

YORK PLANT OF BENDIX COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION

BENDIX FUZING DEVICES DIVISION

BENDIX YORK DIVISION

What became the Bendix York, Pennsylvania operation in 1952 had its start as an Engineering department of Bendix Radio in the late 1940's or early 1950's, the exact date is lost in history. This group moved from Joppa Road to a facility in Pimlico, MD, and then into a new plant in York, Pennsylvania in the fall of 1952.

The separate facility was required for at least two reasons; Bendix Radio needed more floor space and the US Government wanted a separate location because of the highly classified work to be done.

Bendix entered into a lease agreement and had a building constructed in York. The Sparrow I fuze work moved to York in late 1952. At that time the facility was known as the York Plant of Bendix Radio Division and most of the key personnel were transferred from Bendix Radio to York. Work progressed on the Sparrow I missile Fuze. A Fuze consists of three major parts; the Target Detection Device (TDD) which is the part Bendix concentrated on, the Safety and Arming device (S&A), and the explosive train which detonates the warhead. The Target Detection Device is the most complex and the most costly part of the Fuze and can range from tens of dollars in the case of a mortar shell to tens of thousands of dollars in the case of a complex missile. The TDD detects the presence of a target and determines the time to detonate the warhead in order to inflict the most damage to the target.

Bendix designed and/or produced radar TDD's. Government security, although less strict now than 50 years ago still precludes describing, in detail the type of radar, the frequency, etc. used on a particular weapons system. Suffice it to say Bendix designed and produced TDD's from

CW FM to pulsed modulation. Most were microwave frequency devices

The types of weapons ranged from 81 mm mortars to Re-entry vehicles. The following is a list of most of the weapons programs; Sparrow I, Bird Dog, Little John, Honest John, LaCrosse, Talos, Air Target Fuze, Bomarc B, MMB-1, MMRBM, Redstone, Minuteman, Phoenix, Chaparral, Mauler, M 532 (mortar), Lance, and MK12 R/V (Re-entry vehicle). The Patriot program was awarded after this group returned to Towson.

The York Plant Became a full Division of Bendix in November 1954. Mr. Howard Walker, who was the Plant Manager became the General Manager and in fact was the only person to ever serve as the General Manager of this facility.

Sometime in the 1960's Bendix renamed many of the Divisions and the York Division became known as the Fuzing Devices Division. The operation remained the same.

Although the primary product was target detection devices, many other items were manufactured at the York facility. York designed the TATTE (Talos Tactical Test Equipment) in conjunction with Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory and Bendix Mishawaka Division.

Instrumentation Beacons for missile performance and tracking were made. Components for the SAGE system were made at this facility.

Bendix was a major sub contractor for IBM and did state of the art (at that time) core memory systems for IBM in addition to many other components.

In 1968 a Corporate decision was made to do away with the separate Fuzing Devices Division and again make it the York Plant of the Towson Facility. In 1971 the Plant was closed and the TDD product line and key personnel were transferred to Communications Division in Towson, MD making a full circle if you will. Bendix and later Allied Signal continued in the Target Detection Device business. The Towson facility was later sold to Raytheon Corp. and the products continue to be made at least until the year 2001.

That in a nutshell describes the history of a proud group of people who designed and manufactured state of the art equipment and perhaps describes a typical business cycle of a product.