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(54) **CUTTING ELEMENT**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A tool component, which is typically a cutting element or a gauge stone in a rotary drill bit, comprises a layer of ultra-hard abrasive material bonded to a substrate, the layer of ultra-hard abrasive material comprising a pair of opposed end surfaces, an upper surface defined between the end surfaces, and at least one curved and tapered cutting edge defined at the intersection of the respective end surfaces and the upper surface. The respective cutting edges of the tool component and the respective end surfaces leading to the cutting edges are generally wedge-shaped, the upper surface of the layer following generally the same or a similar profile, at least in the region of the cutting edges.

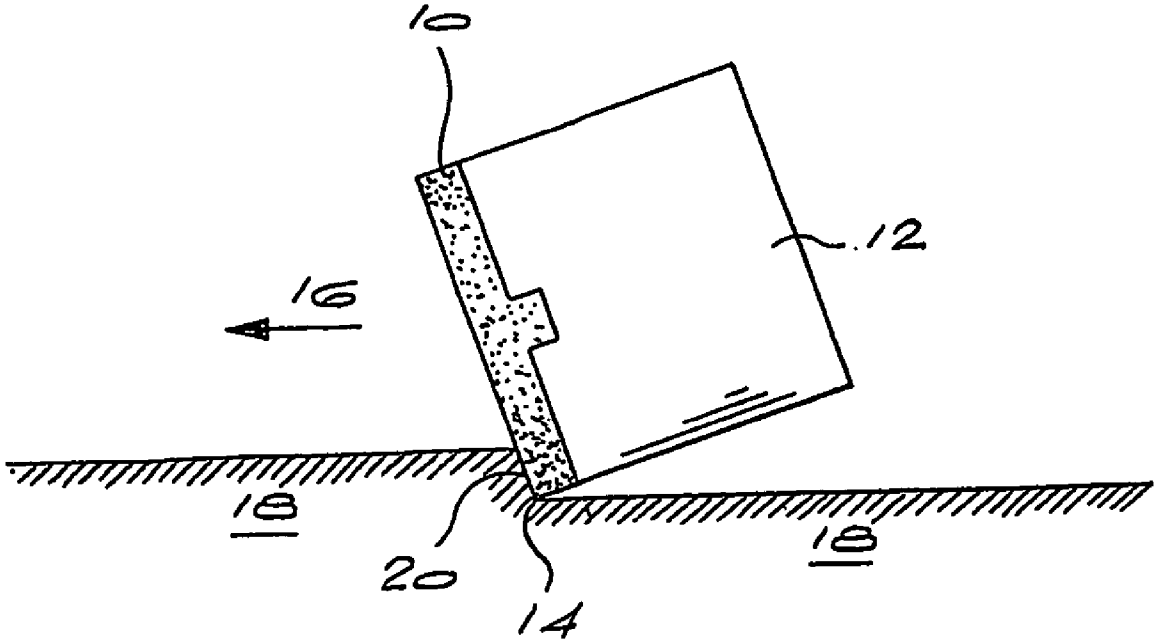


Fig.1

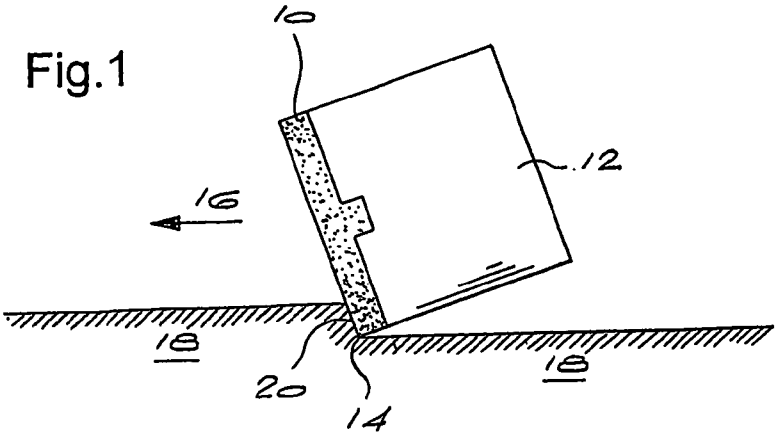


Fig.2

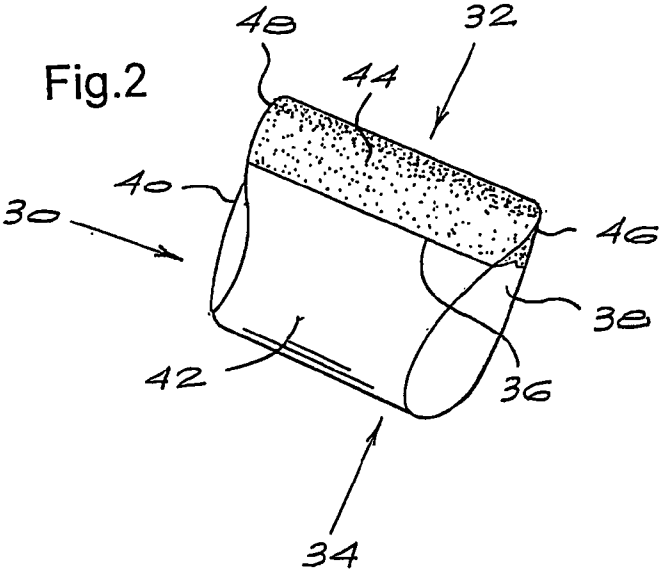
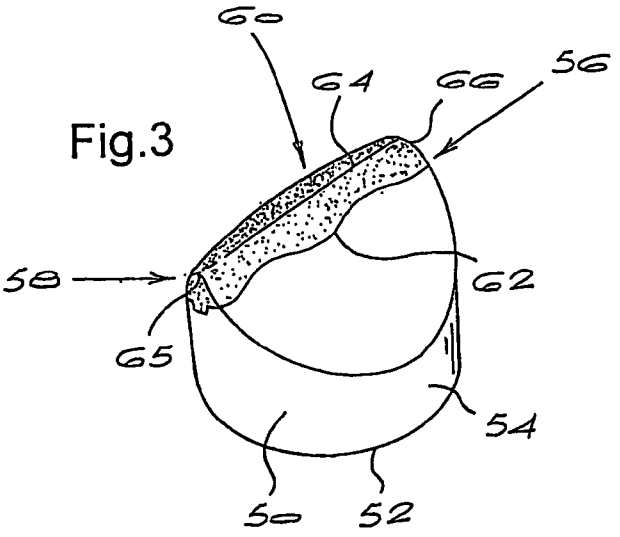


Fig.3



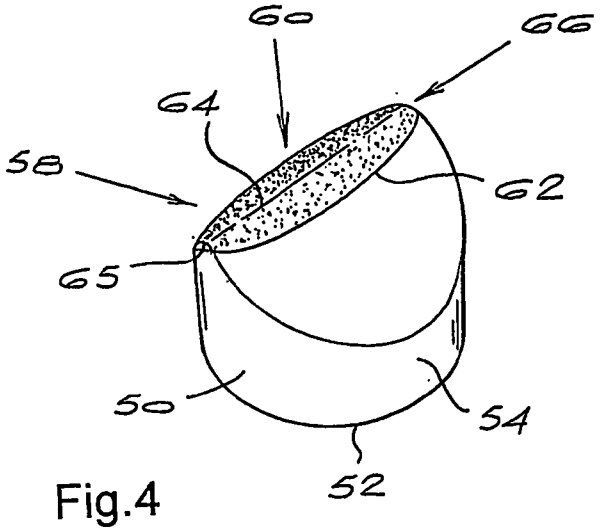


Fig.4

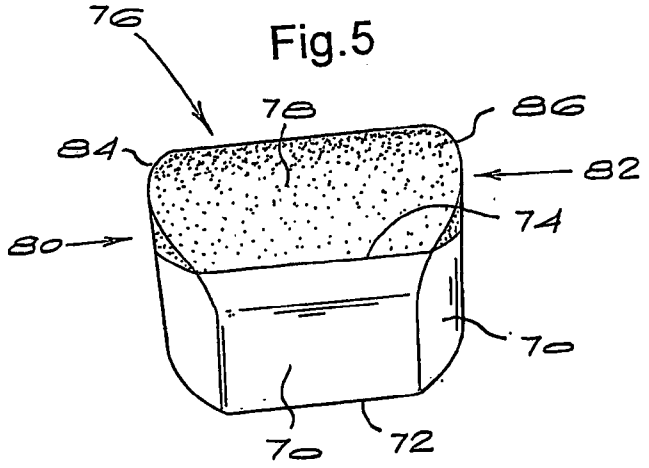


Fig.5

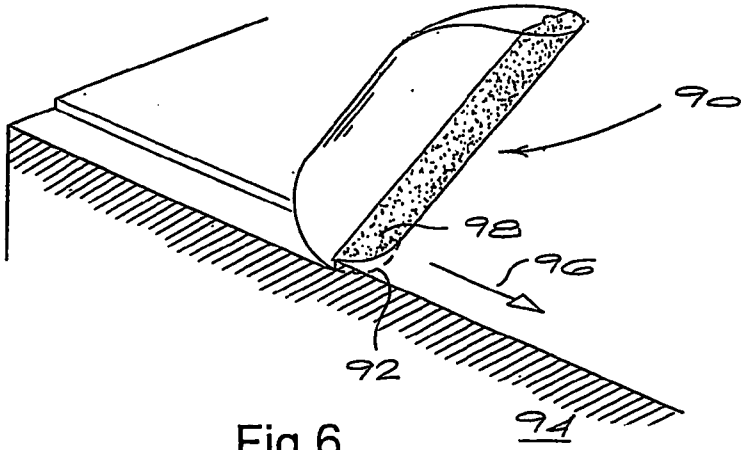


Fig.6

Fig.7

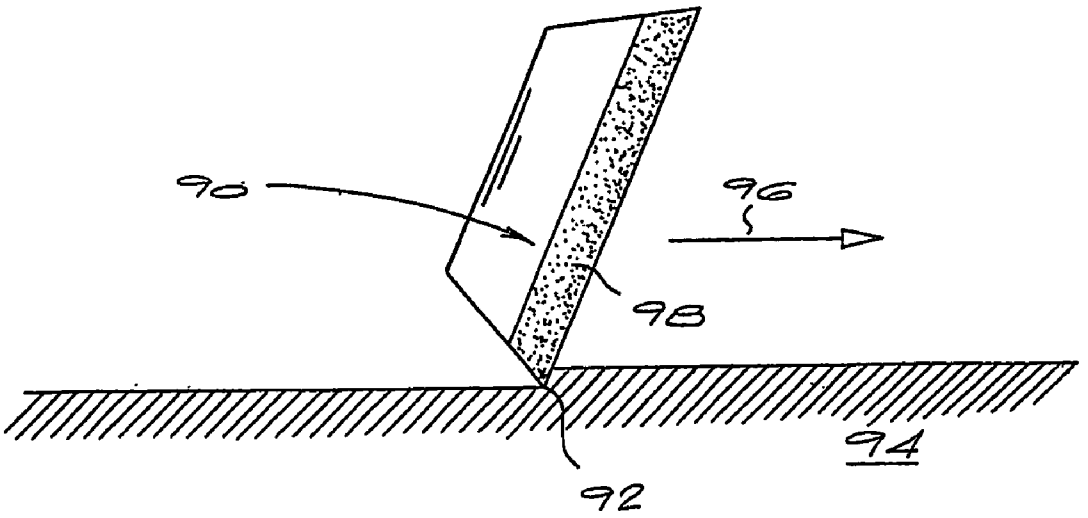
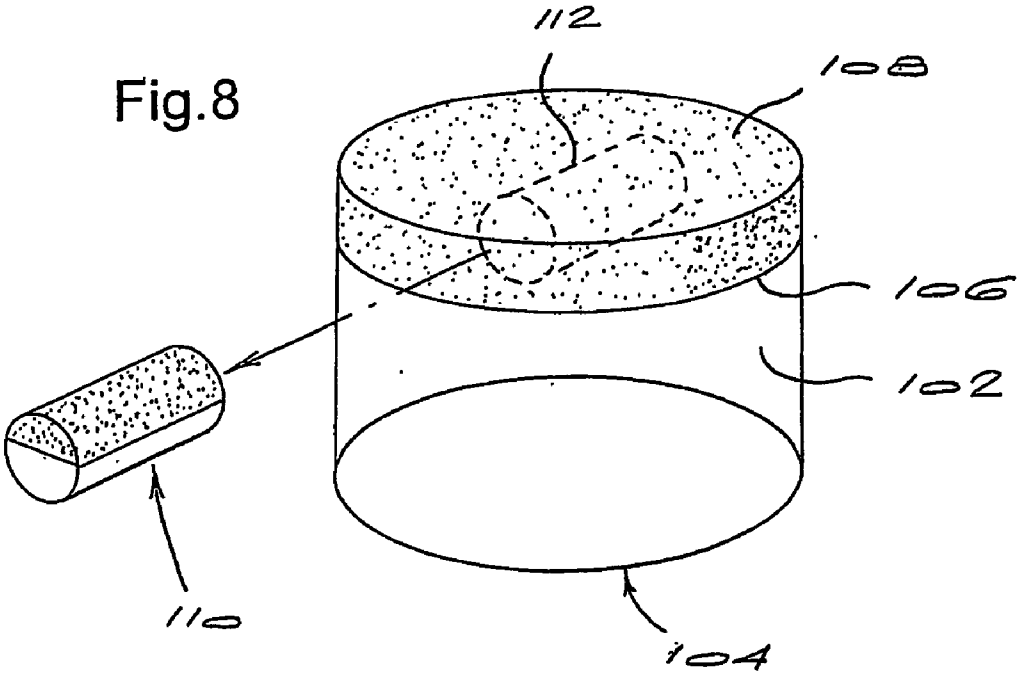


Fig.8



CUTTING ELEMENT

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] This invention relates to tool components.

[0002] Tool components, particularly cutting elements, in the form of composite abrasive compacts are well known in the art and used extensively in various cutting, drilling, milling and other abrasive operations. The tool components generally comprise a layer or table of ultra-hard abrasive material bonded to a cemented carbide substrate. The tool component has a generally cylindrical shape with the layer or table of ultra-hard abrasive material being bonded to one of two flat ends of a cylindrical substrate. The ultra-hard abrasive material is generally polycrystalline diamond (PCD) or polycrystalline cubic boron nitride (PCBN).

[0003] In use, the upper exposed peripheral edge of the layer or table of ultra-hard abrasive material is the edge which provides the cutting edge for the component. In drilling, for example, the cutting element is generally mounted at a negative rake angle relative to the direction of advancement of the component through the rock, as illustrated by **FIG. 1** of the attached drawings. Referring to **FIG. 1**, the prior art cutting element comprises a layer **10** of ultra-hard abrasive material bonded to a cemented carbide substrate **12**. The cutting element has a cylindrical shape. The peripheral edge **14** of the layer **10** provides the cutting edge for the element. **FIG. 1** illustrates the cutting element advancing in the direction of arrow **16** into a rock face or other workpiece **18**. In so advancing, a considerable load is placed on the front flat face **20** of the layer **10**. This in turn creates a significant bending moment on the cutting element and hence stress on this element. This stress leads to fracture and spalling. U.S. Pat. No. 4,109,737 discloses a rotary drill bit for rock drilling which comprises a plurality of cutting elements mounted in a crown of the drill bit. Each cutting element comprises an elongate pin with a thin layer of crystalline diamond bonded to the free end of the pin. The layer of polycrystalline diamond presents a curved cutting surface for the drill bit.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0004] According to the present invention, a tool component comprises a layer of ultra-hard abrasive material bonded to a substrate, the layer of ultra-hard abrasive material comprising a pair of opposed end surfaces, an upper surface defined between the end surfaces, and at least one curved and tapered cutting edge defined at the intersection of the respective end surfaces and the upper surface.

[0005] The end surfaces are preferably tapered complementary to the cutting edges.

[0006] The respective cutting edges of the tool component and the respective end surfaces leading to the cutting edges are generally wedge-shaped. This means that the cutting edges and end surfaces will have generally converging regions. It is preferred that the converging regions meet notionally beyond the cutting edges, thus providing the curved cutting edges.

[0007] The upper surface of the layer follows generally the same or a similar profile to that of the respective cutting edges, at least in the region of the cutting edges.

[0008] In one form of the invention, the tool component has an essentially cylindrical shape presenting opposite ends and a curved side surface, the layer of ultra-hard abrasive material being located in the curved side surface and presenting a curved upper surface.

[0009] In another form of the invention, the tool component has an essentially rectangular or cylindrical substrate to which is bonded a layer of ultra-hard abrasive material presenting a curved upper surface.

[0010] The interface between the layer of ultra-hard abrasive material and the substrate may be planar, curved or otherwise profiled.

[0011] The ultra-hard abrasive layer may be PCD, PCBN or CVD diamond.

[0012] The substrate will typically be a cemented carbide substrate, and preferably a cemented tungsten carbide substrate.

[0013] The tool component of the invention may be used for a variety of abrasive operations. Preferably, the tool component is used as a cutting element or as a gauge stone in a rotary drill bit for subterranean rock drilling.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0014] The invention will now be described in more detail, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

[0015] **FIG. 1** is a sectional side view of a cutting element of the prior art, in use;

[0016] FIGS. **2** to **5** are perspective views of different embodiments of tool components of the invention;

[0017] **FIG. 6** is a perspective view of a tool component of the invention, in use cutting a workpiece;

[0018] **FIG. 7** is a side view of **FIG. 6**; and

[0019] **FIG. 8** is a perspective view of a body from which a tool component of the invention may be produced.

DESCRIPTION OF EMBODIMENTS

[0020] Embodiments of the invention will now be described with reference to the accompanying drawings. FIGS. **2** to **5** of the accompanying drawings illustrate different embodiments.

[0021] Referring first to **FIG. 2**, a tool component **30**, which is generally cylindrical, comprises a layer **32** of ultra-hard abrasive material bonded to a substrate **34**. The interface **36** between the layer **32** and the substrate **34** is planar.

[0022] The tool component **30** has converging end surfaces **38**, **40** and a curved side surface **42**. The layer **32** of ultra-hard abrasive material is located lengthwise in the tool component. The layer **32** presents a curved upper surface **44** and curved and essentially wedge-shaped cutting edges **46**, **48** defined at the intersection of the upper surface **44** and the respective end surfaces **38**,**40**.

[0023] A second embodiment of the invention is illustrated by **FIG. 3**.

[0024] Referring to this figure, a tool component comprises a cemented carbide substrate **50** which is generally cylindrical. The substrate **50** has a flat base surface **52**, a curved side surface **54** and converging surfaces **56**, **58**. Located in and bonded to the substrate in the converging surfaces **56**, **58** is a layer **60** of ultra-hard abrasive material. The layer **60** is bonded to the substrate **50** along profiled interface **62**. The layer **60** has a wedge-shaped upper surface **64** and wedge-shaped cutting edges **64**, **66**.

[0025] A third embodiment of the invention is illustrated by **FIG. 4**. This embodiment is similar to the embodiment of **FIG. 3** and like parts carry like numerals. The difference with this embodiment is that the profiled interface **62** is essentially crescent-shaped.

[0026] A fourth embodiment of the invention is illustrated by **FIG. 5**. Referring to this Figure, a tool component comprises a generally rectangular cemented carbide substrate **70** having a flat lower surface **72** and a flat upper surface **74**. Bonded to the flat upper surface **74** is a layer **76** of ultra-hard abrasive material. The layer **76** has an upper curved surface **78**. Further, the layer **76** has, at opposite ends thereof, converging surfaces **80**, **82** and essentially wedge-shaped cutting edges **84**, **86**.

[0027] The tool components illustrated by FIGS. **2** to **5** are merely illustrative and not limiting. The curves of the various surfaces may vary as may the shapes of the interfaces between the layer of ultra-hard abrasive material and the substrate. The cutting edges may be sharp or radiused. In all variations, the tool component will retain its essentially curved and wedge-shaped cutting edge or edges and surfaces leading to the cutting edge or edges.

[0028] The tool components have particular application as cutting elements for rotary drill bits and as gauge stones for such bits. **FIGS. 6 and 7** illustrate diagrammatically a tool component of **FIG. 2** as a cutting element in a rotary drill bit. Referring to these Figures, the cutting element **90** is mounted in the crown of a drill bit. In use, leading cutting edge **92** carries out the cutting action on a rock formation or substrate **94**. The tool component advances into the workpiece in the direction of arrow **96**. The cutting action of the cutting edge is similar to that of the prior art cutting elements illustrated by **FIG. 1**. However, the essentially wedge-shape of the cutting edge **92**, the curved surfaces leading to this cutting edge and the curved upper surface **98** reduces very substantially the load which is placed on the layer of ultra-hard abrasive material as it advances through the substrate in a similar fashion to the bow of a boat through a body of water. Accordingly, it reduces substantially the bending moment to which the cutting element is exposed.

[0029] The tool components of the invention may be produced from a known ultra-hard abrasive material/substrate body as illustrated diagrammatically in **FIG. 8**. The body **100** comprises a substrate, generally a cemented carbide substrate **102** having a flat lower surface **104** and a flat upper surface **106**. Bonded to the flat upper surface **106** is a layer **108** of ultra-hard abrasive material. The body is cylindrical in shape. A blank **110** may be cut from the body **100** as shown by the dotted lines **112**. The cutting, as shown, is transverse to the longitudinal axis of the body **100** and through the interface between the layer **108** and substrate **102**. The blank **110** may then be shaped to produce a tool component as shown, for example, by **FIG. 2**. This is merely illustrative of one way of making the tool components of the invention. Variations, such as variations in the profile of the interface between layer **108** and substrate **104**, for example, would also fall within the ambit of this invention.

1. A tool component comprising a layer of ultra-hard abrasive material bonded to a substrate, the layer of ultra-hard abrasive material comprising a pair of opposed end surfaces, an upper surface defined between the end surfaces, and at least one curved and tapered cutting edge defined at the intersection of the respective end surfaces and the upper surface.

2. A tool component according to claim 1, wherein the end surfaces are tapered complementary to the cutting edges.

3. A tool component according to claim 2, wherein the respective cutting edges and end surfaces are generally wedge-shaped.

4. A tool component according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the upper surface follows generally the same or a similar profile to that of the respective cutting edges, at least in the region of the cutting edges.

5. A tool component according to claim 1, wherein the tool component has an essentially cylindrical shape presenting opposite ends and a curved side surface, the layer of ultra-hard abrasive material being located in the curved side surface and presenting a curved upper surface.

6. A tool component according to claim 1, comprising an essentially rectangular or cylindrical substrate to which the layer of ultra-hard abrasive material is bonded, the layer of ultra-hard abrasive material presenting a curved upper surface.

7. A tool component according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the interface between the layer of ultra-hard abrasive material and the substrate is planar, curved or otherwise profiled.

8. A tool component according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the layer of ultra-hard abrasive material is PCD, PCBN or CVD diamond.

9. A tool component according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the substrate is a cemented carbide substrate.

10. A tool component according to claim 9, wherein the substrate is a cemented tungsten carbide substrate.

11. A method of cutting or abrading a workpiece or substrate, the method including the steps of:

1) providing a tool component according to any one of the preceding claims;

2) providing a workpiece or substrate;

3) contacting the workpiece or substrate with a curved and tapered cutting edge of the tool component; and

4) advancing the cutting edge into the workpiece or substrate.

12. A method according to claim 11, wherein the tool component is a cutting element or a gauge stone in a drill bit for subterranean rock drilling.

13. A method of manufacturing a tool component according to any one of claims 1 to 10, the method including the steps of:

1) providing a body comprising a layer of ultra-hard abrasive material bonded to a substrate;

2) cutting a blank from the body transverse to the longitudinal axis of the body and through the interface between the layer of ultra-hard abrasive material and the substrate; and

3) shaping the blank into the desired shape for the tool component.

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