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✓ Greg Drake (AFRL/PRSP); Tommy Hawkins (AFRL/PRSP); Kerri Tollison (ERC), et al., "Low
Melting Salts"

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(Statement A)

Low Melting Salts

Greg Drake, Tommy Hawkins, Kerri Tollison[#], Adam Brand, Milton McKay, Leslie Hall, Ashwani Vij[#], Ismail Ismail[#], Greg Warmoth[#], Sarah Sabowski[#]

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Summary: The synthesis and characterization of several new families of low melting salts was carried out. 4-amino-1,2,4-triazole was alkylated in the N(1) position of the 1,2,4-triazole ring, resulting in 1-R-4-amino-1,2,4-triazolium salts, where R= methyl, ethyl, propyl, isopropyl, butyl, methylcyclopropyl, allyl, and 2-ethanol. These starting salts were metathesized with silver salts of nitrate, perchlorate, and nitrocyamide making large families of new salts with low melting points and high decomposition onset temperatures.

Introduction

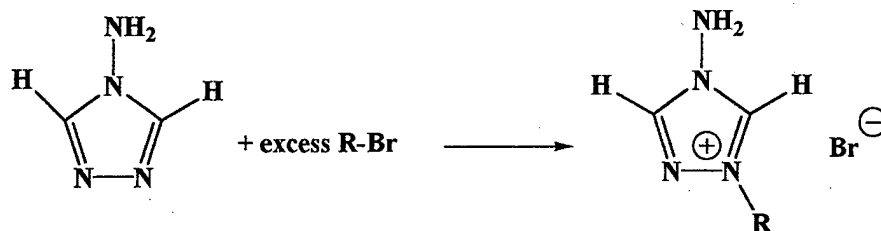
Research in the use of low melting salts based on alkyl 1,3-N, N⁷-substituted imidazolium cations has increased almost exponentially in the last five years.¹⁻³ Scientists have used them as novel solvents in a wide array of organic synthesis⁴⁻⁶, catalytic work^{7, 8} and separations⁹. Low melting salts offer several inherent advantages over neutral materials, including negligible vapor pressure, wide liquid ranges, and unique solvating power. The physical properties of the ionic liquid can be tailored by judicious choice of the pendant alkyl side chains of the substituted imidazolium cation ring as well as by the nature of the paired anion. However, di-alkyl substituted imidazolium rings suffer from being fuel rich, having relatively poor heats of formation, and low densities.

At AFRL, we have been investigating low melting salts for several years and have discovered similar physical properties with a different, more desirable, parent heterocyclic ring system, 4-amino-1,2,4-triazole. This heterocycle has a high positive heat of formation, significantly higher density, and less fuel content than that of the five-membered, two nitrogen atom imidazole ring. The chemistry used herein is not novel, it was first described by pharmaceutical workers over a decade ago¹⁰ in the search for

making pure 1-substituted-1,2,4-triazole systems. We have improved and expanded this process to make a large family of new, high purity 1-R-4-amino-1,2,4-triazolium bromide salts in essentially quantitative yields. Subsequent metathesis with the appropriate silver salts led to several new families of nitrate, perchlorate and nitrocyanamide ionic liquids. These materials were characterized by vibrational spectroscopy, multinuclear nmr, elemental analyses, DSC studies, and initial impact and friction studies.

General Synthesis and Characterization

Previously, a communication reported the alkylation 4-amino-1,2,4-triazole forming 1-alkyl-4-amino-1,2,4-triazolium salts with subsequent diazotization of the N-amino group to form desired 1-substituted-1,2,4-triazoles.¹⁰ However, the intermediates were not focused upon since the real effort was at the pharmaceutically active 1-substituted-1,2,4-triazoles.^{11,12} We realized that the intermediate salt materials have a similar shape to the well known class of ionic liquids based upon 1,3 di-substituted imidazolium cations. These new materials would make a highly desirable family of precursor halide salts that could open the door to many new families of energetic salts. We improved the reaction scheme by increasing the mole ratio of alkyl halide to greater than 2:1 mole ratio to 4-amino-1,2,4-triazole, which was much greater than the 1:1 or 1:1 mole ratio previously reported, and this also facilitated better precipitation of the product salts from the reaction solution. A large family of new 1-substituted-4-amino-1,2,4-triazolium cations have been synthesized and fully characterized. The synthesis of all of the materials was accomplished by the reaction of excess n-bromoalkane with 4-amino-1,2,4-triazole (< 2:1 mole ratio) in acetonitrile. The product salts precipitated from the reaction mixture upon cooling. (Reaction 1)



Reaction 1. The reaction of 4-amino-1,2,4-triazole with excess alkyl halide to form the desired 1-R-substituted-4-amino-1,2,4-triazolium bromide.

cation. In the case of the 1-ethyl- and the 1-methylcyclopropyl- substituted rings, the expected strong hydrogen bond interactions between the N-amino hydrogen atoms of the 4-amino-1,2,4-triazole ring and the bromide anion are observed with close interatomic distances in the crystal lattice. However, in the case of the 1-isopropyl-4-amino-1,2,4-triazolium bromide structure, the bromide anion is sandwiched between the forks of two isopropyl chains of two adjoining 1-isopropyl-4-amino-1,2,4-triazolium cations in the lattice with no significant hydrogen bonding noted. (Figure 2,3,4) This is somewhat surprising and cannot be easily explained. Further crystal structure investigations are ongoing with the rest of the series to see if there are any trends with the expected hydrogen bonding between the N-amino hydrogen atoms and the bromide anion in the crystal lattice.

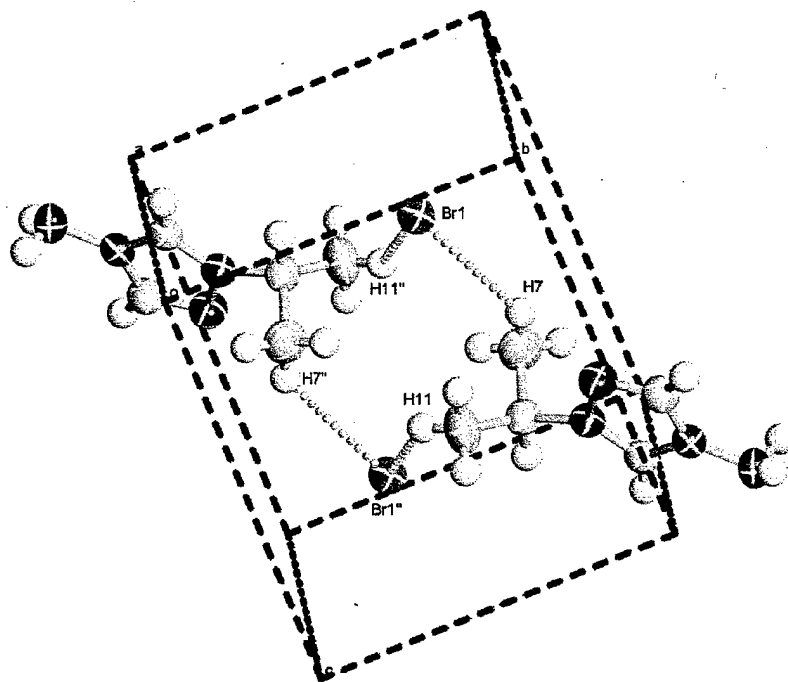


Figure 2. Single crystal x-ray diffraction structure of 1-isopropyl-4-amino-1,2,4-triazolium bromide showing crystal lattice interactions between the cation and the anion.

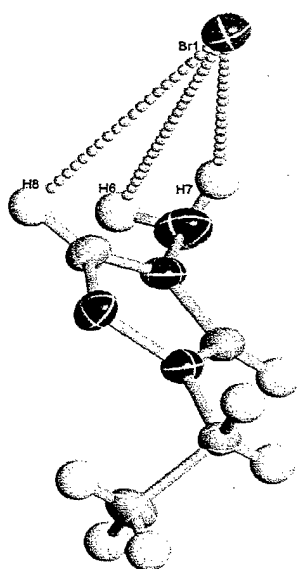


Figure 3. Single crystal x-ray diffraction structure of 1-ethyl-4-amino-1,2,4-triazolium bromide showing crystal lattice interactions between the cation and the anion.

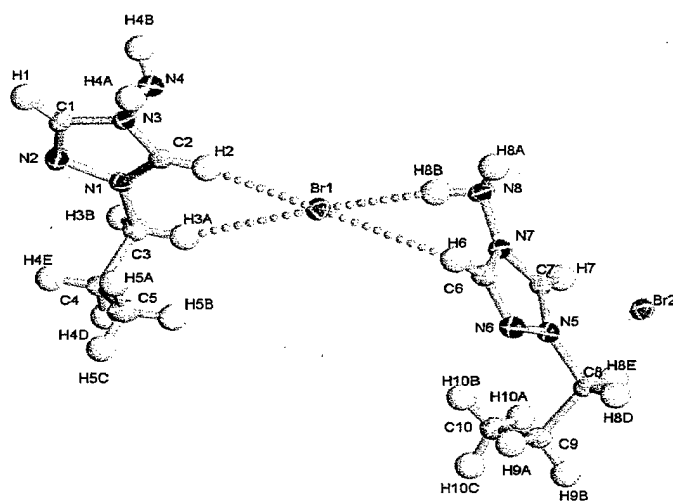
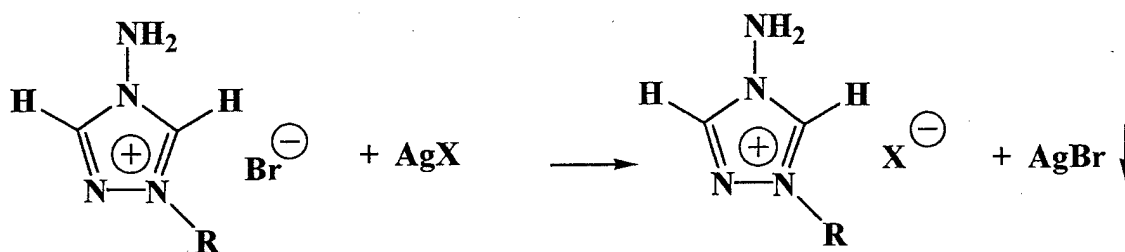


Figure 4. Single crystal x-ray diffraction structure of 1-n-propyl-4-amino-1,2,4-triazolium bromide showing crystal lattice interactions between the cation and the anion.

The bromide salts were reacted with either silver nitrate, silver perchlorate, or silver nitrocyanamide in simple metathesis reactions in polar solvents gave clean products after the silver bromide was carefully filtered away. (Reaction 2) Most of the salts were liquids at ambient temperatures, with melting points well below room temperature. All materials were stable at room temperature and showed no signs of decomposition even after over one year of storage at ambient temperatures.

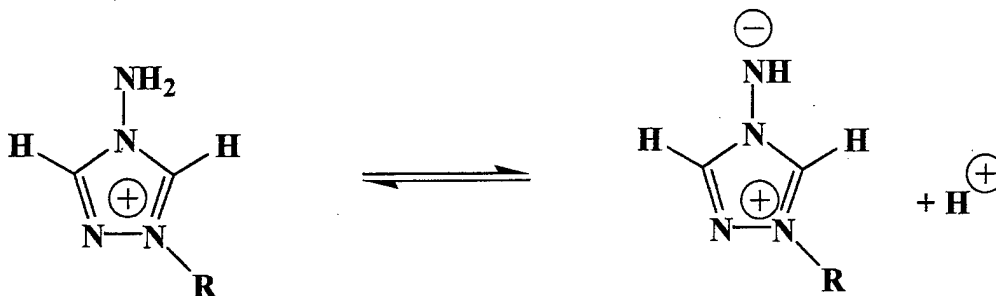


Where X = NO₃⁻, ClO₄⁻, or N(NO₂)(CN)⁻

Reaction 2. The metathesis of 1-R-1,2,4-triazolium salts.

Vibrational spectra revealed the presence of hydrogen bonding in the C-H and N-H stretching region (3300- 2900 cm⁻¹) making absolute interpretations difficult. The corresponding energetic anions of the salts (nitrate^{19,20}, perchlorate²¹, and nitrocyanamide²²) were easily identified by their characteristic “fingerprint” bands in their respective infrared and Raman spectra. Despite repeated efforts at crystallization in several polar solvents, either by chilling extremely concentrated solutions or layering of concentrated, highly polar solutions with solvents such as diethyl ether, no reasonable crystals of the any of the energetic salts have been obtained for single crystal x-ray diffraction studies.

As expected all of the 1-substituted-4-amino-1,2,4-triazolium salts are weakly acidic via the equilibrium of the loss of a N-amino NH₂ proton forming a zwitterionic species, 1-substituted-4-imido-1,2,4-triazole. (Reaction 3) Typically the pH of aqueous solutions was around 5 for all of the studied materials. Viscosity was temperature dependent with all of the 1-substituted-4-amino-1,2,4-triazolium salts and was also very dependent on the corresponding paired anion. The nitrate salts were the most viscous



Reaction 3. Weak acid equilibrium for 1-alkyl-4-amino-1,2,4-triazolium cation which lies far to the left, pK_a approx. 7.0×10^{-5} .

followed closely by the perchlorate salts, both anions have relatively high symmetry, while the nitrocyanamide salts were the least viscous, and nitrocyanamide is a low symmetry anion. Work in the near future will attempt to measure the absolute viscosity values of the energetic salts, and try to make correlations with chain length as well as cation anion interactions.

Thermal and Initial Safety Studies

Differential Scanning Calorimetry (DSC) studies revealed the high stability of all of the energetic salts. In many of the salts, a definite melt point could not be obtained, and often only a glass transition could be observed. This was noted even after many cooling/warming cycles (-100 °C to 50 °C) in the DSC cell. This behavior has been noted before in many other ionic liquids¹⁻³, and can often be attributed to poor fit between the cation and anion of the salt. Figure 5 demonstrates a typical DSC study representative of the new energetic ionic liquids obtained, illustrating the low melting point as well as the high decomposition temperature onset.

In Tables 1, 2, and 3, the melting (often glassing point), and the decomposition onsets of the new nitrate, perchlorate, and nitrocyanamide salts have been listed respectively. With the relatively high decomposition onsets, all materials had excellent thermal stability losing significantly less than 1% mass loss per day at 75 °C.

Sample: 1-PROPYL-4-AT NITRATE
 Size: 1.9000 mg
 Method: greg
 Comment: 10C/min/10ml/minhermeticalpans

DSC

File: C:\...files from old DSCMat propyl no3
 Operator: DRAKE
 Run Date: 16-Jan-02 23:04

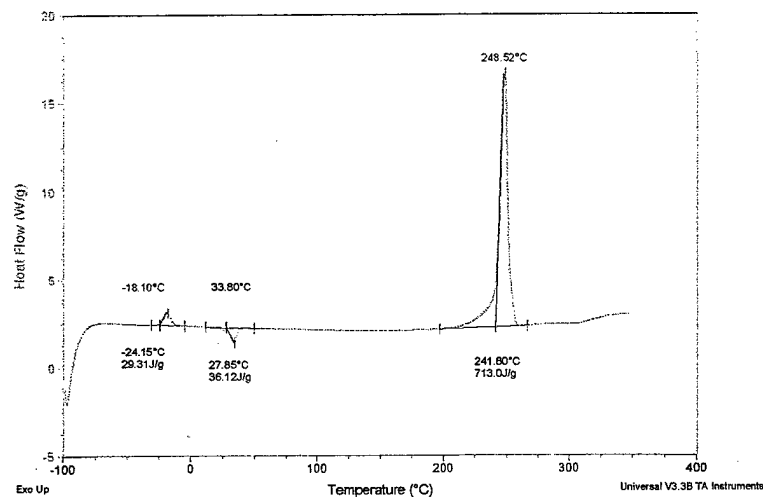


Figure 5. DSC of 1-n-propyl-4-amino-1,2,4-triazolium nitrate.

1-substituted-4-amino-1,2,4-triazolium nitrate salt	Melting point (°C)	Decomposition onset (°C)
1-methyl	54	185
1-ethyl	5	185
1-n-propyl	34	190
1-n-butyl	-10	190
1-ethanol	10	180
1-(2-propenyl)-	10	165
1-methylcyclopropyl	56	190

Table 1. Measured melting/decomposition onset temperatures of the nitrate salts.

1-substituted-4-amino-1,2,4-triazolium perchlorate salt	Melting point (°C)	Decomposition onset (°C)
1-methyl	83	250
1-ethyl	5	195
1-n-propyl	0	190
1-n-butyl	39	240
1-ethanol	10	175
1-(2-propenyl)-	-11	180
1-methylcyclopropyl	5	150

Table 2. Measured melting/decomposition onset temperatures of the perchlorate salts.

1-substituted-4-amino-1,2,4-triazolium nitrocyamide salt	Melting point (°C)	Decompositon onset (°C)
1-methyl	11	180
1-ethyl	10	175
1-n-propyl	5	185
1-n-butyl	<-10	175
1-ethanol	<-10	175
1-(2-propenyl)-	-10	185
1-methylcyclopropyl	-11	195

Table 3. Measured melting/decomp. onset temperatures of the nitrocyamide salts.

Some of the salts were tested for their sensitivity to impact and friction. Impact sensitivity was determined on an Olin-Mathieson style drop weight tester. For friction sensitivity, a Julius Peters instrument was employed with ceramic pins and plates. Some general trends were noted and follow the expected nature of the corresponding anion. Most of the nitrate salts are relatively insensitive to impact and friction, the perchlorate salts being significantly more sensitive, while most are still reasonable to work with, and finally the nitrocyamide salts which were extremely sensitive to impact and friction and should be handled with extreme caution.

Conclusions

Several new families of low melting salts based on 1-alkyl-substitued- 4-amino-1,2,4-triazolium cations were synthesized and well characterized using a variety of techniques. These families of materials all share desirable low melting points yet have relatively high decomposition onsets which make many of these materials interesting for a wide array of uses. Initial safety testing revealed a wide array of relatively insensitive nitrate salts to the highly sensitive nitrocyamide salts.

Acknowledgements

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