DEVELOPMENT OF A SUB-MINIATURE RUBIDIUM OSCILLATOR<br>FOR SEEKTALK APPLICATION<br>H. Fruehauf, W. Weidemann, E. Jechart Efratom Irvine, California

## ABSTRACT

For some time now the Efratom 4-inch cubed Rubidium Oscillator has been used in numerous navigation and secure communication systems. The SEEKTALK program, however, and other programs of similar nature, present new challenges to oscillator makers in terms of warm-up time, size, power, operating environment, and unit cost in large quantities.

This paper will present our approach to these new warm-up and size challenges as well as the problems involved in these tasks. In order to define the improvements needed, a comparison will be made between the performance of the present off-theshelf M-100 Military Rubidium Oscillator and that expected for the Sub-Miniature Rubidium Oscillator that is currently in development (called M-1000). Methods of achieving 1.5 minute warm-up will be discussed as well as improvements in performance under adverse environmental conditions, including temperature, vibration, and magnetics. Expected performance curves of the new oscillator as well as our microelectronics approach will be presented.

An attempt will be made to construct an oscillator error budget under a set of arbitrary mission conditions.

GEiNERAL
In order to clearly indicate the improvements that will be realized for this new. M-1000 Oscillator development, Table 1 is provided to compare the off-the-shelf M-100 Oscillator with the M-1000. The SEEKTALK program spec requirements are shown as tentative design goals, pending a final Air Force spec release in early 1981. The most challenging performance requirements are (a) ultra fast warm-up, (b) MIL-E-5400 Class II temperature environment, (c) operation in a severe vibration environment and (d) our attempt to make the $\mathrm{M}-1000$ less than one half the volume of
the present M-100 Oscillator. Figure 1 depicts the subject oscillators. The M-100 measures approximately $4^{\prime \prime} \times 4^{\prime \prime} \times 4.8^{\prime \prime}$ (or $\sim 77 \mathrm{in}^{3}$ ) and the M-1000 approximately $2.3^{\prime \prime} \times 3.5^{\prime \prime} \times 4^{\prime \prime}$ (or $\sim 33 \mathrm{in}^{3}$ ) with future goals toward further reduction in size.

Figure 2 is a functional block diagram of the present off-the-shelf M-100 oscillator. The highly stable output of the M-100 is obtained from a 10 MHz voltage-controlled crystal oscillator (VCXO), whose frequency is locked to an atomic frequency reference. The atomic reference is provided by the $6.834 . . \mathrm{GHz}$ ground-state hyperfine transition of ${ }^{87} \mathrm{Rb}$. The VCXO is locked to the rubidium resonant frequency fRb , at approximately 6.8 GHz , in the following manner: A microwave signal, having a frequency in the vicinity of $\mathrm{f}_{\mathrm{Rb}}$, is synthesized from the 10 MHz VCXO output. This microwave signal is used to excite rubidium atoms that are contained within a microwave cavity. The frequency synthesis scheme is designed so that the VCXO frequency is exactly 10 MHz when the microwave frequency is exactly equal to ${ }^{\mathrm{Rb}}$. The frequency of the signal applied to the microwave cavity can be maintained equal to $\mathrm{f}_{\mathrm{Rb}}$ by generating an error signal when the microwave frequency differs from $\mathrm{f}_{\mathrm{Rb}}$ and using this error signal to servo the VCXO via its control voltage.

| TABLE -1- SPEC COMPARISON (Sheet 1 of 7) 11-4-80 |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| DESCRIPTION | $\begin{aligned} & \text { ANTICIPATED } \\ & \text { SEEK TALK } \\ & \text { SPEC } \\ & \hline \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & \text { OFF-THE-SHELF } \\ & \text { M-100 OSC. } \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & \text { IN DEVELOPMENT } \\ & \text { M-1000 OSC. } \end{aligned}$ | REMARKS |
| Output | 10 MHz sine wave <br> 0.5 Vrms $\pm 10 \%$ <br> 50 Ohms $\pm 10 \%$ | 10 MHz sine wave <br> $0.5 \mathrm{Vrms}+30,-10 \%$ <br> 50 Ohms $\pm 10 \%$ | Same as M-100 |  |
| Input Power | $<13 \mathrm{~W}$ © $25^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ (Amb) 22-32 VDC <br> (28 VDC Nom) | $\begin{aligned} & 17 \mathrm{~W} \circ 25^{\circ} \mathrm{C} \\ & 22.5-32 \mathrm{VDC} \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & \text { Same as SEEK } \\ & \text { TALK } \end{aligned}$ |  |
|  |  | Separate Heater power available. | Separate heater power available |  |
| Transient Protection | $\begin{aligned} & \text { MIL-STD-704 } \\ & \text { Category A } \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & \text { MIL-STO-704 } \\ & \text { Category C } \end{aligned}$ | Same as $14-100$ (Working on a compromise 204A Spec) | 704C Should be adequate for program. <br> Pushing AF Spec change from $A$ to $C$. |
| Harm-up Characteristics | $\begin{aligned} & \leq 1.5 \text { minutes to } \\ & \text { reach } 5 \times 10^{-10} \text { a } \\ & 25^{\circ} \mathrm{C} \text { (Amb); } \\ & <4 \text { min. from } \\ & -55^{\circ} \mathrm{C} \text { (Amb). } \end{aligned}$ | < 10 minutes to reach $2 \times 10^{-10}$ @ $25^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ (Amb.) <br> < 25 minutes from <br> $-55^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ (Amb.) | $\begin{aligned} & \text { Same as SEEK } \\ & \text { TALK } \end{aligned}$ |  |
| Warm-up Power | Power available not specified with engines running. | 4 min. option, <br> ~ 100 watts. | < 100 watts; <br> ~ 80 W typical for less than 1 minute. | * Max peak current at 32 VDC <6A |



| TABLE -1- SPEC COMPARISON (Sheet 3 of 7) 11-4-80 |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| DESCRIPTION | ANTICIPATED SEEK TALK SPEC | $\begin{aligned} & \text { OFF-THE - SHELF } \\ & \text { M-100 OSC. } \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & \text { IN DEVELOPMENT } \\ & \text { M-1000 OSC. } \end{aligned}$ | REMARKS |
| Voltage Variation | Not specified. | $\begin{aligned} & <1 \times 10^{-11} \text { for } \\ & \pm 10 \% \text { input } \\ & \text { vol tage change. } \end{aligned}$ | - Same as M-100 |  |
| Magnetic Field | Meets spec under $1 \times 10^{-11} /$ Gauss | $\begin{aligned} & <8 \times 10^{-11} / \text { gauss } \\ & \text { (worst case } \\ & \text { orientation) } \end{aligned}$ | < $1 \times 10^{-11} /$ Gauss | Note: 1 Gauss $=79.59 \mathrm{AM}^{-1}$ |
| Signal to Noise ${ }^{\prime}$ (SSB LHz BW) | $\begin{array}{llllll} > & 120 \mathrm{~dB} & 100 \mathrm{~Hz} \\ > & 130 \mathrm{~dB} & \mathrm{KHZ} \end{array}$ | $\begin{array}{llllll} > & 120 & \mathrm{~dB} & 100 \mathrm{~Hz} \\ > & 135 \mathrm{~dB} & \mathrm{C} & \mathrm{KHZ} \end{array}$ | Same as M-100 |  |
| Harmonic / Non Harmonic | 30 dB down <br> 80 dB down | Same | Same |  |
| Sinusoidal Vibration (operational) | $<1 \times 10^{-10}$ $5-14 \mathrm{~Hz}-0.10^{\prime \prime} \mathrm{D} . \mathrm{A}$. $15-23 \mathrm{~Hz}- \pm 1 \mathrm{pk}$ $24-52 \mathrm{~Hz}-0.036^{\prime \prime} \mathrm{D} . \mathrm{A}$. $54-500 \mathrm{~Hz}- \pm 5 \mathrm{gk}$ | Tested to ~1g $20-500 \mathrm{~Hz}$; parts in $10^{9}$ at narrow critical freq. | Goal is to improve M-100 performance significantly | More testing needed to evaluate performance |


| TABLE -1- SPEC COMPARISON (Sheet 4 of 7) 11-4-80 |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| DESCRIPTION | ANTICIPATED SEEK TALK SPEC | $\begin{aligned} & \text { OFF-THE-SHELF } \\ & \text { M-100 OSC. } \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & \text { IN DEVELOPMENT } \\ & \text { M-1000 OSC. } \end{aligned}$ | REMARKS |
| Random Vibration (operational) | $\left\{\begin{array}{c} <1 \times 10^{-10} \\ 15-50 \mathrm{~Hz}-0.02 \mathrm{~g}^{2} / \mathrm{Hz} \\ 51-300 \mathrm{~Hz}-+4 \mathrm{~dB} / \mathrm{oct} . \\ 301-1 \mathrm{KHz}-0.1 \mathrm{~g}^{2} / \mathrm{Hz} \\ 1001-2 \mathrm{KHz}-6 \mathrm{~dB} / \mathrm{oct} . \end{array}\right.$ | Tested to $.02 \mathrm{~g} 2 / \mathrm{Hz}$ $20-50 \mathrm{~Hz}$ falling to $.001 \mathrm{~g}^{2} / \mathrm{Hz}$ at 500 Hz parts in 10 for an Allen Vari- ance of $\tau=1 \mathrm{sec}$. | Goal is to improve M-100 performance sign. | More testing needed to evaluate performance (major design problem) |
| Acoustical <br> Noise | $\begin{aligned} & <1 \times 10^{-10} \\ & \text { MIL-STD-810 } \end{aligned}$ <br> Method 515.2 <br> Procedure I <br> Category A | TBD - Not tested | TBD |  |
| Storage Temp. (non-operational) | $\begin{aligned} & -62^{\circ} \mathrm{C} \text { to }+80 \mathrm{C} \\ & \text { Prefer Class II: } \\ & -62^{\circ} \mathrm{C} \text { to }+95^{\circ} \mathrm{C} \end{aligned}$ | $-62^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ to $+85^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ | $-62^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ to $+95^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ |  |
| Acceleration (operational) | $<1 \times 10^{-8}$ for 10g's in any axis. | $-4 \times 10^{-12} / \mathrm{g}$ (Worst case orientation) | $\begin{aligned} & -4 \times 10^{-12} / \mathrm{g} \\ & \text { (worst case } \\ & \text { orientation) } \end{aligned}$ |  |
| Temperature Altitude | MIL-E-5400 <br> Class II $<5 \times 10^{-10}$ <br> S.L. to 70X ft <br> $71^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ to $10^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ Amb. | $<1 \times 10^{13} / \mathrm{mbar}$; with temp change $<5 \times 10^{-10}$ total | $<1 \times 10^{-13}$ /mbar with temp change $<2 \times 10^{-10}$ total | * M-100 has not been tested to 70 Kft ; but expect no problems <br> ** Vacuum Ops is goal. |


| TABLE -1- SPEC COMPARISON (Sheet 5 of 7) 11-4-80 |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| DESCRIPTION | $\begin{gathered} \text { ANTICIPATED } \\ \text { SEEK TALK } \\ \text { SPEC } \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{aligned} & \text { OFF-THE-SHELF } \\ & \text { M-100 OSC. } \end{aligned}$ | IN DEVELOPMENT M-1000 OSC. | REMARKS |
| Temperature Shock | MIL-STD-810 <br> Method 503.1 <br> Procedure | OK | OK |  |
| Transient Temp. | Meet Spec e $2^{\circ} \mathrm{C} /$ sec from $-55^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ to $+85^{\circ} \mathrm{C}, 71^{\circ}$ Amb. | OK | OK |  |
| EMI | RIT-SIJ-461A Notice 3 CE 01, 02, 03, 04 CS 01, 02, 06 RE 02, 04 RS 01, 02, 03 | MIL-STO-46IA Notice 3 CE 01, 02, 03, 04 CS 01, 02, 06 RE 02, RS 01, 02, 03 | Same as $\mathrm{N}-100$ | RE04 not applicable. |
| Radiation Hardening | Not specified. | Hard to ground tactical environment of a major program. | Hardness level to be assessed. |  |
| Reliability | MTBF $>20,000 \mathrm{hrs}$. $60 \%$ DR @ $55^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ Amb. Airborne uninhabited fighter environment. M1L-HDBK217C, Not.1, Sec 2 | MTBF $>19.000$ hrs. $60 \%$ © $68^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ baseplate Airborne inhabited transport environment MIL-HDBK-217C | MTBF $>20,000 \mathrm{hrs}$. $60 \%$ @ $71^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ Amb. <br> Airborne uninhabited fighter MIL-HDBK-217C | Reliability level for unit largely controlled by hybrid screening level and can be improved accordingly. |


| TABLE -1- SPEC COMPARISON (Sheet 6 of 7) 11-4-80 |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| DESCRIPTION | $\begin{aligned} & \text { ANTICIPATED } \\ & \text { SEEK TALK } \\ & \text { SPEC } \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & \text { OFF-THE - SHELF } \\ & \text { M-100 OSC. } \end{aligned}$ | IN DEVELOPMENT M-1000 OSC. | REMARKS |
| Humidity | $\begin{aligned} & \text { MIL-STD- } 810 \\ & \text { Method } 507.1 \\ & \text { Procedure III } \end{aligned}$ | 95\% | 100\% |  |
| Shock <br> (Bench Handling) | $\begin{aligned} & \text { MIL-STD- } 810 \\ & \text { Method } 516.2 \\ & \text { Procedure V } \end{aligned}$ | OK | OK |  |
| Size | $\begin{aligned} & 5 \times 5 \times 5 \frac{1}{2} " \max \\ & 2 \frac{1}{4} \times 2 \frac{1}{4} \times 4^{\prime \prime} \text { Goal } \end{aligned}$ | $\left(\begin{array}{l} <80 \text { in }^{3} \\ (3.94 \times 3.90 \times 4.8) \end{array}\right.$ | $\left(2.5 \times 3.0 \times 4^{\prime \prime}\right)$ |  |
| Weight | TBD | 4.5 lbs. max | < 2 lbs. |  |
| Salt Fog | MIL-STD-810 <br> Method 509.1 <br> Procedure 1 | TBD - not tested | OK |  |


| TABLE -1- SPEC COMPARISON (Sheet 7 of 7) 11-4-80 |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| DESCRIPTION | ANTICIPATED SEEK TALK SPEC | $\begin{aligned} & \text { OFF-THE-SHELF } \\ & \text { M-100 OSC. } \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{gathered} \text { IN DEVELOPMENT } \\ \text { M-1000 OSC. } \end{gathered}$ | REMARKS |
| Fungus Resistance | MIL-STD-454 Requirement 4 | OK | OK | No test data available. |
| Explosive Atmosphere | $\begin{aligned} & \text { MIL-STD- } 810 \\ & \text { Method } 511.1 \\ & \text { Procedure } 1 \end{aligned}$ | OK | OK |  |
| Sand and Dust | $\begin{aligned} & \text { MIL-STD- } 810 \\ & \text { Method } 510.1 \\ & \text { Procedure } 1 \end{aligned}$ | TBD - Not tested | OK |  |
| Maintainability Requirements | ~ 90\% Fault Detection with a BITE | OK | OK | Use of lock monitor. |
| Shop Level Maintenance | Required | NO | NO | An atomic standard does not lend itself to detailed AF field level maintenance. |



Figure 1. M-100/M-1000 Size Comparison
The error signal is generated by the Physics Package using the method of optical pumping (not discussed here) and appears as a current from the photocell in the Physics Package. When the applied microwave frequency is equal to $f R b$, the $R b$ atoms resonate with the microwave field in the cavity resulting in a decrease (minimum) of the photocell output current. Conventional modulation techniques are used to locate the minimum in the photocell current characteristic (Figure 3). In the M-100, the applied microwave frequency is sine-wave modulated at 127 Hz . This modulation results in an a.c. component of output current from the photocell. When the microwave frequency is different than Rb , there is a 127 Hz component present whose phase (positive or inverted) depends on whether the microwave frequency lies above or below frb. This phase information is used to steer the VCXO in the proper direction to bring the microwave frequency into coincidence with $\mathrm{f}_{\mathrm{Rb}}$ (at which point the 127 Hz signal is zero). From a practical point of view, the $M-100$ is considered locked to the atomic resonance when its output frequency is within $1 \times 10^{-9}$ of exactly 10 MHz .


Figure 2. M-100 Functional Block Diagram


Figure 3. M-100 Modulation Scheme

## M-1000 APPROACH

The $\mathrm{M}-1000$ differs from the $\mathrm{M}-100$ Oscillator in the area of the Physics Package, form-factors and some electronic changes. These changes are summarized below but will be discussed in detail later. As noted on the M-1000 Block Diagram of Figure 4, (a) the modulation frequency has been changed from 127 Hz to 254 Hz to reduce sensitivity to the vibration spectrum below 250 Hz , (b) the 40 second sweep during warm-up has been reduced to 6 seconds including a new resonance detection scheme which is among the several things necessary to achieve to 1.5 minute warm-up requirement, (c) a special lamp ignition system to prevent operation in undesired lamp modes which could result from power on-off cycling or external power supply transients, (d) physics changes to allow for MIL-E5400 Class II temperature operation ( $71^{\circ} \mathrm{Amb}$. continuous) including size reduction, (e) an integrated SC Cut VCXO/Rb resonator package with overall lower mass to facilitate the fast warm-up requirement, (f) a Hybrid electronics circuits approach to reduce the overall size of the oscillator.


Figure 4. M-1000 Functional Block Diagram

## OVERALL MECHANICAL DESIGN

The present design approach will allow for a reduction to half the M-100 volume. The presently planned form-factors are shown in Figure 5. The resonator portion of the Physics Package has been reduced in both size and mass proportions, housing a smaller Rubidium Vapor Cell decreased in length from $1 \frac{1}{2}$ in. to $7 / 8 \mathrm{in}$. This has reduced the size of the resonant cavity as illustrated in Figure 6.

The lamp oscillator, Figure 7 , does not readily lend itself to Hybridization and thus has been repackaged to make the overall assembly smaller. The major size and mass reduction comes from the use of blanket heaters in place of heating transistors. Since the lamp is not sensitive to varying magnetic fields, the blanket heater approach presents no problem.


Figure 5. M-1000 Form-Factors


Figure 6. Resonator Comparison


Figure 7. Lamp Board Comparison

These sub-modules integrated into an overall assembly, will resemble the M-1000 Physics Package shown in Figure 8. This integrated assembly will be foamed into an inner Mu-metal housing for reduction of vibration sensitivity with a second outer Mu-metal case again at the Physics Package. This eliminates the need for the outer Mu-metal cover which has been the $\mathrm{M}-100$ design approach and allows for a standard cover which can be sealed to meet salt spray, sand and dust specs. The M-1000 unit thermal design will allow for operation from sea level to hard vacuum space craft applications. All heat will be conducted to the $\mathrm{M}-1000$ mounting baseplate.

The major size reduction comes from our hybrid electronics approach. The Servo Hybrid, before lid-closure, is shown in Figure 9. More than 95\% of the electronic parts count will be contained in Hybrid circuits. As shown in Figure 4, the Hybrid circuits are as follows: (a) Servo Hybrid, (b) Power Supply Hybrid, (c) two identical Heater Control Hybrids, (d) the M-100 synthesizer approach has been split into two sections; Multiplier and Synthesizer Hybrids: this allows for more flexibility for future changes in synthesizer approach which may be necessary when mass production quantities are required (2000 or more per year).


Figure 8. Physics Package Comparison


Figure 9. Servo Board Comnarison
(e) VCXO Hybrid which will be an integral part of crystal and resonator assembly, and (f) the Buffer Amp Hybrid mounted outside the Physics Package to provide isolation and output drive.

Including eight (8) Hybrids, the $\mathrm{M}-1000$ is expected to have approximately 80 electronic piece parts.

## M-1000 PHYSICS

The most innovative designs of this unit fall within the Physics Package area. We have designed an integral lamp and resonator assembly which includes the SC-Cut Crystal and the VCXO Hybrid.

The lamp is our conventional unit but without the usual brass holder. This allows a size reduction. The blanket heater approach allows for rapid heating to the nominal $115^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$. The overall temperature of the resonator, which houses a smaller cell, has been raised to approximately $85^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ to allow $71^{\circ}$ Amb. continuous operation (approximately $80^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ baseplate) which meet MIL-E-5400, Class II temperature requirements.

The assembled package will be foamed into the inner Mu-metal can as discussed earlier. VCXO Control Voltage trim range adjustment is acomplished with a varactor diode so that a control pot can be mounted external to the Physics Package.

## M-1000 PERFORMANCE CHARACTERISTICS

The most challenging design requirement is the ultra fast warm-up. This task is accomplished by a combination of several concepts discussed earlier. They are: (a) smaller cell/lower mass Physics Package, (b) use of SC-Cut Crystal, (c) use of blanket heater on lamp and cell, (d) special constant power heater control using pulse width modulation, and (e)a fast sweep circuit in the Servo Hybrid.

These factors contribute to the $\mathrm{M}-1000$ warm-up time shown in Figure 10. The off-the-shelf M-100 standard warm-up and fast warm-up options are illustrated for reference. The approximate output frequency that can be expected during warm-up is shown in Figure 11. The frequency will be in the range of $\sim \pm 3 \times 10^{-6}$ until atomic lock. 15 to 20 seconds after the sweep circuit stops, the frequency will be $\sim 5 \times 10^{-10}$. Shortly thereafter, parts in $10^{11}$ can be expected.


Figure 10. Warm-up Time


Figure 11. Output Frequency During Warm-up
The M-1000 power dissipation is expected to be 12 watts or less (steady state at $25^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ ) see Figure 12. A goal of 8 to 10 watts is set for second and third generation units. VCXO performance is expected to be similar to the M-100 spec. The short-term stability is shown in Figure 13 and phase noise in Figure 14. Magnetic field susceptibility is expected to be a factor of 8 to 10 better than $\mathrm{M}-100 \mathrm{spec}$ and is illustrated in Figure 15.

At present satisfying solutions have been found for all SEEKTALK requirements and environmental specs with the exception of sine and random vibration performance. These specs are most challenging and extremely difficult to meet. Typical performance under a 1 g sine environment for an M-100 style Physics Package is illustrated in Figure 16. These data are exaggerated, however, since the sweep is extremely slow and tends to amplify the response of the unit at the modulation frequency and it's harmonics.


Figure 12. Power Dissipation
Figure 17 shows considerable improvement when the $\mathrm{M}-100$ is modified with the 254 Hz M-1000 servo scheme. This scheme, plus the new M-1000 mechanical approach to the Physics Package should provide a significant improvement over the M-100 data and will certainly make vibration frequencies below 250 Hz less influential. Present $\mathrm{M}-100$ performance at 1 g is parts in $10^{8}$ peak to peak at the modulation frequency; $\mathrm{M}-1000$ performance is expected to be in parts in $10^{10}$. Under random vibration, $\mathrm{M}-100$ performance is $<1 \times 10^{-10}$ at $0.02 \mathrm{~g}^{2} / \mathrm{Hz}$ at $\tau=1$ second. This is still considerably higher than the $<1 \times 10^{-10}$ requirement which is the present SEEKTALK spec in a $0.04 \mathrm{~g}^{2} / \mathrm{Hz}$ environment.

## Rb OSCILLATOR "LIFE" CONSIDERATIONS

Useful field life of any electronic equipment or system is generally evaluated in light of hardware peculiarities which will in time render the equipment at a life-limit. This analysis usually excludes random parts failures but is oriented toward wear-out mechanisms.

The M-100/M-1000 oscillator "life" limit revolves around the aging characteristics of the Rubidium Vapor Cell; assuming the Rb lamp has no


Figure 13. Short Term Stability


Figure 14. Phase Noise


FRACTIONAL FREQUENCY CHANGE OF THE MODEL FRK-H DUE TO A STATIC MAGNETIC FIELD APPLIED PARALLEL TO THE OPTICAL AXIS

Figure 15. Magnetic Field Susceptibility
systematic wear-out mechanisms, which it does not, if everything is done properly. When the cell is manufactured, it is made with a deliberate negative off-set of approximately $\geq 4 \times 10^{-9}$ which is zeroed by the addition of a magnetic field (C-field). With a C-field trim range of $\pm 1.5 \times 10^{-9}$, the oscillator will allow normal adjustments as long as the frequency of the cell has not aged past the $\Delta f / f$ equivalent of (+) $1.5 \times 10^{-9}$ of 10 MHz .

As can be seen in Figure 18, the typical oscillator will begin to age at a rate of (-) $3 \times 10^{-11} / \mathrm{mo}$ for about 5 to 6 months while steadily improveing to $\leq 1 \times 10^{-11} / \mathrm{mo}$. After the initial (-) aging, the oscillator may drift (+) or continue (-). Long-term aging data show that the oscillator will not always drift in the same direction. The data also show, however, that the typical oscillator, while operating, continues to improve, with the monthly drift tending to decrease in magnitude. Aging improvements have also been observed for stored units with the extent of the improvement depending on the storage temperature. For illustration purposes, Figure 18 shows three curves. Curve (a) is for a typical oscillator that, after 5 to 6 months, continues to age always negative (best case). In this case, the frequency off-set that accumulates can be cancelled by increasing the magnetic field (C-field current). Under these conditions, the normal C-field trim range of $\pm 1.5 \times 10^{-9}$ will have been reached in


Figure 16. Sine Vibration Data - 1 g
( 127 Hz Modulation)


Figure 17. Sine Vibration Data - 1 g (254 Hz Modulation)
~ 11 years. In practice, magnetic field can be added at that time but at a degradation of unit magnetic field spec; doubling the C-field current approximately doubles the external field sensitivity. For example, if we allow a degradation of the shielding factor of $\sim 50 \%$, the end of the useful life will be reached after $\sim 80$ years.

Curve (b) applies for the case of an oscillator that, after the first 5 to 6 months, ages continually positive. Here the $\sim 3 \times 10^{-9}$ point is reached in approximately 35 years. Since the positive aging cell requires a reduction in magnetic field, the cell at this point is for practical purposes at zero magnetic field. As aging continues past this point, the oscillator will still operate in a completely stable fashion (according to spec), but it will no longer be possible to zero the offset that will gradually accumulate.

The third case, curve (c), is absolutely the worst case and as far as we know, has never occurred. In this phase, the oscillator ages continuously positive at the constant rate of $3 \times 10^{-11} / \mathrm{mo}$, reaching zero frequency off-set at zero magnetic field after approximately 11 years.


Figure 18. Oscillator Life

## MISSION PROFILE

Figure 19 illustrates an arbitrary mission profile and resultant oscillator performance. The concept for a precision timing system for tactica? aircraft, revolves around the ability to have an oscillator within parts in $10^{10}$, 1.5 minutes after engine start (assuming no battery power is available prior to that time). This ability provides ample time for a timing-sync (possibly RF linked) before aircraft is very far from its origin, minimizing RF link propagation delay errors. Due to the accuracy and retrace ability of the Rb oscillator, frequency sync would not be necessary prior to a mission as long as a periodic calibration plan is in effect. The 1.5 minute warm-up capability would appear to greatly simplify the tactical system. No battery power is required on the aircraft and no external warm-up scheme is needed.

Factors which have the most significant effect on oscillator time error are temperature changes and vibration. The least impact are voltage variations, magnetic field changes, and acceleration. Oscillator aging


Figure 19. Typical Mission Profile
or drift is negligible. Since the oscillator is used as a clock, many of the environments such as magnetics and vibration should have a somewhat cancelling effect with only residuals influencing the time error.

Preliminary data has been received from Edwards Air Force Base for flight tests of similar mission profiles using shock-mounted EFRATOM commercial FRK-L units. The data indicates an accumulated time error scatter of $\sim 1.3$ to $12.1 \mu \mathrm{~s}$. Flight duration of these tests varied between $\sim 7$ to 11 hours.

## CONCLUSION

We are proceeding with full speed to complete this new M-1000 development in mid 1981 to meet the SEEKTALK schedule. Several prototype units will be delivered to RADC at that time for test and evaluation. We believe that the 1.5 minute warm-up atomic oscillator will revolutionize the tactical warfare theater and will greatly improve the presentday military communication and navigation system capabilities.

The major portion of the Hybrid vendor costs for the initial prototype units is being funded by RADC.

## SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE


${ }^{\Delta_{\text {NOTE }}}$ : Edwards AFB - Modified Thunderbird Tests

- Shock Mounted Commercial FRK
$\sim 1.3 \mu \mathrm{~s}$ to ~ $12.1 \mu \mathrm{~s}$ for Test Durations
$\sim 7$ to 11 HRS.


## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

MR. SAMUAL WARD, Jet Propulsion Laboratory
Have you considered whether or not the so-called vibration or gravitational effects on the unit may be induced currents that are getting into the XVCO loop?

MR. FRUHAUF:
You mean, on the vibration table?
MR. WARD:
Correct.
MR. FRAUHAUF:
Yes, we have checked very carefully the mganetic fields that are set up on the vibration head, and we have got that pretty well nailed down.

MR. WARD:
Was the power supply -- how much of the unit was being shaken?
MR. FRUHAUF:
In these particular tests?
MR. WARD:
Yes.
MR. FRAUHAUF:
The entire unit.
MR. WARD:
Shielding and all.
MR. FRUHAUF:
Right. We have been sensitive to that area, so we characterized the table very carefully before we draw a lot of conclusions from the data.

MR. WARD:
It looks suspicious because the power goes up as the vibration frequency goes up.

MR. FRUHAUF:
What goes up, please?
MR. WARD:
The power -- the effect -- how much it is being pulled off frequency, which appears to me power related.

Normally, as you shake it faster, that should go down.
MR. FRAUHAUF:
It is primarily related to resonances in the system. It is definitely not the magnetic field from the shake table.

