

# ICAO TIE-INS

By Albert Pelsser

## Romania - A nation of aviation pioneers

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Romania was among the few nations in the world which brought essential contributions to aviation and flying because there were people who dedicated their life and work to fulfilling the human desire to fly and developing aviation. Among the most well-known inventors who contributed to the flight development by means of apparatuses heavier than the air, Traian Vuia, Aurel Vlaicu and Henri Coanda played a distinct role.

In parallel to the above developments, schools of piloting were established and airships from other countries were purchased, with provision for specially designed workshops for the maintenance and repairing of aircraft.



*Chitila's infrastructure in 1911.  
Farman IV biplane.*

The first school of piloting was initiated by the Romanian lawyer Mihail Cerchez, after his return from Paris in the summer of 1909. It started its activity in the spring of 1910, on the field near Chitila, where the first aerodrome of the Romanian aviation was settled. Once the infrastructure for the construction and repair of the airships had been completed, Mihail Cerchez purchased four aircraft from France: two biplane Farman aircraft that were intended to carrying out the training flights of the future pilots, one Demoiselle aircraft and a Wright aircraft for the ground instruction. Second Lieutenants Ștefan Protopopescu and Gheorghe Negrescu were among the first six military pilots trained. Cerchez also obtained that the Farman aircraft be assembled in his workshops.

Having obtained their Pilot Licences in July 1911, Protopopescu and Negrescu, along with other pilots, participated in military maneuvers on Farmans in the fall of 1911 and carried out a series of raids to popularize aviation among youth and to maintain a high degree of readiness among pilots.

Returned from France in 1911, Prince George Valentin Bibescu brought with him one Voisin Canard aircraft and one Blériot XI, having the intention to establish a piloting school. Later on, he ordered three more Blériot aircraft. In real competition with the school of piloting from Chitila, Bibescu's school began its activity on the field nearby Cotroceni in the summer of 1911.

Towards the end of 1911, the state ceased the financial support to the school of Chitila and decided to settle a new military school at Cotroceni, after Bibescu was granted the army's support; hence, this forced Cerchez to close both the school and its premises at Chitila. On 1 April 1912, the Military School of Piloting was officially established in Romania, thus replacing the piloting school initiated by Bibescu.

Another school of piloting mentioned in the Romanian annals of aeronautics was established in the year of 1912, at the initiative of the same enthusiast, George Bibescu, who had not given up his desire of promoting the aeronautics. Through his and other contemporary people's effort, on 5 May 1912, the National Air League was founded, meant to equip the Romanian Army with airplanes. As a result, the collection of funds was possible in a relatively short time, which allowed a new aerodrome to be constructed at Băneasa and the National Aeronautic League School of Piloting to be established. Several Blériot monoplanes and Farman biplanes were acquired for the training of military pilots. Year 1912 is used to calculate the anniversaries of Băneasa airport, later renamed *Aeroportul Internațional Aurel Vlaicu*.

With these component phases of the forming process of military pilots reminded, the following pages display a

few covers commemorating the historical events of aviation which have occurred in Romania early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. All these covers bear at least one stamp of the series issued by Romania on 15 August 1984 for the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ICAO (with graphic design by Mihai Andrei); these stamps are shown here-after for the sake of easy reference. The covers are shown in chronological sequence.



Lockheed 14-WG3B Super Electra of Romanian LARES airline, registered YR-LIS in Romania, over map of Europe.



Britten-Norman BN-2A Islander, registered YR-BNC in Romania, over Băneasa airport, Bucharest.



Rombac One-Eleven Series 500, leaving Otopeni Airport, Bucharest, and an airliner on ground.



Boeing 707 of TAROM and world map.



Cover commemorating the first philatelic exhibition *Bucuresti '84*, held in Bucharest from 1 to 7 December 1984, coinciding with the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ICAO.

The cachet and cancel show a Rombac 1-11 from Tarom.



First Day Cover issued on 2 April 1985 to commemorate the 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the invention of an early version of the modern ejection seat by Anastase Dragomir.

Romanian inventor Dragomir was interested in aviation issues. He went to France, where he worked in several aircraft factories. There he perfected his own system to save the pilots and passengers in case of accidents. On 3 November 1928, he recorded in France the patent application *Nouveau système de montage des parachutes dans les appareils de locomotion aérienne* and obtained patent #678566 on 2 April 1930, together with another Romanian inventor, Tănase Dobrescu. After several interventions, Dragomir managed to obtain the necessary financing and began the construction of a *catapulted cabin*. He experienced the invention on 28 August 1929, at Orly airport near Paris with a modified Farman airplane wherein a catapultable cockpit was installed. After the experiment, Anastase Dragomir returned home, where he repeated the demonstration at the Băneasa Airport in Bucharest, on 26 October 1929, with the help of Captain Constantin Nicolau, engineer of the Romanian aviation technical services. After that, Dragomir continued to refine his invention and obtained several other patents.

The cover was sponsored by the A.F.R. (Romanian Philatelic Association) Iași Branch.



Philatelic Exhibition held from 20 to 24 July 1985 to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of first civil flight between Bucharest and Arad, with stops in Craiova and Timișoara, on 17 July 1935, and with pilot Dumesnil, mechanical Desal and passenger desAla Polihroniade Vacas in an ICAR M-36 *Comercial* high-wing monoplane, registered YR-ACS and operated by LARES airline (see lower aircraft in the cachet). The protocol for the establishment of Timișoara Regional Airport was signed earlier that year on 29 May 1935 and the airport was officially inaugurated on 20 July 1935. ICAR Comercial was the first aircraft fully manufactured in Romania.

The aircraft registered YR-BCA shown at the upper-side of the cachet is a BAC 1-11 from TAROM, delivered on 14 June 1968; it was the first one of a series of 21 Bac One-Eleven delivered to Romania.

The cachet shows the Timișoara airport and control tower at the time of issue; the airport commemorated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1985.

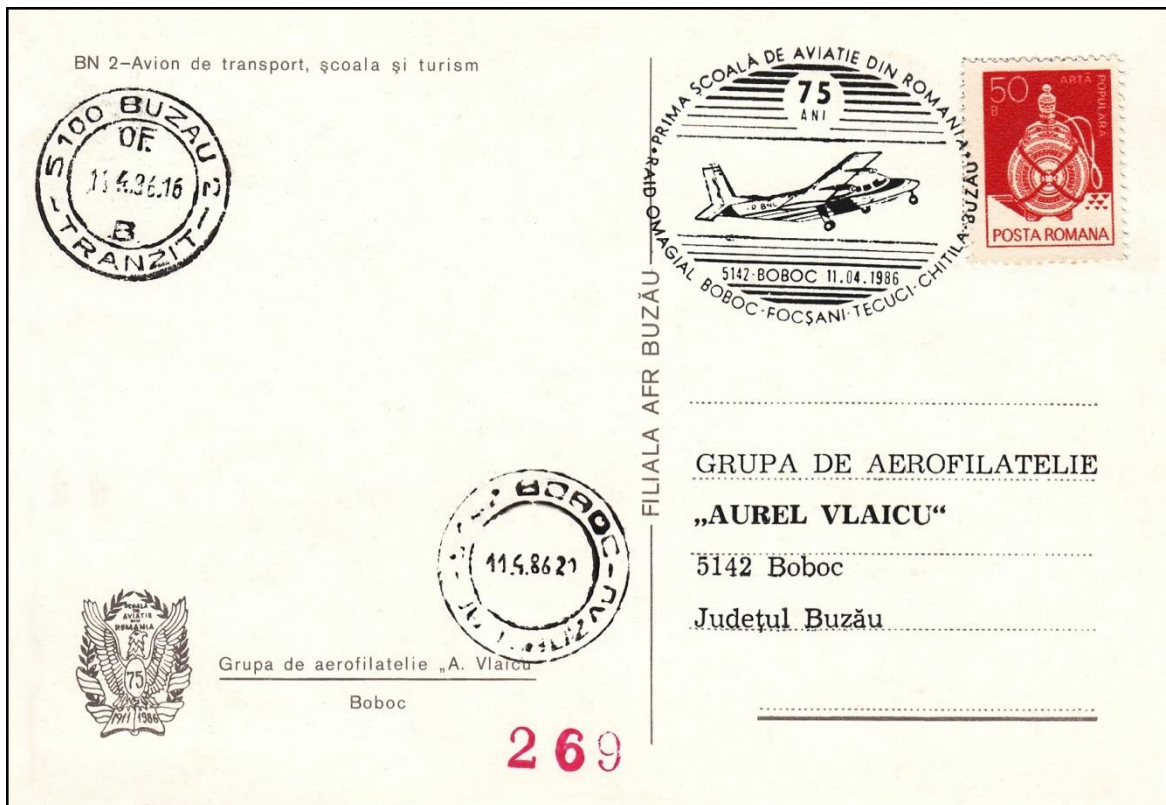
The cover was sponsored by the A.F.R. (Romanian Philatelic Association) Timiș Branch in Timișoara.



Philatelic Exhibition held from 20 to 24 July 1985 to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of first civil flight to Timișoara, on 17 July 1935.

The protocol for the establishment of Timișoara Regional Airport was signed earlier that year on 29 May 1935 and the airport was officially inaugurated on 20 July 1935.

The aircraft registered YR-BCA shown here is a BAC 1-11 from TAROM, delivered on 14 June 1968; it was the first one of a series of 21 Bac One-Eleven delivered to Romania.



11 April 1986 - First day card commemorating the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the first piloting school in Romania in the spring of 1911. Homage air raid in April 1986: Boboc - Focsani - Tecuci - Chitila - Buzau. Black cancel. Graphic design by Mihai Andrei. The picture of the back (with a sequential number 269) shows the special emblem designed for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first piloting school.

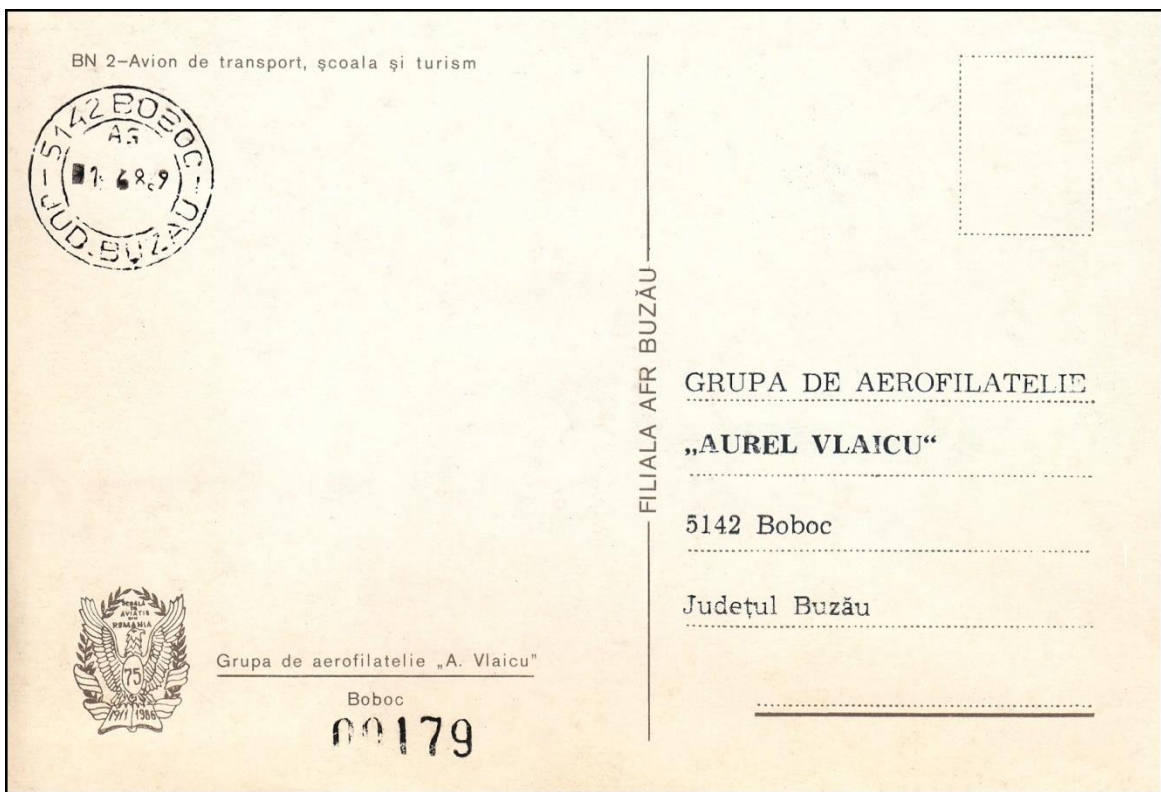


11 April 1986 - First day cover commemorating the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the first piloting school in Romania in the spring of 1911. Homage air raid in April 1986: Boboc - Focsani - Tecuci - Chitila - Buzau. The cachet shows the evolution of aircraft in Romania (from top to bottom): Farman IV (built in Romania under a French patent), IAR-80 (Romanian World War II low-wing monoplane), IAR-823 (low-wing monoplane, civil and military trainer aircraft built in Romania from 1974 until 1983), IAR-316B (Romanian helicopter) and IAR-99 (Romanian Jet trainer and light attack aircraft). Blue cancel.



Maximum card issued for the philatelic exhibition (EXPOZITIA FILATELICA ARIPI ROMANESTI, held from 11 to 18 April 1986 in Buzau, Romania) commemorating the 75th anniversary of the creation of the First Aviation School (Chitila School initiated by Mihail Cerchez) in Romania in 1911. The aircraft on the maximum card and the stamp is a Britten-Norman BN-2A Islander, registered YR-BNC. Graphic design by Mihai Andrei.





15 June 1986 - First day card commemorating the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the first piloting school in Romania in the spring of 1911. The aircraft on the maximum card and the stamp is a Britten-Norman BN-2A Islander, registered YR-BNC.

Graphic design by Mihai Andrei.

The card was issued on the occasion of the aviation day (ZUIA AVIATIEI) and parachuted on that day (CORRESPONDENTA PARASUTATA).

The picture of the back (with a sequential number 179) shows the special emblem designed for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first piloting school.



Cover commemorating the International Competition *Prietenia* of aerial acrobatics of the socialist countries held in Strejnicu (County of Prahova) on 29 June 1986. Cover sponsored by the A.F.R. (Romanian Philatelic Association) Prahova Branch.



First day cover commemorating the first raid between Bucharest and Craiova by Pilots Negrescu and Protopopescu in 1911. It was the first flight of this kind in the country.

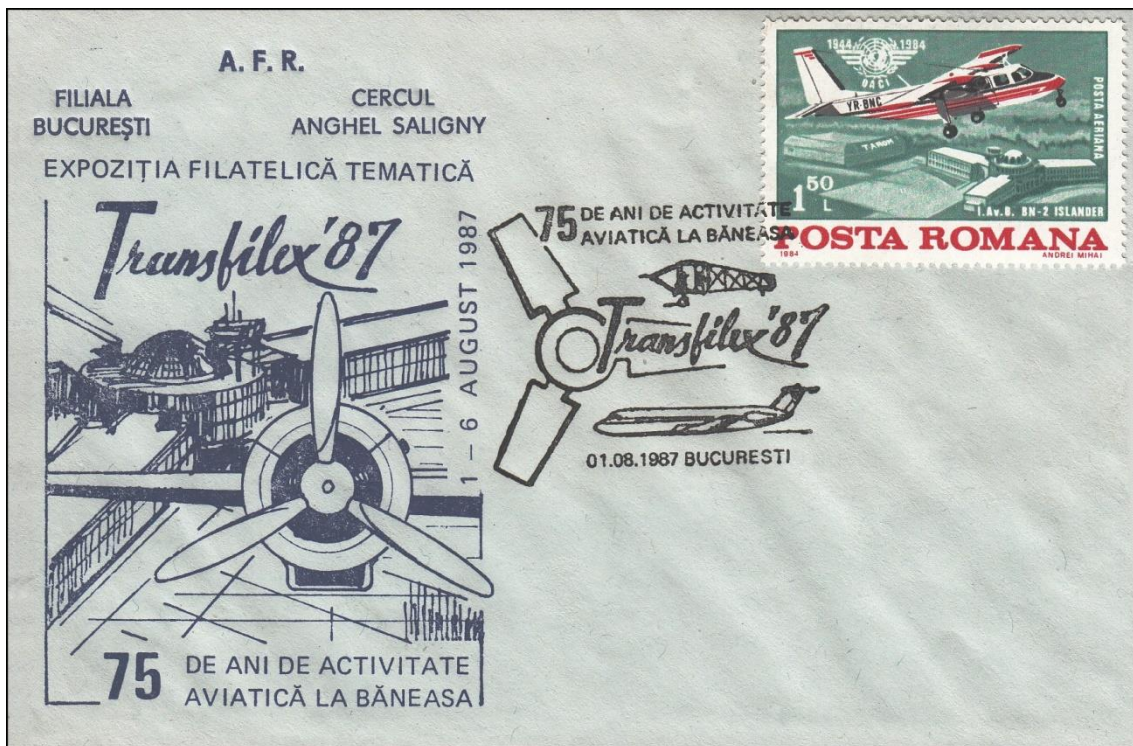
In the morning of 22 October 1911, Lieuts. Negrescu and Protopopescu on their Henry Farman IV machines set out from Bucharest to fly the 364kms to Turnu-Severin on the Serbian frontier.

Lieut. Negrescu got as far as Sviniseshei and then had to come down for petrol. On the following day, he got on to Craiova, after making a stop of five minutes at Karakal.

Lieut. Protopopescu took a more northerly course and his first landing was at Slatina after flying 189 kiloms. He finished the first stage at Craiova on the following day, doing the 61 kms in 30 minutes. The next day, he easily completed the final stage to Turnu Severin.

On 22 October 1986, a Britten-Norman BN-2A Islander flew on the exact same route: Bucharest-Craiova-Bucharest to commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the original flight.

The cachet and the postmark show a Farman IV and a Britten-Norman BN-2A Islander.



First day cover commemorating the Transfilex'87 philatelic exhibition held from 1 to 6 August 1987 at Bucharest, Romania. It was organized for the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of aviation activity at Băneasa airport. Băneasa airport (shown in the cachet and the stamp) is the oldest continuously operating airport in Eastern Europe, and among the oldest five airports in the world. The cancel shows a Farman IV biplane. The cover was sponsored by the A.F.R. (Romanian Philatelic Association).



FILIALA MUREȘ

Piața Trandafirilor nr. 20  
4300 Tîrgu-Mureș

Philatelic exhibition *Aerosocfilex* held from 29 August to 5 September 1987 to commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the prizes realized by aviation pioneer Aurel Vlaicu during the air rally held in Aspern, Austria from 23 to 30 June 1912. In 1911, Aurel Vlaicu built a second plane, Vlaicu II, which won five memorable prizes in 1912: one first prize and four second prizes.

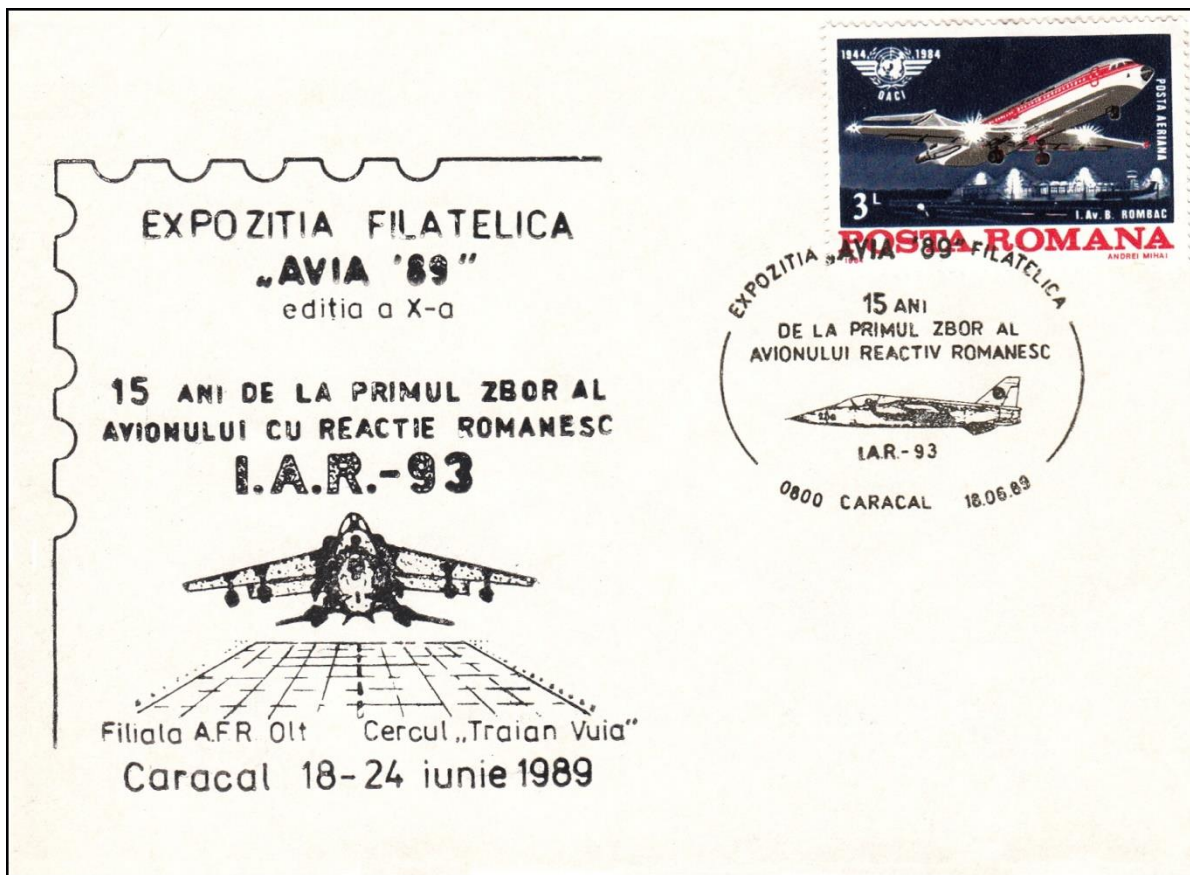


The Aspern Airfield (near Vienna) was officially inaugurated on 23 June 1912, as the largest and most modern airport in Europe at that time, with an International Aviation week.

The cover was sponsored by the A.F.R. (Romanian Philatelic Association) Tîrgu-Mureș Branch. The cachet shows the Vlaicu II aircraft.



Cancel commemorating the fifth anniversary of the first flight of the Romanian aircraft Rombac 1-11. From 1982, Romania built nine BAC One-Eleven Series 500 under licence, as the Rombac One-Eleven (with registration numbers from YR-BRA to YR-BRI). The first Rombac One-Eleven registered YR-BRA was rolled out at Romaero Băneasa factory on 27 August 1982 and flew for the first time on 18 September 1982.



Philatelic exhibition AVIA 89 held in Caracal (from 18 to 24 June 1989) commemorating the 15th anniversary of the first flight by the Romanian jet aircraft I.A.R. 93 on 31 October 1974. This aircraft is a high-winged subsonic fighter.

The cover was sponsored by the A.F.R. (Romanian Philatelic Association) Olt County Branch.

- END -