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Summary

A superconducting linac is being constructed to provide an energy booster for heavy ions from an FN tandem. By late 1980 the linac will consist of 24 independently-phased superconducting resonators, and will provide an effective accelerating potential of more than 25 MV. While the linac is under construction, completed sections are being used to provide useful beam for nuclear physics experiments. In the most recent run with beam (June 1979), an eight resonator array provided an effective accelerating potential of 9.3 MV. Operation of a 12 resonator array is scheduled to begin in October 1979.

Introduction

This paper reports the status of the Argonne superconducting heavy-ion linac, which has been developed to boost the energy of heavy-ion beams from an FN tandem accelerator.[1,2,3] The intent of the project has been both to develop superconducting rf technology for the acceleration of heavy ions, and to provide a useful accelerator for use with the Argonne FN tandem. At this time all significant development tasks have been completed. Current funding provides for a linac of four modular sections, of which two have been completed.

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The physical layout of the accelerator system is shown in Fig. 1. The pre-tandem beam-bunching system and a post-tandem superconducting buncher are housed in the tandem vault. The linac and most of the helium refrigeration system are located in a previously existing target room, with the linac output going into a small new target area.

Preserving the good quality of the tandem beam requires an exceedingly narrow beam pulse injecting the linac. This has been accomplished with little loss in the tandem beam intensity by a two-stage bunching system.[4] The pre-tandem buncher is a gridded-gap (room temperature) driven by a sawtooth-like voltage generated by

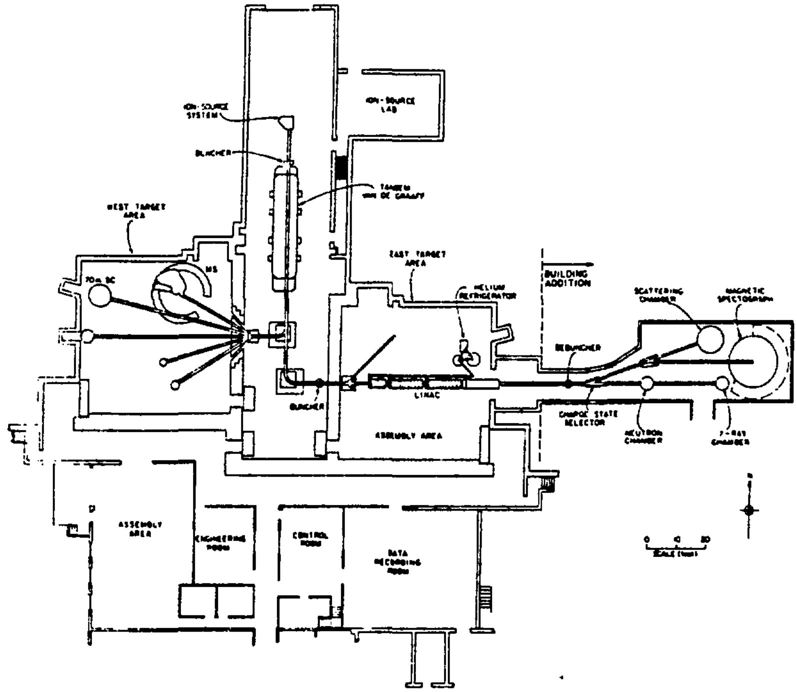

Fig. 1. Overall layout of the accelerator system.

superposing four rf harmonic components. This system compresses about 80% of the dc tandem beam into 1 nsec pulses at the tandem output. The post-tandem buncher is a single superconducting split-ring resonator which linearly compresses these pulses to a width of less than 100 psec at the linac entrance.

The linac is formed of modular cryostat sections any one of which can be taken off-line without disturbing operation of adjacent sections.[1] Figure 2 shows a cross section of a typical cryostat. Thus the linac consists of an independently phased array of superconducting split-ring resonators, each of which can provide more than 1 MV of effective accelerating potential over a range of a factor of two in particle velocity.[5,6,7] Independent phasing allows the velocity profile of the linac to be varied over a wide range, and provides a high degree of operational flexibility. Focussing within the linac is accomplished with a superconducting solenoid following every pair of resonators.[8] Beam diameter within the linac is typically kept smaller than 6mm both to prevent beam impinging on the superconducting surfaces of the resonators and to limit radial variation of the energy gain within the resonators.

The linac target area was constructed in 1977, and installation of the experimental equipment shown in Fig. 1 will be completed in 1979-80. For initial operation, experiments are being performed on the zero-degree beam line. Later, with the installation of the superconducting debuncher-rebuncher and the charge selector magnet, the location of the various experimental stations will be changed to that shown in Fig. 1.

The modular nature and variable velocity profile of the linac have permitted useful operation with completed sections while construction continues. Beam acceleration tests began in June 1978 with two resonators in a six-foot cryostat module, and have continued to the present array of twelve resonators in two twelve-foot cryostats, scheduled to run with beam in October of this year.

Table I outlines the several runs with beam. Initial operation revealed a number of system flaws, and the first three runs were focussed primarily on system development, as has been discussed elsewhere.[3] As is discussed below, in the last two runs with beam the remaining significant development tasks have been completed, and the emphasis has shifted to providing beam for users.

Linac Systems

The fourth run, in March 1979 was the first in which beam was provided for users over an extended period of time. However three significant problems remained with linac performance. Firstly, the resonators provided on-line an effective accelerating potential of 0.9 MV/resonator, substantially less than the 1.4 MV/resonator obtained in off-line tests. Secondly, mechanical vibration of the resonators caused occasional excursions of rf eigenfrequency beyond the range of the fast tuning system. The consequent loss

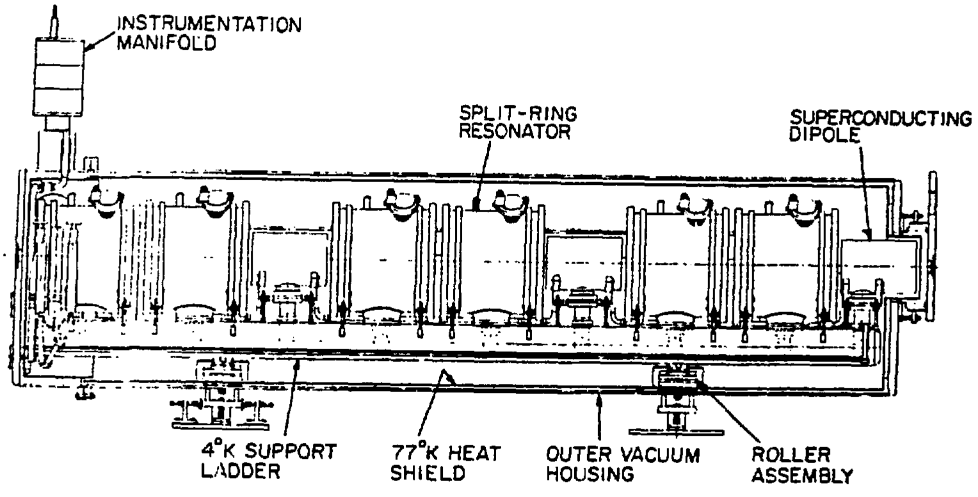

Fig. 2. Cross section of a linac cryostat module. The cryostat disassembles by rolling the resonator array, together with all cryostat plumbing and electrical leads, out of the vacuum housing.

TABLE I

Outline of Linac Beam Tests

Date	Duration	Number of Resonators	Max. Acc. Potential	Ion Species
June 1978	3 days	2	1.6 MV	O_{16}^{6+}, F_{19}^{6+}
Sept. 1978	5 days	5	4.0 MV	O_{16}^{6+}
Dec. 1978	8 days	6	5.2 MV	S_{32}^{14+}
March 1979	31 days	8	7.6 MV	S_{32}^{14+}
June 1979	30 days	8	9.3 MV	S_{32}^{14+}, Si_{28}^{12+}, O_{16}^{8+}

of phase control caused output energy variations which required blanking of either the beam or data taking for 10-20% of the time, i.e., the effective duty factor of the linac was 0.8 - 0.9. Thirdly, the linac output energy was found to vary by a few parts in 10^3 over a time period of several hours.

The resonator field level was limited by thermal instability at an rf input power less than the design level of 4 watts. Following the fourth run, it was found by radiography that plastic tubes used to vent helium gas from the resonator interior were out of position in a way that would cause a gas bubble to accumulate and prevent cooling of a critical portion of each resonator. The tubing was modified with the result that in the fifth run with beam, the effective accelerating potential was increased to 1.2 MV/resonator.

The rf control system was modified to provide rf damping of mechanical vibration in each resonator. This was achieved at the cost of varying the rf amplitude in each resonator at the frequency of the mechanical motion. In the system used, an amplitude variation of 2 parts in 10^4, which has a negligable effect on beam quality, reduced the vibration by 40%. The system also provides temporarily increased damping for any resonator that loses phase-lock. In this condition, the output beam is useless, so that an increased rf amplitude variation is tolerable. The result is that vibration resulting from any large mechanical perturbation is quickly damped out. In the fifth run with beam, the rf damping system reduced the vibration-induced loss of phase control to less than 1% of the time for the eight resonator array.

Finally, it was found that the slow drift in linac output energy was correlated with a change in the liquid nitrogen level in a portion of the cryostats through which the rf cabling is run to the resonators. Apparently, the liquid nitrogen permeates the rf cabling and causes a slight change in electrical length. Thus variations in the liquid nitrogen level induce a slight shift in the resonator rf phase and amplitude, and in the beam energy gain. Modification of the control system to maintain a constant liquid level eliminated the drift in output energy.

Linac Operation

More than 1800 hours of beam time have been logged. The most outstanding operating feature has been the general reliability of the linac.[3,9] While accelerating beam, the linac systems generally require little or no operator intervention for periods of many hours. Linac downtime has been small, typically an hour per day.

Beam quality is essentially as expected,[1] although three factors limit presently available performance. (1)-The second stripper is temporarily located upstream of the tandem beam-analyzing magnet, rather than at the time focus at the linac entrance; thus energy straggling in the stripper dominates the output time-energy spread. (2)-In the temporary linac configuration used thus far, a six-foot gap exists between two cryostat modules which produces a significant time spread of the particle bunch prior to acceleration through the final cryostat module. (3)-Also, absence of a debuncher-rebuncher downstream of the linac prevents obtaining the full time or energy resolution capability of the linac in the experimental areas.

Linac tuning has proven straightforward. At present this is accomplished by calibrating the rf phase of each resonator by varying the phase and observing the output beam energy. In this procedure, the first resonator is tuned, with all others off, and then one successively turns on and tunes each resonator in the chain. At present tuning is done manually, and requires several hours. Eventually, the operation will be fully computer controlled, and should go very much more rapidly.

Future Plans

Planned hardware additions in 1980 include modifying a six-foot cryostat and constructing a fourth, twelve-foot cryostat which together will add twelve resonators to the linac array. Also a superconducting debuncher-rebuncher is to be installed downline of the linac.

Acknowledgments

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