



Flight Simulation Transforms Aviation (and saves the world from tyranny)

From *The Talent Code*, Daniel Coyle

“Early pilot training was built on the bedrock belief that good pilots are born, not made....The U.S. Patent Office declared Link's trainer a "novel profitable amusement device." [and the world ignored this innovation]

In the winter of 1934 President Franklin Roosevelt had a problem. Pilots in the US Army Air Corps--by all accounts the military's most skilled, combat-ready airmen--were dying in crashes...The carnage was not caused by a war. The pilots were simply trying to fly through winter storms, delivering the U.S. mail... a group of Army Corp brass grew desperate...[and] in one of the first recorded instances of nerd power trumping military tradition, the officers understood its potential [and] the generals ordered the first shipment of Link trainers.

Seven years later. WWII began, and with it the need to transform thousands of unskilled youth into pilots as quickly and safely as possible. That need was answered by ten thousand Link trainers; by the end of the war, a half-million airmen had logged millions of hours in what they fondly called "The Blue Box." In 1947 the Air Corps became the U.S. Air Force, and Link went on to build simulators for jets, bombers, and the lunar module for the Apollo mission.

Link's trainer permitted pilots to practice more deeply, to stop, struggle, make errors, and learn from them. During a few hours in a Link trainer, a pilot could "take-off" and "land" a dozen time...He could dive, stall and recover, spending hours inhabiting the sweet spot on the edge of his capabilities in ways he could never risk in an actual plane. The Air Corps pilots who trained in Links were no braver or smarter than the ones who crashed. they simply had the opportunity to practice more deeply.“