

Down Mexico Way



In the Mexican Civil War, forces of the rebel Francisco "Pancho" Villa in March 1916 crossed into the US and killed 17 Americans in Columbus, N.M. President Wilson ordered US forces under Brig. Gen. John Pershing to pursue Villa and capture him. On March 15, 1916, this "Punitive Expedition" entered Mexico, followed a few days later by the 1st Aero Squadron. The 1st Aero comprised eight Jenny aircraft, 11 pilots (including Capt. Benjamin Foulois), 84 enlisted airmen, 10 trucks, one automobile, and six motorcycles. The 1st suffered many mishaps but completed the first-ever US air expedition. Here, US Army Aircraft #43, a JN-3, is shown on a desolate stretch of Mexico.