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## DOE/NLUF Final Report

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The investigation of Calibration Methods for Neutron Diagnostics at Omega is still underway. However, this status report may be used as a final report for Grant # DE-FG03-96SF21019. The data shown below is a compilation of measurements taken at Omega during the time of the grant. The data set has been updated with additional information taken this year.

The neutron yield from an ICF event was determined by measuring the activity of an aluminum sample activated by target-produced DT neutrons. The radioactive nuclei  $^{24}\text{Na}$  and  $^{27}\text{Mg}$ , which were produced via the  $^{27}\text{Al}(\text{n},\alpha)^{24}\text{Na}$  and  $^{27}\text{Al}(\text{n},\text{p})^{27}\text{Mg}$  direct reactions, beta decay to excited states of  $^{24}\text{Mg}$  and  $^{27}\text{Al}$  respectively. These excited states then emitted gamma rays as the nuclei de-excite to their respective ground states. The gamma rays are detected and counted. From their numbers the neutron yield is determined.

The DT neutron yield,  $Y_n$ , as measured by counting gamma rays in the HPGe detector is given by the equation:

$$Y_n = \frac{4\pi N_\gamma R(E_\gamma)}{\Omega n \ell \sigma(E_n) \beta(E_\gamma) (1 - e^{-\lambda t_c}) e^{-\lambda t_w}}$$

Where  $\Omega$  is the solid angle of the aluminum sample,  $n$  is the number density of aluminum,  $\sigma$  is the nuclear cross section for 14.1 MeV neutrons and  $\ell$  is the thickness of the aluminum sample.  $\beta(E)$  is the efficiency of the HPGe detector at the gamma ray energy of interest and  $\lambda$  is the decay constant for  $^{24}\text{Na}$  or  $^{27}\text{Mg}$ .  $T_w$  is the "wait time" between activation of the sample and the time when counting begins and  $t_c$  is the gamma

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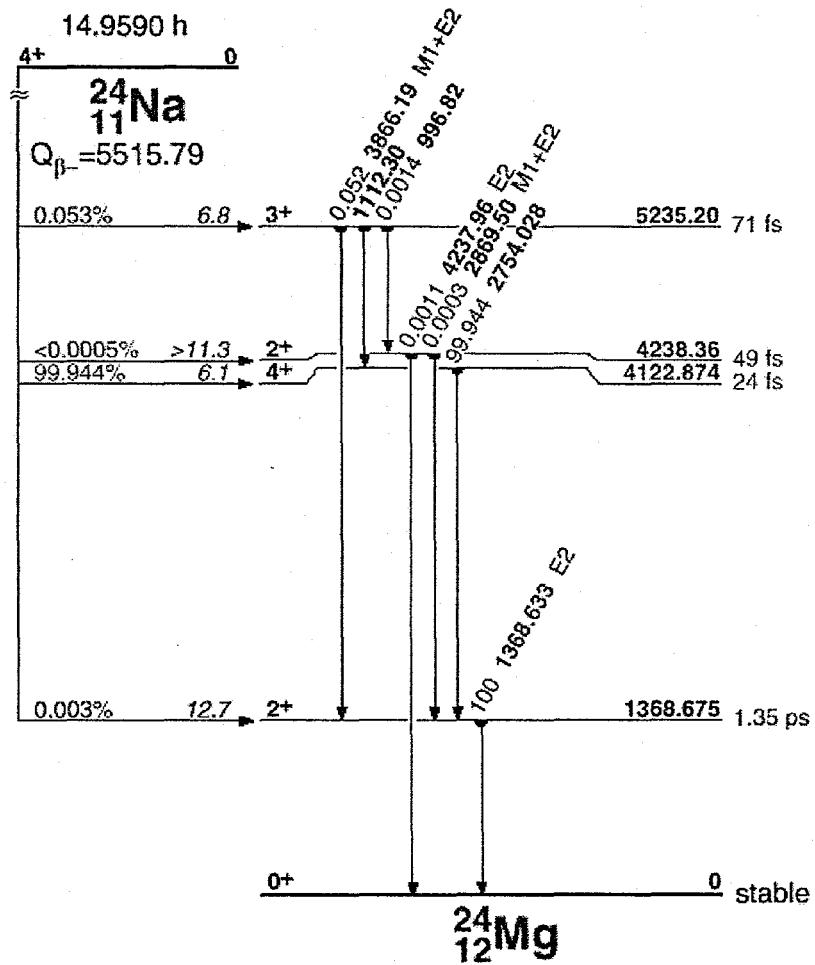
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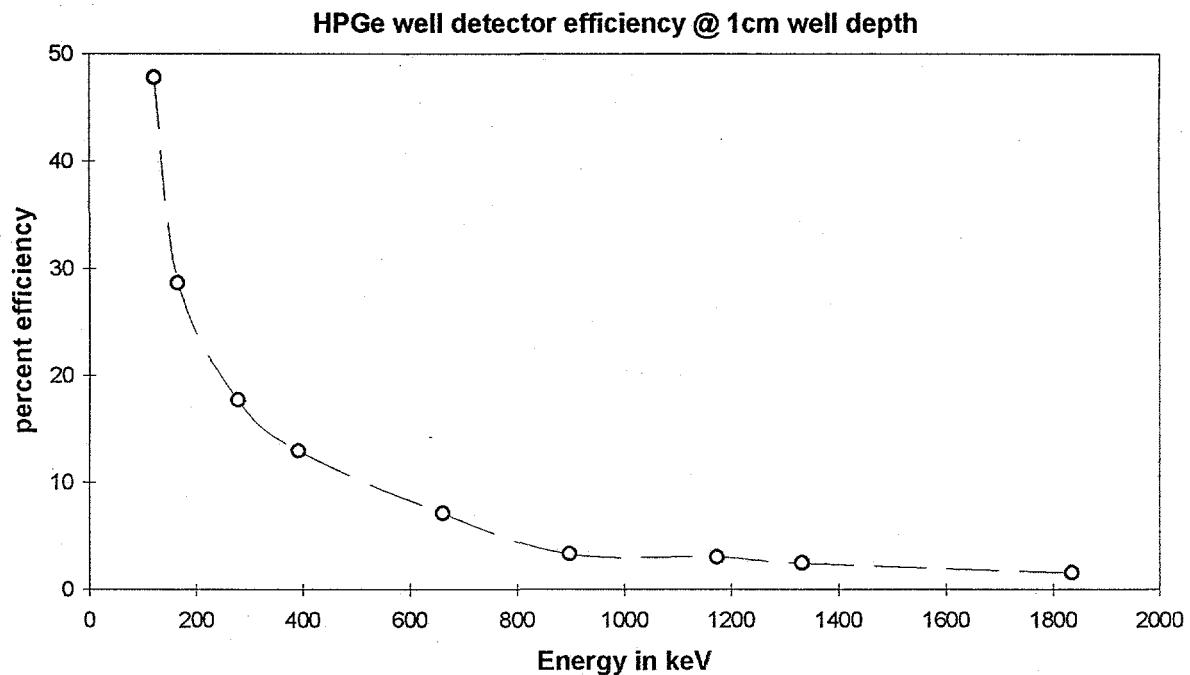
ray counting time.  $N_\gamma$  is the number of gamma rays detected by the HPGe and  $R(E)$  is the gamma ray re-absorption coefficient for aluminum.

Three gamma ray peaks are prominent in the gamma ray energy spectrum. They are produced by two nuclear reactions, which lead to the decay of  $^{24}\text{Mg}$  and  $^{27}\text{Al}$ . The decay scheme for  $^{24}\text{Mg}$  is shown below.



As shown above the  $^{24}\text{Na}$  beta decay feeds into the second excited state of  $^{24}\text{Mg}$  99.944% of the time. The transition from the second to the first excited state of  $^{24}\text{Mg}$  emits a 2.754 MeV gamma ray 99.944% of the time. Subsequently, the first excited state de-excites 100% of the time to the ground state, emitting a 1.368 MeV gamma ray making this transition a good indicator of the measure of activation of the aluminum sample. However the efficiency of the high purity germanium (HPGe) detector, used in

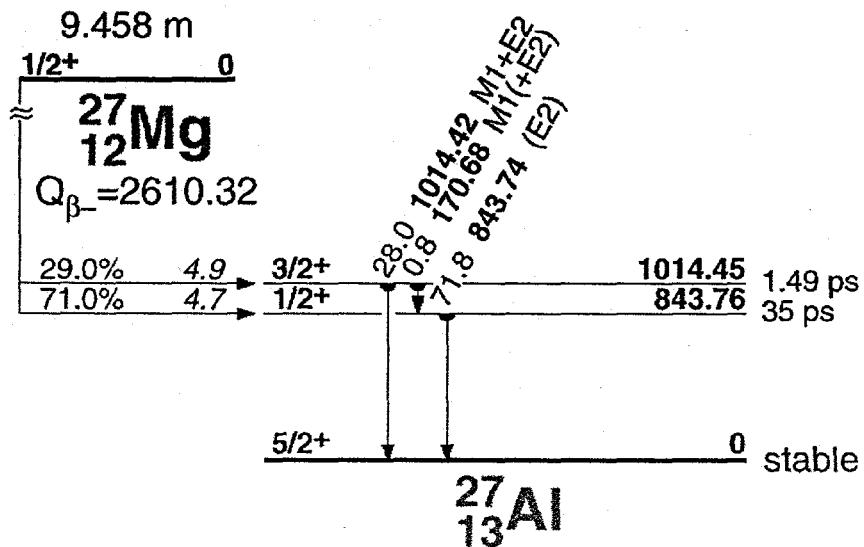
these measurements, has a low detection efficiency of 2.7 % at 1.368 MeV. The gamma ray detection efficiency as a function of energy for the HPGe well detector was measured using a 9 line calibrated gamma ray source at 10 well depths. The calibration curve at 1 cm from the bottom of the well is shown below. The full set of efficiency curves for all 10 depths are not shown here.



At higher gamma ray energies the detection efficiency drops further. This makes it impractical to use higher energy transitions, such as the 2.754 MeV gamma ray in  $^{24}\text{Mg}$  in counting measurements with our detector. In contrast, the efficiency is relatively good near 0.7 MeV, approximately 7 %. However, the gamma ray background is large and the signal to noise ratio is poor. Our project showed that the gamma ray background at 0.843 MeV is low enough to make a good measurement with reasonable counting statistics.

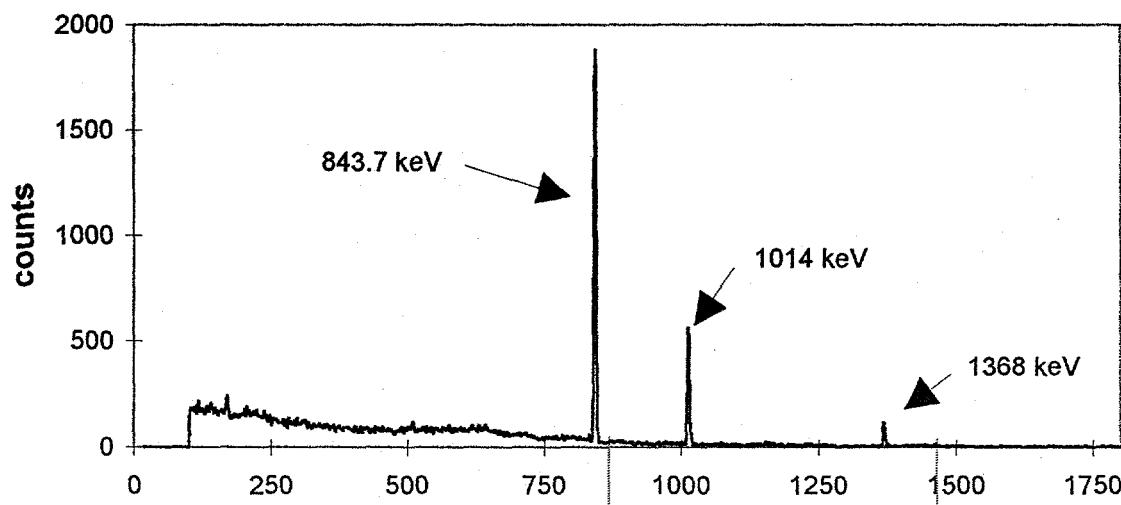
The production of the 0.843 MeV gamma is shown below in the level diagram for  $^{27}\text{Al}$ . The beta decay of  $^{27}\text{Mg}$  feeds the first and second excited states of  $^{27}\text{Al}$ . These

states de-excite and emit 0.843 and 1.014 MeV gamma rays with branching fractions of 71 % and 29 % respectively.

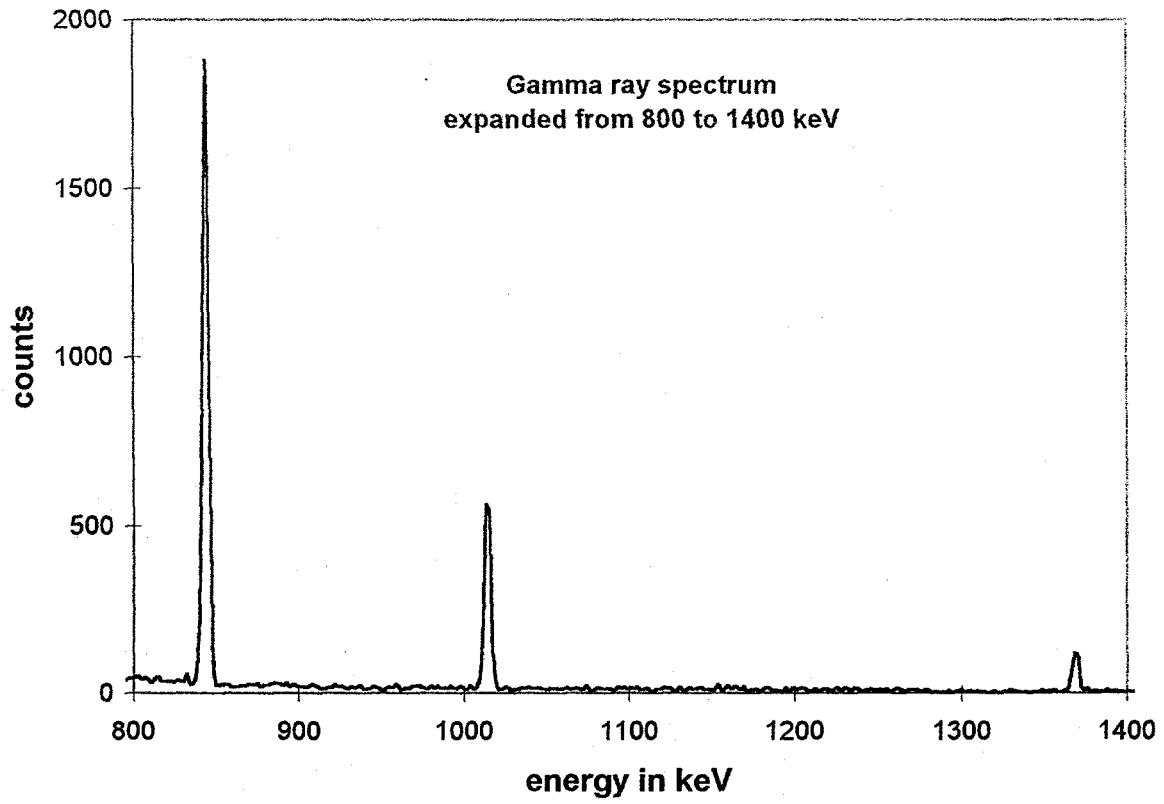


Shown in the next figure is a typical spectrum. The good signal to noise ratio for this gamma peak, coupled with a reasonable detector efficiency, favorable branching fraction and the 9.5 minute half-life made this the best choice for a neutron yield measurement. Due to the physical limitation of the aluminum sample size and half-life of  $^{27}\text{Mg}$ , yields of less than  $10^8$  neutrons produced poor gamma counting statistics for times greater than 45 minutes which is the maximum time allowed between experimental events.

Gamma ray spectrum

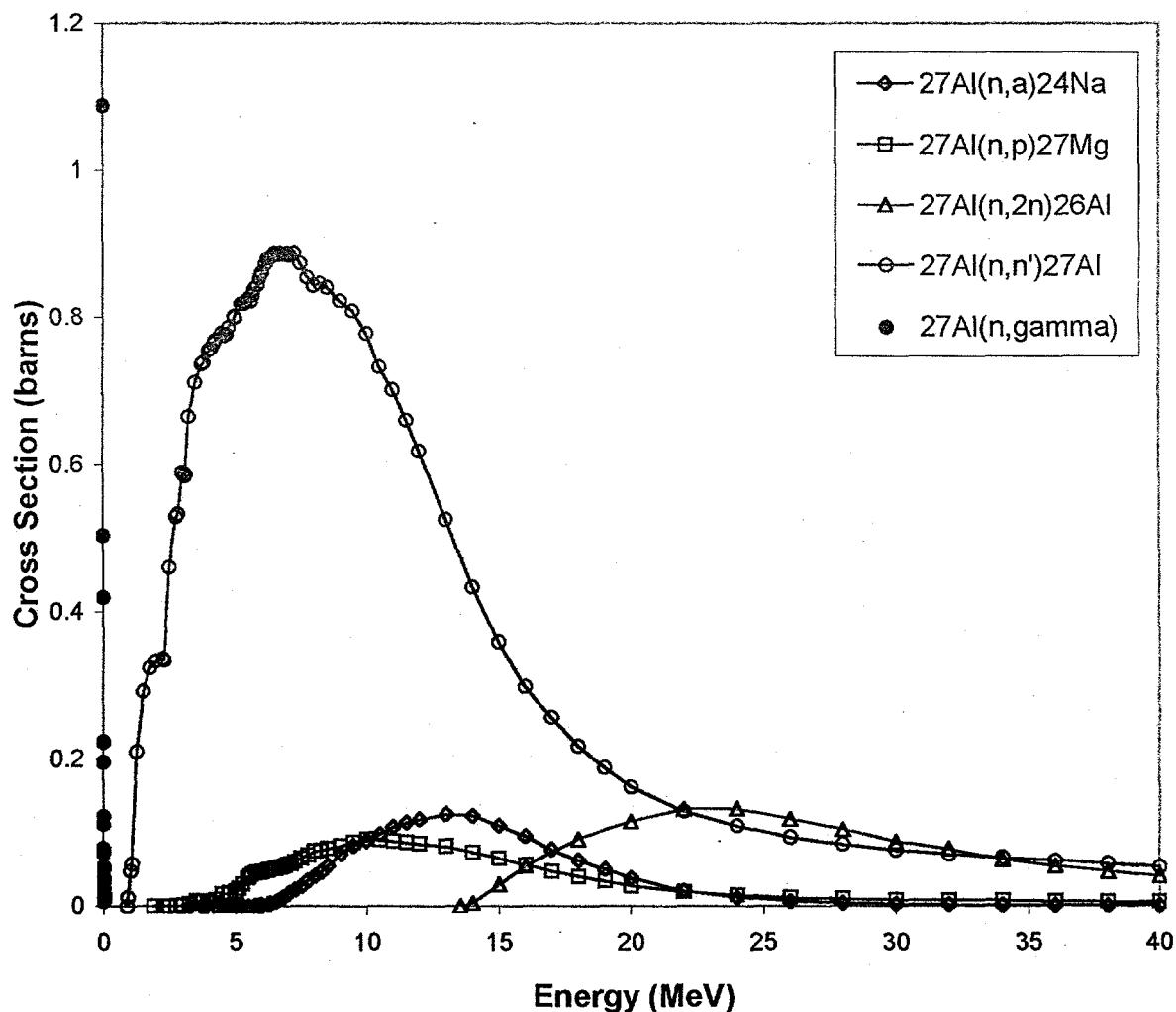


Gamma ray spectrum  
expanded from 800 to 1400 keV



The sensitivity of the aluminum activation method was modified to cover a large dynamic neutron yield range. Some of the factors are fixed by nature and the detector, such as the neutron capture cross section, the half life, the efficiency of the HPGe detector, and the branching ratio of the gamma ray transitions in the decay products. Others could be changed, such as the radial position, mass or type of the activation sample and the counting time. The neutron threshold energy is also important and must be high enough to exclude thermal or low energy scattered neutrons. Shown below is a plot of the neutron reaction cross section for the  $^{27}\text{Al}(n,x)$  reactions.

### Reaction Cross Sections

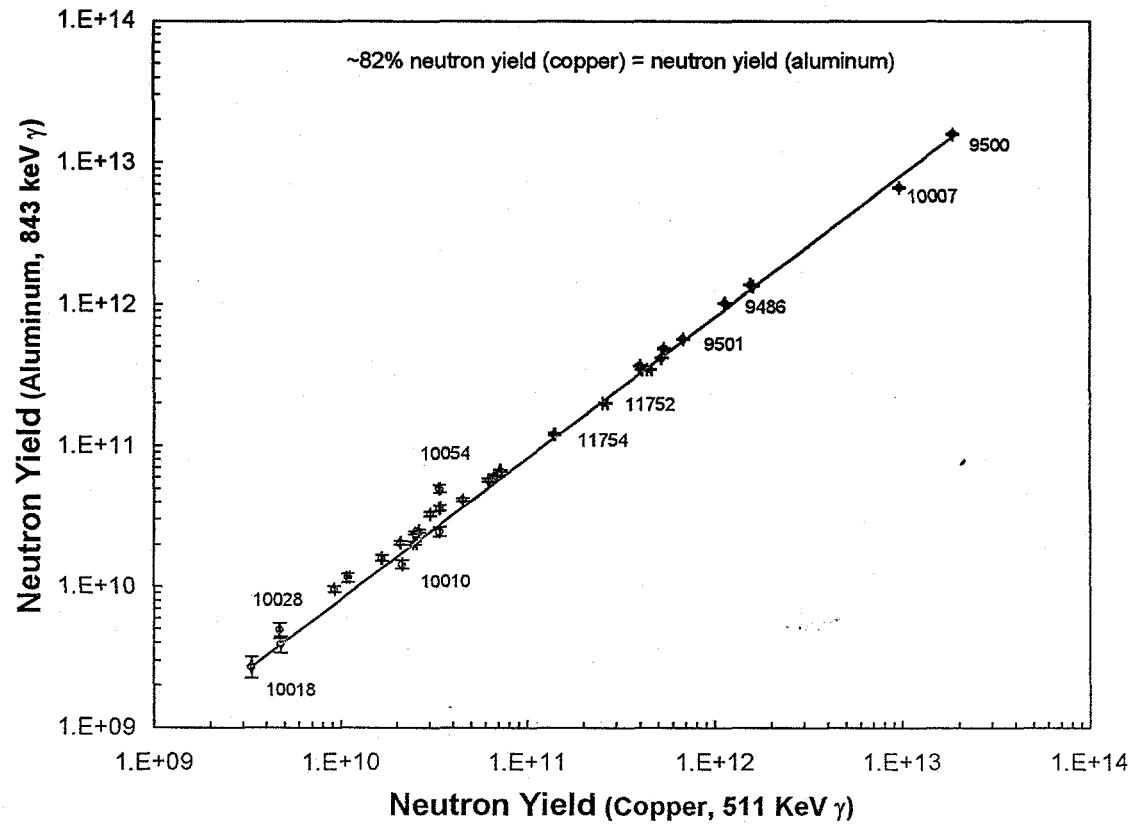


Reaction	Cross Section at 14.1 MeV	Halflife
$^{27}\text{Al}(\text{n},\alpha)^{24}\text{Na}$	0.123 barns	15 hrs
$^{27}\text{Al}(\text{n},\text{p})^{27}\text{Mg}$	0.073 barns	9.5 hrs
$^{27}\text{Al}(\text{n},2\text{n})^{26}\text{Al}$	0.004 barns	740,000 yrs
$^{27}\text{Al}(\text{n},\text{n}')^{27}\text{Al}$	0.433 barns	

Note that the cross section for neutron capture in the  $^{27}\text{Al}(\text{n},\alpha)^{24}\text{Na}$  reaction at 14.1 MeV is 121.2 millibarns. Compare this to 72.3 millibarns for the  $^{27}\text{Al}(\text{n},\text{p})^{27}\text{Mg}$  reaction. Furthermore the  $\text{n},\text{n}'$  reaction is prompt and does not play a role in our measurement time scale.

The aluminum activation experiment used the 843 KeV gamma ray counting measurement to determine the neutron yield from DT reactions. These measurements were then compared to the yields measured with the copper activation method. A comparison of aluminum method vs. the copper method is shown below for 40 Omega shots.

## Aluminum Activation vs. Copper Activation



The measurements reveal a very strong correlation between the two methods. However the absolute yield produced by the aluminum method is consistently lower than the copper method by 18%.

We have determined that the difference occurs because the yield calculation assumes that the aluminum sample is thin compared to the energy of the neutrons. However, at 14 MeV it is only marginally thin. Therefore we have undertaken the task of writing a Monte Carlo program to determine if the 18% difference is produced by  $1/r^2$  effect due to the geometry and proximately of the aluminum sample with respect to the target. Also secondary scattering and the neutron flux attenuation through the marginally thin aluminum sample will also be considered in this calculation.