Frederic Calland Williams Encyclopedia Article

Frederic Calland Williams

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Frederic Calland Williams

1911-1977

English electrical engineer who invented the first digital computer memory system, called the Williams tube store. During World War II, Williams helped to develop IFF (Identification Friend or Foe) systems to distinguish between friendly and enemy aircraft, and AI (Airborne Interception) systems, which allowed aircraft to track and intercept other planes. In the mid-1940s he visited MIT, where he was inspired to develop a cathode-ray-tube digital storage system for computers. In 1947 Williams and his team built the first working Random Access Memory (RAM) system, which they used in their Manchester Mark 1 computer. Williams was knighted in 1976.