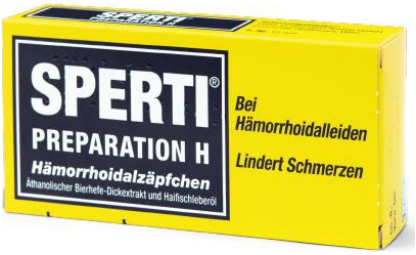
What Connects the Proximity Fuze to Preparation H and Ham Radio?

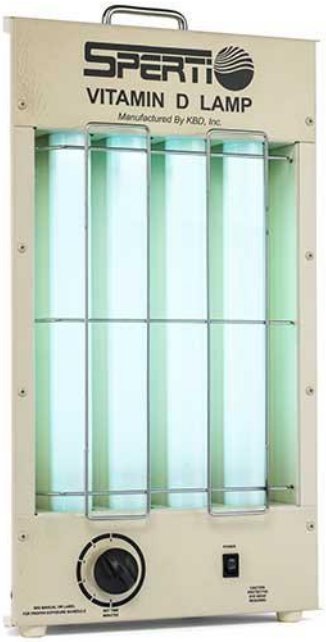
George S. Sperti (1900–1991) from Ft. Mitchell, Kentucky, was an electrical engineer with a Ph.D. from the University of Cincinnati. He held over 127 patents and became director of the University of Cincinnati Research Laboratory.

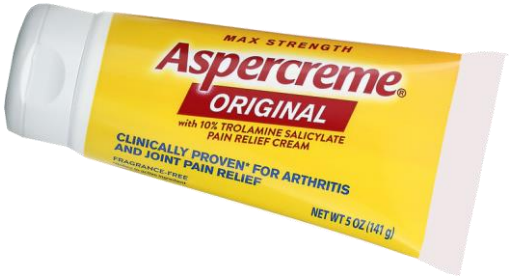
At age 21, he invented the kVA polyphase power factor meter, which formed the basis of modern power measurements (shown at the left). Westinghouse paid him $50,000 for the invention.

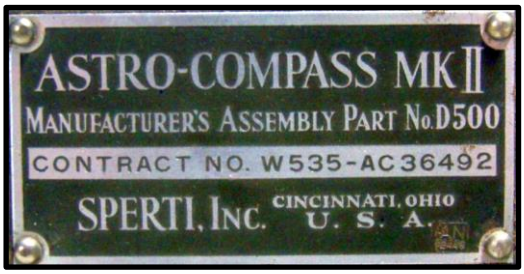
He also invented Preparation H, Aspercreme, the sun lamp (1933), a meat tenderizer, the Astrocompass, bombsights, and the mercury switch.

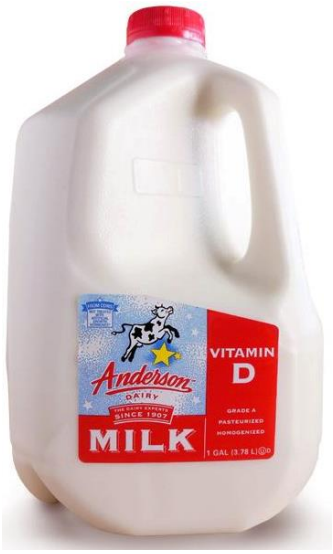


In the early 1930s, General Foods paid Sperti $300,000 for his invention to enhance vitamin D in milk.









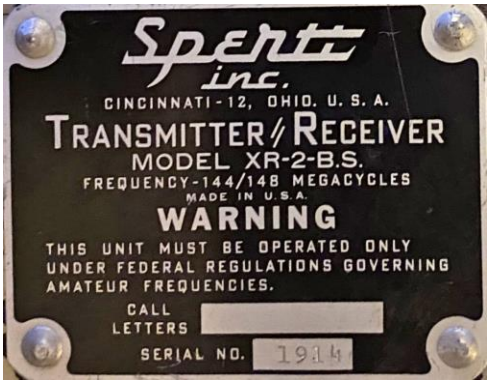
While the previous inventions are impressive and improved people's lives, one of Dr. Sperti's greatest contributions to society was secret and yet to come.

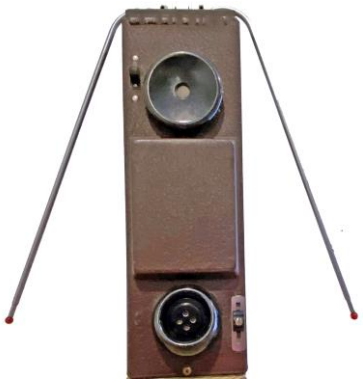
In WWII, Sperti accepted a top-secret assignment from the U.S. government known as the *Penthouse Project*. Labeled the proximity fuze (essentially the world's first smart bomb), the project entailed the participation of several agencies that contributed to its design and evolution, but they could not make it survive the high g-force and rotational speed when shot from an artillery gun.

Because the Crosley Radio Corporation had a reputation for making things that worked and worked well, the Navy asked Powel Crosley, Jr., to attempt a solution to the problem of the high g-force and rotational speed issue. Crosley's efforts were unsuccessful; consequently, he asked his good friend Dr. Sperti to try solving the problem. Sperti had success, and soon Crosley was shipping samples back to the Navy for testing. The Navy was pleasantly surprised with the samples. After a few iterations in design, Crosley was soon manufacturing and shipping working units to the Navy.

Dr. George Sperti remains one of the hidden heroes that provided success for the first U.S. smart bomb. The Proximity Fuze has been identified as the third most important invention from WWII behind the atomic bomb and radar.

In 1948, Sperti used the packaging skills learned from the development of the Proximity Fuze to invent a small ham radio Walkie Talkie. Model XR–2–B.S. was the 2-meter version and is on display in the Ham Radio Room at the National Voice of America Museum of Broadcasting.

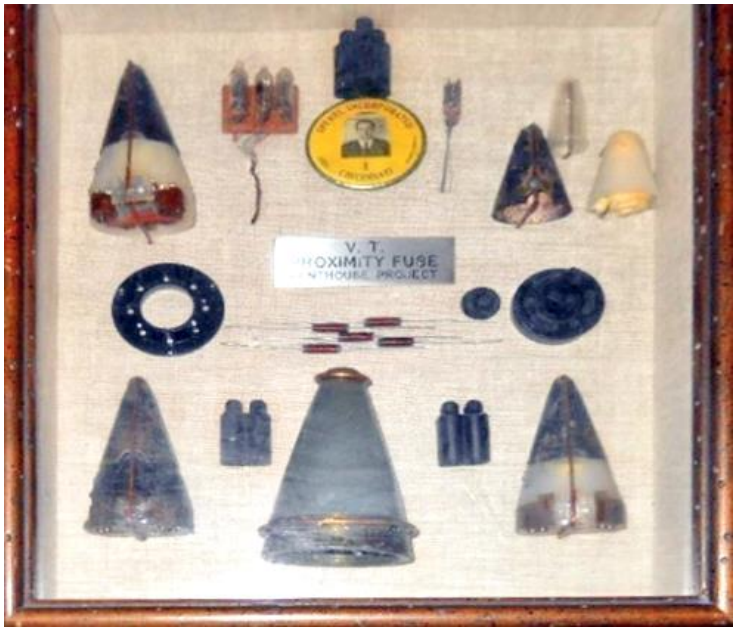




Sperti also developed a health tonic for Powel Crosley called Peptikai, which Crosley sold at his store in the Arlington Street radio manufacturing plant.

Powel Crosley, Jr., was in awe of Sperti's inventions and was going to donate his entire Seagate Estate in Sarasota, Florida, to Sperti as a research lab. Instead, Sperti and Cincinnati Archbishop John T. McNicholas collaborated on a research laboratory and graduate school called the Institutum Divi Thomae, founded in 1935 (shown above, source). Sperti used profits from his inventions to provide tuition-free attendance. Sperti ended his long-standing career at the Institutum.

Shown below are artifacts from the Penthouse Project. Source



Leland L. Hite
11-17-2021

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Dr. George Sperti

Part 1 of 4 https://youtu.be/G2qUTSDiEU4

Part 2 of 4 https://youtu.be/yX0Kjo4ahG0

Part 3 of 4 https://youtu.be/CVQced9wpts

Part 4 of 4 https://youtu.be/gCfhrkmQOPk