NORTH RUSSIA

AMERICAN INTERVENTION

U.S. units involved in North Russia were the 339th Infantry Regiment, 310th Engineers, 337th Field Hospital, 337th Ambulance Co. and the 167th and 168th Transportation Cos. In total, approximately 5,500 U.S. Army troops, operating under local British command, were engaged in the campaign for a period of nine months.

Troops in Transit

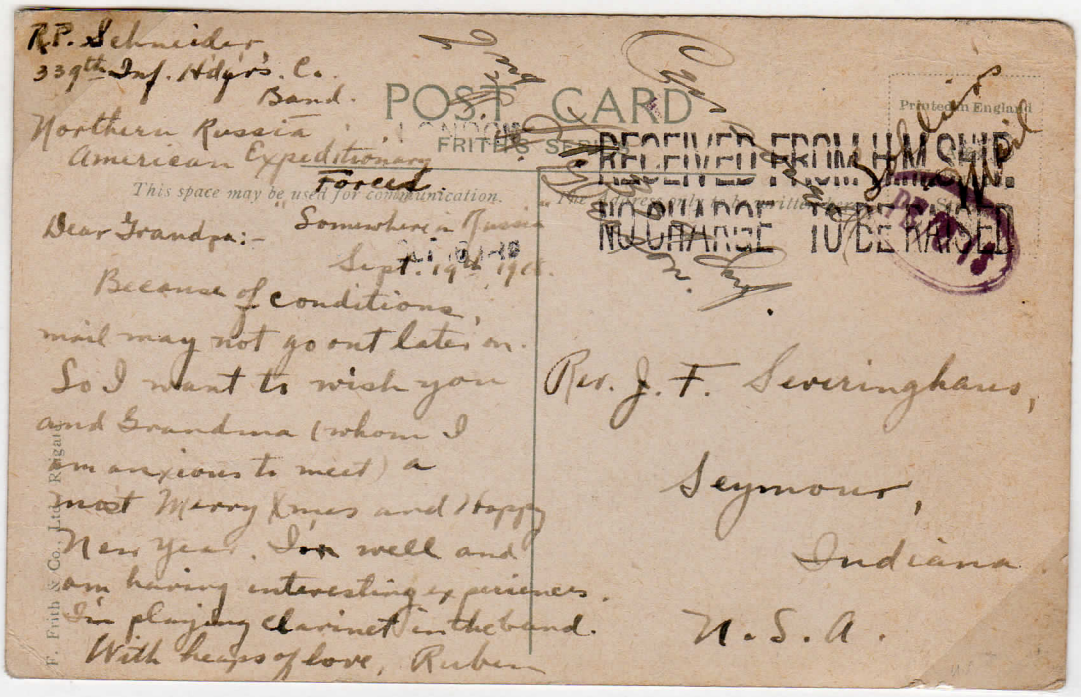
Liverpool
4 August 1918

Bisley Camp
7 August 1918

The first Americans destined for North Russia arrived in England on 3 August 1918 and embarked for Russia on 21 August. A further replacement group withdrawn from France arrived in late August and left for Archangel in late September. In England, U.S. troops enjoyed free franking of mail through the British post office.

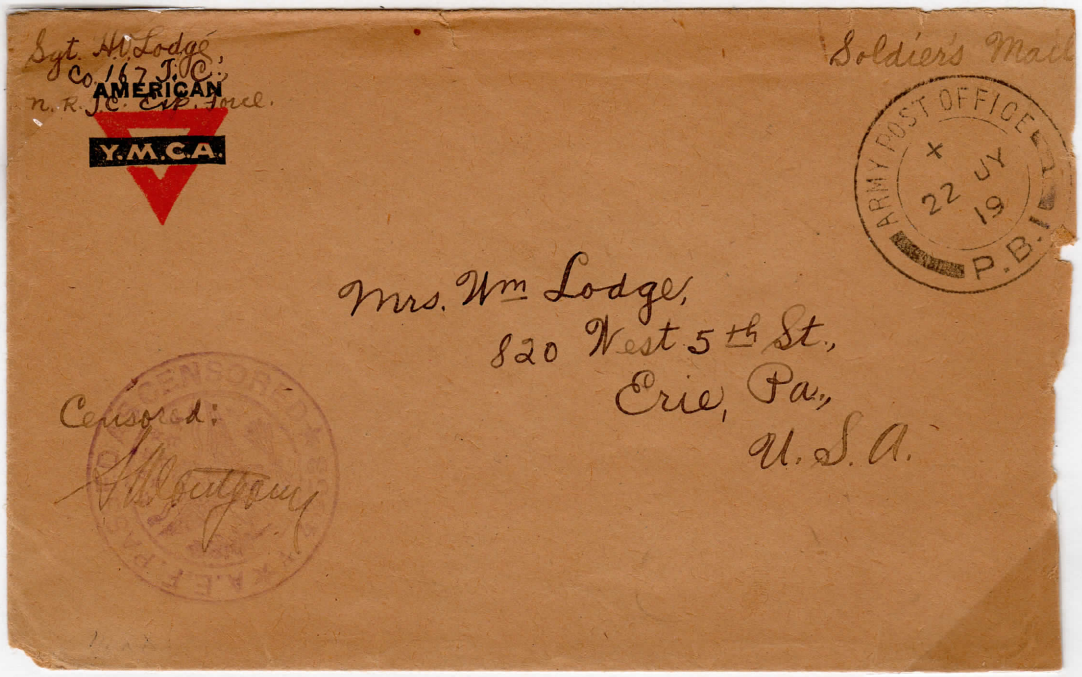
AMERICAN INTERVENTION IN NORTH RUSSIA
Forerunners

19 September 1918
30 November 1918



Because of the lack of local field post offices when the Americans arrived, much of the early mail was not postmarked in Russia and can only be identified by the return address and/or censorship markings. These examples have the oval "PE/C/18" marking used in North Russia. Upper example has return address of the 339th Infantry HQ and is datelined "Somewhere in Russia." It was sent by pouch to the office for inbound naval mail in London, where a machine cancel inscribed "Received from H.M. Ship/No Charge to be Raised" was applied.

AMERICAN INTERVENTION IN NORTH RUSSIA
British PB Postmarks



APO PB 1 (Murmansk)

This British postmark was used from 30 September 1918 to 27 September 1919. As no American troops were in Murmansk until the arrival of the Transportation Corps in April 1919, this marking is extremely scarce on U.S. mail.

APO PB 2 (Archangel)
Earliest Recorded Date

This post office was open from 15 October 1918 to 24 September 1919. It cds is the most common marking found on U.S. mail from North Russia.

Most of the Allied troops in North Russia used the British military postal service, including the Americans. Its postmarks were distinguished by the "P.B. (believed to stand for Polar Bear)" at the bottom of the dial, along with a number designating the location. As American forces were not stationed at all of the locations, only ten of these markings are known on their mail.

AMERICAN INTERVENTION IN NORTH RUSSIA
British PB Postmarks

FPO PB 11 (Soroka)

This marking is recorded as used from 5 November 1918 to 12 July 1919. American mail is only known with this postmark after the arrival of the Transportation Corps in April 1919.

FPO PB 33
(Petchenga)

This post office was open from 7 December 1918 to 2 July 1919. As with PB11, American mail with this postmark is known only after the arrival in April of the Transportation Corps.

AMERICAN INTERVENTION IN NORTH RUSSIA
British PB Postmarks

FPO PB 44 (Bakhariza)

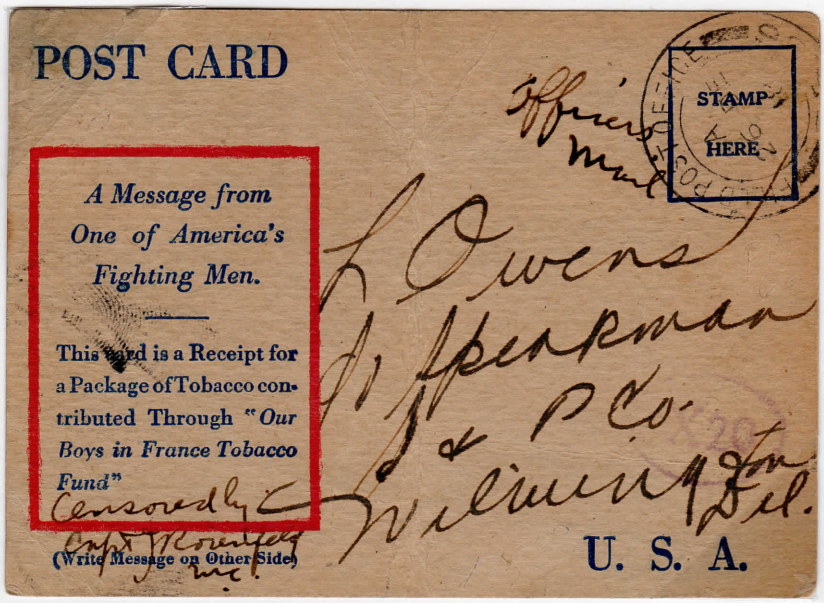
Marking is recorded as used from 1 November 1918 to 23 September 1919. Uncommon on American mail.

FPO PB 55 (Bereznik)

Recorded from 16 December 1918 to 7 August 1919. Located on the Dvina River and represented the most distant American outpost relative to Archangel (135 air miles).

This cover made from a Red Cross lettersheet, making it the only recorded U.S. mail from North Russia on Red Cross stationery.

AMERICAN INTERVENTION IN NORTH RUSSIA
British PB Postmarks



FPO PB 66 (Oberzerskaya)

This marking is recorded as used from 24 November 1918 to 4 September 1919.

Unusual usage of a "thank you" card for cigarettes sent from home to the front.

FPO PB 77 (Emetskoye)

Recorded from 2 February to 18 August 1919.

It is one of only two known PB 77 covers that were sent by American soldiers.

AMERICAN INTERVENTION IN NORTH RUSSIA
British PB Postmarks

FPO PB 88 (Kem)

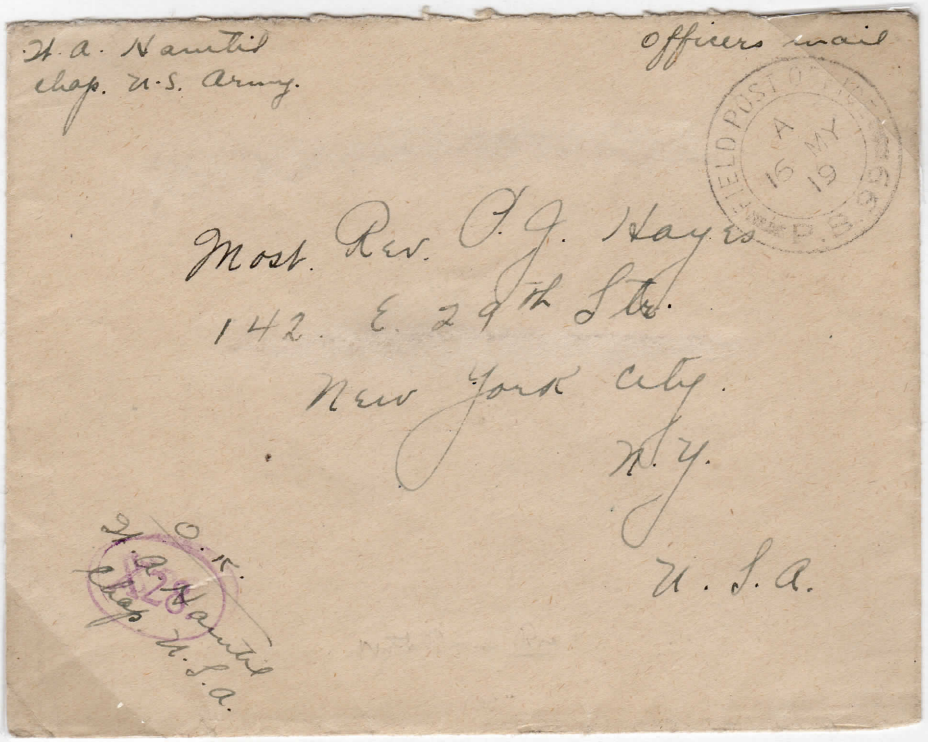
This marking is recorded as used from 4 December 1918 until 23 September 1919.

PB 88 moved from Kem to Medvezhya Gora in early June.

FPO PB 99 (Kola)

Recorded from 9 December 1918 to 16 May 1919. It is the scarcest of the North Russian stationary FPOs.

PB 99 covers are recorded for only about six weeks after the arrival of the U.S. Transportation Corps, so that this cds is even more elusive on American mail.



ARMY TPO No. 1
(The Scarcest North Russian Postmark)

The Traveling Post Office No. 1 operated on a weekly schedule on the rail line between Murmansk and Soroka. It commenced service on 4 November 1918. However, only five covers have been recorded: four from U.S. soldiers with postmarks dated from 3 to 12 July 1919 (and one from a British soldier dated 15 August 1919).

MISSENT IN ARCHANGEL PB Nr. 4
(Only Recorded Example)

No postmark was proofed for an Army or Field Post Office PB 4, and Archangel was served by APO PB 2. Therefore, the meaning of the PB 4 reference here is unknown. The cover should have gone to Murmansk. Had it done so, it might have reached the addressee in North Russia as the Transportation Corps embarked for the U.S. on 28 July 1919. This cover is the only recorded example of mail from an APO in Germany to North Russia.

AMERICAN INTERVENTION IN NORTH RUSSIA
Incoming Mail

Detroit, Mich.
14 April 1919

Toledo, Ohio
17 March 1919

Mail from the United States to the ANREF had to be paid at domestic rates, i.e. letters at 3 cents including the war tax. Fever than five such examples are recorded. Lower cover was first sent to France and then forwarded to North Russia where the PB 11 cds was applied as a receiving mark -- the only known example of this treatment.

AMERICAN INTERVENTION IN NORTH RUSSIA
Naval Mail

U.S.S. Des Moines
14 May 1919
23 May 1919
7 June 1919

Twelve different U.S. warships were in North Russia during the intervention, but mail is recorded from only five of these. *Des Moines*, a light cruiser with a complement of 339 men, was in Russian waters from 22 May to 14 September 1919. On this basis, it was the last U.S. ship to leave. It's cancel was the only one that had specific locations indicated. As shown, three different locations have been recorded: Kola, Yukanski and Archangel.

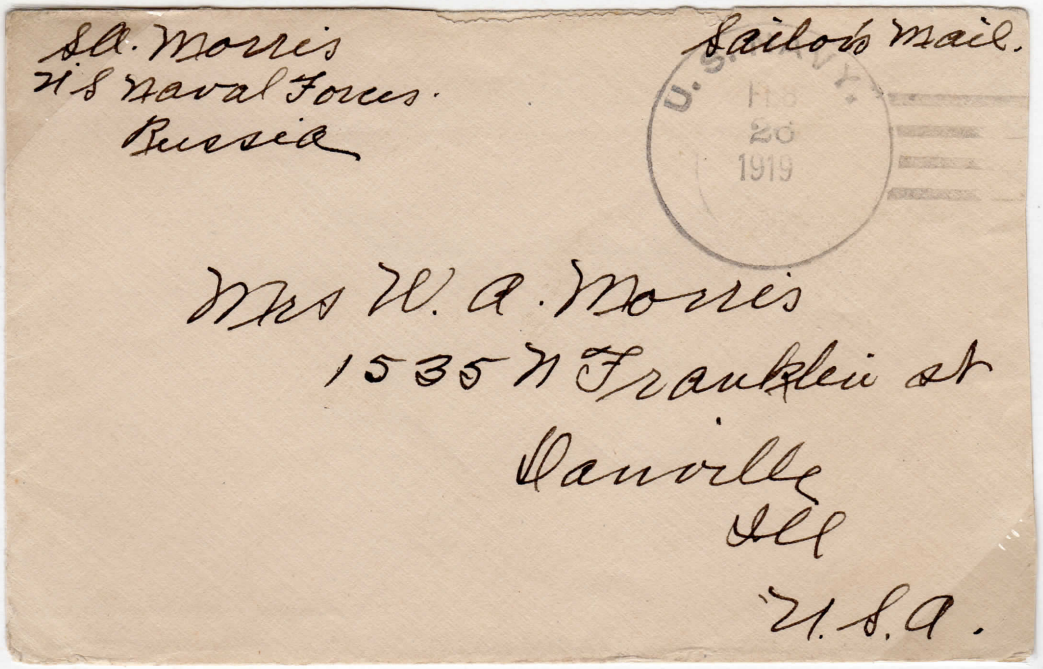
AMERICAN INTERVENTION IN NORTH RUSSIA
Naval Mail

U.S.S. Olympia
12 June 1918
19 July 1918

Olympia was an old cruiser (made famous as Admiral Dewey's flagship at the Battle of Manila Bay in 1898), with a complement of 411 men. It arrived early in the intervention period, serving in North Russia from 24 May to 27 October 1918. Some 150 sailors from *Olympia*, not soldiers or Marines, were the first Americans to land in North Russia -- on 11 June 1918.

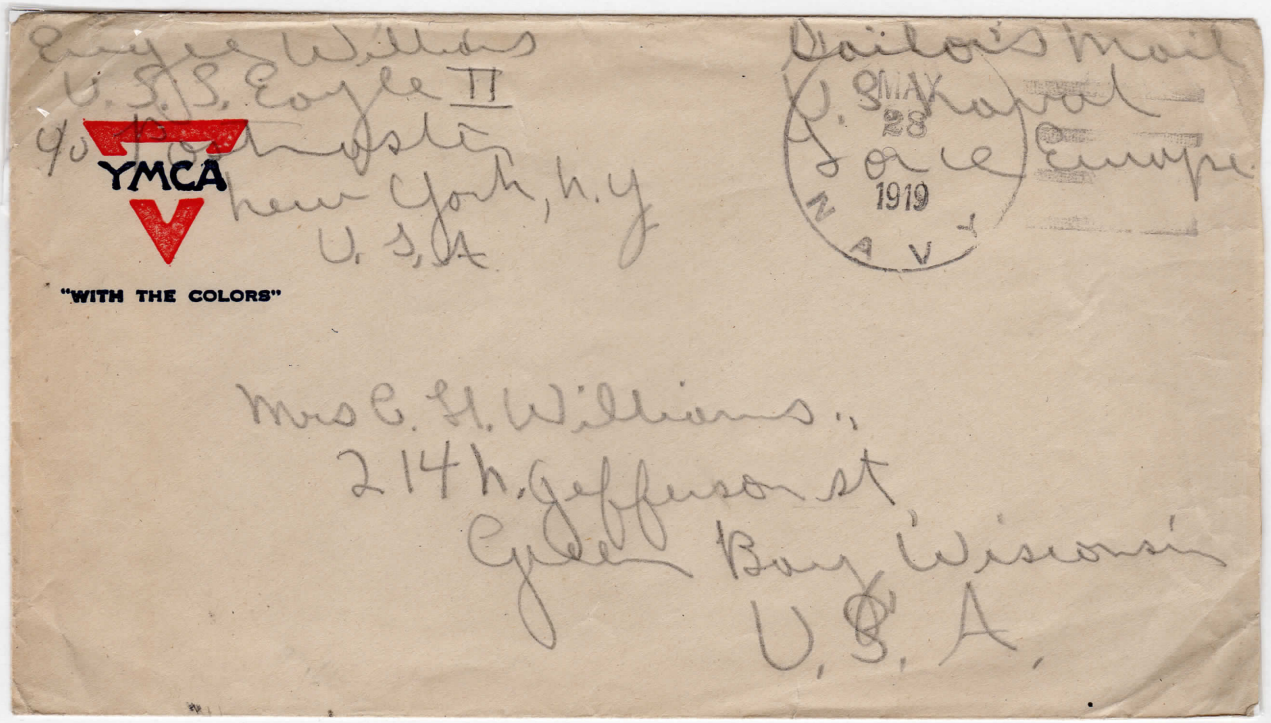
Olympia used a standard 3-bar cancel with "Foreign Service" between the bars. No indication of location, which can only be confirmed by naval records.

AMERICAN INTERVENTION IN NORTH RUSSIA
Naval Mail



U.S.S. Yankton

Yankton was a steam yacht with a complement of 78 men. It was in Russian waters from 8 February to 9 July 1919. It used a standard U.S. Navy 4-bar cancel.



U.S.S. Eagle II

One of three "Eagle" patrol boats sent to North Russia, *Eagle II* and its complement of 61 men served there from 25 May to late July 1919. A standard U.S. Navy 4-bar cds was used.

AMERICAN INTERVENTION IN NORTH RUSSIA
Naval Mail

New York, N.Y.
18 July 1919

Only Recorded Cover to a U.S. Warship in North Russia

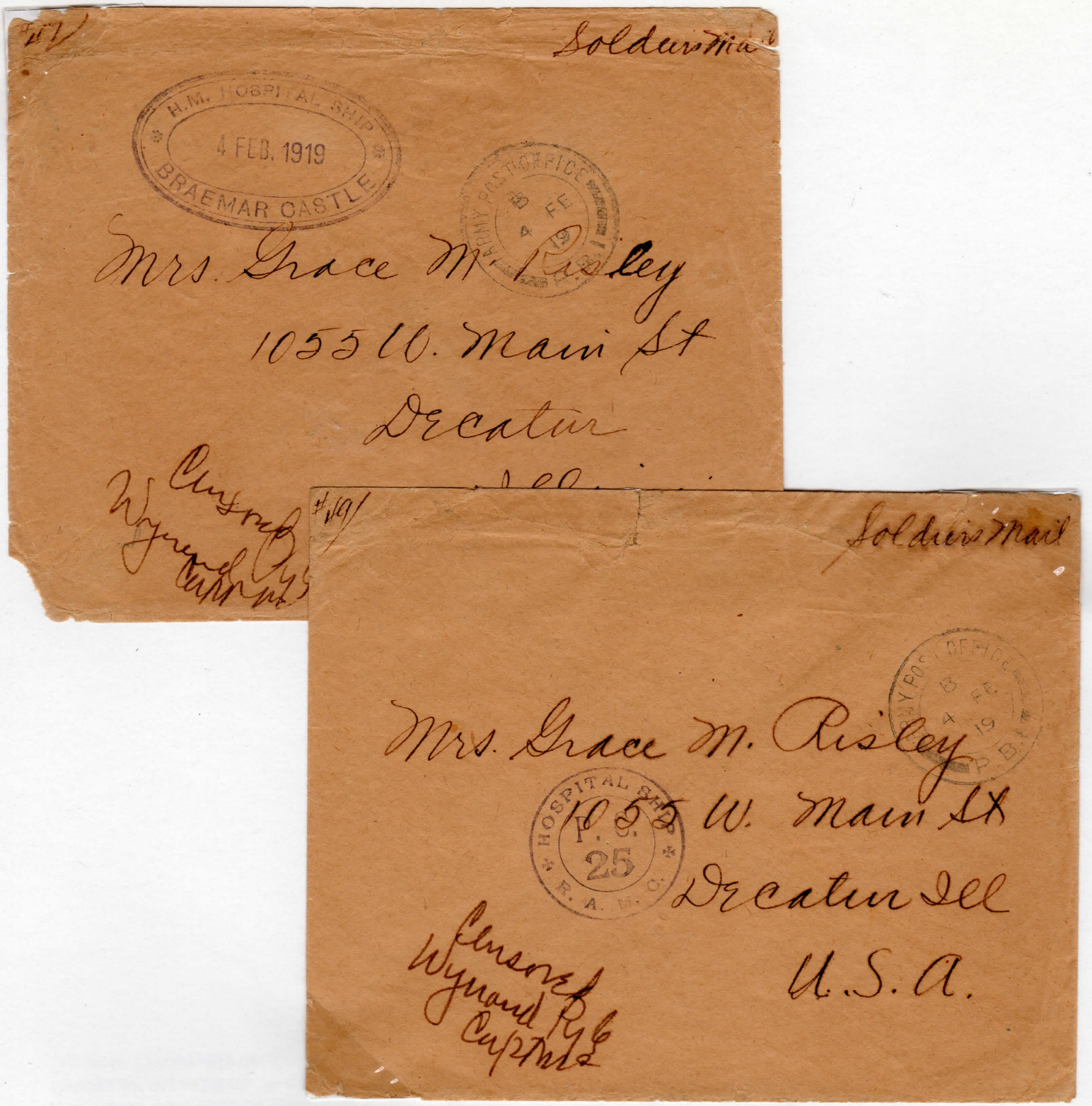
U.S.S. Sacramento
28 May 1919

Three wooden-hulled sub-chasers (SC95, 256 and 354 with a complement of 27 men each) arrived in North Russia on 18 June 1919 as the U.S. ground forces were being evacuated. With virtually nothing to do, they departed in company with *U.S.S. Yankton* on 9 July. No mail is recorded from them. Upper cover was forwarded to *SC 95* in North Russia by the Navy Department, but the ship had already left and the letter was returned to sender.

U.S.S. Sacramento served a brief tour ofduty in North Russia. It arrived Murmansk on 22 May and remained until 6 June 1919. It then proceeded to Archangel, where it was stationed from 7 June to 13 July 1919. Lower cover is the only recorded example from that period.

AMERICAN INTERVENTION IN NORTH RUSSIA
Hospital Ship Mail

APO PB 1
4 February 1919



U.S. soldiers so badly wounded as to be beyond the skills of the staff at our field hospital were sent to British hospital ships. These covers originated from *Braemar Castle* (with 421 beds) stationed at Murmansk. The reason for two different handstamps is unknown. Fewer than five examples of hospital ship mail from U.S. troops have been recorded.