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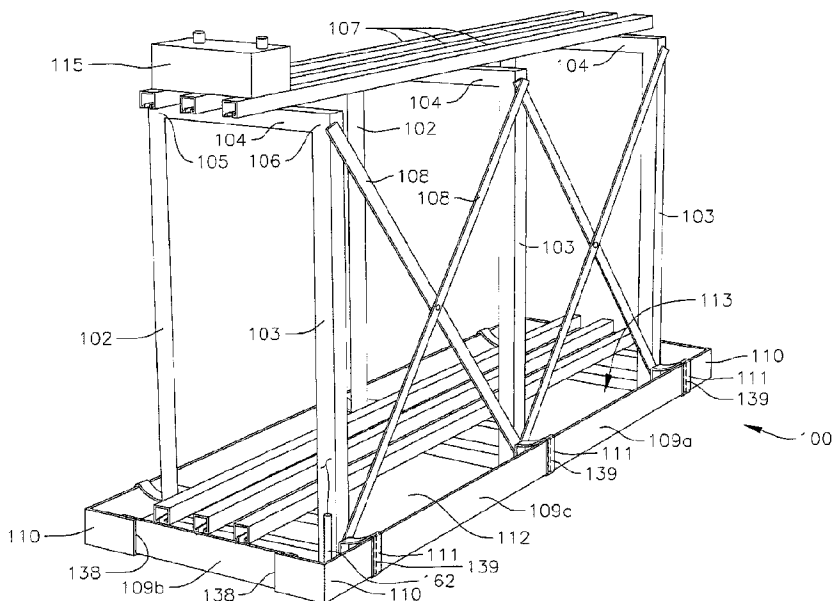
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(54) Title: BATTERY SPILL CONTAINMENT SYSTEM AND METHOD OF MAKING THE SAME



(57) Abrégé/Abstract:

A spill containment assembly for containing fluids, such as battery acid, leaked or spilled from one or more devices stored on a storage rack and thereby prevent contamination of surrounding areas. The spill containment assembly includes a series of wall segments coupled together and a series of adjustable clips for coupling the wall segments to the storage rack. The series of wall segments together define a perimeter of a spill containment chamber for containing the fluids leaked from the one or more devices.

## ABSTRACT

A spill containment assembly for containing fluids, such as battery acid, leaked or spilled from one or more devices stored on a storage rack and thereby prevent contamination of surrounding areas. The spill containment assembly includes a series of wall segments coupled together and a series of adjustable clips for coupling the wall segments to the storage rack. The series of wall segments together define a perimeter of a spill containment chamber for containing the fluids leaked from the one or more devices.

## **BATTERY SPILL CONTAINMENT SYSTEM AND METHOD OF MAKING THE SAME**

### **5 FIELD**

The present disclosure relates generally to spill containment systems and methods for containing a hazardous substance spilled from at least one device and, more particularly, to battery spill containment assemblies and methods for containing spills from battery storage racks.

### **10 BACKGROUND**

In our industrial society, devices often contain substances that may leak or spill undesirably onto other devices, persons, or the environment. For example, batteries may be stored on battery racks, cabinets, relay racks, a combination of one or more of these structures, or any other suitable structure. These batteries may serve as a backup power supply for data communication centers, telecommunication equipment, utility substations, broadband equipment, cable equipment, and/or computers. These batteries may contain acidic or alkaline substances that may leak or spill onto other batteries, cables, equipment, and other devices as well as personnel, thereby posing a hazard to people and property. Sulfuric acid, commonly found in batteries, is an extremely hazardous material regulated by federal, state and local governments. With respect to the storage of batteries, Article 64 of the Uniform Fire Code requires a four-inch high containment barrier with an acid neutralization capability to a pH of 7-9. Additionally, state and city requirements are often more stringent than National Fire Protection Association ("NFPA") guidelines. In many cases, Valve Regulated Lead Acid (VRLA) batteries, as well as other batteries and devices other than batteries, are required by

city or county ordinances to have spill containment devices or other control devices. Additionally, in many cases, insurance carriers require spill containment or control devices to be used when storing batteries or other devices that contain hazardous materials. Other devices that may use spill containment systems include, but are not limited to, air conditioning units that may drip water from condensation or leak Freon, and water heaters that may leak water.

Accordingly, it is desirable to contain leaks and spills from hazardous devices such as batteries. While spill containment systems exist, the existing systems need to be improved and are cost prohibitive in many cases. Conventional spill containment systems are attached to the floor by a larger number of fasteners that penetrate concrete, wood, or tile flooring. Accordingly, installing conventional spill containment systems is very costly, labor intensive, and involves defacing or damaging the floor or substrate. Additionally, many floors in older facilities have asbestos tile and therefore drilling into the floor poses a health hazard due to the release asbestos fibers into the air. Additionally, storage space for battery backup systems is limited and precious. As companies become increasingly dependent on computers, their need for storing a greater number of batteries increases. Real estate, battery cabinets, and relay rack space are at a premium. Thus, companies utilizing battery backup systems would like to be able to store as many batteries as they can in their space, such as a warehouse or basement or other rooms. Some of the rooms may have structures that obstruct the floor space (such as columns); others may have non-rectangular areas. Battery spill containment systems should be able to be installed in virtually any of these diverse rooms. The systems should also be able to be installed quickly and easily in a given space at a low cost, and with minimal effort and time. Additionally, rails of the spill containment systems should provide a reinforced and secure environment around the perimeter of the batteries, but yet have the ability to be removed to allow for maintenance or battery change out as the batteries reach the end of their lives.

Accordingly, it is desirable to have improved designs of a battery spill containment system that permits a greater number of batteries to be stored in a given space (e.g., on relay racks or in cabinets) with easy access to the batteries, increased safety, and modularity of designs that incorporate spill containment.

## SUMMARY

The present disclosure is directed to various embodiments of a spill containment system configured to be coupled to a battery rack or any other structure which may leak fluids. The spill containment systems of the present disclosure are also configured to maintain the seismic and structural testing requirements of the battery rack or other structure to which the spill containment system is attached. The spill containment systems of the present disclosure are configured to be coupled to the support structure of the battery rack using an adjustable bracket, rather than the floor, thereby reducing the number of connections required to install the spill containment system. Furthermore, the spill containment systems of the present disclosure are configured to be installed to both new and existing battery racks.

According to one embodiment of the present disclosure, the spill containment assembly includes a series of wall segments coupled together and a series of adjustable clips for coupling the wall segments to the battery rack. Together, the wall segments define a perimeter of a spill containment chamber for containing the fluid leaked from the one or more devices stored on the storage rack. The spill containment assembly may also include a base plate. The base plate and the wall segments together may define the spill containment chamber. The wall segments may include a series of corner wall segments and a series of straight wall segments coupled to the corner wall segments. The straight wall segments and the corner wall segments may cooperate to define a rectangular perimeter of the spill containment chamber. Each of the clips may include an inner vertical flange having an aperture configured to receive a fastener coupling the clips to the storage rack, an upper flange extending outward from an upper end of the inner vertical flange, an outer flange extending downward from an outer end of the upper flange, and a lower horizontal flange extending inward from a lower end of the outer flange. In one embodiment, the clips may include a first component and a second component slidably coupled to the first component. The second component is configured to move between a first position in which the wall segments are spaced from the storage rack by a first distance and a second position in which the wall segments are spaced apart from the storage rack by a second distance. The spill containment assembly may also include an Underwriters Laboratory ("UL") certified liner in the spill containment chamber. The spill containment assembly may also include a liquid detection

device or a pH meter for detecting a leak from the one or more devices stored on the storage rack. Additionally, in one embodiment, the spill containment assembly may include a flame proof pillow in the spill containment chamber that conforms to both UL flammability standards and Factory Mutual ("FM") Insurance Company standard FM 4955 for  
5 flammability.

The present disclosure is also directed to a storage and spill containment system. In one embodiment, the storage and spill containment system includes a storage rack configured to support one or more devices prone to leaking and a spill containment system configured to contain and neutralize leaks from the one or more devices supported on the storage rack. The  
10 storage rack includes a series of front stanchions, a series of rear stanchions, and a series of support braces coupled to the front and rear stanchions. The spill containment system includes a series of wall segments coupled together and a series of adjustable clips coupling the wall segments to a series of stanchions of the storage rack. Together, the wall segments define a perimeter of a spill containment chamber below the storage rack. The perimeter of the spill  
15 containment chamber extends around the storage rack. The spill containment system may also include a base plate disposed below the storage rack. Together, the base plate and the wall segments may define the spill containment chamber. The spill containment system may not be connected to the ground.

The present disclosure is also directed to various methods of a spill containment  
20 assembly below a storage rack. In one embodiment, the method includes coupling a series of clips to a series of stanchions of the storage rack, and attaching a series of wall segments to the clips. The tasks of coupling the clips to the storage rack and attaching the wall segments to the clips may be performed without coupling the wall segments or the clips to the ground. The method may also include attaching the storage rack to a support surface. The method may also  
25 include installing a liner. The task of installing the liner may be performed before attaching the storage rack to the support surface or after attaching the storage rack to the support surface. The task of attaching the storage rack to the support surface may include fastening the storage rack to the support surface through the liner.

This summary is provided to introduce a selection of concepts that are further  
30 described below in the detailed description. This summary is not intended to identify key or

essential features of the claimed subject matter, nor is it intended to be used in limiting the scope of the claimed subject matter.

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

These and other features and advantages of embodiments of the present disclosure will  
5 become more apparent by reference to the following detailed description when considered in conjunction with the following drawings. In the drawings, like reference numerals are used throughout the figures to reference like features and components. The figures are not necessarily drawn to scale.

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a spill containment assembly according to one  
10 embodiment of the present disclosure attached to a non-seismic battery storage rack;

FIG. 2A is a perspective view of a spill containment assembly according to one embodiment of the present disclosure attached to a seismic battery storage rack;

FIGS. 2B and 2C are perspective views of a straight wall segment and a corner wall segment, respectively, of the spill containment assemblies illustrated in FIGS. 1 and 2A;

15 FIG. 3 is an enlarged detail view of a spill containment assembly attached to a battery storage rack; and

FIG. 4A is a cross-sectional view of a spill containment assembly according to one embodiment of the present disclosure, illustrating a liner in a first configuration;

20 FIG. 4B is a cross-sectional view of a spill containment assembly according to one embodiment of the present disclosure, illustrating a liner in a second configuration;

FIG. 4C is a cross-sectional view of a spill containment assembly according to one embodiment of the present disclosure, illustrating a liner in a third configuration; and

25 FIGS. 5A and 5B are an enlarged detail view and a cross-sectional view, respectively, of a spill containment assembly according to another embodiment of the present disclosure attached to a battery storage rack.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The present disclosure relates to spill containment assemblies and methods of installing the spill containment assemblies onto both new and existing support structures. The

spill containment assemblies of the present disclosure are configured to contain leaks and spills from a variety of devices, such as batteries which may leak hazardous materials (e.g., sulfuric acid), air conditioning units which may leak Freon, and hot water heaters which may leak water. Additionally, the spill containment assemblies of the present disclosure are  
5 configured to be coupled to the structure which supports the devices, rather than a floor or substrate on which the spill containment assembly rests, thereby reducing installation time, eliminating the risk of drilling into older floors, which typically contain asbestos, and minimizing damage to the floor. Moreover, the spill containment assemblies of the present disclosure are configured to retrofit existing support structures, such as existing battery racks  
10 (e.g., the spill containment assemblies are configured to be installed on an existing support structure *in situ*). The spill containment assemblies of the present disclosure are also configured to be installed during the installation of a new support structure. Furthermore, the spill containment assemblies of the present disclosure are configured to be readily detached from the support structure (e.g., battery rack), such as to facilitate maintenance or replacement  
15 of the devices (e.g., batteries) supported on the support structure.

With reference now to FIGs. 1 and 2A, a spill containment assembly **100** according to one embodiment of the present disclosure is illustrated attached to, and installed below, a battery storage rack **101**. In FIG. 1, the spill containment assembly **100** is illustrated installed below a non-seismic battery storage rack **101**. In FIG. 2, the spill containment assembly **100** is  
20 illustrated installed below a seismic-rated battery storage rack **101** configured to meet or exceed seismic shake testing per International Building Code ("IBC") 2009, IBC 2012, and Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers ("IEEE") 693. It will be appreciated, however, that the spill containment assemblies **100** of the present disclosure may be installed below any other suitable structure in order to contain leaks and spills, such as, for instance air  
25 conditioning units or hot water heaters. In the illustrated embodiment, the battery storage racks **101** include a plurality of front and rear support stanchions **102**, **103**, respectively. Although the front and rear support stanchions **102**, **103** in the illustrated embodiment are vertical, in one or more alternate embodiments, the front and rear support stanchions **102**, **103** may have any other suitable orientation and configuration. The battery storage racks **101** also include a  
30 plurality of horizontal support braces **104** extending between and interconnecting

corresponding front and rear vertical support stanchions **102**, **103** (i.e., front ends **105** of the horizontal support braces **104** are connected to the front vertical stanchions **102** and rear ends **106** of the horizontal support braces **104** are connected to the rear vertical stanchions **103**). The battery storage racks **101** also include a plurality of horizontal rails **107** extending  
5 transversely across the horizontal support braces **104**. The horizontal rails **107** are configured to support one or more batteries **115**. The battery storage racks **101** may also include one or more diagonal braces **108** extending between and interconnecting the vertical support stanchions **102**, **103**. In one embodiment, the vertical stanchions **102**, **103** and the horizontal support braces **104** are square tubes. The vertical stanchions **102**, **103** and the horizontal  
10 support braces **104**, however, may have any other suitable shape, such as, for example, L-shaped, C-shaped, or Z-shaped in transverse cross-section.

With continued reference to the embodiment illustrated in FIGs. 1 and 2A, the spill containment assembly **100** includes a plurality of rails or straight wall segments **109a**, **109b**, a plurality of corner wall segments **110**, a plurality of clips **111**, and a base plate **112**. Together,  
15 the straight wall segments **109a**, **109b** and the corner wall segments **110** define a generally rectangular border or perimeter of the spill containment assembly **100**. Moreover, the straight wall segments **109a**, **109b**, the corner wall segments **110**, the clips **111**, and the base plate **112** together define a spill containment chamber or cavity **113** disposed below the battery storage rack **101** and configured to contain any spills or leaks from the batteries **115** stored on the  
20 battery storage rack **101**.

In the illustrated embodiment, the spill containment assembly **100** includes two straight wall segments **109a** along each of the longer sides of the spill containment assembly **100**, one straight wall segment **109b** along each of the shorter sides of the spill containment assembly **100**, and four corner wall segments **110**. It will be appreciated, however, that the spill  
25 containment assembly **100** may have any other suitable shape and configuration, such as, for example, circular or square, depending upon the configuration of the structure under which the spill containment assembly **100** is installed (e.g., a battery storage rack, an air conditioning unit, or a hot water heater). Additionally, the spill containment assembly **100** may have any other suitable number of straight wall segments **109a**, **109b** and corner wall segments **110**. For

instance, in one embodiment, the longer sides and the shorter sides of the spill containment assembly **100** may each include only one straight wall segment **109a**, **109b**.

With reference now to the embodiment illustrated in FIG. 2B, the straight wall segments **109a**, **109b** each include a vertical flange **120** having an upper end **121** and a lower end **122** opposite the upper end **121** and a horizontal flange **123** projecting inward from the lower end **122** of the vertical flange **120**. The horizontal flange **123** includes an outer end **124** interconnected to the lower end **122** of the vertical flange **120** and an inner end **125** opposite the outer end **124**. Accordingly, in the illustrated embodiment, the straight wall segments **109a**, **109b** have an L-shaped cross-section.

In the embodiment illustrated in FIG. 2C, the corner wall segments **110** each include first and second vertical flanges **126**, **127** having upper ends **128**, **129**, respectively, and lower ends **130**, **131**, respectively. The corner wall segments **110** each also include first and second horizontal flanges **132**, **133** projecting inward from the lower ends **130**, **131** of the first and second vertical flanges **126**, **127**, respectively. The first and second horizontal flanges **132**, **133** include outer ends **134**, **135** interconnected to the lower ends **130**, **131** of the first and second vertical flanges **126**, **127**, respectively, and inner ends **136**, **137** opposite the respective outer ends **134**, **135**. In the illustrated embodiment, the first and second vertical flanges **126**, **127** of the corner wall segments **110** define an angle  $\alpha$  of approximately 90 degrees, although it will be appreciated that the first and second vertical flanges **126**, **127** may define any other suitable angle depending upon the configuration of the spill containment assembly **100**. In an alternate embodiment, the straight wall segments **109a**, **109b** and the corner wall segments **110** may be provided without the horizontal flanges **123**, **132**, **133**. Additionally, although the straight wall segments **109a**, **109b** and the corner wall segments **110** have been described above as having vertical flanges **120** and **126**, **127**, respectively, in one or more alternate embodiments, the flanges **120**, **126**, **127** may be non-vertical (e.g., the flanges **120**, **126**, **127** may be canted at any suitable angle, such as, for instance, approximately five degrees to approximately forty-five degrees relative to an imaginary vertical plane). Moreover, in one or more alternate embodiments, the vertical flanges **120**, **126**, **127** of the wall segments **109a**, **109b**, **110** may be non-planar (e.g., curved).

With reference again to the embodiment illustrated in FIGs. 1 and 2A, the straight wall segments **109b** on the shorter sides of the spill containment assembly **100** overlap a portion of the corner wall segments **110** (i.e., lap joints **138** are defined between the straight wall segments **109b** on each of the shorter sides of the spill containment assembly **100** and the corner wall segments **110**). Accordingly, two lap joints **138** are defined along each of the shorter sides of the spill containment assembly **100**. The overlapping portions of the straight wall segments **109b** and the corner wall segments **110** may be coupled together by any suitable means, such as, for example, mechanical fastening, welding, bonding, or adhering. The two straight wall segments **109a** on each of the longer sides of the spill containment assembly **100** abut each other and abut the corner wall segments **110** (i.e., butt joints **139** are defined between the two straight wall segments **109a** on each of the longer sides of the spill containment assembly **100** and between the straight wall segments **109a** and the corner wall segments **110**). Accordingly, three butt joints **139** are defined along each of the longer sides of the spill containment assembly **100**.

As described in detail below, the plurality of clips **111** are configured to overlap the butt joints **139**, thereby coupling together the two straight wall segments **109a** along each of the two longer sides of the spill containment assembly **100** and coupling the two straight wall segments **109a** to the corner wall segments **110**. Additionally, in one embodiment, the clips **111** may be configured to maintain a fluid-tight seal around the butt joints **139** (i.e., the clips **111** may be configured to join the straight wall segments **109a** and the corner wall segments **110** together to ensure a fluid-tight fit). It will be appreciated, however, that the clips **111** do not need to maintain a fluid-tight seal around the butt joints **139** as the spill containment assembly **100** includes a liner **114**, described in detail below, which is configured to prevent spilled or leaked fluid (e.g., sulfuric acid from batteries) from escaping the spill containment chamber **113** and thereby contaminating surrounding areas. In an alternate embodiment, the straight wall segments **109b** on the shorter sides of the spill containment assembly **100** may abut, rather than underlap, the corner wall segments **110** (i.e., butt joints may be defined along the shorter sides of the spill containment assembly **100**, similar to the butt joints **139** defined along each of the longer sides of the spill containment assembly **100**) and clips **111** may be

provided to couple the straight wall segments **109b** on the shorter sides of the spill containment assembly **100** to the corner wall segments **110**.

With reference now to the embodiment illustrated in FIG. 3, the adjustable clip **111** will now be described in more detail. One of the corner wall segments **110** is omitted in FIG. 3 to reveal one of the adjustable clips **111**. As illustrated in FIG. 3, each adjustable clip **111** includes an adjustable inner vertical flange **140** having a lower end **141** and an upper end **142** opposite the lower end **141**. Each adjustable clip **111** also includes an upper flange **143** projecting outward from the upper end **142** of the inner vertical flange **140**, although in one or more alternate embodiments, the flange **143** may project outward from the lower end of the inner vertical flange **140**. In one embodiment, the upper flange **143** may be generally horizontal. The upper flange **143** includes an inner end **144** interconnected to the upper end **142** of the inner vertical flange **140** and an outer end **145** opposite the inner end **144**. In the illustrated embodiment, the upper flange **143** is arcuate, although it will be appreciated that the upper flange **143** may be straight (e.g., planar) and still fall within the scope and spirit of the present disclosure. Each adjustable clip **111** also includes an outer vertical flange **146** extending downward from the outer end **145** of the upper flange **143**. The outer vertical flange **146** includes an upper end **147** interconnected to the outer end **145** of the upper flange **143** and a lower end **148** opposite the upper end **147**. Although the outer flange **146** is depicted as a vertical and planar, in one or more alternate embodiments, the flange **146** may not be vertical (e.g., the flange **146** may be canted) and/or the flange **146** may not be planar (e.g., the flange **146** may be curved). In one embodiment, the shape of the outer flange **146** matches or substantially matches the shape of the first vertical flange **126** of the corner wall segment **110** and/or the shape of the vertical flanges **120** of the straight wall segments **109a**. Each adjustable clip **111** further includes a lower horizontal flange **149** extending inward from the lower end **148** of the outer vertical flange **146**. In one embodiment, the lower horizontal flange **149** may rest on the ground or other substrate on which the storage rack **101** is supported. The lower horizontal flange **149** includes an outer end **150** interconnected to the lower end **148** of the outer vertical flange **146** and an inner end **151** opposite the outer end **150**. Each adjustable clip **111** also includes a lip **152** extending upward from the inner end **151** of the lower horizontal flange **149**. In the illustrated embodiment, the inner vertical flange **140**, the upper

flange **143**, the outer vertical flange **146**, the lower horizontal flange **149**, and the lip **152** are integrally formed (e.g., by roll forming sheet metal), although in one or more alternate embodiments, the inner vertical flange **140**, the upper flange **143**, the outer vertical flange **146**, the lower horizontal flange **149**, and the lip **152** may be separately formed and coupled  
5 together by any suitable process, such as, for instance, welding.

With continued reference to the embodiment illustrated in FIG. 3, each adjustable clip **111** also includes an aperture **153** configured to receive a fastener **154** coupling the clip **111** to one of the plurality of stanchions **102**, **103** on the battery support rack **101**. In the illustrated embodiment, the aperture **153** is a notch or slot defined in the inner vertical flange **140** that  
10 extends upward from the lower end **141** of the inner vertical flange **140**. It will be appreciated that the slot allows for the vertical adjustability of the clip **111** (i.e., the slot **153** is configured to permit the clip **111** to be adjusted vertically based upon the location of the openings in the vertical stanchions **102**, **103** configured to receive the fastener **154** coupling the clip **111** to the vertical stanchion **102**, **103**). In one embodiment, the stanchions **102**, **103** of the battery  
15 support rack **101** may include pre-existing holes (e.g., holes configured to attach other components to the stanchions **102**, **103**) and the slot **153** allows the clips **111** to be adjusted vertically such that the existing holes in the stanchions **102**, **103** may also be used to couple the clips **111** to the stanchions **102**, **103** of the battery storage rack **101**. In another embodiment, new holes may be drilled into the stanchions **102**, **103** to attach the adjustable  
20 clips **111** (e.g., the stanchions **102**, **103** may be retrofitted to include openings configured to receive the fasteners **154** coupling the clips **111** to the stanchions **102**, **103** of the battery rack **101**). Although the aperture **153** in the illustrated embodiment is a slot, the aperture **153** may have any other suitable shape, such as, for example, a plurality of spaced apart holes. In the illustrated embodiment, the flanges **140**, **143**, **146**, **149** and the lip **152** are all thin plates. Each  
25 adjustable clip **111** may be formed by any suitable means, such as, for example, bending, stamping, pressing, machining, molding, extruding, rapid prototyping using additive manufacturing techniques, or any combination thereof. Each clip **111** may be made of any suitably strong material, such as, for example, aluminum, steel, alloys, carbon fiber reinforced plastic, or any combination thereof.

When the spill containment assembly **100** of the present disclosure is installed, the outer vertical flanges **146** on the adjustable clips **111** are configured to overlap the butt joints **139** defined between the straight wall segments **109a** and the corner wall segments **110**, as illustrated in FIGs. 1 and 2A. Accordingly, the adjustable clips **111** are configured to couple together the two straight wall segments **109a** along each of the two longer sides of the spill containment assembly **100**. The adjustable clips **111** are also configured to couple the two straight wall segments **109a** along each of the two longer sides of the spill containment assembly **100** to the corner wall segments **110**. As illustrated in FIGs. 1-3, the adjustable clips **111** are also configured to space the straight wall segments **109a**, **109b** and the corner wall segments **110** away from the stanchions **102**, **103** of the battery storage rack **101** by a suitable distance, such as, for example, approximately 1 inch to approximately 4 inches (i.e., the adjustable clips **111** are configured to space the border or perimeter of the spill containment assembly **100** away from the stanchions **102**, **103** of the battery storage rack **100**). Spacing the straight wall segments **109a**, **109b** and the corner wall segments **110** away from the battery storage rack **101** may be necessary to comply with various federal, state and/or local regulations. Additionally, the upper flange **143** of the adjustable clip **111** may be configured such that the spacing between the stanchions **102**, **103** of the battery storage rack **101** and the wall segments **109a**, **109b**, **110** of the spill containment assembly **100** is adjustable.

In addition, the adjustable clips **111** are configured to couple the straight wall segments **109a**, **109b** and the corner wall segments **110** to the stanchions **102**, **103** of the battery storage rack **101** rather than the floor. Coupling the straight wall segments **109a**, **109b** and the corner wall segments **110** to the stanchions **102**, **103** of the battery storage rack **101** eliminates the necessity of drilling a series of holes (e.g., hundreds of holes) into the floor or substrate in order to install the spill containment assembly **100** or at least reduces the number of holes that need to be drilled into the floor or substrate to install the spill containment assembly **100**. Drilling a series of holes into the floor or substrate may be time consuming, labor intensive, and expensive. Additionally, the floors in many older facilities contain asbestos, and therefore drilling into the floor may release asbestos fibers into the air, thereby posing a health risk to workers. Furthermore, coupling the straight wall segments **109a**, **109b** and the corner wall segments **110** to the stanchions **102**, **103** of the battery storage rack **101** enables cost-effective

retrofitting of existing storage racks. Finally, coupling the straight wall segments **109a**, **109b** and the corner wall segments **110** to the stanchions **102**, **103** of the battery storage rack **101** eliminates the necessity of defacing the floor or substrate, such as by drilling holes or applying adhesive.

5       With reference now to FIGs. 5A and 5B, an adjustable clip **200** according to another embodiment of the present disclosure is illustrated. One of the corner wall segments **110** is omitted in FIGs. 5A and 5B to reveal one of the adjustable clips **200**. Unlike the clip **111** described above with reference to FIG. 3 that is a single component, the clip **200** illustrated in FIGs. 5A and 5B includes two components **201**, **202** configured to be coupled together by a  
10       fastener **203**. As described in more detail below, the clip **200** is configured to permit the adjustment of both the vertical and horizontal position of the clip **200**. Like the clips **111** described above, the clips **200** are configured to couple the straight wall segments **109a**, **109b** and/or the corner wall segments **110** of the battery spill containment assembly **100** to the stanchions **102**, **103** of the battery storage rack **101** rather than the floor. The adjustable clips  
15       **200** are also configured to couple the straight wall segments **109a**, **109b** to each other and to couple the straight wall segments **109a**, **109b** to the corner wall segments **110**.

      In the embodiment illustrated in FIGs. 5A and 5B, the first component **201** of the clip **200** includes an adjustable inner vertical flange **204** having a lower end **205** and an upper end **206** opposite the lower end **205**. The first component **201** of the clip **200** also includes an  
20       upper flange **207** projecting outward from the upper end **206** of the inner vertical flange **204**. In one or more alternate embodiments, the flange **207** may project outward from the lower end **205** of the inner vertical flange **204**. In the illustrated embodiment, the upper flange **207** defines an obtuse angle  $\alpha$  with the inner vertical flange **204**, such as, for instance, from approximately 100 degrees to approximately 150 degrees, although it will be appreciated that  
25       the upper flange **207** may define any other suitable angle  $\alpha$  relative to the inner vertical flange **204**, such as, for instance, greater than approximately 150 degrees or less than approximately 100 degrees (e.g., approximately 90 degrees). The upper flange **207** includes an inner end **208** interconnected to the upper end **206** of the inner vertical flange **207** and an outer end **209** opposite the inner end **208**. In the illustrated embodiment, the upper flange **207** is straight  
30       (e.g., planar), although it will be appreciated that the upper flange **207** may be non-planar

(e.g., arcuate) and still fall within the scope and spirit of the present disclosure. In the illustrated embodiment, the upper flange **207** and the inner vertical flange **204** of the first component **201** are integrally formed, although in one or more alternate embodiments, the upper flange **207** and the inner vertical flange **204** may be separately formed and coupled together by any suitable process, such as, for instance, welding.

Still referring to the embodiment illustrated in FIGs. 5A and 5B, the first component **201** of each clip **200** defines an aperture **210** configured to receive a fastener **154** coupling the clip **200** to one of the plurality of stanchions **102**, **103** of the battery support rack **101**. In the illustrated embodiment, the aperture **210** is a notch or slot extending upward from the lower end **205** of the inner vertical flange **204**. It will be appreciated that the slot **210** allows for the vertical adjustability of the clip **200**. In particular, the slot **210** is configured to permit the clip **200** to be adjusted vertically (arrow **226**) based upon the location of the opening in the stanchion **102**, **103** configured to receive the fastener **154** coupling the clip **200** to the battery storage rack **101**. For instance, if the stanchion **102**, **103** has an existing opening (e.g., an opening for connecting a diagonal support brace **222** of the battery storage rack **101** to the stanchion **102**, **103**), the slot **210** allows the clip **200** to be adjusted vertically such that the existing opening in the stanchion **102**, **103** may also be used to couple the clip **200** to the stanchion **102**, **103** of the battery storage rack **101**. In another embodiment, new holes may be drilled into the stanchions **102**, **103** to attach the clips **200** (i.e., the stanchions **102**, **103** may be retrofitted to include openings configured to receive the fasteners **154** coupling the clips **200** to the stanchions **102**, **103** of the battery rack **101**). Although the aperture **210** in the illustrated embodiment is a slot, the aperture **210** may have any other suitable shape, such as, for example, a plurality of holes. In another embodiment, the aperture **210** in the first component **201** may be a single hole such that the first component **201** of the clip **200** is not configured to be adjusted vertically. In one embodiment, the aperture **210** may be a slot that does not extend completely to the lower end **205** of the inner vertical flange **204**. Additionally, as described in more detail below, the upper flange **207** of the first component **201** also includes an aperture or an opening **211**, such as, for instance, a slot, configured to receive the fastener **203** coupling the first component **201** of the clip **200** to the second component **202** of the clip **200**.

With continued reference to the embodiment illustrated in FIGs. 5A and 5B, the second component **202** of the clip **200** includes an upper flange **212** having an inner end **213** and an outer end **214** opposite the inner end **213**. The upper flange **212** also includes an opening **215**. The upper flange **212** of the second component **202** is configured to overlap the upper flange **207** on the first component **201** of the clip **200**. In the illustrated embodiment, the upper flange **212** on the second component **202** overlies the upper flange **207** on the first component **201**. In an alternate embodiment, the upper flange **212** on the second component **202** may underlie the upper flange **207** on the first component **201** of the clip **200**. Additionally, the opening **215** in the second component **202** is configured to at least partially align with the opening **211** in the first component **201** such that the aligned openings **215**, **211** may receive the fastener **203** coupling the first and second components **201**, **202** together (i.e., the fastener **203** is configured to extend through the openings **215**, **211** to couple the first and second components **201**, **202** together).

In the illustrated embodiment, the opening **215** in the second component **202** of the clip **200** is a notch or slot extending outward from the inner end **213** of the upper flange **204**. It will be appreciated that the slot **215** allows for the horizontal adjustability of the clip **200**. In particular, the slot **215** is configured to enable the second component **202** of the clip **200** to be adjusted horizontally based upon a desired distance **D** between the stanchions **102**, **103** of the battery storage rack **101** and the vertical flanges **120** and **126**, **127** of the straight wall segments **109a**, **109b** and the corner wall segments **110**, respectively. The horizontal position of the second component **202** of the clip **200** may be adjusted by loosening the fastener **203**, sliding (arrow **227**) the second component **202** of the clip **200** inward or outward into the desired position, and then retightening the fastener **203**. In one embodiment, the slots **211**, **215** are configured to allow the distance **D** between the stanchions **102**, **103** and the vertical flanges **120**, **126**, **127** of the spill containment assembly **100** to be adjusted between approximately 1 inch and approximately 4 inches. It will be appreciated, however, that the slots **211**, **215** may be configured such that the distance **D** may be adjusted between any other suitable range. Additionally, although in the illustrated embodiment the openings **211**, **215** in the first and second components **201**, **202**, respectively, are both slots, the openings **211**, **215** may have any other suitable shapes. For instance, in one embodiment, the opening **211** in the

first component **201** may be a circular hole and the opening **215** in the second component **202** may be a slot. In another embodiment, the opening **211** in the first component **201** may be a slot and the opening **215** in the second component **202** may be a circular hole. In other embodiments, the openings **211**, **215** in the first and second components **201**, **202**,  
5 respectively, may each be a plurality of holes.

Still referring to the embodiment illustrated in FIGs. 5A and 5B, the second component **202** of each clip **200** also includes an outer vertical flange **216** extending downward from the outer end **214** of the upper flange **212**. The outer vertical flange **216** includes an upper end **217** interconnected to the outer end **214** of the upper flange **212** and a lower end **218** opposite the  
10 upper end **217**. In the illustrated embodiment, the upper flange **212** defines an acute angle  $\beta$  with respect to the outer vertical flange **216**, such as, for instance, from approximately 80 degrees to approximately 30 degrees, although it will be appreciated that the upper flange **212** may define any other suitable angle  $\beta$ , such as, for instance, greater than approximately 80 degrees (e.g., approximately 90 degrees). Although the outer flange **216** is depicted as a  
15 vertical and planar, in one or more alternate embodiments, the flange **216** may not be vertical (e.g., the flange **216** may be canted) and/or the flange **216** may not be planar (e.g., the flange **216** may be curved). In one embodiment, the shape of the outer flange **216** matches or substantially matches the shape of the first vertical flange **126** of the corner wall segment **110** and/or the shape of the vertical flanges **120** of the straight wall segments **109a**.

20 The second component **202** of each clip **200** further includes a lower horizontal flange **219** extending inward from the lower end **218** of the outer vertical flange **216**. In one embodiment, the lower horizontal flange **219** may rest on the ground or other substrate on which the storage rack **101** is supported. The lower horizontal flange **219** includes an outer end **220** interconnected to the lower end **218** of the outer vertical flange **216** and an inner end  
25 **223** opposite the outer end **220**. Each adjustable clip **200** also includes a lip **221** extending upward from the inner end **223** of the lower horizontal flange **219**. In the embodiment illustrated in FIGs. 5A and 5B, the second component **202** also includes an inverted U-shaped flange **224** provided between the outer end **214** of the upper flange **212** and the upper end **217** of the outer vertical flange **216**. The inverted U-shaped flange **224** defines a cavity **225**  
30 configured to receive upper portions of the straight wall segments **109a** and the corner wall

segments **110**. The cavity **225** defined by the inverted U-shaped flange **224** is configured to aid in retaining the straight wall segments **109a** and the corner wall segments **110** and in maintaining the proper position and alignment of the straight wall segments **109a** and the corner wall segments **110**. In the illustrated embodiment, the upper flange **212**, the inverted U-shaped flange **224**, the outer vertical flange **216**, the lower horizontal flange **219**, and the lip **221** are integrally formed, although in one or more alternate embodiments, the upper flange **212**, the inverted U-shaped flange **224**, the outer vertical flange **216**, the lower horizontal flange **219**, and the lip **221** may be separately formed and coupled together by any suitable process, such as, for instance, welding.

In the embodiment in which the upper flange **212** defines an angle  $\beta$  other than 90 degrees relative to the outer vertical flange **216**, it will be appreciated that sliding (arrow **227**) the second component **202** inward or outward to adjust the horizontal position of the second component **202** also adjusts the vertical position of the second component **202** (i.e., adjusting the horizontal position of the second component **202** to achieve the desired distance **D** between the stanchions **102**, **103** of the battery storage rack **101** and the vertical flanges **120** and **126**, **127** of the straight wall segments **109a**, **109b** and the corner wall segments **110**, respectively, also changes the vertical position of the second component **202**). Accordingly, in one embodiment, the vertical position of the first component **201** may be adjusted (arrow **226**) to compensate for the change in vertical position of the second component **202** from sliding (arrow **227**) the second component **202** inward or outward.

With reference now to the embodiment illustrated in FIGS. 3 and 5A, the base plate **112** is a generally rectangular plate having an upper surface **155** and a lower surface **156** opposite the upper surface **155**. The lower surface **156** of the base plate **112** is configured to rest on the ground or floor and the battery storage rack **101** is configured to rest on the upper surface **155** of the base plate **112**. The base plate **112** may be made of any suitable material, such as, for example, rubber, aluminum, steel, carbon fiber reinforced plastic, polyvinyl chloride (PVC) coated rubber, or any combination thereof.

With reference now to the embodiment illustrated in FIGS. 4A-4C, the spill containment assembly **100** also includes an Underwriters Laboratory ("UL") certified liner **114**. The UL certified liner **114** provides a liquid-tight seal that is configured to prevent spilled

or leaked fluid (e.g., sulfuric acid from batteries) from escaping the spill containment chamber **113** defined by the spill containment assembly **100** and thereby prevent the spilled or leaked fluid from contaminating surrounding areas. The liner **114** may be made of any material having a suitably high chemical resistivity to caustic and otherwise hazardous fluids, such as, for example, polyvinyl chloride (PVC).

In the embodiment illustrated in FIG. 4A, the liner **114** extends along the upper surface **155** of the base plate **112** and up along at least a portion of the inside surfaces **157**, **158**, **159** (see FIGS. 2B and 2C) of the vertical flanges **120** and **126**, **127** of the straight wall segments **109a**, **109b** and the corner wall segments **110**, respectively, that face the battery storage rack **101**. In this embodiment, the battery storage rack **101** may be first bolted to the floor or substrate and then the wall segments **109a**, **109b**, and **110** may be coupled to the battery storage rack **101** by installing the clips **111** or **200**. In particular, the spill containment assembly **100** may be attached to the battery storage rack **101** by installing the bolts **154** coupling the clips **111** or **200** to the stanchions **102**, **103** of the battery storage rack **101** and then snapping the wall segments **109a**, **109b**, and **110** into engagement with the clips **111** or **200**. The liner **114** may then be installed in the spill containment chamber or cavity **113** defined by the spill containment assembly **100** by applying the liner **114** along the upper surface **155** of the base plate **112** and then turning up the edges of the liner **114** such that the liner **114** covers at least a portion of the inside surfaces **157**, **158**, **159** of the vertical flanges **120** and **126**, **127** of the straight wall segments **109a**, **109b** and the corner wall segments **110**, respectively.

In the embodiment illustrated in FIG. 4B, the liner **114** is first provided along the floor or substrate and the battery storage rack **101** is bolted to the floor or substrate through the liner **114** such that the liner **114** extends along the lower surface **156** of the base plate **112**. The wall segments **109a**, **109b**, and **110** may then be coupled to the battery storage rack **101** by installing the clips **111** or **200** (i.e., installing the bolts **154** coupling the clips **111** or **200** to the stanchions **102**, **103** of the battery storage rack **101** and then snapping the wall segments **109a**, **109b**, and **110** into engagement with the clips **111** or **200**). Finally, edges of the liner **114** may be turned upwards such that the liner **114** covers outer surfaces **163**, **164**, **165** (see FIG. 2A) of

the vertical flanges **120** and **126, 127** of the straight wall segments **109a, 109b** and the corner wall segments **110**, respectively, that face away from the battery storage rack **101**.

In the embodiment illustrated in FIG. 4C, the liner **114** is first provided along the floor or substrate and the battery storage rack **101** is then bolted to the floor or substrate through the liner **114** such that the liner **114** extends along the lower surface **156** of the base plate **112**. Edges of the liner **114** are then turned upwards before the wall segments **109a, 109b**, and **110** and the clips **111** or **200** are installed. The wall segments **109a, 109b**, and **110** are then coupled to the battery storage rack **101** by installing the clips **111** or **200** (i.e., installing the bolts **154** coupling the clips **111** or **200** to the stanchions **102, 103** of the battery storage rack **101** and then snapping the wall segments **109a, 109b**, and **110** into engagement with the clips **111** or **200**). After the wall segments **109a, 109b, 110** and the clips **111** or **200** are coupled to the battery storage rack **101**, the upwardly turned edges of the liner may be applied or pressed against the inside surfaces **157, 158, 159** of the vertical flanges **120** and **126, 127** of the straight wall segments **109a, 109b** and the corner wall segments **110**, respectively. Accordingly, in this embodiment, the liner **114** extends along the lower surface **156** of the base plate **112**, through a gap **160** between the lip **152** or **221** on the clip **111** or **200** and an edge **161** of the base plate **112**, and then up along at least a portion of the inside surfaces **157, 158, 159** of the vertical flanges **120** and **126, 127** of the straight wall segments **109a, 109b** and the corner wall segments **110**, respectively.

Accordingly, it will be appreciated that the liner **114** may be provided completely inside the spill containment chamber or cavity **113** (FIG. 4A), partially inside the spill containment chamber or cavity **113** (FIG. 4C), or completely outside the spill containment chamber or cavity **113** (FIG. 4B) defined by the spill containment assembly **100**.

In one embodiment, the spill containment assembly **100** may also include one or more spill containment pillows (not shown) configured to absorb spilled or leaked fluids, such as battery acid, and to neutralize the spilled or leaked fluid to a PH of 7 to 9. The spill containment pillows may be provided in the spill containment chamber or cavity **113** defined by the straight wall segments **109a, 109b**, the corner wall segments **110**, and the base plate **112** of the spill containment assembly **100**. Additionally, the spill containment pillows may be provided on top of the liner **114**. In one embodiment, the spill containment pillow is filled with

an absorbent and acid neutralizing material and includes a flame retardant covering configured to limit flame spread across the exterior of the pillow. In one embodiment, the flame retardant pillow covering is configured to meet or exceed Underwriters Laboratory ("UL") Class 1 requirements for flammability, Factory Mutual ("FM") fire standard FM 4955 when tested in accordance with ASTM-E2058 and UL recognized requirements, and the requirements of ASTM-E648. The spill containment pillow may be made of any suitable materials, such as, for example, a blend of polyester fibers and flame retardant fibers. The spill containment pillow may be fabricated by any suitable process, such as, for instance, a needle punch fabrication process. Additionally, in one embodiment, the fabric of the spill containment pillow may include interwoven thicker and thinner polyester fibers configured to prevent chemicals (e.g., battery acid) from leaking out of the spill containment pillow. In one embodiment, the fabric of the spill containment pillow may be blend of 35% flame retardant fibers and 65% standard polyester fibers. The flame retardant may be applied to the polyester fibers by any suitable process (e.g., the polyester fibers may be treated with a flame retardant chemical additive). The material of the spill containment pillows may also be configured to stain a particular color when a leaked fluid (e.g., battery acid or other caustic material) contacts the spill containment pillows, thereby providing a visual indication to personnel that a leak has occurred.

In one embodiment, the spill containment assembly **100** may also include one or more liquid detection devices and/or pH meter probes **162**. The liquid detection devices and/or pH meter probes **162** may be coupled to either the storage rack **101** (e.g., one of the stanchions **102**, **103**, as illustrated in FIG. 1) or the spill containment assembly **100** (e.g., one of the straight wall segments **109a**, **109b** or one of the corner wall segments **110**). The liquid detection devices and/or pH meter probes **162** may be positioned to extend into the spill containment chamber **113** to detect the presence of a liquid (e.g., battery acid) that has leaked from one of the devices (e.g., a battery **115**) supported by the storage rack **101** down into the spill containment chamber **113**. The liquid detection devices and/or pH meter probes **162** may be wired back to a relay that, when the circuit is closed, sends an alarm indicating that leaking liquid (e.g., battery acid) has been detected in the spill containment assembly **100**. Additionally, the liquid detection devices and/or pH meter probes **162** may be linked to a

central alarm system to alert fire department personnel, security personnel, or property owners that a leak has been detected.

While the present disclosure has been described with respect to a limited number of embodiments, those skilled in the art, having benefit of this disclosure, will appreciate that  
5 other embodiments and modifications can be devised which do not materially depart from the scope of the invention as disclosed herein. All such embodiments and modifications are intended to be included within the scope of this disclosure as defined in the following claims. Additionally, although relative terms such as "outer," "inner," "upper," "lower," "below," "above," "vertical," "horizontal" and similar terms have been used herein to describe a spatial  
10 relationship of one element to another, it is understood that these terms are intended to encompass different orientations of the various elements and components of the device in addition to the orientation depicted in the figures.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A spill containment assembly attachable to a storage rack for containing a leaked fluid from one or more devices stored on the storage rack, the spill containment  
5 assembly comprising:

a plurality of wall segments coupled together, wherein the plurality of wall segments together define a perimeter of a spill containment chamber for containing the leaked fluid, the plurality of wall segments comprising a first wall segment coupled to a second wall segment at a joint; and

10 a clip comprising an inner vertical flange with a vertical slotted aperture, an outer vertical flange spaced apart from the inner vertical flange, and an upper flange spanning between and connecting the inner vertical flange to the outer vertical flange, and a lower flange extending from the outer vertical flange opposite the upper flange;

15 wherein a fastener is inserted through the vertical slotted aperture to permit the inner vertical flange to slide relative to the fastener prior to the fastener being tightened to permit adjustment of the clip; and

wherein the first wall segment is held by the clip with the first wall segment positioned between the outer vertical flange and the inner vertical flange to secure the position of the first wall segment.

20

2. The spill containment assembly of claim 1, further comprising a base plate, wherein the base plate and the plurality of wall segments together define the spill containment chamber.

25 3. The spill containment assembly of claim 1, wherein the plurality of wall segments comprises:

a plurality of corner wall segments; and

a plurality of straight wall segments coupled to the corner wall segments.

4. The spill containment assembly of claim 3, wherein the plurality of straight wall segments and the plurality of corner wall segments cooperate to define a rectangular perimeter of the spill containment chamber.
5. The spill containment assembly of claim 1, wherein the upper flange comprises:  
a first component extending from the inner vertical flange and having a first slot; and  
a second component extending from the outer vertical flange and having a second slot,  
the second component slidably coupled to the first component by a second fastener inserted  
through the first slot and the second slot to selectively tighten the first component to the  
second component;  
wherein the second component is adapted to move between a first position and a  
second position moving the plurality of wall segments.
6. The spill containment assembly of claim 1, further comprising a liner in the  
spill containment chamber.
7. The spill containment assembly of claim 1, further comprising one or both of a  
liquid detection device or a pH meter for detecting a leaked fluid.
8. The spill containment assembly of claim 1, wherein the joint between the first  
wall segment and the second wall segment is a butt joint, the outer vertical flange of the clip  
overlapping the joint and fluidly sealing the joint.
9. A spill containment assembly for containing a leaked fluid comprising:  
a plurality of wall segments coupled together, wherein the plurality of wall segments  
together define a perimeter of a spill containment chamber, the plurality of wall segments  
comprising a first wall segment coupled to a second wall segment; and  
a clip comprising an inner vertical flange with a vertical slotted aperture, an outer  
vertical flange spaced apart from the inner vertical flange, and an upper flange spanning

between and connecting the inner vertical flange to the outer vertical flange, and a lower flange extending from the outer vertical flange opposite the upper flange;

wherein a fastener is inserted through the vertical slotted aperture to permit the inner vertical flange to slide relative to the fastener prior to the fastener being tightened to permit  
5 adjustment of the clip; and

wherein the first wall segment is held by the clip with the first wall segment positioned between the outer vertical flange and the inner vertical flange to secure the position of the first wall segment.

10 10. The spill containment assembly of claim 9 wherein the first wall segment is coupled to the second wall segment at a joint, the outer vertical flange of the clip overlapping the joint.

FIG. 1

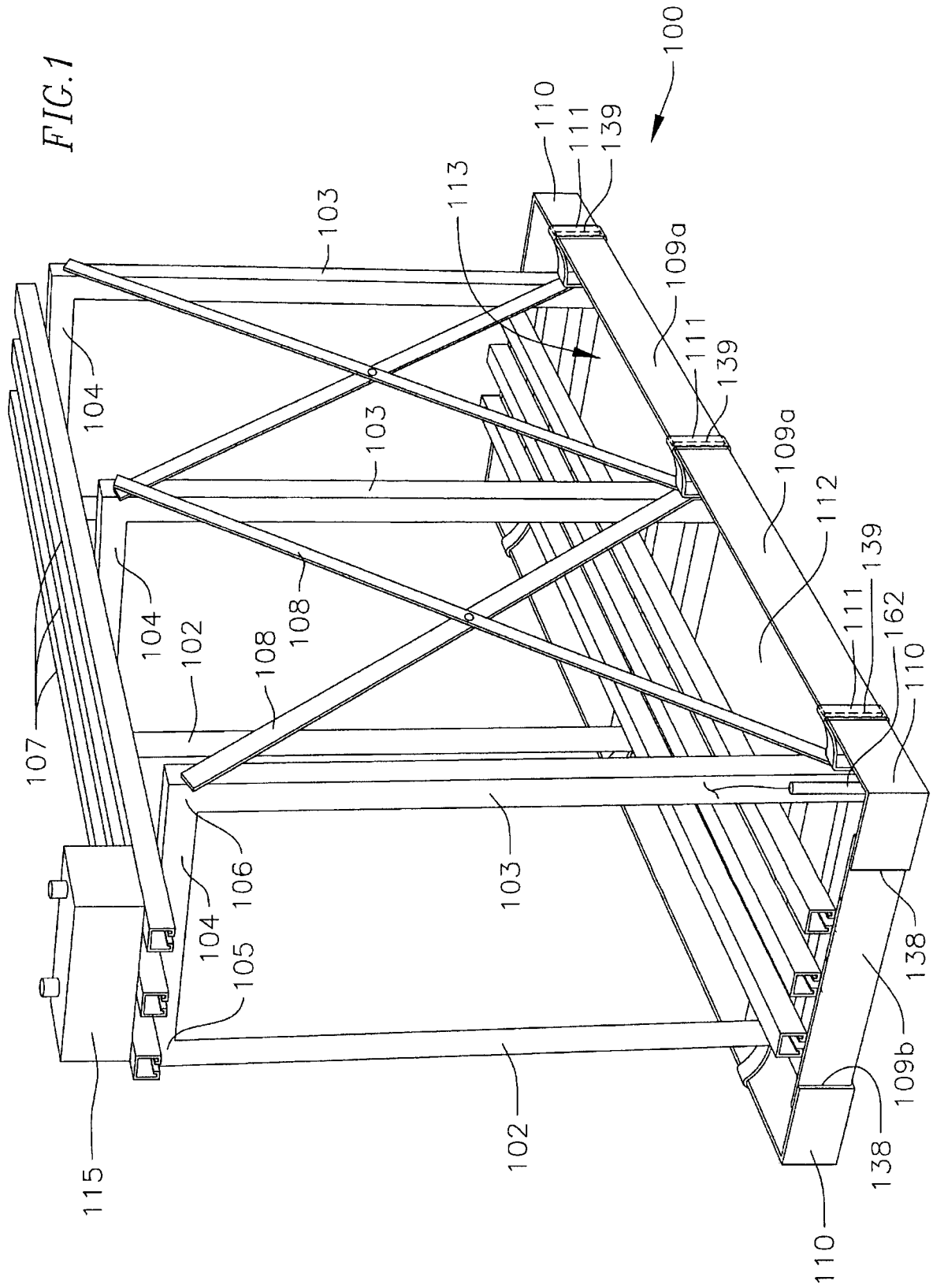


FIG. 2A

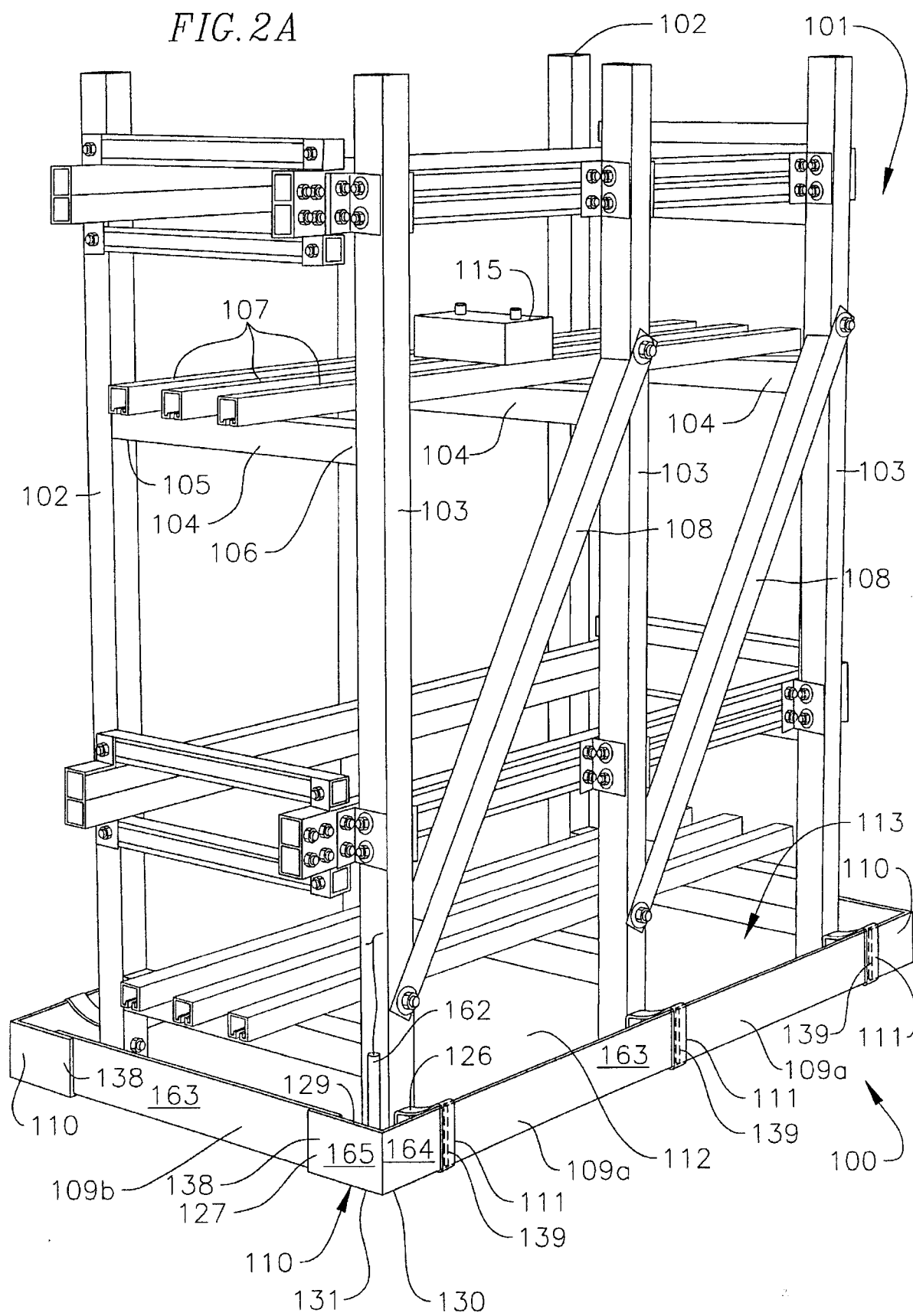


FIG. 2B

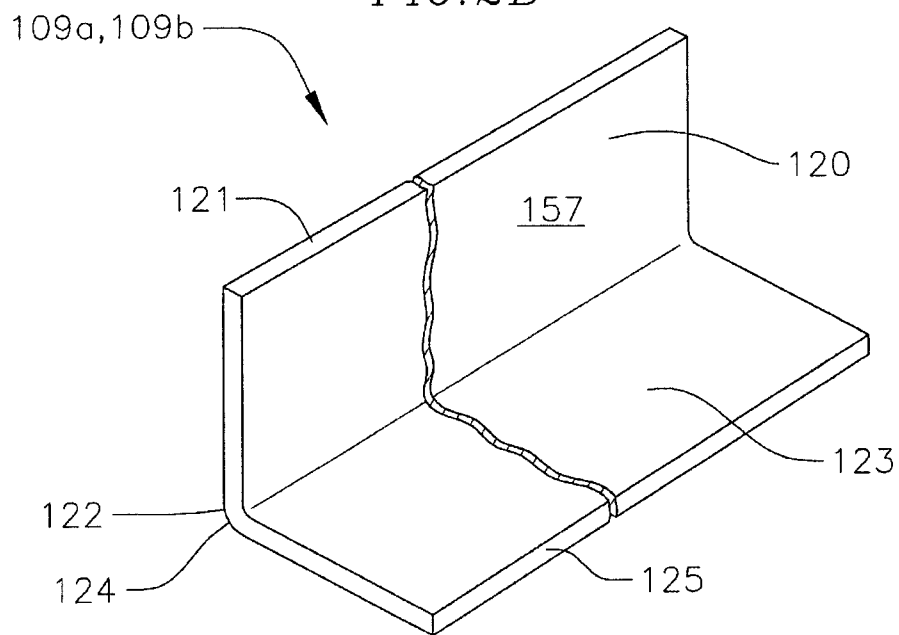


FIG. 2C

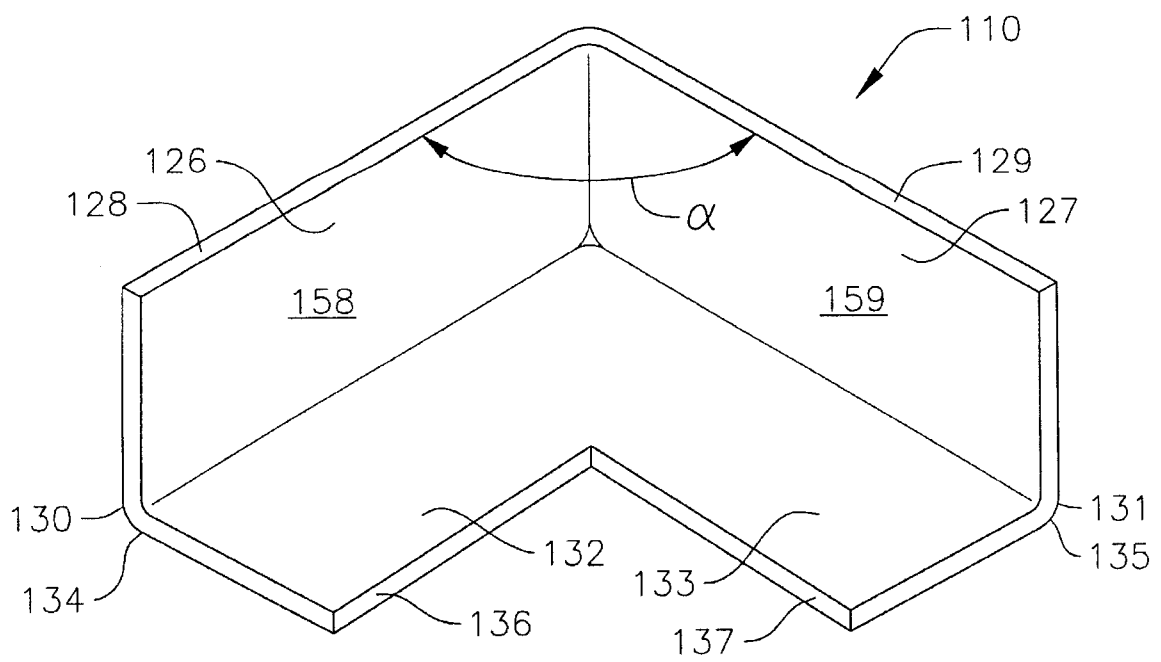


FIG. 3

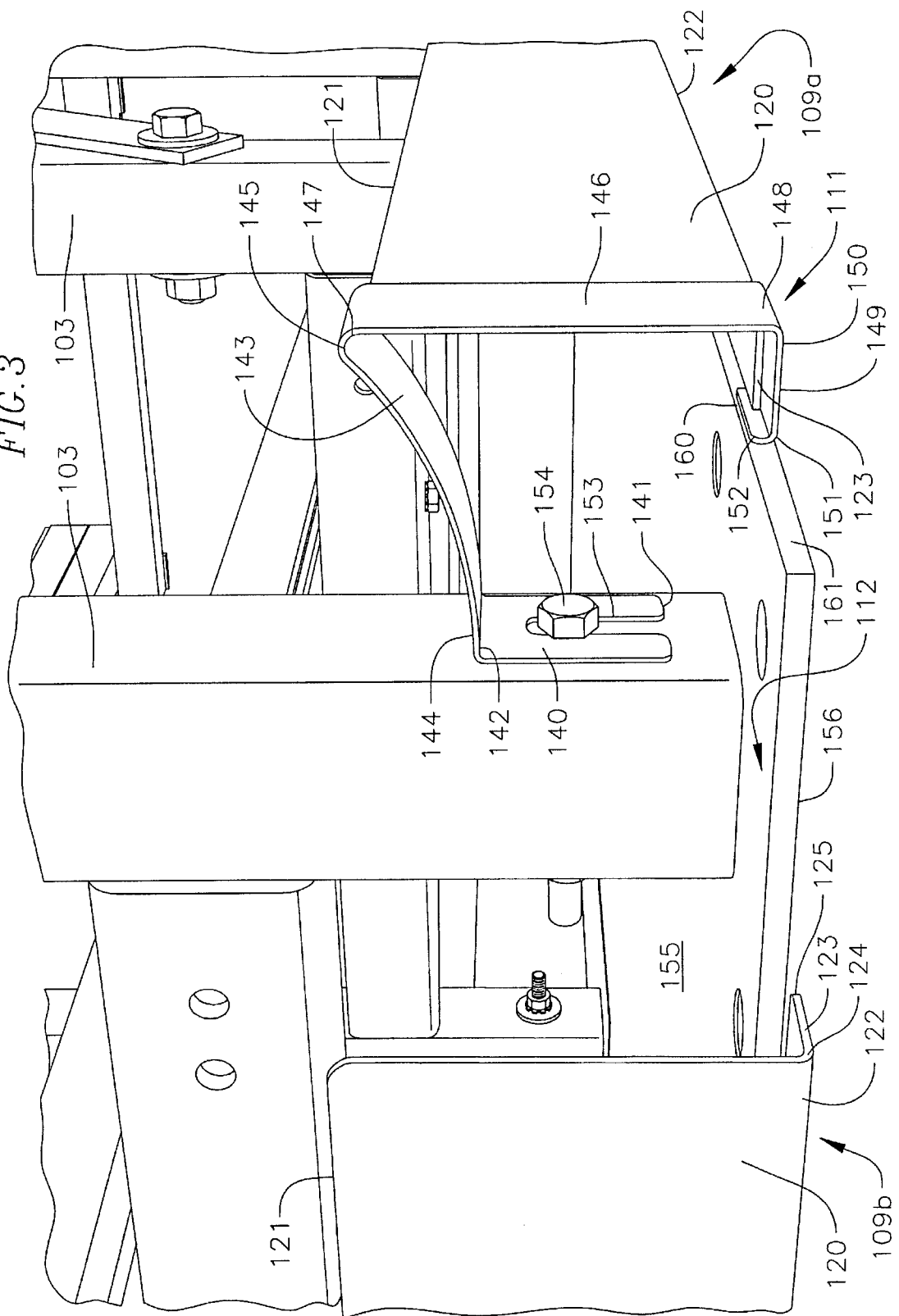


FIG. 4A

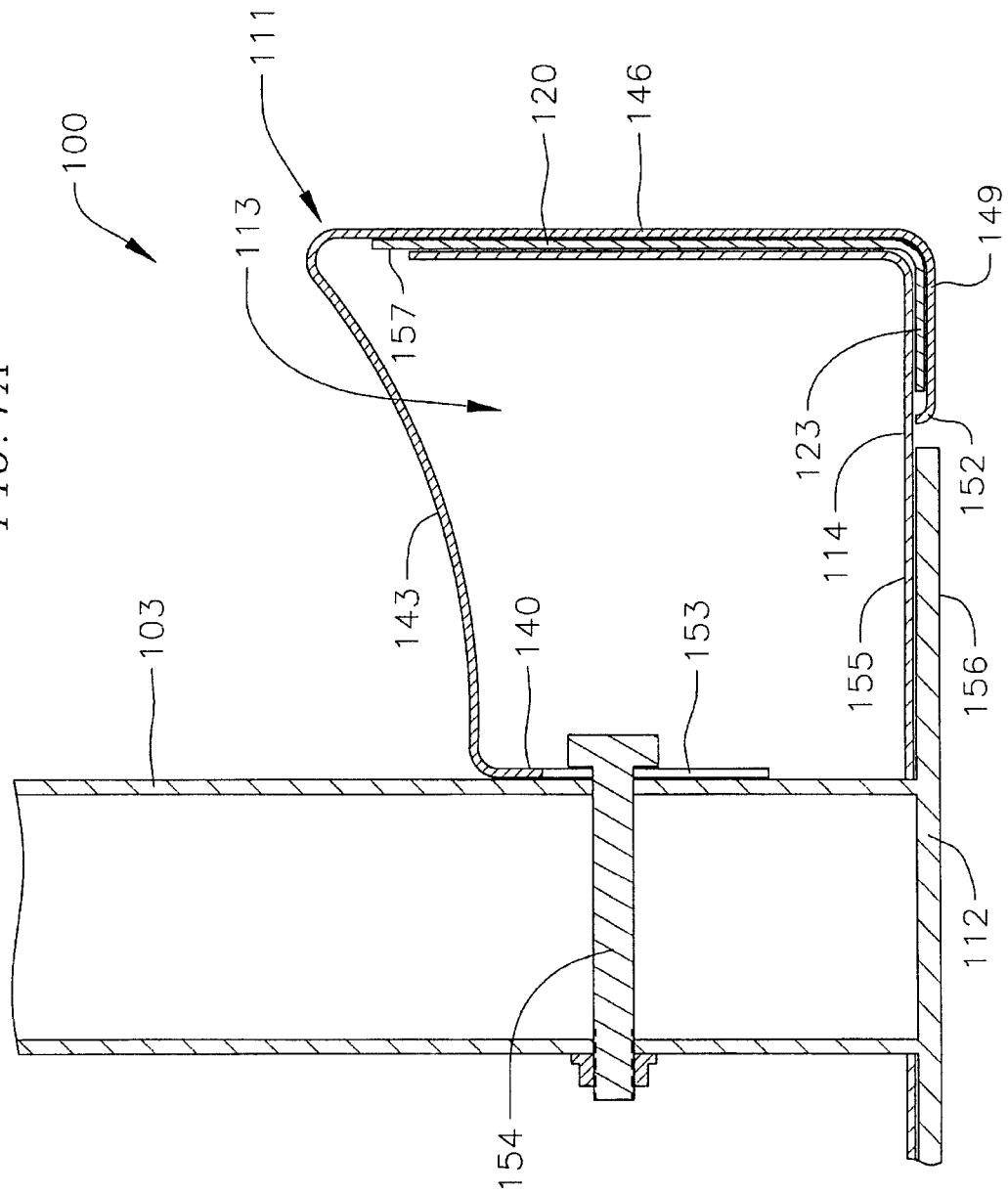




FIG. 4C

