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ADVANCED LASER SEMI-CONDUCTOR
AIR TO AIR TRAINING DEVICE CONCEPT

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ALBERT H. MARSHALL
RONALD W. WOLFF

NAVAL TRAINING SYSTEMS CENTER
ADVANCED SIMULATION CONCEPTS DIVISION
ORLANDO, FL 32826-3224

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PAUL LITTLE, Head
Advanced Simulation Concepts Division

HM BISHOP, Director
Research and Engineering Department
Statement A per telecom
Frank O'Harek
NAVTRASYSCEN/Code 253
Orlando, FL 32826-3224  NW 3/6/92
PREFACE

THE ADVANCED LASER SEMICONDUCTOR AIR TO AIR TRAINING DEVICE RESEARCH WORK WAS PERFORMED BY NTSC UNDER THE IED PROGRAM SPONSORED BY ONT.
The LATAGS system will allow aerial gunnery training over inhabited areas with no live ammunition. The proposed LATAGS system will also allow free play of the aircraft and calculate the bullet hit and miss distances from a towed aerial banner. In the old system the laser is pointed to a point in space for the lead expected in a typical gunnery run. The old system does not compensate for variations in g's, range, angular rates or attitude of the aircraft. The new system measures the ranges, angular rates, piper location and calculates the actual lead required for a hit. An expert system will play back the flight picture and show where each round impacted (hit or missed) in the plane of the towed banner. The data, stored on a removable RAM card, will be transported to the ready room where it will be analyzed by an expert system software program in a PC.
INTRODUCTION

In 1975, NTSC developed an Laser Air-To-Air Gunnery Simulator (LATAGS). The LATAGS system was designed to simulate machine gun fire for either air-to-air or air-to-ground gunnery training in the T-2 aircraft against a cooperative (optically retroreflective) towed banner target. In the training mode of operation, a laser pulse is fired for each gun round. If the laser pulse hits the retroreflective target, the pulse is returned to the LATAGS receiver and counted as a hit. The LATAGS system consisted of two major subassemblies, a hit indicator assembly and a transmitter/receiver module. The LATAGS system counts and displays rounds fired and hits scored cumulatively and flashes a hit indicator lamp mounted on the gunsight to indicate hits while the pilot is firing the system. This indicator provides instantaneous hit feedback information within the pilot's peripheral field-of-view. The LATAGS equipment is shown in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1. LATAGS EQUIPMENT

The current "squirrel-cage" gunnery pattern is similar to a circle. Four firing aircraft move around the periphery of this circle, equally separated, 90 degrees apart. The two aircraft and banner constitute a small chord at one side of the circle, with the starting or perch position on the opposite side. The plane of the circle is inclined to the horizon by the amount of altitude advantage of the perch position above the two aircraft and banner. This circle moves along relative to the speed and direction of the two aircraft.
The aerial gunnery pattern viewed from above is shown in Figure 2.

The LATAGS is boresighted at a fixed elevation angle and azimuth angle and is aligned with the fixed sight reticle of the gun sight prior to the training flight. This is commonly known as a fixed pipper.

Effective range of the LATAGS system is up to 5,000 feet utilizing retroreflective banner targets and up to 12,000 feet in the air to ground mode utilizing glass corner cube retroreflectors.

An adjustable range gate is used in the LATAGS system to only permit hits within the effective maximum range of the weapon. A boresight alignment kit is provided, which allows one-man alignment of the LATAGS to the gun sight pipper.
The LATAGS system is comprised of two major modules, the Transmitter/Receiver Module and the Electronics Module. The Transmitter/Receiver Module is mounted on the glare shield of the aircraft's instrument panel forward of the gunsight. A common mounting plate is utilized to provide a stable alignment of the laser and the gun sight. The Electronics Module is mounted in the forward pilot's map case location. The Electronic Module contains displays that show the cumulative rounds fired and the number of hits. The Hit Indicator is a small assembly that flashes when hits are being scored.

The transmitted beam has an angular width of 2.5 mradians at the 3 db points. The laser beam width closely approximates the dispersion of the weapons round.

The aircraft installation is shown in Figure 3.

![Diagram of LATAGS Aircraft Installation](attachment:image.png)

FIGURE 3. LATAGS AIRCRAFT INSTALLATION

LATAGS allows gunnery to be accomplished over inhabited land areas. Elimination of the aircraft's gun pods increases the fuel economy of the aircraft. Less ordnance personnel are required because the LATAGS uses no ammunition or guns. The cost of maintaining the LATAGS is also less than maintaining the operational weapon for training.
The Nominal T-2 attack parameters are shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FIRING RANGE</td>
<td>600 TO 1,200 FEET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OFFSET ANGLE</td>
<td>27 DEGREES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALTITUDE</td>
<td>11,000 FEET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATTACK SPEED</td>
<td>300 KT TRUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TARGET SPEED</td>
<td>200 KT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G LOAD</td>
<td>3.8 G</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PROBLEM

A laser beam has a perfectly straight trajectory and travels at one foot per nanosecond or, has essentially zero time of flight from the laser transmitter to the banner and return. In the current LATAGS the laser beam is offset from the gun line by an amount equal in magnitude to the required lead angle and opposite in sign. Target hits are only indicated if the laser beam offset is suitably compensated by the attacking pilot by introducing the correct lead angle into the aircraft attitude. The required lead angle is not constant over the entire range of possible attacks, thus, the laser beam offset from the gun line should ideally be adjusted for each attack by an automatic control or equivalent. When the laser beam does not strike the target the system registers a miss. If the student only has misses there are no means of analyzing his tracking errors.

The target geometry for a fixed gun vs. a moving target is shown in Figure 4. The basic fire control problem is the correct aiming of fixed forward-firing guns. Lead allowance is necessary for the target's motion during the projectile's finite time of flight and is called kinematic lead. The basic gunnery parameters are listed in the table below.

FIRE CONTROL PARAMETERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FIRING RANGE</td>
<td>600 TO 1,200 FEET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BORESIGHT RANGE</td>
<td>1,000 FEET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OFFSET ANGLE</td>
<td>23-30 DEGREES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GUNNERY ALTITUDE</td>
<td>7,000 TO 15,000 FEET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TARGET SPEED</td>
<td>300 KIAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUZZLE VELOCITY</td>
<td>2,935 FEET PER SEC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRAavity DROP</td>
<td>18 INCHES AT 1,000 FEET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIVE ANGLE</td>
<td>10 TO 20 DEGREES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;G&quot; LOAD DURING GUNFIRE</td>
<td>3.6 TO 3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GUN DISPERSION</td>
<td>3 MILS AT 1,000 FEET</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Magnitude of the lead can be obtained by reference to the vector diagram shown in Figure 4.

**KINEMATIC LEAD IS THE LEAD NECESSARY FOR THE TARGET'S MOTION DURING PROJECTILE TIME OF FLIGHT**

![Vector Diagram]

**LEAD = [TIME OF FLIGHT] X [ANGULAR RATE] [OF PROJECTILE] [OF GT]**

**GRAVITY DROP = 1.5 FT**

**FIGURE 4. TARGET GEOMETRY FOR A FIXED GUN VS. A MOVING TARGET**

The reference line in Figure 4, from which the angles are measured, points in a fixed direction in space. The origin about which the angles are measured is the pivot point of the gun platform, i.e., the center of gravity of the aircraft. Velocities shown in Figure 4 are considered as being measured relative to inertial axes fixed in space. Suppose that the target banner, T, traverses the line T\(T_f\) with a constant speed \(V_T\). The point \(T_f\) represents the banner position at the time of bullet impact. \(V_f\) is the average bullet velocity over the firing range. Using the triangle \(GTT_f\), and the Law of Sines

\[
\frac{\sin \Lambda}{\sin \alpha} = \frac{V_{Tf}}{V_f} = \frac{V_T}{V_f} \quad (1)
\]

or

\[
\sin \Lambda = \frac{V_T \sin \alpha}{V_f} \quad (2)
\]

Since \(\alpha\) is not available as an input to the fire control system it is convenient to resolve \(V_T\) into components along and perpendicular to \(GT\). The perpendicular components is given by,
\[ V_f \sin \alpha = r \omega = r \frac{d\theta}{dt} \quad (3) \]

Where \( \omega \) is the angular rate of the line GT given in rad/sec, and is its angular coordinate referred to a fixed reference line through \( G \).

Combining equations (2) and (3)

\[ \sin \Lambda = \frac{r \omega}{V_f} \quad (4) \]

\[ \sin \Lambda = \frac{V_r}{V_f} \frac{r \omega}{V_r} = \frac{V_r}{V_f} t \omega \quad (5) \]

\[ \frac{V_r}{V_f} \equiv 1 \]

\[ \sin \Lambda = t \omega \]

Equation (5) essentially says the kinematic lead, \( \Lambda \) is approximately the time of flight multiplied by the angular rate \( \omega \) of the sightline GT. To determine the time of flight, \( t \), the range to the target is required. The bullet path is an extension of the instantaneous gun axis at firing if cross wind deflections and gravity drop are neglected. Cross wind deflections while important in some cases are considered negligible in forward firing guns. Gravity drop is about 1.5 feet at the maximum range. Gravity drop is a function of range and can be accounted for if the range is known. Range can be determined by measuring the time for a laser pulse to be reflected and returned to a receiver in the attacking aircraft.

The angular rate of the gun line can be measured with a gyro.

Air resistance to the bullet is accounted for by using an average velocity, \( V_f \), over the bullet path. This velocity is equal to the aircraft forward speed plus the bullet muzzle velocity minus an average slow down. The M2 muzzle velocity is 2,935 feet per second and at 300 knots true air speed, the gun is moving at slightly more than 505 feet per second relative to inertial coordinates. The initial velocity of the bullet is 3,400 feet per second. The previous figure of 1.5 foot gravity drop in 1,000 feet corresponds to an average bullet velocity of 3,270 feet per second which indicates an average slow down of 170 feet per second or five percent. Slow down is approximately proportional to range assuming a constant air drag force. Thus, a variation of between three percent
and six percent in average bullet velocity is predicted for target ranges of from 600 to 1,200 feet.

For the firing parameters of

\[ V_f = 3,500 \text{ feet} \]
\[ V_T = 150 \text{ knots (true)} \]
Offset = 25 degrees
Lead = 31 mils

The current LATAGS system has the following characteristics:

- HIT OR MISS SCORING ONLY
- NO BALLISTIC COMPENSATION
- NO AIRCRAFT MANEUVER COMPENSATION
- FREE PLAY NOT POSSIBLE
- DURING AIR TO GROUND STRAFING LATAGS DOES NOT SCORE MISSES

**OBJECTIVE**

The objective of this research program is to research the development of an advanced LATAGS system that can compensate for variations of the flight path and also score the rounds location, in the plane of the target, if the student trainee misses or fires when the pipper is not on the target.

The system will also be capable of recording the pipper location during the tracking run.

The new system will also be capable of analyzing the students tracking efficacy using an expert system. Advantages of a new LATAGS system is shown in the table below.

**ADVANTAGES AND NEW FEATURES OF NEW VS OLD LATAGS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OLD LATAGS</th>
<th>NEW LATAGS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NO FREE PLAY MANEUVER SCORING</td>
<td>FREE PLAY SCORING'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO PLAY BACK</td>
<td>PLAYBACK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO MISS DISTANCE DETERMINATION</td>
<td>MISS DISTANCE DETERMINATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO EXPERT SYSTEM ANALYSIS</td>
<td>EXPERT SYSTEM ANALYSIS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPRAOH

The OLD LATAGS has a 2.5 mradian beam at the 3 db points. At a range of 1,500 feet the beam diameter is 3.75 feet. In the new approach, the transmitted beam will be approximately 20.0 mradian at the 3 db points. At a range of 1,500 feet the beam will have a 30 foot diameter. See Figure 5. This beam diameter will allow the system to determine the pipper location within plus or minus 25 feet from the center of the towed target. The return from towed retroreflective banner is be focused on a vertical and horizontal detector array in the tracker assembly. See inset in Figure 5.

FIGURE 5. LASER BEAM GEOMETRY

Cylindrical optics are used to focus the retroreflected laser beam on a 25 element avalanche photo-diode, APD, array. The lens layout is shown in Figure 6.

The detector is a 25-Element Silicon Avalanche Photodiode Linear array. The detector used is an RCA C30985E array. The detector is made using a double-diffused "reach through" structure. This structure provides high responsivity at 904 nm as well as fast rise and fall time characteristics.

The responsivity of the C30985E is independent of modulation frequency up to about 200 MHz. Using this 25 element array we can resolve the pipper location within 2 feet. This is well within the CEP of the weapon.
Key APD characteristics are shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rise and Fall Time</td>
<td>2 nsec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsivity</td>
<td>31 amps / watt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantum Efficiency</td>
<td>85% at 904 nm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A pulsed Ga-As laser is used to determine both the range to the target, and the pipper location or aircraft orientation with respect to the towed banner target.

Cylindrical optics are used to focus the retroreflected laser beam into a line on the 25 element APD array. Cylindrical lenses condense the received light in one axis to form a line. Notice the two optical channels are orthogonal to each other. The focused returned laser line will move up and down the array as the pipper location changes. One set of cylindrical optics are used to determine the vertical position of the banner and the other set of cylindrical optics is used to determine the horizontal position of the pipper. An aircraft attitude sensor determines the roll axis. Using this system no moving mechanical parts are necessary for the scanner, which is used to determine the banners coordinates. This system can replace a rotating mirror laser scanner which would be both expensive and difficult to implement in an aircraft environment.

Figure 6 shows the equipment located in the training aircraft.
Equipment in the aircraft consists of two optical systems: vertical and horizontal systems. The array amplifier consists of a transimpedance amplifier for each detector and a voltage comparator and latch for each channel. The output is digital and represents the location of the banner. The outputs from the latches are read by an Intel 80960 Microcontroller.

Range to the target is determined by measuring the round trip time for the pulse to transit from the aircraft to the target and back. The aircraft has a display for the rounds fired and the number of hits.

The movement data for the pipper is stored on a removeable ram card.

Figure 8 shows the microcomputer.
Figure 9 illustrates the playback system located in the ready room. A PC in the ready room would be used to play back the pipper location and run an Expert System to coach the pilot.

![Diagram of playback system]

**FIGURE 9. PLAYBACK SYSTEM**

**BENEFITS**

The following benefits would be accrued by using this improved LATAGS system:

FREE PLAY RATHER THAN FIXED PIPPER GUNNERY

BETTER STUDENT DIAGNOSTICS USING AN EXPERT SYSTEM
RESULTS

This system will allow aerial gunnery training over inhabited areas with no live ammunition. The system will also allow free play of the aircraft and calculate the bullets hit and miss distances from a towed aerial banner. In the old system the laser is pointed to a point in space for the lead expected in a typical gunnery run. The old system does not compensate for variations in g's, range, angular rates or attitude of the aircraft. The new system measures the ranges, angular rates, pipper location and calculates the actual lead required for a hit. An expert system will play back the sight picture and show where each round impacted (hit or missed) in the plane of the towed banner. The data, stored on a removeable RAM card, will be transported to the ready room where it will be analyzed by an expert system software program in a PC.

The old LATAGS system only scored hits and misses and did not score where the round impacted if a miss occurred.

A tracker has been invented that has no moving parts. This allows better miniaturization and lower cost.

A single channel of the tracker system was successfully breadboarded.

A system patent was submitted.

Remaining problems are: breadboard the entire system, aircraft interface and further minimization of the equipment size.
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FDAC
ATTN: J. E. Cundiff
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Code 2
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