

# ANTIGUERRILLA OPERATIONS

## A Case Study From History

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*The italicized paragraphs in this article are in consonance with current doctrine as taught at the United States Army Command and General Staff College.—Editor.*

**T**HEY were unequalled in endurance and fighting ability. So cunning were the Apaches that a mere handful could keep a community in terror or an army in disorder. What type operations would be required to subdue the Apaches who have been described as the most hardy, warlike people known to history?

What were the qualifications of the Army officer who was to guide this antiguerrilla operation and to subdue Apaches such as "Old Nana" who at the age of 81 led 30 of his Apache warriors on a raid into New Mexico and in a period of less than 60 days traversed over a thousand miles of US territory, fought and won eight separate battles, and successfully evaded a pursuing force of 1,000 soldiers and 400 civilians?

It was General George Crook—a brilliant military strategist, tactician, and leader—who was to subdue and effectively rule the Apache Indians. A description of the officer by one of his contemporaries of the 1870's would read something like this.

"The General was every inch a soldier—always in top physical condition and ready for battle. He was a large man, erect,

spare, and muscular. When considering a plan he listened much and talked little. No soldier or Indian was too low or too poor to gain access to him. He was quiet and unpretentious, but even to a stranger 'there was the power, the force of a man who DOES.'"

### Mission

Crook's mission was to tame the Apache Indians and establish them on a reservation. It is apparent immediately that he was to wear two hats—that of a tactical military commander and that of a diplomatic negotiator. He was faced with the job of defeating on their own ground the most outstanding fighting men on the continent of North America, and, at the same time, he was to negotiate a peace with these nomadic people who had for centuries lived by fighting and plundering.

*Guerrilla type forces, employing tactics characterized by surprise, rapid movement, deception, secrecy, and stealth, have realized considerable success throughout history. Since World War II, guerrilla warfare and antiguerrilla operations (Greece, Algeria, Malaya, and Indochina) have become the most common forms of overt warfare.*

*The scope and nature of a commander's antiguerrilla mission may include political and administrative aspects seldom encountered in normal operations. The methods and techniques of combat in which*

***General Crook was a brilliant military strategist, tactician, and leader. His antiguerrilla methods could be modified to utilize current materiel with equally effective results against any present-day guerrilla force***

*commanders have been trained may have to be modified or even disregarded.*

### Intelligence

Crook arrived in Tucson, Arizona, in the summer of 1871 unheralded and unknown, but already an experienced Indian fighter. He immediately interviewed everyone who could contribute in any part to building up his information concerning the area of operation, the Apaches, and the over-all situation in the southwestern United States. He talked and listened to a multitude of people representing all walks of life—privates and colonels, mule skinnners and bankers, as well as the Governor.

Before making any plans concerning the conduct of the campaign he was to wage, Crook made absolutely sure that he had explored all sources to gain information concerning the situation—his intelligence estimate was thorough and complete.

*To conduct antiguerrilla operations without sound intelligence and counter-intelligence; wastes time, material, and troop effort. However, the intangible aspects of guerrilla warfare create intelligence obstacles that can be overcome only by patient determination and the utmost resourcefulness.*

*Plans for antiguerrilla operations are based primarily on a detailed analysis of the country concerned and its population. The political, administrative, economic, sociological, and military aspects of the plans are correlated closely with the overall military plan.*

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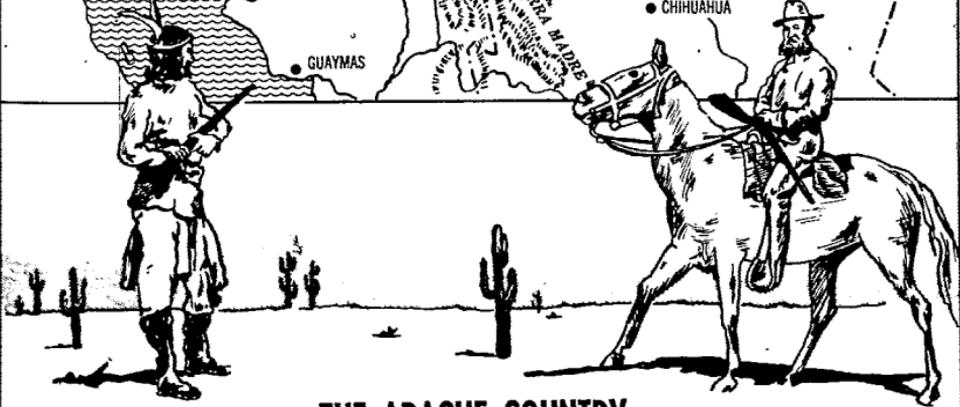
### Preparation

Crook knew that the type of warfare in which he was about to engage would be anything but normal and that his training and orientation program would have to ensure that his organization, as well as the mental and physical conditioning of his men, would permit him to cope with such a foe as the Apache. Demands of significant proportions would have to be placed on the officers and men of Crook's command. Crook knew that in order for the men to "pay the price" willingly, his leadership must be strong, and the men of his command must know him, trust him, and have faith in him.

By mid-July Crook was on the march at the head of his command. His general objective was not to do battle, but to shake down his command and, more specifically, to conduct a study of the terrain, to condition his men, and to create *esprit de corps*. The route that he selected for the march was through enemy territory and included some of the most rugged terrain in the southwestern United States. When Crook had completed his 700-mile training march he knew his command well and the command had come to know and respect its new leader.

*An intimate knowledge of the terrain is necessary. Only when the antiguerrilla forces' knowledge of the terrain begins to approach that of the guerrillas can they meet the guerrillas on anything like equal terms. Commanders and troops need time to become acquainted with the detailed topography of the area, the civilian population, and the organization and operations of the hostile guerrilla forces. Time is required to impart this knowledge to new commanders, staffs, and troops.*

*Morale of forces engaged in antiguerrilla warfare presents problems quite different from those encountered in normal combat. Operating against an elusive, violent, destructive force that seldom offers a target, that disintegrates before opposition, and then reforms and strikes again*



THE APACHE COUNTRY

is quite different from operating against the more tangible forces encountered in normal combat.

### Conduct of Operations

Crook recognized that the key to the effective conquest of the Apaches would be his ability to maintain a strong and continuous pursuit of the hostiles. To do this he would need men capable of combating the Apache in his own element, and a transportation system far better than any that existed at the time. He organized a transportation system that was unequalled in his day. He became known as the daddy of the American mule; his men were fond of saying that he was "pack-mule wise." Drawing on his knowledge gained from studies of the highly organized transportation systems of Spain, Peru, Mexico, and the mining systems of the southwest, he developed and maintained a pack train system that was equal to the task of wearing down the Apaches. Crook spent much of his time in close observation of the pack trains and gained even more knowledge of the trains and the mule skinnners by talking frequently to the men around the campfires and observing the trains in operation.

*Constant pressure must be maintained against the guerrillas by continuous operations and vigorous combat patrolling until they are brought to decisive battle. This keeps the guerrillas on the move, disrupts their security and organization, separates them from their bases of supply, weakens them physically, destroys their morale, and denies them the opportunity to conduct operations. Once contact is made, it must be maintained until the guerrillas are brought to battle and destroyed.*

*A superior mobility differential is essential in antiguerrilla operations. Consideration is given to the type and size of units employed; the selection, training, and equipping of individuals and units; communications; and administration.*

*These variable factors are then considered in relation to the hostile guerrilla forces, the mission of the various command echelons, and the topography, weather, and climatic conditions. A commander develops the desired mobility through initiative, improvisation, and aggressiveness, as well as by choice of transportation.*

*The most effective means of destroying the hostile guerrilla force is to conduct a continuous, aggressive offense.*

### Use of Native Troops

Crook realized that no American soldier would be able to compete with the Apache warriors on a man-to-man basis in the field of endurance. The Apaches had been trained since childhood to go for days with little or no food or water and to march 50 to 75 miles a day on foot. Recognizing the problem, Crook recruited scouts on a scale never before employed in order that he would have fighting troops with the necessary individual endurance and "know how" to fight the Indians on their own terms. Navahos, Pimas, and friendly Apaches were hired on such a scale that Crook was able to put numerous forces in the field each of which had sufficient Indian scouts to maintain direct pressure on the ever-moving hostile Apaches.

*Whenever possible, Allied troops native to the area should be employed against hostile resistance elements. Their familiarity with the country, people, language, and customs makes them invaluable.*

*When feasible, special antiguerrilla units are organized, equipped, and trained to combat guerrilla forces by using guerrilla methods. They are an effective means of carrying on offensive action with relatively small forces. Under many conditions, they are more effective than larger conventional troop units. The chief value of these units is not their numerical strength, but the abilities of the commander and the individuals to develop special skills and teamwork. The effectiveness of a special antiguerrilla unit increases*

*as it becomes thoroughly familiar with the terrain, and the habits of the hostile guerrillas and the supporting populace.*

### Civil Affairs—Diplomacy

While engaged in his preparations for the military campaign Crook did not forget to don his diplomatic cap. He talked personally to every Apache Indian who would meet with him. He explained to them exactly what was expected of them and told them what their life on an Indian reservation would be like. He explained the advantages that would accrue to them if they accepted the reservation life. He also told them the alternative if they would not move peacefully to a reservation—that he would hunt them down and kill them. Crook made no false promises and his words were so sincere and impressive that there is little doubt that every soldier and Apache in the area knew exactly what the situation was. This policy of keeping everyone concerned informed and of speaking nothing but the bare, cold facts was to have a decided bearing on Crook's military campaign against the Apaches.

*Campaign objectives, together with the measures governing political, economic, and social functions, should be publicized clearly. Information and propaganda stress that the people's cooperation and acceptance of the announced policies will determine the amount of assistance and freedom of action given them. If offered, amnesty terms are widely publicized and scrupulously observed.*

### The Campaign

By the fall of 1872 it was evident that many of the Apaches were not going to accept reservation life peacefully. Raiding, plundering, and killing were continuing on a large scale. By this time Crook was ready to accomplish his mission; his forces were trained and organized—they knew what had to be done and how to do it.

In November 1872 Crook's well-prepared forces took to the field to chase down the renegade Indians. Crook's orders to his separate commands were simple but complete. Each of his commands was to find and fight the renegades wherever possible until the Indians either submitted or were destroyed. The renegades were to be kept on the move constantly, and Crook told his commands that if their horses died, they were to pursue the Indians on foot. They were to maintain relentless, never-ending pressure. The mule pack train system, coupled with the friendly Indian scouts, gave Crook a means to maintain this pressure, and he demanded that it be maintained at all times. By the end of the winter the relentless and effective pursuit had accomplished its purpose and most of the renegades were willing to submit.

The campaign was a success. Crook's policies had paid off. He had "tamed" the Apaches who represented one of the most destructive guerrilla forces the world had ever known.

### Conclusion

The foregoing italicized paragraphs are excerpts from instructional material currently presented at the United States Army Command and General Staff College. Disregarding the time element with regard to General Crook's operations against the Apaches, one might easily conclude that he had attended one of the recent courses at the College. More likely, the College doctrine was developed based on experience of men such as General Crook.

The current USA CGSC antiguerrilla doctrine and the methods used by General Crook are virtually identical. If these methods worked against such a foe as the Apache, they will work as well against any known present-day guerrilla force. Remember how General Crook did it: modify tactics to fit current materiel and results should be equally effective.