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(54) **TRENCH GATE TYPE SEMICONDUCTOR DEVICE AND FABRICATING METHOD OF THE SAME**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A trench gate type semiconductor device includes a first semiconductor layer having first and second main surfaces, a second semiconductor layer of a first conductivity type as formed on the first main surface of the first semiconductor layer, a third semiconductor layer of a second conductivity type as formed on the second semiconductor layer, a fourth semiconductor layer of the first conductivity type as formed at a surface of the third semiconductor layer, a gate electrode having a polycrystalline silicon layer being buried in a trench formed to a depth reaching the second semiconductor layer from a surface of the fourth semiconductor layer with a gate insulating film interposed therebetween and having an upper end portion protruding upwardly from a trench upper end opening while having its width greater than a width of the trench and a metal silicide film formed at an upper surface and side surfaces of the upper end portion of the polycrystalline silicon layer, a first main electrode in contact with both the fourth third semiconductor layer, and a second main electrode formed at the second main surface of the first semiconductor layer.

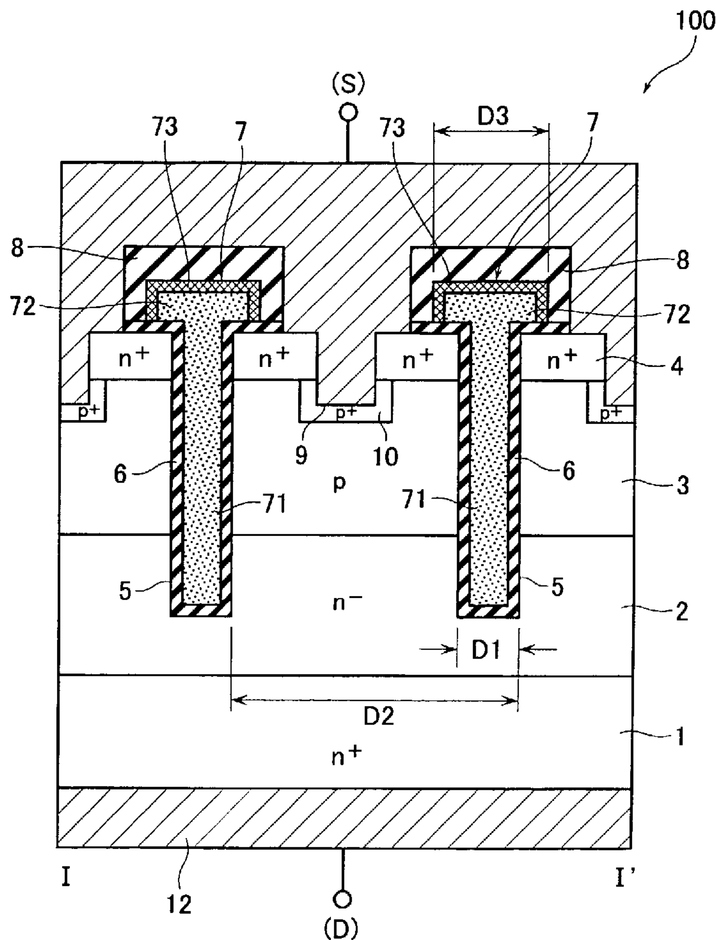


FIG. 1A

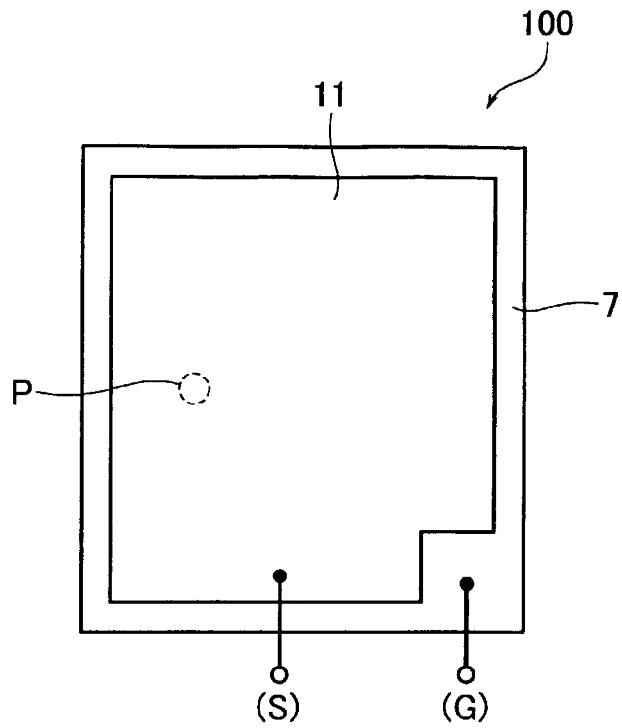


FIG. 1B

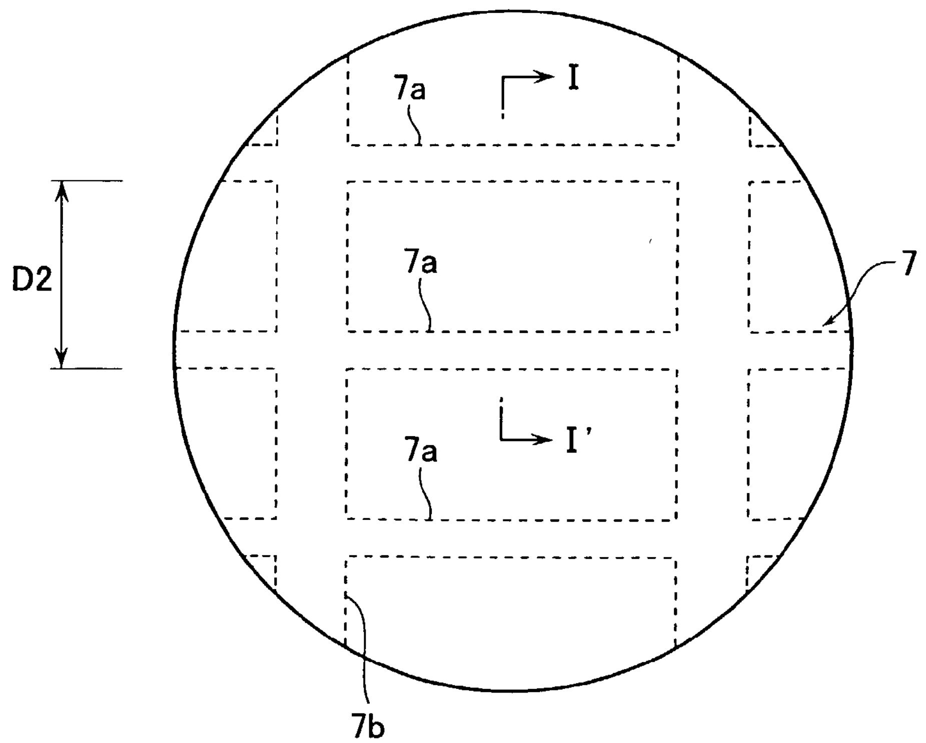


FIG. 2

FIG. 3

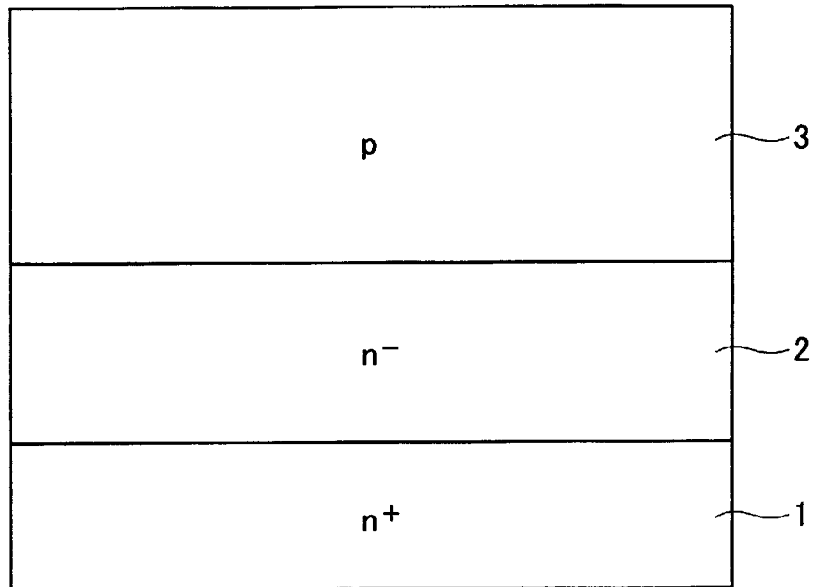


FIG. 4

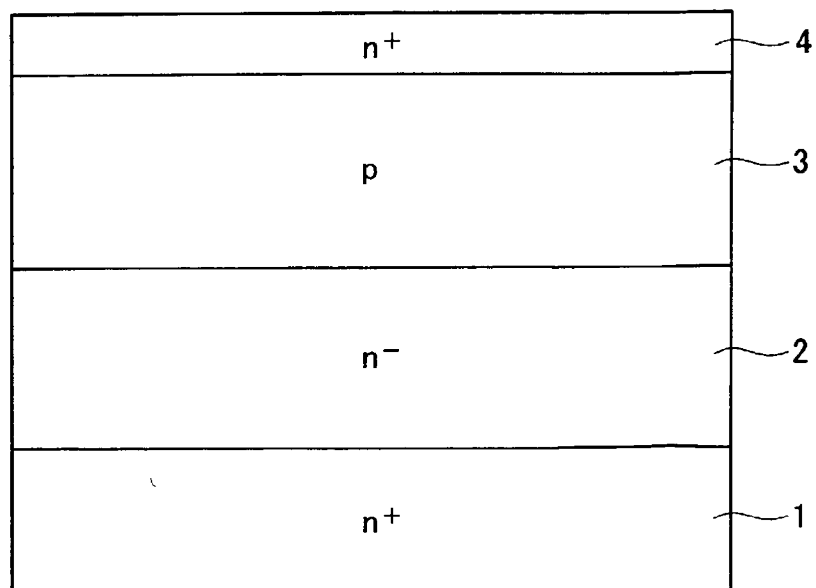


FIG. 5

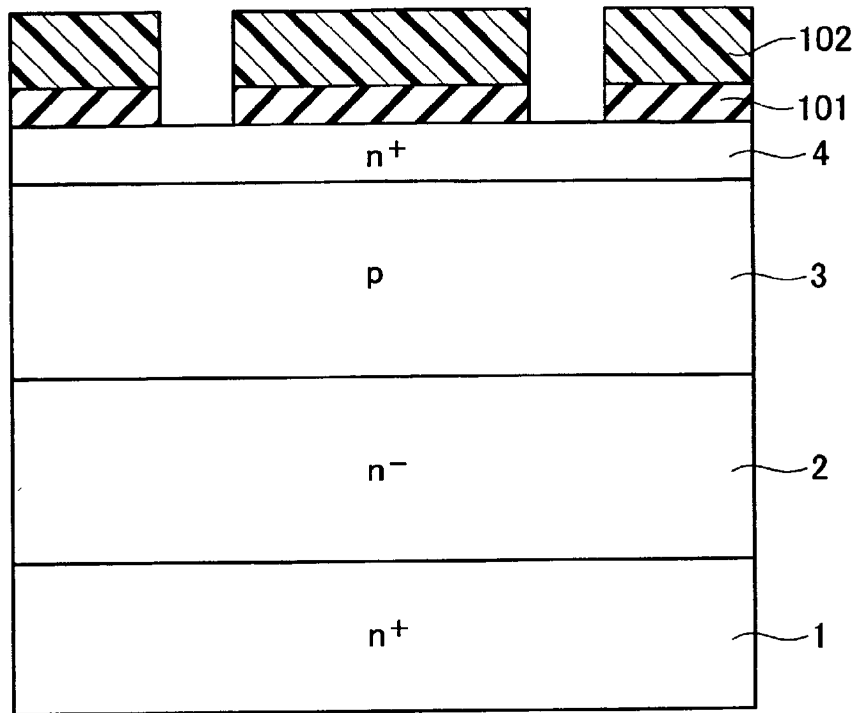


FIG. 6

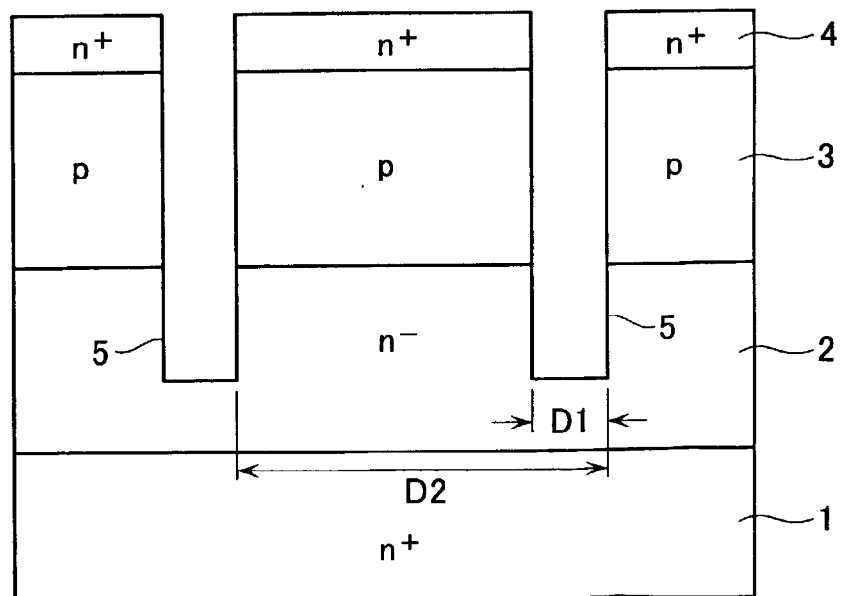


FIG. 7

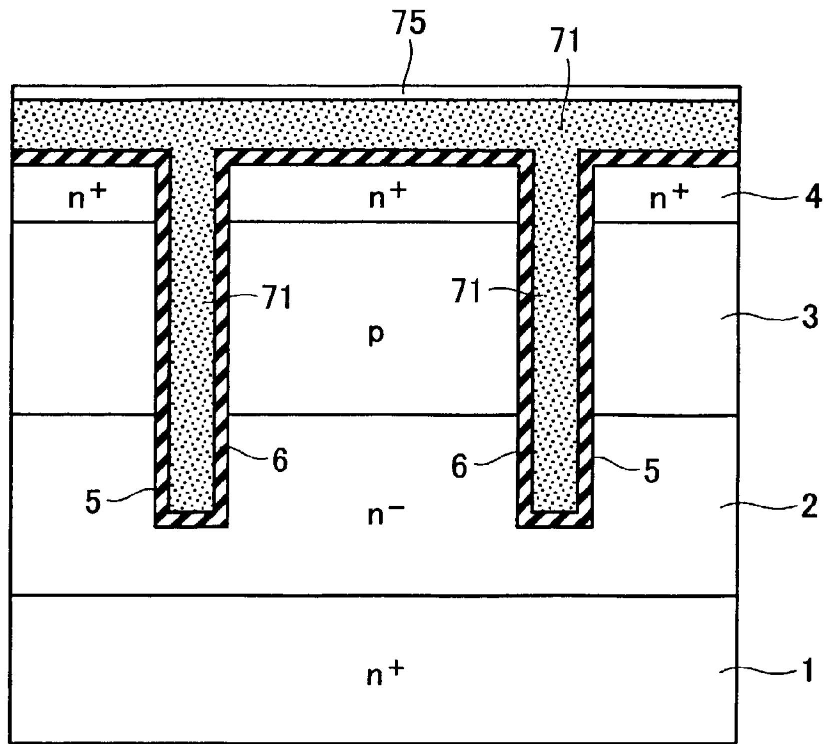


FIG. 8

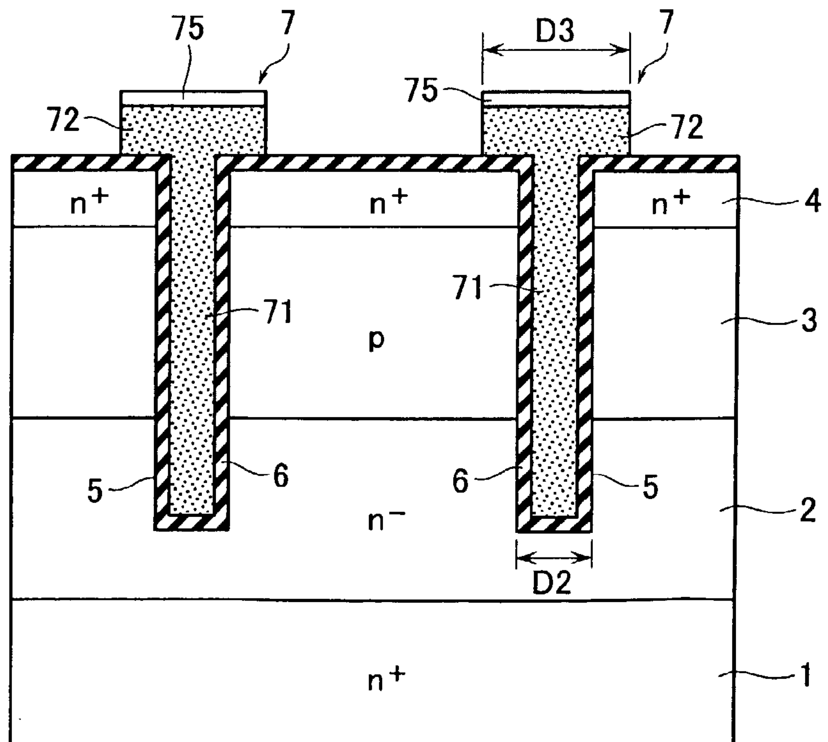


FIG. 9

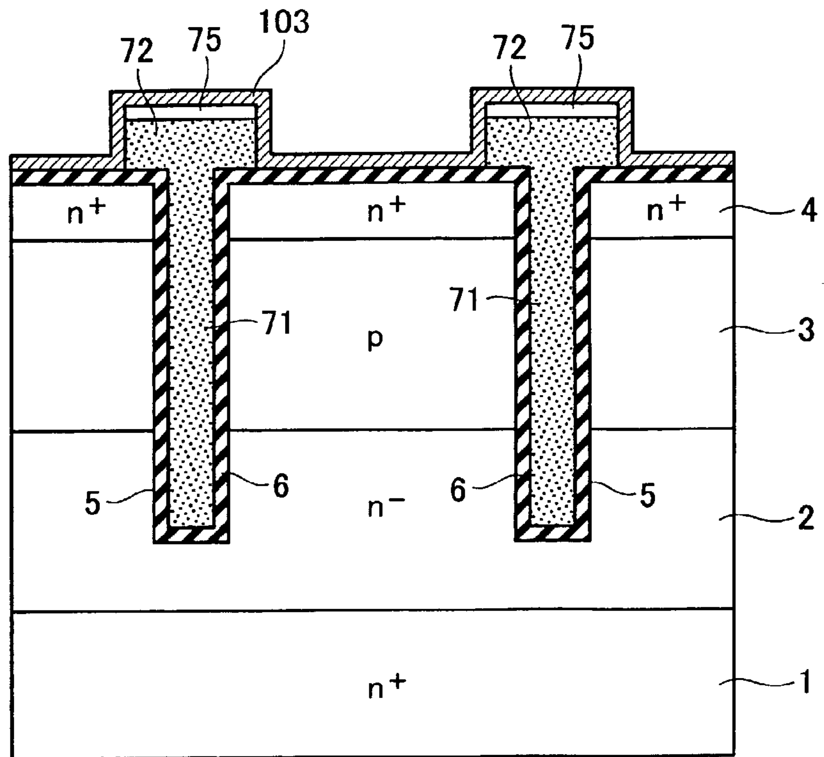


FIG. 10

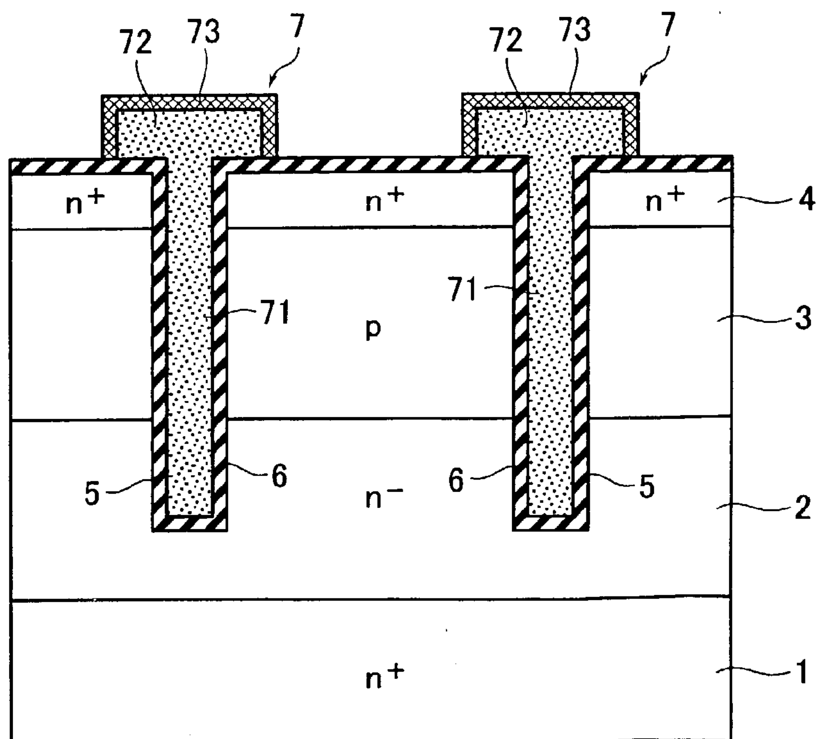


FIG. 11

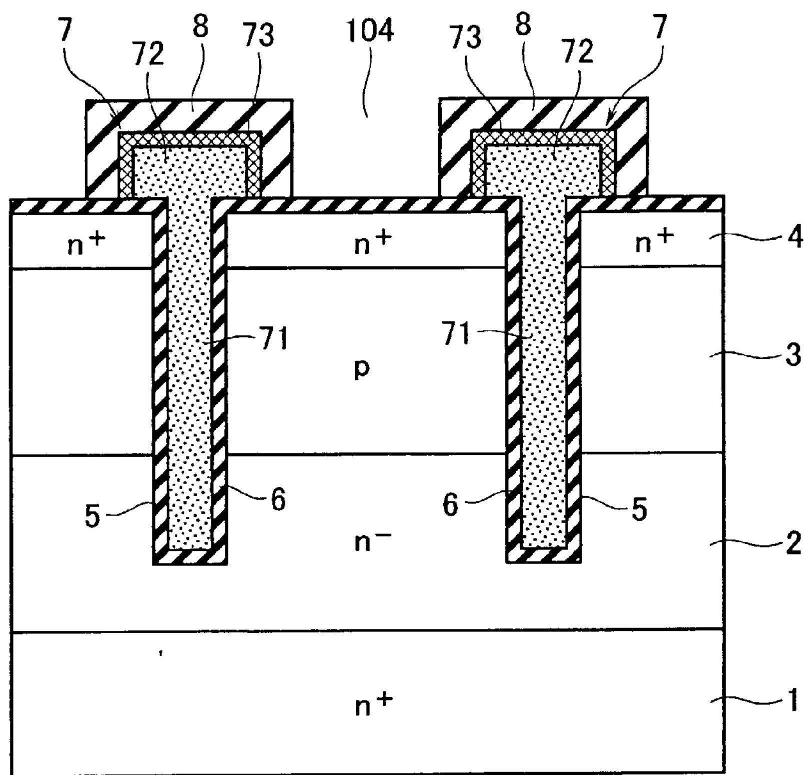


FIG. 12

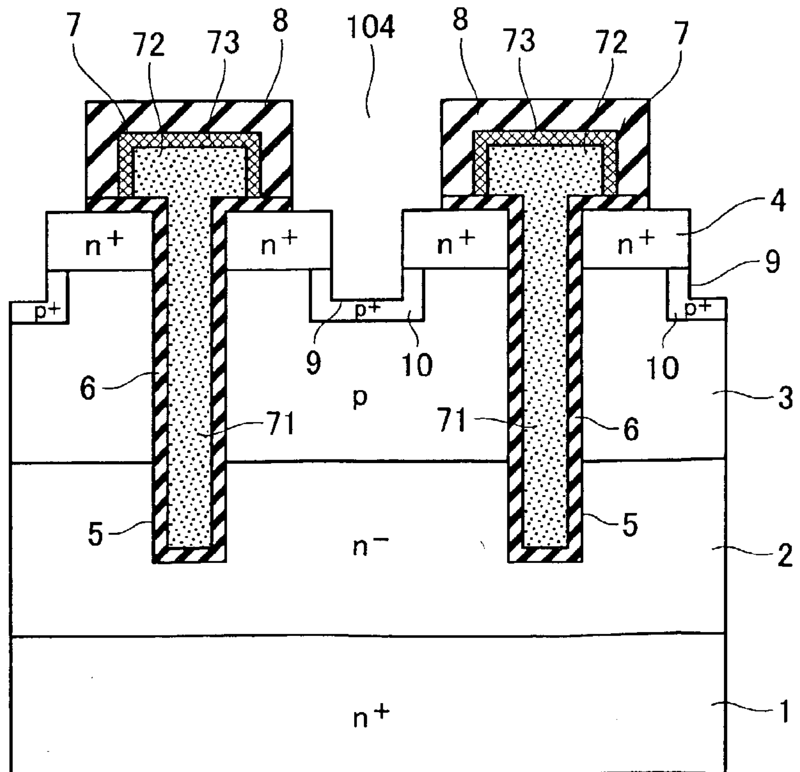


FIG. 13

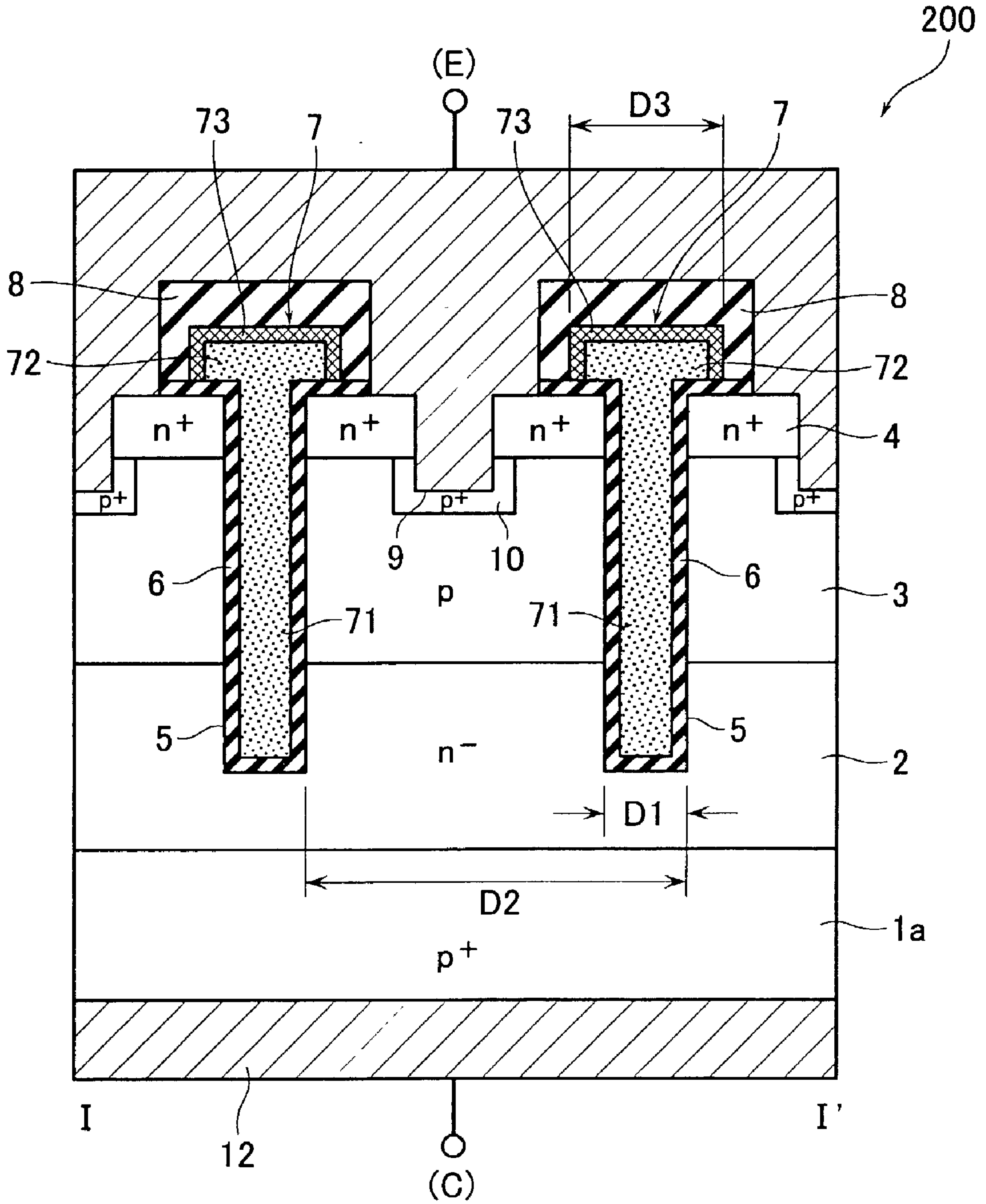
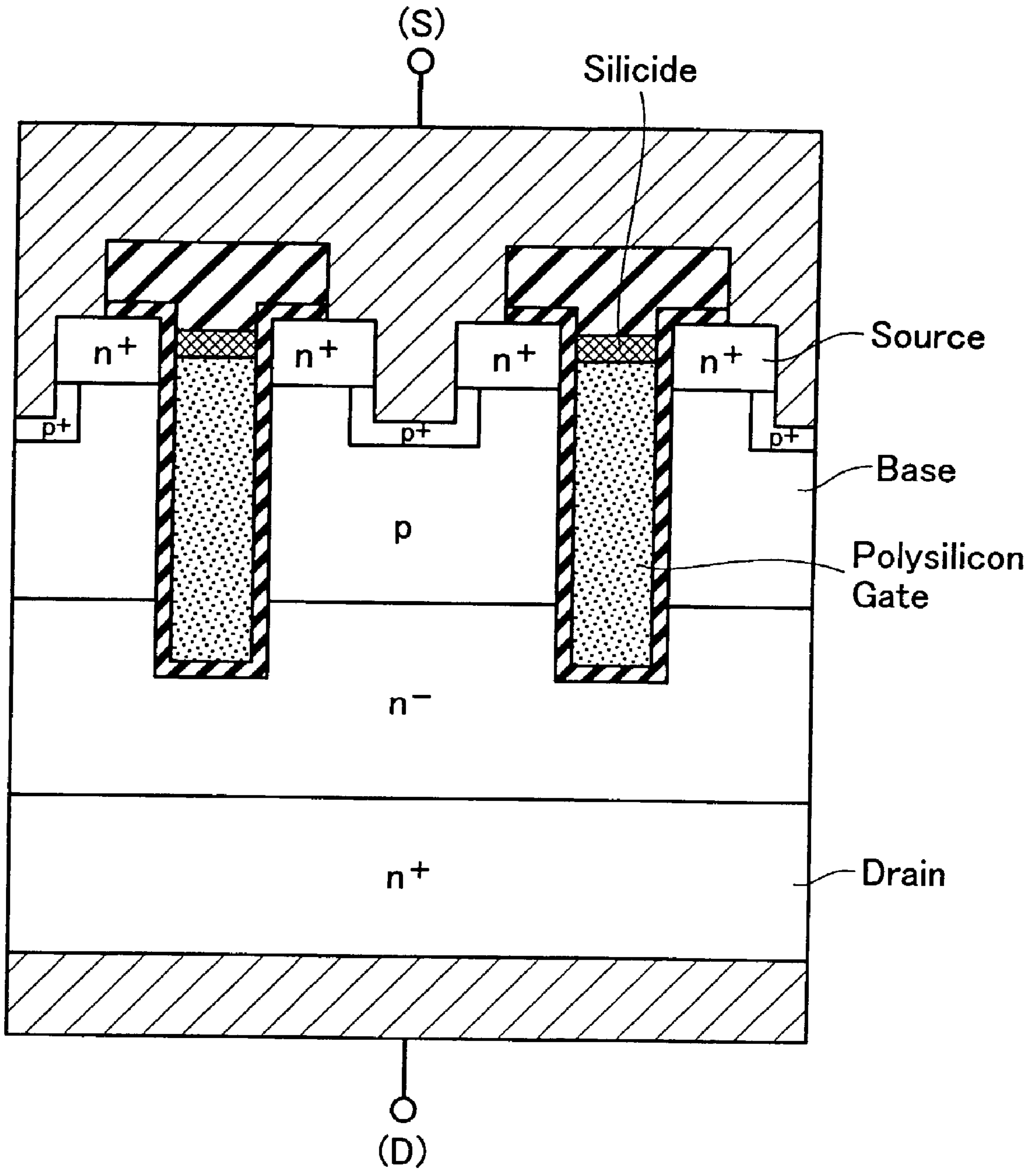


FIG. 14



TRENCH GATE TYPE SEMICONDUCTOR DEVICE AND FABRICATING METHOD OF THE SAME

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] 1. Field of the Invention

[0002] This invention relates to a semiconductor device of the type employing a trench gate structure and also to fabrication methodology thereof.

[0003] 2. Description of Related Art

[0004] As power devices capable of realizing low on-resistances and high-speed switching performances, trench gate type metal oxide semiconductor (MOS) transistors and insulated gate bipolar transistors (IGBTs) are known. **FIG. 14** shows an example of the trench-gate MOS transistors (JP-A-2000-183337). This MOS transistor has an n^+-type source layer and its underlying p-type base layer, with a stripe-shaped (or mesh-like) trench formed to vertically extend from the n^+-source and penetrate the p-base layer resulting in subdivision into a plurality of regions. Each divided region becomes a unit cell with a gate electrode formed at the base layer which is exposed to trench side surfaces. More specifically, each unit cell makes up a vertical MOS transistor with an n^+-type drain layer commonly used or "shared" by adjacent ones of vertical transistors.

[0005] The trench-buried gate electrode is generally made of polycrystalline silicon or "polysilicon" doped with a chosen impurity. However, such polysilicon gate is limited in electrical resistivity reduction even when phosphorus or arsenic is heavily doped thereinto at an increased concentration. In order to realize ultra-high speed switching operations, a need is felt to further lower the electrical resistance of the gate electrode per se. To this end, with the device of **FIG. 14, a** silicide film is formed on the surface of the buried polysilicon gate for achievement of the low gate-electrode resistivity required.

[0006] The silicide film for reduction of the polysilicon gate resistance is typically fabricated by forming on the surface of a polysilicon film a conductive film made of a metal such as titanium (Ti), cobalt (Co), nickel (Ni) or the like and then thermally processing it to permit the metal film to react with the polysilicon. Unfortunately, this silicide process is encountered with a problem that the sheet resistance unacceptably increases when on-chip gate wiring leads are narrowed beyond a predetermined degree. It has been found that in case the gate width is decreased to less than 1 micrometer (μm), a Ti silicide ($TiSi_2$) film formed on a phosphorus-doped polysilicon gate results in a critical increase in the sheet resistance. This is called the "thin line" effect (see "Revolution of Logic LSI Technologies", published by Science Forum Corporation), also known as "edge thinning" effect or simply "edge" effect.

[0007] In the trench-gate semiconductor device shown in **FIG. 14** also, this thin-line effect pauses serious problems if the trench gates further shrink in dimension in pursuance of the quest for higher chip integration in the near future. This would result in reduction or loss of the effectiveness of the silicide process. As far as the trench gate width is designed to stay at 1 μm or greater, the thin-line effect is avoidable. However, in view of the fact that the trench gate is effective only at their side surfaces opposing the base layer, enlarging the trench width would result in unwanted increases in gate capacity and in gate area. This in turn leads to a decrease in switching performance and also to an increase in on-state resistance, which occurs due to a relative decrease in source area within the chip.

[0008] Accordingly in the trench-gate semiconductor devices, it is desired to perform shrinkage or miniaturization of a trench gate without having to reduce or loose the inherent effectiveness of the silicide process.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0009] A trench gate type semiconductor device includes a first semiconductor layer having first and second main surfaces, a second semiconductor layer of a first conductivity type as formed on the first main surface of the first semiconductor layer, a third semiconductor layer of a second conductivity type as formed on the second semiconductor layer, a fourth semiconductor layer of the first conductivity type as formed at a surface of the third semiconductor layer, a gate electrode having a polycrystalline silicon layer being buried in a trench formed to a depth reaching the second semiconductor layer from a surface of the fourth semiconductor layer with a gate insulating film interposed therebetween and having an upper end portion protruding upwardly from a trench upper end opening while having its width greater than a width of the trench and a metal silicide film formed at an upper surface and side surfaces of the upper end portion of the polycrystalline silicon layer, a first main electrode in contact with both the fourth semiconductor layer and the third semiconductor layer, and a second main electrode formed at the second main surface of the first semiconductor layer.

[0010] A method of fabricating a trench gate type semiconductor device includes: forming a second semiconductor layer of a first conductivity type on a first main surface of a first semiconductor layer having first and second main surfaces, doping an impurity into a surface of the second semiconductor layer to thereby form a third semiconductor layer of a second conductivity type, doping an impurity into a surface of the third semiconductor layer to form a fourth semiconductor layer of the first conductivity type, forming a trench extending from a surface of the fourth semiconductor layer and penetrating the third semiconductor layer to have a depth reaching the second semiconductor layer, after having formed a gate insulating film on inner surfaces of the trench, depositing over the fourth semiconductor layer a polycrystalline silicon layer in such a manner as to completely bury the trench, etching the polycrystalline silicon layer to form a gate electrode having its main part buried in the trench and an upper end portion protruding upwardly from a trench upper end opening while having a width greater than a width of the trench, forming a metal silicide film at an upper surface and side surfaces of the upper end portion of the gate electrode, and forming a first main electrode in contact with both the fourth semiconductor layer and the third semiconductor layer and a second main electrode in contact with the second main surface of the first semiconductor layer, respectively.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0011] **FIGS. 1A and 1B** are diagrams showing a plan view and expansion thereof of a MOS transistor in accordance with one embodiment of this invention.

[0012] **FIG. 2** is a cross-sectional diagram as taken along line I-I' of **FIG. 1B**.

[0013] **FIG. 3** is a sectional diagram showing a process up to formation of a p-type base layer of the MOS transistor.

[0014] **FIG. 4** is a sectional diagram showing a process of forming an n^+-type source layer of the MOS transistor.

[0015] **FIG. 5** is a sectional diagram showing an oxide film mask forming process for trench formation of the MOS transistor.

[0016] **FIG. 6** is a sectional diagram showing a trench formation process of the MOS transistor.

[0017] **FIG. 7** is a sectional diagram showing a gate polysilicon deposition process of the MOS transistor.

[0018] **FIG. 8** is a sectional diagram showing a polysilicon patterning process of the MOS transistor.

[0019] **FIG. 9** is a sectional diagram showing a metal film deposition process for polysilicon gate silicide process of the MOS transistor.

[0020] **FIG. 10** is a sectional diagram showing a polysilicon gate silicide film formation process of the MOS transistor.

[0021] **FIG. 11** is a sectional diagram showing an interlayer dielectric film formation process of the MOS transistor.

[0022] **FIG. 12** is a sectional diagram showing a groove formation process of the MOS transistor.

[0023] **FIG. 13** is a sectional diagram of an insulated-gate bipolar transistor (IGBT) in accordance with another embodiment of this invention.

[0024] **FIG. 14** is a sectional diagram showing one prior known MOS transistor.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0025] Embodiments of this invention will be explained with reference to the accompanying drawings below.

[0026] **FIGS. 1A and 1B** illustrate a power MOS transistor **100** in accordance with one embodiment of the invention, wherein the former shows a plan view whereas the latter is an expanded plan view of the portion P of **FIG. 1A**. **FIG. 2** is a cross-sectional view as taken along line I-I' of **FIG. 1B**. Here, as an example that the first and second conductivity types are "n" and "p" types respectively, an n-channel MOS transistor **100** is shown which has a p-type base layer. A heavily doped n (n^+) type silicon substrate **1** is a low-resistivity drain layer. On this substrate **1**, a lightly doped n (n^-) type layer **2** for later use as a high-resistivity drain layer and a p-type layer **3** for use as a base layer are formed. The p-type base layer **3** has its surface portion, in which an n^+-type source layer **4** is formed.

[0027] A trench **5** is formed as to penetrate the p-base layer **3** from the source layer **4** and to have a depth reaching the n^--type drain layer **2**. A gate electrode **7** is formed and buried in this trench **5** with a gate insulating film **6** interposed therebetween. The gate electrode **7** consists essentially of a polycrystalline silicon or "poly-silicon" layer **71** and a metal silicide film **73**. The polysilicon layer **71** is buried in trench **5** and is doped with a chosen impurity, such as phosphorus (P) or arsenic (As) at an increased concentration. The metal silicide film **73** is formed on the surface of this polysilicon layer **71**. The polysilicon layer **71** has an upper end portion **72**, which has its width D3 greater than a width D1 of trench **5** and is protruded upwardly from the source layer **4**. The upper end portion **72** is covered or coated with a metal silicide film **73** as formed thereon. In the case of this embodiment, the metal silicide film **73** is made of $TiSi_2$ although other similar suitable silicide materials are employable.

[0028] As shown in **FIG. 1**B, the gate electrode **7** has a plurality of parallel stripe-like portions **7***a* which are laid out at a prespecified pitch D2 and coupling portions **7***b* which couple these stripe portions **7***a* together. In **FIG. 1B** the stripe portions **7***a* and the coupler portions **7***b* constitute a mesh-like pattern. This mesh pattern defines a plurality of "closed" subdivided regions, which make up unit cells respectively. Optionally at least one of the stripe portions **7***a* may have its terminate end which is not coupled to the others. In this case also, a region surrounded by the neighboring stripe portions **7***a* becomes a unit cell. In other words, this MOS transistor is arranged by an ensemble of multiple unit cells which are partitioned by the trenches **5** while sharing the substrate **1** that is the low-resistivity drains thereof.

[0029] Practically in this embodiment, 0.35-μm rules are used for trench gate fabrication, resulting in the width D1 of trench **5** becoming less than or equal to 1 μm. The layout pitch D2 of trench **5** is a few or a several μm. On the other hand, the buried polysilicon layer **71** has such a T-shaped profile that its upper end portion **72** is protruded upwardly from the source layer **4** while having its width D3 of 1 μm or greater, with the metal silicide film **73** formed on the upper surface and side faces of this upper end portion **72**. Thus, even when the metal silicide film **73** is made of $TiSi_2$, there are no appreciable increases in sheet resistance otherwise occurring due to the thin-line effect. This in turn makes it possible to obtain the gate electrode with low electrical resistance.

[0030] The gate electrode **7** is covered with an interlayer dielectric (ILD) film **8**. Formed on this ILD film **8** is a source electrode **11**. In addition, a drain electrode **12** is formed on the bottom or back surface of the substrate **1**. The source electrode **11** is in contact with the source layer **4** through an opening or hole as formed in ILD film **8** at a gap portion of each gate electrode **7**. The source electrode **11** is in contact with both the source layer **4** and the p-base layer **3**. More specifically, a groove **9** which reaches p-base layer **3** from source layer **4** is formed in each unit cell region laterally interposed between gate electrode **7**. In this groove **9**, a p^+-type layer **10** is formed. Source electrode **11** is in contact with source layer **4** and base layer **3** due to this electrode being buried in the groove **9**.

[0031] In this way, letting the source electrode **11** be in contact with the upper and side surfaces of the source layer **4** makes it possible to obtain contacts of low resistances. This is a structure preferable for achievement of low on-voltage. Additionally, by letting source electrode **11** be in contact with the p-base layer **3** also, electrical charge carriers of p-base layer **3** are rapidly released and drained to source electrode **11** in turn-off events. Thus it becomes possible to

achieve a switching operation at a high speed while at the same time enabling voltage potential stabilization of p-base layer **3** during turn-off.

[**0032**] A fabrication process of the MOS transistor **100** of this embodiment will be explained with reference to **FIGS. 3 through 12** below, while using the cross-section of **FIG. 2**. Firstly as shown in **FIG. 3**, let an n^--type layer **2** epitaxially grow on a principal surface of n^+-type silicon substrate **1**. Then, use ion implantation techniques to dope a chosen p-type impurity such as boron (B) or the like into the surface of this n^-layer **2**; next, let the doped impurity thermally diffuse, thereby forming a p-type base layer **3**. Further as shown in **FIG. 4**, implant ions of an n-type impurity such as arsenic (As) or else into the surface of p-base layer **3** at a high concentration; then, thermally diffuse the dopant, thereby forming an n^+-type source layer **4**.

[**0033**] Next as shown in **FIG. 5**, form on the surface of source layer **4** a silicon oxide film **101**; then, lithographically form a pattern of resist mask **102** used for trench formation. Using this resist mask **102**, etch silicon oxide film **101** by reactive ion etch (RIE) methods. And, with the patterned silicon oxide film **101** as a mask, silicon etching is performed by RIE methods to form trench **5** to a predetermined depth reaching the n^-layer **2** from source layer **4** as shown in **FIG. 6**.

[**0034**] More specifically the trench **5** is formed into a pattern which corresponds to the multiple stripe portions **7*a*** and the coupler portions **7*b*** which couple these stripes together, of the gate electrode **7** shown in **FIG. 1B**. At this time, as shown in **FIG. 6**, the trench width D1 in the layout direction (short side direction) of the stripe portions **7*a*** is set at 1 μm or below. Let the pitch D2 be several μm.

[**0035**] Subsequently, perform thermal oxidation to thereby form a gate insulator film **6** which overlies the bottom surface and sidewall of the trench **5** as shown in **FIG. 7**. Thereafter, deposit a polysilicon layer **71** on the source layer **4** to a predetermined thickness in such a manner as to completely bury the trench **5** thereunder while making its top surface substantially flat. The polysilicon layer **71** is heavily doped with a chosen impurity such as phosphorus (P) or arsenic (As) or the like at a high concentration. Preferably, deposit on this polysilicon layer **71** a non-doped or "undoped" polysilicon layer **75** with a small thickness. This undoped polysilicon layer **75** will be used to form low resistivity silicide during a silicide process to be later executed.

[**0036**] Next, etch the polysilicon layers **71, 75** by use of an etching mask (not shown) which has mask portion with a width D3 greater than the trench width D1. The result of this etching is that the polysilicon layers **71, 75** are patterned together into the gate electrode **7** with a T-shaped profile having a main portion buried in the trench **5** with the width D1 less than 1 μm and an upper end portion **72** which is projected from the upper end opening of its corresponding trench while having the width D3 greater than 1 μm, as shown in **FIG. 8**.

[**0037**] Thereafter, as shown in **FIG. 9**, deposit a Ti/TiN film **103** by sputter methods. And, use rapid thermal anneal (RTA) techniques to thermally process the resultant device structure. This thermal processing causes Ti of the Ti/TiN film **103** to react with polysilicon material, thereby forming a Ti silicide film **73** which overlies an upper surface and sidewall of the individual upper end portion **72** of gate electrode **7** as shown in **FIG. 10**. At this time, the reaction between the Ti and polysilicon is done under a carefully controlled condition which permits the undoped polysilicon layer **75** to undergo silicidation to be completely converted into a silicide—say, fully "silicidized."

[**0038**] In the case of the silicidation of polysilicon containing therein an impurity at high concentrations, the presence of such impurity gives rise of a bar to electrical resistivity reduction of silicide. On the contrary, with this embodiment, the undoped polysilicon layer **75** is formed on the surface of the impurity-doped polysilicon layer **71** prior to the silicidation processing; thus, fully silicidizing this undoped polysilicon layer **75** makes it possible to allow the silicide film **73** to much decrease in resistance. After having formed the silicide film **73**, etch away unreacted portions of the Ti/TiN film **103**. Thus the gate electrode **7** is completed.

[**0039**] Next as shown in **FIG. 11**, deposit an interlayer dielectric (ILD) film **8** by chemical vapor deposition (CVD) methods so that ILD film **8** covers the gate electrode **7**. Subsequently, define contact openings or holes **104** in ILD film **8** in its source regions each of which is laterally interposed between adjacent portions of the gate electrode **7**. At the bottom of each contact hole **104**, form a groove **9** which penetrates the source layer **4** and reaches its underlying p-base layer **3** as shown in **FIG. 12**. This groove **9** has its bottom portion at which the p-base layer **3** is partially exposed. Form a p^+-type diffusion layer **10** at such exposed portion of p-base **3**.

[**0040**] Lastly as shown in **FIG. 2**, form a source electrode **11** and a drain electrode **12** on the top and bottom surfaces of resultant structure, respectively, thus completing the intended trench-gate MOS transistor **100**. The source electrode **11** is in contact with the source layer **4** and p-base layer **3** of each unit cell through the opening of gate electrode **7**.

[**0041**] According to this embodiment discussed above, the polysilicon gate electrode which is buried in a trench as formed to have a width less than or equal to 1 μm has an upper end portion which is projected at a trench opening upper portion while letting this upper end portion have its width greater than the trench width—typically, measure 1 μm or more. Accordingly, in case this polysilicon gate electrode is subjected to silicidation at its surface, in particular in case the silicide film is a $TiSi_2$ film, the thin-line effect may be avoided. This enables achievement of the trench gate structure with low electrical resistances. This in turn makes it possible to obtain an improved power MOS transistor with ultrahigh-speed switching performances.

[**0042**] Although the above-noted embodiment is specifically drawn to the n-channel MOS transistor, the principles of this invention may also be applicable similarly to p-channel MOS transistors with respective portions reversed in conductivity type. Note here that if the n^+-type silicon substrate **1** of the above embodiment is replaced with a p^+-type silicon substrate while letting its remaining portions be kept unchanged in structure then the resulting device becomes an insulated gate bipolar transistor (IGBT). Such IGBT structure **200** is shown in **FIG. 13** in a way corresponding to **FIG. 2**. A "pnpn" structure of the IGBT is formed with a p^+-type silicon substrate **1*a*** as a collector

layer (p-type emitter layer), with the n^--type layer **2** and p-type layer **3** as first and second bases respectively and also with the n^+-type layer **5** as an n-type emitter layer. By letting the emitter electrode **11** be in contact with both the n^+-emitter layer **4** and p-base layer **3**, latch-up is precluded. Forming similar trench gate to those of the MOS transistor of the above embodiment makes it possible to obtain a low on-voltage. In addition, the trench-gate thin-line effect is prevented enabling achievement of ultrahigh speed switching performances.

[**0043**] As apparent from the foregoing, according to this invention, it is possible to obtain high-performance trench-gate semiconductor devices even when its trench gate is further decreased in line width.

What is claimed is:

1. A trench gate type semiconductor device comprising:

a first semiconductor layer having first and second main surfaces;

a second semiconductor layer of a first conductivity type as formed on said first main surface of said first semiconductor layer;

a third semiconductor layer of a second conductivity type as formed on said second semiconductor layer;

a fourth semiconductor layer of the first conductivity type as formed at a surface of said third semiconductor layer;

a gate electrode having a polycrystalline silicon layer being buried in a trench formed to a depth reaching said second semiconductor layer from a surface of said fourth semiconductor layer with a gate insulating film interposed therebetween and having an upper end portion protruding upwardly from a trench upper end opening while having its width greater than a width of said trench and a metal silicide film formed at an upper surface and side surfaces of said upper end portion of said polycrystalline silicon layer;

a first main electrode in contact with both said fourth semiconductor layer and said third semiconductor layer; and

a second main electrode formed at said second main surface of said first semiconductor layer.

2. The semiconductor device according to claim 1, wherein said gate electrode is formed as a mesh-like pattern.

3. The semiconductor device according to claim 2, wherein said gate electrode is less than or equal to 1 micrometer (μm) in trench width in a direction of the array of said stripe portions, and wherein said metal silicide film is a titanium (Ti) silicide.

4. The semiconductor device according to claim 1, wherein said polycrystalline silicon layer is deposited as a multilayer structure of an impurity doped layer and an undoped layer, and wherein said undoped layer is completely silicidized.

5. The semiconductor device according to claim 2, wherein grooves extending from the surface of said fourth semiconductor layer and reaching said third semiconductor layer are formed between the respective stripe portions of said gate electrode, and wherein said first main electrode is in contact with both said third semiconductor layer and said fourth semiconductor layer in each groove.

6. The semiconductor device according to claim 1, wherein said semiconductor device is a metal oxide semiconductor (MOS) transistor with said first semiconductor layer as a low resistivity drain layer of the first conductivity type, with said second semiconductor layer as a high resistivity drain layer, with said third semiconductor layer as a base layer, and with said fourth semiconductor layer as a source layer.

7. The semiconductor device according to claim 1, wherein said semiconductor device is an insulated gate bipolar transistor with said first semiconductor layer as a collector layer of the second conductivity type, with said second semiconductor layer as a first base layer, with said third semiconductor layer as a second base layer, and with said fourth semiconductor layer as an emitter layer.

8. A method of fabricating a trench gate type semiconductor device, said method comprising:

forming a second semiconductor layer of a first conductivity type on a first main surface of a first semiconductor layer having first and second main surfaces;

doping an impurity into a surface of said second semiconductor layer to thereby form a third semiconductor layer of a second conductivity type;

doping an impurity into a surface of said third semiconductor layer to form a fourth semiconductor layer of the first conductivity type;

forming a trench extending from a surface of said fourth semiconductor layer and penetrating said third semiconductor layer to have a depth reaching said second semiconductor layer;

after having formed a gate insulating film on inner surfaces of said trench, depositing over said fourth semiconductor layer a polycrystalline silicon layer in such a manner as to completely bury said trench;

etching said polycrystalline silicon layer to form a gate electrode having its main part buried in said trench and an upper end portion protruding upwardly from a trench upper end opening while having a width greater than a width of said trench;

forming a metal silicide film at an upper surface and side surfaces of said upper end portion of said gate electrode; and

forming a first main electrode in contact with both said fourth semiconductor layer and said third semiconductor layer and a second main electrode in contact with said second main surface of said first semiconductor layer, respectively.

9. The method according to claim 8, wherein said gate electrode is formed as a mesh-like pattern.

10. The method according to claim 9, wherein said gate electrode is 1 μm or less in trench width in a direction of the array of said stripe portions, and wherein said metal silicide film is a Ti silicide.

11. The method according to claim 8, wherein said polycrystalline silicon layer is deposited as a multilayer structure of an impurity doped layer and an undoped layer, and wherein said undoped layer is completely silicidized.

12. The method according to claim 8, further comprising:

forming, prior to formation of said first main electrode, a groove extending from the surface of said fourth semiconductor layer and reaching said third semiconductor layer.

13. The method according to claim 8, wherein said semiconductor device is a MOS transistor with said first semiconductor layer as a low resistivity drain layer of the first conductivity type, with said second semiconductor layer as a high resistivity drain layer, with said third semiconductor layer as a base layer, and with said fourth semiconductor layer as a source layer.

14. The method according to claim 8, wherein said semiconductor device is an insulated gate bipolar transistor with said first semiconductor layer as a collector layer of the second conductivity type, with said second semiconductor layer as a first base layer, with said third semiconductor layer as a second base layer, and with said fourth semiconductor layer as an emitter layer.

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