

Various views of the Link Trainer





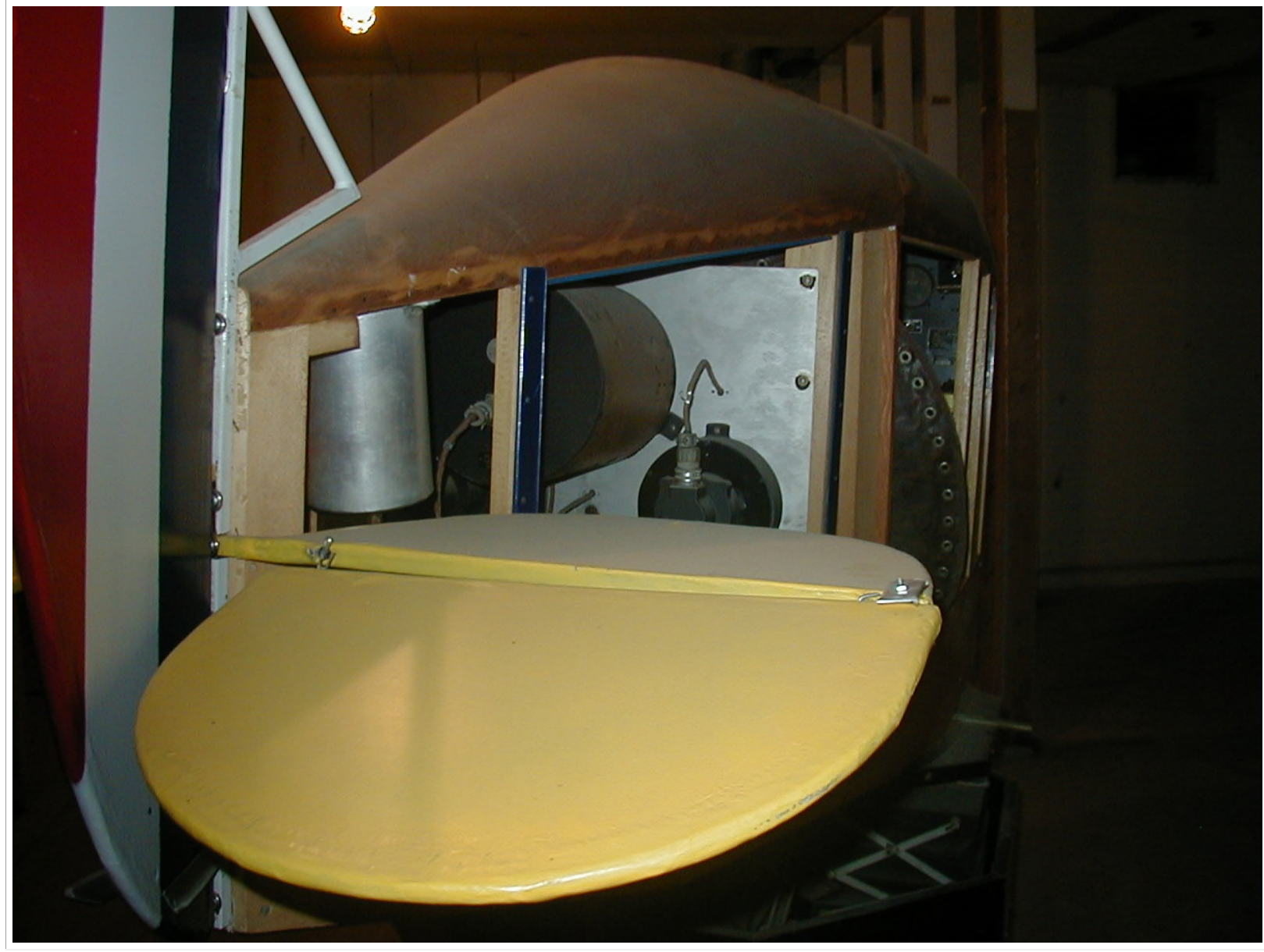










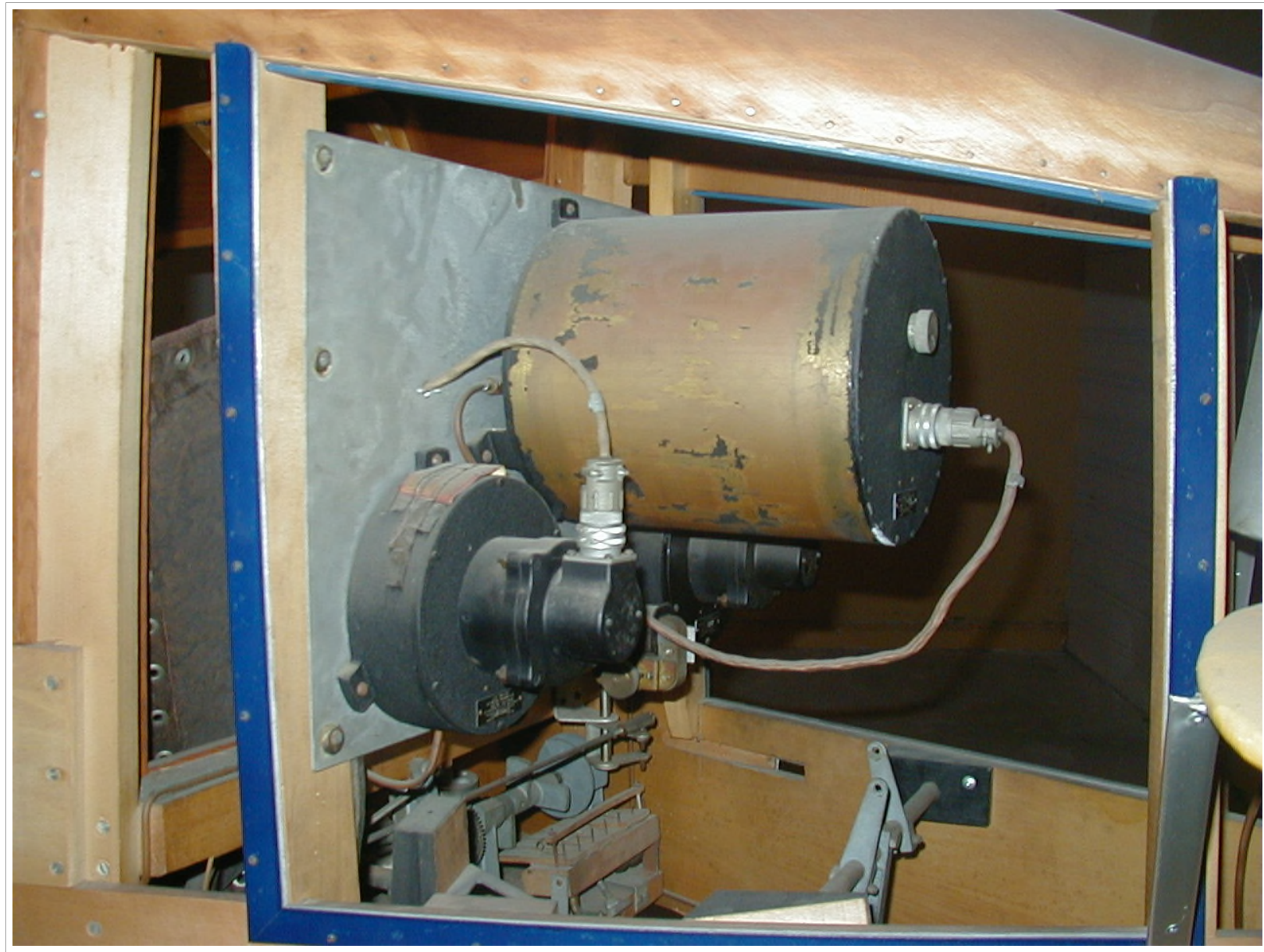


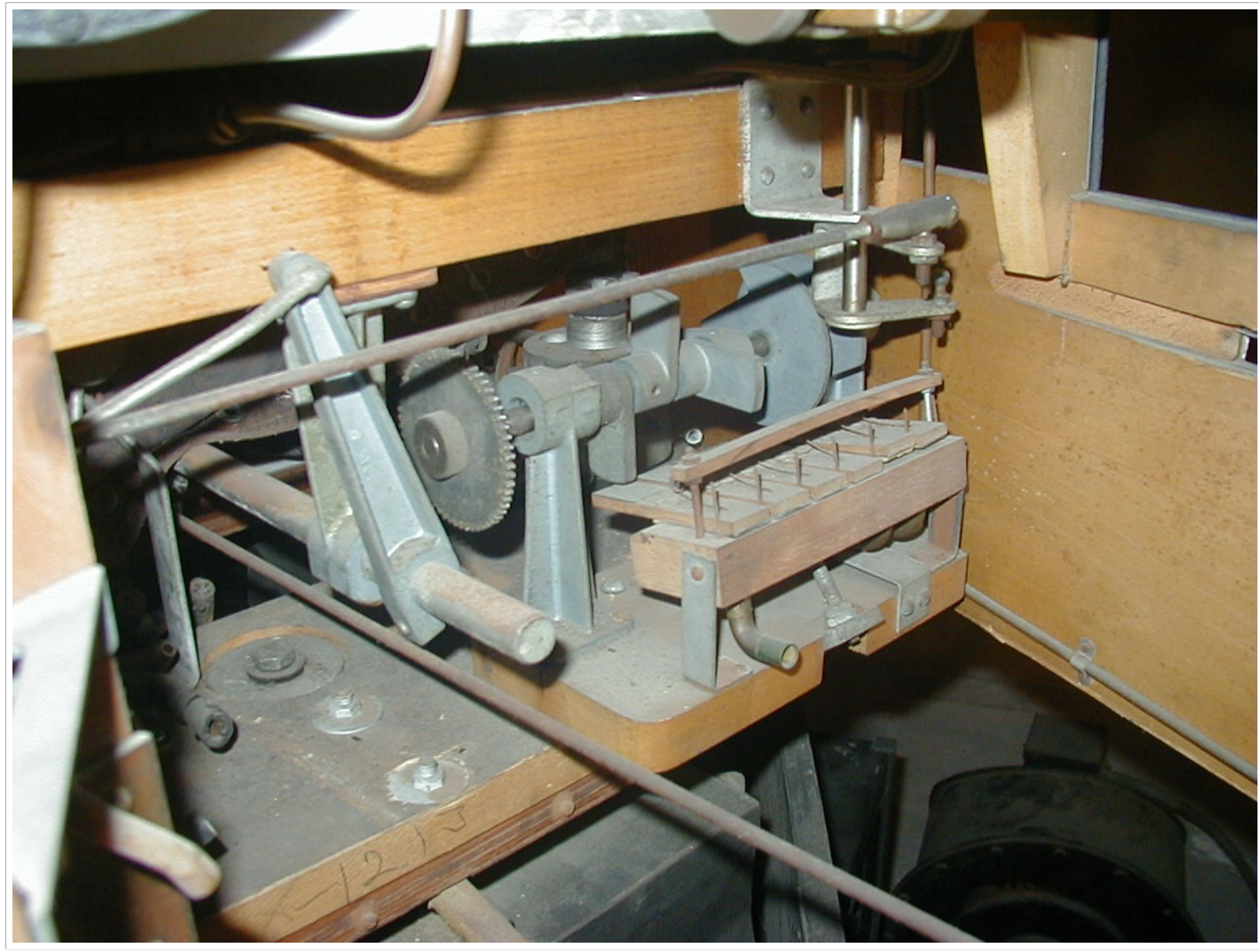


















Invention revolutionized pilot training

BY **JEFF PLATSKY**

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KIRKWOOD -- Seventy-five years ago, Edwin A. Link filed a patent that would give birth to a multibillion-dollar industry.

On Wednesday, about 30 people gathered in the lobby of the L3 Link Simulation and Training facility in Kirkwood to celebrate the diamond anniversary of Link's invention, feting his accomplishments and paying tribute to a man who is credited with forever changing the way aircraft pilots are trained.

Working in his father's Binghamton organ factory, the aviation enthusiast put together a rudimentary machine that revolutionized the aviation industry and developed technology that would be used in applications well beyond its original purpose.

From that invention, Link built a Binghamton-based business that became the pre-eminent supplier of flight simulators for military and commercial applications. It is a company that developed and refined the art and science of flight simulation, a company that until about 1980 had few peers in its field.

The company built simulators that trained World War II pilots, Boeing 727 pilots and even the trainers for the National Space and Aeronautical Administration. The NASA simulator was instrumental in devising a plan to rescue the star-crossed Apollo 13 mission. Even some of the technology for the hair-raising simulation rides at Walt Disney World can be traced to the technology developed by Link and his trusty crew of engineering talent. Link, who would have turned 100 this year, was inducted last year into the National Inventors Hall of Fame in Akron, Ohio.

"Today, Link is a name that continues to carry immeasurable value within the military training and simulation market," said John McNellis, president of Link Simulation and Training, now a unit of L3 Communications.

But the Link of today is much changed from the company that was built by the West Side resident who died in 1981. The Kirkwood facility employs 125 people, a fraction of the 2,500 people it employed at peak Binghamton employment levels in 1983. It occupies about 125,000 square feet of a 478,000-square-foot plant. In its heyday, the company had personnel in at least three plants located within the region.

Article courtesy of Richard Corey.

The above Link Trainer was acquired by the Freeman Museum thru the efforts of Jim West, who arranged the swap for several of the un-identified excavated plane parts.



Jim West

Page last revised

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