



Douglas DC-3 K.L.M. West-Indies “early schemes”

INTRODUCTION

The K.L.M. Royal Dutch Airlines operated Douglas DC-3 (C-53 and C-47), popularly known as Dakota, prop aircraft in the Caribbean through their “Koninklijke Luchtvaart Maatschappij West Indisch Bedrijf” (K.L.M-WIB) after the Second World War.

Some 10 aircraft were flown with registration PJ- :

Douglas DC-3

PJ-ALA	Douglas C-53-DO	c/n 7392	1945-1961
PJ-ALB	Douglas C-53-DO	c/n 7345	1945-1961
PJ-ALC	Douglas C-53-DO	c/n 7338	1945-1962
PJ-ALD	Douglas DC-3D	c/n 42965	1946-1955
PJ-ALE	Douglas C-47A-70-DL	c/n 19247	1946-1960
PJ-ALG	Douglas C-47A	c/n 12953	1946-1948
PJ-ALH	Douglas C-47A-1-DK	c/n 11994	1946-1954
PJ-ALI	Douglas C-47A-25-DK	c/n 13301	1947-1949
PJ-ALP	Douglas C-47A-DK	c/n 11831	1947-1954
PJ-ALT	Douglas C-47A	c/n 9904	1949-1955

Note that the fuselage configurations of the DC-3/ C-53 have a rear passenger door at port, C-47 has a large cargo door.

Antennas on the upper fuselage may vary as well between individual aircraft as well as the long wire antennas. On most planes the astrodome was still present.

MODEL KITS

In 1/72 scale several C-47 / DC-3 plastic model kits have appeared over the years. Many of these have some inaccurate shapes. The latest Airfix 1/72 kits C-47A kit #A08014 or Dakota #A08015 are very nice.

DECAL SYSTEM and APPLICATION

The decal sheet has ONE continuous print film, so EACH decal needs to be cut out with fine scissors. No other prior laser printed decal preparation is needed. Each cut out decal can be applied as usual after soaking it a short while in water. Decals are EXTREMELY THIN, so slide off from the wet backing sheet on the model surface. Do not use tweezers! They will fold doubled!

Note that a decal that contains a white section is often split in two parts. To apply the full decal marking, first set the white decal section at correct position and on top of that the coloured section. On the decals sheet you will often see an “arrow” to

indicate this way of application (on white surfaces, the white section is optional).

After all decals have been applied, finish the model with your preferred final gloss or semi-matt varnish coats. This will also protect the decals.

K.L.M-WIB PAINTING AND DECALS

Several different K.L.M-WIB DC-3 and C-47 were used with many different schemes. At first sight a scheme looks similar to a KLM scheme used on aircraft in Europe but there are quite some subtle differences, even per individual aircraft. If blue cheat lines were present, these also could vary in style and letter style of codes and registrations.

On the upper wing there was common a large registration in orange lettering in KLM font as well as at the lower wing. The PJ- and A—code was on both sides. (apply the white undercoat letter decals first and than the orange letter).

Note that some planes are had a small registration letter code at the tail and above the cockpit windows an even smaller code.

Cockpit and cabin interior is light grey. In the cabin area seats were set in rows with usually blue upholstered passenger seats which were also removed but for cargo flights.

The wing, stabilizers and cowlings were natural bare metal. Same with fuselage colour though the upper fuselage colour and tail colour was sometimes white at the later applied schemes.

Note that on these planes NO black anti-icing areas were seen such as on leading edges at outboard starboard and port wing, vertical tail and stabilizers. A small anti-glare panel at front cockpit windows is more common.

The propellers are natural metal with black edges but otherwise varied with yellow tips, white-red-white-blue tips or uncoloured tips.

REFERENCES

On internet it is easy to find photos of the DC-3's of the K.L.M-WIB by searching combined with + PJ-

Recommended book in Dutch: “DAKOTA”, DC-3/ C-47 onder Nederlandse vlag by Theo Wesselink et al, De Alk, 1985

This decals sheet could be realized with the assistance of Mr. Cedric Bronswinkel of the Museo Aeronautiko Curaçao; Dutch Caribbean.

SCHEME 1

This Douglas DC-3 / C-53 [c/n 7392] was purchased by K.L.M. from the American Surplus Board and was the first C-53 to arrive July 1945. Coded PJ-ALA it was named ALA BLANCA (in black on the nose).

This early scheme has an overall bare shiny metal finish. Note the C-53 passenger door at port (with KLM letters above it).

It has a small anti-glare panel and the circular loop antenna on the forward fuselage and long wire antenna (it may have had 2 wire antennas).

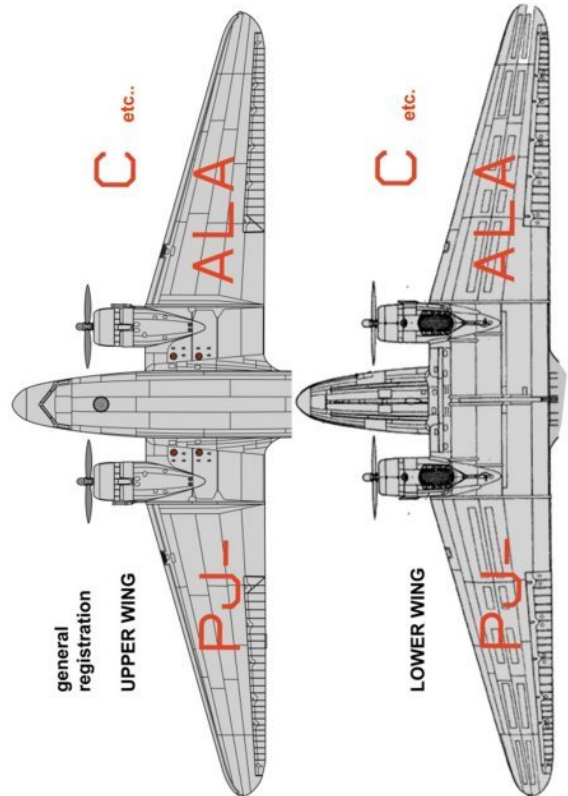
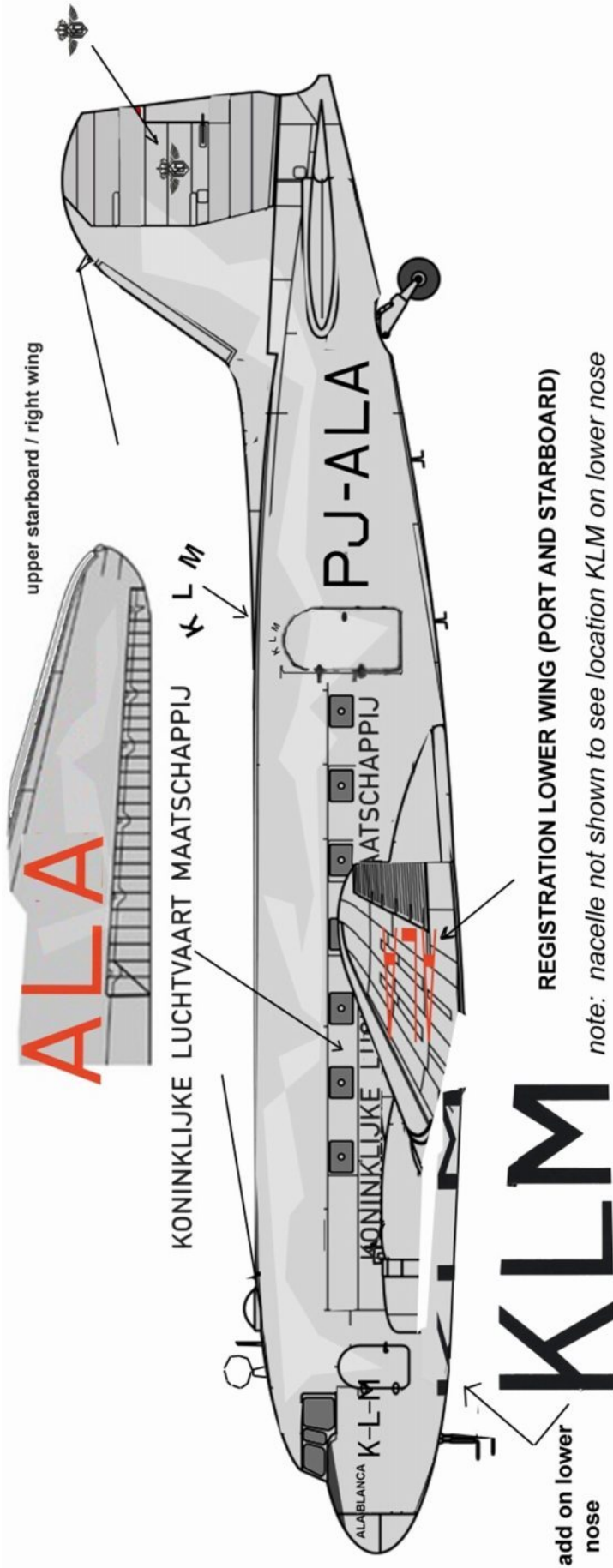
The long KONINKLIJKE LUCHTVAART MAATSCHAPPIJ titles are below the cabin windows.

The small KLM logo is set on the rudder and below the nose is a KLM lettering in black.

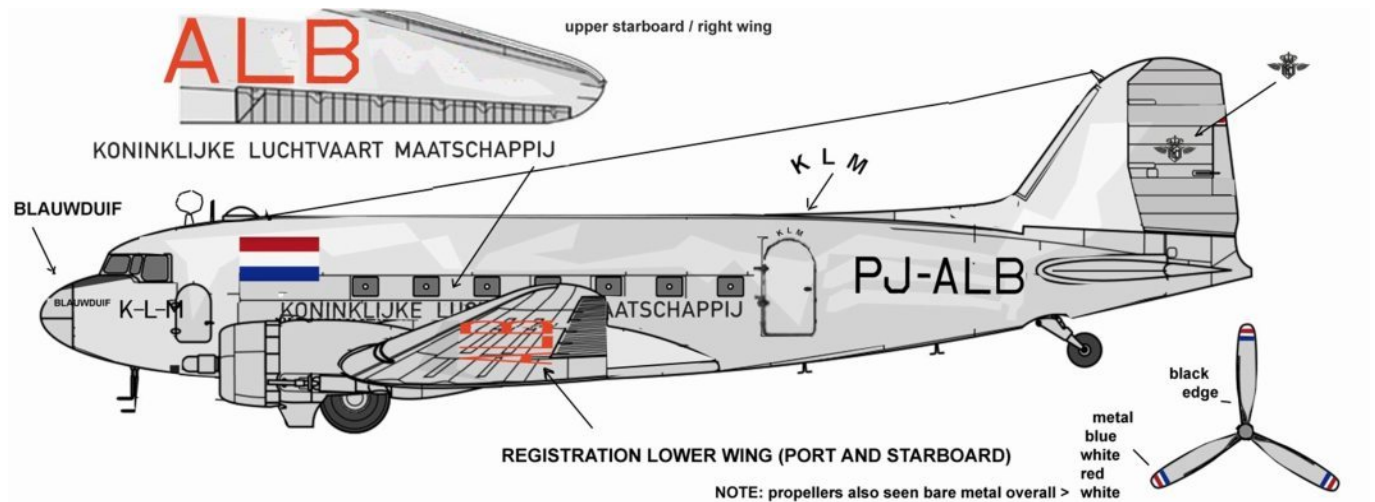
It has the standard large wing registrations PJ-ALA in orange lettering in typical KLM letter font.

Natural metal propeller blades with black edges have white-red-white-blue tips (at both front and back prop areas).

(Scheme is almost symmetrical port and starboard sides).



SCHEME 2



This Douglas DC-3 / C-53 [c/n 7345] was the second aircraft purchased and arrived September 1945. Coded PJ-ALB it was named BLAUWDUIF, again a local bird.

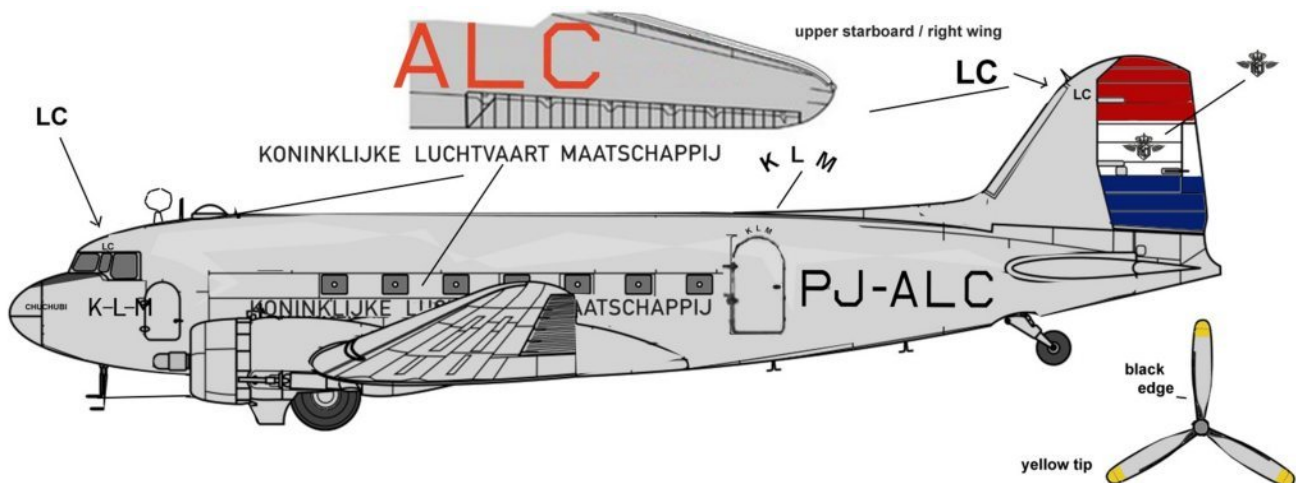
Overall bare shiny metal finish as described above in **scheme 1**. Note the standard C-53 passenger door at port (with KLM letters above it). It has a small anti-glare panel.

This scheme includes also below the nose KLM lettering in black. But this aircraft was also seen with large Dutch flags on both starboard and port sides behind the cockpit. It has the standard large wing registrations PJ-ALB in orange lettering (note that the orange B letter has the KLM font and is different than the fuselage registration font).

Natural metal propeller blades with black edges have white-red-white-blue tips (at both front and back prop areas).

(Scheme is almost symmetrical port and starboard sides).

SCHEME 3



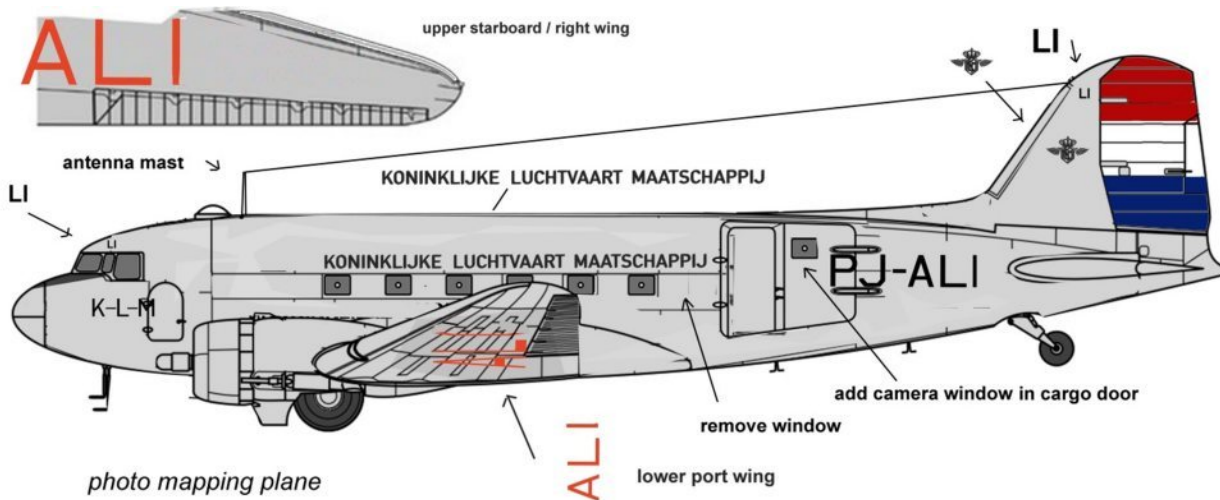
This Douglas DC-3 / C-53 [c/n 7338] coded PJ-ALC with K.L.M-WIB service entry October 1945 is named CHUCHUBI. The name is on the nose (in black). It is an early scheme in an overall bare shiny metal finish but the large rudder has Dutch flag colours (red-white-dark blue) on both sides.

It is otherwise very similar to **schemes 1 and 2**. The small KLM logo is now set on the white rudder area. At the tail is a small code LC and a smaller code LC above the cockpit windows. Below the nose probably NO KLM lettering in black was painted. It has the standard large wing registrations PJ-ALC in orange lettering.

Natural metal propeller blades with black edges have yellow tips (at both front and back prop areas).

(Scheme is almost symmetrical port and starboard sides).

SCHEME 4



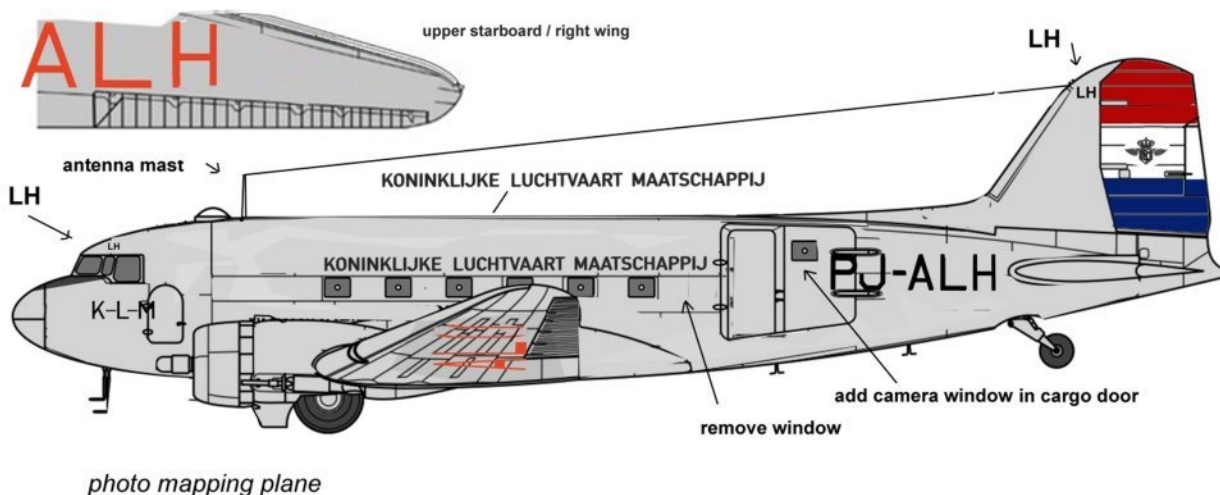
This Douglas C-47A [c/n 13301] coded PJ-ALI is a special plane used for photo cartography mapping. It arrived October 1947 and got no aircraft name. It has the large C-47A cargo door but for taking photos with an extra (camera) window in the rear door. Also the last port window in front of the cargo door was not present (so remove). It is unknown if there were windows/ glazing the fuselage belly for photo taking. Note also the long mast with long wire antenna.

Has an overall bare metal finish but the large rudder has Dutch flag colours (red-white-dark blue) on both sides. It has a small anti-glare panel. The full KONINKLIJKE LUCHTVAART MAATSCHAPPIJ titles (in another style) are now situated above the cabin windows. The small KLM logo is now set on the tail (so not on the rudder). At the tail is a small code LI and a smaller code LI above the cockpit windows.

It has the standard large lower and upper wing registrations PJ-ALI in orange KLM font lettering. Natural metal propeller blades with black edges have probably yellow tips (at both front and back prop areas).

(Scheme is almost symmetrical port and starboard sides).

SCHEME 5



This Douglas C-47A [c/n 11994] coded PJ-ALH is also a special plane used for photo cartography mapping. It arrived December 1946 and got no aircraft name. It is a sister plane of the PJ-ALI with similar configuration and paint scheme as seen in **scheme 4** but the small KLM logo was now probably set amidst the white rudder section.

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