

THE ICAO CORNER

by Albert Pelsser

OVERSEAS MAILERS' COVERS

This month's story of the series titled "The ICAO Corner" focuses on the first day cover, shown at Figure 1, issued on 1 June 1955 to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), which has its headquarters in Montréal, Canada, since 1945. Strangely enough, this cover features a *Convair B-36 Peacemaker* aircraft, parked on the tarmac of an airport, in the process of refuelling; this aircraft was a heavy strategic bomber, designed for military use. The association made by the cachet maker (that is, Overseas Mailers) with a stamp related to civil aviation may either be symbolic of the conversion of military aircraft to civilian transport use after World War II or just have been an error of assessment on ICAO's mission.

With World War II raging in Europe, a specific request issued on 11 April 1941 for the first intercontinental bomber originated from the U.S. Army Air Corps having concerns about the range of its bomber force; it would require a bomber with transcontinental capability and sufficient range to strike targets in Europe from bases in the U.S. These requirements called for an aircraft with a 275mph cruising speed, a service ceiling of 35,000 feet, an unrefueled range of 10,000 miles, and a bomb load of 72,000 pounds. These quickly proved to be beyond the capabilities of existing technology and the requirements were reduced in August 1941. Selected from four competing designs addressing the new requirements, Consolidated (Convair after 1943) won the development contract.



Figure 1

While the initial mockup was completed in July 1942, the project was plagued by delays, as early in the war the military refused to supply materials, tradesmen, and engineers to this development. Dwarfing the newly arriving Boeing B-29 Superfortress, the Convair B-36 possessed immense wings which permitted cruising altitudes above the ceilings of existing fighters and anti-aircraft artillery. For power, the B-36 incorporated six Pratt & Whitney radial engines mounted in a pusher configuration. While this arrangement made the wings more efficient, it led to problems with the engines overheating. The design was also plagued with landing gear problems which limited the airfields from which it would operate. Eventually on 8 August 1946, the prototype flew for the first time. On 28 August 1947, the B-36 took off for its maiden flight and production continued for almost seven years. Though largely obsolete when it entered service, the B-36 became a key asset for the Strategic Air Command due to its long range and bomb capacity. After a life service of 11 years, it was declared obsolete in February 1959.

Every great nation believes that its own overwhelming strength is the only possible guarantee of the world's peace and can only be secured by the defeat of other nations. The nickname of the bomber B-36 *Peacemaker* may open the discussion on the ethics of war and whether the power deployed by this bomber was proportional or appropriate, before the United States entered World War II; peacemaking is a complicated concept because peace can be defined in so many different ways. The nickname of the aircraft may have just been derived from a 1868 painting by George P.A. Healy titled *The Peacemakers* depicting the historic 28 March 1865 strategy session by the Union High Command on the steamer *River Queen* during the final days

of the American Civil War; it currently hangs in the private dining room of the U.S. President.

The relationship between civil and military aviation is obvious, but was emphasized by World War II. The air transport picture changed quickly and drastically with the outbreak of hostilities in 1939. Military operations became a major component of the world transportation system and huge organizations of military air transport were built on the basis of existing peacetime international air services. But on the other hand, it was also felt that, with the end of hostilities, aviation was destined to become one of the principal elements of economic development of the world and that an instrument serving evil war purposes should also serve good peaceful purposes.

In aviation circles during the war, the need for international organization of civil aviation in peacetime became a problem of primary concern. The goals of international cooperation were crafted in the Preamble to the Convention on International Civil Aviation, as follows: *Whereas the future development of international civil aviation can greatly help to create and preserve friendship and understanding among the nations and peoples of the world, yet its abuse can become a threat to the general security; and Whereas it is desirable to avoid friction and to promote that cooperation between nations and peoples upon peace of the world depends; Therefore, the undersigned governments ... have accordingly concluded this Convention to that end.*

Overseas Mailers Ltd. was established by John Barnard (Jay) Leach (1911-2003), a New York State resident, who designed and printed first day and event covers of dozens of countries from the early 1950s to 1976. In addition to his own covers, Leach also sold covers

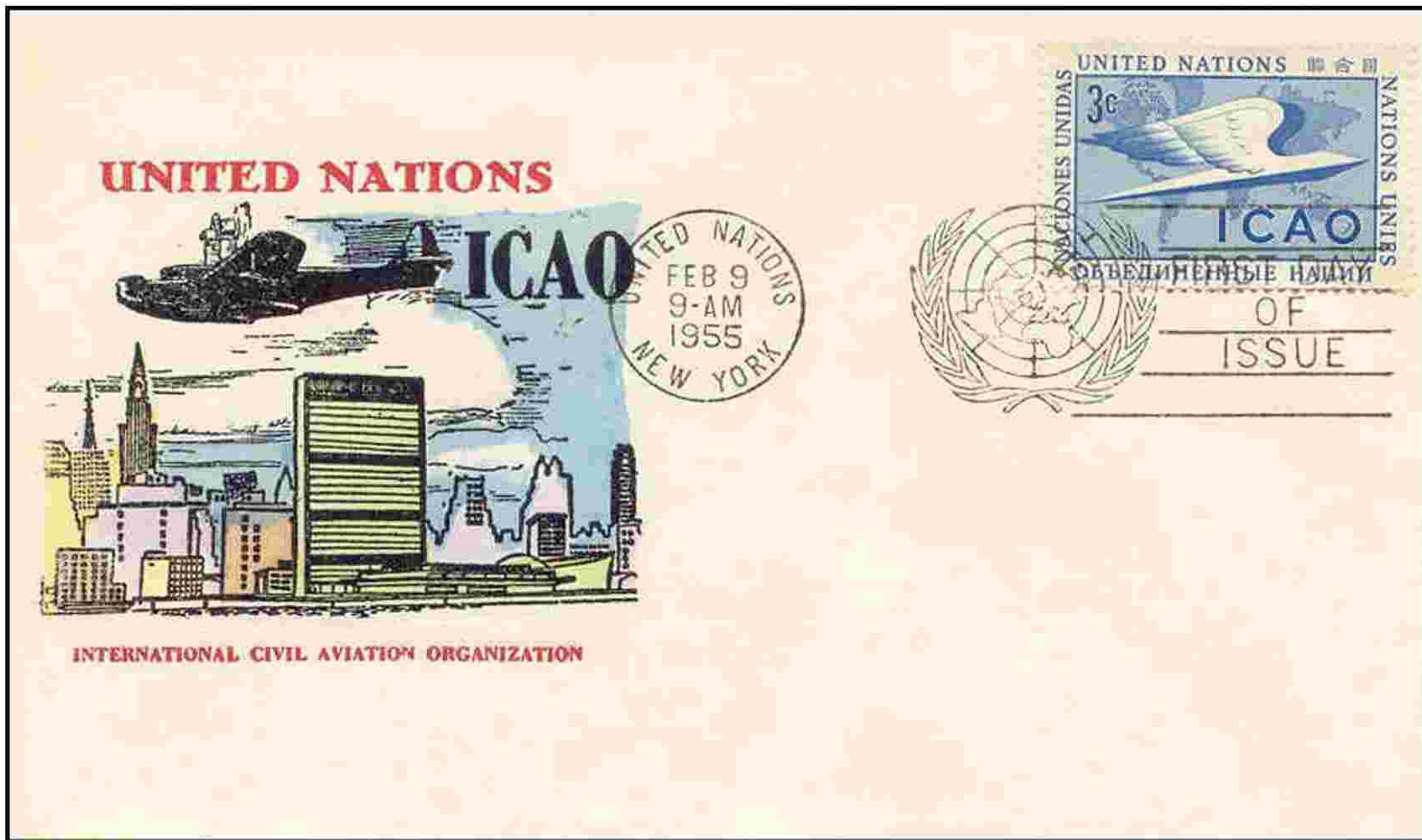


Figure 2

designed by others which he modified by hand-painting or adding art-work, and included with the covers vivid write-ups of the stamps and cachets.

In addition to the cover mentioned here-above, Overseas Mailers released a few other covers related to ICAO. Two were issued for the 10th anniversary of ICAO in 1955. The first one with the blue-grey 3-cent stamp (see at Figure 2) shows an aircraft over the U.N. building and the city of New York. The second one with the carmine 8-cent stamp (see at Figure 3) shows an airport, patrol activity

and control tower services at work; it also displays an early ICAO emblem.

The last cover within the ICAO collection (see at Figure 4) was issued when the U.N. released two stamps of its airmail issue in 1959. The cachet shows a pilot flying his plane and pays tribute to the ICAO's work in promoting safety and progress in aviation.

Overseas Mailers' covers are extremely attractive and visually appealing; the colourful designs capture the essence of the stamp's theme.



Figure 3

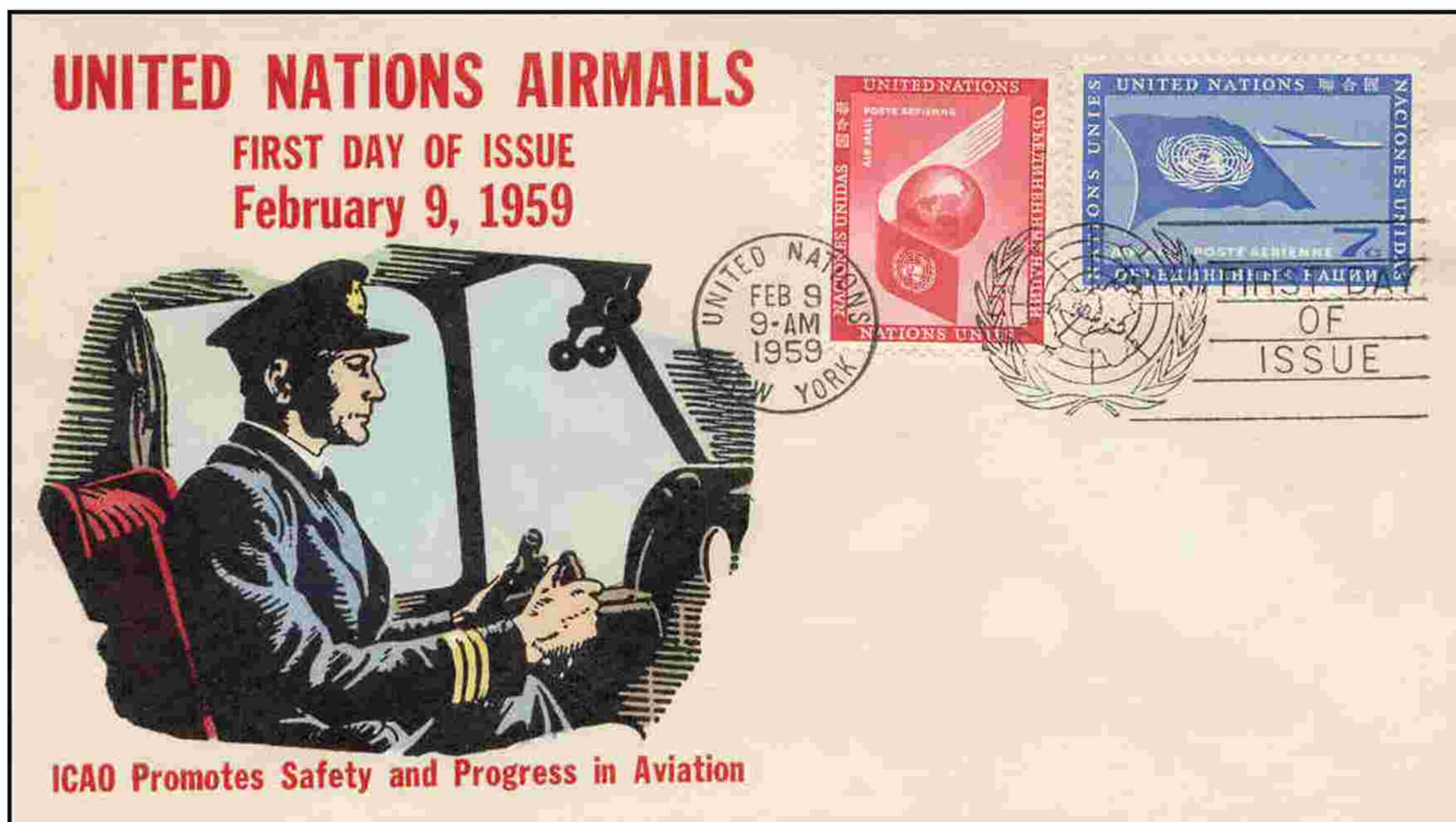


Figure 4

CHECKLIST

Canada	354	1955 Jun 01	10 th Anniversary of the Interim Agreement and first PICAQ Meeting
United Nations New York	31-2	1955 Feb 09	10 th Anniversary of the Interim Agreement and first PICAQ Meeting
United Nations New York	C6-7	1959 Feb 9	Air post stamps

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http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Peacemakers

<http://www.icao.int/secretariat/PostalHistory/index.html>

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