



(22) Date de dépôt/Filing Date: 2007/06/06

(41) Mise à la disp. pub./Open to Public Insp.: 2007/12/06

(45) Date de délivrance/Issue Date: 2014/09/30

(30) Priorité/Priority: 2006/06/06 (US60/811,281)

(51) Cl.Int./Int.Cl. *E21B 43/119* (2006.01),
E21B 43/116 (2006.01)

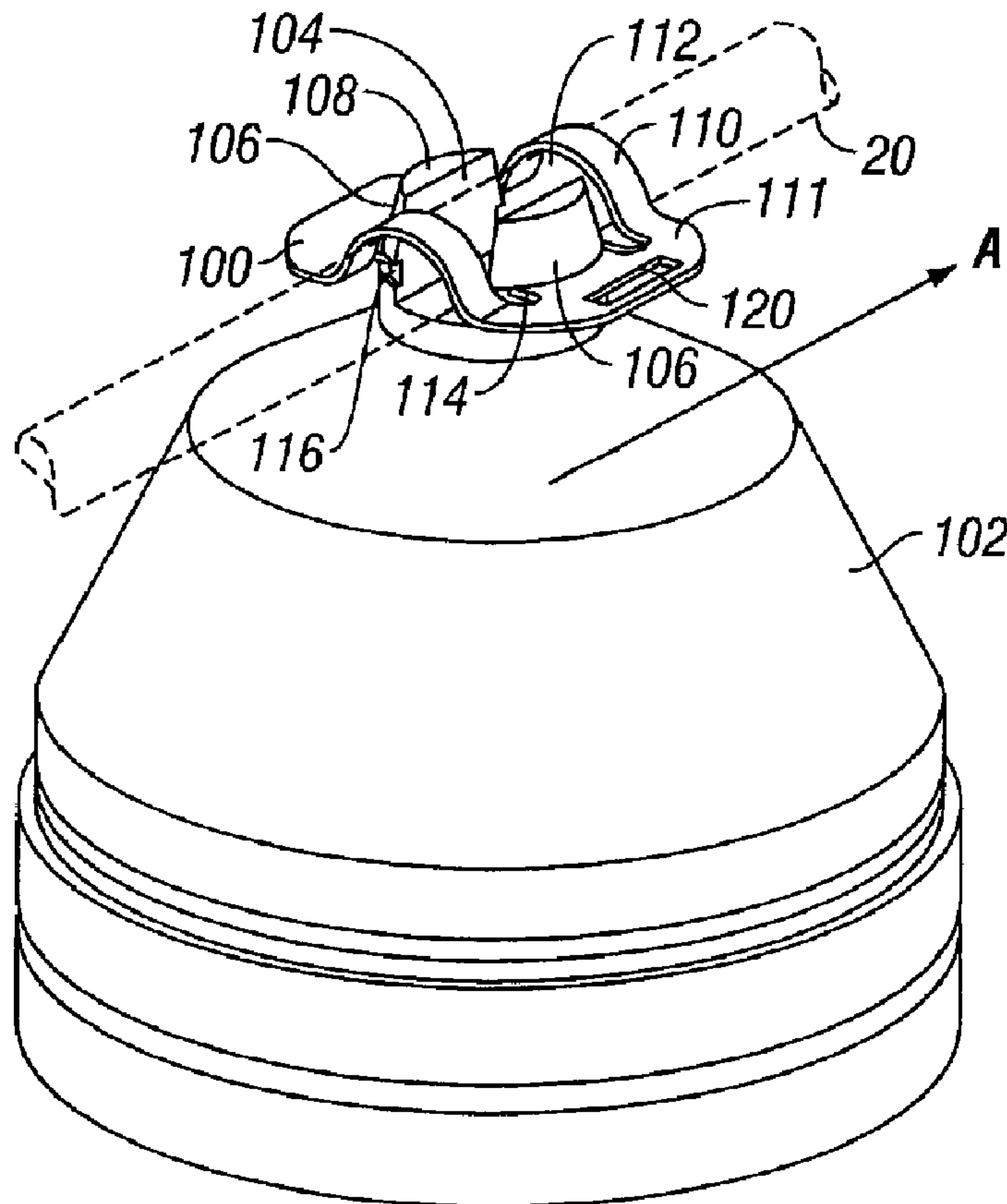
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(54) Titre : ELEMENT DE RETENUE POUR PERFORATEURS

(54) Title: RETENTION MEMBER FOR PERFORATING GUNS



(57) Abrégé/Abstract:

A perforating gun includes a charge tube having shaped charges affixed thereto. Each shaped charge includes a radially outward pointing post adapted to receive a detonator cord. A retention member installed on the post provides a compressive force that

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

energetically couples the detonator cord to the post. The radially outermost portion of the retention member is radially flush with or radially recessed relative to the radially outermost portion of each post. In one embodiment, the retention member has a rounded medial portion, a central opening and a pair of locking tabs that point radially inward to the central opening. Each post may include a slot for receiving the detonator cord and a circumferential groove that is adapted to receive the locking tabs.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

[0025] A perforating gun includes a charge tube having shaped charges affixed thereto. Each shaped charge includes a radially outward pointing post adapted to receive a detonator cord. A retention member installed on the post provides a compressive force that energetically couples the detonator cord to the post. The radially outermost portion of the retention member is radially flush with or radially recessed relative to the radially outermost portion of each post. In one embodiment, the retention member has a rounded medial portion, a central opening and a pair of locking tabs that point radially inward to the central opening. Each post may include a slot for receiving the detonator cord and a circumferential groove that is adapted to receive the locking tabs.

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001]

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention

[0002] The present invention relates to devices and methods for energetically coupling a detonator cord to one or more shaped charges.

Description of the Related Art

[0003] Hydrocarbons, such as oil and gas, are produced from cased wellbores intersecting one or more hydrocarbon reservoirs in a formation. These hydrocarbons flow into the wellbore through perforations in the cased wellbore. Perforations are usually made using a perforating gun loaded with shaped charges. The gun is lowered into the wellbore on electric wireline, slickline, tubing, coiled tubing, or other conveyance device until it is adjacent to the hydrocarbon producing formation. Thereafter, a surface signal actuates a firing head associated with the perforating gun, which then detonates the shaped charges. Projectiles or jets formed by the explosion of the shaped charges penetrate the casing to thereby allow formation fluids to flow through the perforations and into a production string.

[0004] Referring now to **Fig. 1A**, there is shown a conventional perforating gun **10**. The gun **10** includes a charge strip or tube **12**, concentrically positioned in a carrier tube **14**. Fixed within the charge tube **12** are shaped charges **16**. Typically, the charge

tube **12** is oriented in the carrier tube **14** such that the shaped charges **16** on each charge strip (not shown) align with weakened portions or scallops **18** formed in the carrier tube **14**. A detonator cord **20** runs through suitable bores (not shown) in the perforating gun **10**. Referring now to **Fig. 1B**, there is shown a cross-sectional view of the **Fig. 1A** perforating gun **10**. Conventionally, the detonator cord **20** is coupled to the shaped charge **16** with an external clip **28**. As is known, the shaped charge **16** may not detonate if the detonator cord **20** is not held firmly within a groove **30** formed in a post **31** extending from the rear of the shaped charge **16**. Thus, in a typical assembly sequence, the shaped charges **16** are fixed within the charge tube **12** and then the detonator cord **20** is run through the grooves **30** of the shaped charges **16**. Thereafter, the external clips **28** are snapped over the grooves **30** to retain the detonator cord **20** within the grooves **30**. Next, the charge tube **12** is slid into the carrier tube **14**. It should be noted that the annular clearance space **32** separating the charge tube **12** and the carrier tube **14** is relatively small in the region of the groove **30** and external clip **28**. It should be noted that conventionally, the external clip **28** lies radially outward of the post **31** formed on the shaped charge **16**. Disadvantageously, during installation of the charge tube **12** in the carrier tube **14**, the external clip **28** sometimes hangs up with, gets caught by, and/or scrapes against the carrier tube **14** and becomes dislodged or damaged. If the external clip **28** is so damaged, the detonator cord **20** can fall out of the groove **30**, in which case the shaped charge **16** may not detonate. An incomplete detonation of the shaped charges **16** can impair the effectiveness of the perforating activity and necessitate remedial work.

[0005] Thus, what is needed is a perforating gun that can be assembled without impairing the ballistic coupling of the detonator cord to the shaped charges. The present invention addresses these and other disadvantages of the prior art.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] In some aspects, the present invention provides a perforating gun for perforating a wellbore that has enhanced energetic couplings between the detonator cord and the shaped charges. In one embodiment, the gun includes a charge tube
5 disposed in a carrier tube and shaped charges fixed in the charge tube. Each shaped charge has a body or casing on which is formed a radially outward pointing, substantially cylindrical post. The post has a slot that receives a detonator cord. To ensure that the detonator cord remains energetically coupled to the shaped charge, a retention member installed on the post captures the detonator cord and compresses the
10 cord against the post.

[0007] In some embodiments, only a minor portion of the retention member in contact with the detonator cord extends radially beyond the radially outermost portion of each post. In other words, a major portion of the retention member is radially recessed
15 relative to the radially outermost portion of the post. As used herein, "a major portion" means at least slightly more than half, and in some embodiments significantly more than half. In other embodiments, substantially all of the retention member lies radially flush with or is radially recessed relative to the radially outermost portion of each post. When the charge tube is inserted into the carrier tube during installation, a significantly
20 smaller portion of the retention member, in comparison with conventional means, is likely to undesirably contact either an edge or the interior of the carrier tube. Thus, it is less likely that the retention member will in some way strike the carrier tube as a result of mishandling. Because the retention member is therefore less likely to be damaged or

dislodged during such mishandling, there is a correspondingly greater likelihood that the energetic coupling between the detonator cord and the shaped charges will remain intact during assembly and subsequent deployment, increasing the likelihood of a successful perforating operation.

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[0008] Furthermore, embodiments of retention members in accordance with the present invention include a portion that restricts movement of the retention member along a long axis of the charge tube. Such a portion can restrict movement by bumping up against or otherwise interferingly engaging with a post. For instance, in one embodiment, the retention member is formed as a generally plate like member having a curved medial portion, a central opening and a pair of locking tabs that point radially inward to the central opening. The central opening is defined by two bridge portions that are spaced apart along the long axis of the charge tube. The post of the shaped charge includes a slot for receiving the detonator cord and a circumferential groove that is adapted to receive the locking tabs of the retention member. During installation, the detonator cord is positioned in the post slot and the retention member is positioned over and pressed onto the post. As the post enters the central opening, the locking tabs interferingly engage the outer surfaces of the post and deform. Once the locking tabs reach the circumferential groove, the tabs spring back to their original shape and seat within the groove. When so positioned, the detonator cord is nested in the curved medial portion and squeezed against the shaped charge, *i.e.*, squeezed in the post slot, by the retention member. Advantageously, if the retention member is axially jarred, one of the bridge portions will strike the post and thereby restrict further axial motion and

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possible dislodgement of the retention member from the post. To remove the retention member, tool such as a rod or shaft is inserted into a slot or hole formed in the retention member. The shank member is positioned against the post and rotated to apply a dislodging force to the retention member.

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[0009] In another embodiment, the retention member includes two pairs of fingers formed in the medial region. The fingers are two spaced apart elements that can have a bow-like shape for securing the detonator cord. For this embodiment, during installation, the retention member is first positioned over and pressed onto the post until
10 the locking tabs seat within the groove. Thereafter, the detonator cord is pressed between the fingers and positioned in the post slot. The so-called "tips" of the fingers may remain radially flush with or recessed relative to the radially outermost portion of the post.

15 **[0010]** It should be understood that examples of the more important features of the invention have been summarized rather broadly in order that the detailed description thereof that follows may be better understood, and in order that the contributions to the art may be appreciated. There are, of course, additional features of the invention that will be described hereinafter.

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0011] For detailed understanding of the present invention, references should be made to the following detailed description of the preferred embodiments, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which like elements have been given
5 like numerals and wherein:

Fig. 1A schematically illustrates a conventional perforating gun train;

Fig. 1B schematically illustrates a sectional view of the **Fig. 1A** perforating gun;

Figs. 2 and 3 schematically illustrate one embodiment of a detonator cord retention member according to the present invention;

10 **Fig. 4** schematically illustrates an embodiment of a detonator cord retention member according to the present invention that utilizes one or more fingers;

Fig. 5 schematically illustrates an embodiment of a detonator cord retention member according to the present invention that uses a support member, and

15 **Fig. 6** schematically illustrates an embodiment of a detonator cord retention member according to the present invention that uses a flexure element.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0012] The present invention relates to devices and methods for facilitating the assembly and enhancing the reliability of wellbore perforating tools. The present invention is susceptible to embodiments of different forms. There are shown in the
5 drawings, and herein will be described in detail, specific embodiments of the present invention with the understanding that the present disclosure is to be considered an exemplification of the principles of the invention, and is not intended to limit the invention to that illustrated and described herein.

10 **[0013]** Referring now to **Figs. 2** and **3**, there is shown one embodiment of a retention member **100** that energetically couples a detonator cord **20** to a shaped charge **102**. The detonator cord **20** and shaped charge **102** are generally similar to that already described in connection with **Fig. 1A**. Merely for convenience, the retention member **100** will be hereafter referred to as a “clip.” However, it should be understood
15 that no particular shape, dimension or other characteristic is implied by the term “clip.” As will be seen, the clip **100** is less susceptible to damage during assembly and handling.

[0014] The clip **100** presses a detonator cord **20** against the shaped charge **102**
20 to energetically couple the detonator cord **20** to the shaped charge **102**. The clip **100** secures onto a post **106** formed on one end of the shaped charge **102**, *i.e.*, the portion opposite the liner (not shown). The detonator cord **20** is captured in a slot **104** formed in the post **106**. In one embodiment, only a radially outermost portion of the clip **100** lies

radially beyond the posts **106**. This portion is generally defined by a section of the clip **100** in contact with the detonator cord **20**. Thus, when compared to the conventional clip **28** shown in **Fig. 1B**, a significantly reduced portion of the clip **100** would be susceptible to contact with a carrier tube **14** when the charge tube **12** is slid into the carrier tube **14** during assembly of a perforating gun. In other embodiments of the present invention, substantially all of the clip **100** lies radially flush with or is radially recessed from the radially outermost portion of each post **106**.

[0015] In one embodiment, the clip **100** is a thin plate like member that includes an arcuate or curved medial portion **110**, a central opening **112**, and radially inwardly pointing tabs **114**. The medial portion **110** is shaped to overlies the detonator cord **20**. The height and thickness of the medial portion **110** are controlled to minimize the amount of the medial portion **110** that extends radially beyond the post **106**. While the medial portion **110** is shown as closely conforming to the cross-sectional profile of the detonator cord **20**, such a shape is not necessary. Other adequate shapes can include squared or circular profiles. The medial portion **110** includes one or more bridge portions **111** that are spaced apart along a long axis **A** of the perforating gun **10** (**Fig. 1A**). For purposes of this discussion, a radial direction is a direction normal or orthogonal to the long axis **A**. The central opening **112** has a diameter sized to fit substantially around the post **106**. The inwardly pointing tabs **114** are flexible members that are adapted to snap and seat within a circumferential groove **116** formed on the outer circumferential surface of the post **106**. In one arrangement, the clip **100** and the post **106** are relatively dimensioned such that the clip **100** applies a compressive force

onto the detonator cord **20** when installed in the post **106**. Optionally, a handling slot **120** can be formed in the clip **100**. The handling slot **120** is dimensioned to receive a removal tool such as a screwdriver shank or other device that can be used to manipulate the clip **100**. Further, while two bridge portions **111** are shown, a single
5 bridge portion can also be used in certain embodiments.

[0016] During assembly of a perforating gun, the shaped charge **12** is fitted into a charge tube **14** and the detonator cord **20** is wound or threaded through the slots **104** formed in the posts **106** of the shaped charge **102**. Next, the clip **100** is positioned over
10 and pressed onto the posts **106**. Because the tabs **114** interferingly engage the outer diameter of the post **106**, pressure is applied to temporarily deform the tabs **114** as the post **106** slides through the central opening **112**. Once the tabs **114** are adjacent to the circumferential groove **116**, the tabs **114** snap back to the original shape and seat within the groove **116**. At this stage, the detonator cord **20** will be securely nested in the
15 medial portion **110** and compressed against the shaped charge **102**. Furthermore, the bridge portions **111** act as axial guards that restrict movement of the clip **100** along the long axis **A** of the perforating gun **10** (**Fig. 1A**). For example, if the clip **100** gets caught on a portion of the carrier tube **14** or other part of the perforating gun **10**, one of the bridge portions **111** will bump up against the post **106** and prevent the clip **100** from
20 sliding off the post **106**. It will be appreciated that this interfering engagement between the bridge **111** and the post **106** can reduce the likelihood that the clip **100** will become dislodged from the post **106** during installation.

[0017] To remove the clip **100**, a suitable removal tool (not shown) such as a screwdriver, rod, or bar may be inserted into a handling slot **120**, or hole of another configuration, which is adapted to receive such removal tool. The removal tool is then positioned to create a fulcrum point on the post **106** and rotated. This rotation readily
5 snaps the clip **100** off the shaped charge **102**.

[0018] Referring now to **Figs. 3** and **4**, there is shown another embodiment of a clip **150** for energetically coupling a detonator cord **20** to a shaped charge **102**. The clip **150** includes two axially spaced apart sets of pairs of fingers **152**, **154**, a pair of tabs
10 **156**, and a central opening **158**. The pairs of fingers **152**, **154** are formed in a portion that underlies the detonator cord **102** and are formed of a flexible material that can bend outward to receive the detonator cord **20** and thereafter seeks to retain its original shape to capture the detonator cord **102**. The height of the fingers **152**, **154** are
15 selected to minimize the portion of the fingers **152** and **154** that extends radially beyond the post **106**. While the fingers **152**, **154** are shown as curved members that conform to the cross-sectional profile of the detonator cord **20**, such a shape is not necessary. In other embodiments, no portion of the fingers **152**, **154** extends radially beyond the post **106**; *i.e.*, the tips of the fingers **152**, **154** are radially flush with or radially recessed from the radially outermost portion of each post. As in the **Fig. 3** embodiment, the tabs **156**
20 are generally flexible members adapted to seat within the circumferential groove **116**. Optionally, a handling slot (not shown) can be formed in one or both of the wings **160** and **162**. Further, while two pairs of fingers, **152** and **154**, are shown, a single pair of fingers can also be used in certain embodiments.

[0019] It will be noted that any part of a retention member that serves to grasp the detonator cord is herein generally referred to as a grasping portion. Thus, a grasping portion may be configured as a bridge portion **111**, or as a pair of fingers **152** or **154**, or a combination of two or more of these, or the like. While any of the embodiments thereof may be substantially arcuate, which may be particularly convenient in the case of an axially cylindrical detonator cord, the precise geometry of the grasping portion is not critical, provided that the grasping portion securely holds the detonator cord in place relative to the post by inhibiting or, in some embodiments, preventing radial movement of such detonator cord and, in some embodiments, that it does not extend, or does not extend significantly, beyond the post **106** in a radial direction. The result of this reduced extension is that it is less likely than conventional means to be damaged or dislodged during installation of the charge tube **14** in the carrier tube **12**. In some embodiments of the present invention detonator cord compression may be employed or may result and is further desirable, to ensure excellent contact between the detonator cord and the shaped charge, thereby increasing the probability of successful detonation. In some embodiments axial movement of the detonator cord **20** and/or post **106** relative to one another is also inhibited, notably where the retention member or clip **100** is configured with, as grasping members, paired bridge portions **111** or sets of paired fingers **152**, **154** such that axial movement of the detonator cord **20** is stopped, in either direction, by the interaction of such grasping member with both the detonator cord **20** and the post **106**.

[0020] It is contemplated that suitable materials for the described embodiments include hardened spring steel and other metallic and non-metallic flexible materials. However, the present invention is not limited to any particular material. Furthermore, while integral locking tabs have been described, it should be understood that other
5 suitable locking arrangements can be utilized to secure the retention member to the post. Still further, the teachings of the present invention can be advantageously applied to any number of conventional perforating gun arrangements, not merely the arrangements previously described. Still further, while certain features have been shown and discussed with respect to certain figures, it should be understood that the
10 features discussed can be interchangeable among the several figures.

[0021] Referring now to **Fig. 5**, there is shown another embodiment of a retention member **500** that energetically couples a detonator cord **20** (**Fig. 2**) to a shaped charge **102** (**Fig. 2**). The **Fig. 5** embodiment is generally similar to the **Fig. 2** embodiment and
15 includes an arcuate medial portion **504**, a central opening **506**, radially inwardly pointing tabs **508**, and a handling slot **510**. These elements have already been discussed with reference to **Fig. 2** and will not be discussed in further detail. Referring now to **Figs. 2** and **5**, the medial portion **504**, which includes one or more bridge portions **512**, is shaped to overlie the detonator cord **20** and press the detonator cord **20** against the
20 shaped charge **102** to energetically couple the detonator cord **20** to the shaped charge **102**. To enhance the coupling of the detonator cord **20** to the shaped charge **102**, the medial portion **504** also includes a support member **514** that provides an additional clamping force on the detonator cord **20**. The support member **514** presses down on at

least a portion of the detonator cord **20** between bridge members **512** such that an energetic coupling is maintained between that portion of the detonator cord **20** and the shaped charge **102**. In one embodiment, the support member **514** is a bar-like portion that spans between the bridge portions **512** and runs generally parallel with the detonator cord **20**. The support member **514** can be integrally formed with the retention member **500** as shown or can be a separate element. Like the **Fig. 2** embodiment, the retention member **500** can have only a radially outermost portion of the retention member **500** lying radially beyond, or lie flush with or radially recessed from the post **106**.

[0022] Referring now to **Fig. 6**, there is shown still another embodiment of a retention member **600** that energetically couples a detonator cord **20** (**Fig. 2**) to a shaped charge **102** (**Fig. 2**). The **Fig. 6** embodiment is generally similar to the **Fig. 2** embodiment and includes an arcuate medial portion **604**, a central opening **606**, and a handling slot **608**. The medial portion **604**, which includes one or more bridge portions **610**, is shaped to overlie the detonator cord **20** and press the detonator cord **20** against the shaped charge **102** to energetically couple the detonator cord **20** to the shaped charge **102**. In the **Fig. 6** embodiment, inwardly pointing tabs **612** are flexible members that are adapted to snap and seat within the circumferential groove **116** in a manner previously described. The tabs **612**, however, are formed to flex relative to one or more portions of the retention member **600**. In one embodiment, the tabs **612** are connected to an outer portion **614** of the retention member **600** by a flexure element **616**. It should be appreciated that the flexure elements **616** allows the gap or spacing between the tabs **616** and the bridge portions **610** to vary, e.g., increase or decrease. More

generally, the flexure elements **616** provide a flexure that allows the retention member **600** to bend, twist, and deform as needed to facilitate the installation or removal of the retention member **600**. It should be appreciated that the flexure element **616** can be positioned anywhere on the body of the retention member **600**, not just between the tabs **612** and the outer portion **614**. Furthermore, although two flexure elements **616** are shown, it should be understood that in some embodiments, only one of the tabs **612** can be connected with the flexure element **616**. The other tab **612** can be formed as shown in the previous figures or in some other configuration. Like the **Fig. 2** embodiment, the retention member **600** can have only a radially outermost portion of the retention member **600** lying radially beyond, or lie flush with or radially recessed from the post **106**. The other elements of the **Fig. 6** embodiment have already been discussed previously, such as with reference to **Fig. 2**, and will not be discussed in further detail.

[0023] From the above, it should be appreciated that embodiments of the present disclosure include retention members that have a major portion positioned radially recessed from the most radially outward portion of a post. A “major portion” generally denotes at least slightly more than half, and in some embodiments significantly more than half. In other embodiments, substantially all of the retention member lies radially flush with or is radially recessed relative to the radially outermost portion of each post. In embodiments, a retention member may have only a portion applying pressure to a detonator cord lying radially further outward than the radially outermost portion of each post.

[0024] The foregoing description is directed to particular embodiments of the present invention for the purpose of illustration and explanation. It will be apparent, however, to one skilled in the art that many modifications and changes to the embodiment set forth above are possible without departing from the scope of the invention. It is intended that the following claims be interpreted to embrace all such modifications and changes.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An apparatus for use with a perforating device for perforating a wellbore, the perforating device including a charge tube, a carrier tube having an interior bore in which the charge tube is disposed, a detonator cord having a circular cross-sectional profile disposed in the charge tube, at least one shaped charge affixed to the charge tube, the at least one shaped charge having a radially outward pointing post in which a slot is formed, the apparatus comprising:
a retention plate having an opening and a plurality of tabs projecting into the opening, the retention plate being configured to retain the detonator cord within the slot and having a medial curved bridge portion that conforms to the profile of the detonator cord, wherein the bridge portion is sized such that a major portion of the bridge portion is positioned radially inward of the radially outermost portion of the post.
2. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the bridge portion includes a contour portion.
3. The apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the contour portion conforms to a cross sectional shape of at least a portion of the detonator cord.
4. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the bridge portion includes at least one finger element.
5. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the bridge portion includes a first bridge and a second bridge, the first and second bridge being spaced apart to receive the post there between.
6. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the bridge portion substantially limits axial and radial movement of the retention plate relative to the post.
7. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the retention plate seats

substantially circumferentially around the post.

8. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the retention plate includes a flexure element that allows the retention member to deform while being affixed to the post.
9. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the retention plate includes a pair of wings connected by the bridge portion.
10. The apparatus according to claim 9, wherein at least one wing of the pair of wings includes a slot.
11. An apparatus for perforating a wellbore, comprising:
 - a charge tube;
 - a carrier tube having an interior bore in which the charge tube is disposed;
 - a plurality of shaped charges affixed in the charge tube, each shaped charge having a radially outward pointing post having a slot receiving a detonator cord having a circular cross-sectional profile; and
 - a retention member associated with each post, the retention member including an opening for receiving the post, wherein the retention member includes a medial curved bridge portion that conforms to the profile of the detonator cord, the bridge portion being circumferentially adjacent to the post such that it inhibits axial movement of the detonator cord, substantially all of the retention member being radially recessed relative to the radially outermost portion of the post.
12. The apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the bridge portion includes a contour portion that conforms to a cross sectional shape of the detonator cord.
13. The apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the bridge portion includes one of:
 - (i) two bridge portions;

- (ii) a support member; and
- (iii) a pair of fingers.

14. The apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the bridge portion inhibits radial and axial movement of the detonator cord relative to the post.

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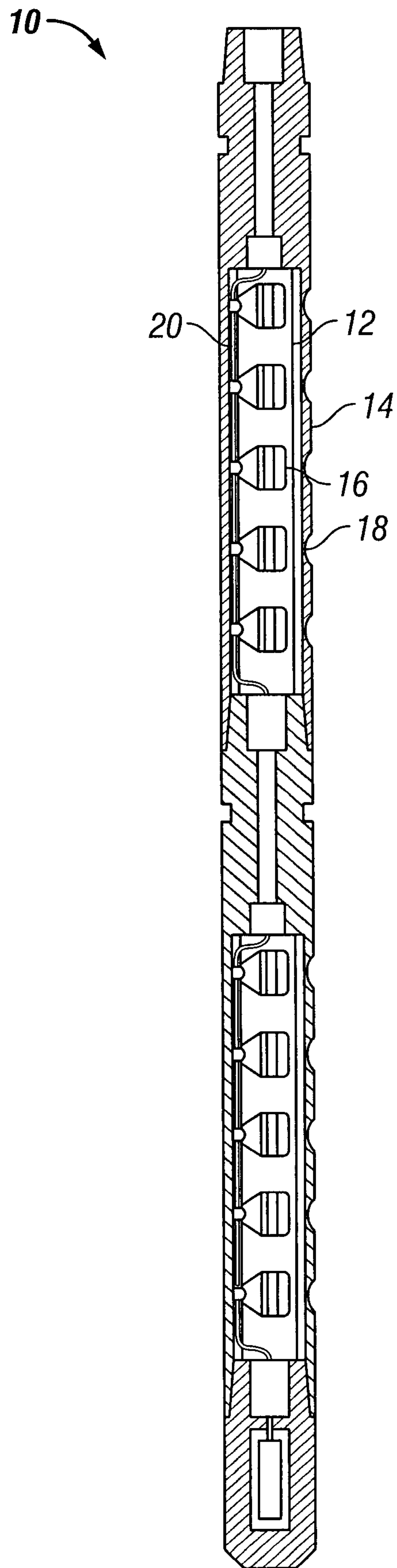


FIG. 1A

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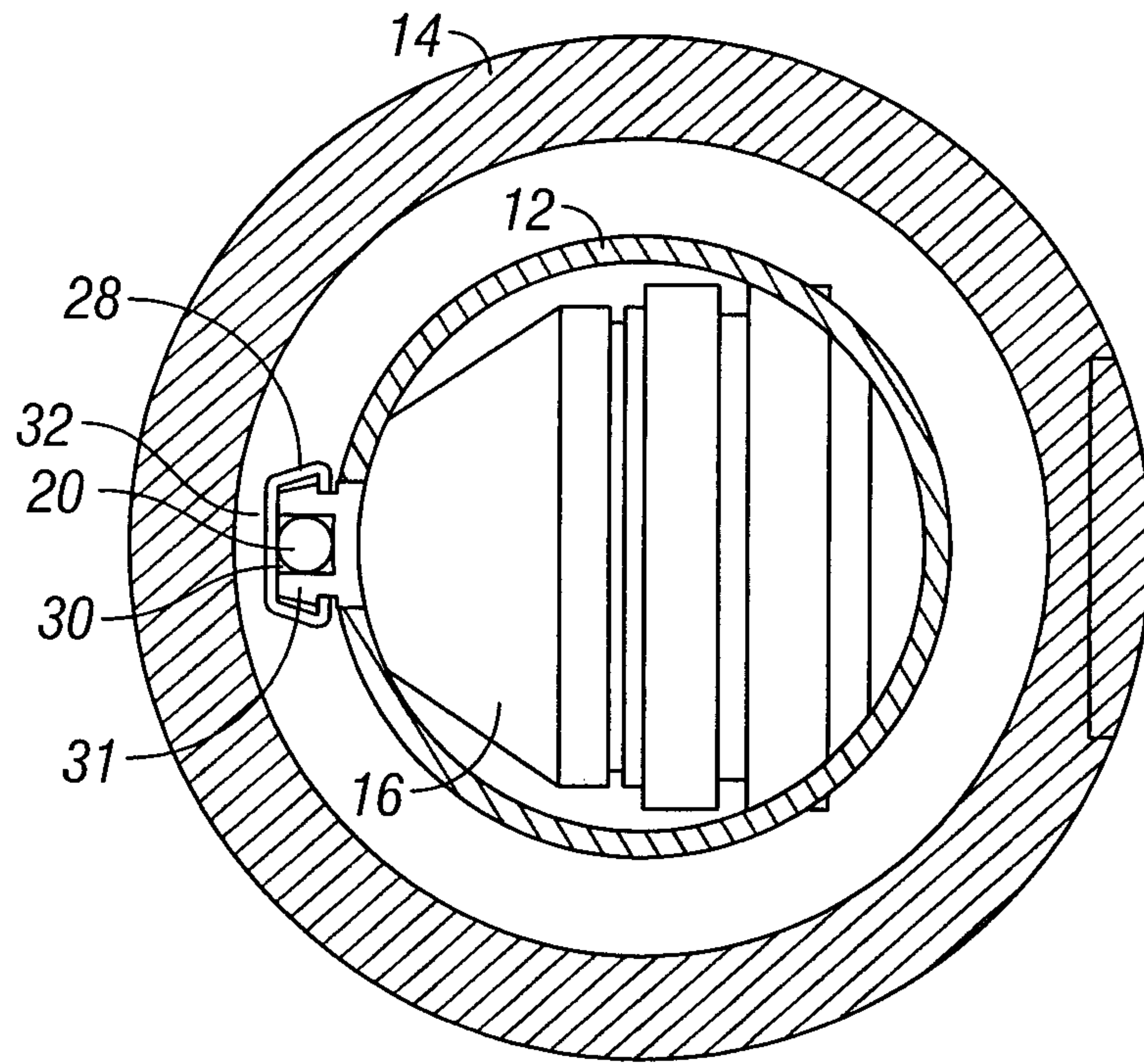


FIG. 1B

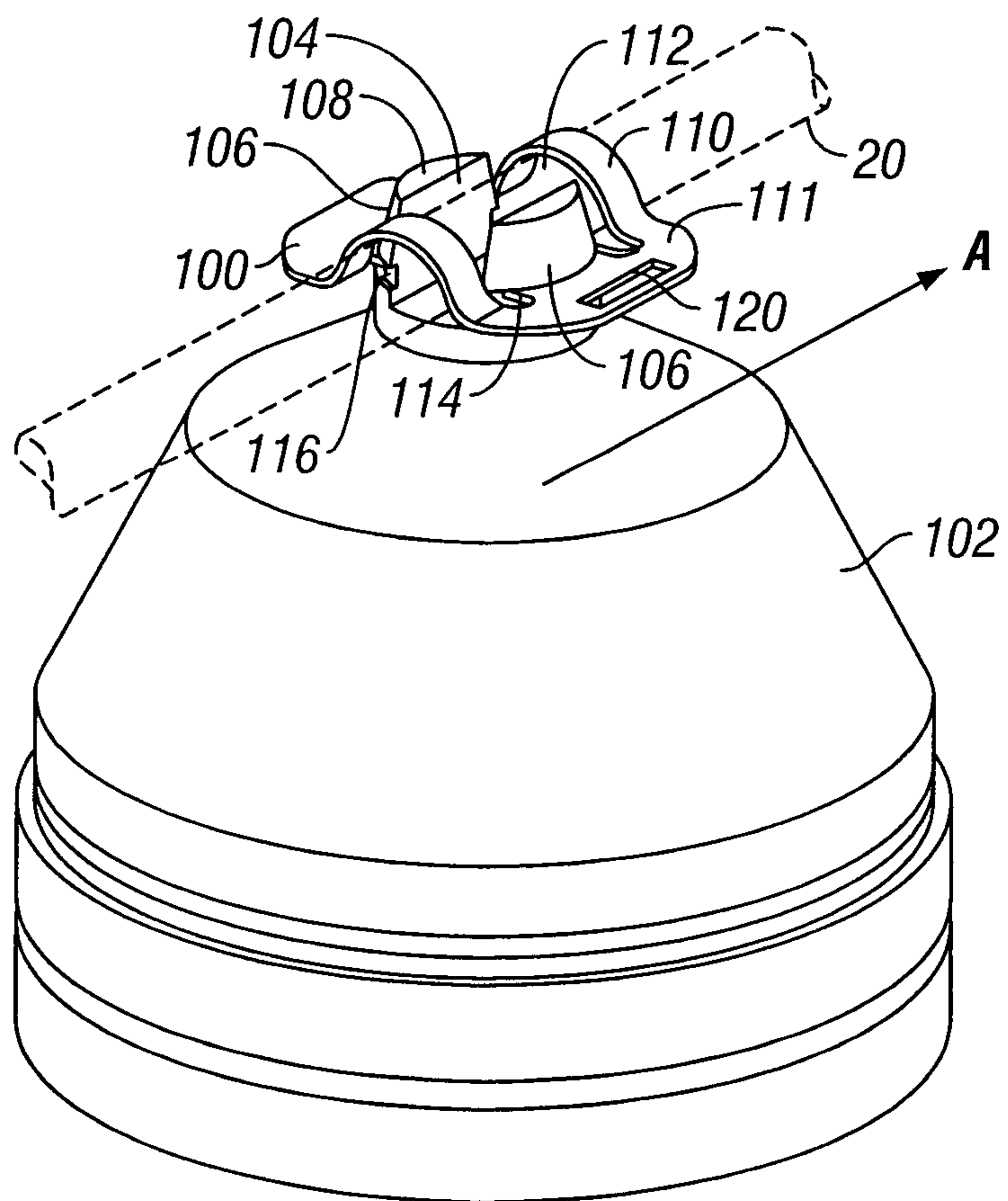
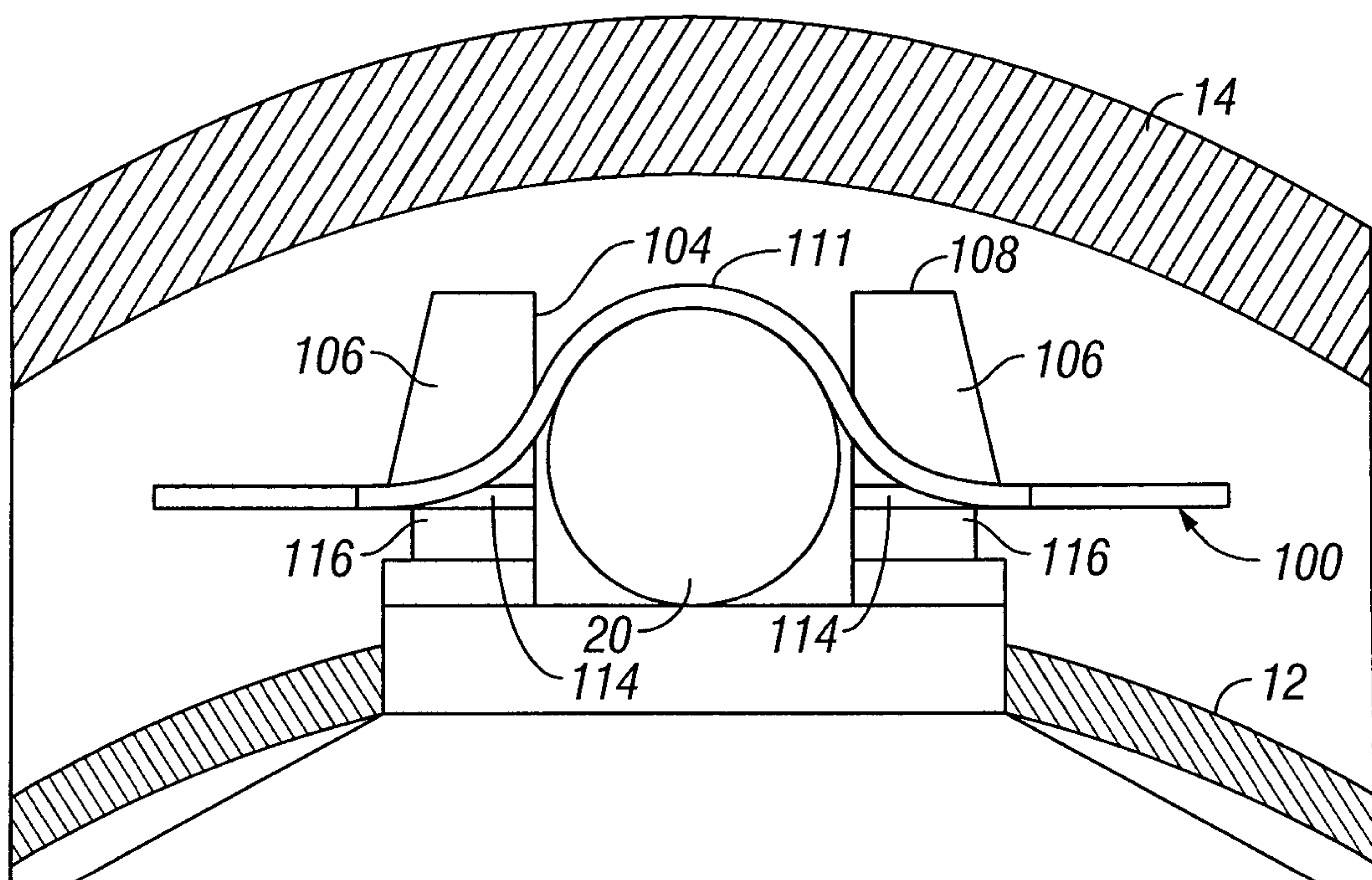


FIG. 2

3/6**FIG. 3**

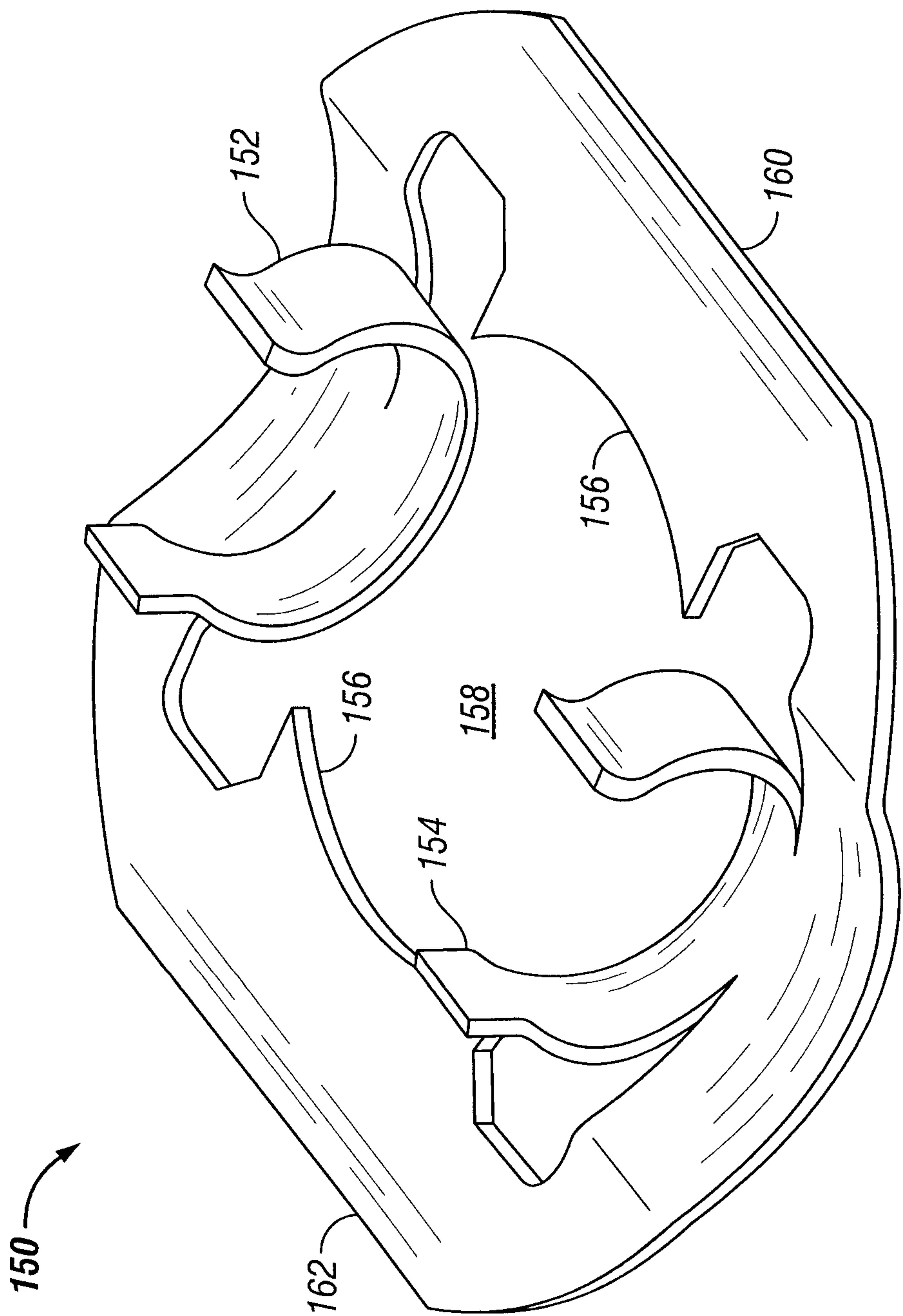


FIG. 4

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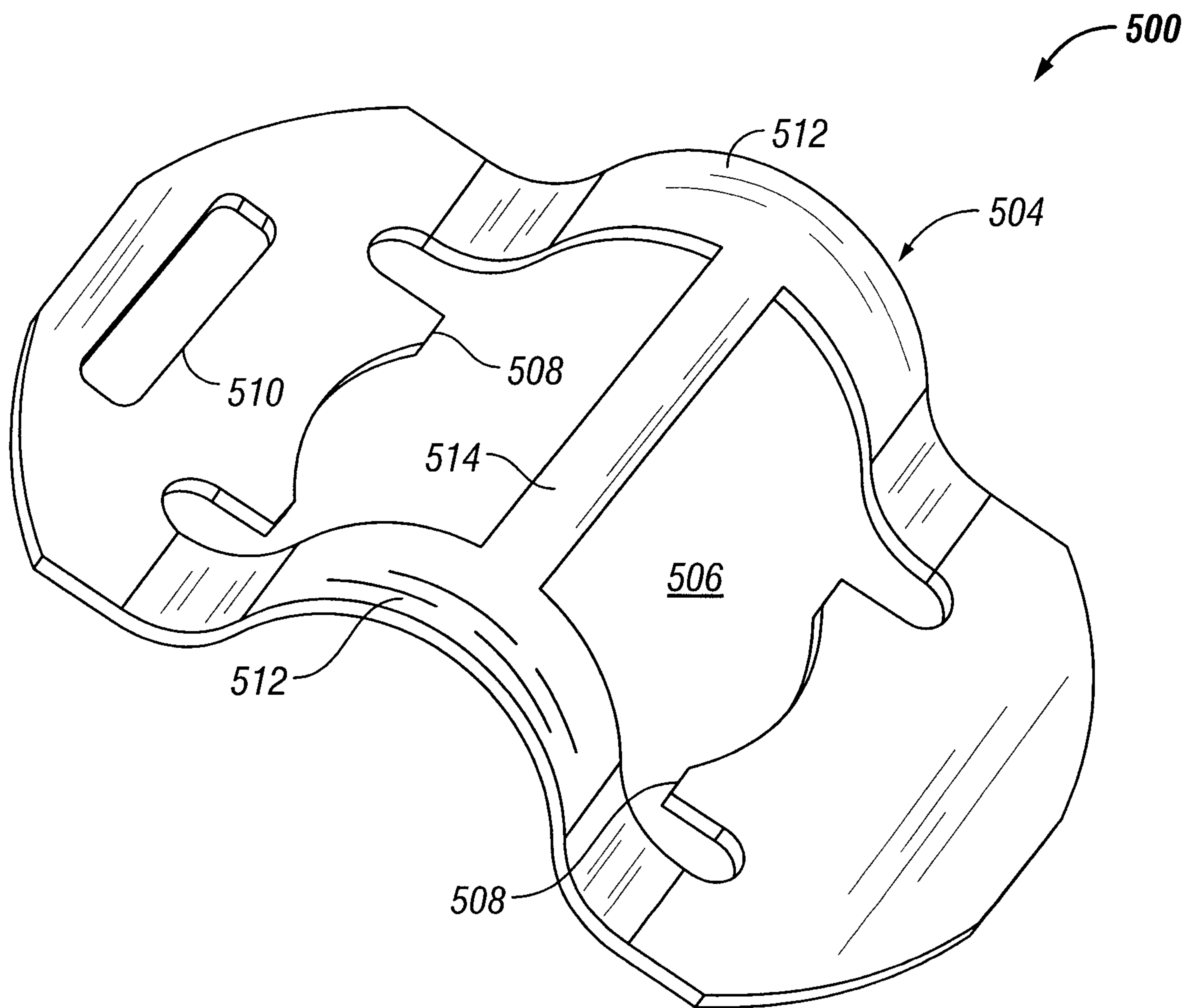


FIG. 5

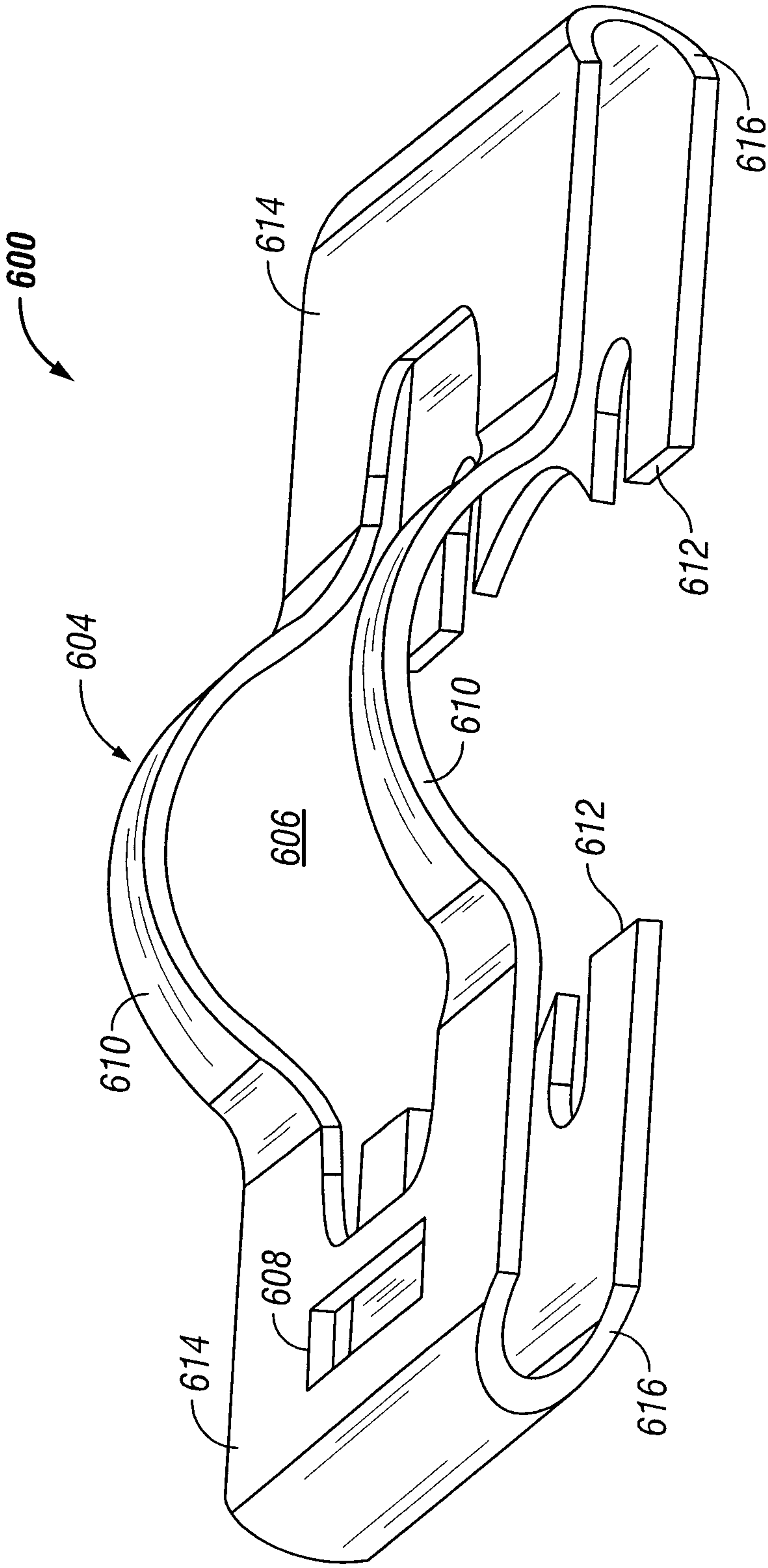


FIG. 6

