



**Evaluation of the Submodeling Technique for  
Analyzing Electronic Components**

**by Brian M. Powers and David A. Hopkins**

**ARL-TR-3627**

**October 2005**

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**Brian M. Powers and David A. Hopkins  
Weapons and Materials Research Directorate, ARL**

# REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

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<b>1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY)</b> October 2005		<b>2. REPORT TYPE</b> Final		<b>3. DATES COVERED (From - To)</b> July 2005	
<b>4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE</b>  Evaluation of the Submodeling Technique for Analyzing Electronic Components				<b>5a. CONTRACT NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5b. GRANT NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER</b>	
<b>6. AUTHOR(S)</b>  Brian M. Powers and David A. Hopkins (both of ARL)				<b>5d. PROJECT NUMBER</b> 622618.H80	
				<b>5e. TASK NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER</b>	
<b>7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> U.S. Army Research Laboratory Weapons and Materials Research Directorate Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD 21005-5069				<b>8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER</b>  ARL-TR-3627	
<b>9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b>				<b>10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)</b>	
				<b>11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)</b>	
<b>12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT</b>  Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.					
<b>13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES</b>					
<b>14. ABSTRACT</b>  The use of submodeling in a finite element model for structural response is investigated for a simple structure representative of an electronic circuit board subjected to projectile launch conditions. The basic technique and rationale for submodeling are discussed. The consequences of sampling rate when one is using the global model's response as input for the local model's response are also highlighted. Additionally, the effect of submodeling in introducing artificial high frequency response is shown. Finally, it is shown that with proper selection of model parameters, submodeling can provide accurate stress results of electronic components in conditions similar to gun launch.					
<b>15. SUBJECT TERMS</b> electronic components; finite elements; submodeling					
<b>16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:</b>			<b>17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT</b>  SAR	<b>18. NUMBER OF PAGES</b>  25	<b>19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON</b> Brian M. Powers
<b>a. REPORT</b> Unclassified	<b>b. ABSTRACT</b> Unclassified	<b>c. THIS PAGE</b> Unclassified			<b>19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (Include area code)</b> 410-306-1961

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## 1. Introduction

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The need for computational techniques to efficiently handle multiple length scales is increasingly important as finite element (FE) models become more detailed and complex. This is especially pronounced in structures containing electronic components. One example of interest is smart munitions, which are often evaluated in a dynamic analysis that simulates gun launch. The length scale of the electronics is typically orders of magnitude smaller than the overall size of the structure. This can lead to very small element sizes and a very large number of elements when mesh uniformity is imposed. In explicit dynamic analyses, the time increment is chosen, based on stability criteria (i.e., Courant condition) and is directly dependent upon the element size; see, for example, (1). Consequently, as the element size decreases, so does the time step; this results in an increase in the computational time that can be excessive, often restrictively so in the case of large models with very small components.

One way to alleviate this problem is to use global-local modeling approaches, one method of which is often referred to as “submodeling”. A review of submodeling and other modeling global/local approaches is included in (2). The commercial FE package ABAQUS<sup>1</sup> includes a submodeling technique. This report explores whether the submodeling technique has applicability for modeling structures with electronic components using the technique available in ABAQUS.

Submodeling employs two models, as detailed in (3). In this report, the global model represents the entire structure and contains a coarse representation of the domain of interest (e.g., an electronic chip). The entire global model is sufficiently refined to accurately calculate the displacement solution on the boundary of the domain of interest. Subsequently, the solution obtained from the global model along the boundary of interest is applied as a displacement boundary condition on the submodel.

The submodel is a highly refined model of the domain of interest. The primary assumption of submodeling is that the structural details of the submodel do not significantly affect the solution in the global model. In most practical applications, there are no known *a priori* methods for determining the validity of this assumption. It is therefore left to the analyst to determine the validity of this assumption, based on prior experience.

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<sup>1</sup>ABAQUS, which is not an acronym, is a registered trademark of ABAQUS, Inc.

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## 2. Sample Problem

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The submodeling technique was applied to a simplified geometry of an electronic component. The purpose of the example is to demonstrate how the technique can be applied to structural elements of an FE model with large differences in length scales. The length scales chosen are representative of those seen in typical smart munitions applications. Figure 1 shows the layout of the electronics with respect to the outer shell and the supporting structure. The electronics consist of two structures representing capacitors which are modeled as monolithic material, and a small outline integrated circuit (SOIC) eight-lead chip. The support ring has a 3-inch diameter, while the width of the leads on the chip is on the order of 0.010 inch. The scale difference is thus on the order of 300 to 1. This is an intermediate level of disparity in length scales and is typical for smart munitions.

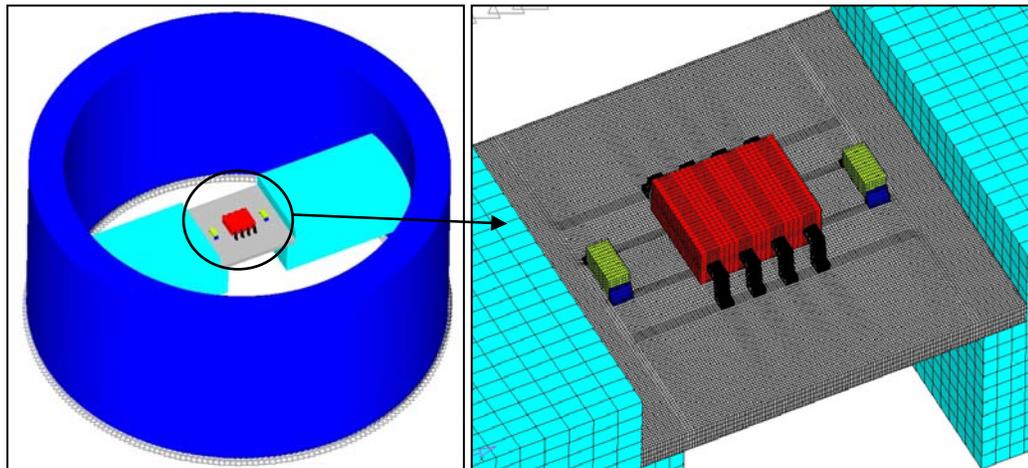


Figure 1. Finite element model layout with electronic chip.

The full baseline model uses 116,000 elements, with 47,000 elements comprising the chip. “Tied surface” contact is used at the interface between the chip and the support. All material properties are linear elastic and are summarized in table 1. The loading is applied by prescribing the velocity of the nodes on the lower surface of the outer ring. The velocity-time history is shown in figure 2. The defined termination time for the model is 1.4 ms. This time span was chosen so that the model would execute in a reasonable amount of time on available hardware. The initial time step is  $4.24 \times 10^{-9}$  seconds. The model requires more than 200,000 time steps to complete the analysis.

Table 1. Material properties of model components.

	Density (lb·s <sup>2</sup> /in <sup>4</sup> )	Modulus (Msi <sup>1</sup> )	Poisson's Ratio
Ring and Support	7.33x10 <sup>-4</sup>	30.0	0.3
Board	1.48x10 <sup>-4</sup>	28.6	0.14
Chip (AD623)	1.14x10 <sup>-4</sup>	2.31	0.25
Chip Leads	3.55x10 <sup>-4</sup>	17.5	0.3
Capacitor	1.31x10 <sup>-4</sup>	15.1	0.17
Solder Cap	7.98x10 <sup>-4</sup>	5.2	0.4

<sup>1</sup>Msi = millions of psi

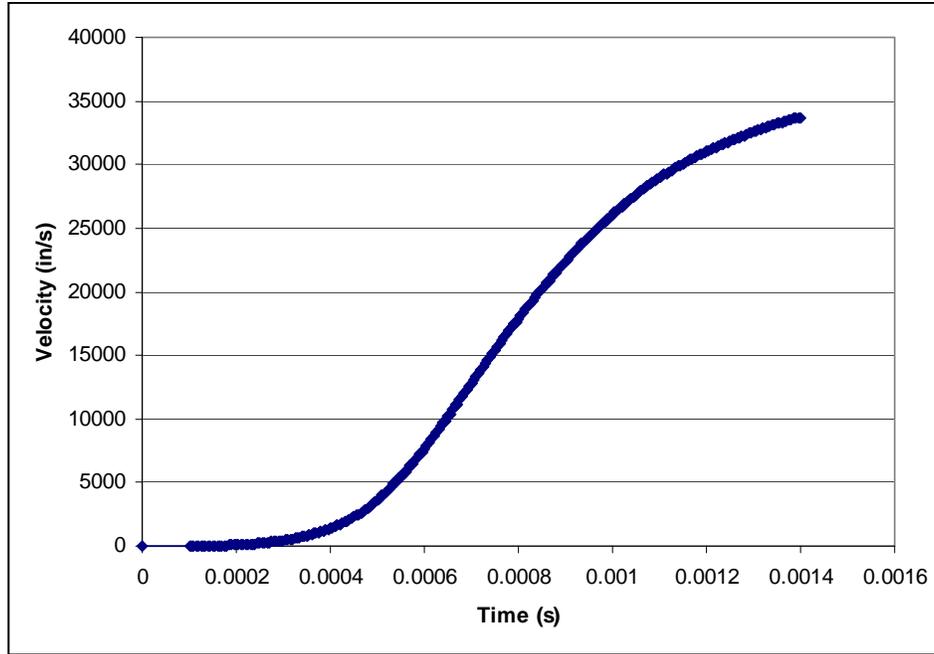


Figure 2. Velocity load curve applied to base of support ring.

The global model uses the mesh from the baseline model for the outer ring and supports and is shown in figure 3. The geometry of the chip is replaced with a coarser mesh of shell elements with offset contact used to maintain the centerline location of the board with respect to the support structure. The shell elements are defined to have the thickness of the board. Discrete mass elements are attached to nodes at the approximate locations of the lead attachment points. The mass of these elements is distributed to match the total mass of the capacitors and the chip. The total number of elements in the global model is 70,000. It is assumed that the stiffness of the chip does not appreciably affect the overall response of the structure away from the chip location.

As an additional consideration, the time-dependent fidelity of the boundary conditions that are applied to the submodel is known to affect the results (3). To determine these effects, two different sets of results are extracted from the global model and are subsequently used as boundary conditions for the submodel. Specifically, 100 and 1000 result states are used as input. This has the effect of essentially using two load curves that are discretized at different time intervals,  $1.4 \times 10^{-5}$  seconds and  $1.4 \times 10^{-6}$  seconds, respectively, for the different number of results states.

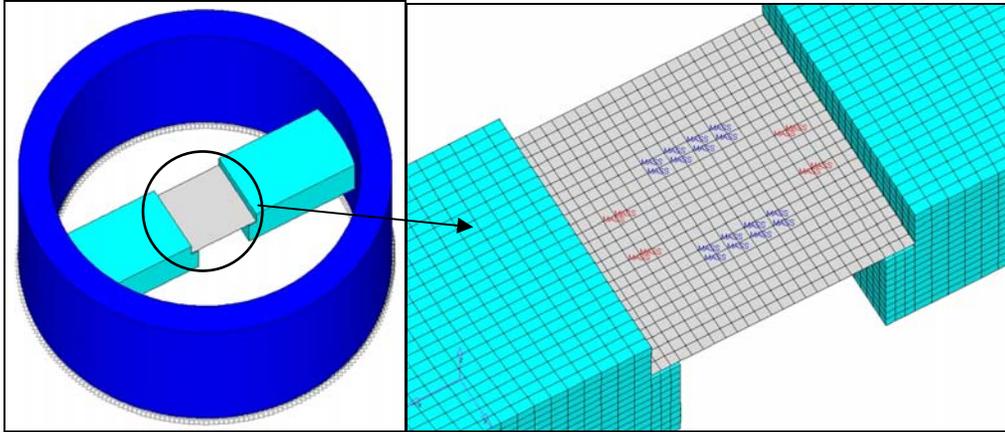


Figure 3. Global model with coarse representation of board.

The submodel consists of the detailed geometry of the electronics package and a small adjacent section of the supports. The domain of the submodel is shown in figure 4. As mentioned, the displacement results from the global model were applied along the outer edges of the supports.

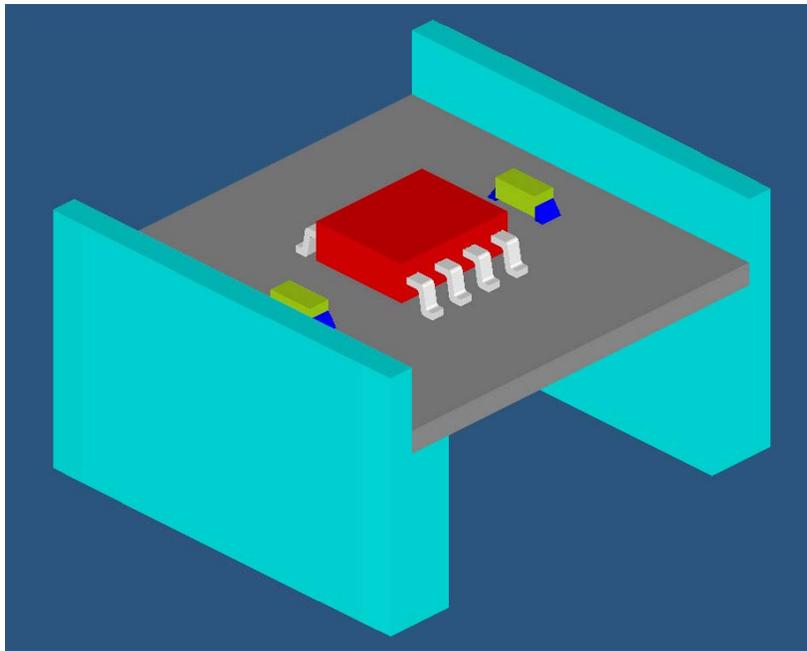


Figure 4. Submodel domain.

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### 3. Results

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All analyses were run on an SGI (Silicon Graphics, Inc.) Origin 3900. The baseline model was analyzed with 32 processors and took approximately 1,100 total CPU (central processing unit) hours (or about 34 hours/CPU). The global model was run on a single processor and took 6 CPU

hours. The two submodel analyses, one using 100 global result states and the other using 1000 states, took approximately 900 total CPU hours each on 32 processors (or about 28 hours/CPU). For this model, the overall reduction in analysis time was not significant.

The results from the two submodel cases are compared to the baseline model as shown in figure 5. Figure 5 shows contour plots of the Von Mises stress at time  $t = 0.6$  ms for the three cases. For this geometry, the highest stress is in the leads. Figure 6 compares the stress-time history for a representative element in a lead. The results for both submodels are generally in good agreement with the global model, but the stress peaks for the 100-point case overshoot the global model. The 1000-point results match the peaks and valleys of the global model better. The reason for the difference in the results is entirely attributable to the use of a coarser loading function in the case of the 100-point curve versus the 1000-point curve.

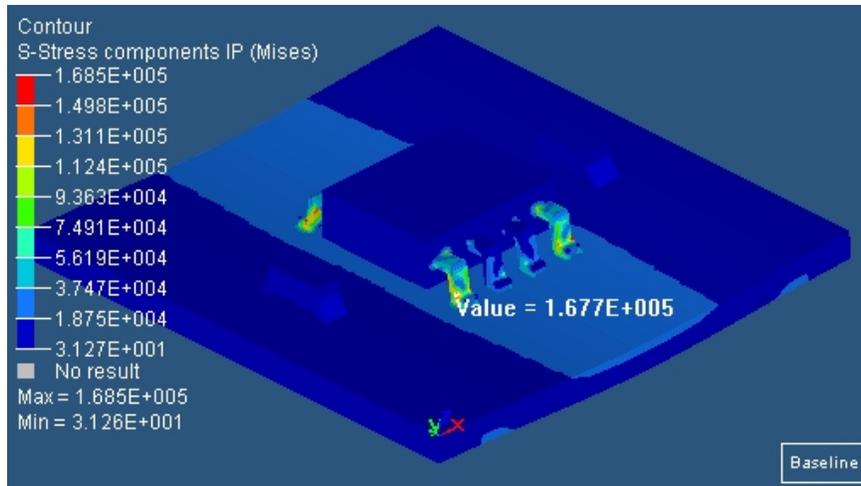
It is known *a priori* that the submodeling technique might introduce high frequency content into the solution, but it is unknown how the solution would be affected. A fast Fourier transform (FFT) was performed on the data in figure 6 and is presented in figure 7. An FFT assumes the data to be periodic, but the data are finite in length, which causes error because of leakage (4). Non-zero values in the data at the starting and ending times create jumps in the data when they are expanded from a finite time to become periodic. These jumps create spurious, non-physical frequencies in the FFT. These spurious frequencies can be minimized with the use of a window on the data to force the starting and ending times of the signal to be zero so that no jumps appear in the periodic representation. For this study, a Hamming window was applied to the data before the FFT was calculated. While the frequency content of the response below 10 KHz matches very well, the time resolution for the loading function for the submodel introduces high frequency response into the solution for both cases.

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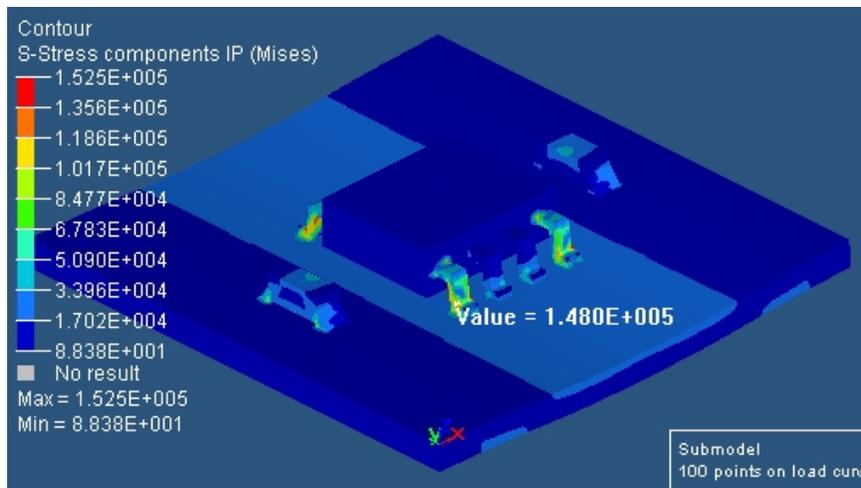
## 4. Conclusions

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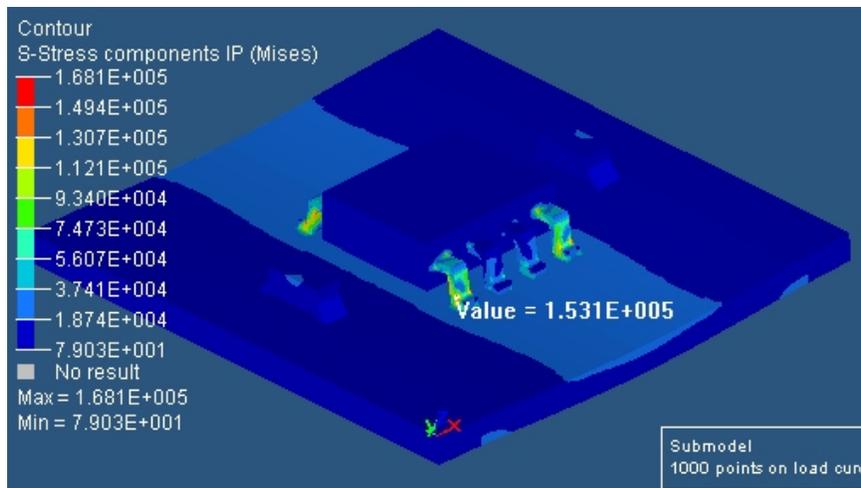
The submodeling analysis technique in ABAQUS has been shown to be applicable to dynamics analysis involving electronic components. While submodeling can lead to artificial high frequency content in the final results, proper care in selecting the frequency of global model output can minimize these effects. As shown in the sample problem, sufficient accuracy in the stress results of the submodel can be realized if we consider the desired frequency response range. If we subsequently sample the global loading finely enough, any high frequency content introduced will be above the frequency range of interest.



(a)



(b)



(c)

Figure 5. Contour plots of Von Mises stress (psi) at  $t = 0.6$  ms for (a) the baseline case, (b) 100-point load curve, and (c) 1000-point load curve.

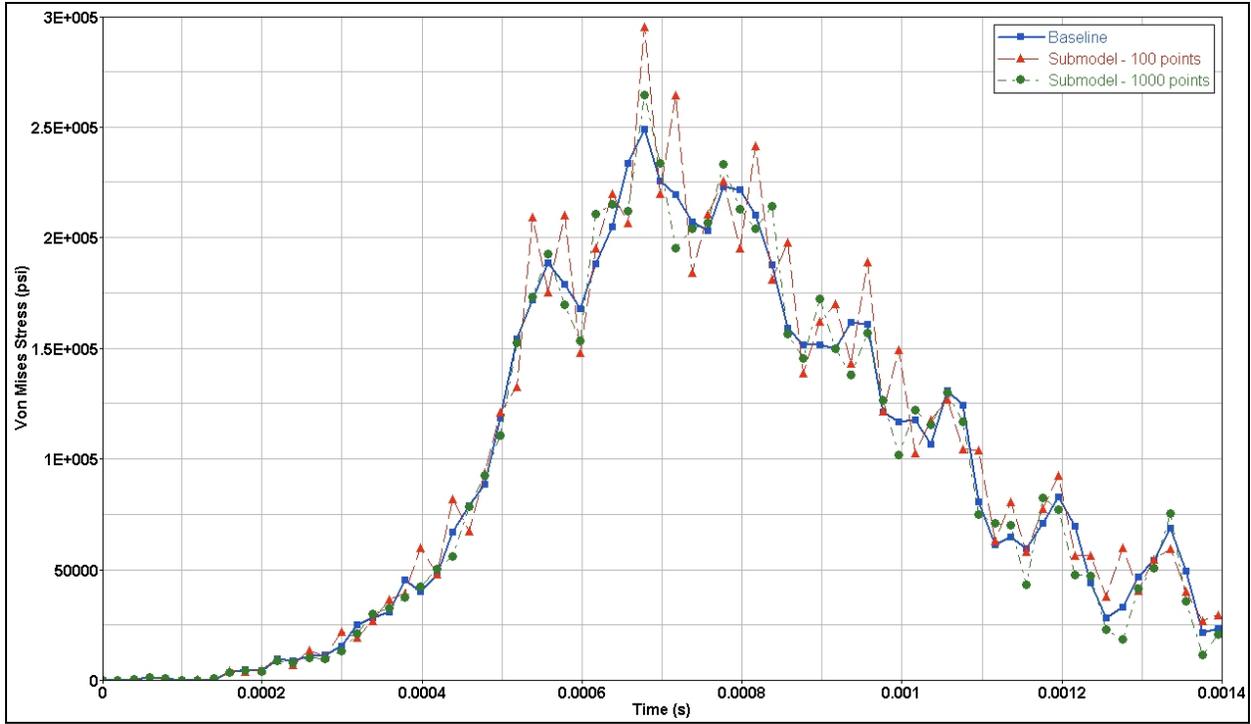


Figure 6. Comparison of the Von Mises stress in a representative element in a lead for the baseline case and the two submodels.

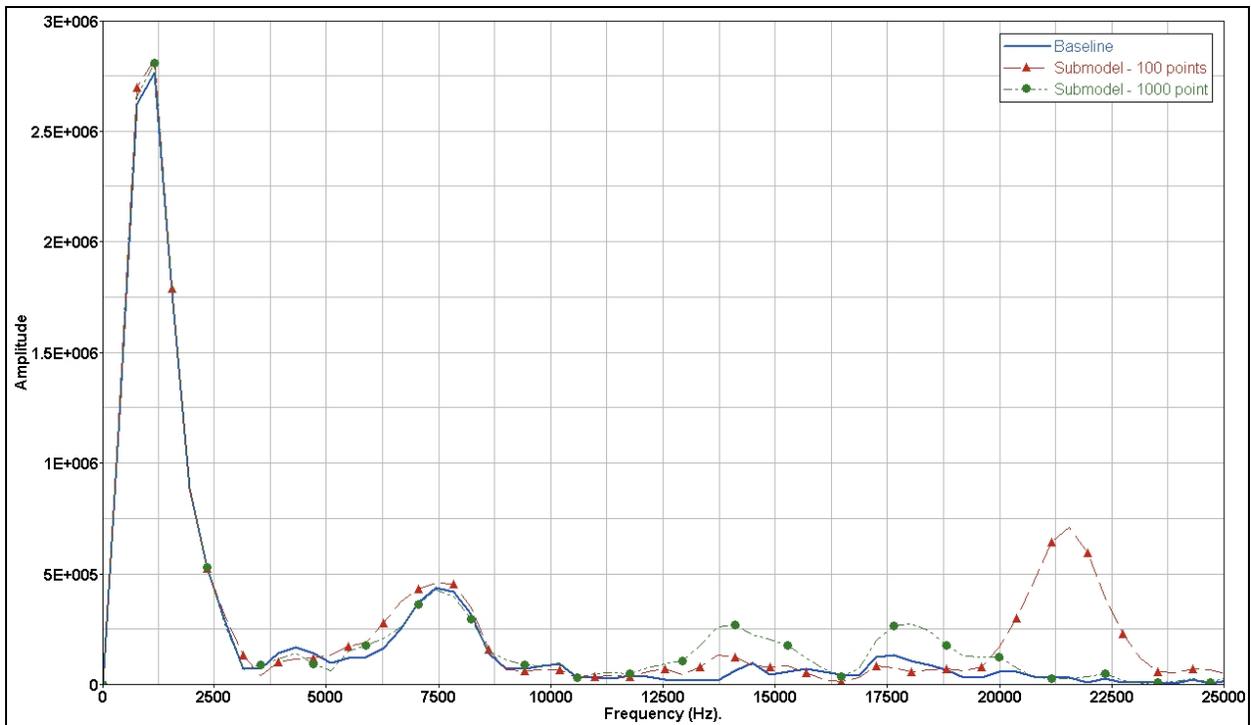


Figure 7. FFTs of data from figure 6.

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