

The History of Textron Systems

August 11, 2022

Textron Systems has a rich history that contributed to the business of today. Our decades of innovation and collaboration combined with our strategic vision to grow have positioned us to embrace the unique capabilities that come with being a mid-sized player in the defense, government and aerospace industry.

Early Land and Sea Capabilities

As two integral legs of Textron Systems, our Land and Sea capabilities support the U.S. military through manufacturing military security vehicles and marine craft. One of the earliest defense divisions established by Textron Inc., our history of supporting the warfighter reaches back decades.

1960: Textron Inc. acquired the defense business of Bell Aircraft Corporation, creating Bell Aerospace Corporation. This business included Bell Helicopter as well as the marine craft work that Textron Systems does today.

1980: The Bell Halter Shipyard opened in New Orleans and was the only U.S. shipyard dedicated solely to full time production of air cushion vehicles and surface effect ships.

1986: The New Orleans Operations split from Bell Aerospace and became a separate division known as Textron Marine Systems (TMS). TMS was responsible for all air cushion/surface effect/marine activity, including products like the JEFF(B), LCACs, and MLBs. That same year, Cadillac Gage became a wholly owned subsidiary of Textron Inc., expanding Textron's portfolio to include land vehicles. In 1994, Textron Cadillac Gage merged with Textron Marine Systems, forming Textron Marine & Land Systems (TMLS).

1999: The first contract was awarded for production of the Armored Security Vehicle (ASV) M1117. Over the course of the multi-year contract, over 1,100 vehicles were produced.

2011: Full rate production was awarded for 240 Mobile Strike Force Vehicles (MSFVs). By 2019, over 3,800 vehicles were delivered to U.S. and international customers.

Expanding into Weapon Systems

Before the formation of Textron Systems, various individual, specialized businesses came together to form the multi-capability powerhouse we are today. Textron Defense Systems was created in 1985 after Textron Inc. acquired AVCO Corporation. Textron

Defense Systems eventually evolved into Textron Systems and makes up today's Weapon Systems division.

1955: AVCO's first major foray into the defense industry came when they earned a contract from the U.S. Air Force to aid in development of Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs).

1960s and 1970s: AVCO played a large role in the Apollo missions and received the Apollo Command module from NASA for installation of their ablative heat shield.

1979: AVCO was awarded a contract for Peacekeeper reentry system integration; this work proved success of advanced capabilities and was instrumental to the company's future in this space. Today, we're building on our experience with this technology and thermal protection materials to support hypersonics work.

2020: Building on our years of experience in the ICBM space, Textron Systems was part of the team awarded the Task Order for the Sentinel missile system.

2021: Continuing our support of NASA's missions, our Fine Weave Pierced™ Fabric was used on the Mars 2020 Perseverance Rover.

Positioned for Growth into Air, Electronic Systems, and Test, Training & Simulation

In 1950, AAI Inc. was founded in Baltimore County, Maryland. In AAI's early days, the business lines included training systems, vehicles, electronic and electromechanical systems, test equipment, explosive devices, mechanical and system studies. The customer base of AAI included all branches of the U.S. armed services, government agencies and research laboratories.

1950s: The primary programs and products included tanks, machine guns, ammunition, and missile trainer systems. Over the years, AAI began to transform from a developer of prototype hardware for military laboratories to a supplier of operational systems for the Army, Navy and Air Force.

1980s: AAI expanded into the Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) space with programs like the Pioneer® and eventually the Shadow® Tactical Unmanned Aircraft System (TUAS).

2000s: AAI made two strategic acquisitions: Overwatch Systems (today part of our Electronic Systems division) and Aerosonde Pty. Ltd. (part of our Air division). Finally in 2007, AAI became part of the Textron enterprise.

Today, much of our Electronic Systems and Test, Training & Simulation divisions consist of legacy AAI work, including our Joint Services Electronic Combat Systems

Trainer (JSECSTTM) product, A2PATS® and Advanced Boresight Equipment (ABE®) common measurement system.

With decades of innovation in Air, Land, Sea, Weapon Systems, Electronic Systems, Test Training & Simulation and Propulsion, Textron Systems has proven experience in supporting the mission of our customers.