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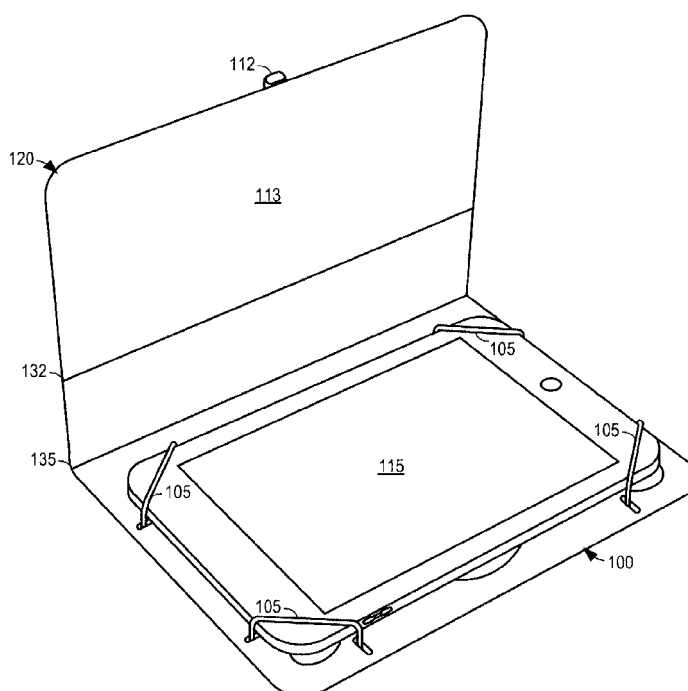
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(54) **Universal case for portable electronic devices**

(57) According to various embodiments, a universal case for a portable electronic device (PED) (115) includes a rear panel (100), a front panel (120), and a securing mechanism configured to secure a PED to the rear panel. According to various embodiments, a securing mechanism may comprise an adjustable flexible band (105) configured to secure each corner of a PED to the rear panel. The adjustable flexible band may be routed

through a support structure having one or more routing slots (110). Alternatively, a securing mechanism may comprise adjustable corner mounts configured to selectively secure each corner of a PED to the rear panel. In each embodiment, a single universal case may be used to secure PEDs having various lengths, widths, and thicknesses. A plurality of support grooves formed in a front panel may be configured to catch a bottom edge of a PED and support it at various angles of inclination.

FIG. 1D



## Description

### RELATED APPLICATIONS

**[0001]** The present application claims priority from U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/529,768 filed August 31, 2011 and titled "UNIVERSAL CASE FOR PORTABLE ELECTRONIC DEVICES".

### TECHNICAL FIELD

**[0002]** This disclosure generally relates to cases for portable electronic devices. More particularly, this disclosure relates to cases adaptable to secure portable electronic devices of varying sizes.

### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

**[0003]** Non-limiting and non-exhaustive embodiments of the disclosure are described, including various embodiments of the disclosure with reference to the figures, in which:

**[0004]** FIG. 1A illustrates an embodiment of the inside of a rear panel of a universal case for portable electronic devices (PEDs), including an adjustable flexible band configured to secure each corner of a PED.

**[0005]** FIG. 1B illustrates the outside of the rear panel of the universal case for PEDs, including the adjustable flexible band.

**[0006]** FIG. 1C illustrates the outside of a front panel of the universal case for PEDs, including the adjustable flexible band securing a PED.

**[0007]** FIG. 1D illustrates a universal case for PEDs with the front panel lifted to expose the PED secured at each corner with the adjustable flexible band.

**[0008]** FIG. 1E illustrates the outside of the rear panel of the universal case securing the PED with the adjustable flexible band.

**[0009]** FIG. 1F illustrates a front view of the universal case in an upright position securing the PED with the adjustable flexible band.

**[0010]** FIG. 1G illustrates a rear view of the universal case securing the PED in an upright position with the adjustable flexible band, including the rear panel configured with integrated camera holes.

**[0011]** FIG. 2A illustrates an embodiment of a universal case configured with an adjustable flexible band securing a relatively large PED.

**[0012]** FIG. 2B illustrates an embodiment of the universal case of FIG. 2A with the adjustable flexible band securing a relatively small PED.

**[0013]** FIG. 3A illustrates an embodiment of a universal case for PEDs configured with support grooves adapted to secure a PED in an upright position and an adjustable flexible band configured to secure the four corners of the PED.

**[0014]** FIG. 3B illustrates a side view of the universal case for PEDs, including the support grooves adapted

to secure the PED in an upright position and the adjustable flexible band configured to secure the corners of the PED.

**[0015]** FIG. 3C illustrates a top view of the inside of the front and rear panels of the universal case for PEDs, including support grooves on the front panel and integrated camera holes on the rear panel.

**[0016]** FIG. 3D, illustrates an elevational view of the front and rear panels of the universal case for PEDs, including the support grooves on the front panel adapted to secure a PED in an upright position.

**[0017]** FIG. 4A illustrates an embodiment of a universal case for PEDs configured with a support structure for an adjustable flexible band.

**[0018]** FIG. 4B illustrates a close-up view of a corner portion of the universal case for PEDs including the support structure and the adjustable flexible band.

**[0019]** FIG. 4C illustrates the universal case with the support structure securing a PED at each corner with the adjustable flexible band.

**[0020]** FIG. 4D illustrates a rear panel being partially separated from the internal support structure of the universal case for PEDs.

**[0021]** FIG. 4E illustrates a side view of the universal case supporting the PED in an upright position with a portion of the rear panel separated from the support structure.

**[0022]** FIG. 4F illustrates a rear view of the universal case for PEDs in an upright position, including integrated camera holes on the rear panel.

**[0023]** FIG. 4G illustrates an elevational view of one embodiment of the support structure.

**[0024]** FIG. 5A illustrates a top view of an embodiment of the inside of front and rear panels of a universal case for PEDs, including support grooves on the front panel, and a support structure and adjustable flexible band on the rear panel.

**[0025]** FIG. 5B illustrates a top view of the inside of the front and rear panels of the universal case for PEDs, including a PED secured by the support structure and adjustable flexible band on the rear panel.

**[0026]** FIG. 5C illustrates a perspective view of the universal case for PEDs, including the internal support structure on the rear panel and the support grooves on the front panel.

**[0027]** FIG. 5D illustrates a side view of the universal case for PEDs, including the support grooves, the support structure, and the adjustable flexible band configured to secure the corners of the PED.

**[0028]** FIG. 6A illustrates a top view of an embodiment of a universal case configured with adjustable corner mounts for securing a PED.

**[0029]** FIG. 6B illustrates a perspective view of the adjustable corner mounts for securing the PED within a universal case.

**[0030]** FIG. 6C illustrates a perspective view of the universal case configured with adjustable corner mounts for securing the PED.

**[0031]** FIG. 6D illustrates a cutaway view of the adjustable corner mount on a universal case for a PED showing a threaded height adjustment mechanism.

**[0032]** FIG. 6E illustrates a side view of the adjustable corner mount securing a PED of a first thickness.

**[0033]** FIG. 6F illustrates a side view of an embodiment of the adjustable corner mount securing a PED of a second thickness.

**[0034]** FIG. 6G illustrates a perspective view of the universal case securing the PED via adjustable corner mounts, including a concave front panel.

**[0035]** FIG. 6H illustrates a perspective view of the universal case securing the PED with a front panel partially opened.

**[0036]** FIG. 6I illustrates a rear perspective view of the universal case for a PED in an upright position, including a transparent rear panel.

**[0037]** FIG. 7A illustrates an embodiment of a universal case securing a relatively large PED via adjustable corner mounts.

**[0038]** FIG. 7B illustrates the universal case of FIG. 7A securing a relatively small PED via adjustable corner mounts.

**[0039]** In the following description, numerous specific details are provided for a thorough understanding of the various embodiments disclosed herein. The systems and methods disclosed herein can be practiced without one or more of the specific details, or with other methods, components, materials, etc. In addition, in some cases, well-known structures, materials, or operations may not be shown or described in detail in order to avoid obscuring aspects of the disclosure. Furthermore, the described features, structures, or characteristics may be combined in any suitable manner in one or more alternative embodiments.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

**[0040]** The present disclosure provides various embodiments of universal cases for securing, protecting, and/or supporting portable electronic devices (PEDs). According to various embodiments, a universal case may be configured to secure PEDs having various dimensions. For example, a single universal case may be configured to secure a tablet device with a 10-inch diagonal display or a tablet device with an 8-inch diagonal display. Similarly, a single case may be configured to secure tablet devices and/or other PEDs with varying thicknesses and/or aspect ratios. A universal case may include a flexible band for securing a PED within a universal case. The flexible band may be a continuous flexible band configured to wrap around each corner of a PED in order to secure it within a universal case. The flexible band may be manufactured using silicon, nylon, and/or other elastic material. According to various embodiments, the flexible band may be adjustable within slots at each corner of the universal case in order to accommodate PEDs of varying sizes. For example, at each corner of a universal case

an adjustable flexible band may be configured to transition from an inner position to an outer position. In the inner position the adjustable flexible band may be configured to secure the corners of a relatively small PED. In the outer position the adjustable flexible band may be configured to secure the corners of a relatively large PED.

**[0041]** According to various embodiments, an adjustable flexible band may pass through a plurality of openings in a rear panel of a universal case such that a continuous adjustable flexible band is exposed on the front at the four corners and hidden across the top, bottom and two sides. The adjustable flexible band may be adjusted within slots at each of the four corners to accommodate PEDs of various sizes. In some embodiments, an internal support may be utilized to provide structural support and/or to route an adjustable flexible band. The flexible band may also be used to selectively secure a front panel of a universal case in a closed position. The rear panel and the front panel may be pivotally connected via one or more hinges. For example, a living hinge or an elongated rod hinge may be employed to allow the front panel to selectively expose a PED secured within a universal case. A universal case may utilize a rear panel and/or a front panel to secure a PED in an upright or angled position. A rear panel or front panel may include one or more support grooves configured to secure the bottom edge of the PED in an upright position. Alternatively, a variety of friction contacts and/or catches may be utilized to secure the bottom edge of the PED in the upright position.

**[0042]** According to various embodiments, a rear panel of a universal case may include one or more holes to accommodate ports, flashes, and/or cameras on a PED. Alternatively or additionally, the rear panel of a universal case may include one or more transparent sections to accommodate flashes and/or cameras. For example, a rear panel may include a transparent polycarbonate panel.

**[0043]** According to another embodiment, a universal case for PEDs of varying sizes may include adjustable corner mounts configured to rotate and/or pivot in order to accommodate PEDs having various lengths and widths. Additionally, the adjustable corner mounts may be lowered and raised, and/or pivoted, in order to adequately secure PEDs having various thicknesses to a rear panel of a PED. For example, screw-type fasteners may be employed to lower and raise the adjustable corner mounts to a desired height. Such screw type mounts may include quick release mechanisms to allow for quicker adjustments.

**[0044]** Each of the variously described mechanisms for securing a PED, such as adjustable corner mounts, flexible bands, adjustable flexible bands, and/or continuous adjustable flexible bands, as describe herein, may be utilized in conjunction with alternative cases for PEDs. For example, any of the variously described securing mechanisms may be utilized in conjunction with a case configured to rotate a PED from a portrait orientation to

a landscape orientation, mount a PED to a wall, secure a PED in an upright position, enable various peripheral devices (such as a keyboard), and/or in conjunction with other alternative cases for PEDs.

**[0045]** A "portable electronic device" (PED) as used throughout the specification may include any of a wide variety of electronic devices. Specifically contemplated and illustrated are tablet-style electronic devices, including, but not limited to, electronic readers, tablet computers, tablet PCs, cellular phones, interactive displays, video displays, touch screens, touch computers, and the like. Examples of PEDs include the Apple iPad, iPod, and iPhone, the Hewlett Packard Slate, the BlackBerry Playbook, the Acer Iconia Tab, the Samsung Galaxy, the LG Optimus G-Slate, the Acer Ivonia Tab, the Motorola Xoom, the HP touchpad Topaz, and the Dell Streak.

**[0046]** A "continuous flexible band" as used herein may be manufactured using silicon, nylon, and/or other elastic or semi-elastic material. Moreover, the term "continuous" as it relates to flexible bands may refer to a flexible band manufactured as a continuous band having no ends, a band having two ends which are mechanically, chemically, or otherwise joined together, or as numerous sections of flexible bands joined end to end mechanically, chemically, or otherwise.

**[0047]** Reference throughout this specification to "one embodiment" or "an embodiment" means that a particular feature, structure, or characteristic described in connection with the embodiment is included in at least one embodiment. Thus, the appearances of the phrases "in one embodiment" or "in an embodiment" in various places throughout this specification are not necessarily all referring to the same embodiment.

**[0048]** FIG. 1A illustrates an embodiment of the inside 102 of a rear panel 100 of a universal case configured to secure a PED at each of the PED's four corners. As illustrated, an adjustable flexible band 105 may extend from slots 110 at each of the four corners of rear panel 100. According to various embodiments, one or more openings 108 may be present in rear panel 100 in order to reduce weight, material used, and/or to accommodate a camera, flash, or port of a PED. According to various embodiments, the portion of adjustable flexible band 105 in each corner of rear panel 100 may be adjusted within slots 110 between an inner position and an outer position. In the inner position, adjustable flexible band 105 may be configured to secure the corners of a relatively small PED. In the outer position, the adjustable flexible band 105 may be configured to secure the corners of a relatively large PED. Additionally, by positioning adjustable flexible band 105 at various locations within slots 110, the corners of PEDs having various aspect ratios may be adequately secured.

**[0049]** FIG. 1B illustrates the outside 103 of rear panel 100 of a universal case configured to secure a PED at each of the PED's four corners. According to various embodiments, adjustable flexible band 105 may be a continuous flexible band configured to extend along outside

103 of rear panel 100, except for at each of the four corners where it passes through slots 110 to inside 102 of rear panel 100. According to alternative embodiments, each of the four corner sections of adjustable flexible band 105 may be independent sections of flexible band material. In such an embodiment, each corner section of adjustable flexible band 105 may be secured to rear panel 100 at each end. Additionally, rather than extending along outside 103 of rear panel 100, sections of adjustable flexible band 105 may extend within rear panel 100 or within designated tube sections.

**[0050]** FIG. 1C illustrates the outside 111 of a front panel 120 of a universal case for PEDs. As illustrated, adjustable flexible band 105 may be used to secure front panel 120 in a closed position with respect to rear panel 100. Adjustable flexible band 105 may be extended up and around a clasp 112 or other engagement feature, such as a button or loop, located on front panel 120.

**[0051]** FIG. 1D illustrates the universal case for PEDs with a front panel 120 lifted to expose PED 115 secured at each corner with adjustable flexible band 105. Front panel 120 may be pivotally secured to rear panel 100 via a hinge 135. Hinge 135 may be any type of hinge, such as a rod hinge or a living hinge. Inside 113 of front panel 120 may include one or more features to protect a display screen of PED 115. For example, inside 113 of front panel 120 may be lined with a microfiber material to prevent scratches. Inside 113 of front panel 120 may include a fold point 132 configured to allow front panel 120 to fold in order to allow the universal case to support PED 115 in an upright position, as described in greater detail below.

**[0052]** FIG. 1E illustrates the outside 103 of rear panel 100 of the universal case securing PED 115 with adjustable flexible band 105. As illustrated, a camera 117 of PED 115 is visible through one of openings 108. According to various embodiments, the universal case may include additional or fewer openings 108, each of which may be smaller or larger, or specifically sized to fit camera 117 and/or other feature of PED 115.

**[0053]** FIG. 1F illustrates a front view of the universal case securing PED 115 in an upright position via adjustable flexible band 105. As illustrated, front panel 120 may be folded at fold point 132 behind rear panel 100 in order to provide support for rear panel 100 in an upright or inclined position. Rear panel 100 may be pivoted with respect to front panel 120 about hinge 135 in order to adjust the angle of inclination of PED 115.

**[0054]** FIG. 1G illustrates a rear view of the universal case securing PED 115 in an upright position via adjustable flexible band 105. As illustrated, front panel 120 may be folded at fold point 132 in order to provide support for rear panel 100 in an upright or inclined position. Rear panel 100 may be pivoted with respect to front panel 120 about hinge 135 in order to adjust the angle of inclination of rear panel 100. According to various embodiments, edge 114 of front panel 120 may interact with one or more features disposed on the outside 103 of rear panel 100

in order to further secure PED 115 in an upright position. For example, edge 114 may interact with one or more support grooves in the outside 103 of rear panel 100. Alternatively, clasp 112, a flap, or a similar feature, may interact with edge 114, or other feature on outside 103 of rear panel 100, in order to further secure PED 115 in an upright position. For example, clasp 112 may comprise a mechanical or magnetic fastener configured to interact with a corresponding feature, or set of features, disposed on or near edge 114 of front panel 100.

**[0055]** As illustrated, openings 108 may allow for the use of camera 117 located on the back of PED 115. Additional or fewer openings may be utilized and/or the size of the openings may be modified to accommodate a particular PED, achieve a desired design, and/or to reduce the amount of material used. In some embodiments, rear panel 100 of the universal case may include one or more transparent sections to accommodate flashes and/or cameras. For example, rear panel 100 may include one or more transparent polycarbonate panels instead of holes 108.

**[0056]** FIG. 2A illustrates an embodiment of a universal case 200 configured with an adjustable flexible band 205 securing a large PED 215. As illustrated, front panel 220 may be folded at fold point 232 in order to provide support for rear panel 201 in an upright or inclined position. Rear panel 201 may be pivoted with respect to front panel 220 about hinge 235 in order to adjust the angle of inclination of PED 215. According to various embodiments, adjustable flexible band 205 may be a continuous adjustable band exposed on the inside of front panel 200 at each of the four corners in order to secure PED 215 in place.

**[0057]** As illustrated, since PED 215 is relatively large, adjustable flexible band 205 may be in an outer position within top slots 210 and side slots 209. In an outer position, adjustable flexible band 205 may adequately secure the corners of a relatively large PED, such as PED 215, without obstructing the functionality and/or display of PED 215. Again, adjustable flexible band 205 may be manufactured using silicon, nylon, and/or other elastic material. Additionally, adjustable flexible band 205 may be a continuous adjustable flexible band 205 or may comprise four sections of adjustable flexible band secured to rear panel 201.

**[0058]** FIG. 2B illustrates universal case 200 configured with adjustable flexible band 205 securing a relatively small PED 216. Again, front panel 220 may be folded at fold point 232 in order to provide support for rear panel 201 in an upright or inclined position. Rear panel 201 may be pivoted with respect to front panel 220 about hinge 235 in order to adjust the angle of inclination of PED 216. Additionally, adjustable flexible band 205 may be a continuous adjustable band exposed on the inside of front panel 200 at each of the four corners in order to secure PED 216 in place, or adjustable flexible band 205 may comprise multiple independent sections of flexible material.

**[0059]** As illustrated, the aspect ratio of PED 216 is

such that the display of the device is wider than it is tall. In fact, as compared to PED 215 in FIG. 2A, PED 216 is the same total width, but is significantly shorter. In order to accommodate PED 216, adjustable flexible band 205 may be adjusted to an inner position within top slots 210 and in an outer position within side slots 209. As can be appreciated, adjustable flexible band 205 may be adjusted within top slots 210 and side slots 209 in order to accommodate PEDs of varying sizes and aspect ratios. Additionally, the length of top slots 210 and side slots 209 may be increased in order to accommodate a wider range of PED sizes. For example, if side slots 209 are about 1 inch, then adjustable flexible band 205 may be adjusted within side slots 209 to accommodate PEDs having widths varying by approximately 2 inches. Similarly, if top slots 210 are about ½ an inch, then adjustable flexible band 205 may be adjusted within top slots 210 to accommodate PEDs having widths varying by approximately 1 inch.

**[0060]** FIG. 3A illustrates an embodiment of a universal case 300 for PEDs configured with support grooves 335, 336, and 337 adapted to secure a PED 315 in an upright position and an adjustable flexible band 305 configured to secure the four corners of PED 315. Front panel 303 may be pivotally secured to rear panel 320 via a hinge 332. Hinge 332 may be any type of hinge, such as a rod hinge or a living hinge. Inside 313 of front panel 303 may include one or more features to protect a display screen of PED 315. For example, inside 313 of front panel 303 may be lined with a microfiber material to prevent scratches.

**[0061]** As illustrated, rear panel 320 may include a fold point 333 configured to allow a section of rear panel 320 to fold in order to support PED 315 in an inclined position. Rear panel 320 may include an upper section and a lower section pivotally connected about fold point 333. The lower section may include a first portion of rear panel 320 that pivots about fold point 333 away from a second portion 321. Second portion 321 may remain planar with the upper portion of rear panel 320 and maintain PED 315 adequately secured to rear panel 320. Support grooves 335-337 may be adapted to catch a bottom edge 318 of a second portion 321 of rear panel 320. According to various embodiments, bottom edge 318 of second portion 321 of rear panel 320 may be selectively placed within any one of support grooves 335, 336 and 337 in order to adjust the angle of inclination of PED 315.

**[0062]** Similar to previously described embodiments, adjustable flexible band 305 may extend from slots 309 and 310 at each of the four corners of second portion 321 of rear panel 320. According to various embodiments, the portion of adjustable flexible band 305 in each corner of second portion 321 may be adjusted within slots 309 and 310 between an inner position and an outer position. In the inner position, adjustable flexible band 305 may be configured to secure the corners of a relatively small PED. In the outer position, adjustable flexible band 305 may be configured to secure the corners of a rela-

tively large PED. Additionally, by positioning adjustable flexible band 305 at various locations within slots 309 and 310, the corners of PEDs having various aspect ratios may be adequately secured to second portion 321 of rear panel 320.

**[0063]** Adjustable flexible band 305 may be a continuous flexible band configured to extend along the outside of rear panel 320, except for at each of the four corners where it passes through slots 310 to inside 301 of rear panel 320. According to alternative embodiments, each of the four corner sections of adjustable flexible band 305 may be independent sections of flexible band material. In such an embodiment, each corner section of adjustable flexible band may be secured to rear panel 320 or second portion 321 at each end. Additionally, rather than extending along the outside of rear panel 320, sections of adjustable flexible band 305 may extend within rear panel 320, within second portion 321 of rear panel 320, and/or within designated tube sections between second portion 321 and rear panel 320. Though not illustrated, adjustable flexible band 305 may be used to secure front panel 303 in a closed position with respect to rear panel 320. Adjustable flexible band 305 may be extended up and around a clasp or other feature, such as a button or loop, located on the outside of front panel 303.

**[0064]** FIG. 3B illustrates a side view of the universal case 300 for PEDs, including support grooves 335, 336, and 337 adapted to secure PED 315 in an upright position. Also illustrated is adjustable flexible band 305, configured to secure the corners of PED 315. Living hinge 332, or an alternative hinge mechanism, may pivotally connect front panel 303 to rear panel 320. Rear panel 320 may further include a fold point 333 configured to allow rear panel 320 to fold in order to support PED 315 in an upright position. Support grooves 335-337 may be adapted to catch a bottom edge 318 of a second portion 321 of rear panel 320. According to various embodiments, bottom edge 318 of second portion 321 of rear panel 320 may be selectively placed within any one of support grooves 335, 336 and 337 in order to adjust the angle of inclination of PED 315.

**[0065]** Front panel 303 may include pads 340-343, extending across the length of front panel 303. Pads 340-343 may provide protection to a display of PED 315 when in a closed position. According to various embodiments, support grooves 335-337 may be formed as grooves within pads 340-343. Pads 340-343 may be embedded within and beneath an outer shell material of front panel 303, or may alternatively be exposed so as to directly contact PED 315 when in the closed position. According to some embodiments, pads 340-343 may be removable and/or selectively replaceable with pads of varying thicknesses. In such an embodiment, thicker pads may be used to provide increased protection and/or to accommodate PEDs having varying thicknesses. In some embodiments rear panel 320 and/or second portion 321 of rear panel 320 may also be adapted to receive and/or include pads similar to pads 340-343.

**[0066]** FIG. 3C illustrates a top view of the inside of front 303 and rear 320 panels of universal case 300 for PEDs, including support grooves 335-337 on front panel 303 and integrated camera holes 308 on rear panel 320. Again, a hinge 332 may allow rear panel 320 to be pivoted with respect to front panel 303. A fold point 333 may be configured to allow rear panel 320 to fold in order to support PED 315 in an upright position.

**[0067]** FIG. 3D, illustrates an elevational view of the front 303 and rear 320 panels of universal case 300 for PEDs, including support grooves 335-337 adapted to secure a PED in an upright position. Also illustrated in FIG. 3D is hinge 332 and fold point 333 on rear panel 320.

**[0068]** FIG. 4A illustrates an embodiment of a universal case 400 for PEDs configured with a support structure 450 configured to route an adjustable flexible band 405. A front panel 420 may be pivotally secured to a rear panel 401 via a hinge 435. Hinge 435 may be any type of hinge, such as a rod hinge or a living hinge. According to various embodiments, rear panel 401 may include an integrated support structure 450 configured to receive adjustable flexible band 405. Rear panel 401 may also include one or more openings 408 in order to reduce weight, material used, and/or to accommodate a camera, flash, or port of a PED. Additionally or alternatively, rear panel 401 of the universal case may include one or more transparent sections to accommodate flashes and/or cameras. For example, rear panel 401 may include one or more transparent polycarbonate panels instead of holes 408.

**[0069]** As illustrated, support structure 450 may include a pair of arms 455 at each corner configured with slots 410 to receive adjustable flexible band 405. According to various embodiments, the portion of adjustable flexible band 405 in each corner of support structure 450 may be adjusted within slots 410 between an inner position and an outer position. In an inner position adjustable flexible band 405 may be configured to secure the corners of a relatively small PED. In the outer position the adjustable flexible band 405 may be configured to secure the corners of a relatively large PED. The corners of PEDs having various aspect ratios may be adequately secured by positioning adjustable flexible band 405 at various locations within slots 410.

**[0070]** FIG. 4B illustrates a close-up view of a corner portion of a pair of arms 455 of support structure 450 and adjustable flexible band 405. As illustrated, adjustable flexible band 405 may be held in place at each corner by arms 455. Adjustable flexible band 405 may be moved between an outer position and an inner position within slots 410 on arms 455. According to the illustrated embodiments, adjustable flexible band 405 is a continuous band extending between each pair of arms 455 on support structure 450. According to an alternative embodiment, each corner of support structure 450 may include an independent section of flexible band material extending between, and adjustable within, each pair of arms 455.

**[0071]** FIG. 4C illustrates universal case 400 with sup-

port structure 450 securing a PED 415 at each corner with adjustable flexible band 405. The height of each pair of arms 455 relative to the remaining body of support structure 450 may correspond to the thickness of one or more PEDs. The height of each arm 455 of a pair of arms in each corner of support structure 450 relative to the remaining body of support structure 450 may or may not be equivalent. According to various embodiments, front panel 420 may be pivotally secured to a rear panel 401 via hinge 435 allowing front panel 420 to pivot between 180 degrees and 460 degrees from a closed position. As previously described, rear panel 401 may include one or more openings in order to reduce weight, material used, and/or to accommodate a camera, flash, or port of PED 415.

**[0072]** FIG. 4D illustrates rear panel 401 being partially separated from support structure 450. As illustrated, rear panel 401 may be folded at a fold point 432 in order to support PED 415 in an inclined position. According to various embodiments, a portion of rear panel 401 may be selectively secured to support structure 450 via one or more fasteners, such as hook and loop fasteners 460. Front panel 420 may be pivotally secured to rear panel 401 via one or more hinges 435. A PED 415 may be secured within support structure 450 via adjustable flexible band 405 routed through slots 410 at the end of each of arms 455.

**[0073]** FIG. 4E illustrates a side view of universal case 400 supporting PED 415 in an upright position with a lower portion of rear panel 401 separated from support structure 450. As illustrated, rear panel 401 may fold at fold point 432 in order to allow a lower edge 418 of PED 415 (or lower arms 455) to rest against front panel 420 in an inclined position. According to various embodiments, hinges 435 and fold point 432 allow lower edge 418 of PED 415 to contact front panel 420 at various angles. Again, universal case 400 may utilize a support structure 450 in conjunction with adjustable flexible band 405 routed through slots 410 in order to secure each corner of a PEDs, regardless of the dimensions of the PED.

**[0074]** FIG. 4F illustrates a rear view of an embodiment of universal case 400 securing a PED (not shown) in an inclined position. Rear panel 401 may include one or more openings 408 in order to reduce weight, material used, and/or to accommodate a camera, flash, or port of a PED. Rear panel 401 may be attached permanently, semi-permanently, or selectively to support structure 450 (shown in dashed lines). At fold point 432, a lower portion of rear panel 401 may be selectively detached from support structure 401 in order to support the PED in an inclined position (as illustrated in FIG. 4E). Support structure 450 may include a pair of arms 455 at each corner, each arm 455 configured to route an adjustable flexible band through a slot 410.

**[0075]** In some embodiments, support structure 450 may be selectively secured to rear panel 401 via one or more fasteners, such as a hook and loop fastener or other

fastener. Accordingly, support structure 450 may be completely detached from rear panel 401. In such embodiments, a PED may remain secured to support structure 450 at each corner by an adjustable flexible band. Support structure 450 may be selectively reattached to rear panel 401. Alternatively, support structure 450, while still securing the PED, may be attached or secured to any of a wide variety of stands or cases. For example, a PED secured to support structure 450 may be removed from a universal case, such as universal case 400, and attached to any of a wide variety of alternative cases, stands, frames, wall-mounts, car mounts, headrest mounts, and/or the like.

**[0076]** FIG. 4G illustrates an elevational view of one embodiment of support structure 450. As illustrated, each corner of support structure 450 may include a pair of arms 455 configured to route an adjustable flexible band through slots 410. Support structure 450 may be configured to attach to a rear panel of a universal case, or other case, display, and/or stand via grommets 457. In various embodiments, grommets 457 may be replaced with any of a wide variety of alternative fasteners and/or mounting hardware. Additionally, support structure 450 may include one or more dampeners 458, such as a rubber washer or other shock-absorbing feature.

**[0077]** FIG. 5A illustrates a top view of an embodiment of the inside of front 503 and rear 520 panels of a universal case 500 for PEDs. As illustrated, front panel 503 may include support grooves 535, 536, and 537. Rear panel 520 may include a support structure 550. Support structure 550 may include a pair of arms 555 at each corner configured to route an adjustable flexible band 505. Adjustable flexible band 505 may extend between each pair of arms 555 through slots 510. Front panel 503 may be pivotally secured to rear panel 520 via a hinge 532, such as a rod hinge or a living hinge. Rear panel 520 may include one or more openings 508 in order to reduce weight, material used, and/or to accommodate a camera, flash, or port of a PED. Additionally or alternatively, rear panel 520 may include one or more transparent panels, such as a polycarbonate panel.

**[0078]** According to various embodiments, the portion of adjustable flexible band 505 in each corner of support structure 550 may be adjusted within slots 510 between an inner position and an outer position. In an inner position adjustable flexible band 505 may be configured to secure the corners of a relatively small PED. In the outer position the adjustable flexible band 505 may be configured to secure the corners of a relatively large PED. The corners of PEDs having various aspect ratios may be adequately secured by positioning adjustable flexible band 505 at various locations within slots 510. Adjustable flexible band 505 may be a continuous band extending between each pair of arms 555 on support structure 550. In an alternative embodiment, each corner of support structure 550 may include an independent section of flexible band material extending between, and adjustable within, each pair of arms 555.

**[0079]** As described in greater detail below, rear panel 520 may include a fold point 533 configured to allow rear panel 520 to fold in order to support a PED in an upright position. As described below, support grooves 535-537 may be adapted to catch a bottom edge of either the PED or two of the arms 555 of the support structure. According to various embodiments, any of support grooves 535, 536 and 537 may be selected in order to adjust the angle of inclination of the PED.

**[0080]** FIG. 5B illustrates a top view of the inside of front 503 and rear 520 panels of universal case 500 for PEDs, including a PED 515 secured by the support structure (550 in FIG. 5A) and adjustable flexible band 505 to rear panel 520. As illustrated, adjustable flexible band 505 may secure each of the four corners of PED 515. Adjustable flexible band 505 may be routed through slots 510 of the support structure. In the illustrated embodiments, adjustable flexible band 505 is in an inner position within each of slots 510 in order to secure relatively small PED 515. Adjustable flexible band 505 may be moved to an outer position in order to secure a larger PED.

**[0081]** FIG. 5C illustrates a perspective view of universal case 500 for PEDs, including internal support structure 550 (only slots 510 are visible). Front panel 503 may include support grooves 535, 536, and 537 adapted to secure PED 515 in an upright position. Adjustable flexible band 505 may be routed through slots 510 and configured to secure the four corners of PED 515. Front panel 503 may be pivotally secured to rear panel 520 via hinge 532. Hinge 532 may be any type of hinge, such as a rod hinge or a living hinge. Inside 513 of front panel 503 may include one or more features to protect a display screen of PED 515. For example, inside 513 of front panel 503 may be lined with a microfiber material to prevent scratches.

**[0082]** Rear panel 520 may include a fold point 533 configured to allow a lower section of rear panel 520 to fold in order to support PED 515 in an upright position. Support grooves 535-537 may be adapted to catch a bottom edge 518 of PED 515 and/or a bottom edge of the support structure. The bottom edge of support structure may comprise the two lowest slots 510. According to various embodiments, bottom edge 518 of PED 515 may be selectively placed within any one of support grooves 535, 536 and 537 in order to adjust the angle of inclination of PED 515.

**[0083]** Adjustable flexible band 505 may be a continuous flexible band configured to extend between support structure (550, illustrated in FIG. 5A) and rear panel 520, except for at each of the four corners where it passes through slots 510 of support structure 550 to inside 501 of rear panel 520. According to alternative embodiments, each of the four corner sections of adjustable flexible band 505 may be independent sections of flexible band material secured on the backside of each of slots 510 in support structure 550. Adjustable flexible band 505 may be used to secure front panel 503 in a closed position with respect to rear panel 520. Adjustable flexible band 505 may be extended up and around a clasp or other

feature, such as a button or loop, located on front panel 503.

**[0084]** FIG. 5D illustrates a side view of universal case 500 for PEDs, including the support grooves 535, 536, and 537, support structure 550, and adjustable flexible band 505 configured to secure the corners of PED 515. Living hinge 532, or an alternative hinge mechanism, may pivotally connect front panel 503 to rear panel 520. Rear panel 520 may further include a fold point 533 configured to allow rear panel 520 to fold in order to support PED 515 in an upright position. Support grooves 535-537 may be adapted to catch a bottom edge 518 of PED 515 and/or a lower portion of support structure 550. According to various embodiments, bottom edge 518 of PED 515 may be selectively placed within any one of support grooves 535, 536 and 537 in order to adjust the angle of inclination of PED 515.

**[0085]** Front panel 503 may include pads 540-543, extending across the length of front panel 503. Pads 540-543 may provide protection to a display of PED 515 when in a closed position. According to various embodiments support grooves 535-537 may be formed as grooves within pads 540-543. Pads 540-543 may be embedded within and beneath an outer shell material of front panel 503, or may alternatively be exposed so as to directly contact PED 515 when in the closed position. According to some embodiments, pads 540-543 may be removable and/or selectively replaceable with pads of varying thicknesses. In such an embodiment, thicker pads may be used to provide increased protection and/or to accommodate PEDs having varying thicknesses. In some embodiments rear panel 520 may also be adapted to receive and/or include pads similar to pads 540-543.

**[0086]** FIG. 6A illustrates top view of an embodiment of a universal case 600 configured with adjustable corner mounts 655 for securing a PED 615. As illustrated, a front panel 620 may be pivotally attached to a rear panel 601 via one or more hinges 635. Hinge 635 may be any type of hinge, such as a rod hinge or a living hinge. According to various embodiments, each adjustable corner mount 655 may be configured to rotate about a pivot point and to raise, lower, and/or pivot with respect to rear panel 601. Accordingly, universal case 600 may be configured to secure PEDs of varying sizes and thicknesses using adjustable corner mounts 655.

**[0087]** FIG. 6B illustrates a perspective view of adjustable corner mounts 655 for securing a PED within universal case 600. As illustrated, each adjustable corner mount 655 may be attached to a pivot 670 and include a securing plate 673 configured to contact an upper surface of a PED. Securing plate 673 may be manufactured using and/or coated with materials suitable to provide adequate grip on a top surface of a PED without damaging the top surface of the PED. For example, securing plate 673 may be coated with or manufactured from a rubber, plastic, cloth, microfiber, and/or other non-abrasive material.

**[0088]** PEDs of various sizes may be secured within

universal case 600 by rotating adjustable corner mount 655 between an inner position and an outer position. Additionally, PEDs having various thicknesses may be accommodated by adjusting the height of securing plate 673 relative to rear panel 601 along pivot 670. Additionally, rear panel 601 may include one or more alignment guides 675 configured to align a PED on rear panel 601 prior to securing the PED with corner mounts 655. Additionally, front panel 620 may include a first attachment feature 681 configured to mate with a second attachment feature 682 on rear panel 601. First attachment feature 681 and second attachment feature 682 may be utilized to selectively maintain front panel 620 secured to rear panel 601 in an open position.

**[0089]** FIG. 6C illustrates a perspective view of universal case 600 configured with adjustable corner mounts 655 for securing PED 615. As illustrated, rear panel 601 may include one or more alignment guides 675 configured to align PED 615 on rear panel 601 prior to securing PED 615 with securing plates 673 of corner mounts 655. Additionally, FIG. 6C illustrates that front panel 620 may be pivotally connected to rear panel 601 via hinge 635. Again, hinge 635 may comprise any number and/or types of hinges, including rod hinges and living hinges. According to various embodiments, front panel 620 may be configured to pivot with respect to rear panel 601 up to 180 degrees, up to 270 degrees, up to 360 degrees, and/or to a maximum angle between 180 degrees and 360 degrees. In some embodiments, front panel 620 may be selectively detached from rear panel 601.

**[0090]** FIG. 6D illustrates a cutaway view of adjustable corner mount 655 configured to secure a corner of PED 615. As illustrated, a threaded pivot 671 may comprise a threaded height adjustment mechanism. Threaded pivot 671 may allow securing plate 673 to pivot between an inner position and an outer position. Additionally, threaded pivot 671 may allow securing plate 673 to be adjusted vertically such that the distance between rear panel 601 and securing plate 673 may be adapted for PEDs having various thicknesses. In the illustrated embodiment, securing plate 673 may be rotated about threaded pivot 671 in order to adjust the height of securing plate 673. According to alternative embodiments, any of a wide variety of pivots allowing for both height adjustment and rotational adjustment may be employed in place of threaded pivot 671. For example, a quick release mechanism may provide for rotation and/or height adjustment in addition to or in place of threaded pivot 671.

**[0091]** FIG. 6E illustrates a side view of adjustable corner mount 655 securing a PED 618 of a first thickness. As illustrated, securing plate 673 may be vertically adjusted along threaded pivot 671 to correspond to the thickness of PED 618. Additionally securing plate 673 may be rotatably adjusted to accommodate the dimensions of PED 618. Securing plate 673 of adjustable corner mount 655 may include an extendable portion. According to such embodiments, one end of the securing plate 673 may be selectively extended to accommodate PEDs hav-

ing smaller dimensions. In an extended position, adjustable corner mount 655 may be better suited to secure a relatively small PED. In a contracted position, adjustable corner mount 655 may be suited to secure a relatively large PED.

**[0092]** FIG. 6F illustrates a side view of adjustable corner mount 655 securing a PED 619 of a second thickness. As illustrated, PED 619 is significantly thicker than PED 618 of FIG. 6E. Accordingly, securing plate 673 may be vertically adjusted along threaded pivot 671 to correspond to the thickness of PED 619. According to various embodiments, the minimum and maximum heights that securing plate 673 may reach may depend on the length of threaded pivot 671. As previously described, any of a wide variety of adjustable members, such as a quick release mechanism, may be used in place of threaded pivot 671.

**[0093]** FIG. 6G illustrates a perspective view of universal case 600 securing PED 615 via adjustable corner mounts 655, including a concave front panel 621. In some embodiments, the inside of front panel 621 may be concave while the outside of front panel 621 remains flat (as opposed to being correspondingly convex). According to various embodiments, concave front panel 621 may be formed as thin as possible. In some embodiments reinforced sections and/or a supporting framework may also allow front panel 621 to be made thinner, stronger, and/or reduce its overall weight.

**[0094]** Concave front panel 621 may include corners 622 configured to mate with corresponding adjustable corner mounts 656 in a closed position. In a closed position, the concave shape of concave front panel 621 may prevent concave front panel 621 from impacting a display of PED 615. Corners 622 may be used to selectively secure concave front panel 621 in a closed position when corners 622 are mated with adjustable corner mounts 656. Adjustable corner mounts 656 may include additional latching features not present on adjustable corner mounts 655. In some embodiments, corner mounts 656 may be magnetically secured to corners 622.

**[0095]** FIG. 6H illustrates a perspective view of universal case 600 securing PED 615, including concave front panel 621 in a partially opened state. Again, concave front panel 621 may include corners 622 configured to mate with adjustable corner mounts 656. Corners 622 may selectively maintain concave front panel 621 in a closed position via one or more protrusions, inclusions, mechanical fasteners, and/or via magnetic components. For example, corners 622 may include magnets, hook and loop fasteners, and/or protrusions configured to engage corresponding features on corners 622.

**[0096]** FIG. 6I illustrates a rear perspective view of universal case 600 securing PED 615 in an upright position. PED 615 may be secured within universal case 600 via adjustable corner mounts 655. As illustrated, an outside 603 of the rear panel may be transparent and/or include a transparent section. Transparent outside 603 may be configured to allow a camera 617 to be used without re-

moving PED 615 from universal case 600. For example, outside 603 of the rear panel may comprise a transparent polycarbonate panel configured to protect a rear portion of PED 615 while allowing for unhindered use of camera 617. As illustrated, front panel 620 may be used to support universal case 600 in an upright position with camera 617 exposed for use through transparent outside 603 of the rear panel.

**[0097]** FIG. 7A illustrates an embodiment of a universal case 700 securing a large PED 715 via adjustable corner mounts 755. As illustrated, a front panel 720 may be concave and include corners 722 configured to mate with corresponding corner mounts 755. Each adjustable corner mount 755 may be rotatably and vertically adjustable to accommodate various sized PEDs. As illustrated in FIG. 7A, a relatively large PED 715 may be secured with adjustable corner mounts 755 in an outer position.

**[0098]** FIG. 7B illustrates universal case 700 securing a relatively small PED 716 via adjustable corner mounts 755. As illustrated, adjustable corner mounts 755 may be rotated to an inner position in order to adequately secure relatively small PED 716. In addition, adjustable corner mounts 755 may be adjusted vertically in order to accommodate PEDs having various thicknesses.

**[0099]** The above description provides numerous specific details for a thorough understanding of the embodiments described herein. However, those of skill in the art will recognize that one or more of the specific details may be omitted, or other methods, components, or materials may be used. In some cases, operations are not shown or described in detail. Additionally, features or elements described in conjunction with any one embodiment may be adapted for use with and/or combined with the features of any other embodiment.

## Claims

1. A universal case (200,300,400,500,600,700) for a portable electronic device (115) comprising:

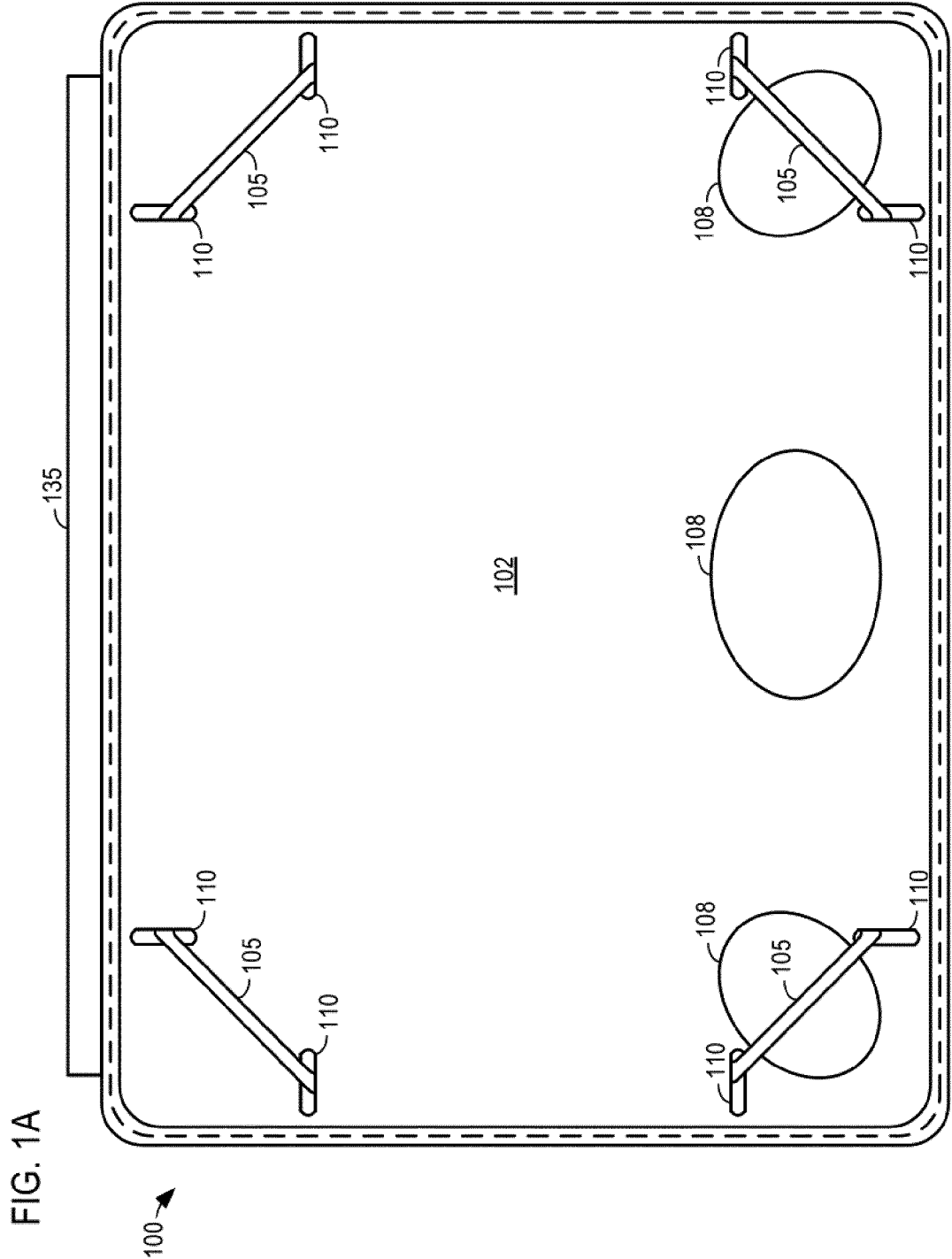
a rear panel (100) configured to selectively secure a portable electronic device having four corners, the rear panel comprising a plurality of slots (110); and

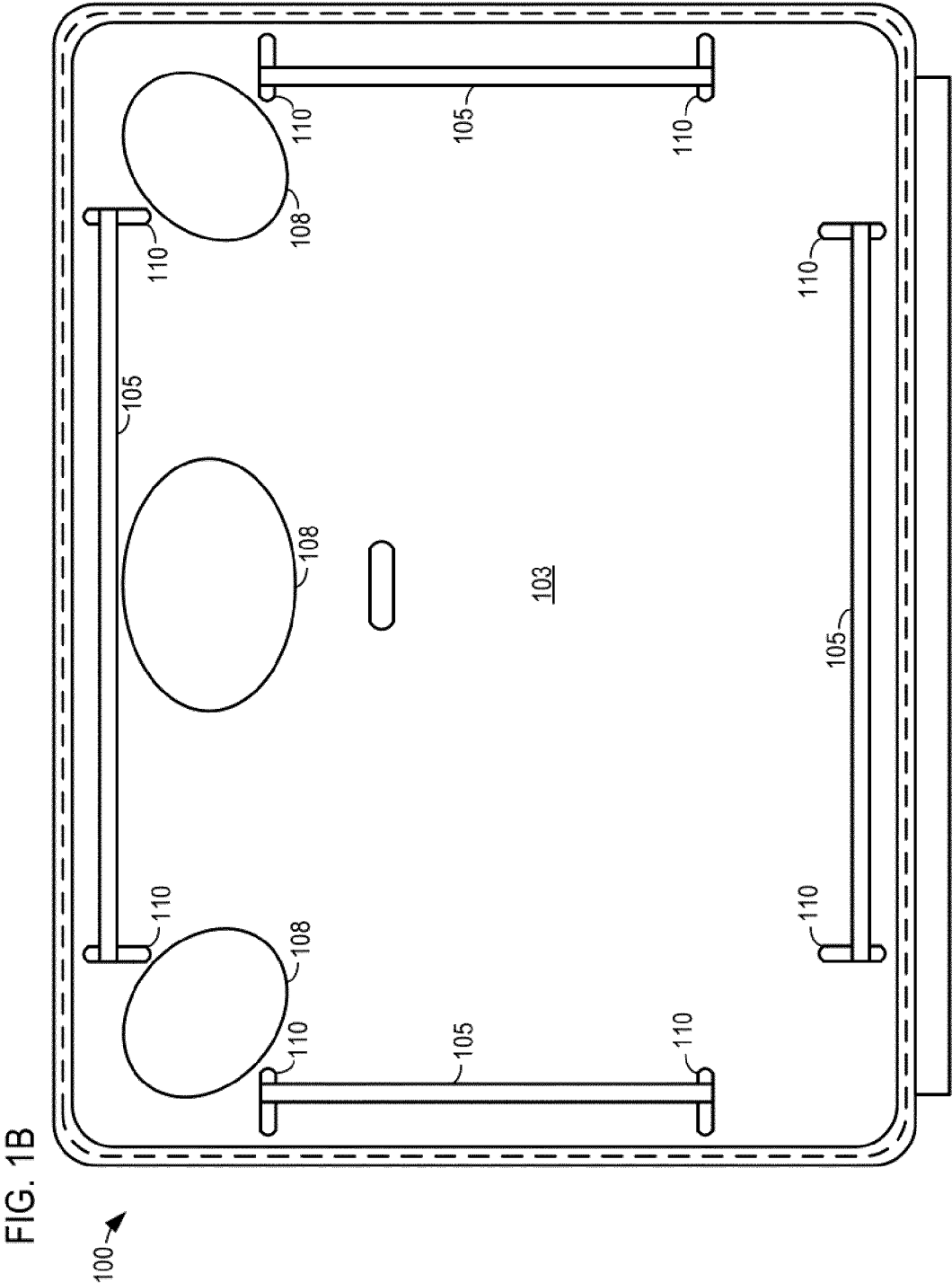
a flexible band (105) routed through the plurality of slots in the rear panel configured to selectively secure each of the four corners of the portable electronic device, the flexible band adjustable between an inner position with respect to a center of the rear panel and an outer position with respect to the center of the rear panel, wherein in an inner position, the flexible band is configured to secure the four corners of a portable electronic device having a first size, and wherein in an outer position, the flexible band is configured to secure the four corners of a portable electronic device having a second, larger

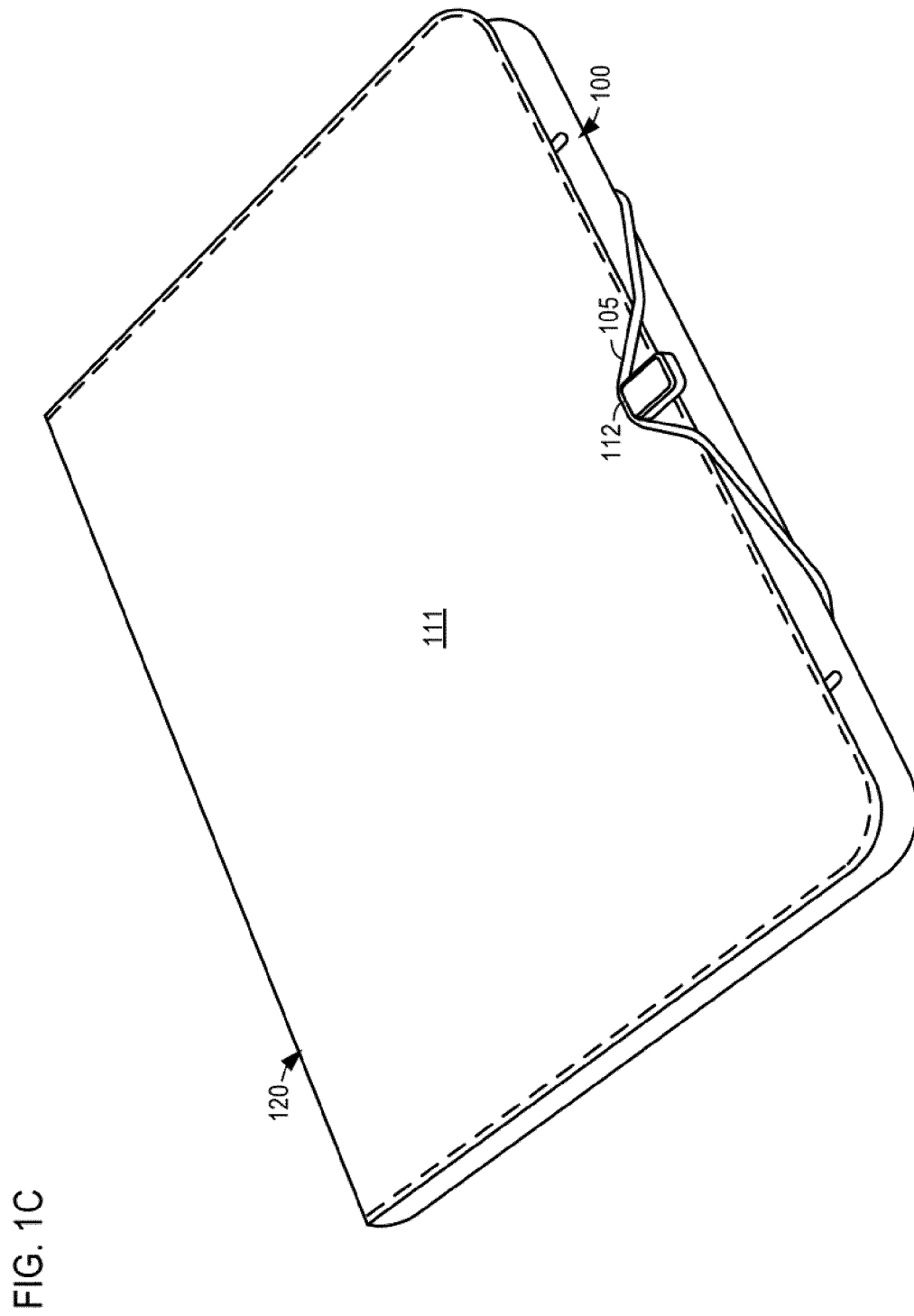
size.

2. The universal case of claim 1, wherein the rear panel (100) comprises eight slots (110) configured to route the flexible band such that the flexible band selectively secures each of the four corners of the portable electronic device, and wherein the flexible band is adjustable within each of the eight slots between an inner position and an outer position.
3. The universal case of claim 1, wherein the rear panel (100) comprises an upper section and a lower section connected at a pivot point (135), wherein the lower section of the rear panel comprises a first portion and a second portion, and wherein the first portion is configured to pivot about the pivot point away from the upper section of the rear panel, such that the first portion of the lower section supports the rear panel in an inclined position.
4. The universal case of claim 1, further comprising a front panel (120) pivotally connected to the rear panel via one or more hinge members, wherein in a closed position, the portable electronic device is configured to be housed between the front panel (120) and the rear panel (100), and wherein in an open position, the front panel is configured to expose a display screen of the portable electronic device.
5. The universal case of claim 4, wherein the front panel further comprises an engagement feature (112), and wherein the flexible band (105) is configured to be secured to the engagement feature in order to maintain the front panel in the closed position.
6. The universal case of claim 4, wherein the front panel (120) comprises a fold point (132), and wherein the front panel is configured to be pivoted about the one or more hinge members and folded about the fold point in order to provide support for the rear panel in an inclined position.
7. The universal case of claim 4, wherein the rear panel (100) comprises an upper section and a lower section connected at a pivot point, wherein the lower section of the rear panel comprises a first portion and a second portion, wherein the first portion is configured to pivot about the pivot point away from the upper section of the rear panel, such that the first portion of the lower section supports the rear panel in an inclined position, and wherein a bottom edge of the second portion of the lower section of the rear panel is configured to rest on an inner surface of the front panel.

8. The universal case of claim 7, wherein the inner surface (113) of the front panel comprises a plurality of support grooves configured to receive the bottom edge of the second portion of the lower section of the rear panel, and  
5  
wherein each of the plurality of support grooves is configured to maintain the rear panel at a different angle of inclination.
9. The universal case of claim 1, wherein the rear panel 10  
further comprises a support structure,  
wherein each of the plurality of slots (410,510) is formed in a corresponding arm (455,555) extending from the support structure, such that the flexible band is configured to secure each of the four corners of 15  
the portable electronic device to the support structure, and  
wherein the flexible band is adjustable between an inner position and an outer position within each of the plurality of slots formed in each of the corre- 20  
sponding arms extending from the support structure.
10. The universal case of claim 9, wherein the rear panel comprises an upper section and a lower section connected at a pivot point, and 25  
wherein the lower section is configured to pivot about the pivot point away from the support structure, such that the lower section supports the support structure in an inclined position. 30
11. The universal case of claim 10, further comprising a front panel pivotally connected to the rear panel via one or more hinge members,  
wherein in a closed position, the portable electronic device is housed between the front panel and the rear panel, 35  
wherein in an open position, the front panel is configured to expose a display screen of the portable electronic device, and  
wherein in the inclined position, a bottom edge of the support structure is configured to rest on an inner surface of the front panel. 40
12. The universal case of claim 11, wherein the inner surface (113) of the front panel (120) comprises a plurality of support grooves configured to receive the bottom edge of the support structure, and 45  
wherein each of the plurality of support grooves is configured to maintain the support structure at a different angle of inclination. 50
13. The universal case of claim 1, wherein the rear panel (100) is configured with one or more openings (108).
14. The universal case of claim 1, wherein the rear panel 55  
(100) is configured with one or more transparent sections.
15. The universal case of claim 1, wherein the flexible band (105) comprises a band having two ends joined together in order to form a continuous flexible band.







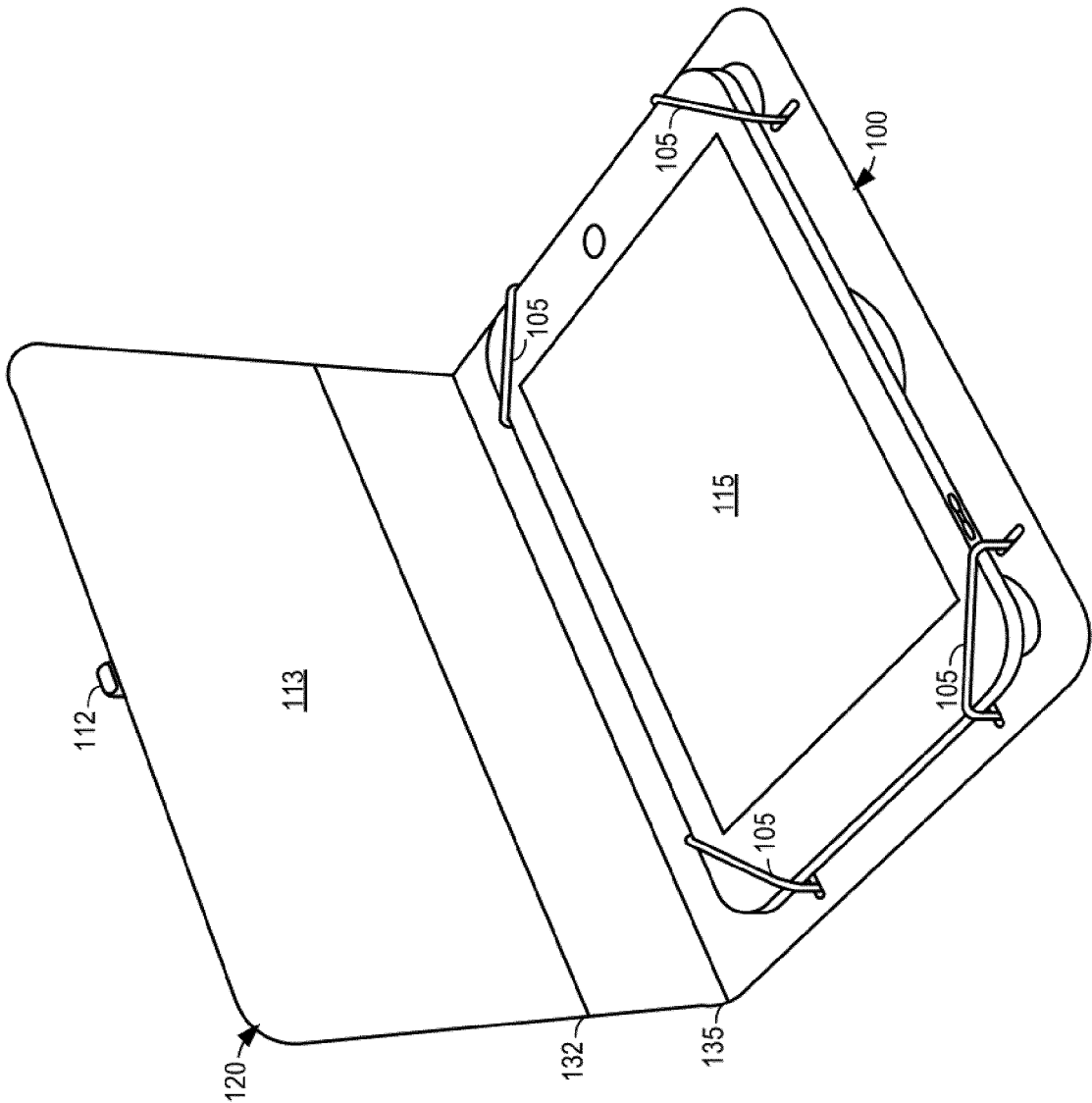


FIG. 1D

FIG. 1E

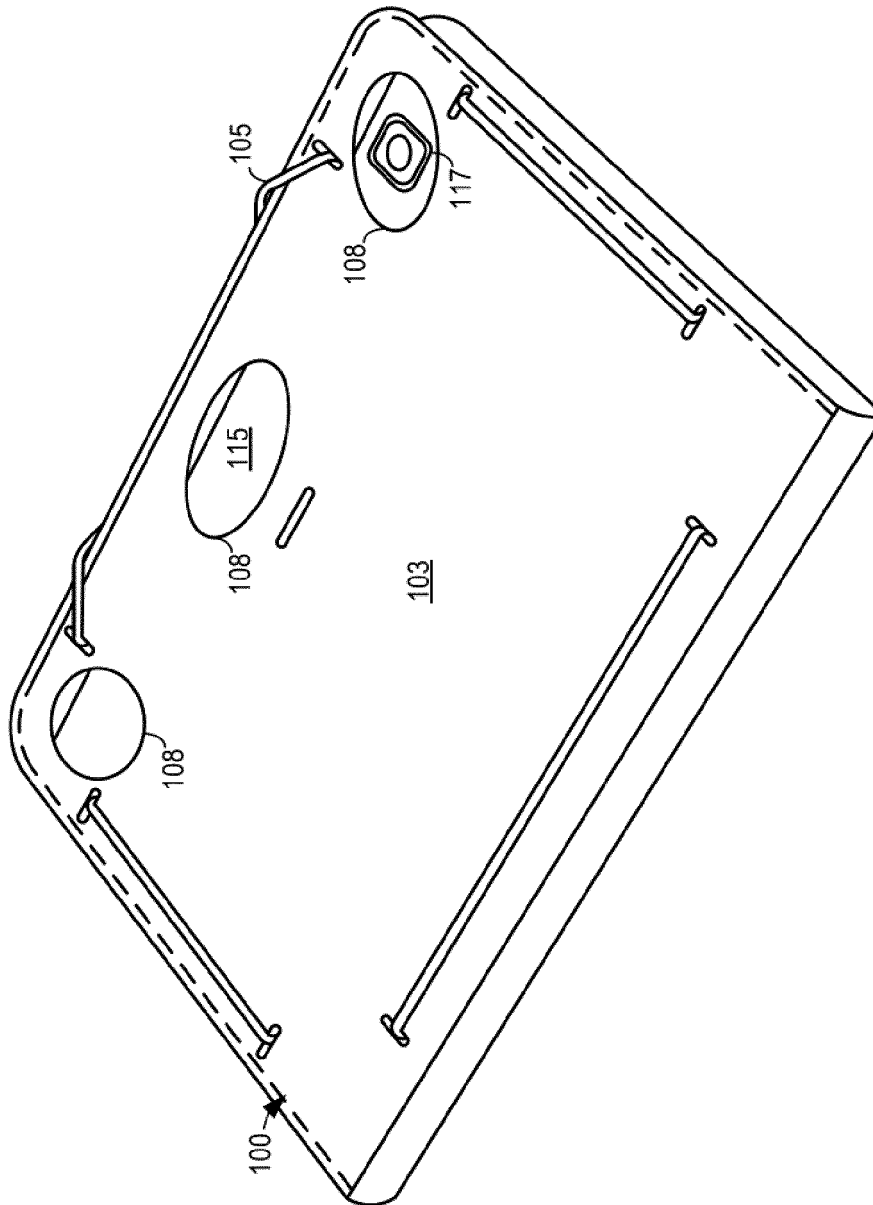
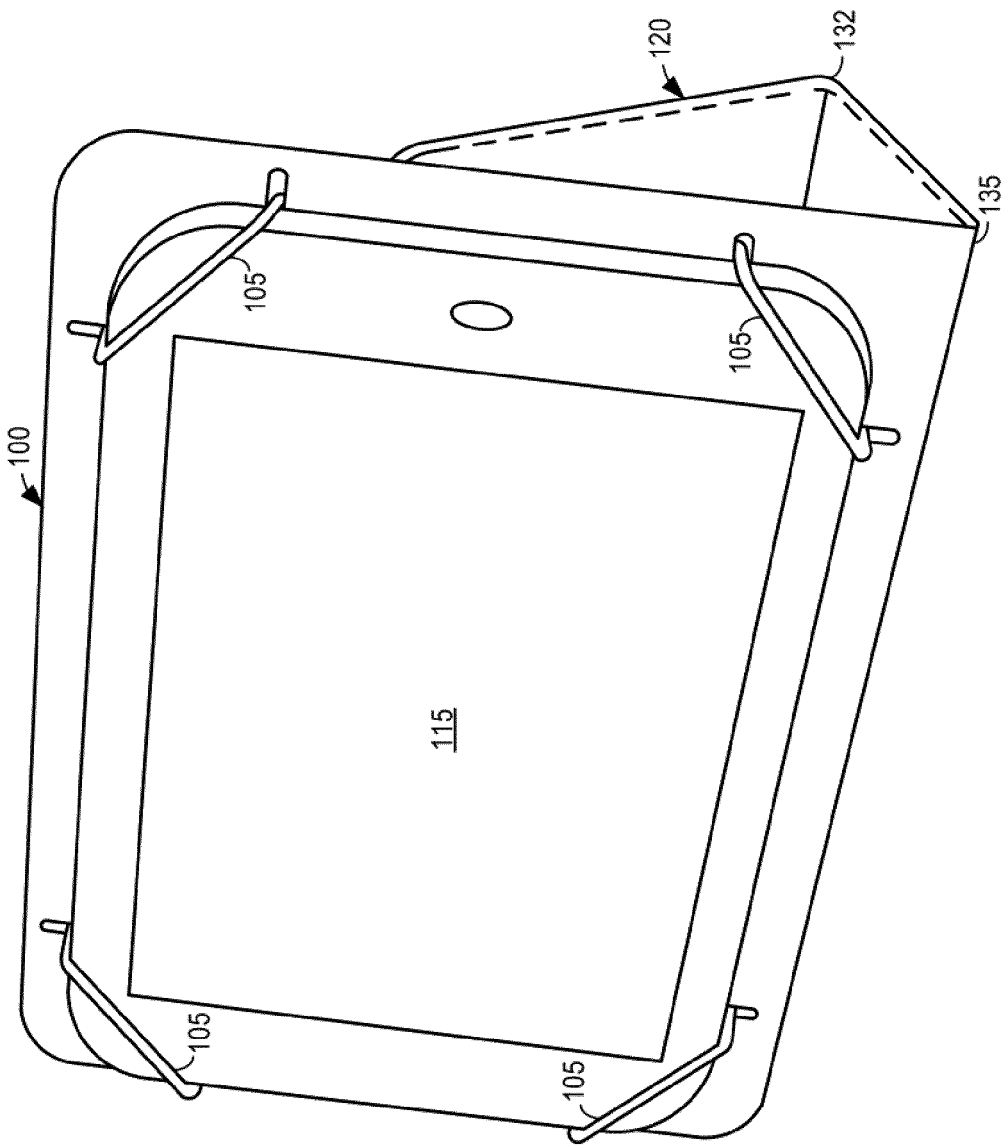


FIG. 1F



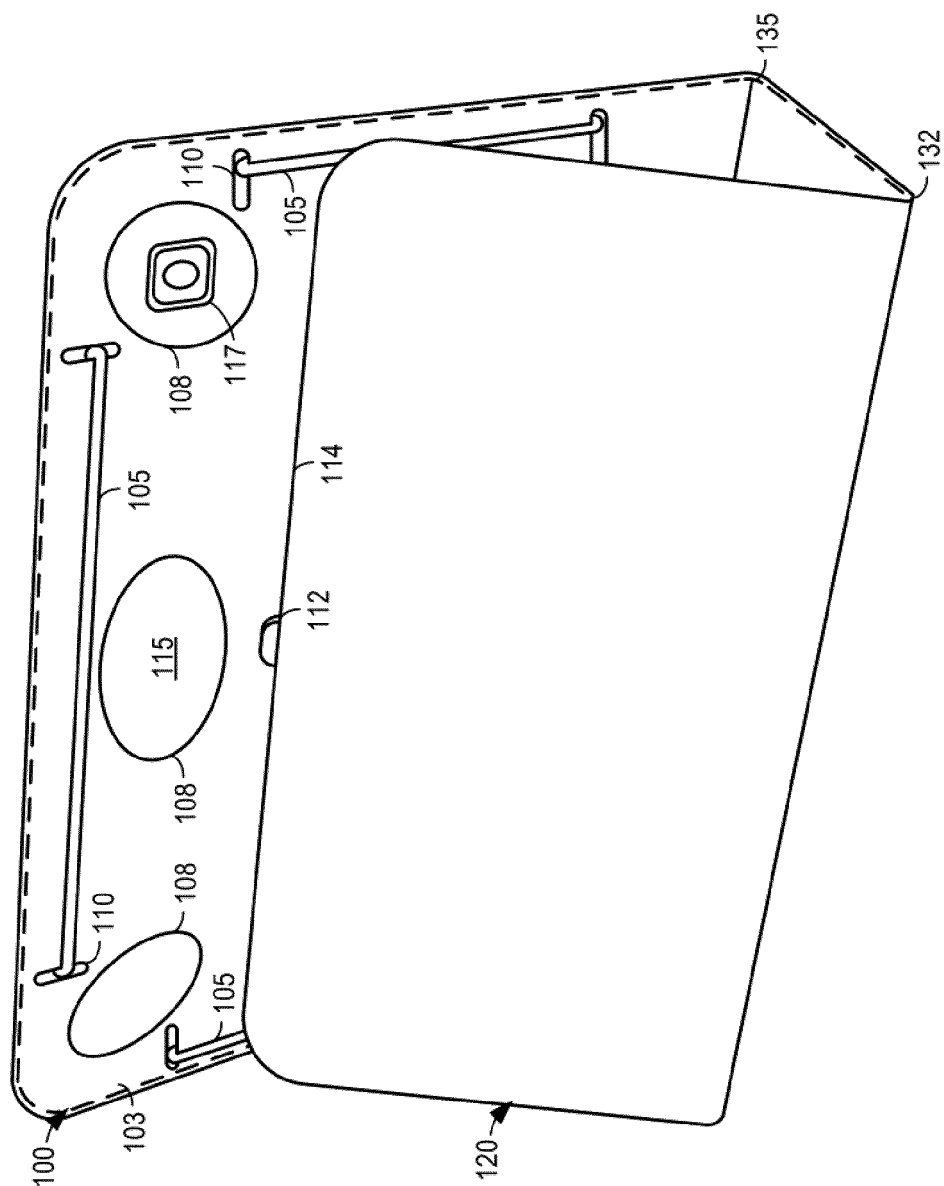


FIG. 1G

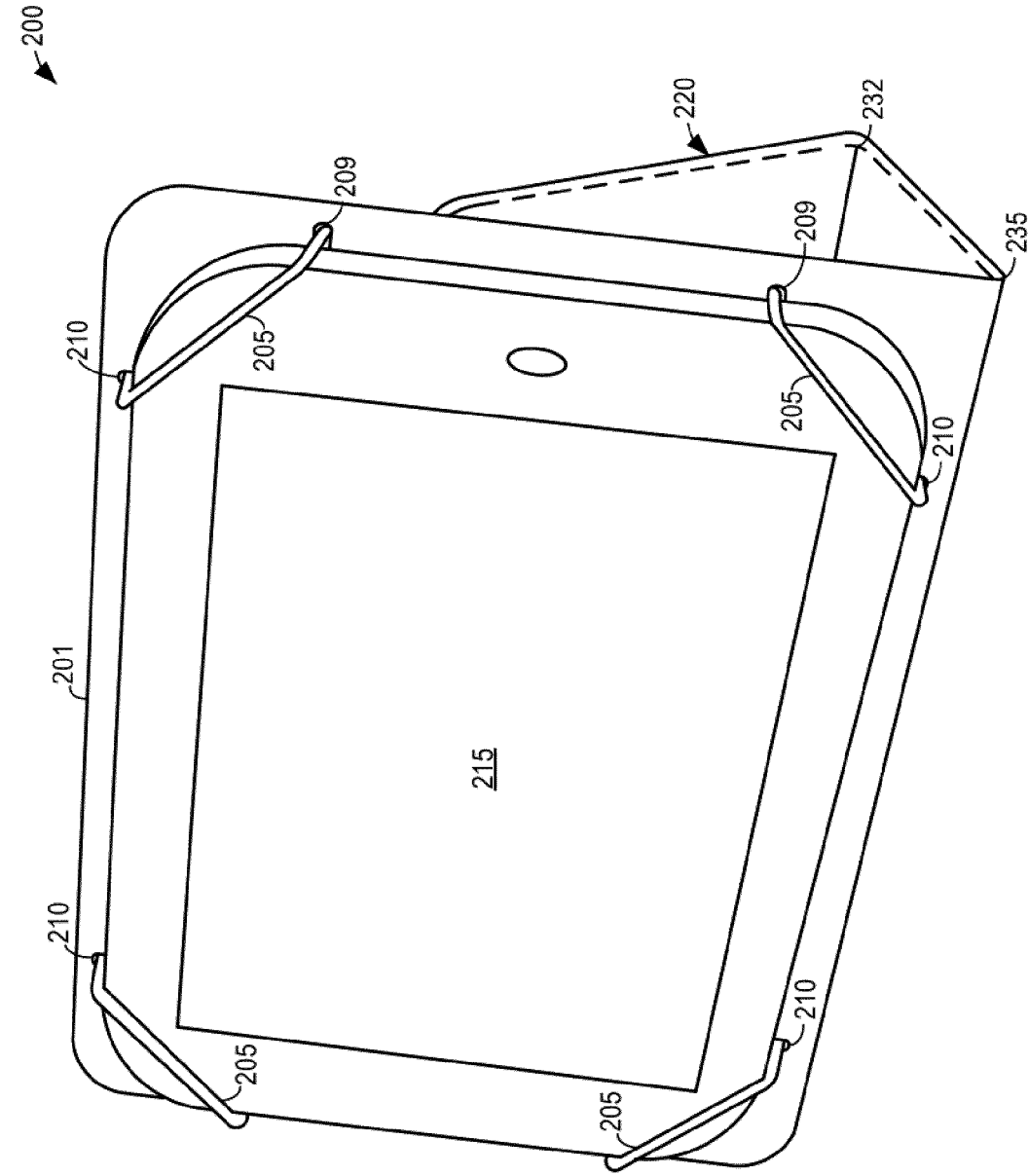


FIG. 2A

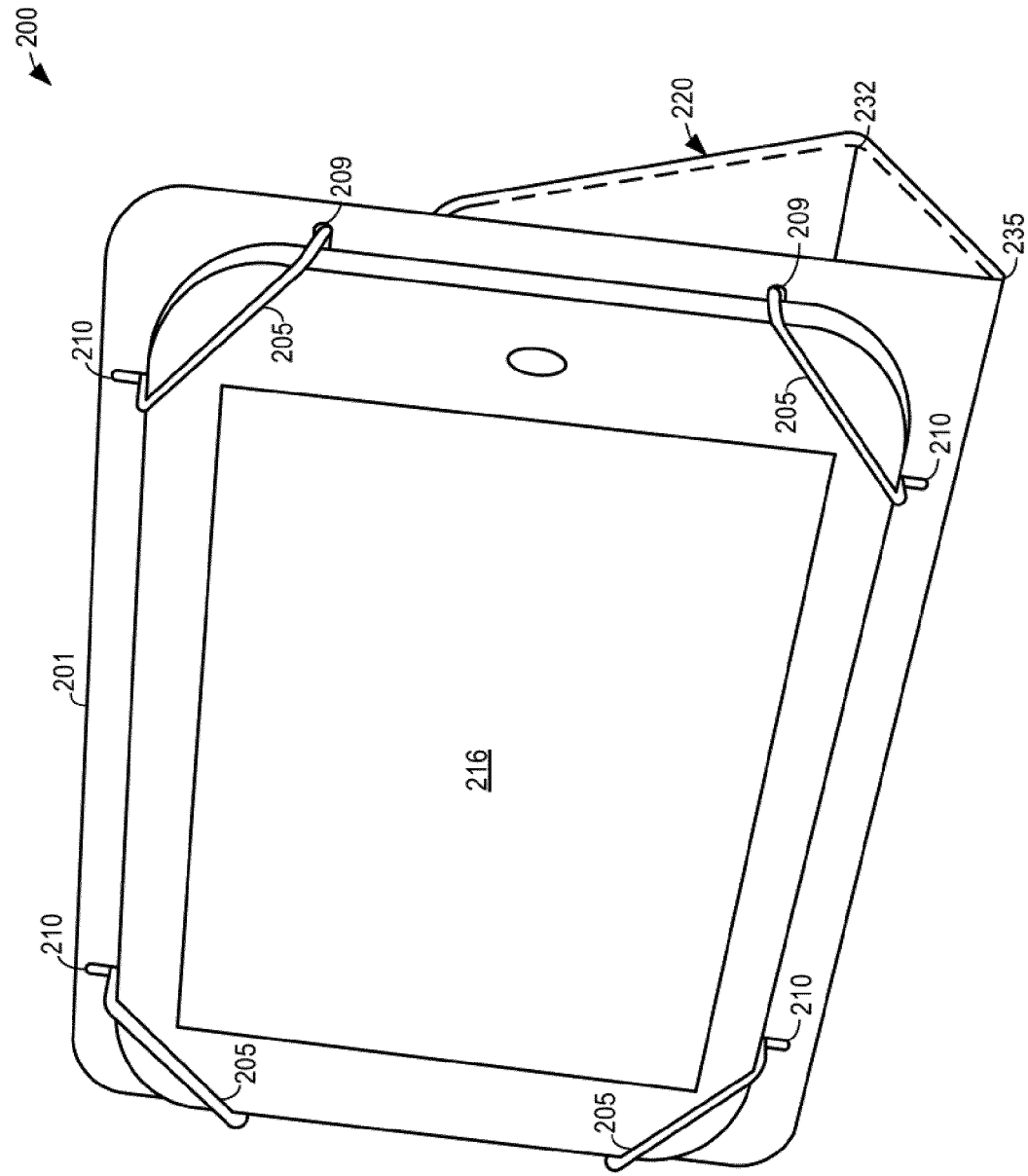


FIG. 2B

FIG. 3A

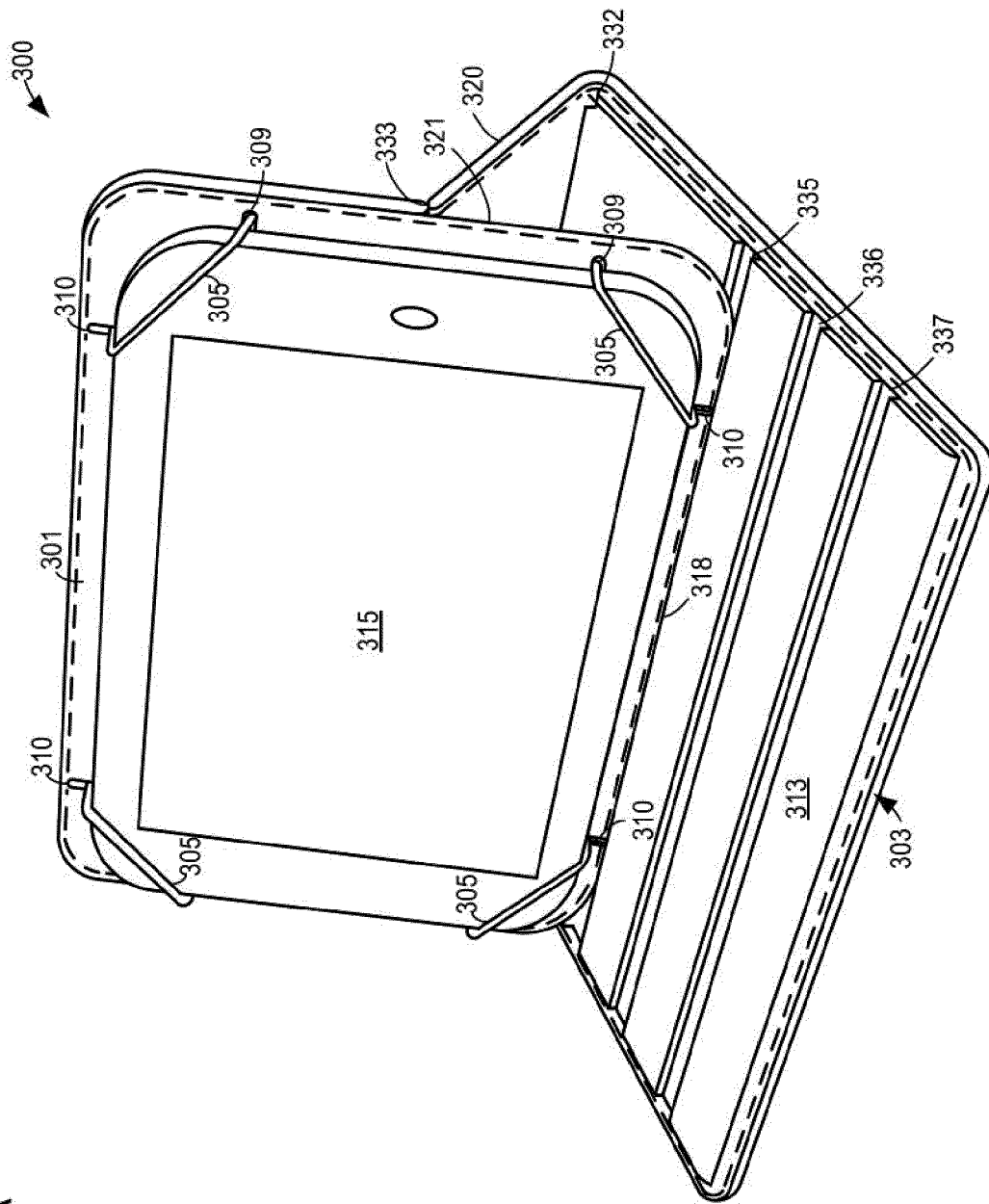
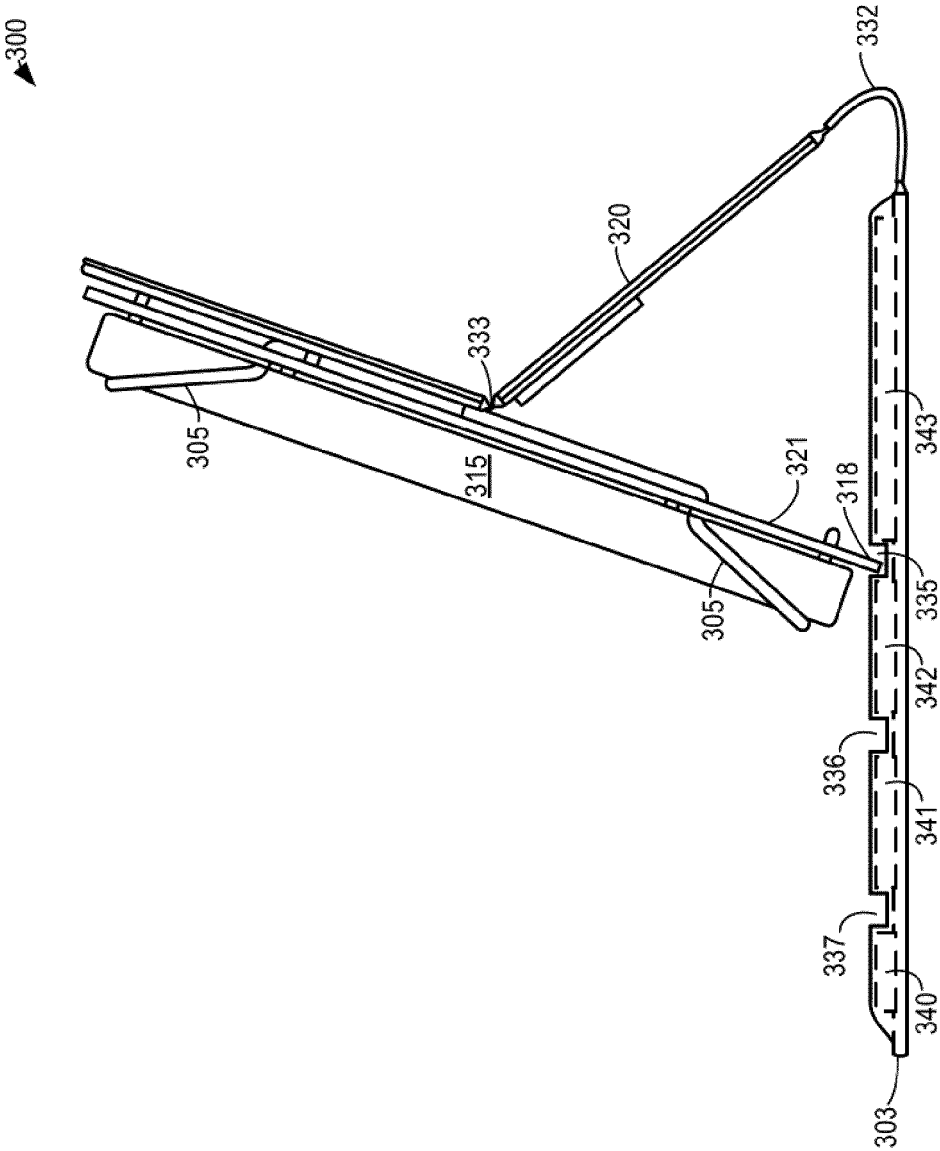


FIG. 3B



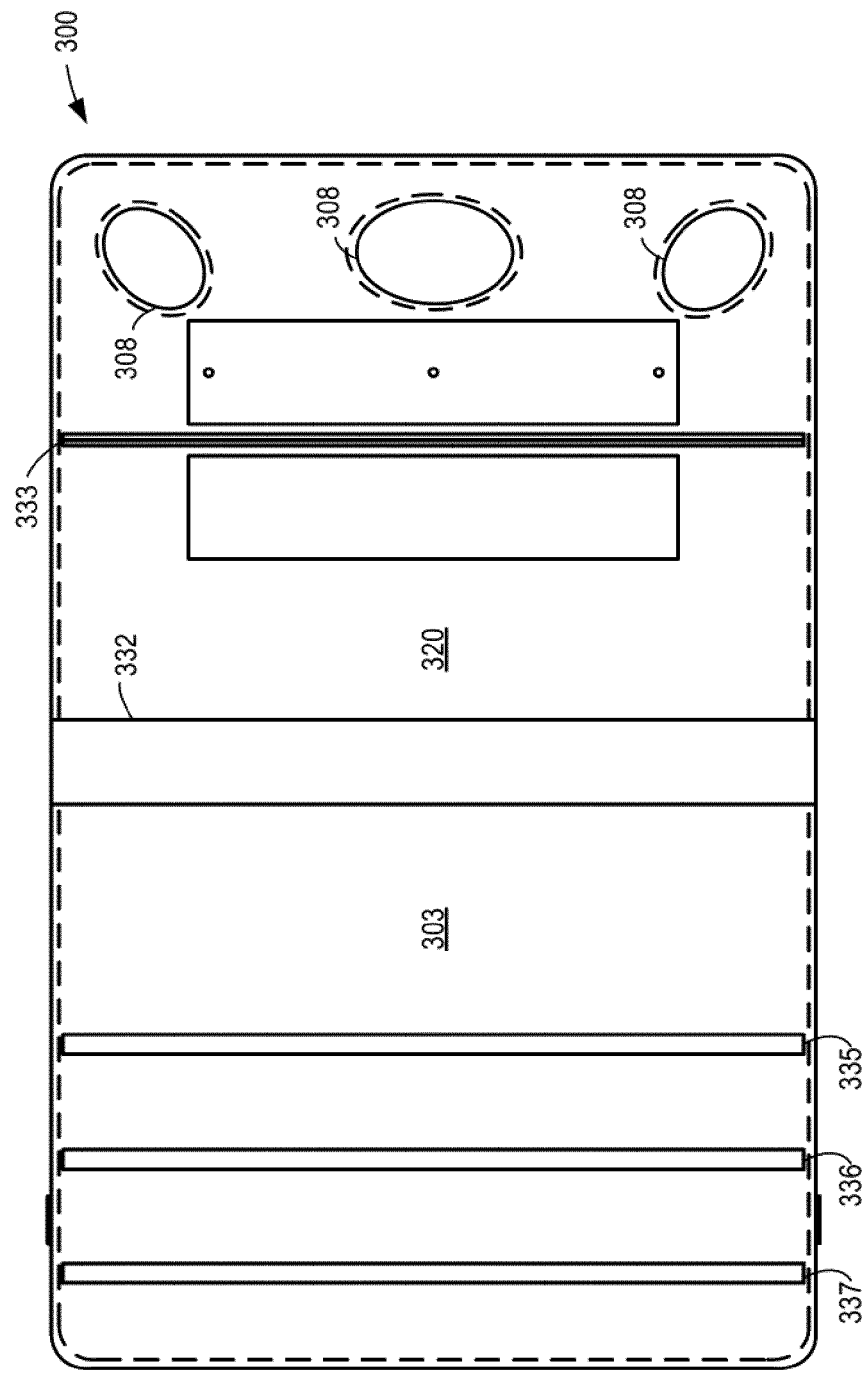


FIG. 3C

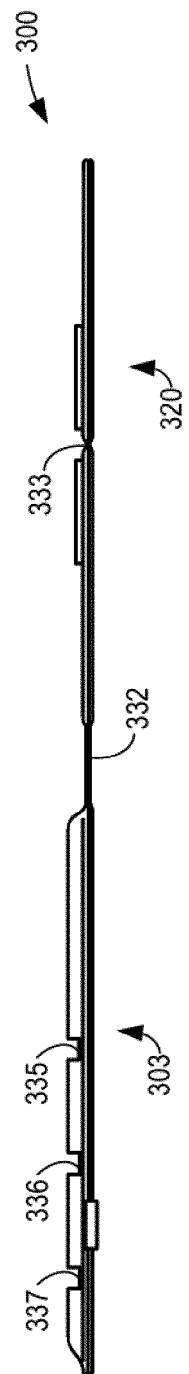


FIG. 3D

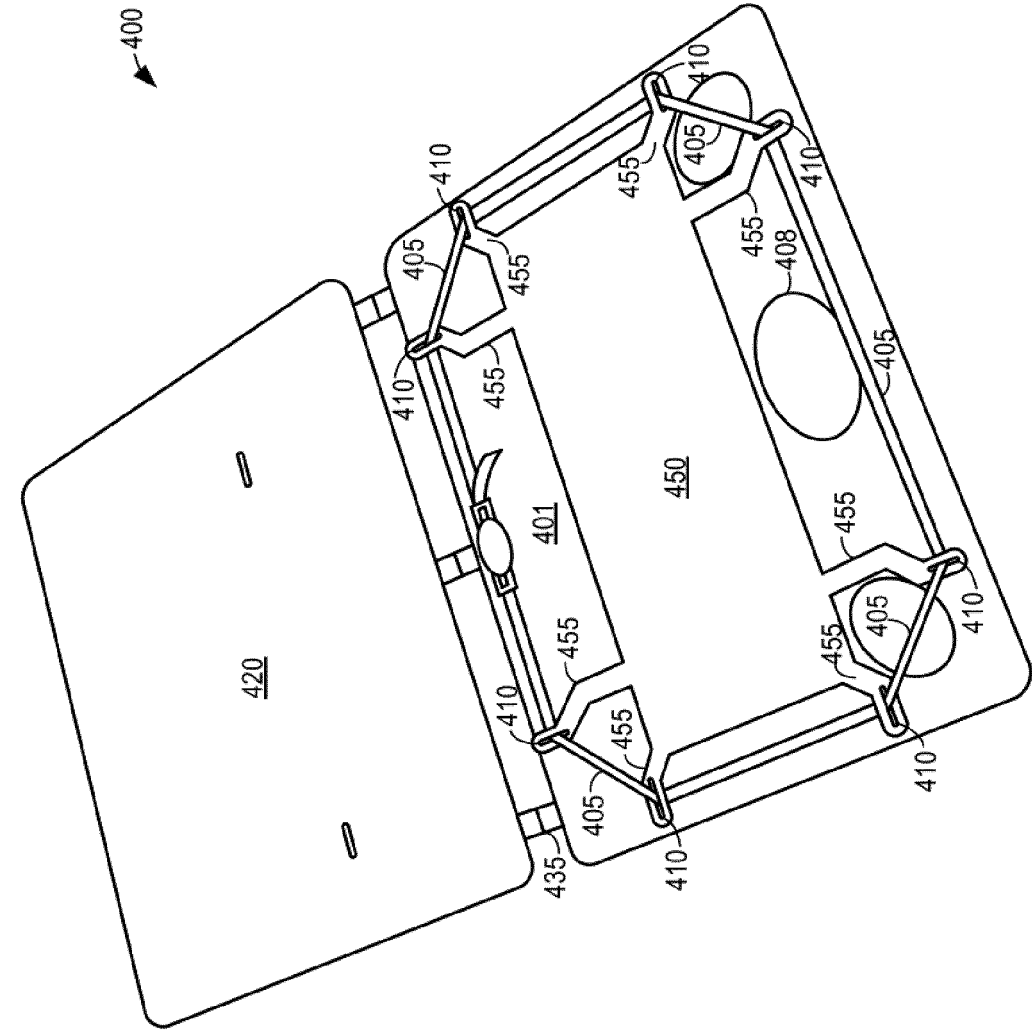


FIG. 4A

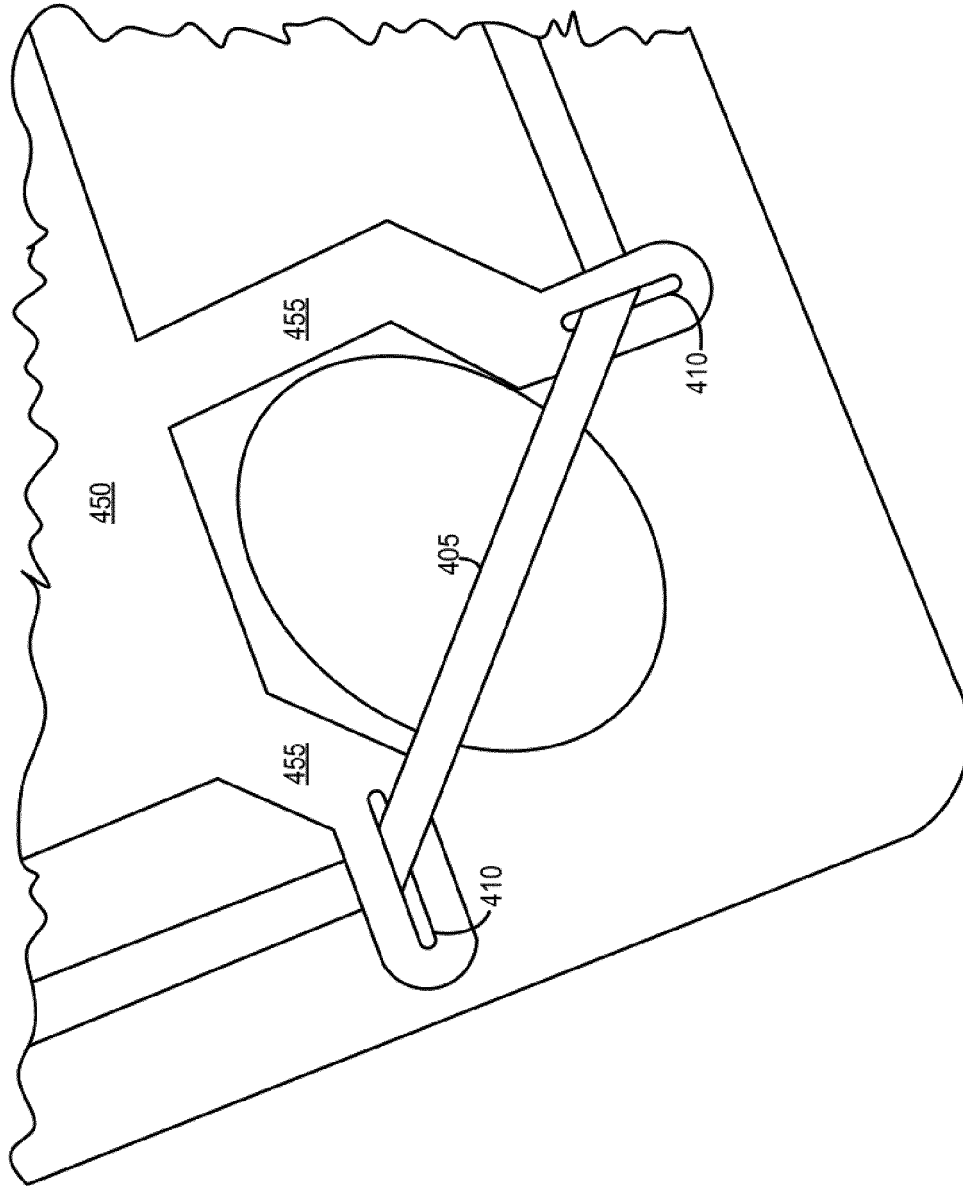
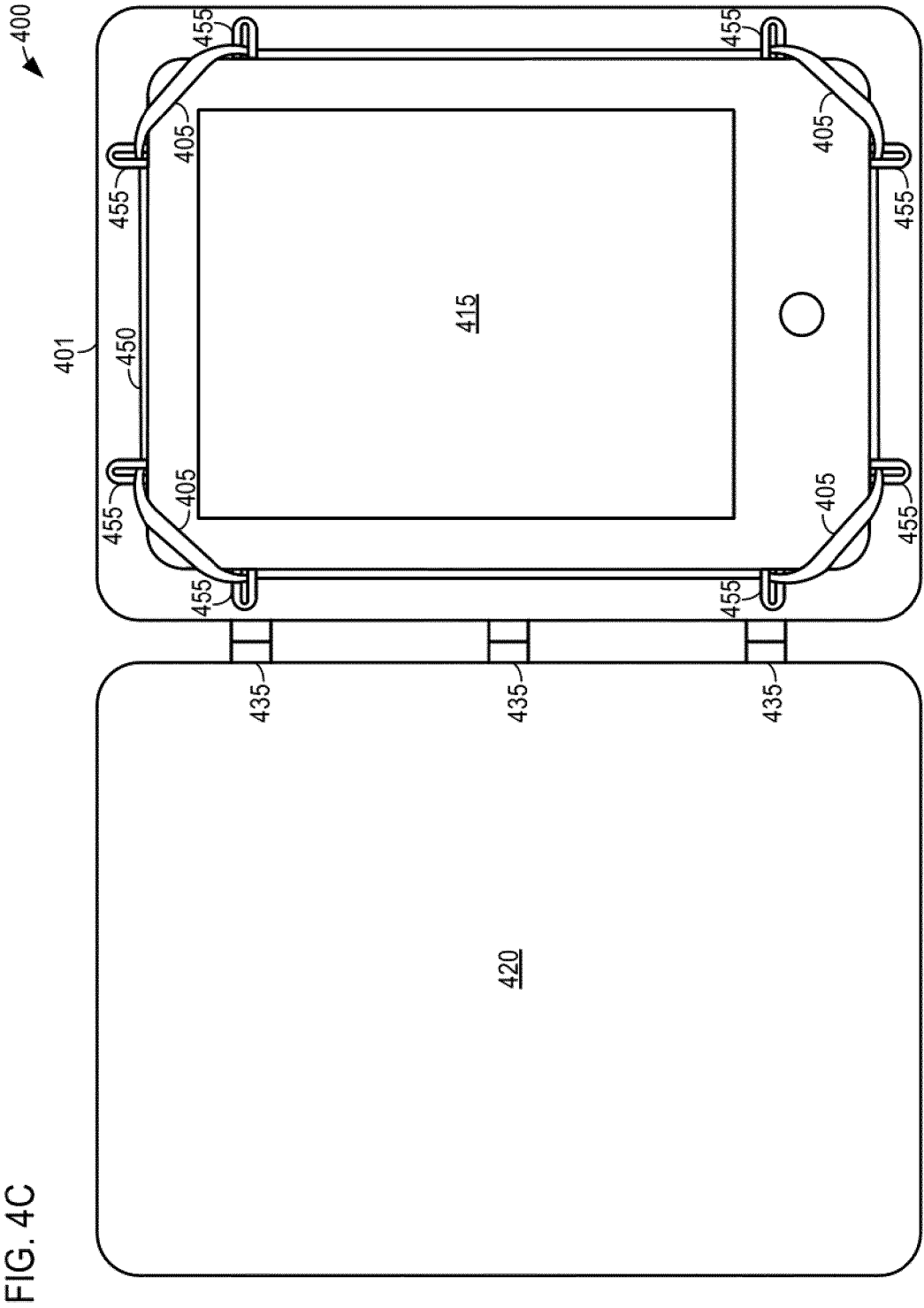
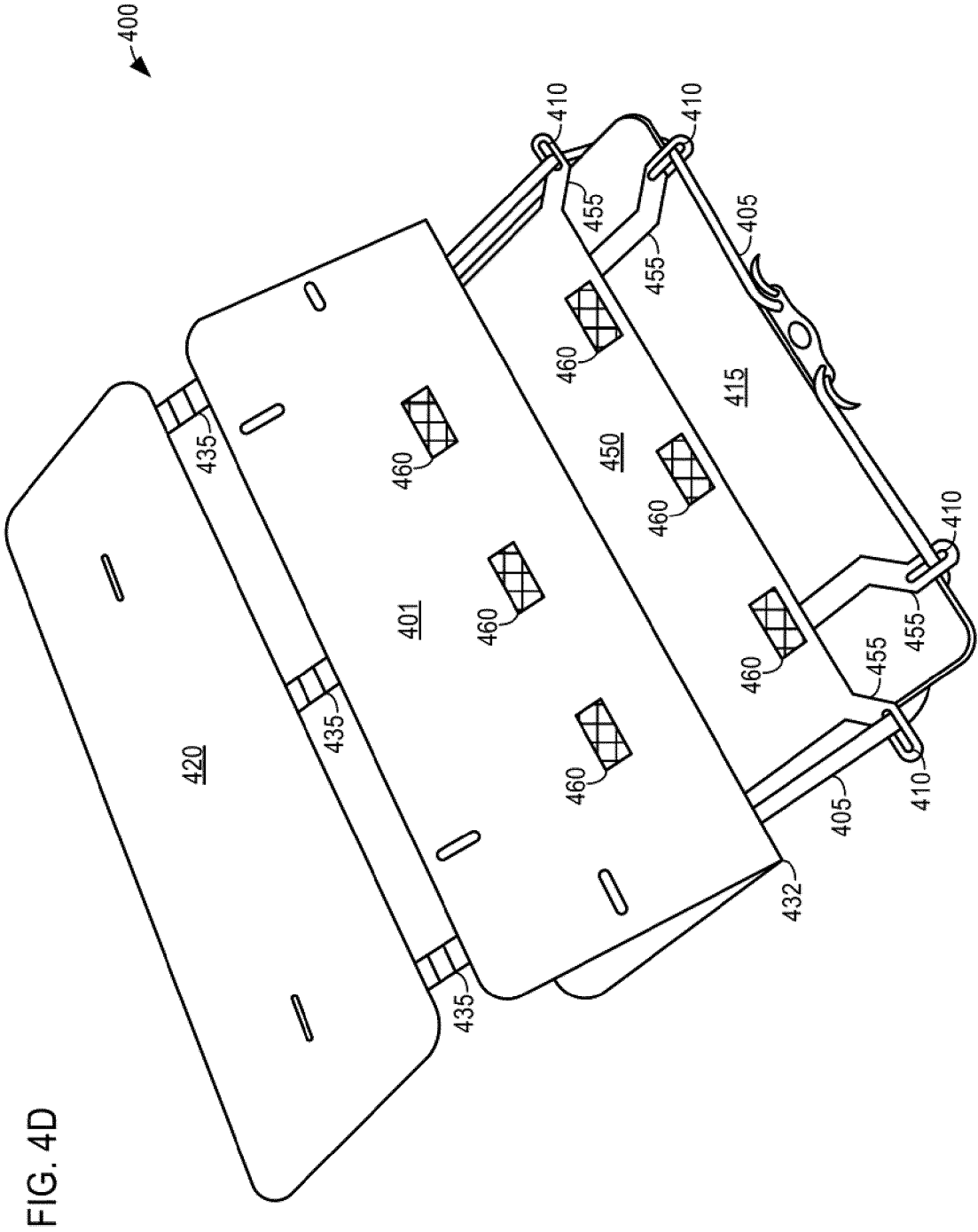


FIG. 4B





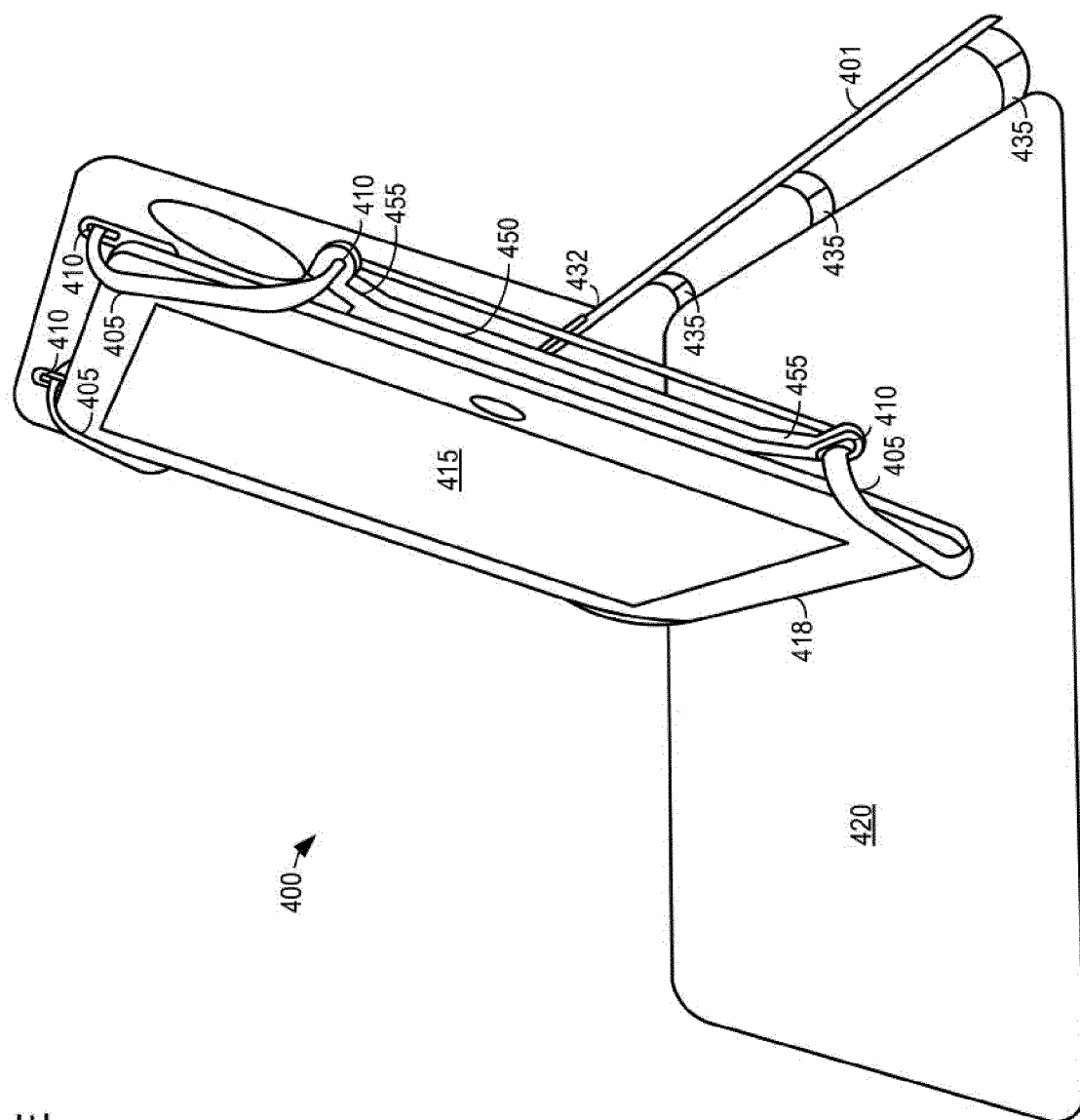
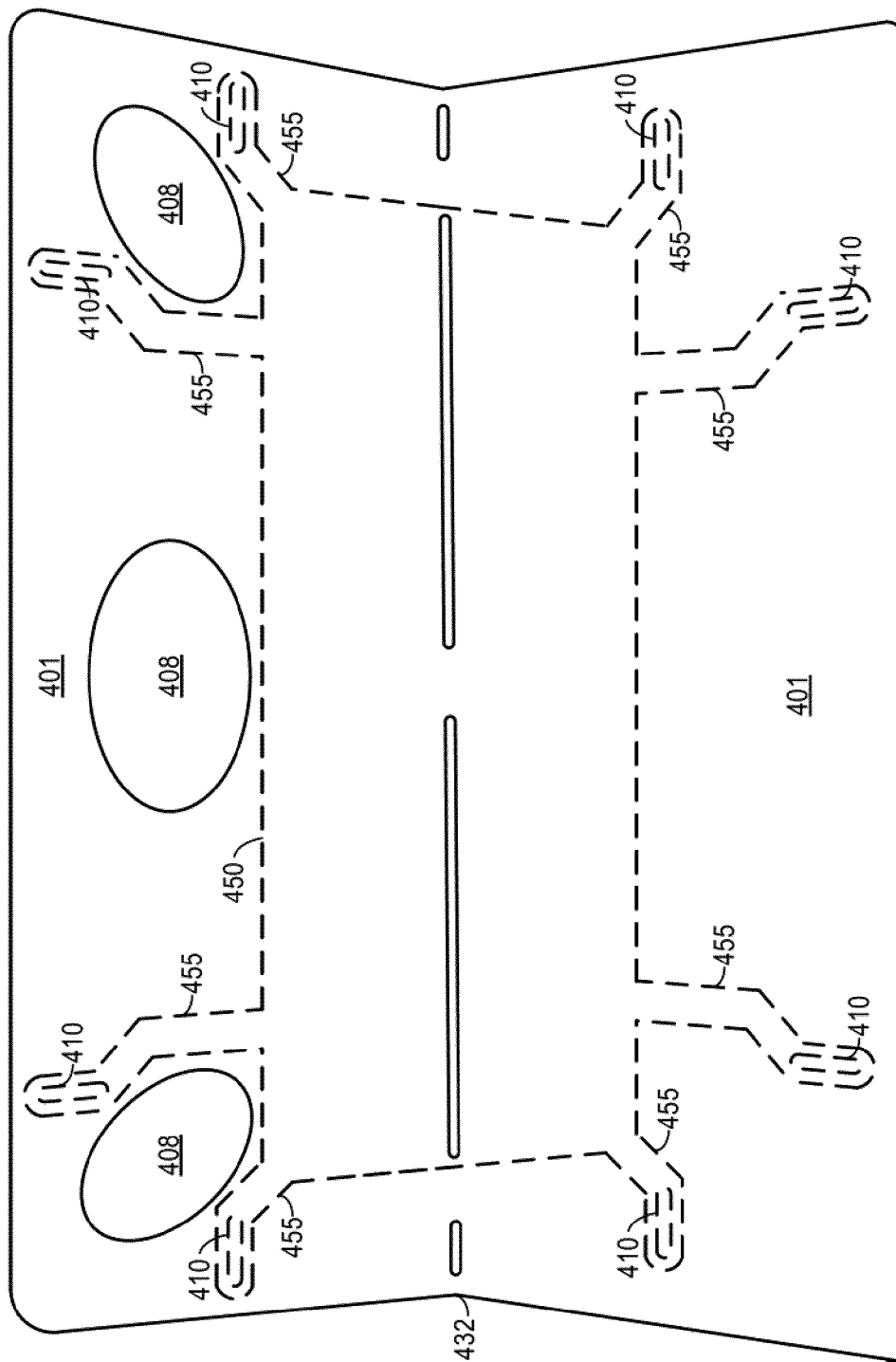


FIG. 4E

400

FIG. 4F



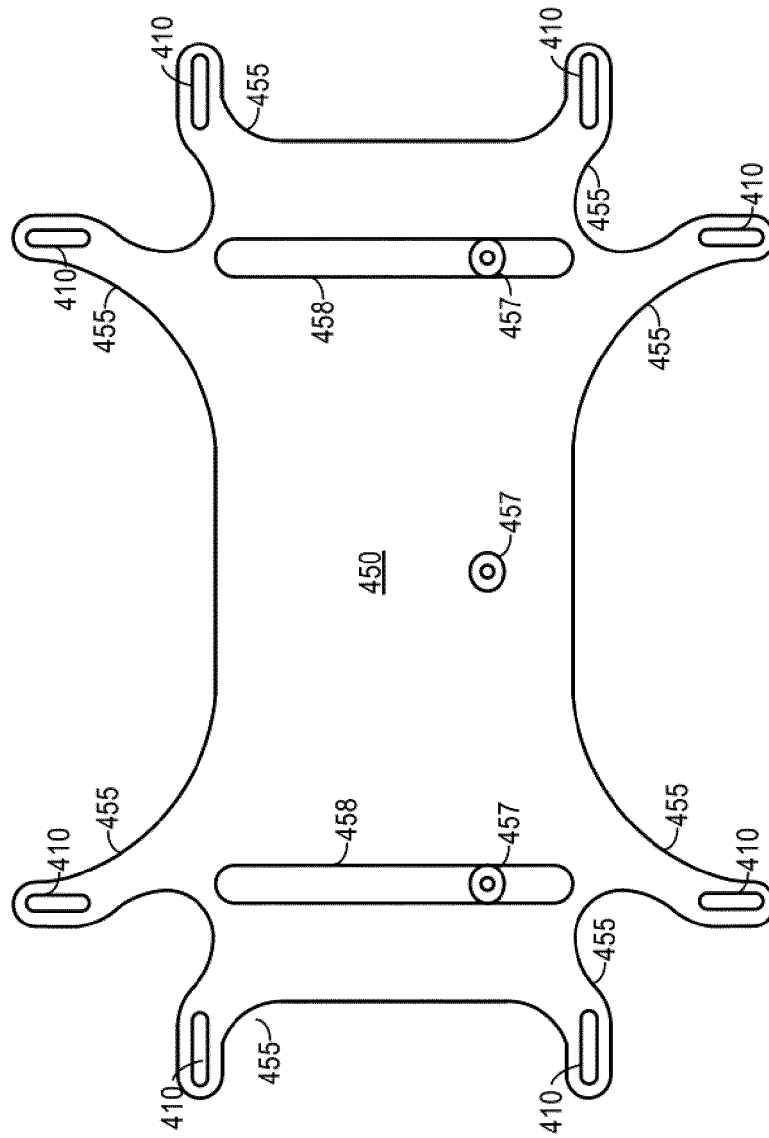
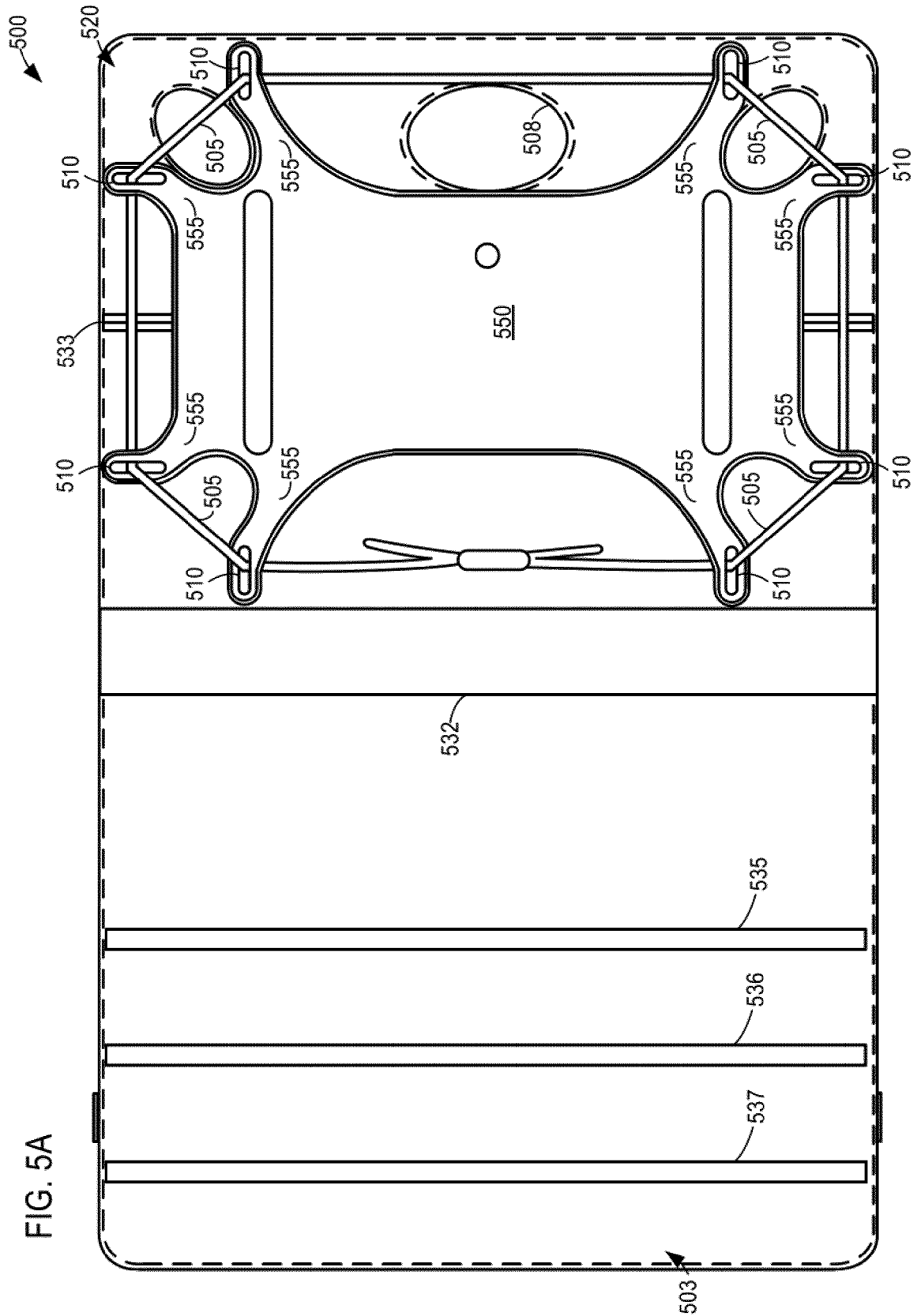


FIG. 4G



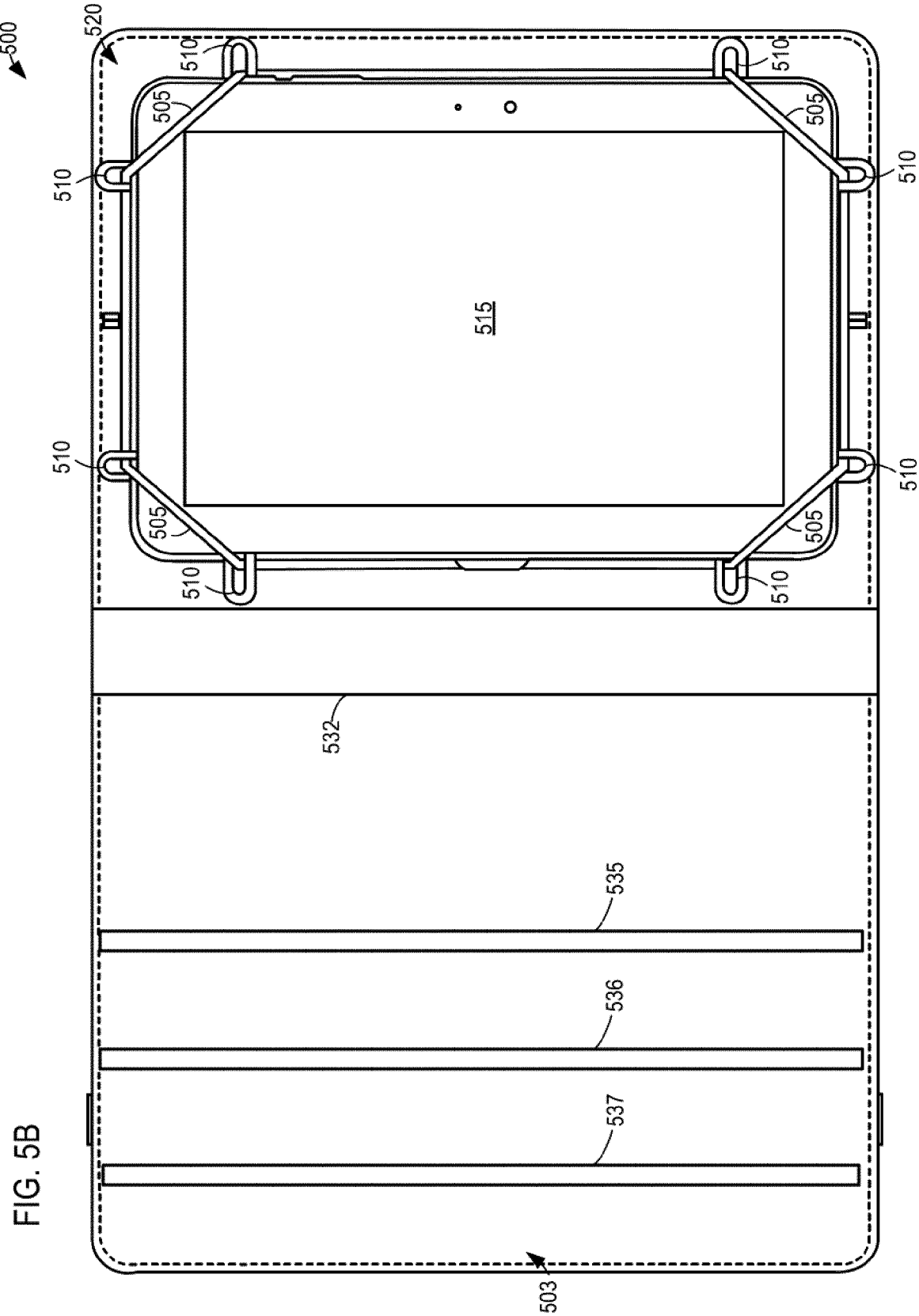


FIG. 5C

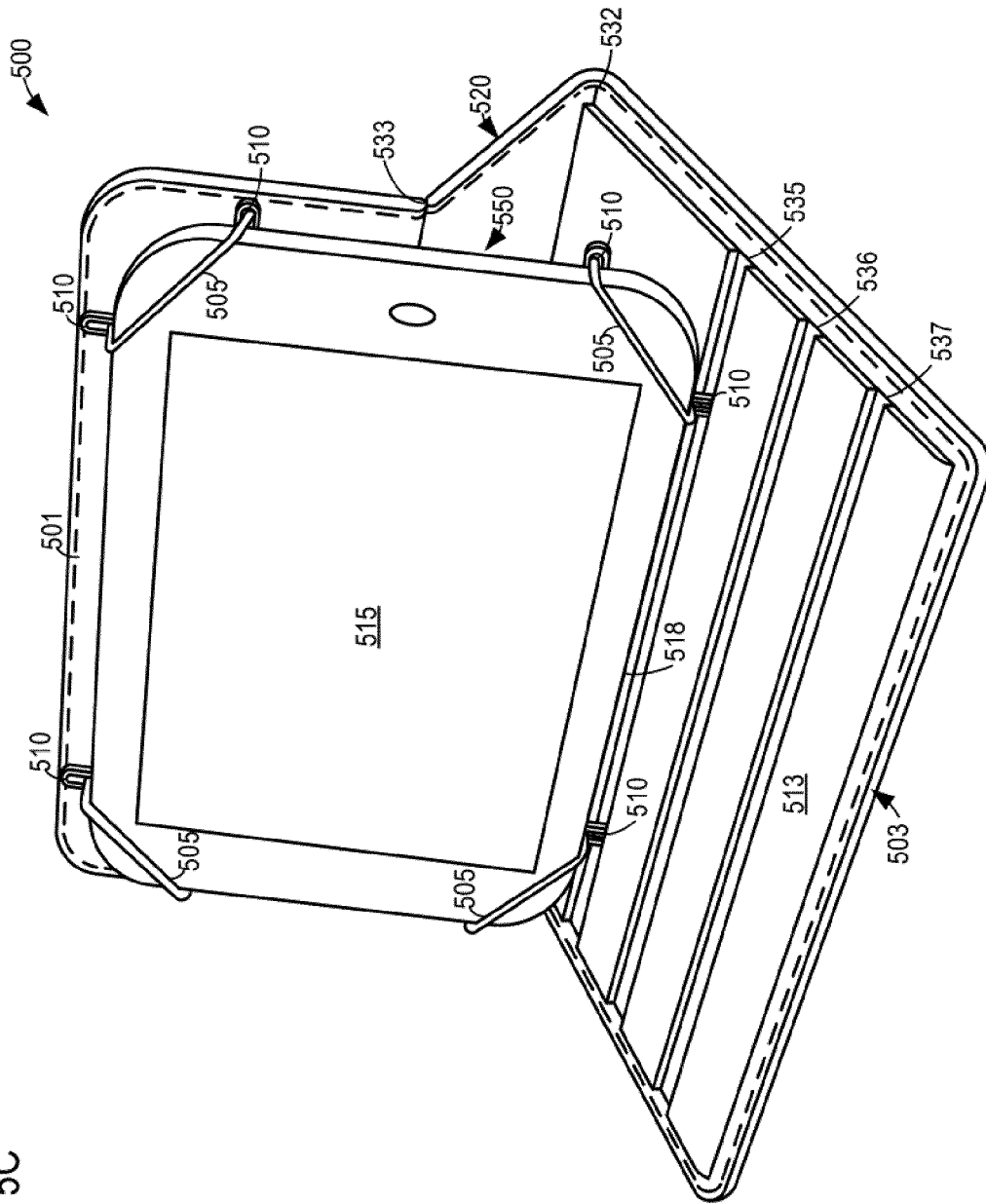
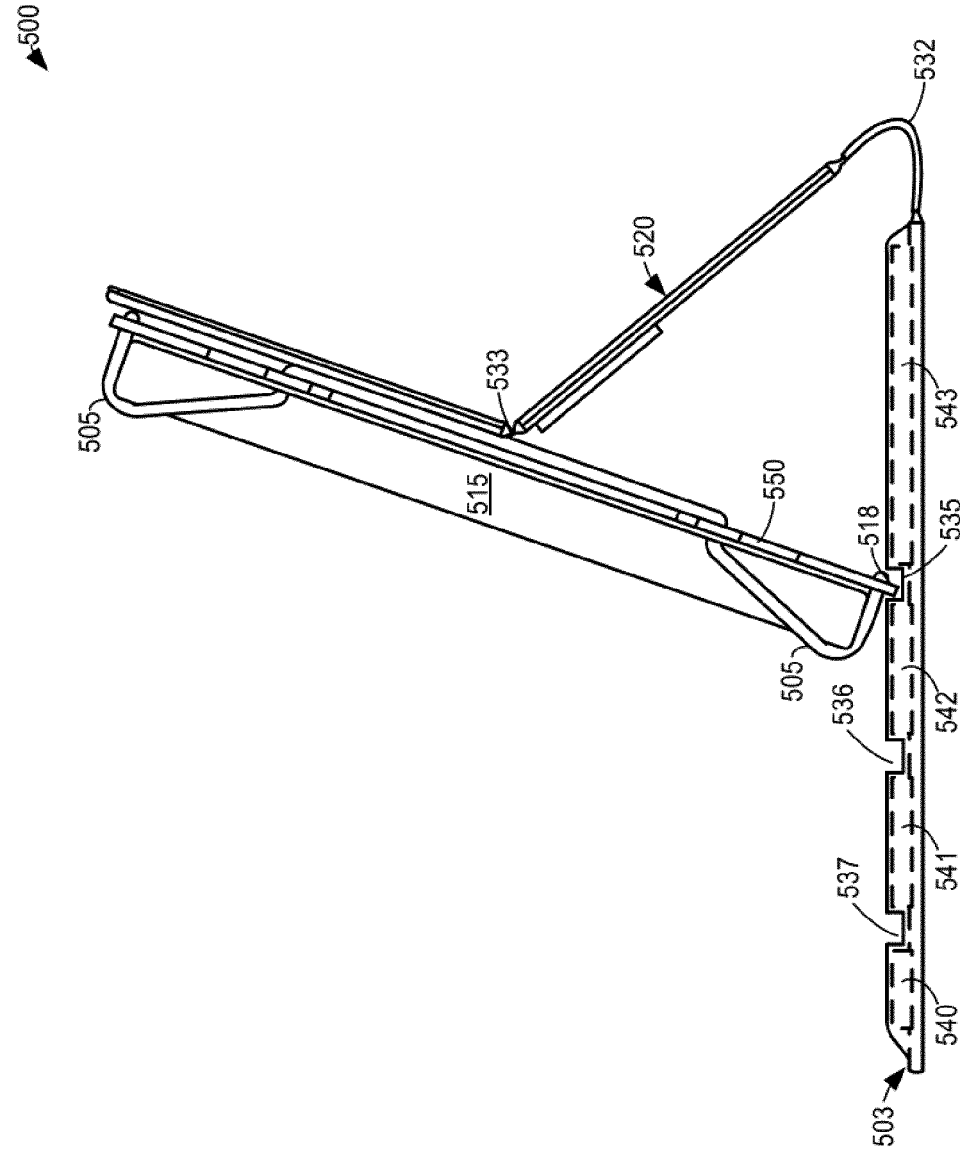


FIG. 5D



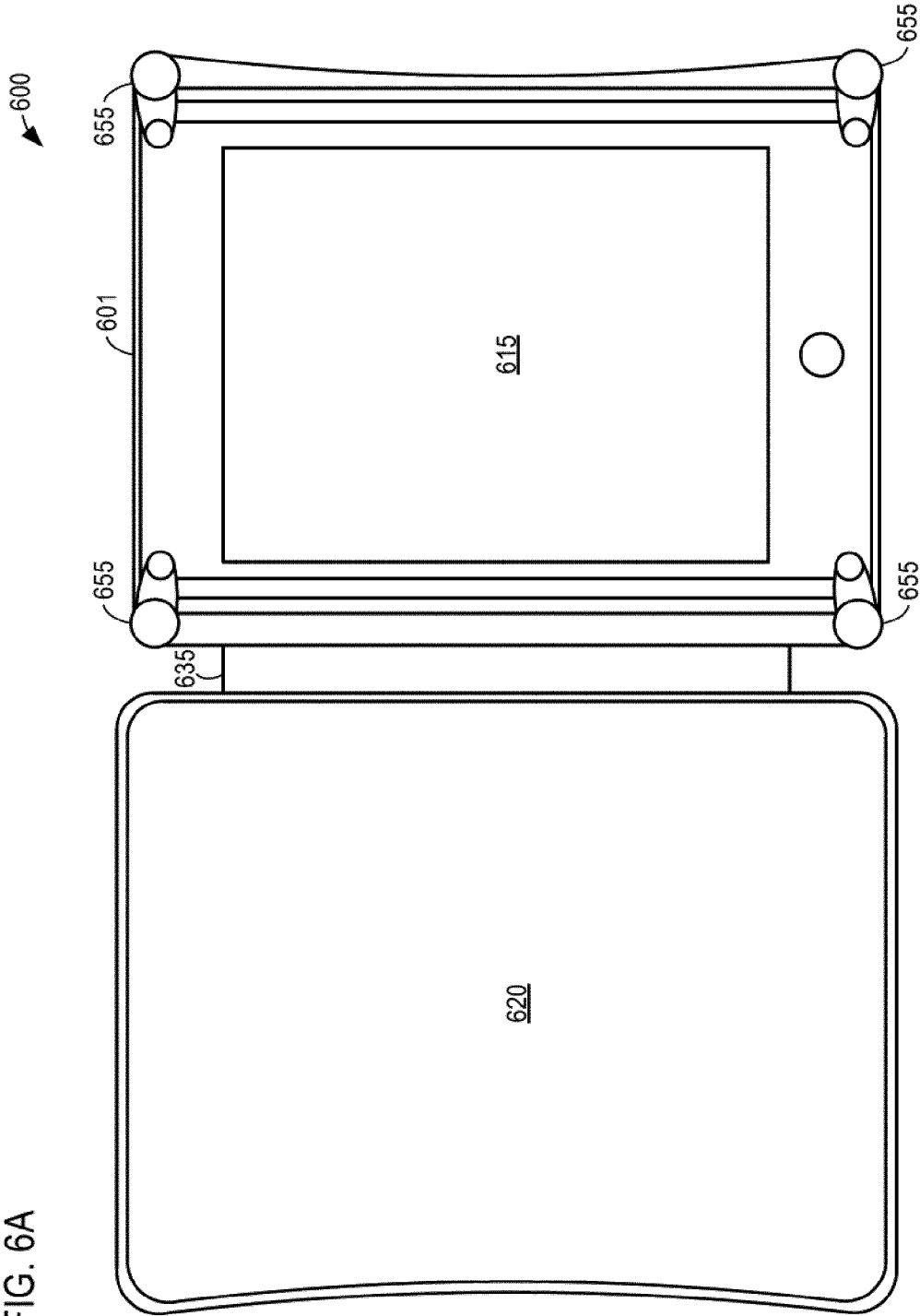
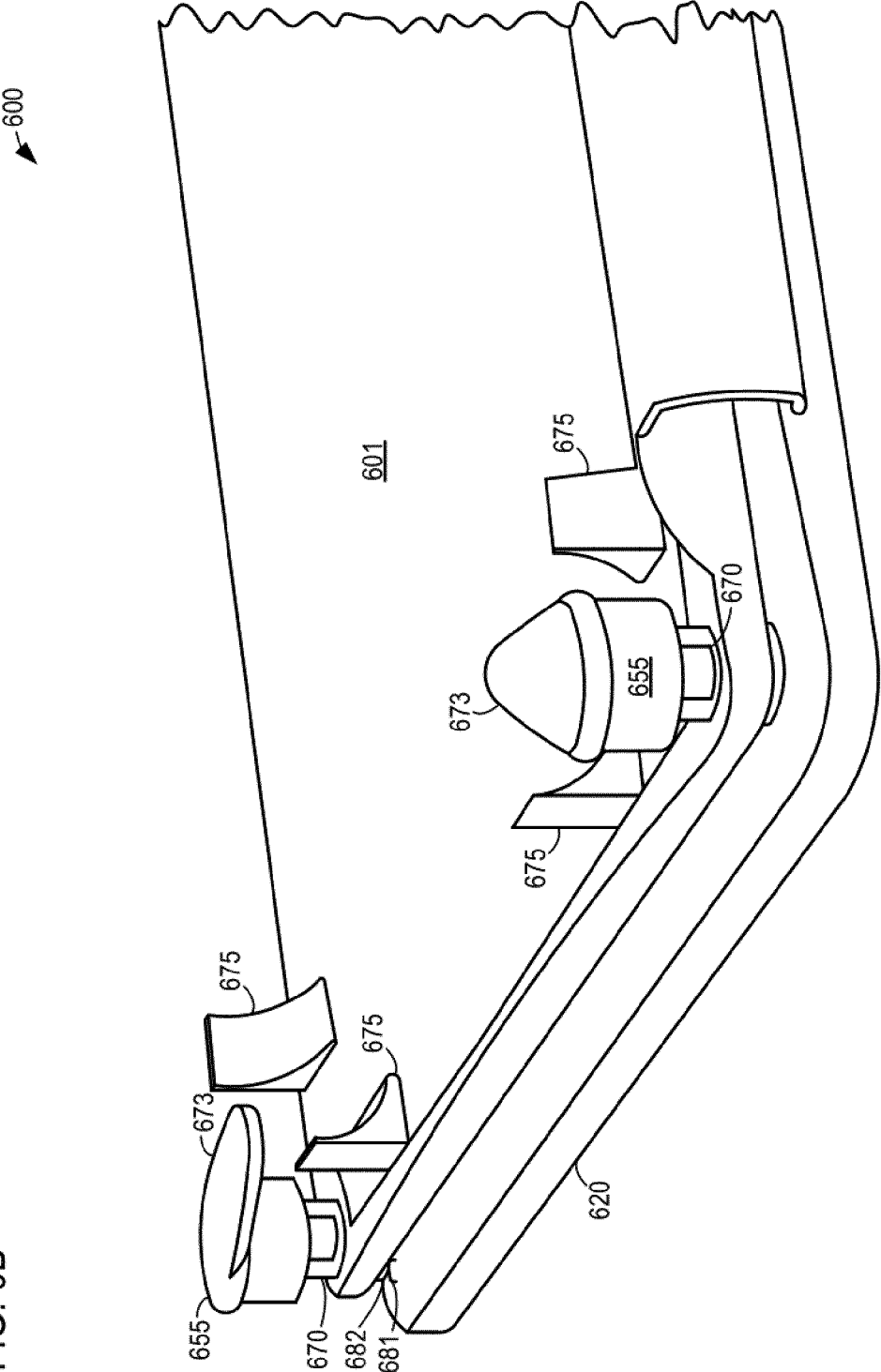


FIG. 6B



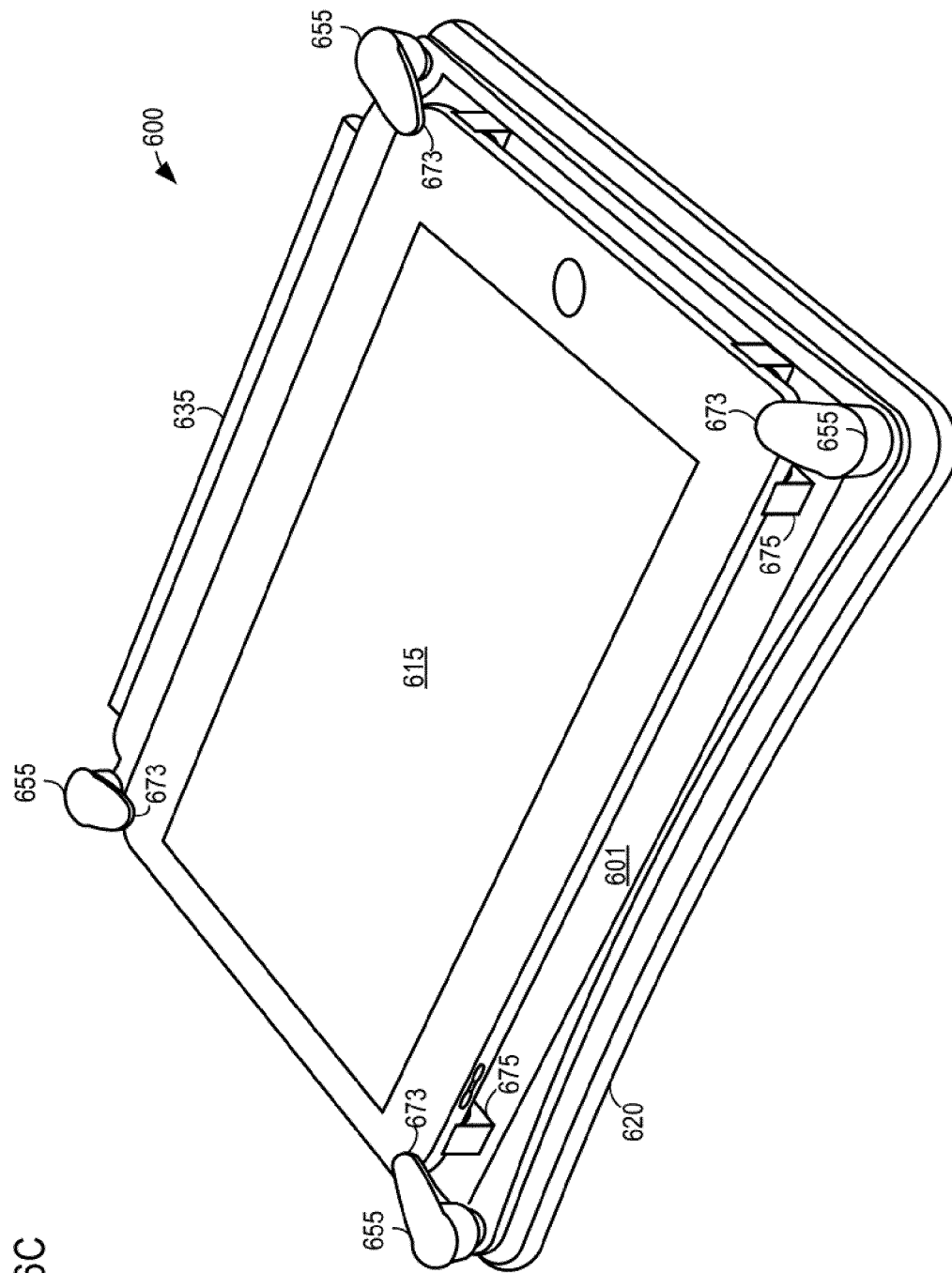
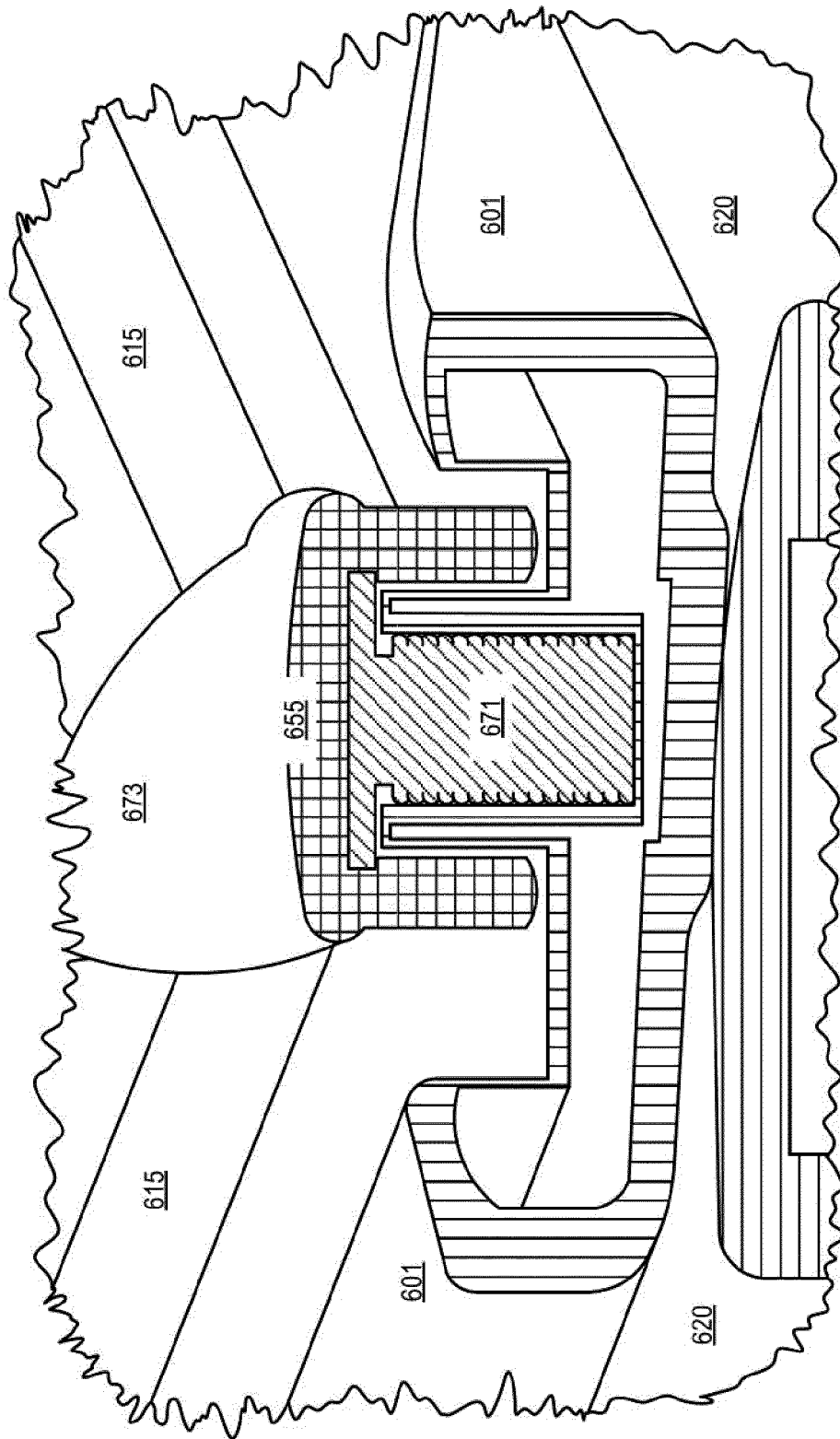


FIG. 6C

FIG. 6D



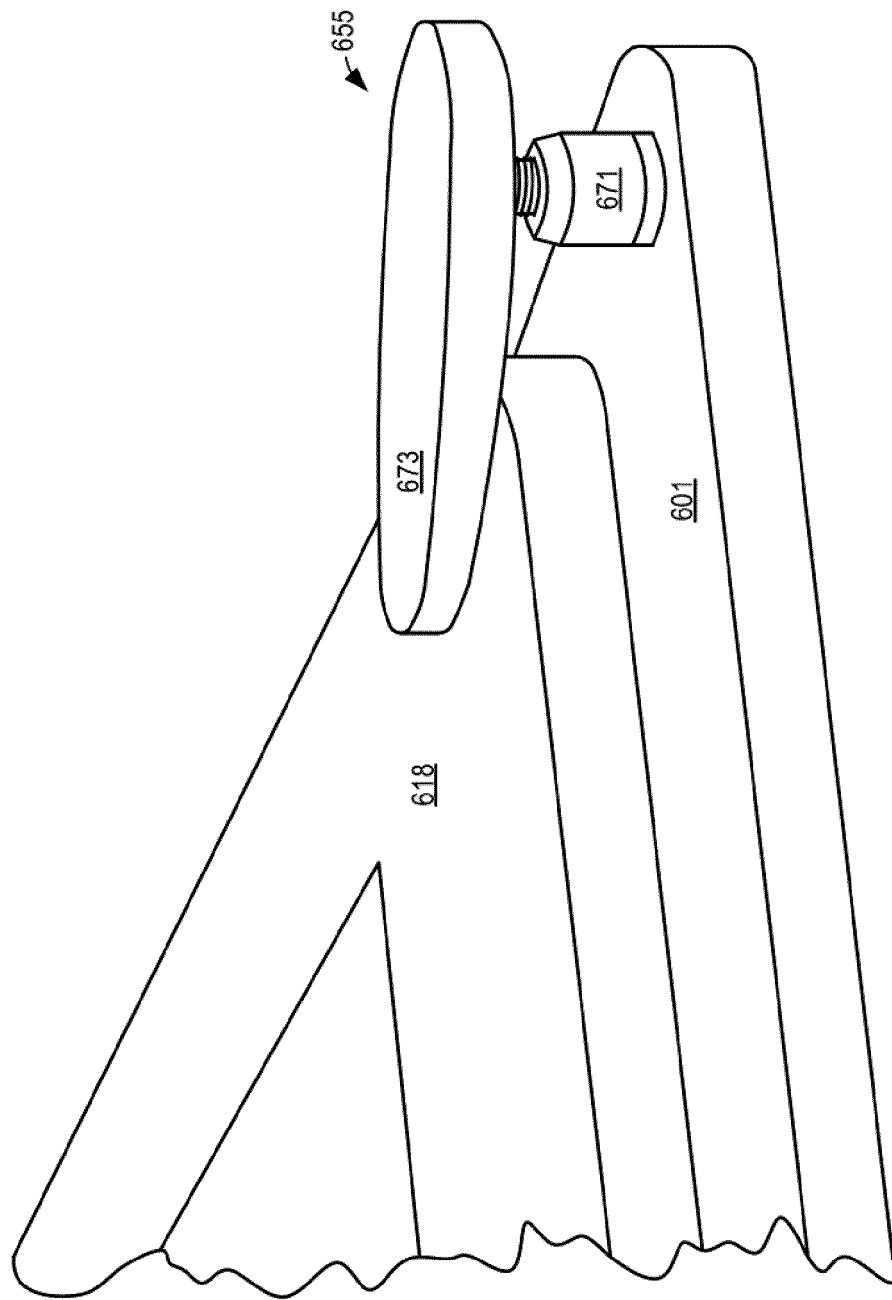
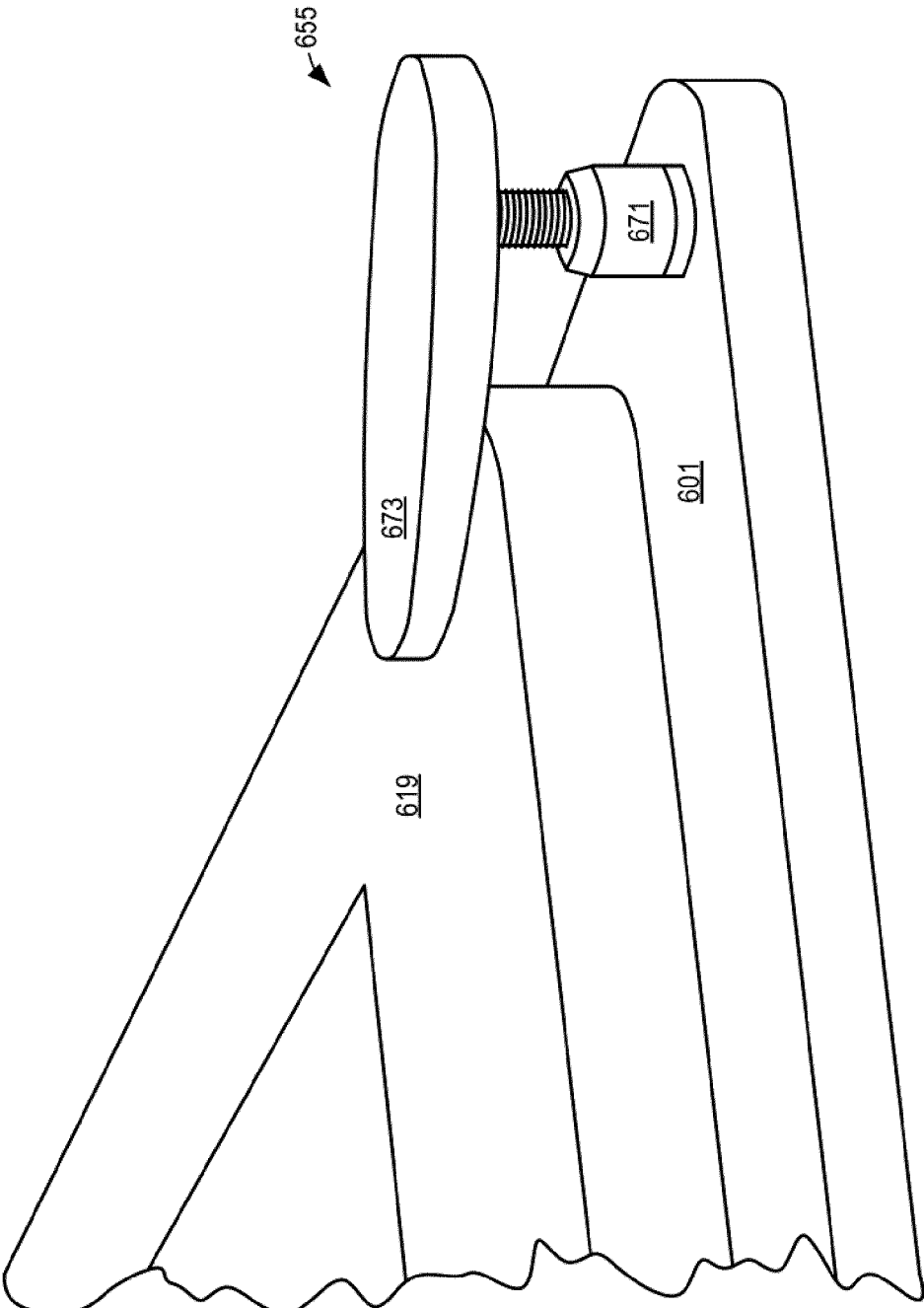
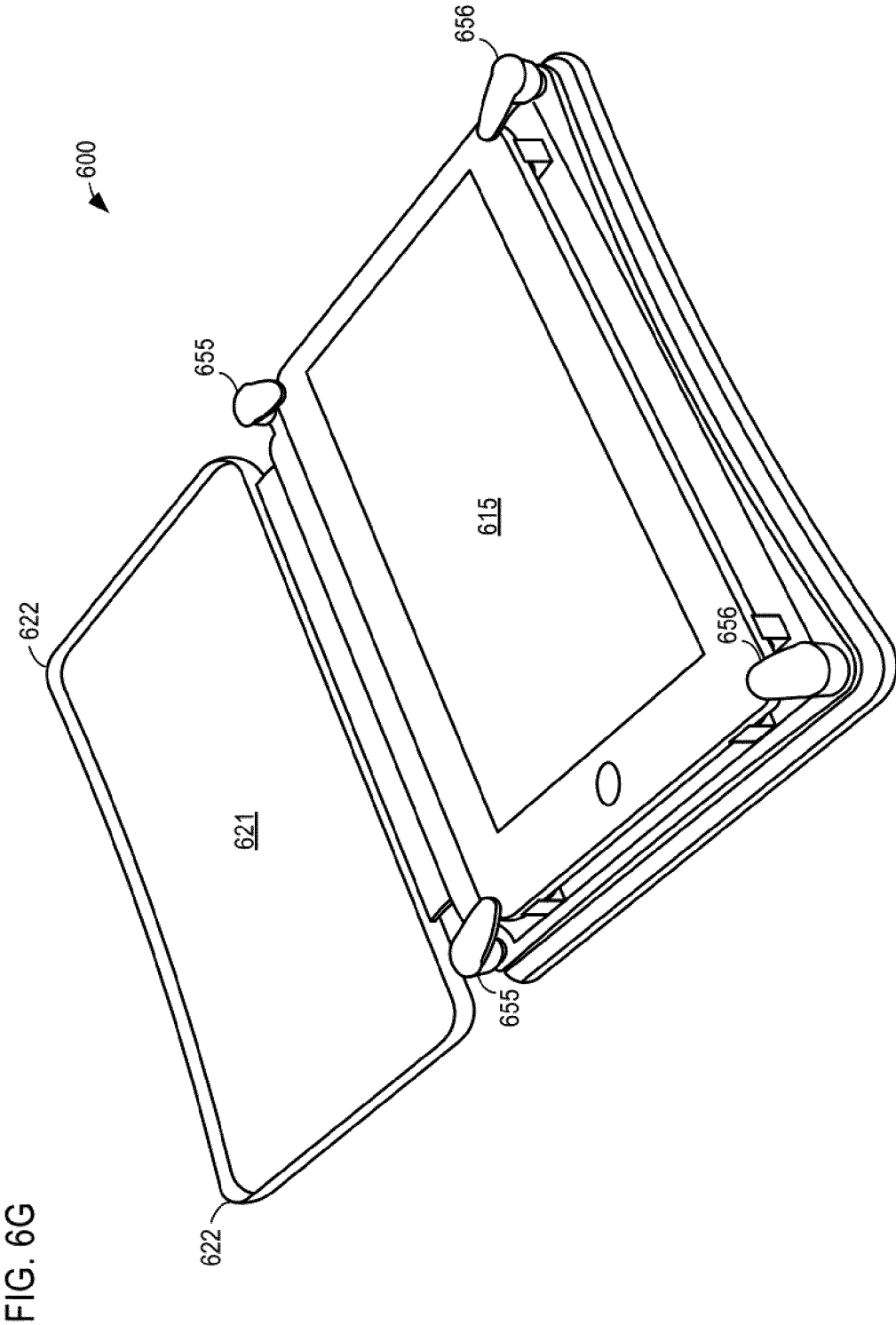
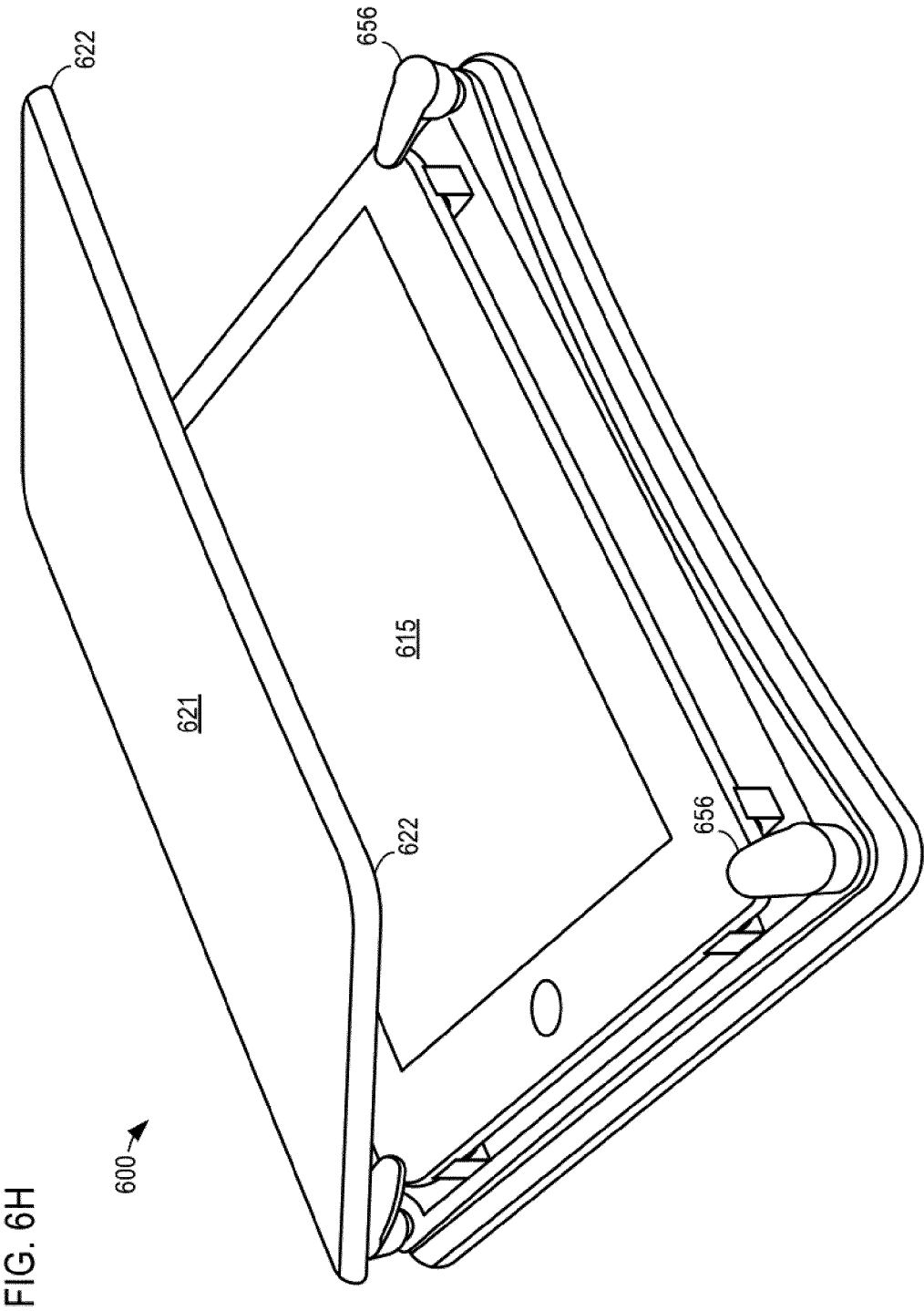


FIG. 6E

FIG. 6F







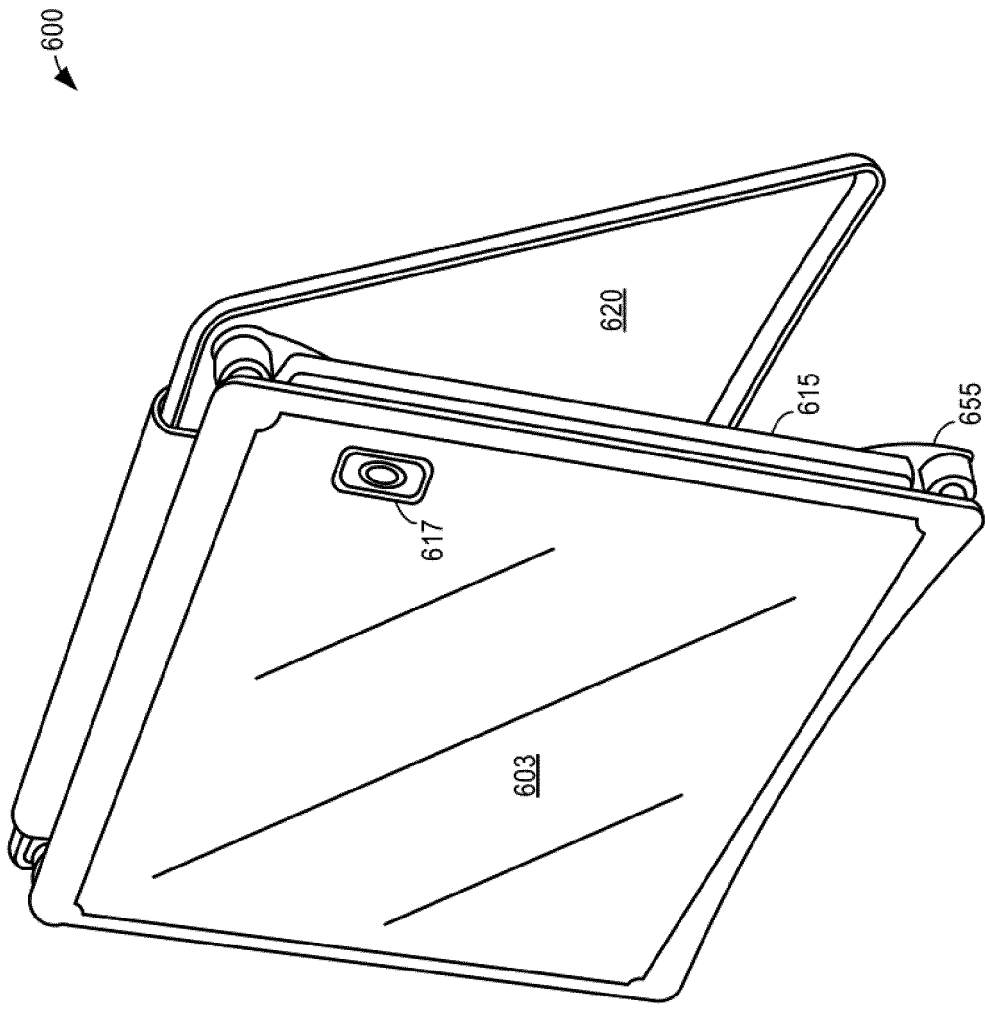
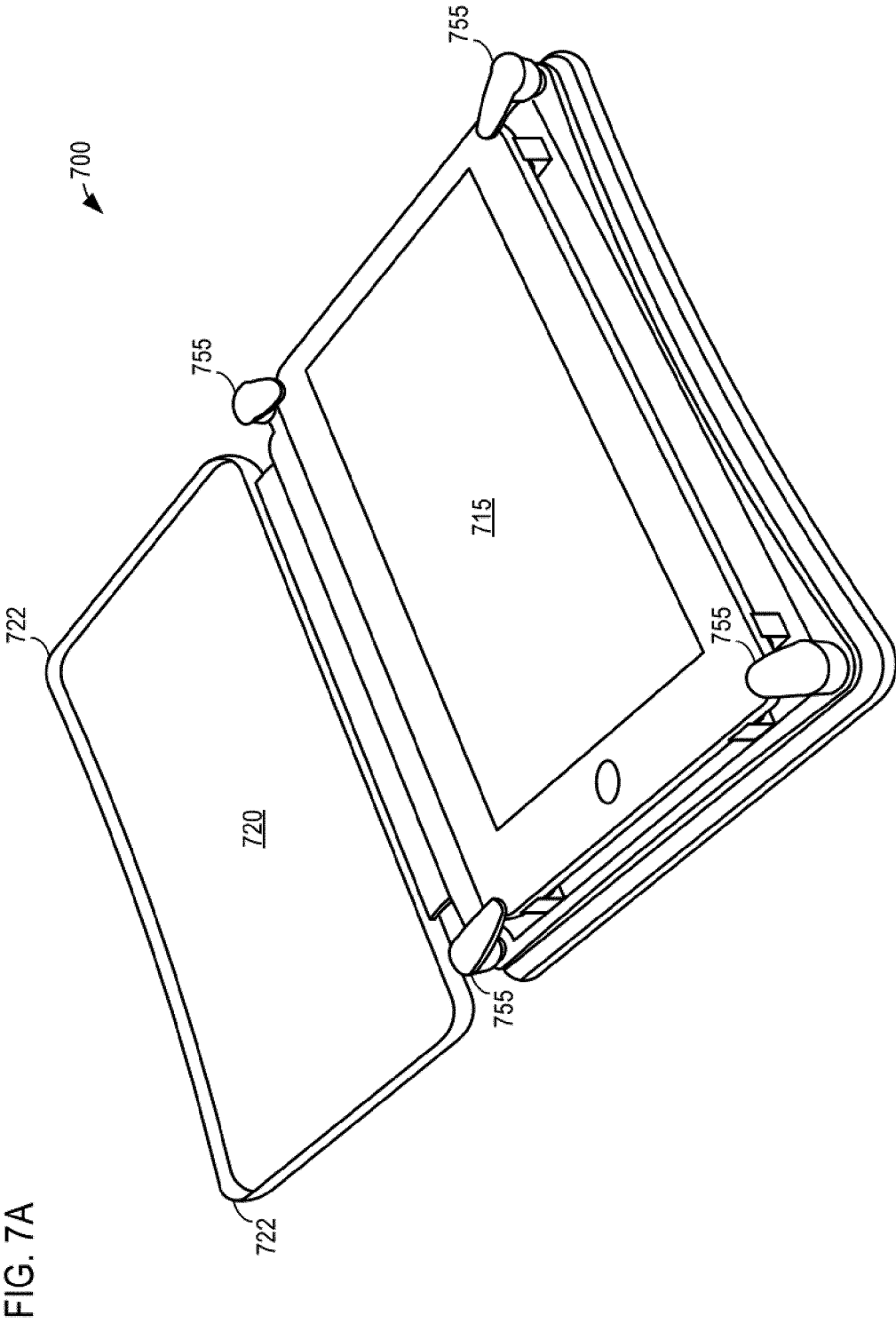


FIG. 6I



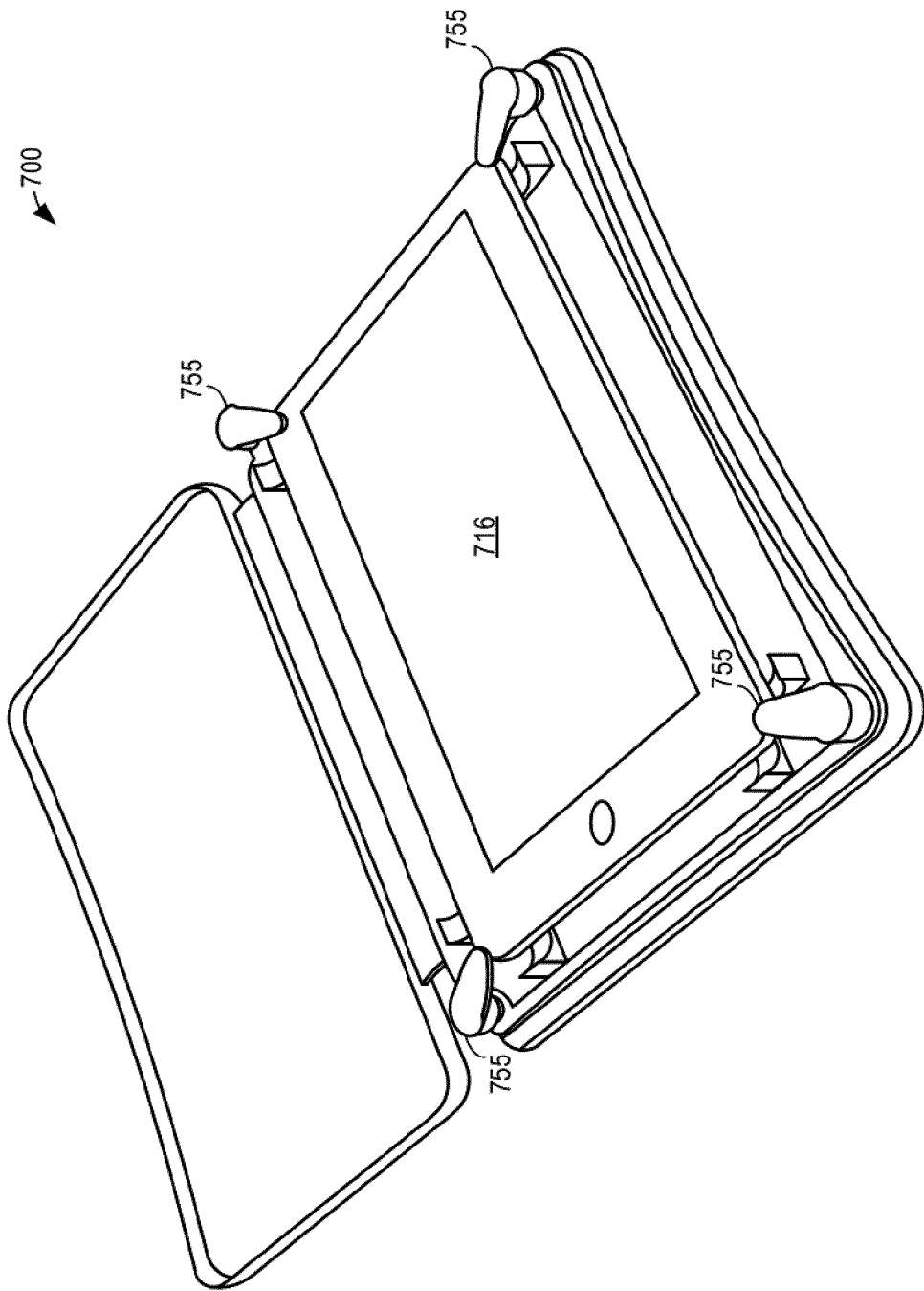


FIG. 7B



## EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number  
EP 11 19 4168

| DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                              |                                  |                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Category                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages                                                                | Relevant to claim                | CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (IPC) |
| X                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | US 2006/052064 A1 (GORADESKY HAROLD S [US]) 9 March 2006 (2006-03-09)<br>* paragraphs [0049], [0065], [0066];<br>figures 10, 11 *            | 1,2,15                           | INV.<br>A45C13/00                       |
| X                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | US 4 991 328 A (ROUSSEAU JEAN-PIERRE [FR] ET AL) 12 February 1991 (1991-02-12)<br>* column 1, line 5 - column 4, line 50;<br>figures 8, 10 * | 1,2,15                           |                                         |
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| <p>3 <del>The present search report has been drawn up for all claims</del></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                              |                                  |                                         |
| Place of search                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                              | Date of completion of the search | Examiner                                |
| The Hague                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                              | 23 May 2012                      | Ehrsam, Sabine                          |
| <p>CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS</p> <p>X : particularly relevant if taken alone<br/>Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category<br/>A : technological background<br/>O : non-written disclosure<br/>P : intermediate document</p> <p>T : theory or principle underlying the invention<br/>E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date<br/>D : document cited in the application<br/>L : document cited for other reasons<br/>.....<br/>&amp; : member of the same patent family, corresponding document</p> |                                                                                                                                              |                                  |                                         |

EPO FORM 1503 03 82 (P04C01)



Application Number

EP 11 19 4168

**CLAIMS INCURRING FEES**

The present European patent application comprised at the time of filing claims for which payment was due.

☐ Only part of the claims have been paid within the prescribed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for those claims for which no payment was due and for those claims for which claims fees have been paid, namely claim(s):

☐ No claims fees have been paid within the prescribed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for those claims for which no payment was due.

**LACK OF UNITY OF INVENTION**

The Search Division considers that the present European patent application does not comply with the requirements of unity of invention and relates to several inventions or groups of inventions, namely:

see sheet B

☐ All further search fees have been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for all claims.

☐ As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fee, the Search Division did not invite payment of any additional fee.

☐ Only part of the further search fees have been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for those parts of the European patent application which relate to the inventions in respect of which search fees have been paid, namely claims:

☒ None of the further search fees have been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for those parts of the European patent application which relate to the invention first mentioned in the claims, namely claims:

1, 2, 15

☐ The present supplementary European search report has been drawn up for those parts of the European patent application which relate to the invention first mentioned in the claims (Rule 164 (1) EPC).



**LACK OF UNITY OF INVENTION  
SHEET B**

Application Number

EP 11 19 4168

The Search Division considers that the present European patent application does not comply with the requirements of unity of invention and relates to several inventions or groups of inventions, namely:

1. claims: 1, 2, 15

An universal case comprising a rear panel comprising a plurality of slots and a flexible band routed through the plurality of slots in the rear panel configured to selectively secure each of the four corners.

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2. claims: 1, 3, 4, 6-8

An universal case comprising a front panel configured to expose a display screen of the portable electronic device in a inclined position.

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3. claims: 1, 4, 5

The front panel further comprises an engagement feature wherein the flexible band is configured to be secured to the engagement feature in order to maintain the front panel in the closed position.

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4. claims: 1, 9-12

The universal case, wherein the rear panel further comprises a support structure

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5. claims: 1, 13, 14

The universal case, wherein the rear panel is configured with one or more openings and/or one or more transparent sections.

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**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT  
ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO.**

EP 11 19 4168

This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report.  
The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on  
The European Patent Office is in no way liable for these particulars which are merely given for the purpose of information.

23-05-2012

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