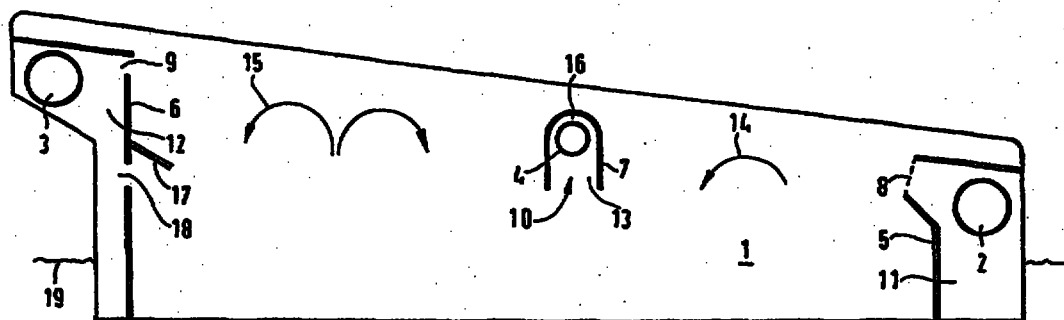




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(54) Title: APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR INERTING A WAVE SOLDERING INSTALLATION**(57) Abstract**

The present invention relates to an apparatus and a method for inerting a wave soldering installation having a solder bath (19) and a conveying system for producing one or more solder waves (14, 15), in particular for soldering electric printed circuit boards, having an immersion box (1) which is closed on all sides, shaped like a frame, can be immersed in the solder bath (19) and which has porous pipes (2, 3, 4) to distribute nitrogen, said pipes being arranged inside the immersion box in cage-like housings (5, 6, 7) with outlet openings (8, 9, 10), the cage-like housings (5, 6, 7) being designed such that the porous pipes (2, 3, 4) are arranged therein in such a way that the porous pipes (2, 3, 4) are essentially not struck by solder splashes produced during the operation of the wave soldering installation. By means of the arrangement and shape of the outlet openings (8, 9, 10), very uniform inerting of the wave soldering installation under all operating states can be achieved, even without an inerting covering hood. The elimination of solder splashes, which can damage the porous pipes (2, 3, 4), permits long service times; the construction of the installation permits simple maintenance.