

THE GERONIMO CAMPAIGN

By BRIG. GEN. JAMES PARKER

At the time of the Geronimo outbreak I was stationed at Fort Apache, Ariz., commanding Troop K, 4th Cavalry, and performing the duties of Post Quartermaster and Commissary. On May 17, 1885, Geronimo's band, camped near the Post, went on the war path and we started in pursuit, Troops A and K, 4th Cavalry, Captain Allen Smith in command. On May 22, following the trail of the hostiles, we arrived at Devil's Creek, a deep canyon, and camped. An hour afterwards, Captain Smith being absent bathing, we were attacked by the hostiles. I took command and we ascended the heights, drove off the Indians and captured their camp.

On or about June 3rd, I relinquished command of my troop, having been ordered back to Fort Apache to perform my duties as Quartermaster. In January, 1886, I reported to Fort Huachuca as Adjutant of the 4th Cavalry.

Early in June, 1886, General Miles arrived at Fort Huachuca. To get an idea of the country he and I climbed to the summit of El Moro mountain near the post. I have never been slow at suggestions and I took this opportunity to ask General Miles if I could make one. "I have recently come from Fort Apache where the Chiricahuas not with Geronimo are located," I said. "Whenever there is news of a raid, the Chiricahuas, in order not to become involved in the fighting, go into the post and are quartered in the quartermaster corral. "I would suggest a false report of a raid be spread and when the Indians are in the corral, they be surrounded by the troops, disarmed, taken to the railroad and shipped east as prisoners of war. Geronimo's band in the field will then be isolated, will no longer receive aid and comfort, as heretofore, and will surrender." "Why that would be treachery," said the General. "I could never do that." "Treachery or not," I replied, "it will end the war and save hundreds of lives of innocent citizens."

The General appeared to regard the proposition with disfavor. But nevertheless it was only a few weeks later when the Chiricahuas at Fort Apache, being assembled to receive rations, were surrounded by troops, disarmed and sent by

railroad to Florida. This was in August. In September, Miles, in his negotiations with Geronimo, used this fact to bring about the surrender.

Descending from El Moro we climbed another mountain, and at the end of that day we had ascended five peaks. This gives an idea of Miles' physical energy.

In June, 1886, I resigned the adjutancy of the 4th Cavalry and asked to be sent to a troop. Accordingly, I was assigned to H troop, 4th Cavalry, at Cloverdale, Ariz., which I reached 4 days later after a march of over 100 miles. I had two men with me. At Cloverdale, an abandoned ranch, I found Lieut. Abiel L. Smith whom I relieved of the command of H troop. Also at the camp was a company of the 8th Infantry, Capt. John F. Stretch, 1st Lieut. James Pettit and 2nd Lieut. R. L. Bullard.

Thirty-six hours after I got there, there arrived at the camp two Americans, Anderson and Jones, fine looking frontiersmen. It appeared that their profession was smuggling, carrying tobacco and other wares into Mexico. They informed us that they had picked up a trail of hostiles in Guadalupe Canyon.

I hastened to mount my troop and start in pursuit. Anderson and Jones led me to a point in Guadalupe Canon where the Indians had killed a cow and had camped for several days. It was apparent that they had been there when I passed two days before. Hidden among some rocks they had not seen me, or it would have fared hard with my party.

The trail led north, passing over the crests of the mountains. Being obliged, on account of the roughness of the trail to often dismount and lead our horses, we made that day only 20 miles.

The next day we made 30 miles. At night my horses having had no water we were obliged to leave the trail and descend from the mountain to the plain, where we camped at Gray's Ranch. It was very hot and my horses had suffered greatly.

The next morning Jones and Anderson, who I found could follow a trail like the most expert Indians, proposed that instead of going back to where we had left the trail, we should try to cut it further north, at Skeleton Canyon. Adopting their advice, after a march of 16 miles, and having