

WHAT COULD'VE BEEN! – THE “DC-10 TWIN”[©]

by Dan Pemble, Kissimmee, Florida – May 6, 2023

Isn't it wonderful just how much we are all blessed to have “20-20 hindsight”!? Often such hindsight can be a bit sad and regretful! So too can the lack of “20-20 foresight” have like effects! This short article covers what I feel is completely “blind sight” when it comes to developing an airplane that was, almost from day one, destined to be of keen interest to airlines throughout the world! Please do read on.

I was first an employee of the McDonnell Douglas Corporation's (MDC) Douglas Aircraft division for 28 years and, following the MDC merger with Boeing during 1997, I was grateful for another 12.5 years of employment at the Boeing Company. I must say that prior to the MDC merger with Boeing, engineering expertise at the Douglas Company in Long Beach derived countless airplane derivatives and new designs in their stellar and exhaustive efforts to keep the Douglas Aircraft Company in the spotlight as a viable commercial jet transport airframe manufacturer! But it wasn't to be because the McDonnell part of the corporation had been exclusively engaged in the manufacturing and sales of military aircraft; consequently they had little knowledge or interest in commercial aviation and, as such, failed to back numerous highly-credible projects on the drawing board at Douglas. This was to be the demise of Douglas! So be it but, let me now address the subject of this article.



During 1975, the DC-10 “Twin” was conceived as a shortened version of the DC-10 with just 2 engines. Indeed, it may have been one of the most viable of all the Long Beach proposed new airplanes! The twin-engined wide-body Airbus A300 had entered service in 1974 but, following meager initial sales, it was not until 1978 that larger sales were realized. And, the wide-body Boeing 767-200 did not enter service until 1982. It's certainly possible that if MDC had gone forward with the DC-10 Twin in the mid-1970s, it may have eventually dominated the market and enjoyed very profitable sales! Here are a few of today's facts about the DC-10 “Twin” competitors:

-Airbus A300: Including all variants, 561 produced during 1971-2007

-Boeing 767: Including all variants, 1272 produced through March/2023; program still active!

Undoubtedly, if MDC had produced the DC-10 Twin, they would have captured a large chunk of the market and the program would have been highly profitable!!

The following link tells the whole BIG story:

<https://www.airlinerratings.com/news/mcdonnell-douglas-missed-big-twin-disappeared/>