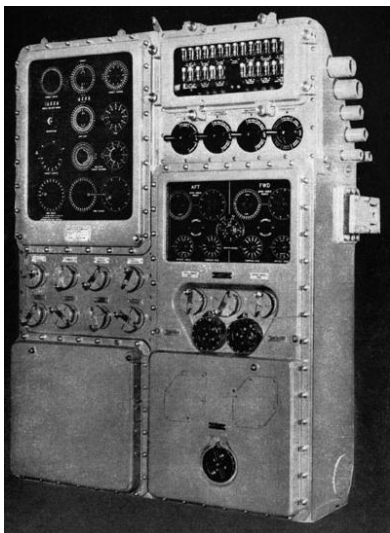


June 3rd

TDC Submerges June 3, 1940

The Torpedo Data Computer (TDC) was an electromechanical analog device [Jan 00; Jan 2; April 8; July 20] used to aim and fire torpedoes on US submarines during WWII.

Britain, Germany, and Japan also developed torpedo control equipment, but none as advanced as the TDC which was able to track a target rather than calculating a single firing direction.



The US Navy Mk III Torpedo Data Computer. Source: Submarine Sonar Operator's Manual, Navpers 16167.

The USS Tambor, launched in June 1940, was the first submarine to utilize the TDC as a rather bulky addition to its conning tower, and required two additional crew members. Despite these drawbacks, it proved to be an important factor in the successful raids made by US subs during the Pacific campaign.

Alan Cooper

Born: June 3, 1952;

San Francisco, California

Cooper is often called The Father of Visual Basic, although Microsoft's friendly lawyers once sent him a cease-and-desist notice demanding that he stop using that title. After Cooper complained, Bill Gates [Oct 28] stepped in to patch things up, and later even lauded him as a "Windows pioneer" [May 23].

After Cooper left college, he founded one of the first microcomputer software companies, Structured Systems Group (SSG) [March 28; April 16], and wrote "General Ledger" one of the first business programs for microcomputers [July 00]. He also collaborated with Gordon Eubanks [Nov 7] to develop CBASIC, an early competitor to Microsoft BASIC [Nov 18].

In 1988, Cooper created a visual programming language called Ruby (*not* [Feb 24]) based around the dragging-and-dropping of GUI components onto a canvas. After he demonstrated Ruby to Gates, Microsoft quickly purchased the software as Gates firmly believed that it would have a "profound effect" on their product line. However, Ruby was given a major makeover, becoming Visual Basic, which was released in May 1991

Some programmers have joked that the only thing left of BASIC in Visual Basic are the five letters. Perhaps as a nod toward all the changes, Microsoft dropped the uppercasing of the name.

Cooper was personally amazed by what happened: "It's like sending your kid to college and he comes back summa cum laude, but he has had a sex change operation."

Another quote from Cooper: "It has been said that the great scientific disciplines are examples of giants standing on the shoulders of other giants. It has also been said that the software industry is an example

of midgets standing on the toes of other midgets."

Missile Attack June 3, 1980

At 1:26 am, the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD [Aug 1; Dec 24]) sent a message to a Strategic Air Command (SAC) command post near Omaha, Nebraska, indicated that two submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) were heading toward the US. Eighteen seconds later, the system reported even more incoming missiles.

B-52 crews were hurriedly prepared for takeoff, but when human operators double-checked with nearby radar stations, no missiles were detected.

The cause of those imaginary missiles was eventually traced to the failure of a chip. When this 46-cent item failed, the system started writing random numbers into the "missiles detected" field.

More false alarms, caused by the same problem, occurred on June 6 and 7, while NORAD was debugging the system.

For an earlier 'attack', see [Nov 9].

WarGames Released June 3, 1983

The movie "WarGames" is notable for bringing hacking to the attention of the American public, and igniting a media frenzy regarding the hacker subculture. The film's cast includes Matthew Broderick and Ally Sheedy, and was nominated for three Academy Awards.

The movie inspired Congress to formulate the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act of 1984. Representative Dan Glickman (D-Kansas) opened the proceedings by explaining: "we are gonna show about four

minutes from the movie 'WarGames,' which...outlines the problem fairly clearly." A House committee report later solemnly intoned: "'WarGames' showed a realistic representation of the automatic dialing and access capabilities of the personal computer."

The movie follows a hacker prodigy, David Lightman, who inadvertently accesses WOPR, a supercomputer run by the US Army. WOPR (aka War Operation Plan Response, or "Whopper") is a machine endowed with powerful AI capabilities for simulating combat strategies.

The WOPR name was based on a real NORAD computer used to predict war strategies called "BRGR". It may be relevant to point out that the US "Burger King" fast food company produces a "Whopper" burger.

The film's NORAD set was the most expensive ever built at the time, costing almost \$1 million. In the movie's DVD commentary, director John Badham notes that the actual NORAD command center isn't nearly as elaborate, and refers to the set as "NORAD's wet dream of itself."

The studio had Galaxian ([Oct 00] 1979) and Galaga (1981) arcade machines delivered to Matthew Broderick's home, where he practiced for two months to prepare for the film's arcade scene.

The movie contains the first reference to a "firewall"

The largest hacker convention in the world is called "DEF CON" [June 9] in homage to the film. However, it wasn't the first movie to utilize the word "hacking"; that honor belongs to TRON [July 9].

The writers, Lawrence Lasker and Walter F. Parkes, later penned "Sneakers" [Sept 9].

I, Robot June 3, 1984

The "I, Robot" Atari [June 27] arcade game was poorly

received [Aug 18] even though it was the first to utilize flat-shaded 3D polygons, and the first to permit a player to adjust the camera angle, to move closer to the action, or switch to an overhead shot.

The player takes on the role of "Unhappy Interface Robot #1984" which rebels against Big Brother.

A rumor persists that Atari shipped 500 unsold units to Japan with instructions that the crew dump them into the ocean at the halfway point. Atari employee Rusty Dawe called this a "total myth" in a 2009 interview, adding "I would have LIKED to dump [the] I, Robot controls into the ocean [as they were a] total nightmare. But that didn't happen."

Zoomer Beats Newton June 3, 1993

Casio and Palm Computing [June 1] released the Zoomer PDA, beating the long-awaited Apple Newton [May 29; Aug 3] to market. Unfortunately, it still failed, for much the same main reason as the Newton disappointed - dismal handwriting recognition [Aug 23; Nov 13].

However, the surprise release of the Zoomer was the last straw for Apple's board of directors, who felt CEO John Sculley [April 6] has wasted way too much time on the Newton, especially in light of Apple's recent announcement of a \$188.3 million quarterly loss. On June 18, the board asked Sculley to step down.

Best of 386 DX Released June 3, 2001

Photographer and "net.artist" Alexej Shulgin is known for his "386DX" performances, which he began in 1998. Somehow he

managed to coax a 386 [Oct 17] equipped with a sound card, a text-to-speech program, and MIDI software to play (and sing) hits by The Doors, The Sex Pistols, Nirvana, and others.

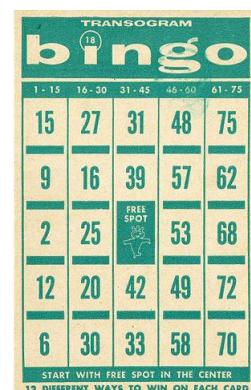
One performance held on the San Diego/Mexico border placed Shulgin on one side of the frontier and his computer on the other (this would no longer be possible today).

On this day, Shulgin released a CD entitled "The Best of 386 DX". The sleeve was designed by Shulgin and Geert-Jan Hobijn as an ASCII version of The Rolling Stones's "Sticky Fingers" album cover [Aug 24; Sept 4; Dec 7].

Bing Beginning June 3, 2009

Microsoft launched its Bing search engine, a re-vamped version of Live Search [Nov 10], promoting it as a "decision engine" to help consumers compare goods and services.

Microsoft hoped the new name would remind people of the sound made during "the moment of discovery and decision making." The name is also similar to the exclamation when someone wins at Bingo.



A Bingo card. Photo by Abbey Hendrickson. CC BY 2.0.

Microsoft advertising strategist David Webster originally proposed the name "Bang". He noted, "It's there, it's an exclamation point [...] It's the opposite of a question mark." That name was ultimately dropped as Webster commented

that, “Oh, ‘I banged it’ is very different from ‘I binged it’”.
