Physical and Mechanical Properties of LoVAR: a new lightweight particle-reinforced Fe-36Ni alloy

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Agenda

• Background
• Initial Trials
• Process Route
• Mechanical & Physical Properties
• Summary
Background

• Because of its low thermal expansion, alloy Fe-36Ni finds extensive use in spacecraft structures that require high pointing accuracy and dimensional stability, in spite of its density (8.1g/cm³).

• For Example:
  – JWST uses 429kg
  – Kepler FPA 20kg

• However, Payload mass is a direct driver of launch cost!

• So there is a direct need to light-weight this alloy while maintaining its favourable low-expansion properties.
Initial Blending Trials
Fe-36Ni+20Si₃N₄

Necklacing of Si₃N₄ around Fe-36Ni powders

Agglomeration of Si₃N₄ to produce millimeter sized agglomerates
Process Route

Processing ↔ Structure ↔ Properties ↔ Performance

- Fe-36Ni Powder
- Si₃N₄ Powder
- Mixing
- Mechanical Alloying
- Hot Isostatic Pressing
- Open Die Forging
Mechanically Alloyed Fe-36Ni+20Si₃N₄
Tensile Properties

![Graph showing stress-strain relationship for LoVAR and Invar® materials.](image-url)

- **Stress, MPa**
  - 0
  - 100
  - 200
  - 300
  - 400
  - 500
  - 600
- **Strain, %**
  - 0.0%
  - 1.0%
  - 2.0%
  - 3.0%
  - 4.0%
  - 5.0%

**Lines:**
- **LoVAR**
- **Invar®**
Thermal Expansion

![Graph showing thermal expansion vs. temperature for different materials: 7A1, 32-5 Super Invar, and LoVAR.](image)

- **Thermal Expansion**: \( \Delta L/L_0, \text{ppm} \)
- **Temperature**: K

**Materials**:
- **7A1**
- **32-5 Super Invar**
- **LoVAR**
## Secant CTE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alloy</th>
<th>Room Temperature CTE (ppm/K)</th>
<th>Secant CTE 10°C to 30°C (ppm/K)</th>
<th>Secant CTE -60°C to 60°C (ppm/K)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LoVAR</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Super-Invar</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invar® (7A1)</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>1.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
 Isothermal Dimensional Stability at 80°C

\[ \frac{\Delta L}{L_0}, \text{ppm} \]

- LoVAR
- 7A1
- 7A3
- Commercial Invar ®

Time, hours

0 40 80 120 160
## Isothermal Dimensional Stability at 80°C

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample ID</th>
<th>Dimensional Change (ppm)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LoVAR</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invar ® (7A1)</td>
<td>4.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invar ® (7A3)</td>
<td>2.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invar ® (commercial hot finished rod)</td>
<td>38.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** LoVAR greatly reduces the isothermal time-dependent length change that has been one of the main difficulties using Invar® in optical structures.
Summary

• We have described the early stage development of a new MMC that we call LoVAR.
• It embodies a low CTE and excellent dimensional stability.
• Materion and GSFC will continue to exploit the alloy design paradigm:

  Processing ←→ Structure ←→ Properties ←→ Performance

  To further enhance specific stiffness and stability.
• This will include a CTE matching capability.