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Report No. FAA-CT-80-46



# MICROWAVE LANDING SYSTEM (MLS) **CLEARANCE FORMAT ASSESSMENT TESTS**

**Robert McFadden** 



DATA REPORT



**DECEMBER 1980** 

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Prepared for **U. S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION** FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

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#### INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE.

The purpose of this experiment was to provide static and flight test data with the proposed Microwave Landing System (MLS) clearance format to support the MLS International Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPS) development by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) working group.

#### SYSTEM DESCRIPTION

#### GROUND SYSTEM/EQUIPMENT DESCRIPTION.

The Bendix Small Community (SC) Microwave Landing System Azimuth Sub~ system without the monitor pole is shown in figure 1. A monitor pole was not used during the clearance assessment testing. The azimuth unit utilizes a Rotman lens which feeds 46 slotted waveguide elements spaced so as to form a vertical fan beam 3 degrees in width and 20 degrees in elevation, with a sharp underside cutoff. This antenna provides proportional guidance from left 10 degrees to right 10 degrees. Builtin sector antennas provide full fly-left and full fly-right coverage from 10 to 40 degrees. Similar antennas are used to provide identification (ID) and outof-coverage indication (OCI) functions. Figure 2 indicates the azimuth coverage of each antenna.

#### THEORY OF OPERATION OF THE MLS AIRBORNE RECEIVER.

The MLS time reference scanning beam (TRSB) airborne receiver (figure 3) uses a dwell gate processor which envelope detects the "TO" or "FRO" scanning beam and applies a -3 decibels (db) beam threshold from which a dwell gate is generated. The midpoint time (t) is calculated from four dwell gate edge measurements  $(t_1, t_2, t_3, and t_4)$ .

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$$t_{TO} = \frac{1}{2} (t_1 + t_2)$$
$$t_{FRO} = \frac{1}{2} (t_3 + t_4)$$
$$t = t_{FRO} - t_{TO}$$

The angle estimate is then given by

 $\phi = \frac{1}{K} (t - t_0)$ 

Where K = 0.10 ms/degt<sub>0</sub> = 6.8 ms

In a standard right-handed rectangular coordinate system this angle is called a conical angle and is equivalent to:

$$= \sin^{-1} \left( \frac{-Y}{\sqrt{X^2 + Y^2 + Z^2}} \right)$$

Where the azimuth unit is aimed along the +X axis.

In addition to computing an angle estimate, the receiver signal processor performs a critical function known as signal acquisition and validation. The signal acquisition process essentially involves making signal amplitude measurements; whereas, the measurements of signal quality involve a collection of time measurements.

The first event which must occur properly is the identification of the scan function; no beam functions are performed without a proper IDENT code.

The second function performed is to determine if the beams are stable and persistent. This is determined by comparing the amplitude of the signal inside the tracking gate with the amplitude of all signals outside the tracking point. For azimuth acquisition, a "confidence" counter must be incremented beyond a count of 14 before an unknown signal is declared the correct signal and the "confidence" flag is raised. Interruption of data for longer than 20 seconds will cause the confidence flag to drop.

Contraction of



BENDIX SMALL COMMUNITY MICROWAVE LANDING SYSTEM AZIMUTH SUBSYSTEM FIGURE 1.



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FIGURE 3. MLS ANGLE RECEIVER AND BLOCK DIAGRAM

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The next process is to determine the quality of the signal which requires that the TO-FRO beams have the correct shapes and relative time positions. The criteria for the frame counter to be incremented by one are:

1. A valid identification must be decoded as part of the function preamble.

2. Only one pair of dwell gate edges must be present for each half scan.

3. The dwell gate width must be less than 350 microseconds (µs).

4. The dwell gate centroids must be symmetric about the midscan time within 125 µs.

5. The scanning beam amplitude must be greater than the out-of-coverage indication (OCI) signals.

When the frame counter exceeds seven counts for the azimuth function, the Interruption of frame flag is raised. data for longer than 1 second will cause the frame flag to drop.

When the frame flag and confidence flag are both up, the system flag is raised and the system switches to the track mode. If one of the data quality checks fail, the system then reverts to a coast mode, and the best estimate of the missing data point (or rejected data) is inserted in its place by an  $\alpha - \beta$  tracker (recursive filter). An angle is considered bad if the rate of change of any MLS angle is greater than 1 degree/ second. outputs: a smoothed angle,  $X_k$ ; <sup>a</sup> resembling one-half of a 5.4 degree prediction of the next filter input scanning beam, with the exact shape and angle,  $Y_{k+1}$ ; and a velocity term,  $V_k$ , one-half power width being dependent which measures the rate of change of the upon the traveling wave tube amplifier input angle. The present raw data input (TWTA) drive signal level. Figure 6 angle is  $U_k$ ; the predicted input from represents the approximate wave shape the previous scan is  $Y_k$ . The filter and pulse width. The second shape to be is summarized by the following three evaluated was a 35 µs square pulse. equations:

 $X_{k} = \alpha U_{k} + (1-\alpha)Y_{k}$  $v_{k} = \sum_{n=1}^{k} (u_{n} - Y_{n})$ 

 $Y_{k+1} = X_{k} + \beta V_{k}$ 

k = Data sample index number n = Sample size.

The constants for the azimuth signal are:

 $\alpha = 1/4$  $\beta = 1/32$ 

A clearance counter is used to measure the reliability of data obtained from the right and left clearance pulses. The counter is incremented each time the magnitude of the CLR pulse is greater than the SLS peak and the SLS peak exceeds the scanning beam peaks. For good clearance data the count must exceed seven for azimuth. If the clearance flag is raised, the receiver enters the clearance mode and outputs the full-scale azimuth deviation to the course deviation indicator (CDI).

#### TEST CONFIGURATION.

The Bendix Small Community Azimuth equipment was modified by the contractor to generate the clearance signals as proposed by the All Weather Operations Panel (AWOP) representative from the United Kingdom (U.K.). Existing and proposed Small Community Azimuth formats are shown in figures 4 and 5, respectively. Two clearance signal shapes were This filter provides three evaluated. The first was a pulse



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Each type of pulse was transmitted at The elevation angles, with respect to the the edge of proportional coverage. They azimuth antenna phase center, for most of were positioned in time to merge with 12.462 degrees.

certain test configurations. A radiofrequency (RF) phase shifter was standard deviation, a minimum angle, a inserted in the clearance antenna line maximum angle, and the number of frame to vary the relative RF phase relationship between the clearance and scanning beam signals. The attenuation or termination of certain functions was also samples was 100. During a system flag necessary during some tests.

The SC MLS azimuth antenna was installed in two locations (figure 7) at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Technical Center, Atlantic City Airport, New Jersey. A clean site (no obstructions) in the approach zone of runway 13 was the first to be utilized. Both static and flight data were collected at this site. A second location, behind the FAA hangar (bldg. 301), was also used for flight tests only. The large hangar structure provided an excellent reflector during the multipath flight testing. Figure 8 indicates the antenna position relative to the hangar and the azimuth boresite (0 degrees) direction.

TEST PROCEDURES AND RESULTS

#### STATIC TEST PROCEDURES.

Static data were collected using a mobile test van (figure 9), with a receiving antenna height of 50 feet above the ground level. A block diagram of the van instrumentation is shown in figure 10. A series of data points were used between the pure scanning beam signal region and the pure clearance signal region. Figure 11 shows the relationship of the test van to the azimuth ground station. Only the negative angle side was used due to airport vehicular restrictions and the angle that produced a scanning beam convenience of an existing road.

the data points ranged between 1.0 and the scanning beams at an angle of 0.96 degrees. The azimuth angles ranged between -10 and -17 degrees.

Additional modifications were made for At each data point, the statistical data recorded included a mean angle, a flags. The system flag status was also recorded. In the absence of a system flag, the number of valid azimuth condition no valid samples were available. If the receiver displayed an intermittant system flag, the data was considered unusable.

> The receiver log video and dwell gates were observed during all the static Tracking gates and filtered tests. video (26 kilohertz (kHz) filter output) were also observed during some tests. Some video photographs were taken.

> The receiver video photographs and a copy of the static data were provided to the MITRE Corporation representative, under contract to the Systems Research and Development Service (SRDS), who observed the static tests for SRDS.

> During the first static test series, the ground system was radiating the shaped clearance signal. Two signal levels were used: clearance acquisition +3.0 dB and clearance acquisition +9.0 dB. Clearance acquisition was determined by positioning the test van in the pure clearance region, setting the test van attenuator to maximum, and then slowly decreasing the attentuation until the receiver acquired and held the clearance The attenuation was then signal. reduced further until the desired test ratio was reached.

> Three clearance (CL) to scanning beams (SB) ratios were tested: -9, -4.5, and -3.0 dB. The CL/SB ratio was set by positioning the test van at an azimuth dwell gate width of 75  $\mu$ s (approximately



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FIGURE 7. SITE LOCATIONS



FIGURE 8. SITE 2 (HANGAR) ORIENTATION







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FIGURE 11. SITE 1 (RUNWAY) ORIENTATION

beam level until the desired ratio was obtained. For this portion of the test a CL/SB ratio of -4.5 dB at a CL acquisition level of +9 dB was investigated, at MITRE's request, for correlation with Calspan Laborstory simulations.

For the second static test series, the 35 µs square pulse was transmitted. The signal levels tested were clearance acquisition +3 dB and clearance acquisition +9 dB. The clearance to scanning beam ratios were CL/SB = -3 dB and CL/SB = -9 dB.

During all static testing and at each data point three sets of statistical data were taken. The first was with 180 degrees received RF phase shift between the clearance and the scanning beam signals, the second was with 0 degrees phase difference, and the third was with a varying phase relationship. Phase shifts were accomplished by inserting a four bit RF phase shifter in the clearance antenna line. At each data it was necessary to terminate the OCI point the phase shifter was manually signals to prevent the receiver from adjusted to produce 180 degree phase flagging when the clearance or scanning difference between the received SB and beam level fell below the OCI level.

12.5 degrees) and reducing the scanning CL signals, as indicated by the deepest transition null in the log video, and then to 0 degree phase difference. For the varying phase condition, the shifter was clocked sequentially through its 16 phase increments. A summary of test conditions is contained in table 1.

#### STATIC TEST RESULTS.

The first test series (shaped pulse) showed poor results at the lower signal level using the existing Bendix MLS receiver. As described earlier, the receiver utilizes a multiple dwell gate test; more than one pair of dwell gates will decrement the frame counter. When the frame counter reaches zero, the frame flag drops causing a system flag. The slow rise (or fall) time associated with the shaped pulse and small noise perturbations caused multiple threshold crossings. This problem was accentuated by the reduced TWTA drive necessary to create the desired wave shape. Since the clearance signal level was reduced,

#### TABLE 1. STATIC TEST SUMMARY

Date	Clearance To Scanning Beam Ratio (dB)	Signal Level (dB Above Acquisition)	Clearance Pulse Type
2/8/80	-4.5	9	Shaped
2/14/80	-3 -9	9 9	Shaped
2/15/80	-3 -9	3 3	Shaped
2/22/80	-3 -9	9 9	35 µs
2/26/80	-3 -9	3 3	35 µs

Figure 12 are plots of calculated performance were attributed to the azimuth angle versus the receiver azimuth angle output and valid azimuth frame percentages using the shaped clearance pulse.

An acquisition test was done to determine the difference in receiver performance using the standard 3 degree scanning beam compared with the shaped clearance pulse. The receiver was placed in the pure scanning beam region with the clearance and OCI signals terminated. The SB signal level was then reduced below the receiver noise level, but still maintaining a function identification decode rate of 100 percent. As the SB signal was increased in small increments, the point at which the receiver acquired and held the SB was recorded. A similar procedure was utilized in the pure clearance region, except that this time the clearance signal was radiated and the scanning beam was terminated. It required approximately 3 dB more signal level to acquire and hold the shaped clearance pulse than it did the 3 degree scanning beam.

Since this condition made a fair evaluation of the proposed format difficult at low signal levels, an alternate clearance signal (a 35 µs square pulse) was chosen as a second It was wide enough test condition. to pass through the receiver without appreciable distortion, and narrow enough to minimize the multiple crossing problem associated with its flat top. A second acquisition test showed no preference between SB and CL signals.

During the second test series, the 35  $\mu$ s square pulse exhibited better low signal Azimuth, elevation, and range, with performance than the wider shaped one. Figure 13 are plots of calculated were computed by the tracking facility azimuth angle versus the receiver and then telemetered to the test airazimuth angle, with an additional graph craft. indicating the percentage of valid time, DME range, MLS azimuth angle, and azimuth frames. expected and no unusual results were (ID), right clearance, left clearance,

multiple dwell gate problem described previously.

One system flag area was between -10.5 and 11.2 degrees true azimuth when the clearance to scanning beam (CL/SB) ratio was -3 dB (figures 13-g through 13-1).

When the CL/SB ratio was at this level, which also corresponds to the receiver dwell gate threshold point, a valid frame percentage of less then 100 occured over a large area between -10.5 and -15.5 degrees. A second system flag region between -14.8 and -15.2 degrees with the CL/SB ratio equal to -9 dB was also noted (figure 13-c). Although the only system flagged data occurred when the phase shift was equal to 180 degrees, the valid frame percentage dropped below 100 at one or more points between 14.3 and 17 degrees true azimuth angle (figures 13-a through 13-f).

#### FLIGHT TEST PROCEDURES.

An Aerocommander (N-50) was the FAA test aircraft. Figure 14 is a block diagram of the airborne data collection package. A modified MLS receiver was installed in the number one position in order to provide signal amplitude information as a part of the digital output data. Figures 15 and 16 are laboratory calibrations of receivers SC101 and SC103, respectively, and indicate the digital output number (a measure of signal amplitude) for a specific signal level input at the receiver RF input connector.

Aircraft space position was determined by the Nike-Hercules tracking facility. respect to the MLS SC azimuth antenna, This information, along with Performance was as the signal amplitudes of the preamble found. Areas of system flag or poor left out of coverage indication (OCI),

beams were recorded digitally on the Kennedy 9800 tape unit. Analog deviation and flag signals were recorded on the brush 220 strip chart recorder. FLIGHT TEST RESULTS.

The digital tapes were checked for No attempt was made to analyze the quality and then forwarded, along with a airborne digital data at the Technical receiver calibration, to Vitro for Center since the data tapes were sent with Vitro to provide data plots showing after a "quick look" check of the the signal amplitudes of the various recorded data was performed. A Flight functions versus the aircraft position. Test Summary is contained in table 2.

rear OCI, right OCI, and "TO" and "FRO" The analog strip chart recordings were used to check any abnormalities during the flight.

further processing. SRDS contracted to Vitro for processing immediately

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FIGURE 12. AZIMUTH RECEIVER ANGLE VERSUS TRUE AZIMUTH PLOTS USING THE SHAPED CLEARANCE PULSE (SHEET 1 OF 15)



FIGURE 12. AZIMUTH RECEIVER ANGLE VERSUS TRUE AZIMUTH PLOTS USING THE SHAPED CLEARANCE PULSE (SHEET 2 OF 15)



FIGURE 12. AZIMUTH RECEIVER ANGLE VERSUS TRUE AZIMUTH PLOTS USING THE SHAPED CLEARANCE PULSE (SHEET 3 OF 15)

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FIGURE 12. AZIMUTH RECEIVER ANGLE VERSUS TRUE AZIMUTH PLOTS USING THE SHAPED CLEARANCE PULSE (SHEET 4 OF 15)



FIGURE 12. AZIMUTH RECEIVER ANGLE VERSUS TRUE AZIMUTH PLOTS USING THE SHAPED CLEARANCE PULSE (SHEET 5 OF 15)



FIGURE 12. AZIMUTH RECEIVER ANGLE VERSUS TRUE AZIMUTH PLOTS USING THE SHAPED CLEARANCE PULSE (SHEET 6 OF 15)



FIGURE 12. AZIMUTH RECEIVER ANGLE VERSUS TRUE AZIMUTH PLOTS USING THE SHAPED CLEARANCE PULSE (SHEET 7 OF 15)





FIGURE 12. AZIMUTH RECEIVER ANGLE VERSUS TRUE AZIMUTH PLOTS USING THE SHAPED CLEARANCE PULSE (SHEET 8 OF 15)



FIGURE 12. AZIMUTH RECEIVER ANGLE VERSUS TRUE AZIMUTH PLOTS USING THE SHAPED CLEARANCE PULSE (SHEET 9 OF 15)



FIGURE 12. AZIMUTH RECEIVER ANGLE VERSUS TRUE AZIMUTH PLOTS USING THE SHAPED CLEARANCE PULSE (SHEET 10 OF 15)



FIGURE 12. AZIMUTH RECEIVER ANGLE VERSUS TRUE AZIMUTH PLOTS USING THE SHAPED CLEARANCE PULSE (SHEET 11 OF 15)



FIGURE 12. AZIMUTH RECEIVEP ANGLE VERSUS TRUE AZIMUTH PLOTS USING THE SHAPED CLEARANCE PULSE (SHEET 12 OF 15)



FIGURE 12. AZIMUTH RECEIVER ANGLE VERSUS TRUE AZIMUTH PLOTS USING THE SHAPED CLEARANCE PULSE (SHEET 13 OF 15)



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FIGURE 12. AZIMUTH RECEIVER ANGLE VERSUS TRUE AZIMUTH PLOTS USING THE SHAPED CLEARANCE PULSE (SHEET 14 OF 15)



FIGURE 12. AZIMUTH RECEIVER ANGLE VERSUS TRUE AZIMUTH PLOTS USING THE SHAPED CLEARANCE PULSE (SHEET 15 OF 15)



FIGURE 13. AZIMUTH RECEIVER ANGLE VERSUS TRUE AZIMUTH PLOTS USING THE 35 µs SQUARE PULSE (SHEET 1 OF 12)



FIGURE 13. AZIMUTH RECEIVER ANGLE VERSUS TRUE AZIMUTH PLOTS USING THE 35  $\mu s$  square pulse (sheet 2 of 12)

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FIGURE 13. AZIMUTH RECEIVER ANGLE VERSUS TRUE AZIMUTH PLOTS USING THE 35  $_{\mu 8}$  square pulse (sheet 3 of 12)





FIGURE 13. AZIMUTH RECEIVER ANGLE VERSUS TRUE AZIMUTH PLOTS USING THE 35 µs SQUARE PULSE (SHEET 4 OF 12)



FIGURE 13. AZIMUTH RECEIVER ANGLE VERSUS TRUE AZIMUTH PLOTS USING THE 35 µs SQUARE PULSE (SHEET 5 OF 12)



FIGURE 13. AZIMUTH RECEIVER ANGLE VERSUS TRUE AZIMUTH PLOTS USING THE 35  $_{\mu S}$  SQUARE PULSE (SHEET 6 OF 12)



FIGURE 13. AZIMUTH RECEIVER ANGLE VERSUS TRUE AZIMUTH PLOTS USING THE 35 µs SQUARE PULSE (SHEET 7 OF 12)



FIGURE 13. AZIMUTH RECEIVER ANGLE VERSUS TRUE AZIMUTH PLOTS USING THE 35  $\mu s$  SQUARE PULSE (SHEET 8 OF 12)



FIGURE 13. AZIMUTH RECEIVER ANGLE VERSUS TRUE AZIMUTH PLOTS USING THE 35  $\mu$ s SQUARE PULSE (SHEET 9 OF 12)







FIGURE 13. AZIMUTH RECEIVER ANGLE VERSUS TRUE AZIMUTH PLOTS USING THE 35 #8 SQUARE PULSE (SHEET 11 OF 12)



35 µs SQUARE PULSE (SHEET 12 OF 12)

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Z/12/80 LAB CALIBRATION OF RECEIVER SCIDE



FIGURE 16. RECEIVER CALIBRATION CURVE (S/N SCI03)

		TABLE 2.	FLIGHT TES	T SUMMARY	
Date	Run	Flight Pattern	Altitude (ft)	Range (nmi)	Ground Station Configuration
2/6/80	2 and 3	"S" shaped radial	4,500	From 20	Site 1 (runway): proposed format,
	4	(-10° to -15°) CCW Partial Orbit (±50°)	3,500	10	shaped pulse, phase incrementing in left clearance (CL), left and
	5	CW Partial Orbit (±50°)	3,500	10	right CL amplitude unequal.
2/8/80	l and 2	"S" Shaped Radial	4,500	From 20	Site 1: proposed format, shaped
		(-10° to -15°)	000		pulse, phase incrementing in left
	4 10	CCW Partial Orbit (±50°) CW Partial Orbit (±50°	2,000	ەم	CL, left and right CL amplitude equal.
2/27/80	-	CW Partial Orbit (±50°)	2,000	Q	Site 1: proposed format with 35 $\mu$ s
	2	CCW Partial Orbit (±50°)	2,000	9	square pulse, phase incrementing
	3 and 4	"S" Shaped Radial (_10° + 2 -15°)	2,000	12	in left CL, OCI's off, no attenuation.
	44	CL Darrial Orbit (+50°)	2 000	ų	Same as runs 1 to 4 excent no phase
	, ,	CW Partial Orbit (+50°)	2,000	y ve	incrementing.
	œ	"S" Shaped Radial (-10° to -15°)	2,000	12	0
2/28/80	1	CW Orbit (±50°)	1,500	9	Site 1: existing format, no
	2	CCW Orbit (±50°)	1,500	9	modification.
	4 and 5	"S" Shaped Radial	1,500	11	
		( CI - 01 0I -)			
3/4/80	*	CW Orbit 0° to 35°	1,600	9	Site 2 (Hangar): existing format.
	2*	CCW Partial Orbit 30° to 0°	1,600	9	
	<b>*</b> e	CW Partial Orbit 0° to 35°	1,600	9	
	*7	"S" Shaped Radial (11° to 17°)	1,600	12	
3/5/80	-	"S" Shaped Radial (11° to 17°)	4,000	20	Site 2: existing format.
	2	"S" Shaped Radial (11° to 17°)	4,000	20	Site 2: proposed format with
	m	"S" Shaped Radial (11° to 17°)	1,600	12	35 µs pulse.
	4	CW Orbit 0° to 35°	1,600	9	
	5	CCW Orbit 35° to 0°	1,600		
3/6/80	1	"S" Shaped Radial	4,500	20	Site 2: proposed format with
		(11 <sup>-</sup> to 17 <sup>-</sup> )			$35 \ \mu s$ pulse, no phase incrementing,
	2 and 3	"S" Shaped Radial (14°± 1°)	1,600	12	0C1's on.
	4	CW Partial Orbit 0° to 35°	1,600	9	
	Ś	CCW Partial Orbit 35 to 0°	1,600	9	
	<b>ب</b>	"S" Shaped Radial (-11° to -16°)	4,500	20	
		"S" Shaped Radial (-14 ± 1)	1,600	12	-
	σ	"S" Shaped Radial (14°±1°)	1,600	12	Site 2: existing format.

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\*No Nike Tracking

