



Beyond The Limits: Flight Enters the Computer Age (MIT Press)

Paul E. Ceruzzi

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Computers and flying machines are two dominant technologies of our time. *Beyond the Limits* shows the ways in which they interact, clearly illustrating the complex issues and devices involved in their mutual evolution. It describes and illustrates how computer technology has affected the theory and practice of the engineering and operations of aircraft and spacecraft from 1945 to the present. Paul Ceruzzi points out that the "revolution" in aerospace technology has been going on for at least forty years. For the first time, he tells how modern flight depends on computers, how this came about, and what its consequences are. He brings to light new facets of the individual stories of aerospace and computing, while also revealing more general themes about the dynamics and evolution of these modern technologies. Spacecraft and fighters make use of leading-edge computer technologies in their design, testing manufacture, navigation and operation; moreover pilots and astronauts rely on computer simulations throughout their training. Ceruzzi describes these technologies and their history. In separate chapters he focuses on Northrop ("midwife of the computer industry"), missile tracking, Whirlwind, Apollo, Minuteman, and the software involved. An appendix discusses the role that on-board and ground computers played in the explosion of the space shuttle Challenger.

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