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**EFFECT OF HEAT TREATMENT ON STRUCTURE AND MECHANICAL PROPERTIES OF 12Cr-3Co STEEL WITH LOW N AND HIGH B CONTENTS**

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The effect of heat treatment on the microstructure and mechanical properties of Fe<sub>bal</sub>-0.1 wt.%C-12Cr-3Co-2.5W-1Cu-VNbTaBN steel was investigated. After normalization in the range of 1050-1150°C, the martensitic structure was dominant;  $\delta$ -ferrite content was about 10%. When temperature of normalizing increased from 1050C to 1150°C, the average size of prior austenite grains increased from 44 to 68  $\mu\text{m}$ . After tempering at 750, 770 and 800°C, tempered martensitic lath structure with a high dislocation density within martensitic laths contained nanosized  $\text{M}_{23}\text{C}_6$  carbides along the boundaries of prior austenite grains and laths and (Ta,Nb)X carbonitrides randomly distributed in the ferritic matrix. The average sizes of  $\text{M}_{23}\text{C}_6$  carbides and (Ta,Nb)X carbonitrides were 50 nm and 40 nm, respectively, independently of tempering temperature. The  $\text{M}_6\text{C}$  carbide particles were also observed along the boundaries of prior austenite grains and pockets as well as along the boundaries between  $\delta$ -ferrite and martensite; their amount was negligible. When tempering temperature increased from 750 to 800°C, the particle density on the boundaries between  $\delta$ -ferrite/martensite decreased from 3.8 to 0.2  $\mu\text{m}^{-1}$ . A relationship between the lath size ( $h$ ) and the density of free dislocations ( $\rho$ ) obeyed:

$$h = 5.41\rho^{-0.5} - 0.07$$

Increasing the tempering temperature to 800°C led to a decrease in the hardness up to ~220 HB, yield stress and ultimate tensile stress up to 520 and 700 MPa, respectively.

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