

[54] DIRECT PROCESS FOR EXPLOSIVES

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[52] U.S. Cl. 149/109.6; 149/47; 149/92

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[58] Field of Search 149/47, 92, 109.6

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[57] ABSTRACT

A direct process of making ethylenediamine dinitrate through the reaction of ethylenediamine and ammonium nitrate.

3 Claims, No Drawings

*Patent rights waived to
Stinecipher*

DIRECT PROCESS FOR EXPLOSIVES

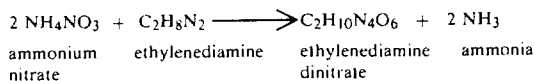
The Government has rights in this invention pursuant to Contract No. W-7405-ENG-36 awarded by the U.S. Department of Energy and Contract No. F08635-78-C-0215 awarded by the United States Air Force.

SUMMARY

This invention involves the production of ethylenediamine dinitrate from the non-explosive components ethylenediamine and ammonium nitrate. The conventional preparation of ethylenediamine dinitrate requires the use of nitric acid and is a very exothermic reaction which is difficult to control in large quantities. The process involved in this invention is slightly endothermic initially. Variations on the basic process include several. First, an excess of ammonium nitrate may be used with the starting materials to form the eutectic of ammonium nitrate and ethylenediamine dinitrate which is an even better explosive than ethylenediamine dinitrate. Other additives which can be used include nitrophenols, nitroheterocycles, and picric acid for formation of a solid with the byproduct ammonia. Heating or allowing the ammonia to escape by other means enables the product to form a solid more rapidly from the slurry stage that initially results. Other explosives may be added to the materials to sensitize the reaction. The product of the basic reaction remains a slurry for several days unless some means of removing the ammonia is utilized and this slurry may be poured as desired prior to formation of the solid.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION INCLUDING A DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

The reaction of ethylenediamine and ammonium nitrate is a quantitative acid-base reaction to form a salt, ethylenediamine dinitrate, and a weak base, ammonia, according to the following chemical equation:



The basic reaction proceeds fairly rapidly but the product and byproduct may remain in a slurry state for several days prior to solidification. The product is explosive in the slurry state and may be used as is or poured into place for use as an explosive. The solidification of the product ethylenediamine dinitrate can be hastened by the removal of the byproduct ammonia. This can be accomplished by heating or otherwise re-

moving the ammonia or by reacting the ammonia with an additional substance to form a solid.

The amounts of ammonium nitrate and ethylenediamine used in the initial process determine the final stoichiometry of the mixture. To prepare the eutectic mixture, which is a 50/50 weight ratio of ethylenediamine dinitrate to ammonium nitrate or a mole ratio of 2.33/1, one mole of ethylenediamine is added to 4.33 moles ammonium nitrate. Two moles of ammonia are formed. Much of the ammonia is evolved during addition and the rest is evolved on standing as the product solidifies. This mixture or others of different stoichiometry can be used as formed as a blasting explosive.

To prepare an explosive of greater power, the eutectic mixture is heated to 110° C. (8° greater than the eutectic melting point). After the melt is uniform, it can be cooled quickly for use as a pressing powder or cast. Additives to the melt to get desired explosive and physical properties may be RDX (1,3,5-trinitro-1,3,5-triazacyclohexane), HMX (1,3,5,7-tetranitro-1,3,5,7-tetraazacyclooctane), PETN (pentaerythritol tetranitrate), TNT (2,4,6-trinitrotoluene), NQ (nitroguanidine), TATB (1,3,5-triamino-2,4,6-trinitrobenzene), nitroheterocycles, and aluminum.

Another approach to utilizing the ammonia given off during the reaction is to add a material which neutralizes the ammonia and forms an ammonium salt. It may be an explosive (for example, picric acid) or a non-explosive material which does not degrade the explosive performance too much (for examples, a nitrophenol or a nitrated biphenol, both of which pick up ammonia at ambient temperature).

We claim:

1. A method of forming an explosive mixture of ammonium nitrate and ethylenediamine dinitrate which comprises:

(a) combining ethylenediamine and a stoichiometric excess of ammonium nitrate, said ammonium nitrate being present in an amount to form, after reaction of said ethylenediamine therewith, a mixture of ammonium nitrate and ethylenediamine dinitrate; and

(b) reacting said ethylenediamine with the stoichiometric portion of said ammonium dinitrate to form said explosive mixture of ammonium nitrate and ethylenediamine dinitrate.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the mixture of step (b) is heated to form a uniform melt and thereafter cooled to solidify said uniform melt.

3. The method of claims 1 or 2 wherein said explosive mixture of step (b) is an eutectic mixture.

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