

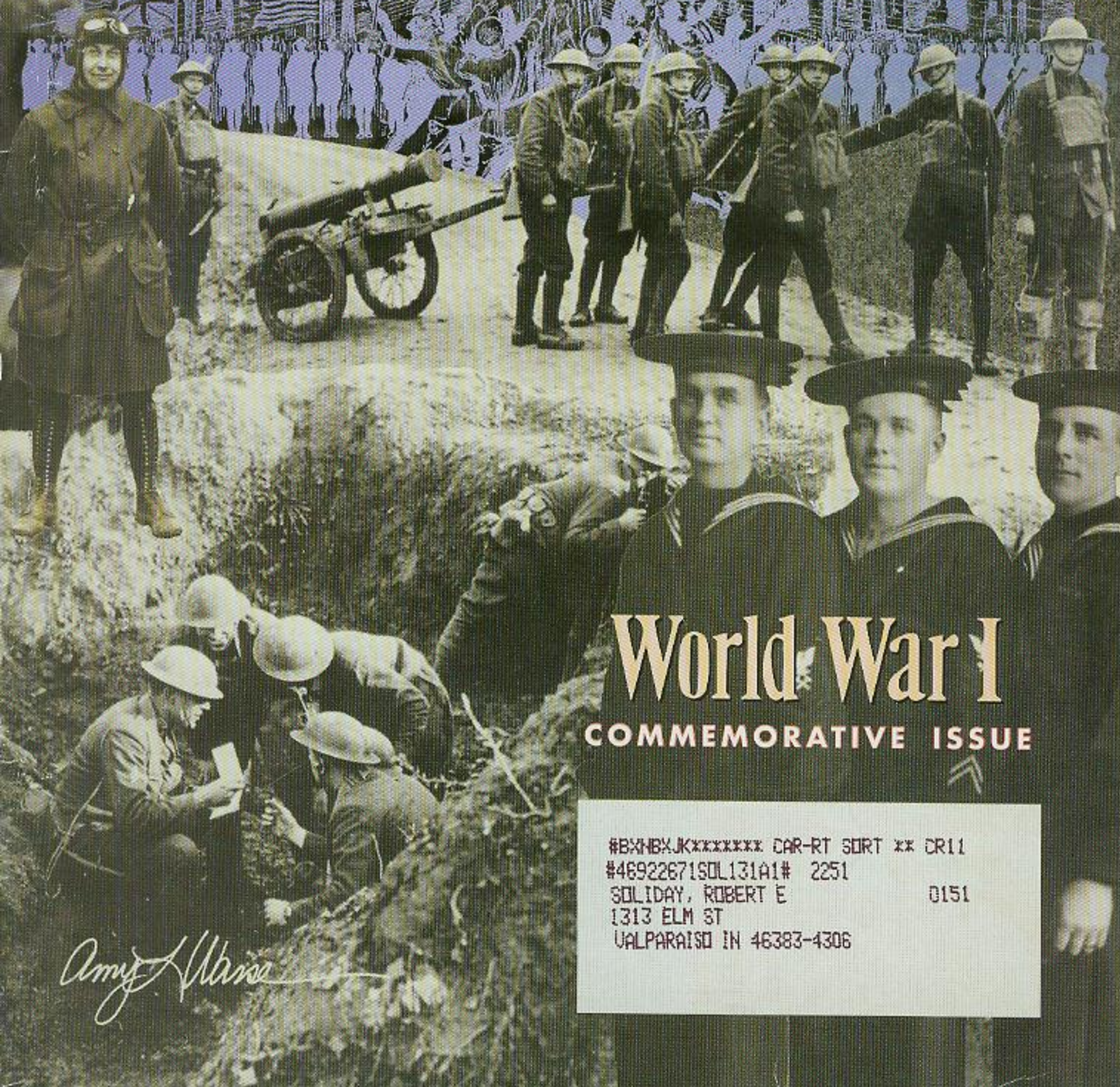
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VFW

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS



VICTORY



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World War I

COMMEMORATIVE ISSUE

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Sideshow in the Soviet Union

The twin U.S. military interventions in the Soviet Union near WWI's end were among the oddest in international history. Devoid of strategy, they nonetheless entailed substantial sacrifice by the roughly 15,000 Doughboys who served in this frigid land.

NORTH RUSSIA EXPEDITION

Only a World War I Victory Medal service clasp inscribed, "Russia," was authorized, covering service from Nov. 12, 1918 to Aug. 5, 1919, for these veterans. The months of fighting and dying in Russia before Armistice Day were specifically unacknowledged by the government.

Units committed: 339th Inf. Regt., 310th Engineer Regt. (1st Bn.), 337th Ambulance Co., 337th Field Hospital and 167th and 168th Cos. of the North Russia Transportation Corps.

1918

- May 24 Allied troops occupy Archangel to avert the possibility of stockpiled arms and munitions falling into unfriendly hands. 55 crewmen from the U.S. cruiser *Olympia* participate.
- Jun 11 150 U.S. Marines land in North Russia.
- Aug 3 Sailors from the *Olympia* go ashore to serve as legation guards. 25 Bluejackets, as part of "B Force," engage in the initial U.S. action of the expedition in Archangel's rail yards. Ensign Donald Hicks, wounded, is the first Allied casualty.
- Sep 4 U.S. forces of the American North Russian Expeditionary Force (ANREF) — 339th Infantry Regiment — land at Archangel. Total: 5,108 soldiers. Plus 720 railway engineers.
- Sep 11 Two platoons of Co. M make initial contact with Red Guards.
- Sep 16 L and I Cos. sustain the first U.S. Army casualties: 3 KIA; 2 WIA.
- Sep 15-
Sep 30 **Railroad Front.** In the drive to set up a defensive perimeter connecting the eastern and western shores of the White Sea, U.S. forces suffer 48 KIA and 58 WIA.
- Nov 11-14 **"Battle of Armistice Day."** Along the Archangel front at Toulgas, 28 Allies are KIA and 70 are WIA. More than 300 Russian dead are counted on the battlefield.

1919

- Jan 19 **Battle of Ust Padenga.** Cos. A and C and elements of the 310th Engineers are attacked. U.S.: 27 KIA.
- Mar-
Apr 5 **Battle of Bolshie Ozerki:** Last major U.S. engagement of the expedition. Allies withstand simultaneous frontal and rear assaults during the Red's largest offensive. D and M Cos., and elements of E Co., fortify blockhouses at Vaerst 18. H Co. holds town's outskirts. Allies inflict 2,000 enemy casualties. Last official ANREF formation is held on Memorial Day.
- May 30 **Expedition Ends.** Last U.S. personnel depart. Total U.S. casualties: 144 KIA; 305 WIA; 81 dead from diseases; 19 killed in accidents.
- Jun 27



I Co., 339th Inf., 85th Div. in North Russia. Signal Corps photo



"Polar Bears" of the 31st Inf. Regt. on the march near Vladivostok in 1918. National Archives

SIBERIA EXPEDITION

Doughboys in Siberia faced a hodgepodge of adversaries — Chinese bandits, Bolsheviks and Cossacks. U.S. motives for the intervention were never clear, and remain controversial to this day.

Units committed: 27th and 31st Inf. Regiments; D Co., 53rd Telegraph Bn.; Evacuation Hospital 17; Medical Supply Depot 7; 4th Field Hospital; 4th Ambulance Co.; and the U.S. Russian Railway Service Corps.

1918

- Jun 29 Marine detachment from the *USS Brooklyn* lands at Vladivostok to safeguard the U.S. Consulate. It departs Aug. 28.
- Aug 4 First elements of the American Expeditionary Forces, Siberia (SEF) land at Vladivostok.
- Aug 15 9,000 U.S. troops from the Philippines and fillers from the Army's 8th ID (Calif.) move inland from Vladivostok.
- Aug 29 A 40-man detachment from F and G Cos., 27th Inf., is ambushed by Chinese bandits at Razdolnoe in the Amur River Valley. Pvt. Stephen Duhart, WIA, becomes the first U.S. casualty.

1919

- Jun 22 First overt hostile act taken against U.S. servicemen — 5 U.S. troops are captured by Reds. 110 men of Co. M, 31st Inf., sent to the rescue are ambushed — 5 are KIA — at Novitskaya.
- Jun 25 **Attack on Romanovka:** 72 men of the 3rd Platoon, Co. A, 31st Inf., are attacked by several hundred Reds. U.S. casualties: 24 KIA; 25 WIA. This is the greatest single loss of American lives in Siberia.
- Jun Three squads of F Co., 27th Inf., come under attack at Kraefski by Reds and bandits. The remainder of F Co. is ambushed the same day at Shmakovka: 6 WIA.
- Jul-Aug **Suchan Valley Campaign:** Five companies of the 31st Inf. launch a three-pronged attack to clear the Suchan Valley of armed Reds. Men from the *USS Albany* and *New Orleans* occupy hostile villages. 500 guerillas are killed during the campaign.
- Aug 7 A patrol of 40 men of H Co. decimates a band of 30 partisans at Novo Litovoskaya. No U.S. casualties.

1920

- Jan 9 **Last U.S. Combat.** At Posolskaya railroad station, a 39-man platoon of M Co., 27th Inf., is fired upon from a Cossack armored train. U.S. casualties: 2 KIA and 2 WIA.
- Apr **Last U.S. troops depart.** Japanese forces take control of Vladivostok three days after the last Doughboys leave.

Final Tally. Total U.S. Casualties: 48 KIA (36 by Bolsheviks and 12 by Cossacks) and 52 WIA. Sickness and mishap account for 122 other lives.