



The NASA Turbulent Heat Flux (THX) Experiments: Summary and Lessons Learned

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Note: several individuals contributed to the experimental and computational efforts documented herein. See the references in the paper for these authors/contributors.

Motivation

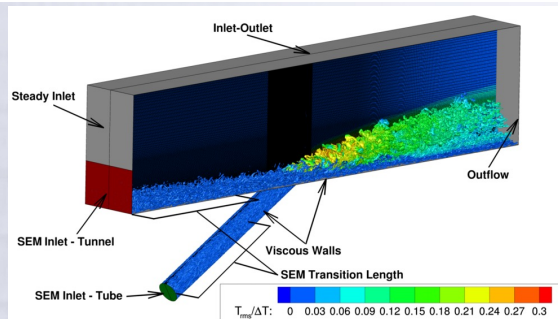
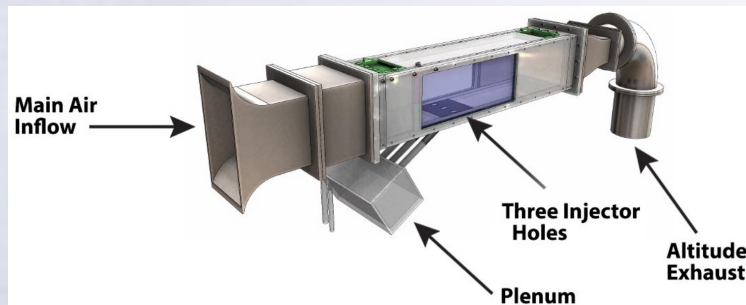
- In CFD, turbulent temperature variations & heat flux haven't received as much attention as traditional aerodynamic turbulence, yet are important to many flows.
- Examples include: (1) high Mach number applications, (2) propulsion systems, (3) systems requiring active cooling – just to name a few
- NASA's turbulent heat flux (THX) experiments were designed to make detailed turbulent measurements of velocities and temperatures – with the goal of obtaining data to:
 - 1) improve understanding of turbulence in flows where turbulent thermal transport is important.
 - 2) develop and validate better computational models for simulation of flows involving turbulent heat flux
- Alongside experiments, CFD efforts were undertaken to provide a baseline of RANS and scale-resolving (WRLES, WMLES, HRLES) techniques for these flows.

Turbulent Heat Flux (THX) Experiments Phases

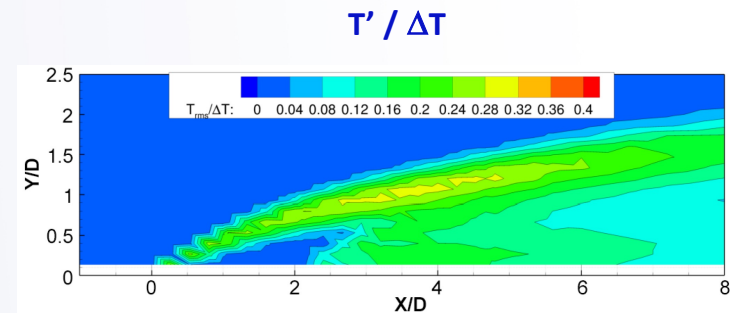
1. Low speed / temperature cooling hole experiments in GRC SW6.
2. Subsonic jet temperature measurements: using Raman in GRC Aeroacoustic Propulsion Laboratory (AAPL).
3. Subsonic Square nozzle flow over plate with single cooling hole, PIV and Raman temperature measurements in AAPL.
4. Subsonic Square nozzle flow over perforated plate film cooling, PIV & Raman temperature measurements in AAPL. *Data used in 5th AIAA Propulsion Aerodynamics Workshop (PAW5).*
5. Supersonic round nozzles replicating experiments of Seiner et al., 1992. BOS, Raman and PIV measurements were obtained in AAPL. *Data used in AIAA PAW6 and NASA TMR.*

THX – Phase 1

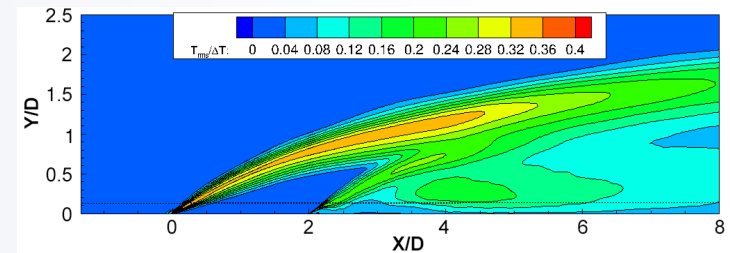
- Low speed / temperature cooling hole experiments in GRC Fundamental Film Cooling and Heat Transfer Facility (SW6).
- Hotwire measurements of velocity, temperature, and turbulent heat flux ($u'T'$), also PIV for velocities. WRLES performed by Borghi, et al. RANS & HRLES shown to be inferior.



Expt.



LES



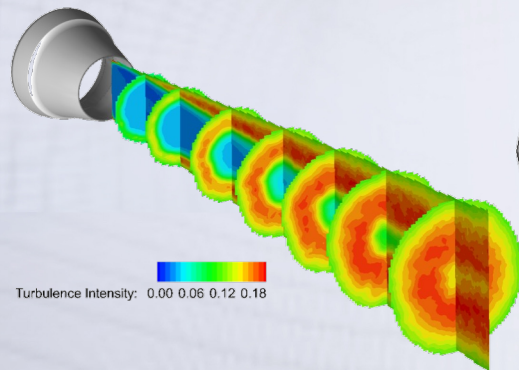
Off-Body Measurements for THX Experiments

- Background Oriented Schlieren (BOS)
 - BOS measurements used to optimize the Raman measurement grid depending on cooling film thickness
- Raman Scattering (**key new measurement technology developed & demonstrated**)
 - Molecular scattering technique for measuring the gas temperature
 - Composition of the gas is known, only interested in temperature
 - Measure both the mean and rms temperature
 - Measurements at a single point
 - See the following publications for details of the technology development of this Raman scattering technique: Locke, R. J., Wernet, M. P., Anderson, R. C., "Rotational Raman-Based Temperature Measurements in a High-Velocity Turbulent Jet," *Measurement Science Technology*, Vol. 29, No. 1, Dec. 2017, pp. 1-16, <https://doi.org/10.1088/1361-6501/aa934d>.
- Particle Image Velocimetry (PIV)
 - Streamwise plane of 2-component measurements
 - Cross-stream planes of 3-component measurements
 - Planar measurements

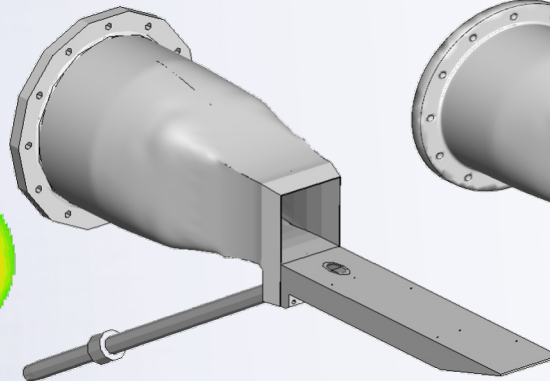
THX Phases 2 - 5

All experiments conducted in NASA GRC Aeroacoustic Propulsion Laboratory (AAPL) – using the Small Hot Jet Acoustic Rig (SHJAR) – having capability up to Mach 2 and 950 K conditions.

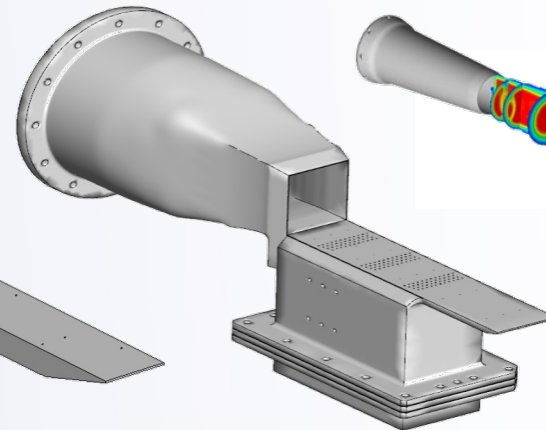
THX 2
SMC000



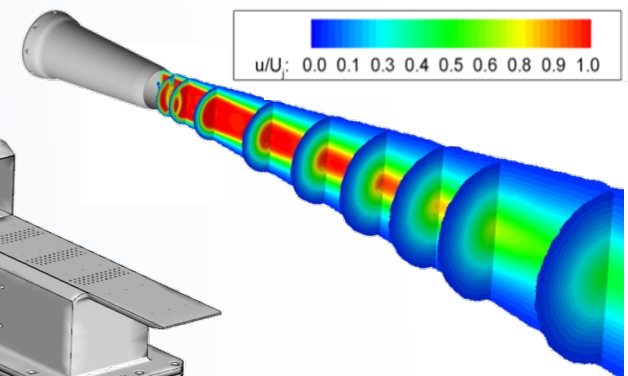
THX 3
Single Hole Plate



THX 4
Multi-Hole Plate

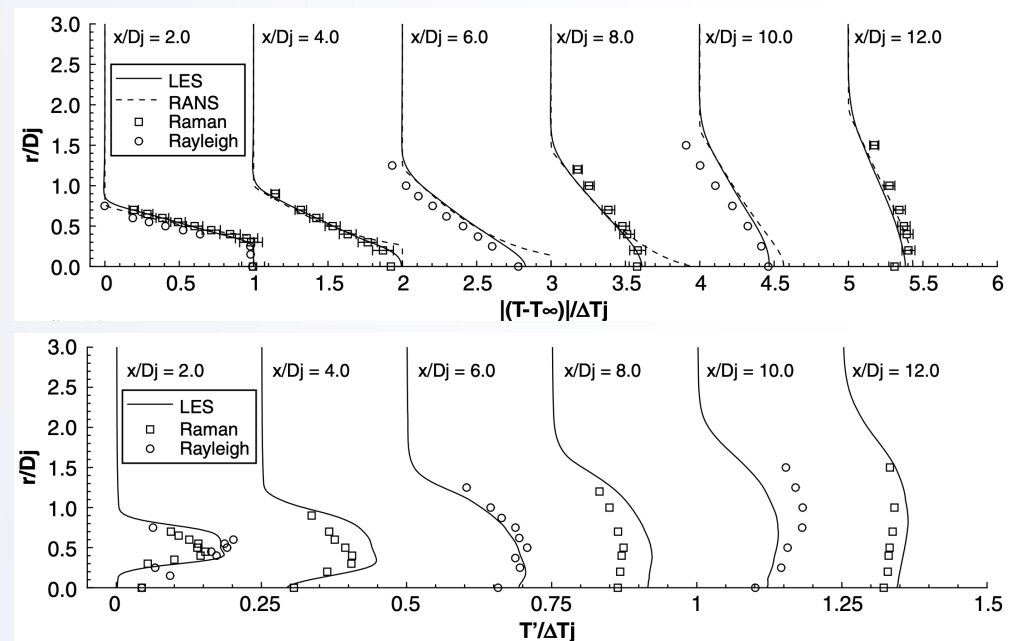


THX 5
Supersonic Jets

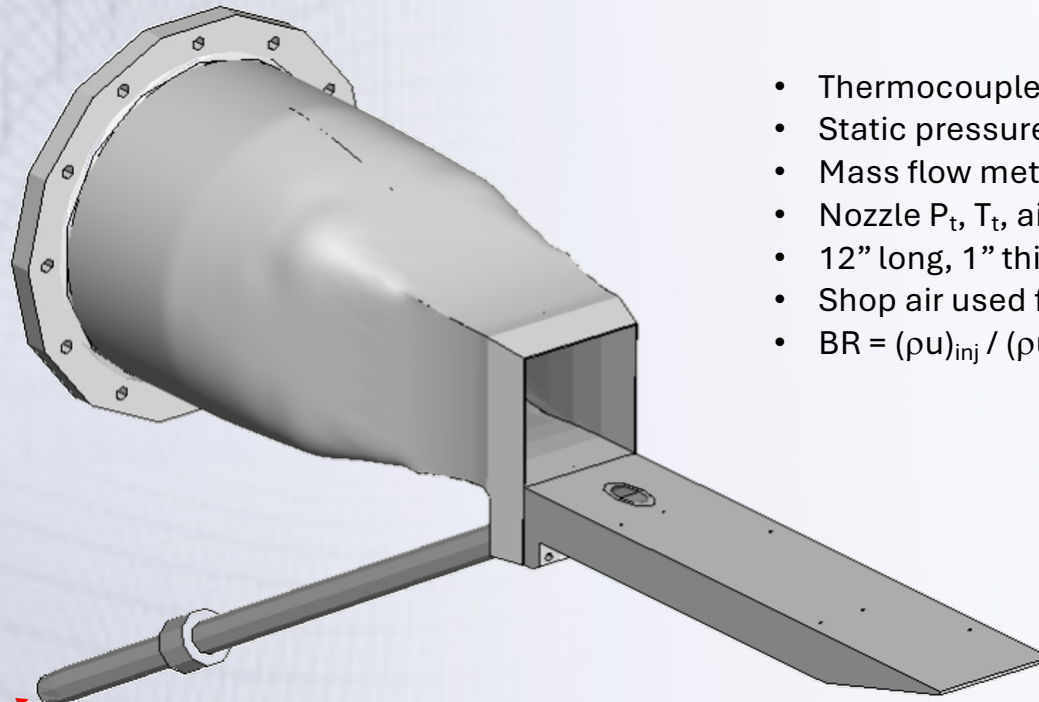


THX 2 – Subsonic Jets Tested at GRC AAPL

- Raman Scattering technique implemented and demonstrated using this phase.
- Examined the “SMC000” convergent nozzle, for many of the same points as the Bridges and Wernet PIV Consensus Data (AIAA Paper 2010-3751) – also taken in GRC AAPL, data used on NASA TMR
- Comparisons of temperature measurements and LES (DeBonis) for consensus data SP23, Mach 0.38, $\Delta T = 233\text{K}$.
- Raman Measurements: Locke, R. J., Wernet, M. P., and Anderson, R. C., “Rotational Raman-Based Temperature Measurements in a High-Velocity Turbulent Jet,” *Measurement Science and Technology*, Vol. 29, No. 1, Dec. 2017.
- Rayleigh Measurements: Mielke, A., Elam, K., and Sung, C.-J., “Multiproperty Measurements at High Sampling Rates Using Rayleigh Scattering,” *AIAA Journal*, Vol. 47, No. 4, 2009, pp. 850–862.
- LES: Debonis, J.R., “Prediction of Turbulent Temperature Fluctuations in Hot Jets,” *AIAA Journal*, Vol. 56, No. 8, Aug. 2018, pp. 3097–3111.



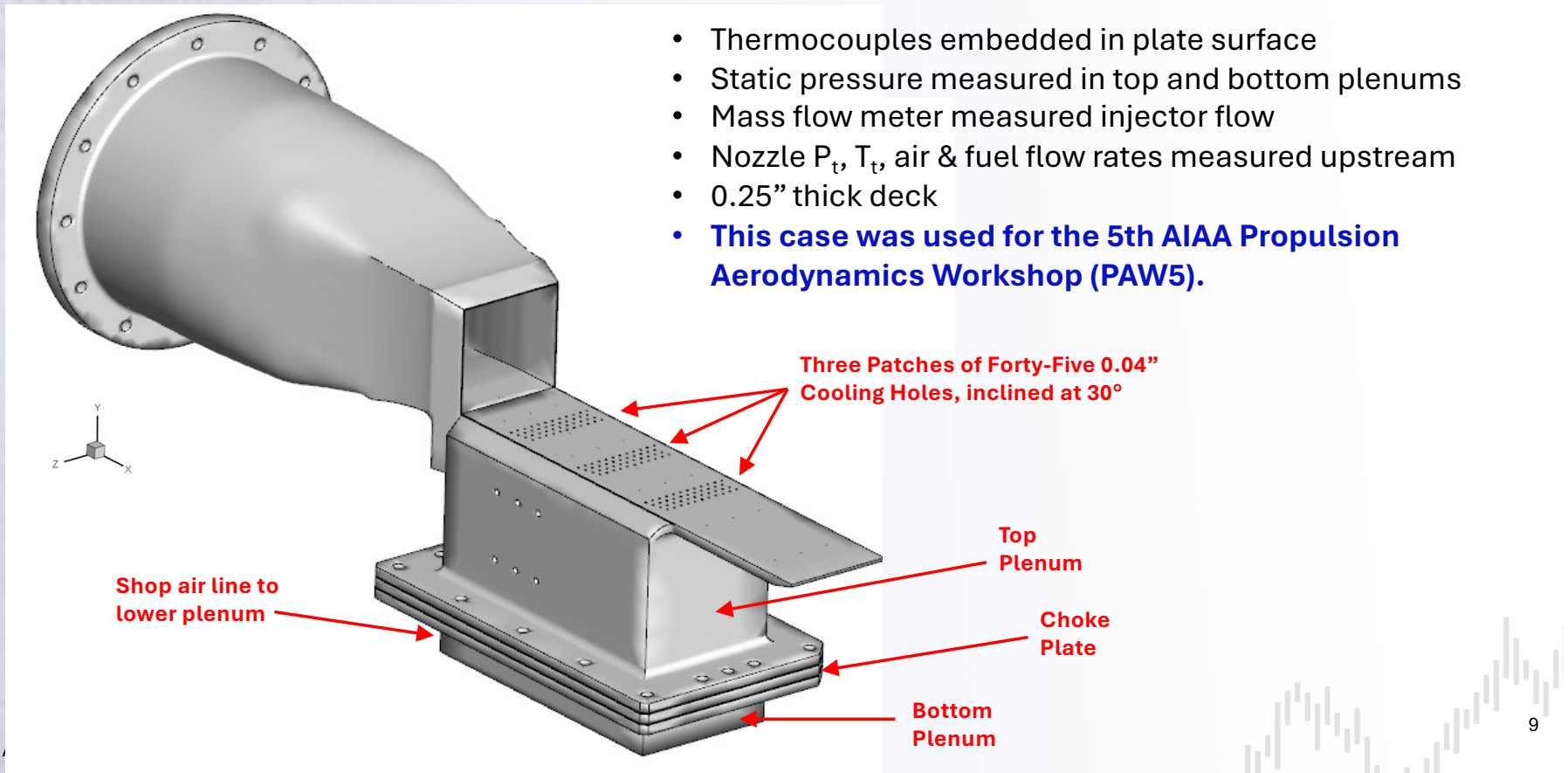
THX Phase 3 – Single Cooling Hole



- Thermocouples embedded in plate surface
- Static pressure measured in cooling flow tube
- Mass flow meter measured injector flow
- Nozzle P_t , T_t , air & fuel flow rates measured upstream
- 12" long, 1" thick SS deck
- Shop air used for cooling flow
- $BR = (\rho u)_{inj} / (\rho u)_{jet}$

Shop air

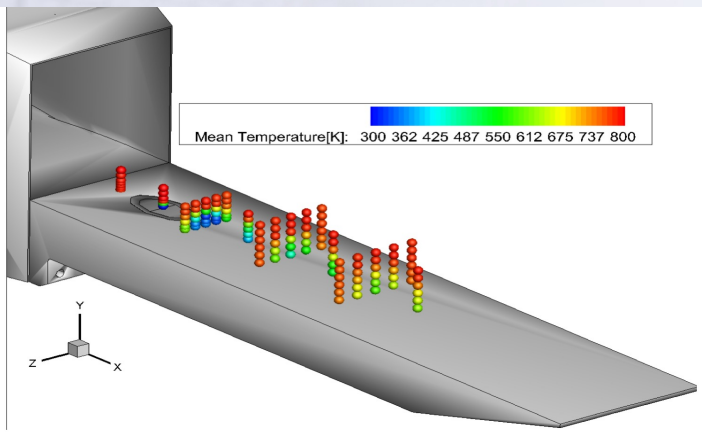
THX Phase 4 – Porous Plate Geometry



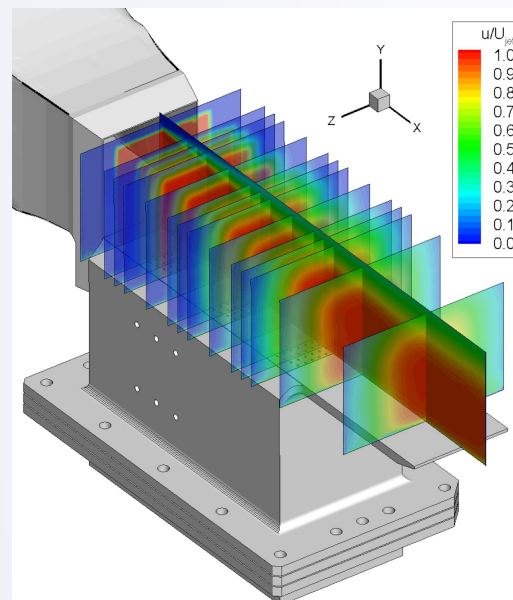
THX – Phases 3 & 4

- Sample experimental measurements:

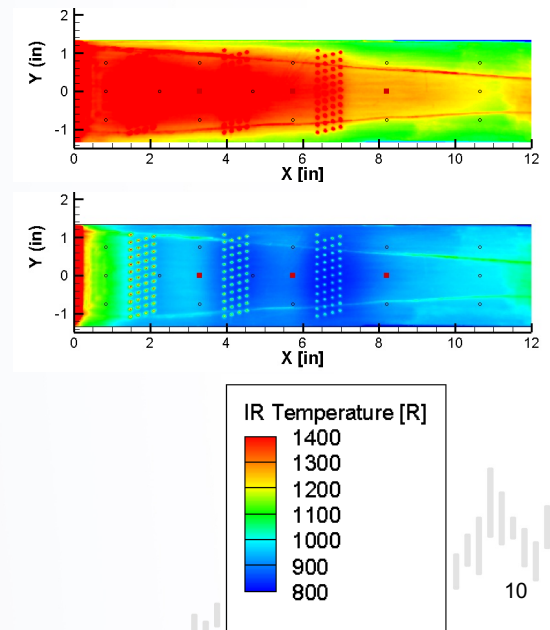
THX 3: Raman temperature measurements
(mean and rms)



THX 4: PIV velocity measurements
(mean and rms)



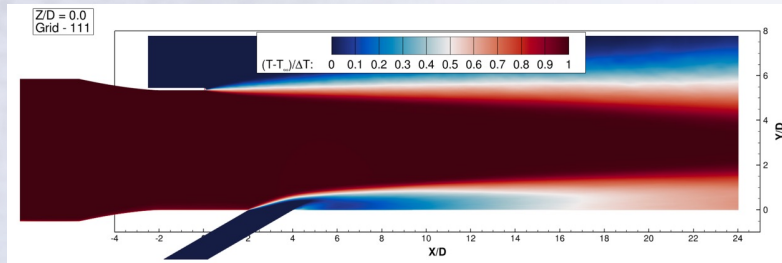
THX 4: Surface IR temperature measurements



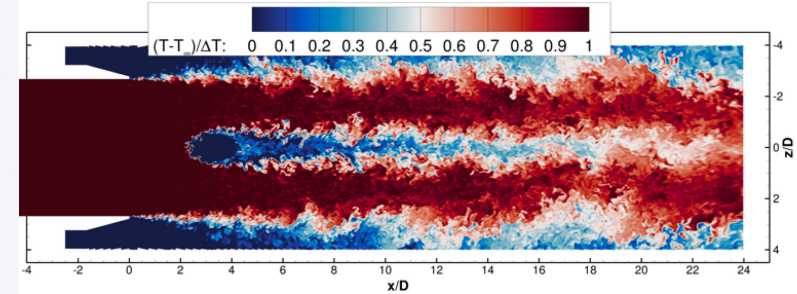
THX Phase 3 – Single Cooling Hole

- Computational simulations obtained with GFR and FDL3DI, using WRLES; FUN3D using SSG-LRR RSM RANS.
- Comparisons of mean and RMS velocities and temperatures to experimental measurements.

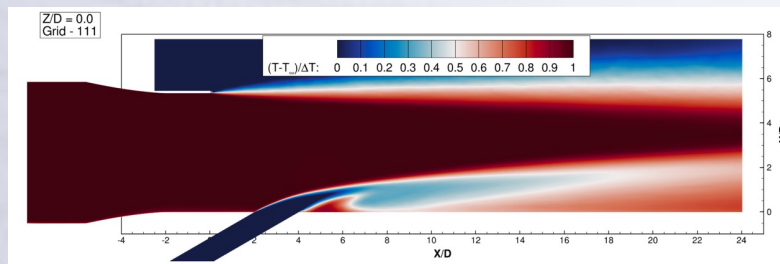
FDL3DI, BR = 1



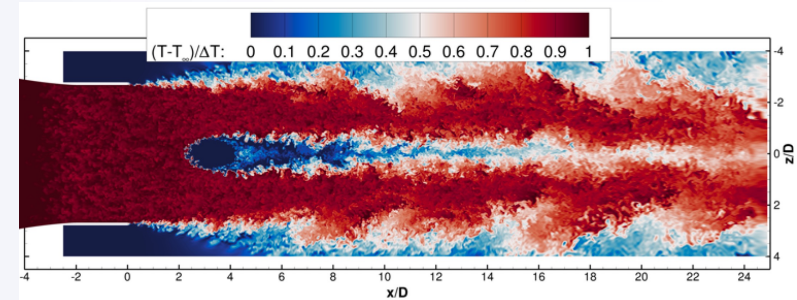
GFR, BR = 1, $y/D = 0.1$



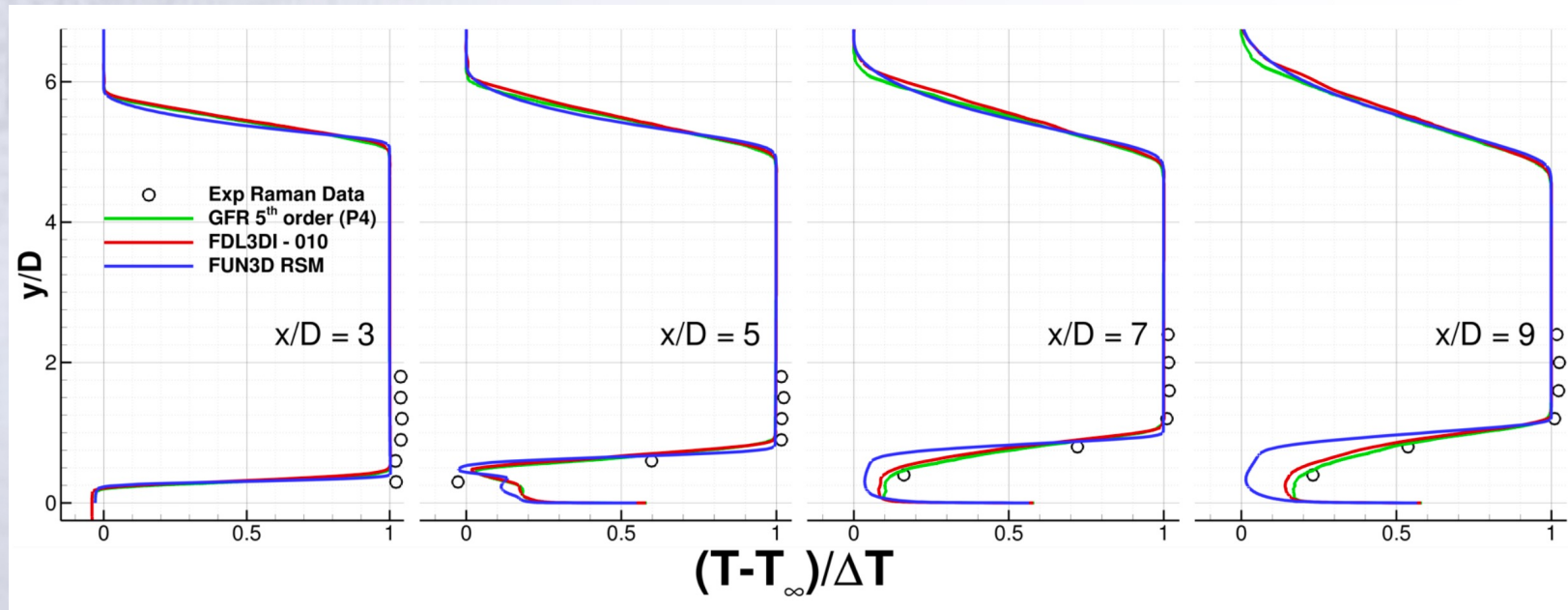
FDL3DI, BR = 2



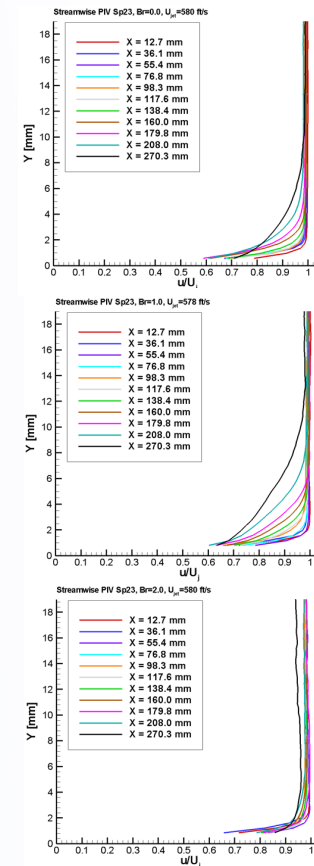
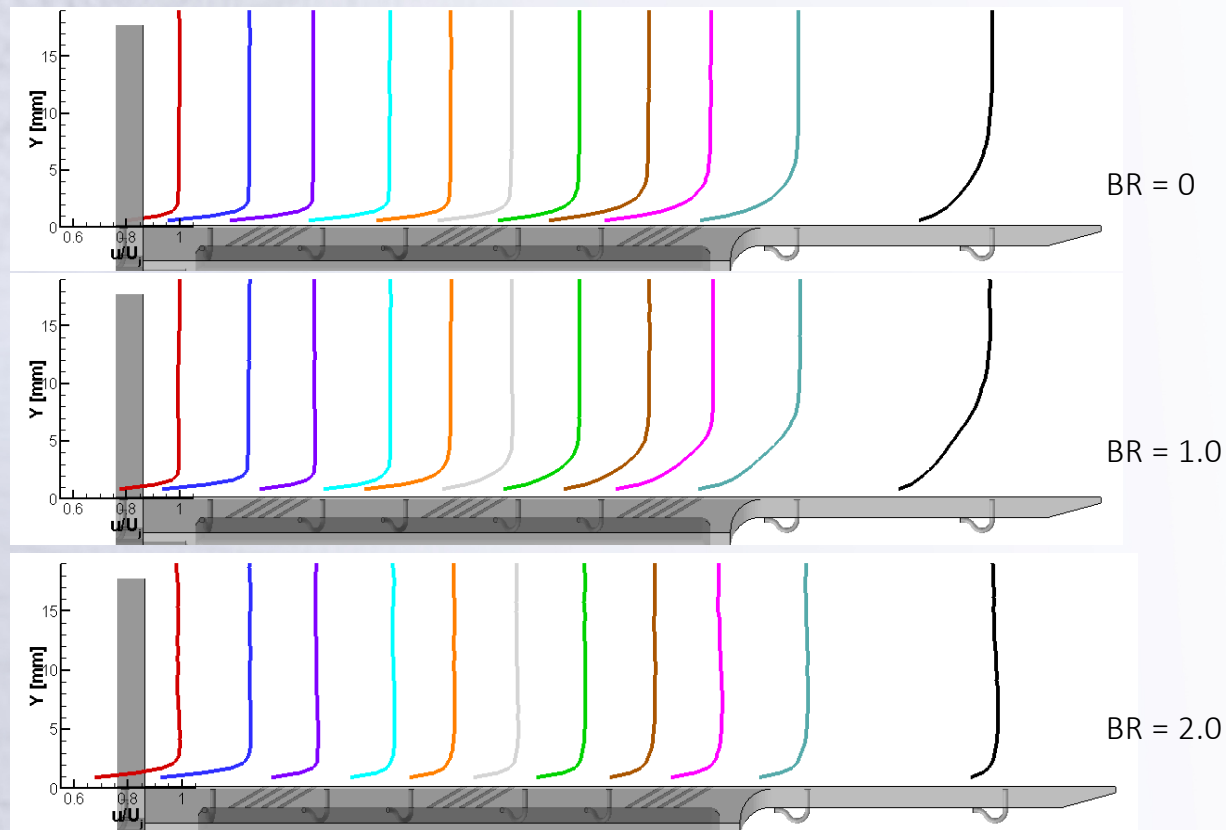
FDL3DI, BR = 1, $y/D = 0.1$



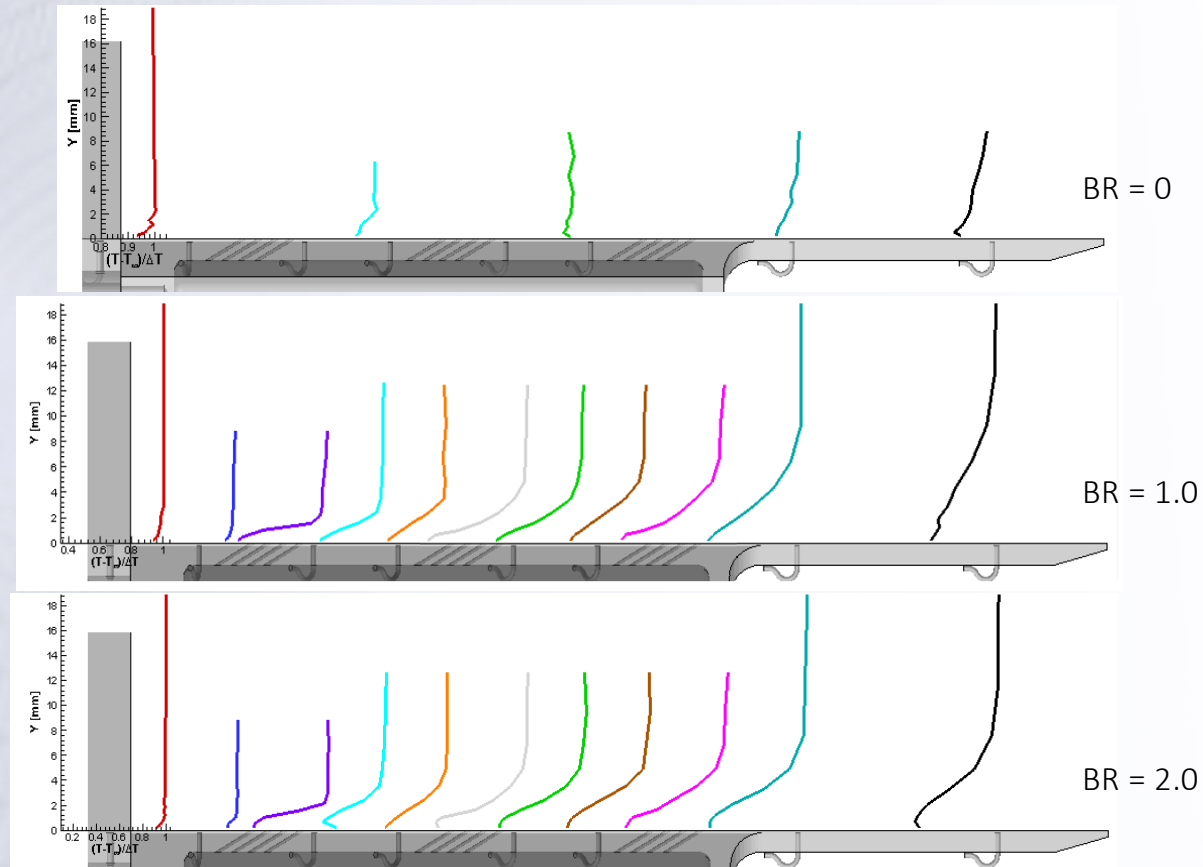
THX 3 – Temperature Comparisons for BR = 1



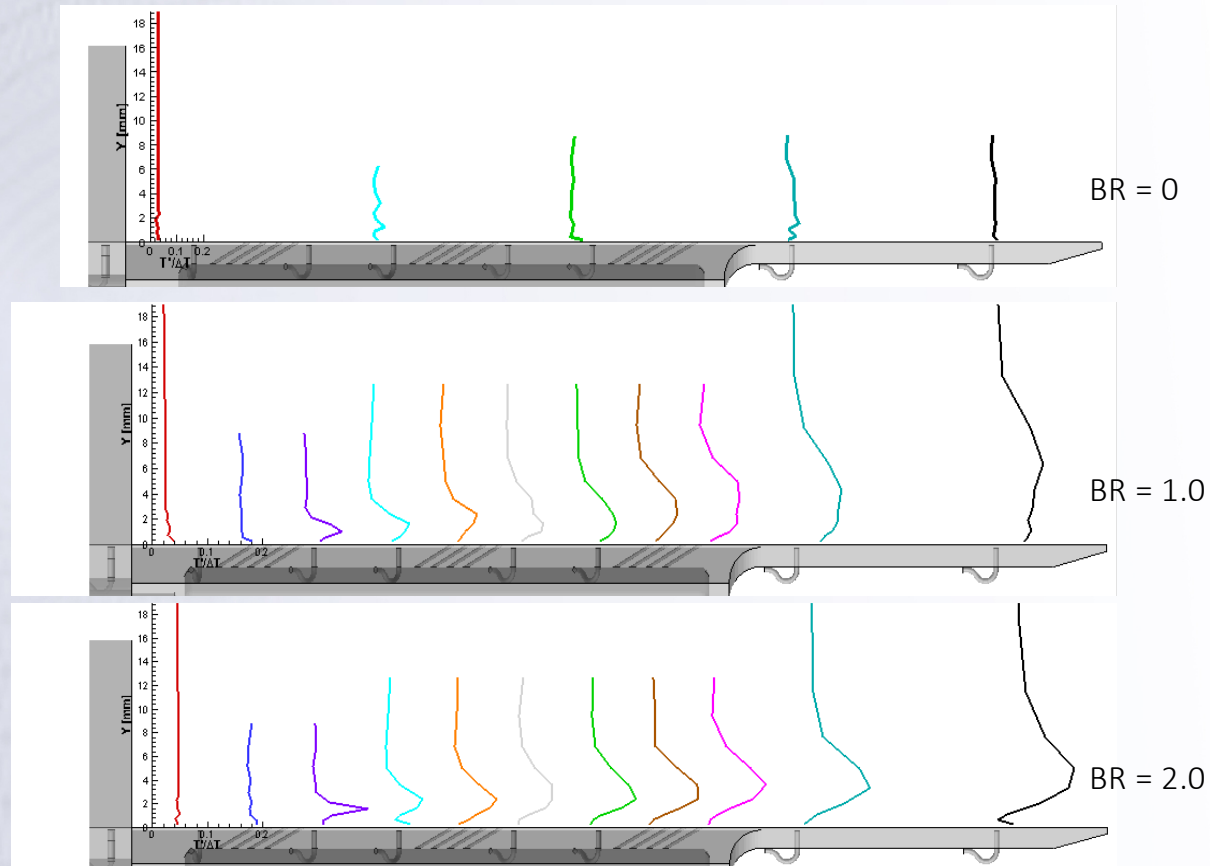
Mean Axial Velocity – THX 4: Set Point 23, Mach 0.38, $\Delta T = 233K$



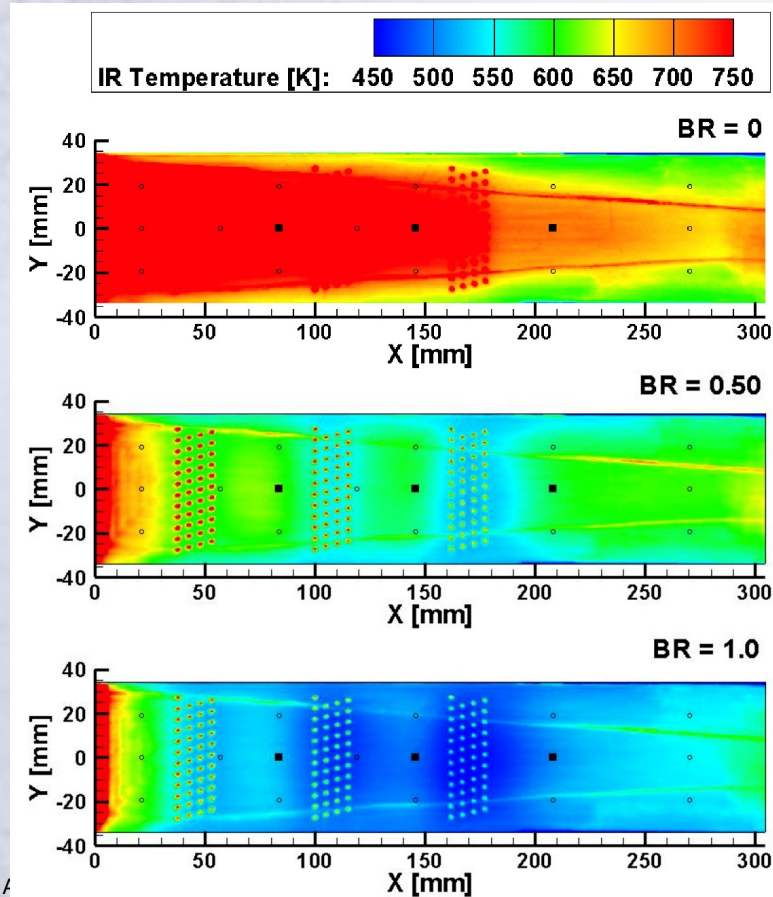
Mean Temperature – THX 4: Set Point 23, Mach 0.38, $\Delta T = 233K$



RMS of Temperature – THX 4: Set Point 23, Mach 0.38, $\Delta T = 233K$



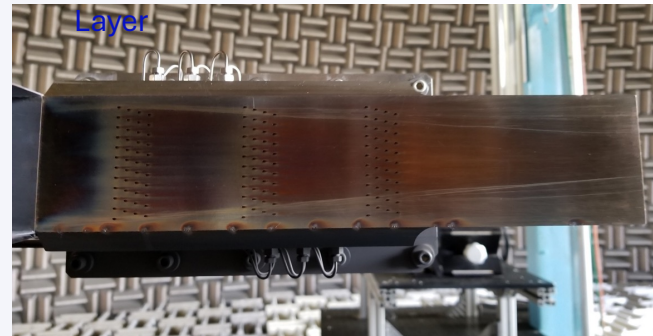
Raw IR Surface Temperature Measurements



FLIR SC655 infrared camera

- 640 x 480 pixels (roughly 0.024"/pixel)
- Stainless steel plate not painted black
- Emissivity of surface was nominally 0.2

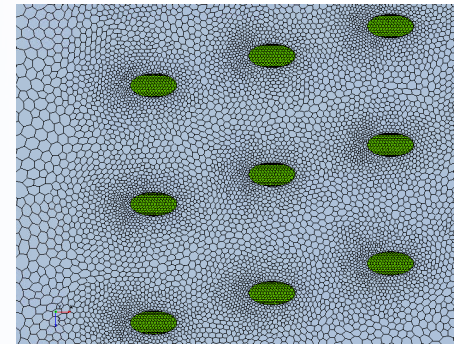
Plate Discoloration due to Jet Shear Layer



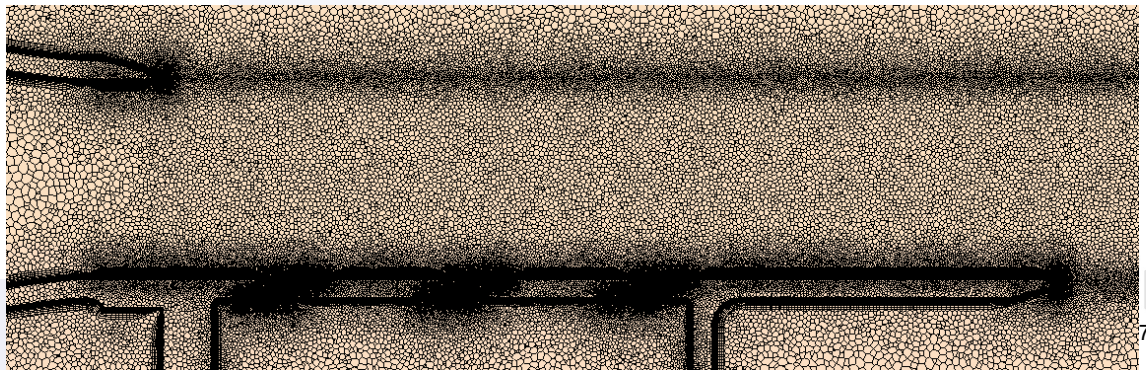
THX4 Model Geometry & CFD-CHT Problem Setup

THX4 is a complex flow problem: hot jet exhaust over plate with 135 1-mm cooling holes (45 holes/patch).

Looking down on plate:



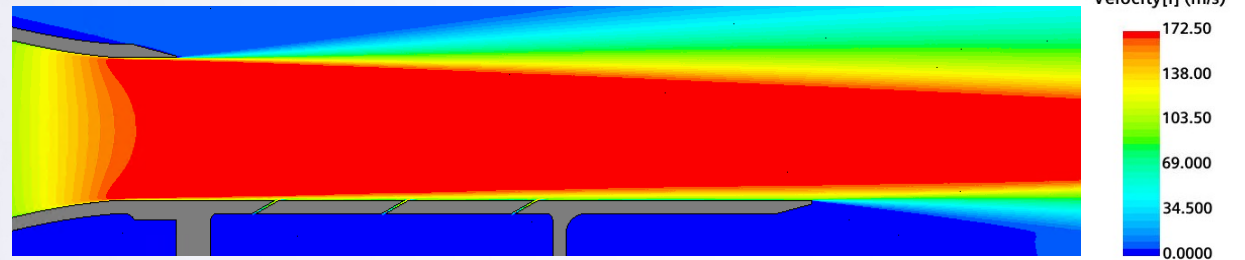
Fluid-Solid conformal polyhedral grid created in commercial CFD code STAR-CCM+ to solve the conjugate heat transfer (CHT)



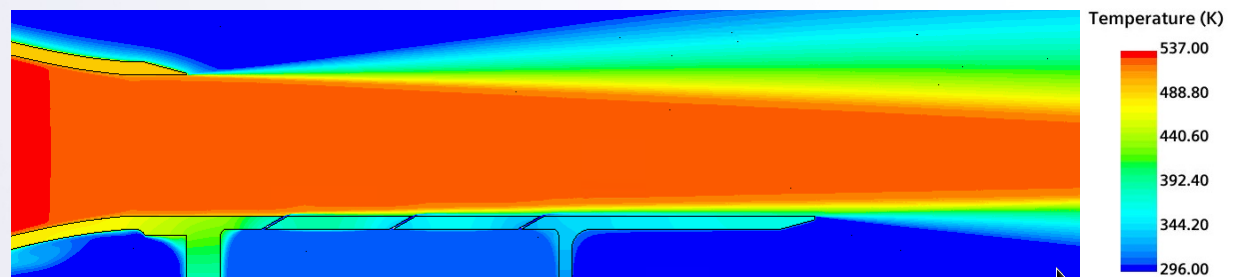
THX4: RANS Cases

- RANS SST simulation of **complete** Phase 4 configuration
- Modeling Approaches:
 1. Fluid-only (adiabatic wall)
 2. Fluid-Solid (CFD-CHT)
- CFD-CHT not a “typical” standard practice – complexity and cost.
- CFD-CHT examined here – due to potential to improve prediction of both (1) fluid flow and (2) temperatures of structure.

Axial velocity contours for Blowing Ratio = 1.0 of Fluid-Solid simulation

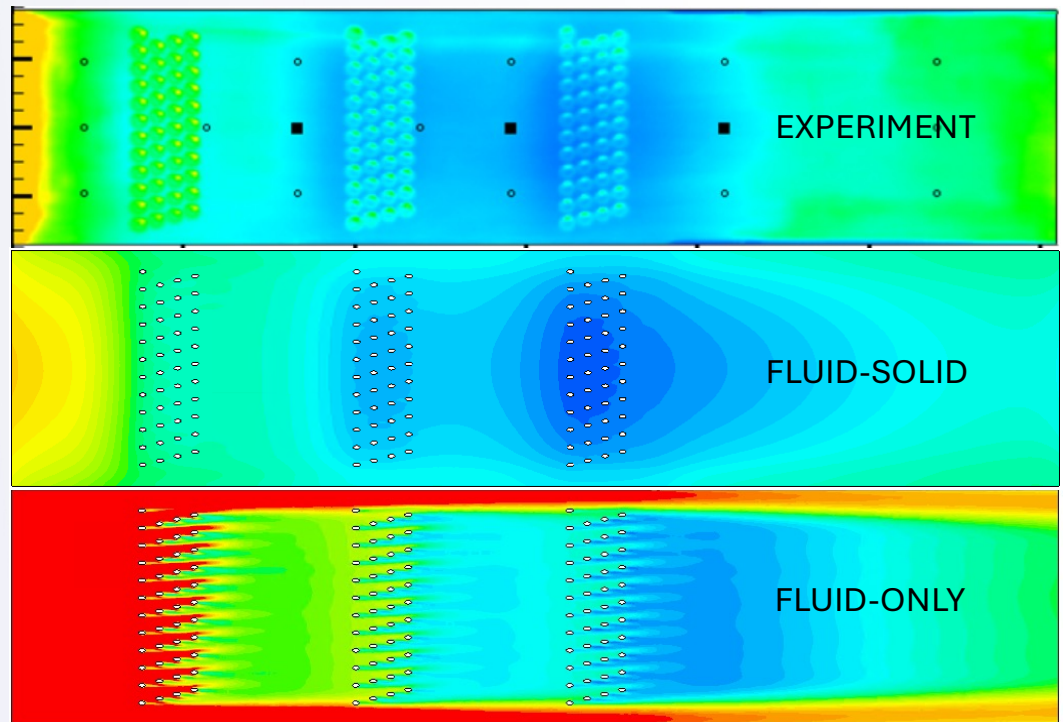
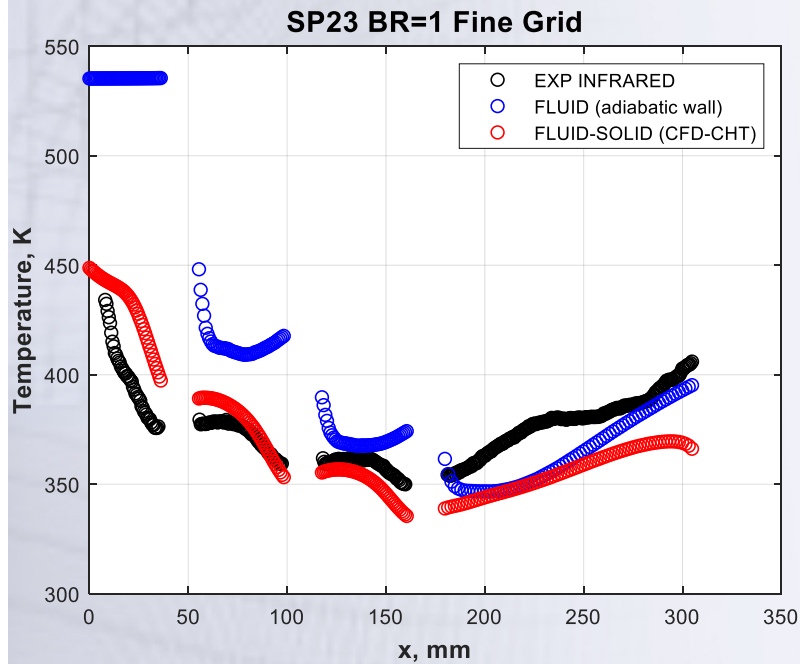


Temperature contours for Blowing Ratio = 1.0 of Fluid-Solid simulation



Grid	Fluid-only # cells	Fluid-Solid # cells	Blowing Ratio	# Cores	Numerical Scheme
Coarse	26.3 million	29.9 million	0.0, 1.0, 2.0	4,200	2 nd order upwind
Medium	70.3 million	78.9 million	1.0	4,200	2 nd order upwind
Fine	143.3 million	143.3 million	1.0	5,600	2 nd order upwind
XFine	N/A	321.4 million	1.0	5,600	2 nd order upwind

THX4 RANS Centerline Surface Temperature

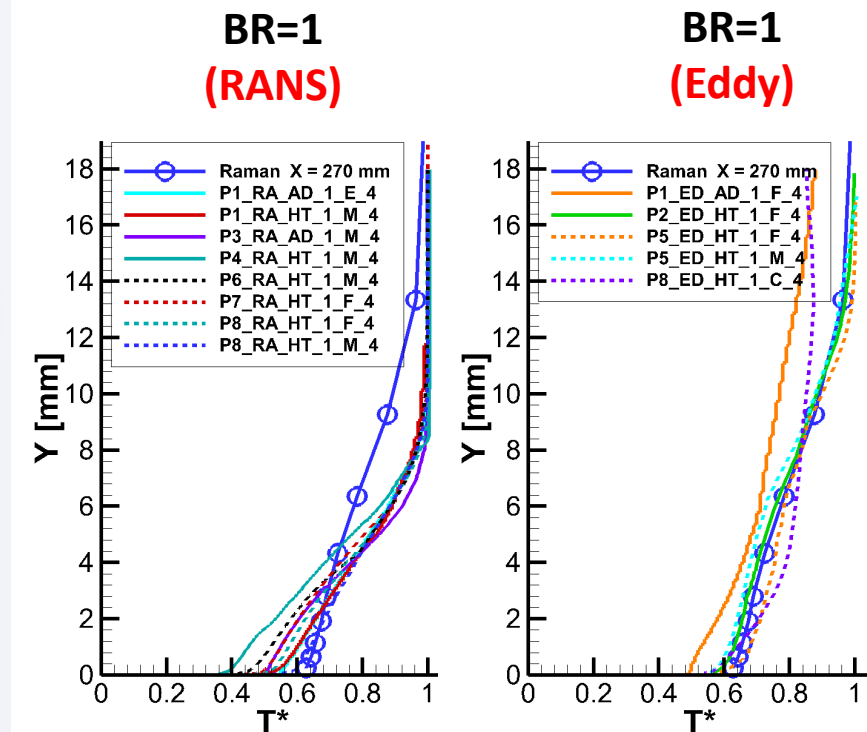


IR Temperature [K]: 325 350 375 400 425 450 475

LESSON LEARNED / BEST PRACTICE: Thermally coupled CFD-CHT significantly improves surface temperature prediction.

Temperature Profiles – THX5, x = 270 mm

- Near end of plate, on overhang.
- AD = adiabatic
- HT = Conjugate Heat Transfer
- RA = RANS
- ED = eddy-resolving
- **KEY OBSERVATION:** - in comparing SRS to RANS – is the difference in temperature profiles. Perhaps indicative of inability of RANS gradient-diffusion capability for modeling thermal transport?
- **These results are from AIAA PAW6 (multiple submissions) summary paper:** Georgiadis, N. J., Wernet, M. P., Crowe, D. S., Woerber, C. D., Karman-Shoemaker, K.C., Winkler, C.M., “Assessment of Multiphysics Computations of Flow Over A Film Cooled Plate,” *Journal of Thermophysics and Heat Transfer*, Vol. 39, No. 4., Oct. 2025, pp. 704-723.



Background: THX5 -NASA GRC Supersonic Jet Tests

- The THX5 experiments examined heated supersonic round jets.
- Experiments of Seiner et al. for a Mach 2.0 nozzle were used as the starting point.
- ***The goal of this test program was to provide modern validation quality data for high temperature supersonic jets where compressibility and jet heating impact the jet mixing rate.***

AIAA 92-02-046

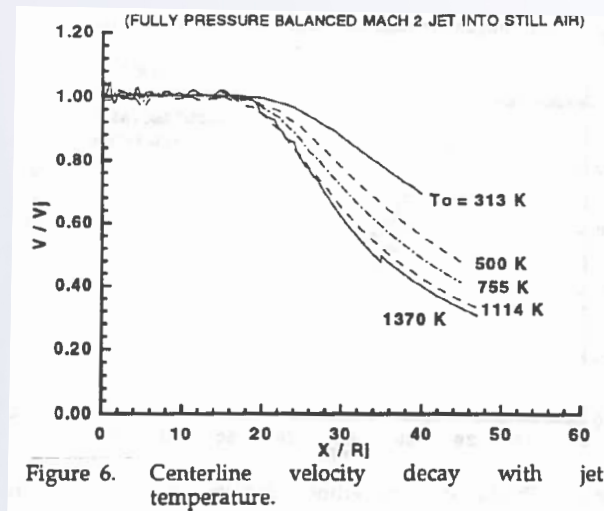
DGLR/AIAA 92-02-046

The Effects of Temperature on Supersonic Jet Noise Emission

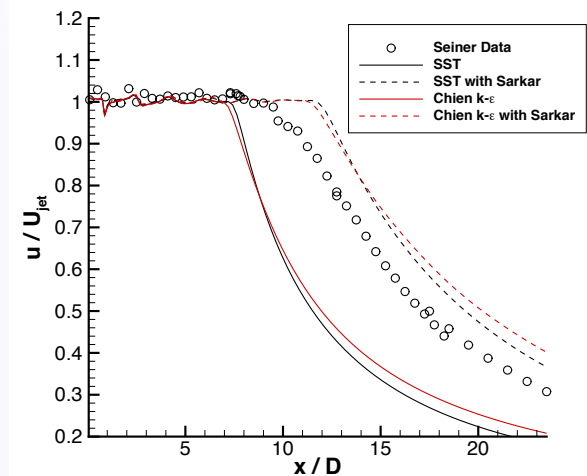
J.M. Seiner, M.K. Ponton
NASA Langley Research Center
Hampton, Virginia, U.S.A.

B.J. Jansen, N.T. Lagen
Lockheed Engineering and Sciences Company
Hampton, Virginia, U.S.A.

Centerline Velocity Decay from Seiner Experiments



Typical RANS CFD Result & Comparison with Seiner Data



THX 5 – Supersonic Jet Experiments

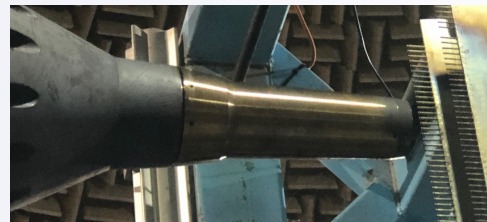
TEST MATRIX:

- Test program conducted in GRC Aeroacoustic Propulsion Laboratory (AAPL).
- Test Matrix: Mach 1.36, 1.63, and 2.0 nozzles were investigated at temperatures from unheated up to $T_t = 1700^\circ \text{R}$. Most on-design, 2 off-design test points.

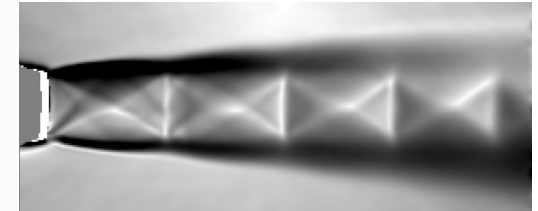
TEST PROGRAM RESULTS:

- Background-oriented Schlieren (BOS) and legacy probe measurements were obtained first.
- Streamwise and Cross-stream Particle Image Velocimetry (PIV) used to obtain velocities and turbulent stresses.
- Rotationally Resolved Raman Spectroscopy used to measure mean and rms velocities.
- **This case was used for the 6th AIAA Propulsion Aerodynamics Workshop (PAW6).**

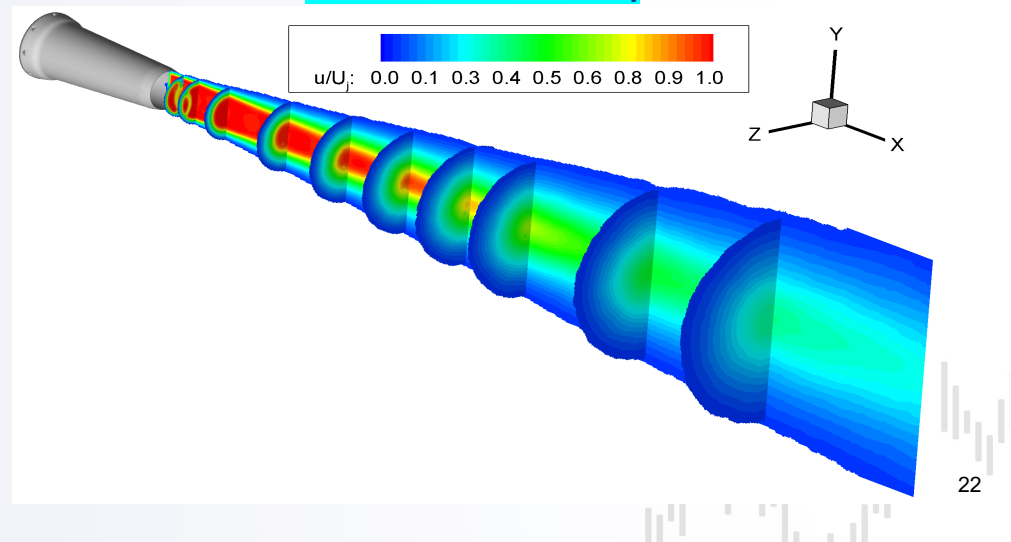
Mach 2.0 nozzle installed in GRC AAPL



BOS image showing shock-cells at off-design test point



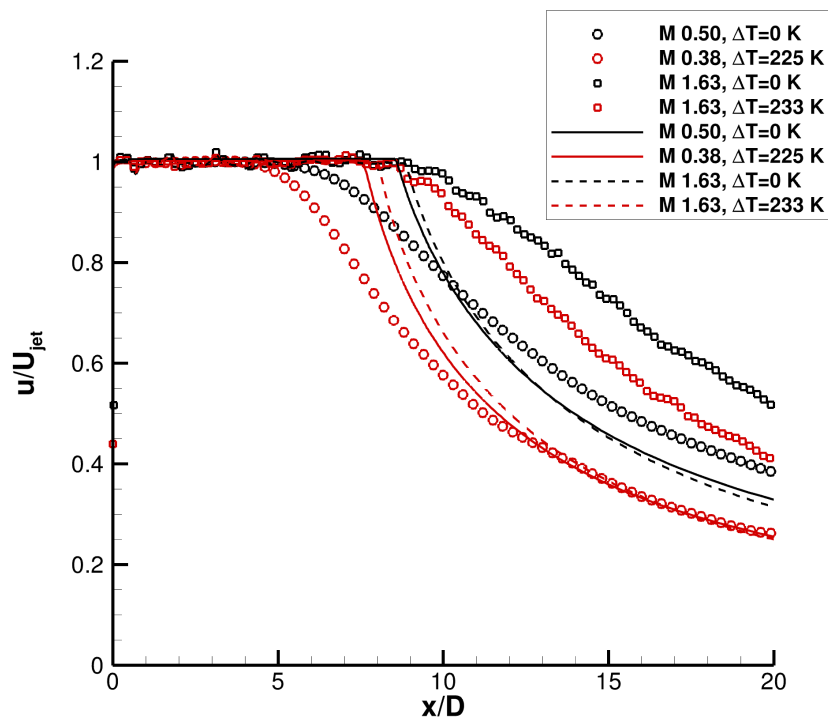
PIV of mean axial velocity



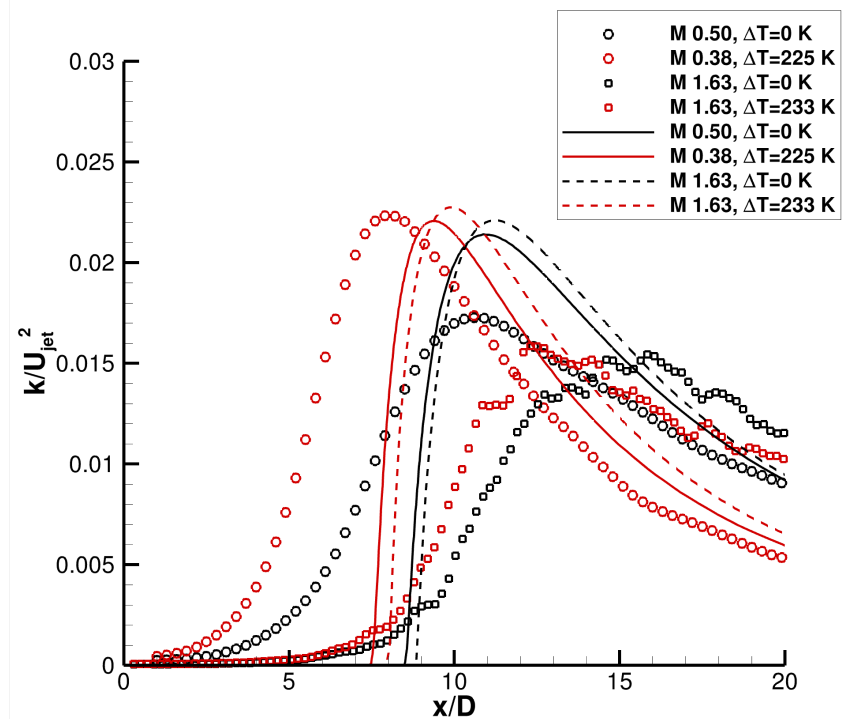
Typical Subsonic-Supersonic Jets Comparison of Experiment to RANS

Subsonic data is from Bridges and Wernet (AIAA Paper 2010-3751) – also taken in GRC APL, data used on NASA TMR

Centerline Velocity

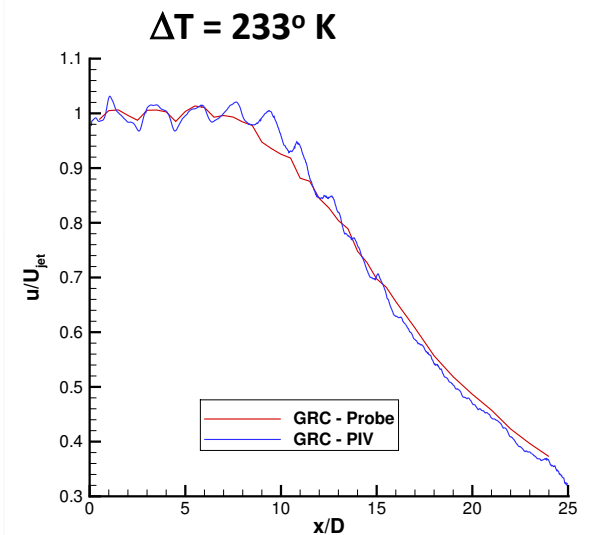
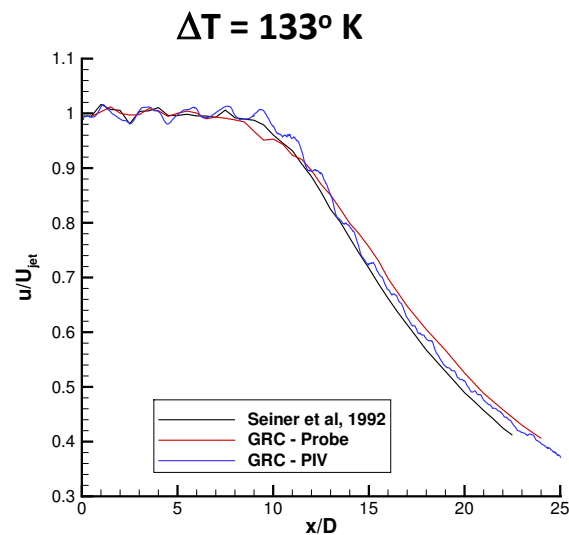
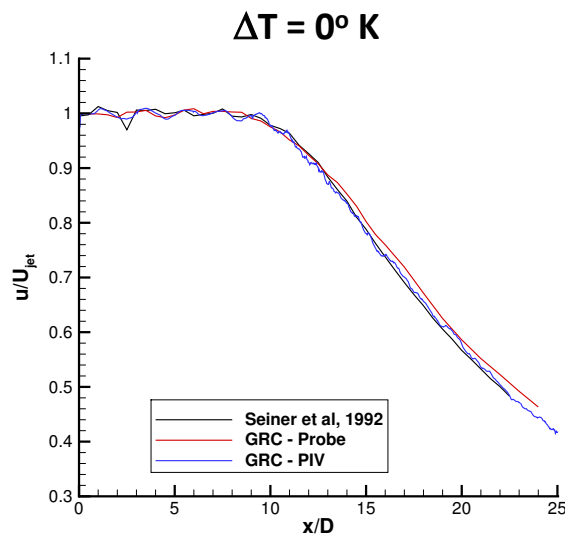


Centerline TKE



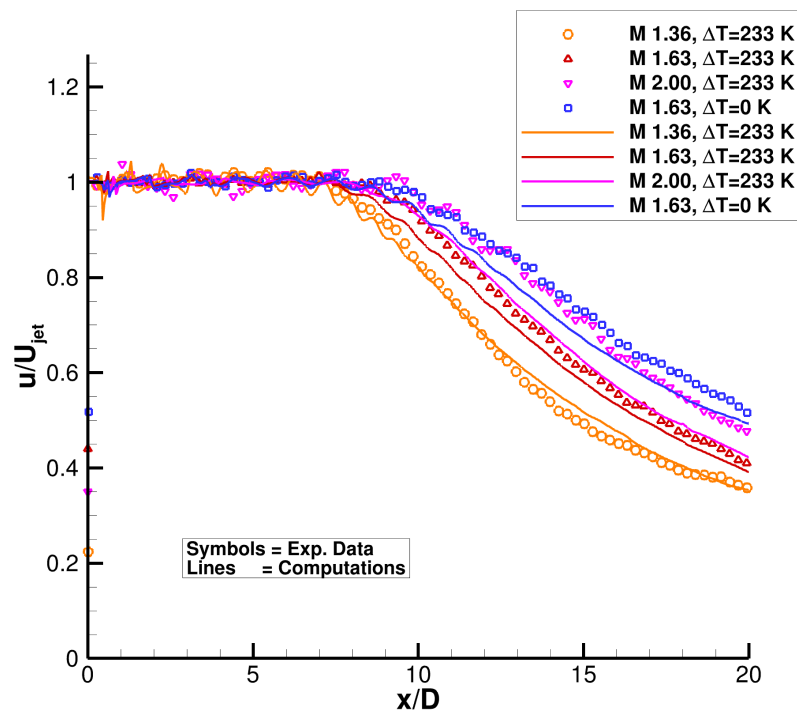
Mach 2.0 Velocity Comparisons – Seiner to THX5 & Probe to PIV

- $\Delta T = T_{\text{jet}} - T_{\infty}$, 3 matched points between Seiner experiments and current experiments, 2 shown here.
- $\Delta T = 233^{\circ}\text{ K}$ represents highest temperature of SHJAR.
- Centerline velocities shown – purpose is to verify that current experiments are consistent with previous well-respected test data set.

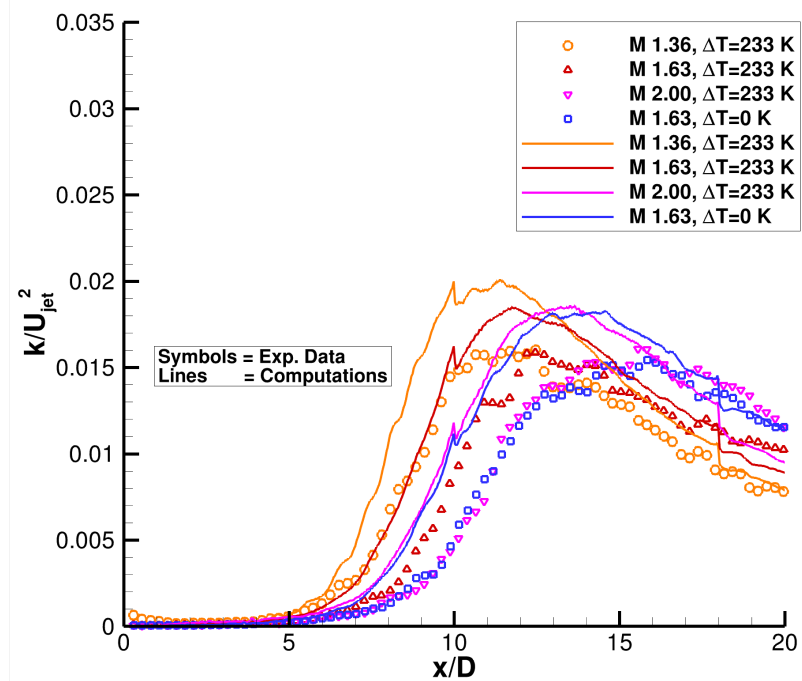


Centerline Velocity Statistics - WMLES

Centerline Velocity

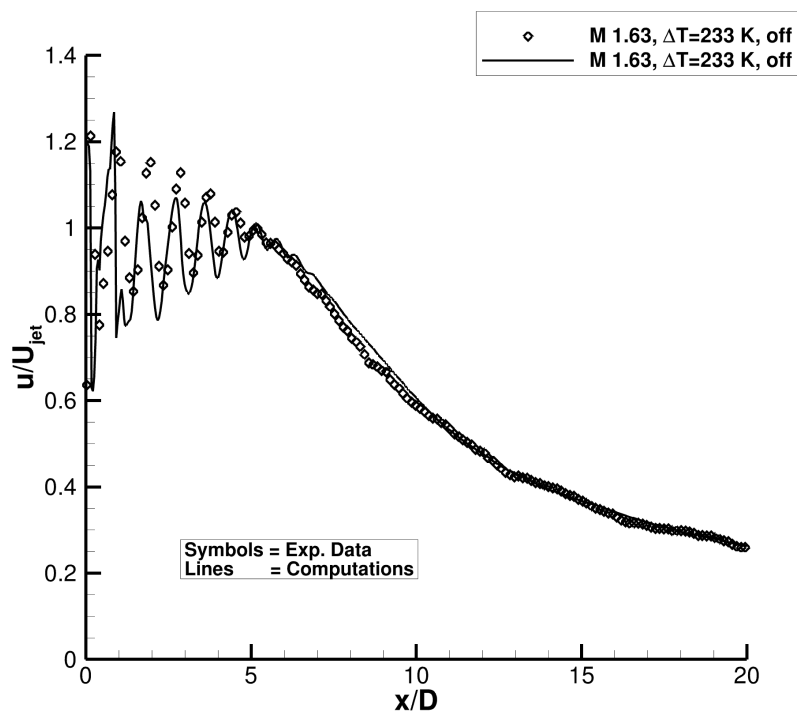


Centerline TKE

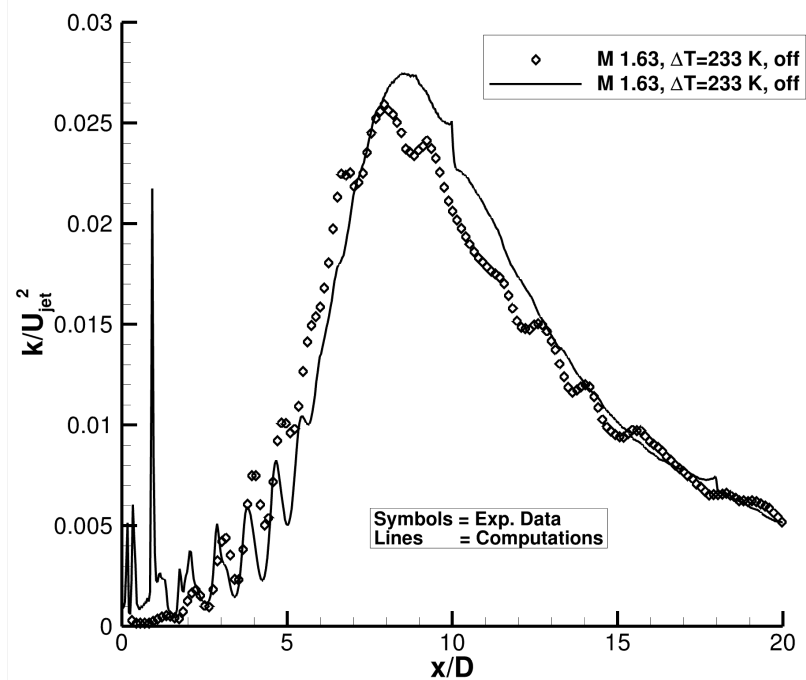


Off-Design Case Velocity Statistics - WMLES

Centerline Velocity

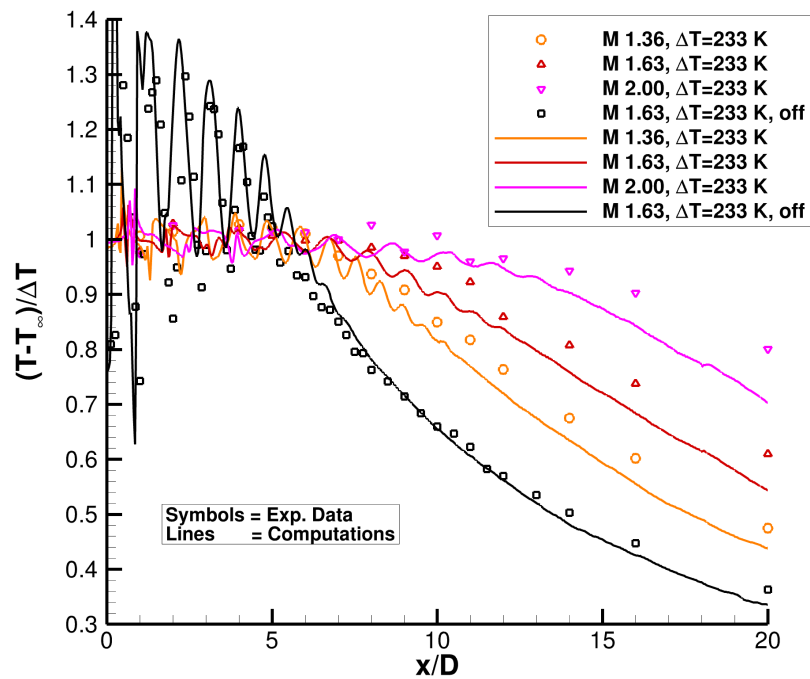


Centerline TKE

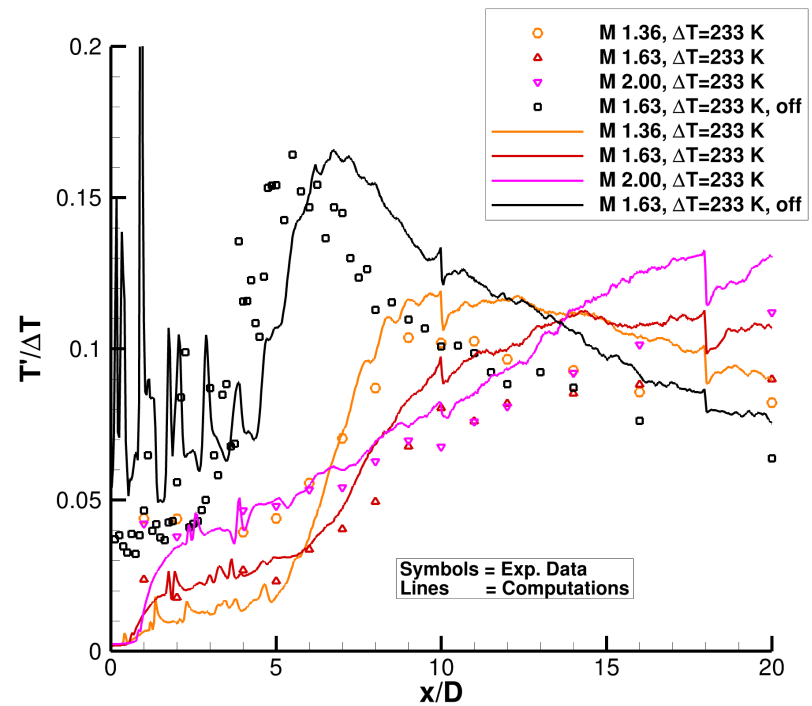


Centerline Temperature Statistics - WMLES

Mean Temperature



RMS Temperature



Conclusions and Key Lessons Learned

- **Turbulent thermal transport is an important consideration for aerospace flows; however – not as extensively studied (experimentally or computationally) as basic aerodynamic flows.**
- **The NASA Turbulent Heat Flux (THX) Experiments collected data for several heated problems focused on propulsion applications.**
- **The Raman temperature measurement capability was developed and demonstrated via these THX efforts - to enable model scale facility experiments.**
- **Concurrent CFD work was conducted to benchmark existing methods.**
- **Data already used extensively in AIAA PAW5 and PAW6; also NASA TMR.**
- **Key CFD findings:**
 1. **Scale-resolving methods (i.e some form of simulation including LES for a significant part of the flow) are significantly more accurate than RANS-based techniques for turbulent heat transport. RANS GDH likely inadequate for many flows.**
 2. **RANS is inferior to LES for free shear layer mixing – jets, JICF as in film-cooling.**
 3. **A conjugate heat transfer (CHT) modeling approach, in conjunction with the CFD solver, is required to obtain accurate surface temperature measurements.**

Publications on THX Work

- The next few pages provide a list of papers detailing experimental results from the THX efforts, phases 1-5. In addition, directly related computational work is also listed. For phases 4 & 5, this includes non-NASA publications resulting from the data being used in AIAA Propulsion Aerodynamics Workshops (PAWs) 5 and 6. The THX 5 data is also used in three NASA TMR cases, with links below:
- TMR Cases using THX5 supersonic jet data:
 1. https://turbmodels.larc.nasa.gov/jet_mach1p63_tmatched_val.html
 2. https://turbmodels.larc.nasa.gov/jet_mach1p63_hot_val.html
 3. https://turbmodels.larc.nasa.gov/jet_mach1p63_offdesign_val.html

THX1 References (low ΔT cooling flow)

EXPERIMENTS:

- Wernet, M.P., Wroblewski, A.C., and Locke, R.J., “A Dual-Plane PIV Study of Turbulent Heat Transfer Flows,” NASA TM-2016-219074, May 2017, <https://ntrs.nasa.gov/api/citations/20160003685/downloads/20160003685.pdf>.
- Poinatte, P., Thurman, D., and Lucci, B., “Detailed Velocity, Temperature, and Heat Flux Measurements on a Large Scale Film Cooling Model,” NASA TM 20220004085, May 2022, <https://ntrs.nasa.gov/api/citations/20220004085/downloads/TM-20220004085.pdf>.

COMPUTATIONS:

- Borghi, M., Thurman, D., Poinatte, P., and Engblom, W., “Numerical and Experimental Investigation of a Heated Jet in Crossflow,” J. Thermophysics and Heat Transfer, Vol.34, No. 2, April 2020, pp. 230-242. <https://doi.org/10.2514/1.T5608>

THX2 References (subsonic jet temperature measurements)

EXPERIMENTS:

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