DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEODYMIUM PENTAPHOSPHATE (NPP) LASER

J. Gualtieri
NIGHT VISION & ELECTRO-OPTICS LABORATORY

October 1979

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**DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEODYMIUM PENTAPHOSPHATE (NPP) LASER**

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The structural properties of NPP are examined and the effect of twin domain boundaries on light propagation are discussed. Spectroscopic properties of NPP and other lanthanide pentaphosphates are outlined. The advantages of NPP as a laser material for miniature rangefinder and long distance fiber optic application are discussed. Laser and device considerations are reviewed and a miniature NPP laser cavity with all components individually removable for easy replacement (overall size 1.5 x 1.5 x 4.4 cm) is described.

**Key Words**  
Solid state laser materials  
Neodymium pentaphosphate  
Miniature rangefinder application  
Laser considerations  
Device considerations  

**Abstract**  
The structural properties of NPP are examined and the effect of twin domain boundaries on light propagation are discussed. Spectroscopic properties of NPP and other lanthanide pentaphosphates are outlined. The advantages of NPP as a laser material for miniature rangefinder and long distance fiber optic application are discussed. Laser and device considerations are reviewed and a miniature NPP laser cavity with all components individually removable for easy replacement (overall size 1.5 x 1.5 x 4.4 cm) is described.
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

ADVANTAGES OF PENTAPHOSPHATES

GROWTH AND STRUCTURAL PROPERTIES
   a. Structural Properties
   b. Twin Boundary Iridescence

SPECTROSCOPY
   a. Lifetimes and Concentration Quenching
   b. Line Broadening in NPP
   c. Multiphonon Decay
   d. Crystal Field Symmetry
   e. Effective Emission Cross-Section
   f. Notes on Lanthanide Ions Other than Nd

LASER CONSIDERATIONS
   a. Threshold Calculation
   b. Colinear Monochromatic Pumping Thresholds
   c. Transverse Monochromatic Pumping Thresholds
   d. Power Output and Optimum Coupling
   e. CW Laser Considerations for NPP Transversely Pumped by a GaAlAs Diode Array
   f. Broadband Pumping

DEVICE CONSIDERATIONS
   a. Potential of NPP for Use as a Fiber Optics Source for Single Mode High Data Rate Transmission
   b. Rangefinder Application

SUMMARY OF ERADCOM AND ARMY/ERADCOM SPONSORED NdP 0 ACHIEVEMENTS

Page
INTRODUCTION 6
ADVANTAGES OF PENTAPHOSPHATES 6
GROWTH AND STRUCTURAL PROPERTIES 8
   a. Structural Properties 10
   b. Twin Boundary Iridescence 11
SPECTROSCOPY 14
   a. Lifetimes and Concentration Quenching 14
   b. Line Broadening in NPP 14
   c. Multiphonon Decay 16
   d. Crystal Field Symmetry 18
   e. Effective Emission Cross-Section 20
   f. Notes on Lanthanide Ions Other than Nd 21
LASER CONSIDERATIONS 26
   a. Threshold Calculation 26
   b. Colinear Monochromatic Pumping Thresholds 32
   c. Transverse Monochromatic Pumping Thresholds 32
   d. Power Output and Optimum Coupling 36
   e. CW Laser Considerations for NPP Transversely Pumped by a GaAlAs Diode Array 37
   f. Broadband Pumping 40
DEVICE CONSIDERATIONS 42
   a. Potential of NPP for Use as a Fiber Optics Source for Single Mode High Data Rate Transmission 42
   b. Rangefinder Application 43
SUMMARY OF ERADCOM AND ARMY/ERADCOM SPONSORED NdP 0 ACHIEVEMENTS 46
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIGURES</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1. Absorption coefficient as a function of wavelength for Nd:YAG and NPP.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2. Orientation of index ellipsoids in adjacent domains in NPP. The (b,z) axis is perpendicular to the plane of the paper.</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3. Resolution of a single beam of unpolarized light into two triplets after reflection and refraction at a twin boundary.</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4. Fluorescence spectrum of EuP$<em>5$O$</em>{14}$ (77 K).</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5. Energy level diagram showing pump absorption, non-radiative decay and principal lasing transitions for the Nd ion.</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6. Fluorescence spectrum of samarium pentaphosphate diluted with yttrium compared to Sm:CaWO$_4$ (300 K).</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 7. Fluorescence spectrum of terbium pentaphosphate diluted with yttrium (77 K).</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 8. Fluorescence spectrum of dysprosium pentaphosphate diluted with yttrium (300 K).</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 9. Fluorescence spectrum of dysprosium pentaphosphate diluted with gadolinium (300 K).</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 10. Fluorescence spectrum of erbium pentaphosphate diluted with ytterbium (77 K).</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 11. Incident threshold power as a function of non-resonant round trip loss for colinearly LED pumped NPP and Nd:YAG mini-lasers.</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 12. Incident threshold power as a function of non-resonant round trip loss for colinearly laser diode pumped NPP and Nd:YAG mini-lasers.</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 13. Incident threshold intensity as a function of non-resonant round trip loss for transversely pumped NPP and Nd:YAG mini-lasers.</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 14. (a) GaAlAs diode array spacing $d_s$ and light emitting length $d_l$. (b) Illumination geometry of one of the diodes in the array (shown above the laser rod). Rod to diode spacing is $h$, $g_1$ is the</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
gain length on the rod face and \( g_{av} \) is the gain length at a depth \( d/2 \), \( d \) is the rod length.

Figure 15. Optimum output coupling and available power as a function of absorbed power for a CW NPP mini-laser transversely pumped with a 5 diode array at 798.8 nm.

Figure 16. Miniature NPP laser cavity showing INVAR steel case with adjustable output mirror mount, BN pump cavity and L-shaped xenon flashlamp.

TABLES

Table 1. Injection lasers versus neodymium pentaphosphate mini-lasers for long distance fiber optic communications applications.

Table 2. Advanced laser materials.

Table 3. Spectroscopic properties of rare-earth pentaphosphates.
INTRODUCTION

Late in 1972, the announcement of intense infrared emission in the compound NdP$_{5}O_{14}$, as opposed to ordinary Nd doped solid state laser materials such as Nd:YAG, aroused much interest in the laser community. The significance of this for Army/DOD laser applications was clearly recognized, and shortly thereafter, a small group of investigators was assembled at ERADCOM, NV&EO Laboratories, Fort Monmouth to study the growth and optical properties of this new type of laser material. For about two years, laser research on these materials was confined to the study of as-grown crystals almost microscopic in size. In 1975, significant results were achieved regarding the preparation and laser performance of large (4.5 x 3 x 2.2 mm) perfect optical quality NdP$_{5}O_{14}$ crystals. However, the impact on future Army laser rangefinders and designators could not be evaluated until the growth of larger crystals was established. Thus, the in-house developed technology was transferred to industry (Philips Laboratories) for the development of 10 mm long laser rods. Contractor performance was excellent and the technology was advanced to provide laser rods up to 20 mm in length. In addition, through an ARO funded contract, concurrent studies were performed at Lincoln Laboratories to examine resonator effects and thermal properties of flashlamp pumped mini-lasers. Laser performance was significantly improved as a result of this work.

ADVANTAGES OF PENTAPHOSPHATES

The lanthanide pentaphosphates are hard, stable crystalline materials which may be inexpensively grown to a high degree of perfection and optical quality. They make excellent hosts for the lanthanide series of rare-earth ions.

NPP is a high optical gain laser material, mainly as a result of a 30 X increase in concentration over ordinary Nd lasers. (In Figure 1 the absorption coefficient for both NPP and Nd:YAG are plotted as a function of wavelength.) There is little fluorescence quenching, lifetime reduction or linewidth broadening and no optical degradation of the material with increasing concentration. These unique properties of NPP have been suggested as resulting from: (a) The large Nd-Nd separation of 0.52 nm which reduces Nd$^{3+}$ dipole-dipole interactions. In YAG the Nd-Nd separation can be as small as 0.37 nm.1

Figure 1. Absorption coefficient as a function of wavelength for Nd:YAG and NPP.
(b) A favorable position of the $^4I_{15/2}$ manifold relative to the upper laser manifold ($^4F_{3/2}$) and the ground manifold ($^4I_{9/2}$). This reduced cross-relaxation between Nd ions. The fact that the Nd-O polyhedra are unconnected in NPP. This isolation affects the cross-relaxation quenching mechanism both by increasing the Nd-Nd separation and modifying the crystal-field splitting of the $^4I_{15/2}$ manifold.

In projecting the use of NPP, several possible advantages over existing materials are apparent. The Nd concentration can be varied over the full (0-100%) range by dilution with inert cations such as La or Y. This allows a "molecular engineering" of the chemical composition to obtain a specific pump band absorption strength. Uniform pumping and increased absorption by the lasing medium is of prime importance since the efficiency of the laser is related to the amount of pump radiation absorbed. This means that one can "tailor" the material for low threshold or high output power for CW, pulsed or Q-switched operation. The high degree of polarization of the NPP laser output, which is a consequence of its inherent gain anisotropy, will also facilitate electro-optic Q-switching. The potential military benefit for a rangefinder/designator application is in providing a low cost, miniature, low threshold, high efficiency laser transmitter. Additional advantages of NPP vs LED's or injection lasers for long distance high data rate fiber optic communications systems are: Better operating service lifetimes, better mode control and beam divergence, lower spectral waveguide dispersion (narrower linewidth), higher output power with transverse pumping. The current status and limitations of injection lasers and NPP type lasers for use in future long distance fiber optic communications systems are outlined in Table 1.

GROWTH AND STRUCTURAL PROPERTIES

The growth of bulk crystals of NPP at ERADCOM and under ERADCOM sponsorship has been adequately covered in previous reports.  

Table 1. Injection lasers versus neodymium pentaphosphate mini-lasers for long distance fiber optic communications applications.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Injection Laser Type</th>
<th>Nd-Pentaphosphate Laser Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emission wavelengths (µm)</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both in low loss and dispersion regions of silica fiber</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emission bandwidth (Å)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPP would have less dispersion-meaning higher information rates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode Control</td>
<td>Possible, but with substantial power reduction</td>
<td>Relatively easy to obtain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power Output</td>
<td>High radiance laser required which may limit device lifetime</td>
<td>Power output is scalable through transverse pumping with LED's which have long lifetime. NPP lifetime should be unlimited.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modulation capability</td>
<td>Drive current modulation possible to 2 gigahertz</td>
<td>Electro-optic modulation required. 800 MHz demonstrated in miniature LiNbO₃ device</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costs</td>
<td>The cost of injection lasers and their associated modulation equipment should be lower</td>
<td>Advantages of high power, increased lifetime, and favorable emission characteristics may compensate for increased costs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
a. Structural Properties

The lanthanide pentaphosphates crystallize in three different space groups depending on lanthanide ion radius. The elements La through Tb form a monoclinic structure (pseudo orthorhombic) whose atomic positions allow a smooth transition into orthorhombic symmetry with increasing temperature. The monoclinic cell has a $P2_1/c$ space group (commonly called type I or class I). The elements Tb through Lu, Y, Bi form a second monoclinic structure with a $C2/c$ space group (commonly called type II or class II). The pentaphosphates of Dy, Ho, Er and Y also form a third structure, truly orthorhombic, having space group $Pnma$ (commonly called type III or class III).

The monoclinic type I structure shows a pseudo-orthorhombic symmetry characteristic of space group $Pncm$. Only very small shifts in atomic position are required to produce a true orthorhombic symmetry. The shifts required for structure reorientation increase as the ionic radii decrease from La through Tb. This reorientation can be introduced abruptly (mechanically) or smoothly (thermally). In type I NPP crystals, two types of twin planes have been found which undergo elastic reorientation through twin boundary motion.\(^7\)-\(^8\) One observes that twin boundaries can be induced and moved across and out of crystals with very small applied stress. However, their removal is temporary, in that they are reintroduced by similar small stresses, for example, in subsequent handling and fabrication procedures. It was suggested that by choosing an appropriate average ionic radius, mixed crystals containing any of the lanthanide ions could yield any of the three structure types. Since the type III orthorhombic structure pentaphosphates do not exhibit twinning, we would like to have a crystal with the maximum concentration of Nd attainable in type III structure. Using the ionic radius of Tb as indicative of monoclinic type I structure, we can simply require the average ionic radius to be less than 0.94 A.U. Tb has an ionic radius of .93 A.U. and can exist in type II structure. For Y ( .92 A.U.) and Nd (1.04 A.U.) the composition for type III structure would be Nd\(_{0.167}\)Y\(_{0.833}\)P\(_5\)O\(_{14}\).

Besides Y we might choose Yb ( .86 A.U.) Sc ( .81 A.U.) or In ( .81 A.U.) as possible diluent ions. Yb can be ruled out for Nd laser purposes since Nd is known to transfer energy to Yb. Sc and In have ionic radii too small to form mixed crystals with Nd except in monoclinic type I structure this has been verified for Sc\(^9\) and by our own growth experiments for In. Unfortunately, the growth of large bulk crystals of diluted NPP

---

compounds is difficult. Thus far, only small crystals have been produced which sometimes represented different phases. Large crystals of Nd$_{0.5}$La$_{0.5}$P$_2$O$_{14}$ have been grown but these were highly strained due to lattice mismatch. Domain free Nd$_{14}$Y$_{86}$P$_5$O$_{14}$ epitaxial layers have been grown on Gd$_{33}$Y$_{67}$P$_5$O$_{14}$ substrates. Room temperature CW lasing was reported, with thresholds in the milliwatt range for longitudinal pumping with an argon laser.

b. **Twin Boundary Iridescence**

It is known that potassium chlorate and calcite occasionally crystallize in twinned forms which display iridescent effects. The phenomena of iridescence is generally described as the result of interference of light produced by thin films or by liquid filled cracks in crystals. In twinned crystals, iridescence is a consequence of the anisotropy of the medium and the different orientation of adjacent domains. Light propagating through these crystals is both reflected and refracted at the planes of twinning. Effects such as deviated images exhibiting spectral dispersion and polarization characteristics are easily observed. The index ellipsoids in adjacent domains in NPP have a common axis which coincides with the b axis of the crystal. The iridescent phenomena results because one of the ellipsoids is rotated clockwise ($\theta = 9.45^\circ$) and the other counter-clockwise by the same amount (see Figure 2). Figure 3 is a diagram showing how a single beam of light incident on a crystal plate containing a twin boundary is resolved into 8-beams. Two of the beams in reflection and 2 in refraction at the twin boundary are unresolved and leave the plate unpolarized (indicated by the letter U). Thus, the emergence of two triplets is noted. As the angle of incidence $\theta$ is increased to approximately 12-degrees, the vertically polarized components grazing the twin boundary disappear. These components also exhibit spectral dispersion. The effects disappear and laser performance is unaffected when light propagates parallel or perpendicular to the twin plane. The perpendicular direction is the c-axis of the crystal and is the logical choice for the laser resonator direction. Polishing is limited by the presence of elastic twins perpendicular to the c-axis which produces surface irregularities on a faces.

---

Figure 2. Orientation of index ellipsoids in adjacent domains in NPP. The (b,z) axis is perpendicular to the plane of the paper.
Figure 3. Resolution of a single beam of unpolarized light into two triplets after reflection and refraction at a twin boundary.

\[ x, y, x', y' = \text{polarization directions as shown in Fig. 2} \]

\[ U = \text{unpolarized} \]

\[ B, G, Y, O, R = \text{Blue, green, yellow, orange and red respectively} \]
Polishing is also limited by perfect cleavage parallel to b faces. Fortunately, c-planes can be precision polished.

SPECTROSCOPY

a. Lifetimes and Concentration Quenching

Fluorescence lifetimes corresponding to $^{4}F_{3/2} \rightarrow ^{4}I_{11/2}$ transitions of pentaphosphates of Nd were determined by pulsing samples repetitively with a GaAlAs diode laser (peak wavelength = 810 nm). The resultant fluorescence was filtered and then detected with an RCA 7102 photomultiplier. The repetitive signals were averaged using a boxcar integrator. Lifetimes were determined from the negative slope of the plot of ln I versus time. There is no obvious difference in lifetimes with cooling to 77K. In Table 2 we give the fluorescence lifetimes and Nd concentration for various diluent ions. The lifetimes were found to be sensitive to the growth temperature of the sample. For example, material grown at temperatures below 550°C showed shorter lifetimes possibly as the result of hydroxyl ion trapping within the crystals.

Concentration quenching of the fluorescence was found to be linear in $Nd:LaP_{5}O_{14}$ while in ordinary Nd doped materials it is usually quadratic. Recently, at our suggestion, the spectroscopic properties of $Nd_{x}Y_{1-x}P_{5}O_{14}$ have been investigated. It was found that the Nd ions occupy a variety of slightly perturbed sites. No significant energy transfer was found to occur between these ions in inequivalent sites. A new quenching model for NPP based on spatial but non-spectral energy migration to surface quenching sites was suggested. In addition, we have found that it is possible to lengthen the Nd lifetime by about 10% by growing an epitaxial layer of $Gd_{0.54}La_{0.46}P_{5}O_{14}$ on a substrate of NPP. This change lends some definite proof to the surface quenching suggestion. Although this increase in lifetime is small, other epilayer compositions and improved growth procedures may lead to increases in lifetime which are helpful technologically.

b. Line Broadening in NPP

The line broadening mechanism in NPP is a temperature dependent effect which does not influence the observed lifetime. For example, the fluorescence lifetime of the $^{4}F_{3/2} \rightarrow ^{4}I_{11/2}$ transition was unchanged when the temperature was lowered from 300K to 20K. Moreover, at 300K, the emission lines are 0.01 nm wide, while at 300K they are 1.7 nm wide. NPP behaves like a typical thermally broadened material. Physically, thermal

### Table 2. Advanced laser materials.

Spectroscopic properties of rare-earth pentaphosphates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Fluorescence (μm)</th>
<th>RT Linewidth (Å)</th>
<th>RT Lifetime (μs)</th>
<th>Terminal State (cm&lt;sup&gt;-1&lt;/sup&gt;)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nd</td>
<td>(0.885)</td>
<td>(62)</td>
<td>100-300</td>
<td>(2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.052)</td>
<td>(16)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(4000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.320)</td>
<td>(46)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sm</td>
<td>0.595</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eu</td>
<td>0.612</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4800</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tb</td>
<td>0.545</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4000</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dy</td>
<td>(0.577)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>(3000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.488)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>(416)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Er</td>
<td>1.530</td>
<td>2 @ 77K</td>
<td></td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
broadening is caused by variations in the crystal field which modulate the energy levels. However, the linewidth changes are not simply proportional to the lattice vibrational amplitude. Dominant lattice vibrations in NPP occur at 450 cm⁻¹, 1000 cm⁻¹, 1170 cm⁻¹ and 1300 cm⁻¹. The modulation rate is therefore much greater than the linewidth changes. Higher order interactions are required. For example, two high frequency vibrations may combine to produce a vibration oscillating at the difference frequency. This frequency is then low enough to cause slow variations of the energy of the excited states which can account for the broadening, but do not affect the lifetime. The broadening produced by such a process is homogeneous. From a laser point of view this broadening is not detrimental, since any excited ion in the crystal is free to radiate over the whole lineshape. The probability is greater for emission at the center frequency. Theoretically, emission within the homogeneously broadened envelope will depopulate the upper laser level completely. By contrast an inhomogeneously broadened laser material (e.g. Nd:Glass) is not free to radiate over the entire lineshape, but only over a very narrow wavelength range corresponding to its own spectral packet. For this reason, one saturates or burns holes in the laser gain curve at these center frequencies.

c. Multiphonon Decay

For a given rare-earth ion, the most critical factor affecting the multiphonon relaxation rate is the energy gap to the next lower level. The decay rates exhibit an approximate exponential dependence on energy gap, ΔE, predicted by the equation

\[ W = W(0) \exp(-a\Delta E) \]

W(0) is the multiphonon transition probability at T = 0 K and a is a constant determined by the phonon nature of the host and by the strength of electron lattice coupling. In Table 3 we have indicated the energy gaps below the fluorescing states, the number of high energy (1300 cm⁻¹) phonons required for multiphonon decay in pentaphosphates, and a qualitative fluorescence intensity. From Table 3 we see that ErPrO⁻⁺ at 5 phonons stands at the limit of room temperature fluorescence. Fluorescence of wavelength longer than 1.54 μm will occur only weakly at room temperature (see section f). Instead, multiphonon decay will dominate and depopulate the excited states. We see from Table 3 that only Nd is a candidate for room temperature infrared pentaphosphate lasers. While for visible lasers Eu, Tb, Dy and Sm pentaphosphate could be considered candidates. ErPP could be considered as a low temperature infrared laser candidate.
Table 3. Spectroscopic properties of rare-earth pentaphosphates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ion</th>
<th>Largest Energy Gap (cm(^{-1}) approximately)</th>
<th>No. of 1300 cm(^{-1}) Phonons required</th>
<th>Room Temperature Fluorescence Intensity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nd</td>
<td>7,300 *</td>
<td>&gt;5</td>
<td>Strong (IR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sm</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>&gt;5</td>
<td>Distinct (vis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eu</td>
<td>12,200</td>
<td>&gt;9</td>
<td>Strong (vis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tb</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>&gt;11</td>
<td>Strong (vis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dy</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>&gt;5</td>
<td>Strong (vis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>&lt;4</td>
<td>Very weak (vis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Er</td>
<td>6,500</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Weak (IR, vis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tm</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>&lt;5</td>
<td>Not detected</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Ignoring the \( ^4I_{15/2} \) state.
d. Crystal Field Symmetry

The absorption and emission spectra corresponding to $^{5}D_0 \rightarrow ^{7}F_J$ transitions of Eu$^{3+}$ yield useful information about its local site symmetry. For example, the transition $^{5}D_0 \rightarrow ^{7}F_0$ corresponds to a $J = 0$ to $J = 0$ transition which is strictly forbidden, but if the site symmetry can be described using a linear crystal field term, this transition has a weak but observable intensity. The only site symmetries possessing linear crystal field terms are $C_s$, $C_n$ and $C_{nv}$. From the emission of EuP$_5$O$_{14}$ at 77°K (Figure 4), a weak line is observed at 578.5 nm corresponding to a $^{5}D_0 \rightarrow ^{7}F_0$ transition. Also, we observe three lines corresponding to magnetic dipole transitions ($^{5}D_0 \rightarrow ^{7}F_1$) and 5 lines corresponding to $^{5}D_0 \rightarrow ^{7}F_2$. Blanzat, et al. originally found only 4 lines for $^{5}D_0 \rightarrow ^{7}F_2$, however, lowering the temperature to 77°K reveals a 5th very weak line at 612.5 nm. They reasoned that since the $^{5}D_0 \rightarrow ^{7}F_0$, $^{5}D_0 \rightarrow ^{7}F_1$ and $^{5}D_0 \rightarrow ^{7}F_2$ yielded 1, 3, and 4 lines, respectively, this indicated $C_{2v}$ symmetry. Although they apparently chose the correct symmetry, the existence of the 5th line in $^{5}D_0 \rightarrow ^{7}F_2$ shows that the situation is a bit more complicated. However, since the $C_{2v}$ forbidden 5th line is extremely weak, the effective symmetry to be chosen from spectroscopic consideration is $C_{2v}$. Thus, we can guess that Nd in the monoclinic I pentaphosphate structure effectively "feels" a $C_{2v}$ symmetry. Later Brecher derived a reasonably complete and consistent picture of the spectroscopic behavior of EuP$_5$O$_{14}$. Using polarized emission and absorption spectra of single crystals, he identified most of the observed transitions and derived the energy level structure of the $^{7}F$ multiplet. The overall site symmetry was found to be very low ($C_1$),


Figure 4. Fluorescence spectrum of EuP$_5$O$_{14}$ (77 K).
however, the local symmetry of the Eu ion was higher (effectively C\textsubscript{2v}). The proposed structure of the Eu site was related to a face-centered isosceles prism.

e. **Effective Emission Cross-Section**

Much has been written concerning stimulated emission cross-sections of Nd:YAG, with values ranging from 1.8 x 10\textsuperscript{-19} cm\textsuperscript{2} to 4.6 x 10\textsuperscript{-19} cm\textsuperscript{2}. Original measurements of the cross-section of Nd in NPP were in error by a factor of 2 because of neglect of reabsorption. The following analysis suggested by Weber, et al.\textsuperscript{17} may be used to determine the effective emission cross-sections in NPP and Nd:YAG.

The upper laser states for Nd is \textsuperscript{4}F\textsubscript{3/2}, which is split into two components by the crystal field (upper R\textsubscript{2}, lower R\textsubscript{1}). In NPP the maximum cross-section \(\sigma_{R_1, Y_2} = 1.7 \times 10^{-19} \text{ cm}^2\) and corresponds to a R\textsubscript{1} \rightarrow Y\textsubscript{2} transition. Y\textsubscript{2} is one of the six crystal field split levels of \textsuperscript{4}I\textsubscript{11/2} (the lower laser state). In Nd:YAG the maximum cross section is \(\sigma_{R_2, Y_3} = 4.6 \times 10^{-19} \text{ cm}^2\). NPP has contributions from two transitions:

\[ \sigma_{R_1, Y_1} = 1.5 \times 10^{-19} \text{ cm}^2 \text{ at 1051.3 nm and } \sigma_{R_2, Y_4} = 0.7 \times 10^{-19} \text{ cm}^2 \text{ at 1050.6 nm.} \]

Their combined contribution is needed to calculate the laser gain. This results in an emission cross section \(\gamma\), where

\[ \gamma = F_{R_1} \sigma_{R_1, Y_1} + F_{R_2} \sigma_{R_1, Y_4} \]

\(F_{R_1}\) is the fractional occupation number of the R\textsubscript{1}th level of \textsuperscript{4}F\textsubscript{3/2}. These levels are split 110 cm\textsuperscript{-1} in NPP. Thus,

then \( \gamma_{Npp} (R_1 \rightarrow Y_1, R_2 \rightarrow Y_4) = 1.2 \times 10^{-19} \text{ cm}^2 \). Since the \( ^4F_{3/2} \) splitting in Nd:YAG is 86 cm\(^{-1} \) calculation of \( F_{R_1} \) yields 0.602 and \( F_{R_2} = 0.398 \) then \( \gamma_{Nd:YAG} (R_2 \rightarrow Y_3) = 1.8 \times 10^{-19} \text{ cm}^2 \).

See Figure 5 for the relevant energy level diagrams.

g. Notes on Lanthanide Ions Other than Nd

1. \( \text{Sm}_{0.1} \text{Y}_{0.9} \text{P}_5 \text{O}_{14} \)

   To our knowledge, Sm\(^{3+} \) has never lased in any host. The fluorescence of this compound compares favorably with that of Sm\(^{3+} \) :CaWO\(_4\) (see Figure 6). However, the lifetime of the strongest transition at 5945 A.U. is less than 80 \( \mu \)s and the linewidth is very broad (approximately 60 A.U.). The possibility of laser action in this compound is remote.

2. \( \text{EuP}_5 \text{O}_{14} \)

   Eu\(^{3+} \) has lased in \( \text{Y}_2 \text{O}_3 \) and \( \text{YVO}_4 \). The linewidth of the 6122 A.U. emission line in \( \text{EuP}_5 \text{O}_{14} \) is approximately 9 A.U., approximately half the width of a similar transition in \( \text{Y}_2 \text{O}_3 \) at room temperature. It is known that Tb transfers
Figure 5. Energy level diagram showing pump absorption, non-radiative decay and principal lasing transitions for the Nd ion.
Figure 6. Fluorescence spectrum of samarium pentaphosphate diluted with yttrium compared to Sm:CaWO$_4$ (300 K).
energy to Eu increasing the initial state population by about 72% in the compound Eu$_{0.2}$Tb$_{0.8}$P$_5$O$_{14}$. The terminal level is approximately 1000 cm$^{-1}$ above ground. See Figure 4 for the relevant fluorescence spectrum.

3. TbP$_5$O$_{14}$

A 50 J/in threshold for laser action has been reported for Tb:YLF using the composition LiY$_0.5$Tb$_{0.25}$Gd$_{0.25}$F$_4$. The laser transition is within the $^5D_4 \rightarrow ^7F_5$ multiplet and since $^7F_5$ is 2000 cm$^{-1}$ above ground, this laser operates as a 4 level device. The fluorescence lifetime of 25% Tb in YLF was reported to be approximately 5 ms. TbP$_5$O$_{14}$ has a fluorescence lifetime of 4 ms for a 5447 A.U. line within the $^5D_4 \rightarrow ^7F_5$ multiplet the fluorescence spectrum of Tb$_{0.1}$Y$_{0.9}$P$_5$O$_{14}$ is given in Figure 7.

4. Dy$_{0.1}$Gd$_{0.9}$P$_5$O$_{14}$

Dy$_{0.1}$Gd$_{0.9}$P$_5$O$_{14}$ could be a possible laser in the yellow region at 577.4 nm. The transition involved is in the $^4F_{9/2} \rightarrow ^6H_{13/2}$ emission multiplet. $^6F_{13/2}$ is approximately 3000 cm$^{-1}$ above ground level and the fluorescence lifetime is approximately 340 μs.

Dy$^{3+}$ may also be the only reasonable choice for a blue-green laser for the following reasons: (1) Dy is a good absorber of blue and UV pump radiation. (2) There is an energy gap between the emitting level and the next lower level of at least 5 times the energy of the most energetic lattice phonon available. This means non-radiative relaxation through multiphonon decay is very unlikely. (3) There is no excited state absorption from the initial emitting level to high lying configurations as in the case of terbium. One disadvantage might be that the terminal level is approximately 459 cm$^{-1}$ above ground. Thus, 4-level operation at room temperature is questionable.

We have found the fluorescence of DyP$_5$O$_{14}$ is quenched, making it necessary to use a composition of only 10% Dy. The choice of either Y or Gd alters the emission spectrum markedly. This is no doubt a result of the structure changes dictated by the differing ionic radii of these ions.

Figure 7. Fluorescence spectrum of terbium pentaphosphate diluted with yttrium (77 K).

$0.1 \text{Tb} \ 0.9 \text{Y} \ P_{514}$ fluorescence (arbitrary units)

77 deg K, effective slit width = 1.28 A
In Figure 8 and Figure 9 we show the fluorescence spectra of these compounds. In the case of the Gd compound, most of the blue-green fluorescence is concentrated in one line at 4879 A.U. The lifetime of this transition was 250 µs.

5. Er$_{0.01}$Yb$_{0.99}$P$_5$O$_{14}$

The largest energy gap between $^4F$ levels in Er is between $^4I_{13/2}$ and $^4I_{15/2}$, representing about 5 phonons in the pentaphosphate lattice. Thus, efficient fluorescence and any possible laser action requires cooling the material to at least 770K. In Figure 10 we show the spectrum of this compound at 770K.

LASER CONSIDERATIONS

a. Threshold Calculation

The round trip gain exponent should equal the round trip loss at threshold:

$$2YD_{th}L = L_0 + L_T$$

where $\gamma$ = effective stimulated emission cross section,

$L_0$ = total non-resonant round trip loss including scattering in the laser medium, diffraction and mirror absorption losses.

$L_T$ = round trip transmission loss,

then

$$D_{th} = \frac{L_0 + L_T}{2Y} = N_{i,th} - N_f = \Delta N_{th}$$

where $N_{i,th}$ = number density of ions in the initial laser level at threshold,

$N_f$ = number density of ions in the final laser level.
0.1 Dy, 0.9 Y$_{5}P_{0.14}$ fluorescence (arbitrary units)
effective slit width = 1.28 Å, 300 deg K
attenuation factor = 1

Figure 8. Fluorescence spectrum of dysprosium pentaphosphate diluted with yttrium (300 K).
0.1Dy 0.9Gd P$_5$O$_{14}$ fluorescence (arbitrary units)
300 deg K, effective slit width = 1.12 A
attenuation factor = 2

Figure 9. Fluorescence spectrum of dysprosium pentaphosphate diluted with gadolinium (300 K).
Figure 10. Fluorescence spectrum of erbium pentaphosphate diluted with ytterbium (77 K).
The density in the final state is

\[ N_f = \frac{N}{Z} \exp \left( -\frac{E_f}{kT} \right) \]

where \( N \) is the density of Nd ions in the crystal, \( Z \) is the partition function, \( z = \sum \exp \left( \frac{E_j}{kT} \right) \). The density of ions in the initial state may be written as

\[ N_i, \text{th} = \frac{P_{th} \tau_f \eta_p}{V \hbar \nu_p} \]

where:
- \( P_{th} \) is defined as the absorbed power at threshold,
- \( \eta_p \) is the quantum efficiency for pumping (\( N_i/\text{No. of pumped ions} \)),
- \( V \) is the pumped volume,
- \( \tau_f \) is the lifetime of the initial level.

Thus, \( N_{i, \text{th}} - N_f = \frac{P_{th} \tau_f \eta_p}{V \hbar \nu_p} - \frac{N}{Z} \exp \left( -\frac{E_f}{kT} \right) \)

the absorbed power at threshold is

\[ P_{th} = \frac{V \hbar \nu_p}{\tau_f \eta_p} \left[ \frac{L_0 + L_T}{2Vl} + \frac{N}{Z} \exp \left( -\frac{E_f}{kT} \right) \right] \]

\[ P_{th} = \frac{V \hbar \nu_p}{\tau_f \eta_p} \frac{1}{2Vl} \left[ L_0 + L_T + L_R \right] = P \left[ L_0 + L_T + L_R \right] = P \left[ L \right] \]

where \( L_R \) is the round trip resonant loss and \( L_R = 2\gamma l N/Z \times \exp(-E_f/kT) \).

If we want to obtain the incident pump intensity in Watts/cm² necessary to achieve threshold, we must introduce the fraction absorbed. For example, for a square cross section rod of diameter \( d \), length \( l \) and absorption coefficient \( \alpha_p \):

\[ I(\text{absorbed}) = I(\text{incident}) - I(\text{transmitted}) \]
for colinear pumping: \[ I_a = I_i (1 - \exp(-\alpha_p l)) \]

for transverse pumping: \[ I_a = I_i (1 - \exp(-\alpha d)) \]

therefore \((I_{th})\) colinear becomes:

\[ \frac{h \nu_p}{\tau_f \hbar_p} \frac{[L]}{2Y(1 - \exp(-\alpha_p l))} \]

and \((I_{th})\) transverse =

\[ \frac{h \nu_p d}{\tau_f \hbar_p} \frac{[L]}{2Y(1 - \exp(-\alpha_p d))} \]

In what follows, we would like to compare the NPP laser material with the more thoroughly developed Nd:YAG materials.

If we calculate the ratio \((I_{th})_{NPP}/(I_{th})_{Nd:YAG}\) by assuming colinear pumping using, for example, a GaAlAs LED with \(l\) optimized to \(\alpha_p^{-1}\) we find that

\[ \frac{(I_{th})_{NPP}}{(I_{th})_{Nd:YAG}} \approx \frac{\tau_{YAG}}{\tau_{NPP}} \frac{Y_{YAG}}{Y_{NPP}} \approx 3 \]

We have used \(\tau_{YAG} = 230\ \mu s\) and \(\tau_{NPP} = 120\ \mu s\) in this calculation.

The absorption lengths are 9 mm for 1.3% Nd:YAG (the highest practical Nd concentration in Nd:YAG), and only 0.3 mm for NPP. For a similar resonator configuration, this results in a larger mode area on the rod face for Nd:YAG. The mode area

\[ \approx \pi \left[ W(\frac{1}{2}) \right]^2 \]

where \(W(\frac{1}{2})\) is the spot size on the rod face. Assuming a typical fundamental mode waist radius \(w_o = 30\ \mu m\) (as for example in a concentric cavity with \(R = 10\ cm\)), we calculate the mode area for Nd:YAG to be approximately 4 x the mode area for NPP. The mode area may be calculated from

\[ \text{mode area} = \pi \left[ W(\frac{1}{2}) \right]^2 = \pi w_o^2 \left[ 1 + \left( \frac{\lambda}{\pi w_o^2} \right)^2 \right] . \]
Thus, the Nd:YAG advantage in lifetime and cross section is offset by the requirement for a larger mode area. The colinear pumping thresholds should be similar with NPP holding an edge considering that L will probably be less for the considerably shorter NPP laser. Further, the Nd:YAG length is fixed at approximately 1 cm, while the NPP length is adjustable depending on Nd concentration. We will see in the following calculations that NPP is clearly a better choice for miniature laser applications as far as threshold and efficiency are concerned.

b. **Colinear Monochromatic Pumping Thresholds**

In the following discussion, the lengths of the laser media are optimized to \( \alpha_p^{-1} \) and \( \eta_p \) is assumed to be \( \approx 1 \). For optical pumping with GaAlAs LED's, \( \alpha_p(810 \text{ nm}) \) \( \text{YAG} = 1.1 \text{ cm}^{-1} \) and \( \alpha_p(799 \text{ nm}) \) \( \text{NPP} = 32.4 \text{ cm}^{-1} \). Using \( P_{\text{th}} = I_{\text{th}} \times (\text{mode area on laser rod face}) \), we can calculate the incident threshold power as a function of nonresonant round trip loss. This is shown in Figure 11. We note that for all levels of reasonable output coupling NPP has a lower threshold and results in a much smaller device.

For colinear GaAlAs injection laser pumping, we find \( \alpha_p(810 \text{ nm}) \) \( \text{YAG} = 3.2 \text{ cm}^{-1} \) and \( \alpha_p(799 \text{ nm}) \) \( \text{NPP} = 135 \text{ cm}^{-1} \). In this case the increased absorption of Nd:YAG, due to the narrow bandwidth of the diode laser pump, results in a shorter Nd:YAG laser. The mode areas of the NPP laser and the Nd:YAG laser are now nearly equal. The Nd:YAG device has a lower threshold for any value of nonresonant loss (see Figure 12). The Nd:YAG laser is of reasonably small size, thus, we believe for this type of pumping Nd:YAG is a better choice.

c. **Transverse Monochromatic Pumping Thresholds**

In these cases we calculated \( I_{\text{th}} \) for each material optimizing \( d = \alpha_p^{-1} \). However, the device size using this optimization does not result in a miniature laser for Nd:YAG (0.9 cm) but does for NPP (0.3 mm). Further, to obtain near equal thresholds for comparison purposes, the gain lengths for Nd:YAG were set equal to 1 cm, and those of NPP were set equal to 1 mm. The results are shown in Figure 13. NPP is clearly a better choice for a low threshold transversely pumped miniature laser device.
Figure 11. Incident threshold power as a function of non-resonant round trip loss for colinearly LED pumped NPP and Nd:YAG mini-lasers.
colinearly laser diode pumped mini-lasers

Figure 12. Incident threshold power as a function of non-resonant round trip loss for colinearly laser diode pumped NPP and Nd:YAG mini-lasers.
Figure 13. Incident threshold intensity as a function of non-resonant round trip loss for transversely pumped NPP and Nd:YAG mini-lasers.
d. Power Output and Optimum Coupling

This section is included mainly to identify the symbols used in this report. The following analysis may be found in many standard textbooks.19,20

In a laser cavity containing \( n_i \) initial state ions having a decay time \( \tau_f \), the total rate of fluorescence power is

\[
p_{fl} = \frac{n_i \hbar \nu_L}{\tau_f}, \quad \frac{n_i}{V} = N_i
\]

the laser output power is then

\[
P_{out} = (n_i - n_{ch}) \frac{\hbar \nu_L}{\tau_f}
\]

since

\[
n_i = \frac{P_p \tau_f \eta_p}{\hbar \nu_p} \quad \text{and} \quad n_{ch} = \frac{V[L]}{2 \gamma L}
\]

then

\[
P_{out} = \left( P_p - P[L] \right) \eta_p \frac{\nu_L}{\nu_p}
\]

since the available laser power is the fraction of output power lost through transmission.

\[
P(\text{avail}) = P_{out} \left[ \frac{L_T}{L} \right] \quad \text{or}
\]

\[
P(\text{avail}) = P_p \left[ \frac{L_T}{L} \right] - P[L_T] \frac{\nu_L}{\nu_p} \eta_p
\]


Setting $\frac{\partial}{\partial L_T} (P(\text{avail})) = 0$, the optimum transmission is found to be

$$[L_T]_{opt} = [L_0 + L_R][\left(\frac{P_p}{P(L_0+L_R)}\right)^{1/2} - 1]$$

The maximum available power with optimized output coupling is then

$$P(\text{max avail}) = \left[\left(\frac{P_p}{\lambda_p}\right)^{1/2} - \left(\frac{P(L_0+L_R)}{\lambda_p}\right)^{1/2}\right] \frac{\lambda_p}{\lambda_L} \eta_p$$

where $P(L_0 + L_R)$ is the threshold power for $L_T = 0$.

For $P_p >> P(L_0 + L_R)$ and $\eta_p = 1$, the maximum efficiency is

$$\frac{P(\text{max avail})}{P_p} \propto \frac{\lambda_p}{\lambda_L}$$

e. CW Laser Considerations for NPP Transversely Pumped by a GaAlAs Diode Array

We begin with a consideration of the geometry of the diode array. Referring to Figure 14(a), the separation between light emitting regions is $d_s$, the light emitting length is $d_L$. The beam divergence perpendicular to the junction plane is $\theta = 27.5^\circ$ (half angle to 50% points) and $\phi = 2.5^\circ$. Typically, $d_L = 1 \text{ mil} = 25 \mu\text{m}$ and $d_s = 9 \text{ mil} = 229 \mu\text{m}$. Each diode illuminates an area on the laser rod of width $d_w = 2h \tan \theta$, where $h$ is the distance of the rod, then the average gain length (at a depth $d/2$) is

$$g_{av} = d_L + 2(h + d/2)\tan \phi$$

The total gain length of the square cross section rod is

$$G_T = D\left[ d_L + 2(h + d/2)\tan \phi \right]$$
Fig. 14(a). GaAlAs diode array spacing $d_s$ and light emitting length $d_l$.

Fig. 14(b). Illumination geometry of one of the diodes in the array (shown above the laser rod). Rod to diode spacing is $h$, $g_1$ is the gain length on the rod face and $g_{av}$ is the gain length at a depth $d/2$, $d$ is the rod length.
where \( D \) = number of diodes in the array. The equation for the power threshold for transverse pumping is

\[
P_{\text{th}} = \frac{\sqrt{h V_{\text{p}} L}}{2 \Phi T E G (1 - \exp(-\alpha_p d))}.
\]

\( V \) is the pumped volume, which is the sum of the volumes of the pyramidal pumped sections. Each pumped section is the frustrum of a pyramid of volume

\[
v = \frac{1}{3} (A_1 + A_2 + (A_1 A_2)^{1/2})
\]

where \( A_1 \) = area of the top and \( A_2 \) = area of the bottom.

\[
A_1 = d_w (d_0 + 2h \tan \theta),
\]

\[
A_2 = (2(d + h) \tan \theta)(d_0 + 2(d_w + h) \tan \theta).
\]

the thickness \( d \) should be fabricated to be \([d_p (799 \mu m)]_{NPP} \approx 80 \mu m\).

We arbitrarily choose \( h \) to be 25 \( \mu m \). Then

\[
d_w = 26 \ \mu m,
\]

\[
A_1 = 7 \times 10^{-6} \text{ cm}^2
\]

\[
A_2 = 3.2 \times 10^{-5} \text{ cm}^2
\]

\[
v = 1.44 \times 10^{-7} \text{ cm}^3 = V/D
\]

\[
G = 2.8 \times 10^{-3} \text{ D cm}
\]

Using these values we can calculate the incident power required to reach threshold.

\[
P_{\text{th}} = (0.7 (L_0 + L_T) + (5.6 \times 10^{-5}) D + 5.13 \times 10^{-4} (D-1)) \text{ W}.
\]
If we arbitrarily choose a laser rod length = 1 mm, the number of diodes in the array should be equal to 5. Then

\[ P_{TH} = (0.7 \ (L_0 + L_T) + 2.3 \times 10^{-3}) \text{ watts}. \]

\[ L_0 \text{ is estimated to be } 0.002 \text{ and } L_R \text{ is calculated to be } 0.0032. \]

Thus, \[ P(L_0 + L_R) = 2.3 \text{ mW} \]

and \[ P(\text{max avail}) = 0.76 \ ((P_p)^{1/2} - (2.3 \text{ mW})^{1/2}). \] If we use CW GaAlAs laser diodes which produce approximately 10 mW each, we have approximately 50 mW of incident power available for pumping. Applying a high reflectance coating to the opposite side of the laser rod would increase the absorption from 63% to approximately 86%. Then, the absorbed power

\[ P_p = \left(1 - \exp\left(-\frac{\alpha_p}{d}\right)\right) P_{inc}, \]

where \[ \alpha_p = 2/d. \] The absorbed power would then be 43 mW and the maximum available power would be 19.3 mW. The efficiency \( P(\text{max avail})/P_{inc} \times 100 = 39\%. \)

Assuming a 5% diode efficiency and a 100% optical transfer efficiency, an overall efficiency of approximately 2% results.

\[
(L_T)_{opt} = (L_0 + L_R)((P_p/P(L_0 + L_R))^{1/2} - 1) = 0.017
\]

and \( R_1 R_2 = \exp(-0.017) = 0.983. \) These results are plotted in Figure 15.

f. Broadband Pumping

We cannot easily calculate performance factors to obtain an indication of the response of NPP under flashlamp pumping. These calculations have been attempted in the past and recently NPP was compared to Nd:YAG. \(^{21}\) NPP turns out to be an overwhelming favorite. To obtain an idea of the efficiency under flashlamp pumping, we can make the following assumptions:

\[ \eta_c = \text{conversion efficiency of electrical power to light output in the Nd pump bands = 10\%.} \]

\[ \eta_T = \text{transfer efficiency lamp to laser rod = 80\%.} \]

\[ \eta_Q = \text{quantum efficiency (average) of absorbed light to laser light = 60\%.} \]

\[ \eta_A = \text{absorbed fraction of incident pump light.} \]

\(^{21}\) S. Chinn, M. I. T. Lincoln Lab., PO Box 73, Lexington, Mass., 02173, Private Communication.
cw NPP mini-laser transversely pumped with a 5 diode laser array at 798.8 nm

Figure 15. Optimum output coupling and available power as a function of absorbed power for a CW NPP mini-laser transversely pumped with a 5 diode array at 798.8 nm.
The efficiencies $\eta_c, \eta_T$ and $\eta_Q$ are roughly equal for Nd laser materials. However, $\eta_A$ is subject to wide variation depending on absorption coefficient and absorption length. For example, for applications requiring 3 mm diameter lasers $\eta_A = 28\%$ for Nd:YAG. This single pass value is found by using the effective pump absorption coefficient $\alpha_p$ for pump radiation having a full-width at half-maximum of 30 nm in the strongest pump band at 810 nm.\textsuperscript{22} $\alpha_p$ must be averaged over all the effective pump bands at Nd. For 1 mm diameter Nd:YAG lasers, the strongest pump band has an $\eta_A = 10.4\%$. NPP lasers of either 1 or 3 mm diameter have $\eta_A > 96\%$ in the strongest pump band at 799 nm. The point here is that even though radiation in the 30 nm band centered at 799 nm is almost completely absorbed in a single pass in NPP, radiation in the wings of this pump band and in other weaker bands penetrates deeper into the material. The result is that NPP is much more efficiently pumped than Nd doped lasers. Thus, from the laser thresholds predicted under monochromatic pumping and the increased overall efficiency, we reasoned that NPP should be developed as a flashlamp pumped miniature laser for low energy applications.

DEVICE CONSIDERATIONS

a. Potential of NPP for Use as a Fiber Optics Source for Single Mode High Data Rate Transmission

The NPP laser offers several advantages over both LED and Injection Laser sources in long distance transmission systems:

(1) Its emission wavelengths at 1.05 and 1.32 $\mu$m coincide with two of the low-loss and low-dispersion regions of silica fibers. Ultra low-loss fibers exhibiting 0.5 dB/km loss have potential for repeater spacings exceeding 30 km. Thus, benefits with respect to system economy, repeater reliability, and maintenance are expected.

(2) Its emission spectral width is narrower than injection lasers -- meaning less material dispersion. Its output is easily made single mode, single frequency making it attractive for single mode fiber applications.

Its LED pumping source has an extremely long life. The overall life expectancy of the unit is on the order of $10^4$ years.

With transverse pumping, it is relatively simple to increase source brightness.

The expected performance of an NPP laser (transversely pumped is):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wavelength</th>
<th>1.05 µm</th>
<th>1.32 µm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Output power (mW)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rod length (mm)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incident Pump Intensity (W/cm$^2$)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LED Pump Power (mW)</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

High power GaAlAs LED’s are now available in the 50-60 mW range. These can be compositionally tuned to emit at 800 nm for optimum pumping of NPP lasers. The spectral width of the LED’s closely match that of the NPP laser. Each LED occupies about 1 mm of rod length. Pumping efficiencies are expected to be about 14%.

T. Kimura, et al\textsuperscript{23} have experimented with guided wave electro-optic modulators having a bandwidth of 800 MHz and a half-wave voltage of 4V at 1.05 µm wavelength. They used a Ti diffused three-dimensional waveguide structure using external intensity modulation. The device had an extinction ratio of 13 dB and a 7.7 dB insertion loss.

b. Rangefinder Application

The latest results of bench testing flashlamp pumped NPP, using a dye solution Q-switch, external (large) mirrors and a 10 cm confocal laser cavity\textsuperscript{24} are: For a 1 Joule input to a linear xenon filled flashlamp (1 mm bore and 10 mm discharge length), a 2 mJ output was obtained in a 7 ns pulse. A 2J lamp input resulted in a 4 mJ output in 7 ns.


With these encouraging results, we designed a miniature NPP laser cavity which could be incorporated into an experimental mini-rangefinder housing. The cavity is shown in Figure 16. An INVAR steel case holds a removable pump cavity, Q-switch and adjustable output mirror. The pump cavity is HP boron nitride, selected for its high thermal conductivity, low thermal expansion and relatively high reflectivity.* The boron nitride pump cavity holds the flashlamp and laser rod in a close coupled diffuse reflectance cylindrical space. The NPP laser rod has a rectangular parallelepiped shape of dimensions 2 x 2 x 10 mm. The long dimension is coincident with the c-axis of the crystal. The rod has 2 x 2 mm flat end faces polished to \( \lambda/10 \) at 587.6 nm. The faces are parallel to within 20 seconds of arc. A high reflectance coating on one face serves as the rear mirror. The other face is anti-reflection coated. The 2 x 10 mm (100) pump faces are rough ground and the other (010) faces are cleaved. The (100) face is cemented† to the BN for maximum heat removal since the (100) direction has the highest thermal conductivity and the (010) cleavage plane is also perpendicular to the cemented interface to insure maximum resistance to cleavage. The Q-switch is a saturable absorbing dye film‡ mounted in an INVAR holder which is removable. The output mirror is HR coated for 97.5% or alternatively 82% reflectivity at 1052 nm. These mirrors are 3.75 mm in diameter, 3 mm thick and have a radius of curvature of 2 m.§ The mirror is held in a screw adjustable INVAR mirror mount. The flashlamp is a miniature "L" shaped design (to shorten the laser cavity), xenon filled, discharge length 10 mm and bore diameter 1.2 mm.$ The flashlamp is triggered externally. The calculated spot sizes are 274 \( \mu \)m at the curved mirror and 273 \( \mu \)m at the flat mirror. The calculated beam divergence is 1.2 mrad, and the measured beam divergence was 1.6 mrad. Output energy


* Carborundum Company, Refractories & Electronics Division, Technical Ceramics Plant, PO Box 311, Latrobe, PA 15650.

† The (100) direction of NPP has a thermal conductivity of 0.021 W/cm\(^\circ\)K, HP boron nitride is 0.61 W/cm\(^\circ\)K. Aremco Products, PO Box 429, Ossining, NY 10562 manufactures high thermal conductivity adhesives. For example, ceramabond 503 (0.048 W/cm\(^\circ\)K) and Aremco Coat 543 (1.43 W/cm\(^\circ\)K) both are permanent adhesives. Aremco also supplies crystalbond 509 which is acetone soluble and crystal bond 555 which is water soluble.

‡ Manufactured by Eastman Kodak Co., Eastman Organic Chemicals, Rochester, NY 14650, Standard No. 15064 Optical Density at 1060 nm is 0.36 ± 0.02.

$ Supplied by Laser Optics Inc., PO Box 127, Danbury, CO 06810.

§ Supplied by Laser Optics Inc., PO Box 127, Danbury, CO 06810.

$ Manufactured by ILC Technology, Sunnyvale, CA 94086.
Fig. 16. Miniature NPP laser cavity showing INVAR steel case with adjustable output mirror mount, BN pump cavity and L-shaped xenon flashlamp.
using a 97.5% reflectivity output mirror was 1 MJ in 60 μs. Input to the flashlamp was 400 V at 17.78 μF and 45 μH. A single-mesh discharge circuit was used and the lamp pulse duration was approximately 100 μs. Under the same conditions an 82.5% output mirror gave an energy output of 2 mJ. It, therefore, is clearly established that the pentaphosphate material is competitive material for future rangefinder developments.

SUMMARY OF ERADCOM AND ARMY/ERADCOM SPONSORED Nd₅PO₁₄ ACHIEVEMENTS

a. Growth of large, perfect laser crystals (4.5 x 3 x 2.2 mm).

b. Laser output at 1.05 μm; 240 mW pulsed using an Argon laser pump (optical conversion efficiency 24%).

c. Study of the effects of crystal twinning on laser performance.

d. Unique modifications of conventional solution growth techniques yielding laser quality crystals up to 1 cm in size (patent granted).

e. Gadolinium and cerium diluted material shown to have 20% longer lifetime.

f. Calculations to show the impact of Nd₅PO₁₄ on future rangefinder and fiber-optic systems.

g. Technology developed for the growth of crystals up to 12 x 25 x 25 mm in size.

h. Process developed to fabricate laser rods 1 x 1 x 10 mm to 4 x 4 x 20 mm.

i. Thermal conductivity and specific heat of NPP measured and the thermally limited repetition rate estimated.

j. Operation of a miniature flashlamp pumped laser at 1.05 μm established with the following parameters: Input 1 J, Output 11 mJ in 60 μs, and 2 mJ in 7 μs.

k. New quenching model suggested based on spatial energy migration to surface quenching sites.

l. Miniaturization of NPP laser cavity, all components individually removable for easy replacement, overall size 1.5 x 1.5 x 4.4 cm.

FORECAST

To assist future decisions on the implementation of NPP lasers for rangefinder applications, additional work is required
to increase the energy output of the miniaturized cavity. New resonator configurations will have to be designed to be accommodated in a small package. Guidelines for this effort will no doubt come from the conclusions of the Lincoln Laboratories final report. In the future, should a decision be made to cement the laser rod, dye-film Q-switch and external mirror to a common base, the overall size of the unit could be as small as 1 x 1 x 2 cm and weigh only 5 grams.

An NPP laser development program to extend the mode of operation and widen the range of applications has been suggested. Specifically, a mode locked laser system would find applications in high-data-rate information transmission and in signal processing.

Future materials' development should include research to find an Nd compound laser material less susceptible to structural effects which limit the use of certain crystal directions as the laser axis.