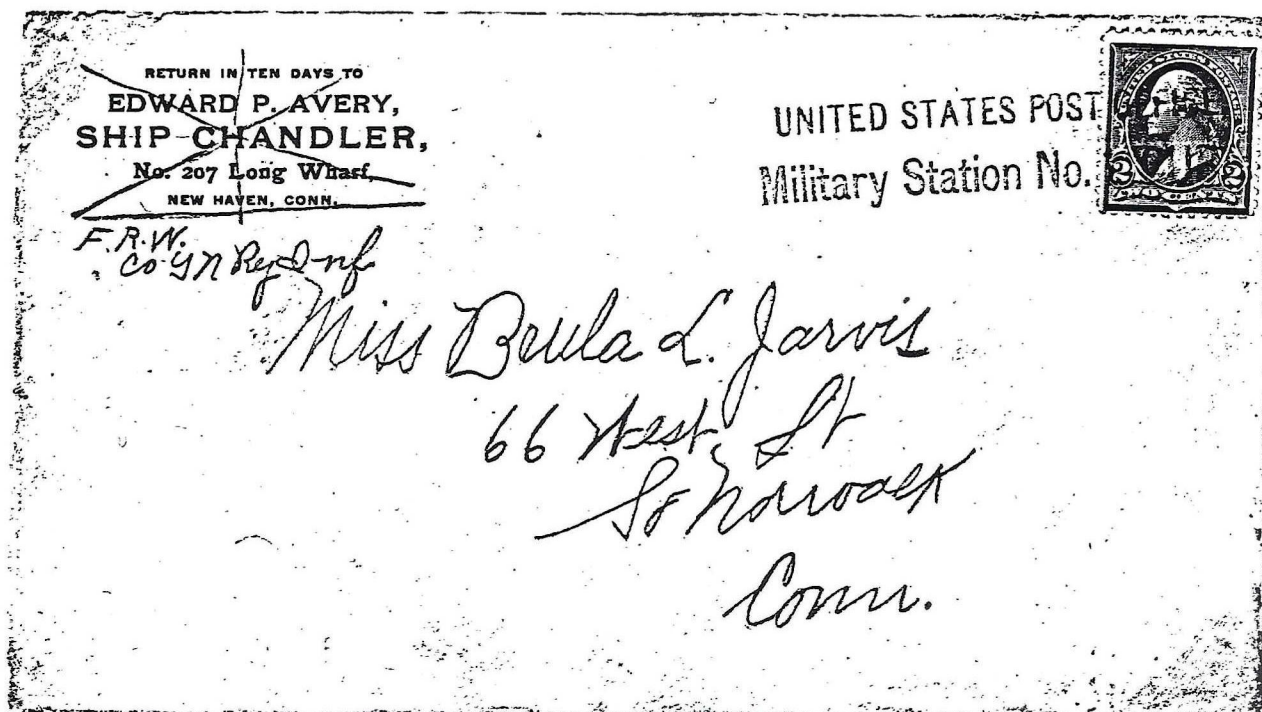


THE DAWN OF THE AMERICAN EMPIRE, 1898 - 1919

Triggered by victories at Manila Bay and Santiago de Cuba in the 1898 war with Spain, a large portion of the American public became enthused about extending American political control beyond the North American continent. In this, they were supported by the philosophical doctrine of Social Darwinism, the political themes of Manifest Destiny and the Monroe Doctrine (made more aggressive by Theodore Roosevelt), the economic vision (somewhat hallucinatory) of a vast American trading empire in the Pacific and the military need for bases from which coal-powered ships could be refueled. These needs and aspirations led the United States to extend its control to 8 areas between 1898 and 1917. The following pages show the development of U.S. military, political and postal arrangements during this approximately 2-decade expansionist period in its newly-acquired possessions of Cuba, Puerto Rico, Philippines, Guam, Hawaii, Samoa, the Canal Zone and the Virgin Islands.



Backstamped Norwalk 11 July 1898. Transit time for Cuba-U.S. mail in late July and early August (when dated Cuban postmarks begin to appear) ranged from 12 to 19 days, indicating that this cover was posted from Daiquiri, where the first U.S. military post office was opened on 23 June.

The public zeal for expanding American power around the globe was not universal, nor was it embraced in its extreme form by the U.S. government. Consequently, while it actively extended its power, the United States became known at the same time as the "reluctant imperialist." The practical effect of this reluctance was that America attempted to establish something other than formal colonial governments in many of its new possessions as soon as possible.

Variations in the acquisition, administration and, in some cases, disposition of the American imperial possessions resulted in a wide range of complexity in their respective postal histories. For example, the need for military conquest followed by the suppression of internal revolt makes for a much more involved postal history in the Philippines than did peaceful acquisition and the rapid extension of formal territorial status in Hawaii. And the small areas, populations and levels of economic activity in Guam, Samoa and the Virgin Islands contrasts with those of Cuba and even Puerto Rico. Thus the scope of the postal history available for examination in each of these areas varies widely; and so, therefore, does its treatment here.

THE DAWN OF THE AMERICAN EMPIRE, 1898 - 1919

	Frames
I. Captured from Spain in the Caribbean - 1898	
Cuba (Republic from May 1902)	1 - 2
Puerto Rico	3 - 4
II. Captured from Spain in the Pacific - 1898	
Philippines	5 - 8
Guam	8
III. Petitioned for Annexation - 1898	
Hawaii	9
IV. Annexed by Treaty with Britain & Germany - 1900	
Samoa	9
V. Leased from Panama - 1904	
Canal Zone	10
VI. Purchased from Denmark - 1917	
Virgin Islands	10

HIGHLIGHTS

(Location references are to Frame/Page[s])

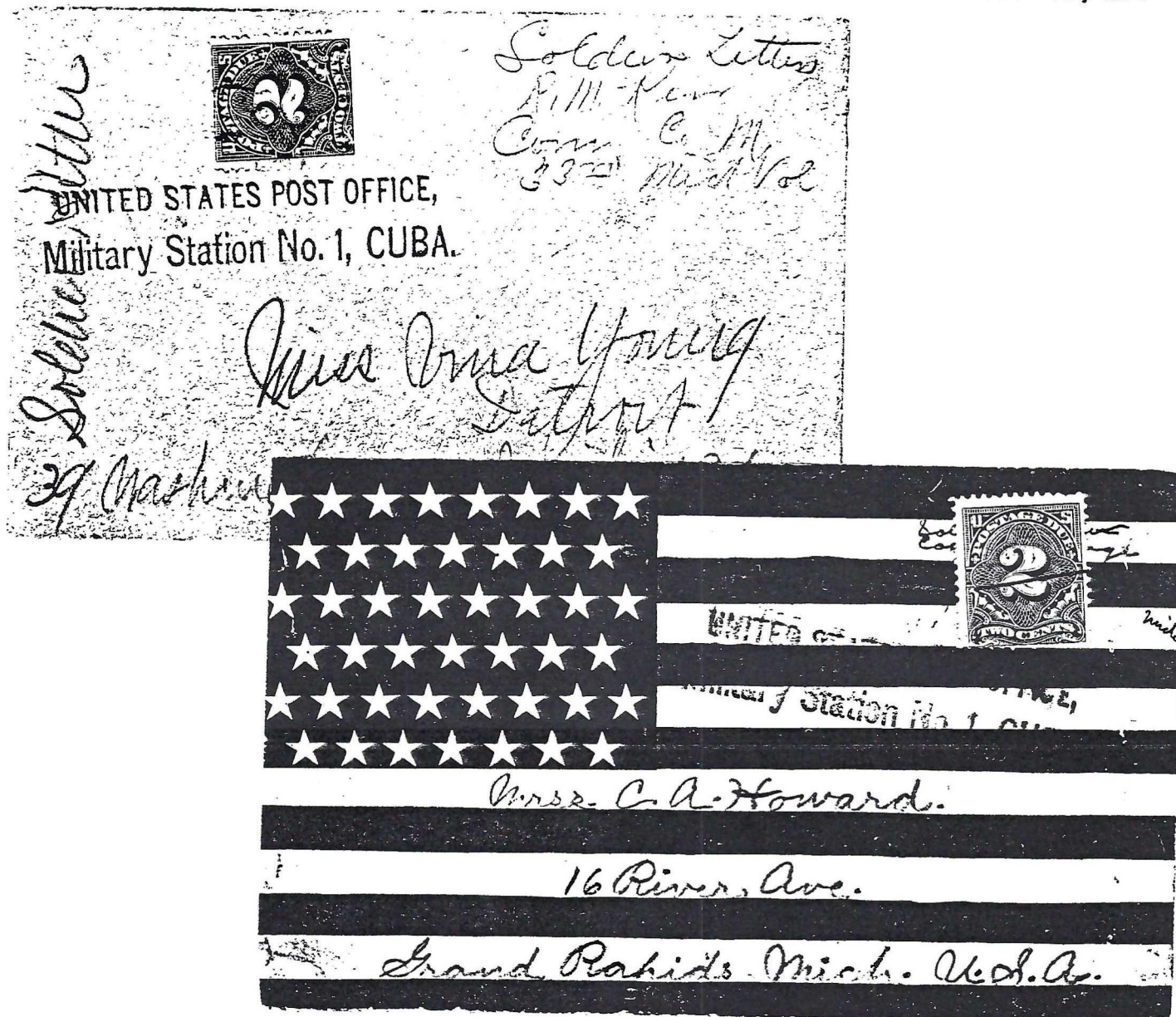
- Cuba:** Usages from the field of temporary Military Station No. 1 postmark (1/1; 1/3)
 Military Station No. 1, NYPO duplex postmark (1/4)
 Mil. Stations: Nos. 4, 7, 24, 26 (Rec'd) and 27 (registered) (1/11, 14; 2/6, 8, 9)
 Columbia Barracks (2/12)
- Puerto Rico:** Mil. Sta. No. 1, first day of use (2 recorded) (3/1)
 Railway Mail Service, Mil. Sta. No. 1 (previously unrecorded) (3/3)
 Ponce Municipal Postage Paid Marking tying US Postage (3/5)
 Mil. Stations: 2 (M.O.B. & registered) and 6 (registered) (3/10; 4/3)
 50¢ First Bureau & 50¢ Trans-Mississippi issues used at Mil. Sta. No. 4 (3/15)
 Mil. Stations: Arecibo (registered), Bayamon (registered), Fajardo (registered)
 and Humacao (provisional duplex) (4/7, 8, 10, 11)
 1906 San Juan Registry label (4/15)
- Philippines:** First day, US military post office at Cavite (4 recorded) (5/1)
 Manila pre-opening souvenir & first day of US Post Office (5/3)
 Mil. Stations: Nos. 2 (3-line registered), 5 (registered) and 6 (6/4, 11, 12)
 Mil. Station San Fernando (registered) (7/2)
 Dollar value 1901 and 1903-4 overprints on cover (7/6-8)
- Guam:** First day (14 June 1900) second Agana straight-line postmark (8/3)
 USS Yosemite/San Louis [sic] d'Apra, Guam handstamp (2 recorded) (8/5)
 Agana Rec'd datestamp (previously unrecorded) (8/11)
- Hawaii:** Spanish-American War military rate (9/2)
 1905 Honolulu Registry label (9/4)
 Midway Island, H. Isls. duplex (9/6)
- Samoa:** Pago Pago, earliest recorded postmark (9/9)
 Pago-Pago registry postmark (3 recorded) (9/11)
 Tau (3 examples, including earliest & latest) (9/12, 13)
- Canal Zone:** First issue on covers (10/1-2)
 Cristobal Registry label (10/5)
- Virgin Islands:** Accession Day (10/9)
 First day of US Post Office (10/10)
 Mixed franking registered cover (10/13)

CUBA

Following the sinking of the *U.S.S. Maine* in Havana harbor, the United States declared war on Spain on 21 April 1898. The destruction of the Spanish fleet in the Battle of Santiago on 3 July by the Americans under Admiral Sampson and Commodore Schley sealed the fate of the defenders, which resulted in an armistice being signed on 12 August.

Oriente Province

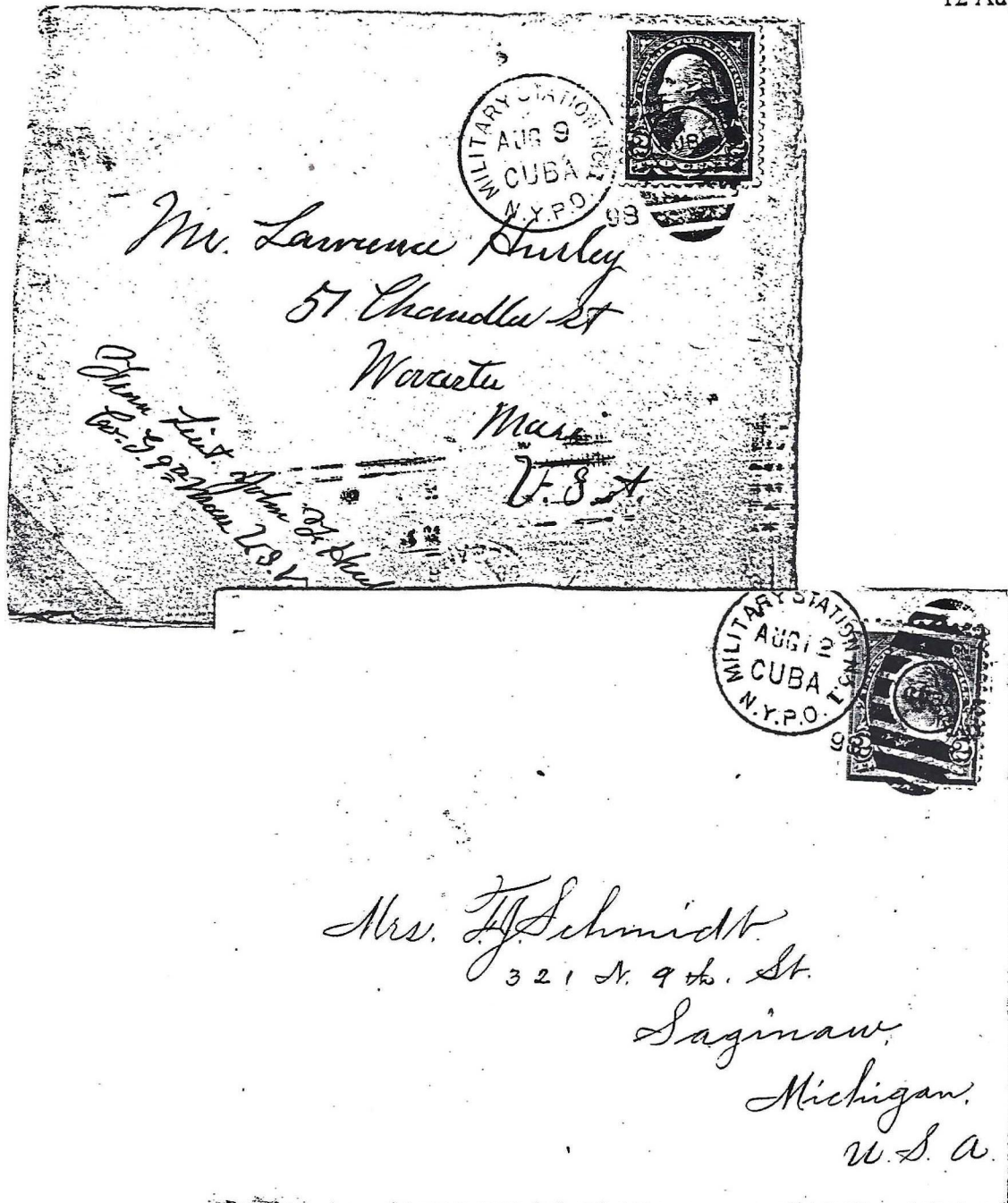
Military Station No. 1
June - July 1898



The initial U.S. post office in territory occupied outside of North America opened on 23 June 1898 at Daiquiri, on the south coast of Cuba, the day following the landing of our troops. The first postmark was a temporary device indicating neither location nor date. As the troops advanced toward Santiago, the military postal station moved westward to Siboney on 6 July and to the outskirts of Santiago on 21 July. The above covers are backstamped for receipt in the U.S. on 14 and 17 July, respectively, indicating origination in Cuba in late June or early July.

CUBA
Oriente Province

Military Station No. 1
9 August 1898
12 August 1898

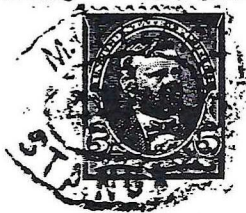
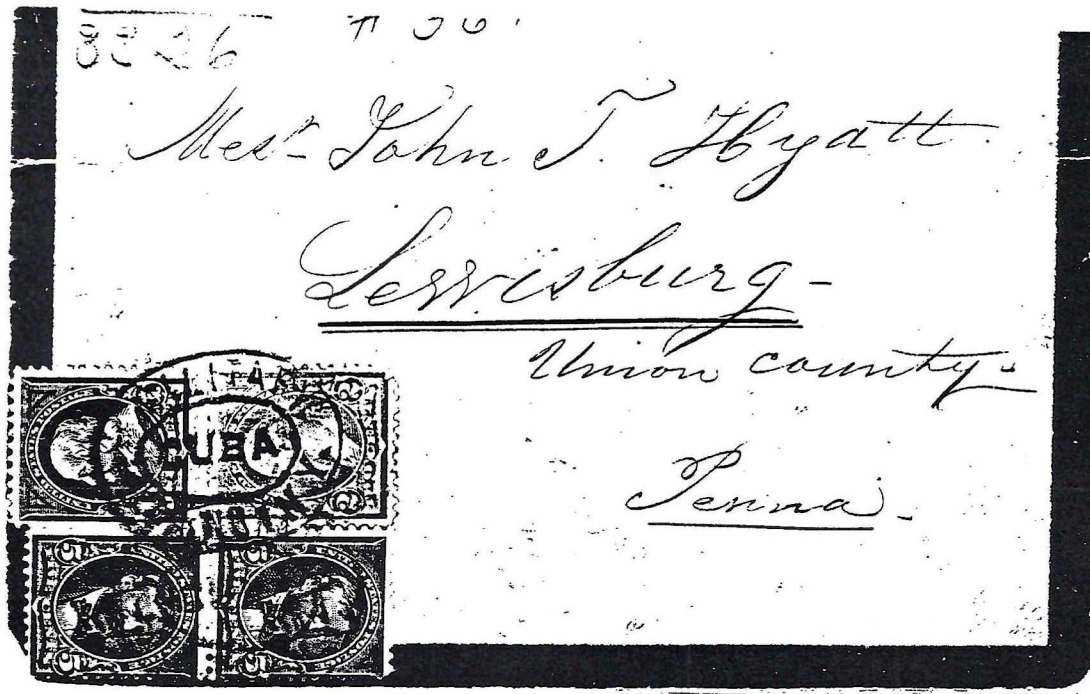


To clearly indicate the fact that the Cuban military stations were regarded as branches of New York, a steel duplex inscribed "Military Station No. 1/NYPO" with "Cuba" in both the cds and the killer was used briefly during August. Because it did not indicate the location of usage, it was quickly withdrawn and replaced by a cancel which included "Santiago" in the cds. As a result, only a few examples of the above marking have been recorded, with dates ranging from 8 to 13 August.

U.S. troops participating in the war with Spain enjoyed two postal concessions. First, mail to and from the occupied territories was carried at domestic rates. Letters could be sent unfranked, with the postage due, but not the deficiency penalty, being charged to the addressee.

CUBA
Oriente Province

Military Station No. 1
1 September 1898
October 1898



Mrs
Garnier Hermanns
Calle des Saints Peres 6

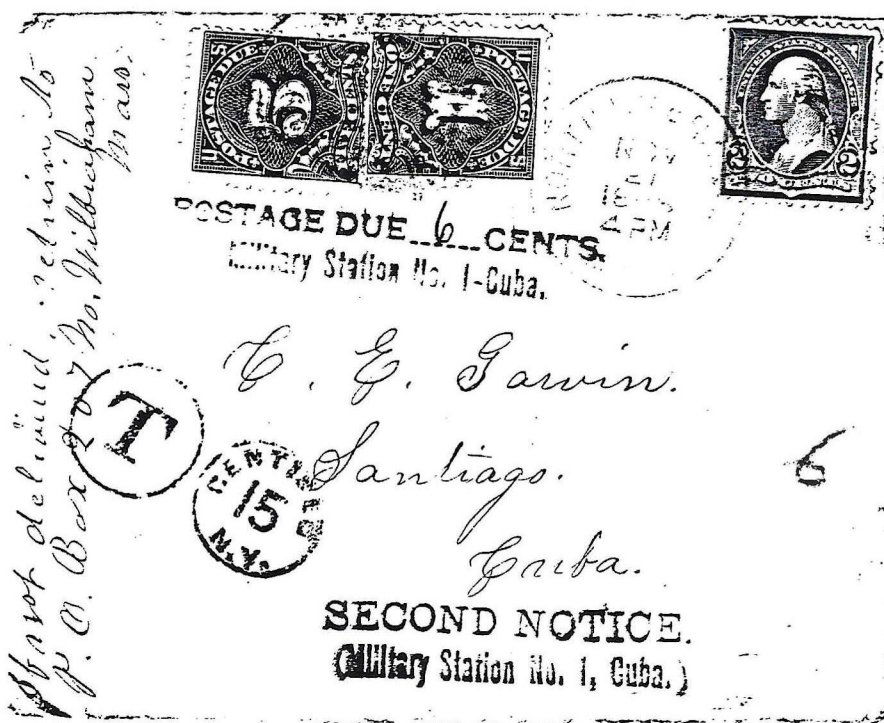
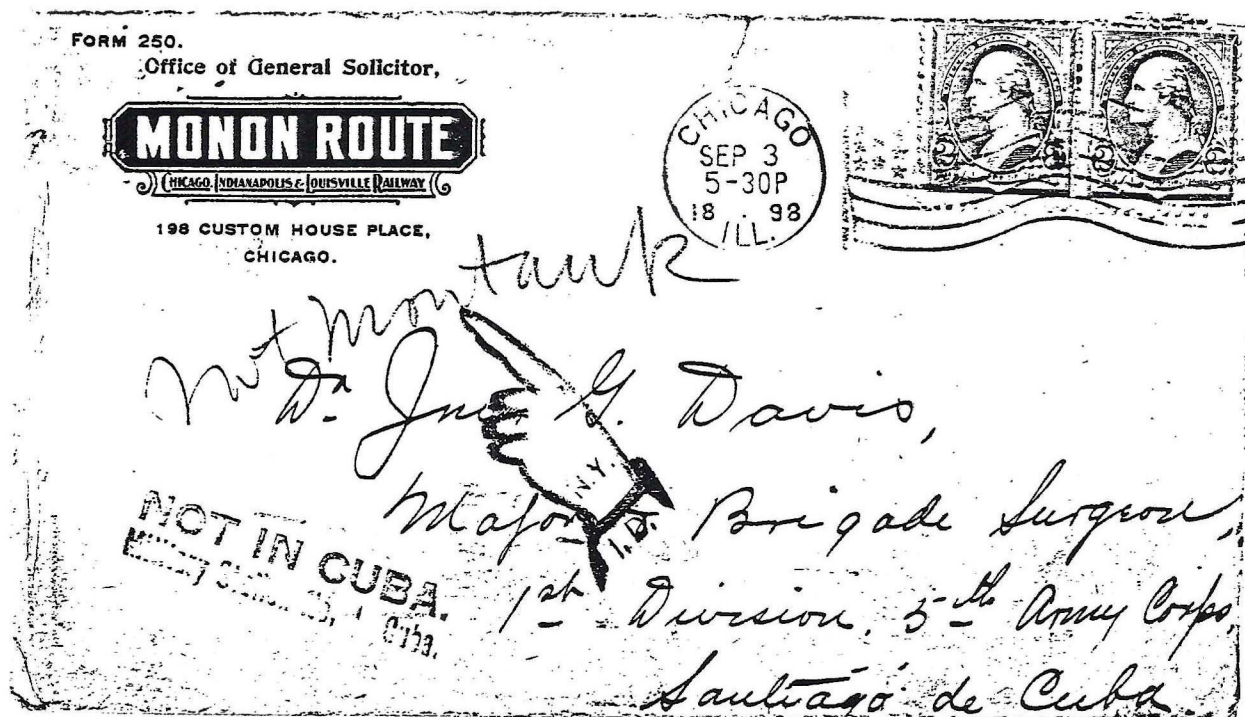
Paris

The lower cover of the letter. It features a handwritten address in cursive: "Mrs", "Garnier Hermanns", "Calle des Saints Peres 6", and "Paris". In the top right corner, there is a single 5-cent postage stamp featuring a profile of George Washington, with a circular postmark over it.

A double ring oval reading "Military Sta. No. 1 N.Y." with "Cuba" in the middle was used on ordinary letters and as a killer on Registered mail. No date or location was indicated, but usage is reported from July into October 1898. The upper cover bears 13 cents postage (5 cent rate for civilian sender to U.S. plus 8 cents registration). Lower cover shows 5 cent U.P.U. rate to France.

CUBA
Oriente Province

Military Station No. 1
16 September 1898
29 November 1898



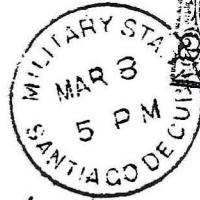
Several auxiliary markings were used at MPS No. 1, including those on the covers above, i.e. "Not in Cuba," "Second Notice" and "Postage Due....Cents." In addition, both covers are backstamped for receipt with steel cds reading "Military Sta. 1 Santiago de Cuba/Rec'd." Upper cover shows double weight domestic rate on an inbound letter to a soldier. Bottom cover, not being to a military address, should have been paid at the 5 cent civilian rate. As it was not, a double deficiency (3 cents x 2), was assessed as postage due.

CUBA
Oriente Province

Military Sta. No. 1 Santiago
8 March 1899
3 April 1899

U.S.S. EAGLE

Wm. L. Stevens
ENSIGN, U.S.N.



Mr. L. L. Stevens
313 Law Building
Baltimore
Maryland
U.S.A.

Post Office Department.

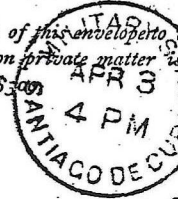
POST OFFICE AT SANTIAGO DE CUBA,

(MILITARY STATION NO. 1.)

OFFICIAL BUSINESS.

(No. 1-A.)

The use of this envelope for
postage on private matter is
fine of \$3.00

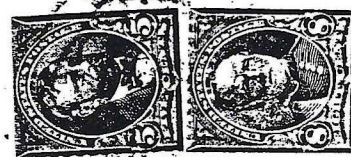


H. E. Nilson
314 Fourth Ave
Pittsburg
Pa

Once Spanish resistance ended, it was possible to assign the various military post offices to fixed locations. Thus, a steel duplex with cds reading "Military Sta. 1/ Santiago de Cuba" was introduced. The recorded dates of usage are 21 August 1898 to 13 April 1899. Although not endorsed as "sailor's mail" the postal clerk accepted the upper cover as navy mail at the 2 cent rate.

CUBA
Oriente Province

Military Station No. 1 Santiago
21 November 1898
4 February 1899



Madame Char^{te} A. de Lima
Royal Hotel
33 Avenue Friedland

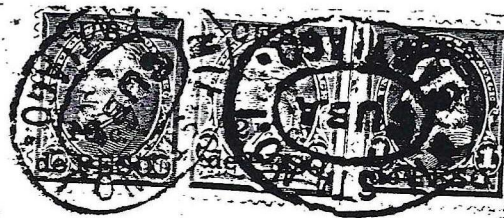


REGISTERED
NOV 21 1898
Military Station No. 1,
Santiago de Cuba.

Paris
France

Post Office Department.
POST OFFICE AT SANTIAGO DE CUBA,
(MILITARY STATION No. 1.)
John Gustafson
OFFICIAL BUSINESS.

(No. 1-A.)



#1596
6024
C. R. Morley Esq.

778 Prospect st
Cleveland
Ohio

REGISTERED
FEB 4 1899
Military Station No. 1,
Santiago de Cuba.

The first Registration markings from Santiago consisted of four lines, including the date -- both unrecorded in Gordon. The earliest version had large letters, with a later type using smaller letters. In both cases, the stamps were cancelled with a double oval marking reading "Mil. Sta. No. 1/Santiago" and "Cuba" in the middle.

CUBA
Oriente Province

Military Sta. No. 3 Guantanamo
23 November 1898
8 April 1899



A total of 39 numbered military postal stations for Cuba are listed in the literature. In theory, at least, they would have been supplied with marking devices similar to those used in Santiago. However, some of the smaller offices handled so little mail and others were opened so late in the occupation period that no examples have been recorded in certain cases and only a few in others.

Two types of steel cds were used at Guantanamo. The first shows the indication "No. 3" at the top of the circle; it is recorded used from 23 November 1898 (above) to 28 July 1899. The second type has "No. 3" in the middle and is recorded from 7 January to 14 June 1899.

CUBA
Oriente Province

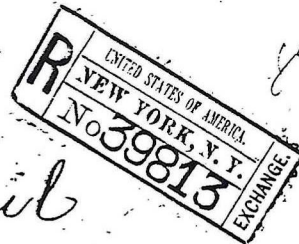
Military Sta. No. 3 Guantanamo
17 January 1899
6 June 1899



Almania

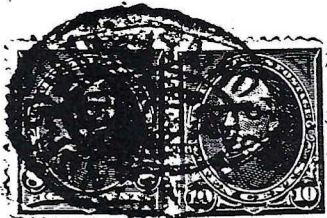
Mr.

Mase Kettlembeil

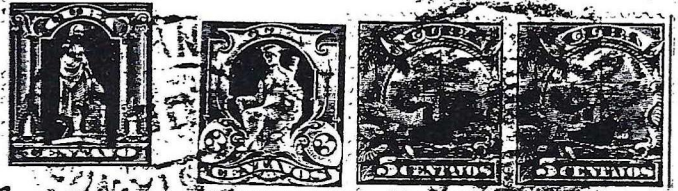


Butler for 29

107 Berlin W 28 8



*Soliers letter, from
Capt. Parrelli, U.S.A.
Carneg. Guantanamo.*



23173

J. D. Starr Stamp Co.

Caldwater



Michigan

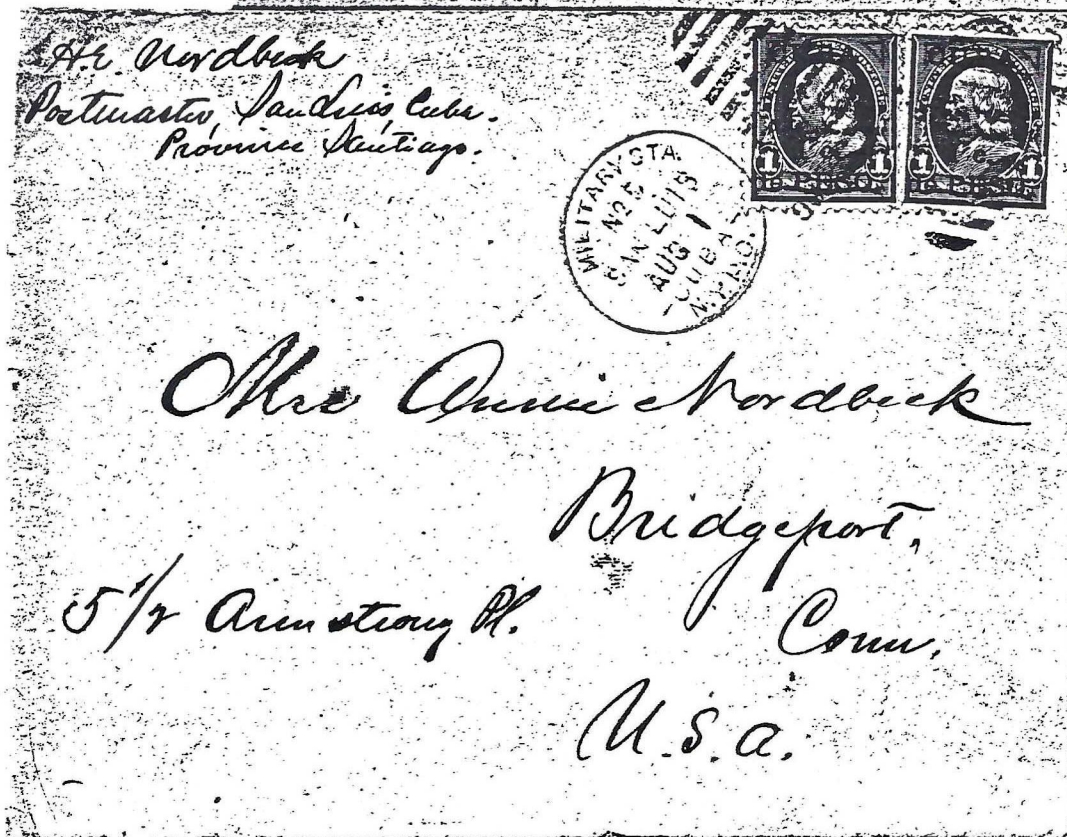
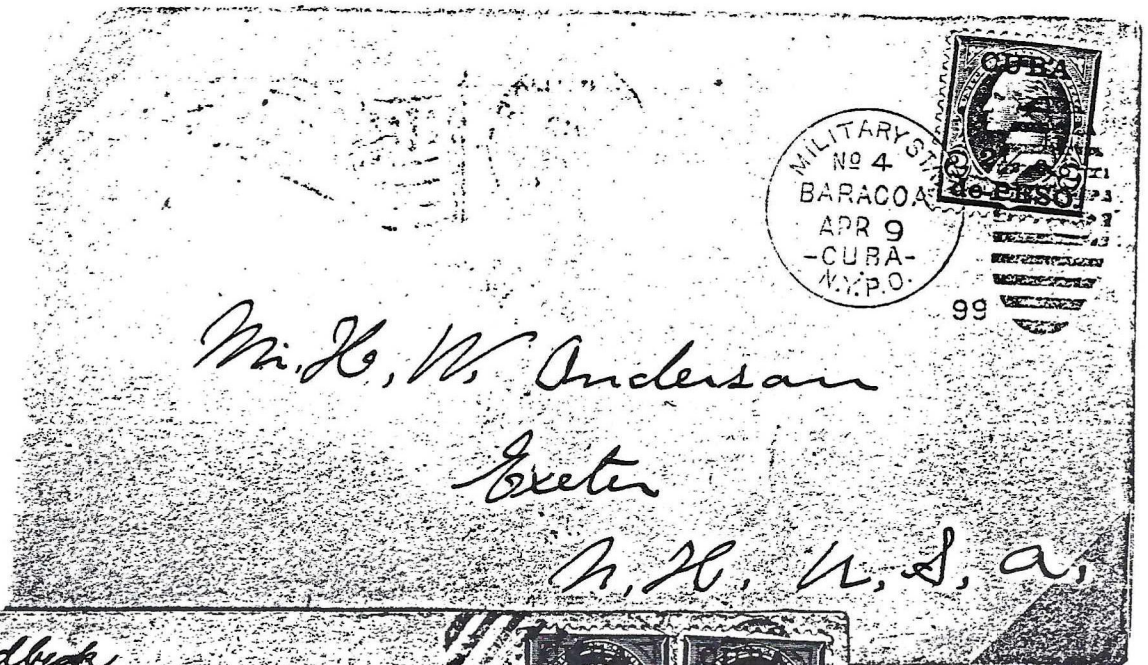
USA

Covers above show usage of the Guantanamo boxed Registration marking with the indication of "Military Station No. 3" during the military administration and a "Guantanamo, Santiago de Cuba" marking after all existing military post offices in Cuba were required to assume civilian status under order of 10 February 1899. However, some military markings remained in use for a considerable period thereafter. The postage on both covers above was cancelled with a double oval killer inscribed "Mil. Sta. No. 3/Guantanamo."

CUBA
Oriente Province

Military Sta. No. 4 Baracoa
9 April 1899

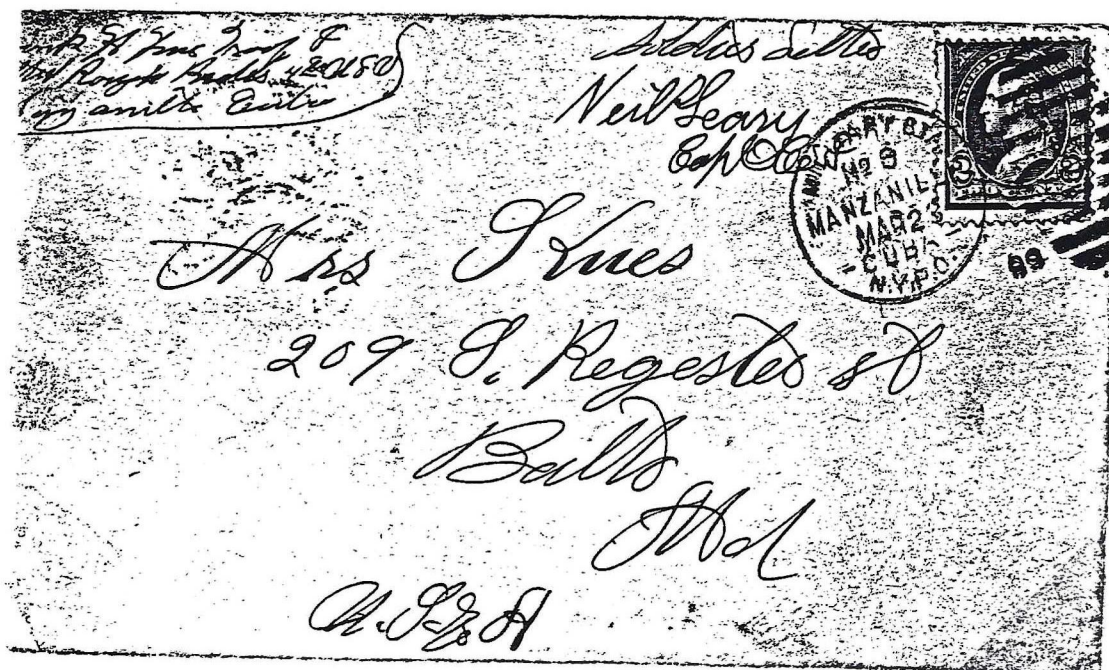
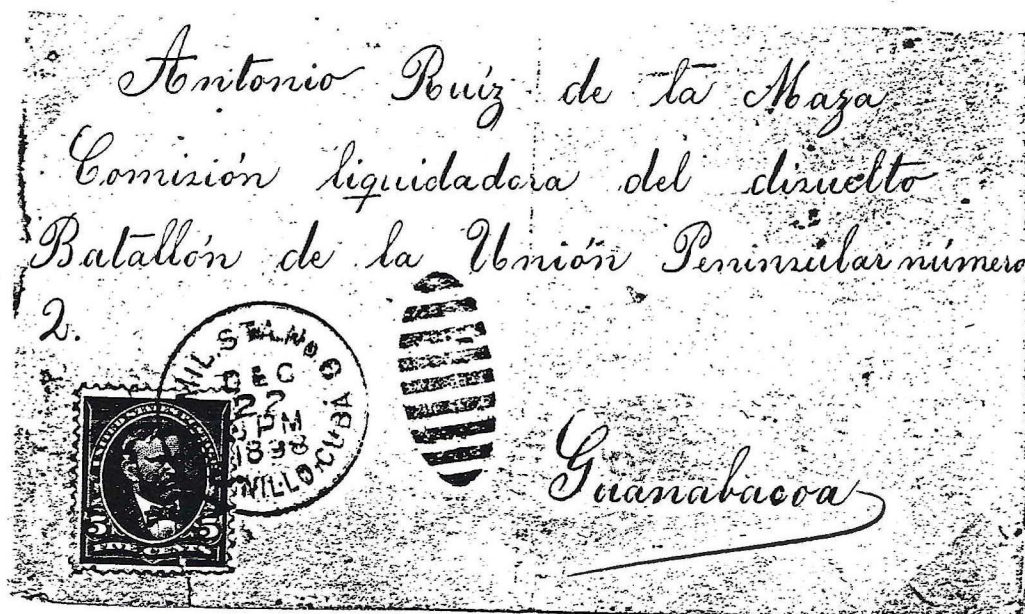
Military Sta. No. 5 San Luis
1 August 1899



Covers from the smaller villages are scarce, with only a few copies recorded of some of the markings. Postmarks of Baracoa (near the eastern tip of the island) and San Luis (25 miles north of Santiago) are in this category, with examples of the latter recorded only on 4 April and 1 August 1899.

CUBA
Oriente Province

Military Sta. No. 6 Manzanillo
22 December 1898
23 March 1899



Manzanillo used both types of steel cds, the early version with the "No.6" at the top and the later version with it in the middle. Previously recorded examples of these postmarks were from December 1898 to 2 March 1899.

CUBA
Oriente Province

MPS No. 6 Manzanillo
8 March 1899
11 May 1899

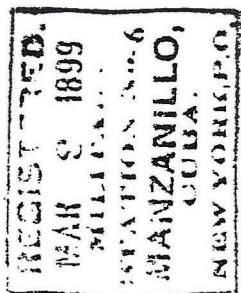
PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE \$300.



Manzanillo used the same
boxed and 4-line markings
for its Registered mail
as noted for other military
stations.

WAR DEPARTMENT.

OFFICIAL BUSINESS.



McKesson & Robbins
67263
91. Fulton Street
New York

sent by
Coffin Potatoes
Manzanillo, Cuba

(45746)

R. VILLAVARDE,
MANZANILLO, CUBA.

M. G. of a/s n. 314



REGISTERED
MAY 11 1899

Military Station No. 6
Manzanillo, Cuba.

Mr. Frank Jones

22 Fulton St.

60001
New York
City

19261
Via Havana

CUBA
Oriente Province



Military Sta. No. 7 Gibara
24 January 1899

Gibara
25 August 1899

Received Feb 3rd 1899-



Mr. B. Tompkins

New York City

359 W. 34th Street 359

fr.



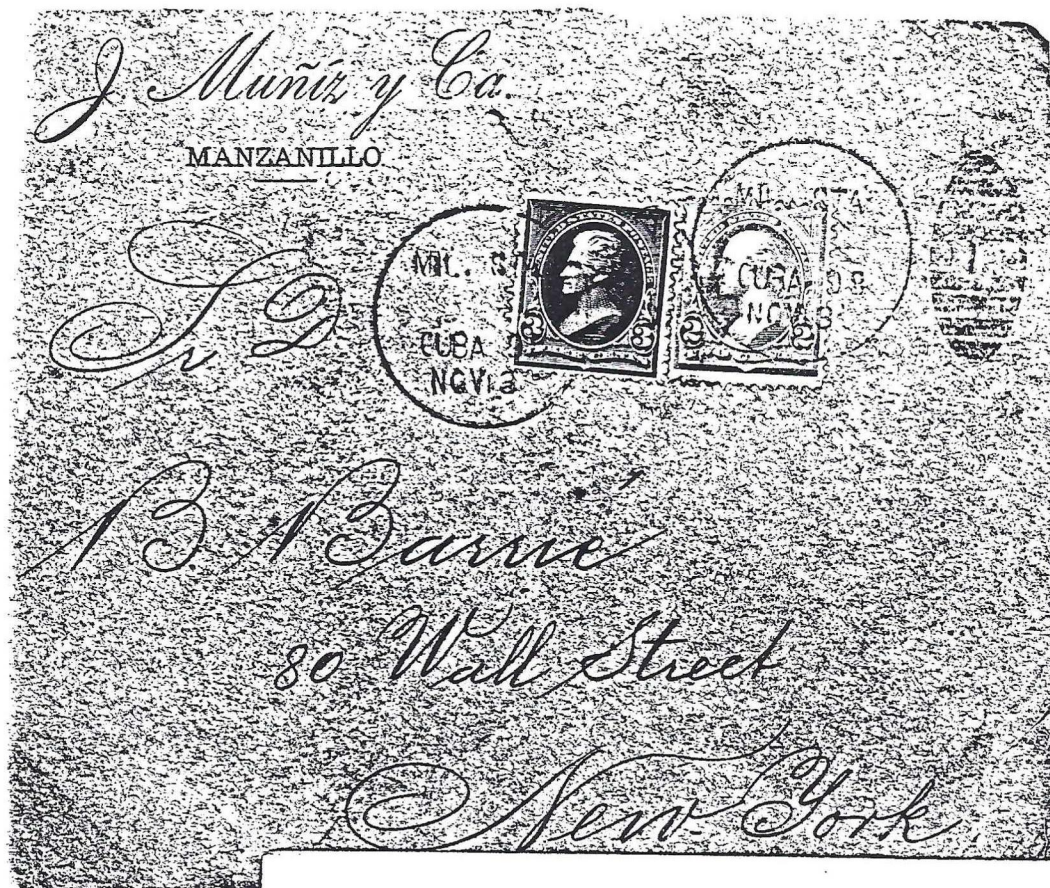
Only a few copies are recorded of these markings. Gordon reported no examples of covers showing the cds of Gibara, a small village on the northeast coast.


 32-13425
 J. Parlington
 D.C.

CUBA
La Habana Province

Mil. Sta. Cuba
13 November 1898

Mil. Sta. Havana Cuba
21 December 1898



Saldado, L.



N. S. ...
50 B. 10 U. S. ...
...

...
...
...

A provisional postmark, modeled on RPO markings used in the U.S. at the time, is believed to have been brought to Havana by an army survey group in November 1898; its use on the upper cover is earlier than previously recorded. It was superseded by a similar cancel in which "Havana" was included in the cds. Examples of this marking are recorded only from 21 December 1898 (above) to 26 January 1899.