

OPERATION MARKET GARDEN



In August 1944 it took part in operations in Provence, in September it carried men of the 82nd Airborne Division to Nijmegen to capture the bridge that led to Arnhem, the operation immortalised in the Film "A Bridge Too Far".

It was hit several times by enemy fire. Some months later on 27th December 1944, riddled by flak, it and its crew were very nearly lost.

At the end of the war it was sold to a Czechoslovakian airline who refitted it for civil use and made it the pride of the fleet. Repurchased by the French Air Force in March 1960 it was sold again in 1973 to the Yugoslavian military. At a base near Sarajevo it was machine-gunned during the war that engulfed the Balkans and has remained grounded since then.

At the beginning of 2007, the Association for the Management of the Merville Battery discovered the existence of this aeroplane, unveiled its history and launched the operation "Dakota 43-15073 Must Be Saved", designed to return it to Normandy, to restore it and show it to the public.



THE MERVILLE DAKOTA ASSOCIATION

Created by the initiative of friends of the Merville Battery and aeronautical enthusiasts the Association is set on financing and organising the return of this Dakota to Normandy. It is legally constituted, guaranteed, and possesses the requisite expertise, dynamism and enthusiasm to lead the operation "Dakota 43-15073 Must Be Saved". The Anglo-French Association for the Management of the Merville Battery, through its partnership with the Espace du Littoral, manages the historic site and the museum, has set in train the actions necessary to receive this legendary aeroplane to the iconic site at Merville. Under the gaze of Lieutenant Colonel Otway's bronze bust, on one of the legendary sites where airborne troops brought freedom in the folds of their parachutes, the old Dakota will surely regain its dignity.

**I WANT TO TAKE PART,
I WANT TO SIGN UP...**

Enthusiasm and expertise on their own are not always enough. **Saving Dakota 43-15073 will require funding for the dismantling and return transport, and then to restore it to its former glory on the site at Merville.**

Whether you are an individual or a company you can be part of "Dakota 43-15073 Must Be Saved" by donating to the Association Merville-Dakota. The address is **Place du 9^{ème} Bataillon – 14810 – Merville, France.**

Cheques or bank transfers should be made payable to "Merville-Dakota".

Whether in France, in the United Kingdom or the United States or elsewhere, we call out to all those who cherish freedom to donate generously to this worthwhile cause.

Account: 00086369482 - Crédit Agricole Cabourg

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**FROM GLORY
TO OBSCURITY...**

**"DAKOTA
43-15073
MUST BE
SAVED"**



OVERLORD OPERATION FROM SAINT-MÈRE-ÉGLISE



DAKOTA 43-15073: AN IMPORTANT WITNESS TO OUR HISTORY

On 29th January 1944 a C47 troop transport aircraft left the Douglas factory in Long Beach, California. It bore the serial number **19539** and entered the fleet of the US Army Air Force, serial number **43-15073**. It cost the American tax payer \$109,663.

From the time it became part of the US Army 9th Air Force, it crossed the Atlantic and arrived in the United Kingdom via West Africa. Assigned to the 440th Troop Carrier Group it took part in multiple exercises in support of the American Expeditionary Corps, in preparation for the invasion along the coast of Normandy. On 6th June it crossed the channel in the direction of the Cotentin Peninsula and dropped paratroops of the 501st Parachute Regiment (101st Airborne Division) south of Saint-Mère-Eglise. Throughout the battle of Normandy it flew supply sorties using temporary landing strips, returning to the UK with wounded soldiers.



DAKOTA RESCUE OPERATION TO MERVILLE-FRANCEVILLE



DOUGLAS C-47 DAKOTA: A LEGENDARY AEROPLANE

The Douglas C-47 was conceived from a famous pre-war transport aircraft, the DC-3. Brought into service in the mid-1930s, it enjoyed considerable success, which did not go unnoticed by the US armed forces, and was therefore adapted for military use.

Without changing the basic design, it was necessary to have more powerful engines, reinforced bays and wider doors for loading. The interior layout was completely changed. It was given the name C-47 Skytrain.

The C47 took part in Allied offensives, notably in parachute drops in Normandy in June 1944 and in Arnhem, Holland, in September the same year.

The production ran to more than 13,000 units, 10,123 in the United States. Its utility was shown again after the war in the huge air lift to West Berlin, and its presence in numerous military and civil fleets, especially in the East and in Africa. Today around 400 C-47s are still flying, 70 years after their introduction.

American veterans and historians use the name "Skytrain"; the British use "Dakota" and others "Gooney Bird". Whatever it is called it was, and is, still today, an incredible aircraft.

"DAKOTA 43 15073 MUST BE SAVED"

Rot away or the breakers yard...

Is this to be the unenviable destiny of this exceptional aeroplane and its unique heritage? This fails to take into account the enthusiasm and willingness of the volunteers of the Merville Battery, people who do not want to see this icon of our modern history disappear. Similar to the aircraft that dropped our brave paratroops of the 9th Battalion at Merville. It is just a blink of an eye to the other flank of the allied invasion and the American paratroops of the 101st Airborne Division (Screaming Eagles). After D Day It would take part in all the major airborne operations leading up to the fall of the 3rd Reich : Dagoon, Market, Repulse, Varsity. From the landings in Normandy to operations in Provence, from the battle at Nijmegen to the siege of Bastogne and the crossing of the Rhine it is a veritable piece of history, and an invitation to remember and to reflect on the price paid to regain freedom.

The aeroplane whose green light was the signal to intrepid paratroopers to jump, this mythical aeroplane should not be cut up for scrap. This would be an affront to the paratroopers of 101st Airborne Division who lie at rest in the cemetery at St-Laurent-sur-Mer, it would be to forget the sacrifice the Red Berets of British 6th Airborne Division; it would be turning our backs on history. With you, thanks to you, we are going to save Dakota 43-15073.

WE ARE NOT GOING TO FETCH A SIMPLE AEROPLANE:

IT IS A VETERAN THAT IS CALLING US !
WITH YOU, THANKS TO YOU, WE ARE GOING TO
SAVE DAKOTA 43-15073.