

UNITED STATES MILITARY STATIONS: THE POSTAL MARKINGS OF BACOLOD

by Nestor C. Nuñez and Alfred F. Kugel

While Manila and the Central Plain of Luzon are considered the heartland of the Philippines, the Visayan Islands at the time of the Philippine-American War was an equally important part of the country in terms of population and mercantile activities. More importantly from a military viewpoint, these islands were also a hotbed of revolutionary fervor. Prominent in this island group are the islands of Panay, which had the provinces of Antique, Capiz, Iloilo and Concepcion (this province was later incorporated into Iloilo); Negros, divided into Negros Oriental and Negros Occidental; and Cebu, an island province. The major towns, now cities, in these islands are Iloilo, Bacolod, and Cebu. These three islands had a total population of 1,666,000 (1), compared to that of Luzon of 3,563,000. Iloilo (473,000) and Cebu provinces (504,000) had more population than the province of Manila (400,000) (2).

With the collapse of Spanish authority as a result of the Spanish-American War and the resumption of the Philippine revolution after Aguinaldo's return from exile in Hong Kong, a "Visayan Republic" was set up, composed principally of these three islands. The capital was Iloilo city, after its capture from the Spanish in December 1898 (3). After the Spanish surrendered Manila on August 13, 1898, the Spanish forces there retreated to Iloilo. In the interim period, American and Spanish delegates met in Paris to negotiate the terms of the peace treaty. During this period, it became evident that the U.S. wanted to obtain possession of the entire country.

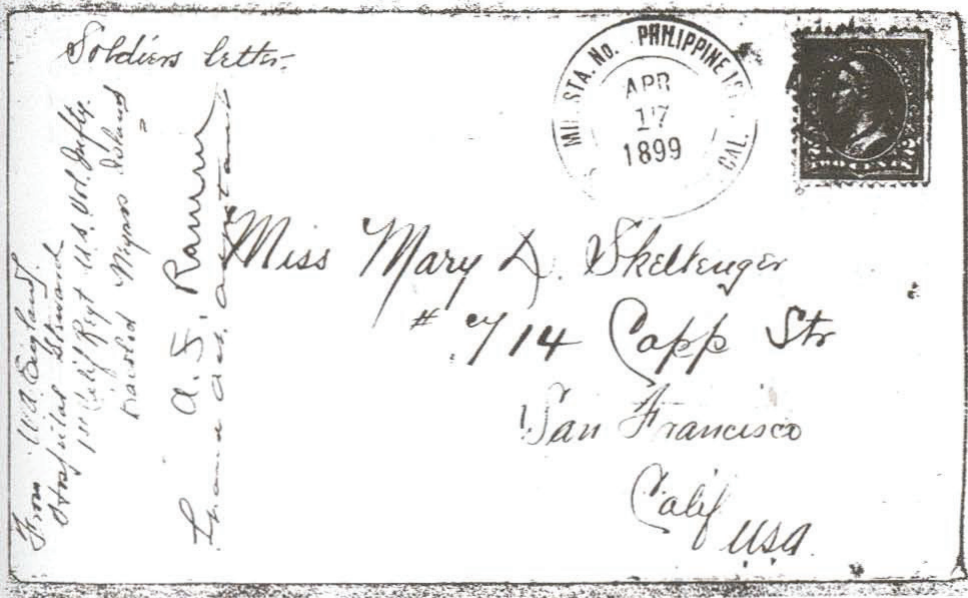
Back in Panay Island, the Spanish forces were beleaguered by the Filipino revolutionists to the point where the Spanish commander in Iloilo had to send a message to Gen. Elwell Otis that he could no longer hold out against the insurgents. Otis responded by creating a Separate Brigade (4), which proceeded to the Iloilo on December 26, 1898. After the signing of the Treaty of Paris on December 10, the Visayan Islands became a logical target for American occupation. Thus, sending an expeditionary force to these islands was a sound military move as well, since American occupation would presumably snuff the revolutionary fervor there, thereby ensuring that not many troops would need to be diverted from Luzon, which presented a greater military problem with the then uneasy relationship with Emilio Aguinaldo's revolutionary army.

The occupation of the town of Iloilo was delayed by the unfriendly reaction of the local population, and was only forcibly accomplished on February 11, 1899 following the start of hostilities between the Americans and Filipinos on February 4. Occupation of the town of Cebu followed on February 28 without bloodshed. The occupation of the the town of Bacolod came about in a different fashion, and was probably influenced by the earlier events leading to the American takeover of Iloilo and Cebu.

The following is essentially summarized from Faust (5): The local authorities in Negros were more amicable and more in hearty accord with American domination than those of Panay and Cebu. The inhabitants had earlier been in revolt against, and had practically overturned Spanish authority. On November 12, 1898, a provisional government made up of thirty six deputies had been established with Aniceto Lacson, President and Jose Luis Luzurriaga, President of the native congress. A cabinet was also created with functions "similar to that in all republican governments." Preceding American occupation, a deputation of these officials, including Lacson, approached Gen. Otis with their desire for amicable establishment of American rule in the island. Thus the coming of the Americans was a welcome event, "rather than a reluctant submission of a defeated people." Col. (later Gen.) James H. Smith of the California Volunteers was appointed by Gen. Elwell Otis (6) to be the military governor. Smith, with the 1st Battalion of the California Volunteers under Maj. Hugh T. Sime, proceeded with the transport St. Paul from Manila, and landed in Bacolod on March 4, 1899. Largely due to the welcome manner of its takeover, the Americans strove to give the people of Negros the "largest liberty compatible with the military occupation" by the United States. Gov. Smith took exclusive control of customs, post office, telegraph and police functions while all other civil affairs were left in the hands of Filipinos (7).

According to Goodale (8) Bacolod was the 3rd District Headquarters of the Department of the Visayas, U.S. Army, in March 1900. Civil government was established in Negros Occidental on April 20, 1901. Goodale noted that the Bacolod military post office was a small one, as there was not more than a company of infantry being stationed there at a time.

The following are the recorded postmarks of Bacolod, which was military postal station number five.



DS1 cancellation on cover to California.



DS1. Double-ring rubber canceler with "1" deleted. This device was first used in Manila, which was Military Station No. 1. Similar devices, with "1" excised, were used in Iloilo and Cebu (9). Usage in Bacolod (10) is proven by the sender's address, or use by a military unit known to be in Bacolod or Negros Island at the postmark date. Struck in black or purple.

Earliest: March 15, 1899
 Latest: May 9, 1899 (with La Carlota two-line "cachet")



DS2. Single-ring rubber datestamp 30 mm, with three horizontal bar killers 18 mm wide (11). Struck in black.

Earliest date: May 3, 1899
 Latest date: May 24, 1900



DS 3. Single-ring rubber datestamp 35 mm. Similar to DS 2, but larger, with letters 4 mm tall, with three thick horizontal bar killers 15 mm wide. First reported by Howell (10).

Earliest: February 12, 1900
Latest: July 10, 1900



DS4. Single-ring steel datestamp 29 mm, with eight bar barrel killer. "Standard" type of civil government postmarks. Struck in black.

Earliest: January 12, 1901
Latest: used well beyond July 4, 1902



RC1. Single-ring rubber datestamp 30? mm. with "REC'D" at bottom of the dial. Struck in black.

Earliest: May 12, 1899
Latest: October 29, 1899

REGISTERED
FEB 28 1902
Military Station No. 5,
BACOLOD. P. I.

RG1. Four-line registration rubber datestamp postmark in non-serifed block capital and small letters, with maximum width 42 mm. Seen used as receiving mark (January 31, 1902). Struck in violet or purple.

Earliest: October 17, 1899
Latest date: February 28, 1902

POSTAGE DUE TWO CENTS.

PD1. "POSTAGE DUE TWO CENTS." in capital Roman letters 3 mm tall. Postmark made of rubber. Struck in violet?

Earliest date:

May 27, 1899

Latest date:

October 6, 1899



AX1. Seen used with RG
1. Struck in violet

Earliest date: October 17,
1899

AX 2. Eight bar ovalled
rubber obliterator, seen
used with RG1. Struck in
purple.

Earliest date: February
28, 1902



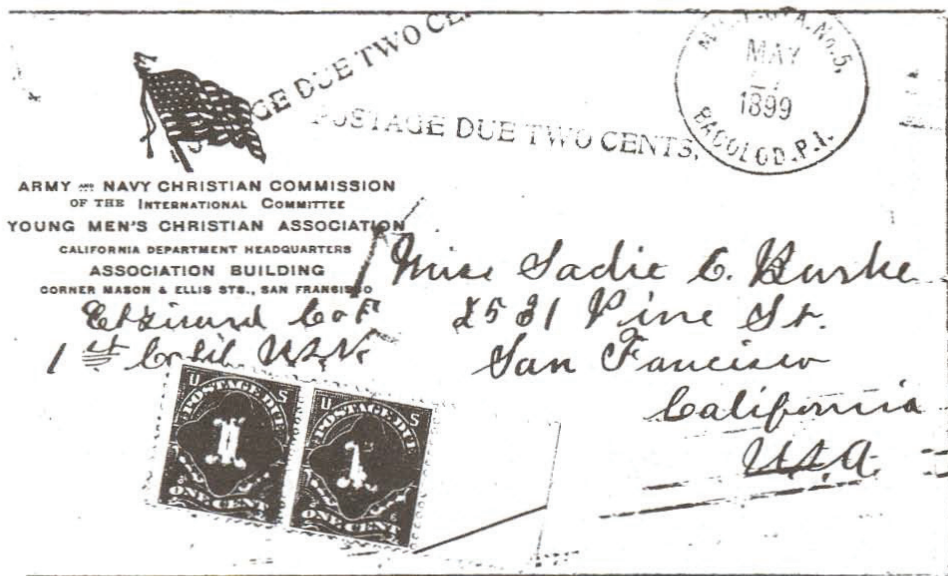
Howell (10) illustrated a two-line "cachet" (struck in blue) used by the California Volunteers on mail from La Carlota, which is 18 miles south of Bacolod. While it may have used in connection with posting of letters, this was not included in the listing, as usage is inconclusive, and it is not strictly a Bacolod military station cancellation. Earliest date seen: May 2, 1899 (with DS1 dated May 6); latest: May 27, 1899 (with DS2 dated May 29).



Goodale notes that a few covers are known which passed through territory controlled by the Filipino insurgent government, and lists his F-1 type cancel, reproduced at left (illustration not exact per Goodale).

Prior to the arrival of American forces in Negros island, revolutionary mail bearing the postmark illustrated at left was sent from there to Iloilo. "COMUNICACION Y TELEGRAFIA" means Communications (Post) and Telegraphs. The cover received an Iloilo DS1 arrival mark of February 28, 1899, and was recently sold at the Philstamps auction in June 1997 (Lot 428A).

Collectors (12) and other readers of this area are encouraged to look into their collections with a view of adding types not included in this article, and/or extending the earliest or latest dates. (Copyright reserved by the authors).



DS2 and PD1 postmarks on unfranked cover

POSTMARK LIST CONCORDANCE

Nuñez/Kugel	Goodale (4)	Baker (10)
DS1	—	—
DS2	A-1	C-2
DS3	—	—
DS4	—	—
RC1	RC-1	—
RG1	—	SR-5
PD1	—	—
PD1	—	—
AX1	—	—
AX2	—	—
—	F-1	—

ENDNOTES:

1. Population figures are from Faust (Endnote 5).
2. Under the Spanish system of political subdivisions, Manila was a province with population mainly in the suburbs, which included Binondo, Santa Cruz, Quiapo, San Miguel, and Tondo.
3. After losing Iloilo, which became the Spanish capital in the Philippines following the fall of Manila, the Spanish forces retreated to the garrisoned city of Zamboanga, or to Jolo, where they remained until repatriation in May 1899 or relieved by American forces in November 1899.
4. See "United States Military Stations: The Postal Markings of Iloilo," second article in this series, *Philippine Philatelic Journal*, Vol. XIX, No. 2.
5. Faust, Karl Irving, *Campaigning in the Philippines*, The Hicks-Judd Publishing Company, San Francisco, 1899.
6. Maj. Gen. Elwell Otis became the military commander of the American forces in late August 1899, following the return of Maj. Wesley Gen. Merritt to the United States. Merritt only stayed some three weeks in Manila. He disagreed with his superior, Maj. Gen. Nelson Miles, army chief, on the military strategy over the islands.
7. While the takeover of Bacolod was without bloodshed, the rest of the population did not necessarily welcome the American authority. Faust lists several armed clashes with "unsubdued class of brigands," including the fight in the capture of Labzid by Lt. Col. Victor D. Duboce, an action at Bobong resulting in 115 local insurgents killed, and a sharp engagement at Tibunan, with 19 insurgents dead.
8. Goodale, George S., "U.S. Military Postal Stations in the Philippines (1898-1904)," *Cyclopedia of United States Postmarks*, edited by Delf Norona, Quarterman Publications, Lawrence, MA, 1975.
9. Nuñez, Nestor C., *Philippine-American War: "Island Hopping" of a U.S. Military Cancel: Additional Notes*, unpublished manuscript which makes additional comments on the use of DS1 devise which was the subject of an article by Haberland, Wolfgang, *American Philippine War 1899-1902, Island Hopping by a US Field Post Cancel* (translated by C.A. Richmond from "Rundbrief USA"), Possessions, published by the United States Possessions Society, Vol. 17 No. 1, Whole 59, First Quarter 1994.
10. Howell, David D., *Postal Markings Used in Isle de Negros, 1899-1902*, War

Cover Club Bulletin, Vol. XVIII, No. 6, Aug.-Sep. 1978, published by the War Cover Club (now Military Postal History Society). Howell's article led many collectors and students of this period to believe that the DS1 device was only used in Bacolod. The Haberland article mentioned in Endnote 9 arrived at different conclusions, but were being corrected by the unpublished Nuñez article.

11. Goodale's illustration of this postmark (his A-1) shows a four-bar killer.
12. The authors would like to acknowledge the help from other Philippine specialists, especially the opportunity to view actual covers or photocopies of the collections of Capt. Weston Burnett, Wolfgang Haberland, Fritz-Walter Lange, the late Lynn Warm-Griffith, Robert F. Yacano and particularly Robert C. Hoge, who also supplied some of the earliest/latest dates.
13. Baker, Philip E., *Postal Markings of United States Military Stations, 1898-1902*, 1963

(Fourth in a series. The first part appeared in No. 3, 3rd Quarter 1996, the second in No. 2, 2nd Quarter 1997 and the third part in this issue)

TWELFTH MAJOR ERROR REPORTED OF THE SPANISH PHILIPPINE 1890-1897 ISSUE: SCRATCHED PLATE FLAW ON THREE SCOTT #150 POSITIONS

by Don Peterson

Eleven major errors of the 1890-1897 issues have previously been reported (Philippine Philatelic News, Vol. XI, No. 4, Fourth Quarter 1989; and Philippine Philatelic Journal, Vol. XVII, No. 4, Fourth Quarter 1995). To qualify as a major plating error, the error must be clearly observable to the average collector, reoccurring or "constant", and must occur on the same position on the pane from one pane to another.

Although scratches are occasionally seen on the 1890-1897 issues, until now, none were known to reoccur on a regular basis of any issue from one plate to the next. Recently, through the keen observations of Philippine collectors Craig Chartrand and Sebastian Baldassarre, a new error (actually three errors) surfaced on Scott #150, the olive gray 2-4/8 centavos 1892 issue. The errors consist of vertical (slightly diagonal) scratches on three different positions on the full pane of this issue. Scott #150 was printed in sheets of 150, comprised of three panes of 50 (5 x 10), each separated by a gutter. The scratches occur on the right side of position 4, the left side of position 19, and the center of position 39 of each pane (FIGURE 1). Several complete panes were inspected and the errors were found on each of the three panes in the same locations.