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TESTING OF COLORIMETRIC TUBES FOR NITROGEN
DIOXIDE AND MONOMETHYLHYDRAZINE

Philip Diamond

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March 1970

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Prof. Report No. 70M-16
(Project No. E70-11)



AD752527

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By

Philip Diamond

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U S A F ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH LABORATORY
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Unclassified

Security Classification

DOCUMENT CONTROL DATA - R & D

(Security classification of title, body of abstract and indexing annotation must be entered when the overall report is classified)

1. ORIGINATING ACTIVITY (Corporate author) USAF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH LABORATORY McCLELLAN AFB, CA. 95552		2a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION Unclassified	
		2b. GROUP	
3. REPORT TITLE TESTING OF COLORIMETRIC TUBES FOR NITROGEN DIOXIDE AND MONOMETHYLHYDRAZINE			
4. DESCRIPTIVE NOTES (Type of report and inclusive dates) FINAL			
5. AUTHOR(S) (First name, middle initial, last name) PHILIP DIAMOND			
6. REPORT DATE March 1970		7a. TOTAL NO. OF PAGES 613	7b. NO. OF REFS 4
8a. CONTRACT OR GRANT NO.		9a. ORIGINATOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S) 70M-16	
b. PROJECT NO.			
c.		9b. OTHER REPORT NO(S) (Any other numbers that may be assigned this report)	
d.			
10. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT Distribution of this document is unlimited			
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES		12. SPONSORING MILITARY ACTIVITY USAF Environmental Health Lab McClellan AFB, CA 95552	
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KEY WORDS

LINK A

LINK B

LINK C

ROLE

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ROLE

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ROLE

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COLORIMETRIC TUBES
NITROGEN DIOXIDE
MONOMETHYL HYDRAZINE
CALIBRATION

II

Unclassified

Security Classification

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ABSTRACT

Colorimetric tubes for nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) and monomethylhydrazine (MMH) were tested for accuracy, and results indicate that at the levels checked the tubes' average deviation was ± 20 percent. Tube NO_2 concentrations all read lower than the analyzed concentrations. MMH tubes read much higher than the analyzed concentration of 0.28 ppm but averaged $< + 20$ percent deviation at the 1 to 2 ppm level.

IV

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SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

Colorimetric gas detector tubes are used at Hill AFB and missile sites for monitoring propellant leaks from Post Boost Propulsion System of the Minuteman III missile. At the request of Capt R. Riccardi, Hill AFB, tests were performed to determine the accuracy of these tubes for NO_2 and MMH. Extensive testing of the accuracy and precision of these tubes has been performed by Rocketdyne, Autonetics (Ref. 1).

SECTION II

DETECTION SYSTEM

The detection system consists of two components. The Drager pump, a hand-operated bellows type with a capacity of 100 ml of air per stroke, is used to pull air through the detector tube. The tube for NO_2 effects a color change from white to blue grey and is based on the reaction of NO_2 with diphenylbenzidine. This indication is affected by free halogens. After a negative reaction, the tube may be used again for a second time on the same day.

The tube for MMH causes a color change from yellow to blue in the presence of MMH, and this change is caused by the basic properties of MMH. In addition to MMH, the tube indicates other air pollutants having a basic reaction such as hydrazine, derivatives of hydrazine, ammonia, and amines. This tube is to be used soon after opening and is not reusable after a negative test. Ten squeezes were taken for each sample for MMH and five squeezes for NO_2 .

SECTION III

APPARATUS

The generator used for obtaining appropriate MMH concentrations is shown in Figure 1. The system used nitrogen to dilute as well as vaporize the MMH from an impinger because of the severe problem from air oxidation of this compound (Ref. 2). Samples were collected in an impinger containing appropriate sampling solution.

Permeation tubes were used for the generation of NO₂ concentrations as shown in Figure 2 because of their convenience and ability to provide a reliable steady concentration of NO₂ during the 10 minute sampling period with Saltzman's reagent being used as the absorption medium. Two "coarse" frits were used in series for the Saltzman procedure (Ref. 3). Figure 2 illustrates the generating and sampling procedure for NO₂. The temperature of the air-NO₂ mix was 73°, and the R. H. was 50 percent.

SECTION IV

ANALYSES

The concentrations of MMH or NO₂ vapors in the final air or nitrogen stream were determined by chemical analyses. The MMH was determined by the Watt and Chrisp (Ref. 4) method and NO₂ by the Saltzman method. Tubes received from Hill AFB had an expiration date of September 1971 and laboratory tubes had an expiration date of December 1971.

SECTION V

RESULTS

The results for MMH are shown in Table I:

TABLE I
TUBE READINGS AND ANALYTICAL RESULTS
FOR MONOMETHYLHYDRAZINE

Analysis, ppm	September '71, ppm	December '71, ppm
0.28	0.4	0.45
0.92	1.2	1.0
2.35	2.5	2.1

The results for NO₂ are shown in Table II:

TABLE II
TUBE READINGS AND ANALYTICAL RESULTS FOR NO₂

Analysis, ppm (total)	September '71, ppm	December '71, ppm
2.7	2.0	1.75
6.3	5.5	4.50
9.05	8.75	7.00

Figures 3 and 4 graphically illustrate the results obtained.

SECTION VI

CONCLUSIONS

1. Limited studies on the MMH tubes indicate that low level readings are on the safe side and at levels of 1 and 2 ppm results average within the required ± 20 percent deviation.
2. The end point on the NO₂ tubes is difficult to read, but all results for NO₂ tubes were on the unsafe side. At 6.3 ppm the deviations from the analyzed concentration were -13 percent and -28 percent.

REFERENCES

1. Minuteman III PBPS, Vapor Detection MGE, Critical Design Review (4 June 1969).
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4. Wat., G. W. and Chrisp, J. P., "A Spectrophotometric Method for the Determination of Hydrazine," Anal. Chem. (1952), 24, p. 2006.

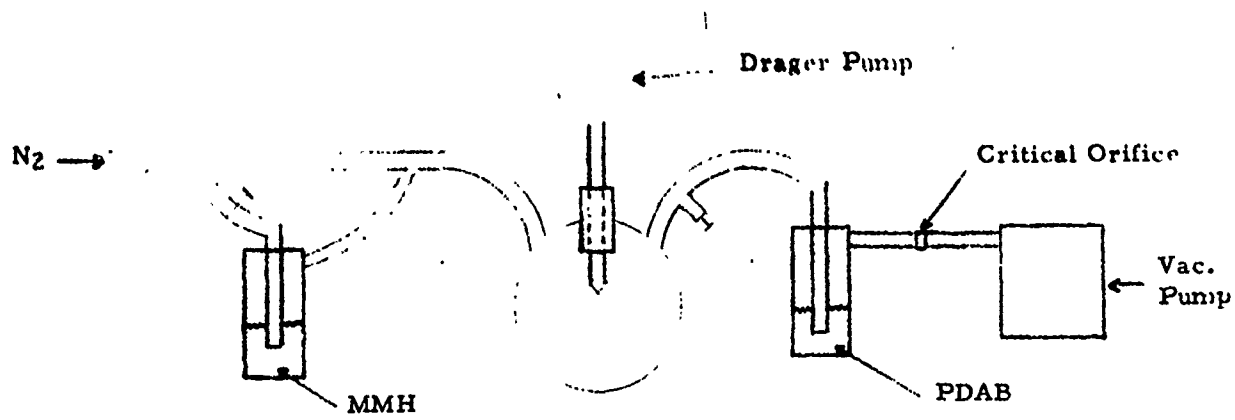


FIGURE 1. MMH Generator

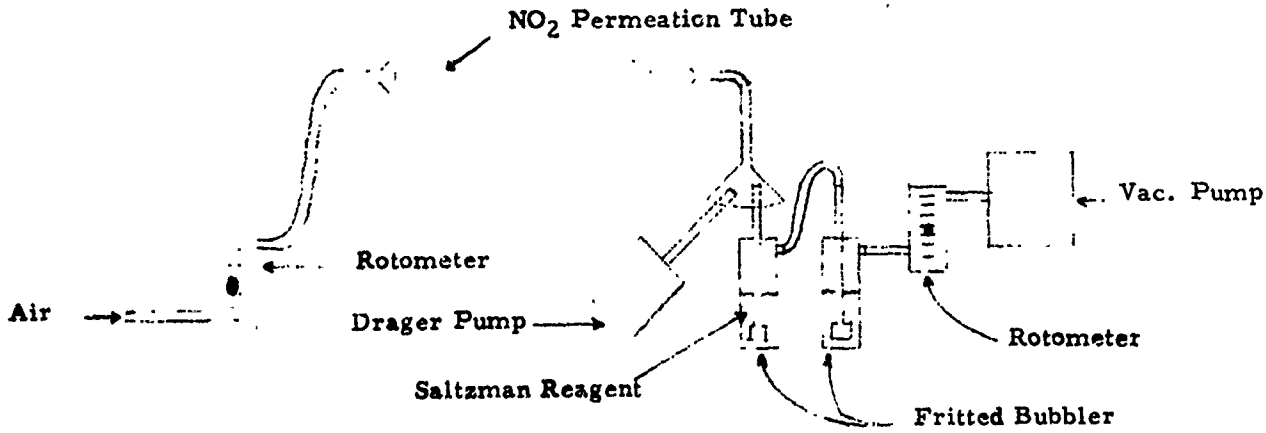


FIGURE 2. NO₂ Generator

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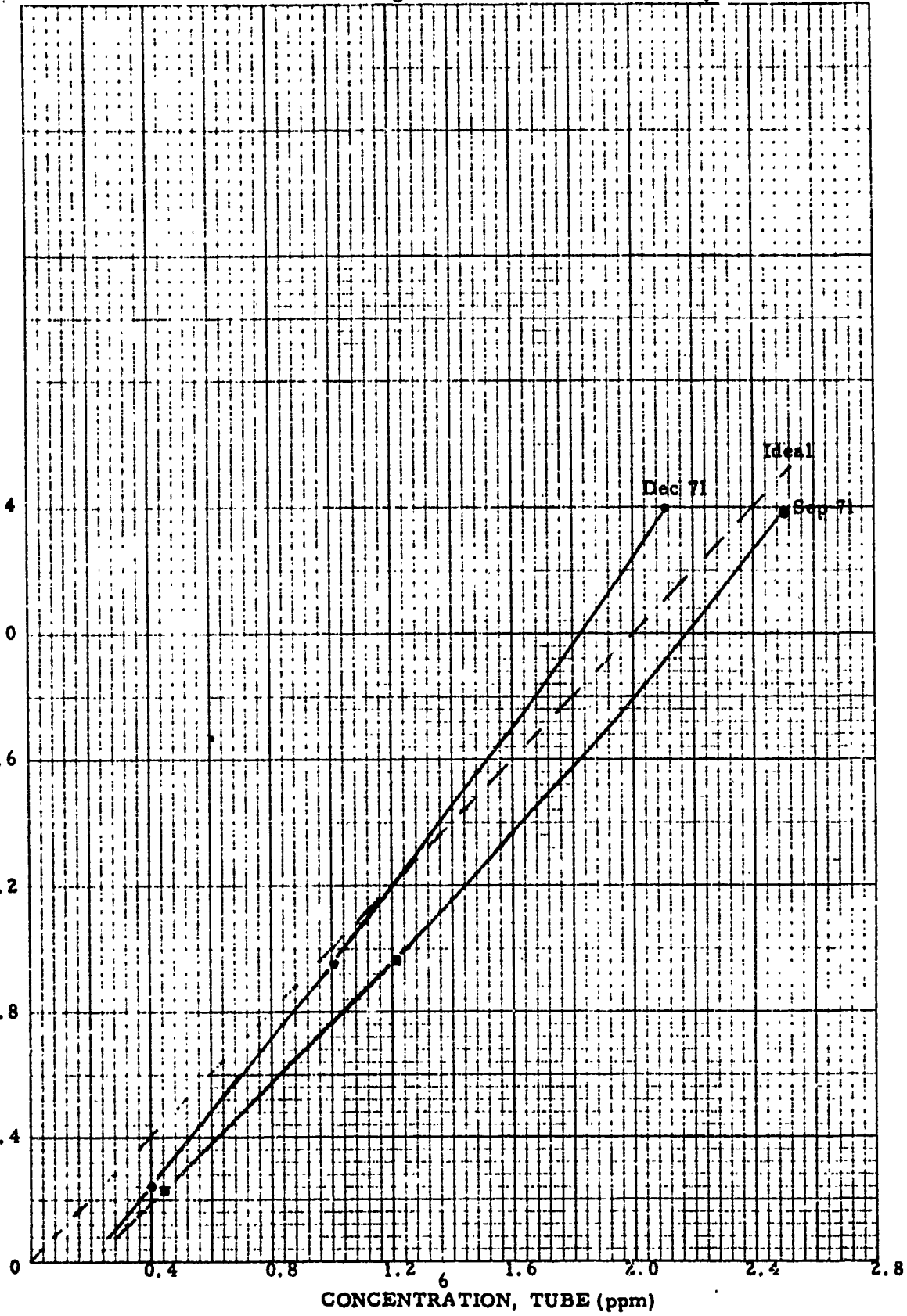
Comparison of MMH Tubes to
Chemical Analysis

Fig 3

FUGENE DIETZGEN CO.
MADE IN U.S.A.

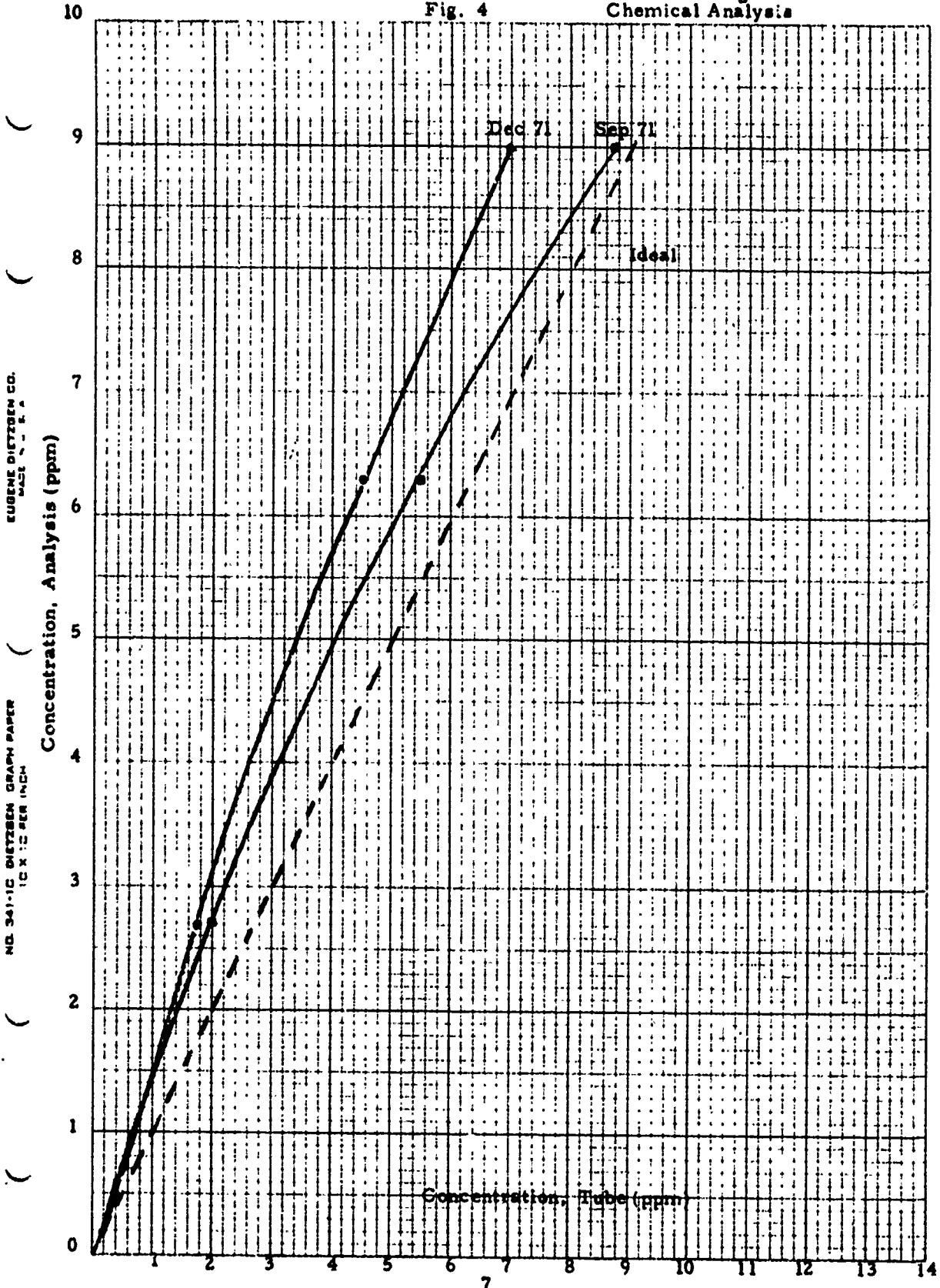
NO. 341-10 DIETZGEN GRAPH PAPER
10 X 10 PER INCH

Concentration, Analysis (ppm)



Comparison of NO₂ Tubes to
Chemical Analysis

Fig. 4



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