

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
AIR FORCE HISTORICAL RESEARCH AGENCY  
MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

24 Mar 2004

AFHRA/RSA  
600 Chennault Circle  
Maxwell AFB AL 36112-6424 USA

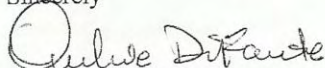
CMST Thomas G. Nurre USAF (Ret)  
2401 West Avenue K  
San Angelo TX 76901

Dear Chief Nurre

Thank you for your request. We have attached our interpretation of the assignments of the C-47A/VC-47D/C-117C, s/n 42-108866.

We hope this information is of value to you.

Sincerely



ARCHIE DiFANTE

Archivist, Archives Branch

(334) 953-2447

[Archie.difante@maxwell.af.mil](mailto:Archie.difante@maxwell.af.mil)

Attachment:  
Assignments

C-47A, s/n 42-108866

Manufactured by Douglas Aircraft, Oklahoma City OK and delivered to the USAAF on 15 Feb 1944.

Feb 1944 To Baer AAF IN  
Mar 1944 Departed the US and assigned to the Twelfth Air Force, Casablanca, Morocco  
Sep 1945 Returned to US and sold as surplus at Augusta GA  
Jun 1952 Returned to USAF inventory at San Antonio Air Materiel Area, Kelly AFB TX (to VC-47D) *STAFF TRANSPORT*  
Jan 1953 To 4600<sup>th</sup> Air Base Wing (Air Defense Command), Peterson AFB CO (to C-117C) *24 seat transport. (Super DC-3)*  
Mar 1955 To 4700<sup>th</sup> Air Defense Group (ADC), Stewart AFB NY  
Aug 1955 To 329<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group (ADC), Stewart AFB  
May 1962 To 4603<sup>rd</sup> Air Base Group (ADC), Stewart AFB (deployments to Macarthur MAP NY)  
Oct 1967 To Civil Air Patrol, Macarthur MAP  
Jul 1969 Dropped from inventory by transfer to museum status

*WRIGHT 1820-C9HE engines*

## A little amplification from ec47.com

Contrary to what the hand-written note above implies, when 42-108866 was converted to VC-47 configuration and later redesignated as a C-117C, the aircraft was *NOT* refitted with R-1820 engines.

The entire C-117 designation warrants some explanation. Towards the end of WWII, this designation was applied to several C-47B airframes which were built from the ground up as staff or VIP transports, with airline-type interiors replacing the rather Spartan accommodations of the standard C-47 cargo aircraft.\*

With the end of the war in sight, Douglas began to search for a replacement for the highly successful DC-3 airliner, upon which the C-47 was based. (See [“Origin of the Species”](#) elsewhere on the website for more details.) Not surprisingly, Douglas engineers looked to improve on the classic DC-3 rather than start a new design from scratch. Called by Douglas the Super DC-3, the new aircraft featured a 3 ft. 3 in. fuselage extension, allowing another row of seats to be installed along with two more windows. An entirely new tail assembly, resembling that of the later DC-6 and DC-7 series, was incorporated, along with revised outer wing panels with squared-off tips. The landing gear was faired over with retractable doors, and more powerful Wright R-1820 engines were fitted.

The aircraft differed significantly in appearance from a C-47. Despite markedly improved performance over the classic model, the Super DC-3 failed to generate much interest among post-war airlines. Eventually, the U.S. Navy contracted for an upgrade of 100 R4D airframes (the USN designation for the C-47) to Super DC-3 configuration. When the common Department of Defense aircraft designation system went into effect in 1962, the Navy “Super Goon” became the C-117D. Former 360th TEWS or 6994th troops may remember the handful of Navy Super Goons parked on the ramp at Tan Son Nhut.

The thumbnails below illustrate a pair of C-117Ds in USMC service stateside.



(L) [www.sim-outhouse.com](http://www.sim-outhouse.com)



(R) [AviationsMilitaires.net](http://AviationsMilitaires.net)

When first converted, 42-108866 was designated VC-47, the “V” prefix indicating staff, or “VIP”. Why the USAF redesignated the converted VC-47 VIP transports—which are not to be confused with the WWII airplanes originally built as C-117s—is something of a mystery. In any case, the replica EC-47 at Goodfellow was never a C-117D, which to all intents and purposes was a different aircraft from any C-47 model.

---

\* These aircraft, designated C-117-1-DK, carried USAAF serial numbers 45-2545 thru 45-2561.