

***The United States' Alternative Motive
of the 1916-1917
Punitive Mexican Expedition:
The True Pursuit of
Francisco "Pancho" Villa or
U.S. Military Preparation to
Enter and be Victorious in World War I?***

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Senior Honors Thesis
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Acknowledgements

I want to thank those who have provided me with support, guidance, and encouragement for producing this thesis. Additionally, I thank my advisor, Prof. Veronica Castillo-Muñoz, with whom I had the pleasure of taking several classes with and who graciously agreed to work with me. I would also like to thank my peers in the Senior Honors Seminar, led by Prof. Hilary Bernstein, for the helpful edits and comments throughout the entire thesis process. I wish to extend a thank you to Stanford University for allowing me to conduct archival research in the Hoover Institution Archives. I owe a special thank you to David Hays, the archivist, at the University of Colorado Boulder who gave me special attention and guidance as I conducted archival research in the William Carey Brown Collection. Most important, I would like to thank my mother, Dr. Monica I. Garcia, who provided me limitless support and assistance during my research and finally, to the rest of my family who kept me motivated to see this thesis through.

Introduction

The thunderous sound of horses galloping, the explosion of gunfire in the still morning air along with the boisterous chants on “Viva Villa!” awoke the residents of the small town of Columbus, New Mexico on March 8, 1916.¹ The townspeople of the small town situated along the U.S.-Mexico border awoke to the riotous sounds only to witness hundreds of men on horses charging through the town. The residents of Columbus tried to run away or hide from the Mexican riders who crossed over the border. The Mexican men on horseback ransacked buildings and looted homes throughout the small town. Additionally, the Mexican intruders raided the town and took what they could carry, including money, clothing, food, and other valuables. The absence of moonlight left the town mostly in the dark.² The darkness allowed the chaos to continue covertly until the dark night brightened due to the fire from the town’s buildings set ablaze by the marauding raiders. The town was in complete chaos with the enigmatic Mexican revolutionary general leading the helm, Francisco “Pancho” Villa.

The assault on Columbus, New Mexico by Mexicans during the Mexican Revolution was indicative of the tensions between the Mexican citizens lacking resources and land, as the wealthy United States’ investors and government increasingly drained Mexico of its resources for their sole gain. Dictator Porfirio Díaz literally gave Mexico’s wealth away to the United States for the right price, which contributed to the explosive Mexican Revolution from 1910-1917. Economic, social, and political problems and tensions increased along the

¹ Frank Tompkins, *Chasing Villa: The Story Behind the Story of Pershing’s Expedition into Mexico* (Harrisburg: The Military service publishing company, 1934), 55.

² John S. D. Eisenhower, *INTERVENTION!: The United States and the Mexican Revolution 1913-1917* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1993), 221.

border between Mexicans and individuals in the United States during the Mexican Revolution. The U.S. government sent military forces to provide protection to those in the U.S., but military forces were stretched thin along the entire U.S.-Mexico border that measured more than two thousand miles long. Previously, Mexican raiders executed successful raids into the United States to steal cattle, horses, and other valuables. From mid-1915 to early 1916, the U.S.-Mexico border faced increased raids and violence.³ However, the raid on Columbus was decidedly larger. More marauders crossed into Columbus and waged a violent and destructive rage throughout the small border town. Despite a seemingly organized attack, there was little warning and lack of reliable information regarding the town of Columbus, NM being a target. Moreover, escalating tensions along the U.S.-Mexico border, were consistent with and symptomatic of the long-standing difficult foreign relationship between the U.S. and Mexican governments.

A garrison and the American military force of the 13th Calvary Regiment were stationed in Columbus, NM at the time of the raid. The U.S. soldiers were wakened by the calamity that ensued throughout the town. The soldiers and Mexican raiders engaged in sporadic gunfights until the raiders fled back across the Mexico border. Not wanting the raiders to return, a group of soldiers took to their horses and pursued the raiders across the border. In violation of the orders given to U.S. troops from the U.S. War Department not to send troops across the U.S.-Mexico border, the cavalrymen rode towards the fleeing raiders into Mexico.⁴ Ultimately, the American troops returned to the U.S. The raid resulted in the

³ Ibid, 187.

⁴ United States Department of State *Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States with the address of the president to Congress December 5, 1916* U.S. Government Printing Office, 1916, 483. <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?type=header&id=FRUS.FRUS1916>.

deaths of eight townspeople and seven U.S. troops, along with an estimated one hundred raiders.⁵ The surprise attack left Columbus scarred from the fires, shootings, and destruction caused by the raiders.

News of the raid on Columbus, NM spread rapidly throughout the United States, which shocked the American people and led to calls for justice. Headlines of U.S. newspapers, such as the *San Francisco Chronicle* and the *Los Angeles Evening Herald*, advocated for U.S. intervention into Mexico and punishment for the killings.⁶ The U.S. military and political leaders believed the raiders were members of the band led by the northern Mexican revolutionary leader, Francisco "Pancho" Villa. One of the most notable figures of the Mexican Revolution, Pancho Villa was known throughout the United States, once as an ally and then as an adversary, due to the U.S. newspapers and the Hollywood films that displayed his image. They recorded some of Villa's various exploits during the Mexican Revolution, such as his military victories and the take over of major cities. After the raid, newspapers headlined the attack on Columbus, NM and the killing of American soldiers and civilians. Despite conflicting accounts of Villa's participation in the Columbus raid the sentiment in the U.S. already turned on Villa and several newspapers splashed Villa on their front page. One newspaper's front page stated, "Villa Army Kills 16 Americans in Raid on United States."⁷ This is one example of many similar headlines, which instilled anger and the

⁵ The Conduct of American Foreign Affairs, 1915-1920 (part 1, chapter 13-19), 477-8, undated; 1915-1920; Robert Lansing Papers, Box 6, Folder 14; Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library. <http://findingaids.princeton.edu/collections/MC083/c0083>.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 482.

⁷ *The Evening World*, (New York, N.Y.), March 9, 1916, *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Library of Congress. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030193/1916-03-09/ed-1/seq-1/>.

call for retaliation by the U.S. government. President Woodrow Wilson was under pressure to make a decision on how the U.S. government should respond to the attack.

After the raid on U.S. soil, President Wilson, in conjunction with advisors and other government officials, decided to launch the Punitive Mexican Expedition, which entered Mexico on March 16, 1916.⁸ A substantial response was needed for the loss and damage of American lives and property. With President Wilson's approval, the expeditionary force was organized and sent into Mexico to capture and punish the raiders responsible for the attack on the town of Columbus, NM and to prevent further raids by Villa's band.⁹ President Wilson, the U.S. State Department, and War Department oversaw the expedition. General John J. Pershing, a lauded member of the military was chosen to lead the expeditionary forces in search of the bandits led by Pancho Villa.¹⁰

The expedition lasted for several months and the U.S. troops traveled throughout the state of Chihuahua, Mexico. Several conflicts with Villa's band, known as the Villistas, occurred throughout the expedition. Additionally, the U.S. troops encountered the Mexican government's troops who did not want the U.S. military in their country. The Mexican government never endorsed the action of U.S. troops to enter Mexico, however, there was a misinterpretation by the Washington Cabinet that the Mexican government had granted permission to cross the border.¹¹ There were anti-American sentiments in Mexico, and the

⁸ William C. Brown, *The Punitive Expedition*, 3, Box 23, Folder 23-5, W.C. Brown, Military Papers Punitive Expedition, Norlin Library, Special Collections & Archives, University of Colorado Boulder.

⁹ Tompkins, *Chasing Villa*, 70-71.

¹⁰ Hugh Lenox Scott, *Some Memories of A Soldier* (New York: The Century Co., 1928), 521. [http://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.\\$b60354](http://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.$b60354).

¹¹ United States Department of State *Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States with the address of the president to Congress December 4, 1917* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1917, 995, <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?type=header&id=FRUS.FRUS1917>.

presence of American forces aggravated those feelings. These conflicts almost led to another war between Mexico and the United States.

The purpose of this thesis is to delineate the actions by the U.S. government and within the context of the Punitive Mexican Expedition to discover if there was an alternative reason for the government launching the mass military operation in pursuit of one man and his band. One explanation is the expedition served as an opportunity for the U.S. to prepare for entry into World War I, or the Great War, in Europe that was well underway. Moreover, the U.S. government utilized the expedition in extensive military exercises and the testing of modern warfare tactics that were seen in Europe in 1917. The Punitive Mexican Expedition, specifically allowed General John J. Pershing to gain experience and be lauded for his abilities to use the same vehicles in World War I in 1917. Additionally, the focus points are exploring the type of relationship Pancho Villa had with the U.S. government and its generals, such as John J. Pershing, and vice versa. The relations on the U.S.-Mexico border at the beginning of the twentieth century played a defining role in the relationship between the U.S. and Mexican governments. The situation at the border revealed several factors that led up to the launching of the Punitive Mexican Expedition.

Pancho Villa triggered the U.S. government's decision to send a military force into Mexico. He became known throughout Mexico and the United States, but Villa did not become a well-known leader overnight. The Mexican Revolution allowed Villa to establish himself as a noted figure with the ability to rally significant forces under his command. Villa's early life fleeing from authorities in Mexico influenced his successes throughout the Mexican Revolution and helped him become a powerful and influential leader.

The Mexican Revolution, in 1910, broke out all over the country. In northern Mexico, a rebellion force developed with the goal of overthrowing the thirty-year dictatorship of José de la Cruz Porfirio Díaz.¹² Pancho Villa was recruited to join and help lead the force against Díaz. Villa and other revolutionary leaders from the north facilitated the overthrow of Porfirio Díaz's dictatorship and resignation. After the coup d'état, a power struggle lasted for several years. During that time, Villa became a prominent general of the revolution.

Several wealthy U.S. business interests were in Mexico before the revolution, therefore the U.S. government closely watched the events in Mexico. Villa, along with other Mexican revolutionary leaders, understood good relations with the U.S. government were necessary. However, Villa came to a position where military defeats resulted in a reduction in his forces, prestige, and resources by 1916. Pancho Villa faced a low point in his position within Mexico and became desperate to regain his influence and power.

The U.S. government was not directly involved in the Mexican Revolution, but closely observed what occurred in the country. The U.S. government implemented an embargo on arms sales against Mexico on February 3, 1912 with Proclamation 1263-
Concerning the Shipment of Arms into Mexico.¹³ This embargo was implemented to prevent the sale of arms to the Mexican revolutionaries. When President Wilson was elected, he wanted to focus on domestic policy, but for the majority of his presidential term he had to deal with foreign affairs, including Mexico.¹⁴ The Punitive Mexican Expedition brought the

¹² Eisenhower, *INTERVENTION!*, 3.

¹³ Woodrow Wilson: "Proclamation 1263 - Concerning the Shipment of Arms into Mexico," February 3, 1914. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*.
<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=117310&st=&st1=>

¹⁴ Clarence C. Clendenen, *The United States and Pancho Villa: A Study In Unconventional Diplomacy* (New York: Kennikat Press, 1972), 50.

U.S. and Mexican governments in direct conflict with each other. Tensions ran high and sporadic conflicts broke out between U.S. and Mexican troops, but Villa managed to continually elude the American forces.

Foreign relations issues the Wilson Administration faced were not solely focused on Mexico. For instance, in 1914, the First World War, which engulfed multiple countries, started in Europe. President Wilson and his administration had to deal with the overseas conflict that eventually escalated and the U.S. had to enter the war. Issues with the U.S. and its relationships with Europe and Mexico occurred almost simultaneously. The U.S. government was pressured into dealing with the U.S.-Mexico border by minimizing the chaos that occurred. In regards to Europe, there was continual pressure on the U.S. to avoid being involved with the conflicts, while problems with Germany made that almost impossible. The Punitive Mexican Expedition occurred at a time of extreme global political unrest, which ultimately created an opportunity for the U.S. to become the reigning world power.

Two years prior to the Punitive Mexican Expedition, World War I broke out in Europe. Kaiser Wilhelm II ruled the German empire as they began their entrance into the war with the invasion of Belgium and France.¹⁵ During 1914, the United States was generally underprepared, poorly trained, sparsely equipped, and lacked a militaristic mindset. The Punitive Mexican Expedition served as an opportunity to acquire the badly needed training and experience for the U.S. army. President Wilson sought to keep the U.S. neutral during WWI, but faced the repercussions resonated from Europe during the war.

¹⁵ Scott, *Some Memories of A Soldier*, 543.

The expedition allowed for the use of military practice and the introduction of new features in modern warfare, which were utilized by the United States in World War I and World War II. Therefore, the Punitive Mexican Expedition also marked the end cavalries in U.S. military history. The U.S. Army sent infantry, cavalry, and artillery into Mexico via Columbus, New Mexico and Hachita, Arizona.¹⁶ One of the new firsts for the U.S. military was the use of airplanes. The First Aero Squadron was enlisted into the U.S. Army to assist in the expedition. Airplanes were used to scan the Mexican terrain in aiding with the search for Pancho Villa. This allowed pilots of the newly created group to gain more experience.¹⁷ Another first was the use of large-scale motorized transportation in service for the military. Supplies were needed to sustain the expeditionary force and the horses and mules could only carry a limited load. A mass organization process was created for trucks to be built, shipped, and utilized to transport the needed supplies. Other aspects included training the troops in weaponry, field exercises, and the general experience of armed combat.

There were several publications on the topic of the Punitive Mexican Expedition. Various publications highlighted the events, which led up to the launching of the expedition and how the U.S. government reacted after the attack. One example is the book, *INTERVENTION!: The United States and the Mexican Revolution 1913-1917*, by John S. D. Eisenhower. The author explores the situation, which occurred in Mexico before and between 1916 and 1917. Eisenhower explores the events within Mexico before and during the Punitive Mexican Expedition. He argues what occurred in Mexico impacted the United States, regardless if they were directly involved or not. In 1913, during the Mexican

¹⁶ James W. Hurst, *Pancho Villa and Black Jack Pershing: The Punitive Expedition in Mexico* (Westpoint: Praeger, 2008), 44.

¹⁷ Tompkins, *Chasing Villa*, 236.

Revolution, President Wilson implemented his “watchful waiting” policy in which the administration observed the events in Mexico.¹⁸ The actions and events that occurred at the border contributed to the lead up to the Punitive Mexican Expedition.

Another publication regarding the Punitive Mexican Expedition is, *The Secret War in Mexico: Europe, the United States, and the Mexican Revolution* by Friedrich Katz. Katz, an Austrian born anthropologist and historian, focused on Latin America, specifically the Mexican Revolution. Katz analyzed events from 1910 to 1920, including the Punitive Mexican Expedition, as well the events in the U.S. and in Europe. The author provides details on what occurred in Mexico during the revolution as the country experienced social, economic, and political turmoil. This was during one of the most seminal periods of Mexican history. Various factions were fighting for control of the government, which resulted in most of the country engaged in constant warfare from 1910 to 1920. The author connects events from the revolution and how they allowed Pancho Villa to become a leader and how his influence affected the governments of the U.S. and Mexico. Katz also incorporates the events and effects of WWI in Europe as well. Consequently, one aspect was the significant German presence in Mexico and the pressures to promote anti-American feelings.¹⁹

The study into the Punitive Mexican Expedition cannot be fully realized without understanding Francisco “Pancho” Villa himself. He made a significant impact not only in Mexico, but in the United States as well. In another book, *The Life and Times of Pancho Villa*, Katz provides an overview of Villa’s life from his birth to the Mexican Revolution to his untimely death. He explains Villa’s origins and influence throughout the revolution,

¹⁸ Eisenhower, *INTERVENTION!*, 60.

¹⁹ Katz, *The Secret War in Mexico*, 338.

helping to reveal what led to the attack on the U.S. The U.S. government's interference directly affected Pancho Villa's actions towards the United States. For example, President Wilson's decision to grant Villa's rival, Venustiano Carranza political recognition marked the turning point in which Pancho Villa no longer supported U.S. interests in Mexico.²⁰

There are also primary sources written by participants of the expedition. For example, an important source that provides a narrative of events during the expedition in Mexico is *Chasing Villa: The Last Campaign of the U.S. Cavalry* by Frank Tompkins. He was a major of the 13th Cavalry and helped lead the short pursuit after the raiders into Mexico right after the raid on Columbus. In his memoir, Tompkins recounts the conditions the troops faced, how the army conducted itself in Mexico, and the events that unfolded in the pursuit of the raiders. His writings provide insightful information regarding the expedition as well as his own thoughts. Tompkins felt there was a lack of sufficient effort by the Mexican government to pursue Villa and the Villistas after the raid on Columbus.²¹

These works, as well as other related publications, offer an insight of helpful information about the historical background surrounding the Punitive Mexican Expedition and some of the major characters involved. However, these works do not address the opportunity the Punitive Mexican Expedition presented for the U.S. military. The war in Europe already erupted and the U.S. was not in a strong position, if pulled into the conflict, which grew as the war went on. The U.S. officially declared war against Germany two months after the expeditionary forces returned from Mexico on February 5, 1917.²² Many of the troops and leaders, specifically Pershing, fought in Europe and applied the vast

²⁰ Ibid., 526.

²¹ Tompkins, *Chasing Villa*, 39.

²² Ibid., 214.

experience and training gleaned explicitly from the Punitive Mexican Expedition.

Chapter 1: Key Figures of the Punitive Expedition

In the beginning and throughout the Punitive Expedition, the U.S. military and the government faced a myriad challenges. When the U.S. military force entered Mexico, it exacerbated an already contentious relationship between the two countries. The U.S. troops dealt with resistance from the Mexican government and citizens while they tried to capture the raiders in Mexico. At several points of the Punitive Mexican Expedition, there was the fear and almost certainty of war between the U.S. and Mexico. The difficulties in Mexico combined with the escalating warfare in Europe contributed to the structure and plan of action during the Punitive Mexican Expedition

Several individuals served in key roles during the Punitive Mexican Expedition and the United States' entrance into WWI in Europe. A central figure in the conflict with Mexico was, of course, Pancho Villa. Daily newspaper headlines with his name and image on the front page made Pancho Villa an international sensation in Mexico and the U.S. during one of Mexico's most tumultuous times. Pancho Villa was respected, praised, and vilified for his natural ability to lead and recruit followers. During the Mexican Revolution, Villa became the leader of not only his own Villistas, but to one of the most powerful armed forces throughout Mexico, the División del Norte (Division of the North). The army consisted of a mix peasants, cowboys, miners, and drifters and by the end of 1914, Villa's army was the most disciplined and popular outside of the northern Mexican region.²³ During the Mexican Revolution, U.S. citizens became acutely aware of Pancho Villa's name. Newspapers in the U.S. and Mexico continually reported on Villa's military victories, which not only contributed to his popularity as a revolutionary leader, but also glorified his exploits. By

²³ Katz, *The Life and Times of Pancho Villa*, 306.

January 1914, his victories reached not only American newspapers, but also U.S. films.²⁴

When Pancho Villa was in the U.S.' good graces, his image in the U.S. newspapers was a well-dressed, well-groomed, polished man who appeared highly Americanized. However, once the United States government supported his rival, he was portrayed as a revolutionary draped in bullets. Despite his growing popularity Pancho Villa and his band were to become the primary target for the U.S. military throughout the Punitive Mexican Expedition.

Equally important at this time was President Woodrow Wilson who was inaugurated on March 2, 1913 as the twenty-eighth president of the United States. He made the major decisions, which led up to the Punitive Mexican Expedition. President Wilson began his presidency with hopes to focus mainly on domestic policies, but throughout his administration he dealt mostly with foreign affairs and how the impacts of those events reverberated around the world.²⁵ Wilson told a friend, "It would be the irony of fate if my administration had to deal chiefly with foreign affairs."²⁶ He had to balance between the disorder in Mexico during the Mexican Revolution and the problems along the U.S.-Mexico border.

General John J. Pershing was chosen for command of the Punitive Mexican Expedition in part for his previous military experience, which came from the Indian Wars, against the Apache and the Sioux, and his command of an all African American unit, the Tenth Cavalry, which gave him his nickname "Black Jack."²⁷ Pershing also had military

²⁴ Mark Cronlund Anderson, *Pancho Villa's Revolution by Headlines* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press: Norman, 2000), 8.

²⁵ Clendenen, *The United States and Pancho Villa*, 50.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Mason, *The Great Pursuit*, 77.

experience during the Spanish-American War and the Philippine-American War.²⁸ After Villa's raid on Columbus, it was Pershing's responsibility to organize the U.S. forces and preparations needed for crossing into Mexico. Throughout the Punitive Mexican Expedition, Pershing and his men not only focused on finding the Villistas and locating Villa, but he also feuded with the Mexican government, led by President Venustiano Carranza, in 1916. From the start of the expedition, tensions were high within the Mexican government and continued to mount until conflict broke out between U.S. troops and Mexican soldiers and Mexican civilians.

Additional major figures of the Punitive Mexican Expedition included the leaders within the expedition and those who worked on the U.S. side of the border to help aid the troops. Another leader of the expedition was Major Tompkins who helped lead the Thirteenth Cavalry. He was the acting officer of the regiment and in charge of tactical training.²⁹ Tompkins became a prominent figure in the Punitive Mexican Expedition because he led the U.S. forces in the first engagement with the Mexican raiders in the pursuit across the border immediately following the Columbus attack. Despite killing several raiders, the small force ran out of sufficient supplies. Ill prepared to handle exposure to the searing heat combined with rough terrain, the U.S. troops turned back to cross into the United States.³⁰ During the expedition, Tompkins continued to help lead the Thirteenth Cavalry back into Mexico for further pursuits. His writings about the Punitive Mexican Expedition revealed what the troops experienced in Mexico, detailed the battles and what experience the U.S. military gained.

²⁸ Herbert Molly Mason, Jr., *The Great Pursuit* (New York: Random House, 1970), 75-77.

²⁹ Tompkins, *Chasing Villa*, 45.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 56-57.

Another key figure from the Punitive Mexican Expedition was Brigadier General Hugh Scott who was involved in the military, advisor to President Wilson, and who maintained a long personal relation with Pancho Villa. He was stationed with other troops along the U.S.-Mexico border prior to the raid on Columbus, where the border faced raids and shootings from the battles of the Mexican Revolution, which spilled over into the U.S. border towns.³¹ While Villa was campaigning for the Mexican presidency during the Mexican Revolution, he traveled through northern Mexico capturing towns and fighting against the Mexican government. Pancho Villa's military exploits and deft command of his men quickly caught the attention of government and military officials. The U.S. government observed Villa's actions and at times wanted to communicate with him. General Scott was one of the few U.S. officials who communicated with Villa personally. After the Punitive Mexican Expedition, he shared details about his experience working in the expedition and his relationship with Pancho Villa.

³¹ Scott, *Some Memories of A Soldier*, 498.

Chapter 2: Pancho Villa

Understanding how Pancho Villa became the leader of Mexican raiding parties who targeted the U.S. is a key element for understanding how the Punitive Mexican Expedition was formed. While Villa was the leader of the raiders he did not launch a raid against the U.S. border town for no reason. Pancho Villa was not solely compulsive, but rather, he was calculating. He was born June 5, 1878 in the Rancho de la Coyotada in Durango, Mexico. Villa's birth name was Dorotro Arango. His mother was Micaela Arambula, a poor sharecropper. Little is known of his father or stepfather who was believed to be a laborer. There were rumors of Pancho Villa's real father being the owner of the hacienda or estate where his mother worked. The young Dorotro Arango worked to help support his mother and other siblings when his father or stepfather died.³² Villa later in his life was forced to leave his home and began life as a bandit, which remained part of his character up to his death.

Villa's early life is shrouded in a veil of myth and legend. For example, some accounts maintain Pancho Villa left the hacienda due to a dispute with the owner's son. Reportedly, Villa shot the owner's son after a dispute related to Pancho Villa's sister's chastity.³³ Knowing he would certainly be jailed or possibly executed, Villa said goodbye to his family and fled to the mountains. After escaping into the mountains, Villa learned how to expertly elude authorities in part to his excellent horseman skills, and was believed to have come into contact with a bandit group led by a well-known leader, Ignacio Parra.³⁴

³² Katz, *The Life and Times of Pancho Villa*, 2.

³³ William Lindsay Gresham, "The Swashbuckling Saga of Pancho Villa," *Saga: True Adventures For Men*, August 1957, 52, Box 13, Folder 70p, Clarence Clendenen, The Punitive Expedition, Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

³⁴ Ibid.

During his life as a bandit, Villa became the leader of the marauders, conducted raids on wealthy haciendas, and robbed funds from banks and wagons. During this time, the locals told legends about him and his escapades. Villa was viewed by some citizens as a man for the poor and hated by the wealthy landowners who looked down on the peasant workers.³⁵

Villa's personality was another aspect that increased his notoriety. Villa was kind to those who supported him and needed help. He made sure he repaid favors, however, he also held grudges. Indeed, he was quick tempered and known to be brutal and unforgiving when he felt betrayed.³⁶

After the Mexican Revolution erupted out in 1910, it embroiled the whole country in a series of conflicts and continuous warfare that changed the face of the Mexican government. Prior to the revolution, dictator Porfirio Díaz ruled Mexico. Under Díaz's rule, parts of Mexico experienced some prosperity, but a majority of the Mexican citizens remained destitute with little resources and no prospects for improvement. To increase economic prospects, Díaz allowed not only U.S. investors, but also others foreign corporations, as well, to establish businesses and own property in Mexico.³⁷ The farmers and rural Mexican citizens watched helplessly as their resources and land were taken and controlled by a myriad of foreign countries. By 1910, U.S. businesses owned about twenty-two percent of property in Mexico.³⁸ Adding insult to injury, the profits from these foreign investors only benefited the landowning elites. To eliminate any organizing of a revolt, Díaz

³⁵ John Mason Hart, *Revolutionary Mexico: The Coming and Process of the Mexican Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 50.

³⁶ Alan Knight, *The Mexican Revolution*, vol. 2, *Counter-revolution and Reconstruction* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 35.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.

³⁸ Hart, *Revolutionary Mexico*, x.

had his police, the Rurales, exercised the use of terror and brutality to control the public.³⁹

The social and economic tensions continued to mount until the Mexican Revolution in 1910.

A contribution for the start of the revolution was the result of an interview by an American journalist, James Creelman, with Porfirio Díaz in 1910. Uncharacteristically, Díaz hinted Mexico was ready for a democratic government. More poignant, Díaz stated he would tolerate opposition parties and not seek candidacy for an election in 1910.⁴⁰ Upon hearing this, many Mexican citizens looked forward to a change in their government. One potential candidate who emerged was Francisco I. Madero, who was from one of the wealthiest families in Coahuila.⁴¹ Despite declaring he would not join the election, Díaz decided to participate. Madero organized against Díaz and secured the nomination as a candidate for the Anti-Reelectionist Party.⁴² Madero gained support due to the animosity towards Díaz's dictatorship in Mexico. However, when Díaz discovered that Madero led in the polls he decided to eliminate him from the election. Prior to the election, Madero was placed in jail, as well as, his supporters or removed from their positions.⁴³ Díaz reportedly won the election by a majority vote. Madero was released from jail after the election and exiled to the United States where he started to plan a revolutionary movement to overthrow Díaz from power and make himself the provisional president of Mexico. Madero returned and launched his revolutionary movement in northern Mexico on November 20, 1910.⁴⁴

³⁹ Steven O' Brien, *Pancho Villa*, (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1994), 30.

⁴⁰ Friedrich Katz, *The Secret War in Mexico: Europe, the United States, and the Mexican Revolution*, trans. Loren Goldner (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), 32.

⁴¹ Katz, *The Life and Times of Pancho Villa*, 53.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 33.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 52-53.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 35.

Pancho Villa, prior to the Mexican revolution, tried to make a living in Chihuahua with a butcher shop. However, he faced tough times with the monopolization of the meat industry held by the Terrazas-Creel elite family.⁴⁵ In 1910, Abraham González approached Villa and asked him to join Madero's movement to overthrow Porfirio Díaz, an offer that Villa accepted.⁴⁶ With his natural ability to lead and with the respect from his men, Villa stood out as a prominent leader in Madero's army. As a commander under Madero, Pancho Villa led his men into a series of victories against the federal forces from the Mexican government. Because Villa was at his side, Madero slowly made his way towards Mexico City and closer to Díaz. After several key victories over several strongholds, Porfirio Díaz's forces were weakened. After his defeat at the battle of Juarez, Díaz was ousted from office and exiled from Mexico.⁴⁷ Madero took his role as the provisional president of Mexico in 1911.

Despite the removal of Porfirio Díaz and a new government under Madero, the Mexican Revolution continued due to the various factions in Mexico fighting for power. Madero tried to implement improvements he felt were necessary, but because of divisions in the legislative body trying to pass resolutions without majority support, political opposition, and a weak administration, he was not successful in executing significant changes. The inability to enact improvements caused many to revolt against Madero.⁴⁸ Pancho Villa aided in putting down one revolt against Madero, but a military coup removed Madero and his vice

⁴⁵ Ibid., 15.

⁴⁶ Eisenhower, *INTERVENTION!*, 4.

⁴⁷ William Lindsay Gresham, "The Swashbuckling Saga of Pancho Villa," *Saga: True Adventures For Men*, August 1957, 52, Box 13, Folder 70p., Clarence Clendenen, The Punitive Expedition, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University.

⁴⁸ Tompkins, *Chasing Villa*, 5.

president from power and both were assassinated. The leader of the coup was Victoriano Huerta, who headed the government's military, and became the new provisional president of Mexico.⁴⁹ After this overthrow, a renewed escalation of conflicts in Mexico erupted.

Villa considered Madero a friend and remained loyal to him during the Mexican Revolution. At that time, Villa was hiding out in the U.S. after escaping from prison and arrived in El Paso, TX in 1913.⁵⁰ Once he learned of Madero's murder, Villa set off to avenge his friend. Villa crossed the border with eight men and within a month he had accumulated a force of five hundred men.⁵¹ This demonstrated Villa's natural charisma, tactical precision, and leadership capabilities. In addition to Pancho Villa, there was Venustiano Carranza, governor of Coahuila, who sought to remove Huerta in order to take power himself.⁵² Carranza formed the Constitutionalists, a revolutionary force with the goal of returning the Mexican government under the structure framed by the Mexican constitution. Initially, Villa was an ally of Carranza, but commanded his own force against Huerta. Reminiscent of Villa's march with Madero, Villa and Carranza marched from northern Mexico towards Mexico City, fighting federal forces to remove Huerta.

On July 15, 1914, Carranza and Villa's forces succeeded in removing Huerta with his resignation, causing him to flee the country.⁵³ However, the battle for the presidency was far from over. After his major victory, Carranza ensured he would reach Mexico City first, leaving Villa behind.⁵⁴ Despite their shared goal, Villa and Carranza feuded over control of

⁴⁹ Ibid., 5-6.

⁵⁰ Katz, *The Life and Times of Pancho Villa*, 185.

⁵¹ O' Brien, *Pancho Villa*, 46.

⁵² Joseph A. Stout, Jr., *Border Conflict: Villistas, Carrancistas, and the Punitive Expedition 1915-1920* (Forth Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1999), 7.

⁵³ René De La Pedraja, *Wars of Latin America, 1899-1941* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2006), 220.

⁵⁴ Katz, *The Life and Times of Pancho Villa*, 344-345.

the armed forces and the travels to Mexico City. In hopes of amending the tension between the leaders, a convention was held in Aguascalientes to discuss the trajectory of the Mexican government. The convention resulted in a divide between Villa and Carranza, solidifying a division of their allies.⁵⁵ When Carranza was ordered to relinquish his leadership, he refused and fled the city with his forces. By refusing to cede power, Carranza was declared to be in rebellion.⁵⁶ Villa and Emiliano Zapata, another revolutionary leader who fought in Southern Mexico, joined forces to fight Carranza.⁵⁷ This contributed to Mexico's warring turmoil with revolutionary factions that tried to become superior in Mexico.

Pancho Villa and the Division of the North, by this time won many military victories and created a sense of invulnerability. However, when Villa fought against Carranza's forces, everything changed for him. The commander-in-chief leading Carranza's force was Álvaro Obregón.⁵⁸ Obregón had studied the warfare conducted in Europe during the war. He utilized the strategy of making trenches and defending with barbed wire and machine gun placements.⁵⁹ Villa's first major engagement against Obregón was at the Battle of Celaya. Villa and his mass army sought to crush the opposing forces with his famed cavalry charges that served him well against the federal forces. Obregón's new defense tactics diminished Villa's charges and rendered them ineffective. Despite the multiple waves of men and horses, Villa eventually retreated after depleting his forces and ammunition on November 3-4,

⁵⁵ Ibid., 378.

⁵⁶ United States Department of State *Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States with the address of the president to Congress December 8, 1914* (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1914), 620, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1914>.

⁵⁷ Alejandro Quintana, *Pancho Villa: A Biography* (Santa Barbara (CA): Greenwood, 2012), 115.

⁵⁸ The Conduct of American Foreign Affairs, 1915-1920 (part 1, chapters 1-12), undated; 1915-1920; Robert Lansing Papers, Box 6, Folder 13, 486; Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

https://webspace.princeton.edu/users/mudd/Digitization/MC083/MC083_c0082.pdf.

⁵⁹ O' Brien, *Pancho Villa*, 71.

1915.⁶⁰ Despite the first defeat of Villa and his forces, he was not going to quit and planned for his next battle. However, Villa continued to face defeat, which was uncharacteristic compared to his earlier victories in the revolution. What Villa did not know at this juncture was that military warfare was forever changed.

After continued defeats at the hands of Obregón, the mighty Division of the North was vastly reduced and Villa's reputation was damaged. Despite a reduced force, Villa did not stop fighting against Carranza's forces. Villa's forces resorted to guerrilla warfare that consisted of hit and run attacks and raids.⁶¹ The state that Villa was in combined with the unfavorable decisions by the U.S. government, towards him pushed Villa to launch the raid on Columbus, NM therefore, laying the foundation for U.S. troops to cross the border into Mexico.

⁶⁰ Colonel Abner Pickering, "The Battle of Agua Prieta," *The U.S. Infantry Journal*, XII (January, 1916): 707-710, 3, Box 13, Folder 70p, Clarence Clendenen, *The Punitive Expedition*, Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

⁶¹ Hart, *Revolutionary Mexico*, 276-277.

Chapter 3: Prior to the Columbus Raid

The U.S.-Mexico border at the start of the twentieth century was an area of much contention. U.S. border towns faced several raids by Mexican bandits from across the border. By August 1916, the U.S. National Guard and militia were sent to the border to provide security and to prevent further incidents.⁶² The raid on Columbus, New Mexico conducted by Villa's band sparked the launching of U.S. troops into Mexico to pursue Villistas. The raid acted as the catalyst in which the U.S. decided to respond with great military force. The Punitive Mexican Expedition was a response to the destruction and loss of American life during the raid; however, it also presented an opportunity for the use and implementation of all available resources that would aid them in their pursuit of the raiders throughout Mexico. This included the modern technology and military practices within Mexico. Moreover, the expedition was served as an opportunity for military exercise for U.S. troops who were to enter WWI.

When WWI broke out in 1914, dynamics of foreign relations changed under the Wilson administration. The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria sparked conflict between Austria-Hungary and Serbia. Once these countries declared war against each other, their allied countries were drawn into the conflict. The war escalated further after Germany's invasion with more nations getting involved. On August 5, 1914 Britain declared war against Germany.⁶³ Throughout the war, Europe was thrown into destruction and chaos. President Wilson declared the U.S. would stay physically neutral once the war broke out in Europe and he tried to sustain that position.

⁶² Tompkins, *Chasing Villa*, 2.

⁶³ Eisenhower, *INTERVENTION!*, 152.

Despite the declaration of neutrality, the U.S. was involved financially prior to sending troops and faced foreign pressure to get formally involved militarily. The U.S. supported the Allied Forces in Europe by sending war materials.⁶⁴ The biggest pressure came from the German government. President Wilson tried to sustain good relations with Europe despite the war, but dealings with Germany became strained as the war progressed. One of the most significant changes from the war was Germany's use of submarine warfare. There was a mass push for construction of submarines set by the German government.⁶⁵ Great Britain, on the side of the Allied powers, sent shipments of supplies and arms. Germany used the submarines to sink enemy ships that entered an established quarantined zone. The U.S. received messages about Germany's use of submarines and complaints about ships considered neutral, including passenger ships that were targeted, resulting in the sinking of the ship and the loss of innocent lives.⁶⁶ The U.S. government, through the State Department, gave warning to the German government if they continued to sink passenger and freight ships, the U.S. threatened to sever all diplomatic relations with Germany.⁶⁷

The sinking of the British liner called the RMS *Lusitania*, all but guaranteed the United States' entry into the war because several Americans aboard the ship lost their lives when a German submarine sank it. There was a public outcry in the United States against the

⁶⁴ The Conduct of American Foreign Affairs, 1915-1920 (part 2, chapters 1-8), 96, undated; 1915-1920; Robert Lansing Papers, Box 6, Folder 16; Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

https://webpace.princeton.edu/users/mudd/Digitization/MC083/MC083_c0085.pdf.

⁶⁵ A War of Self-Defense; 1917; Robert Lansing Papers, Box 11, Folder 23, 1; Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

https://webpace.princeton.edu/users/mudd/Digitization/MC083/MC083_c0196.pdf.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 7.

⁶⁷ Woodrow Wilson: "Address to a Joint Session of Congress on German Violations of International Law," April 19, 1916. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=65390>.

incident, which escalated tensions between the U.S. and Germany.⁶⁸ The U.S. again made protests and demanded Germany discontinue their submarine actions. President Wilson was not ready to get involved in the war at that time and maintained the position of staying neutral. General Scott later commented, "Wilson [was] wise to enter [the war] when the U.S. did and not after the *Lusitania* was sunk, at that time the nation was involved in different things that entering sooner would not have kept the people united."⁶⁹ The U.S. government made several protests to the German government in their submarine warfare. When Secretary of State, Robert Lansing, spoke with the German Ambassador on July 23, 1915 about the U.S., a note to Germany about the sinking of ships stated, "[The U.S.] had shown a restraint which must not be wrongly interpreted at Berlin; that is was true we did not wish to enter the war but that Germany's conduct was forcing us to take that step."⁷⁰

During WWI in Europe, the conflict grew, the pressure increased for the U.S. to get physically involved, however, Wilson was also occupied with what was going on across the border. Throughout the Mexican Revolution, long stretches of warfare continued along the U.S.-Mexico border. Shootings occasionally spilled over the border; raiders stole from U.S. ranches, and fleeing Mexican citizens and faction leaders from defeated groups fled across it.⁷¹ The raids resulted in the loss of property and sometimes the killing of ranchers. These

⁶⁸ The Conduct of American Foreign Affairs, 1915-1920 (part 1, chapters 1-12), undated; 1915-1920; Robert Lansing Papers, Box 6, Folder 13, 38; Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

https://webspace.princeton.edu/users/mudd/Digitization/MC083/MC083_c0082.pdf.

⁶⁹ Scott, *Some Memories of A Soldier*, 550.

⁷⁰ The Conduct of American Foreign Affairs, 1915-1920 (part 1, chapters 1-12), undated; 1915-1920; Robert Lansing Papers, Box 6, Folder 13; Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, 40.

https://webspace.princeton.edu/users/mudd/Digitization/MC083/MC083_c0082.pdf.

⁷¹ Tompkins, *Chasing Villa*, 37.

acts aided in fueling the hatred of U.S. citizens towards Mexicans at the border.⁷² American leaders made every effort to contain the tumultuous events along the border from going further into the United States. However, the limited amount of manpower created challenges to secure long stretches of land with a rough terrain and inclement weather. To add another level of difficulty, both sides were prohibited from crossing the border into each other's country. Moreover, when General Scott was sent on assignment, he went to command the troops along the border from Fabens, TX to California. He had a significant stretch of land to cover with a limited number of men for patrolling.⁷³ Securing and patrolling the border was an immense challenge on its own without the added tension of a warring nation.

Since the start of the Mexican revolution, President Wilson wanted Mexico to sustain itself with a democratic government and to control the U.S.-Mexico border. In the early stages of the Mexican revolution, President Wilson actually supported the Constitutionalists who fought against provisional president Huerta.⁷⁴ After learning how Huerta attained his position, Wilson refused to have diplomatic relations with him because it was an unconstitutional government in Mexico.⁷⁵ Wilson supported the faction that sought to remove Huerta and subsequently lifted the U.S. ban of arm sales to Mexican revolutionaries.⁷⁶ Once Huerta was removed from power, however, the unrest in Mexico was far from settled. With the war escalating in Europe and the problems with Germany, Wilson could not afford to focus on two foreign matters simultaneously. Mexico needed a centralized leader in order to calm the tensions and end the revolution.

⁷² Mason, *The Great Pursuit*, 81.

⁷³ Scott, *Some Memories of A Soldier*, 482.

⁷⁴ Katz, *The Secret War in Mexico*, 183-4.

⁷⁵ Tompkins, *Chasing Villa*, 19.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 20.

Pancho Villa conducted the raid on the U.S., but Villa, by that time, was not a stranger to the United States. He believed and was led to believe he had a good relationship with the U.S. He hoped the positive relations would translate into support. Military, government officials, and President Wilson himself knew who Villa was, and the government had communications with him. Throughout the early portion of the Mexican Revolution, Villa took over key cities in weakening the Mexican federal forces. During his campaign, Villa made sure U.S. citizens and U.S. property was untouched.⁷⁷ Villa knew a relationship with the U.S. was a key factor in securing prominence in Mexico, and he started with looking out for U.S. interests. Villa informed a State Department agent in Mexico, George C. Carothers, he was friendly and grateful towards the U.S. also, "That he would immediately punish anyone who would molest Americans or their property."⁷⁸ Villa was known to have resented foreigners, especially Spanish and Chinese; however, he made sure to look after U.S. citizens.⁷⁹ This allowed him to receive some recognition from the U.S. government. Villa was acutely aware his political figure relied on the relationship he maintained with the United States. He was a savvy individual with clear political objectives.

As the Mexican Revolution continued, the State Department and military officials took note of Villa's actions beginning in 1912. In a telegram from the State Department regarding foreign affairs, the Secretary of War sent to the Secretary of State from Fort Sam Houston about the fighting in Chihuahua where Villa attacked Pascual Orozco who revolted

⁷⁷ Friedrich Katz, "Pancho Villa and the United States," in *Configurations of Power: Holistic Anthropology in Theory and Practice* ed. John S. Henderson and Patricia J. Netherly (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 292.

⁷⁸ United States Department of State *Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States with the address of the president to Congress December 8, 1914* U.S. Government Printing Office, 1914, 805.
<http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?type=header&id=FRUS.FRUS1914>.

⁷⁹ Quintana, *Pancho Villa*, 70.

against Madero on March 4, 1912.⁸⁰ His military victories and ability to win key cities despite many being heavily fortified were worth noting. This was accomplished due to Villa's courage, highly disciplined army, and advisors who served with him. In his earlier fighting, Villa was known to kill his prisoners and ordered brutal executions. Pancho Villa's acts brought to the attention of the U.S. government and officials who were asked by Germany, Britain, France, Spain, and Italy to use their influence to intervene. The State Department was asked to contact Villa and influence him to provide protection for all foreigners.⁸¹ The United States favored Villa when the outcome served their interests. Scott, who was stationed along the border, did some of the communications with Villa. Scott recalled his meeting Villa at the international bridge in the middle, because both of their governments would not allow the other to cross over to their territory. During the meeting, Scott informed Villa of the U.S. State Department's wish to see him stop the execution of prisoners. Scott also gave Villa a copy of a manual of the conduct of modern warfare, which was ironic because modern warfare was redefined at that moment. Villa responded by following the request of the U.S. government and had the book translated and distributed among his troops.⁸² This demonstrated that Villa was willing to comply with U.S. interests and wanted to maintain a good standing relationship with the U.S.

Villa continued to have positive relations with the U.S. government officials on the border and was able to visit inside the country before the raid on Columbus, NM. On August

⁸⁰ United States Department of State *Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States with the annual message of the president transmitted to Congress December 3, 1912* U.S. Government Printing Office, 1912, 735, <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?type=header&id=FRUS.FRUS1912>.

⁸¹ United States Department of State *Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States with the address of the president to Congress December 2, 1913* (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1913.), 898-899, <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?type=header&id=FRUS.FRUS1913>.

⁸² Scott, *Some Memories of A Soldier*, 501-502.

16, 1914 Villa messaged Scott to have the U.S. government allow himself and Obregón, before they fought each other, to enter in the U.S. The goal was to discuss the problems in Naco, Sonora with the fighting between different factions that occurred near the border. On August 26, 1914 the U.S. State Department arranged for the passage of Villa and Obregón with a U.S. escort. They crossed into El Paso and were greeted by the representative of the State Department, Collector Zach Cobb. Not only were they able to visit in the U.S., Villa was also greeted by Pershing himself who recently took command of El Paso.⁸³ These prominent figures greeted each other and smiled for a group picture. Villa then received a personal tour of Fort Bliss.⁸⁴ These two men became nationally known in 1916 and engaged in a pursuit that involved the U.S. and Mexican governments.

One of the most significant acknowledgements of Villa by the U.S. government took place during the U.S. occupation of the Mexican port, Veracruz. On April 9, 1914, known as the Tampico Affair, the gunboat *Dolphin* landed near the port. A group of U.S. sailors came on shore to acquire fuel, but inadvertently entered a restricted territory. The sailors were arrested by Mexican troops and placed in the police station in the port. The Mexican commander of the station, after learning what happened, had the sailors released. The admiral of the ship, Henry Thomas Mayo, demanded from the Mexican government an official apology and to salute the U.S. flag with a twenty-one-gun salute. Provisional president Huerta refused to fully comply with Mayo's unnecessary demand. Admiral Mayo then turned

⁸³ Clendenen, *The United States and Pancho Villa*, 108-110.

⁸⁴ Leon C. Metz, *Border: The U.S.-Mexico Line* (El Paso: Mangan Books, 1989), 218.

to President Wilson for support because the lack of dignity and respect in foreign land should and could not be tolerated.⁸⁵

The situation escalated when the U.S. learned that a German vessel, *Ypiranga*, carried a shipment of arms for Huerta's forces headed towards Veracruz. After this was learned President Wilson approved the sending of U.S. marines to occupy the customs house to prevent the delivering of arms. The justification was to aid the Constitutionalist forces in cutting off the supplies needed for Huerta's forces. Upon landing in the port the U.S. marines were met with shooting from the Mexican people and troops. Fighting ensued which result in the deaths of both Americans and Mexicans at the port. The marines were eventually able to occupy the customs house and prevented the delivery of arms. The U.S. would continue to occupy Veracruz and would stay until Nov 23, 1914.⁸⁶ The aftermath of the occupation of Veracruz was a national feeling of resentment towards the U.S. Huerta condemned the U.S. for invading and occupying Mexican territory. There were rumors war could break out between the two countries. Even Carranza, the leader of the Constitutionalist revolutionary force against Huerta, publicly expressed denouncing the United States' action in Veracruz.⁸⁷ Pancho Villa who led against Huerta and actually congratulated the U.S. for their action in cutting off supplies to Huerta forces. Pancho Villa adeptly quelled the tensions within the Constitutionlists to prevent the forces against Huerta. A telegram from the State Department asked Villa to "[use] his influence to prevent discord among [the] Constitutionalist...and the

⁸⁵ Tompkins, *Chasing Villa*, 23.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 22-23.

⁸⁷ Katz, *The Life and Times of Pancho Villa*, 337.

President [Wilson] feels sure that he will use his influence on the side of harmony and cooperation amongst the Constitutionalist."⁸⁸

Carranza and Villa eventually succeeded in removing Huerta from the presidency with his resignation on July 15, 1914.⁸⁹ Despite Villa assisting the U.S. to promote a good relationship after his military defeats with Carranza's forces, the relationship did not last. Villa lost prestige and did not appear to be the formidable leader of Mexico as he was before. President Wilson needed to have Mexico settled, which he believed would be accomplished by the recognition of a central leader for Mexico. The two prominent leaders in Mexico at this time were Carranza and Villa, who were in the midst of fighting each other. Throughout all the fighting in Mexico and the U.S., Carranza was in possession of wealth and resources to support his forces. He set himself up as being the leader of the Constitutionalists acting as first chief of the army.⁹⁰ With his general Obregón, he was victorious in the fight against Villa. However, Carranza condemned the U.S. for the occupation of Veracruz and did not give up his leadership position.

Villa, on the other hand, was more accommodating of U.S. interests throughout the Mexican Revolution. He provided support for the U.S. and had communication with U.S. military and government officials throughout the Mexican Revolution. When asked by the State Department through General Scott to change how he conducted warfare, Villa obliged. When the Veracruz issue arose, Villa expressed support for the decision. However, he appeared to be a more favorable candidate compared to Carranza. Pancho Villa was not

⁸⁸ United States Department of State *Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States with the address of the president to Congress December 8, 1914* (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1914), 567, <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?type=header&id=FRUS.FRUS1914>.

⁸⁹ Tompkins, *Chasing Villa*, 24.

⁹⁰ O' Brien, *Pancho Villa*, 47.

infallible there were complaints from European countries regarding his treatment of their citizens. Communication with Villa was sporadic because he was constantly on the move. Villa to some people was seen as being unpredictable and his ruthless nature at times cast him in a dark image. After the fighting against Carranza's forces and suffering from repeated losses, his once powerful army was fractured.

President Wilson was left in a difficult situation with the war in Europe and trying to pick a leader for Mexico who would seem to provide stability for the country and be open to a constant U.S. presence. In October 1915, Wilson announced his decision to recognize Carranza as de facto president of Mexico.⁹¹ According to Scott, Wilson's reasoning for the decision was not clearly expressed to his administration. He was told by the officers of the State Department they did not know why and some advised against Wilson's ultimate decision.⁹² The foreign pressure bearing down on the U.S. was a significant factor weighing on Wilson's decision. General Scott felt Wilson picked a person who caused the U.S. the most trouble and that Villa truly was in favor of the U.S. He expressed his opinion by stating, "The recognition of Carranza had the effect of solidifying the power of the man who had rewarded us with kicks on every occasion, and making an outlaw of the man who had helped us."⁹³

Villa did not learn of Wilson's decision until after a battle of Agua Prieta. Wilson's decision only fueled the sense of betrayal committed by the U.S. felt by Pancho Villa. Consequently, Villa made the decision to take his forces to Agua Prieta, which was a key

⁹¹ Tompkins, *Chasing Villa*, 35.

⁹² Scott, *Some Memories of A Soldier*, 516-517.

⁹³ Ibid., 517.

location due to its close proximity towards the border.⁹⁴ Carranza, knowing this, asked the U.S. government for permission to use the U.S. railway to send reinforcements to the area. President Wilson approved Carranza's request that allowed Agua Prieta to become a more fortified location with more troops to protect it.⁹⁵ Villa was unaware of the U.S. support for Carranza and when he arrived he was presented with a more difficult task. The U.S. military were stationed near the area across the border, but did not get involved in the battle. Villa launched his forces that charged in hopes he would penetrate the Carranza defense. Despite the series of charges, Villa's men were stopped by the barbed wire and machine guns. At night, Villa launched a night attack, which was another tactic that served him well before. Unfortunately, the opposing forces were equipped with bright searchlights. These lights scanned the battlefield and Villa's men were spotted and shot.⁹⁶ Villa eventually retreated and the few forces he had left scattered.

Villa was defeated and was at his lowest point in his career; however, he was fueled by anger towards Carranza and now the U.S. He believed the U.S. personally betrayed him despite the years of friendliness and actions he did for the United States.⁹⁷ Villa cut all diplomatic attachments and declared he would no longer look out for U.S. property.⁹⁸ Despite his losses and having few loyal men with him, Villa did not stop his endeavors. Villa needed supplies and funds in order to support his men that were still with him; however, he was still pursued by the Mexican government. His supplies were extremely limited with his men wearing ragged clothing and food was also in low supply. Villa later conducted a raid that

⁹⁴ Clendenen, *The United States and Pancho Villa*, 208.

⁹⁵ Katz, *The Life and Times of Pancho Villa*, 525.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 526.

⁹⁷ Anderson, *Pancho Villa's Revolution by Headlines*, 43.

⁹⁸ Katz, *The Life and Times of Pancho Villa*, 527.

brought the U.S. military into Mexico, thereby, providing an opportunity for conducting military exercise and implementing new elements of warfare used in the WWI.

Chapter 4: Villa-U.S. Ally or Convenient Foe? The Launching of the Punitive Mexican Expedition

The damage from the raid on Columbus, NM had a profound impact on the border town, and news of the raid quickly spread throughout the U.S. News was wired to newspapers, military commanders, and the White House. Once the U.S. public saw what happened to Columbus, there was immediate public pressure to retaliate against the raiders who perpetrated violence and the man who led them.

After the raid, questions ensued about how the raiders crossed into the United States without early notification. Several factors contributed to how the raid occurred without prior detection. For example, Villa was constantly on the run and he was difficult to track. He made sure not to reveal his true intentions to his men to prevent the location to be leaked.⁹⁹ The Mexican government had difficulties tracking Villa, despite constant searching for him he managed to elude his government pursuers.

Colonel Slocum was the commander of the Thirteenth Cavalry stationed near Columbus.¹⁰⁰ Slocum was instructed by the U.S. War Department to protect Columbus and the sixty-five mile stretch of the border, but with only twenty-five officers and 532 available.¹⁰¹ He faced the challenge of guarding this long stretch of the border with a limited amount of men. In addition, false reports flooded into Slocum's headquarters. Due to the fact that Pancho Villa, since the beginning of the Mexican Revolution, was always on the move, there was not clear or accurate information on where Villa was or could be heading next. Reports came in were from Mexican citizens who heard rumors of Villa's planned

⁹⁹ Hurst, *Pancho Villa and Black Jack Pershing*, 47.

¹⁰⁰ "The Cavalry Fight At Columbus," *The Cavalry Journal*, July 27, 1916: 183-185, 1, Box 13, Folder 75p, Clarence Clendenen, The Punitive Expedition, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University.

¹⁰¹ Stout, *Border Conflict*, 34.

destination. U.S.-Mexico relations were still tense, despite the recognition of the Carranza's government. There were different rumors about Villa being along the border. After Villa's series of defeats, Wilson wanted to end the fighting in Mexico. The President offered Villa political asylum. On December 18, 1915 an order was enacted to provide Villa full protection as a political refugee. The U.S. government watched the border to see if Villa was going to accept. Some believed and hoped he was going to accept the offer, however, Villa did not arrive at the border to accept the offer.¹⁰² When he did appear, it was to launch the raid on Columbus.

There was another rumor about Villa approaching the border with the intention to cross and head over to Washington, D.C. to prove he was not involved in a train robbery orchestrated by a group of Villistas. The incident occurred on January 10, 1914 at Santa Ysabel, where a train was robbed and sixteen Americans on board were led off the train and executed.¹⁰³ A related rumor was that Villa was planned to approach the border to meet with George L. Seese, a correspondent from the, *Associated Press*.¹⁰⁴ The correspondent was in contact with a representative for Villa, and they discussed meeting at the border so that Villa could be escorted to Washington to prove that he was not personally involved with the Santa Ysabel killings. Despite the plan, the Associated Press director, Melville Stone, put a stop to the arrangement. General Scott believed this was the reason Villa was near the border at the time of the raid.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Clendenen, *The United States and Pancho Villa*, 221-223.

¹⁰³ The Conduct of American Foreign Affairs, 1915-1920 (part 1, chapters 13-19), undated; 1915-1920; Robert Lansing Papers, Box 6, Folder 14; Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, p. 475-476, <http://findingaids.princeton.edu/collections/MC083/c0083>.

¹⁰⁴ Tompkins, *Chasing Villa*, 41.

¹⁰⁵ Scott, *Some Memories of A Soldier*, 518.

Villa's motivation for his attack on Columbus has not been definitively resolved, but there are several possibilities. One is the fact that at the time Villa's forces were low on supplies and Villa needed resources to sustain them. The Mexican government was pursuing Villa, and the Mexican towns were alerted about Villa's raiding. A border town in the U.S. could be less aware of an impending attack. Another possible explanation was that after the recognition of Carranza, Wilson placed an arms embargo against Villa.¹⁰⁶ As a result many American merchants who previously supplied Villa with arms and other resources had cut connections with him. Some of them even did not deliver the supplies that were bought ahead of time. With the lack of arms delivered, another possible motive was the attack on Columbus as a way for Villa to seek revenge for not receiving the supplies he paid for.

A related motivation for the raid on Columbus was that one of the American merchants who worked with Villa was in the town. A merchant was by the name of Sam Ravel and it was said that when the Villistas entered the town, because his store was one of the targets.¹⁰⁷ When they arrived at the store, Ravel was out of town at the time, but his brother, Arther Ravel, was held captive despite telling them his brother was in El Paso. Arther was later able to escape from the raiders.¹⁰⁸ The other possibility for attacking the town was an act as revenge against the U.S. Villa felt betrayed for all the work he did to accommodate U.S. interests. Despite not knowing Villa's true intentions, the American public called for action after the raid.

¹⁰⁶ Hurst, *Pancho Villa and Black Jack Pershing*, 34.

¹⁰⁷ Eisenhower, *INTERVENTION!*, 225.

¹⁰⁸ Roy E. Stivison and Della Mavity McDonnell, "When Villa Raided Columbus," *New Mexico Magazine*, Vol. 28 (December, 1950), 9, Box 13, Folder 70p., Clarence Clendenen, The Punitive Expedition, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University.

After the raid, the U.S. government and President Wilson were pressured by the American public to create an appropriate response to the attack. Wilson assembled with his advisors to discuss how to address the situation. While in conference with his advisors, the war in Europe and problems over Germany continued to loom. The fact was a band led by Pancho Villa deliberately crossed the border and attacked a U.S. border town, which resulted in destruction and seven American soldiers being killed and five wounded. For civilians eight were killed and two were wounded. On March 10, 1916, Wilson decided to send a military force to go after the raiders who had attacked Columbus.¹⁰⁹

With Wilson's approval, organization of the Punitive Mexican Expedition into Mexico confronted many challenges. For example, the lack of infrastructure for military action in preparation delayed the U.S. forces from heading into Mexico soon after the raid. This made the capture of Villa more complicated. One of the first actions for the expedition was picking the person who was going to lead the U.S. forces into Mexico. General Scott and General Frederick Funston recommended General Pershing to be the leader of the American force. The Secretary of War, Newton K. Baker, approved the recommendation.¹¹⁰ Next was the process of assembling the troops and transporting the supplies for the American force. Time was of the essence, because Villa and his band had already made their way back into the Mexican state of Chihuahua, however, the slow process of recruitment and the transportation of soldiers to the border made the capture of Villa more complicated. The supplies were not ready, as there was neither a set structure in manufacturing supplies for the

¹⁰⁹ United States Department of State *Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States with the address of the president to Congress December 5, 1916* U.S. Government Printing Office, 1916, 490, <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?type=header&id=FRUS.FRUS1916>.

¹¹⁰ Scott, *Some Memories of A Soldier*, 221.

army nor a sufficient way to transport them. No tested or reliable operation plan to enter Mexico existed, which also contributed to the slow progress.¹¹¹ The expeditionary force consisted of a variety of elements to go after the raiders in Mexico. The U.S. cavalry was one of the main forces that accompanied the expedition. Those along the border and Columbus were sent into Mexico due to the fact the cavalry was an efficient part of U.S. forces. The U.S. infantry, artillery, and hospital units were also called to serve in the force into Mexico.¹¹²

Another element consisted of aviation, the first such use for an American military expedition. The First Aero Squadron was assigned to the Punitive Mexican Expedition and arrived in Columbus, March 15, 1916, in order to help aid the troops heading after the raiders.¹¹³ Another force that was brought in was the African American troops of the Twenty-fourth Infantry and Tenth Cavalry.¹¹⁴ They served and participated in several major engagements that occurred in Mexico. The final element was the use of Apache scouts for their abilities in tracking to help aid the troops. Captain James A. Shannin from the Eleventh Cavalry recounted when he heard about the Apaches, he imaged them as tall, lean, wearing moccasins, and bearing a knife or tomahawk. The Apaches were said to be capable of running up mountains all day, being cruel and ruthless, and could "trail anything that walked or swam or flew." When Shannin actually saw the Apache scouts they were short, stocky,

¹¹¹ Hurst, *Pancho Villa and Black Jack Pershing*, 44.

¹¹² Roy E. Stivison and Della Mavity McDonnell, "When Villa Raided Columbus," *New Mexico Magazine*, Vol. 28 (December, 1950), 9, Box 13, Folder 70p., Clarence Clendenen, The Punitive Expedition, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University.

¹¹³ Roger G. Miller, *A Preliminary to War: The 1st Aero Squadron and the Mexican Punitive Expedition of 1916* (Washington, D.C.: Air Force History and Museums Program, 2003), 1.

¹¹⁴ James N. Leiker, *Racial Borders: Black Soldiers Along the Rio Grande* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2002), 147.

pleasant mannered individuals equipped in cavalry uniform.¹¹⁵ The U.S. military used all available resources it could muster in order to head into Mexico and capture the raiders.

After the declaration by President Wilson of launching a force into Mexico, the goals for the Punitive Mexican Expedition needed to be set. This rested in the hands of the newly appointed Secretary of War, Newton K. Baker. Given this important and impactful task, he consulted with Scott about shaping the goals for the expedition. Baker was informed of the plan to go after Villa who headed the raiders that attacked Columbus. Scott replied, pointing out the error that would have arisen from this goal stating, "Mr. Secretary, do you want the United States to make war on one man?"... [To which Baker replied], 'Well, no I am not.' 'That is not what you want then. You want his *band* captured or destroyed,' [Scott] suggested. 'Yes,' [Baker] said, 'that is what I really want.'¹¹⁶

There is a significant misconception that the Punitive Mexican Expedition was focused on solely capturing Villa. This idea came from a statement made by Secretary of State Robert Lansing, who held that "we are sending an expedition into Mexico to catch Villa."¹¹⁷ Although this was not the goal written by the Secretary of War and ordered to the military commanders, the newspapers used this statement across the U.S. Newspapers had "Villa Dead or Alive" as being a part of the expedition's goal. On the front page of the *New York Evening World*, the headline was "'Villa Dead or Alive' Is Order As U.S. Troops Enter

¹¹⁵ James A. Shannin, "With the Apache Scouts in Mexico," 11th Cavalry, *Cavalry Journal*, April 27, 1917:539-357, 540-542, Box 13, Folder 75p, Clarence Clendenen, The Punitive Expedition, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University.

¹¹⁶ Scott, *Some Memories of A Soldier*, 519-520.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 521.

Mexico.”¹¹⁸ Although Scott in his writings pointed out this was not the official order, it was what was presented to the American public at that time.

The early-proposed goal did not provide sufficient justification and did not seem practical to sustain while in Mexico. After considering Scott's input, U.S. officials changed the objective of the Punitive Mexican Expedition to capturing or destroying the band or dispersing it, so that its members no longer posed a threat along the border.¹¹⁹ This order was as long as the military leaders of the expedition. Another addition added for the expedition was in forbidding troops in using Mexican towns for a base camp, resting area, or recreational site. This was due for the U.S. government did not want any indication of the U.S. army to occupy any part of Mexico.¹²⁰ However, tensions were already high on the border before the sending of troops.

The Punitive Mexican Expedition was set to enter Mexico with the goal of going after the raiders who attacked Columbus, but there are some acquaintances that saw the expedition as an opportunity for the U.S. The U.S.-Mexico border was an area that experienced raids, bandit crossings, and hostilities between the two countries. This is evident with the agreement established between the U.S. and Mexico known as the Treaty of Friendship on February 2, 1848. The Article 21 allowed for either country to be able to cross the border in order to pursue raiders from their country.¹²¹ Despite previous intrusions of bandits and raids into the country, the U.S. government decided to take action in pursuing the raiders in this

¹¹⁸ *The Evening World*. (New York, N.Y.), 10 March 1916. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030193/1916-03-10/ed-1/seq-1/>.

¹¹⁹ Tompkins, *Chasing Villa*, 65.

¹²⁰ Mason, *The Great Pursuit*, 81.

¹²¹ United States Department of State *Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States with the address of the president to Congress December 5, 1916* U.S. Government Printing Office, 1916, 515, <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?type=header&id=FRUS.FRUS1916>.

particular instance. The U.S. forces were not just going after some Mexican bandit on a horse, but a person portrayed in U.S. newspapers and known by military and political leaders as a force to be reckoned with.

Another reason for the opportunity for warfare preparation is the structure of the expedition and the amount of resources used for it. The scale of the military response to go after a single band of raiders was excessive, point blank. The military tactics and the resources used during the Punitive Mexican Expedition were seen when the U.S. entered Europe like the use of airplanes. The final factor was the atmosphere of the world and the U.S. at this moment. By this time, the war in Europe already started and the pressures of Germany affecting the U.S. President Wilson felt the problems that were brought up from the war and escalating. As seen demonstrated by the organization for the expedition, the U.S. military was not up to par compared to the European powers. With the lack of readiness and being pushed into the conflict in Europe the U.S. needed a way to get its military prepared for potential warfare. On March 17, 1916 there was an emergency action approval from the Joint Resolution of Congress to increase the enlistment strength of the Regular Army. This included infantry, cavalry, field artillery, Coast artillery Corps, and engineers, most of which were in the expedition.¹²²

¹²² Woodrow Wilson: "Executive Order 2345 - Increasing the Strength of the Regular Army," March 21, 1916. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=75394>.

Chapter 5: American Forces in Mexico

After extensive preparation for the Punitive Mexican Expedition, it launched into Mexico on March 16, 1916. U.S. forces entered Mexico in two columns emanating from Columbus and Culberson's Ranch in Hidalgo County, New Mexico.¹²³ The initial plan after sending in the columns of troops was to encircle Villa and his band; however, they were further away than anticipated by the time the troops entered Chihuahua.¹²⁴ Since the beginning of the expedition, President Carranza never wanted the vast number of U.S. troops in Mexico. However, Carranza did not want to start a conflict between the countries and thus allowed the troops to enter Mexico, but he was not silent about his discontent over their presence and wanted them to leave as soon as possible if they failed to apprehend Pancho Villa.¹²⁵

The Punitive Mexican Expedition consisted of troops, horses, mules, wagons, trucks, and airplanes all in an effort to exact retribution for the attack on Columbus. Despite the resources brought into Mexico, there were several disadvantages for the expeditionary force. The Mexican landscape was dry with little agriculture and scarce water sources. The weather included days of scorching heat and nights of freezing temperatures. This took a toll on the troops and the animals of the expedition. The first major disadvantage was that Villa had a significant head start before the troops even entered Mexico. Villa's expert and vast knowledge of the land and mountains allowed him to travel while effortlessly eluding his

¹²³ William .C. Brown, *The Punitive Expedition*, 2, Box 23, Folder 23-5, W.C. Brown, Military Papers Punitive Expedition, Norlin Library, Special Collections & Archives, University of Colorado Boulder.

¹²⁴ Knight, *The Mexican Revolution*, 384.

¹²⁵ United States Department of State *Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States with the address of the president to Congress December 5, 1916* U.S. Government Printing Office, 1916, 505, <http://digioll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?type=header&id=FRUS.FRUS1916>.

pursuers. The U.S. troops, on the other hand, had little knowledge of the terrain of Mexico, and there was the lack of detailed maps of the extensive countryside. One of the conditions during the Punitive Mexican Expedition was relying on Mexican and indigenous guides to navigate through the landscape.¹²⁶ Mexico did not have many paved roads, which caused the troops and cavalry to travel along ridged and rocky paths. Another major disadvantage was that many Mexicans resented the presence of the U.S. military in Mexico and was not overly willing to provide assistance with U.S. troops. Tensions were high and hostilities arose between the U.S. troops and Mexican citizens and soldiers.¹²⁷

While in Mexico, the U.S. forces utilized all the resources available to them to pursue the Villistas in the Mexican state. The troops experienced daily long marches in order to cover the vast distances between areas where Villa was rumored to be. The expedition proceeded in columns but also broke into smaller units and visited different towns searching for information about the Villistas' locations. Apache scouts were used by the United States for their tracking and hunting skills for the expedition.¹²⁸ Pershing traveled among the expeditionary force in three automobiles in order to keep in touch, gather information, and give orders.¹²⁹

The new innovation of aircraft served various purposes while in Mexico. For the first time in U.S. military history, the entire air force of the First Aero Squadron was used for an active campaign.¹³⁰ The commander for the squadron was Captain Benjamin D. Foulois.¹³¹

¹²⁶ Tompkins, *Chasing Villa*, 110.

¹²⁷ Stout, *Border Conflict*, 62.

¹²⁸ James A. Shannin, "With the Apache Scouts in Mexico, " 11th Cavalry, *Cavalry Journal*, April 27, 1917:539-357, 7, Box 13, Folder 75p, Clarence Clendenen, The Punitive Expedition, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University.

¹²⁹ Tompkins, *Chasing Villa*, 127.

¹³⁰ Miller, *A Preliminary to War*, 1.

The airplanes served as long-range scouts for the Villistas over the vast Mexican territory. The first reconnaissance flight into Mexico was conducted on March 16th, 1916.¹³² The pilots also reported and sent messages to the commanders who were spread throughout the countryside.¹³³ Due to the war in Europe, airplane construction was expanding, but only eight airplanes could be sent to Columbus.¹³⁴ There was also use of wireless communication.¹³⁵ However, wireless devices only worked for a limited range and were not very reliable.¹³⁶

The airplanes did provide messaging and scouting reports, but their service and contribution for the Punitive Mexican Expedition was limited due to the lack of trained and experienced pilots. Moreover, the airplanes could not operate well at high altitudes and did not fair well near mountains, of which Villa had vast knowledge and learned to evade them by traveling through mountains.¹³⁷ There were several reports of the airplanes crashing due to the high winds and rough terrain in Mexico.¹³⁸ The airplanes needed constant maintenance and there were a limited amount of planes and pilots available. Despite the airplanes for the expedition having problems, this marked a new resource never used before in military warfare in WWI. The expedition did provide the military experiences, such as airplanes, that the U.S. army gained and used for the war in Europe.

¹³¹ Tompkins, *Chasing Villa*, 236.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 237.

¹³³ Miller, *A Preliminary to War*, 2.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 7-8.

¹³⁵ Hurst, *Pancho Villa and Black Jack Pershing*, 155.

¹³⁶ Patton, George S. *George S. Patton Papers: Diaries, 1910 to 1945; Annotated transcripts; 1916*. 1916. Manuscript/Mixed Material. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, 3, <https://www.loc.gov/item/mss35634013/>.

¹³⁷ Jerome R. Adams, *Liberators, Patriots, and Leaders of Latin America: 32 Biographies*, 2nd ed. (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2010), 116.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

One of the other problems the U.S. forces faced was the transportation of needed supplies to sustain the troops. One of the leaders of the expedition, Lieutenant Colonel William Carey Brown, recalled the limited government supplies, and one of the biggest challenges during the expedition was securing more.¹³⁹ Supplies from the U.S. came from Columbus, New Mexico, which was transformed into the headquarters for the Punitive Mexican Expedition. Carranza reluctantly allowed the U.S. to use the Casas Grandes Railway from El Paso to deliver supplies to the U.S. forces. However, the single line was insufficient to bringing enough supplies to the troops, and with the tension between the Mexican citizens, this made the process even slower. At one point during the Punitive Mexican Expedition, relations between the two countries became extremely volatile and President Carranza ended the U.S.' use of the railway.¹⁴⁰ This rendered the expeditionary forces without a way to deliver needed supplies.

The U.S. military did not have a sufficient way to keep up supplies until a plan was finally implemented with help from General Scott. Scott was aware of the problem and got tired of waiting for the State Department to figure out a solution. He decided to take matters into his own hands and called General Sharpe, the quartermaster-general, to buy trucks, with the needed supplies, mechanics, and drivers for each one. They were to be sent by express to Columbus and to General Pershing with food and ammunition.¹⁴¹ The use of motorized vehicles in the mass transportation of supplies was another first for the U.S. military. U.S. manufacturing companies were contracted to build the trucks and to fit them with the needed

¹³⁹ William C. Brown, *The Punitive Expedition*, 9, Box 23, Folder 23-5, W.C. Brown, Military Papers Punitive Expedition, Norlin Library, Special Collections & Archives, University of Colorado Boulder.

¹⁴⁰ Scott, *Some Memories of A Soldier*, 530.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 530-531.

supplies. Since the military had not done this before, there was a need to hire civilian drivers and mechanics to maintain the trucks as well as engineers for the roads.¹⁴² The new process of transporting supplies proved to be beneficial in providing the needed resources for the troops. The trucks faced the same conditions faced by the troops in Mexico. There were reports of brand new tires for the trucks being sent to Mexico, and when they came back they were shredded when the trucks returned to the U.S.¹⁴³ Despite the rough Mexican terrain the military was armed with a new surplus of drivers, mechanics and engineers who made sure to keep the transports intact. Motorcycles were also brought in to deliver messages along with the airplanes.¹⁴⁴ The use of motorized vehicles for transportation became another element the U.S. military used in Europe. Along with the use of motor vehicles there were reports of soldiers firing from the cars.¹⁴⁵ Another related concept was placing in the sidecar of motorcycles, but the terrain was too rocky.¹⁴⁶ These demonstrated the experimenting of new ideas with the use of motor vehicles now for the U.S. army.

The military used a variety of tactics in order to catch the Villistas and the leader, Pancho Villa. There were mass searches, the use of airplanes, Mexican guides and Apache scouts. There was also the report of the use of spies in order to assassinate Pancho Villa. He was known and reported for his dislike of foreigners within Mexico. During his military campaigns, in taking over cities he used foreigners as hostages against the Mexican federal

¹⁴² Hurst, *Pancho Villa and Black Jack Pershing*, 132-133.

¹⁴³ Roy E. Stivison and Della Mavity McDonnell, "When Villa Raided Columbus," *New Mexico Magazine*, Vol. 28 (December, 1950), 11, Box 13, Folder 70p., Clarence Clendenen, The Punitive Expedition, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University.

¹⁴⁴ Patton, George S. *George S. Patton Papers: Diaries, 1910 to 1945; Annotated transcripts; 1916. 1916.* Manuscript/Mixed Material. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, 13, <https://www.loc.gov/item/mss35634013/>.

¹⁴⁵ Hurst, *Pancho Villa and Black Jack Pershing*, 105.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 135.

troops.¹⁴⁷ Villa really did not like the Chinese and Spanish, but he did not have a problem with the Japanese.¹⁴⁸ There was a report of Japanese spies employed by the Bureau of Investigation and paid to find Villa.¹⁴⁹ However, as the expedition became highly motorized and technically advanced, Villa remained elusive on horse back in a barren landscape.

There was an attempt to assassinate Villa through the two Japanese spies named Dyo and Sato who reportedly put poison tablets in Villa's coffee.¹⁵⁰ Villa, however, reportedly did not succumb to the poison and lived.¹⁵¹ The story was covered up to save further embarrassment for the expedition.¹⁵² Although this seems as a failure, it revealed despite the multitude of new warfare tactics used in Mexico, espionage allowed the closest access to Pancho Villa during the Punitive Mexican Expedition.

Throughout the expedition the military commanders made various reports about their experiences, the tactics used in Mexico, and their personal thoughts about their travels to catch the raiders. Tompkins, who led the thirteenth cavalry since the start of the Punitive Mexican Expedition, provided details in his writings about the military training conducted in Mexico. The U.S. troops experienced combat, as there were several encounters with the scattered Villistas within the state. In several engagements it was the troops' early training and modern weapons that enabled them to put their skills to the test in real combat. Ben Turner, a former soldier from Villa's army, went to serve under Pershing during the Punitive

¹⁴⁷ United States Department of State *Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States with the address of the president to Congress December 2, 1913* U.S. Government Printing Office, 1913, p.898-899, <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?type=header&id=FRUS.FRUS1913>

¹⁴⁸ Katz, *The Face of Pancho Villa*, 21.

¹⁴⁹ Quintana, *Pancho Villa*, 151.

¹⁵⁰ Katz, *The Life and Times of Pancho*, 609.

¹⁵¹ Patton, George S. *George S. Patton Papers: Diaries, 1910 to 1945; Annotated transcripts; 1916*. 1916. Manuscript/Mixed Material. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, 40, <https://www.loc.gov/item/mss35634013/>.

¹⁵² Hurst, *Pancho Villa and Black Jack Pershing*, 68.

Mexican Expedition. He was hired as an auto mechanic and during the expedition remarked, "We realized that the real reason for going after Villa was not to capture him but to train American soldiers for the war in Europe that was getting closer to the U.S."¹⁵³ Turner, in his opinion, understood the actions the U.S. army conducted in Mexico was going to be utilized in WWI.

However, the Villistas were not the only combatants they faced in Mexico. The longer the U.S. troops were in Mexico, the greater tensions rose with the Mexican government. There were repeated protests and demands since the U.S. troops had not caught Villa they should leave. There were many Mexican citizens who did not like the presence of the U.S. military within their country. The explosion of tensions occurred when Tompkins was attacked by Mexican Federal troops. After proceeding through a town called Parral, the residents gathered around the troops and became a mob yelling and throwing objects at the U.S. troops. A small shooting took place resulting in the injury of several residents; it was unclear which side shot first.¹⁵⁴

The conflict escalated after Tompkins and his troops left, they encountered shooting from the Mexican Federal soldiers.¹⁵⁵ The U.S. troops returned fire before they retreated to shelter. The troops sustained several casualties with two killed and four severely wounded,

¹⁵³ Jessie Peterson and Thelma Cox Knoles, eds., *Pancho Villa: Intimate Recollections by People Who Knew Him* (New York: Hastings House Publishers, 1977), 231.

¹⁵⁴ The Conduct of American Foreign Affairs, 1915-1920 (part 1, chapters 13-19), undated; 1915-1920; Robert Lansing Papers, Box 6, Folder 14; Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, p485, <http://findingaids.princeton.edu/collections/MC083/c0083>.

¹⁵⁵ United States Department of State *Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States with the address of the president to Congress December 5, 1916* U.S. Government Printing Office, 1916, 518, <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?type=header&id=FRUS.FRUS1916>.

and Tompkins himself was injured in his arm and leg.¹⁵⁶ This incident created a firestorm within both the U.S. and Mexican governments; however, there was no intention to escalate the incident to a declaration of war. The fight reminded the U.S. forces they were in hostile territory and needed to be cautious on all sides.

After the raid and the launching of the Punitive Mexican Expedition, Villa worked to rebuild himself and his forces at the expense of U.S. troops pursuing the Villistas. Another possibility for the raid was Villa wanted to denounce Carranza as president of Mexico. Villa created and spread the story Carranza was actually working with the U.S. to give away land in northern Mexico in exchange for recognition and support. If Villa was able to incite the U.S. in sending troops into Mexico, he could use this as proof of a pending U.S. invasion.¹⁵⁷ After the U.S. sent troops, Villa advocated his message about Carranza. In his manifesto to the Nation, he declared he would fight against the invading "barbarians of the North," create unification, and overthrow Carranza's government.¹⁵⁸ Villa traveled to different towns and asked for volunteers to join him. In reality, Villa did not intend to confront the U.S. force but continue his fighting against Carranza's government troops.¹⁵⁹ However, in the beginning Villa did receive support from those who did not like the U.S. troops in Mexico and the fact the U.S. troops entered with no resistance from Carranza. Villa, however, faced problems with being pursued by two countries' military forces and not everyone supported him.

¹⁵⁶ William C. Brown, *Mexican Punitive Expedition 1916*, Dairy 39, Box 3, Folder-Diary 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, William C. Brown Collection, Norlin Library, Special Collections & Archives, University of Colorado Boulder.

¹⁵⁷ Papers relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States. The Lansing papers, 1914-1920 (in two volumes): Volume II, Editor: J.S. Beddie, General Editor: Cyril Wynne, E. Wilder Spaulding, E.R. Perkins, United States Government Printing Office, Washington, 1940, 555, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1914-20v01>.

¹⁵⁸ United States Department of State *Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States with the address of the president to Congress December 5, 1916* U.S. Government Printing Office, 1916, 619-22, <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?type=header&id=FRUS.FRUS1916>.

¹⁵⁹ Quintana, *Pancho Villa*, 145.

Throughout the expedition, the U.S. forces encountered Mexican citizens, Villistas, and government troops, but they did not encounter Villa in person. There was one point during the expedition where U.S. troops came to the closest point in confronting Villa. At the Battle of Guerrero, Villa fought against the Mexican government troops and during the battle Villa sustained a wound in his leg.¹⁶⁰ There is debate concerning who exactly shot Villa during the fighting. Villa could have been hit by one of the Federal soldiers or from a stray bullet from either side. Some accounts maintain that Villa was shot from his own force. After the raid, Villa went to recruit more troops. When he entered El Valle, Chihuahua, Villa called for men to volunteer in joining his band. When the men did not volunteer, Villa forced them to join.¹⁶¹ One of the forced volunteers decided to kill Villa and shot him. Although it did not kill Villa, the injury was severe enough to take him out of the fighting. According to an account by Madesto Nevres, a member of the Villistas, Villa was loaded onto a wagon. Nevres was appointed the wagon driver and drove south from Guerrero with fifty men guarding Villa.¹⁶² Only a few hours later, one of the U.S. units arrived at Guerrero and fought against the remaining Villistas in the area, however, Villa had already left the area. After Villa was shot, there were rumors he was dead. However, Pershing did not believe them and wanted to remain in Mexico until there was proof.¹⁶³ Villa's injury kept him from continuing to lead or fight, thus there was the need for him to go into hiding. Since the U.S. Army and the Mexican government were searching for him, Villa could not afford to properly dress his wound and had to recover in hiding. There have been accounts Villa and a

¹⁶⁰ W.C. Brown, *The Punitive Expedition*, 6, Box 23, Folder 23-5, W.C. Brown, Military Papers Punitive Expedition, Norlin Library, Special Collections & Archives, University of Colorado Boulder.

¹⁶¹ Eisenhower, *INTERVENTION!*, 248.

¹⁶² Tompkins, *Chasing Villa*, 162.

¹⁶³ Hurst, *Pancho Villa and Black Jack Pershing*, 75.

few of his most loyal men went into the mountains and hid in a cave known as Cueva de Cozcomate. Rumors claimed Villa could see the column of U.S. troops passing by not aware of how close they were to him.¹⁶⁴ This was a testament to how ill prepared U.S. troops were in tracking Villa. Although, this might have been true or not, U.S. troops for about ten months searched throughout Chihuahua, but were not able to apprehend Villa for his part in the raid on Columbus. Based on the number of troops and amount of advanced use of technology being implemented in Mexico, it is difficult to believe the expedition was solely based on Pancho Villa.

¹⁶⁴ Katz, *The Life and Times of Pancho Villa*, 573.

Chapter 6: Entering World War I

After several months of the expeditionary force in Mexico, many events transpired since its launching. U.S. and Mexico relations were strained continuously and at some point nearly resulted in war between the two countries. Carranza at one point ordered that U.S. troops to only move in the direction of north and other directions and the entering of towns would result in hostilities. General Pershing received this information, but replied he will not change tactics unless ordered by the U.S. government.¹⁶⁵

The near breaking point for war occurred at the town Carrizal between a part of U.S. troops and Mexican troops from the town. The leader of the U.S. troops, Captain Boyd, received orders to pass through the town in the continued search for Villistas and Villa's location. The commander of the Mexican troops approached Boyd and informed him of the government order for U.S. troops being denied access to pass through Mexican towns. After a couple exchanges it became clear, both men were holding to their orders. Boyd decided to push through the town despite the Mexican troops stationed at the entrance. Upon approaching the town, shooting erupted which resulted in the deaths of both leaders. The U.S. troops retreated and several were held prisoner.¹⁶⁶ Both Presidents were informed of the fighting and the start of war was thought to be inevitable. President Wilson demanded the release of U.S. troops and ordered the mobilization and sending of the National Guard to the

¹⁶⁵ Tompkins, *Chasing Villa*, 208.

¹⁶⁶ Lewis S. Morey, "The Cavalry Fight At Carrizal," *Journal of the United States Cavalry Association*, XXVII (January 1917), 449-456., 7-8, Box 13, Folder 75p. Clarence Clendenen, *The Punitive Expedition*, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University.

border.¹⁶⁷ After diplomatic talks, the prisoners were released and returned across the border on June 29, 1916.¹⁶⁸

After the incident in Carrizal, the expedition assembled at Colonia Dublán and waited for further order from the U.S. government.¹⁶⁹ Although the troops were not searching throughout the Mexican state, General Pershing made sure they continued to conduct military training. He oversaw the physical exercises and practices to keep the troops active and in fighting shape. The troops received further and more rigorous training in preparation for the battles in WWI.¹⁷⁰ George S. Patton, who acted as Pershing's aide, recalled how, "Under the personal supervision of the General [Pershing] every unit went through a complete course in range and combat firing, marches, maneuvers, entrenching, and combating exercises."¹⁷¹ These were all elements that helped the troops in Europe and were conducted while searching for the raiders and Villa. Colonel William C. Brown observed while the expedition force was held in the camp at Colonia Dublán that, "...the rest of the summer and fall was spent in perfecting equipment of the regiment and in training, for by this time it was pretty well realized that the time would soon come when American would enter the World War."¹⁷² Troops remained in in one place to continue preparing and conditioning for future combat in Europe.

With the war in Europe still raging and the need for the U.S. to become settled, the official call for U.S. troops to return to the United States came in January 1917. The U.S.

¹⁶⁷ Tompkins, *Chasing Villa*, 212.

¹⁶⁸ Leiker, *Racial Borders*, 167.

¹⁶⁹ Tompkins, *Chasing Villa*, 213.

¹⁷⁰ Eisenhower, *INTERVENTION!*, 306.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 307.

¹⁷² William C. Brown, "The Punitive Expedition," Box 23, Folder 23-5, W.C. Brown, Military Papers Punitive Expedition, 14, Norlin Library, Special Collections & Archives, University of Colorado Boulder.

forces started to make the trek back across the border and this return was completed on February 5, 1917.¹⁷³ One result from the Punitive Mexican Expedition was the U.S. forces returned with refugees including Mormons, Mexicans, and Chinese who left Mexico and entered the U.S.¹⁷⁴ At the end of the expedition, the U.S. force sustained several casualties during the campaign. The expedition started at 5,000 troops and by the end grew to over 7000 men.¹⁷⁵

There are several opinions regarding the Punitive Mexican Expedition from the U.S. and global perspective. Upon return of U.S. troops from Mexico, there was opinions of U.S. citizens who viewed the expedition was a failure. Despite the amount of resources used for the expedition, the U.S. Army failed to capture the leader of the Columbus raid, Pancho Villa. Although apprehending Villa was not part of the official orders for the expedition, it was sensationalized in U.S. newspaper headlines. The expedition showed the military was not able to catch one bandit on a horse. The failure reflected not only on the ineptitude of the U.S. military, but also of the government and nation as a whole. The failure to catch Villa was international news was a global audience, including Germany, which helped denounced the worry about the U.S. entering WWI. The U.S. military appeared weak, unorganized, and ineffective after the expedition.¹⁷⁶ However, this benefited the U.S. because their strength was under estimated as they entered WWI, which in the end resulted in the U.S. becoming a world power.

¹⁷³ William C. Brown, Diary 40, Box 3, Folder Diary 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, Expedition out of Mexico; the War Bill with selective conscription passes Congress; preparation of New York and New Jersey camps; enroute to Europe on troop transport; World War I; France., 15, Norlin Library, Special Collections & Archives, University of Colorado Boulder.

¹⁷⁴ Metz, *Border*, 229.

¹⁷⁵ Katz, *The Life and Times of Pancho Villa*, 15.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 612.

Another view recognized the accomplishments of the U.S. troops in Mexico, which was held by many leaders of the expedition. Under the official orders given, the main goal for the expedition was to destroy the raiders of Columbus and to render the band of Villistas to the point they were no longer be a threat to the U.S. While in Mexico, U.S. troops did encounter and killed many Villistas. This reduced Villa's strength in his limited forces he held at the start of the expedition. The major aspect from the expedition was the practice of using new innovations in warfare and the experience of combat. The guise of the Punitive Mexican Expedition allowed U.S. troops to practice and utilize resources developed and improved for the U.S. military. The airplanes, although not totally successful during the campaign, did provide the troops and men from the First Aero Squadron with the aircraft, equipment, and the operations in the field used in Europe.¹⁷⁷ They were not only in WWI, but also continued to evolve for future warfare. The trucks helped start the mass manufacturing of products for the military and opened more positions in the military. There was also the training of leading troops in a foreign country. All of these activities contributed to the military experience of the U.S. in WWI.

Although the U.S. officially exited Mexico, Wilson's foreign affairs problems were not over. WWI began on July 1914 and the problems with Germany only increased. The U.S. was aware of Germany's submarine activities, but did not actively intervene in the conflict. Actions consisted of diplomatic messaging and protesting, but the U.S. was pressured for more action when Germany declared unrestricted submarine warfare.¹⁷⁸ The U.S. State

¹⁷⁷ Miller, *A Preliminary to War*, 2.

¹⁷⁸ The Conduct of American Foreign Affairs, 1915-1920 (part 2, chapters 1-8), undated; 1915-1920; Robert Lansing Papers, Box 6, Folder 16, 5; Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, <http://findingaids.princeton.edu/collections/MC083/c0085>.

Department asked the German government to stop this tactical warfare as more ships were in danger and at risk of becoming targets. Tension with Germany reached an apex after Germany announced unrestricted warfare on February 1, 1917.¹⁷⁹

The final straw came from the discovery of the Zimmerman telegram. The message from Arthur Zimmermann, the State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of the German Government, to Mexico proposing in exchange for declaring war on the U.S, Germany would return Mexican territory lost to the U.S.¹⁸⁰ On February 3, 1917 the U.S. government severed diplomatic ties with the German government.¹⁸¹ This was the first step towards intervention in the war by U.S. troops. The U.S. Congress officially declared war on Germany on April 6, 1917 only a little more than a month after the troops were recalled from Mexico.¹⁸² This was a convenient timeline to underscore the true motivation of the Punitive Mexican Expedition. Villa was not the biggest threat to the U.S., but Germany was the true threat. President Wilson stated, "The world must be made safe for Democracy."¹⁸³ In the acknowledgment of the importance of the war, Secretary of State Robert Lansing stated, "Let us understand once and for all that this is no war to establish an abstract principle of right. It is a war in which the

¹⁷⁹ The Conduct of American Foreign Affairs, 1915-1920 (part 1, chapters 1-12), undated; 1915-1920; Robert Lansing Papers, Box 6, Folder 13; Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, 5. <http://findingaids.princeton.edu/collections/MC083/c0082>.

¹⁸⁰ Thomas J. Knock, *To End All Wars: Woodrow Wilson and the Quest for a New World Order* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992), 116.

¹⁸¹ The Conduct of American Foreign Affairs, 1915-1920 (part 1, chapters 1-12), undated; 1915-1920; Robert Lansing Papers, Box 6, Folder 13; Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, 1. <http://findingaids.princeton.edu/collections/MC083/c0082>.

¹⁸² Woodrow Wilson: "Proclamation 1364 - Declaring That a State of War Exists Between the United States and Germany," April 6, 1917. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=598>.

¹⁸³ A War of Self-Defense; 1917; Robert Lansing Papers, Box 11, Folder 23, 5; Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library. <http://findingaids.princeton.edu/collections/MC083/c0196>.

future of the United States is at stake.”¹⁸⁴ Lansing continued with stating, “the Allies must not be beaten. It would mean the triumph of Autocracy over Democracy; the shattering of all our moral standards; and a real, though it may seem remote, peril to our independence and institutions.”¹⁸⁵

After the declaration of war on Germany, the U.S. government focused their attention on the war in Europe with intensity. The War Department, with aid from Scott, already provided input for further preparation and by May 10, 1917 he was Chief of Staff.¹⁸⁶ One of the matters he was a part of was the establishment of conscription or mandatory enlistment. With this the U.S. did not have to worry about filling up the armed forces by begging or paying for enlistment.¹⁸⁷ The president and Congress enacted conscription on May 18, 1917.¹⁸⁸ Another result after the declaration was the formation of an adequate system of military administration with the general staff. With the changes created the result was an army of 100,000 to 4,000,000.¹⁸⁹ The U.S. had troops in Europe in the summer of 1918.

The U.S. physically entered the war in Europe, and its presence made significant impacts. General Pershing, who led the U.S. forces in Mexico, was chosen to lead them in Europe, on May 10, 1917.¹⁹⁰ He was the Commander-in-Chief of the American

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, 6.

¹⁸⁵ The Conduct of American Foreign Affairs, 1915-1920 (part 1, chapters 1-12), undated; 1915-1920; Robert Lansing Papers, Box 6, Folder 13; Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, 8. <http://findingaids.princeton.edu/collections/MC083/c0082>.

¹⁸⁶ Pershing, John J., *John J. Pershing Papers: Diaries, Notebooks, and Address Books, 1882 to 1925; Diaries; Set 2; 1917, May 7-31. 1917*. Manuscript/Mixed Material. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, 2, <https://www.loc.gov/item/mss35949010/>.

¹⁸⁷ Scott, *Some Memories of A Soldier*, 567-568.

¹⁸⁸ Woodrow Wilson: "Proclamation 1370 - Conscription," May 18, 1917. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=65403>.

¹⁸⁹ Scott, *Some Memories of A Soldier*, 567-568.

¹⁹⁰ Pershing, John J., *John J. Pershing Papers: Diaries, Notebooks, and Address Books, 1882 to 1925; Diaries; Set 2; 1917, May 7-31. 1917*. Manuscript/Mixed Material. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, 2, <https://www.loc.gov/item/mss35949010/>.

Expeditionary Force (AEF). The U.S. military fought with the Allied powers against the German forces on the western front. General Pershing provided some details in his dairies on how the U.S. impacted the war and the effects that occurred from the mass fighting. General Foch who was a French military commander stated that, “the benefit to the morale of the French which would result in having vigorous American soldiers serve with them” to Pershing.¹⁹¹ The French forces had experienced much turmoil since the invasion by Germany.

Another contribution made by the U.S. in the war was the use of the Liberty motor that was “all built in America.”¹⁹² The Liberty motor was deemed one of the most powerful engines used during WWI. More than 13,000 engines were built before the Armistice and over 20,000 by 1919.¹⁹³ The Punitive Mexican Expedition jumped start manufacturing for the military and continued until the U.S. entered the war. The U.S. contributed in a variety of factors during the war aiding in the eventual victory for the Allied forces and emerging as the most powerful nation in the world.

WWI ended on November 11, 1918, and the end result had global consequences at the time and for the future. The U.S., although not fighting in the war the longest compared to some of the Allied powers, contributed to the victory. The war is not only noted for the amount of destruction and nation changing results, but for the innovations that were brought into the war. The introduction of airplanes for use of aerial warfare and the development of

¹⁹¹ Pershing, John J., *John J. Pershing Papers: Diaries, Notebooks, and Address Books, 1882 to 1925; Diaries; Set 2; 1918, June 1-30*. 1918. Manuscript/Mixed Material. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, 496, <https://www.loc.gov/item/mss35949023/>.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 515.

¹⁹³ “Liberty Engines: Brief History on the Liberty Engine,” http://antiquedistributorcaps.com/About_Liberty_Engines.htm.

the tank that came from armored cars, were also brought into Mexico. The experience from Mexico helped aid in the leadership for the American troops as many were sent into WWI.

Chapter 7: The End For the Great Revolutionary Leader-Pancho Villa

After the U.S. troops exited Mexico the U.S. government's focus shifted to Europe. Many of the troops involved in the Punitive Mexican Expedition and those who stationed at the U.S.-Mexico border fought in Europe. President Carranza and the Mexican government did not have to worry about further escalations with the U.S.; however, their internal situation was not settled. The Mexican Revolution continued, because there were still factions that were fighting within the country. One of the reasons for the continued fighting was Pancho Villa, who was able to escape capture from the Mexican troops.

When the U.S. launched the Punitive Mexican Expedition Villa sought to re-establish himself and his forces. The Villistas on June 14-15, 1919 again encountered U.S. troops after an attempt to seize of Juárez near the border. They captured the city for a short time, but the shooting spilled across the border. This resulted in injuries and later a death of American civilians and soldiers. The U.S. troops crossed the border in joining the Mexican federal troops in pushing Villas forces out and returned on back across on June 17. After this confrontation, Villa's successful and legendary military and political standing ended.¹⁹⁴

As 1920 approached, the Mexican government sought respite from two decades of fighting and destruction. Carranza was assassinated on May 21, 1919 and was succeeded by Adolfo de la Huerta. With the goal of ending the fighting, the new interim president of Mexico reached out and offered Pancho Villa protection from his Mexican adversaries in exchange for laying down his arms.¹⁹⁵ Villa, who had fought for the majority of the revolution, decided to accept Huerta's offer in 1920. In the agreement, Villa was given a

¹⁹⁴ Clendenen, *The United States and Pancho Villa*, 310-312.

¹⁹⁵ Eisenhower, *INTERVENTION!*, 318-320.

ranch in Canutillo, near Parral, Chihuahua.¹⁹⁶ Situated on the ranch, Villa looked forward to a life of agriculture and tending to his ranch house.

Three years after Villa surrendered to the Mexican government, he lived and worked on his ranch with family and close friends. However, his retirement was not peaceful. Throughout his career during the Mexican Revolution, he made many enemies, and many held grudges against his earlier actions. As part of his agreement for surrendering to the government, he was allowed the company of fifty bodyguards who escorted him.¹⁹⁷

Despite the security, Pancho Villa was assassinated on July 20, 1923 in the Parral. While coming from business, Villa passed through the town in his Dodge car with some passengers. Upon approaching an intersection, a vender cried out "Viva Villa" as he had heard many times while he campaigned throughout Mexico. Men armed with rifles started shooting from an abandon adobe next the street riddling Villa's car with bullets. Villa and his passengers, except for one, died instantly.¹⁹⁸ There are different accounts of who actually planned the killing. One man, Jesús Salas Barraza, claimed to have planned the assassination and was sentenced to twenty years in prison, but he was released after a couple of months.¹⁹⁹ Some people believe Obregón and/or Elías Calles, who sought the Mexican presidency, were behind the assassination out of fear Villa would take up political office. The revolutionary leaders knew first hand the power of Villa's influence and his intoxicating charisma. He was

¹⁹⁶ Clendenen, *The United States and Pancho Villa*, 312.

¹⁹⁷ Katz, *The Life and Times of Pancho Villa*, 737.

¹⁹⁸ William Lindsay Gresham, "The Swashbuckling Saga of Pancho Villa," *Saga: True Adventures For Men*, August 1957, 60, Box 13, Folder 70p., Clarence Clendenen, The Punitive Expedition, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University.

¹⁹⁹ William V. Morison and C. L. Sonnichsen, "They Killed Pancho Villa!" in *Frontier Times: Companion Magazine to TRUE WEST-All Stories True*, 50, Box 13, Folder 70p., Clarence Clendenen, The Punitive Expedition, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University.

a credible threat to their political standing.²⁰⁰ The revolutionary leader was buried in Parral and his name is immortalized in Mexico as a national hero. Decades after Villa's death, his remains were entombed in the monument to the Mexican Revolution in Mexico City.²⁰¹ In regards to U.S. history, he was the man that made sensational headlines and provided a distraction for the world under the guise of the Punitive Mexican Expedition to allow the United States to train its sub par military ahead of warfare in Europe. The U.S. owes substantial credit of its victory in WWI to Pancho Villa despite the U.S. army never setting eyes on him the entire time they were in Mexico.

²⁰⁰ Quintana, *Pancho Villa*, 176.

²⁰¹ Lindsay Porter, *Assassination: A History of Political Murder* (New York: The Overlook Press, 2010), 131.

Conclusion

After the war in Europe, the U.S. emerged as the most powerful nation in the world. Many nations experienced destruction during the war and some recovered better than others. The U.S. experienced a position of supreme power after its contribution to the war on the Allied side. The war officially ended after the signing of the Treaty of Versailles on June 28, 1919. President Wilson tried to implement his Fourteen Points with the idea of a league of nations to provide stability for Europe.²⁰² When he announced his plan on January 8, 1918 Wilson declared that it was "the only possible program for world peace."²⁰³ Once the war ended the U.S. returned to working on internal matters and experienced a short period of prosperity during the 1920s.

The United States' victory in WWI was a direct result of its military training during the Punitive Mexican Expedition. The U.S. military did in fact enter a foreign country and exercised the use of weapons and field training along with implementing new features in the military. The publicized objective of the Punitive Mexican Expedition was to go after the raiders, but with the war raging in Europe and the lack of sufficient readiness by the military or the government, the expedition was an opportunity and did help the U.S. before entering into the war.

The experienced gained from the expedition helped aid the troops and leaders when they went to Europe. Pershing had the ability to command a large military force due to the organization and training conducted in Mexico. He became known as an American war hero

²⁰² Knock, *To End All Wars*, ix.

²⁰³ The Conduct of American Foreign Affairs, 1915-1920 (part 1, chapters 1-12), undated; 1915-1920; Robert Lansing Papers, Box 6, Folder 13; Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, 36. <http://findingaids.princeton.edu/collections/MC083/c0082>.

in an international war. Pershing continued to advise Chief of Staff George C Marshall and President Franklin D. Roosevelt during WWII.²⁰⁴ Many troops that served in the expedition also went into Europe. Another known person who served in the expedition was George S. Patton. He was the Acting Aide to Pershing and received an opportunity to join the American force on March 13, 1916.²⁰⁵ Patton became a noted figure in WWI in commanding tanks and was one of the U.S. generals noted for mobile warfare during WWII.²⁰⁶ Tompkins, of the Thirteenth Cavalry in the expedition, continued to serve the military after the U.S. troops left Mexico. He became a commander during WWI and retired after thirty years of service.²⁰⁷ Even those that did not participate in the expedition into Mexico, in Scott the formation of armed troops on the border provided invaluable experience for the training for the officers for leading into WWI.²⁰⁸

The expedition provided a venue for the use of modern technology and new innovations for the U.S. military utilized in future wars and armed conflicts. The airplanes allowed for long distance scouting and messaging for the troops spread out throughout Chihuahua. During their service from March 15-August 15, 1916 there were 540 flights, total flying time 345 hours and forty-three minutes, and a total distance of 19,553 miles.²⁰⁹ The use of wireless communication, although not the best, was still used for the army and did improve as time went on. The manufacturing and sending of motorized vehicles allowed for more dependable resources in sending supplies. During the fiscal year of 1916, there was the

²⁰⁴ Eisenhower, *INTERVENTION!*, 337.

²⁰⁵ Patton, George S. *George S. Patton Papers: Diaries, 1910 to 1945; Annotated transcripts; 1916*. 1916. Manuscript/Mixed Material. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, 2, <https://www.loc.gov/item/mss35634013/>.

²⁰⁶ Alan Axelrod, *Patton: A Biography* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 42.

²⁰⁷ Tompkins, *Chasing Villa*, VII-VIII.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 525.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 243.

purchase of nearly 600 trucks for the expedition.²¹⁰ The organization, training, and maintaining of motor manufacturing companies for the military proved useful not only for the Punitive Mexican Expedition, but also for the war in Europe.²¹¹ The expedition marked the end of the U.S. "Old Cavalry" campaigns due to the radio and use of airplanes.²¹² Moreover, every image from the Punitive Mexican Expedition captured military exercises, U.S. troops, weapons, trucks, and airplanes, but not one single image of Pancho Villa. These images alone underscore the argument the U.S. needed an excuse to publicly train its military in preparation for WWI. "Viva Villa" is now seminal part of U.S. military history as much as it is a part of Mexico's revolutionary history.

This thesis underscores the fact a historical event can be viewed by several historians and interpreted differently by each one, however, there is always a different lens in which to view the events of the past and develop a new conclusion. The Punitive Mexican Expedition has been a subject of several historical essays and publications, but none have outright declared the United States' reasoning for the expedition a farce in order to overtly conduct extensive military training for entrance into World War I.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 229.

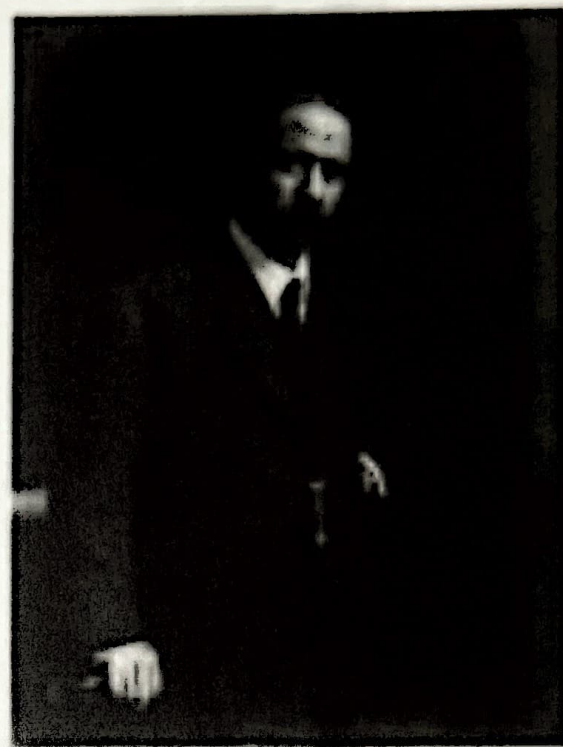
²¹¹ Ibid., 135.

²¹² Ibid., 144.

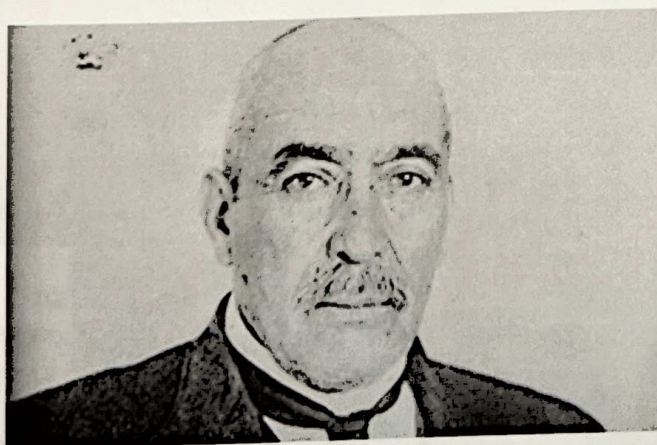
APPENDIX A: Ancillary Characters of the Punitive Mexican Expedition



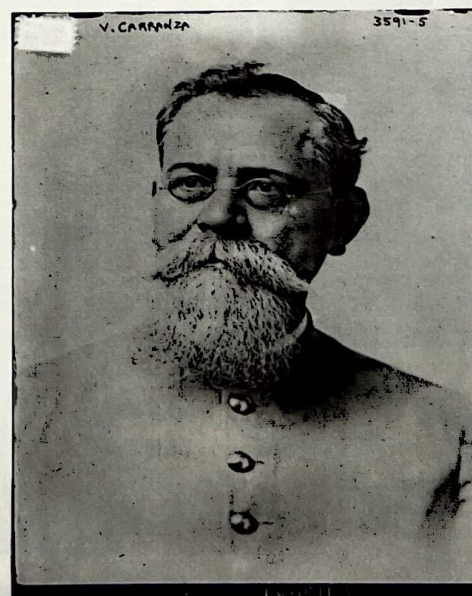
General Porfirio Díaz
President/Dictator of Mexico (1876-1911)
 (Library of Congress)



Francisco I. Madero, Jr.
President of Mexico (1911-1913)
 (Library of Congress)



General Victoriano Huerta
President of Mexico (1913-1914)
 (Library of Congress)



Venustiano Carranza
President of Mexico (1917-1920)
 (Library of Congress)



General Emiliano Zapata, Mexican revolutionary, founder of the Liberation Army of the South, his followers were known as Zapatistas (1876-1919)
(National Archives)



General Alvaro Obregón
(Library of Congress)



The historic meeting of future enemies. Brigadier General John J. Pershing, commanding the Eighth Cavalry brigade at Fort Bliss greets the Mexican generals Alvaro Obregón and Pancho Villa on the International Bridge between Juárez and El Paso, September 1914.



Pancho Villa, General Hugh Scott, and others at a race track, Ciudad Juárez, Mexico. Villa confers with his old friend Major General Hugh Scott, chief of staff, U.S. Army, January 1915. Scott always remained Villa's friend.
(Library of Congress and Eisenhower, *INTERVENTION!*, 196.)



Robert Lansing, who succeeded William J. Bryan as secretary of state in June 1915. Lansing's impatience to recognize a single faction in Mexico precipitated Villa's downfall as caudillo of Chihuahua, Mexico.
(Eisenhower, *INTERVENTION!*, 199.)



Famous photograph of Villa and Zapata occupying the President's Office of the National Palace, Mexico City, in December 1914. Villa sits in the president's chair with Zapata on his left.

(Eisenhower, *INTERVENTION!*, 197.)

APPENDIX B: Timeline Leading up to and of the Punitive Mexican Expedition

October 19, 1915-The United States and six Latin American nations recognize the Venustiano Carranza government in Mexico.

November 1, 1915-Pancho Villa's army is decimated by Carrancista forces under Plutarco Elías Calles in a two-day battle at Agua Prieta, opposite Douglas, Arizona. The fact the United States assisted Calles infuriated Villa.

January 11, 2016-Villistas raid a train, running from Chihuahua City to the Cusi mines, at Santa Isabel, Chihuahua. Villa's men kill sixteen of the seventeen Americans aboard.

March 8, 1916-Villistas raid on Columbus, New Mexico, killing nineteen Americans.

March 16, 1916-Brigadier General John J. Pershing, on President Wilson's order, crosses the Mexican border at Columbus and Culberson's Ranch, pursuing Villa.

March 24, 1916-Protocol signed between Washington and Carranza, *interpreted* by President Wilson as allowing the Punitive Expedition into Mexico.

April 8, 1916- Pershing's Punitive Expedition, now 6,675 men strong reaches over three hundred miles into Mexico.

April 12, 1916- Skirmish between U.S. cavalry and Carrancistas at Parral, over five hundred road miles into Mexican territory. End of Pershing's pursuit of Villa.

May 22, 1916-Venustiano Carranza write President Woodrow Wilson a long bitter note.

June 18, 1916- President Wilson calls on the National Guard and eventually 100,000 men go into Mexico.

January 27, 1917- Beginning of the withdrawal of the Punitive Expedition.

February 5, 1917- Last of the Punitive Expedition crosses the Rio Grande into the United States.

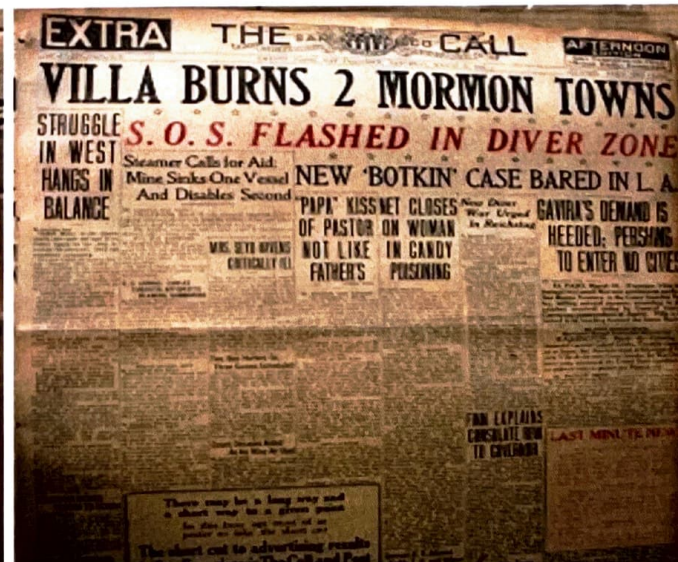
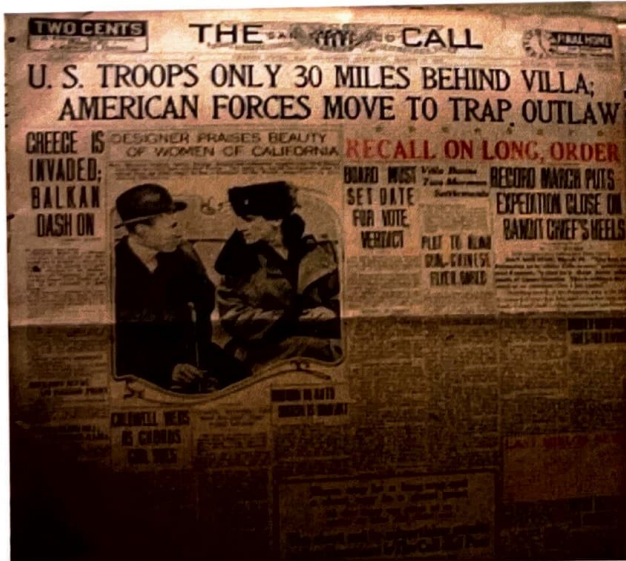
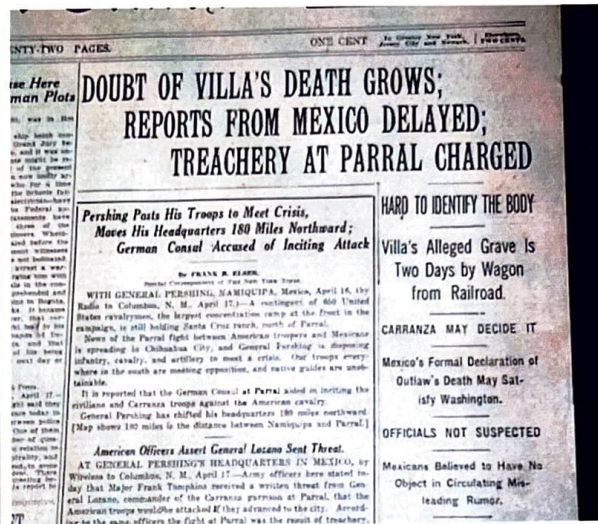
March 11, 1917- Venustiano Carranza is elected president of Mexico.

March 13, 1917- President Woodrow Wilson establishes full diplomatic relations with the new Carranza government by sending Henry P. Fletcher as ambassador to Mexico.

April 6, 1917- The United States declares war on imperial Germany.

June 1917-General John J. Pershing goes to Europe to fight in World War I.

APPENDIX C: Newspaper headlines about Pancho Villa



APPENDIX D: Images of the Punitive Mexican Expedition



Pancho Villa Expedition.
Column of 6th and 16th
Infantry, en route to the
States, between Corralitos
Rancho and Ojo Federico,
Jan 29th, 1917. Photograph
Courtesy of the US
Department of Defense



Brig. Gen. John J.
Pershing in front of his
tent. His aide, Lieutenant
J. Lawton Collins is on the
right.

[https://net.lib.byu.edu/e
stu/wwi/comment/huac
huca/HI2-01.htm](https://net.lib.byu.edu/e/stu/wwi/comment/huachuca/HI2-01.htm)



UNITED STATES
CAVALRY CROSSING THE
RIO GRANDE DURING THE
PUNITIVE EXPEDITION
AGAINST PANCHO VILLA
AND HIS ALLIES, 1916

Source: New Mexico Digital
Collections,
[http://econtent.unm.edu/.../coll
ecti.../abqmuseum/id/245/rec/
509](http://econtent.unm.edu/.../collecti.../abqmuseum/id/245/rec/509)



Pancho Villa's raid on Columbus, NM
3/9/1916



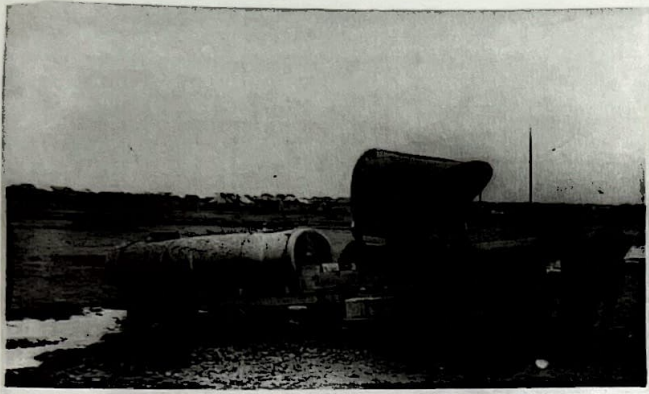
The aftermath of Pancho Villa's raid on
Columbus, NM 3/9/1916



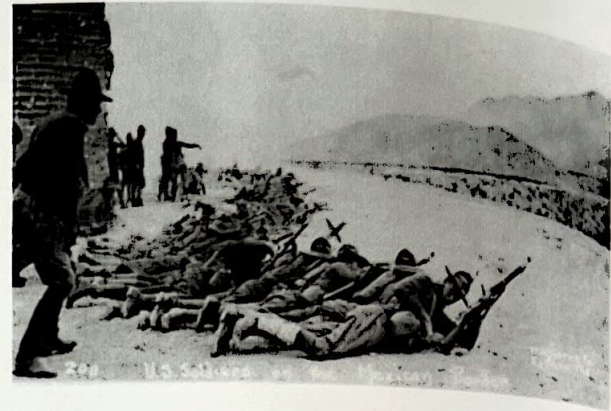
[U.S. Army Punitive Expedition after Villa, Colonia Dublan, Mexico, 1916. American Headquarters: Unloading supplies from Mexican train, which has come from Juarez on the border]

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APPENDIX E: Punitive Mexican Expedition warfare equipment



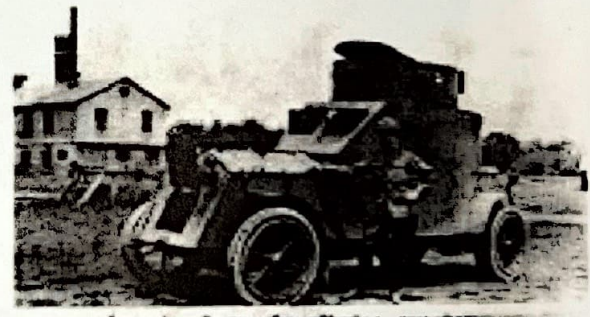
The truck did not, of course, replace horse and wagon in the logistical role during the Punitive Expedition. It only supplemented them.



Conflict during the Punitive Expedition was actually very limited, with only a handful of minor skirmishes between US troops and Mexican revolutionaries.

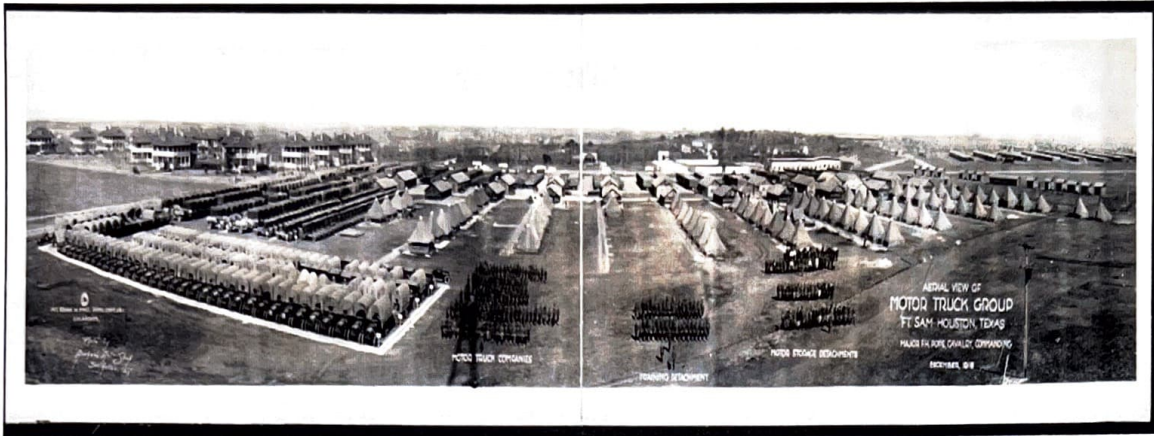


Interesting view from the Punitive Expedition of foot troops, early truck-mounted machine guns, an armored car and horse-mounted troops in El Paso, 6 March 1917.
[http://econtent.unm.edu/cdm4/item_view ... OX=1&REC=2](http://econtent.unm.edu/cdm4/item_view... OX=1&REC=2)



Americans tested new military equipment in the expedition, but only kicked up more dust for Villa to hide behind. No photo credit available.

https://www.google.com/search?q=Military+weapons+in+the+Punitive+Expedition&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwikipqmOioXTAhUMwGMKHVHOBxUQ_AUICCGB&biw=673&bih=558&dpr=1.5#imgrc=DNGf9rov_5_XIM



Motor Truck Group, Ft. Sam Houston, Texas, Major F.H. Pope, Cavalry, commanding, December, 1916

The introduction of the truck, in a logistical support role, really began to impact this. With trucks being so much faster than horse drawn support, supplies were capable of being brought up much faster and in turn, cavalry could operate much deeper in enemy territory. This principle was proven during the Punitive Expedition, if only imperfectly so. Still, it did so effectively.

<http://lexanteinternet.blogspot.com/2016/03/the-punitive-expedition-and-technology.html>



The 1st Aero Squadron was equipped with JN3 Curtiss aircraft. The airplane was very slow and had a very limited service ceiling. In some instances the plane was at its effective ceiling in Mexico the moment it took off, although heroic pilots struggled to get it up over that so that it could be used.

<http://lexanteinternet.blogspot.com/2016/03/the-punitive-expedition-and-technology.html>

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