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America's Siberian Expedition 1918-1920

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AMERICA'S SIBERIAN EXPEDITION

1918 - 1920,

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William D. Leipold
MAJ IN
Section 13
24 April 1981

In March, 1969 armed clashes took place between Soviet and Chinese border troops on a small disputed island on the Ussuri River boundary between the USSR and the Peoples Republic of China. This was but the most recent of those clashes which have characterized the history of the region. Fifty-one years earlier American Expeditionary Forces, under the command of Major General William S. Graves, landed at Vladivostok and began a campaign that would include much of the Amur and Ussuri River valleys.

What caused the United States to send troops to this region? Of what size and composition were these forces? What was their mission? What was the scope of the operations and what were it's results?

By the time American troops entered Siberia in August, 1918, the key players in this episode of American history were already in place. Within Siberia were numerous foreign and indigenous elements, all with divergent aims and objectives.

In November, 1917 the Bolsheviks seized power in Russia, overthrowing the provisional government that had been established in March, 1917. After the Bolsheviks assumed control resistance movements among the White Russians began throughout the country. By June, 1918 a White government had been established at Omsk, but Bolshevik and other partisan groups were still in control in European Russia and in the rural areas of Siberia. On June 29, 1918 a White government was installed in Vladivostok. By mid-November, 1918 Admiral Kolchak was installed at Omsk as supreme ruler of all White Russians in Siberia. His chief allies among the Siberian people were two Cossack chieftans: Semenov, ruling in Chita; and Kalmykov, ruling in Khabarovsk. The rule of these two chieftans was notorious for arbitrariness and cruelty.¹ Despite White control of the major cities along the Trans-Siberian and Chinese-Eastern railroads, the Bolsheviks and other partisans controlled the

countryside and conducted frequent raids against White forces and their allies.

Great Britain and France favored allied intervention in Russia for various reasons. Great Britain had lent huge sums of money to the Russian government during the war and questioned the Bolsheviks' intentions towards repayment. France had also invested great sums of money in Russia and had been a faithful ally for over 30 years. The separate peace between the Soviets (Bolsheviks) and the Germans at Brest-Litovsk in March, 1918, caused the collapse of the eastern front and allowed renewed German attacks on the western front.

Events in Siberia naturally aroused the Japanese. Their interests in Manchuria would be influenced by events in Siberia. Additionally, the impact of the Russo-Japanese War of 1905 still prevailed among the Japanese, further influencing their active participation in Siberian internal affairs.²

One of the most interesting and important groups in Siberia were the Czecho-Slovaks, organized into a 60,000-man corps or legion. A large part of this corps consisted of men forcibly incorporated into the Austrian army who subsequently deserted to Russia or turned pro-ally once captured by the Russians. After the treaty of Brest-Litovsk, the Czechs could no longer fight the Germans on the eastern front. To strengthen their post-war aim of an independent homeland they elected to proceed across Siberia under French direction to embark from Vladivostok and join the allies on the western front. By May, 1918, the lead elements of the Czech corps (some 13,000 men) reached Vladivostok. However, friction between the Soviet government and Czech leaders caused problems all along the evacuation route from European Russia to Siberia. When a few armed clashes occurred, together with inflated reports of Bolshevik and Austro-German prisoner of war alliances against the Czechs, allied intervention became a reality.

American intervention in Siberia was advocated by the allies as early as January, 1918. President Wilson opposed allied objectives in Russia and maintained his opposition through July, 1918. In early July, 1918, the Supreme War Council at Versailles decided to intervene in Murmansk, Archangel and Siberia. The purpose of this intervention was to reconstruct the eastern front, prevent the recall of German divisions from the eastern front, to protect war supplies at key Russian cities and to rescue the Czecho-Slovaks. On July 17, 1918 the U.S. notified the allies that she would take part in the intervention only for the purpose of protecting military supplies and assisting the Czechs in their movement towards Vladivostok.³ On a more pragmatic level, U.S. cooperation with the allies in the summer of 1918 was essential if the war in Europe was to be successfully concluded. In addition, Wilson felt that there had to be some constraint on Japanese designs in the Far East. With this background, the stage for intervention was set.

The first task once the political decision for intervention was reached was to select a commander and assemble a force. The choice for command fell on Major General William S. Graves. General Graves was assigned as commanding general of the 8th Infantry Division at Camp Fremont, California in the spring of 1918. His mission at that time was to complete the training of that division and take it to France for participation in World War I.

When the decision was necessary to choose a commander-in-chief for the Siberian Expedition, Army Chief of Staff Peyton C. March chose General Graves due to March's previous experience with him and great confidence in Graves' abilities.

In early August, 1918, General Graves received an urgent telegram from the War Department directing him to take the most direct train to Kansas City to meet with Secretary of War Newton D. Baker. Graves had no idea of the

nature of this meeting and was instructed to keep his travel plans confidential.

Officially, Secretary Baker was visiting the Disciplinary Barracks at Fort Leavenworth, but his real purpose was to give Graves President Wilson's personal instructions on the Siberian Expedition. Baker and Graves met in a small office at Union Station in Kansas City and after outlining Graves instructions in the Aide Memoire Baker said "Watch your step; you will be walking on eggs loaded with dynamite. God bless you and goodbye."⁴

Secretary Baker provided General Graves with a brief synopsis of his mission as outlined in the Aide Memoire. The four significant parts of his mission were: (1) to guard military stores at Vladivostok which may subsequently be needed by the Russian forces; (2) to render such aid as may be practicable to the Russians in the organization of their own defense; (3) to help the Czecho-Slovaks consolidate their forces and to get into successful cooperation with the Slavic kinsmen; and (4) to steady any efforts at self-government or self-defense in which the Russians themselves may be willing to accept assistance.⁵

The bulk of General Graves' combat forces came from the 27th and 31st Infantry Regiments. In July, 1918, both of these regiments were in the Philippines at less than 50% of their authorized strength.⁶ An infantry regiment in 1918 consisted of three battalions with four line-companies each, a headquarters company, a machine-gun company, a support company and a regimental band. Authorized regimental strength was 3805 men.^(FS)

Other units from the Philippines ordered to Siberia included: Field Hospital 4; Ambulance Company 4; Company D, 53rd Tel. Battalion; a headquarters staff element; and an intelligence section.⁷

In addition to selecting 5,000 individual replacements from the 8th Division, General Graves also received several units from the United States.

Included among these were: Evacuation Hospital 17; Medical Supply Depot 7; a veterinary field unit; two sections of Bakery Company 391; and an Army Field Headquarters detachment.⁸

After arriving in Siberia Company D, Training Battalion, engineer, signal, and quartermaster detachments were formed.

Since February of 1918, Colonel George H. Emerson and 350 American railway engineers had been in Siberia to render assistance in operating the Trans-Siberian and Chinese-Eastern railroads. Although this group was not under General Graves' direct control there was considerable cooperation between the AEF and the railway group. This group, known as the Russian Railway Service Corps, was instrumental in keeping the railroad open despite antiquated equipment and a hostile environment.⁹

Although there is no indication that the 15th Infantry Regiment at Tientsin, China, was involved in the Siberian Expedition, it was probably a strategic reserve since it was only about 500 miles from AEF Headquarters at Vladivostok. The 15th Infantry was in China from 1912 to 1938. Its strength in 1918 was probably close to that of the 27th and 31st Regiments prior to arrival in Vladivostok.¹⁰

Military attaches and War Department observers within the theater were located at Harbin, China and Omsk, Siberia. Primary among this group was Major Homer H. Slaughter who was with the Czech Forces in central Russia. State Department representatives included Ambassador Morris in Tokyo, Consul General Harris at Irkutsk and other consular officers at Vladivostok.

American service agencies in the theater at the time included the American Red Cross, YMCA and the Knights of Columbus. Dr. Teusler, a cousin of President Wilson, was the senior Red Cross representative.

The conduct of the Siberian operation occurred in four distinct phases.

Although no such phasing exists in AEF records, these phases represented the significant changes in the AEF's direction or mission.

The first phase involved initial U.S. intervention in Siberia. On August 18, 1918, companies F and G, 27th Infantry landed and began to guard the railroad between Vladivostok and Nikolsk-Ussuri. The remainder of the 27th Infantry moved into quarters at Vladivostok. On August 21, 1918, the 31st Infantry moved into quarters at Vladivostok while its 3rd Battalion relieved those 27th Infantry units on railroad guard duty.

During the period August 24 through September 16, 1918, the 27th Infantry participated in an Allied advance, under Japanese command, to Ussuri and Khabarovsk. The 27th Infantry had the mission of flank guard and reserve but did not suffer any casualties or see any significant action. By September 16, 1918, the main body of the 27th Infantry was in Khabarovsk while companies C and E accompanied the Japanese to Ushumun. On 10 October 1918, companies C and E rejoined the 27th at Khabarovsk.¹¹

The most significant aspect of this phase was that U.S. troops were under Allied command. Although Colonel Henry D. Styer thought that it was improper to put his regiment under the command of the Japanese, he was told by the War Department that General Graves would have instructions when he arrived. With no other orders, Colonel Styer approved the initial campaign. When General Graves did arrive on 1 September 1918, he immediately took up this matter with the Japanese and by the 2nd of September 1918 had established the position that U.S. troops would operate only under U.S. control.¹² By 29 September 1918, the AEF Siberia reached its largest strength with a force of 253 officers and 8,699 enlisted men.¹³

During the second phase (10 October 1918 - 31 March 1919) the AEF was involved in garrison duty. The 31st Infantry Regiment (less companies B, F, G,

L and M) and most of the combat support and combat service support elements remained in Vladivostok. Companies F and G, 31st Infantry, were at Spasskoe and Company L, 31st Infantry, was at Razdolnee. Company M, 31st Infantry, was at the Suchan coal mine which would become the scene of many problems for the 31st Infantry. Company B, 31st Infantry, was sent to Harbin, China where it would remain throughout phase two and three.¹⁴ Even though Harbin wasn't in Russian Siberia its strategic location along the Chinese-Eastern railroad and economic importance in the region dictated a U.S. presence there.

The 27th Infantry Regiment, less the 1st battalion, was stationed at Khabarovsk. Company E, 27th Infantry, operated the Krasnaya Retskaya prisoner-of-war camp near Khabarovsk. The 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry, was garrisoned at Spasskoe with one platoon at Ussuri.¹⁵

Throughout the long winter of 1918-1919 the American troops had little to do but wonder when and if they would go home, and educate themselves in various aspects of Siberian life. Lieutenant Sylvian G. Kindall, Company C, 27th Infantry, described that first winter this way:

"There was little military training carried on at our Spasskoe garrison during this first Siberian winter. The severely cold weather and lack of a military purpose were good excuses for idleness, and most of the time was ours to spend in any way that we individually cared to spend it. Whether in seeking knowledge of the geography and geology of vast Siberia, its political disorders, and the language and daily life of the Russian people, or in quest of adventure and romance, there was an abundance of opportunity for any of us who might be interested in any or all of such matters."¹⁶

The American operation of the Krasnaya Retskaya (or Red River) prisoner-of-war camp near Khabarovsk was one of the successes of phase two. This camp contained about 2,000 Austrian and Hungarian prisoners captured by the Russians at Stanislaw and Pryzemyi. Captain Larkins and his men of Company E, 27th Infantry, initially encountered poor living conditions and emaciated prisoners

when given responsibility for the camp. He quickly established a prisoner chain of command, incorporated athletics and recreation in the daily routine and otherwise fostered prisoner well-being. Few, if any, escapes were attempted under American control and most of the prisoners wanted to enlist in the American army rather than continue captivity under the Japanese when the Americans departed.¹⁷

In the third phase of the operation American troops undertook a more active role. By 1 April 1919, accord was reached among the allies to allow Colonel Emerson and the Russian Railway Service Corps to supervise the Trans-Siberian and Chinese-Eastern Railways within the Allied zone. The responsibility for guarding these railroads was divided among the Americans, Czechs, Chinese, Japanese and Siberian Cossacks. As a result, the AEF assumed responsibility for 316 miles of railroad at three separate locations.

The 31st Infantry had responsibility for two adjacent sectors. The first was the main line from Vladivostok to Nikolsk-Ussuri, guarded by two companies. The second was a branch line from Ugolnaya to the Suchon mines guarded by six line companies, two understrength line companies, two machine-gun platoons, one signal section and one medical detachment. The remainder of the 31st Infantry stayed in Vladivostok.¹⁸

The 27th Infantry withdrew from Khabarovsk and formed a provisional battalion under Colonel Robert H. Sillman to guard the railroad from Spasskoe to Ussuri. Included in the provisional battalion were companies C, D, E, F, G and H; a machine-gun detachment; and a medical detachment. The remainder of the 27th Infantry moved to a sector near Lake Baikal, some 1,700 miles from Vladivostok and 1,225 miles from Khabarovsk by rail.¹⁹

Once the bulk of the infantry units were deployed they found themselves in hostile territory with small platoons or companies widely dispersed and

opposed by any number of Bolsheviks, White Russians, Siberian Cossacks and Japanese. Although the latter three groups were officially allies, animosity developed because of General Graves' strict interpretation of his orders and the repression by these groups on the peasant populace. General Graves was determined to stay neutral in what he considered to be a Russian internal political struggle. His instructions to his troops were to guard the railroad and railroad property within their sectors and prevent the disruption of railroad operations. Consequently, small garrisons were established near key towns or villages and the soldiers were told to stay within proximity of the railroad line.

Despite these orders, limited offensive actions were conducted with General Graves' permission when Bolshevik strongholds could be pinpointed close to an American sector. More often than not, these limited raids in Bolshevik territory were in retaliation for an attack upon an American garrison or continual harassment or destruction of American guarded sectors.

Typical of these limited actions were two that occurred in the 27th Infantry's Spasskoe to Usurri sector in June 1919. After a group of about 100 Bolsheviks surprised two U.S. squads at Kraefski destroying railroad property but inflicting no casualties, security at Kraefski was increased to a platoon, and a two-company task force went towards Uspenka looking for the Bolsheviks. While the task force went towards Uspenka, the Bolsheviks attacked Kraefski again but were defeated by the determined platoon which inflicted heavy casualties on the attackers. Soon after the Kraefski battle the task force encountered at least 100 Bolsheviks in prepared positions but overran them and captured the town of Uspenka after inflicting moderate casualties.²⁰ In both of these cases, U.S. casualties were light.

On 25 June 1919, American and Japanese patrols inadvertently clashed in

the 27th Infantry sector, in the town of Sviyagino, after the Japanese patrol failed to respond to the proper challenge. Results of this engagement were - one Japanese killed and two wounded, while the Americans had one wounded.²¹

In the 31st Infantry Regiment's sector small engagements also took place with several acts of heroism and courage resulting. The most disastrous encounter for the AEF took place in the town of Romanovka. On 25 June 1919, a large band of Bolsheviks surprised a group of about 75 U.S. soldiers of the 31st Infantry just prior to dawn. After 2LT Lawrence D. Butler rallied his forces, the attackers withdrew leaving 24 Americans dead and another 25 wounded. Most of the Americans were casualties before they could get out of their sleeping bags and tents.²²

In the sector near Lake Baikal where Colonel Morrow had most of the 27th Infantry, very few incidents occurred after Colonel Morrow established his no-nonsense approach with the local Cossack leader, Semenovff.* The only incident of significance occurred on 24 October 1919, when Semenovff refused to let Lieutenant Ryan of the 27th Infantry proceed with a load of rifles for White forces at Omsk. After seeing Lieutenant Ryan's determination not to give up any weapons, Semenovff allowed him to proceed and removed his armored train cars and battalion of Cossacks.²⁴

On 31 December 1919, General Graves ordered all American forces to consolidate at Vladivostok. The deteriorating political situation west of Lake Baikal put the American troops in jeopardy if they remained in their outposts

*In 1900, as a young First Lieutenant in the Philippines, Morrow and three enlisted men pursued a party of insurgents through hostile territory. To gain his objective, he with one other man, inched himself over the single smouldering beam which bridged a 50-foot gulch. The daring movement was made under enemy fire whose number, as he reported, he did not know "because I only saw twelve or fifteen of them."²³

any longer. In addition, U.S. decision-makers had already secretly agreed upon a complete American withdrawal.²⁵

The fourth phase saw a lessening of U.S. activity preliminary to withdrawal. The only significant action occurred on 10 January 1920 in Colonel Morrow's Lake Baikal sector. After Colonel Morrow forced the Cossack General Bogomoletz to release a railroad station-master at Verkhne-Udinsk, Bogomoletz became very perturbed and attempted to surprise an American platoon near Posolskaya. Colonel Morrow reported the incident to General Graves this way:

"Semenoff's armored car attacked detachment thirty-eight men in their cars at Posolskaya at one A.M. January 10th. Detachment fought and captured armored car. One general, six officers and forty-eight men held here. American casualties; one died of wounds, one seriously wounded. Detailed reports of casualties follows: Russian casualties; - five killed and several wounded."²⁶

In response to this attack, General Graves said:

"I was sorry that Lieutenant Kendall, who first got hold of Bogomoletz, did not hang him to a telegraph pole, but he acted within the law and really exhibited better soldierly qualities in doing as he did."²⁷

On 16 January 1920, the 27th Infantry (near Lake Baikal) began moving towards Vladivostok. Prior to this, the provisional battalion of the 27th near Spasskoe and the 31st Infantry had already moved to Vladivostok. On 17 January 1920, the provisional battalion of the 27th Infantry sailed for Manila. On 23 January 1920, Colonel Morrow reluctantly turned Bogomoletz and the other captives over to Semenoff after being assured that they would stand trial. By 25 February 1920, all units were consolidated at Vladivostok.

Subsequent troop movements took place on 15 February, 10 March, 20 March and 31 March 1920. Finally, on 1 April 1920, Headquarters AEF and all remaining detachments sailed for Manila.²⁸

Administrative and logistical aspects of the campaign are worthy of attention. Medical care throughout the AEF Siberia was excellent. Most of

the small-platoon or company-size detachments along the railroad had doctors who administered to both soldiers and civilians. Although administering to the civilian populace wasn't within official jurisdiction, instances of helping individuals created an excellent rapport with the Siberian peasants. General Graves said the following about medical care:

"In view of the unsanitary conditions in Vladivostok, I could not understand how we could escape some epidemic but we did. The medical care of the Command was very important, and the results were most gratifying, showing that the Medical Officers and nurses were very faithful in the performance of their duties."²⁹

Before leaving for Siberia in 1918, General Graves conferred with General C. A. Devol, Quartermaster at San Francisco, on the subject of supply. Graves received Devol's and the War Department's concurrence to deal directly with San Francisco, bypassing the Quartermaster General's Office in Washington, D.C.³⁰ Since the San Francisco Quartermaster's Office was the supply center for Alaska, they had the correct kind of equipment for the Siberian climate. In particular, the sheepskin coats, muskrat caps, and muskrat mittens proved to be extremely beneficial for the troops. Apparently the food provided directly from San Francisco was also better than much of what the AEF in France received.³¹

Personnel problems of the expedition were negligible. Initially, the AEF consisted of seasoned regulars from the Philippines and draftees and volunteers from the 8th Division in California. Attesting to the skill and stamina of these troops were accomplishments such as that by a platoon of E company, 27th Infantry, which marched 51 miles in one day shortly after arriving in Siberia.³² As summer and fall of 1919 approached, many of the original men rotated back to the States.

"Then the troops to fill up the ranks began to come in. They were in many cases mere boys. Indeed some admitted

they had lied about their ages...They were so young and small, it was pitiable to try to make soldiers or even men out of them...The drafted men had borne themselves with credit and great courage...In comparison, these new men struck terror into our hearts."³³

The American Red Cross, Y.M.C.A. and Knights of Columbus provided exceptional service to the troops. Large stocks of warm clothing supplemented the normal issue and prevented cold injuries. Y.M.C.A. and Knights of Columbus organizations provided shoes, entertainment and moving pictures to soldiers and the local populace along the American railroad sector.³⁴

Despite General Graves' complete ban on alcohol with stiff punishment for offenders, there seems to be ample evidence that some of the officers and men circumvented this regulation. Particularly during phase two, when the boredom of the long winter garrison prevailed, soldiers of all nations found cafes or other restaurants in even the remotest villages. Gambling was common since the soldiers had little to spend their money on and the inflation of the ruble made the dollar very valuable. Overall, the conduct of the American troops throughout the 1918-1920 period was excellent. In the United States, there were a few people such as Congresswoman Jeannette Rankin from Montana who advocated the U.S. purchasing land in Siberia for AEF personnel after they were discharged. She felt that the soldiers serving in Siberia would be too diseased in their bodies and corrupted in their morals ever to be permitted to return to the U.S.³⁵

Communications in Siberia were provided primarily by telegraph and with primitive Russian telephones. The American's proximity to the railroad tracks made communications easier although the Bolsheviks continually cut the wire or destroyed other communications gear. As with any headquarters, getting the word out was sometimes an arduous process. Said Lieutenant Kindall of the 27th Infantry:

"Before headquarters could take official notice of the improving temperature with an order to change to campaign hats, our troops were sweltering beneath the heavy muskrat caps which they had worn throughout the winter."³⁶

Logistical support was hindered by the lack of shipping assets in the Pacific prior to the European Armistice and the closing of Vladivostok during the winter. This worried General March. However, with the Armistice in Europe, more shipping assets were provided. In addition adequate warehouse space was obtained in Vladivostok and occasional icebreaking exercises were conducted. Within the theater the railroad provided excellent mobility between Vladivostok and the remote garrisons. The work of the Russian Railway Corps and aggressive security by the soldiers insured that this vital link would remain operational with minor interruptions. The soldiers adopted boxcars for sleeping and kitchen facilities and fortified other cars with sandbags and lumber to provide protection in hostile sectors.

One of the anomalies in the Siberian AEF order of battle was the absence of artillery. Apparently neither General Graves nor War Department planners saw the need for artillery in this theater. On only one occasion did General Graves feel he might need it. This occurred in September 1919 when Kalmikoff and Semenoff were threatening American Forces. General Graves requested one battalion of artillery on 17 September 1919, but his language apparently wasn't strong enough to convince the War Department of its necessity.³⁷

Although each regiment had a machine-gun company, these units usually didn't separate below the detachment or platoon level. The most isolated infantry platoons and companies considered the Browning Automatic Rifle to be the most effective weapon. Apparently the Bolsheviks weren't familiar with this weapon and often they would overestimate the size and firepower of the American unit facing them.

The Provost Marshal and military police operation in Vladivostok during this expedition provides the best example of allied combined operations in the theater. Major S. I. Johnson, U.S. Army, was of Ukrainian descent and spoke many of the Slavic languages. In his capacity as Chief of the International Military Police, he controlled a force of American, British, French, Italian, Chinese, Japanese, Czech, Cossack, White Russian, Polish, Canadian, Indo-Chinese and Serbian soldiers, sailors and marines. After the Bolsheviks seized Vladivostok in early 1920 they ousted the Cossack and White Russian elements of the multi-national force. However they acknowledged Johnson's ability, added a contingent of their own to his force, and allowed him to continue until his departure.³⁸

Although exact figures are not available, many of the American soldiers married Russian women while in Siberia. These women ranged throughout the economic and moral spectrum. Despite concern about the moral grounds for some of these marriages, many women were allowed to come to the United States. During the last few weeks prior to the final American departure, Chaplain Joseph S. Loughran performed about 80 marriages.³⁹

In his report of 1920, assessing the success of the Siberian expedition, Army Chief of Staff Peyton C. March said:

"This expedition affords one of the finest examples in history of honorable, unselfish dealings with an unfortunate people and of a dignified and sincere attempt under very difficult circumstances to be helpful to a people struggling to achieve a new liberty and a self-government. The situation which confronted the commanding general, his subordinate commanders, and troops was a peculiarly difficult and hazardous one. The manner in which this difficult and arduous task was performed is worthy of the best traditions of the Army."⁴⁰

Commenting on the American soldier in Siberia, General Graves had the following to say:

"As to the American troops in Siberia, I can not suffi-

ciently express my gratitude for their loyal support. In guarding the railways, the organizations had to be broken up into very small detachments, of sometimes only eight or ten men, and they all performed their duties in a manner worthy of the best traditions of the American soldier. They knew what was right and they did the right thing, regardless of the calumny and abuse heaped upon them by the press and people interested in misrepresenting them."⁴¹

The casualty figures for this expedition are remarkably low if one considers the duration of the expedition (20 months) and the dispersion of the troops. Losses included 35 combat-related deaths, 135 deaths due to disease, 52 wounded and 50 deserted. Although smaller in number (approximately 5,000) and of shorter duration (10 months), the North Russian Expedition experienced 144 combat-related deaths, 100 deaths due to disease and 305 wounded in action.⁴²

Regarding his original mission, General Graves did provide organization for guarding military supplies at Vladivostok, although there was little interest by the allies or White Russians in most of this equipment. Upon his arrival, General Graves found numerous supplies of war material lying exposed throughout the city of Vladivostok. Most of the Czech Legion was evacuated from Vladivostok with the last contingent leaving on 23 May 1920. Through various routes, the Czechs eventually found their way to their European homeland. Although the Japanese stayed in Siberia until 1922 (the year of the Washington Conference), the American presence there until 1920 definitely had an effect on their territorial designs.

"The decision (to intervene) may have been unjustified in its military aspects; in its political aspect it was the natural, the inevitable and the justifiable thing to do. If Russia is today neither a Prussian province nor a set of foreign spheres of influence nor an utterly ruined country, it is largely because, when faced with a choice of two evils, American statesmanship selected one of the ultimate advantage of Russia, if to the immediate disadvantage of the United States."⁴³

The aspect of State Department-Defense Department cooperation in such an expedition was not covered in this article, however considerable friction existed in that area. State Department personnel at the under-secretary level and Consul General Harris at Irkutsk had different views on the intervention from those of the War Department and General Graves. At one point, Consul General Harris thought that the U.S. had granted recognition of Admiral Kachak's government at Omsk; and he couldn't understand why General Graves would not provide more active support to the White Forces.⁴⁴

The Siberian Expedition affords one the opportunity to examine the problems inherent in an overseas deployment with extended lines of communications. Although the complexities of today's world make many of the problems of this expedition archaic there are many valuable lessons here for the military planner.

General Graves and his West Point classmate and last AEF chief of staff, Joseph D. Leitch, both retired as major generals in 1928. Many of the other officers and men of the expedition continued to serve in the U.S. Army up to and including the second World War period. Two of the most notable veterans of the AEF to achieve World War II fame were Major Robert L. Eichelberger and Lieutenant Paul W. Kendall. Eichelberger commanded the 77th Division, 1st Corps and Eighth Army under General McArthur, finally retiring as a Lieutenant General in 1948 after 40 years service. Kendall served as assistant division commander and later division commander of the 88th Division in North Africa and Italy. After the second World War, he commanded the 2nd Infantry Division.⁴⁵

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