



(51) International Patent Classification:

B01J 8/04 (2006.01) **B05D 1/02** (2006.01)
F27B 14/08 (2006.01)

(21) International Application Number:

PCT/US2009/039701

(22) International Filing Date:

7 April 2009 (07.04.2009)

(25) Filing Language:

English

(26) Publication Language:

English

(30) Priority Data:

12/099,100 7 April 2008 (07.04.2008) US

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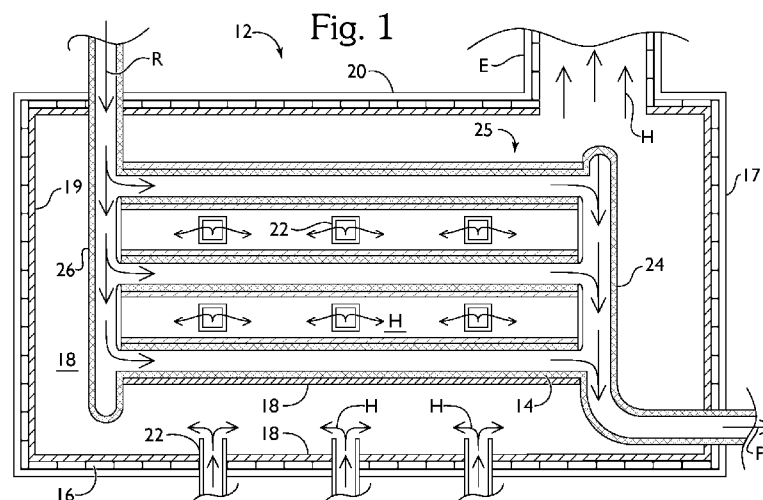
(81) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of national protection available): AE, AG, AL, AM, AO, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BH, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DO, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, GT, HN, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KM, KN, KP, KR, KZ, LA, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LY, MA, MD, ME, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MY, MZ, NA, NG, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PG, PH, PL, PT, RO, RS, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SM, ST, SV, SY, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, ZA, ZM, ZW.

(84) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of regional protection available): ARIPO (BW, GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, NA, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, LV, MC, MK, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Published:

— without international search report and to be republished upon receipt of that report (Rule 48.2(g))

(54) Title: PYROLYSIS FURNACE AND PROCESS TUBES



(57) Abstract: A cracking furnace construction includes a firebox (12) defining a chamber (20) having a high emissivity thermal protective layer (18) disposed on at least part of the refractory walls (17) and/or on process tubes (14) disposed within the chamber (20). The coating contains an inorganic adhesive for metal/alloy tubes or colloidal silica and/or colloidal alumina for refractory walls (17) or ceramic tubes, a filler, and one or more emissivity agents. A method of coating the firebox chamber (20) includes preparing the surface of the tubes/refractory walls (17), preparing the coating, and applying the coating to the surface.

PYROLYSIS FURNACE AND PROCESS TUBES

RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application Ser. No. 12/099,100 entitled "PYROLYSIS FURNACE AND PROCESS TUBES" filed on 7 April 2008, the contents of which are incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] Pyrolysis furnaces, also known as cracking furnaces, have been used to crack a variety of hydrocarbon feedstocks to ethylene and other valuable olefinic fluids. Cracking at short residence time and high temperature selectively favors the production of ethylene. In order to maximize the conversion and the selectivity of such cracking conversion of the saturated hydrocarbon feedstock into ethylene, for example, it is desirable to input that quantity of heat needed to effect cracking of the saturated hydrocarbon feed very rapidly while minimizing the time that the initial cracking product is exposed to this quantity of cracking heat to fast crack the saturated hydrocarbon feed to ethylene and then quickly remove the formed ethylene from this high heat environment maximizes the final yield of ethylene for the degree of conversion obtained.

[0003] Each cracking furnace has a refractory lined firebox containing a multiplicity of high alloy metal or ceramic cracking lines, composed of process pipes, through the interior passages of which flows the hydrocarbon feedstock to be cracked. Refractories are classified as basic, high aluminum, silica, fireclay and insulating. Special refractories include silicon carbide graphite, zircon, zirconia, and fused cast, among others. Refractory lining may be formed of bricks, castables, or thermal ceramic fiber to cover the interior of the firebox. A suitable amount of diluting steam may be included in the process. Burners are located on the floor and/or walls of the firebox to provide the heat necessary. The heat transfers through the metallic/ceramic materials of the reaction lines into the hydrocarbon feedstock that flows within the reaction lines. Known metallic cracking lines may be as long as 2000 feet and may be coiled in a serpentine shape that runs vertically up and down in the firebox or it may be as short as 40 feet in a straight single pass through the firebox.

[0004] The process tubes are heated using convection heating or a combination of convection and radiant heat. In the hot box of an ethylene cracker, for example, the

process tubes inside the furnace are operated at temperatures from about 800°C to about 1150°C, typically from about 950°C to 1100°C. The tube may be made of a metal alloy or ceramic. Alloys include most stainless steel, cast alloys, wrought alloys, carbon steel and the like, which are well known to those skilled in the art.

[0005] The refractory materials, both hard and ceramic fiber, incorporated into the firebox contain the heat permitting the process tubes to be heated for the cracking or related reaction to occur. The fireboxes themselves can deliver an increased radiant heat load to the process tubes. A long process tube length is required to accomplish the desired quantity of heat input into the hydrocarbon mass flow for the short time of residence of this hydrocarbon mass within the metallic/ceramic cracking process tubes. Otherwise, the time of residence of the hydrocarbon mass including the newly generated product within the metallic reaction cracking line must be increased.

[0006] Sometimes, the process tubes have fins, channels, and the like disposed along the inner surfaces of the process tube to disturb the fluid flow through the inner tube. Other structures of process tubes may have fins, ribs, and the like disposed along the outer surfaces of the tube to disturb the fluid flow about the outer surface of the tube. U.S. Patent No. 7,128,139 issued on October 31, 2006 assigned to Nova Chemicals (International) S.A. discloses process tubes having external ribs which are evenly spaced. Adding ribs to the external surface (23) of vertical tubes provides an enhancement to the heat transfer and increases the heat transfer to the process tubes. The product is produced within the tubes. U.S. Patent No. 7,169,292 issued on January 30, 2007 and assigned to LG Chem, Ltd. discloses pyrolysis tubes have a plurality of mixing blades made by twisting two ends of a plate in opposite directions included within the tubes to improve the yield of product. U.S. Patent No. 4,847,051 issued on July 11, 1989 and assigned to International Fuel Cells Corporation discloses a reformer tube heat transfer device in which the tubes have a mounting sleeves about individual catalyst tubes which define a helical hot gas flow paths on the outside of the catalyst tubes.

[0007] Production of ethylene (ethene) and other olefinic fluids is an energy intensive process because of the reactions and heat needed in the process tubes. Traditional process tubes are fabricated from cast or wrought, high alloy stainless steels. Coke layers form along the inner surfaces of the process tubes during normal operation resulting in reduced mass flow through the tube and a reduction in heat transfer through the sides of the tubes. Additional formation of metal carbides along

the tube walls, referred to as carburization, further reduces the structural life of the furnace tubes. The furnace must be periodically shut down in order to remove the deposits of coke. This factor results in a substantial loss of production and facility downtime. Furthermore, coke is an excellent thermal insulator requiring higher temperatures resulting in higher fuel costs and shorter tube life.

[0008] Process tubes resistant to coking and carburization are desirable. Efforts to produce such resistant process tubes have concentrated on developing a variety of new alloys that are resistant to carburization and reduce the development of coke layers. Some of these efforts have concentrated on layering different alloys on the tubes. Research has shown that, like aluminides, aluminum and silicon containing alloys, iron, chrome, and certain other alloys also prevent coking and carburization. Ceramic and alloys containing silicon have also been found potentially useful.

[0009] U.S. Patent No. 6,830,676 issued on December 14, 2004 and assigned to Chrysalis Technologies Incorporated teaches coking and carburization resistant iron aluminides for hydrocarbon cracking. In this invention, the cracking tubes have a lining of iron aluminide alloy which is fouling and corrosion resistant. U.S. Patent Application No. 2005/058,851 discloses a composite tube for an ethylene pyrolysis furnace and methods of manufacture and joining same wherein the tube comprises an outer shell made from a wrought or cast heat resistant alloy and an inner core made from another alloy whose composition approximates a powder form. Both outer shell and inner core may be extruded to form the process tubes.

[0010] U.S. Patent No. 5,873,951, assigned to Alon, Inc., issued on February 23, 1999 shows a diffusion coated ethylene furnace process tube in which the inner surface of the process tubes are diffusion coated with a sufficient amount of chromium or chromium and silicon to form a first coating having a thickness of at least two mils which is then cleaned, neutralized and grit blasted. A second coating of aluminum or aluminum and silicon is then diffused onto the first coating to form a total coating thickness of at least five mils; the second coating is also cleaned and polished to provide a smooth uniform surface. Reportedly, less coking occurs in these coated tubes.

[0011] U.S. Patent No. 6,139,649, also assigned to Alon, Inc., issued on October 31, 2000, teaches a diffusion method for coating high temperature nickel chromium alloy products which produces ethylene furnace process tubes having a high temperature nickel chromium alloy product coated on the inner surface thereof. The

inner coating has a first layer of chromium or chromium and silicon covered by a second layer of aluminum, magnesium, silicon and manganese which in turn is covered by a third layer of rare earth metals such as yttrium and zirconium. After each layer is applied the tube is heat treated, and finally after the final layer has been applied the final surface is treated with argon and nitrogen to stabilize the surface oxides, and can be polished to minimize sites for carbon buildup. Less coking occurs in these coated process tubes.

[0012] U.S. Patent No. 6,537,388 issued on March 25, 2003 and also assigned to Alon, Inc. discloses a surface alloy system conversion for high temperature applications in which chromium, silicon, aluminum, and optionally manganese are diffused onto the surface of a high temperature alloy product, to provide a coating having improved resistance to carburization and catalytic coke formation.

[0013] U.S. Patent No. 6,337,459 issued on January 8, 2002 and assigned to Daido Tokushuko Kabushiki Kaisha teaches a multi-layered anti-coking heat resisting metal tube and a method of manufacturing the process tube in which a preferably powdered alloy is applied to the inner and/or outer surface of the process tube.

[0014] PCT application International Publication No. WO2007/064288 published on June 7, 2007, and applied for by Sandvik Intellectual Property AB discloses a metallic tube for heating a medium or subject outside or inside thereof by heat transfer thorough the walls of the tube in which a layer of essential Al_2O_3 is formed on the surfaces thereof when heated to at least 750°C . At least one of the external and the internal surface (21) of the tube is coated by one of a metal, metal alloy and metal compound, which after oxidation forms as a layer having an emissivity coefficient exceeding 0.7 or by a layer essentially consisting of a metal oxide which has an emissivity coefficient exceeding 0.7.

[0015] Although, the majority of reaction cracking lines are comprised of metallic tubes, alternative compositions of the reaction cracking lines are possible. For example, U.S. Patent No. 6,312,652 issued on November 6, 2001 and assigned to Stone & Webster Engineering Corp. discloses a ceramic drip pipe and tube reactor for ethylene production. The reaction lines of the furnace are fabricated of a ceramic refractory feed inlet pipe coaxially located with a ceramic refractory tube to define an annular space therebetween which is, in part, located without and within the radiant heating firebox volume of such furnace, this to provide for a zone wherein hot cracked olefin product gas is quenched in temperature in such annular space outside

of the firebox and a cracking zone within the firebox within which hydrocarbon feed is cracked to an olefin containing product gas composition. The ceramic refractory material construction of the '652 patent permits such a pipe-tube reaction line structure to be exposed to a much greater heat/temperature content of which the firebox is capable than reaction lines of conventional metallic construction. Cracking predominantly occurs within the annular space, meaning that the cylindrical ceramic refractory structures may be of diameters sufficient to provide for high strength structures. Greater firebox temperatures allow the use of a shorter reaction line structure.

[0016] U.S. Patent No. 6,497,809 issued on December 24, 2002 and assigned to Phillips Petroleum Company discloses a method for prolonging the effectiveness of a pyrolytic cracking tube treated for the inhibition of coke formation during cracking in which the tubes have tin and silicon deposited on the surface exposed to the hydrocarbon feed functioning as an antifoulant for inhibiting the formation of coke to desulfurize a sulfur-containing feedstock.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0017] The present invention, drawn to pyrolysis furnace constructions, each furnace construction includes a firebox (12) defining a chamber (20) having a thermal protective layer (18) disposed on at least part of the refractory walls (17) and/or on at least one process tube (14) disposed within the firebox chamber (20). The thermal protective layer (18) consisting of a high emissivity multifunctional nano coating. The thermal protective layer (18) is disposed on the refractory walls (17), the tubes or both. The refractory walls (17) are covered with refractory material, including bricks, castables or thermal ceramic fiber, as is well known in the art, and are composed of silica, fireclay, high alumina, and the like and combinations thereof, as is also known in the art. The thermal protective coating is disposed on the surface thereof.

[0018] The thermal protective layer (18) on the metal/alloy surfaces of process tubes (14) may contain from about 5% to about 30% of an inorganic adhesive, from about 45% to about 92% of a filler, and from about 2% to about 20% of one or more emissivity agents, in a dry admixture. An alternative thermal protective layer (18) which may be disposed on ceramic surfaces of either refractory wall (17) or process tubes (14) may contain from about 5% to about 35% of colloidal silica, from about 23% to about 79% of a filler, and from about 2% to about 20% of one or more

emissivity agents. Either thermal protective layer (18) of the present invention may further contain from about 1% to about 5% of a stabilizer.

[0019] An aspect of the present invention is that the thermal protective layer (18) limits coking; therefore, less maintenance is required, resulting in less downtime, and increasing the amount of continuous production runs possible.

[0020] Another aspect of the present invention is that it generates uniform heating of the refractory walls (17) and process tubes (14). Uniform heating of the refractory walls (17) results in improved cracking ratios, less maintenance, energy savings and increased production.

[0021] Yet another aspect of the present invention is a dramatic increase in cost efficiency and production. Overall, the cost efficiency and production yields are increased permitting a greater profit and less waste.

[0022] A further aspect of the present invention is that it reduces the outside skin temperature of the furnace.

[0023] Yet a further aspect of the present invention is the increased heat transfer from the furnace refractory walls (17) to the process tubes (14) and the increased thermal flux across the tubes.

[0024] These and other aspects of the present invention will become readily apparent upon further review of the following drawings and specification.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0025] The novel features of the described embodiments are specifically set forth in the appended claims; however, embodiments relating to the structure and process of making the present invention, may best be understood with reference to the following description and accompanying drawings.

[0026] FIG. 1 is a schematic illustration of an embodiment of a cracking furnace having an emissivity coating according to the present invention disposed on heat exposed surfaces thereof.

[0027] FIGS. 2a and 2b are side views of coated refractory brick according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[0028] FIGS. 3a through 3c are cross sectional views of thermal protective layered process tubes (14) according to alternative embodiments of the present invention.

[0029] FIGS. 4a and 4b are schematic illustrations of an additional embodiment of a cracking furnace, utilizing a tube within a tube configuration, having a thermal

protective layer (18) according to the present invention disposed upon heat exposed surfaces thereof.

[0030] FIGS. 5a through 5c are section side views of emissivity coated process tubes (14) according to the alternative embodiment of FIGS. 4a and 4b of the present invention.

[0031] FIGS. 6a through 6c demonstrate an alternative embodiment of a process tube (14) having internal groves extending along the internal surface (21) thereof.

[0032] FIG. 7 is a cross sectional view of a process tube (14) having groves disposed on the external surface (23) and extending along the length thereof.

[0033] FIG. 8 is a cross sectional view of a process tube (14) having groves disposed on both the internal and external surfaces (21) and (23) thereof, wherein the groves extend along the length of the reaction tube.

[0034] FIG. 9 is an elevated side view of another process tube (14) having ridges disposed along the external circumference thereof.

[0035] FIG. 10 is a cross sectional side view of a yet another process tube (14) embodiment having ridges disposed along the internal surface (21) thereof.

[0036] FIG. 11 is a cross section side view of another embodiment of a process tube (14) having ridges disposed along both the internal and external surfaces (21) and (23) thereof.

[0037] FIGS. 12a and 12b are side and cross sectional longitudinal views of an embodiment of a process tube (14) having a ridge on the external surface (23) extending along the length of thereof and in a spiral about the circumference of the tube.

[0038] FIGS. 13a and 13b are alternative views of an embodiment of a process tube (14) having a ridge on the internal surface (21) thereof extending along the length and in a spiral about the circumference of the tube.

[0039] FIGS. 14a and 14b are alternative views of yet another embodiment of a process tube (14) having ridges disposed on the internal and external surfaces (21) and (23) thereof extending along the length in a spiral about the circumference of the tube.

[0040] Similar reference characters denote corresponding features consistently throughout the attached drawings.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0041] A cracking furnace construction, as shown in FIG. 1, includes a firebox (12) defining a chamber (20) having walls (17), and containing a plurality of heat (H) generating burners (22) disposed within the firebox chamber (20), each wall (17) having an internal refractory surface (19) exposed to heat (H) generated by the burners (22). A tube structure (25) having at least one process tube (14) disposed within the firebox chamber (20), and in fluid communication therethrough, permitting fluid to pass through the firebox chamber (20) while the fluid therein is contained entirely within the tube structure (25). The term “fluid” as used herein includes both liquid and gas. Excess heat (H) is allowed to vent through an exhaust E. Each process tube (14) has an internal surface (21) defining an interior space, and an external surface (23) directly exposed to the heat (H) generated within the firebox chamber (20) for thermal communication through the process tube (14) to heat the fluid mixture therein. Each process tube (14), in this embodiment, extends from a first end (26) to a second end (24) allowing fluid communication therethrough.

[0042] As shown in FIGS. 3a through 3c, a thermal protective layer (18) consisting of a high emissivity multifunctional nano coating disposed on the external surface (23) of the process tube (14), on the internal surface (21) of the process tube (14), or on combinations thereof. A thermal protective layer (18) may be disposed on at least a part of the internal surface (19) of the firebox chamber (20). In some firebox chambers (20), at least part of at least a refractory wall (17) is composed of a plurality of refractory bricks 16 disposed therein forming the internal surface (19) of the firebox chamber (20). In other firebox chambers, castable or ceramic fiber is used to form the refractory surface (19) of the firebox chamber (20), as is well known in the art. The thermal protective layer (18) may be disposed upon the refractory bricks 16, as shown in FIGS. 2a and 2b, or on the surface of castable or ceramic fiber refractory walls (17).

[0043] Examples of refractory walls (17) include Empire (trademark) S, which is a high duty dry press fireclay brick, Clipper (trademark), Korundal XD (trademark) and Insblok-19 available from A.P. Green Industries, Inc. (of Mexico, MO). An example of a ceramic fiber refractory includes Insboard 2300 LD also available from A.P. Green Industries, Inc. These refractory materials contains approximately 9.7% to 61.5% silica (SiO_2), 12.1% to 90.0% alumina (Al_2O_3), 0.2% to 1.7% iron oxide

(Fe₂O₃), up to 27.7% lime (CaO), 0.1% to 0.4% magnesia (MgO), 2.0% to 6.3% titania (TiO₂) and 0.1% to 2.4% of alkalis (Na₂O plus K₂O).

[0044] In an alternative cracking furnace construction, as shown in FIGS. 4a and 4b, a second process tube (28) is provided about the first process tube (14) and encompassing the first process tube (14) therein, as shown. The second process tube (28) have first and second ends (29) and (31), wherein the second end (31) is closed, as shown. A fluid entering through the first end (27) of the first thermal tube (14) is ejected out of an opening (25) disposed adjacent the first end (29) of the second thermal tube (28).

[0045] A conventional means for feeding a hydrocarbon containing feed stock fluid mixture R into the tube structure (25) adjacent the first end (24) wherein the feed stock fluid mixture flows through the interior space of each refractory tube (14) from first (24) through second ends (26), and is heated therein by thermal communication through the process tube (14), discharging a cracked hydrocarbon product fluid mixture P out of the tube structure (25). A conventional means for receiving the cracked hydrocarbon product fluid mixture when it is discharged from the tube structure (25) also is provided.

[0046] Various process tube (14) conformations exist, and are demonstrated in FIGS. 3a through 3c, and in FIGS. 6a through 14b. The process tube (14) may have a conformation with a smooth interior surface, as shown in FIGS. 3a through 3c, 6a through 6c, 10, 13a, and 13b, a smooth exterior surface, as shown in FIGS. 3a through 3c, 7, 9, 12a and 12b, concentric ridges disposed along the interior surface, as shown in FIGS. 10 and 11, grooves disposed along the interior surface, as shown in FIGS. 6a through 6c, a ridge disposed cork screw wise along the interior surface, as shown in FIGS. 13a through 14b, concentric ridges disposed along the exterior surface, as shown in FIGS. 9 and 11, grooves disposed along the exterior surface, as shown in FIGS. 7 and 8, a ridge disposed cork screw wise along the exterior surface, as shown in FIGS. 12a, 12b, 14a, and 14b, or combinations thereof.

[0047] The thermal protective layer (18) may be applied as a high emissivity multifunctional thermal protective coating. Suitable coatings and methods of application are described in U.S. Patent Nos. 7,105,047 and 6,921,431 and assigned to Wessex Incorporated, the contents of which are incorporated herein in their entirety.

[0048] A high emissivity coating suitable for forming a thermal protective layer (18) on a metal/alloy process tube (14) assembly of the present invention may contain

from about 5% to about 30% of an inorganic adhesive, from about 45% to about 92% of a filler, and from about 1% to about 20% of one or more emissivity agents, in a dry admixture. Preferably, the dry admixture also contains from about 1% to about 5% of a stabilizer.

[0049] An alternative high emissivity coating suitable for forming a thermal protective layer (18) on a ceramic process tubes (14) and assembly, and on ceramic refractory wall (17) materials, including brick, castable and ceramic fiber refractory walls (17), according to an embodiment of the present invention may contain from about 5% to about 35% of colloidal silica, from about 23% to about 79% of a filler, from about 1% to about 20% of one or more emissivity agents. Preferably, a thermal protective layer (18) of the present invention also contains from about 1.5% to about 5.0% of a stabilizer.

[0050] As used herein, all percentages (%) are percent weight-to-weight, also expressed as weight/weight %, % (w/w), w/w, w/w % or simply %, unless otherwise indicated. Also, as used herein, the terms "wet admixture" refers to relative percentages of the composition of the thermal protective coating in solution and "dry admixture" refers to the relative percentages of the composition of the dry thermal protective coating mixture prior to the addition of water. In other words, the dry admixture percentages are those present without taking water into account. Wet admixture refers to the admixture in solution (with water). "Wet weight percentage" is the weight in a wet admixture, and "dry weight percentage" is the weight in a dry admixture without regard to the wet weight percentages. The term "total solids", as used herein, refers to the total sum of the silica/alumina and the alkali or ammonia (NH₃), plus the fraction of all solids including impurities. Weight of the solid component divided by the total mass of the entire solution, times one hundred, yields the percentage of "total solids".

[0051] Method of preparation of coating involves applying a wet admixture of the coating to the surface to be coated. Alternative methods may include spraying the wet admixture on the surface or atomizing the dry admixture and coating the surface accordingly.

[0052] In a coating solution according to the present invention, a wet admixture of the thermal protective coating, to be applied to metal/alloy process tubes/assembly, contains from about 6% to about 40% of an inorganic adhesive, from about 23% to about 46% of a filler, from about 0.5% to about 10% of one or more emissivity

agents, and from about 18% to about 50% water. In order to extend the shelf life of the coating solution, from about 0.5% to about 2.5% of a stabilizer is preferably added to the wet admixture. The wet admixture coating solution contains between about 40% and about 60% total solids.

[0053] In a coating solution according to the present invention, a wet admixture of an alternative thermal protective coating, to be applied to the refractory structure and ceramic process tubes/assembly, contains from about 15% to about 45% of colloidal silica, from about 23% to about 55% of a filler, from about 0.5% to about 10% of one or more emissivity agents, from about 0.5% to about 2.5% of a stabilizer and from about 18% to about 40% water. The wet admixture coating solution contains between about 40% and about 70% total solids.

[0054] The inorganic adhesive is preferably an alkali/alkaline earth metal silicate taken from the group consisting of sodium silicate, potassium silicate, calcium silicate, and magnesium silicate. The colloidal silica is preferably a mono-dispersed distribution of colloidal silica, and therefore, has a very narrow range of particle sizes. The filler is preferably a metal oxide taken from the group consisting of silicon dioxide, aluminum oxide, titanium dioxide, magnesium oxide, calcium oxide and boron oxide. The emissivity agent(s) is preferably taken from the group consisting of silicon hexaboride, carbon tetraboride, silicon tetraboride, silicon carbide, molybdenum disilicide, tungsten disilicide, zirconium diboride, cupric chromite, and metallic oxides such as iron oxides, magnesium oxides, manganese oxides, copper chromium oxides, and chromium oxides, cerium oxides, and terbium oxides, and derivatives thereof. The copper chromium oxide, as used in the present invention, is a mixture of cupric chromite and cupric oxide. The stabilizer may be taken from the group consisting of bentonite, kaolin, magnesium alumina silica clay, tabular alumina and stabilized zirconium oxide. The stabilizer is preferably bentonite. Other ball clay stabilizers may be substituted herein as a stabilizer. Colloidal alumina, in addition to or instead of colloidal silica, may also be included in the admixture of the present invention. When colloidal alumina and colloidal silica are mixed together one or the other requires surface modification to facilitate mixing, as is known in the art.

[0055] Coloring may be added to the protective coating layer of the present invention to impart coloring to the tubes. Inorganic pigments may be added to the protective coating without generating toxic fumes. In general, inorganic pigments are divided into the subclasses: colored (salts and oxides), blacks, white and metallic.

Suitable inorganic pigments include but are not limited to yellow cadmium, orange cadmium, red cadmium, deep orange cadmium, orange cadmium lithopone and red cadmium lithopone.

[0056] A preferred embodiment of the present invention contains a dry admixture of from about 10% to about 25% sodium silicate, from about 50% to about 79% silicon dioxide powder, and from about 4% to about 15% of one or more emittance agent(s) taken from the group consisting of iron oxide, boron silicide, boron carbide, silicon tetraboride, silicon carbide molybdenum disilicide, tungsten disilicide, zirconium diboride. Preferred embodiments of the thermal coating may contain from about 1.0% to about 5.0% bentonite powder in dry admixture. The corresponding coating in solution (wet admixture) for this embodiment contains from about 10.0% to about 35.0% sodium silicate, from about 25.0% to about 50.0% silicon dioxide, from about 18.0% to about 39.0% water, and from about 1.0% to about 8.5% one or more emittance agent(s). This wet admixture must be used immediately. In order to provide a coating solution admixture (wet admixture), which may be stored and used later, preferred embodiments of the thermal coating contain from about 0.25% to about 2.50% bentonite powder. Preferably deionized water is used. Preferred embodiments of the wet admixture have a total solids content ranging from about 45% to about 55%.

[0057] A preferred thermal protective coating of the present invention contains a dry admixture from about 15.0% to about 20.0% sodium silicate, from about 69.0% to about 79.0% silicon dioxide powder, about 1.00% bentonite powder, and from about 5.00% to about 15.0% of an emittance agent. The emittance agent is taken from one or more of the following: iron oxide, boron silicide, and boron carbide.

[0058] A most preferred wet admixture contains about 20.0% sodium silicate based on a sodium silicate solids content of about 37.45%, from about 34.5% to about 39.5% silicon dioxide powder, about 0.500% bentonite powder, and from about 2.50% to about 7.5% of an emittance agent, with the balance being water. The emittance agent is most preferably taken from the group consisting of iron oxide, boron silicide, and boron carbide (also known as, carbon tetraboride). Preferred embodiments include those where the emittance agent comprises about 2.50% iron oxide, about 2.50% to about 7.5% boron silicide, or from about 2.50% to about 7.50% boron carbide. The pH of a most preferred wet admixture according to the present

invention is about 11.2.+-.1.0, the specific gravity is about 1.45.+-.0.05 and the total solids content is about 50.+-.0.3%.

[0059] A preferred embodiment of the present invention contains a dry admixture of from about 10.0% to about 30.0% colloidal silica, from about 50% to about 79% silicon dioxide powder, and from about 2% to about 15% of one or more emittance agent(s) taken from the group consisting of cerium oxide, boron silicide, boron carbide, silicon tetraboride, silicon carbide molybdenum disilicide, tungsten disilicide, zirconium diboride, and from about 1.5% to about 5.0% bentonite powder. The corresponding coating in solution (wet admixture) for this embodiment contains from about 20.0% to about 35.0% colloidal silica, from about 25.0% to about 55.0% silicon dioxide, from about 18.0% to about 35.0% water, and from about 2.0% to about 7.5% one or more emittance agent(s), and from about 0.50% to about 2.50% bentonite powder. Preferably deionized water is used. Preferred embodiments of the wet admixture have a total solids content ranging from about 50% to about 65%.

[0060] A most preferred thermal protective coating of the present invention contains a dry admixture from about 15.0% to about 25.0% colloidal silica, from about 68.0% to about 78.0% silicon dioxide powder, about 2.00% to about 4.00% bentonite powder, and from about 4.00% to about 6.00% of an emittance agent. The emittance agent is taken from one or more of the following: zirconium boride, boron silicide, and boron carbide.

[0061] A most preferred wet admixture contains about 27.0% colloidal silica based on a colloidal silica solids content of about 40%, from about 25% to about 50% silicon dioxide powder, about 1.50% bentonite powder, and from about 2.50% to about 5.50% of an emittance agent, with the balance being water. The emittance agent is most preferably taken from the group consisting of zirconium boride, boron silicide, and boron carbide. Preferred embodiments include those where the emittance agent comprises about 2.50% zirconium diboride, about 2.50% boron silicide, or from about 2.50% to about 7.50% boron carbide. The specific gravity of a most preferred wet admixture is about 1.40 to 1.50 and the total solids content is about 50% to 60%.

[0062] An inorganic adhesive, which may be used in the present invention, includes N (trademark) type sodium silicate that is available from the PQ Corporation (of Valley Forge, PA). Sodium silicates ($\text{Na}_2\text{O} \cdot \text{XSiO}_2$) are metal oxides of silica. All soluble silicates can be differentiated by their ratio, defined as the weight proportion of silica to alkali ($\text{SiO}_2/\text{Na}_2\text{O}$). Ratio determines the physical and chemical properties

of the coating. The glassy nature of silicates imparts strong and rigid physical properties to dried films or coatings. Silicates air dry to a specific moisture level, according to ambient temperature and relative humidity. Heating is necessary to take these films to complete dryness--a condition in which silicates become nearly insoluble. Reaction with other materials, such as aluminum or calcium compounds, will make the film coating completely insoluble. The N (trademark) type sodium silicate, as used in the examples below, has a weight ratio $\text{SiO}_2/\text{Na}_2\text{O}$ is 3.22, 8.9% Na_2O , 28.7% SiO_2 , with a density (at room temperature of 20°C .) of 41.0°Be , 11.6 lb/gal or 1.38 g/cm³. The pH is 11.3 with a viscosity of 180 centipoises. The N type sodium silicate is in a state of a syrupy liquid.

[0063] The term "total solids" refers to the sum of the silica and the alkali. The weight ratio is a most important silicate variable. Ratio determines the product solubility, reactivity and physical properties. Ratio is either the weight or molar proportion of silica to alkali. Density is an expression of total solids and is typically determined using a hydrometer or pycnometer

[0064] Ludox (trademark) TM 50 colloidal silica and Ludox (trademark) AS 40 colloidal silica are available from Grace Davidson (of Columbia, Md.). The particles in Ludox (trademark) colloidal silica are discrete uniform spheres of silica which have no internal surface area or detectable crystallinity. Most are dispersed in an alkaline medium which reacts with the silica surface to produce a negative charge. Because of the negative charge, the particles repel one another resulting in stable products. Although most grades are stable between pH 8.5-11.0, some grades are stable in the neutral pH range. Ludox (trademark) colloidal silicas are aqueous colloidal dispersions of very small silica particles. They are opalescent to milky white liquids. Because of their colloidal nature, particles of Ludox (trademark) colloidal silica have a large specific surface area which accounts for the novel properties and wide variety of uses. Ludox (trademark) colloidal silica is available in two primary families: mono-dispersed, very narrow particle size distribution of Ludox (trademark) colloidal silica and poly-dispersed, broad particle size distribution of Ludox (trademark) P. The Ludox (trademark) colloidal silica is converted to a dry solid, usually by gelation. The colloidal silica can be gelled by (1) removing water, (2) changing pH, or (3) adding a salt or water-miscible organic solvent. During drying, the hydroxyl groups on the surface of the particles condense by splitting out water to form siloxane bonds (Si-O-Si) resulting in coalescence and interbonding. Dried particles of Ludox (trademark)

colloidal silica are chemically inert and heat resistant. The particles develop strong adhesive and cohesive bonds and are effective binders for all types of granular and fibrous materials, especially when use at elevated temperature is required.

[0065] Colloidal alumina is available as Nyacol (trademark) colloidal alumina, and specifically, Nyacol (trademark) AL20, available from Nyacol Nano Technologies, Inc. (Ashland, MA), and is available in deionized water to reduce the sodium and chlorine levels to less than 10 ppm. It contains about 20 percent by weight of Al_2O_3 , a particle size of 50nm, positive particle charge, pH 4.0, specific gravity of 1.19, and a viscosity of 10 cPs.

[0066] The filler may be a silicon dioxide powder such as Min-U-Sil (trademark) 5 silicon dioxide available from U.S. Silica (of Berkeley Springs, WV). This silicon dioxide is fine ground silica. Chemical analysis of the Min-U-Sil (trademark) silicon dioxide indicates contents of 98.5% silicon dioxide, 0.060% iron oxide, 1.1% aluminum oxide, 0.02% titanium dioxide, 0.04% calcium oxide, 0.03% magnesium oxide, 0.03% sodium dioxide, 0.03% potassium oxide and a 0.4% loss on ignition. The typical physical properties are a compacted bulk density of 41 lbs/ft.^{sup.3}, an uncompacted bulk density of 36 lbs/ft³, a hardness of 7 Mohs, hegman of 7.5, median diameter of 1.7 microns, an oil absorption (D-1483) of 44, a pH of 6.2, 97% -5 microns, 0.005%+325 Mesh, a reflectance of 92%, a 4.2 yellowness index and a specific gravity of 2.65.

[0067] Emittance agents are available from several sources. Emissivity is the relative power of a surface to absorb and emit radiation, and the ratio of the radiant energy emitted by a surface to the radiant energy emitted by a blackbody at the same temperature. Emittance is the energy reradiated by the surface of a body per unit area.

[0068] The boron carbide, also known as carbon tetraboride, which may be used as an emissivity agent in the present invention, is sold as 1000 W boron carbide and is available from Electro Abrasives (of Buffalo, N.Y.). Boron Carbide is one of the hardest man made materials available. Above 1300°C., it is even harder than diamond and cubic boron nitride. It has a four point flexural strength of 50,000 to 70,000 psi and a compressive strength of 414,000 psi, depending on density. Boron Carbide also has a low thermal conductivity (29 to 67 W/mK) and has electrical resistivity ranging from 0.1 to 10 ohm-cm. Typical chemical analysis indicates 77.5% boron, 21.5% carbon, iron 0.2% and total Boron plus Carbon is 98%. The hardness is 2800 Knoop

and 9.6 Mohs, the melting point is 4262°F. (2350°C.), the oxidation temperature is 932°F. (500°C.), and the specific gravity is 2.52 g/cc.

[0069] 1000 W green silicon carbide (SiC), an optional emissivity agent, is also available from Electro Abrasives. Green Silicon Carbide is an extremely hard (Knoop 2600 or Mohs 9.4) man made mineral that possesses high thermal conductivity (100 W/m-K). It also has high strength at elevated temperatures (at 1100°C., Green SiC is 7.5 times stronger than Al_2O_3). Green SiC has a Modulus of Elasticity of 410 GPa, with no decrease in strength up to 1600°C., and it does not melt at normal pressures but instead dissociates at 2815.5°C. Green silicon carbide is a batch composition made from silica sand and coke, and is extremely pure. The physical properties are as follows for green silicon carbide: the hardness is 2600 Knoop and 9.4 Mohs, the melting point is 4712°F. (2600°C.), and the specific gravity is 3.2 g/cc. The typical chemical analysis is 99.5% SiC, 0.2% SiO_2 , 0.03% total Si, 0.04% total Fe, and 0.1% total C. Commercial silicon carbide and molybdenum disilicide may need to be cleaned, as is well known in the art, to eliminate flammable gas generated during production.

[0070] Boron silicide (B_6Si) (Item# B-1089) is available from Cerac (of Milwaukee, Wis.). The boron silicide, also known as silicon hexaboride, available from Cerac has a -200 mesh (about 2 microns average) and a typical purity of about 98%. Zirconium boride (ZrB_2) (Item# Z-1031) is also available from Cerac with a typical average of 10 microns or less (-325 mesh), and a typical purity of about 99.5%.

[0071] Iron oxide (SYN-OX HB-1033T) available from Hoover Color (of Hiwassee, Va.) is a synthetic black iron oxide (Fe_2O_3) which has an iron oxide content of 60%, a specific gravity of 4.8 gm/cc, a tap density (also known as, bulk density) of 1.3 gm/cc, oil absorption of 15 lbs/100 lbs, a 325 mesh residue of 0.005, and a pH ranging from 7 to 10.

[0072] Preferably the admixture of the present invention includes bentonite powder, tabular alumina, or magnesium alumina silica clay. The bentonite powder permits the present invention to be prepared and used at a later date. Preparations of the present invention without bentonite powder must be used immediately. The examples provided for the present invention include PolarGel bentonite powder are available from Mineral and Pigment Solutions, Inc. (of South Plainfield, NJ). Technical grade bentonite is generally used for the purpose of suspending,

emulsifying and binding agents, and as Theological modifiers. The typical chemical analysis 59.00% to 61.00% of silicon dioxide (SiO_2), 20.00% to 22.00% of aluminum oxide (Al_2O_3), 2.00% to 3.00% calcium oxide (CaO), 3.50% to 4.30% magnesium oxide (MgO), 0.60% to 0.70% ferric oxide (Fe_2O_3), 3.50% to 4.00% sodium oxide (Na_2O), 0.02% to 0.03% potassium oxide (K_2O), and 0.10% to 0.20% titanium dioxide and a maximum of 8.0% moisture. The pH value ranges from 9.5 to 10.5. Typical physical properties are 83.0 to 87.0 dry brightness, 2.50 to 2.60 specific gravity, 20.82 pounds/solid gallon, 0.0480 gallons for one pound bulk, 24 ml minimum swelling power, maximum 2 ml gel formation, and 100.00% thru 200 mesh. Tabular alumina (Alumina Tab T64 Item 635) and magnesium alumina silica clay (Mag Alum Sil Technical Item 105) are also available from Mineral and Pigment Solutions, Inc.

[0073] The admixture of the present invention preferably includes bentonite powder, tabular alumina, or other magnesium alumina silica clay as the stabilizer. The bentonite powder permits the present invention to be prepared and used at a later date. The examples provided for the present invention include PolarGel bentonite powder (Item# 354) available from Mineral and Pigment Solutions, Inc. (of South Plainfield, NJ). Bentonite is generally used for the purpose of suspending, emulsifying and binding agents, and as rheological modifiers. The typical chemical analysis is 59.00% to 61.00% of silicon dioxide (SiO_2), 20.00% to 22.00% of aluminum oxide (Al_2O_3), 2.00% to 3.00% calcium oxide (CaO), 3.50% to 4.30% magnesium oxide (MgO), 0.60% to 0.70% ferric oxide (Fe_2O_3), 3.50% to 4.00% sodium oxide (Na_2O), 0.02% to 0.03% potassium oxide (K_2O), and 0.10% to 0.20% titanium dioxide and a maximum of 8.0% moisture. The pH value ranges from 9.5 to 10.5. Typical physical properties are 83.0 to 87.0 dry brightness, 2.50 to 2.60 specific gravity, 20.82 pounds/solid gallon, 0.0480 gallons for one pound bulk, 24 ml minimum swelling power, maximum 2 ml gel formation, and 100.00% thru 200 mesh. Tabular alumina (Alumina Tab T64 Item 635) and magnesium alumina silica clay (Mag Alum Sil Technical Item 105) are also available from Mineral and Pigment Solutions, Inc.

[0074] Colorants, which may be added to the present invention, include but are not limited to inorganic pigments. Suitable inorganic pigments, such as yellow iron oxide, chromium oxide green, red iron oxide, black iron oxide, titanium dioxide, are available from Hoover Color Corporation. Additional suitable inorganic pigments, such as copper chromite black spinel, chromium green-black hematite, nickel

antimony titanium yellow rutile, manganese antimony titanium buff rutile, and cobalt chromite blue-green spinel, are available from The Shepherd Color Company (of Cincinnati, Ohio).

[0075] A surfactant may be added to the wet admixture prior to applying the thermal protective layer (18) to the support layer. The surfactant was surfyolol (trademark) 465 surfactant available from Air Products and Chemicals, Inc. (of Allentown, PA). The surfyolol (trademark) has a chemical structure of ethoxylated 2,4,7,9-tetramethyl 5 decyn-4,7-diol. Other surfactants may be used, such as STANDAPOL (trademark) T, INCI which has a chemical structure of triethanolamine lauryl sulfate, liquid mild primary surfactant available from Cognis-Care Chemicals (of Cincinnati, OH). The amount of surfactant present by weight in the wet admixture is from about 0.05% to about 0.2%.

[0076] The present invention is applied to a substrate surface. The substrate surface may be a metallic substrate such as iron, aluminum, alloys, steel, cast iron, stainless steel and the like, or it may be a ceramic surface, as is well known in the art. The coating is typically applied wet, and either allowed to air dry or heat dry. The metal substrates may be internal surfaces of furnaces, automotive parts, and any other substrate surfaces which may be subjected to high temperatures.

[0077] Surface preparation for metal or ceramic structures are similar. The surface should be clear of all dirt, loose material, surfactants, oils, gasses, etc. A metal surface may be grit blasted. Grit blasting is desirable to remove oxidation and other contaminants. Grits media should be sharp particles. Gun pressure will vary depending on the cut type, condition of the metal and profile desired. Very old metal will require 70-80 psi. Oil and water-free compressed air is required. Proper filters for the removal of oil and water are required.

[0078] After the grit blast, the surface should be thoroughly cleaned to remove all loose particles with clean oil and water free air blasts. Avoid contaminating surface with fingerprints. Acetone can be used (under proper ventilation and exercising all necessary precautions when working with acetone) on a clean cloth to wipe the surface clean. A cleaning compound may be used on certain stainless steel in lieu of grit blasting. Dur-lum 603 available from Blue Wave Ultrasonics (of Davenport, IA), a powdered alkaline cleaner, may be used in cleaning metal surface.

[0079] When using the wet admixture containing a stabilizer, solids may settle during shipment or storage. Prior to use all previously mixed coating must be

thoroughly re-mixed to ensure all settled solids and clumps are completely re-dispersed. When not using a stabilizer, the coating may not be stored for any period of time. In any case, the coating should be used immediately after mixing to minimize settling.

[0080] Mixing instructions for one and five gallon containers. High speed/high shear saw tooth dispersion blade 5" diameter for one gallon containers and 7" diameter for five gallon containers may be attached to a hand drill of sufficient power with a minimum no load speed of 2000 rpm shear. Dispersion blades can be purchased from numerous suppliers. Mix at high speed to ensure complete re-dispersion for a minimum of 30 minutes.

[0081] The product should be applied directly after cleaning a metal surface so minimal surface oxidation occurs. The product should be applied in a properly ventilated and well lit area, or protective equipment should be used appropriate to the environment, for example within a firebox (12). The mixed product should not be filtered or diluted.

[0082] A high volume low pressure (HVLP) spray gun should be used with 20-40 psi of clean, oil and water free air. Proper filters for removal of oil and water are required. Alternatively, an airless spray gun may be used. Other types of spray equipment may be suitable. The applicator should practice spraying on scrap metal prior to spraying the actual part to ensure proper coverage density. An airless spray system is preferable for applications on ceramic surfaces such as the refractory materials. Suitable airless spray systems are available from Graco (of Minneapolis, MN). Suitable HVLP spray systems, which are desirable for metal/alloy process tubes, are available from G.H. Reed Inc. (of Hanover, PA). A high speed agitator may be desirable. Suitable spray gun tips may be selected to provide the proper thickness without undue experimentation.

[0083] Controlling the coverage density may be critical to coating performance. Dry coating thickness should be from about two (2) mils (about 50 microns (μ)) to about ten (10) mils (about 255 μ), depending upon typed, size and condition of substrate. One (1) mil equals 25.4 μ . Proper thickness may vary. If possible, rotate the part 90 degrees at least once to maintain even coverage. Allow 1 to 4 hours of dry time before the part is handled, depending upon humidity and temperature.

[0084] Examples of fuel cost savings resulting from alternative embodiments of the present invention include examples where the radiant walls (17) of the firebox

chamber (20) are coated, and where the external surface (23) of the radiant process tubes are covered in addition to the radiant walls (17) of the firebox chamber (20). An example with an ethylene furnace includes a natural gas fired furnace that has an annual usage of 1,100,000 MMBTU with a production of 50,000 pounds per hour. Radiant walls (17) present in this example, have 3500 square feet of total hard refractory, and 2000 linear feet of Ni-Cr alloy process tubes with an outside diameter of six inches. The furnace controls were PLC controlled by heat distribution in the firebox (12) and exit furnace temperature. The maintenance schedule involved de-coking tubes and inspecting/impacting interior walls (17) every six (6) to eight (8) weeks. The economic impact on the ethylene furnace included a fuel savings of six (6) percent with a production increase of five (5) percent. The production increase was 18,000,000 pounds ethylene per year. The tube life was doubled from five (5) to ten (10) years. There was also reduced down time for maintenance. A six (6) percent energy savings resulted where only the walls (17) were coated with a thermal protective layer (18) according to the present invention. Where the walls (17) and tubes were coated with a thermal protective layer (18), a ten (10) percent energy savings and a five (5) percent production increase were observed.

[0085] The experimental analysis, where aged insulating fire brick was present on the firebox (12) walls (17) and coated by a thermal protective coating containing in wet weight 29.3 percent of Lubox TM 50 colloidal 1 silica, 31.85 percent Min-U-Sil 5 SiO₂ powder, 1.45 percent 354 PolarGel, 2.05 percent B1089 SiB₆ powder and 35.35 percent deionized water. The operating temperature of about 2100 degrees Fahrenheit. After ten (10) months of monitoring with a laser targeted thermometer, the thermal protective layer (18) maintained an emissivity above 0.9 with excellent bonding. The cost savings utilizing the present invention paid for the application of the thermal protective layer (18) in 1 to 2 months.

[0086] Another example of an ethylene furnace which operates at 2100 degrees Fahrenheit had insulating firebrick and a ceramic fiber block, sold as Z-Blok Modules (trademark), with a thermal protective layer (18) according to the present invention disposed thereon. The insulating firebrick were covered by a thermal protective coating having, in wet mixture, 27.12 percent Ludox TM 50 colloidal 1 silica, 43.94 percent Min-U-Sil 5 SiO₂ powder, 1.8 percent 354 Polar Gel, 1.8 percent B1089 SiB₆ powder, and 24.44 percent deionized water. The Z-Block (trademark) were covered with a thermal protective layer (18) having, in wet mixture, 36.05 percent Min-U-Sil 5

SiO₂ Powder, 1.45 percent 354 PolarGel, 2.5 percent B1089 SiB₆ powder, 50 percent Nyacol Al 20, 0.1 percent Standapol, and 9.9 percent deionized water. The thermal protective layer (18) was applied using a standard HVLP or airless spray gun. Within six (6) months, a six (6) percent energy savings and a nine (9) percent production increase were realized.

[0087] In yet another example of an ethylene furnace which operates at 2100 degrees Fahrenheit had insulating firebrick and a ceramic fiber block, sold as Z-Blok Modules (trademark), with a thermal protective layer (18) according to the present invention disposed thereon. The process tubes were replaced when the thermal protective layer (18) was added. The insulating firebrick were covered by a thermal protective coating having, in wet mixture, 27.12 percent Ludox TM 50 colloidal 1 silica, 43.94 percent Min-U-Sil 5 SiO₂ powder, 1.8 percent 354 Polar Gel, 1.8 percent B1089 SiB₆ powder, and 24.44 percent deionized water. The Z-Block were covered with a thermal protective layer (18) having, in wet mixture, 36.05 percent Min-U-Sil 5 SiO₂ Powder, 1.45 percent 354 PolarGel, 2.5 percent B1089 SiB₆ powder, 50 percent Nyacol Al 20, 0.1 percent Standapol, and 9.9 percent deionized water. The thermal protective layer (18) was applied using a standard HVLP or airless spray gun. A fuel savings of twelve (12) percent resulted.

[0088] In another experimental example, a thermal protective layer (18) was added to aged insulating fire brick of a radiant side wall (17) of a firebox chamber (20). Specifically, a thermal protective coating containing in wet weight 29.3 percent of Lubox TM 50 colloidal 1 silica, 31.85 percent Min-U-Sil 5 SiO₂ powder, 1.45 percent 354 PolarGel, 2.05 percent B1089 SiB₆ Powder and 35.35 percent deionized water was applied to a two (2) square foot panel of aged insulating fire brick on the radiant sidewalls (17) using a HVLP or airless spray gun. After ten (10) months under working conditions, using a laser targeted thermometer the thermal protective layer (18) of the present invention maintained an emissivity of 0.9 and appeared visually intact. This test demonstrated that the thermal protective coating can withstand the high temperatures and turbulence found with in an ethylene furnace and still maintain an emissivity of 0.90 plus.

[0089] Another example is a refractory surface (19), comprising ceramic fiber modules, which has an operating temperature of 1800 degrees Fahrenheit having a thermal protective layer (18) disposed thereon. The thermal protective layer (18) covering the refractory surface (19) had, in wet mixture, 36.05 percent Min-U-Sil 5

SiO₂ Powder, 1.45 percent 354 PolarGel, 2.5 percent B1089 SiB₆ powder, 50 percent Nyacol Al 20, 0.1 percent Standapol, and 9.9 percent deionized water. After eight months in service the modules showed no sign of shrinkage and were not ablated. Color photographs of the modules under working conditions demonstrated that heating was more evenly distributed on the coated thermal protective surface, and that more heat was radiated by the coated surface, than an uncoated surface exposed to the same conditions.

[0090] It is to be understood that the present invention is not limited to the embodiments described above, but encompasses any and all embodiments within the scope of the following claims.

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A cracking furnace construction, comprising:

a firebox (12) defining a chamber (20) having refractory walls (17), and containing a plurality of heat (H) generating burners (22) disposed within the firebox chamber (20), each refractory wall (17) having an internal surface (19) exposed to heat (H) generated by the burners (22);

a process tube structure (25) having at least one process tube (14) disposed within the firebox chamber (20), and in fluid communication therethrough, permitting fluid to pass through the firebox chamber (20) while fluidly contained solely within the process tube structure (25), wherein each process tube (14) has an internal surface (21) defining an interior space, and an external surface (23) directly exposed to the heat (H) generated within the firebox chamber (20) for thermal communication therethrough;

each process tube (14) extending from a first end (26) to a second end (24) allowing fluid communication therethrough;

means for feeding a hydrocarbon containing feed stock fluid mixture into the process tube structure (25) through the first end (26) of each process tube (14) wherein the feed stock fluid mixture flows through the interior space of each process tube (14) from first through second ends (26) and (24) heated therein by thermal communication through the process tube (14), discharging a cracked hydrocarbon product fluid mixture out of the second end (24) of each process tube (14), and means for receiving the cracked hydrocarbon product fluid mixture from the process tube structure (25); and

at least one thermal protective layer (18) consisting of a high emissivity coating disposed on the external surface (23) of the process tube (14), on the internal surface (21) of the process tube (14), or on at least a part of the internal surface (19) of the firebox chamber (20) refractory wall (17), or combinations thereof, wherein a thermal protective layer (18) contains

a. from about 5% to about 30% of an inorganic adhesive, from about 45% to about 92% of a filler, and from about 1% to about 20% of one or more emissivity agents, or

b. from about 5% to about 35% of colloidal silica, colloidal alumina, or combinations thereof; from about 23% to about 79% of a filler, from about 1% to about 20% of one or more emissivity agents.

2. The cracking furnace construction of claim 1, wherein:

a thermal protective layer (18) further comprises from about 1.0% to about 5.0% of a stabilizer;

the inorganic adhesive is taken from the group consisting of an alkali/alkaline earth metal silicate taken from the group consisting of sodium silicate, potassium silicate, calcium silicate, and magnesium silicate;

the filler is taken from the group consisting of silicon dioxide, aluminum oxide, titanium dioxide, magnesium oxide, calcium oxide, and boron oxide; or

the one or more emissivity agents are taken from the group consisting of silicon hexaboride, boron carbide, silicon tetraboride, silicon carbide, molybdenum disilicide, tungsten disilicide, zirconium diboride, cupric chromite, and metallic oxides; or combinations thereof.

3. The cracking furnace construction of claim 1, wherein:

the stabilizer is taken from the group consisting of bentonite, kaolin, magnesium alumina silica clay, tabular alumina, and stabilized zirconium oxide.

4. The cracking furnace construction of claim 1, wherein:

a thermal protective layer (18) contains

a. from about 5% to about 30% of an inorganic adhesive, the inorganic adhesive is taken from the group consisting of an alkali/alkaline earth metal silicate taken from the group consisting of sodium silicate, potassium silicate, calcium silicate, and magnesium silicate; from about 45% to about 92% of a filler, the filler taken from the group consisting of silicon dioxide, aluminum oxide, titanium dioxide, magnesium oxide, calcium oxide, and boron oxide; and from about 1% to about 20% of one or more emissivity agents taken from the group consisting of silicon hexaboride, boron carbide, silicon tetraboride, silicon carbide, molybdenum disilicide, tungsten disilicide, zirconium diboride, cupric chromite, and metallic oxides;

b. from about 5% to about 35% of colloidal silica, colloidal alumina, or combinations thereof; from about 23% to about 79% of a filler taken from the group consisting of silicon dioxide, aluminum oxide, titanium dioxide, magnesium oxide, calcium oxide, and boron oxide; and from about 1% to about 20% of one or more

emissivity agents taken from the group consisting of silicon hexaboride, boron carbide, silicon tetraboride, silicon carbide, molybdenum disilicide, tungsten disilicide, zirconium diboride, cupric chromite, and metallic oxides;

c. from about 5% to about 30% of an inorganic adhesive, the inorganic adhesive is taken from the group consisting of an alkali/alkaline earth metal silicate taken from the group consisting of sodium silicate, potassium silicate, calcium silicate, and magnesium silicate; from about 45% to about 92% of a filler, the filler taken from the group consisting of silicon dioxide, aluminum oxide, titanium dioxide, magnesium oxide, calcium oxide, and boron oxide; and from about 1% to about 20% of one or more emissivity agents taken from the group consisting of silicon hexaboride, boron carbide, silicon tetraboride, silicon carbide, molybdenum disilicide, tungsten disilicide, zirconium diboride, cupric chromite, and metallic oxides; and from about 1% to about 5% of a stabilizer taken from the group consisting of bentonite, kaolin, magnesium alumina silica clay, tabular alumina, and stabilized zirconium oxide; or

d. from about 5% to about 35% of colloidal silica, colloidal alumina, or combinations thereof; from about 23% to about 79% of a filler taken from the group consisting of silicon dioxide, aluminum oxide, titanium dioxide, magnesium oxide, calcium oxide, and boron oxide; and from about 1% to about 20% of one or more emissivity agents taken from the group consisting of silicon hexaboride, boron carbide, silicon tetraboride, silicon carbide, molybdenum disilicide, tungsten disilicide, zirconium diboride, cupric chromite, and metallic oxides; and from about 1.5% to about 5.0% of a stabilizer taken from the group consisting of bentonite, kaolin, magnesium alumina silica clay, tabular alumina, and stabilized zirconium oxide.

5. The cracking furnace construction of claim 1, wherein:

a thermal protective layer (18) contains

a. from about 10% to about 30% sodium silicate, from about 50% to about 79% silicon dioxide powder, and from about 4% to about 15% of one or more emissivity agents taken from the group consisting of iron oxide, boron silicide, boron carbide, silicon tetraboride, silicon carbide powder, molybdenum disilicide, tungsten disilicide, and zirconium diboride;

b. from about 10% to about 30% sodium silicate, from about 50% to about 79% silicon dioxide powder, from about 4% to about 15% of one or more emissivity

agents taken from the group consisting of iron oxide, boron silicide, boron carbide, silicon tetraboride, silicon carbide powder, molybdenum disilicide, tungsten disilicide, and zirconium diboride, and from about 1% to about 5% of a stabilizer taken from the group consisting of bentonite, kaolin, magnesium alumina silica clay, tabular alumina, and stabilized zirconium oxide;

c. from about 10% to about 30% colloidal silica, from about 50% to about 79% silicon dioxide powder, and from about 2% to about 15% of one or more emissivity agents taken from the group consisting of iron oxide, boron silicide, boron carbide, silicon tetraboride, silicon carbide molybdenum disilicide, tungsten disilicide, and zirconium diboride; or

d. from about 10% to about 30% colloidal silica, from about 50% to about 79% silicon dioxide powder, from about 2% to about 15% of one or more emissivity agents taken from the group consisting of iron oxide, boron silicide, boron carbide, silicon tetraboride, silicon carbide molybdenum disilicide, tungsten disilicide, and zirconium diboride, and from about 1.5% to about 5.0% of a stabilizer taken from the group consisting of bentonite, kaolin, magnesium alumina silica clay, tabular alumina, and stabilized zirconium oxide.

6. The cracking furnace construction of claim 1, wherein:

at least part of at least a refractory wall (17) of the firebox chamber (20) has a plurality of refractory bricks (16) forming the internal surface (19) of the firebox chamber (20).

7. The cracking furnace construction of claim 6, wherein:

the thermal protective layer (18) is disposed upon the refractory bricks (16).

8. The cracking furnace construction of claim 1, wherein:

a second thermal process tube (28) is provided about the first thermal process tube (14) encompassing the first thermal process tube (14) therein

the thermal process tube (14) having first and second ends (29) and (31), wherein the second end (31) is closed;

such that a fluid entering through the first end (27) of the first thermal tube (14) is ejected out of an opening (25) disposed adjacent the first end (29) of the second thermal tube (28).

9. A refractory wall (17) component, comprising:

ceramic refractory materials; and

a thermal protective layer (18) disposed on at least one surface of the refractory wall (17) component;

wherein the thermal protective layer (18) contains

a. from about 5% to about 35% of colloidal silica, colloidal alumina, or combinations thereof; from about 23% to about 79% of a filler, from about 1% to about 20% of one or more emissivity agents, or

b. from about 5% to about 35% of colloidal silica, colloidal alumina, or combinations thereof; from about 23% to about 79% of a filler, from about 1% to about 20% of one or more emissivity agents, and from about 1.5% to about 5.0% of a stabilizer.

10. The refractory wall (17) component of claim 9, wherein:

the inorganic adhesive is taken from the group consisting of an alkali/alkaline earth metal silicate taken from the group consisting of sodium silicate, potassium silicate, calcium silicate, and magnesium silicate;

the filler is taken from the group consisting of silicon dioxide, aluminum oxide, titanium dioxide, magnesium oxide, calcium oxide, and boron oxide;

the one or more emissivity agents taken from the group consisting of silicon hexaboride, boron carbide, silicon tetraboride, silicon carbide, molybdenum disilicide, tungsten disilicide, zirconium diboride, cupric chromite, and metallic oxides; or

the stabilizer is taken from the group consisting of bentonite, kaolin, magnesium alumina silica clay, tabular alumina, and stabilized zirconium oxide; or combinations thereof.

11. The refractory wall (17) component of claim 9, wherein:

a thermal protective layer (18) contains

a. from about 5% to about 35% of colloidal silica, colloidal alumina, or combinations thereof; from about 23% to about 79% of a filler taken from the group consisting of silicon dioxide, aluminum oxide, titanium dioxide, magnesium oxide, calcium oxide, and boron oxide; and from about 2% to about 20% of one or more emissivity agents taken from the group consisting of silicon hexaboride, boron carbide, silicon tetraboride, silicon carbide, molybdenum disilicide, tungsten disilicide, zirconium diboride, cupric chromite, and metallic oxides; or

d. from about 5% to about 35% of colloidal silica, colloidal alumina, or combinations thereof; from about 23% to about 79% of a filler taken from the group consisting of silicon dioxide, aluminum oxide, titanium dioxide, magnesium oxide,

calcium oxide, and boron oxide; and from about 2% to about 20% of one or more emissivity agents taken from the group consisting of silicon hexaboride, boron carbide, silicon tetraboride, silicon carbide, molybdenum disilicide, tungsten disilicide, zirconium diboride, cupric chromite, and metallic oxides; and from about 1.5% to about 5.0% of a stabilizer taken from the group consisting of bentonite, kaolin, magnesium alumina silica clay, tabular alumina, and stabilized zirconium oxide.

12. The refractory wall (17) component of claim 9, wherein:

a thermal protective layer (18) contains

a. from about 10% to about 40% sodium silicate, from about 50% to about 79% silicon dioxide powder, from about 4% to about 15% of one or more emissivity agents taken from the group consisting of iron oxide, boron silicide, boron carbide, silicon tetraboride, silicon carbide powder, molybdenum disilicide, tungsten disilicide, and zirconium diboride, and from about 1% to about 5% of a stabilizer taken from the group consisting of bentonite, kaolin, magnesium alumina silica clay, tabular alumina, and stabilized zirconium oxide; or

b. from about 10% to about 30% colloidal silica, from about 50% to about 79% silicon dioxide powder, from about 2% to about 15% of one or more emissivity agents taken from the group consisting of iron oxide, boron silicide, boron carbide, silicon tetraboride, silicon carbide molybdenum disilicide, tungsten disilicide, and zirconium diboride, and from about 1.5% to about 5.0% of a stabilizer taken from the group consisting of bentonite, kaolin, magnesium alumina silica clay, tabular alumina, and stabilized zirconium oxide.

13. A process tube (14), comprising:

an internal surface (21) and an external surface (23), composed of a ceramic or metallic structure, has the internal surface (21) defining an interior space extending from a first end (26) to a second end (24) allowing fluid communication therethrough; and a thermal protective layer (18) disposed on either the internal or external surface (21) or (23) or combinations thereof; wherein

a thermal protective layer (18) contains

a. from about 5% to about 30% of an inorganic adhesive, from about 45% to about 92% of a filler, and from about 1% to about 20% of one or more emissivity agents; or

b. from about 5% to about 35% of colloidal silica, colloidal alumina, or combinations thereof; from about 23% to about 79% of a filler, from about 1% to about 20% of one or more emissivity agents.

14. The process tube (14) of claim 13, wherein:

the thermal protective layer (18) further comprises from about 1.0% to about 5.0% of a stabilizer;

the inorganic adhesive is taken from the group consisting of an alkali/alkaline earth metal silicate taken from the group consisting of sodium silicate, potassium silicate, calcium silicate, and magnesium silicate;

the filler is taken from the group consisting of silicon dioxide, aluminum oxide, titanium dioxide, magnesium oxide, calcium oxide, and boron oxide; or

the one or more emissivity agents are taken from the group consisting of silicon hexaboride, boron carbide, silicon tetraboride, silicon carbide, molybdenum disilicide, tungsten disilicide, zirconium diboride, cupric chromite, and metallic oxides; or

combinations thereof.

15. The process tube (14) of claim 14, wherein:

the stabilizer is taken from the group consisting of bentonite, kaolin, magnesium alumina silica clay, tabular alumina, and stabilized zirconium oxide.

16. The process tube (14) of claim 13, wherein:

a thermal protective layer (18) is contains

a. from about 5% to about 30% of an inorganic adhesive, the inorganic adhesive is taken from the group consisting of an alkali/alkaline earth metal silicate taken from the group consisting of sodium silicate, potassium silicate, calcium silicate, and magnesium silicate; from about 45% to about 92% of a filler, the filler taken from the group consisting of silicon dioxide, aluminum oxide, titanium dioxide, magnesium oxide, calcium oxide, and boron oxide; and from about 1% to about 20% of one or more emissivity agents taken from the group consisting of silicon hexaboride, boron carbide, silicon tetraboride, silicon carbide, molybdenum disilicide, tungsten disilicide, zirconium diboride, cupric chromite, and metallic oxides;

b. from about 5% to about 35% of colloidal silica, colloidal alumina, or combinations thereof; from about 23% to about 79% of a filler taken from the group consisting of silicon dioxide, aluminum oxide, titanium dioxide, magnesium oxide, calcium oxide, and boron oxide; and from about 1% to about 20% of one or more

emissivity agents taken from the group consisting of silicon hexaboride, boron carbide, silicon tetraboride, silicon carbide, molybdenum disilicide, tungsten disilicide, zirconium diboride, cupric chromite, and metallic oxides;

c. from about 5% to about 30% of an inorganic adhesive, the inorganic adhesive is taken from the group consisting of an alkali/alkaline earth metal silicate taken from the group consisting of sodium silicate, potassium silicate, calcium silicate, and magnesium silicate; from about 45% to about 92% of a filler, the filler taken from the group consisting of silicon dioxide, aluminum oxide, titanium dioxide, magnesium oxide, calcium oxide, and boron oxide; and from about 1% to about 20% of one or more emissivity agents taken from the group consisting of silicon hexaboride, boron carbide, silicon tetraboride, silicon carbide, molybdenum disilicide, tungsten disilicide, zirconium diboride, cupric chromite, and metallic oxides; and from about 1% to about 5% of a stabilizer taken from the group consisting of bentonite, kaolin, magnesium alumina silica clay, tabular alumina, and stabilized zirconium oxide; or

d. from about 5% to about 35% of colloidal silica, colloidal alumina, or combinations thereof; from about 23% to about 79% of a filler taken from the group consisting of silicon dioxide, aluminum oxide, titanium dioxide, magnesium oxide, calcium oxide, and boron oxide; and from about 1% to about 20% of one or more emissivity agents taken from the group consisting of silicon hexaboride, boron carbide, silicon tetraboride, silicon carbide, molybdenum disilicide, tungsten disilicide, zirconium diboride, cupric chromite, and metallic oxides; and from about 1.5% to about 5.0% of a stabilizer taken from the group consisting of bentonite, kaolin, magnesium alumina silica clay, tabular alumina, and stabilized zirconium oxide.

17. The process tube (14) of claim 13, wherein:

a thermal protective layer (18) contains

a. from about 10% to about 30% sodium silicate, from about 50% to about 79% silicon dioxide powder, and from about 4% to about 15% of one or more emissivity agents taken from the group consisting of iron oxide, boron silicide, boron carbide, silicon tetraboride, silicon carbide powder, molybdenum disilicide, tungsten disilicide, and zirconium diboride;

b. from about 10% to about 30% sodium silicate, from about 50% to about 79% silicon dioxide powder, from about 4% to about 15% of one or more emissivity

agents taken from the group consisting of iron oxide, boron silicide, boron carbide, silicon tetraboride, silicon carbide powder, molybdenum disilicide, tungsten disilicide, and zirconium diboride, and from about 1% to about 5% of a stabilizer taken from the group consisting of bentonite, kaolin, magnesium alumina silica clay, tabular alumina, and stabilized zirconium oxide;

c. from about 10% to about 30% colloidal silica, from about 50% to about 79% silicon dioxide powder, and from about 2% to about 15% of one or more emissivity agents taken from the group consisting of iron oxide, boron silicide, boron carbide, silicon tetraboride, silicon carbide molybdenum disilicide, tungsten disilicide, and zirconium diboride; or

d. from about 10% to about 30% colloidal silica, from about 50% to about 79% silicon dioxide powder, from about 2% to about 15% of one or more emissivity agents taken from the group consisting of iron oxide, boron silicide, boron carbide, silicon tetraboride, silicon carbide molybdenum disilicide, tungsten disilicide, and zirconium diboride, and from about 1.5% to about 5.0% of a stabilizer taken from the group consisting of bentonite, kaolin, magnesium alumina silica clay, tabular alumina, and stabilized zirconium oxide.

18. The process tube (14) of claim 13, wherein:

the process tube (14) has a conformation with a smooth interior surface, a smooth exterior surface, concentric ridges disposed along the interior surface, grooves disposed along the interior surface, a ridge disposed cork screw wise along the interior surface, concentric ridges disposed along the exterior surface, grooves disposed along the exterior surface, a ridge disposed cork screw wise along the exterior surface, or combination thereof.

19. A method of forming a thermal protective layer (18) in a cracking furnace, comprising:

cleaning an exposed surface on a refractory material, on an interior surface of a process tube (14), or on an exterior surface of a process tube (14), or on combinations thereof;

providing a mixed thermal protective coating containing

a. from about 6% to about 40% of an inorganic adhesive, from about 23% to about 46% of a filler, from about 0.5% to about 10% of one or more emissivity agents, and from about 18% to about 50% water, or

b. from about 15% to about 45% of colloidal silica, colloidal alumina, or combinations thereof; from about 23% to about 55% of a filler, from about 0.5% to about 10% of one or more emissivity agents, and from about 18% to 50% water; and

applying the thermal protective coating to the exposed surface using a spray gun to form a thermal protective layer (18) from about 2 mils (5 microns) to about 10 mils (254 microns) thick.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein:

the thermal protective layer (18) further comprises from about 0.5% to about 2.5% of a stabilizer;

the inorganic adhesive is taken from the group consisting of an alkali/alkaline earth metal silicate taken from the group consisting of sodium silicate, potassium silicate, calcium silicate, and magnesium silicate;

the filler is taken from the group consisting of silicon dioxide, aluminum oxide, titanium dioxide, magnesium oxide, calcium oxide, and boron oxide; or

the one or more emissivity agents are taken from the group consisting of silicon hexaboride, boron carbide, silicon tetraboride, silicon carbide, molybdenum disilicide, tungsten disilicide, zirconium diboride, cupric chromite, and metallic oxides; or combinations thereof.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein:

the stabilizer is taken from the group consisting of bentonite, kaolin, magnesium alumina silica clay, tabular alumina, and stabilized zirconium oxide.

22. The method of claim 19, wherein:

the spray gun is taken from the group consisting of an high volume low pressure spray gun or an airless spray gun.

23. The method of claim 19, further comprising:

agitating the solution of thermal protective coating.

24. The method of claim 19, further comprising:

rotating the direction of spray to facilitate an even thickness.

25. The method of claim 19, further comprising:

allowing the thermal protective layer (18) to air dry from about two to about four hours.

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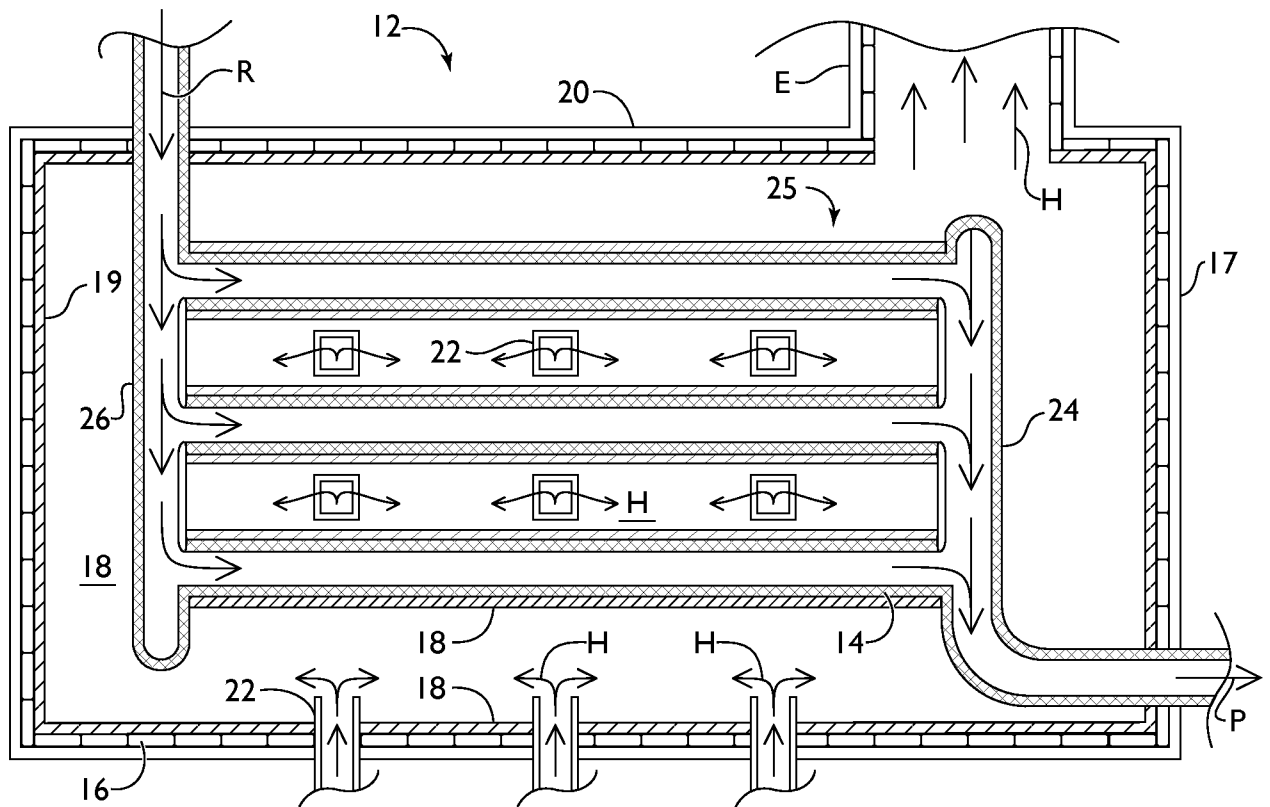


Fig. 1

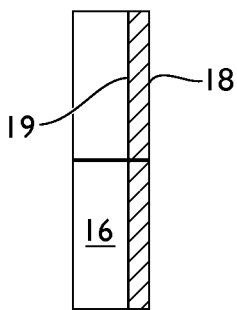


Fig. 2A

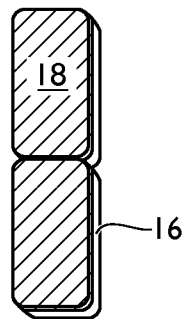


Fig. 2B

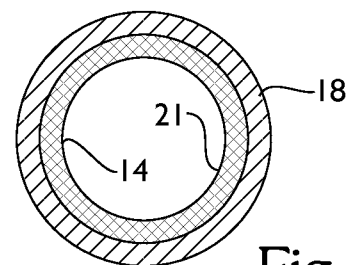


Fig. 3A

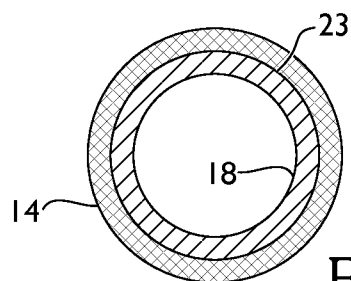


Fig. 3B

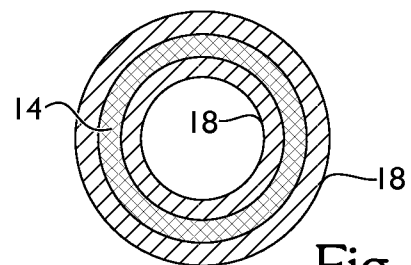
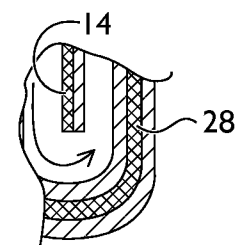
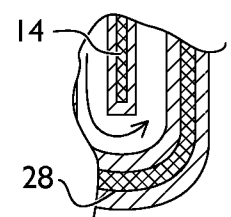
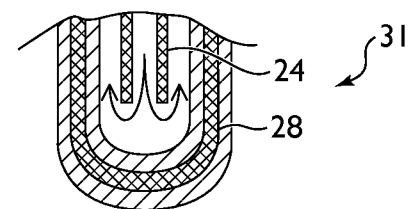
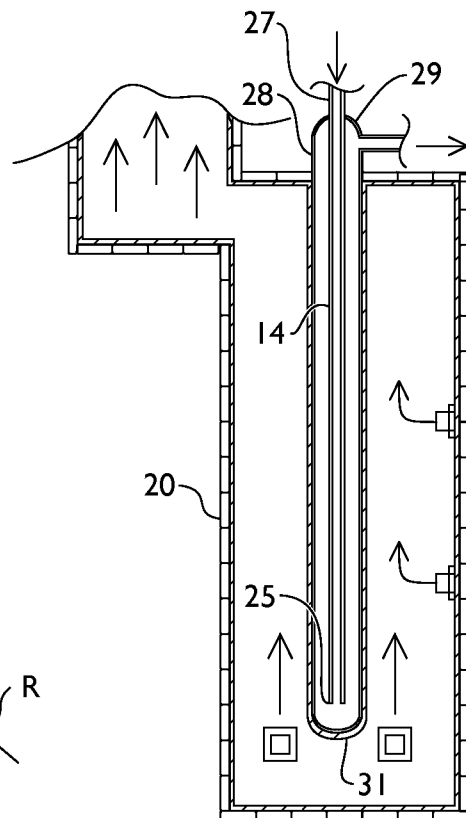
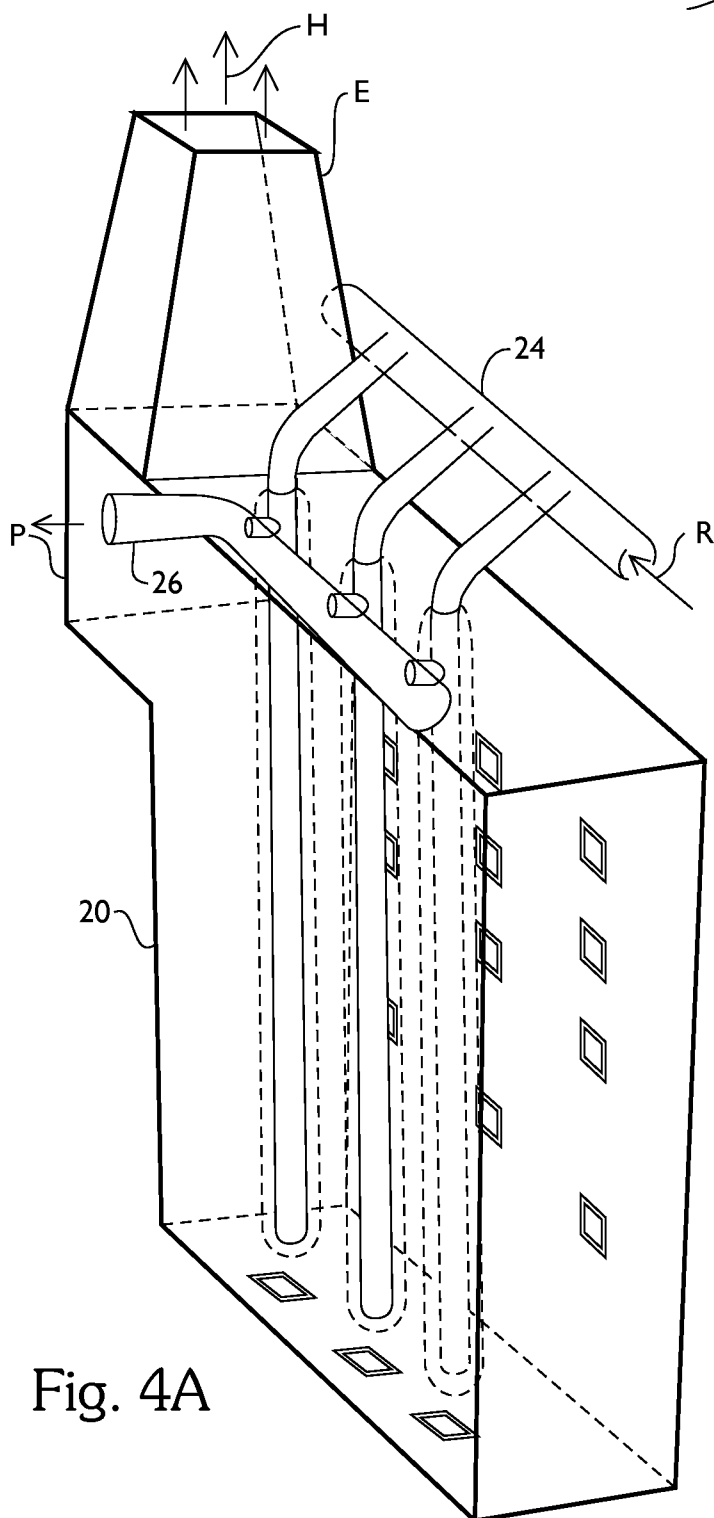


Fig. 3C

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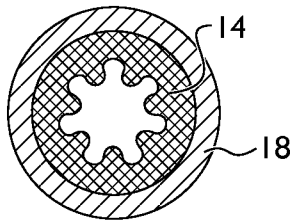


Fig. 6A

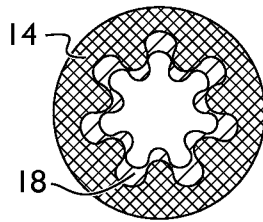


Fig. 6B

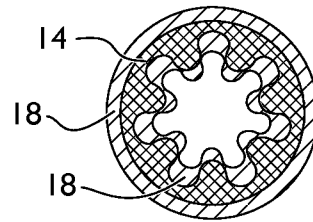


Fig. 6C

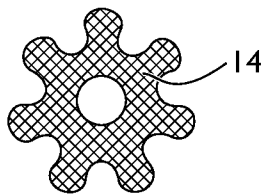


Fig. 7

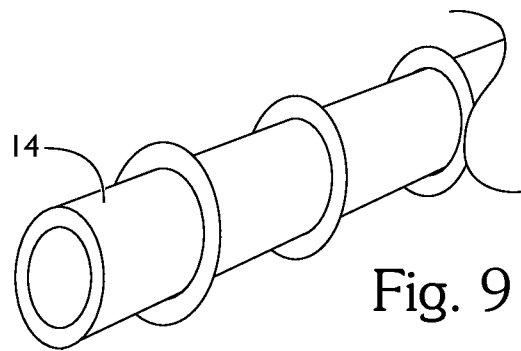


Fig. 9

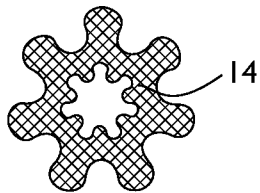


Fig. 8

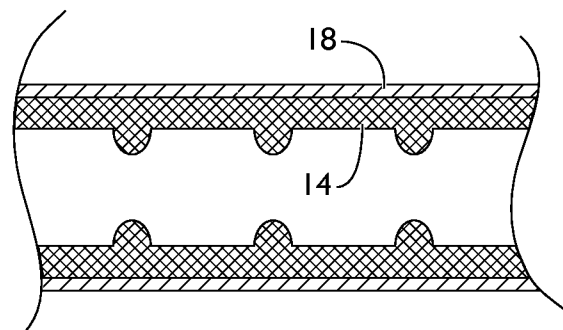


Fig. 10

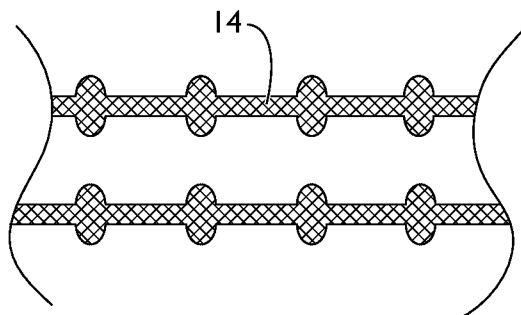


Fig. 11

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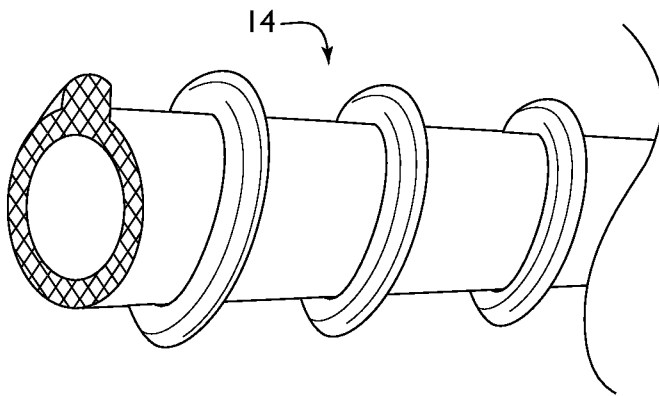


Fig. 12A

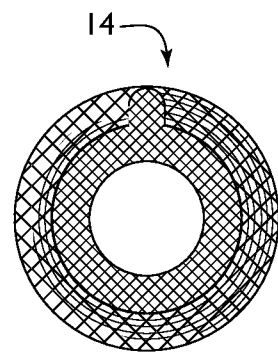


Fig. 12B

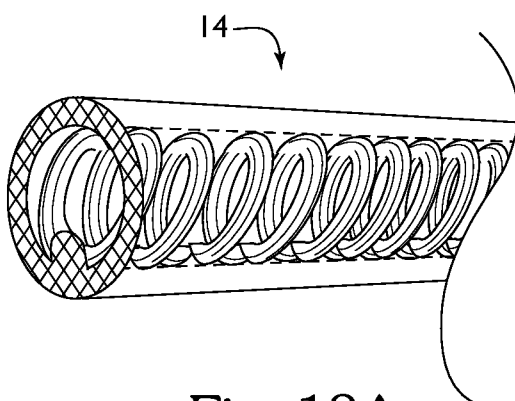


Fig. 13A

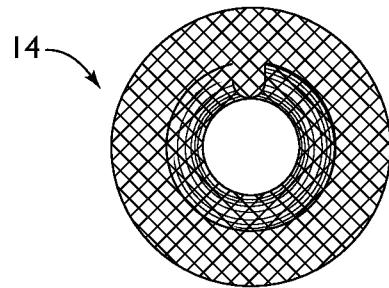


Fig. 13B

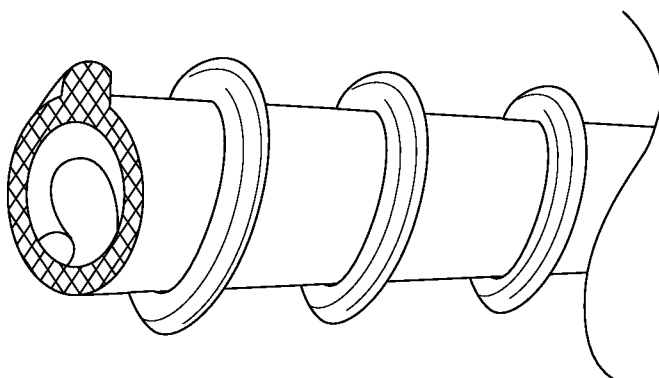


Fig. 14A

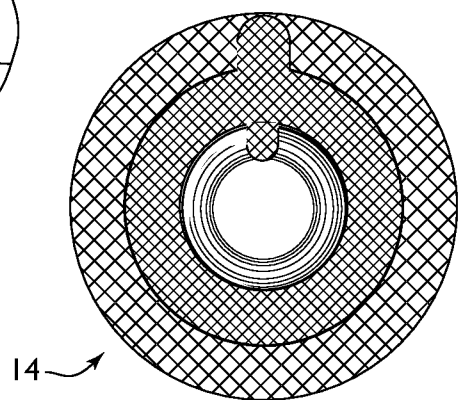


Fig. 14B