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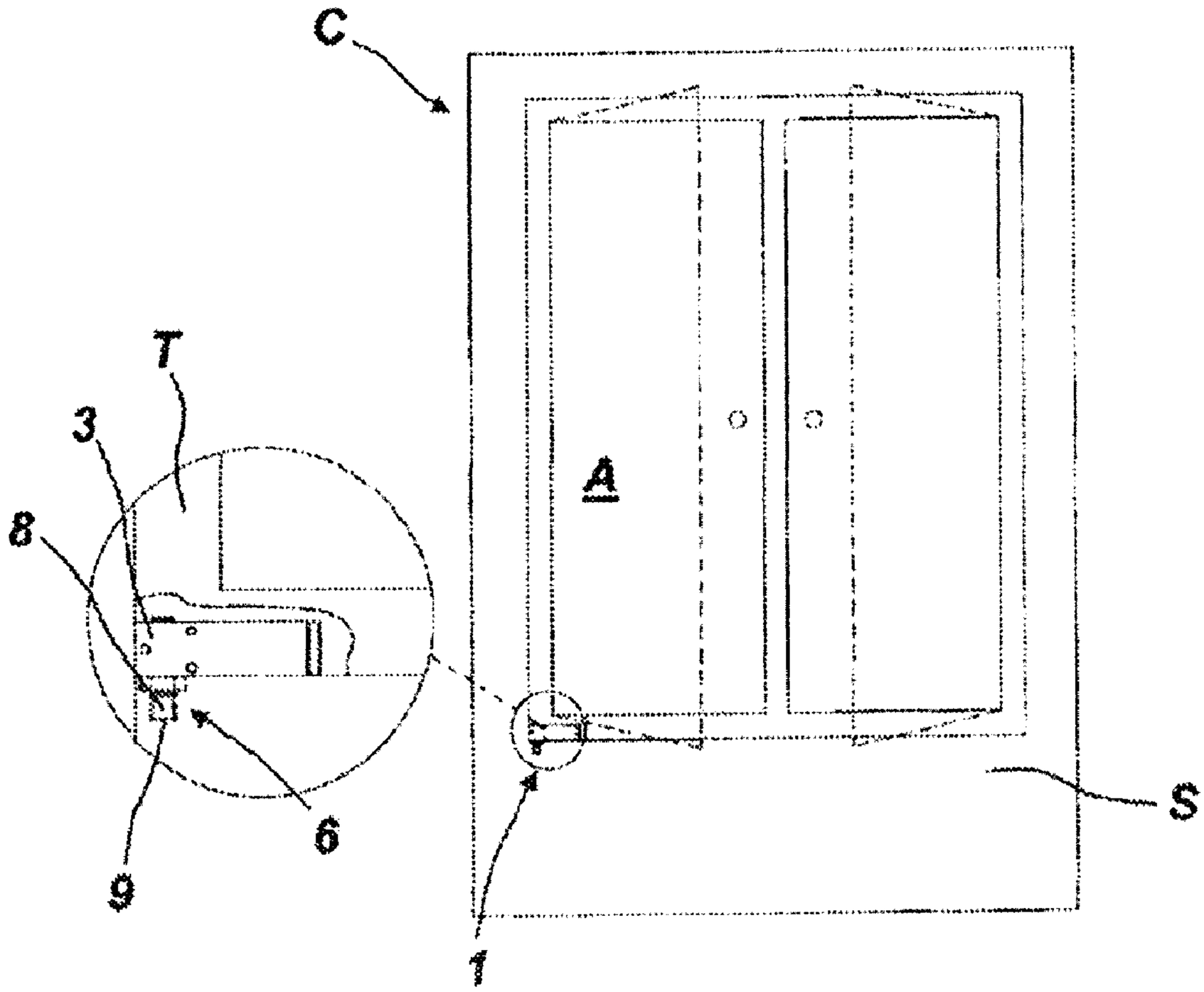

(57) Abrégé/Abstract:
A hinge for cold rooms, swing gates or the like, which comprise a stationary support structure (S) and at least a door (A) movable between an open door position and a closed door position. The hinge comprises a box-like hinge body (3) and a pin (5) reciprocally

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(57) Abrégé(suite)/Abstract(continued):
rotatably coupled to rotate about a first axis (X) between the open door position and the closed door position. Closing means are provided (10) for automatically returning the door (A), as well as a working fluid acting thereon to hydraulically contrast their action. The closing means (10) comprise a cam element (11) unitary with said pin (5) interacting with a plunger element (12) housed in an operating chamber (25) defined within the box-like hinge body (3). The box-like hinge body (3) has an elongated shape to define a second axis (Y) perpendicular to the first one (X).

ABSTRACT

A hinge for cold rooms, swing gates or the like, which comprise a stationary support structure (**S**) and at least a door (**A**) movable between an open door position and a closed door position. The hinge comprises a box-like hinge body (**3**) and a pin (**5**) reciprocally rotatably coupled to rotate about a first axis (**X**) between the open door position and the closed door position. Closing means are provided (**10**) for automatically returning the door (**A**), as well as a working fluid acting thereon to hydraulically contrast their action. The closing means (**10**) comprise a cam element (**11**) unitary with said pin (**5**) interacting with a plunger element (**12**) housed in an operating chamber (**25**) defined within the box-like hinge body (**3**). The box-like hinge body (**3**) has an elongated shape to define a second axis (**Y**) perpendicular to the first one (**X**).

HINGE FOR COLD ROOMS, SWING GATES OR THE LIKE

This is a divisional application of Canadian Patent Application No. 2,747,421 filed internationally on August 4, 2010 and entered nationally on June 16, 2011.

Field of the invention

The present invention is generally applicable in the technical field of the closing hinges, and particularly relates to a hinge for cold rooms, swing gates or the like.

Background of the invention

As known, closing hinges generally comprise a movable element, usually fixed to a door or the like, pivoted on a fix element, usually fixed to the support frame thereof.

Moreover, closing means acting on the movable element to automatically return the door or the like to the closed position are provided.

In the case of cold rooms, swing gates or the like, which comprise a stationary support structure and at least one door which includes a substantially tubular frame to which a double-glazing unit is fixed, the hinges have both the movable and the fix elements visible from outside, external to both the door and the support structure. Such solution is uncomfortable, bulking, unaesthetic and not very effective.

Furthermore, the external position of such known hinges make them extremely exposed to risks of damages and wear.

From the documents US7305797, US2004/206007 and EP1997994 hinges are known, in which the action of the closing means which ensure the return of the door to the closed position is not counteracted. Consequently the risk exists that the door strongly impacts against the support frame, damaging itself.

From the document EP0407150 a door closer is known, which includes hydraulic damping means to counteract the action of the closing

means. Such known device has extremely high bulking, therefore it has necessarily to be mounted on the floor.

The installation of such a device thus requires expensive and difficult break-in works of the floor, which have to be made by qualified operators.

Summary of the invention

The present invention relates to a hinge. The hinge includes a box-like hinge body anchorable between a stationary support structure and a door. The hinge also includes a pin defining a first longitudinal axis anchorable between the stationary support structure and the door. The pin and the box-like hinge body are reciprocally rotatably coupled to rotate around the first axis between an open door position and a closed door position. The hinge also includes closing means for the automatic return of the door from the open to the closed position. The hinge also includes a working fluid acting on said closing mean to hydraulically counteract the action thereof, thus controlling the door rotation from the open position to the closed position. The closing means include a cam element unitary with the pin interacting with a plunger element slidably moveable in an operating chamber within the box-like hinge body along a second axis. The second axis is substantially perpendicular to the first axis between a compressed end position from a corresponding to the open door position and an extending end position corresponding to the closed door position. The plunger element has a pushing head interacting with a substantially countershaped seat of the cam element. The closing means and the working fluid are both entirely housed in the operating chamber. The plunger element comprises a substantially cylindrical back portion and a front portion defining the pushing head. The back portion is designed to separate the operating chamber into a first and a second variable volume compartments in reciprocal fluidic communication. The operating chamber includes control means for controlling the flow of the working fluid between the first and second variable volume compartments. The flow control means include a tubular element interposed between the inner surface of

the operating chamber and the cylindrical back portion of the plunger element to define at least one first hydraulic circuit for the working fluid. The plunger element is tightly housed in the tubular element. The tubular element is tightly housed in the operating chamber.

In a further embodiment of the invention, the first and second variable volume compartments are reciprocally adjacent.

In a further embodiment of the invention, the first and second variable volume compartments are designed to have in correspondence with the closed door position respectively the maximum and minimum volume, the closing means comprising counteracting elastic means located in the first compartment.

In a further embodiment of the invention, the control means comprise a hole passing through the pushing head so as to put into fluidic communication with said first compartment and said second compartment. Further, the hinge includes a check valve interacting with said passing through hole so as allow the flow of the working fluid from the first compartment to the second compartment upon the opening of the door and to prevent the backflow thereof upon the closing of door.

In a further embodiment, the tubular element as another lateral surface which includes a first substantially flat portion. The at least one first hydraulic circuit includes a first channel defined by the interspace between the inner surface of the operating chamber and the first substantially flat portion.

In a further embodiment, the first substantially flat portion extends for the whole length of the outer lateral surface of the tubular element so that the at least one first channel is in fluidic communication with the first variable volume compartment.

In a further embodiment of the invention, the control means further includes first means for adjusting the flow of the working fluid in the at least one first hydraulic circuit in such a manner to adjust the rotation speed of the door from the open to the closed position. The first means for adjusting the flow in the at least one first hydraulic circuit includes at least one

second operating chamber internal to the box-like hinge body which has an inlet fluidically connected with the second variable volume compartment and an outlet fluidically connected with the at least one first channel. The at least one second operating chamber comprises a first adjusting screw inserted in the second operating chamber to obstruct the passing section of the inlet and/or the outlet. This adjusts the rotation speed of the door from the open to the closed position.

In a further embodiment of the invention, the control means include a second hydraulic circuit interposed between the outer surface of the cylindrical back portion of the plunger element and the inner surface of the operating chamber for the controlled backflow of the working fluid from the second compartment to the first variable volume compartment upon the closing of the door. The control means further include second means for adjusting the flow of the working fluid in the second hydraulic circuit so as to adjust the force by which the door reaches the closed position. The second adjusting means in the second hydraulic circuit are designed to impart a latch action to the door towards the closed position when the plunger element is in proximity to the extended end position.

In a further embodiment of the invention, the outer lateral surface of the tubular element includes a second substantially flat portion. The second hydraulic circuit includes a second channel interposed between the inner surface of the operating chamber and the second substantially flat portion. The second substantially flat portion extends only for a part of the length of the outer lateral surface of the tubular element. The tubular element includes a first passing through hole in proximity of an end of the second substantially flat portion facing the outer surface of the cylindrical back portion of the plunger element. The cylindrical back portion of the plunger element has a second passing through hole. The first and second passing through holes are reciprocally uncoupled when the plunger element is in proximity of the compressed end position and reciprocally coupled when the plunger element is in proximity of the extended end position to selectively put into fluidical communication the second channel

with the first variable volume compartment so as to impart the latch action to the door.

In a further embodiment of the invention, the first substantially flat portion and the second substantially flat portion of the outer lateral surface of the tubular element, respectively the first channel and second channel, are reciprocally opposite with respect to a plan passing through the first axis and the second axis.

In a further embodiment of the invention, the second adjusting means in the second hydraulic circuit includes at least one third operating chamber internal to the box-like hinge body which has an inlet fluidically connected to the second variable volume compartment and an outlet fluidically connected with the at least one second channel. The second adjusting means includes a second adjusting screw housed in the third operating chamber so as obstruct the passing section of the inlet and/or the outlet in such a manner to adjust the force by which the latch action is imparted to the door.

In a further embodiment of the invention, the box-like hinge body includes a third channel for the fluidic connection of the second operating chamber and the third operating chamber.

In a further embodiment of the invention, the box-like hinge body has an elongated shape to define the second access. The pushing head has a generally plate-like shape to define a plane substantially perpendicular to the first axis.

In a further embodiment of the invention, the plate-like pushing head has a first couple of substantially flat upper and lower walls. The countershape seat includes a second couple of substantially flat upper and lower walls. The upper and lower walls of the first couple face the corresponding upper and lower walls of the second couple.

In a further embodiment of the invention, the upper and lower flat walls of the first couple and of the second couple are all substantially parallel to the second axis.

In a further embodiment of the invention, the pushing head has a

front face having a predetermined height which is substantially equal to the distance between the upper and lower flat walls of the countershaped seat.

In a further embodiment of the invention, the front face is substantially flat and parallel to the first longitudinal axis and is susceptible to engage with a contact surface of the countershaped seat which is substantially flat and parallel to the first longitudinal axis. The front face and the contact surface are substantially parallel to each other in the closed door position and substantially perpendicular to each other in the open door position.

In a further embodiment of the invention, the operating chamber includes a first generally cylindrical portion having an axis coinciding with the second axis which houses the counteracting elastic means. A second generally cylindrical portion is included, which portion has an axis coinciding with the first axis which houses the countershaped seat and a third generally parallelepiped-like shaped portion interposed between the first two portions which houses the pushing head. The third parallelepiped-like shaped portion has a height lower than the inner diameter of the first cylindrical portion.

In a further embodiment of the invention, the pin is partially inserted in the box-like hinge body with a first portion outcoming from the box-like hinge body for the anchorage to the stationary support structure or to the door and a second portion with the box-like hinge body which includes the cam element.

The hinge according to the invention comprises a fix element, suitable to be anchored to a stationary support structure of a swing gate, a cold room or the like, and a movable element, suitable to be anchored to the movable door of the swing gate, cold room or the like.

The movable element is rotatably coupled to the fix one to rotate on a longitudinal axis between an open door position and a closed door position.

The hinge comprises closing means acting on the movable element to automatically return the door to the closed position.

Furthermore, the hinge comprises a working fluid, generally oil, acting on the closing means to hydraulically counteract the action thereof, adjusting the rotation of the door form the open to the closed door position. The movable element, respectively the fix element, may comprise a box-like hinge body defining a operating chamber and which may have elongated shape along an axis.

Thanks to such combination of features, the hinge may be hidden to the sight by inserting it within the tubular profile defining the frame of the door of a cold room, a swing gate or the like, or within the stationary support structure of the door.

The closing means and the hydraulically counteracting means are entirely housed in one single operating chamber, internal to the movable or to the fix element.

Thanks to such features, the hinge will be very compact and effective, and with a strong aesthetic impact.

The closing means comprise a cam element, unitary with one between the fix and the movable element, which interacts with a plunger element, movable within the other of the fix and the movable elements and movable along an axis substantially perpendicular to the rotation axis between the fix and movable element.

Thanks to such features, the hinge will have a minimum number of constituent parts, with great advantage of the bulkiness of the hinge.

Furthermore, by shaping the hinge in this manner, it can maintain the exact closing position with time, by being also safe.

Such embodiment will allow to obtain a hinge which ensures the controlled movement of the door upon the opening, thus being greatly safe and practical.

Due to bulkiness reasons, the operating chamber defined by the box-like hinge body may include the cam element as well as the plunger element.

In order to minimize the vertical bulkiness, the plunger element may have a generally plate-like shaped pushing head for defining a plane

substantially perpendicular to the rotation axis of the fix and the movable element.

Appropriately, and independently from the shape of the pushing head of the plunger element, the latter may be configured so as to separate the operating chamber into a first and a second adjacent variable volume compartments in reciprocal fluidic communication, which may be designed to have in correspondence with the closed door position respectively the maximum and the minimum volume and vice versa in the open door position the minimum and the maximum volume.

Advantageously, and independently from the shape of the pushing head of the plunger element, the operating chamber may comprise control means to control the flow of the working fluid to allow the flow thereof from the first to the second compartment upon the opening of the door and from the second to the first compartment upon the closing of the door.

Thanks to such features, the hinge according to the invention will allow to hydraulically control the rotation upon the closing of very heavy doors, by also minimizing the bulking.

Advantageously, and independently from the shape of the pushing head of the plunger element, the control means to control the flow of the working fluid may comprise an hydraulic circuit within the box-like hinge body for the controlled backflow of the working fluid from the second to the first variable volume compartment upon the closing of the door.

Thanks to such features, the hinge according to the invention will be extremely safe, because the reciprocal rotating movement of the fix and of the movable element is free upon closing. In fact, during the closing phase the control means will adjust the backflow of the working fluid from the second to the first variable volume compartment independently from the reciprocal rotation of the fix and of the movable element, so that an user will be free to close the door with any speed without any danger of breaking the hinge and/or the door.

Appropriately, and independently from the shape of the pushing head of the plunger element, the control means to control the flow of the working

fluid may furthermore comprise first means for adjusting the flow of the working fluid in the hydraulic circuit, in such a manner to adjust the rotation speed of the door from the open to the closed position.

On the other side, independently from the shape of the pushing head of the plunger element and from the presence – or the absence – of the first adjusting means, the control means to control the flow of the working fluid may comprise second means for adjusting the flow of the working fluid in the hydraulic circuit, in such a manner to adjust the torque with which the door reaches the closed position.

Appropriately, such second adjusting means may be designed to impart to the door a latch action towards the closed position when the plunger element is in proximity of the extended end position.

In a preferred but not exclusive embodiment, independently from the shape of the pushing head of the plunger element, the hinge may comprise a first and a second hydraulic circuit.

In such embodiment the first hydraulic circuit may comprise first means for adjusting the flow of the working fluid, in such a manner to adjust the rotation speed of the door from the open to the closed position, whereas the second hydraulic circuit may comprise second means for adjusting the flow of the working fluid in the hydraulic circuit, in such a manner to adjust the torque with which he door reaches the closed position, preferably designed to impart to the door a latch action when the plunger element is in proximity of the extended end position.

Appropriately, a fluidic connection between the two circuits may be provided, so that the hinge has the same characteristics in both opening senses of the door.

Advantageous embodiments of the invention are defined according to the dependent claims.

Brief description of the drawings

Further features and advantages of the invention will appear more evident upon reading the detailed description of a few preferred, non-

exclusive embodiments of a hinge according to the invention, which are described as non–limiting examples with the help of the annexed drawings, in which:

FIG. 1 is a schematic view of an embodiment of the hinge **1** mounted within the tubular frame **T** of a door **A** of a cold room;

FIG. 2 is a schematic view of an embodiment of the hinge **1** mounted within the tubular frame **T** of the stationary support structure **S** of a swing gate **P**, having a movable door **A**;

FIG. 3 is an exploded view of a first embodiment of the hinge **1**;

FIG. 4 is a sectional, partially exploded view of a few details of the hinge of FIG. 3;

FIG. 5A is a sectional view of the hinge of FIG. 2 in the closed door position;

FIG. 5B is a sectional view of the hinge of FIG. 2 in the open door position, taken along a plane *VB – VB* in FIG. 5A;

FIG. 6 is an exploded view of a second embodiment of the hinge **1**;

FIG. 7 is a sectional, partially exploded view of a few details of the hinge of FIG. 6;

FIG. 8 is a sectional view of the hinge body **3** of the second embodiment of the hinge of FIG. 6, taken along a plane *VIII – VIII* in FIG. 7;

FIG. 9 is a sectional view of the hinge body **3** of the second embodiment of the hinge of FIG. 6, taken along a plane *IX – IX* in FIG. 8;

FIGS. 10A, **10B** and **10C** are views of the tubular element **55** belonging to the second embodiment of the hinge shown in FIG. 6, respectively in axonometric projection, in section along a plane *XB – XB* and in section along a plane *XC – XC*;

FIGS. 11A, 11B and **11C** are views of the plunger element **12** belonging to the second embodiment of the hinge shown in FIG. 6, respectively in axonometric projection, in section along a plane *XI B – XI B* and in section along a plane *XI C – XI C*;

FIG. 12A is a sectional view of the embodiment of the hinge of FIG. 6, in open door position, wherein the corresponding passing through holes

59 and **22'** of the tubular element **55** and of the plunger element **12** are reciprocally uncoupled;

FIG. 12B is a sectional view of the embodiment of the hinge of FIG. 6, in an intermediate position between the open and the closed door position, wherein the corresponding passing through holes **59** and **22'** of the tubular element **55** and of the plunger element **12** are reciprocally coupled, this latter position corresponding to the position wherein the door **A** latches towards the closed position in proximity of the extended end position;

FIG. 12C is a sectional view of the embodiment of the hinge of FIG. 6, in the closed door position.

Detailed description of a preferred embodiment

Referring to the above mentioned figures, the hinge according to the invention, generally indicated by numeral **1**, is advantageously applicable to cold rooms, outer swing gates or similar applications, which comprise a stationary support structure **S** and a door **A**, movable between an open door position and a closed door position.

Preferably, as visible in FIGS. 1 and 2, the hinge **1** may be partially or totally inserted in the tubular frame **T** of the door **A** or of the support structure **S**. In this manner, it will be possible to install the hinge **1** easily and smoothly, avoiding for instance the break-in works which are necessary with the known solutions.

The hinge **1** may be used individually, with a simple hinge on the other end of the door **A**, or in a combination of two or more of said hinges.

FIG 1 shows, as a mere non-limiting example of the invention, an embodiment of the hinge **1**, which is hidden to the sight by inserting in the tubular frame **T** of the door **A** of cold room **C**, which has a support structure **S**.

FIG 2 shows, as a mere non-limiting example of the invention, a further embodiment of the hinge **1**, which is partially hidden to the sight by inserting within the tubular frame **T** of the stationary support structure **S** of

a swing gate **P**, having a movable door **A**.

Although in such embodiments the hinge **1** is horizontally inserted in the frame **T**, it is understood that such hinge can be also vertically inserted in the frame **T**.

FIGS. from 3 to 5B show a first embodiment of the hinge according to the invention, particularly but non-exclusively suitable for cold rooms, whereas FIGS from 6 to 13C show a second embodiment of the hinge according to the invention, particularly but non-exclusively suitable for swing gates.

Where not differently specified, in the description below technical features common to both embodiments will be indicated. Such common features may be for convenience designated by a single reference numeral.

In particular, the hinge **1** will comprise a box-like hinge body **3** rotatably coupled to a pin **5**, in such a manner to rotate about a first longitudinal axis **X**, which may be substantially vertical.

In the embodiment of FIG. 1 the box-like body **3** is anchored to the door **A** of the cold room **C** to define the movable element of the hinge **1**, whereas the pin **5** is anchored to the stationary support structure **S** of the id hinge to define the fix element thereof.

Vice versa, in the embodiment of FIG. 2 the box-like body **3** is anchored to the stationary support structure **S** of the swing gate **P** to define the fix element of the hinge **1**, whereas the pin **5** is anchored to the door **A** of the fix element to define the movable element.

The pin **5**, which may have elongated shape to define the axis **X**, may be partially inserted in the box-like hinge body **3**, so as to have a first portion **6** outcoming from said box-like hinge body and a second portion **7** internal to the body **3**. The first and the second portion may be monolithic, as they are both part of the same pin **5**.

The first portion **6** may have a fastener **8** insertable in a countershaped housing **9**, realized in the stationary support structure **S** in the example of FIG. 1 and in the door **A** in the example of FIG. 2.

In this manner an user, opening the door **A** of the cold room **C** or of the swing gate **P**, will cause the reciprocal rotation of the box-like hinge body **3** and of the pin **5** around the axis **X**.

In order to ensure the automatic closing of the door **A** once opened, closing means may be provided, generally indicated with **10**, acting on the movable element of the hinge **1** to automatically return the door **A** to the closed position.

A working fluid, generally oil, acting on the closing means **10** to hydraulically counteract the action thereof, may be furthermore provided.

By suitably controlling the action of the working fluid, it will be possible to control the rotation of the door **A** from the open to the closed position. This will allow, for example, to prevent the door **A** from strongly impact with the frame.

More generally, the hinge according to the invention ensures a controlled movement of the door upon the opening as well as upon the closing thereof.

In fact, upon the opening, the controlled movement will prevent the door from suddenly opening, so as to protect both the door itself and a possible user who is in the corresponding action area. Appropriately, the closing means **10** may comprise a cam element, generally designed by numeral **11**, unitary with the pin **5**, and more precisely made in correspondence with the inner portion **7** of the pin **5**.

As used herein, the term "cam" means a mechanical part, having any configuration, suitable to change a circular motion into a rectilinear motion.

The cam element **11** will interact with a plunger element, designated by the numeral **12**, slidably movable within the box-like hinge body **3**.

More precisely, the plunger element **12** may slide along a second axis **Y**, which may be substantially perpendicular to the first axis **X**, horizontal in the present example, between a compressed end position, corresponding to the open door position, shown in FIGS. 5B and 12A, and an extended end position, corresponding to the closed door position, shown in FIGS 5A and 12C.

The plunger element **12** may have a substantially plate-like shaped pushing head **13**, interacting with a substantially countershaped seat **14** of the cam element **11**. Appropriately, the countershaped seat **14** may be made in the inner portion **7** of the pin **5**.

Advantageously, the pushing head **13** of the plunger element **12** may define a plane **π**, substantially perpendicular to the first axis **X**.

Thanks to such configuration, the bulk of the hinge body, in particular the vertical one, will be extremely minimized. This will simplify the insertion thereof in the frame **T** of the door **A** or of the stationary support structure **S** to hidden it to the sight.

In particular, the plate-like shaped pushing head **13** of the plunger element **12** may have a flat upper wall **15**, a flat lower wall **15'** and, possibly, a substantially flat front face **16**.

In particular, the flat upper and lower walls **15**, **15'** may be substantially parallel to the second axis **Y**, whereas the front face **16** may be parallel to the first axis, and may have a height **h**. The countershaped seat **14** may comprise a flat upper wall **17** facing a flat lower wall **17'** and, possibly, a substantially flat front contact surface **18**, suitable to interact and contact engage with the front face **16** of the plunger **12**.

It is understood that the pushing head **13** may have any shape, as long as substantially plate-like, without departing from the scope of protection of the invention defined by the terms of the appended claims. For instance, the pushing head **13** may be substantially wedge-shaped, with converging upper and lower walls **15**, **15'**.

As visible in FIGS. 5A and 12C, in the closed door position, i.e. when the plunger **12** is in the extended end position, the front contact surface **18** of the countershaped seat **14** of the cam **11** may be in contact and parallel with the front face **16** of the pushing head **13** of the plunger **12**.

Vice versa, as visibile in FIGS. 5B and 12A, in the open door position, i.e. when the plunger **12** is in the compressed end position, the front contact surface **18** of the countershaped seat **14** of the cam **11** may be perpendicular to the front face **16** of the pushing head **13** of the plunger

The front contact face **18** may be parallel to the first axis **X**, whereas the flat upper and lower walls **17**, **17'** may be substantially parallel to the second axis **Y**, and may have a distance **h'**.

Advantageously, the height **h** of the front face **16** of the pushing head **13** of the plunger element **12** may be substantially coincident with the distance **h'** between the upper and lower flat walls **17**, **17'** of the countershaped seat of the cam **11**, except for the clearance.

Appropriately, the upper and lower flat walls **15**, **15'** of the pushing head **13** of the plunger **12** may face the upper and lower flat walls **17**, **17'** of the countershaped seat **14** of the cam **11**.

The cam element **11** as well as the plunger element **12** may be housed in a single cylindrical operating chamber **25**, made within the box-like hinge body **3** and defined thereby.

Further, the box-like hinge body **3** may have an elongated shape along the axis **Y** to allow the insertion thereof in the tubular frame **T** of the door **A** or of the support structure **S** to make it not visible from the outside, as shown, respectively, in FIGS. 1 and 2.

In other words, the box-like hinge body **3** may develop mainly in in length along the axis **Y**, with the length dimension higher than the other two dimensions.

To promote the pushing of the head **13** of the plunger **12** against the countershaped seat **14** of the pin **5**, that is to promote the interaction between the front face **16** and the contact surface **18**, counteracting elastic means may be provided, which may comprise, respectively consist of, a spring **19**, acting on the plunger element **12**.

Appropriately, the operating chamber **25** may comprise a first generally cylindrical portion **32** having an axis coincident with the second axis **Y**, a second generally cylindrical portion **33** having an axis coincident with the first axis **X** and a third generally parallelepiped-like portion **34**, interposed between the first two portions.

The first cylindrical portion **32**, having an inner diameter **D**, may house the spring **19**. The second cylindrical portion **33** may house the countershaped seat **14** of the cam element **11**. The third parallelepiped-like **34** may have an height **h''**, substantially coincident with the height **h** of the pushing head **13** of the plunger element **12**, to house the pushing head.

The height **h''** may be remarkably lower, for example about the half, of the inner diameter **D** of the first cylindrical portion **32**, so as to allow to minimize the bulk of the box-like hinge body **3**. This will simply the hiding by insertion thereof in the frame **T** of the door **A** or of the stationary support structure **S**.

Advantageously, the contact surface **18** of the cam element **11** may be offset with respect to the axis **X** of a predetermined distance **d**, such as the front face **16** of the plunger element **12** in its extended end position, illustrated in FIGS. 5A and 12A, is positioned beyond said axis **X**.

Suitably, the surface **16** may have a distance **d** from the axis **X** which may be comprised between 1 mm and 6 mm, preferably comprised between 1 and 3 mm and even more preferably close to 2 mm. Thanks to such feature, the closing movement of the hinge will be completely automatic. In other words, the plunger element **12** will start to work after few rotation degrees, starting from the open position.

Advantageously, the first embodiment of the hinge **1**, illustrated in the FIGS. from 3 to 5B, may comprise mechanical blocking means acting on the closing means **10** to counteract the action thereof, so as to stop the door **A** in the closed door position.

In such preferred but non-exclusive embodiment, such mechanical blocking means may consist of a blocking element **20**, unitary with the pin **5**, interacting with a beating member **21**, vertically housed in the box-like hinge body **3**.

The relative position of the blocking element **20** and of the beating member **21** may be such as the closed door **A** position corresponds to the extended end position of the plunger **12**. Furthermore, by appropriately adjusting the respective position of the blocking element **20** and of the

beating member **21** it will be possible to provide a right as well as a left hinge.

Advantageously, in both embodiments illustrated in the annexed figures, the closing means **10** and the hydraulic damping fluid, generally oil, may be both entirely housed in the operating chamber **25**. The plunger element **12** may comprise a substantially cylindrical back portion **22**, and a front portion defining the pushing head **13**.

As particularly visible in FIGS. 5A, 12A, 12B and 12C, the cylindrical back portion **22** is susceptible to separate the operating chamber **25** into a first and a second adjacent variable volume compartment **23**, **24** fluidically connected. The contrasting spring **19** may be housed in the first compartment **23**.

As particularly visible in the figures, the first compartment **23** may have its maximum volume in correspondence with the closed door position and its minimum volume in correspondence with the open door position, and the opposite for the second compartment **24**.

Advantageously, the operating chamber **25** may comprise control means to control he flow of the working fluid to allow the flow thereof from the first compartment **23** to the second one **24** upon the opening of the door **A** and to allow the flow thereof from the second compartment **24** to the first one **23** upon the closing of the door.

In both embodiments illustrated in the annexed figures, such control means may comprise a check valve **26**, designed so as to allow the flow of the working fluid from the first compartment **23** to the second compartment **24** through the hole **27** passing through the pushing head **13** upon the opening of the door **A**, and to prevent the backflow of the working fluid upon the closing of the door **A**.

With this purpose the check valve **26**, interacting with the passing through hole **27**, may be of the butterfly type, with the butterfly **28** housed in the compartment **29** in correspondence with the inlet of the passing through hole **27**.

This way, when the door is opened, that is when it passes from the

closed door position illustrated in FIGS. 5A and 12C to the open door position illustrated in FIGS. 5B and 12A, the working fluid flows from the first compartment **23** to the second compartment **24**, by causing the butterfly element **28** axially slide in the compartment **29** and later flows through the hole **27** into the second compartment **24**.

Vice versa, when the door is closed, that is when it passes from the open position illustrated in FIGS. 5B and 12A to the closed position illustrated in FIGS. 5A and 12C, the butterfly element **28** will axially slide in the direction opposite to the opening one and will prevent the backflow of the working fluid through the hole **27**.

In order to allow the controlled backflow of the working fluid from the second compartment **24** to the first compartment **23** upon the closing of the door **A**, the means for controlling the flow of the working fluid may comprise at least one first hydraulic circuit **50** interposed between the outer surface **30** of the upper cylindrical portion **22** of the plunger element **12** and the inner surface **31** of the operating chamber **25**.

Thanks to such features, the hinge will be extremely safe, because the reciprocal rotating movement of the fix and of the movable element is free upon its closing. In fact, upon the closing phase, the oil will flow from the second compartment **24** to the first one **23** independently from the reciprocal rotation speed of the fix and movable elements.

In this manner, a user will be free to close the door **A** with any speed without any danger to break the hinge or the door. On the other hand, the speed with which the oil flows back into the compartment **23** will be adjusted by adjusting the passing sections of the first hydraulic circuit **50**.

In the first embodiment illustrated in the FIGS. from 3 to 5B, the first hydraulic circuit **50** may be defined by the tubular interspace between the outer surface **30** of the cylindrical back portion **22** of the cam element **12** and the inner surface **31** of the operating chamber **25**.

To this end, the plunger element **12** may be housed with a predetermined clearance in the operating chamber **25**. The size of the respective clearance between these two elements will substantially adjust

the return speed of the door **A** to its closed position. In such embodiment, at least one hole **35** may be provided for the filling of the working fluid.

In the second embodiment illustrated in the FIGS. from 6 to 12C, the return of the door **A** to its closed position may take place in a substantially different way from the first embodiment.

As particularly visible in FIG 6, in fact, in such second embodiment the means for controlling the flow of the working fluid may comprise a tubular element **55**, interposed between the inner surface **31** of the operating chamber **25** and the cylindrical back portion **22** of the plunger element **12**.

The tubular element **55** may have an external lateral surface **56** which includes a first substantially flat portion **57**, made for example by milling.

Appropriately, therefore, the first hydraulic circuit **50** may comprise a first channel **60** which may be defined by the interspace between the inner surface **3** of the operating chamber **25** and the first flat portion **57** of the tubular element **55**.

Advantageously, the flat portion **57** may extend for the whole length of the external lateral surface **56** of the tubular element **55**, so that the first channel **60** has an end in fluidic communication with the first variable volume compartment **23**. In order to facilitate the backflow of the working fluid in this latter compartment the flat portion **57** may comprise a cutting **57'**.

In order that the oil flows through the channel **60** and not elsewhere upon the closing of the door **A**, the plunger element **12** may be tightly housed within the tubular element **55**, whereas this latter may be tightly housed within the operating chamber **25**. With this purpose, the respective tolerances between such elements will have to be very slight.

Appropriately, the control means to control the flow of the working fluid within the operating chamber **25** may comprise first adjusting means to adjust the flow of the working fluid in the first hydraulic circuit **50**, so as to adjust the rotation speed of the door **A** from the open to the closed

position.

Advantageously, such first adjusting means in the first hydraulic circuit **50** may comprise at least one second inner operating chamber **65** within the box-like hinge body **3**, which may have an inlet **66** fluidically connected to the second variable volume **24** and an outlet **67** fluidically connected with the first channel **60**, which is in turn fluidically connected with the first variable volume **23**.

The first hydraulic circuit **50** for the backflow of the working fluid from the second variable volume compartment **24** to the first variable volume compartment **23** may therefore consist of both of such compartments, as well as of the first channel **60** and of the second operating chamber **65**.

Appropriately, this latter may comprise a first adjusting screw **68**, that can be operated by a suitable wrench **69**, housed in the second chamber **65** to obstruct the passing section of the inlet **66** and/or of the outlet **67**, this way adjusting the rotation speed of the door **A**.

In the preferred but non-exclusive embodiment illustrated in FIGS. from 6 to 12C, the control means to control the flow of the working fluid may comprise a second hydraulic circuit **70**, interposed between the outer surface **30** of the cylindrical back portion **22** of the plunger element **12** and the inner surface **31** of the operating chamber **25**, such as the first hydraulic circuit **50**.

Suitably, such second hydraulic circuit **70** may comprise a second channel **75**, which may be defined by the interspace between the inner surface **31** of the operating chamber **25** and a second substantially flat portion **58** of the external lateral surface **56** of the tubular element **55**.

The first and the second substantially flat portions **57**, **58** of the outer lateral surface **56** of the tubular element **55** may be reciprocally opposite with respect to a plane **π'** passing through the first and second axis **X**, **Y**, such as the first and second channel **60**, **75**.

The means for controlling the flow of the working fluid may further comprise second means for adjusting the flow of the working fluid in the second hydraulic circuit **70**, so as to adjust the force by which the door **A**

reaches its closed position.

Preferably, such second adjusting means may be designed to impart a latch action to the door **A** towards the closed position when the plunger element is in proximity of the extended end position, as illustrated in FIG. 12B.

With this aim, the second substantially flat portion **58** may extend for a part of the length of the outer lateral surface **56** of the tubular element **55**.

Advantageously the second substantially flat **58** may furthermore comprise, in proximity of one of its ends, a single passing through hole or port **59** facing the outer surface **30** of the cylindrical back portion **22** of the plunger element **12**.

On the other hand, the cylindrical back portion **22** of the plunger element **12** may have a second passing through hole or port **22'**, movable between a first position, illustrated in FIG. 12A and corresponding to the open door position (wherein the plunger element **12** is in proximity of its extended end position), wherein the hole **22'** is uncoupled from the first passing through hole **59** of the tubular element **55**, and a second position, illustrated in FIG. 12B and in proximity of the closed door position (wherein the plunger element 12 is in proximity of its compressed end position), wherein the hole **22'** is coupled with the first passing through hole **59** to selectively put into fluidic communication the second channel **75** with the first variable volume compartment **23**, this way imparting the latch action to the door **A** towards the closed position.

In other words, the reciprocal positions of the passing through holes **59** and **22'**, respectively made in the tubular element **55** and in the cylindrical portion **22** of the plunger element **12**, have to be such that the passing through holes are coupled when the plunger element **12**, during its alternative movement along the axis **Y**, is in the proximity of the extended end position, as visible in FIG. 12B.

In fact, when the plunger element **12** is in its compressed end position, corresponding to the open door position, the two holes **59** and **22'** are reciprocally far and uncoupled so that the working fluid flowing in the

second channel **75** in its backflow cycle towards the first compartment **23** is hindered by of the outer surface **30** of the cylindrical back portion **22** of the plunger element **12**.

As soon as the two holes **5** and **22'** are reciprocally coupled, as visible in FIG. 12B, such obstacle is removed, so that the fluid can suddenly fill the compartment **23** causing the impulsive push of the pushing head **13** towards the countershaped seat **14**, which imparts the latch action to the door towards the closed position.

In order to adjust the impulsive force which causes the latch action, the second hydraulic circuit **70** may comprise a third operating chamber **80** within the box-like hinge body **3**.

Such third chamber **80** may have an inlet **81** fluidically connected with the second variable volume compartment **24** and an outlet **82** fluidically connected with the second channel **75**, which is in turn selectively put in fluidic communication by the coupling of the holes **59** and **22'** of the tubular element **55** and of the cylindrical portion of the plunger element **12**.

The second hydraulic circuit **70** for the return of the working fluid from the second variable volume compartment to the first compartment **23** may therefore consist of both of these compartments, as well as of the second channel **75** and of the third operating chamber.

Appropriately, this latter chamber may comprise a second adjusting screw **83**, which may be operated by the same wrench **69** which operates the first adjusting screw **68**.

The second adjusting screw **83** may be housed in the third operating chamber **80** to obstruct the passing section of the inlet **81** and/or of the outlet **82**, so as to adjust the force by which the door **A** latches to its closed position.

Appropriately, as visible in FIG. 8, the box-like hinge body **3** may comprise a third channel **90** for the fluidic connection of the second operating chamber **65** and of the third operating chamber **80**. In particular, the third channel **90** may put into fluidic communication the inlet **66** of the

second chamber **65** with the inlet **81** of the third chamber **80**.

Thanks to such feature, the hinge **1** will compensate possible lacks of balance in the oil circulation, so that the hinge **1** works in the same way in both opening directions of the door **A**.

From the above description, it is apparent that the hinge according to the invention fulfils the intended objects.

The hinge according to the invention is susceptible to many changes and variants, all falling within the inventive concept expressed in the annexed claims. All particulars may be replaced by other technically equivalent elements, and the materials may be different according to the needs, without departing from the scope of of the invention.

Although the hinge has been particularly described referring to the annexed figures, the reference numbers used in the description and claims are used to improve the intelligence of the invention and do not constitute any limit to the claimed scope.

CLAIMS

1. A hinge, comprising:

- a box-like hinge body anchorable between a stationary support structure and a door;

- a pin defining a first longitudinal axis anchorable between the stationary support structure and the door, said pin and said box-like hinge body being reciprocally rotatably coupled to rotate around said first axis between an open door position and a closed door position;

- closing means for the automatic return of the door from the open to the closed position;

- a working fluid acting on said closing means to hydraulically counteract the action thereof, thus controlling the door rotation from the open position to the closed position;

wherein said closing means comprise a cam element unitary with said pin interacting with a plunger element slidably movable in an operating chamber within said box-like hinge body along a second axis substantially perpendicular to said first axis between a compressed end position, corresponding to the open door position and an extended end position, corresponding to the closed door position, said plunger element having a pushing head interacting with a substantially countershaped seat of said cam element;

wherein said closing means and said working fluid are both entirely housed in said operating chamber;

wherein said plunger element comprises a substantially cylindrical back portion and a front portion defining said pushing head, said back portion being designed to separate said operating chamber into a first and a second variable volume compartments in reciprocal fluidic communication;

wherein said operating chamber comprises control means for controlling the flow of the working fluid between said first and second variable volume compartments, said flow control means comprising a tubular element interposed between the inner surface of said operating chamber and said cylindrical back portion of said plunger element to define at least one first hydraulic circuit for the working fluid, said plunger element being tightly housed in said tubular element, said tubular element being tightly housed in said operating chamber.

2. The hinge according to claim 1, wherein said first and second variable volume compartments are reciprocally adjacent.

3. The hinge according to claim 1 or 2, wherein said first and second variable volume compartments are designed to have in correspondence with said closed door position respectively the maximum and minimum volume, said closing means comprising counteracting elastic means located in said first compartment.

4. The hinge according to any one of claims 1, 2 or 3, wherein said control means comprise a hole passing through said pushing head so as to put into fluidic communication with said first compartment and said second compartment and a check valve interacting with said passing through hole so as to allow the flow of the working fluid from said first compartment to said second compartment upon the opening of the door and to prevent the backflow thereof upon the closing of the door.

5. The hinge according to any one of the claims 1 to 4, wherein said tubular element has an outer lateral surface which includes a first substantially flat portion, said at least one first hydraulic circuit including a first channel defined by the interspace between the inner surface of said operating chamber and said first substantially flat portion.

6. The hinge according to claim 5, wherein said first substantially flat portion extends for the whole length of said outer lateral surface of said tubular element so that said at least one first channel is in fluidic communication with said first variable volume compartment.

7. The hinge according to claim 6, wherein said control means further comprise first means for adjusting the flow of the working fluid in said at least one first hydraulic circuit, in such a manner to adjust the rotation speed of the door from the open to the closed position, said first means for adjusting the flow in said at least one first hydraulic circuit including at least one second operating chamber internal to said boxlike hinge body which has an inlet fluidically connected with said second variable volume compartment and an outlet fluidically connected with said at least one first channel, said at least one second operating chamber comprising a first adjusting screw inserted in said second operating chamber to obstruct the passing section of said inlet and said outlet, thus adjusting the rotation speed of the door from the open to the closed position.

8. The hinge according to claim 6, wherein said control means further comprise first means for adjusting the flow of the working fluid in said at least one first hydraulic circuit, in such a manner to adjust the rotation speed of the door from the open to the closed position, said first means for adjusting the flow in said at least one first hydraulic circuit including at least one second operating chamber internal to said boxlike hinge body which has an inlet fluidically connected with said second variable volume compartment and an outlet fluidically connected with said at least one first channel, said at least one second operating chamber comprising a first adjusting screw inserted in said second operating chamber to obstruct the passing section of said inlet, thus adjusting the rotation speed of the door from the open to the closed position.

9. The hinge according to claim 6, wherein said control means further comprise first means for adjusting the flow of the working fluid in said at least one first hydraulic circuit, in such a manner to adjust the rotation speed of the door from the open to the closed position, said first means for adjusting the flow in said at least one first hydraulic circuit including at least one second operating chamber internal to said boxlike hinge body which has an inlet fluidically connected with said second variable volume compartment and an outlet fluidically connected with said at least one first channel, said at least one second operating chamber comprising a first adjusting screw inserted in said second operating chamber to obstruct the passing section of said outlet, thus adjusting the rotation speed of the door from the open to the closed position.

10. The hinge according to any one of the claims 1 to 9, wherein said control means comprise a second hydraulic circuit interposed between the outer surface of said cylindrical back portion of said plunger element and the inner surface of said operating chamber for the controlled backflow of said working fluid from said second compartment to said first variable volume compartment upon the closing of the door, said control means further comprising second means for adjusting the flow of the working fluid in said second hydraulic circuit, so as to adjust the force by which the door reaches the closed position, said second adjusting means in said second hydraulic circuit being designed to impart a latch action to the door towards the closed position when the plunger element is in proximity to the extended end position.

11. The hinge according to claim 10, wherein the outer lateral surface of said tubular element includes a second substantially flat portion, said second hydraulic circuit comprising a second channel interposed between the inner surface of said operating chamber and said second substantially flat portion, said second substantially flat portion extending only for a part of the length of said outer lateral surface of said tubular element, the tubular element including a first passing through hole in proximity of an end of said second substantially flat portion facing said outer surface of said cylindrical back portion of said plunger element, said cylindrical back portion of said plunger element having a second passing through hole, said first and second passing through holes being reciprocally uncoupled when said plunger element is in proximity of the compressed end position and reciprocally coupled when said plunger element is in proximity of the extended end position to selectively put into fluidical communication said second channel with said first variable volume compartment, so as to impart the latch action to the door.

12. The hinge according to claim 11, wherein said first substantially flat portion and second substantially flat portion of said outer lateral surface of said tubular element, respectively said first channel and second channel, are reciprocally opposite with respect to a plane passing through said first axis and said second axis.

13. The hinge according to claim 11 or 12, wherein said second adjusting means in said second hydraulic circuit comprise at least one third operating chamber internal to said box-like hinge body which has an inlet fluidically connected with said second variable volume compartment and an outlet fluidically connected with said at least one second channel, said second adjusting means comprising a second adjusting screw housed in said third operating chamber so as to obstruct the passing section of said inlet and said outlet, in such a manner to adjust the force by which the latch action is imparted to the door.

14. The hinge according to claim 11 or 12, wherein said second adjusting means in said second hydraulic circuit comprise at least one third operating chamber internal to said box-like hinge body which has an inlet fluidically connected with said second variable volume compartment and an outlet fluidically connected with said at least one second channel, said second adjusting means comprising a second adjusting screw housed in said third operating chamber so as to obstruct the passing section of said inlet, in such a manner to adjust the force by which the latch action is imparted to the door.

15. The hinge according to claim 11 or 12, wherein said second adjusting means in said second hydraulic circuit comprise at least one third operating chamber internal to said box-like hinge body which has an inlet fluidically connected with said second variable volume compartment and an outlet fluidically connected with said at least one second channel, said second adjusting means comprising a second adjusting screw housed in said third operating chamber so as to obstruct the passing section of said outlet, in such a manner to adjust the force by which the latch action is imparted to the door.

16. The hinge according to any one of claims 10 to 15, wherein said box-like hinge body comprises a third channel for the fluidic connection of said second operating chamber and said third operating chamber.

17. The hinge according to any one of the claims 1 to 16, wherein said box-like hinge body has an elongated shape to define said second axis, said pushing head having a generally plate-like shape to define a plane substantially perpendicular to said first axis.

18. The hinge according to claim 17, wherein said plate-like pushing head has first substantially flat upper and lower walls, said countershaped seat comprising second substantially flat upper and lower walls, the first substantially flat upper and lower walls facing the corresponding second substantially flat upper and lower walls.

19. The hinge according to claim 18, wherein the first substantially flat upper and lower walls and second substantially flat upper and lower walls are all substantially parallel to the second axis.

20. The hinge according to claim 18 or 19, wherein said pushing head has a front face having a predetermined height which is substantially equal to the distance between said upper and lower flat walls of said countershaped seat.

21. The hinge according to claim 20, wherein said front face is substantially flat and parallel to said first longitudinal axis and is susceptible to engage with a contact surface of said countershaped seat which is substantially flat and parallel to said first longitudinal axis, said front face and said contact surface being substantially parallel to each other in said closed door position and substantially perpendicular to each other in said open door position.

22. The hinge according to any one of the claims 1 to 21, wherein said operating chamber comprises a first generally cylindrical portion having an axis coinciding with said second axis, a second generally cylindrical portion having an axis coinciding with said first axis which houses said countershaped seat, and a third generally parallelepiped-like shaped portion interposed between the first two portions which houses said pushing head, said third parallelepiped-like shaped portion having a height lower than the inner diameter of said first cylindrical portion.

23. The hinge according to any one of the claims 1 to 22, wherein said pin is partially inserted in said box-like hinge body with a first portion outcoming from said box-like hinge body for the anchorage to the stationary support structure or to the door and a second portion within said box-like hinge body which comprises said cam element.

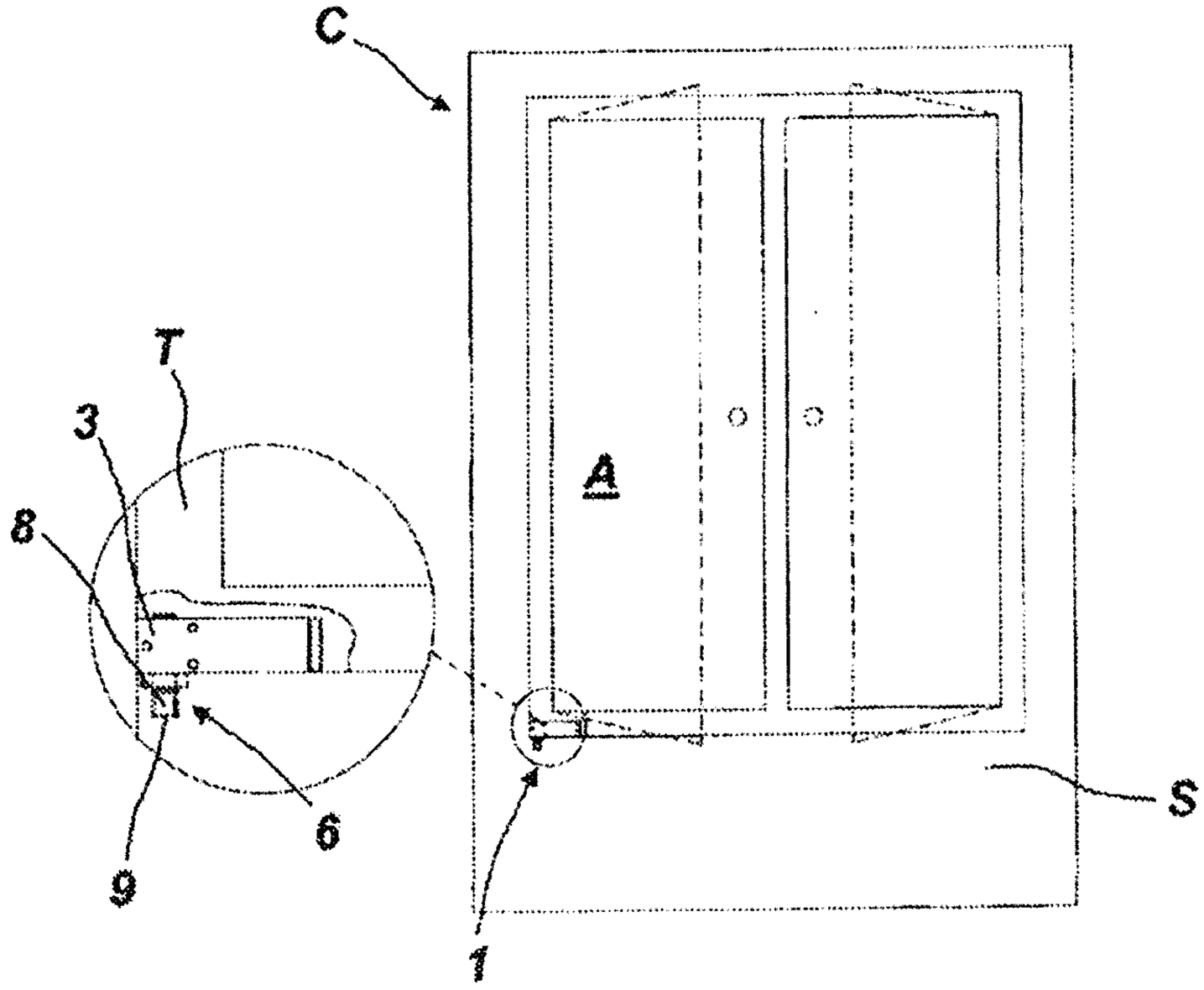


FIG. 1

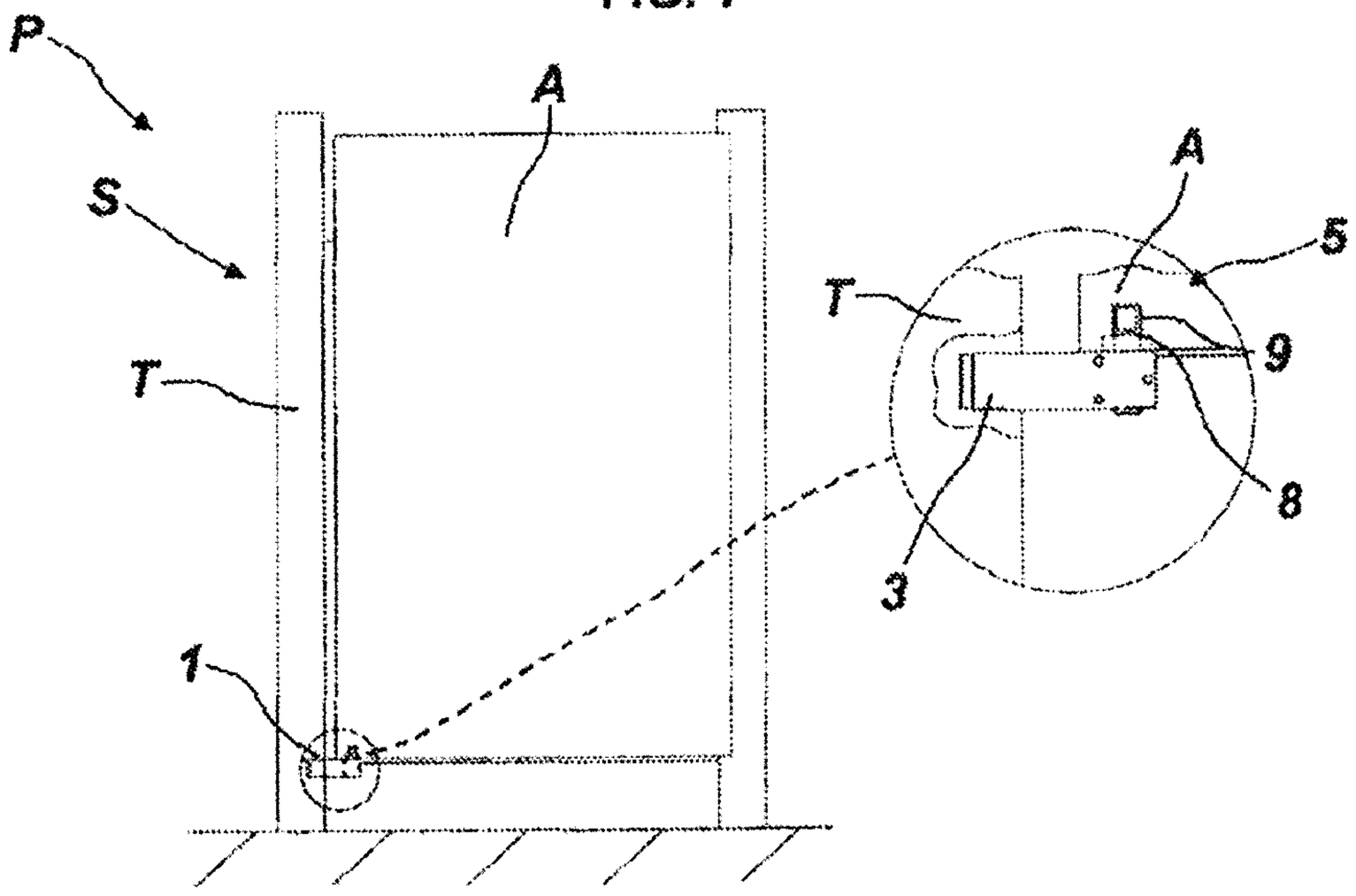


FIG. 2

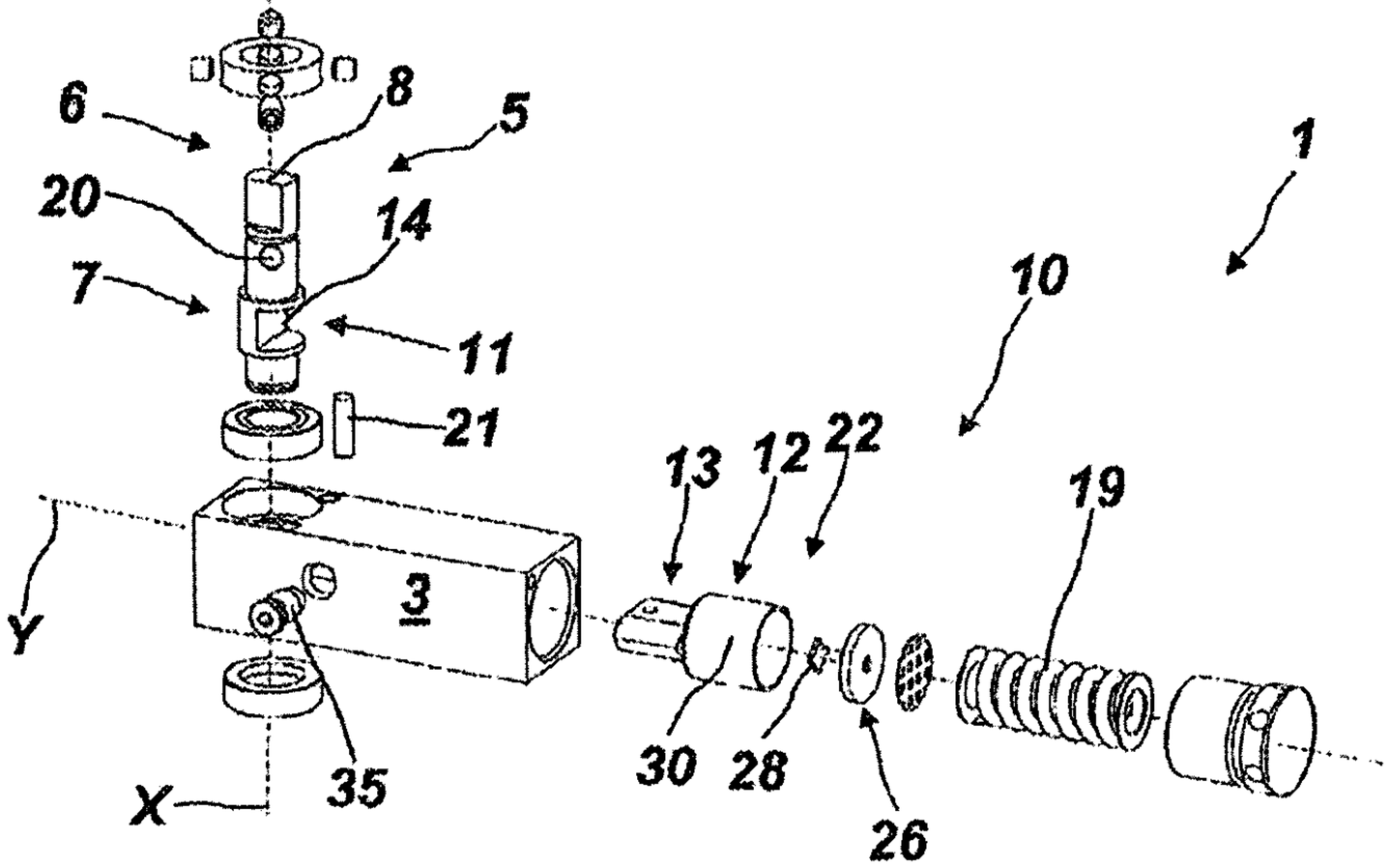

6
8
5
20
14
7
11
21
1
10
13
12
22
19
3
Y
X
35
30
28
26

FIG. 3

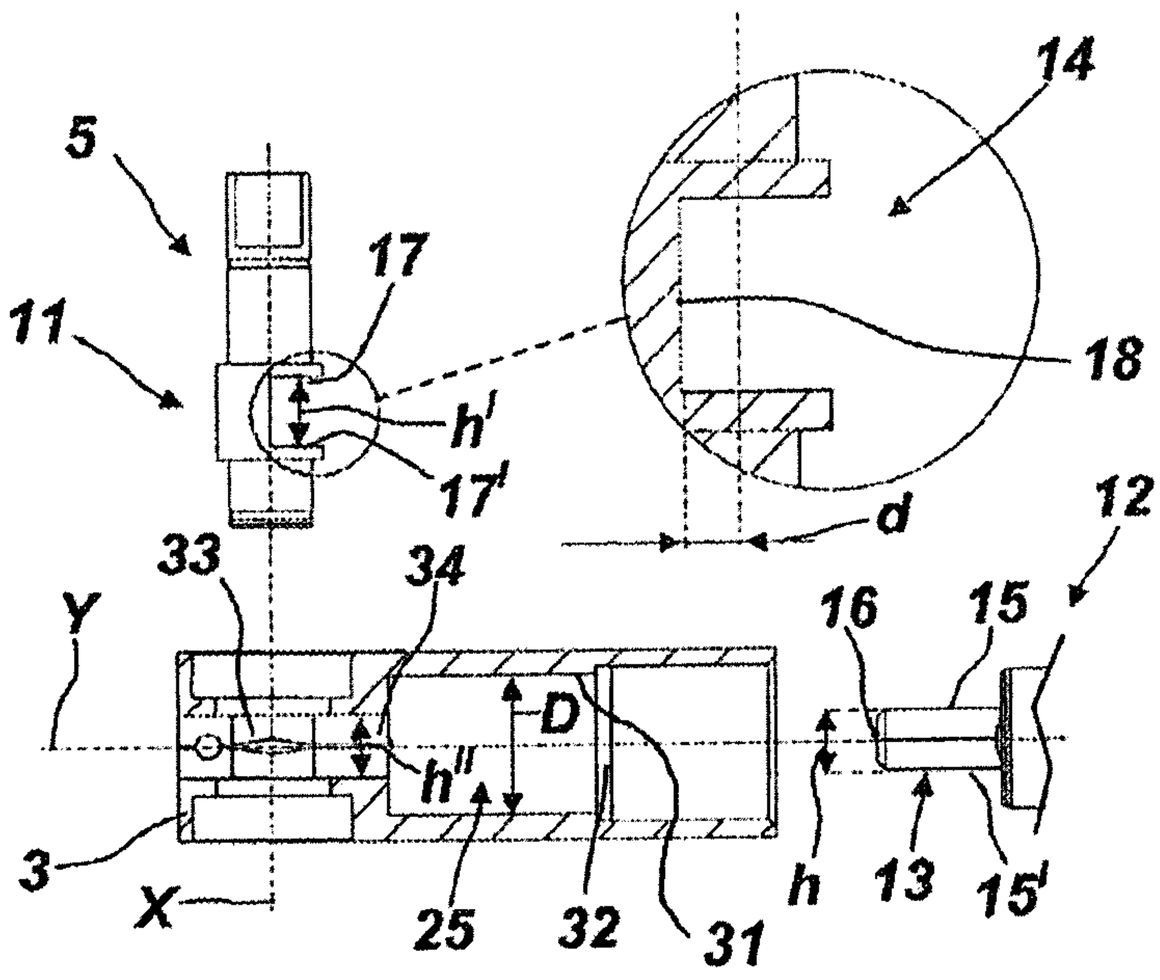

5
17
11
h'
17'
14
18
d
12
33
34
Y
16
15
D
h''
3
X
25
32
31
h
13
15'

FIG. 4

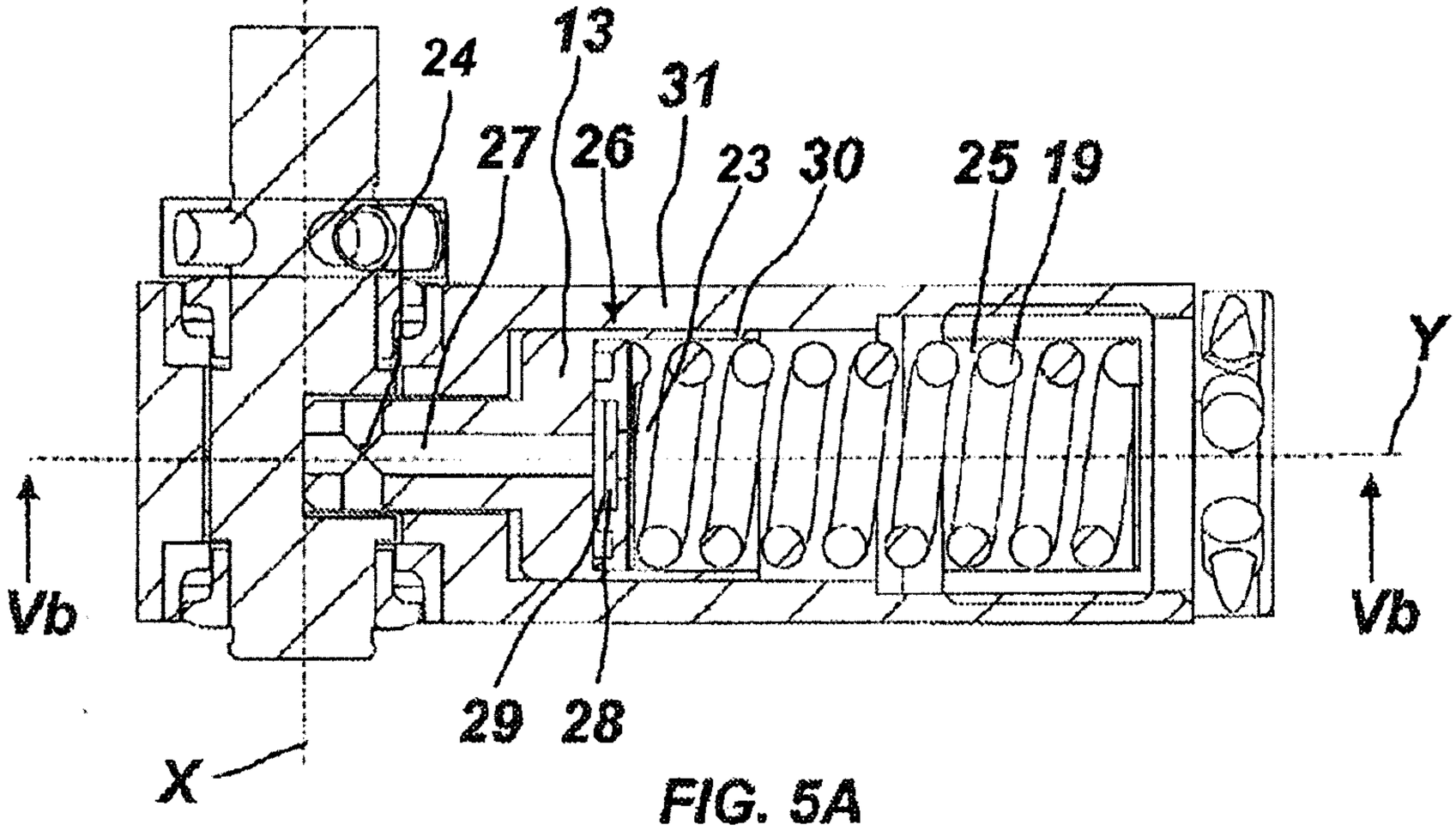

24
13
31
27
26
23
30
25
19
Y
Vb
Vb
29
28
X

FIG. 5A

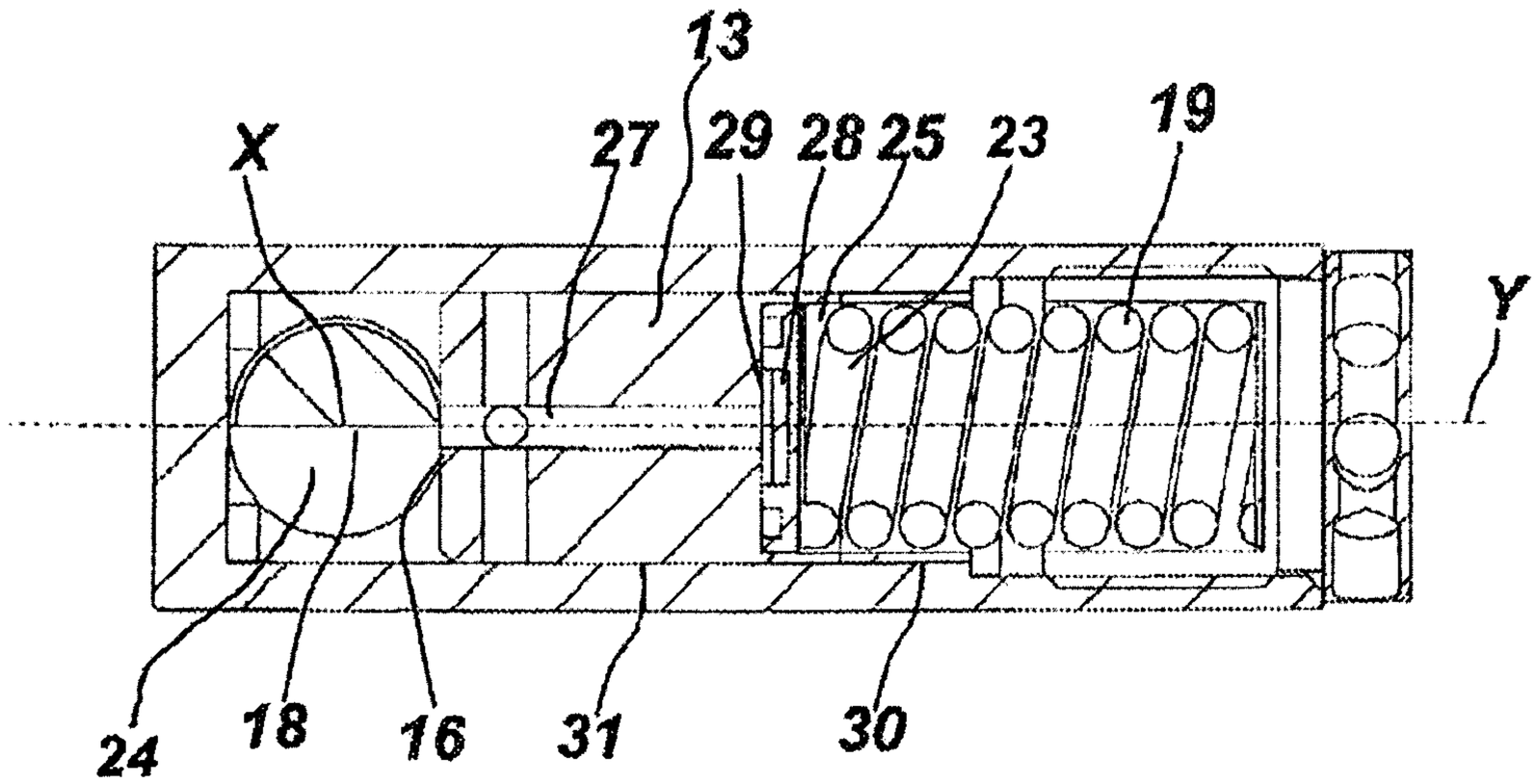

13
X
27
29
28
25
23
19
Y
24
18
16
31
30

FIG. 5B

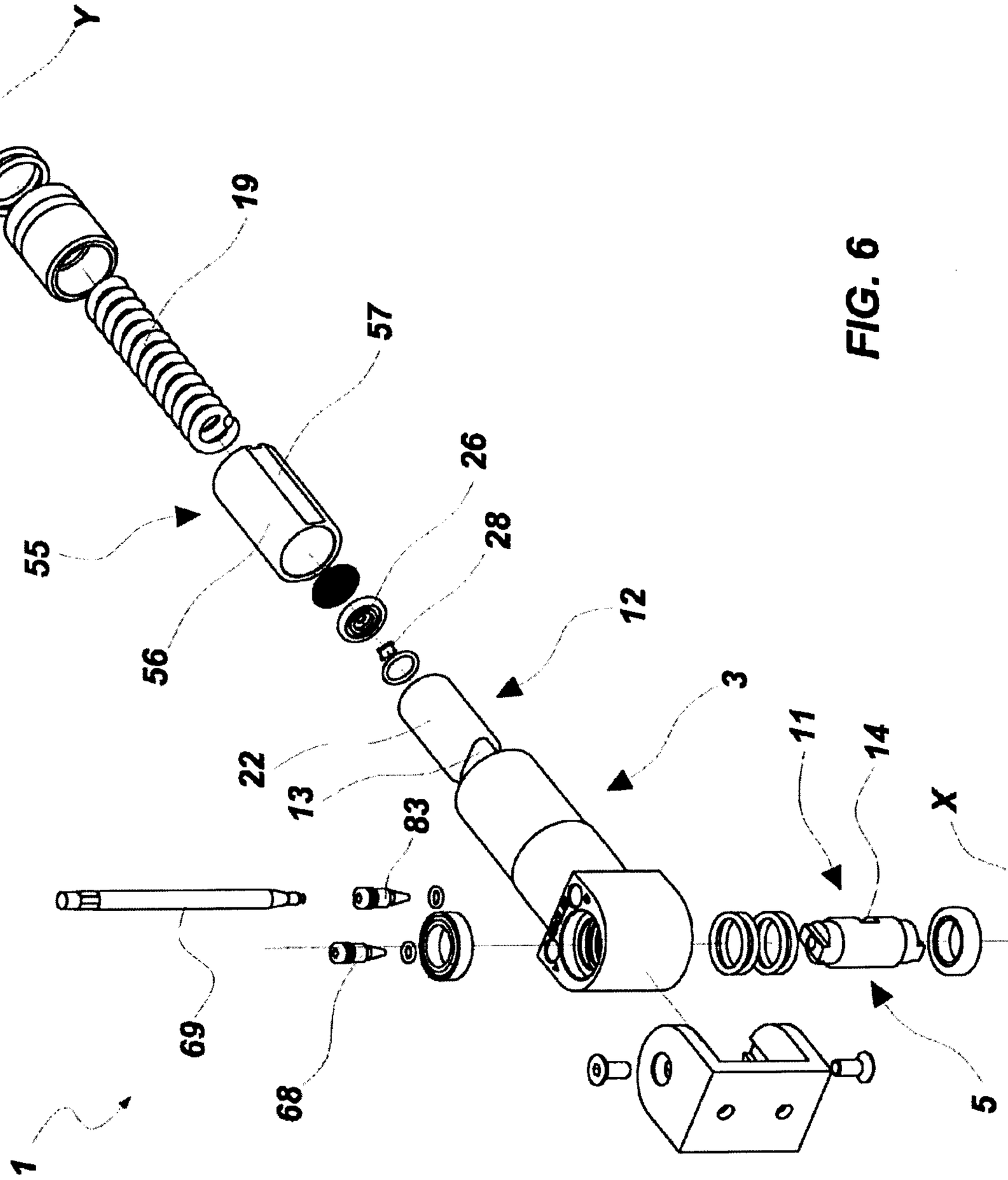


FIG. 6

FIG. 7

FIG. 9

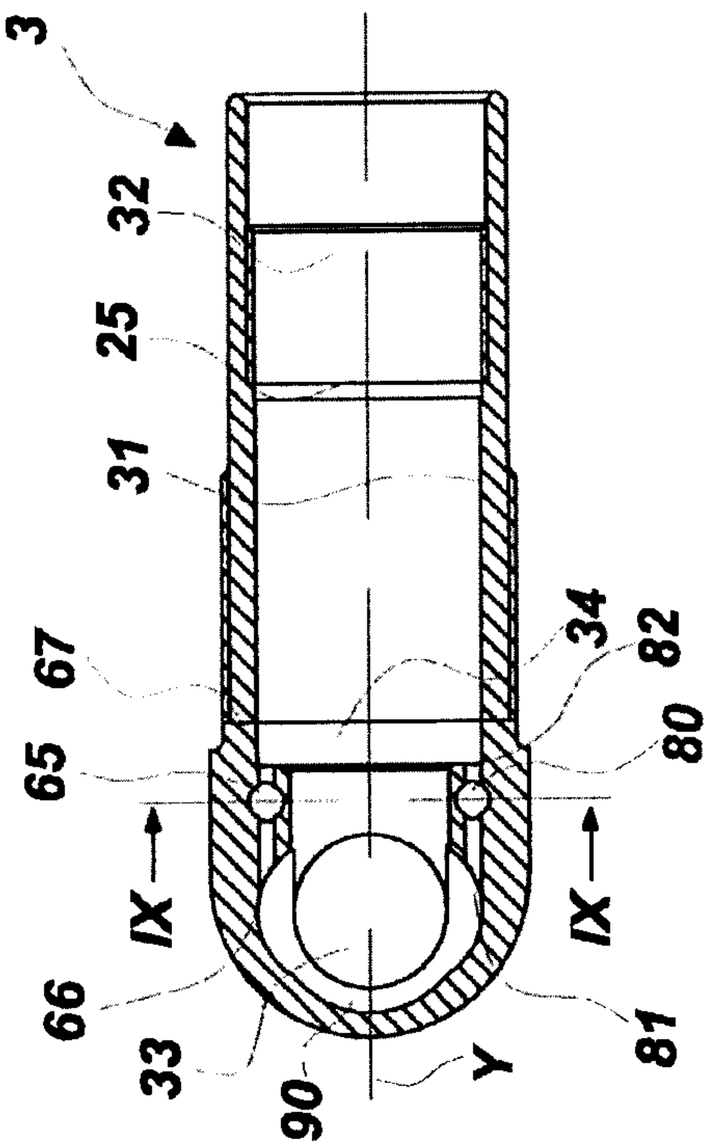


FIG. 8

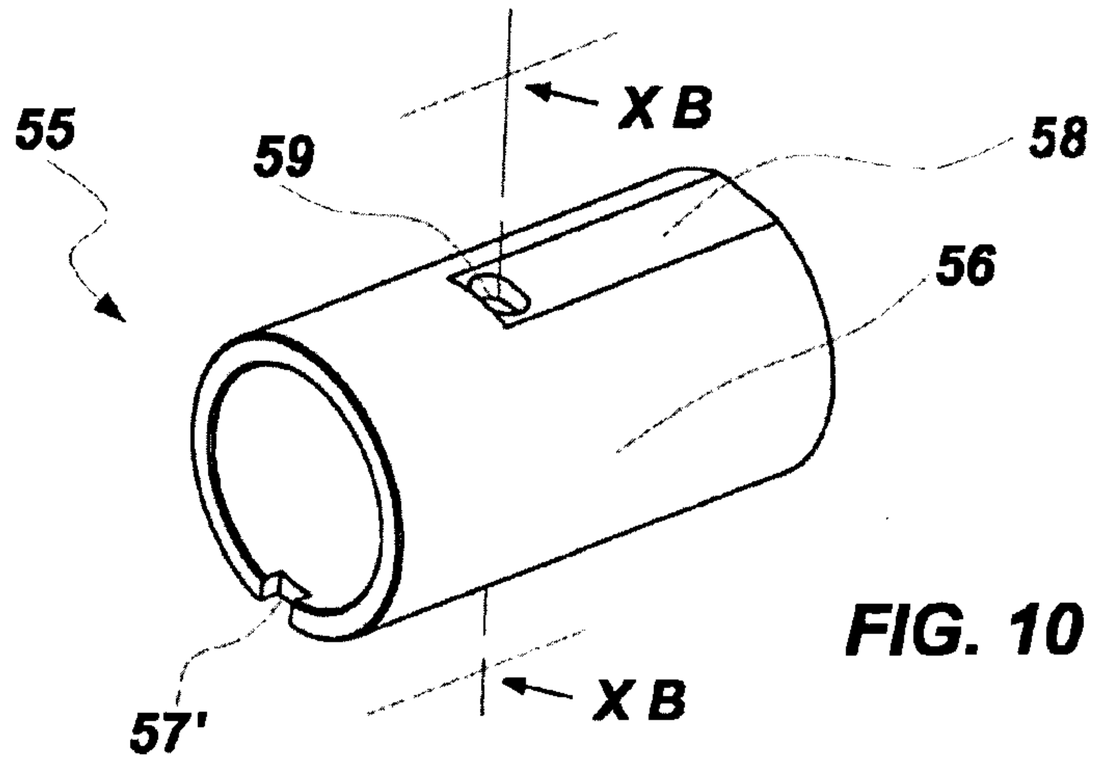


FIG. 10 A

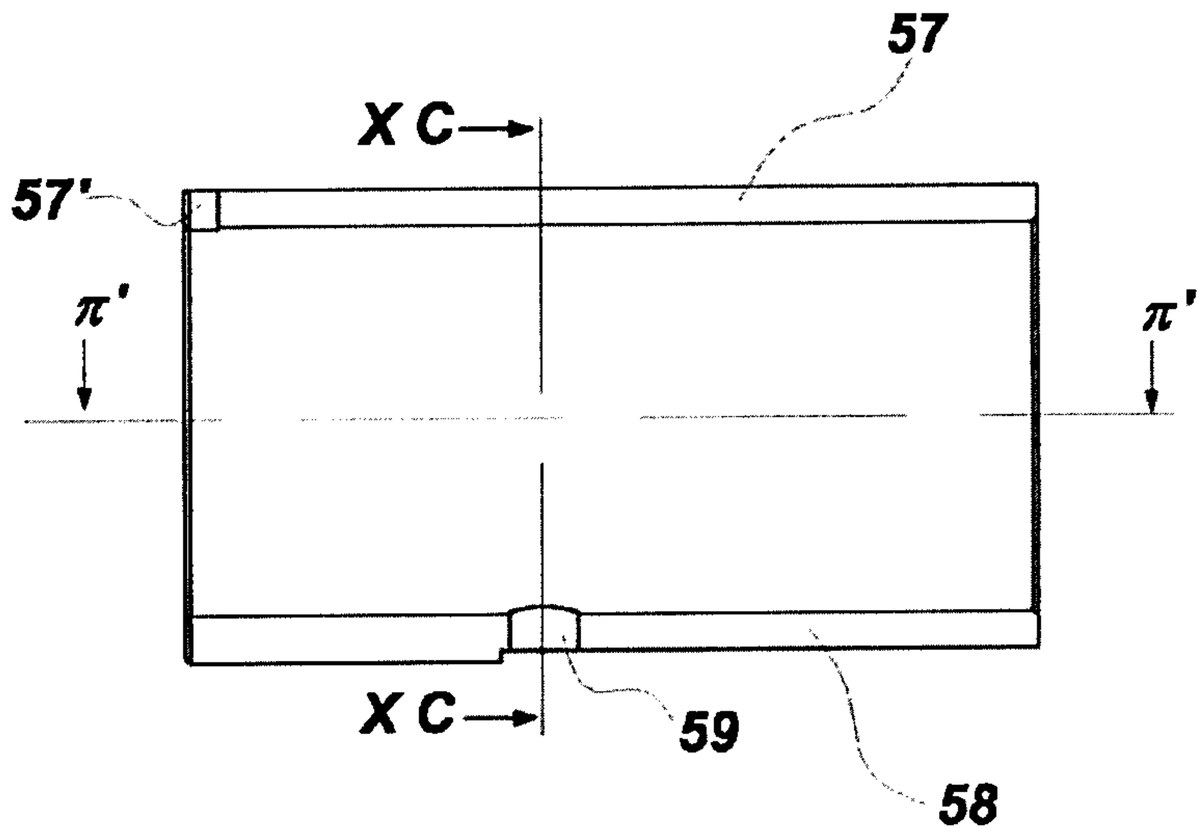


FIG. 10 B

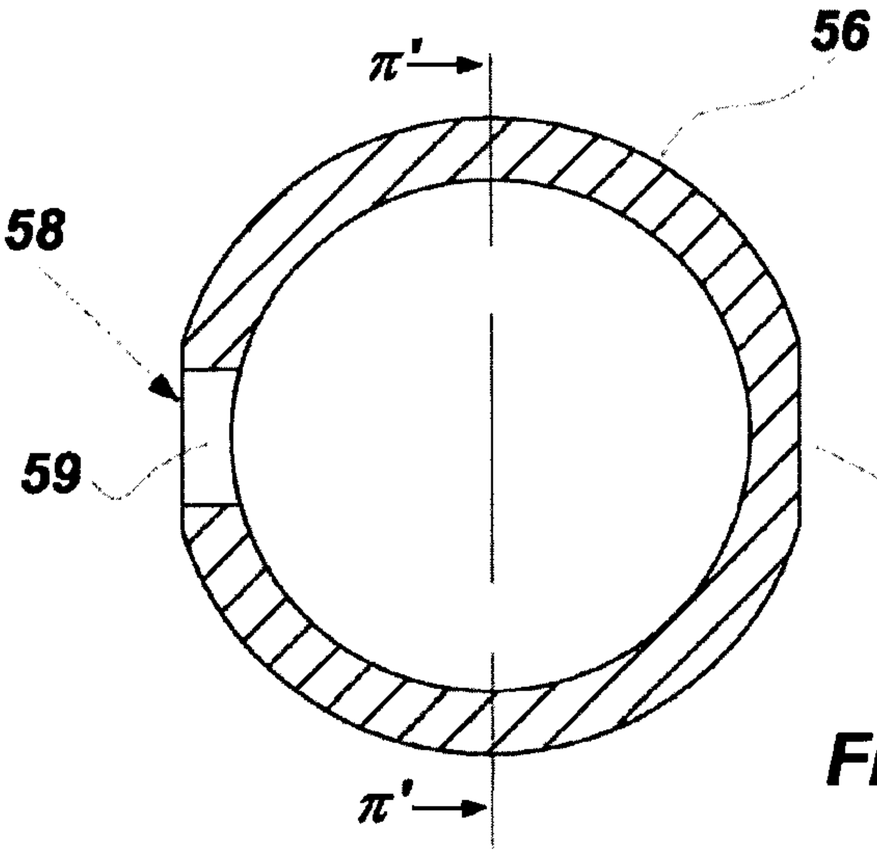


FIG. 10 C

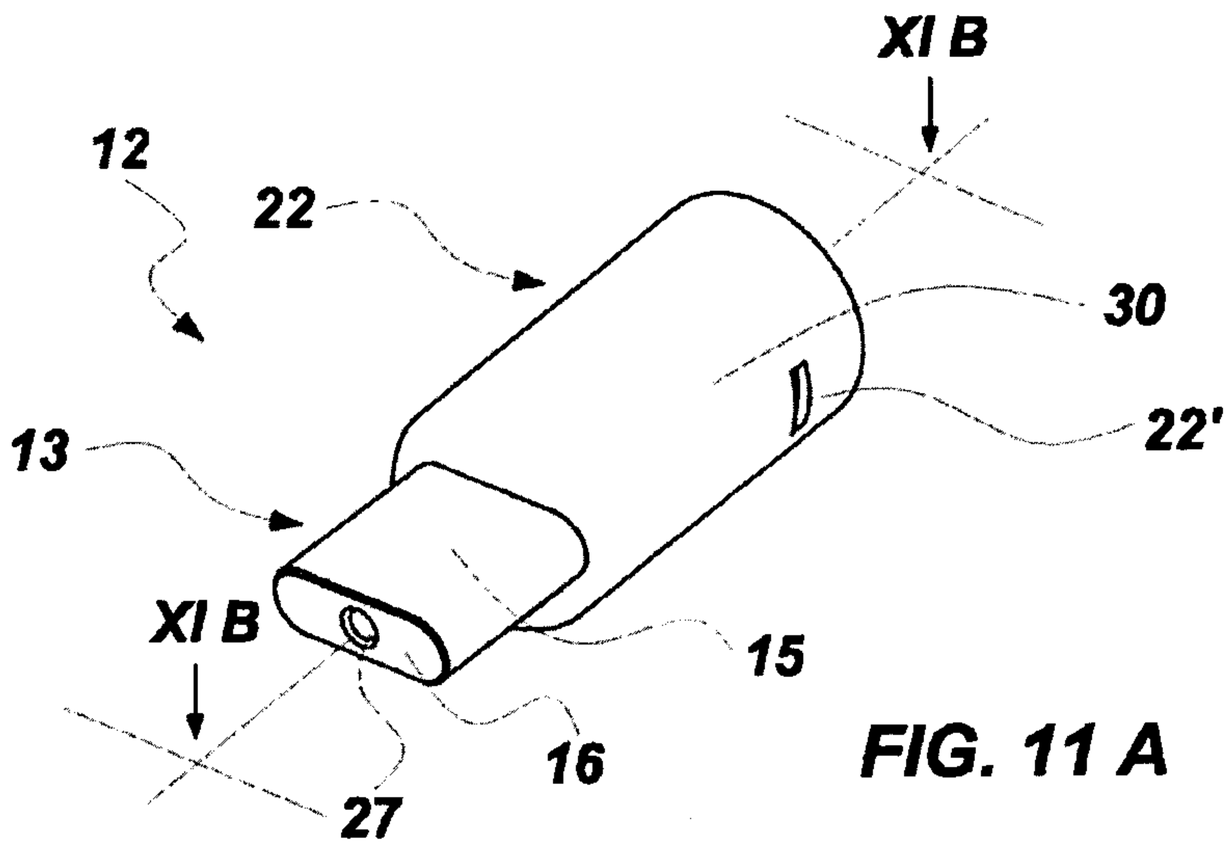


FIG. 11 A

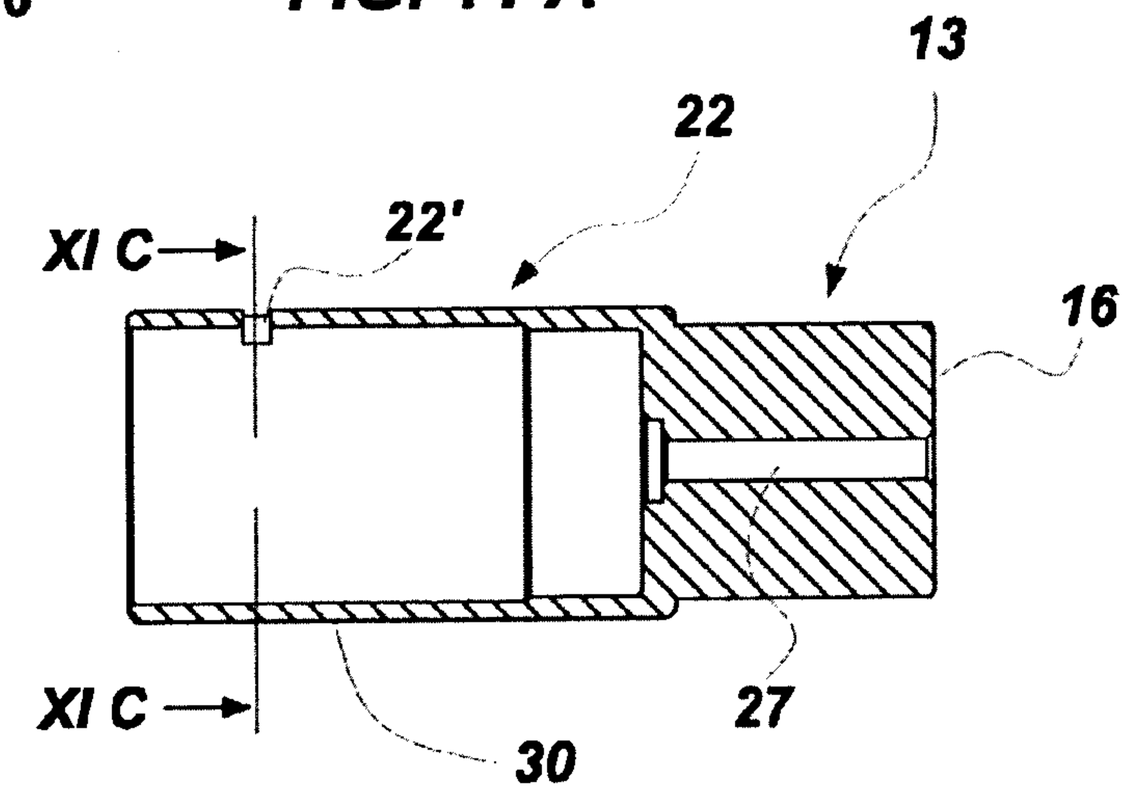


FIG. 11 B

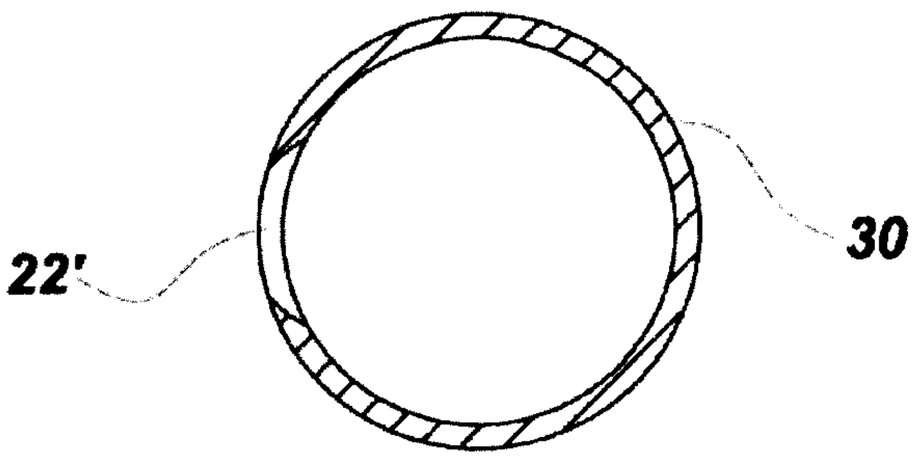


FIG. 11 C

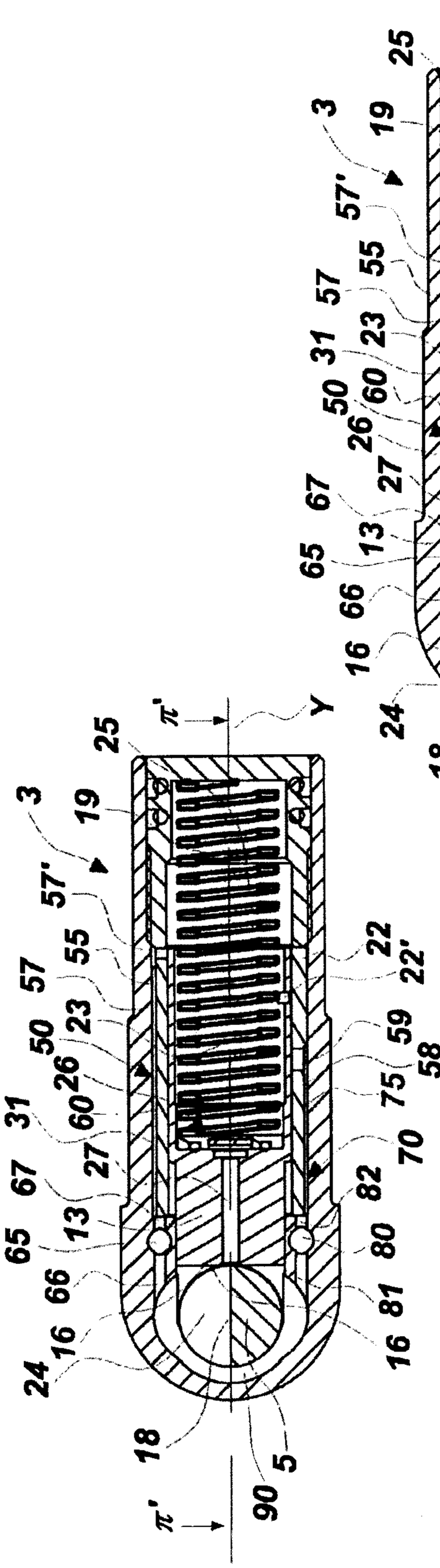


FIG. 12 A

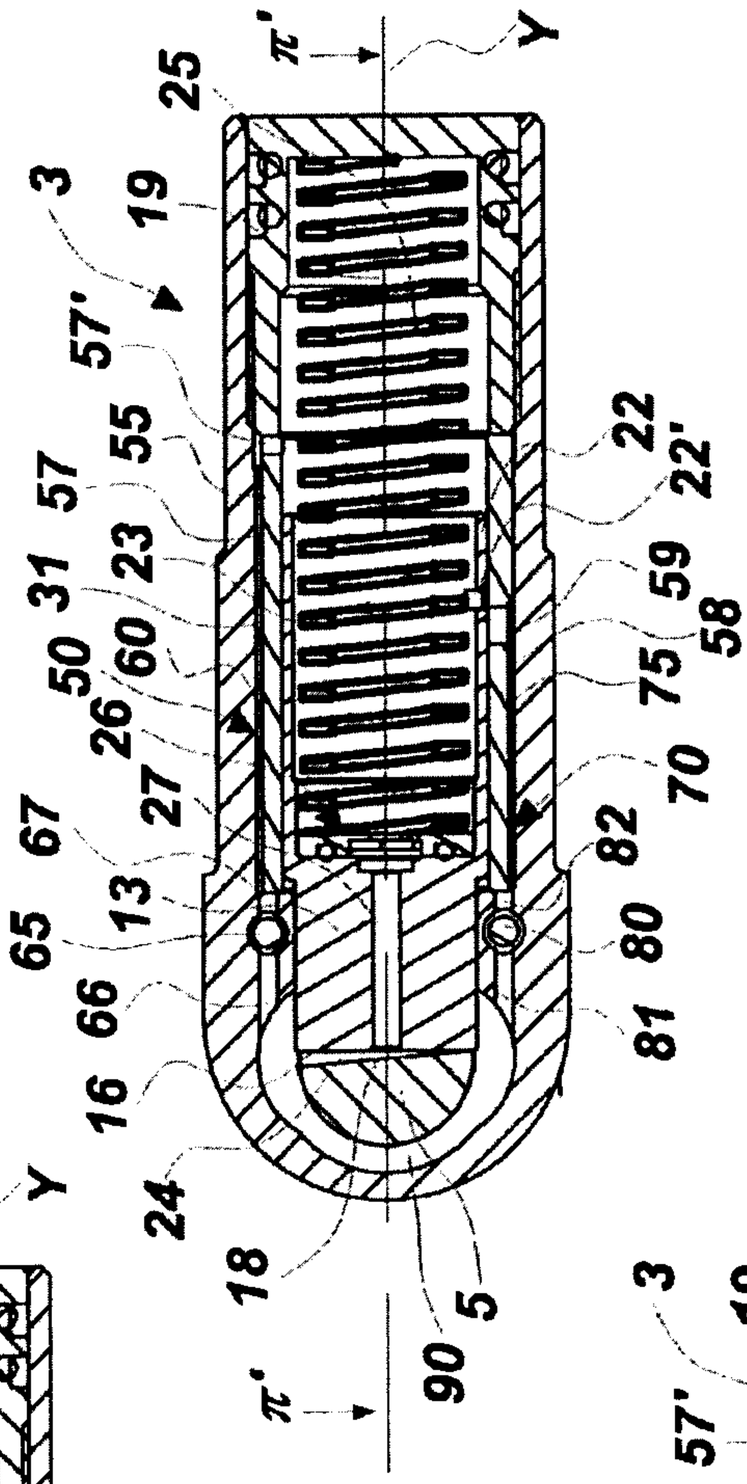


FIG. 12 B

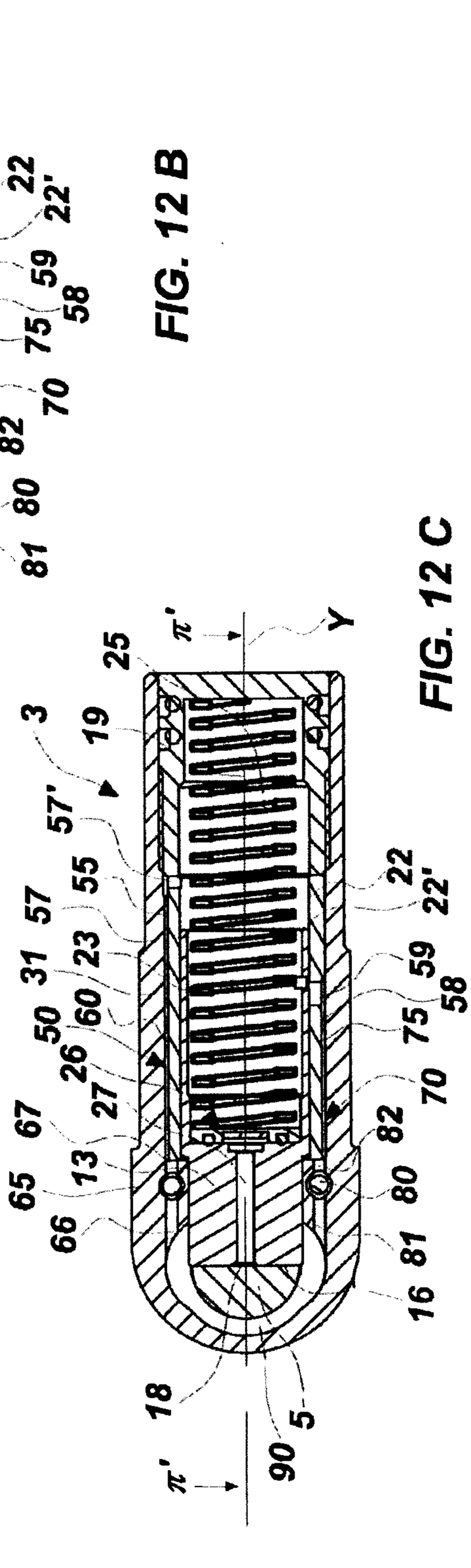
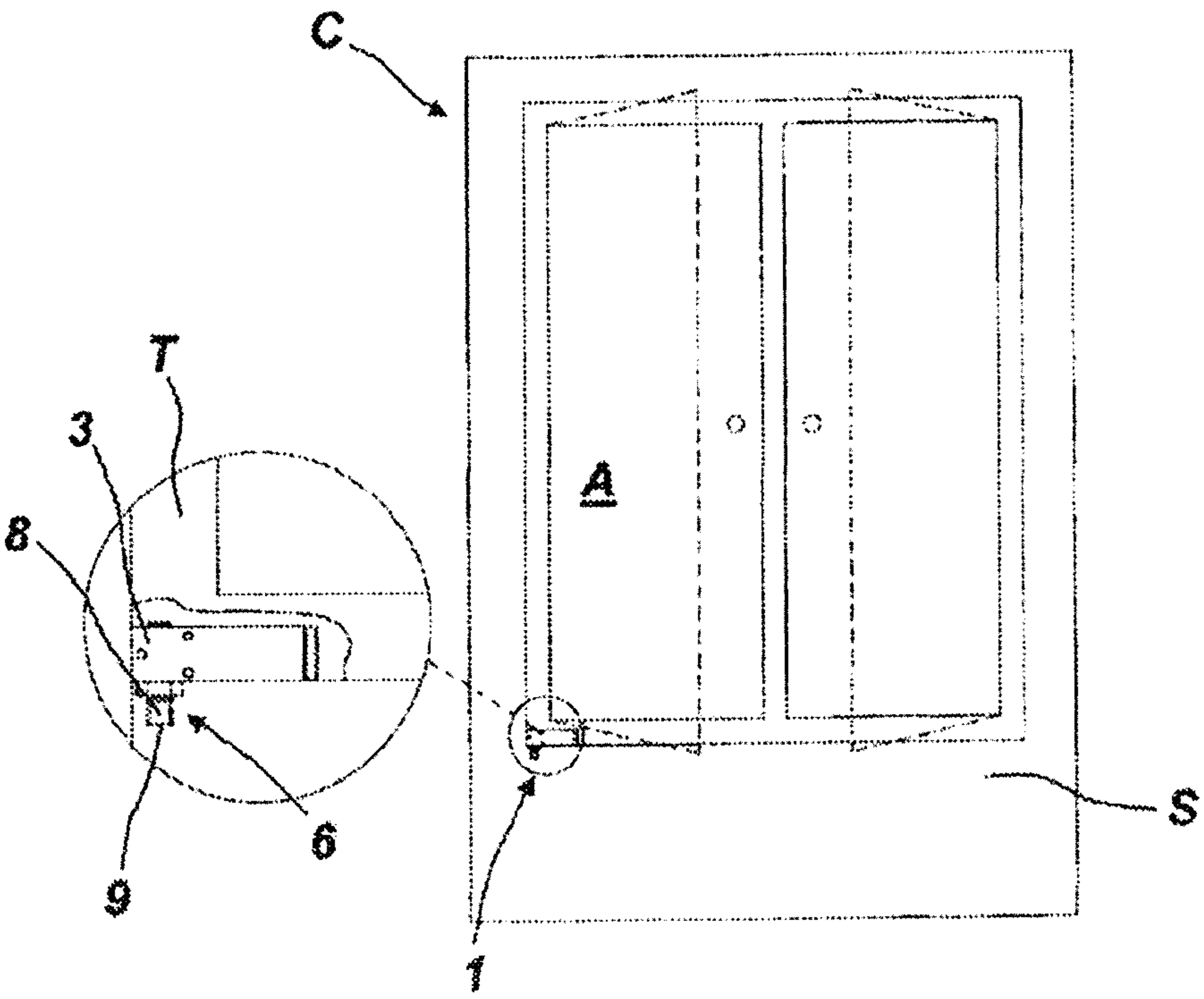


FIG. 12 C


C
T
3
8
9
6
A
1
S