Observation of an Unusual Magnetic Anomaly in the Superconducting Mixed State of Heavy-Fermion Compound UBe$_{13}$ by Precise dc Magnetization Measurements

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Received 28 June 2012; published 20 November 2012

We have performed precise dc magnetization measurements for a single crystal of UBe$_{13}$ down to 0.14 K, up to 80 kOe. We observed a magnetic anomaly in the superconducting (SC) mixed state at a field, named $H_{Mag}$ ($\sim$ 26 kOe, at 0.14 K), implying that UBe$_{13}$ has a magnetically unusual SC state. We studied the magnetization curves of UBe$_{13}$, assuming that the $H_{Mag}$ anomaly originates from (1) and unusual SC diamagnetic response, or (2) a peculiarity of the normal-state magnetization due to vortices in the SC mixed state. The origin of the $H_{Mag}$ anomaly is discussed.

DOI: 10.1103/PhysRevLett.109.217001 PACS numbers: 74.70.Tx, 71.27.+a, 74.25.Ha

Unconventional superconductivity (USC), which cannot be explained in the framework of the Bardeen-Cooper-Schrieffer (BCS) theory, has been found in heavy-fermion compounds, high-$T_c$ cuprates, and organic conductors. Among them, uranium heavy-fermion superconductors show an extremely exotic superconducting (SC) nature, as represented by UBe$_{13}$, UPt$_3$, URu$_2$Si$_2$, UGe$_2$, and URhGe. In order to elucidate the SC mechanism of these novel superconductors, it is crucial to unravel the origin of various non-BCS behaviors, including anisotropic SC gap structures, unusual upper-critical field $H_{c2}$, and SC transition at $T_c$.

Here, we note that $T_c$ is a precursor of the second transition at $T_{c2}$, and $T_1$ and $T_2$ originate from a short-range AF ordering. However, the origin of $B^*(T)$ anomaly and the weak magnetism still remains unclear. Also, how is this anomaly related to the USC in UBe$_{13}$?

Our motivation for the present study is further understanding of the USC in UBe$_{13}$, regarding its magnetic properties. In this Letter, we report precise dc magnetization $M(H)$ measurements at very low temperature below $T_c$ on a single crystal of UBe$_{13}$ for $H||$[001].

A single crystal of UBe$_{13}$ was grown by an Al-flux method. $M(H)$ curves were measured down to 0.14 K and up to 80 kOe with a field gradient of 500–900 Oe/cm by using a capacitive Faraday-force magnetometer installed in a 3He–4He dilution refrigerator. Here, in order to subtract the slight magnetic-torque effect on our measurements, we also measured the field dependence of capacitance with no field gradient at each temperature.

Figure 1(a) shows $M(H)$ curves in the mixed state of the single crystal of UBe$_{13}$ for $H||$[001] at 0.14 K. A clear irreversibility observed in low-field region below $\sim$ 20 kOe is due to vortex flux pinning in a type-II superconductor. We define $H_{irr}$ as a field where the irreversibility vanishes completely. Just below $H_{irr}$, a peak effect is observed. Here, we note that $H_{c2}$ of UBe$_{13}$ is almost the same as $H_{irr}$ ($\leq H_{c2}$).

In Fig. 1(a), we can see that the raw $M(H)$ curves bend around 20–30 kOe, $d^2M(H)/dH^2 > 0$, for both increasing $[M_{inc}(H)]$ and decreasing $[M_{dec}(H)]$ processes. The present results indicate that the origin of the anomaly in pure UBe$_{13}$ is magnetic.

The irreversibility of $M(H)$ curves becomes entirely small in high-field region above $\sim$ 30 kOe (Fig. 1) [24].
by $M_n(H) = \chi_1 H + (1/3!) \chi_2 H^3$, and assume that $M_n(H)$ in the SC mixed state is also described by the same expression. By subtracting the contribution of $M_n(H)$, one can obtain $M_{eq}^{SC}(H)$.

Figure 1(b) shows SC contribution $M_{eq}^{SC}(H)$ and $M_{eq}^{SC}(H)$ of UBe$_{13}$ at 0.14 K for $H||\langle001\rangle$. A broad minimum in $M_{eq}^{SC}(H)$ can be seen at around 26 kOe. We define $H_{Mag}^*$ as a magnetic field where $M_{eq}^{SC}(H)$ shows the minimum; i.e., $|M_{eq}^{SC}(H)|$ reaches a maximum, which we denoted by upper arrow at ~26 kOe for 0.14 K in Fig. 1(b). As for $M_{eq}^{\text{NM}}(H)$ and $M_{eq}^{\text{ideal}}(H)$, we will describe them in the following discussion.

Magnetic anomaly in the mixed state has been reported as anomalous magnetic-torque (AMT) effect from high-resolution torque measurements for a similar-quality sample by Schmiedeshoff et al. [26]. They observed the AMT effect also in the normal state at low-$T$ and in high-$H$ ($\sim 40–50$ kOe) region. In our no-field-gradient measurements, we could not clearly observe it within the experimental error. Besides, since we observed the magnetic anomaly only in the SC state, its origin is different from the AMT effect [26]; while the AMT effect is related to a magnetic anisotropy, $H_{Mag}^*$ is probably related to a change in terms of the absolute value of $M(H)$.

Figure 2 shows $M_{eq}^{SC}(H)$ and $M_{eq}^{SC}(H)$ of UBe$_{13}$ for $H||\langle001\rangle$ at 0.18, 0.24, 0.37, and 0.50 K obtained in the same way as described above. We can see the anomaly around $H_{Mag}^*$ denoted by upper arrows at each temperature, and it becomes distinct with cooling.

suggested that the used single crystal is of high quality, because the flux-pinning centers are impurities or lattice defects in general. We also checked the large and sharp specific-heat jump at the SC transition for the same sample [25]. We then consider that the observed magnetic anomaly is an intrinsic phenomenon for a good-quality sample, which is related to the SC nature of UBe$_{13}$.

We approximately obtain thermal-equilibrium magnetization $M_{eq}(H)$ by averaging increasing and decreasing processes: $M_{eq} = (M_{inc} + M_{dec})/2$, as plotted in Fig. 1(a). The anomaly around ~26 kOe is observed both in $M_{inc}(H)$ and $M_{dec}(H)$, then we can bring out the anomaly also in $M_{eq}(H)$. This $M_{eq}(H)$ consists of normal-state magnetization $M_n(H)$ of vortices and SC diamagnetic response (SCDR) $M_{eq}^{SC}(H)$: $M_{eq}(H) = M_n(H) + M_{eq}^{SC}(H)$. Therefore, it is natural to consider that the magnetic anomaly is originated from a peculiarity of $M_{eq}^{SC}(H)$ or $M_n(H)$. First, we report results of analysis, assumed that $H_{Mag}^*$ anomaly is originated from an unusual SCDR. Although $M_n(H)$ above $H_{c2}$ is almost linear, there is a very small contribution of nonlinear susceptibility in $M_n(H)$. We therefore fit $M_n(H)$ above $H_{c2}$ as

\[
M_n(H) = \chi_1 H + (1/3!) \chi_2 H^3
\]

FIG. 1 (color online). (a) dc magnetization curves, $M_{inc}(H)$, $M_{dec}(H)$, and $M_{eq}(H)$ of UBe$_{13}$ for $H||\langle001\rangle$ at 0.14 K. Normal-state magnetization $M_n(H)$ is also plotted. $M_{eq}^{\text{NM}}(H)$ is the unusual normal-state magnetization, assuming that the SC diamagnetic response is conventional (see text). (b) SC contribution to magnetization $M_{eq}^{SC}(H)$, and $M_{eq}^{SC}(H)$. $M_{eq}^{\text{ideal}}(H)$ is conventional SC diamagnetic response, which is estimated from SC condensation energy obtained by $C(T)$ (see text).
Figure 3 shows $H$-$T$ SC phase diagram of UBe$_{13}$ with an image plot of $M^{\text{SC}}_{\text{eq}}(H)$ for $H || (001)$. $H^*_{\text{Mag}}$ and $H^*_{\text{ irr}}$ ($\leq H_c2$) are also plotted. As seen in Fig. 3, the temperature dependence of $H^*_{\text{Mag}}$ is similar to that of $B^*$ [20,27], suggesting that the origins of these anomalies are the same. The light color in the image plot indicates a $H$-$T$ region where $|M^{\text{SC}}_{\text{eq}}(H)|$ enhances. However, this phenomenon is extremely strange, because generally SC state excludes magnetic flux as well known, and SCDR decreases with increasing field in the SC mixed state. Then it is natural to consider that the unusual SCDR is reflecting a peculiarity of SC diamagnetic current or a presence of some orbital current below $H^*_{\text{Mag}}$ by undefined reason, and then the SCDR below $H^*_{\text{Mag}}$ becomes small in appearance. For example, such an effect might be caused by paramagnetic Meissner effect[28] or some strong flux-trapping effect below $H^*_{\text{Mag}}$. In order to clarify this, a precise study of its sample-shape dependence is needed, because it has been reported that the paramagnetic Meissner effect occurs in very thick SC samples [28].

Another possibility is a presence of a magnetic-field-induced SC state in UBe$_{13}$, which is quite unlike BCS type-II superconductors; this might be caused by an increase of the superfluid density at around $H^*_{\text{Mag}}$, or/and an increase of volume fraction of the SC state by some mechanism. The later case indicates that there is a non-SC part in the sample even below $T_c$. The volume fraction of the SC state would be dependent on the sample quality, then it will be needed to study the sample dependence on the behavior of $H^*_{\text{Mag}}$ anomaly.

Is the estimation of $M_n(H)$ in the SC mixed state appropriate for UBe$_{13}$? In order to verify this, we examine whether SC condensation energy (SCCE) deduced from $M^{\text{SC}}_{\text{eq}}$ is quantitative or not. For this, it is useful to compare with a result obtained from specific-heat $C(T)$. Here, we define $H^*_{\text{Mag}}$ and $H^*_{\text{SH}}$ as thermodynamic critical fields obtained from $M^{\text{SC}}_{\text{eq}}(H)$ and $C(T)$, respectively. We obtain $H^*_{\text{Mag}}$ by integrating $M^{\text{SC}}_{\text{eq}}(H) : \frac{\mu_B n_{\text{Mag}}}{8\pi} = - \int_0^{H^*_{\text{Mag}}} M^{\text{SC}}_{\text{eq}}(H) dH$. On the other hand, we obtain SCCE also from $C(T) : H^*_{\text{SH}}(T)^2 / 8\pi = \int_T^{T_c} dT \int_{T_c}^{T_c} \left( C_{\text{SC}}(T') - C_n(T') \right) / T' dT'$, where $C_{\text{SC}}(T)$ and $C_n(T)$ are specific-heat in SC and normal states, respectively. Here, we assumed an entropy balance between the SC and the normal states according to Ref. [29].

Figure 4 shows the results of SCCE and $H^*_{\text{Mag}}(T)$ obtained from $M^{\text{SC}}_{\text{eq}}$ curves for $H || (001)$, together with results for $H || (110)$ [30]. Dashed line indicates $H^*_{\text{SH}}(T)$ obtained from $C(T)$ data in Ref. [25]. As seen in Fig. 4, there is no significant difference in SCCE and $H^*_{\text{Mag}}(T)$ between for $H || (001)$ and for $H || (110)$. Since SCCE is a scalar quantity, SCCE should be isotropic. Namely, this isotropic behavior on $H^*_{\text{Mag}}(T)$ is considered to be valid. Furthermore, $H^*_{\text{Mag}}(T)$ roughly agrees with $H^*_{\text{SH}}(T)$, suggesting that we cannot rule out the possibility of magnetic-field induced superconductivity.

We now discuss the origin of $H^*_{\text{Mag}}$ anomaly, assuming that it is caused by an unusual normal-state magnetization (UNM) in the SC mixed state. We shall obtain the UNM in the SC mixed state by using the value of $H^*_{\text{SH}}$ obtained from $C(T)$, assuming that the SCDR is conventional as in a BCS superconductor. We define $M^{\text{SC}}_{\text{ideal}}(H)$ as the conventional SCDR. Since we do not know a rigorous function of $M^{\text{SC}}_{\text{ideal}}(H)$, we roughly estimate $M^{\text{SC}}_{\text{ideal}}(H)$ by a straight linear magnetization $a + bH$ as shown in Fig. 1(b), so that the SC condensation energy becomes equal to that obtained from $C(T)$. Here, $a(<0)$, and $b(>0)$ are

FIG. 3 (color online). SC phase diagram of UBe$_{13}$, including the results of $H^*_{\text{Mag}}$ ($\leq H_c2$) and $H^*_{\text{Mag}}$, with an image plot of $M^{\text{SC}}_{\text{eq}}(H)$ for $H || (001)$. Our previous specific-heat $C(T)$ results for $H || (001)$ on the same sample [the peak-top temperatures of $C(T)$ jump at SC transition] [25] are also plotted. Dashed lines are guide to the eye. The light color in the phase diagram indicates a $H$-$T$ region where $|M^{\text{SC}}_{\text{eq}}(H)|$ becomes large.

FIG. 4 (color online). (a) SC condensation energy, and (b) thermodynamic critical field of UBe$_{13}$ for $H || (001)$ and $H || (110)$ [30] obtained from $M^{\text{SC}}_{\text{eq}}(H)$ and $C(T)$ data [25].
We may approximate the vicinity of zero field. This implies a presence of ferromagnetic correlation to our simple analysis indicates that the magnetic correlation constants, and are determined by an equation as below: \( (H_{\text{Mag}}^0)^2 / 8\pi = -\int_0^{H_{\text{Mag}}^0} M_{\text{ideal}}^\text{SC}(H) \, dH = -\int_0^{H_{\text{Mag}}^0} (a + bH) \, dH = -[a + (b/2)H_c^2]H_{\text{Mag}}. \) Besides, we do not consider the lower-critical field \( H_{\text{c1}} \), because \( H_{\text{c1}} \) of UBe13 has been reported to be very small, \( H_{\text{c1}}(T \sim 0) \sim 40-50 \text{ Oe} \) [31]. We may approximate \( M_{\text{ideal}}^\text{SC}(H) \) in this way, because a type-II superconductor with a large Maki parameter \( \kappa_2 \) should exhibit an almost linear SCDR in sufficiently large magnetic field \( (H_{\text{c1}} \ll H) \), if the SCDR is conventional [32]; we have already known that UBe13 has a large value of the \( \kappa_2 \approx 50 \) as reported in our previous work [25]. Next, we conversely obtain the UNM, \( M_{\text{UNM}}^n(H) \) from \( M_{\text{ideal}}^\text{SC}(H) \) and experimentally obtained \( M_{\text{eq}}(H) \); from \( M_{\text{eq}}(H) = M_{\text{UNM}}^n(H) + M_{\text{ideal}}^\text{SC}(H) \), we obtain \( M_{\text{UNM}}(H) = M_{\text{eq}}(H) - M_{\text{ideal}}^\text{SC}(H) \) [Fig. 1(a)].

As seen in Fig. 1(a), \( M_{\text{UNM}}(H) \) is not zero even in the vicinity of zero field. This implies a presence of ferromagnetic (FM) contribution, \( M_0 \sim 0.1 \text{ emu/g} \sim 0.4 \text{ emu/cm}^3 \sim 3 \times 10 \text{ emu/mole} \) [33]. The FM moment per f.u. of UBe13 is converted as \( m_0^0 \sim (3 \times 10 \text{ emu/mole})/(N_A \text{ mol}^{-1} \times \mu_B \text{ erg/Oe}) \sim 5 \times 10^{-3} \mu_B/\text{U} \), where the \( \mu_B \) and \( N_A \) are the Bohr magneton and the Avogadro number, respectively. One of possible explanations of our results, regarding the assumption of UNM, is a presence of a weak FM moment of order \( 10^{-3} \mu_B/\text{U} \) below \( H_{\text{Mag}}^* \), in the SC state of UBe13.

Alternatively, a change of Fermi surface (density of states) around \( H_{\text{Mag}} \) might cause an increase of the susceptibility of normal state, as \( d^2(M/H)/dH^2 > 0 \). In any case, we stress that the variation of magnetization, \( d^2(M/H)/dH^2 > 0 \) around \( H_{\text{Mag}} \) itself is an intrinsic experimental fact, no matter what the origin of this anomaly is. In order to clarify its origin, further studies such as microscopic measurements and its sample-dependence study will be needed.

In conclusion, we have performed precise low-\( T \) dc magnetization measurements on a single crystal of UBe13, and observed the unusual magnetic anomaly at \( H_{\text{Mag}}^* \) in the SC mixed state. We suggest that magnetic field \( H_{\text{Mag}}^* \) is an energy scale which characterizes the unusual magnetic properties on the SC state of UBe13.

We thank H. Tou, F. J. Ohkawa, T. Kita, K. Tenya, H. Hirakawa, V. P. Mineev, and J. P. Brison for valuable discussions. The present work was supported by a Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research on Innovative Areas ‘Heavy Electrons’ (Grants No. 20102002, and No. 23102701), Scientific Research B (Grant No. 19340086) and S (Grant No. 20224015), from MEXT of Japan.

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$H_{c2}$ of type-II superconductor is defined as a field where the thermal-equilibrium magnetization $M_{eq}(H)$ curve shows a kink just below the normal state.


We will report results of magnetization measurements on UBe$_{13}$ for $H_{jj}(110)$ in another paper.