

Fred W. Field Memoir

I was hired at Bendix Radio in June 1952 after receiving a B.S. in Electrical Engineering from Virginia Tech. I went to work in the Communications and Navigation Department (65), then headed by Spike Frazier. When Mr. Frazier was promoted, Norman Kaplan took over the department. My direct supervisor was James O. Stephenson, and his supervisor was Paul D. Rockwell. I was put on the AN/ARC-44 radio design project. This was a VHF FM radio designed to go into the Army L-5 observation aircraft. Its purpose was to communicate with ground troops who used FM backpack and handheld transceivers. I also did some assist work on the AN/ARC-45 radio, which was a companion UHF AM set for communications with Air Force radios.

I had married while a senior in college and in September 1952 my son was born. He suffered with pneumonia and I also had a few bouts with it. The solution was to find a job in a warmer climate. I was made an attractive offer by Hughes Aircraft in Culver City, California. I resigned in September 1954 and moved west.

During my Bendix employment I lived in a third-floor apartment at 10 Linden Terrace, Towson. I had been a licensed radio amateur (W4LLI) since 1947. After the move to Towson I became W3UVU. I was very active in the Chesapeake Radio Club which had been recently formed in Towson. Most of the members were Bendix Radio employees. Here in California my call letters are now N6FY.

I think Bendix Radio gave me the best possible career start. Unfortunately the company was slow to catch up with salary increases and beginning in 1953 lost a number of good engineers over salary dissatisfaction.

After Bendix, the rest of my career was involved in radio design. I did do a little satellite station work, but my first love and specialty remained HF radio.

Soon after I joined Hughes, the company hired Pat Hyland from Bendix as General Manager. When I first met Pat I told him that in 1954, Hughes hired two people from Bendix - one from the top and one from the bottom. Later, when Pat would see me he would always smile and say, "One from each end."

I still have a Department 65 Christmas Card address list for December 1953.