

REGISTERED MAIL OF THE U.S. MILITARY POSTAL STATIONS IN CUBA 1898-1902

Following the sinking of U.S.S. *Maine* in Havana harbor, the United States declared war on Spain on April 21, 1898. The destruction of the Spanish fleet in the Battle of Santiago by the Americans under Admiral Sampson and Commodore Schley sealed the fate of the defenders of Cuba, which resulted in an armistice being signed on August 12.

During the occupation period, which lasted until Cuba was granted its independence on May 20, 1902, thirty-nine numbered military postal stations were opened on the island. Theoretically, registered mail service and the use of special registry cancels should have been available from all of these offices. However, about a half dozen of them were located small villages with just a handful of troops present for such a short period of time that no examples of any of their markings have been recorded after more than a hundred years, and a substantial number of other stations do not have any reported registration markings.

The initial U.S. post office was opened at Daiquiri on June 23, 1898, the day after our troops landed. As the men advanced toward Santiago, the major city on the south coast, Military Station No. 1 moved to the Siboney area on July 6 and to Santiago itself on the 21st. However, the first postmarks were temporary devices indicating neither the date nor location.



The first registry cancel was a double oval rubber marking inscribed "Military/Sta. No. 1 N.Y." between the rings, with "Cuba" in the center, reportedly used from August to October 1898.

For the ease of viewers in finding their way through this frame, the pages are shown in numerical order for the military stations, whether that number was included in the postmark or not.

CUBA

Mil. Sta. No.1 Santiago de Cuba
November 21, 1898
February 4, 1899



The second postmark used for registered mail from Military Station No. 1 was a similar double oval device but inscribed "Mil Sta No. 1/Santiago" with "Cuba" in the center. It was used in conjunction with two different four-line markings, with the earliest and latest dates shown above.

CUBA

Mil. Sta. No. 1 Santiago

July 5, 1899

September 20, 1899



Two additional types of registration markings were used in Santiago during 1899, including a box with a military station designation and a 3-line handstamp without.

CUBA

Mil. Sta. No. 3 Guantanamo
January 17, 1899

Mil. Sta. No. 5 San Luis
January 18, 1899



Alenia

Mr.

Mase Kettlembeil



~~Butler for 27~~

107
Berlin W 50



OK
8/14/98
(soldiers mail)
#447



MESSEES DODD & CO Druggists

cor. 5th & monroe street

Springfield Illinois



67086 U.S.A.

The military stations for the remaining following eight locations were opened on December 1, 1898. The box marking for San Luis is the discovery example of this type, previously unrecorded in the literature.

CUBA

Mil. Sta. No. 6, Manzanillo

March 8, 1899

May 11, 1899

Manzanillo used both
box and straight-line
markings on its mail.

WAR DEPARTMENT.

OFFICIAL BUSINESS.



McKesson & Robbins
67263
91. Fulton Street
New York

Ansby.
Capt. Potat
Manzanillo, Cuba

PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE \$300.



R. VILLAVARDE,
MANZANILLO, CUBA.

M. G. of a. n. 314

REGISTERED
MAY 11 1899

Military Station No. 6
Manzanillo, Cuba.

Mr. Frank J. Jonsen

22 Fulton St.

60001
New York
City

Via Havana



Mil. Sta. No. 8 Holguin
January 11, 1901



Three-line registration markings from two additional small town military stations.

CUBA

Mil. Sta. No. 10, Havana
April 8, 1899
September 1899



Reflecting the very large quantity of mail handled, Havana employed the widest variety of registration markings during the occupation period, including the late use of an old Spanish box device (on a letter to the Philippines) and an oval reading "Havana/Cuba."

CUBA

Mil. Sta. No. 10, Havana
April 29, 1899
July 25, 1900



Three-line and box markings are shown on the upper cover. Below is a marking from Substation No. 1 on cover to Switzerland, with Havana registration label, the only type issued by the U. S. Post Office Department for use in Cuba.

CUBA

Mil. Sta. No. 10, Havana
June 18, 1900
December 7, 1901



Later in the U.S. occupation period, a different box marking was applied to registered mail from Havana. Shown above are a blue example to Argentina and a red one destined for Austria.

CUBA

Mil. Sta. No. 11, Puerto Principe
May 15, 1899
June 29, 1899



International registered covers addressed to Belgium and Germany, respectively, with different types of Puerto Principe registration markings. (This town is now known as Camaguey.)

Mil. Sta. No. 13, Cienfuegos
March 10, 1899
October 2, 1899



Registered covers from Cienfuegos with box and straight-line markings. The lower cover also has the double oval cancel for this station.

CUBA

Mil. Sta. No. 18 Trinidad
March 17, 1899
March 5, 1900

Mil. Sta. No. 21 Cardenas
March 30, 1901

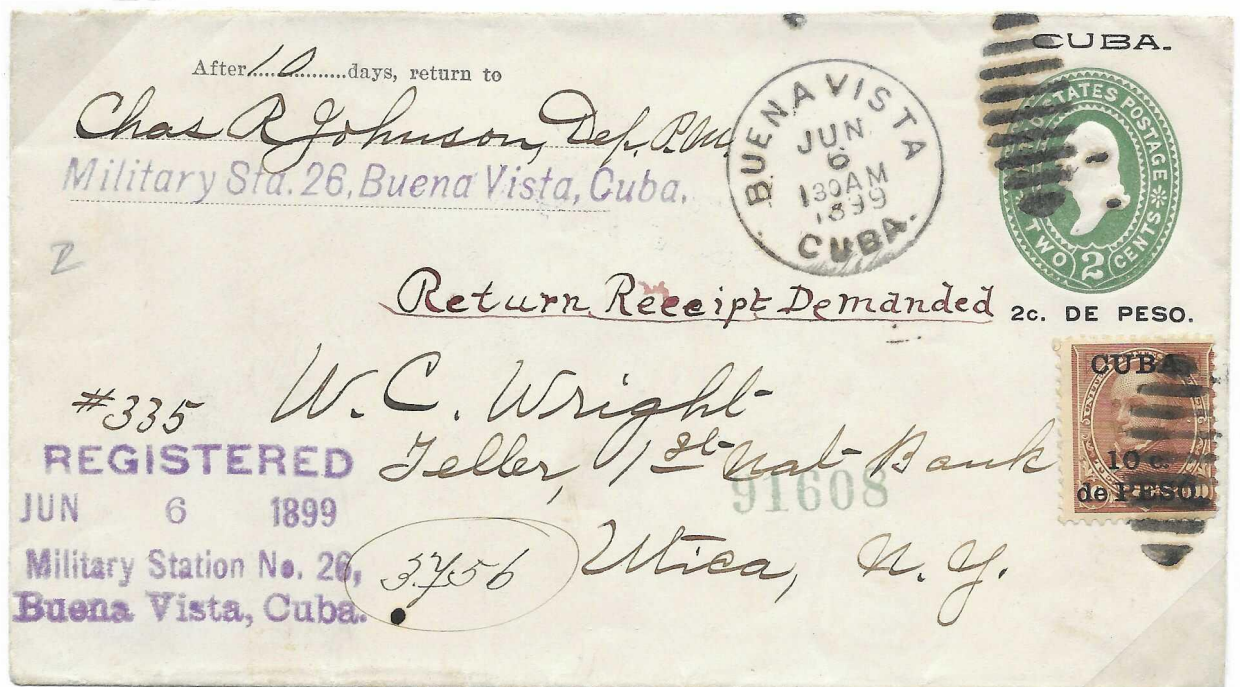


Covers from Trinidad (Santa Clara Province) to the U.S. with 5-line and 3-line registration markings, respectively, and from Cardenas.

CUBA

Mil. Sta. No. 24 Palma Soriano
March 20, 1900

Mil. Sta. No. 26 Buena Vista
June 4, 1899



Registered cover from Palma Soriano has three-line and double oval markings. Example shown below shows the return address of the Buena Vista military station.

CUBA

Mil. Sta. No. 27, Matanzas
May 5, 1899

Mil. Sta. No. 30, Santa Cruz
April 6, 1899

Registered covers from
additional small towns.

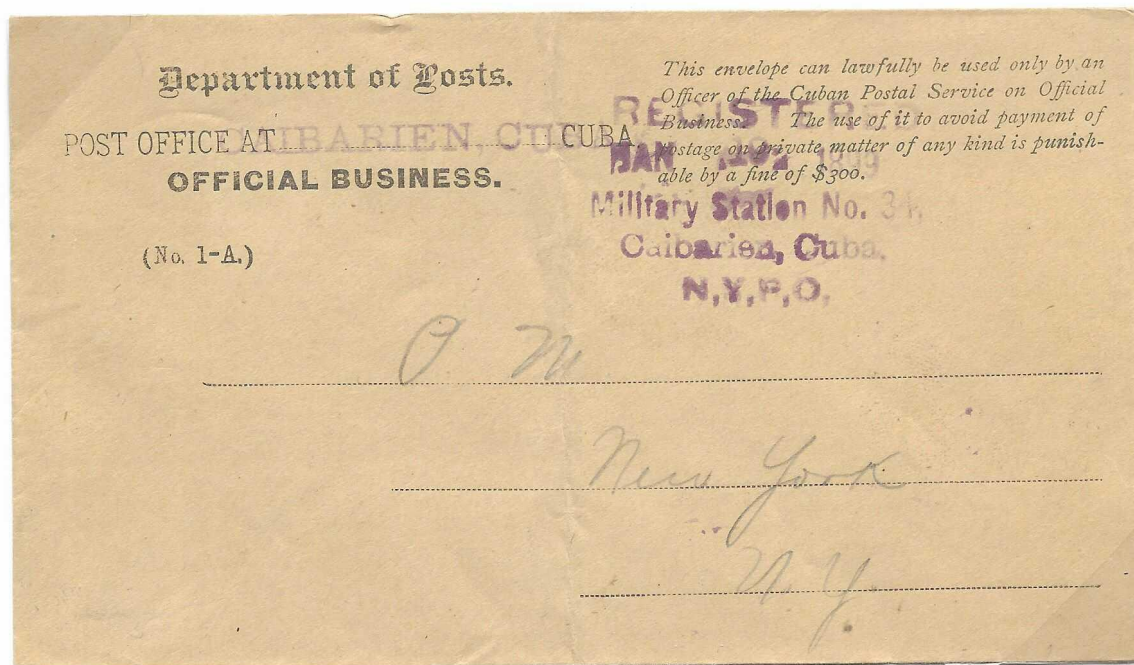


Military Station No. 30,
Santa Cruz, Cuba,
H. P. Harris

CUBA

Mil. Sta. No. 33, Sagua la Grande
August 1, 1899

Mil. Sta. No. 34, Caibarien
January 19, 1899



Registration marking of Caibarien is the discovery copy of this postmark of this previously unrecorded example. It is used here on an official envelope to the Postmaster at New York City.

CUBA

Columbia Barracks Station
December 16, 1899



The Havana military station closed officially on February 17, 1899 and "reopened" the next day under the name of Columbia Barracks. It continued in operation under that title until May 29, 1902, when it was turned over to the Cuban authorities. Shown above is the discovery example of its registration marking – struck on a sheet of note paper used as a wrapper.