

## THE ICAO CORNER

by Albert Pelsser

### BRAZIL: SEMANA DA ASA



Figure 1

This month's story of the series titled "The ICAO Corner" focuses on the SEMANA DA ASA (Week of the Wing) celebrated every year in Brazil since 1935. The cover serving as the basis of this story shown at Figure 1, with Icarus, the allegorical figure of flight, was postmarked on 21 October 1959 by the latter country and bears the emblem of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), which has had its headquarters in Montréal, Canada, since 1945.

In 1935, at the initiative of the Touring Club of Brazil, the Semana da ASA was established in Brazil to preserve the memory of Alberto Santos-Dumont (1873-1932), a Brazilian aviation pioneer. Born in Brazil, Santos-Dumont moved to Paris, France at the age of 18 after the death of his father in 1891, rich with the profits of his family's coffee plantation.

Talented mechanic, Santos-Dumont began racing motorized tricycles, then turned to ballooning and subsequently to dirigibles. On 19 October 1901, he made an early demonstration of controlled flying in a dirigible No. 6 around the Eiffel Tower in Paris and won the Deutsch de la Meurthe Prize. In 1904, Santos began to experiment with

gliders and produced a helicopter.

On 23 October 1906, in addition to his pioneering work in airships, Santos-Dumont flew, before a crowd of journalists and aviation officials, 60 meters in a fixed-wing aircraft of his own design and construction, the *14-bis*, setting the first ever world record for distance flown recognized by the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (FAI); he won the Deutsch-Archdeacon Prize for the first sustained flight of more than 25 metres. His aeroplane was in fact a tail-first box-kite powered by a 50hp Antoinette engine.

Then, on 12 November 1906 still with the same *14-bis*, Santos made the longest powered flight yet recorded in Europe, by flying 220 meters in 21.5 seconds; he won the Aéro-Club de France's Prize for the first officially observed flight of more than 100 metres. It is to be noted that the Wright Brothers made their first flight in public in August 1908, which is almost two years later.

Santos-Dumont returned later to Brazil where he died in 1932. In his homeland after his feats, Santos-Dumont is considered a national hero and the Father of Aviation, having his name written in Brazilian Hero Pan-



theon.

In honour of Santos-Dumont's achievement with his *14-bis*, the date of 23 October was designated the Aviator's Day (Dia do Aviador) and is yearly commemorated by the Brazilian Air Force (Força Aérea Brasileira). His name and image are printed in many places of the world, in books, monuments, coins, museums, airports, schools, parks, streets, cities and even celestial bodies orbiting the universe. One of most noted monuments to Albert Santos-Dumont was unveiled in 1932 in Saint-Cloud, France; the bronze statue symbolizes Icarus and the inscription on the statue reads: *This monument was erected by the Aero-club of France to commemorate the experiences of Santos-Dumont, pioneer of aerial locomotion.* The slopes of Saint-Cloud were naturally selected to test the first aircraft engines and see rising spherical vessels.

In addition, only three years after Santos-Dumont's death, that is in 1935, the Semana da ASA was established and is celebrated every year usually in the week of 23 October with air demonstrations and exhibitions.

In April 1934, at the initiative of the Aero Club of São Paulo, the first National Aviation Congress was organized to define the strategy for the development and implementation of the aviation industry in Brazil. On this occasion, the latter country issued a stamp (Scott #386, blue), showing Santos-Dumont's monument in St. Cloud, France (Icarus taking off a rock), the plaster model being inaugurated on 19 October 1913 on a square near the ground where Santos-Dumont took off on 19 October 1901 to perform in less than half an hour the round-trip Saint-Cloud-Eiffel Tower in his airship No. 6. The whole

monument with its pedestal was shown on the stamp at Figure 2 (Scott #C65, see at Figure 2) issued for the Week of the Wing in 1947. It is interesting to note that Switzerland issued a set of three stamps (Scott #C10-12, see sample at Figure 3) on 13 May 1924 with a design of Icarus quite similar to the design of the Brazilian stamp with Santos-Dumont's monument.



Figure 3

The commercial cover at Figure 4, addressed to ICAO, was postmarked on 3 July 1962. It bears a deep-blue hand-stamp commemorating the year of Santos-Dumont which started on 20 January 1956 for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Santos-Dumont's flight in the *14-bis* aeroplane. The cancel at the upper-middle of the cover shows the coat of arms of Brazil created in 1889 when the country became a republic; the ribbons at the lower part of this cancel indicate: ESTADOS UNIDOS DA BRAZIL (UNITED STATES OF

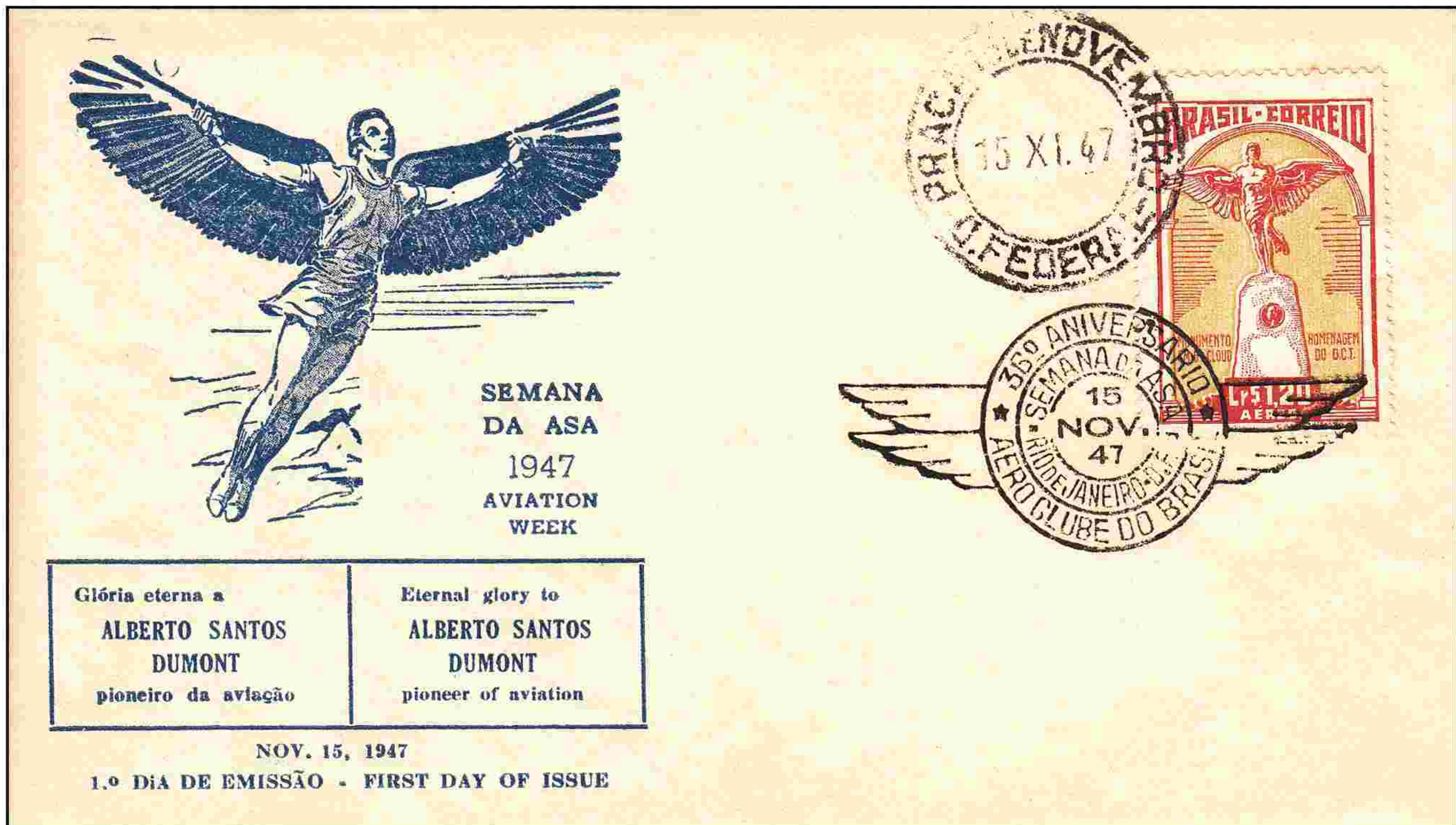


Figure 2





Figure 4

BRAZIL) and 15 de Novembro de 1889. It is to be noted that the second South American/South Atlantic Regional Air Navigation Meeting was convened by ICAO in the Parque Ibirapuera, São Paulo, Brazil, from 22 October to 16

November 1957, during the celebrations of the Semana da Asa of that year.

The comprehensive list of Brazil’s issues related to the Week of the Wing is provided hereafter.

CHECKLIST

Brazil	386	1934 Apr 15	Santos-Dumont’s monument in St. Cloud
Brazil	511	1941 Oct 20	Air Force Emblem, Week of the Wing
Brazil	C60	1944 Oct 23	Week of the Wing, Bartolomeu de Gusmão and the Aerostat balloon
Brazil	C65	1947 Nov 15	Santos-Dumont’s monument, Week of the Wing
Brazil	713-714	1951 Oct 19	Santos-Dumont, Week of the Wing; 50 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of Santos-Dumont’s flight around the Eiffel Tower
Brazil	C90	1959 Oct 21	Santos-Dumont’s monument, Week of the Wing
Brazil	1012	1965 Oct 8	Week of the Wing, National Philatelic Exhibition at São Paulo, Curtiss Fledgling aircraft
Brazil	1062	1967 Oct 18	Week of the Wing, balloon, airplane and rocket
Brazil	1138	1969 Oct 17	Week of the Wing, Santos-Dumont’s flight around the Eiffel Tower, Man’s first landing on the moon

REFERENCES

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alberto\\_Santos-Dumont](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alberto_Santos-Dumont)  
[http://legacy.icao.int/icao/en/hist/stamps/1957\\_São\\_Paulo\\_regional\\_air\\_navigation\\_meeting.htm](http://legacy.icao.int/icao/en/hist/stamps/1957_São_Paulo_regional_air_navigation_meeting.htm)

