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# A Saturable Pulse Transformer Based on Nanocrystalline Magnetic Cores for an Adjustable Nanosecond High-Voltage Generator

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**Abstract**—This paper is devoted to saturable pulse transformers (SPTs), combining the functions of a pulse transformer and a magnetic switch. Two nanocrystalline magnetic cores are investigated in the SPT of an inductive energy storage (IES) pulsed power system based on a semiconductor opening switch (SOS). The first magnetic core has a square hysteresis loop ( $B_r/B_{sat} > 90\%$ ), while the second core has a flat hysteresis loop ( $B_r/B_{sat} \sim 4\%$ ). A test bench with an initially stored energy of 10 J is developed. The circuit design is discussed, and the magnetic materials are compared. Based on the features of the hysteresis loops, two nanosecond high-voltage SOS generators are tested, with the output voltage adjusted by tuning the input voltage and controlling the bias magnetic field. The influence of the optimal core saturation on the operation of the SOS diode is studied. An adjustable output voltage impulse of more than 200 kV amplitude with a 16 ns rise time is demonstrated on a 1 k $\Omega$  resistive load.

**Index Terms** — Nanocrystalline magnetic core, pulsed power systems, saturable pulse transformer, semiconductor opening switch.

## I. INTRODUCTION

THE advent of semiconductor opening switches (SOSs) discovered in the 1990s [1] has opened the gate for solid-state pulsed power based on the inductive energy storage (IES) technique. Recently, high-voltage nanosecond generators based on SOS diodes, so-called SOS generators, are becoming increasingly attractive for repetitive pulsed power applications. These systems have many advantages, such as high pulse repetition frequency, high reliability, and long lifetime, and are mainly used both in basic research and in major

industrial applications such as high-power microwaves, pulsed HV gas, vacuum and underwater plasma electrical discharges, particle acceleration, X-ray devices, and many others [2]–[6].

From a structural viewpoint, the SOS generators usually involve magnetic elements, used in voltage-boosting pulse transformers and magnetic pulse compressors (MPCs) [2], [7]–[10]. The robustness, stability, high-frequency operation, and long lifetime of magnetic elements [11]–[21], make these items suitable for use in solid-state generators. A noteworthy illustration is their utilization in the injection and extraction systems utilized in state-of-the-art particle accelerator facilities [21], [22]. In addition, the use of multiple MPC stages enables reducing the stress on the primary solid-state switch while keeping a high voltage output, although the efficiency might be compromised [12]–[14], [17]. It is well known that the material of the magnetic element strongly affects the efficiency of the generator, especially at the fast magnetization that is particularly required for SOS generators.

Furthermore, adjustment of the output voltage level is often required in pulsed power applications including x-ray, e-beam, excimer lasers, generation of ozone, and others [12], [23]. In [18] and [23], the output voltage was adjusted by varying the input voltage, while using either a Fe-based amorphous or a permalloy magnetic core pulse transformer, respectively. However, the absence of a pre-magnetizing circuit introduces limits on the voltage regulation range and energy efficiency. The work [19] proposed a method to regulate the peak voltage, the saturation time, and the pulse compression ratio, using different connection points of the magnetic switch winding to adjust the number of turns. However, this approach appears to be complex when a large number of connection points is required. A novel topology was suggested by [8] in which an additional primary circuit connected to the primary winding is

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used to reset the core. In this configuration though, the input voltage remains unchanged, which may lower the efficiency.

The present work studies a saturable pulse transformer (SPT) with a controlled time to saturation, as part of a high-efficiency adjustable SOS generator. A circuit containing a single magnetic element, an SPT, is used to ensure high efficiency.

In a single magnetic element SOS generator, an SPT combines two functions: (i) a step-up transformer with an energy transfer time of about 500 ns, and (ii) a magnetic switch with a current compression ratio of about 2.5. Nanocrystalline soft magnetic materials, presenting a high saturation induction, low magnetic losses, high permeability, and high resistivity, meet all the requirements for a highly efficient SPT [13], [24], [25]. Nanocrystalline MPCs were used in our recently published study [26], where off-the-shelf diodes were examined as high-voltage solid-state opening switches. The present paper is centered on the SPT-based system in general, while also using an SOS diode. It is therefore focused on two types of nanocrystalline magnetic cores with different shapes of the hysteresis loop (i.e., B-H curve). The first type has a flat loop (i.e., a low remanent induction), which is traditionally used in transformers. The second type has a square hysteresis loop (i.e., a high remanent induction), which is a well-known characteristic of magnetic materials used in pulsed power magnetic switches. These magnetic materials are investigated when used in a single-core transformer topology, to compare their efficiency and suitability for the SPT of the SOS generator. To this end, a test bench with an initially stored energy of 10 J, is developed.

The paper is structured as follows. In Section II, the design of the pulse transformer, the operating principle of the SOS generator, and the characteristics of the nanocrystalline magnetic cores are described. In Section III, the results obtained using the two different magnetic materials are compared and discussed. In the same section, the high-voltage SOS generators are presented. The paper ends with the Conclusion and the suggested way ahead.

## II. CIRCUIT PRINCIPLE AND SYSTEM DESIGN

### A. General Layout and Operating Principle of the Circuit

The general layout of the test bench is presented in Fig. 1. The arrangement consists of a triggered spark gap switch SG and a film capacitor C1, connected to the primary winding of the SPT. The secondary winding of the transformer is connected to the low inductive ceramic capacitor C2, followed by the SOS diode and the resistive load R in parallel. The current viewing resistors  $R_{Sh1}$  and  $R_{Sh2}$ , made in-house from carbon composition resistors, are used for the SOS current and load voltage measurements. The measurement of  $V_{C1}$  and  $V_{C2}$  is performed using North Star high-voltage probes type PVM-12 and PVM-100, respectively. A pre-magnetizing circuit (magnetic bias circuit) is used to reset the core before each pulse. This circuit comprises a direct current (DC) source (IPS 303A, 0-3 A, 0-30 V) and an in-house made choke, which protects this current source from the main high-voltage pulse.

The specifications of the circuit components are described in TABLE I.

The operating principle of the experimental setup (Fig. 1) is as follows. C1 is charged by an external power supply (for simplicity this is not shown). When SG closes, the energy stored in C1 is transferred to the capacitor C2 through the transformer SPT. The current of amplitude  $I^+$  and duration  $t^+$ , termed “forward pumping current”, flows through the SOS diode in a forward direction, charging C2. Subsequently, when the voltage across C2 reaches its maximum value, the SPT is designed to saturate. As a result, the secondary winding is decoupled from the primary winding. In addition, the inductance of the secondary winding of the saturated core significantly decreases due to the low permeability of the core in its saturated state. Hence, the discharge current of C2 of higher amplitude  $I^-$ , termed “reverse pumping current”, flows through the SOS for the duration  $t^-$ . In order to reach the reversed current density of several to tens of kA/cm<sup>2</sup> that is required for the SOS-mode current cut-off [2], a high value of  $I^-$  is necessary to be generated. Finally, the high-value reverse current is interrupted by the SOS within the current cut-off time  $t_0$ , then the energy is transferred to the load R, generating a nanosecond rise time high-voltage pulse.

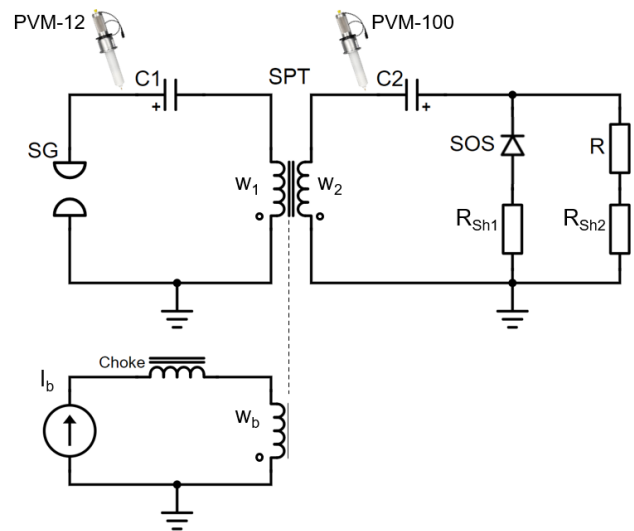
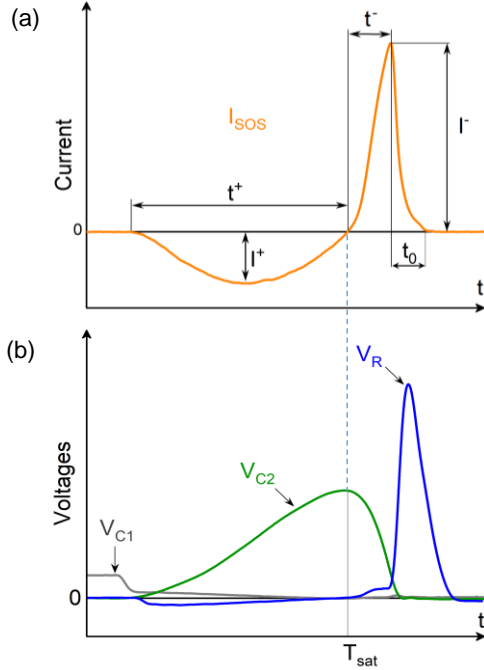


Fig. 1. Circuit diagram of the experimental arrangement.

TABLE I  
SPECIFICATIONS OF CIRCUIT COMPONENTS

	C1	C2	SOS	R	R <sub>Sh1</sub>	R <sub>Sh2</sub>
Value	200 nF	2 nF	180 kV/4 kA	0.05–1 kΩ	0.15 Ω	0.5 Ω
Type	STP-02QI	UHV-9A	SOS-180-4	TVO-20	RCC050	

The typical waveforms of the SOS current, the charging voltages  $V_{C1}$  of C1 and  $V_{C2}$  of C2, and the load voltage  $V_R$  are presented in Fig. 2. A non-zero resistance of the SOS in the conductive state causes negative and positive pre-pulses on the load voltage ( $V_R$ ). This can be suppressed by two oppositely connected diodes in series with the load as described in [27]. However, this topic is beyond the scope of the present work.



**Fig. 2.** Typical waveforms of (a) the current flowing through the SOS diode, and (b) the voltages  $V_{C1}$ ,  $V_{C2}$  (reversed for clarity), and  $V_R$ .

### B. Design of the 100 kV Saturable Pulse Transformer

The 10 kV capacitor  $C1$  set the input energy to 10 J maximum. A toroidal shape of the core is adopted, and the transformation ratio  $n$  is fixed to 10. To improve energy transfer efficiency, the primary and secondary capacitors are matched as follows:

$$C1 = n^2 \times C2 \quad (1)$$

According to the requirement for an SOS diode pumping as stated in [2] and based on preliminary studies, the forward and reverse pumping durations of the diode were defined respectively as  $t^+ = 500$  ns and  $t^- = 100$  ns. Therefore, the equivalent capacitance  $C_{eq}$  and self-inductance  $L_{eq}$  of the transformer, when referring to the primary side, can be estimated as:

$$C_{eq} = \frac{C_1 \times n^2 C_2}{C_1 + n^2 C_2} = \frac{C_1}{2} \quad (2)$$

$$L_{eq} = \frac{(t^+)^2}{\pi^2 \times C_{eq}} \quad (3)$$

where  $t^+$  is the forward pumping time of the SOS. For an ideal energy transfer,  $t^+$  must correspond to the time required for the peak voltage of  $C2$  to be reached and to the saturation time  $T_{sat}$  of the transformer (see Fig. 2). In this condition, the size of the core is determined using the simplified form of the Faraday law termed the volt-second product:

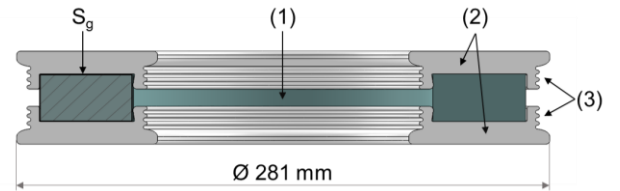
$$2\Delta B \times S_c \times w_2 = V_{max} \times T_{sat} \quad (4)$$

where  $\Delta B$  is the magnetic induction swing,  $S_c$  is the effective

cross-section area of the material without the interlaminar insulating layers,  $w_2$  is the number of turns of the secondary winding and  $V_{max}$  is the peak voltage of  $C2$ .  $S_c$  is determined by multiplying the geometrical cross-section of the core  $S_g$  (see Fig. 3, (1)) by the packing factor  $k = 0.73$ , as indicated by the manufacturer. The packing factor represents the ratio of the effective to the geometrical cross-section area of the core, and due to the interlaminar insulation of the wound cores it is always less than 1.

The magnetic induction swing  $\Delta B$ , representing the change in the magnetic induction, is one of the most crucial parameters to consider when choosing the core material. Indeed, for the same core size, a material with a higher induction swing will lead to a higher energy transfer. In other words, a high saturation flux density implies a low magnetic core volume for the same voltage amplitude across the secondary winding.

As the transformer is operating in air, proper attention should be paid to the electrical insulation. Hence, to prevent an electrical breakdown between the winding and the core, plastic insulating supports are required (see Fig. 3, (2)). The plastic supports were 3D printed using polylactic acid (PLA) filaments. These supports, designed by considering the air dielectric strength as 30 kV/cm, ensure a minimum distance between the winding and the core of 12 mm in all directions. To extend the current path and prevent any surface breakdown, ripples are applied at the two ends of the support sleeves (see Fig. 3, (3)). The transformer windings comprise a single-turn primary ( $w_1=1$ ) and a 10-turn secondary ( $w_2=10$ ) windings. The primary winding is made up of a metallic cylinder with a diameter of 100 mm, which is placed in the center of the transformer. The top part of the cylinder is connected to the primary capacitor  $C1$  through a metallic plate. The base of the cylinder is directly connected to the grounded plate underneath the transformer. The secondary winding consists of two parallel sections covering the entire surface of the core. To regulate the induction swing, an additional 5-turn winding is applied, as a part of the pre-magnetizing circuit.



**Fig. 3.** Sectional view of the SPT showing the cross-section  $S_g$ , (1) the core, (2) the PLA supports and (3) the rippled sleeves.

The link between the pre-magnetizing current and the induction is expressed, respectively by (5) and (6):

$$H = \frac{I_b \times w_b}{l_m} \quad (5)$$

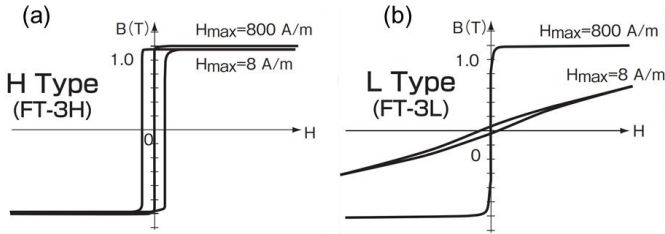
$$B = \mu H \quad (6)$$

where  $H$  is the bias magnetic field,  $I_b$  is the pre-magnetizing

current,  $w_b$  is the number of turns of the pre-magnetizing winding,  $l_m$  is the mean magnetic path length of the core,  $B$  is the induction flux and  $\mu$  is the magnetic permeability.

### C. Overview of the Tested Cores

Two nanocrystalline Fe-based soft magnetic materials were investigated as SPTs. The nanocrystalline cores provide high saturation flux density, high relative permeability, low core loss and excellent temperature characteristics for a wide frequency range [28]. The characteristics of the cores, including the saturation induction  $B_{sat}$ , the remanent induction  $B_r$ , the coercive force  $H_c$ , the magnetic material cross-section  $S_c$  and the core size are all provided in TABLE II, and their corresponding B-H loops are presented in Fig. 4.



**Fig. 4.** B-H loops of (a) Finemet FT-3H, and (b) Finemet FT-3L reproduced from [27].

TABLE II  
PARAMETERS OF THE PULSE TRANSFORMER CORES

	$B_{sat}$ (T)	$B_r/B_{sat}$	$H_c$ (A/m)	$S_c$ (cm <sup>2</sup> )	Size (mm <sup>3</sup> )
<b>Finemet FT-3H</b>	1.23	> 90%	0.6	8.29	256 x 165 x 25
<b>Finemet FT-3L</b>	1.23	4%	0.6	8.29	256 x 165 x 25

## III. TEST AND RESULTS

### A. Investigation of the Nanocrystalline Magnetic Cores

As described in the previous sections, the parameters of the magnetic core, and particularly the effective induction swing, are critical to minimize the size of the core. However, the static characteristics provided in the manufacturer's datasheet may differ from dynamic characteristics, especially under fast pulse magnetization [13], [29]. Hence, in these experiments, the effective induction swings of the two cores are determined and compared.

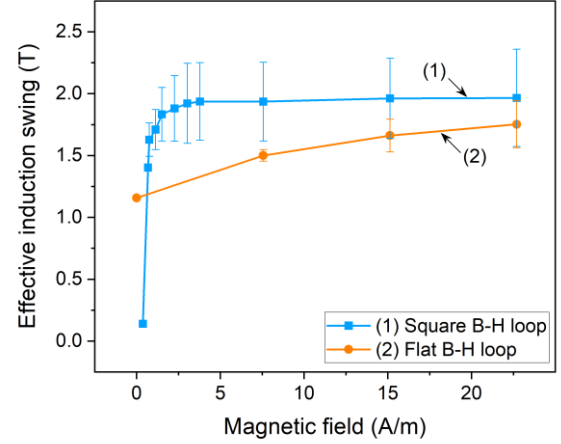
To this end, at a fixed input voltage, the bias magnetic field  $H_0$  is continuously applied using the pre-magnetizing circuit, to set the initial induction to  $B_0$ . Thus, the total induction swing  $\Delta B$  can be defined by:

$$\Delta B = B_{sat} - B_0 \leq 2B_{sat} \quad (7)$$

where the induction swing is obtained using the volt-second product defined in (4). The peak voltage  $V_{max}$  of C2 is measured and the saturation time  $T_{sat}$  is graphically determined using the SOS current and the  $V_{C2}$  waveforms (see Fig. 2).

In these experiments, the input voltage is fixed at 6 kV and the magnetic field  $H_0$  is varied from 0 to 23 A/m, to regulate the

induction swing.  $H_0$  is applied in the opposite direction compared to the main pulse, to increase the effective induction swing. The results obtained are plotted in Fig. 5. The error bar corresponds to the inaccuracy in the measurement of the saturation time  $T_{sat}$ .



**Fig. 5.** Effective induction swing of the SPT cores as a function of the bias magnetizing field  $H_0$  for (1) Finemet FT-3H and (2) Finemet FT-3L.

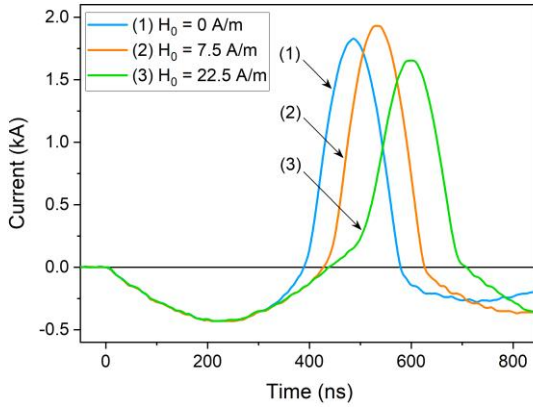
The induction swings obtained when operating the materials under fast pulse magnetization are in good agreement with the datasheet specifications. For the square B-H loop core (i.e., Finemet FT-3H), a maximum induction swing of  $2 \pm 0.2$  T is achieved by applying a low magnetic field of absolute value  $H_0$  about 5 A/m. The further increase in the bias magnetic field does not lead to the increase of the  $\Delta B$ , which confirms the operation at the maximum induction swing. Hence, the maximum flux density, inducing the highest voltage across the secondary of the transformer ( $V_{C2}$ ), can be achieved by applying a relatively low bias magnetic field using the square B-H loop core. However, the steep slope of the induction in the area between 0 and 2 A/m (Fig. 5, (1)) seriously reduces the possibility of tuning the  $\Delta B$ .

On contrary, at the maximum bias magnetic field of 23 A/m, the maximum induction swing obtained while using the flat B-H loop core (i.e., Finemet FT-3L) is  $1.75 \pm 0.2$  T. Even though the remanent induction of the Finemet FT-3L is low ( $\sim 0.05$  T), the continuously applied  $H_0$  makes it possible to achieve a substantial induction swing, close to  $2B_{sat}$ . Due to the limit of the pre-magnetizing circuit – limited current source and number of turns – the induction swing could not be further increased for this arrangement. However, the smooth slope of the induction curve (Fig. 5, (2)) provides the excellent advantage of regulating the induction swing.

### B. Adjustable Nanosecond High-Voltage Generator Based on SOS-180-4 and Finemet FT-3L

The advantage of the flat B-H loop core is harnessed in the development of an adjustable high-voltage SOS generator. The adjustment of the output voltage is performed by changing the input voltage (i.e., the C1 charging voltage  $V_{C1}$ ). However, to maintain a high efficiency, an optimal pre-magnetizing  $H_0$  should be applied to achieve an optimum saturation. The

optimum saturation corresponds to the situation where the core is saturated at the precise moment when the charging voltage of the secondary capacitor  $V_{C2}$  reaches its peak amplitude, and the SOS current is zero (Fig. 2). If saturation occurs too early, it prevents the transmission of all the energy stored in the primary capacitor C1. If saturation occurs too late, a part of the energy transmitted to the secondary capacitor C2 is transferred back to the primary circuit. Therefore, a transformer designed to saturate at the optimum moment ensures an efficient and complete energy transfer from C1 to C2.



**Fig. 6.** Waveforms of the current through C2 at different saturation states of the SPT, depending on the bias magnetic fields  $H_0$ : (1) early saturation, (2) optimum saturation, and (3) late saturation.

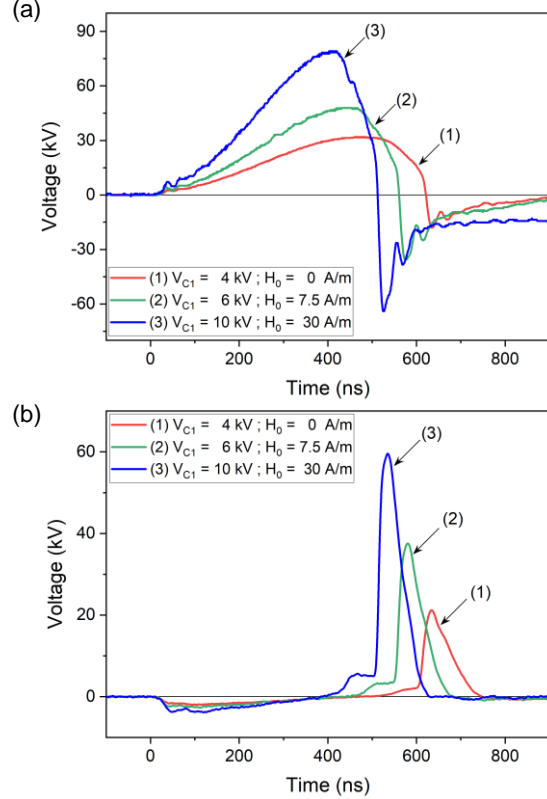
A preliminary study was carried out to determine the optimal pre-magnetizing  $H_0$  for each  $V_{C1}$ . In this preliminary study, the diode is short-circuited and the secondary of the transformer consists of the secondary winding in series with the capacitor C2. The input voltage  $V_{C1}$  is varied from 3 to 10 kV. For each input voltage, the magnetic field is tuned to obtain the optimum saturation. Fig. 6 presents the three different states of early, optimum, and late saturation. It is shown that the reverse current is at its maximum when the saturation time is optimal. Consequently, the reverse pumping current density required for the SOS effect is improved when operating at the optimum saturation. For the input voltage of 7 kV, the optimum magnetic field applied is 7.5 A/m for which a maximum reversed current amplitude of 1.9 kA is obtained (see Fig. 6, (2)).

TABLE III  
PARAMETERS OF THE ADJUSTABLE HIGH-VOLTAGE GENERATOR

$V_{C1}$ (kV)	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
$H_0$ (A/m)	-	-	-	7.5	7.5	15	15	22.5
$ V_{C2} $ (kV)	24	32	40	48	56	63	72	80
$V_R$ (kV)	10	22	30	38	44	50	55	60
$t_{R(0.1-0.9)}$ (ns)	39	25	22	21	19	18	16	16
FWHM (ns)	85	63	60	57	55	55	54	53
$\eta_{PT}$ (%)	65	67	66	70	68	69	70	68

Based on this preliminary study, an adjustable SOS generator, having an electrical circuit shown in Fig. 1, was designed and manufactured. The generator components are the

same as described in TABLE I. A single core of Finemet FT-3L is used for the saturable pulse transformer, whose design parameters are as described in Section II.B. The resistive load is set to  $50 \Omega$  as an example. For insulation considerations, both the diode and the load are immersed in oil.



**Fig. 7.** Typical waveforms of (a) secondary capacitor voltage  $V_{C2}$  (reversed for clarity) and (b) load voltage  $V_R$ , when the primary capacitor is charged to 4 kV, 6 kV, and 10 kV.

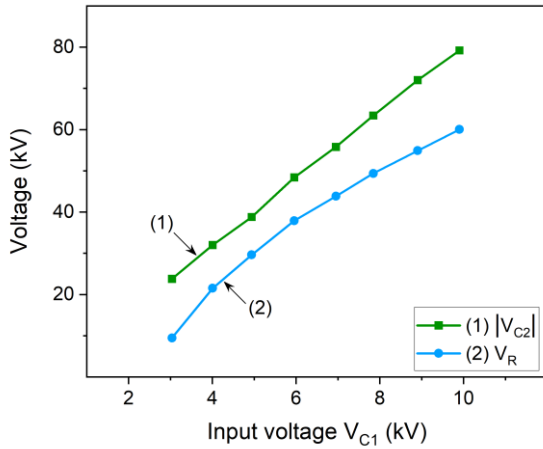
The typical waveforms of  $V_{C2}$  and  $V_R$  are shown in Fig. 7 for different values of  $V_{C1}$  and  $H_0$ . Fig. 8 presents the voltage amplitudes of the  $V_{C2}$  and  $V_R$  as a function of  $V_{C1}$ . By varying the input voltage from 3 kV to 10 kV,  $V_{C2}$  is changed from 24 kV to 80 kV and the output load voltage is adjusted almost linearly from 10 kV to 60 kV. The proper bias magnetic field is also applied, to ensure the optimum saturation is reached at each operation point. Although the rise time and duration of the load voltage are shortened with the voltage increase, these parameters are hardly tunable in this circuit. Therefore, the adjustment described in this paper is only related to the amplitude of the output voltage.

The main characteristics of the adjustable high-voltage generator working on  $50 \Omega$  load are summarized in TABLE III, including the load voltage pulse parameters: peak amplitude  $V_R$ , rise time  $t_{R(0.1-0.9)}$ , and full width at half maximum (FWHM). The transformer efficiency  $\eta_{PT}$  is evaluated as the ratio of primary and secondary stored energy (8):

$$\eta_{PT} = \frac{E_{C2}}{E_{C1}} \quad (8)$$

It is worth noting that this efficiency includes spark gap losses. Therefore, the ultimate efficiency of the transformer itself is

likely to be higher than the calculated  $\eta_{PT}$ . Thanks to the regulation of the induction swing, the transformer efficiency remains almost constant for all the output voltages (see TABLE III); its value of up to 70% was calculated using (8).



**Fig. 8.** Evolution of the amplitude of (1) secondary charging voltage  $V_{C2}$  and (2) output load voltage  $V_R$ , both as a function of the input voltage  $V_{C1}$ .

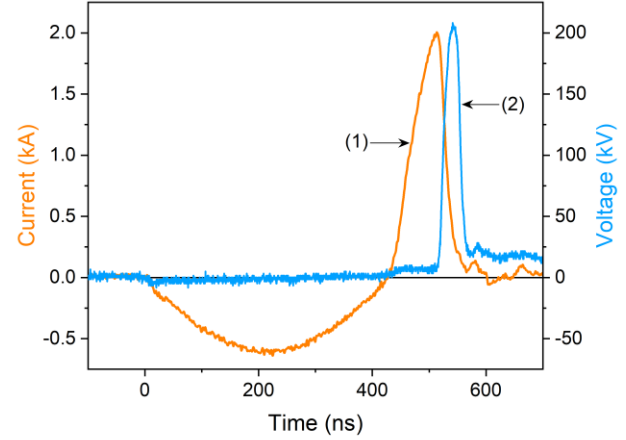
For an input voltage in the range from 3 kV to 5 kV, no magnetic field  $H_0$  is applied since the induction swing is higher than required for obtaining an efficient transfer of the energy from the primary to the secondary capacitor. This causes the SPT to operate in the late saturation state and, consequently, part of the energy is transferred back to the primary. A magnetic field of the same direction as the main pulse could have been applied to regulate the induction swing in order to optimize the overall energy efficiency of the generator at these operation points (from 3 kV to 5 kV). The range of adjustment can also be extended by increasing the voltage capability of the primary capacitor  $C1$ .

### C. Nanosecond High-Voltage Generator Based on SOS-180-4 and Finemet FT-3H

For this generator, the electrical circuit and parameters are the same as presented in Fig. 1 and TABLE I. The SPT of transformation ratio 10 is based on the Finemet FT-3H core (see TABLE II). The generator is designed to operate at a fixed input voltage  $V_{C1}$  of 10 kV. The bias field  $H_0$  of 1.5 A/m is required for an operation at the optimum saturation of the core. This applied magnetic field is only 2.5 times higher than the coercive force but is strong enough to properly bias the square B-H loop core. In such conditions, the effective induction swing of the core is evaluated as  $\sim 2.2$  T.

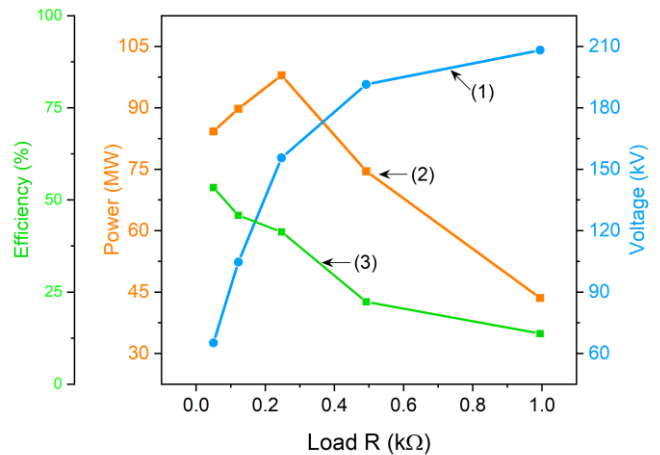
Fig. 9 illustrates the SOS current and the load voltage impulse obtained for a load of 1 k $\Omega$ . To prevent breakdown, both the diode and the load are immersed in oil. The amplitude and duration of the forward current are 620 A and 430 ns, respectively. The reverse current has a duration of 86 ns and an amplitude of 2 kA. A diode cut-off time of 22 ns is measured. The transformer compression ratio, defined as the ratio of the SOS forward pumping current duration to twice the reverse pumping time ( $t^+/2t^-$ ), is evaluated as 2.5. The ratio of the

forward to reverse current amplitude ( $I^+/I^-$ ) is more than 3. A load voltage pulse is generated, having an amplitude of 210 kV, a rise time of 16 ns and an FWHM of 32 ns. The charging voltage  $V_{C2}$  of the secondary capacitor is measured as 85 kV. The overvoltage coefficient  $k_{ov}$  of the SOS, defined as the ratio of the output voltage  $V_R$  to the charging voltage of  $C2$ , is 2.5.



**Fig. 9.** Waveforms of (1) the current flowing through the SOS diode  $I_{SOS}$  and (2) the load voltage  $V_R$  for  $R = 1$  k $\Omega$ , for the generator based on the Finemet FT-3H core.

The influence of the load upon the operation of the generator was also studied for resistive loads varied between 50  $\Omega$  and 1 k $\Omega$ . In what follows, the energy switching efficiency of the SOS diode is defined as the ratio of the energy transmitted to the load  $R$  to the energy stored in the secondary capacitor  $C2$  ( $\eta_{SOS} = E_R/E_{C2}$ ). The load peak power is calculated from the load voltage  $V_R$  measured experimentally.



**Fig. 10.** Load characteristic of the generator based on the Finemet FT-3H core: (1) load voltage  $V_R$ , (2) peak power  $P_R$ , and (3) diode energy switching efficiency  $\eta_{SOS}$  for different values of resistive load ranging from 50  $\Omega$  to 1 k $\Omega$ .

The main results are presented in Fig. 10. A peak output power  $P_R$  of  $\sim 100$  MW is obtained with a load of 250  $\Omega$  while the maximum voltage of  $\sim 210$  kV is obtained for a 1 k $\Omega$  load. The

change in the load does not influence the transformer efficiency  $\eta_{PT}$  which is superior to 70% for each load (up to 77% at 1 k $\Omega$ ).

The diode energy switching efficiency reaches its maximum of 54% with the load of 50  $\Omega$  and its minimum of only 16% for the load of 1 k $\Omega$  (Fig. 10). Considering that the energy efficiency is highest when the source and load impedances match, a higher efficiency should be reached by matching the source impedance, estimated as 32  $\Omega$ . On the contrary, the overvoltage coefficient is maximum ( $k_{ov} = 2.5$ ) for 1 k $\Omega$  and minimum ( $k_{ov} = 0.8$ ) for the 50  $\Omega$  load. This result is in agreement with [2], which reports that the switching efficiency of SOS decreases with the increase of the overvoltage coefficient.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The present paper describes the studies related to optimizing the operation of a saturable pulse transformer when used as part of a pulsed-power high-voltage SOS generator. It was found that the saturation flux density is one of the most critical parameters when designing an SPT. The SPT was studied using nanocrystalline magnetic cores of both flat and square hysteresis loops. The comparison of results obtained with these cores reveals the most important features of a hysteresis loop. Thus, it was found that the core presenting the square hysteresis loop, due to the low magnetic field required for the maximum induction swing, is suitable for an operation at a fixed voltage. On the other hand, when using a flat hysteresis loop core, the generator output voltage can be adjusted almost linearly, by tuning the input voltage and by applying the adequate bias magnetic field. It was also demonstrated that a relatively high DC current amplitude is necessary to generate the required magnetic field for higher voltages while using the flat hysteresis loop core. In such a case, proper cooling of the choke must be considered. Two SOS generators based on the aforementioned cores were designed, manufactured and tested. The control of the bias magnetic field enabled these generators to be operated with a high transformer efficiency of more than 70%. Future research will focus on using a solid-state switch in the primary circuit to improve the overall energy efficiency and address the high pulse repetition frequency operation of these generators. Applying the proposed voltage regulation method to more energetic (>10 J) SOS generators will also be considered.

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