

DOUGLAS DAKOTA C.mk.III

KG496 - No.267 ("Pegasus") Sqn, RAF, based at Bari (Italy) in mid-1944

By Colin Ovens

Kit: Hasegawa 1/200th c2002



Background

KG496 was flown by No.267 ("Pegasus") Sqn, RAF, based at Bari (Italy) in mid-1944, supporting Marshal Tito's partisan forces in the Balkans. The squadron's Dakotas not only supplied Tito's forces with equipment, but also evacuated their casualties- the Dakotas landing behind enemy lines; they also flew into Belgrade and Bucharest. A suitably modified Dakota from this squadron flew to a specially prepared strip in southern Poland and brought back home a complete V-1 "flying bomb" from under the noses of the Germans.

THE MODEL

It was built "straight from the box"; there is a grand total of 22 parts (excluding a stand and other items not required for this build). However, Hasegawa, in their "wisdom", have omitted the exhausts for the Pratt & Whitney R1830-9 engines- a very simple scratch-build in this scale!

It was an easy build- but a very delicate one. Being from the Hasegawa stable, the kit went together without any filler. The panel lines are extremely fine in this scale (they did cause a minor problem at the end of the build). The undercarriage is "fiddly" (ingeniously designed for ease of construction) and gives a good impression of its structure. I installed it after the airframe was camouflaged; it is quite robust.

The kit provides two options- both Dakota C.mk.III aircraft- one, from No.233 Sqn RAF, in Dark Green, with Medium Sea Grey undersurfaces, carrying the Operation Overlord Distinctive Markings (supplied as decals); the other option is the desert camouflaged example from No.267 Sqn: I hand-painted it using Xtracolor enamels (Dark Earth, Mid-Stone, and Azure Blue).

The decals include the fuselage windows and outlines of the doors. This is where I had some slight difficulty... Because I had hand-painted the model, the very subtle panel lines on this model were even more difficult to see, to enable me to place the cabin windows and the door outlines, with any degree of ease- door and window positions are NOT indicated! Add to that, the fact that these decals are

very typical of Hasegawa's output from the 1980's to the quite recent past- nicely printed, in perfect register, but- oh, so very, very thick! Bedding them down took much MicroSol and MicroSet- and patience... Once the decals had set for twenty-four hours, the model was airbrushed with MicroFlat varnish thinned 1/3 with Tamiya Thinners, and a nice flat finish was obtained.

The next thing to do was to fit the cockpit glazing (the framing of which I had painted a few days earlier), this was an extremely tight fit, and no adhesive was used. The astrodome was fitted next, and then, finally, the very delicate propellers, which are a delight in this small scale.

To sum up- this is a very nice little kit, but despite it having few parts, it is not a "fast build"- anyone attempting to assemble the main undercarriage would agree! Would I build another? Yes.



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