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#290 ✓

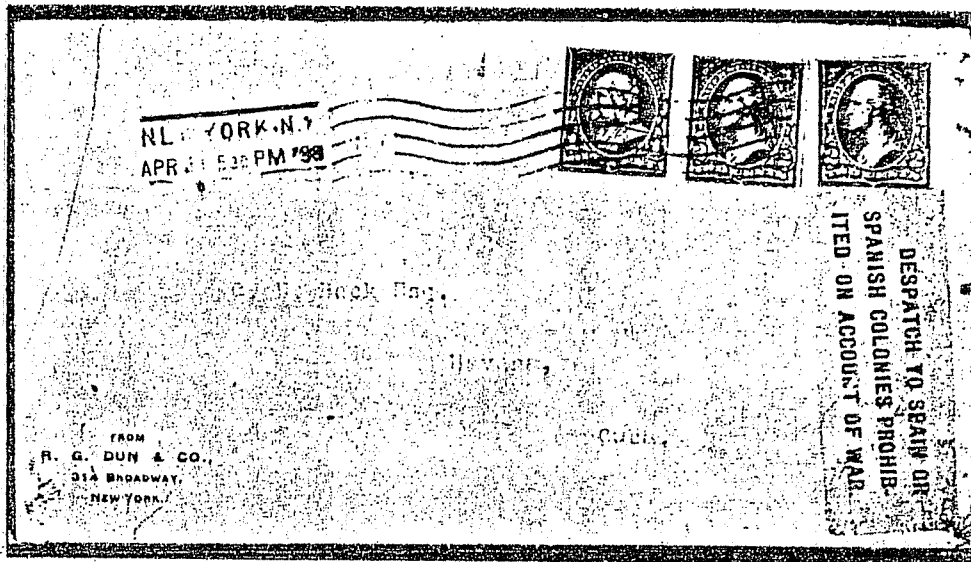


Figure 1  
Example of label attached to cover posted at New York, April 21, 1898. (Sheldon)

## U. S. Military Post Offices in

# CUBA: 1898-1899

By Robert S. Gordon, A. P. S.

**THIS POSTAL** history of the United States military post offices in Cuba during, and immediately after, the Spanish-American War, is primarily the work of H. L. Lewis. It was the main philatelic field of Mr. Lewis, who spent over 20 years in Cuba. His unfortunate death in December, 1962, brought to an end his work on the subject. The following article is based largely on his collection, on the notes which he made of material in other collections, and on the cooperation of those many other collectors who helped him.

☆ ☆ ☆

**WAR** was declared on April 21, 1898. It was not until April 26th that an order of the Postmaster General officially banned the further despatch of U. S. mail to Spain and to its colonies. Nevertheless, mail to Cuba was intercepted and returned to senders even earlier. The earliest example seen of the use of the label (shown in Figure 1) is a cover from New York posted April 16, 1898. An example of a rather late date appears on a cover in the Sheldon collection, mailed at Portland, Oregon, May 23, 1898, bearing a rubber handstamp with similar wording.

The dates of establishment of the military post offices have been taken from the orders of the Postmaster General authorizing the offices. These dates run from July 31, 1898, when military station No. 1 was assigned to Santiago, to February 10, 1899, when the last four military offices were authorized.

Soon after the surrender of Santiago, the Postmaster General issued order No. 296 (July 21, 1898) permitting civil postal service in the eastern part of Cuba which had been included in the surrender of July 16. The use of United States stamps was required in this mail service.

**UNITED STATES POST OFFICE,  
Military Station No. 1, CUBA.**

**Figure 2  
First military postmark applied  
in Cuba (June, 1898).**

On Aug. 19, 1898, civil postal service throughout Cuba was sanctioned, again specifying that only United States stamps were to be used. No new post office equipment was provided at this time; and the Spanish colonial cancellers necessarily continued in use everywhere except at Santiago, then the only existing military postal station. As the next military post offices were not authorized until December 1st, and as postmarks in English were apparently not supplied to any non-military offices until March, 1899, ordinary colonial cancellations on unoverprinted U. S. stamps can be found, both on soldiers' letters and on civilian correspondence, during the interim.

The military offices were considered branches of New York City for administrative purposes, and many postmarks demonstrate this. (In similar fashion, military offices in Puerto Rico were under Washington, D. C., and those in the Philippines were subordinate to San Francisco.)

Some closing dates are given in a report of the (civil) Cuban Department of Posts. Others are still unknown. It is recorded, however, that the last military post office closed officially on March 18, 1899.

These closing dates were matters of administrative detail only. Some military postal officials may have been replaced by civilians; but the military station postmarks continued in use for a time in all locations.

Under these circumstances, the best that can be done is to note the earliest and latest dates now recorded.

Population figures taken from a special 1899 census by the War Department are included as a matter of interest, and to serve perhaps as a rough guide to the scarcity of the markings. For both soldiers and civilians, Americans and Cubans, originally had only the military post offices available for mail service in those places where military offices were established.

Soldiers' letters did not necessarily carry military postmarks after the establishment of the military stations. There were U. S. garrisons at many places not so supplied. Examples are also known of colonial cancellations on soldiers' letters that presumably should have gone through the military post offices.

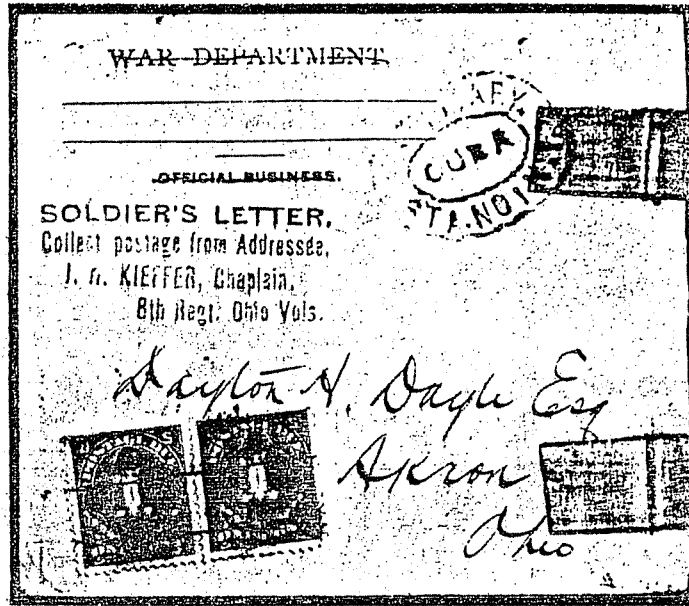
### **Military Station No. 1**

**A**N ACT of Congress of June 6, 1898 authorized military post offices, in general. Marine Corps and naval forces landed in Cuba at least as early as June 10 (Guantánamo Bay); but the first troop landing took place on June 22, 1898, at a small place whose Spanish post office name at the time was Baiquirí, but which has since been known as Daiquirí. The next day (June 23, 1898), the "United States Post Office, Military Station No. 1" opened for business here. It did not get around to putting stamps on sale until June 25.

Landing operations continued at Daiquirí, and on June 23 simultaneous landings began at Siboney, a few miles west. The last U. S. soldiers went ashore from the first transports on June 25th.

As the initial landing place for the troops had been left to the discretion of the military authorities, supplies brought by the two postal agents lacked postmarks showing any town name.

Figure 3  
Undated oval post-  
mark on envelope,  
probably opened for  
fumigation. (James)



The first postmark used consisted merely of a straight-line handstamp (Figure 2) applied in red. Being undated, its period of use cannot be precisely fixed. Early and late dates now recorded are June 29 and July 5.

With landing operations completed and the main body of troops moved closer to Santiago, the post office itself was transferred from Daiquiri to Siboney on July 6. No record has been found of any colonial postal facility at Siboney.

Yellow fever broke out at Siboney at this time, and no mail was sent or received from July 10 to July 20, 1898.

The following condensed quotation from "Campaigning in Cuba", by George Kennan (published 1899 by the Century Co., New York) will give one war correspondent's impression of the town.

"When we returned from the front on July 9, we found the condition of the village" (Siboney) "worse than ever . . ." On the 11th General Miles arrived from Washington, and on ascertaining the state of affairs ordered the burning of every house in the village . . . The postal, telegraph, and signal-service officers were turned out of their quarters and put into tents . . . Siboney at that time was a wretched little hamlet . . . One of the largest and most commodious buildings in the village . . . had been used . . . as a store or shop. At the time of our return from the front, it sheltered the "United States Post Office, Military Station No. 1," which had been transferred from Daiquiri to Siboney two or three days before . . ."



Figure 4  
Oval postmark shown  
by Barreras.

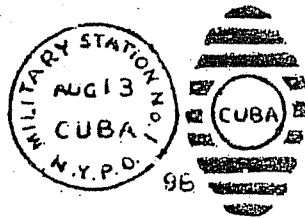


Figure 5  
With "Cuba" in both  
circle and killer.

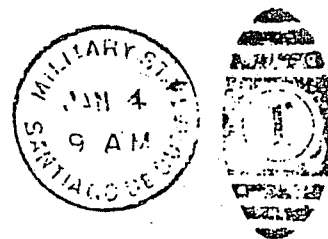


Figure 6  
First canceler with  
town name.



Figure 7  
First parcel handstamp with town name included.



Figure 8  
Santiago receiving mark.

RECEIVED  
OCT 19 1899  
Military Station No. 2,  
Daiquiri, Cuba.

Figure 9  
Daiquiri receiving mark.

When mail service was resumed, the envelopes apparently were opened in an attempt at fumigation (Figure 3). Upon despatch, the letters then received an oval handstamp, again with neither location nor date. This is known to have been used as early as July 20.

No actual example has been seen of the oval marking illustrated by Barreras<sup>1</sup> (Figure 4), with error "NE 1" for "NO 1".

On July 21, the post office was again moved, this time to the outskirts of Santiago itself. Actual fighting had ended on July 14th; Santiago surrendered on the 16th, and was occupied the next day. The main body of troops moved to an encampment near Santiago, and the post office followed suit.

Use of the oval handstamp continued. Again it is hard to determine dates; but use to July 28 has been ascertained.

Soon after, a steel duplex handstamp made its appearance (Figure 5). The earliest date presently recorded is Aug. 8 (Hopps); the latest, Aug. 13. As might be expected, this is an extremely rare marking.

### Military Station No. 1: Santiago

SANTIAGO de Cuba, under colonial postal administration, was an "administración principal"—one degree lower than Habana, and one degree higher than a first-class post office. Its population in 1899 was 43,090.

The use of Spanish colonial cancellers under the U. S. occupation is known with dates from July 24 to Aug. 15, 1898.

Specific authorization for the location of military station No. 1 at Santiago is found in an order of July 31, 1898. A steel duplex handstamp identifying Santiago as the location of this military station came into use in August (Figure 6). The earliest date seen is Aug. 21; the latest now recorded (in the Ferrer collection) is April 13, 1899.

An oval handstamp, one of a series probably intended for use on parcels but found also on letter mail occasionally, is known with location "Santiago" included (Figure 7). It is recorded on the overprinted stamps of 1899, and as late as Feb. 27, 1900, on the permanent issue (Joyner).

<sup>1</sup> Reference is to a long article "Marcas Postales de Cuba," by Dr. A. Barreras, published in *Revista de la Sociedad Filatélica Cubana*, 1902-03.

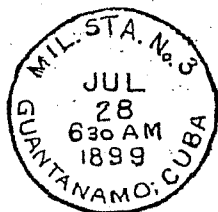


Figure 10

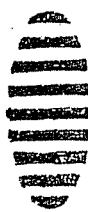


Figure 11

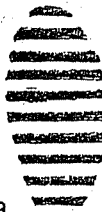


Figure 12

The receiving mark shown in *Figure 8* (and a very scarce one it is) can be dated from Nov. 20, 1898, to April 5, 1899, both dates from items in the Sheldon collection.

A straight-line handstamp is also recorded, with wording "NOT IN CUBA. / Military Station No. 1, Cuba." applied to a letter returned from Santiago to the sender in November, 1898.

This military office closed, or more accurately, was turned over to civil authority, on Feb. 18, 1899.

### Military Station No. 2: Daiquiri

SHORTLY before the U. S. occupation, a fourth-class colonial post office operated here under the name "Baiquiri". The population of the town was 1380 in 1899.

Military station No. 2 officially opened here on Dec. 1, 1898, and became a civil office Feb. 27, 1899.

No complete example of its cancellation has been seen. The Lewis collection contained a loose stamp (2½c on 2c) with part of postmark apparently ending in "No. 2", but Daiquiri origin is not certain. The date is March, 1899.

The receiving postmark shown in *Figure 9* is from an illustration by Barreras. No actual example has been noted.

### Military Station No. 3: Guantánamo

THIS city, some distance north of the later U. S. naval establishment on Guantánamo Bay, possessed a first-class post office in colonial Cuba. Its 1899 population was 7137.

Guantánamo surrendered on July 25, 1898. The U. S. military garrison arrived Aug. 21, 1898, and left April 17, 1902.

Hill<sup>2</sup> writes that "the Military Station was opened on Sept. 6, 1898". This probably means that Americans were *in charge* from that date. The military post office actually opened Dec. 1, 1898.

Two canceling devices were apparently in simultaneous use. The first, with "MIL. STA. No. 3" around the top (*see Figure 10*), is recorded with dates from December 8, 1898 (Sheldon) to July 28, 1899 (Hill). The second (*Figure 11*) has only "MILITARY STA." around the top, with station number above "GUANTANAMO" in the center area. This has been noted dated Feb. 17 (Joyner) to June 14, 1899 (Sheldon).

The oval cancellation in *Figure 12* has only been seen on the permanent 1899 issue of stamps for Cuba. As these stamps were not shipped from Washington until July 19, 1899, this use of the oval Guantánamo canceller must date to late July or early August, 1899.

The military station closed Feb. 22, 1899.

### Military Station No. 4: Baracoa

UNDER colonial postal administration, Baracoa possessed a second-class post office. Its 1899 population was 4,937.

A detachment of U. S. troops landed here from a transport Sept. 5, 1898. (Baracoa, near the eastern tip of Cuba, was still not connected with the Cuban highway system by an all-weather road as late as 1956).

The military post office was opened Dec. 1, 1898.

Use of the Spanish colonial postmarks on ordinary U. S. stamps is known with dates in November, 1898. The earliest date now recorded for the postmark shown in *Figure 13* is Dec. 21, 1898 (Hill); the latest for this marking is Jan. 13, 1899 (Barreras).

A later cancellation type (*as in Figure 14*) is recorded on a few covers and loose stamps. On none of the latter is the date legible.

<sup>2</sup>References to "Hill" are from "History of the American Postal Service in Cuba," by George S. Hill, published in the January, 1937, issue of *Collectors Club Philatelist*.



Figure 13  
First Baracoa canceler.

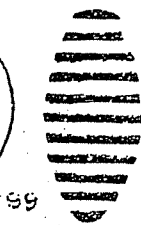


Figure 14  
Second Baracoa canceler.

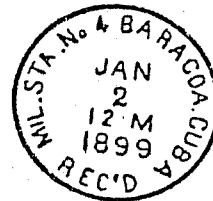


Figure 15  
Baracoa receiving mark.



Figure 16

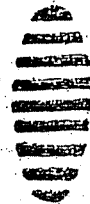


Figure 17

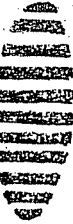


Figure 18

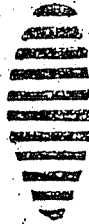
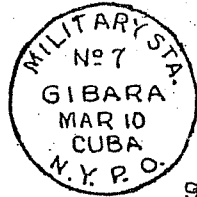


Figure 19



Figure 20

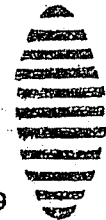
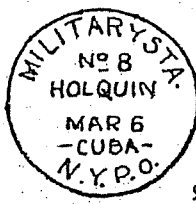


Figure 21



Figure 22

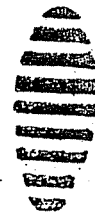


Figure 23

Worthy of mention is a straight-line marking, reading "MILITARY STATION No. 4, / BARACOA, CUBA" on cover, but not used as a cancellation (Brenner collection).

Our only present knowledge of the Baracoa receiving mark is from an illustration by Barreras (Figure 15).

The nominal closing date for this military station was Feb. 27, 1899.

### Military Station No. 5: San Luis

CUBA has more than one town by the name; four are shown on a 1956 map. In 1896, there were two Cuban post offices named San Luis. The one with which we are concerned is about twenty-five miles north of Santiago, by road. It had a population of 5,059 in 1899, and a colonial post office of the fourth class.

The town was garrisoned by U. S. troops on Aug. 16, 1898. They departed Dec. 20, 1901.

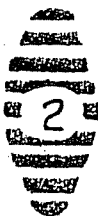


Figure 24

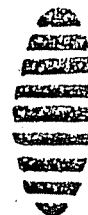


Figure 25

Americans took over the post office about Aug. 20 (Hill); the military postal station was officially opened here on Dec. 1, 1898.

Only one cover has been recorded with military postmark of San Luis (Figure 16), in the Sheldon collection. There are no subsidiary markings yet reported.

It will be noted the illustration shows usage of an unoverprinted U. S. envelope, as late as April, 1899. An order of March 24, 1899, required exclusive use thereafter of the special stamps (and envelopes) overprinted for Cuba. Perhaps that order had not yet trickled through to San Luis by April 4, 1899.

This military post office nominally reverted to civil authority Feb. 24, 1899.

### Military Station No. 6: Manzanillo

An important sea port, Manzanillo had a population of 14,164 in 1899, and a second-class colonial post office.

The garrison detachment landed here Oct. 3, 1898. It left April 25, 1902.

The post office was taken over Oct. 5 (Hill); it officially became a military station Dec. 1, 1898.

The Spanish colonial registry marking was in use here on Dec. 10, 1898.

Known examples of the first military postmark (Figure 17) are dated only from Dec. 17 (James) to Dec. 22, 1898 (Joyner).

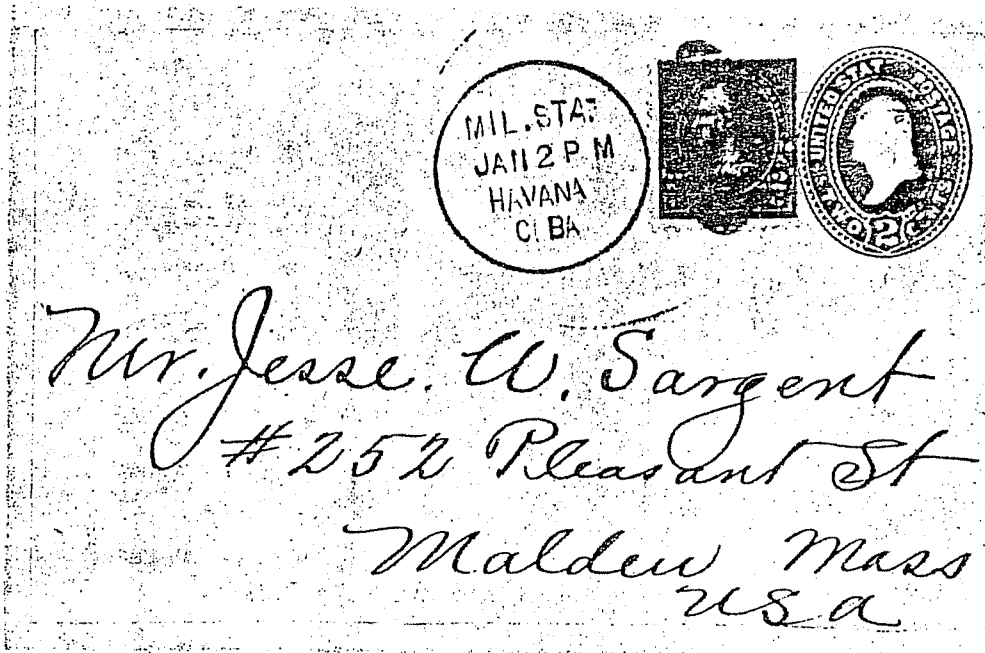


Figure 26

First day of use of No. 10 in the killer of Havana provisional cancellation.

Subsequent military cancellations are all of the type shown in *Figure 18*. These are recorded, dated Jan. 26 to June 15, 1899 (both dates from covers in the James collection).

An example of the oval postmark is known (Lewis) used as cancellation on overprinted stamp.

The official closing date for this military post office was Feb. 19, 1899.

### Military Station No. 7: Gibara

THIS town on Cuba's north coast, with a population of 6,841 in 1899, had a second-class post office under the colonial regime. At the time of the armistice Gibara, and much of the surrounding area, were under the somewhat precarious control of the Cuban revolutionaries. Here, as elsewhere, the Cuban army forces were put to work immediately on the job of maintaining public order, until their demobilization could be completed.

The military post office opened Dec. 1, 1898, and passed to civilian control Feb. 28, 1899.

No covers have been recorded. From loose stamps in the Lewis collection, dates of January-March 1899 are known. (See *Figure 19*, a reconstruction from various impressions on loose stamps.)

### Military Station No. 8: Holguin

WITH an 1899 population of 6,045, Holguin had a second-class colonial post office in Cuba.

The name is properly Holguin. At the time of the occupation, the Spanish colonial postmark was worded "HOLQUIN", and that spelling was retained in the military station markings. This military office officially opened Dec. 1, 1898, and closed Feb. 28, 1899.

The earliest date now recorded for any military postmark of Holguin is Feb. 10, 1899. (See *Figure 20*, taken from an illustration in the Hill article). No example of this marking seems to have been recorded elsewhere.

The more normal form of the postmark (*Figure 21*) is known, dated from Feb. 13 (Hill) to March 6, 1899 (Lewis).

One example of the oval postmark (*Figure 22*) is recorded, canceling an overprinted stamp (1c on 1¢) on piece in the Lewis collection.

### Military Station No. 9: Sagua de Tanamo

WITH a third-class post office in colonial Cuba, this town near the north coast at the eastern end of the island had a population of 1,252 in 1899.

A small U. S. garrison arrived here Sept. 6, 1898. The military post office opened Dec. 15, 1898; its closing date is not recorded.

Nothing is known at present about military postmarks.

### Military Station No. 10: Havana

IN ACCORDANCE with the terms of the peace treaty, the sovereignty over Cuba passed from Spain to the United States of America at noon Jan. 1, 1899. The formal ceremony was held at Havana at that time.

The 1899 population of Havana was 235,981.

To prepare for housing U. S. troops, an army survey group sailed from Savannah, Georgia, Nov. 13, 1898, for Havana. The first forces of the regular garrison arrived in Havana Nov. 26.

*Figure 23* illustrates the first military marking known. Although it contains no reference to location or to station number, this was almost certainly used at Havana, and, in that case, it must have been brought by the early survey group.

This is incorrect. This postmark has now been found on two covers with a Manzanillo cornercard and is presumed to be an early Manzanillo postmark.



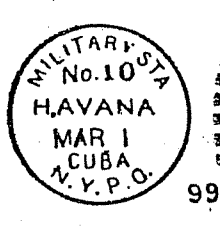


Figure 27

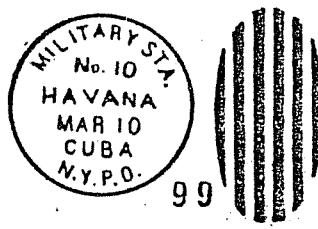


Figure 28



Figure 29

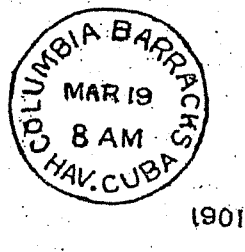


Figure 30



Figure 31

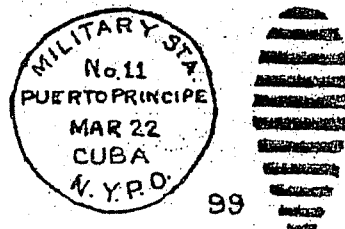


Figure 32

Postmarks of this provisional type, with all-horizontal inscriptions, were used at many army camps in the United States; and at most, if not all, of the numbered military stations in Puerto Rico. Only at Havana, however, are they known used from Cuba.

Havana's military station No. 10 officially opened on Dec. 12, 1898.

The next recorded postmark (*Figure 24*) has No. 2 in the killer, shows location at Havana, and is known with dates from Dec. 21 to 24, 1898.

Two covers are recorded bearing cancellation similar to that shown in *Figure 24*, but with numeral 1 in the killer. One is dated Dec. 26, 1898 (James); the other is dated Jan. 26, 1899 (Joynes).

Next to appear was a mute killer without number (see *Figure 25*), recorded with dates of Dec. 27 (James) and Dec. 28, 1898 (Hill).

This same style of postmark but with No. 10 in the killer is known, dated Jan. 2 to 25, 1899 (*Figure 26*). It occurs either with or without abbreviated year designation.

Two steel handstamps then came into use. One had the usual duplex killer of eleven horizontal bars in the form of an upright oval (*Figure 27*); known dates for this run from Jan. 27 (Norona) to May 2, 1899 (James). The other, with six vertical bars forming the killer (*Figure 28*), was used from Jan. 28 (Hill) to March 28, 1899 (Lewis).

The oval marking shown in *Figure 29* is recorded on three covers, but on none can the date of use be determined.

No registry, received, or other subsidiary markings have yet been reported from Military Station No. 10.

This Havana military station officially closed Feb. 17, 1899. The following day, it "reopened" under the name of "Columbia Barracks", and it continued to operate under this title to May 19, 1902. Its inclusion here can perhaps be justified as Columbia Barracks was officially listed as a military post office.

Rather surprisingly, considering its length of life, the Columbia Barracks postmark is scarce. The earliest date on record is March 19, 1901; the latest; Jan. 28, 1902. (See *Figure 30*).

No subsidiary markings have yet been reported.

A somewhat different "Columbia Barracks" cancellation was used here by U. S. forces after the Cuban government disintegrated in 1906.



Figure 33

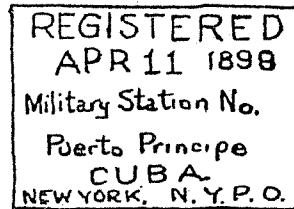


Figure 34

MIL. STA. No. 11  
Puerto Principe  
Cuba.

Figure 35

### Military Station No. 11: Puerto Principe

THIS is the city whose name was changed to "Camagüey" about 1905, together with the name of its province. In colonial days, its post office was an "administración principal." Population in 1899 was 25,102.

The Spanish troops departed on November 24, 1898. The U. S. garrison forces arrived the same day (they left here Feb. 25, 1902); their location was "Camp R. S. Mackenzie."

Officially, the U. S. military post office opened on Dec. 12, 1898.

Despite the fact that use of Spanish colonial stamps in U. S.-occupied areas had been banned by the Postmaster General, those stamps continued in use at Puerto Principe, and perhaps in other parts of the province. An item, dated Dec. 15, 1898, has been seen with the Spanish cancel on colonial stamps.

An article by Dr. A. Barreras entitled, "*Habilitados de Puerto Principe*", published in the September, 1902, issue of *Revista de la Sociedad Filatélica Cubana*, gives many details of the provisional stamps issued here, and of the local postal services at the time. Delf Norona published an article in the *War Cover Philatelist* (June 1941) discussing the cancels found on these provisional issues.

According to Barreras, colonial stamps were used to and including Dec. 19, with the provisionals going on sale the following day in Puerto Principe city. (Norona, however, mentions a Dec. 19 date seen on the provisional stamps.) They were available Dec. 21 at Nuevitas and at Minas de Principe, and Jan. 3, 1899, at Santa Cruz del Sur.

The U. S. stamps overprinted "CUBA" superseded these provisionals Jan. 20 at Puerto Principe and at Nuevitas; at an undetermined later January date at Minas, and not until Feb. 28, 1899, at Santa Cruz.

According to the on-the-spot information of Mr. Lewis, these provisionals were still being manufactured at Havana in the 1920s, from the original type, and were then "canceled" by one of the original Spanish-language cancellers that fell into private hands.

The only dates now recorded for the first U. S. postmark (*Figure 31*) are "9-1-99" and "9-2-99", presumably intended for Jan. 9 and Feb. 9, 1899. This has been seen only on the provisional stamps, with no visible killer.

The normal steel handstamp shown in *Figure 32* is recorded, dated Feb. 9 to March 28, 1899 (Thetford). Usually, but not always, it is found on the stamps overprinted "CUBA".

The oval handstamp shown in *Figure 33* (illustration by Barreras and Hill) has not been recorded in complete form. An example used May 17, 1899 (Joyner collection), shows "MIL STA" and "No 11." elided.


A registered cover in the Sheldon collection bears the boxed registry marking (*Figure 34*) and the unframed handstamp (*Figure 35*), which served as the canceler. It will be noted that the number of the military station is omitted from the registry marking.

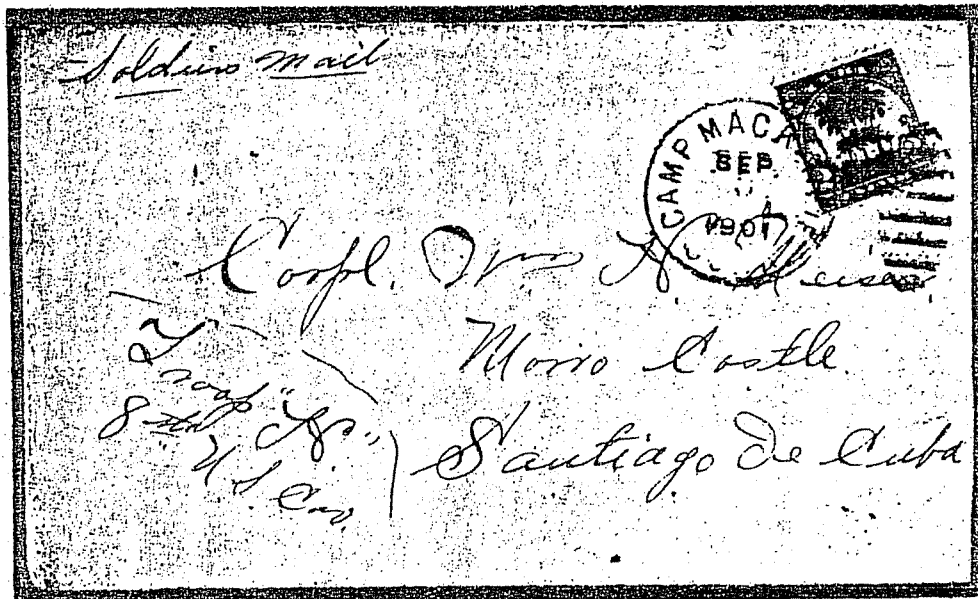
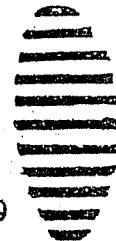
The final postmark from Military Station No. 11 is a straight-line postage-due handstamp (*Figure 36*) illustrated by Barreras. No example has been recorded elsewhere.

POSTAGE DUE ..... CENTS.

Military Station II, Puerto Principe, Cuba.

Figure 36

Figure 38 



THEODORE SHELDON

Figure 37

One of the very few covers known with the postmark of Camp Mackenzie

The official closing date for Military Station No. 11 was March 1, 1899. For more than a year thereafter, soldiers and civilians alike used the facilities of the civil post office. However, about April 28, 1900, a separate office was opened at Camp Mackenzie. It closed about Jan. 27, 1902. (See Figure 37).

### Military Station No. 12: Nuevitas

ON CUBA'S north coast, Nuevitas had a second-class post office before 1898. Its 1899 population was 4,228.

The U. S. garrison arrived Nov. 16, 1898; the military post office officially went into operation Dec. 12, 1898.

According to Hill, the first U. S. postmark had the town name spelled "UNEVITAS", in error, and was used to Jan. 21, 1899. No example of this has been seen.

The Barreras article on the "Habilitados de Puerto Principe" says the provisional stamps were used at Nuevitas Dec. 21, 1898 to Jan. 20, 1899, and were canceled with the Spanish colonial handstamp which, at that time, was in such bad condition that it applied a blot rather than a legible postmark.

No covers are recorded which might serve to clear up this apparent discrepancy.

The marking shown in Figure 38 contains a different error of spelling: "NEUYITAS". Dates noted for this range from Feb. 19 (Newson) to April 13, 1899 (Lewis).

The military post office was turned over to the civil postal authorities Feb. 28, 1899.

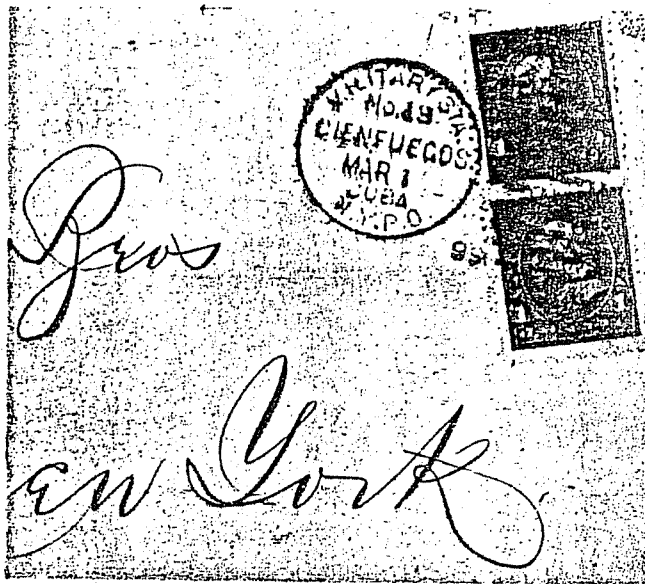


Figure 39  
Commercial mail despatched  
through the military post  
office

It may be of interest to note that Barreras shows a civilian registered handstamp, dated Aug. 28, 1901, with yet another spelling error: "NEUFITAS".

### Military Station No. 13: Cienfuegos

CIENFUEGOS possessed a first-class post office in colonial Cuba. The population was 30,038 in 1899.

American troops arrived in November, 1898. Their encampment, a short distance from the city, was "Rowell Barracks". The military post office opened Dec. 21, 1898. American control of the city itself dated from Jan. 1, 1899. The last Spanish troops in Cuba (26,954 in all) embarked from Cienfuegos on Feb. 6, 1899.

The normal steel handstamp used here (see Figure 39) is recorded with dates ranging from Feb. 6 to April 17, 1899.

A very few loose stamps, with "CUBA" overprint always, are known with an oval cancellation similar to that used at Military Station No. 11, with, of course, "NO. 13/ CUBA" in the center, and "CIENFUEGOS" around the bottom.

The military office nominally closed Feb. 17, 1899.

### Military Station No. 14: Songo

THIS place is, properly, Alto Songo, about 20 miles by road northeast of Santiago. Under the Spanish, it had a fourth-class post office. The population in 1899 was 3,158.

According to Hill, the post office was taken over ("established as a sub-station of Santiago") about Aug. 20, 1898. It officially became a military station on Dec. 21, 1898.



Figure 40

MIL. STA. No. 14,  
SONGO,  
CUBA.

Figure 41



Figure 42

No actual military station postmarks have been seen. Barreras, however, illustrates the two shown here as *Figures 40 and 41*. The date in *Figure 40* appears to be "6-4.23", which agrees with no known chronological era of modern times as the equivalent of 1898 or 1899.

The military post office closed Feb. 23, 1899.

### Military Postal Station No. 15: Pinar del Rio

**B**EGINNING with No. 15, the cancelers underwent two changes. The abbreviation for "Postal" was always included, and the handstamps were of rubber instead of steel.

Under the colonial system, the Pinar del Rio post office was an "administración principal". The city's population in 1899 was 8,880.

The military post office opened Jan. 1, 1899.

Examples of the normal canceler, shown in *Figure 42*, are known, dated from Feb. 6 to March 22, 1899.

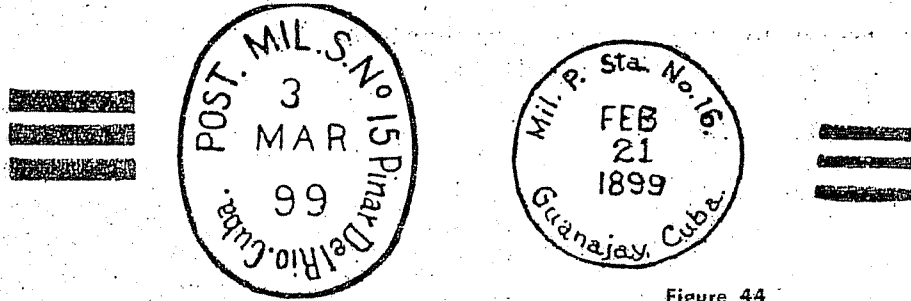


Figure 43

Figure 44

The marking shown in *Figure 43* is from an illustration in the Barreras article. No examples of this have been seen.

The military post office was turned over to civilian control Feb. 23, 1899.

### Military Postal Station No. 16: Guanajay

**T**HIS interior town in Pinar del Rio Province, almost on the boundary with Havana Province, possessed a third-class post office in colonial days. The population was 6,483 in 1899.

The military post office officially came into operation here Jan. 1, 1899.

A peculiarity of the dated Guanajay canceller (shown in *Figure 44*) is its invariable appearance in red. Early and late dates presently recorded for this marking are Feb. 6 (James) and April 4, 1899 (Sheldon).

Most known items from this military office show the stamp additionally struck, in black, with the oval (parcel?) postmark. This is usually a very fuzzy strike, impossible to illustrate, with any accuracy.

The military office officially closed Feb. 26, 1899.

### Military Postal Station No. 17: Mariel

**T**HIS small north-coast town, about seven miles northwest of Guanajay, had a fourth-class colonial post office. Its population in 1899 was 3631.

The military post office opened Jan. 1, 1899.

No covers have yet been recorded. The Lewis collection contains a piece in which a magenta postmark (shown in *Figure 45*) cancels an overprinted stamp. No record of other dates of this marking has been found.

The office officially closed Feb. 27, 1899.



Figure 45



Figure 46



Figure 47

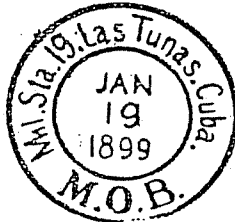


Figure 48



Figure 49

### Military Postal Station No. 18: Trinidad

THIS town near the south coast had a second-class post office, under the colonial administration. The population in 1899 was 11,120.

The military post office opened January 1, 1899. Trinidad was garrisoned by one company of Second U. S. Infantry.

The cancellation used here (*Figure 46*) appears to have deteriorated rapidly. An example, dated in March, 1899, shows it badly deformed. A replacement, or a reserve canceler, with identical wording in sharp, clear letters, was in use from May 4 (James) to June 5, 1899.

Official closing date for this office is not recorded.

### Military Postal Station No. 19: Las Tunas

THIS small town on the south coast was served by a colonial post office under the name "Tunas". The civil establishment under the republic is "Tunas de Zaza." The population in 1899 was 1,014.

The military office opened Jan. 1, 1899.

Only one item has been reported with this cancellation—a cover with blurred postmark, distorted as shown in *Figure 47*.

Barreras illustrates the Money Order Business marking shown in *Figure 48*.

This military post office reportedly reverted to civil administration Feb. 16, 1899.

### Military Postal Station No. 20: Sancti Spiritus

THIS was a first-class post office in colonial Cuba. Its 1899 population was 12,696.

The military office opened Jan. 1, 1899. A garrison force of one company of the Second U. S. Infantry was stationed here.

The only postmark so far noted from here is that shown in *Figure 49*, with dates from March 2 to 24, 1899. No complete covers have been recorded.

The office passed to civil control Feb. 20, 1899.

To Be Continued

# U. S. Military Post Offices in

# CUBA: 1898-1899

(Concluded from Page 512, Vol. 78, No. 7, April 1965)

By Robert S. Gordon, A. P. S.

## Military Postal Station No. 21: Cardenas

IN 1899, the population of this city was 21,940. Under the Spanish, it had a second-class post office.

The military office opened here on January 1, 1899, officially. However, as late as March 5, 1899, a soldier's letter received the Spanish colonial cancellation on U. S. over-printed stamps. The garrison force was one battalion of the Third Kentucky Volunteer Infantry.

The only exact dates now known for this cancellation (see *Figure 50*) are from March 20 to April 11, 1899. On many examples seen, the date is either blurred or missing entirely.

No official closing date for this office has been found.



Figure 50



Figure 51

## Military Postal Station No. 22: Bayamo

THIS interior town, east of Manzanillo, was recorded as having a first-class post office in colonial Cuba, although the 1899 census gave it only 3,022 inhabitants.

A small garrison force arrived here in October, 1898. The military post office, however, was not officially established until Jan. 1, 1899.

The only date now known for the military postmark is that shown in *Figure 51*.

The official closing date for the military post office was Feb. 20, 1899.

## Military Postal Station No. 23: Mayari

IN colonial Cuba, Mayari had a third-class post office. The population in 1899 was 1821.

The military post office opened Jan. 1, 1899. The only recorded examples of its cancellation bear very late dates: from May 18 (Sheldon) to Oct. 8, 1899 (Baker).

The Sheldon cover of May, 1899, also carries a straight-line handstamp "Military Station No. 23, / Mayari, Cuba." used as a return address rather than as a postmark.

The official closing date for this military office was Feb. 23, 1899.

## Military Postal Station No. 24: Palma Soriano

A THIRD-class post office functioned here in colonial days. The 1899 population was 1,776.

The military post office opened Jan. 1, 1899, and closed officially Feb. 23, 1899.  
 No postmarks of this office have yet been seen.

### Military Postal Station No. 25: Cristo

THIS small town a few miles north of Santiago de Cuba (the name is properly "El Cristo") had a fourth-class colonial post office. The population was 1,194 in 1899.

Although garrisoned from September, 1898, the military post office did not open until Jan. 1, 1899. Its closing date has not been found.

The only information on military postmarks comes from the Barreras article, where a receiving mark (*Figure 53*) is shown.



Figure 52

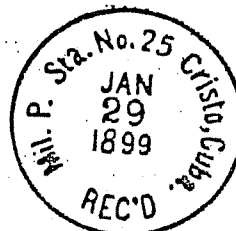


Figure 53

### Military Postal Station No. 26: Buena Vista

THIS was a suburb of Havana, then located between Camp Columbia ("Columbia Barracks") and the center of the city. It possessed no post office of its own in colonial days. In 1899, the census showed 4,071 inhabitants in the "district."

The military post office opened Jan. 5, 1899. The cancellation (*Figure 54*) is known dated from January 22 (Willinger) to March 24, 1899 (Sheldon). Its normal color is red.

One example of the receiving postmark (*Figure 55*) is known (Brenner collection). This also is in dark red.

Various covers are recorded with the registry marking shown in *Figure 56*. Dates run from Feb. 6 to March 2, 1899 (Ferrer)—and are applied in red.

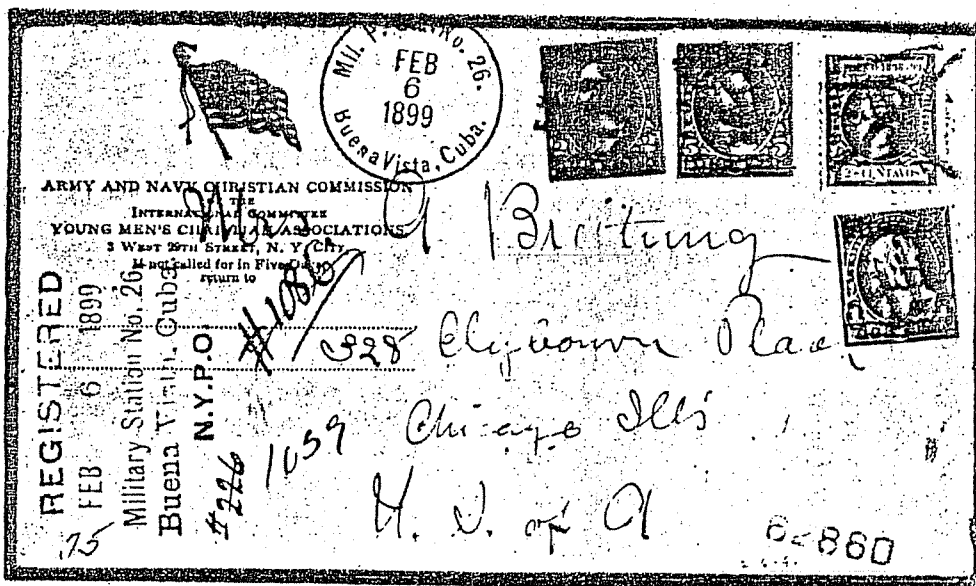


Figure 54  
 Buena Vista cover. (James)





Figure 55

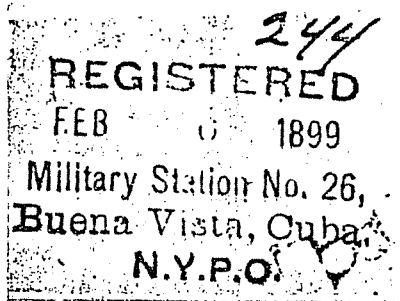


Figure 56

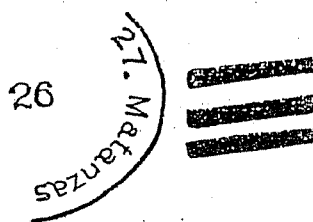


Figure 57

The Sheldon collection contains a piece with double-circle M. O. B. marking dated March 13, 1899, from which some wording probably referring to "Mil. P. Sta. No. 26" has been excised. No example of the complete inscription is yet recorded.

The military post office officially closed Feb. 20, 1899.

### Military Postal Station No. 27: Matanzas

SPANISH troops began the evacuation of the interior of Matanzas Province in mid-November 1898; by Dec. 28, all of these troops had left for the seacoast. The contingent of 13,000 Spanish troops left Matanzas (city) Jan. 12, 1899.

The Matanzas post office was considered an "administración principal" in colonial Cuba. The population was 36,374 in 1899. The military post office opened Jan. 6, 1899.

According to Hill, the original military cancellation was spelled "Matarizas". A cover is recorded in which only the portion of the cancellation shown in Figure 57 is legible. Considering the similarity of the printed small letter "n" to "ri", especially if slightly blurred, it seems possible that this marking is the origin of the Hill report. The date of the cancellation is almost certainly Jan. 26, 1899.

The usual cancellation is that shown in Figure 58. It is often found greatly deformed; two (or more) similar canceling devices apparently were in simultaneous use. Dates known for this marking run from Jan. 28 (Sheldon) to Aug. 2, 1899 (Lewis).

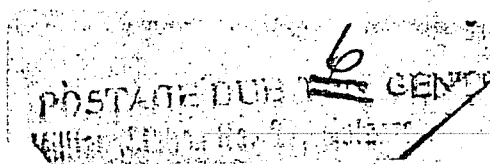
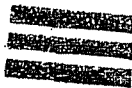


Figure 58

Figure 59



The only subsidiary postal marking now recorded is the postage-due handstamp (Figure 59) in the Sheldon collection.

This military post office closed Feb. 26, 1899.

### Military Postal Station No. 28: Santa Clara

SANTA CLARA was an "administración principal" under the Spanish. Its population in 1899 was 13,763. The military post office opened Jan. 10, 1899.

The only postmark seen from here is that illustrated in Figure 60. It occurs normally in red, with recorded dates from Feb. 17 (Lewis) to April 20, 1899 (Barreras).

The military office came under civil administration on Feb. 22, 1899.

### Military Postal Station No. 29: Placetas

THIS town in Santa Clara Province had only a fourth-class post office in colonial Cuba, although its population in 1899 was 5,409. The military office opened Feb. 1, 1899.



Figure 60



Figure 61

The only postmark known from here is that shown in *Figure 61*, always applied in red. Known dates of use range from March 20 (Baker) to April 19, 1899 (Lewis).

The military office closed Feb. 26, 1899.

### Military Postal Station No. 30: Santa Cruz

UNDER the postal administration of colonial Cuba, there were three offices named "Santa Cruz". Two fifth-class post offices were Santa Cruz de los Pinos and Santa Cruz del Norte. The U. S. military office was at the third-class office of Santa Cruz del Sur. That town's population in 1899 was 1,210. The military post office opened Feb. 1, 1899.

In his article on the "*Habilitados de Puerto Príncipe*", Dr. Barreras says the provisional issue of Puerto Príncipe was also used at Santa Cruz del Sur from Jan. 3 to Feb. 28, 1899. They were canceled, according to the same authority, by the colonial "rejilla"—an oval enclosing a latticed design, with no wording. No examples have yet been seen.

The cancellation shown in *Figure 62* is known in black, in carmine, and in purple, with dates from April 3 (Baker) to May 11, 1899 (Lewis).

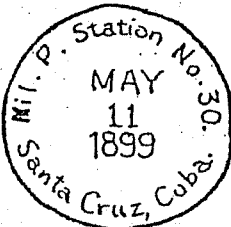


Figure 62

REGISTERED  
JUN 23 1899  
Military Station No. 30,  
Santa Cruz, Cuba.  
N.Y.P.O.

Figure 63

The straight-line registry marking (*Figure 63*) is presently known only through a Barreras illustration.

A cover in the Baker collection bears a straight-line handstamp "*Military Station No. 30, / Santa Cruz, Cuba.*"

The nominal closing date for this military post office was Feb. 17, 1899.

### Military Postal Station No. 31: Santo Domingo

THIS town had a third-class post office in the 1890s, and a population of 2,079 in 1899. The military post office officially opened Feb. 1, 1899, and reportedly closed Feb. 11, 1899, for a very short period of existence.

The only item presently recorded bearing an example of the Santo Domingo military postmark is a loose stamp with the oval cancellation shown in *Figure 64*.

### Military Postal Station No. 32: Jucaro

IN colonial Cuba, Jucaro had a fourth-class post office. Its 1899 population amounted to only 468 people. The decision to establish a military station here (it opened Feb. 1, 1899) was perhaps dictated by the location: a seaport on the south coast, connected by rail to Morón, near the north coast.



Figure 64

Figure 65

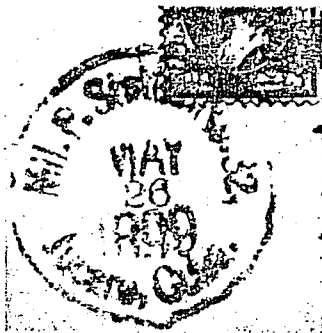


Figure 66

Examples of the cancellation (*Figure 65*) are known with dates from May 12 to June 9, 1899 (Lewis). See *Figure 65*.

One example of the oval postmark (*Figure 66*) has been recorded, used as a cancellation on piece in the Lewis collection. This military office closed officially Feb. 17, 1899.

### Military Postal Station No. 33: Sagua la Grande

**T**HIS town had a second-class post office in colonial Cuba. Its population in 1899 was 12,728. The military post office existed, officially, from Feb. 1 to 27, 1899.

The standard canceler (*Figure 67*) is recorded, dated from March 12 (Baker) to July 1, 1899.

A loose stamp in the Lewis collection shows enough of the oval handstamp to identify it, but hardly sufficient to illustrate usefully.

### Military Postal Station No. 34: Caibarien

**T**HIS was a third-class post office before the Americans arrived. The population was 7013 in 1899.

The military post office opened Feb. 1 and closed, officially, Feb. 27, 1899.

The only dates presently recorded for this postmark (*Figure 68*) are in March, 1899.

A cover in the James collection additionally carries a two-line handstamp: "POST-AGE DUE TWO CENTS./Military Station No. 34, Caibarien, Cuba."

### Military Postal Station No. 35: Batabano

**A** SMALL village near the south coast, Batabanó had a fourth-class post office under the Spanish. The population was 1025 in 1899. The military post office existed officially from Feb. 1 to 17, 1899.

The Lewis collection contains the only example so far recorded of the postmark of this office. (See *Figure 69*.)

### Military Postal Station No. 36: Colon

**T**HIS place, with an 1899 population of 7175, possessed a second-class post office in colonial days. Its military post office opened Feb. 10, 1899. The closing date has not been found.

There have been no reports of the military postal markings used here.

### Military Postal Station No. 37: Surgidero de Batabano

**A**LTHOUGH the name means "harbor of Batabanó", this place was—and still is—larger than Batabanó itself. In 1899, the population was 3,683. In colonial days, it had a post office of the third class.

The military post office opened February 10, 1899, and officially closed Feb. 26, 1899.

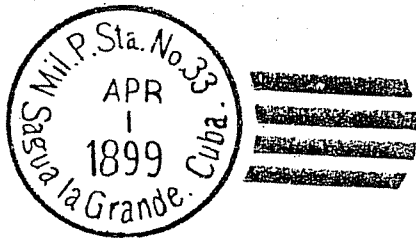


Figure 67

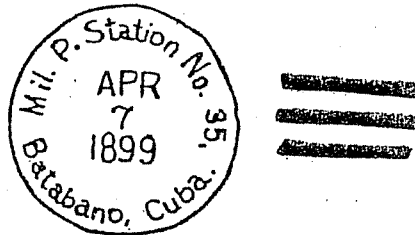


Figure 69

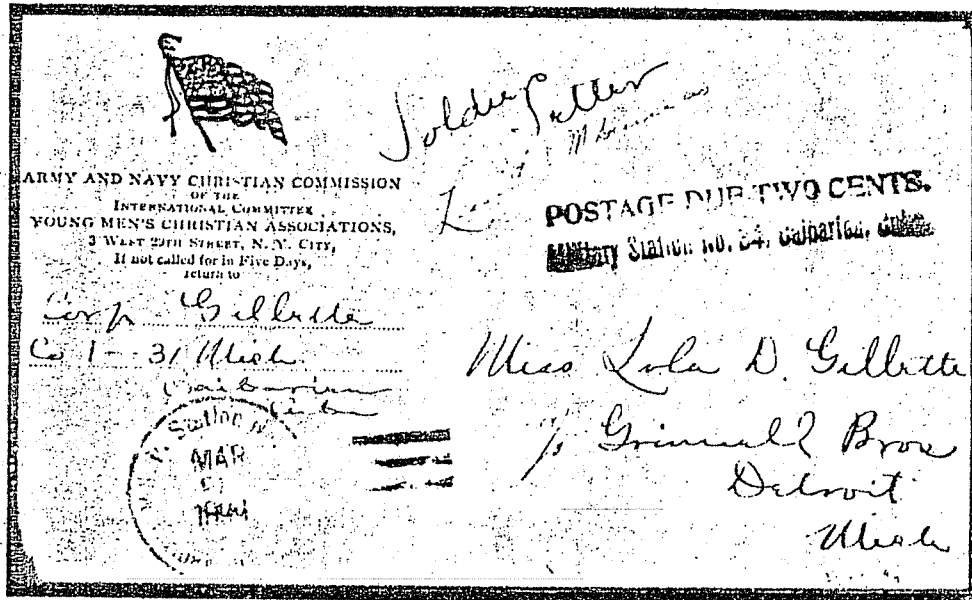


Figure 68

MILLO S. JAMES

The only known example of the postage-due marking of Caibarien.

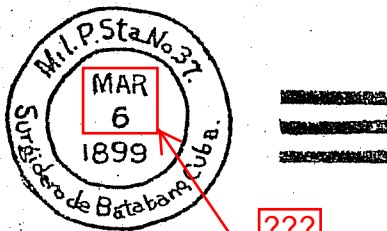


Figure 70

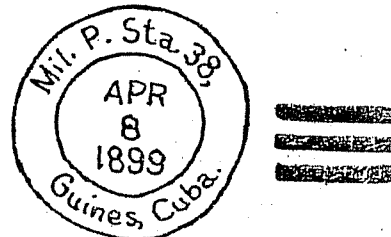


Figure 71

Only one item has currently been recorded with this military postmark,—a cover in the Baker collection (see Figure 70). Part of the same marking is illustrated by Barreras. The Baker cover is dated Feb. 26, 1899.

### Military Postal Station No. 38: Guines

THIS town of 8,149 (by 1899 census) possessed a third-class post office under the Spanish. The military office opened Feb. 10, 1899. Its closing date is not recorded.

The original postmark misspelled the name as "GRIMES", according to Hill. No example of this has been seen.

The Lewis collection contains one example, on piece, of the normal cancellation (Figure 71). No others are now known.



Figure 72

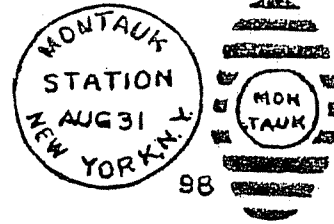


Figure 73

The oval handstamp (*Figure 72*) is from a Barreras illustration, no examples of this having been recorded.

### Military Postal Station No. 39: Union de Reyes

THE interior town of Unión de Reyes, 20 miles south of Matanzas, had a second-class post office under the Spanish. Its 1899 population was 5,226.

The garrison force consisted of one battalion of the third Kentucky Infantry. The military post office officially opened Feb. 10, 1899. Its closing date is not known.

No cancellation from this military station has yet been seen. Barreras, however, illustrates an unframed two-line handstamp, "POSTAGE DUE TWO CENTS. / Union de Reyes, Cuba.", in which the second line is shifted far to the right, perhaps implying the deletion of the military station number on that line.

☆ ☆ ☆

AN OUTBREAK of yellow fever among the troops taking part in the campaign before Santiago was the basis for the decision to return those troops at the earliest possible moment to an isolated area at the eastern end of Long Island, N. Y. It was believed this was necessary to avoid the spread of the disease in the United States. The facilities in Cuba were unable to satisfactorily take care of the sick soldiers; and almost the entire contingent was sent to Montauk Point, where the first of these troops landed Aug. 14, 1898.

To serve the postal needs of these soldiers, a branch of the New York City post office was opened on Montauk Point in August 1898 (*see Figure 73*). The branch closed in February, 1899.

☆ ☆ ☆

THIS CONCLUDES the survey of the military post offices which operated in Cuba during the period covered in this monograph, together with what is now known of the postmarks used. Mention of the branch at Montauk Point has been made in the belief that it may be of some interest through its close connection with the actual operations.

By an order of Feb. 10, 1899, all existing military post offices in Cuba were required to assume civilian status, or to "consolidate" with the local civil post offices in the few places where both then operated concurrently.

This civil postal administration came into operation on Jan. 1, 1899, when the special overprinted stamps were first issued. (Jan. 1 was a Sunday; the first day of use appears to have been Jan. 2). The status of the civil postal administration was defined in a letter of Dec. 30, 1898, from Postmaster General Emory Smith to the Secretary of War:

"The postal system of Cuba, while for convenience practically administered under the direction of the Post Office Department, is to be maintained by virtue of military authority and as a part of the military government established by the United States during the period of control."

It might be argued, with some reason, that the "civil" post offices of Cuba, from Jan. 1, 1899 to May 20, 1902, also were military offices of a sort. Comparatively little research has been done; but it is a field of considerable potential interest.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:** Many collectors have contributed information, directly to the writer and indirectly through Mr. Lewis. Those known to the writer are: Walter C. Ayres, Philip E. Baker, C. D. Brenner, José A. Ferrer-Monge, Edward C. Hopps, Robert J. Hutcheson, Milo S. James, Alton N. Joyner, Floyd S. Leach, Paul T. Newson, R. B. Parker, Theodore Sheldon, Norman D. Thetford and I. Willinger.

Apologies are extended to any who may have been inadvertently omitted.

## U. S. CHRONICLE, 1965

### Kennedy Aerogramme First-Day in Boston

THE 11-cent John F. Kennedy aerogramme will be issued in Boston on May 29—the 48th birthday anniversary of the 35th President.

The imprinted design consists of a Kennedy portrait, featured in one of the rejected designs prepared by the Loewy/Snaith firm of New York for the 1964 memorial issue, and the silhouette of a jet plane, printed in blue on lighter blue paper. It was created by Robert L. Miller of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, based on a photograph of President Kennedy by Douglas Jones, staff photographer of Look magazine, and published in the special issue "Kennedy and His Family in Pictures."

Lower left on the design is "John F. Kennedy" in blue. Upper left, in red, is "11¢ Air Mail." Lower right, also in red, "U. S. A."

An initial printing of 20 million is underway at the Government Printing Office.

Collectors desiring first-day cancellation may submit orders to the Postmaster, Boston, Mass. 02109, plainly indicating full name and address, including ZIP code number, with remittance to cover the cost, which is 11 cents for each sheet. The co-operation of collectors in including their ZIP Code Number will greatly facilitate the processing of the thousands of orders in the short time available.

### Three More Dates, Cities Selected

DATES and places for first-day ceremonies for three 5-cent commemorative postage stamps to be issued during the summer months have been decided. These are:

- International Co-operation Year, June 26, San Francisco.
- Dante Alighieri, July 17, San Francisco.
- Florida Quadricentennial, St. Augustine, Fla., Aug. 28.

The design of the Dante stamp, which honors the great Italian poet who was born 700 years ago has been made public. The stamp was designed by Douglas Gorsline, New York artist who also designed last year's Shakespeare commemorative stamp. Gorsline's design simulates the style of early Florentine allegorical paintings. For his likeness of Dante, the artist turned to the



painting of an unknown 16th Century artist which hangs in the National Gallery of Art, Washington.

Dante is shown wearing the laurel wreath symbolic of poetry. Above him an angel unfurls a banner on which is inscribed "700th Anniversary." Lower left are flames, an allegorical reference to hell, which the poet visited in his poem "The Divine Comedy."

At the bottom of the stamp is a horizontal plaque inscribed "United States." Bisecting this is a vertical plaque in which appears "5¢".

The picture was engraved by A. W. Dintaman, with lettering by W. R. Burnell, of the U. S. Bureau of Engraving and Printing.

Production of 112 million vertical stamps is planned in one color on colored paper to come off the Cottrell presses.

ST. AUGUSTINE, Fla., the oldest continuous settlement in the U. S., is the first-day city for the stamp marking the 400th anniversary of permanent colonization by Europeans of this hemisphere. The famed Spanish admiral, Don Pedro Menendez de Aviles founded St. Augustine in 1565, naming it in honor of the saint whose feast day it was when the land was found.

Four different flags have flown over the city—Spanish, French, United States, and, briefly, the Stars and Bars of the Confederate States of America.

The International Co-operation Year-United Nations commemorative stamp will appropriately have its first-day in San Francisco, where 20 years ago on June 26 the Charter was completed. Theme of ICY is "Peace and Progress Through Co-operation" and the U. N.'s General Assembly has asked all member nations to issue commemorative stamps.

Collectors desiring first day cancellations for the three stamps may send addressed envelopes, together with remittance to cover the cost of stamps to be affixed, to the appropriate city.