

# Douglas C-47A Skytrain

1944

## General History

### Workhorse

In a speech to returning troops after the Allied victory in World War II, U.S. General Dwight D. Eisenhower heralded the jeep, the landing craft and the C-47 airplane as the three tools that won the war for the Allies. Indeed, it seemed that these olive drab cargo planes were everywhere, taking on every job and hauling everything.

Officially called *Dakotas* in England and *Skytrains* in the U.S., the C-47s were almost always lovingly called “Gooney Birds” or “Goonies” by soldiers. The planes flew over the “Hump” (the Himalayan Mountains), hauling precious cargo into China. They wore the black and white “invasion stripes” on D-Day, towing gliders and dropping paratroops over France. And after the war during the Berlin Airlift, “Goonies” helped supply a city from the air, with everything from candy to coal.

An unknown C-47 pilot once said, “You might wreck a *Dakota*, but you’ll never wear it out.” Since World War II, “Goonies” have flown to the North and South Poles, fought in Korea and Vietnam, and continue to fly, with no end in sight.

### Toughened for Army Life

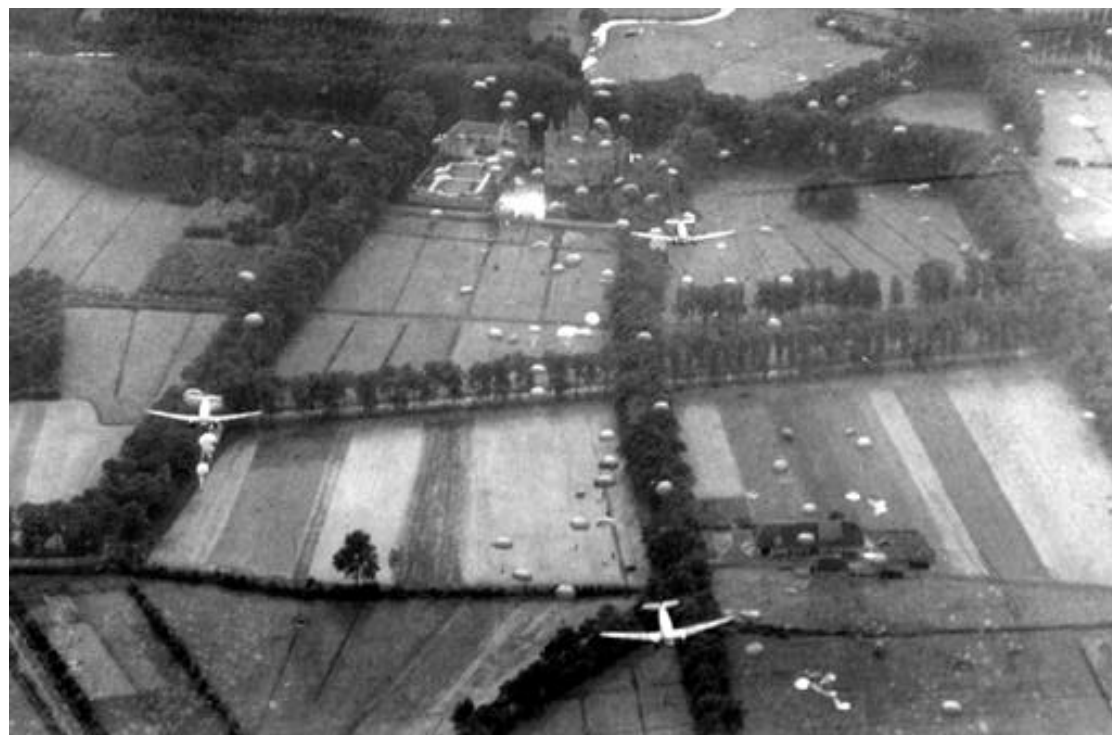
The C-47 is a derivative of the famously successful Douglas DC-3 passenger plane. But a “Gooney” was more than simply a green coat of paint covering an airliner’s silver finish. Toughened up, the C-47 had improved engines, cargo doors big enough to admit a jeep, a strengthened rear fuselage and a beefed up floor to hold loads of equipment. Instead of the airliner’s leisurely jaunts with 21 passengers, the DC-3’s military counterpart had to carry troops and tons of equipment, or tow a loaded glider.

## About This Aircraft

The Museum’s Douglas C-47 was built in Santa Monica, California in 1944 and delivered to the U.S. Army Air Force on April 3<sup>rd</sup>. Assigned to the 89th Troop Carrier Squadron of the 438th Troop Carrier Group, it was based at Greenham Common in Berkshire, England. This plane took part in the D-Day Allied Invasion, dropping paratroopers over Normandy, France. After many other Army missions, the C-47 returned to the U.S. at the end of the war.

The plane was sold by the government to Empire Air Lines in 1946. Converted to a passenger carrier, the ex-military transport was registered as a DC-3, and flew more than five million miles with Empire and West Coast Airlines. Upon retirement, the plane was donated to the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI) on May 24, 1966. It was displayed at OMSI’s former Portland, Oregon location near the zoo, and a passageway led from the building to the interior of the plane. In 1998, this veteran of both military and civil service was donated to the Museum and transferred to McMinnville.

*This plane took part in the D-Day Allied Invasion, dropping paratroopers over Normandy, France*



## Specifications

Type:	Military Cargo and Civilian Passenger Aircraft
First Flight:	Douglas Sleeper Transport on December 17, 1935
Wingspan:	95 feet 6 inches
Length:	63 feet 9 inches
Height:	17 feet
Wing Area:	987 square feet
Weight, Empty:	17,865 pounds
Weight, Loaded:	26,000 pounds
Power:	Two Pratt & Whitney R-1830 1,200 horsepower engines
Normal Crew:	Five (Pilot, Copilot, Navigator, Radio, Flight Engineer)
Capacity:	27-32 troops
Typical Armament:	None

## Performance

Cruise Speed:	160 miles per hour
Top Speed:	230 miles per hour at 8,800 feet
Range:	1,600 miles
Service Ceiling:	24,000 feet