

Seventy Years of Defence Electronics

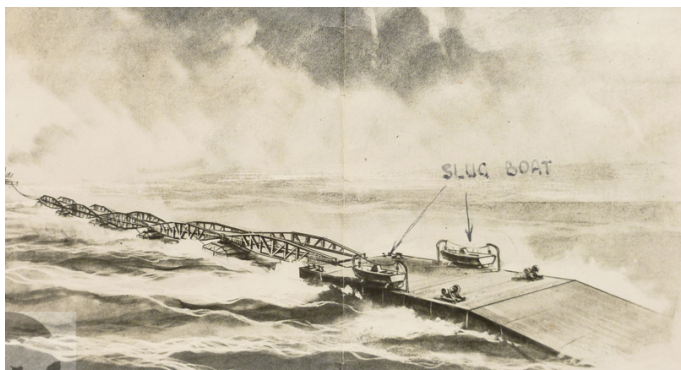
In 2020, STS Defence will celebrate 70 years as a proud supplier of systems and services to the Royal Navy.

It was established in its current form in 2001 but the story begins nearly 190 years ago.

Our site in Gosport, Hampshire sits on the original boatyard of Camper & Nicholson's, the luxury yacht builder. Although the company was established in 1832, yachts had been built on the site since at least 1782.

During the First World War, the yard made patrol boats, minesweepers, and small naval craft for the Admiralty, reverting to high performance sailing yachts in the inter-war years.

With the start of the Second World War, yacht production was set aside in favour of torpedo and gunboats, minesweepers and landing craft. Famously, the yard produced "SLUG" boats for D-Day. These small craft, Surf Landing Under Girders, were designed to manage the kite anchors securing the Mulberry harbour roadways.



During this period, a subsidiary was established to produce control boxes for minesweepers and other defence-related electrical items. In the 1950s this unit became C&N (Electrical) which, by the early 1970's, employed 1,250 people in five factories having divested and acquired various businesses along the way, including Shrewsbury Technology.



The Mumby Road site in the 1970s. The building on the right, which still stands, was built in the 1950s. The building to the left was demolished around 2007.

Under pressure to relinquish some of its prime waterfront premises for post-war redevelopment, reducing its capacity for repairs and refits, and with the yacht-building activities shrinking, Camper & Nicholson's merged with Crest Securities to concentrate on the leisure industry and became Crest Nicholson in 1972.

C&N Electrical Industries, as it was now known, did not fit into this new business and was acquired by Cray Electronics.

The Dialled Dispatches subsidiary, which had been created to manufacture pneumatic tube carriers, acquired Lamson Engineering in 1976 to become DD Lansom and was itself acquired from Crest Nicholson by Frederick Cooper in 1987.

Advert in Navy News,
May 1968



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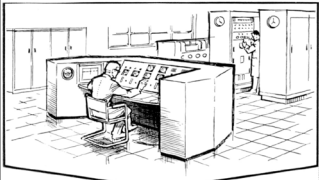
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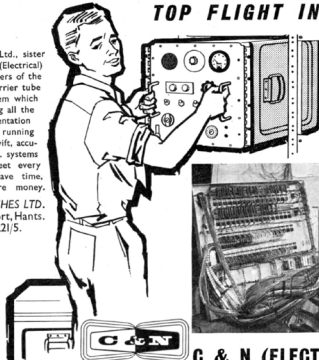
Designers and manufacturers of the famous Dialled Dispatches pneumatic carrier tube systems. Ideal for carrying documents, piece parts, tools, laboratory samples, X-ray films, drugs, etc., through offices, factories, hospitals, warehouses or airports.



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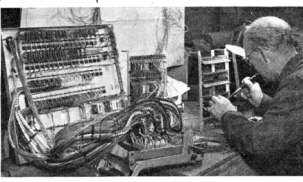


Dialled Dispatches Ltd., sister company to C & N (Electrical) Ltd., are manufacturers of the famous pneumatic carrier tube communications system which is capable of handling all the operating documentation concerned with the running of a busy airfield. Swift, accurate, adaptable D.D. systems are designed to meet every requirement and save time, work and therefore money.

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In 1988, C&N Electrical Industries split within Cray Electronics: one part, Eurotel, was established on the new part of the Mumby Road site specialising in PCB manufacture. They became Craycom, then Cray Communications before being acquired by Dowty Case and relocating to Hertfordshire in 1996.

C & N Electrical Industries Ltd
MUMBY ROAD, GOSPORT, HAMPSHIRE
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The remaining part of the business, including part of Shrewsbury Technology

based in Segensworth, Hampshire which had moved to Gosport in the early 1990s, became Cray Technology and then, after a management buy-out in 1994, Basys Technology on the whole Mumby Road site. It acquired PCB specialists Niche Manufacturing in Portchester in 1995.

Basys Technology specialised in a range of support and manufacturing programmes. For many years, it provided post design services for Royal Navy sensors and satellite communications systems and



tracked vehicles, as well as building the Talon riot control vehicle for a Gulf State. It refurbished the control surfaces and rocket motors of the RN's Seawolf missile and maintained a substantial technical publications facility and drawing office.

In 2001, Basys Technology was acquired by Space Technology Systems, an Alton-based holding company, and was briefly renamed STS Basys before becoming



STS Defence. As part of this, STS's Subsea business, which was established

in Acle in Norfolk in 1989 (and is now in Great Yarmouth) became a subsidiary of STS Defence.

The new company was then acquired by STS International, created by Grove Industries, Barclays Ventures and members of its management team. Barclays Ventures were bought out with the creation of Key Technologies in 2009.

In 2014, STS Defence acquired SR Antennas, makers of polemasts and antennas.



STS Defence viewed from Portsmouth's Spinnaker Tower, early 2000s. The new part of the building can clearly be seen as well as the buildings, upper right, that were demolished around 2007

(Image © Phil Calbourne)

Today, STS Defence is an established technology and engineering company, specialising in mission critical communications, electronics and intelligent systems, operating in the defence, marine, aerospace and nuclear sectors and employing around 150 people.



STS Defence in 2019. The new part of the site was built in 1983.