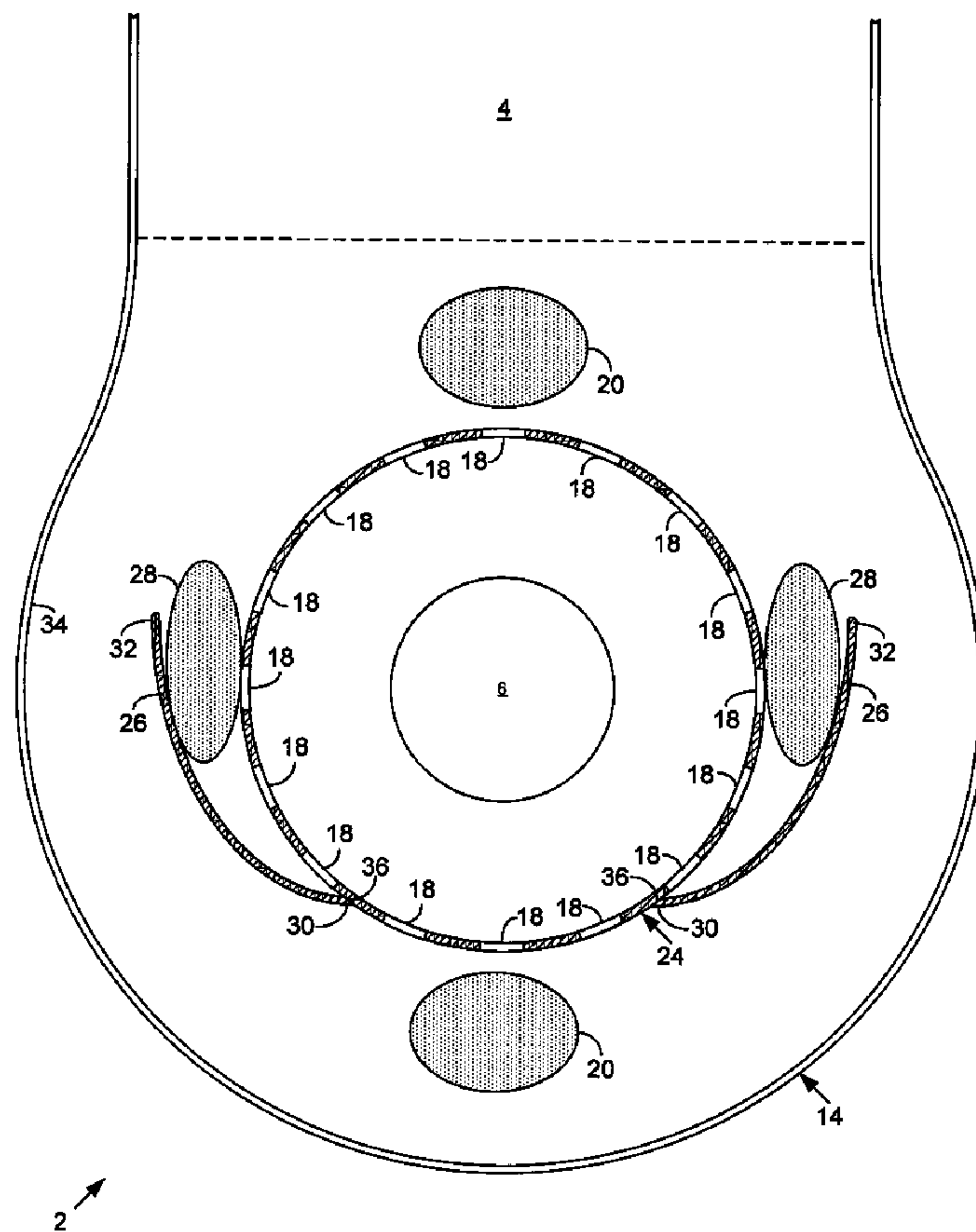




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(71) Demandeur/Applicant:  
HAMILTON SUNDSTRAND CORPORATION, US  
(72) Inventeur/Inventor:  
MEHRING, CARSTEN, US  
(74) Agent: OGILVY RENAULT LLP/S.E.N.C.R.L.,S.R.L.

(54) Titre : PLENUM D'OUÏE D'ENTREE AMELIORE POUR TURBINE A GAZ  
(54) Title: IMPROVED INLET PLENUM FOR GAS TURBINE ENGINE



(57) Abrégé/Abstract:

An inlet plenum for coupling airflow from a radial airflow inlet to an axial compressor inlet for a compressor comprises a perforated inlet (PI) baffle that comprises a generally cylindrical baffle that circumscribes the compressor inlet and a plurality of apertures, each

(57) **Abrégé(suite)/Abstract(continued):**

aperture perforating the baffle to pass the airflow from the radial airflow inlet to the compressor inlet and a plurality of stagnation vanes, each stagnation vane comprising a generally arc-shaped vane that extends proximate the PI baffle to establish an approximation of stagnant flow around the entire PI baffle to reduce flow distortion of the airflow between the radial airflow inlet and the axial compressor inlet.

**ABSTRACT OF THE INVENTION**

An inlet plenum for coupling airflow from a radial airflow inlet to an axial compressor inlet for a compressor comprises a perforated inlet (PI) baffle that comprises a generally cylindrical baffle that circumscribes the compressor inlet and a plurality of apertures, each aperture perforating the baffle to pass the airflow from the radial airflow inlet to the compressor inlet and a plurality of stagnation vanes, each stagnation vane comprising a generally arc-shaped vane that extends proximate the PI baffle to establish an approximation of stagnant flow around the entire PI baffle to reduce flow distortion of the airflow between the radial airflow inlet and the axial compressor inlet.

## **IMPROVED INLET PLENUM FOR GAS TURBINE ENGINE**

### **FIELD OF THE INVENTION**

The invention relates to an air supply system for a gas turbine engine, and  
5 more particularly to an inlet plenum for a gas turbine engine compressor.

### **BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

The performance of turbomachinery, such as a centrifugal compressor for a  
gas turbine engine, is partially dependent upon the quality of flow that such  
10 turbomachinery receives. In particular, it is important to minimise pressure loss and  
distortion of flow that enters the impeller of such centrifugal compressors in order to  
maximise efficiency and minimise noise.

Proper inlet design is a particular challenge for a gas turbine engine that has  
a radial inlet duct that couples airflow to an axial compressor impeller inlet by way  
15 of an inlet plenum that receives the airflow from the inlet duct and guides it to the  
compressor inlet plane. Such an arrangement is common for an aeronautical  
auxiliary power unit due to space constraints.

In order to keep flow-distortion at the plenum outlet to the compressor  
impeller to a minimum, the inlet plenum may comprise one or more inlet guide vane  
20 passages to help guide the airflow. Such guide vanes offer no barrier to ingestion of  
foreign matter in the airflow that may damage the compressor impeller, so such an  
arrangement also may comprise a foreign object damage (FOD) barrier or screen  
positioned in the airflow upstream of the guide vanes to prevent the ingestion of  
foreign matter by the compressor impeller. Such a FOD barrier or screen typically  
25 comprises a wire screen placed within the interface between the inlet duct and the  
inlet plenum.

A FOD barrier or screen of this type typically exhibits stability and integrity  
problems that make it unreliable at best and the source of FOD itself at worst.  
Consequently, an alternative inlet design utilises an inlet plenum that comprises a  
30 perforated inlet (PI) baffle. The PI baffle comprises a generally cylindrical baffle  
within the inlet plenum that circumscribes the generally annular inlet of the  
compressor. The airflow must pass through a plurality of apertures or perforations

in the baffle, each aperture small enough to block foreign matter within the airflow greater than a critical size that may cause FOD to the compressor impeller.

However, the generally small wall thickness of a PI baffle offers almost no flow guidance compared to guide vanes. This generally results in significant flow distortion of the airflow to the compressor inlet and significant flow pressure losses across the apertures or perforations in the PI baffle. Choosing different sizes, shapes and distributions of the apertures or perforations along the perimeter or surface of the PI baffle could possibly reduce such flow distortion, but production and verification of structural integrity for such a PI baffle would be difficult and costly.

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### **SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION**

The invention generally comprises an inlet plenum for coupling airflow from a radial airflow inlet to an axial compressor inlet for a compressor, the inlet compressor comprising a perforated inlet (PI) baffle that comprises a generally cylindrical baffle that circumscribes the compressor inlet and a plurality of apertures, each aperture perforating the baffle to pass the airflow from the radial airflow inlet to the compressor inlet and a plurality of stagnation vanes, each stagnation vane comprising a generally arc-shaped vane that extends proximate the PI baffle to establish an approximation of stagnant flow around the entire PI baffle to reduce flow distortion of the airflow between the radial airflow inlet and the axial compressor.

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### **DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

Figure 1 is a partial cut-away end view of a gas turbine engine with a radial airflow inlet, an axial compressor inlet and an inlet plenum that couples the airflow inlet to the compressor inlet through inlet guide vanes according to the prior art.

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Figure 2 is a partial cut-away end view of a gas turbine engine with a radial airflow inlet, an axial compressor inlet and an inlet plenum that couples the airflow inlet to the compressor inlet through a perforated inlet (PI) baffle according to the prior art.

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Figure 3 is a partial cut-away end view of a gas turbine engine with a radial airflow inlet, an axial compressor inlet and an inlet plenum that couples the airflow

inlet to the compressor inlet through a perforated inlet (PI) baffle and upstream stagnation vanes according to a possible embodiment of the invention.

### **DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION**

5           Figure 1 is a partial cut-away end view of a gas turbine engine 2 with a radial  
airflow inlet 4, an axial compressor inlet 6 and an inlet plenum 8 that couples the  
airflow inlet 4 to the compressor inlet 6 through at least one inlet guide vane 10  
according to the prior art. Figure 1 shows an arrangement with eight of the inlet  
guide vanes 10 as an illustrative example. The purpose of the inlet guide vanes 10 is  
10 to guide and deflect the airflow within the inlet plenum 8 that propagates radially  
from the airflow inlet 4 axially into the compressor inlet 6 with minimal  
circumferential flow variation about the perimeter of the compressor inlet 6. A FOD  
barrier or screen 12, typically comprising a wire screen, mounts upstream of the inlet  
plenum 8 across the airflow inlet 4 to block the passage of foreign matter greater  
15 than a critical size that may cause FOD to a compressor impeller (not shown) that  
the compressor inlet 6 feeds.

          Figure 2 is a partial cut-away end view of a gas turbine engine 2 with a radial  
airflow inlet 4, an axial compressor inlet 6 and an inlet plenum 14 that couples the  
airflow inlet to the compressor inlet 6 with a perforated inlet (PI) baffle 16 according  
20 to the prior art. The PI baffle 16 comprises a generally cylindrical baffle that  
circumscribes the compressor inlet 6 and has a plurality of apertures or perforations  
18 that passes through it. The apertures 18 pass the airflow from the radial airflow  
inlet 4 to the compressor inlet 6. Each aperture 18 is small enough to block foreign  
matter within the airflow greater than a critical size that may cause FOD to the  
25 compressor impeller.

          Unfortunately, the PI baffle 16 is generally ineffective for guiding airflow  
from the radial airflow inlet 4 to the axial compressor inlet 6 without significant  
flow distortion. The PI baffle 16 generally has a relatively large diameter relative to  
the axial compressor inlet 6 to assure reasonably low flow velocities through the  
30 apertures 18 and low pressure losses across the PI baffle 16. However, such a PI  
baffle 16 introduces flow stagnation regions 20 and increased velocity regions 22.  
Guide vanes, such as the guide vanes 10 in Figure 1, placed either upstream or

downstream of the PI baffle 16 are generally ineffective for controlling airflow in a manner that reduces such flow distortion. Furthermore, placement of such guide vanes 10 downstream of the PI baffle 16 makes them subject to ice formation upon their surfaces. This ice may then break loose and cause damage to the compressor  
5 impeller.

Ideally, to achieve low exit flow distortion and low pressure losses across the PI baffle 16 for a given configuration of the inlet plenum 14, the flow through each aperture 18 should be similar and perpendicular through each aperture 18 independent of the total mass flow rate. In order to achieve this, ideally the flow  
10 upstream and around the PI baffle 16 should be stagnant. For a given finite size of the inlet plenum 14, this is not the case. The flow just upstream from the apertures 18 and the flow angle at the inlet of each aperture 18 swirl around the PI baffle 16 causing flow distortion and increased pressure losses across each aperture 18 if the flow is not perpendicular to each aperture 18.

In order to obtain uniform flow conditions downstream of the PI baffle 16 and consequently at the axial compressor outlet 6, uniform stagnant flow conditions upstream and around the perimeter of the PI baffle 16 are desirable, assuming that pressure losses due to flow deceleration remain at an acceptable level. Stagnation conditions upstream of the PI baffle 16 guarantee that velocity vectors and pressure  
15 contour lines do not vary circumferentially downstream of the PI baffle 16, with exception of the jet/wake structure generated when the flow accelerates through the apertures 18.

Figure 3 is a partial cut-away end view of a gas turbine engine 2 with a radial airflow inlet 4, an axial compressor inlet 6 and an inlet plenum 14 that couples the  
25 airflow inlet 4 to the compressor inlet 6 through a perforated inlet (PI) baffle 24 according to a possible embodiment of the invention. A plurality of stagnation vanes 26 arranged along the perimeter of the PI baffle 24 generates additional flow stagnation regions 28 that replace the undesirable increased velocity regions 22 without such stagnation vanes as shown in Figure 2. Figure 3 shows two of the  
30 stagnation vanes, although the inlet plenum 14 may alternatively have a different number of stagnation vanes 26 to establish an approximation of stagnant flow conditions around the entire PI baffle 16 as shown. The two stagnation vanes 26

comprise generally arc-shaped vanes. Each stagnation vane 26 extends from a first end 30 proximate the PI baffle 24 to a second end 32 upstream in the airflow and outwardly toward an outer wall 34 of the inlet plenum 14. In Figure 3, each first end attaches to the PI baffle 24 at an attachment point 36. The shape of these stagnation  
5 vanes 26 and their placement within the inlet plenum 14 relative to the PI baffle 16 are crucial in order to prevent flow separation behind the stagnation vanes 26 and/or enhanced jet flow through the apertures 18 near the first end 30 of each stagnation vane 26.

The described embodiment of the invention is only an illustrative  
10 implementation of the invention wherein changes and substitutions of the various parts and arrangement thereof are within the scope of the invention as set forth in the attached claims.

**CLAIMS**

1. An inlet plenum for coupling airflow from a radial airflow inlet to an axial compressor inlet for a compressor, comprising:
  - 5 a perforated inlet (PI) baffle that comprises a generally cylindrical baffle that circumscribes the compressor inlet and a plurality of apertures, each aperture perforating the baffle to pass the airflow from the radial airflow inlet to the compressor inlet; and
  - 10 a plurality of stagnation vanes, each stagnation vane comprising a generally arc-shaped vane that extends proximate the PI baffle to establish an approximation of stagnant flow around the entire PI baffle to reduce flow distortion of the airflow between the radial airflow inlet and the axial compressor inlet.
2. The inlet plenum of Claim 1, wherein each stagnation vane has a first end  
15 proximate the PI baffle and a second end that extends upstream in the airflow and outwardly toward an outer wall of the inlet plenum.
3. The inlet plenum of Claim 2, wherein the shape of each stagnation vane and  
20 the position of its first end proximate the PI baffle prevent flow separation behind the stagnation vanes
4. The inlet plenum of Claim 2, wherein the shape of each stagnation vane and  
25 the position of its first end proximate the PI baffle enhances jet flow through the apertures in the PI baffle near its first end.
5. The inlet plenum of Claim 2, wherein the first end of each stagnation vane  
attaches to the PI baffle at a corresponding attachment point.
6. The inlet plenum of Claim 1, wherein the inlet plenum comprises two of the  
30 stagnation vanes.

7. The inlet plenum of Claim 1, wherein each aperture in the PI barrier is small enough to block foreign matter within the airflow greater than a critical size that may cause foreign object damage (FOD) to a compressor impeller for the compressor.

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8. An inlet plenum for coupling airflow from a radial airflow inlet to an axial compressor inlet for a compressor, comprising:

10 a perforated inlet (PI) baffle that comprises a generally cylindrical baffle that circumscribes the compressor inlet and a plurality of apertures, each aperture perforating the baffle of such size to pass the airflow from the radial airflow inlet to the compressor inlet and block foreign matter within the airflow greater than a critical size that may cause foreign object damage (FOD) to a compressor impeller for the compressor; and

15 two stagnation vanes, each stagnation vane comprising a generally arc-shaped vane with a first end proximate the PI baffle and a second end that extends upstream in the airflow and outwardly toward an outer wall of the inlet plenum to establish an approximation of stagnant flow around the entire PI baffle to reduce flow distortion of the airflow between the radial airflow inlet and the axial compressor inlet.

20

9. The inlet plenum of Claim 8, wherein the shape of each stagnation vane and the position of its first end proximate the PI baffle prevent flow separation behind the stagnation vanes

25 10. The inlet plenum of Claim 8, wherein the shape of each stagnation vane and the position of its first end proximate the PI baffle enhances jet flow through the apertures in the PI baffle near its first end.

11. A gas turbine engine, comprising:  
a compressor with an axial compressor inlet;  
a radial airflow inlet for supplying ambient air to the compressor; and  
an inlet plenum for coupling airflow from the radial airflow inlet to the axial  
5 compressor inlet for a compressor that comprises a perforated inlet (PI) baffle that  
comprises a generally cylindrical baffle that circumscribes the compressor inlet and  
a plurality of apertures, each aperture perforating the baffle to pass the airflow from  
the radial airflow inlet to the compressor inlet; and a plurality of stagnation vanes,  
each stagnation vane comprising a generally arc-shaped vane that extends proximate  
10 the PI baffle to establish an approximation of stagnant flow around the entire PI  
baffle to reduce flow distortion of the airflow between the radial airflow inlet and  
the axial compressor inlet.
12. The gas turbine engine of Claim 11, wherein each stagnation vane has a first  
15 end proximate the PI baffle and a second end that extends upstream in the airflow  
and outwardly toward an outer wall of the inlet plenum.
13. The gas turbine engine of Claim 12, wherein the shape of each stagnation  
vane and the position of its first end proximate the PI baffle prevent flow separation  
20 behind the stagnation vanes
14. The gas turbine engine of Claim 12, wherein the shape of each stagnation  
vane and the position of its first end proximate the PI baffle enhances jet flow  
through the apertures in the PI baffle near its first end.  
25
15. The gas turbine engine of Claim 12, wherein the first end of each stagnation  
vane attaches to the PI baffle at a corresponding attachment point.
16. The gas turbine engine of Claim 11, wherein the inlet plenum comprises two  
30 of the stagnation vanes.

17. The gas turbine engine of Claim 11, wherein each aperture in the PI barrier is small enough to block foreign matter within the airflow greater than a critical size that may cause foreign object damage (FOD) to a compressor impeller for the compressor.

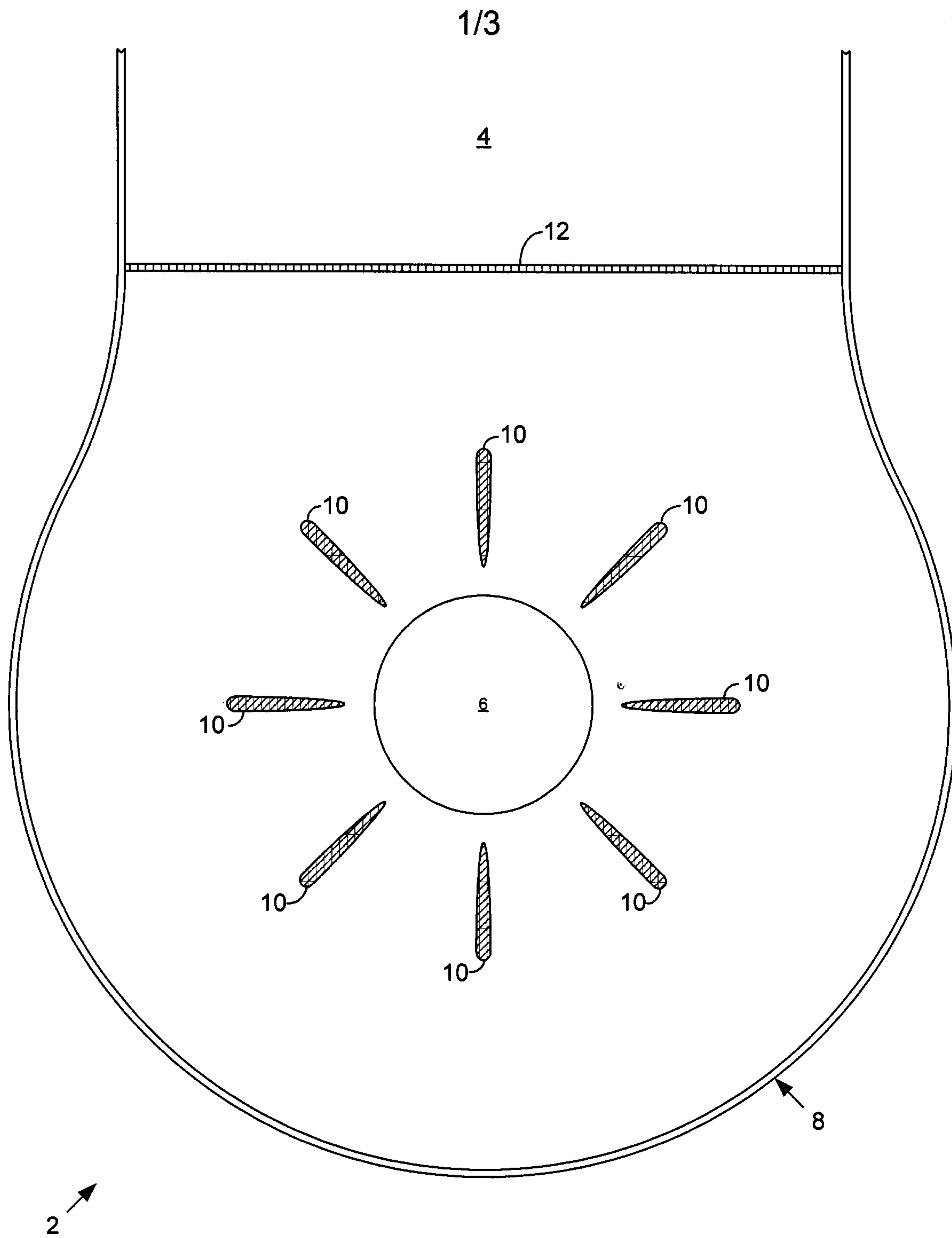


Figure 1  
Prior Art

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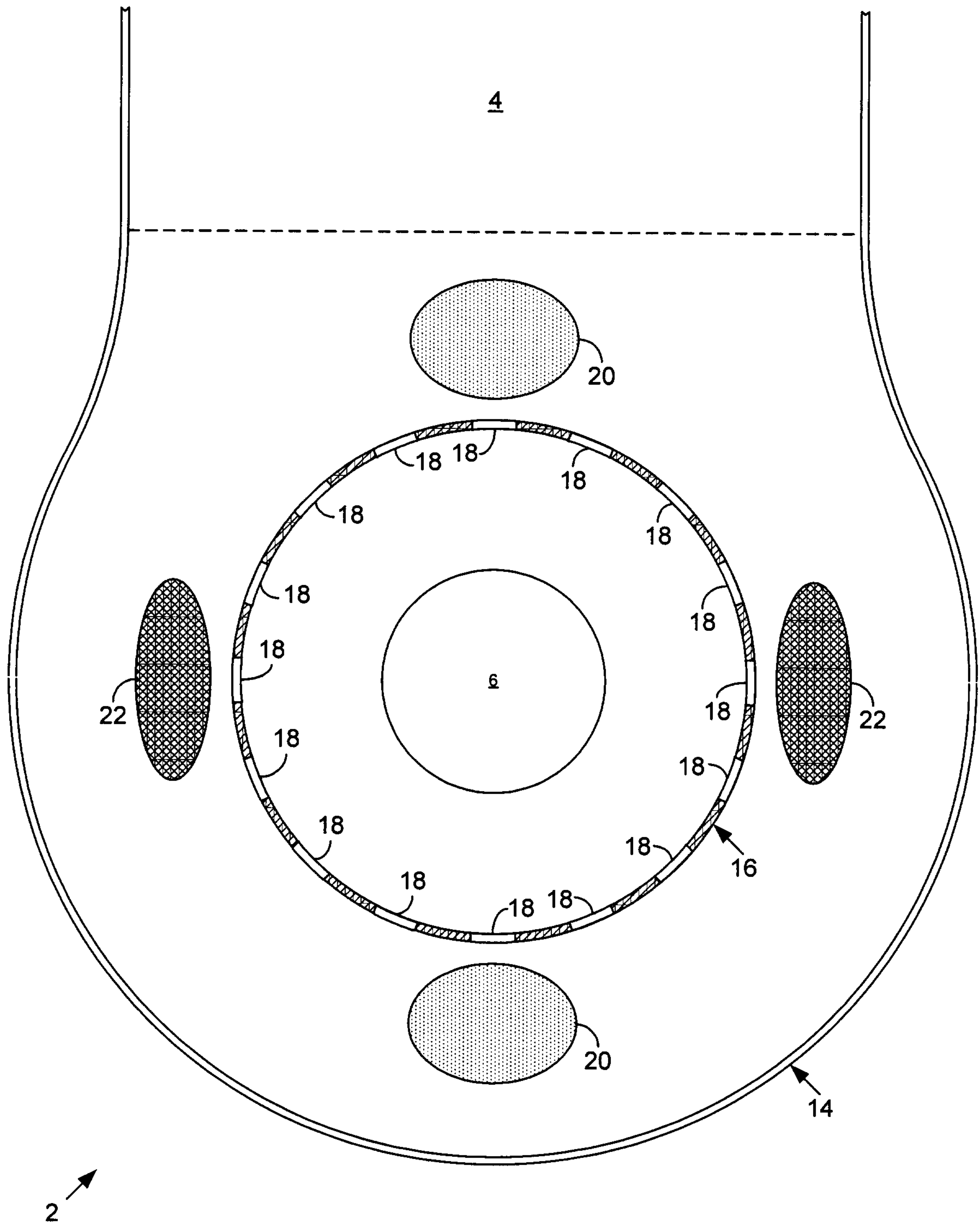


Figure 2  
Prior Art

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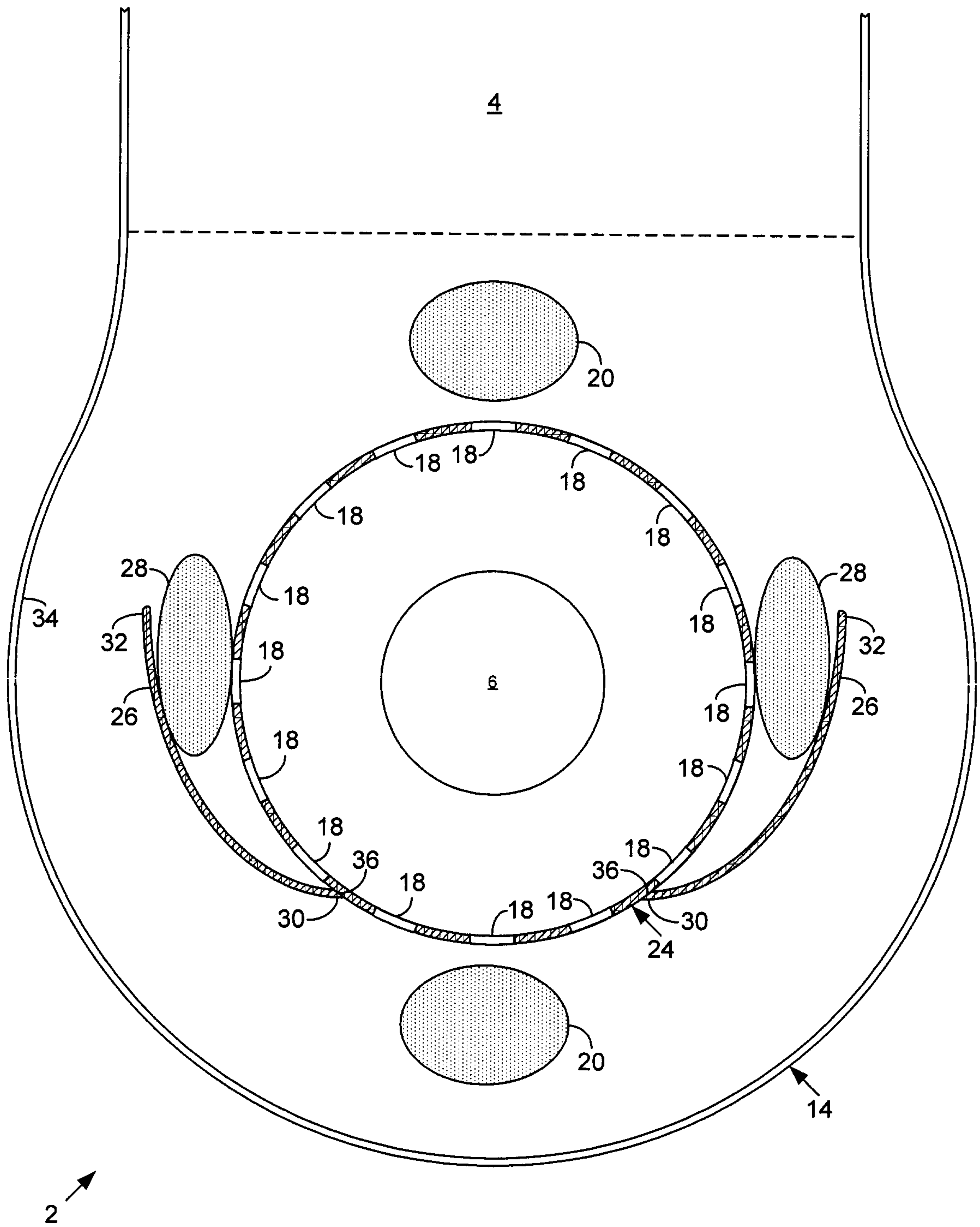


Figure 3

