APPENDIX C – TEST METHODS/PROCEDURES AND EQUIPMENT DESCRIPTION

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Principles of LFET

Low Frequency Electromagnetic Technique (LFET) was developed out of further research of Remote Field Electromagnetic Technique (RFET). The main difference of LFET is the placement of the sensors between the two poles of an electromagnetic driver.

With a low frequency AC driver signal of 3 to 40 Hz for carbon steel (see Figure 1), the driver signal fully penetrates the material being tested. When the scanner passes over an area with no defects, the magnetic fields are not distorted.

When the test material has a defect and the sensors are located above that defect, distortions in the magnetic field indicate presence of the flaw. LFET instruments measure this distortion as changes in phase and amplitude. Depth of the flaw is proportional to these phase and amplitude changes. Diameter of the defect is related to the number of sensors affected.

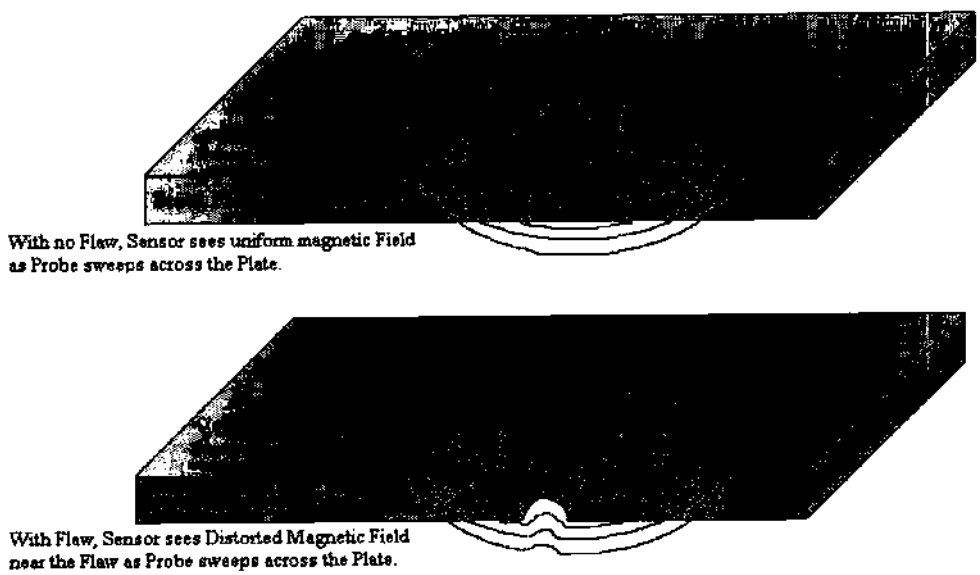

Figure 1.
Principles of Low Frequency Electromagnetic Technique (LFET)

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Tank Floor Scanning Theory/Background

FALCON 2000 SYSTEM

The TesTex Tank Floor Inspection System consists of a sixteenth inch modular swath containing 32 probe heads. This configuration allows for a 100% coverage of the tank plate. The probe emits a very low frequency electromagnetic field which penetrates the tank floor. Any variation in the tank floor thickness will cause the electromagnetic field to change. These changes are very small, which makes it necessary to use digital signal processing to enhance the resulting signal. The resulting processed signal is in the form of phase and amplitude readings. Calibration tables are used to convert these signals into percentage wall loss values.

PROCEDURES

Each tank floor is mapped out by measuring the length, width, and orientation of the individual plates. The wall loss information for each plate is stored on a floppy disk.

SOFTWARE

The data acquisition module collects the plate data at a given sample rate. The menu-driven program provides for real-time display of phase, amplitude, and probe position across the plate. The x-y geometry of the plate, probe speed, and other details are also handled by the data acquisition module.

The data analysis and display module contain the calibration curves for wall thinning, volume losses, and pitting. His module correlates calibration standards information with the plant data for flaw sizing and evaluation. Several routines for digital the filtering, averaging techniques, background evaluation, curve fitting, and other useful signal processing techniques are also available. Up to 16 waveforms can be displayed simultaneously in the screen while "zooming" algorithms are used to easily examine small segments of the waveforms.

Plate Scanning Theory/Background

To test vertically/horizontally-oriented plates, the ***TS 2000*** scanner is placed on an unobstructed area on the topside of one of the plates. The equipment is then zeroed using the ***TS 2000 PLATE SCAN*** software's auto-set function. This action also selects the right time constant, sets the gains of the internal amplifiers, and ensures that the data is displayed on the screen as it is being collected.

After zeroing, the scanner is moved to the beginning of the scan sweep area. The scanner is then gradually moved across the surface of the tube and data is collected via magnetic medium on the PC. The processing of the data occurs real-time and the data is stored as several waveforms and stored as several signal responses. Among these are phase and amplitude for each individual channel.

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SYSTEM DESCRIPTION

ELECTRONICS: The digital system consists of function generators, power amplifiers, difference amplifiers, phase rotators, auto-zero phase shifters, A-to-D converters, digital controllers, etc. One of the key design objectives was to achieve as low a noise as possible. We detect phase changes to an accuracy of 1/10 of a degree and amplitude signals of a fraction of a microvolt. The ***TS 2000*** contains all the electronics and software for data acquisition. It contains an internal A-to-D converter, which connects to the PC through a serial port.

SOFTWARE: Consists of two modules

The data acquisition module collects the tube data at a given sample rate. The menu driven, user-oriented program provides for real-time display of phase, amplitude, and probe position in the tube. The row and column of the tube, probe speed, and other bookkeeping details are also handled by the data acquisition module.

The data analysis and display module contains the calibration curves for plate thinning, volume losses, pits, vibration/fret wear, and correlates the calibration standard information with the actual plant data for flaw sizing and evaluation. It has routines for digital filtering, averaging techniques, background evaluation, curve fitting, and other useful signal processing techniques. Up to three waveforms can be displayed simultaneously on the screen and the "zooming" algorithm enables the user to easily examine small segments of the waveform.

DETECTION ACCURACY

The ***TesTex, Inc.*** developed lock-in amplifier is capable of measuring very low level signals in the microvolt range and can measure small phase angle changes of a fraction of a degree, even in the presence of a considerable amount of noise. This system, when used in conjunction with the calibration standards: partial and through-wall pitting, gradual wall thinning. Hydrogen damage, etc. and their respective calibration curves, allows us to measure small gradual wall losses on the order of 10%, pits of diameter 0.062" (1.57mm), and vibration/fret wear of five volume percent.

Weld Scanning Theory/Background

TesTex, Inc. has developed a special electromagnetic probe based on the principle of achieving a "balanced field" for the probe. This probe is also very sensitive to small changes in electromagnetic field and the noise is significantly reduced by appropriate phase rotation of the horizontal and vertical component of the signal. A single element probe of this type was used to detect "surface and subsurface cracking" This probe was called Hawkeye and it is successfully used for testing cracks, welds, pipes, plates, etc.

The system works by PHASE ROTATING liftoff noise into the ACOS signal while leaving the CRACK signal in the ASIN waveform. Processing is used to reduce gradual changes in the waveform to make detection easier.

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Ultrasonic Shear Wave (Angle Beam) Testing Description

The instrument used for Shear Wave or Angle Beam Testing is a simple pulse-echo flaw detector with A-Scan, receiving, and transmitting capabilities in which the user can size the length, depth, and distance of the flaw.

The primary reason for using shear waves is for the detection of discontinuities with geometries and orientations non-parallel to the testing surface. The Angle Beam technique is extensively used for weld testing at ½ step and full step distances. The frequency range specifically for weld testing with angle beam transducers is 1MHz to 5MHz. The most common Angle Beam contact transducers are designed to produce shear waves of 45, 60, and 70° in steel.