

CERTIFICADO DE PARTICIPACIÓN

Exposición Virtual de Filatelia CUBAFIL'23



Mark Piper

Por su colección

Cuban forces in Angola 1975-1991.

Adolfo Sarrias
Presidente Comité Organizador

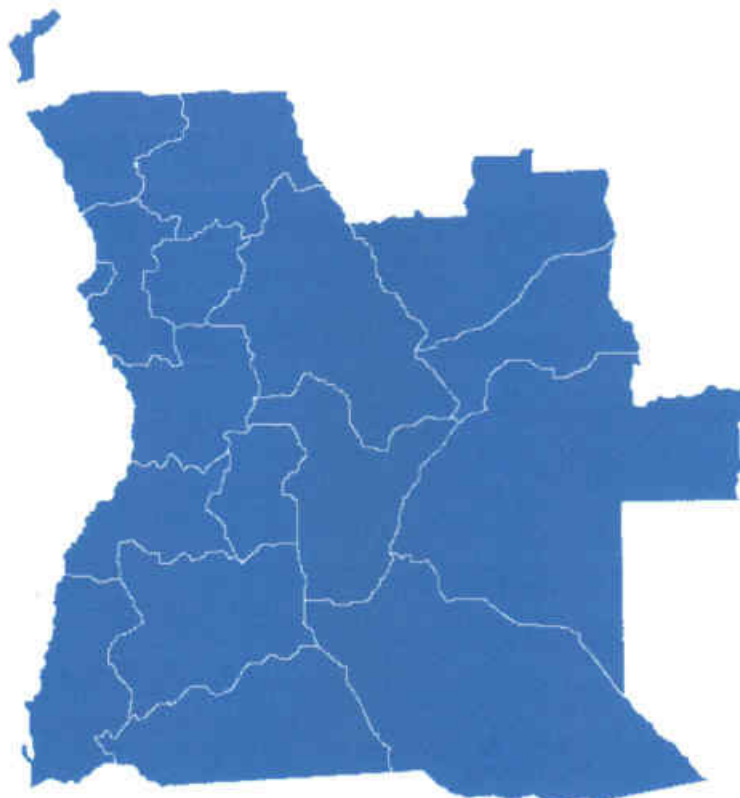


Yasel Hernández
Webmaster

Jose Raul Lorenzo
Presidente del Cuerpo de Asesores



Cuban Forces in Angola 1975 – 1991



In August 1975 the first Cuban combatants were deployed to counter South African-led guerrilla forces. By March 1976 36,000 Cuban troops had been deployed to Angola, a country with approximately 10 million inhabitants and 1,246 million square kilometers of territory, including the separate enclave of Cabinda. The original MININT forces were redeployed to Ethiopia in 1977, replaced with Cuban military MINFAR (*Ministerio de Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias*) personnel. Hostilities continued until 1988 when Cuban-led FAPLA forces scored a decisive victory over South African-led guerrilla forces at Cuito Cuanavale in southern Angola. Cuban troops withdrew in May 1991 from Angola in compliance with a UN-supervised agreement signed in December 1988 between the governments of Angola, Cuba and South Africa.

377,033 Cuban combatants and over 50,000 civilian cooperantes served in Angola during the sixteen-year Cuban participation in Angola. The Telecommunications Corps of the MINFAR provided postal services to the Cuban combatants in Angola. Given in this exhibit are stationery and markings, with a review with highlighted maps of MINFAR and mixed MINFAR/FAPLA units. This exhibit chronicles the postal history of the Cuban participation in Angola. The covers and collateral material shown here are rare and historic artifacts, considered among the few tangible traces of this little known facet of the Cold War.

CUBAN FORCES IN ANGOLA GENESIS

Cuban military participation in Africa began in 1963 with a contingent of 400 military advisors sent to Algeria. The Cuban participation in Angola dates to early 1965, when Che Guevara met Angolan MPLA leader Agostinho Neto in Congo Brazzaville. Neto requested Cuban aid for the MPLA from Guevara to continue the MPLA struggle in Angola to oust the Portuguese colonial authorities who had governed Angola for 400 years. Cuba sent a small number of covert military advisors based in Congo Brazzaville, and trained MPLA personnel in Cuba. In 1972, a team from the Cuban Ministry of the Interior made a covert assessment trip to the Angolan MPLA front. In January 1975 the MPLA requested financial and direct military aid from Cuba to counter UNITA forces that were being supported by South Africa. Postal history from this period of covert Cuban participation in Angola is non-existent. Communications consisted of encrypted telexes sent from the Cuban Embassy in Congo Brazzaville. Accounts published by veterans of the Cuban covert missions abroad state that letters sent from the field were received by Cuban Embassy personnel who visited the covert personnel in Angola, were sent with returning diplomatic personnel to Cuba and delivered in Cuba by personnel from the Cuban Ministry of Interior.

DEL ÁFRICA A LA HIGUERA: El pensamiento vivo del



ENCUENTRO EN LA
CASA CENTRAL DE LAS FAR



2004 maxi card issued by the Cuban armed forces headquarters in Havana commemorating the 39th anniversary of Che Guevara's 1965 mission to the Congo.

MPLA FORCES IN ANGOLA GENESIS

In 1956 the *Movimento Popular da Libertação de Angola*, Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) issued its first manifesto against the colonial Portuguese authorities in Angola. In 1961 the MPLA with Agostinho Neto as its Secretary, began guerrilla actions in Luanda. In early 1965, Che Guevara met Neto in Congo Brazzaville, who requested Cuban aid for the MPLA from Guevara. Guevara agreed and Cuba sent a small number of covert military advisors to train MPLA guerrillas in the field and also trained MPLA personnel in Cuba. By 1966 MPLA guerrillas operated camps in nine of Angola's fifteen provinces. In 1974 the armed forces of the MPLA, *Forças Armadas Popular de Angola*, (FAPLA) were created. The covert Cuban aid the MPLA received was vital to continue actions against the Portuguese authorities.



Above – 1986 Angola FDC commemorating the 30th anniversary of the founding of the MPLA.

Below – 1976 Angola FDC commemorating the 15th anniversary of the MPLA insurgency.

CUBAN MININT FORCES IN ANGOLA PLAN CARLOTA AUGUST – NOVEMBER 1975

In August 1975, Cuba sent a contingent of 400 military advisors to Angola to establish four schools in the field to train MPLA forces. The covert operation was named *Plan Carlota* in honor of a Cuban slave who led a revolt against the Spanish colonial authorities in Cuba. The arrival of the Cuban contingent was via Pointe Noire, Congo into Cabinda province. The contingent was formed from members of the Special Forces of the Ministry of Interior (MININT) and regular Cuban military MINFAR (*Ministerio de Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias*) personnel. Mail service was occasional at best. The two covers shown below from the *Plan Carlota* phase are the **earliest known**.

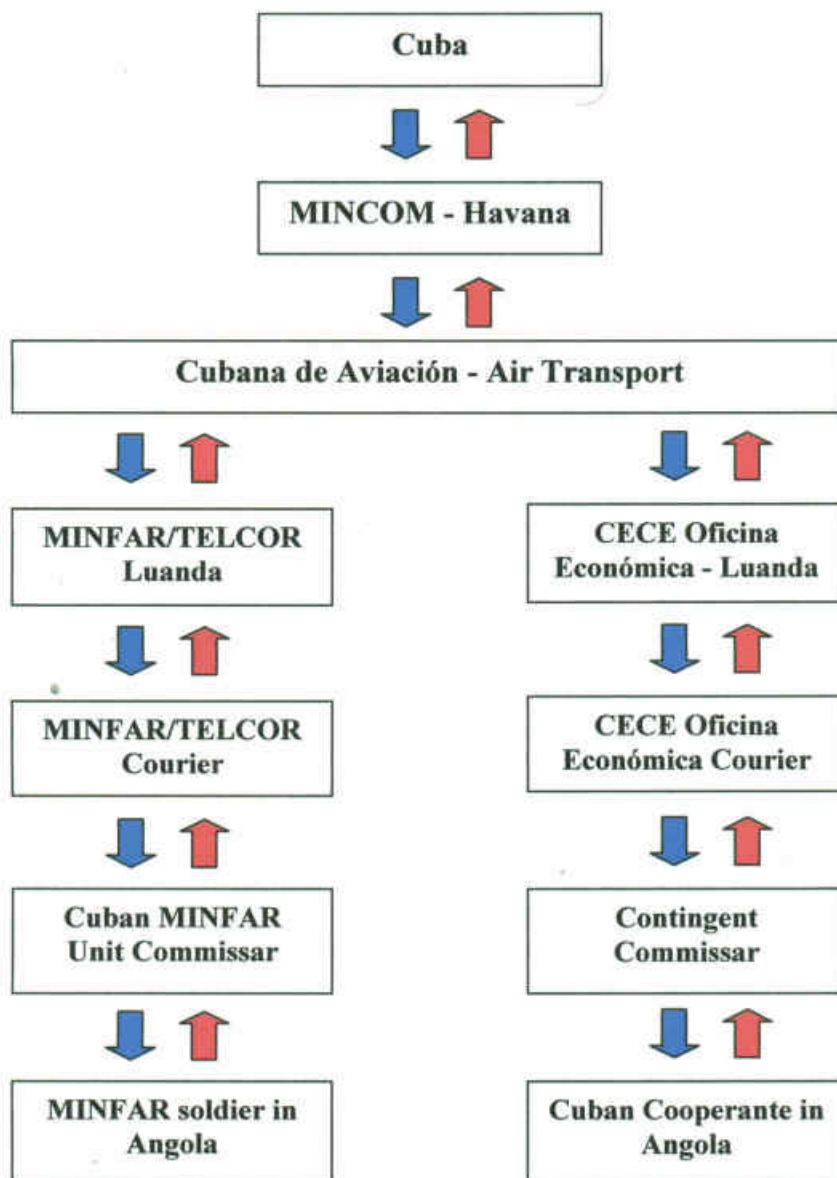


Above – Cuban PSE posted to Santiago de Cuba by a combatant deployed to Collective 66 of the Special Mission of the Cuban Ministry of the Interior in Angola. Cancelled in transit on 13 September 1975 in Havana.

Below – Cuban PSE posted to Santiago de Cuba by a combatant deployed to Collective 66 of the Special Mission of the Cuban MININT in Angola. Cancelled in transit on 21 October 1975 in Havana.

CUBAN FORCES IN ANGOLA POSTAL TRANSIT SCHEME

In March 1976, the Telecommunications Corps of the MINFAR established a postal office to service mail for the Cuban MINFAR personnel in Angola. The Cuban military Telecommunications Corps coordinated with the Cuban Ministry of Communications (MINCOM) and the Cuban Embassy in Luanda to provide military postal services in Angola. In the same manner, the Oficina Económica of the CECE at the Cuban Embassy coordinated with MINCOM to establish postal services for the civilian cooperantes in Angola.



Flowchart showing the postal transport scheme for Cuban personnel in Angola. Shown is the postal transport chain for Cuban military combatants and Cuban civilian advisors (cooperantes), both of which maintained separate postal services for their personnel in Angola.

CUBAN MILITARY MISSION IN ANGOLA STATIONERY SUPPLIED TO MINFAR PERSONNEL IN ANGOLA

The MINFAR leadership recognized the value of mail service to the morale of the Cuban forces in Angola. To this end, a variety of stationery was distributed at no charge by MINFAR/TELCOR for the use of the combatants in Angola consisting of franked or unfranked Cuban PSE and plain envelopes with Cuban domestic rate postage stamps for franking. Postal cards, greeting cards and envelopes were also produced in small quantities in Angola. Veterans recall that distributions of stationery were erratic, and many also used stationery brought from Cuba or sent by family.



1983 Cuban domestic rate PSE and Cuban plain bleached bagazo/pulp envelope with block of 10 Cuban domestic rate stamps for franking, distributed to MINFAR forces for use in Angola.

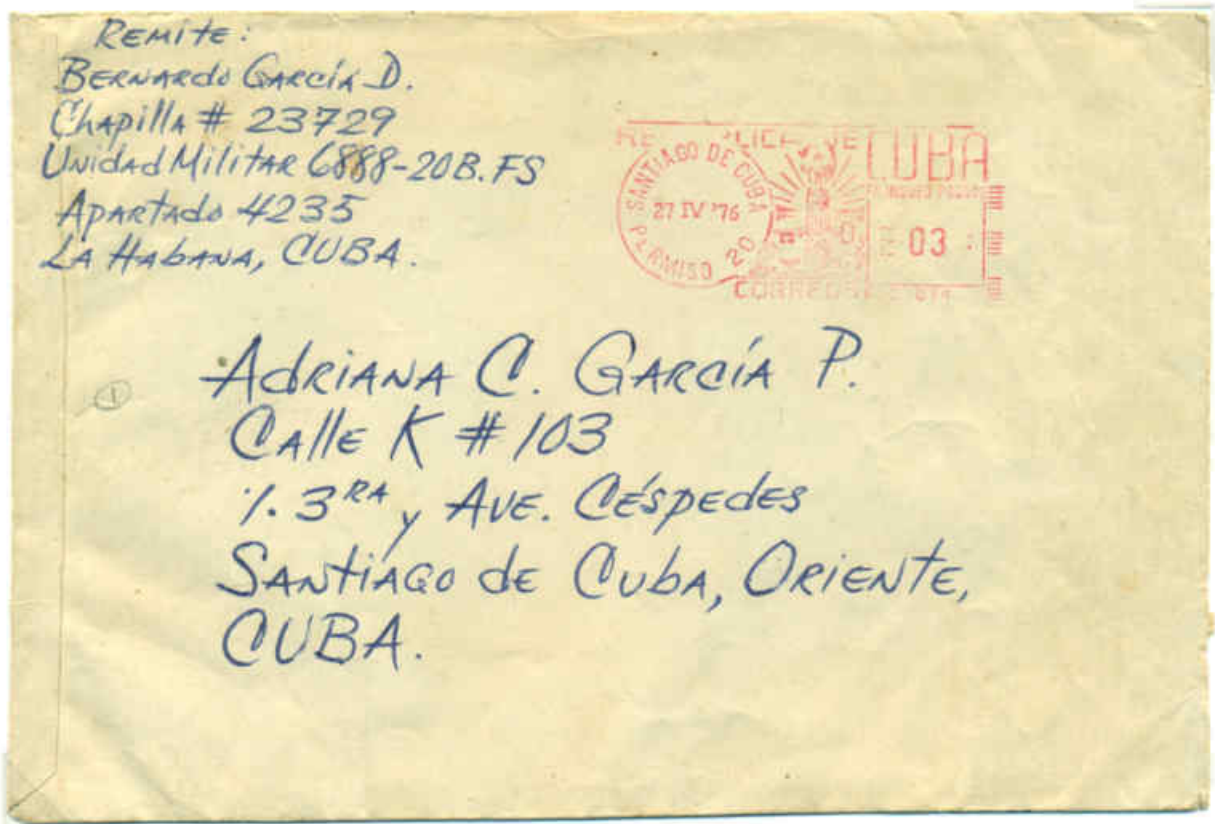
CUBAN MILITARY MISSION IN ANGOLA

MINFAR/TELCOR POSTAL OFFICE

Cuban Embassy, Luanda Angola

In March 1976, the Telecommunications Corps of the MINFAR established a postal office to service mail for the Cuban MINFAR personnel in Angola. The MINFAR postal office was located in an annex to the Cuban Embassy in Luanda, and later at an off-site location also in Luanda. The MINFAR/TELCOR office had 8 employees, using couriers to service the MINFAR personnel in the field. Mail from the Cuban forces in Angola was posted at domestic rates, using Cuban franked PSE and unfranked stationery with postage stamps distributed in Angola at no charge to the combatants. Conditions of war made the distribution and use of franked stationery erratic and mail was accepted unfranked.

Though mail from the Cuban forces was free frank, to comply with MINCOM postal franking regulations, unfranked mail was franked with Cuban Pitney Bowes portable postal meter machines at the MINFAR/TELCOR postal office in Luanda. Compliance meter franking is known from March 1976 to October 1978, when the practice ceased. To this date, two Cuban postal meter machines, 836 and 874, are known used at the MINFAR/TELCOR office in Luanda.



Unfranked envelope posted to Santiago de Cuba by a combatant deployed to the 20th Brigade of MINFAR unit 6888 with the MINFAR/FAPLA Southern Front. Meter franked in red 27 April 1976 at the MINFAR/TELCOR office in Luanda with Cuban Pitney Bowes postage meter 874, with meter dial SANTIAGO DE CUBA - PERMISO 20.

**CUBAN MILITARY
MISSION IN ANGOLA
MINFAR/TELCOR
POSTAL OFFICE
LUANDA,
ANGOLA**



Remite:
BERNARDO GARCIA DOMINGUEZ.
Chapilla # 23729
Unidad Militar 6888-20
Apartado 4235
La Habana, Cuba.

OLGA PORTUONDO ZUNIGA. Espectes.
CALLE K # 103, 1/2 BRA Y AVE. Espectes.
REPARTO SUEÑO, SANTIAGO DE CUBA.
ORIENTE, CUBA.

Unfranked envelope posted to Santiago de Cuba by a combatant deployed to the 20th Brigade of MINFAR unit 6888 with the MINFAR/FAPLA Southern Front. Meter franked in red 20 March 1976 at the MINCOR/TELCOR office in Luanda with Cuban Pitney Bowes postage meter 836, with meter dial LA HABANA - PERMISO 268.

CUBAN MININT FORCES IN ANGOLA POSTAL GREETING CARDS

The Cuban Special Mission of the Ministry of the Interior in Angola commissioned the production of a number of unfranked postal cards that were distributed to its personnel in Angola. The cards were printed at the Angolan National Printworks in Luanda using four-color printing with acetate covering onto card stock, with MININT letterhead and Angolan printer's marks. The cards celebrate a variety of Cuban holidays, with Angolan/Cuban national unity and military themes, following the Cuban tradition of posting greeting cards on important holidays. The cards were distributed free of charge in Angola, to be posted to family in Cuba. Today, the cards are considered treasured family heirlooms, with few examples known to philately.



Above – 1976 postal card printed in Angola, celebrating the annual 26th July holiday commemorating the first armed struggle of the Cuban Revolution in 1953. Headlined Luanda, 26 July 1976. Sent under separate cover to Havana.

Below – 1977 postal card printed in Angola, celebrating Mother's Day. With the letterhead of the Cuban Special Mission of the Ministry of Interior in Angola, and printer's mark from the Angolan National Printworks. Sent under separate cover to Havana.

CUBAN SPECIAL MISSION OF THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR IN ANGOLA COMMEMORATIVE CARD

The Cuban Special Mission of the Ministry of the Interior in Angola celebrated the one-year anniversary of the MPLA government in Angola on 11 November 1976 with a commemorative greeting card printed in Luanda with the letterhead of the MININT on the back of the card. The card was distributed free of charge for use by MININT personnel stationed in Angola to send to their families in Cuba. The card shows the Cuban and Angolan flags with a text from Cuban leader Fidel Castro praising the combatants in Africa.




1976 MININT fold out greeting card commemorating the one-year anniversary of the MPLA regime in Angola on 11 November 1976. Dedicated December 1976. Posted under separate cover to Havana.

CUBAN MINFAR AIR LETTER SHEET

Rmte : BERNARDO GARCIA D.
Alno : 23729
U/M : 6533-10
Apdo : 4235, LA HABANA.

A : ADRIANA GARCIA P.
Calle K No. 103
E/ TERCERA y AV. CESPEDES.
Barrio SUEÑO Ciudad S. de Cuba.
Provincia SANTIAGO DE CUBA.

**VIA AEREA
PAR AVION
BY AIR MAIL**



FIDEL

PERTENECAMOS A UNA GRAN PATRIA
Y A UNA GRAN FAMILIA QUE SON
EL MUNDO Y LA FAMILIA HUMANA.
EN ESA FAMILIA LOS PUEBLOS
DEL AFRICA NEGRA OCUPAN UN
LUGAR MUY CERCANO A CUBA.

1976 unfranked MINFAR air letter sheet posted to Santiago de Cuba by a combatant deployed to MINFAR unit 6533 headquartered at Cahama, southern Cunene province. Meter franked 7 October 1976 with Cuban domestic franking at the MINFAR/TELCOR postal office in Luanda. Printed in Angola and distributed at no charge to combatants. This is the only example known to philately.

CUBAN MILITARY MISSION IN ANGOLA MINFAR greeting cards

In Cuba, Mother's Day is celebrated as a civic holiday, with the sending of greeting cards much like Christmas is celebrated in Western nations. Greeting cards were also prepared for distribution to Cuban personnel in Angola for posting to family in Cuba. Military and Cuban-Angola solidarity motifs predominate the designs, which also include patriotic messages. The cards were printed in four-color lithography at the Angolan National Press in Luanda.



Left – 1982 Mother's Day card printed and distributed in Angola, sent under separate cover to Santiago de Cuba by a combatant deployed to MINFAR unit 6963 at Huambo, Angola

Right – 1983? Mother's Day card printed and distributed in Angola, with patriotic text. Mint

CUBAN MILITARY MISSION IN ANGOLA MAIL TO MINFAR FORCES IN ANGOLA

In a 2001 interview, a Cuban veteran who served in the MINFAR/TELCOR office in Luanda recalled that the majority of mail was incoming from Cuba. Presently, three examples of mail to the Cuban forces in Angola are known to philately because MINFAR regulations ordered Cuban combatants in Angola to destroy incoming mail from Cuba. South African forces also observed the same regulation in respect to their incoming mail. Possession of mail could identify combatants to enemy forces, assuring a gruesome death in a war that did not believe in the concept of POWs.



REMITENTE Y CODIGO 88903
7 de Noviembre Habana
Calle 63 P.O. Box 55300
Apt 6533 P.O. Box 55000

ARMANDO VALLE LOPEZ
 27 - OCT. 1929
 20 - JUL. 1983
 MARTIR DEL MOCCADA

28/2/89

NOMBRE: Victor
Alexis Hung

DIRECCION: U/M 6533
apdo 6074 - 73-002
Ciudad Habana

CODIGO UNIDAD DE DESTINO

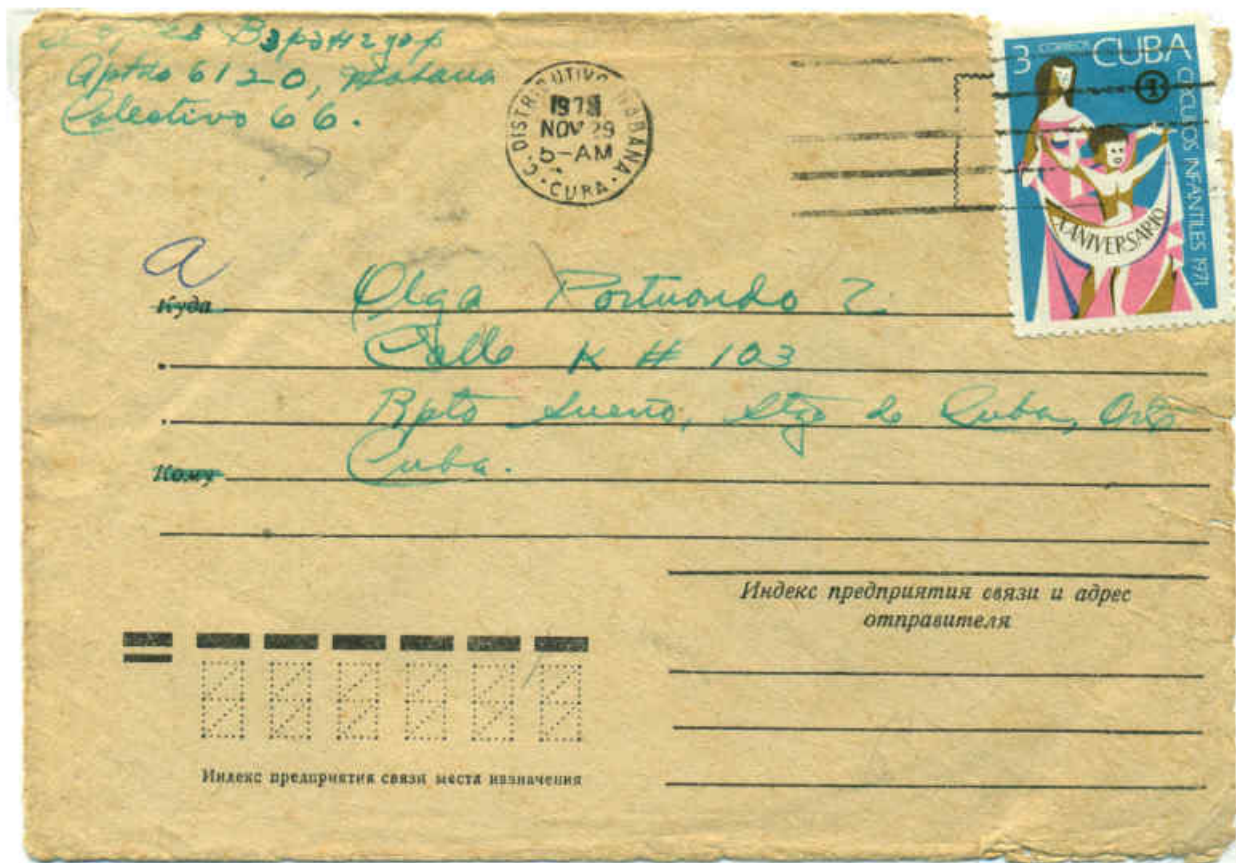
Alvares # 22085
 DIRECCION: U/m 6963
Apto 4235
Habana

Above - Cuban PSE posted February 1989 from Cienfuegos to a combatant deployed to MINFAR unit 6533, headquartered at Lubango, Angola. The cover was manually docketed in transit with the destination at lower right.

Below - Cuban PSE posted 2 April 1976 from Santiago de Cuba to a combatant deployed to MINFAR unit 6963, headquartered in Luanda.

CUBAN MININT FORCES IN ANGOLA SOVIET SUPPORT

From 1966 to 1972, the MPLA received limited financial support from the Soviet Union. In January 1976, after the MPLA victory, Soviet support increased; the Soviet Union became the main suppliers of heavy weaponry and aircraft to the Angolan government, while the Cuban advisors led and trained the Angolan forces and operated the Soviet equipment. The presence of Soviet military advisors in Angola was officially denied for many years, but newly released Soviet archives confirm the Soviet presence, which numbered between 1,000 and 1,500 military advisors. Evidence of Soviet participation in Angola is rare. The envelope shown is a standard Soviet unfranked stationery envelope, used by a Cuban MININT officer deployed to Angola with *Plan Carlota*, likely obtained from Soviet advisors in Angola. The Cyrillic translation for the name in the return address, also suggests Cuban use of Soviet support operations during the covert *Plan Carlota* phase of the Cuban participation to remit mail from Angola.



Soviet unfranked stationery posted to Santiago de Cuba by a combatant deployed in Angola with Collective 66 of the Cuban Ministry of Interior. Franked with Cuban domestic postage, the cover was cancelled in Havana in transit 29 November 1975.

CUBAN MILITARY MISSION IN ANGOLA COLLATERAL MATERIAL

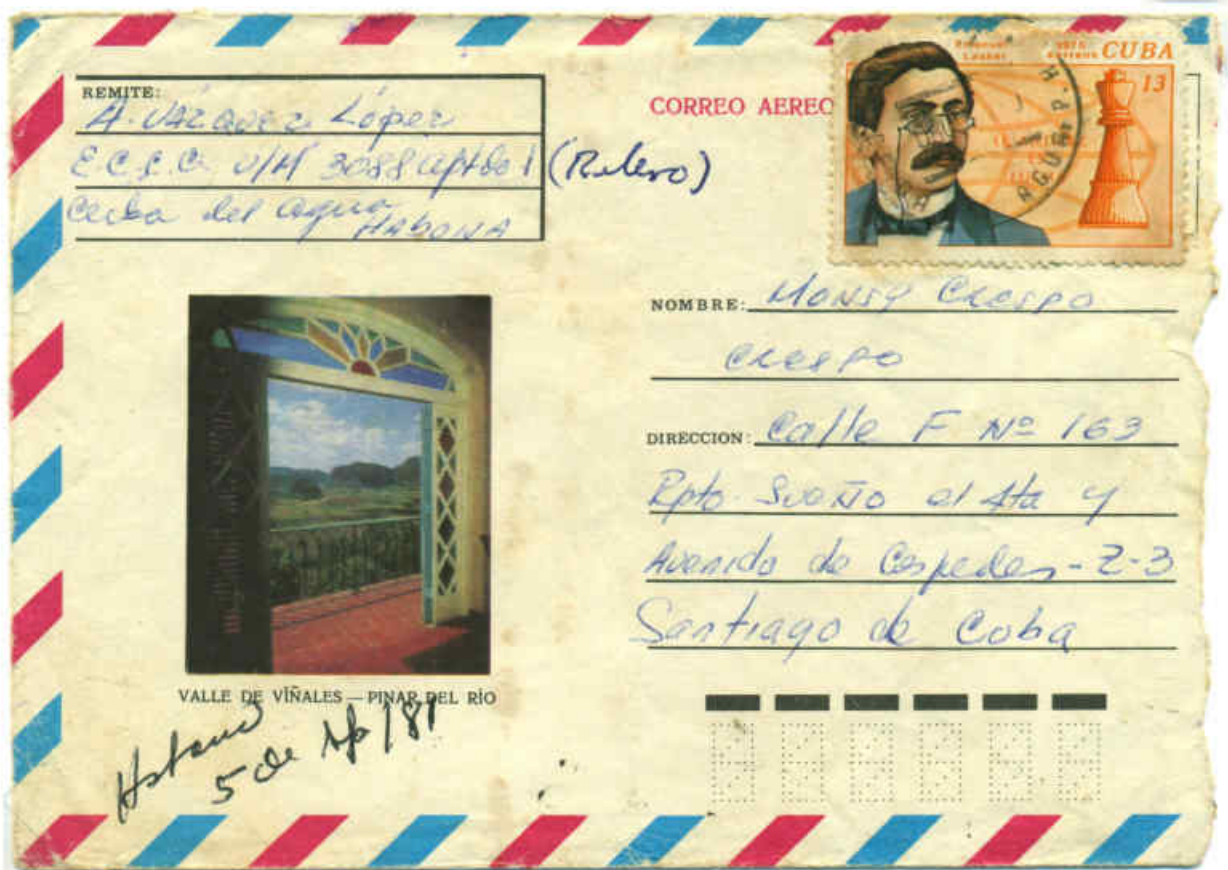
In addition to interviews and letters, non-philatelic collateral material that was included in letters from combatants in Angola adds to the study of the postal history of the Cuban participation in Angola. Post cards showing the sights of African Angola, currency and coins were sent from Angola as souvenirs. The tradition of mailing souvenirs home has been seen with military forces deployed in conflicts around the world.



Commercial postcards showing view of Luanda and Angolan natives; 1976 Angolan 100 kwanzas banknote with the image of Angolan leader Agostinho Neto.

CUBAN MILITARY MISSION IN ANGOLA TROOP RECRUITMENT

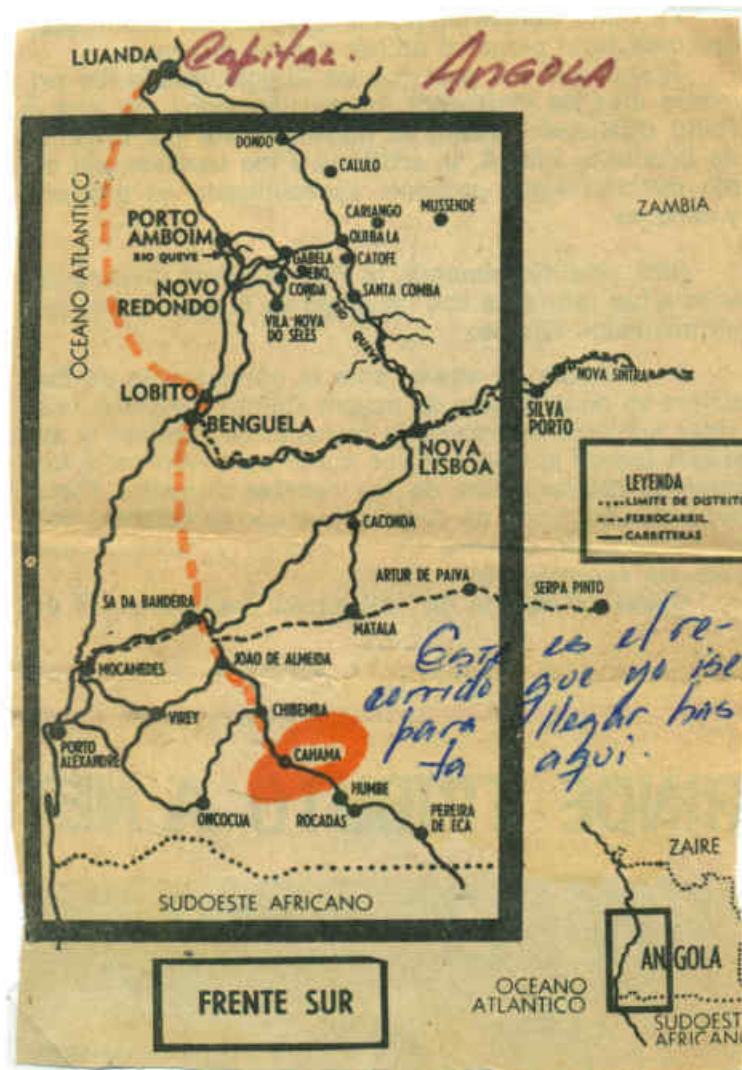
Personnel for the MINFAR forces in Angola were drawn from draftees called for obligatory military service. In Cuba, all males between the ages of sixteen and forty-five years of age are eligible for obligatory military service with a standard term of service of three years. Once an induction notice was issued, the draftees reported for induction and were sent to MINFAR training camps in Cuba for a six-week military bootcamp. The training would consist of guerrilla warfare techniques with weapons training. Courses in basic Portuguese were also part of the training received along with technical training predicated by an aptitude test upon induction. Once the draftees passed induction, they were ready to be deployed to military units in Angola.



Cuban PSE with franking posted September 1981 to Santiago de Cuba by a draftee at MINFAR cadet training prior to deployment to Angola with MINFAR unit 3088 at Ciego de Avila in central Cuba.

CUBAN MILITARY MISSION IN ANGOLA TROOP DEPLOYMENT

This unique newspaper clipping documents the deployment of a MINFAR cadet from Cuba to Angola. Upon arrival in Angola, the cadet is deployed to MINFAR training unit headquartered in Luanda. After training, the cadet was deployed via Lobito to Cahama, an important MINFAR garrison on the MINFAR/FAPLA Southern Front. Enclosed in a letter home, the combatant used the map of the MINFAR/FAPLA Southern Front, with his deployment path written out.



1988 geographical map of the MINFAR/FAPLA Angolan Southern Front, published in the MINFAR magazine, *Verde Olivo*. The sender used the map to detail his deployment in Angola. Unique.

CUBAN MILITARY MISSION IN ANGOLA TROOP DEPLOYMENT

Matching changing return addresses on the covers from a correspondence with a map that the sender sent detailing his deployment, the postal historian can form a deployment chronology. MINFAR training unit 6555, used in the first letters, corresponds to initial deployment to Luanda. MINFAR unit 6368, used also for a short period corresponds to the cadet's arrival in Cahama from Luanda via Lobito. Cahama was an important MINFAR air support location on the MINFAR/FAPLA Southern Front. The use of post office box 6915-5 confirms final deployment to a mixed MINFAR/FAPLA unit operating in the Cahama region as part of MINFAR unit 6963.



Above – Cuban PSE posted Feb 1988 by a cadet deployed to MINFAR training unit 6565 in Luanda.

Center – Cuban PSE posted April 1988 by a cadet deployed with MINFAR unit 6368 in Cahama.

Below – Cuban PSE posted February 1989 by a cadet deployed to a mixed MINFAR/FAPLA unit as part of MINFAR unit 6963 on the Southern Front based in Cahama.

CUBAN MILITARY MISSION IN ANGOLA MINFAR/TELCOR OFFICIAL MAIL

Official certified mail was used to transmit marriage and death certificates as well as casualty notifications from the field to next of kin. After 1981, such mail is franked with MINFAR/TELCOR postage paid markings.



Cuban MINFAR letterhead envelope posted May 1983 as certified mail to Camaguey from MINFAR headquarters in Havana. Franked with MINFAR/TELCOR postage paid stamp in purple.

CUBAN MILITARY MISSION IN ANGOLA TELCOR POSTAGE PAID MARKING

In late 1981, the Telecommunications Corps of the MINFAR distributed postage paid markings to the political commissars of MINFAR units, responsible for mail. The rubber stamps were produced in Cuba and are known stamped in a variety of colors. Meant for franking mail, the marking was applied in Angola indiscriminately to outgoing mail as a cancel or franking. The MINFAR/TELCOR marking shows the symbol of the Telecommunications Corps, with the text POSTAGE PAID in a rectangular box measuring 38 x 29 mm. The rubber stamps quickly deteriorated in tropical Angola, producing warped and incomplete marks. In early 1984, the MINFAR/TELCOR postage paid markings ceased to be used.



Above – Cuban PSE posted June 1982 to Santiago de Cuba by a cadet deployed to MINFAR unit 6339, a MINFAR training school in the Rosalinda sector of Luanda. Stamped with MINFAR/TELCOR postage paid marking in black.

Below – Cuban unfranked PSE posted April 1982 to Havana by a cadet deployed to MINFAR unit 6495-J headquartered in Luanda. Franked with MINFAR/TELCOR postage paid marking in black.

CUBAN MILITARY MISSION IN ANGOLA TELCOR POSTAGE PAID MARKING

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Above – Cuban PSE posted June 1982 to Havana by a cadet deployed to MINFAR unit 6534 headquartered in Lubango. Stamped with MINFAR/TELCOR postage paid marking in red.

Below – Cuban PSE posted October 1982 to Santiago de Cuba by a cadet deployed to MINFAR unit 6963 headquartered in Huambo. Stamped with MINFAR/TELCOR postage paid marking in purple.

CUBAN MILITARY MISSION IN ANGOLA TELCOR POSTAGE PAID MARKING

In 1982, MINFAR unit 6677 headquartered in Lubango began using a second type of the MINFAR/TELCOR postage paid marking. It is thought that the larger variety, measuring 46 x 37 mm, was produced in Angola to replace worn examples of the original 38 x 29 mm marking. Use of the larger marking is only known for MINFAR unit 6677. Meant for franking mail, the marking was applied indiscriminately to outgoing mail as cancel or franking. Use of this marking ceased in early 1984. Shown are two of eight examples of the large MINFAR/TELCOR 46 x 37 mm size known.



Above – Cuban PSE posted September 1982 to Havana by a cadet with MINFAR unit 6677-A headquartered in Lubango. Stamped with 46 x 37 mm TELCOR/MINFAR postage paid marking in red.

Below – Cuban PSE posted August 1983 to Havana by a cadet with MINFAR unit 6677-X headquartered in Lubango. Stamped with 46 x 37 mm TELCOR/MINFAR postage paid marking in purple.

CUBAN MINFAR FORCES IN AFRICA TELCOR POSTAGE PAID MARKING

Angola was also the operational hub of the Cuban presence in other African nations including Ethiopia. The MINFAR/TELCOR postage paid marking was also used by MINFAR units deployed in Ethiopia, which together with the Cuban forces in Angola formed the Cuban Expeditionary Forces as a separate branch of the Cuban armed forces. Only the first type of the marking, measuring 38 x 29 mm, is known used in Ethiopia. In 1977, when Cuban forces were deployed to Ethiopia, the initial personnel sent were redeployed personnel already in place in Angola. Insufficient information is available to create a chronology of usage of the MINFAR/TELCOR postage paid marking in Ethiopia. As in Angola, use of the TELCOR/MINFAR postage marking ceased after 1984.



Cuban PSE posted May 1982 to Santiago de Cuba by a cadet deployed to MINFAR unit 7685-H stationed in Ethiopia. Stamped with 38 x 29 mm MINFAR/TELCOR postage paid marking in purple.

CUBAN MILITARY MISSION IN ANGOLA 1988 MINFAR/TELCOR PAID ENVELOPE

In the spring of 1988, the Telecommunications Corps of the MINFAR distributed paid envelopes to Cuban forces in Angola. The envelope stock is common Cuban bagazo/pulp envelopes measuring 162 x 113 mm, stamped in black in the upper right corner with a 43 x 16 mm rectangle with the text POSTAGE PAID – MINCOM. The distribution of manually produced paid envelopes coincides with substantial increases in MINFAR personnel deployed to the MINFAR/FAPLA Southern Front. It is assumed that the envelopes were produced in Angola at TELCOR/MINFAR headquarters in Luanda.



Above – 1988 MINFAR/TELCOR paid envelope posted June 1988 to Camaguey by a combatant deployed to MINFAR unit 6677-15L headquartered in Lubango.

Below – 1988 MINFAR/TELCOR paid envelope posted May 1988 to Santiago de Cuba by a combatant deployed to a mixed MINFAR/FAPLA unit at Xangongo, in southern Cunene province as part of MINFAR Southern Front unit 6963, using post office box 6168-32D.

CUBAN MILITARY MISSION IN ANGOLA 1988 MINFAR/TELCOR PAID ENVELOPE

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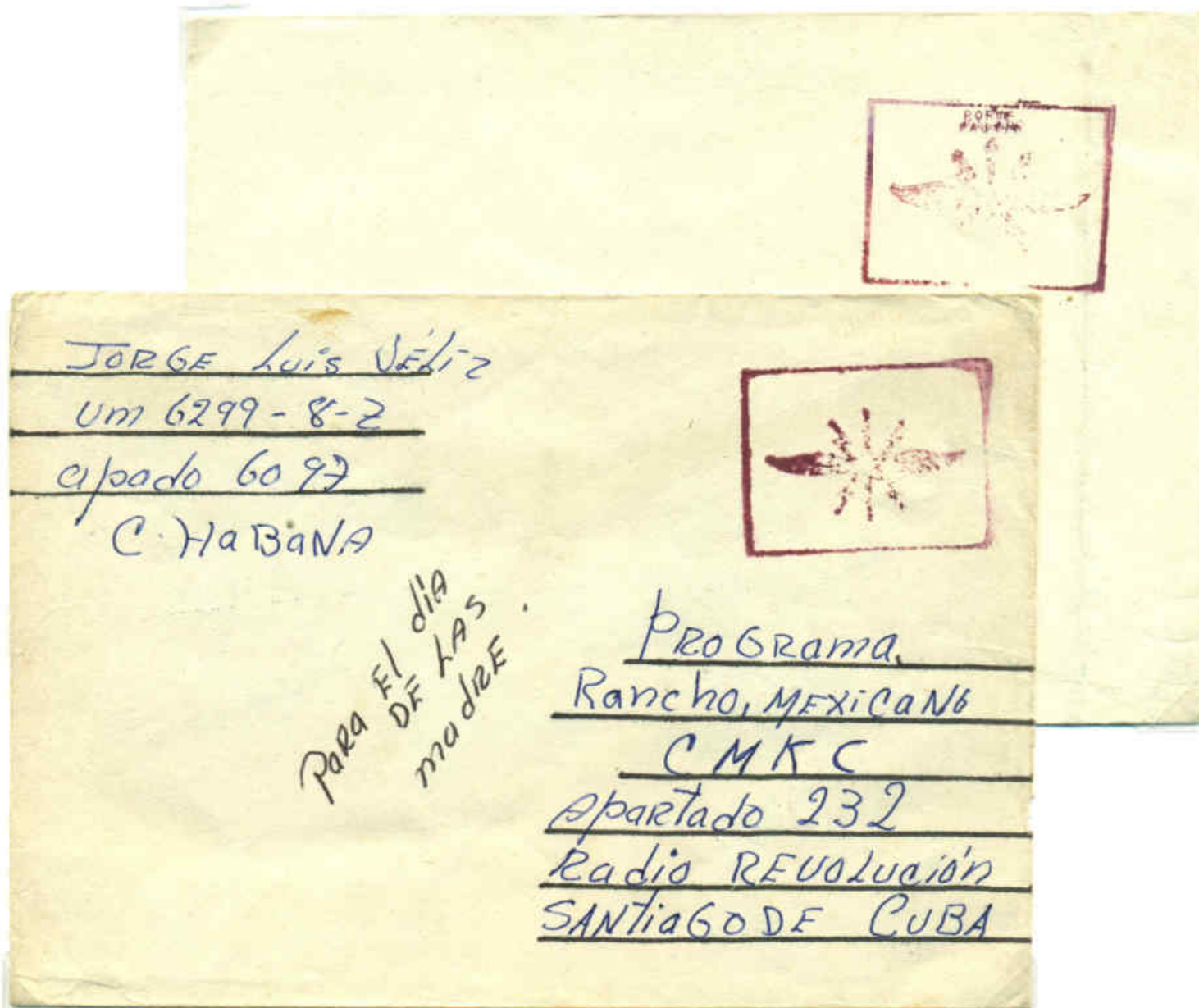


Above - 1988 MINFAR/TELCOR paid envelope posted March 1988 to Santiago de Cuba by a cadet deployed to a mixed MINFAR/FAPLA unit in southern Cunene province as part of MINFAR Southern Front unit 6963, using post office box 6915-221.

Below - 1988 MINFAR/TELCOR paid envelope posted March 1988 to Santiago de Cuba by a cadet deployed to a mixed MINFAR/FAPLA unit in southern Cunene province as part of MINFAR Southern Front unit 6963 using post office box 6915-113.

CUBAN MILITARY MISSION IN ANGOLA 1989 MINFAR/TELCOR PAID ENVELOPE

In the spring of 1989, the Telecommunications Corps of the MINFAR distributed a new type of paid envelopes to Cuban forces in Angola. The envelopes stock are common Cuban bagazo/pulp paper envelopes, measuring 162 x 115 mm, stamped in the upper right corner with the 38 x 29 mm MINFAR/TELCOR postage paid marking. The rubber stamps used were extremely worn and produced weak strikes on the envelopes. As with the 1988 envelopes, the 1989 MINFAR/TELCOR envelopes reflect substantial increases in Cuban forces with the MINFAR/FAPLA Southern Front. It is assumed that the envelopes were produced in Angola at MINFAR/TELCOR headquarters in Luanda.



Above – 1989 MINFAR/TELCOR paid envelope in cranberry. Mint. Only example known.

Below – 1989 MINFAR/TELCOR paid envelope in cranberry posted April 1989 to Santiago de Cuba by a combatant deployed to MINFAR unit 6299-8-Z headquartered in Cabinda. Only used example known.

CUBAN MILITARY MISSION IN ANGOLA 1989 – MINFAR/TELCOR PAID ENVELOPE

The 1989 TELCOR/MINFAR paid envelopes were produced in a variety of colors reflecting mass production of the envelopes to fulfill the needs of the substantial increases in Cuban forces deployed to the MINFAR/FAPLA Southern Front. Again, the rubber stamps used to produce the envelopes were extremely worn producing weak and incomplete strikes. It is assumed that the envelopes were produced in Angola at MINFAR/TELCOR headquarters in Luanda.



Above – 1989 MINFAR/TELCOR postage paid envelope stamped in red. Mint. Only example known.

Below – 1989 MINFAR/TELCOR postage paid envelope stamped in black. Mint. Only example known.

CUBAN MILITARY MISSION IN ANGOLA 1989 – MINFAR/TELCOR PAID ENVELOPE

The 1989 MINFAR/TELCOR paid envelopes were produced in a variety of colors reflecting mass production of the envelopes to fulfill the needs of the increase in Cuban forces deployed to the MINFAR/FAPLA Southern Front. Again, the rubber stamps used to produce the envelopes were extremely worn producing weak and incomplete strikes. It is assumed that the envelopes were produced in Angola at MINFAR/TELCOR headquarters in Luanda.

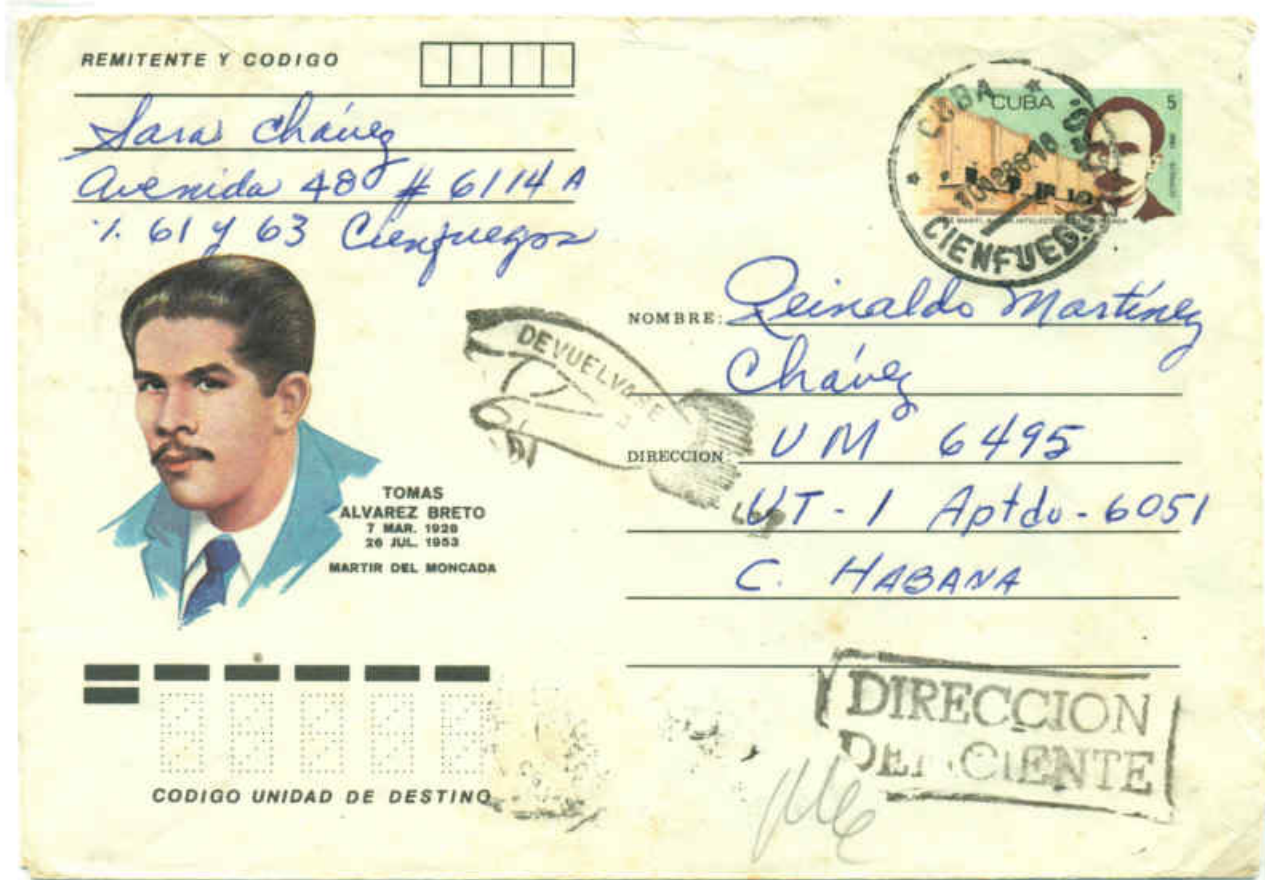


Above - 1989 MINFAR/TELCOR postage paid envelope stamped in blue. Mint. One of two known.

Below - 1989 MINFAR/TELCOR postage paid envelope stamped in blue. Mint. Two of two known.

CUBAN MILITARY MISSION IN ANGOLA MINFAR/TELCOR postal office in Havana INTERNAL MAIL SERVICES

Mail to the Cuban forces in Angola was posted to dedicated MINCOM post office boxes in Havana. Initial mail processing was done by MINCOM at the mechanized Havana National Classification Center, with further sorting done by the MINFAR/TELCOR office in Havana prior to transmission to Angola. Evidence of MINFAR/TELCOR sorting included return to sender services for inactive or incorrect unit addresses.



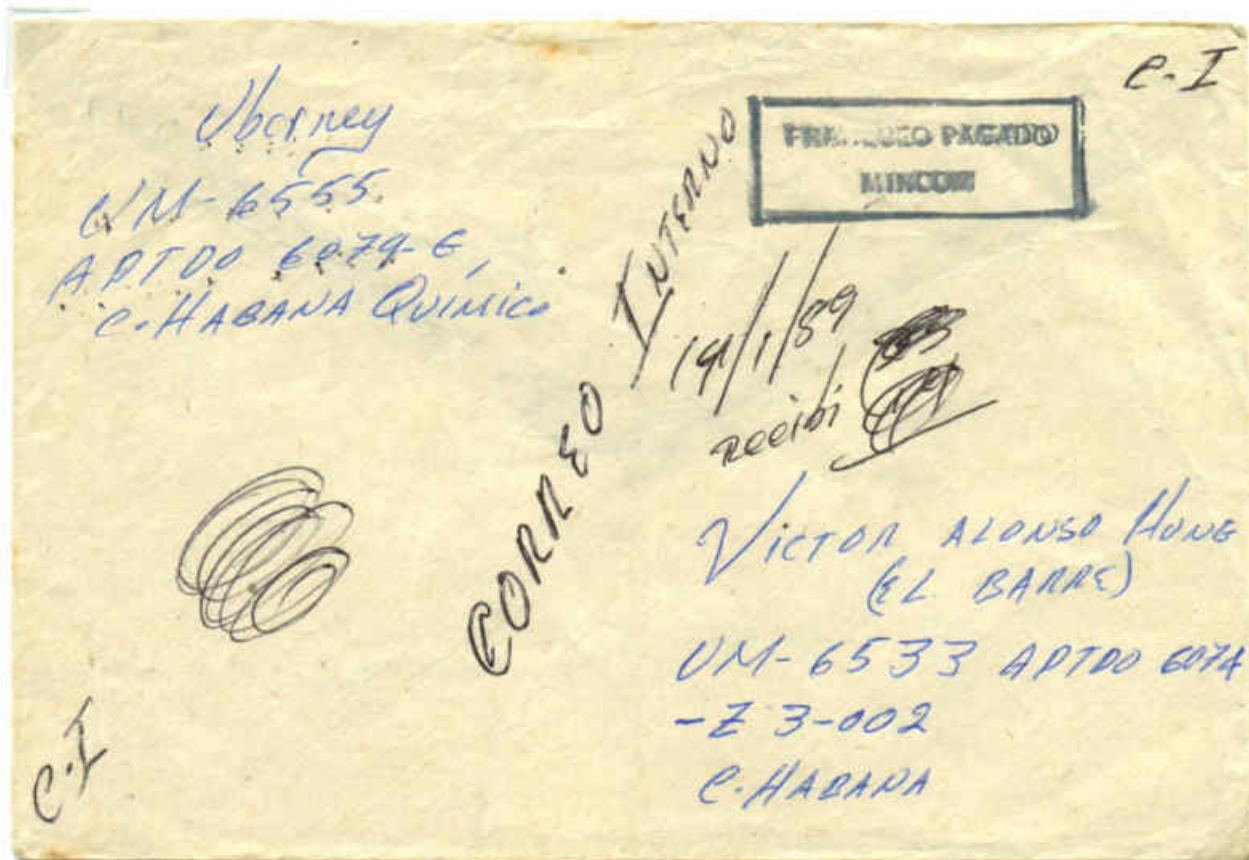
Cuban PSE posted December 1986 from Cienfuegos to a member of MINFAR unit 6495-UT-1 headquartered in Luanda. The address is incorrect, using post office box 6051, when in fact post office box 6079 should have been used. The cover was marked with textual deficient address and return to sender auxiliary markings, and returned to the sender.

CUBAN MILITARY MISSION IN ANGOLA

MINFAR/TELCOR postal office in Luanda

INTERNAL MAIL SERVICES

The Telecommunications Corps of the MINFAR was originally an inter-office non-postal mail and communications network. In Angola, MINFAR/TELCOR expanded and worked in tandem with the Ministry of Communications to provide mail services to the Cuban forces in Angola. In Angola, MINFAR/TELCOR conducted internal mail services between units in the field in Angola from its office in Luanda. Because Cuban personnel were under direct orders to destroy all mail, the cover shown so far is the only example of inter-unit mail from the Cuban forces in Angola known to philately.



Cuban MINFAR/TELCOR postage paid envelope posted by a combatant deployed to MINFAR unit 6555 headquartered in Luanda to another combatant deployed to MINFAR unit 6533 headquartered in Lubango. The envelope is marked in several places with the text or acronym *CORREO INTERNO* or (CI) for internal mail. The cover is hand docketed as received on 14 January 1989.

CUBAN MILITARY MISSION IN ANGOLA CUBAN STATIONERY USED BY ANGOLAN FAPLA FORCES

In the early 1990s an accumulation of covers addressed to the National Angolan Radio in Luanda were sold in the philatelic market. This accumulation contained a number of Cuban PSE used by Angolan FAPLA personnel, which spoke of the camaraderie Cuban and Angolan forces shared. Cuban PSE used by Angolan FAPLA personnel was marked with a variety of FAPLA free frank marks, and processed through the Angolan posts.

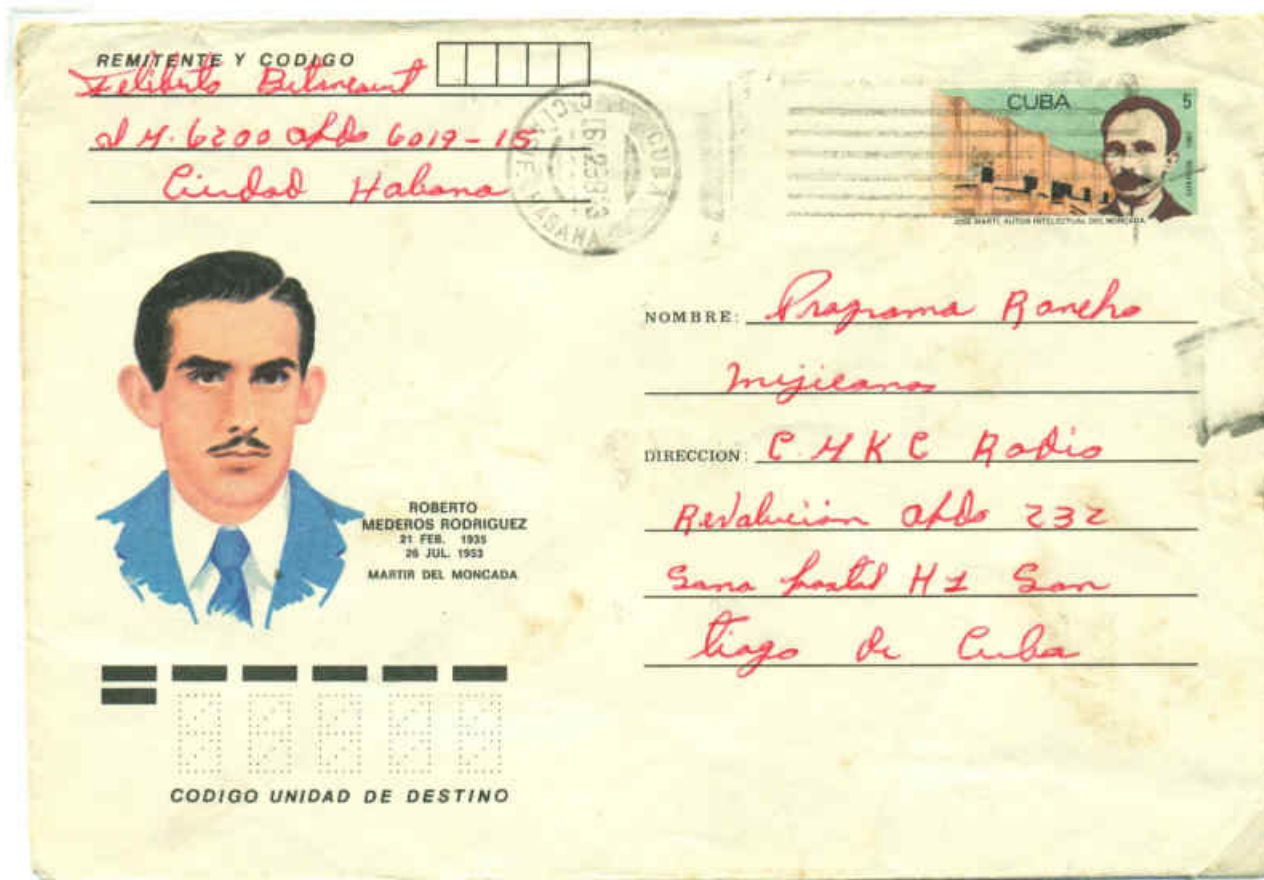


1982 Cuban PSE posted August 1984 to a Luanda radio station by a combatant deployed to the Angolan FAPLA 179th Detachment in Malanje. Stamped with triangular FAPLA free frank mark.

CUBAN MINFAR UNIT 6200 POST OFFICE BOX 6019 LUANDA, ANGOLA



MINFAR unit 6200, headquartered in Luanda, was the official MINFAR Press Office for the Cuban Military Mission in Angola. The main functions of MINFAR unit 6200 included the transmission of images and news from the front and to coordinate travel for the visiting Cuban press in Angola. Luanda is the capital of Angola, and was also the administrative heart of the Cuban Military Mission in Angola, headquartered at the Cuban Embassy in Luanda. A number of MINFAR units were also headquartered in Luanda, based at various locations in Luanda provided by the Angolan government for that purpose.



Cuban PSE posted February 1988 to Santiago de Cuba by a combatant deployed to MINFAR unit 6200 headquartered in Luanda.

CUBAN MINFAR UNIT 6299 POST OFFICE BOX 6097 CABINDA, ANGOLA



Cabinda is a small enclave of land separated by the Congo River. Cabinda province is also the heart of Angolan oil production. The boundaries were set up in 1883 to give the former Belgian Congo (now Congo) port access to the Atlantic Ocean. Oil exploration in Cabinda began in 1954 and oil production began in 1968. The Cuban presence in Cabinda dates from August 1975 and at its height numbered about 2,000 combatants. The mission of MINFAR unit 6299 was to protect oil production from guerrilla action.



Above – Cuban PSE posted September 1990 to Santiago de Cuba by a combatant deployed to MINFAR unit 6299 headquartered in Cabinda.

Below – Cuban PSE posted December 1986 to Santiago de Cuba by a combatant deployed to MINFAR unit 6299 headquartered in Cabinda.

CUBAN MINFAR UNIT 6339 POST OFFICE BOX 6079 LUANDA, ANGOLA



Cuban MINFAR unit 6339 was headquartered in Luanda, operating as a MINFAR training academy for incoming cadets deployed to Angola, located in the Rosalinda neighborhood of Luanda. By 1985, MINFAR unit 6339 was incorporated as a dedicated cadet school for MINFAR unit 6963.

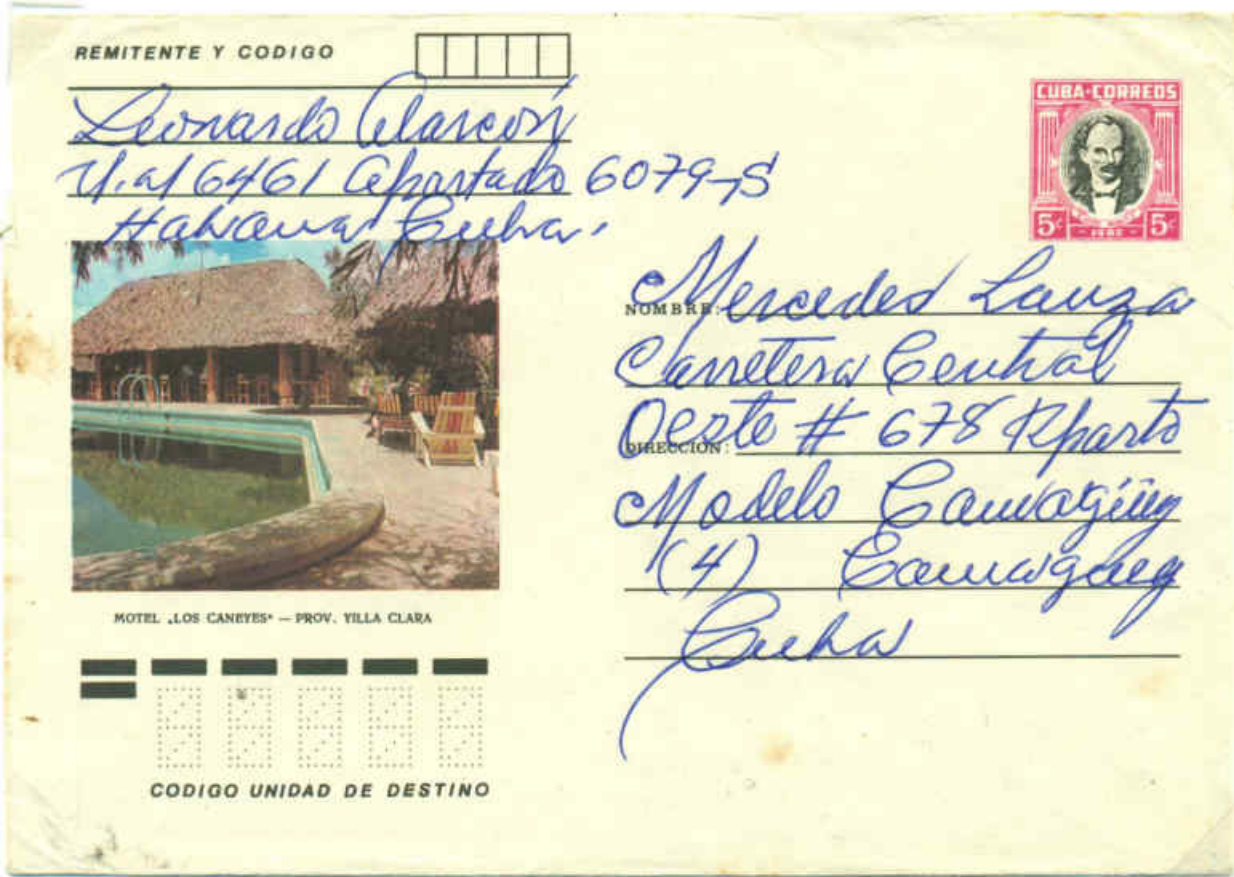


Cuban PSE posted June 1982 by a cadet deployed to MINFAR unit 6339 in Luanda to Santiago de Cuba. Stamped with a MINFAR/TELCOR postage paid marking in black.

**CUBAN MINFAR UNIT 6461
POST OFFICE BOX 6079
LUANDA, ANGOLA**



Cuban MINFAR unit 6461 was an administrative unit of the Cuban Military Mission in Angola, headquartered in Luanda, Angola. By 1985, MINFAR unit 6461 was incorporated into MINFAR unit 6963, headquartered in Luanda.



REMITENTE Y CODIGO

*Leonardo Claros
U. 6461 Apartado 6079-5
Havana, Cuba*



MOTEL „LOS CANEYES“ — PROV. VILLA CLARA

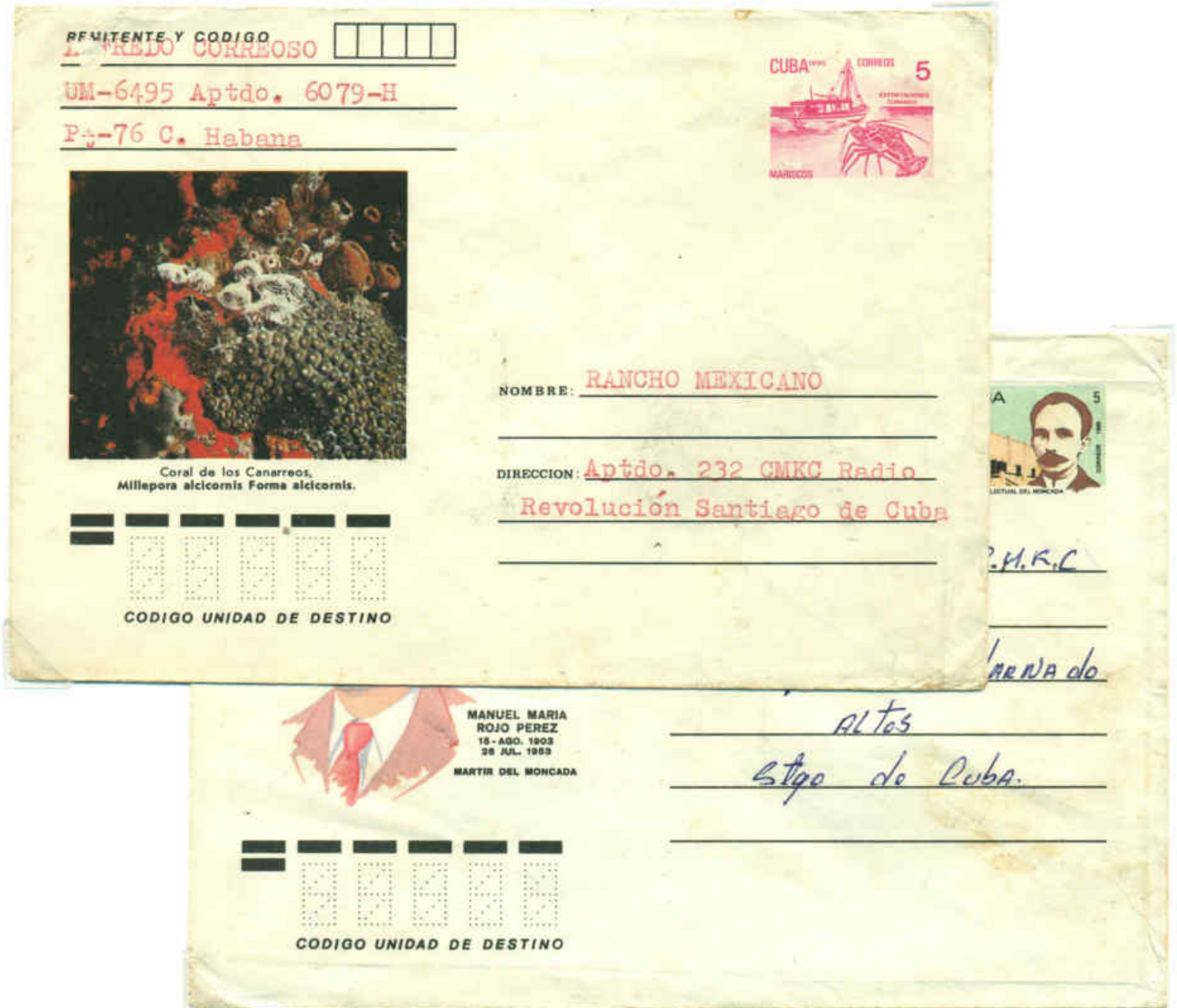
NUMERO: *Mercedes Lauza*
 DIRECCION: *Carretera Central
 Deste # 678 Aparto
 Modelo Camaguey
 (4) Camaguey
 Cuba*

CODIGO UNIDAD DE DESTINO

Cuban PSE posted November 1983 to Camaguey by a combatant deployed to MINFAR unit 6461 headquartered in Luanda.

CUBAN MINFAR UNIT 6495 POST OFFICE BOX 6079 LUANDA, ANGOLA

MINFAR unit 6495 was headquartered in Luanda as an administrative unit of the Cuban Military Mission in Angola. MINFAR unit 6495 was among the last MINFAR units to depart Angola in May 1991, overseeing Cuban compliance for withdrawal from Angola supervised by UNAVEM.



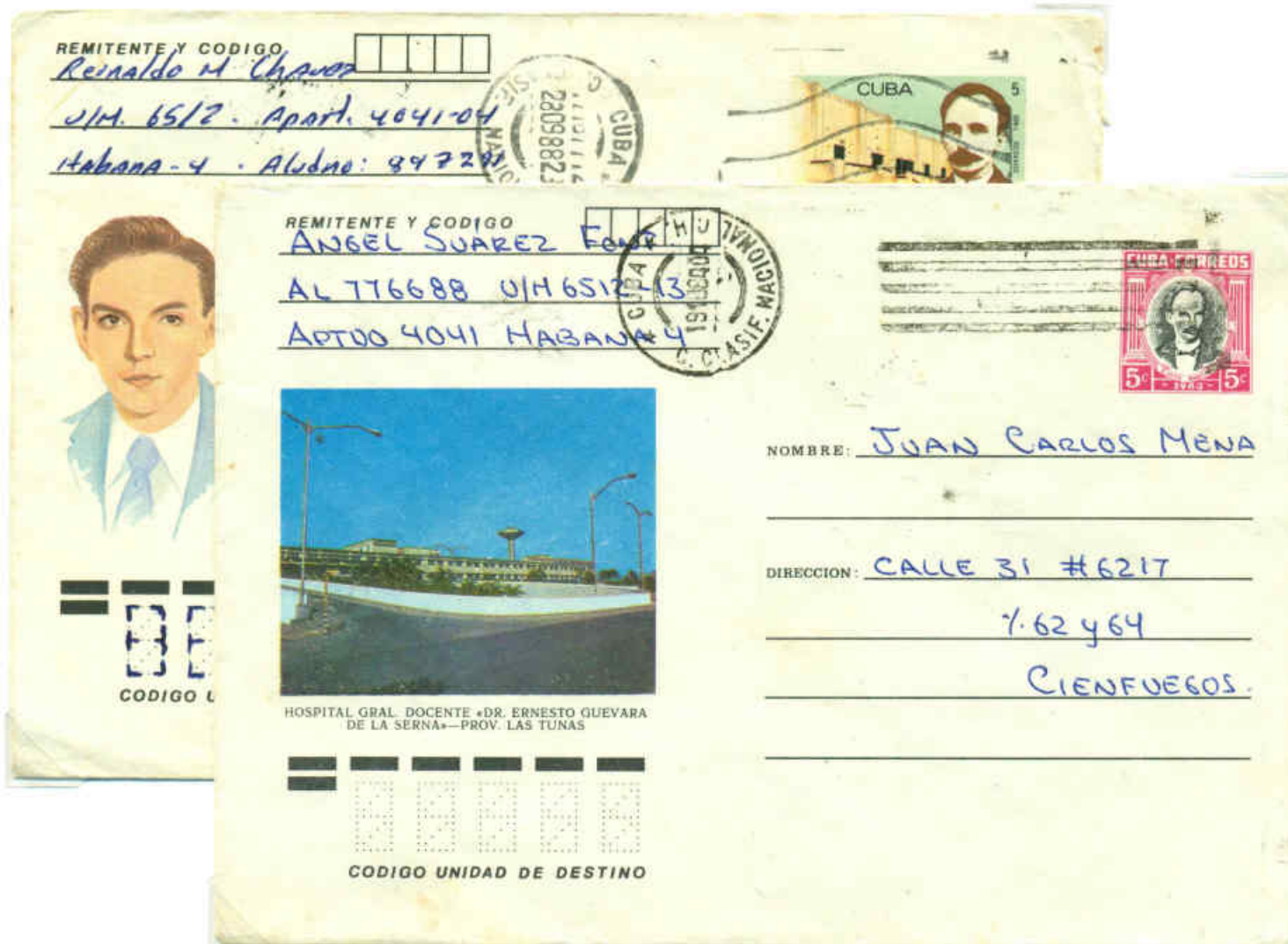
Above - Cuban PSE posted May 1991 to Santiago de Cuba by a combatant deployed to MINFAR unit 6495 headquartered in Luanda.

Below - Cuban PSE posted August 1990 to Santiago de Cuba by a combatant deployed to MINFAR unit 6495 headquartered in Luanda.

CUBAN MINFAR UNIT 6512 POST OFFICE BOX 4041 MOZAMEDES (NAMIBE), ANGOLA



Cuban MINFAR unit 6512 was headquartered at Angolan port city of Mozamedes, which was renamed Namibe in 1985. The Portuguese settled the Namibe region in 1485, establishing the third most important port in Angola, connecting the southern interior with the Atlantic Ocean. In 1967 a world-class port dedicated to heavy ore exports was completed; commercial fishing is the main industry for the region. Beyond the coast, the province of Namibe is a complex geographical region where the desert, ocean and savanna converge. An important rail links Namibe with the interior cities of Lubango and Menongue, important strategic locations for the Cuban Military Mission in Angola.



Above – Cuban PSE posted September 1988 to Santiago de Cuba from a combatant deployed to MINFAR unit 6512 headquartered in Mozamedes (Namibe).

Below - Cuban PSE posted October 1984 to Cienfuegos from a cadet deployed to MINFAR unit 6512 headquartered in Mozamedes (Namibe).

CUBAN MINFAR UNIT 6532 POST OFFICE BOX 6114 CAHAMA, CUNENE, ANGOLA



Cuban MINFAR unit 6532 was headquartered at Cahama, in southern Cunene province. Cahama was the site of a support airfield, which was built by Cuban contractors in a record 70 days in the spring of 1988. Considered one of the most important support locations for the MINFAR/FAPLA Southern Front, numerous MINFAR units were headquartered in Cahama. The MINFAR/FAPLA airfield in Cahama was built to permit access to the battle areas of southern Cunene province from a closer location than available from the Cuban Military Mission Southern Front Air Base further north at Lubango. The MINFAR/FAPLA airfield at Cahama permitted air superiority against South African-led UNITA guerrillas during the Southern Front battles of 1987-1988.



Above – Cuban PSE posted July 1986 to Santiago de Cuba by a combatant deployed to MINFAR unit 6532 headquartered in Cahama, southern Cunene province.

Below - Cuban PSE posted April 1989 to Santiago de Cuba by a combatant deployed to MINFAR unit 6532 headquartered in Cahama, southern Cunene province.

CUBAN MINFAR UNIT 6533 POST OFFICE BOX 6071 CAHAMA, CUNENE, ANGOLA



Cuban MINFAR unit 6533 was headquartered at Cahama, in southern Cunene province. Cahama was the site of a support airfield, which was built by Cuban contractors in a record 70 days in the spring of 1988. Considered one of the most important support locations for the MINFAR/FAPLA Southern Front, numerous MINFAR units were headquartered in Cahama. The MINFAR/FAPLA airfield in Cahama was built to permit access to the battle areas of southern Cunene province from a closer location than available from the Cuban Military Mission Southern Front Air Base further north at Lubango. The MINFAR/FAPLA airfield at Cahama permitted air superiority against South African-led UNITA guerrillas during the Southern Front battles of 1987-1988.



Above – Cuban PSE posted January 1988 to Santiago de Cuba by a combatant deployed to MINFAR unit 6533 headquartered at Cahama, southern Cunene province.

Below - Cuban PSE posted March 1989 to Santiago de Cuba by a member of FILMICO with MINFAR unit 6533 headquartered in Cahama, embedded to document the Cuban participation.

CUBAN MINFAR UNIT 6534 POST OFFICE BOX 6044 LUBANGO, ANGOLA



Cuban MINFAR unit 6534 was headquartered at Lubango, located in Huila province. Lubango was founded in 1885 by Portuguese settlers, who originally naming the city Sá de Bandeira. The city was renamed Lubango after independence in 1975. Lubango is located on the Huila plateau and is an important transportation hub connected to the southern port of Namibe via rail. In late November 1987, Lubango was made the headquarters of the Cuban Military Mission Southern Front under the command of Cuban MINFAR General Leopoldo Cintra. The military airfield at Lubango was the headquarters of the Cuban/FAPLA air forces in Angola, equipped with a 9,800 foot paved runway that accommodated the Soviet bombers used in air strikes against South African-led UNITA forces along the southern Angolan border.



Above – Cuban PSE posted November 1978 to Camaguey from a combatant deployed to MINFAR unit 6534 headquartered in Lubango.

Below - Cuban PSE posted December 1988 to Santiago de Cuba from a combatant deployed with MINFAR unit 6534 headquartered in Lubango.

CUBAN MINFAR UNIT 6535 POST OFFICE BOX 6036 MUCOPE, CUNENE, ANGOLA



Cuban MINFAR unit 6535 was headquartered at Mucope, in southern Cunene province. Mucope is a small town south of the MINFAR/FAPLA airfield at Cahama along the main road that runs from the Cuban Military Mission Southern Front headquarters in Lubango to the southern Angolan/Namibian border. Southern Cunene province was the site of open hostilities from South African-led UNITA guerrillas, supported from neighboring South West Africa, then a South African mandate territory. The town of Mucope was a field support site equipped with radio communication for the Cuban/FAPLA units operating in southern Cunene province during the 1987-1988 MINFAR/FAPLA Southern Front operation.



Above – Cuban PSE posted January 1989 to Las Tunas by a combatant deployed to MINFAR unit 6535 headquartered in Mucope, southern Cunene province.

Below - Cuban PSE posted June 1989 to Santiago de Cuba by a combatant deployed to MINFAR unit 6535 headquartered in Mucope, southern Cunene province.

CUBAN MINFAR UNIT 6538 POST OFFICE BOX 6079 LUANDA, ANGOLA



Cuban MINFAR unit 6538 was headquartered in Luanda, with personnel operating in various parts of Angola. Insufficient information has limited the study of the activities of MINFAR unit 6538.



REMITENTE Y CODIGO

Alberto Oroseo
U/M 6538 APTDO 6079
R.A.M. S.C.O. C.H.

NOMBRE: noel perez

RPA
REMITENTE Y CODIGO
Idalberto M. 10600
U/M 6538 AP: K041
GRA-FAMIL
C: HABANA

NOMBRE: RANCHO
MEXICANO
DIRECCION: EMISORA
SNKS RADIO
Revolucion Aguibana
STGO de CUBA

90100
CODIGO UNIDAD DE DESTINO

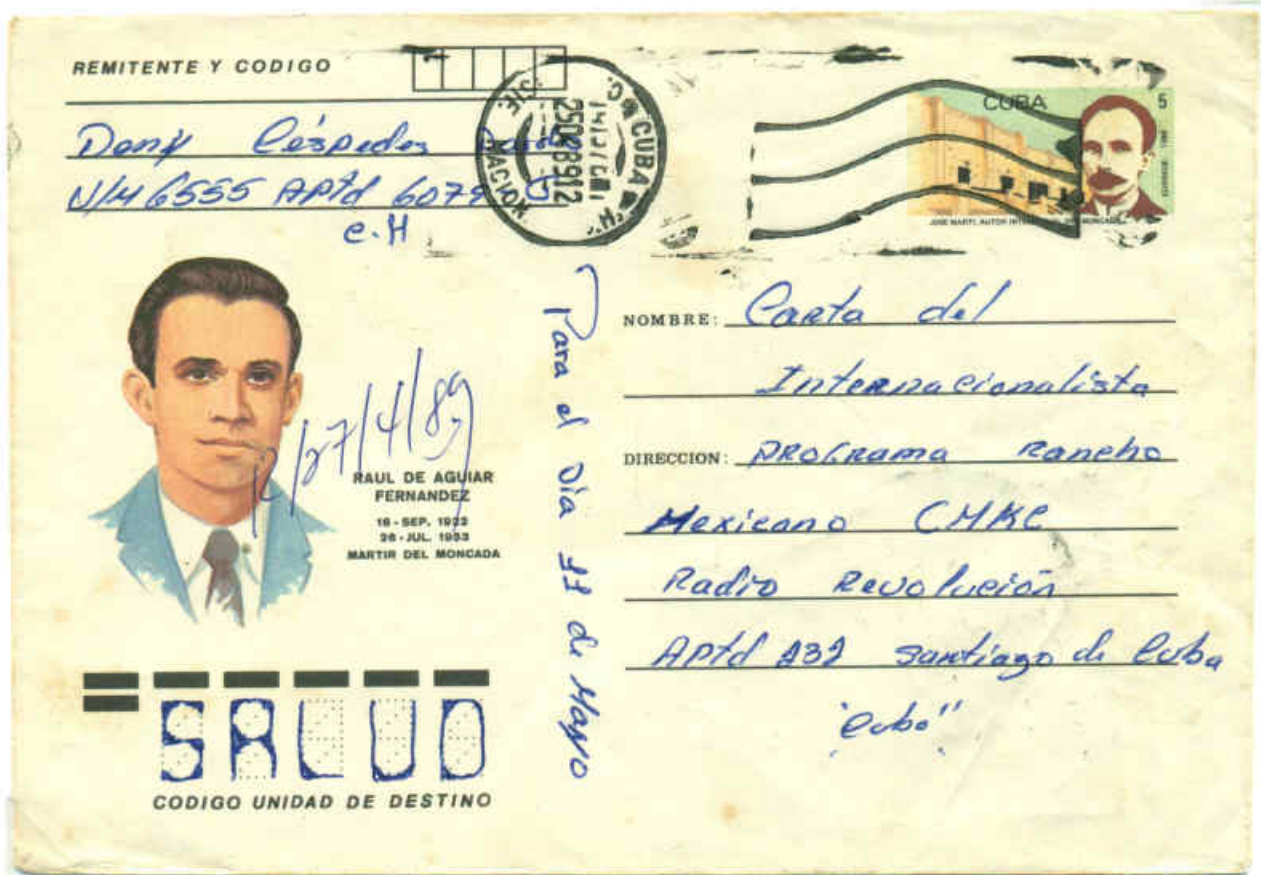
Above - Cuban PSE posted September 1989 to Santiago de Cuba by a combatant deployed to MINFAR unit 6538 headquartered in Mozamedes (Namibe).

Below - Cuban PSE posted May 1991 to Santiago de Cuba by a combatant deployed to MINFAR unit 6538 headquartered in Luanda.

CUBAN MINFAR UNIT 6565 POST OFFICE BOX 6084 LONGA, CUANDO CUBANGO



Cuban MINFAR unit 6565 was headquartered at the town of Longa, in Cuando Cubango province. The mission of MINFAR unit 6565 was to protect Longa from guerrilla action intended to sabotage the strategic national road that connected the besieged area of Cuito Cuanavale in central Cuando Cubango province to MINFAR/FAPLA support at Menongue and the Serpa Pinto Air Base. In November 1987 the region of Cuito Cuanavale came under direct attack from South African-led UNITA guerrillas. The MINFAR/FAPLA response was a substantially reinforced force in Cunene and Cuando Cubango provinces to lead the final counter offensive against the UNITA guerrillas.

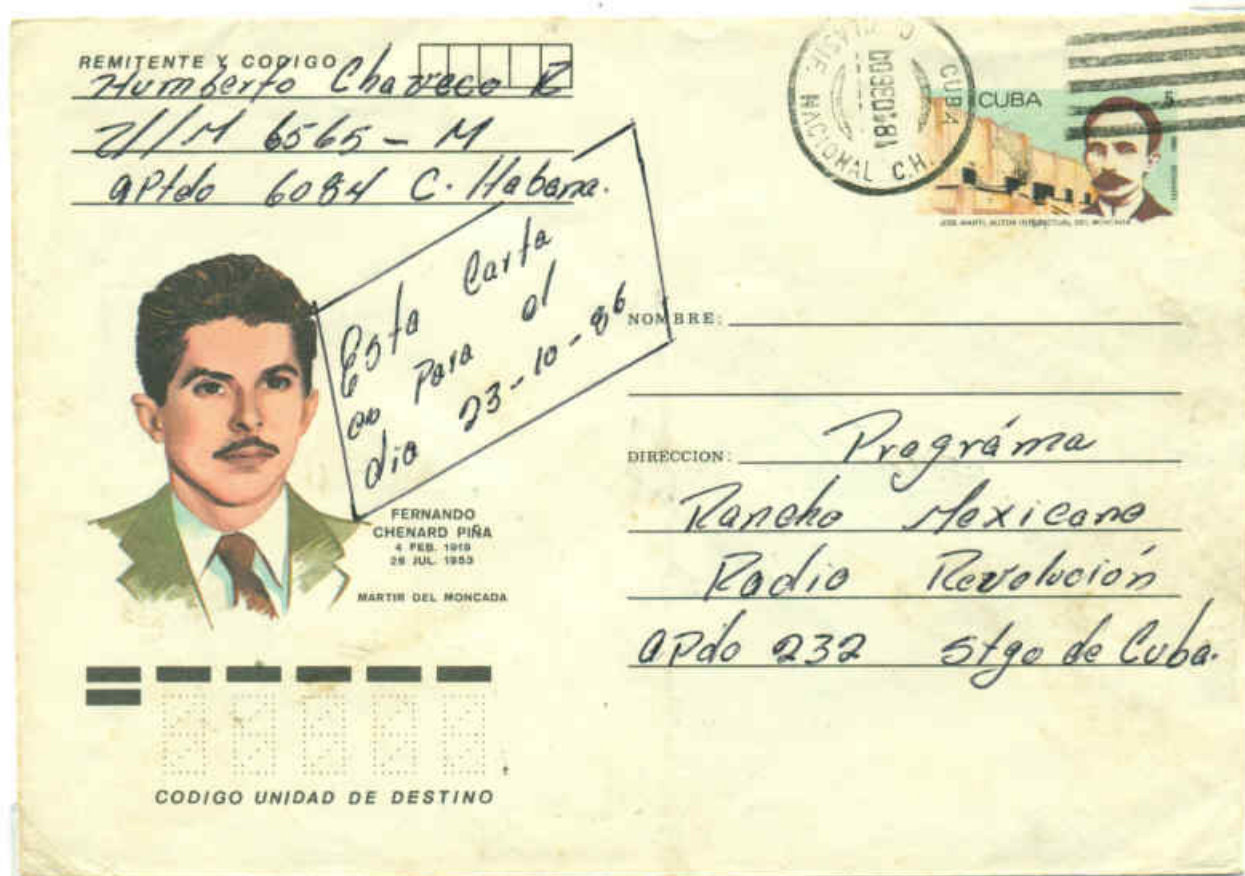


Cuban PSE posted October 1986 to Santiago de Cuba by a combatant deployed to MINFAR unit 6565 headquartered at Longa, Cuando Cuando province.

CUBAN MINFAR UNIT 6555 POST OFFICE BOX 6079 LUANDA, ANGOLA



Cuban MINFAR unit 6555 was an administrative and support unit for the Cuban Military Mission headquartered in Luanda. Insufficient information has not permitted further study into the functions of MINFAR unit 6555.



Cuban PSE posted April 1989 to Santiago de Cuba by a combatant deployed with MINFAR unit 6555 stationed in Luanda.

CUBAN MINFAR UNIT 6677 POST OFFICE BOX 6025 LUBANGO, ANGOLA



Cuban MINFAR unit 6677 was headquartered at Lubango, located in Huila province. Lubango was founded in 1885 by Portuguese settlers, who originally naming the city Sá de Bandeira. The city was renamed Lubango after independence in 1975. Lubango is located on the Huila plateau and is an important transportation hub connected to the southern port of Namibe via rail. In late November 1987, Lubango was made the headquarters of the Cuban Military Mission Southern Front under the command of Cuban MINFAR General Leopoldo Cintra. The military airfield at Lubango was the headquarters of the Cuban/FAPLA air forces in Angola, equipped with a 9,800 foot paved runway that accommodated the heavy Soviet MiG-23ML bombers used in air strikes against South African-led UNITA forces along the southern Angolan border.



Cuban PSE posted December 1989 to Santiago de Cuba by a combatant deployed to MINFAR unit 6677 headquartered in Lubango.

CUBAN MINFAR UNIT 6893 POST OFFICE BOX 6120 ZAIRE NORTE, ANGOLA

Cuban MINFAR unit 6893 was created in early 1976 with Cuban MININT and MINFAR combatants from various units originally sent with *Plan Carlota* operating in the northern province of Zaire Norte protecting the important northern border region from guerrilla attacks.



REMITENTE:

Jorge Berenguer Cala
U.M. 6893 F.N.
Aptdo 6120, Habana.



ESCUELA SECUNDARIA BASICA EN EL CAMPO - ISLA DE PINOS

NOMBRE:

Olga Fortunou

DIRECCION:

Calle K # 10
entre Ave. Tercera
Suero, Stgo de Gu
Cuba.

Cuban PSE posted March 1977 to Santiago de Cuba by a combatant deployed to MINFAR unit 6893 with the Cuban Military Mission Northern Front in Zaire Norte province, Angola.

CUBAN MINFAR UNIT 7400 POST OFFICE BOX 6051 POINTE NOIRE, CONGO



Cuban MINFAR unit 7400 was headquartered at Pointe Noire, Congo, with the primary mission of protecting oil production in neighboring Cabinda province from guerrilla attacks. Pointe Noire was founded in 1921 and operates as Congo Brazzaville's major port. Pointe Noire has been an important support location for the Cuban participation in Angola - Che Guevara first met the Angolan MPLA at Pointe Noire in 1965. Congo Brazzaville has had a long relationship with Cuban forces - in August 1975 Pointe Noire was the landing site of the first covert Cuban forces in Angola.



Above – Cuban PSE posted August 1986 to Santiago de Cuba by a combatant deployed to MINFAR unit 7400 headquartered in Pointe Noire, Congo.

Below - Cuban PSE posted September 1990 to Santiago de Cuba by a combatant deployed to MINFAR unit 7400 headquartered in Pointe Noire, Congo.

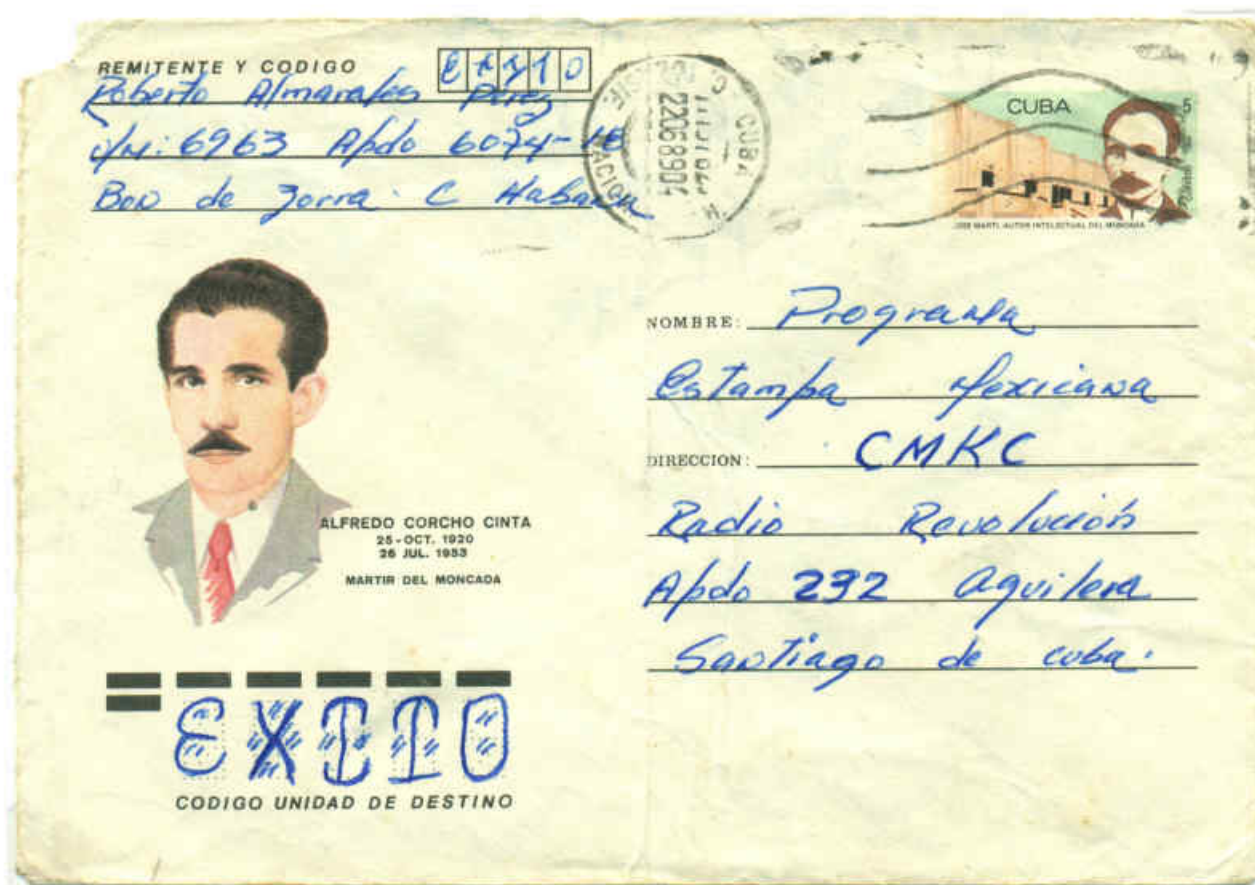
CUBAN MINFAR UNIT 6963

POST OFFICE BOX 6074

LUBANGO, ANGOLA



Headquartered in Luanda, MINFAR unit 6963 was the main unit of the Cuban Military Mission in Angola with combatants deployed to all areas of Angola. The Cuban combatants that were deployed to mixed MINFAR/FAPLA units were also part of MINFAR unit 6963, each using a different post office box for their mail. The mixed MINFAR/FAPLA unit headquartered at Lubango used post office box 6074. In late November 1987, Lubango was made the headquarters of the Cuban Military Mission Southern Front. The military airfield at Lubango was the headquarters of the Cuban/FAPLA air forces in Angola, equipped with a 9,800 foot paved runway that accommodated the heavy Soviet MiG-23ML bombers used in air strikes against South African-led UNITA forces along the southern Angolan border.

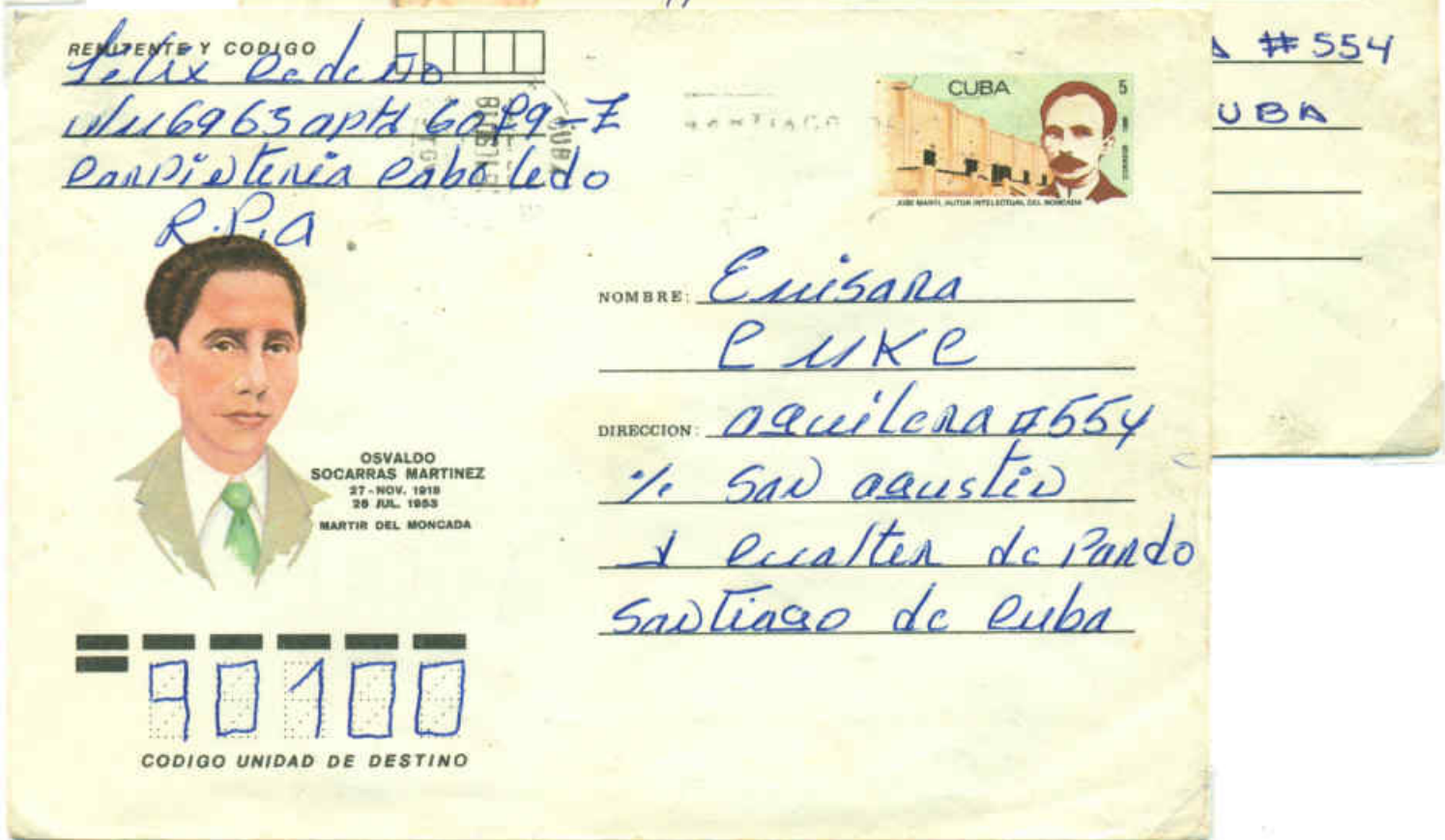
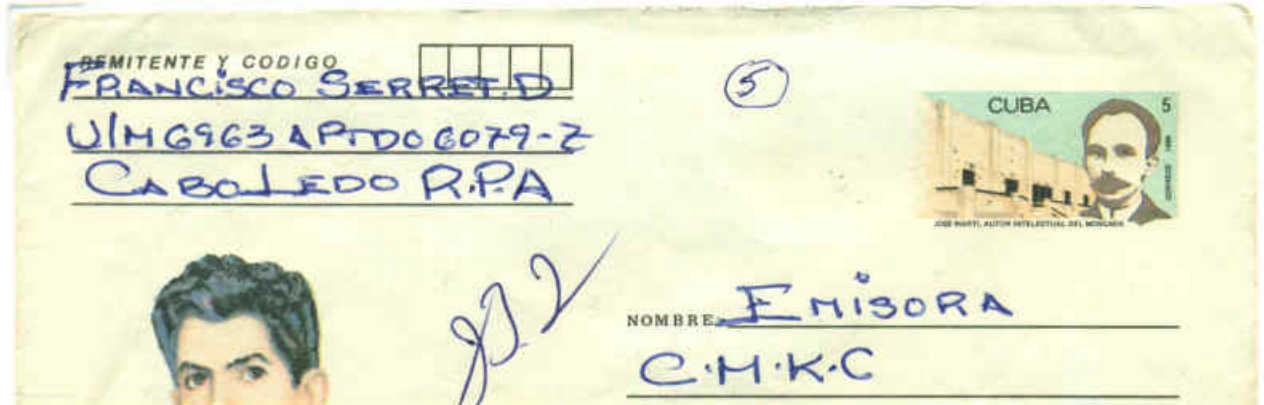


Cuban PSE posted June 1989 to Santiago de Cuba from by a combatant deployed to the mixed MINFAR/FAPLA Z Battalion headquartered in Lubango, part of MINFAR unit 6963 using post office box 6074.

CUBAN MINFAR UNIT 6963 POST OFFICE BOX 6079 CABO LEDO, ANGOLA



Headquartered in Luanda, MINFAR unit 6963 was the main unit of the Cuban Military Mission in Angola with combatants deployed to all areas of Angola. The Cuban combatants that were deployed to mixed MINFAR/FAPLA units were also part of MINFAR unit 6963, each using a different post office box for their mail. The mixed MINFAR/FAPLA unit headquartered at Cabo Ledo used post office box 6079.



Above - Cuban PSE posted September 1990 to Santiago de Cuba by a combatant deployed to MINFAR unit 6963-Z headquartered in Cabo Ledo.

Below - Cuban PSE posted October 1990 to Santiago de Cuba from a construction unit of MINFAR unit 6963-Z, headquartered in Cabo Ledo.

CUBAN MINFAR UNIT 6963 POST OFFICE BOX 6109 & 6145 CUNENE PROVINCE, ANGOLA



Headquartered in Luanda, MINFAR unit 6963 was the main unit of the Cuban Military Mission in Angola with combatants deployed to all areas of Angola. The Cuban combatants that were deployed to mixed MINFAR/FAPLA units were also part of MINFAR unit 6963, each using a different post office box for their mail.

In late 1987 southern Cunene province came under direct attack from South African-led UNITA guerrillas. The MINFAR/FAPLA response was a substantially reinforced force in Cunene province to lead the final counter offensive against the UNITA guerrillas in the spring of 1988. The mixed MINFAR/FAPLA unit based at Cahama used post office box 6109. The mixed MINFAR/FAPLA unit based at Xangongo used post office box 6145.



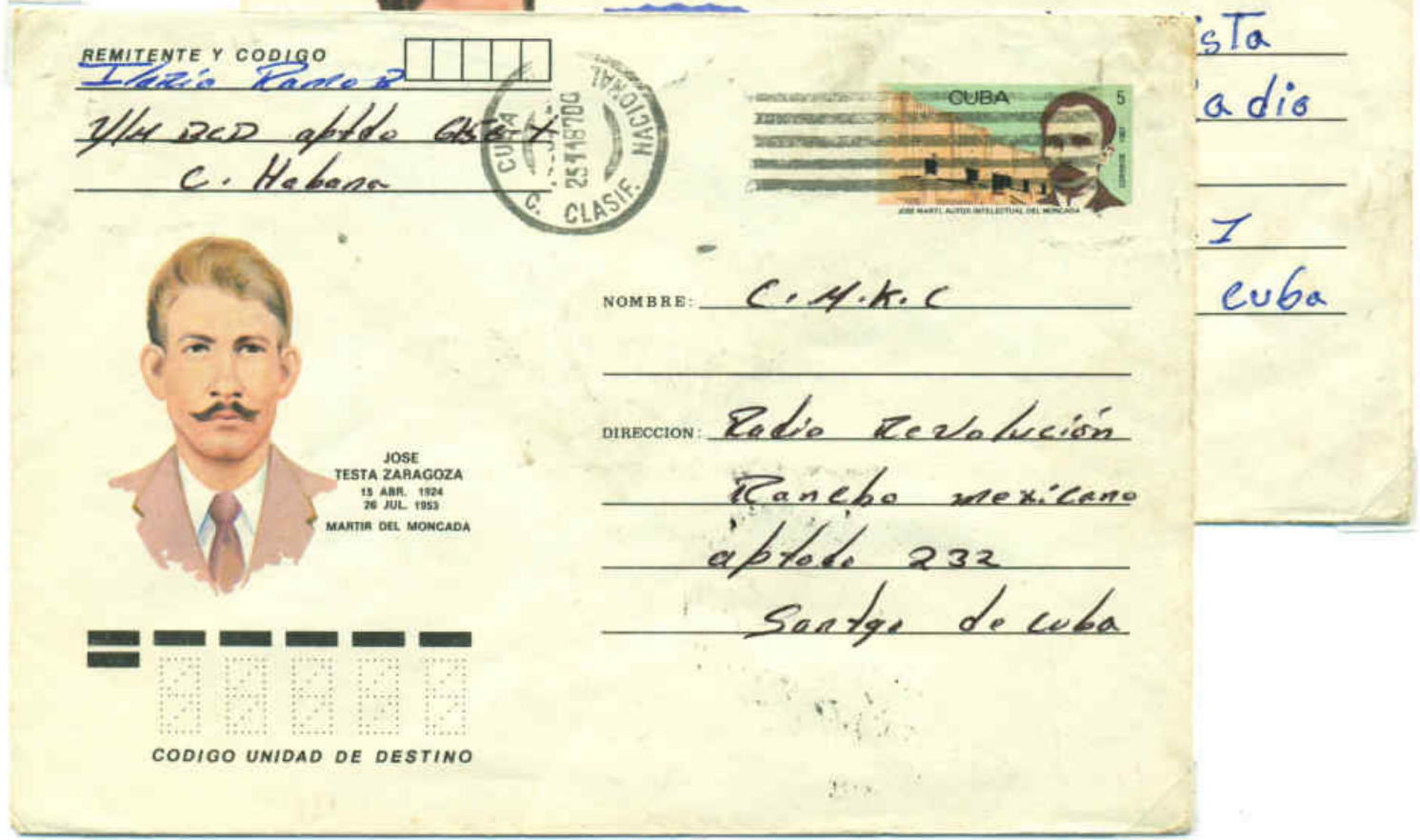
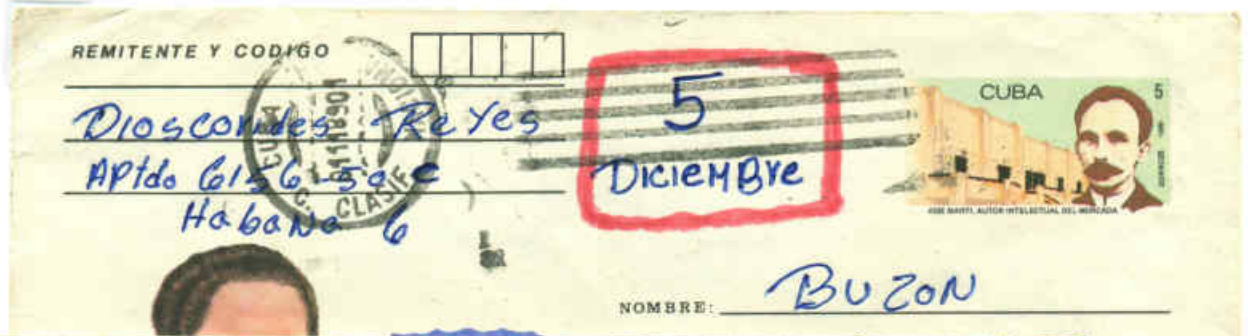
Above – Cuban PSE posted February 1989 to Santiago de Cuba by a combatant deployed to a mixed MINFAR/FAPLA unit based in Cahama, part of MINFAR unit 6963 using post office box 6109.

Below – Franked envelope posted April 1986 to Santiago de Cuba by a combatant deployed to a mixed MINFAR/FAPLA unit based in Xangongo, part of MINFAR unit 6963 using post office box 6145.

CUBAN MINFAR UNIT 6963 POST BOX 6156-X - LOBITO POST BOX 6156-50-C - HUAMBO



Headquartered in Luanda, MINFAR unit 6963 was the main unit of the Cuban Military Mission in Angola with combatants deployed to all areas of Angola. The Cuban combatants deployed to mixed MINFAR/FAPLA units were also part of MINFAR unit 6963, each using a different post office box for their mail. The MINFAR/FAPLA units using post office box 6156 protected the important port of Lobito and its connection to the city of Huambo. The mixed MINFAR/FAPLA unit based in the port city of Lobito used post office box 6156-X. The mixed MINFAR/FAPLA unit based in Huambo used post box 6156-50-C.



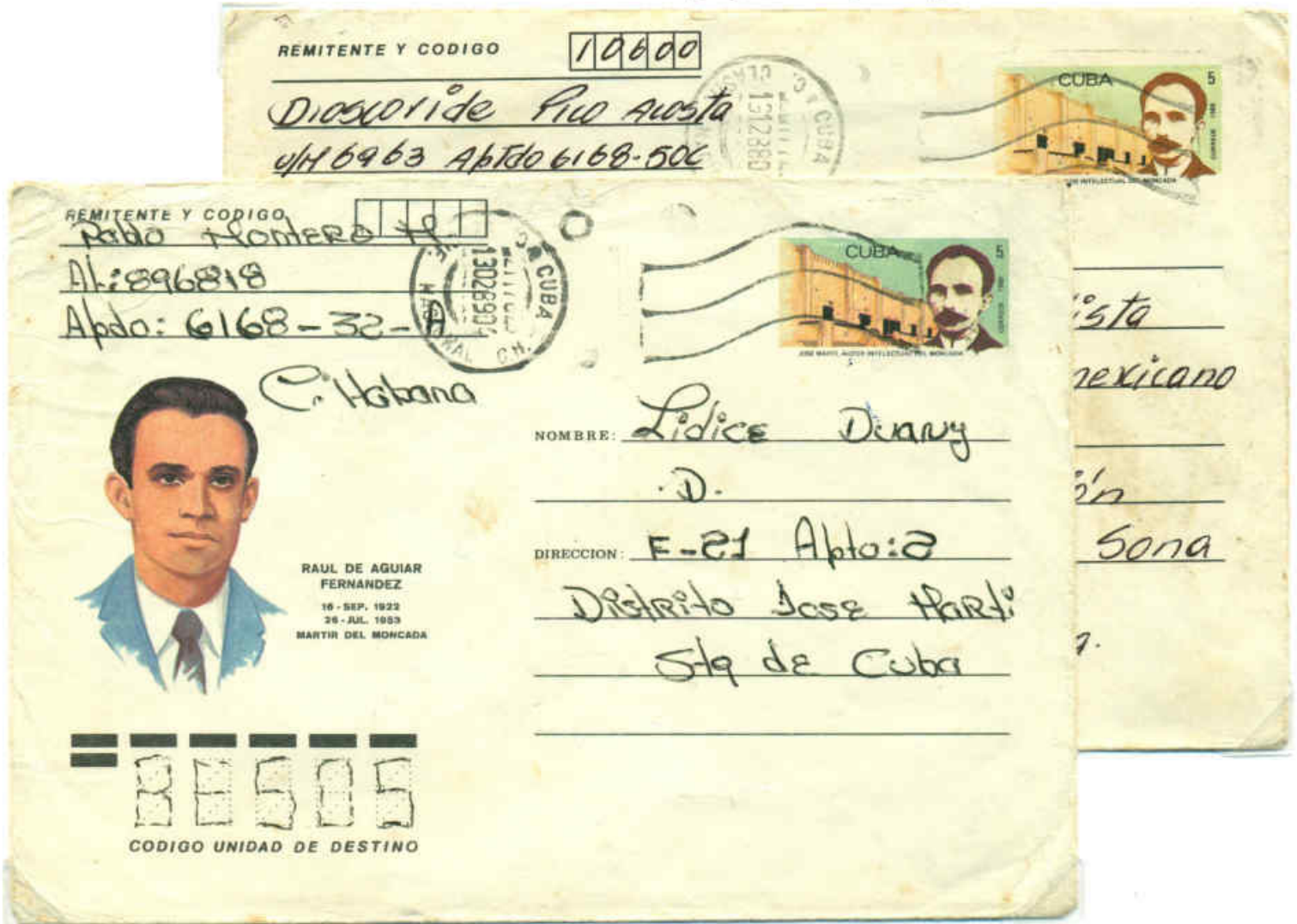
Above - Cuban PSE posted November 1989 to Santiago de Cuba by a combatant deployed to a mixed MINFAR/FAPLA unit based in Huambo, part of MINFAR unit 6963 using post office box 6156-50-C.

Below - Cuban PSE posted November 1987 to Santiago de Cuba by a combatant deployed to a mixed MINFAR/FAPLA unit based in Lobito, part of MINFAR unit 6963 using post office box 6156-X.

CUBAN MINFAR UNIT 6963 POST OFFICE BOX 6168 XANGONGO & TCHIPA, CUNENE PROVINCE



Headquartered in Luanda, MINFAR unit 6963 was the main unit of the Cuban Military Mission in Angola with combatants deployed to all areas of Angola. The Cuban combatants that were deployed to mixed MINFAR/FAPLA units were also part of MINFAR unit 6963, each using a different post office box for their mail. In late 1987 southern Cunene province came under direct attack from South African-led UNITA guerrillas. The MINFAR/FAPLA response was a substantially reinforced force in Cunene province to lead the final counter offensive against the UNITA guerrillas in the spring of 1988. The town of Xangongo was the site of 6,500 foot unpaved airfield used for resupply operations. The battle of Tchipa in the spring of 1988 was a major victory for the MINFAR/FAPLA Southern Front. The MINFAR/FAPLA units based at Xangongo and Tchipa used post office box 6168.



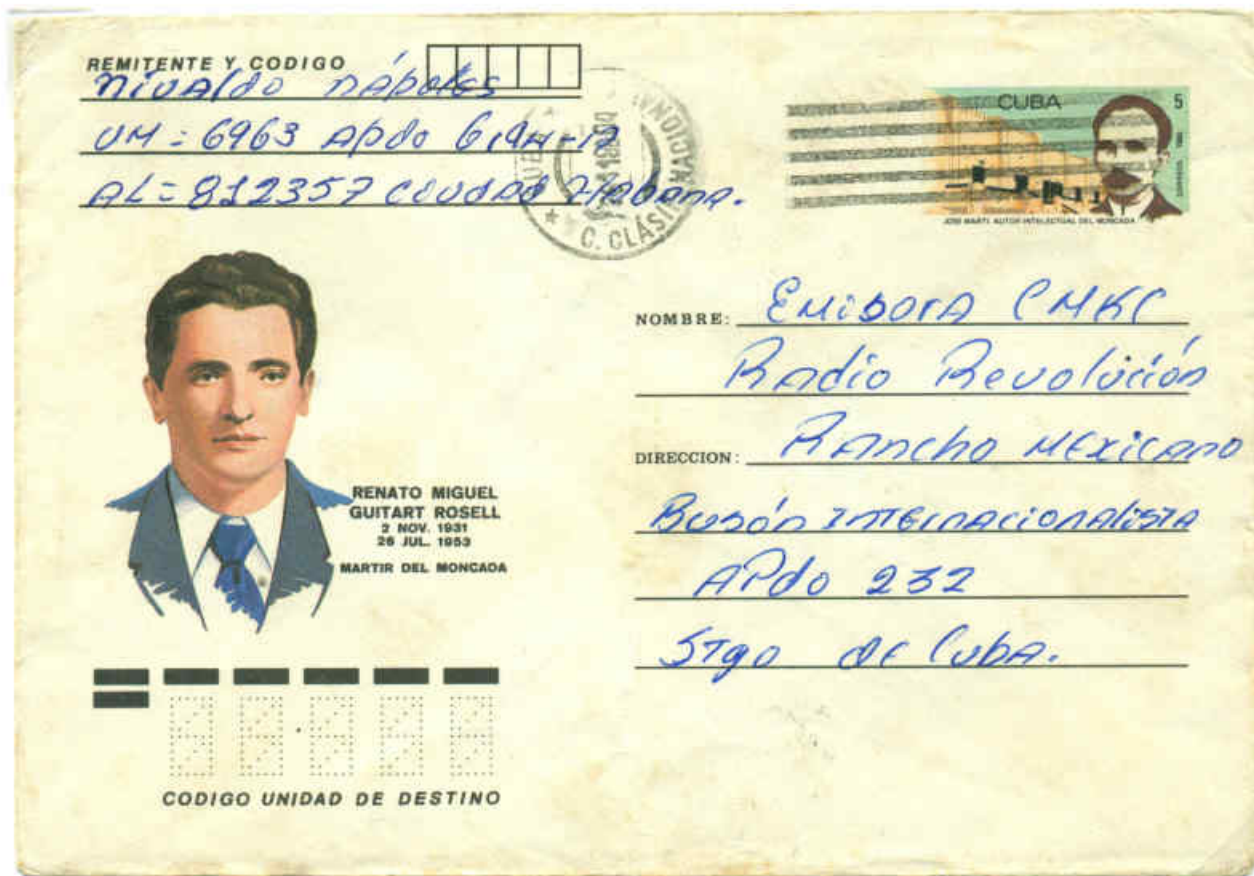
Above – Cuban PSE posted February 1989 to Santiago de Cuba by a combatant deployed to a mixed MINFAR/FAPLA unit based in Xangongo, part of MINFAR unit 6963 using post office box 6168-50-C.

Below - Cuban PSE posted February 1989 to Santiago de Cuba by a combatant deployed to a mixed MINFAR/FAPLA unit based in Tchipa, part of MINFAR unit 6963 using post office box 6168-32-A.

CUBAN MINFAR UNIT 6963 POST OFFICE BOX 6194 KWANZA PROVINCE, ANGOLA



Headquartered in Luanda, MINFAR unit 6963 was the main unit of the Cuban Military Mission in Angola with combatants deployed to all areas of Angola. The Cuban combatants that were deployed to mixed MINFAR/FAPLA units were also part of MINFAR unit 6963, each using a different post office box for their mail. The security of Kwanza province from guerrilla attacks was vital to the MINFAR/FAPLA supply routes from Luanda to Huambo and the Southern Front. The mixed MINFAR/FAPLA unit based in Kwanza used post office box 6194.



Cuban PSE posted November 1986 to Santiago de Cuba by a combatant deployed to a mixed MINFAR/FAPLA unit based in Kwanza province, part of MINFAR unit 6963 using post office box 6194.

CUBAN MINFAR UNIT 6963 POST OFFICE BOX 6202 CAHAMA, CUNENE, ANGOLA



Headquartered in Luanda, MINFAR unit 6963 was the main unit of the Cuban Military Mission in Angola with combatants deployed to all areas of Angola. The Cuban combatants that were deployed to mixed MINFAR/FAPLA units were also part of MINFAR unit 6963, each using a different post office box for their mail. In late 1987 southern Cunene province came under direct attack from South African-led UNITA guerrillas. The MINFAR/FAPLA response was a substantially reinforced force in Cunene province to lead the final counter offensive against the UNITA guerrillas in the spring of 1988. The mixed MINFAR/FAPLA unit based in Cahama using post office box 6202 was one of several units deployed in southern Cunene province during the final offensives.

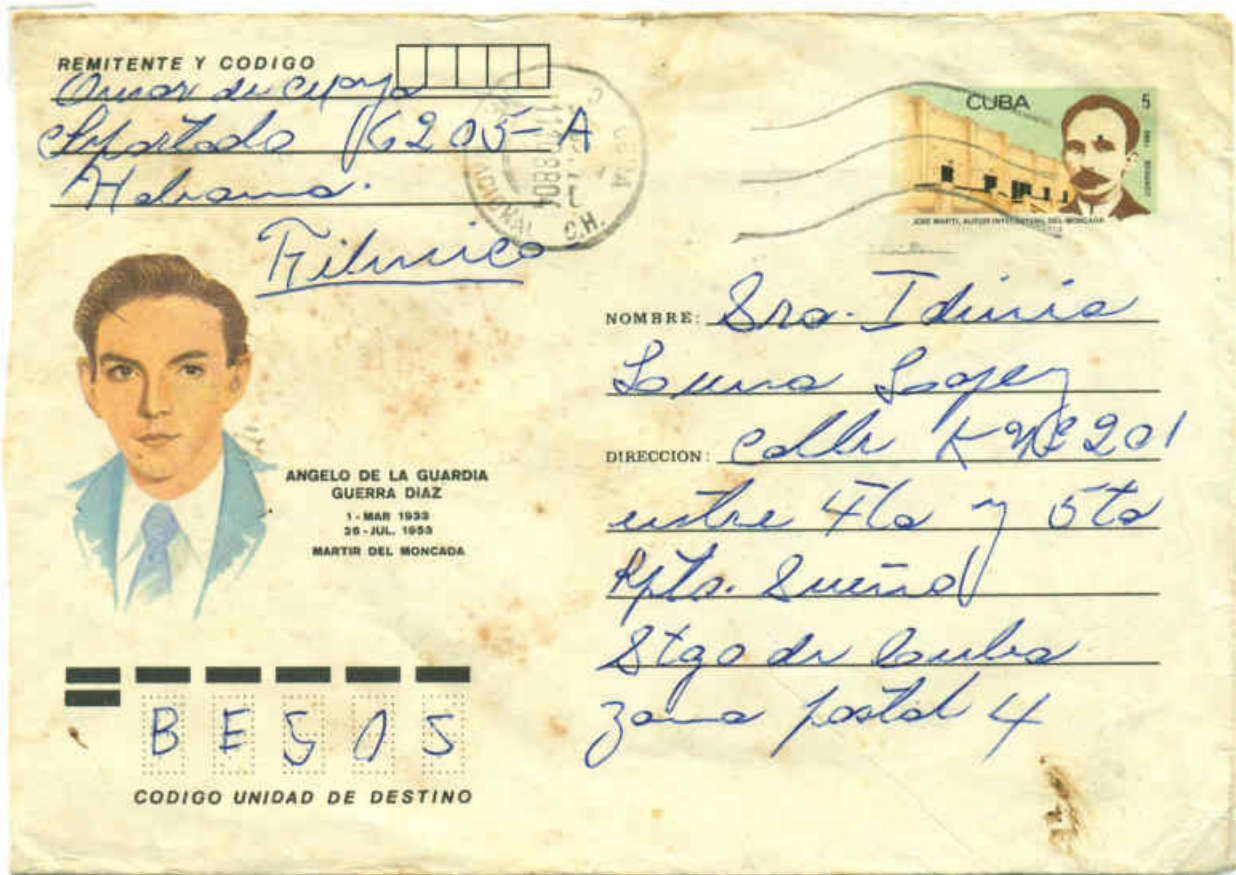


Cuban PSE posted November 1986 to Santiago de Cuba by a combatant deployed to a mixed MINFAR/FAPLA unit based in Cahama, part of MINFAR unit 6963 using post office box 6202.

CUBAN MINFAR UNIT 6963 POST OFFICE BOX 6205 CUITO CUANAVALÉ, CUANDO CUBANGO



Headquartered in Luanda, MINFAR unit 6963 was the main unit of the Cuban Military Mission in Angola with combatants deployed to all areas of Angola. The Cuban combatants that were deployed to mixed MINFAR/FAPLA units were also part of MINFAR unit 6963, each using a different post office box for their mail. In late 1987 Cuito Cuanavale came under direct attack from South African-led UNITA guerrillas. On 15 November 1987, the Cuban Military Mission committed itself to holding Cuito Cuanavale, with an additional 50,000 combatants and a front line force that came to include 998 tanks, 600 armored vehicles, and 1,600 artillery, mortar and anti-aircraft defense units. A decisive victory for the MINFAR/FAPLA forces occurred on 23 March 1988 at Cuito Cuanavale, which led to an UN brokered agreement with the Angolan, Cuban and South African governments that led to the withdrawal of the Cuban forces in Angola on 25 May 1991. The mixed MINFAR/FAPLA units based in Cuito Cuanavale used post office box 6205.

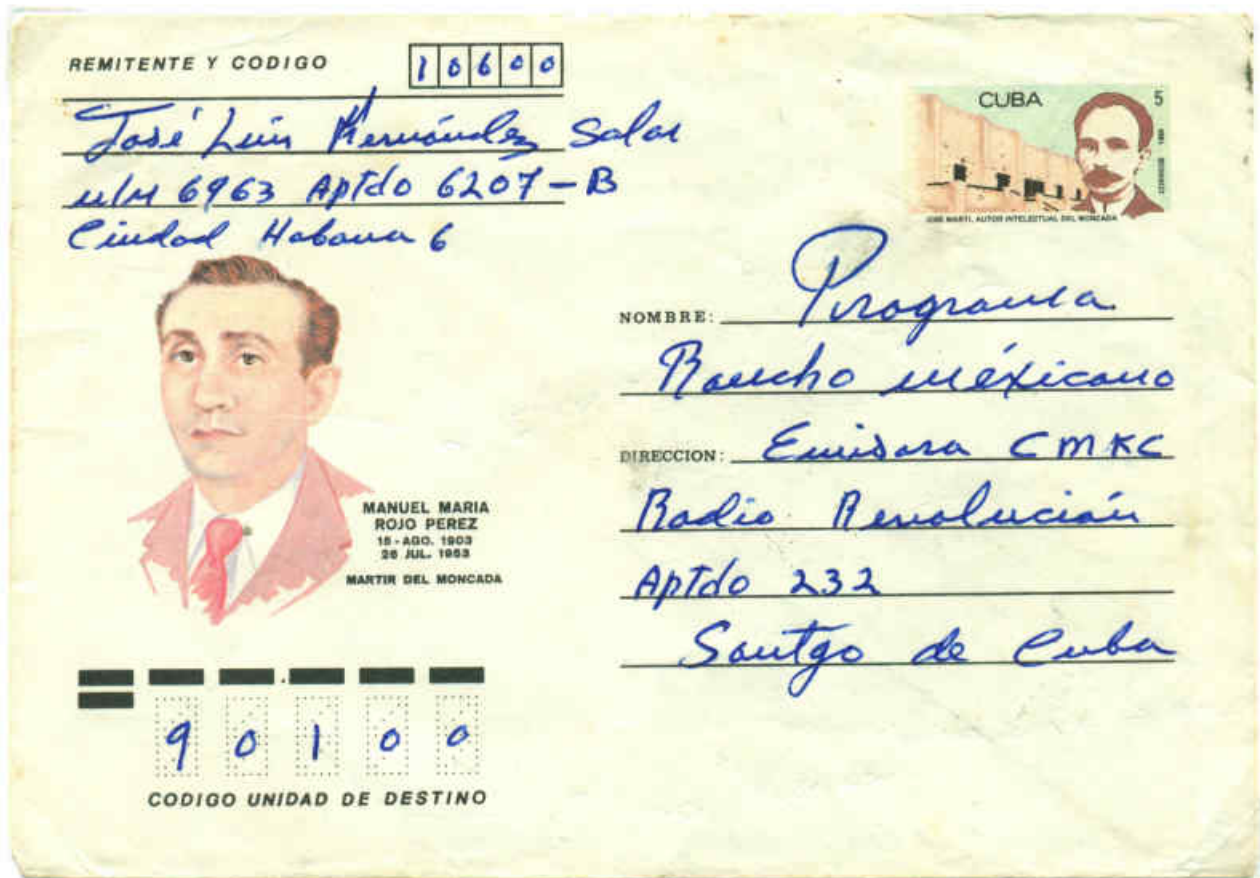


Cuban PSE posted November 1986 to Santiago de Cuba by a member of FILMICO documenting the Cuban Southern Front, embedded with a mixed MINFAR/FAPLA unit based in Cuito Cuanavale, part of MINFAR unit 6963, using post office box 6205.

CUBAN MINFAR UNIT 6963 POST OFFICE BOX 6207 HUMBE, CUNENE PROVINCE



Headquartered in Luanda, MINFAR unit 6963 was the main unit of the Cuban Military Mission in Angola with combatants deployed to all areas of Angola. The Cuban combatants deployed to mixed MINFAR/FAPLA units were also part of MINFAR unit 6963, each using a different post office box for their mail. In late 1987 southern Cunene province came under direct attack from South African-led UNITA guerrillas. The MINFAR/FAPLA response was a substantially reinforced force in Cunene province to lead the final counter offensive against the UNITA guerrillas in the spring of 1988. The mixed MINFAR/FAPLA unit based in the town of Humbe in southern Cunene province used post office box 6207.



Cuban PSE posted November 1986 to Santiago de Cuba by a combatant deployed to a mixed MINFAR/FAPLA unit based in Humbe, part of MINFAR unit 6963 using post office box 6207.

CUBAN MINFAR UNIT 6963 POST OFFICE BOX 6440 MOZAMEDES (NAMIBE)



Headquartered in Luanda, MINFAR unit 6963 was the main unit of the Cuban Military Mission in Angola with combatants deployed to all areas of Angola. The Cuban combatants deployed to mixed MINFAR/FAPLA units were also part of MINFAR unit 6963, each using a different post office box for their mail. The port of Mozamedes was the main ocean supply receiving depot for the MINFAR/FAPLA Southern Front. The mixed MINFAR/FAPLA unit based in Mozamedes used post office box 6440.



Above - Cuban PSE posted July 1986 to Santiago de Cuba by a combatant deployed to a mixed MINFAR/FAPLA unit based in Mozamedes, part of MINFAR unit 6963 using post office box 6440.

Below - Cuban PSE posted September 1986 to Santiago de Cuba by a combatant deployed to a mixed MINFAR/FAPLA unit based in Mozamedes, part of MINFAR unit 6963 using post office box 6440.

CUBAN MINFAR UNIT 6963 POST OFFICE BOX 6915 CAHAMA, CUNENE



Headquartered in Luanda, MINFAR unit 6963 was the main unit of the Cuban Military Mission in Angola with combatants deployed to all areas of Angola. The Cuban combatants deployed to mixed MINFAR/FAPLA units were also part of MINFAR unit 6963, each using a different post office box for their mail. In late 1987 southern Cunene province came under direct attack from South African-led UNITA guerrillas. The MINFAR/FAPLA response was a substantially reinforced force in Cunene province to lead the final counter offensive against the UNITA guerrillas in the spring of 1988. The mixed MINFAR/FAPLA units based in Cahama using post office box 6915 were deployed in southern Cunene province.



Above - Cuban PSE posted February 1989 to Santiago de Cuba by a combatant deployed to a mixed MINFAR/FAPLA unit based in Cahama, part of MINFAR unit 6963 using post office box 6915-3B.

Below - Cuban PSE posted July 1986 to Santiago de Cuba by a combatant deployed to a mixed MINFAR/FAPLA unit based in Cahama, part of MINFAR unit 6963 using post office box 6915-9.

CUBAN MILITARY MISSION IN ANGOLA 1998 - COMMEMORATION



X ANIVERSARIO DE LA VICTORIA
DE CUITO CUANAVALÉ



Cuba – Scott 3911 – 1998 commemorative stamp and FDC issued to mark the 10th anniversary of the MINFAR/FAPLA victory at Cuito Cuanavale on 23 March 1988.

CUBAN MILITARY MISSION IN ANGOLA 2000 - COMMEMORATION



**25 ANIV. MISIÓN INTERNACIONALISTA
CUBANA EN LA R.P. DE ANGOLA**

Cuba – Scott 4117 – 2000 commemorative stamp and FDC issued 7 November to mark the 25th anniversary of the beginning of the Cuban Internationalist Mission in Angola.

CUBAN MILITARY MISSION IN ANGOLA WITHDRAWAL – UNAVEM 1-3

The Cuban victory on the battlefield in Angola was followed by an UN-brokered agreement in December 1988 between the governments of Angola, Cuba and South Africa that set up a tiered withdrawal of Cuban forces from Angola. The Cuban withdrawal from Angola was monitored from January 1989 to May 1991 by UNAVEM I (United Nations Angola Verification Mission) observers, with the last Cuban personnel departing on 25 May 1991. At the Angolan government's request, the mission of UNAVEM was extended, creating UNAVEM II in June 1991 to verify elections. The election process broke down, with UNITA rebels launching an attack against the MPLA, making substantial territorial gains. In 1994, with new agreements UNAVEM III was created in February 1995 to oversee the disarmament of Angolan and UNITA forces, officially ending in June 1997.



ARMATA ROMÂNĂ
ÎN MISIUNI DE MENȚINERE A PĂCII



ANGOLA: dec



Carte postală

MORTEN POSTRUP
Möndalsvägen 57
412 63 GÖTEBORG
Tel. 031-703 44 73

MISIUNEA UNAVEM III :

Expeditor:

Tiraj: 25.000

Serie cart

LUBANGO

Lt Col G Postrup
UNAVEM

SWEDINT
Box 635

151 27 Södertälje



Above – 1997 Romanian commemorative PC issued to honor UNAVEM III observers in Angola.

Below – 1996 cover sent from Goteborg, Sweden to a UNAVEM III Swedish Observer at Lubango.

CUBAN MINFAR FORCES IN ANGOLA PHILATELIC COLLABORATION

The study of the Cuban participation in Angola has required international collaboration among philatelists and postal historians in Cuba, South Africa and the United States. In 2001, I began a long correspondence with George van der Hurk, noted South African philatelist, who had written an extensive book on the postal history of South African Defense Forces - the opposing party in the Angolan conflict. Fostering international collaboration among former foes, an appendix in a 2001 reprint of van der Hurk's book *Border Mail, Postal Markings and Postal History of the War in Angola and along the Namibian Border 1975-1988* and a later four-part serial in *The South African Philatelist* presented the postal history of the Cuban participation in Angola. This work has continued with Martin Boulton, also a noted South African philatelist. In 2003, in recognition of this unique collaboration Boulton sent me a small selection of South African military covers for study. The similarities of the Cuban and South African military mails are remarkable. The collaboration of Cuban, American and South African researchers continues.



South African Defense Forces post card posted as free frank military mail January 1987 to Windhoek, SWA by a member of the SADF 102nd Battalion on the South West Africa/Angola border. The card shows the SADF logo with a view of an SADF Olifant tank on patrol.



Cuban Cooperantes in Angola 1975 – 1991



In addition to the Cuban combatants in Angola, Cuba also provided non-military personnel consisting of educators, doctors and construction workers who came to be called *cooperante internacionalistas*, internationalist collaborators. The first *cooperantes* in Angola were demobilized Cuban technical personnel attached to the initial Cuban forces sent in 1975-1976. The Angolan government requested their presence as contracted civilian workers to provide professional services not available after the Portuguese departure in 1975. After 1976, the cooperantes were graduates of Cuban schools, recruited for service by the *Empresa Cubatécnica* (Cuban Technical Enterprise), a dependency of the CECE, *Comité Estatal de Colaboración Económica* (State Committee for Economic Collaboration). The CECE directed the international cooperation projects abroad. The cooperantes left Angola in May 1991 as part of the Cuban withdrawal from Angola.

The cooperantes served in all areas of Angola and were considered a secondary support force for the Cuban combatants in Angola. The standard service term for cooperantes was two years. The CECE headquarters in Luanda, directed the services of the cooperantes, and provided mail services similar to MINFAR/TELCOR services for combatants. Given in this exhibit are meter frankings, services, stationery and markings used by cooperante mail service in Angola. The covers and collateral material shown here are rare and historic artifacts, considered among the few tangible traces of this little known facet of the Cold War.

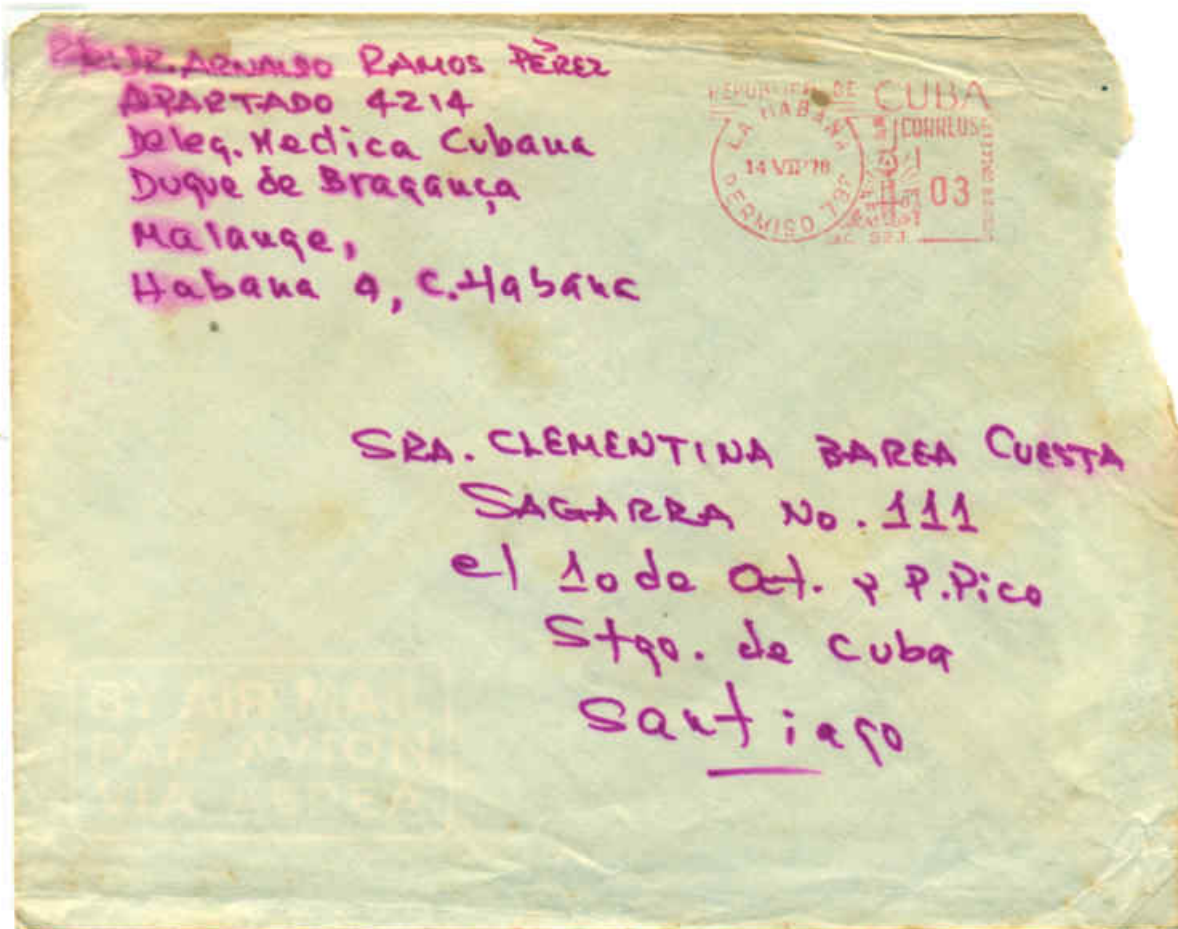
CUBAN COOPERANTES IN ANGOLA

CECE POSTAL OFFICE

POST OFFICE BOX 4214

Cuban Embassy at Luanda, Angola

In March 1976, the CECE established a postal office to service mail for the Cuban cooperantes in Angola. Mail to the cooperantes in Angola was sent to dedicated MINCOM post office box number 4214. The CECE postal office originally was located at the CECE headquarters at the Cuban Embassy in Luanda, then later at an off-site location in Luanda. A dedicated window at the Angolan central post office in Luanda also accepted outgoing cooperante mail. Couriers and representatives of the CECE delivered mail to the cooperantes brigades. Mail from the Cuban cooperantes in Angola was posted at domestic rates, using Cuban franked PSE and plain envelopes with postage stamps to fulfill postage. Conditions of war made the distribution of stationery supplies difficult and mail was accepted unfranked. Though mail from the Cuban forces was free frank, to comply with MINCOM postal franking regulations, unfranked mail was franked with Cuban Pitney Bowes postal meter machines at the CECE postal office in Luanda. Compliance meter franking is known from March 1976 to October 1978, when the practice ceased. Presently, three postal meter machines - 523, 542 and 839 are known used at the CECE office in Luanda.



Unfranked envelope posted to Santiago de Cuba by a cooperante with the Cuban Medical Brigade deployed to Duque de Bragança, Malanje province. Meter franked in red 14 July 1978 at the CECE postal office in Luanda with Cuban Pitney Bowes postage meter 523, with meter dial LA HABANA - PERMISO 792.

**CUBAN COOPERANTES
IN ANGOLA**

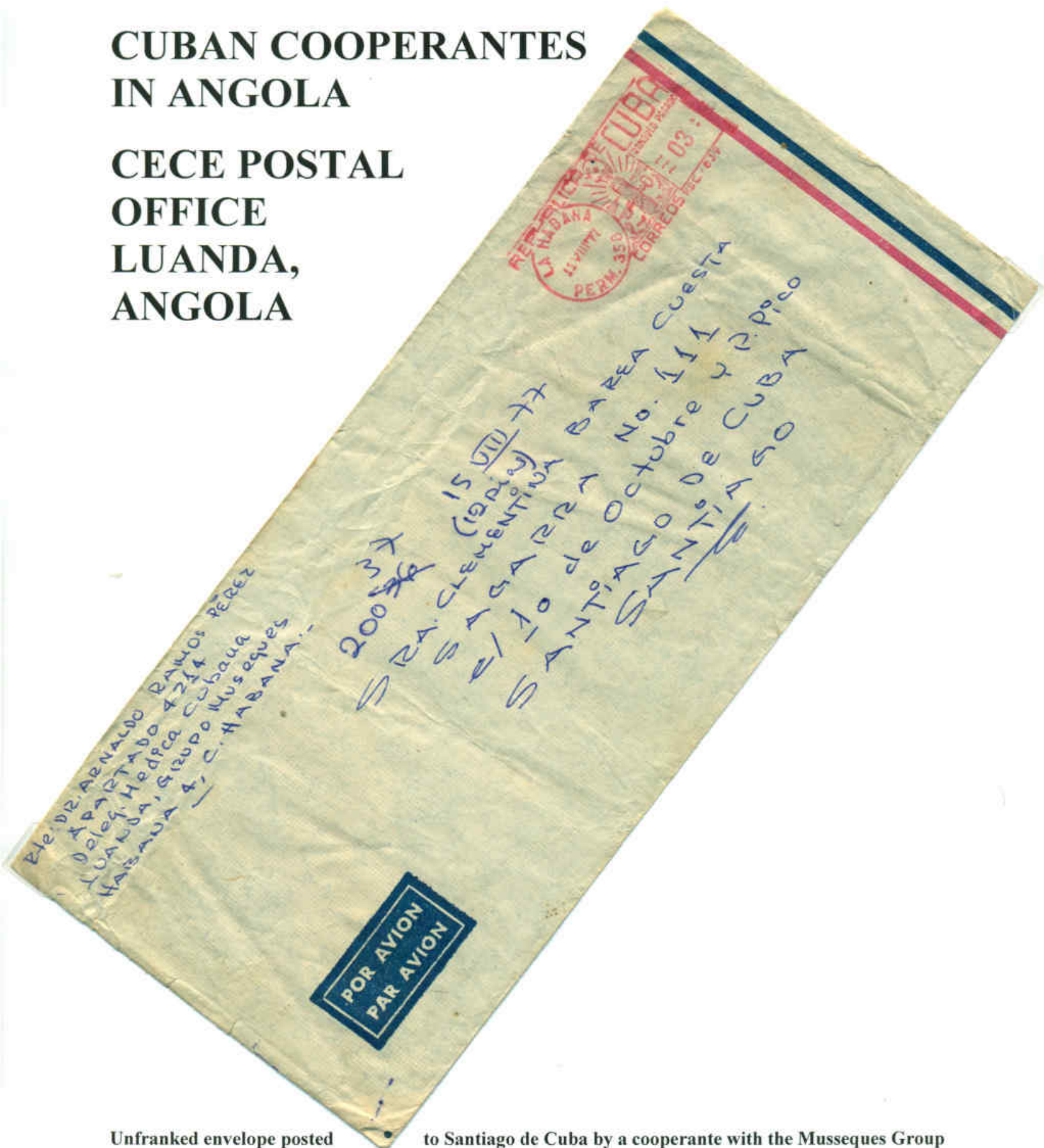
**CECE POSTAL
OFFICE
LUANDA,
ANGOLA**



Unfranked Cuban airmail envelope posted to Santiago de Cuba by a cooperante with the Cuban Medical Brigade deployed to Luanda. Meter franked in red 10 June 1977 at the CECE postal office in Luanda with Cuban Pitney Bowes postage meter 542, with meter dial LA HABANA - PERMISO 185.

CUBAN COOPERANTES IN ANGOLA

CECE POSTAL OFFICE LUANDA, ANGOLA



Unfranked envelope posted
of the Cuban Medical Brigade deployed to Luanda. Meter franked in red 11 August 1977 at the
CECE postal office in Luanda with Cuban Pitney Bowes postage meter 839, with meter dial LA
HABANA - PERMISO 358.

to Santiago de Cuba by a cooperante with the Musseques Group
No. 111 Pico
SANTIAGO DE CUBA

CUBAN COOPERANTES IN ANGOLA STATIONERY TYPES

A variety of stationery was distributed by the CECE for the use of the cooperantes in Angola. The Cuban issued stationery consisted of franked or unfranked Cuban PSE or plain envelopes with Cuban domestic rate postage stamps for franking. Veterans recall that distributions of stationery supplies were infrequent at times, and many used stationery brought from Cuba by the participants or sent by family. The use of Angolan government letterhead stationery, franked with Cuban postage is also known.



Above – Cuban PSE posted November 1982 to Camaguey by a cooperante deployed to the Education Contingent headquartered at the May Day Compound in Luanda.

Below - Angolan Health Services letterhead envelope franked with Cuban postage posted January 1978 to Santiago de Cuba by a cooperante deployed to the Musseques Group of the Cuban Medical Brigade in Luanda.

CUBAN COOPERANTES IN ANGOLA

USE OF ANGOLAN POSTAL SERVICES



Unfranked Cuban airmail envelope posted 10 June 1977 to Santiago de Cuba by a cooperante with the Cuban Medical Brigade deployed to Luanda. Franked with 11.50 kwanzas Angolan postage fulfilling the airmail rate to Cuba. The use of the Angolan postal system for cooperante mail is rare.


CUBAN COOPERANTES IN ANGOLA ALTERNATIVE MAIL SERVICE

Beyond the mail services provided by the CECE, personal delivery of mail, transported with returning or arriving personnel to Angola was an alternative mail system with wide usage among the Cuban participants in Africa. The alternative mail system has a long history in Cuba, dating to colonial times. Interviews with veterans indicate that personal delivery was used because postal service could be very slow.

REMITENTE Y CODIGO

Dr. Mariano García Nevés

CUBA 5
JOSE MARTI, AUTOR INTELLECTUAL DEL MONCADÁ


RAUL DE AGUIAR
FERNANDEZ
18 - SEP. 1922
28 - JUL. 1953
MARTIR DEL MONCADÁ

NOMBRE: *BERTHA. Nevés
GONZALEZ.*

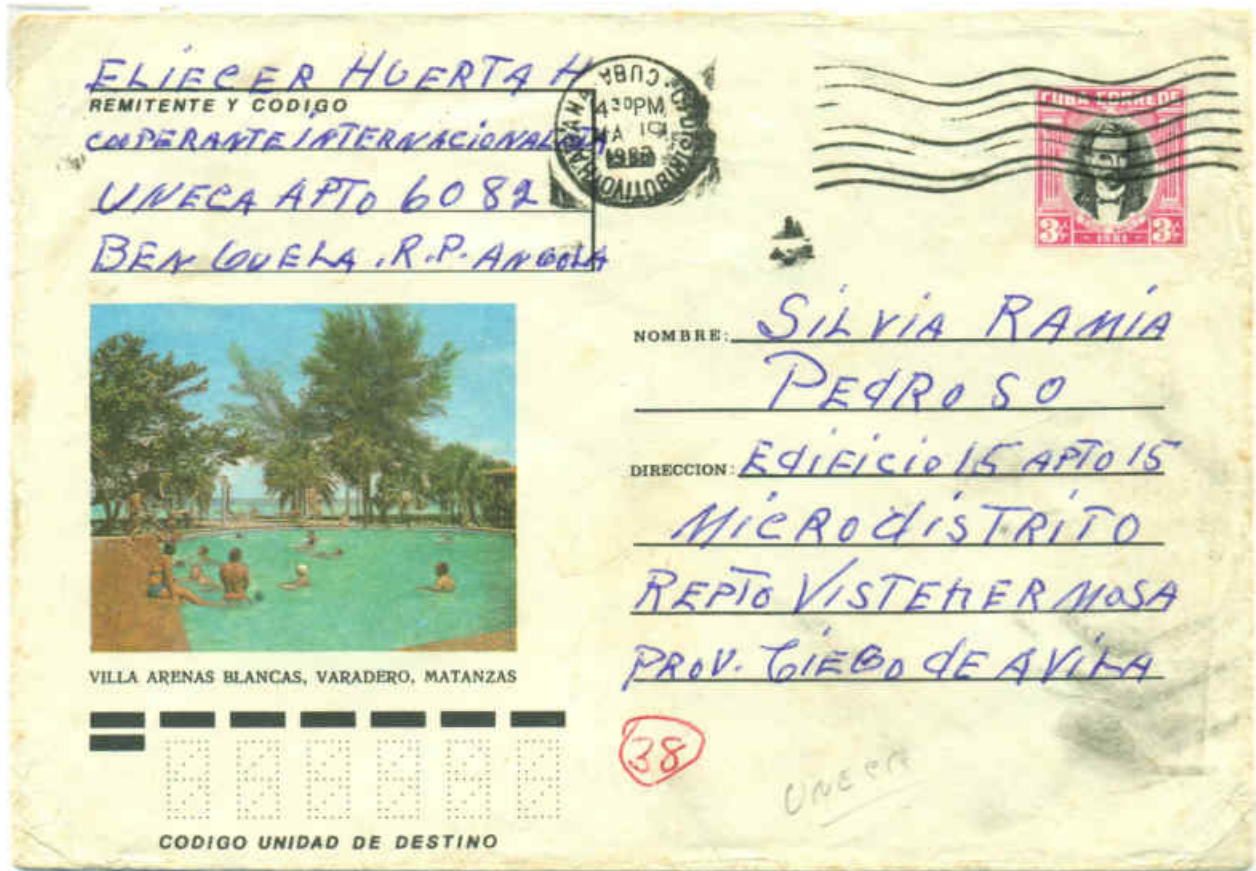
DIRECCION: *TRINIDAD #553
de CARNICERIA Y SAN
BARTOLO ME.
SOTO DE CUBA
TELEFONO 7807.*

CODIGO UNIDAD DE DESTINO

Cuban PSE posted in 1989 to Santiago de Cuba by a cooperante deployed to Luanda with the Cuban Medical Brigade using alternative mail service. The cooperante wrote the addressee's telephone number to facilitate delivery of the letter by personal delivery.

CUBAN COOPERANTES IN ANGOLA UNECA PERSONNEL POST OFFICE BOX 6082

In addition to the cooperantes, personnel from UNECA (*Unión de Empresas Constructoras Caribe*), a dependency of the Cuban Ministry of Construction, were also deployed to Angola. UNECA was the contractor agency the Cuban government used to fulfill construction contracts abroad. The Cuban civilian collaboration participation in Angola included infrastructure maintenance and construction projects. The members of UNECA used the unique post office box number 6082 for correspondence. The UNECA headquarters in Luanda coordinated with the CECE for mail services to their personnel.



Cuban PSE posted in May 1982 to Ciego de Avila by a cooperante deployed to a UNECA construction project in Benguela, Angola.

CUBAN COOPERANTES IN ANGOLA

1981 UNFRANKED AIRMAIL PSE

In addition to regular franked Cuban PSE distributed to the cooperantes in Angola, the Cuban Ministry of Communications produced unfranked versions of regular airmail franked stationery to be used for mail to the cooperantes from Cuba and for use as free frank envelopes by the cooperantes in Angola. In addition to the lack of franking, the cooperante stationery bears a stylized star and bar in the lower right hand corner in the Cuban national colors. The cooperante stationery was sold in Cuban post offices as unfranked stationery and also are known used domestically with franking.

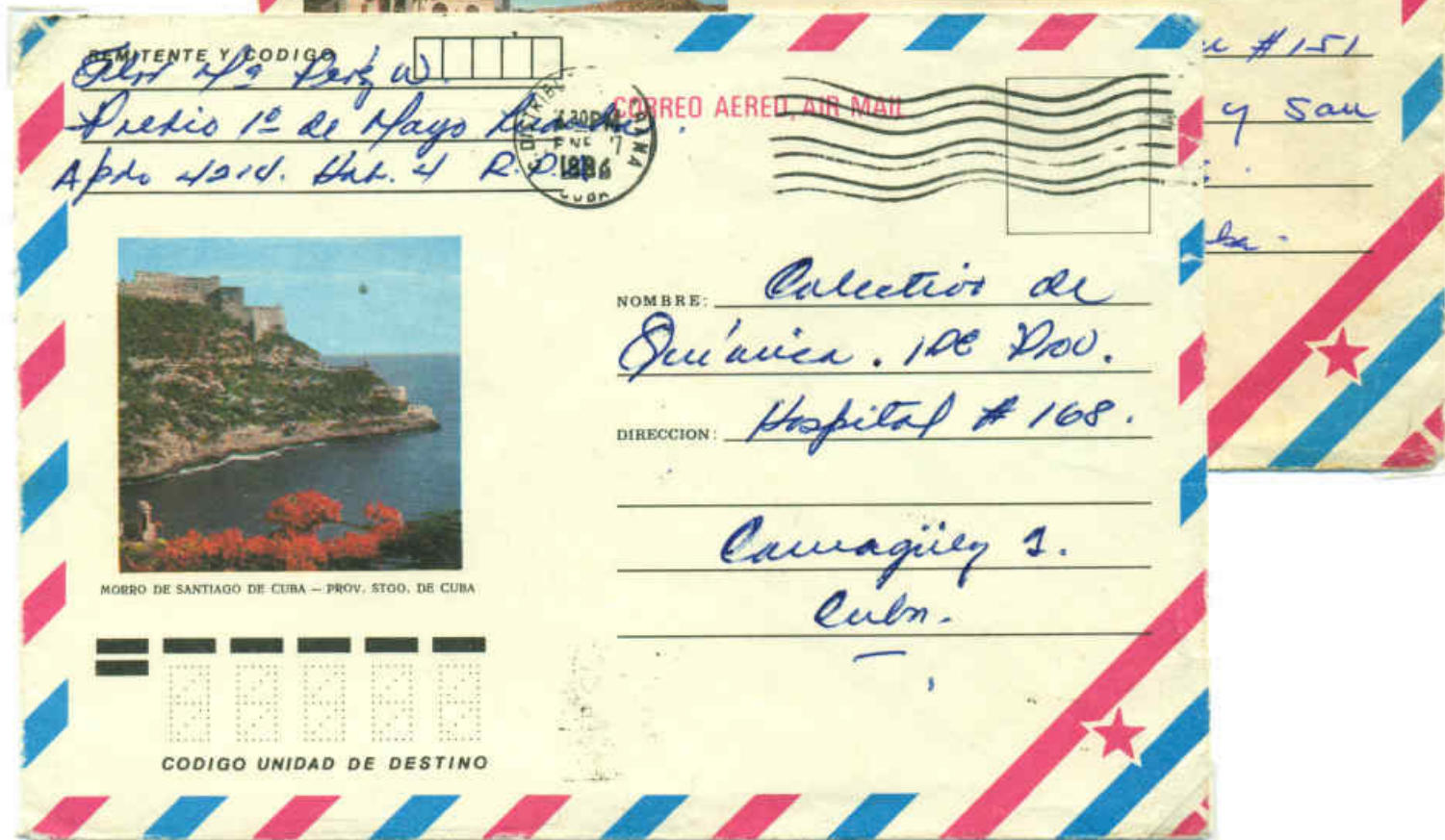


Above – Unfranked 1981 Cuban cooperante PSE used March 1987 with domestic franking, used as a regular unfranked envelope.

Below – Unfranked 1981 Cuban cooperante PSE posted April 1986 as free frank mail to Santiago de Cuba by a cooperante to deployed to the UNECA Housing Group headquartered in Luanda.

CUBAN COOPERANTES IN ANGOLA 1982 UNFRANKED AIRMAIL PSE

In addition to regular Cuban PSE distributed to the cooperantes in Angola, the Cuban Ministry of Communications produced unfranked versions of regular airmail franked stationery to be used for mail to the cooperantes from Cuba and for use as free frank envelopes by the cooperantes in Angola. In addition to the lack of franking, the cooperante stationery bears a stylized star and bar in the lower right hand corner in the Cuban national colors. The cooperante stationery was sold in Cuban post offices as unfranked stationery and also are known used domestically with franking.



Above - Unfranked 1982 Cuban cooperante PSE posted January 1984 to Santiago de Cuba as free frank mail by a cooperante deployed to the Logging Contingent in Cabinda province.

Below - Unfranked 1982 Cuban cooperante PSE posted January 1984 to Camaguey as free frank mail by a member deployed to the May Day compound headquartered in Luanda.

CUBAN COOPERANTES IN ANGOLA

1985 UNFRANKED AIRMAIL PSE

In addition to regular Cuban PSE distributed to the cooperantes in Angola, the Cuban Ministry of Communications produced unfranked versions of regular airmail franked stationery to be used for mail to the cooperantes from Cuba and for use as free frank envelopes by the cooperantes in Angola. In addition to the lack of franking, the cooperante stationery bears a stylized star and bar in the lower right hand corner in the Cuban national colors. The cooperante stationery was sold in Cuban post offices as unfranked stationery and also are known used domestically with franking.

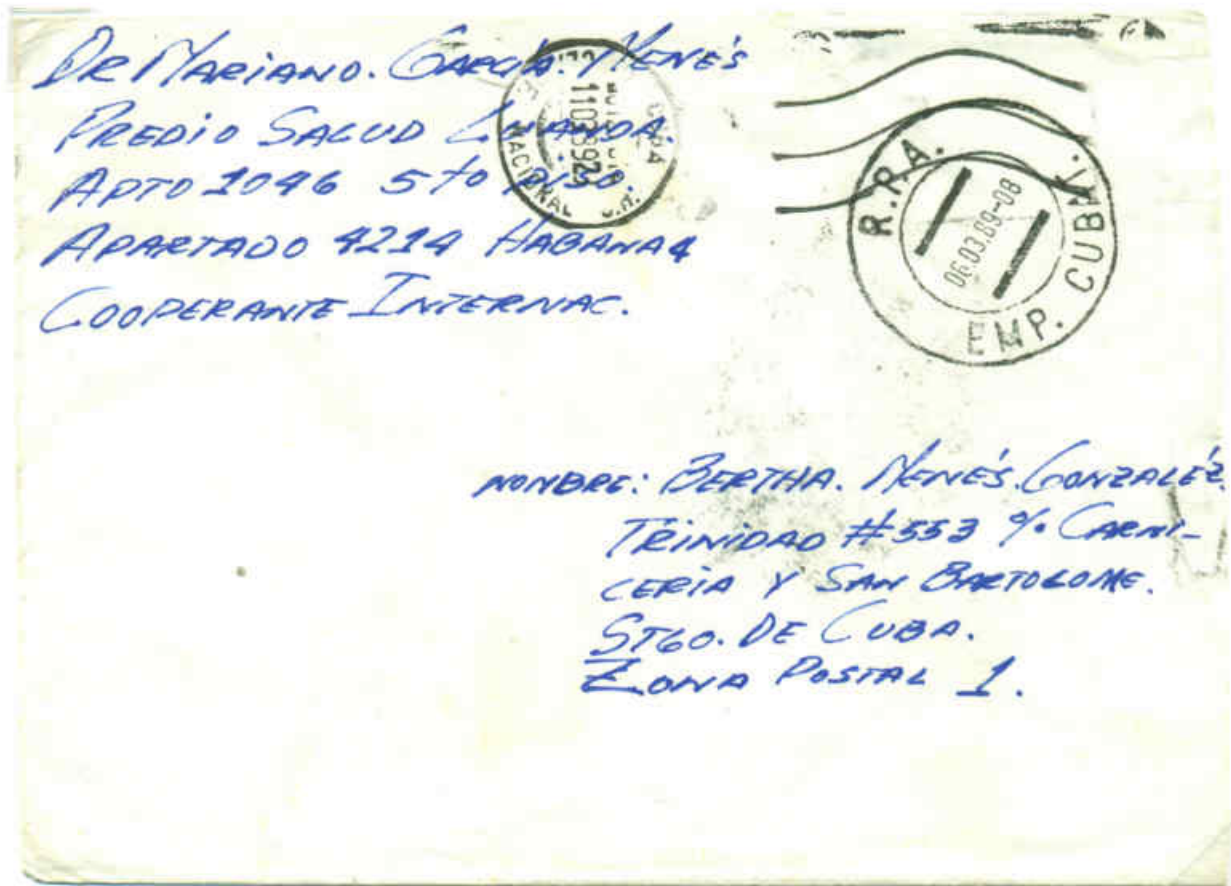


Above – Unfranked 1985 Cuban cooperante PSE. Mint.

Below – Unfranked 1985 Cuban cooperante PSE posted January 1987, posted with airmail franking from Santiago de Cuba to Kiev, USSR.

CUBAN COOPERANTES IN ANGOLA MINCOM POSTAL OFFICE LUANDA, ANGOLA

In January 1985, the Cuban Ministry of Communications replaced the CECE as provider of postal services to the cooperantes in Angola, replacing the CECE postal office with a MINCOM postal office in Luanda. The postal clerks at the MINCOM Office in Luanda were equipped with circular dated cancellers measuring 35 mm in diameter with the acronyms R.P.A. – EMP. CUBAT, for *República Popular Angola – Empresa Cubatécnica*. The cancellers were of the same format as used in post offices across Cuba. The numericals on the cancels indicate day, month, year and clerk number. Presently clerk numbers 07, 08, 11, 15, 16, and 17 are known. The canceller was used both as a canceller and as a free frank mark accepted by MINCOM.



Unfranked envelope posted March 1989 to Santiago de Cuba by a cooperante deployed to the Health Compound in Luanda. The cover is cancelled with MINCOM RPA canceller - clerk 8, used as a free frank marking.

CUBAN COOPERANTES IN ANGOLA MINCOM POSTAL OFFICE LUANDA, ANGOLA

In January 1985, the Cuban Ministry of Communications replaced the CECE as provider of postal services to the cooperantes in Angola, replacing the CECE postal office with a MINCOM postal office in Luanda. The postal clerks at the MINCOM Office in Luanda were equipped with circular dated cancellers measuring 35 mm in diameter with the acronyms R.P.A. – EMP. CUBAT, for *República Popular Angola – Empresa Cubatécnica*. The cancellers were of the same format as used in post offices across Cuba. The numericals on the cancels indicate day, month, year and clerk number. Presently clerk numbers 07, 08, 11, 15, 16, and 17 are known. The canceller was used both as a canceller and as a free frank mark accepted by MINCOM.

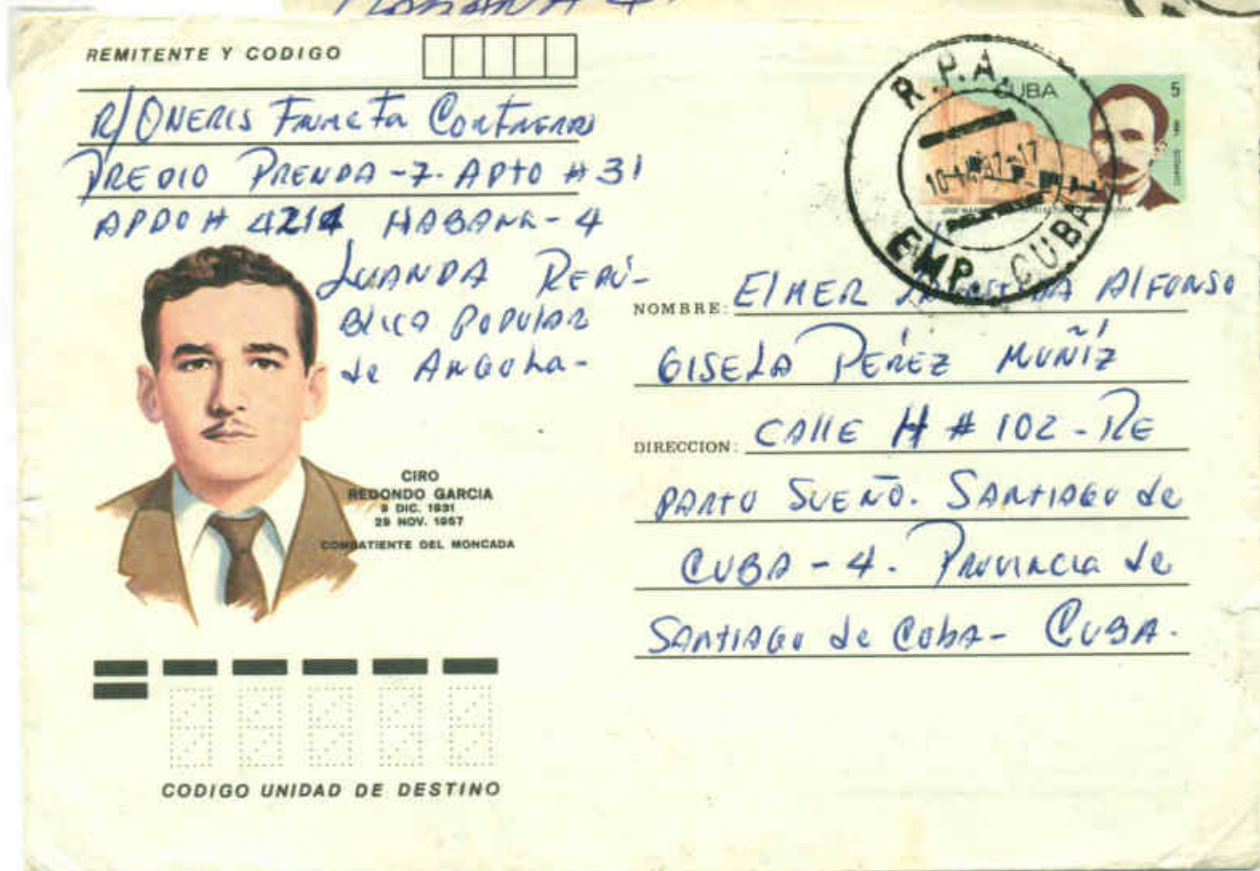
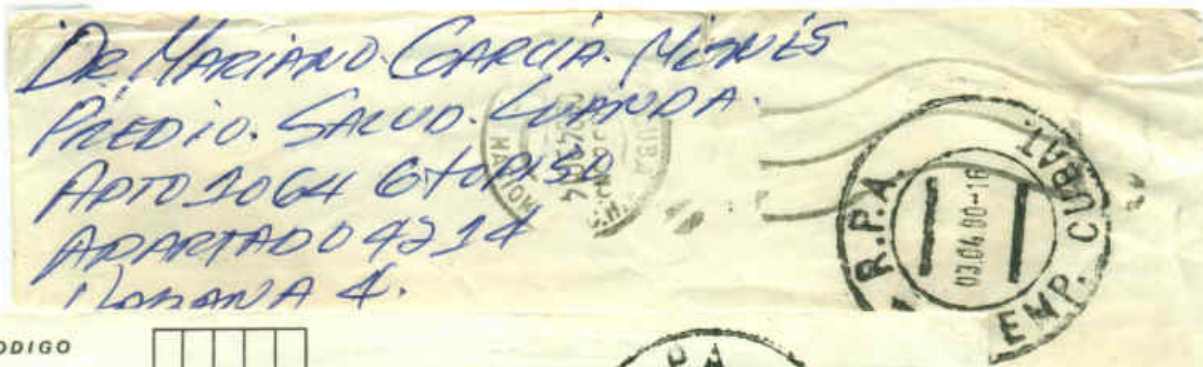


Above – Cuban PSE posted July 1987 to Santiago de Cuba by a cooperante deployed to the Work Compound in Luanda. The cover is cancelled with MINCOM RPA canceller - clerk 11.

Below – Unfranked Cuban cooperante PSE posted October 1985 to Santiago de Cuba by a cooperante deployed to Huila, Lubango province. The cover is cancelled with MINCOM RPA canceller – clerk 15 used as a free frank marking.

CUBAN COOPERANTES IN ANGOLA MINCOM POSTAL OFFICE LUANDA, ANGOLA

In January 1985, the Cuban Ministry of Communications replaced the CECE as provider of postal services to the cooperantes in Angola, replacing the CECE postal office with a MINCOM postal office in Luanda. The postal clerks at the MINCOM Office in Luanda were equipped with circular dated cancellers measuring 35 mm in diameter with the acronyms R.P.A. – EMP. CUBAT, for *República Popular Angola – Empresa Cubatécnica*. The cancellers were of the same format as used in post offices across Cuba. The numericals on the cancels indicate day, month, year and clerk number. Presently clerk numbers 07, 08, 11, 15, 16, and 17 are known. The canceller was used both as a canceller and as a free frank mark accepted by MINCOM.



Above – Unfranked envelope posted April 1990 to Santiago de Cuba by a cooperante deployed to the Health Compound in Luanda. The cover is cancelled with MINCOM RPA canceller - clerk 16 used as a free frank marking.

Below – Cuban PSE posted October 1987 to Santiago de Cuba by a cooperante deployed to the Clothing Compound in Luanda. The cover is cancelled with MINCOM RPA canceller – clerk 17.

CUBAN COOPERANTES IN SAO TOME E PRINCIPE

The CECE office in Luanda also served as an operational headquarters for Cuban cooperantes deployed to other African nations. Mail services to cooperantes in São Tomé e Príncipe and Congo Brazzaville were routinely routed through the CECE postal office in Luanda due to their proximity to Luanda. A former Portuguese colony, São Tomé e Príncipe became an independent nation on 12 September 1975. Cuban collaboration began in March 1976 with the arrival of a contingent of the Cuban Medical Brigade. In 1984-1985, according to Mastrapa's *Cuban Armed Forces Review*, 325 cooperantes and 100 military advisors were deployed to São Tomé e Príncipe. Mail from the cooperantes was forwarded to the Luanda CECE office for delivery in Sao Tomé by visiting CECE representatives. Such mail generally does not show postal markings from routing via Luanda. The cooperante brigades in São Tomé e Príncipe used post office boxes established at the central post office in São Tomé to receive for their mail.



Above – Unfranked Cuban PSE posted January 1987 to Santiago de Cuba by a cooperante deployed to São Tomé e Príncipe. The cover was routed to the MINCOM office in Luanda for transmission to Havana and is cancelled with MINCOM RPA canceller - clerk 17 used as a free frank marking.

Below – Plain envelope franked with Cuban postage posted April 1984 to Camaguey by a cooperante deployed to the Education Brigade in São Tomé e Príncipe.