Resilient and Corrosion-Proof Rolling Element Bearings Made from Ni-Ti Alloys for Aerospace mechanism Applications

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Bearings 101: The what, where, whys and hows

• Definition: A bearing is a device that allows free movement between two connected machine parts.
  – Allows one part to turn while the other remains stationary (e.g. wheel vs. car frame, propeller vs. airplane wing).
  – Must operate with low friction and no wear.
  – Be able to withstand severe loads.
  – Ubiquitous (cars, planes, washing machines, spacecraft, pumps, fans, computer disk drives, roller skates and bicycles).

• Commonly rely on balls rolling between tracks (races).

• Typically made from hard, stiff steel.
Bearing Material: State-of-Art (SOA)
(Current suite of candidates is severely limited)

- Four general types of bearing materials:
  - Steels (Corrosion resistant steels, martensitic, austenitic)
  - Ceramics (Si$_3$N$_4$ balls + steel races, a.k.a., hybrid bearings)
  - Superalloys (e.g., jet turbine blade alloys)
  - Non-ferrous alloys (bronze, nylon etc.)

- Each of these has inherent shortcomings:
  - Hard steels are prone to rusting (even “stainless steels” like 440C)
  - Superalloys and austenitic stainless steels (304ss) are soft.
  - Ceramics have thermal expansion mismatch and dent steel races
  - Non-Ferrous materials are weak and lack temperature capabilities

- No known bearing material blends all the desired attributes:
  - High hardness, corrosion immunity, toughness, surface finish, electrical conductivity, non-magnetic, manufacturability, etc.
New approach: 60NiTi-Superelastic
(Hard but resilient material based upon shape memory alloys)

- **60NiTi Basics: market name NiTiNOL 60**
  - Invented by W.J. Buehler (late 1950’s) at the Naval Ordinance Laboratory (NiTiNOL stands for Nickel-Titanium Naval Ordinance Lab).
  - Contains 60 wt% Nickel and 40 wt% Titanium
  - 60NiTi is not a metal or a ceramic: a weakly ordered inter-metallic compound.
  - A close cousin to the shape memory alloy, NiTiNOL 55, but 60NiTi is dimensionally stable.
  - 60NiTi is bearing hard (Rockwell C60) but only half as stiff as steel.
  - Buehler found 60NiTi too difficult to manufacture but modern (ceramic) processing methods enable 60NiTi bearings with remarkable properties.
Contact Engineering:
(60NiTi’s properties affect contact stresses)

• When hard surfaces contact
  – Forces are transmitted at small, concentrated contact points (Hertz).
  – Resulting stresses cause deformations that help “spread the load”.
  – Contact area is a function of the geometry, material stiffness and load.
  – High stiffness (modulus) inhibits deformations leading to small contact area and high stresses (contrast with a tire contacting the ground).

• Hertz stresses are a function of load, radii of surfaces and elastic moduli.
• High stresses lead to dents especially on race surfaces.
• Understanding how materials properties affect race denting requires brief tutorial on stress and strain.
• Deformation is proportional to the elastic modulus (stiffness), not hardness.
• Length is regained when load is removed (elastic) just like a spring.
• If load exceeds yield (plastic) permanent length reduction (dent) occurs.
Permanent deformation (dent) begins

**Slope** $\gamma_{\text{REX}20}$ is 234 GPa

**Slope** $\gamma_{\text{440C/52100}}$ is 205 GPa

**Slope** $\gamma_{\text{Ti-6V-4Al}}$ is 113 GPa

Conventional Metals: Elastic Behavior
60NiTi: Stress-Strain Behavior

Slope $E_{60\text{NiTi}}$ is 95 GPa

$\sigma$, stress, GPa

$\varepsilon$, strain, %

- 440c or 52100 Bearing Steel
- Ti-6V-4Al
- REX20 Steel
- 60NiTi ($E=95\text{GPa}$)

$60\text{NiTi}$ (E=95GPa)
Low Modulus + Hard: A Technical Opportunity

• Surprising and relevant behavior:
  – It is contrary to a century of experience with hard bearing materials!
  – Hard bearing materials are stiff and unforgiving and yield after small deformations.
  – Small contact points result in high stress and damage even under modest loads.
  – Brinell denting test can quantify resilience effect.

Balls touch races at small points causing race surface dents
Dents on race surface cause rough running and premature failure
Resilience: Can 60NiTi withstand high dent loads? (Static denting behavior)

- 60NiTi dent resistance
  - Threshold load to damage
  - Critical to launch vehicles and aircraft
Dent Depth vs. Hertz Contact Stress
(12.7 mm diameter Si$_3$N$_4$ ball against 60NiTi plate)

Quiet Running Dent Depth Limit
(dp/D = 0.00005)
60NiTi combines high hardness, reduced stiffness and superelasticity to increase load capacity over other steels dramatically. Immunity to rust is an added bonus!
Damage Threshold Load Capacity: Comparison
(1/2” Diameter ball pressed into plate)

Indent test

Low modulus + high hardness + superelasticity = extreme load capacity
Now the material is ready for shaping into bearing races.
Next Step: Heat treating the races to increase hardness.
**Bearing Manufacturing: Heat treatment**

*Unrestrained Races Distorted*

- Inconel race fixtures  
  (vented to allow quenching)

- Process yields flat, round, hardened races

*Final steps include finish grind, polish and assembly.*
Pathfinder Bearing Manufacturing

Finished 60NiTi-Hybrid Bearing

Manufacturing Process is now proven. Does the bearing actually work?
ISS DA Centrifuge Bearings: 60NiTi Application

Hub side Motor side
Centrifuge Driver rotor: gear - motor side
Compressor Driven rotor: gear - motor side

Drive Motor
Pulleys
Tensioner and Compound
Bearing Testing: (Warm, wet, slow conditions)

Speed, load, configuration, temperature and moisture match ISS application.
Bearing Testing:
(Warm, wet, slow conditions)

Lab Configuration of DA Urine Processor

Short term (20 hour) tests run to prove operations.
DA Bearing: 60NiTi-Hybrid (50mm)

Post-Test Steel vs. 60NiTi-Hybrid

Test Results: 60NiTi bearings turn but don’t rust!
Take Away: 60NiTi is a bearing material!

• Using modern materials and processing methods, 60NiTi can be manufactured into precision bearings.
• Good tribology and corrosion behavior.
• High hardness with low modulus and extremely high “super” elasticity are an unusual and valuable combination of characteristics with major implications to bearing technology.
• Leads to much more robust bearings and mechanical systems. Ideal for industrial, marine, spacecraft and aero bearings and components.
Fe-C system has yielded literally thousands of alloys and variants following centuries of development.

NiTi explorations to date have been limited to very narrow region.

Though much more R&D remains to commercialize 60NiTi and other superelastic intermetallic materials for use in bearings, gears and other mechanical systems, early indications are very promising.
Thank You!
Space Tribology Challenges on-board the International Space Station (ISS)

The Ultimate Space Technology Development Platform

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February 25th, 2015
ISS-Background:

- International Space Station (ISS)
  - Solar powered laboratory platform
  - Low earth orbit (~250 miles above surface)
  - One complete orbit takes 90 minutes
  - Solar panels continually rotate to track the sun and keep the station “facing the ground”.
  - Unique up-mass/down-mass opportunities for research and development.
ISS-Background: Environment

- **ISS provides Jekyll/Hyde zero-g environment**
  - **Outside ISS**: hard space vacuum, atomic oxygen and UV radiation exposure, -100 to +100°C temperature swings.
  - **Inside ISS**: Nominal earth atmosphere, stringent health/safety requirements, unique tribology challenges (e.g., life support system machines).
- **General**: Zero-g thwarts normal fluid flows (convection, drainage, etc.),
ISS-Background: Key References

- Excellent Recent Space Tribology Topical Review:
ISS-Background: Key References

- Foundational ISS Tribology Papers:
ISS-Environment: Tribology Impact

- ISS provides Jekyll/Hyde zero-g environment
  - **Outside ISS:** Extensive use of vacuum compatible grease, solid film lubricants, radiation shielding.
  - **Inside ISS:** Grease, PTFE based solid lubricants, fire/toxicity/odor concerns.
  - **General:** Wear debris minimization and control, maintenance-free are key drivers. Active thermal control/cooling is norm.
MISSE-7: ISS Tribology Experiments

ISS Orbits

Eight POD units in MISSE Rack

Candidate space lubricants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disk sample/coating</th>
<th>Ball material</th>
<th>Disk substrate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RAM</td>
<td>440C</td>
<td>304 Stainless Steel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoS_2/Au/Sb_2O_3</td>
<td>440C</td>
<td>304 Stainless Steel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YSZ/Au/MoS_2/C</td>
<td>440C</td>
<td>Bulk PTFE/Al_2O_3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTFE/nano-Al_2O_3</td>
<td>440C</td>
<td>Bulk PTFE/Al_2O_3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold</td>
<td>Ruby</td>
<td>Bulk gold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wake</td>
<td>440C</td>
<td>304 Stainless Steel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoS_2/Sb_2O_3/Graphite</td>
<td>440C</td>
<td>304 Stainless Steel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTFE/nano-Al_2O_3</td>
<td>440C</td>
<td>Bulk PTFE/Al_2O_3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YSZ/Au/MoS_2/C</td>
<td>440C</td>
<td>304 Stainless Steel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DLC/SiO-doped</td>
<td>440C</td>
<td>304 Stainless Steel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pin-on-disk tribometer unit

- Univ. of FL (Krick & Sawyer)
ISS: Layout, scale and scope

- Is large, ~100 meters long, stiff backbone truss, terminated by Solar Panels (PV) array “wings”.
- Many moving mechanisms and systems.
- Two specific tribology problems epitomize the challenges.
ISS: Tribology Challenge Examples

- **SARJ Bearing Failure:**
  - In space environment outside.
  - Continuous slow rotation.
  - Vital to ISS operation. Failure not an option.

- **ECLSS Distillation Assembly:**
  - Inside ISS, warm, wet, corrosive environment.
  - Intermittent use.
  - Changes/trials possible.
ISS: Layout and terminology

- Truss has two sides, port and starboard.
SARJ Background-ISS

- Basic SARJ functional operation
  - SARJs must be stiff, smooth and reliable.
  - SARJs are halted during EVAs and shuttle docking
SARJ Requirements

• SARJs are required:
  • Last thirty years without maintenance
  • Cause no vibrations
  • Be replaceable and redundant
  • Operate in the vacuum of space bombarded by atomic oxygen and possibly micrometeorite impact.

• SARJs are large, unique mechanisms
  • Cannot be fully and accurately tested on the ground.
SARJ Hardware

- 10 foot diameter bearing comprised from two rings (races) in a side-by-side arrangement.
- Incorporates ring gear drive mechanism
- Includes centrally located slip ring to transmit power and data to habitation modules.
SARJ Hardware

- SARJs:
  - Design sounds simple but is truly complex.

“Hula Hoops” are really called Race Rings and are joined to each other by a dozen arms called trundles.
SARJ Hardware

- SARJ Skeleton:
  - Animated graphic (courtesy CSA) shows the race rings and trundle arms clearly.
SARJ Basic Operation

- One ring stays fixed and serves as clamp surface for trundle arms.
- The other race ring freely rotates through rollers found on the other end of the trundle arms.
SARJ Basic Operation

- In truth, the race rings differ from hula hoops.
- They are nitride treated hardened stainless steel, not plastic.
- They have a triangular cross section upon which the trundle rollers ride.
SARJ Basic Operation

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- They are nitride treated hardened stainless steel, not plastic.
- They have a triangular cross section upon which the trundle rollers ride.
SARJ Basic Operation

- The trundle arms are the most complex SARJ component.
- The clamp ensures exacting alignment.
- The rollers and swivel housings accommodate thermal distortions, maintain preload and ensure free motion of moving race ring.
Trundle Arm “as-installed”

- Clamped to right side race ring.
- Roller housings “nestle” moving race ring on left.
Identified Failure Modes: (Mitigation approaches)

- Rolling contact fatigue spalling (pitting) of rollers and race rings
  - Super-hard, long life materials (300+ year fatigue life)
- Seizure of bearings located inside each roller
  - Back-up bushings and rotation indicators
- Atomic oxygen-radiation degradation
  - Insulation blankets
- Micrometeorite strikes
  - Shielding critical areas
- FOD jams and interferences
  - Controlled assembly to minimize potential
- Drive gear wear
  - Accelerated life test conducted
- Drive motor failure
  - Redundant drives provided.
Operational History: (Build Timeline)

- Structural Test Article: STA (very first SARJ) built in 1995
  - Proved out design, verified operation and endured gear life test
  - Tested in air, not vacuum
  - Performance matched models
- Port SARJ build followed STA using same design
  - Tested in air and vacuum in abbreviated test program
  - Behavior matched STA.
- Starboard SARJ built last using same design as port and STA
  - Tested only in air
  - Exhibited 30% higher drag torque than port and STA
  - Drag was “out of family” but well within margins
Operational History: (What Happened?)

- Port launched, installed and began rolling in December 2006.
- Starboard SARJ launched, installed and began rolling in June 2007.
- By July 2007 drag torque began to rise.
Operational History: (What Happened?)

- By October 2007 torque levels and noise became alarming.
- In November 2007 the starboard SARJ was shut down.
Operational History: (What was response?)

- Station managers tried to narrow down possible problems
  - Eliminated thermal effects and software problems
  - Cursory review of pre-launch images looking for obvious interference
- Approved EVA to conduct visual inspection
  - No visual damage observed on and around SARJ.
  - Astronauts given go ahead to remove one cover panel to "peek inside".
- What they found was not pretty.
Operational History: (What they found)

- Damage found on one (outer canted 45 race surface) surface.
- Wear debris was everywhere...samples collected.

New raceway surface, and drive gear

Race ring surface severely cratered

Shards of wear particles magnetically attached to roller housings
EVA Impact: (What we now understood)

- Drive gear teeth looked fine.
- No interference from adjacent SARJ parts.
- Nothing found that shouldn’t have been there (no loose nuts, bolts, etc.)
- Damage uniformly spread over single entire race surface.
- Nitride layer on race surface bore brunt of damage.
- No scoring or drag marks, all rollers still rolling.
- No foreign matter (other than SARJ component wear particles) observed.
- No localized initiation site found (micrometeorite strike).
Lacking a quick and obvious answer, an investment was then made to study working port SARJ to understand why it worked starboard SARJ did not.

- EVA to inspect port SARJ.
- Forensic records review extended to port SARJ
- Key differences identified and used to formulate possible failure scenario.
- Failure scenario verified through analysis and test.
Root Cause Trundle Modeling

- Roller motions, loads and stresses modeled to better understand roller-race interactions.
  - Sophisticated ADAMS modeling
  - Yielded contact stresses within rollers, races and support structures.
- Peculiar and unexpected behavior uncovered.
Root Cause Trundle Modeling

- Modeling suggested that under certain conditions rollers can tip on edge.
  - Requires some misalignment
  - Requires friction coefficient above $\sim0.4$.

- Tipping concentrates the load onto small area leading to very high stresses
Root Cause Evidence

- Gold plating on starboard SARJ rollers didn’t stick:
  - Plating met specifications when made, peeled later.

*Note: Process used for plating identical. Major difference was port rollers used immediately after plating, Starboard rollers stored for months before use.*
Validation data for modeling

• Testing measured friction for rollers:
  • In vacuum using SARJ materials
  • With gold, w/o gold and with grease.

• Intact gold and grease both yield low friction. Rollers with no lubrication give friction well above 0.4.
Roller Miss-Tracking-Tipping Effects

- Should two rollers tip towards each other, the race can be pinched causing loads and stresses to soar.
Roller Tipping Confirmed

Inspection of hardware returned from orbit confirmed roller tipping.

- Careful wear measurements eventually done on all twelve trundles proved that rollers indeed behave in the peculiar tipping-pinching fashion predicted by model.
Inadequate lubrication of the roller-race contact, combined with a kinematic mechanism design that is vulnerable to roller tipping and high friction, led to damaging high roller-race surface forces and stresses.
SARJ Epilogue: Recovery Planned

- Ground tests and analyses showed that grease ensures low friction was an appropriate recovery path.
- STS-126 trained for SARJ repair and recovery.
SARJ Epilogue: A truly happy ending

- EVA’s in November 2008 to replace worn trundles, remove debris and grease starboard SARJ.
Operational History: ("Current" Status)

- Both SARJs were greased in November 2008.
- Port SARJ torque dropped 20%.
- Starboard SARJ rotation began in 2010 following verification ground tests.
SARJ Epilogue: A truly happy ending, 5+yr

• Current draw for the Starboard SARJ is a bit noisier than the Port SARJ, it continues to function well within limits and is getting smoother.
  • Ground tests suggest that re-lube interval is measured in years.
  • The ISS power system is fully functional.
ISS: Tribology Challenge Examples

- **SARJ Bearing Failure:**
  - In space environment outside.
  - Continuous slow rotation
  - Vital to ISS operation. Failure not an option.

- **ECLSS Distillation Assembly:**
  - Inside ISS, warm, wet, corrosive environment.
  - Intermittent use.
  - Changes/trials possible.
Superalloy Centrifuge Bearings Wear

Hub side   Motor side
Centrifuge

Driver rotor: gear - motor side
Driven rotor: gear - motor side

Compressor

Drive Motor

Pulleys
Tensioner and Compound
Technical Requirements:
(Material properties needed for bearings/components)

• Bearing and component materials must be:
  – Hard (Rockwell C58 or better)
  – Wear-resistant and compatible with existing lubricants
  – Resistant to rolling contact fatigue (RCF)
  – Fracture resistant
  – Corrosion resistant (preferably immune)
  – Low density (to reduce centripetal loads at high rpm)
  – Capable of producing ultra-smooth surface finishes
  – Dimensionally stable and easy to manufacture
Technical Challenge:
(Current suite of candidates is severely limited)

- Four general types of bearing and tribo-mechanical materials:
  - Steels (Corrosion resistant steels, martensitic, austenitic)
  - Ceramics (\(\text{Si}_3\text{N}_4\) hybrid bearings)
  - Superalloys
  - Non-ferrous alloys (bronze, nylon etc.)

- Each of these has inherent shortcomings:
  - Hard steels are prone to rusting (even "stainless steels" like 440C)
  - Superalloys and austenitic stainless steels (304ss) are soft.
  - Ceramics are non-conductive (and operate on steel raceways)
  - Non-Ferrous materials are weak and lack temperature capabilities

- No known bearing material blends all the desired attributes:
  - High hardness, corrosion immunity, toughness, surface finish, electrical conductivity, non-magnetic, manufacturability, etc.
60NiTi Basics:

- Invented by W.J. Buehler (late 1950’s) at the Naval Ordinance Laboratory (NiTiNOL stands for Nickel-Titanium Naval Ordinance Lab).
- Contains 60 wt% Nickel and 40 wt% Titanium
- 60NiTi is neither a metal nor a ceramic: a weakly ordered inter-metallic compound; a member of the super-elastic family.
- Its cousin (55NiTi), the widely used shape memory alloy, is soft and dimensionally unstable.
- The additional Ni suppresses the shape memory affect. 60NiTi is dimensionally stable.
- 60NiTi can be hardened to Rc 60+.
- 60NiTi recognized by Buehler for bearings but too difficult to manufacture using 1960’s technology.
- Modern (ceramic) processing methods now enable 60NiTi bearings with remarkable, breakthrough properties. (Patents awarded to protect IP).
**Problem:** Bearings in the ISS urine processor utilize soft superalloy races and hard ceramic balls to withstand the corrosive environment but are prone to wear and damage from assembly and shock loads.

**Approach:** Review design and engineer a corrosion proof, shock proof 60NiTi bearing that, once proven, could be a drop-in replacement.

**Status:** Team assembled. Baseline bearing designed, manufactured and tested in simulated environment. Flight bearing manufacture underway.

**Expected Payoffs:** Successful use of 60NiTi bearings on ISS will ease transfer of such technology to future terrestrial and space applications.
Centrifuge Bearing Components
50 mm Bore

Disassembled Components

• Soft (Rc 40) superalloy races used in centrifuge location for corrosion resistance
• Si$_3$N$_4$ Balls with nylon snap fit cage and grease shields
**DA Centrifuge Bearing Requirements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OD</td>
<td>75mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID</td>
<td>50mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Width</td>
<td>16mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ball Size</td>
<td>8.6mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ball Compliment</td>
<td>13 balls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ball Material</td>
<td>Si$_3$N$_4$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race Material</td>
<td>Superalloy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cage</td>
<td>Snap fit, polymer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lubricant</td>
<td>grease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ball-Race Stress Limit</td>
<td>240 Ksi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ball-Race Mean Stress</td>
<td>120 Ksi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Axial Preload</td>
<td>40 lbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radial Load (terrestrial)</td>
<td>~30 lbs/bearing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed</td>
<td>220 rpm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>65°C, acidic aqueous splash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambient Pressure</td>
<td>~8 Psia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Centrifuge bearings are in a highly corrosive but mechanically benign environment.*
### Technical Properties Comparison:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property</th>
<th>60NiTi</th>
<th>55NiTi</th>
<th>440C</th>
<th>Si₃N₄</th>
<th>M-50</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Density</td>
<td>6.7 g/cc</td>
<td>6.5 g/cc</td>
<td>7.7 g/cc</td>
<td>3.2 g/cc</td>
<td>8.0 g/cc</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hardness</td>
<td>56-62 Rc</td>
<td>35-40 Rc</td>
<td>58-62 Rc</td>
<td>1300-1500 Hv</td>
<td>60-65 Rc</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thermal Cond. W/m °K</td>
<td>~9-14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>~36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thermal Expansion</td>
<td>~11.2×10⁻⁶/°C</td>
<td>~10×10⁻⁶/°C</td>
<td>10×10⁻⁶/°C</td>
<td>2.6×10⁻⁶</td>
<td>~11×10⁻⁶/°C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnetic</td>
<td>Non</td>
<td>Non</td>
<td>Magnetic</td>
<td>Non</td>
<td>Magnetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrosion Resistance</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(in acids)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tensile/Flexural Strength</td>
<td>~1000/1500 MPa</td>
<td>~900 MPa</td>
<td>1900 MPa</td>
<td>600-1200 MPa (Bend Strength)</td>
<td>2500 MPa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young’s Modulus</td>
<td>~90-115 GPa</td>
<td>~100 GPa</td>
<td>200 GPa</td>
<td>310 GPa</td>
<td>210 GPa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poisson’s Ratio</td>
<td>~.34</td>
<td>~.34</td>
<td>.3</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fracture Toughness</td>
<td>~20</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>22 MPa/√m</td>
<td>5-7 MPa/√m</td>
<td>20-23 MPa/√m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max. Use Temp</td>
<td>~400°C</td>
<td>~400°C</td>
<td>~400°C</td>
<td>~1100°C</td>
<td>~400°C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elect. Resistivity</td>
<td>~1.04×10⁻⁶ Ω-m</td>
<td>~0.80×10⁻⁶ Ω-m</td>
<td>~0.60×10⁻⁶ Ω-m</td>
<td>Insulator</td>
<td>~0.18×10⁻⁶ Ω-m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*TBD means “to be determined”
The ability to achieve required roundness and surface finish in 60NiTi is predicated upon isotropic mechanical-physical properties of the ball blank (provided by the NASA-Abbott process).
60NiTi: Ball microstructure

Fine grain structure typical for powder metallurgy

Cross section reveals small amounts of secondary phases and is typical for PM NiTi alloys.
60NiTi exhibits slightly lower, but comparable friction to 440C. Plates were 440C in both tests.
60NiTi: Friction and lubricant life testing

- Test confirms that pure titanium and conventional alloys (Ti-6Al-4V) are poor tribological materials.
- 60NiTi exhibits lower running friction than 440C stainless steel.
- 60NiTi yields consistently longer lubricant life than 440C.
- 60NiTi is also corrosion proof, non-magnetic and electrically conductive.
Corrosion Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Weight Loss (mg)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60NiTi (pH 2)</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60NiTi (pH 6.5)</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co Alloy (pH 2)</td>
<td>0.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 50 Tool Steel (pH 2)</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• 60NiTi-Corrosion resistance of a superalloy.
• 60NiTi-Structural capability of tool steel.

All samples were soaked for 4.8 days at 60-65 °C
Technical Opportunity:
(60NiTi—a newly rediscovered alloy)

• What do we now understand about 60NiTi?
  – Favorable mechanical and physical properties that are largely independent of processing route (PM vs. casting)
  – Dimensionally stable–free from shape memory behavior
  – Excellent chemical properties (corrosion “proof”)
  – Good tribological properties (despite high Ti content)
  – Electrical conductor and non-magnetic (good for sensitive instruments and electrical machines)
  – Fairly easy to manufacture into complex shapes and components (bearing balls and races, rollers, gears etc.)
  – Only alloy known to possess all of these (and other) attributes.
Materials Properties: Dent Resistance

• 60NiTi contact behavior is surprising and relevant:
  – It is contrary to a century of experience with hard bearing materials!
  – Hard bearing materials are stiff and unforgiving and yield after small deformations.
  – Small contact points result in high stress and damage even under modest loads.
  – Brinell denting test can quantify resilience effect.

Balls touch races at small points

Meshing gear teeth are small line contacts
Contact Engineering:
(60NiTi’s properties affect contact stresses)

• When hard surfaces contact
  – Forces are transmitted at small, concentrated contact points (Hertz).
  – Resulting stresses cause deformations that help “spread the load”.
  – Contact area is a function of the geometry, material stiffness and load.
  – High stiffness (modulus) inhibits deformations leading to small contact area and high stresses (contrast with a tire contacting the ground).

• Hertz stresses are a function of load, radii of surfaces and elastic moduli.
• When stress exceeds limit, dents occur and lead to failure.
• Mechanical designs include margins for overloads or vibe-shock isolation adding weight and expense.
Brinell Test:
(Static denting behavior)

- How well does 60NiTi resist dents?
  - Brinell number
  - Threshold load to damage
Dent Depth vs. Hertz Contact Stress
(12.7 mm diameter Si$_3$N$_4$ ball against 60NiTi plate)

Quiet Running Dent Depth Limit
($dp/D = 0.00005$)

- **60NiTi**
- **440C**
- **REX 20**
Dent Depth vs. Load
(12.7 mm diameter Si₃N₄ ball against 60NiTi plate)
Damage Threshold Load Capacity: Revised
(1/2” Diameter ball pressed into plate)

Indent test

Contact Load Capacity, lbs.

Low modulus + high hardness + superelasticity = extreme load capacity
Rolling Contact Fatigue
(Updated test results: representative materials)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rod Specimen</th>
<th>Peak Contact Stress (GPa)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.7 GPa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM-60NiTi (Baseline)</td>
<td>&gt;800 hr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM-60NiTi (With inclusions)</td>
<td>131-800 hr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60NiTi (Cast &amp; hot-rolled)</td>
<td>13-800 hr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59NiTi + X alloy (Cast)</td>
<td>&gt;800 hr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59NiTi + X Alloy (Cast and extruded)</td>
<td>&gt;800 hr</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Modern bearing steels yield long life to at least 3.5GPa.
- 60NiTi begins to exhibit permanent dents at stresses above ~4.0GPa.
- 60NiTi’s life limiting fatigue stress is lower (~2) but is adequate for some applications. RCF results highly dependent upon material quality.
Status Report: 60NiTi Confirmed Attributes

• Data shows that 60NiTi is a good tribological material
• 60NiTi has excellent corrosion resistance.
• 60NiTi has good Rockwell C hardness.
• 60NiTi has good dimensional stability and polishes to a smooth surface finish.
• RCF data suggest good life if continuous stresses are modest (less than 300Ksi).
• Static load capacity enhanced by high hardness, low modulus and superelasticity.
• Ideal initial application would be chemically aggressive, exposed to shock loads but otherwise mechanically benign.
Expanded Drawing of DA Centrifuge Bearing

Bearing visualization aids design and manufacturing
Final steps include hardening (heat treat), finish grind and polish.
Pathfinder Bearing Manufacturing: Race Turning Details

Turning tools, parameters and cutting fluid data shared with industry.
Pathfinder Bearing Manufacturing: (Heat treatment development)

Unrestrained Races Distorted

Inconel race fixtures  
(vented to allow quenching)

Process yields flat, round, hardened races

Final steps include finish grind, polish and assembly.
DA Bearing: 60NiTi-Hybrid (50mm)

Ready for Testing
Bearing Testing:
(Warm, wet, slow conditions)

Speed, load, configuration, temperature and moisture match ISS..
Bearing Testing:
(Warm, wet, slow conditions)

Lab Configuration of DA Urine Processor

Short term (20 hour) tests run to prove operations.
60NiTi bearings ran quietly and smoothly throughout the tests.
Baseline tool steel bearings began to run roughly and make noise after one-hour due to corrosion.
Corrosion resistant steels (like 440C) would be expected to survive such short duration tests in the presence of pure water without problems.
DA Bearing: 60NiTi-Hybrid (50mm)

Post-Test Steel vs. 60NiTi-Hybrid

Test Results: 60NiTi bearings turn but don’t rust!
NiTi Bearing Take Away:

• Good tribology and corrosion behavior.
• High hardness with low modulus and extremely high “super” elasticity are an unusual and valuable combination of characteristics with major implications to bearing technology.
• Employing low modulus, super-elastic, hard materials can lead to much more robust bearings and mechanical systems. Ideal for industrial, marine, spacecraft and aero bearings and components.
• Though much more R&D remains to commercialize 60NiTi and other superelastic intermetallic materials for use in bearings, gears and other mechanical systems, early indications are very promising.
ISS Tribology: Space Technology Pull

- Space imposes unique tribological challenges:
  - Vacuum, radiation and temperature extremes outside
  - Stringent safety and performance requirements inside
  - Loss of gravity enhanced effects (convective cooling, fluid drainage)
  - Novel machinery and systems (life support, exercise machines, etc.)

- ISS is the ultimate space development tool: (~3x of steel)
  - Deep support for developing advanced technologies
  - High stakes and payoffs
  - Cache of space is highly motivating
  - Ability to make and try (up-mass & down-mass)
  - ISS is viewed as “test lab located 250 miles away”

- Technologies developed for ISS provide terrestrial solutions:
  - Space mechanism “solutions” often find terrestrial applications (hybrid Si3N4 bearings, fluorocarbon oils, NiTi bearings)
  - Closed loop water and air purification systems (valves, pumps, bearings)
  - Expect the unexpected.
Thank You!