

Ford Aerospace

Ford Aerospace was the aerospace and defense division of Ford Motor Company. It was based in Newport Beach, Orange County, California, and was active from 1956 through 1990, when it was sold to the Loral Corporation.

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History

The company was established in 1956. It was renamed to **Ford Aerospace and Communications Corporation** in 1976, and then to **Ford Aerospace Corporation** in 1988.

The 99 acres (40 ha) Engineering and Research Center campus was located on Jamboree Road at Ford Road, overlooking the Santa Catalina Strait of the Pacific Ocean in Newport Beach.^{[1][2]} The facility's master plan and main buildings were designed by Modernist architect William Pereira in 1958.^[3] Operation was moved to Newport Beach in 1960.^[4]

In the 1960s and 1970s, business enjoyed rapid growth because of the success of the Sidewinder air-to-air missile and Chaparral surface-to-air missile programs.^[4] In the 1970s, the Pave Tack bomb-targeting system became a significant contributor to revenue.^[4]

The company included: Space Systems Division (later Space Systems/Loral) and the Western Development Labs (WDL) (later Loral WDL, and presently Lockheed Martin WDL) in Palo Alto, California with Aeronutronic (later Space Systems/Loral) at the Newport Beach site.^[4]

Company timeline

A partial company timeline includes:

- 1956 Aeronutronic becomes a Ford Motor Company division.
- 1961 Ford Motor Company acquires Philco Corporation, later named Philco-Ford Corporation.

Ford Aerospace



Ford Aerospace logo

Formerly	<u>Aeronutronic</u> (1956-1963) <u>Philco-Ford Corporation</u> (1961-1975) <u>Aeronutronic Ford Corporation</u> (1975-1976) <u>Ford Aerospace & Communications Corporation</u> (1976-1988)
Industry	<u>Aerospace & Defense</u>
Fate	Sold to <u>Loral Corporation</u>
Parent	<u>Ford Motor Company</u>
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- 1963 Ford Motor Company folds Aeronutronic into Philco, strengthening Ford Motor Company's overall participation in space and defense markets.
- 1975 Philco-Ford becomes Aeronutronic Ford Corporation
- 1976 Aeronutronic Ford Corporation becomes Ford Aerospace & Communications Corporation.
- 1981 FACC starts new sister division to Aeronutronics in Southern California named DIVAD (Division Air Defense) for the production of the M247 Sgt. York armor tracked vehicle (named in honor of legendary World War I sharpshooter and medal of honor recipient Sergeant Alvin York) which incorporated F-16 search-and-track radar directed twin 40 mm Bofors gun systems in Newport Beach and Lake Forest, CA. Divad division dissolved in 1984 when Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger canceled the production contract and all existing Sgt. York units were dismantled for scrap. (D.V. Barker)
- 1988 Ford Aerospace San Jose CA location working on NATO Airbase SATCOM (NABS) Skynet control facilities
- 1990 Ford Aerospace sold to Loral Corporation. The sale did not include the lease of land for the Newport Beach plant that the buyer was required to vacate within five years.^[4]

Products

- AGM-88 HARM (subcontractor)
- AIM-9 Sidewinder
- AN/AAS-38 (F/A-18 FLIR)
- Have Dash
- LGM-118 Peacekeeper (subcontractor)
- LGM-30 Minuteman (subcontractor)
- MGM-51 Shillelagh
- MIM-72 Chaparral
- Pave Knife
- Pave Tack
- UGM-73 Poseidon (subcontractor)
- Trident (missile) (subcontractor)

See also

- Technology companies based in the Greater Los Angeles Area

References

1. Los Angeles Times.com: "Ford Aerospace Treated for Years Like a Stepchild : Defense: The auto maker has announced plans to sell its Newport Beach-based unit. But critics say the firm was abandoned long ago." (http://articles.latimes.com/1990-01-14/business/fi-390_1_ford-aerospace); 14 January 1990.
2. Newport Beach.gov: Aeronutronic Ford (Planned Community) District (http://www.newportbeachca.gov/PLN/MAP_DOCUMENTS/PC_TEXT/PC_24_Aeronutronic_Ford.pdf); by Planning Division Staff, Community Development Department; 18 December 2013.
3. Google Books.com: *The Architecture of Industry: Changing Paradigms in Industrial Building and Planning* (https://books.google.com/books?id=qeq_CwAAQBAJ&pg=PA69&lpg=PA69&dq=Aeronutronic+history&source=bl&ots=yiCVxp80fr&sig=ELdx8R9LkGUZEN7k1C0eCQ6x050&hl=en&sa=

X&ved=0ahUKEwjw7Oiv8uXOAhVD6mMKHW07C7U4ChDoAQgpMAM#v=onepage&q=Aeronutronic%20history&f=false); by Mathew Aitchison; pg. 69; Routledge Press 2014.

4. Los Angeles Times.com: "Newport Plant Put in Limbo by Ford Sale : Defense industry: With the aerospace subsidiary under new ownership, the future of its Aeronutronic division in Orange County is up in the air." (July 24, 1990) (http://articles.latimes.com/1990-07-24/business/fi-851_1_ford-aerospace).

External links

- University of California Irvine Library, Online Archives: "Aerial view of Ford Aeronutronics Plant in 1960" (<http://ucispace.lib.uci.edu/handle/10575/6633>)
 - Flickr.com: "Aerial view of Ford Ford Aerospace & Communications & Newport Beach c.1983 (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/kamaaina56/12393113243>)
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