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(54) **IRON NITRIDE MATERIALS AND
MAGNETS INCLUDING IRON NITRIDE
MATERIALS**

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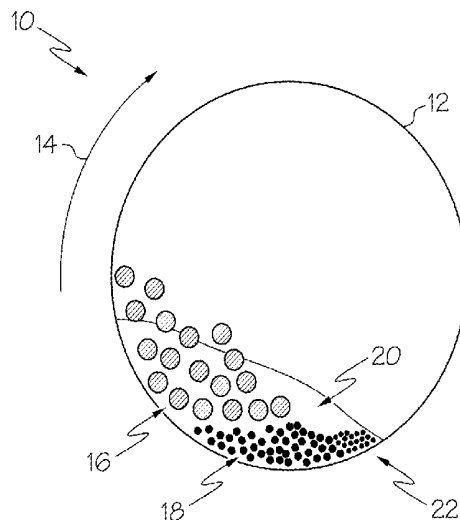
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

The disclosure describes magnetic materials including iron nitride, bulk permanent magnets including iron nitride, techniques for forming magnetic materials including iron nitride, and techniques for forming bulk permanent magnets including iron nitride.

39 Claims, 22 Drawing Sheets



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(58) **Field of Classification Search**

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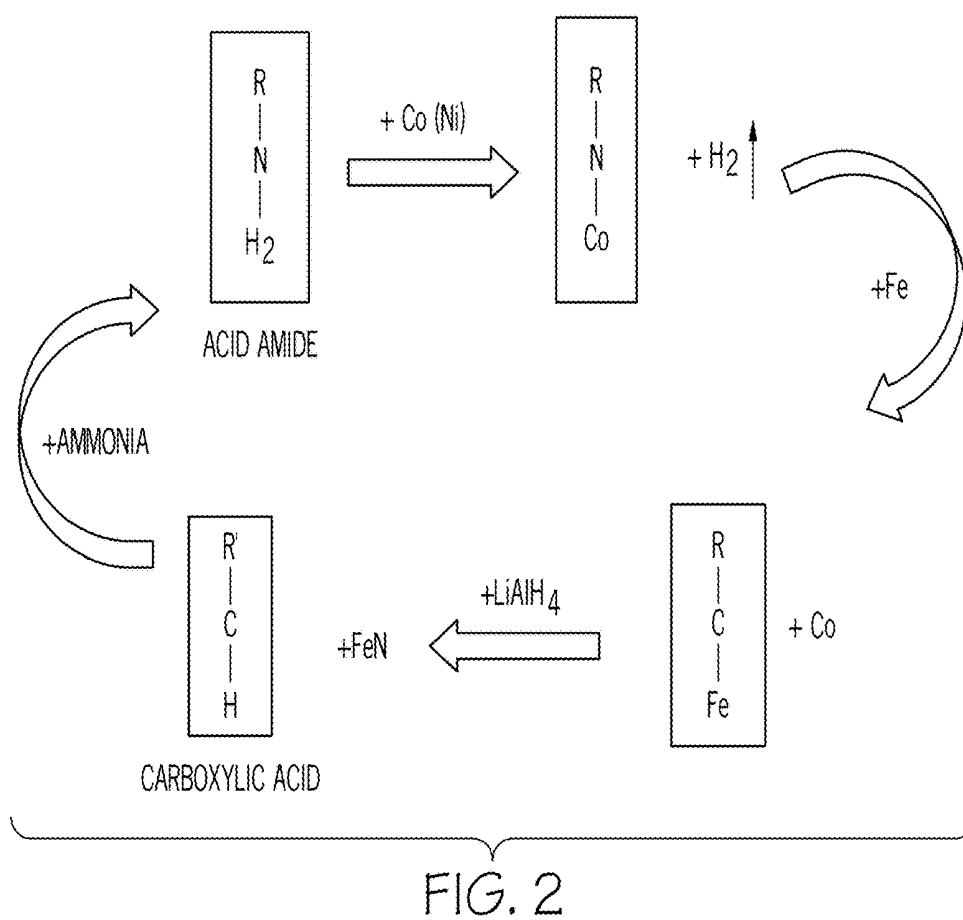
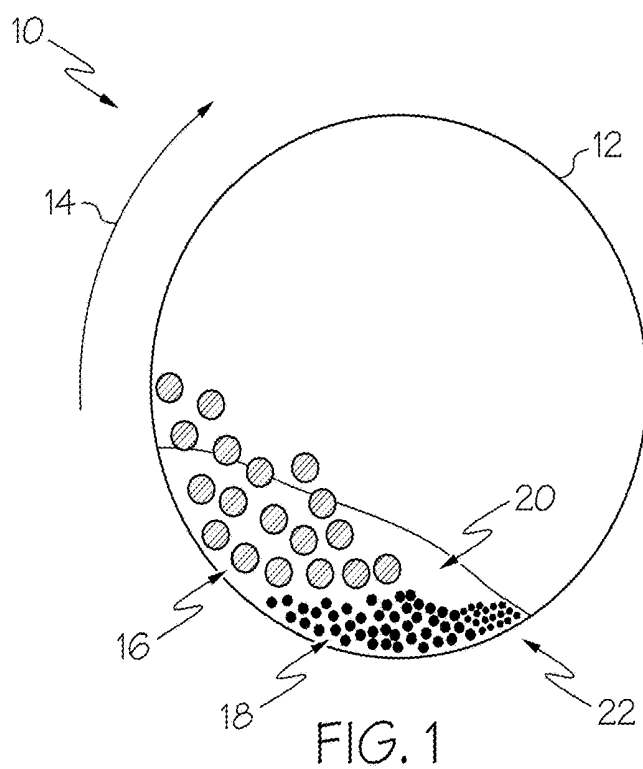
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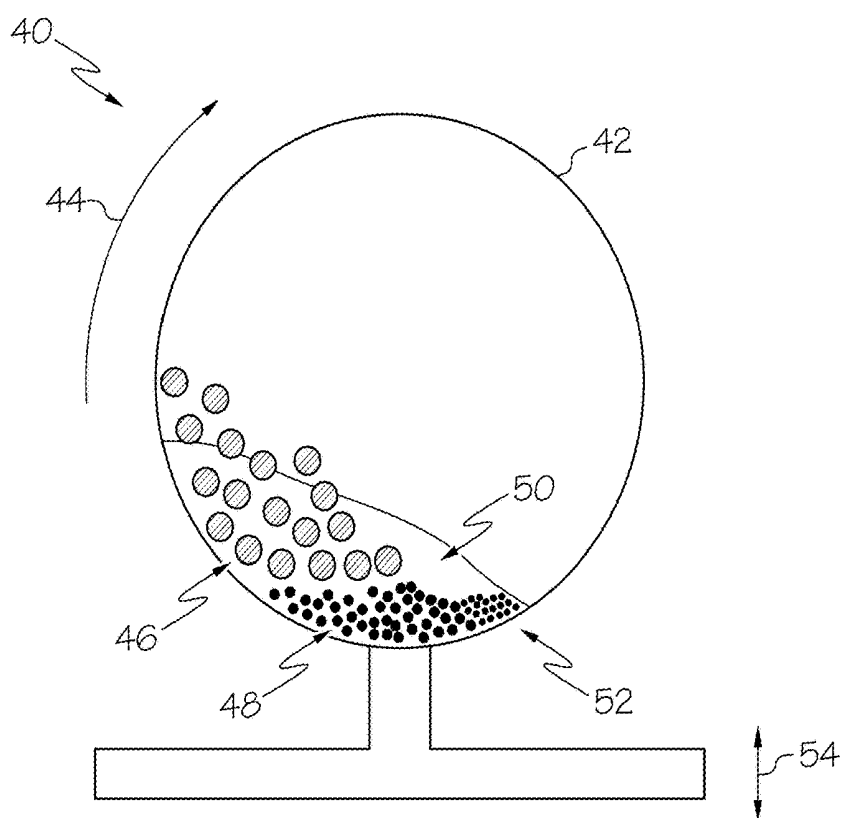
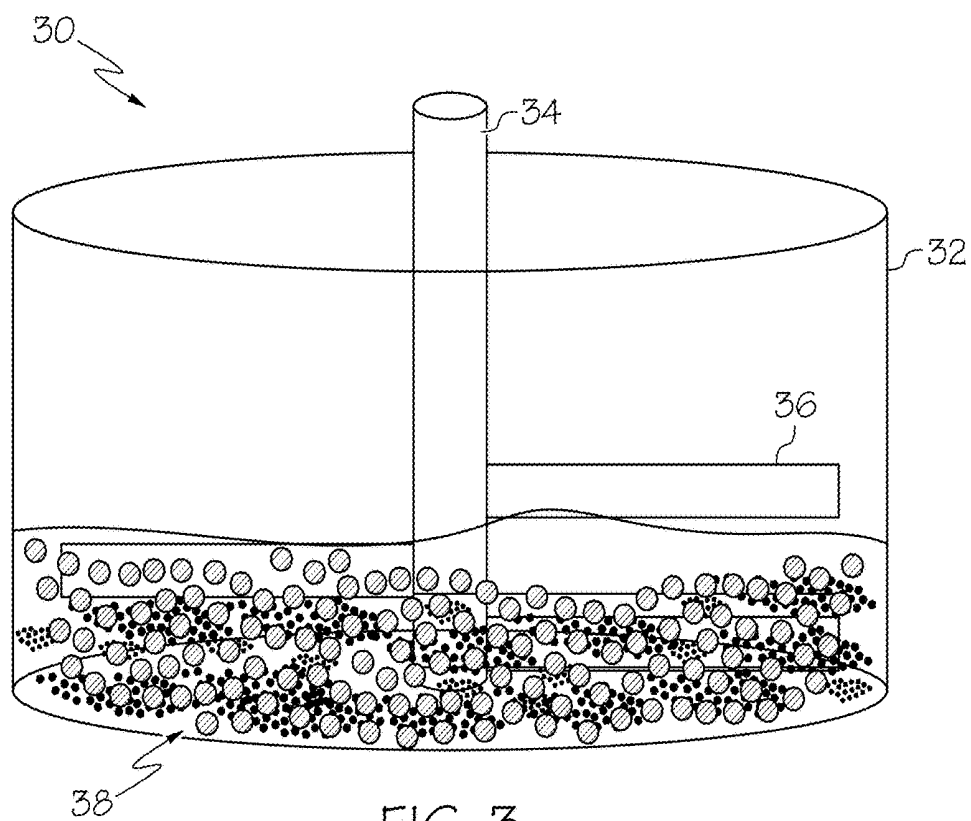
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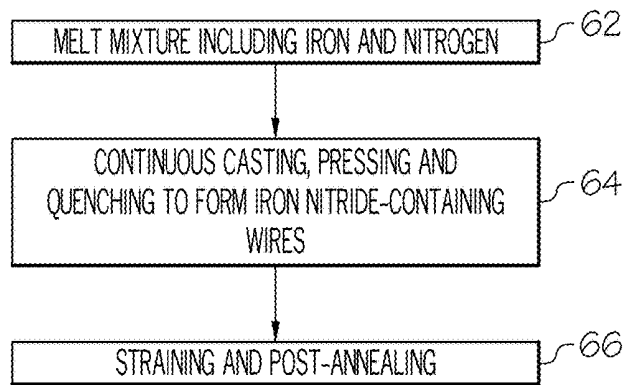


FIG. 5

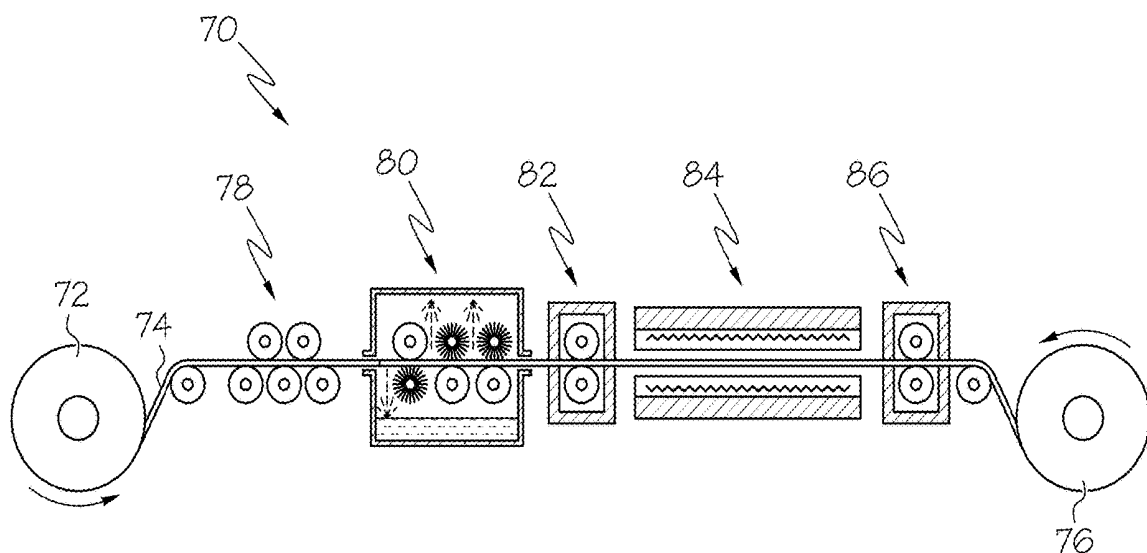
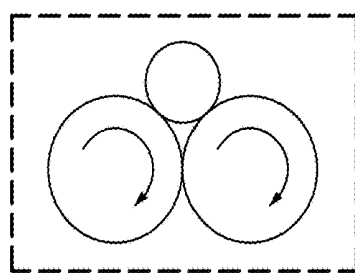
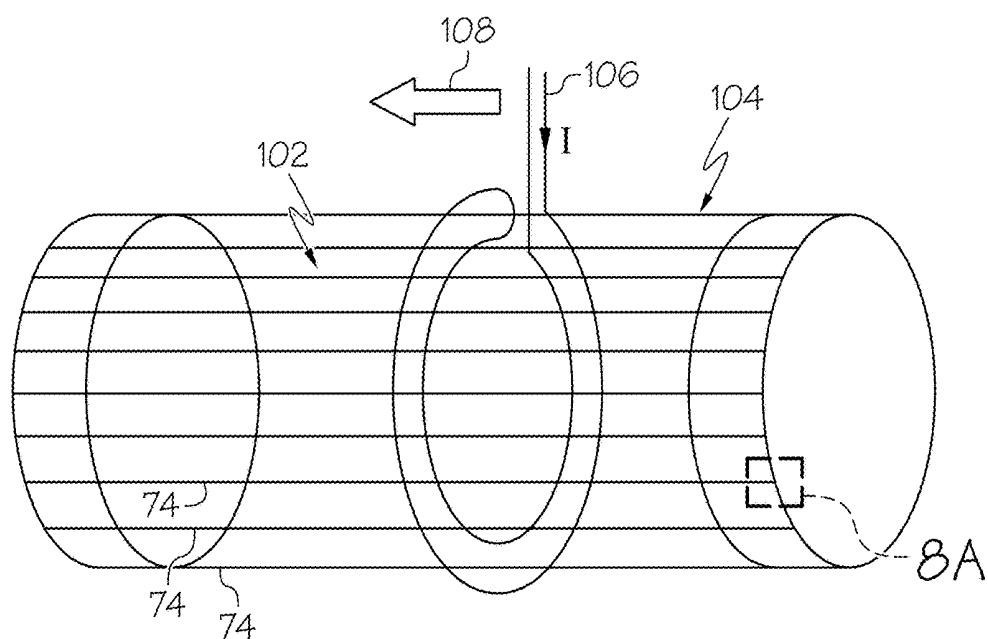
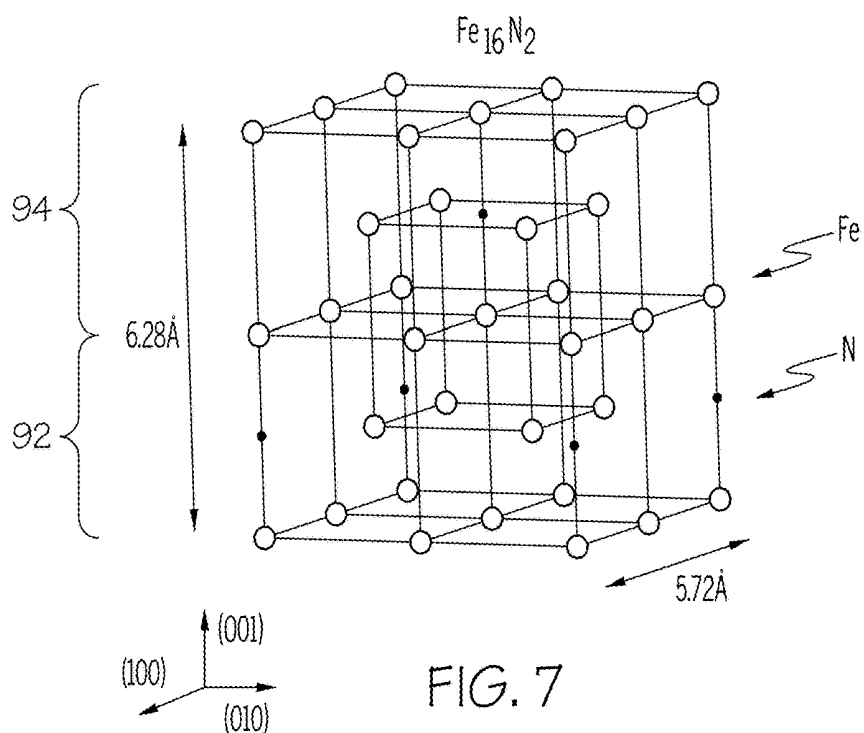


FIG. 6



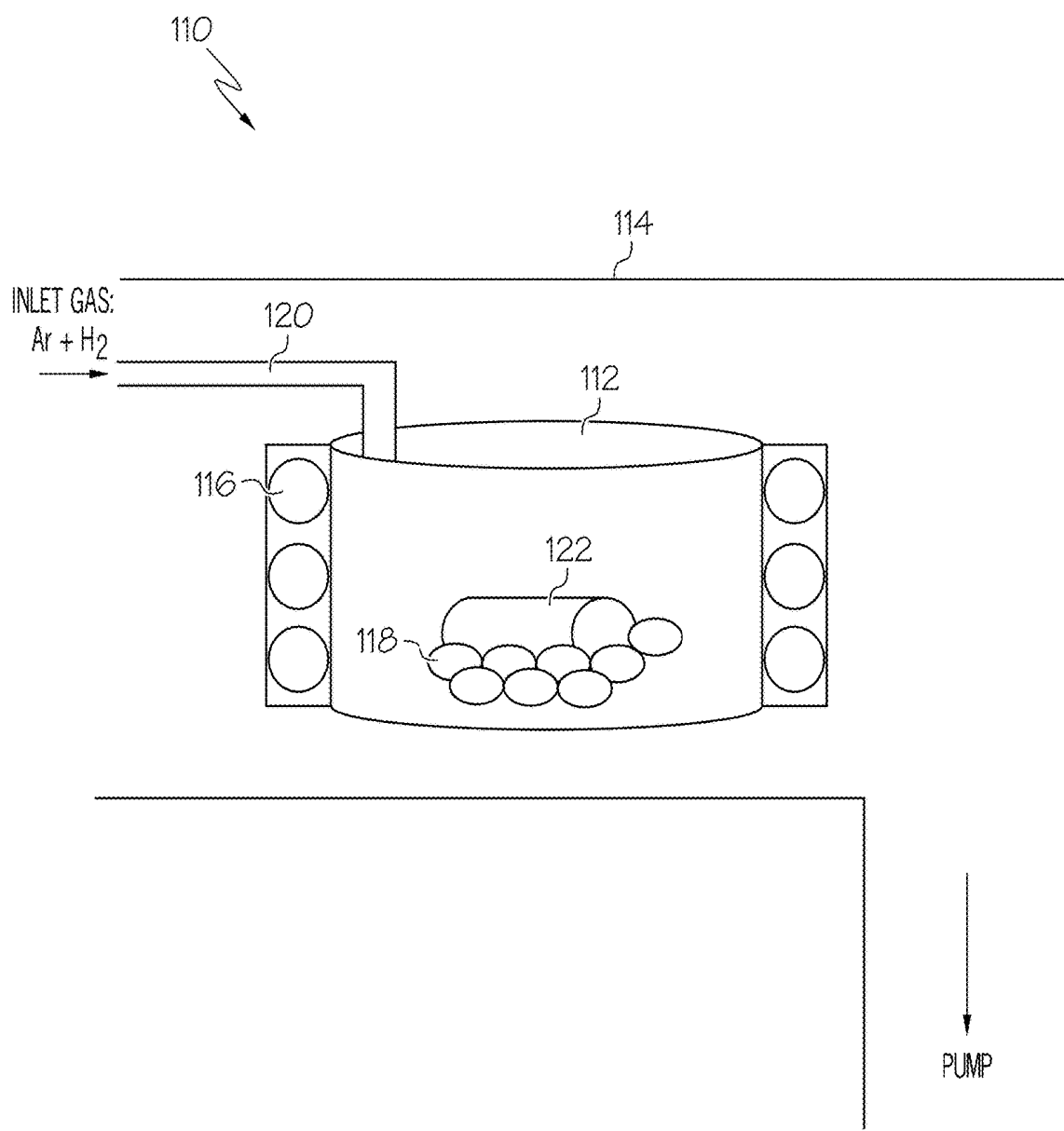


FIG. 9

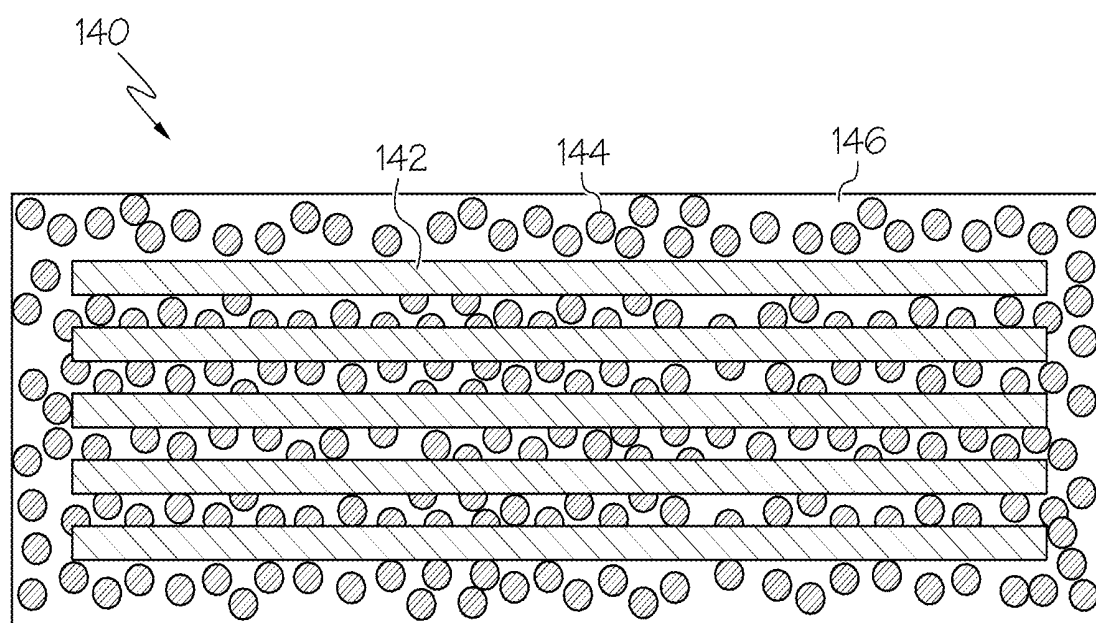
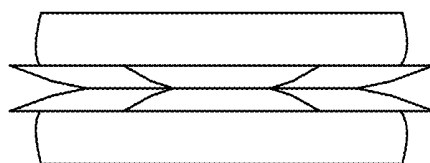
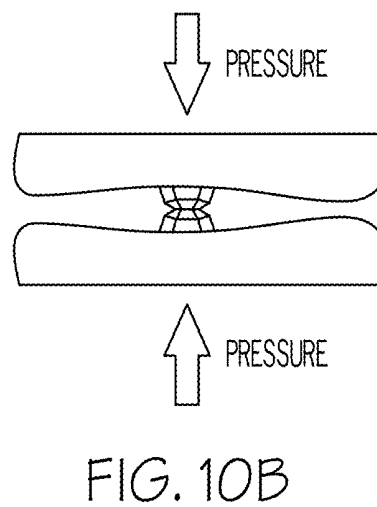
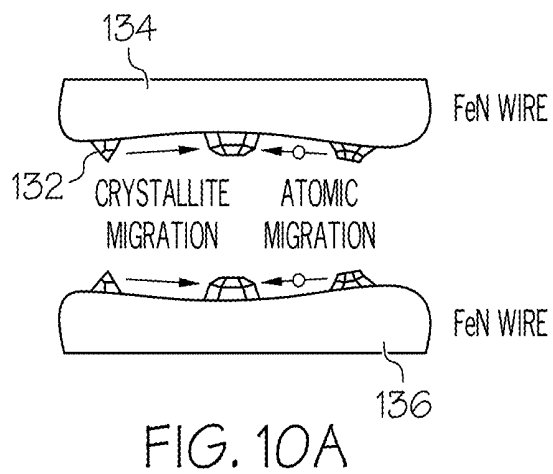


FIG. 11

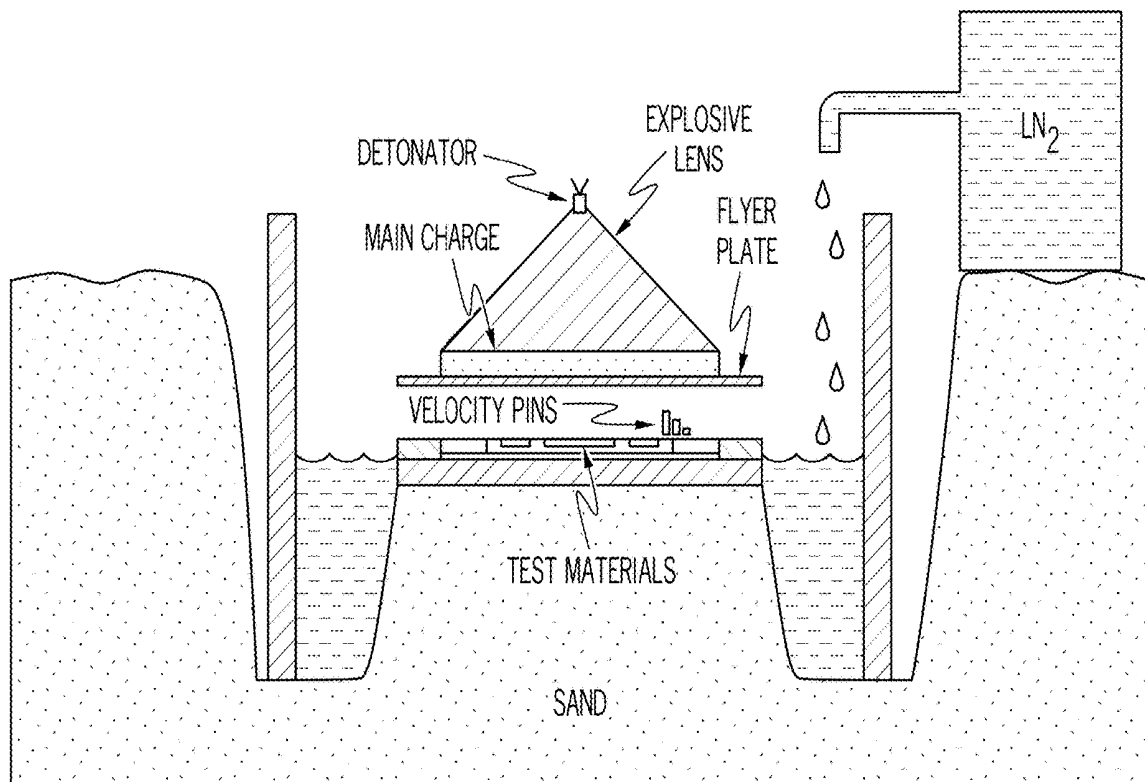


FIG. 12

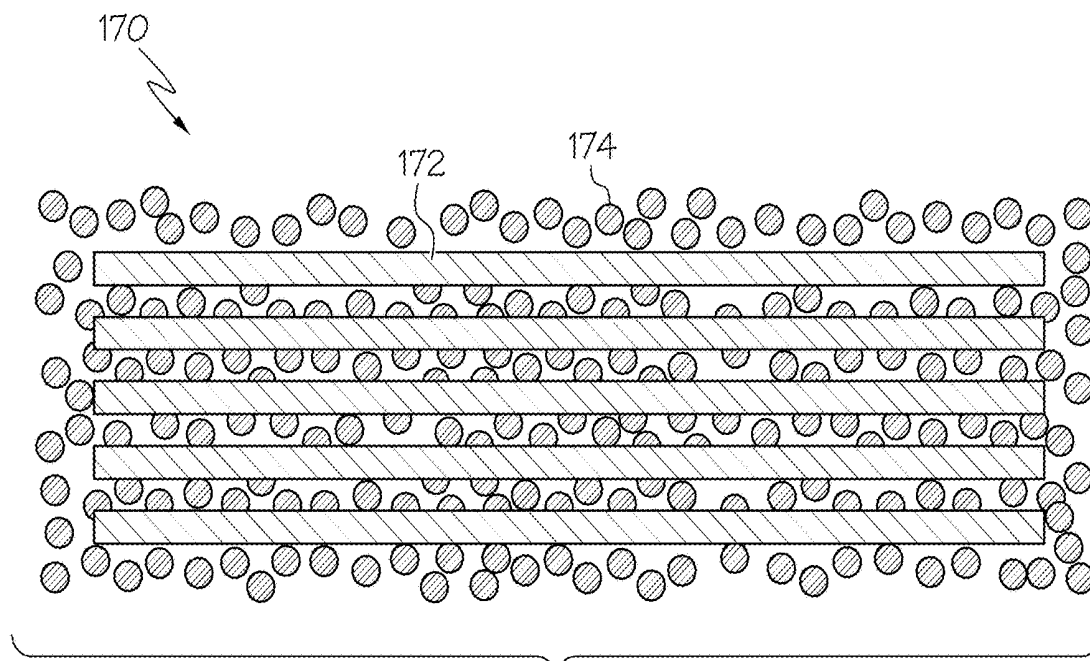


FIG. 13

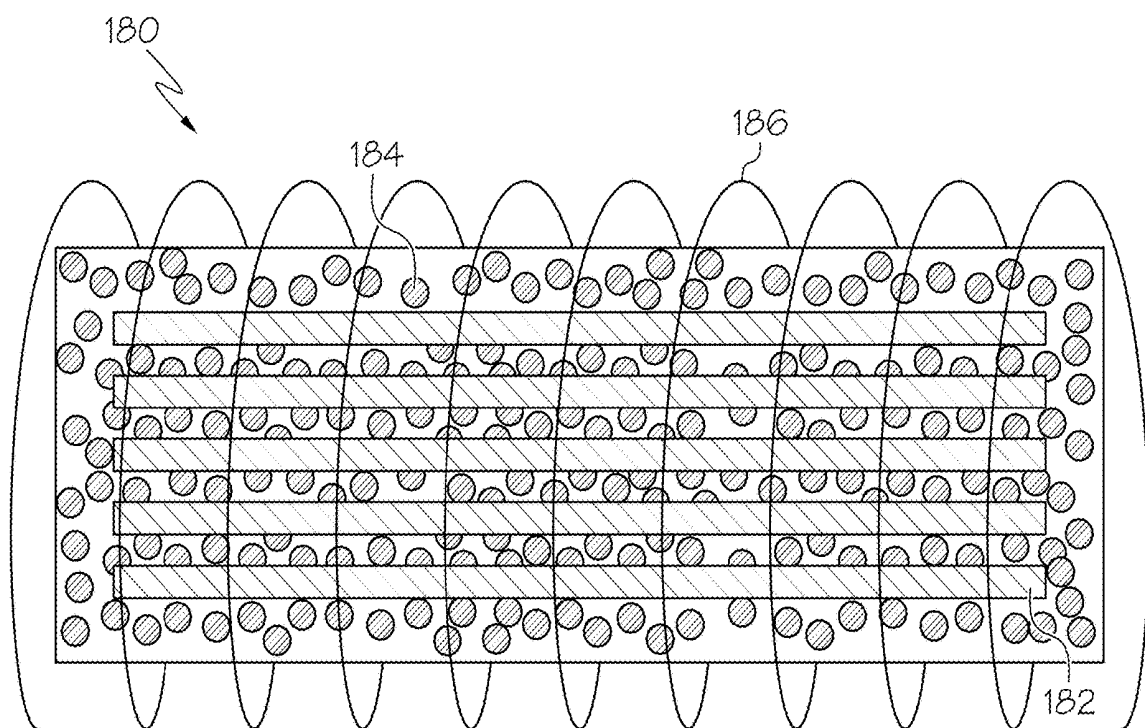


FIG. 14

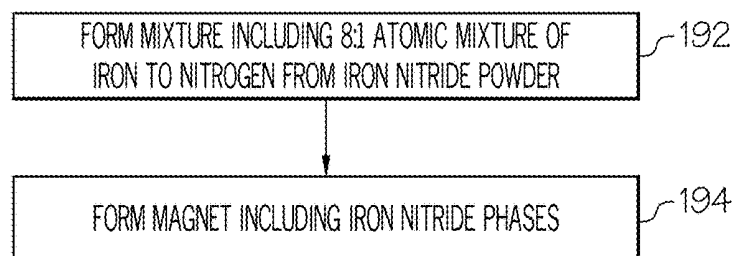


FIG. 15

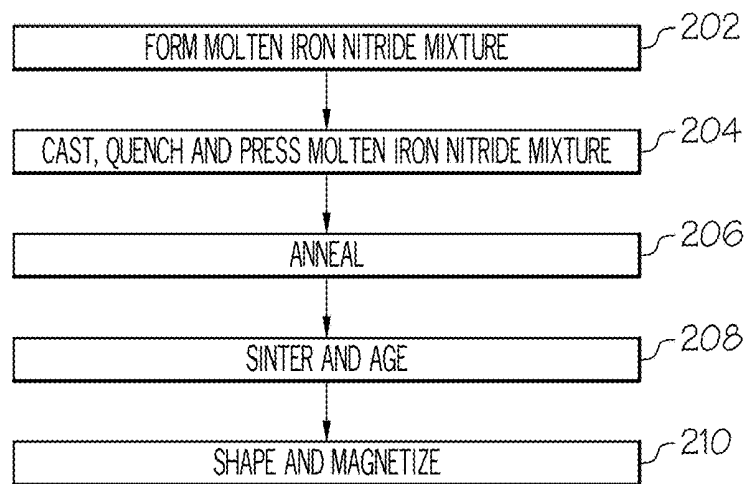


FIG. 16

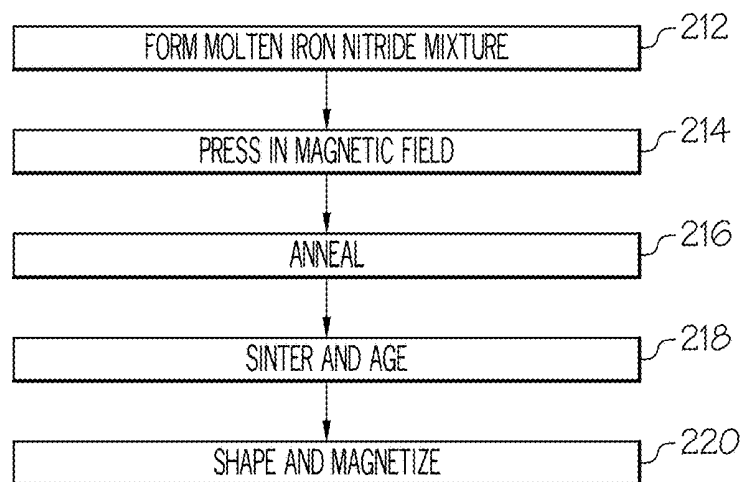


FIG. 17

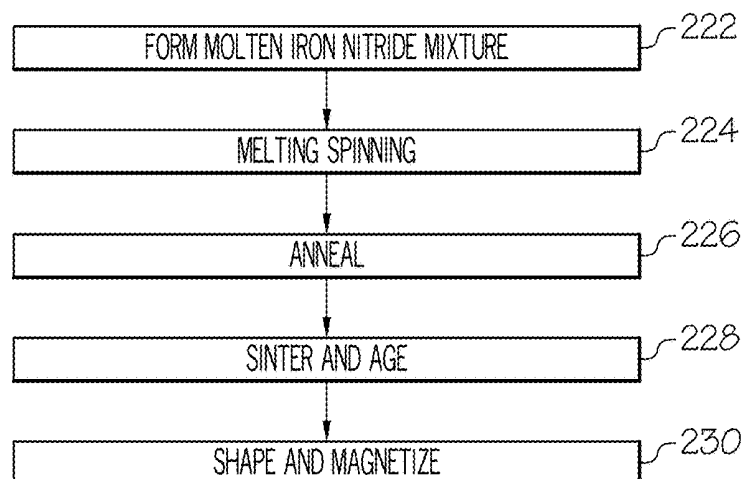
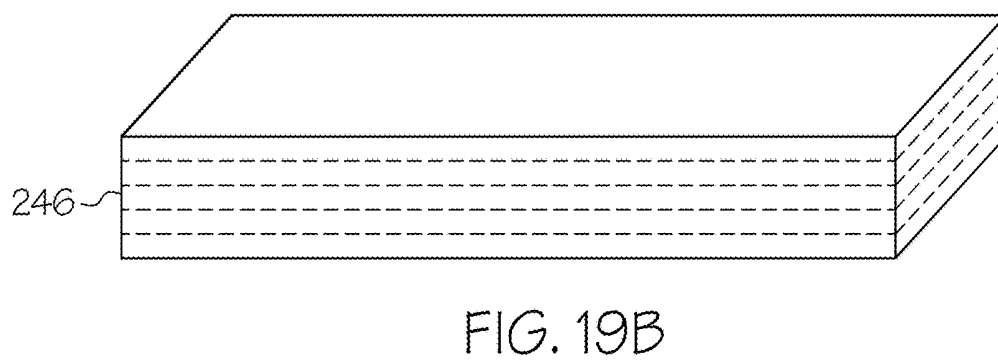
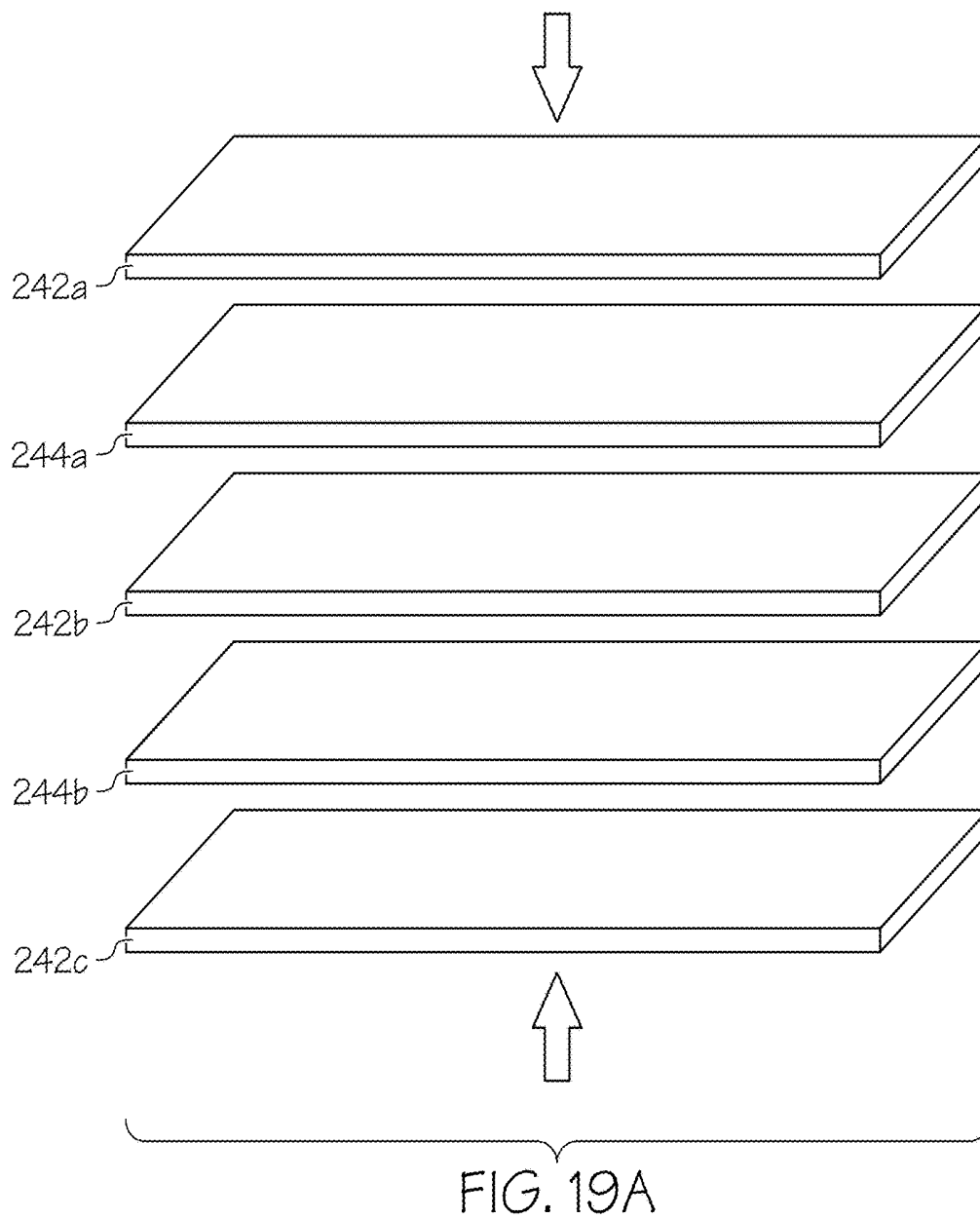


FIG. 18



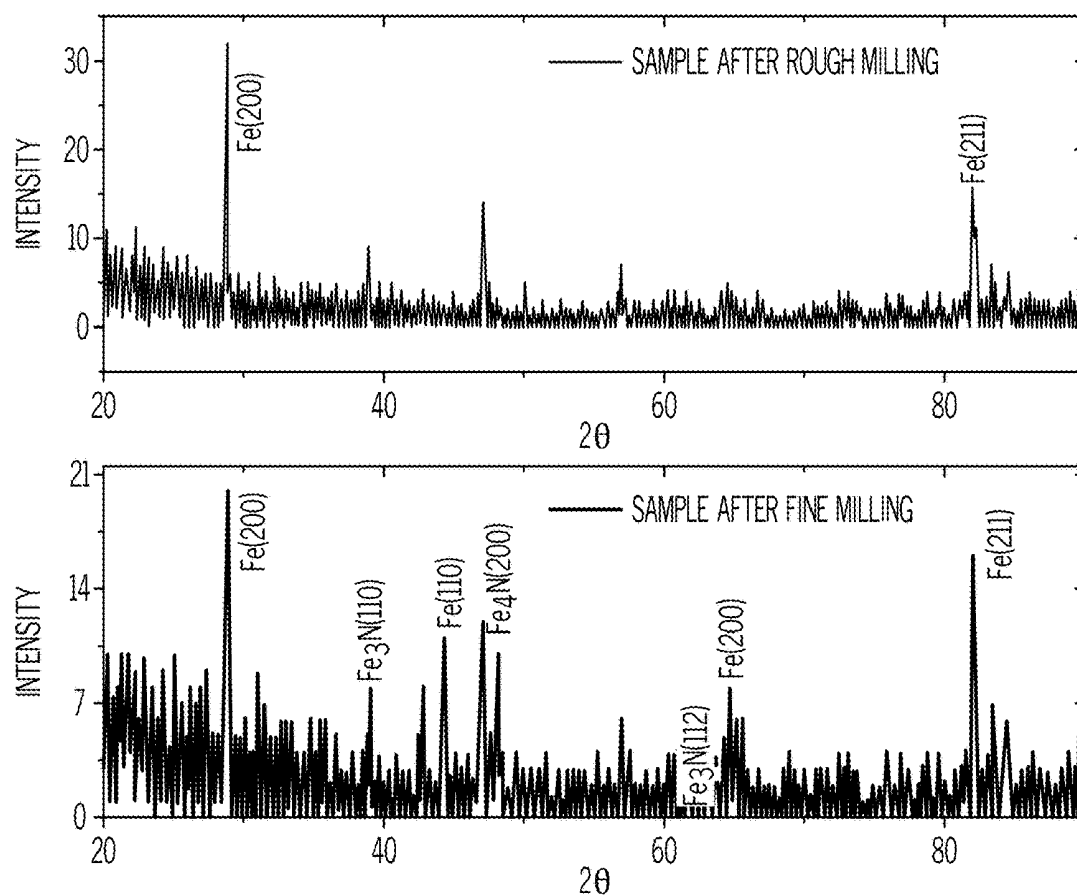


FIG. 20

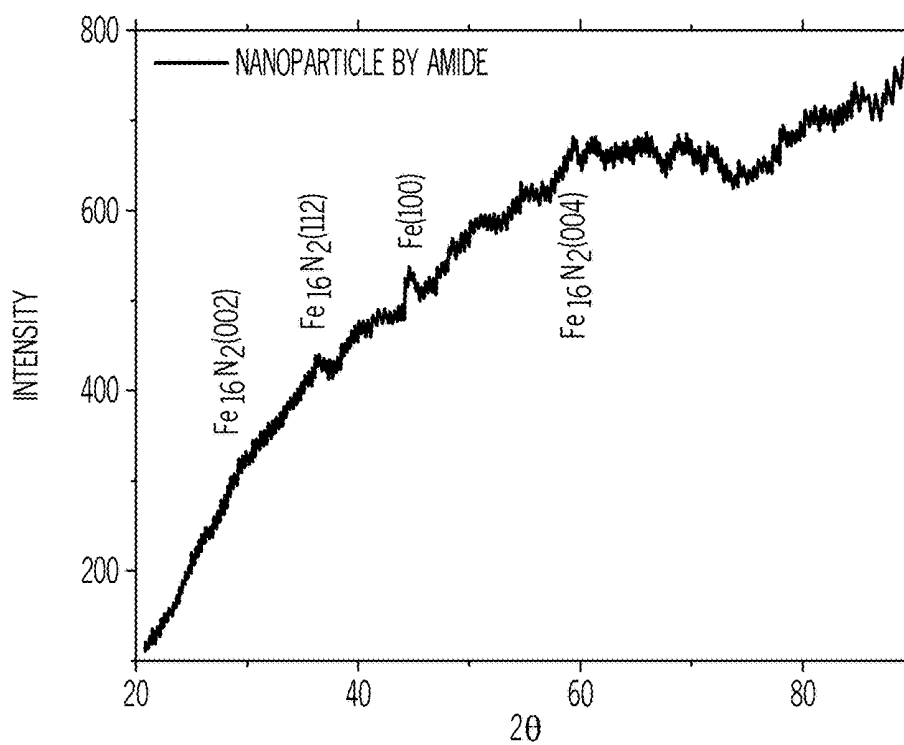


FIG. 21

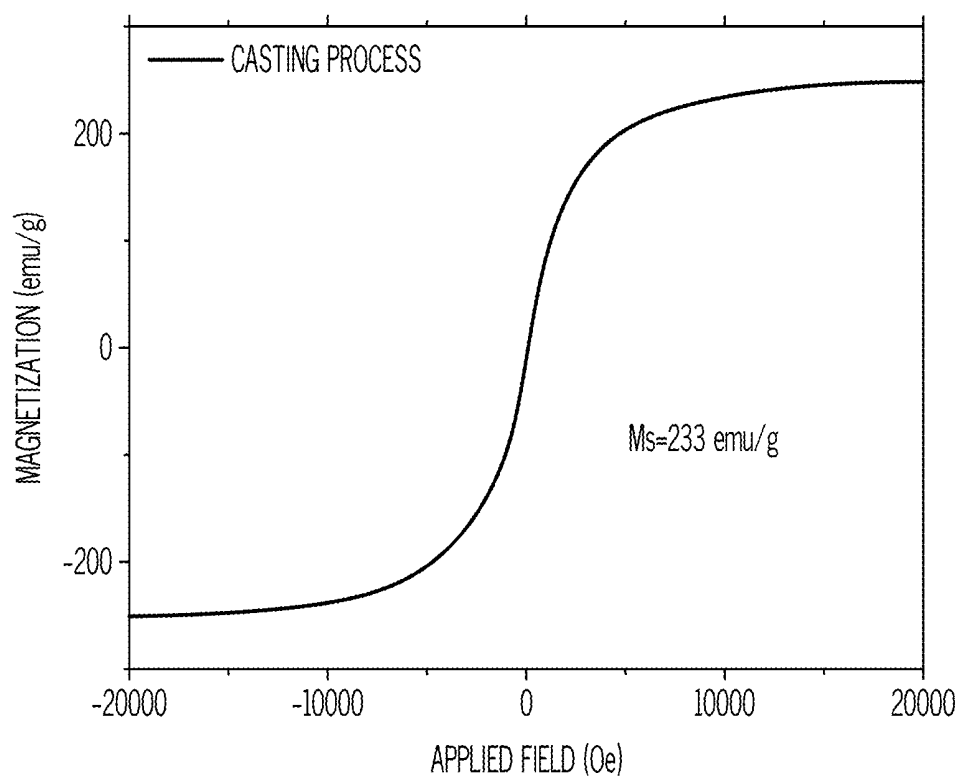


FIG. 22

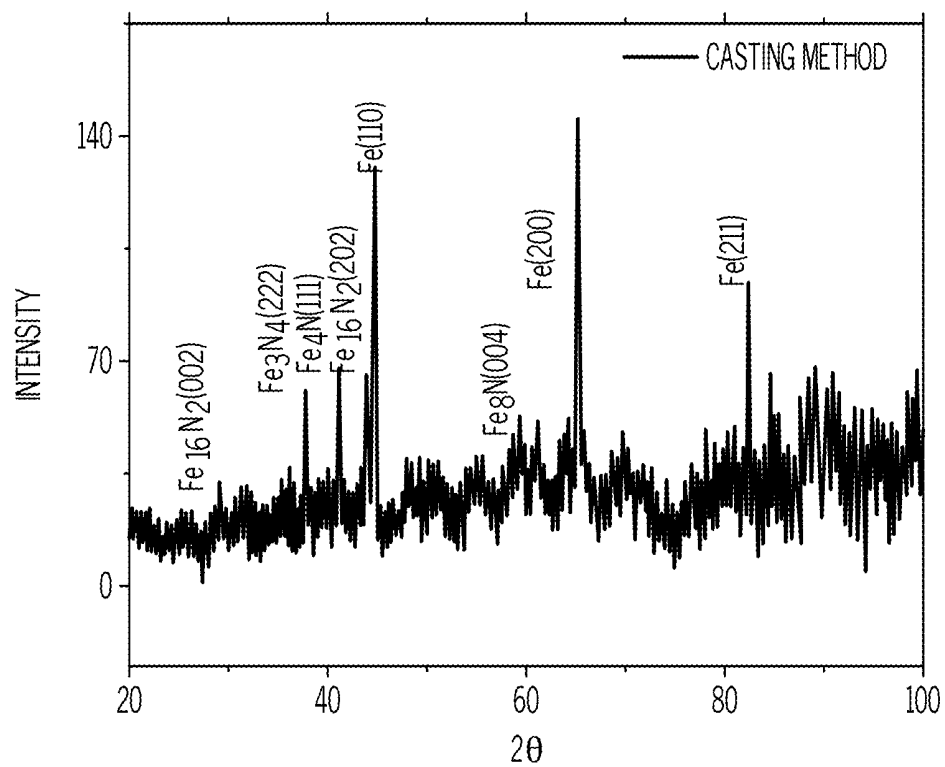


FIG. 23

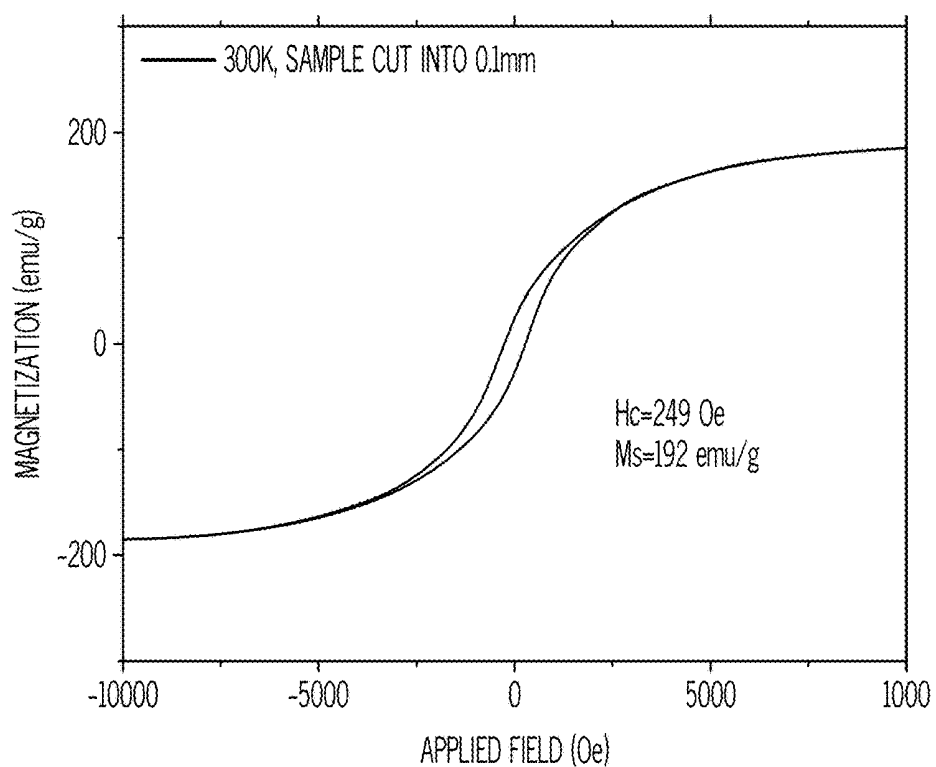


FIG. 24

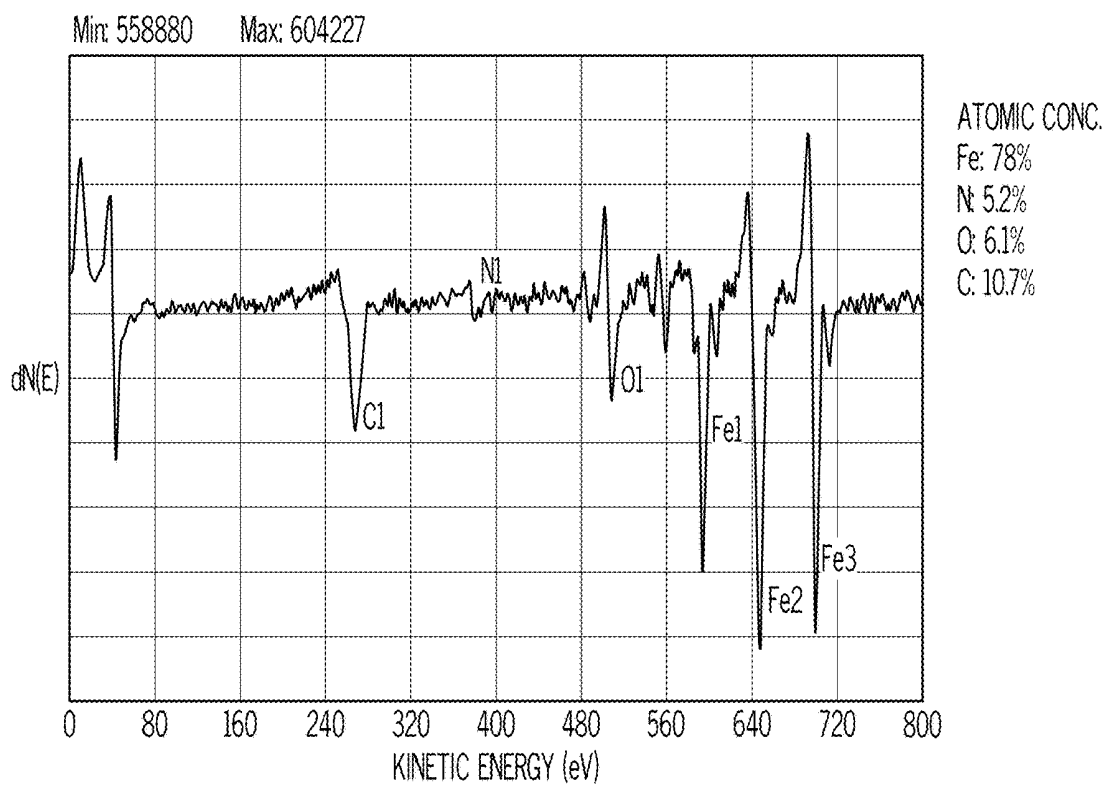


FIG. 25

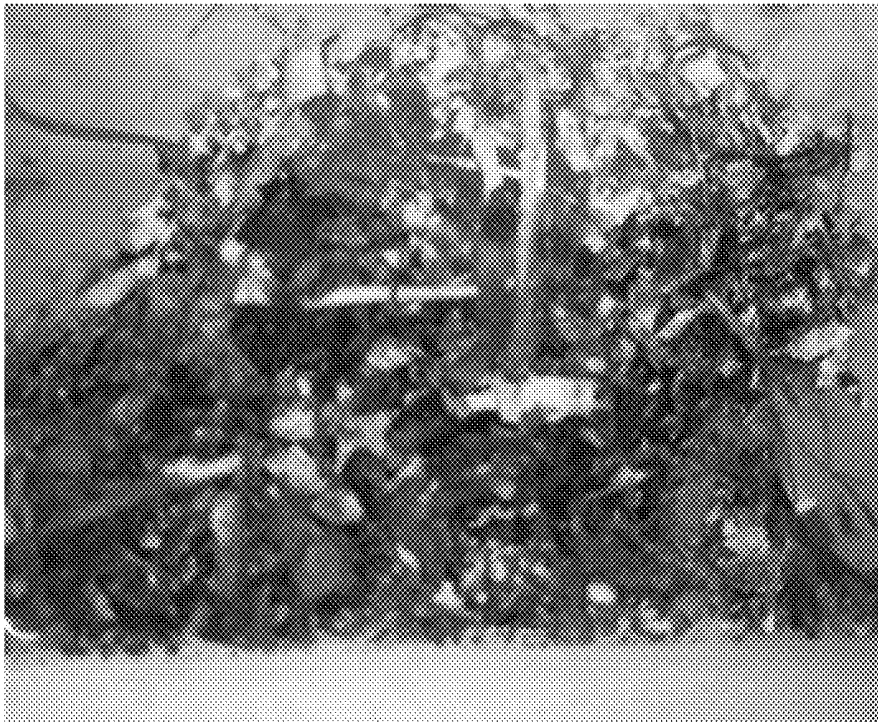


FIG. 26A



FIG. 26B

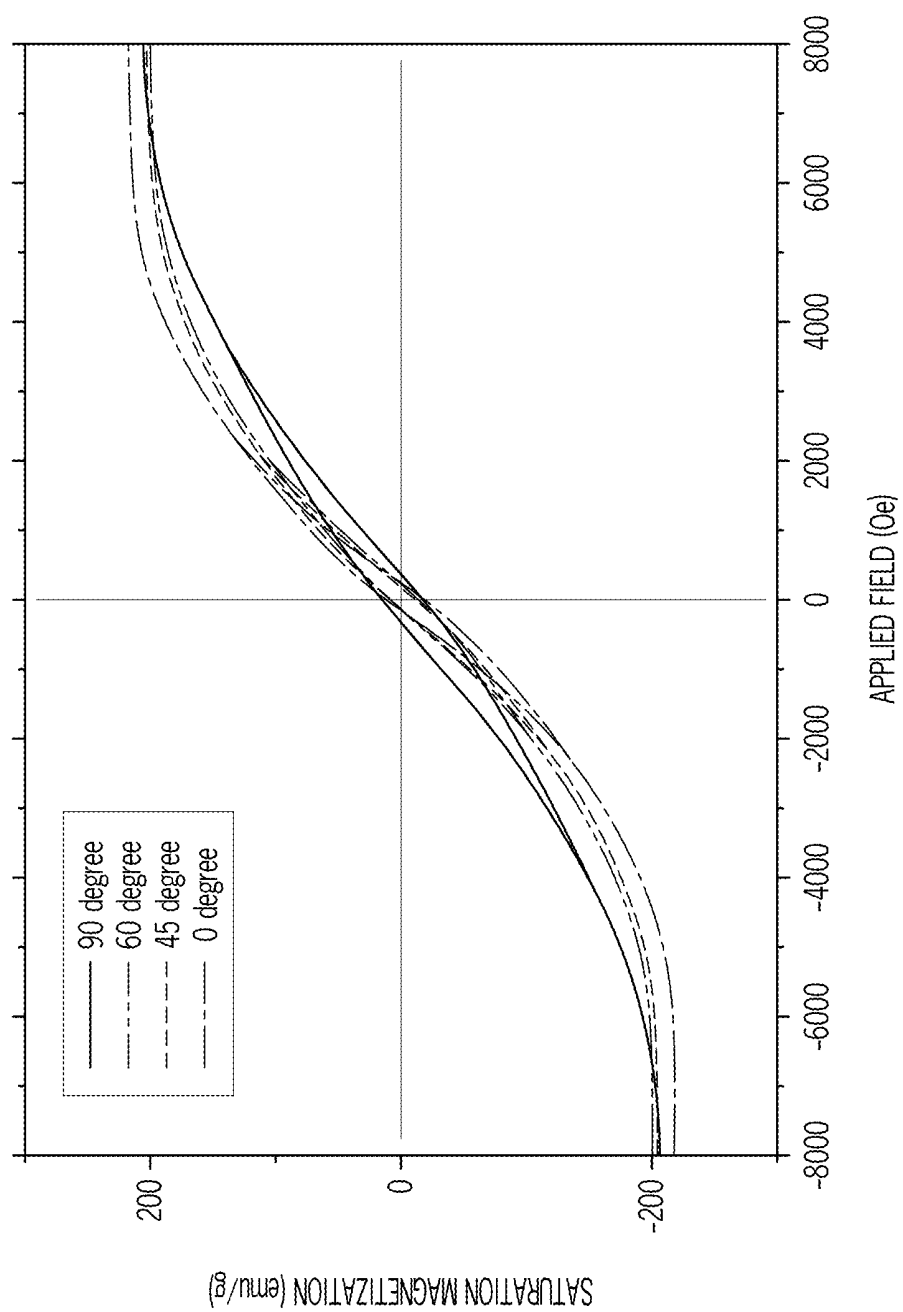


FIG. 27

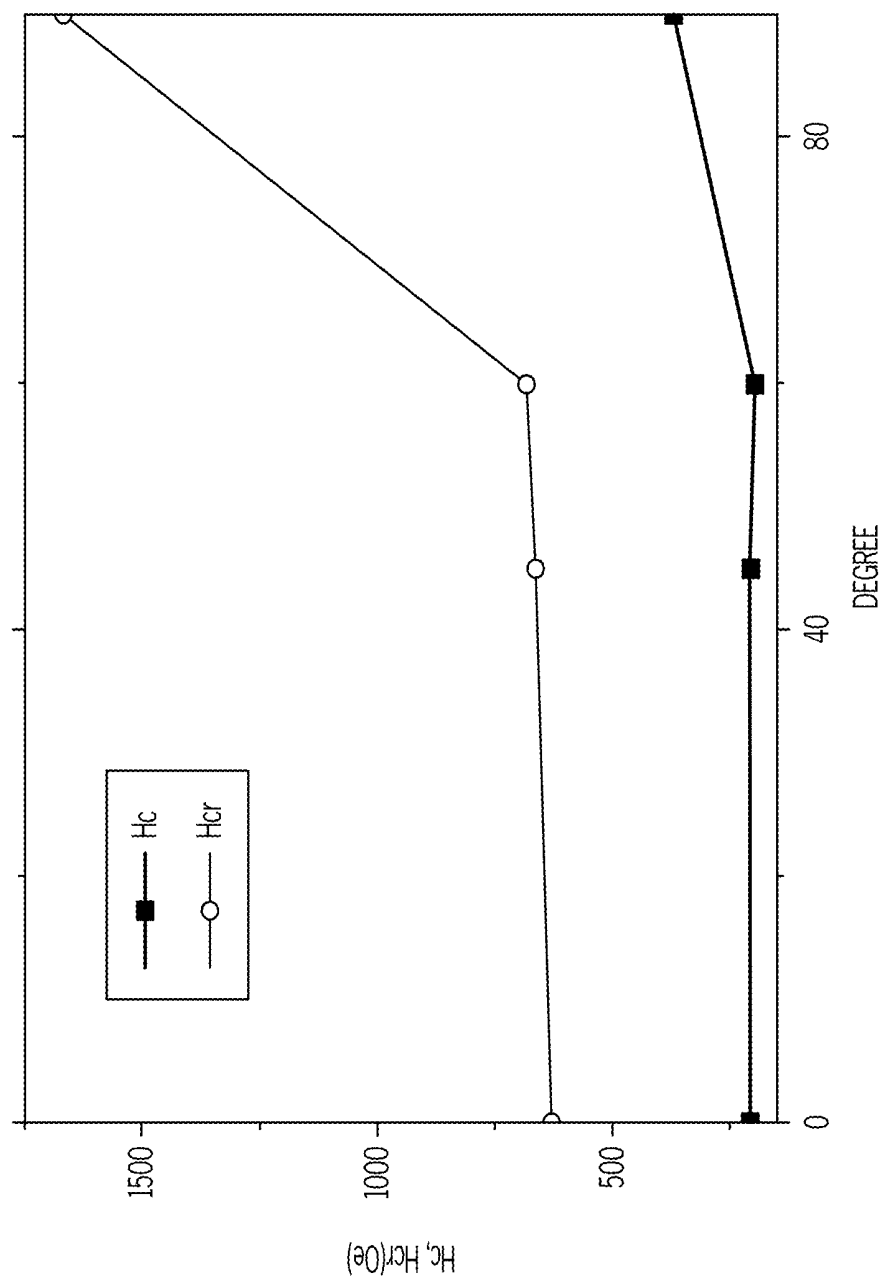


FIG. 28

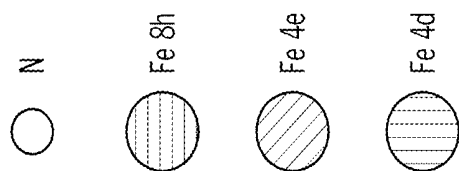
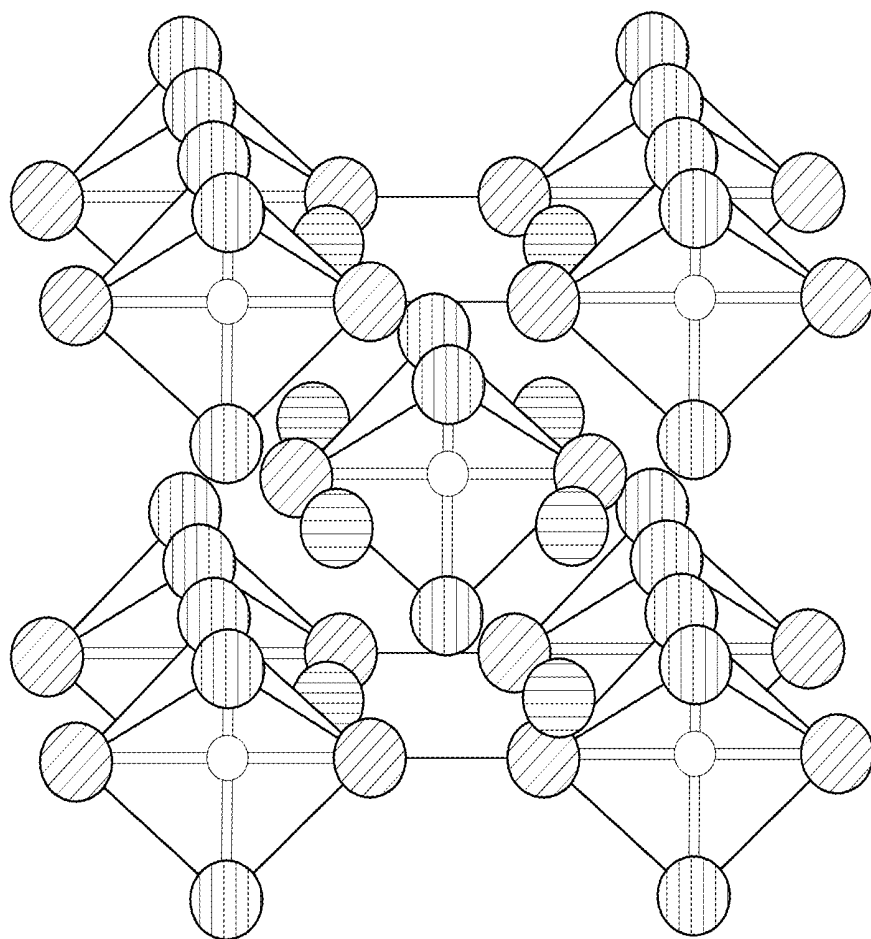


FIG. 29

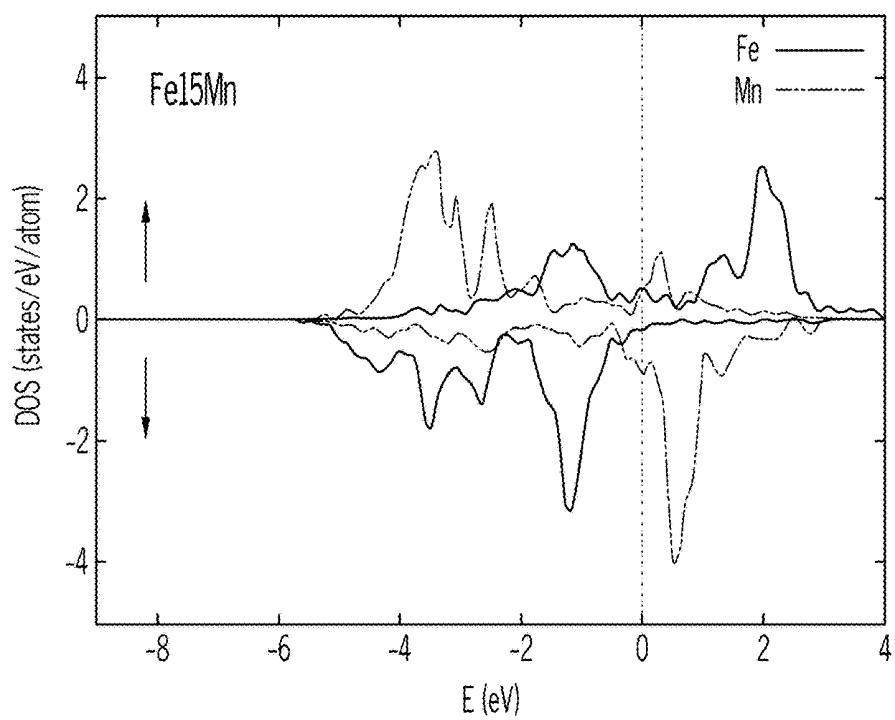


FIG. 30

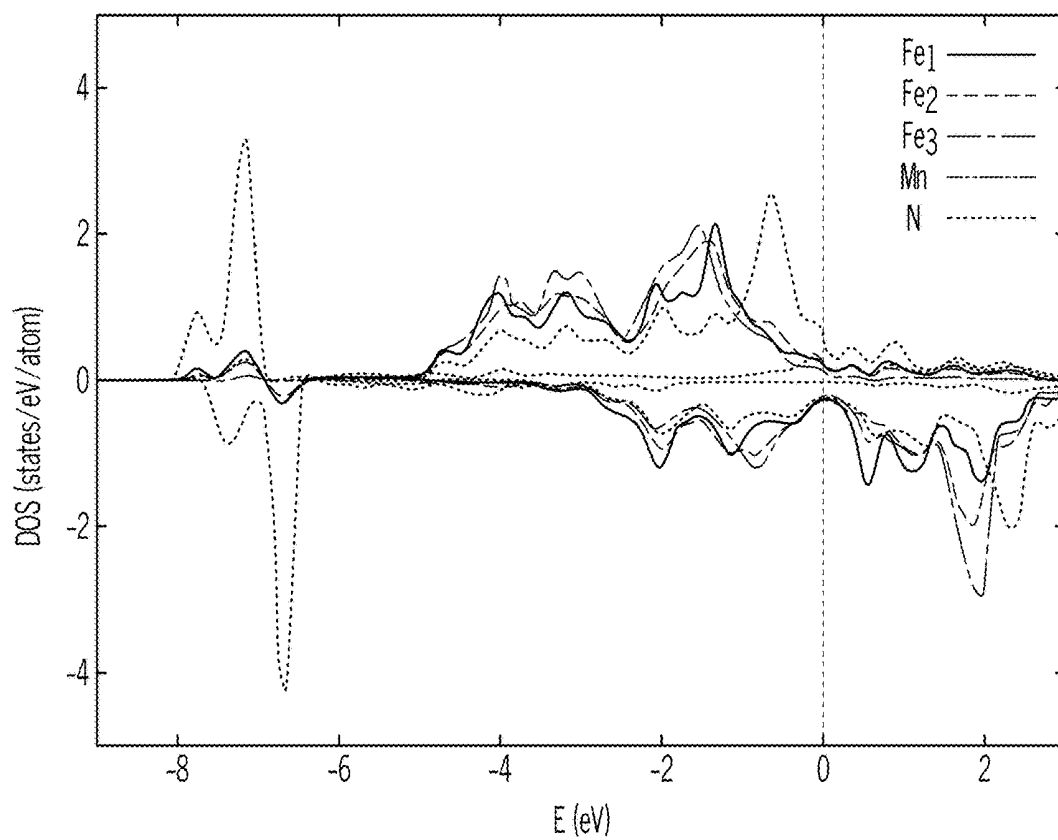


FIG. 31

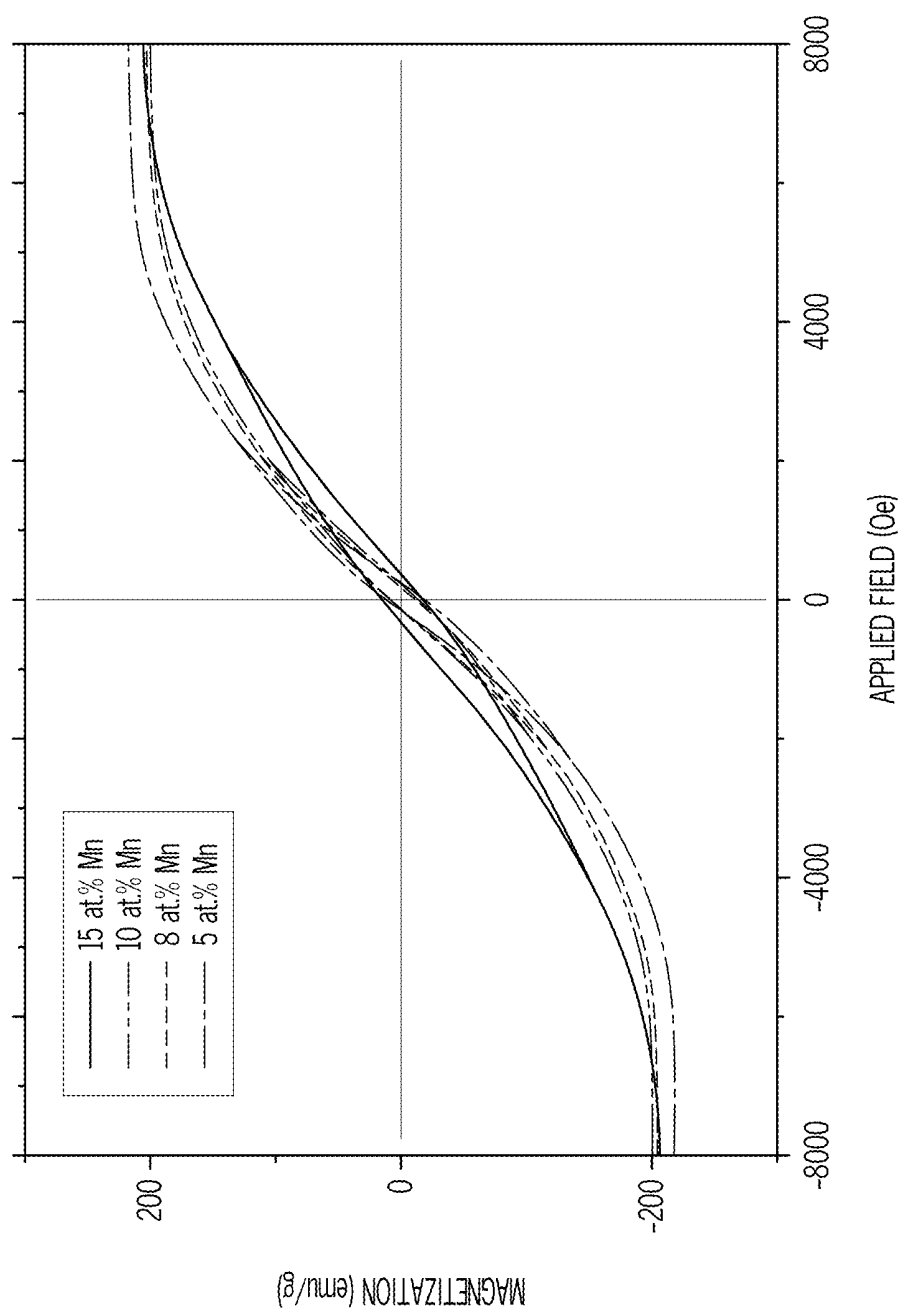


FIG. 32

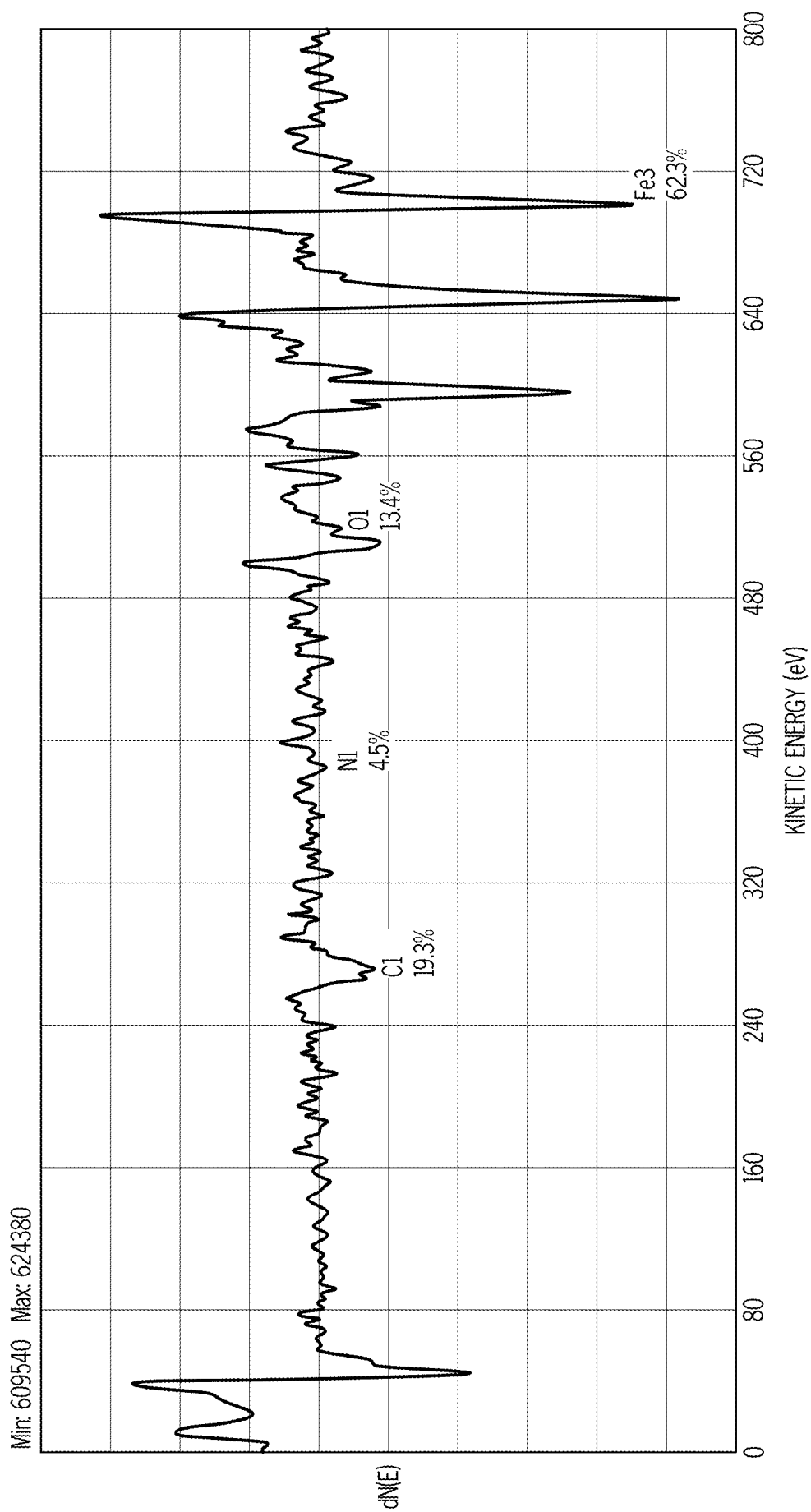


FIG. 33

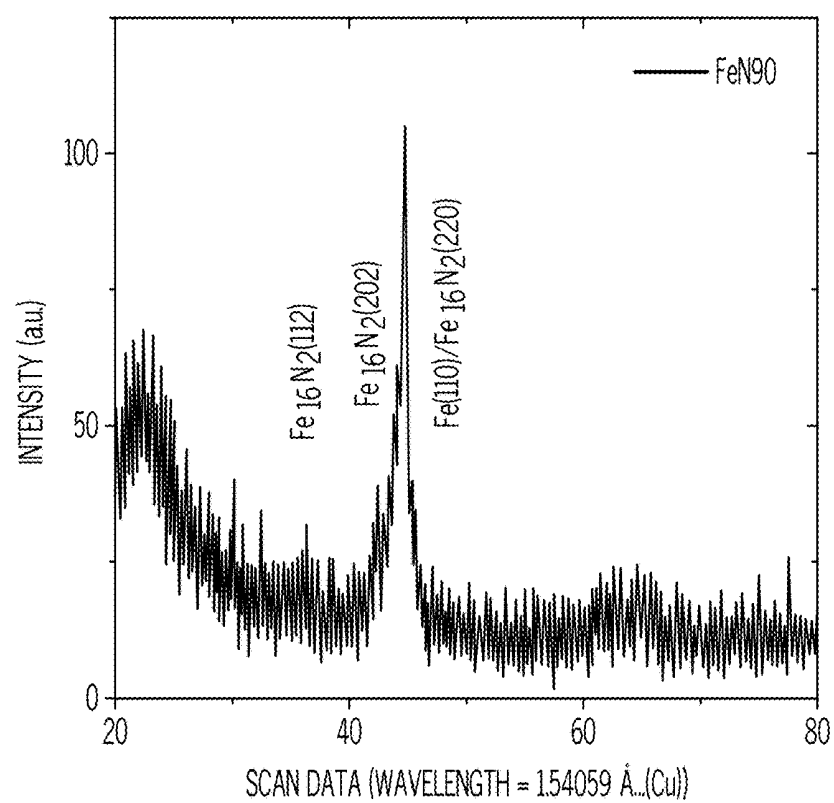


FIG. 34

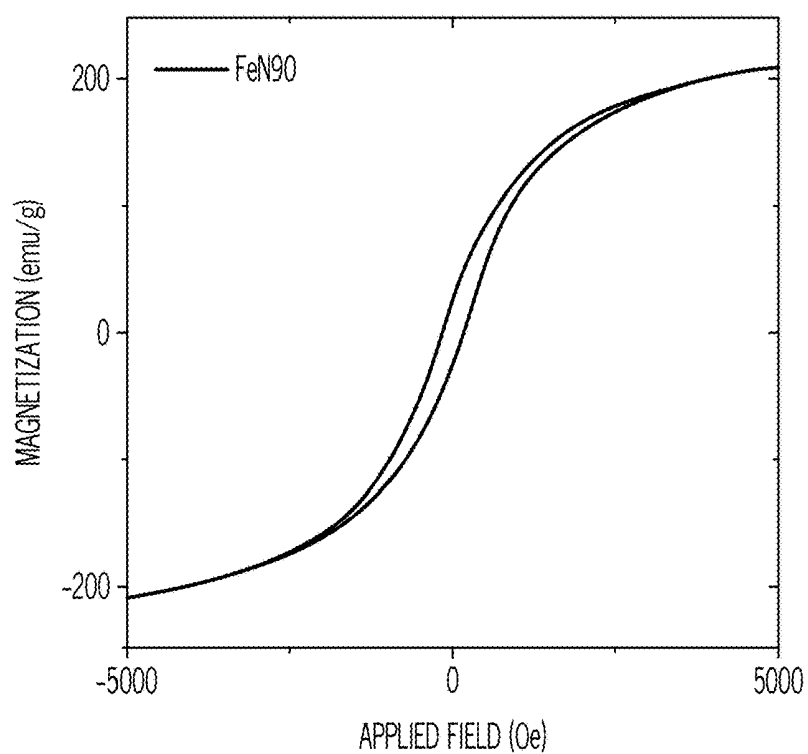
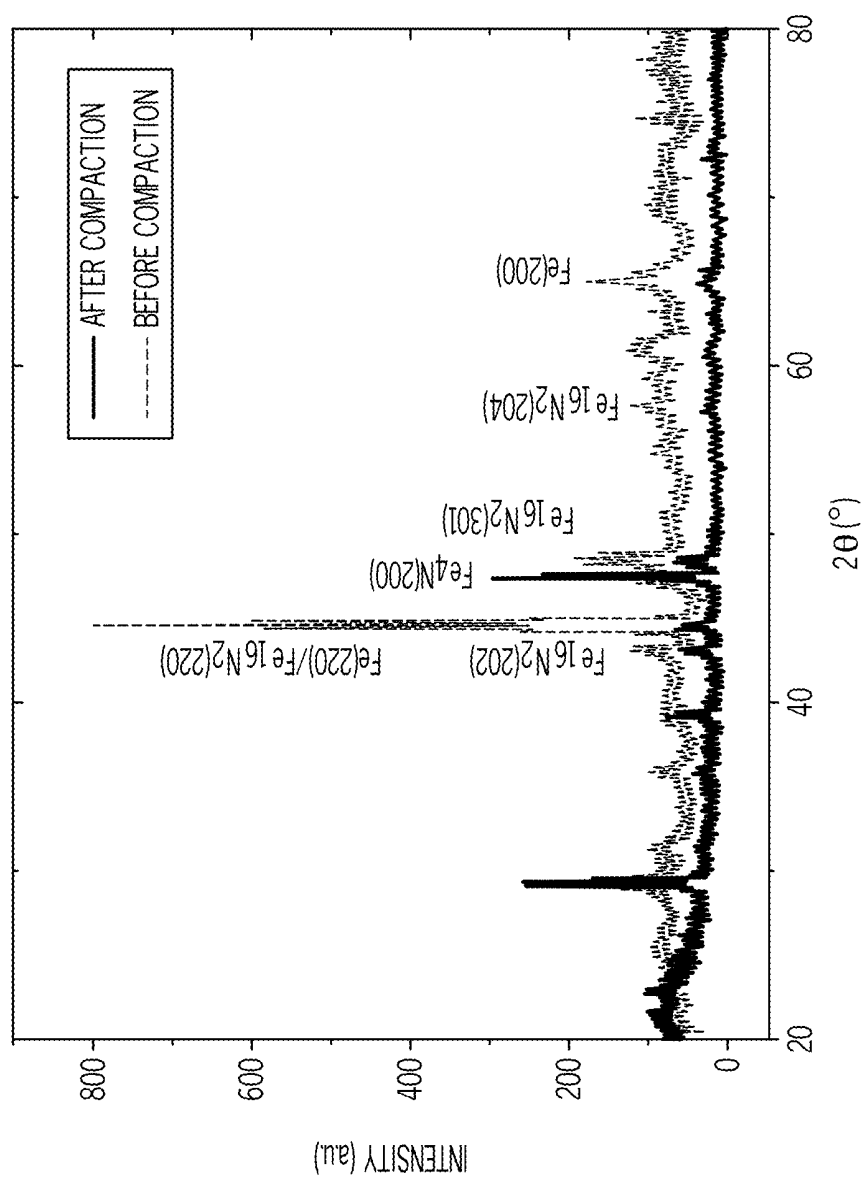


FIG. 35



IRON NITRIDE MATERIALS AND MAGNETS INCLUDING IRON NITRIDE MATERIALS

This application is a national stage entry under 35 U.S.C. § 371 of International Application No. PCT/US2014/043902, filed Jun. 24, 2014, which claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/840,213, entitled, "TECHNIQUES FOR FORMING IRON NITRIDE WIRE AND CONSOLIDATING THE SAME," and filed Jun. 27, 2013; U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/840,221, entitled, "TECHNIQUES FOR FORMING IRON NITRIDE MATERIAL," and filed Jun. 27, 2013; U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/840,248, entitled "TECHNIQUES FOR FORMING IRON NITRIDE MAGNETS," and filed Jun. 27, 2013; and U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/935,516, entitled "IRON NITRIDE MATERIALS AND MAGNETS INCLUDING IRON NITRIDE MATERIALS," and filed Feb. 4, 2014. The entire contents of International Application No. PCT/US2014/043902; U.S. Provisional Patent Application Nos. 61/840,213; 61/840,221; 61/840,248; and 61/935,516 are incorporated herein by reference for all purposes.

GOVERNMENT INTEREST

This invention was made with Government support under contract number DE-AR0000199 awarded by DOE, Office of ARPA-E. The Government has certain rights in this invention.

TECHNICAL FIELD

The disclosure relates to magnetic materials and techniques for forming magnetic materials.

BACKGROUND

Permanent magnets play a role in many electromechanical systems, including, for example, alternative energy systems. For example, permanent magnets are used in electric motors or generators, which may be used in vehicles, wind turbines, and other alternative energy mechanisms. Many permanent magnets in current use include rare earth elements, such as neodymium, which result in high energy product. These rare earth elements are in relatively short supply, and may face increased prices and/or supply shortages in the future. Additionally, some permanent magnets that include rare earth elements are expensive to produce. For example, fabrication of NdFeB and ferrite magnets generally includes crushing material, compressing the material, and sintering at temperatures over 1000° C., all of which contribute to high manufacturing costs of the magnets. Additionally, the mining of rare earth can lead to severe environmental deterioration.

SUMMARY

The disclosure describes magnetic materials including iron nitride, bulk permanent magnets including iron nitride, techniques for forming magnetic materials including iron nitride, and techniques for forming magnets including iron nitride. Bulk permanent magnets including Fe_{16}N_2 may provide an alternative to permanent magnets that include a rare earth element, as Fe_{16}N_2 has high saturation magnetization, high magnetic anisotropy constant, and high energy product.

In some examples, the disclosure describes techniques for forming powder including iron nitride using milling of iron-containing raw materials with a nitrogen source, such as an amide- or hydrazine-containing liquid or solution. The amide-containing liquid or solution acts as a nitrogen donor, and, after completion of the milling and mixing, a powder including iron nitride is formed. In some examples, the powder including iron nitride may include one or more iron nitride phases, including, for example, Fe_8N , Fe_{16}N_2 , Fe_2N_6 , Fe_4N , Fe_3N , Fe_2N , FeN , and FeN_x (where x is in the range of from about 0.05 to about 0.5). The powder including iron nitride may be subsequently used in a technique for forming a permanent magnet including iron nitride.

In some examples, the disclosure describes techniques for forming magnetic materials including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain. In some implementations, the magnetic materials may be formed from a material including iron and nitrogen, such as a powder including iron nitride or a bulk material including iron nitride. In such examples, a further nitriding step may be avoided. In other examples, the magnetic materials may be formed from an iron-containing raw material (e.g., powder or bulk), which may be nitridized as part of the process of forming the magnetic materials. The iron nitride-containing material then may be melted and subjected to a continuous casting, quenching and pressing process to form workpieces including iron nitride. In some examples, workpieces include a dimension that is longer, e.g., much longer, than other dimensions of the workpiece. This dimension of the workpiece may be referred to as the "long dimension" of the workpiece. Example workpieces with a dimension longer than other dimensions include fibers, wires, filaments, cables, films, thick films, foils, ribbons, sheets, or the like.

In other examples, workpieces may not have a dimension that is longer than other dimensions of the workpiece. For example, workpieces can include grains or powders, such as spheres, cylinders, flecks, flakes, regular polyhedra, irregular polyhedra, and any combination thereof. Examples of suitable regular polyhedra include tetrahedrons, hexahedrons, octahedron, decahedron, dodecahedron and the like, non-limiting examples of which include cubes, prisms, pyramids, and the like.

The casting process can be conducted in a gaseous environment, such as, for example, air, a nitrogen environment, an inert environment, a partial vacuum, a full vacuum, or any combination thereof. The casting process can be at any pressure, for example, between about 0.1 GPa and about 20 GPa. In some examples, the casting and quenching process can be assisted by a straining field, a temperature field, a pressure field, a magnetic field, an electrical field, or any combination thereof. In some examples, the workpieces may have a dimension in one or more axis, such as a diameter or thickness, between about 0.1 mm and about 50 mm, and may include at least one Fe_8N phase domain. In some examples, the workpieces may have a dimension in one or more axis, such as a diameter or thickness, between about 0.01 mm and about 1 mm, and may include at least one Fe_8N phase domain.

The workpieces including at least one Fe_8N phase domain may subsequently be strained and post-annealed to form workpieces including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain. The workpieces including at least one Fe_8N phase domain may be strained while being annealed to facilitate transformation of the at least one Fe_8N phase domain into at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain. In some examples, the strain exerted on the workpiece may be sufficient to reduce the dimension of the workpiece in one or more axis to less than about 0.1

mm. In some examples, to assist the stretching process, roller and pressure can be applied at the same time, or separately, to reduce workpiece dimension in one or more axis. The temperature during the straining process can be between about -150°C . and about 300°C . In some examples, a workpiece including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain may consist essentially of one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain.

In some examples, the disclosure describes techniques for combining a plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain into a magnetic material. Techniques for joining the plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain include alloying the workpieces using at least one of Sn, Cu, Zn, or Ag to form an iron alloy at the interface of the workpieces; using a resin filled with Fe or other ferromagnetic particles to bond the workpieces together; shock compression to press the workpieces together; electrodischarge to join the workpieces; electro-magnetic compaction to join the workpieces; and any combination of such processes.

In some examples, the disclosure describes techniques for forming a magnetic material from an iron nitride powder. The iron nitride powder may include one or more different iron nitride phases (e.g., Fe_3N , Fe_{16}N_2 , Fe_2N_6 , Fe_4N , Fe_3N , Fe_2N , FeN , and FeN_x (where x is in the range of from about 0.05 to about 0.5)). The iron nitride powder may be mixed alone or with pure iron powder to form a mixture including iron and nitrogen in an 8:1 atomic ratio. The mixture then may be formed into a magnetic material via one of a variety of methods. For example, the mixture may be melted and subjected to a casting, quenching, and pressing process to form a plurality of workpieces. In some examples, the mixture may also be subjected to a shear field. In some examples, a shear field may aid in aligning one or more iron nitride phase domains (e.g., aligning one or more $\langle 001 \rangle$ crystal axes of unit cells of the iron nitride phase domains). The plurality of workpieces may include at least one Fe_8N phase domain. The plurality of workpieces then may be annealed to form at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain, sintered and aged to join the plurality of workpieces, and, optionally, shaped and magnetized to form a magnet. As another example, the mixture may be pressed in the presence of a magnetic field, annealed to form at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain, sintered and aged, and, optionally, shaped and magnetized to form a magnet. As another example, the mixture may be melted and spun to form an iron nitride-containing material. The iron nitride-containing material may be annealed to form at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain, sintered and aged, and, optionally, shaped and magnetized to form a magnet.

In some examples, FeN workpieces may be sintered, bonded, or both sintered and bonded together directly to form bulk magnet. Sintering, bonding, or both may be combined with application of an external magnetic field with constant or varying frequencies (e.g. a pulsed magnetic field) before or during bonding process, to align FeN workpieces orientation and to bond the FeN workpieces together. In this way, an overall magnetic anisotropy can be imparted to the FeN workpieces.

In some examples, the disclosure describes an iron nitride-containing magnetic material that additionally includes at least one ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopant. In some examples, at least one ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopant may be referred to as a ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic impurity. The ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopant may be used to increase at least one of the magnetic moment, magnetic coercivity, or thermal stability of the magnetic material formed from the mixture including iron

and nitrogen. Examples of ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopants include Sc, Ti, V, Cr, Mn, Co, Ni, Cu, Zn, Nb, Mo, Ru, Rh, Pd, Ag, Cd, Pt, Au, Sm, C, Pb, W, Ga, Y, Mg, Hf, Ta, and combinations thereof. In some examples, more than one (e.g., at least two) ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopants may be included in the mixture including iron and nitrogen. In some examples, the ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopants may function as domain wall pinning sites, which may improve coercivity of the magnetic material formed from the mixture including iron and nitrogen.

In some examples, the disclosure describes an iron nitride-containing magnetic material that additionally includes at least one phase stabilizer. The at least one phase stabilizer may be an element selected to improve at least one of Fe_{16}N_2 volume ratio, thermal stability, coercivity, and erosion resistance. When present in the mixture, the at least one phase stabilizer may be present in the mixture including iron and nitrogen at a concentration between about 0.1 at. % and about 15 at. %. In some examples in which at least two phase stabilizers are present in the mixture, the total concentration of the at least two phase stabilizers may be between about 0.1 at. % and about 15 at. %. The at least one phase stabilizer may include, for example, B, Al, C, Si, P, O, Co, Cr, Mn, S, and combinations thereof.

In one example, the disclosure describes a method including heating a mixture including iron and nitrogen to form a molten iron nitride-containing material and casting, quenching, and pressing the molten iron nitride-containing material to form a workpiece including at least one Fe_8N phase domain.

In another example, the disclosure describes a method including disposing a plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain adjacent to each other with respective long axes of the plurality of workpieces being substantially parallel to each other, and disposing at least one of Sn, Cu, Zn, or Ag on a surface of at least one workpiece of the plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain. In accordance with this example, the method also may include heating the plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain and the at least one of Sn, Cu, Zn, or Ag under pressure to form an alloy between Fe and the at least one of Sn, Cu, Zn, or Ag at the interfaces between adjacent workpieces of the plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain.

In a further example, the disclosure describes a method including disposing a plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain adjacent to each other with respective long axes of the plurality of workpieces being substantially parallel to each other, and disposing a resin about the plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain, wherein the resin includes a plurality of particles of ferromagnetic material. In accordance with this example, the method also may include curing the resin to bond the plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain using the resin.

In an additional example, the disclosure describes a method including disposing a plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain adjacent to each other with respective long axes of the plurality of workpieces being substantially parallel to each other, and disposing a plurality of particles of ferromagnetic material about the plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain. In accordance with this example, the method also may include joining the plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain using a compression shock.

In another example, the disclosure describes a method including disposing a plurality of workpieces including at

least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain adjacent to each other with respective long axes of the plurality of workpieces being substantially parallel to each other, and disposing a plurality particles of ferromagnetic material about the plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain. In accordance with this example, the method also may include joining the plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain using an electromagnetic pulse.

In an additional example, the disclosure describes a method including milling, in a bin of a rolling mode milling apparatus, a stirring mode milling apparatus, or a vibration mode milling apparatus, an iron-containing raw material in the presence of a nitrogen source to generate a powder including iron nitride.

In a further example, the disclosure describes a rolling mode milling apparatus comprising a bin configured to contain an iron-containing raw material and a nitrogen source and mill the iron-containing raw material in the presence of the nitrogen source to generate a powder including iron nitride.

In another example, the disclosure describes a vibration mode milling apparatus comprising a bin configured to contain an iron-containing raw material and a nitrogen source and mill the iron-containing raw material in the presence of the nitrogen source to generate a powder including iron nitride.

In a further example, the disclosure describes a stirring mode milling apparatus comprising a bin configured to contain an iron-containing raw material and a nitrogen source and mill the iron-containing raw material in the presence of the nitrogen source to generate a powder including iron nitride.

In an additional example, the disclosure describes a method including mixing an iron nitride-containing material with substantially pure iron to form a mixture including an iron atom-to-nitrogen atom ratio of about 8:1, and forming a magnetic material comprising at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain from the mixture.

In another example, the disclosure describes a method comprising adding at least one ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopant into an iron nitride-containing material, and forming a magnet including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain from the iron-nitride containing material including the at least one ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopant.

In a further example, the disclosure describes a method comprising adding at least one phase stabilizer for body-center-tetragonal (bct) phase domains into an iron nitride material, and forming a magnet including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain from the iron-nitride containing material including the at least one phase stabilizer for bct phase domains.

The details of one or more examples are set forth in the accompanying drawings and the description below. Other features, objects, and advantages will be apparent from the description and drawings, and from the claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

The summary, as well as the following detailed description, is further understood when read in conjunction with the appended drawings. For the purpose of illustrating the disclosure, there are shown in the drawings examples; however, the disclosure is not limited to the specific techniques, compositions, and devices disclosed. In addition, the drawings are not necessarily drawn to scale. In the drawings:

FIG. 1 is a conceptual diagram illustrating a first milling apparatus that may be used to mill an iron-containing raw material with a nitrogen source.

FIG. 2 is a conceptual flow diagram illustrating an example reaction sequence for forming an acid amide from a carboxylic acid, nitriding iron, and regenerating the acid amide from the hydrocarbon remaining after nitriding the iron.

FIG. 3 is a conceptual diagram illustrating another example milling apparatus for nitriding an iron-containing raw material.

FIG. 4 is a conceptual diagram illustrating another example milling apparatus for nitriding an iron-containing raw material.

FIG. 5 is a flow diagram of an example technique for forming a workpiece including at least one phase domain including Fe_{16}N_2 (e.g., $\alpha''\text{-Fe}_{16}\text{N}_2$).

FIG. 6 is a conceptual diagram illustrating an example apparatus that may be used to strain and post-anneal an iron nitride-containing workpiece.

FIG. 7 is a conceptual diagram that shows eight (8) iron unit cells in a strained state with nitrogen atoms implanted in interstitial spaces between iron atoms.

FIG. 8A illustrates straining an iron nitride-containing workpiece using rollers.

FIG. 9 is a conceptual diagram of an example apparatus that may be used to nitridize an iron-containing raw material using a urea diffusion process.

FIGS. 10A-10C are conceptual diagrams illustrating an example technique for joining at least two workpieces including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain.

FIG. 11 is a conceptual diagram illustrating another example technique for joining at least two workpieces including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain.

FIG. 12 is a conceptual diagram that illustrates another technique for joining at least two workpieces including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain.

FIG. 13 is a conceptual diagram illustrating a plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain with ferromagnetic particles disposed about the plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain.

FIG. 14 is a conceptual diagram of another apparatus that may be used for joining at least two workpieces including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain.

FIG. 15 is a flow diagram that illustrates an example technique for forming a magnet including iron nitride.

FIGS. 16-18 are flow diagrams illustrating example techniques for forming a magnet including iron nitride phase domains from a mixture including an iron to nitride ratio of about 8:1.

FIGS. 19A and 19B are conceptual diagrams illustrating another example technique for forming a magnetic material including Fe_{16}N_2 phase domains and at least one of a ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopant and/or at least one phase stabilizer.

FIG. 20 illustrates example XRD spectra for a sample prepared by first milling an iron precursor material to form an iron-containing raw material, then milling the iron-containing raw material in a formamide solution.

FIG. 21 illustrates an example XRD spectrum for a sample prepared by milling an iron-containing raw material in an acetamide solution.

FIG. 22 is a diagram of magnetization versus applied magnetic field for an example magnetic material including Fe_{16}N_2 prepared by a continuous casting, quenching, and pressing technique.

FIG. 23 is an X-ray Diffraction spectrum of an example wire including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain prepared by a continuous casting, quenching, and pressing technique.

FIG. 24 is a diagram of magnetization versus applied magnetic field for an example magnetic material including Fe_{16}N_2 prepared by the continuous casting, quenching, and pressing technique, followed by straining and post-annealing.

FIG. 25 is a diagram illustrating auger electron spectrum (AES) testing results for the sample magnetic material including Fe_{16}N_2 prepared by the continuous casting, quenching, and pressing technique, followed by straining and post-annealing.

FIGS. 26A and 26B are images showing examples of iron nitride foil and iron nitride bulk material formed in accordance with the techniques described herein.

FIG. 27 is a diagram of magnetization versus applied magnetic field for an example wire-shaped magnetic material including Fe_{16}N_2 , showing different hysteresis loops for different orientations of external magnetic fields relative to the sample.

FIG. 28 is a diagram illustrating the relationship between the coercivity of an example wire-shaped FeN magnet and its orientation relative to an external magnetic field.

FIG. 29 is a conceptual diagram illustrating an example Fe_{16}N_2 crystallographic structure.

FIG. 30 is a plot illustrating results of an example calculation of densities of states of Mn doped bulk Fe.

FIG. 31 is a plot illustrating results of an example calculation of densities of states of Mn doped bulk Fe_{16}N_2 .

FIG. 32 is a plot of magnetic hysteresis loops of prepared Fe—Mn—N bulk samples with concentrations of Mn dopant of 5 at. %, 8 at. %, 10 at. %, and 15 at. %.

FIG. 33 is a plot of elemental concentration of the powder of Sample 1 after ball milling in the presence of a urea nitrogen source, collected using Auger electron spectroscopy (AES).

FIG. 34 is a plot showing an x-ray diffraction spectrum of powder from Sample 1 after annealing.

FIG. 35 is a plot of a magnetic hysteresis loop of prepared iron nitride formed using ball milling in the presence of ammonium nitrate.

FIG. 36 is a plot showing an x-ray diffraction spectrum for the sample before and after consolidation.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The present disclosure may be understood more readily by reference to the following detailed description taken in connection with the accompanying figures and examples, which form a part of this disclosure. It is to be understood that this disclosure is not limited to the specific devices, methods, applications, conditions or parameters described and/or shown herein, and that the terminology used herein is for the purpose of describing particular examples and is not intended to be limiting of the claims. When a range of values is expressed, another example includes from the one particular value and/or to the other particular value. Similarly, when values are expressed as approximations, by use of the antecedent “about,” it will be understood that the particular value forms another example. All ranges are inclusive and combinable. Further, a reference to values stated in a range includes each and every value within that range.

It is to be appreciated that certain features of the disclosure which are, for clarity, described herein in the context of separate examples, may also be provided in combination in a single example. Conversely, various features of the dis-

closure that are, for brevity, described in the context of a single example, may also be provided separately or in any subcombination.

The disclosure describes magnetic materials including iron nitride, bulk permanent magnets including iron nitride, techniques for forming magnetic materials including iron nitride, and techniques for forming bulk permanent magnets including iron nitride. Bulk permanent magnets including Fe_{16}N_2 iron nitride phase may provide an alternative to permanent magnets that include a rare earth element, as Fe_{16}N_2 has high saturation magnetization, high magnetic anisotropy constant, and, therefore high, energy product. The high saturation magnetization and magnetic anisotropy constants result in a magnetic energy product that may be higher than rare earth magnets in some examples. Bulk Fe_{16}N_2 permanent magnets made according to the techniques described herein may have desirable magnetic properties, including an energy product of as high as about 130 MGOe when the Fe_{16}N_2 permanent magnet is anisotropic. In examples in which the Fe_{16}N_2 magnet is isotropic, the energy product may be as high as about 33.5 MGOe. The energy product of a permanent magnetic is proportional to the product of remanent coercivity and remanent magnetization. For comparison, the energy product of $\text{Nd}_2\text{Fe}_{14}\text{B}$ permanent magnet may be as high as about 60 MGOe. A higher energy product can lead to increased efficiency of the permanent magnet when used in motors, generators, or the like. Additionally, permanent magnets that include a Fe_{16}N_2 phase may not include rare earth elements, which may reduce a materials cost of the magnet and may reduce an environmental impact of producing the magnet.

Without being limited by any theory of operation, it is believed that Fe_{16}N_2 is a metastable phase, which competes with other stable phases of Fe—N. Hence, forming bulk magnetic materials and bulk permanent magnets including Fe_{16}N_2 may be difficult. Various techniques described herein may facilitate formation of magnetic materials including Fe_{16}N_2 iron nitride phase. In some examples, the techniques may reduce a cost of forming magnetic materials including Fe_{16}N_2 iron nitride phase, increase a volume fraction of Fe_{16}N_2 iron nitride phase in the magnetic material, provide greater stability of the Fe_{16}N_2 iron nitride phase within the magnetic material, facilitate mass production of magnetic materials including Fe_{16}N_2 iron nitride phase, and/or improve magnetic properties of the magnetic materials including Fe_{16}N_2 iron nitride phase compared to other techniques for forming magnetic materials including Fe_{16}N_2 iron nitride phase.

The bulk permanent FeN magnets described herein may possess anisotropic magnetic properties. Such anisotropic magnetic properties are characterized as having a different energy product, coercivity and magnetization moment at different relative orientations to an applied electric or magnetic field. Accordingly, the disclosed bulk FeN magnets may be used in any of a variety of applications (e.g., electric motors) to impart into such applications low energy loss and high energy efficiency.

In some examples, the disclosure describes techniques for forming powder including iron nitride using milling of iron-containing raw materials with a nitrogen source, such as an amide- or hydrazine-containing liquid or solution. The amide-containing or hydrazine-containing liquid or solution acts as a nitrogen donor, and, after completion of the milling and mixing, a powder including iron nitride is formed. In some examples, the powder including iron nitride may include one or more iron nitride phases, including, for example, Fe_8N , Fe_{16}N_2 , Fe_2N_6 , Fe_4N , Fe_3N , Fe_2N , FeN , and

FeN (where x is in the range of from about 0.05 to about 0.5). The powder including iron nitride may be subsequently used in a technique for forming a bulk permanent magnet including Fe_{16}N_2 iron nitride.

In some examples, the disclosure describes techniques for forming magnetic materials including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain. In some implementations, the magnetic materials may be formed from a material including iron and nitrogen, such as a powder including iron nitride or a bulk material including iron nitride. In such examples, a further nitriding step may be avoided. In other examples, the magnetic materials may be formed from an iron-containing raw material (e.g., powder or bulk), which may be nitridized as part of the process of forming the magnetic materials. The iron nitride containing material then may be melted and subjected to a casting, quenching and pressing process to form workpieces including iron nitride. In some examples, the workpieces may have a dimension in at least one axis between about 0.1 mm and about 50 mm, and may include at least one Fe_8N phase domain. In some examples, such as when the workpiece includes a wire or ribbon, the wire or ribbon may have a diameter or thickness, respectively, between about 0.1 mm and about 50 mm.

In some examples, workpieces include a dimension that is longer, e.g., much longer, than other dimensions of the workpiece. Example workpieces with a dimension longer than other dimensions include fibers, wires, filaments, cables, films, thick films, foils, ribbons, sheets, or the like. In other examples, workpieces may not have a dimension that is longer than other dimensions of the workpiece. For example, workpieces can include grains or powders, such as spheres, cylinders, flecks, flakes, regular polyhedra, irregular polyhedra, and any combination thereof. Examples of suitable regular polyhedra include tetrahedrons, hexahedrons, octahedron, decahedron, dodecahedron and the like, non-limiting examples of which include cubes, prisms, pyramids, and the like.

In some examples, the casting process can be conducted in air, in a nitrogen environment, an inert environment, a partial vacuum, a full vacuum, or any combination thereof. In some examples, the pressure during casting can be between about 0.1 GPa and about 20 GPa. In some implementations, the casting and quenching process can be assisted by a straining field, a shear field, a temperature field, a pressure field, an electrical field, a magnetic field, or any combination thereof can be applied to assist the casting process.

In some examples, the quenching process includes heating the workpieces to a temperature above 650°C . for between about 0.5 hour and about 20 hours. In some examples, the temperature of the workpieces may be dropped abruptly below the martensite temperature of the workpiece alloy (Ms). For example, for Fe_{16}N_2 , the martensite temperature (Ms) is about 250°C . The medium used for quenching can include a liquid, such as water, brine (with a salt concentration between about 1% and about 30%), a non-aqueous fluid such as an oil, or liquid nitrogen. In other examples, the quenching medium can include a gas, such as nitrogen gas with a flow rate between about 1 standard cubic centimeters per minute (scm) and about 1000 scm. In other examples, the quenching medium can include a solid, such as salt, sand, or the like. In some implementations, an electrical field or a magnetic field can be applied to assist the quenching process.

The workpieces including at least one Fe_8N phase domain may subsequently be strained and post-annealed to form workpieces including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain. The

workpieces including at least one Fe_8N phase domain may be strained while being annealed to facilitate transformation of the at least one Fe_8N phase domain into at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain. In some examples, the strain exerted on the workpiece may be sufficient to reduce the dimension of the workpiece in one or more axis to less than about 0.1 mm. In some examples, such as when the workpiece includes a wire or ribbon, the strain exerted on the wire or ribbon may be sufficient to reduce the diameter or thickness, respectively of the wire or ribbon to less than about 0.1 mm. In some examples, to facilitate the reduction of the dimension of the workpiece in one or more dimension, a roller may be used to exert a pressure on the workpiece. In some examples, the temperature of the workpiece may be between about -150°C . and about 300°C . during the straining process. In some examples, a workpiece including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain may consist essentially of one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain, which can further be oriented along the long direction of the workpiece (e.g., one or more $\langle 001 \rangle$ crystal axes of unit cells of the iron nitride phase domains may be oriented along the long direction of the workpiece).

In some examples, the disclosure describes techniques for combining a plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain into a bulk magnetic material. In some examples, the plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain may each include one or more $\langle 001 \rangle$ crystalline axes substantially parallel perpendicular to a long axis of the respective workpiece. The long axes of the plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain may be disposed substantially parallel to each other, so that the $\langle 001 \rangle$ crystalline axes in the workpieces may be substantially parallel. This may provide high magnetic anisotropy, which may lead to high energy product. Techniques for joining the plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain include alloying the workpieces using at least one of Sn, Cu, Zn, or Ag to form an iron alloy at the interface of the workpieces; using a resin filled with Fe or other ferromagnetic particles to bond the workpieces together; shock compression to press the workpieces together; or electrodischarge to join the workpieces; and/or electro-magnetic compaction to join the workpieces.

In some examples, the disclosure describes a technique for forming a magnetic material from an iron nitride powder. The iron nitride powder may include one or more different iron nitride phases (e.g., Fe_8N , Fe_{16}N_2 , Fe_2N_6 , Fe_4N , Fe_3N , Fe_2N , FeN, and FeN_x (where x is between about 0.05 and 0.5)). The iron nitride powder may be mixed alone or with pure iron powder to form a mixture including iron and nitrogen in an 8:1 atomic ratio. The mixture then may be formed into a magnetic material via one of a variety of methods. For example, the mixture may be melted and subjected to a casting, quenching, and pressing process to form a plurality of workpieces. The plurality of workpieces may include at least one Fe_8N phase domain. The plurality of workpieces then may be annealed to form at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain, sintered and aged to join the plurality of workpieces, and, optionally, shaped and magnetized to form a magnet. As another example, the mixture may be pressed in the presence of a magnetic field, annealed to form at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain, sintered and aged, and, optionally, shaped and magnetized to form a magnet. As another example, the mixture may be melted and spun to form an iron nitride-containing material. The iron nitride-containing material may be annealed to form at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain, sintered and aged, and, optionally, shaped and magnetized to form a magnet.

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In some examples, the disclosure describes an iron nitride-containing magnetic material that additionally includes at least one ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopant. In some examples, at least one ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopant may be referred to as a ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic impurity. The ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopant may be used to increase at least one of the magnetic moment, magnetic coercivity, or thermal stability of the magnetic material formed from the mixture including iron and nitrogen. Examples of ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopants include Sc, Ti, V, Cr, Mn, Co, Ni, Cu, Zn, Zr, Nb, Mo, Ru, Rh, Pd, Ag, Cd, Pt, Au, Sm, C, Pb, W, Ga, Y, Mg, Hf, Ta, and combinations thereof. For example, including Mn dopant atoms at levels between about 5 at. % and about 15 at. % in an iron nitride material including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain may improve thermal stability of the Fe_{16}N_2 phase domains and magnetic coercivity of the material compared to an iron nitride material not including Mn dopant atoms. In some examples, the mixture including iron and nitrogen may include more than one (e.g., at least two) ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopants. In some examples, the ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopants may function as domain wall pinning sites, which may improve coercivity of the magnetic material formed from the mixture including iron and nitrogen.

In some examples, the disclosure describes an iron nitride-containing magnetic material that additionally includes at least one phase stabilizer. The at least one phase stabilizer may be an element selected to improve at least one of Fe_{16}N_2 volume ratio, thermal stability, coercivity, and erosion resistance. When present in the mixture, the at least one phase stabilizer may be present in the mixture including iron and nitrogen at a concentration between about 0.1 at. % and about 15 at. %. In some examples in which at least two phase stabilizers are present in the mixture, the total concentration of the at least two phase stabilizers may be between about 0.1 at. % and about 15 at. %. The at least one phase stabilizer may include, for example, B, Al, C, Si, P, O, Co, Cr, Mn, S, and combinations thereof. For example, including Mn dopant atoms at levels between about 5 at. % and about 15 at. % in an iron nitride material including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain may improve thermal stability of the Fe_{16}N_2 phase domains and magnetic coercivity of the material compared to an iron nitride material not including Mn dopant atoms.

FIG. 1 is a conceptual diagram illustrating a first milling apparatus that may be used to mill an iron-containing raw material with a nitrogen source. First milling apparatus 10 may be operated in rolling mode, in which the bin 12 of first milling apparatus 10 rotates about a horizontal axis, as indicated by arrow 14. As bin 12 rotates, milling spheres 16 move within bin 12 and, over time, crush iron-containing raw material 18. In addition to iron-containing raw material 18 and milling spheres 16, bin 12 encloses a nitrogen source 20.

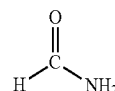
In the example illustrated in FIG. 1, milling spheres 16 may include a sufficiently hard material that, when contacting iron-containing raw material 18 with sufficient force, will wear iron-containing raw material 18 and cause particles of iron-containing raw material 18 to, on average, have a smaller size. In some examples, milling spheres 16 may be formed of steel, stainless steel, or the like. In some examples, the material from which milling spheres 16 are formed may not chemically react with iron-containing raw material 18 and/or nitrogen source 20. In some examples, milling spheres 16 may have an average diameter between about 5 millimeters (mm) and about 20 mm.

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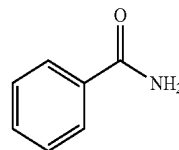
Iron-containing raw material 18 may include any material containing iron, including atomic iron, iron oxide, iron chloride, or the like. In some examples, iron-containing raw material 18 may include substantially pure iron (e.g., iron with less than about 10 atomic percent (at. %) dopants or impurities). In some examples, the dopants or impurities may include oxygen or iron oxide. Iron-containing raw material 18 may be provided in any suitable form, including, for example, a powder or relatively small particles. In some examples, an average size of particles in iron containing raw material 18 may be less than about 100 micrometers (μm).

Nitrogen source 20 may include ammonium nitrate (NH_4NO_3) or an amide-containing material, such as a liquid amide or a solution containing an amide, or hydrazine or a solution containing hydrazine. Amides include a C—N—H bond and hydrazine includes an N—N bond. Ammonium nitrate, amides and hydrazine may serve as a nitrogen donor for forming the powder including iron nitride. Example amides include carbamide ($(\text{NH}_2)_2\text{CO}$; also referred to as urea), methanamide (Formula 1), benzamide (Formula 2), and acetamide (Formula 3), although any amide may be used.

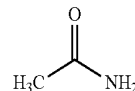
Formula 1



Formula 2



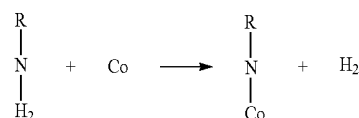
Formula 3



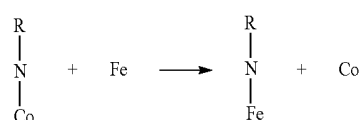
In some examples, amides may be derived from carboxylic acids by replacing the hydroxyl group of a carboxylic acid with an amine group. Amides of this type may be referred to as acid amides.

In some examples, bin 10 also may enclose a catalyst 22. Catalyst 22 may include, for example, cobalt (Co) particles and/or nickel (Ni) particles. Catalyst 22 catalyzes the nitriding of the iron-containing raw material 18. One possible conceptualized reaction pathway for nitriding iron using a Co catalyst is shown in Reactions 1-3, below. A similar reaction pathway may be followed when using Ni as the catalyst 22.

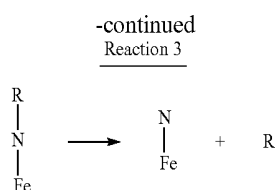
Reaction 1



Reaction 2



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Hence, by mixing sufficient amide and catalyst **22**, iron-containing raw material **18** may be converted to iron nitride containing material.

FIG. 2 is a conceptual flow diagram illustrating an example reaction sequence for forming an acid amide from a carboxylic acid, nitriding iron, and regenerating the acid amide from the hydrocarbon remaining after nitriding the iron. By utilizing the reaction sequence shown in FIG. 2, the catalyst **22** and portions of the nitrogen source **20** (e.g., aside from the nitrogen in the amide) may be recycled and reduce waste from the process. As shown in FIG. 2, a carboxylic acid may be reacted with ammonia at a temperature of about 100° C. to form an acid amide and evolve water. The acid amide then may be reacted with catalyst **22** (e.g., Co and/or Ni) to evolve hydrogen and bond the catalyst to the nitrogen. This compound then may react with iron to form an organic iron nitride and liberate the catalyst. Finally, the organic iron nitride may be reacted with LiAlH_4 to regenerate the carboxylic acid and form iron nitride.

Returning now to FIG. 1, bin **12** of milling apparatus **10** may be rotated at a rate sufficient to cause mixing of the components in bin **12** (e.g., milling spheres **16**, iron-containing raw material **18**, nitrogen source **20**, and catalyst **22**) and cause milling spheres **16** to mill iron-containing raw material **18**. In some examples, bin **12** may be rotated at a rotational speed of about 500 revolutions per minute (rpm) to about 2000 rpm, such as between about 600 rpm and about 650 rpm, about 600 rpm, or about 650 rpm. Further, to facilitate milling of iron-containing raw material **18**, in some examples, the mass ratio of the total mass of milling spheres **16** to the total mass of iron-containing raw material **18** may be about 20:1. Milling may be performed for a predetermined time selected to allow nitriding of iron-containing raw material **18** and milling of iron-containing raw material **18** (and nitridized iron containing material) to a predetermined size distribution. In some examples, milling may be performed for a time between about 1 hour and about 100 hours, such as between about 1 hour and about 20 hours, or about 20 hours. In some examples, the milling apparatus **10** may be stopped for about 10 minutes after each 10 hours of milling to allow milling apparatus **10**, iron-containing raw material **18**, nitrogen source **20**, and catalyst **22** to cool.

In other examples, the milling process may be performed using a different type of milling apparatus. FIG. 3 is a conceptual diagram illustrating another example milling apparatus for nitriding an iron-containing raw material. The milling apparatus illustrated in FIG. 3 may be referred to as a stirring mode milling apparatus **30**. Stirring mode milling apparatus includes a bin **32** and a shaft **34**. Mounted to shaft **34** are a plurality of paddles **36**, which stir contents of bin **32** as shaft **34** rotates. Contained in bin **32** is a mixture **38** of milling spheres, iron-containing raw material; a nitrogen source, such as an amide-containing or hydrazine-containing liquid or solution; and a catalyst. The milling spheres, iron-containing raw material, nitrogen source, and catalyst may be the same as or substantially similar to milling spheres **16**, iron-containing raw material **18**, nitrogen source **20**, and catalyst **22** described with reference to FIG. 1.

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Stirring mode milling apparatus **30** may be used to nitridize the iron-containing raw material **18** in similar manner as milling apparatus **10** illustrated in FIG. 1. For example, shaft **34** may be rotated at a rate between about 500 rpm and about 2000 rpm, such as between about 600 rpm and about 650 rpm, about 600 rpm, or about 650 rpm. Further, to facilitate milling of the iron-containing raw material, in some examples, the mass ratio of the milling spheres to the iron-containing raw material may be about 20:1. Milling may be performed for a predetermined time selected to allow nitriding of iron-containing raw material and milling of iron-containing raw material (and nitridized iron containing material) to a predetermined size distribution. In some examples, milling may be performed for a time between about 1 hour and about 100 hours, such as between about 1 hour and about 20 hours, or about 20 hours. In some examples, the milling apparatus **10** may be stopped for about 10 minutes after each 10 hours of milling to allow milling apparatus **10**, iron-containing raw material **18**, nitrogen source **20**, and catalyst **22** to cool.

FIG. 4 is a conceptual diagram illustrating another example milling apparatus for nitriding an iron-containing raw material. The milling apparatus illustrated in FIG. 4 may be referred to as a vibration mode milling apparatus **40**. As shown in FIG. 4, vibration mode milling apparatus may utilize both rotation of bin **42** about a horizontal axis (indicated by arrow **44**) and vertical vibrating motion of bin **42** (indicated by arrow **54**) to mill the iron-containing raw material **48** using milling spheres **46**. As shown in FIG. 4, bin **42** contains a mixture of milling spheres **46**, iron-containing raw material **48**, nitrogen source **50**, and catalysts **52**. Milling spheres **46**, iron-containing raw material **48**, nitrogen source **50**, and catalysts **52** may be the same or substantially similar to milling spheres **16**, iron-containing raw material **18**, nitrogen source **20**, and catalyst **22** described with reference to FIG. 1.

Vibration mode milling apparatus **40** may be used to nitridize the iron-containing raw material **18** in similar manner as milling apparatus **10** illustrated in FIG. 1. For example, shaft **34** may be rotated at a rate between about 500 rpm and about 2000 rpm, such as between about 600 rpm and about 650 rpm, about 600 rpm, or about 650 rpm. Further, to facilitate milling of the iron-containing raw material, in some examples, the mass ratio of the milling spheres to the iron-containing raw material may be about 20:1. Milling may be performed for a predetermined time selected to allow nitriding of iron-containing raw material and milling of iron-containing raw material (and nitridized iron containing material) to a predetermined size distribution. In some examples, milling may be performed for a time between about 1 hour and about 100 hours, such as between about 1 hour and about 20 hours, or about 20 hours. In some examples, the milling apparatus **10** may be stopped for about 10 minutes after each 10 hours of milling to allow milling apparatus **10**, iron-containing raw material **18**, nitrogen source **20**, and catalyst **22** to cool.

Regardless of the type of milling used to form iron nitride powder, the iron nitride powder may include at least one of Fe_2N , Fe_3N (e.g., $\xi\text{-Fe}_2\text{N}$), Fe_4N (e.g., $\epsilon\text{-Fe}_3\text{N}$), Fe_5N (e.g., $\eta\text{-Fe}_4\text{N}$), Fe_6N , Fe_7N , Fe_8N , Fe_9N , and Fe_{10}N , (where x is between about 0.05 and about 0.5). Additionally, the iron nitride powder may include other materials, such as pure iron, cobalt, nickel, dopants, or the like. In some examples, the cobalt, nickel, dopants, or the like may be at least partially removed after the milling process using one or more suitable techniques. In some examples, the iron nitride powder may be used in subsequent processes to form a

magnetic material, such as a permanent magnet, including an iron nitride phase, such as Fe_{16}N_2 . Milling an iron-containing raw material in the presence of a nitrogen source, such as ammonium nitrate or an amide- or hydrazine-containing liquid or solution, may be a cost-effective technique for forming an iron-nitride containing material. Further, milling an iron-containing raw material in the presence of a nitrogen source, such as ammonium nitrate or an amide- or hydrazine-containing liquid or solution, may facilitate mass production of iron nitride-containing material, and may reduce iron oxidation.

In some examples, prior to milling the iron-containing raw material in the presence of a nitrogen source, an iron precursor may be converted to the iron-containing raw material using a milling technique and/or a melting spinning technique. In some examples, the iron precursor may include at least one of Fe, FeCl_3 , Fe_2O_3 , or Fe_3O_4 . In some implementations, the iron nitride precursor may include particles with an average diameter of, for example, greater than about 0.1 mm (100 μm).

When the iron precursor is milled, any of the milling techniques described above may be utilized, including rolling mode milling, stirring mode milling, and vibration mode milling. In some examples, the iron precursor may be milled in the presence of at least one of calcium (Ca), aluminum (Al), or sodium (Na). The at least one of Ca, Al and/or Na may react with oxygen (molecular oxygen or oxygen ions) present in the iron precursor, if any. The oxidized at least one of Ca, Al, and/or Na then may be removed from the mixture. For example, the oxidized at least one of Ca, Al, and/or Na may be removed using at least one of a deposition technique, and evaporation technique, or an acid cleaning technique. In some examples, the oxygen reduction process can be carried out by flowing hydrogen gas within the milling apparatus. The hydrogen may react with any oxygen present in the iron-containing raw material, and the oxygen may be removed from the iron-containing raw material. In some examples, this may form substantially pure iron (e.g., iron with less than about 10 at. % dopants). Additionally or alternatively, the iron-containing raw material may be cleaned using an acid cleaning technique. For example, diluted HCl, with a concentration between about 5% and about 50% can be used to wash oxygen from the iron-containing raw material. Milling iron precursors in a mixture with at least one of Ca, Al, and/or Na (or acid cleaning) may reduce iron oxidation and may be effective with many different iron precursors, including, for example, Fe, FeCl_3 , Fe_2O_3 , or Fe_3O_4 , or combinations thereof. The milling of iron precursors may provide flexibility and cost advantages when preparing iron-containing raw materials for use in forming iron-nitride containing materials.

In other examples, the iron-containing raw material may be formed by melting spinning. In melting spinning, an iron precursor may be melted, e.g., by heating the iron precursor in a furnace to form molten iron precursor. The molten iron precursor then may be flowed over a cold roller surface to quench the molten iron precursor and form a brittle ribbon of material. In some examples, the cold roller surface may be cooled at a temperature below room temperature by a cooling agent, such as water. For example, the cold roller surface may be cooled at a temperature between about 10° C. and about 25° C. The brittle ribbon of material may then undergo a heat treatment step to pre-anneal the brittle iron material. In some examples, the heat treatment may be carried out at a temperature between about 200° C. and about 600° C. at atmospheric pressure for between about 0.1 hour and about 10 hours. In some examples, the heat

treatment may be performed in a nitrogen or argon atmosphere. After heat-treating the brittle ribbon of material under an inert gas, the brittle ribbon of material may be shattered to form an iron-containing powder. This powder may be used as the iron-containing raw material **18** or **48** in the technique for forming iron nitride-containing powder.

In some examples, the disclosure describes techniques for forming a magnetic material including Fe_{16}N_2 phase domains from an iron nitride-containing material. In some examples, the iron nitride-containing powder formed by the techniques described above may be used to form the magnet including Fe_{16}N_2 phase domains. In other examples, iron-containing raw material may be nitrized using other techniques, as will be described below.

Regardless of the source of the iron nitride containing material, the iron nitride containing material may be melted and continuously casted, pressed, and quenched to form workpieces containing iron nitride. In some examples, the workpieces may have a dimension in one or more axis between about 0.001 mm and about 50 mm. For example, in some examples in which the workpieces include ribbons, the ribbons may have a thickness between about 0.001 mm and about 5 mm. As another example, in some examples in which the workpieces include wires, the wires may have a diameter between about 0.1 mm and about 50 mm. The workpieces then may be strained and post-annealed to form at least one phase domain including Fe_{16}N_2 (e.g., α' - Fe_{16}N_2). In some examples, these workpieces including at least one phase domain including Fe_{16}N_2 (e.g., α' - Fe_{16}N_2) then may be joined with other workpieces including at least one phase domain including Fe_{16}N_2 (e.g., α' - Fe_{16}N_2) to form a magnet.

FIG. 5 is a flow diagram of an example technique for forming a workpiece including at least one phase domain including Fe_{16}N_2 (e.g., α' - Fe_{16}N_2). The technique illustrated in FIG. 5 includes melting a mixture including iron and nitrogen to form a molten iron nitride-containing mixture (**62**). The mixture including iron and nitrogen may include, for example, including an approximately 8:1 iron-to-nitrogen atomic ratio. For example, the mixture may include between about 8 atomic percent (at. %) and about 15 at. % nitrogen, with a balance iron, other elements, and dopants. As another example, the mixture may include between about 10 at. % and about 13 at. % nitrogen, or about 11.1 at. % nitrogen.

In some examples, the mixture including iron and nitrogen may include at least one type of iron nitride, such as, for example, FeN , Fe_2N (e.g., ξ - Fe_2N), Fe_3N (e.g., ϵ - Fe_3N), Fe_4N (e.g., γ' - Fe_4N and/or γ - Fe_4N), Fe_2N_6 , Fe_8N , Fe_{16}N_2 , or FeN_x (where x is between about 0.05 and about 0.5), in addition to iron and/or nitrogen. In some examples, the mixture including iron and nitrogen may have a purity (e.g., collective iron and nitrogen content) of at least 92 atomic percent (at. %).

In some examples, the mixture including iron and nitrogen may include at least one dopant, such as a ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopant and/or a phase stabilizer. In some examples, at least one ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopant may be referred to as a ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic impurity and/or the phase stabilizer may be referred to as a phase stabilization impurity. A ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopant may be used to increase at least one of the magnetic moment, magnetic coercivity, or thermal stability of the magnetic material formed from the mixture including iron and nitrogen. Examples of ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopants include Sc, Ti, V, Cr, Mn, Co, Ni, Cu, Zn, Zr, Nb, Mo, Ru, Rh, Pd, Ag, Cd, Pt, Au, Sm, C, Pb, W, Ga, Y,

Mg, Hf, and Ta. For example, including Mn dopant atoms at levels between about 5 at. % and about 15 at. % in an iron nitride material including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain may improve thermal stability of the Fe_{16}N_2 phase domains and magnetic coercivity of the material compared to an iron nitride material not including Mn dopant atoms. In some examples, more than one (e.g., at least two) ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopants may be included in the mixture including iron and nitrogen. In some examples, the ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopants may function as domain wall pinning sites, which may improve coercivity of the magnetic material formed from the mixture including iron and nitrogen. Table 1 includes example concentrations of ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopants within the mixture including iron and nitrogen.

TABLE 1

Dopant	Concentration (at. %)
Sc	0.1-33
Ti	0.1-28
V	0.1-25
Nb	0.1-27
Cr	0.1-10
Mo	0.1-3
Mn	0.1-28
Ru	2-28
Co	0.1-50
Rh	11-48
Ni	2-71
Pd	0.1-55
Pt	0.1-15
Cu	0.1-30
Ag	1-10
Au	1-10
Zn	0.1-30
Cd	0.1-35
Zr	0.1-33
Pb	0.1-60
Mg	0.1-60
W	0.1-20
Ta	0.1-20
Ga	0.1-10
Sm	0.1-11

Alternatively or additionally, the mixture including iron and nitrogen may include at least one phase stabilizer. The at least one phase stabilizer may be an element selected to improve at least one of Fe_{16}N_2 volume ratio, thermal stability, coercivity, and erosion resistance. When present in the mixture, the at least one phase stabilizer may be present in the mixture including iron and nitrogen at a concentration between about 0.1 at. % and about 15 at. %. In some examples in which at least two phase stabilizers are present in the mixture, the total concentration of the at least two phase stabilizers may be between about 0.1 at. % and about 15 at. %. The at least one phase stabilizer may include, for example, B, Al, C, Si, P, O, Co, Cr, Mn, and/or S. For example, including Mn dopant atoms at levels between about 5 at. % and about 15 at. % in an iron nitride material including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain may improve thermal stability of the Fe_{16}N_2 phase domains and magnetic coercivity of the material compared to an iron nitride material not including Mn dopant atoms.

In some examples, melting the mixture including iron and nitrogen to form a molten iron nitride-containing mixture (62) may include heating the mixture including iron and nitrogen, and, optionally, at least one nonmagnetic or ferromagnetic dopant and/or at least one phase stabilizer at a temperature above about 1500° C. In some examples, the

mixture including iron and nitrogen may be heated in a furnace using a radio frequency (RF) induction coil. In examples in which a bulk iron nitride-containing material is used, the furnace may be heated at a temperature greater than about 1600° C. In examples in which an iron-nitride containing powder is used, the furnace may be heated at a temperature greater than about 2000° C.

In other examples, the mixture including iron and nitrogen may be heated in a furnace using a low or mid-frequency induction coil. In some examples in which a low or mid-frequency induction coil is used to heat the furnace, the furnace may be heated at a temperature greater than about 1600° C., regardless of whether a bulk iron nitride-containing material or an iron-nitride containing powder is used as the mixture including iron and nitrogen. In some examples, the mixture including iron and nitrogen may be heated under an ambient atmosphere.

Once the mixture including iron and nitrogen is molten, the mixture may be subjected to a casting, quenching, and pressing process to form iron nitride-containing workpieces (64). In some examples, the casting, quenching, and pressing process may be continuous, as opposed to a batch process. The molten mixture including iron and nitrogen may be deposited in a mold, which may shape the mixture including iron and nitrogen into a predetermined shape, such as at least one wire, ribbon, or other article having length that is greater than its width or diameter. During the casting process, the temperature of the mold may be maintained at a temperature between about 650° C. and about 1200° C., depending on the casting speed. In some examples, during the casting process, the temperature of the mold may be maintained at a temperature between about 800° C. and about 1200° C. The casting process can be conducted in air, a nitrogen environment, an inert environment, a partial vacuum, a full vacuum, or any combination thereof. The casting process can be at any pressure, for example, between about 0.1 GPa and about 20 GPa. In some examples, the casting process can be assisted by a straining field, a temperature field, a pressure field, a magnetic field, an electrical field, or any combination thereof.

After casting is complete or while the casting process is being completed, the mixture including iron and nitrogen may be quenched to set the crystalline structure and phase composition of the iron-nitride containing material. In some examples, during the quenching process, the workpieces may be heated to a temperature above 650° C. for between about 0.5 hour and about 20 hours. In some examples, the temperature of the workpieces may be dropped abruptly below the martensite temperature of the workpiece alloy (Ms). For example, for Fe_{16}N_2 , the martensite temperature (Ms) is about 250° C. The medium used for quenching can include a liquid, such as water, brine (with a salt concentration between about 1% and about 30%), a non-aqueous liquid or solution such as an oil, or liquid nitrogen. In other examples, the quenching medium can include a gas, such as nitrogen gas with a flow rate between about 1 sccm and about 1000 sccm. In other examples, the quenching medium can include a solid, such as salt, sand, or the like. In some examples, the workpieces including iron and nitrogen may be cooled at a rate of greater than 50° C. per second during the quenching process. In some examples, the casting process can be assisted by a magnetic field and/or an electrical field.

After quenching is complete, the iron nitride-containing material may be pressed to achieve the predetermined size of the iron nitride-containing material. During the pressing process, the temperature of the iron nitride-containing mate-

rial may be maintained below about 250° C., and the iron nitride-containing material may be exposed to a pressure between about 5 tons and 50 tons, depending on the desired final dimension (e.g., thickness or diameter) of the iron nitride-containing material. When the pressing process is complete, the iron nitride-containing material may be in the shape of a workpiece with a dimension in one or more axis between about 0.001 mm and about 50 mm (e.g., a diameter between about 0.1 mm and about 50 mm for a wire or a thickness between about 0.001 mm and about 5 mm for a ribbon). The iron nitride-containing workpiece may include at least one Fe₈N iron nitride phase domain.

The technique illustrated in FIG. 5 further includes straining and post-annealing the iron nitride-containing workpiece (66). The straining and post-annealing process may convert at least some of the Fe₈N iron nitride phase domains to Fe₁₆N₂ phase domains. FIG. 6 is a conceptual diagram illustrating an example apparatus that may be used to strain and post-anneal the iron nitride-containing workpiece (66). The apparatus 70 illustrated in FIG. 6 includes a first roller 72 from which the iron nitride-containing workpiece 74 is unrolled and a second roller 76 onto which the iron nitride-containing workpiece 74 is rolled after the post-annealing process is complete. Although the example illustrated in FIG. 6 is described with reference to iron nitride-containing workpiece 74, in other examples, the apparatus 70 and technique may be used with iron nitride-containing materials defining different shapes, such as any of the shapes for workpieces described above.

For example, workpieces include a dimension that is longer, e.g., much longer, than other dimensions of the workpiece. Example workpieces with a dimension longer than other dimensions include fibers, wires, filaments, cables, films, thick films, foils, ribbons, sheets, or the like. In other examples, workpieces may not have a dimension that is longer than other dimensions of the workpiece. For example, workpieces can include grains or powders, such as spheres, cylinders, flecks, flakes, regular polyhedra, irregular polyhedra, and any combination thereof. Examples of suitable regular polyhedra include tetrahedrons, hexahedrons, octahedron, decahedron, dodecahedron and the like, non-limiting examples of which include cubes, prisms, pyramids, and the like.

In general, any two-dimensional or three-dimensional shape that can be sufficiently stressed while it is being annealed can be incorporated in the techniques described herein. For example, with a sufficiently large press to create tensional stress, wires can become cylinders. In some examples, the workpieces may define have a non-circular cross section. Multiple workpieces having one or more types of shapes, cross sections, or both may also be used in combination in the techniques described herein. In some examples, the workpiece cross section can be arc-shaped, oval, triangular, square, rectangular, pentagonal, hexagonal, higher polygonal, as well as regular polygonal and irregular polygonal variations thereof. Accordingly, as long as the workpiece can be suitably stressed, the workpiece can be induced to form at least one Fe₁₆N₂ phase domain.

As iron nitride-containing workpiece 74 is unrolled from first roller 72, iron nitride-containing workpiece 74 travels through an optional straightening section 78, which may include a plurality of rollers that contact iron nitride-containing workpiece 74 to substantially straighten (e.g., straighten or nearly straighten) iron nitride-containing workpiece 74. After the optional straightening section 78, iron nitride-containing workpiece 74 may pass through an optional cleaning section 80, in which iron nitride-contain-

ing workpiece 74 may be cleaned using, e.g., scrubbing and water or another solvent that removes surface dopants but does not substantially react with the iron nitride-containing workpiece 74.

Upon exiting optional cleaning section 80, iron nitride-containing workpiece 74 passes between a first set of rollers 82 and to the straining and post-annealing section 84. In straining and post-annealing section 84, iron nitride-containing workpiece 74 is subjected to mechanical strain, e.g., by being stretched and/or pressed, while being heated. In some examples, iron nitride-containing workpiece 74 may be strained along a direction substantially parallel (e.g., parallel or nearly parallel) to a <001> axis of at least one iron crystal in iron nitride-containing workpiece 74. In some examples, iron nitride-containing workpiece 74 is formed of iron nitride having a body centered cubic (bcc) crystal structure. In some examples, iron nitride-containing workpiece 74 may be formed of a plurality of bcc iron nitride crystals. In some of these examples, the plurality of iron crystals are oriented such that at least some, e.g., a majority or substantially all, of the <001> axes of individual unit cells and/or crystals are substantially parallel to the direction in which strain is applied to iron nitride-containing workpiece 74. For example, when the iron is formed as iron nitride-containing workpiece 74, at least some of the <001> axes may be substantially parallel to the major axis of iron nitride-containing workpiece 74.

In an unstrained iron bcc crystal lattice, the <100>, <010>, and <001> axes of the crystal unit cell may have substantially equal lengths. However, when a force, e.g., a tensile force, is applied to the crystal unit cell in a direction substantially parallel to one of the crystal axes, e.g., the <001> crystal axis, the unit cell may distort and the iron crystal structure may be referred to as body centered tetragonal (bct). For example, FIG. 7 is a conceptual diagram that shows eight (8) iron unit cells in a strained state with nitrogen atoms implanted in interstitial spaces between iron atoms. The example in FIG. 7 includes four iron unit cells in a first layer 92 and four iron unit cells in a second layer 94. Second layer 94 overlays first layer 92 and the unit cells in second layer 94 are substantially aligned with the unit cells in first layer 92 (e.g., the <001> crystal axes of the unit cells are substantially aligned between the layers). As shown in FIG. 7, the iron unit cells are distorted such that the length of the unit cell along the <001> axis is approximately 3.14 angstroms (Å) while the length of the unit cell along the <010> and <100> axes is approximately 2.86 Å. The iron unit cell may be referred to as a bct unit cell when in the strained state. When the iron unit cell is in the strained state, the <001> axis may be referred to as the c-axis of the unit cell.

The strain may be exerted on iron nitride-containing workpiece 74 using a variety of strain inducing apparatuses. For example, as shown in FIG. 6, iron nitride-containing workpiece 74 may be received by (e.g., wound around) first set of rollers 82 and second set of rollers 86, and sets of rollers 82, 86 may be rotated in opposite directions to exert a tensile force on the iron nitride-containing workpiece 74. In other examples, opposite ends of iron nitride-containing workpiece 74 may be gripped in mechanical grips, e.g., clamps, and the mechanical grips may be moved away from each other to exert a tensile force on the iron nitride-containing workpiece 74.

A strain inducing apparatus may strain iron nitride-containing workpiece 74 to a certain elongation. For example, the strain on iron nitride-containing workpiece 74 may be between about 0.3% and about 12%. In other examples, the

strain on iron nitride-containing workpiece 74 may be less than about 0.3% or greater than about 12%. In some examples, exerting a certain strain on iron nitride-containing workpiece 74 may result in a substantially similar strain on individual unit cells of the iron, such that the unit cell is elongated along the $\langle 001 \rangle$ axis between about 0.3% and about 12%.

While iron nitride-containing workpiece 74 is strained, iron nitride-containing workpiece 74 may be heated to anneal iron nitride-containing workpiece 74. Iron nitride-containing workpiece 74 may be annealed by heating iron nitride-containing workpiece 74 to a temperature between about 100° C. and about 250° C., such as between about 120° C. and about 200° C. Annealing iron nitride-containing workpiece 74 while straining iron nitride-containing workpiece 74 may facilitate conversion of at least some of the iron nitride phase domains to Fe_{16}N_2 phase domains.

The annealing process may continue for a predetermined time that is sufficient to allow diffusion of the nitrogen atoms to the appropriate interstitial spaces. In some examples, the annealing process continues for between about 20 hours and about 100 hours, such as between about 40 hours and about 60 hours. In some examples, the annealing process may occur under an inert atmosphere, such as Ar, to reduce or substantially prevent oxidation of the iron. In some implementations, while iron nitride-containing workpiece 74 is annealed the temperature is held substantially constant.

FIG. 8 is a conceptual diagram illustrating an example technique that may be used to strain and anneal a plurality of iron nitride-containing workpieces 74 in parallel. Although the example illustrated in FIG. 8 is described with reference to iron nitride-containing workpieces 74, in other examples, the technique of FIG. 8 may be used with iron nitride-containing materials defining different shapes, such as any of the shapes for workpieces described above. In the example technique illustrated in FIG. 8, a plurality of iron nitride-containing workpieces 74 are disposed in parallel, and each of iron nitride-containing workpieces 74 includes a region that includes polycrystalline iron nitride 102 and a region that consists essentially of a single Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain 104.

As shown in FIG. 8, a heating coil 106 is disposed adjacent to the plurality of iron nitride-containing workpieces 74 and moves relative to the plurality of iron nitride-containing workpieces 74 in a direction indicated by arrow 108, which may be substantially parallel to the major axes of the respective iron nitride-containing workpieces 74. Each of the plurality of iron nitride-containing workpieces 74 may be strained using rollers, as shown in the inset of FIG. 8A, and similar to the first and second sets of rollers 82 and 86 illustrated in FIG. 6. As the heating coil 106 moves relative to workpieces 74 (e.g., due to motion of coil 106 and/or workpieces 74), workpieces 74 are annealed under strain and at least some of the phase constitution of workpieces 74 changes from a different iron nitride phase (e.g., Fe_8N , FeN , Fe_2N (e.g., $\epsilon\text{-Fe}_2\text{N}$), Fe_3N (e.g., $\epsilon\text{-Fe}_3\text{N}$), Fe_4N (e.g., $\gamma'\text{-Fe}_4\text{N}$), Fe_2N_3 , Fe_8N , Fe_{16}N_2 , and FeN_x (where x is between about 0.05 and about 0.5)) to Fe_{16}N_2 . In some examples, substantially all iron nitride present in the polycrystalline iron nitride region 102 is transformed to Fe_{16}N_2 . In some instances, each of iron workpieces 74 consists essentially of a single Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain 104 after being annealed.

In some examples, regardless of the apparatus used to strain and anneal iron nitride-containing workpiece 74, the strain exerted on iron nitride-containing workpiece 74 is sufficient to reduce a dimension of iron nitride-containing

workpiece 74 in at least one axis. As described above, in some examples, iron nitride-containing workpiece 74 may define a dimension in at least one axis of between about 1 mm and about 5 mm after being casted, quenched, and pressed. After the straining and annealing (66), in some examples, iron nitride-containing workpiece 74 may define a dimension in the at least one axis of less than about 0.1 mm. In some examples when iron nitride-containing workpiece 74 defines a dimension of less than about 0.1 mm in at least one axis, iron nitride-containing workpiece 74 may consist essentially of a single domain structure, such as a single Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain. This may contribute to high anisotropy, which may result in a higher energy product than an iron nitride magnet with lower anisotropy. For example, an iron-nitride containing workpiece that consists essentially of a single Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain may have a magnetic coercivity as high as 4000 Oe, and an energy product as high as 30 MGOe.

In some examples, after formation of the workpiece including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain, the workpiece may be magnetized by exposing the workpiece to a magnetic field having a predetermined, sufficiently large moment in a predetermined direction relative to the workpiece including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain. Additionally or alternatively, as will be described below, in some examples, the iron nitride-containing workpiece 74 may be assembled with other iron nitride-containing workpieces 74 to form a larger magnet.

In the example technique described with reference to FIG. 5, an iron nitride-containing material was used as an input. In other examples, an iron-containing material (as opposed to an iron nitride-containing material) may be used and may be nitridized as part of the process of forming the workpieces including Fe_{16}N_2 . In some examples, the technique described above with respect to FIGS. 1-4 may be utilized to nitride an iron-containing raw material. The iron nitride-containing powder then may be used as an input for the technique illustrated in FIG. 5.

In other examples, a different technique may be used to nitridize an iron-containing material. FIG. 9 is a conceptual diagram of an example apparatus that may be used to nitridize an iron-containing raw material using a urea diffusion process. Such a urea diffusion process may be used to nitridize an iron-containing raw material, whether the iron-containing material includes single crystal iron, polycrystalline iron, or the like. Moreover, iron materials with different shapes, such as wires, ribbons, sheets, powders, or bulk, can also be infused with nitrogen using a urea diffusion process. For example, for some wire materials, the diameter of the wire may be between, e.g., several micrometers and several millimeters. As another example, for some sheet or ribbon materials, the sheet or ribbon thickness may be from, e.g., several nanometers to several millimeters. As a further example, for some bulk materials, the material may mass between, e.g., about 1 milligram and several kilograms.

As shown, apparatus 110 includes crucible 112 within vacuum furnace 114. Iron-containing material 122 is located within crucible 112 along with urea 118. As shown in FIG. 9, a carrier gas including Ar and hydrogen is fed into crucible 112 during the urea diffusion process. In other examples, a different carrier gas or even no carrier gas may be used. In some examples, the gas flow rate within vacuum furnace 114 during the urea diffusion process may be between approximately 5 sccm to approximately 50 sccm, such as, e.g., 20 sccm to approximately 50 sccm or 5 sccm to approximately 20 sccm.

Heating coils **116** may heat iron-containing material **122** and urea **118** during the urea diffusion process using any suitable technique, such as, e.g., eddy current, inductive current, radio frequency, and the like. Crucible **112** may be configured to withstand the temperature used during the urea diffusion process. In some examples, crucible **112** may be able to withstand temperatures up to approximately 1600° C.

Urea **118** may be heated with iron-containing material **122** to generate nitrogen that may diffuse into iron-containing material **122** to form an iron nitride-containing material. In some examples, urea **118** and iron-containing material **122** may be heated to approximately 650° C. or greater within crucible **112** followed by cooling to quench the iron and nitrogen mixture to form an iron nitride material. In some examples, urea **118** and iron-containing material **122** may be heated to approximately 650° C. or greater within crucible **112** for between approximately 5 minutes to approximately 1 hour. In some examples, urea **118** and iron-containing material **122** may be heated to between approximately 1000° C. to approximately 1500° C. for several minutes to approximately an hour. The time of heating may depend on nitrogen thermal coefficient in different temperature. For example, if iron-containing material **122** has thickness of about 1 micrometer, the diffusion process may be finished in about 5 minutes at about 1200° C., about 12 minutes at 1100° C., and so forth.

To cool the heated material during the quenching process, cold water may be circulated outside the crucible **112** to rapidly cool the contents. In some examples, the temperature may be decreased from 650° C. to room temperature in about 20 seconds.

The iron nitride-containing material formed by the urea diffusion process then may be used as an input to the technique illustrated in FIG. 5 for forming workpieces including at least one Fe₁₆N₂ phase domain. Hence, either iron nitride-containing material or iron-containing material may be used to form workpieces including at least one Fe₁₆N₂ phase domain. However, when iron nitride-containing material is used as the starting material, further nitriding may not be performed, which may lower costs of manufacturing workpieces including at least one Fe₁₆N₂ phase domain compared to techniques that include nitriding iron-containing raw materials.

In some examples, the workpieces including at least one Fe₁₆N₂ phase domain may subsequently be joined to form a magnetic material of larger size than an individual workpiece. In some examples, as described above, the workpieces including at least one Fe₁₆N₂ phase domain may define a dimension of less than 0.1 mm in at least one axis. Multiple workpieces including at least one Fe₁₆N₂ phase domain may be joined to form a magnetic material having a size of greater than 0.1 mm in the at least one axis. FIGS. 10A-10C are conceptual diagrams illustrating an example technique for joining at least two workpieces including at least one Fe₁₆N₂ phase domain. As shown in FIG. 10A, tin (Sn) **132** may be disposed on a surface of at least one workpiece including at least one Fe₁₆N₂ phase domain, such as first workpiece **134** and second workpiece **136**. As shown between FIGS. 10A and 10B, crystallite and atomic migration may cause the Sn to agglomerate. First workpiece **134** and second workpiece **136** then may be pressed together and heated to form an iron-tin (Fe—Sn) alloy. The Fe—Sn alloy may be annealed at a temperature between about 150° C. and about 400° C. to join first workpiece **134** and second workpiece **136**. In some examples, the annealing temperature may be sufficiently low that magnetic properties of first workpiece **134** and second workpiece **136** (e.g., magnetiza-

tion of the at least one Fe₁₆N₂ and proportion of Fe₁₆N₂ phase domains within workpieces **134** and **136**) may be substantially unchanged. In some examples, rather than Sn **132** being used to join the at least to workpieces including at least one Fe₁₆N₂ phase domain, Cu, Zn, or Ag may be used.

In some examples, <001> crystal axes of the respective workpieces **134** and **136** may be substantially aligned. In examples in which the <001> crystal axes of the respective workpieces **134** and **136** are substantially parallel to a long axis of the respective workpieces **134** and **136**, substantially aligning the long axes of workpieces **134** and **136** may substantially align the <001> crystal axes of workpieces **134** and **136**. Aligning the <001> crystal axes of the respective workpieces **134** and **136** may provide uniaxial magnetic anisotropy to the magnet formed from workpieces **134** and **136**.

FIG. 11 is a conceptual diagram illustrating another example technique for joining at least two workpieces including at least one Fe₁₆N₂ phase domain. As shown in FIG. 11, a plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe₁₆N₂ phase domain **142** are disposed adjacent to each other, with long axes substantially aligned. As described above, in some examples, substantially aligning the long axes of workpieces **142** may substantially align the <001> crystal axes of workpieces **142**, which may provide uniaxial magnetic anisotropy to the magnet formed from workpieces **142**.

In the example of FIG. 11, ferromagnetic particles **144** are disposed within a resin or other adhesive **146**. Examples of resin or other adhesive **146** include natural or synthetic resins, including ion-exchange resins, such as those available under the trade designation Amberlite™, from The Dow Chemical Company, Midland, Mich.; epoxies, such as Bismaleimide-Triazine (BT)-Epoxy; a polyacrylonitrile; a polyester; a silicone; a prepolymer; a polyvinyl butyral; urea-formaldehyde, or the like. Because resin or other adhesive **146** substantially fully encapsulates the plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe₁₆N₂ phase domain **142**, and ferromagnetic particles **144** may be disposed substantially throughout the volume of resin or other adhesive **146**, at least some ferromagnetic particles **144** are disposed between adjacent workpieces of the plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe₁₆N₂ phase domain **142**. In some examples, the resin or other adhesive **146** may be cured to bond the plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe₁₆N₂ phase domain **142** to each other.

The ferromagnetic particles **144** may be magnetically coupled to Fe₁₆N₂ hard magnetic material within the plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe₁₆N₂ phase domain **142** via exchange spring coupling. Exchange spring coupling may effectively harden the magnetically soft ferromagnetic particles **144** and provide magnetic properties for the bulk material similar to those of a bulk material consisting essentially of Fe₁₆N₂. To achieve exchange spring coupling throughout the volume of the magnetic material, the Fe₁₆N₂ domains may be distributed throughout the magnetic structure **140**, e.g., at a nanometer or micrometer scale.

In some examples, magnetic materials including Fe₁₆N₂ domains and domains of ferromagnetic particles **144** and resin or other adhesive **146** may include a volume fraction of Fe₁₆N₂ domains of less than about 40 volume percent (vol. %) of the entire magnetic structure **140**. For example, the magnetically hard Fe₁₆N₂ phase may constitute between about 5 vol. % and about 40 vol. % of the total volume of the magnetic structure **140**, or between about 5 vol. % and

about 20 vol. % of the total volume of the magnetic structure **140**, or between about 10 vol. % and about 20 vol. % of the total volume of the magnetic structure **140**, or between about 10 vol. % and about 15 vol. % of the total volume of the magnetic structure **140**, or about 10 vol. % of the total volume of the magnetic structure **140**, with the remainder of the volume being ferromagnetic particles **144** and resin or other adhesive **146**. The ferromagnetic particles **144** may include, for example, Fe, FeCo, Fe₈N, or combinations thereof.

In some examples, the magnetic structure **140** may be annealed at a temperature between about 50° C. and about 200° C. for between about 0.5 hours and about 20 hours to form a solid magnetic structure **140**.

FIG. **12** is a conceptual diagram that illustrates another technique for joining at least two workpieces including at least one Fe₁₆N₂ phase domain. FIG. **12** illustrates a compression shock apparatus that may be used to generate a compression shock, which joins the at least two workpieces including at least one Fe₁₆N₂ phase domain. FIG. **13** is a conceptual diagram illustrating a plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe₁₆N₂ phase domain **172** with ferromagnetic particles **144** disposed about the plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe₁₆N₂ phase domain **172**. As shown in FIG. **13**, a plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe₁₆N₂ phase domain **172** are disposed adjacent to each other, with long axes substantially aligned. As described above, in some examples, substantially aligning the long axes of workpieces **172** may substantially align the <001> crystal axes of workpieces **172**, which may provide uniaxial magnetic anisotropy to the magnet formed from workpieces **172**. At least some ferromagnetic particles **174** are disposed between adjacent workpieces of the plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe₁₆N₂ phase domain **172**.

In some examples, shock compression may include placing workpieces **172** between parallel plates. The workpieces **172** may be cooled by flowing liquid nitrogen through conduit coupled to a back side of one or both of the parallel plates, e.g., to a temperature below 0° C. A gas gun may be used to impact one of the parallel plates with a burst of gas at a high velocity, such as about 850 m/s. In some examples, the gas gun may have a diameter between about 40 mm and about 80 mm.

After the shock compression, the ferromagnetic particles **174** may be magnetically coupled to Fe₁₆N₂ hard magnetic material within the plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe₁₆N₂ phase domain **172** via exchange spring coupling. Exchange spring coupling may effectively harden the magnetically soft ferromagnetic particles **174** and provide magnetic properties for the bulk material similar to those of a bulk material consisting essentially of Fe₁₆N₂. To achieve exchange spring coupling throughout the volume of the magnetic material, the Fe₁₆N₂ domains may be distributed throughout the magnetic structure formed by the plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe₁₆N₂ phase domain **172** and ferromagnetic particles **174**, e.g., at a nanometer or micrometer scale.

In some examples, magnetic materials including Fe₁₆N₂ domains and domains of ferromagnetic particles **174** may include a volume fraction of Fe₁₆N₂ domains of less than about 40 volume percent (vol. %) of the entire magnetic structure. For example, the magnetically hard Fe₁₆N₂ phase may constitute between about 5 vol. % and about 40 vol. % of the total volume of the magnetic structure, or between about 5 vol. % and about 20 vol. % of the total volume of the magnetic structure, or between about 10 vol. % and about 20 vol. % of the total volume of the magnetic

structure, or between about 10 vol. % and about 15 vol. % of the total volume of the magnetic structure, or about 10 vol. % of the total volume of the magnetic structure, with the remainder of the volume being ferromagnetic particles **174**. The ferromagnetic particles **174** may include, for example, Fe, FeCo, Fe₈N, or combinations thereof.

FIG. **14** is a conceptual diagram of another apparatus that may be used for joining at least two workpieces including at least one Fe₁₆N₂ phase domain. The apparatus **180** of FIG. **14** includes a conductive coil **186** through which a current may be applied, which generates an electromagnetic field. The current may be generated in a pulse to generate an electromagnetic force, which may help to consolidate the at least two workpieces including Fe₁₆N₂ phase domains **182**. In some examples, ferromagnetic particles **184** may be disposed about the at least two workpieces including Fe₁₆N₂ phase domains **182**. In some examples, the at least two workpieces including Fe₁₆N₂ phase domains **182** may be disposed within an electrically conductive tube or container within the bore of conductive coil **186**. Conductive coil **186** may be pulsed with a high electrical current to produce a magnetic field in the bore of conductive coil **186** that, in turn, induces electrical currents in the electrically conductive tube or container. The induced currents interact with the magnetic field generated by conductive coil **186** to produce an inwardly acting magnetic force that collapses the electrically conductive tube or container. The collapsing electromagnetic container or tube transmits a force to the at least two workpieces including Fe₁₆N₂ phase domains **182** and joins the at least two workpieces including Fe₁₆N₂ phase domains **182**. After the consolidation of the at least two workpieces including Fe₁₆N₂ phase domains **182** with the ferromagnetic particles **184**, the ferromagnetic particles **184** may be magnetically coupled to Fe₁₆N₂ hard magnetic material within the plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe₁₆N₂ phase domain **182** via exchange spring coupling. In some examples, this technique may be used to produce workpieces that have at least one of cylindrical symmetry, a high aspect-ratio, or a net shape (a shape corresponding to a desired final shape of the workpiece).

In some examples, magnetic materials including Fe₁₆N₂ domains and domains of ferromagnetic particles **184** may include a volume fraction of Fe₁₆N₂ domains of less than about 40 volume percent (vol. %) of the entire magnetic structure. For example, the magnetically hard Fe₁₆N₂ phase may constitute between about 5 vol. % and about 40 vol. % of the total volume of the magnetic structure, or between about 5 vol. % and about 20 vol. % of the total volume of the magnetic structure, or between about 10 vol. % and about 20 vol. % of the total volume of the magnetic structure, or between about 10 vol. % and about 15 vol. % of the total volume of the magnetic structure, or about 10 vol. % of the total volume of the magnetic structure, with the remainder of the volume being ferromagnetic particles **184**. The ferromagnetic particles **184** may include, for example, Fe, FeCo, Fe₈N, or combinations thereof.

In any of the above examples, other techniques for assisting consolidation of a plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe₁₆N₂ phase domain may be used, such as pressure, electric pulse, spark, applied external magnetic fields, a radio frequency signal, laser heating, infrared heating, for the like. Each of these example techniques for joining a plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe₁₆N₂ phase domain may include relatively low temperatures such that the temperatures use may leave the Fe₁₆N₂ phase domains substantially unmodified (e.g., by converting Fe₁₆N₂ phase domains to other types of iron nitride).

In some examples, the disclosure describes techniques for forming a magnet including Fe_{16}N_2 phase domains from a powder including iron nitride. By using iron nitride-containing raw materials to form the permanent magnet including Fe_{16}N_2 phase domains, further nitriding of iron may be avoided, which may reduce a cost of forming the permanent magnet including Fe_{16}N_2 phase domains, e.g., compared to techniques which include nitriding pure iron.

FIG. 15 is a flow diagram that illustrates an example technique for forming a magnet including iron nitride (e.g., Fe_{16}N_2 phase domains). As shown in FIG. 15, the technique includes forming a mixture including an approximately 8:1 iron-to-nitrogen atomic ratio (192). For example, the mixture may include between about 8 atomic percent (at. %) and about 15 at. % nitrogen, with a balance iron, other elements, and dopants. As another example, the mixture may include between about 10 at. % and about 13 at. % nitrogen, or about 11.1 at. % nitrogen.

In some examples, the iron nitride-containing powder formed by milling iron in a nitrogen source (e.g., an amide- or hydrazine-containing liquid or solution), described above, may be used in the mixture including the approximately 8:1 iron-to-nitrogen atomic ratio. The iron nitride-containing powder may include at least one of FeN , Fe_2N , Fe_3N , Fe_4N , Fe_8N , FeN_6 , Fe_8N , Fe_{16}N_2 , or FeN_x (where x is between about 0.05 and about 0.5). Additionally, the iron nitride powder may include other materials, such as pure iron, cobalt, nickel, dopants, or the like.

In some examples, the iron nitride-containing powder may be mixed with pure iron to establish the desired iron to nitrogen atomic ratio. The specific proportion of the different types of iron nitride-containing powder and pure iron may be influenced by the type and proportion of iron nitride in the iron-nitride-containing powder. As described above, the iron-nitride containing powder may include at least one of FeN , Fe_2N (e.g., $\xi\text{-Fe}_2\text{N}$), Fe_3N (e.g., $\epsilon\text{-Fe}_3\text{N}$), Fe_4N (e.g., $\gamma'\text{-Fe}_4\text{N}$), FeN_6 , Fe_8N , Fe_{16}N_2 , and FeN_x (where x is between about 0.05 and about 0.5).

The resulting mixture including the approximately 8:1 iron to nitrogen ratio then may be formed into a magnet that includes iron nitride phase domains (194). The mixture including the approximately 8:1 iron to nitrogen ratio may be, for example, melted, formed into an article with a predetermined shape, and annealed to form Fe_{16}N_2 phase domains (e.g., $\alpha''\text{-Fe}_{16}\text{N}_2$ phase domains) within the article. FIGS. 16-18 are flow diagrams illustrating three example techniques for forming a magnet including iron nitride phase domains (94).

As shown in FIG. 16, a first example technique includes forming a molten iron nitride mixture (202). In some examples, the mixture including iron and nitrogen may have a purity (e.g., collective iron and nitrogen content) of at least 92 atomic percent (at. %).

In some examples, the mixture including iron and nitrogen may include at least one dopant, such as a ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopant and/or a phase stabilizer. In some examples, at least one ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopant may be referred to as a ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic impurity and/or the phase stabilizer may be referred to as a phase stabilization impurity. A ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopant may be used to increase at least one of the magnetic moment, magnetic coercivity, or thermal stability of the magnetic material formed from the mixture including iron and nitrogen. Examples of ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopants include Sc, Ti, V, Cr, Mn, Co, Ni, Cu, Zn, Zr, Nb, Mo, Ru, Rh, Pd, Ag, Cd, Pt, Au, Sm, C, Pb, W, Ga, Y, Mg, Hf, and Ta. For example, including Mn dopant atoms at

levels between about 5 at. % and about 15 at. % in an iron nitride material including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain may improve thermal stability of the Fe_{16}N_2 phase domains and magnetic coercivity of the material compared to an iron nitride material not including Mn dopant atoms. In some examples, more than one (e.g., at least two) ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopants may be included in the mixture including iron and nitrogen. In some examples, the ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopants may function as domain wall pinning sites, which may improve coercivity of the magnetic material formed from the mixture including iron and nitrogen.

Alternatively or additionally, the mixture including iron and nitrogen may include at least one phase stabilizer. The at least one phase stabilizer may be an element selected to improve at least one of Fe_{16}N_2 volume ratio, thermal stability, coercivity, and erosion resistance. When present in the mixture, the at least one phase stabilizer may be present in the mixture including iron and nitrogen at a concentration between about 0.1 at. % and about 15 at. %. In some examples in which at least two phase stabilizers are present in the mixture, the total concentration of the at least two phase stabilizers may be between about 0.1 at. % and about 15 at. %. The at least one phase stabilizer may include, for example, B, Al, C, Si, P, O, Co, Cr, Mn, and/or S. For example, including Mn dopant atoms at levels between about 5 at. % and about 15 at. % in an iron nitride material including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain may improve thermal stability of the Fe_{16}N_2 phase domains and magnetic coercivity of the material compared to an iron nitride material not including Mn dopant atoms.

In some examples, forming the molten iron nitride mixture (202) may include heating the mixture including iron and nitrogen, and, optionally, at least one nonmagnetic or ferromagnetic dopant and/or at least one phase stabilizer at a temperature above about 1500° C. In some examples, the mixture including iron and nitrogen may be heated in a furnace using a radio frequency (RF) induction coil. In examples in which a bulk iron nitride-containing material is used, the furnace may be heated at a temperature greater than about 1600° C. In examples in which an iron-nitride containing powder is used, the furnace may be heated at a temperature greater than about 2000° C.

In other examples, the mixture including iron and nitrogen may be heated in a furnace using a low or mid-frequency induction coil. In some examples in which a low or mid-frequency induction coil is used to heat the furnace, the furnace may be heated at a temperature greater than about 1600° C., regardless of whether a bulk iron nitride-containing material or an iron-nitride containing powder is used as the mixture including iron and nitrogen. In some examples, the mixture including iron and nitrogen may be heated under an ambient atmosphere.

Once the mixture including iron and nitrogen is molten, the mixture may be subjected to a casting, quenching, and pressing process to form iron nitride-containing workpieces (204). The molten mixture including iron and nitrogen may be deposited in a mold, which may shape the mixture including iron and nitrogen into a predetermined shape, such as at least one workpiece or other article having length that is greater than its width or diameter. During the casting process, the temperature of the mold may be maintained at a temperature between about 650° C. and about 1200° C., depending on the casting speed. In some examples, during the casting process, the temperature of the mold may be maintained at a temperature between about 800° C. and about 1200° C. In some examples, the casting process can be

conducted in air, a nitrogen environment, an inert environment, a partial vacuum, a full vacuum, or any combination thereof. In some examples, the pressure during casting can be between about 0.1 GPa and about 20 GPa. In some implementations, the casting and quenching process can be assisted by a straining field, a temperature field, a pressure field, a magnetic field, and/or an electrical field, or any combination thereof.

After casting is complete or while the casting process is being completed, the mixture including iron and nitrogen may be quenched to set the crystalline structure and phase composition of the iron-nitride containing material. In some examples, the quenching process includes heating the workpieces to a temperature above 650° C. for between about 0.5 hour and about 20 hours. In some examples, the temperature of the workpieces may be dropped abruptly below the martensite temperature of the workpiece alloy (Ms). For example, for Fe₁₆N₂, the martensite temperature (Ms) is about 250° C. In some examples, the mixture including iron and nitrogen may be cooled at a rate of greater than 50° C. per second during the quenching process. The medium used for quenching can include a liquid, such as water, brine (with a salt concentration between about 1% and about 30%), a non-aqueous liquid or solution such as an oil, or liquid nitrogen. In other examples, the quenching medium can include a gas, such as nitrogen gas with a flow rate between about 1 sccm and about 1000 sccm. In other examples, the quenching medium can include a solid, such as salt, sand, or the like. In some implementations, an electrical field or a magnetic field can be applied to assist the quenching process.

After quenching is complete, the iron nitride-containing material may be pressed to achieve the predetermined size of the iron nitride-containing material. During the pressing process, the temperature of the iron nitride-containing material may be maintained below about 250° C., and the iron nitride-containing material may be exposed to a pressure between about 5 tons and 50 tons, depending on the desired final dimension of the iron nitride-containing material. In some examples, to facilitate the reduction of the dimension of the workpiece in at least one axis, a roller may be used to exert a pressure on the iron nitride-containing material. In some examples, the temperature of the iron nitride-containing material may be between about -150° C. and about 300° C. during the pressing process. When the pressing process is complete, the iron nitride-containing material may be in the shape of a workpiece with a dimension in at least one axis between about 0.01 mm and about 50 mm, as described above. The iron nitride-containing workpiece may include at least one Fe₈N iron nitride phase domain.

The technique illustrated in FIG. 16 further includes annealing the iron nitride-containing workpiece (206). The annealing process may convert at least some of the Fe₈N iron nitride phase domains to Fe₁₆N₂ phase domains. In some examples, the annealing process may be similar to or substantially the same (e.g., the same or nearly the same) as the straining and annealing step (66) described with respect to FIG. 5. A strain inducing apparatus may strain the iron nitride-containing workpiece to a certain elongation. For example, the strain on the iron nitride-containing workpiece may be between about 0.3% and about 12%. In other examples, the strain on the iron nitride-containing workpiece may be less than about 0.3% or greater than about 12%. In some examples, exerting a certain strain on iron nitride-containing workpiece may result in a substantially

similar strain on individual unit cells of the iron, such that the unit cell is elongated along the <001> axis between about 0.3% and about 12%.

While the iron nitride-containing workpiece is strained, the iron nitride-containing workpiece may be heated to anneal the iron nitride-containing. The iron nitride-containing workpiece may be annealed by heating the iron nitride-containing workpiece to a temperature between about 100° C. and about 250° C., such as between about 120° C. and about 200° C. Annealing the iron nitride-containing workpiece while the straining iron nitride-containing workpiece may facilitate conversion of at least some of the iron nitride phase domains to Fe₁₆N₂ phase domains.

The annealing process may continue for a predetermined time that is sufficient to allow diffusion of the nitrogen atoms to the appropriate interstitial spaces. In some examples, the annealing process continues for between about 20 hours and about 100 hours, such as between about 40 hours and about 60 hours. In some examples, the annealing process may occur under an inert atmosphere, such as Ar, to reduce or substantially prevent oxidation of the iron. In some implementations, while the iron nitride-containing workpiece is annealed the temperature is held substantially constant.

Once the annealing process has been completed, a plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe₁₆N₂ phase domain may be sintered together to form a magnetic material and aged (208). The plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe₁₆N₂ phase domain may be pressed together and sintered. During the sintering process, <001> crystal axes of the respective workpieces may be substantially aligned. In examples in which the <001> crystal axes of the respective workpieces are substantially parallel to a long axis of the respective workpieces, substantially aligning the long axes of workpieces may substantially align the <001> crystal axes of the workpieces. Aligning the <001> crystal axes of the respective workpieces may provide uniaxial magnetic anisotropy to the magnetic material formed from the workpieces.

The sintering pressure, temperature and duration may be selected to mechanically join the workpieces while maintaining the crystal structure of the plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe₁₆N₂ phase domain (e.g., as including the Fe₁₆N₂ phase domains). Thus, in some examples, the sintering may be performed at a relatively low temperature. For example, the sintering temperature may be below about 250° C., such as between about 120° C. and about 250° C., between about 150° C. and about 250° C., between about 120° C. and about 200° C., between about 150° C. and about 200° C., or about 150° C. The sintering pressure may be between, for example, about 0.2 GPa and about 10 GPa. The sintering time may be at least about 5 hours, such as at least about 20 hours, or between about 5 hours and about 100 hours, or between about 20 hours and about 100 hours, or about 40 hours. The sintering time, temperature, and pressure may be affected by the materials in plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe₁₆N₂ phase domain. The sintering may be performed in an ambient atmosphere, a nitrogen atmosphere, a vacuum, or another inert atmosphere.

The sintered material including Fe₁₆N₂ phase domains may then be aged. In some examples, aging the sintered material is conducted at a temperature between about 100° C. and about 500° C. for between about 0.5 hour and about 50 hours. The aging step may to stabilize the sintered material and achieve a stable phase domain structure.

After the sintered material including Fe₁₆N₂ phase domains has been aged, the sintered material may be shaped and magnetized. In some examples, the sintered material

may be shaped to a final shape of the permanent magnet, e.g., depending upon the desired final shape. The sintered material may be shaped by, for example, cutting the sintered material to the final shape. The sintered material or the magnetic material in the final shape may be magnetized using a magnetizer. The magnetic field for magnetizing the magnetic material may be between about 10 kOe and about 100 kOe. In some examples, relatively short-duration pulse may be used to magnetize the sintered material or the magnetic material in the final shape.

FIG. 17 is a flow diagram illustrating another example technique for forming a magnet including iron nitride phase domains from a mixture including an iron to nitride ratio of about 8:1. Like the technique described with reference to FIG. 16, the technique illustrated in FIG. 17 includes forming a molten iron nitride mixture (212). Forming the molten iron nitride mixture (212) may be similar to forming the molten iron nitride mixture (202) described with reference to FIG. 16. For example, in some implementations, the mixture may include at least one ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopant and/or at least one phase stabilizer. Unlike the technique described with reference to FIG. 16, the technique illustrated in FIG. 17 includes pressing the molten iron nitride mixture in the presence of a magnetic field (214).

Pressing the molten iron nitride mixture in the presence of a magnetic field (214) may assist the formation of Fe_{16}N_2 phase during casting and annealing. In some examples, a 9 Tesla (T) magnetic field may be applied to the molten iron nitride mixture while pressing the molten iron nitride mixture. In some examples, pressing the molten iron nitride mixture in the presence of a magnetic field (214) may be combined with annealing the iron nitride mixture (216). For example, the iron nitride mixture may be annealed at a temperature of about 150° C. while being exposed to an about 9 T magnetic field for about 20 hours. In some examples, the magnetic field may be applied in the plane of the iron nitride mixture to reduce eddy currents and the demagnetization factor.

In some examples, pressing (214) and/or annealing (216) the iron nitride mixture in the presence of an applied magnetic field may facilitate control over the phase constitution and crystalline orientation of the iron nitride mixture. For example, the Fe_{16}N_2 content may increase due to an increase in the amount of iron nitride from α' phase to α'' phase. This may result in an increased saturation magnetization (M_s) and/or coercivity of the iron nitride mixture.

After pressing the molten iron nitride mixture in the presence of a magnetic field (214), the technique illustrated in FIG. 17 includes annealing (216), sintering and aging (218), and shaping and magnetizing (220). Each of these steps may be similar to or substantially the same as the corresponding steps (206)-(210) described with reference to FIG. 16.

FIG. 18 is a flow diagram illustrating another example technique for forming a magnet including iron nitride phase domains from a mixture including an iron to nitride ratio of about 8:1. Like the technique described with reference to FIG. 16, the technique illustrated in FIG. 17 includes forming a molten iron nitride mixture (222). Forming the molten iron nitride mixture (222) may be similar to forming the molten iron nitride mixture (202) described with reference to FIG. 16. For example, in some implementations, the mixture may include at least one ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopant and/or at least one phase stabilizer.

Unlike the technique described with reference to FIG. 16, the technique illustrated in FIG. 18 includes melting spinning the molten iron nitride mixture (224). In melting

spinning, the molten iron nitride mixture may be flowed over a cold roller surface to quench the molten iron nitride mixture and form a brittle ribbon of material. In some examples, the cold roller surface may be cooled at a temperature below room temperature by a cooling agent, such as water. For example, the cold roller surface may be cooled at a temperature between about 10° C. and about 25° C. The brittle ribbon of material may then undergo a heat treatment step to pre-anneal the brittle iron material. In some examples, the heat treatment may be carried out at a temperature between about 200° C. and about 600° C. at atmospheric pressure for between about 0.1 hour and about 10 hours. In some examples, the heat treatment may be performed in a nitrogen or argon atmosphere. After heat-treating the brittle ribbon of material under an inert gas, the brittle ribbon of material may be shattered to form an iron-containing powder. After melting spinning the molten iron nitride mixture (224), the technique illustrated in FIG. 18 includes annealing (226), sintering and aging (228), and shaping and magnetizing (230). Each of these steps may be similar to or substantially the same as the corresponding steps (206)-(210) described with reference to FIG. 16.

In some examples, the disclosure describes techniques for incorporating at least one of a ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopant into iron nitride and/or incorporating at least one phase stabilizer into iron nitride. In some examples, the at least one of a ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopant may be used to increase at least one of the magnetic moment, magnetic coercivity, or thermal stability of the magnetic material formed from the mixture including iron and nitrogen. Examples of ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopants include Sc, Ti, V, Cr, Mn, Co, Ni, Cu, Zn, Zr, Nb, Mo, Ru, Rh, Pd, Ag, Cd, Pt, Au, Sm, C, Pb, W, Ga, Y, Mg, Hf, and Ta. For example, including Mn dopant atoms at levels between about 5 at. % and about 15 at. % in an iron nitride material including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain may improve thermal stability of the Fe_{16}N_2 phase domains and magnetic coercivity of the material compared to an iron nitride material not including Mn dopant atoms. In some examples, more than one (e.g., at least two) ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopants may be included in the mixture including iron and nitrogen. In some examples, the ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopants may function as domain wall pinning sites, which may improve coercivity of the magnetic material formed from the mixture including iron and nitrogen. Table 1 (above) includes example concentrations of ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopants within the mixture including iron and nitrogen.

Alternatively or additionally, the mixture including iron and nitrogen may include at least one phase stabilizer. The at least one phase stabilizer may be selected to stabilize a bcc phase, of which Fe_{16}N_2 is one type. The at least one phase stabilizer may be an element selected to improve at least one of Fe_{16}N_2 volume ratio, thermal stability, coercivity, and erosion resistance. When present in the mixture, the at least one phase stabilizer may be present in the mixture including iron and nitrogen at a concentration between about 0.1 at. % and about 15 at. %. In some examples in which at least two phase stabilizers are present in the mixture, the total concentration of the at least two phase stabilizers may be between about 0.1 at. % and about 10 at. %. The at least one phase stabilizer may include, for example, B, Al, C, Si, P, O, Co, Cr, Mn, and/or S. For example, including Mn dopant atoms at levels between about 5 at. % and about 15 at. % in an iron nitride material including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain may improve thermal stability of the Fe_{16}N_2 phase domains

and magnetic coercivity of the material compared to an iron nitride material not including Mn dopant atoms.

In some examples, as described above, the at least one of a ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopant and/or at least one phase stabilizer may be incorporated into a mixture including an iron nitride powder. The mixture then may be processed to form a magnetic material including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain. In other examples, also described above, the at least one of a ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopant and/or at least one phase stabilizer may be incorporated into a mixture including an iron-containing raw material. The mixture including the at least one of a ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopant and/or at least one phase stabilizer and the iron-containing raw material then may be nitrified, e.g., by milling the mixture in the presence of a nitrogen source such as an amide- or hydrazine-containing liquid or solution, or using urea diffusion.

In other examples, the at least one of a ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopant and/or at least one phase stabilizer may be incorporated into a magnetic material using a different technique. FIGS. 19A and 19B are conceptual diagrams illustrating another example technique for forming a magnetic material including Fe_{16}N_2 phase domains and at least one of a ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopant and/or at least one phase stabilizer.

As shown in FIGS. 19A and 19B, the at least one of a ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopant and/or at least one phase stabilizer may be introduced as sheets 242a, 242b, 242c (collectively, “sheets 242”) of material, and may be introduced between sheets 244a, 244b (collectively, sheets “244”) including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain. The sheets 244 including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain may be formed by any of the techniques described herein.

The sheets 242 including at least one of a ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopant and/or at least one phase stabilizer may have sizes (e.g., thicknesses) ranging from several nanometers to several hundred nanometers. In some examples, the sheets 242 including at least one of a ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopant and/or at least one phase stabilizer may be formed separately from the sheets 244 including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain. In other examples, the sheets 242 including at least one of a ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopant and/or at least one phase stabilizer may be formed on a surface of at least one of the sheets 244 including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain, e.g., using a deposition process such as CVD, PVD, sputtering, or the like.

The sheets 244 including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain may be arranged so the <001> axes of the respective sheets 244 including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain are substantially aligned. In examples in which the <001> axes of the respective sheets 244 including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain are substantially parallel to a long axis of the respective one of the sheets 244 including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain, substantially aligning the sheets 244 including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain may include overlying one of the sheets 244 including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain on another of the sheets 244 including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain. Aligning the <001> axes of the respective sheets 244 including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain may provide uniaxial magnetic anisotropy to magnet material 246 (FIG. 19B).

The sheets 244 including at least Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain and the sheets 242 including at least one of a ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopant and/or at least one phase stabilizer may be bonded using one of a variety of processes. For example, the sheets 242 and 244 may be bonded using one

of the techniques described above for joining workpieces including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain, such as alloying, compression shock, resin or adhesive bonding, or electromagnetic pulse bonding. In other examples, the sheets 242 and 244 may be sintered.

The sintering pressure, temperature and duration may be selected to mechanically join the sheets 242 and 244 while maintaining the crystal structure of the plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain (e.g., as including the Fe_{16}N_2 phase domains). Thus, in some examples, the sintering may be performed at a relatively low temperature. For example, the sintering temperature may be below about 250° C., such as between about 120° C. and about 250° C., between about 150° C. and about 250° C., between about 120° C. and about 200° C., between about 150° C. and about 200° C., or about 150° C. The sintering pressure may be between, for example, about 0.2 gigapascal (GPa) and about 10 GPa. The sintering time may be at least about 5 hours, such as at least about 20 hours, or between about 5 hours and about 100 hours, or between about 20 hours and about 100 hours, or about 40 hours. The sintering time, temperature, and pressure may be affected by the materials in the sheets 242 and 244. The sintering may be performed in an ambient atmosphere, a nitrogen atmosphere, a vacuum, or another inert atmosphere.

The disclosure has described various techniques for forming materials, powders, magnetic materials, and magnets including iron nitride. In some examples, various techniques described herein may be used together, in combinations described herein and in other combinations that will be apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art.

Clause 1: A method comprising milling, in a bin of a rolling mode milling apparatus, a stirring mode milling apparatus, or a vibration mode milling apparatus, an iron-containing raw material in the presence of a nitrogen source to generate a powder including iron nitride.

Clause 2: The method of clause 1, wherein the nitrogen source comprises at least one of an amide-containing or hydrazine-containing material.

Clause 3: The method of clause 2, wherein the at least one of the amide-containing or hydrazine-containing material comprises at least one of a liquid amide, a solution containing an amide, a hydrazine, or a solution containing hydrazine.

Clause 4: The method of clause 2, wherein the at least one of the amide-containing or hydrazine-containing material comprises at least one of methanamide, benzamide, or acetamide.

Clause 5: The method of any one of clauses 1 to 4, wherein the iron-containing raw material comprises substantially pure iron.

Clause 6: The method of any one of clauses 1 to 5, further comprising adding a catalyst to the iron-containing raw material.

Clause 7: The method of clause 6, wherein the catalyst comprises at least one of nickel or cobalt.

Clause 8: The method of any one of clauses 1 to 7, wherein the iron-containing raw material comprises a powder with an average diameter of less than about 100 μm .

Clause 9: The method of any of clauses 1 to 8, wherein the iron nitride comprises at least one of FeN , Fe_2N , Fe_3N , Fe_4N , Fe_2N_6 , Fe_8N , Fe_{16}N_2 , and FeN_x wherein x is between about 0.05 and about 0.5.

Clause 10: The method of any one of clauses 1 to 9, further comprising milling an iron precursor to form the iron-containing raw material.

Clause 11: The method of clause 10, wherein the iron precursor comprises at least one of Fe, FeCl₃, Fe₂O₃, or Fe₃O₄.

Clause 12: The method of clause 10 or 11, wherein milling the iron precursor to form the iron-containing raw material comprises milling the iron precursor in the presence of at least one of Ca, Al, and Na under conditions sufficient to cause an oxidation reaction oxygen present in the iron precursor.

Clause 13: The method of any one of clauses 1 to 9, further comprising melting spinning an iron precursor to form the iron-containing raw material.

Clause 14: The method of clause 13, wherein melting spinning the iron precursor comprises: forming molten iron precursor; cold rolling the molten iron precursor to form a brittle ribbon of material; heat treating the brittle ribbon of material; and shattering the brittle ribbon of material to form the iron-containing raw material.

Clause 15: A method comprising: heating a mixture including iron and nitrogen to form a molten iron nitride-containing material; and continuously casting, quenching, and pressing the molten iron nitride-containing material to form a workpiece including at least one Fe₈N phase domain.

Clause 16: The method of clause 15, wherein the mixture including iron and nitrogen is formed by the method of any of clauses 1 to 14.

Clause 17: The method of clause 15 or 16, wherein a dimension of the workpiece in at least one axis including at least one Fe₈N phase domain is less than about 50 millimeters.

Clause 18: The method of any one of clauses 15 to 17, wherein the molten iron nitride-containing material includes an iron atom-to-nitrogen atom ratio of about 8:1.

Clause 19: The method of any one of clauses 15 to 18, wherein the molten iron-nitride containing material includes at least one ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopant.

Clause 20: The method of clause 19, wherein the at least one ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopant comprises at least one of Sc, Ti, V, Cr, Mn, Co, Ni, Cu, Zn, Zr, Nb, Mo, Ru, Rh, Pd, Ag, Cd, Pt, Au, Sm, C, Pb, W, Ga, Y, Mg, Hf, or Ta.

Clause 21: The method of clause 19 or 20, wherein the molten iron-nitride containing material comprises less than about 10 atomic percent of the at least one ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopant.

Clause 22: The method of any one of clauses 15 to 21, wherein the molten iron-nitride containing material further comprises at least one phase stabilizer.

Clause 23: The method of clause 22, wherein the at least one phase stabilizer comprises at least one of B, Al, C, Si, P, O, Co, Cr, Mn, or S.

Clause 24: The method of clause 22 or 23, wherein the molten iron-nitride containing material comprises between about 0.1 atomic percent and about 15 atomic percent of the at least one phase stabilizer.

Clause 25: The method of any one of clauses 15 to 24, wherein heating the mixture including iron and nitrogen to form the molten iron nitride-containing material comprises heating the mixture at a temperature greater than about 1500° C.

Clause 26: The method of any one of clauses 15 to 25, wherein continuously casting, quenching, and pressing the molten iron nitride-containing material comprises casting the molten iron nitride-containing material at a temperature between about 650° C. and about 1200° C.

Clause 27: The method of any one of clauses 15 to 26, wherein continuously casting, quenching, and pressing the

molten iron nitride-containing material comprises quenching the iron nitride-containing material to a temperature above about 650° C.

Clause 28: The method of any one of clauses 15 to 27, wherein continuously casting, quenching, and pressing the molten iron nitride-containing material comprises pressing the iron nitride-containing material at a temperature below about 250° C. and a pressure between about 5 tons and about 50 tons.

Clause 29: The method of any one of clauses 15 to 28, further comprising straining and post-annealing the workpiece including at least one Fe₈N phase domain to form a workpiece including at least one Fe₁₆N₂ phase domain.

Clause 30: The method of clause 29, wherein straining and post-annealing the workpiece including at least one Fe₈N phase domain reduces the dimension of the workpiece.

Clause 31: The method of clause 30, wherein the dimension of the workpiece including at least one Fe₁₆N₂ phase domain in the at least one axis following straining and post-annealing is less than about 0.1 mm.

Clause 32: The method of any one of clauses 29 to 31, wherein, after straining and post-annealing, the workpiece consists of a single Fe₁₆N₂ phase domain.

Clause 33: The method of any one of clauses 29 to 32, wherein straining the workpiece including at least one Fe₈N phase domain comprises exerting a tensile strain on the workpiece of between about 0.3% and about 12%.

Clause 34: The method of clause 33, wherein the tensile strain is applied in a direction substantially parallel to at least one <001> crystal axis in the workpiece including at least one Fe₈N phase domain.

Clause 35: The method of any one of clauses 29 to 34, wherein post-annealing the workpiece including at least one Fe₈N phase domain comprises heating the workpiece including at least one Fe₈N phase domain to a temperature between about 100° C. and about 250° C.

Clause 36: The method of any one of clauses 15 to 35, further comprising forming the mixture including iron and nitrogen by exposing an iron-containing material to a urea diffusion process.

Clause 37: The method of any one of clauses 29 to 36, wherein the workpiece including at least one Fe₁₆N₂ phase domain is characterized as being magnetically anisotropic.

Clause 38: The method of clause 37, wherein the energy product, coercivity and saturation magnetization of the workpiece including at least one Fe₁₆N₂ phase domain are different at different orientations.

Clause 39: The method of any one of clauses 15 to 38, wherein the workpiece including at least one Fe₈N phase domain comprises at least one of a fiber, a wire, a filament, a cable, a film, a thick film, a foil, a ribbon, and a sheet.

Clause 40: A rolling mode milling apparatus comprising a bin configured to contain an iron-containing raw material and a nitrogen source and mill the iron-containing raw material in the presence of the nitrogen source to generate a powder including iron nitride.

Clause 41: A vibration mode milling apparatus comprising a bin configured to contain an iron-containing raw material and a nitrogen source and mill the iron-containing raw material in the presence of the nitrogen source to generate a powder including iron nitride.

Clause 42: A stirring mode milling apparatus comprising a bin configured to contain an iron-containing raw material and a nitrogen source and mill the iron-containing raw material in the presence of the nitrogen source to generate a powder including iron nitride.

Clause 43: An apparatus configured to perform any one of the methods of clauses of 1 to 39.

Clause 44: A workpiece made according to the method of any one of clauses 15 to 39.

Clause 45: A bulk magnetic material comprising the workpiece formed by any one of clauses 29 to 35, 37, or 38.

Clause 46: A method comprising: disposing a plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain adjacent to each other with respective long axes of the plurality of workpieces being substantially parallel to each other; disposing at least one of Sn, Cu, Zn, or Ag on a surface of at least one workpiece of the plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain; and heating the plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain and the at least one of Sn, Cu, Zn, or Ag under pressure to form an alloy between Fe and the at least one of Sn, Cu, Zn, or Ag at the interfaces between adjacent workpieces of the plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain.

Clause 47: A method comprising: disposing a plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain adjacent to each other with respective long axes of the plurality of workpieces being substantially parallel to each other; disposing a resin about the plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain, wherein the resin includes a plurality particles of ferromagnetic material; and curing the resin to bond the plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain using the resin.

Clause 48: A method comprising: disposing a plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain adjacent to each other with respective long axes of the plurality of workpieces being substantially parallel to each other; disposing a plurality particles of ferromagnetic material about the plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain; and joining the plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain using a compression shock.

Clause 49: A method comprising: disposing a plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain adjacent to each other with respective long axes of the plurality of workpieces being substantially parallel to each other; disposing a plurality particles of ferromagnetic material about the plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain; and joining the plurality of workpieces including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain using an electromagnetic pulse.

Clause 50: The method of any one of clauses 46 to 49, wherein a workpiece of the plurality of workpiece comprises at least one of a fiber, a wire, a filament, a cable, a film, a thick film, a foil, a ribbon, and a sheet.

Clause 51: A bulk magnetic made according to the method of any one of clauses 46 to 50.

Clause 52: An apparatus configured to perform any one of the methods of clauses of 46 to 50.

Clause 53: A method comprising: mixing an iron nitride-containing material with substantially pure iron to form a mixture including an iron atom-to-nitrogen atom ratio of about 8:1; and forming a bulk magnetic material comprising at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain from the mixture.

Clause 54: The method of clause 53, wherein the iron nitride-containing material comprises iron nitride-containing powder.

Clause 55: The method of clause 53 or 54, wherein the iron nitride-containing material includes one or more of $\epsilon\text{-Fe}_3\text{N}$, $\gamma'\text{-Fe}_4\text{N}$ and $\xi\text{-Fe}_2\text{N}$ phases.

Clause 56: The method of any one of clauses 53 to 55, wherein forming the bulk magnetic material including at

least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain comprises: melting the mixture to create a molten mixture; continuously casting, quenching, and pressing the molten mixture to form a workpiece including at least one Fe_8N phase domain; and straining and post-annealing the workpiece including at least one Fe_8N phase domain to form the bulk magnetic material comprising the at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain.

Clause 57: The method of any one of clauses 53 to 55, wherein forming the bulk magnetic material including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain comprises: melting the mixture to create a molten mixture; annealing the mixture in the presence of an applied magnetic field; and straining and post-annealing the workpiece including at least one Fe_8N phase domain to form the bulk magnetic material comprising the at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain.

Clause 58: The method of any one of clauses 53 to 55, wherein forming the bulk magnetic material including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain comprises: melting spinning the mixture; and straining and post-annealing the workpiece including at least one Fe_8N phase domain to form the magnetic material comprising the at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain.

Clause 59: The method of any one of clauses 56 to 58, further comprising sintering a plurality of bulk magnetic materials comprising at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain.

Clause 60: A method comprising: adding at least one ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopant into an iron nitride-containing material; and forming a bulk magnetic material including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain from the iron-nitride containing material including the at least one ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopant.

Clause 61: The method of clause 60, wherein the at least one ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopant includes at least one of Sc, Ti, V, Cr, Mn, Co, Ni, Cu, Zn, Zr, Nb, Mo, Ru, Rh, Pd, Ag, Cd, Pt, Au, Sm, C, Pb, W, Ga, Y, Mg, Hf, or Ta.

Clause 62: The method of clause 60 or 61, wherein adding the at least one ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopant into the iron nitride-containing material comprises mixing the at least one ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopant with an iron nitride-containing powder.

Clause 63: The method of clause 60 or 61, wherein adding the at least one ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopant into the iron nitride-containing material comprises mixing the at least one ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopant with a molten iron nitride-containing material.

Clause 64: The method of clause 60 or 61, wherein adding the at least one ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopant into the iron nitride-containing material comprises: disposing a plurality of sheets including the iron nitride-containing material adjacent to each other with the at least one ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopant disposed between respective sheets of the plurality of sheets including the iron nitride-containing material; and joining the plurality of sheets of the iron nitride-containing material.

Clause 65: A method comprising: adding at least one phase stabilizer for bct phase domains into an iron nitride material; and forming a bulk magnetic material including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain from the iron-nitride containing material including the at least one phase stabilizer for bct phase domains.

Clause 66: The method of clause 65, wherein the least one phase stabilizer includes at least one of B, Al, C, Si, P, O, Co, Cr, Mn, or S.

Clause 67: The method of clause 65 or 66, wherein the at least one phase stabilizer is present in a concentration between about 0.1 atomic percent and about 15 atomic percent.

Clause 68: The method of any of clauses 65 to 67, wherein adding the at least one phase stabilizer for bct phase domains into the iron nitride-containing material comprises mixing the at least one phase stabilizer for bct phase domains with an iron nitride-containing powder.

Clause 69: The method of any one of clauses 65 to 67, wherein adding the at least one phase stabilizer for bct phase domains into the iron nitride-containing material comprises mixing the at least one phase stabilizer for bct phase domains with a molten iron nitride-containing material.

Clause 70: The method of any one of clauses 65 to 67, wherein adding the at least one phase stabilizer for bct phase domains into the iron nitride-containing material comprises: disposing a plurality of sheets including the iron nitride-containing material adjacent to each other with the at least one phase stabilizer for bct phase domains disposed between respective sheets of the plurality of sheets including the iron nitride-containing material; and joining the plurality of sheets of the iron nitride-containing material.

Clause 71: The method of any one of clauses 53 to 70, wherein the bulk magnetic material comprising at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain is characterized as being magnetically anisotropic.

Clause 72: The method of clause 71, wherein the energy product, coercivity and saturation magnetization of the magnetic material comprising at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain are different at different orientations.

Clause 73: An apparatus configured to perform any one of the methods of clauses of 53 to 72.

Clause 74: A magnetic material comprising at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain made according to the method of any one of clauses 53 to 72.

Clause 75: A bulk permanent magnet made according to the method of any one of clauses 53 to 72.

Clause 76: A workpiece comprising at least one of a fiber, a wire, a filament, a cable, a film, a thick film, a foil, a ribbon, or a sheet, wherein the workpiece is characterized as having a long direction, and wherein the workpiece comprises at least one iron nitride phase domain oriented along the long direction of the workpiece. In some examples, the workpiece may be formed using any one of the techniques described herein. Additionally, in some examples, any of the precursor materials, including iron or iron nitride powders, may be used to form the workpiece.

Clause 77: The workpiece of clause 76, wherein the at least one iron nitride phase domain comprises one or more of the following phases: FeN , Fe_2N , Fe_3N , Fe_4N , Fe_2N_6 , Fe_8N , Fe_{16}N_2 , and FeN_x , and wherein x is in the range of from about 0.05 to about 0.5.

Clause 78: The workpiece of clause 76 or 77, wherein the workpiece comprises one or more dopants, one or more phase stabilizers, or both.

Clause 79: The workpiece of clause 78, wherein the one or more dopants, the one or more phase stabilizers, or both, are present in the range of from 0.1 at. % to 15 at. %, based on at. % of the at least one iron nitride phase domain.

Clause 80: The workpiece of any one of clauses 76 to 79, wherein the workpiece is characterized as being a bulk permanent magnet.

Clause 81: A bulk permanent magnet comprising iron nitride, wherein the bulk permanent magnet is characterized as having a major axis extending from a first end of the bulk permanent magnet to a second end of the bulk permanent magnet, wherein the bulk permanent magnet comprises at least one body centered tetragonal (bct) iron nitride crystal, and wherein a $\langle 001 \rangle$ axis of the at least one bct iron nitride crystal is substantially parallel to the major axis of the bulk

permanent magnet. In some examples, the bulk permanent magnet may be formed using any one of the techniques described herein. Additionally, in some examples, any of the precursor materials, including iron or iron nitride powders, may be used to form the bulk permanent magnet.

EXAMPLES

Example 1

FIG. 20 illustrates example XRD spectra for a sample prepared by first milling an iron precursor material to form an iron-containing raw material, then milling the iron-containing raw material in a formamide solution. During the milling of the iron precursor material, the ball milling apparatus was filled with a gas including 90% nitrogen and 10% hydrogen. Milling balls with a diameter of between about 5 mm and about 20 mm were used to mill, and the ball-to-powder mass ratio was about 20:1. During the milling of the iron-containing raw material, the ball milling apparatus was filled with the formamide solution. Milling balls with a diameter of between about 5 mm and about 20 mm were used to mill, and the ball-to-powder mass ratio was about 20:1. As shown in the upper XRD spectrum shown in FIG. 20, after milling the iron precursor material, an iron-containing raw material was formed that included $\text{Fe}(200)$ and $\text{Fe}(211)$ crystal phases. The XRD spectrum was collected using a D5005 x-ray diffractometer available from Siemens USA, Washington, D.C. As shown in the lower XRD spectrum illustrated in FIG. 20, a powder containing iron nitride was formed after milling the iron-containing raw material in the formamide solution. The powder containing iron nitride included $\text{Fe}(200)$, $\text{Fe}_3\text{N}(110)$, $\text{Fe}(110)$, $\text{Fe}_4\text{N}(200)$, $\text{Fe}_3\text{N}(112)$, $\text{Fe}(200)$, and $\text{Fe}(211)$ crystal phases.

Example 2

FIG. 21 illustrates an example XRD spectrum for a sample prepared by milling an iron-containing raw material in an acetamide solution. During the milling of the iron precursor material, the ball milling apparatus was filled with a gas including 90% nitrogen and 10% hydrogen. Milling balls with a diameter of between about 5 mm and about 20 mm were used to mill, and the ball-to-powder mass ratio was about 20:1. During the milling of the iron-containing raw material, the ball milling apparatus was filled with the acetamide solution. Milling balls with a diameter of between about 5 mm and about 20 mm were used to mill, and the ball-to-powder mass ratio was about 20:1. The XRD spectrum was collected using a D5005 x-ray diffractometer available from Siemens USA, Washington, D.C. As shown in the XRD spectrum illustrated in FIG. 21, a powder containing iron nitride was formed after milling the iron-containing raw material in the acetamide solution. The powder containing iron nitride included $\text{Fe}_{16}\text{N}_2(002)$, $\text{Fe}_{16}\text{N}_2(112)$, $\text{Fe}(100)$, $\text{Fe}_{16}\text{N}_2(004)$ crystal phases.

Example 3

FIG. 22 is a diagram of magnetization versus applied magnetic field for an example magnetic material including Fe_{16}N_2 prepared by a continuous casting, quenching, and pressing technique. First, an iron-nitrogen mixture including an iron-to-nitrogen atomic ratio of about 9:1 was formed by milling an iron powder in the presence of an amide. The average iron particle size in was about $50 \text{ nm} \pm 5 \text{ nm}$, as measured using scanning electron microscopy. The milling

was performed at a temperature of about 45° C. for about 50 hours with a nickel catalyst in the mixture. The weight ratio nickel to iron was about 1:5. The iron-to-nitrogen atomic ratio was measured using Auger Electron Spectroscopy (AES).

The iron nitride powder was then placed in a glass tube and heated using a torch. The torch used a mixture of natural gas and oxygen as a fuel and heated at a temperature of about 2300° C. to melt the iron nitride powder. The glass tube was then tiled and the molten iron nitride cooled to room temperature to cast the iron nitride. The magnetization curve was measured using a superconducting susceptometer (a Superconducting Quantum Interference Device (SQUID)) available under the trade designation MPMS®-5S from Quantum Design, Inc., San Diego, Calif. As shown in FIG. 22, the saturation magnetization (Ms) value for the sample was about 233 emu/g.

Example 4

FIG. 23 is an X-ray Diffraction spectrum of an example wire including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain prepared by a continuous casting, quenching, and pressing technique. The sample included $\text{Fe}_{16}\text{N}_2(002)$, $\text{Fe}_3\text{O}_4(222)$, $\text{Fe}_4\text{N}(111)$, $\text{Fe}_{16}\text{N}_2(202)$, $\text{Fe}(110)$, $\text{Fe}_8\text{N}(004)$, $\text{Fe}(200)$, and $\text{Fe}(211)$ phase domains. Table 2 illustrates the volume ratios of the different phase domains.

TABLE 2

Phase	Volume ratio
Fe	48%
$\text{Fe}_{16}\text{N}_2 + \text{Fe}_8\text{N}$	35%
Fe_4N	11%
Fe_3O_4	6%

Example 5

An FeN bulk sample prepared by a continuous casting, quenching, and pressing technique described in Example 3 was cut into wires with a diameter of about 0.8 mm and a length of about 10 mm. A wire was strained along the long axis of the wire with a force of about 350 N and post-annealed at a temperature between about 120° C. and about 160° C. while being strained to form at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain within the wire. FIG. 24 is a diagram of magnetization versus applied magnetic field for the wire, measured using a superconducting susceptometer (a Superconducting Quantum Interference Device (SQUID)) available under the trade designation MPMS®-5S from Quantum Design, Inc., San Diego, Calif. As shown in FIG. 24, the sample had a coercivity of about 249 Oe and a saturation magnetization of about 192 emu/g.

FIG. 25 is a diagram illustrating auger electron spectrum (AES) testing results for the sample. The composition of the sample was about 78 at. % Fe, about 5.2 at. % N, about 6.1 at. % O, and about 10.7 at. % C.

FIGS. 26A and 26B are images showing examples of iron nitride foil and iron nitride bulk material forming using the continuous casting, quenching, and pressing technique described in Examples 3 and 5.

Example 6

FIG. 27 is a diagram of magnetization versus applied magnetic field for an example of a wire-shaped magnetic

material including Fe_{16}N_2 , showing different hysteresis loops for different orientations of external magnetic fields relative to the long axis of the wire-shaped sample. The sample was prepared using a strained wire technique with a cold crucible system. The α "- Fe_{16}N_2 bulk permanent magnet was prepared from commercially available bulk iron of high purity (99.99%). Urea was used as the nitrogen provider in the cold crucible system. First, bulk iron was melted in the cold crucible system with a predetermined percentage of urea. Urea was chemically decomposed to generate nitrogen atoms, which could diffuse into the melted iron. The prepared FeN mixture was taken out and heated to about 660° C. for about 4 hours, then quenched using water at room temperature. The quenched sample was flattened and cut into wires, with a square column shape, about 10 mm in length and 0.3-0.4 mm in square side length. Finally, the wire was strained in the length direction to induce lattice elongation along the length direction, and the wire was annealed at about 150° C. for 40 about hours.

The wire-shaped sample was placed inside a vibrating sample magnetometer at different orientations with respect to the external magnetic field, varied from 0° to 90°. The results show different hysteresis loops for different orientations of the sample relative to the external magnetic field. The results also demonstrate experimentally that the FeN magnet sample has anisotropic magnetic properties.

FIG. 28 is a diagram illustrating the relationship between the coercivity of a wire-shaped FeN magnet prepared using the cold crucible technique described with respect to FIG. 27 and its orientation relative to an external magnetic field. The angle between the long axis of the wire-shaped sample and the external magnetic field was varied changed between 0°, 45°, 60°, and 90°. When the long axis of the wire-shaped sample was substantially perpendicular to the magnetic field, the sample's coercivity increased abruptly, demonstrating the sample's anisotropic magnetic properties.

Example 7

Table 3 illustrates a comparison between theoretical and experimental values of magnetic properties in Fe_{16}N_2 containing iron nitride permanent magnets formed by different methods. The "Cold Crucible" magnet was formed by a technique similar to those described in International Patent Application No. PCT/US2012/051382, filed on Aug. 17, 2012, and entitled "IRON NITRIDE PERMANENT MAGNET AND TECHNIQUE FOR FORMING IRON NITRIDE PERMANENT MAGNET," and described with respect to Example 6.

The "Nitrogen Ion Implantation" magnet was formed by a technique similar to those described in U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/762,147, filed Feb. 7, 2013, and entitled, "IRON NITRIDE PERMANENT MAGNET AND TECHNIQUE FOR FORMING IRON NITRIDE PERMANENT MAGNET." In particular, pure (110) iron foils with about 500 nm thickness were positioned on a mirror-polished (111) Si substrate. The surfaces of the (111) Si substrate and the iron foil were cleaned beforehand. The foil was directly bonded with the substrate by using a wafer bonder in fusion mode (SB6, Karl Suss Wafer Bonder) at about 450° C. for about 30 minutes. Nitrogen ion implantation was conducted using ions of atomic N⁺ accelerated to 100 keV and implanted into these foils vertically with fluences ranging from $2 \times 10^{16}/\text{cm}^2$ to $5 \times 10^{17}/\text{cm}^2$ at room temperature. After that, a two-step post-annealing process is applied on the implanted foils. The first step is pre-annealing at about 500° C. in an N₂ and Ar mixed atmosphere for about

0.5 hour. Then, a subsequent post-annealing followed at about 150° C. for about 40 hours in vacuum.

The “Continuous Casting” magnet was formed by a technique similar to that described above with respect to Example 3.

TABLE 3

	Coercivity (Oe)	Saturation Magnetization (emu/g)	Energy Product (MGOe)
Theoretical	17,500	316	135
Cold Crucible (Experimental)	1,480	202	7.2
Nitrogen Ion Implantation (Experimental)	1,200	232	20
Continuous Casting (Experimental)	400	250	2.5
Continuous Casting (Predicted)	2,000	250	15
Attained Degree (Maximum)	8.5%	63%	8%

Example 8

In this example, use of Manganese (Mn) as a dopant atom in an Fe₁₆N₂ iron nitride bulk sample was investigated. Density functional theory (DFT) calculations were used to determine the likely positions of Mn atoms within the Fe₁₆N₂ iron nitride crystalline lattice and the magnetic coupling between the Mn atoms and Fe atoms in the Fe₁₆N₂ crystalline lattice. The thermal stability and magnetic properties of Fe₁₆N₂ iron nitride doped with Mn atoms were also experimentally observed. All DFT calculations were performed using the Quantum Espresso software package, available from www.quantum-espresso.org. Information regarding Quantum Espresso may be found in P. Gianozzi et al. J. Phys.: Condens. Matter, 21, 395502 (2009) <http://dx.doi.org/10.1088/0953-8984/21/39/395502>.

In the DFT calculations, Mn was inserted into the tetragonal unit cell of the α'-Fe₁₆N₂ phase, replacing one of the Fe atoms. As seen from the periodic table, Mn is similar to Fe and was predicted to show affinity with the host Fe₁₆N₂ structure and possible contribute to magnetic properties of the material. Mn may be inserted at one or more of three different crystallographic positions of Fe. FIG. 29 is a conceptual diagram illustrating an example Fe₁₆N₂ crystallographic structure. As shown in Fe atoms exist at three different distances from N atoms, Fe 8h, Fe 4e, and Fe 4d. Fe 8h iron atoms are closest to N atoms, Fe 4d iron atoms are furthest from N atoms, and Fe 4e iron atoms are a middle distance from N atoms. The effects of Mn insertion at each of these crystallographic positions were investigated using DFT calculations. In particular, three DFT calculations were used to estimate the respective total energy of the system for an Mn atom inserted at each of the three crystallographic positions. DFT calculations were also used to estimate the results of doping bulk iron with Mn atoms. The results of these calculations were then compared to assess the role of N atoms in determining the position and the magnetization of the Mn dopant atoms and to evaluate the thermodynamic stability of the doped systems.

In bulk Fe, Mn dopants or impurities couple anti-ferromagnetically to Fe atoms. FIG. 30 is a plot illustrating results of an example calculation of densities of states of Mn doped bulk Fe. The calculation was made using Quantum Espresso. As shown in FIG. 30, Mn dopants are more likely

to be found in the Fe₁ (Fe 8h) site in bulk iron. Additionally, FIG. 30 shows that the density of states of Fe is always reverse to the density of states of Mn. At positive density of states of Fe, Mn density of states are negative, indicating that Mn atoms are antiferromagnetically coupled to Fe atoms in the bulk Fe sample.

FIG. 31 is a plot illustrating results of an example calculation of densities of states of Mn doped bulk Fe₁₆N₂. The calculation was made using Quantum Espresso. As shown in FIG. 31, Mn dopants are not anti-ferromagnetically coupled to the rest of the Fe atoms in the Fe₁₆N₂ bulk sample, as the density of states of Mn is always the same sign as the density of states of Fe. Because the density of states of Mn are generally closest to the density of states of Fe₁ (Fe 8h) at the same energy in FIG. 31, FIG. 31 indicates that the Mn dopants are more likely to be found in the Fe₁ (Fe 8h) site in Fe₁₆N₂. This suggests that N atoms have a non-trivial effect on the inter-site magnetic couplings.

FIG. 32 is a plot of magnetic hysteresis loops of prepared Fe—Mn—N bulk samples with concentrations of Mn dopant of 5 at. %, 8 at. %, 10 at. %, and 15 at. %. The samples were prepared using a cold crucible system. Four mixtures including Fe, Mn, and urea precursors with Mn concentrations (based on Fe and Mn atoms) of 5 at. %, 8 at. %, 10 at. %, and 15 at. %, respectively, were each placed into a cold crucible a melted to form respective mixtures of FeMnN. The respective mixtures of FeMnN were heated at 650° C. for about 4 hours and quenched at room temperature in cold water. The quenched FeMnN materials were then cut into wires with dimensions of about 1 mm by 1 mm by 8 mm. The wires were then heated at about 180° C. for about 20 hours and strained to form Fe₁₆N₂ phase domains including Mn dopant (replacing some Fe atoms). FIG. 32 shows that the saturation magnetization (M_s) decreases with increasing Mn dopant concentrations. However, the magnetic coercivity (H_c) increases with increasing Mn dopant concentrations. This indicates that Mn doping of Fe₁₆N₂ can increase the magnetic coercivity. The value of magnetic coercivity for samples with a concentration of Mn between 5 at. % and 15 at. % is larger than that of the sample without Mn dopant.

The thermal stability of Mn-doped Fe₁₆N₂ bulk material was investigated by observing its crystalline structure at elevated temperatures. Samples with Mn dopants showed an improved thermal stability compared to samples without Mn dopants. An FeN bulk sample without Mn dopant may show changes in phase volume ratios (e.g., Fe₁₆N₂ phase volume fraction), observed by changes in relative intensities of corresponding peaks in an x-ray diffraction spectra, at a temperature of about 160° C. The changes in phase volume ratios may indicate decreased stability of Fe₁₆N₂ phases at this temperature. However, the samples with Mn dopant concentrations between 5 at. % and 15 at. % demonstrated substantially stable phase volume ratios (e.g., Fe₁₆N₂ phase volume fraction), observed by changes in relative intensities of corresponding peaks in an x-ray diffraction spectra, at 180° C. for about 4 hours in an air atmosphere. In some examples, a temperature of about 220° C. may lead to completely decomposition of Fe₁₆N₂ phase.

Example 9

A ball milling system available under the trade designation Retsch® Planetary Ball Mill PM 100 (Retsch®, Haan, Germany) was used with steel balls to mill Fe with an ammonium nitrate (NH₄NO₃) nitrogen source in a 1:1 weight ratio. For each sample, 10 steel balls, each having a diameter of about 5 mm, were used. Each time 10 hours of

milling was complete, the milling systems was stopped for 10 minutes to allow the system to cool. Table 4 summarizes the processing parameters for each of the samples:

TABLE 4

	Sample 1	Sample 2	Sample 3	Sample 4
Milling RPM	650	600	650	600
Milling Time (hours)	60	90	90	60
Annealing Temperature (° C.)	180	180	200	180
Annealing Time (hours)	20	20	20	20
Coercivity (Oe)	540	380	276	327
Saturation Magnetization (emu/g)	209	186	212	198

FIG. 33 is a plot of elemental concentration of the powder of Sample 1 after ball milling in the presence of a urea nitrogen source, collected using Auger electron spectroscopy (AES). As shown in FIG. 33, the powder included carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, and iron.

FIG. 34 is a plot showing an x-ray diffraction spectrum of powder from Sample 1 after annealing. As shown in FIG. 34, the powder included Fe_{16}N_2 phase iron nitride.

FIG. 35 is a plot of a magnetic hysteresis loop of prepared iron nitride formed using ball milling in the presence of ammonium nitrate. The magnetic hysteresis loop was measured at room temperature. The iron nitride sample with which the magnetic hysteresis loop was measured was prepared using the processing parameters listed above for Sample 1. In particular, FIG. 35 illustrates an example magnetic hysteresis loop for Sample 1, after annealing. FIG. 35 shows a coercivity (H_c) for Sample 1 of about 540 Oe and a saturation magnetization of about 209 emu/g.

Example 10

Powder samples are placed in an electrically conductive container or armature. The samples included iron nitride powder formed using the same processing parameters listed above for Sample 1. The electrically conductive container was placed in the bore of a high magnetic field coil. The magnetic field coil was pulsed with a high electrical current (e.g., between 1 amp and 100 amps and a pulse ratio between about 0.1% and about 10%) to produce a magnetic field in the bore that, in turn, induces electrical currents in the armature. The induced currents interact with the applied magnetic field to produce an inwardly acting magnetic force that collapses the armature and compacts the samples. The compaction occurs in less than one millisecond.

The density of the part formed by the compaction was estimated to be 7.2 g/cc, almost 90% of the theoretical density.

FIG. 36 is a plot showing an x-ray diffraction spectrum for the sample before and after consolidation. FIG. 36 shows that Fe_{16}N_2 phase still existed in the sample after consolidation. Although the intensity of the Fe_{16}N_2 peaks decreased, Fe_{16}N_2 phase was still present.

When ranges are used herein for physical properties, such as molecular weight, or chemical properties, such as chemical formulae, all combinations and subcombinations of ranges for specific examples therein are intended to be included.

Various examples have been described. Those skilled in the art will appreciate that numerous changes and modifications can be made to the examples described in this disclosure and that such changes and modifications can be made without departing from the spirit of the disclosure. These and other examples are within the scope of the following claims.

The disclosure of each patent, patent application, and publication cited or described in this document are hereby incorporated herein by reference, in its entirety.

What is claimed is:

1. A method comprising:

heating a mixture including iron and nitrogen to form a molten iron nitride-containing material and thereby forming the molten iron nitride-containing material; and

casting, quenching, and pressing the molten iron nitride-containing material to form a workpiece including at least one Fe_8N phase domain.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein casting, quenching, and pressing comprises continuously casting, quenching, and pressing the molten iron nitride-containing material to form a workpiece having a dimension that is longer than other dimensions of the workpiece.

3. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

milling, in a bin of a rolling mode milling apparatus, a stirring mode milling apparatus, or a vibration mode milling apparatus, an iron-containing raw material in the presence of a nitrogen source to generate a powder including iron nitride, and

wherein heating the mixture including iron and nitrogen comprises heating the powder including iron nitride.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein the nitrogen source comprises at least one of ammonium nitrate, an amide-containing material, or a hydrazine-containing material.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein the at least one of the amide-containing or hydrazine-containing material comprises at least one of a liquid amide, a solution containing an amide, a hydrazine, or a solution containing hydrazine.

6. The method of claim 4, wherein the at least one of the amide-containing or hydrazine-containing material comprises at least one of carbamide, methanamide, benzamide, or acetamide.

7. The method of claim 3, wherein the iron-containing raw material comprises substantially pure iron.

8. The method of claim 3, further comprising adding a catalyst to the iron-containing raw material.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the catalyst comprises at least one of nickel or cobalt.

10. The method of claim 3, wherein the iron-containing raw material comprises a powder with an average diameter of less than about 100 μm .

11. The method of claim 3, wherein the powder including iron nitride comprises at least one of FeN , Fe_2N , Fe_3N , Fe_4N , Fe_5N_6 , Fe_6N , Fe_{16}N_2 , or FeN_x , wherein x is in the range of from about 0.05 to about 0.5.

12. The method of claim 3, further comprising milling an iron precursor to form the iron-containing raw material.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the iron precursor comprises at least one of Fe, FeCl_3 , Fe_2O_3 , or Fe_3O_4 .

14. The method of claim 12, wherein milling the iron precursor to form the iron-containing raw material comprises milling the iron precursor in the presence of at least one of Ca, Al, or Na under conditions sufficient to cause an oxidation reaction between the at least one of Ca, Al, or Na and oxygen present in the iron precursor.

15. The method of claim 3, further comprising melting spinning an iron precursor to form the iron-containing raw material.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein melting spinning the iron precursor comprises:

- forming molten iron precursor;
- cold rolling the molten iron precursor to form a brittle ribbon of material;
- heat treating the brittle ribbon of material; and
- shattering the brittle ribbon of material to form the iron-containing raw material.

17. The method of claim 1, wherein a dimension of the workpiece including at least one Fe_8N phase domain is less than about 50 millimeters in at least one axis.

18. The method of claim 1, wherein the molten iron nitride-containing material includes an iron atom-to-nitrogen atom ratio of about 8:1.

19. The method of claim 1, wherein the molten iron-nitride containing material includes at least one ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopant.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein the at least one ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopant comprises at least one of Sc, Ti, V, Cr, Mn, Co, Ni, Cu, Zn, Zr, Nb, Mo, Ru, Rh, Pd, Ag, Cd, Pt, Au, Sm, C, Pb, W, Ga, Y, Mg, Hf, or Ta.

21. The method of claim 19, wherein the molten iron-nitride containing material comprises less than about 10 atomic percent of the at least one ferromagnetic or nonmagnetic dopant.

22. The method of claim 1, wherein the molten iron-nitride containing material further comprises at least one phase stabilizer.

23. The method of claim 22, wherein the at least one phase stabilizer comprises at least one of B, Al, C, Si, P, O, Co, Cr, Mn, or S.

24. The method of claim 22, wherein the molten iron-nitride containing material comprises between about 0.1 atomic percent and about 15 atomic percent of the at least one phase stabilizer.

25. The method of claim 1, wherein heating the mixture including iron and nitrogen to form the molten iron nitride-containing material comprises heating the mixture at a temperature greater than about 1500° C.

26. The method of claim 1, wherein continuously casting, quenching, and pressing the molten iron nitride-containing material comprises casting the molten iron nitride-containing material at a temperature in the range of from about 650° C. to about 1200° C.

27. The method of claim 1, wherein continuously casting, quenching, and pressing the molten iron nitride-containing

material comprises quenching the iron nitride-containing material to a temperature above about 650° C.

28. The method of claim 1, wherein continuously casting, quenching, and pressing the molten iron nitride-containing material comprises pressing the iron nitride-containing material at a temperature below about 250° C. and a pressure in the range of from about 5 tons to about 50 tons.

29. The method of claim 1, further comprising straining and post-annealing the workpiece including at least one Fe_8N phase domain to form a workpiece including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain.

30. The method of claim 29, wherein straining and post-annealing the workpiece including at least one Fe_8N phase domain reduces the dimension of the workpiece.

31. The method of claim 30, wherein the dimension of the workpiece including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain in the at least one axis following straining and post-annealing is less than about 0.1 mm.

32. The method of claim 29, wherein, after straining and post-annealing, the workpiece consists essentially of a single Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain.

33. The method of claim 29, wherein straining the workpiece including at least one Fe_8N phase domain comprises exerting a tensile strain on the workpiece in the range of from about 0.3% to about 12%.

34. The method of claim 33, wherein the tensile strain is applied in a direction substantially parallel to at least one $\langle 001 \rangle$ crystal axis in the workpiece including at least one Fe_8N phase domain.

35. The method of claim 29, wherein post-annealing the workpiece including at least one Fe_8N phase domain comprises heating the workpiece including at least one Fe_8N phase domain to a temperature in the range of from about 100° C. to about 250° C.

36. The method of claim 29, wherein the workpiece including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain is characterized as being magnetically anisotropic.

37. The method of claim 36, wherein the energy product, coercivity and saturation magnetization of the workpiece including at least one Fe_{16}N_2 phase domain are different at different orientations.

38. The method of claim 1, further comprising forming the mixture including iron and nitrogen by exposing an iron-containing material to a urea diffusion process.

39. The method of claim 1, wherein the workpiece including at least one Fe_8N phase domain comprises at least one of a fiber, a wire, a filament, a cable, a film, a thick film, a foil, a ribbon, or a sheet.

* * * * *