

WELDING WIRE AND METHOD OF MAKING SAME

The present invention relates to the art of electric arc welding of the type where a welding wire is directed toward a workpiece and an electrical current is passed through the welding wire to the workpiece to create an arc welding process melting the end of the advancing wire and depositing the melted metal onto the workpiece and more particularly to an improved welding wire for use in this arc welding process and the method of making this improved welding wire.

BACKGROUND OF INVENTION

Electric arc welding of the type to which the present invention is directed involves the use of a welding wire normally stored upon a spool or reel, which wire is fed from the supply reel toward a workpiece through a tubular connector so that current can be directed through the connector to the advancing welding wire and through the welding wire to the workpiece. The electric current heats the advancing welding wire by I^2R heating so that the end of the welding wire is melted and deposited onto the workpiece by transfer through the arc or by other electrical and mechanical phenomenon. Thus, the advancing wire conducts the welding current which melts the wire for deposition of the molten metal from the end of the wire onto the workpiece. Through the years there have been substantial improvements in the welding wire, which is normally a solid wire having a predetermined diameter and a surface lubricant so the wire can be advanced at a controlled feed speed for melting and depositing the molten metal onto the workpiece. Shielding gas can be used around the advancing welding wire. A solid wire provides superior arc welding properties; however, it is often necessary to provide the welding wire with flux and alloying metal ingredients to tailor the molten metal deposition to the desired metallurgical demands of the welding process. To



L-1859

accomplish these added features, it has become common practice to form the wire as a steel sheath surrounding a center core formed from fluxing ingredients and/or alloying powder. Thus, there are many cored welding wires. By using a cored wire concept, the flux can be evenly distributed along the length of the advancing welding wire. When producing the metal sheath from a somewhat standard steel, the core can include alloying powder. These metal cored electrodes employ the powdered metal in the core to tailor the deposited metal for a given welding process. There is a substantial advantage in some welding processes to use the flux cored or metal cored wire. Indeed, there are instances when a combination flux and alloy powder are used in the core of the wire. The advantages of these cored wires or electrodes for arc welding wire are somewhat offset by the fact that a solid metal wire normally produces superior arc welding. The metal is at the center of the arc and in a sheath surrounding the arc, as in a flux cored or metal cored wire. Both a solid metal wire and a metal cored wire have a substantially constant resistance per length of wire, which resistance controls the arc welding process especially in constant voltage arc welding procedures. In some arc welding processes, it is desirable to have an increased resistance per length to optimize the welding process, but such a modification affects the amount of metal being deposited. The solid metal wire and the cored metal wire satisfy the demands of the electric arc welding industry; however, they have disadvantages caused by the constraints of their physical characteristics which in some instances does not allow optimum electrical characteristics of the welding process.

THE INVENTION

The present invention is a solid metal welding wire which has distinct quantized segments that facilitate superior droplet transfer. The segments each have essentially the same volume. This



use of a solid welding wire with quantized distinct segments separated by bridging elements has been found to perform well with conventional constant voltage welding sources. The current or heating is controlled by the effective resistance or resistance per length, which resistance is increased by using interconnecting smaller bridging elements between the larger segments. This type of solid wire has the advantage that it is easily made by simply processing existing solid MIG wire in a manner to produce a series of spaced indentations creating a quantized segment between adjacent indentations. Such indentations can be done at the manufacturing facility making the solid wire or in a device adjacent to the wire feeder at the welding station, which is often a robotic welding station. By using quantized spaced segments in a solid welding wire, pulsed arc welding can be coordinated so that the pulse frequency and the wire feed rate provide a quantized segment at the time of each current pulse. This coordination stabilizes the pulsed mode transfer so that a single droplet detachment is achieved with each current pulse to optimize the welding characteristics in ways well known in the welding art. The electrode is heated by current passing through the wire. The resistance of the wire has a direct effect on the heating. Thus, by using smaller areas between the quantized segments, the effective resistance or resistance per length is increased and the current is decreased when a constant voltage is applied to the welding process. This adjustment of resistance controls the heating of the advancing welding wire in a manner determined by the area and length of the bridging elements created by the indentations defining the spaced quantized segments. By using the present invention, the resistance per length of wire is higher than with a solid wire with the same outer diameter. This is an advantage at high deposition rates because the heat input into the workpiece per unit weight of wire can be reduced to extend the stable range of the constant voltage



process. By reducing the cross sectional area of the metal in the bridging element between the quantized segments, the resistance per length can be modified in a tailored fashion. The shape of the indentations creating the bridging elements between the quantized segments of the solid wire electrode can be in the form of circular grooves or other configurations which reduce the area and, thus, increase the resistance of the solid wire between the quantized segments. If the bridging elements are in the form of circular grooves, the solid metal wire can be provided with fluxing, filling or alloying agents, such that the agents are carried by the grooves without affecting the outer diameter of the metal wire. Electrical contact is maintained at the outer portions of the quantized segments. By adjusting the relative length of the quantized segments and the length of the groove forming the connecting elements, the desired amount of fluxing or alloying agents can be provided per length of the advancing solid metal welding wire. Such solid wire has the advantages of standard solid wire with the added advantage of a flux cored or metal cored wire. To protect the fluxing, filling or alloying agents in the space created by the indentations forming the bridging elements, another aspect of the invention includes the use of a metal sheath around the metal electrode. This sheath can be steel or copper to enhance electrical conduction from the electrical contact in the welding equipment to the advancing solid metal welding wire. Thus, moisture contamination and physical damage to the fluxing, filling or alloying agents is inhibited. The sheath or jacket can be mechanically wrapped around the wire having spaced quantized segments by using a standard spiral wrapping technique. The sheath or jacket can be placed around the wire and drawn or rolled with the wire, using techniques similar to those employed in conventional cored wired manufacturing techniques. The sheath or jacket can also be provided by a plating technique or a plasma spray



technique so long as the sheath or jacket around the quantized segments is electrically conductive. Indeed, such a sheath or jacket can be placed around the quantized segments forming the solid metal welding wire without the use of filling agents merely to enhance the electrical characteristics, or appearance, of the advancing metal wire stored on a spool for use in an automatic or semi-automatic electric arc welding process.

In accordance with the present invention, there is provided a welding wire for use in electric arc welding wherein the welding wire has an effective outer diameter and comprises a length of solid metal formed into a series of distinct segments, each having a selected volume and joined together by interconnecting bridging elements with the cross sectional area of the solid metal at these segments being greater than the cross sectional area of the solid metal at the bridging elements. In this manner, the solid metal welding wire has distinct quantized segments. By controlling the contour of the connecting bridging elements, the resistance per length of welding wire can be changed to control the welding process so that a lesser amount of current will be needed to deposit a given amount of molten metal.

In accordance with another aspect of the present invention, the bridging elements are formed by indentations, such as circular grooves, which indentations may be filled with a fluxing agent, alloying metal powder or other constituents to control the metallurgy and fluxing characteristics of the metal wire while maintaining the advantage of a solid metal arc welding wire.

In accordance with another aspect of the present invention, the quantized distinct metal segments have a maximum cross sectional area essentially defining the effective outer diameter of the solid metal welding wire while the bridging elements of the wire have a maximum cross



sectional area that is substantially less than the maximum cross sectional area of the quantized segments.

5 In accordance with still a further aspect of the present invention, there is provided a method of producing a solid welding wire for electric arc welding, which method comprises the steps of conveying a solid metal welding wire along a given path and forming a series of indentations in the wire at equally spaced locations to define a series of distinct metal segments each having a selected volume. These quantized metal segments are joined together by bridging elements determined by the shape of the separating indentations. In practice, the indentations are circular grooves between the quantized metal segments of the solid welding wire.

10 In accordance with still a further aspect of the invention, this method includes the step of depositing granular flux into the indentations or depositing powder alloying metal into the indentations. In this manner, the indentations can control the even distribution of alloying agents and/or fluxing agents along the length of the solid welding wire, without requiring the use of a cored wire concept. The method also contemplates the further implementation of an aspect of the
15 invention wherein a metal sheath of steel or other conductive material is placed around the solid metal welding wire.

20 By using the invention, the series of distinct quantized metal segments that are joined together by interconnecting bridging elements can have effective resistance of the solid metal welding wire accurately controlled by adjusting the relationship of the segments and bridging elements.

In accordance with another aspect of the present invention there is provided a method of



controlling the resistance per length of a solid metal welding wire used for electric arc welding including the steps of providing a solid metal welding wire, forming a series of indentations in the wire at spaced locations whereby the resistance per length at the indentations is greater than the resistance per length of the wire between the indentations and controlling the size of the indentations to control the overall resistance per length of the wire. This method is further modified by including the step of controlling the spaces between the indentations to provide quantized segments of generally equal volume of metal.

The primary object of the present invention is the provision of a solid metal welding wire, which wire has a series of distinct, quantized segments joined together by bridging elements.

Another object of the present invention is the provision of a solid metal wire, as defined above, which solid metal wire can be produced from a standard MIG wire at the manufacturing facility or adjacent the wire feeding device in the welding area.

Yet another object of the present invention is the provision of a solid metal welding wire, as defined above, which wire has improved arc stability and controlled heat input. The wire can greatly facilitate pulse arc welding in a constant voltage welding process.

Still a further object of the present invention is the provision of a solid metal welding wire, as defined above, which wire can be produced to have a controlled resistance per length greater than the resistance per length of a metal wire of the same diameter.

A further object of the present invention is the provision of a solid metal welding wire, as defined above, which wire can be produced to control the resistance of the wire stick out per unit volume of wire directed to the workpiece.



Another object of the present invention is the provision of a solid metal welding wire, which wire has a greater resistance per length than a solid wire of the same diameter. This object is an advantage at very high deposition rates due to a reduced heat input to the workpiece per unit length of wire, thus extending the stable range of a constant voltage process.

5 Still a further object of the present invention is the provision of a solid metal welding wire, as defined above, which welding wire can have controlled resistance per unit length or controlled resistance of the stick out merely by utilizing a series of indentations defining the distinct quantized segments of the wire.

10 Another object of the present invention is the provision of a solid metal welding wire, as defined above, which welding wire can be coordinated with a pulse welding process so that a quantized segment of the wire is provided to the arc of the welding process simultaneously with each current pulse.

15 A further object of the present invention is the provision of a solid metal welding wire, as defined above, which welding wire can be provided with fluxing, filling and/or alloying agents that can be carried with the wire while maintaining the solid metal characteristics of the welding wire. In addition, the wire of the present invention can be provided with an outer metal sheath to hold the fluxing, filling or alloying agents and/or to increase the conductivity to the advancing metal welding wire during the welding process.

20 Another primary object of the present invention is the provision of a method of producing a welding wire for electric arc welding, which method forms a series of indentations in the wire to quantize segments of the wire so the wire can accept fluxing, filling and/or alloying agents and can



have controlled resistance per length of wire.

Another object of the present invention is the provision of a method as defined above, which method can use a standard MIG welding wire and can be performed at a relatively low cost.

These and other objects and advantages will become apparent from the following description
5 taken together with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

FIGURE 1 is a side elevational view showing a solid metal welding wire constructed in
accordance with the present invention;

10 FIGURE 2 is a cross sectional area taken generally along line 2-2 of FIGURE 1;

FIGURE 3 is an enlarged partial cross-sectional view illustrating one quantized segment of
the wire shown in FIGURES 1 and 2 with the indentations forming the bridging elements filled with
a fluxing agent;

15 FIGURE 4 is a view similar to FIGURE 3 with an outer metal sheath over the metal welding
wire;

FIGURE 4A is a figure similar to FIGURE 4 with the indentations filled with powdered
alloying metal;

FIGURE 4B is a view similar to FIGURE 4 with the indentations filled with a fluxing agent;

20 FIGURE 5 is a side elevational view schematically illustrating a procedure for forming the
spaced quantized segments in the solid metal welding wire by using two rotating forming wheels;

FIGURE 5A is an enlarged cross sectional view taken generally along line 5A-5A of



FIGURE 5 at an indentation forming the bridging element;

FIGURE 5B is an enlarged cross sectional area taken generally along line 5A-5A at a quantized segment of the wire;

FIGURE 5C is an enlarged, partial cross sectional area of the forming wheels used in forming
5 the indentations to define spaced quantized segments in the metal welding wire;

FIGURE 5D is a side elevational view in partial cross section showing the wire produced by rotating forming wheels, as shown in FIGURE 5; and,

FIGURE 6 is a composite view showing the coordination between current pulses in a pulse arc welding process and the mechanical aspects of the welding process explaining the relationship
10 between the pulses and the quantized segments of a welding wire constructed in accordance with the present invention.

PREFERRED EMBODIMENT OF THE INVENTION

Referring now to the drawings, wherein the showings are for the purpose of illustrating a preferred embodiment of the present invention and not for the purpose of limiting same, FIGURES
15 1 and 2 show a welding wire W constructed in accordance with the present invention. This wire has a series of distinct, quantized segments Q separated by connecting or bridging elements B. These bridging elements are formed by a series of axially spaced indentations 10 inward of cylindrical surface 12 for welding wire W. Quantized segments Q can take a variety of shapes from cylindrical to spherical and connecting elements B can have a variety of shapes determined by indentations 10
20 or other groove like modifications extending inwardly of surface 12. In accordance with the invention, quantized segments Q have a maximum diameter which corresponds to diameter a of wire



L-1859

W. The maximum diameter of the segments determines the cylindrical surface 12 of wire W. Connecting elements B have a diameter b . As illustrated in FIGURE 2, a cross sectional area A_1 of segments Q is substantially greater than the cross sectional area A_2 of elements B. Thus, the resistance per length of wire W is increased by the indentations 10 forming bridging elements B.

5 The relationship between the length c of segment Q and length d of bridging element B determines the change, or modification, in the resistance per length of wire W over the resistance per length of a standard wire having the diameter a . Thus, indentations 10 have two overall functions. The indentations separate wire W into a series of quantized segments Q each having essentially the same volume of metal. These indentations also increase the resistance through wire W so that the effective
10 resistance per length of wire W is controlled by the contour, size and configuration of indentations 10. Thus, indentations 10 are used to control the effective resistance of wire W, whereas the quantized segments Q provide controlled droplet transfer of molten metal from wire W during the arc welding process. As can be seen, a variety of dimensions can be provided for segments Q and indentations 10 to accurately control the resistance and welding characteristics of solid wire W.
15 However, wire W still functions as a solid welding wire. The quantizing of segments on the solid welding wire and the control of resistance through the wire is unique and forms the advantages of the invention, as previously discussed.

In the preferred embodiment shown in FIGURES 1 and 2, indentations 10 are in the form of generally circular grooves having a diameter b and a length d . By using this, or any similar
20 construction of the indentations, it is possible to load the solid welding wire W with fluxing agents, filling agents, and/or alloying agents. As shown in FIGURE 3, grooves or indentations 10 are filled



L-1859

with a fluxing agent 20 which is normally granular in nature and formed into a paste. The paste is easily deposited in grooves 10 and remains in indentations or grooves 10. Thus, the amount of flux directed to the arc in the welding process is controlled by the size and axial spacing of grooves or indentations 10. The wire still has the characteristics of a solid metal wire, which characteristic produces arc stability, while still having the ability of carrying a flux of controlled quantities to the arc during the welding process. In the past, use of flux involved a flux cored welding wire, which wire did not have the beneficial characteristics of a solid wire. There are stick electrodes which have flux agents coated on the outside of the electrodes. Such outside coating could not be used for welding wire of the type to which the present invention is directed. In some instances it may be advisable to cover indentations 10 with an appropriate metal sheath 30, as illustrated in FIGURE 4. This sheath can be a steel sheath as used in flux cored wire. In addition, it could be a copper sheath to enhance the electrical contact with wire W in the welding equipment. By using sheath 30, indentations or grooves 10 are closer so that they can retain alloying powder 32, as shown in FIGURE 4A, or granular fluxing agents 34 as shown in FIGURE 4B. The disclosure of FIGURES 3, 4, 4A and 4B show that a variety of structures can be used for either closing indentations 10 and/or loading indentations 10 with several additional constituents, without compromising the solid wire characteristics of wire W or the resistance controlling characteristics obtainable by use of spaced indentations 10. As shown in FIGURE 3, electrical contact is maintained with surface 12 and the ratio of diameter a to diameter b and length c to length d can be adjusted to control the ratio of the quantity of materials 20, 32 and 34 with respect to the volume of wire W. Jacket or sheath 30 prevents moisture and other contaminations from entering indentation 10 and maintains agents 32



and 34 in place. In practice, when sheath 30 is employed, it is wrapped around the quantized wire as a metal foil jacket utilizing a spiral wrapping technique.

Indentations 10 can have a variety of shapes and can be provided by a variety of procedures. Indeed, indentations can merely be formed by joining together quantized elements Q into a continuous wire W. Thus, "indentations" indicate the existence of a reduced volume inward of diameter 12, but not necessarily the procedure for accomplishing that decreased size of the volume and the increased resistance in elements B. One procedure for accomplishing the indentations 10 is schematically illustrated in FIGURES 5, 5A, 5B, 5C and 5D wherein forming wheels 50, 52 are located adjacent the outlet of wire extruder 60 that produces a standard MIG wire C. Wheels 50, 52 have a series of circumferentially spaced cogs or blades 70, 72 coming together at joint 74, as shown in FIGURE 5A to upset wire C at axially spaced locations to create grooves or indentations 10. Relief areas 80, 82 are provided on wheels 50, 52, respectively for accommodating spaced, quantized segments Q to produce a wire W, as shown in FIGURE 5B. As shown in FIGURE 5D the outer surface 12 of the wire may have a certain unevenness created by upsetting the metal forming wire C to create the spaced, quantized segments Q. This upsetting action is minor and still produces a generally cylindrical outer surface, which surface can be used for directing electrical current into wire W' during the welding process. Forming wheels 50, 52 could be located adjacent the welding operation in front of the wire feeder for driving welding wire W to the welding area. In this manner, an operator could customize the size of segments Q and the configuration of indentations 10 with respect to the actual welding process to be performed. A different set of wheels 50, 52 could be provided for various welding operations. A standard MIG wire C could be provided to the welding



L-1859

locations and the quantized segments Q would be formed on the wire at that site. This is an advantage of the present invention and allows customized production of a solid welding wire having quantized segments Q separated by bridging elements B. Other arrangements could be provided for creating the indentations 10, such as laser cutters, end mills, saws, etc.

5 One advantage of a solid welding wire constructed in accordance with the present invention is that it can be coordinated with a pulse welding process, as schematically illustrated in FIGURE 6 wherein a series of current pulses 100 from a constant voltage power supply have a time spacing t_1 to t_2 . The pulse frequency of the pulses 100 is a known value, such as X pulses per minute. The lower portion of FIGURE 6 illustrates schematically the welding process, wherein wire W is passed
10 through a contact sleeve 110 toward a workpiece 112 so that wire W is melted at arc D by pulses from a power supply connected to negative lead 120 and positive lead 122. As pulses 100 are directed through arc D, wire W is moved at a wire feed speed providing a quantized segment Q at the same time as a current pulse 100. The wire feed speed is coordinated with the frequency of the current pulses so that a quantized amount of metal is provided for each pulse to melt during the pulse
15 welding procedure. This ability to coordinate specific quantities of metal for each current pulse is an advantage of the present invention. There are other advantages as previously discussed whereby the novel concept of quantized segments joined together to form a solid metal welding wire can produce controlled resistance and superior droplet transfer.





CLAIMS

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1. A welding wire for use in electric arc welding, said wire having an effective outer diameter and comprising a length of solid metal formed into a series of distinct segments each having a selected volume and joined together by interconnecting bridging elements, with the cross sectional area of said solid metal at said segments being greater than the cross sectional area of said solid metal at said bridging elements.

2. A welding wire as defined in claim 1, wherein said segments are generally cylindrical with an outer diameter corresponding to said effective outer diameter of said wire.

3. A welding wire as defined in claims 1 or 2, wherein said connecting bridging elements have a diameter less than said effective diameter to define circular grooves between said segments.

4. A welding wire as defined in claims 1 to 3, wherein said grooves contain granular flux.

5. A welding wire as defined in claims 1 to 4, wherein said grooves contain alloying metal powder.

6. A welding wire as defined in claims 1 to 5, including an outer metal sheath encircling said length of solid metal.

7. A welding wire as defined in claims 1 to 6, wherein said connecting bridging elements are generally cylindrical with a diameter less than said effective diameter to define circular grooves between said segments.

8. A welding wire for use in electric arc welding, said wire formed from a solid metal





5 with an effective outer diameter and comprising a series of distinct segments joined by interconnecting bridging elements, said segments having a given volume and a maximum cross sectional area generally determined by said effective outer diameter and said bridging elements having a maximum cross sectional area where said maximum cross sectional area of said segments is substantially greater than said maximum cross sectional area of said bridging elements.

9. A welding wire as defined in claim 8, wherein said segments are generally cylindrical with an outer diameter corresponding to said effective outer diameter of said wire.

10. A welding wire as defined in claims 8 or 9, wherein said connecting bridging elements have a diameter less than said effective diameter to define circular grooves between said segments.

11. A welding wire as defined in claims 8 to 10, wherein said connecting bridging elements are generally cylindrical with a diameter less than said effective diameter to define circular grooves between said segments.

12. A welding wire as defined in claims 8 to 11, wherein said interconnecting bridging elements are formed by a series of indentations in said solid metal between said segments.

13. A method of producing a welding wire for electric arc welding, said method comprising the steps of:

- 5 (a) conveying a solid metal welding wire along a given path; and,
(b) forming a series of indentations in said wire at equally spaced locations to define a series of distinct metal segments each having a selected volume.

14. A method as defined in claim 13, wherein said indentations are circular grooves between said equal volume metal segments.





15. A method as defined in claims 13 or 14, including the further step of depositing granular flux into said indentations.

16. A method as defined in claims 13 to 15, including the further step of depositing powder alloying metal into said indentations.

17. A method as defined in claims 13 to 16, including the step of placing a metal sheath around said wire.

18. A welding wire for use in electric arc welding, said wire having an effective outer diameter and comprising a length of solid metal formed into a series of distinct segments joined together by interconnecting bridging elements with resistance per length at said segments being substantially less than the resistance per length at said elements.

19. A welding wire as defined in claim 18, wherein said segments are generally cylindrical with an outer diameter corresponding to said effective outer diameter of said wire.

20. A welding wire as defined in claims 18 or 19, wherein said connecting bridging elements are generally cylindrical with a diameter less than said effective diameter to define circular grooves between said segments.

21. A welding wire as defined in claims 18 to 20, wherein said grooves contain granular flux.

22. A welding wire as defined in claims 18 to 21, wherein said grooves contain alloying metal powder.

23. A welding wire as defined in claims 18 to 22, including an outer metal sheath encircling said length of solid metal.





24. A welding wire as defined in claims 18 to 23, wherein said interconnecting bridging elements are formed by a series of indentations in said solid metal between said segments.

25. A welding wire as defined in claims 18 to 24, wherein said segments each have a given volume.

26. A method of arc welding a workpiece with a wire having a series of distinct segments of generally equal volume joined together by interconnecting bridging elements generally smaller than said segments, wherein said segments are spaced along said wire a selected distance, said weld comprising the steps of:

5 (a) moving said wire toward said workpiece at a controlled feed speed delivering a given number of segments per minute;

(b) applying a pulsed welding current between said wire and said workpiece with a pulse rate of a given number of pulses per minute; and,

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(c) controlling said pulse rate and said feed speed so said given number of segments generally equals said given number of pulses.

27. A method of arc welding as defined in claim 26, wherein said pulsed welding current is provided by a constant voltage during each of said pulses.

28. A method of controlling the resistance per length of a solid metal welding wire used for electric arc welding including the steps of:

(a) providing a solid metal welding wire;

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(b) forming a series of indentations in said wire at spaced locations whereby the resistance per length of said wire at said indentations is greater than the resistance per length of said wire between said indentations; and,

(c) controlling the size of said indentations to control the resistance per length of said wire.





29. A method as defined in claim 28, including the further step of selecting said spaces between the indentations to provide quantized segments of generally equal volume between said indentations.

30. A method as defined in claims 28 or 29, wherein said indentations are formed by deforming said wire.

31. A method of producing a welding wire for electric arc welding, said method comprising the steps of:

- (a) conveying a solid metal welding wire along a given path; and,
- (b) forming a series of indentations in said wire at generally equally spaced locations to define a series of distinct metal segments each having a selected volume, said indentations positioned at least partially about the peripheral surface of the wire.

32. A method as defined in claim 31, wherein said metal segments having a generally equal volume.

33. A method as defined in claims 31 or 32, wherein said indentations having a generally rectangular cross-section shape.

34. A method as defined in claims 31 to 33, including the further step of depositing granular flux into said indentations.

35. A method as defined in claims 31 to 34, including the further step of depositing powder alloying metal into said indentations.

36. A method as defined in claims 31 to 35, including the step of placing a metal sheath around said wire.





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37. A welding wire for use in electric arc welding, said wire having an effective outer diameter and comprising a length of solid metal having a first major dimension reshaped into a series of distinct segments, each of said segments having a selected volume and a second major dimension and joined together by interconnecting bridging elements with the cross-sectional area of said solid metal at said segments being greater than the cross sectional area of said solid metal at said bridging elements, said first major dimension being greater than said second major dimension.

38. A welding wire as defined in claim 37, wherein said non-indentation section being generally cylindrical with an outer diameter corresponding to said effective outer diameter of said wire.

39. A welding wire as defined in claims 37 or 38, wherein said segments are at least partially spherical with a maximum outer diameter corresponding to said effective outer diameter of said wire.

40. A welding wire as defined in claims 37 to 39, wherein said connecting bridging elements have a diameter less than said effective outer diameter to define circular indentations between said segments.

41. A welding wire as defined in claims 37 to 40, wherein said indentation section having a generally rectangular cross-sectional shape.

42. A welding wire as defined in claims 37 to 41, wherein said indentation section having a diameter less than said diameter of said non-indentations section.

43. A welding wire as defined in claims 37 to 42, wherein each of said segments having substantially the same volume of solid metal.

44. A welding wire as defined in claims 37 to 43, wherein at least one of said indentation





containing a granular flux.

45. A welding wire as defined in claims 37 to 44, wherein at least one of said indentation containing an alloying metal powder.

46. A welding wire as defined in claims 37 to 45, including an outer metal sheath encircling said length of said solid metal.

47. A welding wire as defined in claims 37 to 46, wherein said connecting bridging elements are generally cylindrical with a diameter less than said effective outer diameter to define circular indentations between said segments.

48. A welding wire as defined in claim 37 to 47, where said welding wire formed from a single solid metal material.

49. A method of producing a welding wire for electric arc welding, said method comprising the steps of:

(a) conveying a solid metal welding wire along a given path, said solid wire having a first major dimension; and,

(b) reshaping the solid wire into a reformed wire having a second major dimension and series of indentations in said reformed wire at generally equally spaced locations to define a series of distinct metal segments each having a selected volume, said first major dimension being greater than said second major dimension.

50. A method as defined in claim 49, wherein said indentations are generally circular grooves between said equal volume metal segments.

51. A method as defined in claims 49 or 50, including the further step of depositing granular flux into said indentations.





52. A method as defined in claims 49 to 51, including the further step of depositing powder alloying metal into said indentations.

53. A method as defined in claims 49 to 52, including the step of placing a metal sheath around said wire.

54. A method as defined in claims 49 to 53, wherein said metal segments having a generally equal volume.

55. A method as defined in claims 49 to 54, wherein said indentations having a generally rectangular cross-section shape.

56. A method as defined in claims 49 to 55, wherein said welding wore formed from a single solid metal material.

