



100
YEARS

World War I MILITARY HISTORY

The AEF in Russia

- 1773 Boston Tea Party
- 1880 George C. Marshall is born
- 1898 Treaty of Paris signed
- 1914 First air raid against Britain
- 1937 Nanjing captured by the Japanese
- 1941 U.S. Civil Air Patrol established
- 1941 Pearl Harbor attack
- 1943 Second Cairo Conference
- 1944 Battle of the Bulge
- 1991 The U.S.S.R. is disbanded.

DID YOU KNOW?

Many know of the Battle of Gettysburg and the Gettysburg address. The plaques of the address are posted at national cemeteries around the country. The original plaque, as well as the duplicates, were produced at RIA. Today JMTC continues to produce these plaques upon request for national parks and cemeteries.

TRIVIA

- ① What weapon was produced at the current site of the Rock Island Arsenal Museum?
- ② In what year did Locks and Dam 15 reach their completion?
- ③ In World War II, where was the target of the first all-American bombing raid?

Last Month's Answers:

- ① What is the only aircraft to use the M102 105 MM Howitzer as a standard weapon?
The AC-130 Gunship
- ② How many 280 MM atomic guns were produced over the program's lifetime?
20
- ③ What was the name of the steamboat that struck the 1856 Rock Island-Davenport bridge?
The Effie Afton

Answers to trivia and more are available on the ASC History Office's SharePoint page.

Following on the heels of the Russian Red October revolution in 1917, the Allies lamented at the loss of a crucial ally in the war against the Central Powers. Understanding that Germany was now only fighting a war on one front, the Allies began to mobilize and mount a series of battles from 1918 through 1920 that many have forgotten. The soldiers deployed into this battle would not be celebrating Armistice Day. Instead they would be on the frontlines of a very different war.

When Russia fell to the Bolshevik's on 7 November 1917, the U.S. had been supplying war materiel to the White Army in the east as a means to resist the Reds. In addition, Czech fighters that had been fighting against the Reds within Russia and on the Eastern front were now cut off from the remainder of the Allies. It was not until 6 July 1918 that the Allies approached President Wilson requesting aid for an intervention in Siberia. Against the better judgment of the War Department, Wilson allocated between 10,000 and 13,000 troops for deployment in the frozen tundra.

Of the U.S. forces that were deployed to Russia, 8,000 landed in Vladivostok as the Allied Expeditionary Force, Siberia (AEFS) under the command of MG William S. Graves on 15-16 August 1918. These forces consisted of the 27th and 31st Infantry Regiments — "Wolfhounds" and "Polar Bears", respectively — which had been stationed in the Philippines. The remainder of Graves' forces were pooled largely from California, a far cry in climate from the desolate and unforgiving cold that awaited them in Siberia. The remaining 3,000 to 5,000 were the newly formed 339th Infantry Regiment — "Detroit's Own Polar Bears" — posted to *Arkhangelsk* (Archangel) (American North Russia Expeditionary Force, ANREF), arriving on 20 August under the command of LTC George E. Stewart.

While Graves' forces were tasked with securing American assets in the western theater and the eastern

terminus of the Trans-Siberian Railroad, Stewart was also tasked with assisting retreating Czech forces and aiding the White Army in the northwest. By the time the Americans arrived the Red Army was well entrenched with plentiful supplies to hold off the Allies while simultaneously defeating the White resistance forces. This, coupled with a lack of supplies that were suitable for the climate, put the Allies and the AEFS at a stark disadvantage.

In addition, confusion within the Allied ranks and suspicion of other "presumed" Allies led to issues in communication. In the eastern theater, Japanese forces outnumbered other allied forces 10:1, making the western powers wary of Japanese intentions for a supposed rescue and evacuation operation. The Japanese maintained forces in Siberia through 1922, making the United States concerned about the potential of Japanese expansion.

By 1919, forward momentum of the AEFS had dwindled, and morale was extremely low. American Soldiers had begun to write letters home to newspapers and representatives asking to return home like their peers in France. The order to withdraw was finally given in April, and forces began pulling out in large numbers off the northern coast of the Archangel oblast by July. In August, ANREF was totally disbanded and withdrawn from the northern coast. The last forces in the eastern theater operating within the AEFS would not withdraw until almost a year later in 1920.

Around 300 American soldiers died on the frozen tundra of Russia, with over 500 casualties reported in the Siberia expedition. The lack of any meaningful gains in both interventions led to U.S. involvement in Russia being largely forgotten in the west. The White Army was completely defeated in 1920, and all opposition to the Red forces ended at that time. The last American survivor of the Allied Intervention died in 2003, marking the end of this chapter in history.

From the Archives

Associated Press
Leased Wire Report

THE ROCK ISLAND ARGUS.

Member of Audit
Bureau of Circulations

SIXTY-SEVENTH YEAR - NO. 273. WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 4, 1918. -TEN PAGES. PRICE THREE CENTS.

YANKS WITH
CHIEF REACH
SIBERIA PORT

Graves Will Head U. S.
Force in Russia—250,-
000 Sent in August.

Arrival of Major General William S. Graves and his staff at Vladivostok to take command of all American forces fighting on the new eastern front was announced today by General March.

General Graves took with him from the United States, 43 officers and 1,388 men, who will join the regiments from the Philippines already on the ground.

General March announced today that the total embarkation of American soldiers for all fronts, including the Siberian expedition, had passed the 1,600,000 mark August 31.

The chief of staff identified the American unit which participated in the Flanders advance as the Thirtieth division, composed of troops from Tennessee, North Carolina and South Carolina.

The French advance north of Soissons, resulting in the capture of Terny-Serny, was participated in by the Thirty-second division, composed of Michigan and Wisconsin troops, under Major General Haan.

In answer to a question, General March said it was estimated that more than 250,000 had landed in France during August. The record for monthly shipment, he added, was 285,000.

Taking up the military situation, General March said the object of the Canadian drive across the old Queant-Drocourt switch line was Cambrai, which was now within 7 miles of the British advance, according to official advices.

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Presented to you by your friendly ASC History Office. Feel free to call or stop by our office for any of your history needs.

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