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(54) Title: **SUGRICAL APPARATUS WITH REMOVABLE TOOL CARTRIDGE**

(57) Abstract: A surgical apparatus for coagulating and cutting tissue includes a handle assembly and a tool cartridge. The tool cartridge includes electrically conductive movable tools, such as jaws and a blade, for cutting tissue. The jaws and blade each are connected to a transmission to facilitate movement. Multiple sheaths are used to encompass and protect the transmissions. Slidable grips are disposed outside of the sheaths and operatively connected to the transmissions that are disposed within the sheaths. At least one lever is supported by the handle assembly and engagable with the grips to facilitate movement of the grips, and thus, the tools.



WO 2009/082477 A2

SURGICAL APPARATUS WITH REMOVABLE TOOL CARTRIDGE

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

5 **[0001]** This application claims the benefit of provisional patent application No. 61/014,612, filed December 18, 2007, provisional patent application No. 61/117,380, filed November 24, 2008, and provisional patent application No. 61/119,150, filed December 2, 2008, which are each hereby incorporated by reference.

10 BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

[0002] The subject invention relates to surgical instruments. Specifically, the subject invention relates to electrosurgical instruments for cutting tissue such as blood vessels.

15 2. Description of the Related Art

[0003] Electrosurgical instruments have gained high acceptance in the medical community for coagulating and cutting tissue, such as blood vessels. These instruments are typically “one-piece” assemblies where the delicate tools used in the surgery are permanently affixed to handle and trigger mechanisms.

20 **[0004]** Because of this one-piece construction, these instruments tend to be expensive. Furthermore, due to the risk of infections, these instruments need to be sterilized and replaced often. Obviously, routinely replacing these expensive instruments drives up the cost of surgical procedures which must ultimately be borne by the patient.

25 **[0005]** Therefore, there is an opportunity to provide a surgical instrument that has more performance in a cost effective, disposable device.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION AND ADVANTAGES

[0006] A first aspect of the invention provides a surgical apparatus for coagulating and cutting tissue. The apparatus includes a handle assembly having a housing and a tool cartridge at least partially receivable in the housing. The tool cartridge includes a tool for use in coagulating and cutting tissue and a transmission operatively connected to the tool and longitudinally movable between positions. The tool cartridge also includes a sheath enclosing at least part of the transmission and defining at least one slot. A grip is disposed outside of the sheath and operatively connected to the transmission through the at least one slot. The handle assembly also includes a tool actuation lever operatively engagable with the grip of the tool cartridge such that the grip and the transmission move to actuate the tool in relation to actuation of the tool actuation lever.

[0007] A second aspect of the invention provides a surgical apparatus for coagulating and cutting tissue. The apparatus includes a tool cartridge having a tool for use in cutting tissue. A handle assembly includes a housing for supporting the tool cartridge. The housing defines an opening for accommodating the tool cartridge such that part of the tool cartridge is disposed inside the housing and part of the tool cartridge is disposed outside the housing. The apparatus also includes a gate mechanism for shuttering the opening when the tool cartridge is absent from the handle assembly.

[0008] A third aspect of the invention provides A surgical apparatus for coagulating and cutting tissue of a body. The apparatus includes a handle assembly having a first lever and a second lever. A tool cartridge is supported by the handle assembly. The tool cartridge includes a pair of jaws electrically connected to a

power source and movable in conjunction with the first lever for grasping the tissue. The tool cartridge also includes a blade electrically connected to the power source and movable in conjunction with the second lever between positions. A cut-coag switch is operatively connected to the second lever for automatically switching between a
5 coagulation mode and a cutting mode as the blade is moved between positions.

[0009] The surgical apparatus of the subject invention provides numerous advantages over the prior art. The use of sheaths enclosing the transmission helps protect these components from dirt or damage, allowing positioning of springs and pistons thus executing desired movements. Likewise, the
10 gate mechanism also protects the interior of the handle assembly from debris and damage. Moreover, the apparatus allows for automatic switching between coagulation and cutting modes. This automatic switching allows the surgeon to concentrate on the surgical procedure, instead of worrying about turning dials on a power supply.

15

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0010] Other advantages of the present invention will be readily appreciated, as the same becomes better understood by reference to the following detailed description when considered in connection with the accompanying drawings
20 wherein:

[0011] Figure 1 is a perspective view of a first embodiment of a surgical apparatus showing a tool cartridge installed in a handle assembly;

[0012] Figure 2 is a perspective view of a first design of the tool cartridge for use with the handle assembly of the first embodiment;

[0013] Figure 3 is a perspective view of a second design of the tool cartridge for use with the handle assembly of the first embodiment;

[0014] Figure 4 is a close-up perspective view of a pair of jaws and a blade of the tool cartridge of the second design;

5 [0015] Figure 5 is a close-up perspective view of the jaws and a blade of a third design of the tool cartridge;

[0016] Figure 6 is a perspective view of a fourth design of the tool cartridge for use with the handle assembly of the first embodiment;

[0017] Figure 7 is a close-up perspective view of a pair of electrodes
10 and the blade of the tool cartridge of the fourth design;

[0018] Figure 8 is a perspective view of the handle assembly of the first embodiment;

[0019] Figure 9 is a perspective view of the handle assembly of the first embodiment showing electrical connecting pins for connecting the handle
15 assembly to an electrosurgical power source;

[0020] Figure 10 is a perspective view of a second embodiment of the surgical apparatus showing the tool cartridge installed in the handle assembly with the jaws grasping tissue T;

[0021] Figure 11 is a close-up perspective view of the pair of jaws and
20 the blade of the second embodiment grasping tissue T;

[0022] Figure 12 is a close-up perspective view of the pair of jaws of the second embodiment

[0023] Figure 13 is an exploded view of the tool cartridge of the second embodiment;

[0024] Figure 14 is a partial cross-sectional view of the tool cartridge of the second embodiment showing an interior of first and second sheaths;

[0025] Figure 15 is a perspective view of the handle assembly of the second embodiment showing a polarity switch;

5 [0026] Figure 16 is a partial cross-sectional view of the handle assembly of the second embodiment with the tool cartridge installed therein;

[0027] Figure 17 is a front view of a printed circuit board (PCB) of the handle assembly of the second embodiment;

[0028] Figure 18 is a back view of the PCB of the handle assembly of
10 the second embodiment;

[0029] Figure 19 is a close-up perspective view of electrical contacts of the second embodiment electrically connecting the PCB to conductive rings of the handle assembly;

[0030] Figure 20 is a perspective view of a third embodiment of the
15 surgical apparatus showing the tool cartridge installed in the handle assembly;

[0031] Figure 21 is a close-up perspective view of the pair of jaws of the third embodiment;

[0032] Figure 22 is an exploded view of the tool cartridge of the third embodiment;

20 [0033] Figure 23 is a partial cross-sectional view of the tool cartridge of the third embodiment showing the interior of the first and second sheaths;

[0034] Figure 24 is a perspective view of the third embodiment of the handle assembly;

[0035] Figure 25 is a perspective view of the third embodiment of the handle assembly with part of a housing removed and a lid opened and the tool cartridge installed therein;

[0036] Figure 26 is a side view of the third embodiment of the handle assembly with part of the housing removed and the lid opened;

[0037] Figure 27 is a front view of the PCB of the handle assembly of the third embodiment;

[0038] Figure 28 is a back view of the PCB of the handle assembly of the third embodiment;

[0039] Figure 29 is a close-up perspective view of electrical contacts of the third embodiment electrically connecting the PCB to conductive rings of the handle assembly; and

[0040] Figure 30 is a perspective view of an interior of the housing of the third embodiment showing a gate mechanism for shuttering an opening of the housing.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0041] Referring to the Figures, wherein like numerals indicate like parts throughout the several views, a surgical apparatus for cutting tissue is shown at **100**.

5 [0042] Referring to Figures 1, 10, and 20, the surgical apparatus **100** includes a handle assembly **102** accommodating a tool cartridge **104**. Three main embodiments for the surgical apparatus **100** are shown herein. Specifically, a first embodiment is shown in Figure 1-19, a second embodiment is shown in Figures 10-19, and a third embodiment is shown in Figures 20-30.

10 [0043] In the first and third embodiments, the tool cartridge **104** is removable from the handle assembly **102** and replaceable. The tool cartridge **104** may be reusable, disposable, or reposable (i.e., used a limited number of times) while the handle assembly **102** may be used any number of times with different tool cartridges **104**. The handle assembly **102** can accommodate a variety of different tool
15 cartridges **104** where each tool cartridge **104** has specific scope and functionality. In the second embodiment, tool cartridge **104** is not removable from the handle assembly **102**. That is, the handle assembly **102** and tool cartridge **104** are one unit that is typically disposed of after use. The tool cartridge **104** includes at least one tool **105** for use in a surgical procedure, preferably in an electrosurgical procedure. The handle
20 assembly **102** may be held by a surgeon or other medical personnel, for operating the tool or tools **105** of the tool cartridge **104**.

[0044] The handle assembly **102** includes a housing **106**. The tool cartridge **104** is at least partially receivable in the housing **106** of the handle assembly **102**. That is, the housing **106** supports the tool cartridge **104** by interfacing with at
25 least part of the tool cartridge **104**. The housing **106** of the handle assembly **102**

defines an opening **107** for accommodating the tool cartridge **104** such that part of the tool cartridge **104** is disposed inside the housing **106** and part of the tool cartridge is disposed outside the housing **106**.

[0045] In some implementations, such as those shown in Figures 1-5,
5 10-13, and 20-22, the tools **105** of the tool cartridge **104** includes a pair of jaws **108**. The jaws **108** are movable with respect to one another for grasping the tissue **T**, as best shown in Figures 10 and 11. That is, the jaws **108** move toward one another to grasp the tissue **T** therebetween and move away from each other to release the tissue. Preferably, each jaw **108** includes a grasping portion **109** and a support portion **110**.
10 The grasping portion **109** may include a plurality of serrated teeth (not numbered). The support portion **110** supports the grasping portion **109**. In the illustrated embodiments, the support portion **110** for each jaw includes a pair of rigid wires (not numbered) connected to the grasping portion **109**.

[0046] The jaws **108** are each electrically connectable to a power
15 source **112**. Specifically, the jaws **108** are electrically connectable to the power source **112** when the tool cartridge **104** is properly installed in the handle assembly **102**. As such, the jaws **108** may conduct electricity to the tissue **T** for use in surgical cutting and coagulating procedures. The power source **112** may be an electrosurgical generator, such as the Bovie ICON GP, manufactured by Bovie Medical Corporation
20 located in St. Petersburg, Florida. However, alternative devices may be implemented as the power source **112**. The power source **112** preferably generates an AC waveform in the radio frequency (RF) range. However, those skilled in the art realize other suitable electrical characteristics generated by the power source **112**, including, but not limited to, DC power.

[0047] The tool cartridge **104** includes at least one transmission (not separately numbered) operatively connected to the tool **105** for operating the tool. In the illustrated implementations involving the jaws **108**, the transmission is implemented as an extension tube **114** having a proximal end **115** and a distal end **116**.
5 The tube **114** is movable longitudinally, i.e., lengthwise, in a back-and-forth fashion. Movement of the tube **114** may be caused by the handle assembly **102**, as described in more detail below.

[0048] The distal end **116** of the extension tube **114** operatively engages the jaws **108**. More specifically, the tube **114** encompasses part of the
10 support portions **110** of the jaws **108**, such that the distal end **116** of the extension tube **114** engages the support portions **110** of the jaws **108**. Movement of the extension tube **114** toward the grasping portions **109** result in the tube **114** encompassing more of the support portions **110**. That is, the tube **114** compresses the support portions, resulting in movement of the grasping portions **109** with respect to
15 one another.

[0049] The tools **105** of the tool cartridge **104** may also include at least one blade **118**, as is shown in Figures 1-7, 10-13, and 20-22. The blade **118** is movable longitudinally cut the tissue **T**. When implemented with the jaws **108**, the blade **118** may be movable between the jaws **108** such that it is used to cut the tissue
20 **T** that is grasped by the jaws **108**. The transmission is implemented as a wire **120** which is operatively connected to the blade **118** for controlling movement of the blade **118**, as will be described in detail below. Preferably, the wire **120** extends through the tube **114**.

[0050] The blade **118** is electrically connectable to the power source
25 **112** for conducting electricity to the tissue. More specifically, the wire **120** conducts

electricity from the power source **112** to the blade **118**. The blade **118** and jaws **108** may operate in a monopolar or bipolar fashion, as described in detail below.

[0051] The tools **105** of the tool cartridge **104** may also include one or more electrodes **190**, as shown in Figures 6 and 7. In the illustrated implementations, the electrodes **190** extend through and are supported by the tube **114**. The electrodes **190** are stationary, i.e., they do not open and close. The blade **118** may be disposed between the electrodes **190**. A nonconductive coating **192** may be applied to the electrodes **190** adjacent the blade **118** to electrically isolate the electrodes **190** from the blade **118**, thus directing electric current through the tissue **T**.

[0052] In the illustrated embodiments, the tool cartridge **104** includes a knob **121**. The knob **121** surrounds the tube **114** and allows the surgeon to easily rotate the tool cartridge **104** when interfaced with the handle assembly **102**.

[0053] The tool cartridge **104** includes one or more grips **122**, **130** to facilitate movement of the tools **105**. In some implementations, a first grip **122** is operatively connected to the extension tube **114** for facilitating movement of the tube **114** and thus movement of the jaws **108**. The tool cartridge **104** also preferably includes a first sheath **124** encompassing at least part of the tube **114**. The first sheath **124** is preferably tubular or cylindrically shaped and the first grip **122** is preferably ring shaped to encompass and slidably engage the first sheath **124**. Other shapes and designs of the first grip **122** and first sheath **124** may be contemplated by those skilled in the art.

[0054] In some implementations, a first piston **123** disposed within the first sheath **124**. Preferably, the first piston **123** is disc shaped to slidably engage with the tubular shaped the first sheath **124**. The first piston **123** is operatively connected to the tube **114**, preferably by a direct connection. The first sheath **124** also defines at

least one slot 126. In the illustrated embodiments, the first piston 123 and the first grip 122 are connected with two screws (not numbered) disposed through the slot 126. Of course, those skilled in the art realize other techniques to connect the first piston 123 and the first grip 122.

5 [0055] Preferably, the tool cartridge 104 also includes a first spring 128 disposed around the tube 114 and engagable with the first piston 123. The first spring 128 may also engage the knob 121. The first spring 128 provides tension against the first grip 122. The first sheath 124 preferably surrounds the first spring 128. As such, the first sheath 124 conceals and protects the first spring 128 from dirt
10 and damage.

 [0056] The tool cartridge 104 preferably includes a second grip 130 operatively connected to the wire 120 for facilitating movement of the blade 118. The tool cartridge 104 also preferably includes a second sheath 132 encompassing at least part of the wire 120. In the illustrated embodiments, the second sheath 132 is tubular
15 or cylindrically shaped. The second sheath 132 is preferably connected to the first sheath 124 in an end-to-end manner.

 [0057] In some implementations, a second piston 134 is disposed within the second sheath 132. The second piston 134 is preferably connected to the wire 120 and disc shaped to slidably engage the second sheath 132. The second grip
20 130 is preferably ring shaped and slidably engagable with the second sheath 132. The second sheath 132 also defines at least one slot 138. In the illustrated embodiments, the second piston 134 and the second grip 130 are connected with two screws (not numbered) disposed through the slot 138. Of course, those skilled in the art realize other techniques to connect the second piston 134 and the second sheath 132.

[0058] Preferably, the tool cartridge 104 also includes a second spring 140 engagable with the second piston 134. More specifically, the second spring 140 is disposed within the second sheath 132. The second spring 140 may also engage an end of the first sheath 124, which narrows for connection with the second sheath 132.

5 As the second piston 134 and second grip 130 are connected, the second spring 140 provides tension against the second grip 130. The second spring 140 also encircles the wire 120 connected to the blade 118. Furthermore, the second sheath 132 conceals and protects the second spring 140 and the wire 120 from dirt and damage.

[0059] In the illustrated embodiments, the tool cartridge 104 also includes a third sheath 142. The third sheath 142 is preferably connected to either the first sheath 124 or the second sheath 132 in an end-to-end manner. A plurality of conductive rings 144 encircle an outer surface (not numbered) of the third sheath 142. These conductive rings 144 are formed of an electrically conductive material and utilized to interface electrical power between the handle assembly 102 and the tool

10 cartridge 104. More specifically, the conductive rings 144 are electrically connected

15 to the jaws 108, blade 118, and/or electrodes 190.

[0060] The handle assembly 102 includes a first tool actuation lever 150. The first tool actuation lever 150 is preferably pivotably hinged to allow motion about a pin (not numbered). The first tool actuation lever 150 is operatively

20 engagable with the first grip 122 of the tool cartridge 104. Accordingly, in some embodiments, depression of the first tool actuation lever 150 moves the first grip 122 and the tube 114 to actuate the jaws 108 in relation to actuation of the first tool actuation lever 150.

[0061] The first tool actuation lever 150 is positioned both inside and

25 outside of the housing 106 such that a user of the apparatus 100 may actuate the first

tool actuation lever **150**. Preferably, the first tool actuation lever **150** includes a first forked part **152** extending thereof. The first forked part **152** contacts the first grip **122**. The third embodiment of the handle assembly **102** includes an auxiliary forked part **153** operatively connected to the first tool actuation lever **150**, as shown in Figures 25 and 26. The auxiliary forked part **153** may actuate other grips (not numbered) on the tool assembly **104**.

[0062] The handle assembly **102** also includes a second tool actuation lever **154**. The second tool actuation lever **154** is preferably pivotably hinged to allow motion about a pin **156**. In the illustrated embodiments, the second tool actuation lever **154** is operatively connected to the second grip **130** of the tool cartridge **104**. Accordingly, depression of the second tool actuation lever **154** moves the second grip **130** and the wire **120** to actuate the blade **118** in relation to actuation of the second tool actuation lever **154**.

[0063] The second tool actuation lever **154** is positioned outside of the housing **106** such that a user of the apparatus **100** may actuate the second tool actuation lever **154**. A second forked part **158** is operatively connected to the pin **156**. The second forked part **158** contacts the second grip **130** to effectuate movement of the second grip **130**.

[0064] Importantly, the tool cartridge **104** of the illustrated embodiments may be rotated in a full 360° rotation while maintaining full mechanical and electrical operation. That is, no matter how much the tool cartridge **104** is rotated, the operation of the jaws **108** may be opened and closed, the blade **118** may be extended and retracted, and electrical current may flow to the jaws **108**, the blade **118**, and/or the electrodes **190**. This functionality is a product of the ring shape of the

grips **122, 130** working in conjunction with the fork parts **152, 153, 158** along with the conductive rings **144** contacting the electrical contacts **176**.

[0065] The handle assembly **102** may also include a gate mechanism **160** for shuttering the opening **107** of the housing **106** when no tool cartridge **104** is
5 interfaced with the handle assembly **102**. The third embodiment of the handle assembly **102** includes such a gate mechanism **160**, as shown in Figures 24-26 and 30. Referring primarily to Figure 30, the gate mechanism **160** includes a gate **162** tensioned by a spring **164**. The gate **162** includes a semi-circular edge **166** which engages the tool cartridge **104** when the installed in the handle assembly **102**.
10 Furthermore, the gate **162** forces the tool cartridge **104** against a seal **168** disposed adjacent the opening **107**.

[0066] The housing **106** of the third embodiment also includes a lid **170** that is openable for insertion and removal of the tool cartridge **104**. The gate mechanism **160** is supported by the lid **170** such that the gate **162** is moved into
15 engagement with the tool cartridge **104** when the lid **170** is closed.

[0067] The handle assembly **102** is electrically connectable to the power source **112** via a cable **172**. The cable **172** preferably includes a plurality of conductors
(not numbered) for conduction of electrical power and/or data between the handle
20 assembly **102** and the power source **112**.

[0068] The handle assembly **102** may include a printed circuit board (PCB) **174** disposed within the housing **106**. In the second and third embodiments, the conductors of the cable **172** are electrically connected to the PCB **174**. A plurality of electrical contacts **176** are electrically connected to and supported by the PCB **174**.

The electrical contacts **176** make contact with the conductive rings **144** of the tool cartridge **104**.

[0069] The handle assembly **102** further includes a power switch **178** electrically connected to the PCB **174** for initiating conduction of electrical power from the power source **112** to the jaws **108** and/or blade **118**. The power switch **178** is preferably a pushbutton and preferably disposed in close proximity to the first tool actuation lever **150**. As such, the user of the apparatus **100** can easily initiate electrical power after closing the jaws **108** on the tissue. In the second and third embodiments, the power switch **178** is disposed within first tool actuation lever **150**.

10 [0070] The handle assembly **102** also preferably includes a cut-coag switch **196**. The cut-coag switch **196** is preferably disposed within the housing and is operatively connected to the second forked part **158**. Thus, the cut-coag switch **196** is operatively connected to the second tool actuation lever **154** as well. In the illustrated embodiments, such as is shown in Figure 16, an extension spring **198** connects the cut-coag switch **196** to the second forked part **158**. The cut-coag switch **196** is electrically connected to the PCB **174** for switching the apparatus **100** between a coagulating mode and a cutting mode, as described in detail below. As the cut-coag switch **196** is preferably disposed within the housing **106**, it is not directly activated by a surgeon, but rather by operation of the second tool actuation lever **154**.

20 [0071] In bipolar operation, the apparatus **100** includes a coagulation mode and a cutting mode. When operating on tissue **T**, the coagulation mode is typically performed first to coagulate the blood and tissue proteins. As such, the blade **118** is retracted. Accordingly, the cut-coag switch **196** is not activated, i.e., the switch **196** is open. Therefore, in the coagulation mode, i.e., when the cut-coag

switch **196** is not activated, electric current flows from one of the jaws **108** (or one of the electrodes **190**) to the other of the jaws **108** (or the other of the electrodes **190**).

[0072] After performing coagulation of the tissue, the surgeon proceeds to cut the tissue **T**. Using the apparatus **100**, the surgeon will advance the
5 blade **118** using the second tool actuation lever **154** (which, in turn, operates the second forked part **158**). As the second forked part **158** is moved forward, the extension spring **198** activates the cut-coag switch **196**. This turns the apparatus **100** into cutting mode. As such, the electric current is then conducted from the blade **118**, through the tissue **T**, to the jaws **108** (or the electrodes **190**). This allows for superior
10 cutting as both the sharp edge of the blade **118** and the electric current operate in tandem to cut the tissue **T**.

[0073] The electric waveform and cycle timing is typically different in the coagulation mode than in the cutting mode. For instance, in the coagulation mode, a pulsed RF waveform at a first frequency is typically used (e.g., 0.2 seconds on, and
15 0.8 seconds off). In the cutting mode, a constant RF waveform at a second frequency, different than the first frequency, is typically used. Those skilled in the art realize numerous techniques to produce suitable waveforms and cycle timing for the differing modes.

[0074] The handle assembly **102** may also include a polarity switch
20 **180** electrically connected to the PCB **174**. The polarity switch **180** allows selection of either monopolar or bipolar operation of the apparatus **100**. Bipolar operation is described above with respect to either the coagulation mode or the cutting mode. In monopolar operation, electric current is conducted from the jaws **108** and the blade **118**, through the tissue, to a conductive pad **179**. Those skilled in the art realized that
25 the conductive pad **179** is often referred to as a “ground pad”. The conductive pad

179 is placed in contact with the body of the patient on whom the surgery is being performed such that a circuit is completed through the body of the patient.

[0075] By allowing convenient access to monopolar mode, the surgeon can easily switch the apparatus 100 from bipolar to monopolar (and back again if
5 necessary) to complete the cutting operation. This on-the-fly switching is particularly useful for cutting "hard-to-cut" tissue T, which is often only realized during the middle of a coagulation and cutting procedure.

[0076] The handle assembly 102 may further include a light 181, such as a light emitting diode (LED). The light 181 is electrically connected to the PCB
10 174. In some embodiments, the light illuminates when the apparatus 100 is in monopolar operation.

[0077] The handle assembly 102 may also include a lever locking assembly 182. In the second embodiment, as best shown in Figure 16, the lever locking assembly 182 is used to retain the first tool actuation lever 150 in position.
15 The lever locking assembly 182 includes a plurality of teeth 186 in a saw-tooth configuration. The teeth 186 interface with a pin 188 extending from the first tool actuation lever 150. As the first tool actuation lever 150 is depressed, the pin 188 latches against one of the teeth 186. This holds the first tool actuation lever 150 (and accordingly the jaws 108) in position such that the surgeon need not retain pressure on
20 the first tool actuation lever 150. The lever locking assembly also includes a tab 184 extending from the teeth 186 and positioned outside of the housing 106 to allow release of the pin 188 from the teeth.

[0078] The handle assembly 102 and/or the tool cartridge 104 may also include an identification chip 194. In the second embodiment, where the tool
25 cartridge 104 is not removable from the handle assembly 102, the identification chip

is preferably supported by the housing **106**, as is shown in Figure 16. In the third embodiment, where the tool cartridge **104** is replaceable, the identification chip **194** is preferably supported by the tool cartridge **104**, as is shown in Figures 22 and 23. As the chip **194** is carried by the tool cartridge **104**, electrical connections to the PCB **174** of the handle assembly **102** is accomplished via the conductive rings **114** and the electrical contacts **176**.

[0079] The chip **194** contains identification data to identify the particular tool cartridge **104** that is installed in the housing **106**. Particularly, the identification data may include a serial number, the particular tools **105** that the cartridge **104** carries, or other relevant information. The identification chip **194** is electrically connectable to the handle assembly via one or more of the contacts **176** and the PCB **174**. Thus, the data stored on the identification chip **194** may be conveyed to the power source **172**. The power source **172** may track the serial numbers provided by the identification chip **194** to limit the number of uses of each particular tool cartridge **104**. The power source **172** may also launch an initial default setup to accommodate the characteristics of the specific tool cartridge **104** and/or apparatus **100**.

[0080] The present invention has been described herein in an illustrative manner, and it is to be understood that the terminology which has been used is intended to be in the nature of words of description rather than of limitation. Obviously, many modifications and variations of the invention are possible in light of the above teachings. The invention may be practiced otherwise than as specifically described within the scope of the appended claims.

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A surgical apparatus for coagulating and cutting tissue, said apparatus comprising:

5 a handle assembly including a housing;

a tool cartridge at least partially receivable in said housing of said handle assembly;

said tool cartridge including

a tool for use in cutting tissue;

10 a transmission operatively connected to said tool and longitudinally movable between positions;

a sheath enclosing at least part of said transmission and defining at least one slot, and

15 a grip disposed outside of said sheath and operatively connected to said transmission through said at least one slot; and

said handle assembly including a tool actuation lever operatively engagable to said grip of said tool cartridge such that said grip and said transmission move to actuate said tool in relation to actuation of said tool actuation lever.

20 2. A surgical apparatus as set forth in claim 1 wherein said tool cartridge further includes a spring disposed within said sheath and operatively connected to said grip for providing tension against said grip.

3. A surgical apparatus as set forth in claim 1 wherein said grip is ring shaped and surrounds and slidably engages said sheath.

25

4. A surgical apparatus as set forth in claim 3 wherein said tool cartridge further includes a piston slidable within said sheath and operatively connected to said transmission and said grip.

5 5. A surgical apparatus as set forth in claim 4 wherein said tool is electrically connectable to a power source for conducting electricity to the tissue.

6. A surgical apparatus as set forth in claim 5 wherein said tool cartridge is fully rotatable while maintaining mechanical control of said tool and electrical
10 connection between said tool and said power source at any position of rotation.

7. A tool cartridge as set forth in claim 1 wherein said tool is further defined as a pair of jaws for grasping tissue, said transmission is further defined as an extension tube having a proximal end and a distal end, and said distal end of said
15 extension tube operatively engages said jaws such that movement of said extension tube actuates movement of said jaws with respect to one another.

8. A surgical apparatus as set forth in claim 1 wherein said at least one tool is further defined as a blade and said transmission is further defined as a wire
20 operatively connected to said blade and extending through said tube.

9. A surgical apparatus as set forth in claim 1 wherein said tool is further defined as a pair of jaws and a blade, said transmission is further defined as an extension tube operatively engaging said jaws and a wire operatively connected to
25 said blade, said sheath further defined as a first sheath enclosing part of said tube and

a second sheath enclosing part of said wire, said grip further defined as a first grip operatively connected to said tube and a second grip operatively connected to said wire, and a tool activation lever further defined as a first tool activation lever operatively engagable with said first grip and a second tool activation lever
5 operatively engagable with said second grip.

10. A surgical apparatus as set forth in claim 9 wherein said second sheath is connected to said first sheath.

10 11. A surgical apparatus as set forth in claim 9 wherein said handle assembly includes a second tool actuation lever engagable with said second grip such that said second grip and said wire move to actuate said blade in relation to actuation of said second tool actuation lever.

15 12. A surgical apparatus as set forth in claim 1 wherein said housing of said handle assembly defines an opening for accommodating said tool cartridge such that part of said tool cartridge is disposed inside said housing and part of said tool cartridge is disposed outside said housing.

20 13. A surgical apparatus as set forth in claim 12 wherein said handle assembly includes a gate mechanism for shuttering said opening when no tool cartridge is interfaced with said handle assembly.

25 14. A surgical apparatus as set forth in claim 1 wherein said tool cartridge is reposible and/or disposable.

15. A surgical apparatus for coagulating and cutting tissue, said apparatus comprising:

a tool cartridge including a tool for use in cutting tissue;

a handle assembly including a housing for supporting said tool cartridge

5 said housing defining an opening for accommodating said tool cartridge such that part of said tool cartridge is disposed inside said housing and part of said tool cartridge is disposed outside said housing; and

a gate mechanism for shuttering said opening when the tool cartridge is absent from said handle assembly.

10

16. A surgical apparatus as set forth in claim 15 wherein said housing includes a lid openable to install or remove said tool cartridge.

17. A surgical apparatus as set forth in claim 16 wherein said gate
15 mechanism is supported by said lid.

18. A surgical apparatus as set forth in claim 15 wherein said gate mechanism includes a gate moveable to a closed position for shuttering said opening and a spring operatively connected to said gate for urging said gate towards said
20 closed position.

19. A surgical apparatus as set forth in claim 18 wherein an edge of said gate defines a semi-circle for interfacing with said tool cartridge.

20. A surgical apparatus for coagulating and cutting tissue of a body, said apparatus comprising:

a handle assembly having a first lever and a second lever;

a tool cartridge supported by said handle assembly;

5 said tool cartridge including

a pair of jaws electrically connected to a power source and movable in conjunction with said first lever for grasping the tissue, and

a blade electrically connected to the power source and movable in conjunction with said second lever between positions;

10 said tool cartridge also include a cut-coag switch operatively connected to said second lever for automatically switching between a coagulation mode and a cutting mode as said blade is moved between positions.

21. An apparatus as set forth in claim 20 wherein electric current is
15 conducted from one said jaws, through the tissue, to the other of said jaws in said coagulation mode, and is conducted from said blade, through the tissue, to both of said jaws, in said cutting mode.

22. An apparatus as set forth in claim 21 further comprising a conductive
20 pad positionable on the body and electrically connected to the power source and a switch supported by said handle assembly for switching between a monopolar mode and one of the bipolar coagulation mode and the bipolar cutting mode, wherein electric current is conducted from said jaws and said blade, through said tissue, and to said conductive pad in said monopolar mode.

23. A surgical apparatus for coagulating and cutting tissue, said apparatus comprising:

a handle assembly having a first lever and a second lever;

a tool cartridge supported by said handle assembly, said tool cartridge
5 including

a pair of jaws movable in conjunction with said first lever for grasping the tissue and electrically connected to a power source, and

a blade electrically connected to the power source and movable in conjunction with said second lever between positions,

10 wherein said tool cartridge is fully rotatable while maintaining mechanical control of said tool and electrical connection between said tool and said power source at any position of rotation;

an identification chip in communication with the power source for providing identification data regarding said tool cartridge to the power source;

15 a lever locking assembly operatively connected to said first lever for securing said first lever and said jaws in position;

a conductive pad positionable on the body and electrically connected to the power source; and

a switch supported by said handle assembly for switching between a bipolar
20 mode, wherein electric current is conducted from said blade, through the tissue, and to said jaws, and a monopolar mode, wherein electric current is conducted from said blade, through said tissue, and to said conductive pad;

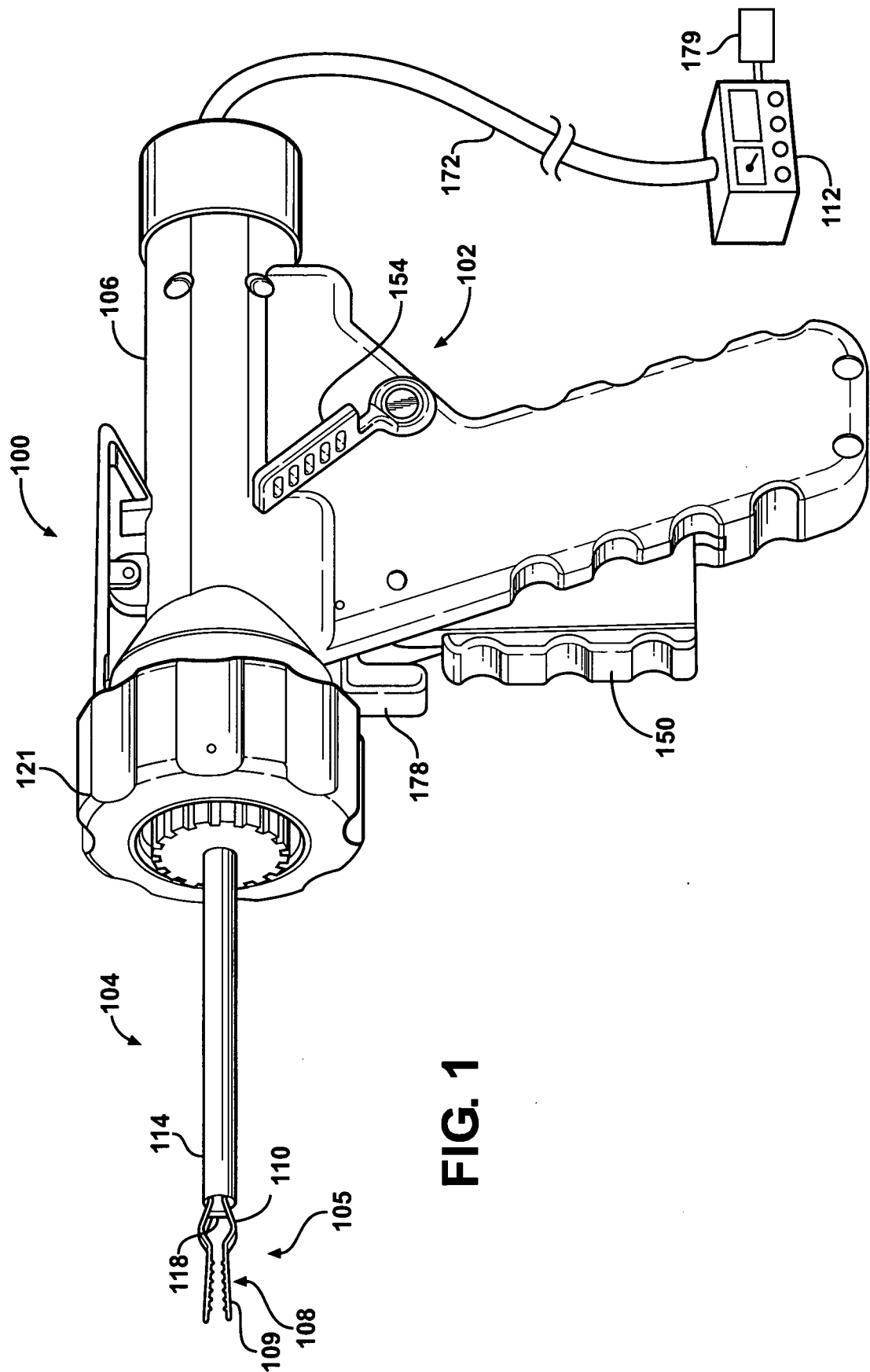
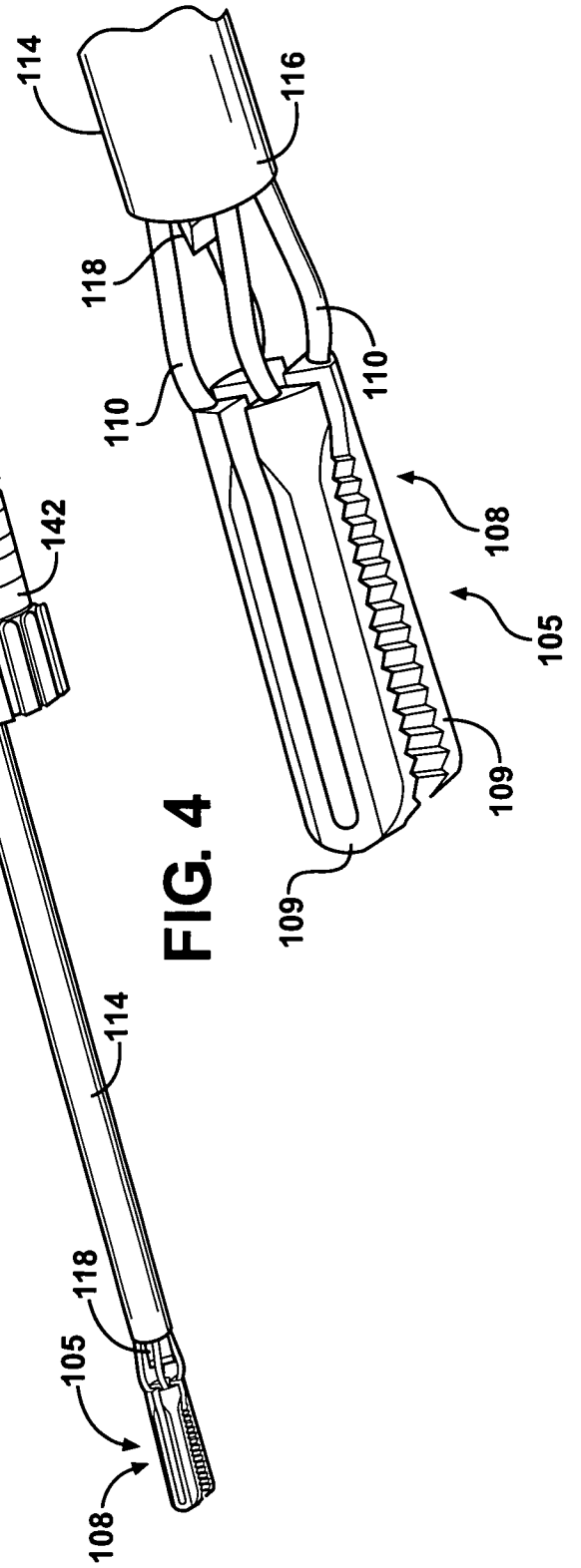
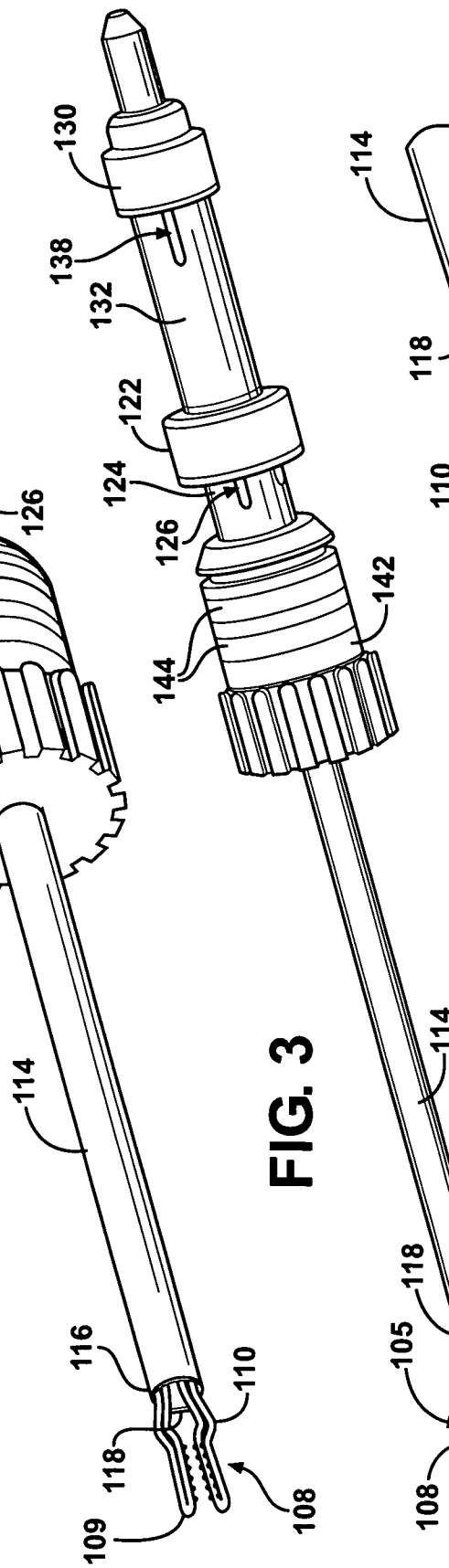
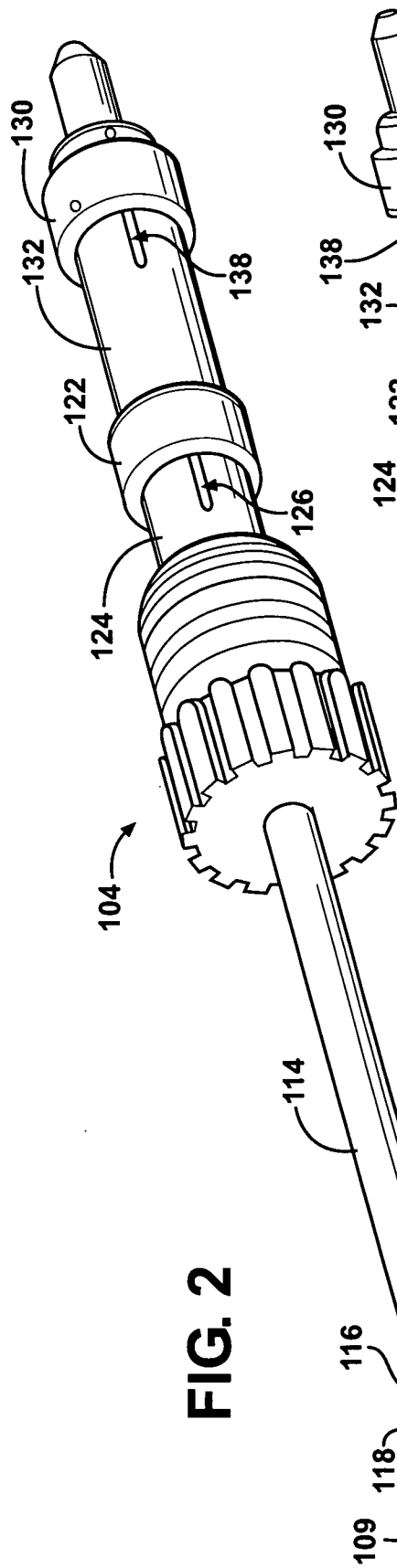
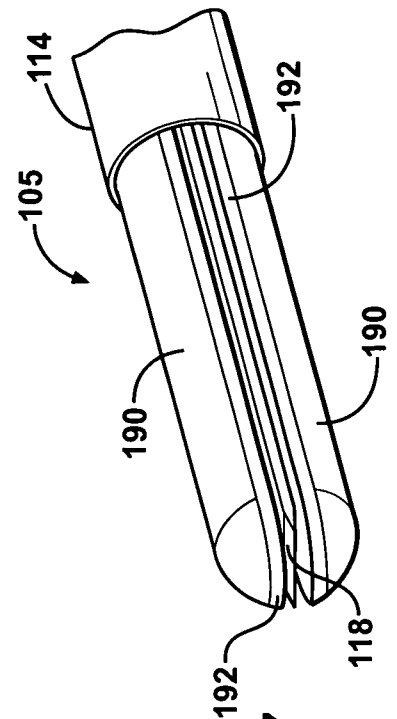
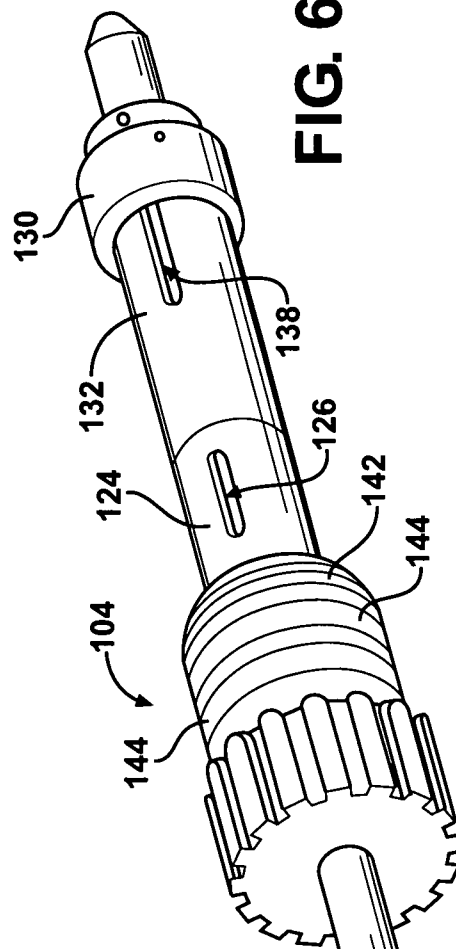
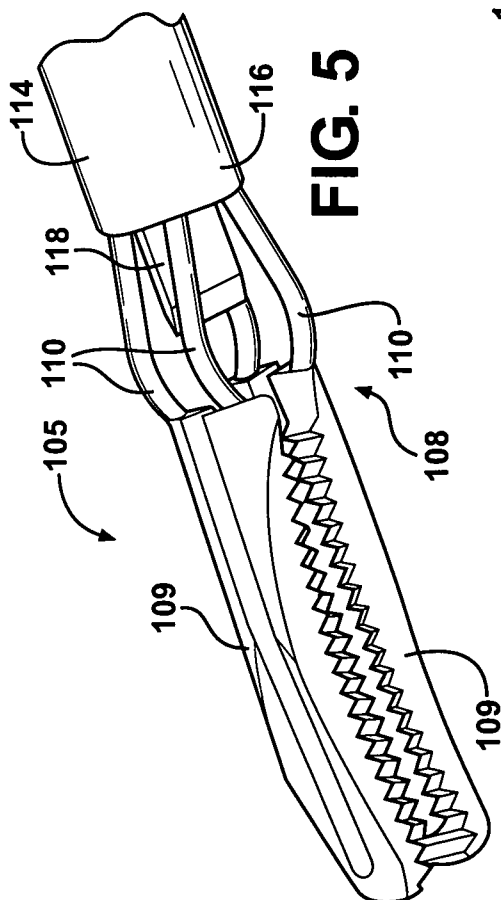


FIG. 1





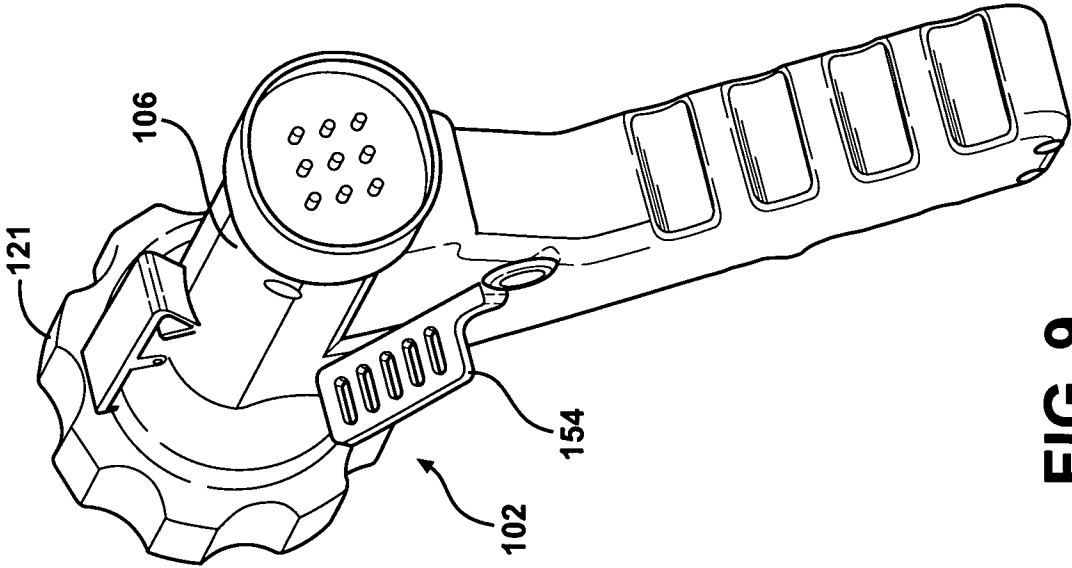


FIG. 9

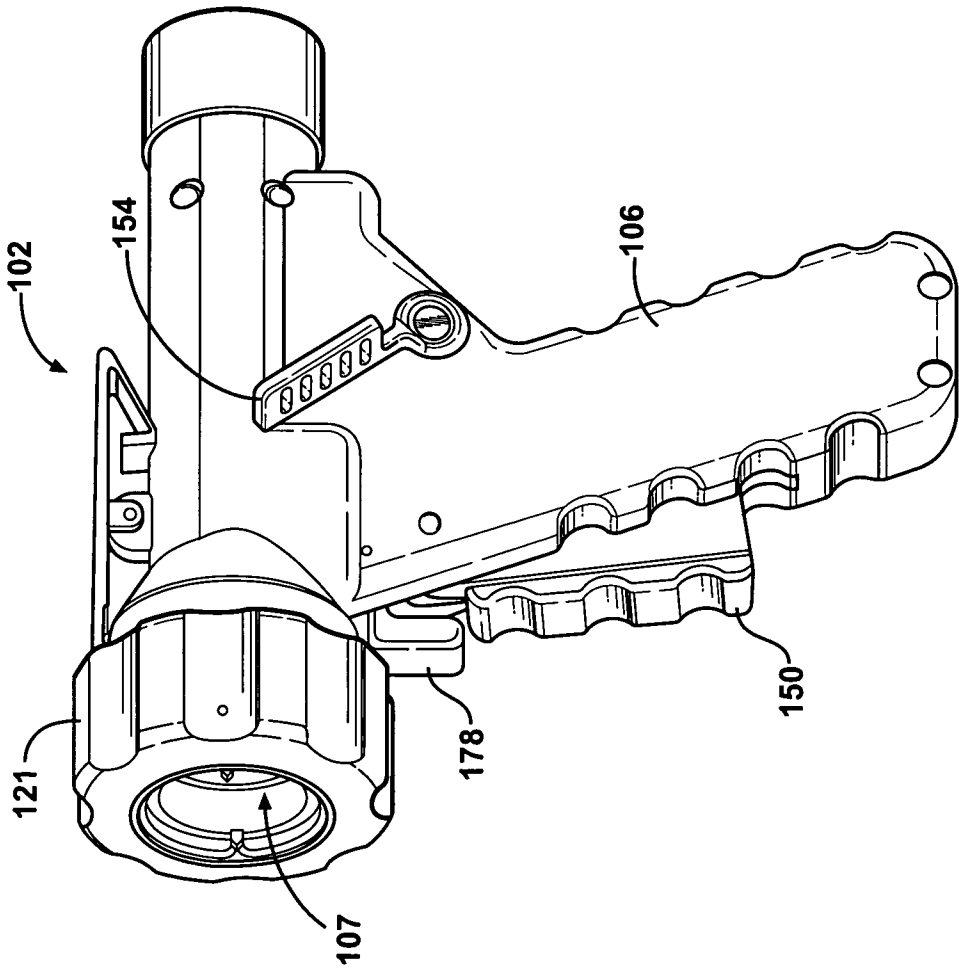
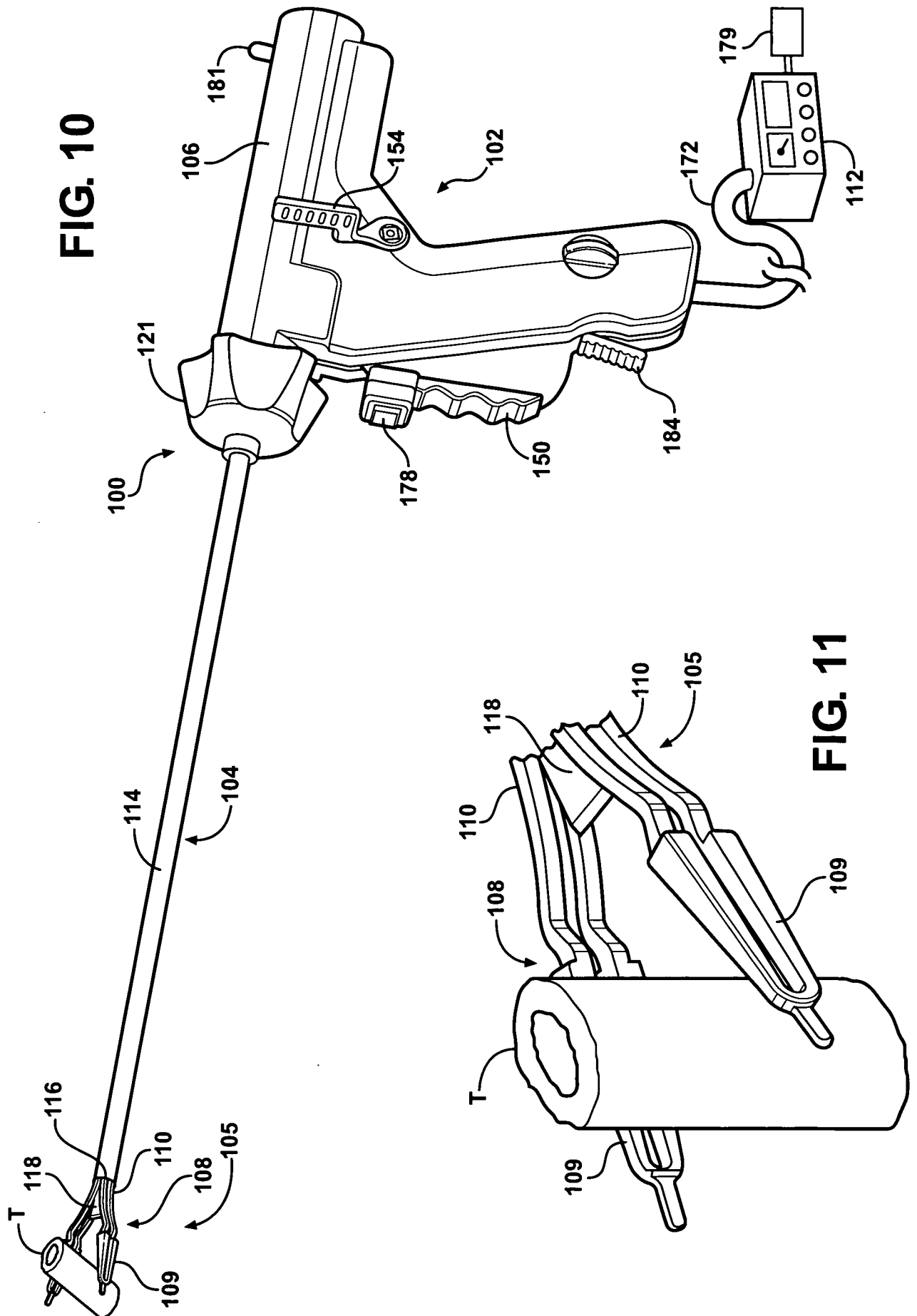


FIG. 8



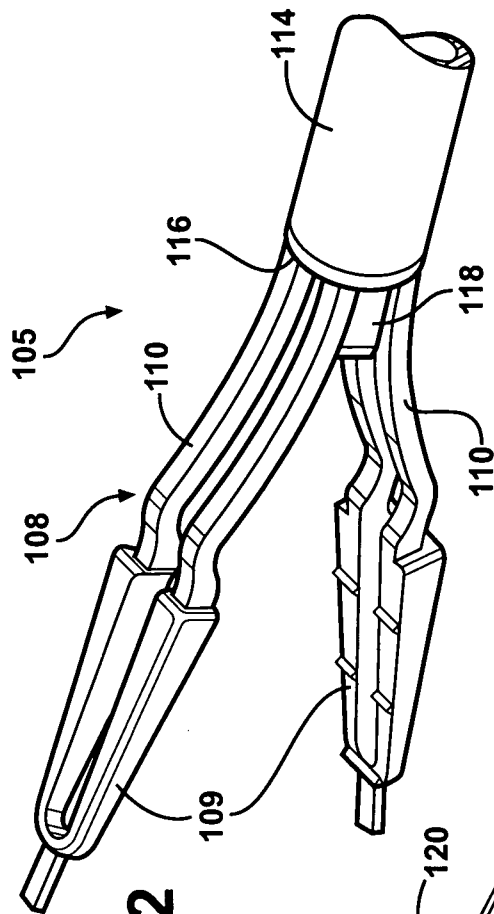


FIG. 12

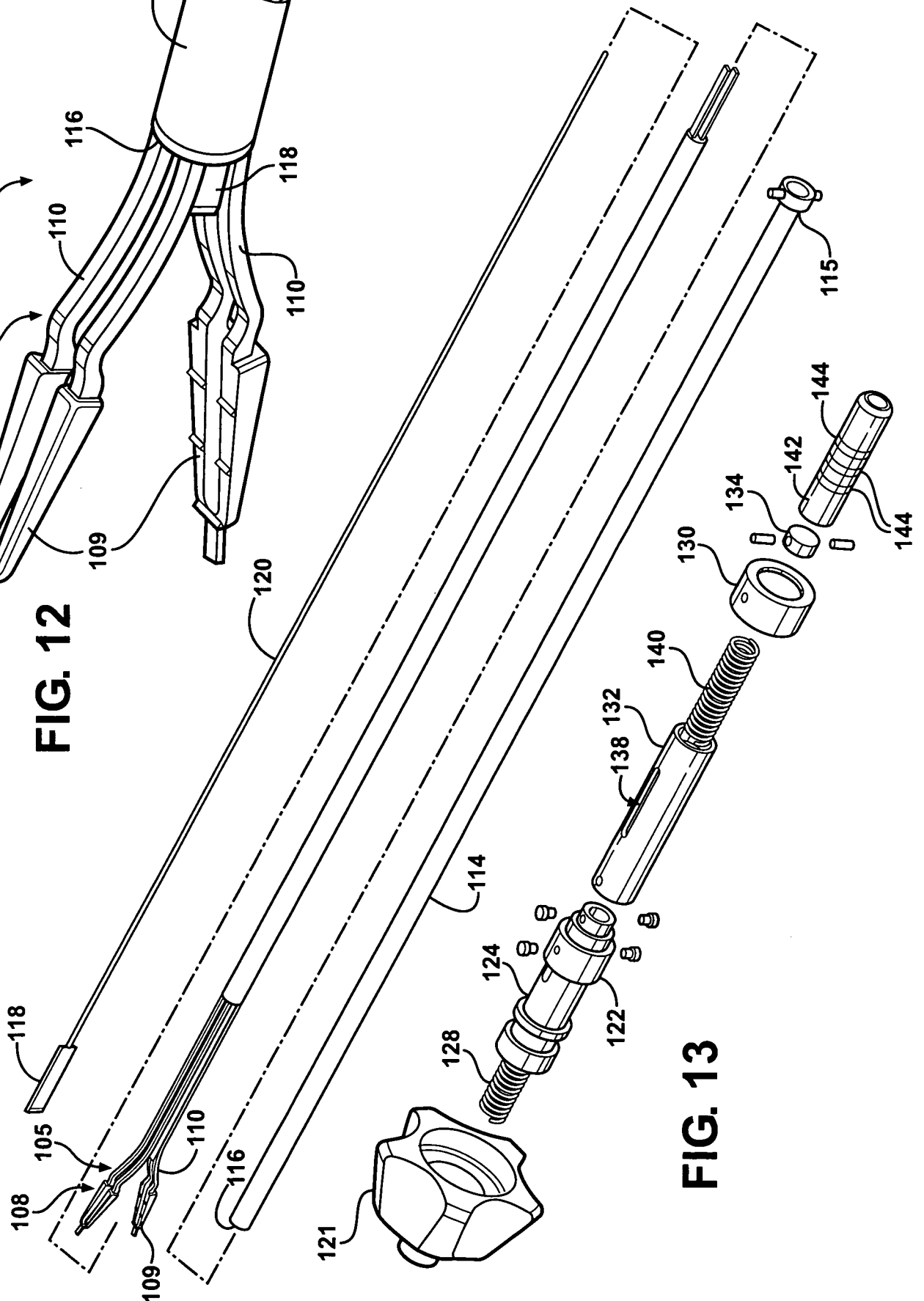


FIG. 13

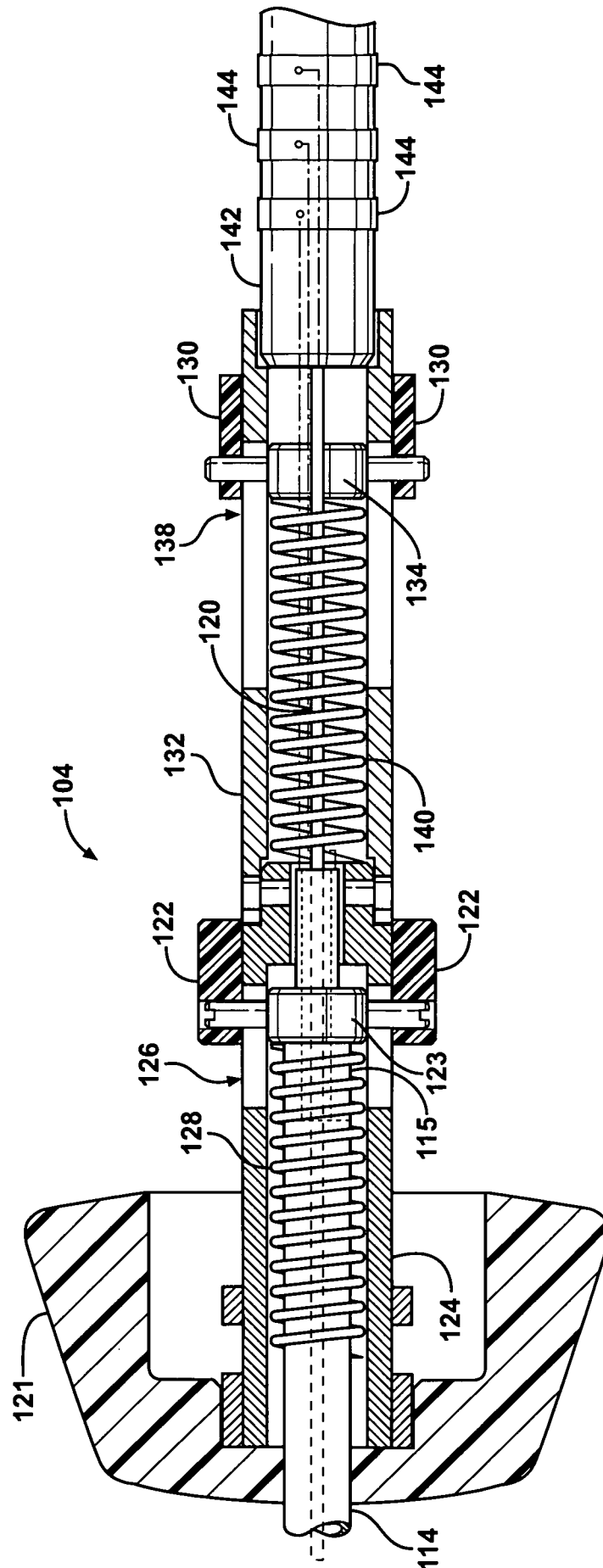
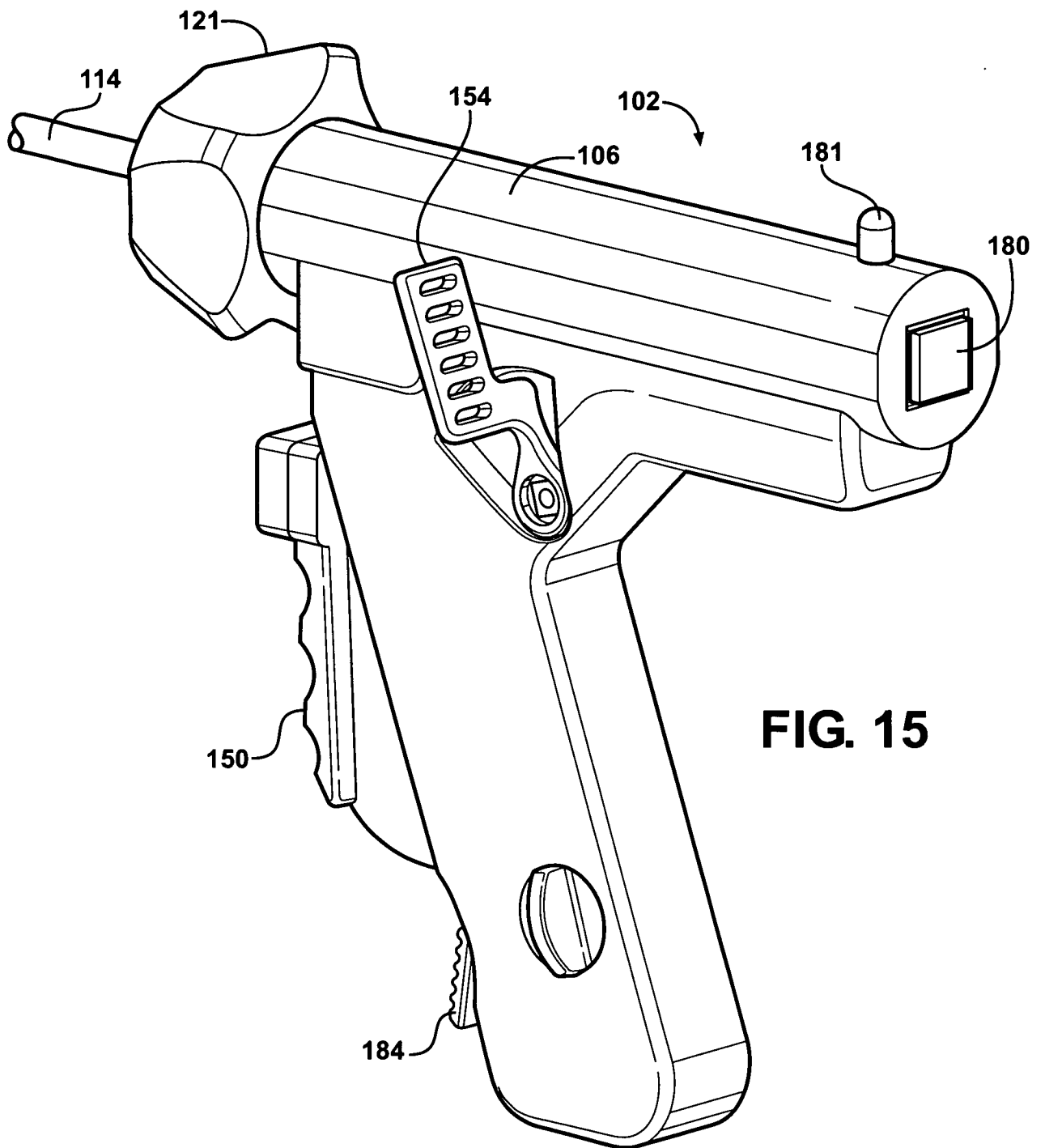
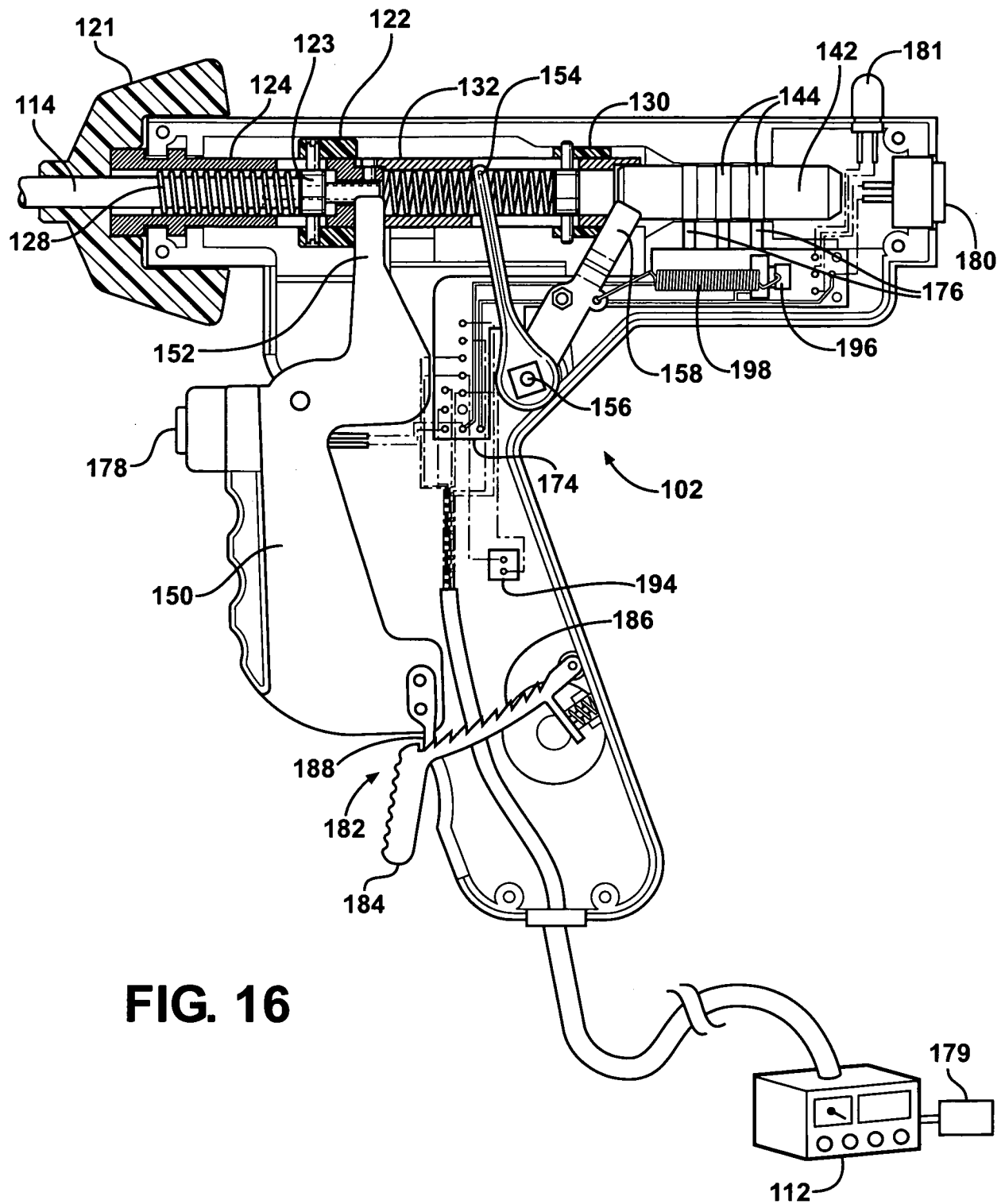
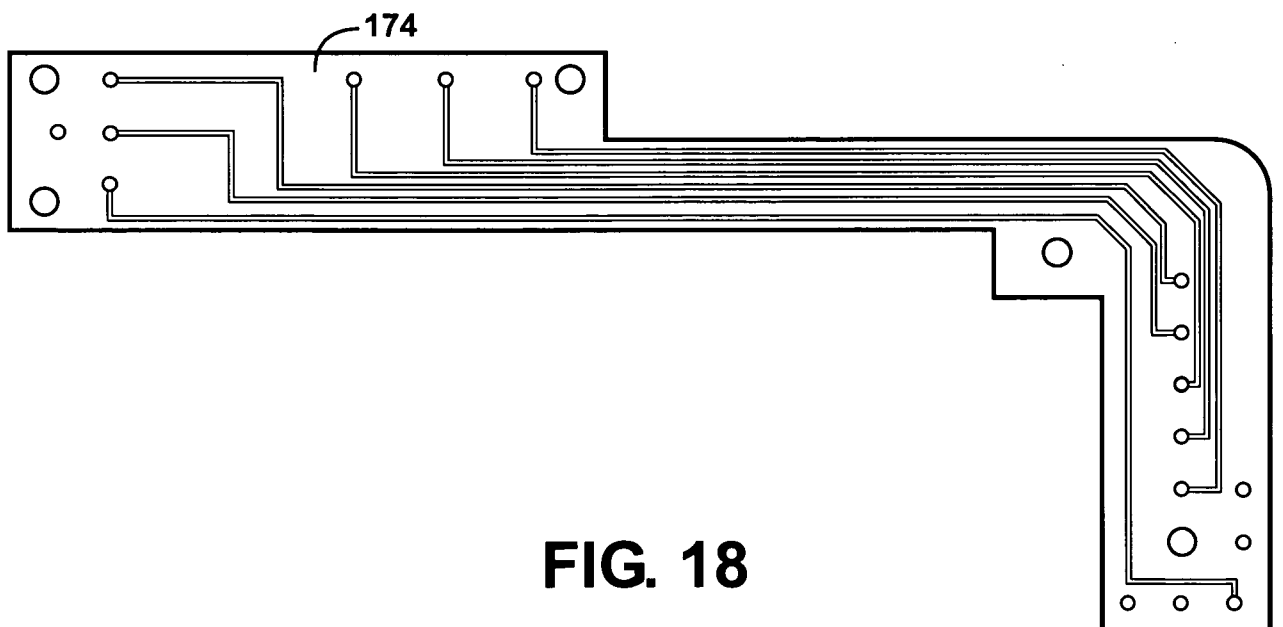
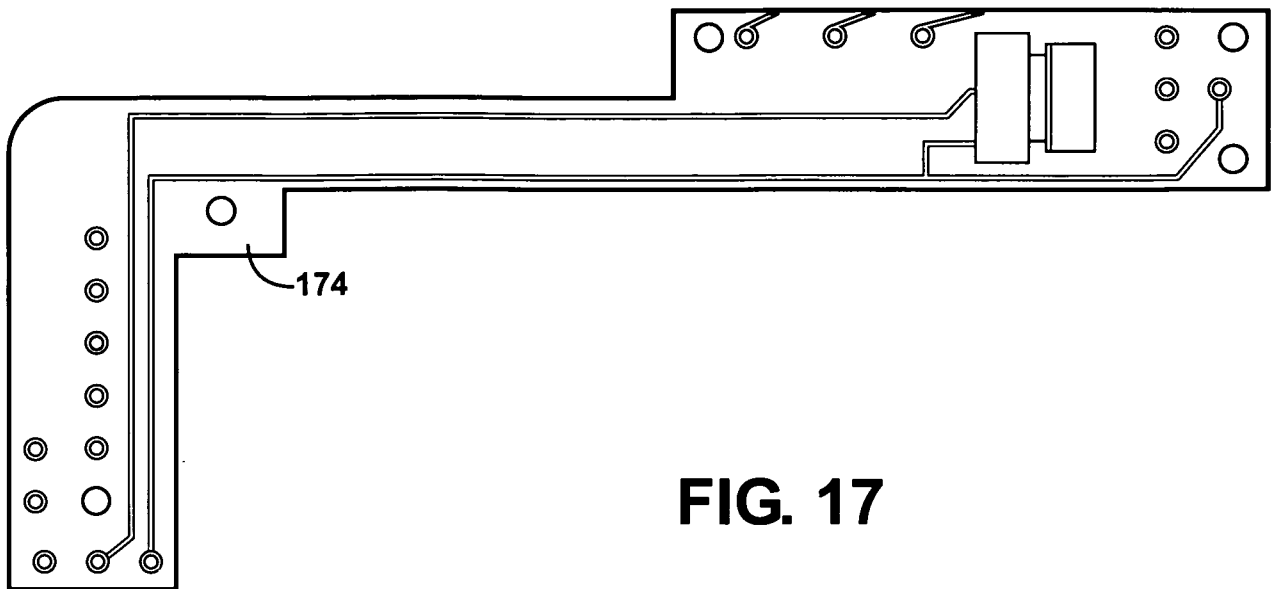


FIG. 14

**FIG. 15**





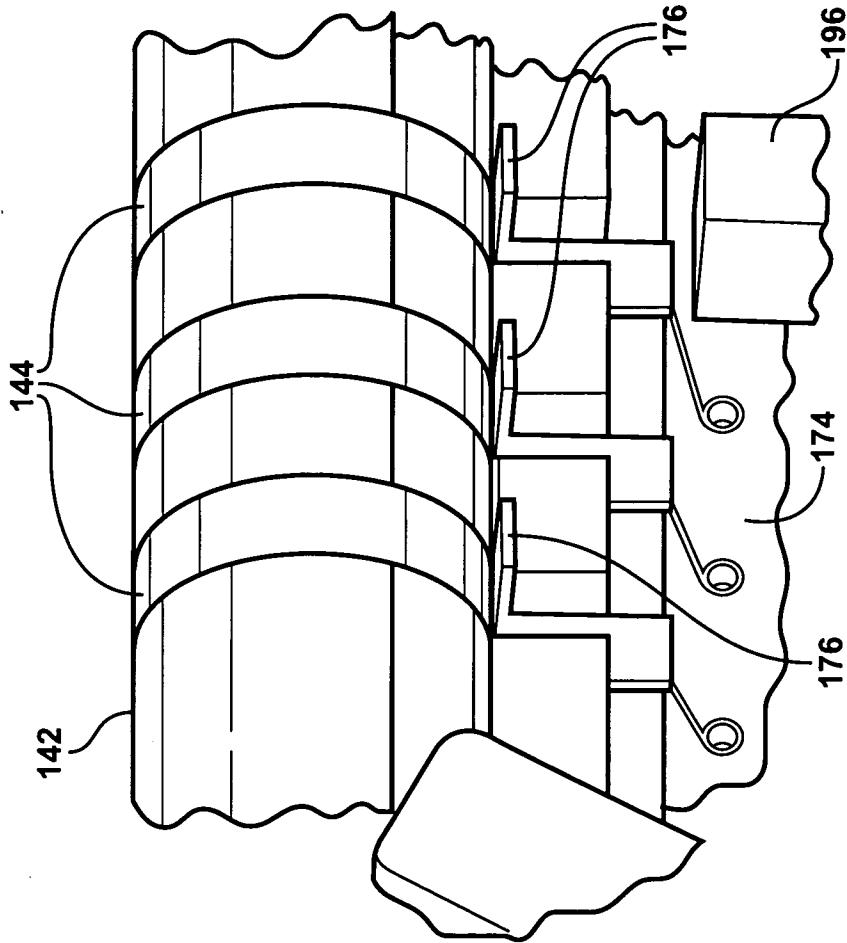


FIG. 19

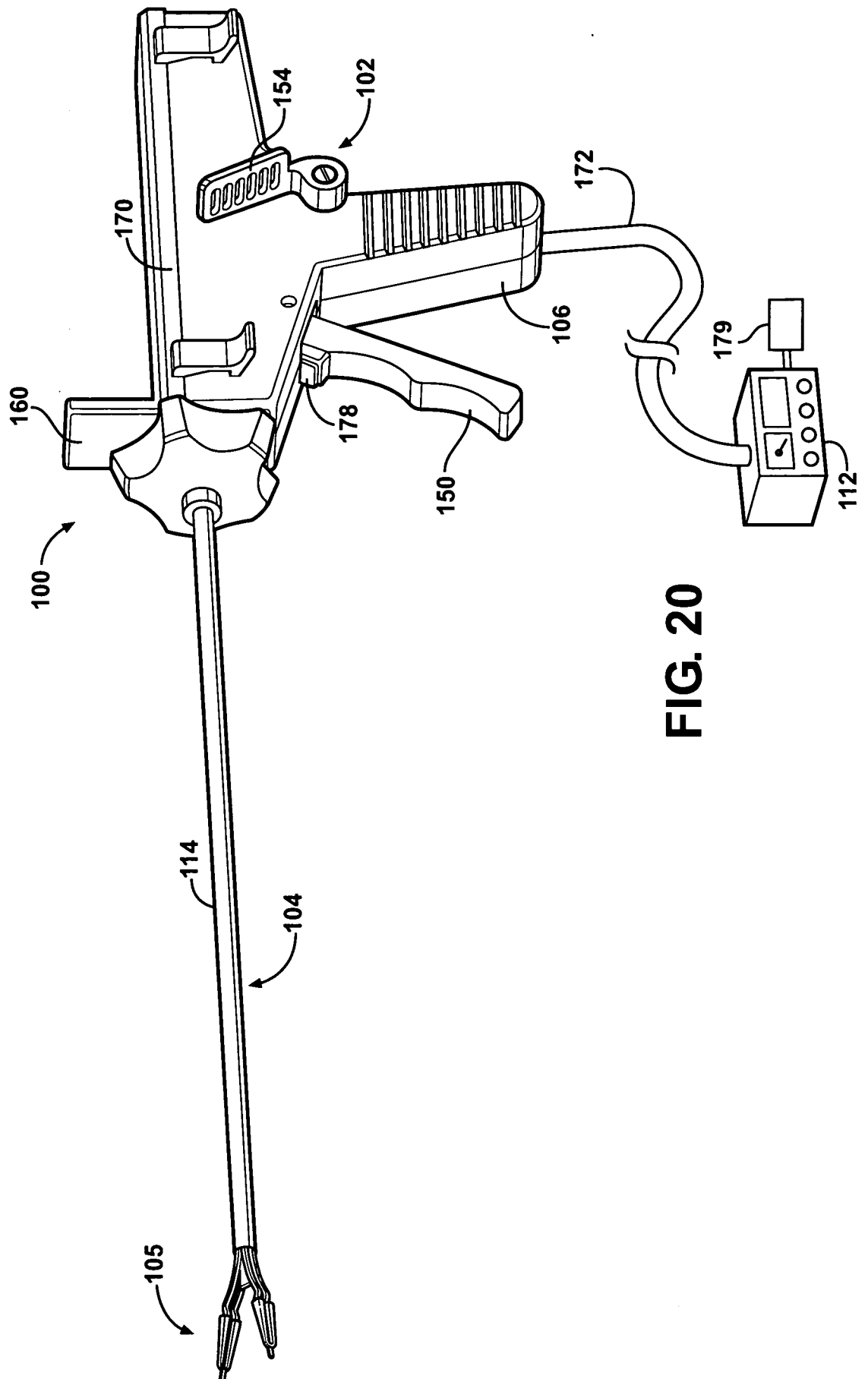


FIG. 20

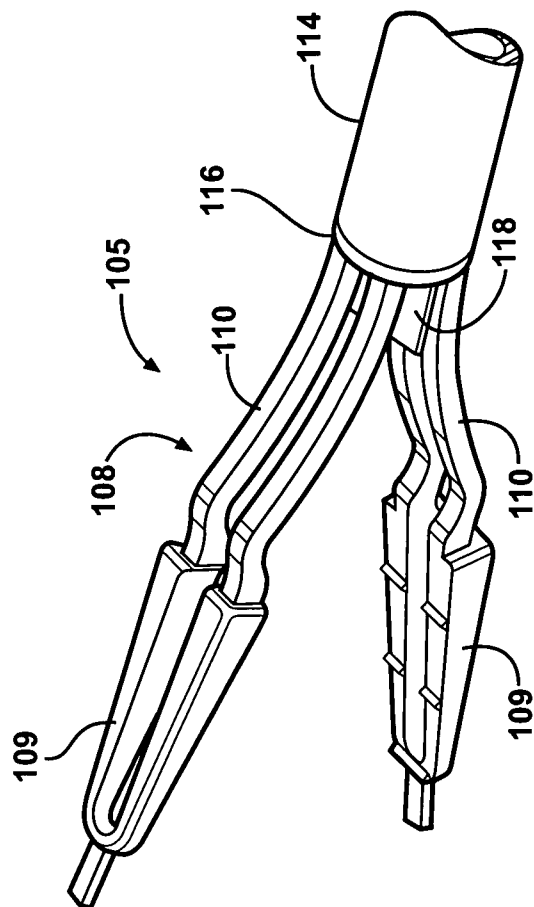


FIG. 21

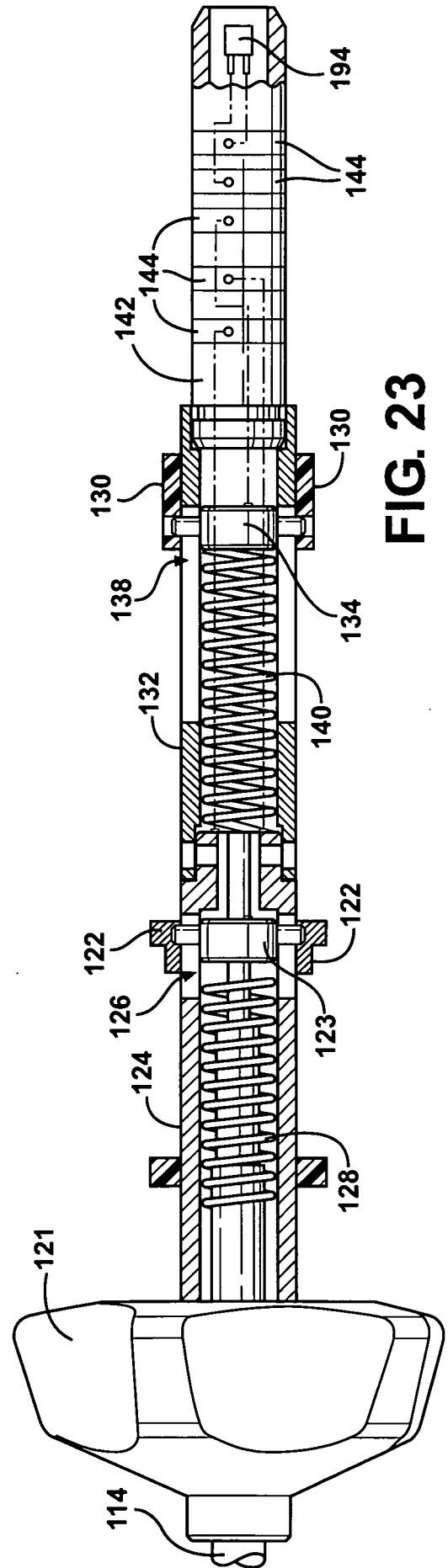


FIG. 23

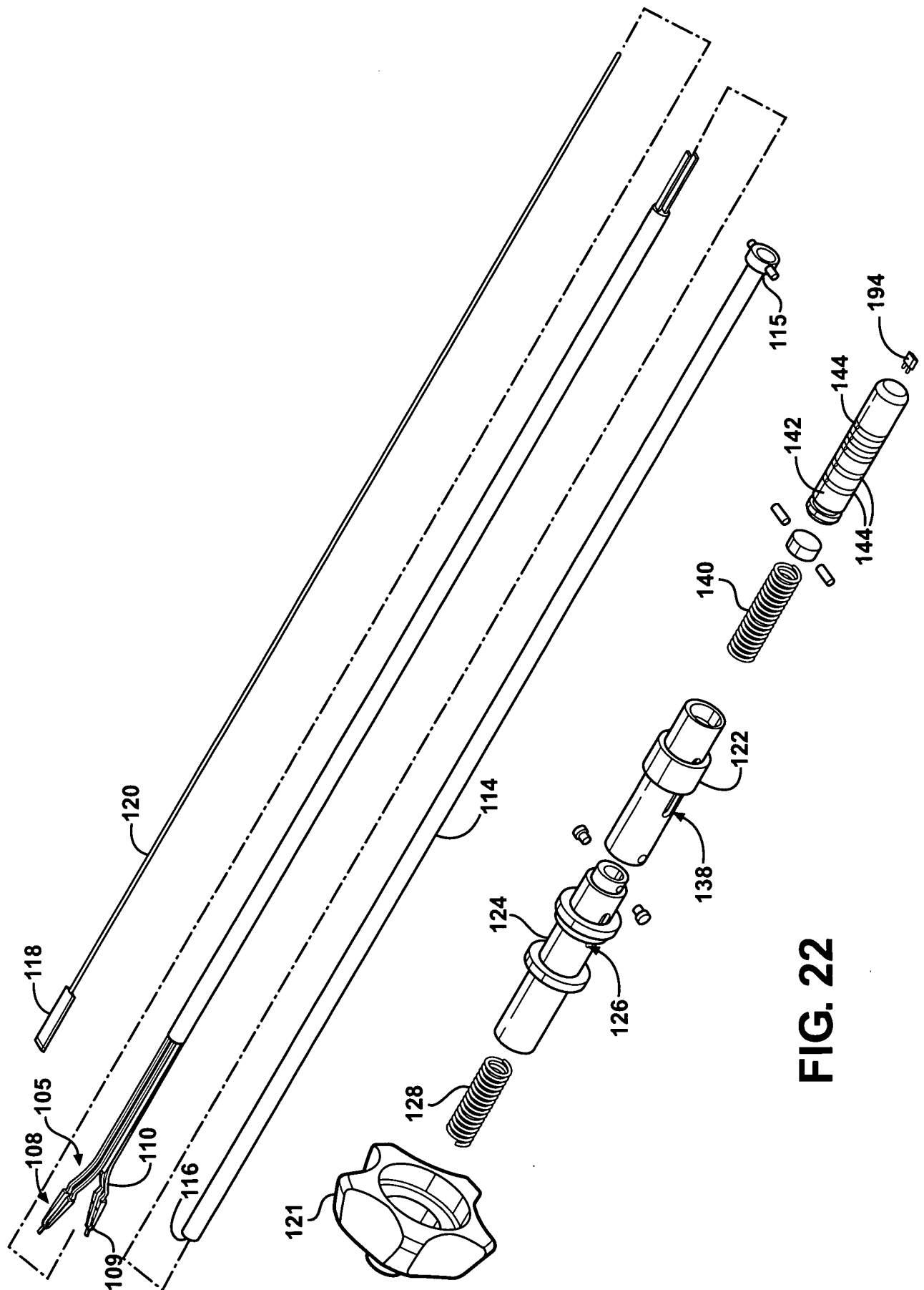
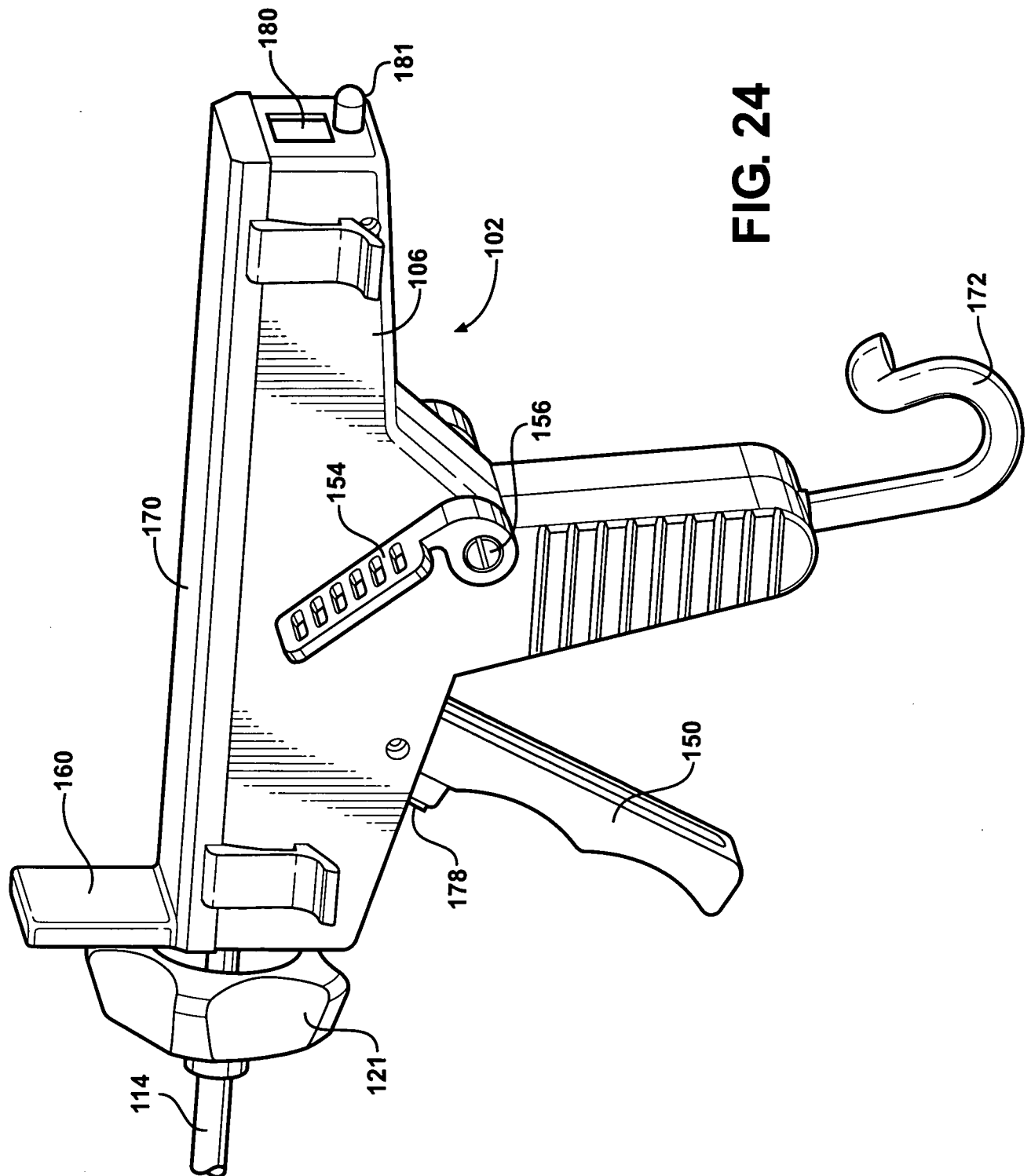
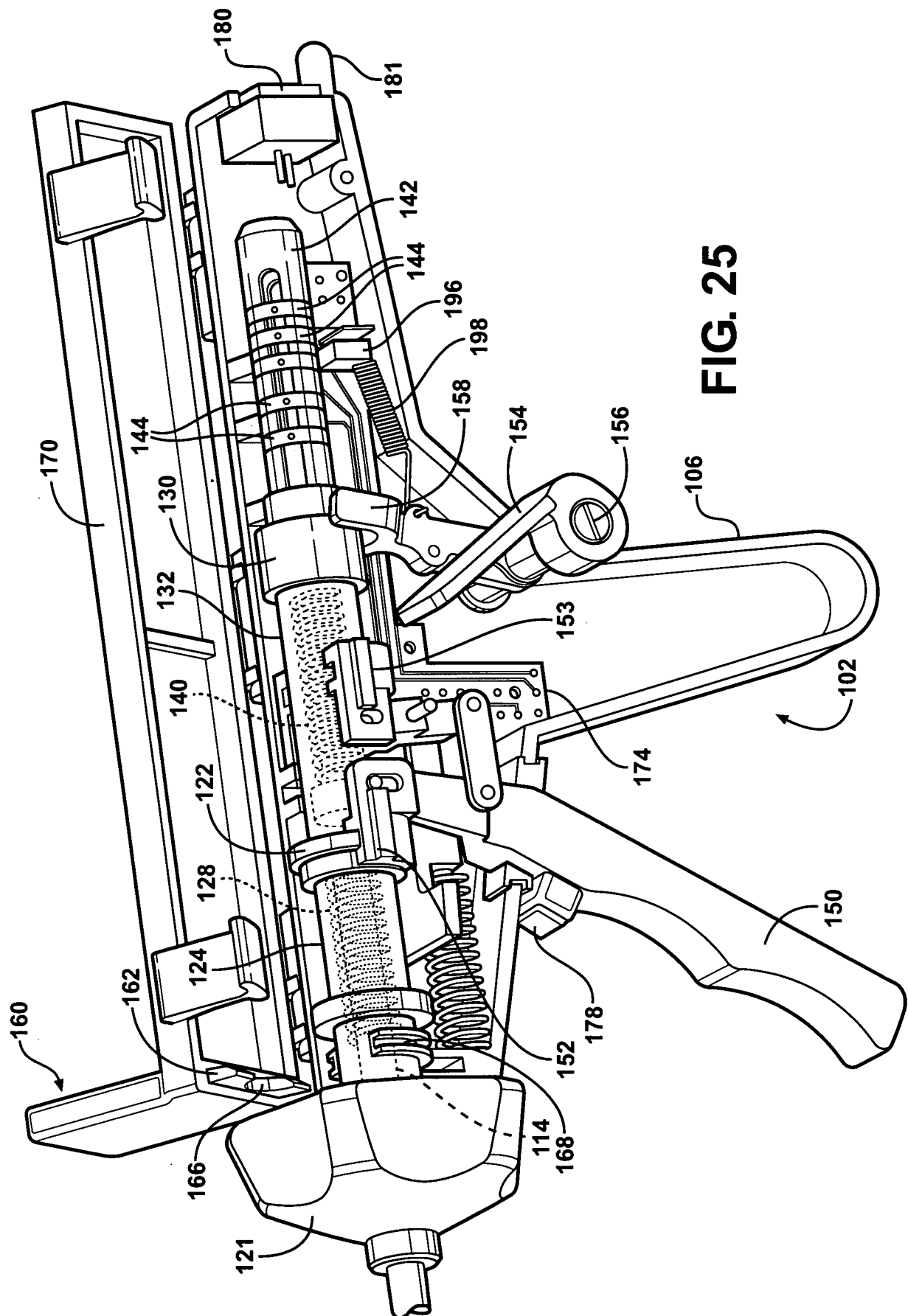
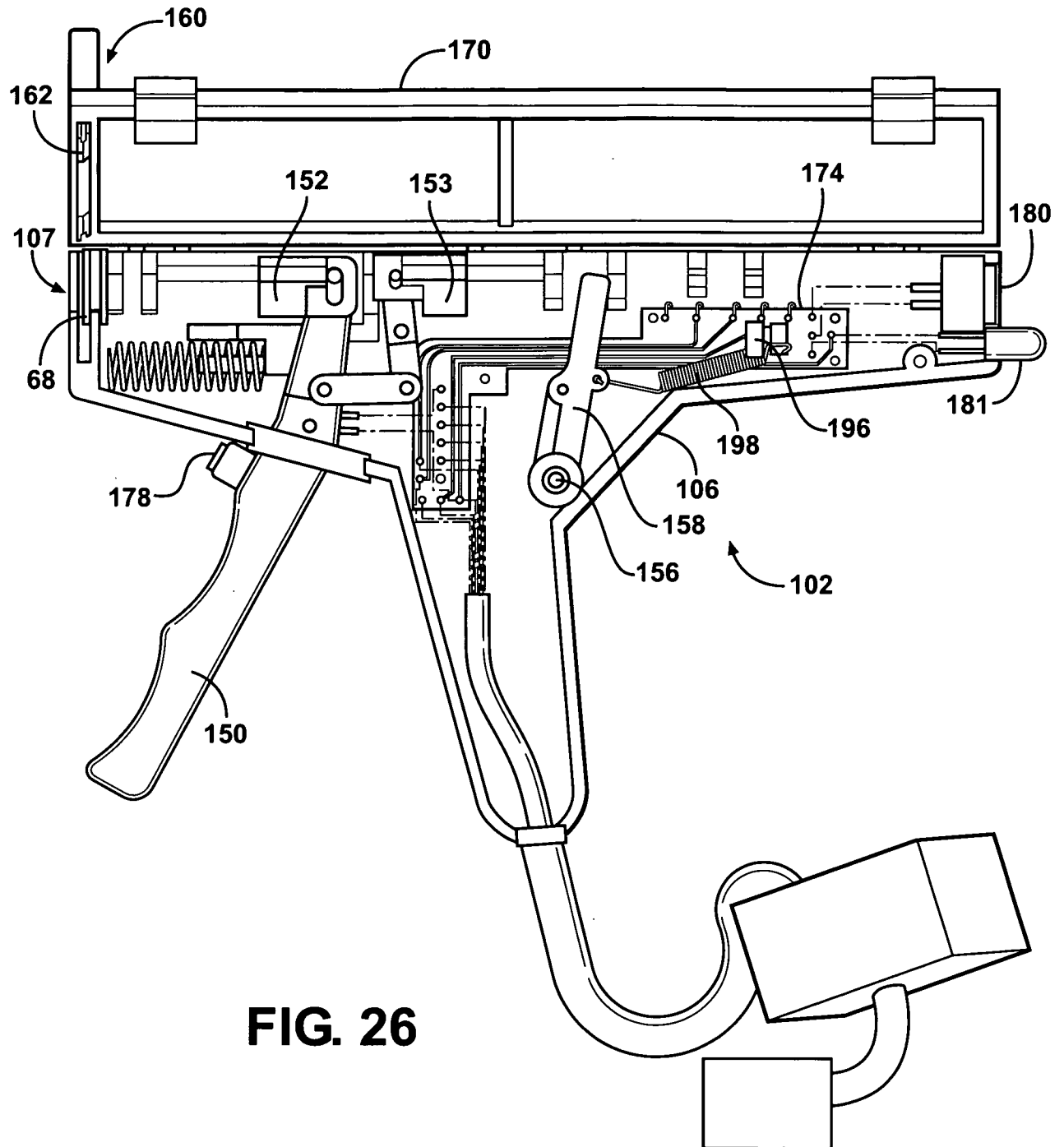


FIG. 22





**FIG. 26**

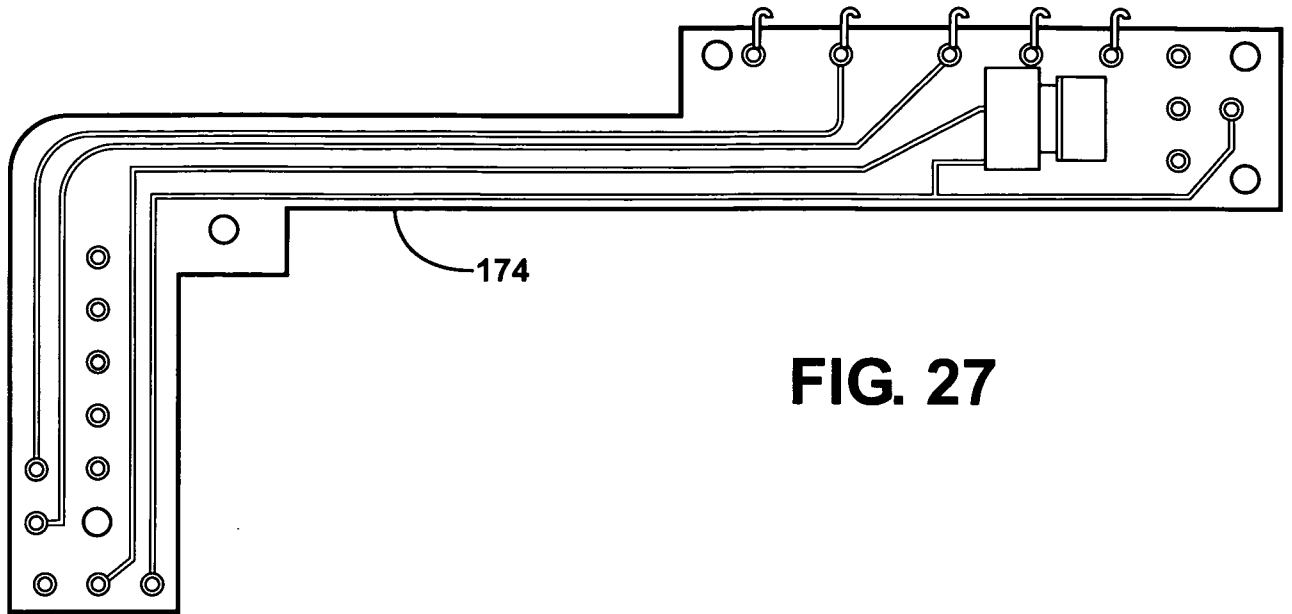


FIG. 27

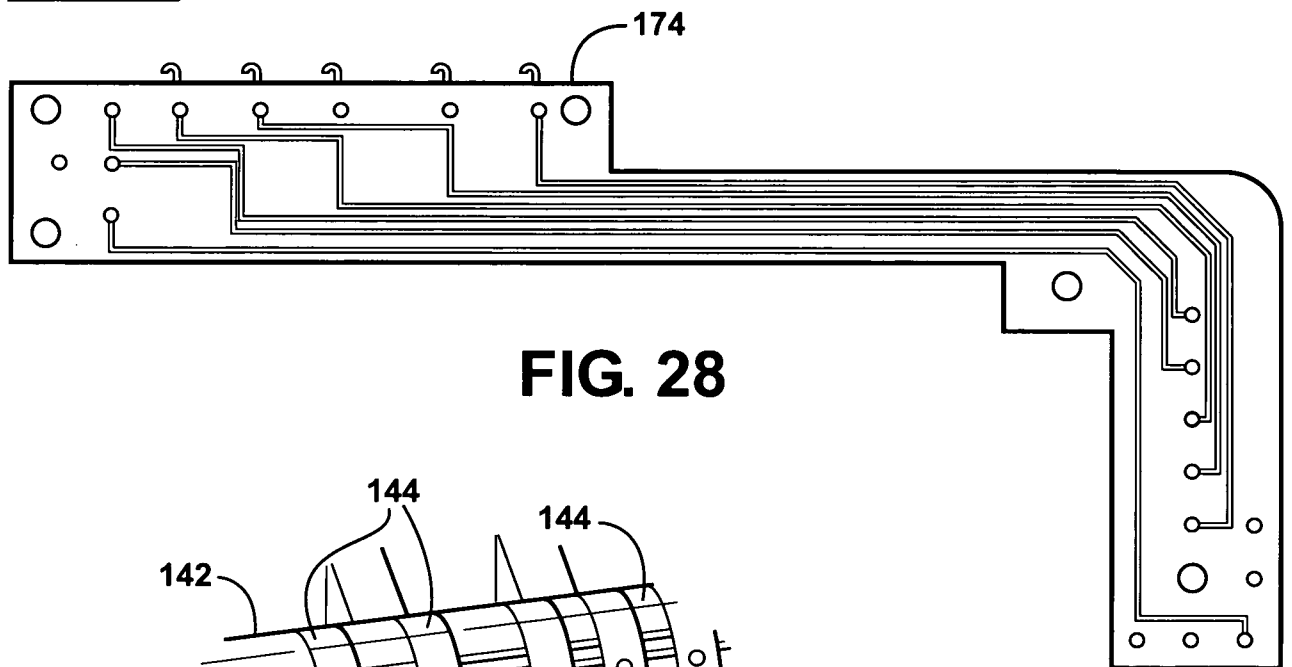


FIG. 28

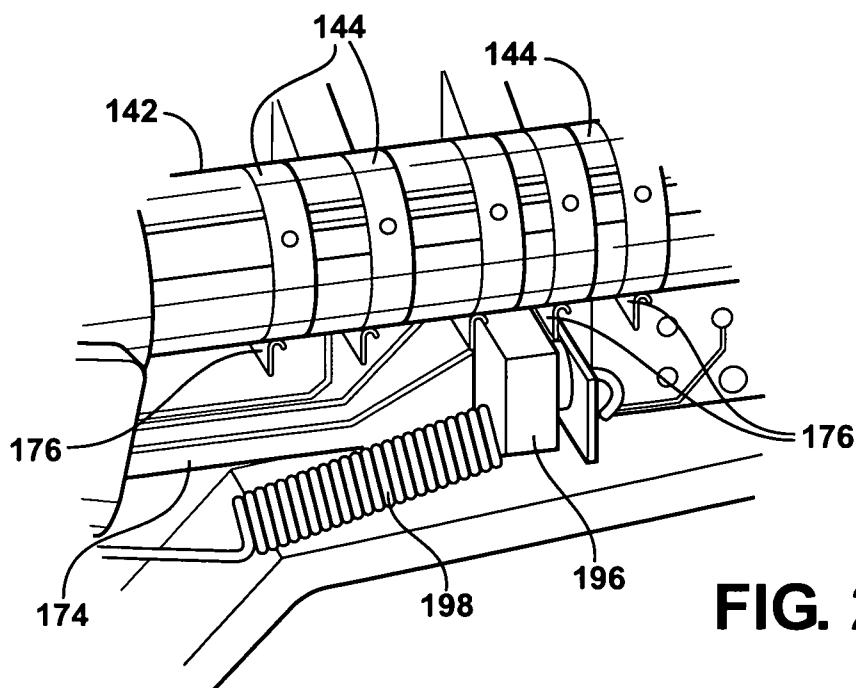


FIG. 29

