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[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: HEAD MOUNTED DISPLAY WITH EYE TRACKING

(57) Abstract: A head mounted display is disclosed. More particularly, a head mounted display including one or more projection light sources, one or more eye-tracking light sources, a polarizing beam splitter, and a second polarizing beam splitter is disclosed. Light from the one or more projection light sources and the one or more eye-tracking light sources and the one or more projection light sources and the one or more eye-tracking light sources are both at least partially reflected by the polarizing beam splitter. An optical path between the polarizing beam splitter and the second polarizing beam splitter passes through air. A head mounted display that utilizes polarizing beam splitters having certain reflection bandedges over a range of incidence angles is disclosed.

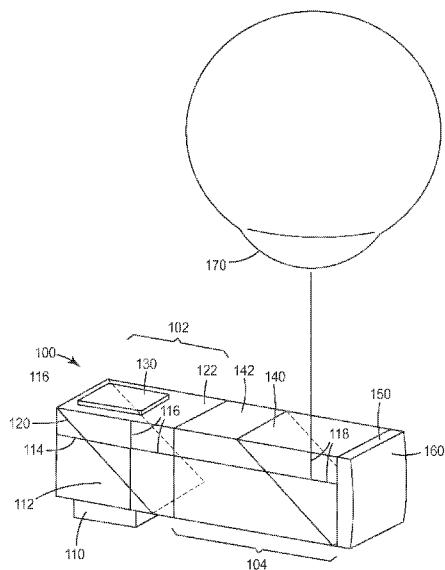


FIG. 1

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HEAD MOUNTED DISPLAY WITH EYE TRACKING

Background

5 Head mounted displays, as a subset of wearable computing devices, often utilize projected light to display an image within the wearer's visual field. Eye tracking systems may utilize a camera centered on the wearer's pupil or observe light reflected off a wearer's eye to detect gaze direction.

Summary

10 In one aspect, the present disclosure relates to a head mounted optical device. The head mounted optical device includes one or more projection light sources, one or more eye tracking light sources, a polarizing beam splitter, and a second polarizing beam splitter. The optical device is configured such that projection light from the one or more projection light sources and eye-tracking light from the one or more eye-tracking light sources are both at least partially reflected by the polarizing beam splitter and such that
15 an optical path between the polarizing beam splitter and the second polarizing beam splitter for at least one of projection light from the one or more projection light sources and eye-tracking light from the one or more eye-tracking light sources passes through air.

In another aspect, the present disclosure related to a head mounted optical device that includes one or more projection light sources, one or more eye tracking light sources, a polarizing beam splitter, and a second polarizing beam splitter. The optical device is configured such that projection light from the one or more projection light sources and eye-tracking light from the one or more eye-tracking light sources are both at least partially reflected by the polarizing beam splitter. As measured between 40 degrees and 50 degrees in a medium with a refractive index of about 1.53, the polarizing beam splitter has a right band edge between about 950 nm and about 850 nm. In some embodiments, as measured between
20 40 degrees and 50 degrees in a medium with a refractive index of about 1.53, the second polarizing beam splitter has a right band edge between about 800 nm and about 700 nm.

At least one of the polarizing beam splitter and the second polarizing beam splitter may include multilayer optical film. The eye-tracking light from the one or more eye-tracking light sources may include infrared light. In some embodiments, the eye-tracking light from the one or more eye-tracking
25 light sources includes a substantial portion of light with a wavelength between 700 nm and 1000 nm. In some embodiments, an eye-tracking wavelength range of the eye-tracking light from the one or more eye-tracking light sources and a projection wavelength range of the projection light from the one or more projection light sources do not overlap. In some embodiments, the polarizing beam splitter reflects at least 50% of a first polarization state but less than 50% of a second orthogonal polarization state of eye-
30 tracking light from the one or more eye-tracking light sources. In some embodiments, the polarizing beam splitter reflects at least 50% of both a first polarization state and a second orthogonal polarization state of eye-tracking light from the one or more eye-tracking light sources. In some embodiments, the polarizing

beam splitter reflects at least 50% of a first polarization state but less than 50% of a second orthogonal polarization state of projection light from the one or more projection light sources. In some embodiments, the second polarizing beam splitter transmits at least 50% of both a first polarization state and a second polarization state of eye-tracking light from the one or more eye-tracking light sources. The polarizing beam splitter and the second polarizing beam splitter may have different right band edges. In some embodiments, the polarizing beam splitter and the second polarizing beam splitter have substantially equal left band edges. In some embodiments, when measured at 45 degrees in a medium with a refractive index of about 1.53, the polarizing beam splitter has a right band edge of about 900 nm. When measured at 45 degrees in a medium with a refractive index of about 1.53, the second polarizing beam splitter may have a right band edge of about 750 nm. In some embodiments, the head mounted optical device includes a quarter wave plate. In some embodiments, the head mounted optical device includes an image sensor. The image sensor may include a CCD imager or it may include a CMOS imager. In some embodiments, the head mounted optical device includes a frame, and the image sensor is disposed within the frame. The polarizing beam splitter may be immersed in a lens.

Brief Description of the Drawings

FIG. 1 is a schematic top perspective view of a head mounted optical device.

FIG. 2 is a schematic top perspective view of the head mounted optical device of FIG. 1 including an eye tracking system.

FIG. 3 is a graph depicting the right reflection bandedge as a function of incidence angle for several polarizing beam splitters.

FIG. 4 is a schematic top perspective view of another head mounted optical device including an eye tracking system.

Detailed Description

As a subset of wearable computing devices, head mounted displays may correspond in appearance to accessories such as glasses that are worn publicly. Correspondingly, it may be desirable when incorporating systems into a head mounted display to add minimal bulk and conspicuity. Similarly, interaction with and control of head mounted displays, again owing to its potential for public use, may be designed to be as inconspicuous and appear as natural in social settings as possible. Alternatively, head mounted displays may be desirable in industrial settings when the wearable device has other purposes, such as occupational safety. In this case, it may be advantageous to configure the systems as to not expose sensitive electronics to the industrial environment. Eye tracking systems may be incorporated into head mounted displays in order to allow relatively unnoticeable eye movements to be detected and interpreted. For example, a head mounted display may be configured to detect when a wearer's gaze is focused on a certain portion of the display.

In previous head mounted displays that included eye tracking, many use a camera positioned at the opposite side of the head mounted display from the projection optics, as described in United States

Patent Publication No. 2013/0106674 A1 (Wheeler et al.) . This prevents both the eye tracking camera and the projection optics from being hidden within a frame and creates a noticeable object that may obscure part of a wearer's field of view.

FIG. 1 is a top perspective view of a head mounted display. Head mounted display **100** includes frame region **102** and viewing region **104**. Frame region **102** includes illuminator **110**, polarizing beam splitter **120** within medium **122**, and spatial light modulator **130**. Viewing region **104** includes second polarizing beam splitter **140** within second medium **142**, quarter wave plate **150**, and reflector **160**. Eye **170** is shown to illustrate the optical path of projection light from illuminator **110**. For purposes of this application, the label "second" in "second polarizing beam splitter" is used simply to distinguish the two polarizing beam splitters by the order of their description; in other words, the label is arbitrary and for ease of explanation only. In some embodiments, for example, what is described herein as the second polarizing beam splitter may be equally be described as the polarizing beam splitter, and vice versa.

Illuminator **110** may be any suitable component or set of components for generating or emitting light. Illuminator may include one or more light sources, including light emitting diodes (LEDs), cold cathode fluorescent lights (CCFLs), or incandescent light bulbs. Illuminator **110** may be powered by any suitable mechanism, including by a battery. Illuminator **110** may include any combination of light sources, including light sources of different wavelength ranges. In some embodiments, the light sources of illuminator **110** may generate white or substantially white light. In some embodiments, illuminator **110** may generate polarized or partially polarized light, or it may generate a certain distribution of polarization states. The configuration and construction of illuminator **110** may depend on the desired performance characteristics, including luminance, battery life, and operating temperature. In some embodiments, the luminance and wavelength output of illuminator **110** may be configurable, either directly by a wearer or automatically depending on environmental conditions, such as time of day, ambient light, desired battery life performance, or temperature.

Light emitted by illuminator **110** is indicated in FIG. 1 by projected light **112**. Projected light **112** is depicted as a ray for ease of illustration, but it should be evident to those with skill in the art that projected light **112** is representative of any suitable light distribution, including collimated or Lambertian distributions, light cones, or the like. Suitable collimation optics may be included in conjunction with illuminator **110** to provide the desired light distribution of projected light **112**.

Projected light **112** is incident on polarizing beam splitter **120** from medium **122**. Medium **122** may be any suitable optical medium. In some embodiments, medium **122** is substantially transparent to minimize optical loss. In some embodiments, medium **122** is selected for durability or protective characteristics in order to provide rigidity, warp, or impact resistance for the components of head mounted display **100**. Medium **122** may also be selected for its manufacturability, including its ability to be injection molded. Medium **122** may have any index of refraction and may be optically coupled to illuminator **110** to minimize losses through Fresnel reflection at the interface between the illuminator and the medium. Further, polarizing beam splitter **120** exhibits different optical properties, for example,

different reflection bandedges at least in part as a function of the refractive index of the medium in which it is disposed. Therefore, it may be desirable to carefully select medium **122** based on the desired optical properties of the medium/polarizing beam splitter system.

Polarizing beam splitter **120** may be formed from any suitable material and may be any suitable shape or size. In some embodiments, polarizing beam splitter **120** may be substantially planar, as depicted in FIG. 1. In some embodiments, polarizing beam splitter **120** may be oriented such that projected light **112** is incident at 45°. Other orientations may be desirable based on the optical geometry of head mounted display **100**. In some embodiments, the polarizing beam splitter substantially reflects light of one polarization while substantially transmitting light having the orthogonal polarization state. Many different proportions or reflectivity and transmittance may be appropriate depending on the particular application. In some embodiments, reflecting light of one polarization may mean reflecting 50% or more of light having a certain polarization state. In some configurations, reflecting light of one polarization may mean reflecting 60%, 70%, 80%, 90%, 95% or even 99% of light of one polarization. Similarly, transmitting light of an orthogonal polarization may mean transmitting more than 50% of light of having an orthogonal polarization state. In some embodiments, 60%, 70%, 80%, 90%, 95%, or even 99% of light having an orthogonal polarization may be transmitted. Polarizing beam splitter **120** may be described as having a pass axis and a block axis, with the pass axis and block axis being oriented substantially at a 90° angle from one another.

Polarizing beam splitter **120** may include a reflective polarizer. In some embodiments, polarizing beam splitter **120** includes a wire grid polarizer or a cholesteric reflective polarizer. The reflective polarizer may be a broadband reflective polarizer. In some embodiments, polarizing beam splitter **120** may include a multilayer optical film reflective polarizer, including, for example, those described in U.S. Patent 7,468,204 (Hebrink et al.).

Depending on the configuration, orientation, and construction of polarizing beam splitter **120** and its surrounding medium, including incident angle, polarizing beam splitter **120** may exhibit different transmission or reflection properties based on the wavelength or wavelengths of incident light. In some embodiments, there may be a wavelength for a given angle of incidence where the polarizer ceases to behave as a polarizing beam splitter; that is, for example, it may transmit two orthogonal states of incident light. This wavelength for a given incidence angle may be described as a bandedge. For a typical polarizing beam splitter there will be two bandedges: a left (or lower wavelength) and a right (or higher wavelength) bandedge. Bandedges are also described in conjunction with FIG. 3.

At least a portion of projected light **112** is transmitted through polarizing beam splitter **120**. In some embodiments, a first portion of projected light **112** having a first polarization state is transmitted while another portion, in some cases having a second, orthogonal polarization state, is reflected as rejected light **114**. Rejected light **114** may in some cases be directed toward a light absorbing material. In embodiments of the present disclosure where projected light **112** is at least partially polarized to align

with the pass axis of the polarizing beam splitter, a higher proportion of projected light **112** may pass through polarizing beam splitter **120**.

The portion of projected light **112** that is transmitted through polarizing beam splitter **120** is next incident on spatial light modulator **130**. Spatial light modulator may be any suitable component or device, and may have any suitable size. In some embodiments, spatial light modulator may be or include a digital micromirror device or a liquid crystal on silicon configuration. Spatial light modulator **130** may reflect projected light **112** as modulated light **116**. In some cases, spatial light modulator **130** produces light having grayscale information. In other embodiments, spatial light modulator additionally produces light having color information. Modulated light **116** may now have spatially dependent luminance and color values; in other words, spatial light modulator may provide image information to modulated light **116**. In some embodiments, spatial light modulator **130** may be capable of producing an image in only one color at a time, instead relying on human perception to blend different colored images relayed in rapid succession. Spatial light modulator **130** may be powered, driven, and/or configured by any suitable components, including one or more microprocessors, microchips, or other microdevices. In some embodiments, spatial light modulator **130** rotates the polarization of at least a part of projected light **112**, so that in some cases at least a portion of modulated light **116** is reflected by polarizing beam splitter **120** instead of transmitted.

Modulated light **116** travels from frame region **102** of head mounted display **100** into viewing region **104** and second medium **142** of the head mounted display. Note that frame region **102** and viewing region **104** are distinguished for ease of explanation, but do not necessarily need to have any identifiable boundary or represent a substantive difference in medium, shape, or size. The regions are labeled to orient head mounted display **100** by describing a region which may be positioned to be closer to a frame. Similarly, for example, frame region **102** is distinguished from viewing region **104** because frame region **102** may in some cases contain components positioned such that a viewer would not observe that region to be transparent.

In some cases, frame region **102** and viewing region **104** are separated by or include a gap; that is, there may be air or another low index material separating or within the two media. In other words, there may be a gap between polarizing beam splitter **120** and second polarizing beam splitter **140**. In some embodiments the optical path between polarizing beam splitter **120** and second polarizing beam splitter **140** passes through air. Utilizing a gap may have certain physical advantages, such as lower overall weight and better comfort and aesthetics. More design flexibility is also possible, because the system is not limited to the rectilinear optics of a monolithic injection molded piece, such as the one described in U.S. Patent Publication No. 2013/0207887 A1. Such a configuration may also provide desirable optical properties, such as more desirable levels of magnification for the projected (i.e., display) light. Further, in some embodiments including a gap, light may become at least partially collimated; that is, light rays incident from the lower gap index of refraction to a higher index of refraction may be bent toward the normal, which may be desirable in some applications.

After entering viewing region **104** of head mounted display **100**, modulated light **116** is incident on second polarizing beam splitter **140** from second medium **142**. In some embodiments, second medium **142** may be the same material—even being a unitary construction—or it have the same index of refraction as medium **122**. Second polarizing beam splitter **140** may be oriented such that modulated light **116** is incident at 45° . Second polarizing beam splitter **140** may be configured or tuned with some or all of the same considerations as described above for polarizing beam splitter **120**. In some embodiments, one or more bandedges of second polarizing beam splitter **140** may be the same as for polarizing beam splitter **120**. Second polarizing beam splitter **140** may be configured to transmit most or all of modulated light **116**, that is, to transmit the light reflected by polarizing beam splitter **120**. This may mean that the pass axis of polarizing beam splitter **120** and the pass axis of second polarizing beam splitter **140** are oriented substantially orthogonally to one another. In other words, polarizing beam splitter **120** and second polarizing beam splitter **140** may be crossed.

Modulated light **116**, after at least partially transmitted through second polarizing beam splitter **140** is incident on quarter wave plate **150** disposed on reflector **160**. Modulated light **116** passes through quarter wave plate **150**, is reflected by reflector **160**, and passes back through quarter wave plate **150**. Quarter wave plate **150** may be any suitable quarter wave retarder, including suitable birefringent materials or liquid crystal layers. The thickness of quarter wave plate **150** may be selected to provide acceptable polarization rotation performance for a wavelength or a set of wavelengths. Quarter wave plates are generally configured to change the polarization state from linear to circular polarization, or vice versa. Passing through a quarter wave plate twice may have the same effect on the polarization state of light as passing through a half wave plate; that is, the polarization state may be rotated 90° . Reflector **160** may be any suitable reflector, including a standard mirror or a multilayer optical film reflector, such as Enhanced Specular Reflector (ESR) available from 3M Company, St. Paul, MN.

Modulated light **116**, after passing through quarter wave plate **150** twice, may have its polarization state rotated, becoming rotated light **118**. In some embodiments, this may cause rotated light **118** to be substantially or at least partially reflected by second polarizing beam splitter **140** instead of transmitted (as modulated light **116**, having an orthogonal polarization state, was). Rotated light **118**, after being reflected by second polarizing beam splitter **140**, passes out of second medium **142** and into the surrounding air, and is eventually observed by a viewer through eye **170**. In some embodiments, the geometry and design of the interface between second medium **142** and air may be designed or configured to compensate for refraction as the light travels from an area of higher refractive index to an area of lower refractive index.

FIG. 2 schematically illustrates a top perspective view of the head mounted optical device of FIG. 1 including an eye tracking system. Head mounted display **200** is similar to head mounted display **100** as depicted in FIG. 1. Corresponding with FIG. 1, head mounted display **200** includes, separated into frame region **202** and viewing region **204**, illuminator **210**, polarizing beam splitter **220** in medium **222**, spatial light modulator **230**, second polarizing beam splitter **240** in medium **242**, quarter wave plate **250**, and

reflector **260**. The description and operation of these components for projecting light to eye **270** is not shown in FIG. 2 for ease and clarity of illustration. Head mounted display **200** also includes image sensor **280** including lens **282**, and eye-tracking light sources **290**.

Eye-tracking light sources **290** may be any number of light emitting components. In some embodiments, eye-tracking light sources **290** may include one or more LEDs. In some embodiments, eye-tracking light sources **290** may emit light at least partially outside the visible spectrum. Eye-tracking light sources **290** may emit infrared light. In some embodiments, eye-tracking light sources **290** may emit light having multiple discrete wavelengths or a range of wavelengths. In some cases, eye-tracking light sources **290** may emit at least partially polarized light. Eye-tracking light sources **290** may be configured on head mounted display **200** such that the eye-tracking light sources are inconspicuous and non-obscuring.

Eye-tracking light sources **290** emit light represented by eye-tracking light **292**. Eye-tracking light **292** is later incident on at least a portion of eye **270**. Eye-tracking light sources **290** may be configured or positioned such that the incidence angle of eye-tracking light **292** on eye **270** is low; in some cases as low as practically possible given other design considerations.

Eye-tracking light **292** may be incident on one or more portions of eye **270**. The reflections at several refractive index interfaces at and within the eye are generally referred to as Purkinje images, of which there are four. For example, light reflected by the cornea of the eye is referred to as the first Purkinje image, while light reflected by the back of the lens (of the eye) is referred to as the fourth Purkinje image. In some embodiments, eye-tracking light **292** may be configured to reflect at one or more of these interfaces, resulting in Purkinje light **294**. Purkinje light **294** may, as described elsewhere, include one or more of the Purkinje images generated by the reflection of light at interfaces of the eye.

Purkinje light **294** enters second medium **242** and is incident on second polarizing beam splitter **240**. As described for head mounted display **100** in FIG. 1, the outer geometry of head mounted display **200** may be configured to compensate for refraction caused by the change in medium at the interface between air and second medium **242**. Second polarizing beam splitter **240** may be configured to at least partially reflect Purkinje light **294** having a certain polarization state. In some embodiments, second polarizing beam splitter **240** may be configured to reflect most or all of Purkinje light **294**. In embodiments where at least some of Purkinje light **294** is transmitted through second polarizing beam splitter **240**, the light continues through the other side of viewing region **204**. In some embodiments, it may be important to minimize these losses by controlling the initial polarization of eye-tracking light **292** (and thereby Purkinje light **294**).

Purkinje light being reflected by second polarizing beam splitter **240** is incident on quarter wave plate **250** and reflector **260**. As for projected light (modulated light **116**) described in FIG. 1, passing through quarter wave plate **250** twice may rotate the polarization of Purkinje light **294** by 90°, represented by rotated Purkinje light **296**. Rotated Purkinje light **296** is incident on second polarizing beam splitter **240** and is at least partially transmitted. In some embodiments, most or all of rotated Purkinje light **296** is transmitted by second polarizing beam splitter.

Rotated Purkinje light **296** then enters medium **222** and is incident on polarizing beam splitter **220**. In some embodiments, rotated Purkinje light **296** is also transmitted by polarizing beam splitter **220**. Note that in some embodiments described in FIG. 1, the pass axis for polarizing beam splitter **120** (corresponding with polarizing beam splitter **220**) and the pass axis of second polarizing beam splitter **140** (corresponding with second polarizing beam splitter **240**) are orthogonal. Thus, in order for both polarizing beam splitters to pass rotated Purkinje light **296** of the same polarization state, polarizing beam splitter **220** may in some embodiments at least partially transmit light of both polarization states. In some embodiments, polarizing beam splitter **220** may substantially pass light of a first polarization state and substantially reflect light of a substantially orthogonal polarization state for light having a first wavelength or wavelength range, and transmit light of both polarization states for light having a second wavelength or wavelength range, where the first wavelength or wavelength range is different from the second wavelength or wavelength range. In some embodiments, polarizing beam splitter **220** and second polarizing beam splitter **240** may have different right bandedges. This may, in some cases, correspond to orthogonal polarization states of infrared light being substantially transmitted by a polarizing beam splitter while only one polarization state of visible light is substantially transmitted. The other polarizing beam splitter may substantially transmit only one polarization state of both infrared and visible light. These bandedge profiles are discussed in conjunction with FIG. 3, below.

Rotated Purkinje light **296** passes through lens **282** and may be focused, concentrated, or inverted, creating Purkinje image **298** on image sensor **280**. In some embodiments, lens **282** may include a filter, including a filter that passes only infrared light. As described elsewhere, Purkinje image **298** may include one or more of the four Purkinje images reflected from eye **270**. Image sensor **280** may be or include a passive-pixel sensor, such as a charge-coupled device, or CCD. In some embodiments, image sensor **280** may include an active-pixel sensor, such as a sensor including a complementary metal-oxide-semiconductor (CMOS). Any suitable electronics may accompany image sensor **280**, including one or more processors (not shown) to interpret the location and character of Purkinje image **298**. The one or more processors may transmit or modify information based on Purkinje image **298**. For example, the one or more processors may make a portion of the projected light brighter based on where the processor detects the viewer's gaze is focused. In some embodiments, the one or more processors may also or alternatively determine pupil size, change in pupil size, eye movement, or eye moisture. This information may be used to determine a viewer's interest or reaction to certain content. In some embodiments the processor may receive input commands to interact with head mounted display **200** based on gestures that utilize gaze direction.

FIG. 3 is a graph depicting the relationship between (right) reflection bandedge and incidence angle for two polarizing beam splitters in a 1.53 index medium. For some applications, given the geometry of the optical system, the position of the bandedge at 45° may be of particular interest. First polarizing beam splitter, depicted by line **310**, has a right bandedge at 45° of about 900 nm. This polarizing beam splitter may reflect one of each orthogonal polarization state for both visible light and at

least a portion of the near infrared spectrum, for example, 825 nm light. Second polarizing beam splitter, represented by line **320**, has a right bandedge at 45° incidence of about 750 nm. This polarizing beam splitter may reflect one of each orthogonal polarization state for visible light but may substantially transmit both states of at least a portion of the near infrared spectrum, for example, 825 nm light.

5 In some embodiments, angles of incidence at 45° may represent only an ideal case and the reflection bandedges over a more realistic or wider range of angles may result in lost light and color defects. For example, light generated by an LED having a generally Lambertian distribution may be collimated by various optical elements as to approach perfect collimation, yet will never reach it. Further, in many cases, efforts to perfectly collimate Lambertian light often results in unacceptable brightness and efficiency losses, which may, for example, contribute to a diminished battery life. In other words, actual
10 angles of incidence on one or more reflective polarizers, even for a substantially rectilinear head mounted display, may more realistically be characterized and be important over a range of between 40 and 50 degrees, or between 30 and 60 degrees. Therefore, in some embodiments, because reflection bandedges shift with incidence angle, failing to consider and design for the reflection bandedge's variation over a
15 range of angles may result in unacceptable optical performance in many applications; for example, a polarizing beam splitter that is designed to transmit both states of infrared light at a 45° incidence may begin to reflect one or more polarization states of infrared light over a more realistic range of angles. Certain reflective polarizers, such as those with the performance shown in FIG. 3 or, for example, Advanced Polarizing Film (APF) available from 3M Company, St. Paul, MN, may be more suitable for a
20 realistic range of incidence angles.

The labels for first and second polarizing beam splitters described in conjunction with this graph are for the convenience of distinguishing the two and do not necessarily correspond to the polarizing beam splitter and the second polarizing beam splitter described in FIGS. 1–2. The values and curve profiles shown are exemplary and may be altered depending on the desired application or specific
25 configuration of the polarizing beam splitter.

FIG. 4 is schematic top perspective view of another head mounted optical device including an eye tracking system. Head mounted display **400** includes frame **402**, projection optics **410**, immersed polarizing beam splitter **420** in lens **422**, eye-tracking light sources **440**, and image sensor **450** including lens **452**.

30 Frame **402** may be any suitable shape and size or made from any suitable material. In some embodiments, frame **402** may be configured to appear as a standard glasses frame. In some embodiments, frame **402** may be configured to conceal at least some of the components of head mounted display **400**.

Projection optics **410** are not shown in detail in FIG. 4 but may be any suitable configuration or set of components, including, for example, a digital micromirror projection system or a liquid crystal on silicon system. Depending on the desired application of head mounted display **400** projection optics **410**
35 may produce projection light of a single wavelength or projection light having multiple discrete wavelengths or a range of wavelengths. In some embodiments, projection optics **410** may produce at least

partially polarized light. Projection optics **410** may also contain a polarizing beam splitter. Note that, for the head mounted display shown in FIG. 4, in these cases the optical path between the polarizing beam splitter included in projection optics **410** and immersed polarizing beam splitter **420** passes through air.

Immersed polarizing beam splitter **420** may behave as any of the polarizing beam splitters described elsewhere in the present disclosure; it may substantially reflect one polarization of light while substantially transmitting an orthogonal polarization or it may instead or additionally substantially transmit both polarizations of light in a certain wavelength range. In some embodiments it may also substantially reflect both polarizations of light in a certain wavelength range. Immersed polarizing beam splitter **420** may be configured such that emitted light from projection optics **410** has the right incidence angle in order to provide a desired optical performance. Immersed polarizing beam splitter **420** along with lens **422** may be curved or shaped such that light incident from projection optics **410** is reflected as to be viewable at eye **430**.

Eye-tracking light sources **440** may be any appropriate number and any suitable type of light source, including those described for eye-tracking light sources **290** in conjunction with FIG. 2. Eye-tracking light sources **440** may emit light in the infrared spectrum. In some embodiments, light from eye-tracking light sources **440** may be configured with immersed polarizing beam splitter **420** and lens **422** such that the geometry causes light emitted from eye-tracking light sources **440** to be at least partially reflected by immersed polarizing beam splitter **420** and directed into eye **430**, where the reflected Purkinje image is directed back through lens **452**, where the image may be focused or concentrated onto image sensor **450**. As with image sensor **280** in FIG. 2 whose description applies to this embodiment, image sensor **450** may include suitable components and electronics, including CMOS and CCD sensors.

Embodiments of the present disclosure may be suitable for incorporation into many head mounted optical displays, devices, or other near-to-eye or wearable computers. Note that in some embodiments, because a polarizing beam splitter located in front of the eye at least partially transmits visible light of one or both orthogonal polarization states, a viewer may observe real world scenes through the head mounted display. In some embodiments where a polarizing beam splitter located in front of the eye at least partially reflects a polarization state of light, the head mounted display may have the added benefit of reducing glare from reflected light.

The following are a list of items of the present disclosure:

Item 1 is a head-mounted optical device, comprising:

- one or more projection light sources;
- one or more eye-tracking light sources;
- a polarizing beam splitter; and
- a second polarizing beam splitter;

wherein the optical device is configured such that projection light from the one or more projection light sources and eye-tracking light from the one or more eye-tracking light sources are both at least partially reflected by the polarizing beam splitter; and

wherein the optical device is configured such that an optical path between the polarizing beam splitter and the second polarizing beam splitter for at least one of projection light from the one or more projection light sources and eye-tracking light from the one or more eye-tracking light sources passes through air.

5 Item 2 is a head-mounted optical device, comprising:

- one or more projection light sources;
- one or more eye-tracking light sources;
- a polarizing beam splitter; and
- a second polarizing beam splitter;

10 wherein the optical device is configured such that projection light from the one or more projection light sources and eye-tracking light from the one or more eye-tracking light sources are both at least partially reflected by the polarizing beam splitter; and

15 wherein as measured between 40 degrees and 50 degrees in a medium with a refractive index of about 1.53, the polarizing beam splitter has a right band edge between about 950 nm and about 850 nm.

Item 3 is the head-mounted optical device of item 2, wherein as measured between 40 degrees and 50 degrees in a medium with a refractive index of about 1.53, the second polarizing beam splitter has a right band edge between about 800 nm and about 700 nm.

20 Item 4 is the head-mounted optical device as in either item 1 or item 2, wherein at least one of the polarizing beam splitter and the second polarizing beam splitter include multilayer optical film.

Item 5 is the head-mounted optical device as in either item 1 or item 2, wherein the eye-tracking light from the one or more eye-tracking light sources includes infrared light.

25 Item 6 is the head-mounted optical device as in either item 1 or item 2, wherein the eye-tracking light from the one or more eye-tracking light sources includes a substantial portion of light with a wavelength between 700 and 1000 nm.

Item 7 is the head-mounted optical device as in either item 1 or item 2, wherein a eye-tracking wavelength range of the eye-tracking light from the one or more eye-tracking light sources and a projection wavelength range of the projection light from the one or more projection light sources do not overlap.

30 Item 8 is the head-mounted optical device as in either item 1 or item 2, wherein the polarizing beam splitter reflects at least 50% of a first polarization state but less than 50% of a second orthogonal polarization state of eye-tracking light from the one or more eye-tracking light sources.

35 Item 9 is the head-mounted optical device as in either item 1 or item 2, wherein the polarizing beam splitter reflects at least 50% of both a first polarization state and a second orthogonal polarization state of eye-tracking light from the one or more eye-tracking light sources.

Item 10 is the head-mounted optical device of item 9, wherein the polarizing beam splitter reflects at least 50% of a first polarization state but less than 50% of a second orthogonal polarization state of projection light from the one or more projection light sources.

Item 11 is the head-mounted optical device as in either item 1 or item 2, wherein the second polarizing beam splitter transmits at least 50% of both a first polarization state and a second orthogonal polarization state of eye-tracking light from the one or more eye-tracking light sources.

5 Item 12 is the head-mounted optical device as in either item 1 or item 2, wherein the polarizing beam splitter and the second polarizing beam splitter have different right band edges.

Item 13 is the head-mounted optical device as in item 12, wherein the polarizing beam splitter and the second polarizing beam splitter have substantially equal left band edges.

Item 14 is the head-mounted optical device of item 1, further comprising a quarter wave plate.

Item 15 is the head-mounted optical device of item 1, further comprising an image sensor.

10 Item 16 is the head-mounted optical device of item 15, wherein the image sensor includes a CCD imager.

Item 17 is the head-mounted optical device of item 15, wherein the image sensor includes a CMOS imager.

15 Item 18 is the head-mounted optical device as in any one of items 15–17, further comprising a frame, wherein the image sensor is disposed within the frame.

Item 19 is the head-mounted optical device of item 1, wherein the polarizing beam splitter is immersed in a lens.

20 All U.S. patents and publications cited in the present application are incorporated herein by reference as if fully set forth. The present invention should not be considered limited to the particular embodiments described above, as such embodiments are described in detail in order to facilitate explanation of various aspects of the invention. Rather, the present invention should be understood to cover all aspects of the invention, including various modifications, equivalent processes, and alternative devices falling within the scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims and their equivalents.

What is claimed is:

1. A head-mounted optical device, comprising:

one or more projection light sources;

5 one or more eye-tracking light sources;

a polarizing beam splitter; and

a second polarizing beam splitter;

wherein the optical device is configured such that projection light from the one or more
projection light sources and eye-tracking light from the one or more eye-tracking light sources are
10 both at least partially reflected by the polarizing beam splitter; and

wherein the optical device is configured such that an optical path between the polarizing
beam splitter and the second polarizing beam splitter for at least one of projection light from the
one or more projection light sources and eye-tracking light from the one or more eye-tracking
light sources passes through air.

15

2. A head-mounted optical device, comprising:

one or more projection light sources;

one or more eye-tracking light sources;

a polarizing beam splitter; and

20 a second polarizing beam splitter;

wherein the optical device is configured such that projection light from the one or more
projection light sources and eye-tracking light from the one or more eye-tracking light sources are
both at least partially reflected by the polarizing beam splitter; and

wherein as measured between 40 degrees and 50 degrees in a medium with a refractive
index of about 1.53, the polarizing beam splitter has a right band edge between about 950 nm and
25 about 850 nm.

3. The head-mounted optical device of claim 2, wherein as measured between 40 degrees and 50
degrees in a medium with a refractive index of about 1.53, the second polarizing beam splitter has a right
30 band edge between about 800 nm and about 700 nm.

4. The head-mounted optical device as in either claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the eye-tracking light
from the one or more eye-tracking light sources includes infrared light.

5. The head-mounted optical device as in either claim 1 or claim 2, wherein a eye-tracking
wavelength range of the eye-tracking light from the one or more eye-tracking light sources and a
projection wavelength range of the projection light from the one or more projection light sources do not
overlap.

6. The head-mounted optical device as in either claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the polarizing beam splitter reflects at least 50% of both a first polarization state and a second orthogonal polarization state of eye-tracking light from the one or more eye-tracking light sources.

5

7. The head-mounted optical device of claim 6, wherein the polarizing beam splitter reflects at least 50% of a first polarization state but less than 50% of a second orthogonal polarization state of projection light from the one or more projection light sources.

10

8. The head-mounted optical device as in either claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the polarizing beam splitter and the second polarizing beam splitter have different right band edges.

9. The head-mounted optical device of claim 1, wherein the polarizing beam splitter is immersed in a lens.

15

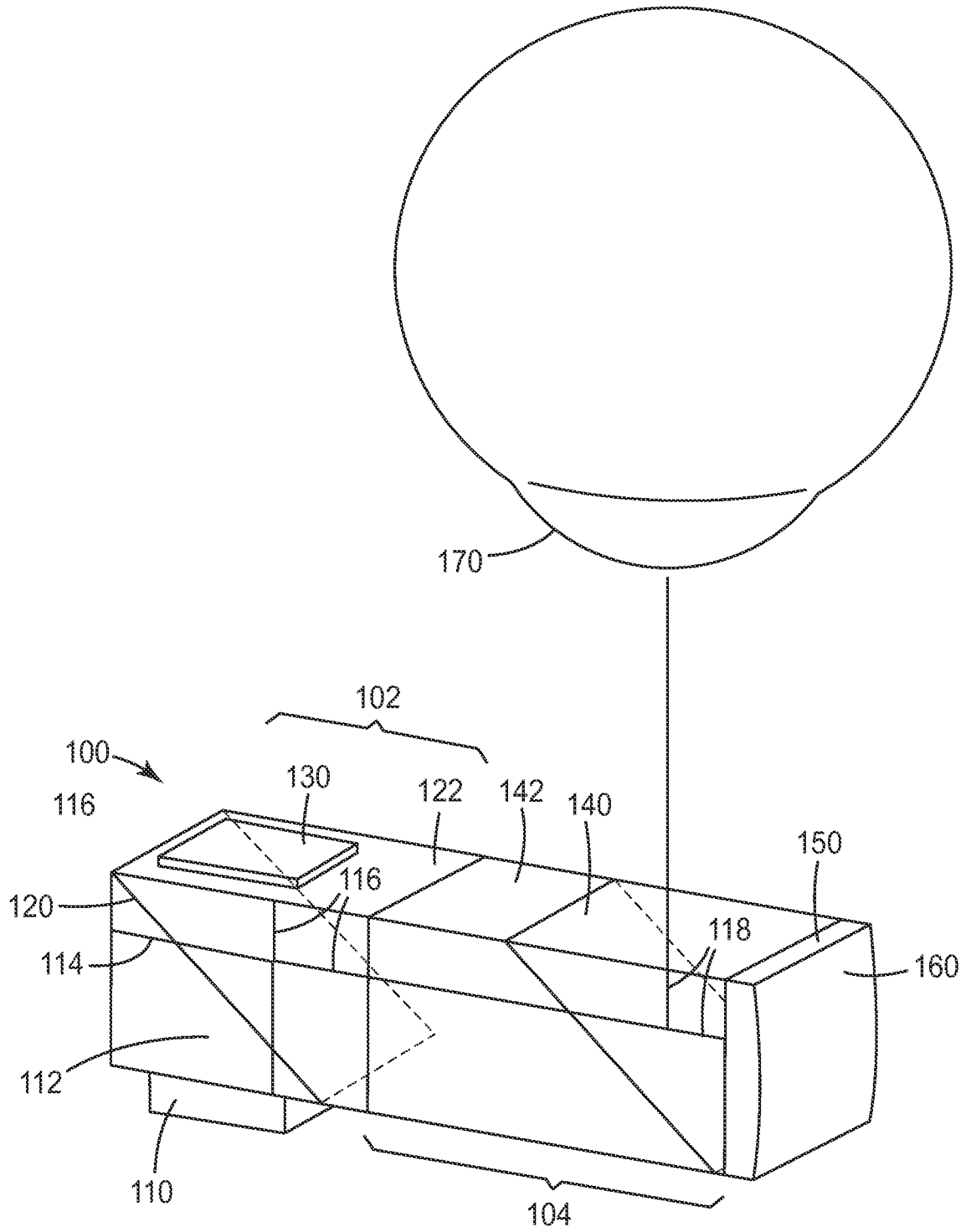


FIG. 1

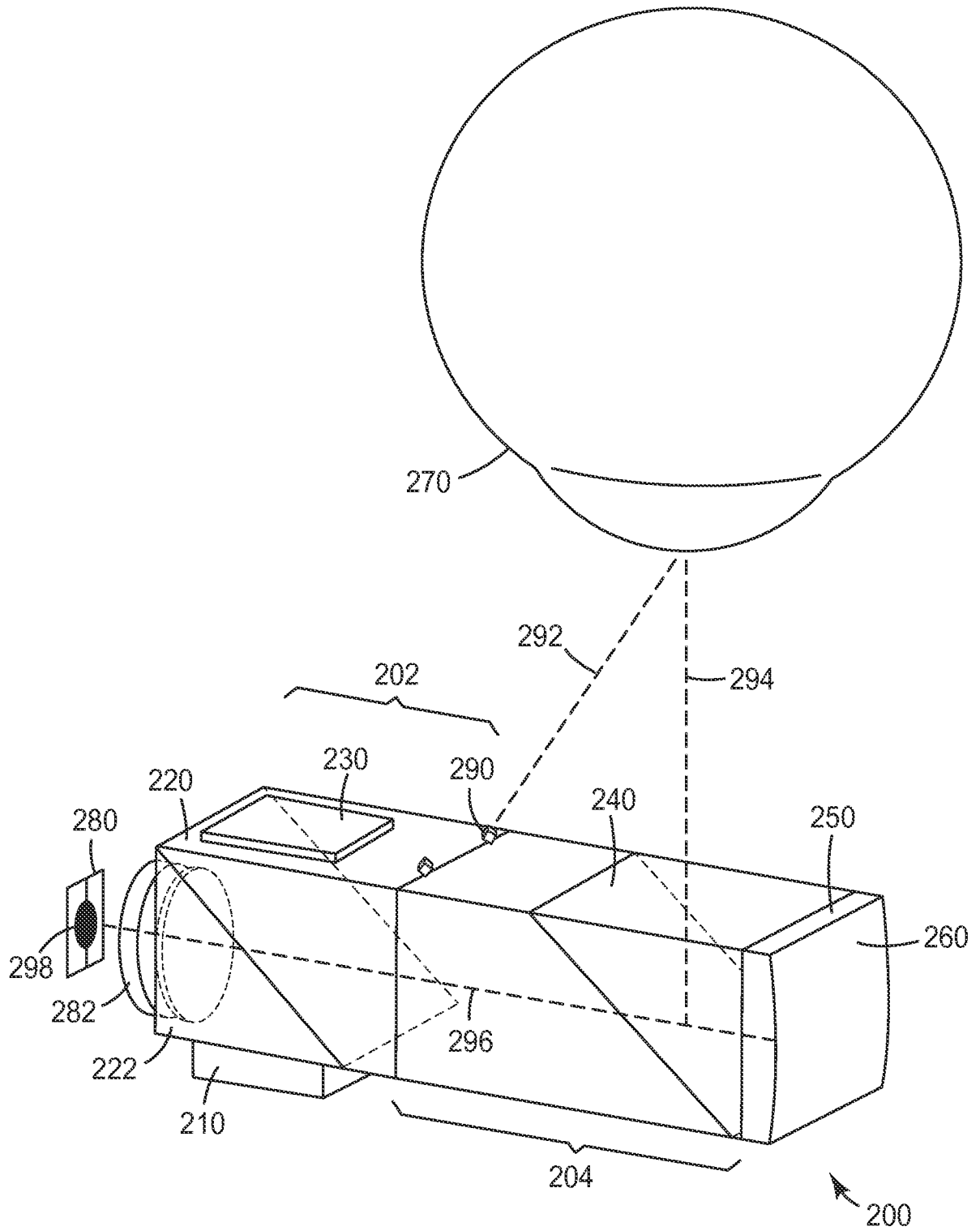


FIG. 2

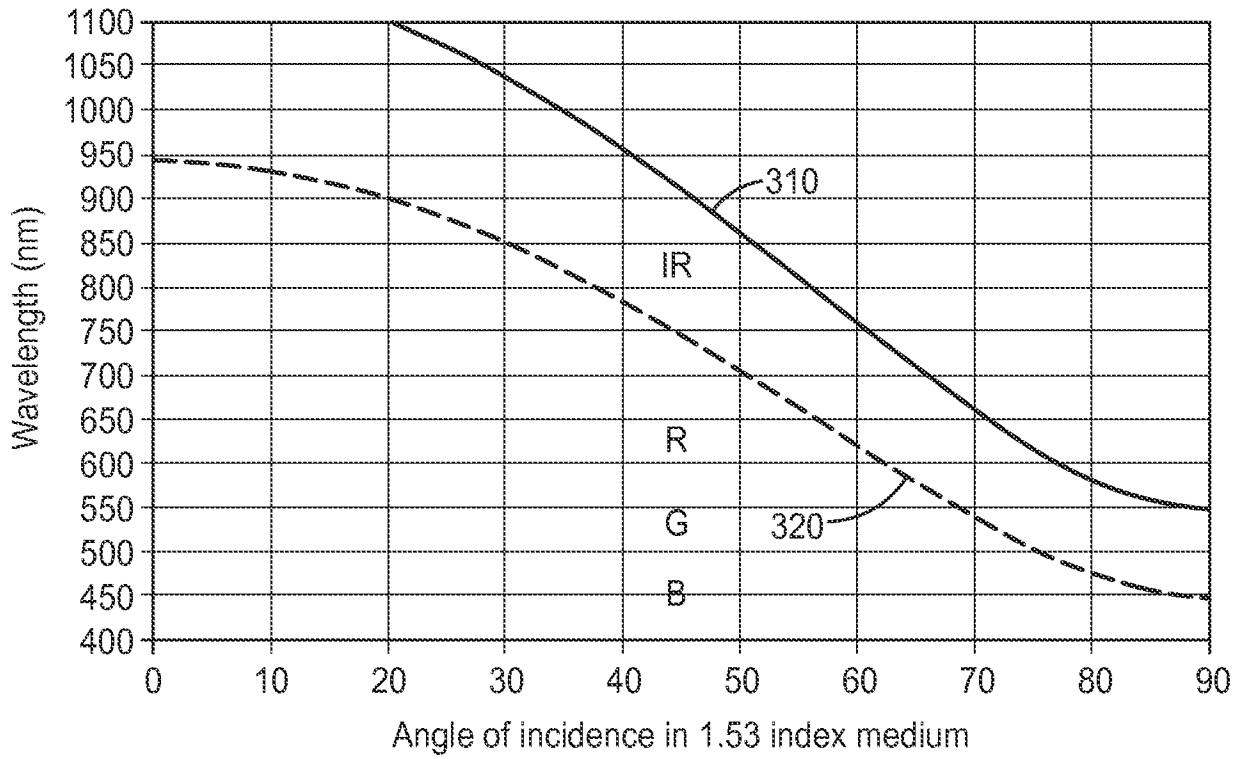


FIG. 3

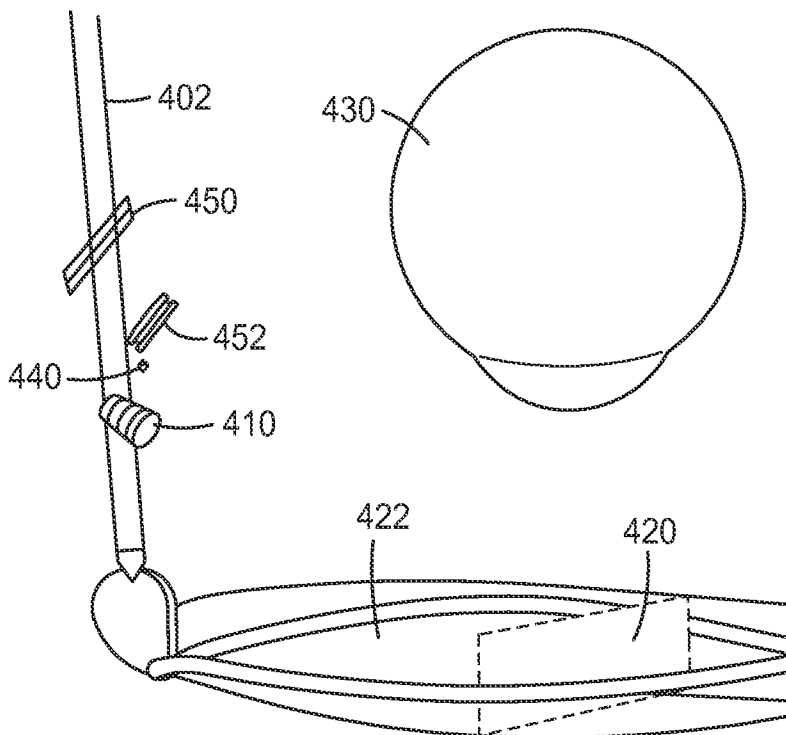


FIG. 4