

FIRST STORY OF MEXICAN INVASION

Associated Press Man Describes in Detail Crossing of Border and March Through Desert.

ARMY MOVES AT GREAT SPEED

EL PASO, Tex., March 24.—The following dispatch from an Associated Press correspondent at the front in Mexico is the first complete story of the crossing of the border of the punitive expedition sent to avenge the Columbus massacre.

HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES PUNITIVE EXPEDITION, near Colonia, Dublan, Chihuahua, Mex., March 22.—(By Wagon Train to Columbus, N. M., March 23.)—Reaching here by a forced march that demonstrated the endurance of the American soldier and obviously amazed the Mexicans, several thousand United States troops, cavalry, infantry and artillery were scattered today between this point and the northern boundary of the district of Querroco, intent on the task of capturing or killing of Francisco Villa in the shortest possible time and exterminating the bandit band with which he raided Columbus, N. M., and slaughtered nine civilians on March 9. Troop movements and dispositions, however, it was said, were shrouded in the strictest secrecy, by order of the War Department.

Flag Crosses the Border. The entry into Mexico occurred at 12:07 p. m. March 15. At that moment the American flag with the standard of the Thirteenth cavalry, 30 men, which beat off Villa's raiders, despite the surprise carried over the boundary by the guard, Colonel Herbert J. Slocum, commanding the Thirteenth, was the first commanding officer to cross, he was followed by Major James A. Ryan, acting chief of staff to General John J. Pershing, who commands the punitive expedition.

This was column number one, consisting of infantry, artillery and cavalry and burdened with heavy wagon trains. It moved rather slowly, and camped the first night at Palomas, a filthy village of adobe huts and "go-downs" seven miles below the boundary, south of Columbus. Column number two entered Mexico from the desert of Chihuahua, fifty miles south of Palomas, N. M. General Pershing, who had accompanied the first column part of the way to Palomas, returned to Columbus the same afternoon, and, taking command of the second "flying column," drove it more than 119 miles over the desert of Chihuahua in twenty-two hours actual marching time.

Spies Dot the Route. Official records show that spies dotted the route of the first column, but the men of the second column had forged their way fifty miles into the country before a single native was seen; and to the patent surprise of the Mexicans reached here Friday night, exactly forty-two hours after crossing the border at El Thursday morning.

In this column, every man was mounted and the lumbering wagon trains were supplanted by army mules, which made the entire distance under heavy packs with the loss of only three of their number.

Given First Place. The Thirteenth cavalry, because of its accomplishment in driving Villa's greatly superior numbers out of Columbus after a brief engagement, was given first place in the first column. Muster of the .30-caliber command found here after he passed through going southward eight days ago showed that he made the raid on Columbus with 523 men. Having in anger after his deal deserters reported that their chief had killed five of his officers and men as cowards. There were 263 in his command when he retreated through Colonia Dublan. The Thirteenth accounted for the rest.

Major Frank Tompkins, who took fifty-nine men of his squadron and drove the bandits fifteen miles into Mexico after they had crossed the border, commanded the advance guard. The rest of the cavalry under Major Elmer Lindsey followed. Then came the mountain and field guns, next the "dough boys" of the infantry regiments and last the wagon trains, field hospital and sanitary equipment and the field wireless.

The orders were for every man to "travel light." Officers and men were not permitted to carry more than the clothing and equipment work upon their persons. The trains, nevertheless, were long and heavy.

Rations for Five Days. Vast quantities of ammunition for all types of arms including the machine guns of the cavalry and infantry, accounted for most of the weight. Rations were carried for only five days. The ration was bacon, hard tack and coffee. The column stretched out a length of a mile and a half. From Columbus, three miles north of the boundary line, only a vast cloud of dust, whipped to a great height by a high wind, could be seen, and two hours later, when the troops began making camp the men were thickly powdered from head to foot by grayish white coatings of pulverized lava. In the sense of smell detected Palomas long before the collection of brown, sun-burned huts of mud and cobblestones came into view. The odors were those of stock yards and tannery combined. Closer there was added that of unwashed humanity and soiled raiment, ragged remnants of which lay strewn about, with the remains of slaughtered cattle that had furnished food for Villa and his men during their brief stop at Palomas, and rations for the Carranza troops, who were there both before and after the bandit's brief sojourn in the village.

The American troops camped near a series of lakes formed by the Mimbres river, a stream which like a number of others in the southwest, disappears in its course through Mexico.

south of Columbus until the wagons came up. When these had crossed the boundary into Mexico, Major Tompkins, a brother of the noted lieutenant colonel, "Tommy" Tompkins of the Soviet army, spread his advance guard out. In the form of a wide fan, the riders of the guard galloped southward. The temper of the Mexicans was still a matter of speculation. There were officers who would not have been surprised to see the entry of the United States forces opposed at the border.

But there were no Mexicans at the border gate, and none were seen on the march to Palomas. Only two bodies of armed men were encountered by either of the columns on the march here. At Ascension Ramon H. Gomez had 100 Carranza soldiers and told Colonel Slocum he did not know whether to fight or let the American column peaceably pass on.

After an exchange of official visits during which he observed at the American camp, the assembly of men and guns, he decided to accept the United States officer's statement that Carranza had agreed to the entry of the troops unopposed.

Calls Them Yellow Jackets. The other body of troops were encountered here Saturday, March 18. Major Eliazdo Reyes, who said he was proceeding to Casas Grandes, from Madera after scouting for Villa, was started to see American troops in this vicinity. His men referred to them as "yellow jackets." He stopped one of the guides of the column and asked to be taken to the American commander to assure him that his forces, consisting of thirty-six men, were not "Yiliasas," and in turn he assured that they would not be fired upon.

Major Tompkins advance guard, with riders at intervals of twenty yards, swept the country between the border and Palomas and stirred nothing but jack rabbits.

Major James A. Ryan of the Thirteenth cavalry, acting chief of staff to General Pershing, found at Palomas just two human beings, a crippled Mexican, described by the American guides as the most cunning horse thief along the border and his wife. The only other living things were a few stray dogs which nightly fought the coyotes for the remains of cattle slaughtered by the Carranza garrison and the Villa troops.

Makes Boca Grandes. Infantrymen were posted all along the route from the border to Colonia Dublan to guard the line of communications, engineers maintained the road for wagon trains and motor trucks. Colonel Slocum's column made Boca Grandes from Palomas March 16. This was the point from which Villa started on his raid on Columbus. It was near Boca Grandes that Villa captured and murdered Arthur Kinney, a round-up boss for the Palomas Land and Cattle company, and three other Americans before the raid.

American soldiers found the body of one of the victims, battered and mutilated and in such a condition that it could not be recognized. An officer also picked up in the abandoned villa camp an expensive note of C. R. Walmsley, leader of a party of sixteen employees of the Cud Mining company, who were slaughtered by Pablo Lopez, a Villa lieutenant at Santa Ysabel.

Men and officers of these columns were not permitted to drink water that had not been previously tested. They were forbidden to enter Mexican houses for fear of typhus. The result was that all were healthy and in good condition. The officers issued by the commanding general provided also that no towns should be occupied. For that reason the temporary base here was established two miles outside of Colonia Dublan and four miles from Nueva Casas Grandes, where the Carranza authorities maintain small garrisons.

Ready to Co-operate. Army officers said they found Carranza officers, both civil and military, ready to accord hearty co-operation in the task of hunting down Villa and his bandit band. The intelligence department of the American punitive expedition, headed by Major Ryan, received much information from Carranza sources. American colonists near the old town of Casas Grandes, southwest of the army camp, declared the feeling among the Mexicans there was tense, but there has been no evidence of it.

The American troops brought in the first silver money some of the Mexicans had seen in years, and willingly paid double the prices that prevail within the boundary for food and the rough, dirty and strong native tobacco. There was, in fact, so little metal money among either the Mexicans and the small band of American Mormons who have braved the dangers of reported Villa raids, that many were unable to provide change for a silver dollar. The one Chinese storekeeper found in Nueva Casas Grandes was asked what he would give for an American \$5 bill. He opened his cash drawer and with an expressive motion of the arms and hands indicated that he was willing to exchange for it the bale of Carranza and Villa paper money it contained.

Loss Twelve Mules. Marching slowly on account of the trains the head of the first column did not enter the base camp here until Monday at noon after a march of 167 miles from Columbus. The machine gun troops of the Thirteenth cavalry, the wagon trains and other units lost altogether twelve mules.

The second or flying column, which, under General Pershing's personal command, made the dash from Culbertson's ranch, lost three mules. The transport animals of the latter, however, were more lightly burdened.

General Pershing's cavalry and escort crossed the boundary at 5:37 o'clock Thursday morning, March 16. It was a brilliant moonlight night.

The sun rising over the mountains gave the men their first view of the country, a desert stretch of sun-scorched mesquite and bunch grass dotting a level valley floor with full red material from an eminence thrown up by volcanic explosions in pre-historic ages.

Recalls Apache War. At 7:30 the flying column made Carriao. The horses, cavalrymen and soldiers of the artillery, hospital units and field radio outfits that had preceded the escort were encamped on the sides of a granite butte fronting the canyon in which General Pershing, the famous Apache warrior, made his final stand and surrendered to American troops more than thirty years ago. These facts recalled to many officers, some of the older of whom participated in the Apache campaign that the present expedition in Mexico had set no precedent, and that bandit hunting is a foreign country, of independent sovereignty was not a new thing for the United States army.

Here on the hillside was observed for the first time the first units of the flying column, the artillery, the negro cavalry and other organizations. Some of them had previously marched from Fort Huachuca, Ariz., and other distant points, and such was the secrecy thrown about their movements that even the officers of lesser rank did not know of their coming.

More or Less in the Dark. In fact the officers of the organizations moved more or less in the dark. Their orders directed them to proceed to certain points where other orders would be found. They proceeded thus by stages, not knowing where the next would take them and the appearance of General Pershing first at Hatobia and then at Culbertson's plainly surprised the soldiers and some of their officers.

At Carriao, the first meal in Mexico was eaten. It consisted of army bacon, part of the five days' rations issued to the men, hard tack, which tastes somewhat like the maize of a Jewish religious feast and unseasoned coffee. Officers and men fared alike.

General Pershing allowed the command to rest until noon. The order then was to make all speed to reach the big Ojitos ranch, formerly the property of a brother of Admiral Lord Charles Beresford of Great Britain, at nightfall.

Ojitos is sixty miles from the border. At 7 o'clock the night camp was being made by the American troops beside irrigation ditches through which flowed the first running water they had seen in Mexico. Here also were seen the first Mexicans, other than two who were observed a few miles north of Ojitos, silhouetted against the sky on a mountain top. These two were at first believed to be spies, but scouts reported them to be ranchers living in the valley.

Reap Golden Harvest. The Ojitos Mexicans reaped a golden harvest among the bumper crops, mainly of Pezoles, tortillas and Chilli sauces were in great demand and in contrast to the Casas Grandes Mexicans, who doubled and tripled prices on bread and every other edible, their prices were "what you like to give." The señoras of the ranch households cooked half the night, their daughters delivered it served the food and the husbands and fathers gathered the money.

At Ojitos, the intelligence department of the flying column received the first definite word concerning Villa. The Mexicans there reported that he had passed the ranch Saturday, two days after the Columbus raid with an escort of only ten men. They also stated that reports had been received at the ranch that Villa had killed five Mexicans at Corralitos, an American ranch to the south, because they were working for the hated "gringos."

Hard on the Feet. Although the march of sixty miles had rendered one tender foot and made part of the officers of the softer men among the workers and soldiers, the column was again in the saddle shortly after daylight. The line of march took the trails through the mountains from here on, and those who forgot to fill canteens suffered, for the day was torrid, the dust thick and the road hard. Letting up and down hills, it crossed precipices and skirted ravines and declivities. Pals, broken fragments of porous volcanic rock strewn most of the way.

The next water was found at Casa de Janos, a ranch about fifteen miles south of Ojitos, where a running stream, fringed by groves of cottonwood, cooled the few trees along the way. Water was found. Here General Pershing allowed a five-minute rest. Horses were watered and men plunged their heads into a stream to drink and to wash off layers of dust. Then the drive was resumed.

Trot ten miles, walk ten, was the marching order. And a cavalry trot, a gait unaccustomed to the jarring and jolting, is anything but easy.

General Pershing, tall, slender, ascetic and grown much grayer since the fire at the Presidio at San Francisco, which bereaved him of wife and four daughters, already had become known to the men as "the old man," and throughout the march, comments ran through the ranks on his tendency to speed up to the utmost limit.

"Old Man's Expectation." "The old man must expect to get Villa tonight," said one tired recruit. "No," replied an equally saddle-weary comrade, "he is on the way to Mexico City and we will get there tomorrow." The recruit, young and apparently little acquainted with geography and the vast distances in Mexico, took the statement at fair value and said "honest."

Every soldier had something to say about Villa and everyone pronounced the name, not "Vee-ya," but as it is spelled in English. Many expressed the hope that the bandit leader would soon have the misfortune to get in front of his rifle as the army automatic pistol.

Not one had a doubt but that the object of the expedition would be promptly accomplished.

Villa Wants Gas. "Good night for you or for him?" cut in a white soldier. "Goodnight for him," was the indignant answer. "No man named Villa will ever put my lights out." A sergeant expressed similar sentiments, and added that if chance gave him the honor of bagging the bandit, no one of lesser rank than a colonel could speak to him, "and even the colonel would have to say 'sir'."

The object of the grueling march of Friday was to reach Colonia Dublan by night and it was done. The mountain route reduced the distance to fifty miles, while the artillery and hospital wagons in the valley were doing sixty-eight. By a o'clock Friday night camp was made beside an irrigation plant.

The last ten miles was almost a torture. It was hot. High winds whirled the clouds of dust kicked up by the horses into the eyes and mouths of the men. Water at a dollar a swallow could not be bought anywhere along the line. Every canteen had been emptied, many tongues were swollen. Eyes, mouths and nostrils were merely blackened orifices in every face, but there was no complaint.

Mouth Full of Mud. "God, I wish I had a drink, my mouth is full of mud," was the nearest to a complaint that was heard.

Twenty miles northwest of here, where the tablelands grow narrow, outcrops were thrown out on the flanks, and two troops of cavalry went in pursuit of some horsemen reported to General Pershing as having been seen lurking in a canyon. The horsemen turned out to be rideless range horses.

The hardest part of the march was through the pass just west of here known as Puerto San Vicente, this defile is so narrow that the columns had to move for several miles in single file, the horses now climbing rocky steepes, and now slipping with stiffened forelegs down into ravines, at the bottom of which ran tiny streams of alkali water tinged green by the copper impregnated rocks.

Officers experienced difficulty in preventing the men and their mounts from drinking the poisonous water. Discipline prevailed, however. Up to today the hos-

pital corps have had only two cases to handle, one of them a soldier accidentally shot at Carriao, and who later died. Lieutenant T. S. Bowen, the aviator officer injured Monday when his airplane was caught by a whirlwind, turned upon its nose and plunged to the ground.

Moved to the River. From the irrigation plant, the troops, after a night of refreshing sleep, despite the almost freezing temperature, were moved Saturday to the Casas Grandes river, which skirts the Mormon colony of Dublan.

General Pershing and Colonel George A. Dodd, commanding the Second Cavalry brigade, established headquarters on the right bank of the river and held them there for a day. The commanding general allowed the tired troops of the flying column a full day of rest, but at 3 o'clock Sunday morning the actual pursuit of Villa and his diminished band of brigands was begun.

Brings First Tent. Yesterday's march which arrived at the same time brought the first tents to be erected in camp. Previously the cottonwoods fringing the river provided the only shelter from the ardent sun. During the nights, always frigid in this altitude of 5,000 feet, the shivering men supplemented meager equipment of blankets with hay piled beneath and on top of them. High winds have prevailed almost continuously. There are wild duck and cotton tail rabbits to furnish shooting. The coyotes, attracted to throngs by the proximity of the camp with its assemblage of those animals, make the nights noisy with their cries and provide interest for the outposts hidden in the tall volunteer wheat and bunch grass covering the valley in the vicinity of the river.

One of General Pershing's first acts on arriving at the camp was to make inquiry concerning the Mormon families of the colonies Dublan and Juarez who refused to abandon their homes and property when the United States government issued its last warning to get out of Mexico, following the massacre of the Watson party of mining men at Santa Ysabel, last January. It had been reported that Villa in his retreat southward had raided the colonies, robbed the homes of the colonists and killed a number. Bishop A. B. Call, in charge of Colonia Dublan, confirmed reports of extensive looting but said no lives had been lost.

Service in Mormon Church. In the old, battered, shot-marked Mormon church of the colony a praise service was held last Sunday. The bishop said since Villa's retreat from Sonora after his defeat at Agua Prieta last November the Mormon residents in the vicinity of Casas Grandes had been subjected to all sorts of impositions. For twenty-five days subsequent to December 3, 500 men had been quartered on them.

The colony of Dublan contains substantial brick houses for more than 100 families. Large roomy dwellings, they are in marked contrast to the Mexican town of Nueva Casas Grandes. Most of the colonists have been here since its establishment more than thirty years ago. When the last warning of the United States government to get out was given all but twenty-five families left.

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reached. Then a pack master of the mule trains noting his exhaustion picked him up and let him ride a pack into camp.

House Refuses to Open Polar Dispute. WASHINGTON, March 23.—The house education committee today voted unanimously to take no action on pending bills to reopen the North pole controversy. Dr. Frederick A. Cook recently asked the committee to investigate his claims.

WAR CAUSES OVER FORTY THOUSAND BRITISH WIDOWS. LONDON, March 24.—The number of widows of British soldiers who have thus far been reported to the army coun-

cil is 41,500, according to William Hayes Fisher, parliamentary secretary of the local government board, in a speech to the House of Commons committee on the war pensions bill today. There are about 10,000 widows of sailors, Mr. Fisher added.

Ask the man who has used Bee Want Ads—100 to 1 you will hear a boast.

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