Abstract Submitted
for the PSF15 Meeting of
The American Physical Society

Structural Studies of Metastable and Ground State Vortex Lattice Domains in MgB_2[1] E.R. DE WAARD, S.J. KUHN, C. RASTOVSKI, M.R. ESKILDSEN, University of Notre Dame, A. LEISHMAN, Kent State University, C.D. DEWHURST, Institut Laue-Langevin, France, L. DEBEER-SCHMITT, K. LITTRELL, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, J. KARPINSKI, EPFL, Switzerland, N.D. ZHIGADLO, ETH, Switzerland — Small-angle neutron scattering (SANS) studies of the vortex lattice (VL) in the type-II superconductor MgB_2 have revealed an unprecedented degree of metastability that is demonstrably not due to vortex pinning, [C. Rastovski *et al.*, Phys. Rev. Lett. **111**, 107002 (2013)]. Application of an AC magnetic field to drive the VL to the ground state revealed a stretched exponential behavior in the metastable volume fraction as a function of the number of applied AC cycles. Here, we report on detailed structural studies of both metastable and ground state VL domains. These include measurements of VL correlation lengths as well as spatially resolved SANS measurements showing the VL domain distribution within the MgB_2 single crystal. We discuss these results and how they may help to resolve the mechanism responsible for stabilizing the metastable VL phases.

[1]This work is supported by the U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Basic Energy Sciences under Award DE-FG02-10ER46783

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Date submitted: 18 Oct 2015 Electronic form version 1.4