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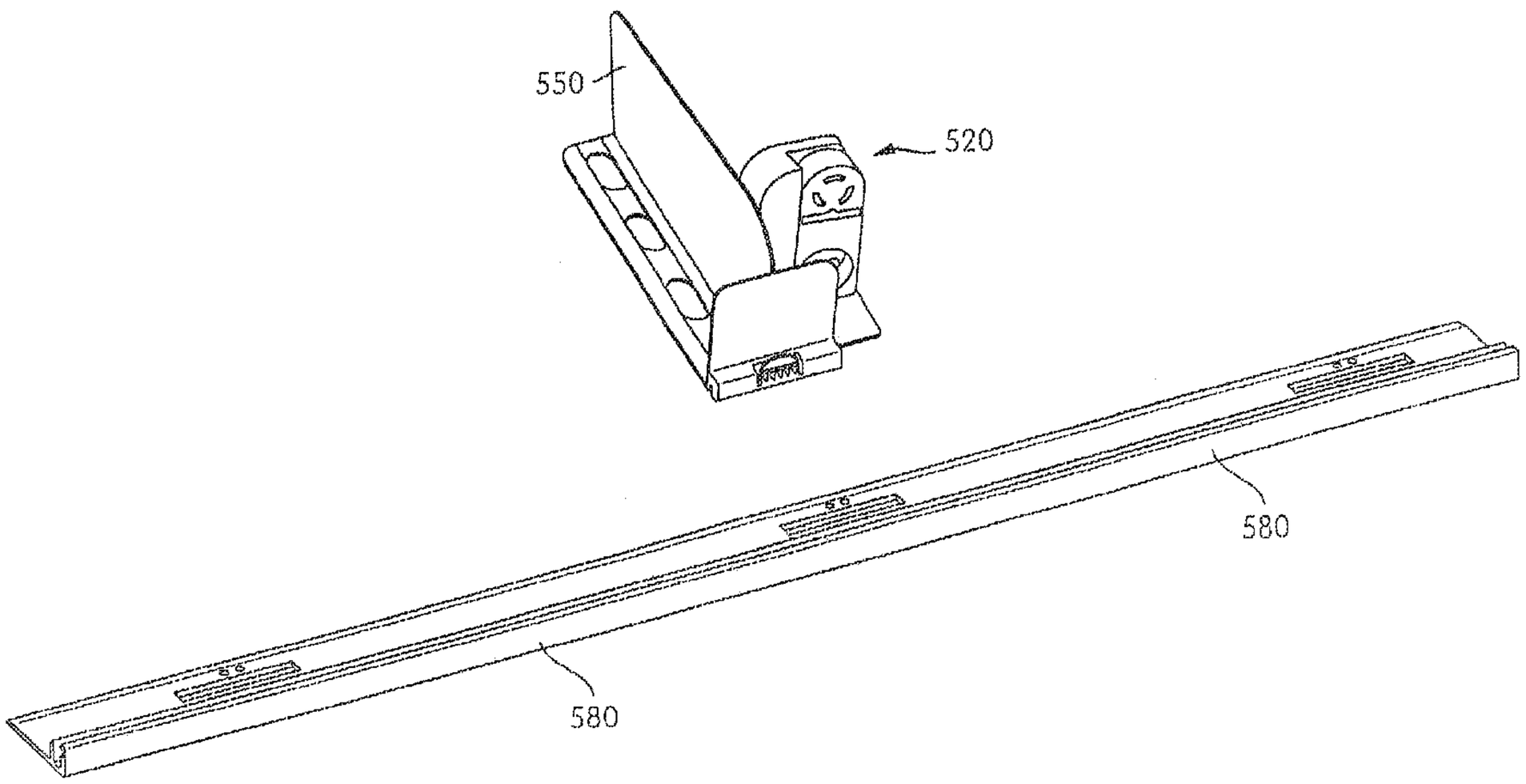
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(54) **Titre : SYSTEME D'AFFICHAGE DE GESTION DE PRODUIT**
(54) **Title: PRODUCT MANAGEMENT DISPLAY SYSTEM**



(57) **Abrégé/Abstract:**
A product management display system for merchandising product on a shelf includes using a trackless pusher mechanism that travels along a surface on which product is placed and one or more dividers for separating product into rows. The one or more dividers may be engaged to a front rail in two different conditions, locked and unlocked. In a locked condition, the relationship between the divider and the front rail resists alteration in any direction with respect to each other. In the unlocked condition, the dividers may be freely slid laterally along the front rail, while remaining perpendicular to the front rail. The one or more dividers may lock to the front rail through the use of corresponding teeth, resilient surfaces, a locking tab, a locking bar and/or a cam.

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Abstract

A product management display system for merchandising product on a shelf includes using a trackless pusher mechanism that travels along a surface on which product is placed and one or more dividers for separating product into rows. The one or more dividers may be engaged to a front rail in two different conditions, locked and unlocked. In a locked condition, the relationship between the divider and the front rail resists alteration in any direction with respect to each other. In the unlocked condition, the dividers may be freely slid laterally along the front rail, while remaining perpendicular to the front rail. The one or more dividers may lock to the front rail through the use of corresponding teeth, resilient surfaces, a locking tab, a locking bar and/or a cam.

PRODUCT MANAGEMENT DISPLAY SYSTEM

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This is a divisional application of Canadian National Phase Patent Application No. 2,847,521 filed August 31, 2012.

[01]

FIELD

[02] The exemplary embodiments relate generally to a shelf assembly for use in merchandising product and more particularly to a shelf assembly having improved mechanisms for displaying and pushing product on the shelves.

BACKGROUND

[03] It is known that retail and wholesale stores, such as convenience stores, drug stores, grocery stores, discount stores, and the like, require a large amount of shelving both to store product and to display the product to consumers. In displaying product, it is desirable for the product on the shelves to be situated toward the front of the shelf so that the product is visible and accessible to consumers. In the case of coolers or refrigerators that are used to store and display such products as soft drinks, energy drinks, bottled water, and other bottled or canned beverages, it is desirable for these

products to also be situated toward the front of the shelf and visible and accessible to the consumers.

[04] To accomplish this placement of product, known systems may include inclined trays or floors that through gravity will cause the product to move toward the front of the shelf. Many of these systems include floors or shelves made of a plastic material such as polypropylene that due its low coefficient of friction permit the product to easily slide along the inclined floor or surface. However, over time, these surfaces can become obstructed with debris or sticky substances that inhibit the product from properly sliding, sometimes causing several products to tip over thus blocking additional product from moving to the front of the shelf.

[05] Other systems include the use of a pusher system to push the product toward the front of the shelf as the product at the front of the shelf is removed. The known pusher systems are typically mounted to a track and include a pusher paddle and a coiled spring to urge the product forward. Occasionally, as the system is used, and over time, the track becomes obstructed with dirt or sticky materials that hinder the proper operation of the pusher system in the track. In addition, depending on the size, shape and weight of the product to be merchandised, the known pusher paddles may occasionally tip or bend backwards, thereby causing a binding of the pusher mechanism in the track. In those situations, the pusher mechanism may not properly push product toward the front of the shelf.

[06] One exemplary embodiment is directed at improving upon existing merchandising systems by providing a trackless pusher system that works with gravity-fed merchandise systems (*i.e.*, inclined shelves or trays) and non-gravity-fed merchandise systems.

SUMMARY

[07] One exemplary embodiment is directed to a product management display system for merchandising product on a shelf. This embodiment includes using a trackless pusher mechanism that travels along a surface on which product is placed. The trackless system overcomes the known problems with the use of tracks to hold and guide the

known pusher mechanisms. It should be understood however that the teachings of this embodiment may be used with systems that include tracks for mounting a pusher mechanism or the like.

[08] The pusher mechanism can include a pusher paddle and a floor that extends forward of the pusher paddle. A flat coiled spring or other biasing element can be operatively connected behind the pusher paddle and extend across the floor of the pusher mechanism and to the front of the shelf. Alternatively, the flat coiled spring or biasing element can extend across the divider to the front of the shelf assembly. With this configuration, the pusher paddle is prevented from tipping or bending backwards during operation.

[09] An exemplary embodiment also includes the use of a pushing mechanism with the merchandising of product on horizontal or non-inclined shelves or surfaces, as well as with gravity-fed systems, or systems that use gravity as a mechanism to urge product toward the front of the shelf.

[10] In accordance with an exemplary illustrative embodiment of the invention, the pusher paddle may define a concave pushing surface for pushing cylindrical products, such as soft drink bottles or cans, and to keep the paddle centered on the track and behind the product. Alternatively, the pusher paddle may define a flat pushing surface that may further include at its upper edge a curved rib or similar structure that can also be used to push cylindrical products.

[11] In accordance with another exemplary illustrative embodiment of the invention, the floor of the pusher mechanism can include a notched or cut-out portion to align the pusher mechanism relative to the coiled spring. Also, the floor of the system also can include a notch or cut-out portion for receiving and mounting a flat end of the coiled spring to the floor. A spring tip may be placed on the end of the coiled spring to mount the coiled spring to the floor of the system. Alternatively, the end of the coiled spring can mount to the divider of the assembly.

[12] In accordance with yet another exemplary embodiment, an adaptor for a product management display system may be positioned on a floor surface of the display

system. The adaptor may include a planar surface with at least two ribs extending outwardly from the planar surface and across the planar surface in a substantially parallel manner. A coiled spring may be positioned between the parallel extending ribs. With this configuration, product to be merchandised may sit on the ribs, and not directly on the coiled spring, to enhance the forward movement of certain types of product, such as cans of a beverage.

[13] In yet another alternative aspect, a mounting member may be used to mount the end of the coiled spring to the floor of the system. For those systems that include spaced-apart glide rails that are joined together by connecting ribs, the mounting member may be snap-fit to or otherwise mounted on the floor and between the glide rails.

[14] In yet another alternative aspect, the trackless pusher system is retrofitted into an existing shelf assembly. This allows for the placement of the trackless pusher system in an existing shelving system as a low cost alternative to purchasing the entire trackless pusher assembly.

[15] In another exemplary embodiment, the coil spring can be mounted to the retainer. An end of the coil spring can be directly mounted to the retainer or alternatively the end can be mounted to the retainer via an adapter. The adapter can have a curved portion which is received in a correspondingly shaped curved slot in the retainer to secure the end of the spring to the display assembly.

[16] In another exemplary embodiment, the trays can be attached via a dovetail connection to form a shelf assembly. Additionally the dividers can be adjusted such that the width of the product rows can be adapted to receive different sized products.

[17] In accordance with yet another exemplary embodiment, the product management display system can be arranged in a stackable arrangement. The assembly can be provided with a first tray and a second tray each having a first wall and a second wall. The first and second trays are each adapted to receive a pusher mechanism, and a retainer mechanism. First and second spacers are mounted to the first and second trays for stacking the first and second trays on top of one another. The first and second spacer can be provided with a plurality of detents, and the first tray and the

second tray can each be provided with a plurality of correspondingly shaped sockets for receiving the plurality of detents.

[18] In accordance with yet another exemplary embodiment, a product management display system for merchandising product on a shelf includes using a trackless pusher mechanism that travels along a surface on which product is placed and one or more dividers for separating product into rows. The one or more dividers may be attached and releasably engaged to a front rail. When the one or more dividers are not engaged and held in position to the front rail, the one or more dividers and product positioned on the display system may be moved in a lateral direction, or may be lifted away from the front rail. This permits ease of replanogramming of product on the shelf. The one or more dividers may releasably engage to the front rail through the use of corresponding teeth, resilient surfaces, a locking tab, a locking bar, a cam and/or through a friction or press fit.

[19] In an example, a merchandise display system includes a front rail and at least one divider configured to engage the front rail. In some embodiments, the front rail is configured to attach to a shelf. The at least one divider includes a barrier and the at least one divider further includes a divider wall. The at least one divider also includes a divider floor perpendicular to the divider wall, wherein the divider floor is configured to hold product. The merchandise display system also includes a cam coupled to the divider, wherein the cam is configured to move between a first position and a second position. The at least one divider is (a) movable in a lateral direction parallel to the front rail and (b) secured in a direction perpendicular to the front rail when the at least one divider is engaged with the front rail and the cam is in the first position. The at least one divider is (a) fixed in the lateral direction parallel to the front rail and (b) secured in the direction perpendicular to the front rail when the at least one divider is engaged with the front rail and the cam is in the second position.

[20] In an example, a merchandise display system includes a front rail and a plurality of dividers configured to attach to the front rail and separate product into rows. Each of the plurality of dividers includes a divider wall extending in a direction perpendicular to the front rail, a divider floor perpendicular to the divider wall, wherein the divider floor is configured to hold product, and a cam coupled to the divider, wherein the cam is configured to move between a first position and a second position. Each of the

plurality of dividers is (a) movable in a lateral direction parallel to the front rail and (b) secured in a direction perpendicular to the front rail when each of the plurality of dividers is engaged with the front rail and the cam for each of the plurality of dividers is in the first position. In addition, each of the plurality of dividers is (a) fixed in the lateral direction parallel to the front rail and (b) secured in the direction perpendicular to the front rail when each of the plurality of dividers is engaged with the front rail and the cam for each of the plurality of dividers is in the second position.

[21] In an example, a merchandise display system includes a front rail and at least one divider configured to attach to the front rail, the at least one divider including a barrier, a divider wall extending in a direction perpendicular to the front rail, a divider floor perpendicular to the divider wall, wherein the divider wall separates the divider floor into a first portion and a second portion and each of the first portion and the second portion are configured to hold product. In some embodiments, the front rail is configured to attach to a shelf. The merchandise display system also includes a first pusher mechanism configured to slide along at least part of the first portion, a second pusher mechanism configured to slide along at least part of the second portion, and a cam coupled to the at least one divider, the cam configured to move between a first position and a second position. The at least one divider is movable in a lateral direction parallel to and along the front rail when the cam is in the first position, and the at least one divider resists movement in the lateral direction parallel to and along the front rail when the cam is in the second position.

[22] In an example, a merchandise display system includes a front rail and at least one divider configured to attach to the front rail, the at least one divider including a barrier configured to engage the front rail, a divider wall extending in a direction perpendicular to front rail, a divider floor perpendicular to the divider wall, wherein the divider floor configured to hold product. The display system also can include a resilient tab coupled to the divider, the resilient tab configured to move between a first position and a second position. The at least one divider is fixed in a lateral direction parallel to the front rail when the resilient tab is in the first position. The at least one divider is movable in the lateral direction parallel to the front rail when the resilient tab is in the second position.

[23] In an example, a merchandise display system includes a front rail, the front rail comprising at least one first projection and at least one first recess, and at least one divider configured to attach to the front rail, the at least one divider comprising a divider wall and a divider floor perpendicular to the divider wall, the at least one divider further comprising at least one second recess and at least one second projection, the at least one second projection of the divider configured to move between a first position and a second position. The at least one divider is (a) movable in a lateral direction parallel to the front rail and (b) secured in a direction perpendicular to the front rail when the at least one first projection of the front rail is engaged with the at least one second recess of the divider and the at least one second projection of the divider is in the first position. The at least one divider (a) resists movement in the lateral direction parallel to the front rail and (b) is secured in a direction perpendicular to the front rail when the at least one first projection of the front rail is engaged with the at least one second recess of the divider and the at least one second projection of the divider is in the second position.

[24] In an example, a merchandise display system includes a front rail, the front rail including at least one first projection and at least one second projection, the at least one second projection of the front rail configured to move between a first position and a second position. The merchandise display system also includes at least one divider configured to attach to the front rail, the at least one divider comprising a divider wall and a divider floor perpendicular to the divider wall, the at least one divider further comprising at least one recess. The at least one divider is (a) movable in a lateral direction parallel to the front rail and (b) secured in a direction perpendicular to the front rail when the at least one first projection of the front rail is engaged with the at least one recess of the divider and the at least one second projection of the front rail is in the first position. The at least one divider is (a) fixed in the lateral direction parallel to the front rail and (b) secured in the direction perpendicular to the front rail when the at least one first projection of the front rail is engaged with the at least one recess of the divider and the at least one second projection of the front rail is in the second position.

[25] In an example, a merchandise display system includes a front rail, the front rail comprising a first projection and a second projection. The merchandise display system also includes at least one divider configured to attach to the front rail, the at least one divider comprising a divider wall and a divider floor perpendicular to the divider wall, the at least one divider further comprising a recess and a third projection. The at least one of the second projection or the third projection is a movable projection that is movable between a first position and a second position. The at least one divider is (a) movable in a lateral direction parallel to the front rail and (b) secured in a direction perpendicular to the front rail when the first projection of the front rail is engaged with the recess of the divider and the movable projection is in the first position. The at least one divider is (a) fixed in the lateral direction parallel to the front rail and (b) secured in the direction perpendicular to the front rail when the first projection of the front rail is engaged with the recess of the divider and the movable projection is in the second position.

[26] In an example, a merchandise display system includes a front rail, the front rail comprising at least a first engaging member. The merchandise display system also includes at least one divider configured to attach to the front rail, the at least one divider comprising a divider wall and a divider floor perpendicular to the divider wall, the at least one divider further comprising at least a second engaging member. The merchandise display system also includes a third engaging member configured to move between a first position and a second position. The at least one divider is (a) movable in a lateral direction parallel to the front rail and (b) secured in a direction perpendicular to the front rail when the first engaging member of the front rail is engaged with the second engaging member of the divider and the third engaging member is in the first position. The at least one divider is (a) fixed in the lateral direction parallel to the front rail and (b) secured in the direction perpendicular to the front rail when the first engaging member of the front rail is engaged with the second engaging member of the divider and the third engaging member is in the second position.

[27] In an example, a merchandise display system includes a front rail and at least one divider configured to engage the front rail, the at least one divider including a barrier,

the at least one divider further including a divider wall, the at least one divider further including a divider floor perpendicular to the divider wall, wherein the divider floor is configured to hold product. In some embodiments, the front rail is configured to attach to a shelf. The merchandise display system also includes a cam coupled to the divider, wherein the cam is configured to move between a first position and a second position. The at least one divider can be secured in a direction perpendicular to the front rail when the at least one divider is engaged with the front rail. The cam can inhibit movement of the at least one divider in the lateral direction parallel to the front rail when the cam in in the first position and the cam can allow movement of the divider in the lateral direction parallel to the front rail when the cam is in the second position. The merchandise display system can include a handle to rotate the cam between the first position and the second position. The merchandise display system can include a handle to slide the cam between the first position and the second position.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[28] Figure 1 depicts an isometric exploded view of an exemplary embodiment of a product management display system of the present invention.

[29] Figure 2 depicts an isometric view of an exemplary pusher mechanism mounted to an exemplary tray or product channel of the present invention.

[30] Figure 3 depicts another isometric view of the system of Figure 2 with product placed in the system.

[31] Figure 4 depicts another isometric view of the system of Figure 2 with multiple product placed in the system.

[32] Figure 5 depicts an isometric rear view of the system of Figure 4.

[33] Figure 6 depicts an alternative embodiment of the tray or product channel of the present invention.

[34] Figure 7 depicts an exemplary tip for an end of a coiled spring that may be used with the product management display system of an embodiment of the invention.

[35] Figure 8 depicts the exemplary tip of Figure 7 being mounted to a surface of a tray or product channel.

[36] Figure 9 depicts the exemplary tip of Figure 7 being mounted to an end of a coiled spring.

[37] Figure 10 depicts the exemplary tip of Figure 7 mounted to an end of a coiled spring.

[38] Figure 11 depicts an isometric view of an alternative exemplary embodiment of a product management display system of the present invention.

[39] Figure 12 depicts another isometric view of the system of Figure 11.

[40] Figure 13 depicts a front view of the system of Figure 11.

[41] Figure 14 depicts a top view of the system of Figure 11.

[42] Figure 15 depicts a rear view of the system of Figure 11.

[43] Figure 16 depicts an isometric view of an adaptor that may be used with an embodiment of the invention.

[44] Figure 17 depicts a front view of the adaptor of Figure 16.

[45] Figure 18 depicts an exemplary installation of the adaptor of an embodiment of the invention.

[46] Figure 19 depicts an isometric view of an installed adaptor of an embodiment of the invention.

[47] Figure 20 depicts a front view of an installed adaptor of an embodiment of the invention.

[48] Figure 21 depicts an isometric view of an alternative exemplary embodiment of a product management display system of the present invention.

[49] Figure 22 depicts an isometric bottom view of an exemplary mounting member that may be used to mount the end of the coiled spring to the floor of the display system.

[50] Figure 23 depicts an isometric top view of the exemplary mounting member of Figure 22.

[51] Figure 24 depicts the exemplary mounting member of Figure 22 mounted to the end of the coiled spring with the coiled spring mounted to an exemplary pusher paddle.

[52] Figure 25 depicts another view of the exemplary mounting member of Figure 22 mounted to the end of the coiled spring with the coiled spring mounted to an exemplary pusher paddle.

[53] Figure 26 depicts the exemplary mounting member of Figure 22 with attached coiled spring being mounted to the floor of the system.

[54] Figure 27 depicts the exemplary mounting member of Figure 22 installed on the floor of the system.

[55] Figure 28 depicts an isometric view of an alternative exemplary embodiment of a product management display system of the present invention.

[56] Figure 29 depicts a close-up isometric view of the tray of the exemplary embodiment of Figure 28.

[57] Figure 29A depicts a cross-sectional view of the exemplary embodiment of Figure 28 illustrating a first securing method.

[58] Figure 29B depicts a cross-sectional view of the exemplary embodiment of Figure 28 illustrating a second securing method.

[59] Figure 30 depicts a close-up isometric view of the embodiment of Figure 28 illustrating a rivet attaching the spring to the tray.

[60] Figure 31 depicts an isometric view of the embodiment of Figure 28 being assembled in a preexisting wire shelf.

[61] Figure 32 depicts an isometric view of the embodiment of Figure 28 assembled in a preexisting wire shelf.

[62] Figure 33 depicts an isometric view of an exemplary embodiment of the display system.

[63] Figure 34 depicts an isometric view of an exemplary embodiment of the display system.

[64] Figure 35 depicts an isometric view of an exemplary embodiment of an adapter.

[65] Figure 36 depicts an isometric view of an exemplary embodiment of a retainer.

[66] Figure 37 depicts a side view of an exemplary embodiment of the display system.

[67] Figure 38 depicts an isometric view of an exemplary embodiment of the display system.

[68] Figure 39 depicts an isometric view of an exemplary embodiment of the display system.

[69] Figure 40 depicts an isometric view of an exemplary embodiment of the display system.

[70] Figure 41A depicts a sectional side view of an exemplary embodiment of a divider.

[71] Figure 41B depicts a front view of an exemplary embodiment of the display system.

[72] Figure 41C depicts a close up view of a section of Figure 41B.

[73] Figure 41D depicts a front view of an exemplary embodiment of a divider.

[74] Figure 42 depicts an isometric view of an exemplary embodiment of the display system.

[75] Figure 43 depicts an isometric view of an exemplary embodiment of the display system.

[76] Figure 44 depicts an isometric view of an exemplary embodiment of a product management display system.

[77] Figure 45 depicts another isometric view of an exemplary embodiment of a product management display system with product in the system.

[78] Figure 46 depicts a top view of another exemplary embodiment of a product management display system with product in the system.

[79] Figure 47 depicts an isometric-rear view of an exemplary embodiment of a product management display system with product in the system.

[80] Figure 48 depicts an isometric view of an exemplary embodiment of the pusher mechanism mounted to a divider.

[81] Figure 49 depicts another isometric view of the divider and pusher mechanism being assembled to the product management display system.

[82] Figure 50 depicts an isometric view of yet another exemplary embodiment of the product management display system.

[83] Figure 51 depicts another isometric view of the exemplary embodiment of the product management display system of Figure 50 without product.

[84] Figure 52 depicts an exploded isometric view of the exemplary embodiment of the product management display system of Figure 50.

[85] Figure 53 depicts an isometric view of yet another exemplary embodiment of the product management display system.

[86] Figure 54 depicts an isometric view of an exemplary attachment of the pusher spring to a shelf of the product management display system of Figure 53.

[87] Figure 55 depicts an isometric view of an exemplary attachment of the pusher spring to a shelf of the product management display system of Figure 53.

[88] Figure 56 depicts an isometric view of an exemplary attachment of the pusher spring to a shelf of the product management display system of Figure 53.

[89] Figure 57 depicts an isometric view of an exemplary attachment of the pusher spring to a shelf of the product management display system of Figure 53.

[90] Figure 58 depicts an isomeric view of an exemplary embodiment of the product management display system in accordance with one or more aspect of the disclosure.

[91] Figure 59 depicts an isometric view of the exemplary product management display system of Figure 58.

[92] Figure 60 depicts an isometric view of an exemplary pusher mechanism in accordance with one or more aspects of the disclosure.

[93] Figure 61 depicts a partial isometric view of an exemplary divider in accordance with one or more aspects of the disclosure.

[94] Figure 62 depicts an isometric view of an exemplary divider and pusher mechanism in accordance with one or more aspects of the disclosure.

[95] Figure 63 depicts a partial isometric view of an exemplary front portion of a divider in accordance with one or more aspects of the disclosure.

[96] Figure 64 depicts a partial isometric view of an exemplary front portion of a front rail in accordance with one or more aspects of the disclosure.

[97] Figure 65 depicts a partial isometric view of an exemplary connection between a divider and a front rail in accordance with one or more aspects of the disclosure.

[98] Figure 66 depicts a side view of an exemplary divider and front rail in accordance with one or more aspects of the disclosure.

[99] Figures 67A-C depict side views of an exemplary divider attaching to a front rail in accordance with one or more aspects of the disclosure.

[100] Figures 68A-C depict side views of an exemplary divider attaching to a front rail in accordance with one or more aspects of the disclosure.

[101] Figure 69A depicts an isometric view of exemplary rail mounting clips for a front rail in accordance with one or more aspects of the disclosure.

[102] Figure 69B depicts an isometric view of an exemplary front rail in accordance with one or more aspects of the disclosure.

[103] Figure 70 depicts an isometric view of an exemplary front rail and rail mounting clips in accordance with accordance with one or more aspects of the disclosure.

[104] Figure 71 depicts an isometric view of an exemplary front rail in accordance with one or more aspects of the disclosure.

[105] Figure 72 depicts an isometric view of an exemplary divider and pusher mechanism in accordance with one or more aspects of the disclosure.

[106] Figure 73 depicts an isometric view of an exemplary divider and pusher mechanism in accordance with one or more aspects of the disclosure.

[107] Figure 74 depicts a partial isometric view of an exemplary divider in accordance with one or more aspects of the disclosure.

[108] Figure 75 depicts a partial isometric view of an exemplary front rail in accordance with one or more aspects of the disclosure.

[109] Figures 76A and 76B depict partial isometric views of an exemplary front rail and a cam bar lever in accordance with one or more aspects of the disclosure.

[110] Figure 77 depicts a front exploded view of an exemplary product management display system in accordance with one or more aspects of the disclosure.

[111] Figure 78 depicts a back exploded view of an exemplary product management display system in accordance with one or more aspects of the disclosure.

[112] Figures 79A-C depict side views of an exemplary front rail and divider in accordance with one or more aspects of the disclosure.

[113] Figure 80 depicts an isometric view of an exemplary product management display system in accordance with one or more aspects of the disclosure.

[114] Figures 81A-B depict partial side views of an exemplary front rail and divider in accordance with one or more aspects of the disclosure.

[115] Figures 82A-C depict partial side views of an exemplary front rail and divider in accordance with one or more aspects of the disclosure.

[116] Figures 83A-C depict partial side views of an exemplary front rail and divider in accordance with one or more aspects of the disclosure.

[117] Figures 84A-F depict isometric views of an exemplary product management display system in accordance with one or more aspects of the disclosure.

[118] Figure 85 depicts a side view of an exemplary divider and front rail in accordance with one or more aspects of the disclosure.

[119] Figures 86A-L depict views of components of an exemplary product management display system in accordance with one or more aspects of the disclosure.

[120] Figures 87A-C depict side views of exemplary dividers and front rails in accordance with one or more aspects of the disclosure.

[121] Figures 88A-B depict isometric views of an exemplary divider in accordance with one or more aspects of the disclosure.

[122] Figures 89A-C depict side views of an exemplary divider attaching to a front rail in accordance with one or more aspects of the disclosure.

[123] Figures 90A-F depict views of an exemplary divider attaching to a front rail in accordance with one or more aspects of the disclosure.

[124] Figure 91A depicts a view of an exemplary divider and a rear rail in accordance with one or more aspects of the disclosure.

[125] Before the embodiments of the invention are explained in detail, it is to be understood that the invention is not limited in its application to the details of construction and the arrangement of the components set forth in the following description or illustrated in the drawings. The invention is capable of other embodiments and of being practiced

or being carried out in various ways. Also, it is to be understood that the phraseology and terminology used herein are for the purpose of description and should not be regarded as limiting. The use of "including" and "comprising" and variations thereof is meant to encompass the items listed thereafter and equivalents thereof as well as additional items and equivalents thereof. Further, the use of the term "mount," "mounted" or "mounting" is meant to broadly include any technique or method of mounting, attaching, joining or coupling one part to another, whether directly or indirectly.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[126] The invention may be embodied in various forms. Referring to the Figures wherein like numerals indicate like elements, there is depicted in Figure 1 an isometric exploded view of an exemplary embodiment. Exemplary merchandise system 10 includes a product dispensing tray 12 in which is mounted an exemplary trackless pusher mechanism 14. As described in more detail below, the pusher mechanism 14 will fit in the tray 12 and will slide along the surface of the tray without the use of tracks, rails, or guides typically used to hold a conventional pusher mechanism to the tray or floor of the tray. The pusher mechanism defines a pusher paddle and a pusher floor that extends forward of the pusher paddle. A coiled spring may extend across the pusher floor and operatively connect to the tray at a forward position on the tray. In one aspect of the invention, product to be merchandised may be placed in the tray in front of the pusher paddle and may sit on the pusher floor as well as the coiled spring. With this configuration, the weight of the product will prevent the pusher paddle from tipping to ensure proper pushing of the product. In addition, the problems associated with debris or sticky materials hindering the effectiveness of known pusher systems that use tracks, rails or guides have been eliminated. Other aspects, embodiments and features of the invention and its teachings are set forth in more detail below.

[127] The exemplary tray 12 may define a surface 16 and one or more dividing panels or dividers 18 to separate the tray into numerous rows for placement of product. In an alternative aspect, the tray 12 may be a shelf or any other surface on which products

may be placed for merchandising. The surface 16 may be a solid surface or a surface defining a plurality of spaced-apart apertures 20 separated by a plurality of support ribs 22. The apertures 20 and ribs 22 provide a surface that permits the slidable movement of product placed on this surface and also permits liquids and dirt to pass through the apertures 20 so that they do not collect on the surface 16. The surface 16 may be made of any suitable material that permits the slidable movement of product on the surface 16. Other surface or floor configurations are known and may be used with the principles of the invention.

[128] As depicted in Figures 9 and 10, the surface 16 may define a rounded end portion 24 that includes a notch or cut-out portion 26. The end portion 24 may be rounded to match the shape of the product that is placed on the tray. For example, the depicted end portion 24 is rounded or defines a semi-circular shape to match the contour of a bottle or can that may be placed in the tray and on the end portion 24. Other shapes of the end portion may be used with the invention depending on the product to be merchandised.

[129] The notch 26 may be used to receive and mount an end 29 of a coiled spring 30 or similar biasing element. The notch 26 may define opposing angled edge surfaces 32 that are joined by edge 34. The edge 34 is preferably centered across the width of the product row formed in the tray 12 and extends perpendicular to the length of the tray. This configuration will center the coiled spring 30 relative to the tray 12 and will permit the spring to extend in a substantially parallel manner relative to the length of the tray. In other words, the depicted edge 34 of the notch 26 will permit the spring 30 to extend along the length of the tray 12 at or near the center of the product row formed by the tray. One skilled in the art will appreciate that the location and configuration of the notch may vary depending on the desired placement of the spring.

[130] The coiled spring 30 may define an end 29 that is configured to be placed across the notch 26 and onto the edge 34. In one aspect, the end 29 of the coiled spring may be V-shaped and function as a hook such that the end 29 will wrap around the edge 34 with a portion of the end 29 of the coiled spring extending beneath the end portion 24 of the surface 16. This configuration permits an easy installation of the coiled spring onto the tray.

[131] In another aspect, and referring to Figure 7, a spring tip 60 may be added to the end 29 of the spring 30 to assist with the mounting of the spring to the system. The spring tip 60 may define numerous shapes and configurations depending on the configuration of the tray and the surface on which the spring end needs to attach. The spring tip 60 may be permanently attached to the end 29 of the coiled spring 30 or it may be detachable to permit the interchange or replacement of the spring tip 60. The spring tip 60 may be made of plastic and may define one or more apertures. Aperture 61 may be used to receive the end 29 of the coiled spring 30. A second aperture 63 may be used to receive a mating tongue or mounting member 65 extending from the surface 16 of the tray 12, as discussed below. With this configuration, the end 29 of the coiled spring 30 may be operatively connected to the tray 12.

[132] In another aspect, the end 29 of the coiled spring may snap-fit into an aperture formed in the surface 16, or may be otherwise inserted and secured to an aperture or opening in the tray, thereby securing the end 29 of the coiled spring 30 in position.

[133] Referring back to Figure 1, dividers 18 may also be used to separate product into rows. The dividers 18 extend substantially upwardly from the surface 16 and as illustrated in Figure 1, may be positioned on opposing sides of the surface 16. Alternatively, the dividers 18 may be positioned at any desired position on the tray 12 or to the surface 16. The dividers 18 may be formed as a unitary structure with the surface 16, or the dividers 18 may be detachable to provide added flexibility with the system. The dividers may be attached to a front or back rail depending on the system. The dividers 18 may define numerous configurations and may extend upwardly any desired distance to provide the desired height of the dividers between the rows of product to be merchandised. This height may be adjustable by adding divider extenders or the like.

[134] Located at the front of the tray 12 and extending between the dividers 18 may be one or more product-retaining members 44. The product-retaining members 44 serve as a front retaining wall or bar to hold the product in the tray 12 and to prevent the product from falling out of the tray 12. These members are also configured to permit the easy removal of the forward-most product positioned in the tray 12. The product-retaining member 44 may be one or more curve-shaped retaining ribs as depicted in Figure 1.

These illustrated retaining ribs may extend from one divider to another divider thereby joining the dividers. The retaining ribs may also extend part-way between the dividers, as also shown in Figure 1 as rib 46, to also assist in retaining the product in the tray. Alternatively, and as shown in Figure 6 the product-retaining member 44 may be a curve-shaped solid retaining wall 48 that extends between dividers. The retaining wall 48 may be transparent or semi-transparent to permit visualization of the product on the shelf. In another aspect, the retaining wall 48 may also extend part-way between the dividers 18. In yet another embodiment depicted in Figures 11-15, the retaining wall 100 may be attached to the surface of the tray and not connect to the dividers. In this embodiment, the retaining wall 100 may form an opening 102 defined by an upper member 104, opposing, curved side walls 106 that further define an angled edge 108, and a floor member 110. The side walls 106 may also be straight and not curved depending on the system. The end of the coiled spring may also snap-fit into the floor 110 or otherwise attached to the tray using any of the techniques described herein. One of skill in the art will readily appreciate that there are numerous shapes and configurations possible for the product-retaining member 44 and that the depicted configurations are merely exemplary embodiments of these numerous configurations.

[135] Referring back to Figure 1, the exemplary trackless pusher mechanism 14 defines a pusher paddle 50 and a pusher floor 52. The pusher paddle 50 and pusher floor 52 may be formed as a single, unitary structure or may be separate structures that are joined together using known techniques. In addition, the pusher paddle 50 and pusher floor 52 may be made of any known suitable plastic or metal material. The pusher paddle and pusher floor may be reinforced using any known reinforcing techniques.

[136] In one aspect, the pusher paddle 50 forms a curved-shape pusher surface or face 54 that is configured to match the shape of the product to be merchandised, such as plastic bottles or cans containing a beverage, as depicted in Figures 3-5. The curve-shaped pusher surface 54 permits the pusher to remain centrally aligned with the last product in the tray. This configuration reduces friction and drag between the pusher and the divider walls. In an alternative aspect, the pusher surface or face may be a flat surface. In yet another aspect, the flat pusher surface may be accompanied by a

curved shaped rib that is positioned near or on the top of the pusher paddle and that may be used to center and align product in the tray, in a manner similar to the curve-shaped pusher surface 54 depicted in Figure 1. The curve shaped rib may define other shapes and configurations that permit cylindrical or similar shaped products to be properly pushed in the tray. Advertisement, product identification or other product information may be placed on the pusher surface 54.

[137] Positioned behind the pusher surface or face 54 may be one or more support members 58, such as ribs, walls, or gussets. The support members 58 are configured to support the pusher surface 54 and further connect the pusher paddle 50 to the pusher floor 52. As can be seen in Figure 5, positioned between the support members 58 is the coiled spring 30, and more specifically the coiled end 57 that is used to urge the pusher paddle 50 forward and along the tray 12, as understood in the art. Any technique used to operatively connect the coiled spring to the pusher paddle 50 may be used with the invention.

[138] As shown in Figure 1, the pusher floor 52 may be positioned below the pusher paddle 50 and may extend forward of the pusher surface 54 of the pusher paddle. The pusher floor 52 may extend any predetermined distance and at any predetermined angle. For example, the pusher floor 52 may extend substantially perpendicular to the pusher surface 54. In the exemplary embodiment, the pusher floor 52 may extend a sufficient distance to permit one product, such as a single bottle or can, to be placed on the pusher floor. In another aspect, the pusher floor 52 may be configured to permit more than one product to be placed on the pusher floor. The pusher floor 52 may define any shape, including the depicted round shape and may define any product retaining features on the surface of the pusher floor, such as ribs, walls, or the like, to further hold the product on the pusher floor.

[139] As can be seen in Figure 2, the pusher floor 52 may define an elongated channel, groove or recessed portion 59 that is sized, shaped and configured to seat the coiled spring 30. In the exemplary embodiment, the channel or groove 59 may extend across the floor 52 and in a substantially perpendicular manner relative to the pusher paddle 50. In an alternative aspect, the groove or channel may extend part-way or across the entire pusher floor 52, as shown in Figure 19. Such configuration permits the proper

alignment and positioning of the pusher paddle 50 in the tray. The groove 59 may define a depth that matches or exceeds the thickness of the coiled spring 30. With this configuration, the coiled spring 30 will seat at or below the pusher floor surface such that product will not sit directly on the coiled spring, rather, such product will sit on the pusher floor surface. As shown in Figure 19, the pusher floor may include apertures and openings through which debris or other items may pass. Alternatively, the floor may be a solid surface.

[140] In an alternative aspect of the invention, as shown in Figures 16-20, an adaptor 180 may be positioned on the surface 16. Referring to Figures 16 and 17, the adaptor 180 may include one or more raised ribs 182 on which a product may sit. The raised ribs 182 may extend longitudinally along the length of the adaptor 180. The adaptor 180 may be a flat extrusion of plastic material (or any other suitable material) defining a planar surface 184 with the one or more ribs 182 extending outwardly from the planar surface 184. The adaptor 180 may define a rounded end 185 and include a notch or cut-away portion 186 through which or across which the coiled spring may extend. The rounded end 185 may be configured to match the shape of the product that is placed on the tray. Other shapes of the end 185, notch 186 and adaptor 180 may be used with the invention depending on the product to be merchandised. The adaptor 180 may be a separate, insertable piece or, alternatively, a piece formed integral with the surface 16.

[141] Referring to Figure 18, the adaptor 180 may be easily insertable onto the surface 16 and between the dividers 18. Referring to Figure 19, once the adaptor 180 is installed, the pusher mechanism 14 may be positioned on top of the adaptor 180 and may slide freely across the ribs 182 of the adaptor 180. The coiled spring 30 may extend in a parallel manner between the ribs 182 and may seat at or below the top surface of the ribs 182, as more clearly shown in Figure 20. With this configuration, the product to be merchandised may sit on, and slide along, the ribs 182 and not on the coiled spring 30.

[142] In an alternative aspect, the ribs 182 may be a raised bead or raised beads, or a series of fingers that may be used to facilitate the movement of the product on the surface 16. In yet another alternative embodiment, the ribs 182 may be product moving

members, such as runners or one or more rollers or rolling members that permit the product to roll across the rolling members and toward the front of the product display system. Exemplary roller assemblies include those disclosed and described in United States Application Serial No. 11/257,718 filed October 25, 2005 and assigned to RTC Industries, Inc. As should be appreciated by those skilled in the art, there are many possible techniques that may be used with the described pusher mechanisms for facilitating the movement of the product on the shelf or floor.

[143] The underneath side of the pusher floor 52 may be a smooth planar surface that will slide freely along the surface 16. Alternatively, and similar to above, the pusher floor 52 may include beads, runners, rollers or the like that will permit the pusher floor to slide along the surface yet raise the pusher floor up off of the surface 16. In another alternative embodiment, the underneath side of the pusher floor may be configured with rail mounting members to permit the mounting of the pusher to a track or rail, as understood in the art.

[144] The pusher floor further defines a notch or cut-out portion 62 through which will pass the coiled spring 30. The end 29 of the coiled spring 30 will pass through the notch 62 and through the notch 26 of the surface 16 and will mount to the tray using any of the techniques described above.

[145] In use, as the pusher mechanism 14 is urged rearward in the tray 12, the end 29 of the coiled spring 30 will be held in position as described above and the coiled end 57 of the spring 30 will begin to uncoil behind the pusher paddle 50. If the pusher 14 is allowed to move forward in the tray 14, such as when product is removed from the front of the tray, the coiled end 57 of the spring 30 will coil and force the pusher paddle 50 forward in the tray 12, thereby urging product toward the front of the tray.

[146] In an alternative embodiment, the coiled spring 30 may extend below and underneath the pusher floor 52 as opposed to above and across the pusher floor, as depicted in the figures. With this configuration, the groove 59 and notch 62 may not be necessary.

[147] The coiled spring 30 may be any biasing element including, without limitation, a flat coil spring commonly used with pusher systems. The present invention may use one or more coiled springs to urge the pusher mechanism 14 forward depending on the desired application. The coil tension of the spring 30 may also vary depending on the particular application.

[148] Referring to Figure 2, the trackless pusher mechanism 14 is shown mounted to the tray 12. As illustrated, the pusher mechanism 14 fits in the tray 12 between the dividers 18. End 29 of the coiled spring 30 extends through the notch in the pusher floor and mounts to the tray as described above. In use, the pusher mechanism 14 will slide along the surface 16 of the tray 12 without the use of tracks, rails, or guides. As depicted in Figure 2, the pusher mechanism 14 is shown in a forward position.

[149] Referring to Figure 3, the pusher mechanism 14 is shown merchandising one product 70 in the merchandise system 10. The product is prevented from tipping out of the tray by the product-retaining member 44. The product 70 may be any product to be merchandised including the depicted soft drink bottle. As shown in this Figure, the product 70 sits on the pusher floor 52 and the coiled spring 30 that extends below the product. The weight of the product on the floor 52 and the positioning of the product across the spring 30 prevent the paddle 50 from tipping in the tray 12.

[150] Referring to Figure 4, the pusher mechanism 14 is shown merchandising multiple products 70 in the merchandise system 10. As shown in this Figure, the product next to the pusher paddle 50 sits on the pusher floor 52 and the coiled spring 30 that extends below the product. The other products will sit on the coiled spring 30 that will extend below these products. Alternatively, the adaptor 180 may be positioned in the system in which case the product may sit on the ribs 182 of the adaptor as opposed to the coiled spring. Again, the weight of the product on the pusher floor 52 and the positioning of the products across the spring 30 prevent the paddle 50 from tipping in the tray. In use, as one product is removed from the front of the tray near the product-retaining member 44, the pusher mechanism 14 (through the urging of the coiled spring 30) will push the remaining product forward in the tray 12 until the forward-most product contacts the product-retaining member 44. As additional products are

removed, the pusher mechanism 14 will continue to push the remaining product toward the product-retaining member 44.

[151] Referring to Figure 5, a rear view of the pusher mechanism 14 shows the pusher mechanism 14 merchandising multiple products 70 in the merchandise system 10. Again, the product next to the pusher paddle 50 sits on the pusher floor 52 and the coiled spring 30 that extends below the product. The other products will sit on the coiled spring that will extend below these products. Alternatively, the adaptor 180 may be positioned in the system in which case the product may sit on the ribs 182 of the adaptor as opposed to the coiled spring. As one product is removed from the front of the tray near the product-retaining member 44, the coiled end 57 of the spring 30 will urge the pusher paddle 50 of the pusher mechanism 14 forward in the tray 12 until the forward-most product contacts the product-retaining member 44. As can be seen in this Figure, the coiled end 57 may be positioned between two support members 58. The support members will retain the coiled spring between these members. As can be seen in this Figure, the pusher floor 52 may also extend below the support members 58.

[152] Referring to Figure 6, an alternative embodiment of the pusher tray is depicted. With this embodiment, multiple trays 12 may be formed into a single multi-tray assembly 80. The multi-trays may have a common floor with dividers 18 extending upwardly from the floor to create the multiple trays or rows. In this embodiment, the product-retaining member 44 may be a solid member that extends between two dividers, as discussed above. One or more of the multi-tray assemblies 80 may be coupled or joined together in a side-by-side manner using any known technique, including clips, dovetailing, fasteners, or the like. With this configuration, numerous rows of product can be provided for the merchandising of numerous products.

[153] As stated above, the trackless pusher mechanism 14 may be used with gravity-fed systems, that is, systems having trays or product channels that are mounted on an incline to permit gravity to assist with the merchandising of the product. Alternatively, the trackless pusher mechanism 14 may be used with systems that are mounted in a non-inclined or in a horizontal manner where gravity will provide little

or no assistance with the merchandising of the product. The trackless pusher mechanism 14 may also be used to push various shaped products.

[154] Figure 7 depicts an exemplary tip 60 for the end 29 of a coiled spring 30 that may be used with the merchandise system 10. As illustrated, the tip 60 defines an aperture 61 for receiving the end 29 of the coiled spring and an aperture 63 for mounting to the surface 16 of the tray. As can be seen in Figure 7, in one aspect of an alternative embodiment, extending beneath the surface 16 may be a tongue or mounting member 65 that may be configured to mate with the aperture 63 and to snap-fit the tip 60 onto the tongue 65 and thus to the surface 16.

[155] Referring to Figure 8, the exemplary tip 60 of Figure 7 is shown being mounted to the tongue or mounting member 65. The tongue 65 may include an elongated outwardly extending rib 67 that is used to snap-fit the tip 60 onto the tongue 65. One skilled in the art will appreciate that other techniques may be used to mount the tip 60 to the surface 16 and that the depicted technique is merely an exemplary embodiment of one such technique.

[156] Referring to Figure 9, the exemplary tip 60 is shown fully mounted in a snap-fit manner to the surface 16, and more specifically to the end portion 24 of the surface 16 of the tray 12. Also depicted is the mounting of the end 29 of the coiled spring 30 to the aperture 61 of the tip 60. As shown in Figure 9, the end 29 of the coiled spring may be inserted into the aperture 61. The aperture 61 is configured to receive the end 29 of the coiled spring and hold the end 29 in position, and to also permit the removal of the end 29 of the coiled spring from the aperture 61 in those circumstances where it is desirable to disconnect the coiled spring from the tip to permit the removal of the pusher mechanism 14 from the system.

[157] Referring to Figure 10 there is shown the end 29 of the coiled spring fully mounted to the exemplary tip 60. As illustrated in this figure, the coiled spring 30 is now operatively connected to the surface 16 of the tray 12. As a result, the pusher mechanism 14 is now mounted to the tray 12.

[158] Referring to Figures 21-27 there is shown an alternative technique for mounting the end 29 of the coiled spring 30 to the merchandise display system. A mounting member 130 may be used to mount the end 29 of the coiled spring to the floor 131 of the system. For those systems that include spaced-apart glide rails 132 that are joined together by connecting ribs 134 (Figures 26-27), the mounting member 130 may be snap-fit to or otherwise mounted on the floor 131 and between the glide rails 132. The mounting member will thus hold the end of the coiled spring in position and to the floor of the system.

[159] Referring to Figures 22-23, the mounting member 130 may include one or more legs 136 on one or more sides of the member 130. The legs may be configured to snap-fit to the underside of the rails 132 to thereby hold the mounting member 130 to the floor of the system. The legs 136 may include legs ends 137 defining an L-shape or angled surfaces that are configured to contact the underside of the rail 132 and prevent the mounting member 130 from being lifted up from the floor, except by the intentional flexing of the legs out from the underside of the rail 132. The legs 136 may contact the connecting ribs 134 which will prevent slidable movement of the mounting member 130 relative to the floor. Referring to Figure 26, the mounting member 130 is shown being mounted to the floor of the system and more specifically to the rails. Figure 27 illustrates that the mounting member 130 remains in position as the pusher paddle 141 is pulled away from the front of the system. The mounting member 130 may be connected to this type of system floor 131 using other techniques. For example, a separate mounting clip, one or more fasteners, adhesives, or other techniques may be used to secure the mounting member 130 to the floor 131.

[160] Referring to Figures 22-23, the mounting member 130 may also include an aperture or opening or slot 138 that will receive the end 29 of the spring. The spring may be mounted using any of the techniques described herein, or other techniques. The configuration of the aperture 138 and mounting member 130 will hold the spring in position on the mounting member 130, similar to the technique described above.

[161] The mounting member 130 may also include glide ribs 139 on a top surface that allow product placed thereon to slide more easily across the mounting member after the mounting member is installed to the floor of the system. The mounting member 130

may also include an elongated flat body 140 that extends forward of the location of the legs 136 to provide stability to the mounting member 130 after it is mounted to the floor of the system.

[162] Referring to Figures 24-25 and 27, the pusher paddle or pusher mechanism 141 may include a pusher face 143 configured to match the shape of the product against which it pushes. As illustrated, the pusher face 143 may be curve shaped to match the shape of a bottle or other cylindrical object. The pusher paddle 141 may also include a pusher floor 145 similar to the pusher floor configurations described above. The pusher floor 145 may further include a spring sleeve 147 that receives the coiled spring 30 to shield and protect the spring. The spring sleeve 147 may extend partly or fully across the pusher floor 145 and in the direction of the spring 30. The spring sleeve 147 may have a relatively short height and a flat surface 149 to permit product to sit thereon without significant tipping or leaning of the product.

[163] The pusher paddle 141 may be positioned on top of the floor 131 to glide on top of the surface, as described above. The pusher paddle may be positioned between two product divider walls 153 that are joined together by a product retaining member 155. Additional product retaining members 157 may extend outwardly from the product dividers.

[164] Referring to Figures 28 and 29 there is shown yet another alternative technique for mounting the end 29 of the coiled spring 30 to the merchandise display system. In this embodiment, the end 29 is riveted to the tray 216.

[165] Referring to Figures 28-32 in an alternative embodiment, the trackless pusher system may be retrofitted to an existing shelf assembly 230, which may have product dividers already built in. For example, in one embodiment, the trackless pusher system may be retrofitted to an existing wire shelf assembly. Referring to Figures 30-32, a tray or adaptor 216 may have a glide floor 222 that may be sized to a single lane of the shelf 234 or sized to an entire shelf width. The glide floor 222 may include several raised ribs 224, which help to reduce friction for the products merchandised on the tray 216. It should be understood that one or more raised ribs 224 may be used with the glide floor 222. Alternatively, the glide floor 222 may be a flat, planar surface without

raised ribs. The tray or adaptor 216 may be configured similar to the adaptor 180 of Figure 16.

[166] As shown in Figures 28 and 30, the end 29 of coiled spring 30 may be riveted, via a rivet 229, to the front end 228 of the tray 216, or may be attached by any other attachment technique. The tray 216 can be retained to the shelf by any attachment technique suitable for the particular shelf. In one embodiment, and as illustrated in Figures 29-32, the tray 216 may include one or more outwardly extending fingers or snaps 220, which may engage one or more individual wires 232 of the shelf 234 to retain the tray 216 on the shelf 234. The fingers or snaps 220 may extend longitudinally along the length of the tray 216, or may be spaced apart along the length of the tray. The snaps 220 may be used to snap-fit the tray 216 to the existing wire shelf. As depicted in Figures 29A and 29B, the snaps 220A and 220B may define numerous configurations that permit the tray 216 to be snap fit to the shelf. The embodiment depicted in Figures 28-32 allows for the placement of the trackless pusher system in an existing shelving system, such as a wire shelf system, as a low cost alternative to the entire trackless pusher assembly. It should be understood that with this embodiment, any pusher mechanism described herein may be used.

[167] As depicted in FIGS. 33 and 44, in another exemplary embodiment, the display management system comprises one or more pusher mechanisms 286, one or more dividers 266, one or more trays 306, and one or more retainers 250. The pusher mechanisms 286 can be formed of a pusher paddle 287 and a pusher floor 288. Product is placed on the pusher floor 288 and guided to the front of the display management system via the dividers 266 and the pusher paddle 287. The coiled spring 30 biases the pusher mechanism 286 toward the retainer 250 such that product moves to the front of the system.

[168] In one exemplary embodiment, depicted in FIG. 33, the coiled spring 30 can be mounted to the retainer 250. Alternatively, the coiled spring 30 can be mounted to a divider 266 (also shown in FIGS. 48 and 49). The coiled spring 30 can be directly mounted to the retainer 250, as depicted in FIG. 33, or can be mounted to the retainer 250 via a separate adapter 252, as depicted in FIG. 34.

[169] As depicted in FIG. 35, the adapter 252 has a wall 254 proximate a first end 256. The first end 256 has a curved portion 262, which curves upwardly. The middle portion of the adapter 252 may be provided with a curved slot 260, which is adapted to receive a correspondingly shaped spring end (not shown).

[170] The coiled spring 30 at one end can be secured to the middle portion of the adapter 252. In an exemplary embodiment, the curved slot 260 corresponds in shape and size of the first spring end. Additionally, the first spring end of the coiled spring 30 can be crimped or bent to provide for additional fastening. Nevertheless, any sufficient fastening method can be used to fix the first spring end of the coiled spring 30 to the adapter 252.

[171] In an exemplary embodiment, shown in FIGS. 36 and 37, the retainer 250 has a curved slot 284 corresponding in shape and size to the curved portion 262 of the adapter 252. The curved slot 284 extends the length of the retainer to allow for unlimited positioning of the adapter 252 along the length of the retainer 250.

[172] To secure the first spring end of the coiled spring 30 to the retainer 250, the curved portion 262 of the adapter 252 is placed into the curved slot 284 of the retainer 250. The curved slot 284 secures the adapter 252 and the first spring end of the coiled spring 30 to the retainer 250 and provides for a quick and easy assembly of the display system. The wall 254 provides additional stability in the connection between the retainer 250 and the adapter 252. Other methods, however, can be used to secure the adapter 252 and/or the first spring end of the coiled spring 30 to the retainer 250.

[173] Alternatively, as depicted in FIGS. 33 and 44 the coiled spring 30 of the pusher paddle 287 can be mounted directly to the front of the tray 306. The first spring end 290 of the coiled spring 30 is provided with a curved portion. The curved portion curves downwardly from the pusher floor 288 and is adapted to be received in a recess 316 (shown in FIG. 33) defined by a lip 318 of the front surface of the dispensing tray 306 and the retainer 250. A vertically oriented surface of the retainer 250 and the lip 318 are spaced such that a gap is formed between the vertically oriented surface and a front edge of the lip 250. To secure the coiled spring 30 and the pusher mechanism 286 to the assembly, the first spring end 290 is inserted into the

gap formed between the vertically oriented surface of the retainer 250 and the front edge of the lip 318 and placed into the recess 316 formed by the lip 318 of the dispensing tray 306 and the retainer 250.

[174] In another exemplary embodiment depicted in FIGS. 38, 39, 48 and 49, the coiled spring 30 can be directly mounted to a divider 266. In addition, in this exemplary embodiment the coiled spring 30 can be mounted perpendicular to the pusher floor 288 such that the axis, about which the coiled spring 30 is coiled, is perpendicular to the pusher floor 288. This orientation has the benefit of preventing the pusher paddle from tipping back. The first spring end 290 can be provided with an angled portion 292 and a tip portion 296. In one exemplary embodiment, the angled portion 292 can be bent perpendicular to the coiled spring body 294. The divider can be provided with a slot 298, which is adapted to receive the tip portion 296 of the first spring end 290.

[175] To secure the coiled spring to the divider, the tip portion 296 is inserted into the slot 298. Once the tip portion 296 is fully inserted into the slot 298, the angled portion 292 engages the slot 298 so as to secure the first spring end 290 to the divider 266.

[176] As depicted in FIG. 33, various pusher mechanism designs can be implemented. The pusher paddle 287 can be formed flat to accommodate correspondingly shaped product. Alternatively, the pusher paddle 286 can have a curved first end and a flat second end. This serves to accommodate a variety of cylindrical products having a variety of different sized diameters and to facilitate the operation of the pusher mechanism 286. During operation, the product in the pusher mechanism 286 and the curved first end together force the pusher mechanism against the divider 266, such that the coil spring 30 remains flat against the divider 266 holding the first spring end 290, while in tension or in operation. This allows for a smoother operation of the pusher mechanism and ensures that the product is properly dispensed as users remove the product from the system.

[177] In another exemplary embodiment depicted in FIGS. 40-41D, the distance between the dividers 266 can be adjusted to accommodate different sized containers. The dividers 266 can be provided with connecting portions 272. The connecting portions

272 can be provided with a first elongated angled surface 268 and a second elongated angled surface 270. Additionally, the connecting portions 272 can be provided with a plurality of projections 274. As depicted in FIG. 41B, the rails can be formed of teeth 278 having face surfaces 280 and flank surfaces 282.

[178] When assembled, as depicted in FIG. 41C, the connecting portions 272 are received between the teeth 278 of the rails. Additionally, the elongated angled surfaces 268 and 270 and the projections 274 are wedged between the teeth 278. Also as shown in FIG. 41C, the elongated angled surfaces 268 and 270 engage the face surfaces 280, and the projections 274 engage the lower surfaces of the teeth 278. Flank surfaces 282 contact the connecting portion 272.

[179] In an exemplary embodiment depicted in FIG. 42, the trays 306 are provided with dovetail connections. A first side 308 of the trays 306 is provided with tongues 312 adapted to fit within grooves 314 located on a second side 310 of the trays 306. To connect the trays, the grooves 314 are aligned with tongues 312 such that the tongues 312 are firmly secured within the grooves 314.

[180] In an exemplary embodiment depicted in FIG. 43, the trays 306 are configured to receive the retainer 250 at a front end. The retainer can be provided with rectangular holes 300, and the retainer is provided with correspondingly shaped and sized projections 302. To secure the retainer 250 to the tray 306, the projections 302 fit into holes 300 to lock the retainer into place on the tray 306.

[181] As depicted in FIGS. 45-47, after the product management display system is assembled, product is loaded into the system. By adjusting the dividers 266 a wide variety of product sizes and shapes can be loaded into the system. As shown in FIGS. 46 and 47, the coil spring 30 in conjunction with the pusher paddle 287 push the product toward the retainer 250. As a user takes product out of the system, the pusher paddle 287 pushes the remaining product such that the product slides along the floor 264 to the retainer 250. This assures that all product remains at the front of the display system.

[182] As depicted in Figures 50-52, the product management display system 400 can be arranged such that trays 402, 404 can be stacked on top of one another. This embodiment can consist generally of a first tray 402, a second tray 404, a first spacer 406, and a second spacer 408.

[183] The trays 402, 404 are each arranged to house product to be dispensed. The first tray 402 and the second tray 404 can be each provided with a clear retainer 410, a pusher mechanism 412, first and second guiding walls, and a coil spring 414.

[184] The pusher mechanism 414 is arranged in a similar fashion as the embodiments discussed above, such that it slides product along the surface of the trays 402, 404, while product is removed. Additionally, any of the alternative arrangements of the pusher mechanism discussed above may be implemented in a stackable tray arrangement.

[185] To provide for an easy assembly and disassembly, the stackable product management display system can be provided with a dovetail connection or any other suitable connection, such as a snap-fit connection, screw-thread connection, or a rivet connection. The first and second trays are provided with detents 416 for assembling the first and second spacers 406, 408 to the first and second trays 402, 404. Each of the first and second trays 402, 404 can be provided with sockets 418 on their respective outside surfaces for receiving the correspondingly shaped detents 416 located on the first and second spacers 406, 408.

[186] To assemble the stackable product management display system, the detents 416 located on the first and second spacers 406, 408 are placed into the correspondingly shaped sockets 418 on the outside surfaces of the first and second trays 402, 404 in a locking arrangement. This provides for a stackable arrangement that can be implemented in conjunction with any of the embodiments discussed above.

[187] In another exemplary embodiment depicted in Figures 53-57, a pusher paddle 500 may be mounted directly to a shelf 508 and held to the shelf by the end of the coiled spring 504. The pusher paddle 500 will slide along and on top of the surface of the shelf. One or more dividers 502 that define a T-shaped configuration may be

positioned next to the pusher paddle 500. In an alternative aspect, the base of the divider 502 may be positioned on the shelf such that the base is located underneath the pusher paddle 500. With this configuration, the pusher paddle 500 may slide along the base of the divider. If the dividers 502 are positioned sufficiently far away from the paddle 500, the paddle 500 will slide directly on the surface of the shelf 508. The dividers 502 may define numerous configurations including those described herein and may be secured to the shelf using any known technique, including push pins, rivets, fasteners, adhesives and the like.

[188] In one aspect, the end 510 of the coiled spring 504 is positioned within a hole or aperture 506 located on the shelf 508. The end 510 may define a spring tip that may further define any suitable configuration that permits the spring end to pass into the hole 506 and remain secured to the hole. For example, the spring tip of end 510 may define a hook-shaped configuration that permits the end 510 to wrap around the edges of the hole 506. Alternatively, the spring tip may define one or more catches that hook onto the edges of the hole 506. Still other spring tip configurations are possible.

[189] As shown in Figure 54, to further secure the spring 504 to the shelf 508, a fastener 512, pin, rivet or the like may be used. This fastener 512 will provide a second spaced-apart anchoring point for the spring that will hold the spring in the desired alignment during the full operation of the spring 504 as the paddle 500 moves back and forth on the shelf 508. It will be appreciated that depending on the shelf type and the number and spacing of existing holes on the shelf, even more anchoring points are possible.

[190] Referring to Figures 55-57, there is depicted an exemplary mounting technique for mounting the spring 504 of the paddle 500 onto a shelf. As shown in Figure 55, the end 510 of the spring 504 is inserted into the hole 506 on the shelf. The end 510 may define a spring tip as described herein to hold the end 510 to the edges of the hole 506. As shown in Figure 56, the spring 504, which in this embodiment includes a rivet or stud 514, is lowered onto the shelf such that the rivet or stud 514 fits within another hole 506 located on the shelf. This rivet or stud provides another anchoring point for the spring. As shown in Figures 56 and 57, the spring 504 may define an aperture 516 for receiving yet another rivet or stud 518 to even further secure the

spring 504 to the shelf. With these multiple anchoring points, the spring 504 will be secured to the shelf, and thus the paddle will be secured to the shelf. Also, with these multiple anchoring points, the spring will retain the desired alignment during the full operation of the spring as the paddle moves back and forth on the shelf. It should be understood that other anchoring techniques are possible to secure the end of the spring 504 to the shelf, including any of the technique described herein, or any combination of the techniques described herein. It should be appreciated that if a shelf does not have pre-existing holes that could be used to anchor the spring 504, one or more holes could be drilled into the shelf at the desired locations.

[191] With the embodiment depicted in Fig. 53-57, it can be appreciated that a trackless pusher paddle may be retrofitted directly onto existing store shelves with very minimal effort or extra mounting pieces. Additionally, this embodiment is easily removable to permit the repositioning of the pusher paddle at any location on the shelf to accommodate any size and type of product being merchandised on the shelf. One of skill in the art will also appreciate that any of the pusher paddles described herein may be mounted directly to the shelf using the techniques described herein, or by using any combination of the techniques described herein.

[192] In an alternative embodiment, as depicted in FIG. 58, a display management system is comprised of one or more pushers 520, one or more dividers 550, and a front rail 580. The divider 550 and the front rail 580 can sit on a shelf. The pusher 520 can include a pusher face 522 and a pusher floor 524, as illustrated in FIG. 59. The pusher face 522 can be divided into a non-adjustable portion 526 and pusher extender 528. The non-adjustable portion 526 and pusher extender 528 both may define a surface that may be used to contact product on the shelf. Both the non-adjustable portion 526 and the pusher extender 528 may define similar heights and depths. The pusher extender 528 can adjust from a position that is flush with and adjacent to the non-adjustable portion 526, as shown in FIG. 59. The pusher extender 528 can be directed downward toward the pusher floor 524 as in FIG. 60. The pusher extender 528 can be adjusted to a variety of positions as shown in FIG. 60, including a position that is parallel to the pusher floor 524 and a position that is directed upward away from the pusher floor 524 and a position that is directed downward toward the pusher floor 524. In this

manner, the width or the height of the pusher 520 can be effectively extended for wider or taller products.

[193] The pusher extender 528 can rotate about an axis on the upper portion of the pusher 520. A notched wheel 532 (see FIG. 77) can be located behind the pusher extender 528. The pusher extender 528 includes a protrusion (see, e.g. protrusion 530 in FIG. 77) that fits within the notches in the notched wheel 532. As the pusher extender 528 rotates, about the axis, the protrusion rotates into the various spaces within the notches in the notched wheel 532, similar to a pawl and ratchet mechanism. Each notch represents a separate position for the pusher extender 528. In each separate position, the pusher extender 528 can remain stationary, such that a force is required to move the pusher extender 528 to a different position. In exemplary aspects of the embodiment, the pusher extender may rotate from a first position that is adjacent to the non-adjustable portion 526 to one of numerous second positions that may be located within a range of approximately 180 degrees relative to the first position. The degree of adjustment may vary depending on the number, size and spacing of the notches on the notched wheel. The pusher extender may define a lightener aperture through the wall of the pusher extender to reduce the weight of the pusher extender and to reduce the moment created around the axis of the pusher extender. The pusher extender may define a smooth or textured pusher face.

[194] Referring back to FIG. 59, a biasing element, such as a coiled spring 534, can be maintained in a rear portion of the pusher 520. In an embodiment, the coiled spring 534 can be positioned adjacent the non-adjustable portion 526 of the pusher face 522. The coiled spring 534 can extend across the pusher floor 524 as shown in FIG. 59. In an embodiment, the pusher floor 524 can include a channel 536 in which the coiled spring 534 sits. The channel 536 allows for product to sit on the pusher floor 524 with limited contact with the spring. The weight of the product rests on the pusher floor 524 in this embodiment. The pusher floor 524 also can comprise a surface with no channel.

[195] In an example, a divider 550 can be comprised of a divider wall 552, a floor 554 and a barrier 556, as illustrated in FIG. 59. In an example, a divider 550 can include no barrier. In an example, a divider 550 can include no floor. The divider wall 552 can

divide the divider floor 554 into two portions, 559 and 551 (see FIG. 78) with one portion on each side of the divider wall 552. The divider wall 552 also can have a divider floor 554 on only one side of the divider wall 552. As illustrated in FIG. 77, the divider wall 552 can extend perpendicularly from the divider floor 554. The divider floor 554 can be a planar surface. In an embodiment, the divider floor 554 can include a channel within a portion of the divider floor 554. The coiled spring 534 can extend across the divider floor 554. In an embodiment, the coiled spring 534 can extend across the divider floor 554 within a channel in the divider floor 554. In this embodiment, product will not rest on the coiled spring 534 and instead will rest on the portions of the divider floor 554 that are adjacent the channel in the divider floor 554. In another embodiment, the divider floor 554 does not include a channel. In an example, a single pusher 520 can be located on one portion of the divider floor 554 and a second pusher (see FIG. 84F) can be located on a second portion of the divider floor 554. Thus, one divider 550 can contain two pushers 520, one on each side of the divider wall 552.

[196] The barrier 556 can be configured to restrain product that is being pushed by the pusher 520 and the biasing element contained therein. The barrier 556 can be located at the front of the divider wall 552, as illustrated in FIG. 59. The barrier 556 may also be located at the rear of the divider wall to prevent overstocking of product on the shelf. As shown in FIGS. 59 and 77, the divider wall 552 can divide the barrier 556 into two portions. The barrier 556 can be perpendicular to the front end of the divider wall 552. In an embodiment, the barrier 556, the divider wall 552 and the divider floor 554 are a single integrated device. These three elements can also be integral with each other. In an example, the barrier is separate from the divider. In an example, the barrier is not integral with or integrated with the divider. In another example, the barrier is configured to engage with the divider. In an example, the divider wall and the divider floor are separate devices from each other and are not integral with each other or part of a single integrated device. In an example, the divider wall and the divider floor are configured to engage with each other. In further examples, a barrier can be connected to the front rail 580 or comprise a portion of the front rail 580.

[197] As illustrated in FIG. 61, an end 557 of a coiled spring 534 can be positioned within the barrier 556. The end 557 of the spring can be folded at an angle to the remainder of the spring. This angle can be 90 degrees or any other suitable angle that may be less than or greater than 90 degrees. The end 557 of the coiled spring can then be placed into a slot 558 within the barrier 556. Once in the slot 558, the end of the spring 557 will remain in place and will assist in biasing the pusher 520 toward the barrier 556. An end 557 of the coiled spring 534 can include a plurality of portions, each with bends that place a subsequent portion of the end of the coiled spring at an angle to a previous portion of the coiled spring (not shown). The plurality of bends can engage a plurality of slots or apertures in the barrier 556 or other connection point on the divider 550 or front rail 580. The plurality of slots or apertures can conform to the shape of the plurality of bends in the end 557 of the coiled spring 534. The coiled spring 534 can include a catch (not shown) at one end. The catch in the coiled spring 534 can be configured to prevent the coiled spring 534 from disengaging with the pusher 520, such as, for example, when the coiled spring 534 is extended.

[198] The pusher 520 may be connected to the divider 550 by only the coiled spring 534. The pusher 520 can sit on top of the divider floor 554 and can slide across the divider floor. The pusher 520 can be configured to rest entirely above the divider floor 554 as shown in FIG. 59 and not go below the divider floor 554. In this embodiment, the pusher 520 can be picked up off the divider floor 554 as shown in FIG. 62. Gravity and the weight of product sitting on the pusher floor 524 maintain the pusher 520 on the divider floor 554. Product sitting on the coiled spring 534 also maintains the pusher 520 on the divider floor 554. The only integrated connection between the pusher and the divider can be the end of the coiled spring 557 that is maintained within a slot 558 in the barrier 556. The divider wall 552 may be used to guide the pusher 520 as the pusher 520 moves front to back, and vice versa, on the divider floor 554.

[199] The divider 550 can define a groove 560 or other recess in an underside portion of the divider. This groove 560 or other recess can be in the shape of an upside down "u" as shown in FIG. 61 or can take another shape. The groove 560 or other recess can extend across the full width of the underside portion of the divider 550. The groove

560, or other recess in an example, may extend along only a portion of the width of the underside portion of the divider. The groove 560 or other recess may be used to engage a front rail, front wall of a tray, or other structure. The term recess as used herein can mean a groove, slot, channel, indentation, depression or other recess that extends inwardly.

[200] The divider 550 also can define a plurality of teeth 562 or other projection. The teeth 562 or other projection can be located at the front portion of the barrier 556. As illustrated in an exemplary embodiment in FIG. 63, the teeth 562 may define a series of outwardly-extending, angled surfaces that meet or join at an apex. As used herein, the term teeth can mean any uniform, non-uniform, continuous, non-continuous, evenly-spaced, or non-evenly-spaced outwardly-extending surfaces that may or may not be angled and that may or may not meet or join at an apex. Additionally, the teeth may define at an apex pointed, blunt, rounded, flat, or polygonal ends, or any other suitable shape. Also, the surfaces that define the shape of the teeth may be flat, convex, concave, smooth or textured, or any other suitable configuration. In an embodiment, the teeth 562 are placed on an extension from the front portion of the barrier 556. The divider 550 also can define a resilient tongue or tab 564. The teeth 562 or other projection can be located on the resilient tab 564. When a force is applied to the resilient tab 564, the teeth 562 or other projection can move in the direction of the force. When the force is removed, the teeth or other projection will move back to their original position. The term projection as used herein can mean a protrusion, resilient tab, tongue, bump, tooth or plurality of teeth, ridge, knob or other projection that extends outwardly. A plurality of teeth can include a plurality of projections where the teeth extend outwardly and can include a plurality of recesses that extend inwardly between the portions of the plurality of teeth that extend outwardly.

[201] A front rail 580 can define a planar surface 582, a ridge or tongue 584 or other projection or engaging member, a channel or groove 586 or other recess or engaging member and a plurality of teeth 588 or other engaging member. The ridge or tongue 584 or other projection or engaging member of the front rail 580 can be configured to engage the groove 560 or other recess or engaging member of the divider. The ridge

584 or other projection or other engaging member can fit within the groove 560 or other recess or engaging member and inhibit the divider 550 from moving in a direction perpendicular to the ridge 584 or front rail 580 or at an angle (i.e., out of perpendicular) to the ridge 584 or front rail 580. The teeth 588 or other engaging member of the front rail 580 can be spaced apart. The teeth 588 or other engaging member of the front rail can engage the teeth 562 or other engaging member of the divider 550, which teeth 562 are illustrated in FIG. 63, so as to prevent the divider from moving in a lateral direction parallel to the front rail 580. The teeth 588 or other engaging member of the front rail 580 are engaged with the teeth 562 or other engaging member of the divider 550 and prevent the divider 550 from moving in the lateral direction shown by arrow "A" in FIG. 65. The term engaging member as used herein can mean a projection, recess, planar surface, near-planar surface, or other item of structure that can engage with another item of structure. The front rail may be a separate structure that is attached or coupled to a shelf. Alternatively, the front rail may be part of a tray that defines one or more of a front, back and opposing side walls. In this configuration, the front rail, as described herein, may be formed as part of a front or back wall of a tray and still achieve the objectives of the invention. That is, the front rail may be formed as part of the tray walls (or attached to the tray walls) and receive and engage the dividers and pusher mechanisms using any of the various techniques described herein. The front rail also need not be located in the absolute front of a shelf. The front rail can be located near the front of the shelf or in a location a distance back from the front of the shelf. In an example, the front rail can be located at or near the rear of the shelf, away from the front of the merchandise display system. The front of the shelf can include no rail in an example.

[202] When the resilient tab 564 of the divider 550 is pressed or a force is placed on the resilient tab in a direction away from the teeth 588 in the front rail 580, the teeth 562 of the divider can become disengaged with the teeth 588 on the front rail. When the teeth 588 on the front rail and the teeth 562 on the resilient tab 564 on the divider 550 are disengaged, the divider 550 can be moved in a lateral direction to the teeth 588 in the front rail 580 (i.e., the direction shown by arrow "A" in FIG. 65). Through the use of this resilient tab 564, products contained on the merchandise system 10 can be replanogrammed. When the divider 550 is moved in a lateral direction, the divider

need not be rotated. Instead, the divider 550 remains in a plane parallel to the planar surface 582 of the front rail 580. In addition, the divider 550 need not be lifted. The divider 550 can simply be moved in the direction noted by arrow "A" in FIG. 65.

[203] In an example, a merchandise display system includes a front rail 580 and at least one divider 550 configured to engage the front rail 580. The at least one divider 550 includes a barrier 556 and the at least one divider 550 further includes a divider wall 552. The at least one divider also includes a divider floor 554 perpendicular to the divider wall 552, wherein the divider floor 554 is configured to hold product. The merchandise display system also includes a cam 720 coupled to the divider 550, wherein the cam 720 is configured to move between a first position and a second position. The at least one divider 550 is (a) movable in a lateral direction parallel to the front rail 580 and (b) secured in a direction perpendicular to the front rail 580 when the at least one divider 550 is engaged with the front rail 580 and the cam 720 is in the first position. The at least one divider 550 is (a) fixed in the lateral direction parallel to the front rail 580 and (b) secured in the direction perpendicular to the front rail 580 when the at least one divider 550 is engaged with the front rail 580 and the cam 720 is in the second position.

[204] In an example the cam 720 includes a handle to rotate the cam 720 between the first position and the second position. In another example, the cam 720 can include a handle that allows the cam 720 to slide between a first position and a second position (not shown). The cam 720 also can include one or more cam walls configured to engage one or more groove walls in the front rail 580 when the cam 720 is in the second position. The cam 720 also can include a plurality of cam teeth configured to engage a plurality of front rail teeth on a surface of the front rail 580 when the cam 720 is in the second position. The front rail teeth can be on an inner surface of the front rail 580. The merchandise display system also can include a pusher mechanism having a pusher surface, a pusher floor extending forwardly from the pusher surface, and a coiled spring having a coiled end and a free end. The coiled end of the spring can be positioned behind the pusher surface and the pusher mechanism can be attached to the merchandise display system only by the coiled spring. The barrier can

be configured to receive the free end of the coiled spring. The front rail can define a front rail groove and the divider can define a divider ridge configured to engage the front rail groove.

[205] In an example, a merchandise display system includes a front rail 580 and a plurality of dividers 550 configured to attach to the front rail 580 and separate product into rows. Each of the plurality of dividers 550 includes a divider wall 552 extending in a direction perpendicular to the front rail 580, a divider floor 554 perpendicular to the divider wall 552, wherein the divider floor 554 is configured to hold product, and a cam 720 coupled to the divider 550, wherein the cam 720 is configured to move between a first position and a second position. Each of the plurality of dividers 550 is (a) movable in a lateral direction parallel to the front rail 580 and (b) secured in a direction perpendicular to the front rail 580 when each of the plurality of dividers 550 is engaged with the front rail 580 and the cam 720 for each of the plurality of dividers 550 is in the first position. In addition, each of the plurality of dividers 550 is (a) fixed in the lateral direction parallel to the front rail 580 and (b) secured in the direction perpendicular to the front rail 580 when each of the plurality of dividers 550 is engaged with the front rail 580 and the cam 720 for each of the plurality of dividers 550 is in the second position.

[206] In an example, each of the plurality of dividers 550 is configured to move in the lateral direction parallel to the front rail 580 when product is positioned on the divider floor 554. A force on an outermost divider of the plurality of dividers 550 can cause each of the plurality of dividers 550 to move in the lateral direction parallel to the front rail 580 when the cams 720 for each of the plurality of dividers 550 is in the first position, and wherein the force is in a direction parallel to the front rail 580 and perpendicular to the divider wall 552 of the outermost divider.

[207] In an example, a merchandise display system includes a front rail 580 and at least one divider 550 configured to attach to the front rail 580, the at least one divider 550 including a barrier, a divider wall 552 extending in a direction perpendicular to the front rail, a divider floor 554 perpendicular to the divider wall 552, wherein the divider wall 552 separates the divider floor 554 into a first portion and a second portion and each of the first portion and the second portion are configured to hold

product. The merchandise display system also includes a first pusher mechanism configured to slide along at least part of the first portion, a second pusher mechanism configured to slide along at least part of the second portion, and a cam 720 coupled to the at least one divider 550, the cam 720 configured to move between a first position and a second position. The at least one divider 550 is movable in a lateral direction parallel to and along the front rail 580 when the cam 720 is in the first position, and the at least one divider 550 resists movement in the lateral direction parallel to and along the front rail 580 when the cam is in the second position.

[208] In an example, each of the first and second pusher mechanisms of the merchandise display system include a pusher surface, a pusher floor extending forwardly from the pusher surface, and a coiled spring having a coiled end and a free end, wherein the coiled end is positioned behind the pusher surface. The first and second pusher mechanisms are attached to the merchandise display system only by the coiled spring. The at least one divider can define a divider engaging member and the at least one front rail can define a front rail engaging member, and the divider engaging member can be configured to engage the front rail engaging member. The divider engaging member can define divider teeth on at least one surface of the divider engaging member and the front rail engaging member can define front rail teeth on at least one surface of the front rail engaging member. The divider teeth can be configured to engage the front rail teeth.

[209] In an example, a merchandise display system includes a front rail 580 and at least one divider 550 configured to attach to the front rail 580, the at least one divider 550 including a barrier configured to engage the front rail 580, a divider wall 552 extending in a direction perpendicular to front rail 580, a divider floor 554 perpendicular to the divider wall 552, wherein the divider floor 554 is configured to hold product. The display system also can include a resilient tab coupled to the divider 550, the resilient tab configured to move between a first position and a second position. The at least one divider 550 is fixed in a lateral direction parallel to the front rail 580 when the resilient tab is in the first position. The at least one divider 550 is movable in the lateral direction parallel to the front rail 580 when the resilient tab is in the second position.

[210] In an example, the divider 550 includes a plurality of teeth configured to engage the front rail 580. The divider teeth can be configured to engage corresponding teeth on the front rail 580. The divider teeth of the merchandise display system can be configured to engage a resilient surface on the front rail 580.

[211] In an example, a merchandise display system includes a front rail 580, the front rail 580 comprising at least one first projection and at least one first recess, and at least one divider 550 configured to attach to the front rail 580, the at least one divider 550 comprising a divider wall 552 and a divider floor 554 perpendicular to the divider wall 552, the at least one divider 550 further comprising at least one second recess and at least one second projection, the at least one second projection of the divider550 configured to move between a first position and a second position, The at least one divider 550 is (a) movable in a lateral direction parallel to the front rail 580 and (b) secured in a direction perpendicular to the front rail 580 when the at least one first projection of the front rail 580 is engaged with the at least one second recess of the divider 550 and the at least one second projection of the divider 550 is in the first position. The at least one divider 550 (a) resists movement in the lateral direction parallel to the front rail 580 and (b) is secured in a direction perpendicular to the front rail 580 when the at least one first projection of the front rail is engaged with the at least one second recess of the divider 550 and the at least one second projection of the divider 550 is in the second position.

[212] In an example, the at least one second projection of the divider 550 can comprise a cam 720. The at least one first recess of the front rail 580 can comprise a groove. The at least one second projection of the divider 550 can include a resilient tab. The at least one first projection of the front rail 580 can comprise a tongue. The at least one first projection of the front rail 580 can comprise a plurality of teeth. The at least one second projection of the divider 550 can comprise a tongue. The at least one second projection of the divider 550 can include a plurality of teeth. The merchandise display system also can include a plurality of teeth on the at least one first projection of the front rail 580 and a plurality of teeth on the at least one second recess of the divider 550.

[213] In an example, a merchandise display system includes a front rail 580, the front rail 580 including at least one first projection and at least one second projection, the at least one second projection of the front rail 580 configured to move between a first position and a second position. The merchandise display system also includes at least one divider 550 configured to attach to the front rail 580, the at least one divider 550 comprising a divider wall 552 and a divider floor 554 perpendicular to the divider wall 552, the at least one divider 550 further comprising at least one recess. The at least one divider 550 is (a) movable in a lateral direction parallel to the front rail 580 and (b) secured in a direction perpendicular to the front rail 580 when the at least one first projection of the front rail 580 is engaged with the at least one recess of the divider 550 and the at least one second projection of the front rail 580 is in the first position. The at least one divider 550 is (a) fixed in the lateral direction parallel to the front rail 580 and (b) secured in the direction perpendicular to the front rail 580 when the at least one first projection of the front rail 580 is engaged with the at least one recess of the divider 550 and the at least one second projection of the front rail 580 is in the second position.

[214] In an example, the at least one first projection of the front rail 580 can comprise a tongue and the at least one recess of the divider 550 can comprise a groove.

[215] In an example, a merchandise display system includes a front rail 580, the front rail 580 comprising a first projection and a second projection. The merchandise display system also includes at least one divider 550 configured to attach to the front rail 580, the at least one divider 550 comprising a divider wall 552 and a divider floor 554 perpendicular to the divider wall 552, the at least one divider 550 further comprising a recess and a third projection. The at least one of the second projection or the third projection is a movable projection that is movable between a first position and a second position. The at least one divider 550 is (a) movable in a lateral direction parallel to the front rail 580 and (b) secured in a direction perpendicular to the front rail 580 when the first projection of the front rail 580 is engaged with the recess of the divider 550 and the movable projection is in the first position. The at least one divider 550 is (a) fixed in the lateral direction parallel to the front rail 580 and (b) secured in the direction perpendicular to the front rail 580 when the first projection of

the front rail 580 is engaged with the recess of the divider 550 and the movable projection is in the second position.

[216] In an example, the movable projection of the merchandise display system can be a cam 720 or a resilient tab. The first projection of the front rail 580 can be a tongue and the recess of the divider 550 can be a groove.

[217] In an example, a merchandise display system includes a front rail 580, the front rail 580 comprising at least a first engaging member. The merchandise display system also includes at least one divider 550 configured to attach to the front rail 580, the at least one divider 550 comprising a divider wall 552 and a divider floor 554 perpendicular to the divider wall, the at least one divider 550 further comprising at least a second engaging member. The merchandise display system also includes a third engaging member configured to move between a first position and a second position. The at least one divider 550 is (a) movable in a lateral direction parallel to the front rail 580 and (b) secured in a direction perpendicular to the front rail 580 when the first engaging member of the front rail 580 is engaged with the second engaging member of the divider 550 and the third engaging member is in the first position. The at least one divider 550 is (a) fixed in the lateral direction parallel to the front rail and (b) secured in the direction perpendicular to the front rail 580 when the first engaging member of the front rail 580 is engaged with the second engaging member of the divider 550 and the third engaging member is in the second position. In an example, when the first engaging member of the front rail 580 is engaged with the second engaging member of the divider 550 and the third engaging member is in the first position, the at least one divider 550 is movable in the plane of a shelf (such as shelf 596 shown in FIGS 70 and 71) only in the lateral direction parallel to the front rail 580; the at least one divider 550 is fixed in the plane of the shelf in all directions other than the direction parallel to the front rail 580; the at least one divider 550 may not twist, splay of fish tail in the plane of the shelf; the at least one divider 550 remains perpendicular to the front rail 580.

[218] In an example, the third engaging member can be a portion of the front rail 580 or a portion of the divider 550. In an example, the third engaging member can comprise a cam 720 or an engaging surface. In an example, the first engaging member of the

front rail 580 is a projection. The merchandise display system also can include a pusher mechanism 520 having a pusher surface 528, a pusher floor 524 extending forwardly from the pusher surface 528, and a coiled spring 534 having a coiled end and a free end. The coiled end can be positioned behind the pusher surface 528 and the pusher mechanism 520 is attached to the merchandise display system only by the coiled spring 534. The merchandise display system also can include a barrier that is configured to receive the free end of the coiled spring 534.

[219] In an example, a merchandise display system includes a front rail 580 and at least one divider 550 configured to engage the front rail 580, the at least one divider 550 including a barrier 556, the at least one divider further including a divider wall 554, the at least one divider further including a divider floor 552 perpendicular to the divider wall 554, wherein the divider floor 552 is configured to hold product. The merchandise display system also includes a cam 720 coupled to the divider 550, wherein the cam 720 is configured to move between a first position and a second position. The at least one divider 550 can be secured in a direction perpendicular to the front rail 580 when the at least one divider 550 is engaged with the front rail 580. The cam 720 can inhibit movement of the at least one divider 550 in the lateral direction parallel to the front rail 580 when the cam 720 is in the first position. The cam 720 can allow movement of the divider 550 in the lateral direction parallel to the front rail 580 when the cam 720 is in the second position. The merchandise display system can include a handle to rotate the cam 720 between the first position and the second position. The merchandise display system can include a handle to slide the cam 720 between the first position and the second position (not shown).

[220] Figures 67A-C show an example of a step by step approach to placement of a divider into a front rail. To begin, as illustrated in FIG. 67A, the divider 550 is lowered into the channel 586 defined by the front rail 580. The force of lowering the divider 550 into the channel 586 causes the teeth 562 on the divider 550 to contact the top of the front rail 580 and move in a direction toward the divider 550 and away from the front rail 580, as illustrated in FIG. 67B. The teeth 562 on the divider 550 may be ramped teeth as shown in FIG. 63. The front rail 580 includes recesses 589, as illustrated in FIG. 64, that are shaped to engage the teeth 562 on the divider 550. These recesses

589 are spaced by the teeth 588 present on the front rail 580. When the divider 550 is lowered further into the channel 586 on the front rail 580, as illustrated in FIG. 67C, the teeth 564 of the divider 550 move past the top of the front rail 580 and move into the recesses 589 in the front rail 580. When the teeth 564 on the divider 550 are in the recesses 589 in the front rail 580, the divider 550 is in an engaged position and will not move in a lateral direction under a normal amount of force.

[221] In an example, FIGS. 68A-C show a step by step approach to placement of a divider in a front rail in another embodiment. In the initial step, as illustrated in FIG. 68A, the resilient tongue or tab 564 is manually pushed backward causing the teeth 562 on the tab 564 to move backward toward the divider 550. An axle style pivot allows for the resilient tongue or tab 564 to remain in the pushed back position and allows the teeth 562 to remain in the position toward the divider 550. The divider 550 is then placed in contact with the front rail 580, as illustrated in FIG. 68B. The groove 560 of the divider 550 engages the ridge or tongue 584 of the front rail 580. At this point the divider 550 can be moved in a lateral direction along the front rail and can allow for ease of replanogramming. However, the divider 550 is secured in a direction perpendicular to the front rail 580 (i.e., parallel to the divider 550) and cannot be moved in this direction, other than for an insignificantly small amount of play between the grove 560 of the divider 550 and the ridge or tongue 584 of front rail 580. (The direction perpendicular to the front rail is noted by arrow "B" in FIG 86H.) This insignificantly small amount of play may not be noticeable to a user of the system. While the divider 550 is in contact with the front rail 580 and the groove 560 of the divider 550 engages the ridge or tongue 584 of the front rail 580, as illustrated in FIG 68B, the divider 550 can move in the plane of the shelf (the shelf is noted as 596 in FIGS 70 and 71) only in the lateral direction parallel to the front rail 580 (i.e., the direction noted by arrow "A" in FIG 65). The divider is fixed and immovable in the plane of the shelf under normal operating forces in all other directions other than the direction parallel to the front rail 580. The divider cannot twist, splay, fish tail or otherwise move in the plane of the shelf in a direction other than the direction parallel to the front rail 580. The divider 550 may, however, be able to move in a direction out of the plane of the shelf, such as the direction noted by arrow "C" in FIG 87B. The divider 550, with or without product on the divider floor 554, can be slid in the

direction previously noted by arrow "A" in FIG. 65, without requiring that the divider 550 be lifted up. In the final step, as illustrated in FIG. 68C, the resilient tongue or tab 564 is manually pulled forward away from the divider 550. This movement causes the teeth 562 on the front divider 550 to fit within recesses 589 in the front rail 580. The recesses 589 in the front rail 580 are spaced by teeth 588 in the front rail. When the teeth 562 of the divider 550 are in contact with the recesses 589 and teeth 588 in the front rail 580, the divider 550 is engaged and cannot move in a lateral direction under a normal amount of force.

[222] In another example, the resilient tongue or tab does not include an axle style pivot that allows for the resilient tongue or tab 564 to remain in the pushed back position. Instead, the resilient tongue or tab 564 is biased toward the front rail 580 and away from the divider 550 such that the tongue or tab 564 automatically returns to its resting position and may engage the front rail 580 when the force manually pushing the resilient tongue or tab 564 backward is removed.

[223] In an example, a divider 550 is placed in contact with a front rail 580. An engaging member of the front rail 580 engages with an engaging member of the divider 550, which secures the divider in a direction perpendicular to the front rail 580 (the direction noted by arrow "B" in FIG 86H) and renders the divider 550 immovable in a direction perpendicular to the front rail 580, other than for an insignificantly small amount of play or space between the engaging members that may not be noticeable to a user. The divider 550 also is secured in the plane of the shelf in all directions other than the direction parallel to the front rail 580 (the direction noted by arrow "A" in FIG 65). The divider 550 can move in the plane of the shelf only in the direction parallel to the front rail 580. The divider 550 is fixed, under normal operating forces and conditions, in the plane of the shelf in a direction other than the direction parallel to the front rail 580. The divider, however, may be movable in a direction out of the plane of the shelf, such as a direction noted by arrow "C" in FIG 87B. When the divider is "secured" in a direction perpendicular to the front rail 580, this means that the divider 550 is immovable, under normal operating forces and conditions, in a direction perpendicular to the front rail 580, other than for an insignificantly small amount of play or space between the engaging members that may not be noticeable to

a user. The direction perpendicular to the front rail is noted by arrow "B" in FIG 86H. A second engaging member of the front rail 580 or the divider 550 is in a first position and the divider is moved laterally, parallel to the front rail. The second engaging member is then moved to a second position, which makes the divider 550 fixed in a lateral direction parallel to the front rail 580 (the direction noted by arrow "A" in FIG 65) under normal operating conditions and forces. When the divider 550 is "fixed" in a lateral direction parallel to the front rail 580, the divider 550 will not move in the lateral direction parallel to the front rail 580 under normal operating conditions and forces.

[224] In an example, a plurality of dividers 550 can be moved as a group parallel to the front rail 580 while remaining secured to the front rail 580 in a direction perpendicular to the front rail (the direction noted by arrow "B" in FIG 86H). Each of a plurality of dividers 550 can be placed in contact with a front rail 580. An engaging member or a plurality of engaging members of the front rail 580 engage(s) with an engaging member on each of the plurality of dividers 550, which secures each of the plurality of dividers 550 in a direction perpendicular to the front rail 580 (the direction noted by arrow "B" in FIG 86H) and renders each of the plurality of dividers 550 immovable in a direction perpendicular to the front rail 580, other than for an insignificantly small amount of play or space between the engaging members that may not be noticeable to a user. A second engaging member (or a plurality of second engaging members) of the front rail 580 or each of the dividers 550 is in a first position, which allows the plurality of dividers 550 to be moved laterally, parallel to the front rail 580. The plurality of dividers 550 can form rows between the dividers 550 that are configured for holding product. Product can be placed between two of the plurality of dividers 550 as shown in FIGS 45-47. A force can be applied to a first divider in the direction parallel to the front rail 580. This force can move the first divider in the direction parallel to the front rail 580 and cause the divider 550 to contact a product adjacent the first divider 550. (Product is shown in FIGS 45-47 as cans or cartons and can take other shapes.) The divider 550 then can force the product to move in the same direction as the first divider 550, i.e., parallel to the front rail 580. The force can move the product to come in contact with a second divider 550 adjacent the product. The product can then force the second divider 550 to move

in in the same direction as the first divider 550 and the product, i.e., parallel to the front rail 580. The second divider can then force a second product adjacent the second divider 550 to move in a direction parallel to the front rail 580. The second product can force a third divider 550 adjacent the second product to move in a direction parallel to the front rail 580. In this manner, a series of dividers 550 and products all can be moved in a direction parallel to the front rail 580 with a single force acting on only one of the dividers 550 or products in a direction parallel to the front 580. When the second engaging member or members on the front rail 580 or one of the plurality of dividers 550 is moved to a second position, which makes the divider 550 fixed in a lateral direction parallel to the front rail 580 under normal operating conditions and forces, the divider 550 cannot move in the direction parallel to the front rail 580 and the divider 550 will not force other dividers 550 or products to move in a direction parallel to the front rail 580.

[225] In an example, when the second engaging member is moved to a second position, the second engaging member inhibits movement of the divider 550 in a lateral direction parallel to the front rail 580. Under a force equal to or less than a predefined amount of force, the second engaging member prevents the divider 550 from moving in a lateral direction parallel to the front rail 580. When an amount of force above the predefined amount of force is applied to the divider 550 in the lateral direction parallel to the front rail 580, the divider 550 can move in the lateral direction parallel to the front rail 580.

[226] In an embodiment as illustrated in FIG. 66, the thickness of the divider floor 554 varies. The thickness of a front portion of the divider floor 554 where it is adjacent the planar surface 582 of the front rail is less than the thickness of a rear portion of the divider floor 554 further back, where it is not adjacent the planar surface 582 of the front rail. As shown in FIG. 67, the portion of divider floor 554A is thinner than the portion of divider floor 554B. In an example, the thickness of the front portion of the divider floor adjacent the planar surface 582 of a front rail 580 is at least 25% less than the thickness of a rear portion of the divider floor 554 that is non-adjacent the planar surface 582 of the front rail 580.

[227] An embodiment, as illustrated in FIGS. 69A and 69B, includes rail mounting clips 590 for the front rail 580. As illustrated in FIG. 69B, the front rail 580 includes an aperture 592. This aperture 592 can be coordinated to be placed over apertures 595 on a shelf 596 in a retail environment as shown in FIG. 70. The rail mounting clips 590 can be curved. The rail mounting clips 590 also contain a narrow portion 594 at one end of the rail mounting clips 590. The rail mounting clips 590 can be inserted into the wider, round portion of the aperture 592 in the front rail 580 and into apertures 595 on the shelf 596 in the retail environment as shown in FIG. 71. The rail mounting clips 590 can then be shifted laterally to a narrower portion within the aperture 592 in the front rail 580. By shifting the rail mounting clips 590, the wider round portion of the rail mounting clips 590 will engage the narrower portion of the aperture 592 in the front rail and will be locked into place. The rail mounting clips 590 thereby hold the front rail 580 in place and prevent the front rail 580 from movement in the lateral direction. If it is known prior to shipping that a store shelf will have holes, the rail mounting clips 590 can be inserted and locked into the front rail 580 in advance of shipping. Inserting the rail mounting clips 590 in advance of shipping can add to ease of installation of the merchandise system in the store environment.

[228] In at least one embodiment, the height of the divider wall 552 may be greater than the height of the barrier 556, as shown in Figs 72 and 73. FIG. 74 further displays the end 557 of the coiled spring 534 maintained within the barrier 556. The end 557 of the spring 534 is bent at an angle of approximately 90 degrees to the remainder of the spring body 534. The end 557 is placed within a slot 558 maintained within the barrier 556.

[229] In an embodiment, the divider 550 contains teeth 600, as illustrated in FIGS. 72 and 73. These teeth can be molded to be integral with the divider 550. The teeth 600 are not maintained on a resilient tab or tongue as in other embodiments. The teeth 600 are spaced apart from each other. A plurality of teeth 600 can be placed on the divider 550 at the bottom of a front portion of the divider 550 and in front of the barrier 556.

[230] As illustrated in FIG. 75, a front rail 610 can include a plurality of teeth 612. The teeth 612 in the front rail 610 can be designed to releasably engage the teeth 600 of the divider 550 through use of a cam bar 622 in the front rail 610 and camming action, as illustrated in FIG. 76. The front rail 610 also includes a planar surface 614 that is substantially flat or planar and a tongue or ridge 616 that is substantially perpendicular to the planar surface 614, as illustrated in FIG. 75. The front rail 610 further includes a cam bar lever 618 that moves the cam bar 622 within the front rail 610, as shown in FIGS. 76A and 76B. In FIG. 76A, the cam bar lever 618 is in a first position in which the teeth 612 of the front rail 610 are withdrawn into the front rail 610 away from the divider. In FIG. 76B, the cam bar lever 618 is in a second position in which the teeth 612 of the front rail 610 are extended toward the divider 550.

[231] FIG. 77 shows an exploded view of several aspects of an embodiment. Front rail 610 is shown to include an extruded shell 620, a cam bar 622 and a tooth bar 624. The tooth bar 624 contains a plurality of teeth 612. The extruded shell 620 includes a cam area 626 designed to house the cam bar 622 and the tooth bar 624. The cam bar 622 is located on the base of the front rail 610 adjacent to the extruded shell 620. The cam bar 624 is in contact with the cam bar lever 618. The cam bar lever 618 can operate to move the cam bar 622 back and forth in a lateral direction. The cam bar 622 further includes elongated cam reservoirs 628. The cam reservoirs 628 are diagonal with a front end of the cam reservoir 628 closer to the front end of the front rail 610 and a rear end of the reservoir 628 further back from the front end of the front rail 610.

[232] The tooth bar 624 may include cam studs 630. The tooth bar cam studs 630 are placed within the cam bar reservoirs 628 during operation of the front rail 610. When the cam bar 622 and the cam bar reservoirs 628 move laterally, the tooth bar cam studs 630 move in a perpendicular direction to the movement of the cam bar 622. The tooth bar cam studs 630 move toward the front of the front rail 610 (and away from the teeth 600 of the divider) and away from the front of the front rail 610 (and toward the teeth 600 of the divider) as the cam bar 622 moves laterally back and forth within the cam area 626. As the tooth bar cam studs 630 move, the tooth bar 624 also moves. Thus, when the cam bar lever 618 is moved from a first position to a second

position, it moves the cam bar 622 laterally along the inside of the front rail 610. This lateral movement of the cam bar 622 causes the tooth bar 624 and the teeth 612 thereon to move in a direction perpendicular to the direction of the cam bar 622; that is, the tooth bar 624 moves in a direction toward or away from the front of the front rail 610 and toward or away from the teeth 600 on the divider 550. FIG. 78 shows a rear exploded view of several aspects of the embodiment shown in FIG. 77

[233] FIGS. 79A-C show an example of a step by step guide to placement of the divider 550 into the front rail 610. The divider 550 including teeth 600 on the divider is lowered into the channel 640 of the front rail 610, as illustrated in FIG. 79A. The tooth bar 624 initially is in a position closer to the front of the front rail 610 and the teeth 612 of the tooth bar 624 are not engaged with the teeth 600 of the divider 550. The cam bar lever 618 is in a first position which maintains the teeth 612 of the tooth bar 624 out of engagement with the divider teeth 600, as illustrated in FIG. 79B. In this position, the divider 550 can be moved laterally along the ridge or tongue 616 of the front rail 610. The divider 550 can have product sit on the divider floor 554 as the divider 550 is moved laterally along the front rail in the direction shown in FIG. 77 by arrow "A". . The ridge 584 or other projection in the front rail 580 can engage the groove 560 or other recess in the divider 550 to secure the divider 550 and prevent the divider from movement in a direction perpendicular to the front rail 580, other than for an insignificantly small amount of play (e.g., less than 3 mm) between the ridge 584 and the groove 560, under normal operating conditions and forces. The cam bar lever 618 is then moved from a first position to second position. The movement of the cam bar lever 618 causes the cam bar 622 to move in a lateral direction within the extruded shell 620. The movement of the cam bar 622 includes movement of the diagonal cam bar reservoirs 628 in the lateral direction. Movement of the cam bar reservoirs 628 in turn causes the tooth bar cam studs 630 to move in a direction perpendicular to the direction of the cam bar 622 and in a direction toward the teeth 600 of the divider 550, as illustrated in FIG. 79C. The tooth bar cam studs 630 are coupled to and may be integral with the tooth bar 624. Accordingly, movement of the tooth bar cam studs 630 causes the tooth bar 624 and the teeth 612 contained therein to move toward the teeth 600 of the divider. This movement causes the teeth 612 of the tooth bar 624 to become engaged with the teeth 600 of the divider. When the teeth 612 of the tooth

bar are engaged with the teeth 600 of the divider, the divider 550 is releasably engaged and will not move in a lateral direction shown by arrow "A" in FIG. 77 under normal operating forces and conditions.

[234] The tooth bar 624 is fixed on its ends such that the tooth bar 624 can only move in a direction that is toward or away from the teeth 600 of the divider. The tooth bar 624 cannot move in a lateral direction shown in FIG. 77 by arrow "A". The cam bar 622 operates in the opposite manner. The cam bar 622 is fixed such that the cam bar 622 can only move in a lateral direction shown in FIG. 77 by arrow "A". The cam bar cannot move toward or away from the teeth 600 on the divider

[235] FIG. 80 provides an isometric view of aspects of an embodiment. When the teeth 612 of the tooth bar 624 are engaged with the teeth 600 of the divider, the entire merchandise system 10 is locked. The front rail 610 and the divider 550 are relcasably engaged with each other and will not move relative to each other. In addition, the pusher 520 is engaged with the divider 550. In this position, the entire merchandise system 10 can be moved. The merchandise system 10 can be set up in a remote location according to a particular planogram and then locked. The merchandise system 10 can then be shipped to the store location. At the store location the merchandise system 10 can be removed from the shipping container and placed on the shelf like a mat. The planogramming of the dividers 550 will remain intact while the merchandise system 10 is locked.

[236] In an example, a display system is assembled in a remote location away from a shelf and then moved as a unit to the shelf and secured to the shelf. A plurality of dividers 550 are engaged with a front rail 580 in a manner in which they are secured and will not significantly move in a direction perpendicular to the front rail 580. The plurality of dividers 550 are adjusted laterally parallel to the front rail 580 according to a pre-panned planogram or other arrangement. The plurality of dividers 550 include engaging members and the front rail 580 includes engaging members. The engaging members on the plurality of dividers 550 and/or the engaging members on the front rail 580 are adjusted from a first position to second position to fix the plurality of dividers 550 to the front rail 580 such that the plurality of dividers cannot move in any direction in relation to the front rail 580. The front rail 580 and the plurality of

dividers 550 are then moved as a unit to the shelf. The front rail 580 then is secured to the shelf.

[237] To alter the planogramming of the merchandise system at the store location, the dividers 550 and the product need not be removed from the shelf. The cam bar lever 618 or other engaging member for each of the dividers 550 can be moved to its initial position. By moving the cam bar lever 618 or other engaging member to its initial position, the teeth 612 of the tooth bar 624 release from the teeth 600 of the divider (or one engaging member disengages from another engaging member). In this position, the dividers 550 can be moved laterally in the direction denoted by arrow "A" in FIG. 80. Product can remain in place on the divider floors 554 and the pusher floors 524 while the dividers 550 are being moved. Once the dividers 550 have been moved to the new planogram position, the cam bar lever 618 or other engaging member for each of the dividers 550 can be moved to its second position. The teeth 612 of the tooth bar 622 will then engage the teeth 600 of the divider 550 (or one engaging member will engage with another engaging member) and again cause the merchandise system 10 to become locked.

[238] In an example, operation of the camming action is further shown in FIGS. 81A and 81B. FIG. 81A shows the teeth 600 of the divider not engaged with the teeth 612 of the tooth bar 624. In the embodiment, the cam bar 622 is adjacent the front wall of the front rail 610. In FIG. 81B, the cam bar lever 618 has been moved to the second position, the cam bar 622 has moved laterally and the tooth bar cam studs 630 have moved toward the divider 550. The teeth 612 of the tooth bar 624 also have moved toward the divider 550 and have engaged the divider teeth 600.

[239] In an embodiment, a soft rubber pad can be utilized in place of the teeth 612 on tooth bar 624 and can function as an engaging member. In this embodiment, when the tooth bar 624 is adjacent the front portion of the front rail 610, the soft rubber pad and the divider teeth 600 are not in contact with each other. When the cam bar lever 618 is moved to its second position and the cam bar 622 moves the tooth bar 624 in the direction of the divider teeth 600, the divider teeth 600 come into contact with and thereby engage the soft rubber pad. This contact provides resistive interference and

maintains the divider teeth 600 in place and prevents the divider 550 from lateral movement in the direct noted in FIG. 77 by arrow "A".

[240] In another embodiment, as shown in FIGS. 82A-C, the divider 550 is held in place in contact with the front rail 580 through use of a clamp. FIG. 82A-C show a step by step process for insertion of the divider 550 into the front rail 580. Initially, as illustrated in FIG. 82A, the divider 550 is lowered into a channel 640 formed in the front rail 580 (or 610). In addition, a ridge or tongue 644 in the front rail 580 contacts a channel 645 in the divider 550. The divider 550 includes a bump or outwardly extending ridge 650 at a front portion of the divider 550. A clamp 652 on the front rail 580 is rotated to engage the bump 650 of the divider 550. The clamp 652 snaps over the bump 650 and locks the bump 650 and the divider 550 into place. Once releasably engaged, the divider 550 cannot move in the lateral direction noted in FIG. 80 by arrow "A". To move the divider 550, the clamp 652 must be pulled to unsnap the clamp 652 from the divider bump 650.

[241] In another embodiment, as shown in FIGS. 83A-C, the divider 550 is held in place in contact with the front rail 580 through use of a rotating rod 660 that includes teeth. FIGS. 83A-C show a step by step process for insertion of the divider 550 into the front rail 580. Initially, as illustrated in FIG. 83A, the divider 550 is lowered into a channel 640 formed in the front rail 580. The front rail 580 includes a rotating rod 660 which itself includes teeth. When the divider 550 initially is lowered into the channel, as illustrated in FIG. 83B, the teeth of the rotating rod 660 are in a first position in which they are not engaged with the teeth 600 of the divider 550. A handle 662 is coupled to the rotating rod 660. When the handle is in a first position 664, the teeth of the rotating rod 660 are in a first position in which they are not engaged with the teeth 600 of the divider 500. When the handle 662 is moved to a second position 668, as illustrated in FIG. 83C, the handle 662 rotates the rotating rod 660 and moves the teeth on the rotating rod 662 into a position in which they engage the teeth 600 on the divider 550. In this position, the rod teeth are in an interfering condition with the divider teeth 600. When the rod teeth and the divider teeth 600 are engaged with each other the divider 550 cannot move in the lateral direction noted in FIG. 80 by arrow "A". To move the divider 550, the rod 660 must be returned to its

first position 664 and the teeth of the rod 660 moved out of engagement with the teeth 600 on the divider 550.

[242] In an embodiment, a plurality of pushers 520 and dividers 550 can be used with a single front rail 580. –FIGS. 84A-E show the use of two pushers 520 and two dividers 550 to push product toward the front of the shelf. Use of multiple pushers 520 can allow for pushing of wide product, shown schematically in the figures. In addition, placing the pusher extender 528 in its upwardly extended position can allow the pushers 520 to push taller products or more products as shown in FIG. 84 D and 84E. In an embodiment, a divider 550 can be coupled to two pushers 520. One pusher 520 can be engaged to a portion of the barrier 556 on each side of the divider wall 552 as shown in FIG. 84F. In other examples, the divider can be coupled to one pusher or the divider can be coupled to no pusher.

[243] In another embodiment, the divider 550 is secured to the front rail 580 in part through the operation of a cam 720, as illustrated in FIG. 85. FIG. 85 illustrates a cam 720 in a side perspective view coupled to the barrier 556. The cam 720 includes a rounded portion 722 that is configured to rotate within a cavity 740 (see FIG. 86G) in barrier 556. The cam 720 also includes a tongue 724 that is comprised of a first cam wall 726, a second cam wall, 728, and a third cam wall 730. In FIG. 85, the cam is in a position where it is not engaged with the front rail. In this position, the first cam wall 726 can be in a substantially vertical alignment. In this position the second cam wall 728 and the third cam wall 730 may also be in a substantially horizontal alignment. The first cam wall 726 connects with the second cam wall 728. The second cam wall 728 connects with the third cam wall 730. The cam also includes a handle 732.

[244] In another embodiment, the tongue 724 only has two cam walls. A first cam wall, such as first cam wall 726, and a second cam wall. The second cam wall is straight and spans the length shown by cam walls 728 and 730. There is no bend in the second cam wall in this embodiment. The cam walls can extend for one or more portions of the width of the divider 550 or can extend the entire width of the divider 550.

[245] In an embodiment, the cam 720 fits within a cavity 740 of the barrier 556, as illustrated in FIG. 86G. In an embodiment, the cavity 740 is bounded by side walls 742. Side walls 742 render the front of the cavity 740 slightly narrower than the width of cam 720. An amount of force is required to push cam 720 past side walls 742 and into cavity 740. After the cam passes the side walls 742 it snaps into place in the cavity 740. The cam 720 can then rotate in cavity 740 and will not fall out of cavity 740 or detach from cavity 740 during normal use. The cam 720 is rotatably secured within cavity 740. In an embodiment, cavity 740 also is bounded at its front portion by a front wall (not shown).

[246] In another embodiment, the side walls 742 do not render the front of cavity 740 narrower than the width of cam 720. In this embodiment, cam 720 may be placed into cavity 740 and removed from cavity 740 without the need to overcome resistive force caused by side walls 742.

[247] In an example, FIGS. 86E and 86F illustrate magnified portions of cam 720 and front rail 580. The cam 720 can include texturing. Cam 720 can include teeth or other engaging members. In an embodiment, first cam wall 726 is textured with teeth 736 and 738. Teeth 736 can form a lower row of teeth. Teeth 738 can form an upper row of teeth. Teeth 736 and teeth 738 in an embodiment are rounded. In at least one embodiment, teeth 736 and teeth 738 form one vertical row of teeth. Eliminating the points on the teeth can provide for better operation and longer-life for the cam teeth. Cam 720 also can be textured in manners other than with teeth, such as through roughening or other texturing.

[248] In an example, front rail 580 includes a groove 750, as illustrated in FIG. 86F. The groove 750 may include a first groove wall 752, a second groove wall 754 and a third groove wall 756. First groove wall 752 is connected to second groove wall 754, which in turn also is connected to third groove wall 756. In another embodiment, the groove 750 only has two groove walls. A first groove wall, such as first groove wall 752, and a second groove wall 754. The second groove wall 754 is straight and spans the length shown by groove walls 754 and 756. There is no bend in the second groove wall 754 in this embodiment.

[249] In an embodiment, groove 750 can be textured. Groove 750 can include teeth. In an embodiment, first groove wall 752 includes teeth 766 and teeth 768. Teeth 766 can form a lower row of teeth. Teeth 768 can form an upper row of teeth. In at least one embodiment, teeth 766 and 768 form one vertical row of teeth. Teeth 766 and 768 can be rounded. Teeth 766 and 768 can be placed along an entire length of groove 750. In addition, teeth 766 and 768 can be placed in sections along groove 750 with additional sections of groove 750 that are smooth and without teeth. Groove 750 also can be textured in manners other than with teeth, such as through roughening or other texturing. In an embodiment, second groove wall 754 is smooth and third groove wall 756 is smooth. In an embodiment, second cam wall 728 is smooth and third cam wall 730 is smooth.

[250] In an embodiment, as shown in Figs. 87A-C, a merchandise display system 10 comprises a divider 550 and a front rail 580. The divider 550 comprises a divider wall 556, a divider floor 554 and a barrier 554. A cam 720 is rotatably coupled to a front portion of the barrier 556. The cam 720 includes a cam tongue 724, wherein the cam tongue 724 comprises a first cam wall 726, a second cam wall 728 and a third cam wall 730. The cam 720 also includes a handle 732. The front rail 580 comprises a groove 750 that is comprised of a first groove wall 752, a second groove wall 754 and a third groove wall 756. The cam 720 is configured to rotate between a first position and a second position, wherein when the cam 720 is in the second position, the cam tongue 724 is engaged with the front rail groove 750 and the divider wall 5560 is inhibited from moving in a lateral direction. The cam 720 also can be configured to slide between a first position and a second position.

[251] FIGS. 87A-C show a progression in which divider 550 is coupled to front rail 580. The cam 720 is moved between a first position in FIG. 87B to a second position in FIG. 87C. As described below, the cam 720 allows for the divider 550 to be moved laterally along the front rail 580 or otherwise parallel to the front rail 580 when the cam 720 is in the first position shown in FIG. 87B. (In FIG 87 B the divider 550 is secured in the direction perpendicular to the front rail 580 and cannot move in the perpendicular direction, other than for an insignificantly small amount of play that may exist between the divider and the front rail, which may not be noticeable to a user

of the system.) The cam 720 inhibits the divider 550 from moving laterally along the front rail 580 when the cam 720 is in the second position shown in FIG. 87C. In an example, under normal operating conditions and forces, the cam 720 will prevent the divider 550 from moving laterally along front rail 580 (and render the divider 550 immovable along the front rail 580) when the cam 720 is in the second position shown in FIG. 87C. In another example, the cam 720 inhibits movement of the divider 550 by preventing the divider 550 from moving laterally along front rail 580 when a force equal to or less than a predefined amount of force is applied to the divider 550 in a lateral direction parallel to the front rail 580. When an amount of force above the predefined amount of force is applied to the divider 550 in a lateral direction parallel to the front rail 580, the divider 550 moves in the lateral direction parallel to the front rail 580.

[252] FIG. 87A shows divider 550 raised above front rail 580. In FIG. 87B, divider 550 has been lowered and placed into contact with front rail 580. Groove 560 has been placed over ridge 584 and ridge 584 has been placed with groove 560. Groove 560 and ridge 584 may be in contact with each other in this position. Groove 560 and ridge 584 also may not be in contact with each other at all times in this position. Space can exist between the surfaces of groove 560 and ridge 584 in some positions. A front portion of barrier 556 also has been placed within channel or groove 586. In FIG. 87B, the tongue 724 of cam 720 is not engaged with the groove 750 of front rail 580. In FIG. 87B, the divider 550 can move in a lateral direction shown by arrow "A" in FIGS. 86F and 86H. Divider 550 need not be raised above front rail 580 to enable such movement. Divider 550 can remain in contact with front rail 580 and move in direction "A." Product may be placed on the divider floor 554 during the process of moving divider 550. The ability to move divider 550 without separating divider 550 from front rail 580 or removing product provides for ease of replanogramming. In FIG 87B, the divider 550 can move in the plane of the shelf (the shelf is shown as 596 in FIGS 70 and 71) only in the lateral direction parallel to the front rail 580 shown by arrow "A" in FIGS 86F and 86H. In FIG 87B, the divider 550 is immovable in all other directions in the plane of the shelf, such as the direction shown by arrow "B" in FIG 86H, under normal operating forces and conditions. The divider 550 cannot swing, rotate, splay or fish tail in the plane of the shelf and the divider 550 remains

perpendicular to front rail 580 under normal operating forces and conditions. In FIG 87B, the divider 550 can move in the direction shown by arrow "C" in FIG 87B and thereby lift away from the front rail 580. The direction shown by arrow "C" in FIG 87B is not in the plane of the shelf.

[253] In FIG. 87C, cam handle 732 has been rotated toward front rail 580. In an embodiment, cam handle 732 is in contact with front rail 580. As the cam 720 is rotated from its position in FIG. 87B to its position in FIG. 87C, cam tongue 724 comes into contact with the front rail 580 and slightly deforms the front rail 580 away from cam tongue 724. Cam first wall 726 may be in contact with groove third wall 756 as the cam 720 is being rotated from its position in FIG. 87B to its position FIG. 87C.

[254] As the cam moves into the position shown in FIG. 87C, tongue 724 can snap into place within groove 750 and tongue 724 is engaged with groove 750. In an embodiment, tongue 724 is in perfect fit with groove 750. This perfect fit involves engagement of the tongue 724 and the groove 750. Front rail 580 is not deformed and the cam 720 and the front rail 580 are not in tension with each other. First cam wall 726 is adjacent first groove wall 752. Second cam wall 728 is adjacent second groove wall 754. Third cam wall 730 is adjacent third groove wall 756. In an embodiment, the cam walls and the groove walls are in contact with each other. For example, first cam wall 726 is in contact with first groove wall 752; second cam wall 728 is in contact with second groove wall 754; and third cam wall 730 is in contact with third groove wall 756. In at least one embodiment, while the cam walls and the groove walls are in contact with each other they are not in substantial tension with each other. In another embodiment, one or more of the cam walls are in tension with one or more of the groove walls when the cam walls and groove walls are in contact with each other.

[255] In an embodiment where first cam wall 726 has been placed in contact with first groove wall 752, the teeth of first cam wall 726 engage the teeth of first grove wall 752. Teeth 736 engage teeth 766 and teeth 738 engage teeth 768. The engagement of the teeth of the first cam wall and the teeth of the first groove wall provides resistance

to the divider moving laterally along the front rail in the lateral direction shown by arrow "A" (as shown in FIG. 86H).

[256] When cam tongue 724 has been placed in perfect fit with groove 750, there is substantial resistance to movement of the divider 550 laterally along the front rail in the lateral direction shown by arrow "A," (as shown in FIG. 86H) and the divider 550 will not move laterally under the normal forces placed on the divider during operation.

[257] When it is desired to again move the divider 550 along front rail 580, the cam can be unsnapped from the front rail. Handle 732 can be rotated away from front rail 580. Tongue 724 can disengage from groove 750 and return to its position in FIG. 87B.

[258] In an embodiment, the divider wall 552 has sections of different width (see FIG. 85). A front section 770 of the divider wall 552 that can be adjacent barrier 556 can have a greater width than a rear section 772 of divider wall 552 that is adjacent barrier 556. Front section 770 can be connected to rear section 772 by an intermediate section 774. The width of intermediate section 774 gradually changes from the width of the divider front section 770 to the width of the divider rear section 772. In an embodiment, the width of the portion of the intermediate section 774 adjacent section 770 is equal to the width of section 770 and the width of the portion of the intermediate section 774 adjacent section 772 is equal to the width of section 772. The lesser width of rear section 772 of divider wall 552 creates air space between divider walls 552 and assists in preventing product from binding between two divider walls 552 when being pushed and assists in providing for flow of product along the divider floor 554 as product is removed from the front of the merchandise system 10. In an example, the width of the front section 770 of the divider wall 552 is at least 25% greater than the width of the rear section 772 of the divider wall 552.

[259] In the embodiments shown in FIGS. 85-87C one or more dividers 550 can be placed into contact with front rail 580. When the cam 720 or other engaging member is not engaged with front rail 580, the dividers 550 can move parallel to the length of front rail 580 in the lateral direction shown by arrow "A" (see FIG. 86H). The divider 550 can then be fixed into place by snapping the cam 720 or other engaging member into

engagement with front rail 580. The divider 550 will remain fixed under normal operating forces until the cam 720 or other engaging member is unsnapped or otherwise placed out of engagement with front rail 580.

[260] In an embodiment, the front wall 561 of groove 560 is textured, as shown in FIG. 86K. This texturing can be in the form of roughening or small teeth. The texturing causes the surface of the front wall 561 of groove 560 to not be smooth. In an embodiment, front wall 585 of ridge 584 or other protrusion or engaging member is textured, as depicted in FIGS. 86I, 86J, and 86L. This texturing can be in the form of roughening or small teeth and causes the surface of front wall 585 of ridge 584 to not be smooth.

[261] In at least one embodiment, as depicted in FIG. 86I, the barrier 556 is a separate component and may removably attached to the divider 550. In at least one embodiment, the barrier 556 may snap on to the front of the divider 550. In at least one embodiment, the barrier 556 is moveable. The entire barrier 556 may be movable, or a portion or portions of the barrier 556 may be moveable. For example, the portion of the barrier 556 positioned in front of product on the merchandise display system 10 may be movable. In at least one embodiment, the portion of the barrier 556 positioned in front of the product may be configured to slide. In an alternative embodiment, the portion of the barrier 556 positioned in front of the product may be configured to rotate around an axis, to allow the portion of the barrier 556 to open and close. In this embodiment, the axis may be a hinged connection. Additionally or alternatively, the portion of the barrier 556 may be spring mounted to the divider 550, such that the portion of the barrier 556 requires an amount of force to move it away from the divider 550. In this embodiment, upon release of the force, the portion of the barrier 556 will close or return to its original position. Exemplary methods for mounting the barrier 556 are described in further detail in U.S. Patent No. 8,056,734.

[262] In an example, the divider 550 does not include a barrier. Alternatively, one or more barriers may be included in the front rail 580.

[263] In an embodiment, when the divider 550 is placed in contact with the front rail 580, as shown in FIG. 87B, front wall 561 of groove 560 is not in contact with or not in consistent contact with front wall 585 of ridge 584 while the cam 720 is in the position shown in FIG. 87B and the tongue of cam 720 is not engaged with groove 750 of front rail 580. When the cam 720 is moved from a first position shown in FIG. 87B to a second position shown in FIG. 97C, and the tongue 724 engages with groove 750, the tongue can force the divider 550 to move backward. In an embodiment, tension between the tongue 724 and the groove 750 forces divider 550 to move in a rearward direction. When the cam is moved to the second position shown in FIG. 87C front wall 561 of groove 560 comes into contact with front wall 585 of ridge 584. Front wall 561 engages with front wall 585. The texturing on front wall 561 of groove 560 engages with the texturing on front wall 585 of ridge 584. The engagement of front wall 561 of groove 560 with front wall 585 of ridge 584 inhibits movement of the divider 550 along front rail 580 in the direction shown by arrow "A" in FIG. 86H. The engagement of the texturing on front wall 561 of groove 560 with the texturing on front wall 585 of ridge 584 further inhibits movement of the divider 550 along front rail 580 in the direction shown by arrow "A" in FIG. 86H.

[264] In an example, a resilient strip or bead can be included into the top surface of ridge 584, or other protrusion, of front rail 580. When cam 720, or other engaging device, is in a first position, the resilient strip or bead is not compressed. In this first position, the divider 550 can move in a lateral direction parallel to the front rail, but cannot move in a direction perpendicular to the front rail. When cam 720, or other engaging device, is moved to a second position, the resilient strip or bead comes into compression with groove 560, or other recess, of divider 550. When the resilient strip or bead is in compression with groove 560, or other recess, divider 550 becomes fixed under normal operating forces in a direction parallel to the front rail 580. In an example, the portion of the groove 560, or other recess, that comes into contact with the resilient strip or bead of front rail 580 can include a roughening or teeth (not shown).

[265] In an embodiment, barrier 556 is not molded at the same time as divider wall 552 and divider floor 554. Barrier 556 is molded as a separate piece from divider wall 552

and divider floor 556, as shown in FIG. 88A. Barrier 556 may be molded of a clear material, whereas divider wall 552 and divider floor 554 may be molded of an opaque material.

[266] In an example, a divider 550 includes an engaging member that comprises a planar surface. The front rail 580 can include an engaging member that comprises a planar surface. The planar surface of the engaging member on the divider and/or the engaging member on the front rail can comprise a smooth or substantially smooth surface. The planar surface can include a resilient surface. The planar surface can include a rubber strip or a neoprene strip or material that is otherwise compressible. In an example, when the engaging member of the divider 550 is in a first position it is not engaged with the engaging member of the front rail 580 and the divider 550 is movable laterally parallel to the front rail. When the engaging member of the divider 550 is in a second position it is engaged with the engaging member of the front rail 580 and the divider is fixed and not movable laterally parallel to the front rail under normal operating conditions and forces. In an example where the engaging members of the front rail 580 and the divider 550 are smooth or substantially smooth surfaces and do not include teeth or other protrusions, the divider 550 can have additional lateral adjustability and infinite or near infinite lateral adjustability. The lateral adjustability of the divider 550 is not limited by the physical dimensions, such as width, of projections or teeth. Infinite lateral adjustability provides significant benefits to display systems by efficiently utilizing lateral space and limiting or minimizing unused or lost space between product rows and thereby potentially increasing the amount of usable space and lateral product facings on a shelf.

[267] In an embodiment, barrier 556 can be snap fit or otherwise engaged with divider 550, as shown in FIG. 88B. The engagement between barrier 556 and divider 550 can be such that barrier 556 cannot be removed from divider 550 under normal operating conditions and without deleteriously affecting the structure of barrier 556 or divider 550.

[268] FIGS. 89A-C show an example of a step by step approach to placement of a divider in a front rail. In the initial step, as illustrated in FIG. 89A, the divider 550 may be lowered into contact with the front rail 590. A rotating "T" lock 900 may be rotated

to snap over the front rail 580. The rotating "T" lock 900 may be attached to a front portion of the divider 550. The rotating "T" lock 900 may rotate around an axis 903. The divider 550 may be lowered and placed in contact with the front rail 580, as illustrated in FIG. 89B. The groove 560 or other recess of the divider 550 engages the ridge or tongue 584 or other protrusion of the front rail 580. At this point the divider 550 can be moved in a lateral direction parallel to the front rail and can allow for ease of replanogramming. In an example the divider 550 can move along the front rail. The divider 550, with or without product on the divider floor 554, can be slid in the direction previously noted by arrow "A" in FIG. 65, without requiring that the divider 550 be lifted up. In the final step, as illustrated in FIG. 89C, the rotating "T" lock 900 may be pushed forward and downwardly toward the front rail 580. The rotating "T" lock 900 may engage with a lip 901 on a front portion of the front rail 580. In at least one embodiment, the front rail 580 includes a top front surface 902. The top front surface 902 may include a texture or may be a resilient surface, such as rubber. Alternatively, the top front surface 902 may include one or more teeth. The top front surface 902 may engage with a surface 904 on the rotating "T" lock 900. The surface 904 may also include a texture or may be a resilient surface, such as rubber. Alternatively, the surface 904 may include teeth configured to engage the teeth on the top front surface 902. When the rotating "T" lock 900 engages lip 901, the divider 550 is engaged to the front rail 580 and cannot move in a lateral direction under a normal amount of force.

[269] FIGS. 90A-F illustrate embodiments of the divider 550 and front rail 580. As shown in FIG. 90A, a divider 550 may include wall 552, a floor 554 and a barrier 556. The divider wall 552 may divide the divider floor 554 into two portions, 559 and 551 with one portion on each side of the divider wall 552. As illustrated in FIG. 90B, the divider wall 552 may extend perpendicularly from the divider floor 554. The barrier 556 may be located at the front of the divider wall 552. As illustrated in FIGS. 90C and 90F, the bottom surface of the divider floor 554 may include a groove 560 or other recess, a tongue 941 or other protrusion, and a front wall 561. In at least one embodiment, the front wall 561 of groove 560 is textured. This texturing can be in the form of roughening or small teeth. The texturing may cause the surface of the front wall 561 of groove 560 to not be smooth.

[270] As illustrated in FIG. 90D, a front rail 580 can define a planar surface 582, a ridge or tongue 584 or other projection, a first channel or groove 586 or other recess, and a second channel or groove 950 or other recess. The front wall 561 of the divider 550 may engage the first groove 586 of the front rail 580. The ridge or tongue 584 of the front rail 580 may engage the groove 560 of the divider 550. The tongue 941 of the divider 550 may engage the second groove 950 of the front rail 580. In an embodiment, front wall 585 of ridge 584 is textured. This texturing can be in the form of roughening or small teeth and causes the surface of front wall 585 of ridge 584 to not be smooth. The texturing of the front wall 585 of the ridge 584 may engage with the texturing of the front wall 561 of groove 560. The engagement of the front wall 561 of the divider 550 to the first channel 586 of the front rail 580, the engagement of the ridge or tongue 584 of the front rail 580 to the groove 560 of the divider 550, and the engagement of the projection 941 of the divider 550 to the second groove 950 of the front rail 580 may keep the divider wall 552 perpendicular to the front rail 580 and prevent a back portion of the divider 550 from splaying. In at least one embodiment, the divider 550 may be moved laterally parallel to and/or along the front rail 580 when the divider 550 receives a lateral force.

[271] The front rail 580 may include apertures 951 and openings 952, as illustrated in FIG. 90E. The apertures 951 may be configured to engage with corresponding engagement projections (not shown). In an example, the engagement projection can be a flat splicer. The corresponding engagement projections may connect one or more front rails 580 together in series. The connection of the apertures 951 and engagement projections can allow for one or more front rails 580 to be connected in series, even if the front rails 580 are not in perfect alignment with each other. The openings 952 may be configured to receive fasteners, which fasten the front rail 580 to a display shelf. The front rail 580 may include any number of opening 952 suitable for securing the front rail 580 to a display shelf. Any type of fastener may be contemplated within the scope of the invention.

[272] In an example, as illustrated in Fig. 91A, the merchandise display system 10 may include a back rail 810. The back rail 810 can be located at or near the back of a shelf. The back rail 810 may be a similar construction as the front rail 580 and the

disclosure herein regarding the front rail 580 applies equally to the back rail 810. For example, the back rail 810 may include a recess 804, which may generally be in the shape of a "u". In this embodiment, the dividers 550 may be connected to divider blocks 802. The divider blocks 802 may then engage with the back rail 810. The back rail 810 can be a second rail in the merchandise display system, along with the front rail 580. The back rail 810 also can be the only rail in the merchandise display system. As noted above, front rail 580 can be located at the rear of the merchandise display system and thereby function as a back rail 810. In at least one embodiment, the plurality of divider blocks 802 each has a cam 710 (not shown in FIG 91A) in the location denoted by the arrow in FIG 91A. This cam 720 can rotate from a first position to a second position and have the same affect as the cam 720 in the divider that engages with the front rail 580. The divider blocks 802 also can include other engaging devices, including the engaging devices described herein for the divider 550, that engage with the back rail 810. The use of the back rail 810 may keep the back of the dividers 550 in position and prevent product from moving to a position behind the pusher 520. To unlock the dividers 550 from the back rail 810, the 720 or other engaging device is rotated away from the back rail 810 or otherwise disengaged with the back rail 810.

[273] In an example, a divider 550 can be placed into contact with a front rail 580. Groove 560 can be placed over ridge 584 and ridge 584 can be placed within groove 560. Groove 560 and ridge 584 can be in contact with each other in this position. Divider 550 also can be placed into contact with rear rail 810. A groove or other recess in the divider 550 can be placed over a ridge or other protrusion of rear rail 810 and the ridge or protrusion of the rear rail 810 can be placed within a groove or other recess of divider 550. Divider 550 can be in contact with front rail 580 and rear rail 810 at the same time. An engagement device, such as cam 720, on the front of the divider can be in a position such that the divider 550 can move laterally parallel to the front rail 580 and the rear rail 810, but the divider 550 is immovable in a direction perpendicular to front rail 580 or rear rail 810 (the direction between front rail 580 and rear rail 810). The divider block 802 also can include an engagement device (not shown), such as cam 720 or other engagement devices described above with respect to the front rail 810. The engagement device on divider block 802 can be in a position

such that the divider 550 can move laterally parallel to the front rail 580 and the rear rail 810, but the divider 550 is fixed in a direction perpendicular to front rail 580 or rear rail 810 (the direction between front rail 580 and rear rail 810).

[274] In an example, the engagement device on the front of the divider 550 can be moved to a second position. In the second position the divider 550 is fixed in a direction parallel to the front rail 580 under normal operating forces. The engagement device on divider block 802 also can be moved to a second position. In the second position, the engagement device on divider block 802 renders the divider 550 fixed in a direction parallel to the rear rail 810 under normal operating forces. The front rail 580, divider 550 and rear rail 810 can form a rigid tray that may be moved as a unit from one location to another. The front rail 580, rear rail 810 and a plurality of dividers 550 can be preassembled and formed into a rigid tray in a location away from the shelf. The front rail 580, rear rail 810 and a plurality of dividers 550 can then be moved to the shelf and secured to the shelf by one or more fasteners.

[275] Variations and modifications of the foregoing are within the scope of the present invention. For example, one of skill in the art will understand that multiples of the described components may be used in stores and in various configurations. The present invention is therefore not to be limited to a single system, nor the upright pusher configuration, depicted in the Figures, as the system is simply illustrative of the features, teachings and principles of the invention. It should further be understood that the invention disclosed and defined herein extends to all alternative combinations of two or more of the individual features mentioned or evident from the text and/or drawings. All of these different combinations constitute various alternative aspects of the present invention. The embodiments described herein explain the best modes known for practicing the invention and will enable others skilled in the art to utilize the invention.

CLAIMS:

1. A merchandise display system comprising:

a front rail, the front rail comprising at least one first projection and at least one first recess; and

at least one divider configured to attach to the front rail, the at least one divider comprising a divider wall and a divider floor perpendicular to the divider wall, the at least one divider further comprising at least one second recess and at least one second projection, the at least one second projection of the divider configured to move between a first position and a second position,

wherein the at least one divider is (a) movable in a lateral direction parallel to the front rail and (b) secured in a direction perpendicular to the front rail when the at least one first projection of the front rail is engaged with the at least one second recess of the divider and the at least one second projection of the divider is in the first position, and

wherein the at least one divider (a) resists movement in the lateral direction parallel to the front rail and (b) is secured in a direction perpendicular to the front rail when the at least one first projection of the front rail is engaged with the at least one second recess of the divider and the at least one second projection of the divider is in the second position.

2. The merchandise display system of claim 1, wherein the at least one second projection of the divider comprises a cam.

3. The merchandise display system of claim 1 or 2, wherein the at least one first recess of the front rail comprises a groove.

4. The merchandise display system of any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the at least one second projection of the divider comprises a resilient tab.

5. The merchandise display system of any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the at least one first projection of the front rail comprises a tongue.

6. The merchandise display system of any one of claims 1 to 5, wherein the at least one first projection of the front rail comprises a plurality of teeth.

7. The merchandise display system of any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the at least one second projection of the divider comprises a tongue.

8. The merchandise display system of any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the at least one second projection of the divider comprises a plurality of teeth.

9. The merchandise display system of claim 1, further comprising a plurality of teeth on the at least one first projection of the front rail and further comprising a plurality of teeth on the at least one second recess of the divider.

10. A merchandise display system comprising:

a front rail, the front rail comprising at least one first projection and at least one second projection, the at least one second projection of the front rail configured to move between a first position and a second position; and

at least one divider configured to attach to the front rail, the at least one divider comprising a divider wall and a divider floor perpendicular to the divider wall, the at least one divider further comprising at least one recess,

wherein the at least one divider is (a) movable in a lateral direction parallel to the front rail and (b) secured in a direction perpendicular to the front rail when the at least one first projection of the front rail is engaged with the at least one recess of the divider and the at least one second projection of the front rail is in the first position, and

wherein the at least one divider is (a) fixed in the lateral direction parallel to the front rail and (b) secured in the direction perpendicular to the front rail when the at least one first projection of the front rail is engaged with the at least one recess of the divider and the at least one second projection of the front rail is in the second position.

11. The merchandise display system of claim 10, wherein the at least one first projection of the front rail comprises a tongue and wherein the at least one recess of the divider comprises a groove.

FIG. 1

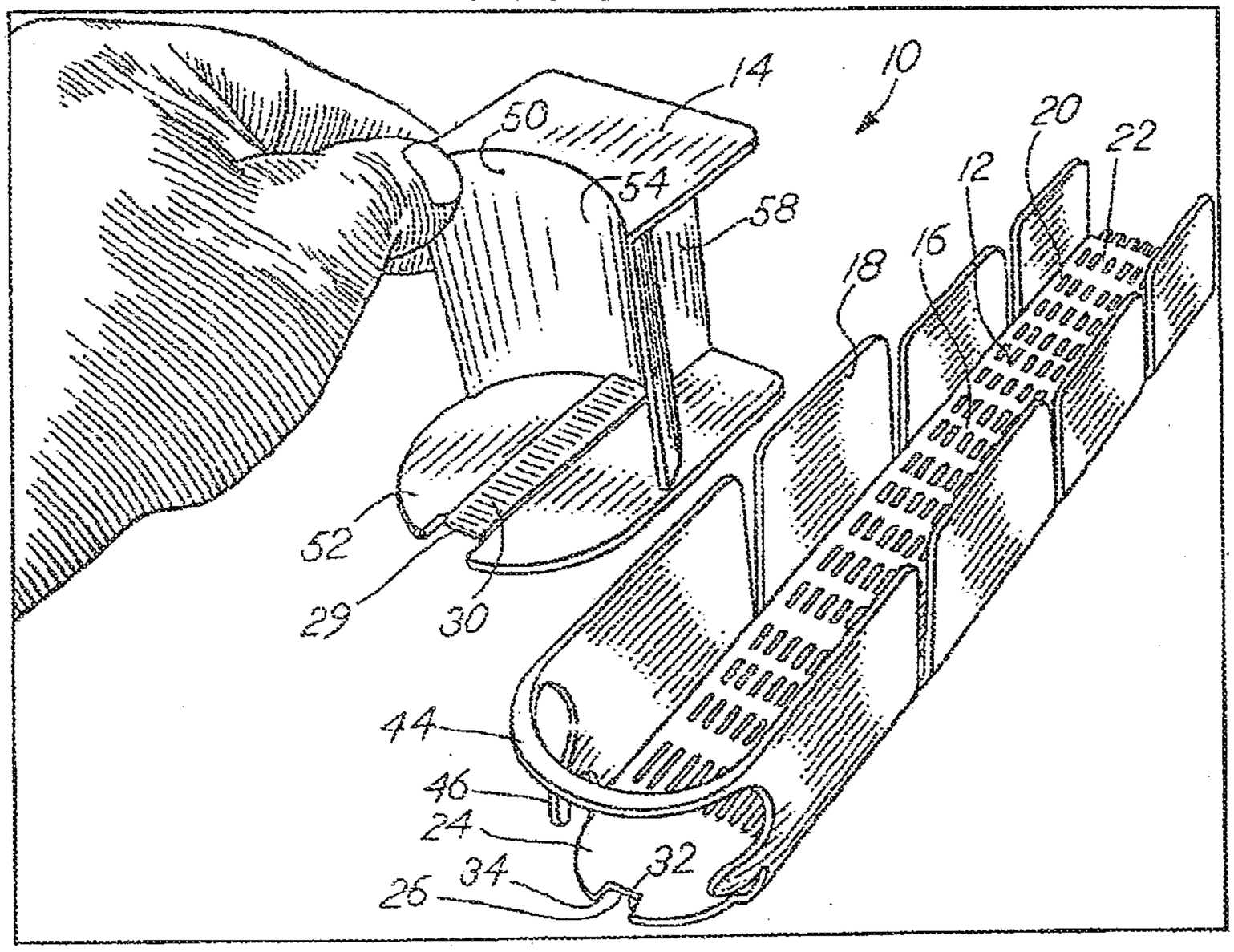
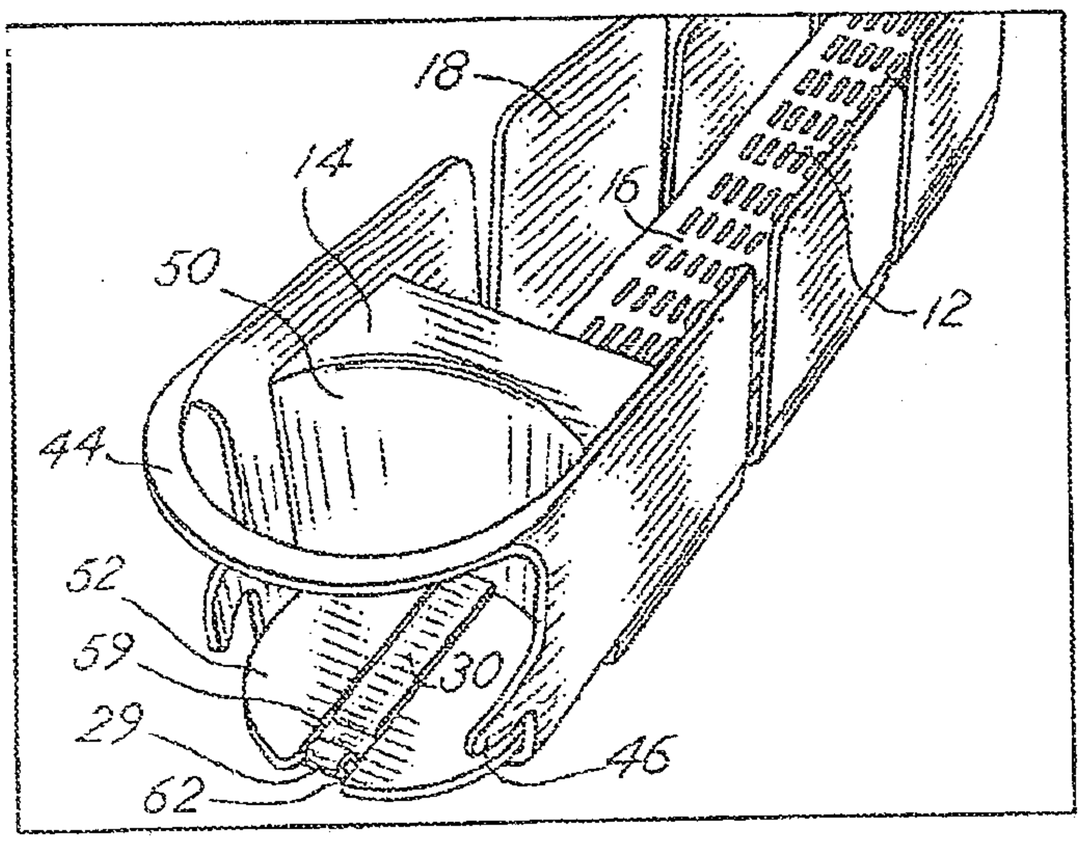

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FIG. 2


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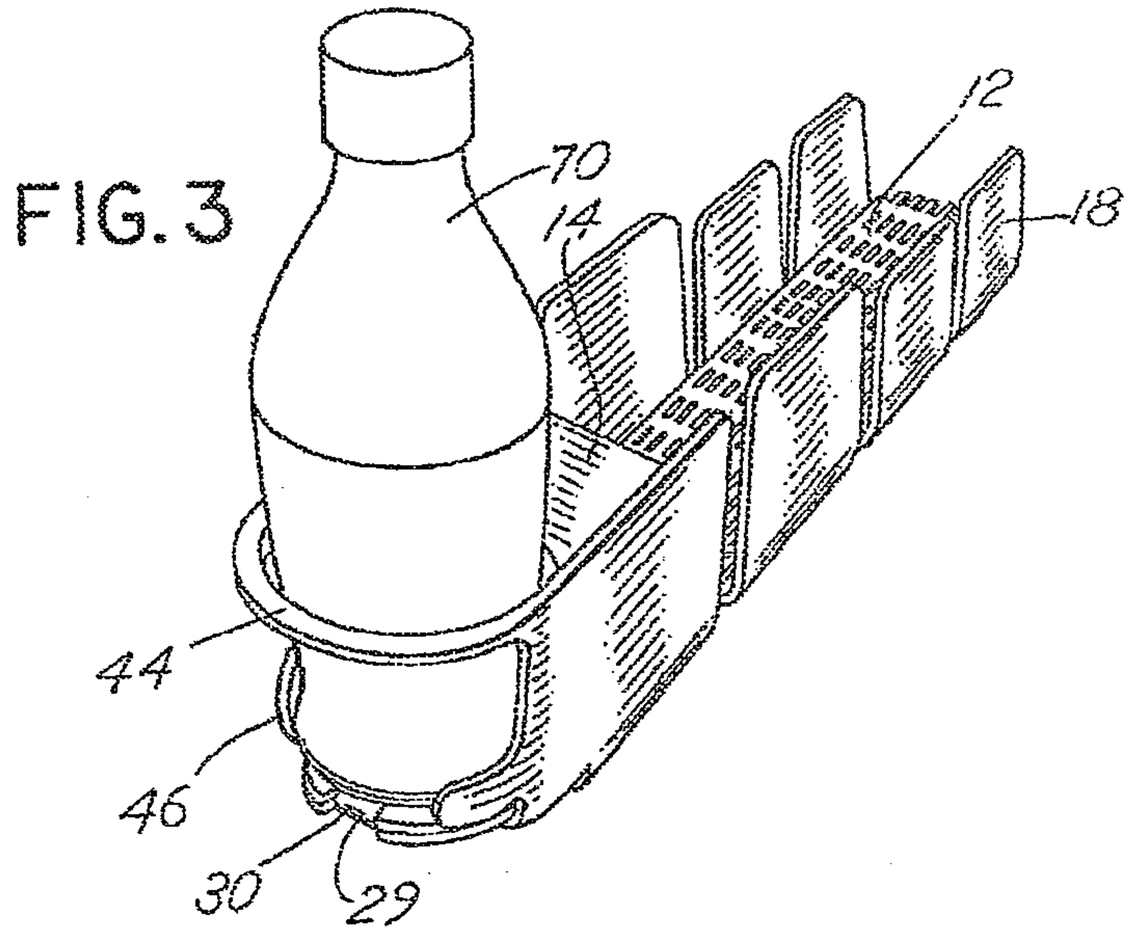


FIG. 3

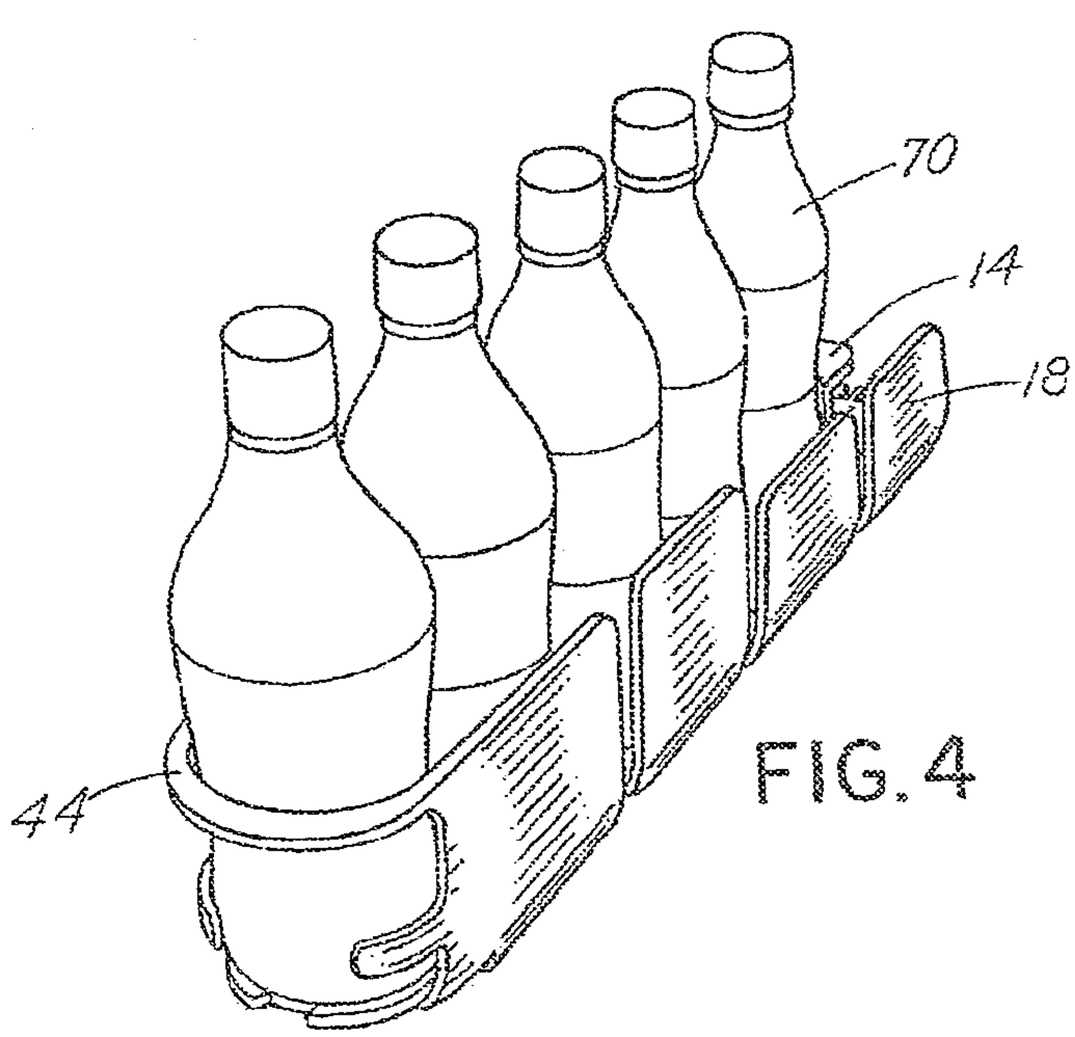


FIG. 4

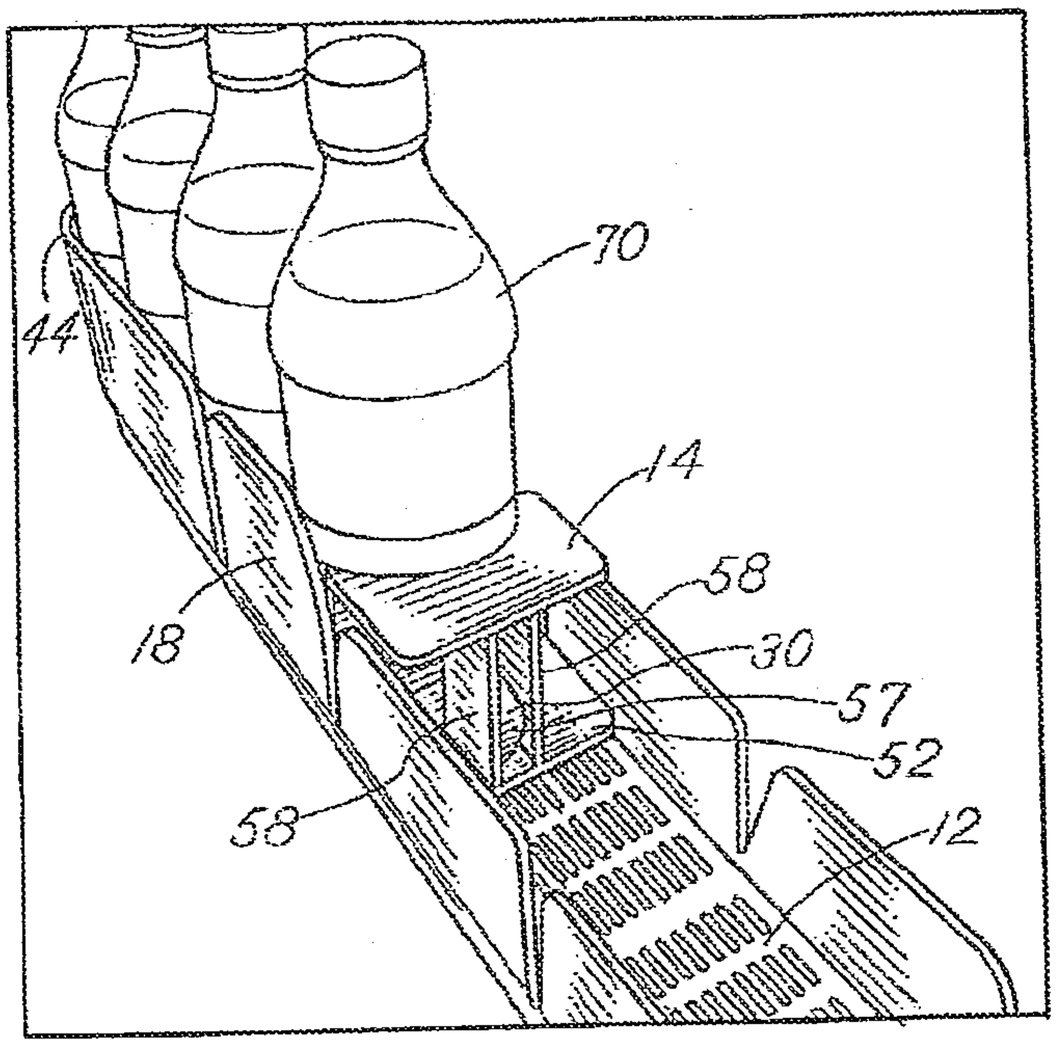


FIG.5

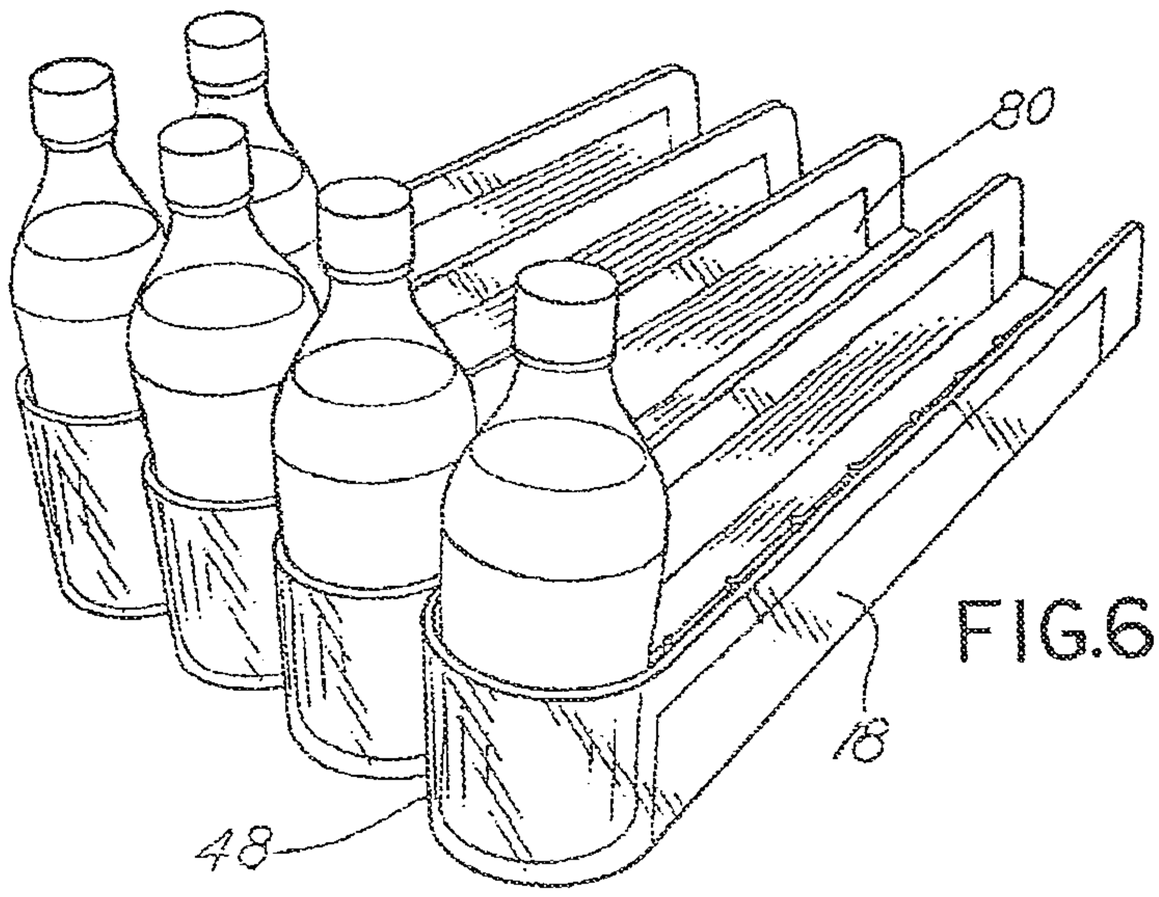


FIG.6

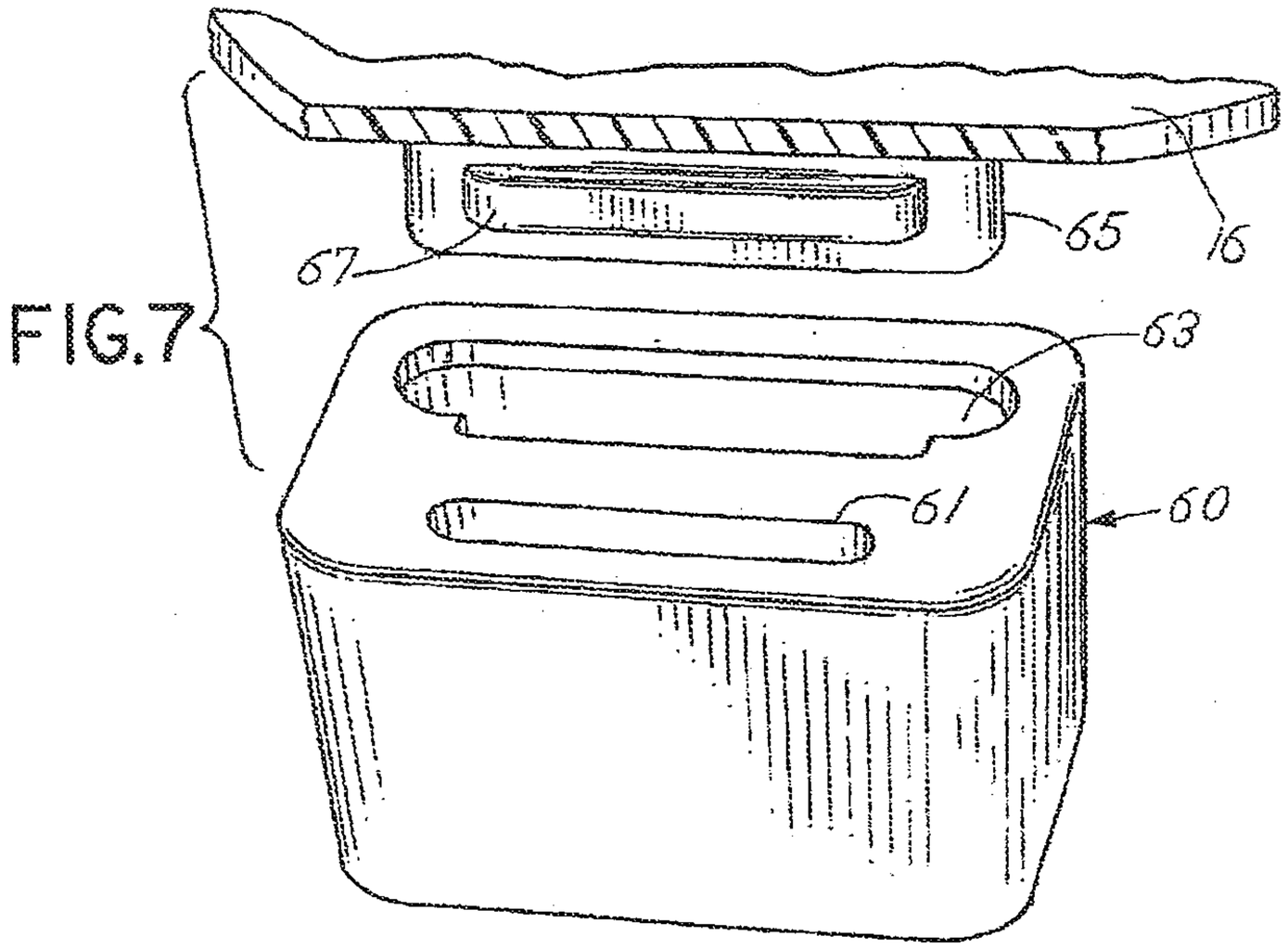


FIG.7

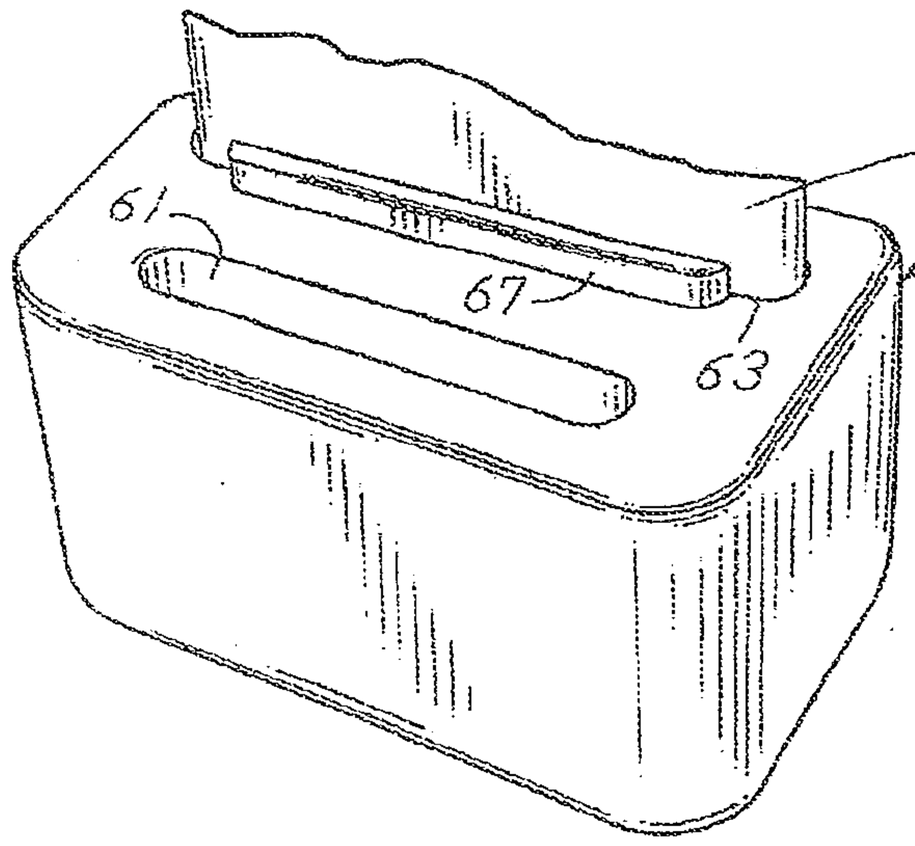


FIG.8

FIG.9

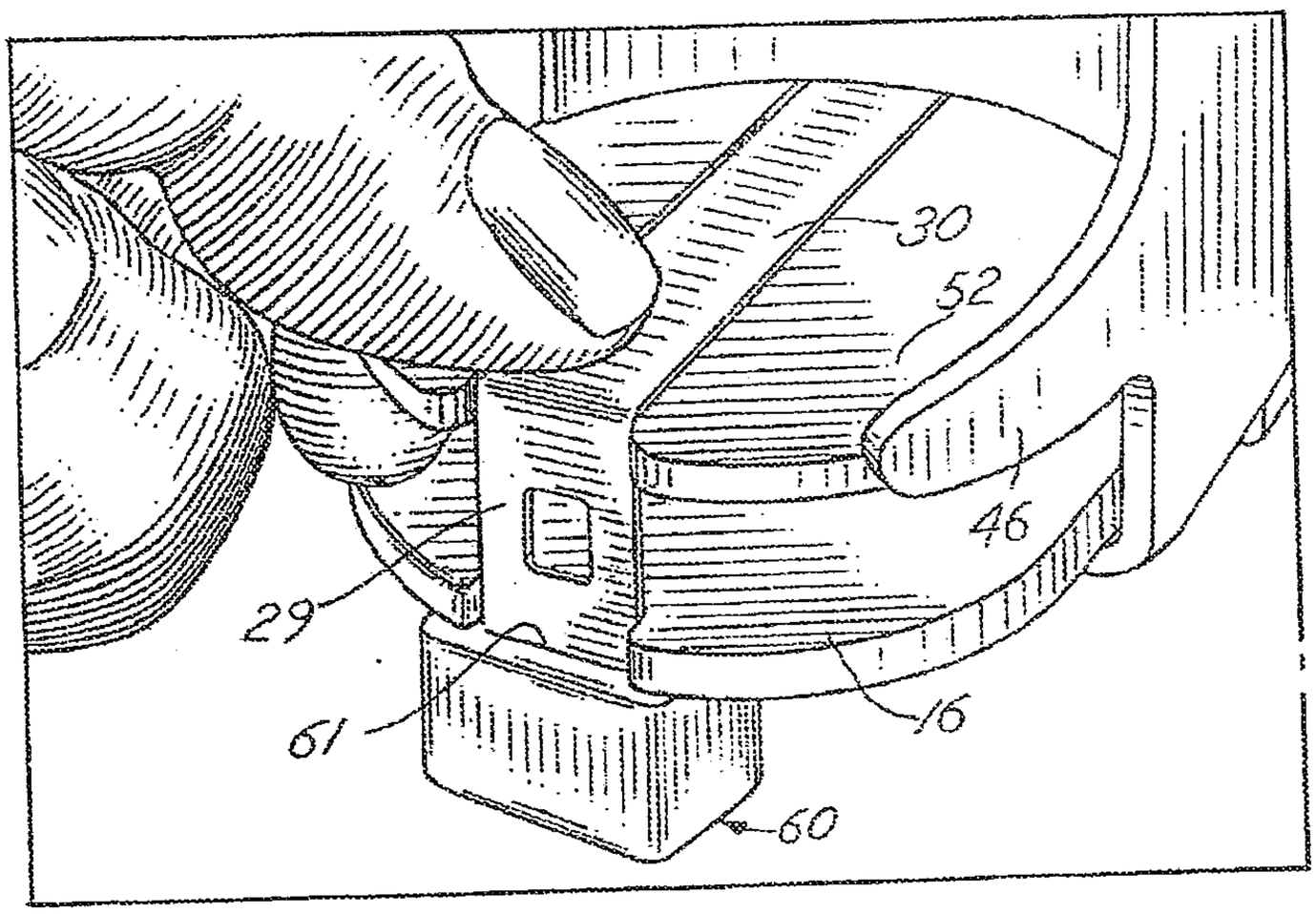


FIG.10

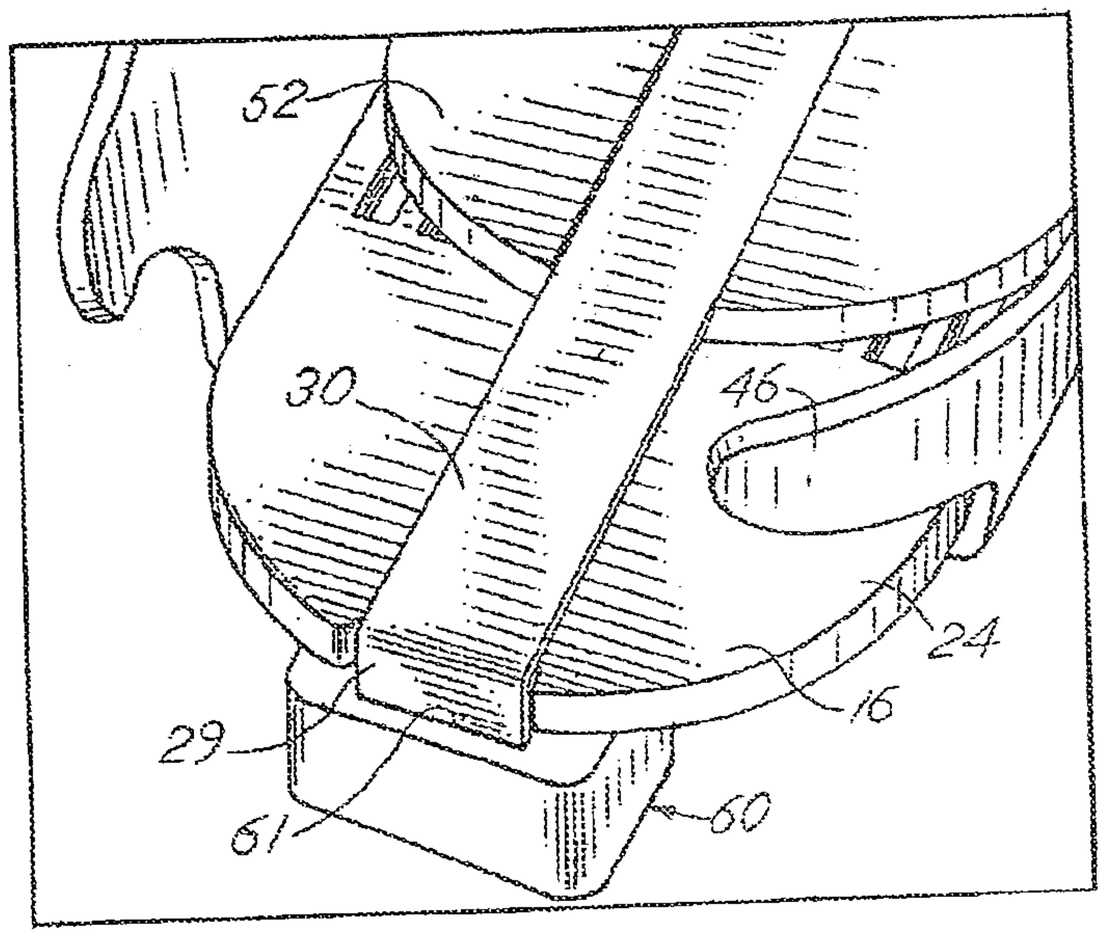


FIG.11

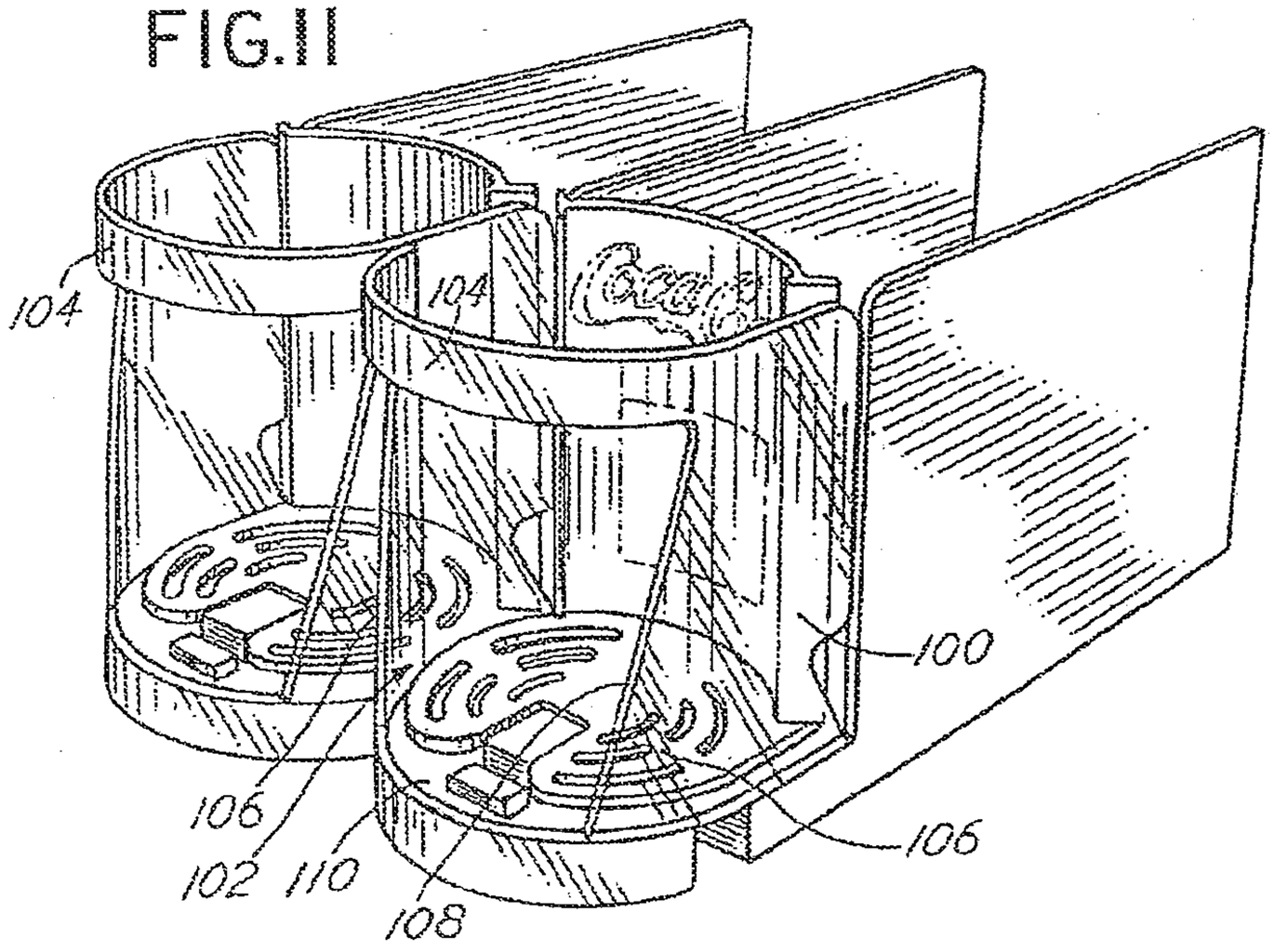


FIG.12

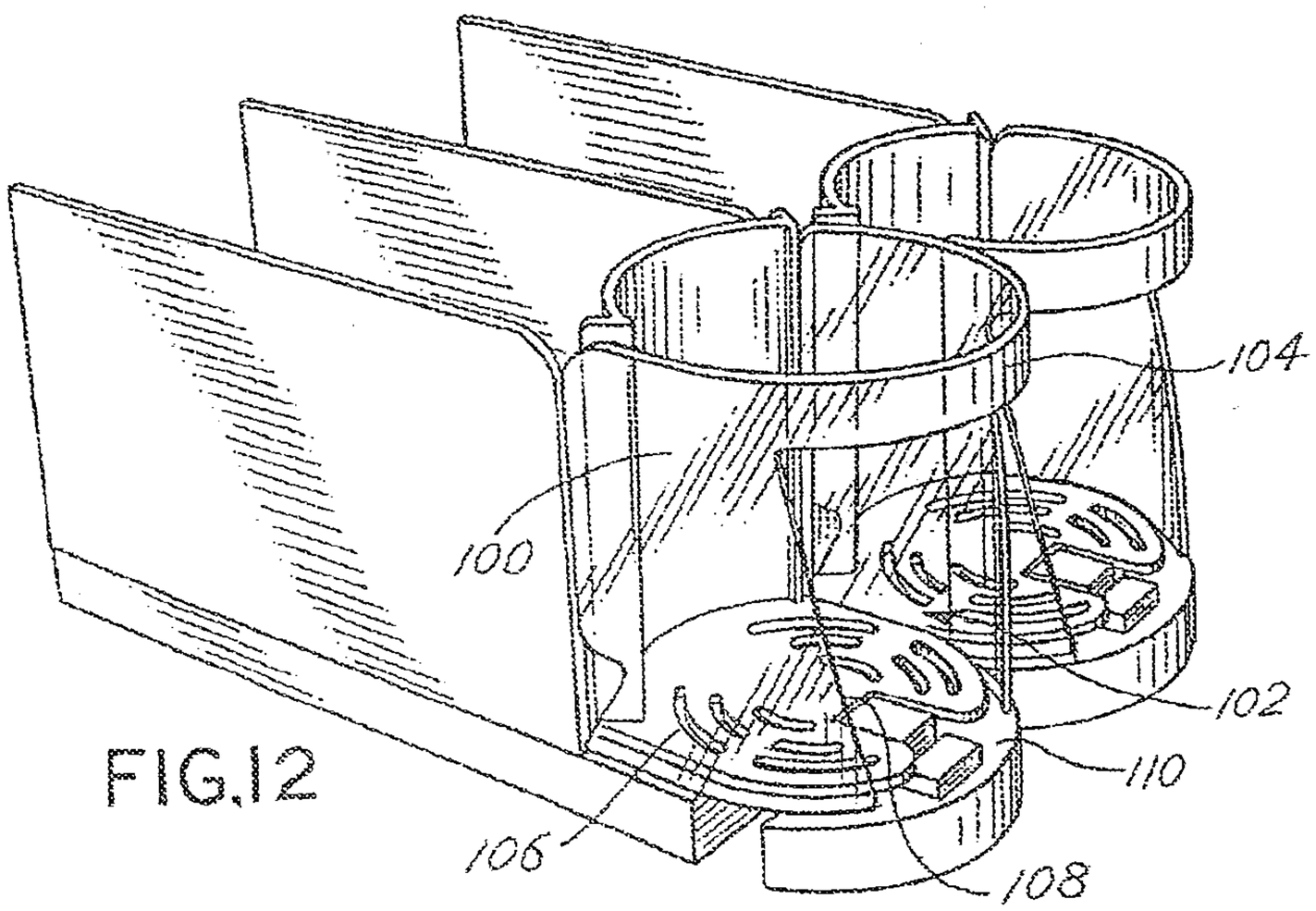


FIG.13

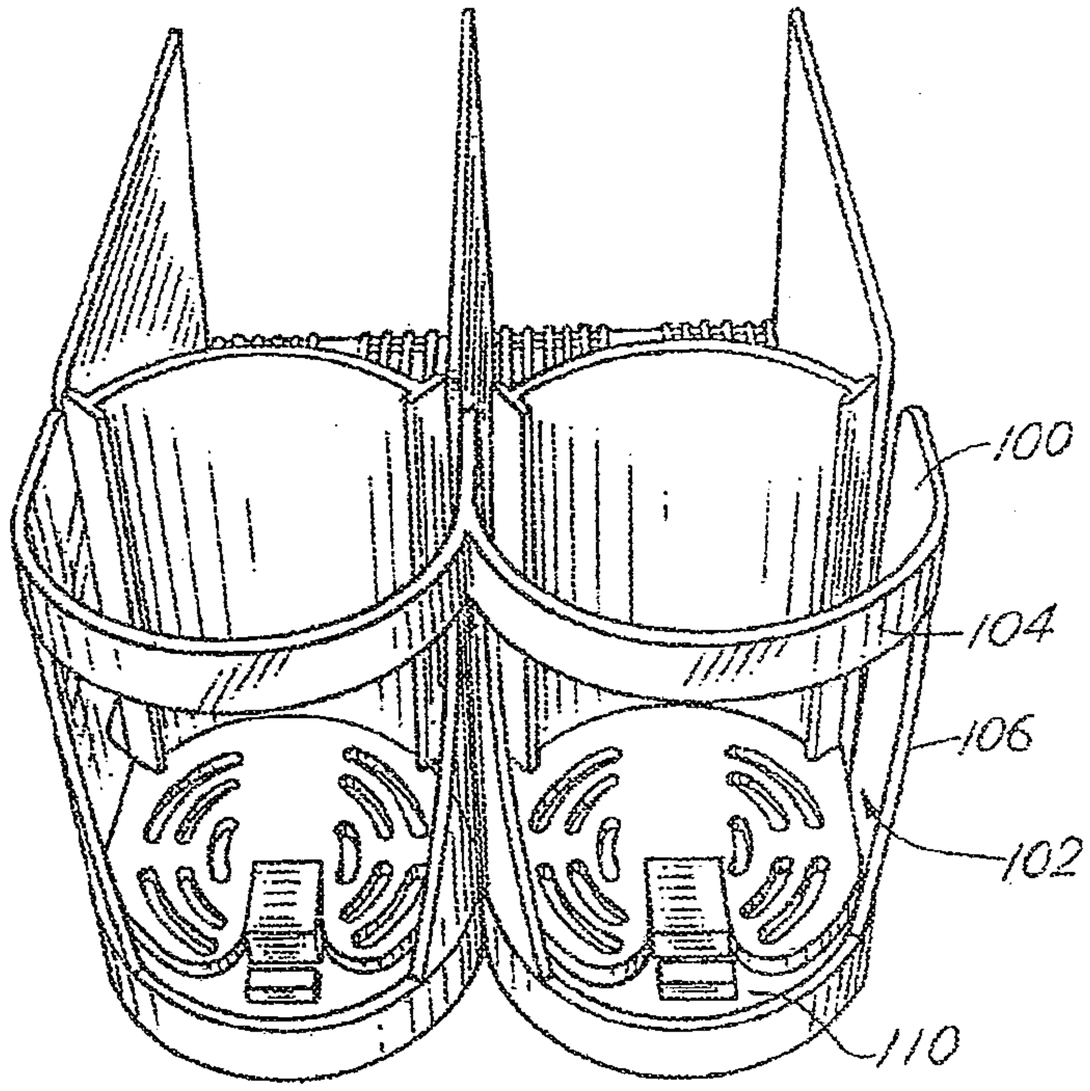


FIG.14

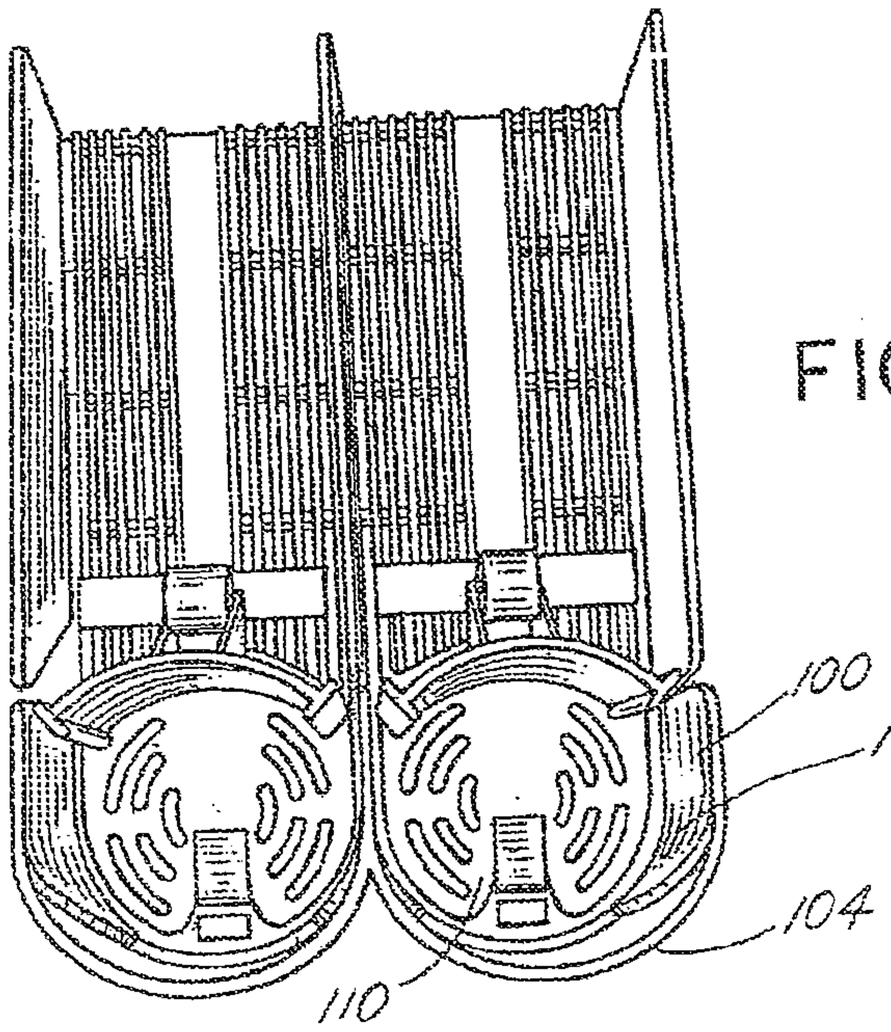


FIG.15

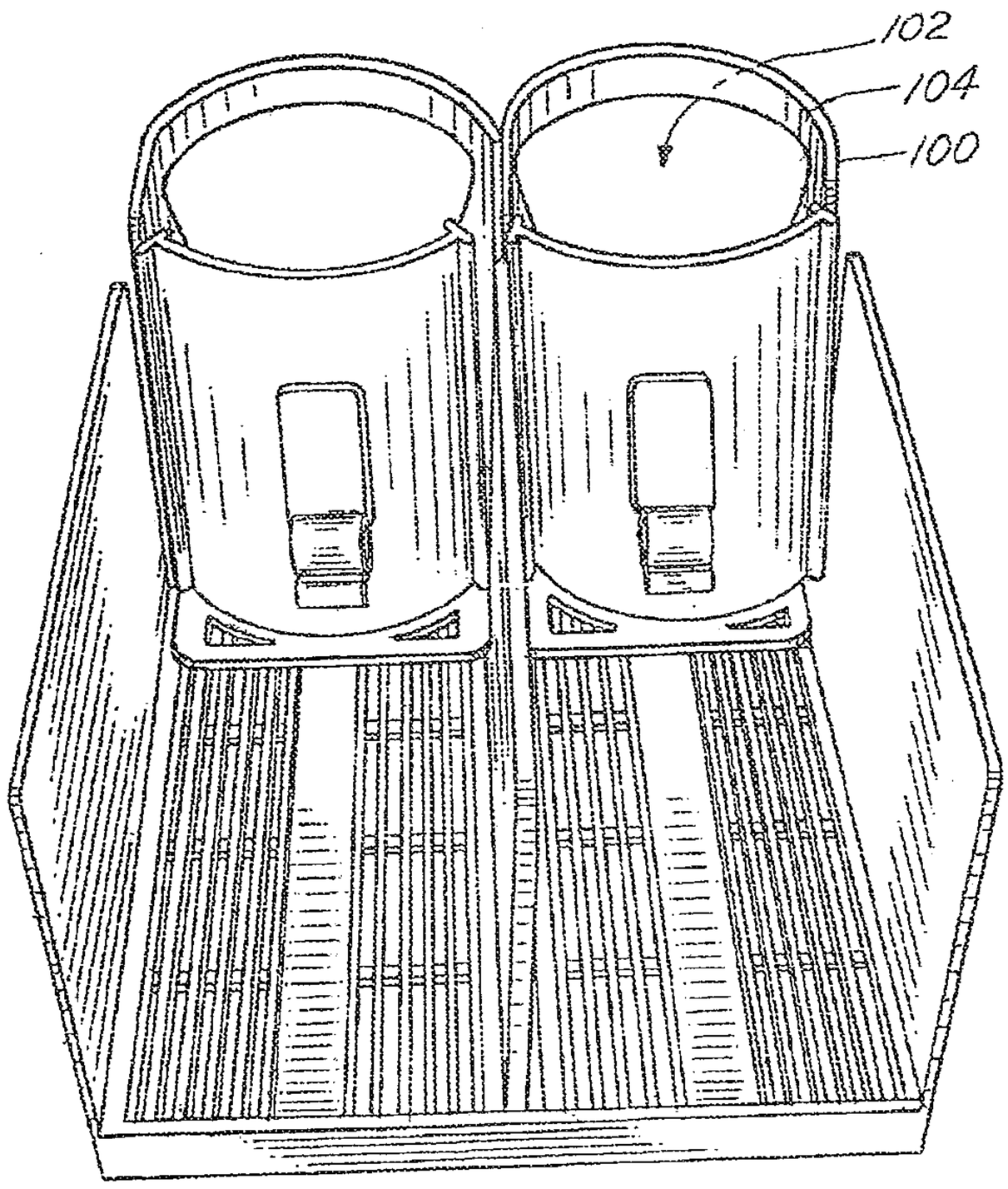


FIG.16

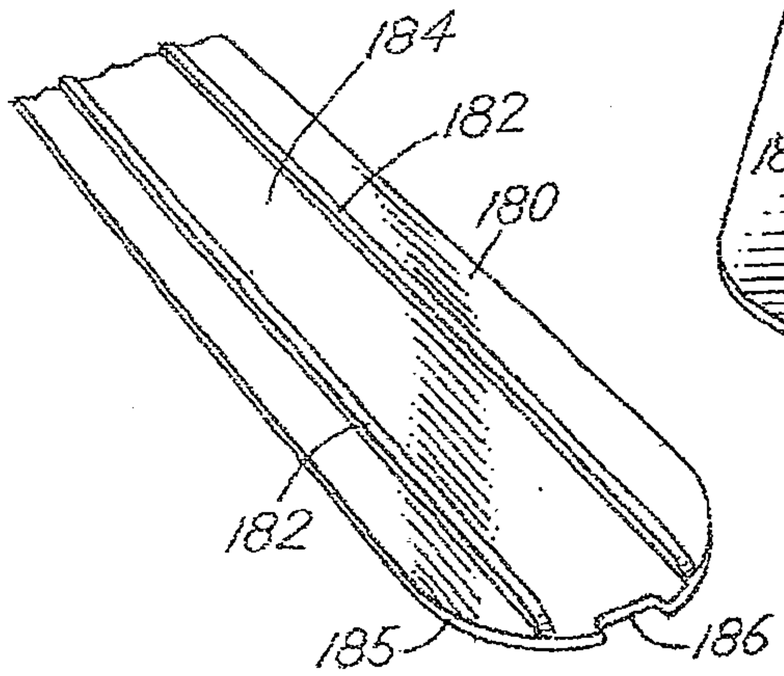


FIG.17

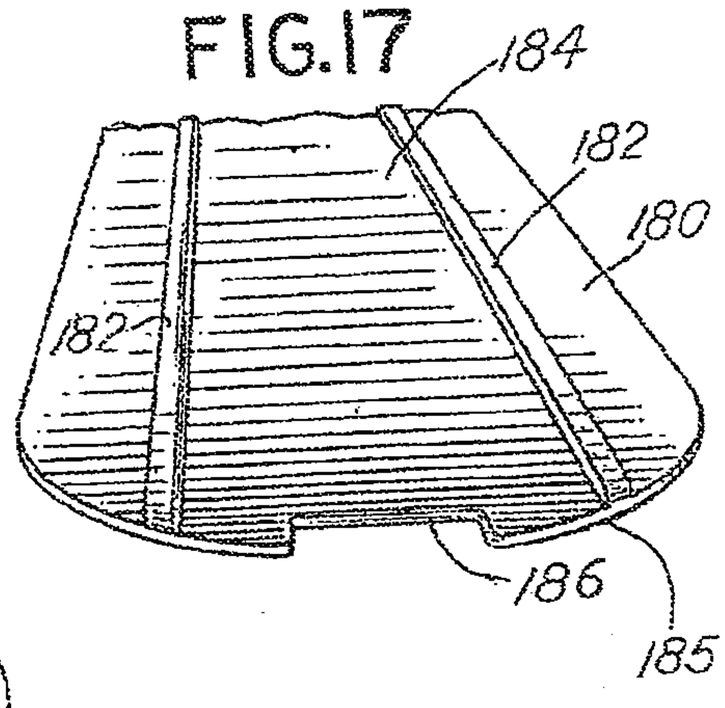


FIG.18

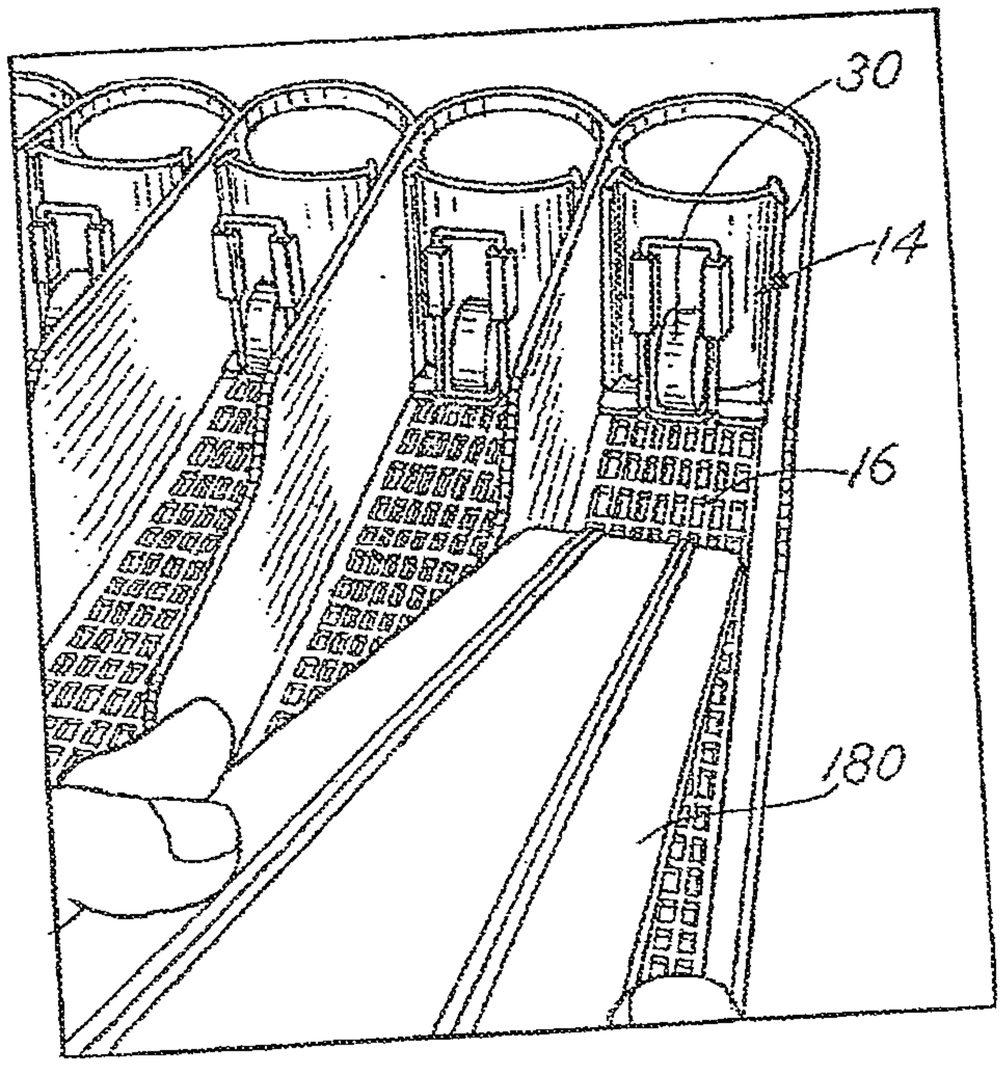


FIG.19

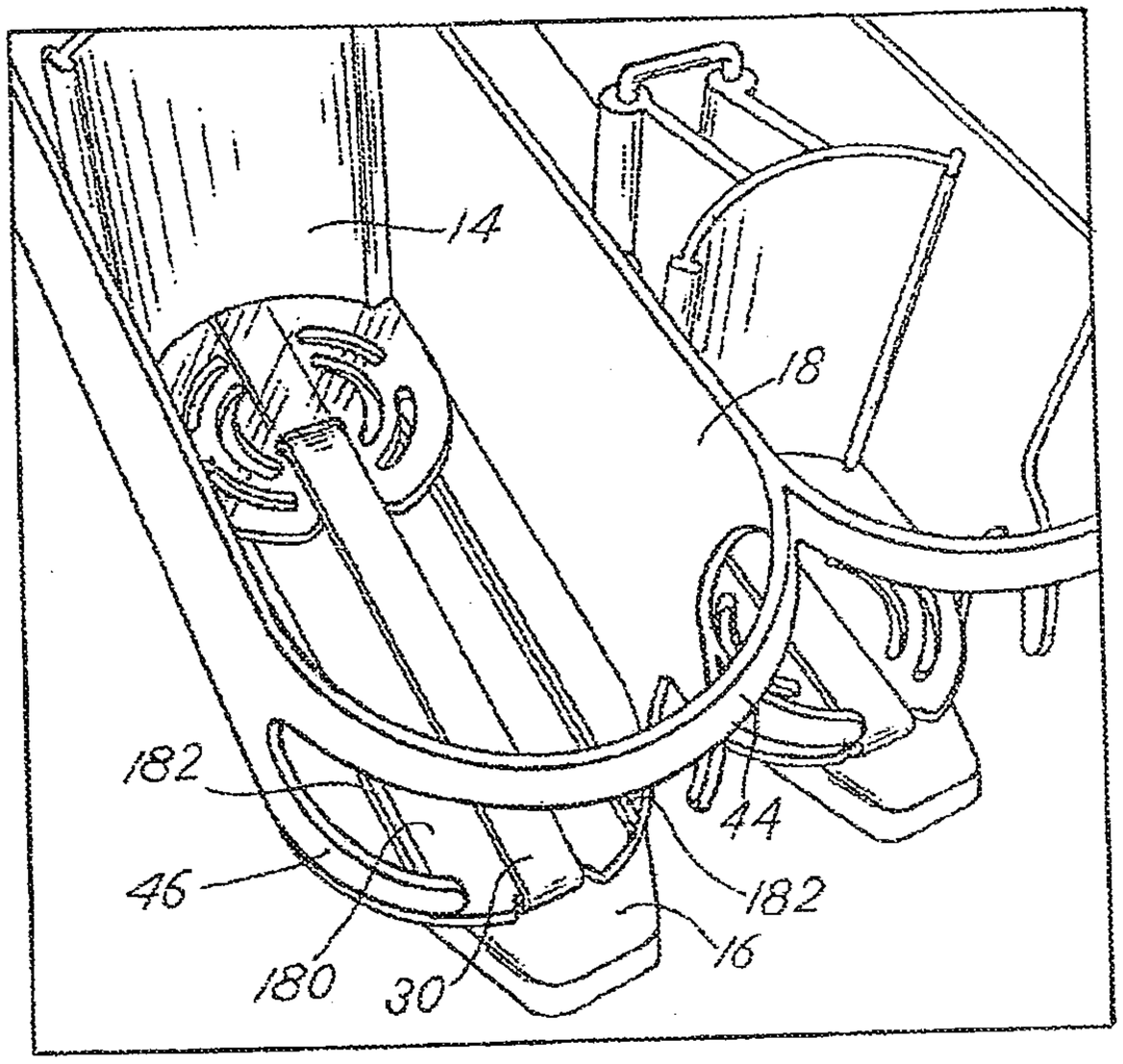


FIG.20

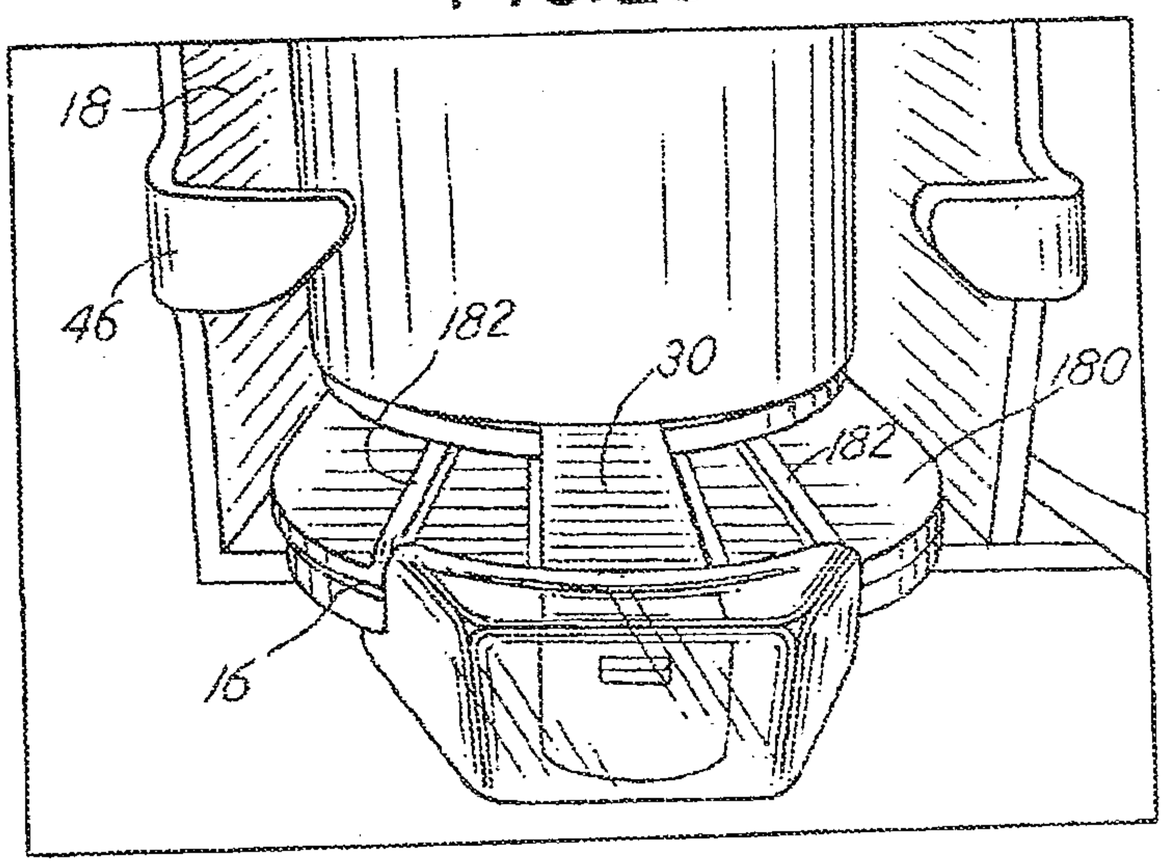


FIG.21

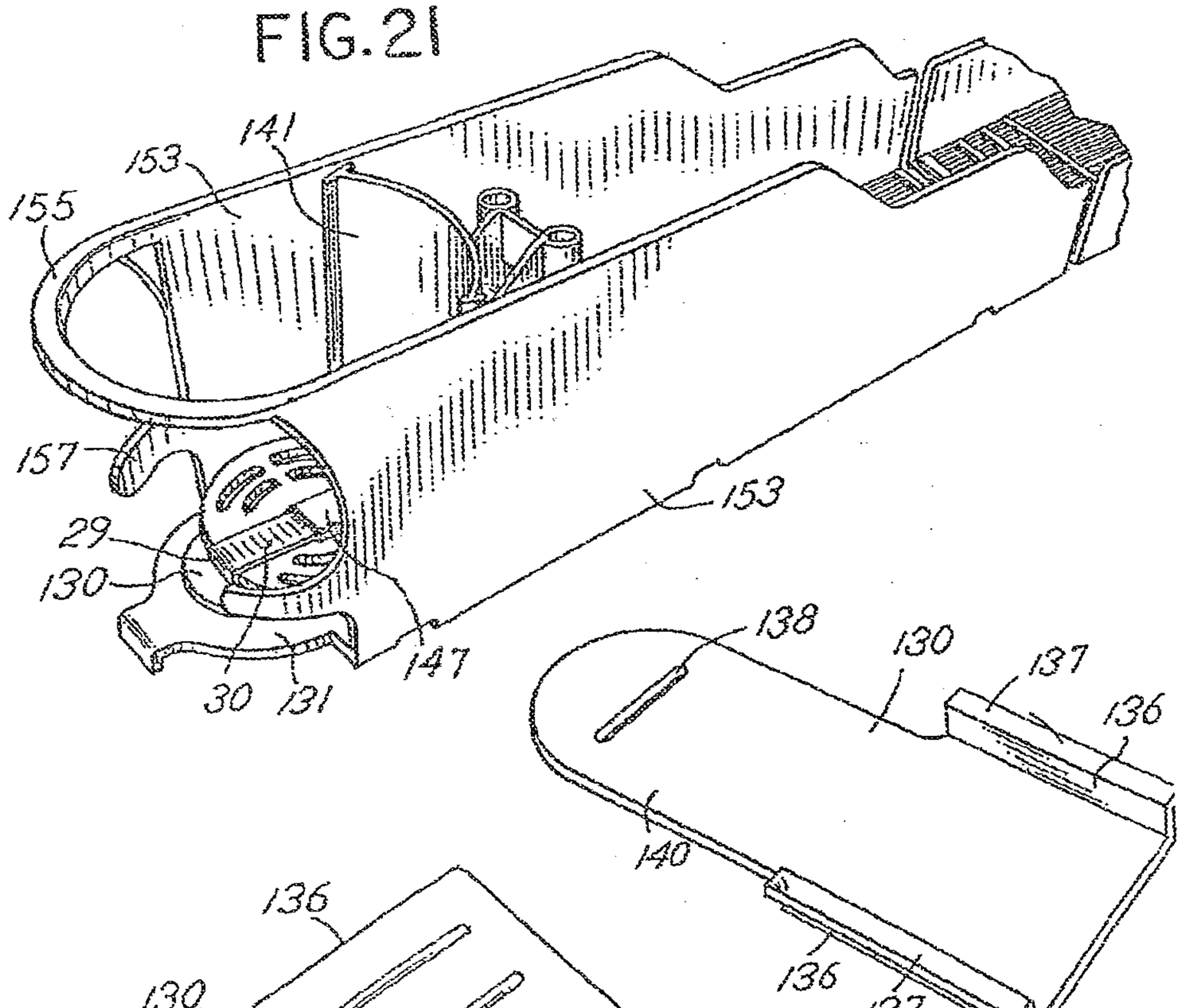


FIG.22

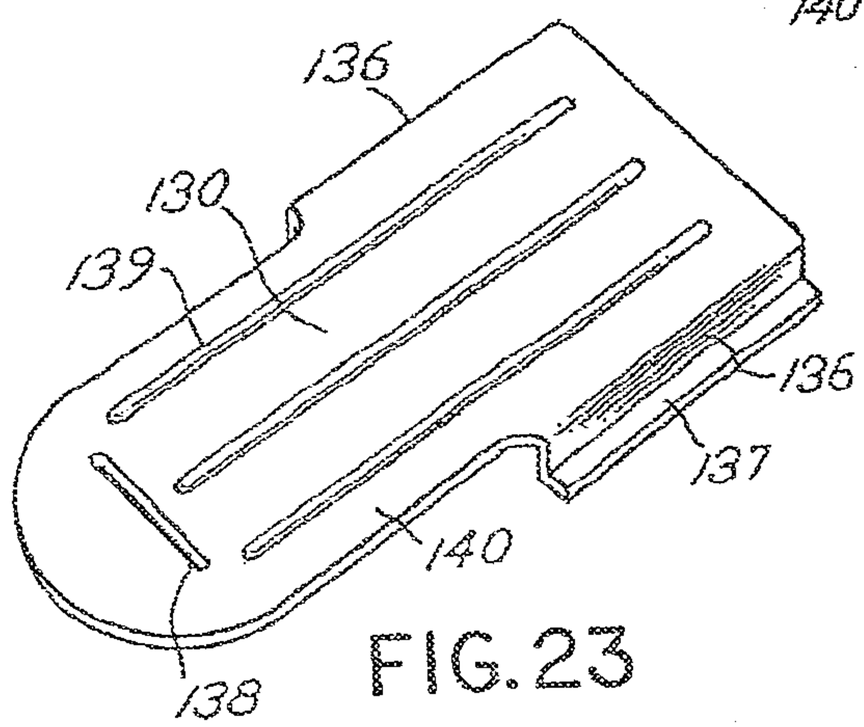


FIG.23

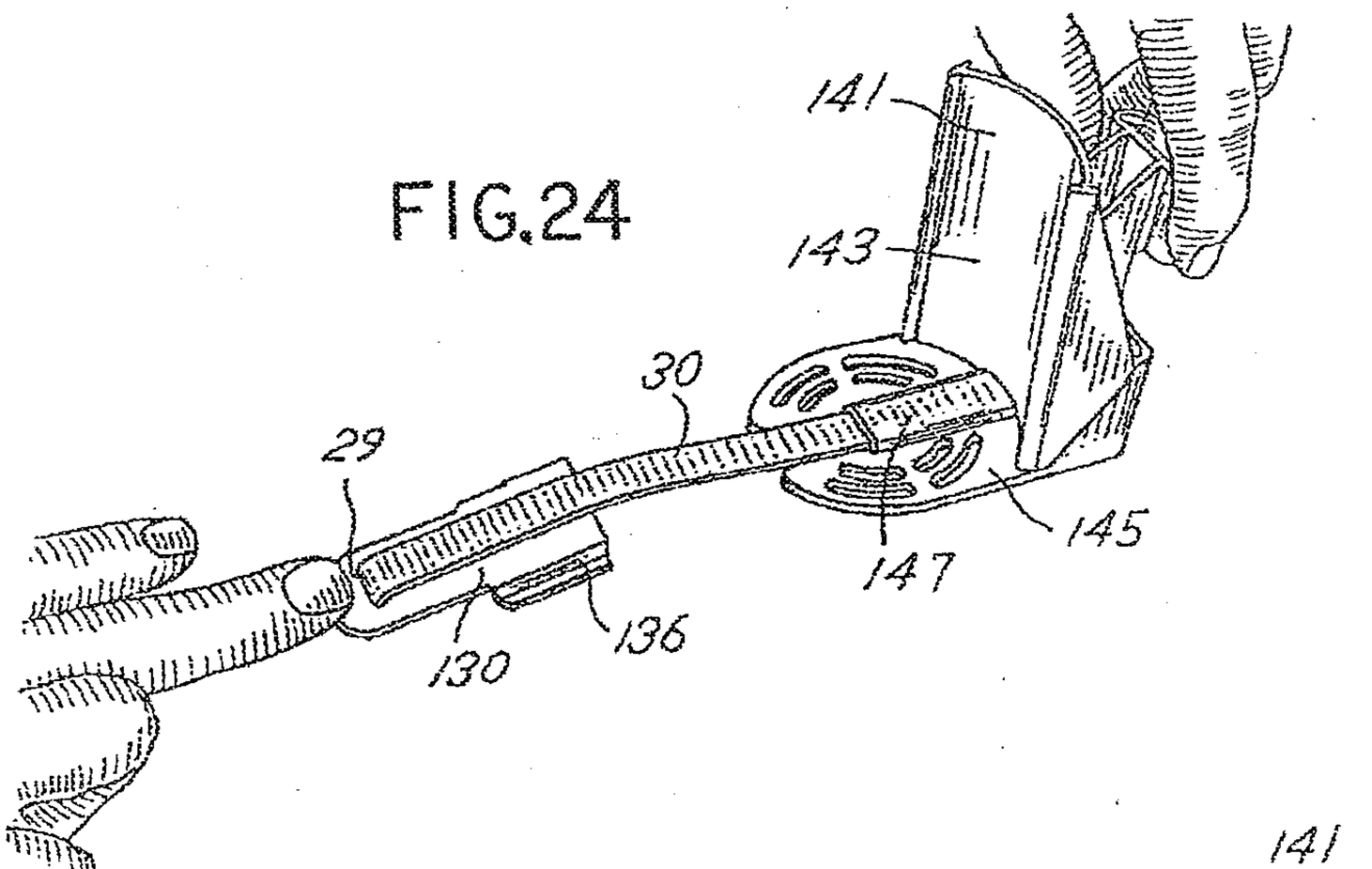

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FIG.24

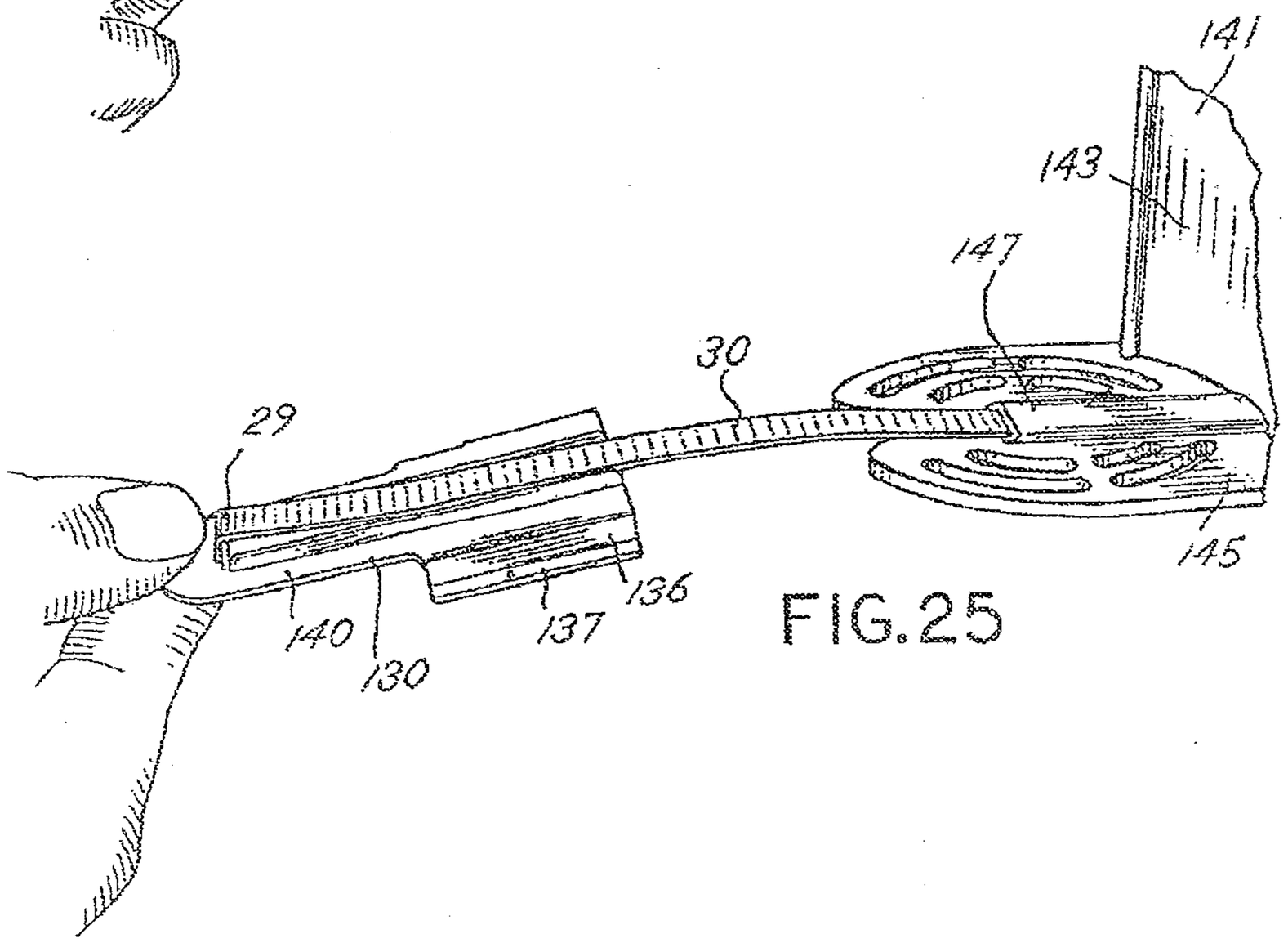

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FIG.25

FIG.26

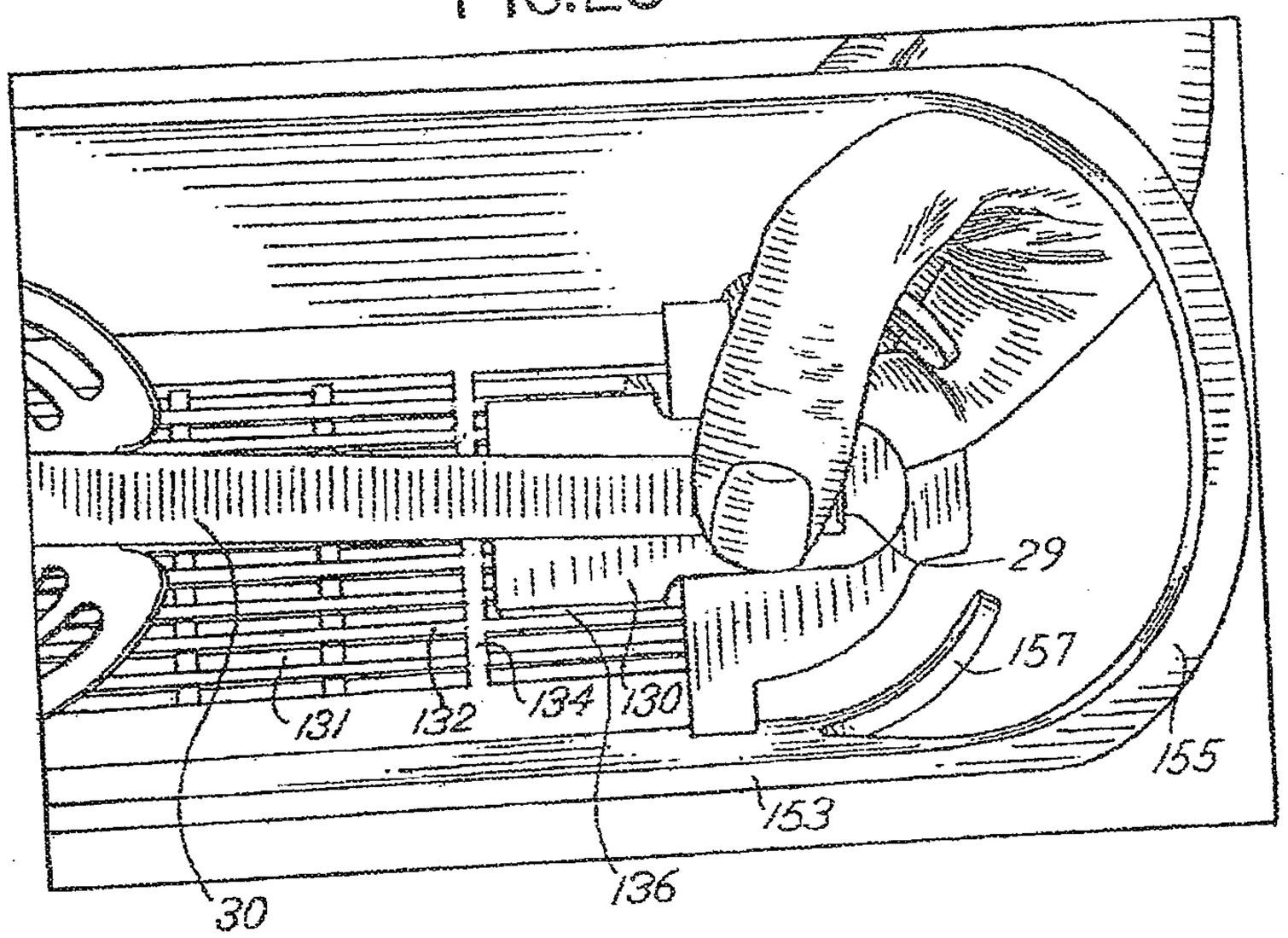
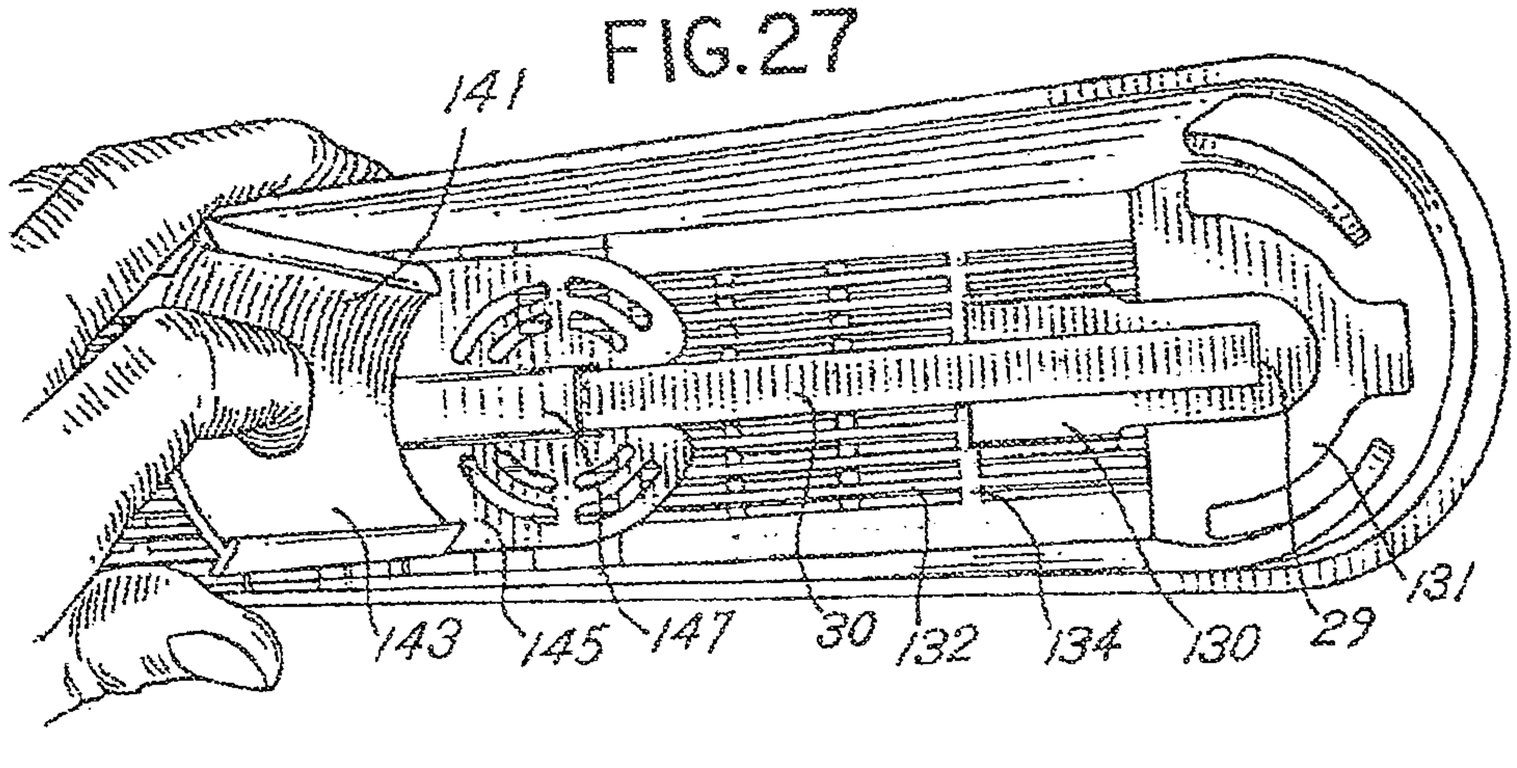

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FIG.27


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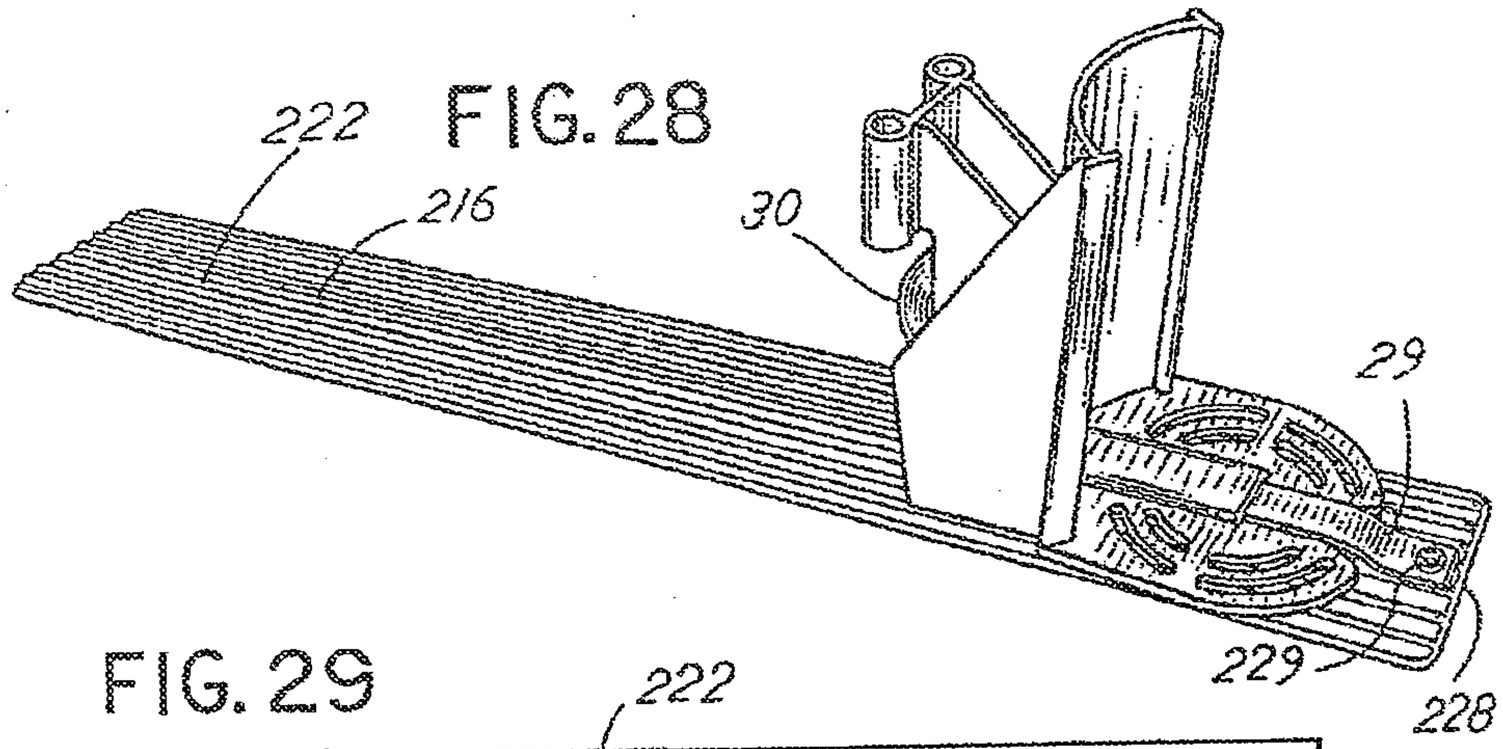


FIG. 28

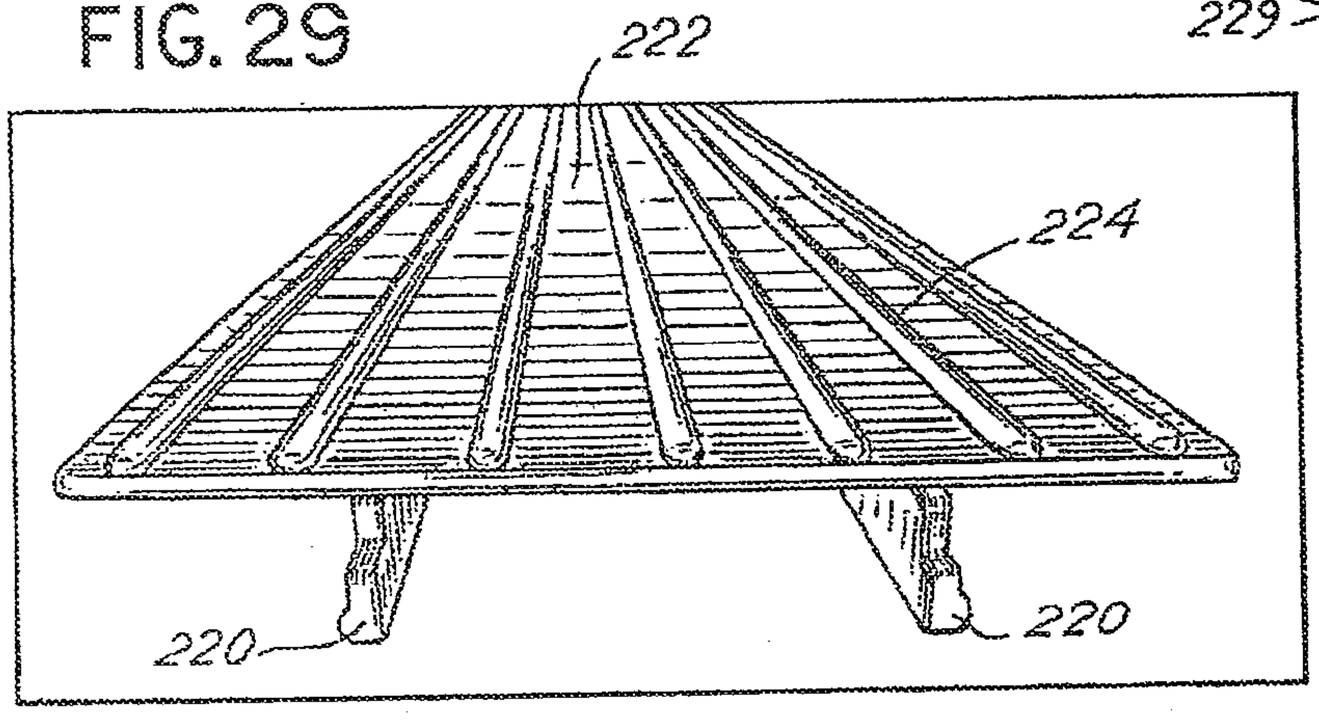


FIG. 29

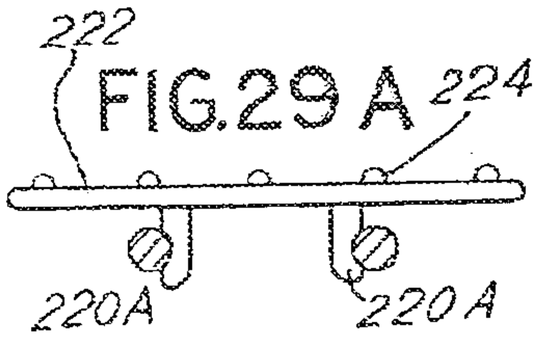


FIG. 29A

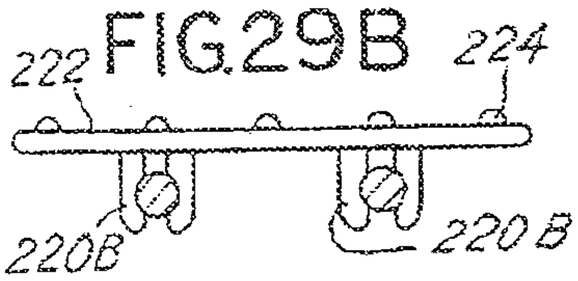


FIG. 29B

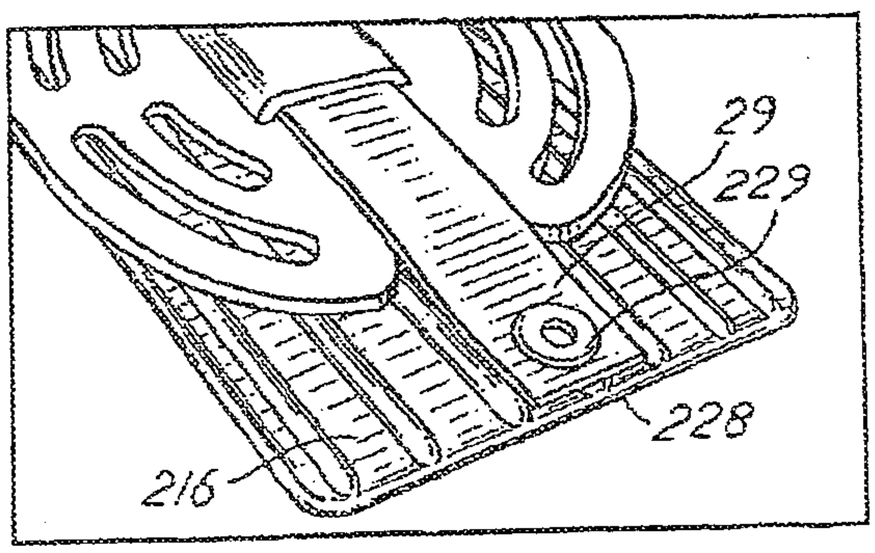


FIG. 30

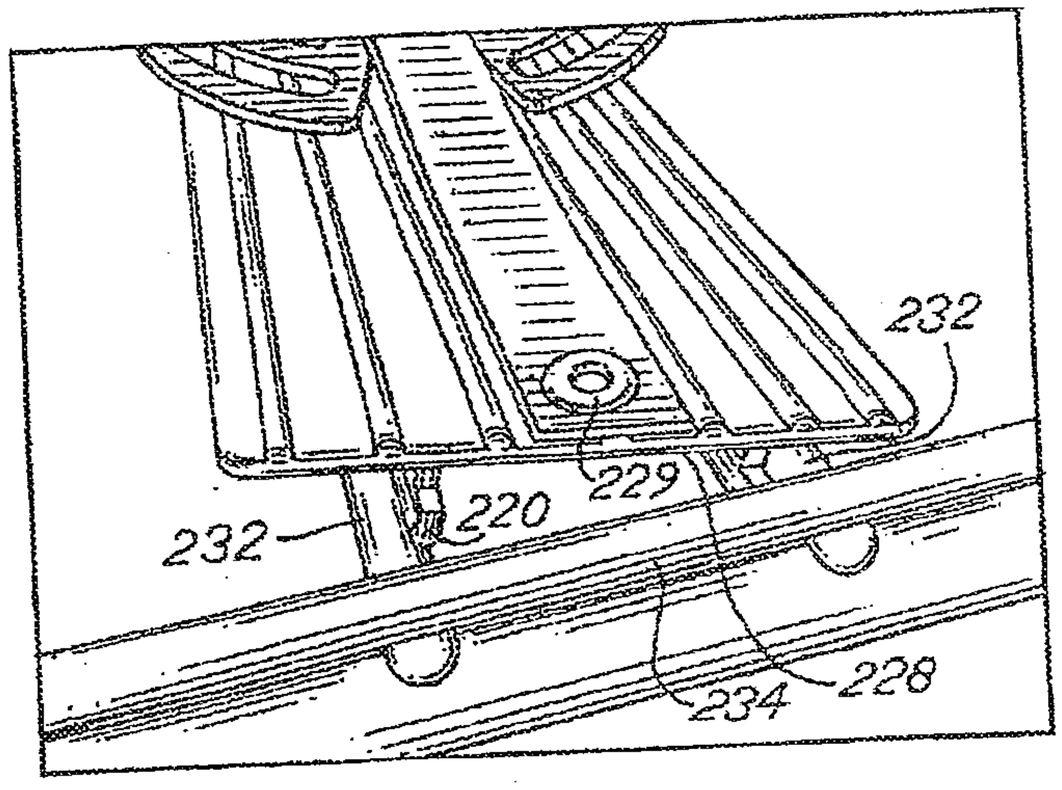


FIG.31

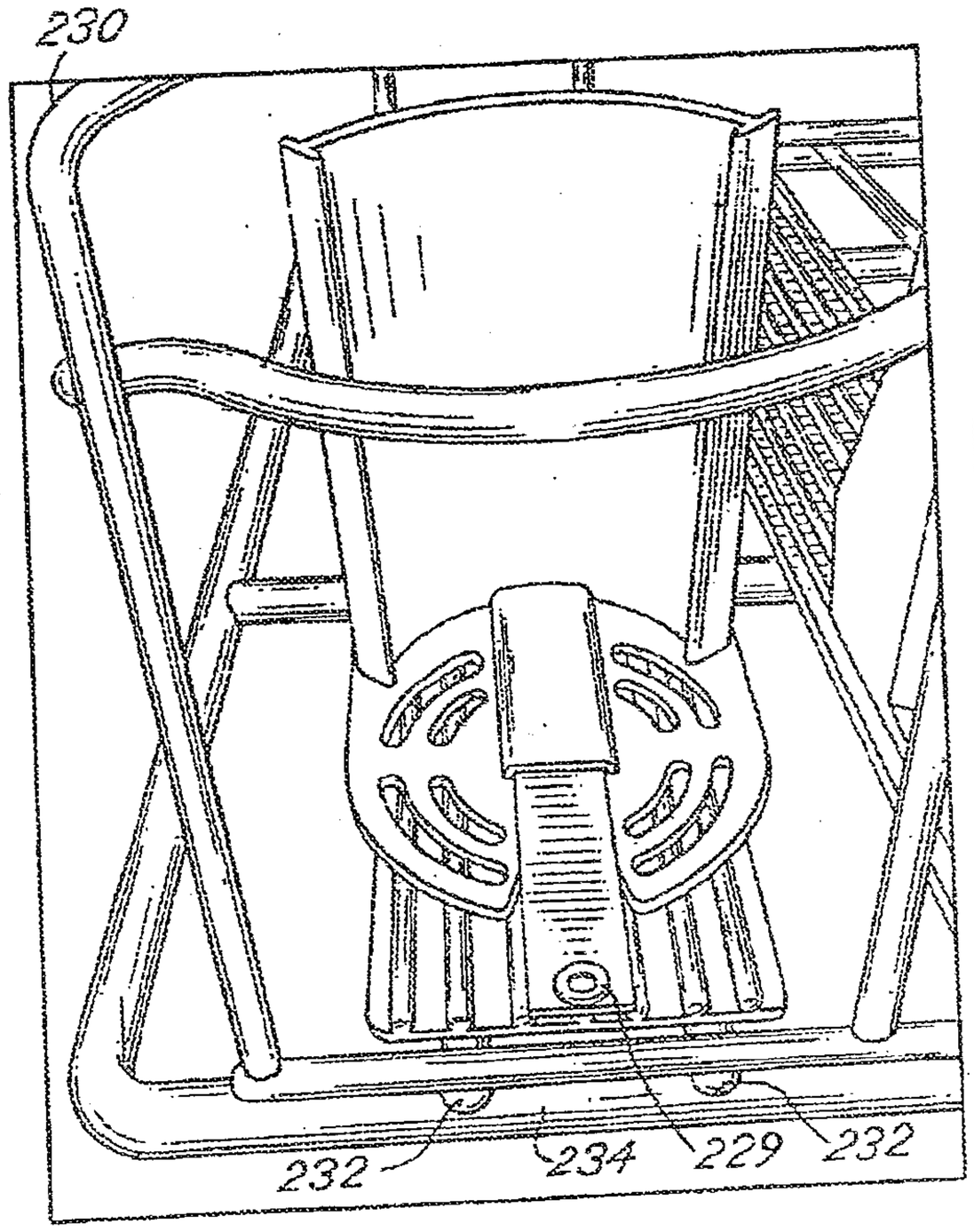
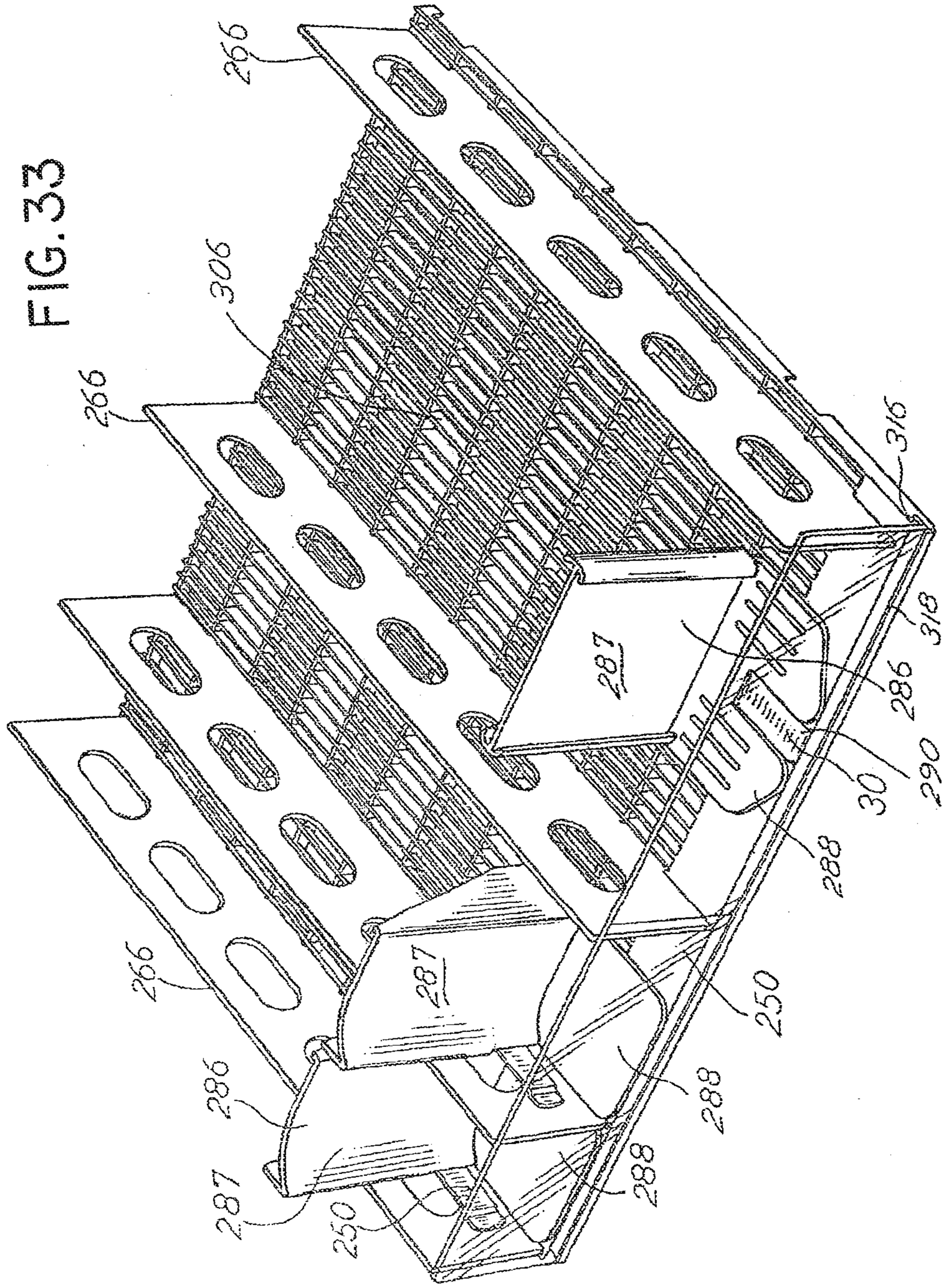


FIG.32

FIG. 33


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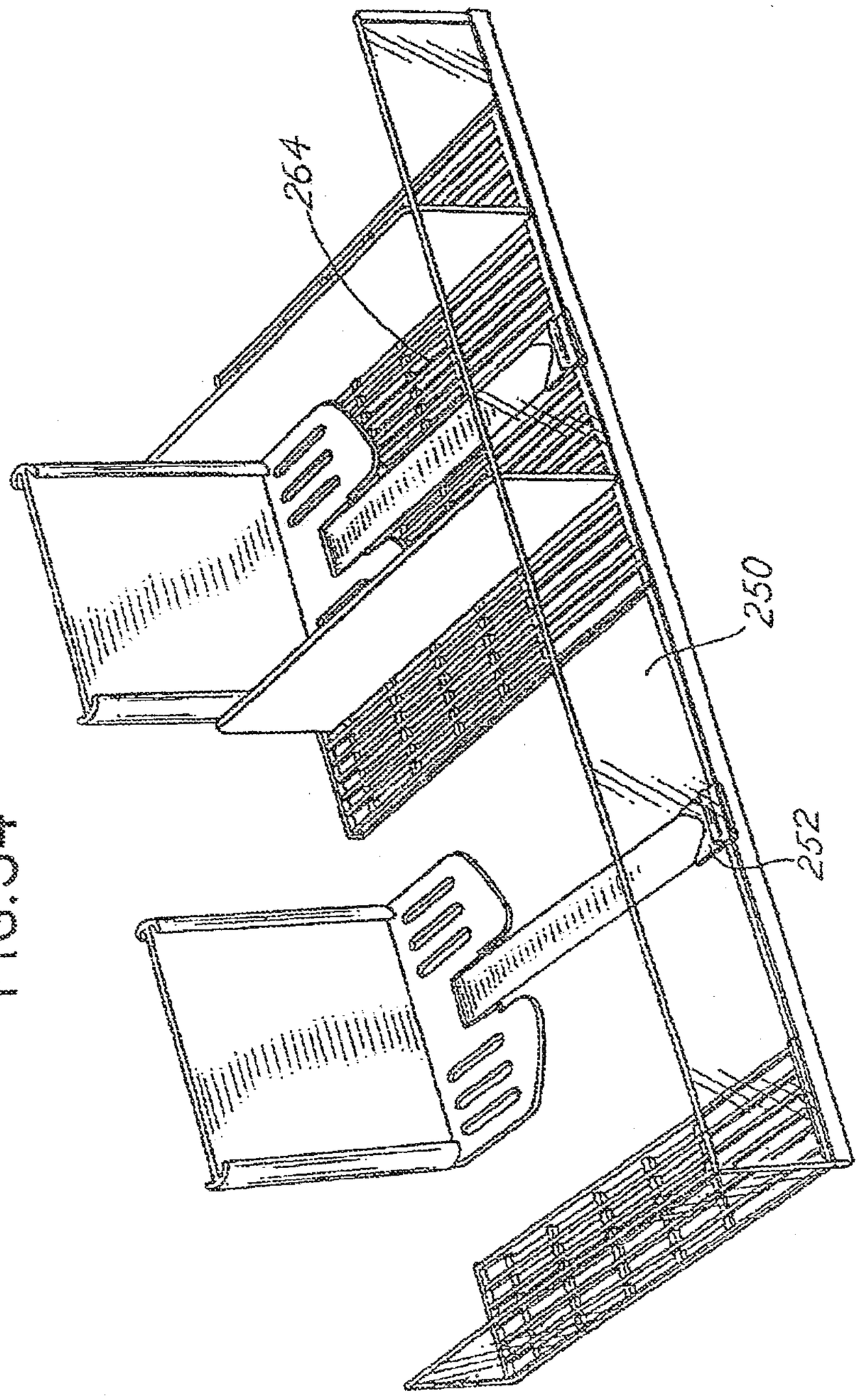


FIG.34

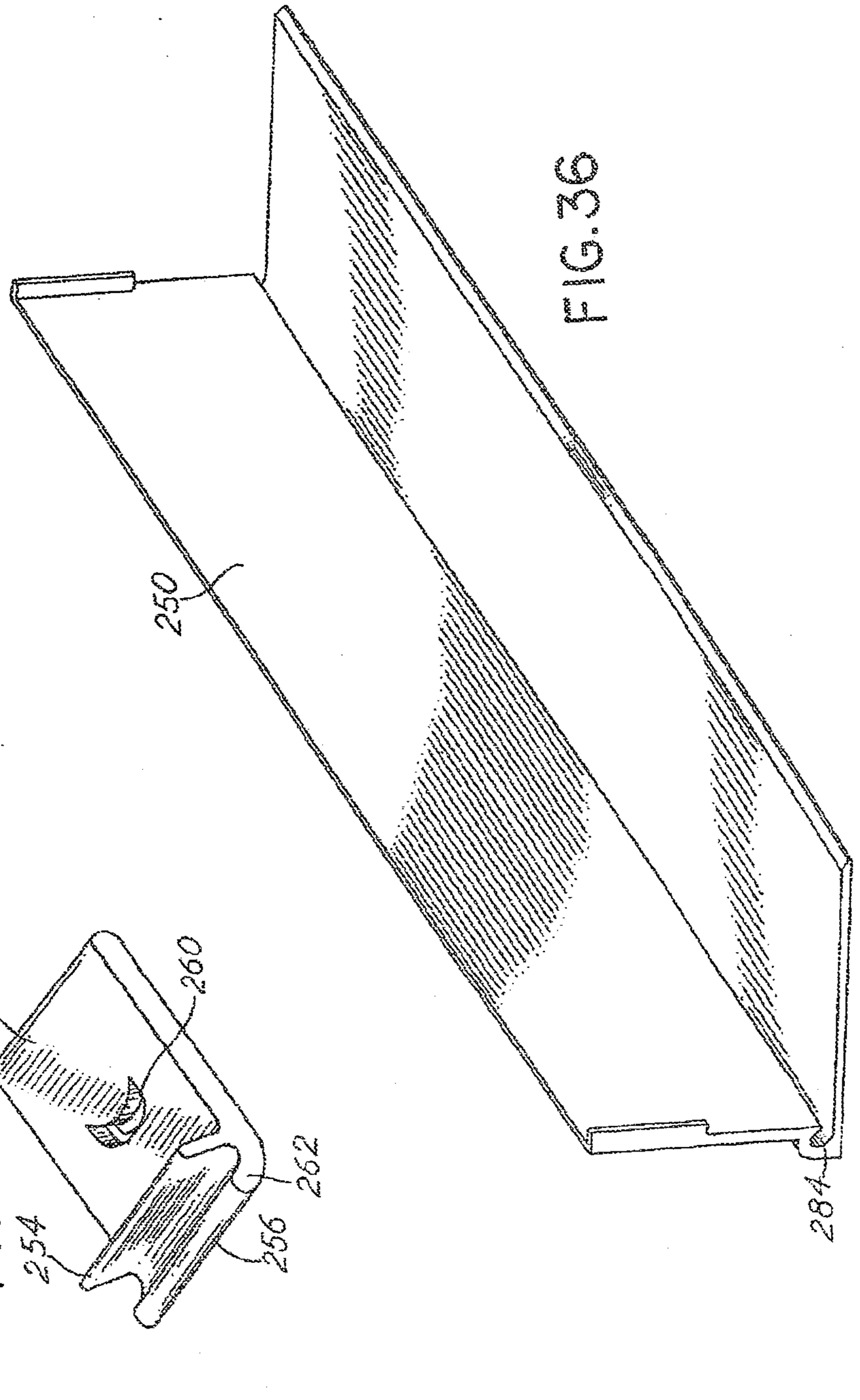


FIG.36

FIG.35

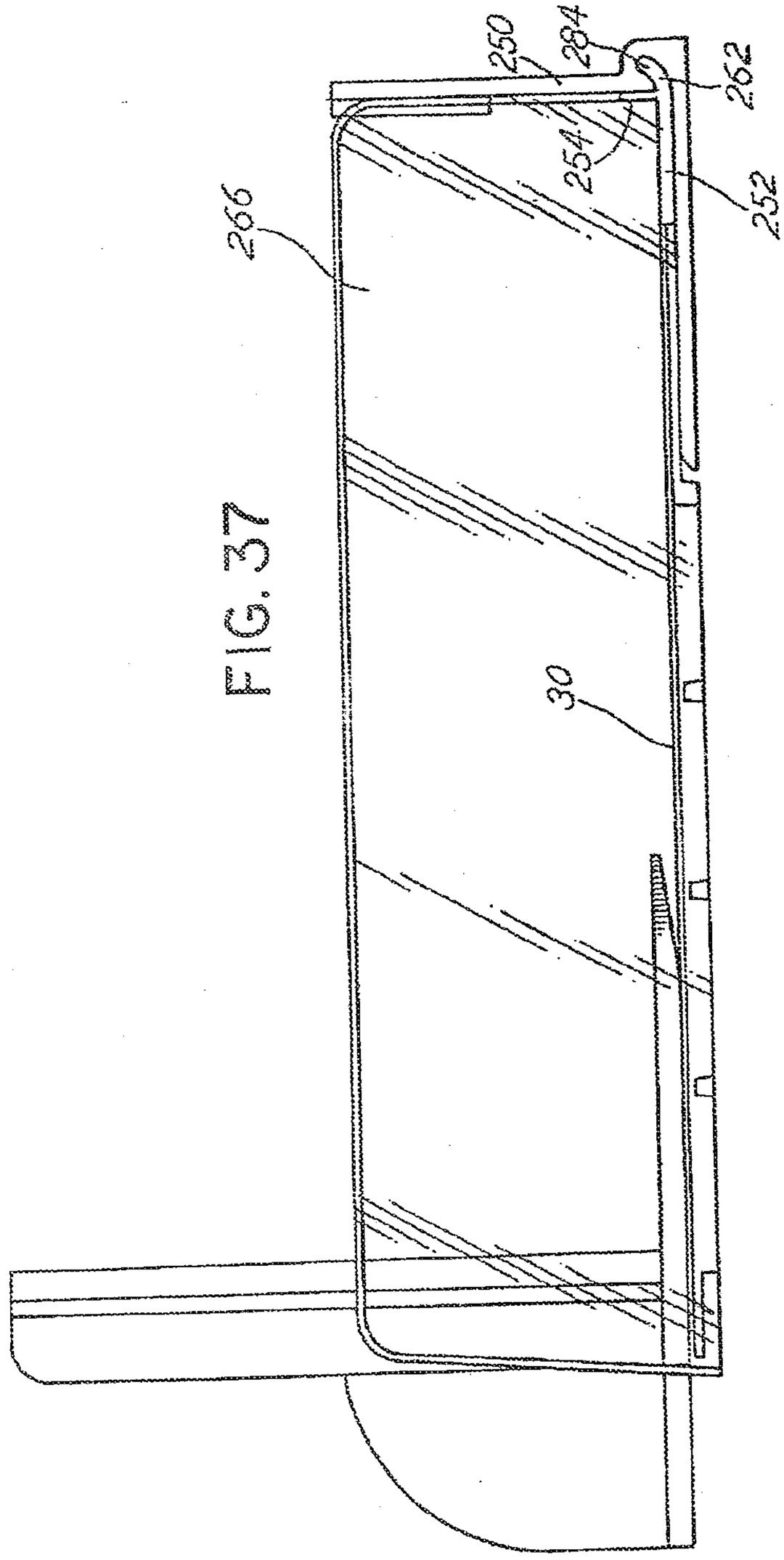


FIG. 37

FIG.38

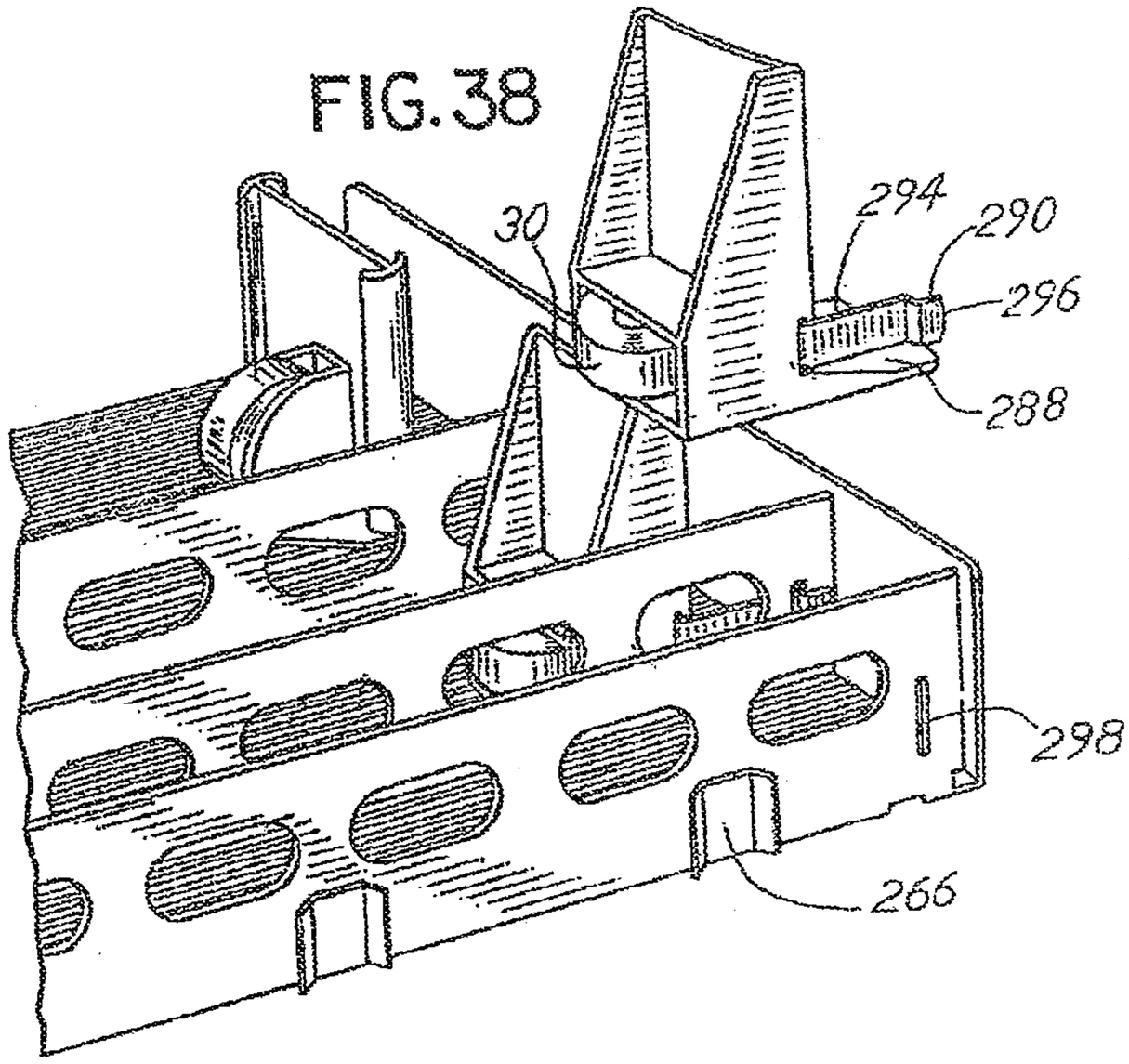


FIG.39

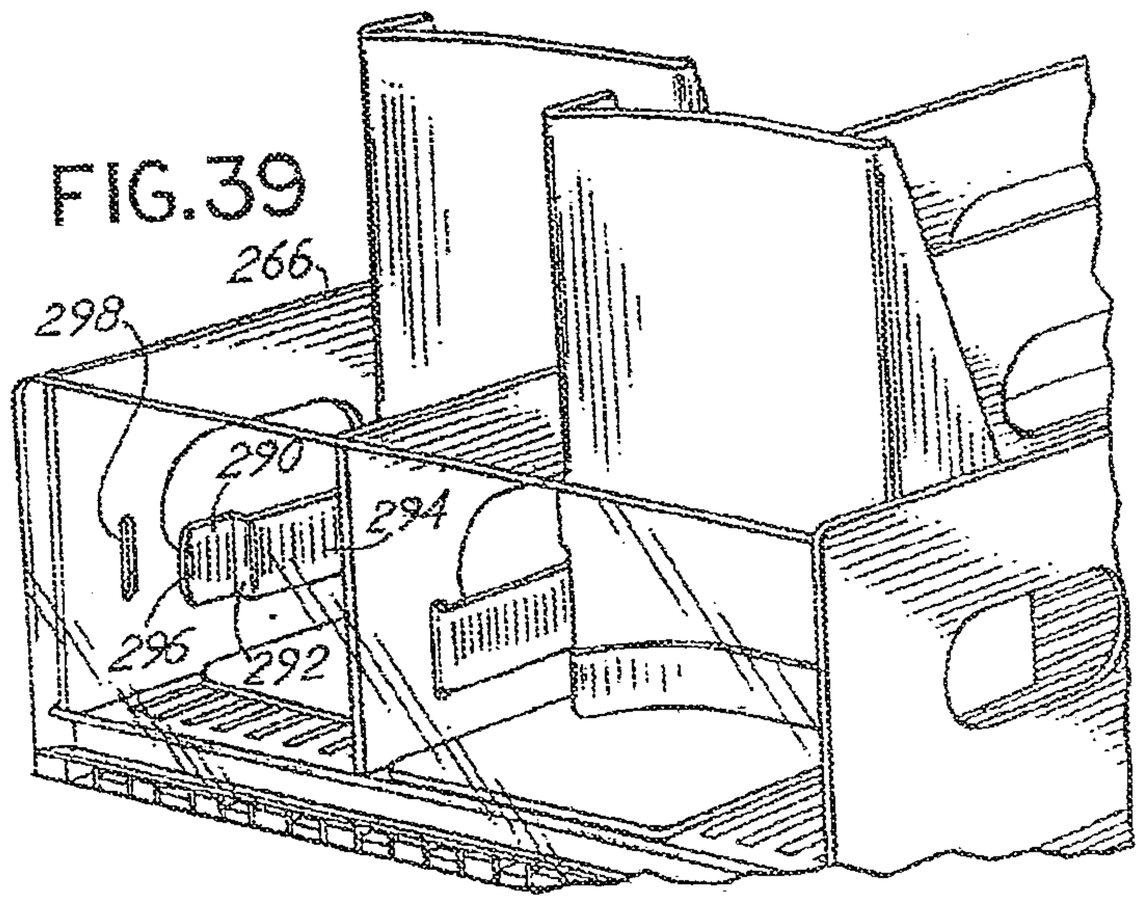


FIG.40

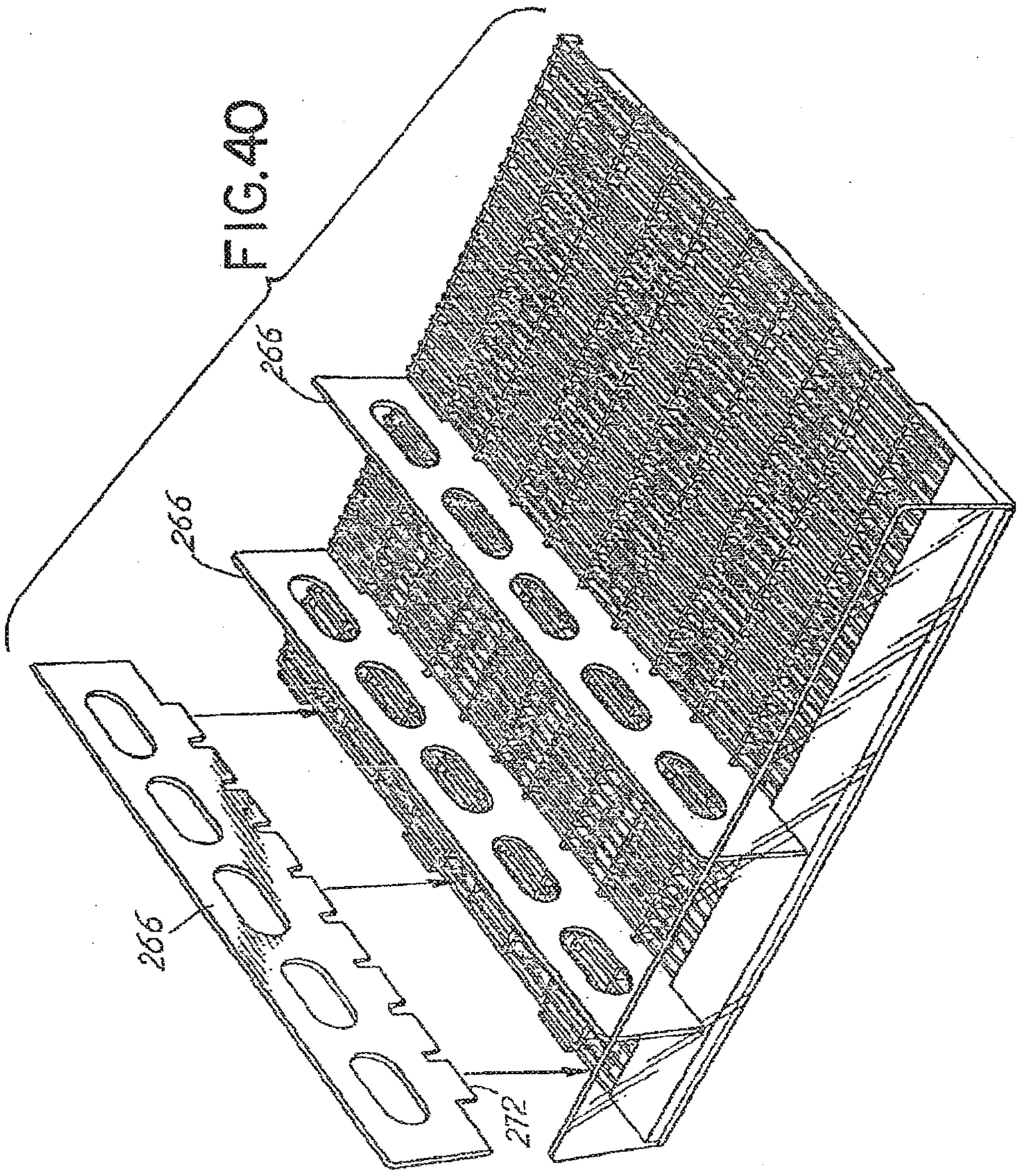


FIG.4IA

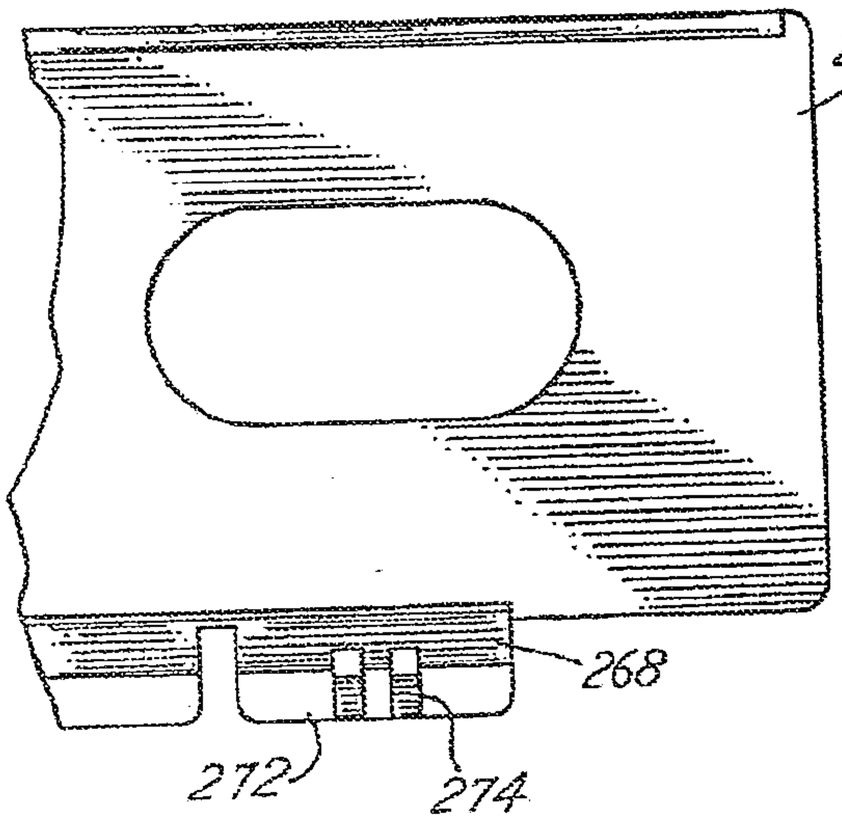


FIG.4ID

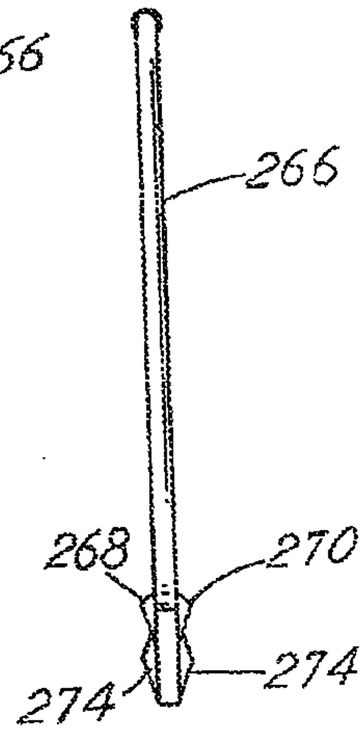


FIG.4IB

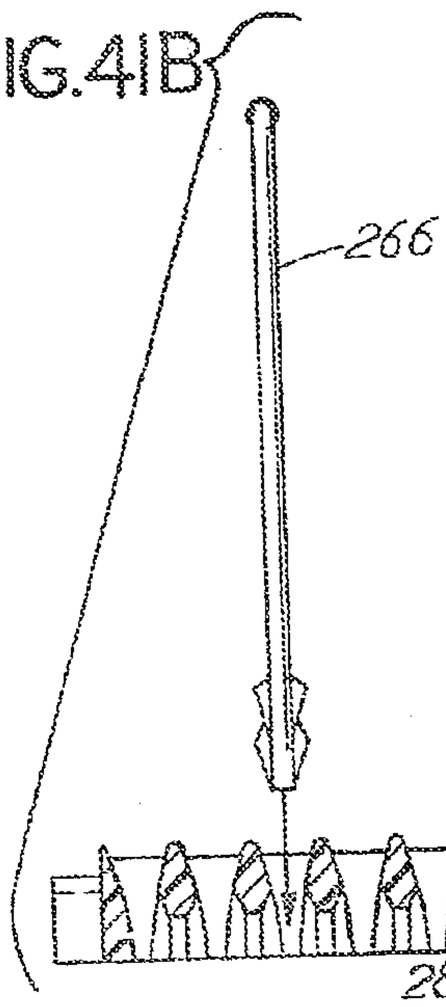


FIG.4IC

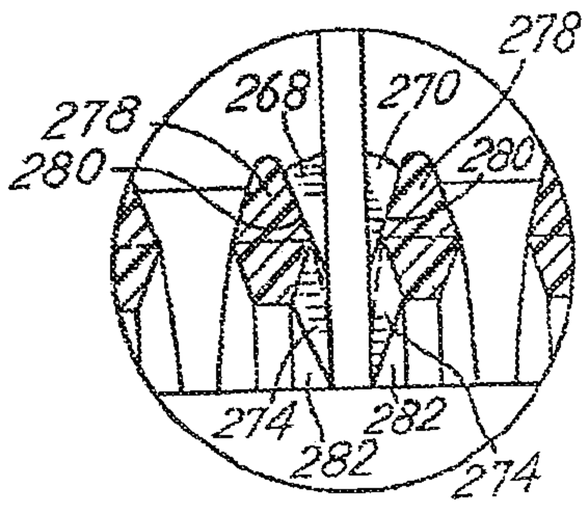
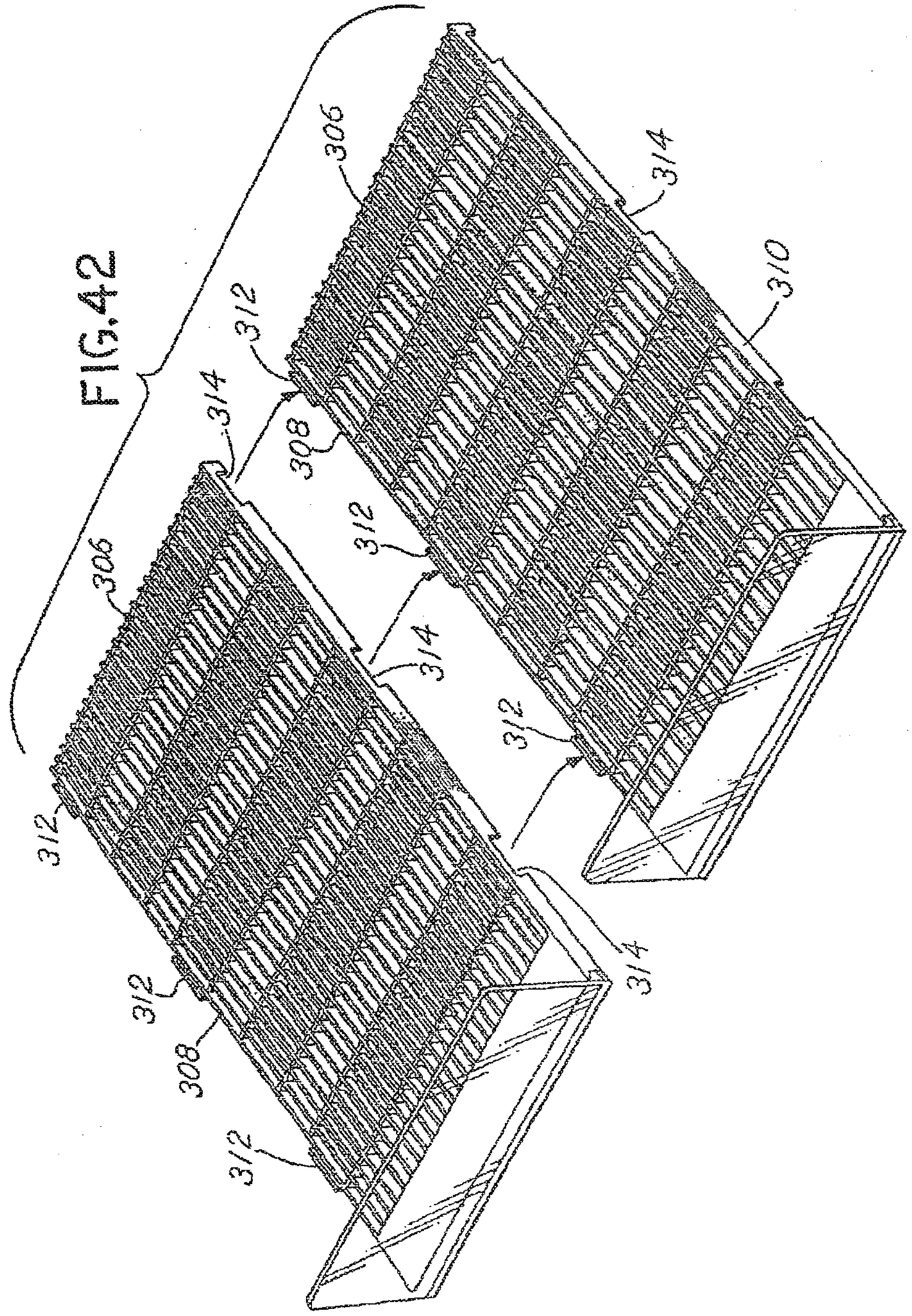


FIG.42



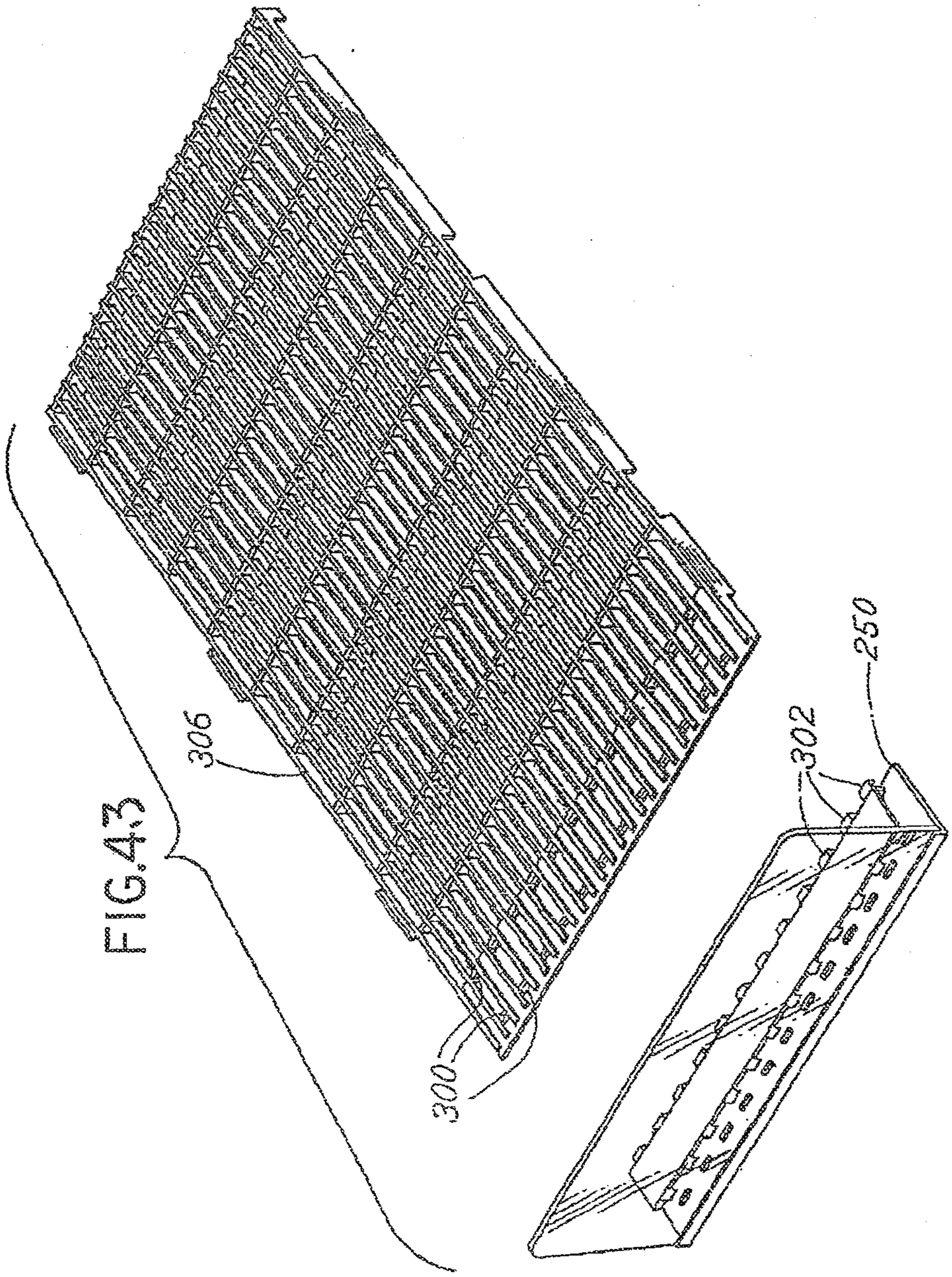


FIG.43

FIG.44

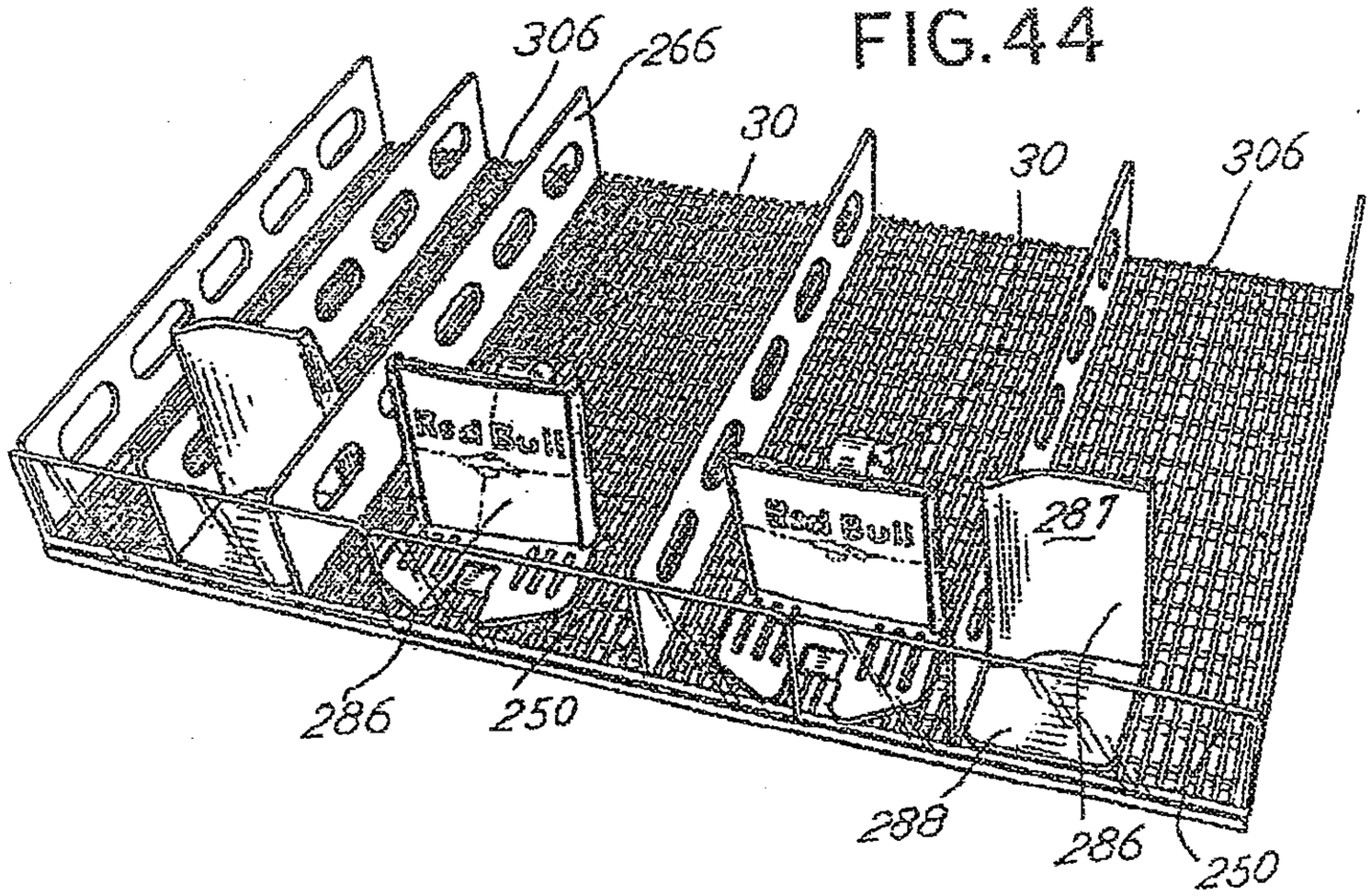
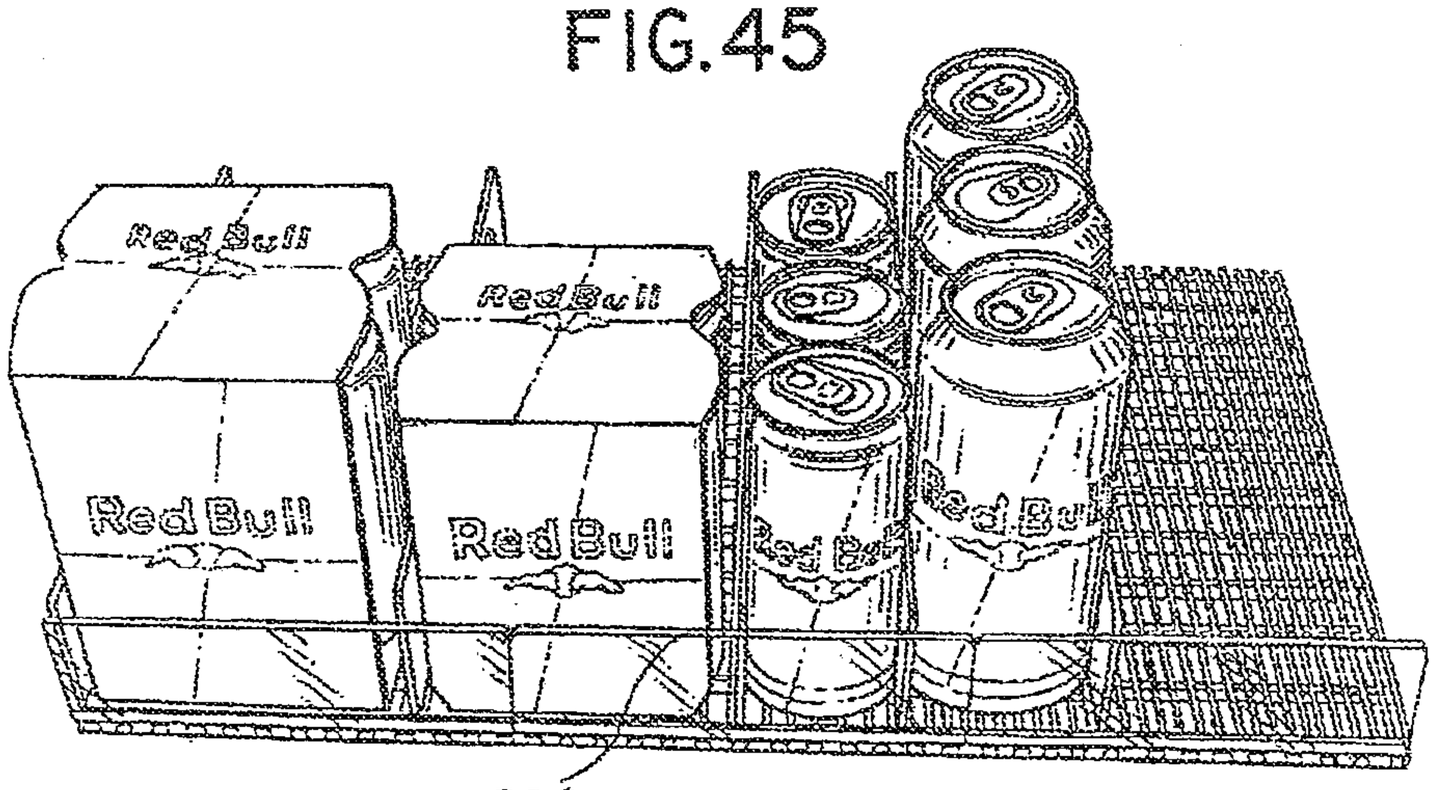


FIG.45



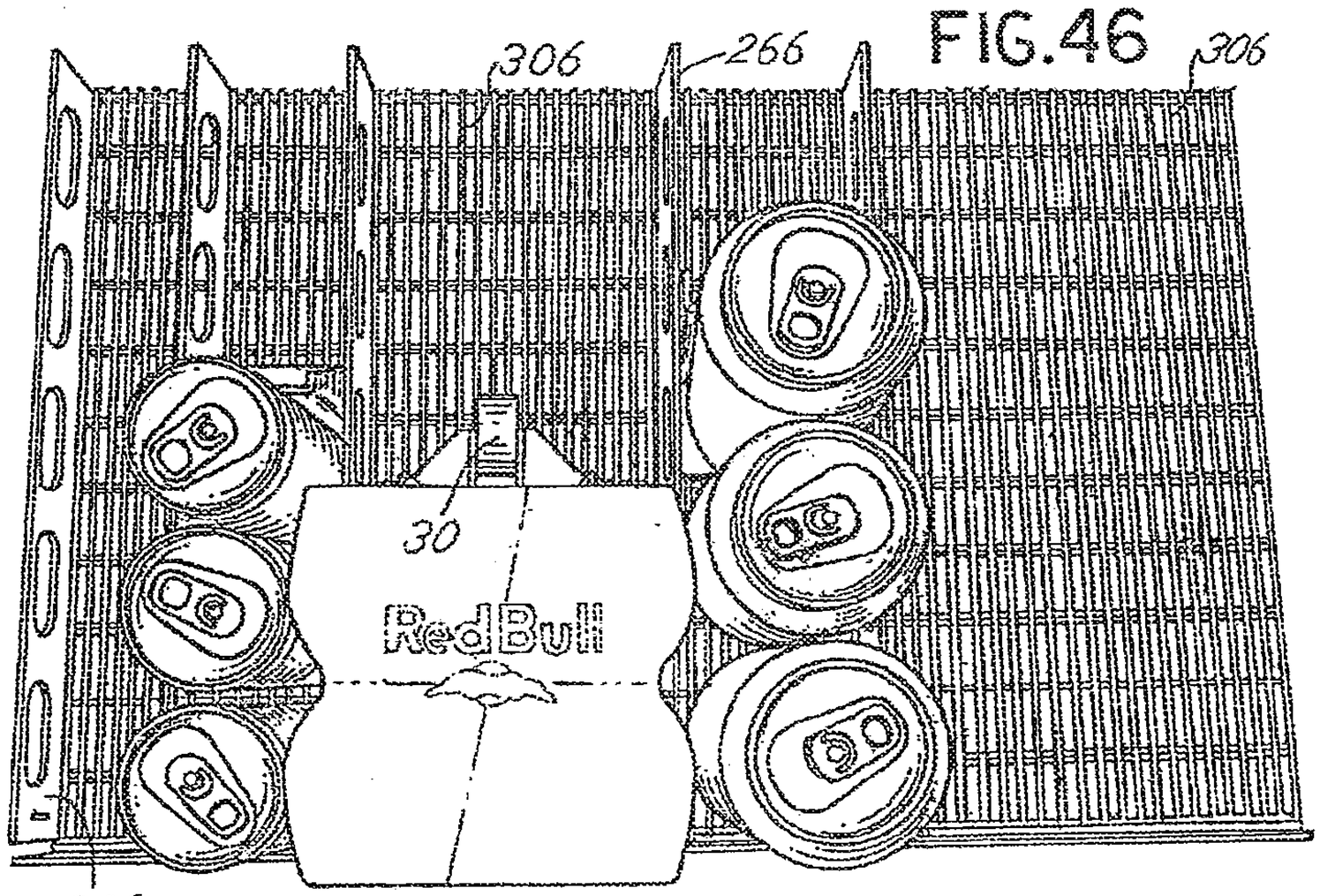


FIG.46

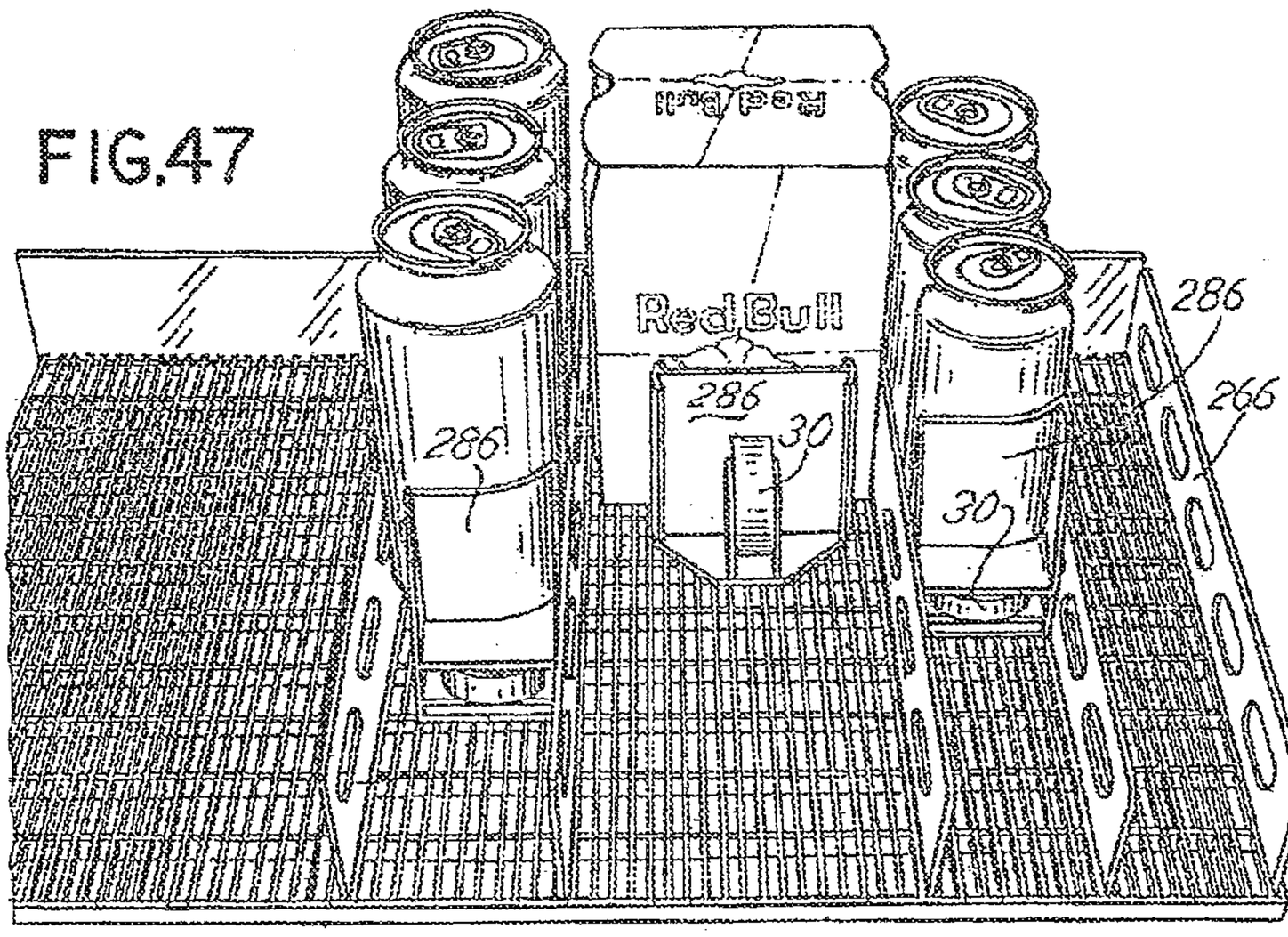


FIG.47

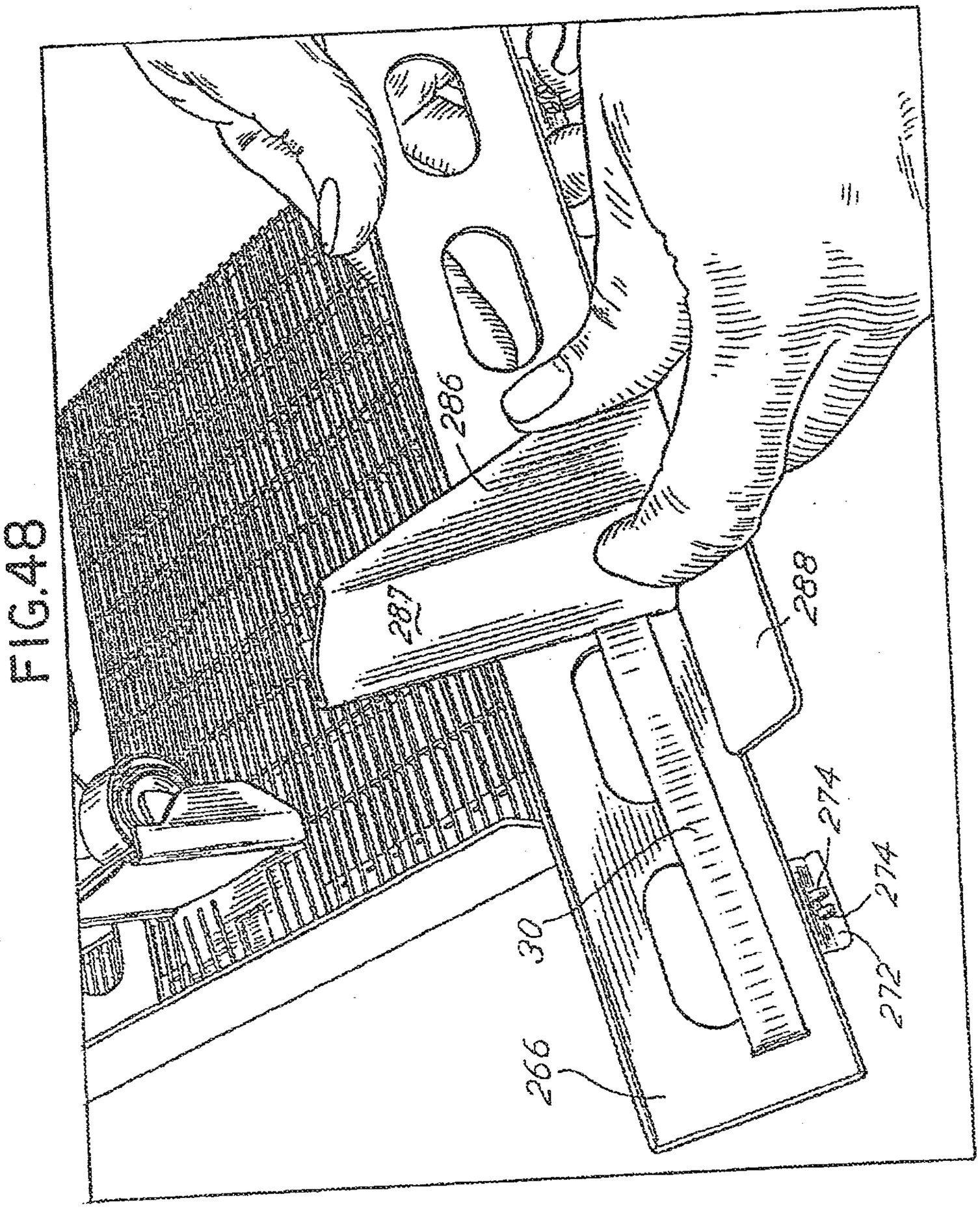


FIG. 48

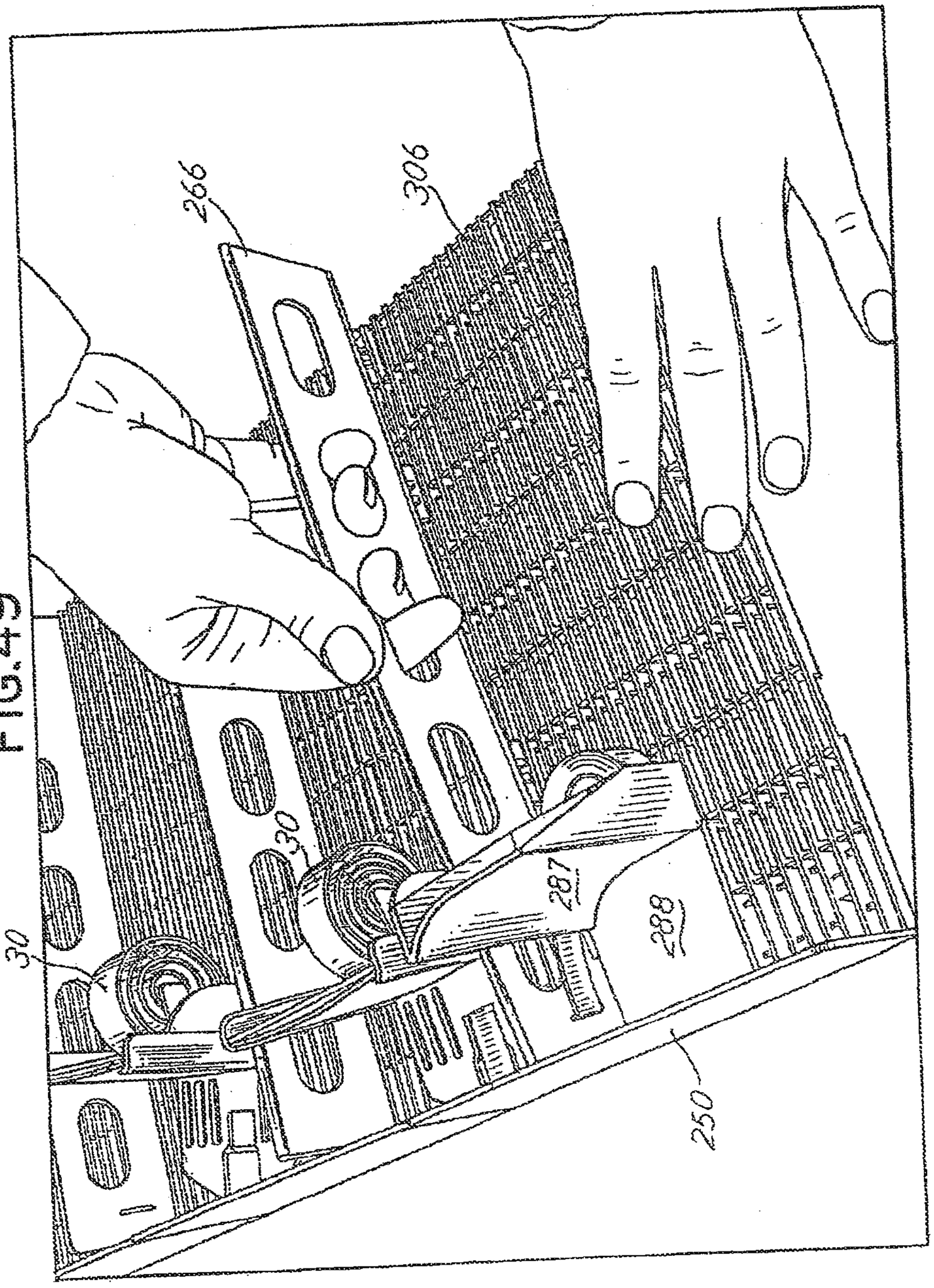


FIG.49

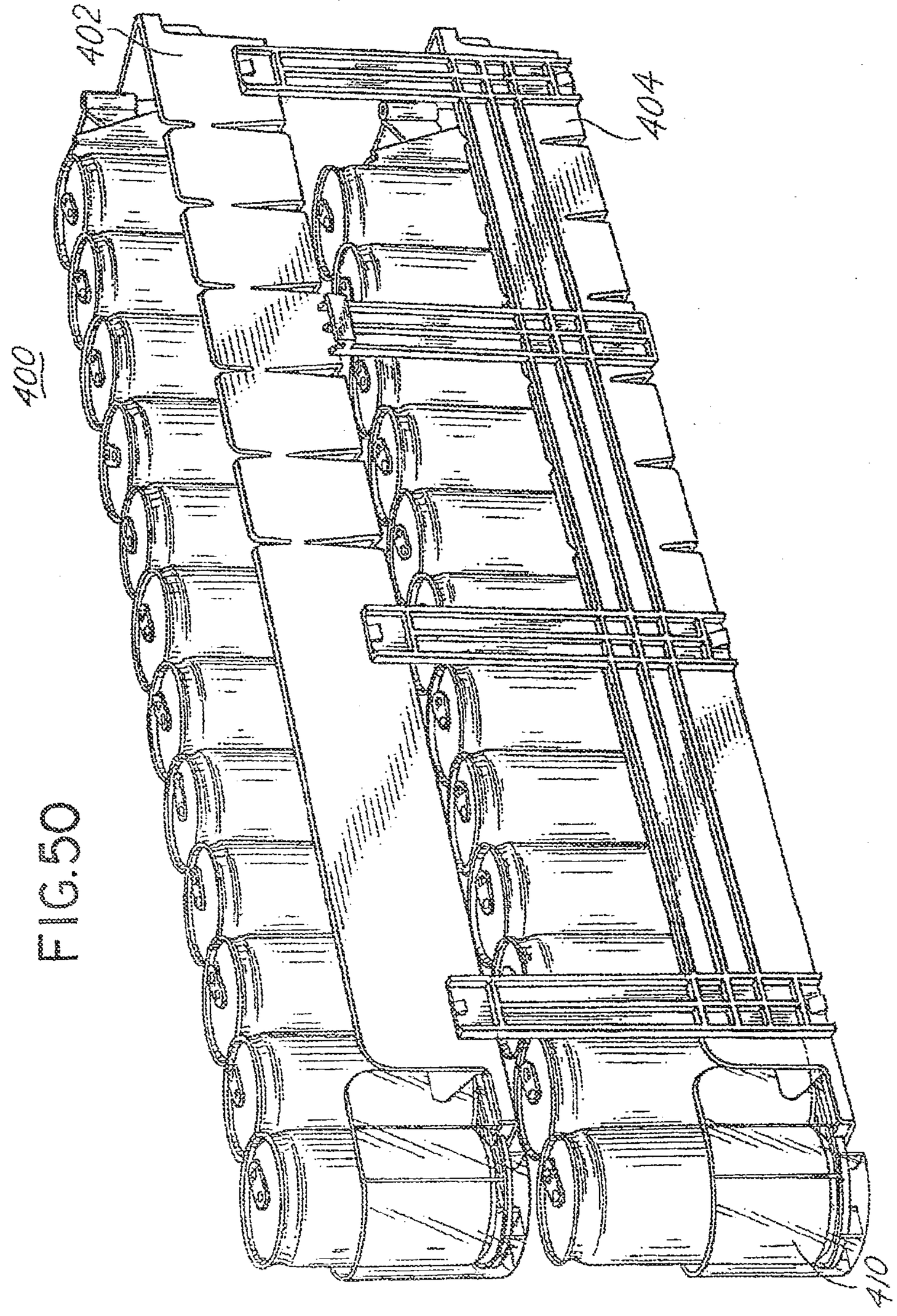


FIG.5O

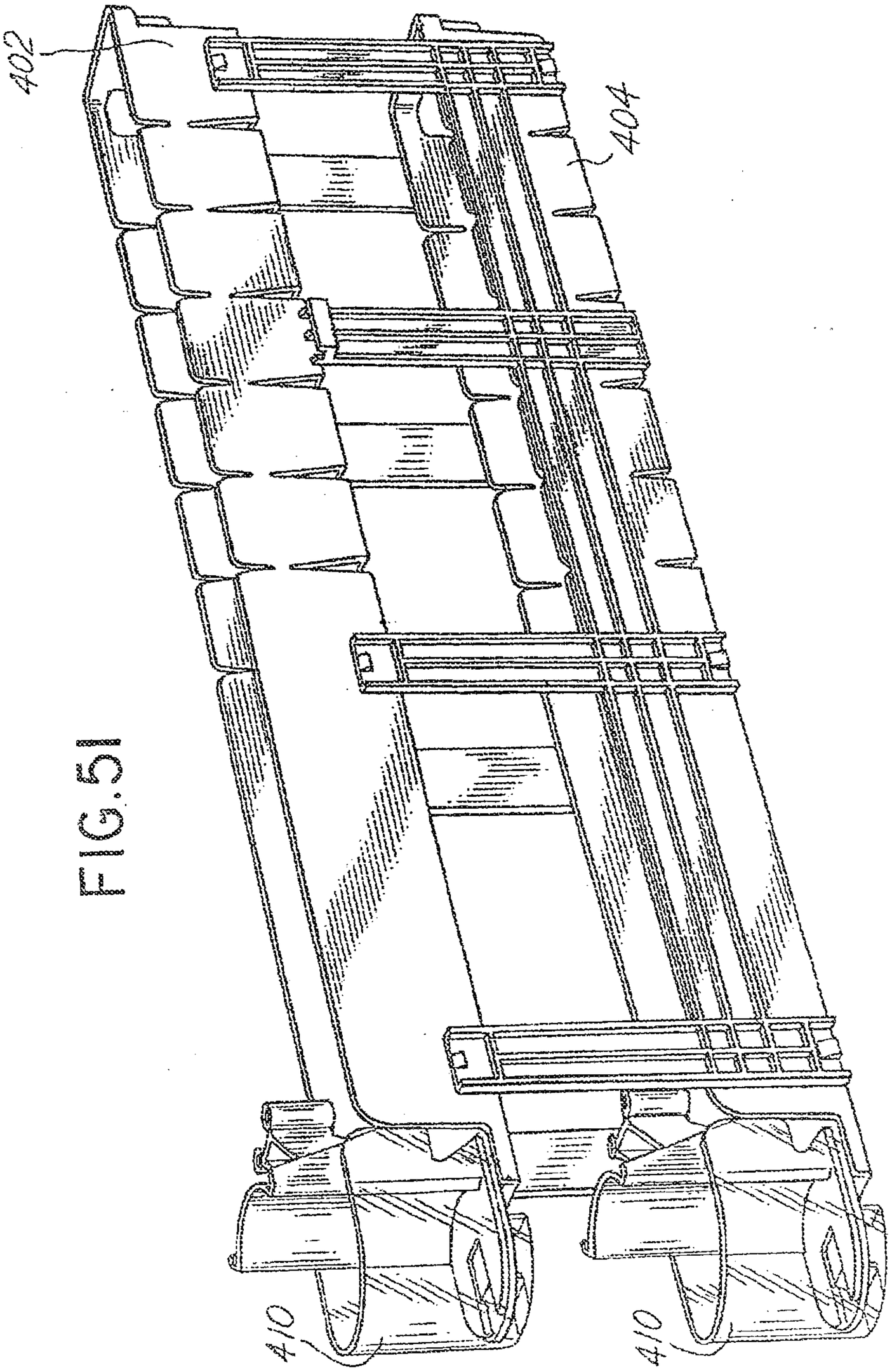


FIG.51

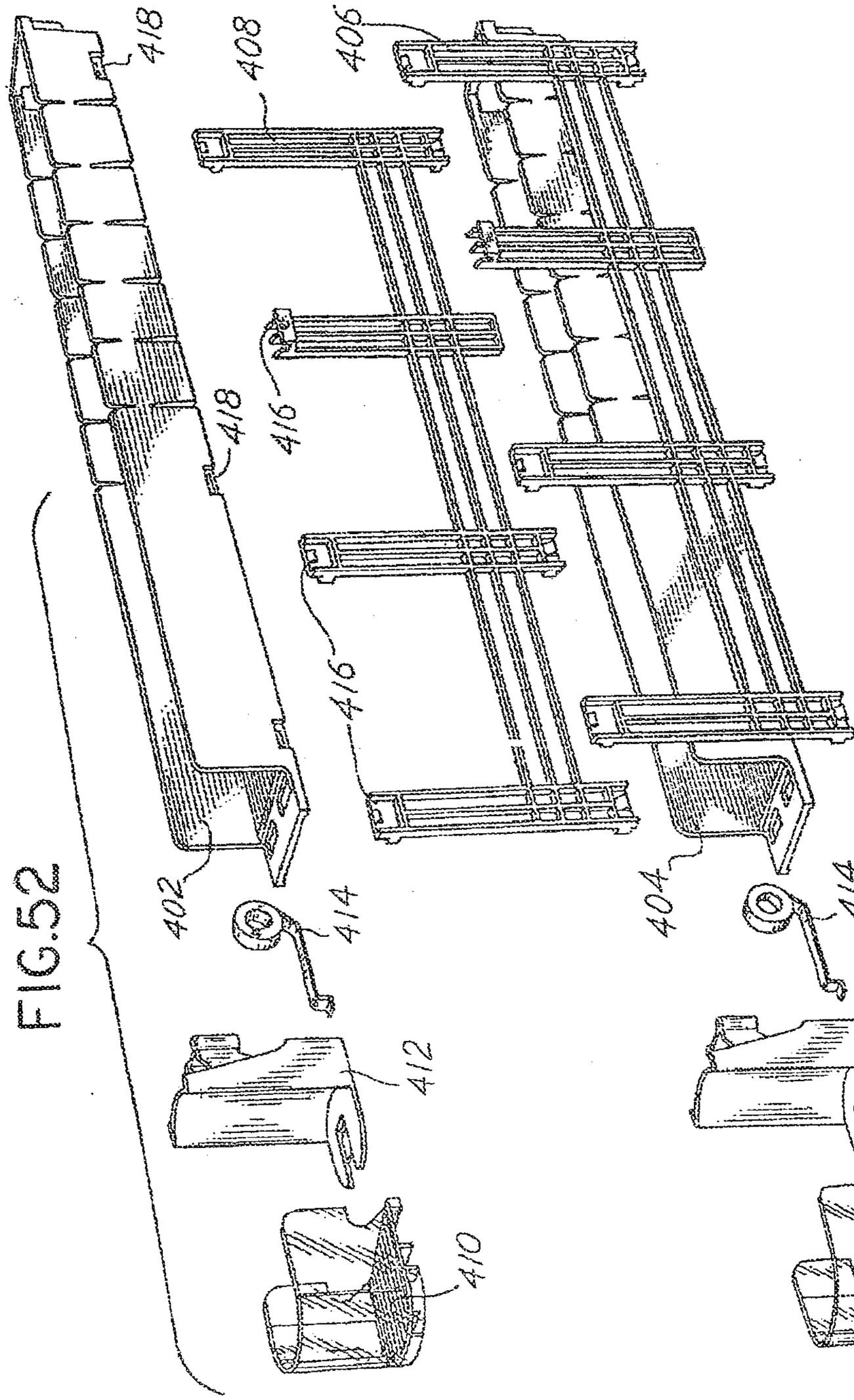


FIG.52

FIG. 53

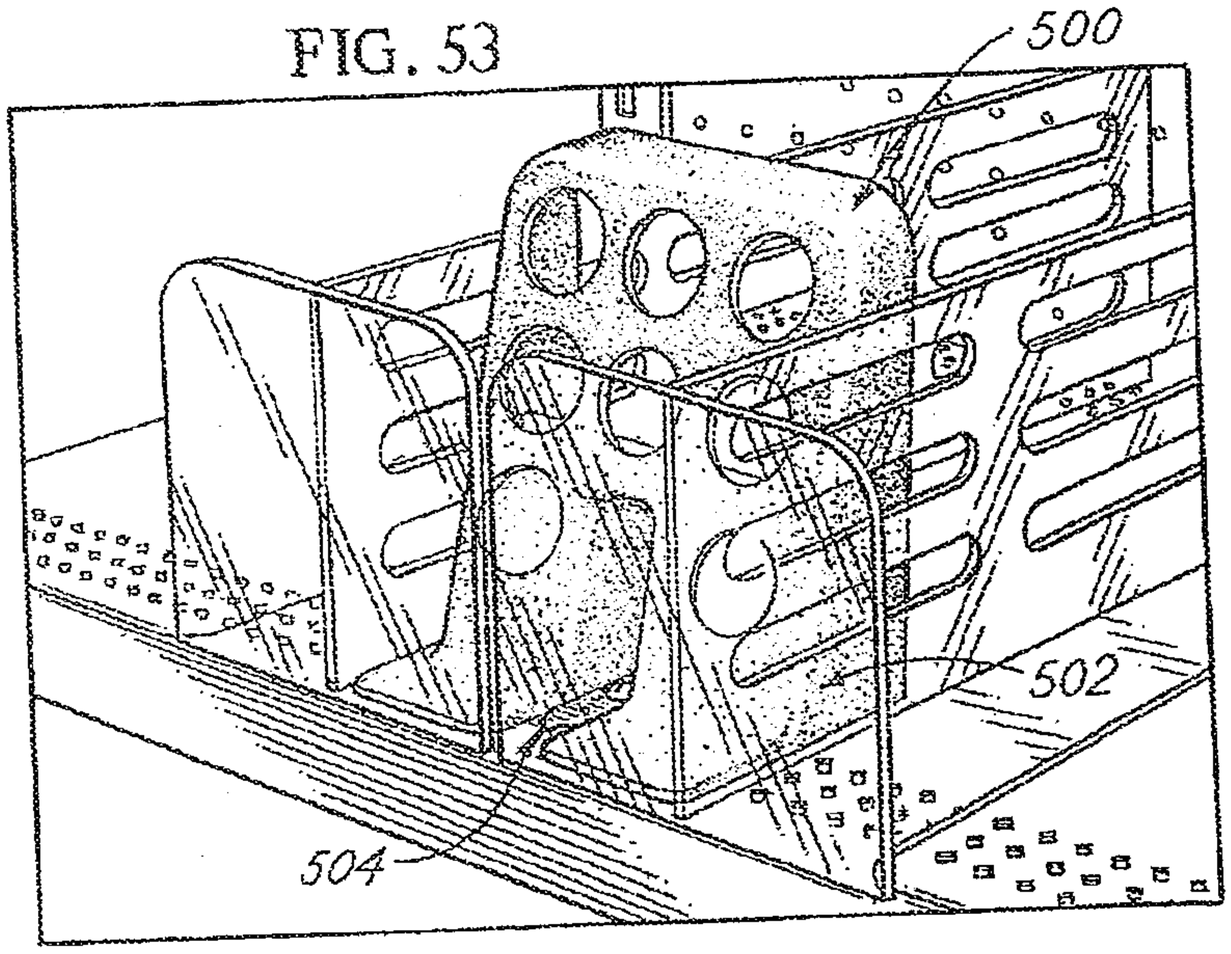


FIG. 54

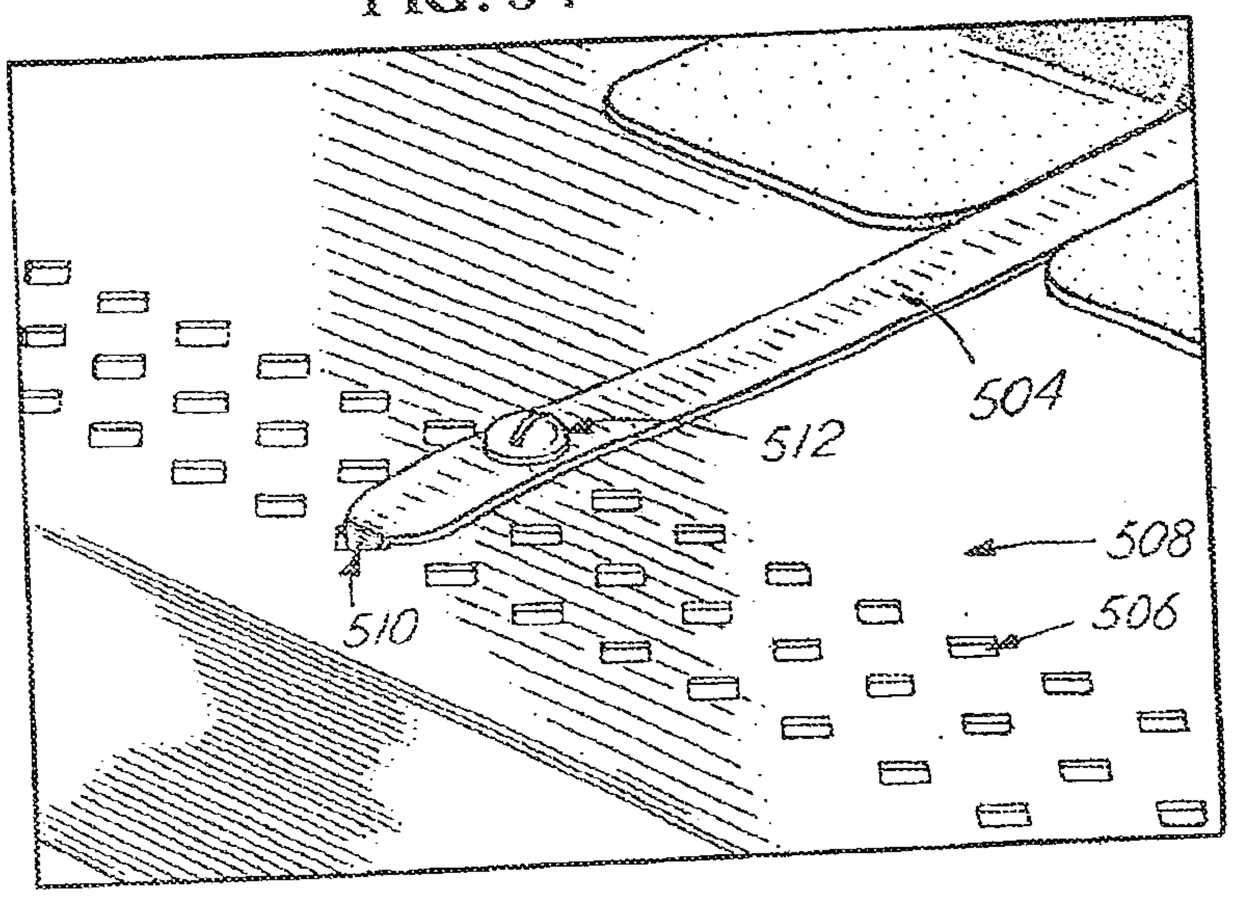


FIG. 55

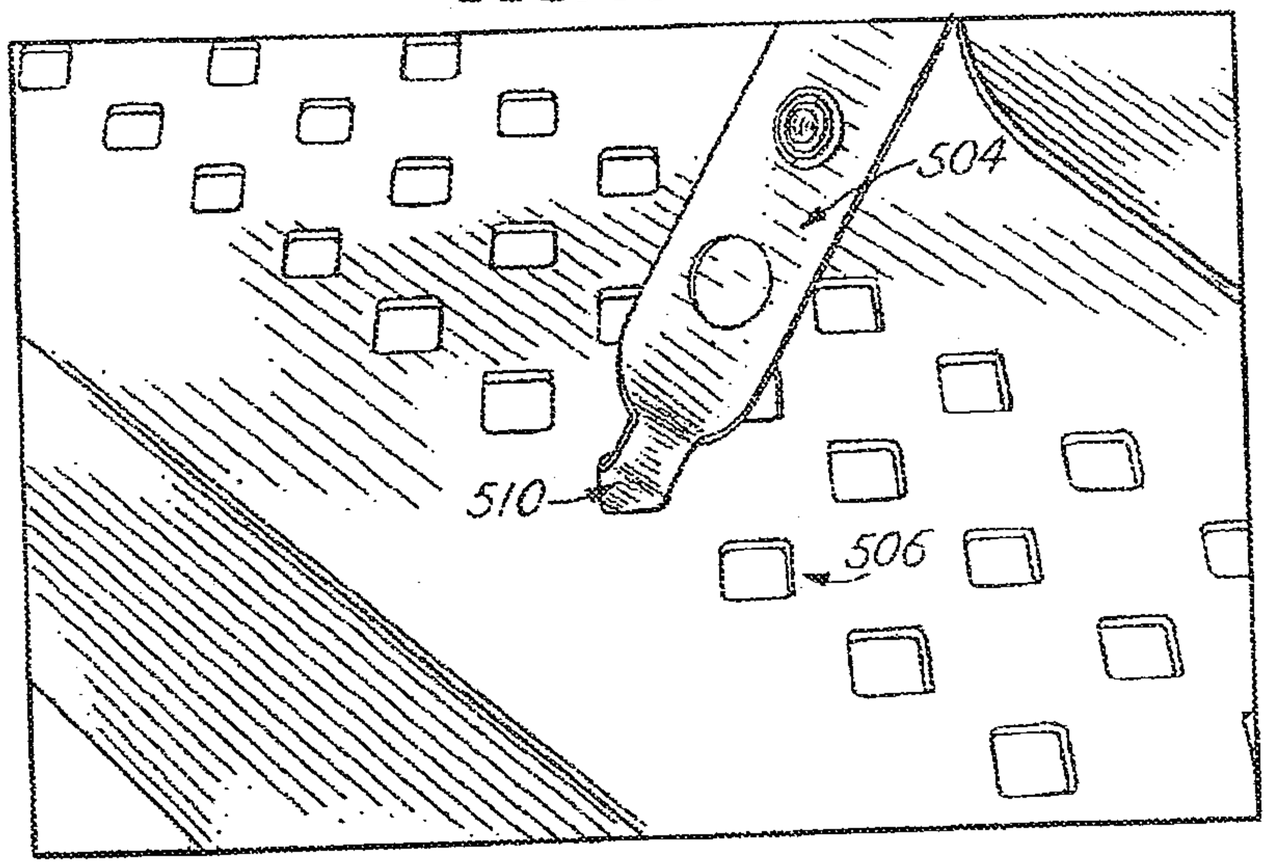


FIG. 56

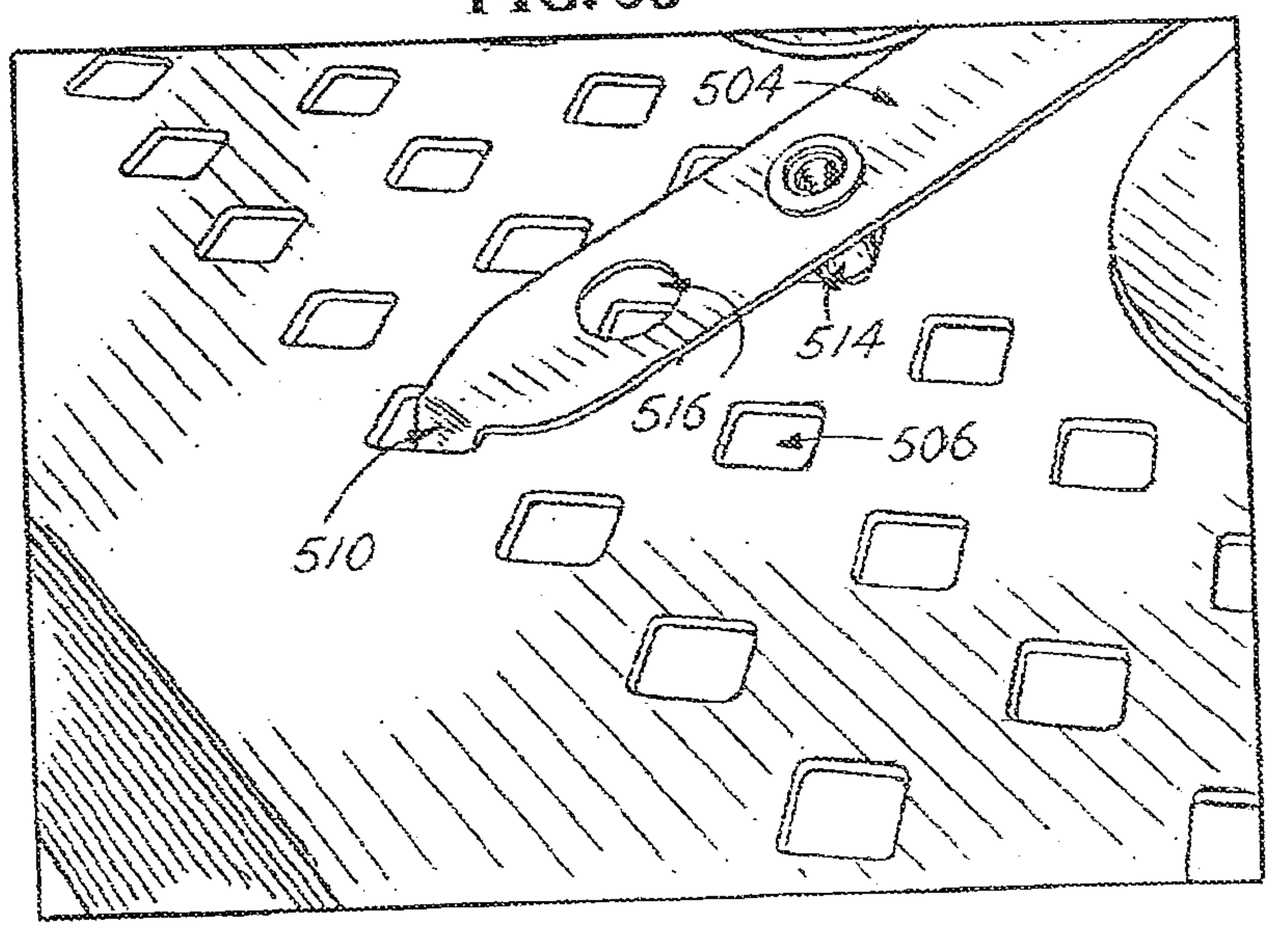
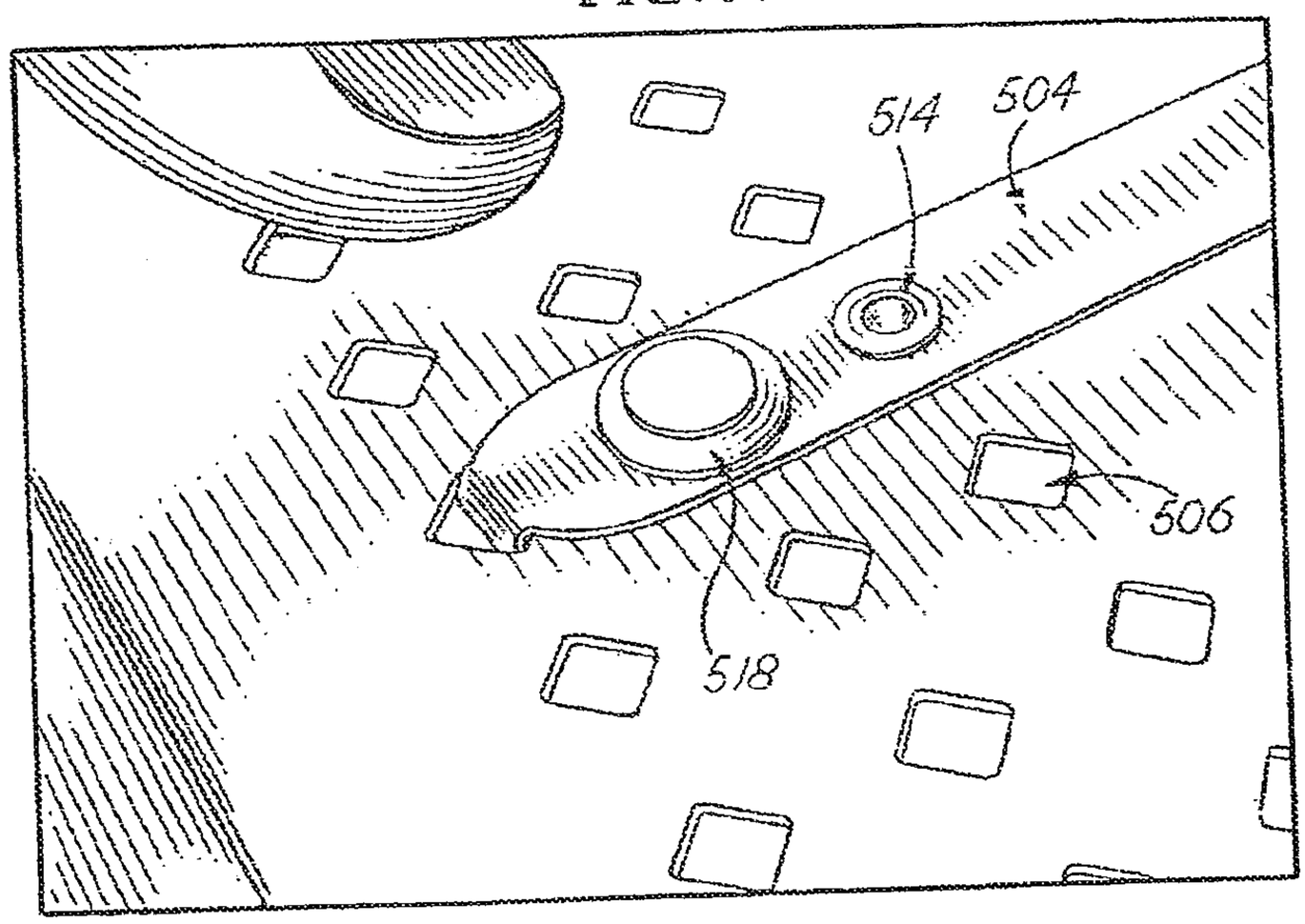


FIG. 57



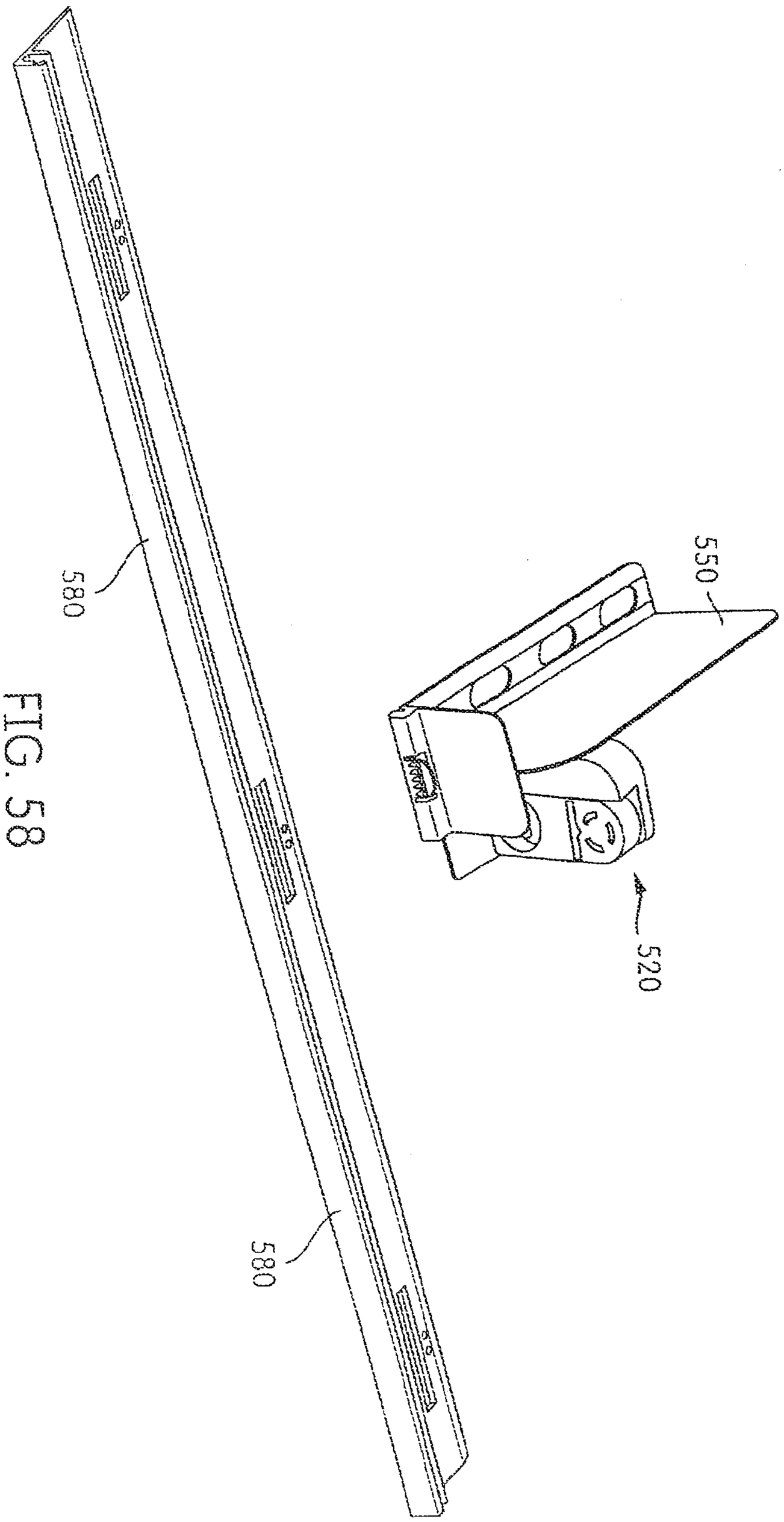


FIG. 58

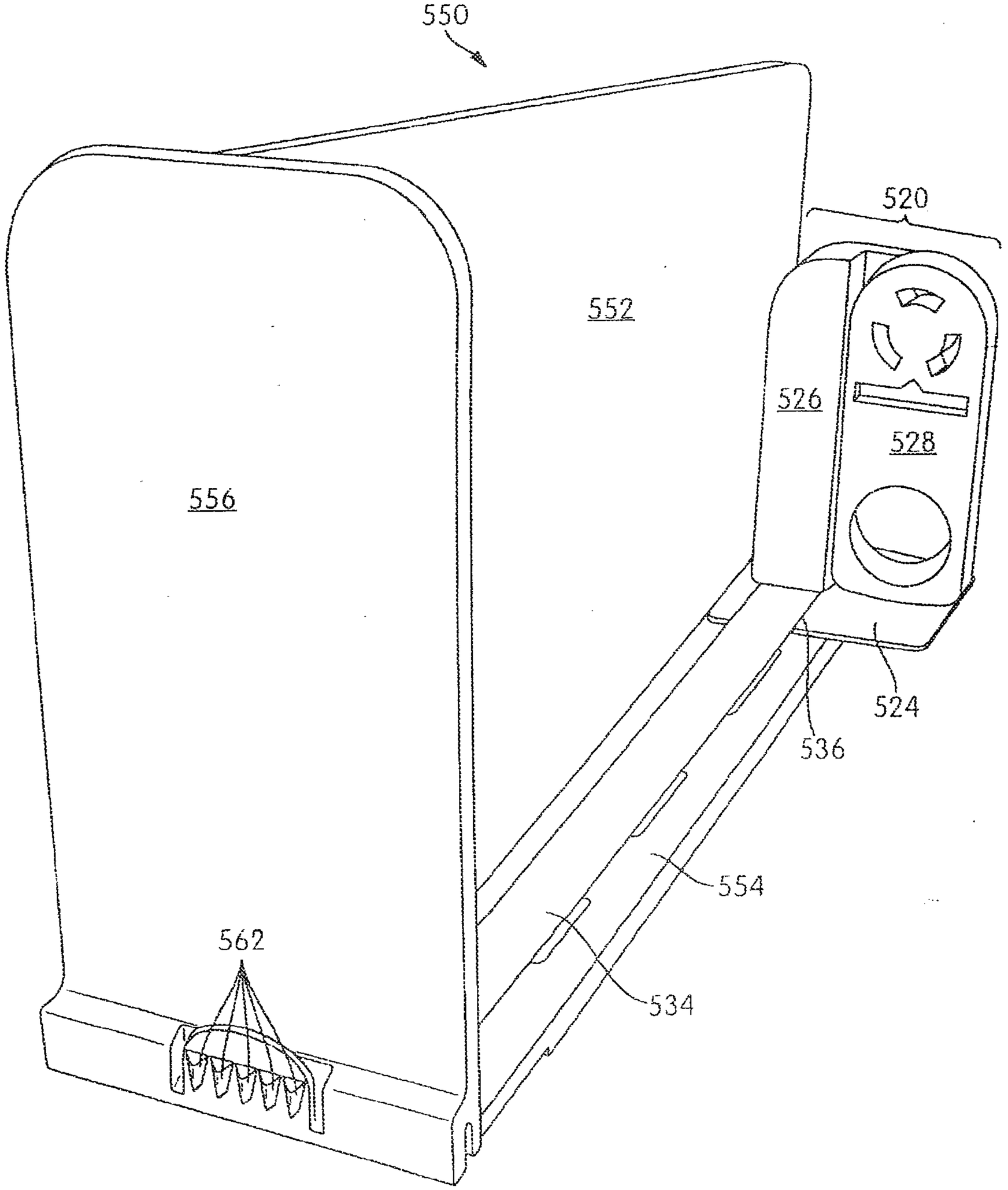


FIG. 59

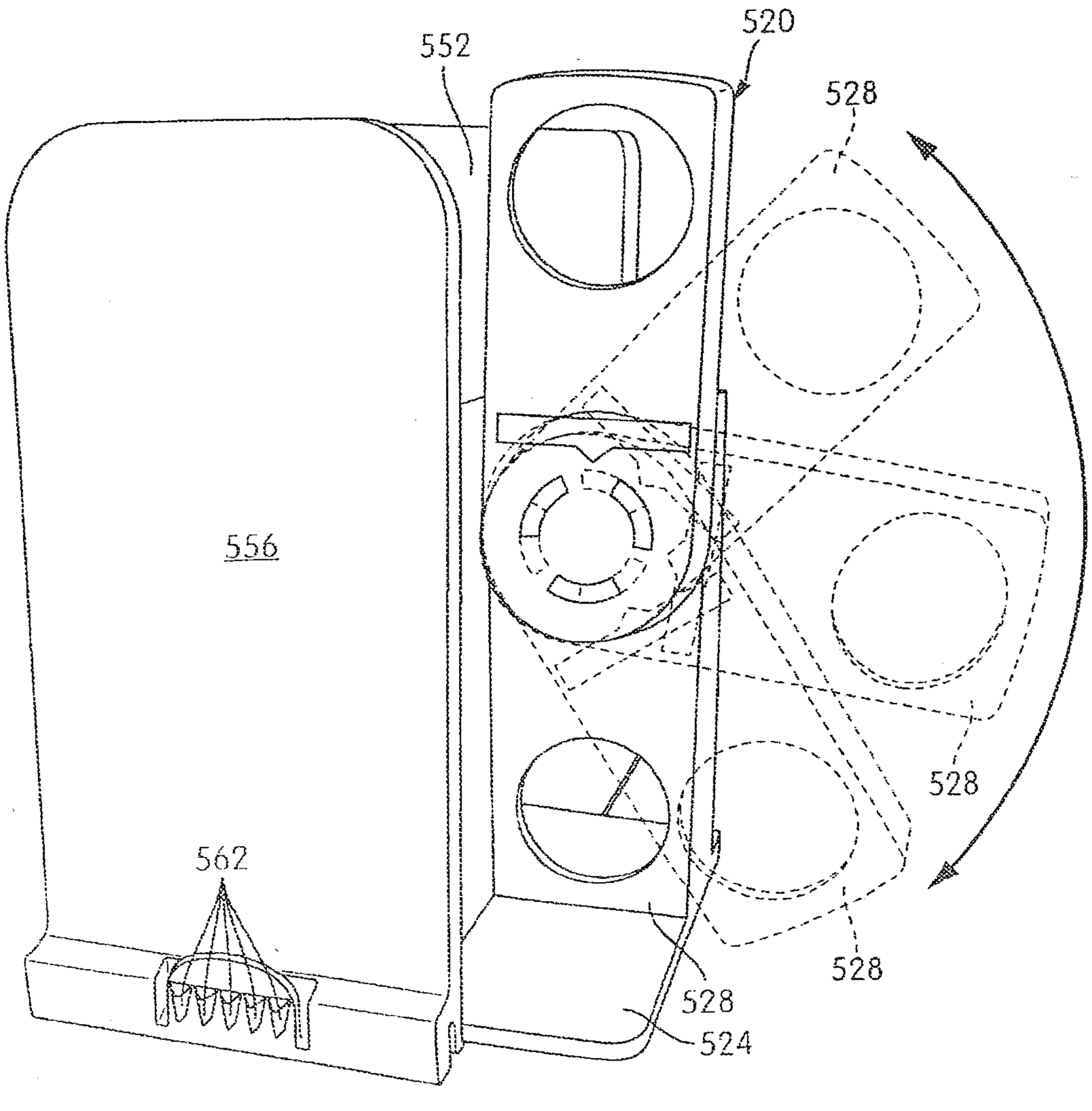


FIG. 60

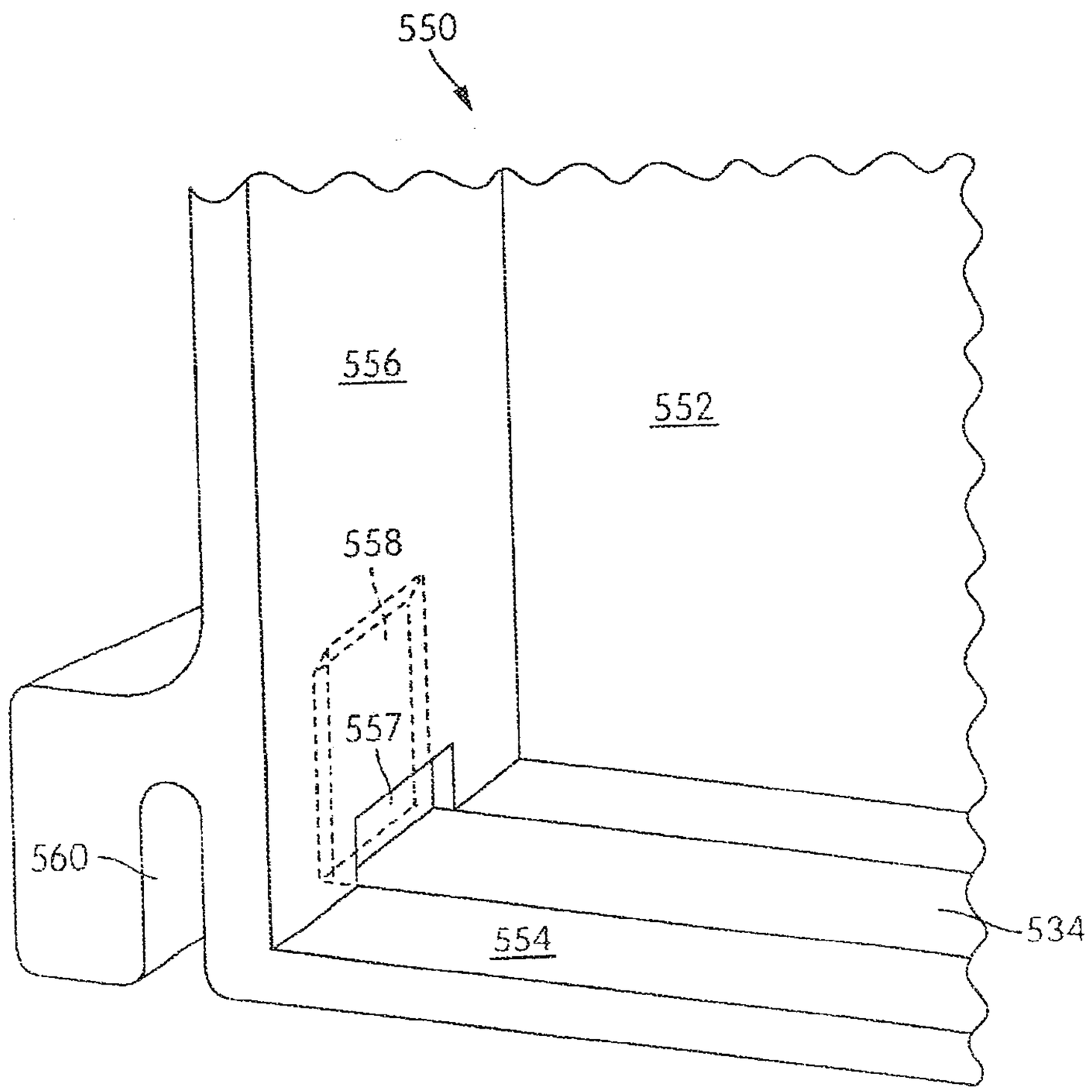


FIG. 61

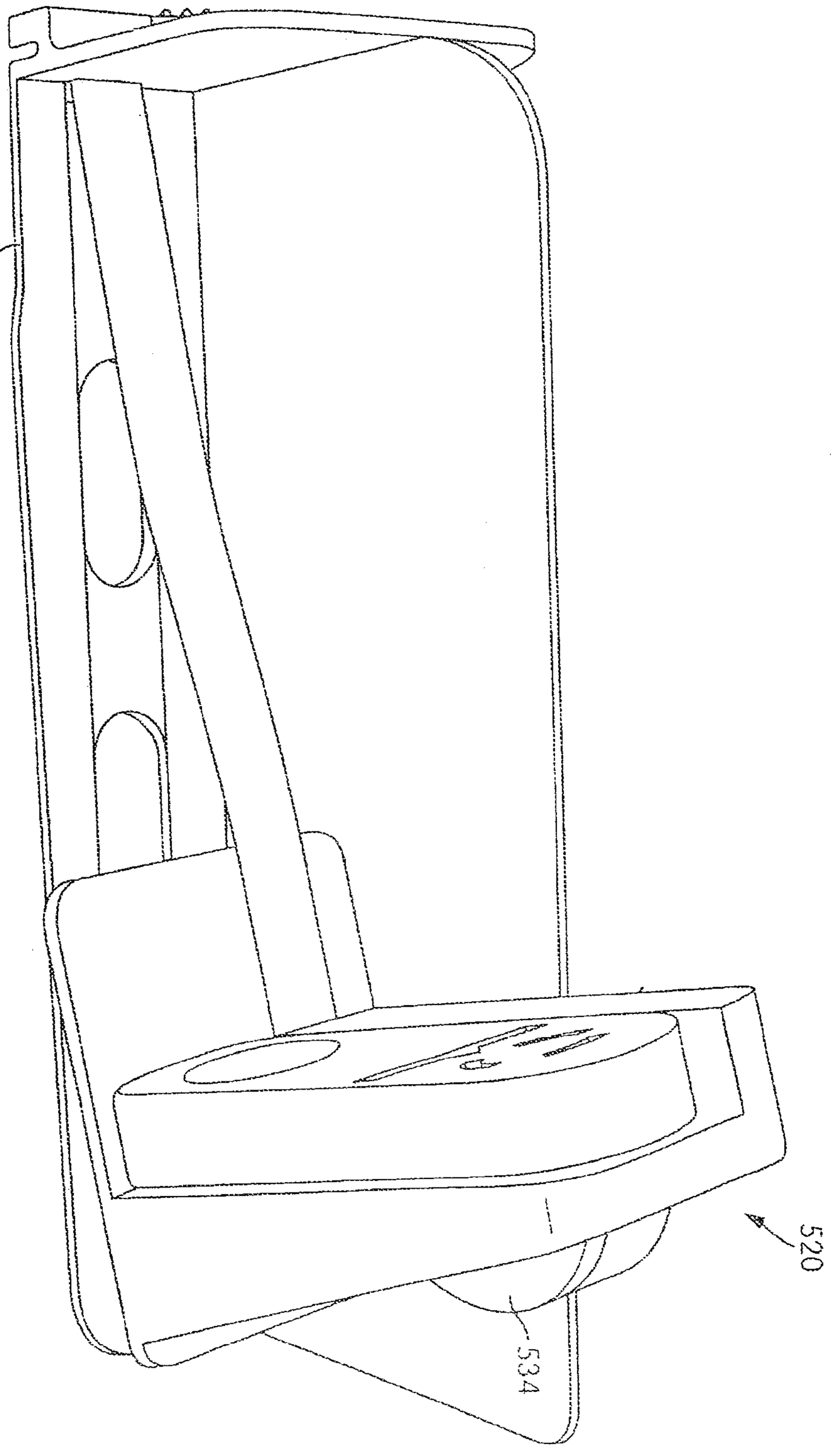


FIG. 62

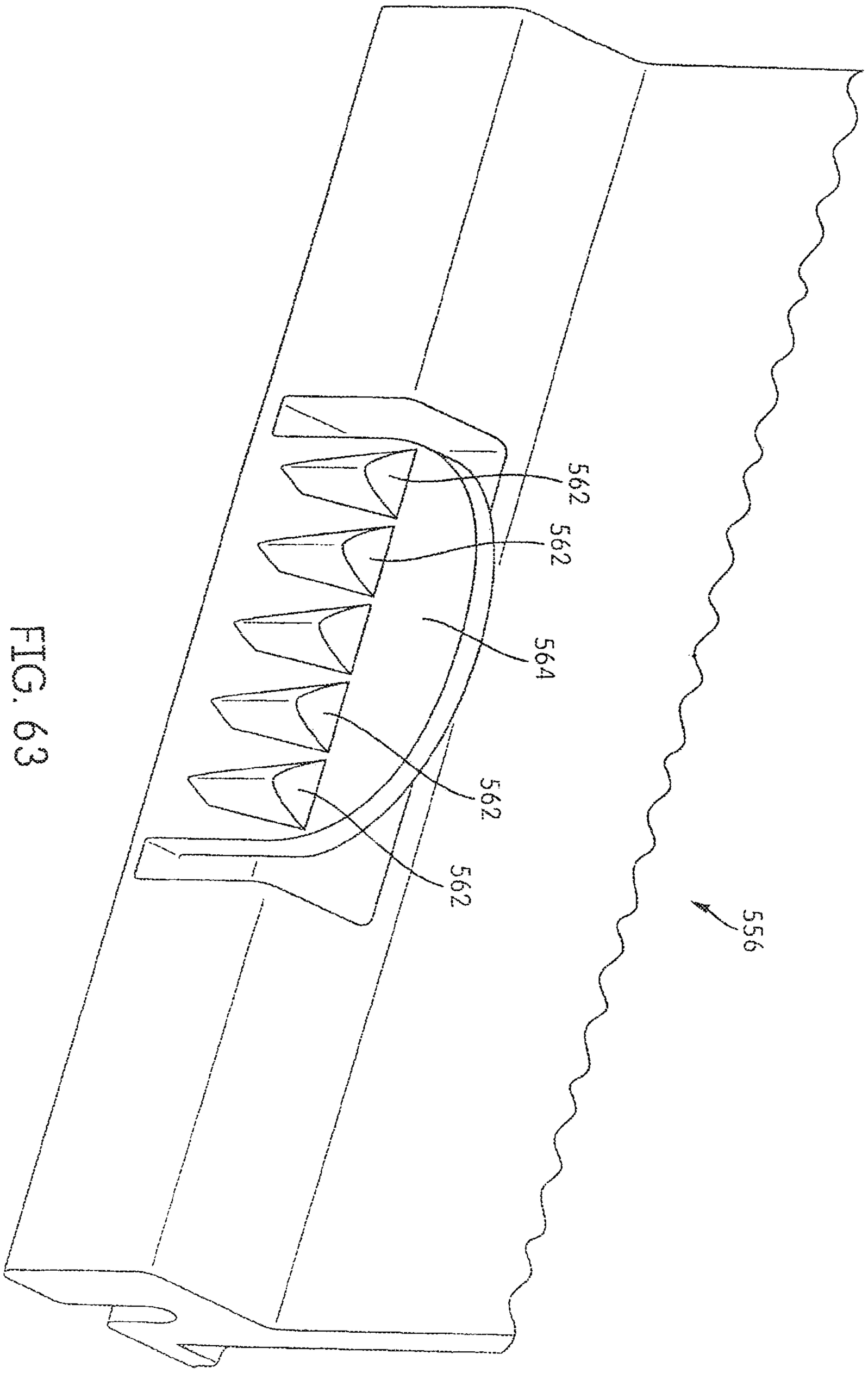


FIG. 63

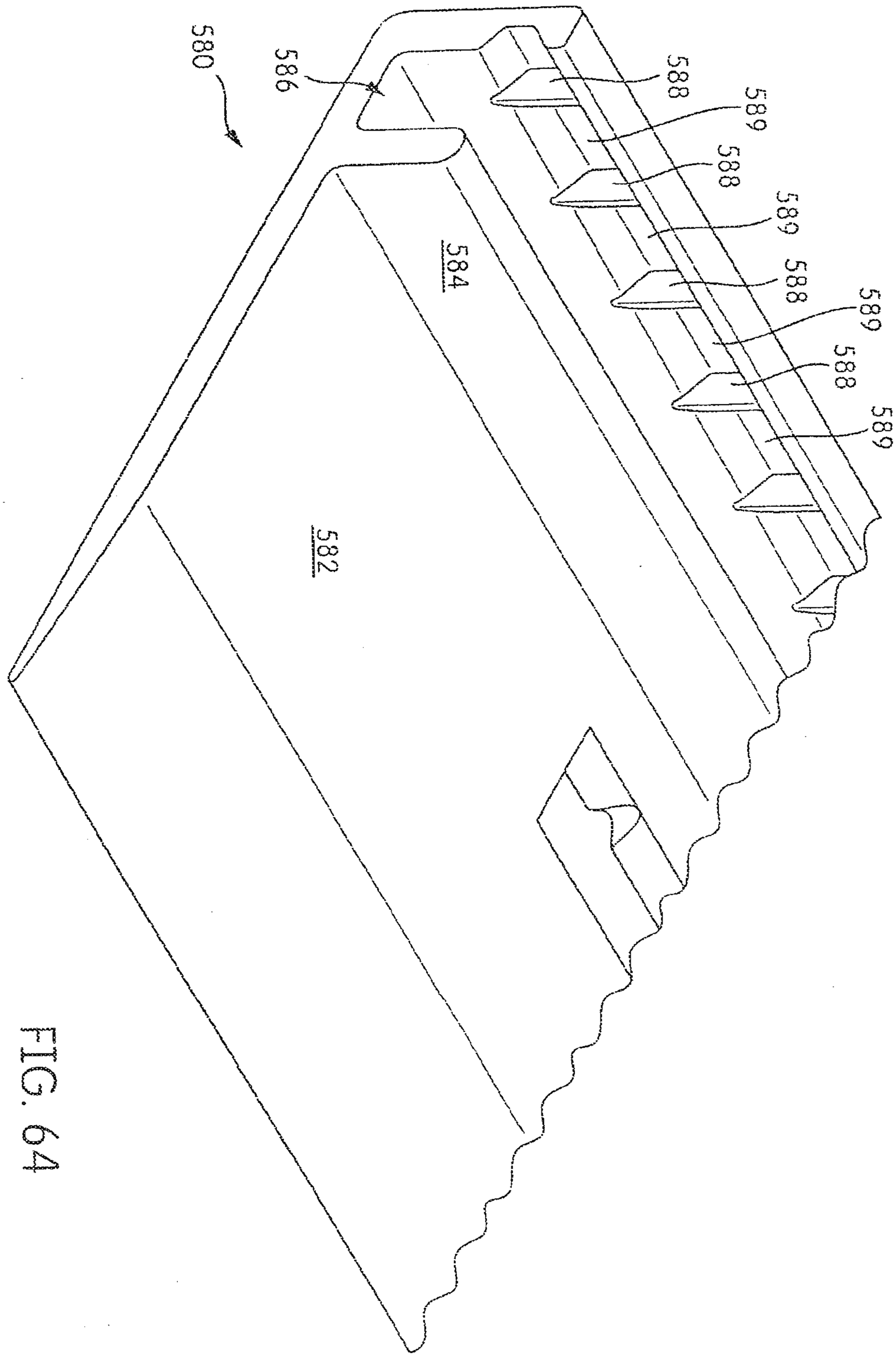


FIG. 94

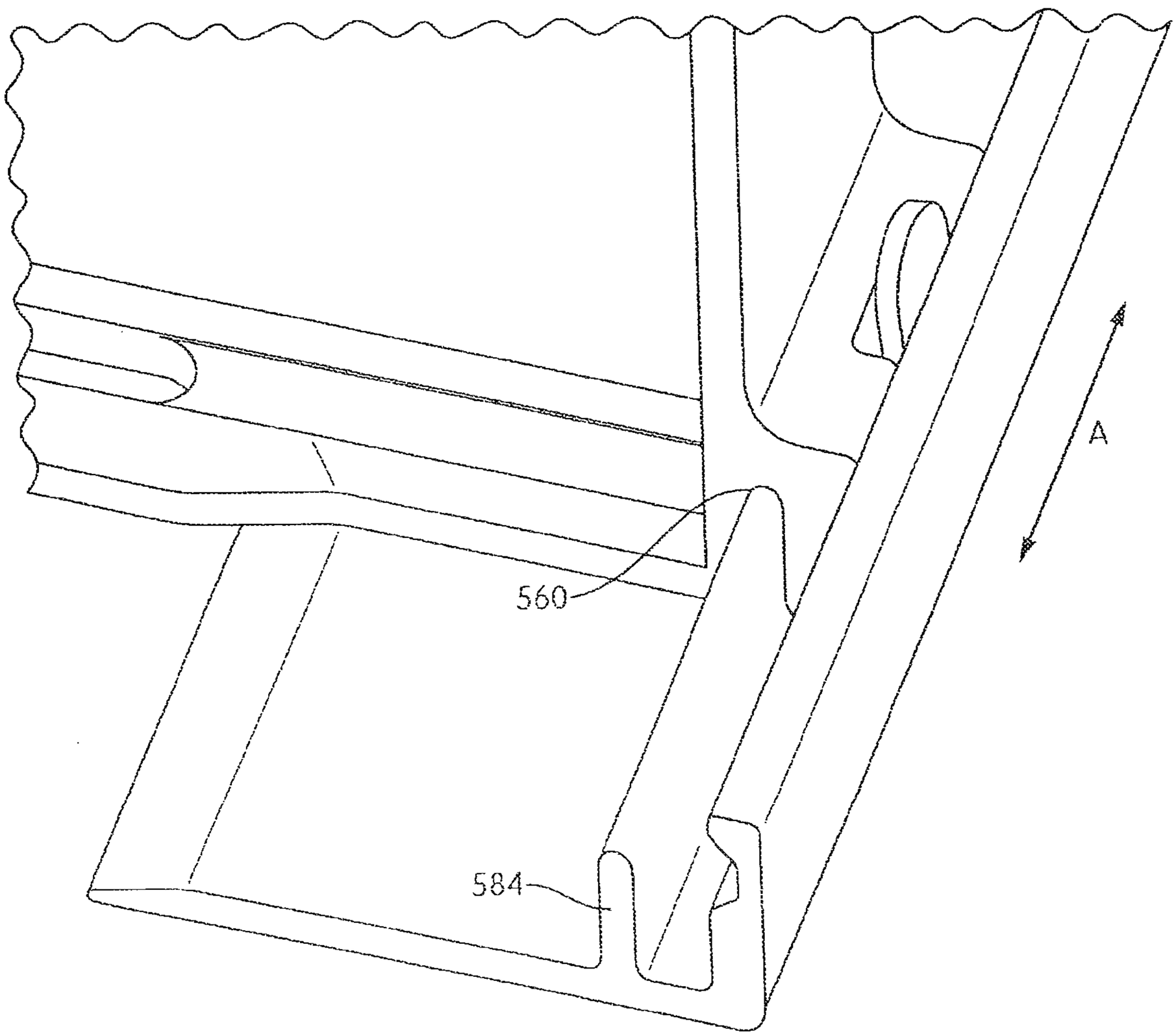


FIG. 65

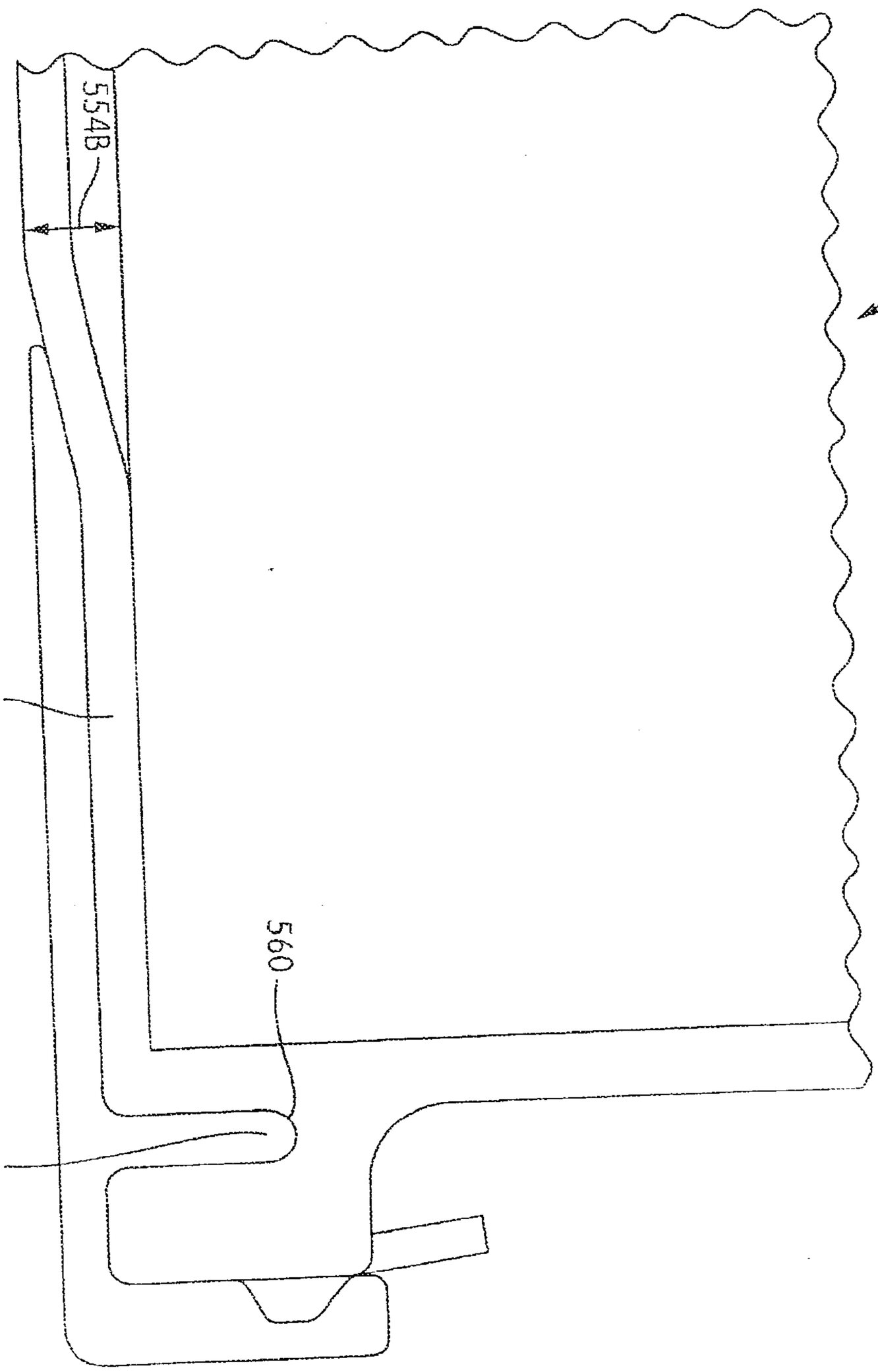


FIG. 66

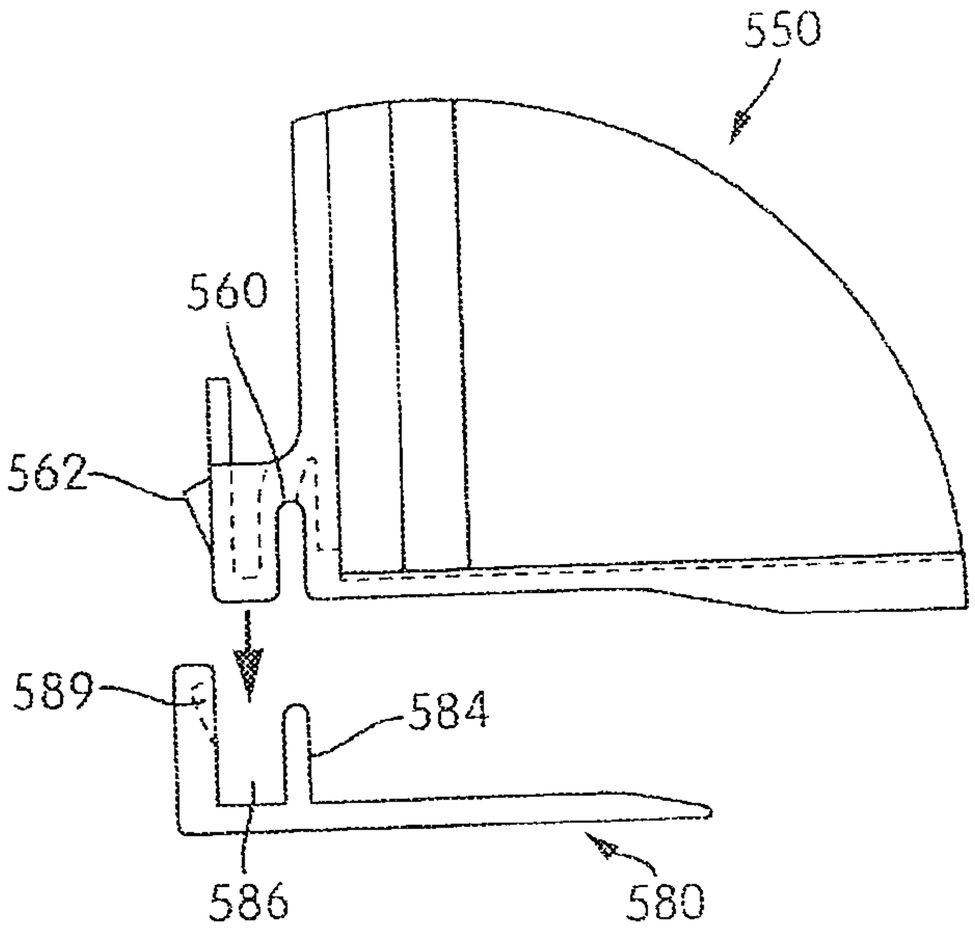


FIG. 67A

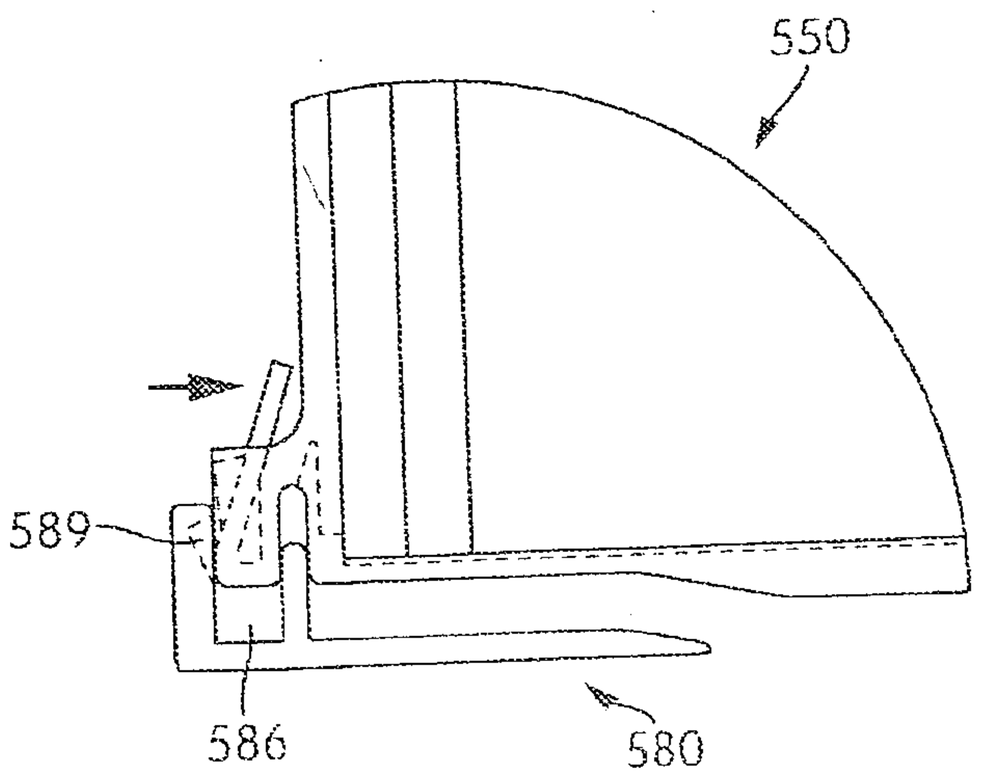


FIG. 67B

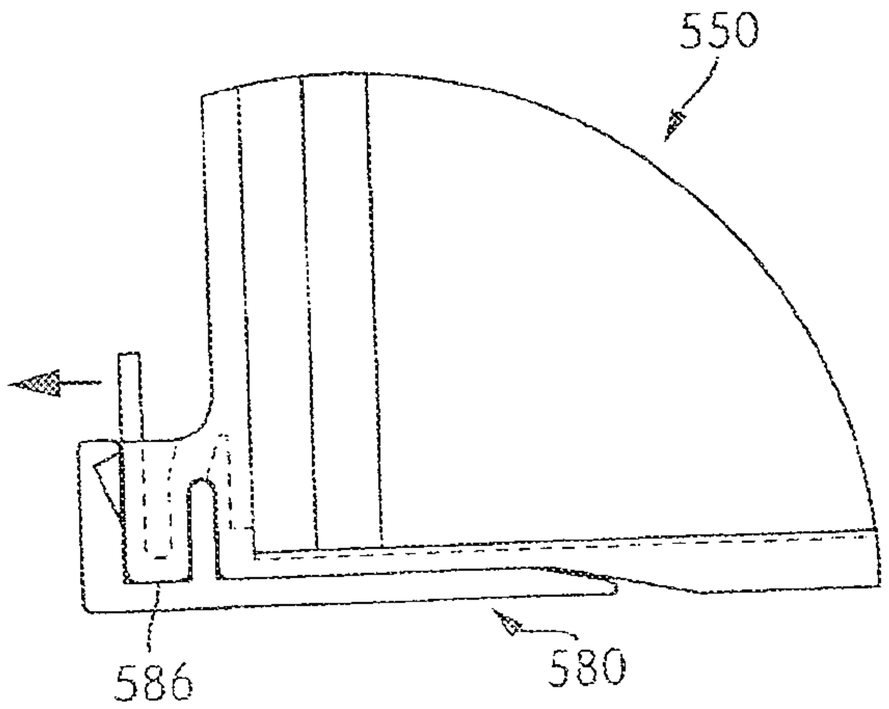


FIG. 67C

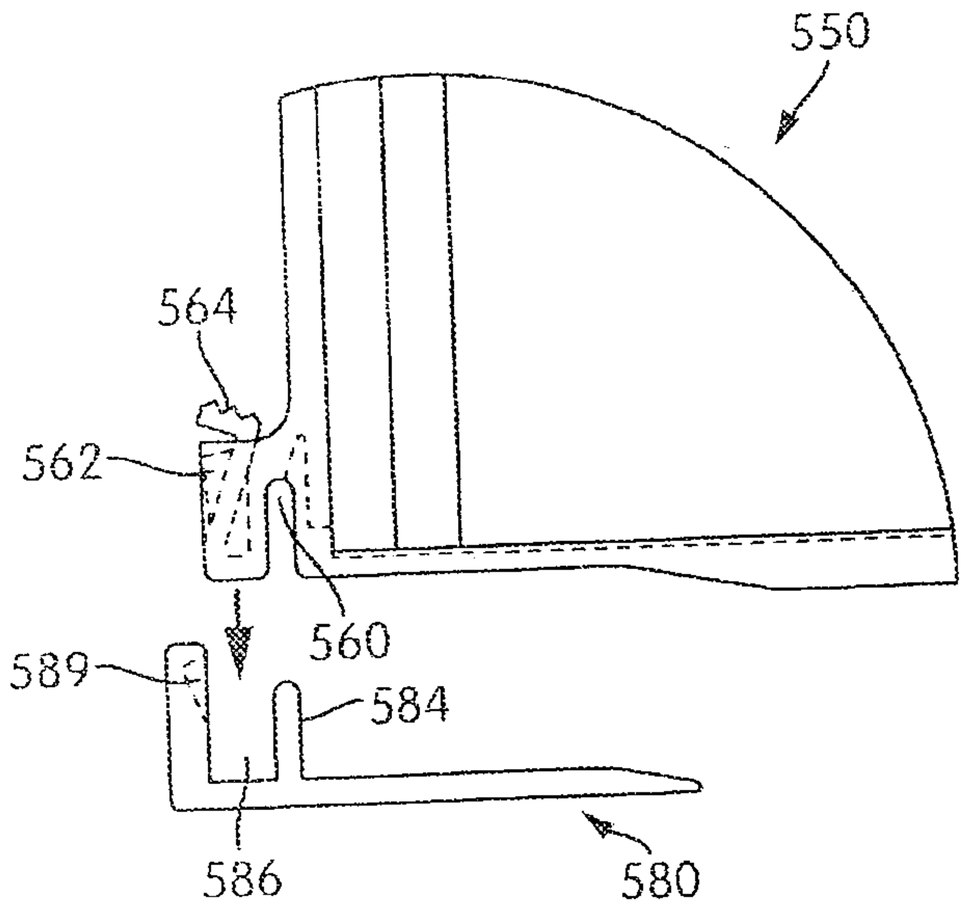


FIG. 68A

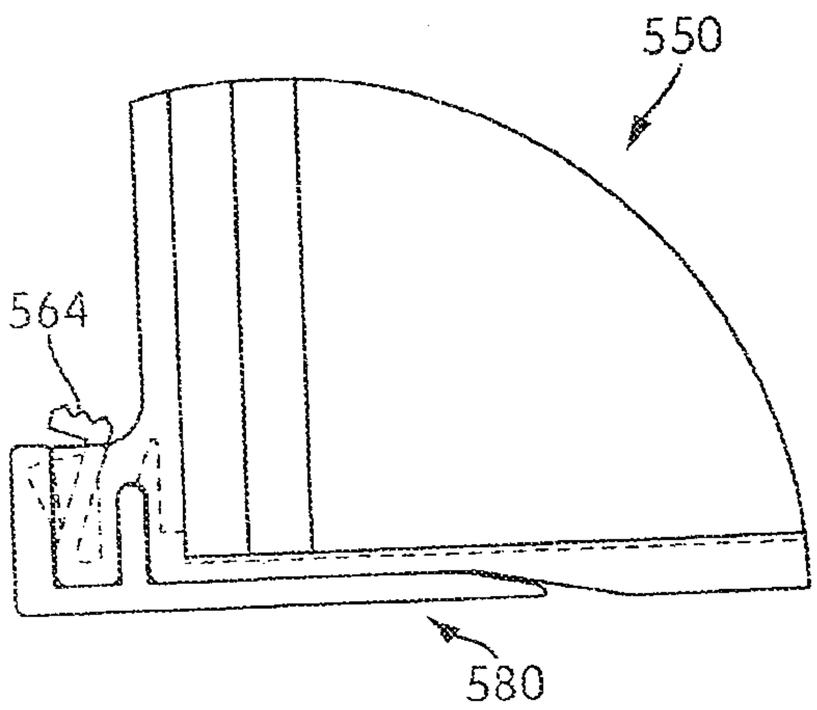


FIG. 68B

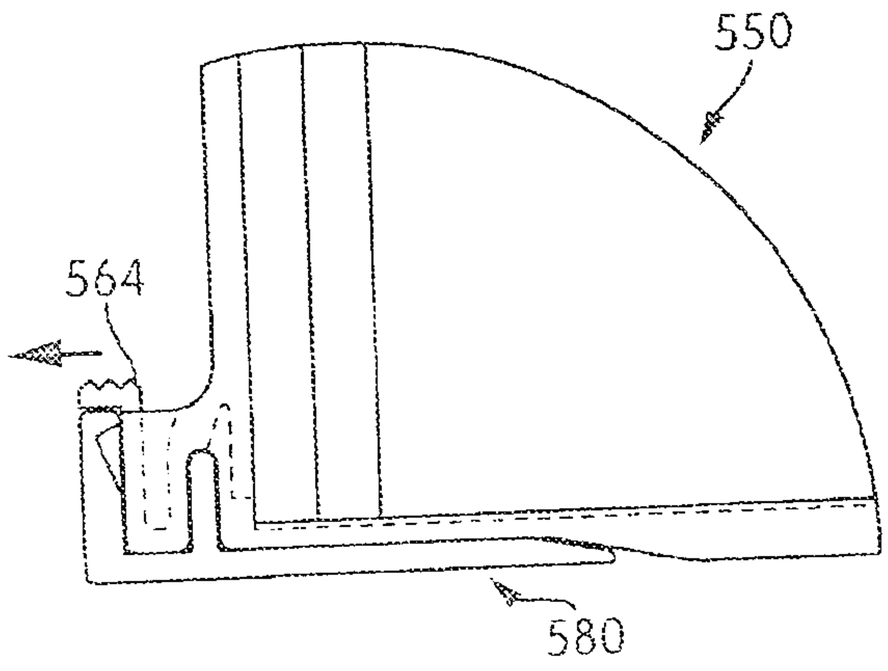


FIG. 68C

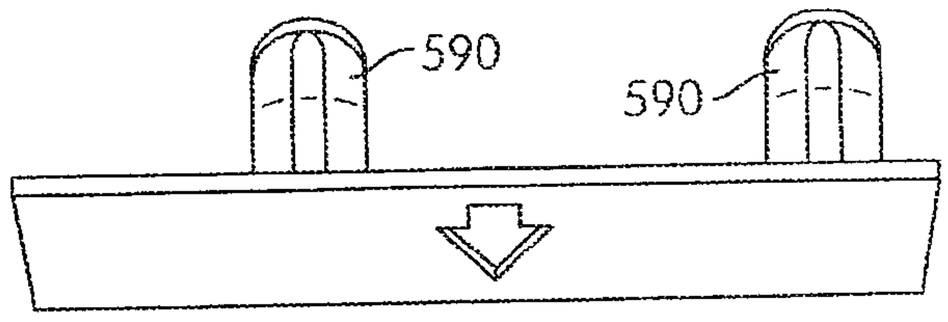


FIG. 69A

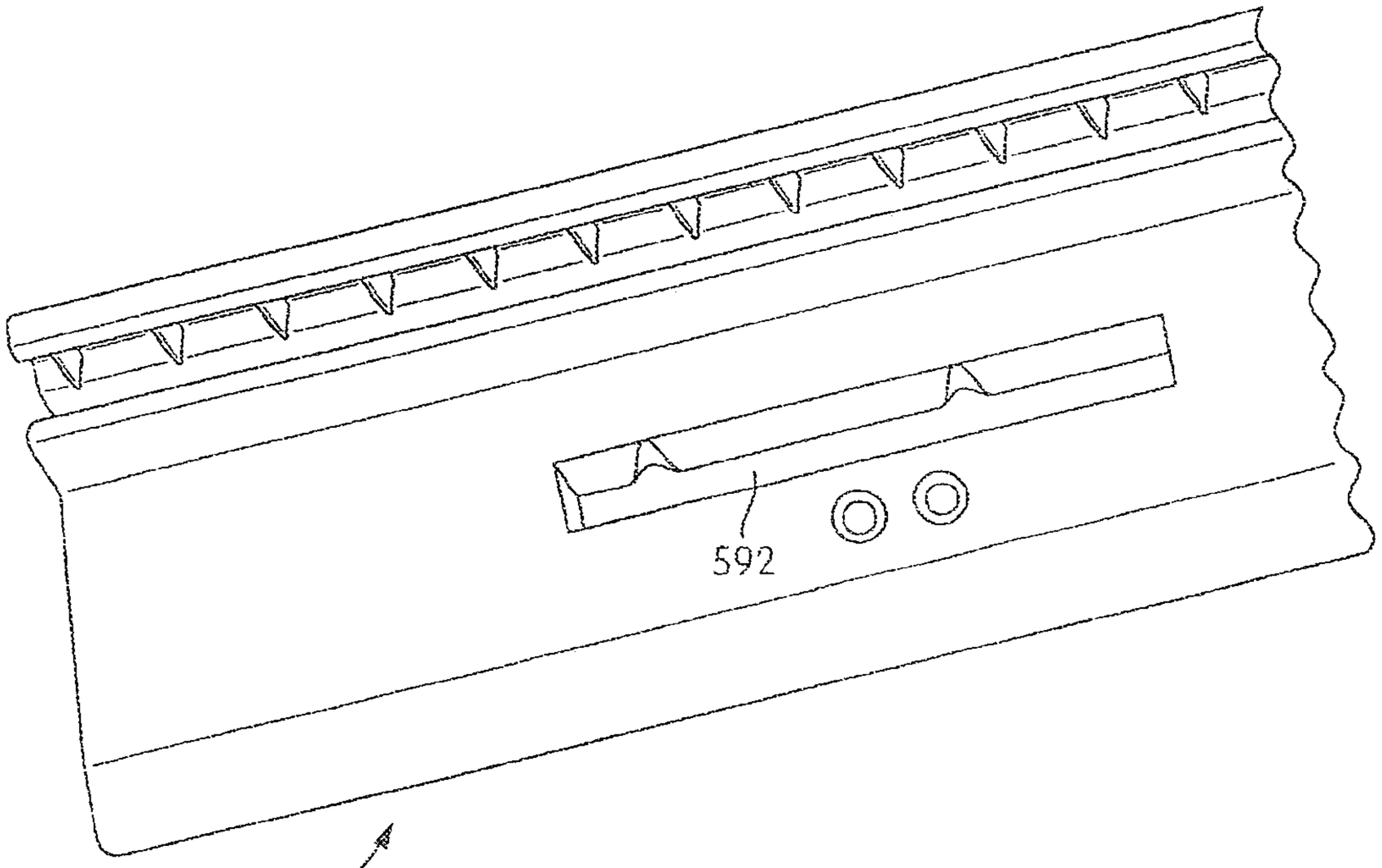


FIG. 69B

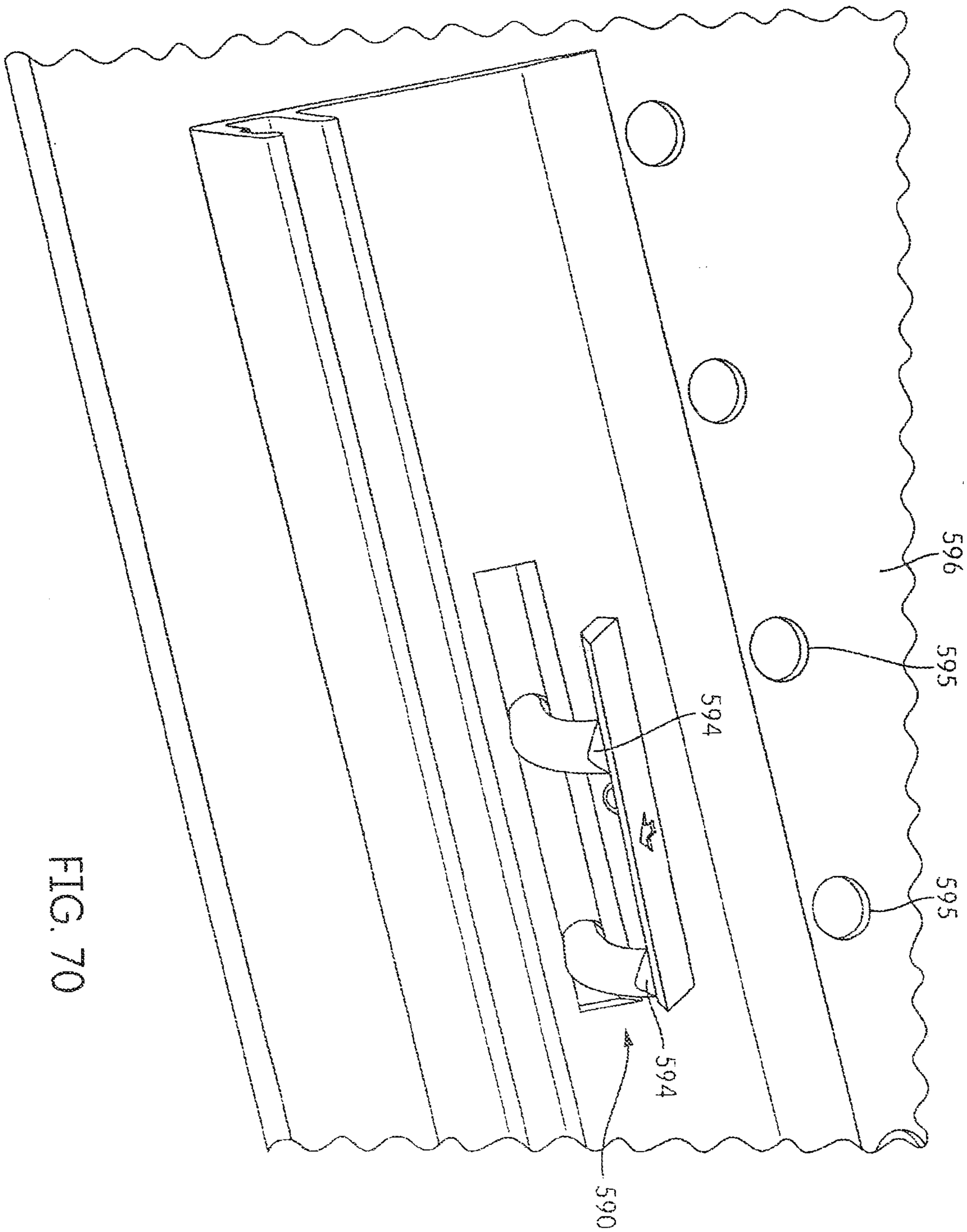


FIG. 70

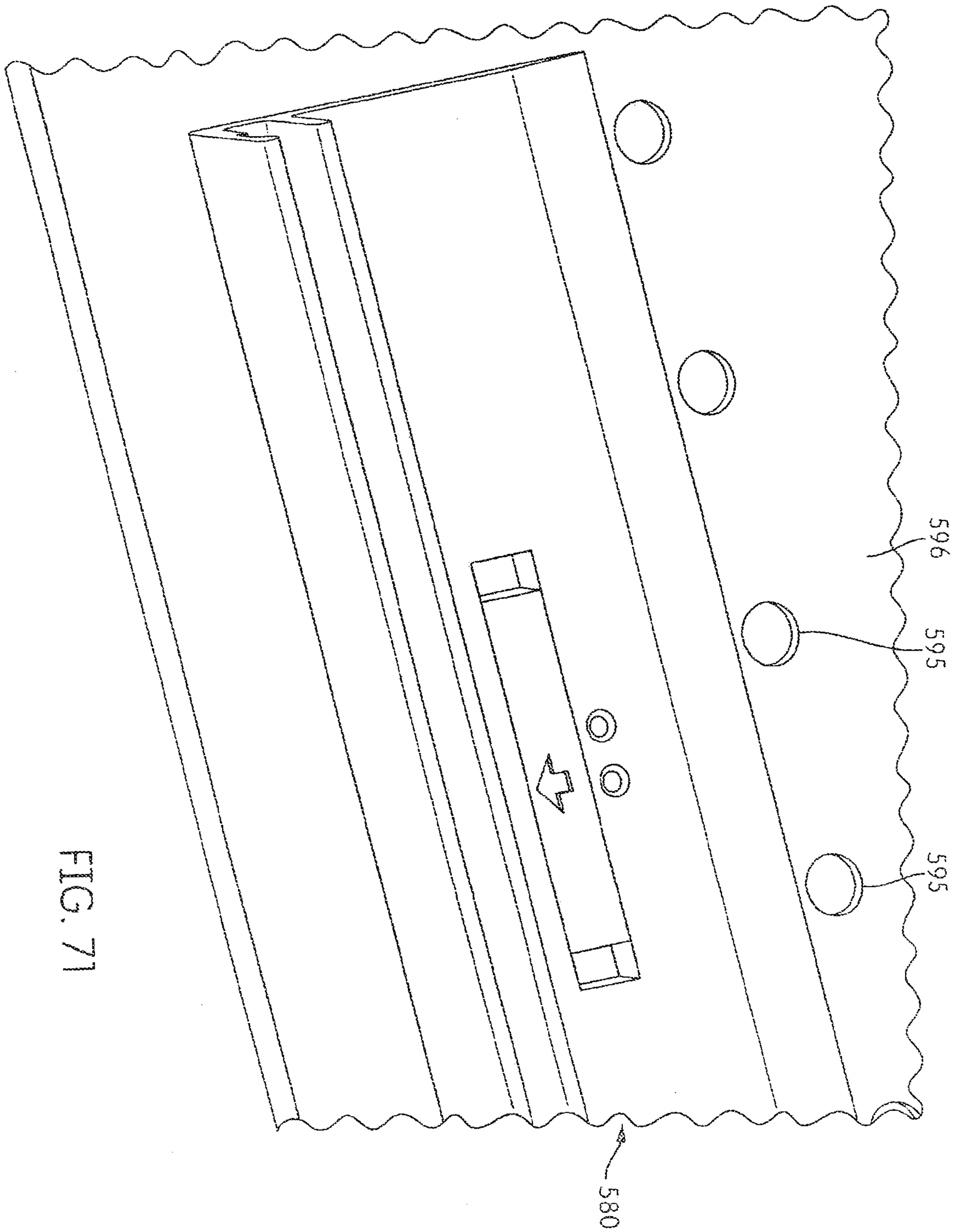


FIG. 71

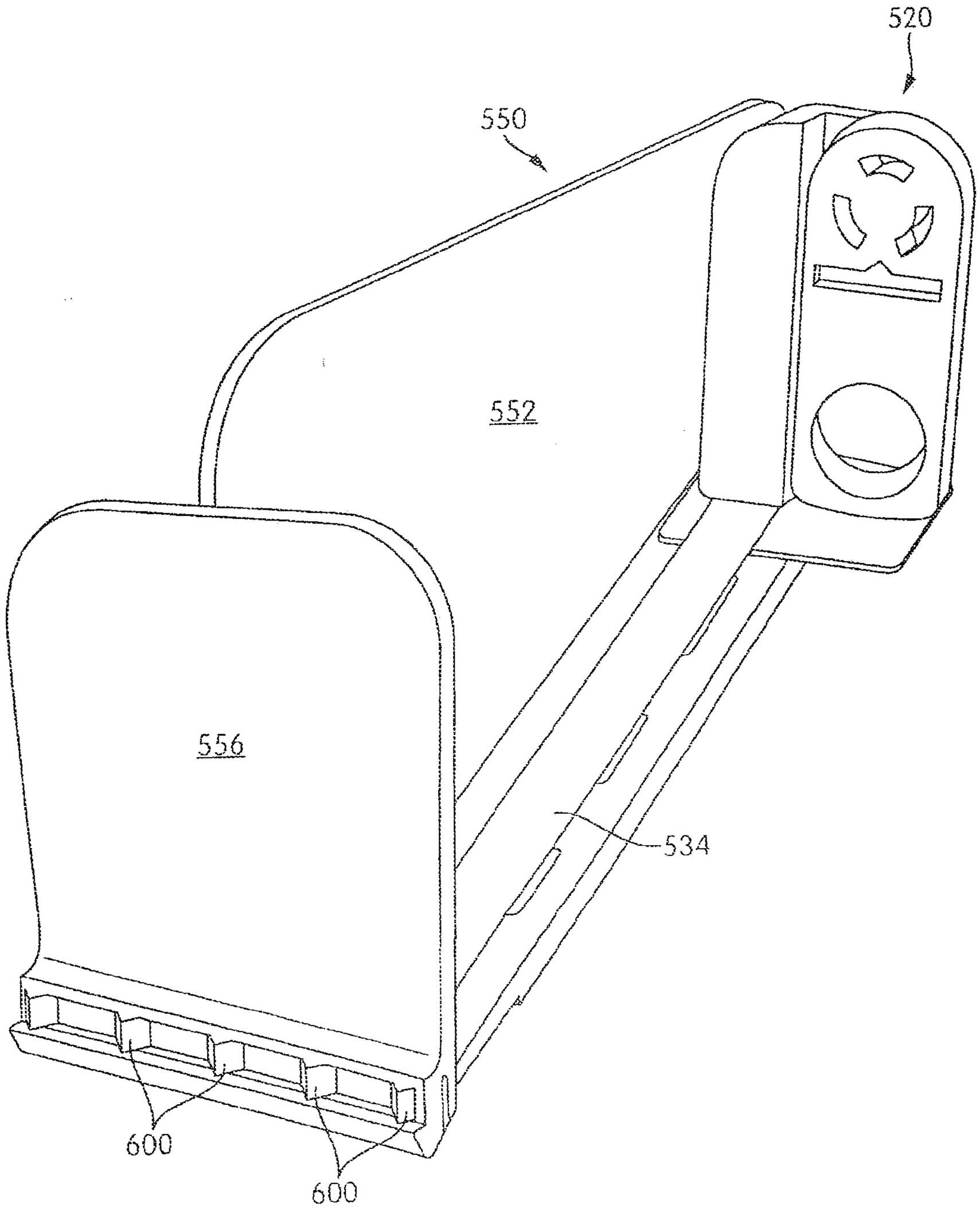


FIG. 72

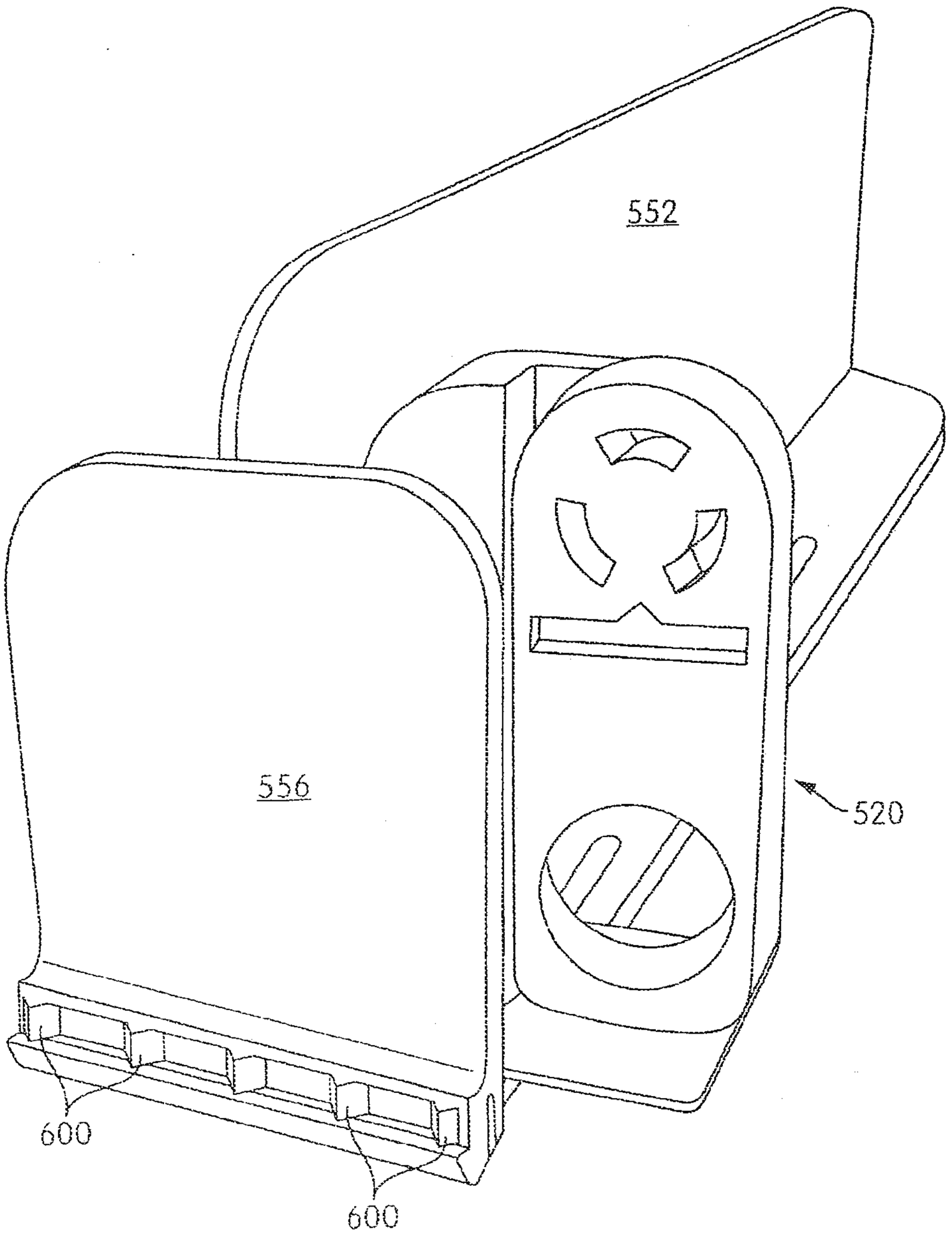


FIG. 73

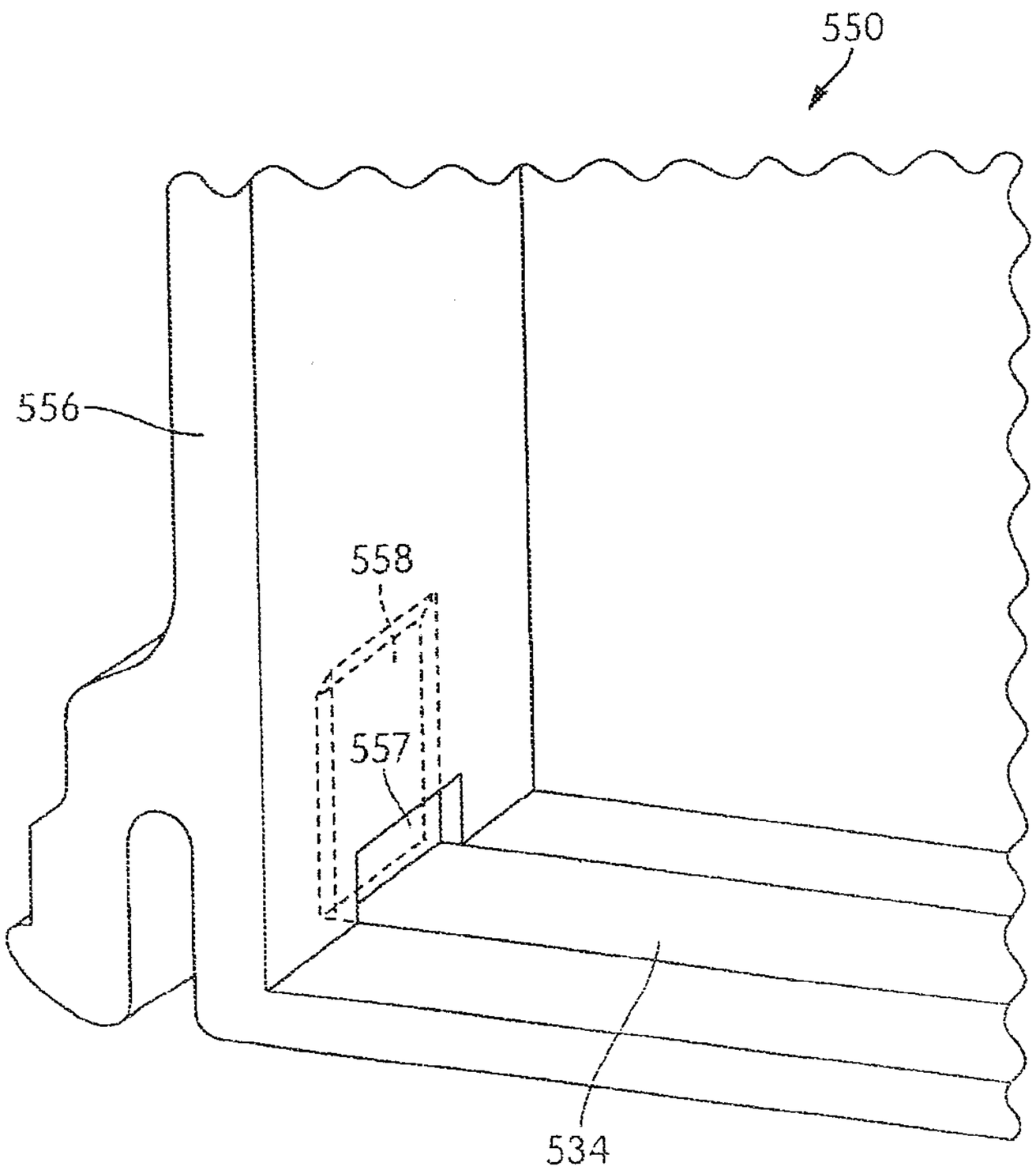


FIG. 74

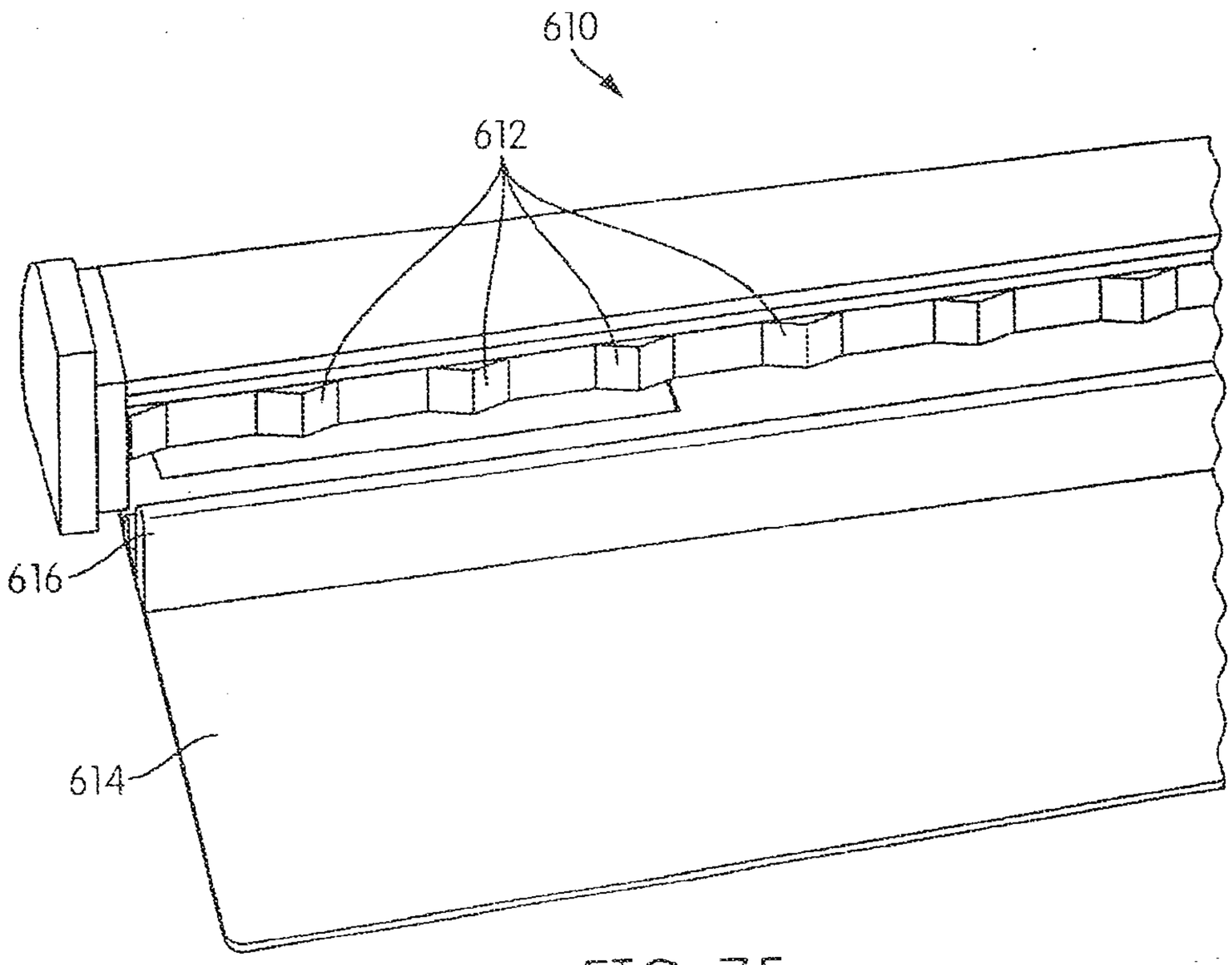


FIG. 75

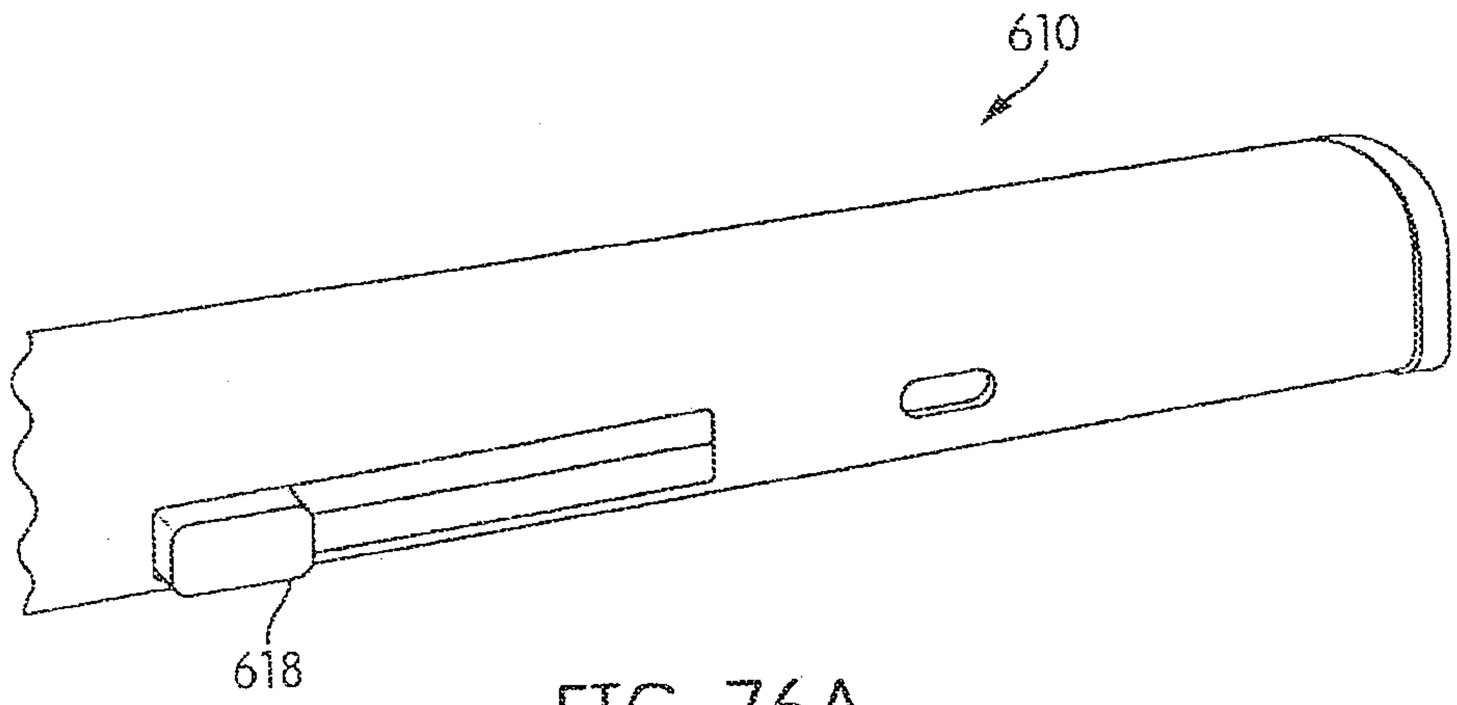


FIG. 76A

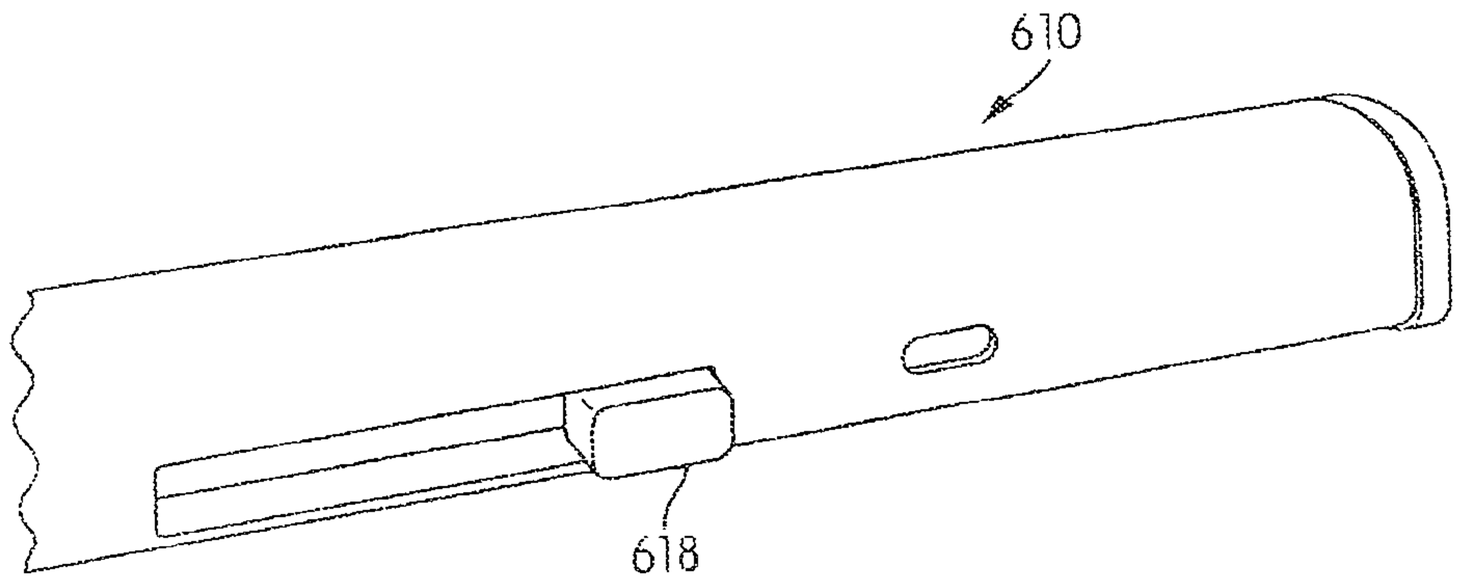


FIG. 76B

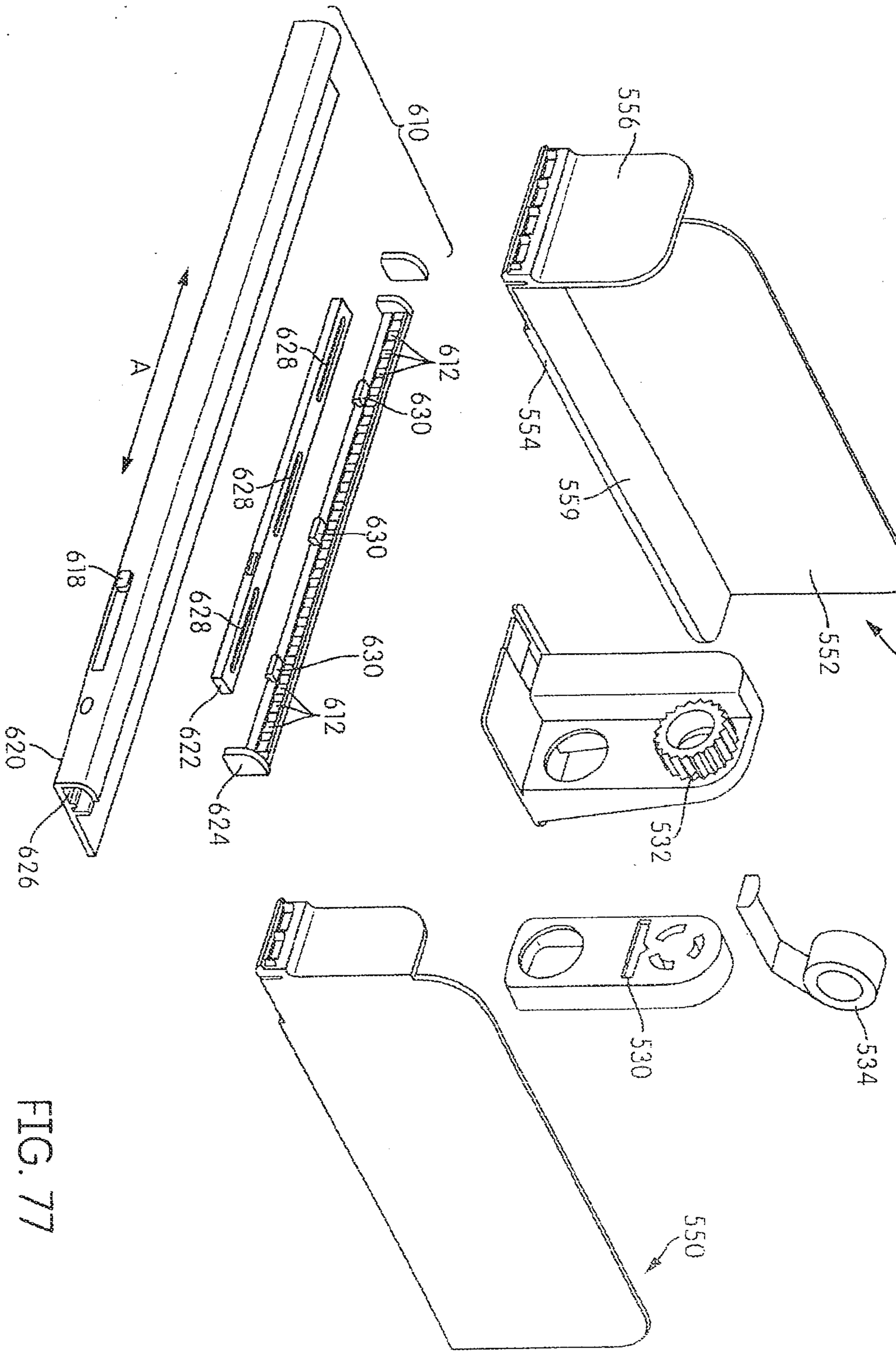

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FIG. 77

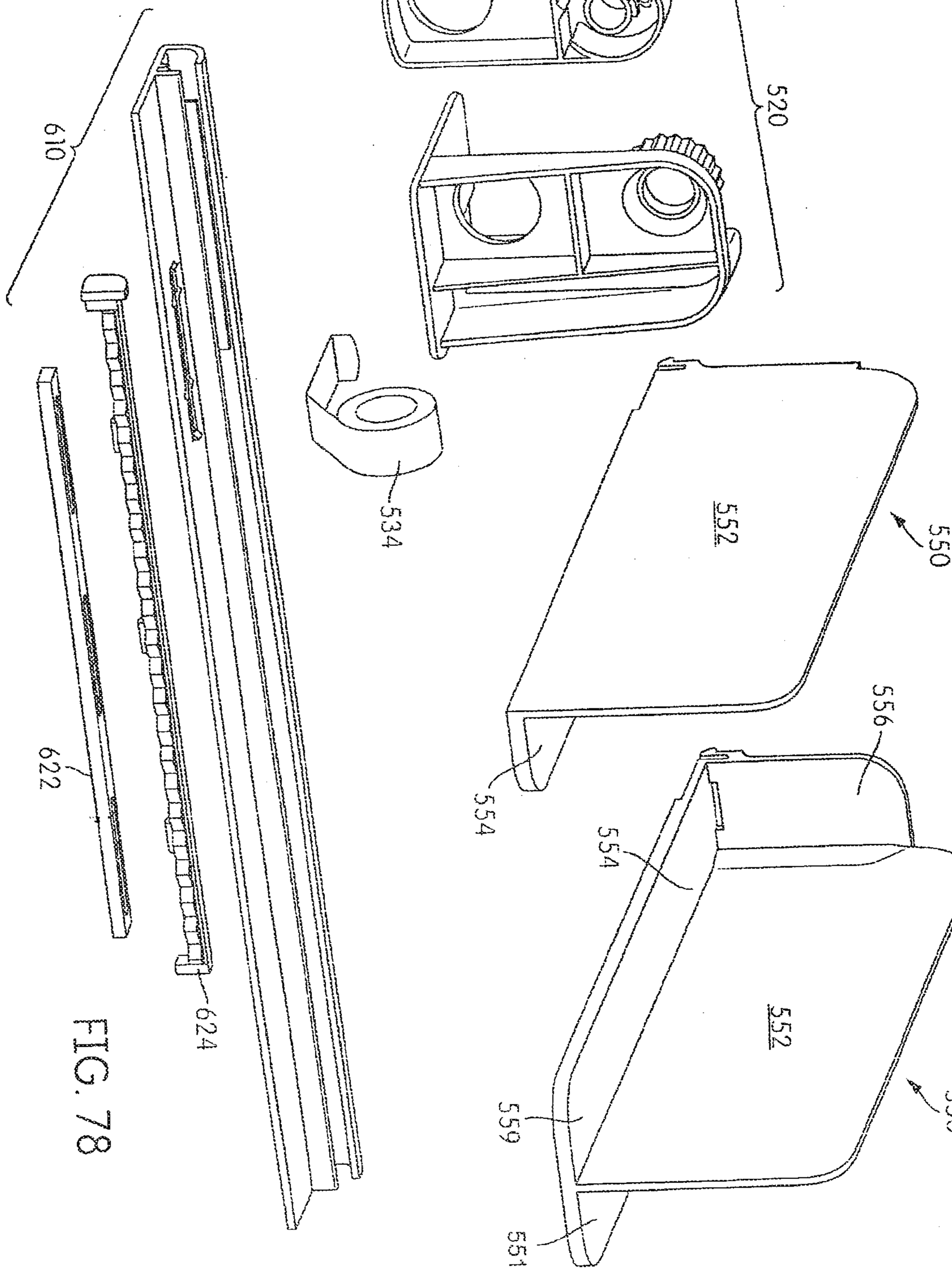


FIG. 78

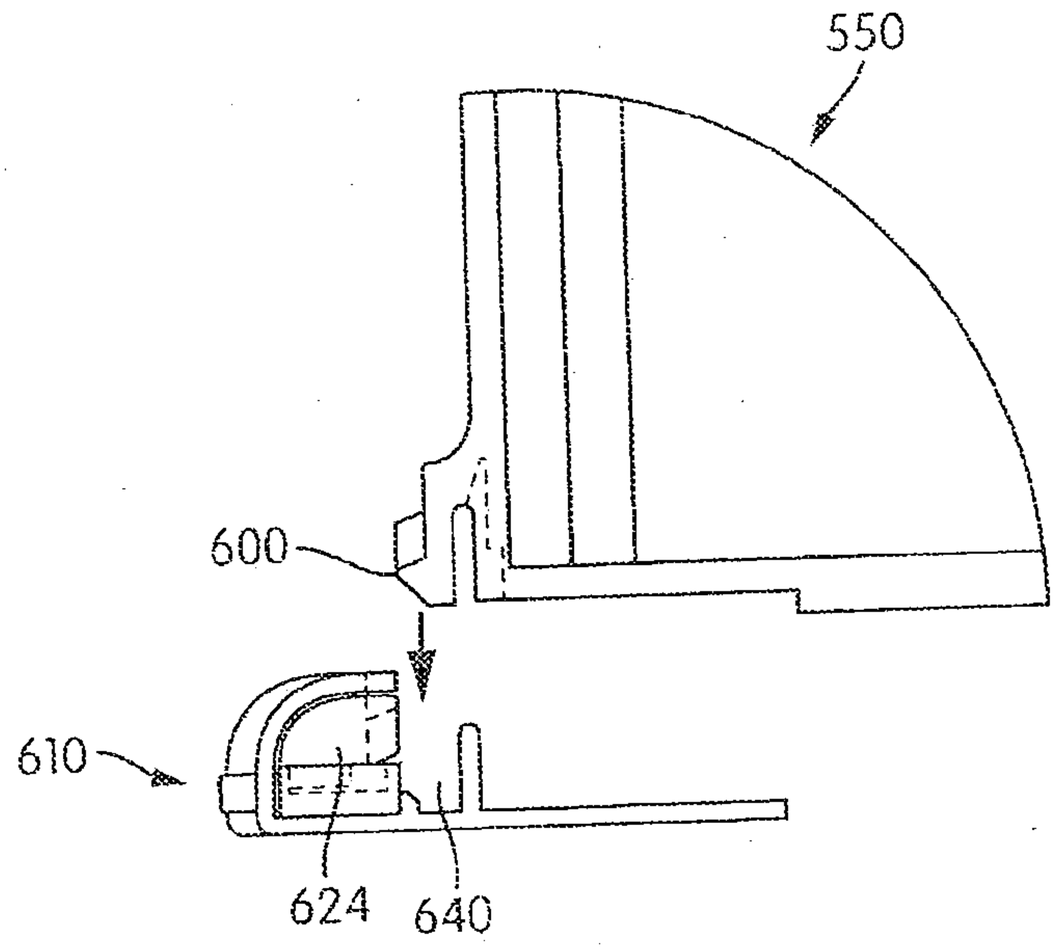


FIG. 79A

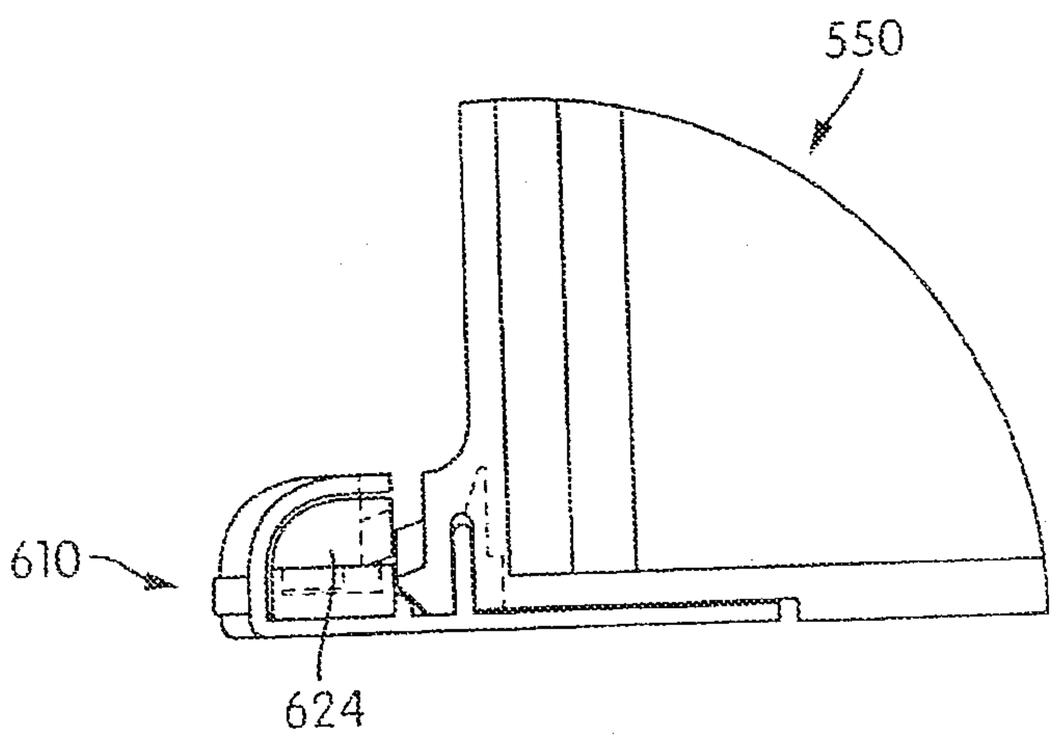


FIG. 79B

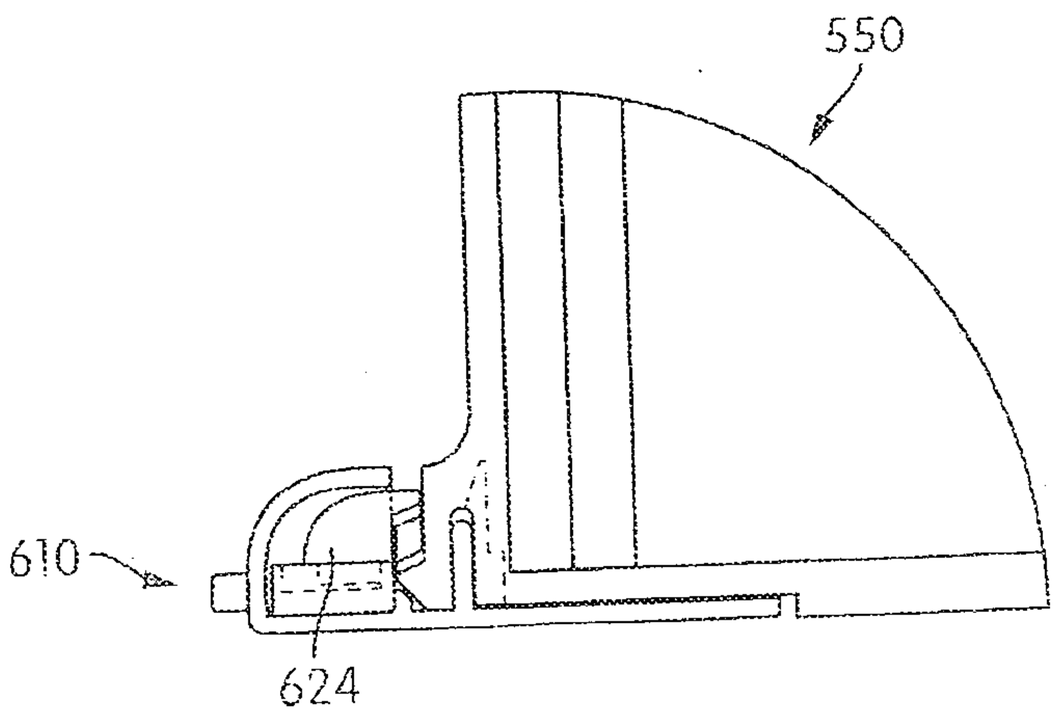


FIG. 79C

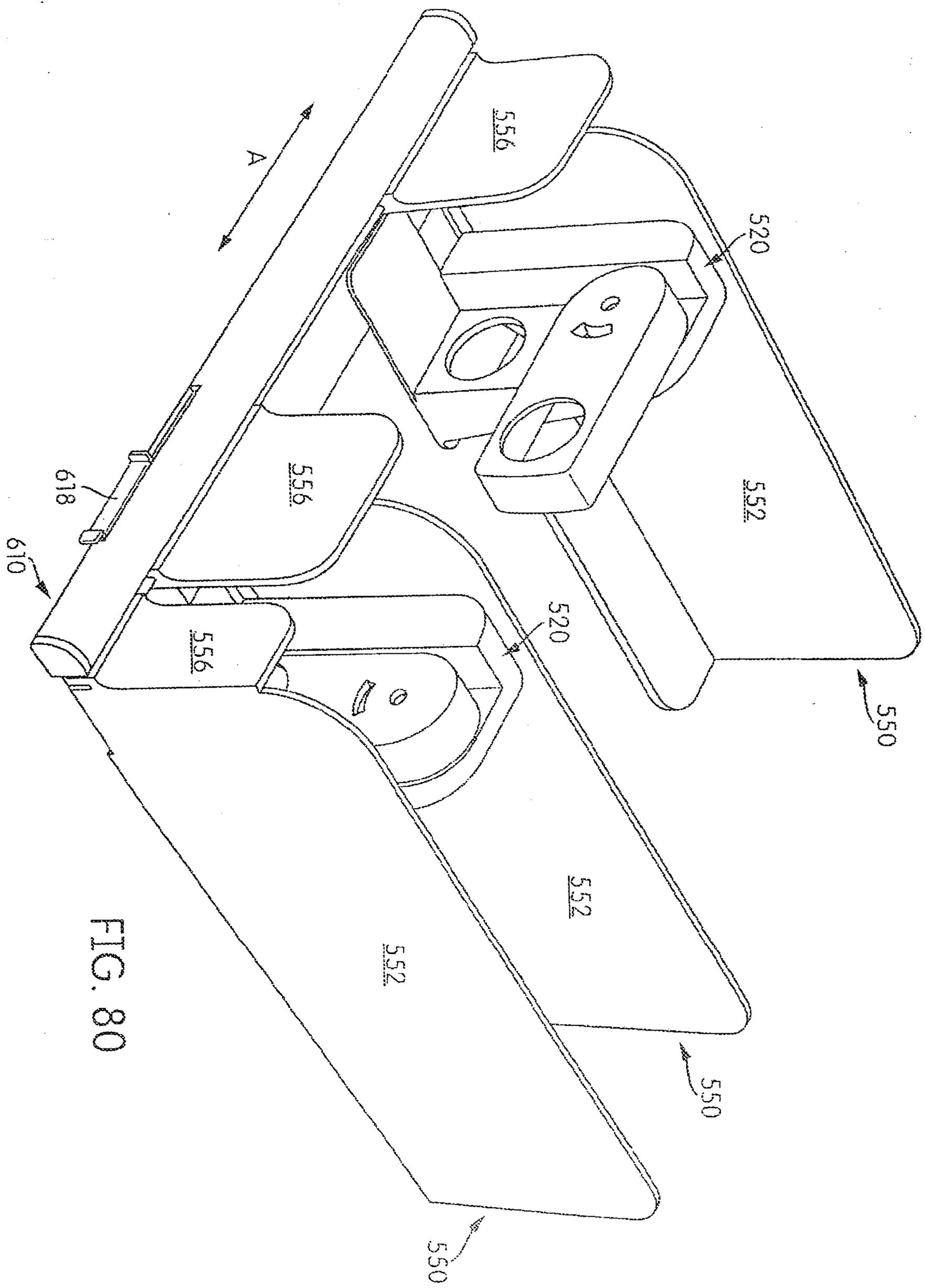


FIG. 80

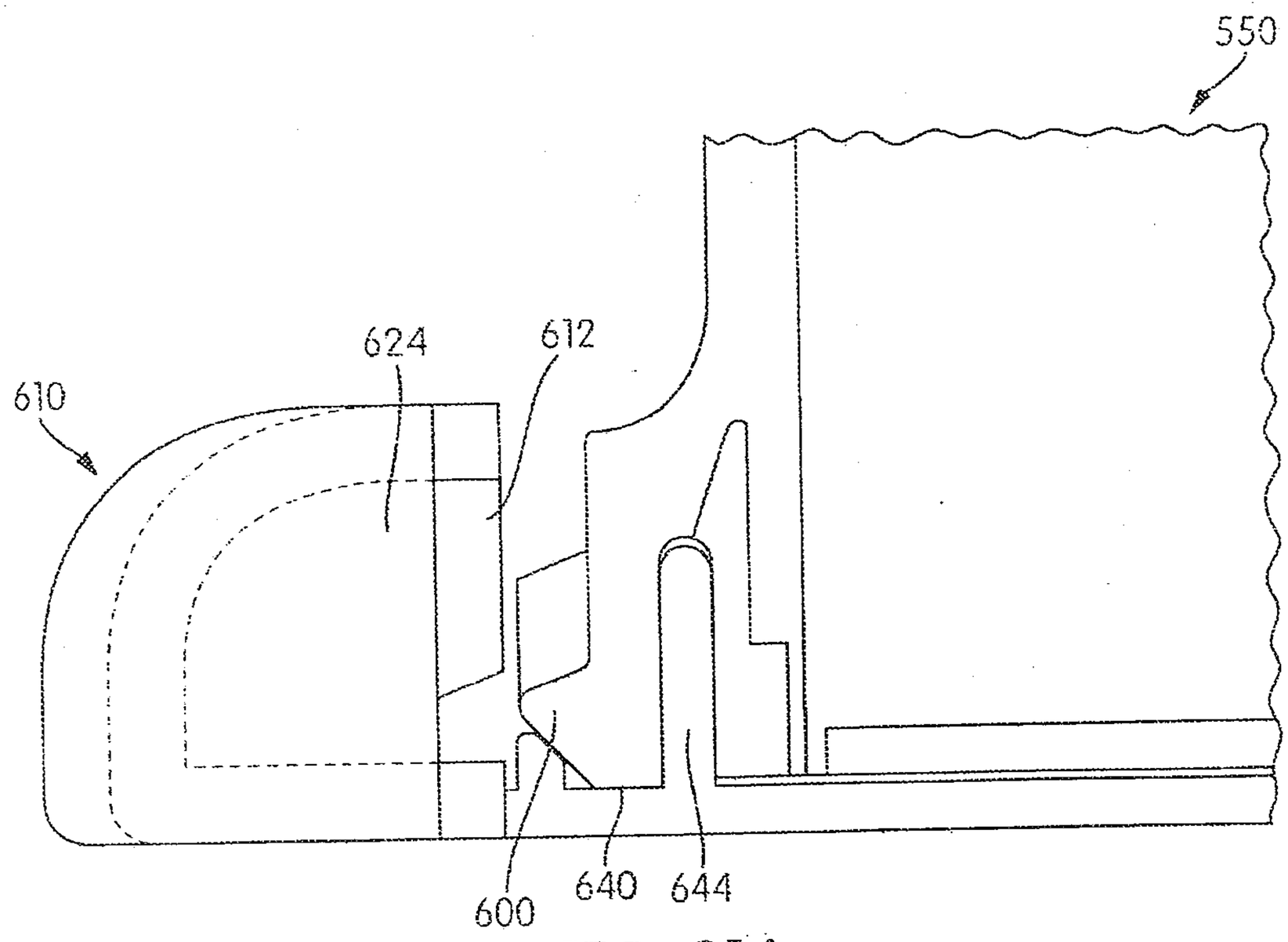


FIG. 81A

FIG. 81B

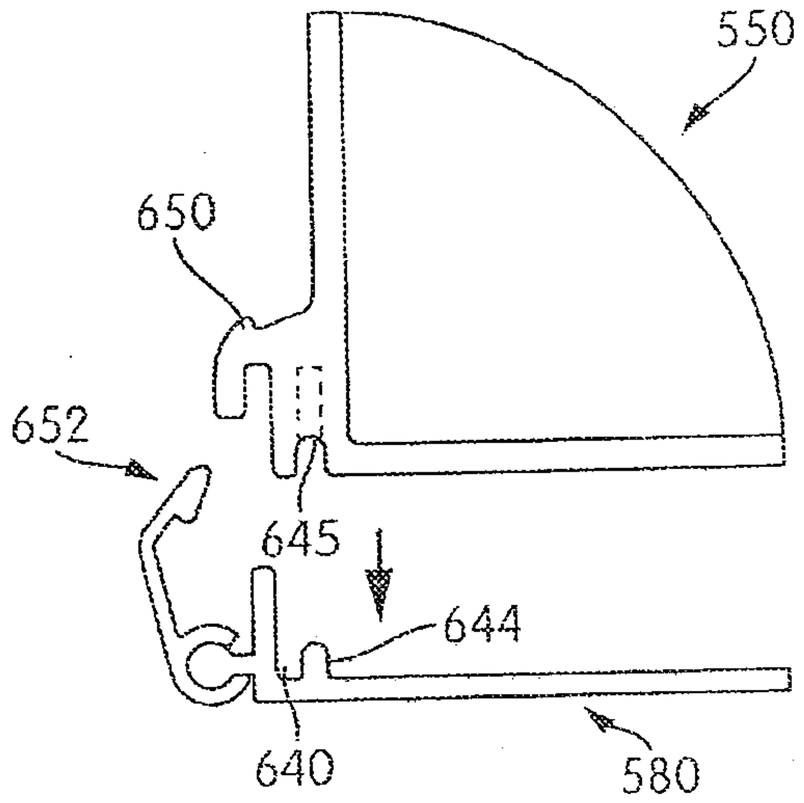


FIG. 82A

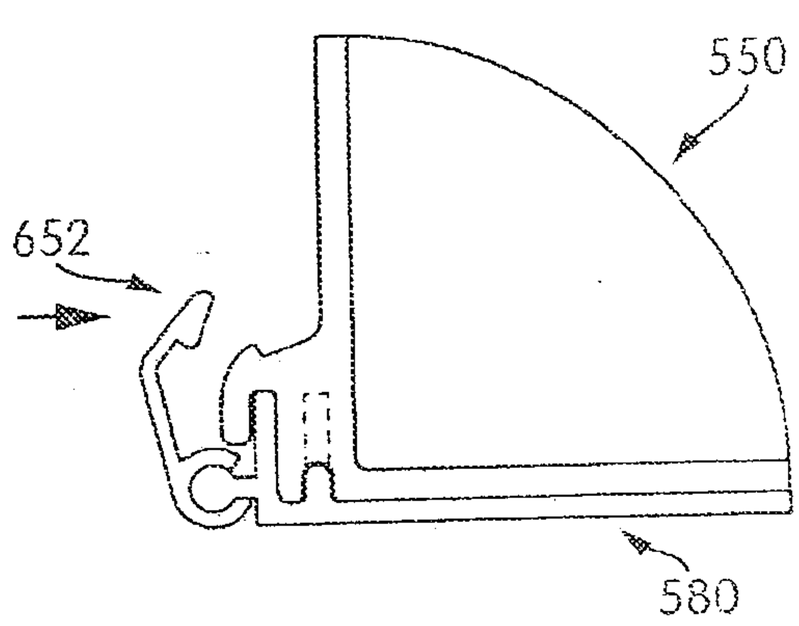


FIG. 82B

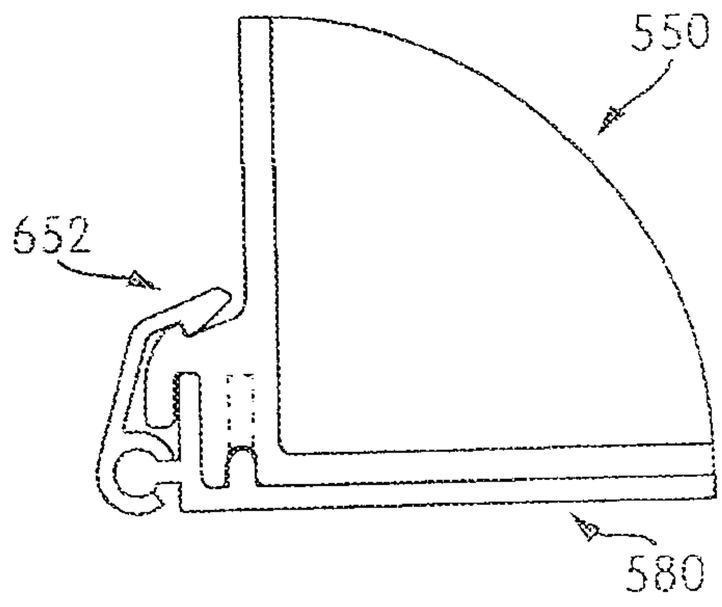


FIG. 82C

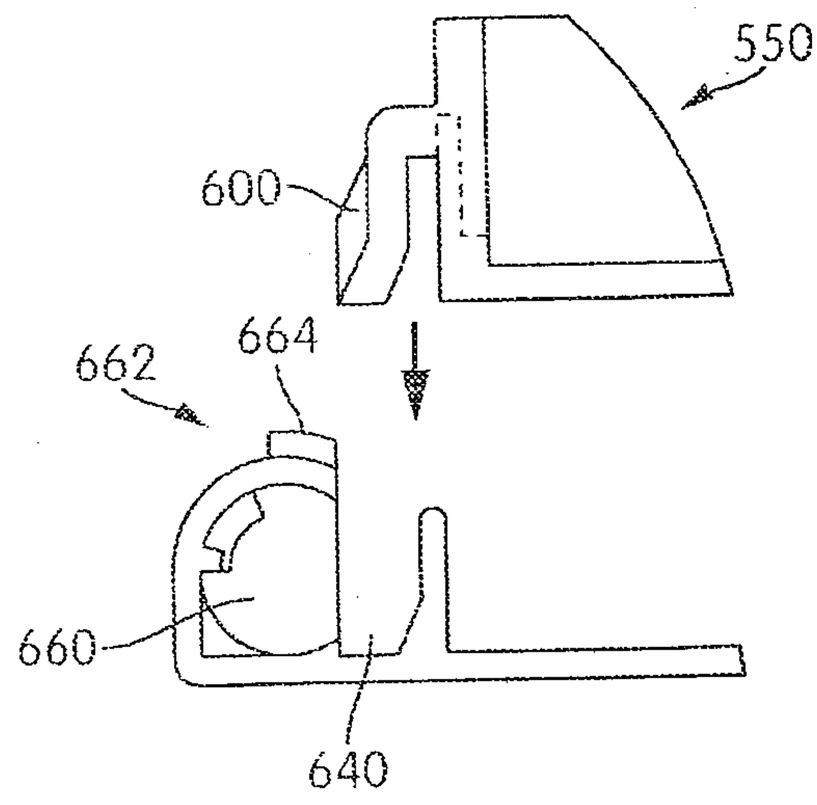


FIG. 83A

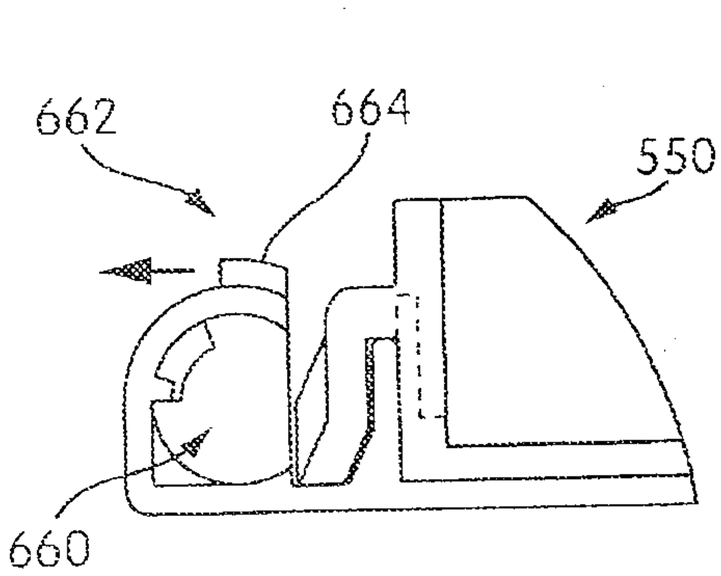


FIG. 83B

FIG. 83C

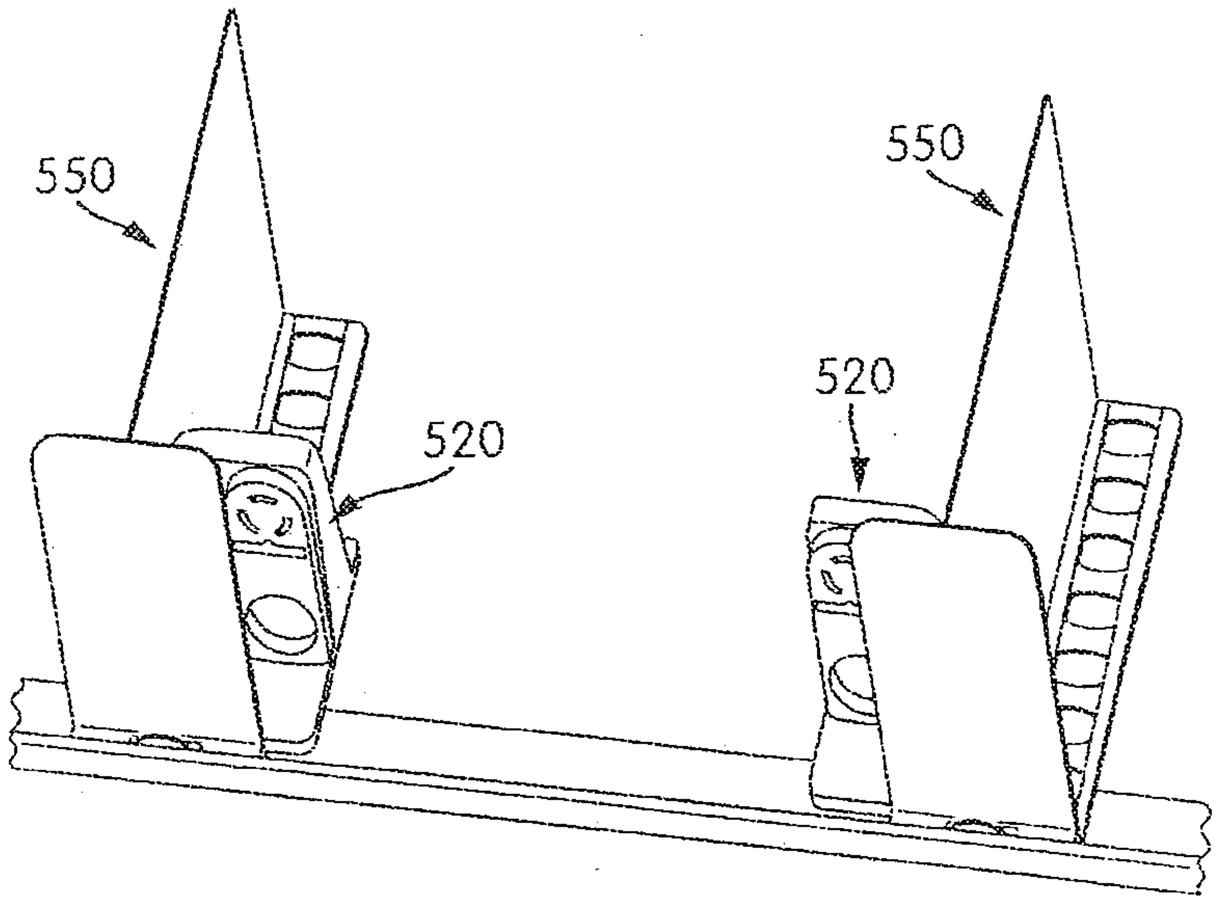


FIG. 84A

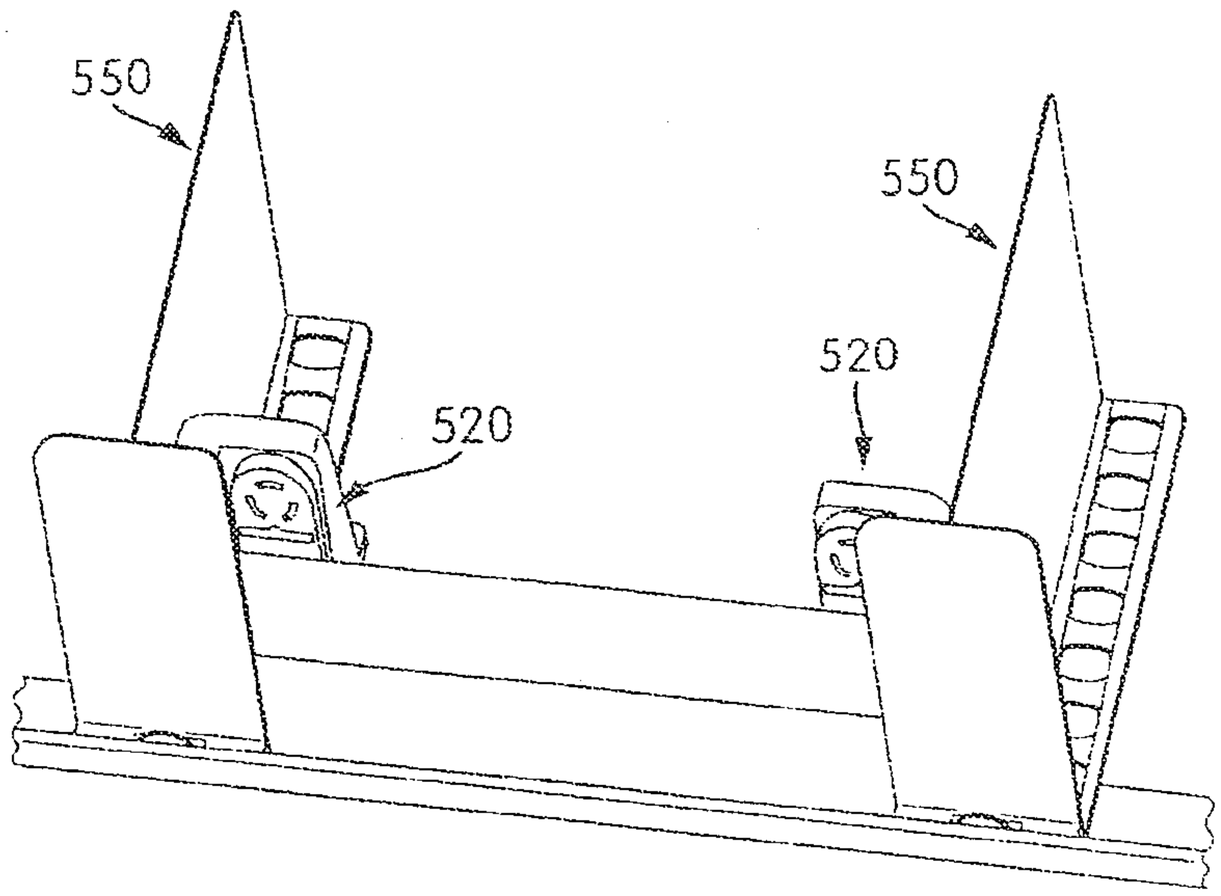


FIG. 84B

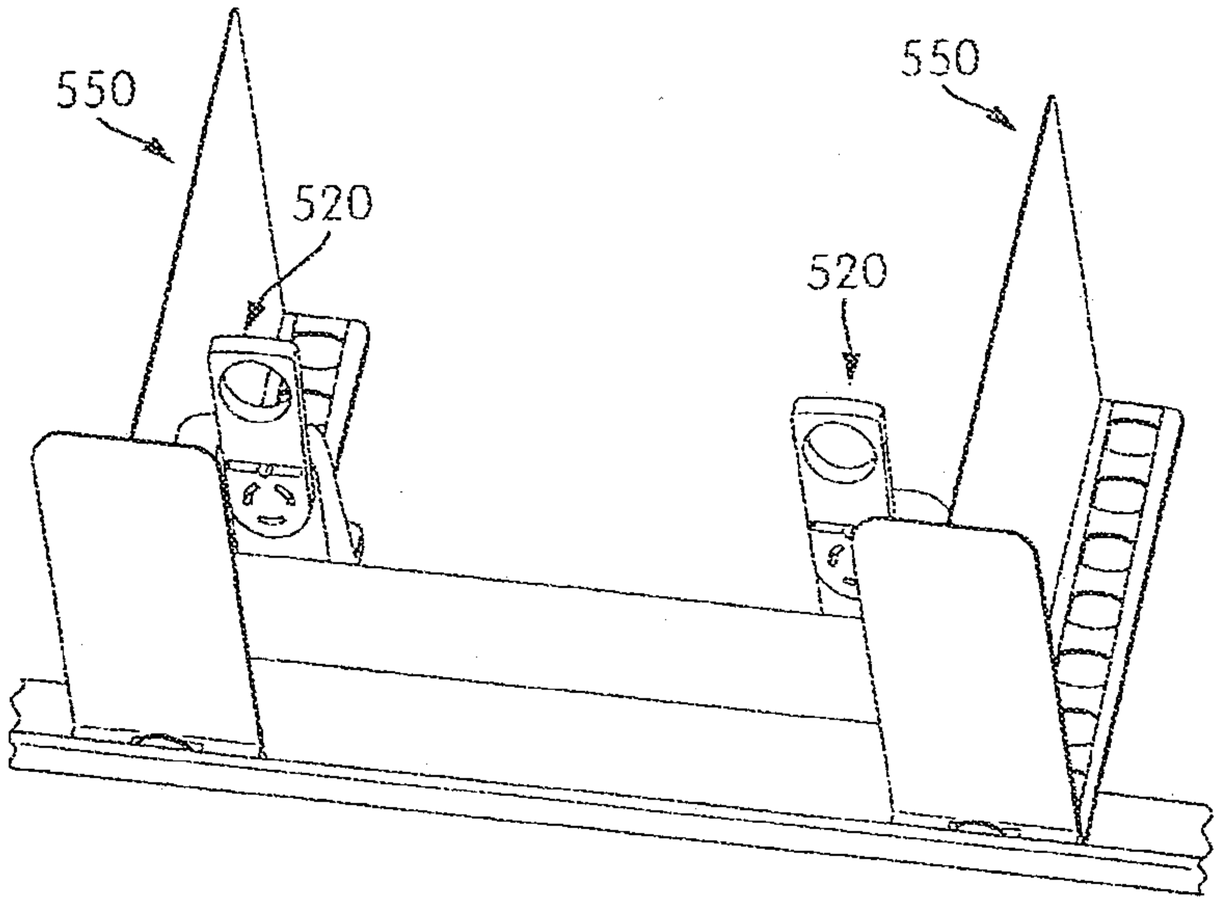


FIG. 84C

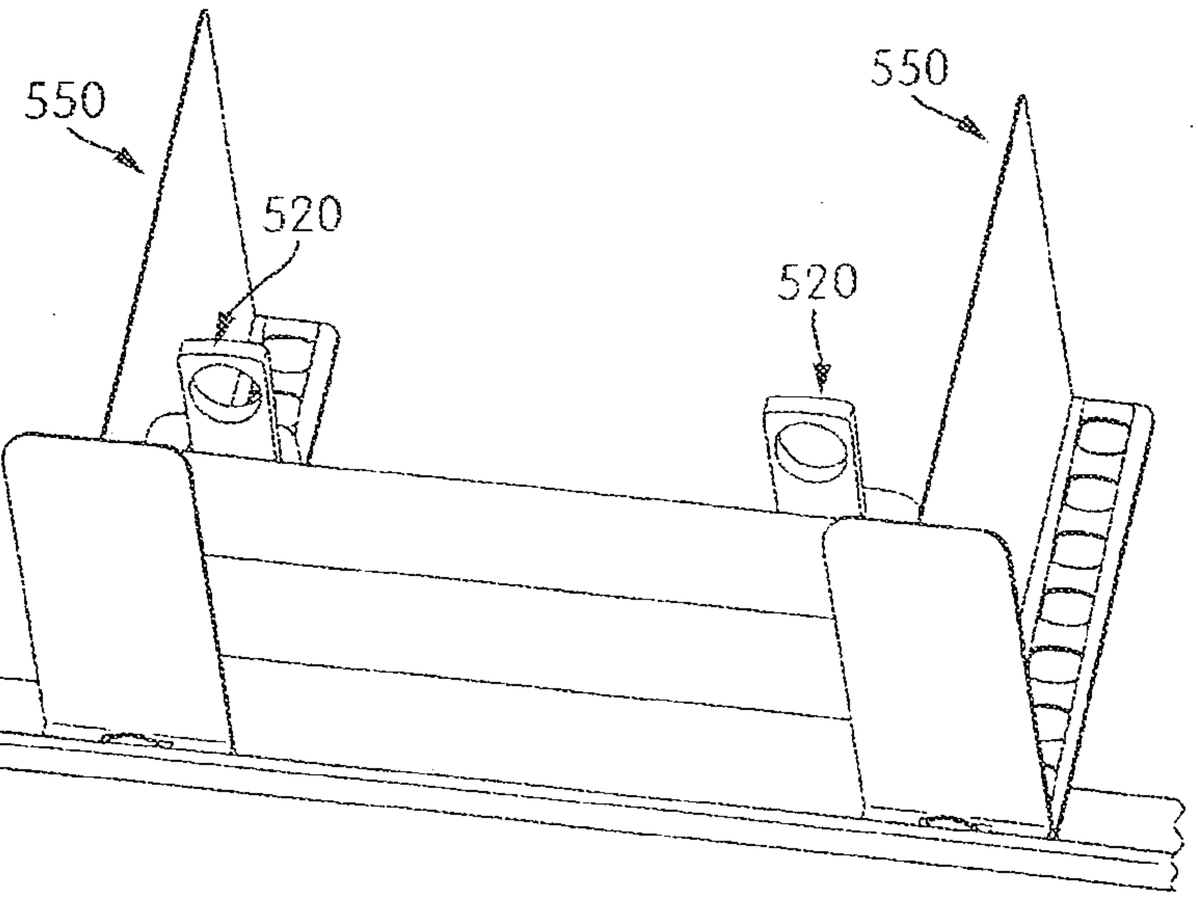


FIG. 84D

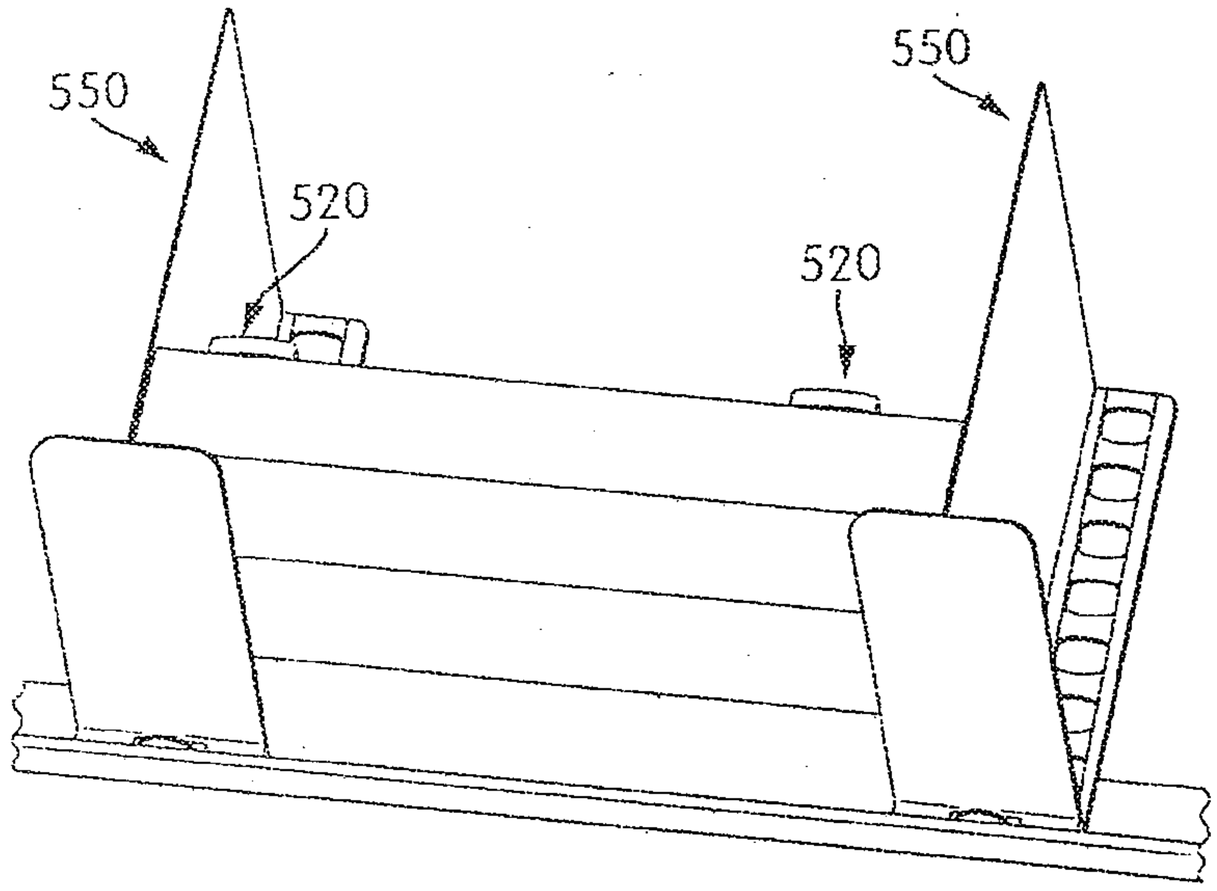


FIG. 84E

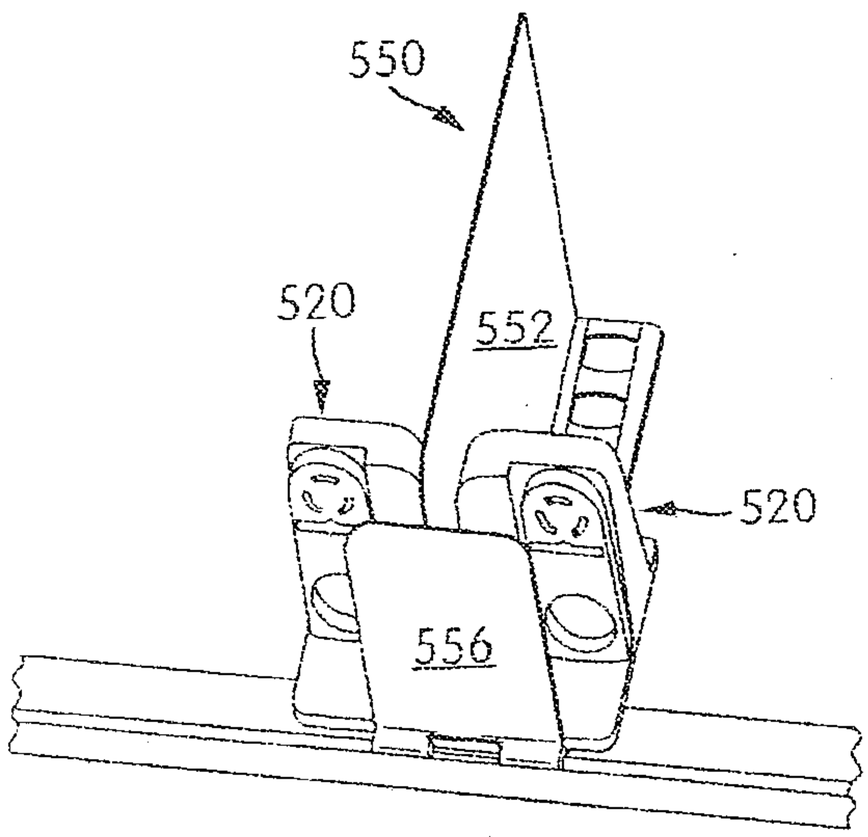


FIG. 84F

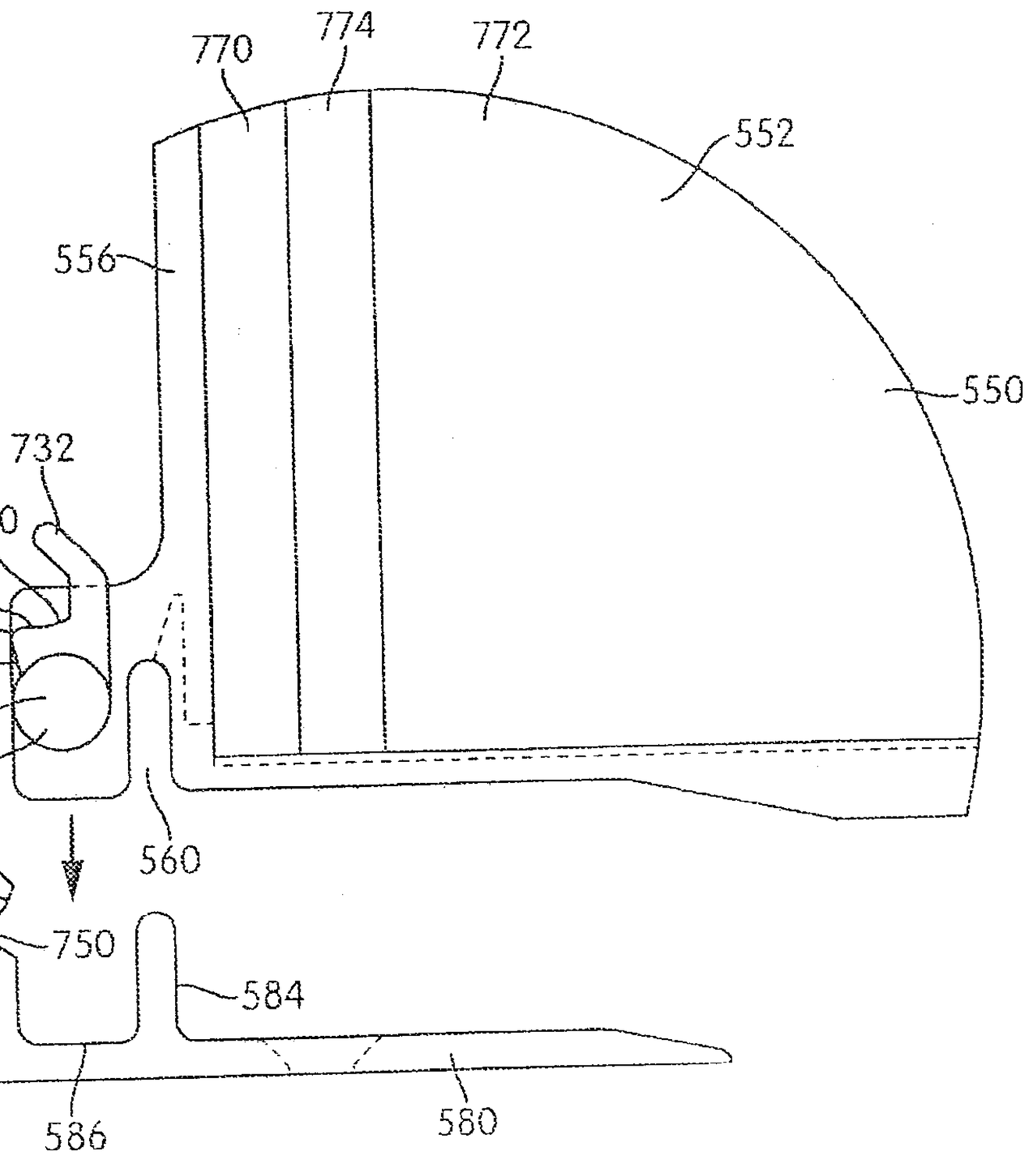

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FIG. 85

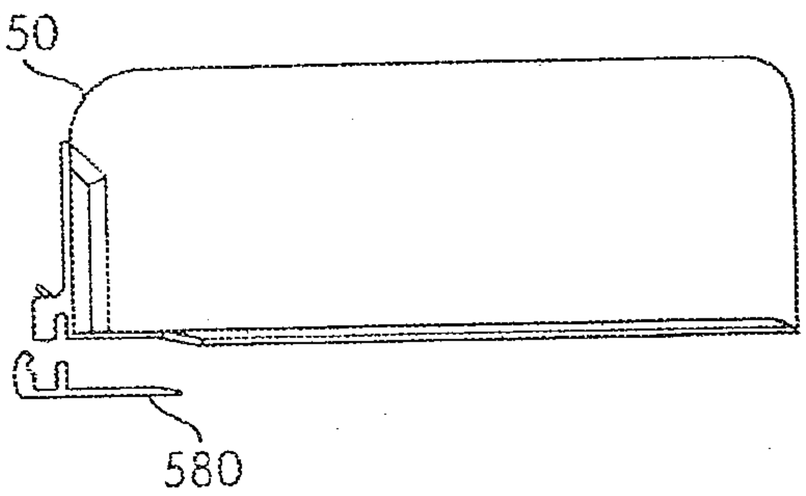


FIG. 86A

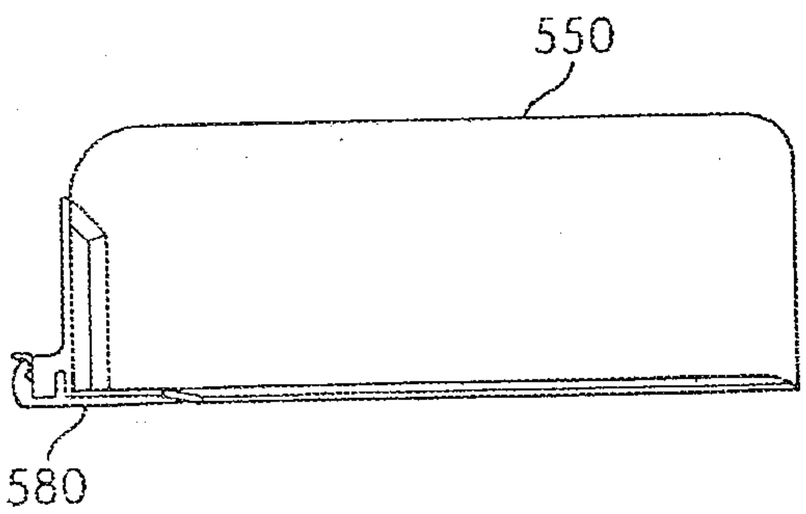


FIG. 86B

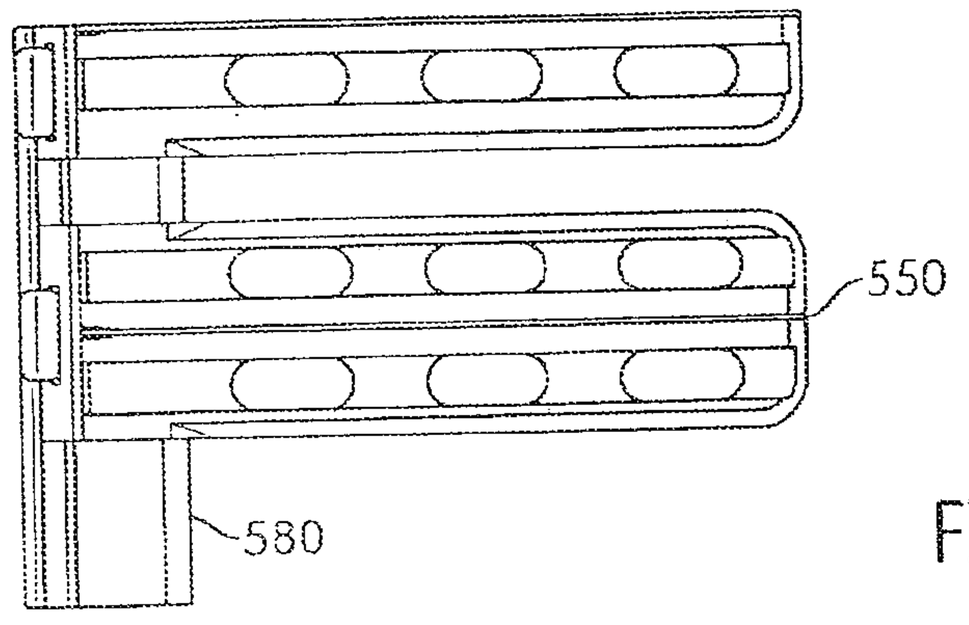


FIG. 86C

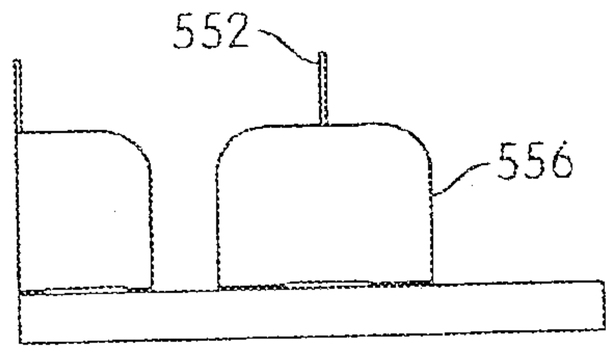


FIG. 86D

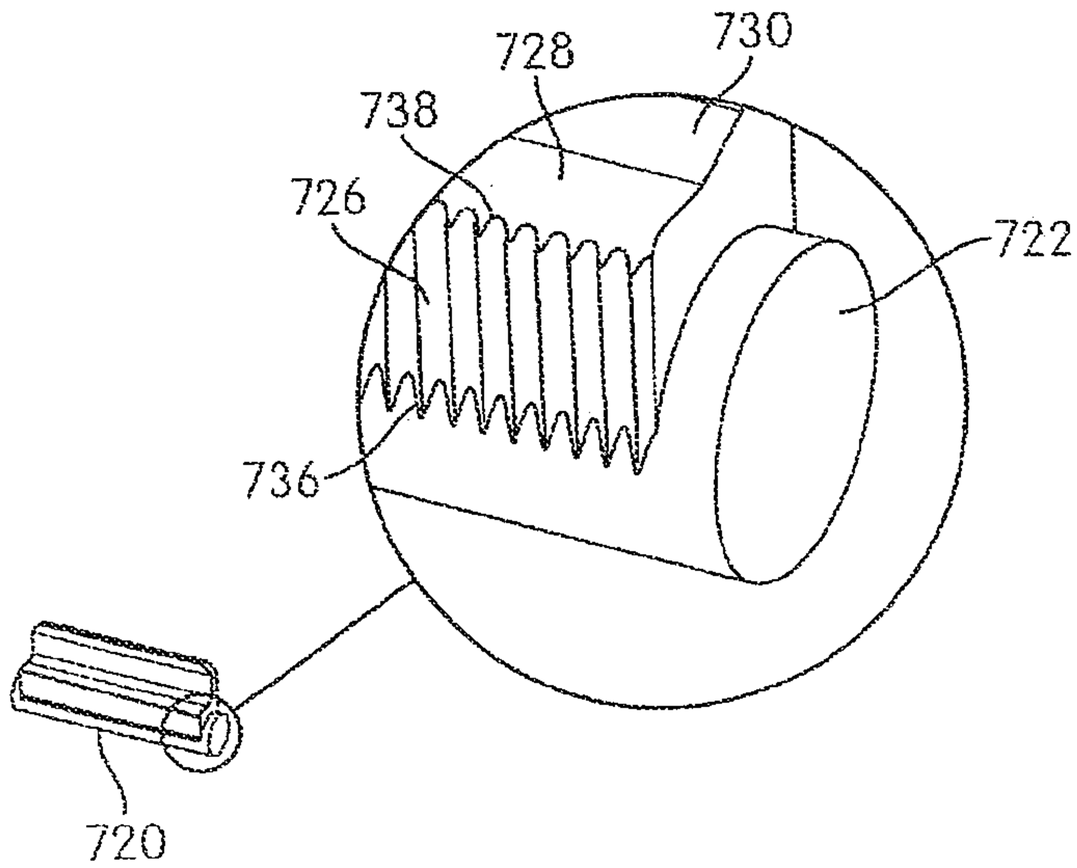


FIG. 86E

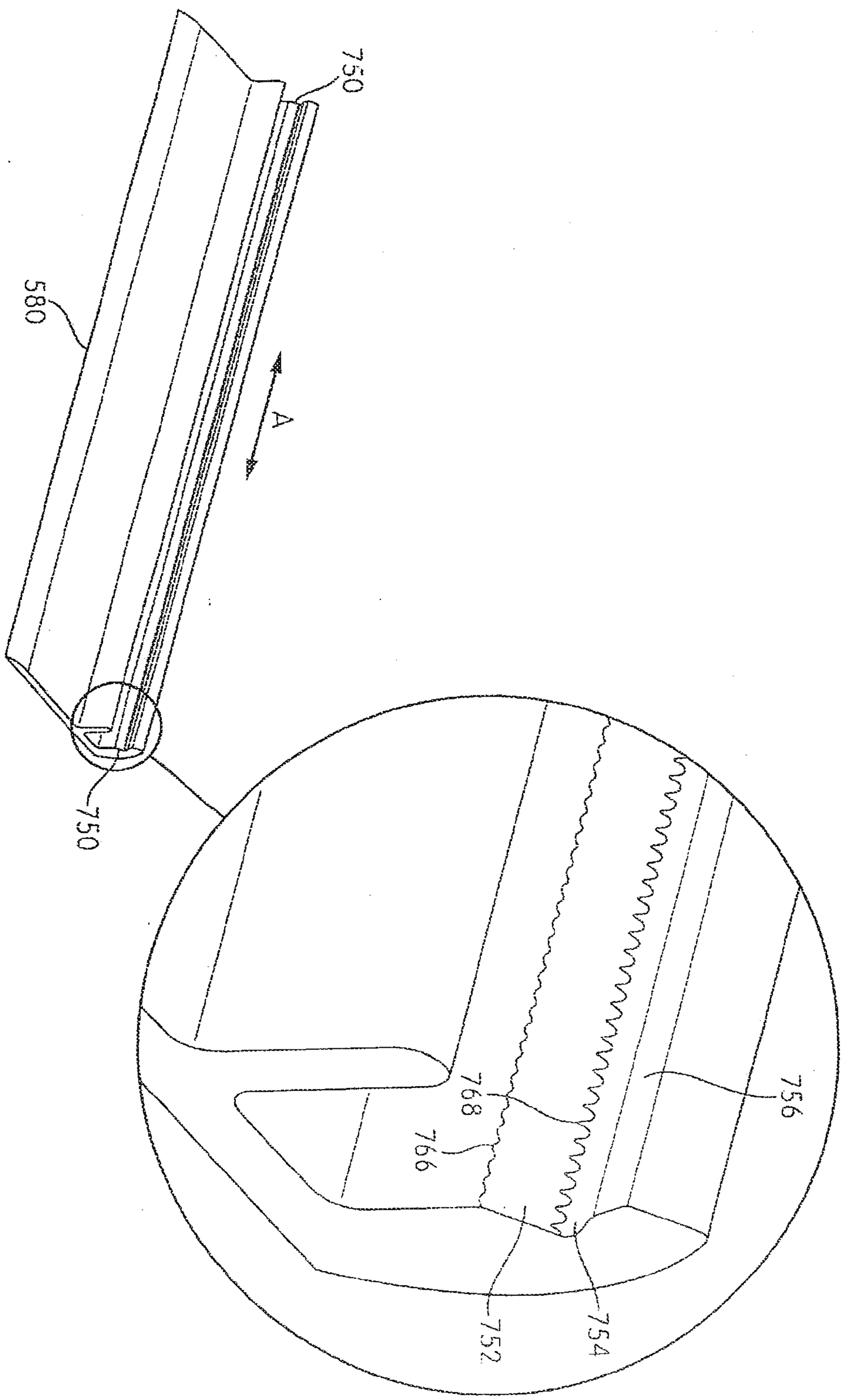


FIG. 86F

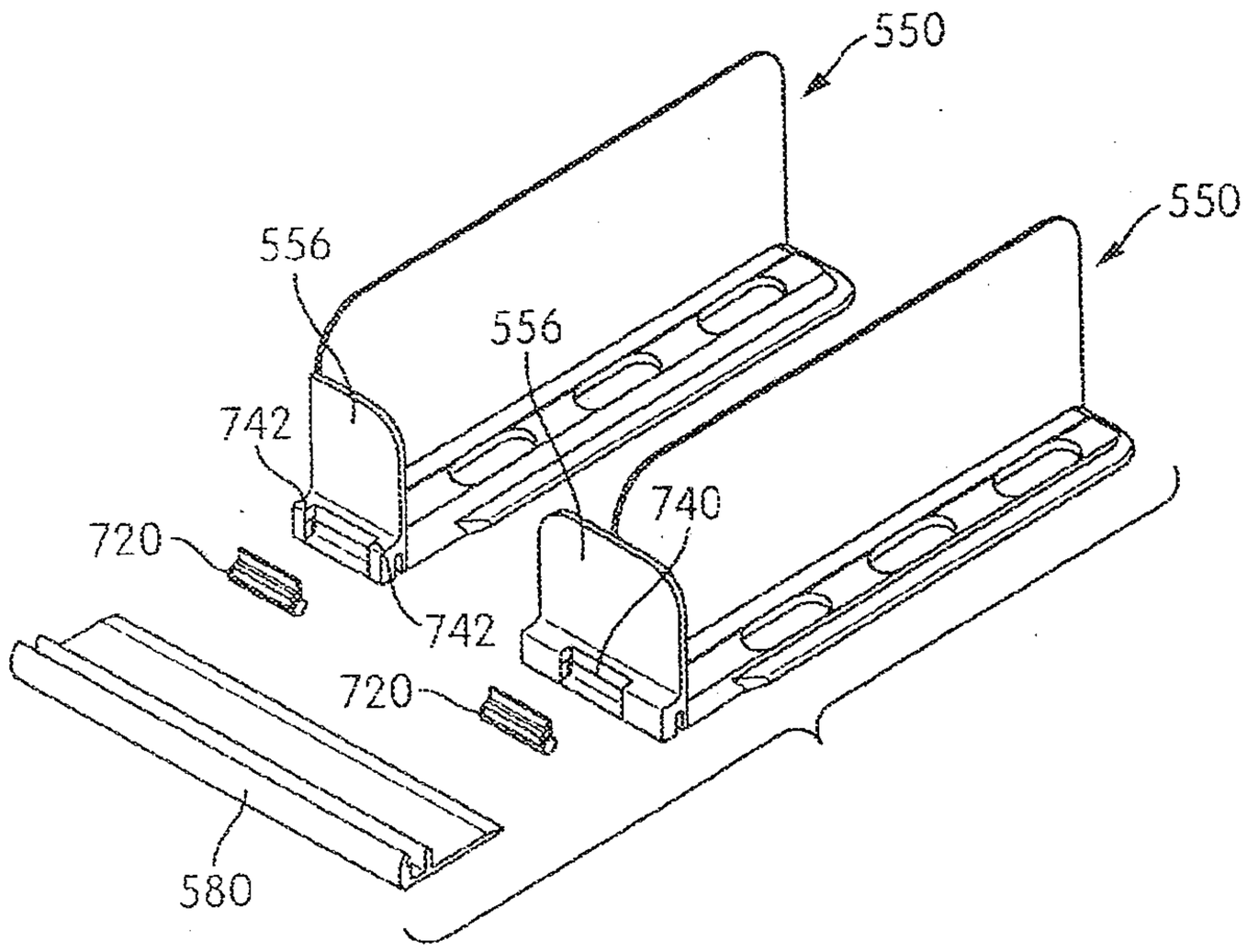


FIG. 86G

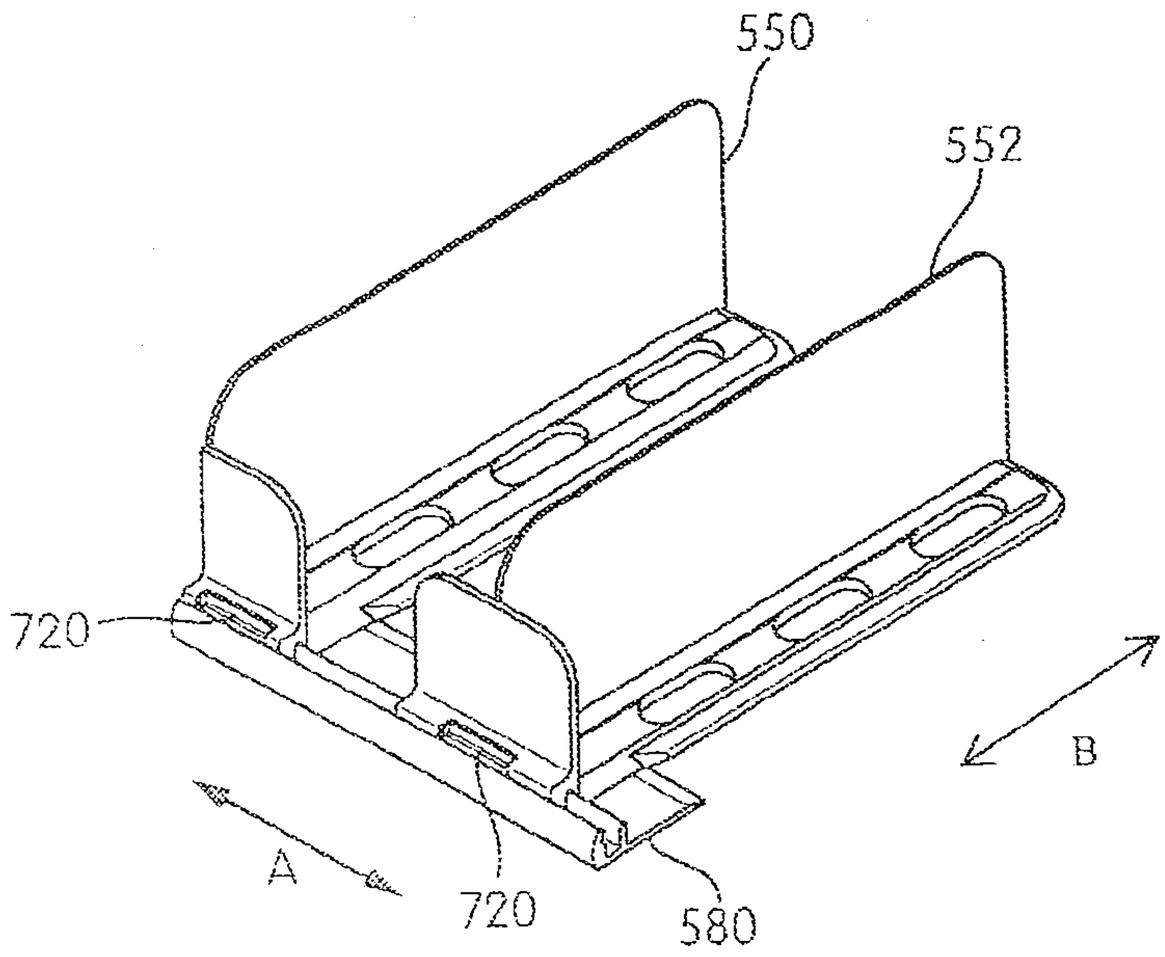


FIG. 86H

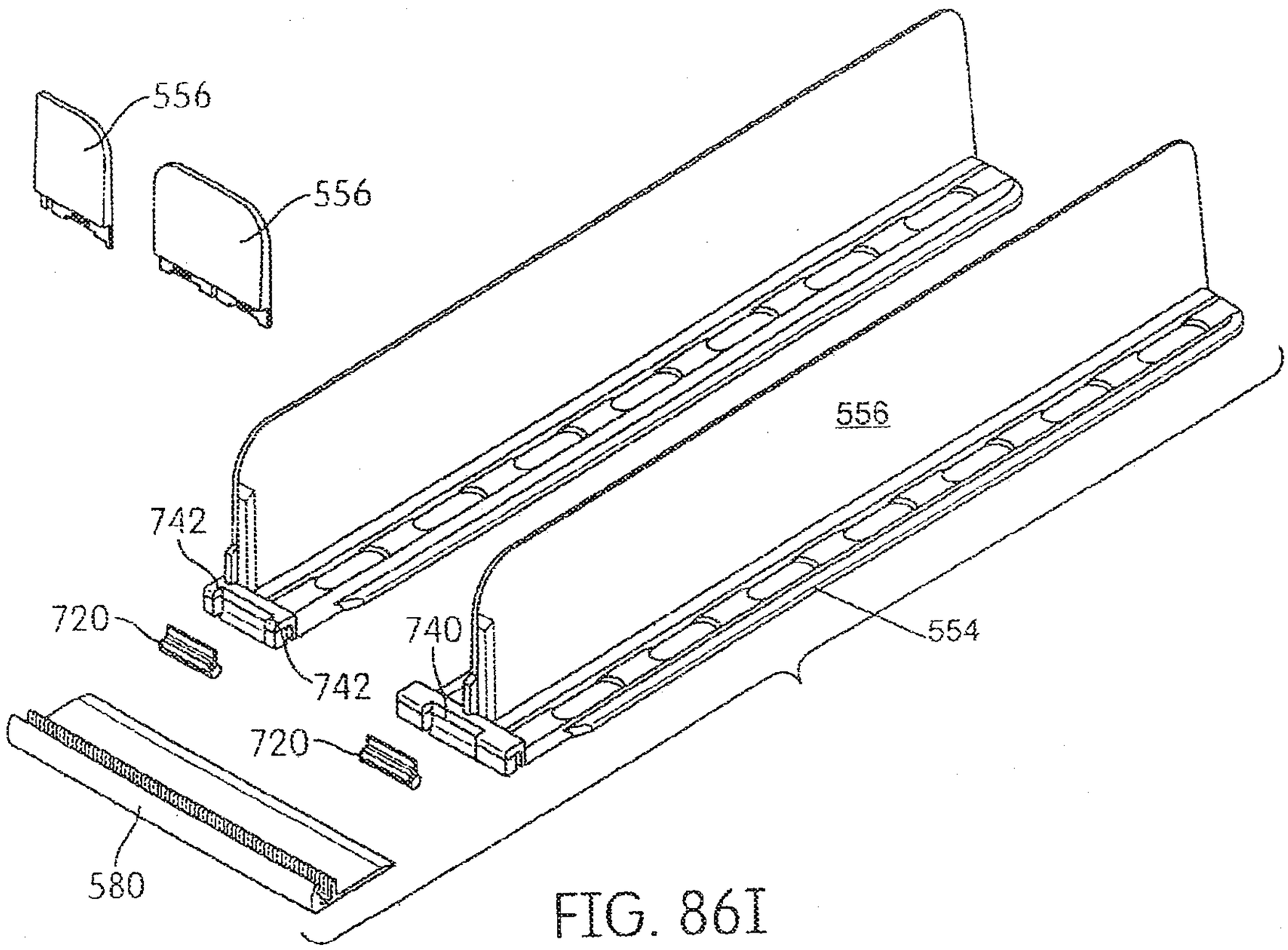


FIG. 86I

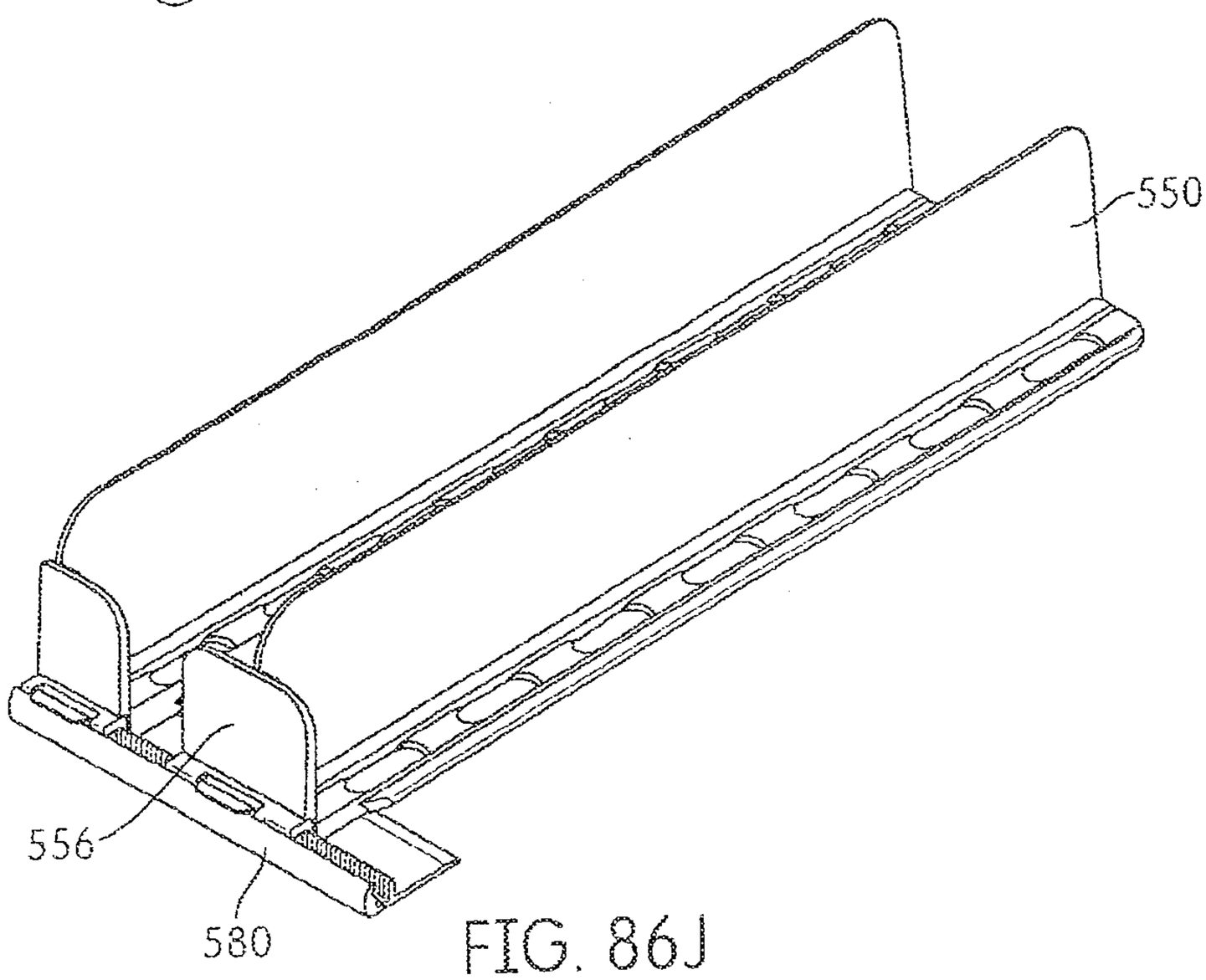


FIG. 86J

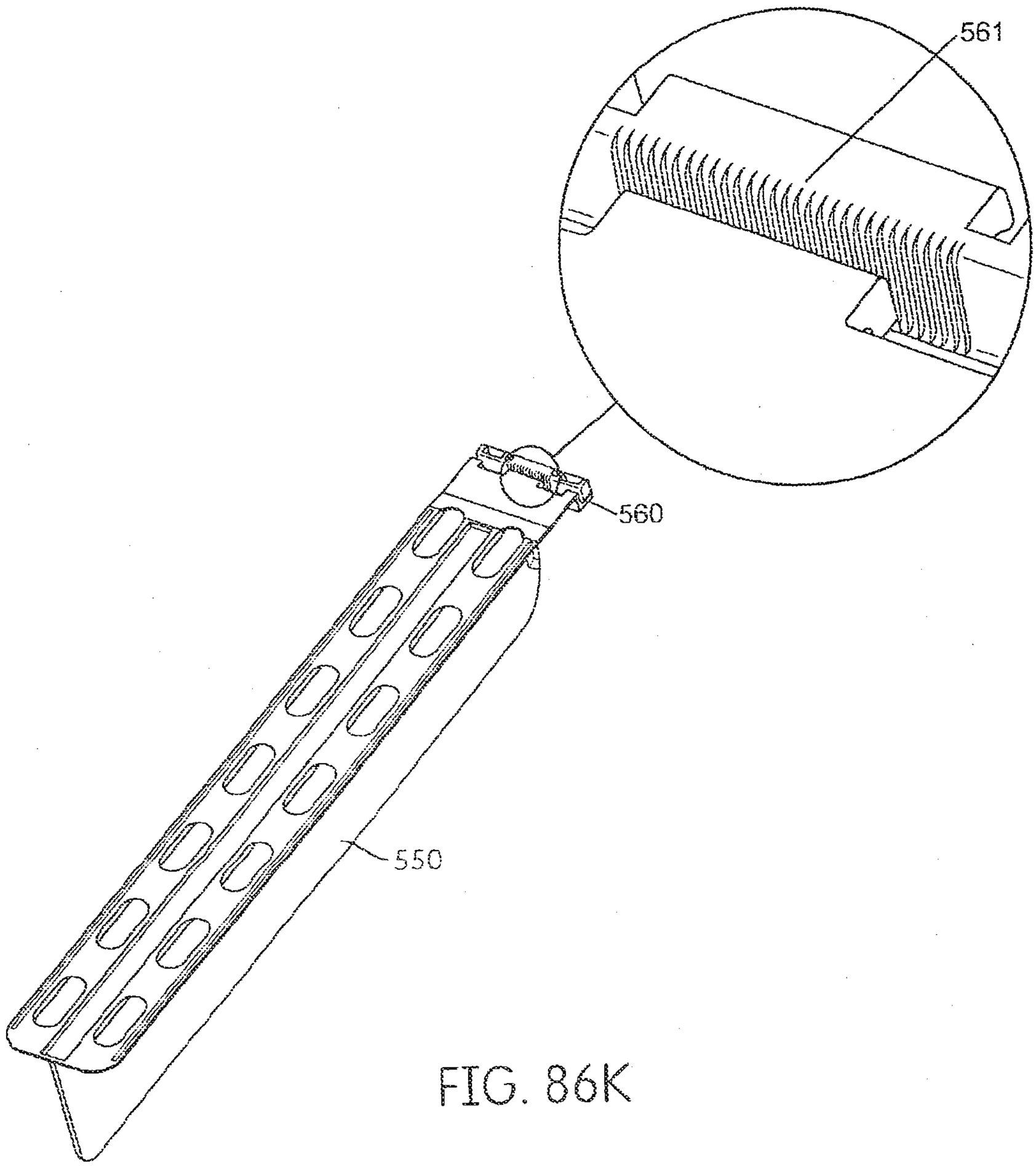


FIG. 86K

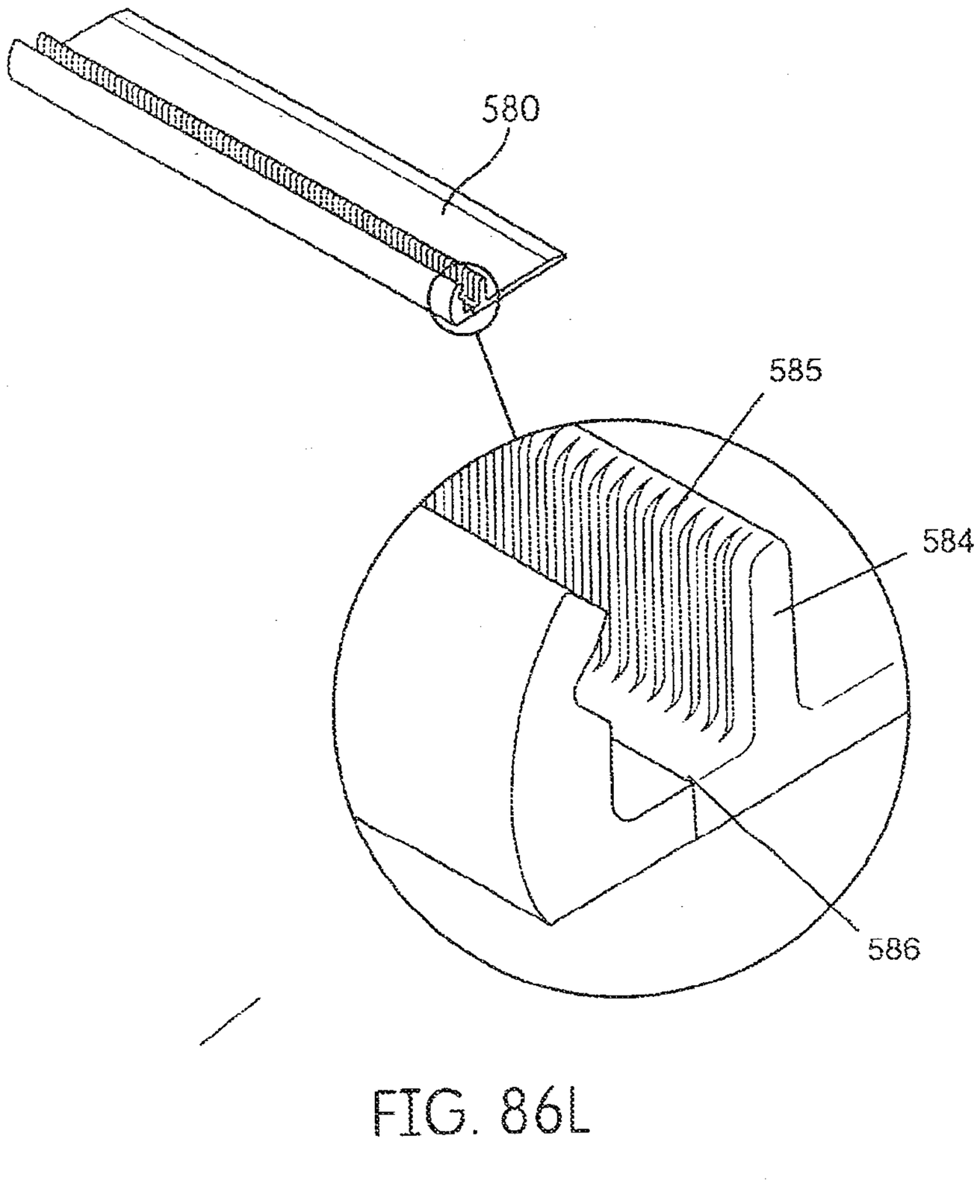


FIG. 86L

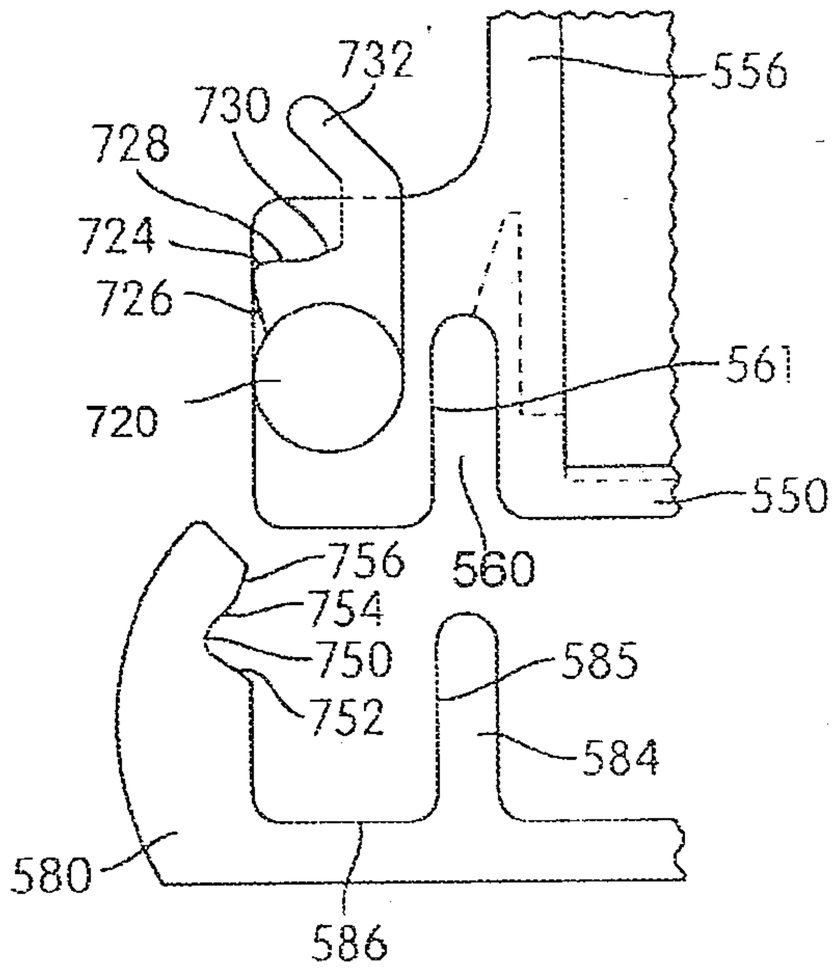


FIG. 87A

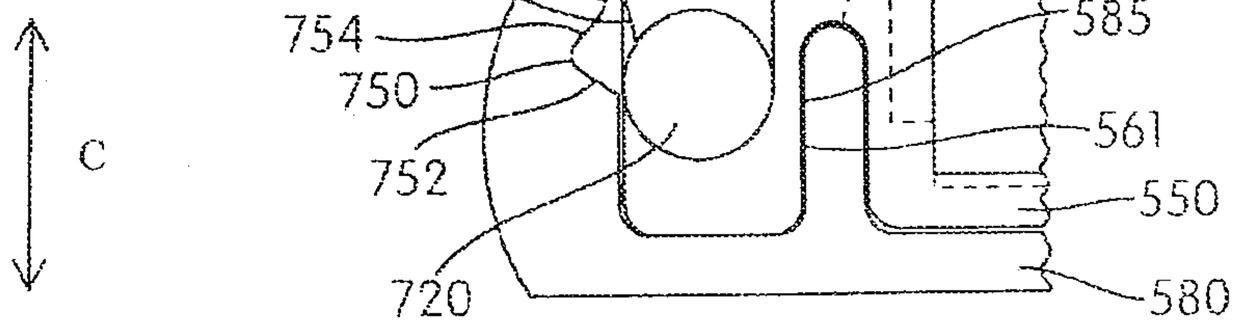


FIG. 87B

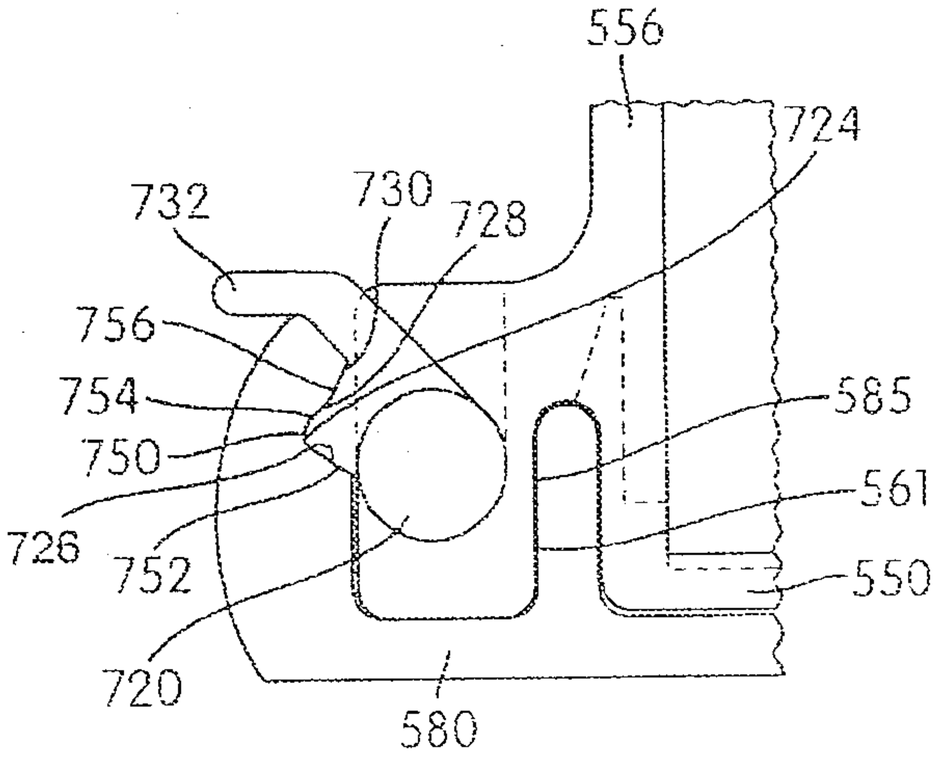


FIG. 87C

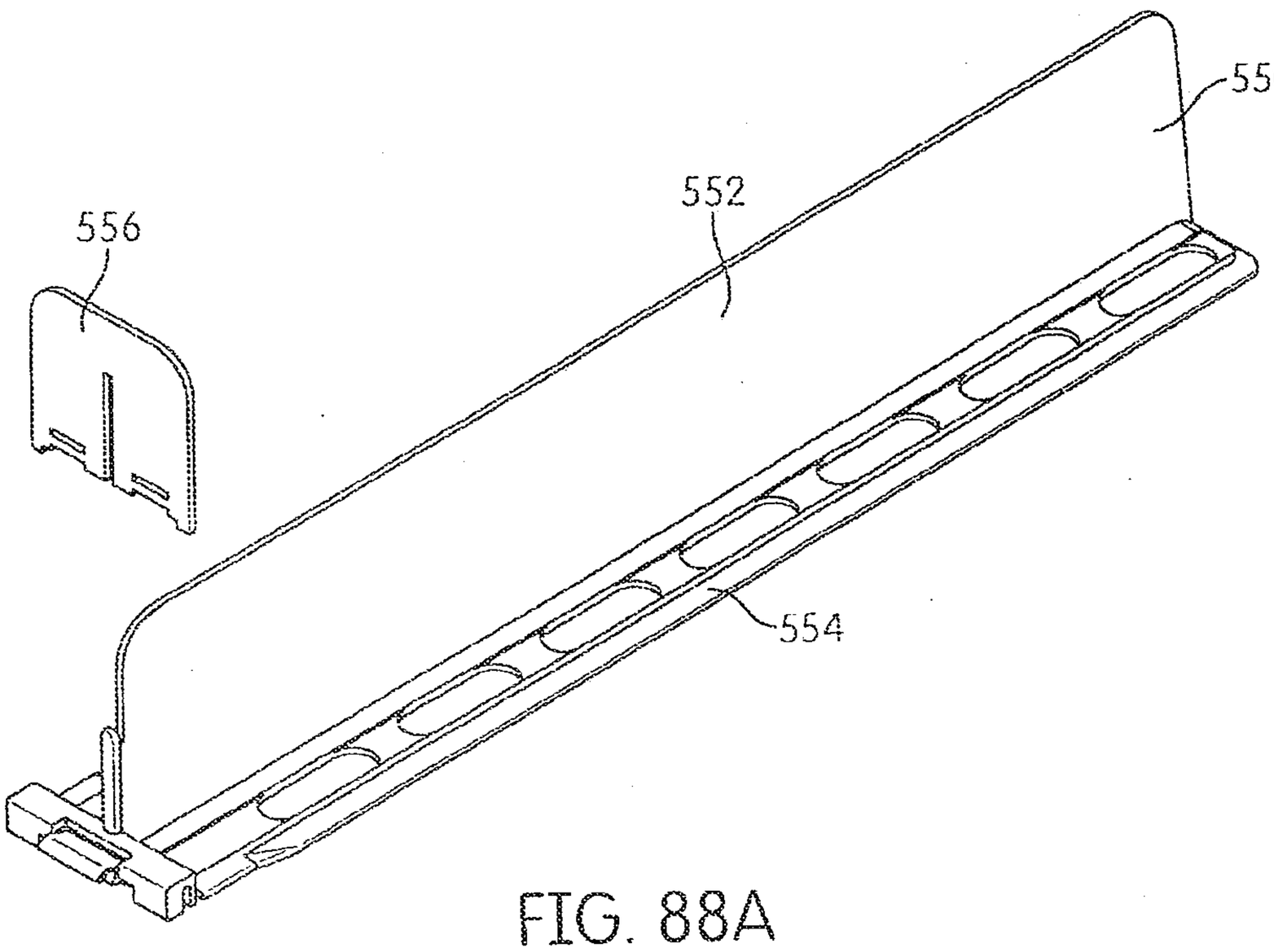


FIG. 88A

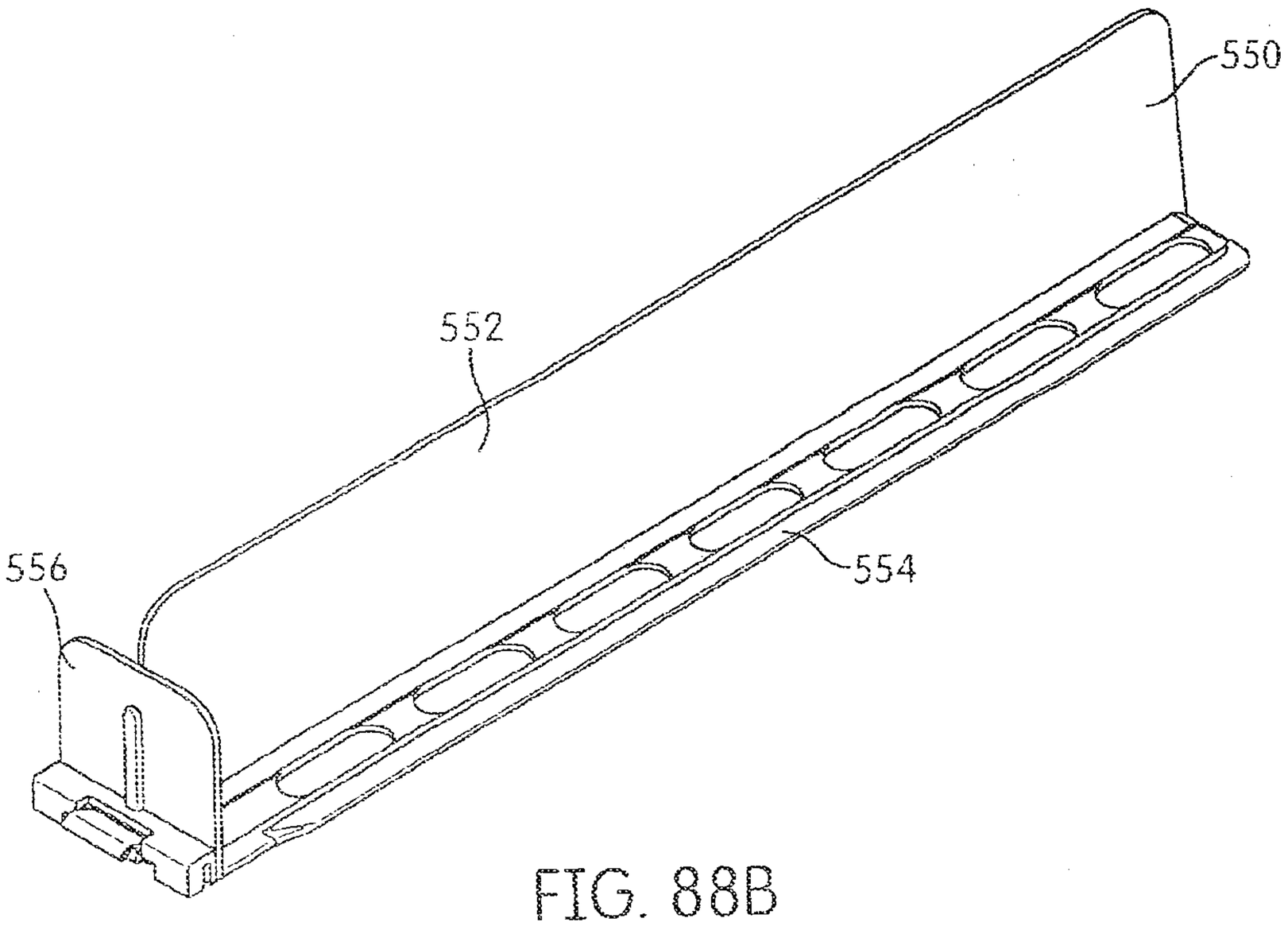


FIG. 88B

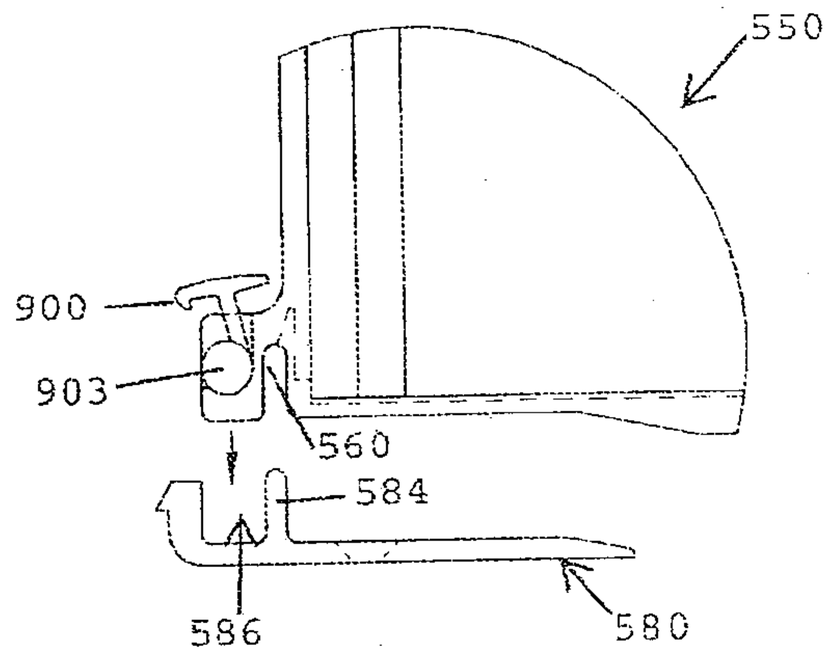


FIG. 89A

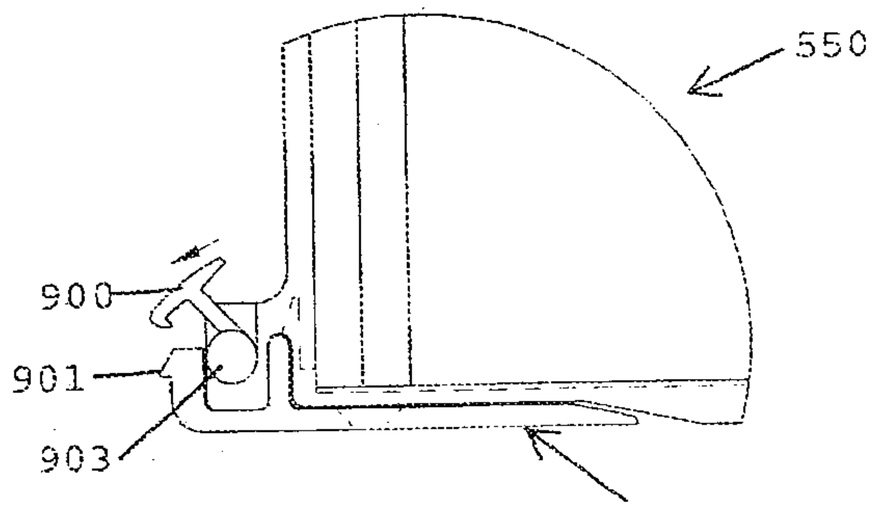


FIG. 89B

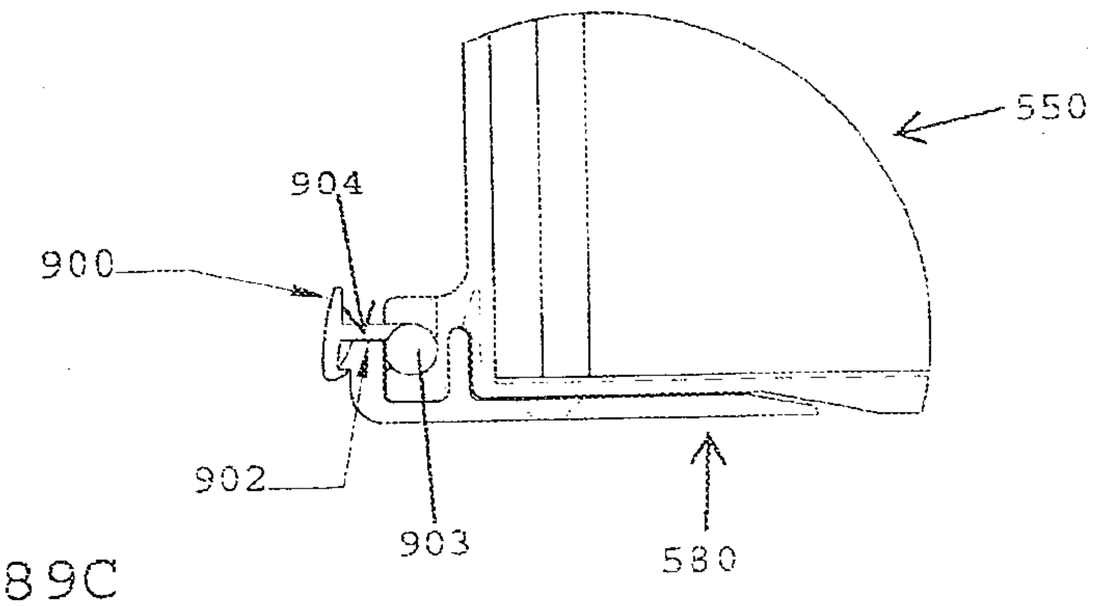


FIG. 89C

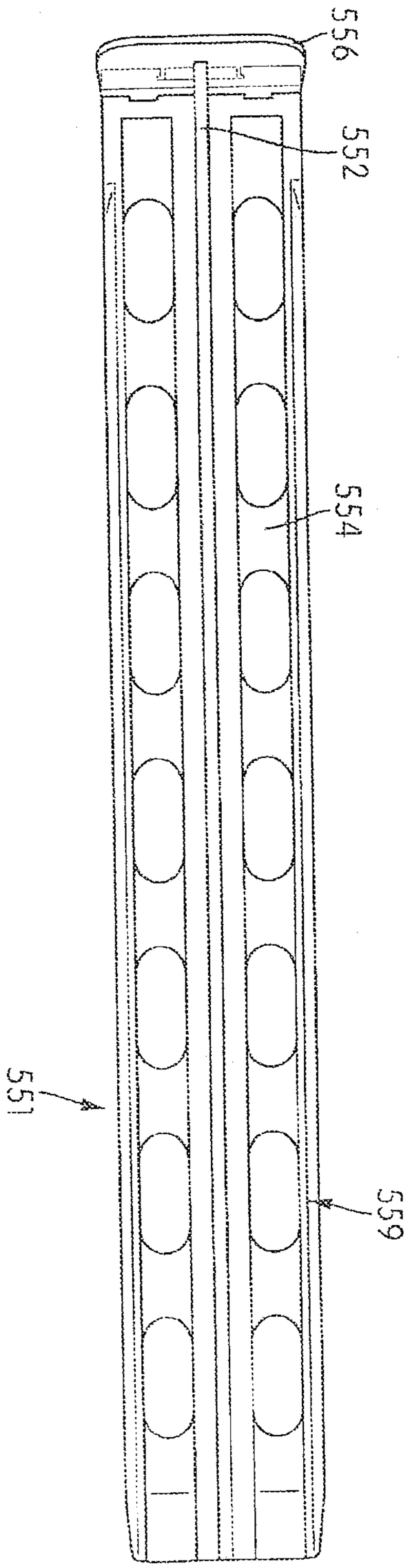


FIG. 90A

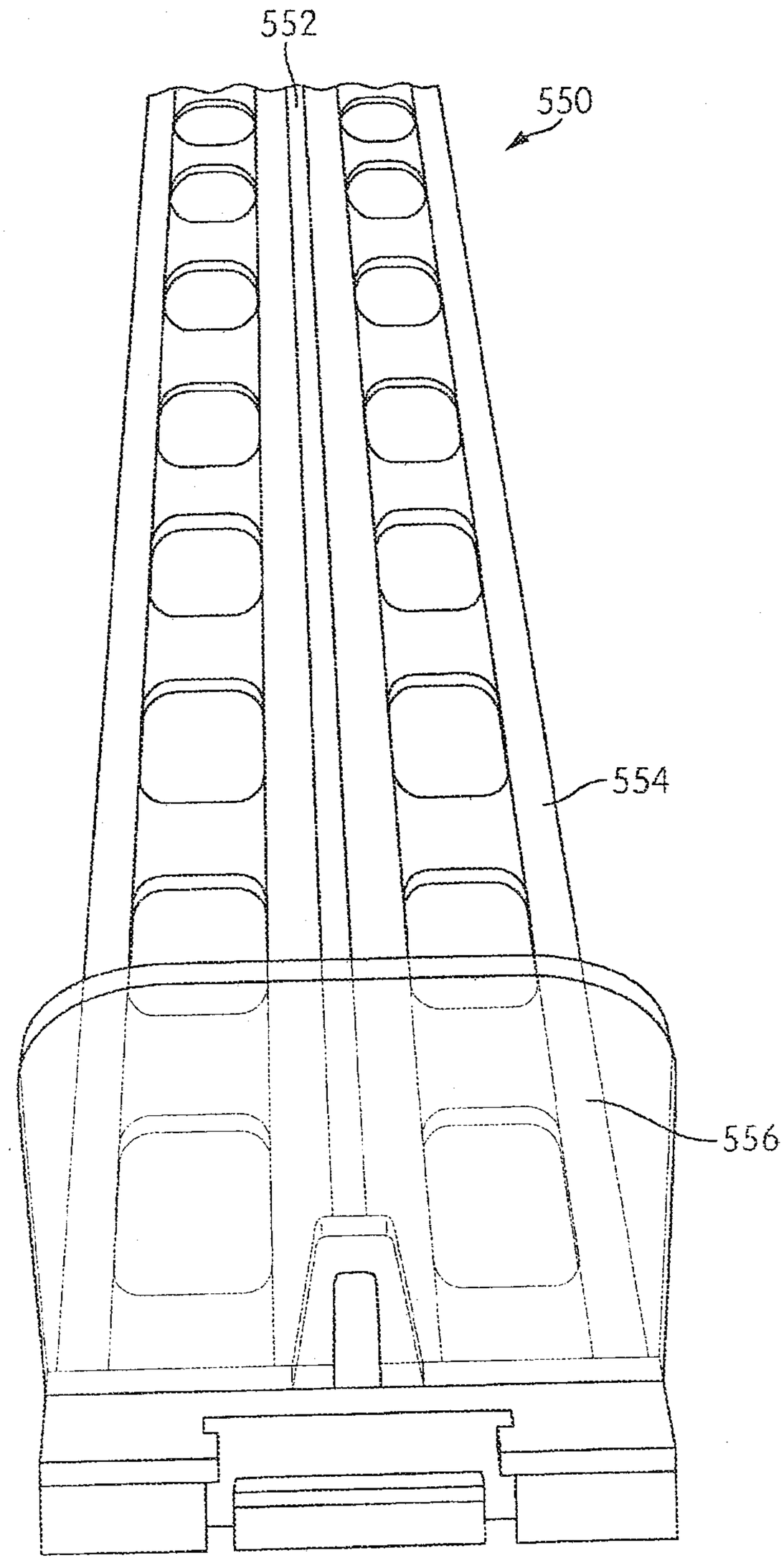


FIG. 90B

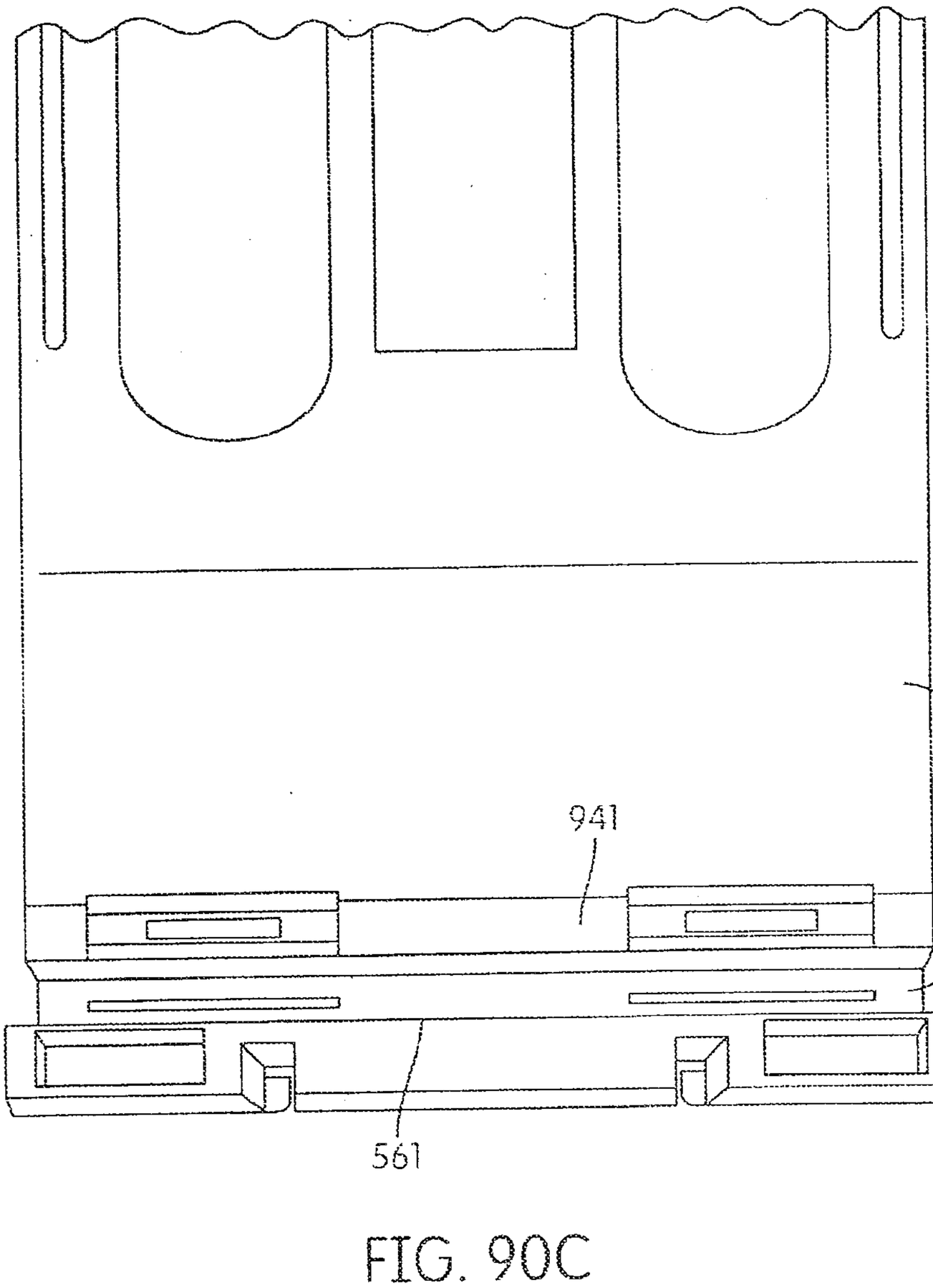


FIG. 90C

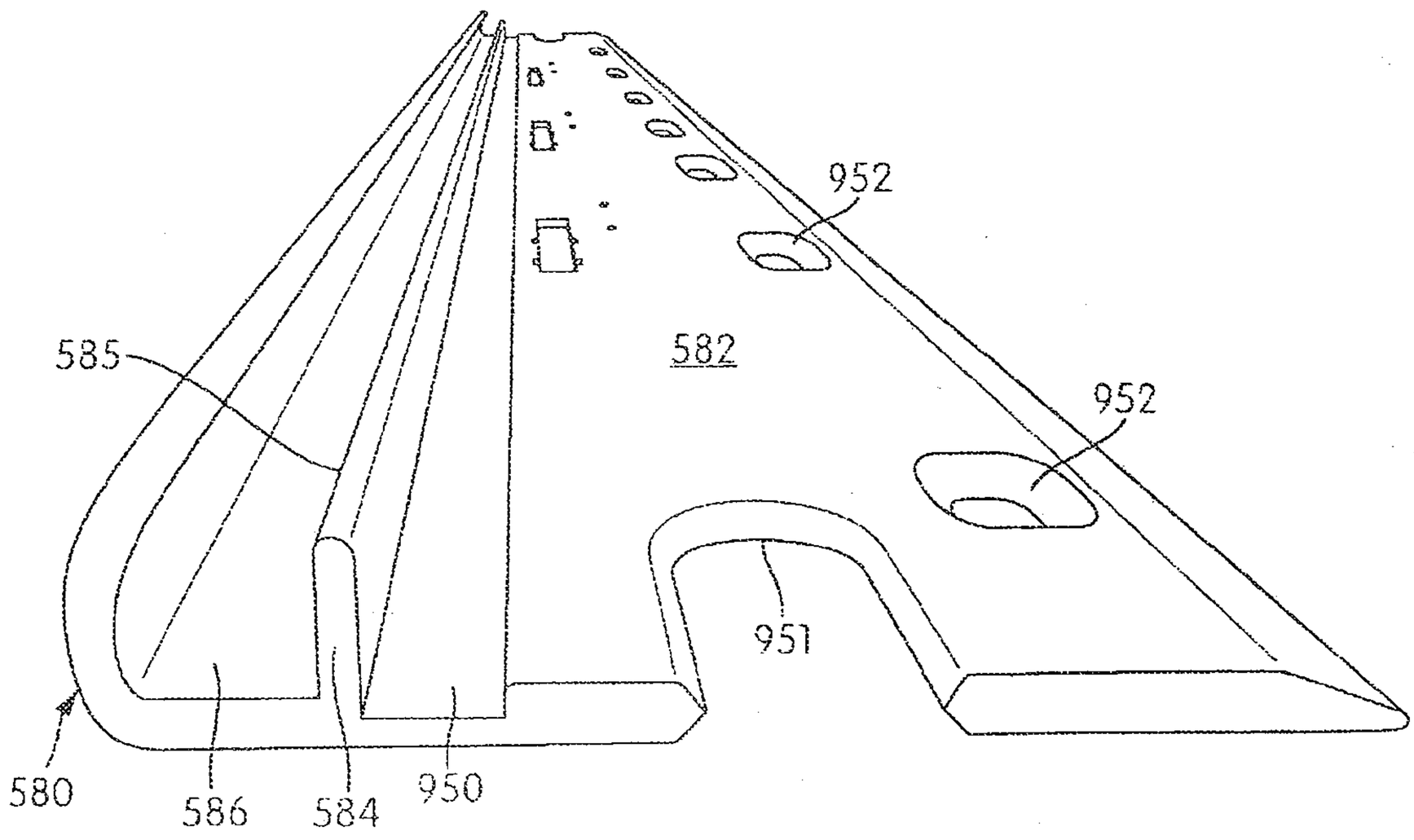


FIG. 90D

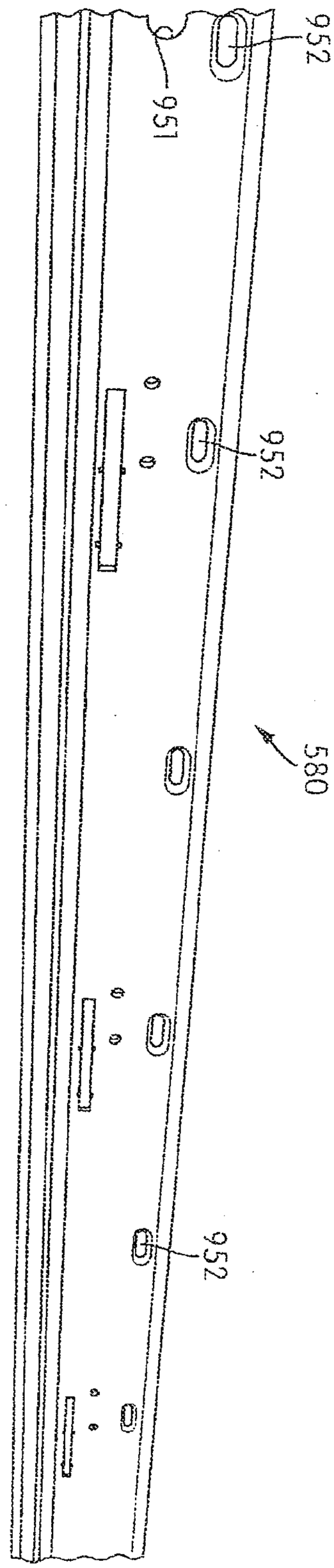


FIG. 90E

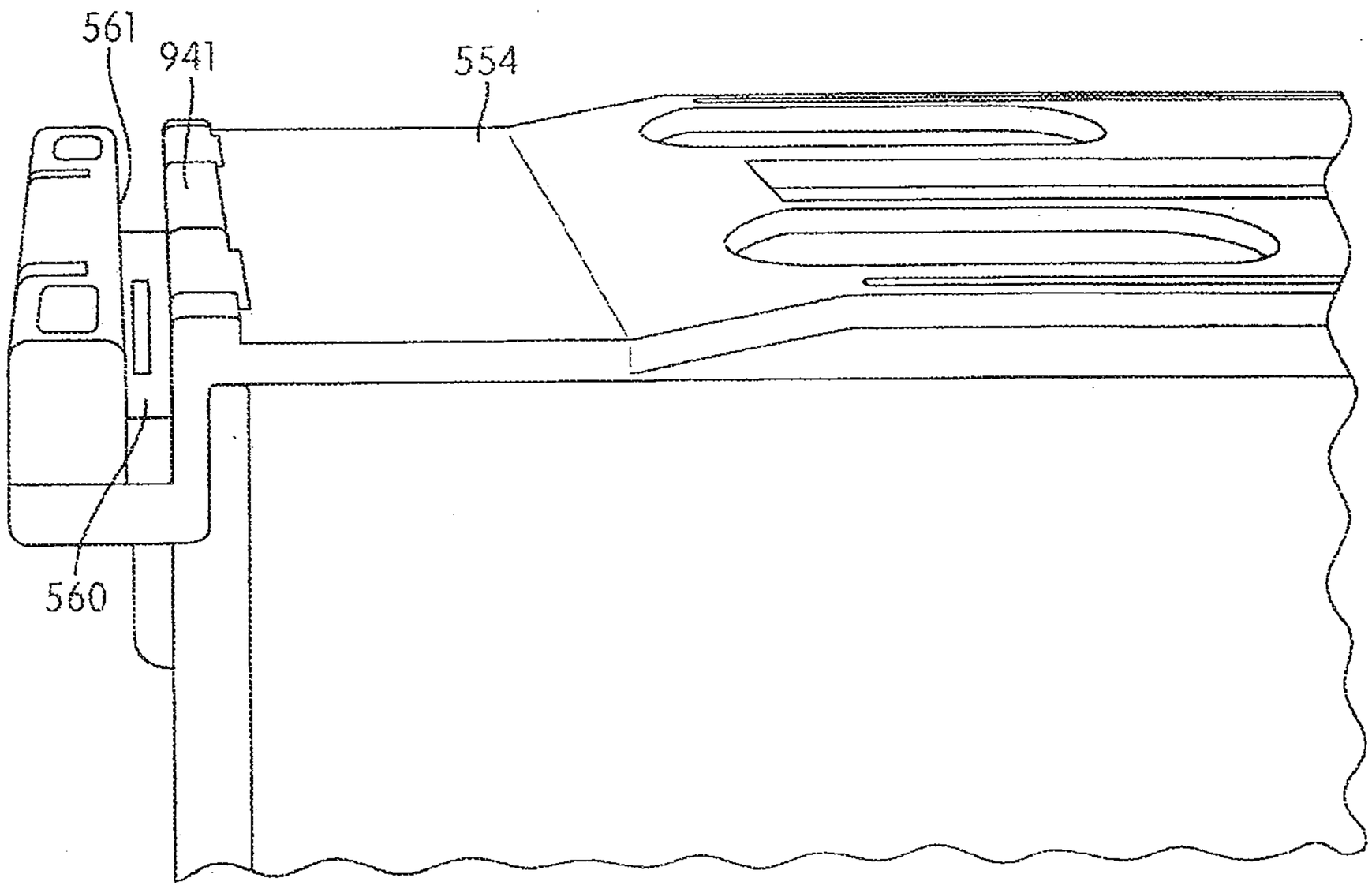


FIG. 90F

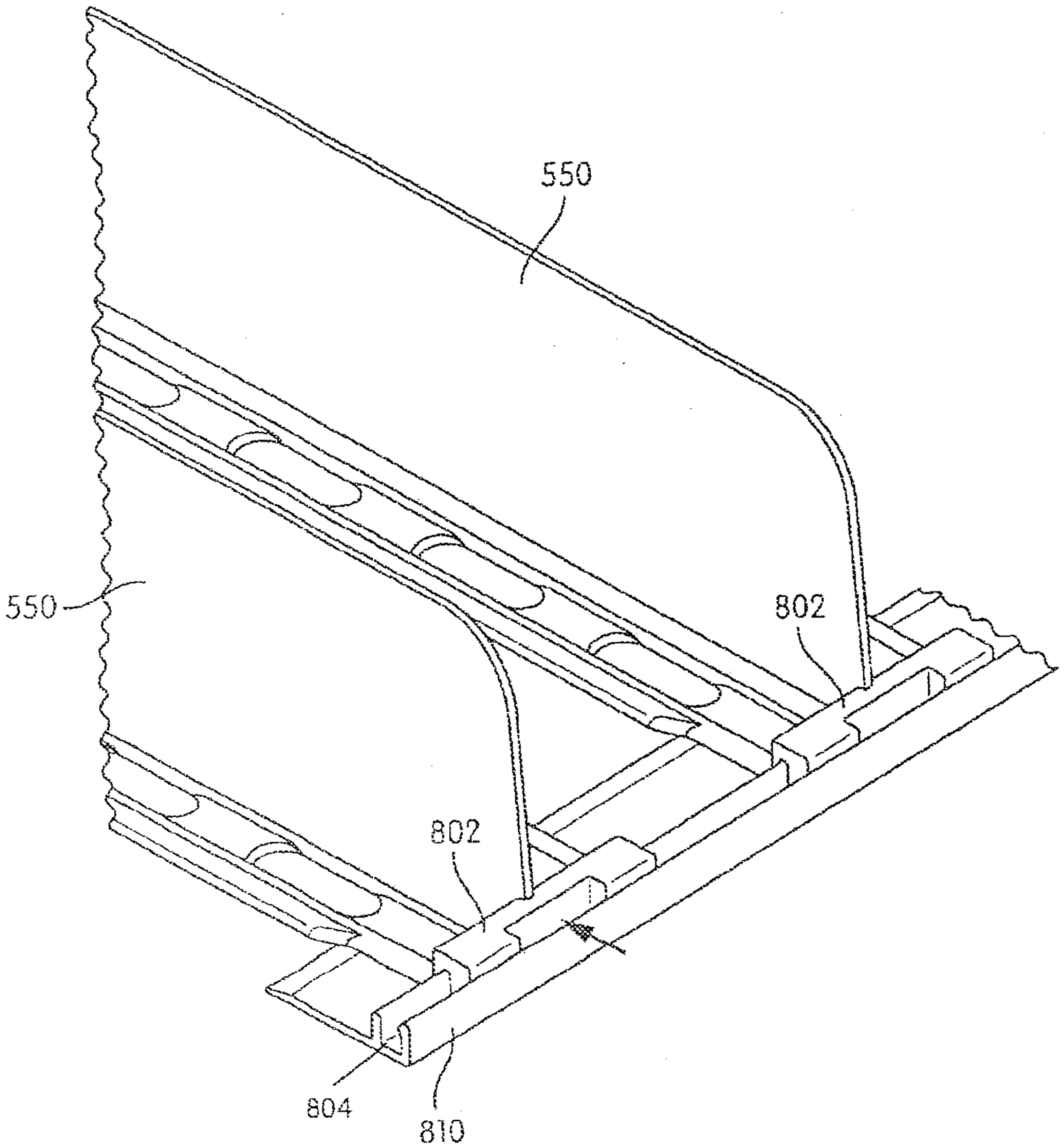
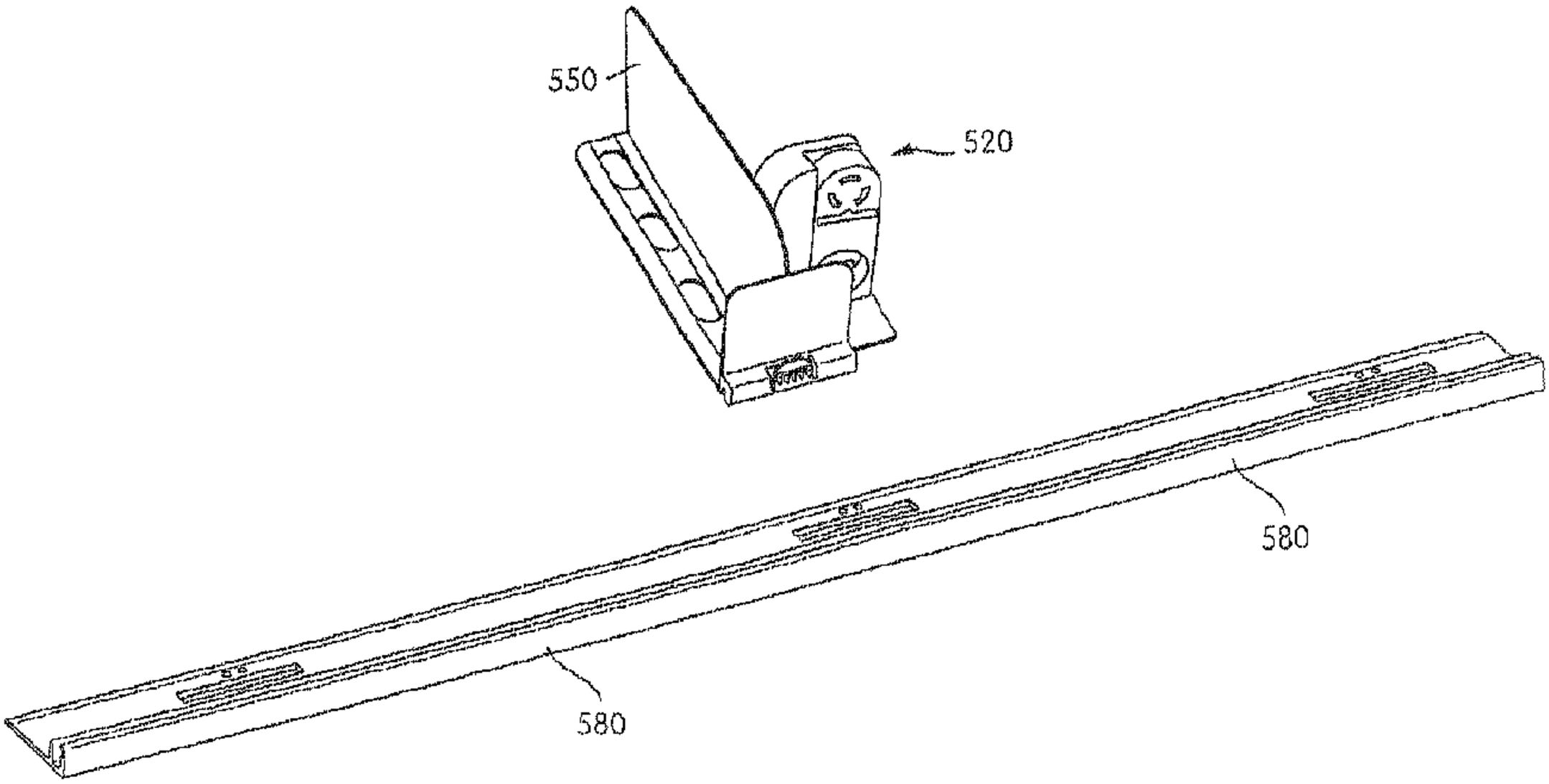


FIG. 91A


550
520
580
580