Oxidation behavior of a multilayered (Si-B-C) ceramic in a complex atmosphere $N_2/O_2/H_2O$

X. Martin, F. Rebillat and A. Guette
Laboratoire des composites thermostructuraux, UMR 5801(CNRS-Snecma-CEA-UB1)
3, allée de la Boétie 33600 Pessac, France

INTRODUCTION

A (Si-B-C) matrix, constituted of different layers as silicon carbide (SiC), boron carbide (B$_C$) and Si-B-C phase, has been developed to improve the oxidation resistance and lifetime in an oxidizing environment of SiC/SiC composites. The incorporation of boron compounds in the matrix allows the formation of boron oxide and borosilicate during oxidation at a lower temperature than that of the silica formation ($T>1000^\circ C$). In addition, the glassy SiO$_2$/B$_2$O$_3$ phase may flow along the matrix cracks, created when the elastic limit is exceeded during a mechanical solicitation. These oxides formed by the oxidation of the different layers lead to the crack sealing, stopping the oxidizing agents diffusion (e.g. O$_2$ and H$_2$O) to the fibers by gas-phase diffusion [Fig. 1].

The aim of this work is to estimate the rates of the oxide formation (e.g. B$_2$O$_3$, and borosilicate) and the carbide recession (e.g B$_C$ and Si-B-C phase) at atmospheric pressure, as function of temperature $T\in [600^\circ C-1400^\circ C]$ and O$_2$ and H$_2$O partial pressures ($P_{O_2}=[0-20kPa]$ and $P_{H_2O}=[0-15kPa]$) for each kind of coatings. The mass variation per surface unit ($\Delta m/S$) versus time for boron-containing coatings, was measured with a thermogravimetric analysis apparatus (SETARAM Setsys 16/18, France), to evaluate both the oxide formation and recession rates.

This approach should allow to quantify the self-healing of a multilayered matrix and to understand the different oxidation mechanisms, taking into account the specificity of the boron compounds (e.g the B$_2$O$_3$ volatilization, its water sensibility and the B$_2$O$_3$/SiO$_2$ flowing).

Results and discussion

The oxidation rate of flat B$_C$ coatings under dry atmosphere, in a domain of temperature ranging from 600$^\circ$C to 900$^\circ$C, is correctly described by a parabolic law [Fig. 2 a)], indicating that the growth of the oxide layer is limited by the diffusion of dioxygen. Above 1000$^\circ$C, the B$_2$O$_3$ volatilization and flowing have to be considered , as those two phenomena make more complex the interpretation of thermogravimetric curves.

Under wet atmosphere, there is a competition between the growth rate (O$_2$ effect) and volatilization rate (H$_2$O effect) of B$_2$O$_3$. When both rates are similar, a parilinear model is applicable [Fig. 2 b)] [1]. On the other hand, if the volatilization rate is higher, oxidation regime becomes active [Fig. 2 c)].

The oxidation rate of flat Si-B-C coatings is more complex, because of the evolution of the borosilicate composition versus time and temperature. The effect of the aging of the borosilicate in different oxidizing environments, resulting from the B$_2$O$_3$ volatilization during time, has also been investigated.

This analysis is useful to explain the different behaviors of the Si-B-C matrix in an oxidizing environment. Under dry atmosphere ($T<900^\circ$C), the self-healing of the Si-B-C matrix is mainly achieved by B$_2$O$_3$. Under wet atmosphere ($T>600^\circ$C), it is obtained by Si-rich borosilicate due to the oxidation of the Si-B-C coatings. Thus, B$_2$O$_3$ alone as sealing is not fully efficient because of its high reactivity with water. Finally, the B$_2$O$_3$ volatilization rate along the matrix crack is simulated and compared with that determined owing to the weight loss of B$_2$O$_3$ (raw material) determined versus time by thermogravimetric analysis.

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REFERENCES


Fig. 1 : Schematic of the crack opening under mechanical loading and the sealing process in multilayered ceramic matrix composites

Fig. 2 : Different oxidation regimes of flat B$_C$ coatings in an oxidizing environment ($N_2/O_2/H_2O$)

a) Parabolic regime: $800^\circ C N_2/O_2/H_2O (80/20)$

b) Paralinear regime: $800^\circ C N_2/O_2/H_2O (70/20/10)$

c) Active regime: $600^\circ C N_2/O_2/H_2O (70/20/10)$

0.0 0 1 2 3 4 5

$\Delta m/S$ (mg/cm$^2$)

Time (h)