

# *Thunder Road to Biafra*

*Letters from  
Somewhere in Biafra  
to Philip Emeagwali*



Biafran refugees fleeing from Owerri, October 1968.

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

**Memorable Quote**

*"I have seen things in Biafra this week which no man should have to see. Sights to search the heart and sicken the conscience I have seen children roasted alive, young girls torn in two by shrapnel, pregnant women eviscerated, and old men blown to fragments, I have seen these things and I have seen their cause: high-flying Russian Ilyushin jets operated by Federal Nigeria, dropping their bombs on civilian centres throughout Biafra ...*

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*At Onitsha - the 300 strong congregation of the Apostolic Church decided to stay on while others fled and to pray for deliverance. Col. [Murtala] Mohammed's Second Division found them in the church, dragged them out, tied their hands behind their backs and executed them. "*

*["Nightmare in Biafra," Sunday Times (London, 4/26/68, p.12), by a war correspondent]*

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**Biafra, Republic of**

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secessionist state of W Africa, in existence from May 30, 1967, to Jan. 15, 1970. At the outset Biafra comprised, roughly, the East-Central, South-Eastern, and Rivers states of the Federation of Nigeria, where the Igbo people predominated. The country, which took its name from the Bight of Biafra (an arm of the Atlantic Ocean), was established by Igbos who felt they could not develop-or even survive-within Nigeria. In Sept., 1966, numerous Igbos had been killed in N Nigeria, where they had migrated in order to engage in commerce. The secessionist state was led by Lt. Col. Chukumeka Odumegwu Ojukwu and included some non-Igbo persons. Biafra's original capital was Enugu; Aba, Umuahia, and Owerri served successively as provisional capitals after



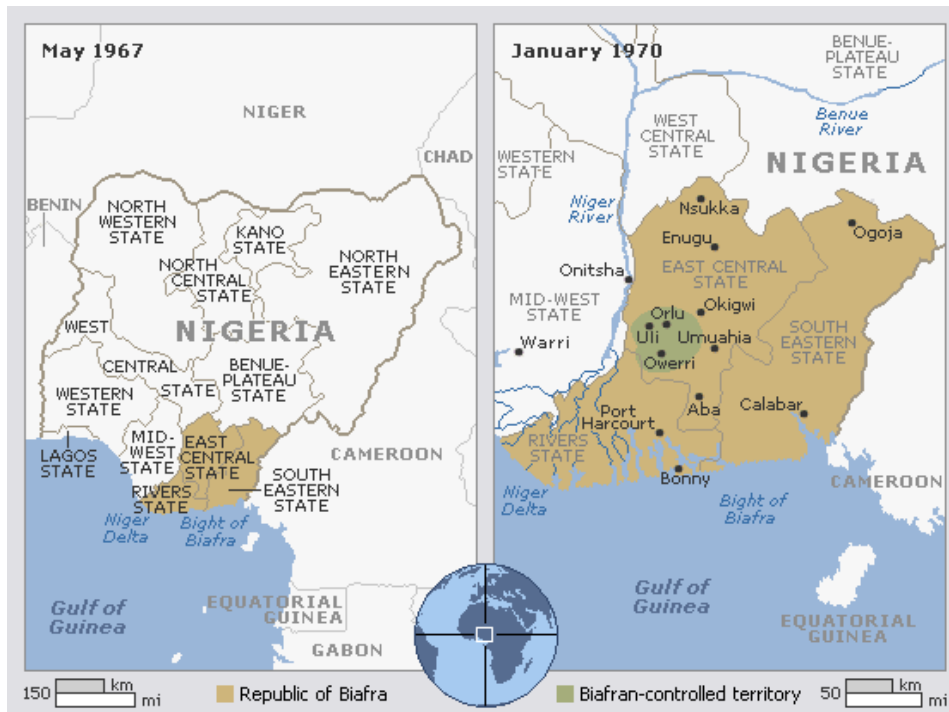
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Enugu was captured (Oct., 1967) by Nigerian forces. Seeking to maintain national unity, Nigeria imposed economic sanctions on Biafra from the start of the secession, and fighting between Nigeria and Biafra broke out in July, 1967. After initial Biafran advances, Nigeria attacked Biafra by air, land, and sea and gradually reduced the territory under its control. The breakaway state had insufficient resources at the start of the war-it was a net importer of food and had little industry-and depended heavily on its control of petroleum fields for funds to make purchases abroad. It lost the oil fields in the war, and more than one million of its civilian population are thought to have died as a result of severe malnutrition. At the time of its surrender on Jan. 15, 1970, Biafra was greatly reduced in size, its inhabitants were starving, and its leader, Ojukwu, had fled the country. During its existence Biafra was recognized by only five nations, although other countries gave moral or material support. Civilian groups were organized in a number of countries to

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publicize the case for Biafra and to raise funds for the secessionist state.



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**Memorable Quote**

*"For record purposes, however, let me state fearlessly that I saw hundreds of unarmed civilians being shot at sight in Benin City when Federal troops arrived to liberate the city from rebel [Biafran] soldiers...."*

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*There appeared to be a fleeting period of lunacy in which Midwesterners gladly identified their Igbo compatriots to be shot down by Federal [Nigerian] troops."*

[Giwa Amu, the former Solicitor-General of  
Midwestern Nigeria, *Sunday Observer*, March 16,  
1983

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# *Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from* *Somewhere in Biafra* *to Philip Emeagwali*

## LETTERS



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I was a year perhaps when my father left to fight in the war..just a baby yet I still feel the aftermath 34 years later because my father never returned...I class myself as a war victim and my soul is lost and will remain lost until the wonderful reunion between my father and me happens... whether here in this life or in heaven...Thank you for your work and pictures they were my first link to the reality...Maybe one on the photos of those brave soldiers going to war had my father in who knows.. god moves in mysterious ways....All i know is

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I am proud of my Nigerian heritage....God bless all  
those who died in the war may they rest in peace....

Yours Sincerely,

Grace Mullen,

United Kingdom

January 9, 2000



*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
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**My Nigerian spirit...**

I am inspired by you.

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I am a Nigerian, sort of. I was a two-year-old when my parents toted our family to the missionary field. Dad was a medical missionary, a surgeon who saved many lives. We moved 18 different times in six years. We finally left in 1967 when the war was in progress. I still remember that Dad had to put my play gun in the attic because he was afraid for my life.

That was 30 years ago. Will I ever return?  
Everyone tells me it is a very sad place. Everyone is poor except for the leaders. Tell me why has nothing ever changed there?

I can tell you my heart is sad, too. I am a white woman that was once the minority in my home country of Nigeria. I was what they called the "peeled one." I am lost in a space of yearning and I've accepted that I will never know that my homeland will ever recover.

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Anyway, I salute you.

Sherie Ellington Frederick  
fredrick@CALPHA.COM



**Comment:** Military Atrocities 30th October 1968 Major General Henry T Alexander of Great Britain talking to a Nigerian soldier during the observers investigations in Nigeria into the Biafran charges of genocide during the war.

**Dear Philip Emeagwali:**

I mistakenly came across your site that documents aspects of the Biafran War with the use of photographs.

First, I want to commend you for a job well done. I especially enjoyed going through your remarkable photos, in spite of the fact that some of them recapture a gory sadness that resulted from the War. However, and forgive me if I'm mistaken, but I also noticed that you provide no meaningful reference to a notable figure who stands as, perhaps, the hero, albeit unsung hero, of the War. As of 1959 when Nigeria had only 30/31 military officers, Major-General Philip Efiong, then a captain, was higher in rank than the two central adversaries of the War--Generals Gowon and Ojukwu. In reality, and without the unfortunate political and social events that led to the War, at the onset of the War he was still technically higher than both men, at least militarily. Ultimately his role, and the one that stands out, was sacrificial, and saved the lives of hundreds, even thousands. It was a role that has caused him unimaginable suffering as well as thrust him into an unfair and marginalized position where he remains largely unacknowledged, even spurned. Major-

General Efiong's role at the end of the War was not only life-threatening and, therefore, courageous, but was also phenomenal because it made history that has yet to be fully recognized. At no point, after all, has a majority ethnic group accepted the leadership of of a minority man or woman, except toward the end of the War when General Ojukwu took his cowardly flight and left General Efiong to clean up his mess. And this, at a time when the likes of the great Zik of Africa and other such Ibo heavyweights could not be looked up to by Ibos. They had only one person to look up to--Major-General Philip Efiong--and he didn't let them down but put his life on the line for their sake.

I don't believe you deliberately excluded Major-General Efiong from your site, but I hope you can understand why I had no choice but to notice the fact of his conspicuous absence.

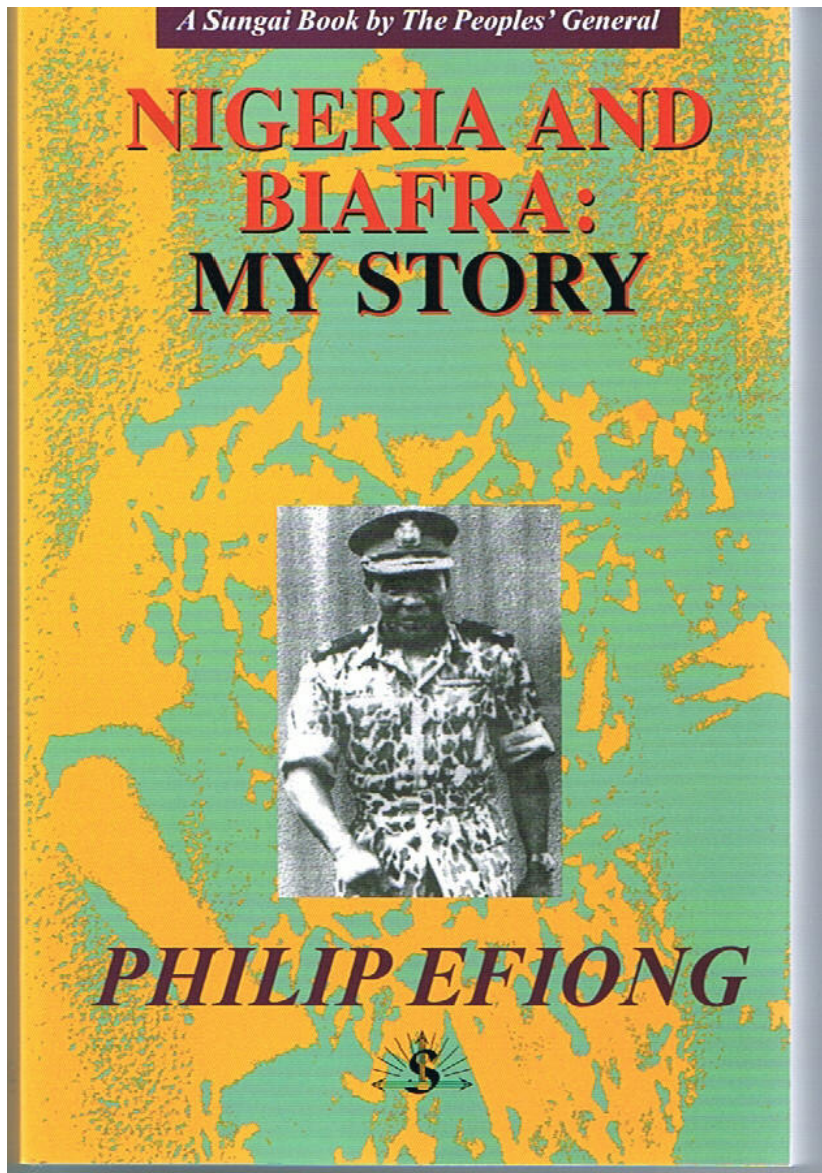
Thank you for your time and I wish you the best in your present and future intellectual pursuits.

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Philip Effiong, Jr.  
(son of General Philip Effiong)



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**Dear Philip Effiong:**

Within the circles I was in, Ndi Igbo praised General Effiong for the courage he displayed at the end of the civil war. The information posted on my Biafra home page is incomplete and unbalanced. With your permission, I will post your response on that page. I will present a more balanced info when I write my biography.

Please visit me again.

Regards,

Philip Emeagwali

BTW, what is the correct spelling "Effiong" or "Efiong?"



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**Comment:** Philip Emeagwali, Onitsha, Nigeria, 1973.

**Philip:**

Thank you for your response to my mail and for your exceptional humility and sincerity. I am

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inclined to believe that you deserve the praises that have been bestowed on you. You have my permission to post my response on your page. "Effiong" is actually an anglicized version of the name. My father still uses "Efiong." For the most part I use "Effiong" because most of my certificates have the name spelt that way. It is usually others--journalists, etc.--who spell the name with double "f." Members of the family generally spell the name with one "f." Since most writings, books, etc., have it spelt with double "f," you may actually stick to this spelling as people are more used to it. Thank you for your time and best wishes.

Philip, Jr.

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**Hello Phillips,**

Going through your site and digesting all the information therein; your world had been obviously influenced by the events of "1968 Nigeria," I thought. I fought back emotion as reality permitted me to but, that is the strength of the collective unconscious we all share. I was only nine at the inception of hostilities. I wonder however if Effiong Jr. feels unimportant in the annals of history as written by events, not by you I might

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add. His Father obviously shared his opinion I hopelessly would think, for that would be most unfortunate. One ought to remind Effiong Jr. that only true cowards make surrendering speeches. Ojukwu could not have chosen a better person. God bless.

Leo @aol.com 16 Nov 2001



**Comment:** Biafran soldiers at river bank.

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**Dear Leo** (I assume this is your name):

I write in reference to a response you gave to my opinion on the Civil War, which is pasted on Phillip Emeagwali's website. Although your response was written since 16 Nov 2001, I am only just coming across it. May I, therefore, respond to it?

I am particularly concerned about your statement, which reads:

"I wonder however if EffiongJr. feels unimportant in the annals of history as written by events, not by you I might add. His Father obviously shared his opinion I hopelessly would think, for that would be most unfortunate. One ought to remind EffiongJr. that only true cowards make surrendering speeches. Ojukwu could not have chosen a better person. God bless."

Although not very clear, I tried to make sense of your statement. Be advised that my intention is to enter into open, rational, and objective conversation, and not to deteriorate into a petty

exchange based on sentiments and, in your case, nothing more than ethnic bias. If you must respond to me, make some effort to rise above emotional leanings. This should help to develop your mind. Now, to respond to more directly to your attack (because that's what it was).

First, I do not feel "unimportant" about anything, and my essay makes no such indication. I am not seeking cheap attention but merely to address the truth, and I will continue to do so, regardless of what people like you say or think! My claim to importance is based on the things I have achieved in my life (thank God) and not a War. If I have to list what those achievements are, ask me. I am not ashamed to share them. I do not seek importance by way of any war, and I would appreciate it if you do not make such baseless suggestions that lack any substance to them.

Second, you would do well to stop imagining things and then writing them down. My opinions are mine, and mine alone. Your claim that my father obviously shares them is unfounded, annoying, insulting, and

absolutely false. Please don't accuse my father falsely. You don't know anything about him or his opinions.

Third, and this is the big one. You state, "only true cowards make surrendering speeches." This is true on some levels, but at the same time this is where you most display your ignorance and small-mindedness. Surrendering can be an act of cowardice, but it can also be heroic based on context. Within the context of the Civil war, my father did what the people wanted him to do, simple! He didn't act in isolation. At the time, the War was virtually over but simply needed an official stamp to confirm what was obvious. Have you ever done any research on the War? Have you read any book about it? If you haven't, you need to. My dad did exactly what the people wanted and that is why in the past 33 years they (the Ibo people mainly) have honored and continue to honor him. Locally he has been honored and internationally he has been honored. How many cowards do you know that are honored so greatly



and sincerely? I guess you expected my dad to single-handedly pick up a gun (which was virtually non-existent in Biafra at the time) and go on a worthless and eccentric battle against the Federal troops.

You indicate, rather boldly and sarcastically, that your tribal hero, Ojukwu, handpicked the best coward in my father. Wouldn't it have been easier for this hero to stay back and perform the "cowardly" act rather than run off to the Ivory Coast? If the act was that cowardly and there was nothing to fear, why didn't he stay back? If it wasn't dangerous and no risks were involved, then why didn't he perform the surrender himself? The fact is (and it doesn't surprise me that you don't know) that surrendering was not as simplistic, as easy, and as safe as you make it sound. Do you know that there were threats on the lives of some of those who went to Dodan Barracks for the signing? You probably don't because your facts are not straight on this matter. Do you know that my father was thrown in detention after signing the



surrender? Do you know that his passport was seized? Do you know that he has not had a job-military or civilian-since after the War? Are these situations that a coward puts himself in? If surrendering is as easy as you make it sound, then why didn't Hitler surrender rather than take his own life? Surrendering, in other words does not always imply safety and freedom as you make it sound, and your hero, Ojukwu, knew this to be true, that is why he absconded to the Ivory Coast and abandoned people like you who know sing eulogies in honor of him. And yet, you dare to call my father a coward. I choose not to be shocked by your ingratitude.

Be aware, and this is for your own good, that my father, like some of his other contemporaries, had been honored before the War and beyond the context of the War. My father served in the UN Peace Keeping Force in the Congo well before the War, and was paid tribute for it. Before the War he served in Kaduna where attempts were made on his life during the second coup. Does his life as a

professional soldier and the risks he faced suggest cowardice? Is this the type of life a coward chooses to live?

Wasn't your father alive during the War? Wasn't he a man? What role did he play, especially since it was his own people who were bearing the brunt of the Federal assault? Why didn't he fight? Why didn't he do the heroic things that you claim my father didn't do?

I don't blame you for insulting my father. It does say something about your upbringing. But, trust me, you really don't count. Yours is a lonesome, ill-informed, nutty voice in some obscure desert where brains haven't yet been invented. As I've stated, my father has been generously honored nationally and internationally, so you are really quite irrelevant and dispensable. Trust me.

Nonetheless, can I request from you, whoever you are, not to insult my father again. He is almost 80 and need not be insulted by a bigot who hates to accept or deal with the truth. He has suffered enormously in his life-I know because I am his son-

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and so, if you have nothing good to say about him,  
as ungrateful as you are, then please don't say  
anything about him.

If you plan to engage in meaningful, fact-based,  
unbiased, unsentimental, and non-insulting  
conversation, by all means respond to me. If not,  
please don't respond to me. The last thing I want  
to do is sink down to your degenerate level of  
perception and thinking.

Enough said.

Philip U. Effiong (Abuja, Nigeria, April 8 2003,  
pueffiong@yahoo.com)

# *Thunder Road to Biafra*

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to Philip Emeagwali*



**Comment:** A Biafran child at a Catholic feeding center, east of Oguta.



**Comment:** A Biafran child at a Catholic feeding center, east of Oguta.

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**Comment:** A Biafran refugee at a Catholic feeding center, east of Oguta.

Though a dark, dreadful and eerie aspect of our history, I could not but enjoy and appreciate looking through the pictorial presentation of the Nigerian Civil War! When the war broke out in 1967, I was 13. I was captivated by the vividness of trauma of war captured in those monumental pictures. Interestingly, I was also musing over the conspicuous absence of General Phillip Effiong's picture when I ran into the feedback provided by

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his son, Dr. Phillip Effiong. I could not but agree with him that General Effiong's role in Biafran struggle deserves a place in the annal of Nigerian history. Please, go back to the archives. I am sure, there will be pictures of this noble Nigerian that could best reflect his contribution to the definition of what we call Nigeria today. Thanks for doing what you are doing, Dr. Emeagwali. Peace!  
Michael O. A.

Michael O.A. 27 Nov 2001



**I wish to add to what must already be a long**

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string of commendations. Philip. All Biafrans (and that is not just Igbo people) owe you a tremendous debt for your personal achievements and your online archive of Biafran history. I also endorse the views of Philip Effiong jr. His father's General Philip Effiong's role in Biafra appears to be under-acknowledged. Something needs to be done not just literally but by other equally meaningful and practical gestures. You, Sir can set the ball rolling.

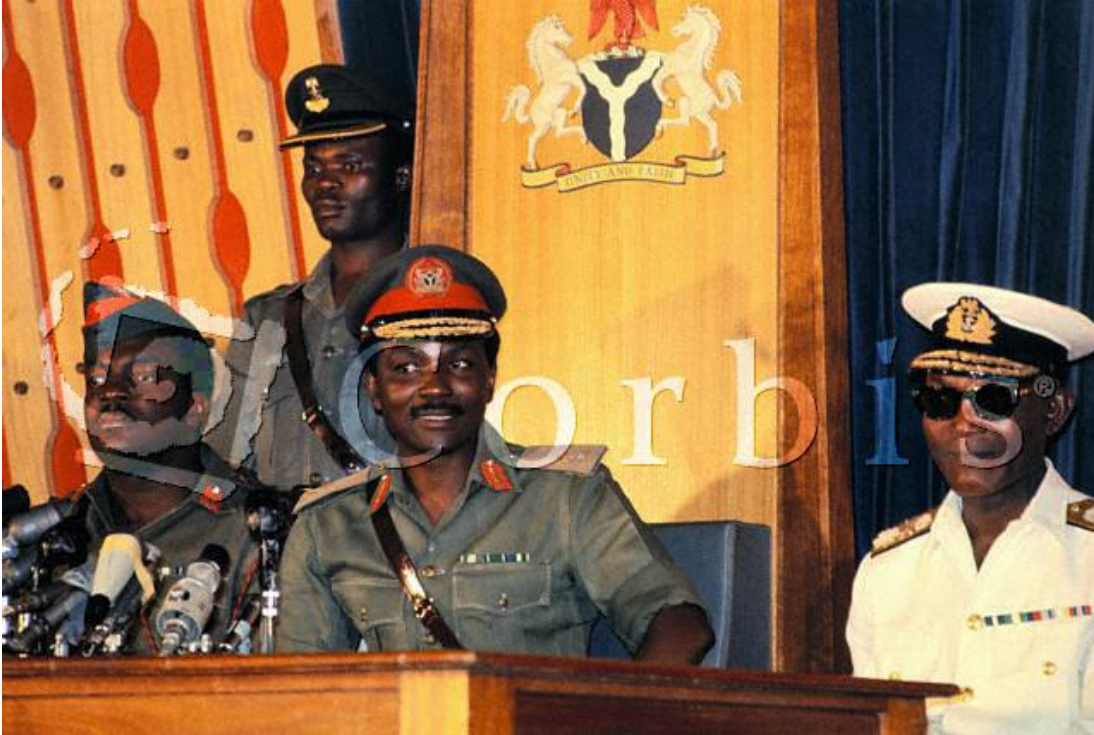
You do not have to wait for any prompt.

Dalu.

C.I. London U.K., 16 Oct 2002



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**I feel greatly fulfilled** reading this part of the gory history of the Biafran state. Honestly, it is the very first time i'm doing that, and am so happy.



I have always heard the phrase, 'on aburi we stand', but have hardly been able to make out the build up. Its also my first time visiting this site. I'll love to say, WELLDONE.

If i have a thing to say, it is that those principles on which Ojukwu stood in 1966, has remained the crux of todays quest for national reconstruction. What i tend to believe is, perhaps, given the tension in the country at that time, the military would be unable to provide a fruitful solution to the crisis. But, we should be asking ourselves, what lessons have we learned from that whole experience? the answer is not far-fetched; 'we have learned nothing'. The crisis that have engulfed Nigeria today is worse off compared to 1966. What else would anybody say, for a country still reeling in the pangs of poverty and starvation, shamefully in the midst of plenty; whose youth cannot see a future with it, but would prefer a low life in london, or slavery in South Africa.

It must be placed on record that no economy or society anywhere in the world is developed by

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foriegners. Nigeria must be developed by Nigerians, and nobody but Nigerians. I believe in the fact everybody will be accountable for his actions, first to posterity, and finally to Almighty God. Sadly, enough, God is usually forgiven in His infinite mercies, but posterity does not.

GOD SAVE NIGERIA

Justus Ekeigwe, 12/28/2002

London, England

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**A Walking Encyclopaedia**  
Dear Dr. Emeagwali,

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I went through your site and came across the webpage that carried pictures and news articles on Biafra/Nigeria civil war. It was quite revealing as it was educative.

I am amazed that an individual like you could be an embodiment of a mass of knowledge - a walking encyclopaedia. You are a blessing to the black race and a gift to humanity. Keep up your good works and God bless you.

Chinedu Anekwe,  
December 28, 2002  
Enugu, Nigeria.

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*to Philip Emeagwali*



**I am really symphatizing with Biafran**  
Hello Sir,  
Happy new year! How's everything I hope is well in  
Jesus name Amen.

I am from Plateau State, Jos, staying at Rayfield. But when I read the history of Biafran and what happened, the people behind the killings of Igbo's i.e, the Nigerian Army then, the Commander in Chief of Federal Republic of Nigeria, then I shed tears and cry deep into my heart for how human beings are so wicked without pity. Meanwhile, I pray that God will forgive those people behind the killings. I also look at the whole pictures of what happened then, the killings of people, how they where sufferings, how soldiers were rapping small girls & married women I cried to God to forgive Nigeria.

Finally, I pray that nothing would happen in Nigeria again like that. And may God choose a good leader to us with God fearings. I also thank those that restored peace to Nigeria and the Igbo's land.

Thank you so much.

Alamba D. Dung.

January 7, 2003

NB: My regard to all Nigerians and I'll always keep in touch. I am just 22yrs old now.

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**Comment:** Umuahia, Biafra. October 1968

I just read an interesting account of the Biafran struggle above your web address.  
I worked in Nigeria from Sept 30, 1965 until the summer of 1968, the latter times in Biafra.  
it is tragic that Biafra could not prevail. I drove my Land Rover to Kaduna during the horrible murder of Igbo civilians in the streets to try to



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rescue the relatives of my workers. It was  
unspeakable.

Peter D.

February 5, 2003

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**Comment:** The Biafran Flag

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**Comment:** Emeagwali was 12 years old when the 30-month Nigerian-Biafran war started in June 1967. Because 50,000 Igbo civilians were killed, his parents withdrew him from Saint Georges Grammar School in Obinomba their home to Agbor and a couple of weeks later the family fled to Onitsha. During the war, Emeagwali's family lived in refugee camps in Ogidi, Awka, Oba, Nnewi, Awka-Etiti and Ndoni. Emeagwali was conscripted into the Biafran army in July 1969 at Ndoni. He was initially sent to the Oguta war front but quickly transferred to serve as a cook's assistant for Biafran army officers.

Photo:  
Emeagwali (far left, sitting in front row)  
at Saint George's College, Obinomba,  
1966)

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**Comment:** Bianca Odumegwu  
Ojukwu, Philip Emeagwali and Dale  
Emeagwali

## Stage Adaptation of the Biafran War

sir

I have just finished an adaptation of the french  
revolution, and visited your site on the biafran war.  
I want do a stage adaptation of the biafran civil

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war which i intend to take around the Eastern part of Nigeria and then other state capitals of Nigeria. I would appreciate contacts with bodies and organisations from you. Im an Igbo and presently a graduate student of the Theatre Arts department of the university of Ibadan. looking forward to hearing from you

Charles Ogu

ogucharles @ yahoo.com

February 7, 2003

Dear Sir

I have written before on the above, looking for institutional link up in realizing the Biafran experience on the stage to relive the experience for majority of the people who didnt witness it. Dr. Stanley Macebuh of the Nigerian Presidency delivered an alumni lecture at Ibadan university in that regards. That has actually fired my interest again. Please reply to confirm whether you got my mail.



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Charles Ogu  
February 14, 2003



**Congratulatory Message as one of the Biafran  
Scientist**

To our Lovely Brother, Philip Emeagwali,

**Comment: Joan Baez And Jimi  
Hendrix Chatting**

Folk singer Joan Baez and rock singer Jimi Hendrix chat between acts at a Biafran Relief Benefit show at a place in Manhattan called Steve Paul's Scene. Both Miss Baez and Hendrix performed free of charge and Hendrix contributed \$500 cash to the fund. The benefit was to raise food and money for refugees of the Biafra-Nigeria Civil War. © Bettmann/CORBIS Date Photographed: August 29, 1968 Location Information: New York, New York, USA

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Congratulations to you as one of the greatest Biafran Scientist as of today; God bless you and your family in general AMen. Sir, since the formal president of America Bill Clinton came to Nigeria during his time, through his speeches that he Clinton made us to know that there is a Biafra Scientist like you, since then i have been thinking of how to reach you. But i thank God that as of today i have totally reach you through our e-mail address.

Please Sir our scientist i welcomed you. First of all i will not fail to introduce my name as Pastor Williams Okafor from Umuezukwe Awo-omamma Imo State Our east L.G.A.

But before April runs out my introduction must totally change as Williams from United State of Biafra (U.S.B) I am a member of (MASSOB)and here we do hear about our Biafran's Brother leaving Overseas; how they are supporting the movement both financial expert of it. God bless you all Amen. Please Sir, there is important thing i need all Biafrans Scientist to do as of now as we

are waiting to hear from U.N. for the annocement of our new birth Biafra. I will be happy if all Biafran scientist can come together as association putting heads together for the betterment of new born Biafra. Because i believe that through our scientist we must also belong to the super-power. I understand that Biafra belong to the commonwealth of Isrealie nation with Southern sudan. Let all Biafran Jews wherever they are we must fish them out becuase some of them don't know where they come from. We must know that many of our Biafrans citizens are around the world such as Norway Republic, This my brothers don't even know where they come from, but they are Biafrans. I believe that through your effort we the Biafrans must have their setlight.

Sir, there is one thing i need to share from you. I believe you can do a favour for me. As of now i have a computer and also intercellular phone wireless phone how can i use the intercellular phone with the computer to get connected to the Internet without running on a Mast or via V-SAT

because here in Nigeria, it is only the rich people that set internet office with Mast or V-SAT. Why i am asking this question is that, the company that sold the Intercellular phone to me told me that i can be able to have access to the Internet through the phone using a set of computer but spending about some thousand for the phone with hope that through it internet will be connected there. At last nobody can feed me how to connect intercellular phone with set of computer to get internet message.

Sir, why i am interested in asking you these question is that you are the Father of Internet, Bill Gate of Africa. And i know why you remains in America because that our promise land is yet to come (i.e.Biafra Land). Why i am interested is because i love information and also i need to know what is happening within an office, within CNN et.c  
Sir i lovely enjoy your interview in one of our Weekend News, I so pick interest on you because you are one of my Biafran man. Please, Sir help me to get solution to my problem which i complain to

# *Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*

*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

you, May the almighty God bless you. Amen,  
Looking forward for your reply.

Thanks from

Williams Okafor

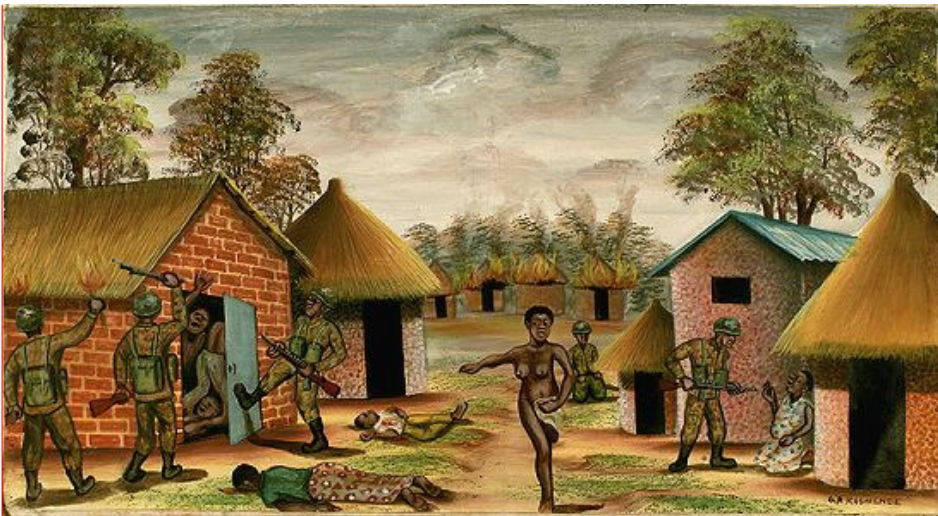
Biafran Citizen

Long-Live Chukwura Emeagwali!

Long-Live United State of Biafra!

February 24, 2003

deumudike @ yahoo.com



**Comment:** An artist's rendition of the genocidal killings of civilians in African wars

Dear Mr Chukwura Emeagwali,

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

I bought the week end news paper and came across a column which read ''BIAFRAN SCIENTIST SHAKES THE WORLD'' after reading this column,I felt elated being a Nigerian and knowing that i have a Nigerian brother that has made a land mark achievement by designing the internet,makes me a proud Nigerian, irrespective of what the world termed Nigeria  
My name is Momodu Oshiokpekhai Emmanuel....  
[stuff deleted]  
February 28, 2003

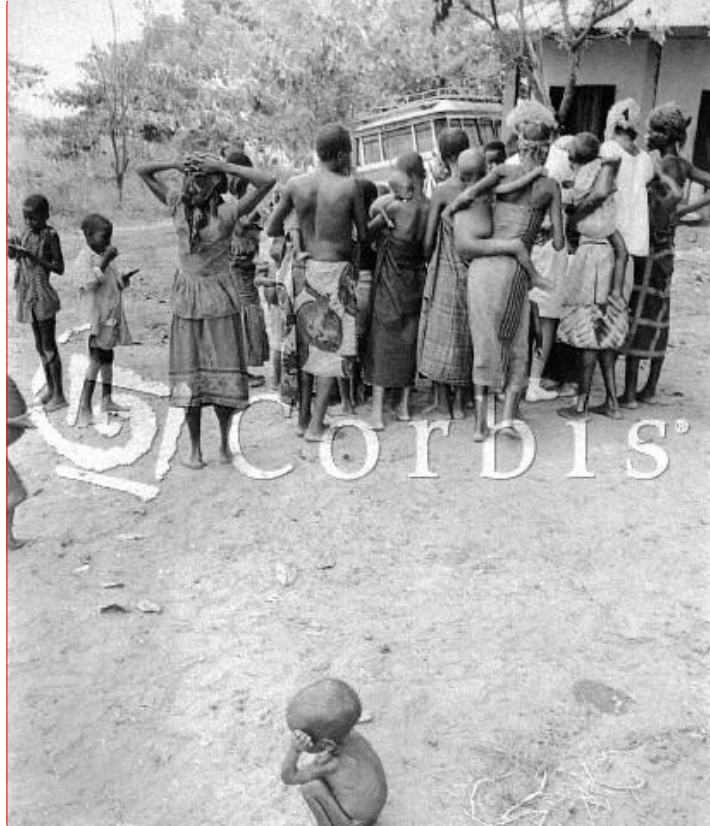


# Thunder Road to Biafra

Photos, Poems & Letters from

Somewhere in Biafra

to Philip Emeagwali



**Comment: Nigerian Boy Squats;**

Crowd @ Unicef Truck  
Original Caption: 7/23/1969-Republic of Nigeria- While man looks upward at the moon and beyond, thinking of the nobility of his race, the age-old problems of his home planet remain unsolved. Here, a starving Nigerian child squats in the dust of a dirt road, forgotten in the excitement over the arrival of UNICEF relief supplies. © Bettmann/CORBIS  
Date Photographed July 23, 1969  
Location Information Republic Of Nigeria

Dear Emeagwali,  
you have tried by putting your experience of that horrible period the igbos went through into history by recording it on your web site. Now one can go through it all but what I regret very much is the inability of Biafra to survive. Maybe they would have made a great Nation. Maybe as their flag

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
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*to Philip Emeagwali*

portray, She would have been one Nation in the  
mist of the darkness that ingross us as black  
people to show a gleamer of light that will point  
the way to our immacipation. Our ability to jion the  
race developed world.

keep it up

Chibuike Agbugba

April 4, 2003

# Thunder Road to Biafra

Photos, Poems & Letters from

Somewhere in Biafra

to Philip Emeagwali



## Comment: Women & Children Get Food At Refugee Camp

Original Caption: 3/22/1969-Umuahia, BIAFRA- By all military odds, Biafra should have lost its war with federal Nigeria long ago. It has not lost, but in the next few months it might--vanquished by starvation. Here, women and children receive their meager rations at a refugee camp. © Bettmann/CORBIS

EMEAGWALI's NOTE: While living at Saint Joseph's Primary School refugee camp at Awka-Etiti, we stood in long lines for okporoko (dried stock fish) and corn meals. Our family of nine lived on two cups of garri --- pulverized cassava root --- a day! Some days, we could not afford meat, pepper or even salt. We merely added water and palm kernels that I gathered from the forest to our gari. In April 1968, my four-year-old brother, Peter, was contracted Kwashiorkor, a disease caused by lack of protein which was suffered by half of the refugee children. His hair was turning red, and Dad being a nurse, diagnosed it as Kwashiorkor. Other symptoms of Kwashiorkor included protruded stomachs, skinny legs and arms, and peeling skins. Dad went to Caritas and begged for extra milk for Peter.

## Biafran War Film Footage

Dear Dr. Brown and/or colleagues,

I am a film researcher working on an upcoming documentary about Africa that requires several seconds of footage from the Biafran War. I

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

recently came across the website "After the War Was Over" and made a preliminary phone call to the number listed at the end with your name. Since you were not there, I spoke with your boss, a very helpful gentleman from Biafra who indicated that you or others may be able to make some inquiries and give me leads on where some footage could be found. Would this be possible? I would appreciate your help very much.

I found the website very moving and insightful.

Please convey my thanks to all involved.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Thomas

April 10, 2003

visitliz @ hotmail.com



**Comment: Soldiers Standing**

Original Caption: Agwu, Nigeria: A federal government soldier, wearing camouflaged helmet and with ammunition belt draped about his torso, stands with other soldiers recently. Agwu, south of breakaway Biafra's capital of Enugu, is the point through which Nigerian authorities say they will open a "mercy corridor" to permit the entry of food and medicine to the stricken rebel state. 7/17/1968 © Bettmann/CORBIS

## **General Phillip Effiong and the Biafran War**

This piece is in response to the comments by Phillip Effiong, Jr. I agree with him that his father (General Phillip Effiong) was a hero of the Biafran war. However, I think he contradicts himself somewhat when in one breath he laments that

General Effiong "remains largely unacknowledged, even spurned", and in another he admits that Igbo "have honored and continue to honor him. Locally he has been honored and internationally he has been honored". If the latter has been the case, what then is he complaining of?

I think Phillip needs to understand that marginalization and disdain have been the fate of all the other "Biafran" actors who distinguished themselves in the war, including the heroic field commanders and the ingenious inventors. The Nigerian state still harbors an aversion to these people, except for a few lucky civilians like MT Mbu who have been fully reabsorbed into Nigeria's political economy. For obvious reasons, even Igbo despite their admiration of the Biafran heroes have not found the political courage to honor or immortalize them - no streets, no monuments, no institutions have been named after any of them in any Igbo town or city. The best effort so far was the controversial pan-Igbo honorary chieftaincy title bestowed on Emeka Odimegwu Ojukwu on his



*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
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*to Philip Emeagwali*

return from exile in the early 1980s. So, if General Effiong has been unacknowledged and spurned, he is not alone in that situation.

One might also add that the General was a victim of unflattering circumstances that were not his making, but which overshadowed his legitimate claim to heroism in the war. The first was that he was effectively Biafra's Vice President, and very few VPs in history ever had the spotlight beamed on them for good. The second was that fate thrust on him the prudent but unenviable role of taking the decision and signing the instrument of surrender. History rarely dwells on such men, much less smile on them. How easily and in what manner does anyone remember the man who signed the instrument of surrender for the Nazis or in any other modern war? This is one of the hard, unfair realities of life that make this world a challenging place to live in.

By the way, I think Philip's lengthy reaction to Leo's rash comment on General Effiong was unnecessary, and the petty and abusive manner he

chose put him in the same category as Leo, and may have done more damage to his dad's reputation. My impression of General Phillip Effiong is that of a fine gentleman who would not blow his own trumpet in search of honor. Unfortunately, the evidences Phillip chose to cite to establish his dad's heroism (service in a UN peacekeeping force, life threatening situation in Kaduna, signing Biafra's instrument of surrender, postwar detention by the Federal Government, and unemployment since after the war) hardly come across as extraordinary acts of heroism for any soldier, much less for a war time General.

I did sense some bitterness against Ojukwu and Igbos in Phillip's response to Leo. I am not surprised because having lived in Nigeria since after the war and studied the pattern of political alliances among its peoples, I know that the sentiments that ran through his comments reflect the mindset of a vast majority of the non-Igbo speaking Easterners. I am disturbed only because Phillip sounded like he is very close to his dad, and

one would naturally suspect that his views on Ojukwu, the Biafran project and Igbos have benefited from privileged discussions with the General. I hope this is not the case.

I am glad to note, however, that General Effiong is still living. I think the world would like to know his views in retrospect. So much has been written and said about the war by people on both sides, a lot of which is either self-serving, revisionist or full of myths and legends. Thankfully Emeagwali's efforts, though quite limited in scope, is insightful especially because of its verbatim transcription of the Aburi deliberations (from the very horses' mouths) which is key to understanding the root causes of the war. General Effiong's reticence about the war has not been helpful. I believe he and others in the inner caucus of the Biafran side (all of whom have been much maligned) owe it to themselves, to the entire victims of the war and to history to write honest memoirs explaining the circumstances and facts that made the war imperative, that sustained the war effort for

three long years, and that led to the eventual vanquish of Biafra. Ojukwu's 'Because I Am Involved' does not seem to satisfy this need, and I hope he will fulfill his promise of a much more detailed book. With most of the Biafran actors already over 70 years, time is running out on them and they will have to work extra hard to discharge this vital responsibility. I think Phillip should prevail on his dad on this issue, rather than blame Emeagwali and other secondary sources for neglecting the good old General in their commendable, albeit much constrained, efforts at telling the story of the war.

I believe it is important for us Nigerians to continue to discuss the Biafran project and subsequent war in an objective manner. It is a major landmark of our national history beneath which is buried much insight into and maybe solutions to the problems that stifle our aspiration for nationhood and development.

# *Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from* *Somewhere in Biafra* *to Philip Emeagwali*

Clem Ugorji,  
Lagos, Nigeria  
May 5, 2003



**Comment: Biafrans Running For Military Training**  
Original Caption: 8/7/1968-Biafra, Africa- This is military training Biafran style. These recruits go through the paces somewhere in Biafra. Nigerian spokesmen have been meeting with a delegation from secessionist Biafra in peace talks in Ethiopia in a bid to end Nigeria's 13-month-old civil war. Meanwhile starvation threatens many in besieged Biafra. © Bettmann/CORBIS

**My views on the Emeagwali site**

I write in reference to opinions I expressed on this site regarding my father, Obong Philip Efiong, and his role in the Nigerian-Biafran War. My initial views were sent directly to the owner of this site, Mr. Emeagwali, who, with my permission, decided to paste them on his site. They were not intended as an expression of hatred or as an attack on any group of people, just as the criticism of Nazi Germany does not necessarily imply hatred for all Germans. They were also not intended to stir up ethnic sentiments and biases.

Subsequently, there have been a number of responses to my views, most of which have been kind and diplomatic, but some of which have been critically vicious, confrontational, and ethnically charged. The results have been a series of exchanges, a number of which I now consider unhealthy, misleading, and quite irrelevant to intellectual or social growth. As such, I have requested that the views I initially expressed be deleted from this site.



I will admit that as Obong Efiong's son my views and reactions were sometimes laced with emotions that one should expect of a son who has witnessed his father go through untold hardships. In other words, I have sometimes overreacted.

Overreacting in this way has resulted in my occasional use of a rhetoric that has been impertinent and belligerent. I regret where I have used words in this manner, especially in my communication with people like Mr. Ugorji and Leo, and would like to express my unconditional apologies to them.

I hold nothing against anyone or any group of people and, under the circumstances, would express the same views if Chief Ojukwu were a Yoruba man or a Ghanaian. I especially hold nothing against the Ibos who I have fervently spoken for on such issues as the Abandoned Property controversy. I have also unequivocally defended their right to peacefully settle and set up commercial ventures in any part of the country

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

without hindrance. Above all, I am part Ibo and married to an Ibo woman.

Most importantly, my father, who is almost 80, is still alive and continues to remain healthy. He also continues to receive tremendous support from people of all backgrounds and from various regions of the world. It would, however, be delusional of me to expect 100% support for him. After all, even Jesus the Christ (for Christians) was crucified by the people that one would have least expected to carry out the act.

In the end, I will stand by the truth and hope that the rest of us also put aside our personal idiosyncrasies and stand by the truth too. This way, the truth will prevail, as it certainly should.

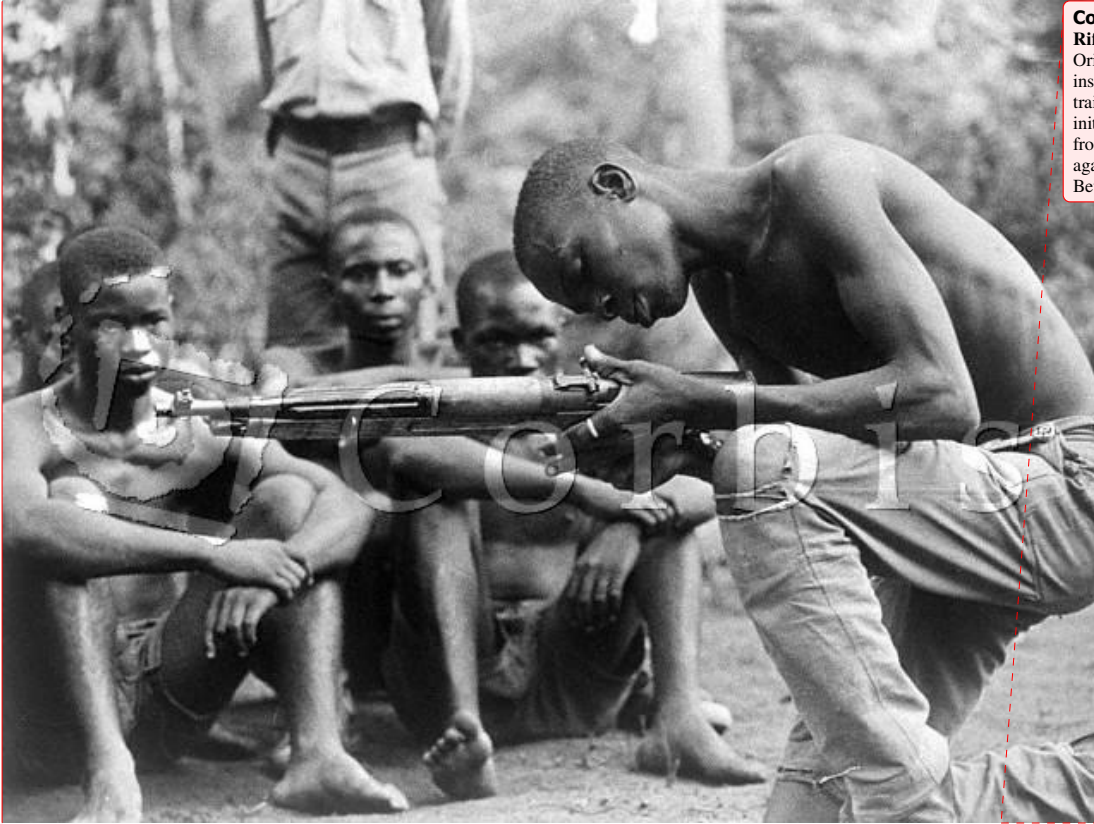
Thank you.

Philip U. Effiong

May 7, 2003

# *Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*

*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*



**Comment: Ibo Tribesman Inspecting Rifle**

Original Caption: An Ibo tribesman inspects a rifle during young soldiers' training at the camp at Owerri. After their initial training, the soldiers go to join the front line forces in Biafra's struggle against Nigerian federal troops. © Bettmann/CORBIS

Hi Phillip [Effiong],  
I have just read the three mails you sent to me.  
Your third mail has overtaken whatever comments  
I would have liked to make in response to the first  
two, and I am glad that I read all three at the  
same time. Your withdrawal of the first two

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letters has been noted and your apologies are accepted.

Nevertheless, I would like to state that my comments on the subject were objective, well-intentioned and non-insulting as a second, less impassioned reading would reveal. I still believe that the only way we can heal the emotional and psychological injuries inflicted by the civil war (which we tend to ignore or deny) would be to engage in objective and tolerant discussion of the issues. This is also necessary if we are to avoid the mistakes of the past.

I am not an ethnic bigot; and my upbringing, education and exposure have guaranteed that I cannot become one. Incidentally, we both share something in common: my wife is Ibibio and I am a full-blooded Igbo. I am very attached to my parents-in-law, and I spent the weekend before last Easter at Nnung Udoe, as I always do when the opportunity arises. So you see, I have a vested interest in promoting understanding and reconciliation among the different peoples of the

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
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former South Eastern Region, who because of disunity and recriminations arising mostly from the Biafran project have become a popular prey in Nigeria's political economy.

You strike me as one from whom I can learn some things about the civil war, because of your privileged position as the son of one of its key actors. Maybe, in spite of everything, we can both find a basis for sustained interaction on the issue. I would be glad if you would accept this hand of fellowship.

Thanks and regards.

Clem Ugorji

May 9, 2003

# Thunder Road to Biafra

*Photos, Poems & Letters from*

*Somewhere in Biafra  
to Philip Emeagwali*



**Comment: Biafran Soldier with Rifle**

Original Caption: The gun the soldier is holding is described as as Communist AK-47 rifle. Sources at the US television network could offer no more information about the weapon. © Bettmann/CORBIS  
Date Photographed: June 4, 1969  
Location Information Okwala Junction, Biafra

## Rejoinder to Philip Effiong, jr

Dear Philip Emeagwali,

I bumped into your web archive on the BIAfran-Nigerian war today for the first time. It is quite interesting and provides a lot information. I could not but be caught by a sudden upsurge of emotions. The fact is that I was born during this war and



seeing those pictures (especially that of an emaciated mother with her baby) gives me an idea of what I must have looked like during that sad period.

I also read with interest the observation sent in by Philip Effiong, Jr. I totally agree with him that Major Gen Philip Effiong deserves a place in the annals of Nigeria which is yet to be accorded to him. And not only that, he also deserves a huge apology and compensation from both the powers that be in Nigeria and the people of Nigeria in general, for having neglected him for too long. I further read with a greater interest (and may be, some sense of amusement) the exchange between Effiong Jr and Leo. I think both of them got a little bit emotional in their exchange. But who will blame the younger Effiong for getting emotional, after such an unwarranted attack and provocation by Leo? I would like to remind Leo that the mark of an educated mind is the ability to face facts and data, and to rise above personal (or tribal - clanish) sentiments.

But at the same, I would like to make a final comment. This is with regard to a statement by Effiong Jr. In his observation he said: "At no point, after all, has a majority ethnic group accepted the leadership of of a minority man or woman, except toward the end of the War when General Ojukwu took his cowardly flight and left General Efiom to clean up his mess." Effiong Jr. got it wrong here, because from the very inception of the Biafran as independent nation the elder Effiong was the second in command, and that fact is not contested, it was actually accepted and accords with the principles that governed Ojukwu's administration of the Eastern Region, even before the declaration of Biafra, namely participation of every ethnic group within the region, in governance. Secondly, I would disagree with Effiong Jr that Ojukwu's flight into exile is to be termed "cowardly". I should think the flight a leader of warring people at time when their military strength has been completely weakened is necessary in order that a peaceful negotiation for

surrender may take place, because as long he is there he remains a prime target for the enemy army, and his presence symbolizes the continued struggle. I should think the leaders and advisers on the Biafran part realized this when advised Ojukwu to leave and then asked his second in command to announce surrender. Gen Effiong was very brave indeed and courageous. He did not fail his people. He rose up to what was expected of him as the second in command, in the absence of the Head of State, and he did it gallantly, just as he did had always gallantly served both before and during the war, in his other assignments. But Ojukwu was no less courageous. It requires a courageous leader to realise that the "game is over". Think of Ojukwu's words on 11th Jan 1970 as he fled Biafra: "The task of leader of a people at war is to be responsive to the plight of his people and to determine what level of sacrifice can be accepted." Clearly it would appear that there is indication in this that he perceived his leaving as necessary in order to ensure the survival of the

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

Biafrans as a people, even if not as an independent nation. It takes a courageous to swallow personal pride for the sake of your people, and move into exile.

I would once more want to thank you, Philip Effiong Jr, for raising these issues, and I think those issues should be brought to the attention of the wider Nigerian public. A true democracy cannot be said to exist in Nigeria yet, as long as such issues as these are still left unaddressed.

Rev. Fr. Emeka Okite,  
Oriental institute, Oxford University.

-- Rev Fr Emeka Okite,  
Oriental Institute,  
Pusey Lane,  
Oxford University,  
(UNITED KINGDOM). Alternative email:  
emekaokite@yahoo.com  
May 23, 2003

# Thunder Road to Biafra

*Photos, Poems & Letters from*

*Somewhere in Biafra*

*to Philip Emeagwali*



**Comment: Starving Biafran Woman Lying On Mat**

Original caption: 7/31/1968-Aba, BIAFRA- An elderly, starving Biafran woman lies on a mat in General Hospital. Hundreds of Biafrans have died as a result of critical food shortages. It is reported that BIAFRA's leader, Lieutenant Colonel Odumegwo Ojukwu, has forbidden the necessary food to reach the country through a neutral corridor for fear federal Nigerian troops will poison it. © Bettmann/CORBIS Date Photographed July 31, 1968 Location Information Aba, Biafra

EMEAGWALI's PERSONAL NOTE:  
My father was the refugee camp nurse at Saint Joseph's Primary School, Awka-Etiti. Our camp director was an intelligent and talkative elderly man named Mr. Okadigbo (I believe he is the father of Chuba Okadigbo). Many refugees died from Kwashiorkor and were unceremoniously buried at the camp backyard. The refugees in our camp were those that fled the Asaba massacres.

Thank you for the web site that presented so much information on the Nigerian/Biafran situation. I was a teacher near Port Harcourt when secession occurred, and, after being evacuated, I returned a year later to work with the Red Cross in Lagos, then in the Elele area, serving clinics in Owerri,

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
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Ahoada, etc.. I was particularly interested to see Adekunle's comments about the Red Cross and other relief agencies as he did not like us being there, but was forced to do so, by public opinion and by Gowon. I have written a book about my experiences, *War Stories: A Memoir of Nigeria and Biafra*. I am hoping to return to Nigeria in the near future to lecture on the situation, from my perspective. I find, as do any of you who are old enough to remember the war, that young Nigerians are eager to learn more about the overall situation. This web site is very helpful in that regard.

John Sherman  
shermco @ earthlink.net  
June 3, 2003

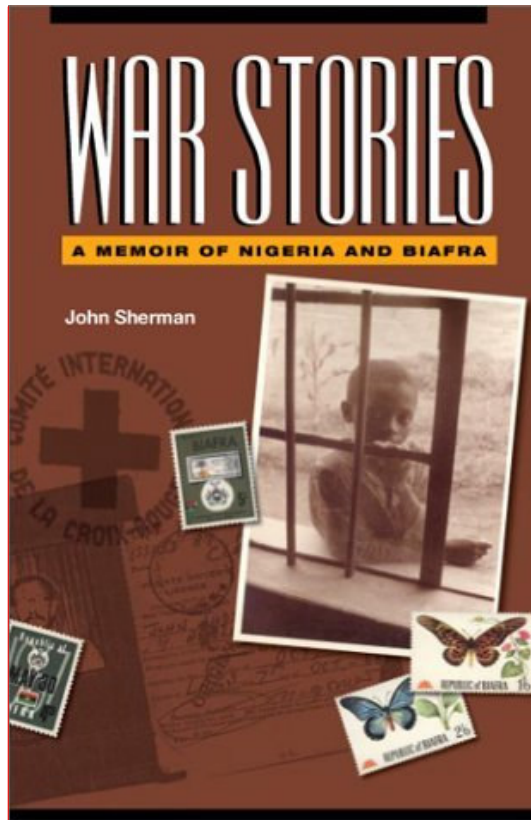


# Thunder Road to Biafra

Photos, Poems & Letters from

Somewhere in Biafra

to Philip Emeagwali



## Comment: Editorial Reviews Book Description

War Stories: A Memoir of Nigeria and Biafra by John Sherman tells the story of an American who served with a food/medical team operated by the International Committee of the Red Cross during the civil war in Nigeria in the late 1960s. It contains flashbacks to the time when the author had been a Peace Corps Volunteer in the same area of West Africa (in 1966-67). The book has 16 pp. of photographs taken by the author during the war and also includes illustrations of some memorabilia of Nigeria and Biafra collected by the author. Front matter includes a chronology of events for Nigeria and Biafra, 1960-70, and maps of the area, along with a glossary, to provide readers with perspective on the situations described in the book.

The memoir began as a diary kept by John Sherman when he lived in West Africa in the late 1960s. Sherman arrived in Nigeria in September 1966 as a Peace Corps Volunteer teacher assigned to a school in the then-Eastern Region of the country. On May 30, 1967, the Eastern Region seceded and became the Republic of Biafra. Civil war soon followed and Sherman was evacuated. He spent the next year with the Peace Corps in Malawi, in southeastern Africa, then returned to Nigeria to work with the International Committee of the Red Cross. At first, he was assigned to work at the airport at Lagos, then the country's capital. Soon, he was sent to work with a food/medical team in an area that had been, briefly, a part of Biafra but was now again in Nigerian hands. Sherman worked with a doctor and two nurses and several young men who were responsible for distributing the food each day at clinics where they treated hundreds and

... [1]

Hi dr Donita.

Let me introduce to you. My name is Mario Aydar. I am a musician. I live in Sao Paulo, Brazil and for a long time in my live I got the nickname of "Biafra" because I was so skinny and the kids - always the

kids - used to associate my body shape with the pictures of people from Nigeria by that time. They don't call me Biafra anymore, although I'm not fat, but I kept a kind of nice feeling about that name.

Today I've searched on my computer for Biafra to know more about the war, the place and the people and it was a gift for me to know about Philip.

I am not part of the scientific community, so that was the first time I've heard about him and I got really impressed. I started reading his notes about the civil war, saw the sad pictures and read his biography. What a nice guy. I don't know why am I writing. Maybe because I felt so happy to know that the people from the place that somehow in the past used to be my name were fighting and showing us how to do it. That really moved me.

Sorry for my bad English, say hi to Philip and  
THANKS.

Mario

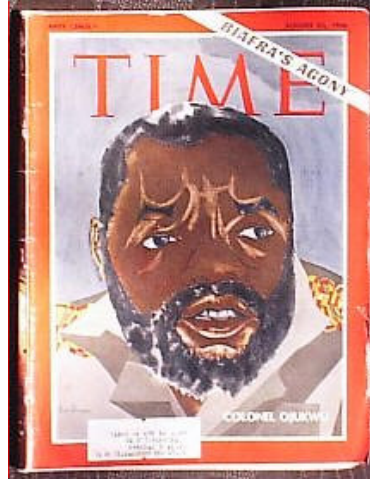
July 18, 2003

# Thunder Road to Biafra

*Photos, Poems & Letters from*

*Somewhere in Biafra*

*to Philip Emeagwali*



**Comment:** Colonel Ojukwu, August 23, 1968 issue of TIME

August 23, 1968 was my 14th birthday. I dropped out of school and was then living at Saint Joseph's Primary School, Awka-Etiti. Like most schools in Biafra, Saint Joseph was converted into a refugee camp.

---

## Nigeria we hail thee

I am always very glad to visit this site. While the civil war was a tragic event for the nation called Nigeria, the death of our citizens Biafrans or Nigerians should for ever never to be forgotten. But I must let you know that your site has cleverly failed to educate other Nigerians that some Western Nigerians fought on behalf of the Biafrans. Additionally, Lots of westerners were forced to join the federal army that fought in the east. I personally witnessed Westerners being

rounded up in Ibadan and forced to become warriors.

I know for a fact that that if the Biafrans had not gotten to Ore, the opposition in the west to the war would have remain solid. It's also not a secret that abandon properties problem was never an issue in the west. The fact that a large population of Easterners reside in the west today is not an accident, it is a testimony to our hospitality and our beileve in United Nigeria.

Why did you not mention the role that Banjo and other westerners played on the Biafran side ?

Why did not educate young Igbos and other Nigerians about what happened to people like Soyinka during the war? I am sure that that the bitterness that some of us westerners experienced from our fellow Eastern Nigerians in the USA who wrongly believed that the west betrayed them will not disappear, but surely providing some data as to the contribution of other ethnic groups within Nigeria may assist some in understanding that the war was a tragic event in

the history of our nation I want to let you know that I supervised an Ibo man who almost cost me my job because of his ignorance and bitterness because I am a western Nigerian. But God is good, I also gained a good friend from the east who was not as myopic as he was during the same period. I have been reading and researching the war to gain better insight to his madness because of my experience. I hope other Nigerians will never cross a bitter individual such as this man.

It is my hope that Nigerians at home and abroad will eventually recognize that we are proud people with long history of peaceful co-existence. We have the facts and history on our side. We are the chosen ones destined to lead Africa and the black race. But we cannot reach the promised land if we continue to ignore the contributions that we've all made to our nation good or bad, large or small.

Finally, you are a gem that all Nigerians should cherish. You are one of those few Nigerians that in the USA that I can honestly call a patriot.

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

Sincerely  
Tunde Agboola  
August 6, 2003  
tunde.agboola@verizon.net



**Comment:** Wole Soyinka was imprisoned during the Nigerian-Biafran Civil War.

RECOMMENDED READING:  
**The man died: prison notes of Wole Soyinka** by Wole Soyinka

Reviewer:

... [2]

Sir,  
You represent a large number of emotionally-scarred survivors and that is immeasurably appreciated by we, the post-war Biafrans who long for truthful documentation of these events. Driving by the veterans on the Onitsha highway since I was 13, I had always stopped to give some



# *Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*

*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

naira or the other to these unsung heroes. You do immensely more by just portraying their struggle. As my dad who was a surgeon throughout the war refuses to even hear mention of the war, your poignant insight has been of great help. Simultaneously, your accomplishments as a scientist leave me in awe and give me great hope for us black people who in a wider perspective, have struggled so hard and so long. I hope you can instill the same level of hope in younger, less-educated blacks to go the way of science, and not money!

With deep respect,  
Ifeyanyi Udekwu  
Klas Ifeyanyi Ikechebelu Udekwu  
Department of Microbiology  
Institute of Cell and Molecular Biology  
Biomedical Center Box 596  
Uppsala University  
Uppsala  
Sweden

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

September 20, 2003



**Comment: Federal Troops Watched By Biafrans**

Villagers watch a group of Nigerian federal troops in a Biafran town. Biafra was a region of eastern Nigeria that seceded from 1967 to 1970. © Bettmann/CORBIS

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Thanks a million for promoting the Biafran cause.  
We, Ndigbo, are really grateful, and your name has  
been written in gold in our hearts.

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

George  
Sokoto, Nigeria  
October 11, 2003



**Comment: Malnourished Nigerian Child**

Original Caption: 1/13/1970-BIAFRA-  
The 30-month-old Nigerian civil war, the  
end of which now seems certain, brought  
untold misery and deprivation to  
hundreds of thousands of Nigerians: men,  
women, children, the old and infirm. In  
this photo, an emaciated Nigerian child  
waits with others for the emergency food  
and medical shipments which offered a  
measure of hope to the people of the  
secessionist province. ©  
Bettmann/CORBIS

-----  
Hello Phillip Emeagwali,

My good brother, the reason i am sending you this email is to let you know that there is work for you to do, which i think you have not been doing, but before telling you the work i will thank God for what He has been doing in your life. We igbos in nigeria is proud of you ,many of us started to hear about you when the former american president visited nigeria ie Clinton, he talked good of you and say that you are the father of internet phillip i read one of the nigerians weekly magazine which i granted an interview which you said how you and your parent suffared during nigerian biafran war but thank God that you survived the war but should know that over two million igbos lost their live during the war and the injustice that coursed the war has double as of today, if you have visited igbo land for the past fifteen years you will see what am telling you how the nigerian government has been punishing the igbos. My brother, the work

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

which i said you have not been doing is to help igbos to get freedom from nigeria. I want you to use your connection you have in the white house and the american govt. to help Biafra to get independence from nigeria. There is another igbo man who works at the U.S nuclear energy he is also a coloniel in the u.s army, his name is Hillary Njoku from Imo state in nigeria you can work with this people on how to get biafra freedom from nigeria. All the igbos will be grateful to you if you can do your own by helping them out of nigeria, i will also like you to know that Biafra has embassy at new york in america and the movement for the Achalisation of soverign state of Biafra (MASOB) is holding meeting in new york on 18th and 19th of october 2003 and the guest of honour is Koffi Anan the UN scribe, for more information you can go to Biafran web site which is [www.biafran.com](http://www.biafran.com). I myself that is writting to you is a member of movement for actualisation of soverign state of biafra (masob). My name is Simeon Njoku,

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

Phone 234-8033059772.

God bless you

October 13, 2003

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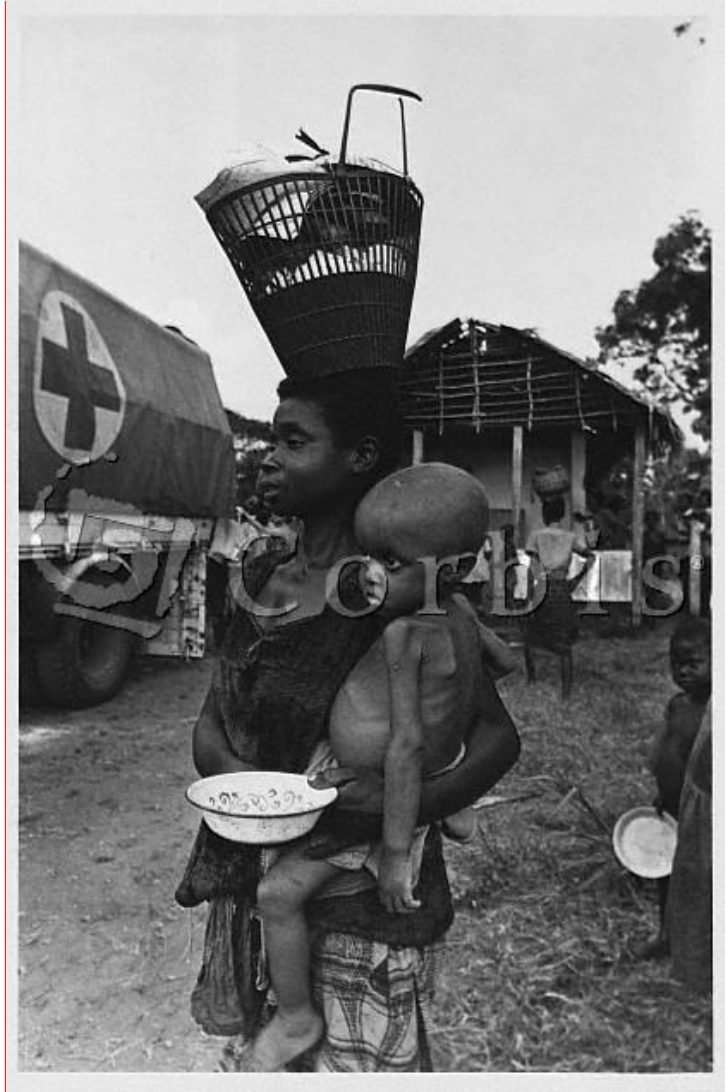


# Thunder Road to Biafra

Photos, Poems & Letters from

Somewhere in Biafra

to Philip Emeagwali



**Comment: Mother with Starved Child**

Original Caption: Nigerian mother and child with their empty food bowl. © Hulton-Deutsch Collection/CORBIS  
Photographer: Dempster Date  
Photographed January 21, 1970 Location  
Information: Nigeria

Hi-Nwa Chi-ukwu,

Ezinwa nne m kedu ka i di? It has been a long time we've not heard from each other. I mail Donita to inform you of my times in Nigeria trying to improve in the business i'm.

Prof. Philip, you'r my good brother in Biafra, and you are of a great impotance to me because you'r in my line of business. I know you'll be of good help to me because I'm in the computer line of business. I'm managing some business centres in Enugu. I would like you to help me in telling and sending me the books that will help me to improve my stardand to the best level.

As we are in the struggle for actualisation,we are not sponsored rather we use our purse and I'll like to be the best in my business so that I can make money to help in financing the movement.

Remain blessed Ezinwa nne m.

Greg.

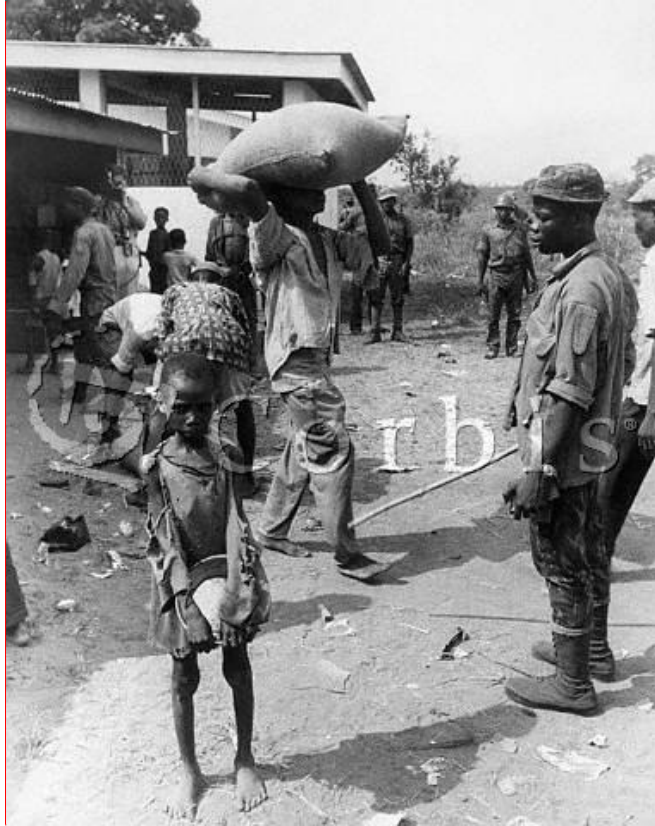
October 14, 2003

# Thunder Road to Biafra

Photos, Poems & Letters from

Somewhere in Biafra

to Philip Emeagwali



**Comment: Refugee Child W/Bowl At Food Dist. Ctr.**

Original caption: 1/22/1970-Owerri, Nigeria- Holding his pan, a young refugee waits for food at a distribution center. Nigerian authorities in Port Harcourt held incommunicado 80 foreign newsmen who reported scenes of starvation, rape, and chaos in the former Biafran territory. © Bettmann/CORBIS  
Date Photographed January 22, 1970  
Location Information Owerri, Nigeria  
EMEAGWALI'S PERSONAL NOTE:  
On about this day (1/22/70), my family and I returned to Onitsha. We had no money , no food, and no shelter. We also stood in line for free food.

Dear Hero,

Kedu ka imelu?

Olu ina anu ugbua bu olu si ebe di anya ma dikwa nso  
wee na-abialu gi. Obukwa olu nwa Biafra na ekele gi

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

we na-asi gi daalu nke ukwu n'olu niile ina-olu gi  
n'uwa niile taa.

Kamgbe mchoputara na obu nwa-afo Biafra na-akpa  
ike niile enwere na komputa n'ubochi taa, n'igwa gi  
eziokwu, emegom ka mba niile di iche iche n'uwa  
mara na Igbo nwere mmadu, oburukwa na amataram  
na oge, n'igwa gi eziokwu agaram na edere gi  
akwukwo ekene kwa mgbe-kwa mgbe.

Nwanne-mmadu, onwero ka ohamu n'onu kamana  
nkwa mna-ekwegi bu na agam na etinyekwagi na  
ijeoma nnwagi na ekpere, na etinyekwa na ekpele ka  
umu Biafra nwere onwefa.

Philip nwannem, gaba n'iru na ejim gi eme onu na  
Naijiria

Agam acho inu olu gi

Jisi ike.

Obu nwa Biafra,

NDUBUISI EZUGHA.

October 22, 2003

-----

I got through your site and felt proud to associate  
with you as an IGBO man. Please, how possible

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

could you use this site to champion the course of the IGBOS in general; especially the young generation children of Igbos whom mostly have taken to artisan trades due to parental incapability financially, to fund them through high schools. We can still make something good from those children that have forgotten the path to light in education, and choose to trade especially since after the civil war of late 60s. Which I am one of them . The phobia still trails us.

Please can you introduce a kind of science oriented programmes in the south eastern nigeria to enhance our children ability in scientific research programmes especially now that we Igbos are clamouring for a sorveriegn state of our own BIAFRA. I look forward to your reply, till then bye bye .

Thanks,

Nnaji Michael Oguejiofor.

oguejimack1968y@yahoo.com

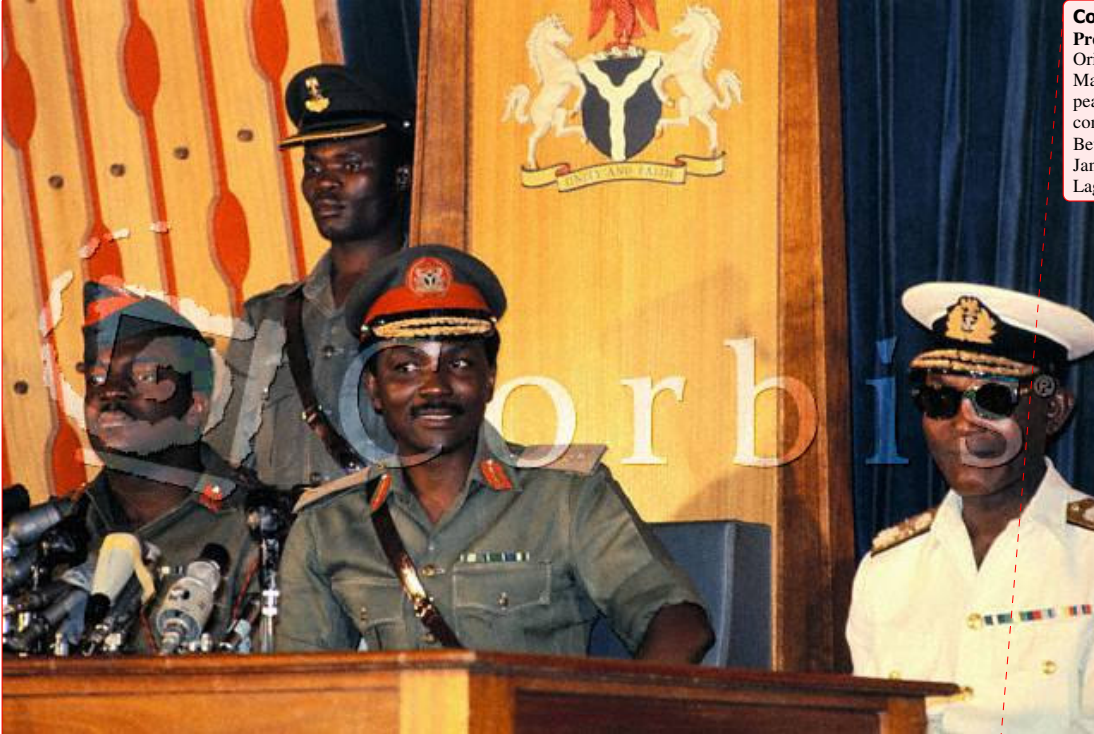
Chika Nwokeji

chikaforme@yahoo.com

# *Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from* *Somewhere in Biafra* *to Philip Emeagwali*

October 25, 2003

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**Comment: Yakubu Gowon Holding Press Conference**  
Original caption: Nigerian Federal Leader Major General Yakubu Gowon (wearing peak cap with red band) addresses a press conference in Lagos, January 22nd. © Bettmann/CORBIS Date Photographed January 22, 1970 Location Information Lagos, Nigeria

**More Grease to your knees. You are almost there!**



*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

Fellow compatriots of Biafra,  
Good day, nno!

I am a delighted son of Biafra born of Imo State  
Origin(Ohuba, Ubomiri in mbaitoli Local Govt Imo),  
I have been reading through your various  
publications in the web and others means of  
communication, and as a man of intellectual sense  
of humor and a responsible Igbo son, I am to a  
very high degree fascinated by these publications,  
so thats why i decided to inquire.

I have for donkey years reading and visiting our  
beloved web site [www.biafraland.com](http://www.biafraland.com) and most  
other sites and most time when I go through these  
pages, i hate my self for being not able to  
contribute in the actualization of this freedom,  
but to God be the glory that I can pray for this  
dream to come true, and He gave us people like you  
and most other illustrious sons of Igbo.

I wish to solicit you for your tremendous and  
stupendous endeavors just to make sure that this  
marginalized and victimized tribe of our

forefathers and our off springs, lives in a land where they would never be judged by their tribe or language but by their individual achievements, so with due respect and humble pleasure, I show my Support solidly behind you.....and I say **MORE GREASE TO YOUR ELBOWS.**

I am also delighted to tell you that as my humble self is in support of you, so is it to every thing that breathes as far as he/she is of Igbo origin...in a nutshell, **WE ARE SOLIDLY BEHIND YOU.** As for me now, what ever it would take just to see that my mother land gains absolute freedom, believe you me, i would do it! that is why i decided to contact you and to show my enormous appreciation and recognition to your most impact making efforts.....don't forget to extend my most humble greetings and cheers to my Rel gems like Chief Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu and Chief Barr. Uwazuruike and any other lover of Good things or any other person who has contributed in one way or the other in this fight for freedom.....say well done to each and every one of them.....tell them

that another lover of freedom has written you again.....we love and pray for all you over there. Haven will be our limit if they and every other son of our mother land Will continue like this. Recently, I met a publication that we needs about one million Biafrans to write to the British high Commision telling them to come and disammalgamate what they amalgamated in 1914, so i wish to know more facts and then thier Email Address so as to forward my own request.Considering the most recent killing of MASSOB men I hereby if you desire declare myself humbly as a member of this non violent organization, let them continue in killing innocent and eligible children of God, as for me I fear no evil! My advice to any body who attended the Ist post war int'l conference at Mary land Usa to stay there for now, cos the tenants of Aso rock are deliberating on daily bases and are plannig to exterminate this goal of freedom actualization by pehaps killing some prominent interlects of our motherland.

Rejoice all ye son/daughters/mothers/fathers of Biafra for the day of vindication is here. I wish also to tell you that "He that dwelleth in the secret places of the Most high shall abide by the shadow of the Almighty, so fear no evil.

When the lord of Host shall start to show himself in our case, I tell you, mountains shall be shaken, heads will roll, even the captives of the almighty shall be taken away! its our time!

Hope to read from you soon. udo na onuu nke onye we anyi diri unu nile ndi ihe oma na adi mma.

Best regards,

O bum Nwanne gi na oso ahu make inwenta n'tozuoke na ala Nna anyi bu Biafra,

Ozims Oyinatumba

October 26, 2003

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# Thunder Road to Biafra

Photos, Poems & Letters from

Somewhere in Biafra  
to Philip Emeagwali



**Comment: Customers Observing Yams at Onitsha Market**  
Original Caption: Nigeria--Fighting for Peace. The market at Onitsha is open once more and prospective customers inspect an enormous pile of yams. © Bettmann/CORBIS Date Photographed: April 25, 1970 Location Information: Onitsha, Nigeria

## Memory Lane

Fellow Kinsman:

Thanks for such painful but wonderful memories. Biafra forever lives in soul. I never forget how my friends and I filled those blood-soaked days--- going to "jumps" and listening to the Fractions at Government College Umuahia and praying for sunlight at the end of a long dark tunnel. Yes, life

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

was very cheap in those days and children bore the brunt of man's brutality towards fellow man.

So many precious lives were wasted---their potentials never to be realized. Such is the fate that every war deals mankind! However, as an old philosopher once stated, "out of chaos" always comes some order. Mindful of this fact, I always thank God, whenever I visit home, for having blessed us with a great nation full of rich and diverse resources. Some order will come to Nigeria someday.

I believe that brighter days await Nigeria.

Chisara Sandra Nwabara

Attorney at Law

Cleveland, Ohio USA

October 28, 2003

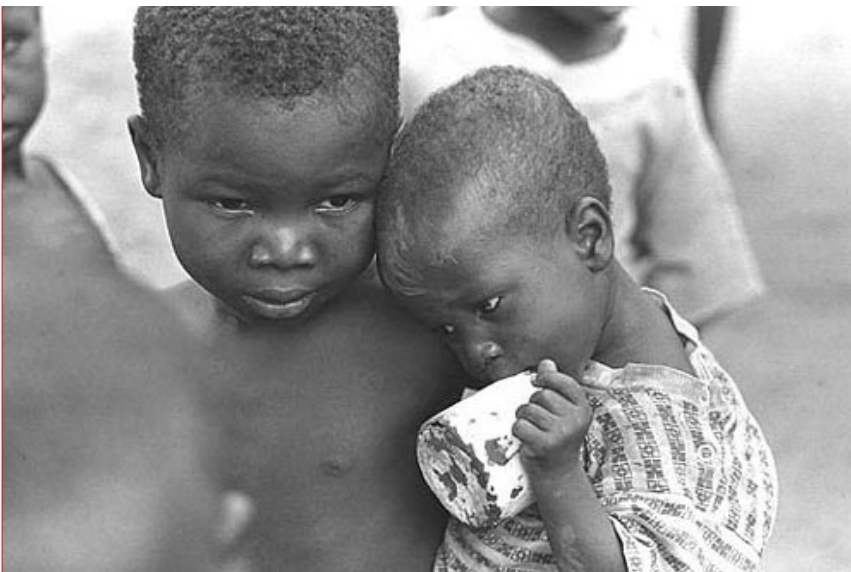


# Thunder Road to Biafra

*Photos, Poems & Letters from  
Somewhere in Biafra  
to Philip Emeagwali*



**Comment:** Village 5-8 km north of Umuahia. The village was bombed in October 1968 by the Nigerian airforce-2



**Comment:** Children in a village 5-8 km north of Umuahia. The village was bombed in October 1968 by the Nigerian airforce

# *Thunder Road to Biafra*

*Photos, Poems & Letters from  
Somewhere in Biafra  
to Philip Emeagwali*



**Comment:** Medical clinic in Mabaitoti  
- Owerri.jpg

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*



**Comment:** Medical clinic in Mabaitoti  
- Owerri-2

**A Response to Clem Ugorji's Essay:**

**"General Phillip Effiong and the Biafran War"**

It is extremely unfortunate that this guy, Clem Ugorji, would spew such an unwarranted and quite an annoying attack on Philip Effiong Jr. First of all, why does Ugorji stand up for Leo? He sounds like

an aggrieved lover defending his girlfriend. If Philip made some kind of assault on Leo (who actually cast the first stone), then why can't Leo defend himself? Philip made no attack against Ugorji. However, Ugorji, who is clearly blinded by his Ibo sentiments and chauvinism, has chosen to defend his "girlfriend" and launch such an insulting attack against one whom he should ordinarily hold in high esteem.

To make things even worse and shallow, Ugorji attacks Philip's father (General Effiong) in the process. His assumption that somehow General Effiong has fed Philip, his son, with the views he expresses is unproven and therefore unworthy of this type of discourse. Without any proof, he shouldn't make such an assumption and subsequently insult General Effiong. He also insults General Effiong by stating that all his involvements in war situations do not add up to heroism? Has Ugorji ever been directly involved in war? What does he know about war? Nothing evidently, otherwise he wouldn't make such bold and brainless

comments. I would like to know what role his father or any member of his family played during the war. None apparently. And yet such cowards are the ones to audaciously refer to others as cowards.

I also don't see anywhere in Philip's comments where he demonstrates hatred of any sort for Ibos. And yet, again, this Ugorji guy accuses him of holding something against Ibos.

Whether we Ibos like it or not, our leader, General Ojukwu, was not with us when we most needed him. We must therefore be grateful for those who put their lives on the line for our sake, rather than insult them like Ugorji does. We hold certain people sacred and would not speak against them, at least not publicly. Thus, even though general Ojukwu left with his entire family after urging the people to fight, we don't speak against him publicly. He had, after all, promised us that the "grasses" would fight if all else fails. He apparently didn't believe in this philosophy when he saw the need to leave. We would also not speak against Dr. Azikiwe

even though he changed sides in the middle of the war. If we, and the likes of Ugorji, would not speak against such figures, no matter what, then why would we speak against General Effiong and put him down? Clearly, then, Ugorji's motivation is ethnic bias and nothing else.

Whether anyone likes it or not, General Effiong and those that were with him before Biafra's ultimate collapse should and will always be revered by most Ibos. This is a great relief since it is also a reminder that most Ibos do not think or carelessly run their mouths like Ugorji. We must remain indebted to the likes of General Effiong without whom many of us would not enjoy the privilege of life and the great opportunities that we enjoy today. That includes you, Ugorji, who, because you occupy who-knows-what-office in Lagos, thinks that you are now empowered to insult the people who you should be indebted to and essentially look up to as heroes.

Shame on you, Ugorji. Your ingratitude and arrogance is, sadly, unbelievable. If you still have



any iota of dignity in you, you should remove your miserable essay from this site. I see that Philip actually apologised to you. For what? He owes you absolutely no apologies. You should be apologising to him and, especially, his father. That he chose to apologise and avoid such uncouth exchanges shows him to be a man with class and dignity, qualities that you lack woefully.

I think it is only appropriate that I apologise to Philip for your comments. I also want him to understand that most Ibos hold his father and family in high esteem. In other words, the likes of Ugorji and Leo do not represent the majority of us.

In the end, and in a seriously failed attempt at sounding intelligent, Ugorji's attack is little more than a great pile of perfumed garbage. It is also a cowardly attempt at seeking cheap attention.

I would have sent this response to Ugorji if I had his address. However, in the spirit of fairness I request that this rejoinder be posted on the Emeagwali site, just like Ugorji's.

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

Thank you.  
Ihuma Nze  
ihumanze @ yahoo.com  
Washington DC  
September 5, 2003

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# *Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*

*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*



**Comment:** Emeagwali and his family were part of this crowd that fled from heavy artillery attacks and a few hours before the Nigerian army captured Awka. [Photo: The Fall of Awka, *Life* Magazine, July 12, 1968]

-----  
I have studied most of the books written about Biafra by Nigerians and others. Emeagwali's pages are interesting if only for the responses.

The affairs that led to the civil war would have happened whether Ifeajuna messed up his aspects of that coup or not. Why? The north had wanted

some opportunity to kill Igbos no matter what. Soyinka however showed in "The Man Died" that the killings could have been reduced drastically by the government but they chose not to. This was because where they wanted to they stopped the murderers. Of course since that era, Igbos have been killed in the north for trivial reasons. An example is the Miss World palava. Not only Igbos though. All southerners especially christians are game when the north wants. These killings are used as a tool for political coercion.

But the war could have been avoided. The problem however is that Igbos lack leaders who understand strategy. It is all about effervescence, bloated egos and empty bigmanism (Chinamanda Adichie). From Zik to Orji Kalu it is the same. Igbos are not hindered by unwieldy mores (except the nonsense Osu and also the male diokpa inheritance trash), are mobile, physically and intellectually well endowed, ambitious etc. but the weak spot is leadership, role modelling etc. The secession should have happened five years after or not at all.

But the leaders could have negotiated all kinds of concessions that would still be operational now. I don't want to give any examples, an observant person will pick examples from contemporary international/Nigerian politics.

Well done Philip Emeagwali. A nation that butchers its own people cannot become great. A people who look the other way when a part is butchered will suffer. People who kill others to make a point will always be dregs. So sad, so much waste.

W.B.

November 6, 2003

-----  
Dear mr Philip emegwali

Its really a thing of joy and creation worthy of recognition that a biafran scientist will ever creat such an imprinting accord 2 another global history, even at the modern edge of obsolete challenge 2 white people who are regarded as the super creature. So it was in the commemorating landmark of a mathematician stellar chike obi, who excelled

the briafran name and marked the feast of his time

I am overjoyed to read about your daily growth and creativity in the field of computer/electronics, after having read about your marvellous feast in the vanguard of 95/96 respectively.

Well, having built a political and skilful development in the field computer and electronics, do not forsake your country especially the land of biafra where your biological formation started while your assignment abroad is periodic do not forget that biafra is a new and in advanced in the field of technological development and therefore, your knowledge in the computer field will be of a great yardstick to resuscitate the country of biafra.

I am a briafran of the super heritage who wish for guidance to facilitate another briafran feast.

Yours

Uzomah t. Peters. -----

Hi



My name is chuks .I am a medical doctor in the UK and I have just seen Mr Emeagwali's nice pictures on Biafra. I was wondering if you had archive footage of the Biafran Civil war.No one seem to have any. The history channels on telly are more interested in the second world war. I would appreciate a reply. cheer.  
chuks

-----  
I'M A YOUNG LADY FROM ULI IN IHIALA  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ANAMBRA  
STATE.

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I' VE GONE  
THROUGH THE WEB SITE OF OUR GREAT  
COUNTRY " NEW BIAFRA".

I KNOWN SOMETHINGS I DID KNOW ABOUT  
CHIEF PHILIP EMEGWALI. I HAVE ALSO SEEN  
PICTURES OF HOW MY COUNTRY PEOPLE  
SUFFERED IN WAR THAT BROKED OUT IN THE  
'60s.

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

I PRAY THAT THE GOOD LORD KEEP YOU  
MOVING AND ONE DAY THE DREAM OF  
ACTUALINSING BIAFRA WILL COME  
THROUGH.

AMAKA. November 8, 2003

From: "Gabriel Jiabana" [gjiabana@hotmail.com](mailto:gjiabana@hotmail.com)

Thanks Philip (more grease to you)  
3 Mar 2003

Hi Philip,

I read the Biafran story and never thought that  
such a web site do exist. Thanks for bringing to  
light the events that actually took place during the  
civil war. I am still very proud that I am an Ibo  
man.

My dream is to shake Gen. Ojukwu's hand and  
thank him for his love for Igbo people.

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

My Mother came from Mba family from Onitsha (Umudei Village) near the General Hospital. During the war, I was very small but I could remember the refugee camp and Caritas around Ufuma and Ajali areas.

Thanks again, your website makes me proud.

Gabriel Jiabana (Baltimore, MD)



**Comment:** Medical clinic in Mabaitoti  
- Owerri-3.jpg

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*



**Comment:** Police officer at Ubulu near  
Uli airport.jpg

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*



**Comment:** Soldiers-during-training-near-Umuahia.jpg

18 Dec 2002

From: Gregory Echewodo

<gregobi2002@yahoo.com>

Subject: ezinwannem

To: emeagwali@emeagwali.com

Ezinwannem,

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

Happy Xmas and New Year.

I was more than happy to receiving your mail after  
a  
long peroid of time contacting you.

As you told me to visit your web site again, I went  
into your web site and saw 22 MASSOB Activists  
docked,  
Refused Bail.

I am a member of MASSOB and I escaped this  
narrow trap  
because I was caught the day we went to seeing  
the  
Veterans of the civil war. At Orji river I was  
arrested and release when soilders of the New  
Biafra  
came.

It is unfortunate we do not have suponsors to  
helping



*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

us do some certain things that suppose be done to  
aviod all this arrest.

In my ward, Nwannem, I am regrouping them to  
face the  
challenge by nest year. Either Onye Igbo achaa  
Nigeria or Anyi ewere oweanyi.

I do not know your say over this movement,  
whether you  
support it or you are against such movement.

I will like to having any little support from you nif  
you are for anytime from this date.

I and my ward can get these people bailed if we  
have  
money to have an activist lawyer.

Remain blessed in the Lord, and remember your  
brothers  
over here for the freedom of our people.

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

Jisike Ezinwannem



**Comment:** soldiers-on-the-umuahia-aba-highway.jpg

To: donita.brown@emeagwali.com  
06 Feb 2006

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

To: donita.brown@emeagwali.com  
Subject: Research project

Dear Dr. Brown;

My name is Donald D Black and I live in Florida. I am restoring an aircraft as a recreation of one of the "Biafra Babies" flown during the civil war by Count vonRosens group of relief pilots. This project has been underway for two years now and will require another year to complete.

I have collected as much information as has been available on the internet as well as purchased books which chronically detail the activities of these small aircraft. I also have a neighbor friend that flew large relief aircraft into Biafra for both the Red Cross and the Christian relief organization. He has helped me assemble

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

information to permit my resoration work to be accurate.

I am wondering, that if by some stroke of luck, that your archives may reveal some information useful to me, such as photographs of the aircraft, their pilots, and particularly technical details of the aircraft that I may not already have.

My project is the "Biafra Baby" 905BB seen in sketches on the internet and also in the Time-Life book "Soldiers of Fortune".

Possibly you can refer me to someone familiar with the activities of von Rosens group.

thank you for your valuable time,

Donald D, Black  
Fort Myers, FL

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

**From:** Aniekwe Maxwell Chukwubike (Dr.)

**Email** aniekwem@yahoo.com

Dear Philip,

I was 3-months old when it started,& 3+ years when it ended-I mean the WAR,that WAR.You were older,peharps luckier-I nearly died in my mother's arm while she was fleeing from the federal troops with the rest of the family;"see my child has turned red,he has changed colour,he is going to die" exclaimed my dear mother-with sorrowful tears.Encouraged by an uncle,they continued the flight.I am still alive today,but have no country of birth-no not Nigeria,where is Biafra! dear Philip, where is our mother country.

I only heard of you sometime in the year 2004 from a not-very-lliterate Biafran-who was only boisterously claiming that you are an Igbo man and could not remember your name nor give further details about you.Subsequently,searching the

internet-hungry of the news about Biafra, you were revealed to me.

I am overjoyed, and thank GOD for your life, and that of many other great individuals of Biafran origin.

In my own opinion, while we-Biafrans are still alive, the great Biafran nation lives-on, it is only the eyes of those who are afraid of Biafra and that of those of the international community, still refuse to see and recognise her! The selfish voices of the powers that rule the international community continue to claim that they do not want further conflicts in Africa. In the case of Biafra, sitting down on issues concerning her recognition, the intl. comm. is covering a powerful time bomb with a bare human hand.

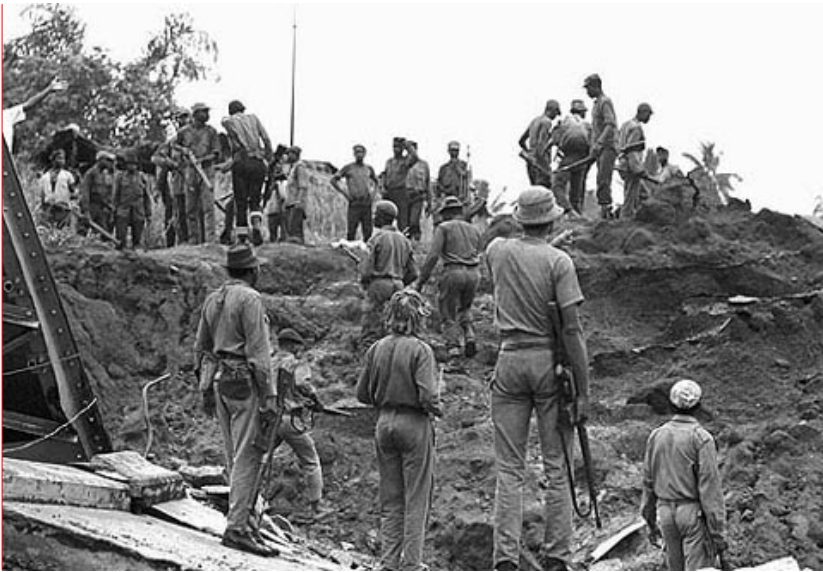
The question I want to ask (to whoever), are Biafrans home and abroad really making every effort to present a united front in this drive to restore their home country. Have we learnt the international politics or are we still displaying our bravery and intelligence in utter naivety-hoping that

# *Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*

*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

the intl,comm, will come to our aid?

Max,lives in Ukraine-a 1993 graduate of the  
university of Biafra Nsukka, with a Diploma in  
Engineering & a Doctor of Vet,Medicine Degree.



**Comment:** Soldiers-on-the-Umuahia-  
Aba-Highway3.jpg



# *Thunder Road to Biafra*

*Photos, Poems & Letters from*

*Somewhere in Biafra*

*to Philip Emeagwali*



**Comment:** Soldiers-on-the-Umuahia-Aba-Highway-2

To: [philip@emeagwali.com](mailto:philip@emeagwali.com)

29 Oct 2005

Igbos, Emeagwali's tribe are in serious bondage in Nigeria. A civil war fourth in 1967-70, was used to slaughter and devastated them. Even now, the Nigerian government is in serious business of stealing their oil wealth with a dubious chant of

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

one-Nigeria. Since then any of the people of the area who had dared to raise their head in protest against the wicked set-up had been murdered by the government.

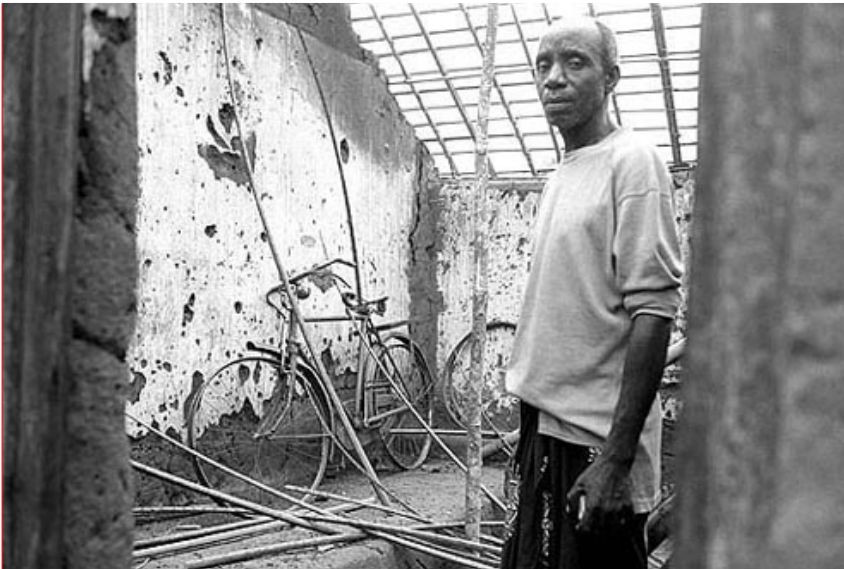
Right now, Ralph Uwazuruike, who is fighting for self determination for Biafran as a sovereign state(through peaceful means) has been kidnapped by the Nigerian government. There are already fears that the government intends to murder him as one of those who kidnapped him was said to have a syringe fall from his pocket in the scuffle for his abduction.

We are calling on people of good will to step in on this to see that the Nigerian government does not murder him.

Already we hear that the Nigerin government has contacted Emeagwali to be part of their Space research project and we are using this medium to emlore him not to be part of it. For there can be nothing in it for him or his people, rather, when it becomes successful, it would be a veritable instrument of operation against his people.

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

Thanks Emma Maduabuchi.



**Comment:** Village 5-8 km north of Umuahia. The village was bombed in October 1968 by the Nigerian airforce.jpg

To: philip@emeagwali.com  
26 Jul 2005

Ironically, it was out of chaos and war that Zik found his mission, his raison d'être. As an Ibo who

understood the basic philosophy and objective of secession, his immediate inclination was to support the action of the head of the Eastern Region and now leader of Biafra, Lieutenant Colonel Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu. His tacit support was accompanied by a stern message in which Zik spelled out his demands for a peaceful, political reconciliation of differences between Ojukwu and General Yakubu Gowon, the military leader of the Federal government. Zik insisted on peaceful resolution and stated unequivocally that if reconciliation could not be achieved without bloodshed, then a unified and peaceful Nigeria must result.

Zik's support was manifest through an extensive but very low key tour of European and African capitals to win recognition, support and aid for the new nation, Biafra. Most doors were quickly closed to Zik's pleas, although he found limited success with recognition of sovereignty from Zambia, Gabon, Tanzania and Ivory Coast. Discussions with

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

the government of France yielded a limited quantity of weapons, but the military might of the Federal government, amply equipped by the Soviet Union and United Kingdom, soon led to open warfare. Zik's worst nightmare was realized.

Zik appealed for the intercession of the Organization of African Unity, the United Nations and the Vatican as a means to reconcile the combatants. In early 1969, Zik, in complete despair at the fighting now raging in his homeland, announced that he could no longer, in good conscience, support the Biafran endeavor and opted instead for a peaceful settlement and a united Nigeria, a goal that he pledged to work hard for.

I was privileged to be at Rhodes House, Oxford, on February 16, 1969, when Zik delivered a masterful address outlining his peace proposals for ending the civil war. In delineating the horrors before the high level group in attendance, Zik sparked a wave

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

of international sympathy for the plight of the millions of starving men, women and particularly children, of breakaway Biafra. Within days of his powerful address, airlifts of food and medicine began from the United Kingdom, Europe and the United States and Canada to Enugu and Port Harcourt.

The last of Biafra's poorly equipped and demoralized forces were finally overcome in pitched fighting south of Enugu on January 12, 1970. General Ojukwo and his senior officials escaped Federal arrest and detention by fleeing on January 8, 1970, to the Ivory coast. Finally, on January 15, 1970, the Biafran adventure collapsed and ceased to exist, surrendered by an acting President, Philip Effiong.

The fighting that savaged Nigeria was over, but the tragedy was far from finished. The nation, particularly the Eastern Region, was a shambles, with millions of starving and destitute people left

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
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*to Philip Emeagwali*

in its wake. Zik was a whirlwind of activity, working to calm people and travelling extensively, now seeking support for refugee assistance and national reconstruction and finding a strong measure of international support. Aid flowed and along with it, Zik's popularity was renewed. In 1970, he announced his re-entry into politics in opposition to General Gowon's continued military rule. His overtures met with failure and Zik again retreated, this time to an old love, sports. He became active in organizing and running amateur football. He chaired the Nigerian Boxing Board of Control and started the Nigerian Table Tennis Association.

Best of all, through the persistent urging and nagging of his many friends, including me, he completed a work long in progress, his autobiography, published in 1970 in London and New York, entitled MY ODYSSEY. Sadly, it was never updated, so much of Zik's later years are somewhat clouded. I do know that he found much



*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

satisfaction in his appointment on January 1, 1972, to the office of Chancellor of the University of Lagos. This lasted until late 1975 when he was replaced by General Gowon's military successor, General Murtala R. Muhammad. Turning again to writing, Zik completed ECONOMIC RECONSTRUCTION OF NIGERIA and MEDITATION, a collection of poetry, and finally, his last book, an anthology, TREASURES OF WEST AFRICAN POETRY.

To: <donita@emeagwali.com>  
Subject: A present - A Biafran Odyssey book  
17 May 2005

Dear Philip,

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

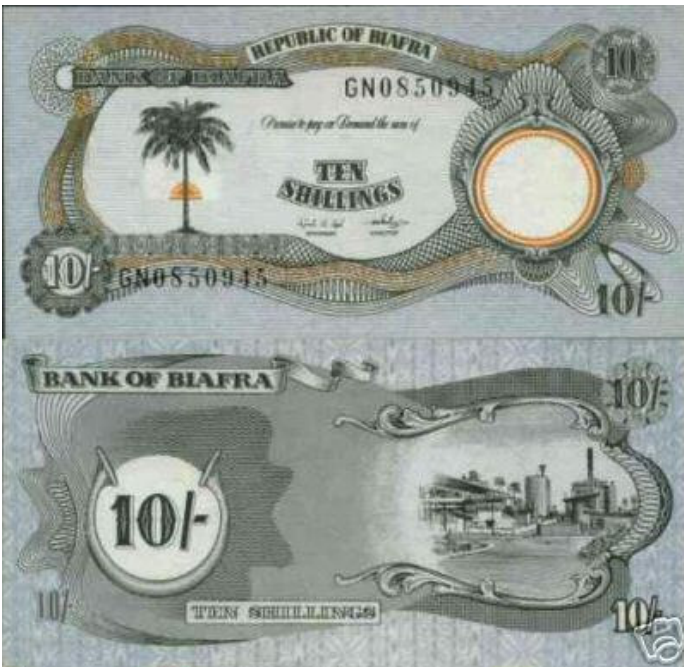
I am writing from Munich, Germany. No doubt, the name "Chidi Giniji" would be unknown to you, but I am sure it would not sound entirely strange. I am one of several million Ibos and many other people, all over the globe, who feel blessed to have a human being like you in our midst. Without going into further details, may it suffice just to say: "please never let go of the light!"

I recently published a book titled "A Biafran Odyssey," which I would like you to read. I am aware of the time restrictions a man like you must have to deal with day to day, but I was so sure this is a book you, your wife or any other members of your family would enjoy reading, I could not resist the urge to offer you a copy. As soon as I get your go ahead, I'll dispatch one to you. By the way, your critique would be highly appreciated! Meanwhile, stay blessed with your entire family.

Yours sincerely,

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

Chidi Giniji.



# Thunder Road to Biafra

*Photos, Poems & Letters from*

*Somewhere in Biafra*

*to Philip Emeagwali*

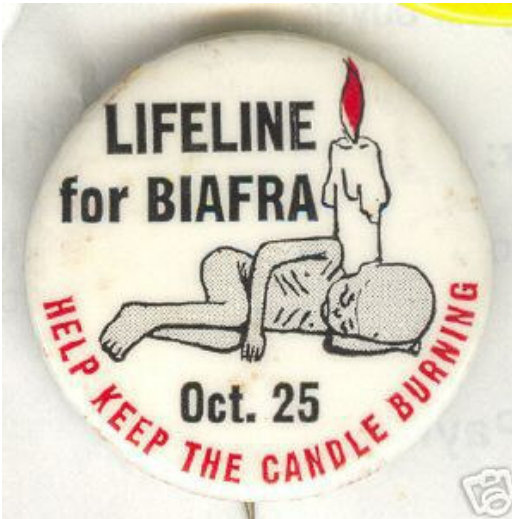


# Thunder Road to Biafra

*Photos, Poems & Letters from*

*Somewhere in Biafra*

*to Philip Emeagwali*



## Memorable Quote

*"I want to see no Red Cross, no Caritas, no World Council of Churches, no Pope, no missionary and no UN delegation."*

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

*I want to prevent even one Ibo from having  
even one piece to eat before their capitulation.  
We shoot at everything that moves and when  
our troops march into the centre of Ibo  
territory, we shoot at everything even at  
things that do not move... "*

Benjamin Adekunle, a.k.a. "Black Scorpion,"  
Commander, 3rd Marine Commando Division,  
Nigerian Army.

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*



**Comment:** Benjamin Adekunle shooting "at everyting that moves" in Biafra.

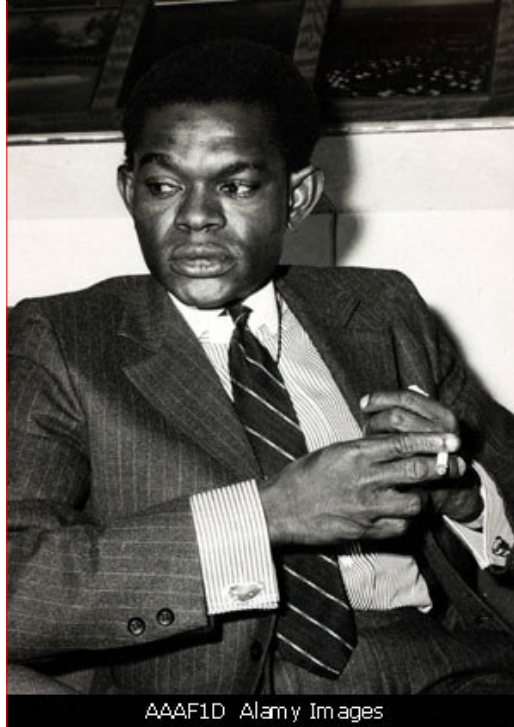


*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*



# Thunder Road to Biafra

*Photos, Poems & Letters from  
Somewhere in Biafra  
to Philip Emeagwali*



AAAF1D Alamy Images

**Comment:** Politics Civil War 12th October 1970 London England Colonel Benjamin Adekunle

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

## Divine Cup of Wrath

By OBU UDEOZO, University of Jos, Nigeria.

According to Chinua Achebe,

"Udeozo's poetry comes to us hot from the foundry of his restless imagination.  
He is a natural poet ready to take on any subject that touches his people.  
We shall hear of him more and more in the years ahead."

*Divine Cup of Wrath* is excerpted from *Cyclone* - an anthology of poems  
shortlisted for the 2005 Nigeria LNG literature prize.

a register  
of cadavers  
outside the compass of trade routes:  
in Biafra  
yawning fabrics  
or leaves  
map the passage rites  
of pilgrims whose luggage  
eclipsed  
in the fever of flight...  
  
... roaring afternoons

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

snatch unwilling folks  
beyond mortality's curve

bullets pluck persons  
from the bulrushes  
for the elephants' feast;  
and our elders  
bargain with death

in loud hunger-propelled night songs  
Mozart and his loyal wife  
dancing away the cruel winter...

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

we have indeed drunk  
the Divine cup of wrath  
promised our ancestors

the Jewish Holocaust  
and Biafra's open graves  
is the same kolanut  
offered our blindness.

and the Bible said:

"I swear by myself; declares the LORD,  
that Bozrah will become a ruin and an  
object of horror, of reproach and of  
cursing;..."  
Jeremiah 49:13

and Okigbo said:

"The drowsy heads of pods in barren farm lands witness  
it,

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

The homesteads abandoned in this century's brush fire  
witness.

it:

The myriad eyes of deserted corn cobs in  
burning barns witness

it:..."

- we endure  
toxic echoes  
of petulant babies'  
veiled and expiring tones  
for the sake of their community's head.

air raids saturate us  
with fatality and fear

their electric birds  
sow death in our  
farmlands and pillows

in tunnels and bunkers  
we rehearse the wisdom  
of rodents  
and the comfort of ant-holes;

air raids saturate us  
with fatality and fear



*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

and because we cannot sow tomorrow in our  
soil  
starvation salutes us at day break.



**Comment:** Undernourished-child-at-Queen-Elisabeth-hospital-in-Umuahia.jpg

**MOUTHFULS OF FIRE**

**Comment:** By Obu Udeozo

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

our toothless telephones  
snore before the shrines of cyberspace  
Onitsha Black Continent's New York  
is blind with Methuselah tools

after swallowing Titanics of our rank and file  
after roasting our farmlands and crops  
after excavating our pregnancies  
with polished and perfumed axe

they are not appeased...

and before clouds of fire  
we are silence,

before acid rain,  
we are wailing walls

before a climate of fury  
we are solemn prayers

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

**Rome's neck  
Spread  
for Nero's fanciful blade to roast.**

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

our genes, genealogy  
mother tongue

and daybreak  
owe their anger a quick sunset

we ripen into  
flaming fangs...

the Asaba solution\*  
trails us from Churches to Sand Hurst  
a tribe's throat  
swoons

before the insanity of cannons  
Amen was fried on our tongues...

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

---

.London Observer 21 January 1968: 'The greatest single massacre occurred in the Ibo town of Asaba, where 700 Ibo males were lined up and shot.'

And Monsignor Georges Rocheau, in an interview with Le Monde, on 5 April 1966 said, "There has been genocide... the region between the towns of Benin and Asaba where only widows and orphans remain, Federal troops having for unknown reasons massacred all the men."

Frederick Forsyth endeavoured to chronicle this impossible statistics of atrocities in the civil war. At one point he said: 'At Awka, I saw the corpses of the occupants of a refugee camp.... The men folk had had their hands tied before shooting; to judge from appearances, the women had been subjected to appalling mutilations either before or after death. The bullet broken bodies of the children lay scattered like dolls in the long grass.'

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

oblivion is enshrined  
in cruelty's Coat of Arms  
Igbo hatred is the Lingua Franca  
and every fresh king  
is a shimmering apostle of exponential  
hate

their anger glows  
their anger grows  
their anger

sharpens at sunrise

because your executors  
are not appeased

their revenge is aflame...

in rainfall,  
a tacky dysentery afflicts our roads  
and tuberculosis takes over in harmattan,



*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

**Mortuary**  
**is the Emperor of the Eastern States**  
**a people policed**  
          **into slavery**  
          **by their kings**

**- we drink pipe-borne water in dreams alone.**

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

and PILOTS  
at the meandering course  
are dribbled into dishwashing across the  
globe

and the golden boots  
which sow Arsenal's hat-trick in England  
the genius painting Pele's miracle in France  
and laser guides the Pathfinder to Mars;  
brains that beat Bill Gates  
by lending supercomputers:  
                  arteries, velocity and cerebellum

are suddenly dumb  
over roosters of Service Chiefs  
and lepers in monitoring our mutual shores

without one firm finger  
on their switch of milk and honey

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

without one firm finger  
on their switch of milk and honey:

a people who  
export Bianca Onoh, Mary Onyali, Oyibo  
Odinamadu, Obiageli Nnodu, Oluchi  
Onweagba, Chioma Ajunwa, Nikky Gilbert  
Onuaguluchi & Co.; and supply Stephen Keshi,  
Chukwuma Igweonwu, Jay Jay Okocha, Kanu  
Nwankwo, Philip Emeagwali, Bartholomew  
Nnaji, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Kenneth Dike, Chike  
Obi, Chinua Achebe, Fabian Udekwu,  
Christopher Okigbo, Ben Obumselu, Anthony  
Ikeme, Arthur Mbanefo, Chukwuemeka  
Odumegwu Ojukwu, Arthur Nwankwo,  
Celestine Ukwu, Osita Osadebe, Francis  
Ngwaba, Ben Enweonwu, Pius Okigbo, Ralph  
Uwazurike, Alex Ekwueme, Green Nwankwo,  
Joe Irukwu, Eddie Iroh, Dora Akunyili, Chuks  
Iloegbunam, Gregory Lekwuwa, Benard  
Ogbonna, Charles Chukwuma Soludo, Macaulay  
Onuigbo, Maik Nwosu, Bona Ezeudu, Beze  
Adogu, Okechukwu Oko, Ike Okonta, Chidi

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*

*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

Umeano,    Obiwu,    Uche    Nduka,    Obi  
Nwakanma, Basil Okeahialam....

witness their seedlings  
swallowed by gutters across the globe  
forced to spit upon their gods...  
Your offspring are gwonjo hawkers worldwide  
delinquency devours  
    the genius of your folks. . . .

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

"the goat knows its fodder  
the leopard on its trail..."

we share fatal finitude  
with  
Scarlet Macaws, Dorcas Gazelles  
Siberian Tigers, Fire Finches, Tiny-  
Golden Tamarinds or the latent eclipse of  
Oryxes...

oblivion awaits us  
on the obverse of the worm-hole....

our genes, genealogy,  
mother tongue

and daybreak  
is extinction bound

- and they are not appeased

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

**we owe their anger,  
BLINDNESS...**



# Thunder Road to Biafra

*Photos, Poems & Letters from*

*Somewhere in Biafra*

*to Philip Emeagwali*



**Comment:** Village 5-8 km north of Umuahia. The village was bombed in October 1968 by the Nigerian airforce-2.jpg

## OPERATION KPOCHAPU

**Comment:** By Obu Udeozo

with swords longer than one year  
and sharper than acid  
horse whips and python clubs

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

they combed the teeth of every rock

armpits of mountains  
bowels of forests  
and surveilled ant-holes across the land

for Igbos to roast across the land

waves, upon waves, upon waves  
trainloads, trailers, and trucks,  
in wheelbarrows and body bags;  
football fields and market squares

their massacre was aflame...

Igbos blossomed in graveyards  
saturating streets  
with blood and bones

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

from Kano to Kaura Namoda,  
Kafanchan to Fadan Karshi,  
from Bornu to Timbuktu  
    Igbos were cleansed  
    from rooftops and market squares

until the ocean vanished  
and the sea surrendered  
her last plea of moisture...

-and they are not appeased

    their revenge is aflame...

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

the universe froze  
at the ferocity of mankind  
darkness ruled the hearts of men  
Africa's holocaust unmapped....

and daylight  
vomited blood  
and reconstructed graveyards  
groaned from saturations afresh

in streetsful of dead Igbos  
the climate was:  
blood and bones

but these they labelled flies

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

**void census and statistics**

**for their revenge is aflame...**

**with the pogrom's switch  
in automatic mode  
and the 3-year war on song**

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

Nweke Udeozo  
my father said:  
witness history's first  
colour blind marriage across the compass;  
Communism and the West  
in a strange and sudden tango  
to pepper Igbos with  
one annihilating blow...

Agrippa and Pilate's  
romance  
over the blood of Christ

and our brothers  
arrived in fractions

our brothers  
arrived as spare parts

Gabriel Okoh, Theo Okeke, ...

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

Chief George Mbonu; and Mrs. Adekunle  
whose knife  
is sacred but her teeth craves forbidden  
meat:  
punctiliously signalled Nwandu to the  
assassins...

from Kano to Kaura Namoda,  
rooftops to market squares  
until the ocean vanished

and the dark census awakes:



*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

# *Thunder Road to Biafra*

*Photos, Poems & Letters from*

*Somewhere in Biafra*

*to Philip Emeagwali*

**Comment:** Egyptian pilots flew Soviet Jets that blasted several homes in Emeagwali's neighborhood. [Photo: Nigerian bombing raid, General Hospital, Aba, Nigeria, *Life* Magazine, July 12, 1968]



*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

**CASUALTIES DURING THE 1966 POGROM  
AND 1967 TO 1970 CIVIL WAR.\***

**Comment:** By Obu Udeozo

Mr. Brown Agbogu of ATMN Bukuru  
Morris Okam  
Nwibe Enweani  
Samuel Anudu  
Mr. C.C. Nwokoye of Akwa  
Mr. Nwari of Awka (All of these killed in  
Jos)

Mr. Nweke Ufele  
Godwin Okeke of Nguru fame  
Clement Nwankwo of ACB Nguru  
Lawrence Okeke  
Eric Okonkwo of Gusau  
Iliemene Nweke Mene

Louis Nwoyeocha  
Reuben Nwandu  
Oji Okoye Okwubunne

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

Emmanuel L. Nkwocha  
Nwankwo Okika  
Lawrence Ifitezue

---

a grim chronicle from Enugwu—Agidi, a mere  
single town,  
out of the several hundreds of towns and  
cities in Igbo Land.

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

Nwamadi Ifitezue  
Uyanwune Ifitezue  
Ernest Onyejeli  
Anthony Ofoedu  
Simon Onwuemene  
Bernard Okoye Nwune

Benson Ogu  
Okeke Okwubunne  
Nweke Nwine  
Okonkwo Nwine (genealogy wiped)  
Mgbeke Nwine  
Kutanya Okoye Igwikolo

Moses Okoye Nkili  
Nwafor Okongwu  
Nweke Ivenso  
Okoye Nmoh  
Okonkwo Ego  
Ementa Ilodigwe

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
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*to Philip Emeagwali*

Okeke Odigili Ama  
Ofoedu Ivenso  
Okoye Enweana



*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

Okeke Ibeki  
Nwokike Ibeki  
Aghaegbune Okoye Akuakor

Nwafor Anagor  
Oranu Okolobu  
Nwamadu Idegwu  
Hyacinth Ibeki  
Nweke Okonkwo Ego  
Nwanne Okoye Anagbogu

Reginald Okeke  
Odii Nwaku  
Andrew Anikpe  
Okeke Arize  
Okoyenta Onuorah  
Joseph Ifitezue

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

**Felix Ifitezue**  
**Nwanebe Ifitezue**  
**Okoye Ifitezue**  
**Mgboye       Ifitezue       (nee**  
**Igboanugo)**  
**Nwokeke Kameme**  
**Mgbafor Enemmor**

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

Nwamgboye Nwolisekwe  
Mankwocha Nwokoye  
Okekenta Okoye  
Okafor Ndife  
Nwankwo Igboanusi  
Nwankwo Eligwo

Okeke Anaduaka  
Nweke Chilete  
Okeke Akamala  
Christopher Okafor  
Chidebe Ogadi  
Afocha Nwankwo Adunma

Eric Obunabo  
Chukwuma Okafor Akuafor  
Onyeibo Ani Modozi  
Agwuncha Nwokafor

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

**Nwanmadi Mgbajiaka**  
**Anene Uluekwu**

**Nwanyaegbo Nwankwo**  
**Okafor Patego**  
**Tabansi Anaoji**

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

Mgbekeocha Ogadi  
Mgba Nwodu Anareñe  
Nwije Ilozor

Mankwocha Udeozo\*  
Peter Ilozor  
Mgbeke Okoye  
Eric Anenwe  
Nweke Nwego (and his wife)  
Anaso Igboanugo  
Ojukwu Añuta

Thomas Anenye  
Anakpu Okonkwo  
Nwufo Mokwuo  
Nwaku Nwufo  
Patrick Nweke

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
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*to Philip Emeagwali*

**Cordelia Ilozor**

**Israel Sunday Chinyelu  
Ejiofor Chinyelu  
Ilojiana Chinyelu  
Nwaomunu Chinyelu  
Mgbeke Chinyelu  
Josiah Nwandu**

---

**.My Paternal Grandmother died 8 October,  
1968.**

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

Sunday Josiah Nwandu  
Chukwuma Okonkwo Uchendu  
Mgbeke Uchendu  
Iwuchukwu Okonkwo  
Nwandu Okonkwo  
Okafor Obuah (and his wife)

Okoye Onwurah  
Okoloudo Nkeakwa  
Nwafor Ifenacho  
Okafor Ejinaka  
Nkwocha Nwokoye  
Nwaku Nkwocha

Cecilia Nkwocha Nwokoye  
Nechi Nkwocha Nwokoye  
Mr. Iwotor of the Nigeria Rail Ways,  
Bauchi.



*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

**Mr. Onyali of the General Hospital,  
Bauchi.**

**Meniru Ikpeamana  
Amechi Okoye**

**Peter Nwaneki  
Peter Nogeli  
Samuel Okoli**

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
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*to Philip Emeagwali*

Okafor Chilete  
Patrick Onuorah  
Onuorah Okeke Nwanma

Bernard Okeke Nwanma  
Christian Nwaneki  
Nweke Obiorah  
Nathaniel Nmoh  
Eduzor Nkwonta  
Abalaora Chieme

Okoye Menu  
Nwobu Egwuekwe  
Christopher Egwuekwe  
Nwakuabia Obiorah  
Akueke Mbonu  
Mgboye Isidaenu

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
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*to Philip Emeagwali*

Chieme Akunkwo  
Uchenu Okeke  
Nwezele Igboekwe  
Mgbeke Anaeme  
Okoye Nwanyaka  
Ekenma Dozie

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
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*to Philip Emeagwali*

Okafor Duaka  
Unoaku Morah  
Jeremiah Nwankwo  
Nwangboye Egwuekwe  
Ekpe Nwaogalanya  
Caroline Ikeanyi

Akuekwu Nwoyeocha  
Albert Igboanugo (and his wife)  
Okoye Mgbeke  
Nwoduijele Nwanisobi  
Nwambu Ogadi  
Nwude Nwokeke

Paul Okafor  
Onuekwusi Enumele  
Nwanna Enemmor

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
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*to Philip Emeagwali*

**Okoye Enemmor**  
**Nmonwuba Okoye Enemmor**  
**Chigbata Okoye Enemmor**

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

Okoye Anawana  
Anyaora Uregwu  
Daniel Ayeke  
Okeke Ofiaeli  
Chinwude Okoye Ezeudu  
Simeon Ezete

Anaesolu Ezete  
Jonathan Nwankwo  
Silvanus Okonkwo  
Joseph Omaefi  
George Okam  
Innocent Omaefi

Nwafor Obike  
Ekemezie Enunwoke  
Innocent Okwubunne

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

**Mgboye Mpuatu**  
**Ojukwu Duaka**

**Nwoye'gbune Okeke**  
**Mgbogafor Modozie**  
**Ebenezer Omaefi**

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

Okoye Nwanyakonwu  
Okeke Nwanyakonwu  
Tabugbo Duaka

Chianumba Okeke  
Ibeki Obuorah  
Obed Oraegbune  
Nweke Nga  
Onwumelu Nhangwu  
Moses Okoye Nmoh

Patrick Onyekwelu  
Solomon Okeke  
David Amanambu  
Chidume Okonkwo Ego  
Eric Obunabo  
Onuorah Okeke Egwuekwe



*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

Onuorah Amazigwom Enweani  
Nwankwo Udozo Nebeolisa  
Nwamadu Ojukwu Nweneteanya  
Chinwuba Okonkwo Igweonwu  
Benedict Ekesi  
Ogbonnia Richard Okonkwo

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

Nwankwo Ifenacho  
Cecillia Ifenacho  
Ugoye Ifenacho  
Nwankwo Nwegbo  
Nwora Okafor Onwanuo  
Anyaegebune Anameze

Felix Anameze  
Biamali Anameze  
Margaret Anameze  
Mankwocha Anameze (nee Nechi)  
Nduba Onwudi  
Nworamali Anagbo

Okoye Anaefune  
Mankwo Anafune  
Okoye Ogalanya

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

**Ifeanyi Okolobu**  
**Benson Akabueze (and his wife)**  
**Ifeanyi Akabueze**

**Chidebe Okeke**  
**Nwamadu Anaduaka**  
**Okoye Nwogo**

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

Nwankwo Okafor Obodoaku  
Jonathan Aguolu  
Josiah Aguolu

Emmanuel Okeke  
Anene Chedom  
Okoye Aguigwo  
Okoye Ibeilo  
Ibeilo Chukwura  
Okoye Emekwisie

Ojukwu Mgbajiaka  
Umeadu Ilora  
Lewis Ekwealor  
Nwankwo Akunkwo  
Okonkwo Ilora  
Nwoye Nñuli

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

Jonathan Duaka  
Hyacinth Mpuatu  
Nwanyaerie Chukwura  
Okonkwo Ekesi  
Nwonwu Ayaebu  
Nwilo Aguolu

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

Okonkwo Nwanyako  
Ibegbune Emekwisie  
Mankwo Nnanyelu  
Nwankwo Nmo Aghogbune  
(and his two wives)

Okolo Duaka  
Victor Okoye Akuakor

Mgboyeocha Okoye Akuakor  
Theophilus Okafor  
Nwafor Obike  
Nweke Chedom  
Okafor Obidike  
Nwankwo Onwuakpa

Philip Ezendu  
Okonkwo Uregwu

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

Okafor Nkilo  
Nathaniel Uzoka  
Nwanaebene Obuogu  
Nwobu Igbo

Nwokonkwo Nwadogbu  
Nwudu Nkilo  
John Aghuche

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

Paul Okonkwo Nonyelu  
Agbonma Nweke Mkpaja  
Obed Agwuncha Okafor

Augustine Nwandu  
Nwanjo Okeke  
Chinwoke Ibenegbu  
Chiedozie Egwuonwu  
Sunday Okonkwo  
Nkwo Anyaorah

Sussana Anyaorah  
Obeleokoye Ekeokwu  
Nwankwo Ubosi  
Isaac Nwobu  
Ozo Nwobu Maneke  
Nwanna Okafor Duaka



*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

Ugonwa Nwokoye Chinweaku  
Akuekwu Nwokoye Chinweaku  
Nwunye Joel Udeze  
Adolphus Ndulue  
Anakwuba Okeke Ama  
Nwoye Okeke Ama

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

Mgbafor Udeji  
Nweke Nwanadile  
Michael Okafor Aru  
Alice Okafor Aru  
Igwevi Ogadi  
Nwanaigwe Okafor

Okeke Onunkwo  
Uchendu Ovulunne  
Nwaku Anyaorah  
Alexander Ezue  
Amoge Ezue  
Ogechukwu Igweonwu

Anyanechi Nwalado  
Jacob Nwabuji  
Mgbeke Nwabuji

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

**Anyankwo Nebechi**  
**Onuorah Obunwa**  
**Emerenti Obunwa**

**Obiageli Onuorah (nee Obunwa)**  
**Tagbo Obunwa**  
**Ilonwa Onyeocha**  
**Nwoye Onyeocha**

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

Njideka Okeke Odogwu  
Anene Okonkwo Anawana

Nwafor Okonkwo Anawana  
Jerome Okoye (Captain Lee)...

The Late Children of  
Sampson C. Okoye  
of Etiti Village Enugwu—Agidi:

Chika Okoye  
Ngozi Okoye  
Nkemdilim Okoye  
Josephine Okoye  
Nwakego Okoye  
Osita Okoye\*

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

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**\*First cousins of the poet who perished in the Biafran War.**

**This list however, does not include children and adolescents, whose memories have curiously been swallowed by Time.**

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

- dead Igbos  
were dumped in decimals:  
left femurs, three-quarter trunks, cracked  
clavicles,  
crushed girdles, limping ears, yanked  
genitals,  
flying heads,  
precursors of the Gideon Akaluka arrogant  
show  
unscratched cadavers  
    putrid and wet  
mutilated bodies, babies, foetuses  
    which fanatical axes split  
waves, upon waves, upon waves  
    of dead Igbos  
saturated a season

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

and Nigeria's soil was drunk

but these they labelled flies  
void census and statistics

for their revenge is aflame...

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

their revenge is aflame  
and foists slavery upon us

their revenge is aflame

Ironsi, their revenge is aflame

and fake lions flee  
your memorials in Abuja and Lagos  
but garnish the anniversary of Butchers  
with Harvard tinted grammar and champagne

Igbos flee  
from your memorials across the land



*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

**for their revenge is aflame...**

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
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*to Philip Emeagwali*

every blade of grass  
fed the massacre

every tributary  
fuelled the graveyard

every face of earth  
pumped profits of Igbo blood

every village  
boasted kilometres of martyrs

every cycle of slaughter  
amplified their outrage

we fell in swoops and squadrons  
in trucksful and trainloads  
an African Auschwitz;  
with London's morals at 4 O'clock

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

an African Gallipoli  
with Washington kissing Moscow in  
Kubla Khan;  
Yugoslavia, Egypt and the Gulf States  
“fanning the embers...”

- prognosis of the debacle in Hamman  
Gog.

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

Igbos perished like locusts  
some buried alive  
but at last

Rome's neck  
spread  
for Nero's fanciful blade to roast.

their swords, guns, pickaxes, and python  
clubs  
drank the blood of kings and merchandise

but they are not appeased

- their anger is aflame...

so they chase us  
beyond the jugular  
profaning our Ikenga and Cross  
uprooting our teeth alive:

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

**pixilated, our nativity's Ogbu Chi  
battles the pityriasis of hatred**

**for their revenge is aflame...**

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

they chase us  
into twilight  
with castration as their Coat of Arms  
our regression as Constitution

subliminal slaughter punctuates our footsteps  
a dirge escorts our toil in every sphere

and now that the first pilots  
are dishwashers across the globe

and without one firm finger  
on their switch of milk and honey

this bearded cruelty blossoms

because they are not appeased...  
our oblivion is their goal

their anger glows

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*

their anger grows  
their anger

sharpens at sunrise

Major General J. T. U. Aguiyi Ironsi

their revenge is aflame....

- by Obu Udeozo.

*Thunder Road to Biafra*    *Photos, Poems & Letters from*  
*Somewhere in Biafra*  
*to Philip Emeagwali*



# *Thunder Road to Biafra*

*Photos, Poems & Letters from*

*Somewhere in Biafra*

*to Philip Emeagwali*

**Comment:** Egyptian pilots flew Soviet Jets that blasted several homes in Emeagwali's neighborhood. [Photo: A searching for her daughter after a Nigerian bombing raid, *Life Magazine*, July 12, 1968]



The logo for meagwali.com features a stylized hamburger menu icon on the left, composed of three horizontal purple bars. To its right, the word "meagwali" is written in a playful, rounded font where each letter is a different color: 'm' is orange, 'e' is purple, 'a' is red, 'g' is green, 'w' is blue, and 'a' is red. The letters have a slight 3D effect with a grey drop shadow. To the right of "meagwali" is ".com" in a smaller, red, sans-serif font.

*For Most of it I Have No Words*

*Reflections on the Biafran Genocide*

*by Philip Emeagwali*

## Editorial Reviews

### Book Description

War Stories: A Memoir of Nigeria and Biafra by John Sherman tells the story of an American who served with a food/medical team operated by the International Committee of the Red Cross during the civil war in Nigeria in the late 1960s. It contains flashbacks to the time when the author had been a Peace Corps Volunteer in the same area of West Africa (in 1966-67). The book has 16 pp. of photographs taken by the author during the war and also includes illustrations of some memorabilia of Nigeria and Biafra collected by the author. Front matter includes a chronology of events for Nigeria and Biafra, 1960-70, and maps of the area, along with a glossary, to provide readers with perspective on the situations described in the book.

The memoir began as a diary kept by John Sherman when he lived in West Africa in the late 1960s. Sherman arrived in Nigeria in September 1966 as a Peace Corps Volunteer teacher assigned to a school in the then-Eastern Region of the country. On May 30, 1967, the Eastern Region seceded and became the Republic of Biafra. Civil war soon followed and Sherman was evacuated. He spent the next year with the Peace Corps in Malawi, in southeastern Africa, then returned to Nigeria to work with the International Committee of the Red Cross. At first, he was assigned to work at the airport at Lagos, then the country's capital. Soon, he was sent to work with a food/medical team in an area that had been, briefly, a part of Biafra but was now again in Nigerian hands.

Sherman worked with a doctor and two nurses and several young men who were responsible for distributing the food each day at clinics where they treated hundreds and fed thousands of people who were struggling to survive the horrible conditions brought about by the war.

Sherman's book brings the reader uncomfortably close to the horrors of war, especially how it affects those least responsible for the war -- the children. The team he served with attempted to save the lives of hundreds of children every day, many of whom were suffering from kwashiorkor -- extreme malnutrition.

The book shows Sherman's evolution from being pro-Biafran (he had attempted to return to Biafra, but was unable to get there, so he joined the Red Cross on the Nigerian side of the civil war) to someone who saw the good and evil on both sides and who quickly understood the futility of all war, particularly the one he became so personally involved in.

### From the Author

This is, unfortunately, a timely book. Sadly, a book about war and the futility of war is always a timely topic. Although the story I tell took place 35 and more years ago, I am confident that readers too young to remember the events will, nonetheless, benefit from the story and learn a piece of history that, at the time, held the world's attention. Those who do remember can relate to the tragedy described in the book. Being a memoir, it is a highly personal view of a broader situation, but readers of the book who were not aware of the events described have found it compelling.

Wole Soyinka was imprisoned during the Nigerian-Biafran Civil War.

### RECOMMENDED READING:

[The man died: prison notes of Wole Soyinka](#) by Wole Soyinka

Reviewer: **David Jackson** (Melbourne, Victoria Australia) - See all my reviews



This is the story of Soyinka's 27 month period of imprisonment at the hands of the Nigerian government. Unlike, say, Nelson Mandela's autobiography, which generally casts a similar subject in its wider political and social contexts, this is fundamentally a personal account, painfully private at times. Essentially, Soyinka found refuge from the brutality inflicted upon him by retreating into and living within his own mind. At times he drifted about the frontiers of madness, hanging on to his self by a thread. At others he pondered, listened, watched, like only the truly otherwise unoccupied can. And, importantly, he also managed to scrounge paper and a pencil from time to time and record his journey of motionlessness. For those interested in the human mind, this is a rewarding book, and I highly recommend it.