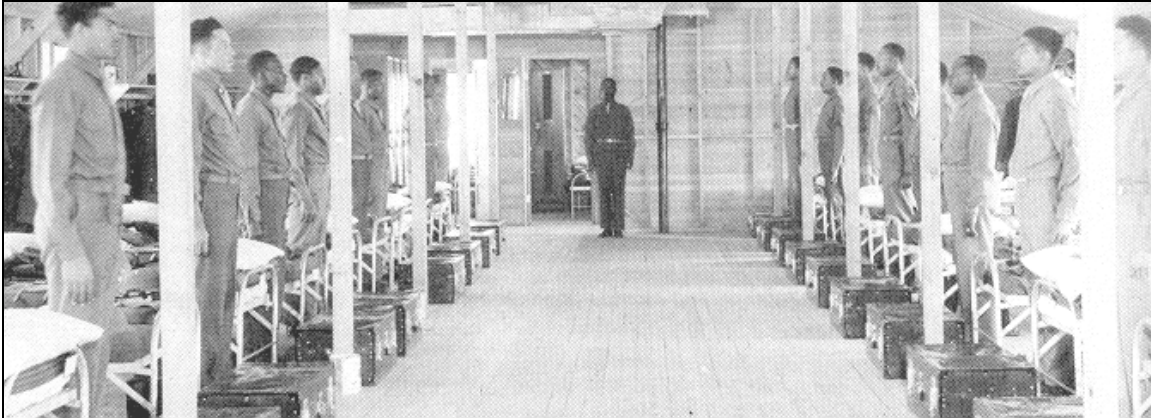


Figure 3.8 Barracks Inspection at Fort Huachuca.⁶⁹

From there the soldier graduated to around 11 weeks of Unit Training. Working in squad to regimental-sized units they maneuvered across the desert plains and mountains. The Unit Training Program was "designed to develop each unit into a fighting team capable of fulfilling its own particular role in the division team and in battle."⁷⁰ Life in the field, and maneuvering across artificial battlegrounds were part of a routine day. Platoon in the defense and offense, attacking fortified areas, night operations, and proficiency testing in combat firing, maneuvering, and physical fitness were conducted. Attempts were made to imbue the men with unit pride by competitions for best soldier, best driver, and best platoon in various events. Twenty-five mile marches and the handling of land mines and booby traps was another level of instruction. Long marches up and over the Huachuca Mountains were kept up. The 369th of the 93rd, for instance, took part in a four day hike that traversed some 60 miles of Arizona landscape that included ambushes and daylight attacks, and a jam band concert at night. In a bit of bravado, the division's newspaper declared at the end of that particular march; "There were tears of pride and admiration in the eyes of more than one of these seasoned staff officers, themselves veterans of stiff campaigns as they watched 'their boys' finish a hard grind in so sprightly a manner."⁷¹ Other unit level training included such maneuvers as the 93rd's combat team training in Camelo Pass, Arizona. There, the division was divided into two teams and each took turns defending the pass. General Miller's debriefing found the unit's "tactical decisions . . . sound and that it was an accumulation of

⁶⁹ Photograph Courtesy Fort Huachuca Museum.

⁷⁰ Goodman, "A Fragment of Victory," p. 7.

⁷¹ Finley, "Fort Huachuca in World War II," p. 46; "Biff" Blake, "369th Infantry Marches More Than Sixty Miles Last Week On Four Day Tactical March," *The Blue Helmet*, Friday 25, 1942.

minor deficiencies and errors that made the big picture look bad at times," but overall he was "highly pleased." Problems he encountered included men sleeping in command posts, and "march and water discipline [was] poor."⁷²

Desert training brought special problems and challenges. Many of the men had never been more than a few miles from their homes in the eastern part of the United States. Charles Wesley describes his arrival in the desert for the first time.

I was totally ignorant of what to expect in the desert. . . .I expected desert sand and that kind of blank terrain. I asked a lady who was service attendant when we were going to get to the desert. She just rolled her eyes and said, 'What the hell to you think this is.' All you could see was vegetation everywhere you looked. I didn't think there was supposed to be any vegetation in the desert.⁷³

If the Arizona desert wasn't exactly the Sahara sand dunes that many expected, it was very hot. Wesley, a member of the cadre described a typical training session:

I remember the hardest part of it was there was no real classroom and no shade. You did your instruction out in the desert sun. There were guys just sitting on the ground out in the desert sun, and you're doing everything to keep them alert. The educational level was so low overall, and you're trying to teach technical stuff like map reading for instance. You're teaching fractions, and here's a guy sitting there who can't put two and two together, and he's out there boiling in the desert sun.⁷⁴

The desert was also full of strange and sometimes playful, but more likely unfamiliar and dangerous creatures. Among the playful were trader rats that would steal shiny objects, like insignia, from the soldiers' pack, leaving a rock as a trade. Charles Wesley became remembered the dangerous beasts he met:

You didn't dare sit down under the shade of a tree. You would take your rifle butt and push the bushes around and look under the tree. Because sometimes the rattlesnakes would be in there like spaghetti. As you traveled along you could hear "ttss, ttss," and you're walking and getting stuck by a cactus bush. You wouldn't

⁷² Finley, "Fort Huachuca in World War II," p. 52-53.

⁷³ Morehouse, *Fighting*, p. 43.

⁷⁴ Wesley, in Morehouse, *Fighting*, p. 47

know whether you were bitten by a snake or stuck by cactus. I will never forget the first time I went through that, I was so tense, when I got to the end of it, I just fell down on the ground and threw up all over everything. I mean, it was horrible.⁷⁵

Upon completion of Unit Training the men progressed to another 11 weeks of Combined Arms Training. Here regimental-sized combat teams were put together in mock combat in both day and night operations that included coordination with tanks, artillery and air components. One particular exercise involved capturing Charleston, an old ghost town on the San Pedro River. In the attack, artillery and machine guns provided cover for the advancing troops, adding combat realism.⁷⁶ Once the town was captured, the troops practiced street fighting tactics. At the end of this period, more testing was done in infantry battalion field exercises and battalion combat firing. Obviously, the exact nature of the training exercised changed during the latter part of the war as experience was gained on the front lines and war-tested tactics were learned the hard way. Some of the improvements included additional practice in close-combat firing, city fighting, infiltration, and generally an overall effort to increase realism.⁷⁷ From this one can draw the conclusion that the 92nd's training was probably more realistic and intense than the 93rd's earlier training. One should have expected them to perform better, but racial problems interfered.

Each division participated in two major off-post exercises, one in Louisiana and the other along the Arizona-California border. The Louisiana Maneuvers along the Texas-Louisiana border were mock-combat exercises at the division level. Howard Hickerson with the 93rd Infantry sums up the maneuvers by explaining that: "They would go into an area like you were an attacking unit, or like we were being attacked--you know, offensive or defensive. Then the planes, the P40s and P39s would come over flying low with a white sack of flour and whoever got hit they'd say 'If this was a bomb you would be killed.' All night and day it would be this, war games. There were lots of night maneuvers, night marching, and that."⁷⁸ The official history of the 92nd noted that "All who participated in the maneuvers have vivid memories of hard work, rain, mud, clashes with the pigs, constant movement, Red Cross doughnuts, and open air movies."

⁷⁵ Welsy, in Morehouse, *Fighting*, p. 44.

⁷⁶ "Oldest Western Fort" p. 2.

⁷⁷ Lee, *Employment of Negro Troops*, pp. 444-455; "With the 92nd Infantry Division," p. 12.

⁷⁸ Howard Hickerson Interview by Maggi M. Morehouse (Fort Huachuca: on file, Fort Huachuca Museum, 1995).

Referring to their later combat experience, the history goes on to say, "The Sabine River [in Louisiana] probably means as much to some men as the 'Serchio or the Po.'"⁷⁹ In the rush and pressure of preparing men for combat, training accidents could not be avoided. First Lieutenant Stanis Melendez earned the Soldier's Medal on January 3, 1943 for his attempted rescue of four men whose assault boat was swept downstream on the Colorado River. Three men were lost.⁸⁰

As mentioned, Fort Huachuca set up special training units not only for reluctant soldiers but also for the illiterates. The Army had prepared for this problem prior to the war, but did not anticipate the numbers of men requiring basic education. It was expected that only one percent of white and up to 20 percent of black soldiers would require specialized educational training, instead they found that nine percent of whites and 49 percent of African Americans inducted after 1943 had to be sent to these special units. Some 80 percent of the men sent to these units were not ignorant, they were simply illiterate. At these schools the men received three hours of educational training along with five hours a day military training. Program success was not total, but it did make available large numbers of men for the war, estimated at more than a dozen divisions, and it freed normal training units from the burden of those that could not keep up.⁸¹

After months of grueling training both units, the 92nd and 93rd believed they had had enough training and were wondering about the real thing. Technical Sergeant Willie Lawton of the 369th, for instance, felt that after the Louisiana Maneuvers, "I doubt if any division in this country spent as much time on maneuvers as this outfit." But instead the unit was sent to the Desert Training Center, under the command of General Patton. Patton's mission was training and in his mind that meant little else interfered. There, "They didn't let up pressure until we were at last shipped out."⁸² Lawton was quite right. In the California heat, the division:

. . .completed refresher courses in basic training, physical conditioning, individual, small unit, and major echelon combat exercises. Included in this preparation for combat was maneuvering under close-in, overhead artillery and small arms fire. All personnel completed a strenuous infiltration course, in which

⁷⁹ "With the 92nd Division," pp. 24-25.

⁸⁰ Finley, "Fort Huachuca in World War II," p. 50.

⁸¹ Lee, *Employment of Negro Troops*, p. 263-64.

⁸² Willie Lawton Interview in Motley, *Invisible Soldier*, p. 100.

ball ammunition was fired close to the prone trainees and exploding TNT charges simulated enemy grenades. The Army Ground Forces preembarkation tests were completed satisfactorily and the Division was pronounced ready for combat. In November and early December the Division maneuvered against the 90th Division. The remainder of December and early January 1944⁸³ were taken up in preparation for overseas movement.

Recreation and Recreational Facilities For African American Troops

It was the philosophy of the War Department that its job was to win the war and not to serve as a method or experimental laboratory for instituting change in society. American society had instituted, through Jim Crow laws in the South and passive acceptance in the North, that the two races would be separate. This state of affairs translated into official policy in the Army. For instance, at the beginning of the war, it was decided that black and white troops would be trained and housed in separate facilities. There was no official policy on segregated recreational facilities then, but since units were housed and trained separately, this usually meant separate recreational facilities simply as a matter of laying out the buildings to maintain unit cohesion. In defense of this policy the Army noted that white soldiers, and even some black soldiers expressed preferences not to mix. But separation policies solved little and presented the Army with yet another set of complicated mobilization problems. The smaller posts did not have the room or facilities available for segregated black troops (they often did not know how many African American soldiers they would have to accept) and in finding room they had to somehow both keep the races separate and maintain some sort of unit integrity. In light of the policy of housing segregation, the Army instituted a policy that recreational facilities for black troops would be provided at the various installations on the basis of the assigned black unit's size. If a black company was stationed at an installation there would be a company-sized day room, exchange, recreational building and so on. Installations training larger units would have more recreational facilities. In reality, the result was that often African American soldiers got the 'left-overs' in housing and recreational facilities, or did not get them at all.⁸⁴ The segregation policy did not sit well with African American troops and protests flooded the War Department, especially in regard to the designation of recreational facilities as "colored" and "white." Eventually, on March 10, 1943, the War Department changed its policy for designating

⁸³ 92nd Division History quoted from Finley, "Fort Huachuca in World War II," p. 56.

⁸⁴ Lee, *Employment of Negro Troops*, p. 302.

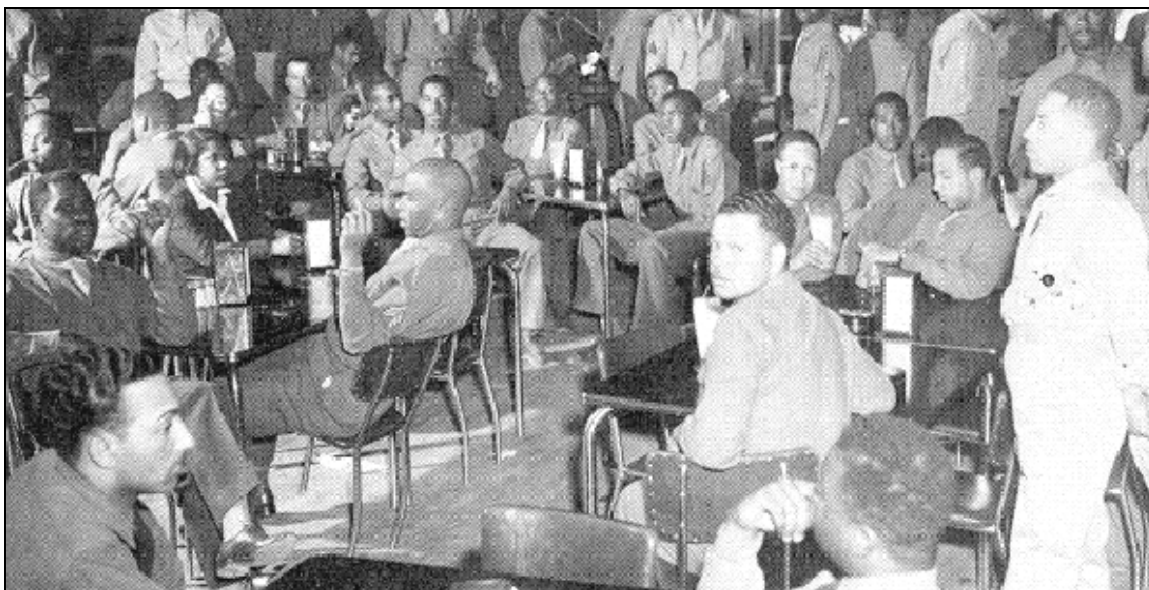


Figure 3.9 Enlisted Men's Recreation Hall.⁸⁵

separate facilities for recreation. Posts were no longer to designate "colored" and "white" facilities. "Where necessary, recreational facilities may be allocated to organizations in whole or in part, permanently or on a rotational basis, provided care is taken that all units and personnel are afforded equal opportunity to enjoy such facilities."⁸⁶

Fort Huachuca problems were of a different sort. Since the post was targeted for the two African American divisions, expansion of the post was designed to better accommodate the policy of separate facilities at least in terms of number and quality. At Fort Huachuca duplication was the rule. Fort Huachuca had the usual facilities of day rooms, libraries, service clubs, officers' clubs, USO clubs, chapels, and theaters for both black and white troops (Figure 3.9). There were five motion picture theaters with a seating capacity of 3,392. There was an 11,000 seat baseball stadium and a 16,000 seat football stadium. The two swimming pools were popular and some 5,361 men and women alone used them in July and August of 1943. There were also two gymnasiums. Practically every kind of facility needed on a military post was done in duplicate so the races would not mix.

⁸⁵ Jesse J. Johnson, *A Pictorial History of Black Soldiers in the United States In Peace and War* (Hampton, Virginia: Published by the Author, 1970), p. 58..

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 308.

Whatever may be said of the white command, Colonel Hardy recognized the problems that might occur in an isolated post such as Fort Huachuca and made monumental efforts to see that the men kept to wholesome recreational activities. As Ulysses Lee, has noted, "Fort Huachuca, in addition to a full complement of recreational facilities, had the only full-time Theater (theatrical production) and Education officers assigned to an individual post in the Army. If recreation had been the key to morale in relation to training, the Negro soldiers of Fort Huachuca and Tuskegee, who received greater attention in this area than the Negro troops at most other stations, should have had the highest morale in the Army." To oversee and organize recreational activities at the fort, the Special Services Department of the Special Services Command consisted of 12 officers and several enlisted men whose full-time job was administrating the soldiers' recreational activities.⁸⁷

Besides pure recreation there were numerous educational programs to assist the soldiers. In addition to basic reading, writing and arithmetic, classes were offered at night for soldiers to improve their minds in Voice, Dancing, Art, French and Spanish, Interior Decorating, and Radio. Campfire sings and field shows were offered. Special Service Division or the soldiers themselves organized swing bands, reading clubs, and little theaters with original shows. The men came to Fort Huachuca with plenty of talent; there were actors, and even acrobats and jugglers. Art was heavily emphasized with a nationally prominent showing of Negro Art at the Mountain View black officers' club and soldiers could take lessons from Lew Davis, a recognized African American artist of the time.⁸⁸

Traveling USO shows were popular and most made the trip to Fort Huachuca. The men were especially happy to see Jazz singer and actress Lena Horne who visited in 1943. The men even named her "Sweetheart of the 92nd." While there she dedicated a theater, which was named after her, and her film *Stormy Weather* was shown. She was probably the most popular actress to visit, especially after her reaction to learning that she was about to perform in a theater that had German POW's seated in front of the black soldiers. She promptly left the stage and sang from the rear of the theater with her back

⁸⁷ Lee, *Employment of Negro Troops*, p. 315; *93rd Blue Helmet*, February 5, 1943; Service Bulletin, March 1943, No. 1.

⁸⁸ "Oldest Western Fort," pp. 2-6.

to the German soldiers. Other well known stars that visited the post included Pearl Bailey, Dinah Shore, Louis Armstrong, and Hattie McDaniels. The most popular male star was Joe Louis, who spent much of his war years traveling from post to post giving boxing exhibitions and raising funds for War Bonds.⁸⁹

Naturally, athletics was strongly emphasized at Fort Huachuca since it builds the competitive spirit, unit morale, and allows the men a physical release from the frustrations of training. As has been demonstrated, sports had always played a large role in the building and maintaining of morale at Fort Huachuca. During WWII, sports played no less and probably a greater part in alleviating the men's anxieties as a result of being separated from home, isolated from normal society, and fearful of the future. The importance of sports in the lives of the trainees cannot be overemphasized. As noted, attendance at sporting events was never a problem; thousands crowded the stadiums for games. The *Blue Helmet*, the 93rd's camp newspaper, always devoted a large portion of the paper to local and national sports, and even reported sporting events at other camps. The only topic in the paper that was equal to sports was other recreational activities, especially upcoming events. Colonel Hardy boasted that "Fort Huachuca is probably better provided with such features [sports programs and facilities] than any other camp in the country," and the size of the sports program clearly supported his claim. During the baseball season, for instance, there were 108 organized teams that played 550 regulation games at 25 baseball fields (and the 11,000 seat stadium). There were also 108 basketball teams. There were six football teams, who played in the 16,000 seat stadium. Attendance at these games reached some 20,000 fans.⁹⁰ In 14 games in 1943 attendance at the games reached 140,000. Tennis, softball, badminton, horseshoes, and golf were also offered. Boxing was a popular spectator sport, made increasingly popular by Heavy-weight Champion Joe Louis's visit.

Off-post Recreation

While Fort Huachuca worked hard to create a wide variety of recreational activities for the men on post, the men needed to get off-post too. Providing for wholesome recreation in the scattered desert region of southeastern Arizona became an

⁸⁹ Finely, "Fort Huachuca in WWII," pp. 146-147; Smith, *Fort Huachuca*, p. 307.

⁹⁰ The exact number of soldiers attending these sports events vary widely depending on the source. One of the 92nd's histories place the number attending a 1943 football game as high as 22,000, see "With the 92nd Division," p. 21.

on-going and frustrating problem for the command at Fort Huachuca. The small civilian community around Fort Huachuca was used to African American soldiers, but not in the numbers that would be seen during the war. But there were few other options. Bisbee, some 35 miles away was also tiny, Tombstone was about the same distance, and down along the border some 60 miles away was Douglas. Just across the border were the Mexican towns of Agua Prieta and Nogales offering a warm welcome to African American soldiers with much less prejudicial treatment, but also with vices and temptations the Army would prefer the men avoid. Buses did run three times a day for Bisbee and two for Nogales.⁹¹ Tucson was over 80 miles away and not so used to large numbers of African Americans. Both Tucson and Phoenix were too far to go except on a weekend. To just get off post for a while, the only option was Fry, a shack and trailer community named for Oliver Fry, the postmaster. Fry had served as the post's gate community prior to the war with a population of about 850. Prior to the war it had a few houses for civilians working on the post and for the men's families although most lived on post. It had a few stores, restaurants, a drug store, and liquor stores.⁹² But with the arrival of thousands of African Americans, it mushroomed into a tent, trailer, lean-to and shack city of around 2,000, full of vice in the form of sleazy bars, violence, rampant prostitution, and gambling. Unfortunately, it was just the thing to attract young, lonely soldiers far from home.

Of all the challenges facing Colonel Hardy as post commander, the shack city of Fry was probably the most vexing, and also came close to ruining his career. His vivid description of the shantytown was that it was "dirty, unsanitary, and squalid." Ulysses Lee described it as offering "in exaggeration, all the allure, if none of the exotic glamour, of the Mexican towns." Or as a veteran of the 369th put it "anyone who went there was going to get caught by something--the clap, a knife blade, or if he was lucky, a tough black fist." Prostitution was just one of the problems Hardy faced there. When the fort was under construction there had been an unsuccessful attempt to eliminate prostitution. From that effort Colonel Hardy came to the conclusion that any further efforts at eradication would not significantly reduce the high incident of venereal disease among the soldiers at Fort Huachuca. They would simply go to another town and find the same temptations. His solution, officially prohibited by the War Department, was to designate

⁹¹ "Inter-Urban Bus Lines," *Bisbee Daily Review*, December 28, 1944.

⁹² There was also a little cluster of buildings for military personnel off the north gate called McCray, see "Report of Investigation of Alleged Prostitution at Fort Huachuca, Arizona, October 9, 1944. Record Group 159, Fort Huachuca (College Park, Maryland: National Archives II).

areas where prostitution was legal but under the eyes federal, state, and county health officials. There, infected prostitutes could be "put out of circulation" and treated, while men who entered the area would be required to use prophylaxis treatments. His plan was actually tried for a while. A fenced-in area along the fort's border was constructed and known prostitutes were moved into the enclosure. The prostitutes were examined by civilian doctors for any sexually transmitted diseases and once cleared, were given I.D. cards. Military police were stationed at the enclosure's gates and prophylactic stations were set up inside and outside the fence. According to Bell Wiley, "the Hook," as it was called, produced the desired reduction in disease. But health officials complained that the area represented the Army's tacit approval of prostitution, and some in the African American community saw it as encouraging vice among the men, so the area was placed off-limits on August 22, 1943. The prostitutes quickly set up business out of their cars or trailers.⁹³

Colonel Hardy's concern about venereal diseases was well founded. The incidence of venereal diseases among African American troops was consistently eight to ten times higher than among white troops during the war. Bell Wiley's study attributed this statistic to the lack of knowledge among African Americans about the diseases' causes and the wide-spread belief that it was no more serious than a cold or toothache. Colonel Hardy and the rest of Fort Huachuca's command took the problem seriously. Besides attempting to control it within the 'Hook," Hardy designated a Venereal Disease Prevention officer to educate the troops and enforce procedures to reduce the number of infected men, and later persuaded the county sheriff to conduct raids in Fry to clean out the prostitutes. As the VPO officer found it, no camp in America had vice and corruption "at its front door" like Fort Huachuca. The VD Program promoted an honor roll and blacklist of men clean and infected, and printed posters about the consequences of VD. Within the 92nd Division, soldiers going to Nogales, Mexico were required to utilize prophylactic stations along the border, and if they failed to do so they were punished for disobeying an order to take prophylactic treatment when exposed. How were they caught? Each man going on furlough was given an examination to see that they were not infected, movies and lectures were required attendance, an orientation program was given indicating the location of prophylactic stations, the post insisted that venereal kits be

⁹³ Jefferson, "Making of the Men," p. 246; Lee, *Employment of Negro Troops*, p. 282; Finley, "Fort Huachuca in WWII," pp. 110-114; Wiley, "The Training of Negro Troops," p. 47

taken when on leave, and finally, they were examined when they returned.⁹⁴ The program had great success, which was the exception to the rule, according to Army historians:

A notable exception to the overall failure of the program [VD Program for Negro Troops], a marked reduction in the rate, effected at Tuskegee and Fort Huachuca, Ariz., demonstrated that successful venereal disease control programs in Negro troops were possible on a local level. The programs at these two posts were organized and carried out by superior Negro medical officers, backed by strong command support, and utilizing all available control procedures including educational media, religious appeals, competitions, and the development of venereal disease control officers among noncommissioned officers.⁹⁵

Colonel Hardy's efforts to find some outlets for the troops did not stop with his attempts to at least control, if not eradicate, prostitution and venereal disease. He was also instrumental in getting a recreation hall built in Fry called the Green Top, after its green roof. Unfortunately, for his effort, he got caught up in a complex investigation by the F.B.I. and the Army's Inspector General and as a result was officially admonished. The Green Top's presence actually had little to do with the disciplinary action taken against Hardy, but was simply a part of a much larger investigation.

Colonel Hardy's motives in the construction of the Green Top were pure. In an effort to find some "wholesome" recreation for the soldiers, he mentioned the problem of Fry to Mr. Truman K. Gibson, Jr., Civilian Aide to the Secretary of War for Negro Affairs when Mr. Gibson visited the post. Hardy was looking for someone to raise the capital needed to build a recreation hall. Mr. Gibson interested a group of African American entrepreneurs in the project; among them was Gibson's father, Truman K. Gibson, Senior, who was president of the Supreme Liberty Life Insurance Company. It was Hardy's involvement with Truman K. Gibson, Senior, that caused him to be admonished. However, the Fry Amusement Company was created and the Greentop was built in Fry. The business venture consisted of a large recreation hall and bar that served beer and soft drinks. No hard liquor was served. Next to the hall was a dormitory containing 50 rooms used to house black officers and their wives and employees at the

⁹⁴ Lee, *Employment of Negro Troops*, p. 284; Wiley, "The Training of Negro Troops," p. 44-47.

⁹⁵ Thomas H. Sternberg, Ernest B. Howard, Leonard A. Dewey, Paul Padgett, "Venereal Diseases." In *Communicable Diseases, Transmitted Through Contact or By Unknown Means, Preventive Medicine In World War II, Volume V* (Washington DC: Officer of the Surgeon General, Department of the Army, Medical Department, 1960), p. 192-193.

Greentop. The building quickly became a popular spot for soldiers. But as problems, complaints and rumors mounted about prostitution, drugs, bootleg liquor and the Greentop and Fort Huachuca, the Federal Bureau of Investigation leveled a series of allegations concerning "conditions at Fort Huachuca." The Army's Inspector General was called in to investigate.⁹⁶

The allegations were as follows: 1) prostitution was as prevalent within Fort Huachuca as it was in the Hook, 2) bootleg whiskey was being sold within the Greentop, the raw ingredients of which were being obtained from the post hospital, and Colonel Bousfield, the Hospital's Commanding Officer was, along with Joe Louis, Truman K. Gibson, Sr., a stockholder in the Fry Amusement Company, 3) Colonel Bousfield was responsible for the bootlegging, 4) some narcotics sold in the area were coming from the hospital, 5) Colonel Bousfield had influence over and dominated Colonel Hardy, 6) Colonel Brooks, Post Quartermaster was working in collusion with local merchants, 7) the Supreme Liberty Life Insurance Company was selling insurance to soldiers on post. In short, the investigation fully cleared everyone, except Colonel Hardy, who Hardy was only given a reprimand. There was no evidence found of organized prostitution on post and Colonel Hardy was praised for his efforts to control the problem. The investigators found no evidence that Joe Louis was involved in the Greentop. Some of the business partners in the Greentop had "acquired somewhat dubious reputations" for gambling enterprises in Chicago, but were running the Greentop clean. An audit of the Greentop's books found no evidence of problems, MP's reported no problems, and although bootlegging and narcotics were prevalent in Fry, there was no evidence to support that it came from the Greentop. Colonel Bousfield was a stockholder in the insurance company, but not in Greentop. An audit of the hospital found no evidence of missing alcohol or narcotics. Colonel Brooks was cleared. The only problem was the issue of insurance. There the inspectors found that insurance was being sold to soldiers on post. Hardy admitted his part. He had decided to let the company on post because they had sold insurance at other posts, and he thought he might be charged with unfair discrimination if he did not let them on. In any case, he was found in violation of War Department Circular #241 of October 5, 1943, and the mild punishment of "admonishment" was recommended.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Lieutenant Colonel John Harland Amen, "Investigation of Alleged Conditions at Fort Huachuca, Arizona," October 26, 1944 (National Archives RG 159, Office of the Inspector General, General Correspondence, Box 44, Fort Huachuca, Arizona).

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

African American Service Women at Fort Huachuca

Early in December of 1943, Colonel Hardy welcomed 180 African American women of the 32nd and 33rd Women's Army Auxiliary Corps to Fort Huachuca along the old rail line that had brought so many young black men since 1892 (Figure 3.10). Once again, Fort Huachuca would lead the way in the role of African Americans in the military. Fort Huachuca was the first installation to have black WAAC's, commanded by black officers. The units were commanded by Lieutenants Frances Alexander (32nd) and Mary



Figure 3.10 WAAC's Arrive at Fort Huachuca.⁹⁸

Kearney (33rd). Colonel Hardy's welcome included the reminder that the women must consider the thousands of men who attended the welcoming ceremony "as brothers in arms" and there was much assent. Besides improving the men's morale by attending dances and entertaining the troops, the women worked important staffing jobs as postal clerks, secretaries, cooks, bookkeepers, post exchange clerks, truck drivers, mechanics,

⁹⁸ Lieutenant General Leonard D. Heaton, *Preventive Medicine in World War II, Volume 5, Communicable Diseases* (Washington DC: Office of the Surgeon General, 1960), p. 193.

warehouse workers, and switchboard operators, under the goal of freeing the men to fight. Of course, they too were segregated and separate facilities were built prior to their arrival.⁹⁹

African American WAAC's were yet another point of contention between the War Department and black leadership. In May 1942, Mrs. Oveta Culp Hobby was named as Director of the new corps, and she was an immediate source of concern. Being from Texas, the African American community was worried that she would not encourage fair treatment of black women. However, her first announcement included the assurances that at least two of the first companies of WAAC's would be black. This assuaged the suspicions of the community and black press. Still all the issues regarding the use of black men in the Army were revisited when African American women were considered. Eventually, the Army settled on policies similar to those made on the use of black men. First, there would be no discrimination in the types of jobs they would be assigned. Second, there would be no lowering of standards to meet racial quotas. Third, black units would be established at the rate of 10.6 percent of overall WAAC strength, and finally, recruiting would be done at African American colleges to increase the number of educated qualified women. Unfortunately, similar policies brought similar results. By the end of the war, African American WAAC's never topped the six percent mark, and their overall effect in releasing men for combat was minimal.¹⁰⁰

Still, their effect on the men at Fort Huachuca was significant, and not just as potential companions. 2nd Lieutenant Irma Jackson Cayton of the 35th Post Headquarters Company attempted to strengthen their resolve by writing in the 93rd Special Service Bulletin that "we must think of ourselves as brothers and sisters in arms. On our part, we are striving consciously to be courageous and reliable sisters to our brothers whom we respect and admire for their valiant hearts, for their bravery and their willingness to face death to defend the homes of America."¹⁰¹

Preceding the WAAC's by more than a year were the 60 African American Army Nurses who arrived in July 1942 (Figure 3.11). With the largest black service hospital in the nation, Fort Huachuca's hospital soon needed additional nurses and another 40 joined the staff. Lieutenant Susan E. Freeman commanded the black nursing staff. In July 1944,

⁹⁹ Lee, *Employment of Negro Troops*, p. 422; Finley, "Fort Huachuca in WWII," p. 34.

¹⁰⁰ Lee, *Employment of Negro Troops*, p. 423.

¹⁰¹ Jefferson, *Making of the Men*, p. 243.



Figure 3.11 Physical Therapy at Fort Huachuca.¹⁰²

the station hospital at Fort Huachuca became the first Army hospital to provide formal basic training to African American Army nurses. Prior to the war, nurses were not in great demand and had been trained where they were stationed by the chief nurse. With wartime expansion nurses were needed immediately in station and overseas hospitals, and training had to be on the job. The result was that "the [training] system suffered a complete breakdown." But, eventually training centers were established, and the first 48 African American nurses were stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina and Camp Livingston, Louisiana. Fort Huachuca was chosen to provide basic training. Unfortunately, the school only lasted until September 23, 1944, but it did graduate 50 African American nurses. The training of black nurses was carried on at Camp McCoy, Wisconsin after this date.¹⁰³

¹⁰² Parks, *Medical Training In World War*, p. 160.

¹⁰³ Captain Robert J. Parks, *Medical Training In World War II* (Washington DC, Office of the Surgeon General, Department of the Army, Medical Department, 1974), pp. 130-132.

Basic training at Fort Huachuca included both medical training and military training in the form of drill, map reading, tent pitching, obstacle and infiltration courses, and physical fitness. The women's basic course was essentially the same as the men's basic. Madine Davis Lane remembered that:

Before we went overseas, we had to go over to the rifle range and learn how to roll on our belly and not raise our head up and get shot. They had live ammunition shooting over us. . . They taught us how to go under barbed wire by turning on our backs. What to do in a ditch. How to lower ourselves into the ditch and come up in case we had that kind of terrain. We drilled on all that, and it was the same kind of training as the men.¹⁰⁴

A physical therapy course for black nurses had a brief one-month life at Fort Huachuca in October 1943. In 1944, the Army Medical Department also began to train WACs (formerly WAAC, but now the Woman's Army Corps) in medical technician fields. A separate school for African American WACs was set up at the Fort Huachuca station hospital training them in X-ray, Medical, Dental, Laboratory, and Surgical technician fields. The Fort Huachuca program graduated 94 women.¹⁰⁵

Overall, the impact of the African American WACs and Army Nurse Corps was small but important in other ways. There were never enough WACs to free a significant number of African American males for combat duty. Of 50,000 nurses in the Corps, only 479 were African American.¹⁰⁶ However, the WACs and nurses at Fort Huachuca must have made a significant impact on the lives black soldiers either, healthy, sick, or injured, if only by being there as part of the largest concentration of African American military personnel during the war.

Summary

Literally thousands of African American men and women passed through the gates of Fort Huachuca during WWII. For most, this was their first experience with the Army and with the world beyond their homes. The shock must have been overwhelming and completely humbling. The lucky few in the 93rd who had training under the old

¹⁰⁴ Madine Davis Lane, quoted in Morehouse, *Fighting*, p. 66.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 132, 159, 238.

¹⁰⁶ Finley, "Fort Huachuca in WWII," p. 42.

veterans of the 25th probably made the adjustment more quickly. Here were some sympathetic black faces that knew their jobs. But for all who came to Fort Huachuca, the post itself was the location of the greatest event of their lives—that of becoming soldiers in the world's largest war. History concentrates on the men's poor record in combat and the white officers prejudices, neither of which can be denied. But in coming to grips with the sheer magnitude of the problems faced these men and women, and the environment and experience that they brought with them to Fort Huachuca, it is amazing that they did as well as they did. A great deal is owed to these men and women for simply serving, and Fort Huachuca can be proud of the role it played in this service.

CHAPTER IV: FORT HUACHUCA AND THE CHALLENGE OF TRAINING AFRICAN AMERICAN TROOPS, 1940-1945

Introduction

It is an unfortunate fact that all aspects of African American military history are tightly bound and intractably woven into the history of the African American struggle for equal rights and racial prejudice. With Fort Huachuca being the location of the largest concentration of African Americans during World War II, no fort history can overlook the negative effects of prejudice on the fort's training and recreation programs. Race relations affected almost every decision, attitude, and judgement taken by both black and white soldiers there, and affected every outcome. Exacerbating any analysis of the racial problems on post are the common, non-racially based, complaining that any troopers do as a common part of soldier life. Any veteran knows that hard words and 'bitching' about any and all aspects of soldier life are simply part of life in the ranks. No veteran of any army at any time believes he or she was treated fairly throughout their military experience. Something would be terribly wrong in their unit if that were so. But it is clear that young African American men and women during WWII faced injurious prejudice in the military because of the general climate and attitude in American society at large. Further, this prejudice was expressed both by individuals in the Army and by the Army's reaction to societal attitudes. Finally, these prejudices were manifested in harmful Army policies.

Problems in the Preparation of African American Troops

As it happened after World War I, after WWII the Army analyzed African American soldier performance and the training regime shortly after the war's completion. The results of this analysis were put together in a Secret publication entitled *The Training of Negro Troops*. Because Fort Huachuca had the greatest number of African Americans, much of the study's data came from interviews of black soldiers and white officers in the 92nd and 93rd. The author, Major Bell I. Wiley, also spent a week at the installation in completing his research. A review of this publication is very relevant to any history of African American soldiers at Fort Huachuca.

The results were, as the report revealed, an "unhappy picture." Although not explicitly stated, it is clear that the blame for this picture lay at the feet of the racial attitudes at the time. For instance, one of the greatest Army-wide problems was the result of a lack of educational opportunities for blacks that had continued since their first arrival on this continent. A common notion about the military even today is that it takes no great intellect to become a soldier. In fact, while genius is not necessary, the ability to read, write, and reason are basic necessities for learning soldier skills in modern armies. Illiteracy was very high within the pre-war African American population. This exacerbated the training situation at every level. The Army did anticipate this problem, and it was expected that because of the inequalities that existed in American society at large, it would take longer to produce combat ready African American units. But the problem's extent was a surprise. As has been seen it took several months of additional training, beyond that of the average white division, to bring the 92nd up to par (Figure 4.1).¹

Overall, black soldier training was, "beset with many difficulties, the most formidable being the Negroes' lack of education and mechanical skill. About 80 percent of the enlisted personnel of typical colored units were in Classes IV and V of the Army General Classification Test [AGCT] against about 30-40 percent in white units." In fact, only 17% of the African American trainees had a high school education (41% for whites), and grade school graduates and non-graduates amounted to 57% (30% for whites).² (The Army was surprised by the extent of poor scores among white draftees.) The problem was acute enough that in the summer of 1943, the War Department decided to test white and black personnel at their induction station, and reject men who were the most "backward." These tests were based on intelligence rather than literacy. Another series of tests were given at the reception centers including the AGCT and men in Class V were immediately assigned to special training units, where they were given instruction until either they were able to be assigned to normal units or, after 13 weeks, were given discharges.³

¹ Palmer et al., *The Procurement and Training of Ground Combat Troops*, pp. 53-58.

² Major Bell I. Wiley, *The Training of Negro Troops*, (Washington DC: Study No. 36, The Army Ground Forces, Historical Section, 1945), p. ii, iii, 7.

³ Wiley, *The Training of Negro Troops*, p. 9



Figure 4.1 African American Troops on Parade.⁴

The widespread educational deficiencies among black soldiers meant that the cadre had to devise different methods for teaching African Americans. Progress was seen by reducing lectures to a minimum and increasing demonstrations, repetition, execution by the numbers, and the use of coach and pupil teaching methods. As noted, training time was increased. Another remedy was to separate out "backward" personnel into special training units. At Fort Huachuca, a school was opened for illiterates, for example, to teach them the rudimentaries of reading and writing before assigning them to regular training units.

Besides the lack of basic educational skills, a large percentage of black trainees lacked mechanical skills, again the result of years of being denied training and opportunity in the civilian community. At Fort Huachuca, an Army Ground Forces staff

⁴ Photograph Courtesy Fort Huachuca Museum.

officer reported that "Maintenance of vehicles, small arms, artillery, fire control instruments, maintenance records, signal and quartermaster equipment was unsatisfactory. . .showed abuse,. . .[and] was dirty."

Not surprisingly, many African American draftees had little respect for the Army and its mission. For instance, Colonel Hardy, the post commander, reported that: "A few weeks after the 93rd was activated, May 15th, 1942, we began to find on the dump entire hams that had never had their wrappings or paper taken off, entire crates of fresh vegetables which had never been opened, entire crates of fresh strawberries that had never been opened. . . ." The 92nd was not exempt from such attitudes, Army Service Forces officers reported large quantities of government property---helmet liners, C rations, toilet paper, and unopened bottles had been left on the Fort Huachuca dump pile shortly before leaving for overseas duty. Colonel Hardy was nonplused that such waste could occur, but today, it might be seen as passive resistance to the injustices African Americans felt they were experiencing as soldiers. Indeed, the Secret report recognized that many African Americans lacked any interest in military activities and in winning the war, feeling that it was a "white man's country and that it would be no less so after the conflict than before." White officers reported a lack of honesty among African American troops, and the report suggested "This seems to have been attributable in large measure to a defensive attitude, springing from longstanding subordination to the white man."

The analysis of the training of black troops was not all negative, but again, in looking at it from today's perspective even the complimentary testimony appears condescending. White officers reported that some African American soldiers were usually cheerful, accepting more adversity than white troops, loyal, and more responsive to flattery. Well-fed African American troops would work long hours "without belly-aching." These compliments seem to stand in direct opposition to other testimony and in a flash of insight buried in the report, Major Wiley concludes that: "As might be expected there was a close correlation between responsiveness of the troops and the quality of their leadership." Perhaps this is as close to pinpointing the problem as a Major in the Army could put in print without repercussions.⁵

In any case, it is interesting that the report's conclusions mimic those made just after WWI. Again the report noted the lack of quality men for technical and officer

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

positions, the fact that training times had to be increased from 50 to 100 percent for black troops, that organizing large division-sized African American units increased training and equipment problems, that white officers deteriorated after long service with black troops, that assigning white and black officers together in the same unit was unworkable, and that black enlisted men in combat units performed better under white officers (although artillery, engineer and service units performed well under black officers) (Figure 4.2).⁶



Figure 4.2 African American Artillery Units Performed Well During WWII.⁷

Wiley's study makes explicit the results of racial inequality, but fails to address these problems in terms of unit morale or esprit de corps. Neither black division ever developed a unit identity or the individual soldier's pride in being a part of a larger unit. Lee, in his *Employment of Negro Troops*, points out for example that for many African American soldiers who brought with them "limited horizons," the sheer size of a division was inconceivable and had little meaning. The very word 'Division' only meant to these men a place where "unpleasant orders and directives emanated." In this regard, Almond's division-sized review of the 92nd shortly after its assembly at Fort Huachuca should have helped a little, but immediately afterward the men were involved in smaller unit training and morale quickly fell as regiments began to criticize each other. Furthermore, the officers and many of the men in the division's higher echelons were white and culturally remote from the common G.I.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

⁷ Photograph Courtesy Fort Huachuca Museum.

The blame for poor African American soldier morale in the 92nd seems to ultimately fall on General Almond as commander. But neither his subordinates nor the War Department really understood it either. Many African Americans believed that the white command was simply out of touch with the common soldier and was utterly blind to the morale problem at the fort. Perhaps General Benjamin Davis got to the essence of the morale problem in a letter written in August of 1943.

General Almond has, in the opinion of the inspector general, overlooked the human element in the training of this Division. Great stress has been placed upon the mechanical perfection in the execution of training missions. Apparently not enough consideration has been given to the maintenance of a racial understanding between white and colored officers and men. The execution of ceremonies with smartness and precision, and the perfunctory performance of military duties are taken as an indication of high morale. This is not true with the colored soldier. He can be driven to perform without the necessarily having a high morale.⁸

Critically, neither the War Department nor General Almond and his staff recognized the cultural differences between the average African American male and the average white male at this time. These differences were not inherent, but the result of years of inequalities and prejudices that made the African American universally suspicious of white authority. They viewed the dominant world as a hostile one and had learned to perform within that world as a matter of survival. For example, there was widespread belief in both divisions that they were not going to be placed on the front line, a belief that many whites in the division shared. Even if no one explicitly said so, the rumor and feeling that they would not be committed nullified the seriousness of the training regime. "No one was more surprised when the 93rd Division was committed to an active theater than the men of the division."⁹ Morale skyrocketed when the men moved overseas, only to be dashed by being used as stevedores when they first arrived in the Pacific.

Appealing to national pride or other traditional means of building morale and esprit did not work with African Americans. A clear example of this problem is seen in that immeasurable but essential element that is unit pride. Men in combat will perform

⁸ Lee, *Employment of Negro Troops*, p. 334.

⁹ Lee, *Employment of Negro Troops*, p. 340.

unprecedented feats in the defense of their comrades and to uphold unit tradition. The British Army, for instance, long ago understood the critical nature of this intangible and built morale upon the reputation of the regiment. A man joined not the Army but a regiment, which became his home, the officers his father, the men his brothers. But what tradition did the African American soldier in the 92nd and 93rd have? The 93rd, while performing better than the 92nd during WWI, did not draw on the regiments of WWI as a means of building this critical part of unit pride. The 92nd's performance in WWI was highly criticized and was not to be drawn upon. Attempts were made to build morale through the adoption of the buffalo for the 92nd, and the blue helmet for the 93rd, but again, it would appear that little was done otherwise to stress unit traditions.¹⁰ These problems, combined with real instances of abuse, mistreatment and name calling by superiors, rumors, and the incessant drumbeat of the black press all worked against the struggle to improve morale in these large units.¹¹ The call to the troops from the black press, for instance, was for a 'double V' victory--victory overseas against fascist governments and at home over a racist government.

It seems clear in hindsight that General Davis's admonishment of General Almond rings true. Almond stressed training, discipline, combat readiness and other military virtues but failed to understand the special requirements of African American males at that time. Almond was a rough, tough individual, a 'General Patton' type character, and drove his men as hard as he drove himself. During training, for instance, he led his staff over the Fort Huachuca live-fire infiltration course. He was the first to jump into a foxhole and let a tank roll over him and he was first in line in the ten-mile hike. He was known for grandiose displays and inspiring speeches in Patton style. These kinds of demonstrations would inspire young white males and at least temporarily inspired the 92nd. But behind these demonstrations was most certainly a racism that showed through to the men and thus negated such efforts. Within the ranks, Almond was not like. For instance, rumors abound that he was given his assignment because he was the brother-in-law of Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall, not for his leadership skills. (On the other hand, his fellow officers felt that the assignment to train the 92nd was the "hottest potato in the Army.") Almond would have been a successful leader in most infantry divisions, but he was missing a character trait needed to lead African Americans.

¹⁰ Lee, *Employment of Negro Troops*, pp. 335-336. Lee discusses this point in great detail and points out the importance of regimental pride. He draws upon the success of the detached African American regiments in WWII and their success in building unit pride that translated to success on the battlefield.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 10-13.

Generals get the praise for success, and must ultimately have the responsibility for failure.¹²

Race Relations at Fort Huachuca During WWII

Whatever racial understanding and acceptance that had developed at Fort Huachuca over the last twenty years of peace between WWI and WWII, the influx of large numbers of African Americans and the institutional segregation of these new men and women changed the entire atmosphere. As expressed in a 1943 editorial in the *Pittsburgh Courier*, "Just a few years ago, this was one of the best army posts in the country for colored soldiers, now the situation has changed overnight."¹³ Unfortunately, the evidence from a variety of sources indicates that there was more truth than opinion in that editorial. As has been stated previously, soldiers are universally hard-nosed, quick to judge, quick to see unfairness, and quick to respond to perceived injustice whether actually there or not. General Benjamin Davis, acting as an assistant to the Inspector General, recognized this tendency during his three visits to the fort. But the numbers of complaints and incidents reported to the NAACP, the Army, and to the black press, clearly indicates a racial problem at the fort that was a strong negative influence on African American morale and performance.¹⁴ Among black troops throughout the Army, the post quickly developed a reputation as a location of racial bigotry, which by no means helped the local situation. One black officer remembers that after his unit had been broken up in Europe, the men wondered where they would end up ". . .and we hoped it would not be to the 92nd Division at Fort Huachuca. The thought of being sent to that bigoted outfit was depressing, and we were assured that we would not be sent there right up until the day we were handed our orders assigning us to the 92nd."¹⁵ Another soldier described the camp as ". . .a big sprawling camp containing somewhere between 17,000 and 20,000 black men with a small percentage of white officers (though they far outnumbered the black officers and held all of the staff positions) who enforced the strictest segregation possible between themselves and the black officers. Their only contact was strictly in relation to military activities: social contact was out."¹⁶

¹² Morehouse, *Fighting*, pp. 56-63; Smith, *Fort Huachuca*, p. 299.

¹³ Frank L. Parker, "Situation in This Army Post Gets Worse," *Pittsburgh Courier*, June 30, 1943, Record Group 107, Office of the Assistant Secretary of War, "Fort Huachuca" file (College Park, Maryland: National Archives II)>

¹⁴ Many of the instances of alleged racist incidents in this section come from the *Papers of the NAACP*, "Discrimination in the Military" a microfilm series available at most major university libraries.

¹⁵ Jefferson L. Jordan Interview in Motley, *The Invisible Soldier*, p. 280.

¹⁶ Sergeant Richard Carter Interview in Motley, *The Invisible Soldier*, p. 327.

Fort Huachuca was not alone in experiencing these problems, but there were unique circumstances that exacerbated the problem. As summarized in General Benjamin Davis's biography:

The racial situation at Fort Huachuca, Arizona, was similar to that on other posts, except that it was magnified by the larger number of black troops present. . . The isolated location of the post, the mostly white officer corps, the segregation of facilities, and the paucity of recreational activities all contributed to the problems, which included low morale and a high rate of venereal disease. Before one of Davis's trips to the post, he noted in his diary, 'I do not look forward with pleasure to this trip.'¹⁷

General Davis made his first inspection of Fort Huachuca in the spring of 1942 while the 93rd was in training. Despite complaints about overcrowded quarters, supply shortages, segregated officers' clubs, and other soldier accusations, Davis reported that operations at Fort Huachuca were "going smoothly." One of his major concerns was the segregated officers' club policy, which he felt should be stopped. But a year later, at the prompting of Truman Gibson, Davis returned to Fort Huachuca and found that things had turned "nasty." Gibson had written the general in June of 1943 because he had received "numerous letters. . .All of them agree that a very serious situation is brewing." He referred to segregation in the officers' mess and to an incident where 50 black lieutenants had been assigned to a special detail for inefficiency. There they were drilled and lectured in front of the enlisted men. There were examples of physical attacks on white officers reported. Adding to the situation, Gibson referred to General Almond's reaction to Colonel Hardy's efforts to ease the stress. Hardy had been disturbed by the tension between white and black officers and had tried to arrange a joint barbecue. The event was "spoiled by remarks from General Almond to the effect that Hardy nor anyone else could interfere with the 92nd Division."¹⁸ If there was any doubt in Davis's mind before the visit he soon saw for himself the depth of the problem. While at Fort Huachuca, Davis and Gibson participated in the dedication of the Andrew Foster Memorial Baseball field where the soldiers openly booed General Almond. In his report to the Inspector General, Davis outlined 10 racial incidents including: 1) command staff including

¹⁷ Marvin E. Fletcher, *America's First Black General: Benjamin O. Davis, Sr., 1880-1970* (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1989), p. 97-98.

¹⁸ Memorandum to Brigadier General B.O. Davis from Truman Gibson, June 3, 1943, Record Group 107, Office of the Assistant Secretary, "Fort Huachuca" file (College Park, Maryland: National Archives II).

Almond and his wife using the word "nigger," 2) black on white and white on black violence, 3) a white officers' car being pelted with rocks in Fry, and 4) discrimination of black officers. Davis recommended that the restrictions of promoting black officers be rescinded, that again, separate officers' clubs should be discontinued, and that the enlisted men conform to local laws and customs-- i.e. put up with segregated areas and Jim Crow laws. Davis also made a special mention that Almond, as a southerner pronounced the word "Negro" as "negra" thus explaining how some soldiers could mishear the pejorative word.¹⁹

Davis's charges and recommendations were not enough for some men, who perhaps thought that his investigation would bring about quick changes. Black soldiers soon denounced him as a pawn of the Army. An anonymous black officer wrote to African American newspapers in December 28, 1943, that "Prejudice is a vicious and subtle thing here in Huachuca. Discriminatory acts are preformed in such a manner that their baseness is blanketed under vague military terms and 'customs of service.' General Davis, recently here for investigation, turned in a report that all was well in the division. It would appear as if he is performing his job, a military figure-head, more than well."²⁰ Another soldier accused the fort of hiding "our cripples" while Davis was inspecting the fort.²¹ A black officer recalled, "After his visit, the name B.O. Davis Sr., was synonymous with 'yes-sirism' and 'Uncle Tomism.'"²²

The year 1943 may have been the height of racial tension at the fort, although complaints continued throughout the war. In any case, General Davis returned again in April of 1944, and reported conditions had improved. Housing for the officers had been integrated and there was "high morale" among the men of the 92nd. Hardy was commended for making an effort to develop good race relations. Whether accurate or not Davis's report was instrumental in swaying the Army into deciding to send the 92nd overseas and giving it a combat mission.²³ In reality, despite the sincere efforts of

¹⁹ General B.O. Davis Memo to the Inspector General, "Special Inspection of Colored Troops at Fort Huachuca, Arizona," August 3, 1943, (National Archives, Record Group 107, Office of the Assistant Secretary of War, Box 207).

²⁰ Letter signed "Negro Officer" to the Afro-American Newspapers, December 28, 1943, quoted in Phillip McGuire, *Taps for a Jim Crow Army* (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-Clio Publishers, 1983), p. 47.

²¹ Letter of "one who desires to know" to Mr. C.A. Scott of the *Atlanta Daily World*, in McGuire, *Taps*, p. 45.

²² Jefferson L. Jordan Interview in Motley, *The Invisible Soldier*, p. 280.

²³ Fletcher, *America's First Black General*, p. 124.

Colonel Hardy, General Davis, and others, the problems were deep-set in society, not the Army, and were not going to be solved during wartime.

As noted, records of the NAACP show a prevalent of racial injustice at the fort, although Fort Huachuca was nowhere near the worst installation in that regard. A sample of the memos and letters indicates racial problems and tension at all levels. Enlisted men complained about inadequate transportation off-post, being searched as they leave and come on to post, inadequate facilities for enlisted men's families, and "continuous humiliation by white officers." Some 300 men of the 365th requested transfer simply to get out of Fort Huachuca, another 1500 men of the 370th also requested reassignment due to "undue harshness" by the regiment's commander, Colonel Sherman. Among officers, over 90 African American officers were court-martialed in the 92nd while no white officers were charged. In the black station hospital, a white doctor with a specialty was allowed to treat patients in that specialty, while the black doctors were denied that same right in the white hospital. Even the black WACs and nurses met discrimination. Black WACs at the hospital felt that they were being given the worst jobs in comparison to the white WACs.²⁴

An example of how racial tensions could explode into controversy and how insensitive whites could walk blindly into a racial firestorm is seen in the Arizona cotton picking crisis in the fall of 1942. Arizona Governor Sidney Osborn requested the Army's help in picking long-staple cotton due to a farm labor shortage. The cotton was vital for making parachutes. The request was for troops, both black and white, but an Arizona newspaper quoted the governor as stating "I am sure there are many thousands of experienced cotton pickers at Huachuca and I am sure that they could be put at nothing more necessary, essential or vital at this particular moment than aiding in the harvesting of this crop." This brought quick protests from the African American soldiers at the fort who reported the slight to the NAACP and the black press. The governor defended himself in a letter to the NAACP by stating that high school students, prisoners, and businessmen were going into the fields to assist in the picking, and that only soldiers who

²⁴ Roscoe Giles Letters of May 16 and June 3, 1944, and Carolyn D. Moore, "Situation At Fort Huachuca As Reported to the NAACP," Memo Reproduce and Distribute," Fort Huachuca, Arizona, April 23, 1944, Letter of C.D. M. to Mr. Walter White, May 18, 1944, Papers of the NAACP, Group II, Series A, Reel 20; Report

desired to pick cotton were to be furloughed. However, the protests were heard and the Army eventually postponed any plans to use troops in the cotton fields.²⁵

Colonel Hardy boasted to Truman Gibson in March of 1943 that "We have not had a single concerted action against authority, riots, or any racial clashes. The people of Arizona have come to be less prejudiced against Negroes and are showing more confidence in them."²⁶ Technically, he was right, there had been no riots at Fort Huachuca, and this fortunately continued for the entire war. However, African American soldiers from the 364th, stationed near Phoenix, were involved in a riot off-post on Thanksgiving night, 1942. Trouble began with an incident involving black soldiers and black Military Police over a black woman. Apparently, a soldier hit a black woman over the head with a bottle, and the MP attempted to arrest him. In the confrontation the MPs shot a soldier in the leg and a general shoot-out began. Black soldiers in "a nearby camp" at Papago Park heard about the trouble, broke into a supply room, grabbed some rifles, commandeered a truck and headed for the city. A three-hour gun battle ensued, and at the end, a white captain, a black soldier and a black spectator were killed.²⁷

Again it must be stressed that Fort Huachuca was by no means the center of racism during the war. African American soldiers met prejudice just about everywhere they went. While participating in the Louisiana Maneuvers, they learned that any day could turn ugly. David Cason of the 92nd recalls the day he came close to being court-martialed and possibly executed.

It had been a hot, boring day, and one of the guys spotted a little place with an ice cream sign out front. We were all young and hot and wanted some ice cream. . . .The usual shot-gun totin' cracker was suddenly standing in the back door. The fellows closest to the screen wheeled and headed back to the carrier. Others followed as few climbed aboard and one pulled back the canvas covering the

²⁵ Newspaper clipping, "Governor Renews Plea For Aid of Huachuca Soldiers, October 24, 1942; Letter of Governor Sidney P. Osborn to Mr. Walter White, November 10, 1942; Newspaper Clipping, "Plan For Troops to Pick Cotton Postponed Indefinitely by Army," February 24, 1943; "Cancellation of Indefinitely Postponed Army Cotton Picking Assignment Sought, February 26, 1943, Papers of the NAACP, Microfilm, Part 1, Series A, Reel 13, Series B, Reel 12.

²⁶ Letter of Colonel Edwin N. Hardy to Mr. Truman Gibson, Jr., March 18, 1943 Record Group 107, Office of the Assistant Secretary of War, 1940-1947, "Fort Huachuca," (College Park, Maryland: National Archives II).

²⁷ Wiley, "The Training of Negro Troops," p. 49: Newspaper articles, "Long Terms for Negro Soldiers," February 17, 1943, New York Times, "2 Killed, 12 shot In Negro-Troop Riot at Phoenix," New York Herald, November 28, 1942, Papers of the NAACP, Group II, Series B, Legal Files, Reel 19 (Columbia, South Carolina: microfilm, University of South Carolina Thomas Cooper Library).

50 mm machine gun it concealed. . . .All of our clips being slapped into place at the same time sounded like a cannon going off.

At that moment I was thinking, better here than there. None of us had any illusions as to what would happen when that .50-caliber opened up on the ice cream shack. It would cut it and everybody in it in half. We knew every white regiment and division in the state, plus their police at every level would be called down upon our heads. Without a word we had decided to make our stand."

Fortunately, for all concerned, the crackers inside realized this was for real, these were not 'niggers' playing soldier, these were black men who planned to kill and die for that right. . . .This incident was the only time in my life I was prepared to die and I went overseas *afterward*.²⁸

The same problems were found in the Mohave Desert, as Walter Green of the 25th found out:

At Camp Clippert, the few little towns scattered around the desert were off limits to black personnel. Those of us who disobeyed the law and sneaked around watching for white MPs saw white officers and enlisted men walking with no such worries. The real sickening thing was the MPs were black, so it was black arresting black. In western towns, in particular, you had the problem of getting served in a restaurant. Some would serve you, and others would not; but they had the upper hand. They knew that by military orders you were not supposed to be there, and they could cause you serious trouble.²⁹

Wherever they went, racism could occur. Again, David Cason recalled the time he was returning from furlough and his train stopped in El Paso, Texas. There he had to go to a "dingy, dinky" place to eat while the station restaurant was doing a brisk business including German POW's. "My morale, if I had any left, dipped well below zero. Nothing infuriated me as much as seeing those German prisoners of war receiving the war hospitality of Texas."³⁰

²⁸ David Cason Interview, quoted in Motley, *The Invisible Soldier*, p. 265.

²⁹ Walter Green Interview, quoted in Motley, *The Invisible Soldier*, p. 90.

³⁰ David Cason Interview, quoted in Motley, *The Invisible Soldier*, p. 266.

The Black Officer Dilemma

No better example of the complexity of the race issue in the military, and its wrong-headed response, is seen in the treatment of African American officers during WWII. The problem of what to do with African American officers was a major headache for the Army, and one that was most visible at Fort Huachuca, where large numbers of unassigned black officers were "pooled" awaiting duties that never came. As mentioned earlier, the Army had developed a set of policies regarding African American officers that precluded them from serving freely as military necessity demanded. For instance, they were not to be in command of white enlisted men. In April 1942, the War Department decided that black officers could, under limited conditions, command white enlisted men, but still would be prohibited from commanding white officers. Even in the few instances where black officers had seniority to whites in the same unit, it was made perfectly clear in practice that no black officer, regardless of grade, would be superior to the most junior white officer. This was true even in the two black divisions at Fort Huachuca, where a great many junior black officers were needed, and where opportunities for advancement should have been most widely available.

Throughout the war, barriers were thrown-up to block the unrestricted use of black officers, often aided by Army policy. Lack of previous educational experience, for example, meant that few black draftees could meet the same standards required of white candidates, like a minimum score of 110 on the Army General Classification Tests.³¹ Therefore many blacks failed to even be considered for Officer Candidate School. On the other hand, when a quota of black men was needed for OCS, the quota had to be filled regardless of test scores. A staff officer with either the 92nd or 93rd at Fort Huachuca explained that "An Army headquarters called for a quota of five students for infantry officers' candidate school. The division only sent two. Army telephoned the division headquarters to provide the other three. Division informed Army that only two soldiers had been able to pass the OCS Board Examination. . . Army replied that no excuses could be accepted but the quota must be met in full."³² This sort of reaction naturally spelt disaster for the men who were sent and for the Army attempting to make him an officer.

³¹ Lee, *Employment of Negro Troops*, pp. 205-238.

³² Wiley, *Training of Negro Troops*, p. 24.

Finding qualified black candidates was truly difficult, made even more difficult by the fact that many experienced black non-commissioned officers with proven leadership skills had no desire to face the challenges of being a junior officer--they knew the black officer received no respect as persons or as officers and would be given few challenging assignments. Thus, those who passed the exam and graduated from Officer Candidate School were usually college educated northern blacks with no previous experience with Jim Crow attitudes in the south and west. This combination would add to the tension of being a black officer. Those that passed the qualifications exams entered what was one of the Army's first formal experiments with integration. Officer Candidate Schools were integrated on the basis that all officers would be treated the same. White and black officers trained together in integrated classes, although housing, messing, and recreational facilities were subject to local installation control, and at posts with large numbers of black officers, they tended to have segregated housing and mess facilities. This was not true of Fort Huachuca, but within integrated messes, the officers sat at different tables according to race.

Those who graduated from Officer Candidate School faced the difficult problem of assignment. The first hurdle was finding a slot among the restricted number of black units being established. To avoid the problem of a black officer potentially being in command of white officers, black officers had to be promoted in blocks as needed (and based on other policy restrictions), and then assigned to black units. This made rewarding competent individual black leadership nearly impossible. However, this problem should have never been seen at Fort Huachuca where two black divisions trained and opportunities for advancement plentiful. Yet, a black noncommissioned officer at the post wrote the *Atlanta Daily World* that "Though we have some brilliant Negro officers they are never promoted. Some of these officers hold degrees from the nation's outstanding universities, while white officers come from Ft. Benning ignorant as the days are long. In a few months they are captains."³³ Surely, there was little excuse for not promoting African Americans within the 92nd and 93rd.

Still another problem was that many white officers resented black officers and would not serve with, recognize, or assist their fellow officers. When mixed black and white officer staffs did occur, leadership problems appeared even when cooperation existed. For instance, separate but equal policies often meant different housing and

³³ Letter of "One who desires to know" to Mr. C.A. Scott, *Atlanta Daily World*, November 23, 1943, quoted in McGuire, *Taps*, p. 45.

facilities at many installations, thwarting the possibility of forging a unified command. Further, because there were so few black officers during the period between the wars, experienced white officers usually had had no experience working with black officers, a problem also seen among new white officers who had not worked with blacks in the civilian world. George Looney didn't think much of the quality of the white officers he had to work with either:

The change in officers at the senior level of this Fort Huachuca division [93rd] was glaringly apparent to me. The animosity between the white and black officers permeated the air and our arrival [of additional black officers] didn't help improve the situation; it just meant the senior officers had more black lieutenants to keep in their place, second lieutenants. Ninety-five to ninety-eight percent of the white officers were southerners. I think I was in a position to say that the majority of the white officers with the 93rd were people who could not have made it in the 37th or 87th divisions, or any white division of any caliber. . . . I understand what we didn't get of these misfits ended up with the 92nd Division.³⁴

Off-post, many white civilians would tolerate black enlisted men, but were outwardly resentful of black officers (i.e., blacks in authority). If the local attitudes of the surrounding communities were decidedly anti-black, then this further restricted the kinds of duties that black officers could be assigned. It would do little good to have black officers on guard duty or assign them to assist in control of black soldiers off-post on Saturday nights. White officers had to take up the slack, which did no good toward building the relationship between white and black officers.

The Army's policy restrictions on where a black officer could be assigned often left them in limbo while commanders found suitable assignments. At Fort Huachuca, the commander of the 93rd responded to one of General Davis's questions regarding the promotion of three black lieutenants, that they were acting as Captains in a field artillery unit but he did not have anyone to replace them if he promoted them as was their due.³⁵ This was an odd response to make at Fort Huachuca where two divisions of black troops trained. At posts across America, no one seemed to know what to do with the black officer so they shipped them somewhere else. Black officers, who were transferred from

³⁴ George Looney, Interview in Motley, *Invisible Soldier*, pp. 83-84.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

post to post, began to call themselves "traveling second lieutenants," as upwards of 20 to 30 of them would meet in pools waiting for assignment. Fort Huachuca was one of these dumping grounds--and there should have been plenty of opportunities. Yet as late as May of 1944, the 92nd had little if any African American officers in the command's upper levels. One regiment's staff for instance had its highest black officer as a Captain, but all others were 1st and 2nd Lieutenants. The unit had no white 2nd Lieutenants.³⁶

For a short time Fort Huachuca staff gave these young officers some real assignments. With a great many black officers at Fort Huachuca, the 93rd experimented with an all-black battalion, commanded by an all black officer staff. According to Wiley, the best officers were chosen for all command positions. For some reason left unexplained the unit performed poorly. The experiment was dubbed a failure and abandoned after three months.³⁷ Using Fort Huachuca as a dumping ground for unassigned black officers did have an unintended positive consequence for whites. A new influx of black officers raised the morale considerably among white officers, because that usually meant that they would be promoted. Since no black officer would be promoted above a white, the white officers had to be promoted to make room for the black officers.³⁸

Even among their own race, maintaining proper military order was difficult for black officers. Black enlisted and non-commissioned men saw that black officers were not treated equally by white officers and though resenting the distinction, were conflicted in following a black officers' orders. This obviously did nothing to help the fortunes of black officers and only confirmed in the minds of Army policy makers that blacks could not lead. Black veteran officer Jessie Johnson's words summarized this problem in a personal way: "Negro enlisted men wondered what was happening. Some of them scorned our apparent laziness; others complained about our second-class assignments. Were we officers or weren't we? None of us could tell them, because we didn't know either."³⁹ At Fort Huachuca, there is some indication that the prejudice the enlisted men met brought some camaraderie between the black officers and enlisted. Sergeant Eugene Lester recalled what happened when an influx of black officers were dumped into the 92nd right as they prepared to go overseas. "I know the enlisted men did not resent their

³⁶ Letter of Lt. John Doe to Mrs., Roosevelt, May 11, 1944, Papers of the NAACP, Part 17 Discrimination in the Armed Forces, Group II, Series A, Reel 20.

³⁷ Wiley, *The Training of Negro Troops*, p. 32.

³⁸ Sergeant E. J. Wells, Interview, Motley, *The Invisible Soldier*, p. 311.

³⁹ Johnson, *Ebony Brass*, p. 57.

new black officers but there was a resentment against the idea of bringing men totally strange at the time it was done. . . .The men at Huachuca were proud of their black officers but not of the fact that these officers had to catch up under the pressure of preparing to go overseas."⁴⁰ The result was that untrained officers in strange units found themselves on the front lines.

White officers in WWII made the same complaints against black officers heard during WWI. These included charges that black officers worked by the clock instead of getting the job done no matter how long it took, that they disappeared in times of crisis, and that they lacked initiative and aggressiveness in combat. The commander of the 93rd complained that "except for a small number (10 to 15%) [black lieutenants] are lacking in military background, aggressiveness, professional knowledge and ability to control or instruct their platoons."⁴¹ Further, black officers sided with black enlisted men in disciplinary situations (and in this same light, they failed to maintain a proper distance from black enlisted or observe the time honored officer code of conduct), and they carried a 'chip-on-the-shoulder' attitude and sensitivity in perceived slights. This latter complaint was the outward manifestation of the tangled environment in which black officers found themselves. Prejudices and Jim Crow were a reality, and thus, in every interaction with a white officer colleague or superior there was the possibility for misunderstanding. How should a black officer interpret and react toward a comment, a glance, a seeming or real injustice? Fearing discrimination, and being subjected to very real incidents of discrimination, many black officers became suspicious of any attempts at camaraderie by white officers. Many black officers developed a defensive attitude to such an extreme that white officers, previously supportive of black officers, became disillusioned and exasperated by black officer attitudes. As Lt. Colonel Johnson saw it, the result was that black officers in World War II fell into various categories. Johnson's observations were that some black officers: 1) varied in their ability to forget the racial barriers of their former civilian lives which caused strained relationships with white officers; 2) succumbed to the discrimination and neglected their duties through resignation to the situation or belligerency; 3) carried a chip-on-their-shoulder (see above), looking for trouble; 4) fell to extreme discipline of subordinates; 5) were over conscious of rank, even among themselves; and 6) like all humans, some were careless and inefficient while others were ambitious and industrious.⁴² In other words, they reacted as all people would

⁴⁰ Sergeant Eugene Lester Interview, Motley, *The Invisible Soldier*, p. 307.

⁴¹ Wiley, *The Training of Negro Troops*, p. 29.

⁴² Johnson, *Ebony Brass*, p. 58.

to the enraging situation where they held the rank and responsibility of professional military officers, but in practice could command none of the support or respect needed to efficiently carry out their duties.

One close-up of a black officers' experience in the Army speaks volumes about the complex situation African American officers' found themselves enduring during WWII. Second Lieutenant William F. Jones was one of the few black officers in the Army who held an engineering degree in civilian life. Commissioned on May 20, 1942, at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, Lieutenant Jones was quickly posted to Fort Leonard Wood. In August he was assigned as Troop Train Commander for 240 black troops heading to Camp Polk, Louisiana--a mission he accomplished with no problem. However, when he and five enlisted men attempted to return to Fort Leonard Wood, they were denied Pullman accommodations in Shreveport, Louisiana. He sent two men ahead immediately by coach, and eventually he got the rest back to Fort Leonard Wood, but not before he and the remaining three were accosted and threatened by local police. The police harassment came about after the train conductor took exception to Lieutenant Jones wearing his sidearm (standard procedure for a Troop Train Commander). The local M.P.s refused to do anything about it, so the irate conductor called the city police. Lieutenant Jones eventually got back to Fort Leonard Wood, but he and 14 other black officers were ordered to Fort Huachuca.

At Fort Huachuca, Lieutenant Jones found additional problems awaiting him. While assisting a Colonel on one project, his Company Commander requested he begin another. He was unable to perform the latter because he was not only busy doing the first, but could not secure the necessary equipment to begin the second project. Meanwhile, a sergeant under his command failed to do his job and, possibly to cover his own failures, jumped the chain of command by complaining to the Company Commander that Lieutenant Jones was inefficient. Then, a white Lieutenant complained to the commander that Jones had failed to salute him at headquarters. Adding to Jones' problems, his white fiancée visited him and he became embroiled in controversy at the Hostess House. One evening he, some fellow officers, and their girlfriends got together in her room, drank sodas and had a good time. Unfortunately the next day, the maid, upon entering her room found the extra bed messed-up from their party and assumed that Lieutenant Jones had slept over the previous evening. Lieutenant Jones soon found himself formally charged with "creating a disturbance in Louisiana" and "inefficient handling of men," because the sergeant had complained that Jones had a "chip on his shoulder thinking about the status

of his race." Whether or not he survived these charges is unknown, but the Lieutenant seems to have endured just about every form of prejudicial behavior black officers could experience during the war; contempt from civilian whites fearful of a black man with authority, insubordination from soldiers below him, and harassment from above and from civilians. It would have taken great strength of character not to develop a 'chip-on-the-shoulder' attitude.⁴³

The categories of black officer responses to prejudice as described by Colonel Johnson, and as were seen in Lieutenant Jones's charges, are hauntingly similar to the conclusions reached by Army historians immediately following the war. Thus it seems clear that at least one black officer and most likely others, recognized the problem, but they were in most cases so much caught up in the issue's complexity that they could do little to solve it themselves. Further as most were junior officers, they had little authority to enact any solutions. There is little wonder that some resigned themselves to inaction and were perceived as inefficient or lazy--what was the use? By the end of WWII, many black officers were as disillusioned with the Army as the enlisted men. As one black officer exclaimed when asked if he was going to stay in, "Are you kidding? At least in civilian life the discrimination is not organized."⁴⁴

Providing housing and recreational facilities for black officers was yet another challenge distinct from the enlisted problem and with a number of nuances unique to the officer corps. Most critically, the control of officers' quarters and officers' messes was traditionally left largely to the officers themselves:

The Army has always regarded the officers' quarters and the officers' mess as the home and the private dining room of the officers who reside and eat there. They are an entity within a military reservation which has always enjoyed a minimum of regulation and the largest possible measure of self-government. The War Department considers this to be a fundamentally correct conception. Both from the standpoint of practice of long standing and from the standpoint of propriety, the War Department should be most reluctant to impose hard and fast rules for every human

⁴³ Letter of H. Leonard Richardson, Attorney at Law, to Mr. Walter White, NAACP, November 24, 1942 in Papers of the NAACP, Discrimination in the Armed Forces Part 9, Series B, Reel 12 (microfilm on file, University of South Carolina Thomas Cooper Library, Columbia).

⁴⁴ Johnson, *Ebony Brass*, p. 65.

relationship involved in the operation of officers' messes and officers' quarters.⁴⁵

Thus at first, higher headquarters left Army installation commanders to operate under the assumption that black officers would have segregated facilities like the enlisted men. But in practice facilities for black officers was an added level of complexity and the application varied from post to post depending on a number of local circumstances. With facility duplication the norm at Fort Huachuca it might be assumed that separate housing and messing of officers would have occurred. It probably did to some extent since Fort Huachuca found itself to be the central "pool" for unassigned or excess African American officers. Still, the fort boasted that colored and white officers of the 93rd ate in the same mess and lived in the same barracks. If racial harmony was supposed to be implied in this, it was misleading since they usually ate at separate tables and in separate areas of the mess.⁴⁶

If policies regarding officers' quarters and mess were avoided, higher headquarters was even more loath to interfere with officers off-duty. Again, the establishment and running of officers' clubs was strongly held within the officer corps (Figure 4.3). Furthermore, the customs, written, and unwritten codes of conduct associated with the officer brotherhood and by association officers' clubs, were held sacrosanct by long-standing traditions going far back in time to at least the creation of professional and state armies in Europe. Officers' clubs were places where officers, regardless of rank, could meet and socialize in a semi-informal environment away from the parade ground or training area. There was a familiarity tolerated between officers within the walls of the officers' club that was not appropriate on duty. Officers' clubs were places where officers of equal rank could casually discuss problems associated with their commands. Senior officers could take aside a junior officer and make important suggested improvements without making an issue official. Likewise, junior officers could approach officers of higher rank with problems. Critically, this interaction forged a bond between officers of different rank and assisted not only morale but also in consistent unit leadership. Socializing in these clubs was actually fundamental and critical in building unit cohesion and morale, and was also critical to officer advancement. Historically, although the Army built officers' club buildings, the clubs had their own operating rules that had served well over time. Officers became members of officers' clubs by paying dues. Officers were

⁴⁵ Lee, *Employment of Negro Troops*, p. 223.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 224; Wiley, *The Training of Negro Troops*, p. 30.



Figure 4.3 The Black Officers' Club at Fort Huachuca.⁴⁷

expected to pay these club fees to stock the clubs with 'supplies' beyond those provided by the Army.

Officers' clubs, and all the important interaction that occurred in these buildings were almost universally denied the black officer in WWII. For while white officers worked side by side with black officers on duty, off-duty, few white officers wanted to socialize with black officers, and in some cases, vice versa. Black officers were routinely denied access to the officers' clubs across the country. "Efforts of commanders to intermingle their white and colored subordinates in officers' clubs were steadfastly resisted."⁴⁸ In one of the few published diaries written by a black officer of WWII, Lieutenant Colonel Jesse Johnson makes it repeatedly clear that black officers were not offered membership or allowed in the officers' clubs at the many posts to which he was transferred. In one instance, he was with several other black officers who, under the

⁴⁷ Photograph Courtesy Fort Huachuca Museum.

⁴⁸ Wiley, *The Training of Negro Troops*, p. 30.

influence of too much alcohol, were discussing crashing them white officers' club. An old veteran took them to task and reminded them of their status. As Johnson concluded "Two brass bars won't get you into the post's one white club."⁴⁹

It was no different at Fort Huachuca where the two races of officers rarely got together for drinking, conversation and story telling. When it became known that the post would have two officers' clubs, the white Lakeside club and the black Mountain View club, African American newspapers made it front page news with headlines like "Segregation at Fort Huachuca." For their part, black officers at the fort were outraged and boycotted the black club, writing letters of protest to the black newspapers. A situation report to the NAACP noted that the black club was known by the black officers as "Uncle Tom's Cabin." Another report mentioned the fact that the African American Officers' club had no swimming pool while the white club did.⁵⁰ A medical officer at the post described the tension at the post in regard to the officers' club:

Before the new cantonment here was built there was only one officers' Cantonment on the Post. I am told relations were most harmonious. When the Division (93rd) started coming in it brought with it a large number of the cheapest type of cracker officers. Segregation was instituted in that a large new, spacious, elegantly furnished [white] officers' club was built for them in an out of the way place with 5 guest rooms in it and a fishing pond stocked with trout and bass. For the Negroes a Service Club building was built like the one built for soldiers with few appointments and no guest rooms and it was built up against two dormitories for enlisted men's guests. The furniture was nothing like the whites had. The Negro officers refused to join it or those that had, sent in their resignations. When Bousfield got here he ordered every man in his outfit to cancel his resignation. The men of the 318 Medical Battalion which was attached to the division, refused almost to a man to cross its doorsill. Those of us in Col. Bousfield's unit pay our dues but the most of us never cross the doorsill. Had it not been for that surrender most of the officers believe that the Commandant of the Fort would have abandoned the project and admitted us to the one club.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Lieutenant Colonel Jessie J. Johnson, *Ebony Brass: An Autobiography of Negro Frustration and Aspiration* (New York: The William-Frederick Press, 1967), p. 49.

⁵⁰ Robert Jefferson, Making of the Men of the 93rd, p. 258; "Situation At Fort Huachuca As Reported to NAACP," May 27, 1944, *Papers of the NAACP*, Part 17, Group II, Series A, Microfilm, Reel 20; Letter of Carolyn Davenport Moore, Executive Secretary, NAACP, to Mr. Walter White, Secretary, June 23, 1944, *Papers of the NAACP*, Part 17, Group II, Series A, Microfilm, Reel 20.

⁵¹ Letter of Roscoe C. Giles to Louie, June 3, 1944, *Papers of the NAACP*, Part 17, Group II, Series A, Microfilm, Reel 20.

Another source of friction over the club was that periodically dues for the clubs were pooled together and distributed equally to run the clubs. Since the vast majority of the officers on post were African American (perhaps as high as 80% around 1944), most of the money to support the white club came from their dues, yet they were not able to enter the club.⁵²

Eventually, black officers' did use the Mountain View Club. The club was used for performances, dances, general recreation and relaxation, sing-alongs and the occasional wedding. One of the more special occasions was an exhibition of African American art called the "Works of Negro Artists," that opened to a grand ceremony on May 16, 1943 (Figure 4.4). In the dedication ceremony, three prominent black artists, painters Vernon Winslow and Hale Woodruff, and Sculptor Richmond Barth were in attendance along with Lew Davis. But the issue of a segregated officers' club must also have persisted for by the end of the war the post commander had abandoned the policy of separate clubs.⁵³

Summary

Turning millions of civilians into soldiers was a daunting challenge for the Army in the early 1940s and at Fort Huachuca the problem was exacerbated by the fact that the cadre would be attempting to turn large numbers of African American men and women into soldiers. These men and women had a wide variety of backgrounds, and educational and economic experiences, but overall, the racial attitudes that prevailed in American society at the time had denied most them opportunities for a good education and employment. This created a training problem at every level. Almost all brought with them the baggage of past injustices and prejudicial treatment in civilian life and most did not expect anything better in the Army. In many cases, their expectations were realized. On the other side of the racial line, many white instructors and officers, especially those who had not been at the fort prior to the war, brought with them a prejudice against the average African American's potential as a soldier. One prejudice in the War Department was that African Americans would respond best to southern officers and that these southern men would better understand how to deal with black troops. It would seem in hindsight that the predominance of southern officers at Fort Huachuca may have actually

⁵² Carloyn Moore, "Situation Report."

⁵³ Bischoff, *Determination of Eligibility*, pp. 25-35; Robert Jefferson, *Making of the Men of the 93rd*, p. 258.



Figure 4.4 Ceremony For Black Art Exhibit Inside Mountain View Officers' Club.⁵⁴

caused greater problems than if there were more of a mix of white northern and southerners in the officers' corps.

Among the various racial attitudes and policies were thousands of enlisted and officers who saw the climate as something that had to be endured in order to get the war completed. No doubt the following interaction between black veteran Howard Hickerson and his white commander was typical of these men. Hickerson had been denied being served at a white PX in Louisiana, the PX for African Americans being closed. This infuriated Hickerson who then drove back to his base without washing his truck as he had been ordered. Upon arrival, the commander wanted to know why the truck was dirty, but recognized Hickerson was "fuming." The officer took Hickerson into his tent, gave him a beer and asked what happened. After hearing his story, the officer said, "Hick, you're not

⁵⁴ Photograph Courtesy Fort Huachuca Museum.

from the South. This is just the way things are down here. You just gotta get used to it. Now go on an get your truck back over there to be washed." Hickerson calmed down and washed his truck.⁵⁵ For many whites the issue was lets get this war over and go home. For African Americans it was much more. Mixing all of the above factors and personalities together with the efforts of sincere individuals in both races who were attempting to make the best of the war time situation, the combat outcome of both division should have been no surprise.

⁵⁵ Interview of Howard Hickerson by Maggi M. Morehouse, March 31, 1995 transcript (Fort Huachuca: on file, Fort Huachuca Museum).

CHAPTER V: FORT HUACHUCA AND THE END OF THE SEGREGATED ARMY

Introduction

After five years of unrelenting hurry, excitement, and bustle, Japan surrendered on September 2, 1945. Just as rapidly as Fort Huachuca had expanded in 1941, thousands of men and women were demobilized and sent happily home. Practically overnight, Fort Huachuca stood silent and for the most part, empty. Almost exactly two years later, on September 15, 1947 the fort was deactivated. It would not reopen until 1951. When it did, it was to an entirely new Army--an Army that was now racially integrated as policy, if not in reality. It would take a few more years before the entire Army was completely integrated, but the Korean crisis moved it forward as a result of another mobilization effort.

The impetus for integration was, admittedly, not due purely to the demands of justice but one of political opportunity. On July 26, 1948, under the pressure of an upcoming election, President Harry Truman signed Executive Order 9981, ending racial segregation in the Armed Forces. From that point on, read the order: "there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin."¹ While decidedly an election maneuver, Truman left no room for dissent within the military. When asked if the order meant the end of segregation in the Army, Truman responded with an unambiguous "Yes."

Integration

While black veterans of WWII pondered their wartime experiences, attempting to make sense of the war's brutality in Europe and the Pacific, and the prejudices they had met at home, the War Department once again reviewed their performance. Two major reviews of the African American soldier were initiated within the Army. The first--

¹ Executive Order 9981, July 26, 1948.

reminiscent of the post WWI review of black troops--was a questionnaire sent to senior commanders by the Secretary of War, John McCloy, only two weeks after the end of the war in Europe. The other review was completed by Truman Gibson. Both reviews concluded that African American unit performance was below par and both leaned toward the conclusion that segregation was the reason. The McCloy questionnaire revealed that commanders believed that the solution was a form of partial integration. Here integration would consist of smaller black units integrated into larger white units. This method had been experimented with during the war and seemed to improve the performance of the black units. Gibson, however, with the backing of civil rights leaders, concluded that the problem was segregation and only full integration was the answer. McCloy recommended a third review to be conducted by a board of general officers. Its goal would be to prepare a new Negro policy for the use of African American soldiers in future wars.

The board became known as the Gillem Board, after its chairman Lieutenant General Alvan C. Gillem, Jr., which met for the first time on October 1, 1945. The board interviewed some 60 witnesses, pored over the previous reviews, and studied a large mass of other relevant documents, all within about a month and a half. Their conclusions came just to the point of recommending full integration without doing so. Eighteen recommendations were made including: 1) the use of qualified black individuals in appropriate overhead and special units; 2) conducting surveys of manpower needs at various installations to include suggestions of where Negroes could be employed; 3) the elimination of the all-black division; 4) the use of small black units, like platoons, within larger white companies, black companies within black battalions, etc.; and, 5) that black officers be accepted into the Regular Army. Civil rights leaders were naturally disappointed, but the momentum was beginning to build, and influential generals like James H. Doolittle and Follett Bradley helped it along by voicing the abolishment of racial segregation. As noted, Truman gave the death blow to the segregated Army. Faced with a divided Democratic party at their political convention, Truman was advised that he could secure the black vote by ending racial segregation within the Armed Forces. His Executive Order did just that and African Americans aligned with Truman's successful presidential bid.

While the order made it official, the Army was left to carry out the mission. In a very reduced peacetime Army, integration would have come slow as opportunities were few and far between. If anything good can come out of war, perhaps the Korean Conflict

can be pointed out as a good thing for it speeded up the process of racial integration in the Armed Services. Faced with integration within the context of a wartime expansion, the Army had to get on with it quickly. In 1950, most units were still segregated. One of these units was the 24th Infantry, who, once again, performed below par in combat. While none of the untrained infantry units performed well at the beginning of the conflict, within the 24th an entire battalion drifted off the battlefield. The 24th was deactivated. Meanwhile integrated units like the 25th performed much better. It was now painfully obvious to the Army that full integration was the answer to many of the performance problems among black troops. Through the Korean Conflict, black troops that were integrated within the ranks performed well and earned the respect of their white comrades. White and black troops soon learned that on the battlefield and in the foxhole, race did not matter. Full integration did not come until 1954 when on October 30 the Secretary of Defense announced that the last of the all-black units were now abolished.²

Fort Huachuca and the Black Soldier

In 1947 the War Assets Administration declared the post surplus and began to dismantle Fort Huachuca. The fort was turned over to the Arizona Fish and Game Department and the post, ironically for the many black veterans, became a buffalo reserve. The buffalo did very well and became a problem for the post when it was reactivated. During the Korean Conflict the installation was opened temporarily and used to serve the 417th and 419th Aviation Brigade, and the 45th, 304th, 923rd, and 934th Engineer Aviation Groups. After the war it was closed again, but on February 1, 1954, the fort was reactivated to serve as the Army's Electronic Proving Ground. The fort has continued its service to the Army since then.³

While the policy of all-black Army units ended in 1954, Fort Huachuca has seen many distinguished African Americans since then, serving as soldiers in units where race means nothing and performance everything. Among the many who have served at Fort Huachuca was Edward Orval Gourdin, who was a Colonel and Commander of the 372nd Infantry during WWII. When he retired in 1959, he had reached the rank of Brigadier General. He died on July 22, 1966. Another was Lieutenant General Emmett Paige, Jr.,

² This summary of the integration process was compiled from Steven D. Smith, Keith Krawczynski, and Robert F. Jefferson, "Victory and Context: Recognition of African American Contributions to American Military History," in Smith and Zeidler, *Historic Context*, pp. 249-255; Nalty, *Strength for the Fight*, pp. 242-265.

³ Smith, *Fort Huachuca*, pp. 312-313.

the first black to make General in the Army Signal Corps. In 1984 he commanded the Information Services Command at Fort Huachuca, retiring in 1987. Lieutenant General Alonzo E. Short, Jr., was another, a staff planner at the post with the Army Communications Command in 1979. Yet another is Brigadier General John Marcella Watkins, Jr., who served two terms at Fort Huachuca, one as Commander of the 11th Signal Brigade, Army Information Systems Command in 1986, and later Commanding General and program manager of the Army Information Systems in 1990. These are some of the higher ranking officers who have served at Fort Huachuca over the last 40 years, but of course there are many, many, others.⁴

Fort Huachuca has been and continues to be the home of the black soldier. It would be safe to say that during the period when African Americans were segregated into all-black units that more African Americans were posted there and for longer periods than any other Army post in existence today. Perhaps its meaning to the black soldier is best left to a black veteran. Woman's Army Corps, Staff Sergeant Gertrude E. Cruse was on temporary duty at Fort Huachuca on June 18, 1947. Her job was to assist in the closing of the fort. She wrote a letter to "Whom it May Concern," which found its way to the NAACP. She offers some thoughts on the meaning of Fort Huachuca to the black soldier:

Being stationed here in Fort Huachuca, Arizona, . . . I wonder if the Negro population of America realize the extent of the facts concerning THIS particular Army Post?

In the first place it represents the only all Negro Fort to have been in operation during the past war and others previously. It was at one time the home Fort for the famed all Negro Tenth Cavalry--latter [sic] home for the Twenty-Fifth Infantry, serving as replacement to the Twenty-Fourth Infantry now serving the Occupation of Japan. It was also the Training home for the Ninety Third and Ninety Second Infantry Divisions. We are very proud of Fort Huachuca, for the fact that the first Women to be sent on the field for service, All Negroes, were sent here, therefore, Huachuca can be proclaimed as the home of the Negro Womens' Army Corps. There were many, many different outfits to train here in Huachuca---Tankers, Tank Destroyers, Engineers, Medical Detachments, Artillery, and Others, all Negroes.

⁴ For complete biographies of these men and other black Generals and Flag Officers see Walter L. Hawkins, *African American Generals and Flag Officers*, (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Company, 1992).

It is really a sad occasion [sic] for me and, many others, to be here on such an assignment. Comments of various and numerous kinds have been made about the Fort, prompting me to write this letter. Officers and Enlisted Men alike who are here for the purposes of closing the place feel the welcoming and friendly much lived-in atmosphere that has made Huachuca what it is. They wonder why such a place is to be junked, (for this is as it seems to me). I wish that it were possible for me to send pictures with this letter to substantiate the facts herein.

There are numerous men, and women who were here, and are in positions to help or hinder, as the case may be, and slander places and people, who have done nothing--perhaps because of the fact that they do not know. Then there are others who have gone to the extent of writing about only the bad elements around and in Huachuca. They seem to have forgotten that wherever there are a number of people congregated that there will be good and bad elements and people alike. It is too bad through [sic] that some people can only see the bad things in life. . . .Places like people, for people make places, are just alike, The Negro Soldier has made Huachuca.

It is said that there is nothing to save Huachuca, at this date--perhaps not, but to destroy this place and keep others which can't even hold a candle to Huachuca, is not only a waste of money but, also a slander to the soldiering done here by our Negro Men and Women in the Service.

I believe that our Press and National Organizations can do something if they are persisting and persistent. To have Fort Huachuca, Arizona as a Shrine or an Honorary Fort to the Negro Soldier would do more for a large number of Service Men and Women, than to have a Bronze Statue on Madison Square, or any other large City Square.

I wish that it were possible for someone to come here to see that the Negro Soldier has done for himself and the Negro as a whole to see just what makes Huachuca what it is and, what I have said that it is. And [that] what an American does for himself, he does that for his Country.⁵

⁵ Letter of Staff Sergeant Gertrude E. Cruse, *Papers of the NAACP*, Part 9, Series C, Reel 1, microfilm on file, Thomas Cooper Library, University of South Carolina.

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