

Perspectives in Military History Roundtable

49th Annual Lecture Series

Taming the Desert with Technology The Mexican Expedition and the United States Army

Dr. Julie Irene Prieto
U.S. Army Center of Military History

As the German Army continued its advance against the French bastion of Verdun in the early months of 1916, the American border town of Columbus, New Mexico, was ablaze. The flames that consumed the town were the result of a raid conducted by Mexican revolutionary Pancho Villa in the early morning of March 9, 1916. Villa's raiders secured horses, as well as armaments and ammunition, and killed 24 Americans, before fleeing back across the border. In response to this latest in a string of spillovers from the Mexican Revolution, President Woodrow Wilson sent General "Black Jack" Pershing, with nearly 10,000 men, to pursue Villa into Mexico and attempt to capture him. Over the next year, the Mexican Expedition was plagued by supply problems and the inability of mounted cavalry to find Villa. Pershing turned to the use of airplanes and trucks to master this difficult landscape; Pershing never captured Villa, but northern Mexico proved to be an important testing ground for new technologies that would be crucial to the Army on the battlefields of France a few months later. On Saturday, August 19, 2017, at 2:00 PM, Dr. Julie Irene Prieto will lead a roundtable lecture at the U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. The lecture will focus on the impact of changes the Army made during the Mexican Expedition, and how those changes affected the American actions in World War I. Dr. Prieto will be joined by two scholars, who will discuss the finer points of the Expedition and the technological advances of the late 1910's.

Dr. Julie Irene Prieto earned undergraduate degrees in History and Sociology from UCLA (2004), her doctorate from Stanford (2013), and is currently a Presidential Management Fellow at the U.S. Army Center of Military History. She authored the book *The Mexican Expedition, 1916-1917* (2016), part of a commemorative series being published by the U.S. Army Center of Military History for the centennial of American involvement in the Mexican Expedition and the First World War. She also authored the article, "The Sword and the Book: The Benjamin Franklin Library and U.S.-Mexican Relations, 1936-1962," (2013), and is currently writing a book entitled, *Making Better Neighbors: United States Public Diplomacy in Mexico, 1920-1953*.

DATE: August 19, 2017

TIME: The USAHEC opens to the public at 10:00 AM, and the roundtable discussion is from 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM.

PLACE: USAHEC, Visitor and Education Center, Multipurpose Room

For more information and any last-minute changes in meeting times/places, please check the USAHEC website: www.USAHEC.org or call the Information Desk: (717) 245-3972.