

The island of Mindanao had always been a troublesome area for the Spanish to control. Since the take-over of the Philippines, the Spanish and the Moros engaged in skirmishes and guerrilla warfare.

On March 1, 1894, Spanish General Blanco organized an expedition of 800 Spanish soldiers to Marahui (today named Marawi) and other towns in Mindanao, where native uprisings were increasing. In October 1895, a native rebellion broke out on Mindanao, a forewarning of the larger, more widespread native rebellion that was to take place across the Philippines in 1896. In response, 10,000 soldiers arrived from Spain in November 1896. The Spanish military campaign against the rebels in 1896 and 1897 generated some military handstamps.

The private correspondence of members of the armed forces engaged in military operations on the Philippines was exempted from the postage by a royal decree of March 5, 1897, published in the Madrid Gazette on March 7. These covers were to be marked by the official seals of the organic units to which the aforesaid forces belonged.

Until then the covers had to be franked in the regular way.



Military mail sent from Marahui to Manila. The cover was sent at the military camp of Marahui. The 2 Centavos de Peso stamp, issued 1896, was cancelled by an oval handstamp "ESTAFETA DE CAMPAÑA / CORREOS / MARAHUI". There are **four covers**, of which are two franked, **known with this special postmark**.

The cover arrived in Manila on May 10, 1896 and a "CORREOS / MANILA" cancel was applied on the backside. Also, on the back a faint single-lined rectangular cancel stating "COMUNICACIONES / ADMIN PRAL MANILA / CARTERA CENTRAL" was applied by the letter sorting section of the Manila central post office.

The cover was marked as military mail "Carta Militar" and it was franked with 2 Centavos de Peso for single domestic postage, up to 15 grams, effective from April 22, 1891. The exemption from the postage for field mail did not come into effect until the spring of 1897.