THE EFFECT OF HEAT TREATMENT AND CHROMIUM ADDITION ON γ -TITANIUM ALUMINIDE RESISTANCE TO HYDROGEN ATTACK

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ABSTRACT

The intermetallic alloys of γ -titanium aluminide are emerging as one of the most attractive alternative structural and machinery part materials for high and low temperature applications. One critical area of application is in hydrogen storage tank in chemical, oil and gas industries or in combustion engine when entail the use of hydrogen as a fuel. It has been widely reported by researchers that these materials exhibit environmental embrittlement in the presence of hydrogen, hence the diffusivity of hydrogen and the effect of hydrogen to the mechanical properties of γ -titanium aluminide is significant and technologically important. Therefore, in the present research, an investigation had been carried out to determine what causes the hydrogen attack and dealuminification. Control microstructure and phases through heat treatment by heating to 1200°C for 30 minutes and cooled in three different ways (i.e. waterquenched, air-cooled and furnace-cooled), and addition of a third alloying element namely chromium become the focus of this research. Samples were subjected to corrosion attack under cathodically charged with galvanostatic mode for 6, 24 and 48 hours. Hydrogen diffusion coefficient (D) was calculated based on Fick's second Law and these results were compared with that obtained from micro-Vickers hardness profiling data. The corroded and uncorroded samples were analyzed by using x-ray diffraction (XRD), scanning electron microscopy (SEM) and secondary ion mass spectroscopy (SIMS). It was found that α_2 -Ti₃Al or lamellae phases are more prone to hydrogen attack than γ -TiAl phases but γ -TiAl is more susceptible to dealuminification. Slowly cooled (furnace-cooled) Ti-Al exhibited the least hydrogen attack due to its low hydrogen diffusion coefficient. However the effect of heat treatment on dealuminification is insignificant. When γ -titanium aluminides were alloyed with chromium, their resistance towards hydrogen attack and dealuminification increased.

ABSTRAK

Aloi antara logam γ -titanium aluminida adalah salah satu bahan alternatif menarik yang membangun dengan pesat sebagai bahan struktur dan mesin pada suhu tinggi dan rendah. Aplikasi yang kritikal adalah pada tangki stor hidrogen bagi industri kimia, petrokimia dan sumber asli atau pada enjin pembakaran ketika penggunaan hidrogen sebagai sumber bahan api telah menyebabkan aloi titanium aluminida mengalami kerapuhan hidrogen. Oleh itu, keresapan hidrogen dan kesan hidrogen terhadap sifat mekanik y-titanium aluminida adalah amat penting. Maka dalam penyelidikan ini, kajian telah dilakukan untuk menentukan kesan serangan hidrogen dan penyahaluminum. Kawalan mikrostruktur dan fasa melalui rawatan haba dengan memanaskan sehingga 1200°C selama 30 minit dan didinginkan dengan 3 kaedah yg berbeza (iaitu lindap kejut menggunakan air, pendinginan pada suhu udara dan pendinginan dalam relau), dan penambahan unsur aloian ketiga iatu kromium adalah menjadi tumpuan penyelidikan ini. Sampel dikakiskan dengan mencas katodik menggunakan mod Galvanostatik selama 6, 24 dan 48 jam. Pekali resapan hidrogen (D) dihitung melalui Hukum Kedua Fick's dan hasilnya dibandingkan dengan pekali resapan yang diperolehi daripada profil kekerasan mikro Vickers. Sampel sebelum dan selepas kakisan telah dianalisis menggunakan pembelauan sinar-x (XRD), mikroskop elektron (SEM) dan spektroskopi jisim ion sekunder (SIMS). Hasil daripada kajian ini, didapati fasa lamela atau α2-Ti3Al lebih cenderung untuk mengalami serangan hidrogen jika dibandingkan dengan fasa y-TiAl. Manakala fasa y-TiAl lebih cenderung mengalami penyahaluminum. Sampel titanium aluminida yang dirawat haba secara pendinginan perlahan (pendinginan dalam relau) menunjukkan paling sedikit serangan hidrogen disebabkan pekali resapan hidrogen yang rendah. Walau bagaimanapun rawatan haba tidak menunjukkan kesan ketara terhadap penyahaluminum. Apabila γ-titanium aluminida dialoikan dengan kromium, ketahanannya terhadap serangan hidrogen dan penyahaluminum meningkat.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		TITLE	PAGE
	DECI	LARATION	ii
	ACK	NOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
	ABST	TRACT	iv
	ABST	'RAK	v
	LIST	OF CONTENTS	vi
	LIST	OF TABLES	xiii
	LIST	OF FIGURES	XV
	NOTA	ATIONS	xxii
	LIST	OF APPENDICES	xxiv
1	INTR	ODUCTION	1
	1.1	Background of The Research	1
	1.2	Objective of The Research	3
	1.3	Scope of The Research	3
2	TITAN	NIUM ALLOYS: METALLURGY AND APPLICATION	4
	2.1.	Titanium Alloys	4
		2.1.1 Titanium alloy, phase transition	6
	2.2.	Titanium-Aluminum Alloy	7
		2.2.1. α -Titanium aluminium alloys	9
		2.2.2. β-Titanium aluminum alloys	11
		2.2.3. α - β Titanium aluminum alloys	12

2.3.	γ-Titan	ium Aluminide Alloys	13
	2.3.1.	Physical Properties of γ-Titanium Aluminide	13
		(y-TiAl) Alloys	
	2.3.2.	Phase diagram and Solid State Transformation.	14
	2.3.3.	Microstructure of as-cast γ -titanium aluminide	17
	2.3.4.	Microstructure of heat treated y-titanium	19
		aluminide	
	2.3.5.	Ternary Titanium Aluminide	20
	2.3.6.	Mechanical Properties of γ -Titanium	21
		Aluminide Alloys.	
2.4.	Titaniu	m aluminide: engineering applications.	22
	2.4.1.	High temperature applications.	23
	2.4.2.	Low temperature applications.	27
CORRC	OSION:	MECHANISM AND KINETICS	30
3.1	Introdu	ction	30
3.2.	Hydrog	gen Damage	32
	3.2.1.	Hydrogen blistering	32
	3.2.2.	Hydrogen Embrittlement	33
	3.2.3.	Hydride formation	35
2.2	3.2.4.	Hydrogen attack	35
5.5. 2.4	Deallo	ying and dealuminumification	30 20
3.4.	Alerei	γ - 1 tanium	38
25	Corros	inde Alloys.	20
5.5.	Domos	a on a Titanium Aluminida	30
2.6	Maaha	e on y- manum Atumnide.	40
5.0.			40
27	on γ-tit	anium aiuminide.	12
5./. 2 0	Macha	s of nyulogell.	43
5.8.	2 0 1	Nature of Diffusion Coefficient	45
	3.0.1.	Machanism of Diffusion Activation	45 45
	3.8.2.	Mechanishi of Diffusion, Activation	43

		Energy and Γ	
	3.8.3.	Diffusion along Defects and on Surfaces	49
	3.8.4.	Kinetics Diffusion of Hydrogen into Metal	50
3.9.	Determina	ation of Kinetic Diffusion Coefficient of	51
	Hydrogen	into γ-Titanium Aluminide using	
	Electroche	emical Galvanostatic Mode	
3.10.	Determina	ation of Kinetic Diffusion Coefficient	54
	of Hydrog	gen into γ -Titanium Aluminide using	
	micro-har	dness test	
3. 11.	Character	zation of hydride film.	56
	3.11.1.	X-ray diffraction for micro-structural	56
		characterization	
	3.11.2.	Secondary Ion Mass Spectroscopy (SIMS)	59
		micro-structural characterization.	
		3.11.2.1.Secondary Ion Mass Spectroscopy	59
		(SIMS)-Magnetic Sector SIMS	
		3.11.2.2.Separation of secondary ions	65
		(Conventional SIMS and TOF SIM	S)
		3.11.2.3.Static and dynamic SIMS	65
		3.11.2.4. Time of Flight (TOF) SIMS	66
	3.11.3.	Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM) for	68
		Microstructure Characterization	
3.12.	Mechanic	al testing of hydrides formed at the top surface	69
	using Mic	ro-hardness Vickers testing.	
RES	SEARCH N	IETHODOLOGY	71
4 1	T . 1		- 1
4. 1.	Introd	uction.	71
4. 2.	Materi		74
4.3.		es Preparation	74
4.4.	Effect	or near treatment and chromium addition on	15
	the mi	crostructure of γ -titanium aluminide.	

4

4.4.1. Effect of heat treatment on microstructure of 75

titanium aluminide.

	4.4.2.	Effect of chromium addition on microstructures	77
		of γ-titanium aluminide.	
4.:	5. Corrosion	Testing Using Cathodically Charged Under	77
	Galvanos	tatic Mode	
	4. 5.1.	Hydrogen Charged by Galvanostatic Corrosion	77
		Test	
	4.5.2.	Galvanostatic Corrosion Test Procedure	78
	4.5.3.	Parameters Setup for Galvanostatic Corrosion	82
		Test	
	4.5.4.	Determination Diffusion Coefficient of	82
		Hydrogen into γ-Titanium Aluminide Using	
		Galvanostatic Corrosion Test Data	
4.6	. Phase and M	Microstructure Characterization.	83
	4.6.1.	Optical method: image analyzer technique.	83
	4.6.2.	Electron microscopy: scanning electron	84
		microscope (SEM).	
	4.6.3.	X-Ray Diffraction (XRD) method.	85
	4.6.4.	Measuring Grain Size Microstructure	86
4.7	7. Hydrogen ic	on detection: secondary ion mass spectroscopy	87
	(SIMS) on s	selected samples.	
	4.7.1.	Time of Flight Secondary Ion Mass	87
		Spectroscopy (TOF-SIMS)	
	4.7.2.	Magnetic Sector-Secondary Ion Mass	89
		Spectroscopy (MS-SIMS)	
4.8.	Determination	Diffusion Coefficient of Hydrogen into	91
	γ-Titanium Alu	uminide Using Vickers Microhardness Test	

5 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

93

5.1.	Introduction.	93
5.2.	Microstructure Characterization of As-cast Materials	94
	5.2.1. As-cast Ti-45%Al	94

	5.2.2.	As-cast Ti-48%Al	95
	5.2.3.	As-cast Ti-48%Al-2%Cr	95
	5.2.4.	As-cast Ti-48%Al-4%Cr	95
	5.2.5.	As-cast Ti-48%Al-8%Cr	96
	5.2.6.	X-Ray Diffraction Analysis of As-received samples	97
5.3.	Micro	structure Characterization and the Effect of Heat	99
	Treatn	nent on the As-cast Ti-45% Al and Ti-48% Al	
	5.3.1.	Heat Treated Ti-45% Al Samples	99
	5.3.2.	Heat Treated Ti-48% Al Samples	102
5.4.	Kineti	c Diffusion of Hydrogen Attack into γ-Titanium	105
	Alumi	nide	
	5.4.1.	Coefficient of Diffusivity of Hydrogen into	105
		γ-Titanium Aluminide	
	5.4.2.	Coefficient of Diffusivity of Hydrogen into	107
		γ-Titanium Aluminide using Electrochemical	
		Data Calculation	
		5.4.2.1.Effect of Heat Treatment on the Coefficient of	108
		Diffusivity of Hydrogen into γ-Titanium	
		Aluminide by using Electrochemical Method	
		5.4.2.2.Effect of Chromium on the Coefficient of	111
		Diffusivity of Hydrogen into y-Titanium	
		Aluminide by using Electrochemical Method	
	5.4.3.	Coefficient of Diffusivity of Hydrogen into γ -Titanium	112
		Aluminide by using Microhardness Test	
		5.4.3.1.Effect of Heat Treatment on the Coefficient of	113
		Diffusivity of Hydrogen into y-Titanium	
		Aluminide using Microhardness Test	
		5.4.3.2.Effect of Chromium on the Coefficient of	115
		Diffusivity of Hydrogen into y-Titanium Alumir	ide
		using Microhardness Test Data Calculation	
	5.4.4.	Comparison of Diffusivity Coefficient between Values	116
		Obtained from Electrochemical Method and by	
		Microhardness Test.	

	5.4.5.	Effect of Exposure Time on the Coefficient	117
		of Diffusivity of Hydrogen into γ-Titanium Aluminide.	
5.5.	Micro	structure and Surface Morphology Analysis on	118
	effect	of Heat Treatment to Corrosion Behavior	
	5.5.1.	X-ray Diffraction Analysis	118
		5.5.1.1.X-ray Diffraction Analysis on Heat Treated	118
		Ti-45%Al	
		5.5.1.2.X-ray Diffraction Analysis on Heat Treated	124
		Ti-48%Al	
		5.5.1.3.Comparison between $\alpha_2\text{-}Ti_3Al$ to $\gamma\text{-}TiAl$ Volume	128
		Size Expansion	
	5.5.2.	Optical and Electron Microscopy Analysis on	129
		As-received and Heat Treated y-Titanium Aluminide	
		After Hydrogen Attack	
		5.5.2.1.Optical and Scanning Electron Microscope	129
		(SEM) Analysis on As-received and Heat Treated	
		Ti-45% Al After Hydrogen Attack	
		5.5.2.2. Optical and Scanning Electron Microscope	133
		(SEM) Analysis on As-received and Heat Treated	
		Ti-48% Al After Hydrogen Attack	
	5.5.3.	Secondary Ion Mass Spectroscopy (SIMS) Analysis	137
		by TOF SIMS	
		5.5.3.1.Hydrogen Mapping by TOF SIMS Analysis	139
5.6.	Micro	structure and Surface Morphology Analysis on	141
	Chron	nium Added γ -Titanium Aluminide After Hydrogen Attack	
	5.6.1.	X-ray Diffraction Analysis on Chromium Content	141
		Variation in γ -Titanium Aluminide After Hydrogen Attac	k
	5.6.2.	Optical and Scanning Electron Microscopy	146
		(SEM) Analysis	
	5.6.3.	Secondary Ion Mass Spectroscopy (SIMS) Analysis	149
		by TOF SIMS	
		5.6.3.1.Hydrogen Mapping by TOF SIMS Analysis	150

	5.7.	Magnetic Sector SIMS Analysis on Heat Treated	152
		Ti-45% Al in Comparison with Static TOF SIMS	
6	CON	ICLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION FOR FUT	URE WORK
6.1	Conc	lusions	153
6.2	Reco	mmendations for Future Work	154
REF	EREN	CES	155
APP	ENDIC	ES A-E	169-242
APP	ENDIC	ES F-I	In-CD

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE NO). TITLE	PAGE
2.1	Design tensile properties of unalloyed titanium	6
	sheets, strips and plates	
2.2	Minimum and avarage mechanical properties of	8
	selected Titanium alloy at room temperature	
2.3	Mechanical properties and typical applications of	10
	α titanium alloys	
2.4	Properties of titanium aluminide alloys and superalloys	14
2.5	Comparison between the microstructures of as-cast	18
	γ-titanium aluminides	
2.6	Effect of microstructure on mechanical properties on	22
	Ti-48Al-2Cr-2Nb	
4.1	Chemical Composition of as-received and as-cast	74
	γ-TiAl samples	
4.2	Heat treated samples A and B	77
4.3	Samples after corrosion test with exposure time variation	81
4.4	Galvanostatic corrosion test parameters	82
4.5	Parameters for X-Ray Diffraction (XRD) method	85
4.6	Time of Flight-Secondary Ion Mass Spectroscopy	88
	(TOF-SIMS) parameters	
4.7	Magnetic Sector Secondary Ion Mass Spectroscopy	90
	(MS-SIMS) parameters	
5.1	Phase compositions of as-received sample analysis	97
	by using Energy Dispersive X-ray System (EDX)	
5.2(a)	Coefficient of diffusivity values of hydrogen into	105

	γ -titanium aluminide for as-received Ti-45% Al and	
	Ti-48% Al samples	
5.2(b)	Coefficient of diffusivity values of hydrogen into	106
	γ -titanium aluminide for heat-treated Ti-45% Al samples	
5.2(c)	Coefficient of diffusivity values of hydrogen into	106
	γ -titanium aluminide for heat-treated Ti-48% Al samples	
5.2(d)	Coefficient of diffusivity values of hydrogen into	107
	γ-titanium aluminide for Ti-48% Al-2% Cr, Ti-48% Al-4% Cr	
	and Ti-48% Al-8% Cr samples	
5.3	Comparison of <i>d</i> values from x-ray diffraction analysis	120
	on uncorroded and corroded samples of heat treated	
	Ti-45% Al before and after hydrogen attack	
5.4	Comparison of d values from x-ray diffraction analysis	126
	on uncorroded and corroded samples of heat treated	
	Ti-48% Al before and after hydrogen attack	
5.5	The <i>d</i> values from x-ray diffraction analysis	145
	on heat treated Ti-48% Al before and after hydrogen attack	

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE NO	. TITLE	PAGE
2.1	Effect of interstitial element content on the strength of titanium	5
2.2	Phase diagram of TiAl Alloys	7
2.3	Hexagonal closed packed (HCP) structure of α -titanium alloys	10
2.4	Body centered cubic (BCC) of β -titanium alloys	11
2.5	Central portion of binary T1-Al phase diagram showing	16
	the composition ranges for two-phase engineering materials	
2.6	Atomic arrangement (a). In ordered face-centered tetragonal	16
	(fct) $L1_0$ structure of γ (TiAl) and (b)in the ordered hexagona	1
	DO_{19} structure of α_2 -Ti ₃ Al	
2.7	Optical of as-cast γ -titanium aluminide, (a) equiaxed;	18
	(b) duplex; (c) nearly lamellae and (d) lamellae	
2.8	Fully lamellae structure of heat treated Ti-48%Al	19
2.9.	(a) and (b) phase equilibria in the Ti-Al-Cr ternary	21
	system at 1200 [°] C and 1000 [°] C	
2.10.	Engineering applications of γ-titanium aluminide,	23
	in hypersonic aircraft: (a) aerospace aircraft, X-30;	
	(b) a military hypersonic aircraft, Aurora Mach 5;	
	(c) civil transport aircraft, Concorde airplane.	
	(d) applications in automotive industries	
2.11	Cast Ti-48%Al-2%Cr-2%Nb, T-700 compressor case	24
2.12	Investment cast γ -TiAl diffuser for demonstrator	25

aircraft engine

	5	
2.13	Turbine wheel casting of γ -TiAl for automotive	26
	turbochargers	
2.14	Cast γ -TiAl exhaust valves in testing for high-performance	26
	cars in US and in Europe	
2.15	High-pressure compressor blades produced by ingot	27
	extrusion followed by closed-die forging for	
	aircraft engine	
2.16	Application of γ -titanium aluminide in highly hydrogen	28
	environment at hydrogen fuel storage tank in Concorde	
	airplane	
2.17	Application of γ -titanium aluminide expose in highly	29
	hydrogen environment: rendering of a city of fuel cell site	
3.1	Cross section of a carbon steel plate removed from	33
	a petroleum process stream showing a large hydrogen	
	blister. Exposure time: 2 years (taken from Imperial oil limited,	
	Ontario, Canada)	
3.2	Schematic diagram of hydrogen migration and blister	33
	formation	
3.3	(a) a dezincification leaded brass bolt, 12 mm in diameter.	37
	(b) the corrosion penetrated to depth of 3 mm, causing	
	severe porosity and embrittlement, and a remarkable	
	layered microstructure within the corrosion product	
3.4	Physical and Chemical Steps in Hydrogen embrittlement	40
3.5	Steady state Diffusion, Fick's First Law	45
3.6	(a) schematic of movement of an interstitial solute	46
	from A to B through $\#$, (b) activation energy, Q_i ,	
	required through #	
3.7	Vacancy diffusion mechanism. (a) atom movement	48
	from A to B require site B to be vacant first,	
	(b) activation energy, Q_v , is the sum of energy to create	
	and to move vacancy	
3.8	Illustration of x-ray beam path	57

3.9	Schematic of interaction between x-ray and atom in material	58	
3.10	(a and b) the principle of secondary ion mass spectrometry:		
	On the sample surface, an energy rich primary ion beam		
	generates secondary ions, which are separated and detected		
	within a mass spectrometer. (c) flowchart showing the		
	principle of Secondary Ion Mass Spectroscopy (SIMS)		
3.11	Schematic representation of an ion-solid interaction,	61	
	leading to the emission of neutral, excited and ionized		
	(+ or -) target atoms (X, Y) and molecules (X Y). In		
	surface near regions of thickness d, processes may take		
	place which change the state of particles as emitted		
3.12	Distribution of the original depth of sputtered	62	
	atoms versus depth		
3.13	(a) positive secondary ion spectrum of aluminium target	63	
	obtained under Ar ⁺ bombardment, (b) negative secondary ion		
	spectrum obtained under the same condition as figure (a)		
3.14	Representative mass spectra for positive (the two upper	64	
	spectra) and negative (the two lower spectra) secondary ions.		
3.15	The principle of TOF SIMS	68	
4.1	Flow Chart of Research Methodology	73	
4.2	Schematic drawing of samples material subjected to	75	
	corrosion attack		
4.3	Schematic heat treatment temperature-time path used in heat	76	
	treatment, T_{α} = Temperature transus α phase field,		
	T_e = Eutectoid temperature, T_t = Temperature treatment.		
	Q =Quenched, A=Air-cooled, FC= Furnace-cooled		
4.4	Furnace high temperature used for heat treatment	76	
	γ-titanium aluminide		
4.5	Schematic setup of the Galvanostatic corrosion test	79	
4.6	Galvanostatic corrosion test experimental setup	79	
4.7	Image analyzer	84	
4.8	Scanning electron microscope (SEM)	85	
4.9	X-ray diffraction system (XRD)	86	
4.10	Time of Flight-Secondary Ion Mass Spectroscopy	89	

	(TOF-SIMS) machine in Laboratory Surface Analysis, PSB	
	Corporation, Singapore	
4.11	Magnetic sector secondary ion mass spectroscopy	90
	(MS-SIMS) machine in Laboratory Surface Science,	
	Faculty Physics, NUS, Singapore	
	(b) cBN coated sample annealed at 427° C	
4.12	Vickers microhardness machine	92
4.13	(a) Three points of indentation hardness for diffusion	92
	coefficient measurement; (b)Vickers michardness	
	profiling at cross-section area from the top surface	
	into the bulk hardness.	
5.1	Microstructures on as-received samples: (a) Ti-45% Al;	96-97
	(b) Ti-48%Al; (c) Ti-48%Al-2%Cr; (d) Ti-48%Al-4%Cr	
5.2	X-ray Diffraction spectrums of as-received samples:	98
	(a) Ti-45%Al; (b) Ti-48%Al; (c) Ti-48%Al-2%Cr;	
	(b) (d) Ti-48% Al-8% Cr; (e) Ti-48% Al-8% Cr	
5.3	Classification of the α_2/γ phase equilibrium at 1000 ⁰ C in	99
	the Ti-Al-Cr systems	
5.4	Micrographs of heat treated Ti-45%Al; (a) water-quenched	101
	sample, (b) air-cooled sample and (c) furnace-cooled sample,	
	respectively	
5.5	Fragmented α_2 platelets in lamellae phases.	101
	Magnification 200x	
5.6	X-ray Diffraction spectrums of heat treated Ti-45% Al samples	; 102
	(a) water-quenched sample, (b) air-cooled sample and (c) furna	ace-
	(b) cooled sample, respectively	
5.7	Optical micrographs of heat treated Ti-48%Al;	103
	(a) water-quenched sample, (b) air-cooled sample,	
	(c) furnace-cooled sample	
5.8	X-ray Diffraction spectrums of heat treated	104
	Ti-48% Al samples; (a) water-quenched sample,	
	(b) air-cooled sample and (c) furnace-cooled sample	
5.9	Bar charts showing coefficient of diffusivity of	108

	hydrogen into γ -titanium aluminide for all samples	
	using electrochemical method	
5.10	Bar charts coefficient of diffusivity of hydrogen into	110
	γ -titanium aluminide for as-received and heat-treated	
	Ti-45% Al samples using electrochemical method	
5.11	Bar charts coefficient of diffusivity of hydrogen into	111
	γ -titanium aluminide for as-received and heat-treated	
	Ti-48% Al samples using electrochemical method	
5.12	Bar charts coefficient of diffusivity of hydrogen into	112
	γ -titanium aluminide for different chromium content samples	
	by using electrochemical data method	
5.13	Bar charts coefficient of diffusivity of hydrogen into	113
	γ-titanium aluminide for all samples using microhardness test	
5.14	Bar charts coefficient of diffusivity of hydrogen into	114
	γ -titanium aluminide for as-received and heat-treated	
	Ti-45% Al samples using microhardness test	
5.15	Bar charts coefficient of diffusivity of hydrogen into	115
	γ -titanium aluminide for as-received and heat-treated	
	Ti-48% Al samples by using microhardness test	
5.16	Bar charts coefficient of diffusivity of hydrogen in	116
	γ -titanium aluminide for different chromium content	
	samples by using microhardness test	
5.17	(a, e and i): x-ray diffraction spectrums of Ti-45%Al	119
	on water-quenched, air-cooled and furnace-cooled samples	
	before corrosion (hydrogen attack), respectively	
5.18	(a, e and i): x-ray diffraction spectrums of Ti-48%Al	125
	on water-quenched, air-cooled and furnace-cooled samples	
	before corrosion (hydrogen attack), respectively	
5.19	Optical micrographs of heat treated Ti-45%Al after	130
	hydrogen charged; (a) to (c) are as-received samples	
	with exposure time 6, 24 and 48 hours, respectively	
5.20	Scanning electron micrograph of as-received Ti-45%Al	132
	after hydrogen charged for 48 hours; (a) x500; (b) x2000;	

	(c) x100 at different location	
5.21	Scanning electron micrographs of quenched Ti-45% Al	132
	after 48 hours hydrogen charged (a) x250; (b) x300 at	
	different location; (c) x1000 from (b)	
5.22	Scanning electron micrographs of furnace-cooled Ti-45% Al	133
	after 48 hours hydrogen charged (a) x250; (b) x500	
5.23	Optical micrographs of heat treated Ti-48% Al	135
	after hydrogen charged; (a) to (c) are as-received	
	samples with exposure time 6, 24 and 48 hours, respectively	
5.24	Scanning electron micrograph of as-received Ti-48% Al	135
	after hydrogen charged for 48 hours; (a) x500; (b) x2000	
5.25	Scanning electron micrographs of quenched Ti-48% Al	136
	after 48 hours hydrogen charged (a) x500; (b) corroded	
	lamellae phase, x2000; (c) corroded γ phase, x1000;	
	(d) corroded γ phase, x2000	
5.26	Scanning electron micrographs of furnace-cooled Ti-48% Al	136
	after 48 hours hydrogen charged (a) x250; (b) corroded	
	lamellae phase, x500; (c) corroded γ phase, x1000	
	(d) surface corroded at other location, x200	
5.27	Mass spectra result by time of flight –secondary ion mass	138
	spectroscopy (TOF SIMS); (a) As -received Ti-45%Al;	
	(b) quenched Ti-45%Al; (c) furnace-cooled Ti-45%Al;	
	(d): as -received Ti-45% Al; (e) quenched Ti-45% Al;	
	(f) furnace-cooled Ti-45% Al	
5.28	Hydrogen mapping by time of flight-secondary ion	140
	mass spectroscopy (TOF-SIMS): (a to c): as -received	
	Ti-45% Al, quenched Ti-45% Al and furnace-cooled Ti-45% Al,	
	respectively; (d to f): as -received Ti-48%Al, quenched	
	Ti-48% Al and furnace-cooled Ti-48% Al, respectively	
5.29	(a and e): x-ray diffraction spectrums of Ti-48%Al-2%Cr	143
	and Ti-48% Al-4% Cr before corrosion, respectively	
5.30	Optical micrographs of γ -titanium aluminide with different	147
	chromium content after hydrogen charged;	

	(a) to (c) are Ti-48%Al-2%Cr samples with exposure time	
	6, 24 and 48 hours, respectively; (d) to (f) are Ti-48%Al-4%Cr	
	samples with exposure time6, 24 and 48 hours, respectively;	
	(g) to (i) are Ti-48%Al-8%Cr with exposure time	
	6, 24 and 48 hours, respectively	
5.31	Scanning electron micrographs of Ti-48%Al-2%Cr after	148
	hydrogen charged for 48 hours; (a) corroded γ phase,	
	x2000; (b) corroded lamellar phase, x2000	
5.32	Scanning electron micrographs of Ti-48%Al-4%Cr after	148
	hydrogen charged for 48 hours; (a) x250; (b) corroded lamellar	
	phase, x2000; (c) corroded γ phase, x2000	
5.33	Scanning electron micrographs of Ti-48%Al-8%Cr after	149
	hydrogen charged for 48 hours; (a) x125; (b) corroded	
	β phase, x500; (c) corroded lamellae phase, x2000;	
	(d) corroded γ phase, x125	
5.34	Mass spectra result by time of flight –secondary ion mass	150
	spectroscopy (TOF SIMS); (a): as -received Ti-48%Al, (b) as-	
	received Ti-48%A-2%Cr, (c) as-received Ti-48%Al-4%Cr and	
	(d) as -received Ti-48% Al-8% Cr	
5.35	Hydrogen mapping by time of flight-secondary ion mass	151
	spectroscopy (TOF-SIMS): (a): as -received Ti-48% Al,	
	(b) as-received Ti-48%A-2%Cr, (c)as-received Ti-48%Al-4%Cr	
	and (d) as -received Ti-48% Al-8% Cr	
5.36	Secondary ion mass spectroscopy (SIMS) on water-quenched	152
	Ti-45% Al after hydrogen attack	

NOTATIONS

γ	-	Gamma Phase/ tetragonal atomic structure
α	-	Alpha phase/ hexagonal atomic structure
α_2	-	Alpha two phase/ hexagonal closed packed atomic structure
β	-	Betha phase/ cubic atomic structure
at.%	-	Atomic percentage
Γ	-	Average jump frequencies
С	-	Concentration of diffusing species (hydrogen)
Ζ	-	Charge number of electro-active diffusing species
F	-	Faraday constant
S	-	Sectional area common to both electrode and electrolyte
D	-	Kinetic diffusion coefficient
Ι	-	Constant current
L	-	Sample half thickness
Vm	-	Volume molar
E	-	Potential
dE/dδ	-	Potential variation of the electrode (γ -TiAl) with the change in
		hydrogen composition
Hv	-	Microhardness vickers
erf	-	Error function
λ	-	wave length
d	-	interplanar spacing
hkl	-	miller indices
θ	-	diffraction angle
a, b, c	-	lattice constant
Å	_	Amstrong constant

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SEM	-	Scanning Electron Microscope
XRD	-	X-ray Diffraction
NA	-	Number of grain
f	-	Jeffries's constant
SIMS	-	Secondary ion mass spectroscopy
TOF-SIMS	-	Time of flight-secondary ion mass spectroscopy
KeV	-	Kilo electron volt

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX	TITLE	PAGE
A	List of Publications	169
В	Parameters Setup for Galvanostatic Corrosion Test	186
С	Diffusion Coefficient Calculation from Galvanostatic Corrosion Test Data	192
D	Diffusion Coefficient Calculation from Microhardness Test Data	216
Е	Details of X Ray Diffraction Spectrums	242
F	Details of Secondary Ion Mass Spectroscopy Spectrums By TOF-SIMS	In-CD
G	Details of Hydrogen Mapping Analysis by TOF-SIMS	In-CD
Н	Details of Magnetic Sector SIMS Spectrums	In-CD
Ι	Details of Potential Data from Galvanostatic Electrochemical Test	In-CD

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of The Research

Since titanium was first discovered in 1790 and was mass-produced in the early 1950's [Mangonon, 1999], the development and research on titanium and its alloys have been well developed. Until now, scientists and engineers had discovered new advanced material: gamma titanium-aluminide, well known as "y-TiAl". y-TiAl based alloys with compositions ranging from 45 to 50 at.%Al, is an intermetallic compound consist of Ti₃Al (α_2 -phase) and Ti-Al (γ -phase) with low density, high Young's Moduli, good creep and oxidation resistance up to 900°C (creep limit) [ASM, 1994]. Due to their high properties, this γ -TiAl extent the capabilities of titanium-based alloys beyond that of conventional α - β titanium alloys and potentially viable to replace nickel-based super alloys in some application with a material having one-half the density [Zheng et al., 1995; Cheng et al., 1999; Nombela et al., 2000]. This γ -TiAl have been considered attractive candidates for applications in advanced fields such as in aerospace: blades, body frames, compressor cases, discs; in marine applications: turbocharger rotors, flywheel, turbine engine compressor component, and turbine engine exhaust system components; in automotive engine components and in chemicals and other applications: hydrogen storage tank,

chemical storage tank and medical profession. [Mangonon, 1999; ASM, 1994; Seagle and Wood, 1993; Huang and Chessnut, 1994; Kim and Dimiduk, 1991 and Maeland *et al.*, 1999].

The future of titanium aluminide intermetallics is bright and well developed deformation mechanisms theory can explain the relationship between mechanical properties and microstructure. The fundamental understanding of phase stabilities is enabling the optimization of microstructure and properties.

In normal air condition, γ -Titanium aluminide intermetallics are known to be highly resistant to atmospheric corrosion at room temperature. However, their tendency to oxidize to form Al_2O_3 preferentially to TiO_2 exits only up to $850^{\circ}C$, which is known as high temperature corrosion [Kim and Dimiduk, 1991]. However, at room temperature γ -titanium aluminide is often subjected to hydrogen-damage mechanisms, although the surface oxide film forms barrier to hydrogen atom entry to metal lattice. It is already known that titanium alloys are susceptible to hydrogen to form hydride on the surface. Hydrogen causes embrittlement leading to the deterioration of the properties of the alloys [Sha and Mckinven, 2002]. Much effort has been made to quantify the hydrogen susceptibility and its effect to properties of titanium alloys. Takasi et al. [1994] noted that for Gamma TiAl alloy, the yield strength increased with increasing amount of hydride but the ultimate tensile strength, ductility and fracture toughness decreased [Takasi et al., 1994]. Therefore the amount of hydrogen that a titanium alloy can absorb during service is a major measure of the ability of the alloy to retain good properties [Sha and Mckinven, 2002]. Also, some researchers found that hydride formed on the surface and the possibility that some hydrogen may occupy the interstitial sites in the alloy [Takasaki et al., 1994; Gao et al., 1993 and Sundaram et al., 2000].

It was found that hydrogen attack is more likely to occur in α_2 or lamellae phases rather than γ -TiAl phases. Control of microstructure and phases could be the

answer to this problem. Appropriate γ -titanium aluminide which is more resistant to environment embrittlement and has useful properties need to be investigated. The focus of this research is to investigate the influence of microstructure and an alloying element content in γ -titanium aluminide namely chromium to corrosion attack in the form of hydrogen attack or hydrogen embrittlement.

1. 2. Objectives of the Research.

The objective of this research is to study the effect of microstructure variation by heat treatment process and chromium addition on γ -titanium aluminide resistance to hydrogen attack and dealuminification.

1.3. Scope of the Research.

The scope of the research include:

- 1. Investigation of the effect of microstructure of γ titanium aluminide generated by heat treatment on corrosion attack in the form of hydrogen attack.
- Investigation of the influence of an alloying element, namely chromium, added to γ-titanium aluminide on corrosion in the form of hydrogen attack.
- Investigating the effect of microstructure and chromium content on corrosion kinetics; namely coefficient of diffusivity of hydrogen in γtitanium aluminide
- 4. Investigating the hydride formed on the surface of titanium aluminides.

6.2 Recommendations for Future Work

Further research can be carried out to enhance the current research and the following are areas which are recommended for further investigation;

- 1. In-depth investigation on the mechanical properties namely; tensile, fatigue and creep strength of γ -titanium aluminide after it is subjected to hydrogen attack and dealuminification.
- 2. Metallurgical and microstructural study in other ternary titanium aluminides such as, Ti-48%Al-X%(Nb, V, Mo, Mn), and in-depth investigation on the effect of heat treatment to corrosion behavior of the ternary titanium aluminide. Understanding microstructural control through combination of heat treatment and addition of third alloying element which may produce better microstructures that more resistant to hydrogen attack and dealuminification.
- 3. Study on the heat treated alloyed γ -titanium aluminide and its effect on corrosion

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