

1944

DOUGLAS C-47

The Douglas C-47 Skytrain or Dakota is a military transport aircraft that was developed from the Douglas DC-3 airliner. It was used extensively by the Allies during World War II and remained in front line service with various military operators through the 1950s. C-47s in British and Commonwealth service took the name Dakota, from the acronym "DACoTA" for *Douglas Aircraft Company Transport Aircraft*. The C-47 also earned the informal nickname "Gooney Bird" in the European theater of operations.

This specific example possesses a pedigree of historic service, as evidenced by its D-Day "invasion stripes." Manufactured in February 1944, it was assigned to the 92nd Troop carrier squadron of the 439th Troop Carrier Group. On the night of June 5/6, 1944, it dropped elements of the 506th Paratroop Infantry Regiment near St. Mere Eglise, France, and towed a Horsa Glider loaded with supplies for paratroopers on June 6, 1944--D-Day. It took part in the resupply of Patton's 3rd Army and flew numerous supply drops and glider resupply mission to surrounded U.S. troops in Bastogne, Belgium, in December 1944. It towed gliders in Operation Varsity—the Allied crossing of the Rhine River on March 24, 1945. It was assigned to the same units that flew supports as part of the Berlin Airlift in 1948, and in 1977 earned its cinematic pedigree in the filming of the movie *A Bridge Too Far*.

FANTASY OF FLIGHT



World War II C-47 Para-drop



SPECIFICATIONS

Year Built – 1944
Wingspan – 95'6"
Cruise – 160 mph
Top Speed – 224 mph
Gross Weight – 26,000 lbs
Engine – Two Pratt & Whitney R-1830-90C Twin Wasp (1200 hp each)

KERMIT'S COMMENTS

This airplane was restored by a collector in Europe at great expense, and when it was finished, it was truly superb. At one point, the collector was considering donating it to a museum, which would have ended its flying career. A mutual friend of his and mine interceded and convinced him to sell it to me (and me only) at a very fair price. One problem: the plane was located in England! I went over to do an inspection, ended up bringing in a crew, and we sealed the deal. The next job was to get home. Our route: Southern England, Northern Scotland, Iceland, Greenland, Canada, Oshkosh—all flying VFR in a WWII aircraft and chronicled step-by-step on Facebook. When all was said and done, I got a great deal on the airplane BUT spent half again as much just to get it home! But then what is the price of great adventure? In the end, this plane was priceless!