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ELECTROSTATIC DISCHARGE INITIATION EXPERIMENTS USING PVDF PRESSURE TRANSDUCERS

BY RICHARD J. LEE, DOUGLAS G. TASKER, and MAI-TRAM CONG

RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT

DECEMBER 1991

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FOREWORD

Naval munitions, especially those contained in insulating cases, are at risk due to electrostatic discharge (ESD). Electrical energy can be stored on such cases through electrostatic charging by normal handling or thermal cycling. The energy deposited in the energetic material in a single event comes from a small fraction of the case surface. Until recently the problem of ESD ignition has been of concern with large rocket motors because of their size, i.e., their ability to store more energy across their surface. However, the realization that a small area of the case can store a sufficient energy to ignite energetic materials, e.g., less than 10 mJ, places small devices in jeopardy as well.

Existing Navy test procedures do not adequately determine the risks associated with ESD from insulating cases. Present certification tests were designed to rank the relative safety of energetic materials with respect to discharges from human bodies. The electrical discharge in encased energetic materials is an entirely different situation; the electrostatic energy is transferred more efficiently since the intimate contact between the case and the energetic material minimizes any dissipative and inductive elements in the discharge path. A number of different factors, inherent to encased energetic materials, sensitize the material to ESD ignition, e.g., casting stresses, containment, and the inclusion of air. None of these factors are addressed in existing Navy test procedures.

Experiments like those reported here are crucial to determining how the electrostatic energy stored on insulating cases can cause ignition in energetic materials. This understanding is necessary to define the relative hazard and to establish effective techniques to reduce the hazard.

We thank B. Hammant of Ministry of Defense, U.K., for his helpful comments on this work. We are indebted to R. Hay for his fine experimental work.

Approved by:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "William H. Bohli".

WILLIAM H. BOHLI, Acting Head
Energetic Materials Division

ABSTRACT

Electrical discharge experiments were performed on an aluminized explosive, PBXW-115. Simultaneous observations of polyvinylidene difluoride (PVDF) pressure sensor signals, and the deposition of electrical power were recorded. These data were compared to those from similar experiments performed on aluminized inert material and in air gaps. Distinct pressure differentials were observed during the discharge phase following a delay after dielectric breakdown. The signals from the pressure sensors are comparable for each case, i.e., the unreacted PBXW-115, the ignited PBXW-115, the inert solids, and the air gaps. It is believed that sustained ignition occurred in the explosive after the electrical energy deposition following a long incubation period (< 10 ms). Containment of the building reaction, and the presence of air adjacent to the explosive sample were found to have a significant effect on the ignition sensitivity. The results are discussed within the context of a preliminary model of electrostatic initiation.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Energetic materials contained in composite casings have been recognized as being prone to ignition due to electrostatic discharge (ESD).^{1,2} The propellant or explosive contained within the casing is subject to ignition via the rapid discharge of electrostatic energy from the case. The energy is stored on the case through electrostatic charging as a result of relative motion and subsequent separation of system materials (triboelectrification). The inherent danger is that substantial charges can be generated through normal handling of the system.

The electrostatic energy per unit area stored on a case from triboelectrification is estimated to be on the order of 100 mJ/m^2 .³ It is useful to think of the energy in these terms since it is expected that the charge contained on a small section of the surface will be depleted in a single discharge event. Hence, a single discharge may only dissipate energies in the 10 mJ range. Until recently, the problem of ESD ignition has been concerned with large rocket motors because of their size, i.e., their ability to store more energy across their surface. However, the realization that a small area of the case, $\leq 1/3 \text{ m}$ in diameter, can store a sufficient energy to ignite energetic materials places small devices in jeopardy as well.

It is important to understand how such small energies can cause ignition in energetic materials so that the relative hazard associated with ESD can be accurately defined. This understanding is necessary to establish effective techniques to reduce the hazards associated with ESD ignition.

TWO-PHASE IGNITION MODEL

A model has been proposed which describes a two-phase ignition process for ESD.^{4,5} In this model it is hypothesized that adiabatic heating of the arc channel leads to reaction of the material in the arc channel. The energy released from the chemical reaction in the channel serves to drive the second phase of ignition in the unreacted material beyond the arc channel. It is surmised that there is a critical volume for the arc channel, above which the secondary reaction will be self-sustaining and will accelerate. The critical volume is based on a sufficient

release of energy from the initial reaction in order for this reaction to continue beyond the arc channel.

Note that the hypothesis of two distinct phases of ignition suggests that there should be two distinct pressure profiles; the detection of these profiles would support the model.

SENSITIZING FACTORS

The available energy from a charged case is several orders of magnitude smaller than those energies used to certify energetic materials. Hence, there must be certain sensitizing factors which serve to decrease the electrical energy required for ignition. It has been suggested that high electrical powers, not necessarily large energies, are crucial for ESD ignition.³ The power input determines the initial release of chemical energy from the arc channel. The ambient gas pressure is another sensitizing factor. Hodges⁶ reported that the threshold ignition energy for a PBAN composite aluminized propellant was reduced from 3.7 J to 90 mJ when subjected to a static nitrogen pressure of 2.0 MPa (300 psig). The study, discussed in this report, demonstrated that containment of the reaction, and the inclusion of air, significantly affect the ESD ignition sensitivity.

CHAPTER 2

EXPERIMENTAL

Polyvinylidene difluoride (PVDF) pressure sensors^{7,8} were used to detect pressure differentials in an aluminized explosive, PBXW-115, during electrical discharge experiments. The data were compared to those from several inert samples: aluminized wax, an aluminized propellant stimulant obtained from the Missile Command (MICOM) at Redstone Arsenal, and air gaps. Electrical energies were deposited in the samples from a 50 μ F capacitance charged to 5 kV. This circuit provided electrical power up to 10 MW and deposition energies exceeding 150 J.

The intent of these experiments was to deposit a high power electrical discharge in explosive samples, and measure the time to the onset of reaction. This technique would provide a measure of the electrical energy necessary for ignition in a single experiment.

TEST SAMPLES

The explosive and solid inert test samples were cylindrical disks 44.45 mm diameter by 6.35 mm thick. The constituents for each solid test material are provided in Tables 2-1 through 2-3. The aluminized wax material was a rudimentary first attempt at simulating the PBXW-115. It proved difficult to maintain a uniform concentration of aluminum along the length of the sample. However, the crucial requirement was to provide enough aluminum to facilitate dielectric breakdown rather than to try to simulate the precise electrical properties of PBXW-115.

The MICOM inert was not an exact replica of PBXW-115 either, but it was available and the material morphology was better controlled. Unfortunately, the dielectric breakdown strength of the MICOM samples (≈ 1.5 MV/mm) exceeded the experimental operating voltage. The 5 kV power supply only produced an electric field of 0.8 MV/mm across the 6.35 mm sample. This problem was circumvented by forcing dielectric breakdown in the sample prior to the discharge experiment.

The air gaps were produced by using a 3.18 mm diameter hole in a Teflon spacer, 6.35 mm thick. Dielectric breakdown was assisted by scribing a pencil mark along the internal wall of the hole.

TABLE 2-1. CONSTITUENT DATA FOR PBXW-115

Ammonium Perchlorate	43%	Aluminum	25%
RDX	20%	HTPB Binder	12%

TABLE 2-2. CONSTITUENT DATA FOR MICOM INERT SAMPLES

Sodium Chloride (200 μ)	51%	Aluminum	19%
Ammonium Sulfate (20 μ)	17%	HTPB Binder	12%
IPDI (curative)	0.8%	HX752 (catalyst)	0.5%

TABLE 2-3. CONSTITUENT DATA FOR ALUMINUM WAX SAMPLES

Paraffin Wax	75%	Aluminum*	25%
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* Concentration of aluminum in wax samples was not uniform due to the aluminum settling towards the bottom during the setting process.

TEST CELL

Each sample was fitted into a plastic test cell, shown in Figure 2-1. The nominal test cell consisted of two brass electrodes (a cylindrical disk and a bar), a polymethyl methacrylate (PMMA) containment cylinder and two Teflon end caps (the retaining ring and the base cap). Four steel retaining bolts (not shown in the figure) held the test cell together.

The high voltage electrode was a 19 mm diameter brass rod which was connected to a brass disk (47.63 mm diameter) used for electrical connections. A 6.35 mm thick Teflon spacer around the electrode displaced the air adjacent to the test sample. In some experiments the effect of the presence of air was determined by either removing the Teflon spacer or using a similar high voltage electrode on the end of a brass threaded rod.

Note that various test cell arrangements, representing a progression in development to the final test cell shown in Figure 2-1, were used in this study. The five different combinations of electrode arrangement are shown in Figure 2-2. Tables A-1 and A-2, in Appendix A, indicate which electrode arrangement was used for each experiment.

In all but two cases, the low voltage electrode was a 15.88 mm wide, 3.18 mm thick bar which was fitted into a groove in the bottom end cap. The groove allowed the electrode face and the bottom end cap to fit flush against the sample. This electrode was covered by a 60 μ m thick insulating mask which had a circular opening (4.6 mm diameter) through which the electrode made contact with the explosive. This configuration provided control over the time to dielectric breakdown, and ensured that the arc channel would be centrally located with respect to the low voltage electrode.

Experiment 115-4 was one of the exceptions concerning the low voltage electrode. A cylindrical disk electrode was used in lieu of the brass bar. This arrangement, shown in Figure 2-2(a), is the original test cell used in earlier studies between 1988 and 1989. Experiment 115-6 was the other exception which used a 12.7 mm wide copper foil in lieu of the brass bar.

The degree of containment was determined by the integrity of the containment cylinder. Four variations of the cylinder configuration were used: a thin-walled tube (1.59 mm wall thickness); a thick-walled tube (9.53 mm wall thickness); the thick-walled tube reinforced with four layers of cloth tape; and the thin-walled tube reinforced with cloth tape and a metal hose clamp.

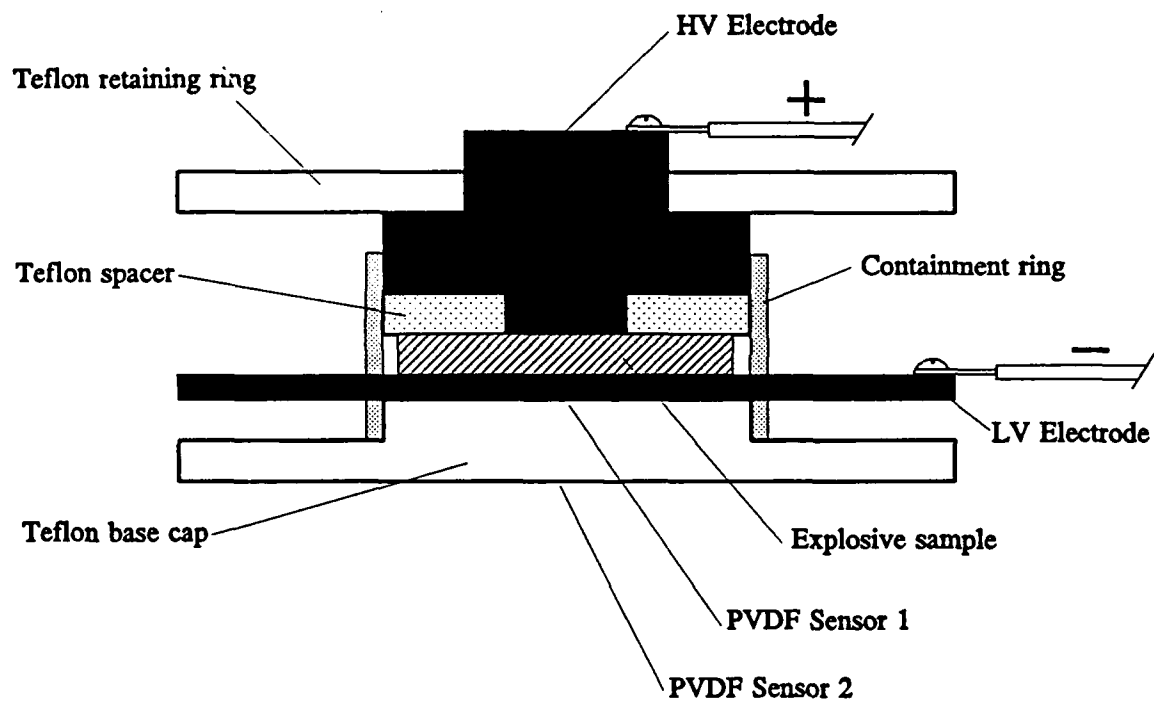


FIGURE 2-1. NOMINAL TEST CELL ARRANGEMENT

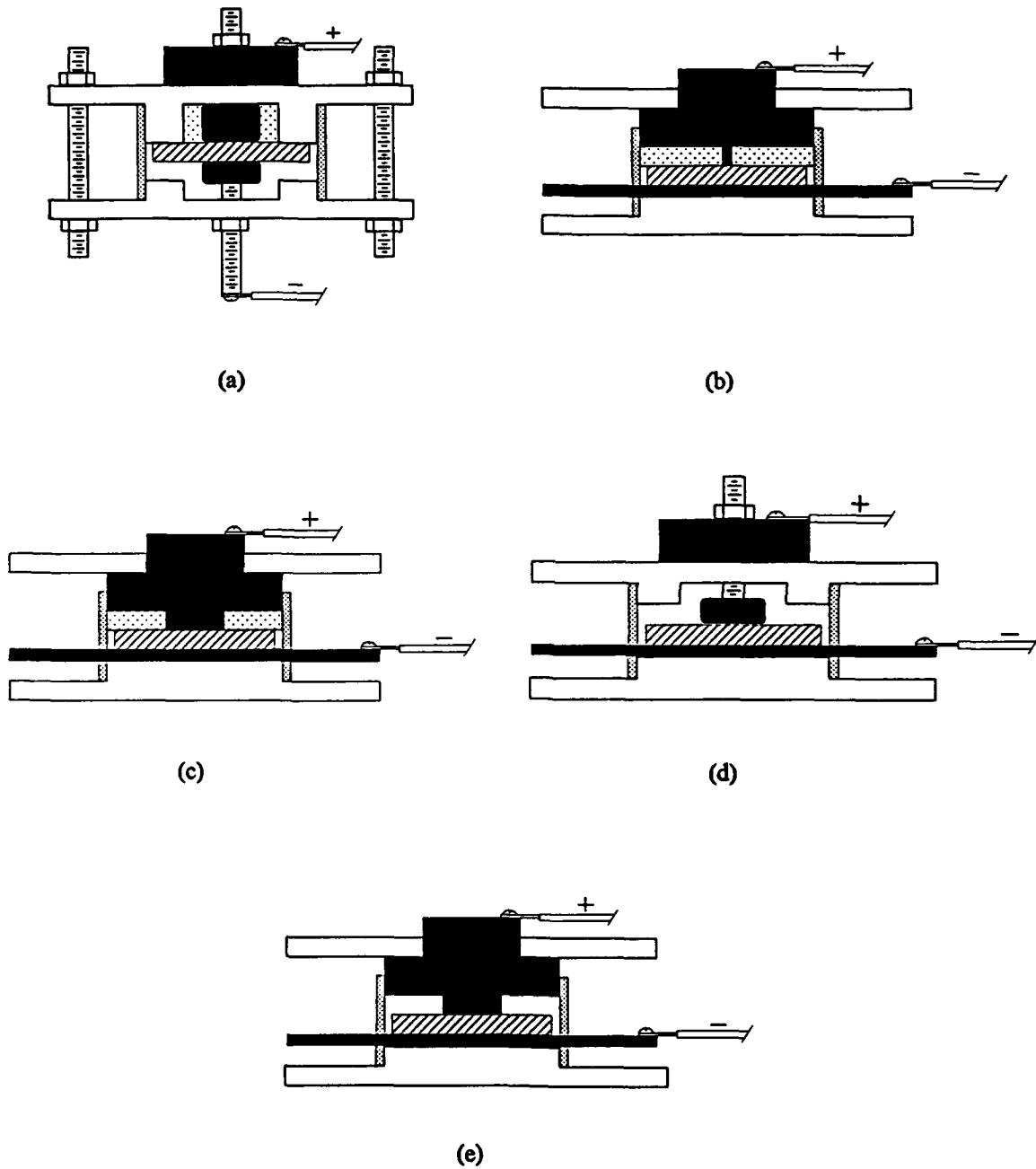


FIGURE 2-2. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATE TEST CELL ARRANGEMENTS

DIAGNOSTICS

A copper sulphate voltage probe⁹ was connected directly across the two electrodes to minimize inductive errors, insuring an accurate measure of the voltage across the test sample. A Pearson current transformer measured the total current in the circuit. A Rogowski coil⁷ placed around the high voltage leads measured the rate of current change, dI/dt , through the sample.

Two PVDF pressure sensors, 12.5 mm wide by 30 mm long, were used to obtain timing markers, i.e., to detect when any pressure differential occurred in the sample during the electrical discharge. Note that the initial intent behind using these sensors did not require an accurate measurement of the pressure. The PVDF sensors used in this study were not calibrated, hence any accurate measurement of pressure was not possible.

The large sensor area was employed so that the arc channel would be directly over the sensor. There is a nonlinear relationship between pressure and the charge density, i.e., charge per unit area, developed in the sensor material. Hence, the area of the sensor affected by any disturbance must be known to obtain an accurate measurement of the pressure. The data from these experiments could not have been related to pressure since the affected sensor area could not be defined. Furthermore, the divergence of the shock profile coming from the arc channel would introduce errors in the measurement since the calibration data are based on uniaxial stress profiles.

Figure 2-3 shows the relative location of each pressure sensor with respect to the bottom section of the test cell. The first pressure sensor was placed under the cathode, and the second sensor was located below the first gauge, on the back side of the test cell. The 6.36 mm thick Teflon retaining cap separated the two gauges. Another Teflon cap, with a brass bar inserted in the groove, was normally used as a backing plate for the second gauge. Four later experiments used a 6.36 mm PMMA plate for this function to minimize any flexing of the base cap.

The pressure sensors were used in either the so-called "charge" or "current" modes which normally yield pressure data, P , or dP/dt , respectively. The first sensor was operated in either the "charge" mode or the "current" mode. The second sensor always was operated in the "current" mode, and was used to verify the integrity of the signal obtained by the first gauge. This method of verification proved worthwhile since the first sensor occasionally experienced signal distortions due to noise pickup from the low voltage electrode.

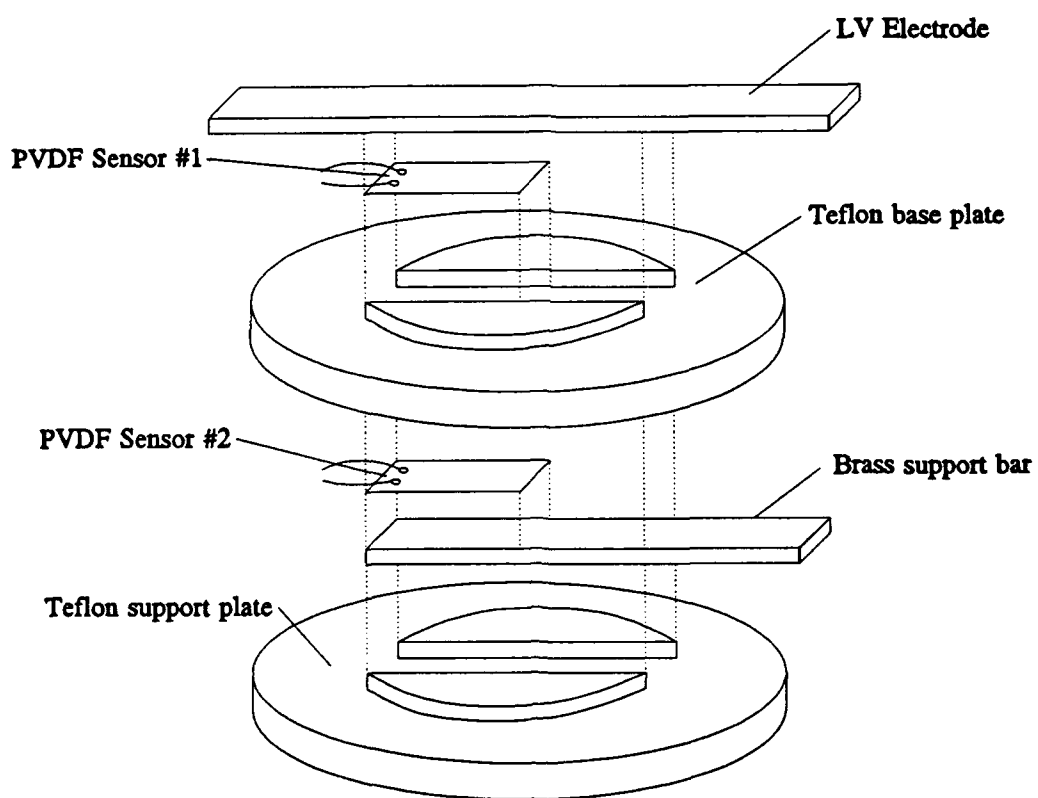


FIGURE 2-3. RELATIVE LOCATION OF PRESSURE SENSORS, EXPLODED

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

SUSTAINED REACTION CONDITIONS

Sustained reaction was observed, i.e., the explosive was consumed, when two conditions were met: (1) the containment cylinder was not ruptured, and (2) air was present in the test cell. If either one of the above criteria were not met then a single hole was left in the sample, with radial cracks emanating from it, as shown in Figure 3-1. In some cases the sample was shattered into several pieces.

The need for a stronger confinement cylinder became obvious during the first attempts to exclude all air along both faces of the test sample. The thin cylinder provided adequate containment only when air was present in the test cell. These cylinders were typically deformed as a result of any reaction but were recovered intact, as shown in Figure 3-2. To maintain the integrity of the test cell when the air was excluded, it was necessary to reinforce the cylinders. This observation suggests that when air is excluded the pressure in the test cell is significantly higher.

It is interesting to note experiments 115-11 and 115-12 concerning the need for containment. The containment rings for these two experiments were designed to maintain containment. However, the containment was lost through an opening between the slits at the base of the containment ring and the bar electrode. These slits were originally cut so that the containment ring would fit tightly over the bar electrode. However, repeated polishing reduced the size of the electrode thereby allowing gases to vent between the electrode and the Teflon. Care was taken in subsequent experiments to maintain a close fit between the containment ring and the bar electrode.

Particular information concerning each experiment (electrode configuration, air inclusion and whether containment was maintained) is listed with the ignition results in Appendix A (Table A-2). The same information concerning the arrangements for the inert experiments is given in Table A-1.

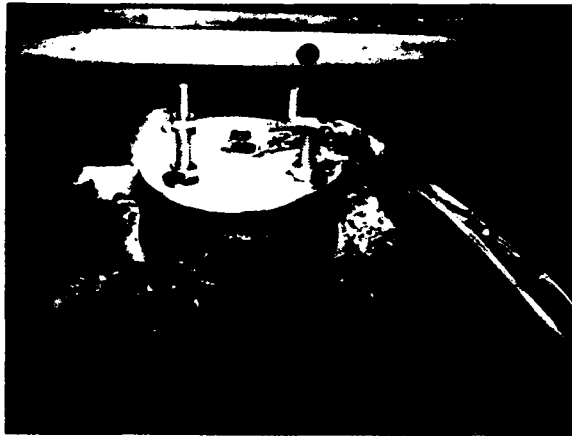


FIGURE 3-1. TEST CELL AFTER IGNITION EXPERIMENT

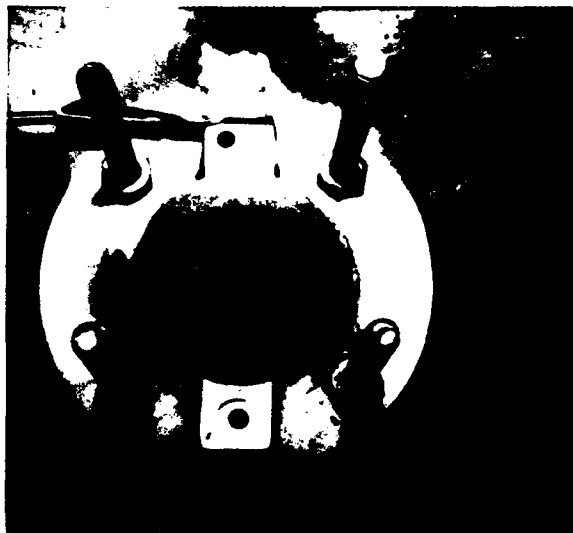


FIGURE 3-2. TEST SAMPLE AFTER FAILED IGNITION EXPERIMENT

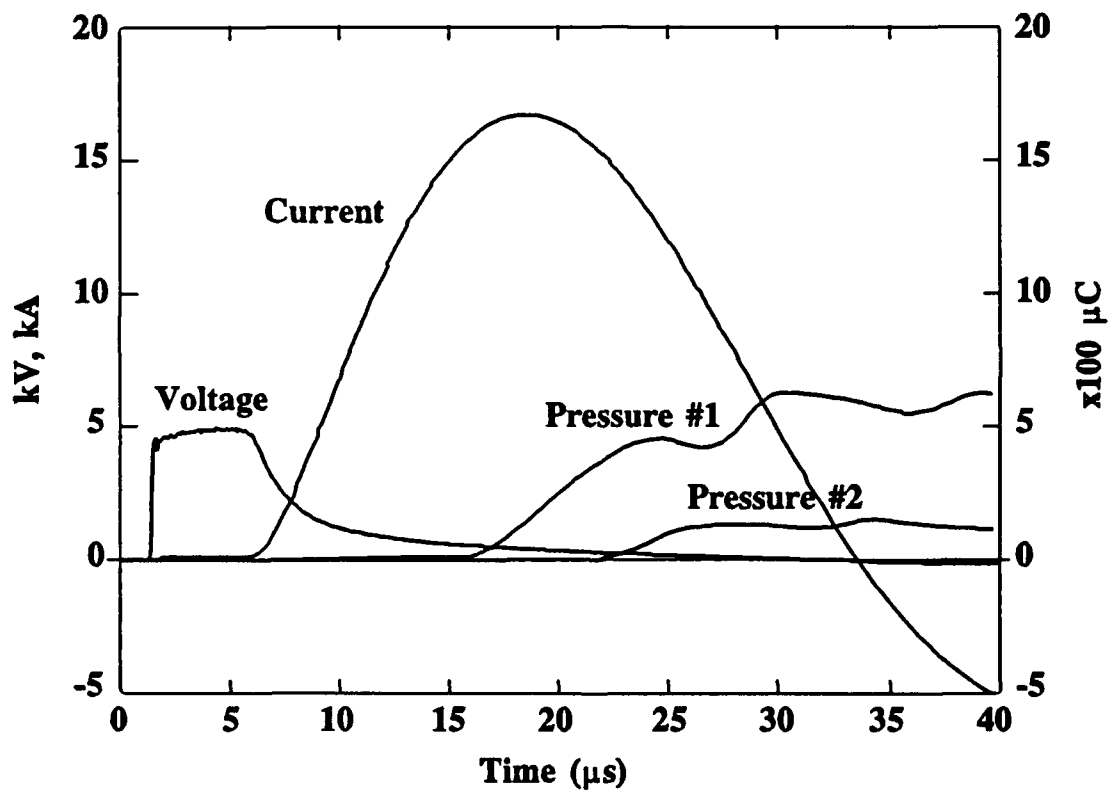


FIGURE 3-3. TYPICAL VOLTAGE, CURRENT AND PRESSURE SIGNAL PROFILES

PVDF PRESSURE SENSOR DATA

The current, voltage and both pressure signals for one experiment are plotted on the same graph in Figure 3-3 to provide an instructional view of when the pressure signals were recorded during an experiment.

The pressure sensor data for all the materials studied (PBXW-115, aluminized wax, the MICOM inert and the air gaps) are comparable. This comparison also holds for those samples that were consumed. A sharp rise in the pressure was observed between 1.8 and 33.7 μ s after dielectric breakdown. The second pressure sensor detected the signal after a delay which varied between 3.4 and 19.4 μ s after the first pressure sensor. Note that 3.5 μ s is consistent with an average transit velocity comparable to the sound speed (1.84 mm/ μ s).

The pressure sensor records are related to the charge, and not the pressure, because the affected area of the pressure sensor was not defined. The PVDF sensor signals reached peak values between 94 nC and in excess of 700 nC. It is interesting that one of the largest signals (627 nC) was recorded for an explosive sample (115-10) which did not ignite. The mean signal peaks for the two sensors are 193 nC and 102 nC, respectively.

The containment ring for one of the MICOM inert samples (NRT-3) was left off to observe the effect on the pressure signal magnitudes. The first PVDF signal exceeded 700 nC and the second signal peaked at 67 nC.

The backing plate for the second pressure sensor was left off in another MICOM inert experiment (NRT-4) to determine if the signals were due to lateral strain in the PVDF sensor. Any lateral strain effects could be attributed to a flexing or bending of the bar electrode and the Teflon base plate, which were in contact with the pressure sensors. The second pressure sensor, having been open to a free surface, would not have registered any significant compressional forces. The second sensor in this experiment registered half of the nominal signal peak observed in experiments which used the backing plate. However, the second gauge in two experiments (NRT-1 and NRT-3) which did use a backing plate registered signals of similar magnitudes.

The last four experiments performed in this study (explosive samples 115-13 through 115-16) used a 6.35 mm thick PMMA backing plate behind the bottom end cap. This plate was employed to minimize bending of the electrode and, hence, stretching of the pressure sensor. The second gauge was not used in these experiments. The signal magnitudes were comparable to those in previous experiments.

The tabulated PVDF pressure sensor data are given in Appendix A (Table A-3) for selected experiments on PBXW-115 and inert samples. The sensor data for those experiments not represented in this table were either corrupted or not recorded due to signal pick up or other experimental difficulties.

DELAYED REACTION

The observation time for the PVDF signals in experiments 115-13 through 16 was extended to 20 ms. These records show the PVDF signals lasting well past the duration of the discharge. The electrical discharge was typically over after 80 μ s while the PVDF signal could continue up to 8 ms. It is interesting to note that for experiment 115-13, an experiment in which ignition occurred, a second PVDF signal rise was observed 17 ms after dielectric breakdown. These long signals are consistent with strain effects in the test cells.

ENERGY DEPOSITION

The electrical energy deposited prior to breakdown varied between 1.8 and 3.9 J. The energy deposited between the dielectric breakdown time and the onset of the PVDF sensor signal varied between 5 and 150 J.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

PVDF SENSOR DIAGNOSTICS

The intent of this study was to deposit a high power electrical discharge in explosive samples, and measure the time to the onset of reaction in two distinct phases of ignition. Hence the PVDF sensors were only meant to detect pressure differentials which were to be used as timing markers. In our ignition model it is hypothesized that the highly localized electrical energy causes reaction in the material associated with the arc channel. It is assumed that the electrical energy is small compared to the heat of reaction, and hence has little effect on the secondary reaction beyond the channel. So, it should be possible to determine the energy to ignition in a single experiment if the initial reaction in the channel can be detected. A second pressure rise, marking the onset of reaction beyond the arc channel, is expected to follow some time after the initial reaction in the channel.

The PVDF sensor signals and the physical damage to the test cell observed in these experiments suggested that a slowly building pressure was developed in the sample. Since similar signals were observed in inert samples and air gaps, this pressure was not likely due to any building reaction in the material beyond the arc channel. It is more likely that the pressure was the result of some process restricted to the arc channel.

Mild shocks are typical for any arc discharge, but the pressure is expected to be on the order of 1.0 MPa.¹⁰ Furthermore, any disturbance of this nature should be detectable at the same time the arc channel is formed, i.e., immediately following dielectric breakdown. Hence, it is not likely that the PVDF sensors detected a shock coming from the arc channel. The inconsistencies in the PVDF data which support this conclusion are as follows:

- a) The delays between dielectric breakdown and the PVDF signals were in excess of 1 μ s, and varied between 1.8 and 33.7 μ s.

b) The delays between the two PVDF signals did not always correspond to the sound speed in the Teflon end cap. This delay varied between 3.4 and 19.4 μ s.

It is plausible that the PVDF signals were indirectly caused by a shock wave from the arc channel, i.e., from lateral strain due to a bending of the electrode and the Teflon end cap. This bending would be consistent with the above observations. The signal magnitudes and the delays would depend on the mechanical motion of the electrode and the Teflon end cap following the shock wave. It is likely that this motion would not be the same for each experiment.

The large PVDF signal obtained in the experiment, where the containment ring was left off (NRT-3), provided the first clue that the PVDF signals could be the result of lateral strain. It is likely that the absence of the confinement ring allowed the test cell to flex more than usual, hence increasing the lateral strain in the sensor. The brass bars, having been bent in each experiment, corroborated this thinking. The conclusive evidence that at least a considerable fraction of the PVDF signals were due to lateral strain, was obtained in experiment NRT-4. The backing plate for the second pressure sensor was left off in this experiment. The second pressure sensor having been open to a free surface could not have registered any compressional forces. The second sensor in this experiment registered half of the nominal signal peak observed in experiments which used the backing plate. However, the second gauge in two experiments (NRT-1 and NRT-3) which did use a backing plate registered signals of a similar magnitude. Those experiments which used a PMMA backing plate, to provide more rigidity behind the electrode, can be overlooked in this argument since it is difficult to determine if the electrodes flexed or not. Given the wide variability in signal magnitudes between experiments, and the above observations concerning the signal delays, it is likely that the PVDF signal observed in each experiment was due largely to lateral strain.

Although the above observation casts aspersions on the pressure data, it supports the idea that significant pressures were being developed in the test sample prior to any reaction. The reason that these pressures were not directly detected was due to the large area of the sensor (375 mm²). Any signal produced by a shock wave from the arc channel would affect an area with a diameter comparable to that of the arc channel, e.g., ≤ 1 mm. Conversely, the entire gauge would be affected from lateral strain effects. Since a large area sensor was used, it is possible that the voltage signal from lateral strain would be several orders of magnitude larger than that from a shock coming from the arc channel.

Despite the above argument concerning lateral strain, it is still possible to use PVDF pressure sensors to measure the ignition energy. The results of this study only suggest that more care must be taken in order to detect the pressure signals of interest. The lateral strain problem can be eliminated by using a more rigid test arrangement. Smaller PVDF sensors can be used to minimize the error associated with defining the affected area and divergent shock fronts.

SUSTAINED REACTION CONDITIONS

The results of the experiments conducted on the PBXW-115 demonstrate that containment and the inclusion of air are significant sensitizing factors for ESD ignition.

Containment

The need for containment to achieve a sustained reaction suggests that a slow building reaction occurs. What is not clear is when the onset of reaction occurs. For one of the experiments in which ignition occurred, 115-13, a second PVDF signal rise was observed 17 ms after dielectric breakdown. This second PVDF signal occurred well after the initial PVDF signal had decayed. It is possible that this late pressure rise was due to the onset of ignition in the explosive beyond the arc channel. This observation suggests that sustained ignition may occur in the explosive after the electrical energy deposition following a long incubation period (>10 ms).

Air Inclusion

It is not clear why air was also necessary to achieve a sustained reaction in these tests. It is possible that the air participates in the reaction, thereby increasing the perceived sensitivity to ignition. An earlier explanation based on a modification of the arc channel dynamics was discarded. It was believed that the sensitivity increased due to a focusing of the arc channel via electric field enhancement at the electrode-air-explosive triple junction. This argument was disproved after a sample was ignited in an experiment where the arc channel was centrally located with respect to the electrodes.

FUTURE WORK

Future studies will determine how the electrical power, pressure, containment and inclusion of air affect the ESD ignition sensitivity. Improvements to the pressure diagnostics will provide the detection of the reaction in the arc channel,

and the subsequent reaction beyond the channel. Photographic observations will confirm the time and degree of reaction.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

The PVDF pressure sensors did not directly detect any pressure development because of lateral strain effects. Consequently, any initial reaction in the arc channel associated with a first phase of ignition has yet to be confirmed. The onset of reaction, for the second phase of ignition beyond the arc channel, was not detected as well. The PVDF signals observed, and the physical damage to the test cells during these experiments, suggest that a significant pressure was developed in the sample. It is believed that both the onset of reaction in the arc channel and in the material beyond the arc channel can be detected with more carefully designed PVDF pressure gauges.

Containment of the reaction and the presence of air adjacent to the explosive sample were noted as two synergistic factors necessary for a sustained reaction in electrical discharge experiments. The need for containment to achieve a sustained reaction suggests that a slow building reaction occurs. The apparent enhancement in the reaction due to the inclusion of air is not yet understood. However, this effect suggests that air voids existing in encased explosives or propellants may sensitize them to ESD ignition.

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APPENDIX A
TABULATED RESULTS

TABLE A-1. EXPERIMENTAL DESCRIPTION FOR INERT SAMPLES

SAMPLE NUMBER	ELECTRODE ARRANGEMENT (LV TO HV)*	AIR INCLUSION	CONTAINMENT MAINTAINED	IGNITION
ALW-1	POINT TO BAR (a)	NO	NO	NO
ALW-2	POINT TO BAR (a)	NO	NO	NO
NRT-1	POINT TO BAR (a)	NO	NO	NO
NRT-2	DISK TO BAR (d)	YES	NO	NO
NRT-3	DISK TO BAR (d)	NO	YES	NO
NRT-4	DISK TO BAR (d)	NO	YES	NO
AIR-7	DISK TO BAR (d)	YES	YES	YES
AIR-8	DISK TO BAR (d)	YES	YES	YES

* High voltage (HV) electrode to low voltage (LV) electrode arrangement used for each experiment. The letter in parentheses indicates the particular electrode arrangement shown in Figure 2-2.

Key:

ALW - aluminized wax samples.
NRT - inert samples from MICOM.
AIR - air gap experiments.

TABLE A-2. DESCRIPTION AND IGNITION RESULTS FOR PBXW-115

SAMPLE NUMBER	ELECTRODE ARRANGEMENT (LV TO HV)*	AIR INCLUSION	CONTAINMENT MAINTAINED	IGNITION
115-1	POINT TO BAR (b)	NO	NO	NO
115-2	DISK TO BAR (c)	NO	NO	NO
115-3	DISK TO BAR (c)	NO	NO	NO
115-4	DISK TO DISK (a)	YES	NO	NO
115-5	DISK TO BAR (c)	NO	YES	NO
115-6	DISK TO FOIL†	NO	YES	NO
115-7	DISK TO BAR (d)	YES	YES	YES
115-8	DISK TO BAR (d)	YES	YES	YES
115-9	DISK TO BAR (c)	NO	NO	NO
115-10	DISK TO BAR (c)	NO	YES	NO
115-11	DISK TO BAR (e)‡	YES	NO	NO
115-12	DISK TO BAR (e)‡	YES	NO	NO
115-13	DISK TO BAR (e)	YES	YES	YES
115-14	DISK TO BAR (d)	NO	YES	NO
115-15	DISK TO BAR (d)	NO	YES	NO
115-16	DISK TO BAR (e)	YES	YES	YES

* High voltage (HV) electrode to low voltage (LV) electrode arrangement used for each experiment. The letter in parentheses indicates the particular electrode arrangement shown in Figure 2-2.

† In sample 115-6 a 5 mil copper foil was used in lieu of the brass bar. This was found to cause excessive electrical noise pick-up on the PVDF pressure sensor.

TABLE A-3. PVDF PRESSURE SENSOR DATA

SAMPLE NUMBER	Δt_{bk-P1} (μs)	Δt_{P1-P2} (μs)	$P_{1 \text{ peak}}$ (nC)	$P_{2 \text{ peak}}$ (nC)
115-2	4.8	4.3	137	106
115-3	4.8	3.6	112	106
115-8	20.0	5.4	-	87
115-9	17.6	5.6	-	156
115-10	10.2	6.0	627	152
115-11	1.8	8.8	128	91
115-13*	4.2	-	94	-
115-15*	3.2	-	134	-
115-16*	3.0	-	117	-
ALW-1	4.0	7.74	>50	>50
ALW-2	3.3	4.2	196	>77
NRT-1	2.0	19.2	374	43
NRT-2	14.1	12.2	173	113
NRT-3†	3.1	19.4	>700	67
NRT-4§	33.7	6.3	117	48
AIR-7	21.1	-	102	-
AIR-8	-	"	-	18

* Experiments 115-13 through 115-16 used a 1/4" thick PMMA backing plate behind the bottom end cap. The second PVDF sensor was not used.

† The confinement ring was not used for experiment NRT-3.

§ The second pressure sensor was not supported by any backing plate in experiment NRT-4.

* The time delay between breakdown and the second PVDF signal in experiment AIR-8 was 53.8 μs .

Key:

ALW - aluminized wax samples.

NRT - inert samples from MICOM.

AIR - air gap experiments.

Δt_{bk-P1} - Delay between breakdown and the first PVDF signal.

Δt_{P1-P2} - Delay between first and second PVDF signal.

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13. ABSTRACT (Maximum 200 words) Electrical discharge experiments were performed on an aluminized explosive, PBXW-115. Simultaneous observations of polyvinylidene difluoride (PVDF) pressure sensor signals, and the deposition of electrical power were recorded. These data were compared to those from similar experiments performed on aluminized inert material and in air gaps. Distinct pressure differentials were observed during the discharge phase following a delay after dielectric breakdown. The signals from the pressure sensors are comparable for each case, i.e., the unreacted PBXW-115, the ignited PBXW-115, the inert solids, and the air gaps. It is believed that sustained ignition occurred in the explosive after the electrical energy deposition following a long incubation period ((10 ms). Containment of the building reaction, and the presence of air adjacent to the explosive sample, were found to have a significant effect on the ignition sensitivity. The results are discussed within the context of a preliminary model of electrostatic initiation.			
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