

## **De “Red Bull” DC-6B – Flying Bull’s**

### **The ‘Red Bull’ DC-6, a unique airplane with a special history.**

The way this DC-6 being the main attraction of the ‘Flying Bulls’ aircraft collection came in the inventory is a truly remarkable story. An exciting boy’s dream, perseverance and professional approach as ingredients.

### **The Flying Bulls**

The flying Bulls in Hangar 7 & 8 at Salzburg Airport is a travelling collection of aircraft exhibitions, a mix of classical aircraft, jets and aerobatic types. Under enthusiastic leadership of Mr. Harald Reiter aircraft of the ‘Flying Bulls’ perform in international air fetes to promote the name of its sponsor Red Bull with the motto ‘Red Bull gives you wings’. The DC-6 is the special treasure of the collection and a most interesting subject to focus on.

### **Deep affection for classical aircraft created something beautiful**

It all started with Sigi Angerer, a previous Tyrolean Airlines pilot. His love for old aircraft types made him travel far from Austria in order to find a war bird which could be useful restored to flying condition and he found first a T-28 Trojan and later on a Corsair. The only thing what mattered next was to find the people who could join his ideas and were willing to finance this expensive hobby. He succeeded in his search when he found Harald Reiter who is today’s General Manager of the ‘Flying Bulls’. Originally 5 to 6 airplanes were planned but at this very moment including the company’s business jet it is close to thirty aircraft altogether being the largest private collection of aircraft in Austria.

### **There is no coincidence, is there?**

It seemed pure coincidence when Sigi Angerer read a small advertisement in a magazine what happened to be put under his eyes. A DC-6 was up for sale in Windhoek, Namibia. A Dutch guy, named Chris Schutte operated the airplane for years on tourist flights above the rainforests but after hostile actions occurred in neighbouring Angola the business was doomed by lack of tourists. Two days later Harald and Sigi landed in Namibia with the intention to own the aircraft. Both eager to see the airplane and joking like gentlemen among each other. ‘You wanted an airplane’..., ‘no no no, it is you, you wanted the airplane’.

### **An exciting journey back to Europe**

The DC-6B was in flyable condition but it seems inevitable that there was work to be done. The flight home to Salzburg was scheduled on July 7<sup>th</sup> 2000 with a crew of six pilots, technicians and a stewardess. On the very last moment two South African pilots with experience on the DC-6 decided to join this special journey. This specific experience was most welcome however some other pilots were accustomed to the DASH-7 a four engine turboprop with somehow comparable flight characteristics. Preparations were made as strictly and complete as possible, even instructions to

survive in the desert between the savage animals after an emergency landing were given. The cargo consisted of spare parts and some 4000 litres oil in jerry cans for the engines. After repair of a stubborn propeller Sigi Angerer himself took off from Windhoek to begin the 8000 km. journey of the DC-6. The first 1300 km. to Victoria Falls airport were undertaken in a four hour flight without any problem. There was even time to visit the Victoria Falls itself.

### **Out of Africa**

The first step in operation 'out of Africa' as described by Red Bull was a fact. The next stop was Uganda which after five hours flying with 450 km/h was reached while 2200 km was travelled. On the airfield of Entebbe the team got a surprise. The Afgaz fuel which could be delivered seemed only one third of what was needed. The chauffeur of the van delivering the fuel said 'I'll be back soon' and he was on his way to recover additional fuel. Not until late in the evening he returned with his tank completely full with Afgaz which didn't reach the need this time either. Next morning he came back again and managed to deliver the third load. Pilot Klaus Plaza could only then climb in the air with the DC-6B for six hours flight above Sudan to the town of Luxor in Egypt. High above the desert the airplane looked in its element but this is later on not the case with the crew standing on the wing while refuelling in Luxor with the sun burning in their necks. Finally the last ten hours to Salzburg could begin where the South African Flippie Vermeulen touched down safely on the 10<sup>th</sup> of July. It was altogether a formidable performance with a carefully selected route avoiding carefully some dangerous war zones in Africa.

### **Special owners**

For those who are wondering how the DC-6 appeared in Windhoek there is this juicy story. The airplane with construction number 45563 was the second last produced and delivered to JAT/Yugoslavian airlines (together with the last produced one) and received the serial YU-AFA. After some three years the airplane was transferred to the Yugoslav Air Force with the serial 7451. There it became the special VIP plane of the great leader President Tito for himself and his guests. In 1975 the airplane was donated to the Zambia Air Force and served some years as the special plane of President Kaunda. In 1990 Chris Schutte managed to buy the DC-6 together with another example and brought them to Namibia. After considerable restoration work it received the serial V5-NCF and entered flight operations for Namibia Commercial Aviation (NCA) together with other examples of this type of airplane. Flights were operated over the rainforests with several destinations, among them Victoria Falls airport until Chris has to seize the flights when tourists stayed away.

### **Consolidation of the airplane for years**

In Salzburg the airplane is completely overhauled. When inspecting the fuselage the presence of corrosion seemed much more as assumed. This resulted in an almost complete stripping of the airplane and changing for some 50 % of the fuselage for new components. In four years a job was done by 17 people in creating some 700 square metres metal and some 18 kilometres wiring. Four new engines, a new fuel system and a more up-to-date avionics suite necessary for today's safe flying

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requirements were also fitted. Every part of the airplane was carefully inspected and when necessary replaced. There was little experience in the world with restoring of such a big aircraft and several things had to be invented or learned for the first time and solutions had to be created. The way this big aircraft was restored with such a perfection is very unique. In the inside of the fuselage there was fitted thick noise reducing and fire delaying material. The whole interior was authentically recreated with the finest touch. Then the DC-6B was registered in the USA and received the serial N-996DM. After this in the summer of 2004 the plane rolls out the hangar of Salzburg airport and shows itself on the concrete in all its glory in the bright sunshine. The first flight is accompanied by the companies own Alpha Jets and everything seemed to work as it was planned. With this a successful restoration process came to its end. The DC-6 is then placed in Hangar 8 which was initially planned as the maintenance hall of the Flying Bulls.

### **Sigi's dream comes through**

The DC-6B is the last flying example in the world and is even in better shape when leaving the Douglas factory in 1958 in Santa Monica. Today the plane is used for promotional activities. However the DC-6 was certificated for maximum 106 people this beauty of the luxury Red Bull version is accustomed for approximately 35 people. The plane is flown by two pilots and a mechanic just sitting behind them to help control the many analogue instruments. It could be possible that Sigi is flying you because he is with some other pilots working permanently for Red Bull. But also free lancers from the commercial airlines are working for Red Bull in the show activities. It must be quite an experience to have a flight with this DC-6, it's really marvellous interior having the complete atmosphere of the fifties but completely adapted to today's quality and safety requirements. Harald Reiter and the company can effort themselves to make conditions for exhibitions on a show such as a minimal 1000m. runway of concrete and commercial interests may not challenge the interests of other contributors on the air fete or show. If Harald's DC-6 really comes to your show depends on if you are interesting enough to select you because today the amount of requests are many more then he is able to grant. For this moment we are sure that we can enjoy the appearance of the fine DC-6B for considerable years !

Wim Das & Kees Otten

### **DC-6B**

Length:	32,2 m.
Height:	8,9 m.
Wingspan:	35,8 m.
Max. Weight:	47.000 kg.
Max. Speed:	555 km/u
Cruise speed:	465 km/u
Economical speed:	435 km/u op 20.000 ft.
Engines:	4 Pratt & Whitney R2800 CB-3
Motor type:	18 cylinder double Wasp
Propeller:	Hamilton standard, threebladed
Power:	2500 Horsepower (water-methanol)