

Our Winnipeg Story

The original plant (about 12,500 sq. ft.) opened in 1977 at 311 Saulteaux Crescent on the northwest end of Winnipeg. The facility was built as an offset commitment to Lockheed Corporation in Burbank, CA, for Sperry Univac's portion of the CP-140 Aurora¹ program. Univac had the contract for all the computers that went aboard all of the aircraft. Winnipeg was chosen as the plant location because of its proximity to St. Paul and the fact that Air Command Headquarters of the Canadian Military was located in Winnipeg. In fact, the airport/base bordered the facilities property. Three people from St Paul moved to Winnipeg



to start the plant. Gerald (Jerry) Smith was the Director; Mike Teawalt, Production Control; and Jim Corcoran, Finance. Bill Corbett came from Salt Lake City to be the Quality Manager. The first Canadian employee was Judy Thomson, who was responsible for everything from personnel to payroll to secretarial to guide to interpreter to introductions to the key people in Manitoba. The first assembly folks were hired in 1978, and the original product was 15-pin printed-circuit boards as used in various peripheral equipments and shipboard computers. Peter Soszek was the first engineer hired; he was responsible for Production Engineering. Ed Pogorzelec was hired as the Quality Control Engineer, and Al Hayden was hired as the first Production Manager. In addition to 15-pin cards, we also built CP-140 power supplies and various other CP-140 hardware sub-assemblies as part of the offset requirement. By 1979 there were about 35 people working at the facility. I, Glen Johnson, had left Plant 1 in St. Paul in 1977 and transferred to International Program Management to take over the Canadian programs.

In late 1979 or early 1980 Sperry Great Neck won the Canadian Patrol Frigate (CPF) program. In addition to the CP-140 offset program, I was also responsible for the AN/UYK 502 development and the SHINPADS serial data bus programs. After Great Neck won the CPF Program, I moved to Winnipeg in 1980 to manage all the Canadian programs. As part of the CPF contract, all manufacturing, hardware and software engineering, and product support had to be done in Winnipeg as part of the proposal submitted by Great Neck. This allowed Winnipeg to start hiring engineering staff as well as more manufacturing people. The first design engineer hired was Ken Buechler, and the first software engineer hired was Neil Williams. Most of the new engineering people spent several months training in St Paul to take advantage of the knowledge base there and to make sure that any development mistakes made in St Paul were not

¹ See CP-140 summary on page 7

repeated in Winnipeg. Soon after CPF was awarded, the TRUMP program was also awarded to upgrade the four existing tribal class frigates with AN/UYK-502's, SHINPADS, and related Canadian products. All this new business, the expansion of the CP-140 program and the need for more people made the existing facility obsolete. In late 1980, Mr. Robert F. Faust, VP of Manufacturing in St Paul, approved the construction of a new 40,000 sq. ft. facility just down the road from 311 Saulteaux Crescent. The new facility was at 200 Saulteaux Crescent.

The original operation consisted mostly of jobs kitted in St Paul and shipped to Winnipeg for assembly. Winnipeg was actually just another Eagan cost center where labor was added to the kits. This worked for a year or two until Revenue Canada found out and wanted us to pay taxes on the profits generated by the value added in Canada. Negotiations ensued and from then on,



profits were split between Winnipeg and St Paul on all joint products. The new (40,000 sq. ft.) facility was completed in May of 1981. By then, Winnipeg had turned into a stand-alone facility with its own Profit and Loss accounting. All financial transactions including payroll, cost and travel accounting, pricing, proposals, etc. had to be done in Canadian dollars. Thus, in addition to a growing engineering and manufacturing organization, we also grew the financial organization. Because Winnipeg had become a stand-alone company and essentially (legally) part of Sperry Canada, a board of directors had to be established per Canadian law to look after employee pensions and other matters that pertained to all Sperry personnel in Canada. Sperry had a considerable commercial manufacturing plant in Montreal as well as sales offices across the country. Sperry Flight Systems had a plant in Ottawa. Halifax had a Sperry Gyro facility and Winnipeg also had a Sperry New Holland plant—so as you can see, there were a lot of Sperry folks in Canada, and Paramax had not started yet.

Gerry Smith left Winnipeg in 1984, taking a job with Sperry commercial in Toronto, and I took over the Canadian operation. We opened a marketing and support facility in Ottawa to be close to the customer. We also had people in Greenwood, Nova Scotia, to support the CP-140 customer. The UYK-502 and SHINPADS programs continued to grow with several Canadian companies as well as those in the U.S. In fact, the first user of SHINPADS was the USMC for the MATCALS program. Because the Canadians had paid for the development, we had to negotiate a royalty that needed to be paid to Canada before we could ship product to the States.

Employment grew to over 300 by 1985. Eventually the transfer of all Eagan/Clearwater/Pueblo cable assembly was transferred to Canada to take advantage of the lower Canadian dollar as well as the highest productivity in the company. Later all the memory core stringing was also transferred to Canada. Headcount continued to grow. In 1986, Burroughs Corporation acquired Sperry, and it wasn't long before we were Unisys.

Winnipeg was the only location in the world where Burroughs and Sperry both had a manufacturing facility. Burroughs had a disc drive manufacturing plant on the east side of the city with about 400 people. Of course, when we became Unisys, we needed a new board of directors, and we had to bring the pension plans of both companies together. It wasn't even fair from our perspective - Burroughs had very little, and we had millions of dollars in the Sperry Canada pension plan. Thank God it was protected by Canadian law, or it all would have been taken by Burroughs into their Detroit headquarters.

In 1987, Winnipeg no longer reported into St Paul. Unisys Canada was turned into one of Fred Jenny's divisions, and Dr. Lee Shevel was made president of Unisys Canada. I was made General Manager of Unisys Defence Systems Canada, reporting to Dr. Shevel, who reported to Mr. Jenny. Paul Manson was hired as the president of Paramax in Montreal with the intention of eventually replacing Dr. Shevel. {Editor's note: *Paramax was the name chosen as UNISYS considered doing a spin-off of several divisions.*} Paul Manson had been the Chief of Defence Staff (like our Joint Chiefs) of the Canadian forces and was respected throughout all of NATO. Paramax, of course, was the systems integrator for the Canadian Patrol Frigate program and quickly grew to nearly 1,000 people. Winnipeg continued to provide all the hardware for the program and the Trump program, which was primed by Litton Canada. In addition to the standard Canadian products, we also marketed to other Unisys divisions and other American companies that had Canadian offset commitments and needed Canadian content for their contracts. Winnipeg did millions of dollars of business for Great Neck on the NEXRAD program as well as a lot of work for the FAA. Winnipeg won a huge contract with Xetron Corp (eventually part of Northrop-Grumman) to build PC cards for the Frequency Hopping Multiplexer (FHMUX) Army communication devices. These programs plus several smaller ones pushed employment to over 400 people.

The 40,000 sq. ft. facility was no longer big enough. We rented space a couple of blocks away and moved the engineering department which had grown to over 100 people. That didn't work very well: have you ever see 100+ engineers on their own? {Editor's note: *Engineering group photo below courtesy of Peter Soszek.*}



We sought and won approval to expand the facility to 86,000 sq. ft. in 1987. By the end of the year with the completion of the expansion we were all back in the same building. The parking lot had spaces for about 400 cars and each spot had an electrical outlet so everyone could plug in their cars in the winter. This is quite common all over central Canada (and in North Dakota, where the head bolt heater was invented) including all the parking spots at the Winnipeg airport. The An/UYK-502 was upgraded and became the AN/UYK-507 which added more work for all departments. Winnipeg was also doing all the travel accounting, contracts, and legal effort for all of Canada, including Paramax. The Winnipeg Information Systems department set up most of the systems for all of our Canadian facilities across the country.

Continued growth: In 1991, Paramax won the EH101 Canadian Helicopter program. It was the biggest contract ever won by the corporation. Montreal was going to integrate all the equipment into the "green" helicopter that came from Westlund in England. Winnipeg was to design and build all the display and processing equipment as well as a lot of the support functions. Engineering and support engineering personnel required in both Winnipeg and Montreal became a crucial need. People were hired from across the country. The engineering department grew to over 200 people and was now bigger than all of manufacturing. When John Westergren came up in 1981 to start up an engineering department, he couldn't have imagined how it would end up. Dave Saxerud succeeded John in 1983 and continued the growth but also didn't expect the growth that followed. In fact, Dave married Judy Thomson, our first employee and eventually headed back to the States at the end of 1985.

The helicopter program was huge for Winnipeg and even more so for Montreal. It even had considerable business for Eagan. However, as history would have it, the Berlin wall came down about the same time, and there would be a federal election slated for late 1993. One of the main missions of the EH101 chopper was anti-submarine warfare, and the liberals campaigned that the program was too expensive and that Russia was no longer a threat. Jean Cretien, the liberal candidate for prime minister of Canada, said that if he were elected he would cancel the program. He was elected and, believe it or not, a politician kept a campaign promise. We received a one-line memo from the Prime Minister's office that the program was terminated in June of '94. There were over 400 companies in Canada working on the program. To this day, Canada is still flying Sea King helicopters built in the early 60's.

In Winnipeg we had reached nearly 600 employees, and in one day we had to lay off about half of them. In Montreal, they laid off close to 1,000 people. With the EH101 program gone, Unisys Canada was kind of disbanded and Winnipeg once again reported to St Paul. Al Zettlemyer had replaced Fred Jenny, who had passed away, as President of the Unisys Defense organization. Obviously, Al Z. was not happy and pretty much decided to get everything out of Canada that he could. They pulled the Xetron program out and sent it to Pueblo and pretty much took all the U.S. work back to the States. I was the only American in Winnipeg, and he ordered me back to the States as well. Corporate also decided to close our plant and move everything that was left to the old Burroughs plant across town. There wasn't much left there either. Again, Corporate didn't listen to us and closed the wrong plant. We had an 8-yr lease left, and the Burroughs plant was owned by the company. It was in the middle of residential area and would have sold for a ton of money. They could have run out the lease on our plant and left with no commitments. The combined plant finally closed in 1997. By then we were Lockheed Martin and they had a plant in Ottawa. They offered everyone a job in Ottawa if they were willing to move, but only one person took them up on the offer. Today, our facility is occupied by the Canadian DNR (at least the last time I was there). What's left of everything we had going is now being done at the LM plant outside of Ottawa.

As with any facility, it's the employees who make it successful, and Winnipeg had a wonderful group of people. At one time we counted 27 first-generation nationalities among the 600 employees we had. In 2005, the former employees held a Sperry reunion for all the folks who had worked for Sperry over the years, and 350 people showed up. Not bad considering that every one of them had been laid off at some point. It was a great evening.

It was a hell of ride while it lasted.
Regards, *Glen*

Author

Glen E. Johnson has held extensive management position in all areas of engineering and manufacturing operations, customer support and program management, both internationally and in the United States. From 1970 through 1977 he held several management positions in manufacturing and production control with Sperry Univac; where he managed 270 hourly employees along with supervision, production and quality/inspection engineering. In late 1977, he moved to International Program Management with Sperry, where he managed the Canadian projects that included the development of the computers and data bus systems that were to be used for the Canadian Patrol Frigate Program, the Tribal Class Upgrade Program (TRUMP) and the CP-140 program (a Lockheed P-3C airplane with a computer from the Lockheed S3A airplane). He moved to Winnipeg, Manitoba, in 1980 to start up an operation to transition these programs to Canada. In 1984 he became General Manager of Canadian Operations for Sperry Corporation, which included over 600 employees with facilities in Winnipeg, Ottawa and Halifax. He was a member of the Board of Directors of Sperry Canada and of Unisys Canada after the two companies merged in 1986. Glen returned to the United States in 1994 and became the Director of Customer Support Services for Unisys, where his responsibilities included logistics, quality, configuration and data management, prototype manufacturing and several customer sites throughout the United States. From 1996 until retiring in April of 2004, he was the Program Director of Navy Standard Programs for Lockheed Martin. This business area represented over \$300 million in annual sales and includes projects and programs in eight foreign countries.

Mr. Johnson has attended Hibbing Junior College, St. Cloud State, and the University of Minnesota. He has an Associate Degree in Business.

Engineering Addendum by Dave Saxerud – BEE, U of MN 1966

John Westergren went from an assignment in Israel to Winnipeg in 1981. At that time I was the Hardware Project Engineer for the SHINPADS Serial Data Bus reporting to Gary Peterson (Communications and Signal Processor Development). In St. Paul we completed the design of the Engineering Development (EDM) model and the Advanced Developmental model (ADM) of the Shipboard Integrated Processing and Display System SDB. Engineering integrated an AN/UYK-502 and two SDB nodes into one 502 cabinet; this comprised the main hardware element along with the Bus Access Modules (BAM), which was a Hi impedance tap connecting the nodes to the tri-axial data and control cables. The original spec called for separate 4-Node cabinets and UYK-502 cabinets, of which some did exist in the overall shipboard system, but the integrated cabinet saved space, weight and power requirements. This hardware completed acceptance testing in St. Paul and began the transition to manufacturing in Winnipeg in 1983. Barry Cockerill, from Winnipeg, was one of the design Engineers who spent about two years in St. Paul. John Westberg was the primary St. Paul Design Engineer. Ernie Griffith was the BAM design engineer and Leroy Vick designed the BAM power supply.

In April 1983 John Westergren began his transition to St. Paul, and I was recruited to become the Engineering Manager in Winnipeg. I arrived permanently in Winnipeg in October 1983. For me, it was a very rewarding and challenging assignment that involved much more than the SHINPADS project. It was a group of about 75 people that included Hardware, Software and Manufacturing Engineering. It also included facilities Engineering, Field Engineering, Test Engineering and Information Technology. In keeping with Jerry Smith's desire for Sperry to maintain a presence in the local business and technical communities, he and Glen were active in groups such as the Air Industries Association of Canada and several other business groups in Winnipeg. I was the Chairman of the IEEE Computer Society for Manitoba and became a member of the Association of Professional Engineers of Manitoba (APEM). I transitioned back to St. Paul at the end of December 1985 with my new bride, Judy Thomson.

CP-140 Program by Lowell A. Benson

The CP-140 program provided the Canadian Forces with airborne Anti-Submarine Warfare capability. This ASW system used the Lockheed P3 air frame, however instead of the CP-901 central processor; the electronic system used the AN/AYK-10 (S3A) 32 bit computer. In the late 80's, the Canadians helped to fund the development of a semi-conductor plug in memory replacement for the film memory chassis. This update also expanded the computer from two 32k word chassis to three chassis for a total of 96k words.

