

ASPECTS OF BIAFRAN POSTAL HISTORY



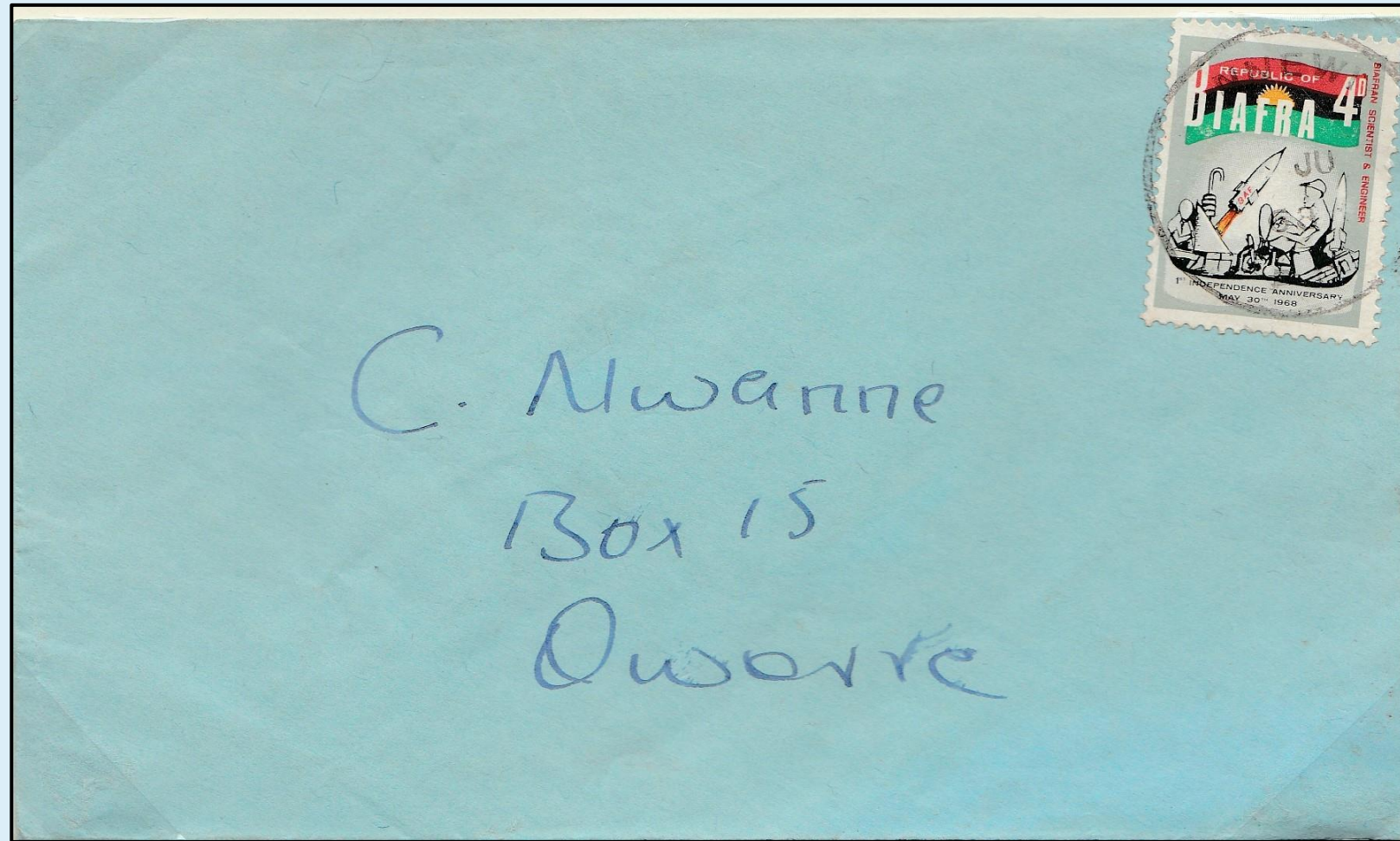
30 May 1967 –
15 January 1970

SELECTED BIAFRAN POSTAL HISTORY

Sections:

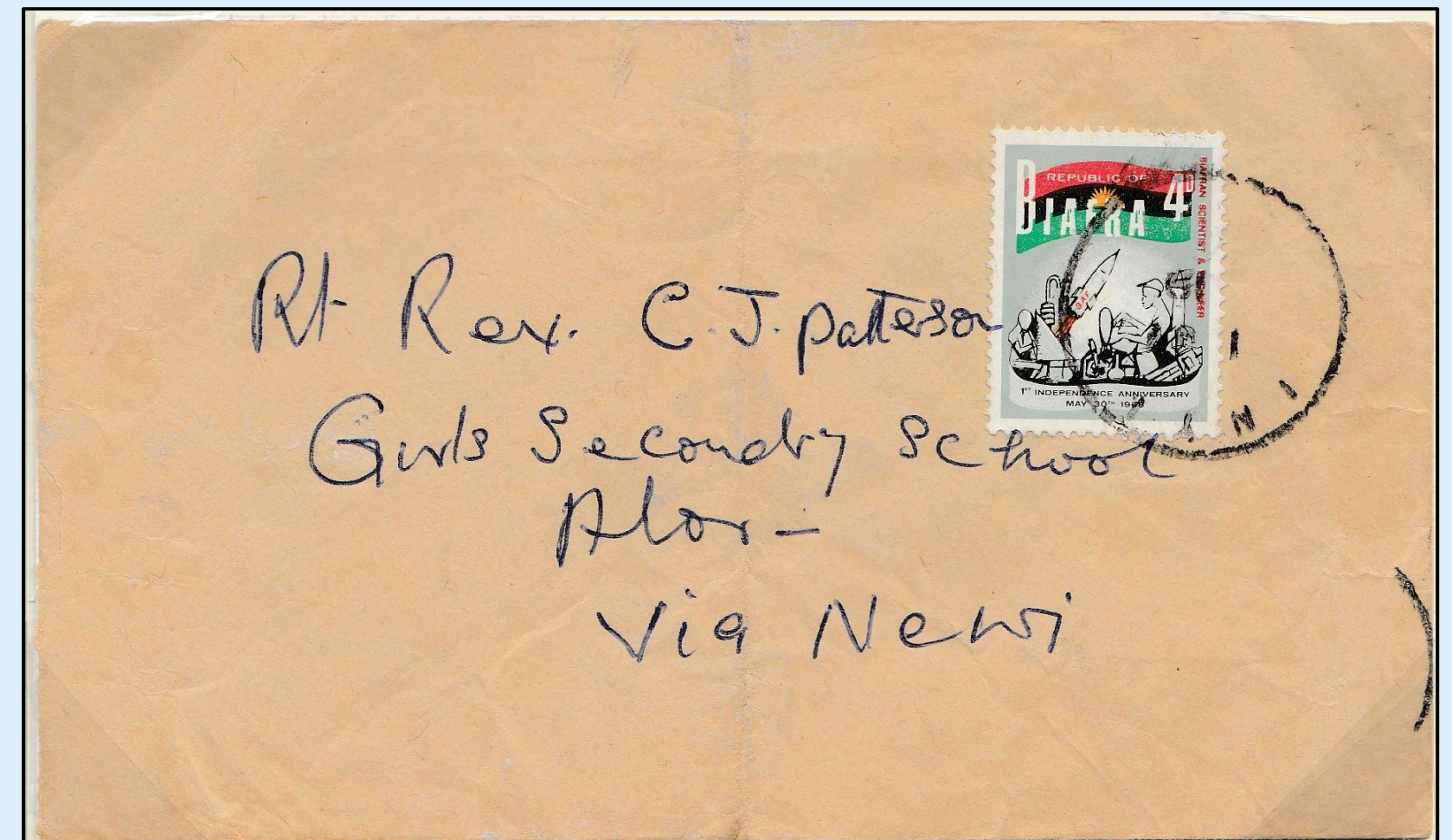
- First & Second Anniversary of 'Independence'
- Pilots & Official Mail
- Specialist Services: RLO and Telegrams
- Charity Covers

First Anniversary of Independence Civilian Mail



First Anniversary of Independence issue is macabre depicting rocket propelled grenade shooting, decapitated body, nurse, refugees, bank-note and orphan ...Shown is a 4d letter rate for up to 1oz sent in June (19)68 from Nnewi to Owerre (sic). Only remarkable for showing the year date.

Sent on 1 July 19(68) from Inyi to Alor as a letter of up to 1oz. Took 7 days to be delivered. Inyi was close to known active northern front.

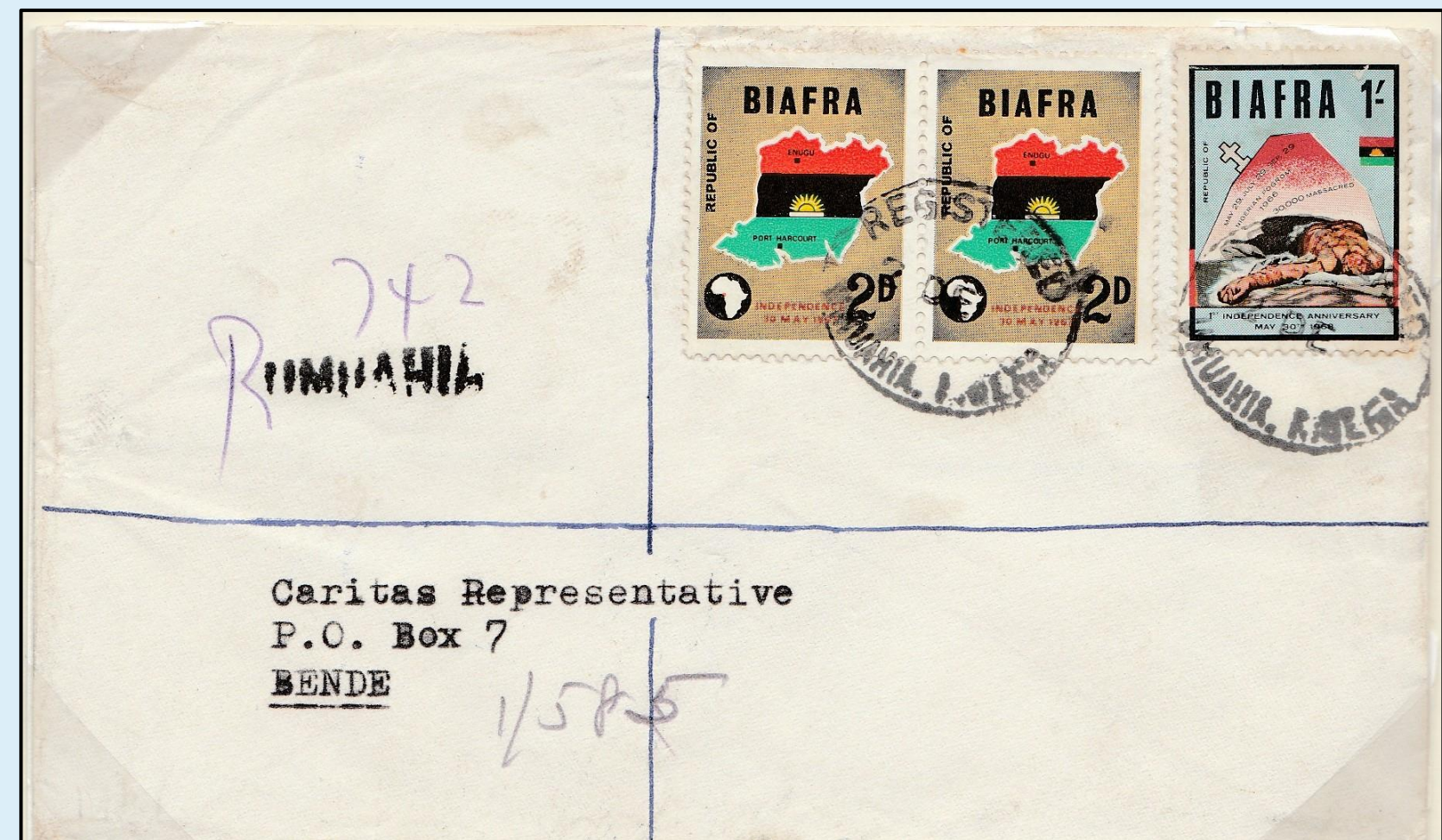


First Anniversary of Independence Civilian Mail

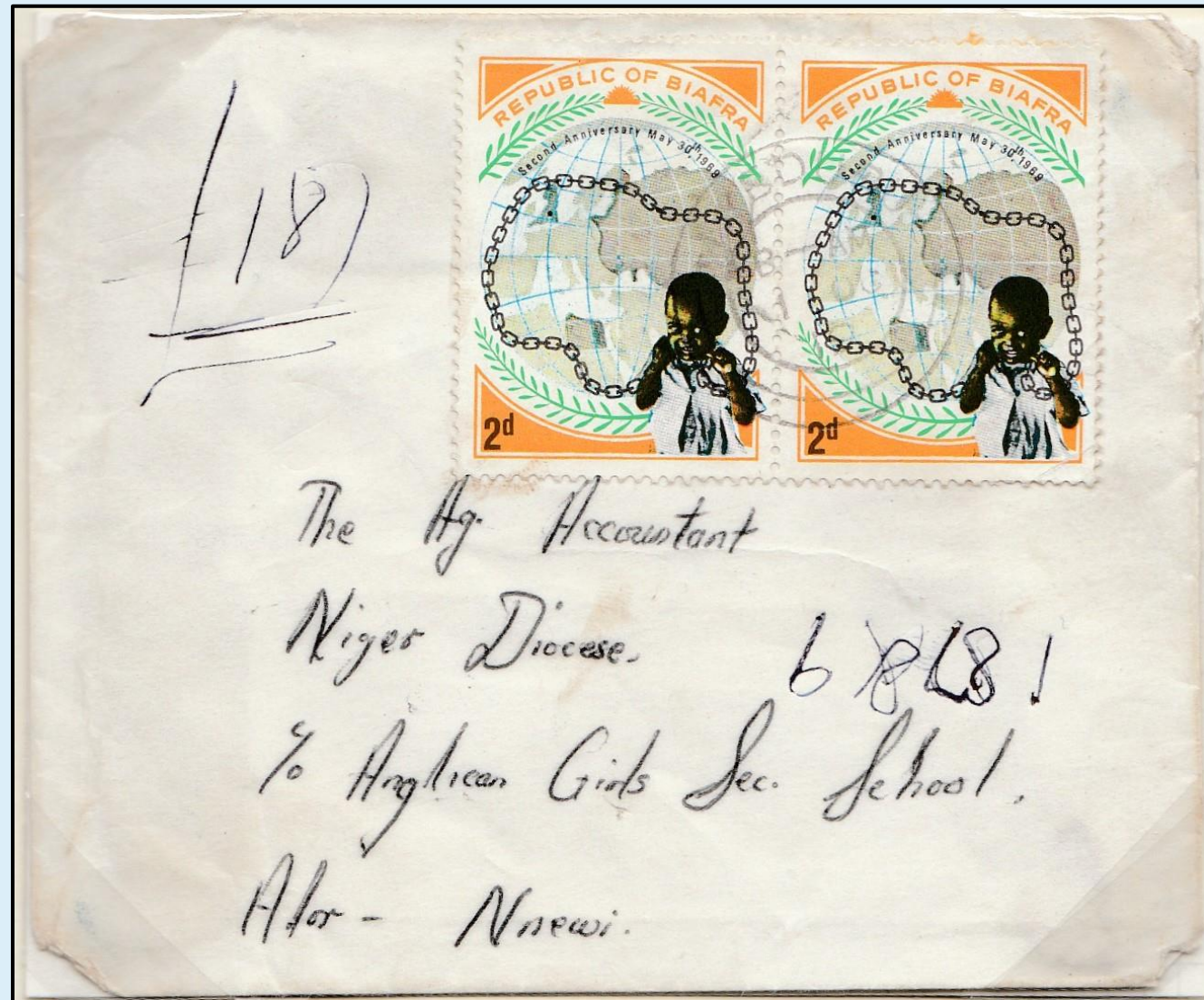


1/4d rated registered letter sent on 10 February 19(69) from the Biafran Police at Uzuakoli to Bende with 'Nigeria' excised from Uzuakoli, transit Umuahia and arrival Bende cancellations. Uzuakoli much fought over being lost, retaken and lost again six weeks after this cover was sent. Combination of Independence and First Anniversary of Independence stamps.

Another 1/4d rated registered envelope showing combination use of Independence and First Anniversary of Independence stamps. Sent from Umuahia on 2 December (1968) and delivered to Caritas Representative in Bende on the same day. Mayer sent to himself?



Second Anniversary of Independence Civilian Mail



Pair of the 2d Second Anniversary of Independence issue posted on 1 October 19(69) at Ikeduru and sent to Alor arriving 5 days later suggesting 'disturbances' en route. Close to collapse of Biafra.



1 - 5 millions
starved to death,
mostly infants



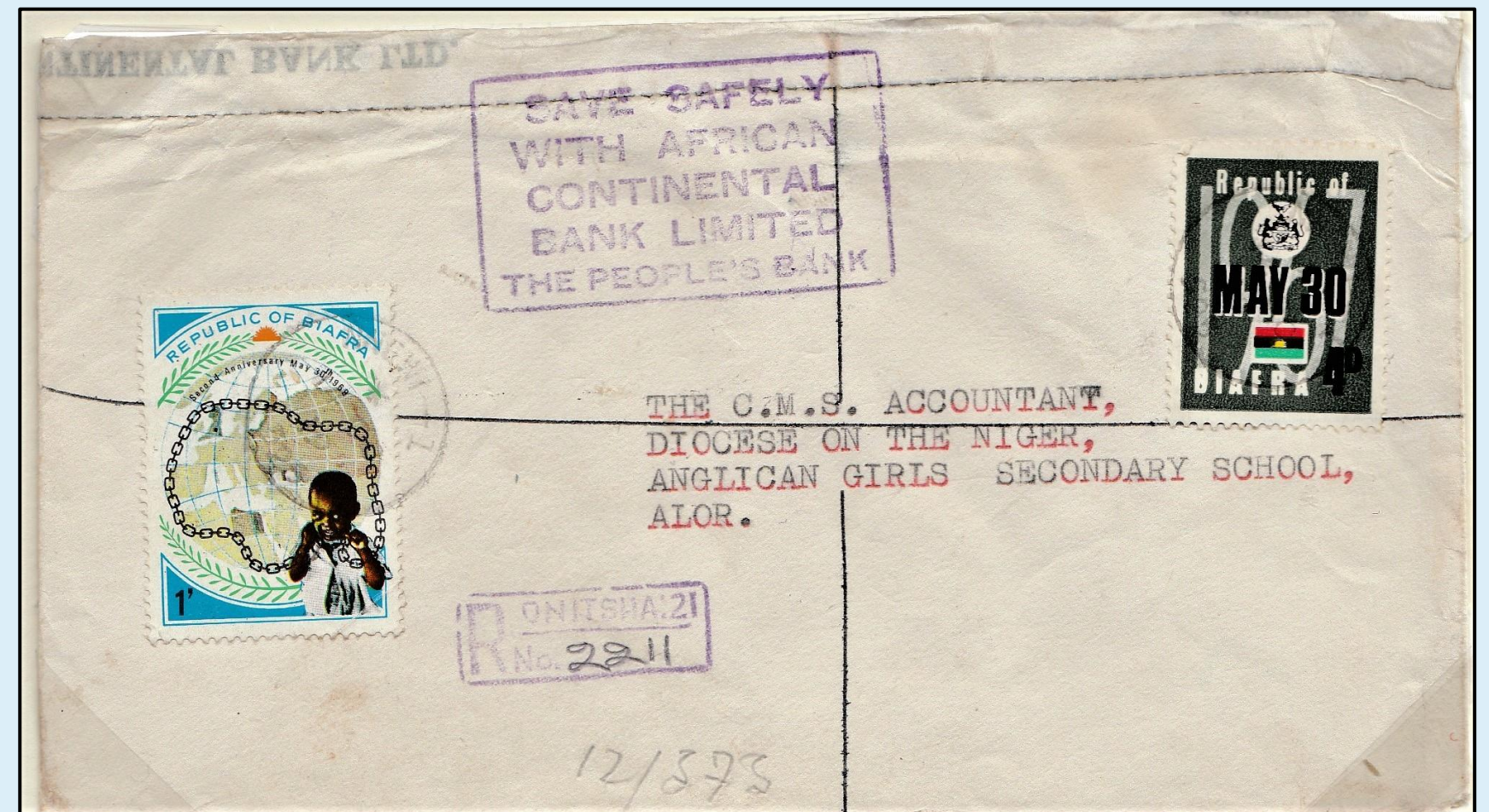
Pair of the 2d Second Anniversary of Independence issue posted on 3 October 19(69) at Atta-Owerri and sent to Alor arriving 7 days later suggesting 'disturbances' en route. In the same hand-writing indicating either a roving person or envelopes sent out as SAEs

Second Anniversary of Independence Civilian Mail

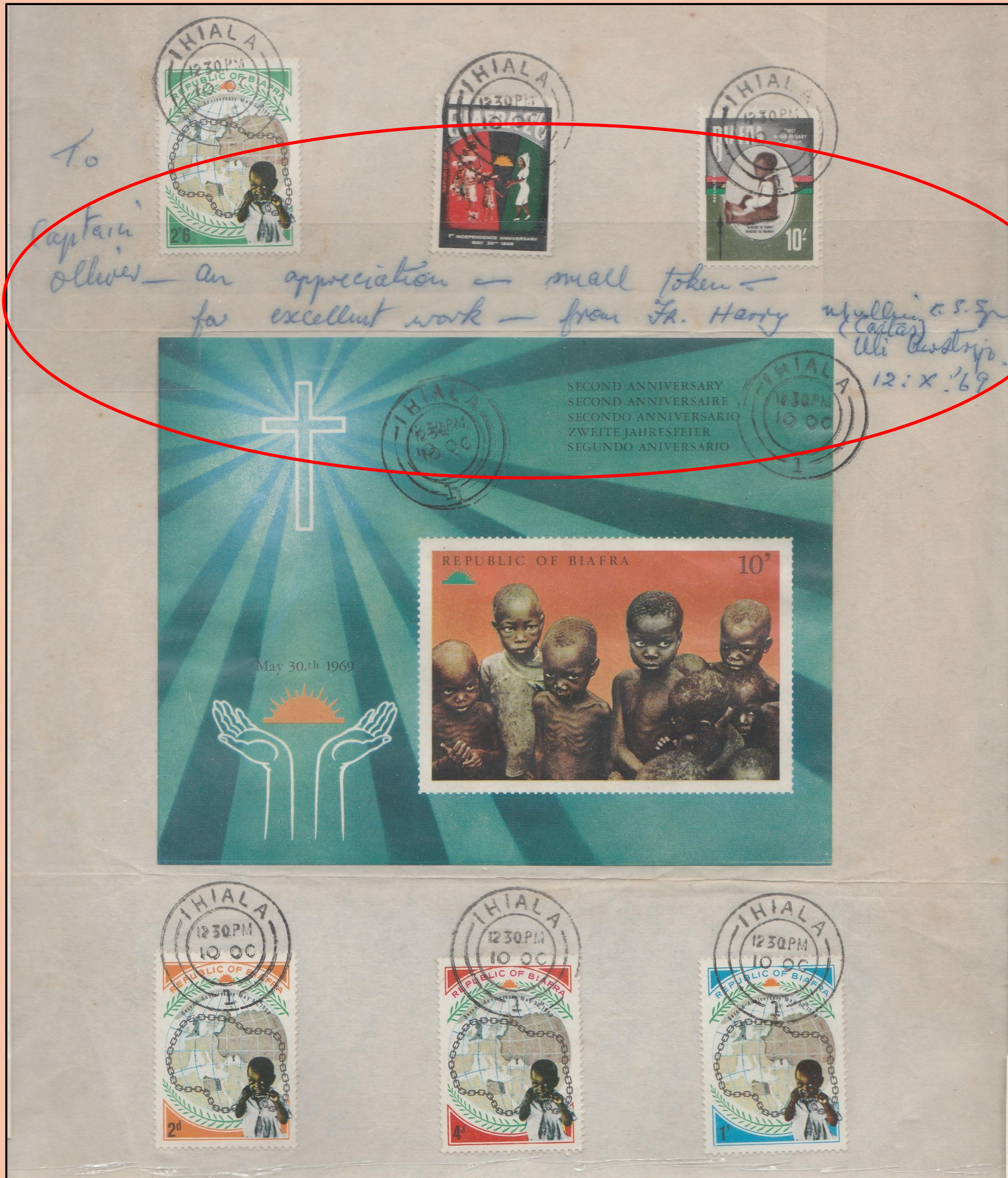


Printed paper rate (2d) used on 15 December 19(69) on cover cancelled at Amaekpu Umuoha sent to Refugee Camp Director at Amavo, Owerinta with Caritas Centre Omuahia at Eberri Omuva Etche cachet. Likely self-addressed by Father Mayer. Very late in War, remnant of Biafra about to be over-run.

1/4d registered 'envelope' sent by a bank at Nnewi on 14 October 19(69) to Alor arriving next day. 1/- 2nd Anniversary of Independence issue on genuine used cover is scarce. Three 'A.C.B. LTD / ONITSHA MAIN' cachets on reverse. These and Onitsha 21 registration etiquette show bank and Onitsha PO had moved to Nnewi. African Continental Bank services still operating three months before Biafran collapse.



Specialist Services: the Relief Pilots

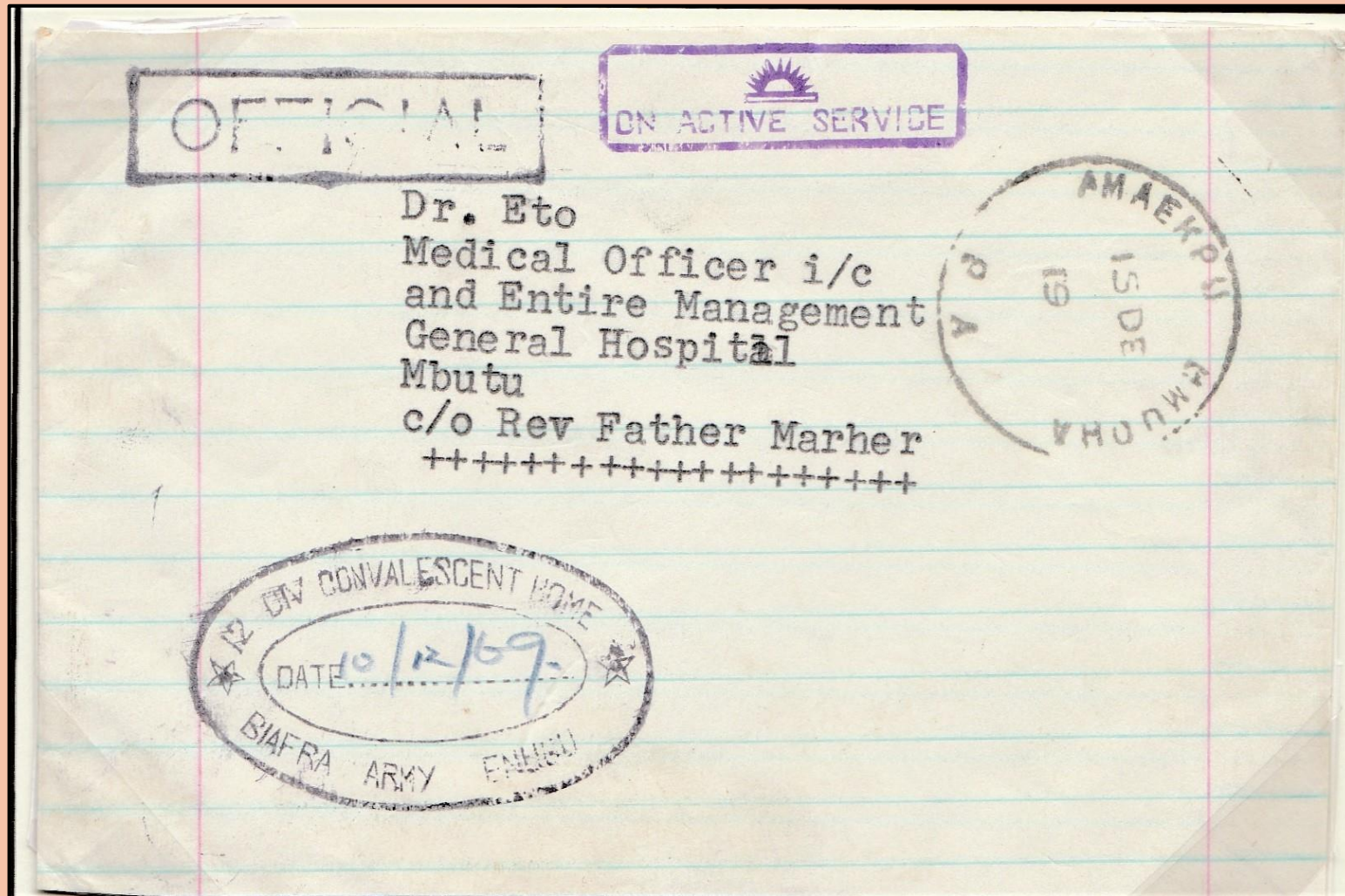


A souvenir appreciation to a food relief flight pilot
“To Captain Oliver – an appreciation – small token – for excellent work – from Fr Harry Mullin G.S.Sp (Caritas) Uli Airstrip 12 : X : '69 “

Postmarked Ihiala 10 October 1969

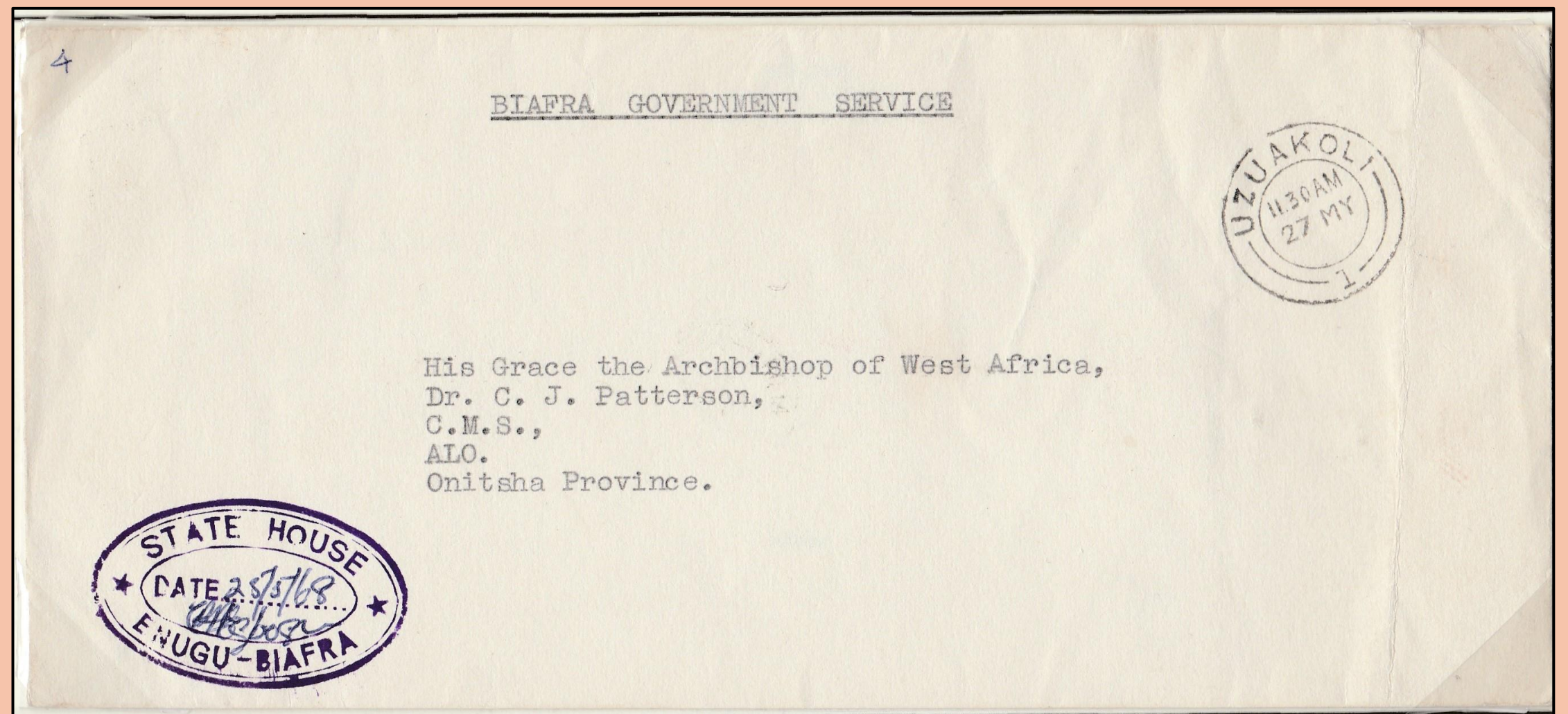
Only 2 items exist that can be traced to the pilots of the relief or military flights

Specialist Services: Official Mail

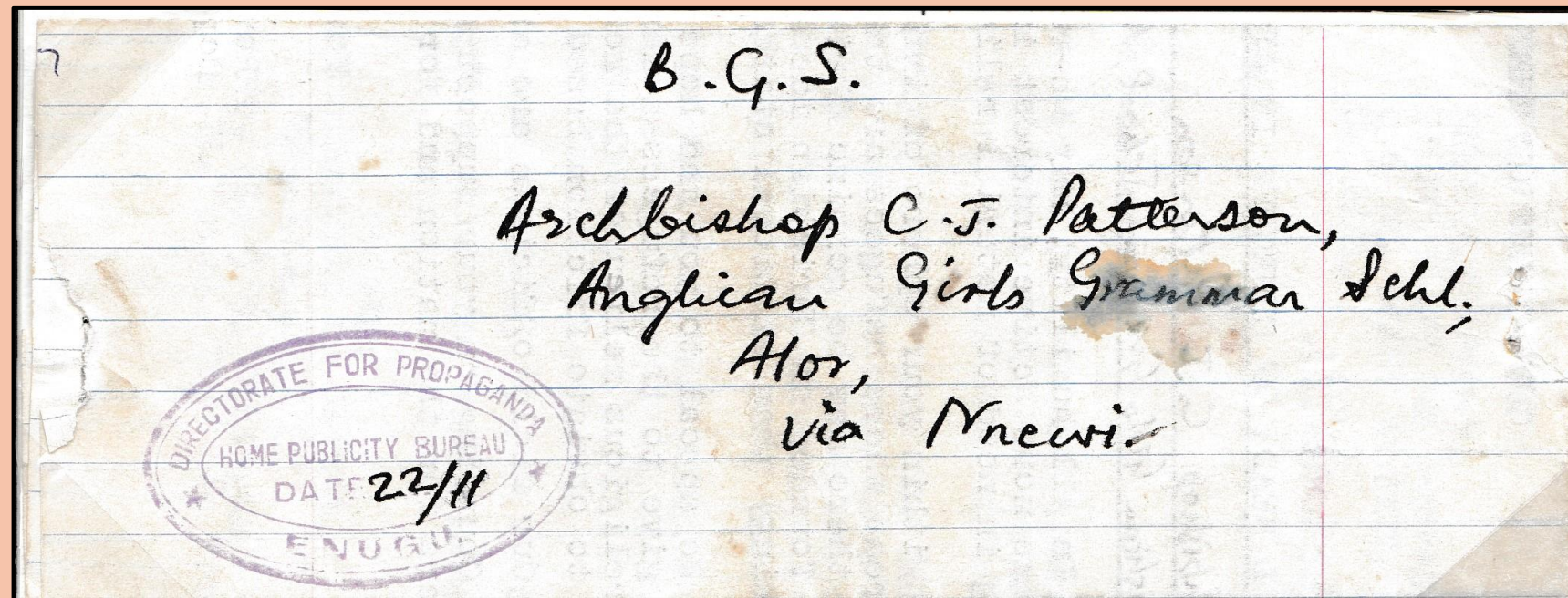


Sent 15 December 1969 from Amaekpu Umuoaha to General Hospital at Mbutu, unfranked, 'boxed 'OFFICIAL', violet 'On Active Service' cachet of 12 Division, and with oval '12 DIV CONVALESCENT HOME /BIAFRAN ARMY ENUGU' dated 10 December 1969. From the area through which the final successful assault on Biafra occurred less than a month later.

Typed 'BIAFRA GOVERNMENT SERVICE' on envelope from State House supposedly at Enugu on 25 May 1968 but actually near Umuahia, posted from Uzuakoli on 27 May 1968, unfranked.

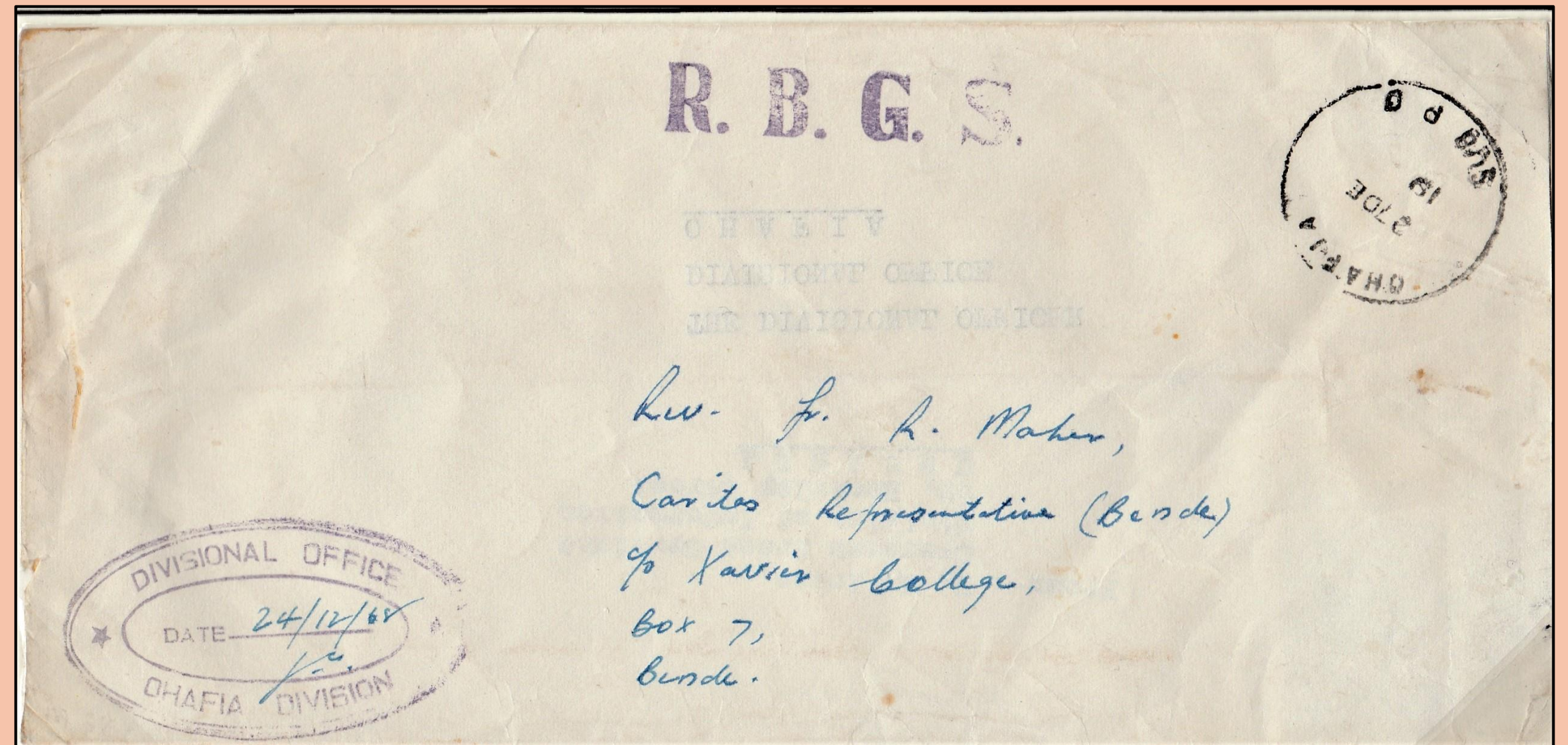


Specialist Services: Official Mail

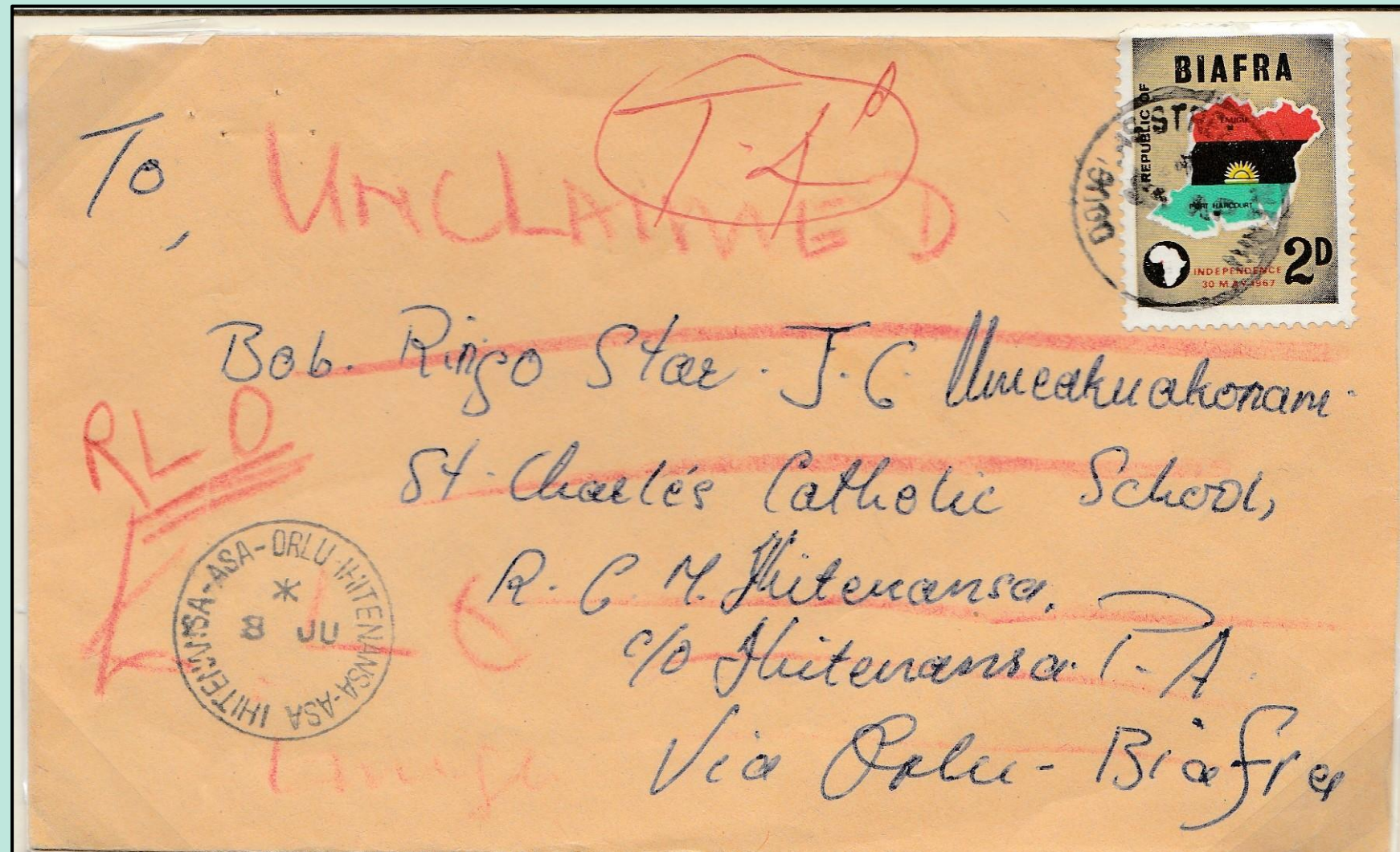


Exercise book entire unfranked but endorsed 'B.G.S.' with cachet of DIRECTORATE FOR PROPAGANDA / ENUGU' dated 22 November 1968. Included statement "We appeal to you and hope you will initiate programmes that will give to the refugees a sense of belonging both of the social and religious milieu of the neighbourhood"

Endorsed R.B.G.S.
(Royal Biafran
Government Service)
on unfranked cover
sent from Ohafia on
24 December 1968 to
Bende endorsed by
oval 'DIVISIONAL
OFFICE / OHAFIA
DIVISION' cachet.

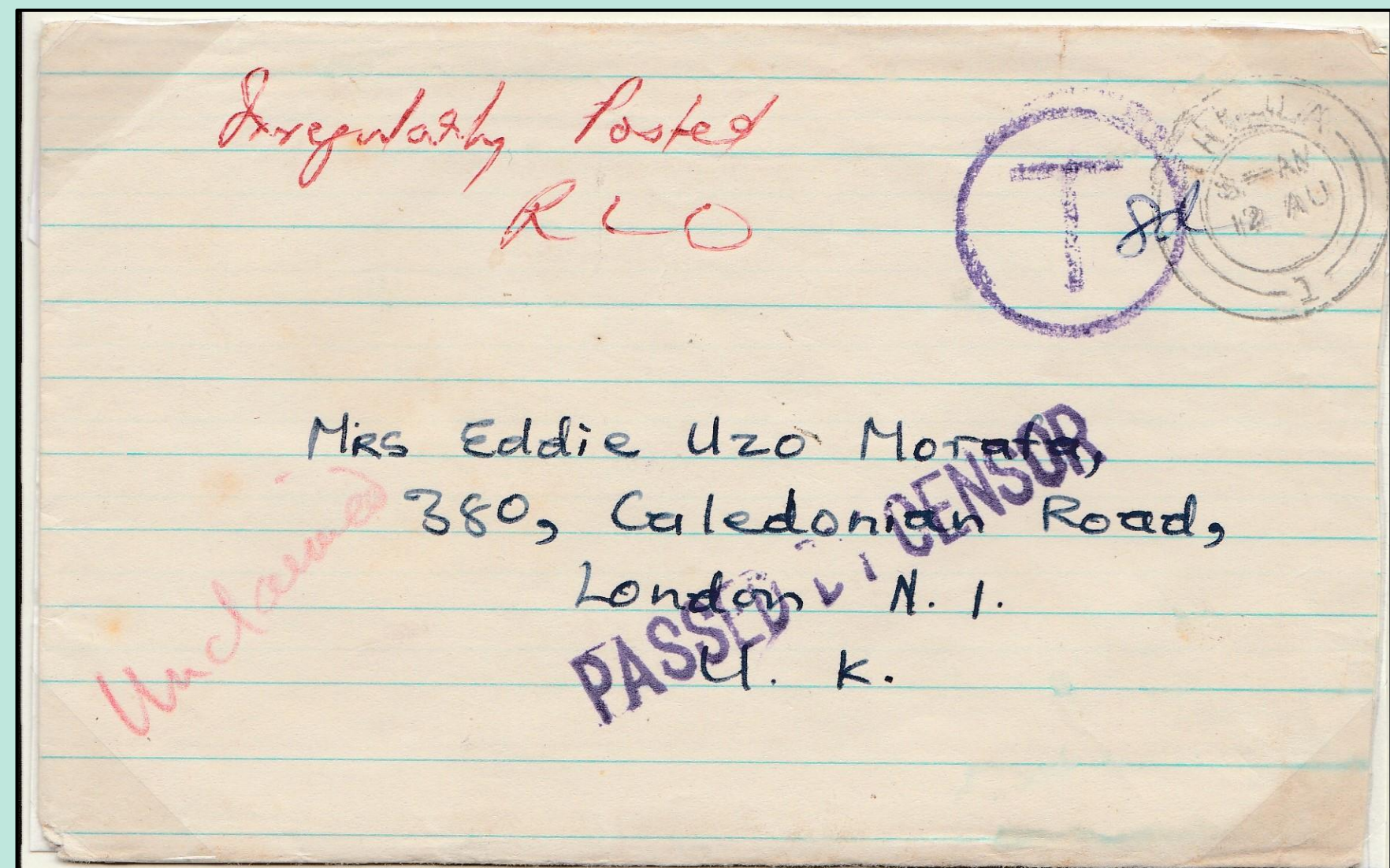


Specialist Services Returned Letter Office

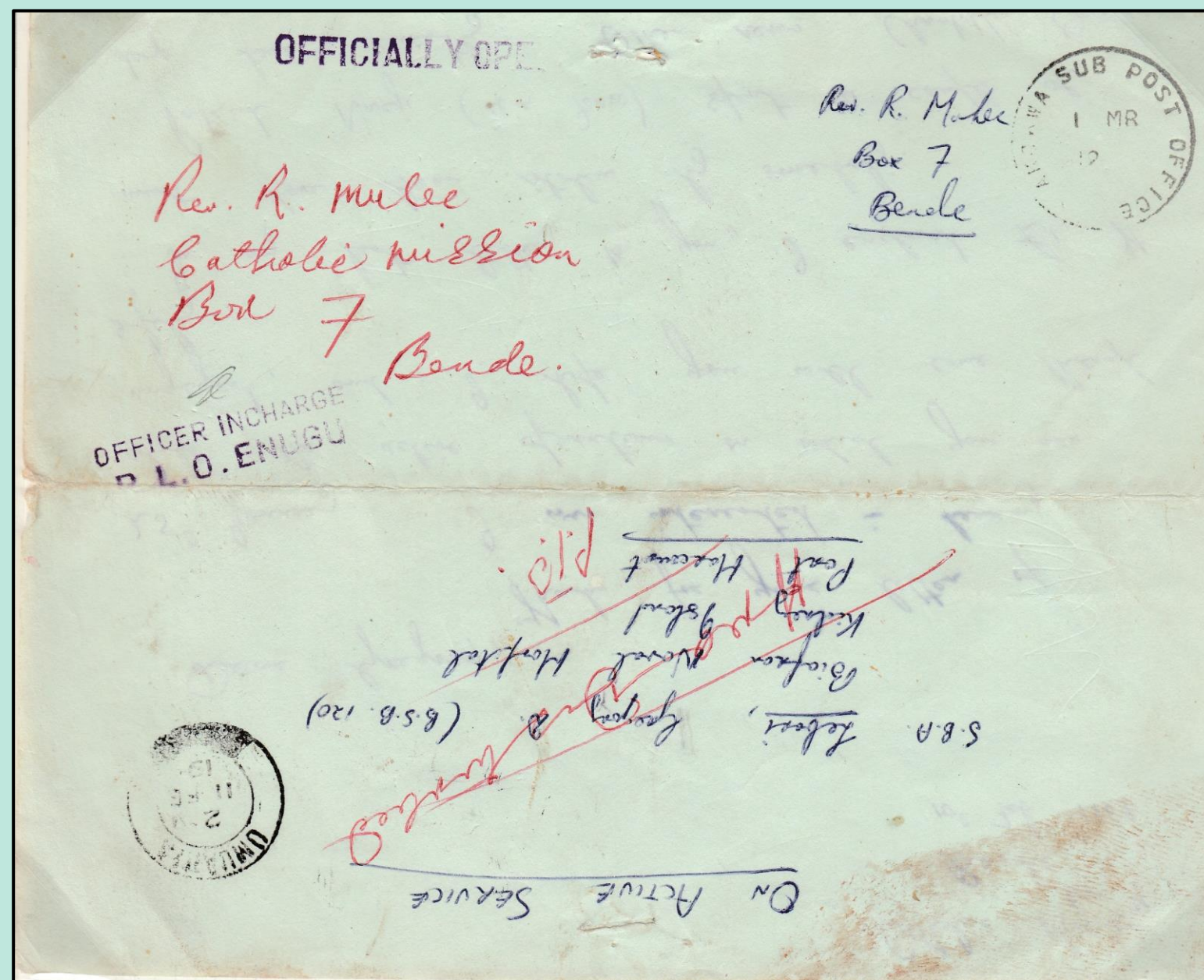


Sent unsealed at 2d rate from Douglas Street Owerri 23 April (1968) to Ihitenansa-Asa-Orlu where, when unclaimed after 6 weeks, it was sent to the 'R.L.O. Enugu'. Treated as a sealed letter, hence mss T 4d. Further red crayon 'R.L.O. Enugu' on reverse. Covers with tax marks and any sign of the RLO are rare. Enugu had fallen on 29 September 1967.

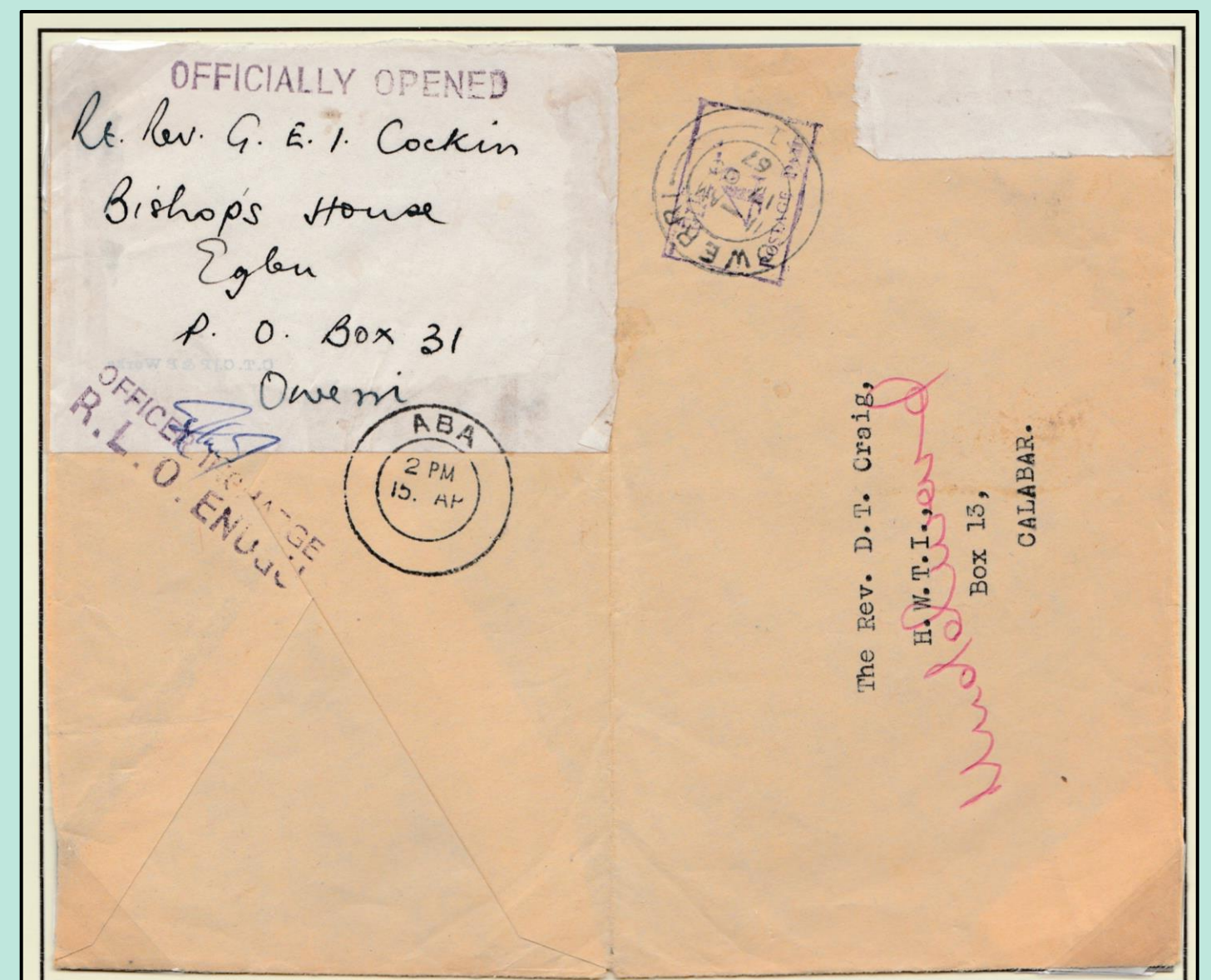
Exercise book page made into an envelope posted unfranked addressed to London. Cancelled Ihiala 12 August (1968). Attracted T in circle tax mark, endorsements in red biro 'Irregularly posted RLO' and red crayon 'Unclaimed'. Also attracted 'PASSED BY CENSOR' cachet. Ihiala was Post Office nearest Uli Airstrip.



Specialist Services Returned Letter Service



Letter written at Bende and posted in Umuahia on 11 February 19(69) to Biafran Naval Hospital at Port Harcourt eight months after it had been captured by the Nigerian Federal forces. Red biro endorsement 'Area disturbed/ P.T.O',s so failed to be delivered and sent to RLO where 'OFFICIALLY OPENED' and 'OFFICER IN CHARGE / R.L.O. ENUGU' cachets applied.



17 October 1967 sent from Owerri to Calabar on the day Calabar was captured by Nigerian Federal forces hence the red mss 'Undelivered'.

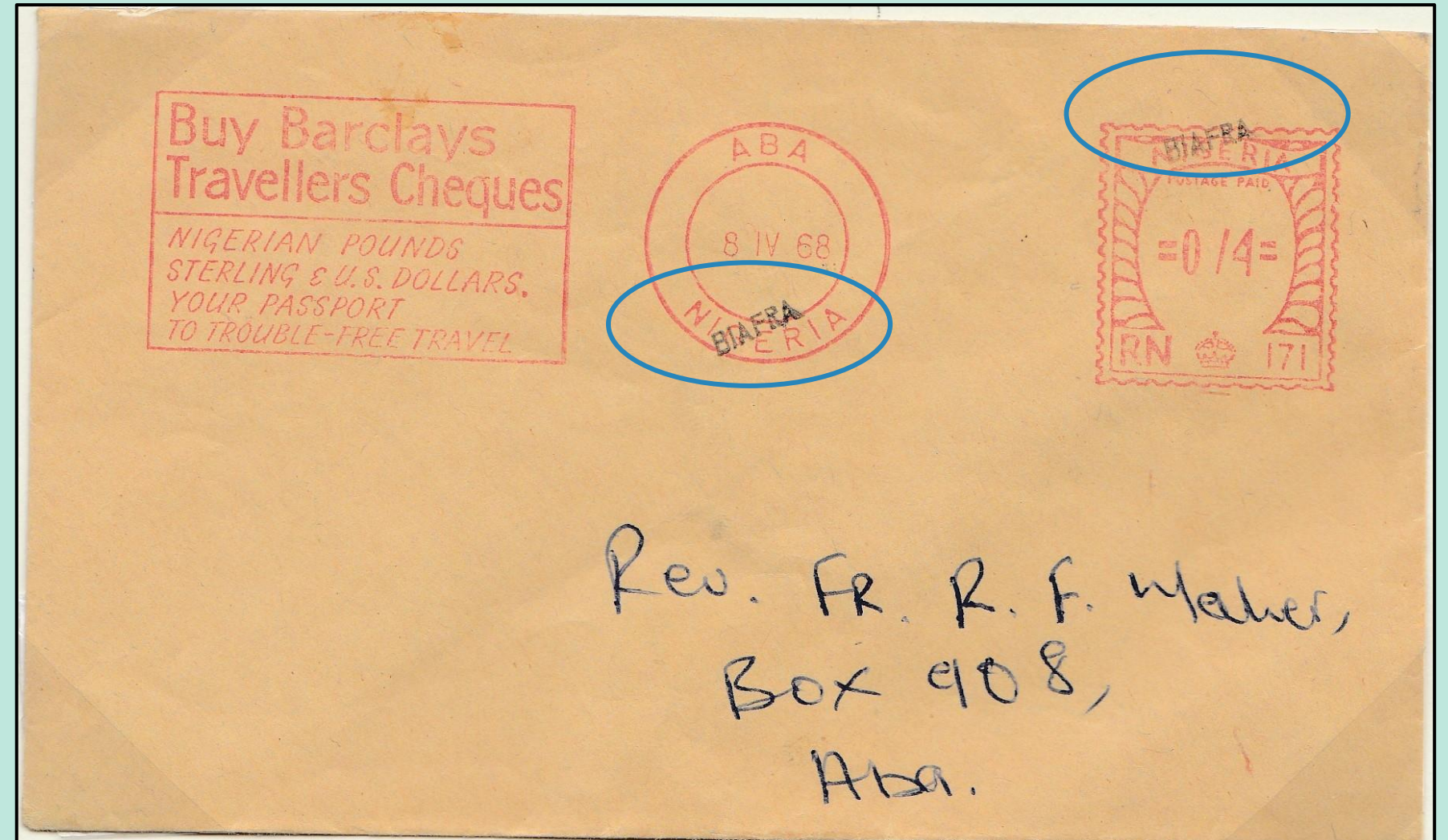
Endorsed 'OFFICIALLY OPENED' and 'OFFICER IN CHARGE / R.L.O. ENUGU' RLO at this date was at Biafra's second capital at Aba.

Specialist Services: Meter Mail

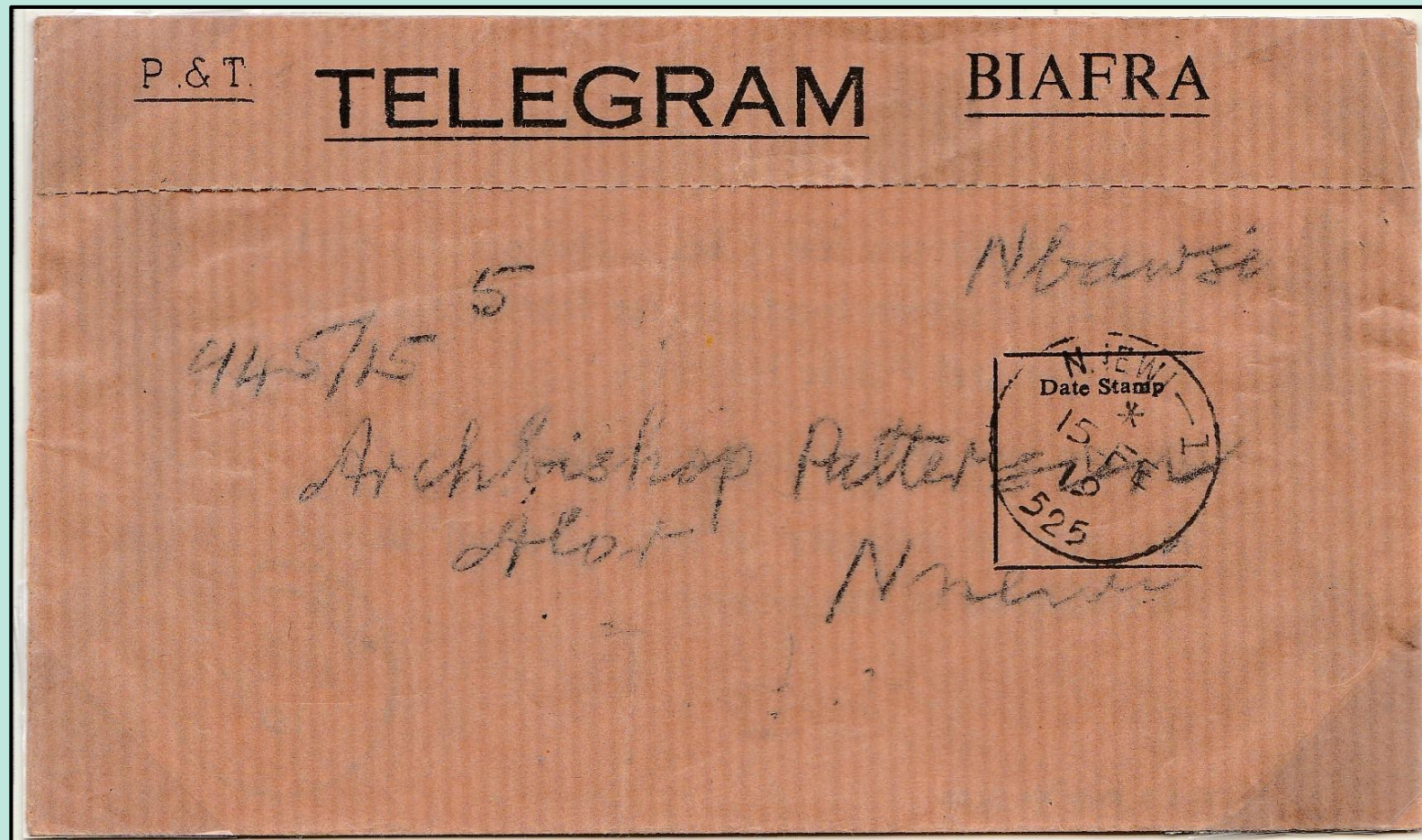


21 August 1967 Sent by bank at Onitsha internally within Onitsha franked by a Nigerian advertising meter cancellation at 4d nearly three months after the Biafran succession but before any Biafran Postage Paid cachets available.

6 April 1968 Sent within Aba with a Nigerian advertising bank meter cancellation with a small 'BIAFRA' handstamp applied to the 'NIGERIA' twice in the cancellation. Two known.



Specialist Services: Telegrams



Nbwasi to Alor.

Acceptance Nnewi-1 15 February 19(68).

Delivery Alor-Nnewi 17 February 19(68)

P. & T. Form No. T.20.

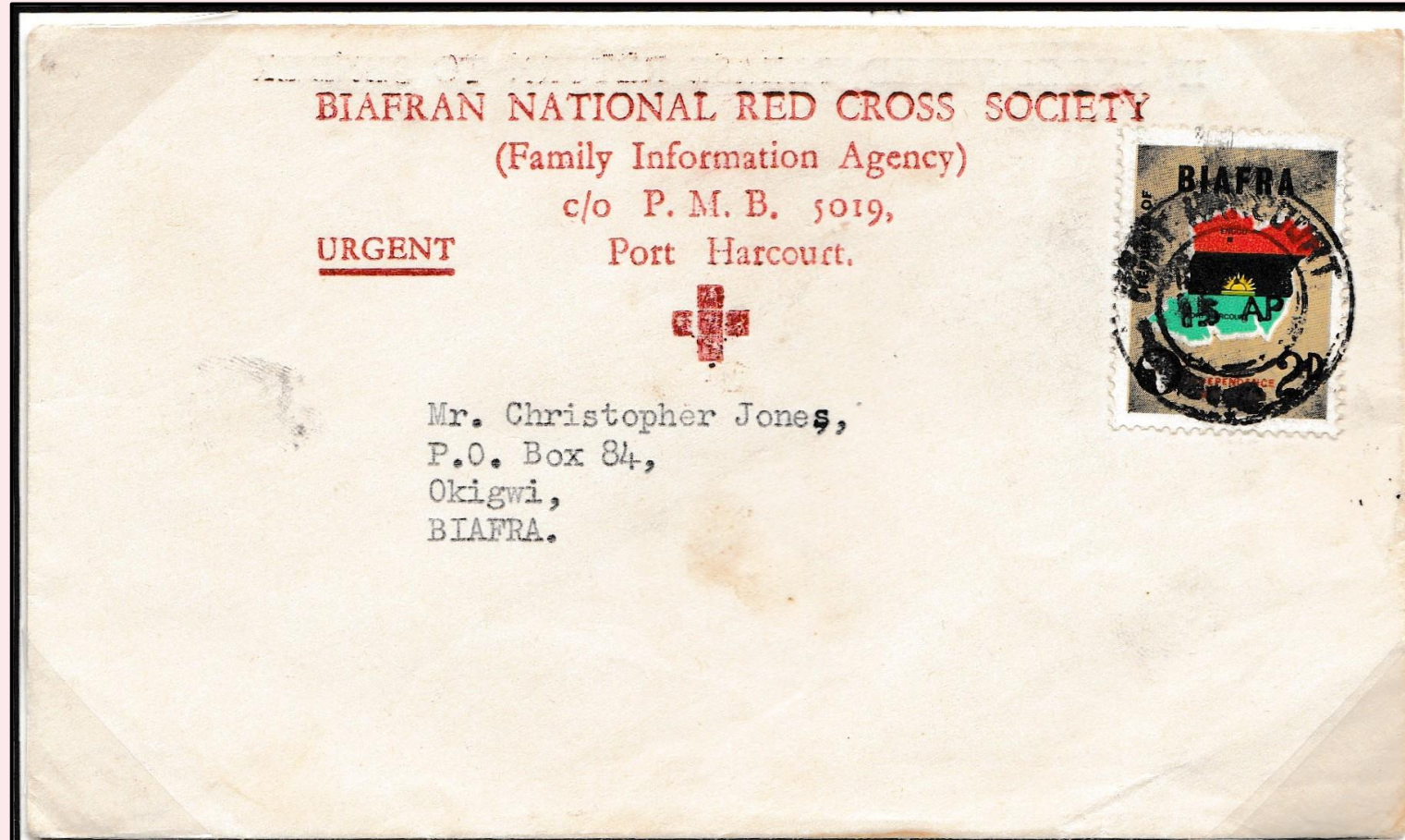
Telegrams could be handed in at Biafran Post Offices but thereafter were treated as letters.

A supplementary charge of 6d was charged on Telegrams tendered for transmission on Sundays and Public Holidays.

Acceptance at Orlu for Alor.
Acceptance Nnewi 17 April 19(68)
Delivery Alor-Nnewi 18 April 19(68)
P. & T. Form No. T.20.
Surviving examples of telegram envelopes are rare.



Specialist Services: Charity Covers



15 April 1968 Family Information Agency of the Biafran Red Cross Society in Port Harcourt writing to an expatriate in Okigwi. Port Harcourt fell 5-6 weeks later but by this time there had been much disturbance to its east and refugees fleeing north and west deeper into Biafra.

Unaddressed philatelic cover of NordChurchAid based in Sao Tome with Biafra Independence and First Anniversary of Independence issues tied by an Ihiala Savings Bank cancellation dated 14 November (1968). Fund raising for operation and co-ordination of relief flights into Biafra.



Specialist Services: Charity Covers



Wholly fund raising cover produced for the Red Cross of Iceland. American stamp tied by Seattle, Washington State FDI machine cancellation and sent to the Biafra Food Fund based in Ohio. One of the airlines airlifting relief supplies into Biafra was Flughjalp HF based in Reykjavik and established by Loftleider. Its aircraft were chartered by NordChurchAid. Most of the Joint Church Aid funding by 1968 came from the USA. (JCA nickname was 'Jesus Christ Airlines').

Thank You!

Any Questions or Comments?