

**PLASMA PROCESSING SYSTEM AND BAFFLE ASSEMBLY FOR USE IN
PLASMA PROCESSING SYSTEM**

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application is related to U.S. Patent 6,837,966 and U.S. Application Numbers 10/647,469, filed August 26, 2003, 10/705,224, filed November 12, 2003 and 11/006,544, filed December 8, 2004. The entire contents of each of this patent and these patent applications are herein incorporated by reference in their entirety.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention relates to a component for a plasma processing system and, more particularly, to a baffle assembly employed in plasma processing system surrounding a substrate holder.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] The fabrication of integrated circuits (IC) in the semiconductor industry typically employs plasma to create and assist surface chemistry within a plasma reactor necessary to remove material from and deposit material to a substrate. In general, plasma is formed within the plasma reactor under vacuum conditions by heating electrons to energies sufficient to sustain ionizing collisions with a supplied process gas.

Moreover, the heated electrons can have energy sufficient to sustain dissociative collisions and, therefore, a specific set of gases under predetermined conditions (e.g. chamber pressure, gas flow rate, etc.) are chosen to produce a population of charged species and chemically reactive species suitable to the particular process being performed within the chamber (e.g. etching processes where materials are removed from the substrate or deposition processes where materials are added to the substrate). In general, a vacuum pump provides a reduced pressure atmosphere in a plasma processing chamber. A (pumping) baffle plate comprising a plurality of small passages therethrough is located between the plasma and the pump to confine the plasma while permitting gas to be evacuated. The baffle plate's surface can be exposed to the physically and chemically active plasma, and, in time, can erode. So the baffle plate should be cleaned or replaced periodically.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0004] The present invention provides a baffle assembly located in a plasma processing system having a chuck assembly for holding a substrate. The baffle assembly includes a baffle carrier attached to the plasma processing system and at least two baffle inserts having a plurality of passages therethrough. The baffle inserts are supported by the baffle carrier.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0005] These and other aspects of the invention will become more apparent and more readily appreciated from the following detailed description of the exemplary embodiments of the invention taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, where:

[0006] FIG. 1 shows a simplified block diagram of a plasma processing system comprising a baffle plate according to an embodiment of the present invention;

[0007] FIG. 2A shows a plan view of a baffle assembly for a plasma processing system according to an embodiment of the present invention;

[0008] FIGs. 2B-2E show a variety of passages which may be employed in the baffle inserts;

[0009] FIG. 3 shows a plan view of a baffle assembly for a plasma processing system according to an embodiment of the present invention;

[00010] FIG. 4A shows a plan view of a baffle assembly for a plasma processing system according to an embodiment of the present invention;

[00011] FIG. 4B shows a cross sectional view of a baffle assembly for a plasma processing system according to the embodiment of FIG. 4A;

[00012] FIG. 4C shows a cross sectional view of a baffle assembly for a plasma

processing system according to an alternative embodiment to FIG. 4B;

[00013] FIG. 5A shows a plan view of a baffle assembly for a plasma processing system according to an embodiment of the present invention;

[00014] FIG. 5B shows a cross sectional view of a baffle assembly for a plasma processing system according to the embodiment of FIG. 5A;

[00015] FIG. 6A shows a plan view of a baffle assembly for a plasma processing system according to an embodiment of the present invention;

[00016] FIG. 6B shows a cross sectional view of a baffle assembly for a plasma processing system according to the embodiment of FIG. 6A;

[00017] FIG. 6C shows a cross sectional view of a baffle assembly for a plasma processing system according to an alternative embodiment to FIG. 6B; and

[00018] FIG. 7 presents a method of maintenance of a plasma processing system according to an embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF SEVERAL EMBODIMENTS

[00019] According to an embodiment of the present invention, a plasma processing system 1 depicted in FIG. 1 comprises a plasma processing chamber 10, an upper assembly 20 for covering the plasma processing chamber, an upper electrode 22 coupled to the upper assembly 20, a substrate holder 30 for supporting a substrate 35, and a

pumping duct 40 coupled to a vacuum pump (not shown) for providing a reduced pressure atmosphere 11 in plasma processing chamber 10. Plasma processing chamber 10 can facilitate the formation of processing plasma in process space 12 adjacent to substrate 35. In the plasma processing system a passageway 42 is formed between the process space 12 and the pumping duct 40. The plasma processing system 1 can be configured to process 200 mm substrates, 300 mm substrates, or substrates of any size.

[00020] In the illustrated embodiment, upper electrode 22 comprises an electrode plate 24 with a deposition shield 26. In an alternate embodiment, upper assembly 20 can comprise a cover, a gas injection assembly, or an upper electrode impedance match network, or any combination of two or more thereof. For example, the upper electrode 22 can be coupled to an RF source. In another alternate embodiment, the upper assembly 20 comprises a cover coupled to the upper electrode 22, wherein the upper electrode 22 is maintained at an electrical potential equivalent to that of the plasma processing chamber 10. For example, the plasma processing chamber 10, the upper assembly 20, and the upper electrode 22 can be electrically connected to ground potential.

[00021] Plasma processing chamber 10 can further comprise an optical viewport 16 coupled to the deposition shield 26 of upper electrode 22. Optical viewport 16 can

permit monitoring of optical emission from the processing plasma in process space 12.

[00022] Chuck assembly 30 for holding substrate 35 can further comprise a vertical translational device 50 surrounded by a bellows 52 coupled to the chuck assembly 30 and the plasma processing chamber 10, and configured to seal the vertical translational device 50 from the reduced pressure atmosphere 11 in plasma processing chamber 10. Additionally, a bellows shield 54 can be coupled to the chuck assembly 30 and configured to protect the bellows 52 from the processing plasma.

[00023] The plasma processing system 1 further comprises a focus ring 60, a shield ring 62, and a baffle assembly 100.

[00024] Referring now to an illustrated embodiment of the present invention depicted in FIG. 2A, the baffle assembly 100 comprises a baffle carrier 110 that can be attached to the chuck assembly 30 or to the processing chamber 10 and at least two baffle inserts 120. The embodiment of the baffle assembly 100 shown in FIG. 2A comprises nine baffle inserts 120. Of course, any number of baffle inserts 120 may be employed.

[00025] The baffle inserts 120 can be disc-shaped. All the baffle inserts 120 can have the same shape, making baffle inserts 120 exchangeable.

[00026] The baffle inserts 120 comprises a plurality of passages 122 therethrough in order to permit gas in the process space 12 to be removed by the vacuum pump.

Various shapes and geometries can be utilized for the passages 122 as shown in FIGs. 2B, 2C, 2D, or 2E. Referring now to FIG. 2B, each passage 122 can have a slot shape and extend radially. As shown in FIG. 2C, each passage 122 can have a round shape. Although the passages can be formed in any different distribution, the illustrated passages 122 have a higher density near the chuck assembly 30 than away from the chuck assembly 30. Referring FIG. 2D, each passage 122 can have a jagged shape. FIG. 2E illustrates that passages 122 can have letter shapes. In the embodiment "T", "E", and "L" shapes are used. Of course, any open polygon shape including letters or characters of any language can be used.

[00027] The baffle carrier 110, as depicted FIG. 2A, is formed into a ring surrounding the chuck assembly 30 and can be secured to the chuck assembly 30 with, for example, threaded hardware (not shown). The baffle carrier 110 comprises holes 112 corresponding to the baffle inserts 120. In the embodiment each hole 112 can be formed into a round shape having a diameter smaller than a diameter of the baffle insert 120. Thus the holes 112 do not permit the baffle insert 120 to pass therethrough. Flanges 114 can be formed at the rims of the holes 112. The flanges 114 can have upper surfaces lower than the upper surface of the baffle carrier 110, enabling the baffle inserts 120 to rest thereon. The baffle inserts 120 can be attached to baffle carrier 110

or the baffle inserts 120 can merely lie on baffle carrier 110.

[00028] Another embodiment of the present invention is illustrated in FIG. 3. In the embodiment a baffle assembly 100 has eight baffle inserts 120 but can have at least two baffle inserts. The baffle inserts 120 can be distributed to adjoin each other and substantially cover the passageway 42. The baffle inserts 120 comprise small passages 122 therethrough. Although passages 122 are round in the illustrated embodiment, the passages 122 can be placed into any kind of disposition and be formed in any shape, such as, for example, those shapes shown in FIG. 2B, 2C, 2D, or 2E. The baffle inserts 120 can be formed into the same fan shape, enabling them to be exchanged with each other. Thus the baffle inserts 120 function as exchangeable modular parts.

[00029] The baffle assembly 100 comprises a baffle carrier 110 for supporting the baffle inserts 120. The baffle carrier 110 defines holes 112 corresponding to the baffle inserts 120. The holes 112 have a similar shape as the baffle inserts 120 and can be formed smaller than the baffle inserts 120 so that the periphery of the baffle inserts 120 can be supported by the baffle carrier 110. In this embodiment the baffle inserts 120 lie on the baffle carrier 100 and are not secured to any part of the plasma processing system 1. Alternatively, baffle inserts 120 can be fastened to baffle carrier 100.

[00030] Another embodiment of the present invention is illustrated in FIGs. 4A and 4B.

The baffle assembly 100 comprises a baffle carrier 110 and baffle inserts 120. The baffle carrier 110 comprises baffle carrier ring 116 surrounding the chuck assembly 30, and baffle carrier supports 118 mounted to the baffle carrier ring 116. In the illustrated embodiment the baffle carrier 110 has eight baffle carrier supports 118, but any number of baffle carrier supports can be chosen for supporting a corresponding number of baffle inserts 120. The baffle inserts 120 comprise small passages 122 therethrough. Although the baffle inserts 120 comprise round shape passages 122 in the illustrated embodiment, the passages 122 can be placed into any kind of disposition and be formed in any shape, such as, for example, those shapes shown in FIG. 2B, 2C, 2D, or 2E.

[00031] As shown FIG. 4B, the baffle carrier supports 118 can be secured to the baffle carrier ring 116 attached to the chuck assembly 30. Specifically, the baffle carrier supports comprise tabs 118A on the first ends 118D and the tabs 118A can be attached to the baffle carrier ring 116 with mounting hardware 118B. The baffle carrier supports 118 have small projections 118C above the second ends 118E thereof so that the baffle inserts 120 can be positioned on the baffle carrier supports 118. Further, a small indent 116A can be formed on the top of the baffle carrier ring 116 to position the baffle inserts between the projections 118C and the indent 116A. The baffle carrier supports 118 can be placed substantially horizontally. Thus the baffle inserts 120 can

be kept substantially horizontal. On the other hand, the baffle carrier supports 118 are placed can be positioned at angles other than horizontal. For example, as shown in FIG. 4C, the baffle carrier supports 118 can be inclined relative to horizontal. Specifically, the second ends 118E of the baffle carrier supports 118 depicted in FIG. 4C are positioned higher than the first ends 118D. Thus the baffle inserts 120 are positioned at an incline.

[00032] Another embodiment of the present invention is illustrated in FIGs. 5A and 5B. In this embodiment, the baffle assembly 100 comprises baffle inserts 120 substantially screening the passageway 42, and a baffle carrier 110 for supporting the baffle inserts 120. The baffle inserts 120 can be formed into the same fan shape, enabling them to be exchanged with each other. Thus the baffle inserts 120 function as exchangeable modular parts. The baffle inserts 120 comprise small passages 122 therethrough. Although the baffle inserts 120 comprise round shape passages 122 in the illustrated embodiment, the passages 122 can be placed into any kind of disposition and be formed into any shape, such as, for example, those shapes shown in FIG. 2B, 2C, 2D, or 2E.

[00033] Baffle carrier 110 comprises a baffle carrier ring 116 secured to the chuck assembly 30. In the embodiment shown in FIG. 5B the baffle carrier 110 consists of a baffle carrier ring 116 surrounding the chuck assembly 30. The baffle carrier ring 116

defines a retaining slit 116B comprising an opening extending downwardly from the top surface of the baffle carrier ring 116.

[00034] The baffle inserts 120 have baffle tabs 124 which can be inserted into the retaining slit 116B to support the baffle inserts 120. The shape of baffle tabs 124 can be formed to be readily inserted into the retaining slit 116B and be readily removed from the retaining slit 116B.

[00035] Another embodiment of the present invention is illustrated in FIG. 6A and 6B.

In this embodiment the baffle assembly 100 comprises baffle inserts 120 substantially screening the passageway 42, and a baffle carrier 110 for supporting the baffle inserts 120. The baffle inserts 120 are formed into the same shape, enabling them to be exchanged each other. Thus the baffle inserts 120 function as exchangeable modular parts. The baffle inserts 120 comprise small passages 122 therethrough. Although the baffle inserts 120 comprise round shape passages 122 in the embodiment, the passages 122 can be placed into any kind of disposition and be formed into any kind of shapes, such as, for example, those shapes shown in FIG. 2B, 2C, 2D, or 2E.

[00036] The baffle carrier 110 can comprise a first baffle carrier ring 116 surrounding the chuck assembly 30, a second baffle carrier 117 positioned adjacent to the inside of the side wall of the chamber 10, and support rods 119 located between the first baffle

carrier ring 116 and the second baffle carrier ring 117. The first baffle carrier ring 116 can be secured to the chuck assembly 30. Alternatively, or in addition, the second baffle carrier ring 117 can be attached to the chamber 10. First ends 119A of the support rods 119 are coupled to the first baffle carrier ring 116 with first mounting hardware 119B. The second baffle ring 117 can be secured to the second ends 119C of the support rods 119 with second mounting hardware 119D. The first baffle carrier ring 116 and the second baffle carrier ring 117 can be at substantially the same height so that the baffle inserts 120 can be horizontally supported by the first baffle carrier ring 116 and the second baffle carrier ring 117. Alternatively, the second baffle carrier ring 117 can be at a different height than first baffle carrier ring 116 so that baffle inserts 120 are at an angle. A first indent 116A is formed on the top surface of the first baffle carrier ring 116 and a second indent 117A corresponding to the first indent 116A is formed on the top surface of the second baffle carrier ring 117. The baffle inserts 120 can be positioned between the first indent 116A and the second indent 117A.

[00037] The baffle inserts 120 can be supported by any different structure. FIG. 6C illustrates support rods 119 having a U-shape portion on the end thereof. The first baffle carrier ring 116 comprises tunnel holes 116C extend horizontally. The first ends 119A of the support rods 119 are fitted in the tunnel holes 116C securely and the support

rods are held horizontally or at any other angle. The second baffle carrier ring 117 comprises tube holes or slots 117B extending vertically. The second end 119B of the support rods 119 are formed in U-shape, and the tip of the second ends 119B are fitted in the tube holes or slots 117B. A first indent 116A is formed on the top surface of the first baffle carrier ring 116 and a second indent 117A corresponding to the first indent 116A is formed on the top surface of the second baffle carrier ring 117. The baffle inserts 120 can be positioned between the first indent 116A and the second indent 117A.

[00038] FIG. 7 presents the method of maintenance of a plasma processing system described in FIGs. 1-6C according to an embodiment of the present invention. Flow diagram 200 begins at 210 in which the baffle carrier 110 is attached to the plasma processing system 1. For example, the baffle carrier 110 can be attached to the chuck assembly 30 in the plasma processing system 1.

[00039] At 220, the baffle inserts 120 are installed on the baffle carrier 110. The baffle inserts 120 need not be secured to any part of the plasma processing system 1.

[00040] After the baffle assembly 100 comprising the baffle carrier 110 and baffle inserts 120 are installed to the plasma processing system 1, the plasma processing system 1 is operated at 230. After some period of use, the baffle assembly should be replaced or cleaned periodically.

[00041] At 240, when maintenance of the plasma processing system 1 is required, the plasma processing system 1 is deactivated. At 250, the baffle inserts 120 are removed from the plasma processing system 1. Since the baffle inserts 120 can merely lie on the baffle carrier 110, maintenance personnel do not need to disassemble other parts in the plasma processing system 1 and can easily remove the baffle inserts 120 from the plasma processing system 1.

[00042] At 260, the removed baffle inserts 120 are cleaned. If one or more of the baffle inserts 120 cannot be cleaned, they can be exchanged for new baffle insert(s) 120. Alternatively, all the removed baffle inserts 120 can be exchanged for new baffle inserts 120 (as shown at 360).

[00043] At 270, the cleaned baffle inserts 120 are replaced in the plasma processing system 1. Specifically, the cleaned baffle inserts 120 can be installed on the baffle carrier 110. In the case where one or more of the baffle inserts are exchanged to new baffle insert(s), the new baffle insert(s) are installed to the plasma processing system 1. Further, all of the baffle inserts are exchanged with other baffle insert(s), the other baffle insert(s) are installed to the plasma processing system 1 (as shown at 370). At 270 and 370, maintenance personnel may not need to secure the baffle inserts to any part of the plasma processing system 1.

[00044] Although only certain exemplary embodiments of this invention have been described in detail above, those skilled in the art will readily appreciate that many modifications are possible in the exemplary embodiments without materially departing from the novel teachings and advantages of this invention. Accordingly, all such modifications are intended to be included within the scope of this invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A baffle assembly located in a plasma processing system having a chuck assembly for holding a substrate, comprising:

a baffle carrier attached to the plasma processing system; and

at least two baffle inserts having a plurality of passages therethrough, the at least two baffle inserts being supported by the baffle carrier.

2. The baffle assembly as recited in claim 1, wherein the at least two baffle inserts are not secured to any part of the plasma processing system.

3. The baffle assembly as recited in claim 1, wherein the at least two baffle inserts have the same shape.

4. The baffle assembly as recited in claim 1, wherein each of the at least two baffle inserts are adjacent to each other.

5. The baffle assembly as recited in claim 1, wherein the at least two baffle inserts have a disk shape.

6. The baffle assembly as recited in claim 1, wherein the plasma processing system includes a passageway for gas, and the at least two baffle inserts cover substantially the entire passageway.

7. The baffle assembly as recited in claim 1, wherein the baffle carrier comprises

a baffle carrier ring attached to the chuck assembly and baffle carrier supports secured to the baffle carrier ring, and edges of the at least two baffle inserts are supported by the baffle carrier supports.

8. The baffle assembly as recited in claim 1, wherein the baffle carrier comprises a baffle carrier ring attached to the plasma processing system and having a slot, and each of the at least two baffle inserts further comprises a tab inserted into the slot.

9. The baffle assembly as recited in claim 1, wherein the baffle carrier comprises a first baffle carrier ring attached to the plasma processing system, support rods having first ends secured to the baffle carrier ring, and a second baffle carrier ring secured to the second ends of said support rods, the at least two baffle inserts resting on at least the baffle carrier ring and the second baffle carrier ring.

10. The baffle assembly as recited in claim 1, wherein the baffle inserts are substantially horizontal.

11. The baffle assembly as recited in claim 1, wherein the baffle inserts are inclined relative to horizontal.

12. A plasma processing system comprising:

a processing chamber;

a chuck assembly disposed in said chamber for holding a substrate; and

a baffle assembly located in the processing chamber, wherein said baffle assembly comprises a baffle carrier attached to the plasma processing system, and at least two baffle inserts having a plurality of passages therethrough, the at least two baffle inserts being supported by the baffle carrier.

13. The plasma processing system as recited in claim 12, wherein the at least two baffle inserts are not secured to any part of the plasma processing system.

14. The plasma processing system as recited in claim 12, wherein the at least two baffle inserts have the same shape.

15. The plasma processing system as recited in claim 12, wherein each of the at least two baffle inserts are adjacent to each other.

16. The plasma processing system as recited in claim 12, wherein the at least two baffle inserts have a disk shape.

17. The plasma processing system as recited in claim 12, wherein the plasma processing system includes a passageway for gas, and the at least two baffle inserts cover substantially the entire passageway.

18. The plasma processing system as recited in claim 12, wherein the baffle carrier comprises a baffle carrier ring attached to the chuck assembly and baffle carrier supports secured to the baffle carrier ring, and edges of the at least two baffle inserts are

supported by the baffle carrier supports.

19. The plasma processing system as recited in claim 12, wherein the baffle carrier comprises a baffle carrier ring attached to the plasma processing system and having a slot, and the each of at least two baffle inserts further comprises a tab inserted into the slot.

20. The plasma processing system as recited in claim 12, wherein the baffle carrier comprises a first baffle carrier ring attached to the plasma processing system, support rods having first ends secured to the baffle carrier ring, and a second baffle carrier ring secured to the second ends of said support rods, the at least two baffle inserts resting on at least the baffle carrier ring and the second baffle carrier ring.

21. The plasma processing system as recited in claim 12, wherein the baffle inserts are substantially horizontal.

22. The plasma processing system as recited in claim 12, wherein the baffle inserts are inclined relative to horizontal.

23. The plasma processing system as recited in claim 12, wherein the baffle carrier is coupled to the chuck assembly.

24. A method of maintaining a plasma processing system having a chuck assembly for holding a substrate, said method comprising:

deactivating said plasma processing system having a baffle assembly therein, the baffle assembly comprises a baffle carrier attached to said plasma processing system, and at least two baffle inserts having a plurality of passages therethrough and being supported by the baffle carrier;

removing said at least two baffle inserts from the plasma processing system without removing the baffle carrier;

cleaning the at least two baffle inserts; and

replacing the cleaned at least two baffle inserts on the baffle carrier.

25. A method of maintaining a plasma processing system as recited in claim 24, wherein the at least two baffle inserts are not secured to any part of the plasma processing system.

26. A method of maintaining a plasma processing system having a chuck assembly for holding a substrate, said method comprising:

deactivating a plasma processing system having a baffle assembly therein, the baffle assembly comprises a baffle carrier attached to said plasma processing system, and at least two baffle inserts having a plurality of passages therethrough and being supported by the baffle carrier;

removing said at least two baffle inserts from the plasma processing system

without removing the baffle carrier; and

placing at least two other baffle inserts onto the baffle carrier instead of replacing the removed at least two baffle inserts.

27. A method of maintenance of a plasma processing system as recited in claim 26, wherein the at least two baffle inserts are not secured to any part of the plasma processing system.

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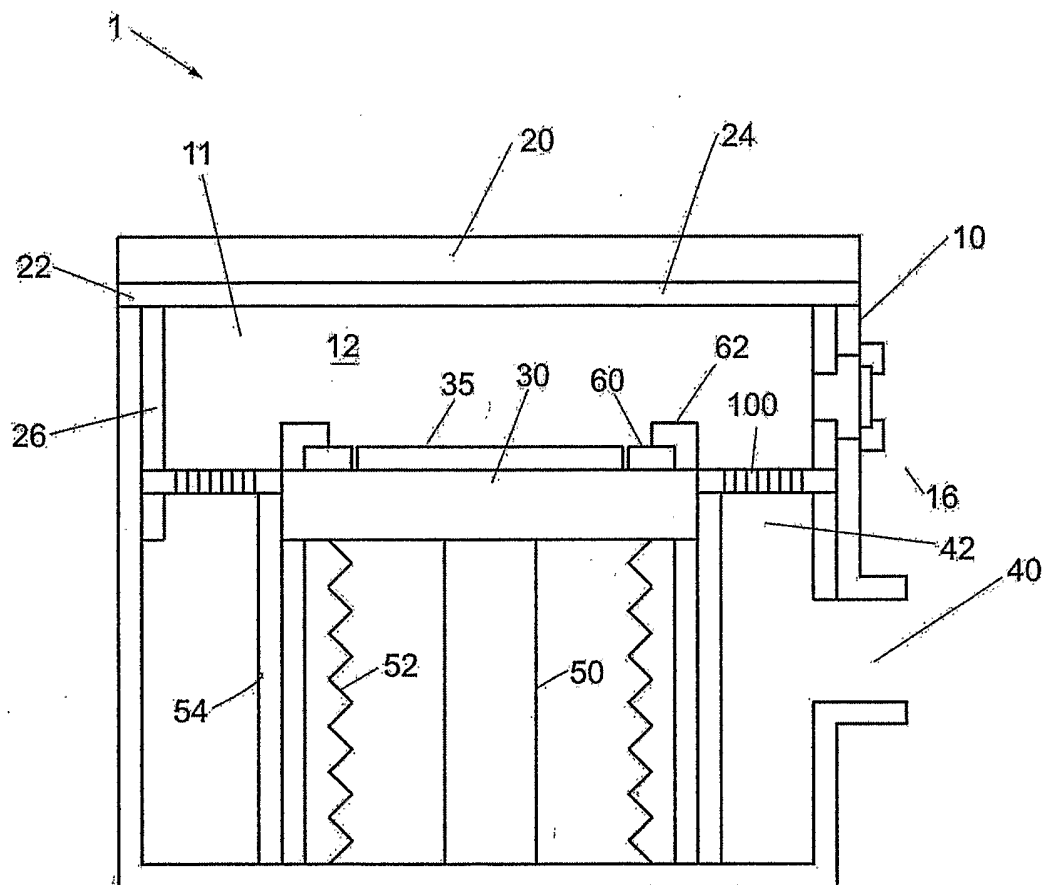


FIG. 1

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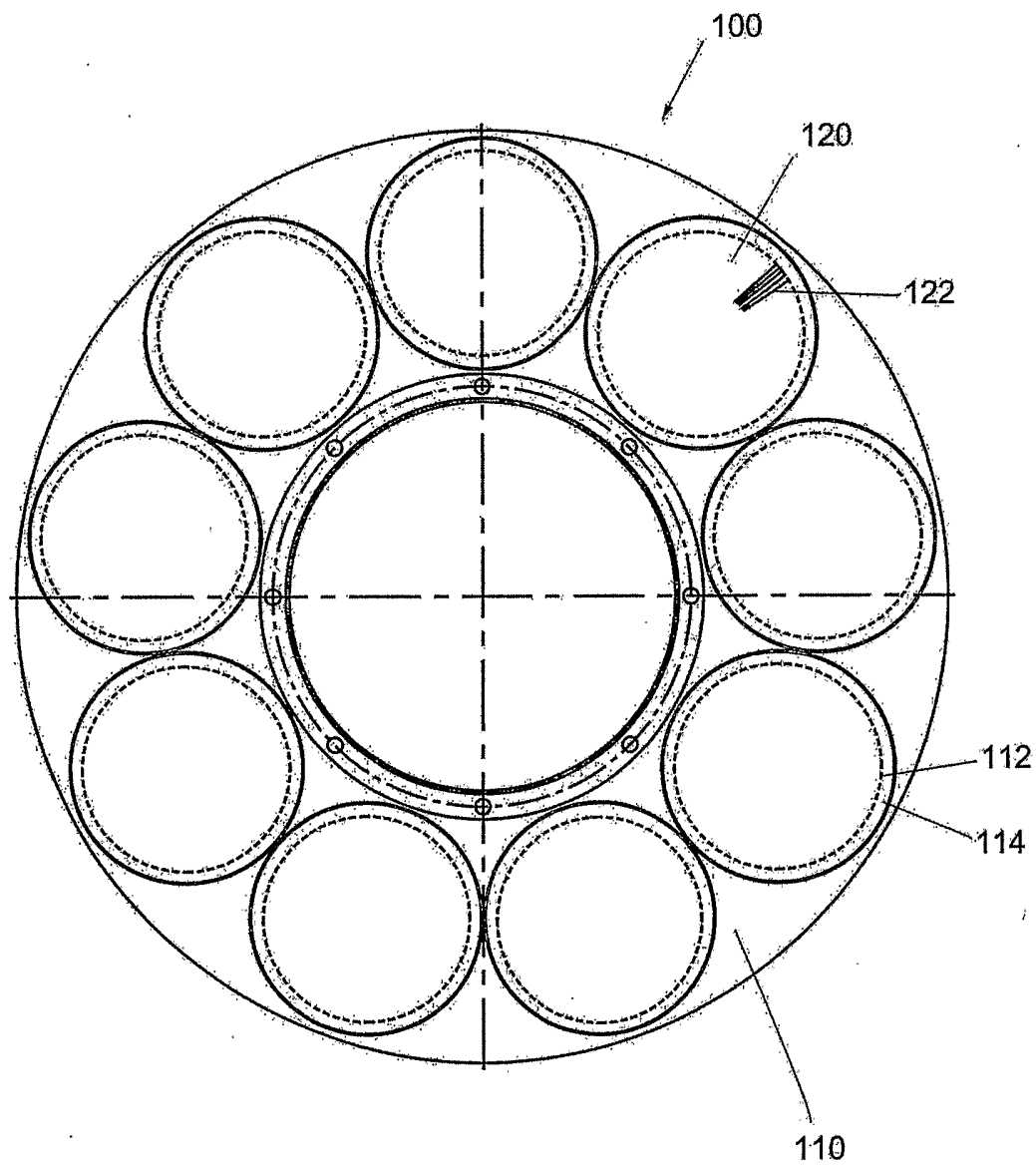


FIG. 2A

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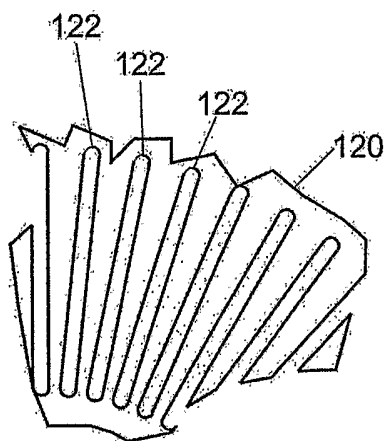


FIG. 2B

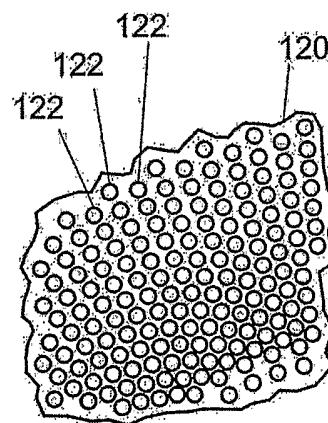


FIG. 2C

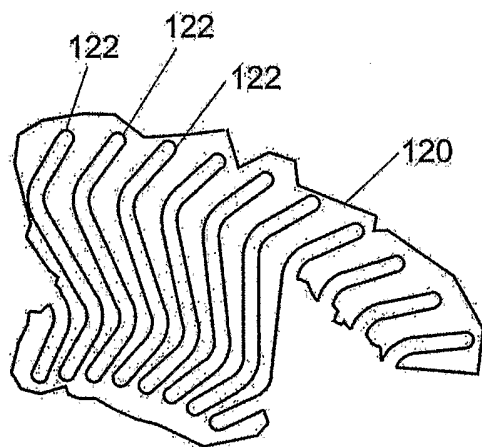


FIG. 2D

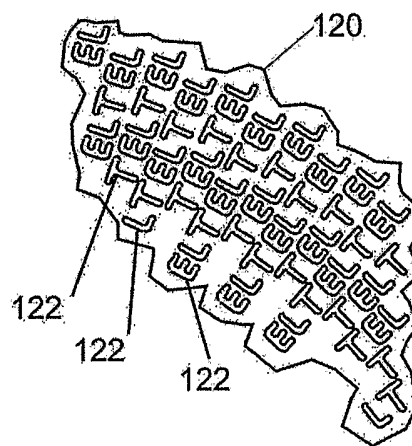


FIG. 2E

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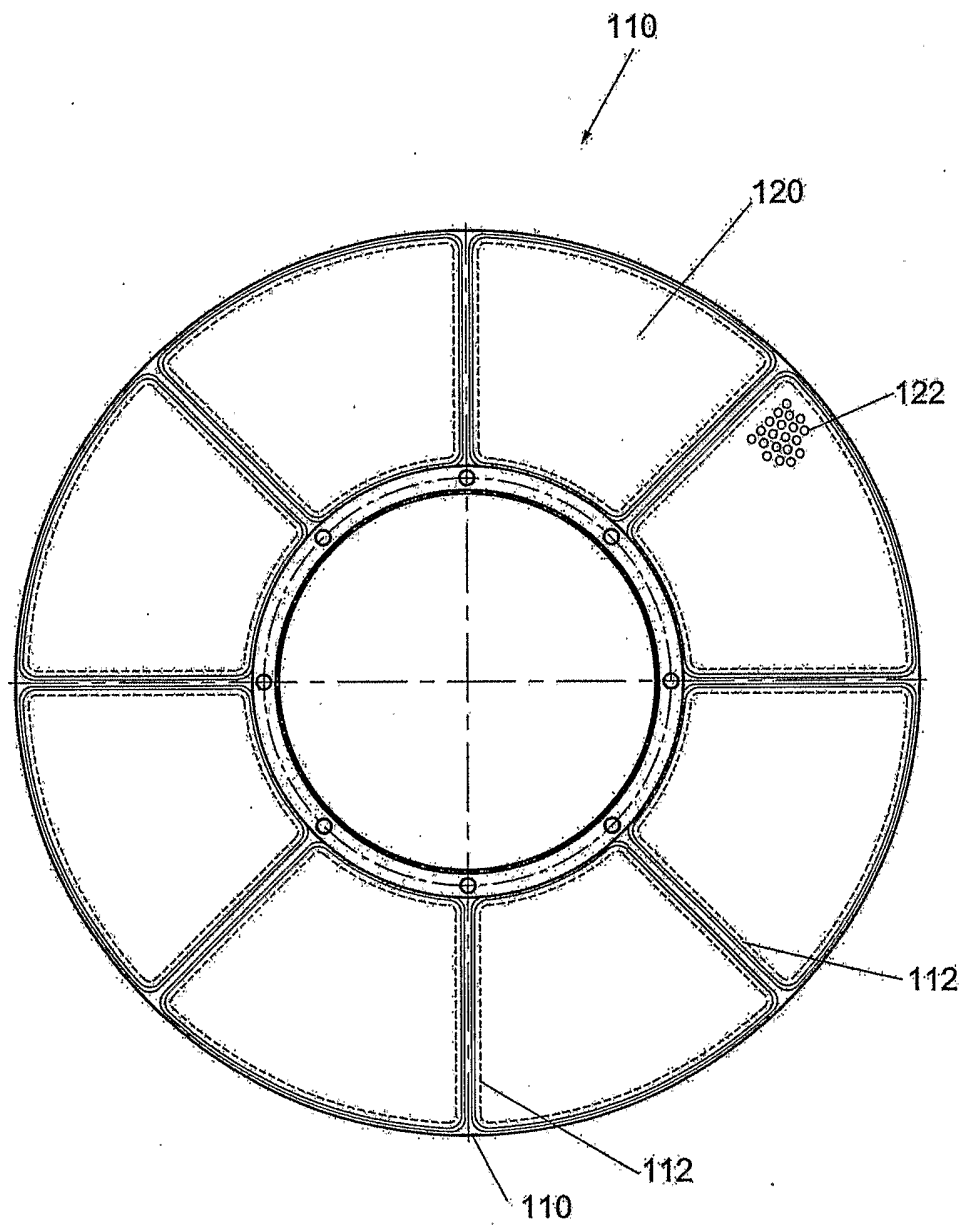


FIG. 3

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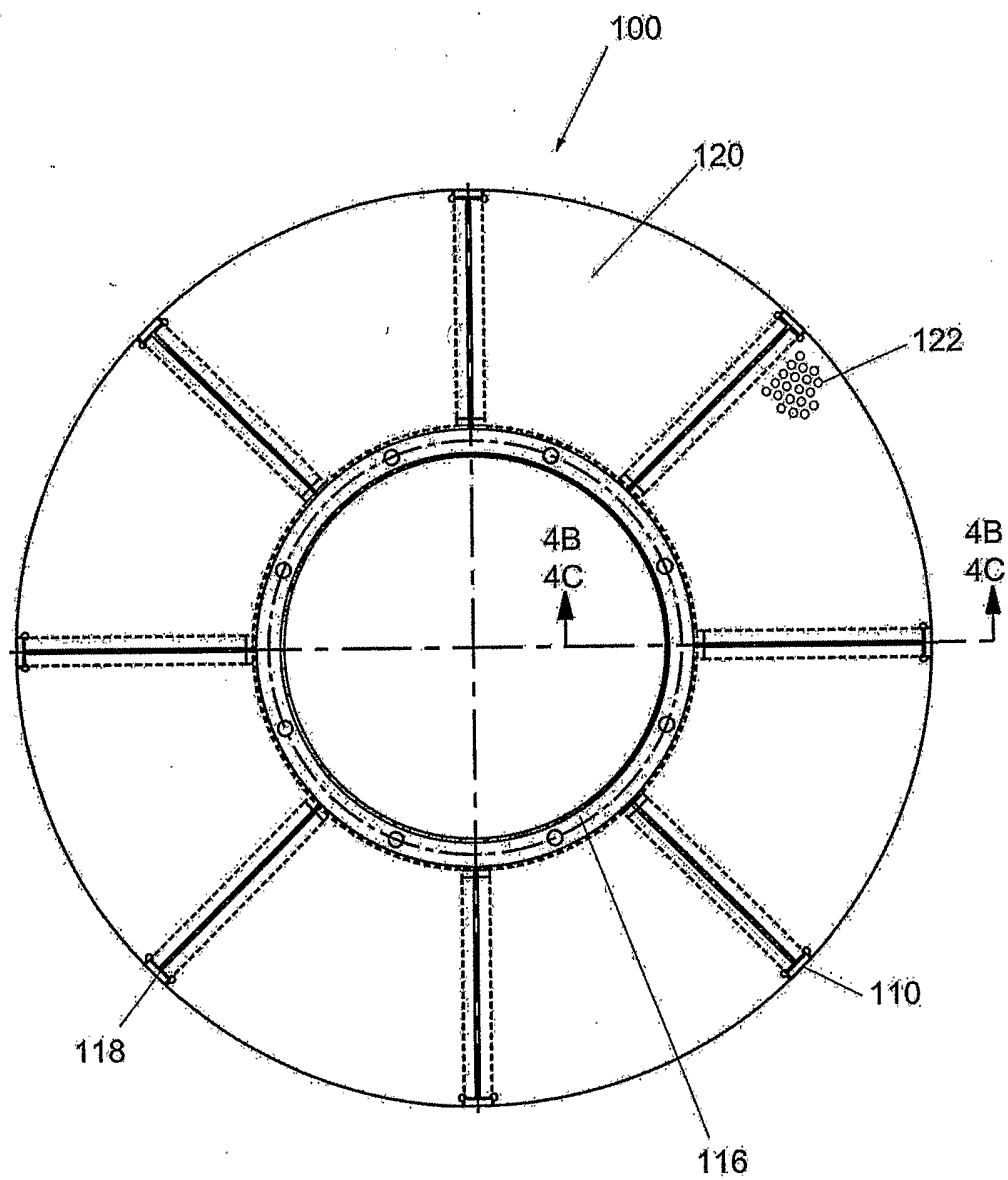


FIG. 4A

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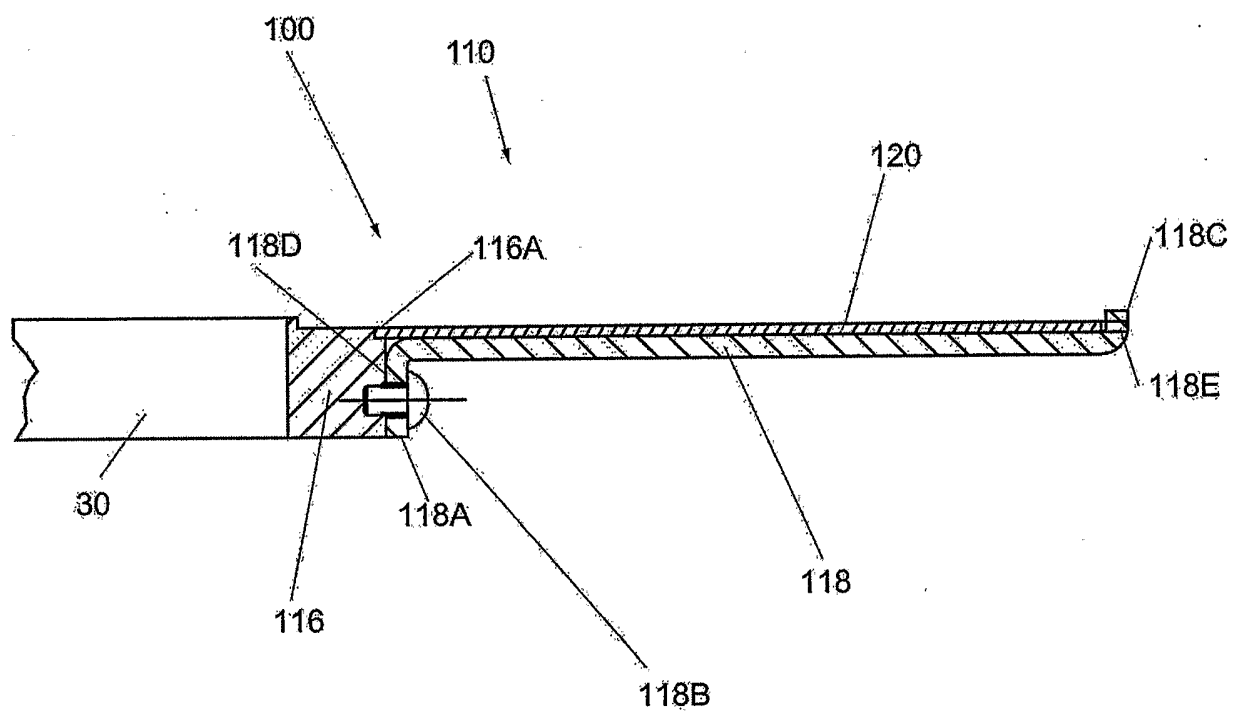


FIG. 4B

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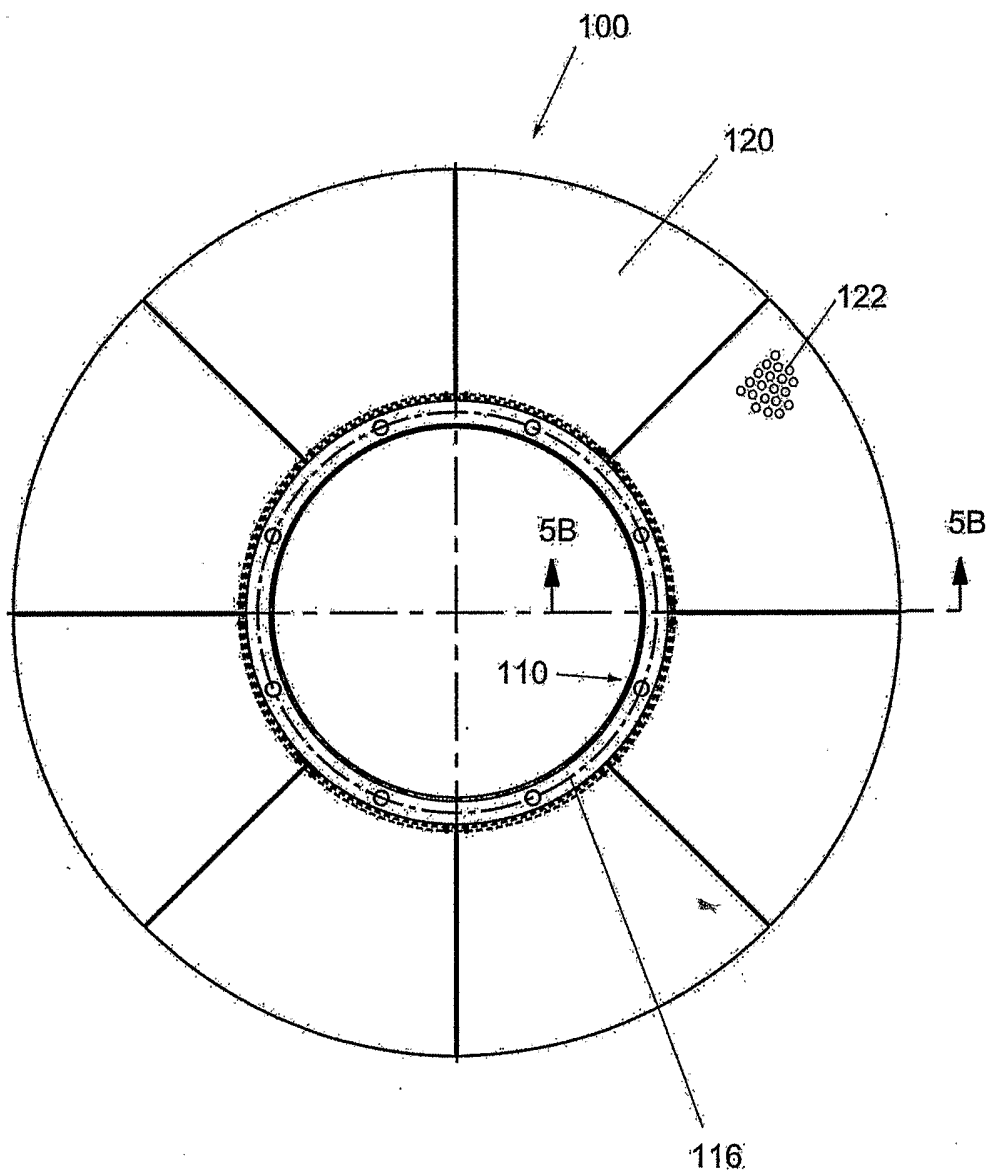


FIG. 5A

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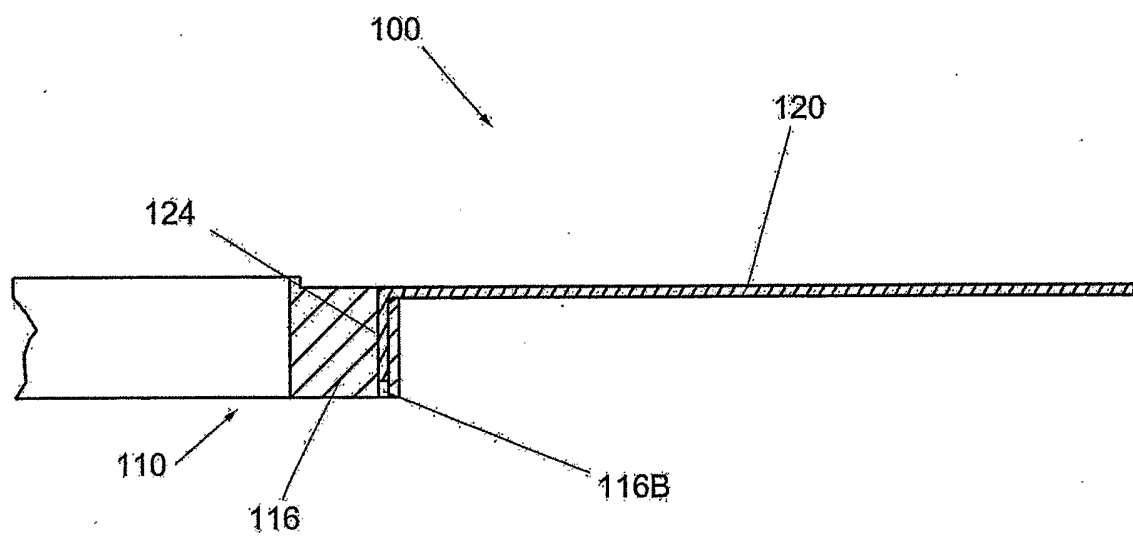


FIG. 5B

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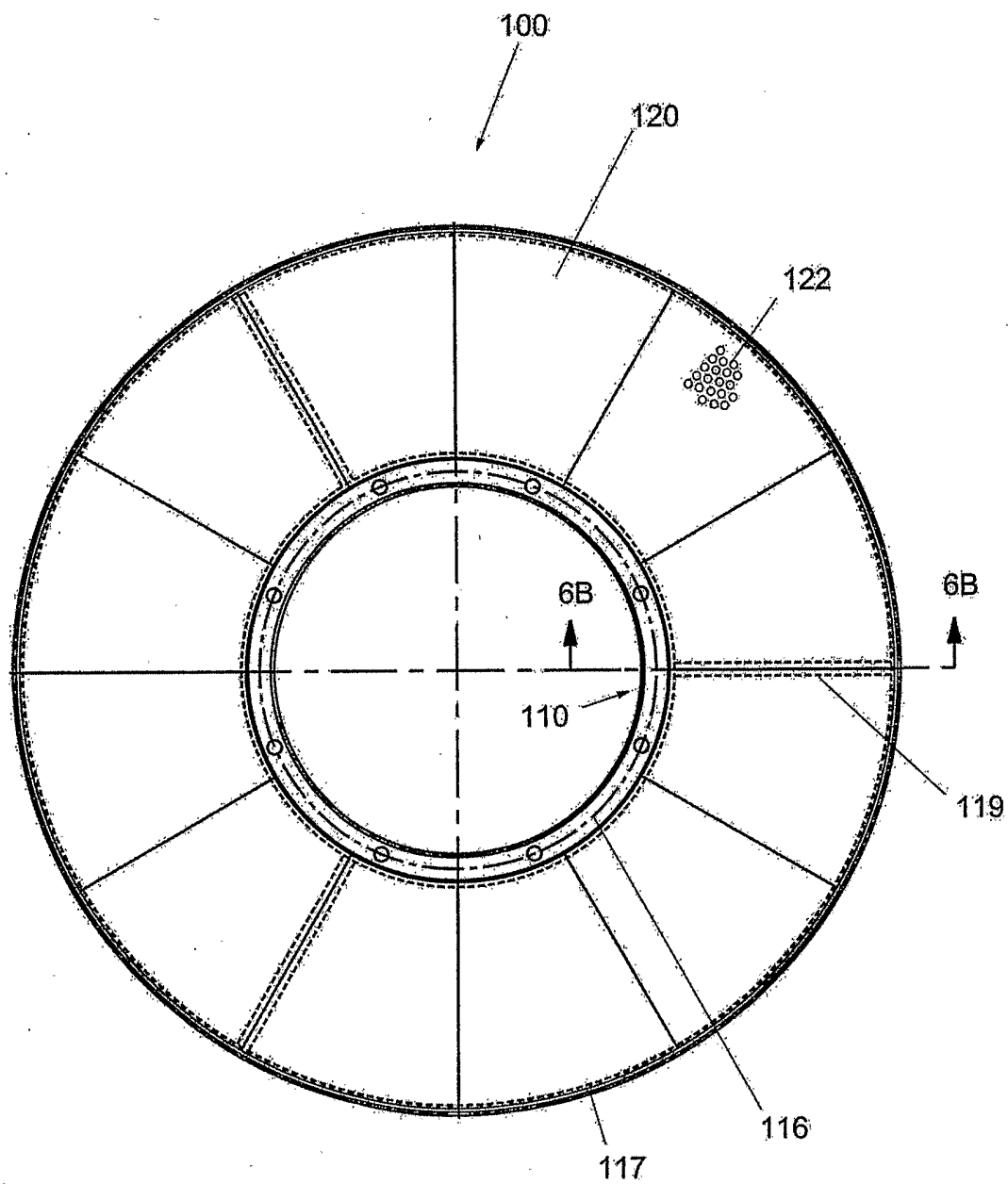


FIG. 6A

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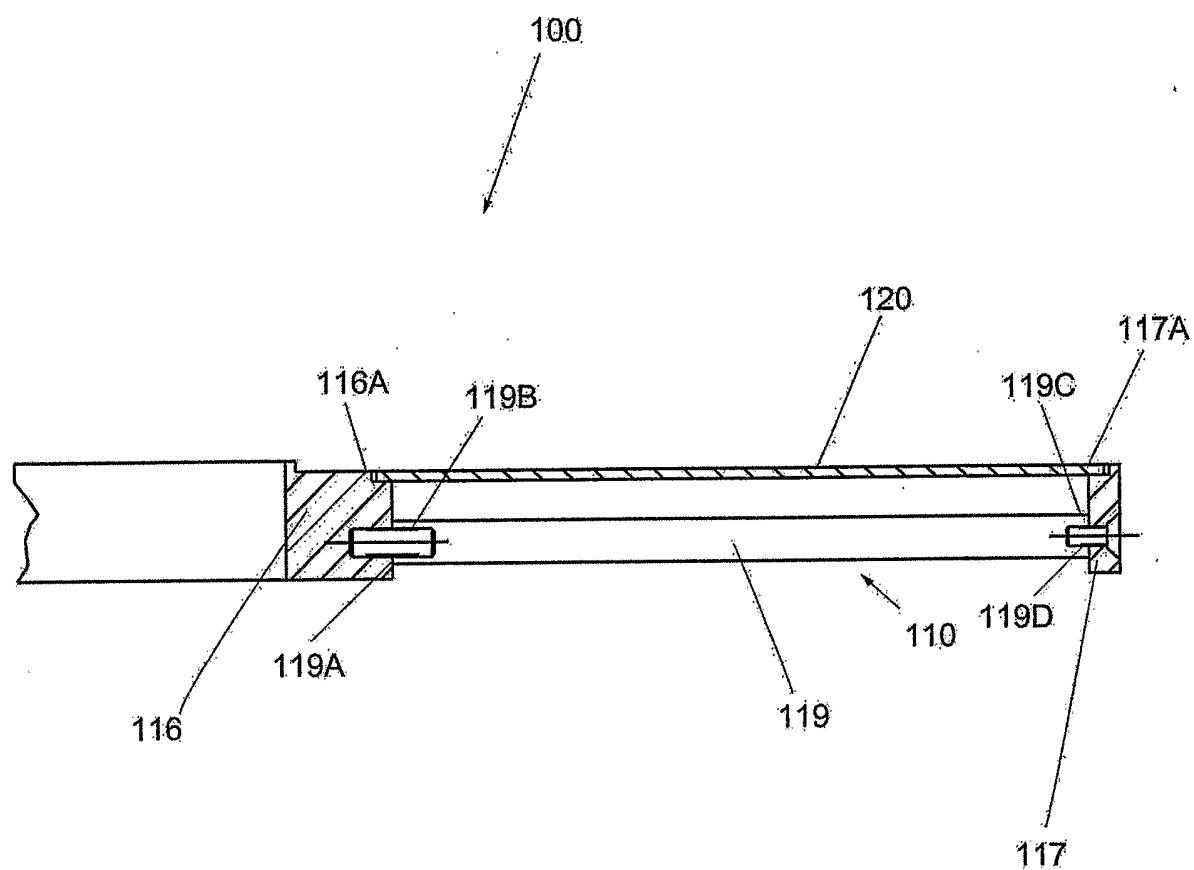


FIG. 6B

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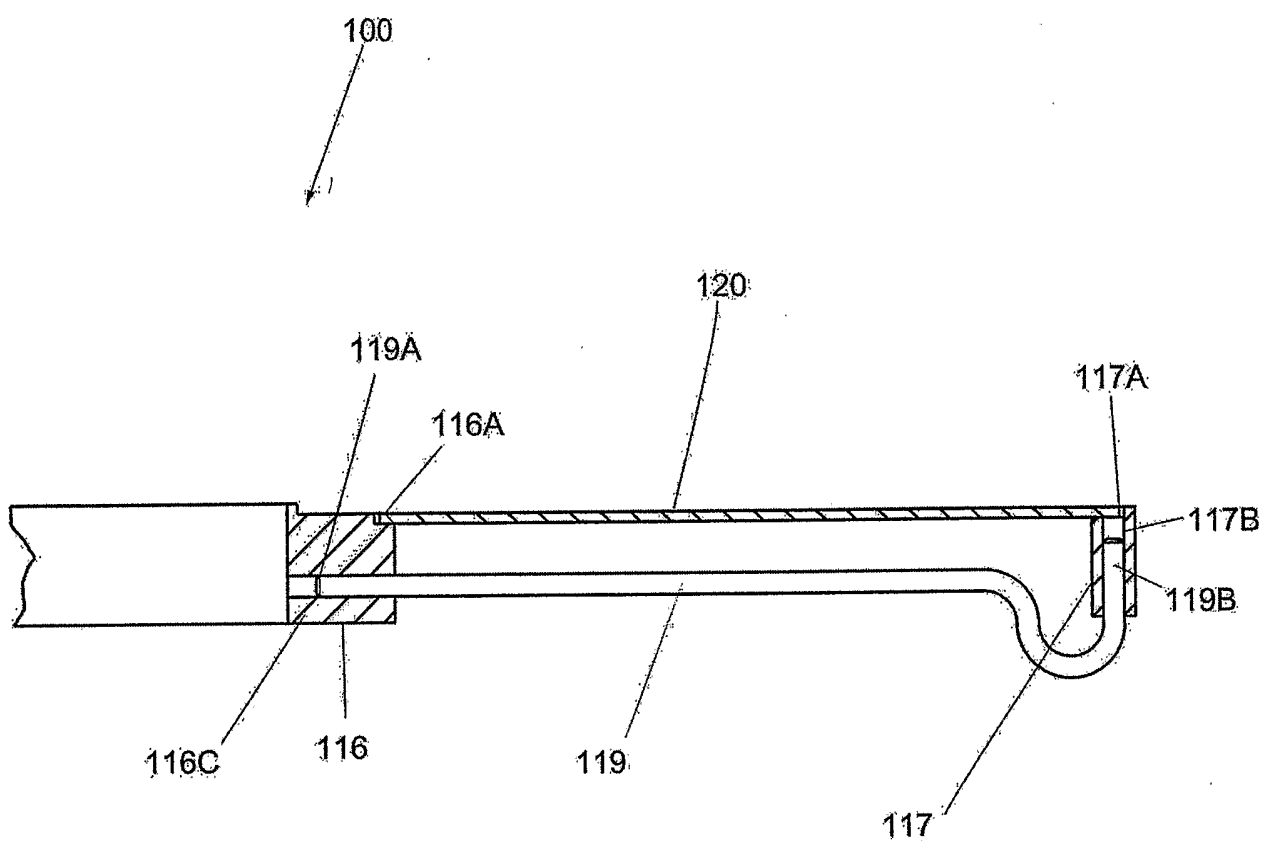


FIG. 6C

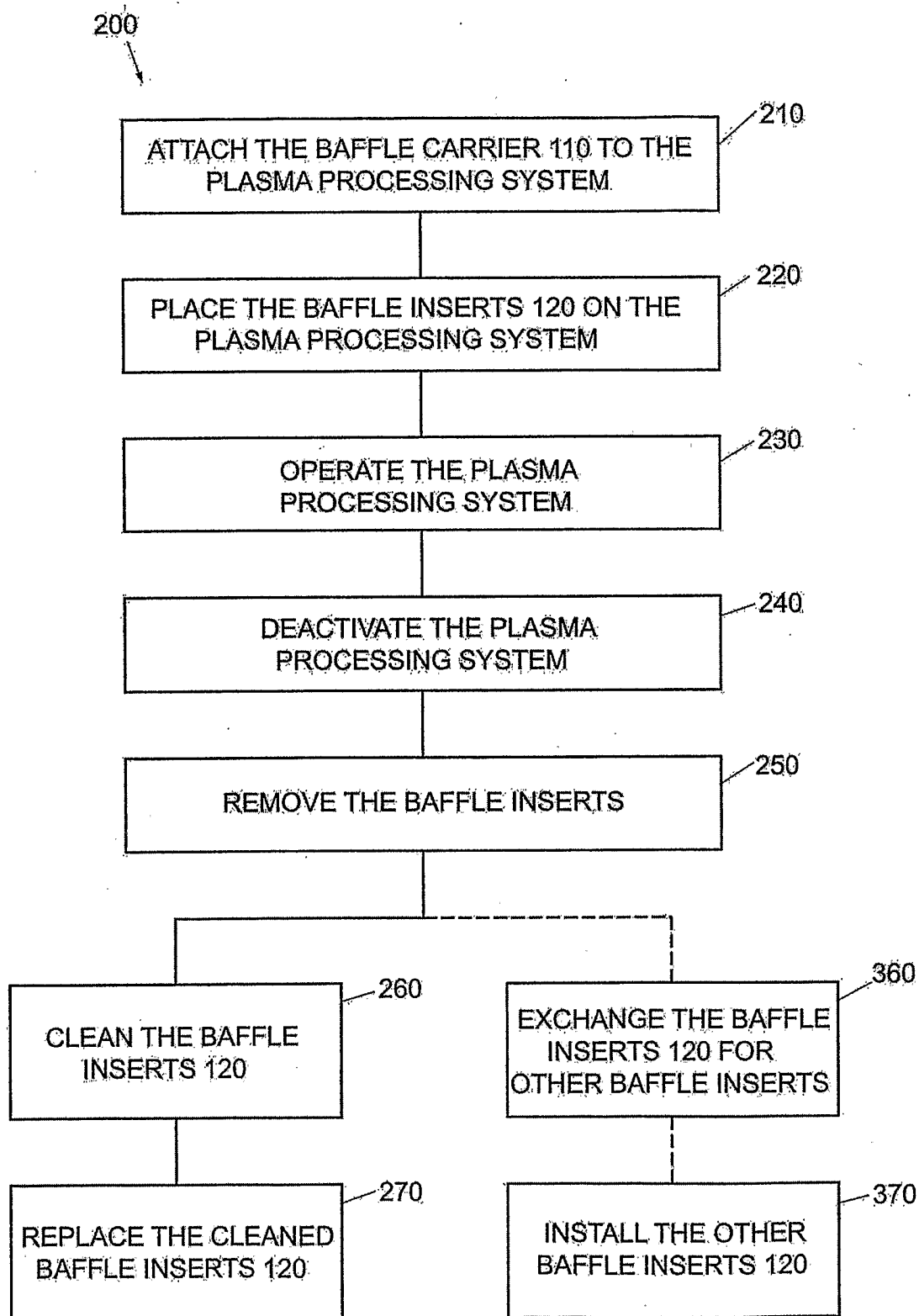
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FIG. 7