

1958

LONG BEACH, Calif., MAY 30 -- The 600-mile-an-hour DC-8 Jetliner, world's newest and most advanced transport, flashed off Long Beach Municipal Airport today on its maiden flight.

Throngs of spectators, including thousands involved in design and manufacture of the four-jet Douglas plane, saw the swept-wing airliner race down the runway and leap nimbly skyward to flex its wings for the first time.

The big white transport, marked with red and blue stripes, headed out over the Pacific Ocean to perform scheduled shakedown maneuvers before returning to land at Edwards Air Force Base, California.

At the controls were A. G. Heimerdinger, pilot; William H. Magruder, co-pilot; and Paul H. Patten, a third Douglas test pilot acting as systems operator.

Today's event had been eagerly anticipated not only by the producers of the DC-8 but by operators of 17 airlines which have placed orders for 138 Jetliners valued at some \$700,000,000.

It was the initial event of probably the most intensive schedule of flight testing ever undertaken for a commercial airliner. As they roll off the production line, eight additional DC-8s will join the one which flew today in an accelerated flying program leading to a Civil Aeronautics Administration airworthiness certificate.

When DC-8s go into airline service, however, they will be equipped with an even more effective and efficient suppressor now ready for production.

The shakedown flight culminated some three years of intensive design, development and production effort by the company which has manufactured one-half of all commercial transports in scheduled airline service.

It was in June, 1955, that Board Chairman Donald W. Douglas initialed a directive that solidified years of preliminary studies into a firm transport project. From its inception, the DC-8 has been considered by Douglas Aircraft company to be as significant an advancement in the field of transportation as the fabled DC-3 was in its day.

The company poured its vast and diversified experience, technical knowledge and some \$250,000,000 of private capital into the Jetliner. Today's flight was the climactic event in the dramatic enterprise whose denouement will be written in the decade ahead.

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WITH DC-8 FLIGHT

Three veteran test pilots were in the cockpit for the first flight of the new Douglas DC-8 Jetliner: A. G. Heimerdinger, flight operations manager for the Douglas Santa Monica Division, William M. Magruder, and Paul H. Patten.

Prior to the flight, the crew had the unique experience of 35 hours in a realistic flight simulator built for Douglas by Link Aviation.

"This is the first time, to my knowledge," said Heimerdinger, "that any crew has had the benefit of developing team work in a new airplane before making a first flight. I can't say too much for what we gained."

Heimerdinger, who first soloed in 1934, has been an engineering test pilot for Douglas for seven years and was active in the flight tests leading to CAA certification of the DC-7 series of commercial transports. A former U.S. Navy pilot and flight instructor, Heimerdinger also was a Civil Aeronautics Administration engineering test pilot for six years.

He has been assigned to the DC-8 project for nearly three years, gaining familiarity with its detail design and coordinating the many considerations given to the pilot's requirements. Heimerdinger will occupy the left seat and be in charge of the flight crew.

His co-pilot, Magruder, holds an aeronautical engineering degree from the University of California and obtained his

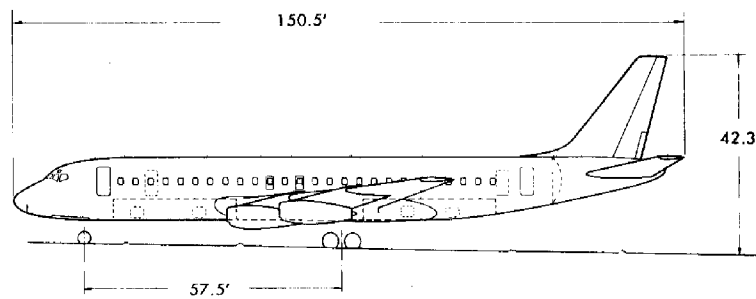
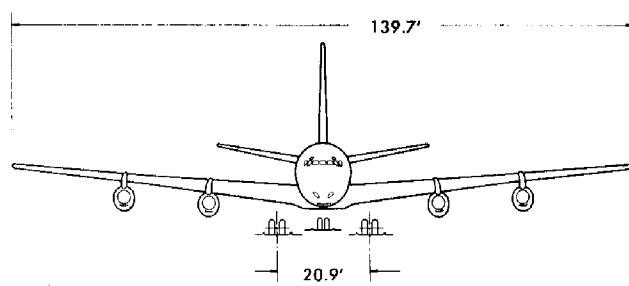
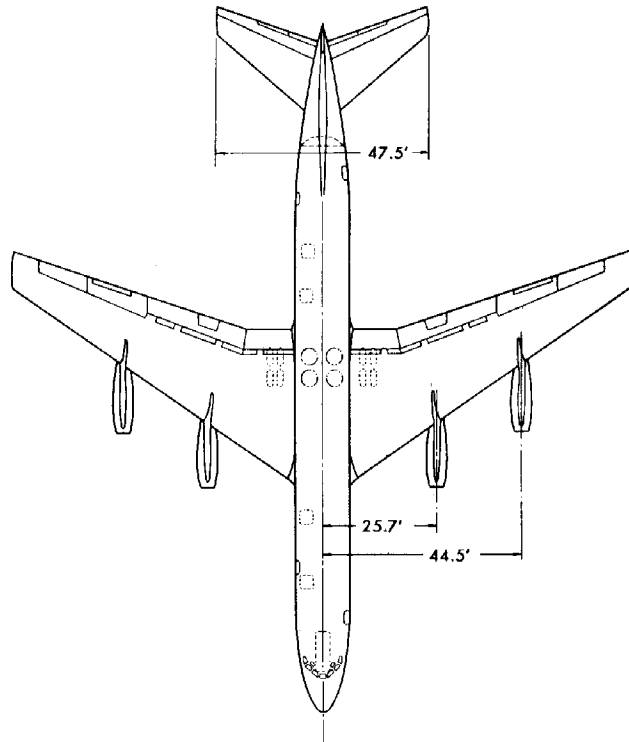
early flight experience with the U.S.A.F. For three years following his active service, he was a civilian flight test engineer at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. As Chief of the Cargo and Bomber Performance Engineering Branch of the U.S.A.F. Flight Test Division, he served as test engineer on a broad variety of aircraft.

Ordered to active duty at Edwards Air Force Base in 1951, Magruder participated in the evaluation of numerous large aircraft, including the C-124, B-57A, C-131C and XB-52.

He was awarded the Legion of Merit decoration for his service as project officer for the functional development of the B-52B, multi-jet bomber. Magruder has been with Douglas since March, 1956, and has served as project pilot for the C-133 turboprop cargo transport.

Patten, a former Navy flier and a Douglas test pilot since 1952, was systems operator for the first flight of the DC-8. He has served as engineering test pilot on the DC-6 and DC-7 series of transports, including certification flying of the DC-7 and DC-7C.

Patten was a member of the crew that made the first non-stop flight from Los Angeles to Paris in a DC-6B and also of a DC-7C which set a distance record on a flight from Long Beach to Paris. He has been assigned to the DC-8 program since February, 1957, helping to prepare operations procedures and in organizing the training program.



DOUGLAS DC-8
GENERAL ARRANGEMENT