

630734

FORM 1
REGULATION 9

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PATENTS ACT 1952-1973

APPLICATION FOR A PATENT

We ETHICON, INC.

of U.S. Route No. 22, Somerville, NEW JERSEY 08876, U.S.A.

hereby apply for the grant of a Patent for an invention entitled:

ONE PIECE CHANNEL SUTURE PACKAGE

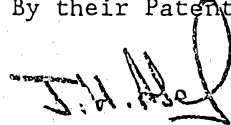
which is described in the accompanying complete specification. This Application is a Convention Application and is based on the Applications numbered: 406,223 for a Patent or similar protection made in U.S.A. on 12 September 1989.

Our address for service is:

GRIFFITH HACK & CO
71 YORK STREET
SYDNEY NSW 2000

DATED this 12th day of September 1990

ETHICON, INC.
By their Patent Attorney



GRIFFITH HACK & CO

TO: THE COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS
COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

5200A:rk

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
PATENTS ACT 1952

DECLARATION IN SUPPORT OF AN APPLICATION FOR A PATENT

In support of an application made by ETHICON, INC.

for a patent of an invention entitled:

"ONE PIECE CHANNEL SUTURE PACKAGE"

I, PAUL COLETTI, ASSISTANT SECRETARY
of ETHICON, INC.

located at U.S. Route #22, Somerville, New Jersey 08876, United States of America, do solemnly and sincerely declare as follows:

1. I am authorized by the above-mentioned application for the patent to make this declaration on its behalf.
2. The name and address of each actual inventor of the invention is as follows:

MARTIN SOBEL, STEPHEN GEORGE, ANTHONY ESTEVES, ROBERT JAMES CERWIN, MARVIN ALPERN, ROBERT DANIELE, residing at 19 Floral Road, Flemington, NJ 08822; 15 Brighton Terrace, Wayne, NJ 07470; 59-4A Taurus Drive, Somerville, NJ 08876; RR#1, Box 290, Pipersville, PA 18947; 177 Hawthorne Avenue, Glen Ridge, NJ 07028; 264 Old York Road, Flemington, NJ 08822, U.S.A.

and the facts upon which the applicant is entitled to make this application are as follows:

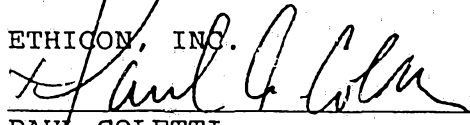
The applicant is the assignee of the invention from the inventors.

3. The basic application(s) is defined by Section 141 of the Act was (were) made as follows:

Country United States Serial No. 406,223 filed
September 12, 1989
in the names of M. Sobel, S. George, A. Esteves, R.J. Cerwin, M. Alpern and R. Daniele
The basic application(s) referred to in the preceding paragraphs was (were) the first application(s) made in a Convention country in respect of the invention the subject of this application.

This 6 day of Sept, 1990
New Brunswick, New Jersey

ETHICON, INC.


PAUL COLETTI
Assistant Secretary

GRIFFITH, HACK & CO., SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

(12) PATENT ABRIDGMENT (11) Document No. AU-B-62436/90
(19) AUSTRALIAN PATENT OFFICE (10) Acceptance No. 630734

- (54) Title
ONE PIECE CHANNEL SUTURE PACKAGE
- International Patent Classification(s)
(51)^s **A61B 017/04**
- (21) Application No. : **62436/90** (22) Application Date : **12.09.90**
- (30) Priority Data
- (31) Number (32) Date (33) Country
406223 12.09.89 US UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
- (43) Publication Date : **21.03.91**
- (44) Publication Date of Accepted Application : **05.11.92**
- (71) Applicant(s)
ETHICON, INC.
- (72) Inventor(s)
MARTIN SOBEL; STEPHEN GEORGE; ANTHONY ESTEVES; ROBERT JAMES CERWIN; MARVIN ALPERN; ROBERT DANIELE
- (74) Attorney or Agent
GRIFFITH HACK & CO. , GPO Box 4164, SYDNEY NSW 2001
- (56) Prior Art Documents
US 3972418
EP 40515
EP 91792
- (57) Claim

1. A suture package defining major surfaces of a suture winding channel and comprising:
- a plurality of door means hingedly attached to the suture winding channel, the door means being closeable to enclose a suture within the suture winding channel; and
- means for locking the door means in their closed position.

630734

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PATENTS ACT 1952

Form 10

COMPLETE SPECIFICATION

FOR OFFICE USE

Short Title:

Int. Cl:

Application Number:
Lodged:

Complete Specification-Lodged:
Accepted:
Lapsed:
Published:

Priority:

Related Art:

TO BE COMPLETED BY APPLICANT

Name of Applicant: ETHICON, INC.

Address of Applicant: U.S. Route No. 22, Somerville, NEW
JERSEY 08876, U.S.A.

Actual Inventor: Martin Sobel; Stephen George; Anthony
Esteves; Robert James Cerwin; Marvin
Alpern and Robert A. Daniele

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SYDNEY NSW 2000

Complete Specification for the invention entitled:

ONE PIECE CHANNEL SUTURE PACKAGE

The following statement is a full description of this
invention, including the best method of performing it
known to us:-

4089-JN:DJH:RK

S 017221 120990

5200A:rk

ONE PIECE CHANNEL SUTURE PACKAGES

5 This invention relates to holders for needles and, in particular, to holders and packages formed of a single molded piece and forming a channel for the retention and delivery of sutures containing attached needles.

10 In the packaging of surgical needles including surgical needles to which there are attached sutures, it is important that the needle and its attached suture be easily removable from the package in one smooth motion. When the needle is grasped by a forceps and pulled, the needle should easily release from the package, and the
15 suture should withdraw from the package smoothly without binding or snagging in the package, and without becoming entangled. Also, suture materials, particularly monofilaments such as catgut, polydioxanone and the like, especially the heavier deniers, are known to take a set
20 during storage; i.e. they tend to have a "memory" causing them to retain the shape of their position in the package after removal from the package. Hence the package should be designed so that any tight bends or curves required in order to package the suture be eliminated.

25 It is further desirable for suture packages to be economical to manufacture in volume quantities. A manufacturing process directed toward this end is one in which the suture package is formed of two interlocking
30 molded, stamped, or thermoformed polymeric members. Packages made in such a process enable the formation of projections useful for winding and capturing the suture in channels designed for that purpose. These packages also enable the maintenance of fine tolerances necessary in the
35 execution of a precision design.

Molded, stamped or thermoformed polymeric suture packages as described above are shown in U.S. Patents 3,972,418 (Schuler et al.); 4,424,898 (Thyen et al.); 4,549,649 (Roshdy); 4,699,271 (Lincoln et al.) and in
5 United States patent application serial number 236,057, entitled "Oval Wrap Suture Package" and filed on August 24, 1988. The latter application describes a two-piece oval suture package in which is formed a channel for winding and retention of the suture. The channel is
10 fully formed when an upper piece of the package mates with the lower piece of the package to fully enclose the suture wound in the channel. The needle which is attached at one end of the suture is retained in a needle park formed in the center of the oval channel, with the
15 attached suture passing through a vent opening in the inner wall of the channel.

This two-piece package requires the molding or stamping of two pieces to form the package, which is relatively costly and requires the assembly of the two
20 pieces in association with the winding of the suture in the package. It would be desirable to reduce the cost of such a package by providing a package with an enclosed channel through the use of a single package piece. Such a one-piece package would simplify the molding and
25 handling of the packages and would reduce the product cost.

Accordingly, the present invention provides a suture package defining major surfaces of a suture winding channel and comprising:

30 a plurality of door means hingedly attached to the suture winding channel, the door means being closeable to enclose a suture within the suture winding channel; and
means for locking the door means in their closed
35 position.

Preferably the suture package is a one piece needle and suture holder in which an oval-shaped channel is formed for retention of the suture. One end of the

suture may exit the oval channel toward the center of the oval and is attached to a needle located in the center of the oval. The oval channel can include gently rounded end sections, eliminating any tight bends or curves which would induce undesirable suture "memory". The oval channel can be formed with an open side, to which are attached a plurality of hinged doors. After the suture is wound in the open channel, the doors can be folded over the open side of the channel and locked in place to retain the suture within the channel. The illustrated embodiments describe two preferred techniques for locking the doors, and an alternate embodiment utilizes a paper cover to complete the enclosing channel. To afford ease of winding the suture, the bottom of the channel can be perforated for the application of a vacuum to the channel during suture winding. The vacuum will draw the suture into the channel and hold the suture in place until the channel is enclosed by the doors or the paper cover. The package optionally comprises a needle park for retaining the needle in the center of the package. In a preferred embodiment the needle park is backed by a relief flap to enable the needle to be conveniently grasped by a forceps.

Preferred embodiments of the present invention will now be described, by way of example only, in which:

FIGURE 1 illustrates a plan view of a one piece suture package constructed in accordance with the present invention;

FIGURE 2 is a cross-sectional view of the suture package of FIGURE 1;

FIGURES 3a, 3b, and 3c are detailed views of the hinged doors of the suture package of FIGURES 1 and 2;

FIGURES 4a and 4b are partial plan and cross-sectional views of the needle holder of the suture package of FIGURE 1;

FIGURE 5 is an assembly drawing of the suture package of FIGURE 1 with a paper cover;

FIGURE 6 is a plan view of a suture package ^{according to} of the present invention utilizing an alternate locking mechanism for the channel doors; and

FIGURE 7 illustrates a further embodiment of a suture package ^{according to} of the present invention utilizing a paper cover to enclose the suture winding channel.

Referring first to FIGURES 1 and 2, a one piece suture package 10 ~~of the present invention~~ is shown in plan and cross-sectional views. The package may be formed of any surgically compatible polymeric materials, such as polyester plastic, polyethylene, polyvinyl chloride (PVC), polypropylene, or polystyrene. The package includes a central floor area 18 which is surrounded by an outer oval channel 12 having two opposing straight sections connected by two semicircular end sections. The channel is defined by an inner wall 14 which extends upwardly from the floor area. Portions of the door locking means are formed at intervals about the inner wall 14. The bottom and outer periphery of the channel 12 is defined by a curved section 16 of the package, which extends outwardly from the inner wall 14 at the level of the floor 18 and curves upwardly to approximately the elevation of the inner wall 14. Attached at the outer periphery of the curved section 16 are a plurality of hinged doors 20. The doors are hinged at an elevation which is slightly below the uppermost elevation of the outer periphery of the curved section and the inner wall so that, when the doors are folded over the channel and latched in place, the upper surfaces of the doors will align with the upper elevation of the outer periphery and inner wall. Formed in each door is a



portion of the door locking means, including a latch opening 26 bounded by a door latch projection 28 and two fins 36, which are described in further detail below.

5 Located inside the oval channel is a needle park including undercut and rigid needle holders 54 and 56, which will be described in further detail below. Adjacent the needle park is a relief flap 50 defined by a cutout 52. A portion of the inner wall 14 is eliminated in the
10 vicinity of the needle park to form a vent 40 in the channel wall through which the suture of the needle accesses the channel 12 between doors 20' and 20". The bottom of the channel 12 formed by the curved section 16 is periodically perforated by holes 80 and 82 around the
15 circumference of the channel.

FIGURE 3a is a partial cross-sectional view of the package of FIGURE 1 showing in enlargement a hinged door 20 and the channel 12. The hinge 22 of the door 20 is
20 attached to the outer periphery of the channel at an elevation which is just below the uppermost elevation of the channel on either side of the hinge so that the door will be flush with the top of the channel when it is closed. The door locking means 24 includes a door latch opening 26 and a door latch projection 28. An overhang 39 is formed at the edge of the door. A fin 36 is located at
25 each end of the door latch opening 26.

Referring concurrently to FIGURE 3c, a latch post 30
30 is formed in the inner wall 14 opposite the hinged door 20. A pair of standoffs 38 are formed along the inner wall at either end of the latch post location as shown also in FIGURE 1. Extending from the latch post 30 toward the inside of the package (i.e., over the floor 18) is a
35 latch post projection 32.

When the door 20 is closed and latched to retain a suture within the channel 20 it has the cross-sectional appearance as shown in FIGURE 3b. The top of the latch post 30 engages the door latch opening 26 and the door latch projection 28 hooks around the latch post projection 32 to lock the door in the closed position. The door is prevented from unlatching in the presence of lateral compression by the abutment of the edge 34 of the opening 26 against the edges of the standoffs 38, which prevents unhooking of the two projections. When the door is closed the sides of the door rest on the edges 44, shown in FIGURE 3c, locating the upper surface of the door flush with the top of the inner wall 14. The fins 36 at either end of the opening 26 engage the openings 42 at either end of the latch post 30. The fins 36 and the standoffs 38 serve to prevent the suture from binding or becoming entrapped in the door locking means. As FIGURE 3b illustrates, the curved fins 36 and the standoffs 38 cause the suture to be located away from and to bridge the engaged door opening and latch post, preventing the suture from becoming caught between these two members, either during closure of the door or during withdrawal of the suture from the channel.

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Referring to FIGURES 4a and 4b the needle park of the package of FIGURE 1 is shown in greater detail. The needle park comprises a wall 60 extending upward from the central floor 18 of the package. The wall 60 is interrupted periodically by openings and the wall ends are tapered at the openings as shown at 62 and 64 to form needle holders 56 and 54. The needle holder 56 has the tapered wall ends secured to the underlying floor of the package, enabling only minimal movement and flexing of the tapered ends when a needle is inserted between them. This

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relatively rigid needle holder 56 will thus retain only a needle of a gauge which is matched fairly closely to the dimension of the opening. By comparison the package floor beneath the needle holder 54 has been undercut by removal of the floor area indicated at 58, which enables the tapered ends of the overlying needle holder to flex and bend somewhat when a needle is inserted in the wall opening. Thus the undercut needle holder 54 can accommodate a relatively wider range of needle gauges as compared with the rigid needle holder 56. Furthermore, the undercut needle holder 54 is undercut upward a short dimension from the floor surface, which causes a needle to be securely retained in the undercut space below the tapered wall ends and above the surface of the package floor, as illustrated in FIGURE 4b.

FIGURES 1 and 4b show that the needle park contains two rigid needle holders and two undercut needle holders. This permits the package 10 to hold either a suture with a needle at one end, or a suture with needles attached at both ends, with a choice of needle holders for either type of suture. With the choice of two types of needle holders, the package can accommodate a wide range of needle gauges.

Referring to FIGURE 5, an assembled package 10 with a needle 2 and suture 4 is shown with a paper cover 90. The package is easily assembled by placing the package 10 on an assembly platform with a number of upwardly extending pins. Two of the pins are aligned to extend upward through holes 66 and 68 in the center of the package to retain the package in its assembly position on the platform. Eight other pins extend upward and are aligned to pass through the holes 82 of the channel (see FIGURE 1). The platform is open beneath the remaining channel

holes 80 and a vacuum source below the platform draws air through the holes 80. With the package so emplaced, the needle 2 is located in the needle holder as shown in the drawing, and the suture 4 is looped above the pin
5 extending through hole 66 then downward through the vent 40 and into the channel 12. The suture is then wound in a clockwise direction around the pins which extend through the channel holes 82. It may be seen in FIGURE 1 that the
10 holes 82 extend inward toward the center of the package by a greater dimension than the holes 80. This allows location of the extending pins close to the inner wall 14. When the suture is wound around the pins and the pins then are withdrawn from the holes, the suture will be
15 loosely positioned in the center of the channel 12, since the pins serve to keep the suture away from the inner wall of the channel during winding by the dimension of the thickness of the pins. As the suture is wound around the
20 pins the flow of air through the holes 80 will draw the suture down into the channel. When the end, or "tail" of the suture is reached, the flow of air will likewise draw the tail of the suture into the channel. With the suture completely wound in the channel the doors are folded closed and latched to the latch posts of the inner channel wall. The pins are then withdrawn from the holes 66, 68,
25 and 82.

The paper cover 90 is then placed over the top of the package to fully protect the suture and needle from any further contact during final assembly of the package. The
30 cover 90 includes a scored tear line 94 along which the cover will preferentially tear when it is grasped at the tear corner 96 for opening. The cover 90 also includes a plurality of perforated push-out tabs 92. These tabs are located so as to be in alignment with ones of the closed
35 doors 20. When the tabs are pressed downward the outer

edges of the tabs snap under the overhanging edges 39 of the doors with which they are aligned, which retains the cover in place on the package 10. The fully enclosed suture package is then ready for final overwrap packaging, which generally comprises hermetically sealing the package in a foil overwrap.

When the package is to be opened the user grasps the tear corner 96 of the package and tears the overwrap and cover downward, causing the cover 90 to open along the scored tear line 94. This reveals that portion of the package to the right of the needle holder wall 60, with the point of the needle still protected by the cover to the left of the holder. The user then grasps the needle with a forceps. Since the needle is resting flush with the floor of the package, making it difficult to securely grasp the needle with the tip of the forceps, the relief flap 50 is provided. As the user presses the tip of the forceps against the relief flap the flap will give way and bend away from the needle, thereby enabling the user to pass the tip of the forceps beyond the needle. The needle may then be securely grasped in the tip of the forceps and removed from the needle holder.

Moreover, when the package is enclosed in a foil overwrap, the silver of the foil which backs the package behind the needle can blend with the silvery needle, causing the needle to be difficult to distinguish from this reflective background. The relief flap 50 obviates this problem by presenting a contrasting background behind the needle. The polymeric package can be tinted or colored a milky white or some other contrasting color, which will highlight the needle in front of the relief flap. The flap also covers the foil overwrap located behind the flap. This contrasting background thus makes

it easier to clearly see fine gauge needles in the package.

FIGURE 5 shows a ramp 67 formed to the right of the relief flap location. The ramp 67 is also shown in FIGURE 1. The purpose of the ramp 67 is to guide the needle barrel up and out of the package during withdrawal, without snagging on the inner wall 14 of the channel at the oval end of the package.

10 In a conventional figure-8 wound suture package, the suture is looped from its point of attachment at the barrel of the needle back toward the point of the needle, where the figure-8 wind is formed. This configuration can cause the needle tip to catch on a loop of the suture and damage the suture. However, in the package of the present invention it may be seen that the suture is looped to the right from the needle barrel, around the hole 66 and down through the vent 40. This winding pattern keeps the suture removed to the right of the needle and the needle point. As the needle is lifted from the needle holder and the suture pulled from the channel, the suture is kept to the right of and away from the needle point and any possible damage.

25 FIGURE 6 is a plan view of an alternate embodiment of ~~the present invention~~. The package 110 of FIGURE 6 is similar to the embodiment of FIGURE 1, containing a central floor 118, an inner channel wall 114, an oval channel 112, and hinged doors 120. In this embodiment the door locking means includes a plurality of posts 130 located around the outer surface of the wall 114 in alignment with the doors 120. The posts 130 are offset from the surface of the wall 114 to provide standoffs for the suture from the wall 114. The door locking means also includes a pair of holes 124 formed in each door 120.

When the hinged doors are closed the posts 130 mate in the holes 124 of the doors in a force fit to hold the doors closed. The posts 130 can alternatively be sized to extend through the doors, enabling the tips of the posts to be swaged to secure the doors in their closed position.

Like the embodiment of FIGURE 1, the package 110 includes a needle park including rigid and undercut needle holders 156 and 154 formed in a needle holder wall 160. Instead of a relief flap, the package 110 has a relief opening 150 formed in the floor of the package adjacent the needle park. A user can securely grasp a needle for withdrawal by pinching the needle in the tip of a forceps with the forceps tip extended into the relief opening 150. In this embodiment a contrasting overwrap background would preferably be located behind the relief opening so that the silvery needle would be easily seen by the user.

FIGURE 7 illustrates a further embodiment ~~of the present invention~~ in which the open suture winding channel is enclosed by a paper cover 190. The package 210 of this embodiment is similar to that of FIGURE 6 with a channel 212 and a plurality of posts 230 extending upwardly from the inner wall of the channel, but this embodiment contains no hinged doors. After the needle is placed in the needle holder and the suture wound in the channel 212, a paper cover 190 is placed over the open package with holes 192 of the cover aligned with and engaging the posts 230. The ends of the posts which extend through the cover are then softened or swaged to hold the cover in place. The paper cover further includes a cover flap 195 overlying the needle position of the package. The cover flap is hinged to the cover 190 at 194. When the package and its overwrap are opened by tearing downward from the corner 196, the hinged cover flap 195 swings downward at



its hinge to reveal a cutout area 198 of the underlying cover. The needle and suture may be accessed and withdrawn from the package through this cutout area 198 while the channel 212 remains completely enclosed by the paper cover 190.

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THE CLAIMS DEFINING THE INVENTION ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. A suture package defining major surfaces of a suture winding channel and comprising:
5 a plurality of door means hingedly attached to the suture winding channel, the door means being closeable to enclose a suture within the suture winding channel; and means for locking the door means in their closed position.

- 10 2. A suture package as claimed in claim 1, wherein the suture winding channel comprises two substantially straight opposing sections connected by opposing semicircular end sections resulting in a generally oval shaped winding channel having an inner and
15 outer wall.

3. A suture package as claimed in claim 2 wherein the suture winding channel is closed and encloses a central area having a point of access to the suture winding channel.

- 20 4. A suture package as claimed in claim 3, wherein the suture winding channel is located about the periphery of the central area.

5. A suture package as claimed in claim 3 or claim 4,
25 further comprising a needle holder located in the central area, wherein the point of access allows passage of a suture from the central area into the suture winding channel.

6. A suture package as claimed in any one of claims 3
30 to 5 wherein the point of access is located in the vicinity of the connection of a semicircular section to a substantially straight section.

7. A suture package as claimed in any one of claims 3



to 6 wherein the point of access comprises an opening in the inner wall of the suture winding channel.

5 8. A suture package as claimed in claim 5 or one of claims 6 or 7 when dependent on claim 5 further comprising:

a curved needle located in the needle holder with the ends of the needle curving away from the point of access; and

10 a suture attached to the barrel of the curved needle and forming a loop extending from the barrel away from the point of the needle and into the point of access.

15 9. A suture package as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 8 wherein the suture winding channel has an open side, and the door means are hingingly attached at the open side of the channel so as to be adapted for closure over the open side of the channel.

20 10. A suture package as claimed in claim 9 wherein the locking means comprises a latch mechanism located on the door means and the channel.

25 11. A suture package as claimed in claim 10 wherein the latch mechanism includes an aperture located in the door means and an aperture interlocking post located on the channel.

30 12. A suture package as claimed in claim 11 wherein the door means further includes fin means projecting from the door means and arranged thereon such that the fin means project into the channel when the door means closes the channel, the fin means being adapted for preventing binding of a suture within the latch mechanism.



- 5
13. A suture package as claimed in claim 2 or any one of claims 2 to 12 when dependent on claim 2 wherein the channel further includes standoff means projecting from the inner wall of the channel for bridging sections of the inner wall.
- 10
14. A suture package as claimed in any one of the preceding claims wherein the suture winding channel is located about the periphery of the package and includes an or said inner wall projecting from the floor of the package and an outer edge opposing the inner wall, wherein the door means are hingedly attached to pivot about the outer edge of the channel.
- 15
15. A suture package as claimed in claim 14 wherein the suture winding channel further includes a curved section extending outwardly from the base of the inner wall to the outer edge.
- 20
16. A suture package as claimed in claim 15 wherein, when the door means are closed, the suture winding channel in cross-section comprises a substantially planar inner wall, a planar top wall formed by the door means, and a curved wall connecting the inner and top walls.
- 25
17. A suture package as claimed in claim 16 wherein portions of the channel are open adjacent to and intermediate the closed door means.
- 30
18. A suture package as claimed in any one of claims 14 to 17 wherein an edge of the door means overhangs the inside of the inner wall upon closure of the door means.
19. A suture package as claimed in claim 18 further comprising



a perforated cover attached to the package by tabs extending therefrom and engaging the overhanging edge of the door means.

- 5 20. A suture package as claimed in claim 19 wherein the perforated cover further includes a tear score line enabling the cover to preferentially open to reveal a needle location within the package.
- 10 21. A suture package as claimed in claim 3 or any one of claims 4 to 20 when dependent on claim 3, wherein the central area includes a wall projecting therefrom, the wall being interrupted by a break at at least one location, wherein a needle may be retained within the or each break in the wall.
- 15 22. A suture package as claimed in claim 21, wherein opposing wall ends at the or each break are tapered toward each other.
- 20 23. A suture package as claimed in claim 22, wherein the material of the central area beneath the tapered wall ends is undercut.
- 25 24. A suture package as claimed in claim 5 or any one of claims 6 to 23 when dependent on claim 5, wherein the central area includes a flap formed therein by the elimination of a portion of the central area adjacent the needle holder, the flap being hingedly connected to the central area at a side of the flap remote from the needle holder.
- 30 25. A suture package as claimed in claim 5 or any one of claims 6 to 23 when dependant on claim 5, wherein the central area includes void means formed therein by the elimination of a

portion of the central area adjacent the needle holder, the void means comprising means for accommodating the tip of a forceps used to grasp a needle when located in the needle holder.

- 5 26. A suture package as claimed in any one of the preceding claims additionally comprising a plurality of apertures formed in the floor of the suture winding channel for assisting the winding of a suture in the suture winding channel.
- 10 27. A suture package as claimed in claim 26 wherein the plurality of apertures are arranged to enable a vacuum to be applied to the channel for drawing a suture into the channel.
- 15 28. A suture package as claimed in claim 26 wherein the plurality of apertures are arranged to enable the inserting of a winding instrument into the channel for winding a suture in the channel.
- 20 29. A suture package as claimed in claim 20 when dependent on claim 5 further comprising a plurality of posts extending normal to the central area; and wherein the cover has a plurality of apertures located to engage the posts when the cover is placed over the package.
- 25 30. A suture package substantially as herein described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

Dated this 12th day of August 1992

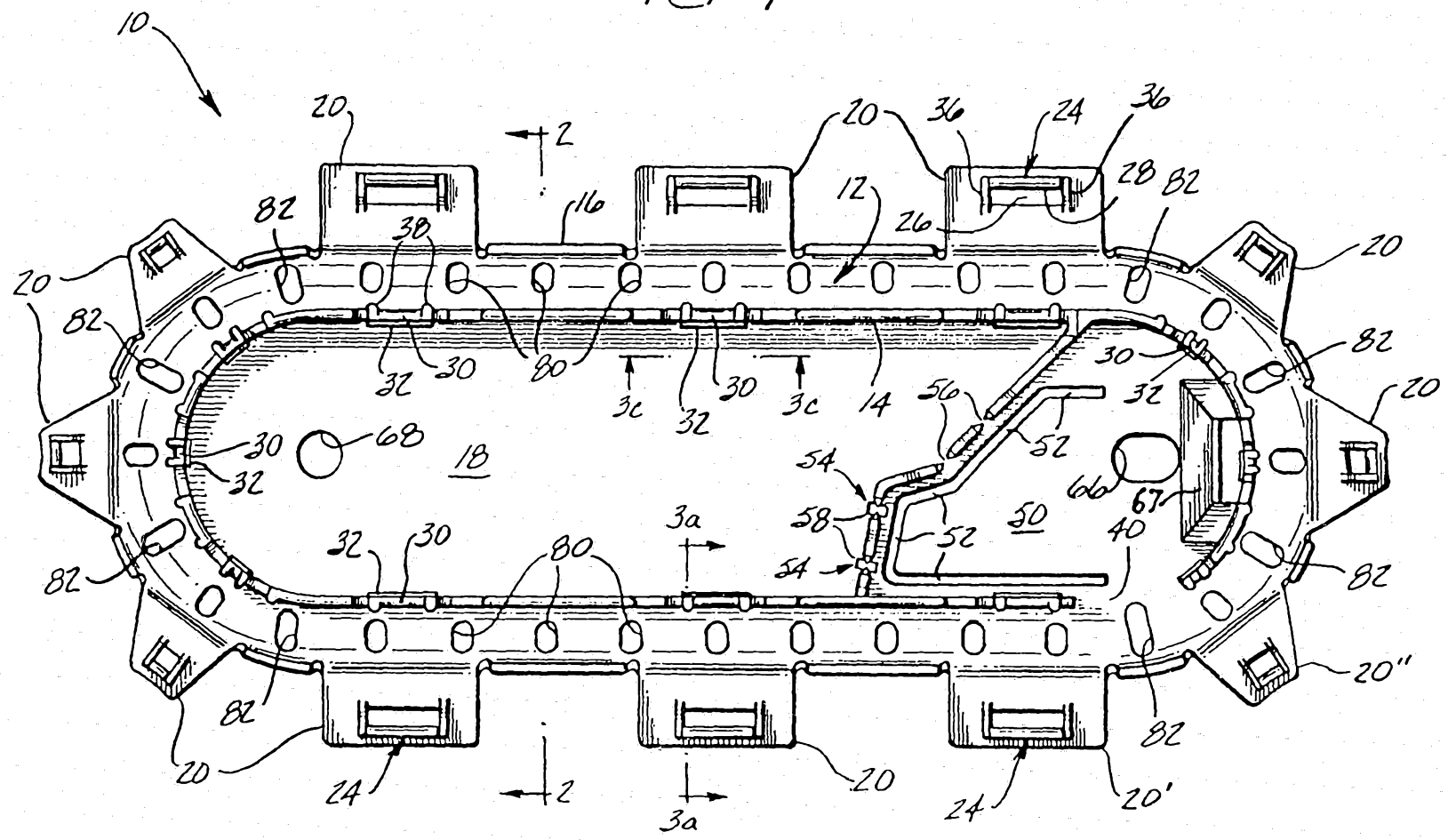
ETHICON, INC.

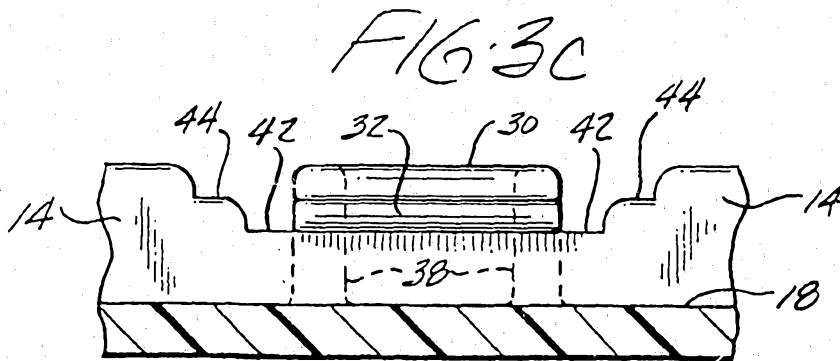
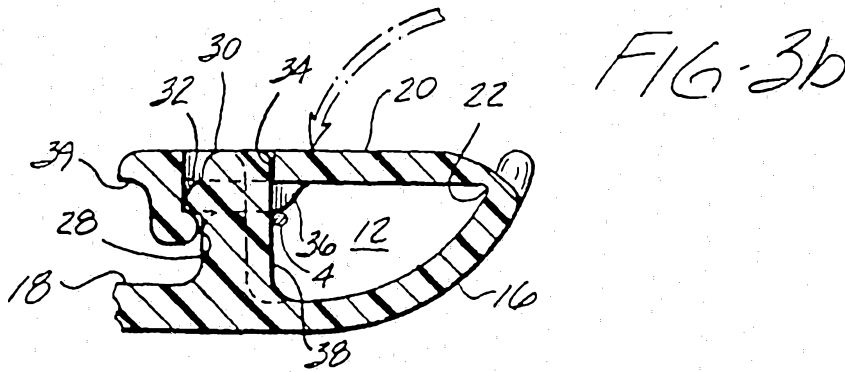
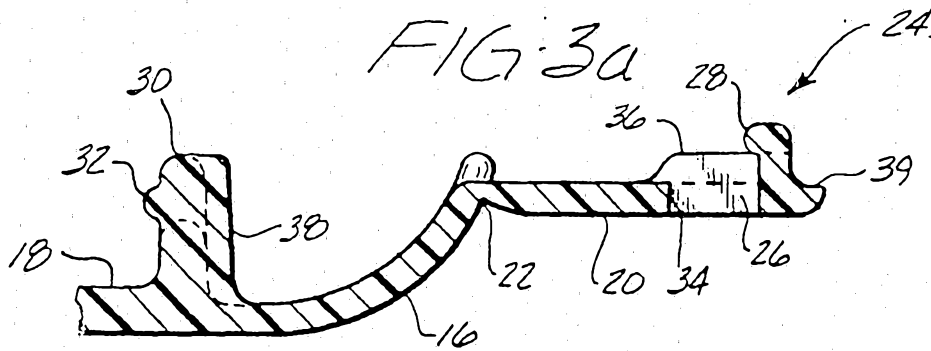
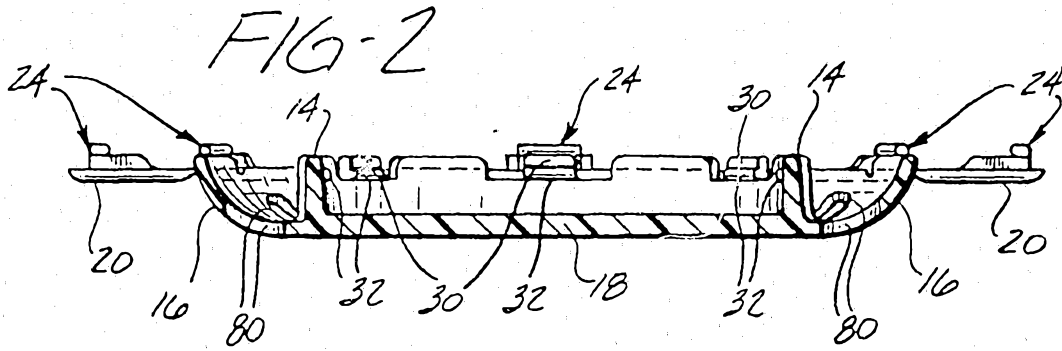
By their Patent Attorneys

GRIFFITH HACK & CO.

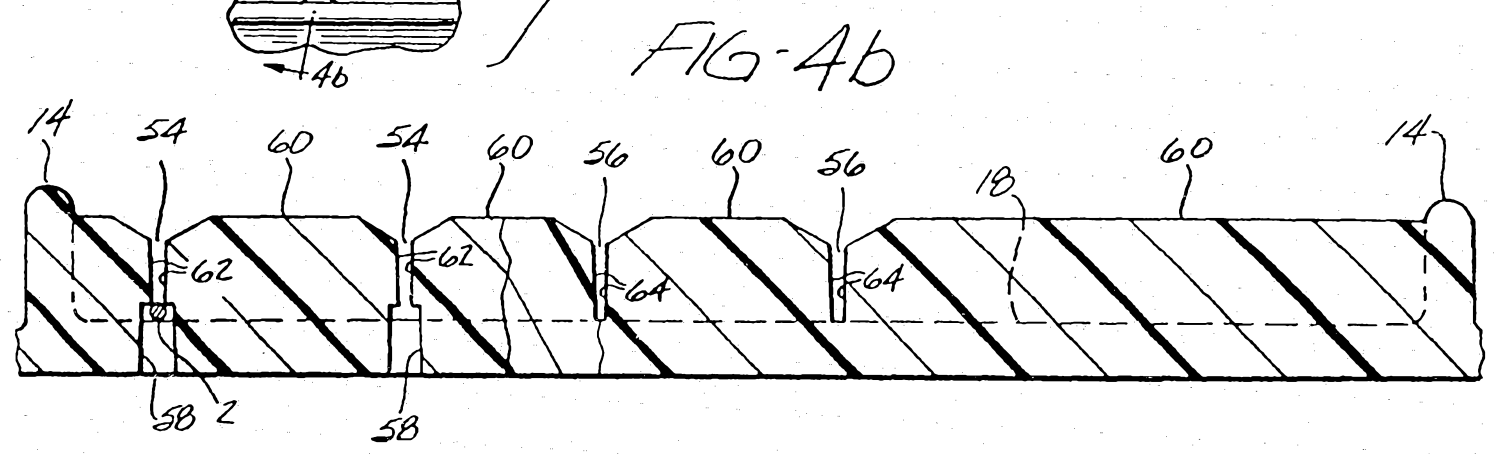
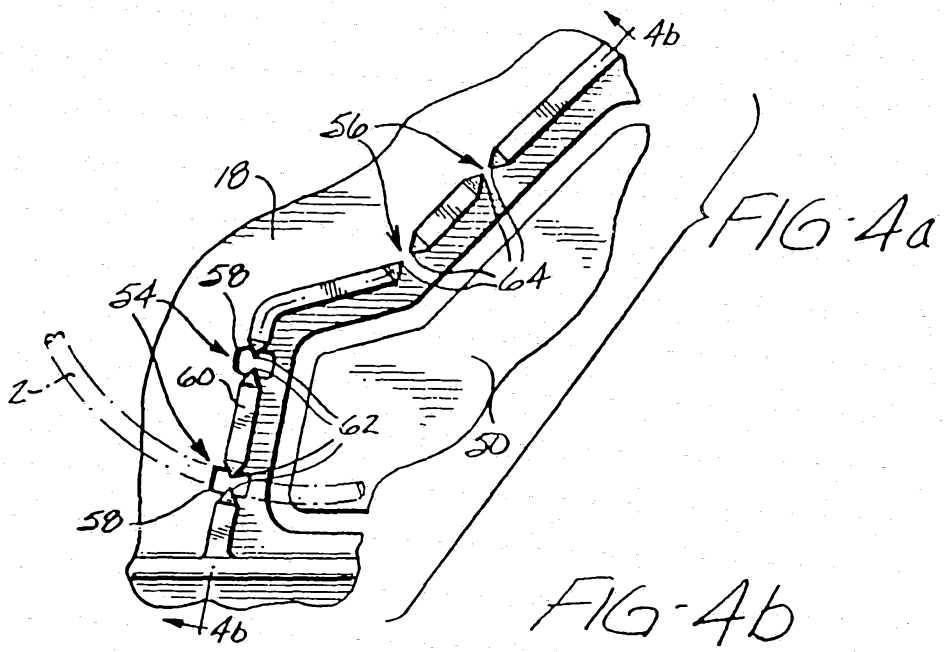


FIG-1





P E N T O N



62436/90

FIG-5

