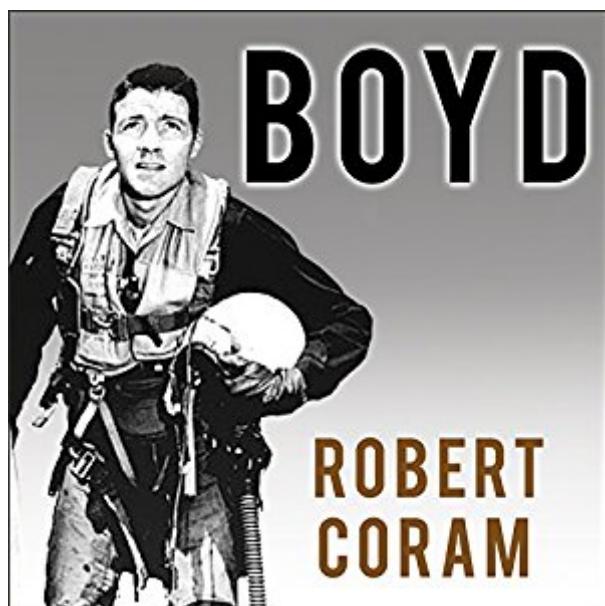


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Boyd: The Fighter Pilot Who Changed The Art Of War



Synopsis

John Boyd may be the most remarkable unsung hero in all of American military history. Some remember him as the greatest US fighter pilot ever - the man who, in simulated air-to-air combat, defeated every challenger in less than 40 seconds. Some recall him as the father of our country's most legendary fighter aircraft - the F-15 and F-16. Still, others think of Boyd as the most influential military theorist since Sun Tzu. They know only half the story. Boyd, more than any other person, saved fighter aviation from the predations of the Strategic Air Command. His manual of fighter tactics changed the way every air force in the world flies and fights. He discovered a physical theory that forever altered the way fighter planes were designed. Later in life, he developed a theory of military strategy that has been adopted throughout the world, and even applied to business models for maximizing efficiency. On a personal level, Boyd rarely met a general he couldn't offend. He was loud, abrasive, and profane. A man of daring, ferocious passion and intractable stubbornness, he was that most American of heroes - a rebel who cared not for his reputation or fortune, but for his country.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As background I read a lot of non-fiction, but typically shy away from biographies as I find them of limited value. After several recommendations from varied sources I decided to give this book a go and was not disappointed. Coram goes through and dissects Boyd's career, without skimping on the negative aspects of his life and gruff approach. Many of the tactics and strategies Boyd researches and applies in his life are uncovered and explained at a high enough level to give insight without

interrupting flow. From there you can either jump right in and start applying his methods to your own life or look into the topics in more depth. Since reading this book I see many parallels to Boyd's work in both business and technology. Anecdotally I find many of the lessons Coram brings to the fore contain large amounts of truth. Sometimes these truths force you to make uncomfortable moral decisions. Its not often a book gives intellectual pursuit, actionable tactics and a dose of ethics all together in the one package, but this biography has achieved it. Highly recommended.

What an enlightening read! I went from not even knowing about Colonel Boyd to wanting to be one of his Acolytes! The fact that a self-admitted "dumb sh@t fighter pilot" went on to both quantify and qualify the design of fighter aircraft and did so with the "elegance" of mathematics is startling to say the least. Much like Generalmajor Carl von Clausewitz, Boyd rose from the ranks to become an officer and like both Clausewitz and his other inspiration, Sun Tzu, he deduced everything, starting with the basics and moving into the elegance and, dare I say it, sophistication of mathematics. And he did it with pure, unvarnished, borderline fanaticism. The thoughts never left his mind and his brain was constantly obsessing, even while sleeping, no doubt, seeking a solution that everyone from the fighter pilots themselves to people with PhD's in mathematics, engineering, physics and aircraft design. Aside from the technical aspect of Col. Boyd's life, John Boyd, the man, is a first class representative of what dogged determination and persistence can accomplish.

You have read reviews that said "I couldn't put it down!" Well, here's one I HAD to put down a couple of times. It has the ring of awful truth. As I read, there were enough points of contact with events I remember that I couldn't dismiss it as fabrication. So we have a gifted but deeply flawed pilot and tactician that goes on to develop energy maneuver theory and some good airplanes and the OODA loop. Good for him (and for us). But we are left with a picture of the Pentagon as the lair of an uncontrollable military-industrial-congressional monster beyond the worst peacenik nightmare. Bad for us. Read this - it is good for you to know these things.

A great book!!!! A must read if you are interested in how the military industrial complex works. It tells the truth about how corrupt the procurement process is and how the Generals are in the pocket of the big defense companies. If you never understood why the DOD has constant cost overruns on its projects this book will clear it up for you. Additionally, a little known fact, John Boyd developed the battle plan for the Gulf War using his OODA Loop strategy. Norman Schwarzkopf was however, happy to take the credit after such a successful campaign. Read the book and find out how the F-16

and A-10 were born. Fascinating.

Biographies of military figures are a tricky business. The core audience for the books is so passionate that they are willing to forgive lousy books in their thirst for more information. For that reason there are a lot of mediocre war books. Because of the title and the subject, it's easy to glance at this book and think of it has a Costco war biography or a decent Christmas present for a military buff. Don't. It is instead of a truly peerless book on military strategy. Coram's chronicle is artful, so well-researched and so informative that it brought John Boyd to the forefront of military strategy well after his death and many years of neglect. Compared to his fellow writers in this field, Coram is a god among men. This book's strength is its ability to make complex, strategic theories that fundamentally shifted the art of war understandable to the average reader. Believe me, that is not an easy task. If the book inspires you to read some of Boyd's academic papers you will quickly discover how artful Coram has translated them. In journal form, Boyd's Creative Destruction is obtuse and confusing. Coram's book is the primer to its understanding for those of us who don't have ranking military professors to explain it. Lastly, Coram doesn't shy away from the negative sides of Boyd's genius bubble. We see how it torn at his family life and how he bore little of the consequences. If it wasn't for the endless patience of his wife who subsidized and tolerated his lifestyle with her support, the world would have been deprived of his insights.

I think that the reason the work of John Boyd has gone virtually non attributed and not given the proper credit was because of him not being political correct. Regardless of when you were in the military you are going to have to political correct or you are going to be promoted. I am a former marine and observed that all the time.

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