



First Flights of the UN



The March 5, 1959 issue of the USPOD publication "Postal Bulletin" announced that an agreement had been reached between the USPOD and the UNPA so that collectors may have covers mailed from the UN Post Office on First Flights originating in New York city. Covers to be serviced must be mailed from the UN Post Office, have the appropriate UN postage affixed, and be in the hand of the UNPA at least 5 days prior to the flight.

Although the agreement had not yet been signed, the first official UN First Flight took place on January 25, 1959 on American Airlines from New York to Los Angeles with just 728 covers.

According to the agreement, official UN First Flight cachets would be struck in green (US First Flight cachets were struck in black). The same cachet was used for both US and UN covers, only the color would be different.

Airlines were required to request official First Flight cachets in advance of the flight. But, sometimes there were flights with little advance notice and no official cachet could be prepared. This occurred mostly in the early years (1959-63). Many such flights exist which bear either a cachet from the airline itself or some other private cachet.

Starting in April, 1968 only envelopes were accepted for servicing. Prior to that time, postcards and air letters (aerogrammes) could also be submitted.

The last official UN First Flight cover was for the November 1, 1989 flight to Stuttgart, Germany. The U.S. Postal Service discontinued providing special treatment and cachets for inaugural flights in late 1992 as part of cost-saving measures.