PHILIPPINES

After the United States declared war on Spain on 21 April 1898, an expeditionary force was assembled preparatory to the occupation of the Philippines. The destruction of the Spanish fleet in the Battle of Manila Bay on 1 May by the Americans under Commodore Dewey sealed the fate of the defenders, and an armistice was signed on 12 August. However, some of the Filipinos wanted independence, not merely the substitution of American rule for Spanish, and an insurrection led by Emilio Aguinaldo required the presence of a substantial American military force until it was finally put down on 16 April 1902.

Transport Post Office Forerunners

Hong Kong
26 July 1898
30 July 1898

A fleet of four troopships sailed from San Francisco on 15 June and arrived in Cavite Bay on 16 July 1898. The postal agent and two clerks remained on board the steamer *China*, where they operated a "transport post office," gathering outgoing mail for despatch to the U.S. At least two such mail shipments went out via Hong Kong.

PHILIPPINES
Luzon

Manila Bay
25 July 1898

Transport Post Office Forerunner

On Steam Ship Zealandia
In Manilla Bay
July 25th 98

Dear Parents.

Gen" Merritt arrived
Yesterday afternoon, the balance of
the 3 Expedition will be 6 days later.
It rains her
and very
Camp, abou

RETURN TO
ELMER H. THOMAS,
NEW BRIGHTON, PA.
I. P. THOMAS & SON CO.,
BONE FERTILIZERS,
PHILADELPHIA, PA.

Soldiers letter
Elmer H Thomas
2nd Lieut Detachment 10 P.V.

To Samuel E Thomas.
New Brighton Pa.
U.S.A.

U.S. CHARGE TO COLLECT 2 CTS.

Several shipments of mail from the troops prior to the opening of the post office at Cavite on 30 July went directly to the United States for processing. These letters were forwarded to the addressees without prepayment of postage but 2 cents postage due was charged on delivery.

Example shown from a soldier on board *S.S. Zealandia* is one of six covers recorded from the despatch of 28 July; has transit backstamp of San Francisco on 22 August 1898 and was received in Pennsylvania on the 27th. Letter mentions arrival of General Merritt on the 24th and expected arrival of the balance of the expedition on the 30th.

PHILIPPINES
Luzon

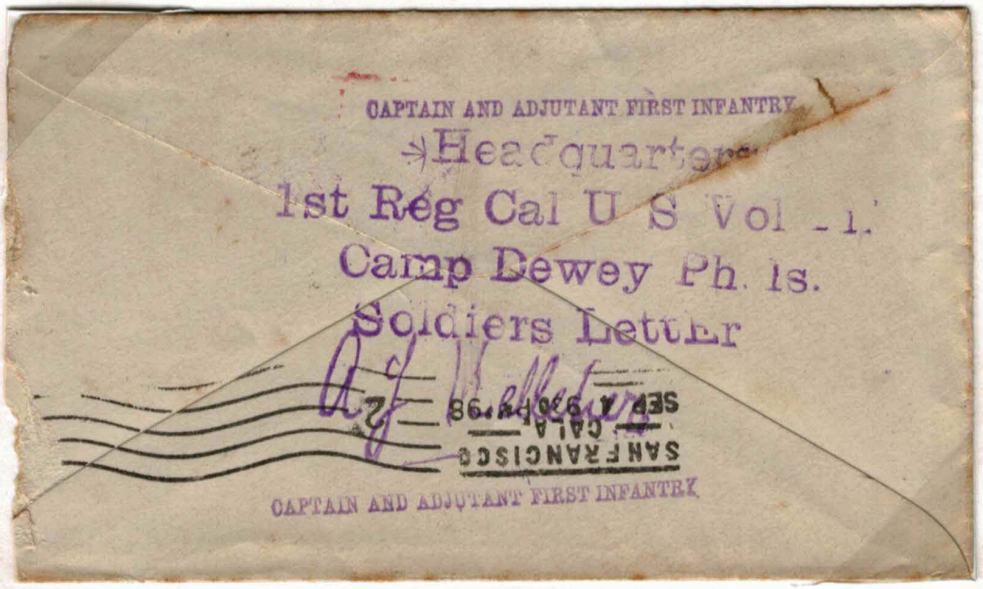
Philippine Station
30 July 1898

Opening Day of Cavite Post Office

Eventually, the postal agent and the clerks, with their safe and other equipment, were unloaded and set up for business on 30 July 1898 at Cavite, about 10 miles southwest of Manila. This first U.S. post office in the Philippines was designated as the Philippine Station branch of San Francisco. Only four examples of this postmark are recorded on the opening date. The latest recorded date is 18 January 1899.

PHILIPPINES
Luzon

Philippine Station
6 August 1898



A few days after the post office was opened at Cavite, a sub-station was opened at Camp Dewey nearby, the primary encampment for the U.S. forces (Goodale). No special marking was used on the Camp Dewey mail, which was delivered to Cavite for cancellation. However, the location was provided in a soldier's letter endorsement applied by the 1st Regiment of California Volunteers.

PHILIPPINES
Luzon

Philippine Station
13 August 1898

Souvenir of Agent Vaille's first visit to the Manila post office

F. W. Vaille, postal agent for the Philippine Island Military Postal Service, embarked on a transport at Cavite on 13 August to witness the taking of Manila and arrange for the transfer of the postal activity to U.S. control. He reported, "...I was enabled to land and enter Manila an hour or more before any of our soldiers entered the city, and soon thereafter succeeded in finding the Manila post office. There I was courteously received and shown over the office."

Vaille also prepared souvenirs of his visit, cancelling Spanish Philippines postal cards with the "Philippine Station" postmark and endorsing them on the back to confirm his visit on the 13th.

PHILIPPINES
Luzon

Philippine Station
14 August 1898

Opening Day of Manila Post Office

On the following day, 14 August, the Manila post office officially opened for business under American authority. Only five covers are recorded as being used on the first day. Four of the examples are on letters sent to the United States and one (shown above) to Canada.

PHILIPPINES
Luzon

Philippine Station
10 August 1898
17 September 1898

Registered Mail

The single ring rubber Philippine Station cds used for registered mail is recorded used only for two months (from the recently-discovered EKU cover used from Camp Dewey on 10 August as shown above to 9 October 1898). Thus, it is an elusive marking, especially on mail to foreign destinations, as in the case of the lower cover to Italy.

PHILIPPINES
Luzon

Philippine Station
24 August 1898

Single-ring rubber cds reads "Philippine Sta." The postage is cancelled with a double oval "San Francisco" killer. On the reverse is a previously unrecorded 3-line marking of the "U.S. Military P.O. Sta./ No.1 Philippines."

PHILIPPINES
Luzon

Mil. Sta. No. 1
24 October 1898
11 November 1898

Manila was the first of six numbered military stations opened in the Philippines. A new double-ring postmark reading "Mil. Sta. No. 1/San Francisco, Cal." is recorded used from 17 October 1898 to 14 March 1899. An extensively used postmark, but usage to foreign destinations (as above to China and Indochina) is very unusual.

PHILIPPINES
Luzon

Mil. Sta. No. 1
24 December 1898
5 May 1899

For Registered mail during this period, a double ring cds was introduced, including the station number and San Francisco. This marking is recorded used between 26 October 1898 and 15 June 1899.

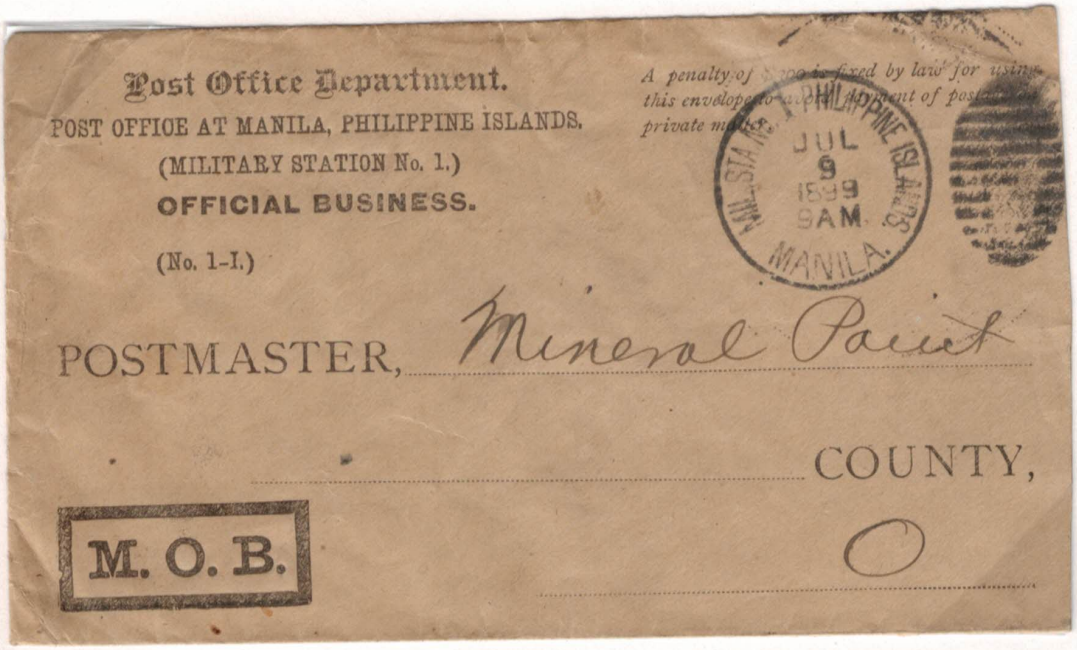
PHILIPPINES
Luzon

Mil. Sta. No. 1 Manila
16 April 1899
7 June 1899

The third type of postmark for ordinary mail was a single ring rubber cds indicating "Mil. Sta. No. 1/Manila, P.I." It is recorded used from 23 March 1899 to 30 March 1901.

PHILIPPINES
Luzon

Mil. Sta. No. 1 Manila
9 July 1899
12 September 1899



Two types of steel duplex devices were provided in 1899. The first, somewhat larger in size and with the town name at the bottom, is recorded used from 20 March 1899 to 22 August 1900 at MPS No.1. The second, smaller version has "Phil. Isl'ds." at the bottom and is recorded used from 5 December 1898 to 25 August 1900.

PHILIPPINES
Luzon

Mil. Sta. No. 1
6 October 1899
17 July 1901

The Philippine postal service remained subsidiary to the San Francisco office until 1 May 1899, when it became an independent entity. This event was most clearly indicated by the excising of the S.F. reference from the Registry cancellation. The altered marking is recorded used from 15 May 1899 to 18 December 1901.

PHILIPPINES
Luzon

Mil. Sta. No. 1 Manila
2 January 1900
15 January 1900
1 February 1900

In December 1899 and January 1900 a single-ring receiving mark was used to despatch mail from Manila. Contemporaneously, a version of this marking with the "Rec'd." filed down was also used. In addition, a "cleaned up" copy of this latter was used during February. Thus, three different versions of a hitherto unrecorded postmark came into use during a very brief period.

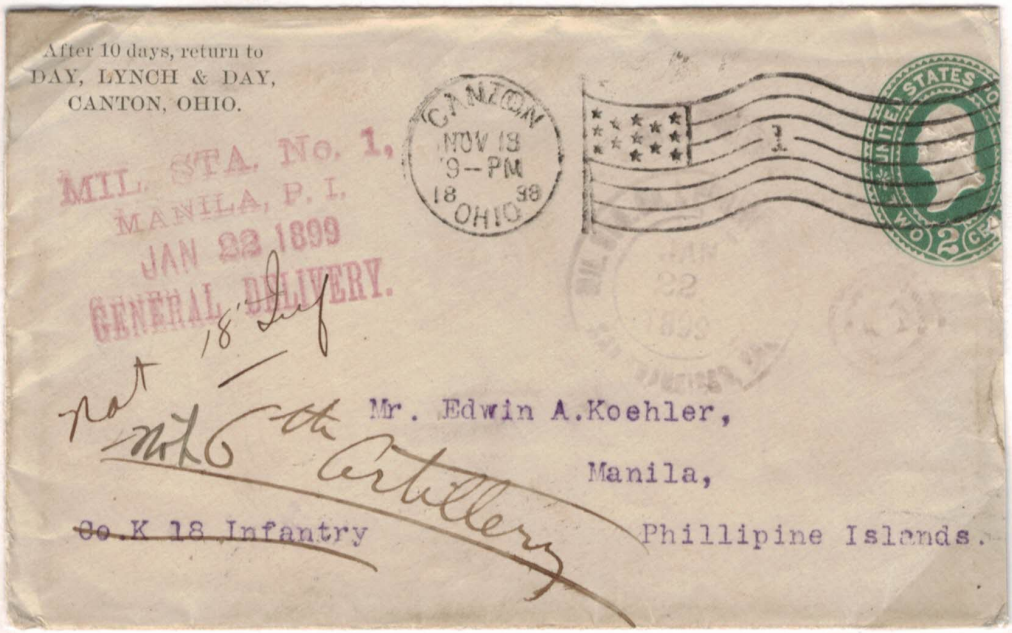
PHILIPPINES
Luzon

First Res. Hosp. Sta.
5 February 1900
16 June 1900
28 June 1900

The First Reserve Hospital Branch post office operated during the military occupation of Manila. Although Goodale states that the postmark is always missing the "o" of "Hosp." this is incorrect as shown on the upper cover dated 5 February 1900. Shortly thereafter, the "o" fell out and the subsequently recorded strikes (from 6 February 1900 to 14 March 1901) are without "o." **Red cancel used as receiving mark; one of two examples.**

PHILIPPINES
Luzon

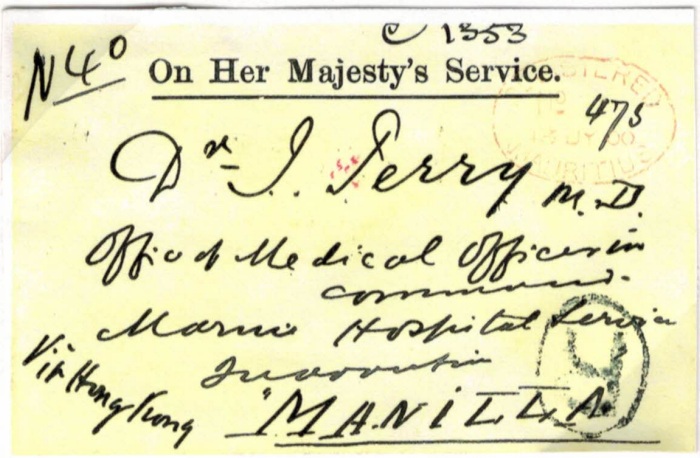
Mil. Sta. No. 1
22 January 1899
30 October 1899



An additional type of supplemental marking was used at Military Station No. 1 in Manila for mail which was sent to recipients without a permanent address or where they could not be located at the address shown. Only five examples of this "General Delivery" marking are recorded, with the earliest and latest dates being shown above.

PHILIPPINES
Luzon

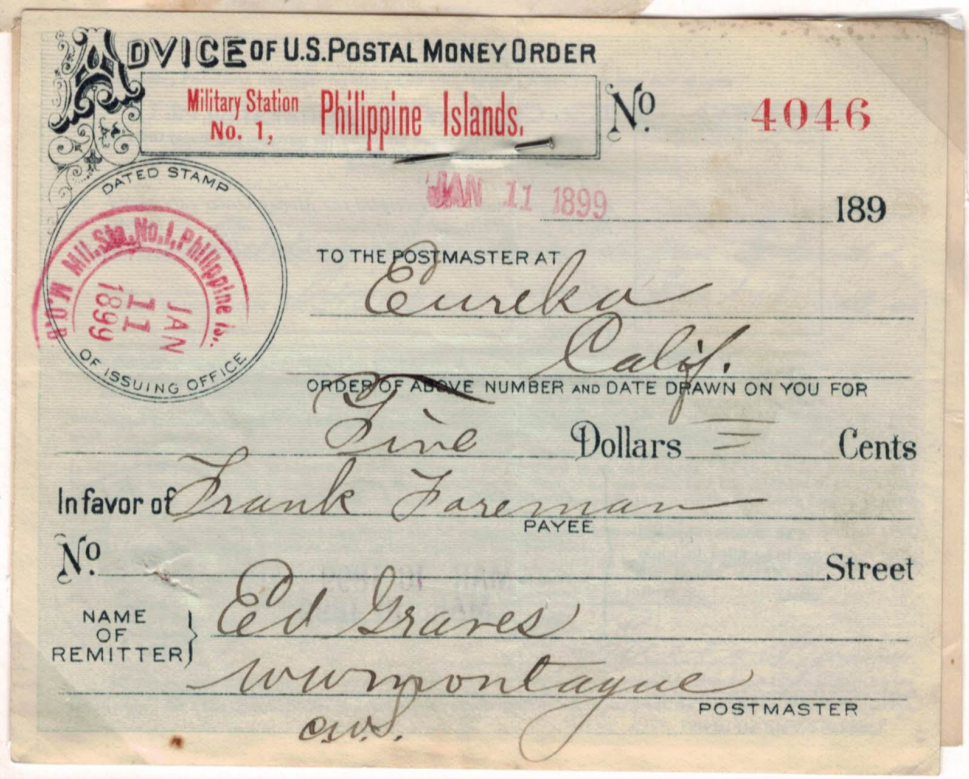
Mil. Sta. No. 1 Manila
11 August 1900



Incoming Registered letter from Mauritius with previously unrecorded "Received" marking of MPS No. 1. A very late reference to the San Francisco connection, which was actually severed in May 1899.

PHILIPPINES
M.O.B. Postmarks

Mil. Sta. No.1 Philippine Islands
12 September 1898
11 January 1899

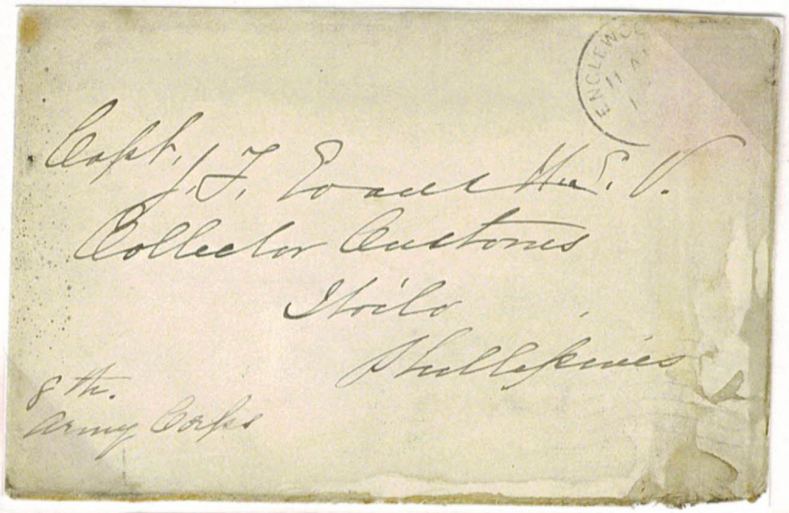


Only three examples of the money order (M.O.B.) postmark from Military Station No.1 have been recorded. The discovery example and earliest known version is shown above as a receiving mark on an inbound cover to a member of the California Volunteers. A subsequent example actually used on a money order for five dollars is shown below.

PHILIPPINES

Manila
30 September 1899

Disaster Mail



The most sought after of all the markings of the military period in the Philippines was that applied to mail which was salvaged from a chartered transport, the *S.S. Morgan City*, which went down at sea off the southeast coast of Japan.

A portion of the mail on board was recovered and sent to Manila where a special handstamp reading "Damaged mail/off S.S. Morgan City/Manila P.I. 9-30-99" was applied. **However, only four examples of this marking have been recorded. The above cover sent to an officer in the 8th Army Corps at Iloilo is the only one not addressed to Manila.**

PHILIPPINES
Luzon

U.S. Mil. Sta. No. 1 Cavite
12 September 1898
6 October 1898
21 October 1898

After the Philippine Station post office was moved to Manila, it turned out that Cavite was handling sufficient mail to warrant restoration of a postal facility. As a result, a new 2-line handstamp was introduced. Postmarks of this type are recorded used from 7 September to 8 November 1898. Note the variations in the marking: the month is spelled in all capital letters on the top cover, but in upper and lower case letters on the middle and bottom ones. The third example shows lower case "s" in "sTA." (Perhaps the capital letter fell out and could not be replaced.)

PHILIPPINES
Luzon

U.S. Mil. Sta. No. 2 Cavite
25 October 1898
8 November 1898
22 December 1898

As Military Station No.1 had moved to Manila in August, it was no doubt rather confusing to have a new No. 1 at Cavite. As a result, the 2-line handstamp was changed to read "No. 2." This marking is recorded as being used from 25 October to 22 December 1898 (both shown above). Note the variations in the marking; the earliest strike shows the lower case "s" used in "sTA." It was then replaced with a proper capital letter in the marking on the cover. In the third example, the "2" has fallen out.

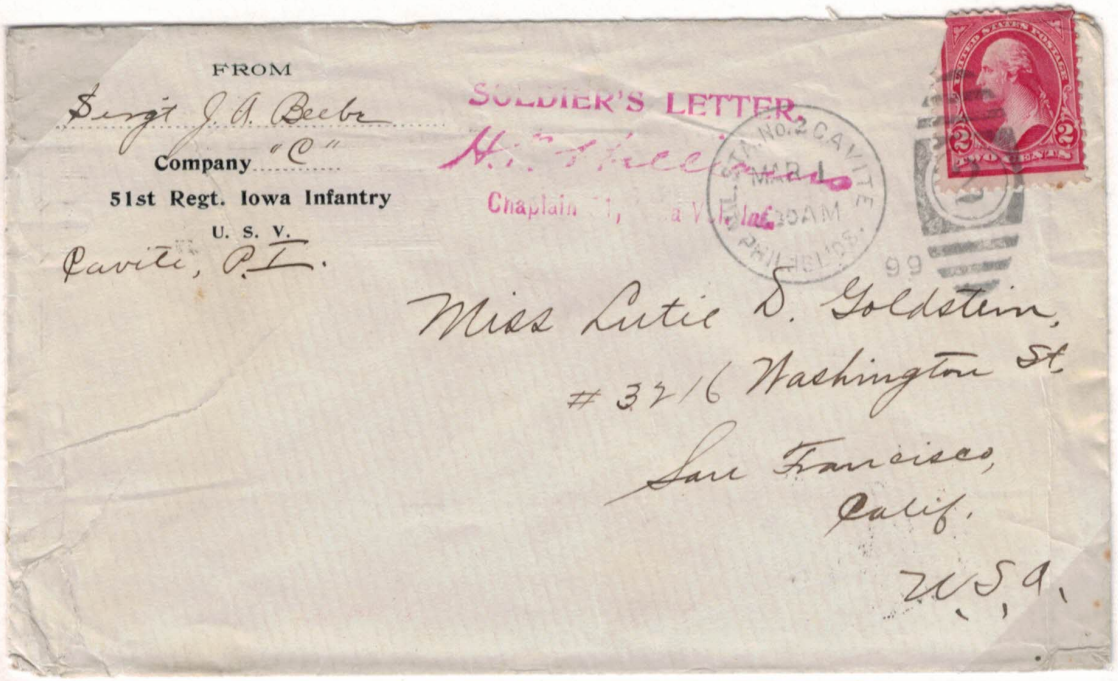
PHILIPPINES
Luzon

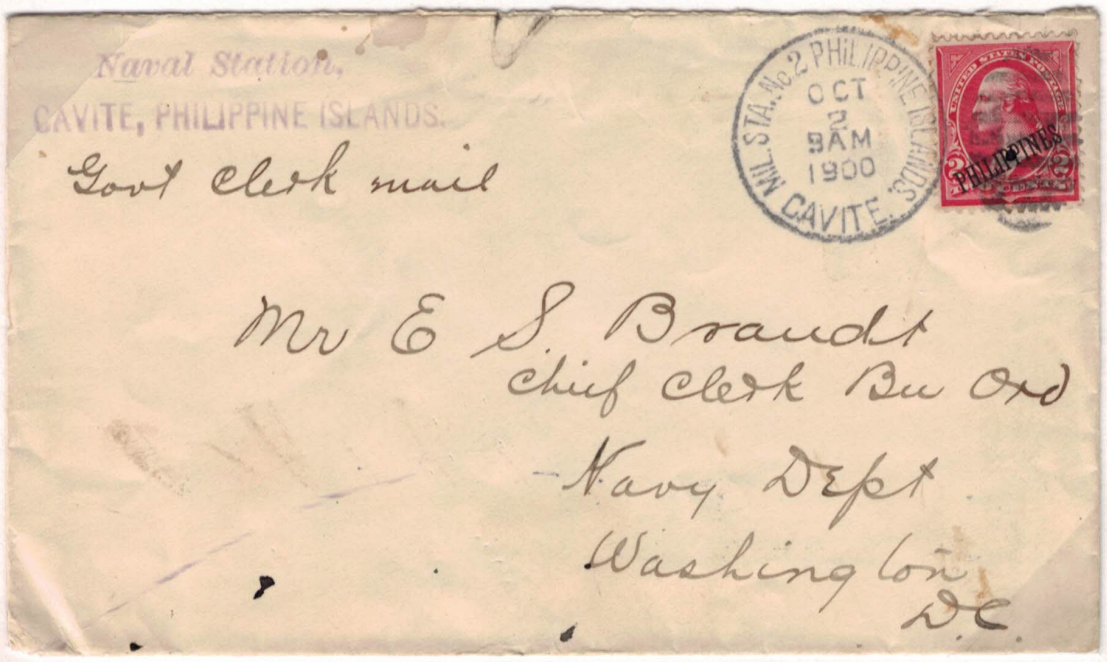
Mil. Sta. No. 2 Cavite

This 2-line marking clearly reads "Military Sta. No. 2, Cavite/Philippine Islands." but it is a mystery in several other respects. It is previously unrecorded and unknown to specialists. The date of use cannot be determined from the above piece, consisting of wrapping paper -- probably a portion of the front of a homemade envelope. The 2 cents postage due on top of the 2 cents franking suggests a double-weight, if odd-sized, letter was sent..

PHILIPPINES
Luzon

Mil. Sta. No. 2 Cavite
1 March 1899
2 October 1900

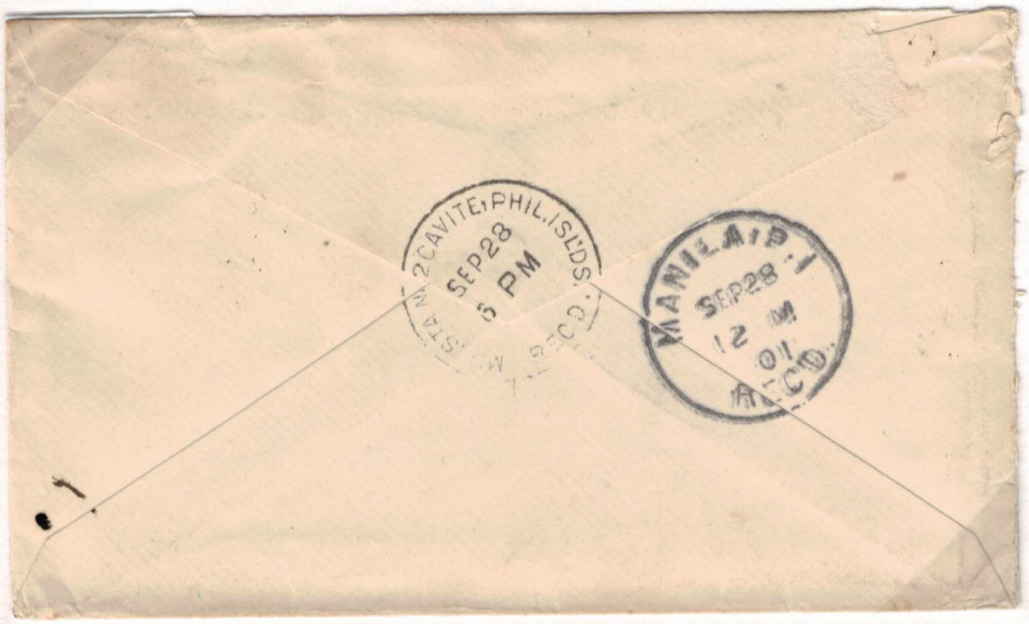




Both the small and large steel duplex cancellers were also issued at Cavite. The recorded dates of usage of the former are from 5 February 1899 to 14 February 1901 and the latter from 23 March 1899 to 27 October 1901.

PHILIPPINES
Luzon

Mil. Sta. No. 2 Cavite
13 July 1901
28 September 1901



Cavite used a small steel cds with "Rec'd." at the bottom of the dial to mark incoming mail. Upper registered cover from Pennsylvania to London was forwarded to Lt. Pollock on the U.S.S. Brooklyn at Cavite. Lower cover sent via the British post office in Shanghai to the Commander of the Naval Station at Cavite. By this time, the Manila "Rec'd." marking no longer stated that it was a military station, although Cavite's still did. Usage is recorded from 29 December 1900 to 28 September 1901.