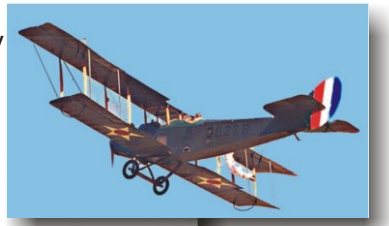
The Aircraft

From Warhorse to Workhorse

Curtiss JN-4 Jenny



Aerofiles Photo

Junkers JL-6

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Standard JR-1B (Max Miller Aircraft)

The DH-4 was not the only plane used by the Postal Service. It replaced the Curtiss Jenny and the Standard JR-1B. However, it was the mainstay in the early 1920's period of the Airmail Service.

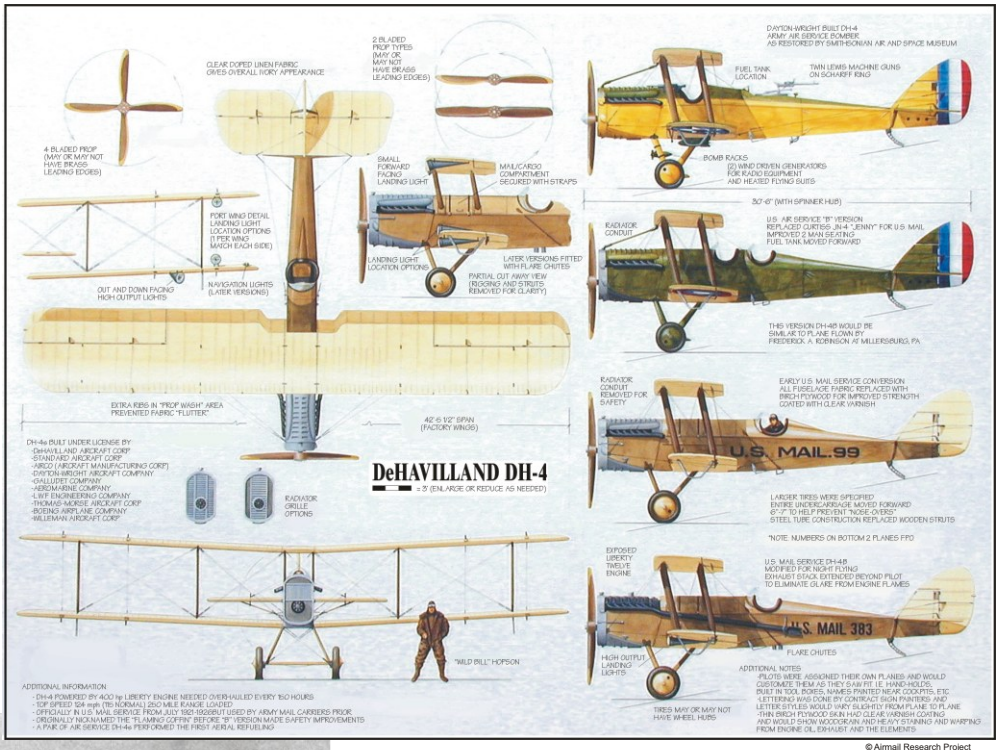
The DeHavilland DH-4 was originally designed and built as a World War 1 era two seat bomber. It was the only American built aircraft to see action during the war. A high altitude, short range aircraft, the DH-4 was not the ideal choice for hauling heavy loads of mail long distances. However, after the war ended, the Army Air Service gave 100 of the surplus planes along with spare parts and engines to the Postal Service for use as mail carriers. This was too good to refuse.

Modifications needed to be made to make the planes more reliable and structurally sound enough to withstand the rigors of take-offs and landings with heavy loads of mail.

The Postal Service had several depots set up where the planes were dismantled and rebuilt per engineer's specifications.

Each pilot was assigned his own plane and was at liberty to make any modifications to suit his personal preferences.

Evolution of the DH-4 as a mail carrier



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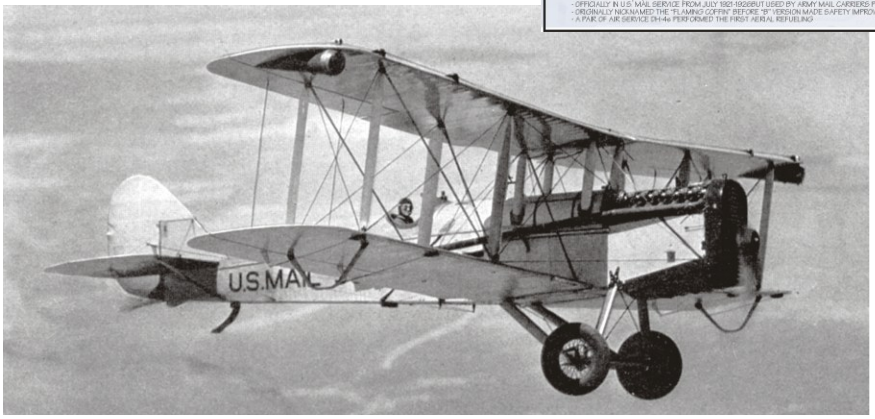

National Archives Photo

DH-4 Instrument Panel

DH-4 Night Equipped

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