(19) DANMARK

(10) DK/EP 2147181 T3

Patent- og Varemærkestyrelsen

(12) Oversættelse af europæisk patentskrift

(51) Int.Cl.: *E 06 B 9/30 (2006.01)* *E 06 B 9/08 (2006.01)* *E 06 B 9/15 (2006.01)* *E 06 B 9/171 (2006.01)*

(45) Oversættelsen bekendtgjort den: **2018-07-16**

(80) Dato for Den Europæiske Patentmyndigheds bekendtgørelse om meddelelse af patentet: **2018-06-06**

(86) Europæisk ansøgning nr.: **08733203.7**

(86) Europæisk indleveringsdag: **2008-04-16**

(87) Den europæiske ansøgnings publiceringsdag: **2010-01-27**

(86) International ansøgning nr.: **US2008060464**

(87) Internationalt publikationsnr.: **WO2008130993**

(30) Prioritet: **2007-04-19 US 737330**

(84) Designerede stater: **AT BE BG CH CY CZ DE DK EE ES FI FR GB GR HR HU IE IS IT LI LT LU LV MC MT NL NO PL PT RO SE SI SK TR**

(73) Patenthaver: **Heissenberg, Michael, 725 N.e. Bayberry Lane, Jensen Beach, FL 34957, USA**

(72) Opfinder: **Heissenberg, Michael, 725 N.e. Bayberry Lane, Jensen Beach, FL 34957, USA**

(74) Fuldmægtig i Danmark: **NORDIC PATENT SERVICE A/S, Bredgade 30, 1260 København K, Danmark**

(54) Benævnelse: **PERSIENNEENHED**

(56) Fremdragne publikationer:
CH-A- 119 649
US-A- 5 205 336
US-A- 6 095 225

DESCRIPTION

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates to the field of rolling protective shutters. The shutters include an assembly, for covering a window or door of a building, which can be compactly rolled up into a housing when not in use.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] Rolling protective shutters have long been used as protection against extreme weather conditions, such as hurricanes, and to deter theft. Conventionally, rolling protective shutters are made from a plurality of shutter blades or slats which are hingedly connected to each other. When deployed, these blades or slats form a surface which covers an opening in a building. When they are not in use they are stored in a housing or enclosure. They are normally wound around a rod or shaft for storage. An example of these rolling shutters is disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 5,575,322, issued to Miller and entitled "Rolling Protective Shutters" which is incorporated by reference herein. As illustrated in Figs. 1 and 2 the rolling shutter of Miller is composed of a plurality of individual slats and a plurality of hinges interconnecting the slats. The slats include a first set of slats and a second set of slats. Each of the slats in the first and second sets being alternated so that each of the hinges is connected to one of the slats in the first set and one of the slats in the second set. The shutter assembly also includes a pair of shutter track and means for rolling the shutters from an extended position to a retracted position in which the shutters are rolled up on a shutter support member. The size of the housing required to hold the rolled up shutters is substantially greater than the depth of the shutters when deployed and extends a substantial distance from the building, as illustrated in Fig. 1.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIOR ART

[0003] U.S. Patent No. 5,575,322, issued to Miller discloses rolling shutter assembly for covering a door or window opening. The shutter is formed from a plurality of slats connected to each other. There are two different sets of slats. Each set of slats is different from the other set in size and connecting elements. The different sets are connected to each other in an alternating arrangement with the first set alternating with the second set. This arrangement allows the first set of slats to occupy a horizontal position when deployed and the second set to occupy a vertical or angled position when deployed. The second set of slats provides the majority ofprotection against high winds and weather. The problem with this type construction is that the slats occupy a substantially large diameter when rolled onto an assembly for storage.

[0004] U.S. Patent 6,422,289, issued to Miller also discloses a rolling shutter assembly for covering a door or window opening. The shutter is designed to be rolled up onto a shutter support member for storage when it is not in use. Many different embodiments of shutter slats are disclosed. In a first embodiment, the slats are curved and may or may not include rollers to assist in guiding the shutter slats in a track as they are raised or lowered. In other embodiments the shutter slats are flat and connected to each other utilizing a variety of different hinge connections. However, none of these embodiments provides a compact and small diameter unit when the shutter is rolled up onto the shutter support member for storage.

[0005] U.S. Patent No. 6,779,582, issued to Heissenberg discloses an accordion type of hurricane shutter assembly for providing a temporary covering across an opening in a building to prevent damage to the interior ofthe building by wind, debris and water from hurricanes and other severe weather conditions.

[0006] U.S. Patent No. 7,069,700, issued to Heissenberg discloses a system for covering the fasteners which are provided on the exterior walls of buildings for mounting hurricane or storm shutters. The system includes a mounting track for the fasteners and a cover plate which is pivotable about one side ofthe track. The cover normally covers the fasteners when they are not in use and pivots outwardly to allow access to the fasteners to permit the shutter to be attached to them.

[0007] CH 119 649 discloses a safety roller shutter composed of rectangular metal plates having tubular connectors at edges thereof for connecting adjacent plates.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0008] The present invention is directed to a rolling shutter assembly comprising a plurality of shutter slats which are designed to fit snuggly against each other when in a rolled up state so as to substantially reduce the diameter of the rolled up shutter assembly. This reduction ofthe diameter ofthe shutter assembly permits the use of a smaller housing for the shutter assembly. The smaller housing increases the aesthetic appeal ofthe assembly and decreases the material required for the assembly housing and thus the cost ofthe shutter assembly. The rolling shutter assembly includes a shutter support member, a shutter coupled to the support member and a plurality of tracks that guide the shutter while it is being raised or lowered. The shutter slats include a hinge connection along each edge portion ofthe slat.

[0009] Accordingly, it is an objective of the instant invention to provide a rolling shutter assembly comprising a plurality of shutter slats designed to fit snuggly against each other when in a stored condition.

[0010] It is a further objective of the instant invention to provide a rolling shutter assembly which provides protection for openings in buildings against hurricanes and high winds when in

a deployed condition.

[0011] It is yet another objective of the instant invention to provide a rolling shutter assembly formed from a plurality of shutter subassemblies wherein each of the slats in a subassembly is the same size or width.

[0012] It is a still further objective of the invention to provide a rolling shutter assembly which is substantially smaller in diameter when in a stored position.

[0013] Other objects and advantages of this invention will become apparent from the following description taken in conjunction with any accompanying drawings wherein are set forth, by way of illustration and example, certain embodiments of this invention. Any drawings contained herein constitute a part of this specification and include exemplary embodiments of the present invention and illustrate various objects and features thereof.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

[0014]

FIG. 1 is an exploded perspective view of the rolling shutter assembly of the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a front perspective view of the rolling shutter assembly of the present invention in the deployed position;

FIGS. 3A and 3B are side views of the roiling shutter assembly of the present invention illustrating different lengths of the shutter assembly in its deployed position;

FIG. 4 is cross sectional view of the rolling shutter assembly of the present invention in its stored position along line 4-4 of Fig. 2; and

FIGS. 5A-5J are end views of shutter slats of the present invention illustrating their different sizes.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0015] While the present invention is susceptible of embodiment in various forms, there is shown in the drawings and will hereinafter be described a presently preferred, albeit not limiting, embodiment with the understanding that the present disclosure is to be considered an exemplification of the present invention and is not intended to limit the invention to the specific embodiments illustrated.

[0016] As broadly construed, the invention comprises a rolling shutter assembly composed of a plurality of discrete shutter subassemblies. A first subassembly is sized to essentially encircle a shutter mounting member. Each succeeding discrete shutter subassembly is subsequently sized to essentially encircle the previous discrete shutter subassembly, until the desired coverage is achieved. This assemblage of discrete subassemblies is unique in its ability to stack about the shutter mounting member in a particularly compact manner, such that the overall diameter is substantially smaller than prior art rolling shutter assemblies.

[0017] An illustrative, albeit non-limiting, embodiment of the rolling shutter assembly 10 of the present invention is illustrated in Figs. 1 and 2. A shutter assembly housing 12 includes a top wall 14, a rear wall 16, a front wall 18, side walls 20 and a bottom wall 22. A shutter support member 24 is mounted for rotation within the housing on support members 26 connected to the side walls 20 of the housing. A shutter mounting member 28 is secured to a shaft 30 of the shutter support member 24.

[0018] A rolling shutter 32 is illustrated in its unrolled or deployed position in Figs. 1 and 2. The rolling shutter comprises a plurality of shutter slats secured to each other. An end view of some of the slats 70-88 can be seen in Figs. 5A-5J. These shutter slats are made from aluminum in a preferred embodiment, but could also be made from steel or any other suitable material. The material must be able to withstand high winds and stop objects carried by these winds from penetrating the openings which the rolling shutter covers. The rolling shutter 32 is attached at its upper portion to shutter mounting member 28 by the top slat 34 of the rolling shutter 32, as illustrated in Fig. 4. A cylindrical socket 36 is secured to or formed on an outer circumferential portion of shutter mounting member 28. A substantially hollow, cylindrical connecting member 38 is secured within cylindrical socket 36. The combination of the connecting member and the cylindrical socket is also known as a knuckle joint. Connecting member 38 is mounted along an edge portion of a shutter slat 34. Another cylindrical socket 42 is mounted along an edge of shutter slat 34 opposite the edge on which connecting member 38 is mounted. The connecting member 44 of a second shutter slat 46 is secured within cylindrical socket 42. The second shutter slat 46 includes a cylindrical socket 48 mounted along an edge portion thereof. The connecting member 50 of a third shutter slat 52 is secured within cylindrical socket 48. The third shutter slat includes a cylindrical socket 54 mounted along an edge portion thereof. The connecting member 56 of a fourth shutter slat 58 is secured within cylindrical socket 54 of the third shutter slat. The fourth shutter slat includes a cylindrical socket 60 mounted along an edge portion thereof. The cylindrical socket 60 is positioned adjacent the initial cylindrical socket 36 when the shutter is in its rolled up or stored position. A group of shutter slats is formed utilizing four shutter slats which are all dimensioned and shaped like the shutter slat 70 of Fig. 5A. This group of four shutter slats essentially encircles the shutter mounting member 28. This group of four shutter slats is known as a shutter subassembly.

[0019] Attached to shutter slat 58 is a second group or subassembly of four more shutter slats, 62, 64, 66 and 68. These shutter slats utilize the same system of cylindrical sockets and connecting members or knuckles to attach each other together. This is described above in the

description of shutter slats 34, 46, 52 and 58. These four shutter slats (62, 64, 66 and 68) essentially encircle the previous four shutter slats 34, 46, 52 and 58. As can be seen in Fig. 4 this second group or subassembly of slats, 62, 64, 66 and 68, nests upon and contacts the innermost subassembly of slats 34, 46, 52 and 58. This second subassembly, 62, 64, 66 and 68 also essentially encircles the innermost subassembly. The cylindrical socket 69 of the fourth slat 68 of the second subassembly is positioned adjacent the cylindrical socket 60 of the fourth slat 58 of the first subassembly of slats. The socket 69 is also adjacent the connecting member 61 of the first slat 62 of the second subassembly, thus forming an almost complete circle. The second subassembly of slats has a diameter only slightly larger than the diameter of the first or innermost subassembly. This arrangement of shutter subassemblies results in a substantially compact rolling shutter assembly when the shutter assembly is in its stored position. The second group or subassembly is formed from four shutter slats dimensioned and shaped like shutter slat 72 in Fig. 5B.

[0020] Each succeeding subassembly or group of shutter slats is formed from four shutter slats each having the same size. Each of these four slats has the next larger dimensions than the shutter slat of the previous subassembly. The third subassembly comprises four shutter slats similar to shutter slat 74 in Fig. 5C, the fourth subassembly comprises four shutter slats similar to shutter slat 76 in Fig. 5D, etc. Each succeeding subassembly of shutter slats nests upon and contacts the previous subassembly of shutter slats, as illustrated in Fig. 4. When the shutter subassemblies are in their deployed position, as illustrated in Fig. 3B, each succeeding subassembly is longer than the preceding shutter subassembly. The first shutter assembly or group 90 is shorter than the second shutter assembly or group 92. Each of the succeeding shutter subassemblies 94-108 is longer than the shutter subassembly preceding it. The last shutter subassembly is sized to fit the remaining portion of the opening being protected by the shutters. The last shutter subassembly may comprise less than four shutters. In the embodiment illustrated in Fig. 3B the last shutter subassembly comprises only a single slat.

[0021] Shutter slats are connected to each other by a connecting member of one shutter slat positioned within a cylindrical socket of the next shutter slat. A guide pin 110 is secured to the connecting member at each end of the shutter slat, as illustrated in Fig. 1. The guide pin 110 moves vertically along a track 112 of guide rail 114. A guide rail 114 is positioned on both the left and right sides of the opening that the rolling shutter assembly is protecting. Guide rails 114 are secured to a building by fasteners 116. Protective caps 118 may be attached to an exposed end of a fastener 116 to protect the fastener from the elements. The plurality of guide pins 110 permit the rolling shutter 32 to be deployed from the housing 12 and rolled up thereinto. The guide pins 110 also secure the shutter slats to the guide rails 114 in a manner such that high winds and flying debris will not move the shutter assembly into the opening which it is covering.

[0022] A base plate 120 is secured to the lowermost slat of the rolling shutter 32, as illustrated in Fig. 1. The base plate is attached to the cylindrical socket of the lowermost shutter slat of the rolling shutter 32. The base plate 120 rests against the ground and prevents the intrusion of the weather elements such as wind and rain and also insects. A bar 122 is secured in the

cylindrical socket of the lowermost slat. The bar 122 is provided with a left and a right movable end members 124 and 126. The movable end members are normally retracted into the bar 122 and do not extend past the end of the shutter slat. When the rolling shutter 32 is unrolled to its fully deployed position, the end members 124 and 126 are extended outwardly and into the track 112 of the guide rails 114. The bar 122 and end members 124, 126 helps to secure base plate 120 and lowermost end of the rolling shutter 32 to the lowermost portion of guide rail 114. Means can be provided to lock the end members 124 and 126 to the guide rails 114.

[0023] Shutter slats are also prevented from pivoting inwardly into the opening by a plurality of hooks formed on the connecting members and cylindrical sockets. Shutter slat 70, Fig. 5A, has a hook 130 formed on an inner portion of its cylindrical socket 71. The hook 130 extends substantially the length of cylindrical socket 71. Another hook 132 is formed on the outer portion of the connecting member 73 of slat 70. The operation of these hooks will now be described utilizing the rolling shutter assembly of Fig. 4. A hook 130 is formed on the inner portion of cylindrical socket 42 of the first shutter slat 34. A corresponding hook 132 is formed on the outer portion of connecting member 44 of the second slat 46. When the slats are deployed from their stored position the connecting member 44 of slat 46 rotates counterclockwise with respect to the cylindrical socket 42 of slat 34. The hooks 130 and 132 engage each other when the slats unroll to a vertical position, as shown in Fig. 1. This arrangement prevents the rolling shutter 32 from pivoting and flexing in a direction opposite to the direction in which it is rolled up for storage. This enhances its protection against high winds.

REFERENCES CITED IN THE DESCRIPTION

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Patent documents cited in the description

- US5575322A **[0002] [0003]**
- US6422289B **[0004]**
- US6779582B **[0005]**
- US7069700B **[0006]**
- CH119649 **[0007]**

PATENTKRAV

1. Oprullelig persienneenhed (10), der kan fungere mellem en nedrullet tilstand og en oprullet tilstand, og som omfatter;

et persiennestøtteelement (28);

en initial diskret persienneunderenhed (90) med en flerhed af individuelle lameller (34, 46, 52, 58) i mekanisk indgreb med hinanden;

hvilken initial diskret persienneunderenhed (90) har en længde, der er i alt væsentligt kan omringe persiennestøtteelementet (28), når den er oprullet deromkring;

mindst én efterfølgende persienneunderenhed (92) med en flerhed af individuelle lameller (62, 64, 66, 68), der er i mekanisk indgreb med hinanden; hvilken mindst ene efterfølgende persienneenhed (92) har en længde, der i alt væsentligt kan omringe den initiale eller tidligere nedrullede diskrete persienneenhed (90) i dens oprullede tilstand, hvorved hver persienneunderenhed er i tæt nærhed af den tidligere nedrullede persienneunderenhed, når persienneunderenhederne er i deres oprullede positioner, hvorved de generelle dimensioner af persienneenheden reduceres, kendetegnet ved, at hver af lamellerne buer langs et plan, der strækker sig fra én kant til den anden kant, og ved, at hver persienneunderenhed er i et indlejret arrangement i forhold til den tidligere nedrullede persienneunderenhed og en del af lamellerne af hver persienneunderenhed er i kontakt med lamellerne af den tidligere nedrullede persienneunderenhed, når persienneenheden er i sin oprullede position.

2. Oprullelig persienneenhed ifølge krav 1, hvor hver af lamellerne har en kropsdel, en øvre kant, der strækker sig langs en øvre del af kropsdelen, en bundkant, der strækker sig langs en bunddel af kropsdelen;

et øvre forbindelseselement (71), der er forbundet med den øvre kant og som i alt væsentligt strækker sig langs længden deraf;

et bundforbindelseselement (73), der er forbundet med bundkanten og som i alt væsentligt strækker sig langs længden deraf;

hvor det øvre forbindelseselement af én af lamellerne er forbundet med bundforbindelseselementet af en anden af lamellerne og afstanden mellem hver lamels øvre forbindelseselement og bundforbindelseselement definerer lamellens bredde.

3. Oprullelig persienneenhed ifølge krav 2, hvor hver af lamellerne i persienneunderenheden har den samme bredde og bredden på lamellerne i forskellige persienneunderheder adskiller sig fra andre underenheder.

4. Oprullelig persienneenhed ifølge krav 1, hvor bredderne af lamellerne i persienneunderenhederne tiltager, når afstanden fra persiennestøtteelementet til persienneunderenheden tiltager.

5. Oprullelig persienneenhed ifølge krav 1, hvor det øvre forbindelseselement og bundforbindelseselementet (71, 73) i alt væsentligt er cylindriske og ét af det øvre forbindelseselement eller bundforbindelseselementet er placeret inde i det andet af det øvre forbindelseselement eller bundforbindelseselementet, hvorved der dannes en drejeforbindelse mellem tilstødende persienner.

6. Oprullelig persienneenhed 5, hvor kroge (130, 132) er dannet integreret på det øvre forbindelseselement og bundforbindelseselementet, hvilke kroge går i indgreb med hinanden for at forhindre rotation af lamellerne forbi et bestemt punkt i forhold til hinanden.

7. Oprullelig persienneenhed ifølge krav 1, der endvidere omfatter et hus (12), der i alt væsentligt omslutter persienneenheden, når persienneenheden er i sin oprullede position.

8. Oprullelig persienneenhed ifølge krav 7, der endvidere omfatter en flerhed af skinner (112), der er fastgjort til siderne af en åbning;

fastgørelseselementer (110), der er fastgjort til lamellerne og placeret i skinnerne, når persienneenheden er i sin nedrullede tilstand, hvorved persienneenheden fastgøres mod åbningen for at forhindre indtrængen af vind eller andre genstande i åbningen.

DRAWINGS

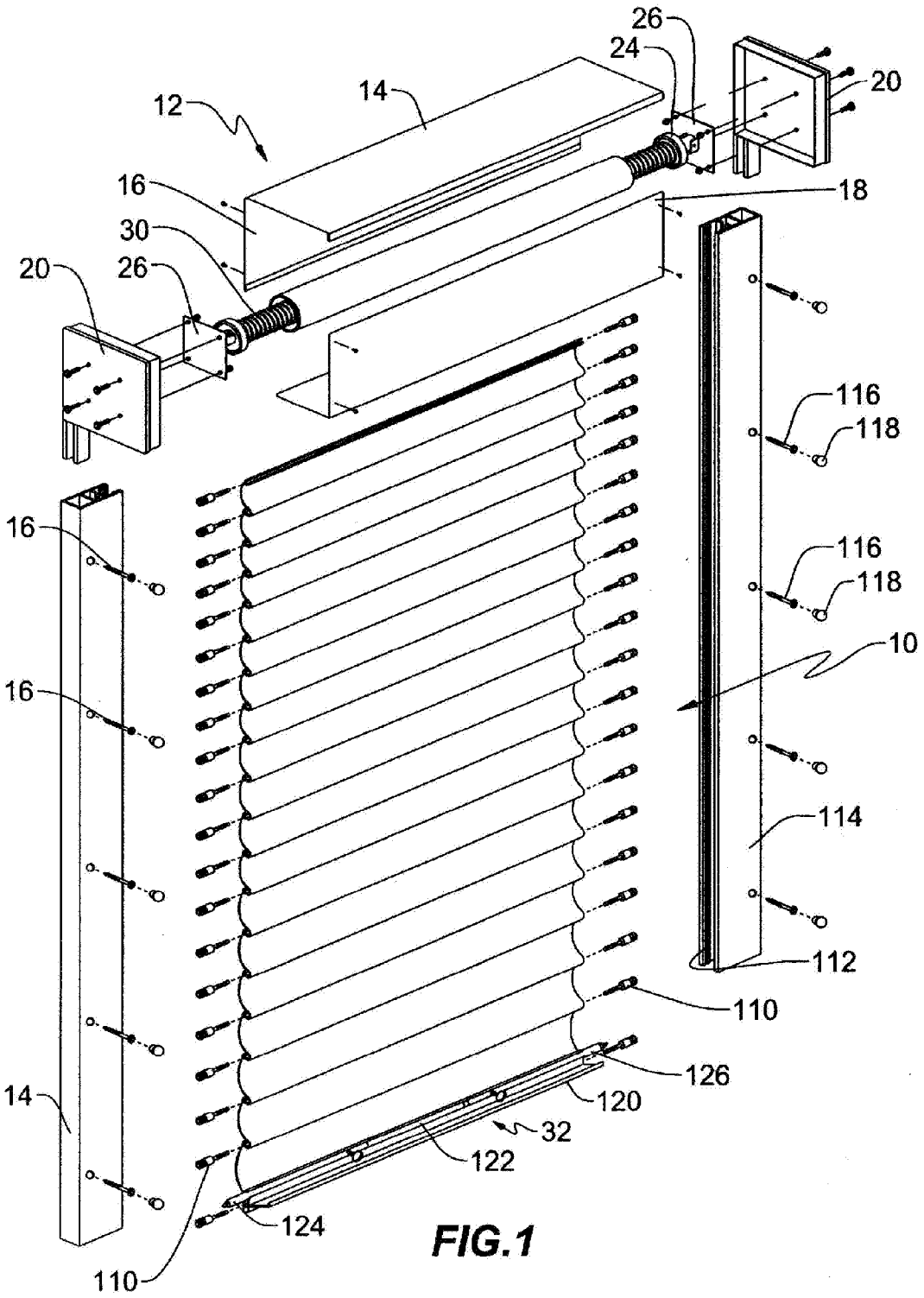

FIG.1

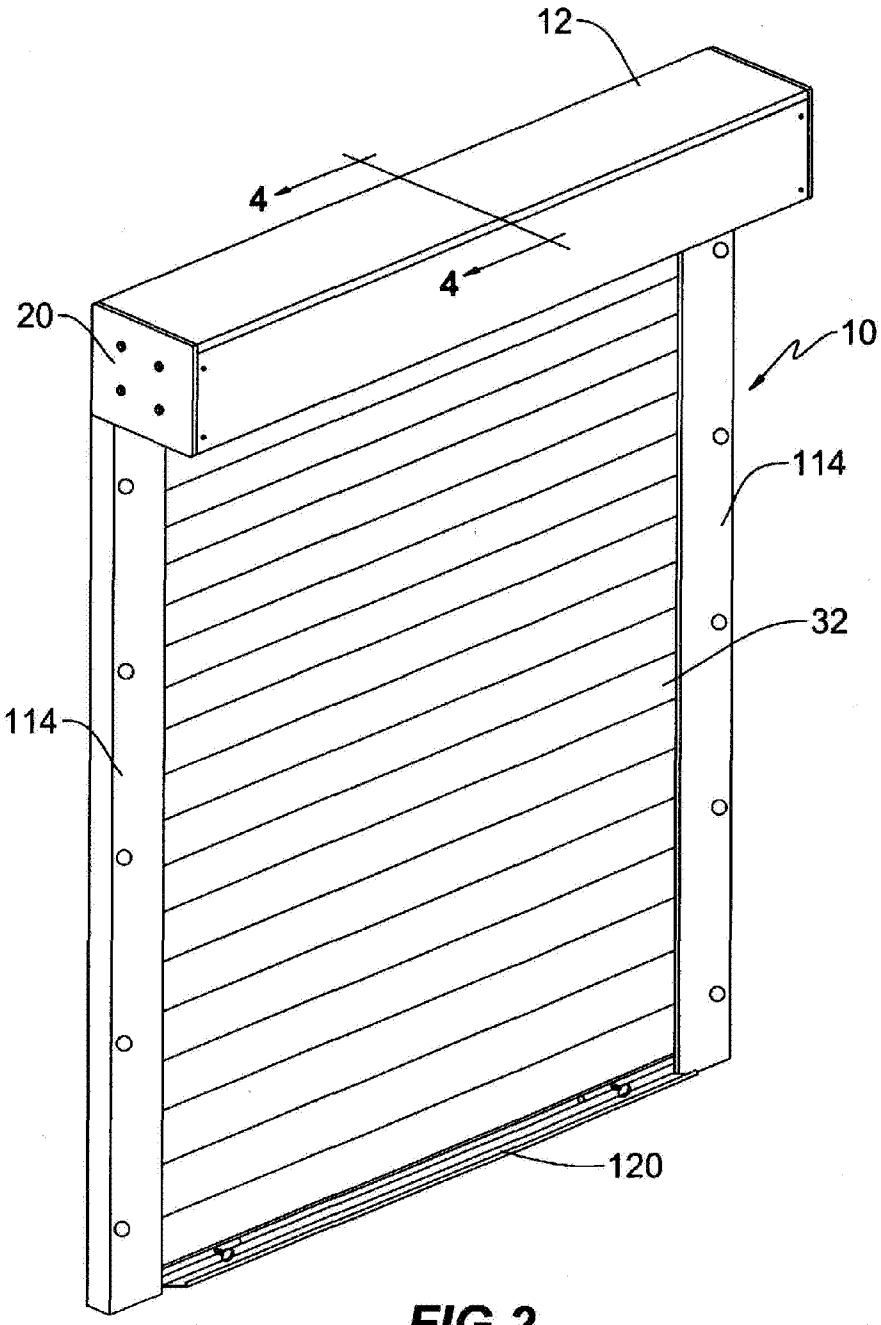

FIG.2

FIG.3A

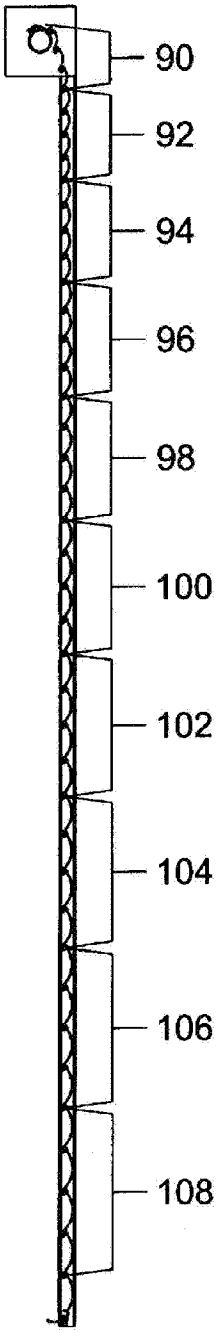

FIG.3B

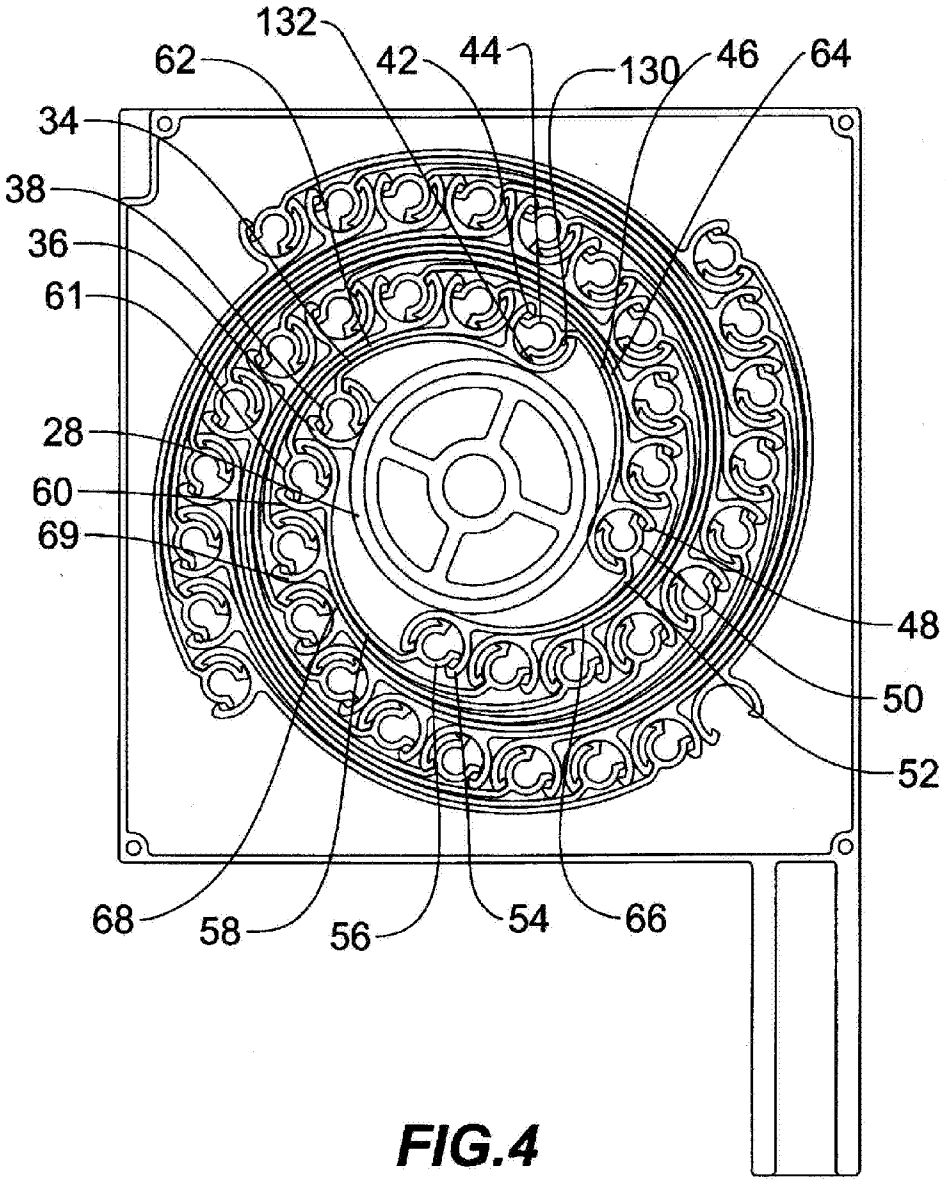

FIG.4

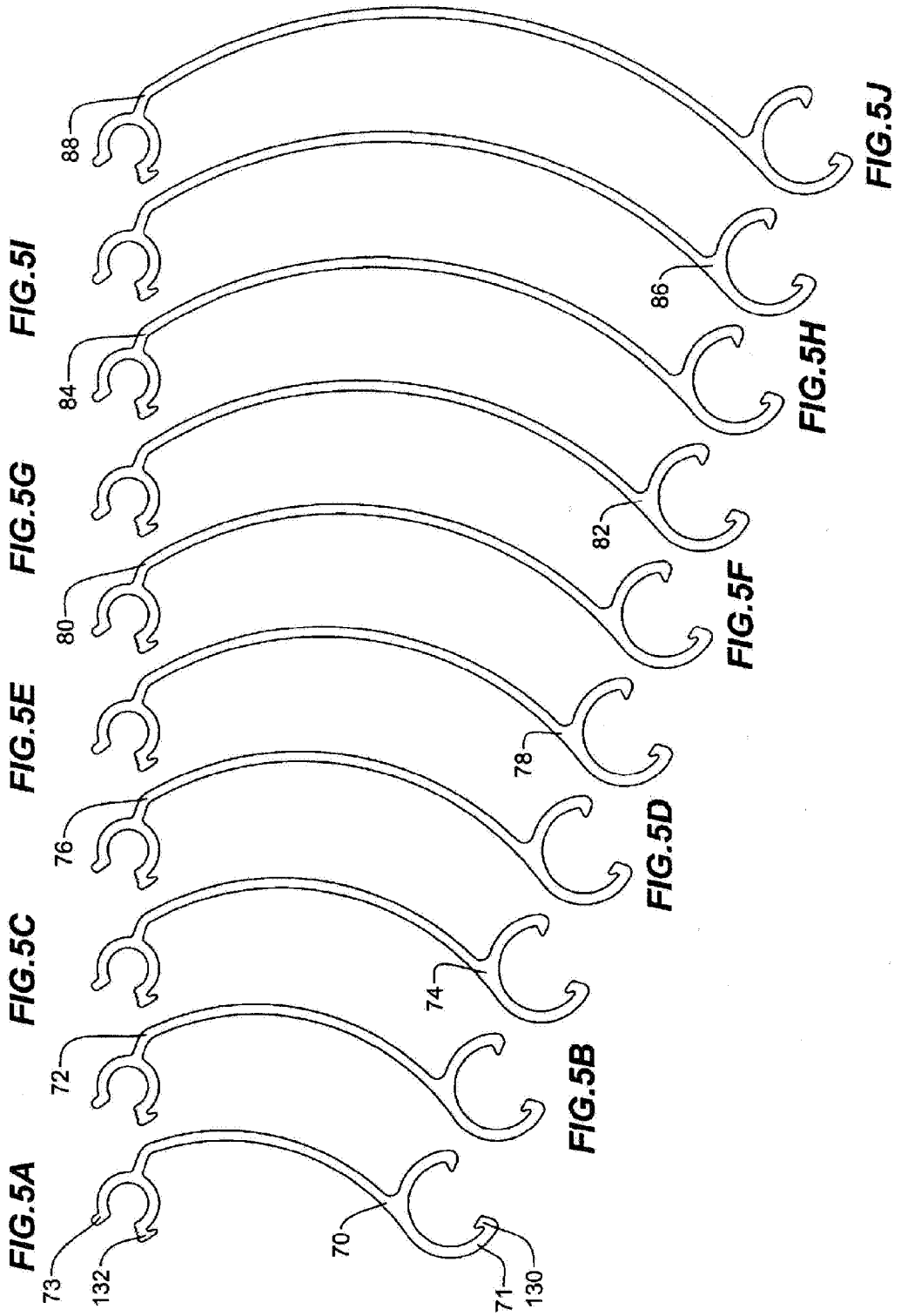
FIG.5A
73
132
70
71
130
FIG.5B
72
74
FIG.5C
FIG.5D
76
78
FIG.5E
FIG.5F
80
82
FIG.5G
FIG.5H
84
86
FIG.5I
FIG.5J
88