

Create Your Own Junk Plane!

The Tommy Plane was first designed in 1916 by B. Douglas Thomas, chief design engineer for the Thomas Brothers Aeroplane Company. During a test flight in 1917 it reached a speed of 95 mph and an altitude of 14,000 feet! Can you build a plane at home? How far can your plane fly?

Materials:

- Tape, glue, string, staples, and other items to attach your different pieces!
- Clean items from home. These can come from your "trash" or recycling. Examples: cardboard, cans, bottles, cloth, paper, broken appliances, or old toys.
- Measuring tape



Activity:

Look around your house and in your recycling bin for clean items that are no longer needed, such as paper towel tubes, plastic bottles, clothing hangers, milk cartons, etc.

Use tape, glue, string, or other items to assemble your junk into an airplane. Does your plane have wings? Is it heavy or light? Can it stand on its own? How many inches long is it?

Your challenge: Create an airplane out of this household junk that will fly at least 6 feet! Lay a measuring tape on the ground, and mark how far your plane goes each time. If it doesn't fly 6 feet the first time, study your design and see what changes you can make to help it go further. Try flying it in different environments. Does it fly differently outside versus inside?

Want to show off your Junk Plane? Share a photo or video on social media with the hashtag #learningathome to @tompkinshistory on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter!

Contact community@thehistorycenter.net with any questions. Visit www.thehistorycenter.net/learn for more History at Home activities.

Learn More About the Tommy Plane

Digital Links:

- **Tommy Plane - The History Center in Tompkins County**
 - www.thehistorycenter.net/Tommy-Plane
- **PEGASYS Presents #102: Tommy Comes Home (30min) - PEGASYS**
 - www.youtube.com/watch?v=oocNovpq1Qg
- **Tommy Comes Home (5min) - ICTV Report**
 - www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zaiwcr3p3eM&t=29s
- **Ithaca's Airplane - Air & Space Magazine**
 - www.airspacemag.com/history-of-flight/13_sep2018-ithacas-airplane-180969918/
- **Thomas Morse Scout S4-C - The Aviation History Online Museum**
 - www.aviation-history.com/thomas/scout.html

Related Archival Collections at The History Center in Tompkins County

- **Aviation Collection V-1-5-6**
- **BorgWarner/Morse Collection - V-64-1-1**
- **Morse Family Collection V-64-8-1**
- **Thomas-Morse/Consolidated Aircraft Photograph Collection FBO-0105**

****You can look at these collections by visiting our Research Library.****

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