THE RED RIVER WAR 1874-1875: EVIDENCE OF OPERATIONAL ART AND MISSION COMMAND

A Monograph

by

MAJ Michael Q. Penney

United States Army

School of Advanced Military Studies
United States Army Command and General Staff College
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

AY 2014-001

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

1. REPORT DATE *(DD-MM-YYYY)*	**2. REPORT TYPE**	**3. DATES COVERED** *(From - To)*
22-05-2014	SAMS Monograph	June 2013 – May 2014

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE
The Red River War 1874-1875: Evidence of Operational Art and Mission Command

5a. CONTRACT NUMBER

5b. GRANT NUMBER

5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER

6. AUTHOR(S)
Major Michael Quinn Penney, US Army

5d. PROJECT NUMBER

5e. TASK NUMBER

5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)
School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS)
250 Gibbon Ave
Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2301

8. PERFORMING ORG REPORT NUMBER

9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)
U.S Army Command and General Staff College
731 McClellan Avenue
Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2301

10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)
CGSC

11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Approved for Public Release; Distribution is Unlimited

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES
N/A

14. ABSTRACT
Lieutenant General Philip H. Sheridan, in the summer of 1874, sent two of his Division of the Missouri departments against the Southern Plains Indians. Large numbers of the Cheyenne, Comanche, and Kiowa tribes fled their Indian Territory reservations that summer and headed for the sanctuary of the Staked Plains and the Texas panhandle. In what became known as The Red River War of 1874, the Departments of the Missouri and Texas attacked and pursued the Indians for many months throughout the fall and winter of 1874 and 1875 until finally the remaining fugitive Indians returned to the reservations and surrendered. In what would be the largest US Army campaign against the Indians after the Civil War, Lieutenant General Sheridan and his subordinate commanders effectively planned and executed simultaneous operations which definitively ended Southern Plains Indian resistance to white expansion. This study looks at the role of the army along the frontier after the Civil War, and examines why and how the army was used against the Indians during the Red River War. It examines the planning and execution of the campaign and specifically looks at modern doctrinal concepts and if there is evidence the concepts were employed during that planning and execution. Through research of credible secondary source material and study of personal accounts of the campaign's planning and execution, this study demonstrates substantial evidence that the commanders recognized certain aspects of what are now termed operational art and mission command.

15. SUBJECT TERMS
US Army, Red River War,Red River Campaign, Southern Plains Indians, Indian Wars, Buffalo, Frontier Army, Mission Command, Operational Art.

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			**17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT**	**18. NUMBER OF PAGES**	**19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON**
a. REPORT	**b. ABSTRACT**	**c. THIS PAGE**			**19b. PHONE NUMBER** *(include area code)*
(U)	(U)	(U)	N/A	63	

MONOGRAPH APPROVAL

Name of Candidate: MAJ Michael Q. Penney

Monograph Title: The Red River War 1874-1875: Evidence of Operational Art and Mission Command

Approved by:

_____, Monograph Director
Ricardo A. Herrera, Ph.D.

_____, Seminar Leader
Christopher T. Drew, COL, EN

_____, Director, School of Advanced Military Studies
Henry A. Arnold III, COL, IN

Accepted this 22nd day of May 2014 by:

_____, Director, Graduate Degree Programs
Robert F. Baumann, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

THE RED RIVER WAR 1874-1875: EVIDENCE OF OPERATIONAL ART AND MISSION COMMAND, by MAJ Michael Q Penney, USA, 63 pages.

Lieutenant General Philip H. Sheridan, in the summer of 1874, sent two of his Division of the Missouri departments against the Southern Plains Indians. Large numbers of the Cheyenne, Comanche, and Kiowa tribes fled their Indian Territory reservations that summer and headed for the sanctuary of the Staked Plains and the Texas panhandle. In what became known as The Red River War of 1874, the Departments of the Missouri and Texas attacked and pursued the Indians for many months throughout the fall and winter of 1874 and 1875 until finally all of the remaining fugitive Indians returned to the reservations and surrendered. In what would be the largest US Army campaign against the Indians after the Civil War, Lieutenant General Sheridan and his subordinate commanders effectively planned and executed simultaneous operations which definitively ended Southern Plains Indian resistance to white expansion. This study looks at the role of the army along the frontier after the Civil War, and examines why and how the army was used against the Indians during the Red River War. It examines the planning and execution of the campaign and specifically looks at modern doctrinal concepts and if there is evidence the concepts were employed during that planning and execution. Through research of credible secondary source material and study of personal accounts of the campaign's planning and execution, this study demonstrates substantial evidence that the commanders recognized certain aspects of what are now termed operational art and mission command.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my monograph director, Dr. Rick Herrera, and my seminar leader, COL Christopher Drew, for guidance and assistance in seeing this project through. I would also like to thank the staff of the Combined Arms Research Library for the help in finding research materials. Most importantly, thank you to my wife and boys for your understanding and patience.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS

> This campaign was not only very comprehensive, but was the most successful of any Indian campaign in this country since its settlement by the whites; and much credit is due to the officers and men engaged in it.[1]
>
> – Lieutenant General Philip Sheridan, US Army.

INTRODUCTION

On 2 June 1875 the last of the Southern Plains Indian tribes made their way to Fort Sill, in Indian Territory, and surrendered their arms and some fifteen hundred ponies to Colonel Ranald S. Mackenzie, the commander of the 4th Cavalry Regiment.[2] The remaining Quahadi Comanche, four hundred of them, led by the powerful Chief Quanah Parker, were the last hold outs from those tribes who had taken part in what would become know as the Red River War. For the previous twelve months the United States Army had pursued the tribes of the Southern Plains throughout the Texas Panhandle and western Indian Territory with the intent of putting an end to Southern Plains Indian resistance to white settlement once and for all. In one of the largest U.S. military actions of the post Civil War era, the Army had conducted a completely effective campaign. Although not flawless, the campaign was one of the most successful of any waged by the army against the Indians, and is evinced within the planning and execution elements of what are today termed operational art and mission command.

Conceptual failures at the strategic level accompanied by failures in execution at the tactical level in both the Department of the Interior and the War Department were chief among the many causes that led to the uprising by the Comanche, Kiowa, Southern Cheyenne and Southern Arapaho Indian tribes in 1874. The peace policies implemented after the conclusion of the Civil War, meant to facilitate settlement, expansion, and foster the growth of commerce, as well as preserving the Indian tribes, were flawed concepts that were utterly unenforceable by the

---

[1]Philip H. Sheridan to William T. Sherman, 23 November 1875, *Annual Report of the Secretary of War* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1875), 58.

[2]James L. Haley, *The Buffalo War: The History of the Red River Indian Uprising of 1874* (Austin, TX: State House Press, 1998), 209.

units charged with securing the frontier. The inability to protect, or perhaps blatant disregard for the Indian's traditional source of sustenance, the buffalo herds, was another contributing factor which ultimately led to the Native American warriors fleeing off their reservation lands and attacking white settlers and the army. These factors, and likely many others, were all important catalysts which led to the conflict; but, ultimately the lack of understanding about the warrior culture of the Indian tribes, and their resistance to what the United States was trying to accomplish with its westward expansion, led to the uprising and the Indian's defeat.

For these reasons, and likely others, several thousand members of the Southern Plains tribes left the reservations in the summer of 1874 and began attacks that spurred the army into action. Indian attacks on a buffalo hunter's outpost in the Texas panhandle at Adobe Walls, and an ambush that killed two Texas Rangers in Jack County, Texas were the tipping points leading to the campaign that resulted in the end of Southern Plains Indian resistance to white expansion. General of the Army William Tecumseh Sherman asked for and received permission to turn Lieutenant General Philip Sheridan's Division of the Missouri loose in the western portion of Indian Territory and the Texas panhandle. What followed was a campaign by two separate, subordinate army departments, the Department of Missouri and the Department of Texas, that pursued the Indians who were off the reservation for several months, and ultimately led to their total capitulation.

The army did very little formal or informal codification of its methods of fighting the Indians on the frontier. Nonetheless, as Andrew J. Birtle states in *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine 1860-1941*, "while the Army had never developed a formal doctrine for Indian warfare, it had gradually evolved a theory that blended conventional with unconventional techniques to attack the social and economic resources upon which Indian

power rested."[3] The methods used by the Indian fighting commanders bore a striking resemblance to those these same commanders utilized while they were fighting Confederates during the Civil War. There were several conditions that set apart this type of warfare though from the more conventional type of warfare they faced during the Civil War. First, the enemy was difficult to identify and could not be clearly delineated from friends. Second, warfare against the Indians was wrought with conflicting emotions by those officers and soldiers tasked to fight it. There was enough death and destruction seen by those fighting to warrant the view of the Indians as savages, but during times of peace there was enough interaction between these same combatants that resulted in ambivalence when soldiers were ordered to take to the field and fight. Third, the Indians were an unconventional opponent. Excellent horsemen, skilled in weapons and mobility, stealthy and able to exploit the natural habitat of the Southern Plains; the Indians were formidable. They were unwilling to stand and fight without vast odds in their favor, unless their families were threatened. Furthermore, the values of the Indians made war as much about plunder and honor as it was about defense of home and people. These special characteristics of Indian fighting turned the army into more of a policing force than a conventional one. The army's lack of Indian fighting doctrine was due to a lack foreknowledge and an institutional bias; as an institution it had no idea that it would be fighting the Indians for a hundred years. Furthermore, the army's senior leadership disdained Indian fighting and would have preferred to have prepared to fight a conventional enemy.[4]

---

[3]Andrew J. Birtle, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1860-1941* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1998), 60.

[4]Robert M. Utley, *Frontier Regulars: the United States Army and the Indian, 1866-1891* (Lincoln, NE: Bison Books, 1984), 45-46; Allan R. Millett and Peter Maslowski, *For the Common Defense: a Military History of the United States of America from the Revolutionary War through Today*, rev. ed. (New York: Free Press, 1994), 249-257.

This paper is not an attempt at identifying a known doctrine of the time, nor is it an attempt to show that the commanders of the Red River War knowingly demonstrated operational art or mission command. This paper is an examination of the planning and execution of the campaign through the lenses of the current doctrinal concepts of operational art and mission command with the intent of identifying evidence demonstrating current doctrinal concepts within that planning and execution. In order to do this, explanations of the contemporary concepts are necessary.

Army doctrine defines operation art as "the pursuit of strategic objectives, in whole or in part, through the arrangement of tactical actions in time, space, and purpose."[5] Operational art is a cognitive approach used by commanders and their staffs which draws upon their "skill, knowledge, experience, and judgment to overcome the ambiguity and intricacies of a complex, ever changing, and uncertain operational environment to better understand the problems at hand."[6] The current doctrine states that operational art is applicable at all levels of war, not just the operational level, a joint concept, and that it integrates ends, ways, and means into all aspects of operations. The cognitive approach calls for commanders to thoroughly analyze the operational environment, to "determine the most effective and efficient methods for applying decisive action in various locations across multiple echelons."[7] Important to the effective practice of operational art is the creation of a shared understanding of purpose. Commanders and staffs accomplish this shared understanding through continuous, open dialogue and communication. This shared understanding helps to "facilitate assessments, fosters critical analysis, and anticipates

---

[5]Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 3-0, *Unified Land Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 4-1.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid.

opportunities and risk."[8] A commander utilizing operational art effectively understands the strategic ends that his operation is meant to accomplish, and will be able to communicate those ends to his tactical commanders through shared understanding. He will translate his desired future conditions through a cohesive operational approach; therefore, ensuring a concept of the operation which links tactical actions together in advancement to that end state. [9] Without this cohesive approach, "tactical actions devolve into a series of disconnected engagements that do not accomplish the mission or objectives" of the force.[10]

The United States Army's foundational doctrine publications, ADP 3-0 and ADRP 3-0, Unified Land Operations, discuss operational art and lists ten intellectual tools that help commanders understand their operating environment and facilitate the visualization and description of their approach for conducting an operation. These intellectual tools are referred to as the elements of operational art. These ten elements are: end state and conditions; center of gravity; decisive points; lines of operations and lines of effort; operational reach; basing; tempo; phasing and transitions; culmination; and risk. Although it is possible for a military force to achieve a strategic objective through one singular tactical action, thus eliminating the need for operational art, most modern conflicts, and as evinced through the Red River War, require the linking of numerous operations through many tactical actions. This examination into the Red River War will evaluate how the aspects of center of gravity, operational reach, and tempo were used as intellectual tools to perform the linkages.[11]

---

[8]Department of the Army, ADRP 3-0, 4-1.

[9]Ibid., 4-2. Operational approach is a description of the broad actions the force must take to transform current conditions into those desired at end state.

[10]Ibid., 4-1.

[11]Ibid., 4-3.

First, center of gravity is defined as the source of power that provides moral or physical strength, freedom of action or will to act.[12] This is the modern interpretation of the classical concept generated by Carl von Clausewitz: "the hub of all power and movement, on which everything depends."[13] When planning operations, commanders and staffs seek to identify their enemy's center of gravity as a point to focus their operational efforts. Centers of gravity are not necessarily an enemy's actual fighting force, and can be physical or moral. An important aspect of discovering an enemy's center of gravity is the understanding of the enemy and the operational environment. Indeed, "This understanding encompasses how enemies organize, fight, and make decisions. It also includes their physical and moral strengths and weaknesses."[14] An understanding of the Indian tribes and how they survived and fought was critical as commanders discovered their center of gravity and the strengths and weaknesses that it encompassed.

Second, doctrine defines operational reach as the distance and duration across which a joint force can successfully employ military capabilities. Therefore, "Operational reach is a tether; it is a function of intelligence, protection, sustainment, endurance, and relative combat power."[15] A force's point of culmination is found at the limits of its operational reach. Operational reach balances the forces of endurance, momentum, and protection. Endurance refers to the ability to employ combat power anywhere for protracted periods. Momentum comes from seizing the initiative and executing high-tempo operations that overwhelm enemy resistance. The protection aspect of operational reach refers to how commanders and staffs anticipate enemy

---

[12]Department of the Army, ADRP 3-0, 4-3.

[13]Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 595-96.

[14]ADRP 3-0, 4-4.

[15]Ibid., 4-5.

actions and environmental factors and how these might disrupt their operations. These three aspects of operational reach must be balanced to ensure success of the mission while still maintaining the requisite combat power to protect the force and anticipate enemy and environmental changes.[16]

The final element of operational art that is evinced within the planning and execution of the Red River War is tempo, which is currently defined as "the relative speed and rhythm of military operations over time with respect to the enemy. It reflects the rate of military action."[17] Commanders seek to keep the initiative during combat operations by controlling the tempo. Commanders seek to maintain a higher operational tempo than their enemy; thereby, diminishing that enemy's ability to counter friendly actions. Commanders seek to control their operational tempo in three ways. First, by developing operations that balance the effects of simultaneous and sequential operations synchronized in both time and space. Second, commanders can avoid unnecessary engagements to avoid getting bogged down in actions that are not getting their force closer to the end state. Third, commanders utilize mission command thus enabling the disciplined initiative of their subordinate commanders. An effective operation utilizes tempo in an effort to balance both speed and endurance.[18]

The second doctrinal concept lens used for examination in this paper is that of mission command. Current U.S. Army capstone doctrine explains mission command as one of the foundations of unified land operations. Commanders and leaders use the philosophy of mission command—the exercise of authority and direction by the commander using mission orders to enable disciplined initiative within the commmander's intent to empower agile and adaptive leaders in the conduct of unified land operations—as a guide in achievement of the commander's

[16]Department of the Army, ADRP 3-0, 4-5.

[17]Ibid.

[18]Ibid., 4-7.

intent and the desired end state. The mission command philosophy is guided by six fundamental principles: build cohesive teams through mutual trust; create shared understanding; provide a clear commander's intent; exercise disciplined initiative; use mission orders; and accept prudent risk. Taken together, these principles assist commanders and their staffs in balancing the art of command and the science of control.[19] The term mission command covers both the art of command and science of control philosophy as well as the war fighting function, which integrates the other warfighting funtions. The mission command lens that will be utilized for the examination of the Red River War will be in terms of the philosophy of mission command and if the overall campaign commander, Lieutenant General Sheridan, and his subordinate commanders utilized this concept.

THE ROAD TO WAR

The lead up to the summer of 1874 can be traced back over many generations and several hundred years. That discussion is beyond the scope of this paper; but, what must be examined is the post-Civil War period on the Southern Plains. The several attempts to establish peace in the region were conceptually flawed and ultimately ineffective. Each peace process brought upon it a time of calm as the Indians waited to see if the government would uphold its end of the agreement, and the army would respond when the Indians reacted with violence to their dissatisfaction. The white world continued to strengthen its grip on the Indian lands and in due time threatened the most basic resource of the Indians, the buffalo. In retrospect, it is difficult to imagine that any other outcome could have developed in the post-Civil War west.

[19]Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication, 6-0, *Mission Command* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 2-1 to 2-5.

The Army Looks West

The conclusion of the Civil War in 1865 allowed the United States to once again turn its attention toward westward expansion. The ending of hostilities in the south brought about renewed activity on the frontier. The Homestead Act of 1862 fostered westward immigration with the promise of land to those who would go west and work it. This along with new railroad legislation dispensed large portions of the public domain. New mineral strikes and prospects of gold in California, Colorado, and elsewhere fostered the spirit of adventure in newly arrived immigrants and soldiers from both sides of the conflict, where "before the guns ceased shrouding the valleys of Tennessee and Virginia with bitter gray smoke, immigrants began pushing beyond the settled edges of Kansas and Nebraska. With war's end, the tempo and volume increased."[20]

Upon the conclusion of the war Lieutenant General Sherman, now the commander of the Division of the Missouri, gained military responsibility for essentially all the land from the Mississippi River stretching west through the Rockies to the current western borders of Montana, Wyoming, Utah, and New Mexico. In 1866 he traveled on a grand tour of his area of responsibility to gain a sense of his new command. What he found were "multitudes of emigrants, pouring westward on the Oregon-California Trail, the Santa Fe Trail, and the Smoky Hill Trail. Their wagons mingled with freight trains laden with merchandise and with stagecoaches hurrying passengers and mail to the growing cities of the Rockies, the Southwest, the Great Basin, and the Pacific Slope."[21] A great western migration had begun. The population of the western states grew from 1.3 million in 1860 to 2.3 million by 1870 and to 4.9 million by 1880.[22] Assisting in this population growth was the drawdown of the wartime army. General of the Army Ulysses S. Grant

---

[20]Douglas C. Jones, *The Treaty of Medicine Lodge: the Story of the Great Treaty Council as Told by Eyewitnesses* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966), 4; Fredrick J. Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1921), 8.

[21]Ultey, *Frontier Regulars*, 2.

[22]Ibid, 9.

recommended a peacetime army of 80,000. That number was, for obvious reasons, an astronomical drop from its wartime strength of over 1.5 million, but significantly larger than the prewar number of 16,000. Congress decided to set a limit of 54,000 in 1866. One third of this strength was to remain in the southern and northern portions of the country to assist in Reconstruction efforts and to return to prewar posts, leaving the remainder to deal with problems on the frontier. The U.S. Army reached a postwar peak number of 56,815 in September of 1867. Congress, however, further reduced the authorized force level to 37,000 in 1869, and to 25,000 in 1874 at the start of the Red River War.[23]

The conclusion of the Civil War allowed the government to promote economic development and the settlement in the western regions. Undoubtedly, the national objective of the United States for the last thirty years of the nineteenth century might be characterized as a "final rush of American energy upon the remaining wilderness."[24] During Lieutenent General Sherman's tour of the Military Division of the Missouri he determined that his role was safeguarding the plains states and territories as well as the Rocky Mountain region. Securing the areas where the railroad companies planned to lay down their tracks and securing the settlers as they moved along the emigration routes were his top priorities.[25] The army's primary mission was to keep the peace between these settlers and the Indian population, to protect the western expansion of the nation, and to ensure that the tribes complied with various treaties.[26]

---

[23]Bill Yenne, *Indian Wars: The Campaign for the American West* (Yardley, PA: Westholme Publishing, 2006), 110.

[24]Turner, *The Frontier in American History*, 312.

[25]William T. Sherman, *Memoirs of General W.T. Sherman* (New York: Library of America, 1990), 900-931; Ultey, *Frontier Regulars*, 2-3. Lieutenant General Sherman wrote in some detail about the importance of the railroad to securing the western regions. Robert Ultey's *Frontier Regulars* also discusses Sherman's views regarding the railroad.

[26]Clayton Chun, *US Army in the Plains Indian Wars, 1865-91* (Oxford: Osprey, 2004), 12.

The challenge facing Lieutenant General Sherman and the Division of the Missouri was that during the Civil War relations between Indians, settlers, and the military had turned chaotic. Faced with war in the east, the army withdrew troops in order to fill requirements in that theater. States and territories west of the Mississippi River not only had those regular troops withdraw, but were also required to raise volunteer units that followed the regulars eastward. What was left were often state or territorial militias tasked with protecting the frontier. Many of the forts on the frontier were abandoned by necessity which allowed the Plains Indians more freedom to maneuver.[27]

In Texas, which was part of the Confederacy, the state was forced to provide for its own frontier defense. The legislature in December 1861 authorized ten companies of Rangers, known as the Frontier Regiment, to guard the state. The regiment established, in 1862, several camps along a relatively straight north to south line from Archer County, in north central Texas, to Eagle Pass on the Rio Grande, which for some time served as a somewhat satisfactory impediment to Indian raiding. The increased pressure for troops to fight for the Confederacy, however, forced the state to rely upon an ineffective militia. There were several major attacks prior to 1863, at which time a number of the Comanche and Kiowa moved temporarily to the north to join the Cheyenne and Arapahoe in a war against white settlers.[28] The biggest effect on the state of Texas was the decrease in the population of the western portions of the state as well as the loss of an estimated 300,000 head of cattle.[29]

---

[27]Millett and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, 252.

[28]Ranald S. Mackenzie, *Ranald S. Mackenzie's Official Correspondence Relating to Texas, 1871-1873*, ed. Ernest Wallace (Lubbock: West Texas Museum Association, 1967), 4-5.

[29]S. C. Gwynne, *Empire of the Summer Moon: Quanah Parker and the Rise and Fall of the Comanches, the Most Powerful Indian Tribe in American History* (New York: Scribner, 2011), 223.

One of the largest obstacles to a lasting peace in the west came in late 1864 when Colonel John Chivington's Third Colorado Cavalry, consisting of militiamen recently mustered into federal service, launched a brazen attack against a Cheyenne camp in southeastern Colorado. The attack was the product of misunderstandings between the Cheyenne Indians and their principal chief, Black Kettle, and the active military and militia elements in Colorado. After several months of conflict between the two, the Cheyenne took the advice of the commander of Fort Lyon, Major E.W. Wynkoop, First Colorado Cavalry, and came to the fort to surrender. The peace made between Major Wynkoop and the Indians angered the major's commander, and he was transferred from the district. General S.R. Curtis was not ready to let the Cheyenne and accompanying Arapaho rest and he ordered Colonel Chivington to stir up a fight. The result was an unprovoked attack on the Indians at their camp along Sand Creek that killed an estimated 150 to 200 Indians. Chivington's troops shot and sabered men, women, and children, and scalped and mutilated their bodies. According to an official government commission, "Fleeing women holding up their hands and praying for mercy were brutally shot down; infants were killed and scalped in derision; men were tortured and mutilated in a manner that would put to shame the savage ingenuity of interior Africa."[30]

The Sand Creek Massacre haunted United States-Indian relations for a generation. According to Lieutenant General Nelson A. Miles, "but for the horrible butchery it is a fair presumption that all subsequent wars with the Cheyennes and Arapahoes and their kindred tribes

[30]US Congress, H.R. Exec. Doc. No. 97, 40th Cong., 2 sess. Quoted in William H. Leckie, *The Military Conquest of the Southern Plains* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), 23.

might possibly have been averted."[31] Whatever the long-term consequences of the action, the immediate result was a war in which Northern Cheyenne and Arapaho, along with Comanche and Kiowa from Texas, joined Black Kettle's band. This war party raged from the Canadian border to the Red River, cost scores of whites their lives, and beat off all troops sent against it. By midsummer 1865, the war was still raging even as the Civil War came to a close.[32]

The Peace Process

Lieutenant General Sherman and the United States Army faced a precarious situation along the plains coming out of the Civil War. The approach taken by the government and the Army is best explained in the model of ends, ways, and means. Although there were no strategic documents to draw direction from the national objective for the United States was to promote economic development and settlement of the western regions of the country. Given this objective, or end, it was up to the army, as well as the Office of Indian Affairs, to develop the ways to attain the objective with the means at hand.

The army did not have sole responsibility over Indian affairs. In fact, it had practically no responsibility over the tribes, except for those times they acted out of line. This was because the Office of Indian Affairs had been transferred from the War Department to the Department of the Interior in 1849.[33] Thus, any approach had to be a joint effort. The resulting agreements and approaches, fostered with congressional support, were a product of competing interests, those of civilians, and those of the military. The approach, when mature, was known as "conquest by

---

[31]Nelson A. Miles, *Personal Recollections and Observations of General Nelson A. Miles, Embracing a Brief View of the Civil War, or, From New England to the Golden Gate and the Story of His Indian Campaigns with Comments on the Exploration, Development, and Progress of Our Great Western Empire (*Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), 139.

[32]Leckie, *The Military Conquest of the Southern Plains*, 20-24.

[33]Philip Weeks, *Farewell, My Nation: The American Indian and the United States, 1820-1890* (Arlington Heights, IL: Harlan Davidson, 1990), 200.

kindness."[34] The way that the government chose to handle the Indian issue from this point on was through a series of peace agreements, or treaties, in which the Indians would be "guaranteed" lands that they could hunt on and be protected from white incursion. If they chose to leave these "reservations"[35] it would be the job of the U.S. Army to ensure they returned. The means by which this approach would be managed were the scattered U.S. Army regiments operating from frontier forts and the Office of Indian Affairs administrators. The Indians were not citizens of the United States, but, more aptly, wards of the state.

For the Southern Plains tribes, the Comanche, the Kiowa, the Southern Cheyenne, and the Arapahoe, there were three major peace agreements that attempted to keep them off of the immigration and rail routes, as well as out of the cattle grazing lands in Texas and settlement areas in Kansas. The first of these, the Little Arkansas Treaty (1865), the second, better-known agreement was signed at Medicine Lodge, Kansas (1867), and the third became known as the Grant Peace Policy (1869), a new approach created with the new president's election. All of the agreements and approaches failed for a variety of reasons.

To end the war that was raging throughout the summer of 1865, United States peace commissioners in October prevailed upon the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Kiowa, and part of the Comanche to sign the treaty of Little Arkansas.[36] According to this agreement, the Cheyenne and Arapaho would relinquish their lands in Colorado and Kansas and confine themselves to areas south of the Arkansas River in Kansas and further south into Indian Territory. The Comanche and Kiowa relinquished their claims to Texas "east and south of a line connecting the southeast corner

---

[34]Robert M. Utley, *The Indian Frontier, 1846-1890*, rev. ed. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003), 97.

[35]Yenne, 114. According to the current definition by the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs, an Indian reservation is a specific area of land which has been reserved, set aside, or acquired for the occupancy and use of an Indian tribe.

[36]William T. Hagan, *American Indians* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1961), 107-09.

of New Mexico and the junction of the north and south forks of the Red River." These agreements were made under the promise of annuity payments to the tribes. This treaty was worthless, however, because many of the most warlike bands of Indians were not present, and because the commissioner did not have the authority to give away any lands that belonged to the states of Kansas or Texas.[37]

Brigadier General John Pope, commander of the Department of the Missouri, had no illusion that this peace agreement would work. "I do not consider the treaties lately made with the Sioux, Cheyennes, Arapahoes, and Comanches worth the paper they are written on," he informed Sherman on 11 August 1866. "I have myself no doubt that hostilities will again break out on the Platte, the Smoky Hill, and the Arkansas rivers before the beginning of winter."[38] Pope was not far off, however it is quite possible that this war was unnecessary. In the spring and summer of 1867, the new commander of the Department of the Missouri, Brigadier General Winfield Scott Hancock, conducted an advance against the Southern Plains tribes along the Arkansas River in Kansas. The tribes had taken to raiding and depredations because of broken promises as part of the peace treaty. Remembering the massacre at Sand Creek just the three years prior, the Indians ran away when Brigadier General Hancock asked for a meeting. The general took this as an act of war. Although there were not many casualties on either side, the ordeal could not be classified as a success for the Army as the Indians disrupted railroad completion and white settlement throughout the summer.[39]

This most recent outbreak of hostilities on the plains, and the way Brigadier General Hancock conducted it, spurred the Office of Indian Affairs and Congress into action. While it is

---

[37]*Mackenzie's Official Correspondence Relating to Texas*, 5.

[38]John Pope to William T. Sherman, 11 August 1866, *Annual Report of the Secretary of War* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1866), 30.

[39]Utley, *Frontier Regulars*, 111-25.

beyond the scope of this paper to cover the myriad of issues between the War Department and the Office of Indian Affairs, it should be said that there were few times that the two entities agreed on how to handle the Peace Policy. Despite this, there was a genuine desire by all parties to see an end to hostilities on the plains.

In the summer of 1867 Congress passed legislation that prescribed another peace commission. This commission would carry more weight with it as it included the heads of the Office of Indian Affairs and several generals as its leads. After aborting treaty talks with the Northern Plains Indians in September 1867, the commission met with the majority of the leading chiefs of the Southern Plains tribes at a place called Medicine Lodge in southern Kansas. Thousands of Indians came out to meet the whites, and after a week of treaty talks the heads of the larger tribes signed the agreement by 28 October 1867.[40]

The Medicine Lodge Treaty laid out even more restrictive terrain in Indian Territory that the Indians agreed to stay on. The Comanche and Kiowa were to occupy a reservation in southwest Indian Territory north of the Red River and south of the Washita headwaters. The Cheyenne and Arapaho would occupy a reservation with a northern boundary of Indian Territory, or southern Kansas, including all the land south of there between the Cimarron and Arkansas rivers. These areas turned out to be insufficient to support these nomadic tribes. A provision included in the treaty language states:

---

[40]Haley, 10. Prominent chiefs to sign the agreement were, Satank, Black Eagle, Women's Heart, Stumbling Bear, and Kicking Bird for the Kiowas; Ten Bears, Painted Lips, Silver Broach, and Little Horn for the Comanches; Chiefs Bull Bear, Black Kettle, Gray Head, Little Rock, Tall Bull, and Little Robe for the Cheyennes; and Little Raven, Yellow Bear, and Storm for the Arapahoes. Almost as important was who did not sign the agreement. There was no representative from the Quahadi or Kotsoteka Comanche as they had no intention of going to the reservation. When visited by an agent in August 1867, at Quita Que in the Llano Estacado of western Texas, these 1500 Comanches were in possession of approximately 15,000 horses, 300 to 400 mules, and innumerable Texas cattle.

> The reservations are hereby set apart for the absolute and undisturbed use and occupation of the Indians herein named . . . and the United States now solemnly pledges that no persons except those herein authorized . . . shall ever be permitted to pass over, settle upon, or reside in the territory described.[41]

Within the treaty the Indians were reserved the right to hunt on any lands south of the Arkansas River "so long as the buffalo may range theron," thus allowing the Indians to continue to hunt their precious buffalo in all of Kansas south of the Arkansas River. These restrictions were difficult to understand and accept for the Indians, but the promise of gifts and annuities was too much for them to pass on.[42]

The following summer, however, failings of the government to deliver on stipulations of the treaty, specifically delivery of arms and ammunition to be used for hunting, and food stuffs for subsistence, caused the Cheyenne to revolt. By the time the issue was sorted out, it was too late. Sensing another betrayal by the government, several small bands of Indians set out on a string of depredations. A large majority of the Indians of the Southern Plains had nothing to do with the current issue, but the Army's reaction was swift and unequivocal: All Southern Plains tribes were now to suffer war without quarter. As Lieutenant General Sherman put it,

> If it results in the utter annihilation of these Indians, it is but the result of what they have been warned again and again . . . I will say nothing and do nothing to restrain our troops from doing what they deem proper on the spot, and will allow no mere vague general charges of cruelty and inhumanity to tie their hands . . . these Indians, the enemies of our race and our civilization, shall not again be able to begin and carry out their barbarous warfare on any kind of pretext they may choose to allege . . these Indians will seek some sort of peace, to be broken next year at their option; but we will not accept their peace, or cease our efforts till all the past acts are both punished and avenged.[43]

---

[41]Haley, 11; Charles J. Kapler, *Indian Affairs Laws and Treaties, Treaty with the Kiowa, Comanche, and Apache 1867* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office), Oklahoma State University Library, http://digital.library.okstate.edu/kappler/ (accessed 13 October 2013).

[42]Haley, 11.

[43]Utley, *Frontier Regulars*, 145-147.

What followed came to be known as the Southern Plains War. A detailed discussion of this conflict is beyond the scope of this paper, but Major General Philip Sheridan, now the commander of the Department of the Missouri wreaked havoc on the Southern Plains Indians in the "Winter Campaign," which also resulted in the death of Black Kettle, still a peace chief, at the Battle of the Washita.[44]

President Ulysses S. Grant, elected in 1868, initiated the final stages of the Peace Policy prior to the Red River War. Long standing bickering between the War Department and the Department of the Interior over which agency should oversee the management of Indian affairs was at its highest pique after the failure of the peace commission of 1867. The War Department insisted that placing the Indian Bureau back under its direction would elimate uncertainty and jurisdictional issues inherent in the current structure.[45] Opponents of Army leadership of the Indian issue insisted that military personnel should be subordinate to civilian military agents when dealing with Indian concerns. Mostly though, they argued that the protection of a whole civilization could not be entrusted to an organization designed for war.[46] General Sherman and Lieutenant General Sheridan expected that sole authority would be transferred back to the Army; but, surprising and confusing to army leadership, President Grant was not General Grant.

The program fostered by President Grant followed a somewhat different approach. This approach emphasized peace and called for all Indians to be concentrated on reservations where they would be educated, Christianized, and shown the way toward agriculture self-sufficiency. In theory this approach would indoctrinate them in the ways of the white man with an eventual

---

[44]Leckie, *The Military Conquest of the Southern Plains*, 63-130. This is a definitive work of the Southern Plains War of 1868-1869.

[45]William T. Sherman to Ulysses S. Grant, 1 November 1868, *Annual Report of the Secretary of War (*Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1868), 5-6.

[46]Utley, *Frontier Regulars,* 188-189.

assimilation into American culture and society.[47] Administration of the reservations would be handled by agents and superintendents nominated by church groups, a Board of Indian Commissioners composed of philanthropists serving without pay. An idea to distinguish between hostile and peaceful Indians and civilian and military responsibility was injected to the policy, stipulating that Indians on the reservations were deemed peaceful and thus the responsibility of the civilian bureaus, where Indians found off of the reservations were deemed hostile and the responsibility of the Army.[48] In the Southern Plains region responsibility for administration of the Indians fell to the Society of Friends. Quaker agents, pacifists by religious conviction, were put in charge of some of the most warlike bands of Indians in the country.

The Quaker agents had a difficult task in managing the people of the Southern Plains. Continually faced with difficulties meeting the needs of the nomadic tribes, now confined to even smaller reservations than before, the agents likely did the best they could.[49] The Indians drew their rations regularly but failed to conform to the stipulations expected in the latest peace policy and continued to roam off of the reservations in search of food, for illegal activity, and to commit depredations. Troops could attack the Indians when they were off the reservations, but could only act within the reservation by invitation from the agent. The Indians knew this and frequently used the reservation as a safe haven. This was put to the test in May 1871 after a Kiowa raid on a

---

[47]Henry E. Fritz, "The Making of Grant's Peace Policy," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma* 37, (1959): 411-20.

[48]Utley, *Frontier Regulars*, 189-91.

[49]For more information regarding the challenges faced by the Quaker agents see Utley's *Frontier Regulars*, Nye's *Carbine and Lance*, and Laurie Tatum's *Our Red Brothers and the Peace Policy of President Ulysses S. Grant*.

teamster wagon train outside of Jacksboro, Texas.[50] The Kiowa leaders of the raid were later arrested on the reservation at Fort Sill and sent to Texas for trial and imprisonment. Upset by the outcome, the Kiowa, joined by Comanche warriors, "robbed, burned, and butchered the length of the Texas frontier."[51] In the coming months Colonel Ranald S. Mackenzie, and his 4th Cavalry would pursue the Comanche into the rugged terrain of the Staked Plains in the Texas panhandle. [52] This was a fruitful effort by Colonel Mackenzie and as stated by Brigadier General Christopher Columbus Augur, the new commander of the Department of Texas "the general knowledge of the country, and the specific knowledge of the routes and modus operandi of the cattle thieves, obtained by Colonel Mackenzie was well worth the summer's labor."[53]

Colonel Mackenzie's actions were not an end to Indian hostilities in the region. The next two years saw increasing hostile activity of the Indian tribes from the Oklahoma Territory reservations. The previous discussion, and many other factors, demonstrate that the peace policy approach after the Civil War was difficult if not impossible to enforce. But there were also other factors leading to the Red River War. Influences propelling the Southern Plains tribes toward a major uprising continued to gather force over the coming period. One of these influences was the eradication of the buffalo.

---

[50]Nye, *Carbine and Lance*, 123-47. During the massacre on Salt Creek Prairie, know as the Warren Wagon Train Massacre, eight teamsters were butchered, the wagons were burned, and forty mules were stolen. Unbeknownst to the approximately 100 Indians (led by Kiowa chiefs Satanta, Kicking Bird, and Lone Wolf) they had let a previous group of soldiers pass some hours before ambushing the supply train. The previous smaller group included General of the Army Sherman who was on a tour of the Division of the Missouri.

[51]Utley, *Frontier Regulars*, 211.

[52]Haley, 16. Staked Plains is a rough translation of the Spanish term Llano Estacado and the more commonly used term for the high plains of western Texas and eastern New Mexico.

[53]Christopher C. Augur to Philip H. Sheridan, 28 September 1872, *Annual Report of the Secretary of War* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1872), 58; *Mackenzie's Official Correspondence Relating to Texas*, 11-12.

The Buffalo

The buffalo carried special significance for the Southern Plains Indians. It was their life blood and a source of spirituality. They thought that if it disappeared then they would, too. White men soon discovered profitable usage of the hide which turned the plains into a veritable gold mine. It appears that the army and the Indian agencies did little to stem the tide of hunters' encroachment on Indian lands, which led the Indians to question their survival.

The lives of the Southern Plains tribes revolved around the buffalo. They followed the herds through their seasonal migrations up and down the plains and were able to satisfy all of their needs with the proceeds of their hunt. Able to use every part of the buffalo, in warmer months the Indians would consume large quantities of buffalo meat, and when it began to turn cold the meat was dried and stored for use during the lean winter months. From the animal the Indians would fashion clothes, shelter, jewelry, and eating utensils. They made rope from the buffalo's hair and bowstrings from its tendons. Essentially no part of the buffalo was allowed to waste.[54] The buffalo was the Indians' larder and was revered as a sacred entity with which life could be sustained. They believed that if the buffalo disappeared then they too would disappear.

In the fall of 1870 a young New Englander, Josiah Wright Mooar, traveled out west and founded a business hunting buffalo for their hides. He arrived on the frontier with the usual idea of adventure in the west but soon found himself hunting buffalo and selling the meat to the local army posts. Wondering about the waste of the hides, he sent several back east to his brother in an attempt to sell them to a tannery. His brother sold the few hides for $3.50 each and was then contracted to deliver 2,000 additional hides. The rush was on. Over the next several years scores of hunters, in search of their fortunes, made their way to the plains where they slaughtered millions of buffalo. Dodge City, Kansas became the hub of the industry where from 1872-1874

[54]Brett J. Cruse, *Battles of the Red River War: Archeological Perspectives On the Indian Campaign of 1874* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2008), 9-10.

over 4,000,000 hides were shipped through its rail yard. The Indians on the reservations did nothing to stop the slaughter because the killing was all taking place north of the Arkansas River.[55]

Eventually the fertile hunting ground north of the Arkansas dried out. The hunters were then forced to make a decision, should they give up their new trade or should they risk the danger from the Indians that awaited them south of the river, as well as the danger from the army who patrolled access to the south. As buffalo hunter Billy Dixon stated,

> The Arkansas was called the 'dead line,' south of which no hunter should go. The river was patrolled at intervals by Government troops, as a feeble indication that the Medicine Lodge treaty had not been forgotten, but their vigilance was so lax that there was no difficulty in crossing back and forth without detection. The danger of attack by Indians was a far more potent obstacle to the buffalo-hunter, but as buffalo grew fewer in number and the price of hides advanced, even this did not deter hardy hunters from undertaking forays into the forbidden country. The troops were supposed to prevent the passing of Indians to the north side of the river. This patrol also failed to work.[56]

Although tasked with keeping white settlers from encroaching on Indian lands, there were contrary ideas as to the efficacy of this within the Army as well as the Indian Bureau. There were thoughts that the elimination of the buffalo from the plains would more quickly settle the Indians onto the reservation. Lieutenant General Sheridan at one point lectured the Texas legislature to defeat a bill that would preserve the buffalo from extinction. In discussing buffalo hunters he said, "Send them powder and lead, if you will; but, for the sake of a lasting peace, let them kill, skin, and sell until the buffaloes are exterminated. Then your prairies can be covered with speckled cattle and the festive cowboy, who follows the hunter as a second forerunner of an

---

[55]Haley, 21-22.

[56]Olive K. Dixon, *Life of Billy Dixon, Plainsman, Scout, and Pioneer* (Abilene, TX: State House Press, 2005), 83. Billy Dixon was a famous frontiersman and buffalo hunter. He was present at the Medicine Lodge Treaty council as a wagon driver and at the Battle of Adobe Walls. He would serve with distinction in Colonel Miles' regiment as a scout in the Red River War.

advanced civilization."[57] In his annual report of 1872 and 1873, the Interior Secretary, Columbus Delano, expressed similar views stating, "I would not seriously regret the total disappearance of the buffalo from our western prairies, it its effect upon the Indians, regarding it rather as a means of hastening their sense of dependence upon the products of the soil."[58]

As the Indians watched with growing dread the slaughter of the buffalo, the hunters extended deeper into their designated hunting territory. Obviously limited by its numbers and ability to patrol the length of the border between Kansas and Indian Territory, as well as the idea that eradication of the buffalo would more quickly lead to total capitulation of the Indians, the government let the incursions persist. With the loss of the buffalo accompanied by food delivery issues inside the agencies, the Indians began to starve.

The Indian

Although these influences created serious unrest, the principle stimulus to war remained cultural values that exalted war and showered acclaim on the successful warrior. For generations the Plains Indian societies had carved out their place in the world through combat. None of these tribes were native to the Southern Plains. They had migrated there through being pushed by white expansion or the spread of other Indian tribes in their native lands. Fighting was a central component in mens' lives and tribal culture, and the more they felt their territory was being threatened the more likely they were to fight back.[59]

The Plains Indian culture was a martial one, but the Indians lacked the ability to adapt that culture to the oncoming world. Raids against settlers became a way that young warriors

---

[57]Wayne Gard, *The Great Buffalo Hunt* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1968), 215.

[58]Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1 November 1872, *Annual Report of the Secretary of Interior* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1872), 6.

[59]Utley, *Frontier Regulars*, 213.

proved their worth and an avenue to importance. Social standing within the tribes came to be dependent upon how the warrior performed in the field. Warriors fought principally for the honors of war, both individual and group, for plunder and revenge, and for defense of the family against the aggressions of enemy warriors similarly motivated.[60] Now the white newcomers, who outnumbered them, and against whom the Indians increasingly felt the need to defend themselves by war, were telling them that war was, in and of itself, bad. This idea was hard for the Indians to comprehend, as they had seen the white man fight each other for several years. They understood this culture and were not ready to adapt.[61]

The Southern Plains Indians understood power; they understood the ways of the warrior. They had the feeling of being squeezed in from all sides as they saw their culture and way of life disappearing a little more each year. These nomadic people were confused and aggrieved by the way they had been treated by white leaders. They were intent on making one final attempt to assert themselves and retain their way of life.

THE RED RIVER CAMPAIGN

By the spring of 1874 the Indian camps were approaching a tipping point of resentment against the whites and there was ever increasing rumor of an oncoming uprising. The Indians understood that the Medicine Lodge Treaty was created to preserve their tribes, protect their hunting lands, and to provide them separation from white civilization. Their white agents were supposed to provide for their subsistence with annual provisions that would supplement what needs they were not able to fill by hunting and farming on their own exclusive territory. As summer approached is was becoming more apparent to the tribes that the government was not able to meet their needs, and it did not appear there was any intention to ensure white hunters did

[60]Utley, *Frontier Regulars*, 6.

[61]Haley, 3.

not poach "their" buffalo herds. Tensions within the Indian tribes were reaching their boiling point.

An answer to the Indian's troubles came to them in the form of a young Quahadi Comanche medicine man, Isa-tai. In the late spring of 1874 he was able to get all of the leading Comanche chiefs to a Sun Dance, which took place outside the western reaches of their designated reservation lands. At this gathering many of the separate Comanche tribes chose to go and make war against the white man. Persuaded by Isa-tai's talk of a new order on the Southern Plains and his perceived magical and mystical abilities, they did not think they could be defeated.[62]

A young war chief, Quanah Parker[63], was chief among Isa-tai's supporters and with his assistance the Comanche were able to enlist the additional support of many Cheyenne and a few Arapaho in an attack on the new buffalo hunter's outpost at Adobe Walls, along the Canadian River in the Texas panhandle. Beginning on 27 June 1874 a mixed band of Indians led by Quanah Parker, with spiritual support from Isa'tai, attacked and besieged the buffalo hunter's camp. The sources vary on the amount of Indians involved in the fight, but from 250 to 750 warriors attacked the approximately twenty-eight hunters in the middle of the night. Isa-tai had promised the Indians they would catch the hunters asleep in their beds, but, because of rumors that the Indians were planning for an attack, many of them were awake. Three buffalo hunters were killed at the start of the attack, but the hunters were able to fend off the Indians and held out for three

[62]Gwynne, 265-67.

[63]Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 327. Quanah Parker was the son of Comanche chief Pe-ta, from the Nokoni band, and his white captive, Mrs. Cynthia Ann Parker. He rose to power during the Red River War and continued on as probably the most famous Comanche after the war's end.

days until the band of tribesmen decided to call off the attack. The Battle of Adobe Walls cost the Indians fifteen fighters and disproved the medicine man's magic.[64]

The failure at Adobe Walls only incensed the Indians to the detriment of many on the Southern Plains and northwest Texas over the next few weeks. Enraged by the result of Adobe Walls, many smaller bands of Indians began raiding all throughout the South Plains region. Lone Wolf and a band of Kiowa ambushed a patrol of Texas Rangers, killing two, not far from the location of the Warren Wagon Train massacre of 1871. Quanah Parker admitted many years later that he took all of his men and went on the warpath to Texas. Attacking from as far north as Medicine Lodge in Kansas and deep into Texas, Comanche and Kiowa warriors forced the frontier take cover. Indian depredations that summer killed approximately 190 whites and had other substantial affects. Buffalo hunting halted and the hunters and settlers were forced toward the forts for protection. Although the revenge exacted on the white population that summer may have been the revenge the Indians were looking for, the outcome was not what they may have predicted. Instead of gaining their lands back, their actions really served notice to the government that the attempts at peace, however genuine they were, had failed.[65]

Campaign Planning

In response to the Indian action in the summer of 1874 Brigadier General Pope increased activity within the Department of the Missouri, attempting to provide some added protection along the border of Kansas and Indian Territory.[66] But, until an order was given that would allow

---

[64]Dixon, 155-83; Gwynn, 268-72. The story as told by Billy Dixon is likely the finest first hand account of the events of the Battle of Adobe Walls from the white hunter's perspective.

[65]Gwynn, 272-73.

[66]Richard N. Ellis, *General Pope and U.S. Indian Policy* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1970), 183. On July 10, Pope reported to Sheridan that he had a cordon of troops from Fort Union in Colorado, the Raton Mountains in New Mexico, and the Purgatory and Arkansas rivers across the boundary of Kansas.

the Army to pursue the Indians on the reservations, there was little else that could be done. General Sherman advised William K. Belknap, the Secretary of War, "defensively it will require ten thousand cavalry to give even partial protection; but offensively, a thousand cavalry can follow them and punish them as they surely merit."[67] The army needed the permission of the Secretary of the Interior, Columbus Delano, to conduct operations on the reservations. He granted it on 18 July 1874.[68]

Anticipating the possibilities of an offensive against the Indians, General Sherman advised Lieutenant General Sheridan earlier in July that he should begin some preliminary movement toward Indian Territory. His guidance to Sheridan stated,

> Don't you think it would be well to order the 6th and 10th Cavalry to converge on Fort Sill and settle this matter at once? Word will be sent the friendly Indians in advance to collect for safety at Fort Sill. The hostiles should be stripped of all horses, mules, etc. Unless something is done now, the rascals will merely rest awhile and start afresh.[69]

Lieutenant General Sheridan also encouraged Brigadier General Augur to prepare for an immediate offensive early in July. As the commanders within the Division of the Missouri began their preparations, the following plan was submitted to President Grant: at a fixed future date all Indians who wanted to be friends of the government must report at their agencies, be enrolled by name, and answer periodic roll calls held by an Army officer. Indians who did not comply would be considered hostile; troops would be sent after them and would punish them severely, until they returned to the agencies and surrendered unconditionally. The men were to be held as prisoners of war, and chosen leaders and criminals were to be selected for special punishment. Where satisfactory proof of their guilt could be established, they would be tried for murder and

---

[67]Robert Wooster, *The Military and United States Indian Policy 1865-1903* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 153.

[68]Ibid., 153.

[69]William T. Sherman to Philip H. Sheridan, July 1874, File of Telegrams, Army Headquarters, Old Records Section, 1874, quoted in Nye, *Carbine and Lance*, 203.

kidnapping by a military commission and punished or executed. Those who were considered to be the ringleaders of the uprising, but could not be proven guilty, would be removed to some fort along the sea and held as prisoners. The president agreed.[70] Having attained the required permissions to conduct an offensive, on 20 July 1874 General Sherman wired Lieutenant General Sheridan to turn loose the troops.[71]

Lieutenant General Sheridan, commanding the Division of the Missouri from his Chicago, Illinois headquarters, developed a plan that required two of his departments to conduct simultaneous operations. The war had broken out on the fringe areas between both the Department of Missouri, commanded by Brigadier General Pope from his Fort Leavenworth, Kansas headquarters; and the Department of Texas, commanded by Brigadier General Augur from his headquarters in San Antonio. All veterans of the Civil War, and with extensive experience against Indians on the plains, the commanders knew they would likely find the hostile Indian bands in the harsh country of the Texas panhandle making a run for the protection of the canyons and valleys of the Staked Plains.

[70]Nye, *Carbine and Lance*, 203.

[71]Utley, *Frontier Regulars*, 214.

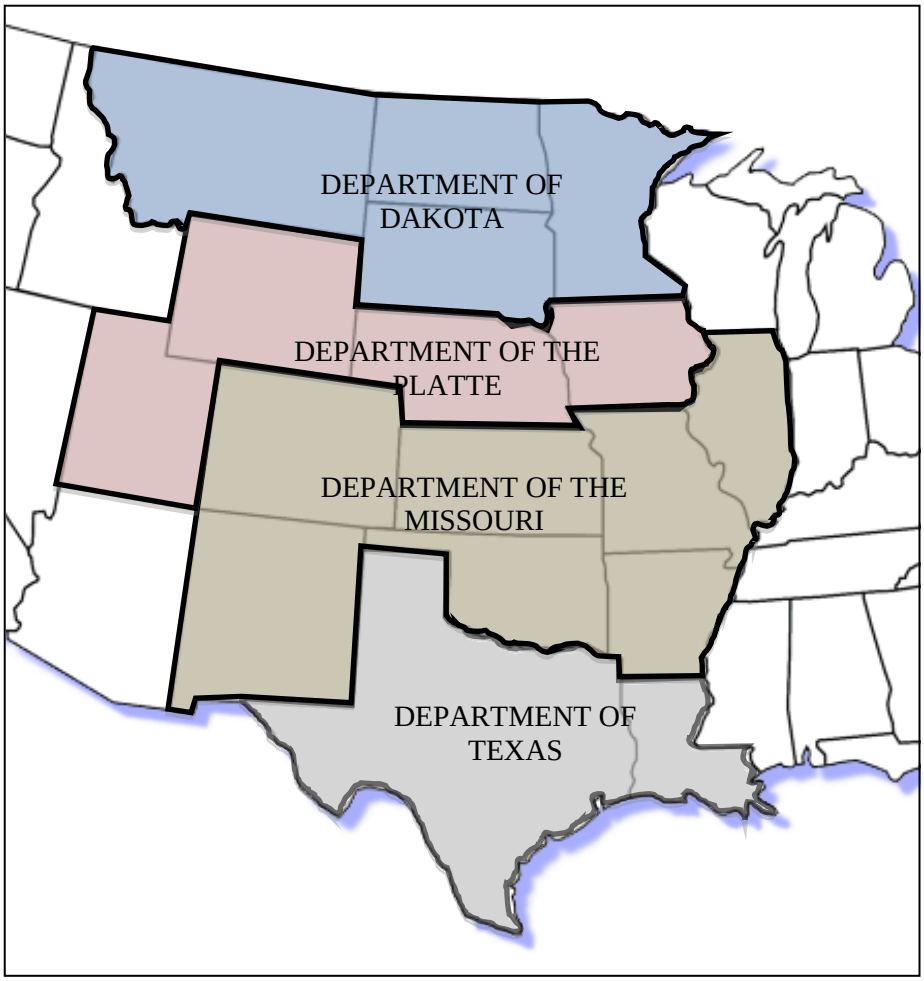

Figure 1. The Division of the Missouri

Source: Created by author

The two major rivers running from west Texas towards Indian Territory were the Canadian River, lying further to the north, and the Red River lying somewhat further south. Several smaller feeder streams, which get their start in the higher elevation of the staked plains, feed these two rivers. The streams and vegetation surrounding them supported an abundance of game that could help subsist the Indians in the coming winter. The Canadian River terrain was typical of flat grassland. The feeder streams for the Red on the other hand had carved deep ravines and canyons into the escarpment of the Llano Estacado as it rose some thousand feet in

places about the prairie land further to the east. These canyons, with their abundant water source, were large enough to hide entire tribes of Indians and provided them a concealed base from which to forage and hunt as they prepared for the winter months.[72] Lieutenant General Sheridan, knowing that the Indians would need to find a place that was ripe with water and from which they could hide, planned to have his departments converge on the edge of the Staked Plains from all sides and drive them out.

Lieutenant General Sheridan's vision was for a five-pronged attack involving both departments. First, from the Department of Missouri, Colonel Nelson A. Miles, commander of the 5th Infantry, would move south from Fort Dodge, Kansas with a force of 6th Cavalry and his 5th Infantry. From the west, Major William Redwood Price would come east along the Canadian River with his 8th Cavalry across the Staked Plains from Fort Bascom, New Mexico. From the Department of Texas, Colonel Ranald S. Mackenzie would sweep northward with his 4th Cavalry from Fort Concho, Texas. Lieutenant Colonel George P. Buell would move northeast with his 11th Infantry from Fort Griffin, Texas. Finally, Lieutenant Colonel John W. Davidson, commanding at Fort Sill, Indian Territory would move west from that location with his 10th Cavalry, Buffalo Soldiers.[73]

As the commander of the division, Lieutenant General Sheridan did not see it as his place to dictate to his subordinate commanders how to conduct the operation; rather, he busied himself relaying interdepartmental communications and securing supplies. "I will not sketch out any plan of operation for your cavalry, leaving you to exercise your good judgment in this respect," he wrote Brigadier General Pope.[74] "In conducting operations against the Indians—either for the

---

[72]Miles, *Personal Recollections*, 165.

[73]Haley, 105.

[74]Sheridan to John Pope, 21 July 1874, quoted in Wooster, *The Military & United States Indian Policy 1865-1903*, 155.

purpose of punishing them, or the protection of persons and property against their depredations—the Commanding Officer's Departments of Missouri and Texas may disregard the line separating those departments."[75] On 26 July 1874, the Division of the Missouri issued orders to its two department commands, which would prosecute the Red River War. Preliminary movements had already begun; but, now the purpose was clear, "harry them, summer and winter, giving them no time to rest or hunt, burning their villages, capturing their horses, violating their last refuge until the warriors, cold and debilitated, encumbered by their women and children, broke and surrendered to whatever terms the government should offer."[76]

The two departmental commanders were now responsible for getting their troops moving. Brigadier General Augur had recalled Colonel Mackenzie from Fort Clark, Texas and from his duties along the Rio Grande on 23 July, and instructed him to consolidate his command at Fort Concho. Once he did that, Mackenzie was to report to the departmental headquarters in San Antonio. Colonel Miles had been ordered to organize his command at Fort Dodge and to prepare for movement to Camp Supply, in Indian Territory, which he did at the beginning of August. These two commands were to be the spearheads of each department's efforts against the Indians who left the reservation.[77]

Colonel Mackenzie organized his expedition, which he designated as the Southern Column, at Fort Concho on 22 August. The column consisted of eight companies from his 4th Cavalry (companies A, D, E, F, H, I, K, and L), four companies from the 10th Infantry (companies A, C, I, and K), H Company from the 11th Infantry, and a number of scouts including thirteen

---

[75]Sheridan, General Order, No. 4, July 10 1874, *Mackenzie's Official Correspondence*, 78.

[76]Paul Andrew Hutton, *Phil Sheridan and His Army* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999), 249.

[77]Augur to Mackenzie, 23 July 1874, *Mackenzie's Official Correspondence*, 79; Miles, *Personal Recollections*, 164.

Seminole Negroes, twelve Tonkawa, and a few Lipan. Lieutenant William A. Thompson commanded the scouts. Instructed to report to Colonel Mackenzie, Lieutenant Colonel Buell consolidated at Fort Griffin two infantry companies from his 11th Infantry, and six cavalry companies; one from the 10th Cavalry and five from the 9th Cavalry. Lieutenant Colonel Davidson was expected to sally forth from Fort Sill with eight of his companies from the 10th Cavalry and two companies from the 11th Infantry.[78] Brigadier General Augur's orders to Colonel Mackenzie were clear:

> As you are aware, the object of the proposed Campaign against the hostile Cheyenne, Comanche, Kiowa, and others from the Fort Sill Reservation, is to punish them for the recent depredations along the Kansas and Texas frontiers, and you are expected to take such measures against them as will, in your judgment, the soonest accomplish the purpose.
>
> In carrying out your plans, you need pay no regard to Department or reservational lines. You are at liberty to follow the Indians where they go, even to the Agencies. In this latter event great care must be exercised not to involve such friendly bands as have already gone to the Agencies and have remained peaceful.
>
> Should it happen in the course of the Campaign, that the Indians return to the Agency at Sill, you will follow them there and assume command of all troops at that point, you will take such measures as will insure entire control of the Indians there, until such time as you can report the condition of affairs to Department Headquarters. While the Indian agent is to be consulted and to be treated with great respect, he will not be permitted to interfere in any way with the hostile bands, until the orders of the government for the disposition of the Indians are received.
>
> Your own familiarity with the Indians and Indian warfare renders it unnecessary to give you any instructions in detail. I hope, however, as I do not doubt you will impress upon your subordinates when acting away from you, that in a hostile Indian Country, there is never a moment when it is safe to relax in vigilance and precautions against surprise. A Commander against hostile Indians is never in such imminent danger as when fully satisfied that no Indians can possibly be near him.[79]

Brigadier General Augur had complete faith and trust in Mackenzie and his Indian fighting capabilities. His orders demonstrate that as he gave the Colonel the freedom to do as he saw fit.

---

[78]Augur to Mackenzie, 28 August 1874, *Mackenzie's Official Correspondence*, 80-81.

[79]Augur to Mackenzie, 28 August 1874, *Mackenzie's Official Correspondence*, 80-81.

During the first two weeks of August Colonel Miles completed his preparation for movement into Indian Territory. His command consisted of eight companies from the 6th Cavalry organized into two equal battalions commanded by Major Charles Compton, commanding D, F, G, and I company and Major James Biddle, commanding A, H, L, and M companies. He also brought four companies of his 5th Infantry, commanded by Captain Henry Bristol, out of which he created an artillery detachment that would be manning three small field guns; two .50-caliber Gatling guns and a 3-inch, 10-pounder Parrott rifle. First Lieutenant Frank D. Baldwin of the 5th Infantry was to command a detachment of scouts that consisted of another officer from the 6th Cavalry, eighteen troopers from the 6th, a signal sergeant, ten white civilians including buffalo hunters Billy Dixon and Bat Masterson, one wagon driver, one servant, and twenty Delaware Indians.[80]

The plan for sustaining the converging forces would consist of a practical push-pull type strategy. Lieutenant General Sheridan and the Division the Missouri had the responsibility to deliver supplies to both Camp Supply and Fort Sill, in Indian Territory, and to Fort Griffin, Texas. This push portion of the strategy was to be contracted out and executed by non-government transportation. The pull portion of the strategy was conducted by the subordinate commands, where they would pull supplies from one of the three bases to their forward staging bases within the operating area. Government wagons driven by civilian teamsters and protected by soldiers (normally the infantry) were the means by which this portion of the sustainment operation was to be carried out.[81]

Sustainment transportation for Colonel Miles' column consisted of approximately sixty wagons. The wagon master for this element was an old frontiersman by the name of Jack

---

[80]Cruse, *Battles of the Red River War*, 52.

[81]Utley, *Frontier Regulars*, 231.

Callahan. The troops were not to be encumbered by useless baggage, as they were to travel under light marching order, bearing only rifles, ammunition, haversacks, and canteens.[82] Light marching order during this era normally meant that troops were expecting imminent contact and combat with hostiles. The lighter weight served to increase their mobility and striking power. To a trooper this meant lighter travel, but with no tent, no extra clothing, and virtually no supplies.[83] The lighter loads allowed for the troops to march farther than the typical twenty miles a day that would have been the planning factor if they were under heavy marching orders.[84]

Brigadier General Pope ordered the supporting force of Major Price with four companies of his 8th Cavalry to move east along the Canadian River from Fort Union, New Mexico to link up with Colonel Miles, or to act independently as the situation dictated. The intent was for these two columns to move out as soon as feasibly ready, as there was concern that many of the hostile Indians would attempt to make it back to the reservation and act as if they had taken no part in the recent action.[85] In all, the combined advances into hostile territory were to consist of forty-six companies, about three thousand troops total. Southern Plains historian Ernest Wallace suggested, "No other military expedition of equal experience, toughness, and preparation had ever gone forth to battle the Southern Plains Indians."[86]

---

[82]J.T. Marshall, *The Miles Expedition of 1874-1875: An Eyewitness Account of the Red River War*, ed. Lonnie J. White (Austin, TX: Encino Press, 1971), 3.

[83]Don Rickey, *Forty Miles a Day On Beans and Hay: The Enlisted Soldier Fighting the Indian Wars* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), 222.

[84]Rickey, 244.

[85]Pope to Sheridan, 7 September 1874, *Annual Report of the Secretary of War, 1874*, 30; Pope to Sheridan, 1 September 1875, *Annual Report of the Secretary of War, 1875*, 78.

[86]Ernest Wallace, *Ranald S. Mackenzie on the Texas Frontier* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1993), 126.

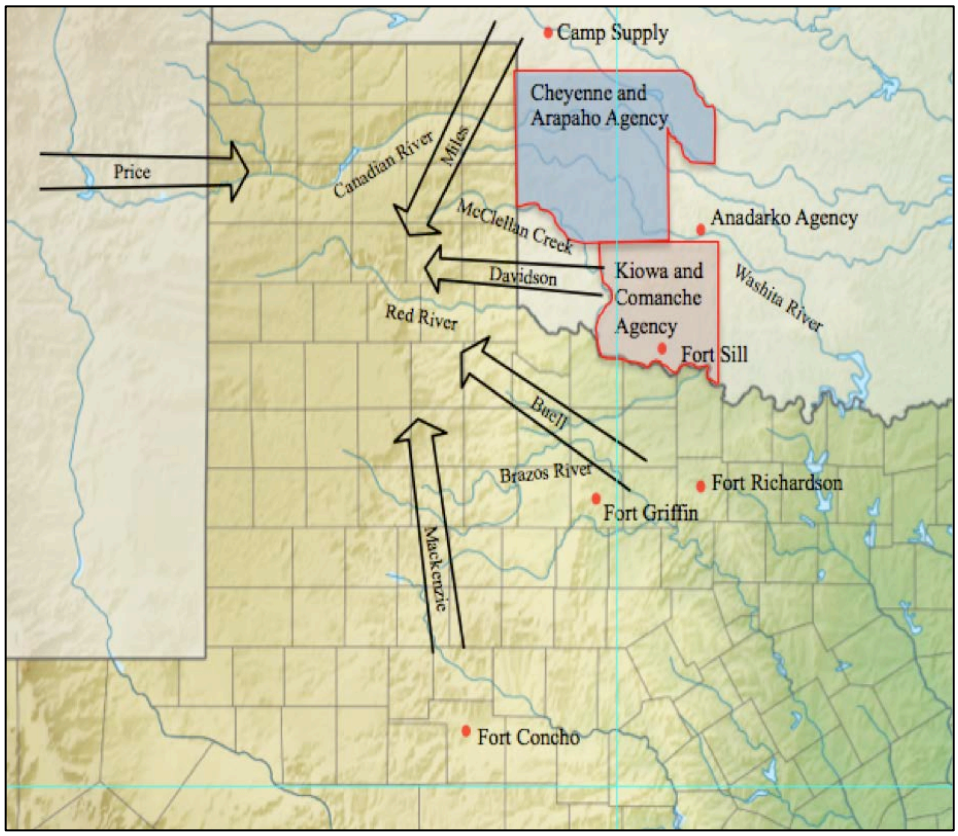

Figure 2. Division's Concept of the Operation

Source: Created by author

First Contact

The agreement between the army and the Department of the Interior, for the involvement of the army on reservation land, allowed for what amounted to a grace period during which the Indian tribes would be required to enroll at their agency. The Darlington Agency was the location of enrollment for the Cheyenne and Arapaho, and Fort Sill was the location for the Comanche and Kiowa. Once enrolled there would be periodic roll calls to ensure accountability of the "non-hostile" Indians. Those Indians not enrolled by 3 August or those that missed their roll calls would be considered hostile and thus subject to attack by the Army. Responsibility for enrollment at the Darlington Agency was assigned to Lieutenant Colonel Thomas H. Neill of the 6th Cavalry

along with the Indian Agent John D. Miles. At Fort Sill the assignment fell to Lieutenant Colonel Davidson and the Indian Agent James M. Haworth.[87]

For Lieutenant Colonel Neill and Agent Miles enrollment was not complicated. The majority of the Arapahoe submitted quietly, and almost all of the Cheyenne remained absent. This was not the case though for Lieutenant Colonel Davidson and Agent Haworth. When the order was received on 26 July Lieutenant Colonel Davidson issued word, without the consent of the agent, that the enrollment of Indians would begin on 31 July and was to conclude on 3 August. Agent Haworth was incensed, expressing that there was no way for all the Indians at the reservation to be enrolled in four days, much less time enough for those that still had to travel back to the Agency. Lieutenant Colonel Davidson felt that the Indian Agent was stalling in order to give his tribes more time in which those that had been out on the plains committing depredations to make it back in. Davidson would have none of it.[88]

The registration was complete on time but, as Lieutenant Colonel Davidson had expected, soon after the conclusion of the process there was a continuation of hostile acts against whites in the vicinity of Fort Sill. Several days after the conclusion of the registration a few Comanche chiefs sent word to the agency that they wished to come in and be enrolled as non-hostile. Davidson sent word that they could come in but that they would be considered as prisoners of war. Instead, the Comanche chiefs led their tribes north of Fort Sill to Anadarko, the agency for the Wichita and its confederation of tribes. Lone Wolf and the Kiowa war faction, many of who had been enrolled, were camped near Anadarko as well. Davidson responded to a call for help from the agent at Anadarko, as the agent feared the new arrivals were intent on stirring up trouble. He arrived there from Fort Sill with four companies of the 10th Cavalry on 22 August.

---

[87]Haley, 111-25.

[88]Utley, *Frontier Regulars*, 221.

The attempt by Davidson to get the Comanche to turn their weapons over and surrender set off a wild clash that saw the sides exchanging long-range fire for two days. The skirmish resulted in one Indian and five civilians killed, with two soldiers wounded.[89]

In the eyes of the army, the incident at Anadarko helped to purge the rolls of those whom they did not believe should be included in a list of non-hostiles. It helped to delineate the truly friendly Kiowa and Comanche from those who were not yet ready to submit. There was some abandonment of the agencies by possibly friendly Indians as word spread of the incident, the memories of past transgressions of white men being not too distant. By late August though, the hostile Indian bands were considered to consist of some 1,800 Cheyenne, 2,000 Comanche, and 1,000 Kiowa. In all these tribes could mount some 1,200 fighters.[90] Those Indians deemed hostile who were not yet in the vicinity of the rivers and tributaries in the Texas panhandle were on the move in that direction; so was the army.

Advance from the North

Colonel Miles' column began its march toward the area of operation on 11 August 1874. This first departure consisted of the battalion commanded by Major Compton as well as a detachment of scouts led by Lieutenant Baldwin. The column moved from Fort Dodge in a southerly direction and was followed on 14 August by the remainder of Colonel Miles' command. After crossing the Cimarron River the initial column split into two with Major Compton continuing down the North Canadian River towards Camp Supply. Lieutenant Baldwin took fifty-three men on a scout upstream of the North Canadian to Palo Duro Creek and then

---

[89]Augur to Sheridan, 28 September 1874, *Annual Report of the Secretary of War, 1874*, 41-43; Richard H. Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom: Four Decades with the American Indian, 1867-1904* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1964), 67; Utley, *Frontier Regulars*, 221; Haley, 111-25; Nye, *Carbine and Lance*, 204-10.

[90]Utley, *Frontier Regulars*, 221.

overland to Adobe Walls. After rescuing a group of buffalo hunters from an impending Indian attack, Lieutenant Baldwin continued down the Canadian River toward a terrain feature called Antelope Hills. Upon departure from Fort Dodge, Colonel Miles' main column took a more southeasterly approach towards Camp Supply eventually linking up with Major Compton there on 18 August. This approach toward the hostile territory had the purpose of driving any Indians in the general area further into the Texas panhandle where they could be dealt with at some point in the future. Miles rested his command for a short time and then started out again on 20 August headed south toward Antelope Hills to conduct the rendezvous with Lieutenant Baldwin, which occurred on 24 August. Baldwin's scout down the Canadian had stirred up a quick skirmish, which killed one Indian and wounded another.[91]

Colonel Miles' column departed Antelope Hills heading southwest, now picking up the pace as the signs of Indian activity became more frequent. The column was experiencing severe heat and drought as it moved across the country towards the Staked Plains. The excessive heat had dried the streams and what water the men did find consisted of varying levels of gypsum that if drunk could cause diarrhea. Despite the conditions, Miles kept his men on the move as daily there were found increasing amounts of abandoned baggage from the retreating Indian villages.

On 28 August, Miles made the decision to leave two companies with his supply trains and forge ahead with the remainder of his regiment, only slowed by two ambulances and five ammunition wagons. The chase toward the Red River, a distance of sixty-five miles, was made in two days, "incredible as such an accomplishment may be in such country."[92]

> On the morning of the 30th the column was in motion at four o'clock, the scouts as usual about two miles in advance. At an early hour it emerged from the broken country and struck a level plain bordered on the south side by steep bluffs, which skirt the Staked

---

[91]Miles to Assistant Adjutant General, Department of the Missouri, 1 September 1874, *Mackenzie's Official Correspondence*, 84-88; Marshall, 9-13; Haley, 129-31.

[92]Miles, *Recollections*, 167.

> Plains. The trail led to an opening through the bluffs, and at eight o'clock Lieutenant Baldwin's detachment of scouts entered the hills, when almost instantly a band of about two hundred and fifty Indians charged upon them from the bluffs on both sides.[93]

Baldwin's force was able to hold its ground until reinforced on either side by the battalions of Major's Compton and Biddle. When the artillery detachment was added to the line adjacent to Baldwin's scouts Colonel Miles ordered his men to advance on the enemy. For the remainder of that day, the Battle of Red River saw Colonel Miles' men advancing across a broad front, pursuing the retreating Indians some twenty miles across the dry Red River bed and into the mouth of Tule Canyon. Indian attempts to stem the tide of the advance were eventually thwarted with tactical maneuvers to force them from any terrain advantage they may have.[94]

The Indians fought a desperate rear guard action to allow their families to withdraw up onto the Llano Estacado and further west towards safety. They left behind burning camps and important possessions, which they would need in future months. The conditions of the approach march and the fight took its toll on Miles' command as well where, "During the chase the men tried every means of finding water, but without avail, and suffered so greatly that some of them resorted to the extreme of opening the veins of their arms to moisten their swollen lips."[95]

Colonel Miles had outrun his supply lines and was forced to give up the pursuit of the escaping Indians, but his attack had done extensive damage to the Indian camp. Unwilling to give the secured area back over to the Indians, Colonel Miles made the decision to make camp there, at the mouth of the Tule Canyon, and to send his supply wagons back to Camp Supply in order to

---

[93]Ibid., 167.

[94]Ibid., 168-69; Miles to Assistant Adjutant General, Department of the Missouri, 1 September 1874, *Mackenzie's Official Correspondence*, 84-88.

[95]Miles, *Recollections*, 168.

replenish provisions and bring the resupply forward to his location; essentially establishing a mobile base of supply.[96]

The next two weeks were a confusing and trying time for Brigadier General Pope's effort from the north. The general had issues his orders and was allowing his subordinate commanders to carry out his intent. Colonel Miles had over-extended his supply lines and was forced into taking a pause in his operation in order to refit. There was an assumption made that Major Price, traveling into the area of operation from New Mexico, would have linked up with Colonel Miles somewhere around the time Miles was moving out of Antelope Hills. This did not occur, and due to the command and control capabilities of the time, Major Price's location was unknown.[97]

To conduct his resupply operation, Colonel Miles dispatched Captain Wyllys Lyman with thirty-six supply wagons to Camp Supply, some two hundred miles to the northeast. He sent along one company of infantry as well as several cavalrymen for protection. Miles intended to wait for the return of Lyman's wagons at which point he would be ready to continue with his operation. Miles did not know at that time of the uprising at Anadarko on 22 August. Many of the Indians involved in that incident just happened to be crossing Colonel Miles' supply lines on 9 September as Captain Lyman was making his return trip. Over the next four days several hundred Kiowa and Comanche Indians lay siege to the wagon train along the Washita River. The Indians made several attempts to overrun the encircled wagon train but were denied each time. What the Indians were really doing, though, was keeping the soldiers occupied, fixing them in position, as they allowed their families to continue their movement to the west.[98]

---

[96]Cruse, 54.

[97]Sheridan to Sherman, 5 September 1874, *Mackenzie's Official Correspondence*, 90-91; Price to Assistant Adjutant General, Department of the Missouri, 23 September 1874, *Mackenzie's Official Correspondence*, 94-103.

[98]Haley, 157-62.

As the Indians abandoned their attack on Captain Lyman's wagon train and continued their movement to the west, they came across a detachment of six civilian scouts, led by Billy Dixon, as well as four cavalry soldiers. The detachment had been sent by Colonel Miles to link up with the Lyman supply train and guide them to his new camp that he established along McClellan Creek, somewhat closer to Camp Supply than the camp at the Tule Canyon. Dixon's men were quickly overwhelmed by the Indians and were forced to take cover in a small a buffalo wallow. For the remainder of the day on 12 September and through the night the Indians continued attempts to pick off Billy Dixon and his men. When dawn broke, Dixon was the only one left who was not wounded or dead.[99]

What finally caused the Indians to abandon the area was the presence of Major Price and his 8th Cavalry. Price, who had not departed Fort Union, New Mexico until 24 August, crossed the Staked Plains with the bulk of his force and found Colonel Miles camped at Tule Canyon on 7 September.[100] Miles had instructed Major Price to go north and find his supply column as well as link up with the remainder of Price's own command which he had split off from his column on 4 September. As Price was moving north his command stumbled across the same band of Indians that had laid siege to the supply train and attacked Billy Dixon's detachment. In a short fight at Sweetwater Creek, Major Price's soldiers fought an indecisive battle as the Indians were again attempting to move their families, baggage, and stock west towards the protection of the canyons.

---

[99]Haley, 158-67; Cruse, 87-91; Dixon, 199-220.

[100]Price to Assistant Adjutant General, Department of the Missouri, 23 September 1874, *Mackenzie' Official Correspondence,* 94-103. Major Price's 8th Cavalry left Fort Union and Fort Bascom, New Mexico with four cavalry companies and enablers tallying 216 soldiers, five Navajo and three Mexican (Comanchero) guides, one civilian blacksmith, twenty government six-mule wagons, one four-mule wagon, one ambulance with surgeon, one four-mule battery forge, two mountain howitzers, thirty pack mules, and a contract train of twenty-four four and six mule teams. Major price states that his wagons contained "10,000 rations, over fifty days for my command; about 80,000 pounds of grain; 30,000 rounds each of carbine and pistol ammunition; 200 rounds canister and shell for howitzers; officers stores, company property, etc."

After the fight, Price came across Billy Dixon who had left the buffalo wallow on foot to find help for the men who remained there.[101]

The confusion and supply problems over the first two weeks of September 1874 were enough to convince Colonel Miles that he needed to shrink his line of communication; therefore, he once again moved his camp, establishing it along the Washita River. Supply issues would continue to haunt him, but not as much as leaving those Indians he had run west onto the Staked Plains an opportunity to return and reestablish themselves in the canyons. Even with the issues in the operation, he had penetrated deep into the Indian safe haven, done considerable harm to several bands of Indian's ability to sustain themselves in the upcoming months, and had most importantly pushed a great number of the Indians into the path of the southern column.

The Southern Column

Many of the Anadarko incident fugitives were unsettled by the events that transpired with Brigadier General Pope's troops during that five days from the 9 to 14 September. A great number of the band were so disheartened that they turned back east and headed for the reservations. Unsure of the situation with Lieutenant Colonel Davidson at Fort Sill, they headed for the Darlington agency instead. A great number of Kiowa turned themselves in to Lieutenant Colonel Neill in early October; the remainder of Kiowa and Comanche in the group avoided any more contact with Colonel Miles' troops and headed for the safety of the Staked Plains.[102]

On 23 August 1874, Colonel Mackenzie's southern column departed Fort Concho, Texas headed for a supply camp along a fork of the Brazos River which the Colonel had used in previous years campaigning along the Staked Plains. The column, traveling without its commander who headed to Fort Griffin with Brigadier General Augur for further planning, broke

[101]Cruse, 96-97.

[102]Ultey, *Frontier Regulars*, 224-25.

into four columns with the scouts out front. Over the next ten days the columns travelled north toward camp arriving on 1 September. Upon arrival the command began establishment of the camp and, in anticipation of what was to come, to drill heavily. The quartermaster, Captain Henry W. Lawton, headed east towards Fort Griffin with empty wagons, as that fort was where the command was to draw its supplies. Colonel Mackenzie was spending time at Fort Griffin paying particular attention to his supplies.[103] His experience with where he was headed paid dividends in his preparation for continuous action.[104]

Colonel Mackenzie's finalized plan for his and Lieutenant Colonel Buell's columns was for him to operate from his camp on the Fresh Fork of the Brazos with his cavalry and five companies of infantry, keeping one or two infantry companies with his supply train. He planned to move north along the eastern edge of the Staked Plains by Quitaque Canyon, across the Main Fork of the Red River, to the Salt Fork of the Red and perhaps even on to Camp Supply in Indian Territory. Buell was to occupy a supply camp along the Red River and follow that stream west up onto the high plain. These general plans were to be disregarded if the circumstances dictated. The columns were to take, if possible, six weeks of rations and thirty days of half forage. The plan called for both Mackenzie's and Buell's columns to depart their supply camps on 18 September.[105]

Colonel Mackenzie arrived at his camp on 19 September and that same day a scouting party reported back that they had discovered three small trails headed north. He wasted no time in preparing his troopers to move out, and the next day the column did just that. Leaving Major

---

[103]Robert G. Carter, *On the Border with Mackenzie; Or, Winning West Texas from the Comanche* (New York: Antiquarian Press, 1961), 478-80.

[104]Haley, 170. Colonel Mackenzie had operated against the Comanche in this same area both in 1871 and 1872.

[105]Mackenzie to Augur, Memorandum on Campaign Plans, 28 August 1874, *Mackenzie's Official Correspondence*, 82-83.

Thomas M. Anderson in charge of his supply camp, supported by three infantry companies, Colonel Mackenzie departed on 20 September with 450 enlisted men, 21 commissioned officers, three surgeons, a detachment of scouts, and the wagon train escorted by two infantry companies.[106] Unsure exactly what his future movements would be he sent word back to Brigadier General Pope that he was headed north.[107]

The first week of Colonel Mackenzie's march north was uneventful except for the first day when a detachment of scouts came into camp and reported that they had been attack by several Indians. The command gave chase but found nothing as frequent rains, which had started at the beginning of September, helped to hide the trail. Some days the command made good distance, but other days little progress was made due to trail conditions.[108]

On the 25th the command made camp high on the plains above Tule Canyon, not far from where Colonel Miles had camped the previous month after his command chased the Indians into the canyon. Scouting patrols discovered numerous trails in the area leading in many different directions. Speculation was made that night that perhaps 1500 head of horses had passed along one of the trails. Colonel Mackenzie remained in his camp along the Tule all day on the 26th and waited for the arrival of his supply trains, which had been slowed by mud. During the day one of the battalions returned from a day long patrol and was followed back to camp by a party of seven Indians. Also, a guide who had been out prospecting for Indian camps, returned to say he had spotted nothing but running buffalo that looked as if Indians were chasing them.[109]

---

[106]Wallace, *Ranald S. Mackenzie and the Texas Frontier*, 132.

[107]Mackenzie to Assistant Adjutant General, Department of Texas, 19 September 1874, *Mackenzie's Official Correspondence*, 93.

[108]Wallace, *Ranald S. Mackenzie and the Texas Frontier*, 133.

[109]Mackenzie, Journal, 20-27 September 1874, *Mackenzie's Official Correspondence*, 119-21.

Feeling that a large group of Indians may be close and that the command could be in danger, Colonel Mackenzie had his men prepare for a possible attack by Indians as they bedded down on the night of 26 September. He was right, as that night approximately 300 Indians swarmed their camp. The Indians made several attempts to stampede the soldier's horses, but were unable to do so because of the preparations made that evening. The firing back and forth went on for a few hours, then in the middle of a lull a peculiar thing happened; Captain Lyman's wagon train just came rolling straight into camp as though nothing was going on. For some unknown reason the Indians did not attack it. At daybreak, Colonel Mackenzie ordered one of his battalions and some of the scouts to mount up and attack the Indians who were now visible. The cavalry mounted a two-hour chase, but when the Indians disappeared they returned to camp for breakfast. That afternoon, Mackenzie broke camp and his command continued its search for the Indians. After a march that day of twenty-five miles they made camp at two o'clock on the morning of 28 September.[110]

After a two-hour rest, the scouts reported they had rediscovered the trail they had lost during the night. Colonel Mackenzie broke camp at four a.m. and after a four mile march came to the edge of the Palo Duro Canyon.[111] What they saw as the day began to dawn was something to behold. For a couple of miles, spread at the bottom of the canyon, stood an estimated two hundred tepees, grouped in villages, and hundreds of horses grazing nearby. These were the Indians who

---

[110]Carter, 486-87.

[111]Wallace, *Ranald S. Mackenzie and the Texas Frontier,* 138. The Palo Duro Canyon is the location of the main headwater of the Red River. At this point along the rim there was a vertical drop of some 700 to 900 feet and from rim to rim was approximately six miles. The Blanca Cita, a smaller feeder canyon, was more than a half mile wide and "there was plentiful cottonwood, cedar, wild cherry, mesquite, and hackberry trees for firewood, lodge poles, and arrows. A stream with good water, fed by springs from the canyon walls, meandered at the bottom of the canyon."

had escaped both Colonel Miles, during the Battle of Red River one month earlier, as well as the remainder of those involved in the Anadarko fight who had not gone in to the reservation.[112]

Colonel Mackenzie, leaving his "1st Battalion in reserve," ordered his "2nd Battalion" and the scouts down the steep canyon walls.[113] In Mackenzie's journal entry for that day he wrote,

> As soon as the first two companies of the 2nd Bat had reached the foot they, with Lt. Thompson and the scouts, were ordered to attack the Indians who were getting away as fast as possible into the mountains. The other two companies of the 2nd Battalion were sent out to support of the other two companies and the 1st Battalion was ordered down into the canyon. A and E Companies, 4th Cavalry with the scouts had a running fight with the Indians for about four miles in which they killed three Indians and captured 1424 head of stock consisting of ponies, colts and mules. The advance companies were ordered to fall back driving off the stock and destroying the camps, etc.[114]

The Indian's attempts to regain their camp and their stock were to no avail as Colonel Mackenzie's troops were able to sustain their gains. The soldiers found that the Indians were well stocked for winter and huge bonfires roared as the soldiers piled on the Indian's supplies. After the camps were destroyed the long march back to their supply wagons began, this time with the excess stock in tow. Upon arrival at their camp, knowing that the Indians would attempt to gain their horses back, Colonel Mackenzie ordered that nearly all the stock be destroyed. Some of the animals were given to the scouts as rewards and some were used as replacement; but, well over a thousand were shot right there.[115]

Although only a few Indians had lost their lives in the two days of contact with Colonel Mackenzie's southern column, the damage to their future prospects was devastating. Robbed of their protection from the winter weather and their ability to hunt, this group of Indians was staring

---

[112]Wallace, *Ranald S. Mackenzie and the Texas Frontier*, 138.

[113]Cruse, 105. The 2nd Battalion was commanded by Captain Eugene B. Beaumont and consisted of companies A, E, H and L. The 1st Battalion was commanded by Captain Napoleon B. McLaughlin and consisted of companies D, F, I and K.

[114]Mackenzie, Journal, 28 September 1874, *Mackenzie's Official Correspondence*, 122-23.

[115]Carter, 493-95.

at tremendous hardship in the very near future. Colonel Mackenzie's operation had done tremendous damage to the Indian's ability to sustain themselves outside of the reservation.

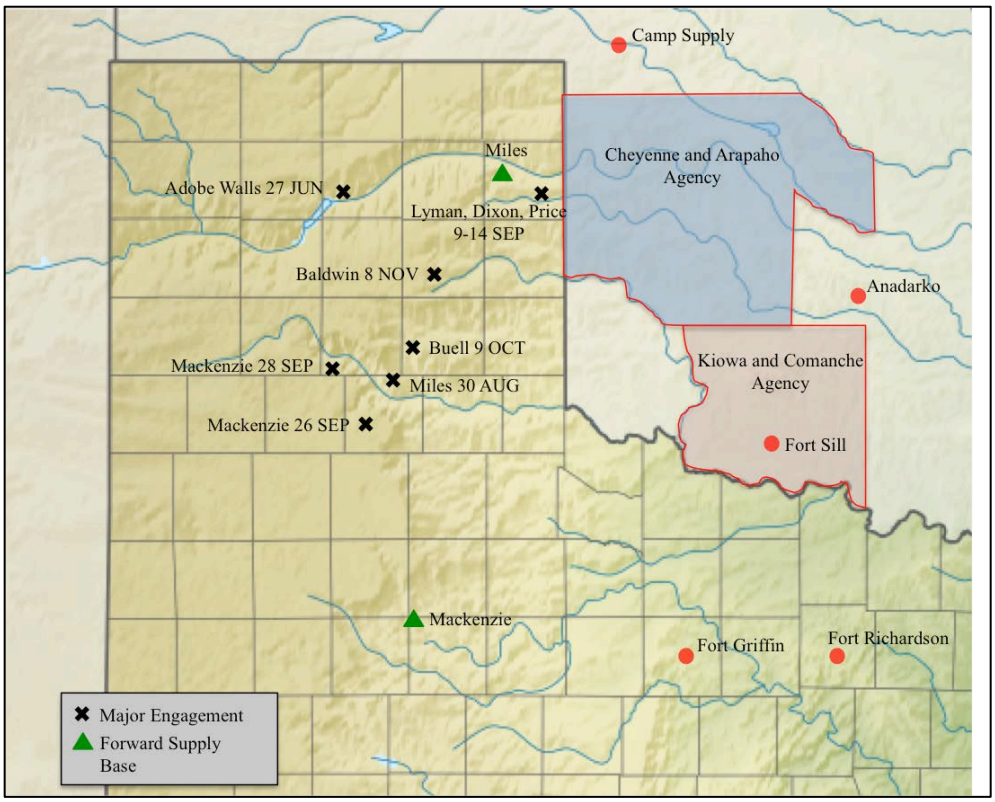

Figure 3. Major Engagements

Source: Created by author

Continuous Harassment

The two decisive operations against the Indians along the Staked Plains by Colonel's Miles and Mackenzie were quite easily the turning points in the Red River War. The Indians were getting the sense that their safe havens were now swarming with soldiers, and finding an opportunity to settle for any amount of time in one place to hunt, and forage the horses they had remaining, was becoming increasingly difficult. For the army commanders, the actions thus far in the campaign had been a great success; but, they understood that in order to bring an end to

hostilities in this region once and for all they needed to keep up the pursuit of the Indians until they faced utter annihilation or starvation. Spurred by their success, and the desires of the division commander, Lieutenant General Sheridan, the field commanders kept up that relentless pursuit over the next several months. Through supply issues and some of the harshest weather any of them had yet experienced, the commanders pushed their troops and pushed the Indians until their hopes for regaining their old way of life died.

After the Palo Duro Canyon raid, Colonel Mackenzie did not let up on the hostiles. He did not turn back to his supply camp immediately after the battle, but instead headed deeper into the Staked Plains. Over the next three weeks, he cut a wide swath around the Palo Duro Canyon in an attempt to pick up the retreating Indians trail. He was eventually forced to turn back toward his supply camp and come back down off of the high plains. The rains were incessant during this time, and made patrolling and resupply that much more difficult. Once he returned to his supply camp he assessed that his command, both soldier and horse, needed a break.[116] During the week in camp he began to plan for sending some of his companies back to Fort Concho or on to another fort to refit. He discussed with his department commander his concerns. He didn't feel he was receiving enough grain for his horses, and was concerned about the conditions of his men. His updated plan was to rotate some of his other troops, who had remained back at Fort Concho, into the fight.[117] Ultimately a hot Indian trail couched his refit plan, as he headed back out.

In the next month and a half, Colonel Mackenzie and his command completed two more extensive patrols in pursuit of the Indians, covering much of the ground in the southern portion of the area of operations. They did not achieve tremendous results in killed or captured Indians, horses, or supplies; but, they most definitely kept any of the Indians in the area on the move.

---

[116]Wallace, *Ranald S. Mackenzie and the Texas Frontier*, 154.

[117]Mackenzie to Assistant Adjutant General, Department of Texas, 29 October 1874, *Mackenzie's Official Correspondence*, 150.

Severe weather took its toll on the troops as the temperatures dropped to well below freezing at times, and the plain was swept by snow and ice storms. Several of the horses froze to death at night while tied up.[118] In December, Colonel Mackenzie received word that he was to take command of Fort Sill and all of Indian Territory. He kept after the Indians a little longer, until he felt his job at Sill would be a little more manageable. Finally in late December 1874 he disbanded his command, sending them back to their forts to refit for the winter, and headed to San Antonio to debrief his commander.[119]

Colonel Mackenzie was not the only one busy during this time. Lieutenant Colonel Davidson was finally able to remove himself from any potential situation at the Agencies and departed Fort Sill in early September. After a thirty-day patrol he returned to the post to find Lieutenant General Sheridan there to meet him. Sheridan, pleased again with the early results of the campaign, wanted Davidson to get back out.[120] Four days later, on 21 September, the 10th Cavalry was moving west once again.[121]

Lieutenant Colonel Buell finally got in on the action in October when on the 9th his command destroyed a small Kiowa camp in southwest Indian Territory. Following the Indian trail northward, he struck another Kiowa camp two days later destroying another seventy-five lodges. Then on the 12th he again came across another camp and destroyed hundreds more lodges. Lieutenant Colonel Buell pursued his pray all the way to the Canadian River before being forced to turn south to his supply base along the Red River.[122]

---

[118]Wallace, *Ranald S. Mackenzie and the Texas Frontier*, 154-165.

[119]Ibid., 154-165.

[120]Hutton, 253.

[121]Nye, *Carbine and Lance*, 225.

[122]R.C. Drum to William D. Whipple, Sheridan's Dispatch from Fort Sill, 24 October 1874, *Mackenzie's Official Correspondence*, 144; Ultley, *Frontier Regulars*, 226.

After being resupplied in early October, Colonel Miles began operations again. Throughout the fall and then into the winter, his command conducted countless patrols throughout the Texas panhandle literally chasing the Indians from stream to stream. On 8 November, a detachment led by Lieutenant Baldwin came across a Cheyenne village along McClellan Creek. He was escorting empty wagons on a supply run, but decided on the spot to place his infantry company inside the wagons and along with the cavalry scouts they stormed straight into the village. The Indians fled, completely surprised by the lieutenant's interesting technique.[123]

The columns in the north were not immune to the weather that had inflicted so much damage on Colonel Mackenzie's 4th Cavalry. The winter weather began to take its toll and one after another the army's forces gave in to the storms. Lieutenant Colonel Davidson returned to Fort Sill on 29 November and Lieutenant Colonel Buell to Fort Griffin in early December. Colonel Miles had consumed Major Price's command and after one final month long patrol in January they returned to the winter camp along the Sweetwater Creek which Lieutenant General Sheridan had ordered established as a deterrent to Indians leaving the reservation when the weather turned better. Colonel Miles left Major James Biddle there with a total of eight companies and he headed to Camp Supply.[124]

The relentless pursuit by the Army throughout the fall and into the winter months was too much for the Indians to take. Robbed of their safe haven, the army's incessant patrolling pushed and pushed them from one end of the panhandle to the other. They needed to find a place where they could graze their remaining animals, hunt, and prepare for the winter months. The constant

---

[123]Utley, *Frontier Regulars*, 227.

[124]Ibid., 228.

molestation precluded this from happening.[125] Starving and freezing, what started as a trickle of Indians returning to the reservation became a rush during January and February of 1875. Almost five hundred Kiowa were persuaded to surrender in late February. On 6 March, nearly a thousand Cheyenne came in. By the spring most of the Indians, including most Comanche had surrendered; but, Quanah Parker, who had led at Adobe Walls, and the Quahadi Comanche were still holding out. They had been able to elude the Army patrols of the summer and fall somewhere farther west on the Staked Plains. Finally, on 2 June 1875 Quanah brought the remaining four hundred Quahadi in to Fort Sill and surrendered to Colonel Mackenzie who had taken command in March. The Red River War was over.[126]

Upon the conclusion of the war, Lieutenant General Sheridan ordered one final act to ensure there would not be another uprising. While the Army still had total command of the reservations he decided to punish the Indians by picking out several of the leaders and significant instigators of the violence, and send them to prison at Fort Marion, Florida. The task was delegated from Colonel Mackenzie to Lieutenant Richard H. Pratt. He took on the job with enthusiasm and escorted the prisoners in May of 1875.[127]

Despite harsh condition, continuous supply issues, and a formidable enemy, Lieutenant General Sheridan's plan for the Red River War achieved what it set out to. The army planned and executed a highly successful campaign even when faced with daunting concerns. Although not as smooth as some would have desired, the planning and preparation accounted for the basic aspects needed to execute the campaign as well as how best to accomplish the objective of getting the Indians back on the reservation and keep them there.

---

[125]Ellis, 191.

[126]Utley, *Frontier Regulars*, 228-29; Haley, 202-09.

[127]Pratt, 111-14.

OPERATIONAL ART AND MISSION COMMAND

While operational art and mission command were not concepts known or understood by the Army commanders at the time of the Red River War, there is evidence that the planning and execution of the campaign employed the concepts none the less. With varying degrees of effectiveness the commanders employed operational art and used mission command in a comprehensive campaign that ultimately led to the capitulation of the Southern Plains tribes. The utilization of operational art and mission command is best developed first with a discussion of Lieutenant General Sheridan's understanding of the ends, ways, and means, and through a look at the operational approach for the campaign.

The Division of the Missouri commander, Lieutenant General Sheridan, like his predecessor, General Sherman, understood that the strategic objective of the United States Government in 1874 was for continuous expansion, both in population and in economy, in the western portion of the country. To do this, the expansion corridor through the central part of the plains had to remain free and safe for settlers, explorers, and entrepreneurs. Likewise, the cattle industry in Texas needed to be free to expand as well. Indians roaming and raiding off of reservation land were a direct impediment to the achievement of this end. With failure of the peace process, the way to ensure this was to force the Indians who had left the reservations to return and take away their ability or incentive to leave again in the future. The Division of the Missouri had army regiments as a means to enforce this.

As evidence of operational art, the planning can be looked at through a discussion of how the Division of the Missouri planned to utilize tactical formations to complete objectives that linked to strategic outcomes. This is best demonstrated through Lieutenant General Sheridan's operational approach. The Division of the Missouri's operational approach was a multi-phase operation that utilized a direct approach along external lines of communication. The subordinate commands were to prepare their forces near the area of operation and, once ready, advance along

five avenues of approach. Once the segregation between hostile and non-hostile was made on the reservations, the advancing columns would converge in the area of the Staked Plains and Texas panhandle to seek out and attack the Indian villages and formations. Once in the area of operations the columns would continuously pursue the Indians, giving them no opportunity to recover. This would effectively degrade their ability to prepare for the upcoming winter months and likely lead to their return to the reservations for want of food and supplies. Upon the return of the tribes to the reservation, the army would effectively remove leaders and instigators from the tribes to prisons elsewhere; therefore, diminishing the possibility that the tribes would attempt another uprising in the future. The five advancing columns were to operate autonomously from one another as the terrain, distances, command and control systems of the day, and the commander's trust in his subordinate commander's capabilities as Indian fighters allowed.

There is evidence that Lieutenant General Sheridan and his subordinate commanders utilized certain elements of operational art as intellectual tools in planning and executing the Red River War. The most important elements, center of gravity, operational reach, and tempo. First, the commanders understood the center of gravity of their enemy to be the Indian tribal villages. Although nomadic when on the plains, these villages were the center from which the tribes drew their power. If the villages themselves could be captured, neutralized, or destroyed, the Indians would likely be forced to return to the reservations. To do this there were three aspects of the tribal villages that the army focused on: their horses, the rivers, and the Indian leadership.

The Indians of the Southern Plains were horsemen. The horse was integral to Indian life, including hunting, travel from place to place, acting against the army and other tribes, and trading. These aspects, and others, made the horse invaluable to the tribes. The horse was also a vulnerability to the Indian villages. Without their herds, the Indians would have had an incredible difficulty sustaining themselves as well as protecting themselves from the army. The army could

take the horses away from the Indian tribes, as Colonel Mackenzie did at Palo Duro Canyon, and make life extremely difficult for them.

Another vulnerability to the Indian villages was their need for water. They needed water to subsist; for themselves as well as the horses. Again, the tribes were nomadic when on the plains, but two things limited these nomadic tendencies: access to game, and access to water. The column commanders understood these limits and were able to focus their scouts and patrols to areas where water was available. Staying along the rivers with sufficient water to sustain large villages greatly limited the area in which to search.

The final vulnerability of the Indian villages and tribes was their leadership. The tribes would not have left the reservations if they had not been allowed to do so by certain chiefs and leaders. Although warrior spirit coursed through the younger warriors, they still followed the guidance of their leadership. Once the Indians returned to the reservations, the removal of key figures to prisons elsewhere served as a demoralizing factor to the villages and, as assumed in the planning, greatly prevented any further instigation of hostilities along the Southern Plains.

The second element of operational art evinced in the planning and execution of the campaign is operational reach. As discussed in the introduction, the concept of operational reach must balance the forces of endurance, momentum, and protection. The commanders attempted to do this through the location of forward supply bases, the system of sustainment, and the planning of their patrols. As stated previously, operational reach is a tether and as such the columns were attached to their supply bases. The planning of the campaign called for the separate columns to establish supply bases near their area of operations. The locations of these forward supply bases were important because they needed to be located near abundant water for sustainment and resupply, and not too far from the supply hubs of Camp Supply, Fort Sill, and Fort Griffin. They needed to be far enough into the area of operations to be efficient for the columns to maintain their momentum and endurance, but not too far into the area of operations as to become a

protection concern for the columns. The relative success of Colonel Mackenzie's supply base along the Brazos and initial failure of Colonel Miles in the panhandle demonstrates the need for balance in operational reach.

The sustainment system established for the campaign demonstrates an understanding of an attempt to extend the operational reach of the columns. The utilization of contract drivers and civilian transport to deliver grain and supplies to the major supply hubs is a reflection of the limited number of Army personnel available to conduct operations after the post-Civil War draw down. Similarly, the utilization of infantry companies to protect the teamster driven wagons travelling to and from the forward supply bases, as well protection of those supply bases, demonstrates an understanding of the need for cavalry troops to be used in search of the Indian villages, and not for sustainment requirements.

To extend their operational reach the column commanders had to pay special attention to the length of their scouts and patrols. The commanders did not have an infinite number of supply wagons, teamster wagon drivers, or troops for protection of their supply lines. They considered these factors when planning their patrols, at times going on half rations in order to balance their need for endurance and momentum with those of protection and resource availability.

A final element of operational art evident in the planning and execution of the campaign is tempo. As discussed previously, the cognitive approach of tempo has to deal with the pace of military action in time and space with relation to the enemy. This element was evident in the speed at which the columns were to be pushed into the field, the number of columns utilized for the campaign, and the duration of the pursuit. First, Lieutenant General Sheridan's intent was to have the columns move into the area of operations as soon as possible. There were a couple of reasons for this, one being that the pace of Indian depredations was quickening and troop movements into the area were meant to stem that tide as quickly as possible. Another reason is that the he wanted to rapidly separate the hostile Indians from those yet friendly. He wanted to

disrupt their actions, even at the risk of not being fully prepared for a campaign of extended duration. This early action had an effect on the campaign as demonstrated with Colonel Miles' supply issues after the Red River battle. As Lieutenant General Sheridan stated, "All of these columns were pushed out much sooner than desirable." He felt the risk was warranted.[128]

The five columns used for the initial stages of the campaign was another planning factor that related to tempo in relation to the enemy. The division commander wanted to converge on the Indians as quickly as possible, and from all sides. Even after the initial movements and larger interactions amongst the Indians and the columns, the presence of the numerous formations allowed the army to keep up nearly constant pursuit of the tribes. The tempo of the soldiers kept the Indians at constant unrest and never allowed them to settle in one place for much time. To accompany this, the number of columns in the field allowed individual columns to return to their supply bases to replenish their supplies, and refit their men and animals while the other columns were still pursuing the Indians. Ultimately this allowed for a campaign of longer duration; long enough to push the Indians back and forth across the Staked Plains region throughout the fall and well into the winter.

One way in which a commander seeks to control his operational tempo is to utilize mission command. As was the case with operation art, there is also evidence that Lieutenant General Sheridan and his subordinate commanders employed what is today termed the philosophy of mission command during their planning and execution of the Red River War. One way in which the commanders did this was by creating a shared understanding of the purpose of the campaign through a clear commander's intent. Understood by the column commanders, they were to pursue and harass the Indians wherever they went until they were so cold and hungry they would have no resort but to return to the reservation. Second, the commanders developed mission

[128]Hutton, 253.

type orders. The orders given to subordinate commanders were not too prescriptive and allowed the individual column commanders to conduct their operations as they saw fit. Finally, Lieutenant General Sheridan and his subordinate department commanders demonstrated the mission command principle of building cohesive teams through mutual trust. The operational environment lent itself to trust of subordinate commanders to conduct their operations as they saw fit; but, this does not mean that the commanders didn't shift their levels of trust during the campaign. In October 1874, Lieutenant General Sheridan demonstrated his lack of trust with Lieutenant Colonel Davidson when he actually visited Fort Sill and immediately ordered the 10th Cavalry back to the field to keep up the pursuit. Conversely, he didn't wish to chastise Colonel Miles after he withdrew from his camp along the Red River, demonstrating that he was pleased with the progress and that he didn't want to embarrass him by giving suggestions.[129]

CONCLUSION

The Red River War pitted two departments of the Division of the Missouri against the elusive tribes of Southern Plains Indians, who had left their assigned reservations that summer for the expanse of the Staked Plains. For several months the US Army patrolled the region in search of the Indian bands with the purpose of inflicting enough damage on their villages to force a return to the reservations. Examining the campaign executed by these Army formations through the modern lenses of operational art and mission command garners the opportunity to look at the post-Civil War Indian conflicts from a perspective of solving the nation's problems via military means.

Upon the conclusion of the Civil War, the nation once again looked to the west. Settling the frontier and exploiting latent economic opportunity became primary strategic aims for the government of the United States. But, the frontier was not secure and had become more

[129]Hutton, 253.

dangerous as the army was occupied with conflict in the east. The potential for growth and prosperity lay to the west; but, to ensure the safety of those who wished to tap its resources, the army was required to keep the Southern Plains tribes from roaming and raiding along the settled areas and migration routes. Attempts to achieve an enforceable peace between the Southern Plains tribes and the government each met with failure, and in a final attempt to gain back their way of life, these tribes turned to what they were most familiar; they fought back.

In the late summer of 1874 Lieutenant General Sheridan had two of his Division's departments, the Departments of Missouri and Texas, shift their focus from protection in the vicinity of their forts to campaign planning for an unknown duration. The commanders and troops of his five assigned columns converged along the Staked Plains and the Texas panhandle applying constant pressure upon the Indian tribes as they sought refuge and sustenance in the fertile hunting grounds. Major engagements, first with Colonel Miles' 5th Infantry at the Battle of Red River, then with Colonel Mackenzie's 4th Cavalry at the Battle of Palo Duro Canyon, inflicted significant damage to the Indian villages and seriously degraded their ability to remain off of the reservations through the winter. Constant patrolling and relentless pursuits kept the Indian villages on the move throughout the fall of 1874. Unable to prepare for the upcoming winter months, the Indians bands began to trickle back toward the reservation and to surrender. In June 1875, nearly one full year since the turning point in hostilities, the final fugitive band of the Comanche tribes returned to the Fort Sill reservation and surrendered its arms and remaining horses, thus ending the Red River War and ultimately ending the Southern Plains Indian's resistance to white expansion.

The tensions between an entire race of people and the United States Government's desire to continue expansion to the west of the continent is interesting in varying ways, depending on the lens utilized. Looking at this particular conflict in relation to the strategic context of the time and the martial means available to the government is beneficial for modern operational planners.

Discovery of key elements of operational level thought, planning, and execution is helpful in generating evolutionary thought in regards to operational art where there may not have been an abundance previously. The Red River War, and the campaign planned to execute it, demonstrates the usage of thought and planning for utilization of tactical formations in achievement of strategic objectives, and continued examinations of the campaigns of this era would likely reveal similar ideas.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Birtle, Andrew J. *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1860-1941*. Washington, DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1998.

Carter, Robert G. *On the Border with Mackenzie; Or, Winning West Texas from the Comanche*. New York: Antiquarian Press, 1961.

Chalfant, William Y. *Cheyennes at Dark Water Creek: the Last Fight of the Red River War*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997.

Chun, Clayton K. S. *US Army in the Plains Indian Wars, 1865-91*. Oxford: Osprey, 2004.

Clausewitz, Carl von. *On War*. Translated and edited by Michael Howard and Peter Paret. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989.

Combat Studies Institute. *Armed Diplomacy: Two Centuries of American Campaigning*. Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 2003.

Cozzens, Peter, ed. *Eyewitnesses to the Indian Wars, 1865-1890*. Vol. 3. Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2001.

Cruse, J. Brett. *Battles of the Red River War: Archeological Perspectives On the Indian Campaign of 1874*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2008.

Dawson, Joseph G. *The Late 19th Century U.S. Army, 1865-1898: A Research Guide*. New York: Greenwood, 1990.

Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Publication 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*. Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2011.

———. Army Doctrine Reference Publication 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*. Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2012.

———. Army Doctrine Publication 6-0, *Mission Command*. Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2012.

———. Army Doctrine Reference Publication 6-0, *Mission Command*. Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2012.

Dixon, Olive K. *Life of Billy Dixon, Plainsman, Scout, and Pioneer*. Abilene, TX: State House Press, 2005.

Ellis, Richard N. *General Pope and U.S. Indian Policy*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1970.

Fritz, Henry E. "The Making of Grant's Peace Policy," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma* 37 (1959): 411-31.

Gard, Wayne. *The Great Buffalo Hunt*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1968.

Gwynne, S. C. *Empire of the Summer Moon: Quanah Parker and the Rise and Fall of the Comanches, the Most Powerful Indian Tribe in American History*. New York: Scribner, 2011.

Hagan, William T. *American Indians*. Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1961.

Hagan, William Thomas. *United States-Comanche Relations: The Reservation Years*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990.

Haley, James L. *The Buffalo War: the History of the Red River Indian Uprising of 1874*. Austin, TX: State House Press, 1998.

Hämäläinen, Pekka. *The Comanche Empire*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008.

Hutton, Paul Andrew. *Phil Sheridan and His Army*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999.

Jones, Douglas C. *The Treaty of Medicine Lodge: the Story of the Great Treaty Council as Told by Eyewitnesses*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966.

Kapler, Charles J. *Indian Affairs Laws and Treaties, Treaty with the Kiowa, Comanche, and Apache 1867*, Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1904. http://digital.library.okstate.edu/kappler/ (accessed 13 October 2013).

Leckie, William H. *The Military Conquest of the Southern Plains*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963.

Linn, Brian McAllister. *The Echo of Battle: The Army's Way of War*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007.

Mackenzie, Ranald S. *Ranald S. Mackenzie's Official Correspondence Relating to Texas, 1871-1873.* Edited by Ernest Wallace. Lubbock, TX: West Texas Museum Association, 1967.

Marshall, J. T. *The Miles Expedition of 1874-1875: An Eyewitness Account of the Red River War.* Edited by Lonnie J. White. Austin, TX: Encino Press, 1971.

Maslowski, Allan R. Millett & Peter. *For the Common Defense: a Military History of the United States of America from the Revolutionary War through Today*. Rev. ed. New York: Free Press, 1994.

Michno, Gregory F. *Encyclopedia of Indian Wars: Western Battles and Skirmishes, 1850-1890.* Missoula, MT: Mountain Press Publishing Company, 2003.

Miles, Nelson Appleton. *Personal Recollections and Observations of General Nelson A. Miles, Embracing a Brief View of the Civil War, or, From New England to the Golden Gate and the Story of His Indian Campaigns with Comments on the Exploration, Development, and Progress of Our Great Western Empire.* Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1992.

———. *Serving the Republic: Memoirs of the Civil and Military Life of Nelson a Miles, Lieutenant-General, United States Army*. New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1911.

Nye, Wilbur Sturtevant. *Carbine & Lance: The Story of Old Fort Sill*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983.

———. *Plains Indian Raiders: The Final Phases of Warfare From the Arkansas to the Red River*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1974.

Pierce, Michael D. *The Most Promising Young Officer: A Life of Ranald Slidell Mackenzie*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993.

Pratt, Richard Henry. *Battlefield and Classroom: Four Decades with the American Indian, 1867-1904*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1964.

Rickey, Don. *Forty Miles a Day On Beans and Hay: The Enlisted Soldier Fighting the Indian Wars*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963.

Robinson, Charles M. *Bad Hand: A Biography of General Ranald S. Mackenzie*. Austin, TX: State House Press, 1993.

Sheridan, Philip Henry. *Personal Memoirs of P.H. Sheridan, General United States Army*. New York: Da Capo Press, 1992.

Sherman, William Tecumseh. *Memoirs of General W.T. Sherman*. New York: Library of America, 1990.

Smits, David D. "The Frontier Army and the Destruction of the Buffalo: 1865-1883." *The Western Historical Quarterly* 25, no3 (Autumn 1994): 312-38.

Tatum, Lawrie. *Our Red Brothers and the Peace Policy of President Ulysses S. Grant*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1970.

Turner, Frederick Jackson. *The Frontier in American History*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1921.

United States. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs.* Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1874.

———. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs.* Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1875.

———. *Annual Report of the Secretary of Interior*. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1872.

———. *Annual Report of the Secretary of War*. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1866.

———. *Annual Report of the Secretary of War*. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1868.

———. *Annual Report of the Secretary of War*. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1872.

———. *Annual Report of the Secretary of War*. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1874.

———. *Annual Report of the Secretary of War*. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1875.

Utley, Robert M. *Frontier Regulars: the United States Army and the Indian, 1866-1891*. Lincoln, NE: Bison Books, 1984.

———. *The Indian Frontier, 1846-1890*. Rev. ed. Histories of the American frontier series. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003.

Vandervort, Bruce. *Indian Wars of Mexico, Canada and the United States, 1812-1900*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

Wallace, Ernest. *Ranald S. Mackenzie on the Texas Frontier*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1993.

Weeks, Philip. *Farewell, My Nation: The American Indian and the United States, 1820-1890*. Arlington Heights, IL: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1990.

Wooster, Robert. *The American Military Frontiers: the United States Army in the West, 1783-1900*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2009.

———. *The Military and United States Indian Policy 1865-1903*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995.

Yenne, Bill. *Indian Wars: The Campaign for the American West*. Yardley, PA: Westholme Publishing, 2006.