

CA 15

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1:48 DOUGLAS DC-3
recommended kit MONOGRAM

THE DOUGLAS DC-3 "HAWDON"

Very few aircraft achieve Hall of Fame status, after their intended operational role has been terminated or taken over by a more advanced and speedier counterpart, but this grand old lady still lives out her legend in a variety of roles from air cargo, research and development projects, aerospace and nostalgia displays to scenic flights and flying restaurants, more than sixty years after her robust airframe earned her airworthy certificate.

Douglas led the way during the early thirties with research into development of passenger aircraft culminating in 1935 with the DC-3 which was soon recognised by its peers as the beginning of a new era in air transport. Australian authorities were quick to appreciate the benefits that the DC-3 could offer a country with vast distances between state capitals, and requiring relatively short runways.

The DC-3 military service record during WW2 was exemplary parachuting in medical supplies, food drops, and the machinery of war to remote mountain areas in New Guinea, Fiji, Burma, etc., not to mention troops from all nations involved in every theatre of war. The C-47 as it was known by the USAAF, and Dakota, RAF's designation, operated as "Supply Ships", air ambulance, gunship, troopcarrier and V.I.P. transport, earned the respect of aircrews and passengers alike, plus affectionate "nick names" such as "biscuit bomber" and "Gooney Bird" because of its multi functional role.

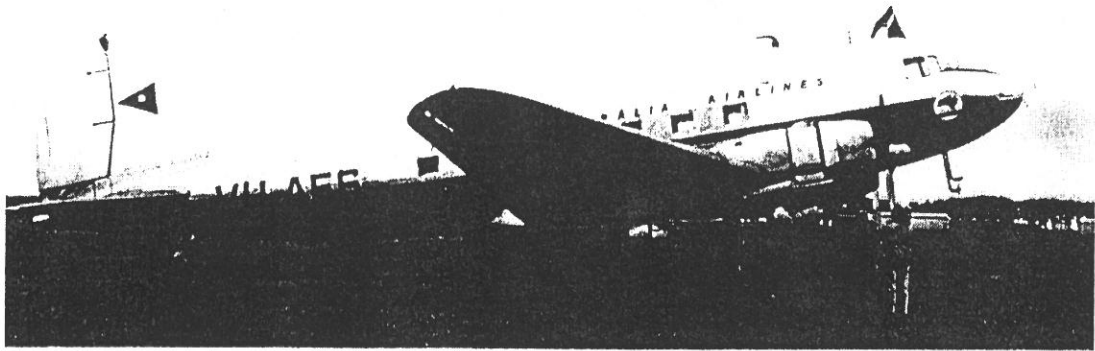
Roodecal has supplied the modeller with a decal set here recreating the DC-3 registered VH-AES and named "HAWDON" as it looked the day of its inaugural flight from Laverton in Victoria to MASCOT airfield in N.S.W. which launched Trans Australia Airlines into intercapital service on September 9th 1946. The second "white top" scheme was introduced circa 1955 with the coming of the LOCKHEED CONVAIR and all aircraft in T.A.A. service followed suit.

VH-AES has had a colourful history, which reflects the durability of the DC-3. First assigned to the USAAF in 1942 it was ferried out to Australia and flew with 374 sq. as "Shanghai Lil" until August of 1944 when it was handed over to 2 interim operators - Dept. of Civil Aviation and Australian National Airways, and while so engaged suffered a minor accident on take off, and as a result of the repair the C-47 was converted to DC-3 configuration for passenger transport. The aircraft now carried the registration VH-AES and two years later was acquired by Trans Australia Airlines for the fledgling airline's inaugural flight from Laverton in Victoria to Mascot airfield in N.S.W. The aircraft was given the name "Hawdon" for this historic flight after a nineteenth century explorer who was the first man to drive 300 head of cattle from Sydney to Melbourne. Some thirty years later Trans Australia Airlines retired Hawdon from active duty and donated the DC-3 to a place of honour at the new Melbourne airport, Tullamarine. Hawdon was erected some twenty feet above the airport carpark on a series of poles after completing over 51,000 hours in the air, a sad fate for such a gallant lady in the eyes of serious classic aircraft buffs.

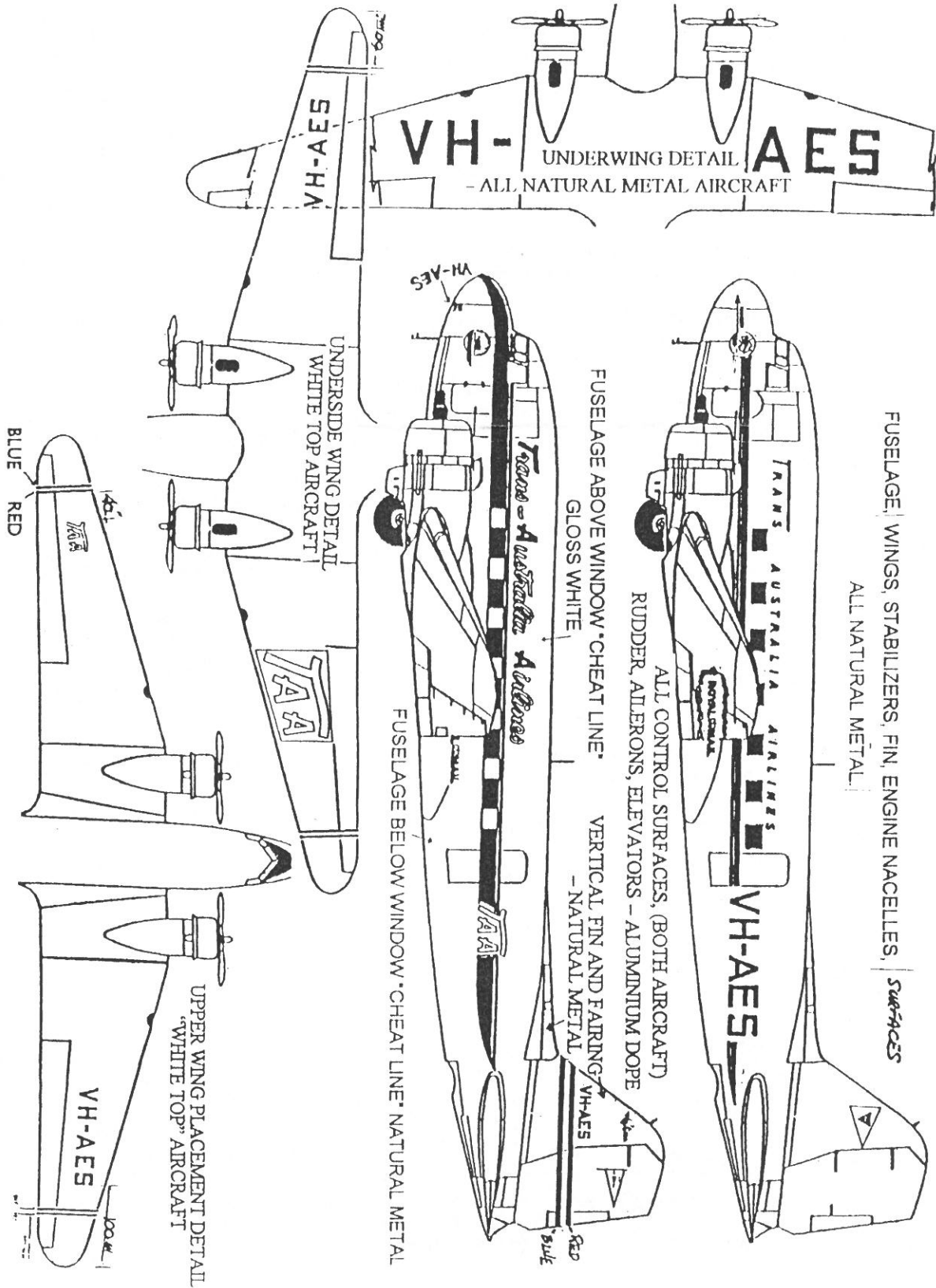
However it was not to be permanent, 8 years later Hawdon Operations Limited was formed and bought the deteriorating DC-3 with restoration in mind and if possible a return to halcyon days for this icon of Australian aerospace. Many dedicated and willing expert hands made it possible for Hawdon's return to what she does best, and under the watchful eye of her carers performs at airshows, puts on joyflights for charities and terminally ill children and generally gives a good account of herself, long may she reign.

TAA'S DC-3, VH-AEO seen here as "CUNNINGHAM", possibly Essehdon circa 1955.





"Hawdon" at a POINT COOK airshow in 1995 resplendant in its restored livery of 1946.



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VH-AES

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