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(71) Applicant (for all designated States except US):
QUESTEK INNOVATIONS LLC [US/US]; 1820 Ridge Avenue, Evanston, Illinois 60201 (US).

(72) Inventors; and

(75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only): **WRIGHT, James, A. [US/US]; 1807 W. Winnemac Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60640 (US). SEBASTIAN, Jason [US/US]; 1927 N. Sawyer Avenue, Unit 2, Chicago, Illinois 60647 (US). JOU, Heng-Jen [US/US]; 1210 Manor Drive, Wilmette, Illinois 60091 (US).**

(74) Agents: **NELSON, Jon, O. et al.; Banner & Witcoff, Ltd., 10 South Wacker Drive, Suite 3000, Chicago, Illinois 60606 (US).**

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(54) Title: TITANIUM ALLOYS

(57) **Abstract:** Provided herein are titanium alloys that can achieve a combination of high strength and high toughness or elongation, and a method to produce the alloys. By tolerating iron, oxygen, and other incidental elements and impurities, the alloys enable the use of lower quality scrap as raw materials. The alloys are castable and can form -phase laths in a basketweave morphology by a commercially feasible heat treatment that does not require hot-working or rapid cooling rates. The alloys comprise, by weight, about 3.0% to about 6.0% aluminum, 0% to about 1.5% tin, about 2.0% to about 4.0% vanadium, about 0.5% to about 4.5% molybdenum, about 1.0% to about 2.5% chromium, about 0.20% to about 0.55% iron, 0% to about 0.35% oxygen, 0% to about 0.007% boron, and 0% to about 0.60% other incidental elements and impurities, the balance of weight percent comprising titanium.

TITANIUM ALLOYS

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims the benefit of priority to U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/330,081, filed April 30, 2010, the content of which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

FEDERALLY-SPONSORED RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

[0002] Activities relating to the development of the subject matter of this invention were funded at least in part by U.S. Government, Army Contract Nos. W15QKN-09-C-0144 and W15QKN-09-C-0026. Thus the U.S. may have certain rights in the invention.

BACKGROUND

[0003] Titanium alloys can provide low-weight corrosion-resistant structures and therefore have been used in a variety of applications. For example, Ti-6Al-4V, in weight percent, is a commercial alloy widely used for aerospace and medical applications. There are other applications which could also benefit from the use of titanium alloys, in various industry sectors such as defense, energy, chemical processing, marine, and transportation. However, the material and processing costs of the titanium can be prohibitive for such applications.

[0004] The material cost of titanium alloys is generally high at least in part because the content of minor elements such as iron and oxygen need to be tightly controlled in the melt stock. Elements such as iron and oxygen may segregate when the melt solidifies, leading to non-uniform mechanical properties. To eliminate this effect, extra-low interstitial (ELI) grade alloys have been developed. For example, the aerospace material specification on ELI grade Ti-6Al-4V limits iron to 0.25 and oxygen to 0.13, in weight percent.

[0005] The processing cost of titanium is generally high at least in part because titanium alloys are typically wrought. Forming the titanium alloys to near-net shape by the working process can involve costly machining. Moreover, the working and machining can generate significant material waste.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] In an aspect the disclosure relates to an alloy comprising, by weight, about 3.0% to about 6.0% aluminum, 0% to about 1.5% tin, about 2.0% to about 4.0% vanadium, about 0.5% to about 4.5% molybdenum, about 1.0% to about 2.5% chromium, about 0.20% to about 0.55% iron, 0% to about 0.35% oxygen, 0% to about 0.007% boron, and 0% to about 0.60% other incidental elements and impurities, the balance of weight percent comprising titanium.

[0007] In an aspect the disclosure relates to a method comprising: providing a material that is based on at least 50% of a titanium-based alloy that includes, by weight, about 6% aluminum and about 4% vanadium, the balance of weight percent comprising titanium, the material further including, by weight, 0% to about 0.35% oxygen, 0% to about 0.55% iron, and other incidental elements and impurities; melting the material to provide an alloy that includes, by weight, about 3.0% to about 6.0% aluminum, 0% to about 1.5% tin, about 2.0% to about 4.0% vanadium, about 0.5% to about 4.5% molybdenum, about 1.0% to about 2.5% chromium, about 0.20% to about 0.55% iron, 0% to about 0.35% oxygen, 0% to about 0.007% boron, and 0% to about 0.60% other incidental elements and impurities, the balance of weight percent comprising titanium; and cooling the alloy with a gas pressurized to about 2 atm.

[0008] In a further aspect the disclosure relates to a method of processing the alloys as a near-net shape or investment casting that enables avoidance of the need for hot working to achieve a good combination of strength and ductility. In contrast, hot working is an essential aspect of many conventional titanium alloys like titanium – 6 wt% aluminum – 4 wt% vanadium which rely upon grain refinement due to forging and cooling from below the beta transus temperature. Control of content iron is an essential aspect of the disclosed aspect to minimize the as-cast grain size without hot-tearing that may result from excessing iron content. Furthermore, in the alloy and by the method of the invention, the alpha lath basketweave morphology of the intragrain microstructure is achieved upon cooling from above the beta transus temperature. The interlocking basketweave morphology is achieved as an aspect of the invention in contrast to parallel or lamellar alpha laths in Ti-6-4 alloys.

[0009] Other aspects and embodiments are encompassed within the scope of the disclosure and will become apparent in light of the following description and accompanying Drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0010] Fig. 1 is a systems-design chart illustrating processing-structure-property relationships of non-limiting embodiments of alloys falling within the scope of the disclosure.

[0011] Fig. 2 is a chart setting forth a set of integrated computational models suitable for the design of alloys falling within the scope of the disclosure as described herein including, for example, Fig. 1.

[0012] Fig. 3 is a graph plotting the coarsening-rate constant of the α phase against the β transus temperature of non-limiting embodiments of alloys falling within the scope of the disclosure as described herein including, for example, Fig. 1.

[0013] Fig. 4 is an enlarged graph similar to Fig. 3 plotting the coarsening-rate constant of the α phase against the β transus temperature of non-limiting embodiments of alloys falling within the scope of the disclosure as described herein.

[0014] Fig. 5 is a graph plotting the coarsening-rate constant of the α phase against the content of molybdenum at 603°C for a non-limiting embodiment of alloys falling within the scope of the disclosure as described herein including, for example, Fig. 1.

[0015] Fig. 6 is a graph plotting contours of the coarsening-rate constant of the α phase as a function of the contents of molybdenum and chromium at 603°C for non-limiting embodiments of alloys falling within the scope of the disclosure as described herein including, for example, Fig. 1.

[0016] Fig. 7 is a graph plotting contours of the Scheil freezing range and the growth-restriction parameter as functions of the contents of iron and boron for non-limiting embodiments of alloys falling within the scope of the disclosure as described herein including, for example, Fig. 1.

[0017] Fig. 8 is a scanning electron microscope image showing α -phase laths in a basketweave morphology for a non-limiting embodiment of alloys falling within the scope of the disclosure as described herein including, for example, Fig. 1.

[0018] Fig. 9 is an optical micrograph similar to Fig. 8 showing α -phase laths in a basketweave morphology for a non-limiting embodiment that is cooled after annealing at 950°C at a cooling rate of about 0.03°C per second.

[0019] Fig. 10 is an optical micrograph similar to Fig. 9 showing α -phase laths in a basketweave morphology for a non-limiting embodiment that is cooled after annealing at 950°C at a cooling rate of about 0.5°C per second.

[0020] Fig. 11 is an optical micrograph similar to Figs. 9 and 10 showing α -phase laths in a basketweave morphology for a non-limiting embodiment that is cooled after annealing at 950°C at a cooling rate of about 7.5°C per second.

[0021] Fig. 12 is an optical micrograph showing α -phase plates with a high aspect ratio in a martensitic microstructure for a non-limiting embodiment that is cooled after annealing at 950°C at a cooling rate of about 150°C per second.

[0022] Fig. 13 is a graph plotting the Vickers hardness number at varying annealing temperatures against the cooling rate for a non-limiting embodiment of alloys falling within the scope of the disclosure as described herein including, for example, Figs. 8–11.

[0023] Fig. 14 is a graph plotting the Vickers hardness number against the coarsening-rate constant of the α phase for non-limiting embodiments of alloys within the scope of the disclosure as described herein including, for example, Figs. 8–11.

[0024] Fig. 15 is a graph plotting the strength and ductility of non-limiting embodiments of alloys falling within the scope of the disclosure as described herein including, for example, Figs. 8–11.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0025] It should be understood that the claims are not limited in application to the details of construction and the arrangements of the components set forth in the following description or illustrated in the drawings that depict non-limiting embodiments of the disclosure. Other aspects and embodiments will be apparent in light of the following detailed description.

[0026] Any recited range described herein is to be understood to encompass and include all values within that range, without the necessity for an explicit recitation.

[0027] In a general sense, the inventors have unexpectedly found titanium alloys that can achieve a combination of high strength and high toughness at a low cost by selecting compositions with a suitable processing, cost, and microstructure. The disclosed alloys comprise α -phase laths in a basketweave morphology. The α -phase laths in the basketweave morphology

can achieve a combination of high strength and high toughness. The cost of the disclosed alloys can be low because low-cost raw materials can be used in near-net-shape castings, followed by a cooling at a cooling rate that is robust and industrially feasible.

[0028] One source of low-cost raw material is scrap titanium alloys. A titanium alloy known as Ti 6-4 is one of the most widely available alloy for remelting. Ti 6-4 includes, by weight, about 6% aluminum and about 4% vanadium, the balance of weight percent comprising titanium. The raw material input for the disclosed alloys can be at least 50%, or at least 70% Ti 6-4. The cost of the disclosed alloys can be low also because the alloys can tolerate by weight, 0% to about 0.35% oxygen, 0% to about 0.55% iron, and other incidental elements and impurities. Iron is a common impurity element in titanium alloys that can result from contamination during sponge processing. By tolerating iron, oxygen, and other incidental elements and impurities, the disclosed alloys enable the use of lower quality scrap like revert and machining turnings as raw materials.

[0029] The manufacturing cost of the disclosed alloys can also be low because forging is not required and machining costs can be reduced. Forging and machining costs can constitute about half the cost of a titanium component depending on the component geometry. Therefore it can be advantageous to have an alloy suitable for near-net-shape casting while maintaining good mechanical properties. While some embodiments of the disclosed alloys are cast, others can be forged and machined. The processing cost of the disclosed alloys can also be low because the alloys can be cooled at a cooling rate that is robust and industrially feasible. As thicker sections of a casting cool slower than thinner sections, the microstructure can vary from section to section if the cooling rate is not very robust. The disclosed alloys can be processed in an inexpensive yet robust way.

[0030] In an aspect, the disclosure relates to an alloy comprising, by weight, about 3.0% to about 6.0% aluminum, 0% to about 1.5% tin, about 2.0% to about 4.0% vanadium, about 0.5% to about 4.5% molybdenum, about 1.0% to about 2.5% chromium, about 0.20% to about 0.55% iron, 0% to about 0.35% oxygen, 0% to about 0.007% boron, 0% to about 0.60% other incidental elements and impurities, and the balance of weight percent comprising titanium. It is noted that the embodiments described herein include a variation in each constituent of plus or minus ten percent of the recited value or values. It is also understood that the alloys described herein may consist only of the above-mentioned constituents or may consist essentially of such constituents, or in other embodiments, may include additional constituents.

[0031] In embodiments, the aluminum content can be about 4.0% to about 5.5%, the tin content can be 0% to about 1.0%, the vanadium content can be about 2.5% to about 3.5%, the molybdenum content can be about 1.0% to about 2.0%, the chromium content can be about 1.0% to about 2.0%, the iron content can be about 0.30% to about 0.55%, the oxygen content can be 0% to about 0.20%, the boron content can be 0% to about 0.005%, and the content of other incidental elements and impurities can be 0% to about 0.20%.

[0032] In embodiments, the alloy is cooled from a β -phase to an α -phase at a cooling rate so as to form α -phase laths in a basketweave morphology. At a high temperature, titanium alloys can form a β -phase with a body-centered cubic crystal structure. When cooled at a cooling rate higher than about 10°C per second, the β -phase in certain titanium alloys can transform to a martensitic α'' phase, resulting in strengthening but also reduced ductility. When cooled at a cooling rate between about 0.03°C per second to about 10°C per second, however, the β -phase in certain titanium alloys can transform to a microstructure comprising α -phase with a hexagonal close-packed crystal structure that forms laths in a basketweave morphology. The basketweave microstructure is produced due to an enhanced homogeneous nucleation of intragrain α variants that grow into the β grain in up to twelve crystallographic orientations. In contrast, when Ti 6-4 is cooled from a β -phase to an α -phase at an industrially relevant cooling rate up to about 10°C per second, it often displays a microstructure with colonies of coarse, highly parallel α lamellae. In general, components produced through casting processes are not subsequently forged or annealed in a two-phase field of α - and β -phases for recrystallization, and as a result, components made of titanium alloys with a coarse lamellar microstructure do not show the best combination of strength and ductility. The substantially α -phase laths in a basketweave morphology as in the disclosed alloys, however, can achieve a combination of high strength and high toughness. Thus, the basketweave morphology typically constitutes about three quarters or more of the disclosed alloy microstructure.

[0033] In embodiments, the laths measure no more than about 100 microns, no more than about 80 microns, no more than about 25 microns, or no more than about 6 microns in the longest dimension.

[0034] In embodiments, the alloy has a tensile elongation of at least about 10% and has a tensile strength greater than about 960 MPa wherein the alloy is cast, subjected to a hot isostatic pressing (HIP) at 900°C and about 100 MPa Ar for 2 hours, and annealed. In other embodiments,

the alloy has a tensile elongation of at least about 4% and has a tensile strength greater than about 1170 MPa wherein the alloy is cast, subjected to a hot isostatic pressing at 900°C and about 100 MPa Ar for 2 hours, and annealed.

[0035] In one aspect, alloys according to embodiments described herein are castable using low-cost raw materials, and can form the basketweave microstructure by a commercially feasible heat treatment that does not require hot-working or rapid cooling rates. In contrast, Table 1 shows compositions of several titanium alloys that either exhibit poor castability or utilize high-cost raw materials. Some titanium alloys that can achieve a basketweave microstructure can have a generally poor castability because its fluidity is lower than that of Ti 6–4. These titanium alloys can include alloying elements known as β stabilizers, such as iron. Although β stabilizers can help achieve the basketweave microstructure, they can also render the casting susceptible to hot-tearing defects during solidification. Hot tearing is caused by a significant volumetric difference between the liquid and the solid. Other β stabilizers, such as vanadium, niobium, and molybdenum, can be expensive as raw material. For example, alloys such as Beta-CEZ and Ti-17 use costly zirconium. Of the alloys in Table 1, only SP-700 can utilize common Ti 6–4 as foundry scrap, because SP-700 has the same weight ratio of aluminum to vanadium as Ti 6–4. SP-700, however, has 2% of iron by weight. This iron content can render the casting susceptible to hot tearing, and therefore SP-700 can be incompatible with casting. In contrast, the disclosed alloys are castable using low-cost raw materials, and can form the basketweave microstructure at commercially feasible cooling rates, achieving a better combination of strength and ductility than Ti 6–4.

[0036]

TABLE 1

	wt%, Ti balanced									
	Al	Sn	V	Mo	Cr	Fe	Zr	Y	B	O
Corona-5	4.5			5	1.5					
Beta-CEZ	5	2		4	2	1	4			
SP-700	4.5		3	2		2				
Ti-17	5	2		4	4		2			
Ti-10-2-3	3		10			2				

[0037] Referring to the systems-design chart depicted in Fig. 1, by a suitable processing and structure, the alloys can achieve a combination of properties such as strength and toughness or elongation that is superior to Ti 6–4 casting. Based on this systems-design chart, a set of computational models are developed to enable the alloy composition selection, as shown in Fig.

2. To reduce the cost, the alloys have a weight ratio of aluminum to vanadium similar to Ti 6-4, so that they can be fabricated by remelting foundry scrap of Ti 6-4 as at least 50% of its starting raw material. Although small quantities of expensive elements such as niobium and zirconium can be present in the alloys from the scrap material, suitably they are substantially avoided as alloying additions.

[0038] To select compositions with a suitable microstructure, the β -transus temperature is determined through thermodynamic equilibrium calculations with thermodynamics calculation packages such as Thermo-Calc[®] software version N offered by Thermo-Calc Software. Thermo-Calc can be used with the Ti-Data version 3 thermodynamics database offered by Thermotech Ltd. and a mobility database that QuesTek Innovations LLC developed based on open-literature data.

[0039] To determine the freezing range and avoid hot tearing, Thermo-Calc's Scheil solidification calculation can be used. A growth-restriction model as disclosed in T.E. Quested, A.T. Dinsdale & A.L. Greer, *Thermodynamic Modeling of Growth-Restriction Effects in Aluminum Alloys*, 53 Acta Materialia 1323 (2005) (incorporated by reference herein) can be used to select compositions with a large growth-restriction parameter. The growth-restriction parameter is also interchangeably called the growth-restriction factor. Compositions with a large growth-restriction parameter reject solute atoms during solidifications and can result in a fine as-cast grain size. While an expanded solidification range could increase the growth-restriction parameter and in turn refine the grains, it could also cause hot tearing. Therefore, alloying elements such as iron are optimized to less than about 0.55% by weight to achieve a suitable balance of grain refinement and hot-tearing resistance.

[0040] A martensite start temperature model as disclosed in Suresh Neelakantana, *Prediction of the Martensite Start Temperature for β Titanium alloys as a Function of Composition*, 60 Scripta Materialia 611 (2009) (incorporated by reference herein) can be used to select alloy compositions. The martensite formed through a diffusionless transformation can have a low ductility. Thus, alloy compositions are selected to substantially avoid martensitic transformation at industrially relevant cooling rates.

[0041] A multicomponent coarsening-rate model as disclosed in J.E. Morral & G.R. Purdy, *Particle Coarsening in Binary and Multicomponent Alloys*, 30 Scripta Metallurgica et Materialia 905 (1994) (incorporated by reference herein) can be used to compute a coarsening-rate constant for the intragranular α laths at 260°C below the β -transus temperature.

This temperature approximates the nose temperature of the C-curve on a time-temperature transformation diagram. The coarsening-rate constant can be derived by thermodynamic parameters such as diffusion coefficients, second-order partial derivatives of the molar Gibbs free energy, and the partitioning ratio of solute atoms. These thermodynamic parameters in turn can be computed from thermodynamic database and calculation packages such as Thermo-Calc software version N and the kinetic software DICTRA™ (DIffusion Controlled TRAnsformations) version 24, both offered by Thermo-Calc Software. The coarsening-rate constant normalized by surface energy and molar volume is hereinafter called K_α . Alloy compositions with a suitably low K_α are selected from alloys according to embodiments described herein. By restricting the growth rate of the α laths, more time can be available for nucleating fine α laths of multiple orientations, enabling a microstructure with higher strength and toughness. Molybdenum has a low diffusivity and therefore can be very effective at reducing the α -lath growth rate, but the addition of molybdenum can also be costly. Chromium tends to partition very little to the α laths compared to the β grain and therefore can also retard the α lath growth, at a lower cost compared to molybdenum. A combination of chromium and molybdenum can thus effectively lower K_α at a relatively low cost.

[0042] A time-temperature transformation model based on a multicomponent precipitation model as disclosed in H.-J. Jou, P. Voorhees & G.B. Olson, *Computer Simulations for the Prediction of Microstructure/Property Variation in Aeroturbine Disks*, in Superalloys 2004, 877 (K.A. Green, T.M. Pollock, H. Harada, T.E. Howson, R.C. Reed, J.J. Schirra & S. Walston eds., 2006) (incorporated by reference herein) can be used to predict the nucleation rate of intragranular α laths. A high nucleation rate of α laths in multiple orientations can help achieve an intragranular basketweave microstructure.

[0043] The solvus temperature of undesirable and stable intermetallic phases is suitably determined through thermodynamic equilibrium calculations with thermodynamic database and calculation packages such as Thermo-Calc® software version N offered by Thermo-Calc Software, the Ti-Data version 3 thermodynamics database offered by Thermotech Ltd., and a mobility database that QuesTek Innovations LLC developed based on open-literature data. Also, a solid-solution strength model based on experimental model alloy coupons or buttons is suitably used to guide the selections of compositions that achieve a high strength.

[0044] Referring also to Fig. 3, K_α and the β -transus temperature are optimized for alloys according to embodiments described herein to achieve a basketweave microstructure at

industrially feasible cooling rates. The horizontal axis in Fig. 3 is the β -transus temperature, which controls the temperature range and the cooling rate at which basketweave microstructures can occur. To achieve a suitable microstructure, the β transus temperature is selected to be below 900°C. Two-phase alloys of α - and β -phase, such as Ti 6-4, with β transus above about 900°C form colonies of lamellar α plates instead of basketweave laths. The lamellar microstructure provides lower strength and toughness compared to the basketweave microstructure. Therefore, suitable alloy compositions can have a β transus below about 900°C.

[0045] The vertical axis in Fig. 3 is the normalized coarsening-rate constant K_α at approximately the nose temperature of the C-curve on a time-temperature transformation diagram. Alloys according to embodiments described herein can limit K_α to limit the formation of detrimental α phase on grain boundaries and therefore have a built-in tolerance for a slow cooling rate after solution treatment. A limited K_α can also make more time available for nucleating fine α laths of multiple orientations. Therefore, the coarsening-rate constant of the α phase can be limited to below about $4 \times 10^{-19} \text{ m}^2 \cdot \text{mol/J} \cdot \text{s}$, below about $2 \times 10^{-19} \text{ m}^2 \cdot \text{mol/J} \cdot \text{s}$, or below about $1.5 \times 10^{-19} \text{ m}^2 \cdot \text{mol/J} \cdot \text{s}$. As shown in Figs. 3 and 4, K_α is largely proportionate to the β -transus temperature. Therefore, K_α can be reduced by limiting the β -transus temperature. The variation of K_α at a given β transus temperature, however, can still be significant. K_α can be further reduced by adding slow diffusers with a low solubility in the α phase, such as molybdenum and chromium. But the benefit of reduced K_α can diminish after adding about 0.5% by weight of molybdenum. For example, Fig. 5 shows K_α against the content of molybdenum at 603°C for a non-limiting embodiment. The temperature 603°C is about 260°C below the β -transus temperature for this embodiment, approximating the nose temperature of the C-curve on a time-temperature transformation diagram. Fig. 5 shows that K_α strongly depends on the content of molybdenum up to about 0.5% by weight. After 0.5% by weight of molybdenum, however, additional molybdenum does not significantly reduce K_α . For at least this reason, alloys according to embodiments described herein use molybdenum in combination with chromium.

[0046] Referring also to Fig. 6, a combination of chromium and molybdenum can effectively lower K_α . Compared to molybdenum, chromium tends to partition less to the α laths than to the β grain and therefore can also reduce the α lath growth rate. In addition, chromium has a lower density and lower cost compared to molybdenum. Therefore, alloys according to

embodiments described herein use chromium in combination with molybdenum. An excessive amount of chromium, however, can promote the precipitation of an embrittling Ti_2Cr Laves phase that is undesirable. The chromium content is thus optimized to achieve a suitable balance of K_α and Laves phase precipitation.

[0047] Referring also to Fig. 7, alloys according to embodiments described herein are compatible with casting with no further hot-deformation, by reducing the growth-restriction parameter and the Scheil freezing range. The Scheil freezing range is also interchangeably called the solidification ΔT or the solidification range. Fig. 7 shows the calculated contours of the growth-restriction parameter and the Scheil freezing range as functions of the iron and boron contents in an alloy. The vertical axis is the iron content in an alloy according to embodiments described herein, and the horizontal axis is the boron content in an alloy according to embodiments described herein. The solid lines represent contours of the freezing range, as calculated with a Scheil approximation of the solidification. In some embodiments, a Scheil freezing range of less than about 200 °C can be helpful to avoid hot-tearing defects in cast components. In other embodiments, the cast alloy can be subsequently hot-worked to cure hot-tearing defects. The dashed lines represent contours of the growth-restriction parameter. Larger values of the growth-restriction parameter promote finer grains. A larger freezing range can generally increase the growth-restriction parameter and in turn refine the grains, but a larger freezing range can also render the casting susceptible to hot-tearing defects during solidification. Thus, alloying elements such as iron and boron are optimized in the alloys according to embodiments described herein to achieve a suitable balance of hot-tearing resistance and grain refinement. Specifically, iron can be limited to no more than about 0.55% by weight, and boron can be limited to no more than about 0.007% by weight (70 ppm by weight) to avoid hot-tearing defects and boride particles that can reduce toughness.

[0048] In an aspect, the disclosure relates to a method comprising: providing a material that is based on 25%, and preferably, at least 50% of a titanium-based alloy that includes, by weight, about 6% aluminum and about 4% vanadium, the balance of weight percent comprising titanium, the material further including, by weight, 0% to about 0.35% oxygen, 0% to about 0.55% iron, and other incidental elements and impurities; melting the material to provide an alloy that includes, by weight, about 3.0% to about 6.0% aluminum, 0% to about 1.5% tin, about 2.0% to about 4.0% vanadium, about 0.5% to about 4.5% molybdenum, about 1.0% to about 2.5% chromium, about 0.20% to about 0.55% iron, 0% to about 0.35% oxygen, 0% to about 0.007%

boron, and 0% to about 0.60% other incidental elements and impurities, the balance of weight percent comprising titanium; and cooling the alloy with a gas pressurized to about 2 atm.

[0049] In embodiments, the titanium-based melt can include, by weight, about 4.0% to about 5.5% aluminum, 0% to about 1.0% tin, about 2.5% to about 3.5% vanadium, about 1.0% to about 2.0% molybdenum, about 1.0% to about 2.0% chromium, about 0.30% to about 0.55% iron, 0% to about 0.2% oxygen, 0% to about 0.005% boron, and 0% to about 0.2% other incidental elements and impurities, the balance of weight percent comprising titanium.

[0050] In embodiments, the method further comprises: subjecting the alloy to a hot isostatic pressing at 900°C and about 100 MPa Ar for 2 hours; annealing the alloy so as to form a single-phase microstructure of β -phase; and cooling the alloy from the β -phase to an α -phase at a cooling rate so as to form α -phase laths in a basketweave morphology. The annealing can be at a temperature range of about a β -transus temperature of the alloy to about 950°C. The cooling rate can be between about 0.03°C per second to about 10°C per second.

[0051] In one aspect, alloys according to embodiments described herein are selected to be feasibly fabricated by recycling or remelting foundry scrap of Ti 6-4 as more than 50% of the raw material input. The disclosed alloys are also compatible with typical cooling rates achieved by gas quenching in conventional vacuum furnaces (up to about 10°C per second). Moreover, the alloys show a robust response to cooling rate variations. By reducing K_α and the β -transus temperature as previously described, the alloys are able to maintain the basketweave microstructure at slow cooling rates.

[0052] Some samples exemplary of embodiments of the alloy disclosed herein were prepared and tested for physical properties. The measured compositions of the alloy prototypes evaluated as part of this disclosure are shown in Table 2 as B72-B76, B78, QTTi-1A, QTTi-2A, and QTTi-2B. Additionally, counter-examples were also prepared and tested for contrast. The counter-examples are shown in Table 2 as B77, Ti-64, QTTi-1B, and QTTi-1C. The examples and counter-examples are described in greater detail below. All alloys prepared and tested maintain a 6-to-4 weight ratio of aluminum to vanadium to utilize common Ti 6-4 as foundry scrap and reduce the material cost. To further minimize the cost, all alloys substantially avoid the alloying elements niobium and zirconium except as incidental elements and impurities from the input scrap material up to about 0.6% by weight. Iron is kept to be less than about 0.55% by weight to help the hot-tearing resistance during casting. The alloys tolerate, by weight, about 0.15% to about 0.30% of oxygen.

[0053]

TABLE 2

		wt%, Ti balanced									
		Al	Sn	V	Mo	Cr	Fe	Zr	Y	B	O
Coupon Samples	B72	4.58	0.98	2.93	1.95	1.52	0.53				0.18
	B73	4.78	0.02	2.99	2.02	1.53	0.52				0.197
	B74	3.83	0.03	2.97	1.40	1.49	0.50				0.16
	B75	5.24	0.94	2.92	0.96	2.47	0.51				0.17
	B76	4.82	0.90	3.04	1.98	1.46	0.53				0.165
	B77	4.86	0	3.03	0.02	2.97	0.53				0.15
	B78	5.98	0.02	2.98	1.45	1.89	0.49				0.17
Casting	Ti-64	5.9	-	4.3	-	-	0.21				0.15
	QTTi-1A	4.5	0.8	3.0	1.5	2.0	0.31				0.25
	QTTi-1B	4.4	1.0	2.9	1.5	1.8	0.35		0.01	0.14	
	QTTi-1C	4.5	0.7	3.2	1.5	1.7	0.33		0.11		0.15
	QTTi-2A	4.30		2.82	1.49	1.63	0.40	0.13			0.15
	QTTi-2B	5.69		3.62	4.00	1.90	0.38	0.51			0.15

[0054] In an aspect the disclosure provides an alloy produced by any of the methods described herein. The method can comprise: providing a material that is based on at least 50% of a titanium-based alloy that includes, by weight, about 6% aluminum and about 4% vanadium, the balance of weight percent comprising titanium, the material further including, by weight, 0% to about 0.35% oxygen, 0% to about 0.55% iron, and other incidental elements and impurities; melting the material to provide an alloy that includes, by weight, about 3.0% to about 6.0% aluminum, 0% to about 1.5% tin, about 2.0% to about 4.0% vanadium, about 0.5% to about 4.5% molybdenum, about 1.0% to about 2.5% chromium, about 0.20% to about 0.55% iron, 0% to about 0.35% oxygen, 0% to about 0.007% boron, and 0% to about 0.60% other incidental elements and impurities, the balance of weight percent comprising titanium; and cooling the alloy with a gas pressurized to about 2 atm.

[0055] In embodiments such alloys are produced by a method that further comprises: subjecting the alloy to a hot isostatic pressing at 900°C and about 100 MPa Ar for 2 hours; annealing the alloy so as to form a single-phase microstructure of β -phase; and cooling the alloy from the β -phase to an α -phase at a cooling rate so as to form α -phase laths in a basketweave morphology. The annealing can be at a temperature range of about a β -transus temperature of the alloy to about 950°C. The cooling rate can be between about 0.03°C per second to about 10°C per second.

[0056] In embodiments such alloys, suitably titanium alloys, comprise at least one of the physical properties described herein.

[0057] EXAMPLE 1: alloy QTTi-1A

A melt was prepared with the nominal composition of 4.5 Al, 3.0 V, 2.0 Cr, 1.5 Mo, 1.0 Sn, 0.40 Fe, 0.15 O, and balance Ti, in wt%. As described above, this example alloy includes a variance in the constituents in the range of plus or minus ten percent of the mean (nominal) value. The alloy was cast partially by remelting foundry scrap of Ti 6-4, with appropriate alloying additions. The foundry scrap constituted at least about 75% of the casting. The casting weighed about 13 kg and measured about 15 cm in height, about 15 cm in width, and about 15 cm in depth. The alloy was subjected to a hot isostatic pressing at 900°C and about 100 MPa in an argon atmosphere for 2 hours, slowly cooled to room temperature, then solutionized at 950°C for 1 hour, and quenched with pressurized gas to room temperature at an estimate cooling rate of about 1°C per second to about 2°C per second. The pressure of the gas was about 2 atm. K_a was calculated as $9.3 \times 10^{-20} \text{ m}^2 \cdot \text{mol/J} \cdot \text{s}$. The tensile strength and K_Q fracture toughness were measured for various tempering conditions, using two samples per each condition. A comparison of the measured properties of alloy A and cast Ti 6-4 is shown in the following Table 3.

[0058] Referring also to Fig. 8, the QTTi-1A alloy forms α -phase laths in a basketweave morphology. Compared to the colonies of parallel α lamellae in Ti 6-4, the α -phase laths of the QTTi-1A alloy are about ten times smaller. Figs. 9, 10, and 11 show QTTi-1A cooled after annealing at 950°C at a cooling rate of about 0.03°C per second, about 0.5°C per second, and about 7.5°C per second, respectively. A basketweave microstructure is seen at all of these cooling rates. L_a represents the longest dimension of the α laths. The α -phase laths are coarser in QTTi-1A slow-cooled at about 0.03°C per second than QTTi-1A gas-quenched at about 1°C per second to about 2°C per second. Thus, below a cooling rate of about 10°C per second, a higher cooling rate can refine the basketweave microstructure further. Above a cooling rate of about 10°C per second, however, the diffusional α transformation is largely suppressed, resulting in a displacive martensitic transformation that leaves a large amount of retained β phase. Fig. 12 shows α -phase plates with a high aspect ratio in a martensitic microstructure for QTTi-1A fast-quenched after annealing at 950°C at a cooling rate of about 150°C per second.

[0059] Fig. 13 shows the hardness response of QTTi-1A under different annealing temperatures and cooling rates. The hardness data in diamonds show QTTi-1A annealed in a single-phase microstructure of β -phase at 950°C. The data is nonlinearly dependent to the cooling rate after annealing. At higher cooling rates above about 10°C per second, the martensitic transformation leaves a large amount of retained β that reduces the hardness. Below a cooling rate of about 10°C per second, however, the hardness is increasing with cooling rate due to the refinement of the basketweave microstructure. Compared to fast-quenched samples, the slow-cooled QTTi-1A shows a lower strength yet higher ductility. The combination of strength and ductility for the slow-cooled QTTi-1A, however, is still superior to that of the Ti 6–4 castings data reported in L. Nastac, M.N. Gungor, I. Ucok, K.L. Klug & and W.T. Tack, *Advances in Investment Casting of Ti-6Al-4V Alloy: A Review*, 19 International Journal of Cast Metals Research 73 (2006) (see Fig. 15). The hardness data in squares and triangles show QTTi-1A annealed in a two-phase microstructure of α -phase and β -phase at 875°C and 850°C, respectively. At these temperatures, the β matrix before cooling is enriched with β stabilizers due to formation of primary α . The enrichment of β stabilizers in turn suppresses the diffusive α formation at lower cooling rates. The peak hardness for QTTi-1A cooled from these temperatures is therefore shifted to a lower cooling rate, as indicated by the two hardness curves.

[0060] EXAMPLE 2: alloy QTTi-1B

In preparing alloy QTTi-1B as a counter-example, a melt was prepared with the nominal composition of 4.5 Al, 3.0 V, 2.0 Cr, 1.5 Mo, 1.0 Sn, 0.40 Fe, 0.15 O, 0.01 B, and balance Ti, in wt%. The only intended difference from alloy QTTi-1A was an alloying addition of boron. As described above, this alloy includes a variance in the constituents in the range of plus or minus ten percent of the mean (nominal) value. The alloy was cast partially by remelting foundry scrap of Ti 6–4, with appropriate alloying additions. The foundry scrap constituted at least about 75% of the casting. The casting weighed about 13 kg and measured about 15 cm in height, about 15 cm in width, and about 15 cm in depth. The alloy was subjected to a hot isostatic pressing at 900°C and about 100 MPa in an argon atmosphere for 2 hours, slowly cooled to room temperature, then solutionized at 950°C for 1 hour, and quenched with pressurized gas to room temperature. The pressure of the gas was about 2 atm. The tensile strength and K_Q comparison of the measured properties of alloy QTTi-1B and cast Ti 6–4 is shown in Table 3. While boron can provide additional benefit to the growth restriction factor for casting, it rapidly increases the

solidification range. Furthermore, it was found that boron has a low solubility in titanium and can form boride particles that can reduce the toughness and ductility of the alloy.

[0061] EXAMPLE 3: alloy QTTi-1C

In preparing alloy QTTi-1C as a counter-example, a melt was prepared with the nominal composition of 4.5 Al, 3.0 V, 2.0 Cr, 1.5 Mo, 1.0 Sn, 0.40 Fe, 0.15 O, 0.10 Y, and balance Ti, in wt%. The only intended difference from alloy QTTi-1A was an alloying addition of yttrium. The alloy was cast partially by remelting foundry scrap of Ti 6-4, with appropriate alloying additions. The foundry scrap constituted at least about 75% of the casting. The casting weighed about 13 kg and measured about 15 cm in height, about 15 cm in width, and about 15 cm in depth. The alloy was subjected to a hot isostatic pressing at 900°C and about 100 MPa in an argon atmosphere for 2 hours, slowly cooled to room temperature, then solutionized at 950°C for 1 hour, and quenched with gas to room temperature. The pressure of the argon gas was about 2 atm. The tensile strength and K_Q comparison of the measured properties of alloy QTTi-1C and cast Ti 6-4 is shown in the following Table 3. Yttrium is a strong oxide former, and as such it formed an excessive amount of yttria particles that were detrimental to toughness and ductility. As such yttrium, scandium, and rare earth elements are substantially avoided in alloys according to embodiments described herein.

TABLE 3

	0.2% Yield Stress (MPa)	Ultimate Tensile Stress (MPa)	Elongation (%)	Reduction of Area (%)	K_Q (MPa \sqrt{m})
QTTi-1A	940	1040	11	16	95
QTTi-1B	920	1010	5	11	77
QTTi-1C	960	1050	4	3	36
Cast Ti 6-4	770	870	8	15	76

[0062] As seen in Table 3, alloys according to embodiments disclosed herein, such as QTTi-1A, can achieve superior physical properties as compared to existing cast titanium alloys, including Ti 6-4, and can be manufactured and processed at a lower cost than such existing wrought titanium alloys. Additionally, the physical properties achieved by the alloys are relatively uniform throughout the alloy, even at higher levels of iron and oxygen.

[0063] EXAMPLE 4: alloys B72–B78

A series of seven model alloys were prepared to evaluate the effect of composition within the alloys according to embodiments disclosed herein. The compositions of the model alloys are listed in Table 2 above. Buttons of the model alloys, weighing about 20 grams each, were arc-melted in an inert argon atmosphere. The seven model alloys all have the same aluminum, vanadium, oxygen, and iron contents as the QTTi-1A alloy, with variations in the chromium, molybdenum, and tin contents. The β transus temperature, K_α , and martensite start temperature are all similar for the seven model alloys. As a result, they all show a similar fine-scale, interlocking “basketweave” microstructure.

[0064] Fig. 14 is a graph plotting the Vickers hardness number (VHN) against K_α for the seven model alloys. A variation in hardness is observed, from about 385 VHN to about 439 VHN. As shown in Fig. 14, this variation can be correlated with K_α . The B77 model alloy is practically free of molybdenum and lacks hardness compared to the other model alloys. The microstructure of the B77 prototype shows a transition between the basketweave and lamellar morphology—some interlocking plates are observed, with parallel lamellar colonies in between. Referring also to Fig. 4, the B77 model alloy has a β -transus of about 865 °C, yet a K_α greater than about 2×10^{-19} . As such, B77 or an alloy that contains no more than about 0.5% by weight of molybdenum is considered a counter-example.

[0065] EXAMPLE 5: alloy QTTi-2A

A melt was prepared with the nominal composition of 4.3Al, 2.8V, 1.5Mo, 1.6Cr, 0.4Fe, 0.1Zr, 0.15O, and balance Ti, in wt%. By substantially eliminating the alloying addition of tin, the cost of the alloy is reduced. The measured composition listed in Table 2 further shows an incidental amount of zirconium in the alloy. The alloy was cast partially by remelting foundry scrap of Ti 6–4, with appropriate alloying additions. The foundry scrap constituted about 70% of the casting. The casting weighed about 13 kg and measured about 15 cm in height, about 15 cm in width, and about 15 cm in depth. The alloy was subjected to a hot isostatic pressing at 900°C and about 100 MPa in an argon atmosphere for 2 hours, slowly cooled to room temperature, then solutionized at 950°C for 1 hour, and quenched with gas to room temperature. The pressure of the gas was about 2 atm, resulting in a cooling rate of about 1°C per second to about 2°C per second. The tensile strength and elongation of alloy QTTi-2A are shown in Fig. 15. Relative to QTTi-1A, QTTi-2A shows a reduced strength and increased ductility at a given cooling rate. QTTi-2A shows a basketweave microstructure.

[0066] EXAMPLE 6: alloy QTTi-2B

A melt was prepared with the nominal composition of 5.7Al, 3.6V, 4Mo, 1.9Cr, 0.4Fe, 0.5Zr, 0.15O, and balance Ti, in wt%. The measured composition listed in Table 2 further shows an incidental amount of zirconium in the alloy. The alloy was cast partially by remelting foundry scrap of Ti 6-4, with appropriate alloying additions. The foundry scrap constituted at least about 75% of the casting. The casting weighed about 13 kg and measured about 15 cm in height, about 15 cm in width, and about 15 cm in depth. The alloy was subjected to a hot isostatic pressing at 900°C and about 100 MPa in an argon atmosphere for 2 hours, slowly cooled to room temperature, then solutionized at 950°C for 1 hour, and quenched with gas to room temperature. The pressure of the gas was about 2 atm, resulting in a cooling rate of about 1°C per second to about 2°C per second. The tensile strength and elongation of alloy QTTi-2B are shown in Fig. 15. Compared to QTTi-1A and QTTi-2A, QTTi-2B shows a higher strength and lower ductility. The microstructure shows a basketweave morphology, and the mechanical properties lie on the high-strength end of the strength-ductility band that includes QTTi-1A and QTTi-2A.

[0067] It is understood that the disclosure may embody other specific forms without departing from the spirit or central characteristics thereof. The disclosure of aspects and embodiments, therefore, are to be considered in all respects as illustrative and not restrictive, and the claims are not to be limited to the details given herein. Accordingly, while specific embodiments have been illustrated and described, numerous modifications come to mind without significantly departing from the spirit of the invention and the scope of protection is only limited by the scope of the accompanying claims. Unless noted otherwise, all percentages listed herein are weight percentages.

CLAIMS:

What Is Claimed Is:

1. A method for casting a titanium alloy article of manufacture comprising the steps of:
 - (a) forming a melt comprising, by weight, about 3.0% to about 6.0% aluminum, 0% to about 1.5% tin, about 2.0% to about 4.0% vanadium, about 0.5% to about 4.5% molybdenum, about 1.0% to about 2.5% chromium, 0% to about 0.35% oxygen, 0% to about 0.007% boron, 0% to about 0.60%, other incidental elements and impurities, about 0.20% to about 0.55% iron, and the balance of weight percent comprising titanium;
 - (b) casting said melt; and
 - (c) cooling said casting.
2. The method of claim 1, including initially forming the casting as said article without hot working.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein said melt is comprised of starting material combined in said melt of at least 25% of a titanium based alloy that includes, by weight, about 6% aluminum and about 4% vanadium, the balance of weight percent comprising titanium, the said starting material further including, by weight, 0% to about 0.35% oxygen, 0% to about 0.55% iron, and other incidental elements and impurities.
4. The method of claim 1 further comprising the heat treatment of:
 - subjecting the cast and formed alloy to a hot isostatic pressing at 900°C and about 100 MPa Ar for 2 hours;
 - annealing the alloy to form a single-phase microstructure of β -phase; and
 - subsequently cooling the alloy from the β -phase to an α -phase at a cooling rate to form α -phase laths in a basketweave morphology.
5. The method of claim 4, wherein the cooling step comprises cooling the casting with a gas pressurized to about 2 atm.
6. The method of claim 5, wherein the annealing is at a temperature above β -transus temperature of the alloy.
7. The method of claim 5 wherein annealing is at a temperature up to about 950°C.

8. The method of claim 5, wherein the cooling rate is between about 0.03°C per second to about 10°C per second.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the titanium-based melt includes, by weight, about 4.0% to about 5.5% aluminum, 0% to about 1.0% tin, about 2.5% to about 3.5% vanadium, about 1.0% to about 2.0% molybdenum, about 1.0% to about 2.0% chromium, about 0.30% to about 0.55% iron, 0.25% to about 0.3% oxygen, 0% to about 0.005% boron, and 0% to about 0.2% other incidental elements and impurities, the balance of weight percent comprising titanium.

10. The method of claim 9, further comprising:

subjecting the cast alloy to a hot isostatic pressing at 900°C and about 100 MPa Ar for 2 hours;

annealing the alloy to form a single-phase microstructure of β -phase; and

cooling the alloy from the β -phase to an α -phase at a cooling rate to form α -phase laths in a basketweave morphology.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the annealing is at a temperature above the β -transus temperature of the alloy.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the cooling rate is between about 0.03°C per second to about 10°C per second.

13. An article of manufacture by the process of claim 1.

14. A titanium alloy comprising:

about 3.0% to about 6.0% aluminum, 0% to about 1.5% tin, about 2.0% to about 4.0% vanadium, about 0.5% to about 4.5% molybdenum, about 1.0% to about 2.5% chromium, 0% to about 0.35% oxygen, 0% to about 0.007% boron, 0% to about 0.60% other incidental elements and impurities, about 0.20% to about 0.55% iron, and the balance of weight percent comprising titanium, said alloy characterized by a substantially basketweave α -phase lath structure, a tensile elongation of at least about 10% and a tensile strength greater than about 960 MPa.

15. The alloy of claim 14, wherein the laths of the lath structure measure no more than about 100 microns in the longest dimension.

16. The alloy of claim 14, wherein the aluminum content is about 4.0% to about 5.5%, the tin content is 0% to about 1.0%, the vanadium content is about 2.5% to about 3.5%, the

molybdenum content is about 1.0% to about 2.0%, the chromium content is about 1.0% to about 2.0%, the iron content is about 0.30% to about 0.55%, the oxygen content is 0% to about 0.20%, the boron content is 0% to about 0.005%, and the content of other incidental elements and impurities is 0% to about 0.20%.

17. The alloy of claim 14, wherein the α -phase laths comprise a basketweave morphology.
18. The method of claim 1 wherein the iron content by weight consists of 0.20% to 0.55%.

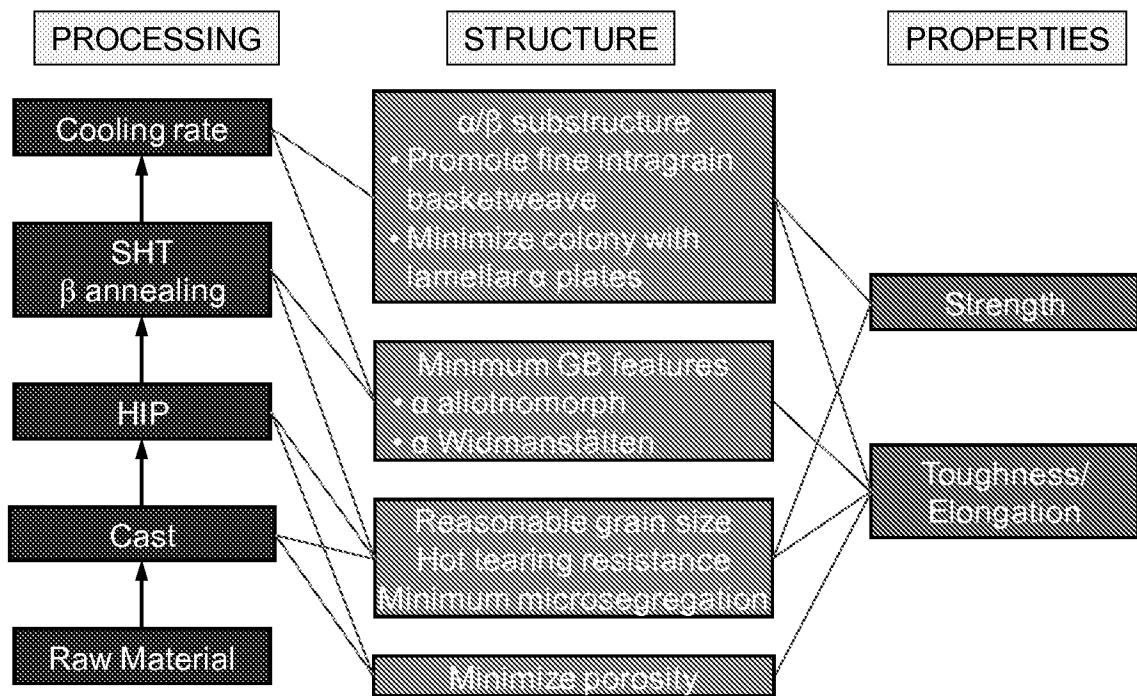


FIG. 1

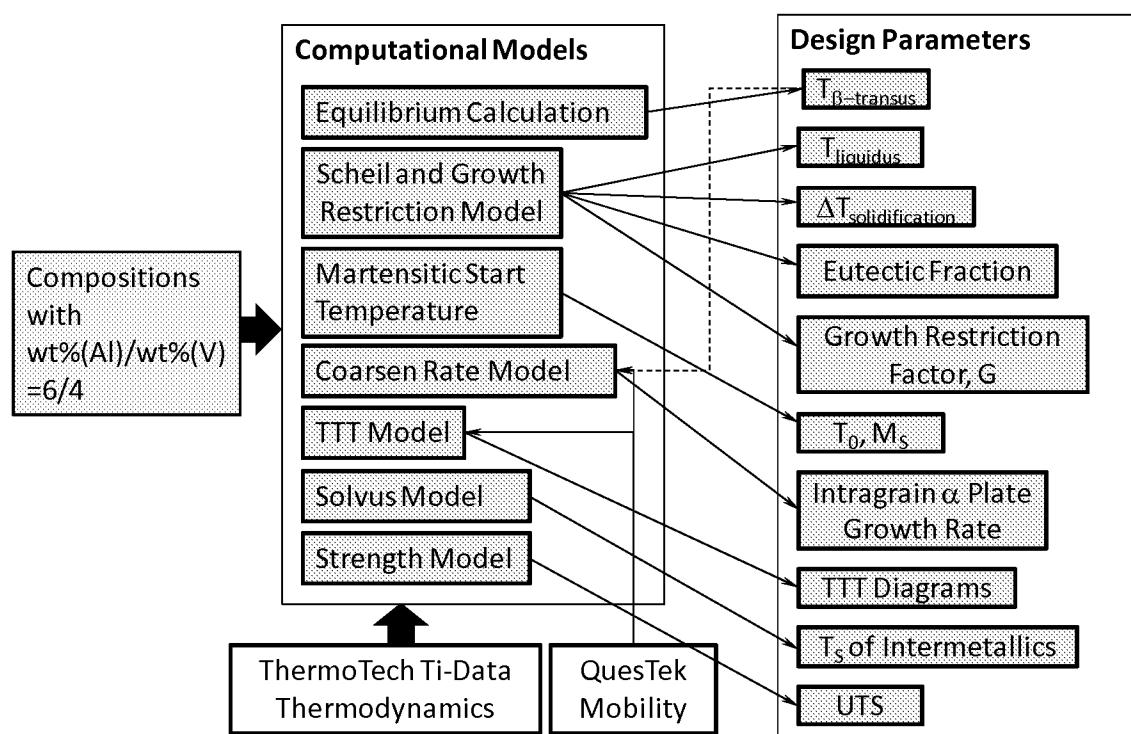


FIG. 2

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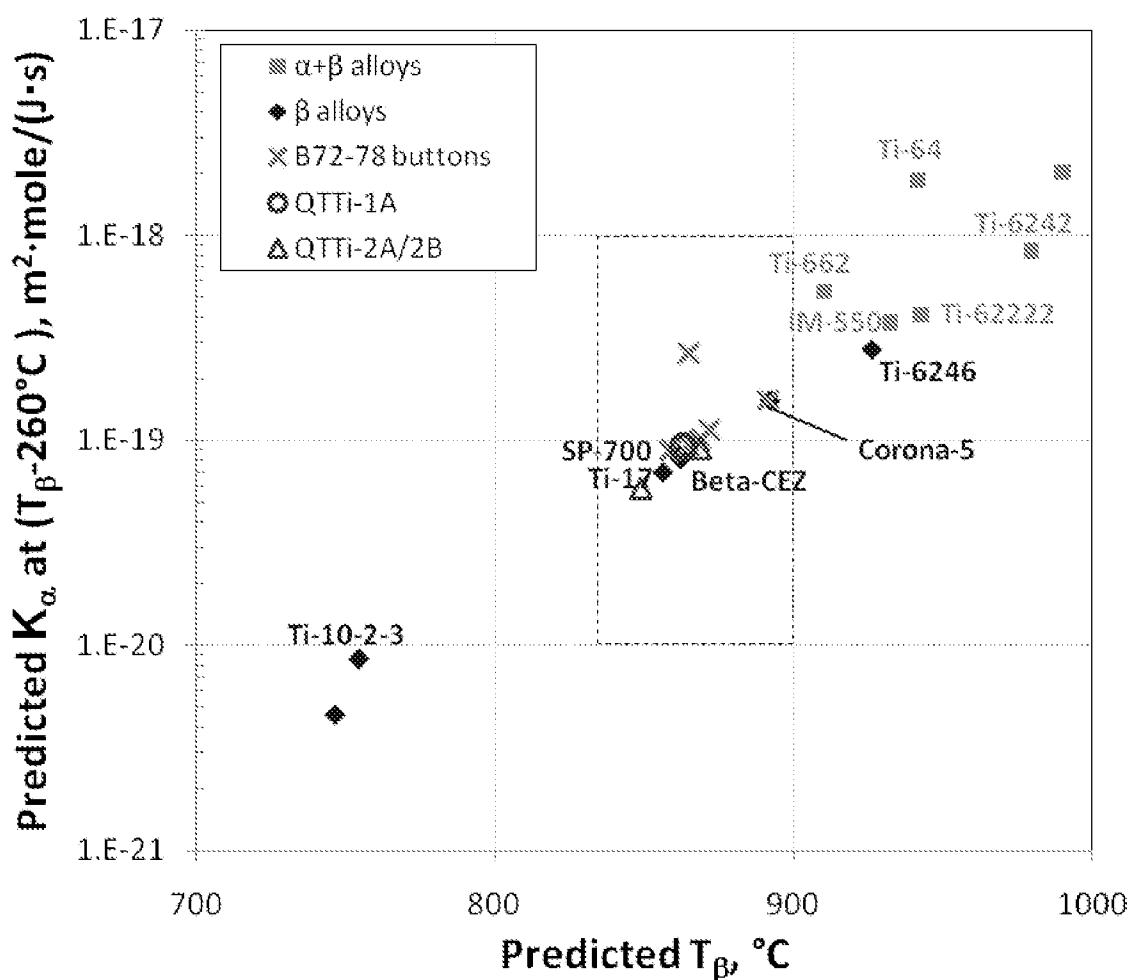


FIG. 3

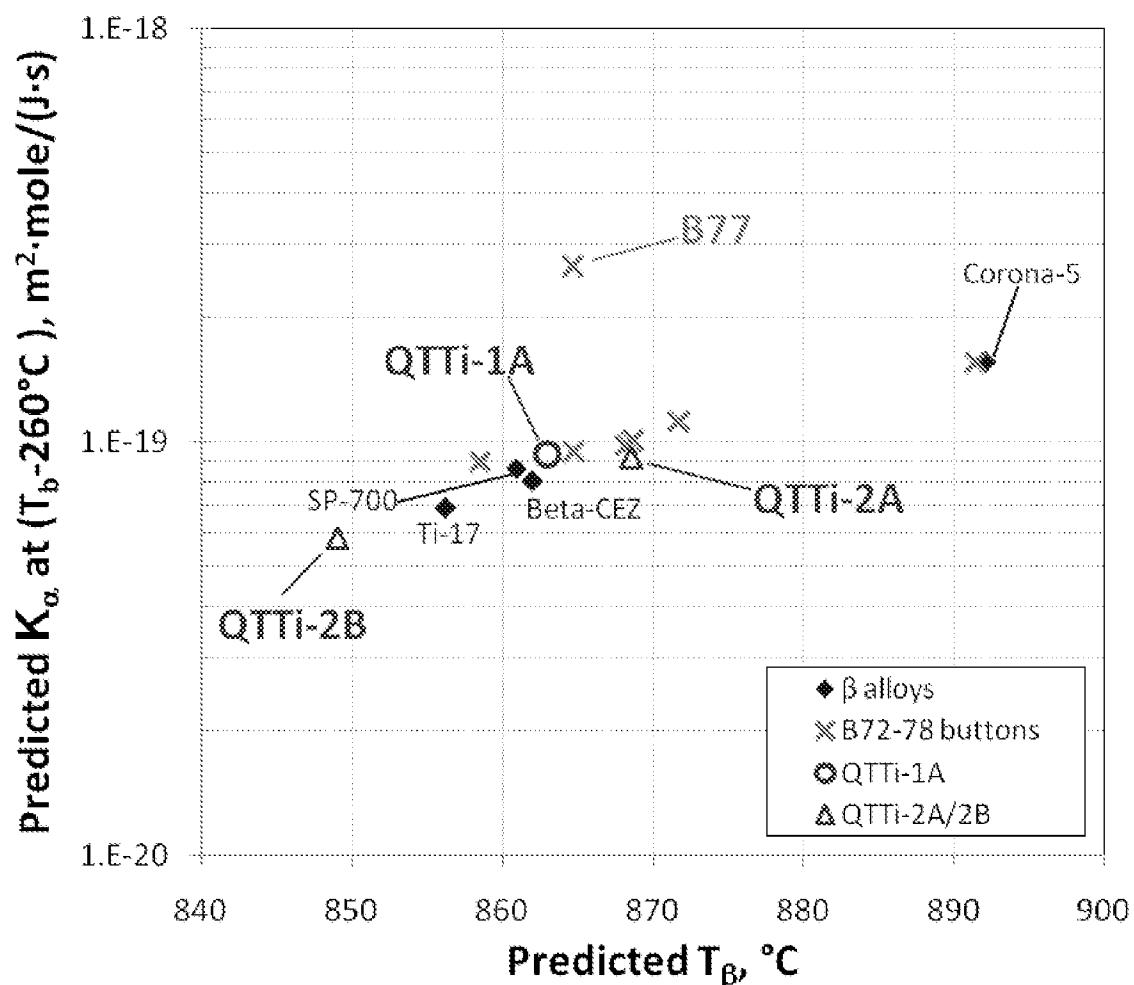


FIG. 4

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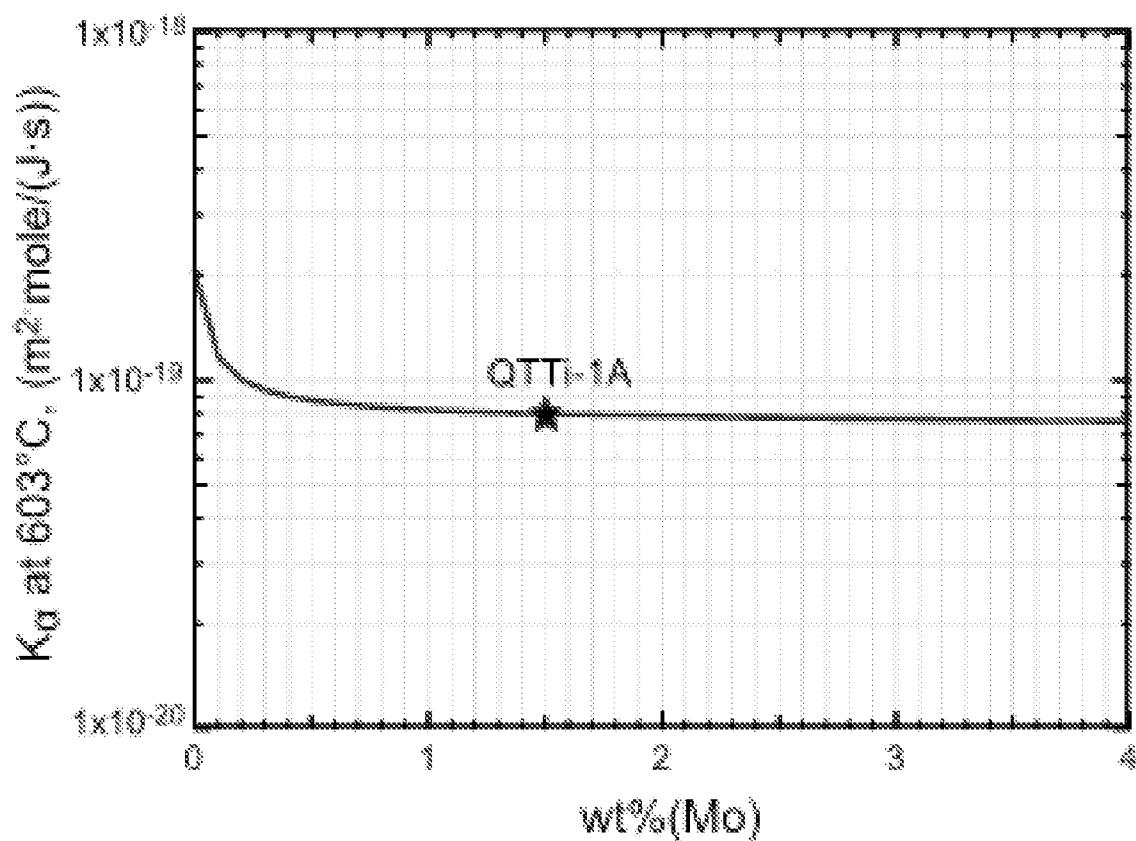


FIG. 5

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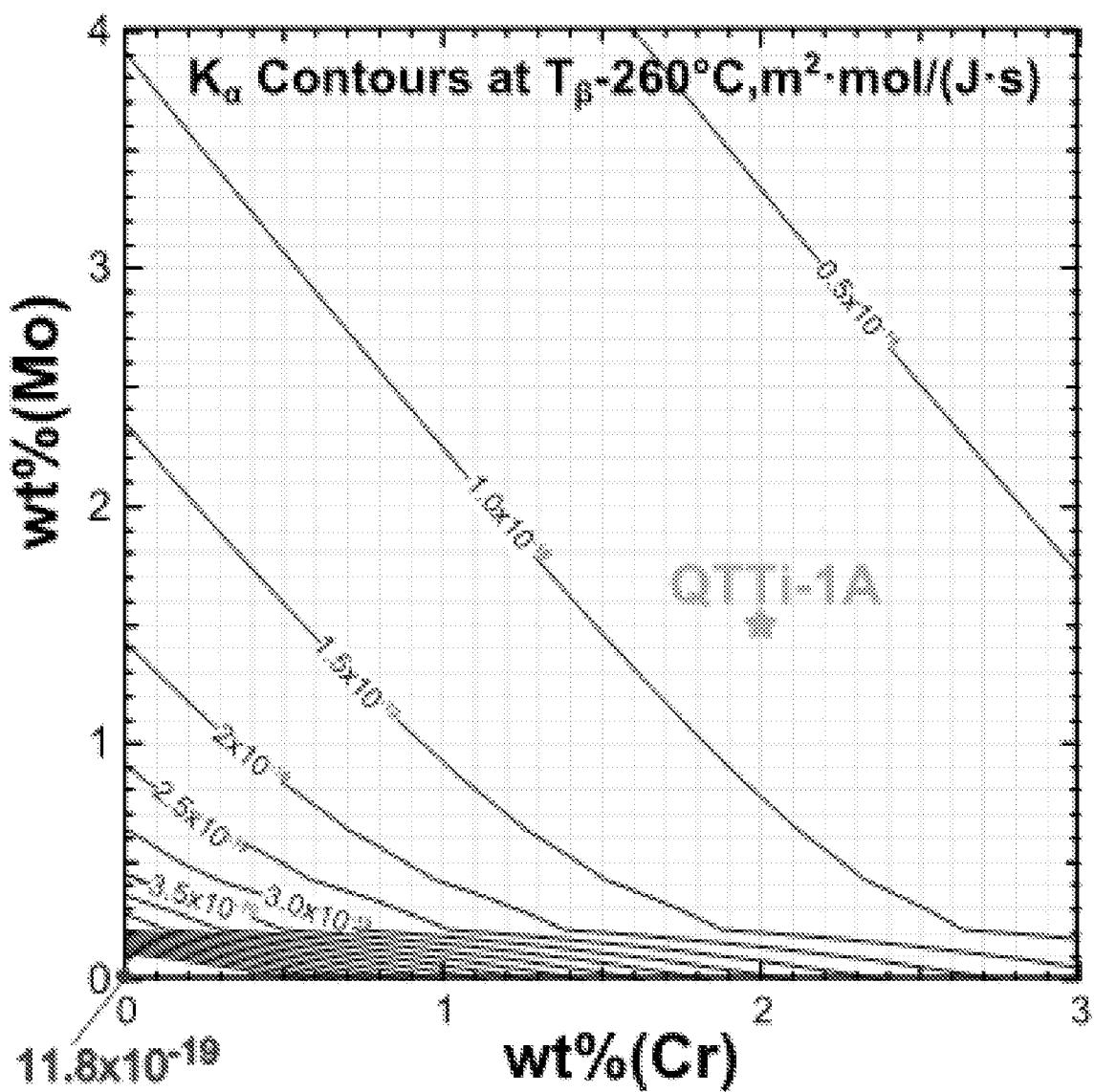


FIG. 6

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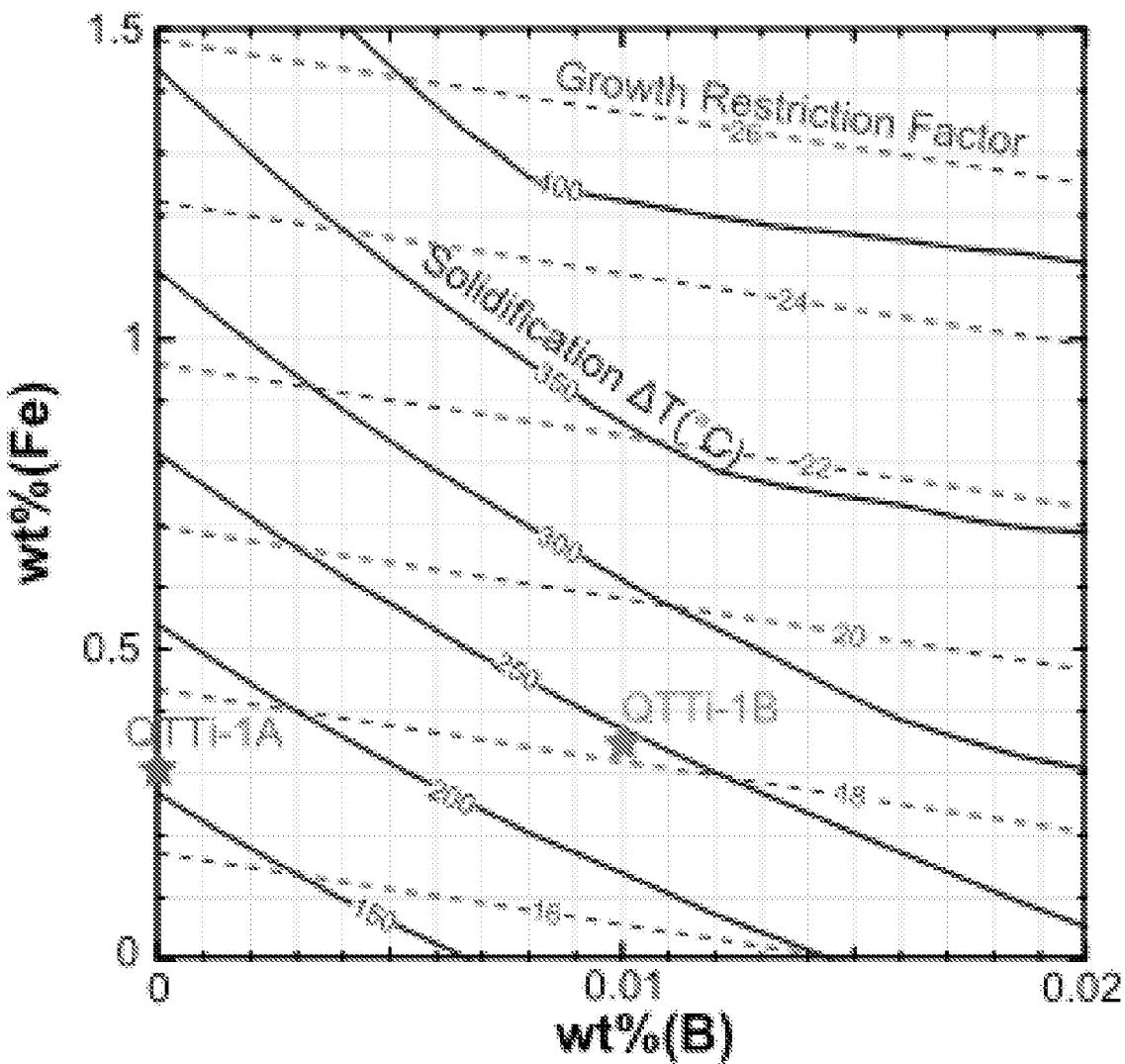


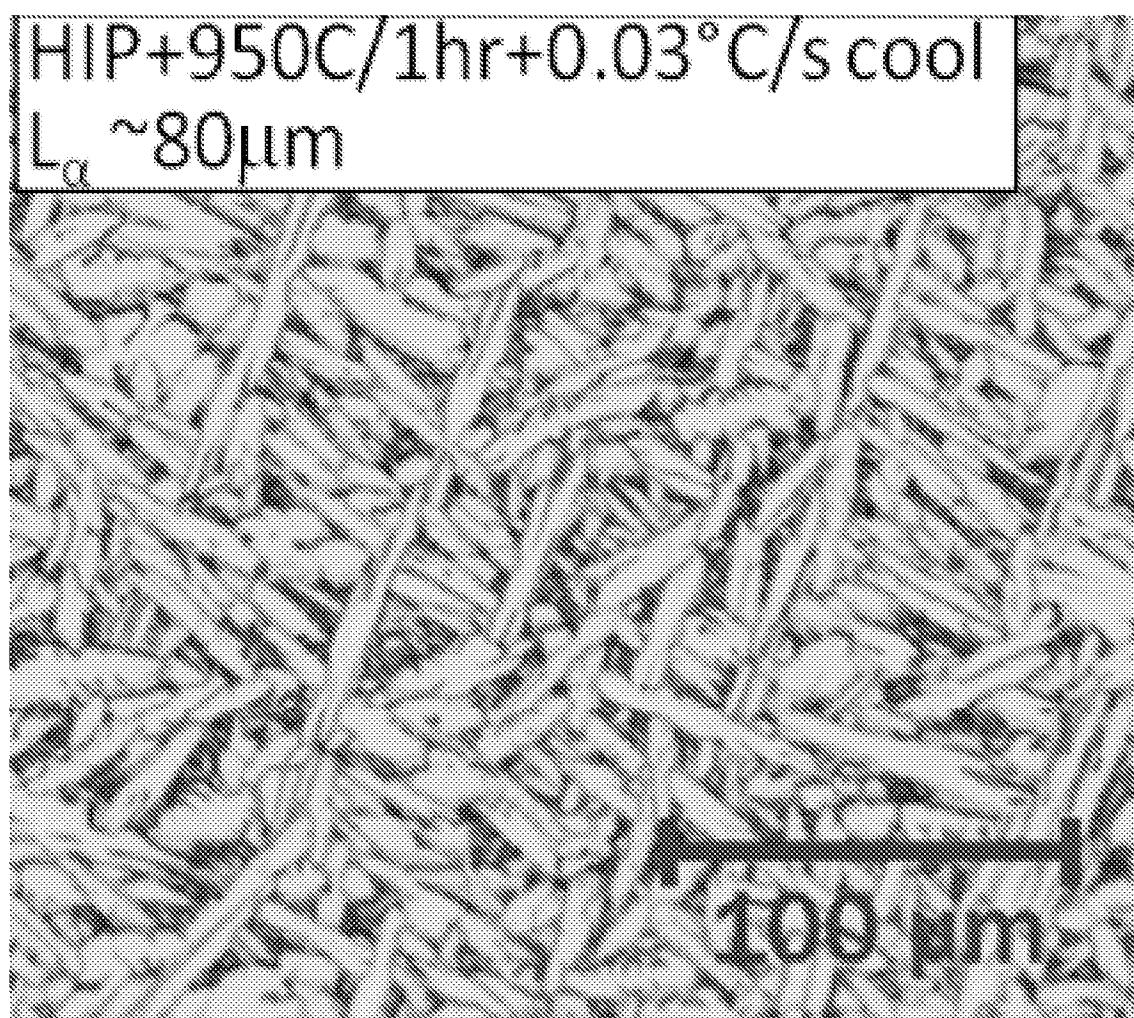
FIG. 7

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FIG. 8

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**FIG. 9**

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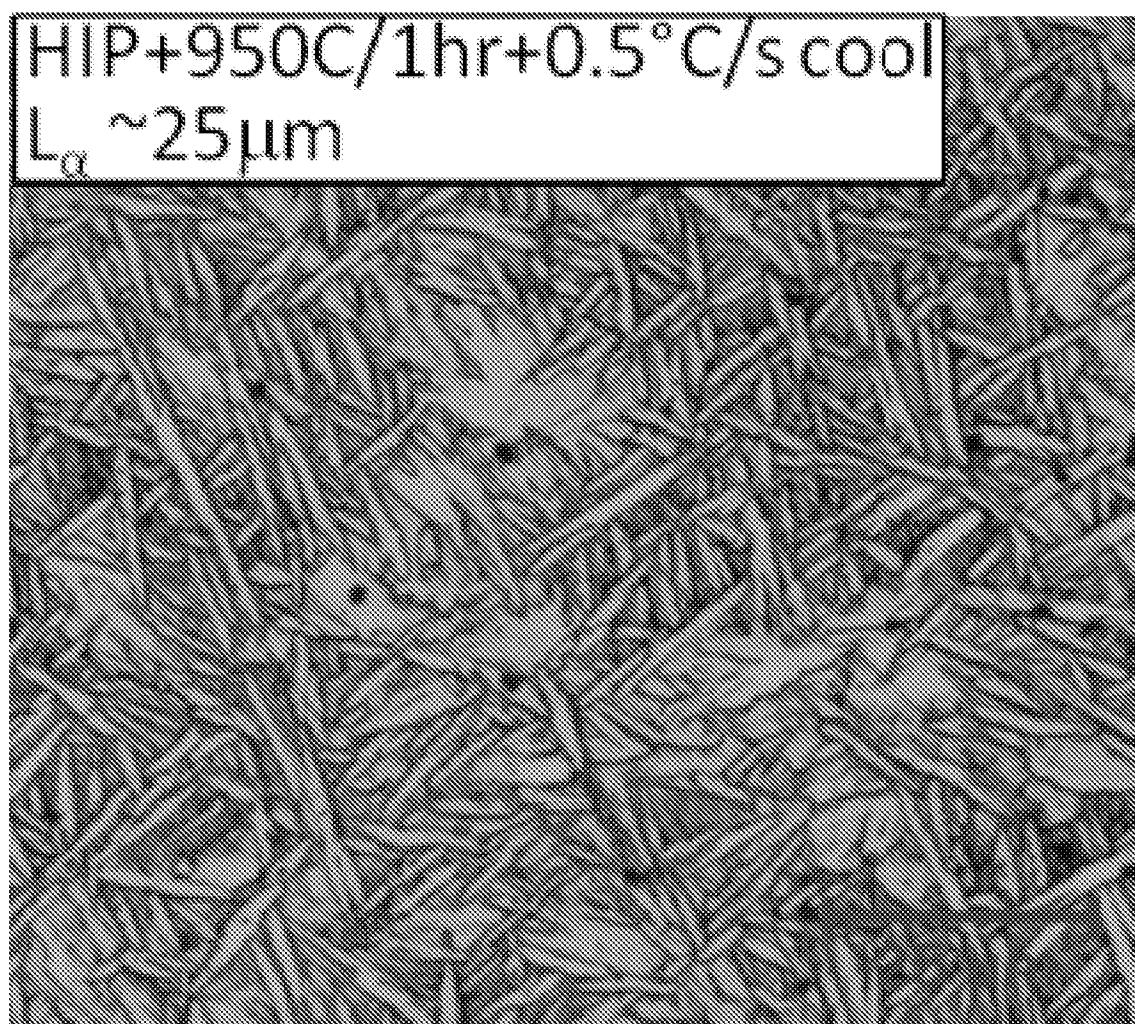


FIG. 10

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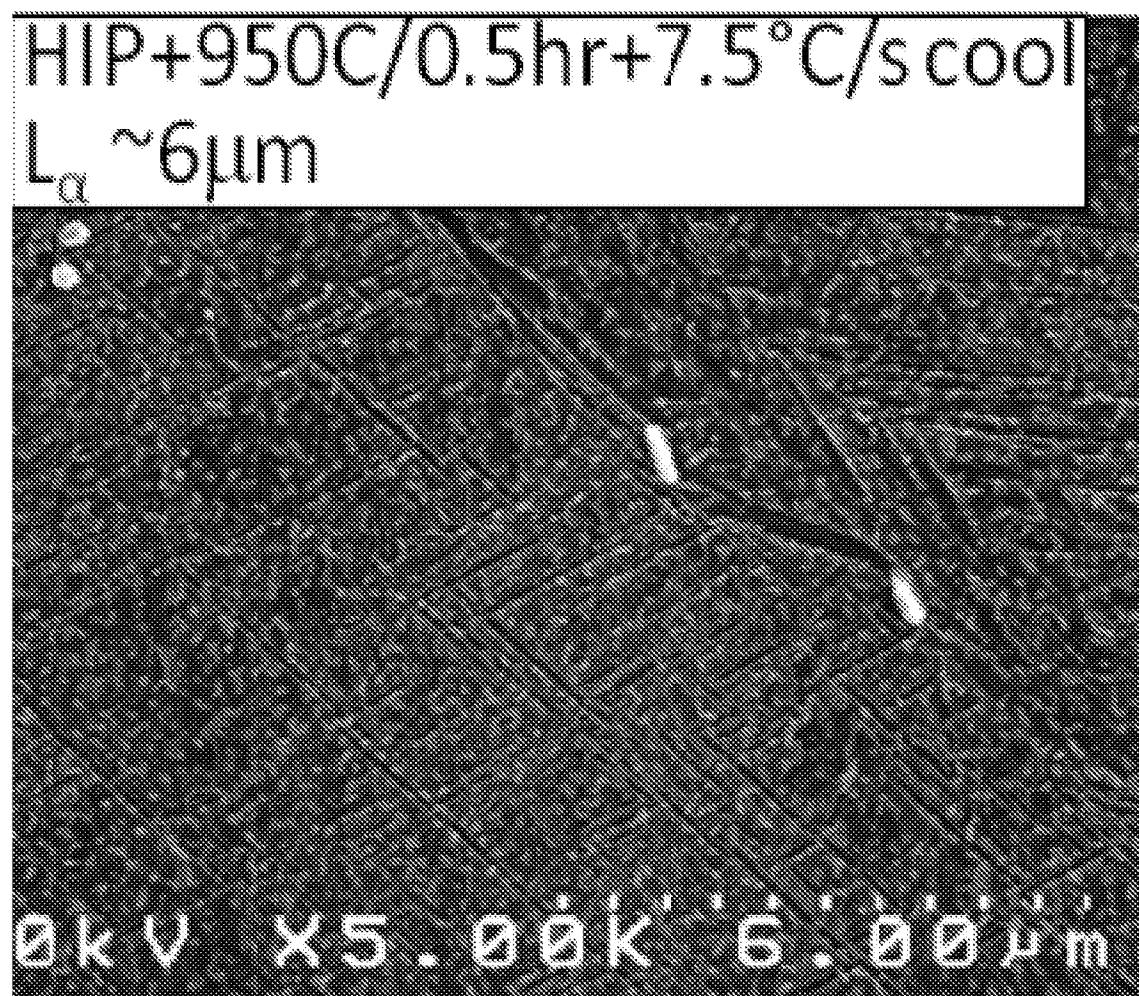


FIG. 11

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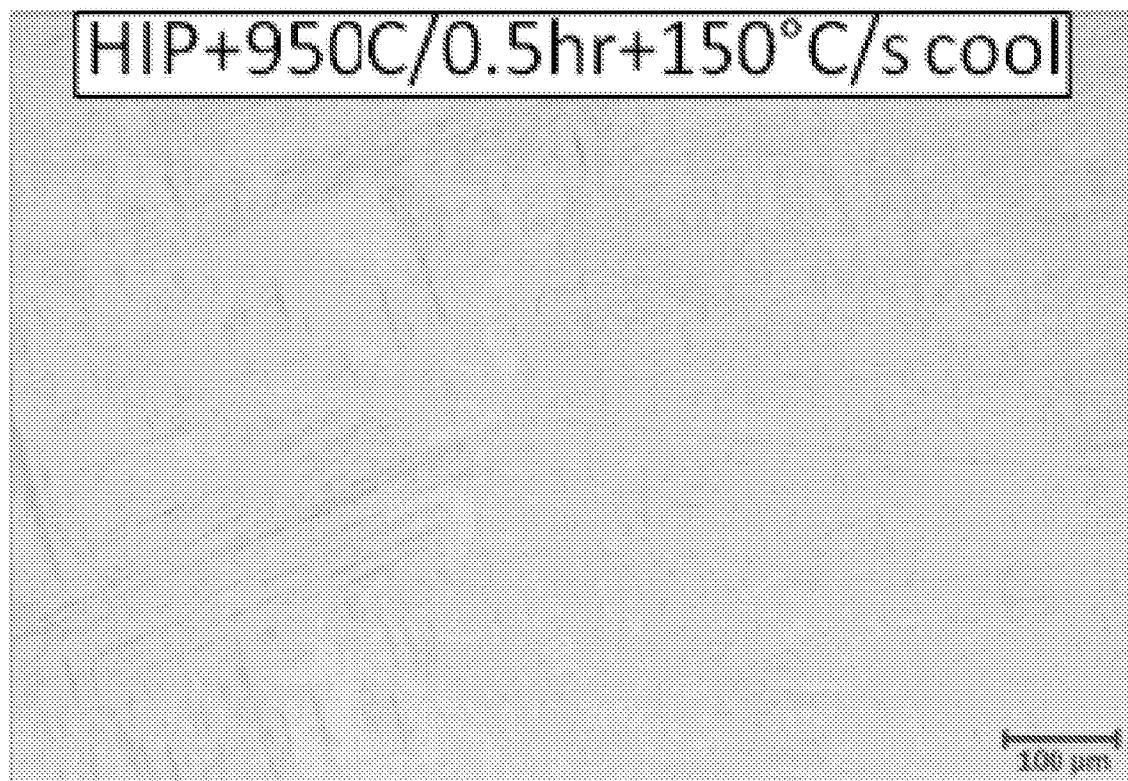


FIG. 12

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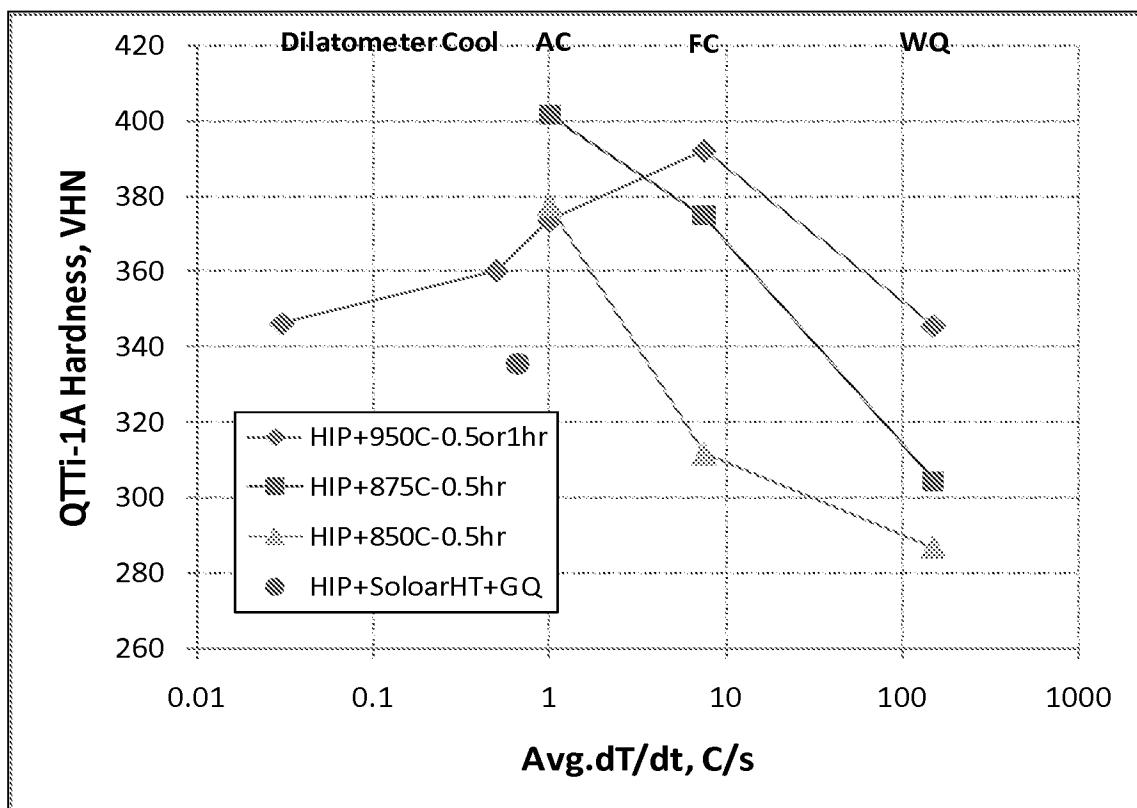


FIG. 13

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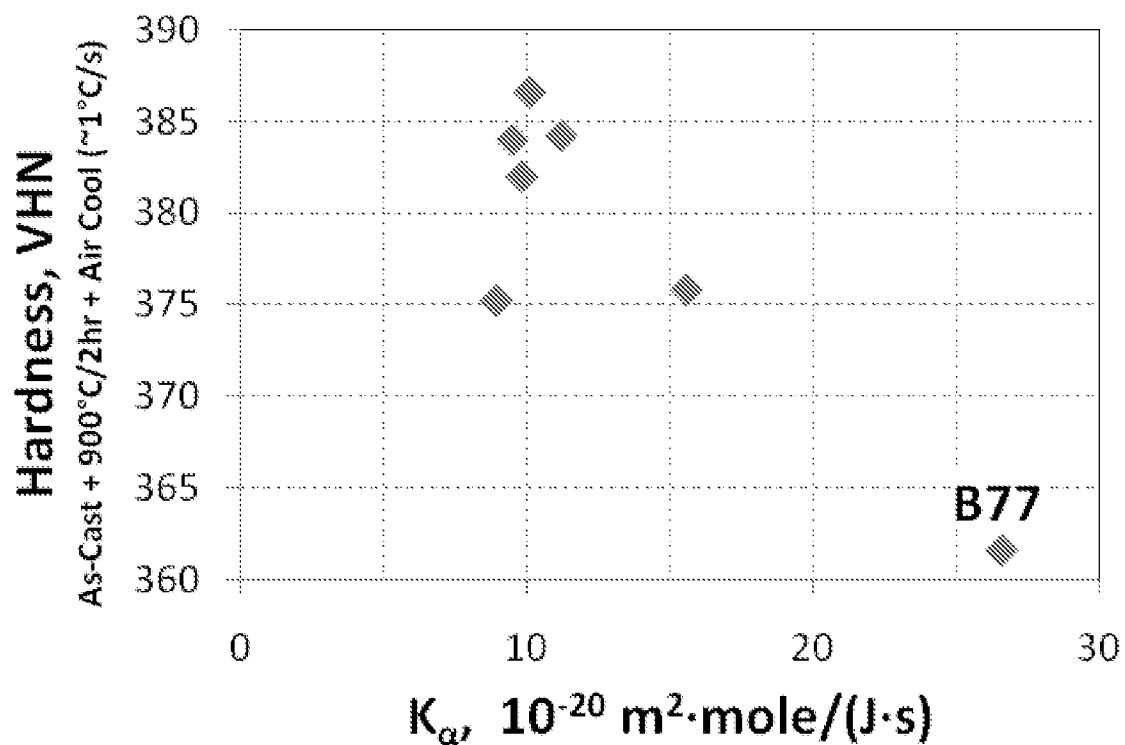


FIG. 14

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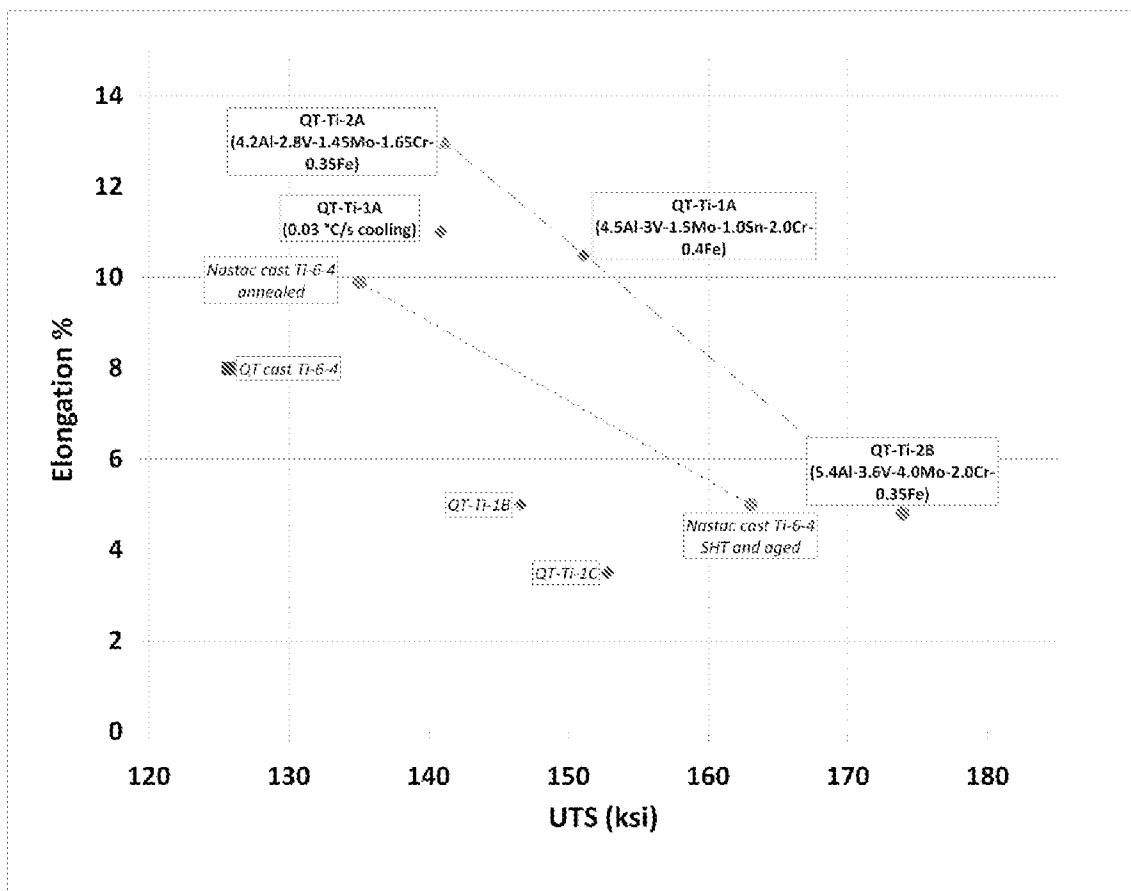


FIG. 15