High Temperature Multilayer Environmental Barrier Coatings Deposited Via Plasma Spray–Physical Vapor Deposition

B. J. Harder and D. Zhu
NASA Glenn Research Center, Cleveland OH 44135
M. P. Schmitt and D. E. Wolfe
The Pennsylvania State University, University Park PA 16802

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Motivation

• Turbine engine materials require long lifetimes at elevated temperatures

• Ceramic matrix composites (CMCs) offer substantial benefits
  – Limited by water vapor attack

• Environmental barrier coatings (EBCs) are necessary to protect the underlying ceramic

• Candidate materials are limited
  – Need to be thin, stable and durable

• Traditional processing methods may not be able to meet the requirements
  – Plasma Spray-Physical Vapor Deposition (PS-PVD)
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- Bridges the gap between plasma spray and vapor phase methods
  - Variable microstructure
  - Multilayer coatings with a single deposition

- Low pressure (70-1400 Pa)
  High power (>100 kW)
  - Temperatures 6,000-10,000K

- High throughput\(^1\)
  - 0.5 m\(^2\) area, 10 μm layer in < 60s

- Material incorporated into gas stream
  - Non line-of-sight deposition

- Attractive for a range of applications
  - Solid oxide fuel cells, gas sensors, etc.

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PS-PVD Diagnostics

Optical Spectrometer

- Data collected *in-situ*
- Emission lines measured and tracked
  - Plasma gases and feedstock
- Conditions can be optimized for maximum vaporization

Optical fiber
PS-PVD Diagnostics

![Graph showing intensity vs wavelength for Ar/He Plasma and Ar/He Plasma with Oxide. Peaks at specific wavelengths indicate He I and Ar I emissions, with additional Oxide emissions in the presence of Oxide.]
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Plasma temperature measurement
• Boltzmann distribution
• Assumes local thermal equilibrium
• Intensities of Ar I lines were used
  – 40 lines measured
  – 516 - 968 nm range

\[ T = (-m k_b)^{-1} \]
\[ \ln(I_{\lambda k}) = A_{\lambda k} + g_j^{-1} - 1 \]

![Graph showing plasma temperature vs. chamber pressure](image)
Yb$_2$Si$_2$O$_7$: As-Deposited

- Yb$_2$Si$_2$O$_7$ (Yb-disilicate) has been considered as a potential next-generation EBC

- Deposited using PS-PVD processing (~115 µm)
  - Air plasma sprayed silicon bond coat (~75 µm)
  - SiC/SiC substrate

- Splat-like deposition with large porosity distribution

- Backscatter shows some localized variation in Si content
  - Bright regions are Si-deficient
  - Dark regions are Si-rich

- XRD shows coatings are fully disilicate after heat treating
  - Isothermal exposure to water vapor at 1316°C for 500 hours shows little crystallographic change
Single Layer Yb-disilicate EBCs

• High heat flux testing showed increased degradation of Yb-silicate coatings

• Coatings tested in air and in a steam environment from 1400-1500C
  – Yb-disilicate was stable in air with some sintering and delamination at the bond coat
  – Steam environment testing resulted in significant porosity at the surface due to the formation of Si-hydroxide

• Although Yb-disilicate has some desirable properties as an EBC, its silica activity may still be too high for temperatures required for advanced engine components.
Qualitative Ranking of Candidate EBC Materials

**Best Water Vapor Resistance**

If silicon-free oxides can be adapted as EBCs, significantly higher stabilities are possible

\[
Flux = 0.664 \left( \frac{\nu_x \rho_x L}{\eta} \right)^{0.5} \left( \frac{\eta}{D_{Si(OH)_4} \rho_x} \right)^{0.33} \frac{D_{Si(OH)_4}}{RTL} K a_{SiO_2} \left( P_{H_2O} \right)^2
\]

Under relevant turbine engine conditions:
- Silicon Carbide: \( J = 0.48 \text{ mg/cm}^2 \text{-hr} \)
- \( \text{Y}_2\text{SiO}_5 + \text{Y}_2\text{Si}_2\text{O}_7 \): \( J = 0.12 \text{ mg/cm}^2 \text{-hr} \)
- \( \text{Y}_2\text{Si}_2\text{O}_5 + \text{Y}_2\text{O}_3 \) \( J = 2 \times 10^{-4} \text{ mg/cm}^2 \text{-hr} \) (CTE issues)

Compiled by Jim Smialek in
Review: N. Jacobson et al.
T/EBC Multilayer Coatings

- Rare earth silicates have some desirable properties for EBCs, but SiO$_2$ activity may still be too high for temperatures required for advanced engine components.

- The addition of an oxide layer on the surface shows promise for reducing the temperature of the EBC and improving durability.

- Topcoat of rare earth doped t’ ZrO$_2$ provides erosion resistance equaling or surpassing other vapor processed coatings.

- Columnar microstructure in the topcoat reduces the in-plane modulus to a value of 25-30GPa.
Thermal Conductivity Testing

- In situ measurement
- 8 μm pyrometer on the surface and backside
- High power CO₂ laser high-heat-flux system
  - Capable up to 315 W/cm²
- Sample approximately 1” in diameter

\[
k_{\text{ceramic}}(t) = \frac{q_{\text{thru}} \cdot I_{\text{ceramic}}}{\Delta T_{\text{ceramic}}(t)}
\]

\[
q_{\text{thru}} = q_{\text{delivered}} - q_{\text{reflected}} - q_{\text{radiated}}
\]

\[
\Delta T_{\text{ceramic}}(t) = T_{\text{ceramic-surface}} - T_{\text{metal-back}} - \int_0^{l_{\text{bond}}} \frac{q_{\text{thru}} \cdot dl}{k_{\text{bond}}(T)} - \int_0^{l_{\text{substrate}}} \frac{q_{\text{thru}} \cdot dl}{k_{\text{substrate}}(T)}
\]
3-Layer T/EBC

- Sample surface heated with high heat flux laser
  - Provides thermal gradient

- Tested for 10 heating cycles (1 hour each)
  - 1470°C surface temperature
  - 1350°C interface temperature
  - 1150°C backside temperature

- Microstructure showed some changes due to the gradient testing
  - Doped ZrO₂ topcoat sintered
  - Yb₂Si₂O₇ EBC layer did not change
  - Silicon bond coat showed signs of melting in various locations

- Sintering also observed in thermal conductivity measurement
  - \( k_0 \): 1.75 W/mK
  - \( k_{10} \): 2.15 W/mK
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Silicon Infiltration

- Microstructure indicated melting of Si bond coat
  - Silicon infiltration of Yb-silicate layer
  - Rapid sintering and delamination

- 1370°C maximum calculated interface temperature
  - Impurities would suppress the melting temperature from 1410°C

- Delamination isolates the top layer oxide and increases sintering
Conclusions and Future Work

• PS-PVD processing is a promising technique for depositing next-generation thermal and environmental barrier coatings on advanced engine components.

• The addition of a more thermally capable oxide topcoat on RE-silicate materials could improve performance as a T/EBC.

• The low melting silicon bond coat is the limiting factor for these coatings with surface temperatures approaching 1500°C.

• Future T/EBCs will use a more thermally capable bond coat, which should allow for thinner coatings and better performance, and will be tested under steam conditions and under mechanical loading with thermal gradient.