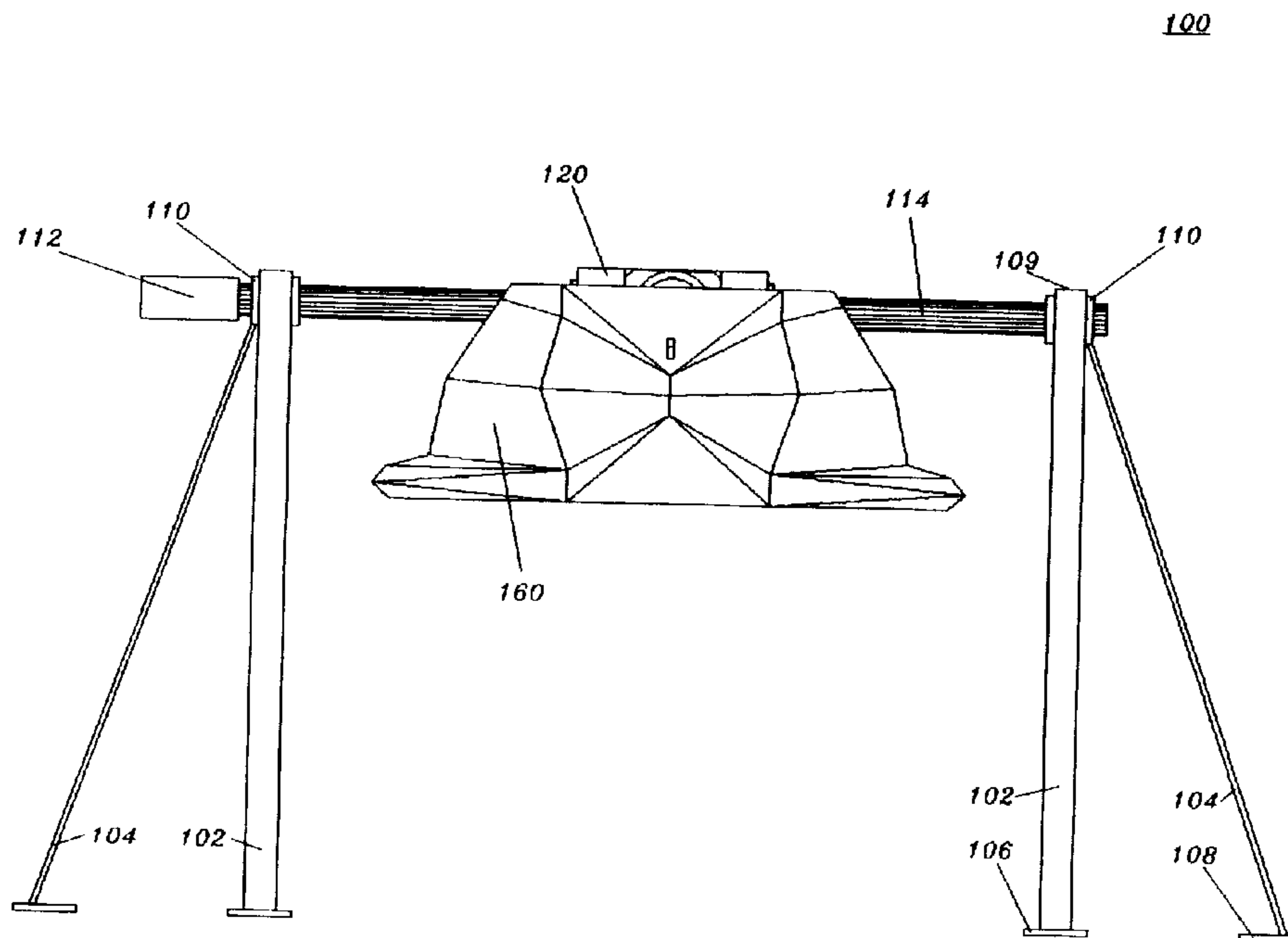




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 (54) Title: **IMPROVED FLIGHT SIMULATOR**



(57) **Abrégé/Abstract:**

This invention is a motion simulator (300) wherein the pitch, roll, and yaw axes are separated from the participant to provide a more realistic simulated motion experience in that the participant feels a translation as well as a rotation of his body as he performs a simulated climb or roll. The simulator includes a pitch boom (114) rotatable about the pitch axis and a swing boom (134), perpendicular to the pitch axis, rotatable about the roll axis. The swing boom supports a participant compartment (160) which can rotate about the roll axis. The participant compartment has a center of gravity which is separated from the intersection of the pitch and roll axes. A counterweight (230) may be slidably connected to a second section (231) of the swing boom opposite the participant compartment and driven by a counterweight drive assembly (232) to achieve both static and dynamic balance. The simulator may be supported by a platform (302) which is rotatable about the yaw axis which intersects the pitch and roll axes. The passenger compartment may be raised and lowered along the yaw axis to permit ease of entry and egress of the participant to and from the passenger compartment.

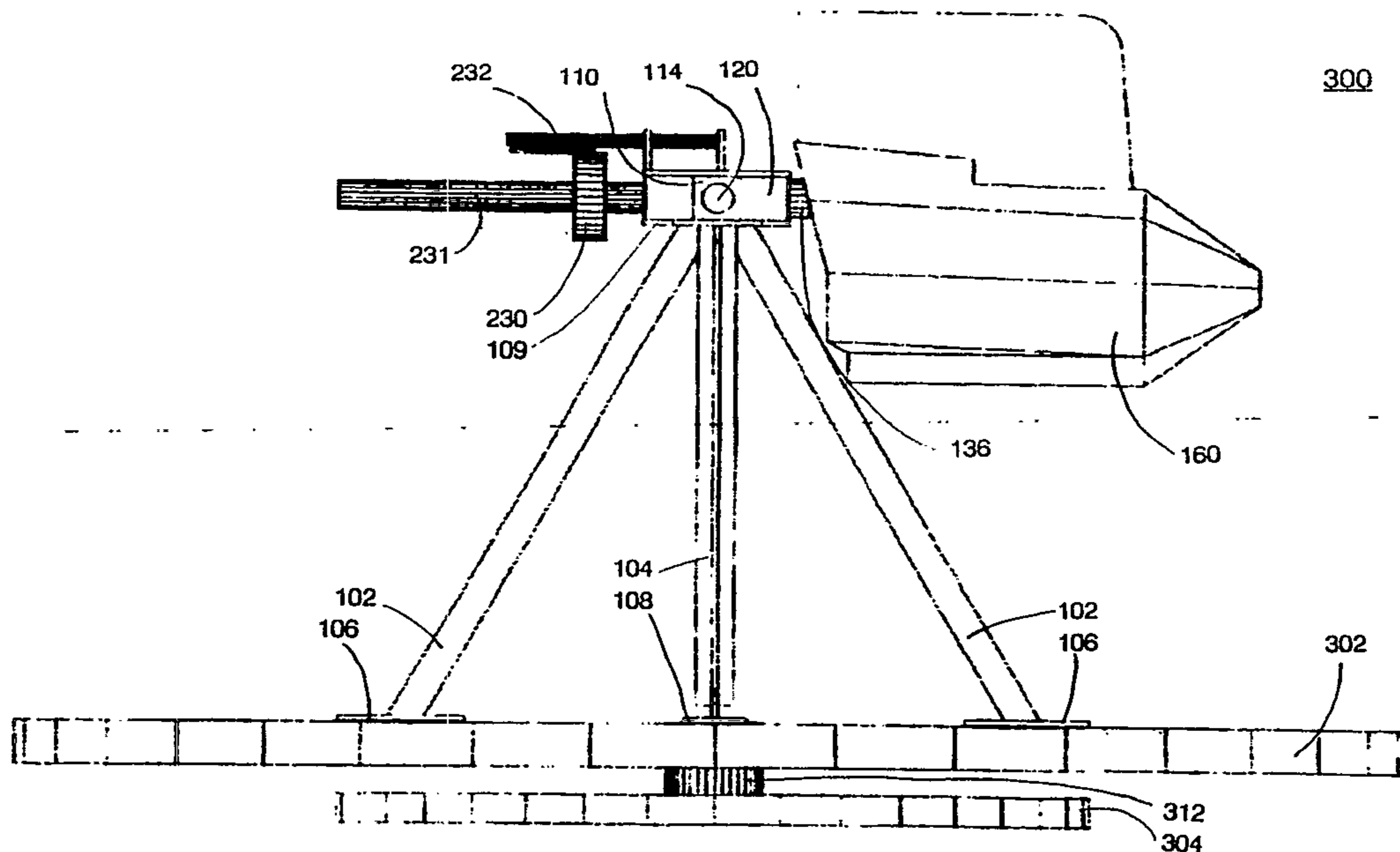
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<p>(21) International Application Number: PCT/US96/01622</p> <p>(22) International Filing Date: 5 February 1996 (05.02.96)</p> <p>(30) Priority Data: 08/383,992                      6 February 1995 (06.02.95)                      US</p> <p>(71)(72) Applicant and Inventor: McCLINTIC, Frank, J. [US/US]; 1575 Priscilla Court, Toms River, NJ 08753 (US).</p> <p>(74) Agent: KRIVOSHIK, David, P.; Crummy, Del Deo, Dolan, Griffinger &amp; Vecchione, One Riverfront Plaza, Newark, NJ 07102 (US).</p>	<p>(81) Designated States: BR, CA, JP, KR, European patent (AT, BE, CH, DE, DK, ES, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE).</p> <p><b>Published</b> <i>With international search report. Before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of the receipt of amendments.</i></p> <p>(88) Date of publication of the international search report: 26 September 1996 (26.09.96)</p>	

(54) Title: IMPROVED FLIGHT SIMULATOR



(57) Abstract

This invention is a motion simulator (300) wherein the pitch, roll, and yaw axes are separated from the participant to provide a more realistic simulated motion experience in that the participant feels a translation as well as a rotation of his body as he performs a simulated climb or roll. The simulator includes a pitch boom (114) rotatable about the pitch axis and a swing boom (134), perpendicular to the pitch axis, rotatable about the roll axis. The swing boom supports a participant compartment (160) which can rotate about the roll axis. The participant compartment has a center of gravity which is separated from the intersection of the pitch and roll axes. A counterweight (230) may be slidably connected to a second section (231) of the swing boom opposite the participant compartment and driven by a counterweight drive assembly (232) to achieve both static and dynamic balance. The simulator may be supported by a platform (302) which is rotatable about the yaw axis which intersects the pitch and roll axes. The passenger compartment may be raised and lowered along the yaw axis to permit ease of entry and egress of the participant to and from the passenger compartment.

**IMPROVED FLIGHT SIMULATOR****BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**1. **Field of the Invention**

This invention relates to a flight simulator, and in particular to one  
5 which provides a more realistic experience concerning the efforts of simulator motion  
upon the person who operates the flight controls.

2. **Description of Related Art**

Flight simulators enhance safety and reduce the costs of training for  
real flight. The safety aspects are enhanced where raw trainees are instructed to fly, or  
10 where experienced pilots are instructed on procedures covering new aircraft or new  
airport situations. The cost is reduced where pilots maintain skills for commercial  
flying,, or for practice in combat or exhibition operations. Fuel bills, landing fees and  
maintenance costs are avoided by using a simulator rather than actual flight time.

The general characteristics of a simulator are that a trainee is placed  
15 before controls and instruments which duplicate an actual aircraft. The canopy  
surrounding the trainee may be blank or it may have a screen upon which images are  
projected to further simulate responses to the movement of the controls. The trainee's  
seat is also caused to move in response to his actions upon the controls.

A problem with existing simulators is that the trainee's center of  
20 gravity is at the intersection of the axes which define the attitude of the simulator with  
respect to pitch (up and down to the trainee), roll (rotation about the axis of travel),  
and yaw (left or right to the direction of travel). The result is that when the controls

are moved to cause a climb, the trainee is rotated about his center of gravity (his pelvis) whereby his feet rotate forward and his head rotates backwards.

In actual flight a pilot is not at the center of gravity of the aircraft, but is usually located forward of it. When the pilot moves the controls for a maneuver, he  
5 feels an acceleration as the seat both translates and rotates him. This dual effect upon the trainee is not fully provided in the art of flight simulators.

For example, U.S. Patent No. 4,710,128 to Wachsmuth et al. discloses a cockpit which is gimbaled on three independently-controlled axes, i.e., pitch, roll and yaw, all of which revolve about a planetary axis. The cockpit is swung around the  
10 planetary axis by an arm so as to exert centripetal forces in the order of 2 g's upon the pilot. The pilot controls each of the gimbaled axes with an on-board computer while being subjected to disorienting forces which are controlled by a stationary computer.

U.S. Patent No. 4,856,771 to Nelson et al. discloses a video simulator machine having an enclosed spherical cockpit which can rotate 360 degrees in any  
15 director, thus simulating simultaneous movements of pitch, roll, and yaw as the occupants of the cockpit control a joystick. When he pulls the joystick back to simulate a climb his body rotates downward. A separate lift control assembly described as a rack and pinion moves a stationary base which supports the rotating sphere and it is controlled by buttons from the cockpit or by a computer. This lifting  
20 assembly is limited in its travel and in its speed.

U.S. Patent No., 4,710,129 to Newman et al. discloses a cabin mounted between the arms of a yoke which define a horizontal axis (pitch), the yoke being

ratably mounted about vertical axis (yaw) to a stationary base. A limited translatory movement on the base, more especially in the vertical direction, may also be provided.

U.S. Patent No. 5,051,094 to Richter et al. discloses a g-force trainer in which a pilot is enclosed in a gondola which is swing by an arm around a vertical axis.

5 A counterweight is mounted to the end of the arm for dynamic balance, and the gondola is free to swing about a roll axis, supported by the arm, at the pilot's eye level as the speed increases.

Accordingly, there is a need in the air for a flight simulator which more closely replicates the actual movement felt by a pilot in maneuvering an aircraft. In particular, to simulate a vertical and sideways forces upon the pilot which are  
10 proportional to the severity of a maneuver he directs on the controls. These forces being in addition to the rotation in lace provided by other flight simulators.

### 3. Summary of the Invention

The present invention relates to a more realistic motion simulator  
15 wherein the participant is not located near the intersection or pitch, roll and yaw axes.

In one embodiment on the invention, a pitch boom is driven to rotate about a pitch axis, and a swing boom, lying along a roll axis which is perpendicular to the pitch axis, supports a participant compartment. The participant compartment can rotate about the roll axis, and its center of gravity, is separated from the intersection of  
20 the pitch and roll axes.

In a further embodiment of the invention, a counterweight is added to the side of the swing boom which is opposite to the participant compartment. A sensor determines an out-of-balance condition after the participant enters the

participant compartment. A balance control system operates upon a signal from the sensor to statically balance the motion simulator by directing a drive motor to move the counterweight to minimize the torque about the pitch axis caused by the weight of all the components supported by it. The process is repeated during motion simulation  
5 to achieve dynamics balance. This process provides the same responses time for a dive or a climb maneuver, as would be felt in an actual aircraft.

In another embodiment of the invention, platform driven by a yaw monitor supports the fight simulator described below, the platform being ratable about a yaw axis which intersects the pitch and roll axes of the previous embodiment. The  
10 participant is separated from this intersection, so three directions of translation and three directions of rotation are experienced by the participant as the motion simulator responds to the controls.

In still another embodiment of the invention, the motion simulator may be raised and lowered to permit easy entry and egress of the participant from the  
15 motion simulator.

In the foregoing embodiments of the invention, a control system operates under the direction of a flight algorithm which can replicate the flight conditions of various aircraft, combat or stunt routines, or various airport landing and takeoff situations. The control system is linked to controls in the cockpit (participant  
20 compartment) and to various display devices therein which may include indicators, displays panels, or helmet mounted displays.

In one broad embodiment there is provided a motion simulator comprising: means for support; a pitch boom, having a pitch axis, the pitch boom being rotatably connected to the support means; a swing boom, having a first end and a second end, the swing boom extending along a roll axis in between said first end and said second end that is perpendicular to the pitch axis, wherein the swing boom is rotatably connected to the pitch boom in a manner that enables the swing boom to completely rotate about the pitch boom in a plane perpendicular to the pitch axis, and wherein the swing boom is rotatable about the roll axis; and a participant compartment, having a center of gravity, coupled to said first end of the swing boom; whereby the participant compartment's center of gravity is separated from the pitch axis.

These and other features and advantages of the invention will be better understood with consideration of the following detailed description of the preferred embodiments taken in conjunction with the accompanying the drawings.

4. Brief Description of the Drawings

5 Figs. 1A, 1B, and 1C are side, front and top views, respectively, of one embodiment of the invention;

Fig. 2 is a side view of a further embodiment of the invention;

Fig. 3 is a side view of another embodiment of the invention; and

Fig. 4 is a side view of still another embodiment of the invention.

10 The drawings are not to scale.

5. Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments

Although the present invention is particularly well suited for use as a flight simulator, and shall be described with respect to this application, the methods and apparatus disclosed here can be applied to other motion simulators. Such motion  
15 simulators can include the simulation of flying, driving, riding, a roller coaster, other amusement park rides, and virtual reality environments. The simulators can be preprogrammed, interactively controlled, as well as dynamically interact with an external environment which may include other motion simulators.

Referring now to Figs. 1A, 1B, and 1C, there is shown apparatus 100  
20 in accordance with one embodiment of the invention. Like elements bear the same reference numbers in all the drawings which follow.

Means for support is comprised of support frames 102 and side frames 104 which rest upon plates 106 and 108, respectively. The support frames and side

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frames terminate at and support pedestals 109. The pedestals and their associated support means are spaced apart and in turn support two pitch bearings 110 which provide a rotating support to pitch boom 114, which lies along a pitch axis, PP (not shown). One of the pedestals also supports a pitch motor 112, which is adapted to  
5 drive the pitch boom bi-directionally around the pitch axis. The pitch motor may be driven electrically or hydraulically under manual or computer control in any manner known in the art. Means for braking (not shown) may also be connected between the pitch boom and a pedestal, pitch motor, or support means. Braking means are well known in the art and may also be under manual or computer control.

10 Pitch boom 114 supports hub 120 which supports swing boom 134 such that the wing boom which lies along a roll axis RR (not shown), is perpendicular to the pitch boom and pitch axis. The hub rotates with the pitch boom and contains a roll motor 132 and roll braking 103 (not shown) which permits the swing boom to be  
15 rotated about the roll axis by the roll motor. The discussion above regarding the type, operation, control, and braking of the pitch motor apply here to the roll motor.

One end 136 of the swing boom supports cockpit assembly 160. The cockpit assembly may comprise: a seat for a trainee, input controls such as a joystick, a wheel, buttons, switches, levers and the like, instruments which indicate various flight conditions such as cockpit attitude, speed and acceleration, reserves of fuel and  
20 armaments, condition of flight control surfaces, and means for displaying what a trainee would see in actual flight. These displays may be on a video screen, a projected screen, or a helmet mounted display. The cockpit assembly also contains communication means through which power, flight, information, and control requests

from the trainee are passed between control systems which may be in the cockpit, or a fixed reference, or both. The communication means may comprise cables and slip rings, or a telemetry system. Power may be provided through the slip rings or may be stored in the cockpit in batteries.

5                   In operation, it is important to note that while the roll axis passes through the cockpit, the pitch axis does not. By placing the trainee away from the pitch axis, the trainee will experience a lifting sensation, as well as a rotating sensation, when the input controls call for a climb. This satisfies a need in the art for a flight simulator which more closely replicates the actual movement felt by a pilot in  
10 maneuvering an aircraft. The cockpit assembly will swing clockwise in Fig. 1A as long as the pilot indicates a climb. Pedestals 109 are spaced above plates 106 and 108 so that the cockpit and swing boom may completely rotate about the pitch axis to simulate a loop in actual flight.

                  The rate at which the simulated loop is performed is determined by the  
15 position of the input controls and an algorithm which is stored in the control system. This algorithm can replicate actual flight conditions of various aircraft, flight situations such as malfunctions, combat, takeoff, landing and the like. The output of the control system drives the pitch and roll motors and it also drives all the instruments and display systems in the cockpit. For training, or for entertainment, the  
20 control system may record the simulated flight performance of a trainee and display this information on a screen or direct it to a memory or a printer.

                  When the trainee calls for a roll, an input signal is sent to the control system which processes it according to an algorithm, as above, so that the roll motor

drives the cockpit assembly in a circular motion about the roll axis until the input controls are returned to a neutral position. The support means are spaced apart sufficiently to permit complete rotation of the cockpit assembly about the roll axis.

Referring now to Fig. 2, there is shown apparatus 200 in accordance  
5 with another embodiment of the invention wherein elements beginning with a "1" are the same elements, operating in the same way, as in apparatus 100.

Apparatus 200 resets upon fixed reference 201 and elements which are added in Fig. 2 are counterweight 230 which is slidably connected to move along a second section of swing boom 231. A first section 136 of the swing boom supports  
10 the cockpit assembly. Counterweight drive assembly 232 is interspersed between the counterweight and the pitch boom, so that a first portion of it is fixed to the center weldment and a second portion is attached to the counterweight, a counterweight motor 234 (not shown) in hub 120, being adapted to move the second portion of the counterweight drive assembly. In operation, pitch motor 112 is left in a neutral  
15 position as the trainee is seated in the cockpit and before the flight simulation begins. IN this condition the cockpit assembly will rotate about the pitch axis in a direction determined by the centers of gravity if all the elements supported by the swing boom and the distances of these centers of gravity from the pitch axis. These distances are moment arms, and when multiplied by the weight of each element supported by the  
20 swing boom (including the swing boom itself) they each produce a moment measured in foot pounds, the sum of which produces a net torque about the pitch axis which will cause the cockpit to point straight up or down. This is a condition of static imbalance, which is detected by a sensor coupled to the pitch boom. The sensor develops a signal

which is fed into a balance control system which directs the counterweight motor to move the counterweight to minimize the net torque about the pitch axis. This operation brings the apparatus into a condition of static balance and compensates for the various weights of trainees. A further adjustment is performed to achieve a  
5 condition of dynamic balance during flight simulation. Dynamic balancing is well known in the art and the benefit achieved is to have the same response time for a climb command as for a dive command.

Referring not to Fig. 3, there is shown apparatus 300 in accordance with yet another embodiment of the invention.

10 Plates 106 and 108 rest upon platform 302 which is free to rotate about an axis YY which intersects the pitch and the roll axes at the center of hub 120. The three axes form an orthogonal set of axes, rotation about which will define any attitude of cockpit assembly 160 in pitch, roll and yaw directions, as one would experience in real flight situations. The intersection of these axes is not located in the  
15 cockpit assembly, as is common in most flight simulators, but is located behind the trainee as it would be in real flight where the pitch axis would be near the intersection of the wings and the fuselage. In this configuration, the trainee feels an acceleration in pitch and yaw as the controls are moved together with a rotation in angular position which is provided by other simulators. Base 304 supports yaw motor 312 which  
20 drives platform 302 about the yaw axis, YY. The discussion above regarding the type, operation, control, and breaking of the pitch motor apply here to the yaw motor. When the trainee calls for a turn, an input signal is sent to the control system which processes it according to algorithm, as above, so that the yaw motor drives the

platform in a circular motion about the yaw axis until the input controls are returned to a neutral position. All the other elements and their functions were described previously.

Referring now to Fig 4, there is shown apparatus 400 which is in accordance with still another embodiment of the invention wherein base plate 407 is attached to support frames 102 which terminate in cap 420. Hydraulic ram 440 is shown in a lowered position in which it supports pitch boom 114, and in turn, hub 120, swing boom 134, and cockpit assembly 160, the functions of which were described for apparatus 100.. The purpose of the hydraulic ram 440 is to make entry into the cockpit assembly 160 easier for a trainee. After the trainee is seated the hydraulic ram is guided by track 430 and elevated so that pitch boom 114 and pitch bearing 110 are shown (dotted) at position "B". In this position, the cockpit assembly is completely rotatable about the pitch axis and it operates as described in the discussion of apparatus 100 or apparatus 200. The hydraulic ram is the preferred embodiment, but its function could be performed by scissors arrangement which permits lowering of the pitch boom or by any other lift means such as a screw drive, rack, and pinion, winch or an electrically driven mechanism.

In a preferred embodiment the pitch, roll, and yaw motors are hydraulically driven and are provided by Rineer Hydraulics, Inc., San Antonio, Texas. The slipo rings which communicate power and signals between the cockpit assembly and the computer are provided by Hydromotion, Inc. Spring City, Pennsylvania. The computer which is outside the cockpit may be provided by any vendor using an Intel, Inc. 486 DX2-66 processor. The on-board computer uses one 486 DX2-66 processor,

and two image generators from Tellurian, Inc., Allendale, New Jersey. The dimensions of the simulator fit within a cube which is 12 feet on a side and can be expanded to larger dimensions.

This satisfies the need of present flight simulators by providing  
5 transitional as well as rotational movement in six degrees of freedom to a t trainee.

Changes and modifications in the specifically described embodiments can be carried out without departing from the scope of the invention. In particular, the means for support may have any configuration which supports the intersection of three axes of rotation and which permits the cockpit, which is separated from that  
10 intersection, to swing in three directions.

Claims

1. A motion simulator comprising:
  - means for support;
  - a pitch boom, having a pitch axis, the pitch boom being rotatably connected to the support means;
  - a swing boom, having a first end and a second end, the swing boom extending along a roll axis in between said first end and said second end that is perpendicular to the pitch axis, wherein the swing boom is rotatably connected to the pitch boom in a manner that enables the swing boom to completely rotate about the pitch boom in a plane perpendicular to the pitch axis, and wherein the swing boom is rotatable about the roll axis; and
  - a participant compartment, having a center of gravity, coupled to said first end of the swing boom;
  - whereby the participant compartment's center of gravity is separated from the pitch axis.
  
2. A motion simulator comprising:
  - means for support;
  - a pitch boom, having a pitch axis, the pitch boom being rotatably connected to the support means;
  - a swing boom, having a first end and a second end, the swing boom extending along a roll axis in between said first end and said second end that is perpendicular to the pitch axis, the swing boom being rotatably connected to the pitch boom;
  - a pitch motor for selectively rotating the swing boom about the pitch axis, wherein the pitch boom is supported by the support means at a height that is sufficient to permit the swing boom to completely rotate about the pitch boom in a plane perpendicular to the pitch axis;
  - a roll motor for selectively rotating the swing boom about the roll axis;

a participant compartment, having a center of gravity, coupled to said first end of the swing boom, the participant compartment including input controls upon which a participant enters directions; and

a control system for controlling the orientation of the swing boom and the participant compartment, wherein the control system operates under the direction of an algorithm;

whereby the participant compartment's center of gravity is separated from the pitch axis.

3. A flight simulator comprising:

means for support;

a pitch boom, having a pitch axis, being rotatably connected to the support means;

a swing boom, comprising a first section and a second section which are able to rotate about the pitch axis, having a roll axis which is perpendicular to the pitch axis, being rotatably connected to the pitch boom;

a counterweight being slidably connected to move along the second section of the swing boom; and

a cockpit assembly, having a center of gravity, being supported by the first section of the swing boom;

whereby the cockpit assembly's center of gravity is separated from the pitch axis.

4. A flight simulator comprising:

means for support;

a pitch boom, having a pitch axis, being rotatably connected to the support means;

a swing boom, comprising a first section and a second section which are able to rotate about the pitch axis, having a roll axis which is perpendicular to the pitch axis, being rotatably connected to the pitch boom;

a counterweight being slidably connected to move along the second section of the swing boom;

a cockpit assembly, having a center of gravity, being supported by the first section of the swing boom;

a counterweight drive assembly, a first portion of which being fixed to the pitch boom and a second portion of which being attached to the counterweight, being adapted to move the counterweight along the second section of the swing boom;

a sensor being coupled to the pitch boom and adapted to detect the rotation of the pitch boom and to generate a signal which is proportional to that rotation;

a balance control system being adapted to receive the signal from the sensor, operate upon it, and direct the counterweight drive assembly to balance the flight simulator about the pitch axis;

a pitch motor for selectively rotating the swing boom about the pitch axis, wherein the pitch boom is supported by the support means at a height that is sufficient to permit the swing boom to completely rotate about the pitch boom in a plane perpendicular to the pitch axis;

a roll motor for selectively rotating the swing boom about the roll axis;  
and

a control system for controlling the orientation of the swing boom and the cockpit assembly;

whereby the cockpit assembly's center of gravity is separated from the pitch axis.

5. A balanced flight simulator comprising:

a base;

a yaw motor, having a frame, a shaft, and a yaw axis, the frame being fixed to the base;

a platform, connected to the shaft of the yaw motor, being rotatable about the yaw axis;

means for support being attached to the platform;

a pitch boom, having a pitch axis, being rotatably connected to the support means;

a pitch motor, having a frame and a shaft, whereby the shaft drives the pitch boom in a rotating motion about the pitch axis and the frame is attached to the support means;

a swing boom, comprising a first section and a second section which are able to rotate about the pitch axis, having a roll axis which is perpendicular to the pitch axis, being rotatably connected to the pitch boom;

a roll motor, having a frame and a shaft, whereby the shaft drives the swing boom in a rotating motion about the roll axis and the frame is attached to the pitch boom;

a counterweight being slidably connected to move along the second section of the swing boom;

a cockpit assembly, having input controls, display devices, and a center of gravity, being supported by the first section of the swing boom; and

a control system, operating under the direction of a flight algorithm, being adapted to drive motors which adjust the orientation of the cockpit assembly;

whereby the cockpit assembly's center of gravity is separated from the intersection of the pitch axis and roll axis.

6. A motion simulator comprising:

means for support;

a pitch boom, having a pitch axis, the pitch boom being rotatably connected to the support means;

a swing boom, having a first end and a second end, said swing boom extending along a roll axis in between said first end and said second end that is

perpendicular to said pitch axis, wherein said swing boom is rotatably connected to said pitch boom in a manner that enables said swing boom to completely rotate about said pitch boom in a plane perpendicular to said pitch axis;

a cockpit assembly, having a center of gravity, coupled to said first end of said swing boom; and

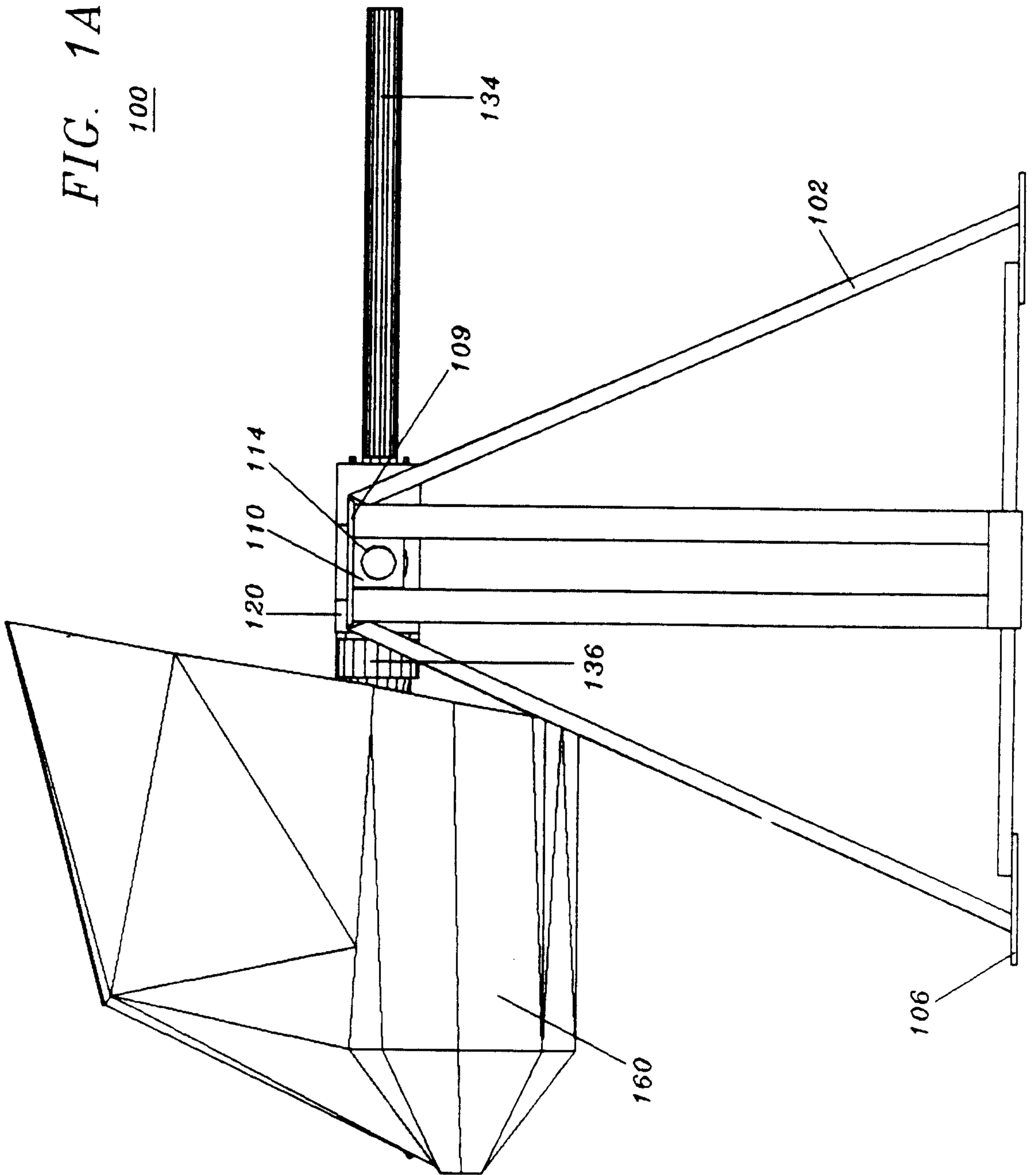
a lift mechanism for selectively raising and lowering said pitch boom; whereby the cockpit assembly's center of gravity is separated from said pitch axis.

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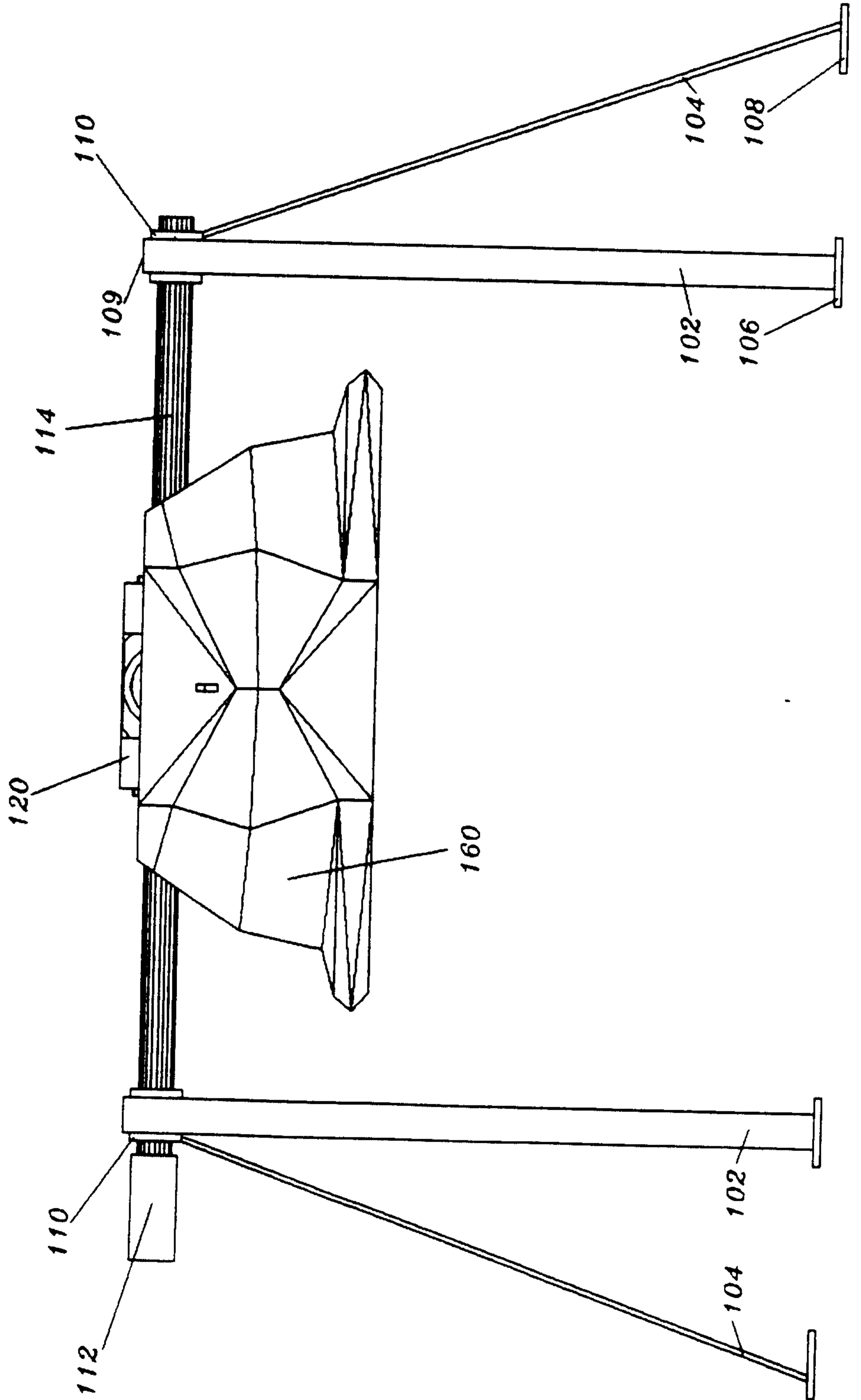
FIG. 1A

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FIG. 1B  
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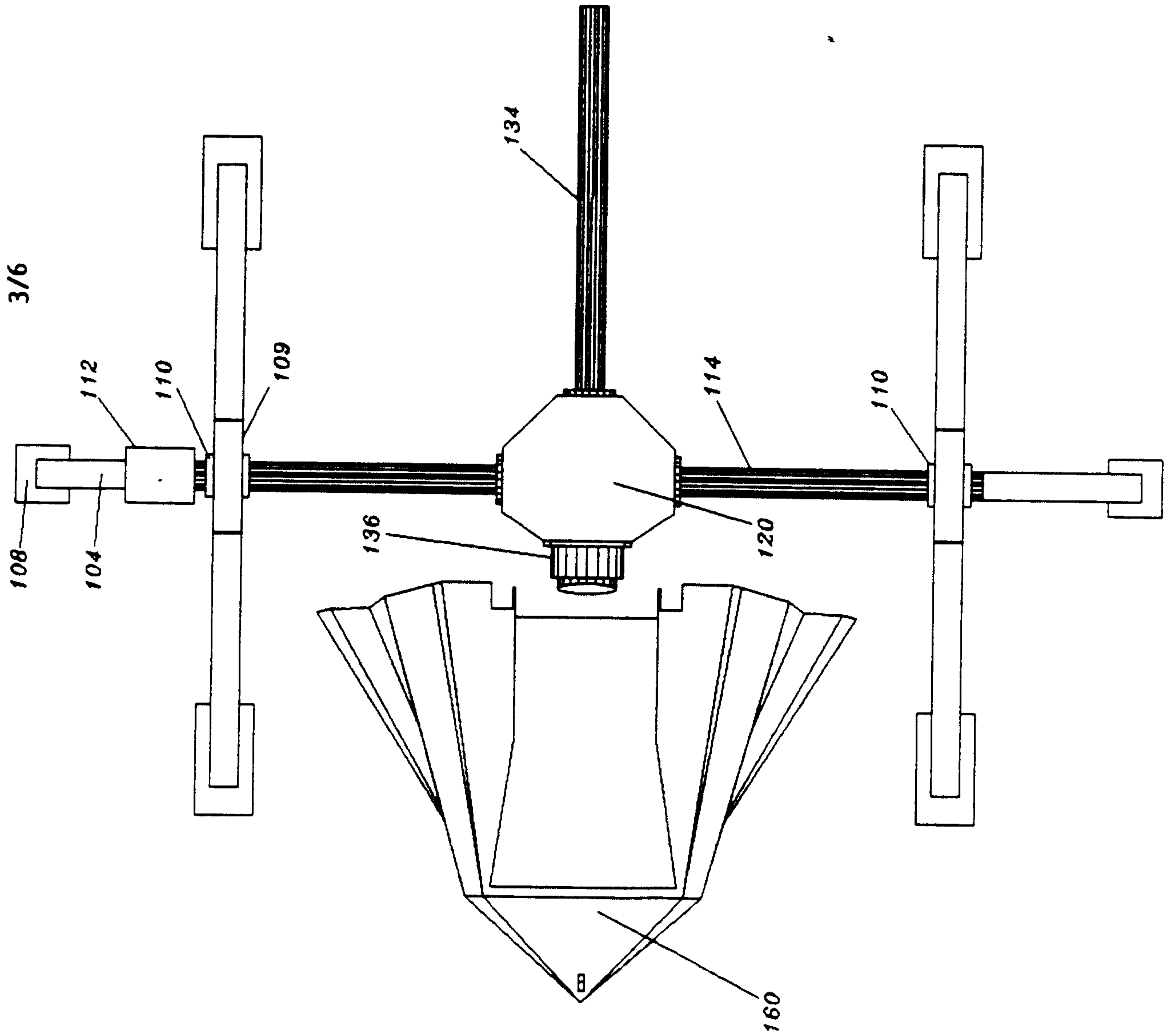


FIG. 1C  
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FIG 2  
200

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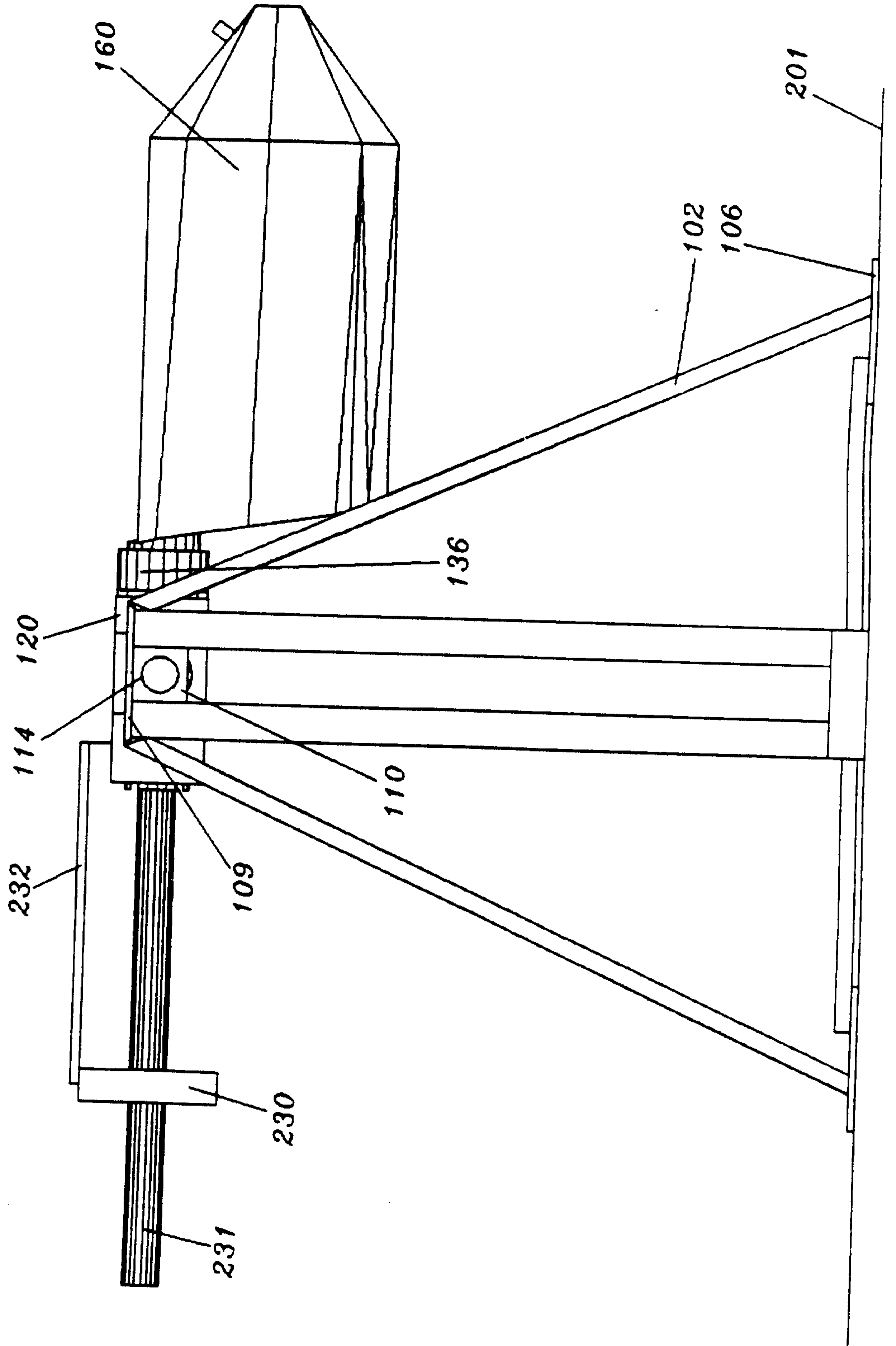


FIG 3  
300

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