

# ZKSD Proposed

Glen Hambleton, <https://vipclubmn.org/Articles/GlenHambleton.pdf>, 1959-86.

*Formatting and editing for our Legacy by Lowell Benson.*

## INTRODUCTION

Glen gave this paper to Lowell 3/7/23 in response to the Club's call for Legacy stories.

ZKSD stands for **Z**entraler **K**ontroll **S**treifen **D**ruck (literally, Central Control Strip Printing), or more descriptively, Central Flight Plan Data Processing and Strip Printing System.

This paper could have been titled 'Trials and Tribulations of Obtaining Contracts'. A ZKSD contract did occur but was not a main-stream full Air Traffic Control (ATC) system!

## THE STORY

ATC in West Germany by Glen Hambleton – drafted February 2023.

### Background:

I had managed the 1974/75 proposal for an Air Traffic Control update to the Soviet Union's systems in preparation for the 1980 Olympic Games. This was a requirement of the International Air Traffic Control organization. My wife, daughter, and I had relocated to Gerrard's Cross in England anticipating that I would be the Project Manager once the contract was in place. I (we) had already taken all the actions needed to obtain a USA export license for the technologies to be exported.

BOOM – in late 1975 the Soviets announced that they would not purchase an update to their ATC, thus I was abruptly out of a job. I was visited by a young Finish lad who informed me I was to be turned over to Blue Bell headquarters who would be deciding my future employment.

After listening to the young man, I told him that such a course of action was unacceptable. Then explained that at the time of my interviews with several management personnel relative to taking the expected Project Management position, I had raised the issue that dealing with the Soviet Union was full of unforeseen risks making me hesitant about relocating my family. A few of the management directors had said "With your background and experience there will be other jobs available to you." So, now that my fears were warranted, was I expected to accept the word of a 'lowly HR peon' then pack bags and leave? NO, I want to interview this organization's management staff and to have them tell me directly that this organization does not need me. Furthermore, the local HR manager doesn't need to call me!

Eventually, I got a call from John Butler's secretary to meet with him the following Monday morning – Mr. Butler was the executive Director of European Operations. On Monday arriving at his office, I was told that he was unavailable due to a death in his family. The secretary gave me an envelope containing what Mr. Butler wanted me to do.

Established in 1980

## ATC Proposal

Mr. Butler's letter stated that their German subsidiary need to develop a way to be successful in winning contracts with the German government. To do so, they need to develop the capability to prepare quality proposals. Willy Bannow, the Managing director for Germany operations had received an RFQ from the German government for an update to their air traffic control operations. IBM had been working with the government agency to design and plan to make the required improvements. Winning this contract was highly unlikely because of IBM's close working relationship with the buyer. My immediate job was to assist Mr. Bannow in preparing a quality proposal to encourage the German government to give more consideration to sending RFG's to the Sperry marketing organization in Germany.

The next day I flew to Frankfort and took a cab to the German subsidiary headquarters to pick up the RFQ from Willy. I asked him to set aside an hour early the next morning then went to a hotel to review the document.

Meeting with Mr. Bannow the next morning he endorsed the comments of Mr. Butler that this effort was primarily an exercise in learning to prepare a quality proposal. To do even that would require submitting a proposal that showed we understood the requirements and had the capability to perform meeting all requirements. In order to do that I asked Mr. Bannow if he could provide the resources to take on three requests to get a meaningful proposal ready in the six-week time period left to submit the proposal:

1. It was unlikely that the subsidiary's engineering staff would understand the technical requirements in the short time we had to develop a quality proposal. However, there was an organization in the corporate structure that could and would fully understand those details. I suggest that you make funding available to bring five or six engineering personnel from the Defense Systems Division to expedite responding to the RFQ.
2. If you have an employee or two who either previously worked at the government agency issuing the RFQ or other means of association with their staff – I would like that person to have some pocket money available and encouragement to visit with former work associates (or a neighbor who worked there) to determine if there are any pinch points – new project elements or other issues that are perhaps not clearly addressed in the RFQ leaving the customer with some anxiety.
3. Are there two or three managerial staff members that have prior experience or employment that devote three or four days to do some brain storming to make a guess at what the bid price will be for IBM on the project?

I had no interest in contacting any of them personally, I wanted feedback from the pinch point person in four weeks at the latest and the IBM price estimate to Willy early in week six. Mr. Bannow could then use the output from former IBM'ers to review and compare the cost estimates by the proposal team.

Established in 1980

Mr. Bannow agreed to provide the resources needed to get personnel on board to prepare a quality response to the RFQ and agreed to find people in the subsidiary staff to do what they could do to gather the requested information. Again, I stressed that IBM had been working with the customer for some time thus winning the contract by Sperry was unlikely.

DSD was requested to send five experienced engineers competent in air traffic control applications and good proposal writers to come to Sperry Germany's offices in Wiesbaden for up to six weeks. Motel arrangements were made for the DSD personnel, a conference room was equipped with desks and chairs and clerical staff was assigned. There was a brief proposal team meeting the following Monday morning to make assignments for who was write which section and what support was being made available to them in getting the proposal completed in the next five weeks.

Our time focus was to begin at seven AM with a complimentary breakfast available. Lunch would be served in the conference room. Later we would take an hour break for dinner at six PM at any location near the hotel then back to the conference room from 7 to 9 PM. [Sorry, I no longer remember the names of any of the DSD personnel who participated.] Every one of the five DSD [personnel dove into the task with vigor and determination. I had done a lot of proposal management at UNIVAC and Sperry; however, none were more dedicated than this team.

The Request for Quote included full Project Plan developed specifically for completing this project. A goal was set to do that the first couple of days the week before submitting the proposal, which was due by 4 PM of that final week. Word came back from a subsidiary employee saying that there was a pinch point regarding a system component called the DUV. The function was to convert analog to digital and digital to analog.

On Monday of the week to submit the proposal came to fruition, we reviewed the work yet to be completed, it was obvious that we were going to run out of time to complete a detailed project work plan. The team elected to prepare a detailed work plan for the technological aspects, making sure that the DUV portion would be done to their full satisfaction. In the cover letter Mr. Bannow signed, we stated that we had developed a full plan but elected to submit only the DUV plan portion since it required advanced concepts well beyond any other parts of the project. The rest of the plan would be available later. The proposal was printed and submitted just minutes before the 4 PM submission deadline.

At a wrap-up meeting with the proposal team when the document was sent to the print shop, the DSD engineers were told to relax over the weekend and to consider doing some site seeing in Germany for a few days the next week following a Monday morning gathering.

By Monday morning, Mr. Bannow had received word that the proposal had been through a preliminary review with favorable impressions. However, the rest of the specific project plan for the entire RFQ had to be in their hands by 4 PM on Friday (via an over the transit delivery.) The team went back to work instead of sightseeing. The final printed detailed plan was in Mr. Bannow's by noon on Friday, he had to get it into the German customer's hands surreptitiously.

Established in 1980

### ATC Contract

Much to everyone's surprise in Europe Sperry won the contract. IBM's price was higher than Sperry's and they had stated that there was no need for them to develop a project specific plan because their master plan for all projects was a well proven plan for any project. The original plan by Sperry had a 1218 computer as the processor.

When I returned to St. Paul in June 1976, DSD had recently reorganized. Among the changes was the establishment of an Off-Site location for doing software development for customers. It was my understanding that the Off-Site team would be the initial preparer of the application software while another group was to develop the operating system but had not yet done so. When a trial run was made to determine if the system under development was going to meet a 6-second response requirement, it had failed to do so after more than a ten-minute wait time. {Editor's note: *I am guessing that this was the beginning of TSD, to do projects with a lower overhead than possible with the home office.*}

George Workman was then assigned as Program/Engineering manager and the use of a 1206 {sic. 1106} computer versus the 1218 was considered. It somehow became apparent to the customer that Sperry was having project difficulties thus unilaterally contracted with MITRE to ascertain if Sperry was capable of fulfilling the contract. When MITRE personnel arrived at DSD unannounced for a project review, they were unable to gain any access because the contract with the Germans had no provisions for a MITRE participation.

The customer then scheduled a project review meeting that I participated in, do not remember the year/month. The review was in Germany run by our subsidiary with the customer and included MITRE personnel. Although Sperry Germany ran the meeting, the MITRE people were asking all the questions. Initially the questions were about Sperry's experience in ATC projects, then moved into questions regarding the German ATC project. For a while, I got by with broad generic responses, but they got evermore insistent that they needed more specific information. Things began to get fairly intense so I stated that I had no authority to answer details of their questions, excused myself and left the meeting.

A second meeting was also in Europe with several people from the Sperry German subsidiary. There were lots of questions about military type computing equipment. I mentioned reliability, compact designs and weight limitations as factors that had to be met. Airborne, shipborne, temperature extremes, and hazardous conditions were each factors influencing designs. This led to the issue of inventorying of spare parts and technician training for each of those types of designs. I requested that we stick to the issue of meeting the reliability required in the contract, not getting focused on solving issues not yet relevant. This led to finding out what the reliability of the 1106 was since the local subsidiary was already prepared with parts and technicians for keeping the 1106 operating. I was advised that the 1106 did not meet the customer's reliability requirements. That led to discussion of how the project would pay for the 1106 computer system. The price of the 1106 sold to a typical customer was a bundled price, including a period of customer support to keep the system functioning and the users' staff trained to fulfill operational objectives. All those factors had been addressed in the proposal so to me that was non issue.

Established in 1980

Resolving the issue of what the cost would be to the project would/could not be resolved at that meeting. Feeling very comfortable that the financial people in the corporation would handle that question, I agreed to the use of an 1106 processor for the project.

A bit later I was called into Dick Seaberg's office and told that I was to take on a critical task. I was to fly over to Sperry headquarters to meet with John Butler regarding management of the German ATC project. I was told my task was to argue with Mr. Butler over who should be responsible for the project, the Sperry subsidiary in Germany or DSD in St. Paul? I was to argue that DSD was the more capable organization and to endeavor to be convincing but to give in to John at the end and agree with him that the subsidiary was preferable. I did encourage Mr. Butler to encourage Mr. Bannow to bring over some engineering staff from DSD who had experience with the ATC application software for similar projects.

When I returned to St. Paul, I reported back to Mr. Seaberg that I'd been successful in accomplishing the assigned objective and informed him of the likelihood of DSD being asked to provide some engineering support. I also recommended that each engineer who was offered the opportunity and considered doing so also be provided with a letter from his office assuring the candidate there would be a job for them in St. Paul when the overseas project was completed. To the best of my knowledge, Mr. Seaberg did so for each candidate and that they all did return upon completing their respective assignments.. Sorry, as a nonagenarian, I no longer remember their names.

## EPILOGUE

The ATC for Korea was likely my next assignment, managing the proposal development and later the program management for fulfilling the contract. Thus, I was too preoccupied to follow the completion of the German ATC project. An open question:

Did winning and fulfilling that project have any impact on the ability of Sperry Germany gaining business with the German government. {Note: The Sperry subsidiary referenced herein was not the DSD Bad Godesberg group - <https://vipclubmn.org/International.html#BadGodesberg>.}

## REFERENCES:

A search for ZKSD from our Legacy chapter several results in 0.20 seconds. In addition to Glen's career summary linked beneath the title above, relevant ZKSD links are:

1. See section 5, <https://vipclubmn.org/aircontrol.html#ZKSD>
2. See page 4 of <https://vipclubmn.org/Newsletters/Enews0803.pdf>
3. See page 16 of <https://www.vipclubmn.org/Articles/AutomatedDesignEvolutionRev1.pdf>
4. See pages 31 and 39 of <https://vipclubmn.org/Articles/LegacyCompendium.pdf>
5. See page 6 of <https://vipclubmn.org/Articles/DecadeRecap.pdf>
6. See the October 1974 paragraph of <https://vipclubmn.org/People5.html#EdNelson>
7. See the 1966-1980 paragraph of <https://vipclubmn.org/People3.html#Grewenow>

{Stay tuned, there are likely more stories out there! *LABenson*}