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Cooper

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(54) **MOLTEN METAL CONTROLLED FLOW LAUNDER**

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(58) **Field of Classification Search**

CPC B22D 41/00; B22D 35/04; B22D 39/00; F04D 7/065

See application file for complete search history.

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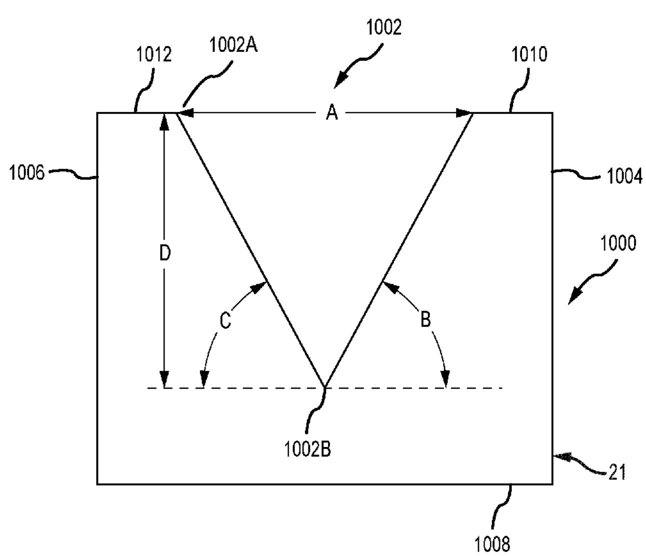
(57) **ABSTRACT**

A launder for use in moving molten metal includes at least one relatively narrow channel through which molten metal flows. Using a narrow, rather than broad, channel permits better control of the flow and helps prevent overflowing the launder or a structure adjacent the launder. A molten metal pumping or transfer system may utilize a launder as disclosed herein.

11 Claims, 11 Drawing Sheets



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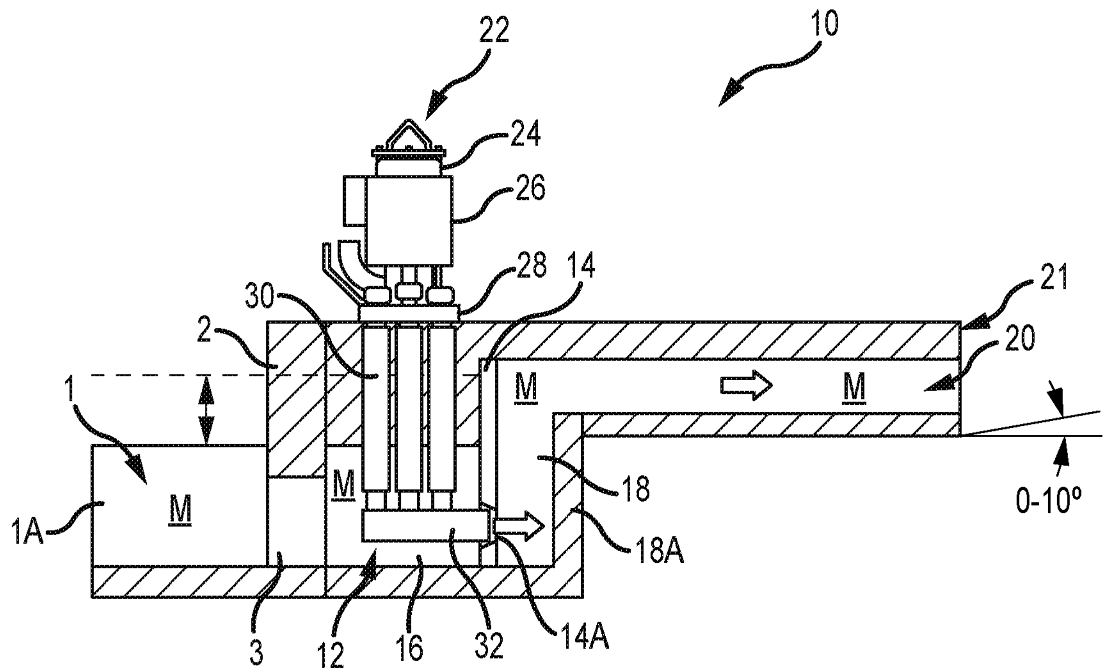


FIG.1

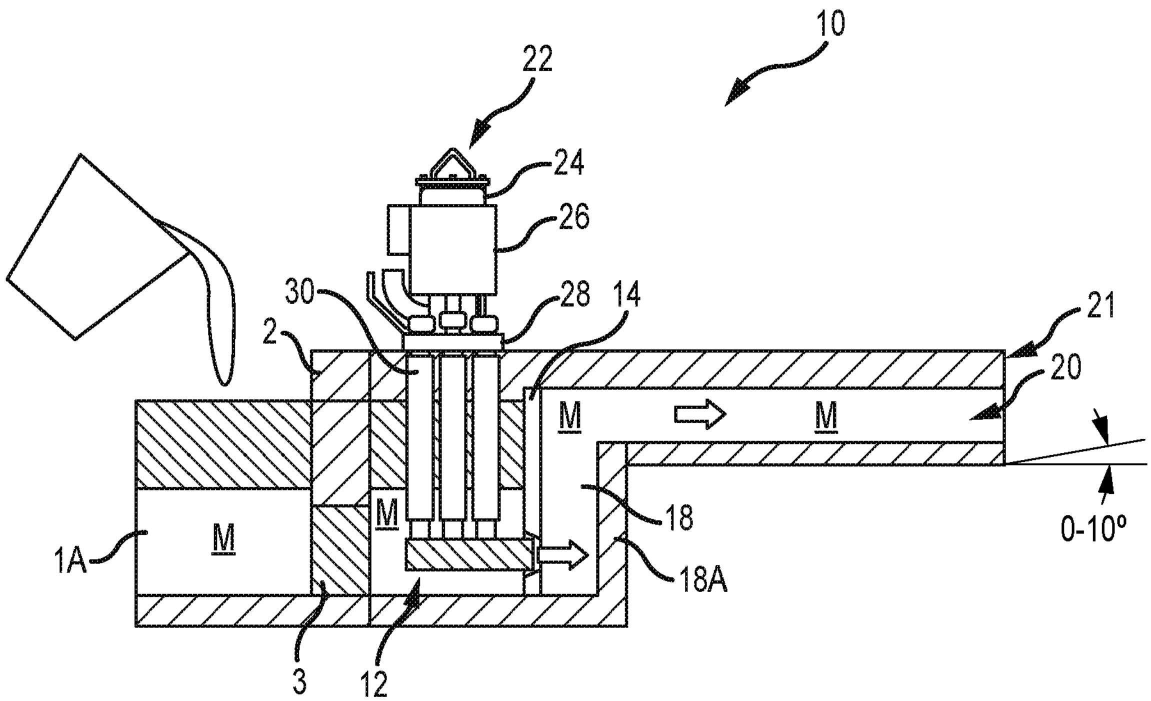


FIG.2

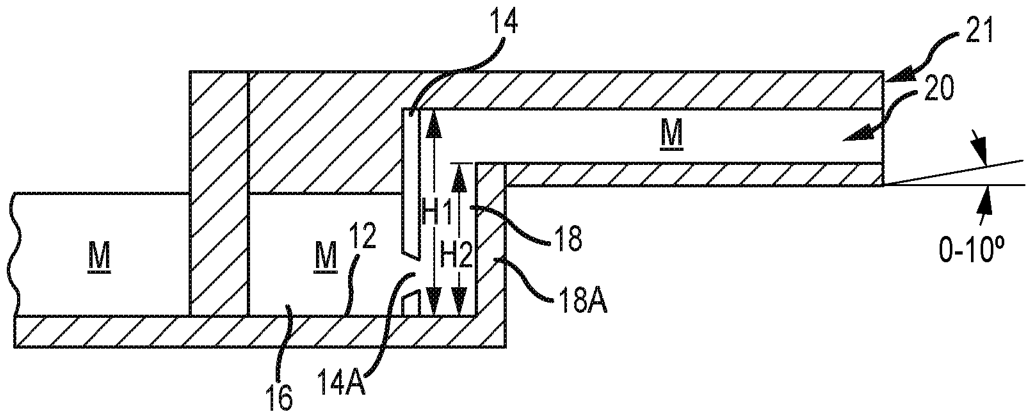


FIG.2A

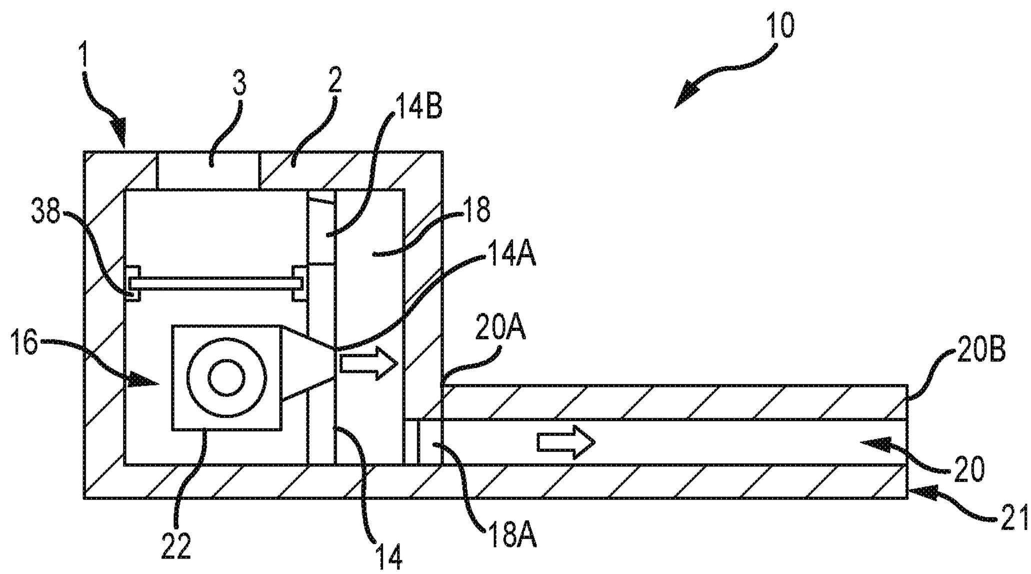


FIG.3

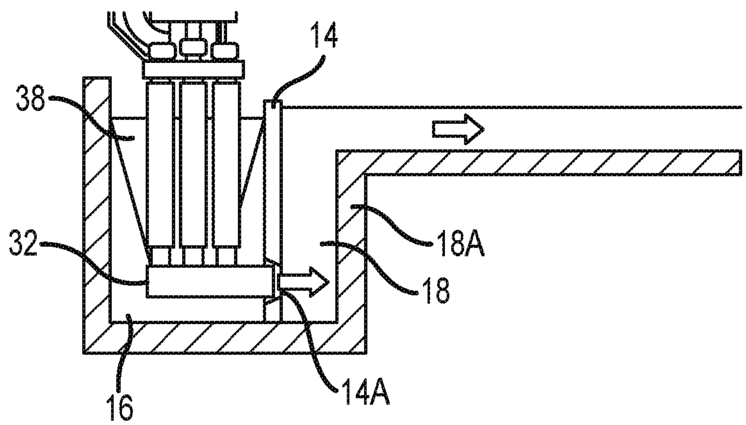
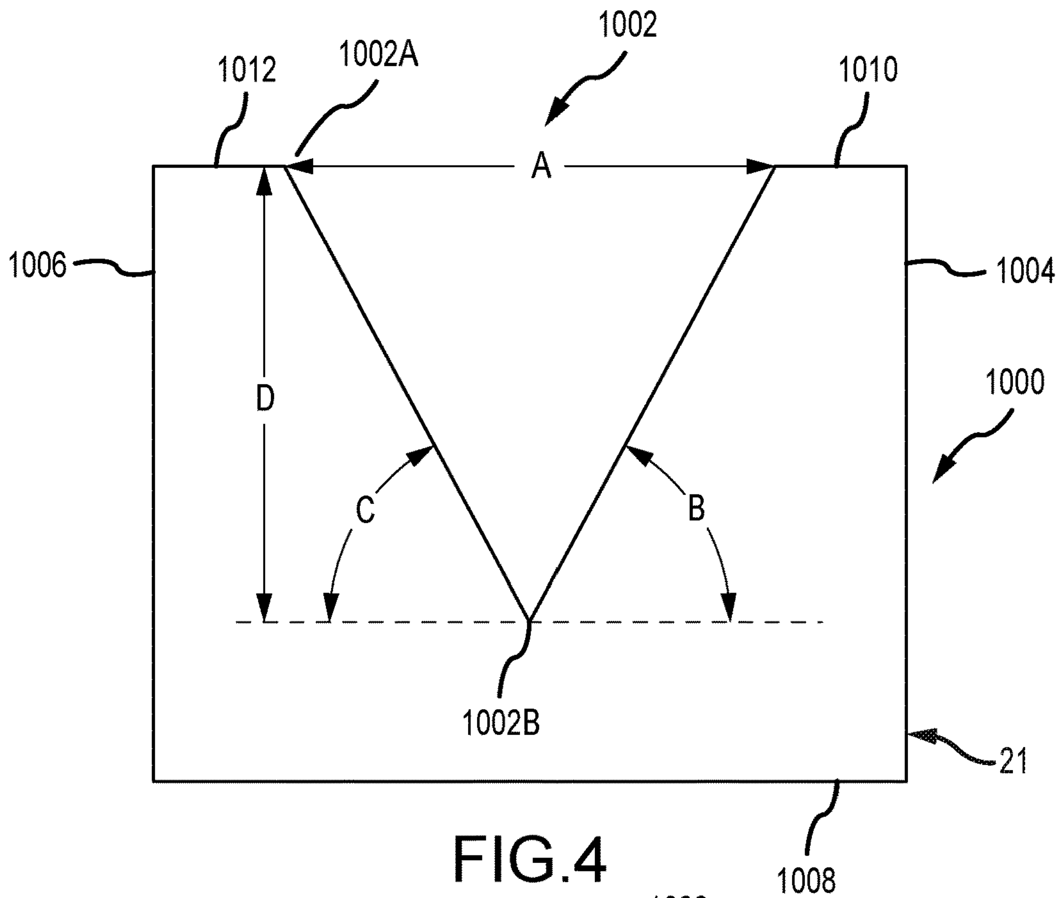


FIG.3A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B
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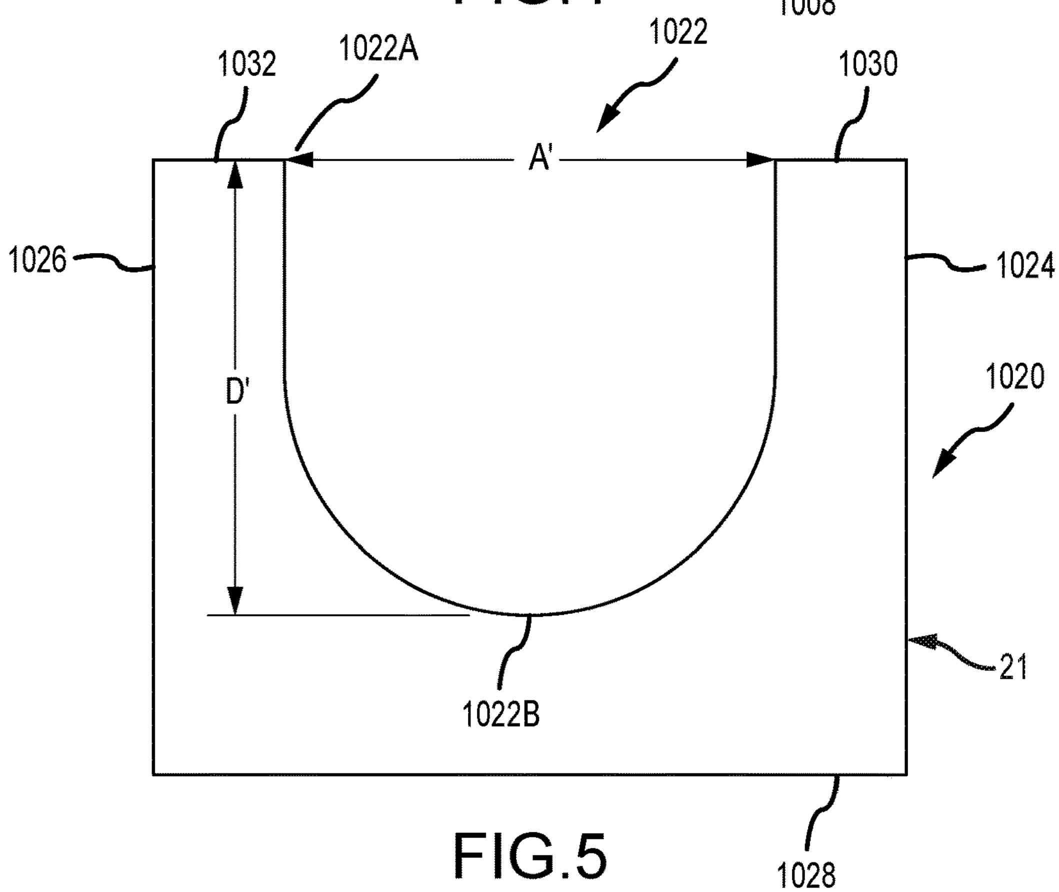
21
1008

FIG.4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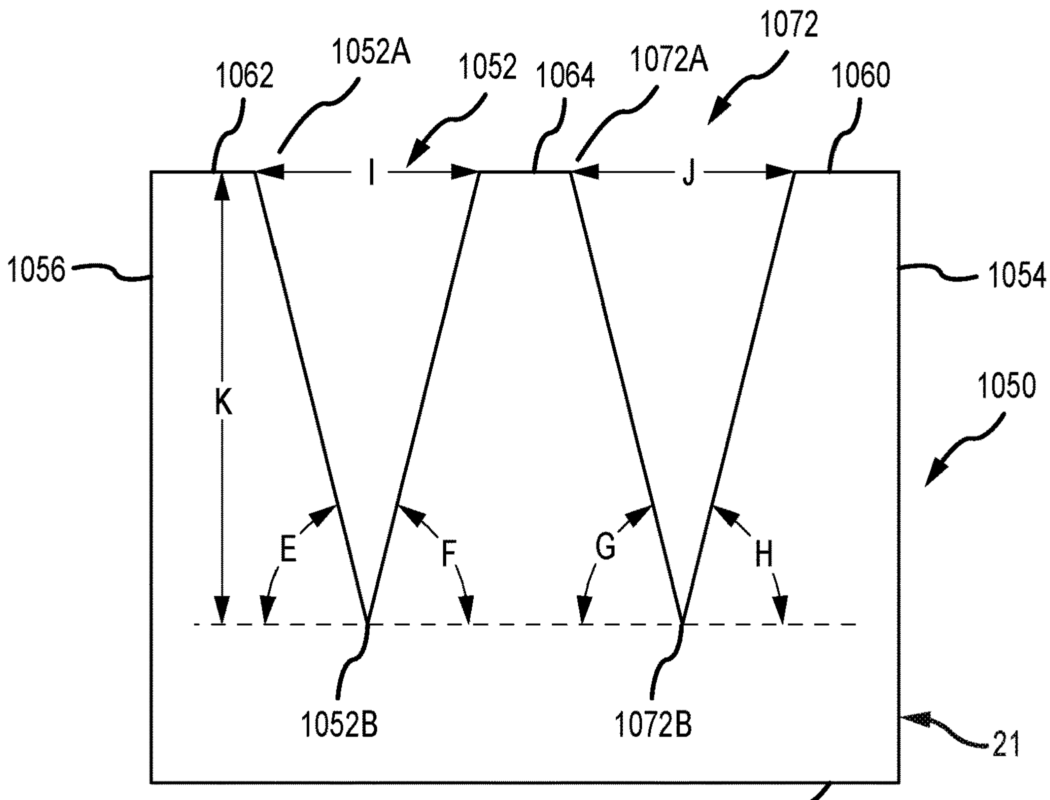
1026
1024
1020
D'
1022B
21
1028

FIG.5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1052
1064
1072A
1072
1060
I
J
1056
1054
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1050
E
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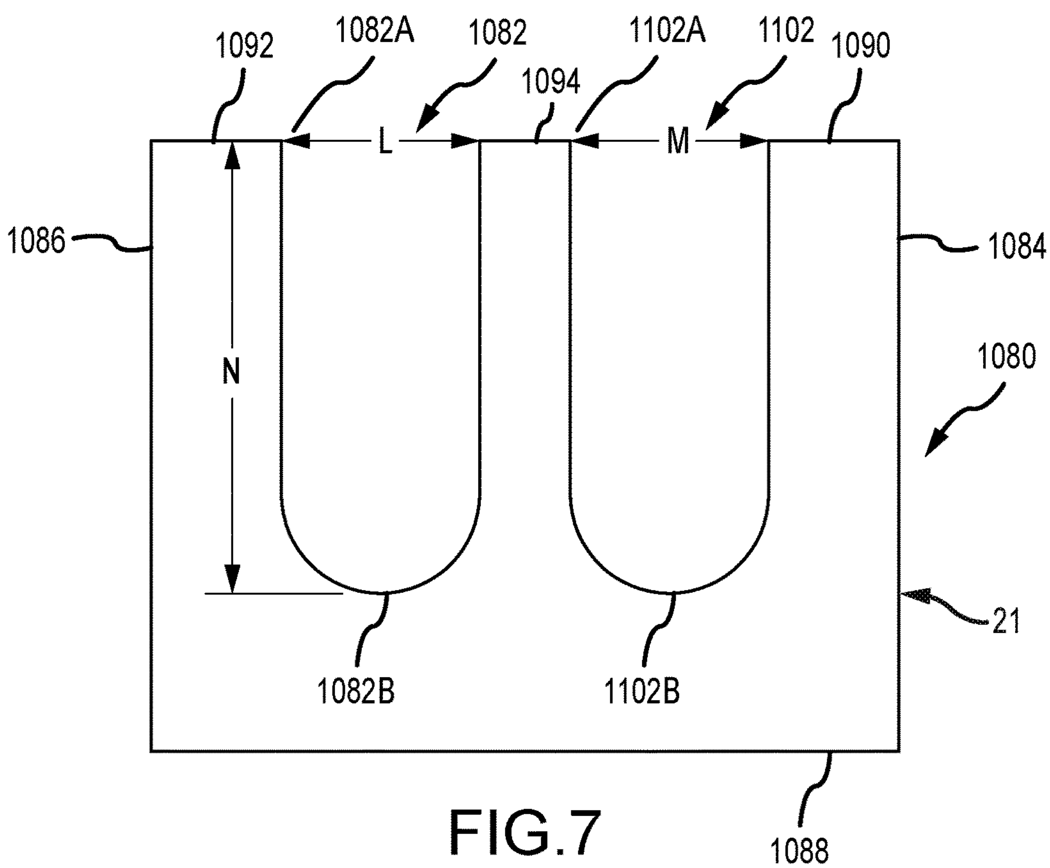
G
H
1052B
1072B
21
1058

FIG.6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1088

FIG.7

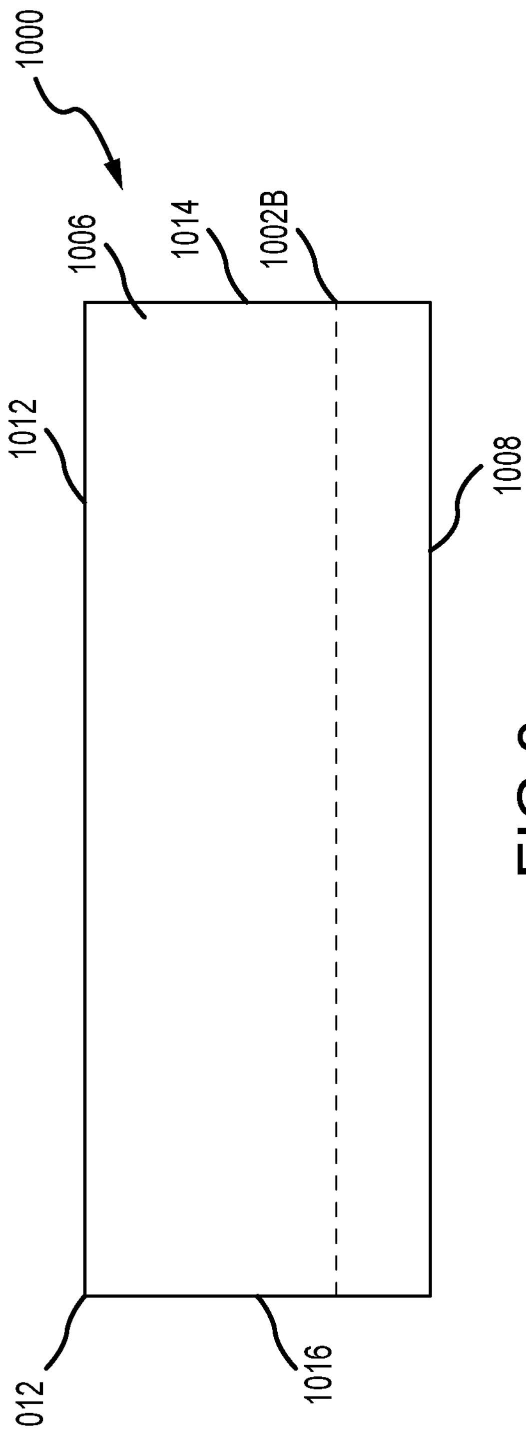
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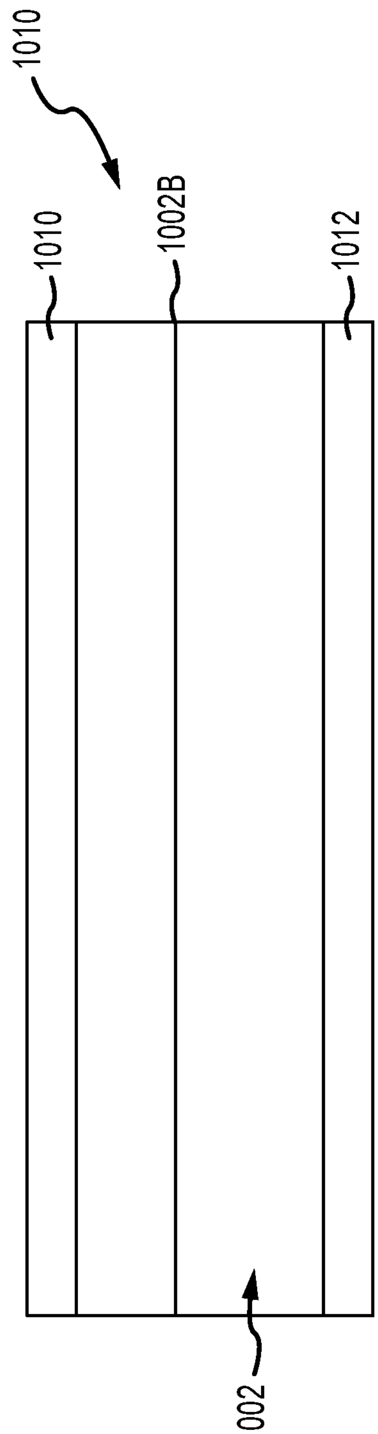
FIG.8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1012
1002

FIG.9

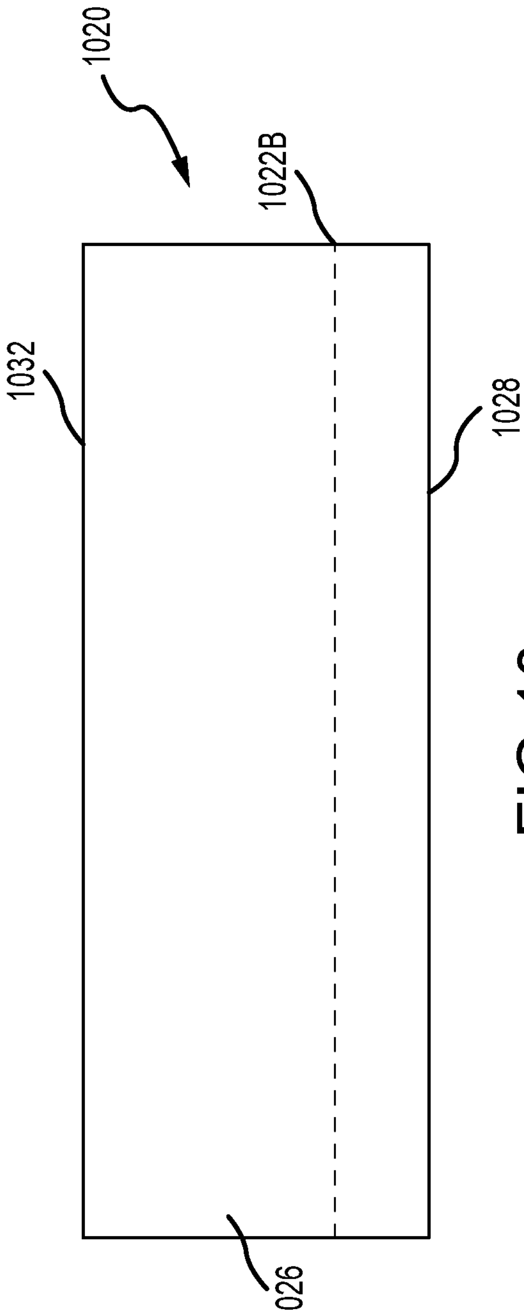

FIG.10

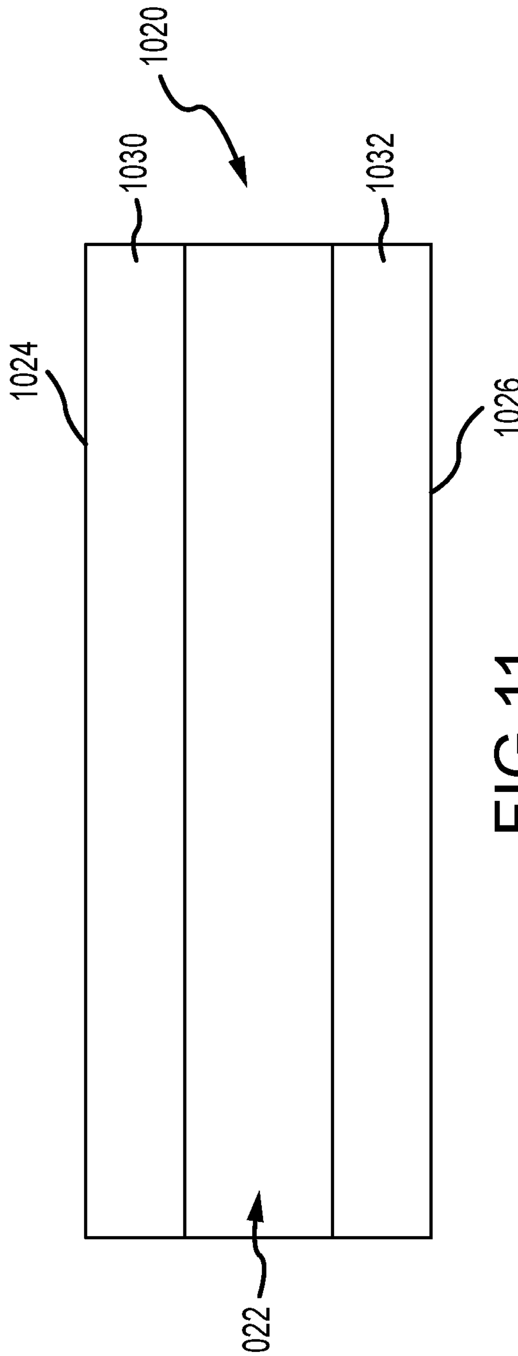

FIG.11

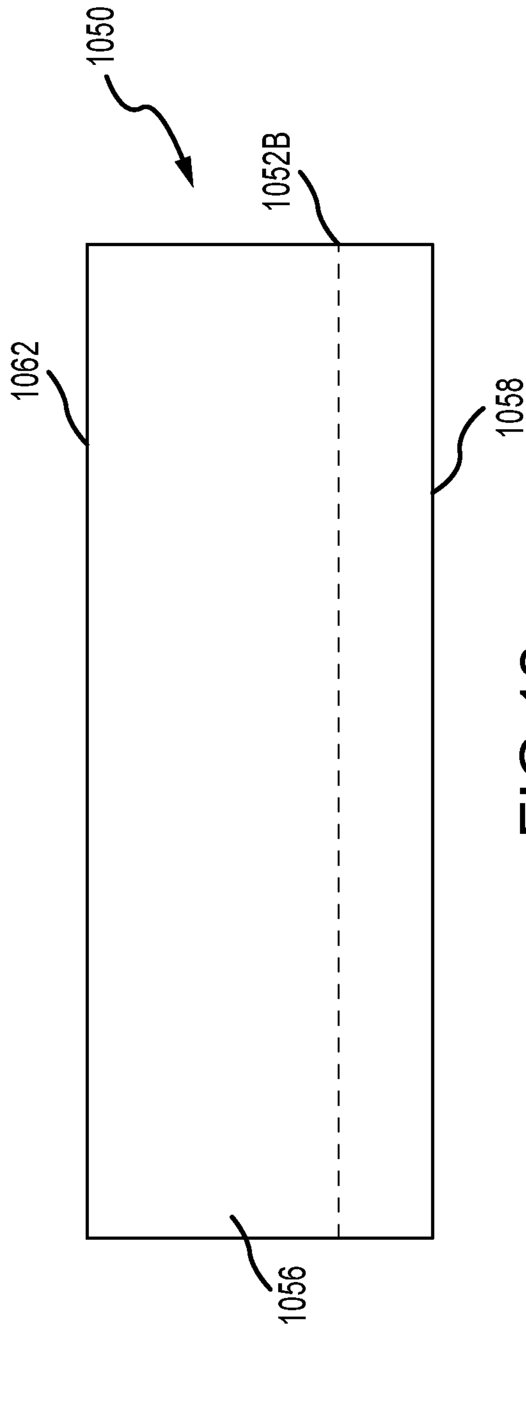
1050
1052B
1062
1058
1056

FIG.12

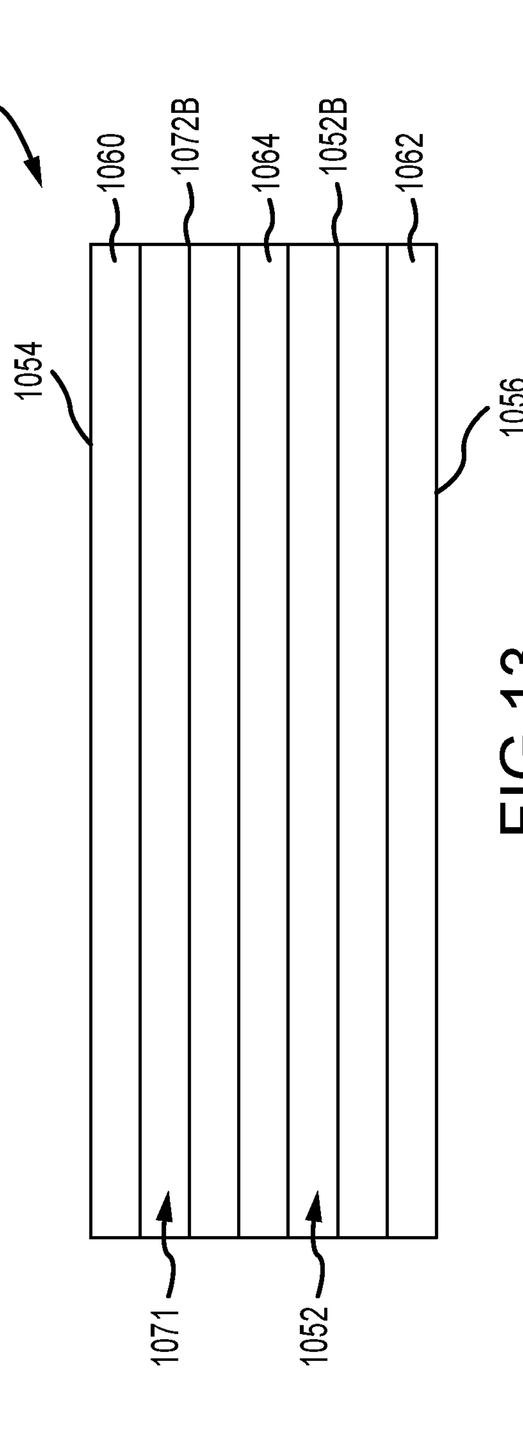
1050
1060
1072B
1064
1052B
1062
1054
1056
1071
1052

FIG.13

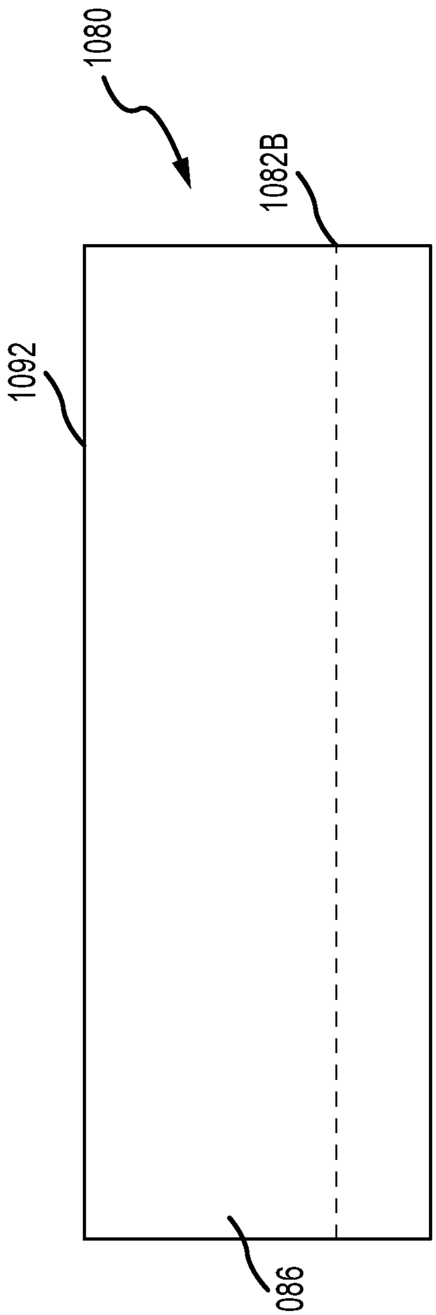

FIG.14

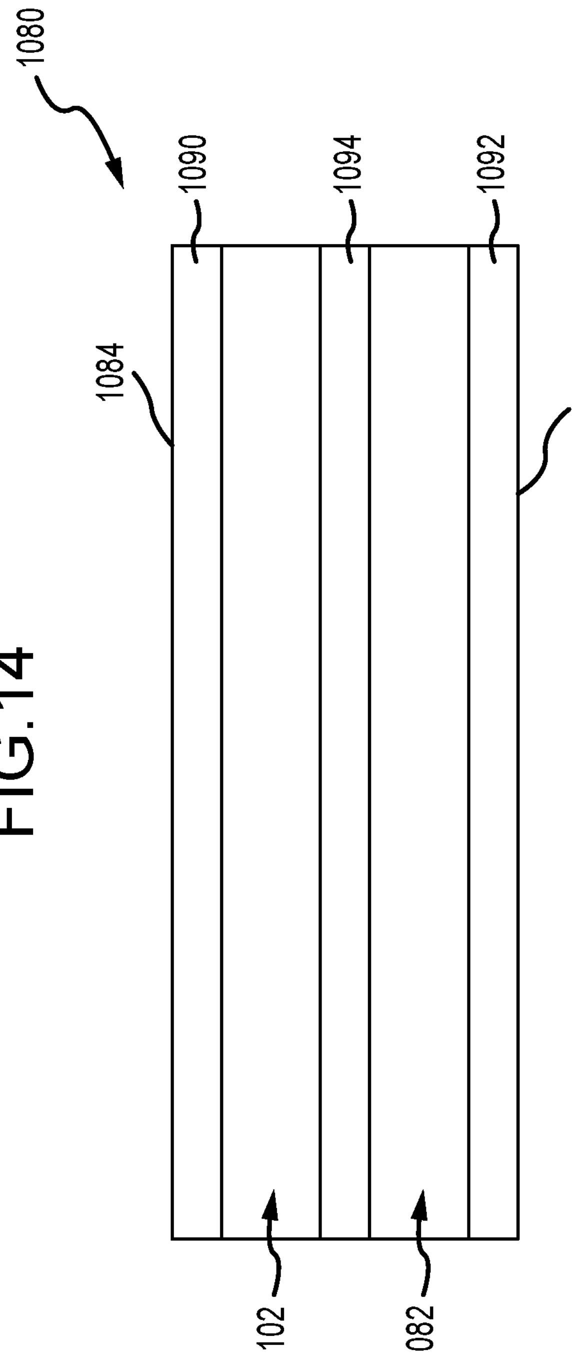

FIG.15

MOLTEN METAL CONTROLLED FLOW LAUNDER

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application claims priority to and incorporates by reference: (1) U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 62/849,787 filed May 17, 2019 and entitled MOLTEN METAL PUMPS, COMPONENTS, SYSTEMS AND METHODS, and (2) U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 62/852,846 filed May 24, 2019 and entitled SMART MOLTEN METAL PUMP.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

As used herein, the term "molten metal" means any metal or combination of metals in liquid form, such as aluminum, copper, iron, zinc and alloys thereof. The term "gas" means any gas or combination of gases, including argon, nitrogen, chlorine, fluorine, Freon, and helium, which are released into molten metal.

Known molten-metal pumps include a pump base (also called a housing or casing), one or more inlets (an inlet being an opening in the housing to allow molten metal to enter a pump chamber), a pump chamber of any suitable configuration, which is an open area formed within the housing, and a discharge, which is a channel or conduit of any structure or type communicating with the pump chamber (in an axial pump the chamber and discharge may be the same structure or different areas of the same structure) leading from the pump chamber to an outlet, which is an opening formed in the exterior of the housing through which molten metal exits the casing. An impeller, also called a rotor, is mounted in the pump chamber and is connected to a drive system. The drive shaft is typically an impeller shaft connected to one end of a motor shaft, the other end of the drive shaft being connected to an impeller. Often, the impeller (or rotor) shaft is comprised of graphite and/or ceramic, the motor shaft is comprised of steel, and the two are connected by a coupling. As the motor turns the drive shaft, the drive shaft turns the impeller and the impeller pushes molten metal out of the pump chamber, through the discharge, out of the outlet and into the molten metal bath. Most molten metal pumps are gravity fed, wherein gravity forces molten metal through the inlet and into the pump chamber as the impeller pushes molten metal out of the pump chamber. Other molten metal pumps do not include a base or support posts and are sized to fit into a structure by which molten metal is pumped. Most pumps have a metal platform, or super structure, that is either supported by a plurality of support posts attached to the pump base, or unsupported if there is no base. The motor is positioned on the superstructure, if a superstructure is used.

This application incorporates by reference the portions of the following publications that are not inconsistent with this disclosure: U.S. Pat. No. 4,598,899, issued Jul. 8, 1986, to Paul V. Cooper, U.S. Pat. No. 5,203,681, issued Apr. 20, 1993, to Paul V. Cooper, U.S. Pat. No. 5,308,045, issued May 3, 1994, by Paul V. Cooper, U.S. Pat. No. 5,662,725, issued Sep. 2, 1997, by Paul V. Cooper, U.S. Pat. No. 5,678,807, issued Oct. 21, 1997, by Paul V. Cooper, U.S. Pat. No. 6,027,685, issued Feb. 22, 2000, by Paul V. Cooper, U.S. Pat. No. 6,124,523, issued Sep. 26, 2000, by Paul V. Cooper, U.S. Pat. No. 6,303,074, issued Oct. 16, 2001, by Paul V. Cooper, U.S. Pat. No. 6,689,310, issued Feb. 10, 2004, by Paul V. Cooper, U.S. Pat. No. 6,723,276, issued Apr. 20, 2004, by Paul V. Cooper, U.S. Pat. No. 7,402,276, issued Jul. 22, 2008, by Paul V. Cooper, U.S. Pat. No. 7,507,367, issued Mar. 24, 2009, by Paul V. Cooper, U.S. Pat. No. 7,906,068, issued Mar. 15, 2011, by Paul V. Cooper, U.S. Pat. No. 8,075,837, issued Dec. 13, 2011, by Paul V. Cooper, U.S. Pat. No. 8,110,141, issued Feb. 7, 2012, by Paul V. Cooper, U.S. Pat. No. 8,178,037, issued May 15, 2012, by Paul V. Cooper, U.S. Pat. No. 8,361,379, issued Jan. 29, 2013, by Paul V. Cooper, U.S. Pat. No. 8,366,993, issued Feb. 5, 2013, by Paul V. Cooper, U.S. Pat. No. 8,409,495, issued Apr. 2, 2013, by Paul V. Cooper, U.S. Pat. No. 8,440,135, issued May 15, 2013, by Paul V. Cooper, U.S. Pat. No. 8,444,911, issued May 21, 2013, by Paul V. Cooper, U.S. Pat. No. 8,475,708, issued Jul. 2, 2013, by Paul V. Cooper, U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/895,796, filed Sep. 30, 2010, by Paul V. Cooper, U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/877,988, filed Sep. 8, 2010, by Paul V. Cooper, U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/853,238, filed Aug. 9, 2010, by Paul V. Cooper, U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/880,027, filed Sep. 10, 2010, by Paul V. Cooper, U.S. patent application Ser. No. 13/752,312, filed Jan. 28, 2013, by Paul V. Cooper, U.S. patent application Ser. No. 13/756,468, filed Jan. 31, 2013, by Paul V. Cooper, U.S. patent application Ser. No. 13/791,889, filed Mar. 8, 2013, by Paul V. Cooper, U.S. patent application Ser. No. 13/791,952, filed Mar. 9, 2013, by Paul V. Cooper, U.S. patent application Ser. No. 13/841,594, filed Mar. 15, 2013, by Paul V. Cooper, and U.S. patent application Ser. No. 14/027,237, filed Sep. 15, 2013, by Paul V. Cooper.

Three basic types of pumps for pumping molten metal, such as molten aluminum, are utilized: circulation pumps, transfer pumps and gas-release pumps. Circulation pumps are used to circulate the molten metal within a bath, thereby generally equalizing the temperature of the molten metal. Circulation pumps may be used in any vessel, such as in a reverbatory furnace having an external well. The well is usually an extension of the charging well, in which scrap metal is charged (i.e., added).

Standard transfer pumps are generally used to transfer molten metal from one structure to another structure such as a ladle or another furnace. A standard transfer pump has a riser tube connected to a pump discharge and supported by the superstructure. As molten metal is pumped it is pushed up the riser tube (sometimes called a metal-transfer conduit) and out of the riser tube, which generally has an elbow at its upper end, so molten metal is released into a different vessel from which the pump is positioned.

Gas-release pumps, such as gas-injection pumps, circulate molten metal while introducing a gas into the molten metal. In the purification of molten metals, particularly aluminum, it is frequently desired to remove dissolved gases such as hydrogen, or dissolved metals, such as magnesium. As is known by those skilled in the art, the removing of dissolved gas is known as "degassing" while the removal of magnesium is known as "demagging." Gas-release pumps may be used for either of both of these purposes or for any other application for which it is desirable to introduce gas into molten metal.

Gas-release pumps generally include a gas-transfer conduit having a first end that is connected to a gas source and a second end submerged in the molten metal bath. Gas is introduced into the first end and is released from the second end into the molten metal. The gas may be released downstream of the pump chamber into either the pump discharge or a metal-transfer conduit extending from the discharge, or into a stream of molten metal exiting either the discharge or the metal-transfer conduit. Alternatively, gas may be released into the pump chamber or upstream of the pump chamber at a position where molten metal enters the pump chamber. The gas may also be released into any suitable location in a molten metal bath.

Molten metal pump casings and rotors often employ a bearing system comprising ceramic rings wherein there are one or more rings on the rotor that align with rings in the pump chamber (such as rings at the inlet and outlet) when the rotor is placed in the pump chamber. The purpose of the bearing system is to reduce damage to the soft, graphite components, particularly the rotor and pump base, during pump operation.

Generally, a degasser (also called a rotary degasser) includes (1) an impeller shaft having a first end, a second end and a passage for transferring gas, (2) an impeller, and (3) a drive source for rotating the impeller shaft and the impeller. The first end of the impeller shaft is connected to the drive source and to a gas source and the second end is connected to the impeller.

Generally a scrap melter includes an impeller affixed to an end of a drive shaft, and a drive source attached to the other end of the drive shaft for rotating the shaft and the impeller. The movement of the impeller draws molten metal and scrap metal downward into the molten metal bath in order to melt the scrap. A circulation pump is preferably used in conjunction with the scrap melter to circulate the molten metal in order to maintain a relatively constant temperature within the molten metal.

The materials forming the components that contact the molten metal bath should remain relatively stable in the bath. Structural refractory materials, such as graphite or ceramics, that are resistant to disintegration by corrosive attack from the molten metal may be used. As used herein "ceramics" or "ceramic" refers to any oxidized metal (including silicon) or carbon-based material, excluding graphite, or other ceramic material capable of being used in the environment of a molten metal bath. "Graphite" means any type of graphite, whether or not chemically treated. Graphite is particularly suitable for being formed into pump components because it is (a) soft and relatively easy to machine, (b) not as brittle as ceramics and less prone to breakage, and (c) less expensive than ceramics.

Ceramic, however, is more resistant to corrosion by molten aluminum than graphite. It would therefore be advantageous to develop vertical members used in a molten metal device that are comprised of ceramic, but less costly than solid ceramic members, and less prone to breakage than normal ceramic.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

A launder for use in moving molten metal includes at least one relatively narrow channel through which molten metal flows. Using a narrow, rather than a broad, channel permits better control of the flow and helps prevent overflowing the launder or a structure adjacent the launder. A molten metal pumping or transfer system may utilize a launder as disclosed herein.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. **1** is a cross-sectional side view of an exemplary system according to this disclosure.

FIG. **2** is the system of FIG. **1** showing the level of molten metal in the furnace being increased.

FIG. **2**A shows the system of FIGS. **1** and **2** and displays how heights H**1** and H**2** are determined.

FIG. **3** is a top view of the system of FIG. **1**.

FIG. **3**A is a partial, side, cross-sectional view of a system according to an embodiment of this disclosure.

FIG. **4** is an end view of a launder according to an embodiment this disclosure.

FIG. **5** is an end view of an alternate launder of this disclosure.

FIG. **6** is an end view of an alternate launder of this disclosure.

FIG. **7** is an end view of an alternate launder of this disclosure.

FIG. **8** is a side view of the launder of FIG. **4**.

FIG. **9** is a top view of the launder of FIG. **4**.

FIG. **10** is a side view of the launder of FIG. **5**.

FIG. **11** is a top view of the launder of FIG. **5**.

FIG. **12** is a side view of the launder of FIG. **6**.

FIG. **13** is a top view of the launder of FIG. **6**.

FIG. **14** is a side view of the launder of FIG. **7**.

FIG. **15** is a top view of the launder of FIG. **7**.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Turning now to the Figures, wherein the purpose is to describe preferred embodiments of the invention and not to limit same, FIGS. **1-3**A show a system **10** for moving molten metal M out of a vessel and into a launder. System **10** includes a furnace **1** that can retain molten metal M, which includes a holding furnace **1**A, a vessel **12**, a launder **20**, and a pump **22**. System **10** preferably has a vessel **12**, a dividing wall **14** to separate vessel **12** into at least a first chamber **16** and a second chamber **18**, and a device or structure, which may be pump **22**, for generating a stream of molten metal from first chamber **16** into second chamber **18**.

Using heating elements (not shown in the figures), furnace **1** is raised to a temperature sufficient to maintain the metal therein (usually aluminum or zinc) in a molten state. The level of molten metal M in holding furnace **1**A and in at least part of vessel **12** changes as metal is added or removed to furnace **1**A, as can be seen in FIG. **2**.

For explanation, furnace **1** includes a furnace wall **2** having an archway **3**. Archway **3** allows molten metal M to flow into vessel **12** from holding furnace **1**A. In this embodiment, furnace **1**A and vessel **12** are in fluid communication, so when the level of molten metal in furnace **1**A rises, the level also rises in at least part of vessel **12**. It most preferably rises and falls in first chamber **16** as the level of molten metal rises or falls in furnace **1**A.

Dividing wall **14** separates vessel **12** into at least two chambers, a pump well (or first chamber) **16** and a skim well (or second chamber) **18**, and any suitable structure for this purpose may be used as dividing wall **14**. As shown in this embodiment, dividing wall **14** has an opening **14**A and an optional overflow spillway **14**B (best seen in FIG. **3**), which is a notch or cut out in the upper edge of dividing wall **14**. Overflow spillway **14**B is any structure suitable to allow molten metal to flow from second chamber **18**, past dividing wall **14**, and into first chamber **16** and, if used, overflow spillway **14**B may be positioned at any suitable location on wall **14**. The purpose of optional overflow spillway **14**B is to prevent molten metal from overflowing the second chamber **18**, or a launder in communication with second chamber **18** (if a launder is used with the invention), by allowing molten metal in second chamber **18** to flow back into first chamber **16**. Optional overflow spillway **14**B would not be utilized during normal operation of system **10** and is to be used as a safeguard if the level of molten metal in second chamber **18** improperly rises to too high a level.

Second chamber **18** has a wall portion **18**A, which has a height H**2**, wherein H**2** is less than H**1** (as can be best seen in FIG. **2**A) so during normal operation molten metal pumped into second chamber **18** flows past wall portion **18**A and out of second chamber **18** rather than flowing back over dividing wall **14** and into first chamber **16**.

At least part of dividing wall **14** has a height H**1** (best seen in FIG. **2**A), which is the height at which, if exceeded by molten metal in second chamber **18**, molten metal flows past the portion of dividing wall **14** at height H**1** and back into first chamber **16**. In the embodiment shown in FIGS. **1**-**3**A, overflow spillway **14**B has a height H**1** and the rest of dividing wall **14** has a height greater than H**1**. Alternatively, dividing wall **14** may not have an overflow spillway, in which case all of dividing wall **14** could have a height H**1**, or dividing wall **14** may have an opening with a lower edge positioned at height H**1**, in which case molten metal could flow through the opening if the level of molten metal in second chamber **18** exceeded H**1**. H**1** should exceed the highest level of molten metal in first chamber **16** during normal operation.

Dividing wall **14** may also have an opening **14**A that is located at a depth such that opening **14**A is submerged within the molten metal during normal usage, and opening **14**A is preferably near or at the bottom of dividing wall **14**. Opening **14**A preferably has an area of between 6 $in.^2$ and 24 $in.^2$, but could be any suitable size. Further, dividing wall **14** need not have an opening if a transfer pump were used to transfer molten metal from first chamber **16**, over the top of wall **14**, and into second chamber **18** as described below.

Dividing wall **14** may also include more than one opening between first chamber **16** and second chamber **18** and opening **14**A (or the more than one opening) could be positioned at any suitable location(s) in dividing wall **14** and be of any size(s) or shape(s) to enable molten metal to pass from first chamber **16** into second chamber **18**.

Molten metal pump **22** may be any device or structure capable of pumping or otherwise conveying molten metal, and may be a transfer, circulation or gas-release pump. Pump **22** is preferably a circulation pump (most preferred) or gas-release pump that generates a flow of molten metal from first chamber **16** to second chamber **18** through opening **14**A. Pump **22** generally includes a motor **24** surrounded by a cooling shroud **26**, a superstructure **28**, support posts **30** and a base **32**. Some pumps that may be used with the invention are shown in U.S. Pat. Nos. 5,203,681, 6,123,523 and 6,354,964 to Cooper, and pending U.S. application Ser. No. 10/773,101 to Cooper. Molten metal pump **22** can be a constant speed pump, but is most preferably a variable speed pump. Its speed can be varied depending on the amount of molten metal in a structure such as a ladle or launder, as discussed below.

Utilizing system **10**, as pump **22** pumps molten metal from first chamber **16** into second chamber **18**, the level of molten metal in chamber **18** rises. When a pump with a discharge submerged in the molten metal bath, such as circulation pump or gas-release pump is utilized, there is essentially no turbulence or splashing during this process, which reduces the formation of dross and reduces safety hazards. The flow of molten metal is smooth and generally at an even flow rate.

If pump **22** is a circulation pump or gas-release pump, it is preferably at least partially received in opening **14**A in order to at least partially block opening **14**A in order to maintain a relatively stable level of molten metal in second chamber **18** during normal operation and to allow the level in second chamber **18** to rise independently of the level in first chamber **16**. Utilizing this system the movement of molten metal from one chamber to another and from the second chamber into a launder does not involve raising molten metal above the molten metal surface. As previously mentioned this alleviates problems with blockage forming (because of the molten metal cooling and solidifying), and with turbulence and splashing, which can cause dross formation and safety problems. As shown, part of base **32** (preferably the discharge portion of the base) is received in opening **14**A. Further, pump **22** may communicate with another structure, such as a metal-transfer conduit, that leads to and is received partially or fully in opening **14**A. Although it is preferred that the pump base, or communicating structure such as a metal-transfer conduit, be received in opening **14**A, all that is necessary for the invention to function is that the operation of the pump increases and maintains the level of molten metal in second chamber **18** so that the molten metal ultimately moves out of chamber **18** and into another structure. For example, the base of pump **22** may be positioned so that its discharge is not received in opening **14**A, but is close enough to opening **14**A that the operation of the pump raises the level of molten metal in second chamber **18** independent of the level in chamber **16** and causes molten metal to move out of second chamber **18** and into another structure. A sealant, such as cement (which is known to those skilled in the art), may be used to seal base **32** into opening **14**A, although it is preferred that a sealant not be used.

Once pump **22** is turned off, the respective levels of molten metal level in chambers **16** and **18** essentially equalize. Alternatively, the speed of pump **22** could be reduced to a relatively low speed to keep the level of molten metal in second chamber **18** relatively constant but not exceed height H**2**. To move molten metal onto raised surface **20**, pump **22** is simply turned on again and operated as described above.

A system according to this disclosure could also include one or more pumps in addition to pump **22**, in which case the additional pump(s) may circulate molten metal within first chamber **16** and/or second chamber **18**, or from chamber **16** to chamber **18**, and/or may release gas into the molten metal first in first chamber **16** or second chamber **18**. For example, first chamber **16** could include pump **22** and a second pump, such as a circulation pump or gas-release pump, to circulate and/or release gas into molten metal M.

As shown in FIGS. **1**-**3**A, launder **20** is any structure or device for transferring molten metal to one or more structures, such as one or more ladles, molds (such as ingot molds) or other structures in which the molten metal is ultimately cast into a usable form, such as an ingot. Launder **20** may be either an open or enclosed channel, trough or conduit and may be of any suitable dimension or length, such as one to four feet long, or as much as 100 feet long or longer. Launder **20** may be completely horizontal or may slope gently upward or downward. Launder **20** may have one or more taps (not shown), i.e., small openings stopped by removable plugs. Each tap, when unstopped, allows molten metal to flow through the tap into a ladle, ingot mold, or other structure. Launder **20** may additionally or alternatively be serviced by robots or cast machines capable of removing molten metal M from launder **31**.

Launder **20** has a first end **21**A and a second end **21**B that is opposite first end **21**B. An optional stop may be included in a launder according to this disclosure. The stop, if used, is preferably juxtaposed the second end **21**B of the launder. If launder **20** has a stop, the stop can be opened to allow molten metal to flow past end **21**B, or closed to prevent molten metal from flowing past end **21**B. The stop preferably has a height greater than height H**1** so that if launder **20** becomes too filled with molten metal, the molten metal would back up inside launder **20**, and spill back over dividing wall **14**A (over spillway **14**B, if used) rather than overflow launder **20**.

Turning now to FIG. **4**, disclosed is a launder **1000** that could be used with system **10**, or with any suitable molten metal pumping or transfer device or system. Launder **1000** is comprised of a material, such as graphite or ceramic (such as silicon dioxide) and is configured to transfer molten metal from one place to another.

The launder **1000** has a channel **1002**, a first side **1004**, a second side **1006**, a bottom **1008**, a first top surface **1010** juxtaposed side **1004**, and a second top surface **1012** juxtaposed side **1006**.

Channel **1002** as shown is v-shaped. It has a top **1002**A having first width A, a first angle B, a third angle C, and a bottom **1002**B. The first width A may be any suitable amount, such as 50%-75%, or 60%-90%, or 50%-90%, or 50% or more, or 20%-50%, or any amount from 20%-90% of the entire width of launder **1000**.

The depth D of channel **1002** as measured from top surface **1012** or **1010** to bottom **1002**B is any suitable amount, such as 50%-75%, or 60%-90%, or 50%-90%, or 50% or more, or 20%-50%, or any amount from 25%-90% of the height of launder **1000** measured along either first side **1004** or second side **1006**.

Angle B is any suitable angle and is preferably from 30°-60°, or 20°-70°, or 40°-50°, or 45°, or any amount from 20%-70%. Angle C is any suitable angle and is preferably from 30°-60°, or any amount from 20°-70°, or 40°-50°, or 45°.

As shown in FIG. **5**, launder **1020** is the same as launder **1000** except that it has a channel **1022** with a U-shaped bottom portion. Channel **1022** has a top opening **1022**A with a first width A, which may be any suitable amount, such as 50%-75%, or 60%-90%, or 50%-90%, or 50% or more, or 20%-50%, or any amount from 20%-90% of the entire width of launder **1020**. The depth D' of channel **1022** as measured from top surface **1032** or **1030** to bottom **1028** is any suitable amount, such as 50%-75%, or 60%-90%, or 50%-90%, or 50% or more, or 20%-50%, or any amount from 20%-90% of the height of launder **1020** measured along either first side **1024** or second side **1026**.

As shown in FIG. **6**, launder **1050** has two channels **1052** and **1072**. The launder **1050** has a first side **1054**, a second side **1056**, a bottom **1056**, a first top surface **1060** juxtaposed side **1050**, a second top surface **1062** juxtaposed side **1056**, and a center top surface **1064**.

Each channel **1052** and **1072** as shown is v-shaped. Channel **1052** has a top **1052**A having a first width I, a first angle E, a third angle F, and a bottom **1052**B. The first width I may be any suitable amount, such as 10%-20%, 10%-30%, 20%-30%, 20%-40%, 50%-75%, or 60%-90%, or 50%-90%, or 50% or more, or any amount from 20%-50%, of the entire width of launder **1050**.

The depth K of channel **1052** as measured from top surface **1062**, **1064**, or **1060** to bottom **1058** is any suitable amount, such as 50%-75%, or 60%-90%, or 50%-90%, or 50% or more, or 20%-50%, or any amount from 20%-90% of the height of launder **1050** measured along either first side **1054** or second side **1054**.

Channel **1072** has a top **1072**A having a first width J, a first angle G, a third angle H, and a bottom **1072**B. The first width J may be any suitable amount, such as 10%-20%, 10%-30%, 20%-30%, 20%-40%, 50%-75%, or 60%-90%, or 50%-90%, or 50% or more, or any amount from 20%-50%, of the entire width of launder **1050**.

The depth K of channel **1072** as measured from top surface **1062**, **1064**, or **1060** to bottom **1058** is any suitable amount, such as 50%-75%, or 60%-90%, or 50%-90%, or 50% or more, or 20%-50%, or any amount from 20%-90% of the height of launder **1050** measured along either first side **1054** or second side **1054**.

Channels **1052** and **1072** need not have the same width or depth.

Angle E is any suitable angle and is preferably from 30°-60°, or 20°-70°, or 40°-50°, or 45°, or 55°-70°. Angle F is any suitable angle and is preferably from 30°-60°, or 20°-70°, or 40°-50°, or 45°, or 55°-70°, or any amount from 30%-70%. Angle G is any suitable angle and is preferably from 30°-60°, or 20°-70°, or 40°-50°, or 45°, or 55°-70°, or any amount from 30%-70%. Angle H is any suitable angle and is preferably from 30°-60°, or 20°-70°, or 40°-50°, or 45°, or 55°-70°, or any amount from 30%-70%.

As shown in FIG. **7**, launder **1080** is the same as launder **1050** except that it has channels **1082** and **1102**, each having U-shaped bottom portions **1082**B, **1102**B. Channel **1082** has a top **1082**A with a first width L, which may be any suitable amount, such as 50%-75%, or 60%-90%, or 50%-90%, or 50% or more, or 20%-50%, or 20%-30%, or any amount from 30%-50% of the entire width of launder **1080**. The depth N of channel **1082** as measured from top surface **1090**, **1092**, or **1094** to bottom **1088** is any suitable amount, such as 50%-75%, or 60%-90%, or 50%-90%, or 50% or more, or 20%-50%, or any amount from 20%-90% of the height of launder **1080** measured along either first side **1084** or second side **1086**.

Channel **1102** has a top **1102**A with a first width M, which may be any suitable amount, such as 50%-75%, or 60%-90%, or 50%-90%, or 50% or more, or 20%-50%, or 20%-30%, or any amount from 20%-50% of the entire width of launder **1080**. The depth N of channel **1102** as measured from top surface **1090**, **1092**, or **1094** to bottom **1088** is any suitable amount, such as 50%-75%, or 60%-90%, or 50%-90%, or 50% or more, or 20%-50%, or any amount from 20%-90% of the height of launder **1080** measured along either first side **1084** or second side **1086**.

Channels **1082** and **1102** need not have the same width or depth.

Some non-limiting examples of this disclosure are as follow:

Example 1: A launder for use in moving molten metal, the launder comprising:

(a) graphite or ceramic;

(b) at least one channel configured to transfer molten metal, the channel having an upper cross-sectional area and a lower cross-sectional area, the lower cross-sectional area being smaller than the upper cross-sectional area.

Example 2: The launder of example 1, wherein the channel is V-shaped.

Example 3: The launder of example 1, wherein the channel is U-shaped.

Example 4: The launder of example 1 that is comprised of ceramic.

Example 5: The launder of any of examples 1-4, wherein the channel is centered in the launder.

Example 6: The launder of any of examples 1-5, wherein the top of the channel has a channel width and top of launder has a launder width, and the channel width is 50% or more of the launder width.

Example 7: The launder of any of examples 1-5, wherein the top of the channel has a channel width and top of launder has a launder width, and the channel width is 50% or less of the launder width.

Example 8: The launder of example 1 that has a plurality of channels.

Example 9: The launder of example 8, wherein each of the plurality of channels is V-shaped.

Example 10: The launder of any of examples 1-7 that further includes a launder height and a channel height and the channel height is 50% or more of the launder height.

Example 11: The launder of any of examples 1-7 that further includes a launder height and a channel height and the channel height is 50% or less of the launder height.

Example 12: The launder of example 2, wherein each side of the V-shaped launder is formed at an angle of 30 degrees-60 degrees from the horizontal axis.

Example 13: The launder of example 2, wherein each side of the V-shaped launder is formed at an angle of 45 degrees from the horizontal axis.

Having thus described different embodiments of the invention, other variations and embodiments that do not depart from the spirit of the invention will become apparent to those skilled in the art. The scope of the present invention is thus not limited to any particular embodiment, but is instead set forth in the appended claims and the legal equivalents thereof. Unless expressly stated in the written description or claims, the steps of any method recited in the claims may be performed in any order capable of yielding the desired product.

What is claimed is:

1. A unitary launder for use in moving molten metal, the launder comprising:

(a) a top surface, and no non-oxidic ceramic material;

(b) a channel configured to transfer molten metal, the channel being V-shaped and having an open top comprising an upper cross-sectional area and a bottom tip comprising no cross-sectional area, wherein each side of the V-shaped channel is formed at an angle of 30 degrees—60 degrees from the horizontal axis and each angled side extends from the bottom tip to the top surface of the launder; and

(c) a grate in the channel, wherein the grate is configured to filter solid pieces from molten metal.

2. The launder of claim **1** that is comprised of ceramic.

3. The launder of claim **1**, wherein the channel is centered in the launder.

4. The launder of claim **1**, wherein the top of the channel has a channel width and top of launder has a launder width, and the channel width is 50% or more of the launder width.

5. The launder of claim **1**, wherein the top of the channel has a channel width and top of launder has a launder width, and the channel width is 50% or less of the launder width.

6. The launder of claim **1** that comprises a plurality of channels.

7. The launder of claim **6**, wherein each of the plurality of channels is V-shaped.

8. The launder of claim **1** that further includes a launder height and a channel height and the channel height is 50% or more of the launder height.

9. The launder of claim **1** that further includes a launder height and a channel height and the channel height is 50% or less of the launder height.

10. The launder of claim **1**, wherein each side of the V-shaped channel is formed at an angle of 45 degrees from the horizontal axis.

11. The launder of claim **1** that is comprised of oxidized ceramic or refractory material.

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