

BREITLING DC-3 WORLD RECORD TOUR STOPS OFF IN ARIZONA

The 77-year-old Breitling DC-3 landed in Scottsdale in mid-July on its historic journey to set a new world record as the oldest plane to circumnavigate the globe. With a flight range of eight hours, the plane's route stays fairly close to land. After legs across Europe, the Middle East and Asia, Captain Francisco Agullo and crew headed to Alaska, then the Lower 48. Scottsdale was the fifth of 12 Continental US stops, followed by Dallas.

A final US stop in Boston was followed by Newfoundland and Labrador, Greenland, Iceland and several stops in the British Isles before a tour finale at the 2017 Breitling Sion Air Show in Switzerland in September.

The Douglas DC-3 made its maiden flight in the United States in 1940; its first delivery was

to American Airlines. Nicknamed "the Normandy landings plane," it was used by the Army from 1942 to 1944, where it towed gliders and dropped thousands of paratroopers on the coast of France during World War II.

The Breitling DC-3 World Tour shares the company's passion for aeronautics with a global audience. Their affiliation with aviation dates back to the early 1930s, when they manufactured cockpit chronographs.

We stopped by the Scottsdale Airport to wish the flight well, as they took some folks up for a half-hour tour of the area.

If you haven't flown on a big prop passenger plane, you've missed the anticipatory fun of the engines firing up, one by one, with protracted sputters and plumes of smoke, till all

are running smoothly. The DC-3 is a tail-dragger: unlike modern aircraft that ride level on a nose wheel, there are two wing wheels and a small tail wheel. If you are in the cabin with the cockpit door open as you taxi toward takeoff, you'll wonder how the pilots can see a thing. As you approach takeoff speed, the tail rises up and the cabin levels off. Upon landing, you experience the tail settling back down onto its little wheel.

The DC-3 cabin is very hot in July in Arizona—modern air conditioning and air handling were still a few years off.

In 1952, Breitling launched its Navitimer watch, the oldest mechanical chronograph still in production today and a cult favorite among pilots. To celebrate the DC-3 World Tour, Breitling introduced a 500-piece limited edition of this watch. The collection traveled onboard the DC-3 throughout the tour, to then be made available to enthusiasts with a certificate signed by Captain Agullo. ■

