



In Search of Eldorado



Hello to Family & Friends

An unwelcome sight this morning. Shortly after I took this picture Erin sent me a text asking if I can come home now, she's sick of snow blowing. I sent her this photo in response.

Another day at Fort Huachuca today, of cold, windy, snowy weather, although the sun did come out before noon and warm things up a little. Fortunately I will be inside museums most of the day.



Below are the Huachuca Mountains as I entered the Fort.

Day 46

Tuesday

February 19th

Fort Huachuca

Weather

40's and Sunny

Eldorado

By Edgar Allen Poe

Gaily bedight,
A gallant knight,
In sunshine and in shadow,
Had journeyed long,
Singing a song,
In search of Eldorado.

But he grew old—
This knight so bold—
And o'er his heart a shadow—
Fell as he found
No spot of ground
That looked like Eldorado.

And, as his strength
Failed him at length,
He met a pilgrim shadow—
'Shadow,' said he,
'Where can it be—
This land of Eldorado?'

'Over the Mountains
Of the Moon,
Down the Valley of the Shadow,
Ride, boldly ride,'
The shade replied,—
'If you seek for Eldorado!'



You Are Looking at Huachuca's Original Camp.

It was here that the natural hush of Huachuca Canyon was shattered on March 3d, 1877, when the clatter of cavalry resounded among the Mexican oaks and commands bellowed in English were heard for the first time in this out-of-the-way enclave. These latest intruders were Yankees—Irish Yankees, German Yankees, English Yankees. Some 120-strong, they were led by a veteran captain named Sam Whitside. They were part of a strategy of the U.S. Army to confine the footloose Apache and they were here to stay. They lived under canvas for the first two years until a construction program could be launched. They were busy looking for people like Victorio, Nana, Chatto, Chihuahua, Juh, and Geronimo.

From 1877 on, the sound of bugle calls ricocheting off the Huachuca foothills would be heard. It was from these picturesque confines that U.S. Army soldiers rode in pursuit of Apache raiders, responded to threats from Mexican revolutionaries along the border, and prepared themselves for every American emergency in the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. You stand on a hallowed patch of ground that is a significant place because of the thousands of patriots that have saluted their nation's flag at this remote intersection in our nation's military history.

This original campsite serves as a memorial. Because of its singular vantage point overlooking much of American history, Huachuca's Old Post was declared a National Historic Landmark in 1974.

This is the area I walked yesterday. This plaque makes me gaze on this area with more reverence than I did a day ago.



The first museum

The Gadsden Purchase was a negotiated \$10 million purchase of a portion of Northern Mexico. This buy would provide an easy navigable route for the coming southern transcontinental railroad.

In a prior newsletter I spoke about the Gadsden Purchase, this really shows the area much better than I could describe it.



I never realized until today how many Civil War battles were fought in New Mexico and Arizona. According to this map there were several.

THE FIRST GENERATION AT FORT HUACHUCA

After the Civil War, the Regular Army returned to the southwest to resume protecting white settlers from hostile bands of Apaches. Mexico refused to allow the U.S. Army to pursue the Apache across the border, so the Army established permanent camps along Apache escape routes. One, Camp Huachuca, was founded in March 1877 by Capt. Samuel Whiteside of the 6th Cavalry. From 1877 to 1892, Fort Huachuca was garrisoned by cavalry and infantry regiments, augmented by Signal Corps detachments and Apache scouts.

Signal Corps detachments stationed on mountain-tops monitored movement in the valleys by a system of mirrors reflecting abbreviated Morse code flashes to stations as far as eighty miles away.

It's amazing that those mirrors could be seen 80 miles away. A little later on you will see just how far away 80 miles is.

The Buffalo Soldiers. There was a TV movie made in 1997 of the same name. I have never seen it, but I will make a note to find it and watch when I have time.



World War 2

The 25th Infantry became part of the reactivated 93rd Infantry Division and would see action in New Guinea and the Philippines. The 24th Infantry Regiment would fight as an independent Regimental Combat Team on Bougainville, Saipan, Tinian and Okinawa. The 92nd Division also reactivated and trained extensively at Fort Huachuca before entering combat in Italy. The 9th and 10th Cavalry regiments were deactivated and their personnel reassigned.

The Buffalo Soldier era came to a close at the end of World War 2. A few years later the military would desegregate, and these unique regiments would pass into history.

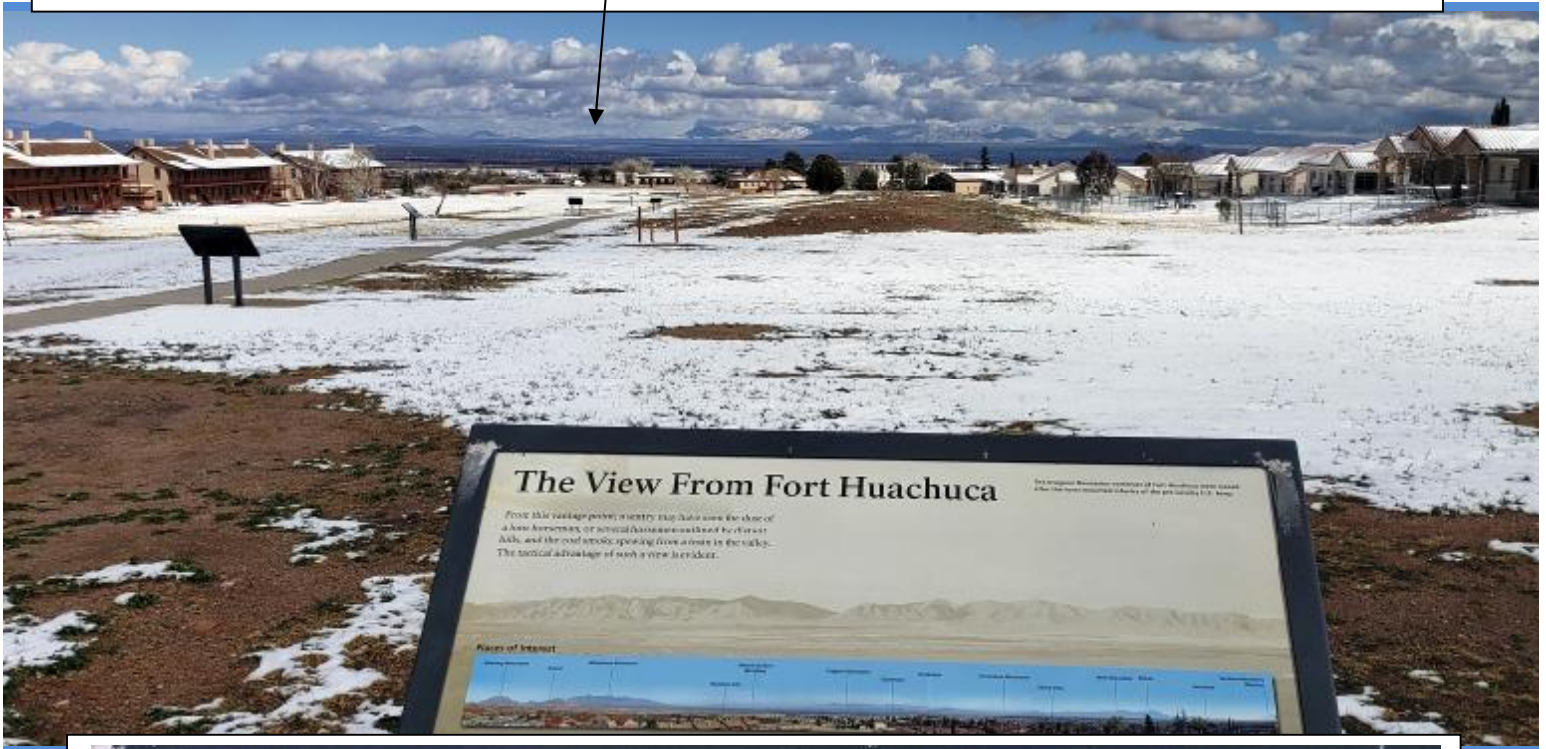
This was one of the several paintings on display of the old west, mostly cavalry and apaches. I forgot to get the name of the artist, but these are most likely the Dragoon Mountains and the stronghold of Cochise.



On 30 June 1995, a sculpture was dedicated in front of the Museum Annex called "Eyes of the Army," by Tucson artist Dan Bates. It depicts in bronze a cavalry officer, standing with binoculars, and an Apache Scout, kneeling and pointing. Displaying the themes of vigilance and reconnaissance during the Indian Wars, the statue honors the Apache Scouts, a unique unit that played out its final years at Fort Huachuca.

Hey, they finally have the statue facing the right way, how about that.

This will show you just how far away 80 miles is. Even though there is pretty clean air out here, keep in mind that there was virtually NO air pollution in 1877, or TV signals, Radio waves, cell towers, etc. which cannot be seen with the naked eye, but can disrupt the air, especially at a distance. Mount Graham is 80 miles away.



The View From Fort Huachuca

From this vantage point, a sentry may have seen the dust of a lone horseman, or several horsemen outlined by distant hills, and the coal smoke spewing from a train in the valley. The tactical advantage of such a view is evident.

Fort Huachuca

History of Innovation and Training in Unmanned Aerial Systems

After WWII Fort Huachuca closed down from 1947 to 1951, but during the Korean War it was reopened with a vengeance. From that time until now it has been the main testing and proving ground for Military Intelligence. Yes, I know, many consider that phase an oxymoron, but don't get caught saying that around here.

One of the main functions is unmanned aerial vehicles, or UAV's. Clear air, wide open spaces, little electromagnetic interference, all make for the perfect proving ground.

Museum number two, or The Annex, was originally built as a movie theater. When a more modern facility was constructed, the floor was leveled and the space turned into a museum for the UAV's



A UAV being shot into the air by a mobile launcher, no runway needed. There was even one that could be tossed into flight just like throwing a paper airplane.

AN/USD-1 Surveillance Drone



The drone on display became known as "Old Faithful" after successfully completing 50 flights and parachute landings. More often, these drones would crash in the Arizona desert when their chutes failed to work properly. Training for the SD-1 was conducted by the US Army Combat Surveillance School Training Center at the US Army Electronic Proving Ground, Fort Huachuca.



A drone operations command console

A new proving ground.

During the Gulf War, unmanned aircraft flew 522 sorties and spent 1641 hours in the air. UAS proved reliable and responsive, providing battlefield damage assessment, targeting, and surveillance missions, particularly in high-threat airspace.



Above is a collection of drones developed here at Fort Huachuca.

Another interesting part of the slide presentation here was the size of Fort Huachuca: 157 square miles; 100,539 total acres; 65,382 acres for training; 7,760 acres for the main post; 27,397 acres for the Willcox Playa; 25 training areas; elevation 3,940 feet to 8,625 feet.

RQ-7 Shadow 200 Tactical Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) being loaded onto its launcher at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Warhorse, in preparation for a mission over Baqubah, Iraq



An Army Shadow UAV platoon in Iraq in 2010

FORT HUACHUCA



Fort Huachuca

- At the leading edge of our Nation's defense since 1877-

UNCLASSIFIED

I thought the slide above was pretty cool. On to museum number three.





This is an actual section of the concrete Berlin Wall. I was amazed I was able to touch it. This is a real piece of history.

I know I talked about the Cold War at the missile silo, but perhaps a little more background, again for those born after 1980.

On August 13, 1961, the Communist government of East Germany began to build a barbed wire and concrete wall between East and West Berlin. The division of Berlin



started in 1945 after the collapse of Germany. The country was divided into four zones and each superpower controlled a zone. In 1946 agreements broke down between the Soviets and the Western zones. The response was to merge the French, British and American zones in 1947. The official purpose of the wall was to keep western "fascists" from entering East Germany, but it primarily served the purpose of stopping defections from East to West. The Wall came down in 1989.



Checkpoint Charlie was the best known border crossing between East and West Berlin during the Cold War.

In 1961 U.S. and Soviet tanks faced-off here in a possible lead up to World War III.

Checkpoint Charlie was the setting for many thrillers and spy novels, from James Bond to THE SPY WHO CAME IN FROM THE COLD.

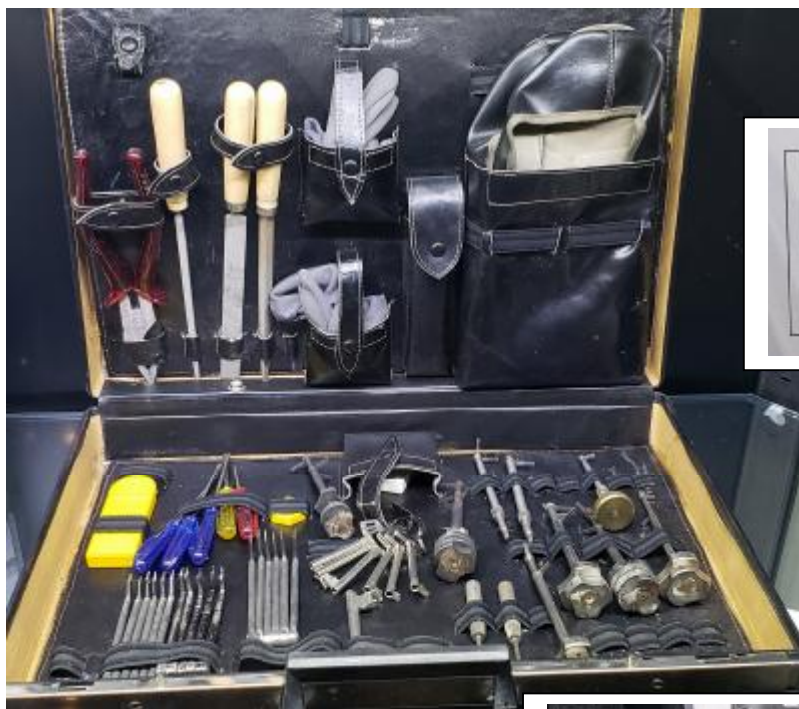


The movie U-571 was about capturing a German Enigma machine. Right is a computerized version. I typed in my name and it was turned into the cipher on the top line.

“Americans in 1950 rediscovered something that since Hiroshima they had forgotten: you may fly over a land; you may bomb it, atomize it, pulverize it and wipe it clean of life—but if you desire to defend it, protect it, and keep it for civilization, you must do this on the ground, the way the Roman legions did, by putting your young men into the mud.”

T.R. Fehrenbach,

This Kind of War: The Classic Military History of the Korean War



CIC Surreptitious Entry Kit

This kit was custom designed for common European lock systems.

Briefcase Camera

Photos are taken through a tiny pin hole by a motor-driven camera.





What I didn't realize yesterday was that the main gate is only open for funerals. I had to enter through a side gate to get into the cemetery.



A Two-fer: Turkeys and a deer in the same shot. Huge turkeys, about 20-25 of them, and there were another four deer inside the fence.





142 years of history in this cemetery





The graves of the two murderers I wrote about yesterday, and an Unkown grave marker in back.

I had time to visit the museum in Sierra Vista that was closed on Monday, but they only had a traveling exhibition from the Smithsonian on water. About a 16x16 foot rooms worth. Nothing about the history of the area, so no photos.

I am still not sure what I will do tomorrow. I seriously considered driving to Bisbee tonight because the weather might be warmer there tomorrow, but I ended up at the same RV park here in Sierra Vista for the night. It's 30 degrees outside right now at 10:30 with clear skies and a low of 21 tonight. The water heater is on ECO which keeps a steady 41 degrees in the unit, so that should be alright. I turned on the heater for the holding tanks so they don't freeze, hopefully. The inside temp is staying in the 60's, so my only worry is the regular water tank, but I don't think that will freeze solid enough to do any damage. The warmest low temp around here for the next seven days is 35.

I know a winter storm is on its way to Wisconsin, but they are expecting 1-3 feet of snow in the mountains here in Arizona. Flagstaff could get another 36 inches. It is supposed to be cold from San Diego to Dallas. I guess I picked the wrong year to come to Arizona. I now understand why Florida is more popular, you rarely see temps drop into the 30's overnight from Orlando south. I just want to be able to sit at my computer and write newsletters without my feet getting cold and the furnace running constantly.

Live and learn

Until next time.....