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- › McDonnell Douglas DC-10 (Airliner Color History) User Manual

Zenith Pr 0760306176

McDonnell Douglas DC-10: An Airliner Color History

Comprehensive Guide to the DC-10 Aircraft

INTRODUCTION

This volume provides a detailed historical account of the McDonnell Douglas DC-10 airliner. It explores the aircraft's development, production, and operational history, highlighting its significance in commercial aviation. The book serves as an informational resource for enthusiasts and researchers interested in the DC-10 and its impact on air travel.

ABOUT THE McDONNELL DOUGLAS DC-10 AIRCRAFT

The McDonnell Douglas DC-10 was designed in response to a demand for a large-capacity, medium-range airliner. Its distinctive three-engine configuration offered a balance between the fuel efficiency of twin-engine designs and the power of four-engine aircraft. This section outlines key aspects of the DC-10's journey from concept to its extensive service record.

Design and Development

The DC-10's design phase was initiated to meet the growing need for wide-body aircraft capable of serving both domestic and international routes. Its development involved significant engineering efforts to integrate advanced avionics and propulsion systems, leading to its first flight and subsequent certification.

Production and Variants

Production of the DC-10 included several variants tailored for different operational requirements, such as extended range and cargo capabilities. Each variant incorporated specific modifications to enhance performance and versatility, serving a diverse range of airline customers globally.

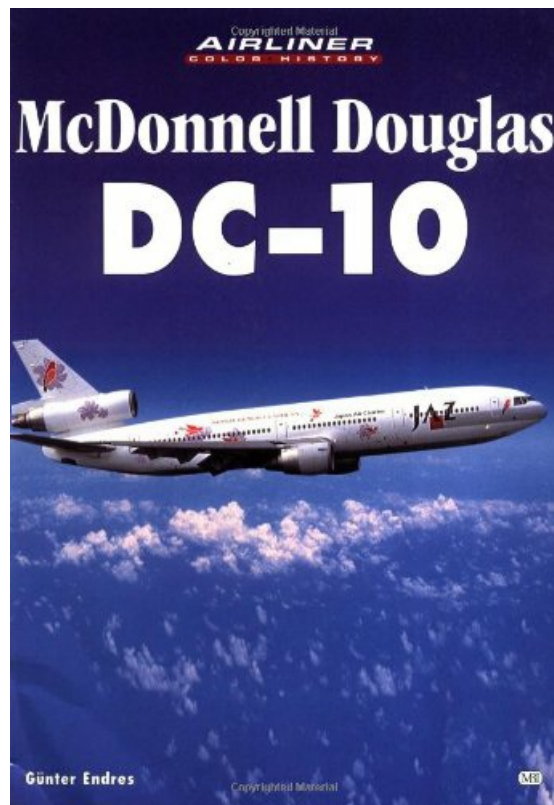
Operational History and In-Service Record

The DC-10 entered service and was adopted by numerous airlines worldwide. Its operational history is characterized by extensive use in passenger and cargo transport. The aircraft's in-service record reflects its role in shaping air travel during its active years, including its performance and notable events.

BOOK SPECIFICATIONS

Publisher	Zenith Pr
Publication Date	January 1, 1998
Language	English
Print Length	128 pages
ISBN-10	0760306176
ISBN-13	978-0760306178
Item Weight	1.46 pounds
Dimensions	8.25 x 0.5 x 11.75 inches

VISUAL DOCUMENTATION



Front cover of the book "McDonnell Douglas DC-10 (Airliner Color History)" by Gunter Endres, featuring a DC-10 aircraft in flight against a cloudy sky.



The takeover of McDonnell Douglas by Boeing in August 1997 provided a sharp reminder that past glories are no longer an automatic passport to the future—indeed, had the merger of the former Douglas Aircraft Company and the St. Louis-based McDonnell in April 1967, Douglas had found itself in exact financial difficulties in 1966 and 1967 when it was unable to raise capital in spite of a healthy order book for its aircraft, and McDonnell stepped in, saving the DC-8, DC-9, and DC-10 programs. The latter had involved—so, too, the Boeing 747—from the USAF's 1963 C-141B requirement won by the Lockheed C-5 Galaxy and from the American Airlines widebody specification issued to all aircraft manufacturers in March 1966.

Since its proposal over 30 years ago, the DC-10 has had a varied history. Saved by McDonnell, the project went through various two-engine and four-engine derivatives before it ended up as a trijet, coincidentally, therefore, going head to head with Lockheed's similar trijet. Entering service with American Airlines on August 5, 1971, the DC-10 has since seen service with some 125 operators across the world—but its operational life has had remarkable ups and downs, with the dark days of its grounding in the summer of 1979 following the American

Airlines crash at Chicago marking the lowest point. This and the Turkish Airlines crash at Paris put a cloud over the DC-10, dislodged only somewhat by success with the United States Air Force, which bought 40 tanker/cargo variants and helped customers regain confidence in the aircraft. Nevertheless, production ceased in 1988 after a disappointing 446 aircraft, and the program was succeeded by the MD-11.

Yet, despite these facts, the DC-10 has emerged as a long-lived and capable workhorse, a true stalwart of the skies. It remains in frontline service with some of the world's largest airlines and has also found a niche as an efficient and capable cargo carrier. So Freddie Laker was one of the first to buy the DC-10 in the early 1970s, and when he resumed transatlantic routes in 1974, the DC-10 was again his first choice. The two biggest passenger airlines and the world's largest freight company all operate the trijet—endorsement indeed! The opinions of countless pilots and operations personnel reflect a universal acknowledgment of an achievement of which everyone of McDonnell Douglas can be proud. And it is an aircraft with a future: plans are being implemented to fit a new "glass" cockpit, which will put it alongside its more modern successors and extend its lifespan for perhaps another 20 years.



Printed in Singapore
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Back cover of the book, displaying text description of the DC-10's history and an image of multiple DC-10 aircraft on an airport tarmac.

SUPPORT AND INFORMATION

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