

\$107,000 Grant To University By A.F. Grant

The Air Force Office of Scientific Research has awarded a grant of approximately \$107,000 to aid a study of nuclear particles associated with cosmic rays being conducted by Texas A&M University's Southwest Center for Advanced Studies in Dallas.

Already, a strange "rocking chair" nuclear particle detector—or telescope—is constructed at Texas A&M in the direction of Dr. Nelson Duller, associate professor of physics at the university.

"We will be looking at the energetic particles called cosmic ray muons," explained Dr. Nelson Duller. "The muons are one class of particles created when powerful cosmic rays strike the upper atmosphere. The muons are shown to and into the earth, measuring the muon's energy direction, a great deal learned about the original ray and some of the intermediate particles it creates."

THE AIR FORCE grant is a jointly divided, giving \$63,250 to Dr. Duller's work and \$44,000 to Dr. W. R. Shelton, SCAS (formerly known as Graduate Research Center of Southwest.) The work will be collaborative effort, however.

The detector being built A&M consists of a pair of "spark chambers" above, below and between them. When a muon plows through the spark chambers and the magnets, spark-like miniature lightning bolts follow its path. These sparks are photographed and the muon's path is bent by magnetism gives a clue to energy involved.

THE MAGNETS are mounted on big rockers so that they be tilted from vertical to horizontal. This way, they look at things coming in straight overhead and at any angle to, and even below, the horizon.

The energies involved with cosmic rays long have fascinated scientists. The electrons create the picture in an old television set are given a voltage of about 20,000 volts. A cosmic ray might strike the atmosphere with an energy of 300 million electron volts. When it hits the nucleus of an atom in the atmosphere, the cosmic particle create a virtual shower of particles. In one possible case, the cosmic ray produces particles known as "pions." The pion, in turn, can decay into a muon and a neutrino. Practically speaking, the neutrino stops a neutrino and it passes through the earth and right into space.

THE SCIENTISTS are interested in the muon, because carries a great memory of what has happened. It's sort of a skeleton of the affair," Duller.

Dr. Duller's previous work has been supported by NASA.

NASA Give \$10,730 For Analysis

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration has awarded Texas A&M a \$10,730 experimental grant for participation in a combined neutron analysis demonstration with possible applications in determining the composition of the moon.

Dr. John Hislop, assistant research chemist for A&M's Activation Analysis Research Laboratory, said the university is one of several organizations participating in joint experiments fall at the Mobil Oil Research Laboratories at Dallas.

Purpose of the joint experiments, Dr. Hislop explained, determine the extent to which various neutron techniques can be combined to obtain useful analytical results.

Texas A&M's phase of the demonstration will involve neutron activation analysis, either the prototype or a version of the unique lunar probe developed by the university's activation analysis personnel.


The A&M lunar probe is a compact remote-controlled probe designed to provide on-site data and relay information back to earth.

Other research organizations participating in the demonstration include the University of California's Lawrence Radiation Laboratory, Mobil, Sandia and the Illinois Institute of Technology.

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