
L'esemplare denominato Betsy Ross, della Pan American World Airways, effettuò il primo volo transatlantico in classe turistica, New York – Parigi, il primo maggio del 1952.[2]


### Douglas DC-6

![Douglas DC-6 of Swiss airline Balair in 1976](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Airliner/transport aircraft</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturer</td>
<td>Douglas Aircraft Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First flight</td>
<td>15 February 1946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduced</td>
<td>March 1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status</td>
<td>49 fully active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary users</td>
<td>United States Air Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>United States Navy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Produced</td>
<td>1946-1959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number built</td>
<td>&gt;700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developed from</td>
<td>Douglas DC-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variants</td>
<td>Douglas DC-7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Douglas DC-6 is a piston-powered airliner and transport aircraft built by the Douglas Aircraft Company from 1946 to 1958. Originally intended as a military transport near the end of World War II, it was reworked after the war to compete with the Lockheed Constellation in the long-range transport market. More than 700 were built, and many still fly today in cargo, military, and wildfire control roles.
The DC-6 was known as the **C-118 Liftmaster** in United States Air Force service, and as the **R6D** in United States Navy service prior to 1962, after which all U.S. Navy variants were also designated as the C-118.

**Design and development**

The United States Army Air Forces commissioned the DC-6 project as the **XC-112** in 1944. The Air Force wanted an expanded, pressurized version of the popular **C-54 Skymaster** transport with improved engines. By the time the XC-112 flew, the war was over, and the USAAF had rescinded its requirement.

Douglas converted its prototype into a civil transport (redesignated YC-112A, having significant differences from subsequent production DC-6 aircraft) and delivered the first production DC-6 in March 1947. However, a series of mysterious in-flight fires (including the fatal crash of United Airlines Flight 608) grounded the DC-6 fleet later that year. The cause was found to be a fuel vent located adjacent to the cabin cooling turbine intake. All DC-6s in service were modified to correct the problem, and the fleet was flying again after just four months on the ground.

**Operational history**

[Image: Passengers deplaning an SAS DC-6. Note the upper row of windows, indicating this was built as the optional sleeper variant of the original length DC-6]

**Pan Am** used DC-6B aircraft to inaugurate its first trans-Atlantic tourist class flights, starting in 1952.

Douglas designed four basic variants of the DC-6: the "basic DC-6," and the longer fuselage, higher-gross-weight, longer range versions—the "DC-6A" with large cargo doors forward and aft of the wing on the port (left hand side) with a cargo floor, the "DC-6B" designed for passenger work, had passengers doors only and a lighter floor and the "DC-6C" a "convertible" aircraft built with the 2 cargo doors, but fitted with removable passenger seats. The DC-6B, originally powered by **Pratt & Whitney R-2800-CB-16** engines with Hamilton Standard 43E60 constant speed reversing propellers, was regarded as the ultimate piston-engine airliner from the standpoint of ruggedness, reliability, economical operation and handling qualities. The military version, essentially similar to the DC-6A, was the USAF C-118 Liftmaster, and the USN R6D which used the more powerful R-2800-CB-17 engines. The more powerful engine was later used on the commercial DC-6B to accommodate international flights.

The USAF and USN renewed their interest in the DC-6 during the Korean War, and ordered a total of 167 C-118/R6D aircraft, some of which later found their way into civilian service. **Harry Truman**'s first presidential aircraft was an Air Force **VC-118** called **The Independence**.

Total production of the DC-6 Series was 702 including military versions.
In the 1960s, two DC-6s were used as transmitter platforms for educational television, based at Purdue University, in a program called MPATI (Midwest Program for Airborne Television Instruction).

Many older DC-6 aircraft were replaced in airline passenger service by the Douglas DC-7, but the simpler, more economic engines in the DC-6 has meant that this type has out-lived the more sophisticated DC-7. DC-6/7s surviving into the Jet Age were replaced in front line service by Boeing 707 and Douglas DC-8 aircraft.

2006 marked the 60th anniversary since the introduction of the DC-6.

Pan Am DC-6B at London Heathrow in September 1954 on a tourist flight

**Variants**

- **XC-112** United States military designation of an improved version of the C-54 (DC-4); became the prototype DC-6. Eventually designated **YC-112A**, pressurized, P&W R-2800-83AM3 engines
- **DC-6** Initial production variant.
- **DC-6a** All-passenger variant of DC-6A, without cargo door.
- **DC-6C** Convertible cargo/passenger variant.
- **VC-118** One DC-6 bought as a presidential transport with special 25 seat interior and 12 beds.
- **C-118** Designation of DC-6As for the United States Air Force, 101 built.
- **VC-118A** Conversions of C-118As as staff transports.
- **C-118B** R6D-1s re-designated.
- **VC-118B** R6D-1Zs re-designated.
- **R6D-1** United States Navy designation for the DC-6A, 65 built.
- **R6D-1Z** Four R6D-1s converted as staff transports.
G-APSA in **British Eagle** scheme

G-APSA displaying at Hamburg
OPublishers
Current operators of the DC-6
Today, most DC-6s in commercial use are based in Alaska. Several other DC-6s are still in operation for small carriers in South America.

- About 100 DC-6s still fly (or are potentially capable of flight).
- In 2002, 49 were fully active.
- One DC-6A, G-APSA, is in use by Air Atlantique, Coventry, UK. They also own a DC-6B, G-SIXC.
- One is in use by Red Bull in Salzburg, Austria.
- One DC-6 is in use by Namibia Commercial Aviation.
- An unknown number are in use as freighters or waterbombers in Canada and the western US.

Civil operators

- New Zealand
  - TEAL
- United Kingdom
  - Air Atlantique, a former cargo carrier based in Coventry, England.
- United States
  - Everts Air Fuel
  - Everts Air Cargo
- Greece
  - Olympic Airways

Military operators

- Argentina
- Belgium
- Bolivia
- Brazil
- Chile
Notable incidents and accidents

- On 29 November 1949, American Airlines Flight 157 crashed while attempting a 3 engine landing in Dallas, Texas, killing 28 people.
- On 24 August 1951, United Airlines Flight 615 crashed into Tolman Peak and into Dry Gulch Canyon below, 15 miles southeast of Oakland, California, killing all 44 passengers and 6 crew.
- On 14 February 1953, National Airlines Flight 470 crashed into the Gulf of Mexico off Mobile, Alabama. The aircraft broke up in the turbulence of a "frontal wave" storm after failure of the left wing, killing all 41 passengers and 5 crew members.
- On 29 October 1953, British Commonwealth Pacific Airlines flight 304 from Sydney, Nadi (Fiji), Canton Island, and Honolulu crashed upon landing at San Francisco Airport, killing all 19 on board.
- On 12 February 1955, a Sabena DC-6 crashed on mount Terminillo, near Rieti, Italy; 29 people died, including 1953 Miss Italia winner Marcella Mariani.
- On 1 November 1955, a time bomb exploded aboard United Airlines Flight 629, a DC-6, killing 44 people above Longmont, Colorado, USA.

Survivors
Several DC-6s are preserved in museums.

- The most well-known is President Harry S. Truman's VC-118B Independence (s/n 46-505), which is preserved at the National Museum of the United States Air Force, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio. It was retired to the Museum in 1965. In 1977-1978 museum personnel restored "Independence" to its former presidential markings and eagle-like paint scheme. The aircraft is on display in the Museum's Presidential Hangar.

Specifications (DC-6B)
_Data from Airliners.net_

**General characteristics**

- **Crew:** 3: captain, copilot, flight engineer, plus attendants appropriate to number of passengers
- **Capacity:** 54-102 passengers
- **Length:** 105 ft 7 in (32.18 m)
- **Wingspan:** 117 ft 6 in (35.81 m)
- **Height:** 28 ft 5 in (8.66 m)
- **Wing area:** 1,463 ft (135.9 m)
- **Empty weight:** 55,357 lb (25,110 kg)
- **Max takeoff weight:** 107,000 lb (48,500 kg)
- **Powerplant:** 4×_radial engine_, 2,500 hp (1,700 kW) with water injection each
- **Propellers:** Hamilton Standard 43E60 "Hydromatic" constant speed props with autofeather and reverse thrust

**Performance**

- **Cruise speed:** 274 kn (315 mph, 507 km/h)
- **Range:** 2,610 nmi (3,010 mi, 4,840 km)
- **Service ceiling:** 25,000 ft (7,600 m)
- **Rate of climb:** 1,070 ft/min (5.44 m/s)

See also

**Related development**

- Douglas DC-4
- Douglas DC-7

**Comparable aircraft**

- Lockheed Constellation
- Boeing 377

**Related lists**

- List of military aircraft of the United States
- List of military aircraft of the United States (naval)

**Bibliography**

**External links**

- DC-6 Images
- Airliners.net on the DC-6
- Oldprops.com Many Images
- The Six