Energy Consumption Determination of the Heat Storage Device Based on the Phase Change Material Depending on the Temperature Ranges

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1. Introduction

The work deals with the peculiarities of the thermal energy storage in the concentrating solar unit based on Stirling engine, which is an ecological engineering system that includes the elements of material engineering. Thermal energy storage is one of the key functions in the concentration solar systems operation (Liu et al. 2016, Zhang et al. 2016), in particular, solar dish Stirling units (Andraka et al. 2015).

The purpose of the work is to study the operation of the heat storage device (HSD) based on the phase change material (PCM), Mg-51%Zn eutectic metal alloy (Blanco-Rodríguez et al. 2014a,b), and to determine its basic energy characteristics.

The battery consists of two concentric steel cylinders with the bottom space filled with the alloy. The design of the heat storage device is determined by its purpose. It is used for the continuous operation of the solar dish Stirling UDS-1 (Stoudenets el al. 2019, Stoudenets & Dudarchuk 2019).

The previous work (Bondarenko 2018a) described the process of creating the heat storage from the alloy Mg-51%Zn with the next parameters:
PCM phase transition specific heat – 155 kJ/kg; PCM specific heat – 0,73 kJ/(kg K); PCM mass – 143 g; HSD net weight – 197 g.

In the course of the experimental studies, the heat storage device was heated to a predetermined temperature (higher than the melting temperature of the alloy) and cooled independently. The melting temperature is 337°C. During the cooling the heat storage device temperature was measured at four points. The work (Bondarenko 2018b) describes the conduct of experimental studies measuring the basic characteristics of the solar unit and the obtained experimental data are presented.

2. Investigation of the heat storage when cooled on the outdoor air

Using thermograms obtained by the heat storage cooled independently on the air, the thermogram of the heat recovery process averaged over the heat storage was obtained (Fig. 1). In this case, we consider that thermocouple sensors mounted on the heat storage surface on the insulation side indicate the temperature of the storage substance, considering that the steel wall of the heat storage shell has a thickness of 0.5 mm and a thermal conductivity of 26.1 W/m·K. The average temperature of the accumulating substance is defined as the arithmetic mean between the statements of the four temperature sensors.
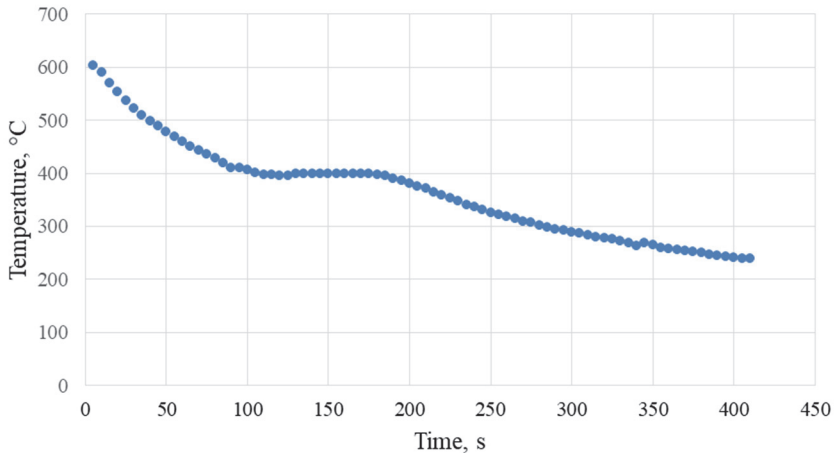

Fig. 1. Averaged thermogram of the heat transfer process by the heat storage when cooled on the outdoor air

Based on the experimental data, the heat flow from the heat storage to the environment was calculated, except for the heat of the phase change. This calculation is somewhat different from the approach used for phase transitions in liquid media, e.g. (Pavlenko & Koshlak 2019). In this case, only the explicit heat is taken into account in the value of the heat flux, since with the phase change the body temperature does not change. The heat flow diagram from the heat storage with the exception of the heat of the phase change is shown in Fig. 2.

Since the heat released by the heat storage into the environment is equal to the change in the internal energy of the heat storage, the heat flux, except for the heat of the phase change, is calculated by the formula (1):

$$Q = \frac{\left(m_1 c_1 + m_2 c_2\right)\left(t_2 - t_1\right)}{\tau}, \tag{1}$$

where:
m_1 – mass of the storage substance, kg; c_1 – specific heat capacity of the storage substance, kJ/(kgK); m_2 – mass of the heat storage shell, kg; c_2 – specific heat capacity of the heat storage shell, kJ/(kgK); Δt – temperature change of the storage substance, °C; τ – time period, sec.
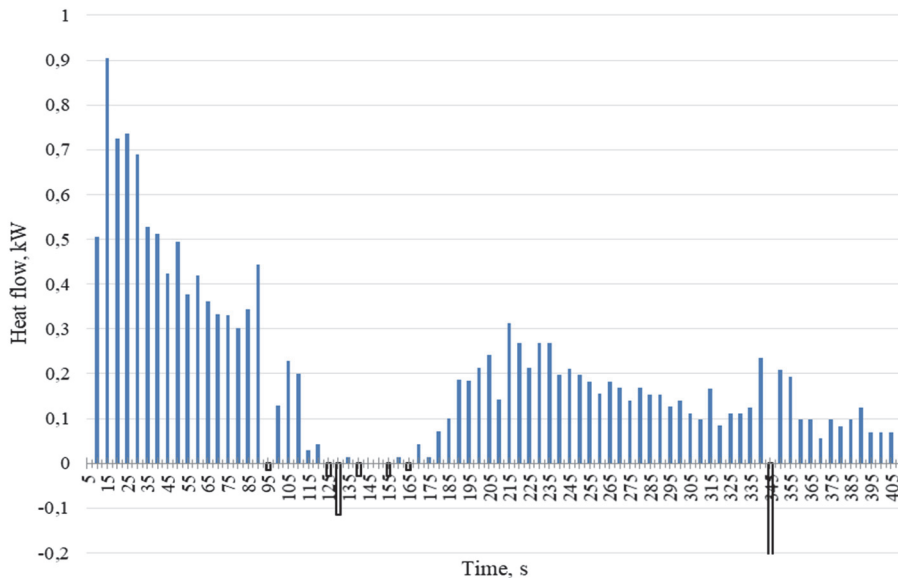

Fig. 2. Heat flow except heat of phase change from heat storage when cooling outdoors

The cooling process can be divided into three phases:
- cooling of the metal in the liquid phase,
- phase change,
- cooling of the metal in the solid phase.

Thus, Figure 2 describes the heat flow during the first and third phases. To determine the heat flux component of heat storage corresponding to the secreted heat release (phase 2), it is necessary to take into account the heat of the phase change of the substance and divide it evenly over the time during which the phase change occurs, since during this period the temperature of the heat storage does not change significantly and the amount of heat flux is permanent. But since the phase change process in the heat storage volume is uneven (the metal at the top of the heat storage reaches the phase change temperature earlier than the lower part), it is difficult to determine the time limits of the phase change. To correctly divide a thermogram into 3 zones, it is necessary to describe the temperature curves in each zone with a mathematical expression that reflects the nature of the temperature change. When the body is independently cooled, the temperature changes exponentially, and during the phase change the temperature is constant, so the schedule of the heat storage temperature changing will consist of two exponents and one horizontal section. The first interval is attributed to the period from 5 to 90 seconds, and to the third interval – from 185 to 410 seconds.

Since the process of the heat storage which cooled independently in the air is exponential, the schedule of temperature change should be described by the function (2).

$$t(\tau) = t_0 + ae^{-b\tau}.$$

$$(2)$$

As a result of the approximation of the experimental data in the first and third sections, a diagram of temperature change over time is presented in Fig. 3, and the corresponding heat flow diagram is shown in Fig. 4.
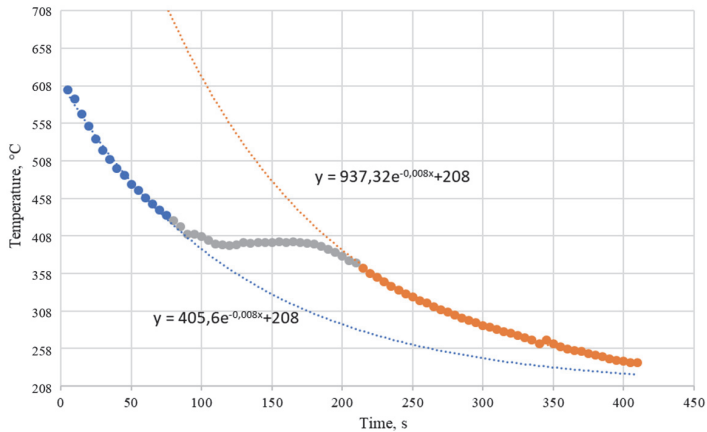
Fig. 3. Averaged thermogram of the heat transfer process by the heat storage after extrapolation of sections
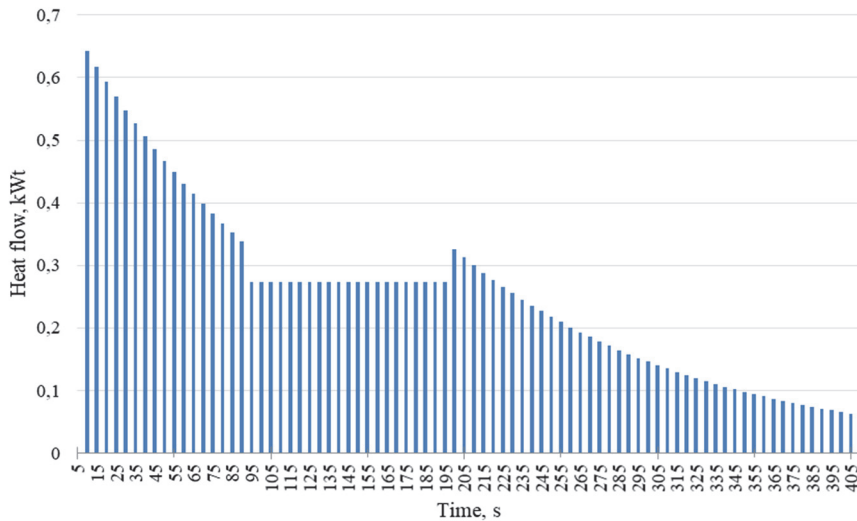

Fig. 4. The heat flow diagram is obtained from the result of mathematical analysis of experimental data

Thus, the amount of heat stored by the heat storage due to the heating of the liquid metal is 46.3 kJ, during the phase change is 22.2 kJ and during the cooling of the solid phase of the metal is 36.6 kJ. The amount of stored heat per unit mass of the HSD is 0.31 kJ/g.

3. Modeling the process of the heat storage cooling on the air using SolidWorks software

Numerical modeling is used to solve various problems of conversion and storage of thermal energy. Modeling of processes in heat exchangers and heat accumulators is often carried out using the universal ANSYS software package. Examples can be given of using ANSYS for internal and external problems in heat exchangers (Deshko et al. 2016, Orlowska et al. 2019) and for thermal storage (Xu et al. 2015, Gorobets et al. 2018). In our study, we used Solidworks software product as more adapted to the specific problem being solved.

Using the data obtained from the experiment, a heat storage model was developed. The outer walls of the heat storage are adiabatic. The inner walls are the real walls that take part in both convective and radiation heat transfer. Heat storage wall material is AISI 304 stainless steel. Heat storage temperature depends on time and consistents with the results of the experiment.

Fig. 5 shows the dependence of the heat storage temperature on time.

The appearance of the model and calculation area is shown in Fig. 6.

The simulation resulted in the following data:
- heat fluxes (convective and radiation component),
- heat transfer coefficients from the heat storage,
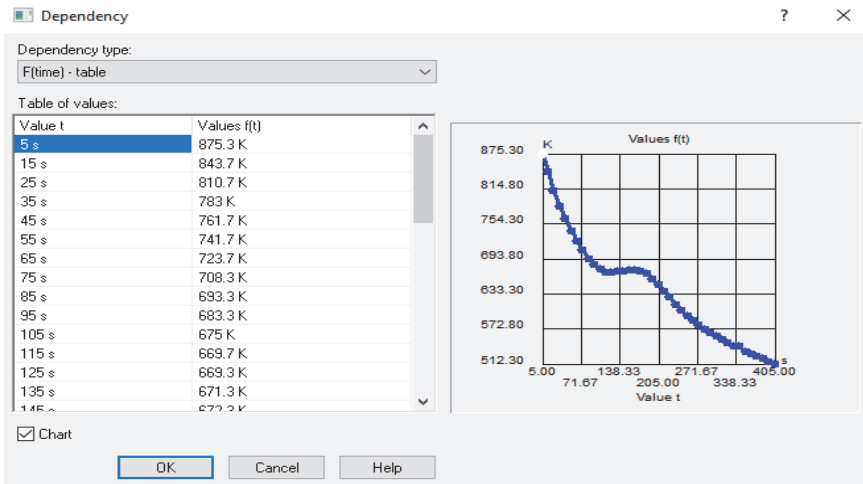- air temperature distribution heated by the heat storage.

Fig. 5. Dependence of the heat storage temperature on time (experimental data)
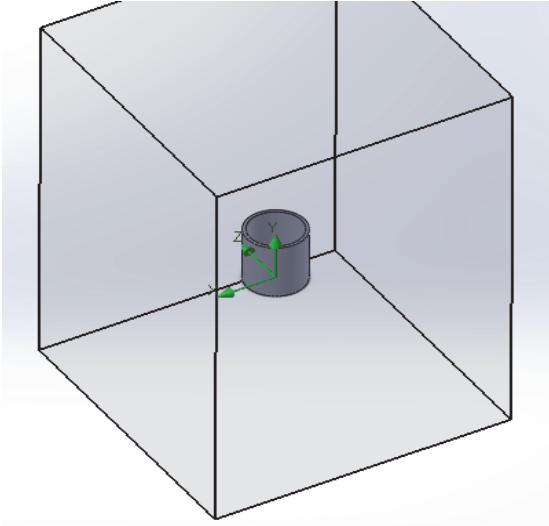
Fig. 6. Appearance of the model

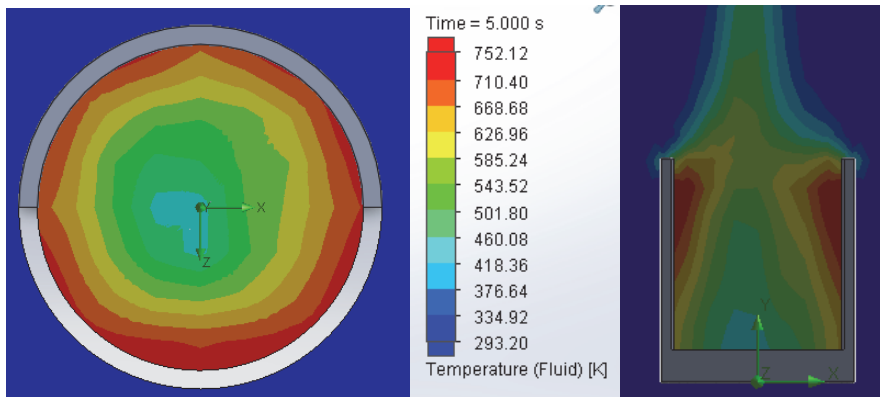The distribution of temperature fields at time 5, 135 and 405 seconds is shown in Fig. 7-9.

Fig. 7. The distribution of air temperature fields at a time of 5 seconds
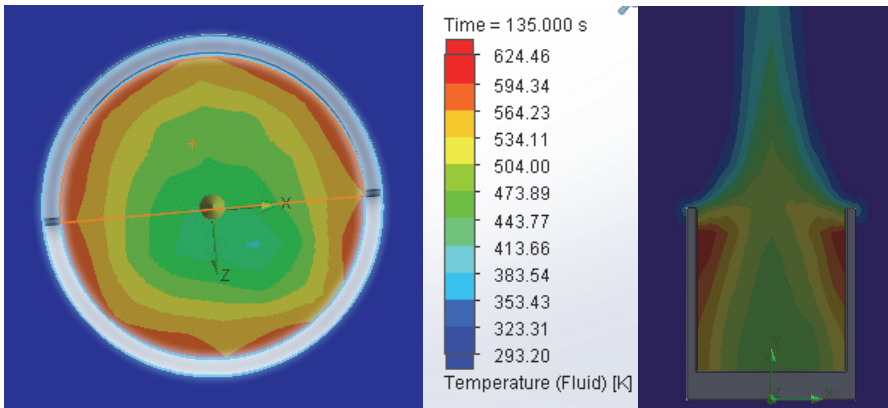
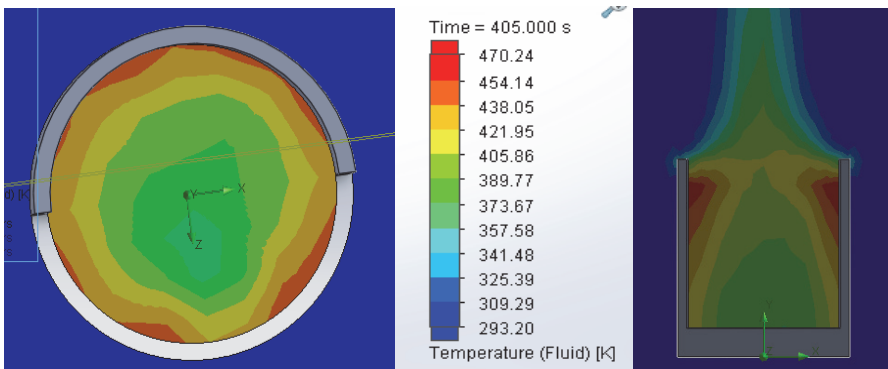**Fig. 8.** The distribution of air temperature at a time of 135 seconds

Fig. 9. The distribution of air temperature fields at a time of 405 seconds

Fig. 10-12 show diagrams of heat loss of the heat storage over time.

The simulated heat flux values shown in Fig. 12 are correlated with the values obtained after processing the experimental data and are presented in Fig. 2.
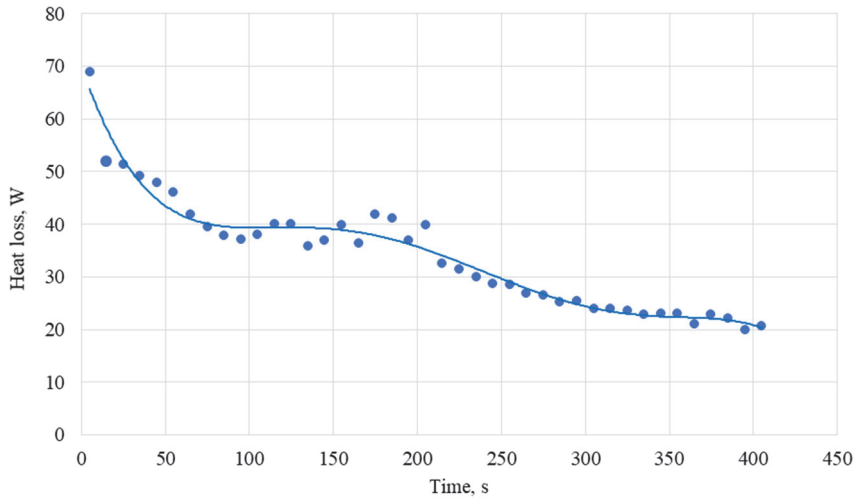
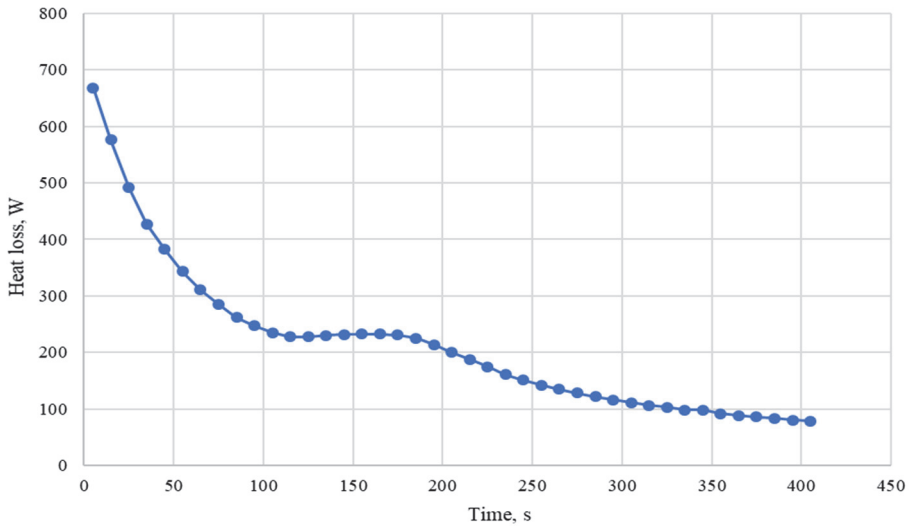**Fig. 10.** Dependence of convective heat loss of the heat storage on time

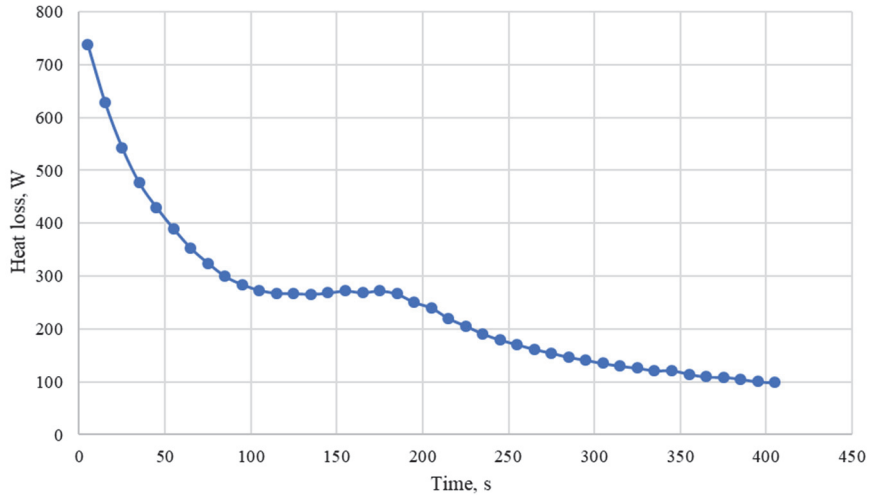**Fig. 11.** Dependence of radiation heat loss of the heat storage on time

Fig. 12. Dependence of total heat loss of the heat storage on time

On the basis of the obtained results, the heat capacity of the heat storage in different temperature ranges of its use was calculated (Fig. 13). The phase change is included in each range. The difference between the initial and final temperatures of each range is 200°C.
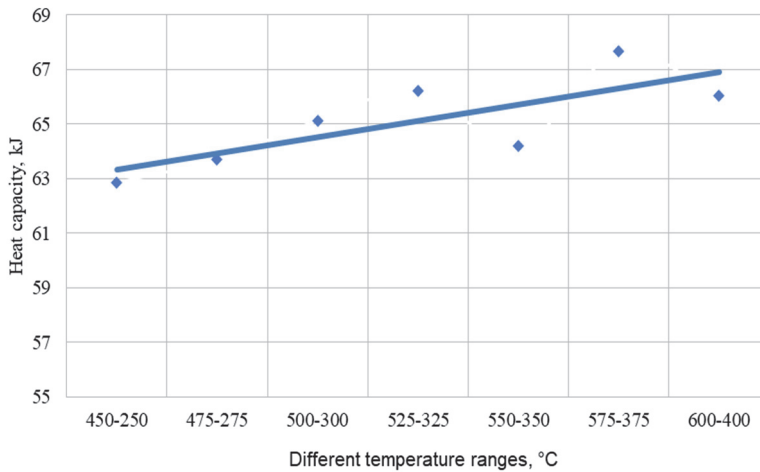

Fig. 13. Dependence of heat storage heat capacity on temperature ranges

4. Conclusions

As a result of the studies, the following HSD basic energy characteristics were obtained.

1. The total amount of heat given off by the HSD according to the simulation results is 102.2 kJ. When approximating the experimental data, the corresponding value is 105.1 kJ. Thus, the difference between the calculation results and the simulation is less than 3%.
2. The amount of heat stored by the heat storage due to the heating of the liquid metal is 46.3 kJ, during the phase change – 22.2 kJ and during the cooling of the solid phase of the metal – 36.6 kJ.
3. The amount of stored heat per unit mass of the HSD is 0.31 kJ/g.
4. The dependence of heat capacity on the interval of operating temperatures of the heat storage is determined. At higher initial and final temperatures (at regular working intervals) the heat capacity is higher.

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Abstract

The work concerns determining the energy performance of the heat storage device based on the phase change material for the solar dish Stirling unit. Experimental studies were performed with the heat storage material, made of the eutectic metal alloy Mg-51%Zn. The energy characteristics are determined by mathematical analysis of the experimental data and simulation of the process of cooling the heat storage.