

# From H-10 ATLAS to MONO-TWIN

**THIS INTERESTING  
DESIGN GESTATED FROM  
A PROPOSED MILITARY  
TRAINER INTO A RATHER  
UNIQUE CABIN MONOPLANE  
BY HOWARD CARTER**

**D**uring the 1960s/1970s, an unusual aircraft could often be seen tied down on the Long Beach Airport ramp in southern California. During this time period, the airfield was home to a huge variety of extremely interesting aircraft — a far cry from today's Long Beach that is populated mainly by bland business jets and airliners.

The aircraft to which we are referring has actually had several different names and designations but while parked at Long Beach it was mainly known as the Atlas H-10. The gestation of this flying machine goes back before America entered the Second World War. The USA was shaking off the effects of the Great Depression and aircraft orders were beginning to boom — especially military trainers since President Franklin Roosevelt had realized the looming threat of fascism and had decreed the country must train as many military aviators as possible.

During the 1930s, aeronautical engineer Max Harlow was working as an instructor at Pasadena Junior College (PJC — today's Pasadena City College) where he instilled advanced aviation techniques on his students. His inspiration was such that



Max Harlow (right) with the prototype PJC-2 at Alhambra Airport.

a decision was made to actually build one of his designs with a view of possibly putting the aircraft into production.

The aircraft was designated PJC-2 and it was a four-place all-metal monoplane with retractable landing gear. It initially appeared the plane could have a good commercial future and Harlow moved to nearby Alhambra Airport where a production facility was created to build the PJC-2. Unfortunately, sales were less than enthusiastic and it appears only about eleven were complet-

ed although the company did enjoy modest success by exporting some disassembled examples to India. Known as PJC-5s, these aircraft were two-seat tandem trainers.

Noting the growing military market, Harlow reasoned that a larger, more powerful tandem trainer might be ideal for the demand. Now, this is where the story gets a bit difficult. The first PJC design was called, logically, the PJC-1, and this aircraft was registered X18136 but was lost during spin testing. The PJC-1 morphed into the PJC-2 limited production aircraft. By the time Harlow got to the PJC-4, the basic design had grown even though the influence of the PJC-2 could still be discerned.



This is how the H-10 started —the PJC-4/PCC-5 was aimed at the military trainer market but the design found no interest.

The PJC-4 had a much more military stance with a long canopy covering the tandem seats with the airframe stressed for aerobatics. Harlow also called the craft a “sporting monoplane,” obviously hoping to cash in on the wealthy civilian market but it appears that both approaches completely failed. The military had no interest and with war on the horizon, civilian prospects quickly fizzled. It appears the aircraft was mostly completed but not flown when work ground to a halt.

Apparently thinking there would be some form of post-war market for the machine (which must have been stored in the Pasadena area during the war years), an organization called the Rheem Manufacturing Company (whose main business was constructing water heaters, but during WWII it built aircraft and ship components) invested in the aircraft, which was now known as the PCC-10.

As the war in the Pacific was drawing to a close, students at the school went back to work on the plane and it was completed with the experimental registration of NX37463 and was fitted with a Lycoming opposed engine of 220-hp. The PCC-10 made its first flight on 4 October 1945 but it never found any sort of market since there were so many surplus military aircraft available for the civilian buyer at give-away prices.

So, it would seem that the PCC-10 just sort of faded away.

However, odd flying machines have a way of returning to life and such was the case with the PCC-10. It would appear the folks that ran Atlas Aircraft Company had some interest in resurrecting the PCC-10, but that is not surprising since one of the company founders was Max Harlow. Combining with J.B. Alexander (a former business partner of none other than Howard Hughes), premises were found at the former WWII training base of Hemet-Ryan

Airport in California where the pair attempted to resurrect the design but in a different manner.

The PCC-10 airframe was converted from a tandem two-seat trainer to a four-seat private aircraft. The new name for the plane was the Atlas H-10. A very limited program was undertaken to see if there was commercial interest. There wasn't. There was zero funding available for any sort of certification program and superior aircraft already in production to fill the niche the H-10 would have occupied — aircraft such as the superb Beech Model 35 Bonanza.



The PCC-5 morphed into the PCC-10. Not a bad looking aircraft, the design was woefully underpowered with its original engine.



The Atlas H-10 reconfigured as the Mono-Twin and photographed at Long Beach Airport during October 1967.

