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MAGNETIC MATERIALS

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This invention relates to permanent magnet alloys and to magnets produced therefrom which are caused to have more desirable properties as permanent magnets by a cold working treatment. The invention also relates to and includes methods of treating and producing such improved alloys and permanent magnets.

An object of the invention is the production of better and more efficient permanent magnet materials.

This present application is a continuation-in-part of my copending application, Serial No. 416,216, filed October 23, 1941, which is now Patent No. 2,382,649 dated August 14, 1945, and which in turn was a continuation-in-part of a former application copending therewith, namely, Serial No. 311,735, filed December 30, 1939, which is now Patent No. 2,298,225, dated October 6, 1942; for which reason the priority benefits of the filing dates of said applications are claimed for the present application to whatever extent and under whatever conditions of law may be applicable.

A feature of the present invention is the discovery that permanent magnet compositions, such as those described hereinafter, may be improved by reduction of the cross section thereof by a stage of cold working during their preparation and prior to the final heat treatment. Such working is preferably accomplished by methods which produce elongation and prevent lateral spreading. Methods that have been found beneficial include swaging, rolling with grooved rolls and wire drawing. It appears that the result of improved permanent magnet properties is manifested chiefly in the direction of elongation. Reduction of thickness by such rolling of a metal sheet as permits the material to spread laterally is only partially effective.

The evidence is that materials of or produced according to the present invention generally are anisotropic and their improved properties are manifested chiefly in the direction in which the elongation takes place.

In the said application, Serial No. 311,735, it is pointed out that there are classes of materials which, if maintained at a certain temperature but below the melting point, assume a form known as the "gamma phase," and if the material is thereafter cooled to around room temperature it tends to assume the "alpha" phase and thereafter if maintained at around 500° to 800°, a finely dispersed small amount of the "gamma" phase forms in the "alpha" phase. This brief statement is to be read in the light of

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the information, diagrams, and discussion of said application, Serial No. 311,735.

As pointed out in the said application, now Patent No. 2,298,225 dated October 6, 1942, a suitable procedure for preparing permanent magnet material is to melt the material and cool it to room temperature to produce formation of the "alpha" phase and thereafter elevate the material to a higher temperature between 500° C. to 800° C. for a length of time such as is necessary to allow a small amount of the "gamma" phase to precipitate in a highly dispersed form in the "alpha" phase. This produces dispersion hardening in the material and produces a very effective permanent magnet material. This method of forming permanent magnet materials is different and seemingly involves a different principle from that heretofore employed with respect to many others, such as alloys of iron, cobalt and molybdenum in that, in the present instance, the material is converted into a low temperature "alpha" phase and thereafter has a small amount of the high temperature "gamma" phase precipitated therein in a fine and dispersed state. In the usual case of permanent magnets hardened by precipitation the high temperature phase is preserved and a small amount of the low temperature phase is precipitated.

In some alloys of the type under discussion the "gamma" to "alpha" transformation tends to occur at low temperatures at which the transformation becomes sluggish and non-equilibrium conditions exist.

Whether this is the case or not, cold rolling these alloys in grooved rolls or working them mechanically by any equivalent method causes or expedites the formation at room temperature of the "alpha" phase and brings them into equilibrium. Some alloys of this type may not change completely to the "alpha" phase at room temperature unless given the above treatment. Others change to "alpha" phase only in part. This result whether whole or partial is one beneficial aspect of the present invention. However, there is a second beneficial aspect which is due to crystal orientation. X-ray measurements confirm this and magnetic tests show the best permanent magnet properties in the direction of elongation. Either or both of these beneficial aspects may be present in varying degrees.

After the alloys are brought completely or mainly into the "alpha" phase by the combination of cooling and cold working they are raised to a temperature in the range of temperatures which causes the precipitation in finely dis-

persed particles of some of the "gamma" phase. This results in the production of magnetic material having effective and desirable properties as permanent magnets in the direction of elongation. In every case care must be used not to raise the material to too high a temperature in order not to lose the effect of cold working.

A frequently used criterion of the desirability of permanent magnet materials is the product of "coercive force" and "residual induction." A more accurate figure of merit is that of "maximum energy product," which on the demagnetization portion of the hysteresis loop, is the product is induction B and magnetizing force H at a point where this product is the greatest. See Wahl, "Applied Magnetism," pages 42 to 45 inclusive.

The above criterion is independent of the matter of cost, ease or difficulty of preparation, rolling or drawing, brittleness, availability of raw materials and other factors which must receive consideration for many practical purposes and applications. Thus a permanent magnet composition which has an absolute "maximum energy product" less than some other which is less available or suitable from some one or more of the above aspects may be a valuable contribution to the art if, for example, it may be made to possess a considerably greater "maximum energy product."

Among objects of the present invention are to provide better permanent magnets at little or no increase in cost; to produce useful permanent magnets from materials not hitherto known to possess permanent magnet properties to a useful extent; to improve the properties of compositions known to have useful permanent magnet properties; to produce useful permanent magnets from cheap or readily available raw materials; to increase either or both the product of "coercive force" and "residual induction" or the "maximum energy product" of magnetic materials; to provide elongated magnetic materials such as tapes and strips having useful "maximum energy products"; and to provide useful magnets from materials which may be worked with facility.

The subject-matter of the invention or discovery comprises a range or group of magnetic alloys which by appropriate combined heat treatment and cold rolling or elongating treatment will have one or the other or both of the above-named magnetic products or the coercive force or the residual induction increased in the direction of elongation by from one hundred to several hundred per cent as compared to the material in the cast or unsuitably heat treated or unsuitably worked condition.

A feature of the invention or discovery is the lack of any necessity for quenching the material at any time in order to improve its properties; however, rapid cooling after casting may be practiced. One of the beneficial aspects of the discovery is that the cooling rates may vary widely as convenience or necessity demands.

The alloys may be prepared in the form of rods, bars, wire or tapes. A suitable treatment for any specimen is first to give it the desired amount of cold working plus a low temperature bake. No other heat treatment is necessary. Satisfactory results have been obtained with reductions in area of 75 per cent, although this exact amount is by no means critical.

In greater detail, the material is cast, which gives it the necessary high temperature treatment; it may be given a further or special heat treat-

ment at around 800° to 1300° C. The cooled material, which may be cooled to room temperature slowly or rapidly, and must be cooled substantially below about 600° C. is forcibly elongated by rolling with grooved rolls, swaging, drawing through dies or by combinations of these methods or by any similar method or methods so as to reduce the cross section in one or several steps over a range from a small amount to a small fraction of the original cross section. The material is then heated to a temperature generally in the region 500° to 800° C. and maintained for a sufficient time such as a matter of seconds or minutes at the higher temperature to one to several hours at the lower temperature, but somewhat more as the temperature approaches the bottom of the range. Too high a temperature destroys the effect of the cold rolling, and too low a temperature or too short a time is only partially effective. A quenching treatment is unnecessary.

A composition which responds to this type of treatment is:

Per cent Iron	Per cent Cobalt	Per cent Manganese	Per cent Vanadium
80	-----	16	4

Carbon above about 0.1 per cent is not an essential constituent and in fact is absent from these materials.

The constituents may in general vary over a range which includes iron from 78 per cent to 82 per cent, manganese from 14 per cent to 18 per cent, and vanadium from 3 per cent to 5 per cent. Impurities incident to commercially available metals may amount to about 1 per cent maximum with the exception of carbon which, as stated above, is restricted in amount.

Thus there are described certain permanent magnet materials, an improvement in them by a heat treatment, a further and often considerable improvement by a cold working treatment, and avoidance of necessity for quenching. These compositions possess or may be made to possess substantial permanent magnet properties and are notably improved in properties by a treatment of the kind described. They may be prepared from raw materials which are ordinarily cheap and readily available. They respond to the described treatment and may be made to acquire magnetic properties increased as a result of the treatment described as compared with identical compositions as cast. In some cases the increase in energy product due to cold rolling may be 100 per cent as compared to the same material heat treated but not cold rolled.

The apparatus illustrated in the above-noted Patent 2,298,225, or any other suitable apparatus, may be used to perform the cold rolling or elongating process.

The finished magnets may be magnetized by any of the usually employed methods or employed in any usual manner as recording tape or wire.

What is claimed is:

1. A composition adapted for permanent magnet use comprising 78 per cent to 82 per cent iron, 14 per cent to 18 per cent manganese, and 3 per cent to 5 per cent vanadium, these constituents comprising the entire constituents of the composition except for minor impurities not over 1 per cent.

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2. An article having properties adapted for permanent magnet use composed of an alloy comprising as essential constituents 78 per cent to 82 per cent iron, 14 per cent to 18 per cent manganese, and 3 per cent to 5 per cent vanadium, these constituents comprising the entire constituents of the composition except for minor impurities not over 1 per cent, said article produced by passing the alloy into the temperature range of from 800° C. to 1300° C., cooling it substantially below 600° C., forcibly elongating the material in the cold condition and thereafter maintaining it in the range 500° C. to 800° C. with-

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out exceeding about 800° C. whereby the material is caused to have increased ability to retain permanent magnetism in the direction of elongation.
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REFERENCES CITED

The following references are of record in the file of this patent:

UNITED STATES PATENTS

Number	Name	Date
2,382,649	Nesbitt	Aug. 14, 1945