Historical Overview of Directed-Energy Work at Dahlgren

By Stuart Moran

In 1962, the United States set off a megaton nuclear weapon 250 miles above the Pacific. The blast caused a large imbalance of electrons in the upper atmosphere that interacted with the Earth's magnetic field to create oscillating electric fields over a large area of the Pacific. These fields were strong enough to damage electronics in Hawaii, a thousand miles away, and clearly demonstrated the effects of an electromagnetic pulse (EMP). It didn't take long for the military to begin considering ways to create such pulses without using nuclear weapons.

In the late 1960s, the Special Applications Branch at the Naval Weapons Laboratory at Dahlgren began studying ways to generate high-power oscillating electric fields that could be used as a weapon to damage enemy electronics. These devices were basically high-power versions of the old spark-gap transmitters used in the early days of radio. To construct a device that could produce nuclear EMP-like fields, stored electrical energy was converted to radio-frequency (RF) energy that could be radiated from an antenna through the atmosphere to a target. These devices typically would store energy in a high-voltage capacitor and release the energy quickly using a spark-gap switch. This would then drive oscillating currents on an antenna, causing it to radiate. To achieve field strengths of thousands of volts per meter, typical of a nuclear EMP, devices operating at hundreds of thousands of volts or more were needed.

A number of radiating devices were studied in the early 1970s. Most belonged to a class of devices called Hertzian oscillators. A capacitor is charged to high voltage, the switch is closed, and current flows in the circuit, causing the stored energy to oscillate between the electric field of the capacitor and the magnetic field of the inductor. To charge the capacitor to extremely high voltages, a step-up transformer of some type must be used. One of the fastest voltage multipliers, the Marx generator, was frequently used. The losses from internal resistance and external radiation damp the oscillating waveform, typically after a few cycles. The radiated pulses are, therefore, short in time and broad in frequency content.[1] A simple diagram of the inductance-capacitance oscillator (L-C oscillator) is shown in Figure 1.

Single-Pulse Burnout Devices

Many types of Hertzian devices were designed, constructed, and tested at Dahlgren during the 1970s. The transmission-line oscillator, or cavity oscillator, used a quarter-wavelength

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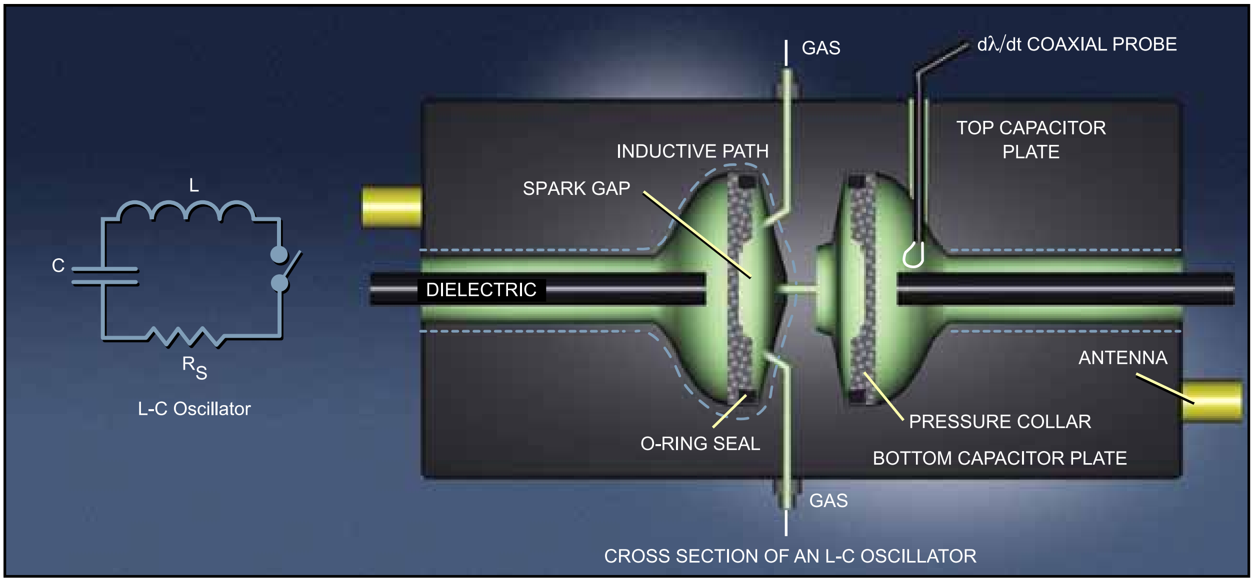

Figure 1. Inductance-Capacitance Oscillator (L-C Oscillator) Diagram

coaxial pipe, which was switched at one end, to create the oscillating waveform. A frozen wave generator, a different type, had quarter-wave sections of cable that were charged plus and minus to create a two-cycle waveform "frozen" in the cable. All sections were simultaneously switched, causing the wave to travel to an antenna. A special folded design was developed so one switch could be used, eliminating the multiswitch synchronization problem. A Ross circuit used a square wave pulse, which traveled down cable "tees," creating reflections, which were timed to create several RF cycles. In the Travetron, the turn-on time of a series of spark-gap switches was incorporated as a designed delay, creating reflections through a series of gaps to produce the waveform. This design allowed higher frequencies. All of these devices were designed, built, and tested to determine power and frequency capabilities, as well as efficiency.

Scientists and engineers at Dahlgren built and tested versions of Hertzian oscillators operating up to half a million volts. These devices powered relatively simple monopole or dipole antennas that could produce very high electric fields at hundreds of meters. In the early 1970s, a special outdoor field-measurement range was constructed. It housed high-voltage systems in underground trailers that fed antennas above ground on a specially-built, 100-m-long ground plane that was constructed for testing and field measurements. A picture of the ground place in a fielded measurement range is shown in Figure 2. Field probes were even carried aboard helicopters to make measurements above ground effects, as shown in Figure 3.

Other types of devices to produce pulses were constructed, too. Vector inversion generators used spiral-wound capacitive plates to generate high voltages without transformers.[2,3] The Landecker ring used a paddle-wheel arrangement of capacitors and inductors charged in parallel and discharged in series. The circular arrangement was designed so the entire system would radiate as a magnetic dipole, thus forming its own antenna.[4] Switch timing was critical, and Dahlgren engineers attempted to verify reports that Landecker developed a specific type that brought all capacitor leads into a single-center spark gap.

Scientists and engineers also looked at devices that used explosives to generate the electrical energy needed. These included explosive flux compressors of several types, which generated fields and then explosively squeezed the fields between conductors to amplify the peak power. In the early 1970s, a large (70-ft clear zone) anechoic chamber was constructed at Dahlgren with an explosive chamber in one end. Explosives would be set off in the chamber to drive various types of flux compressor schemes that would generate electrical pulses fed into an oscillator and antenna in the anechoic chamber. Pulse parameters and field strengths could be measured. Impedance-matching networks, matching transformers, and methods of improving efficiency were studied. Tests were performed at Dahlgren and at Los Alamos using large antennas suspended from balloons.[5] In other schemes, piezoelectric devices were developed, which could be compressed hydraulically and then quickly released to produce high voltages. The concept was to use explosives to generate the high

Figure 2. Field Measurement Range

Figure 3. Airborne Electric Field Measurements

pressures. Ferroelectric and ferromagnetic transducers driven by explosives were also tested.[6]

Special Effects Warhead (SEW) Program

In 1973, Dahlgren began the SEW Program to look at the feasibility of "burning out" enemy radar and missile systems using single-shot, very high-peak-power EMPs. The program looked at the feasibility of constructing an electromagnetic warhead that could disable electronics beyond a normal hard-kill explosive range as far as a mile away. The program was funded at several million dollars a year through most of the 1970s.

A major thrust of the SEW Program was to better understand the effects of high fields on military electronics. Little information was available on the vulnerability of foreign or U.S. electronics, particularly entire systems. A trailer-based RF impulse system, employing a Marx-driven L-C oscillator charged at two million volts, was constructed at Dahlgren. This Transportable Oscillating Pulser System (TOPS) was connected to a large bounded-wave structure that produced uniform fields over a region large enough to place an entire radar or missile system. The electric field emitted from the throat of this system was so high that a special bag of high-voltage gas was needed until the radiating structure became large enough to transition to the normal atmosphere. A picture of TOPS is shown in Figure 4.

Since many important target systems were not available for testing, much of the vulnerability information was obtained from U.S. electronics, and estimates were then made for foreign systems. In addition to the tests done at Dahlgren, pulsers were also constructed in mobile trailers that could be transported to other sites for testing against simulated or actual targets. The Mobile Oscillating Pulser System (MOPS) was an example that was carried to test sites, such as China Lake, to perform tests against radars and simulated foreign systems.

A key requirement for the SEW Program was to demonstrate enforceable target vulnerability, which means that a high percentage of the time a large percentage of the targets are affected. One important finding was the broad difference between an electromagnetic safety concern—where a 1 percent vulnerability was far too great—and a weapon concern—where a 10 percent vulnerability was not good enough. The field strengths between the safety requirements and weapon requirements often were many orders of magnitude apart.

The SEW Program looked at many types of electronic component vulnerability, subsystem vulnerability, and complete system vulnerability. As a result, energy tables for burnout effects were developed. Subsequently, Dahlgren performed numerous field tests against radar and communications systems between 1973 and 1978, and funded component and subsystem testing on missiles.

Figure 4. Transportable Oscillating Pulser System (TOPS)

Repetitive Systems for Electronic Warfare

The electric fields required to damage military electronics in the 1970s often were very high, and ranges typically were limited. As a spinoff of programs trying to damage targets with a single pulse, some of these devices were reduced in size and power, and operated in a repetitive mode to generate noise pulses for the purpose of electronically jamming target systems. In 1976, the Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR) began the Electromagnetic Countermeasures Program to study the application of high-repetition-rate Hertzian devices for use as noise jammers. The initial targets were low-frequency radars.

In late 1976, Dahlgren performed effectiveness tests against various radars using helicopter-mounted Hertzian jammers. These devices were able to screen incoming target aircraft at useful ranges. The concept of a forward-launched rocket to deliver a parachute-suspended Hertzian jammer also was investigated. Dahlgren teamed with engineers at China Lake to study packaging concepts of utilizing an extended 5-inch Zuni rocket as a forward-fired delivery vehicle. A prototype is shown in Figure 5.

Similar Hertzian devices were considered for use as communications and data-link jammers. Several antenna deployment schemes were developed, and by fall 1978, successful ground launches had been performed in which the deployment sequence and jammer operation were demonstrated. The name Zuni Expendable Pulsed-Power Oscillator (ZEPPO) was given to the project. Dahlgren teamed with the Naval Avionics Center (NAC) to build the systems. By 1980, China Lake fired the first air-launched prototypes at both low and high altitudes. Devices, batteries, spark gaps, and antennas continued to be developed, and new targets—such as spread-spectrum systems—were tested. Other delivery systems besides rockets were also considered.

Figure 5. ZEPPO Payload

The Pulsed Power Technology Program

Large directed-energy weapons (DEWs) often required megawatts or gigawatts of peak power, so methods of supplying and modifying this power were needed. As Dahlgren became involved in a broad range of DEW systems, one attribute became more and more obvious: the size, weight, and cost of a directed-energy (DE) system were dominated by the pulsed-power technologies needed to drive the system, not by the source device itself. Consequently, more effort began to be devoted to the power-delivery technologies needed for many of the weapon concepts. Pulsed-power components enabled energy to be stored over long periods of time (seconds) and released very quickly (nanoseconds) to obtain a billion times increase in peak power.

Dahlgren hosted a pulsed-power systems symposium and workshop in 1976 and helped initiate the International Pulsed Power Conferences, which began in 1977 and continues today under the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE). As Dahlgren's involvement with systems design increased, it became apparent that new technologies were needed in the prime-power and pulsed-power area to support a variety of new concepts. Dahlgren urged the Navy to initiate a Pulsed Power Technology Program to develop power sources, energy storage systems, high-power switches, and power conditioning systems needed for a variety of future weapons. This program was initiated in 1978 and was originally funded by NAVAIR and then by the Directed Energy Program Office (PMS 405) in the early 1980s. In addition to the Pulsed Power Technology Program, PMS 405 also began funding free-electron lasers (FELs), chemical lasers, high-power microwaves (HPMs), and charged-particle beams (CPBs). The Pulsed Power Technology Program at Dahlgren, in turn, funded many areas of research, both internal and external, over the next 10 years. Dahlgren served as the focal point for the Navy's science and technology (S&T) in pulsed power and funded many universities, government laboratories, and commercial companies under the Pulsed Power Technology Program.

To provide large amounts of electrical prime power, new types of rotating machines were studied, including flywheels, conventional alternators, homopolar generators, rotary flux compressors, and compensated pulsed alternators. These machines attempted to produce fast, high-power pulses using special materials to reduce losses, eddy currents, and mechanical stresses. MHD generators were developed using rocket-motor propellant that could be started and stopped. In the mid-1980s, a full-scale hybrid (solid fuel/liquid oxidizer) combustor was fabricated and tested at 10 MW, achieving world records for power-to-weight ratio and conductivity. By 1980, new types of energy storage systems were studied, including inductive storage and advanced capacitors using new types of insulating materials and geometries. During the late 1980s, programs such as the Mile-Run Capacitor Program reduced the capacitor size by a factor of 10 through better synthesis of polymer films.

Beginning with internal independent research funds, Dahlgren developed liquid dielectric materials based on water/glycol mixtures at low temperatures. These water-capacitor devices could hold energy for orders-of-magnitude longer time periods than ever before, allowing pulseforming lines to be constructed that could be charged directly from rotating machines. Dahlgren scientists developed a world-record high-voltage water capacitor that could hold pulses for milliseconds and became internationally recognized experts in water breakdown.[7,8]

High-power fast switching was another important area of research. Dahlgren funded companies to develop new types of multistage thyratrons that could operate at very high voltages. By the early 1980s, multistage thyratrons capable of operating at over 200 kV, 40 kA with 20 nsec risetimes were demonstrated. Vacuum switches, ignitrons, plasma pinch switches, pseudospark switches, back-lighted thyratrons, and e-beam switches all were studied, as well as a variety of spark-gap switches. Higher power solid-state switches were developed, too, using new geometries and substrate material. Superconducting coils were considered, both for energy storage and as opening switches. Dahlgren engineers developed exploding-wire opening switches, and several types of plasma pinch switches were funded. They also worked on stacked cable pulsers. Additionally, concepts for electromagnetic armor were developed. These systems used high-density capacitors to blunt penetrators. Inductive energy storage—which could be far denser than capacitors—was studied, including methods of generating the seed current and the problematic high-voltage opening switch. Opening switches—which were needed for inductive energy store systems—were studied, as well as magnetic switches, which used saturating magnetic material to sharpen pulses. Magnetic switches operating at 10 kHz were demonstrated by 1983.[9]

In 1985, Dahlgren used internal funds to upgrade a facility to provide controls, diagnostics, and 200 kW of average power at 50 kV to accommodate testing of new switches and water-based capacitors. This facility could control the power with a vacuum-tube pulser and could generate over a million volts with a rep-rated Marx generator. The facility was used to:

- Develop water-dielectric energy storage, rep-rated spark gaps, and pseudospark switches.
- Test a variety of switches developed by contractors, such as back-lighted thyratrons.[10,11]

A picture of one system being tested—a water pulse-forming line and spark-gap switch—is shown in Figure 6.

Dahlgren concentrated in-house switching efforts in spark gaps. New types of gases were studied, as well as electrode materials, gas-flows, switch geometries, and triggering techniques to produce high-repetition-rate switches for electronic warfare, as well as particle-beam weapons.[12] Dahlgren scientists and engineers demonstrated 100-μs recovery of spark-gap switches after handling kilojoules of energy at hundreds of kilovolts, a world record.[13] The High Energy 2-Pulse System for fast recovery experiment is shown in Figure 7.

In 1986, Dahlgren ran a workshop on high-power switching for Navy tactical and Department of Defense (DoD) strategic applications and became involved with numerous DoD working groups on electromagnetic propulsion, high-power diagnostics, advanced energy conversion, power modulators, and pulsed power. Spark gaps were investigated to create underwater noise for submarines. Dahlgren also led four North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Advanced Study Institutes in Europe and the UK on various pulsed-power topics. International assessments of key pulsed-power technologies were also performed.

Particle-Beam Weapons

Particle-beam weapons were a major focus of DE work during the 1970s and 1980s. A CPB weapon takes subatomic particles, generally electrons, and accelerates them to near the speed of light before sending them toward a target. These fast electrons penetrate deeply into most materials, so they are difficult to counter. The high-current electron beam was to be accelerated by an induction-type

Figure 6. A Water Pulse-Forming Line and Spark-Gap Switch Test

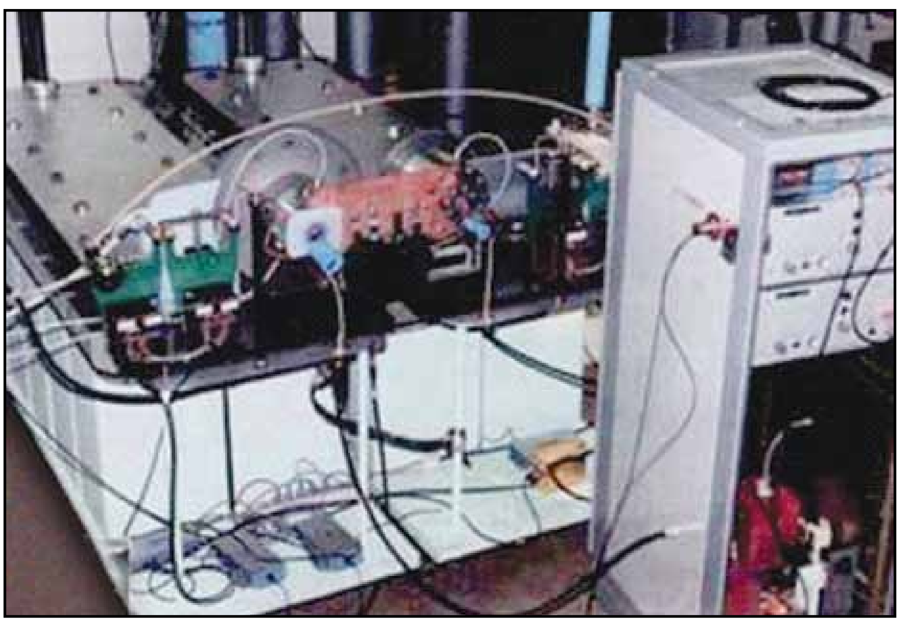

Figure 7. High Energy 2-Pulse System

accelerator, repetitively pulsed. High electron-beam currents (kiloamps) and a hole-boring series of pulses were anticipated to create a stable, long-range beam. Since the beam was capable of penetrating quickly and deeply into any target material, it had the potential to damage electronics and set off explosives before salvage fuzing could occur. The beam was predicted to be all-weather and essentially countermeasure-proof. Even a near miss could cause substantial damage from high fields and X-rays produced by the deceleration of electrons as they hit air molecules near the target. The CPB concept is shown in Figure 8.

Scientists and engineers from Dahlgren worked on the pulsed-power technologies needed to drive these machines beginning in 1980, and it became a major focus of the Pulsed Power Technology Program.[14] The White Oak Laboratory developed beam-steering concepts and looked at material interactions. By 1989, the program investigated:

- Propagation
- Compact Recirculating Accelerators
- Pointing and Tracking
- Prime Power
- Material Interaction
- Fratricide

For a compact shipboard system, recirculating accelerators were needed to make multiple passes of the electron beam past the accelerating cavities. This required a high-power, fast recovery switch, which Dahlgren began working on in 1988. Using patented hydrogen switches and special triggering techniques—efforts that had begun with internal research funds—Dahlgren demonstrated spark-gap switches, the only technology that could meet the current, voltage, and recovery requirements at that time.[15] The High-Voltage 5-Pulse System experiment is shown in Figure 9.

During these technology efforts, significant advances were achieved in all aspects of the program. These included:

- Generating high-current, high-energy beams (although still below weapons parameters)
- Demonstrating a 360º turn in a high-current beam
- Propagating a single pulse through the air
- Demonstrating beam steering on a small scale
- Performing target interaction measurements

Multipulse, long-range propagation was never demonstrated. A comprehensive tri-service summary called the Net Technical Assessment for CPB was sponsored by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) in 1987 to describe the accomplishments of the program. The report said compact accelerators were the most pressing technology need. As a result, most funding was directed toward this topic. Funding was stopped in the early 1990s, however, due to the high expense, stretched timelines, and changes in the threat.

Pulsed Power and Electromagnetic Launchers

During the 1980s, the Army and Air Force looked at short-range electromagnetic weapons to penetrate stronger armor with higher velocities. The Navy worked on concepts for a weapon that could be mounted on ships to intercept missile systems at line-of-sight distances. The Navy—then the biggest user of space systems—was also interested in studies showing that small satellites could

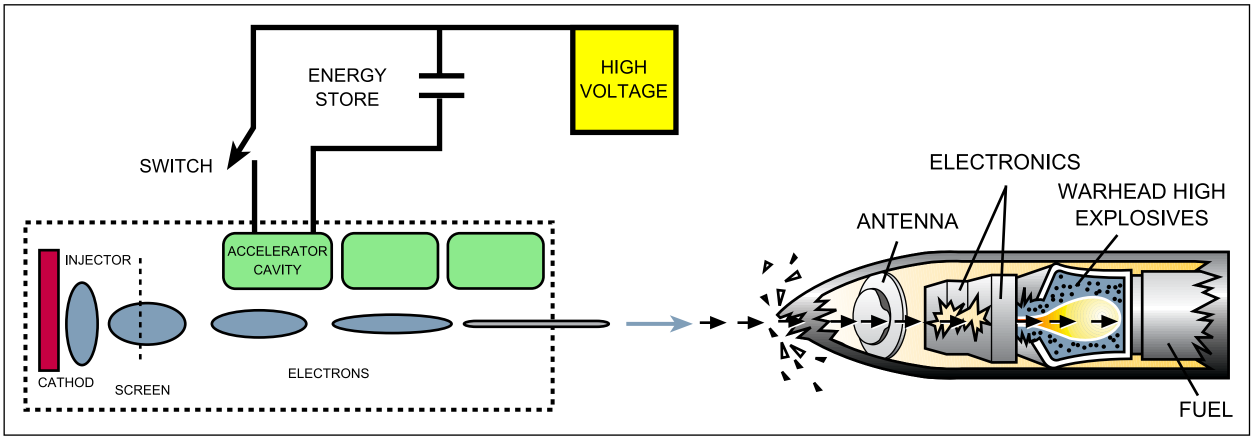

Figure 8. Charged-Particle Beam (CPB) Concept

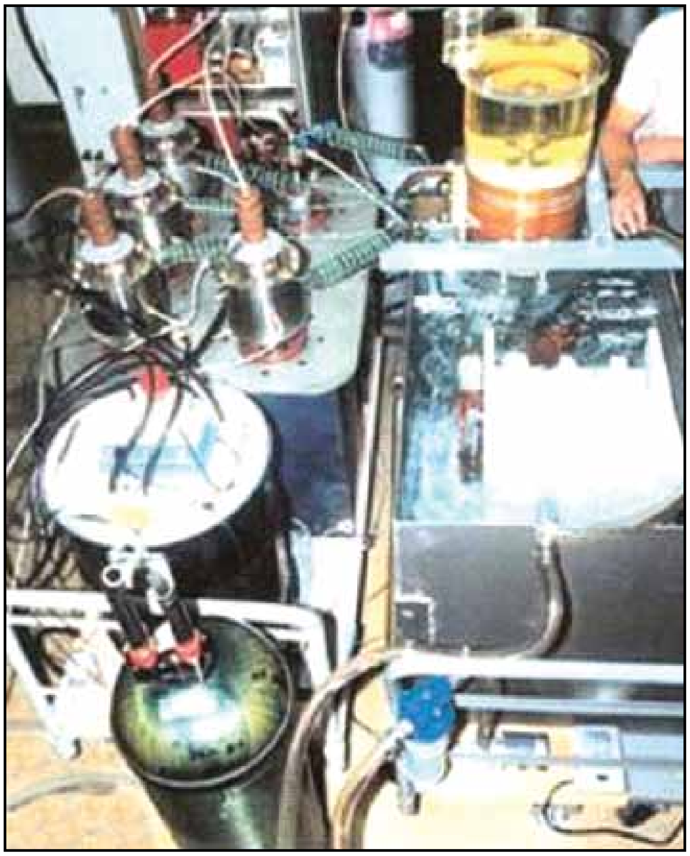

Figure 9. High-Voltage 5-Pulse System Experiment

be electromagnetically launched into low Earth orbit for the fraction of the cost for a normal launch.

Through the 1980s, electric guns were funded by independent research and independent exploratory development programs at Dahlgren, studying electric gun concepts for both rail guns and electrothermal (ET) guns. Kinetic energy weapons were also investigated as part of the Pulsed Power Technology Program. Under these programs, pure electric launchers were developed and tested at Dahlgren, including ones that self-formed projectiles.[16–18] Also studied were ET guns that used the discharge of electrical energy at the gun breech to generate a plasma jet. This plasma jet heated a low-molecular-weight working fluid, such as water, to produce a heated gas that accelerated the projectile to higher velocities than conventional explosives. The Electrothermal-Chemical (ETC) Gun concept augmented the electrical energy generating the plasma jet with a chemical reaction. A 127mm ETC gun was investigated, and a 60mm ETC gun was tested at Dahlgren, with the ability to fire short bursts at a rate of 100 rounds per minute.[19]

Early Dahlgren work on electromagnetic launchers—along with capacitor development and switch advances from the Pulsed Power Technology Program—allowed Dahlgren to provide the Navy with detailed conceptual designs in the late 1990s for near-term, long-range rail guns based on capacitor energy store. These efforts helped support the decision to begin a long-range rail-gun program at Dahlgren that continues today, resulting in world-record achievements. Capital investment funds were used to construct a high-energy facility in 2005 to test pulsed-power components and module designs for use in electromagnetic launcher programs. An early electromagnetic launcher is shown in Figure 10.

High-Energy Lasers (HELs)

In general, megawatts of continuous laser power are required to kill hard targets at long ranges. Laser technologies that can produce this much power are very limited. The Navy was a leader in developing powerful chemical lasers in the 1970s and 80s. These lasers burned chemical reactants to

Figure 10. Early Electromagnetic Launcher at Dahlgren

generate the excited states for lasing, thus reducing the need for large amounts of electrical power. The Navy built an entire HEL system, including the Mid-Infrared Advanced Chemical Laser (MIRACL) and the Sea-Lite beam director. By 1990, this building-sized system demonstrated shooting boosters, missiles in flight, and supersonic vehicles. However, the system had drawbacks because it:

- Used hazardous, expensive chemicals
- Had propagation problems at the mid-infrared wavelength
- Was large in size and high in cost

FELs require electron accelerators similar to CPB weapons, so they also are large and complex. However, they can be designed to operate at optimum wavelengths and scale nicely to higher powers. The Strategic Defense Initiative began working on FELs in the late 1980s, funding the advanced test accelerator at LLNL, originally developed for CPBs. FELs were also studied under the Strategic Defense Initiative Organization (SDIO) to be used as an antisatellite weapon. These lasers went from milliwatts to watts under SDIO, and then to kilowatts more recently with work at the Thomas Jefferson National Accelerator Facility in Virginia. Space-based lasers and relay mirror systems were studied under SDIO funding, too, including the development of the Advanced Beam Control System for beam steering, beam control, rapid optical retargeting, and self-alignment.

Dahlgren engineers concentrated its internal laser efforts on medium-power soft-kill weapons. They performed tests against sensors and cameras, and investigated damage thresholds. In the late 1980s, Dahlgren engineers worked with optical augmentation to locate enemy optics for targeting and on green laser dazzlers for defense against small-boat attack. There were efforts to harden electro-optical equipment, including sights and night-vision systems for the Marines, and laser eye-protection filters for goggles and binoculars. Laser systems were also investigated for remotely cutting holes and wires to disable electronics. Lethality work continued under funding from the Joint Technology Office for High-Energy Lasers to look at alternative wavelengths and pulse shapes in addition to modern target materials.[20]

Dahlgren scientists continued to investigate laser-damage thresholds for materials, components, and subsystems for a variety of laser technologies. Near the start of the 21st century, commercial lasers based on pumping optical fibers with semiconductor lasers became common and more powerful. Dahlgren purchased the Navy's largest collection of fiber lasers in 2004 and began investigating ways to combine multiple beams into a laser weapon. These lasers have very high efficiencies, above 20 percent, and the fiber-optic output reduces the requirement for complex optical paths. In 2008, Dahlgren engineers demonstrated a laser capability to ignite spinning mortar rounds, and in 2009, engineers demonstrated the capability of fiber lasers in a shoot down of soft targets at China Lake, California.

Resurgence of Directed Energy

With the fall of the Soviet Union and a greatly altered threat, DoD funding (particularly technology funding) experienced an overall decline in the late 1980s and early 1990s. This caused Navy managers to emphasize near-term, lower risk, evolutionary concepts. The Pulsed Power Technology Program and the Navy's Charged Particle Beam Program both came to an end. Investigations into HPM weapons declined as the difficulty of burnout of military electronics—particularly analog components—became apparent. Problems with propagation and cost caused the Navy to greatly reduce efforts on chemical lasers. With the cancellation of major programs, Dahlgren used internal funding in 1990 to keep a core technical capability together, which was necessary for the Center to remain in the mainstream of tactical DE and its associated technologies. Efforts continued in water breakdown, testing of contractor-developed pulsed-power components, and electric guns. New talent and technologies from universities were brought in to jump-start new projects. Tunable waveform generators using unique semiconductor materials were developed. These used bulk semiconductor material, fabricated in-house, that could be used as a fast switch controlled by laser light for both on and off operation. This allowed faster repetition rates and better triggering than could be done with small spark gaps, as well as the ability to create specific waveforms.[21] "Green" technologies were also investigated using non-thermal plasmas and spark-gap shock waves for cleaning and pollution reduction.[22] New types of particle detectors and magnetic field sensors were developed, and new methods of infrastructure protection were investigated.[23] Soft-kill weapons, both optical and HPM, continued to be studied. Short-pulse jamming of spread-spectrum systems was investigated, as well as beat-wave coupling and special waveforms.[24]

A number of trends led to a resurgence of DEWs by the end of the 20th century. The DoD trend in using digital electronics and off-the-shelf commercial technologies increased dramatically. The pace of change in electronics and computers changed rapidly, too. Most of these new electronic systems had never been tested for vulnerability, and there was a question of how much they would increase military vulnerability to RF or HPM attack. The reduced emphasis on nuclear EMP shielding meant more military electronics were not as well protected from RF attack. Consequently, interest in protecting U.S. military and civilian infrastructure increased, including systems in foreign countries. Moreover, with the increasing reliance on civilian infrastructure, such as power, communications, and emergency and industrial systems—all of which were controlled by digital electronics—the potential that an adversary could attack infrastructure systems to affect or divert military operations became an increasing concern. Following several major terrorist attacks during this time period, there was also concern about the impact of an RF attack on airport towers, financial systems, alarm systems, and industrial plants. Human factors—such as a state of confusion experienced by humans—also played an important part in determining the overall effects of an RF attack.

The asymmetric threat—where large numbers of cheap weapons in a swarm attack could overrun a few sophisticated weapons—caused more concern. As the asymmetric threat to the surface Navy pushed the limits of conventional defensive systems, DE—with it speed-of-light propagation, soft-kill potential, and cheap rounds—offered tactical advantages, either as an adjunct to conventional systems or as stand-alone systems. Additionally, there was an increased emphasis on nonlethal, precise accuracy and graduated effects that could be used. Moreover, the idea that future battles would be fought together with civilians and friendly forces on the battlefield increased the importance of low collateral damage and antimateriel attacks.

The Joint Program Office for Special Technology Countermeasures (JPO/STC), located at Dahlgren, began efforts concerning the vulnerability of new digital systems to RF attack. The program also established a DoD-wide database of vulnerability data, source designs, and RF-effects information—bringing together much of the information collected by the services over the years. The program looked at the protection of modern digital infrastructure systems and funded a facility constructed in 1992 to test large-scale electromagnetic vulnerabilities to various methods of attack.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, Dahlgren initiated programs regarding the potential for RF attack using nonkinetic disruption, with minimal collateral damage. Capital investment funds were used to construct a test facility for this effort in 1998. Dahlgren developed RF payloads for remotely piloted vehicles and demonstrated their effectiveness in field tests in 1999, and in similar tests in 2007. The successful completion of Project Guillotine was DoD's first demonstration of this type of HPM technology. As the need for statistical vulnerability to commercial digital systems became apparent, Dahlgren constructed instrumented test facilities in 1999 and 2002. Two multistory buildings could be reconfigured to reflect different types of building construction and electromagnetic shielding. Large complexes of electronics, computer networks, server systems, telephone systems, security systems, and various types of digital industrial controls could be assembled, instrumented and exposed to attack from an external device or technique. This program-funded complex—called the Maginot Open Air Test Site (MOATS) facility—continues to be used to test target systems, as well as a variety of RF weapon technologies developed internally and by external and international organizations. A picture of the MOATS facility is shown in Figure 11.

As the need for additional DE laboratory space and testing capabilities became apparent, Dahlgren applied for military construction funds, and in 2008, constructed the Naval Directed Energy Center (NDEC), with access to Dahlgren's overwater test range. Other construction funds were used to construct a remote facility at the Pumpkin Neck Explosive Test Range to serve as a laser backstop and measurement facility, as well as an explosive-test staging area. These facilities already have been used to develop and test fiber lasers against modern threat targets. Construction is currently underway to build an expansion of the NDEC and a 120-m laser test laboratory building using an existing tunnel structure. This collection of facilities represents very important capabilities to develop and test future DE systems.

Conclusion

For over 40 years, the Naval Surface Warfare Center, Dahlgren Division (NSWCDD) has been a leader in developing DE devices, pulsed-power systems, and electric weapons. Its people have contributed many publications and patents, and set world records. DEWs tend to be complex and technically challenging to build. Regardless, these weapons offer important, powerful advantages, such as:

- Deep Magazines
- Cheap Rounds
- Fast Targeting
- Variable Lethality
- Pinpoint Targeting

As a result of NSWCDD's leadership, persistent scientific initiatives, and leading-edge engineering

Figure 11. MOATS Facility Undergoing Testing with an RF Weapon (on right)

over the years, naval warfighters will increasingly find themselves turning to DEWs when dealing with situations spanning the spectrum of conflict.

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