

## Back Issue of Military Postal History Society 'Bulletin': (Bulletin Jan 1953)

Back issues of the Military Postal History Society 'Bulletin' are now available. The issues available span the period from 1937 to 2022. The MPHS is a non-profit organization for philatelists and stamp collectors interested in the collecting and studying of the postal aspects of all wars and military actions of all countries, including soldiers' campaign covers, naval mail, occupation and internment covers, patriotics, propaganda, V-mail, censorship and similar related material.

You are encouraged to join the MPHS to realize the additional benefits of membership. See: <http://militaryphs.org/membership>

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WAR COVER CLUB BULLETIN

Edited by Kevin P. Rogan, R. N.  
2 William Street  
Napanoch, N.Y.

Vol VII

JANUARY

1953

Whole No. 4

I hope everyone had a Merry time at X-Mas and will have a happy new year finding just the covers you need. At this time I want to thank all those who wrote commenting on my first attempt with the Bulletin for last November. I also want to thank all who have contributed articles and "odds and ends" for future bulletins. Doctor Brenner's article is the main dish this month. I know you will like it. Have you ever wanted to know the history of a certain ship of ships?? You may obtain a typed edition by writing to DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY, NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION, SHIP'S HISTORIES SECTION, WASHINGTON 25, D. C. Write to Lt. Commander H. J. Gimpel, Officer in charge. No charge, but don't ask for too many at a time. They have about 1000 histories completed so far. They tell me you can obtain Air Unit Histories from AVIATION HISTORY SECTION, ROOM 5D632, PENTAGON BLDG., WASHINGTON 25, D. C. In NOVEMBER BULLETIN there was a mention of the TRANS PACIFIC MASS JET FLIGHT. Does anyone have any for sale?? I know of a few who need some.

A. L. NICHOLSON, Postmaster of Macon, N. C. tells of 3 very good Navals. First is flown by F9F Panther Jet Fighter from "Valley Forge" off shores of Hong Kong on June 24, 1950... Day before Korean War started! Second flown in a jet from Valley Forge by Cmdr. Lanham over Korea on August 26, 1952. Third is the same except it was "over the Incheon landing area on September 16, 1950. Incidentally Mr. Nicholson's favorite cover is one sent by an American in a North Korean Prisoner of War Camp, on January 17, 1952. The cover was sent free, bore a No. Korean or Chinese military cancel and below was cancelled with APO 100 on March 2, 1952. Not many of these around. I've only heard of one other!!!!

How about some of you new members buying the back copies of the Bulletin? They have many, many fine articles. Complete sets are available. Also don't forget our APO Location chart and APO Type chart which are available from your Secretary, Mr. Tripp, 18533 Mandota Ave., Detroit 21, Michigan.

From Jimmy Russell comes this info: APO 971 has a new machine cancel with very small letters. It reads Army-Air Force Postal Service APO 971. The cover also had an Air Mail cachet showing a Korean with a beard carrying a letter. On the bottom of his garment is "Air Mail form Korea". Have any of you members seen any other new type dies? Please let Jim or your Editor know. The 7th Div. in Korea has a pictorial History "The Bayonet" sells for \$5.50. Write to Lt. Joseph J. Bryane, PIO Office APO 7. Russell has compiled the latest list of ARMY AIR FORCE Cancels with help from Col. Munick, Stewart, Cippoli, Nicholson and Willinger. Here it is: (Number will be APO; H for handstamp; M for machine) 3 H, 5 H, 6 H M, 7 H M, 8 H, 10 H M, 15 H M, 20 H, 24 H, 27 H, 30 H, 32 H, 35 H, 36 H, 42 H, 41 H, 46 H, 47 H, 51 H M, 54 H, 55 H, 58 H, 59 H, 60 H M, 63 H, 64 H, 67 H, 70 H, 71 H, 72 H M, 74 H, 76 H M, 76-1 H, 81 H, 82 H, 86 H M, 106 H, 108 H, 112 H, 117 H, 125 H, 154 H, 168 H, 174 H, 201 H M, 206 H M, 206a H, 226 H M, 231 H, 239 H, 248 H, 264 H M, 301 M, 317 H M, 323 M, 328 M, 331 H, 334 H M, 351 H, 354 M, 358 H, 403 H, 406 M, 407 H, 468 H M, 500 H, 503 H, 541 H, 612 H M, 616 H M, 633 H, 677 H M, 707 H M, 719 H, 757 H, 843 H, 851 H, 856 H, 861 H, 901 H M, 901-2 H, 902 H M, 909 H, 925 H M, 928 H, 929 H M, 953 M, 958 H M, 970 H, 971 H, 1007 H, 1051 H, 1054 H, 7th BPO H.

Received a note from Member Everel E. Keys in re to French covers from Korea. The T.O.E. cancel is used for free mail. The POSTAL MILITAIRE #560 cancel is used when mail carries postage stamps. French mail to the U.S. is sent mostly free thus the T.O.E. cancel. To foreign countries it could be mailed free and forwarded via Paris, France where postage would be added and the POSTE AUX ARMEES / 222 cancel added to cancel the stamps. On your french covers look for the military cachet of the "BATAILLON FRANCAIS DE L'O.N.U. Le Vaguemestre"  
Time out for a breath of air and a "Commercial"

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WORLD WAR II COVERS

Will swap patriotics, POWs, special cancels, etc. for U. S. and foreign.

The Better You Send, The Better You Receive

AL. HALFERN

209 ATLANTIC

McKEESPORT, PENNA.

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During the X-mas time we all received. Lets turn our thoughts to giving. not only at this time of the year but all year long, especially to those who have "given" already. The ones I mention are the wounded vets in our hospitals. How about sending any kind of duplicates, stamps, covers, supplies, etc. to the CASTLE POINT STAMP CLUB, VETERANS' HOSPITAL, CASTLE POINT, NEW YORK. Joseph J. Rosa is president of this club. Early reports from 7BPO indicates the out-going mail record of 1,146,356 pieces of mail handled last X-mas will be broken this year, as in normal months, an average of 800,000 pieces pass through this office. All current mail is being worked over by more than 700 Army and Civilian workers, enough chinaware has been ordered from the PX's to make the PO establish a branch at TOTSUKO. Experienced Japanese girls will sort the mail for the 130 FEC APO's which serve approx. 5000 Army and Air Force units. (A. J. Tripp)

WCC members having pre-cancels, or who can borrow, beg or trade for such, are asked to send the wanted items to RAYMOND W. MULLING, 1905 S. Ashland Ave., Park Ridge, Ill.

At the recent A.S.D.A. show met with Mr. Franklin R. Burns, Jr., Stamp Editor of Telefram-Sun and charge of Division of Philately, Smithsonian Institution, Washington 25, D.C. A complete copy of the WAR COVER CLUB BULLETIN is being sent to the Institute for their use. The U.S.C.S. has a exhibit down there on display. Would some member like to handle the gathering of a display or exhibit for the W.C.C.? Please step into my office!!!

Auction #15 hold in November brought the following prices: 1-9 50¢ ea. 10-\$1.10; 11-\$1.25; 12-0.65; 13-\$2.30; 14-\$5.50; 15-0.65; 16-0.75; 17-0.75; 18- 19-0.25; 20-0.75; 21-0.75; 22-\$1.50; 23-\$1.50; 24-0.25 25-0.50; 26-0.50; 27-0.20; 28-0.75; 29-0.75; 30-\$1.25; 31-0.75; 32 to 38 were 75 cents ea.; 39-0.10; 40-0.25; 41-0.25; 42-0.50; 43-0.50; 44-\$1.50; 45-\$1.75; 46-0.25; 47-0.10; 48-\$1.00; 49-\$2.00; 50-0.40; 51 to 54 were 50 cents ea.; 55-\$1.55; 56-0.75; 57-0.75; 58-0.50; 59-0.55; 60-0.25; 61-0.10; 62-0.25; 63-0.75; 64-0.75; 65-0.75; 66- 67-0.35; 68-0.50; 69-\$1.50; 70-\$1.00; 71 to 74 were 50 cents ea.; 75-\$1.50; 76-\$1.50; 77-0.80; 78-0.80; 79-0.75; 80- 81-\$1.75; 82-0.75; 83-0.10; 84-\$1.00; 85-0.50; 87-0.35; 88-0.35; 89-0.15; 90- 91- 92-0.40; 93- 94-0.35; 95-0.25; 96- 97-0.50; 98 to 101 were 50 cents ea.; 102-\$1.00; 103-0.35; 104-\$2.55; 105-\$1.10; 106-\$1.25.

Time out for another breather after the above figures!! I never did learn how to "Touch type" the numbers on the typewriter. How about another commercial??? Send one in..we will publish it for 50 cents. Send to the editor.

Just heard from Member Burgess Thomas from KOREA. I knew he would get there! His address is Box 7612, Seaman's Unit, RINCON Annex P.O., San Francisco.

## THE A. E. F. IN SIBERIA

By C. D. Brenner

The best account of the postal service of the American Expeditionary Force in Siberia (1918-1920) that has been published is the chapter on this subject by H. M. Metzger in H. M. Sanford's The Mail of the A. E. F., Federalburg, Md., 1940. Since the appearance of this account a certain amount of new information has come to light which it is proposed to present in the following article. The fact that new information and new types of postal markings continue to turn up is sufficient indication that we have not yet had the last word on this particular subject.

The objectives of the Allied Expeditionary Army sent to Siberia were the protection of the stores of supplies accumulated in Vladivostok, the restoration of the Trans-Siberian Railroad, and the rescue and support of the Czechs. The latter, most of them ex-prisoners of war from the Austrian Army, had fought in Kerensky's last offensive against the Bolsheviki. During the winter of 1917-1918, they held their organization together and brought it up to a total strength of 40,000 men. In May, 1918, they started to travel by train across Russia and Siberia with the ultimate aim of being transported across the Pacific and the Atlantic for service on the Western Front. In June, the Czech expedition was attacked by the Bolsheviki and part of it cut off from Siberia. 15,000 men got through, the remaining 25,000 started on a long and epic campaign to fight their way through which lasted the greater part of the next year. It was primarily to aid these Czech forces that the U. S. Government decided on August 3, 1918, to send troops to Siberia.

At about the same time other Allied countries also decided to participate in this operation. The Japanese were the first to have troops on the spot and they furnished the largest contingent of any of the Allies. The Expeditionary Army also comprised British, French, Canadian, Italian, Roumanian, Polish, and Russian troops besides the U. S. and Czech troops.

As soon as the U. S. had decided to join the expedition, the 27th and 31st Infantry Regiments were ordered to proceed to Vladivostok from the Philippines. These units were accompanied by Ordnance, Quartermaster, Medical and Hospital detachments. The first of these regiments landed in Siberia on August 15, 1918, the second on August 21st. Also about 8,000 men were sent from Camp Fremont, near San Francisco, to fill out the compliment of these regiments. At the request of the Provisional White Russian Government which had its seat at Vladivostok, the so-called Russian Railway Service Corps was organized. It was composed of American engineers. These engineers, acting as advisers, were assigned to the fourteen sectors into which the railroad was divided. To protect the railroad the Allied military commanders were asked to provide troops. Some of the U. S. troops were assigned to that part of the railroad near Vladivostok, others took over a section more than 2,000 miles inland near Verkhne-Udinsk where the 27th Regiment had its headquarters.

These first U. S. Troops in Siberia were without any organized postal service for six or seven weeks. A small amount of mail seems to have been sent out during this period by private arrangement. Some of it was taken out on Japanese merchant vessels and placed in the mails of Japan. Some of it was sent to San Francisco on some sort of boat, as we have seen a letter postmarked in that city on Oct. 7, 1918.

In the meantime steps were being taken to provide a regular postal service. We have been fortunate enough to be able to establish communication with several of the men who were associated with this postal service. The first of these is Lester K. Ade who was the original base censor at Vladivostok. His name appears on several

of the base censor stamps to be found on covers. Mr. Ade has not been able to give us much fresh information, but did enable us to communicate with Mr. Stephen A. Cisler who as a representation of the Post Office Department established and had charge of the Postal Agency in Siberia. Mr. Cisler has very generously supplied us with a number of valuable bits of information.

The Postal Agency in Siberia was established by the following order:

September 12, 1918

Postmaster General Order No. 200h:

Pursuant to section 4021, Revised Statutes (sec. 1468, Postal Laws and Regulations), a Mail Agency is hereby established at Vladivostok, Siberia, Russia, or such other port in Russia as may be more convenient, for conducting the postal service in connection with the United States Expeditionary Forces in Russia to be known as the United States Mail Agency, in Russia (Siberia), and Stephen A. Cisler is appointed as Postal Agent in charge.

As soon as he had received this order Mr. Cisler set out for Siberia where he arrived on October first. That he lost no time in establishing the base post office in Vladivostok is attested by the fact that the first mail is postmarked October 2nd. Until October 15, all mail was postmarked with a hand stamp of the U. S. Postal Agency, Shanghai. (Fig. 1). Mr. Cisler says that he took this hand stamp with him from the United States. After several weeks a rubber hand stamp made especially for the Siberian Agency arrived (Fig. 2). It was followed shortly by a cancelling machine (Fig. 3). Impressions of this postmark look like a steel hand stamp. According to Mr. Cisler it is a machine cancellation. It must almost certainly then have been a machine that canceller only one letter at a time.

It has become known only relatively recently that the Postal Agency had three branch post offices, as follows:

No. 1 at Verkhne-Udinsk  
No. 2 at Habarösk  
No. 3 at Spasskaye

The writer has come into possession of cancelled money orders from each of these branches which are stamped Station 1, Station 2, and Station 3 respectively. They are the only postal evidence so far seen of the existence of these branches. Mr. Cisler seems to recall that each branch had its own identifying post mark. We are rather inclined to doubt this, since no such postmark has ever been reported. The possibility is not ruled out, however, so here is something for collectors to watch for. Mr. Cisler also says that the mail cars that ran over the Trans-Siberian Railroad several times a week used R. P. O. hand stamp postmarks to cancel mail. No examples of these have been reported either. The use of these R. P. O. hand stamps is not improbable. They would have most likely been used to cancel mail going from one unit to another along the railroad. Little if any such mail would be preserved and brought back to the United States. When it is remembered that only one example has been found of an R. P. O. postmark used in France by the A. E. F. in World War I and only one example of a similar postmark used in North Russia during the same war, both recent discoveries, there is cause for hope that someone will be lucky enough to find a Trans-Siberian R. P. O. postmark on cover.

The U. S. troops were withdrawn from Siberia in the spring of 1920. By May 1, nearly all had gone, but Mr. Cisler did not close the post office until July 10. The Post Office Department, lagging far behind the accomplished fact, did not officially abolish the Agency until later, as is shown by the following order:

March 2, 1921

Postmaster General Order No. 5497

With reference to order No. 2004 of September 12, 1918, it is hereby ordered that the United States Mail (Postal) Agency at Vladivostok, Siberia, Russia, is discontinued effective this date.

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NAVAL PARTICIPATION

To the writer's knowledge, nothing has appeared in print regarding the participation of the U. S. Navy in the Siberian operation. The following authoritative statement on this subject has been received from the Director of Naval Records and Library in Washington:

"From March 1918 until April 1920 the Asiatic Fleet co-operated with the Japanese and other Allied forces in the Far East. The flagship or some other vessels of the Fleet were almost constantly at Vladivostok-protecting American interests. The USS Brooklyn, flagship of Admiral Austin M. Knight, arrived at Vladivostok March 1, 1918, and remained there until after the arrival of U. S. troops in August. She left that place October 9, but returned December 23rd with Admiral W. L. Rogers who had relieved Admiral Knight. She served as station ship until April 2, 1919, when she was relieved by the USS Albany, which was subsequently replaced by the USS New Orleans. Admiral Albert Gleaves arrived at Vladivostok in the USS South Dakota on January 12, 1920, as relief for Admiral Rogers who had left that place in the Brooklyn on December 8, 1919. During this period on more than one occasion marines and bluejackets were landed from our ships, in co-operation with Allied forces, to guard German and Austrian prisoners, the American consulate and the Russian naval yard, or to patrol the city to prevent destruction and preserve order. The evacuation of U. S. troops from Siberia began January 20, 1920, and was completed April 2, when General Graves and his staff sailed for Manila."

The above statement makes no mention of the U. S. Army Transports that carried troops to and from Vladivostok.

Only two naval covers from Siberia are known to the writer: one, from the USS New Orleans, is dated August 8, 1919; the other, from the USS Albany, is dated January 20, 1920. Since it is very probable that some naval covers from Siberia can be identified only by the date in their postmark, it is hoped that the above information will aid in such identification.

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There was a civilian post office of the Russian Provisional Government functioning in Vladivostok during and after the Allied Occupation. A good many covers

have been seen from private and commercial letters that passed through this post office and usually bear a Russian censor stamp. Mail from U. S. Red Cross workers who stayed on after the Occupation also bears evidence of similar handling. This article is not concerned with the civilian postal history of Siberia of this period.

A few covers have come to the writer's attention that are of such special interest that it is believed worth while to give the following brief description of them.

1) From an American Y.M.C.A. man with the A.E.F. in Siberia. Post card dated Vladivostok, January 9, 1920. Bears three Russian stamps postmarked Vladivostok, date not decipherable. Also bears censor hand stamp in Russian reading Examined Vladivostok by Russian Censor No. 3. It would seem that, contrary to regulations, the sender placed this card in the Russian civilian mail. There is no indication of how, when, or where it arrived in this country.

2) Cover from U. S. Army lieutenant dated August 30, 1918. Russian stamps. Postmark looks like Tsuruga Japan. Also a paquebot marking. No U. S. military censor mark. No U. S. postal system had yet been established in Siberia. Letter probably smuggled out on a Japanese merchant vessel.

3) Commercial cover with U. S. Five cent stamp. Postmarked Sambor, Poland. Clearly dated January 18, 1921. Bears an A.E.F. Siberia censor mark. Looks as if someone among the Polish troops in Siberia had taken this censor stamp home with him. Maybe he did a little looting and secured some U. S. stamps at the same time. Who has a better explanation?

4) A ballot cover. Not seen.

In preparing this article the writer has been aided by the generous co-operation of a number of people who have permitted him to examine postal material in their collections or who have furnished him useful information. It is a great pleasure to have this occasion to thank the following for such services: Lester K. Ade, Stephen A. Cisler, Mario Colaiczzi, Maxwell Halpern, M. Hertzberg, Frank J. Kovarik, Frederick Langford, Ian C. Morgan, William Montgomery, W. K. Russell, H. M. Sanford, J. C. Wheat.

The writer knows of the existence of about 800 covers from U. S. troops in Siberia and he has examined about a quarter of these. No doubt additional covers will come to light from time to time. The commoner types of these covers are not nearly as scarce as is often alleged. The value placed on them is frequently considerably above their true worth established by supply and demand. On the other hand there are certain types of covers and markings that are genuinely scarce. In fact there are a few which up to the present time seem to be unique. See accompanying illustrations for several of these.

## ILLUSTRATIONS

The hand stamp (Fig. 2), while not as common as the machine cancellation (Fig. 3), is often seen. It was used throughout the life of the Postal Agency. Only a few examples of the Money Order stamp (Fig. 4) exist. The double-ring registry stamp, of the type in general use in the U. S. at the time (not illustrated), is slightly more common.

Figs. 12-15, 17 represent unit censor stamps. Fig. 14 is by far the commonest. Many examples of it are seen in which the frame has become badly worn and distorted. Fig. 12, a rather scarce one, is found with several different censor numbers. Figs. 8-10, 18, 19 are the U. S. base censor stamps. Nos. 8 and 10 are the ones most often seen.

Probably the most interesting and most sought type of stationery used in Siberia is that bearing the emblem illustrated in Fig. 5. This emblem is the Russian equivalent of Y. M. C. A. It is found printed in red and black in the upper left corner of envelopes and at the head of sheets of writing paper. It is said to have been intended for Russian soldiers using the Y. M. C. A. in Vladivostok, but American soldiers used it now and again for their letters home, for which we collectors are grateful. The Red Cross used two types of envelopes in Siberia, neither of which we illustrate. One type has a corner card, printed in red, consisting of a red cross beneath which are the words: The American Red Cross/Commission to Siberia. The other type of envelope, which is somewhat larger, has a similar corner card, with an additional line to the inscription reading: Camp Service. Incidentally, the Red Cross stayed on in Siberia for several years after the troops were withdrawn. Covers from this post-occupation period usually passed through the Russian postal system.

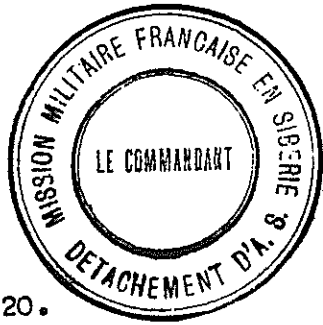
The Christmas card (Fig. 6) and the landing card (Fig. 7), both pictured about half size, are only examples known to the writer. The landing card is postmarked San Francisco and was probably left behind by troops sailing from there and put into the mail after a safe interval of time had elapsed. The Field Service Post Card (Fig. 16) is also extremely scarce.

Figs. 20-39 represent various types of markings found on the mail of some of the other contingents making up the Expeditionary Force. Most of them speak for themselves. The Italian troops used a specially prepared field service post card, but we have been unable to secure one for illustration. The British office stamp (Fig. 26) is also found with "Vladivostok" in the center. The postal markings of the Japanese occupation force constitute a field which we have not investigated. It is possible that some other foreign contingents, such as the Romanian and Polish, had their own postal markings. We know nothing about them.



War Cover Club Bulletin

THE SIBERIAN EXPEDITION 1918-20  
Postal and Censor Markings



20.



21.



22.



27.



28.



29.



23.



30.



31.



32.



24.



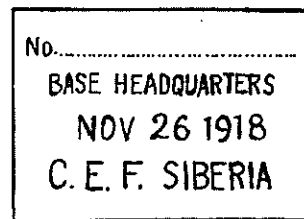
33.



34.



35.



25.



36.



37.



38.

Дѣкствующая Чешско-Словацкая Армія

Дѣкствующая Чешско-Словацкая Армія

CESKOSLOVENSKÉ VOJSKO

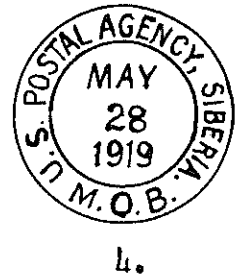
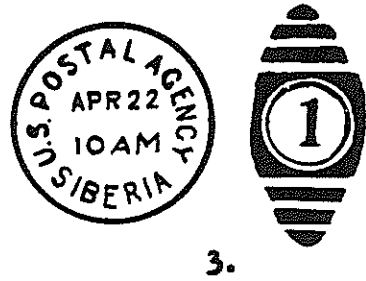
Polni posta čis



26.

WAR COVER CLUB BULLETIN

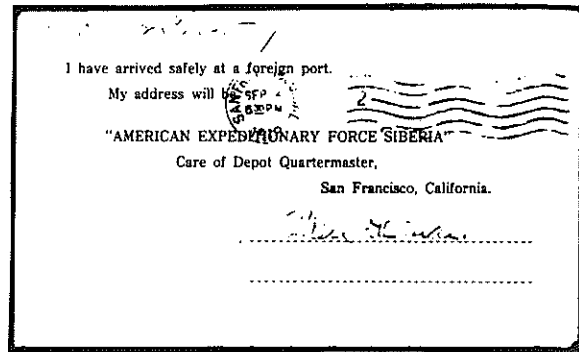
THE SIBERIAN EXPEDITION 1918-20  
Postal and Censor Markings



Interior, U.S. Army Base P. O.  
Vladivostok

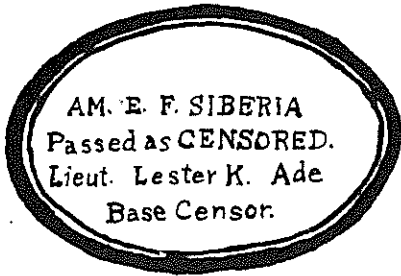


6.



War Cover Club Bulletin

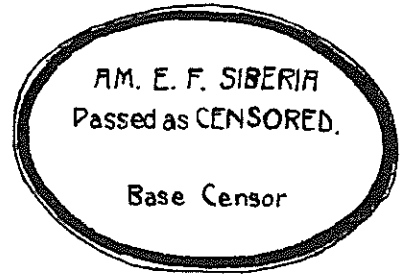
THE SIBERIAN EXPEDITION 1918-20  
Postal & Censor Markings



8.

A.E.F. SIBERIA  
CENSORED  
Lt.H.R. Bartow  
Base Censor

9.



10.



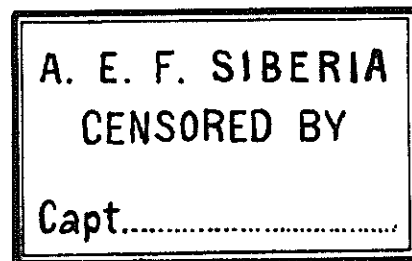
11.

PASSED BY  
MILITARY CENSORSHIP  
A. F. F., SIBERIA

By \_\_\_\_\_

No. 5

12.



13.

War Cover Club Bulletin

THE SIBERIAN EXPEDITION 1918-20  
Postal & Censor Markings

A. E. F. SIBERIA  
CENSORED  
Sig:

14.

A. E. F. SIBERIA  
CENSORED  
Sig.....

15.

**SOLDIER'S MAIL**  
*Sgt. Fred C. Hale* FIELD SERVICE POSTCARD  
(Name and Rank)  
*1st Lt. Office Chief Surgeon*  
American E. F. Siberia.  
1919  
Mrs. Fred C. Hale  
1025 N. Vermont  
Hollywood  
California

16.

A. E. F. SIBERIA  
CENSORED

Sig:

17.

A. E. F. SIBERIA  
CENSORED  
Lt. R. J. Cryer  
Base Censor

18.

A. E. F. Siberia  
Passed as Censored  
Base Censor

19.