

## SHORT HISTORY OF FORT HUACHUCA

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Fort Huachuca has had an important role in the progress of our country at various times since its founding in 1877. In the early days its mission was to confine the Apache Indians to their reservations and thus allow the ranchers, miners, and transportation lines to come into southeastern Arizona and develop this area unmolested.

Today the progress of our country does not depend on cavalry troops operating against Apaches in the Arizona mountains, but instead on keeping the lead in technological developments, particularly in the field of electronic warfare. So it is that Fort Huachuca, delivered to the Signal Corps of the Army in 1954, has again an outstanding position in our national defense effort as a testing area for electronic equipment.

Fort Huachuca also had a role to play in between the Apache era and the modern period of electronic testing. It trained troops and developed techniques that were to count in the Spanish-American War and the Philippine Insurrection around the turn of the century. It figured as one of the starting points for General Pershing's expedition into Mexico in 1913 to hunt Pancho Villa, and it saw some of its garrison fight pitched battles with Mexican irregulars in the border town of Nogales just prior to World War I. It served as a huge training ground for infantry troops during World War II, when the 93rd and 92nd Divisions trained here, 32,000 troops being quartered at one time in the Fort's barracks, and again from 1951 to 1953 when units of the Aviation Engineers trained here for the Korean War.

Back in the 1830's, Fort Huachuca was an important station in a heliograph network extending from one mountain peak to another over much of Arizona territory. The heliograph, a communication device using mirrors and sunlight to transmit signals, was a very important project of the Signal Corps in those days. Fort Huachuca also had several of the first companies of machine gun troops before World War I and was testing this weapon as a sort of novelty in that period.

These are Fort Huachuca highlights. Let us turn back to the beginning for some of the interesting details.

In the 1870's bands of hostile, renegade Apaches moved back and forth between the San Carlos Reservation to the north and the Sierra Madre mountains in Mexico to the south, raiding and murdering through the San Pedro valley as they went. It was to control these Apache bands that Captain Samuel M. Whitside in command of two troops of the Sixth Cavalry founded Camp Huachuca March 3, 1877, in the present Old Post area of the Fort.

The camp site in a canyon in the Huachuca Mountains, which gave the Fort its name, was located on high enough ground to command the San Pedro valley and provided plenty of water and wood in an otherwise hot, desert land. It furthermore proved to be so healthful that General Irvin McDowell recommended its becoming a permanent fort. It became Fort Huachuca officially in 1882. One of the first things Captain Whitside did was to order a sawmill set up, and with timber cut from the mountains and canyons, he began building barracks, stables and storehouses.

One of the most important Apache campaigns in which troops of the Fort participated was the final one against Geronimo. Captain (later General) W. H. Lawton was put into the field to run down Geronimo's band. Leonard Wood, then Contract Surgeon assigned to the Fort who later became very prominent as Governor-General of the Philippines, volunteered for service with the troops and won the Congressional Medal of Honor for services in this campaign. Eventually Lawton and Wood induced Geronimo to come to Skeleton Canyon near Douglas, where he surrendered on September 3, 1886.

This practically put an end to Indian troubles in Arizona, and the years began to roll around more quietly at Fort Huachuca. Pancho Villa raided Columbus, New Mexico, in 1916, and the Punitive Expedition under Pershing, with cavalry and infantry units from Fort Huachuca, spent months in Mexico trying to find him. Boyd Street, Adair Street, and Winrow Road on the Fort still commemorate a captain, a lieutenant, and a sergeant killed in action in Mexico.

World War I brought more excitement in the form of threats of Mexican collaboration with the German government. How much collaboration has never been proved, but a severe pitched battle was fought by troops from Fort Huachuca stationed in Nogales against Mexicans entrenched in the houses in their section of the border city. The fight finished in its second day on terms of the U. S. Troops,

and nothing much came of it. Fort Huachuca was considered to be an important defense on the Mexican border, and except for furnishing a few cadres of troops for Europe, the 10th Cavalry remained in garrison there all during the war.

After the Armistice in 1918, the Post went through a long period of routine garrison life. A building program was instituted in the 1920's and the present Post Headquarters, the quarters along Henry Circle, and the barracks buildings north of the old parade ground were constructed. Later, in the 1930's, the "Million Dollar Barracks" and other buildings were added in a WPA building program.

Although many millions of dollars worth of additional buildings were built at the Fort during World War II, and it had become a large military reservation, in 1947 it was declared surplus and was closed. Many buildings and much equipment was sold and moved off the reservation under the War Assets Administration. This deactivation also resulted in the final disbanding of a U. S. Army unit, the Indian Scouts. The Scouts, which had come into existence under the direction of Brigadier General George Crook in the days of the Indian fighting, were stationed at many Army posts in Arizona until the posts, one by one, were disbanded. The last company of them was stationed at Fort Huachuca, and eight of them remained on duty to pass in final review and be retired when Fort Huachuca closed.

After the Fort had had another brief revival as a training ground for Aviation Engineers from 1951 to 1953, it again went on an inactive status. There were civilian plans to convert it into a low rent residential area for old folks, to make it the Arizona State Correctional Home for Boys, to turn it over to the University of Arizona as an agriculture range, or to turn it over to the Arizona Fish and Game Commission,

None of these plans materialized, and then, quite as unexpected as any other event in its history, Fort Huachuca was reactivated in February 1954, as the site of the U. S. Army Electronic Proving Ground. The activities of the Electronic Warfare Center, formerly carried on at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, were transferred here. Today, Fort Huachuca provides the facilities, engineers, and manpower for testing and evaluating the thousands of new electronic devices with which future American armies will be equipped. The Post is now engaged in testing television for battlefield surveillance, infra-red detection devices, pilotless airplanes (drones) also for battlefield photography.

A large department is devoted to electronic warfare, which is the name given to systems for jamming an enemy's electronic equipment. Another department of the Fort is engaged in developing the use of small planes and helicopters in tactical support of troops. A new electronic environmental testing facility is soon to be constructed which will test the operation of all kinds of electronic devices when they are used in conjunction with one another.

The largest automatic data processing machine which the Army possesses is being constructed on the Fort, and will be housed in the new Technical Building which is about ready for occupancy. In addition, to all these foregoing operations at the Fort there is a meteorological department which makes extensive studies of weather information as it affects the operation of electronic equipment.

As the years have passed by, Fort Huachuca's area has grown gradually to the place where it now comprises over 70,000 acres. There are now over 7,000 civilians and military personnel manning equipment and offices. At an elevation of between 4,500 and 5,000 feet, the Fort offers an invigorating climate of warm summer days and moderately cool winters, with occasional frost and snow. Fort Huachuca has brought about a phenomenal growth in the surrounding area. The closest community, Sierra Vista, has grown from a general store and service station to a busy community with supermarkets, appliance stores and drive-in theaters. Recently, another new community, named Huachuca City, has been incorporated. Other than these communities, the nearest towns are Tombstone, 32 miles away; Bisbee, 40 miles; Nogales, 60 miles; and Tucson, 90 miles.