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Journal of Energetic Materials

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713770432>

Analysis methods for explosive materials-I. polynitro compounds

Eleonore G. Kayser^a

^a Research and Technology Department, Naval Surface Weapons Center, Silver Spring, Maryland

To cite this Article Kayser, Eleonore G.(1983) 'Analysis methods for explosive materials-I. polynitro compounds', Journal of Energetic Materials, 1: 3, 251 – 273

To link to this Article: DOI: 10.1080/07370658308010621

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07370658308010621>

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ANALYSIS METHODS FOR EXPLOSIVE MATERIALS -

I. POLYNITRO COMPOUNDS

Eleonore G. Kayser

Research and Technology Department

Naval Surface Weapons Center

White Oak, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

ABSTRACT

A high pressure liquid chromatography method has been developed for rapid and quantitative chemical analysis of the following thermally stable explosive materials: DATB, DINA, DIPAM, DNT, DODECA, HNAB, HNBiB, HMX, HNBP, HNS, NONA, ONT, PA, PETN, PYX, RDX, TATB, TETRYL, TNA, TNB, TNN, TNS, TNT, and TPT (see glossary). Additional characterization data was obtained using nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy, and thin layer chromatography. Melting point data is also reported.

Journal of Energetic Materials Vol. 1, 251-273
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Published in 1983 by Dowden, Brodman & Devine, Inc.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This work is currently being sponsored by the Lyndon B. Johnson Manned Spacecraft Center, Task NASARI2RB, and the Strategic Systems Projects Office, Task B00035B001, R12GC. The identification of vendors and/or products implies neither endorsement nor criticism by the Naval Surface Weapons Center.

INTRODUCTION

The importance of heat resistant and insensitive high explosive compounds is increasing, since new applications, both military and commercial, require materials that can withstand a higher degree of aerodynamic heating and have a lower vulnerability to accidental initiation. A number of these heat resistant materials (e.g. HNS type-I, HNS-type II, DIPAM) are currently used in explosive transfer lines, commonly called shielded mild detonating cord (SMDC), which are designed to transfer a fully contained explosive stimulus and are the most extensively applied components in aircraft crew escape systems. To date, more than a million rigid explosive transfer lines have been manufactured for this application and are currently installed in various types of aircraft.^{1,2}

A series of these temperature resistant explosive materials, most of which were synthesized and/or evaluated at the Naval Surface Weapons Center (NSWC), are shown in the glossary. Typical examples

include: TATB, PYX, ONT, DATB, HNS, NONA, DODECA, and TPT. Few of the presently used common explosive materials can withstand temperatures above 200°C without melting and/or decomposing, however, the compounds of this investigation are stable and can be used in the temperature range of 230°-350°C. Previously reported assay methods for TATB include spectrophotometric determinations using ethylenediamine (EDA)³, tetraethylammonium hydroxide (TEAH)^{4,5}, dimethylsulfoxide (DMSO)⁶ and sulfuric acid⁷, as well as a liquid chromatography-spectrophotometric method⁸. Spectrophotometric methods of analysis,^{3,9} were reported for HNS, DODECA, NONA, ONT, HNBP, TNN, TNB, HNBiB, TPT, PYX, and DNT. HPLC procedures¹⁰⁻¹⁶ have been described for HNS, HNBiB, TNT, TNB, RDX, HMX, PA, TNA, DNT and TATB. This report describes a practical high performance liquid chromatographic (HPLC) analysis method that provides both accuracy and reproducibility within the solubility constraints of these heat-resistant energetic materials. The HPLC method described herein uses the Waters Associates Radial Compression Separation System (RCSS). The RCSS unit consists of two components: a Radial-Pak cartridge containing reverse phase C-18 column packing material and a Model RCM-100 module that compresses the Radial-Pak cartridge. With this system, a quantitative assay (+1%) is achieved for all of the twenty-four compounds investigated (see glossary).

Additional characterization data was obtained using nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy (NMR), and thin layer chromatography (TLC). Melting point data is also reported for these materials.

EXPERIMENTAL

Materials and Solutions

Most of the explosive compounds of this investigation are not commercially available and were prepared by the NSW Synthesis and Formulations Branch. The exceptions were PYX and DIPAM which were obtained from Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) and from Northrop Carolina Co., Inc. respectively.

The solvent capacities for TATB, HNS, DODECA, NONA, PYX, TPT, and HMX were determined in methanol, dimethylsulfoxide (DMSO), dimethylformamide, and N-methylpyrrolidone. Although dimethylformamide and N-methylpyrrolidone¹⁷ proved to have the greatest solvent capacity for several of the compounds investigated (e.g. TATB, HMX, and TPT) all the compounds were adequately soluble in DMSO at ambient temperature so that HPLC, NMR, and TLC data could be accurately determined with this solvent. HPLC traces of several neat DMSO samples indicated the presence of two minor impurity peaks with retention times of 3.0-3.2 minutes (methanol:water, 70:30) which could have interfered with the peak height calculations of several of the compounds at the low concentration limits. The DMSO used in this study, therefore, was passed thru a column of activated charcoal which removed 95-98% of these impurities.

Calculations

The concentration of each explosive material was initially determined by peak area as well as peak height. Using the radial compression unit, the percentage accuracy of the area method was found to be equivalent to that of the peak height method. For simplicity reasons, the latter method was used for all data calculation.

HPLC Conditions

A high-performance liquid chromatograph (Waters Associates Model ALC 202) equipped with a 254 nm wavelength detector, a solvent delivery system (Model 6000), and a U6K high pressure loop injector was used with a Model RCM-100 module containing a reverse-phase C-18 Radial-Pak cartridge. Sample solutions were eluted isocratically at ambient temperature. Column flow was 2.0 ml/minute, with a mobile phase consisting of the following mixtures of HPLC grade methanol and distilled water. 20:80 (v/v), 40:60 (v/v), 50:50 (v/v), and 70:30 (v/v). The solvent mixtures were not degassed prior to HPLC analysis and sample injections of 2 to 10 microliters were used.

NMR Conditions

Proton NMR spectra were obtained on a Varian XL-200 NMR spectrometer. The chemical shift values (δ) were determined

relative to the reference compound tetramethylsilane (TMS). NMR structure identifications were done in DMSO-d₆ and benzene-d₆.

TLC Conditions

TLC data were obtained with benzene and methanol as the developing solvents. Merck Silica Gel HF-254 was the absorbent coated on glass plates. Spot visualization was achieved with a short wave UV (2537A) lamp.

Melting Point Conditions

Melting point data were determined on a majority of the compounds with a Thomas Hoover Capillary Melting Point Apparatus using a heating rate of approximately 2°/minute.

RESULTS

Quantitative analysis of the investigated compounds was achieved via reverse-phase HPLC with DMSO as solvent and methanol:water mixtures (70:30, 60:40, 50:50, v/v) as the mobile phase. Separation of a fourteen component mixture can be seen in Figure 1. RDX, TATB, TNB, DATB, TETRYL, TNN, TNT, DNT, HNS, and DIPAM were completely resolved, HMX and PYX were partially resolved,

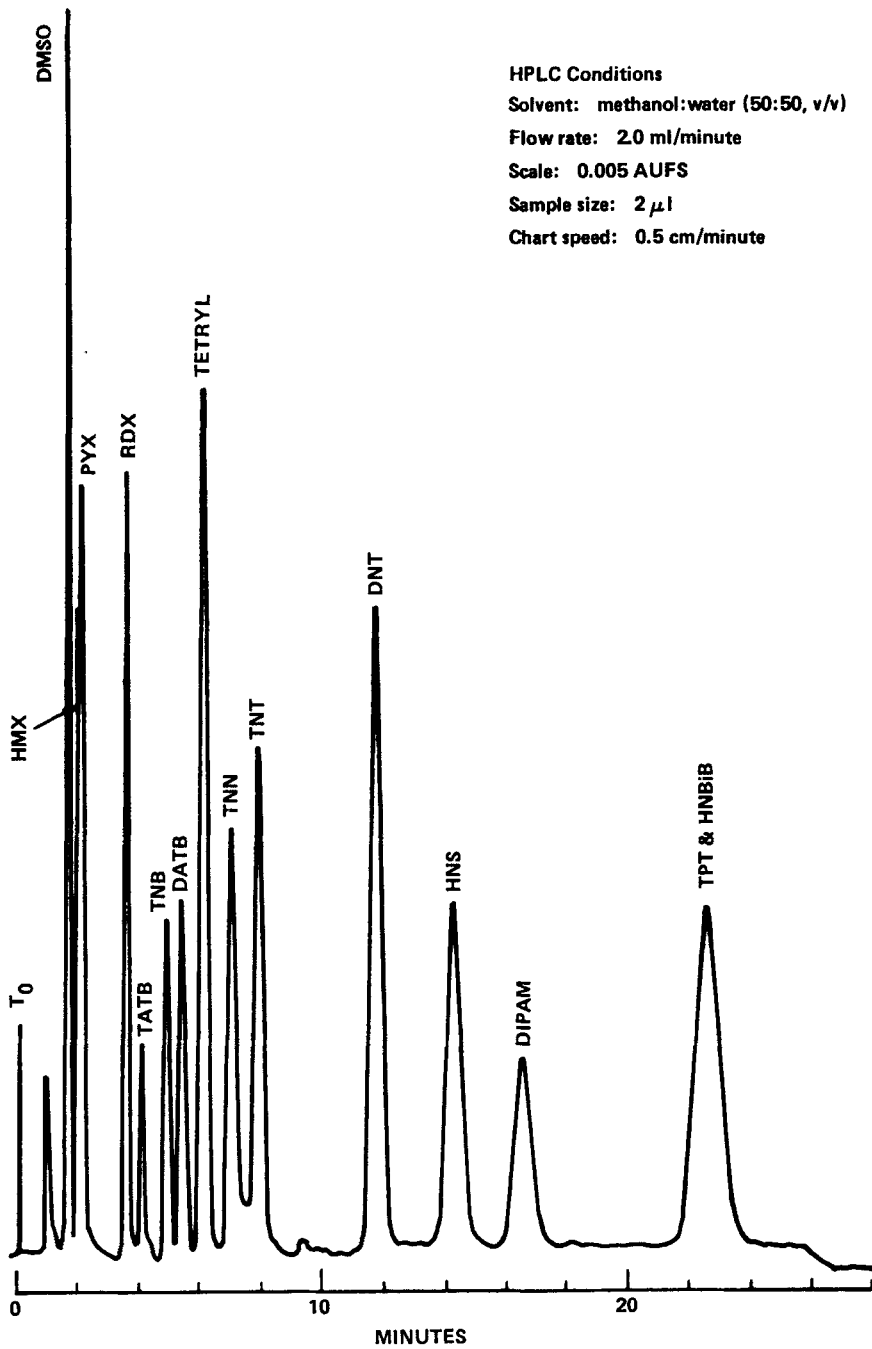


FIGURE 1
HPLC Chromatogram of a Fourteen Component Mixture

and TPT and HNBiB remained unresolved. Although HMX, PYX, TPT, and HNBiB were not completely resolvable using the above methanol:water mixtures, these same materials were totally separable with a methanol:water (20:80, v/v) mobile phase. An HPLC chromatogram of a four component mixture containing three impurities (TNB, TNT, HNBiB)^{11-13,18} found in production grade HNS-I is shown in Figure 2. The average retention times (minutes), average response factor (mm/mg), solution concentration (Molar), and approximate limits of detection (micrograms/ml) are given in Table 1, 2, and 3. The detection limit for all the materials was determined to be 15 millimeters on 0.005 absorbance units full scale (3×10^{-4} AUFS). This limit was set assuming a signal to noise ratio of 5. PETN displayed the least absorbance at 254nm with an approximate limit of detection of 1000 micrograms/ml (Table 3), however, the nitroaromatics had limits of detection in the 1.3-3.1 micrograms/ml range.

The generated NMR data are reported in Table 4. DMSO was the solvent of choice, however, due to solvent interference with DATB and PA (e.g. DATB peak overlap, and H-D exchange of the OH in PA) structure information with deuterated benzene is also reported.

R_f values were obtained on all the investigated compounds in benzene and methanol with the exception of HMX, TATB, PETN, and TNN which remained at the origin. The TLC data are recorded in Table 5.

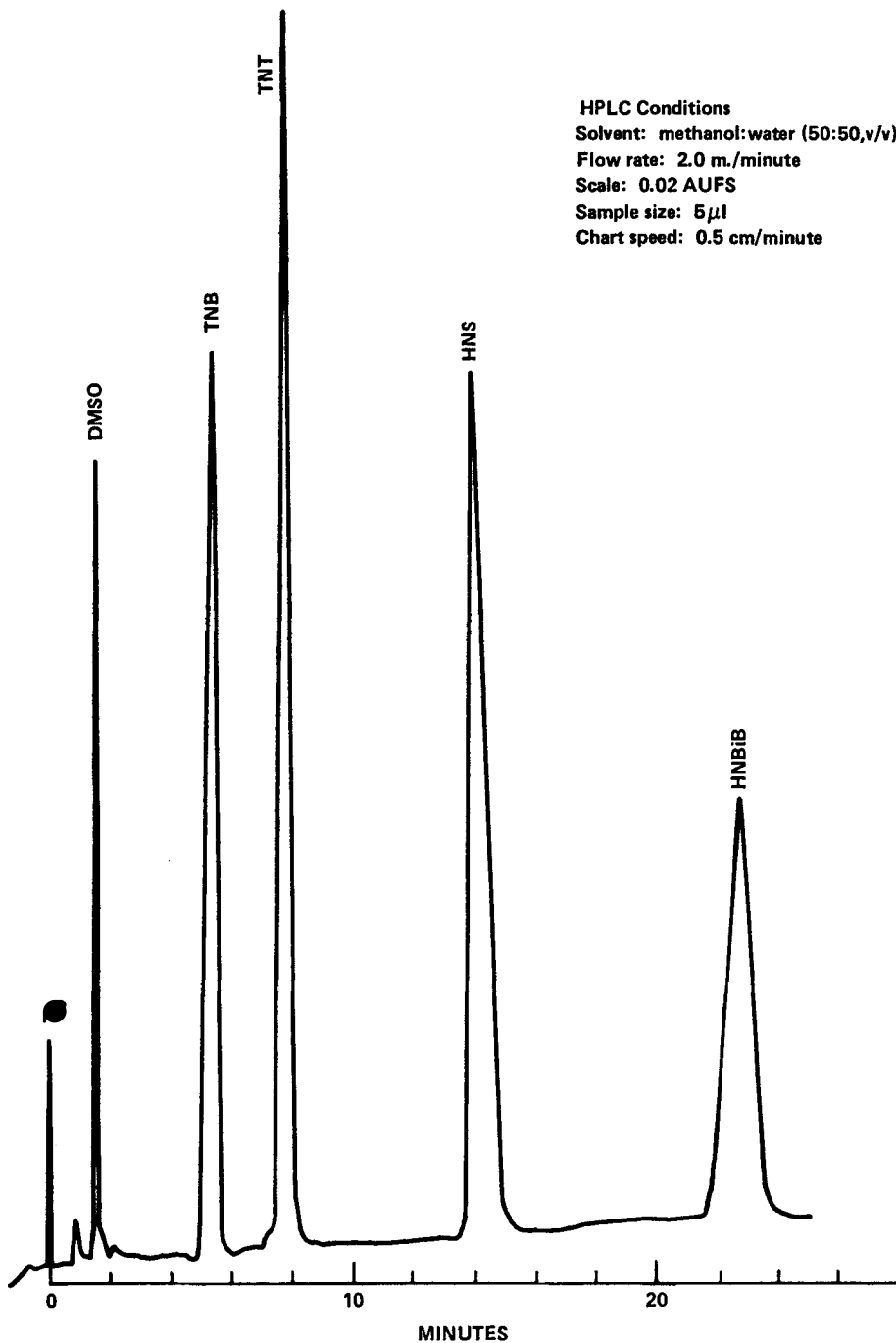


FIGURE 2
HPLC Chromatogram of a Four Component Mixture

TABLE 1 HPLC Data of Explosive Compounds

COMPOUND	AVERAGE RETENTION TIME (minutes)	AVERAGE RESPONSE FACTOR (peak height mm/mg)	DMSO SOLN CONC (moles/liter)	APPROX LIMIT OF DETECTION ^a (micrograms/ml; ppm)
DMSO	1.8	—	—	—
HMX	2.8	—	—	—
PETN	21.2	4.5×10^{-3}	$10^{-2} - 10^{-3}$	3332
PYX	9.6	1.1×10^6	$10^{-4} - 10^{-6}$	13.4
RDX	5.8	—	—	—
TATB	7.4	—	—	—
TPT	80.0	1.7×10^5	$10^{-4} - 10^{-5}$	87.5

CONDITIONS:

Isocratic elution

Detector wavelength, 254 nm

Column: Radial-PAK A with the RCM-100 Radial Compression Module

Flow rate: 2.0 ml/minute

Mobile phase: 40% MeOH/60% H₂O by volume

Chart speed: 0.5 cm/minute

- a From the peak height responses given, the detection limit for all the explosive compounds was calculated to be 15 mm on scale 0.005 absorbance units full scale (3×10^{-4} AUFS). This limit was set assuming a signal/noise ratio of 5.

TABLE 2 HPLC Data of Explosive Compounds

COMPOUND	AVERAGE RETENTION TIME (minutes)	AVERAGE RESPONSE FACTOR (peak height mm/mg)	DMSO SOLN CONC (moles/liter)	APPROX LIMIT OF DETECTION ^a (micrograms/ml; ppm)
DATB	5.5	$2.77 \pm 0.01 \times 10^6$	$10^{-4} \cdot 10^{-5}$	5.4
DINA	4.1	$1.82 \pm 0.04 \times 10^6$	$10^{-4} \cdot 10^{-6}$	8.2
DMSO	1.6	—	—	—
DIPAM	16.1	1.55×10^6	$10^{-4} \cdot 10^{-6}$	9.7
DNT	11.6	4.37×10^6	$10^{-4} \cdot 10^{-6}$	3.4
HNAB	9.2	$9.5 \pm 0.06 \times 10^5$	$10^{-4} \cdot 10^{-6}$	~ 15
HNBiB	22.8	2.41×10^6	$10^{-4} \cdot 10^{-6}$	9.9
HNS	14.2	2.31×10^6	$10^{-4} \cdot 10^{-6}$	6.5
HMX	2.0	4.77×10^6	$10^{-4} \cdot 10^{-6}$	3.1
PA	0.8	$8.98 \pm 0.05 \times 10^7$	$10^{-4} \cdot 10^{-6}$	0.2
PETN	12.0	$1.31 \pm 0.03 \times 10^4$	$10^{-2} \cdot 10^{-3}$	1236
PYX	2.1	$4.04 \pm 0.06 \times 10^6$	$10^{-4} \cdot 10^{-5}$	3.7
RDX	3.4	$4.35 \pm 0.04 \times 10^6$	$10^{-4} \cdot 10^{-6}$	3.5
TATB	4.0	$3.62 \pm 0.04 \times 10^6$	$10^{-5} \cdot 10^{-7}$	4.1
TETRYL	5.8	4.42×10^6	$10^{-4} \cdot 10^{-6}$	3.4
TNA	6.8	$2.6 \pm 0.04 \times 10^5$	$10^{-4} \cdot 10^{-6}$	5.8
TNB	5.3	4.97×10^6	$10^{-4} \cdot 10^{-7}$	3.0
TNN	7.0	$2.12 \pm 0.08 \times 10^6$	$10^{-3} \cdot 10^{-5}$	7.3
TNT	7.8	4.74×10^6	$10^{-4} \cdot 10^{-6}$	3.1
TPT	22.9	$1.32 \pm 0.01 \times 10^6$	$10^{-4} \cdot 10^{-5}$	11.4

CONDITIONS:

Isocratic elution

Detector wavelength, 254 nm

Column: Radial-PAK A with the RCM-100 Radial Compression Module

Flow rate: 2.0 ml/minute

Mobile phase: 50% MeOH/50% H₂O by volume

Chart speed: 0.5 cm/minute

- a From the peak height responses given, the detection limit for all the explosive compounds was calculated to be 15 mm on scale 0.005 absorbance units full scale (3×10^{-4} AUFS). This limit was set assuming a signal/noise ratio of 5.

TABLE 3 HPLC Data of Explosive Compounds

COMPOUND	AVERAGE RETENTION TIME (minutes)	AVERAGE RESPONSE FACTOR (peak height mm/mg)	DMSO SOLN CONC (moles/liter)	APPROX LIMIT OF DETECTION ^a (micrograms/ml; ppm)
DIPAM	3.3	$7.36 \pm 0.06 \times 10^6$	$10^{-4} \cdot 10^{-6}$	2.0
DMSO	1.5	—	—	—
DNT	3.7	1.19×10^7	$10^{-4} \cdot 10^{-6}$	1.3
DODECA	6.7	$4.81 \pm 0.03 \times 10^6$	$10^{-5} \cdot 10^{-7}$	3.1
HNBiB	3.9	$9.72 \pm 0.03 \times 10^6$	$10^{-4} \cdot 10^{-6}$	1.9
HNBP	3.6	$1.14 \pm 0.02 \times 10^7$	$10^{-4} \cdot 10^{-7}$	1.3
HNS	2.9	$9.71 \pm 0.03 \times 10^6$	$10^{-4} \cdot 10^{-6}$	2.1
NONA	4.7	$8.03 \pm 0.06 \times 10^6$	$10^{-4} \cdot 10^{-6}$	1.9
ONT	5.3	$7.56 \pm 0.04 \times 10^6$	$10^{-4} \cdot 10^{-6}$	2.0
PETN	3.3	5.37×10^4	$10^{-2} \cdot 10^{-3}$	1009
TNN	2.3	$6.32 \pm 0.01 \times 10^6$	$10^{-4} \cdot 10^{-5}$	2.4
TNS	5.2	$5.48 \pm 0.04 \times 10^6$	$10^{-4} \cdot 10^{-6}$	2.7
TNT	2.9	1.07×10^7	$10^{-4} \cdot 10^{-6}$	1.4
TPT	3.1	$7.86 \pm 0.07 \times 10^6$	$10^{-4} \cdot 10^{-7}$	1.9

CONDITIONS:

Isocratic elution

Detector wavelength, 254 nm

Column: Radial-PAK A with the RCM-100 Radial Compression Module

Flow rate: 2.0 ml/minute

Mobile phase: 70% MeOH/30% H₂O by volume

Chart speed: 0.5 cm/minute

- ^a From the peak height responses given, the detection limit for all the explosive compounds was calculated to be 15 mm on scale 0.005 absorbance units full scale (3×10^{-4} AUFS). This limit was set assuming a signal/noise ratio of 5.

TABLE 4 H¹ NMR Data of Explosive Compounds

COMPOUND	SOLVENT ^a	NMR SPECTRUM ^b
DATB	DMSO-D ₆	9.10 (s, Ar-H)
		9.10 (s, 2NH ₂)
DATB	BENZENE-D ₆	8.91 (s, Ar-H)
		8.61 (s, 2NH ₂)
DINA	DMSO-D ₆	4.76 (t, 2CH ₂)
		4.17 (t, 2CH ₂)
DIPAM	"	9.08 (s, 2Ar-H)
		8.68 (s, 2NH ₂)
DNT	"	8.68 (d, Ar-H)
		8.42 (q, Ar-H)
		7.87 (d, Ar-H)
		2.62 (s, CH ₃)
DODECA	"	9.39 (s, 2Ar-H)
		9.24 (s, 2Ar-H)
		9.20 (s, 2Ar-H)
HNAB	"	10.19 (s, 4Ar-H)
HNBiB	"	9.05 (s, 4Ar-H)
		3.39 (s, 2CH ₂)
HNBPF	"	9.27 (s, 4Ar-H)
HNS	"	9.07 (s, 4Ar-H)
		7.11 (s, 2CH)
HMX	"	5.98 (s, 8R-H)
NONA	"	9.26 (s, 5Ar-H)
ONT	"	9.26 (s, 6Ar-H)
PA	"	8.56 (s, 2Ar-H)
PA	BENZENE-D ₆	8.07 (s, 2Ar-H)
		11.00 (s, OH)
PETN	DMSO-D ₆	4.65 (s, 4CH ₂)
PYX	"	8.85 (s, 5Ar-H)
		9.10 (s, 2NH)
RDX	"	6.06 (s, 6R-H)
TATB	"	10.00 (s, 3NH ₂) ^c
TETRYL	"	9.28 (s, 2Ar-H)
		3.63 (s, CH ₃)
TNA	"	9.04 (s, 2Ar-H)
		8.98 (s, NH ₂)
TNB	"	9.13 (s, 3Ar-H)
TNN	"	8.80 (s, 4R-H)
TNS	"	9.14 (s, 2Ar-H)
		8.08 (d, Ar-H)
		7.86 (d, 2Ar-H)
		7.68 (m, Ar-H)
		7.54 (d, CH)
TNT	"	7.09 (d, CH)
		8.98 (s, 2Ar-H)
TPT	"	2.52 (s, CH ₃)
		9.23 (s, 6Ar-H)
DMSO-D ₆ (neat)		2.48 (m, 2CH ₃)
BENZENE-D ₆ (neat)		7.18 (s, 6Ar-H)

- a The solvents used were: benzene C₆D₆ - 99.5 atom % D; dimethylsulfoxide DMSO-D₆ - 99.5 atom % D. A water peak δ 3.30 (s, 2H) was noted in the DMSO samples.
- b s = singlet, d = doublet, t = triplet, q = quartet, m = multiplet, Ar = aromatic, R = ring protons. Chemical shifts are in δ units downfield from internal TMS with line multiplicity and relative intensity in parentheses. Spectra were determined on a Varian XL-200 Spectrometer. The pulse sequence was repeated 4 times and the signals time-averaged.
- c The TATB pulse sequence was repeated 5000 times, and the resulting signals time-averaged.

TABLE 5 TLC Data of Explosive Compounds

COMPOUND	R _f ^a	SOLVENT ^b
DATB	0.32	C ₆ H ₆
DINA	0.38	"
DIPAM	0.20	"
DNT	0.78	"
DODECA	0.63 ^c	"
HNAB	0.67	"
HNBiB	0.58	"
HNBP	0.76	"
HNS	0.38	"
HMX	0.00	"
HMX	0.00	MeOH
NONA	0.69 ^c	C ₆ H ₆
ONT	0.14 ^c	"
PA	0.09 ^c	"
PA	0.96	MeOH
PETN	0.00	C ₆ H ₆
PETN	0.00	MeOH
PYX	0.00	C ₆ H ₆
PYX	0.96 ^c	MeOH
RDX	0.17	C ₆ H ₆
TATB	0.00	"
TATB	0.00	MeOH
TETRYL	0.52	C ₆ H ₆
TNA	0.43	"
TNB	0.75	"
TNN	0.00	"
TNN	0.00	MeOH
TNS	0.62	C ₆ H ₆
TNT	0.86	"
TPT	0.40	"

a R_f taken from leading edge of spot. A short wave U V lamp (2537 Å) was used for spot visualization. The adsorbent used was Merck Silica Gel HF-254 coated on glass plates.

b The solvents used were: benzene (C₆H₆) and methanol (MeOH).

c Streaking or tailing to origin.

TABLE 6 Melting Point Data of Explosive Compounds

COMPOUND	MELTING POINT (°C)
DATB	287 ^a , 290 ²⁰ , 286 ²¹
DINA	52 ^a
DIPAM	306 dec ^a , 304 ²¹
DNT	71.5 ^a , 71 ²⁰
DODECA	> 425 ^a
HNAB	220-221 ²²
HNBiB	218 ^a , 218-220 ²³
HNBP	239.3-240.8 ^a
HNS-I	316 dec ^a
HNS-II	318 dec ^a
HMX	280 dec ^a , 273 ²⁰
NONA	440 ²¹
ONT	> 400 ⁹
PA	121.8-122.4 ^a
PETN	141.3 ²²
PYX	360 ⁹
RDX	204 dec ^a , 204 ²²
TATB	> 370 ^a , > 360 ²⁰ , ~ 450 dec ²¹
TETRYL	130 dec ^{a,20} , 129.5 ²²
TNA	188 ^{a,22}
TNB	121 ^a , 121.3 ²²
TNN	450 ²¹
TNS	180-181 ^a
TNT	80.7 ^a , 80.8 ²²
TPT	352 ⁷ , 352-353 ^{21,24} , 349-351 ²⁵

^a Melting points determined on a Thomas Hoover Capillary Melting Point Apparatus, using a heating rate of approximately 2⁰/minute. All measured temperatures are corrected.

The melting points of the majority of compounds were determined with a heating rate of approximately 2°/minute. These temperatures were corrected and are listed together with literature data in Table 6.

CONCLUSION

The HPLC data detailed in this report permits rapid and reliable quantitative determinations of several insensitive, heat-resistant energetic materials (e.g. HNS, DIPAM, TATB, and ONT) currently in use. Sensitivity is sufficient for accurate determinations at relatively low concentrations in the 1-3 milligrams/ml range. This method may be applicable for the quantitative analysis of similar materials which because of low solubility can not be accurately determined using other techniques.

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NOTE: X = NO₂

Glossary

COMPOUND	STRUCTURE	CODE
1,3-DIAMINO-2,4,6-TRINITROBENZENE		DATB
DIOXYETHYLNITRAMINE DINITRATE		DINA
DIPICRAMIDE		DIPAM
2,4-DINITROTOLUENE		DNT
2,2',2'',4,4',4'',6,6',6''-DODECANITROQUATERPHENYL		DODECA
2,2',4,4',6,6'-HEXANITROAZOBENZENE		HNAB
2,2',4,4',6,6'-HEXANITROBIBENZYL, DIPICRYLETHANE		HNBiB

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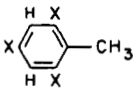
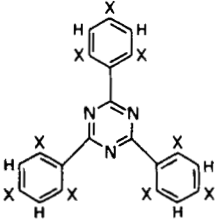
Glossary Continued

COMPOUND	STRUCTURE	CODE
2,2',4,4',6,6'-HEXANITROBIPHENYL		HNBP
2,2',4,4',6,6'-HEXANITROSTILBENE		HNS
1,3,5,7-TETRANITRO-1,3,5,7-TETRAAZACYCLOOCTANE		HMX
2,2',2'',4,4',4'',6,6',6''-NONANITROTERTERPENYL		NONA
2,2',4,4',4'',6,6',6''-OCTANITRO-m-TERPHENYL		ONT
2,4,6-TRINITROPHENOL, PICRIC ACID		PA
PENTAERYTHRITOLTETRANITRATE		PETN

Glossary Continued

COMPOUND	STRUCTURE	CODE
2,6-BIS(PICRYLAMINO)-3,5-DINITROPYRIDINE		PYX
1,3,5-TRINITRO-1,3,5-TRIAZACYCLOHEXANE CYCLO-1,3,5-TRIMETHYLENE-2,4,6-TRINITRAMINE, CYCLONITE		RDX
1,3,5-TRIAMINO-2,4,6-TRINITROBENZENE		TATB
N,2,4,6-TETRANITRO-N-METHYLANILINE		TETRYL
2,4,6-TRINITROANILINE, PICRAMIDE		TNA
1,3,5-TRINITROBENZENE		TNB
1,4,5,8-TETRANITRONAPHTHALENE		TNN
2,4,6,2'-TETRANITROSTILBENE		TNS

Glossary Continued

COMPOUND	STRUCTURE	CODE
2,4,6-TRINITROTOLUENE		TNT
2,4,6-TRIPICRYL-S-TRIAZINE		TPT