

# 6-12-00  
P.R.  
PRE. Arnold

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on March 31, 2000

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Paul E. Rauch, Ph.D.

Name of applicant, assignee or  
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Signature

March 31, 2000

Date of Signature

Our Case No. 10200/12

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of:

Nulty et al.

Filing Date: Filed herewith

For METHOD FOR ELIMINATING  
LATERAL SPACER EROSION ON  
ENCLOSED CONTACT  
TOPOGRAPHIES DURING RF  
SPUTTER CLEANING

)  
)  
) Examiner  
)  
) Group Art Unit No.  
)  
)  
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PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Assistant Commissioner for Patents  
Washington, D.C. 20231

Dear Sir:

Prior to examination on the merits, please amend the above-identified application as follows:

00760000000000000000

**IN THE TITLE**

Please replace the title with the following: --STRUCTURE HAVING REDUCED LATERAL SPACER EROSION--.

**IN THE CLAIMS**

Please amend the claims as follows:

Please cancel Claims 1-24, without prejudice to their further prosecution in a Divisional and/or Continuation application.

Claims 25-26, line 2 of each, please change "is" to --comprises--.

Please add the following new claims:

*AI*  
*Sub C2*  
*cancel*  
*sub C2*

27. A structure, comprising:
- (a) a conductive layer disposed over a substrate;
  - (b) a first insulating layer on the conductive layer;
  - (c) a contact region in said first insulating layer;
  - (d) at least one insulating spacer in the contact region adjacent to the first insulating layer; and
  - (e) an etch stop material over said first insulating layer and adjacent to the insulating spacer, the etch stop material being distinct from the insulating spacer.
28. The structure of Claim 27, wherein the insulating spacer has a substantially rectangular profile in the contact region.
29. The structure of Claim 27, wherein the insulating spacer has a surface portion in the contact region without overlying etch stop material.
30. The structure of Claim 29, wherein the insulating spacer surface portion without overlying etch stop material comprises an insulating spacer surface portion most distant from said substrate.
31. The structure of Claim 28, wherein the insulating spacer has a surface portion in the contact region without overlying etch stop material.

*Copy  
#1*

*sub D2*

32. The structure of Claim 27, further comprising a second insulating layer on the etch stop layer and over the conductive layer.

33. The structure of Claim 32, further comprising a second conductive material in the contact region.

*sub E20*

34. A structure, comprising the steps of:  
(a) a first electrically conductive material formed in and/or on a surface of a substrate;  
(b) a contact opening in a region adjacent to a second electrically conductive material formed on the substrate;  
(c) an electrically insulative spacer in the contact opening adjacent to the second electrically conductive material;  
(d) an etch stop layer over the electrically insulative spacer and the first and second electrically conductive regions;  
(e) a blanket layer over the etch stop layer; and  
(f) an opening through a first part of the etch stop layer to the first electrically conductive region.

*sub E21*

35. The structure of Claim 34, wherein the electrically insulative spacer has a substantially rectangular cross-sectional shape in a plane that is substantially perpendicular to the substrate surface.

*sub D2*

36. The structure of Claim 34, wherein the electrically insulating spacer has a surface portion without overlying etch stop material.

37. The structure of Claim 36, wherein the electrically insulating spacer surface portion without overlying etch stop material comprises a surface portion most distant from said substrate.

38. The structure of Claim 34, further comprising a second insulating layer on the etch stop layer and over the conductive layer.

