

# THE AIRPLANE THAT NEVER WAS

*The airplane never actually existed!*  
No triple-tailed, twin-engined transport airplane was ever designed! It is a “fantasy” airplane never built or flown – a creation of the mind of the greatly-talented William Roach.



The 1941/1944 Transport Series U.S. Airmail stamps feature a beautifully drawn twin-engined airplane stamp design by William Roach of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing.



*The airplane was in fact incapable of flight.* A real airplane matching the airplane on the stamps would have been uncontrollable in the air – not even seasoned test pilots could have flown it successfully.

So what inspired such an airplane??  
Roach’s instructions were to create stamps to replace the existing set of U.S. Airmail stamps. The new stamps were to have a uniform design and feature a modern twin-engine transport airplane used to carry mail. Apparently, he was not to use an existing airplane to avoid favoring one manufacturer over another.



These late 1930’s Douglas Aircraft transport airplanes inspired the aircraft on the airmail stamps.

*Recent extensive research and analysis show that the inspiration for Roach’s airplane could only have been largely or entirely the highly successful Douglas twin-engined transports along with the much-publicized and unique Douglas DC-4E triple-tailed prototype.*



*The dramatic triple-tail of the airplane is both eye-catching and an immediate indicator that the airplane never existed.* It also led William Roach to foreshorten the aft fuselage to include the triple tail, and that shortening would have made an actual airplane uncontrollable in the air. Nevertheless, the airplane and the stamps are beautiful and well-executed additions to the pantheon of U.S. Airmail stamps from the early Twentieth Century.

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