

THE LITTLE AVIATION MUSEUM

Workbench notes

DOUGLAS DC-4 IN 1/144 BY MINICRAFT

(November 2017)

Having almost run out of Boeing airliners to model I decided it was time to make some Douglas airliners. Having been thoroughly annoyed by the quality of the Minicraft Boeing 707 kits I'd had to use I was delighted at the quality of the Minicraft DC-4 kits which may not be totally accurate but look like DC-4s and have a nice delicate quality about them.

I don't think of the DC-4 a very attractive airliner but found that I had two Minicraft DC-4 kits in my collection so I thought I might do something interesting with them and make them to demonstrate a couple of slices of Australian aviation history

Australian National Airways imported four DC-4s into Australia, beginning in 1946. They revolutionized local air transport in the same way that DC-2s and DC-3s had before the war. Hawkeye make a lovely sheet of decals of those first ANA DC-4s so the choice was obvious. It would also have been obvious to make VH-ANA which was the first DC-4 to fly in Australia but more interesting, I thought, to make VH-ANC. In October 1946 it was the first airliner to make a scheduled service flight linking Australia and North America, flying a wet lease for British Commonwealth Pacific Airlines which did not have any aircraft at the time.

At the other end of the time line is two DC-4s that Qantas was flying in the 1970s. The only other DC-4s still flying in Australia were a couple that had been converted to Carvairs (for which Roden make a nice kit and Hawkeye make excellent Ansett-ANA decals). Qantas was not keen on



flying these DC-4s but they were used on the route linking Norfolk Island with the rest of Australia. The reason for this was the '90 minute rule' that said a two engined airliner had to be at all times within 90 minutes flying time of a runway it could use, and there was no two engined airliner capable of making the flight to Norfolk Island in 90 minutes. As a result a four engined airliner had to be used and other factors meant that the only thing that filled the bill was old DC-4s.

Qantas was given two DC-4s and told the fly the route, which it did for a number of years until a dispensation against the rule was finally granted and East-West Fokker F-27s took over the route.



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