



US 20180283612A1

(19) **United States**(12) **Patent Application Publication**
Wexler et al.(10) **Pub. No.: US 2018/0283612 A1**(43) **Pub. Date: Oct. 4, 2018**(54) **TANK FILLING SYSTEM AND METHOD**(71) Applicant: **Other Lab, LLC**, San Francisco, CA
(US)(72) Inventors: **Jason Stein Wexler**, San Francisco, CA
(US); **Durward Kimball Stone**,
Oakland, CA (US); **Karthick**
Chandraseker, San Francisco, CA (US)(21) Appl. No.: **15/940,862**(22) Filed: **Mar. 29, 2018****Related U.S. Application Data**(60) Provisional application No. 62/479,699, filed on Mar.
31, 2017, provisional application No. 62/620,935,
filed on Jan. 23, 2018.**Publication Classification**(51) **Int. Cl.**

F17C 5/06	(2006.01)
F17C 5/00	(2006.01)
F17C 13/02	(2006.01)
F17C 13/04	(2006.01)

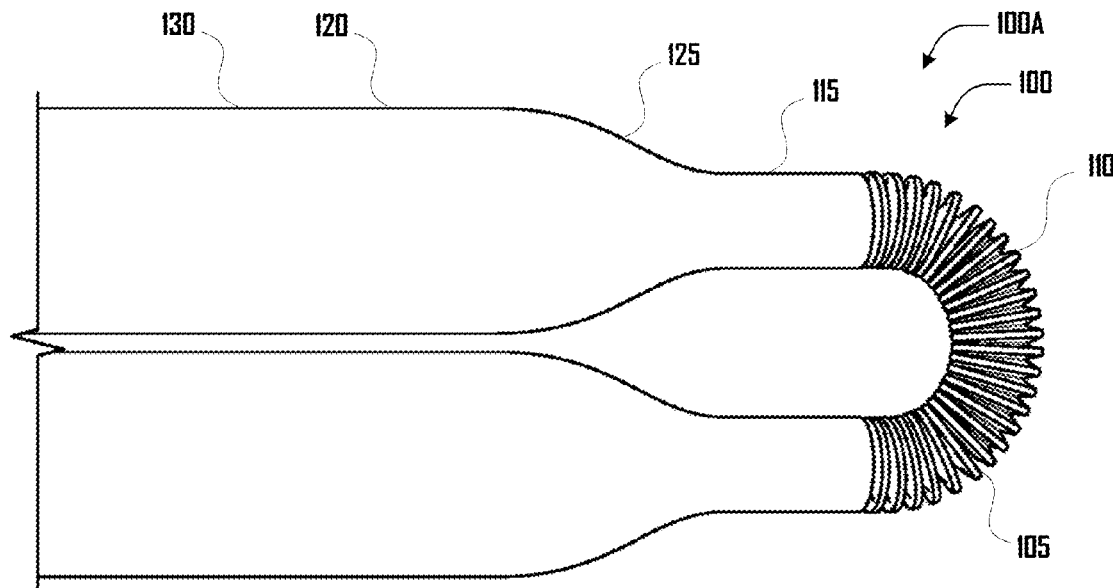
(52) **U.S. Cl.**

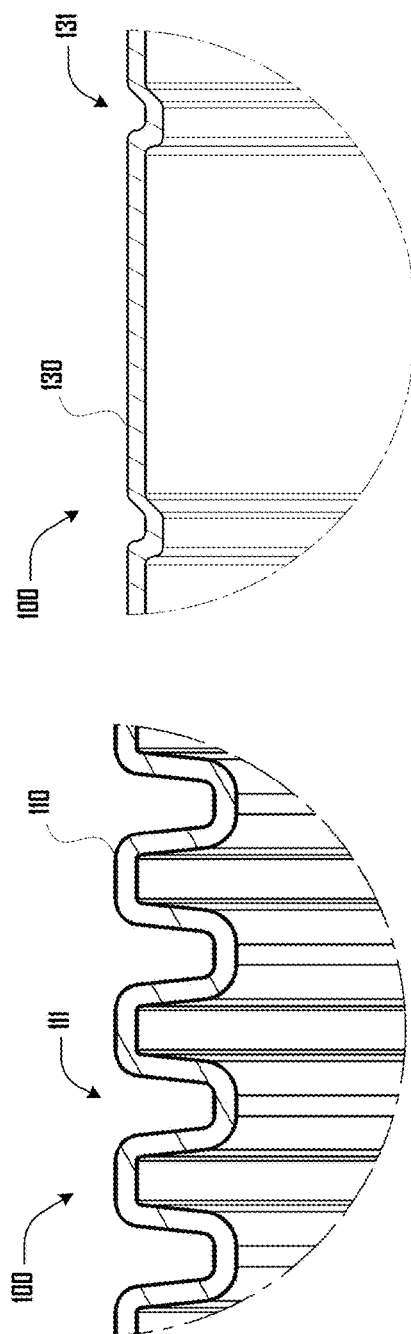
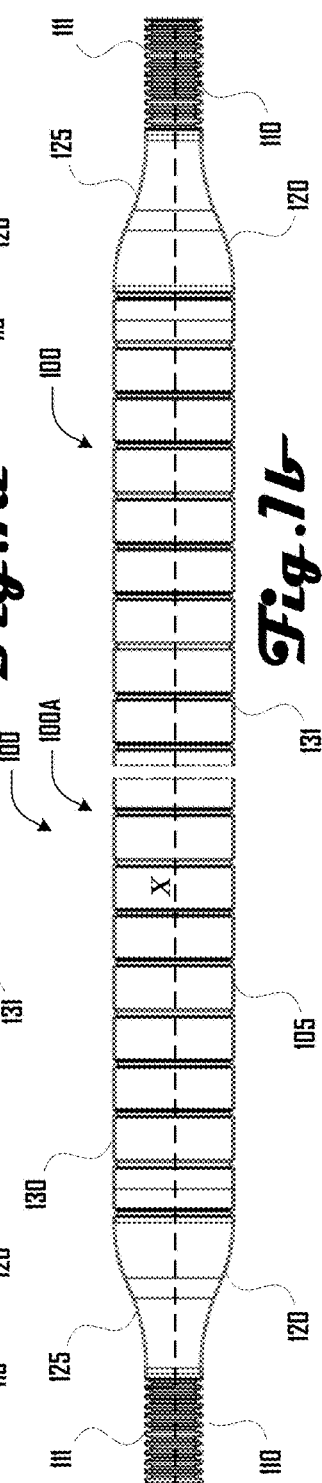
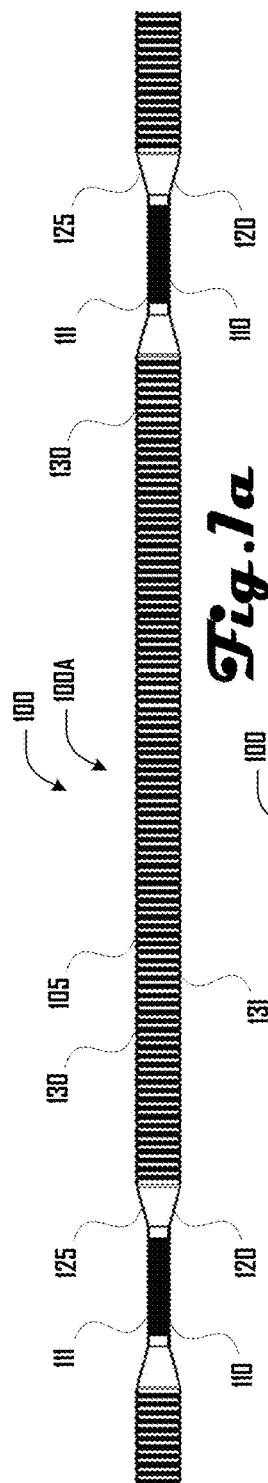
CPC **F17C 5/06** (2013.01); **F17C 2250/075**
(2013.01); **F17C 13/026** (2013.01); **F17C**
13/04 (2013.01); **F17C 2221/012** (2013.01);
F17C 2270/0139 (2013.01); **F17C 2223/0123**
(2013.01); **F17C 2205/037** (2013.01); **F17C**
2225/0123 (2013.01); **F17C 2205/0332**
(2013.01); **F17C 2201/0138** (2013.01); **F17C**
2203/0604 (2013.01); **F17C 2209/2109**
(2013.01); **F17C 2223/035** (2013.01); **F17C**
5/007 (2013.01)

(57)

ABSTRACT

A tank filling system comprising a first filling coupler that couples to a first set of fittings disposed at a first tank end of a tank; a second filling coupler that couples to a second set of fittings disposed at a second tank end of the tank; a fluid source; a set of fluid lines and one or more fluid valves that communicate fluid from the fluid source to the first and second filling couplers; and a computing device configured to control the one or more fluid valves. In some examples, the tank can comprise an elongated folded tank having a plurality of elongated rigid tubing portions having a first diameter, a plurality of connector portions having a second diameter that is smaller than the first diameter and flexible corrugations and a rigid cuff, and taper portions disposed between and coupling successive tubing portions and connector portions.





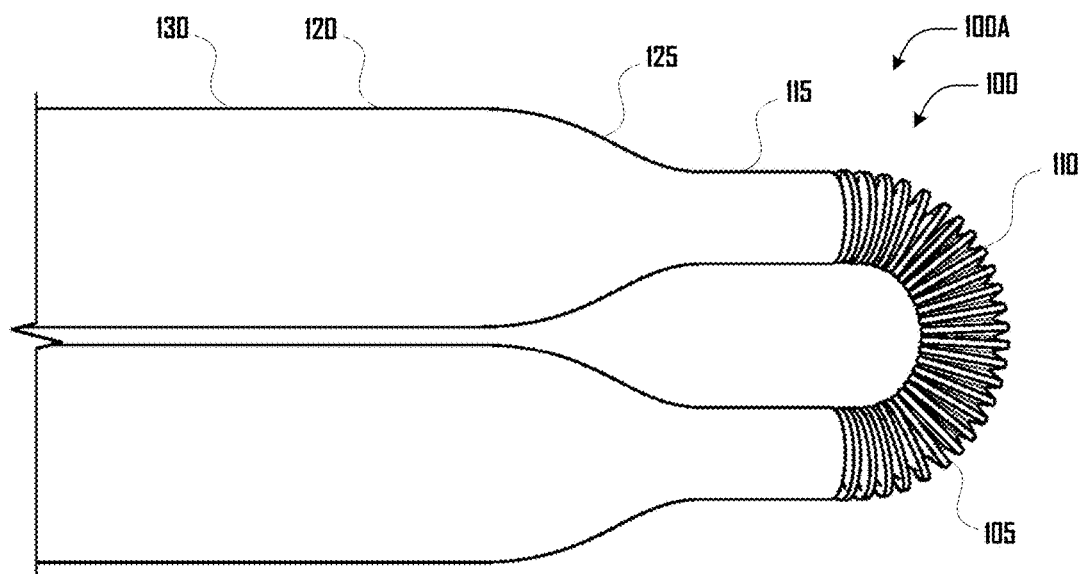


Fig. 2a

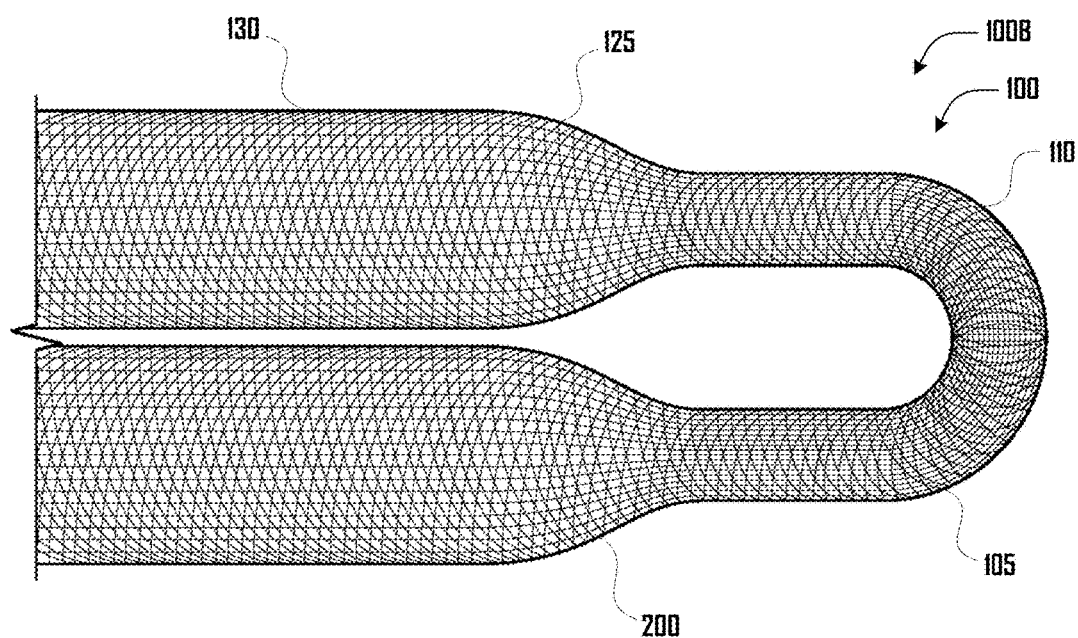


Fig. 2b

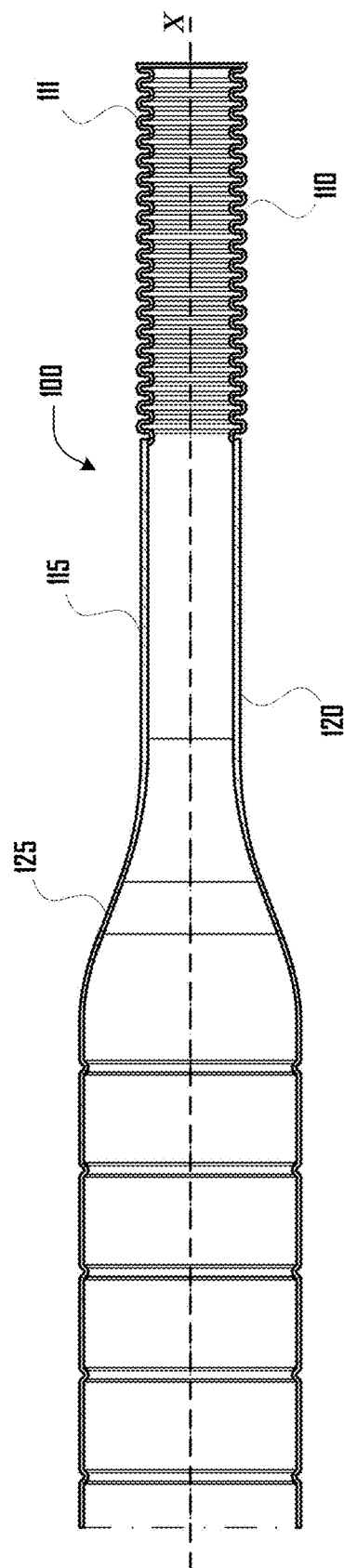


Fig. 3

Fig.4

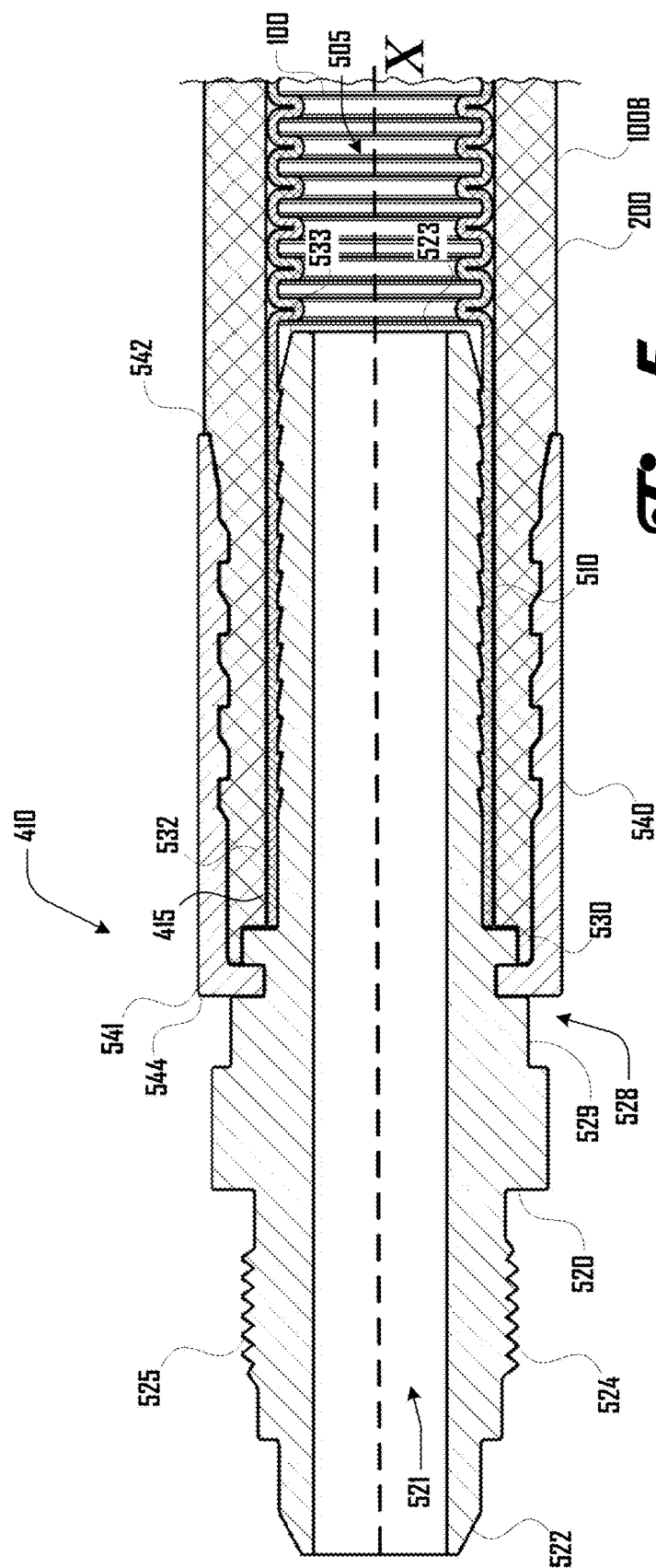


Fig. 5

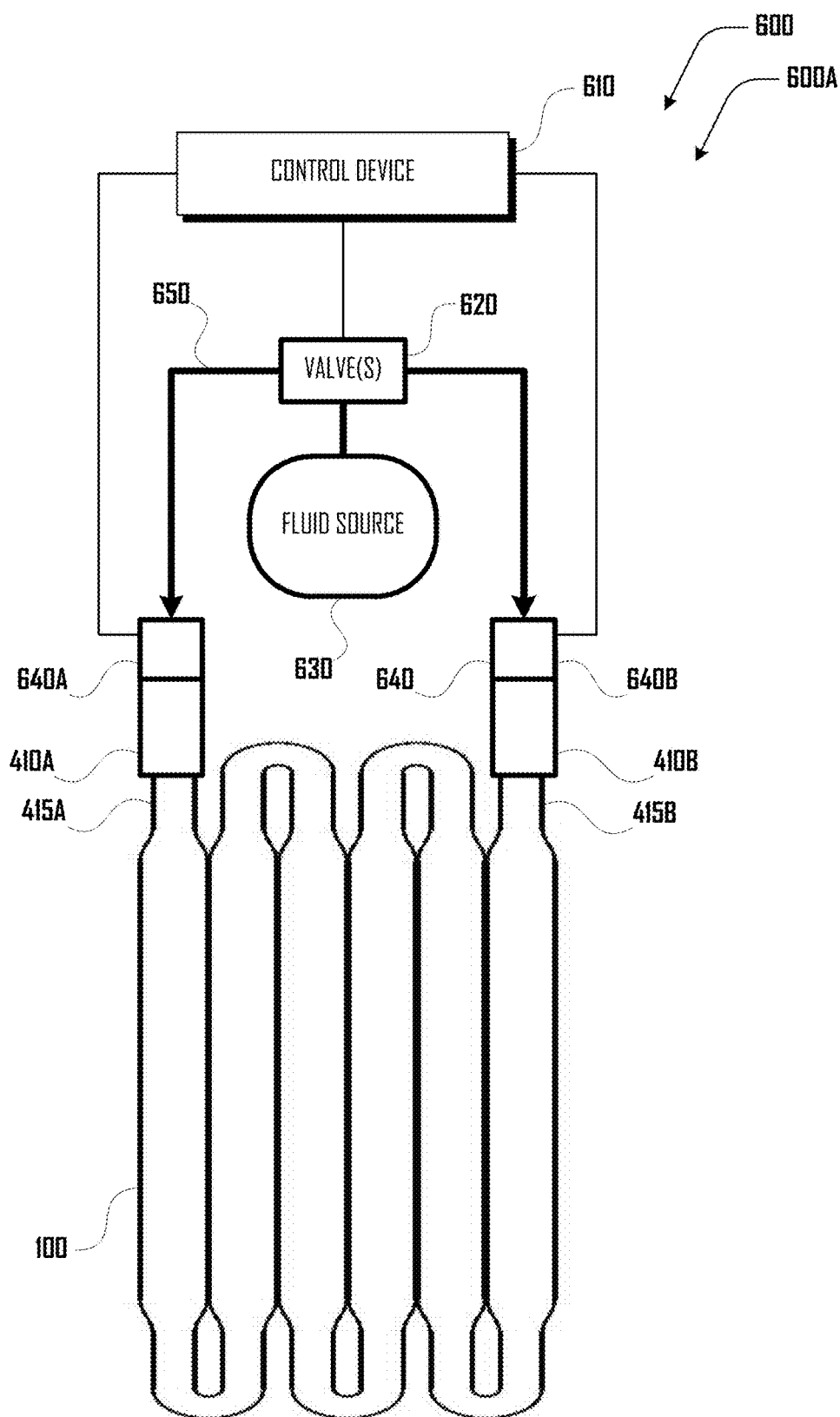
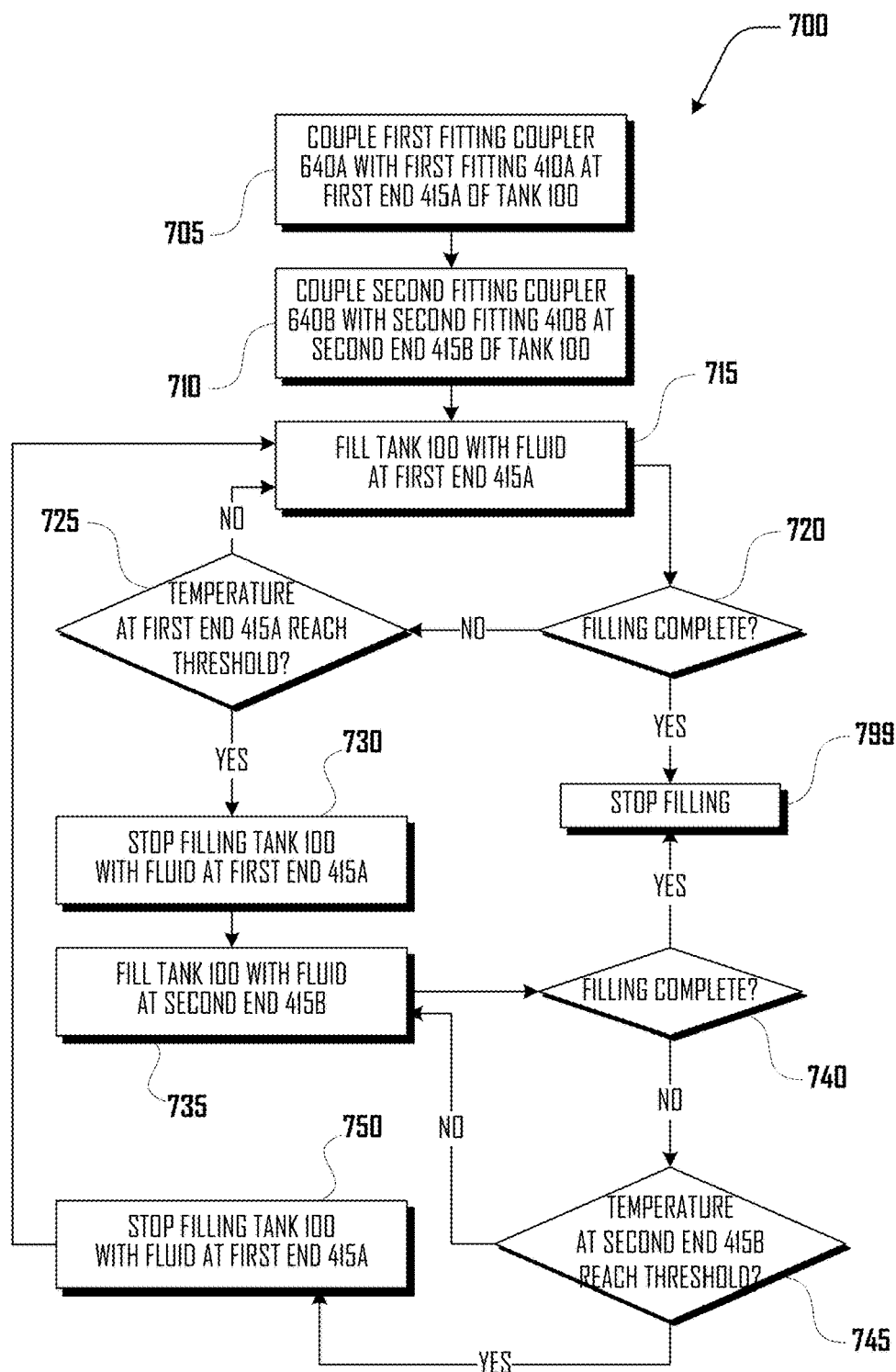


Fig. 6

**Fig. 7**

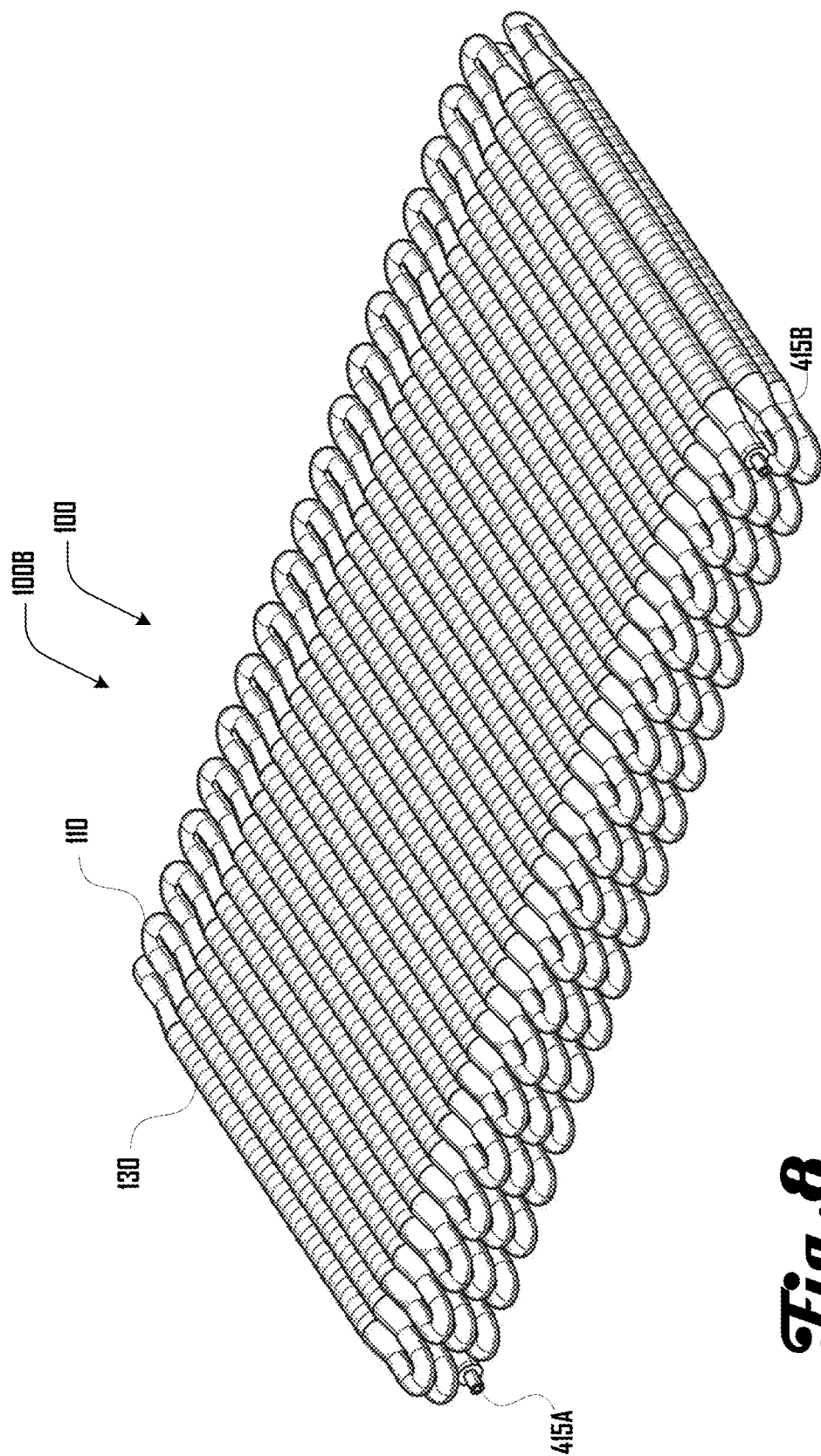


Fig. 8

„Conventional“ 5 kg 70 MPa Type IV HDPE tank		
Parameter	Value	Unit
Total length	800	mm
External diameter	553	mm
Wall thickness liner	5	mm
Wall thickness composite	35.334	mm
Liner density	945	kg/m ³
Liner thermal conductivity	0.5	W/(m*K)
Liner specific heat capacity	2100	J/(kg*K)
Composite density	1494	kg/m ³
Composite thermal conductivity	0.5	W/(m*K)
Composite specific heat capacity	1120	J/(kg*K)

Fig. 9a

Case #	Precool Temp.	Heat transfer to ambient
1	-33°C	5 W/m ² K
2	0°C	5 W/m ² K
3	none	5 W/m ² K
4	0°C	0 W/m ² K

Fig. 9b

*curve ends when SOC = 1

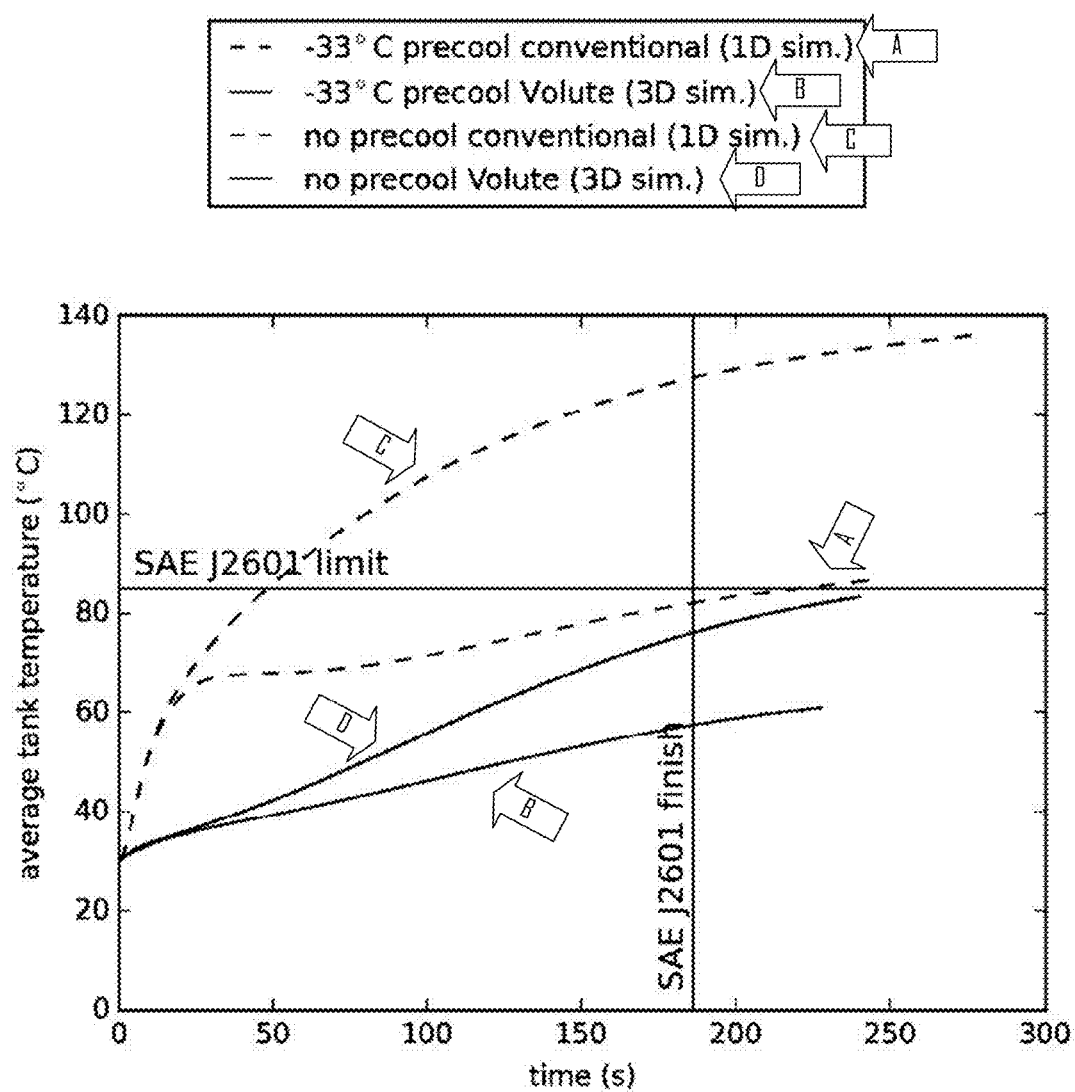
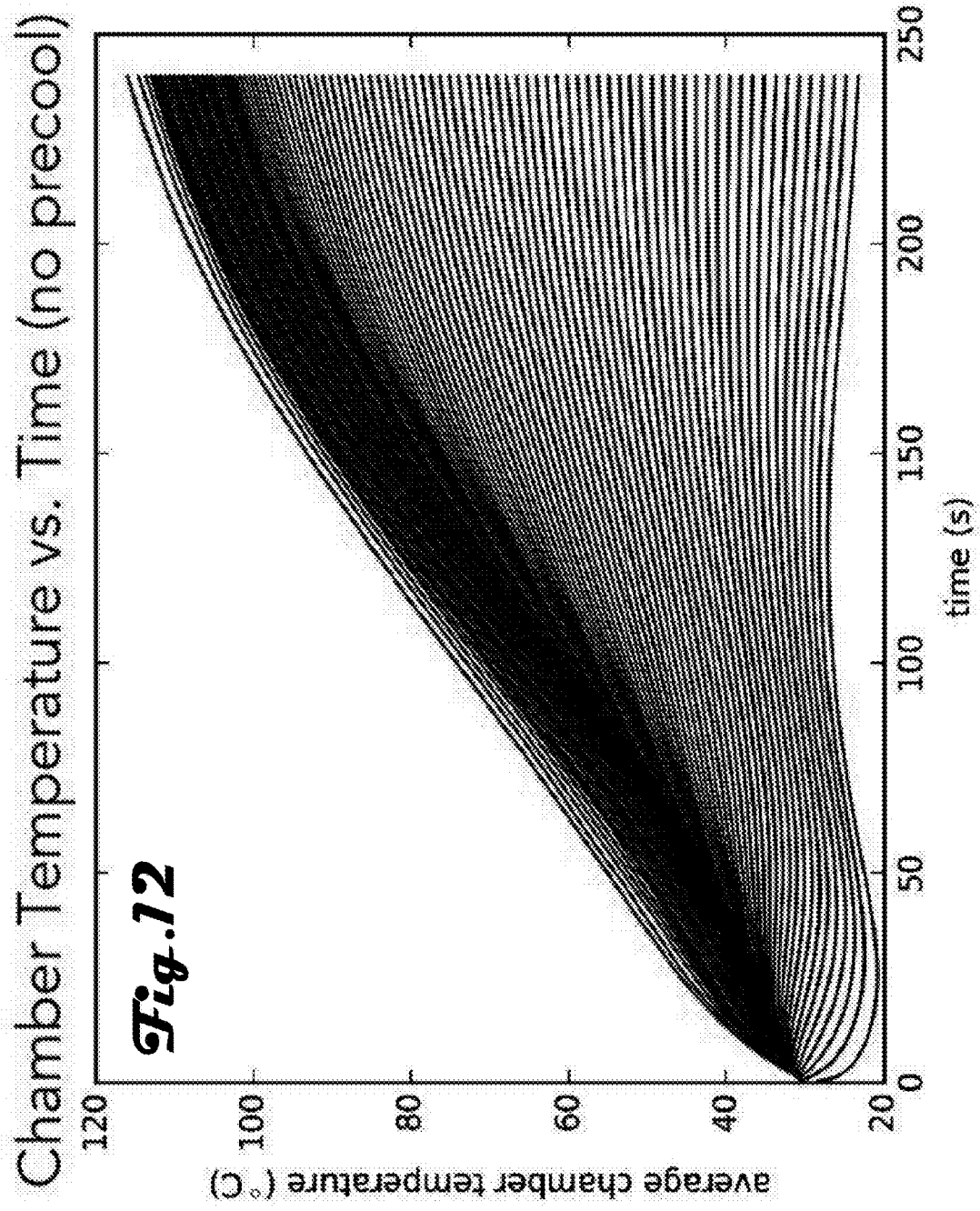
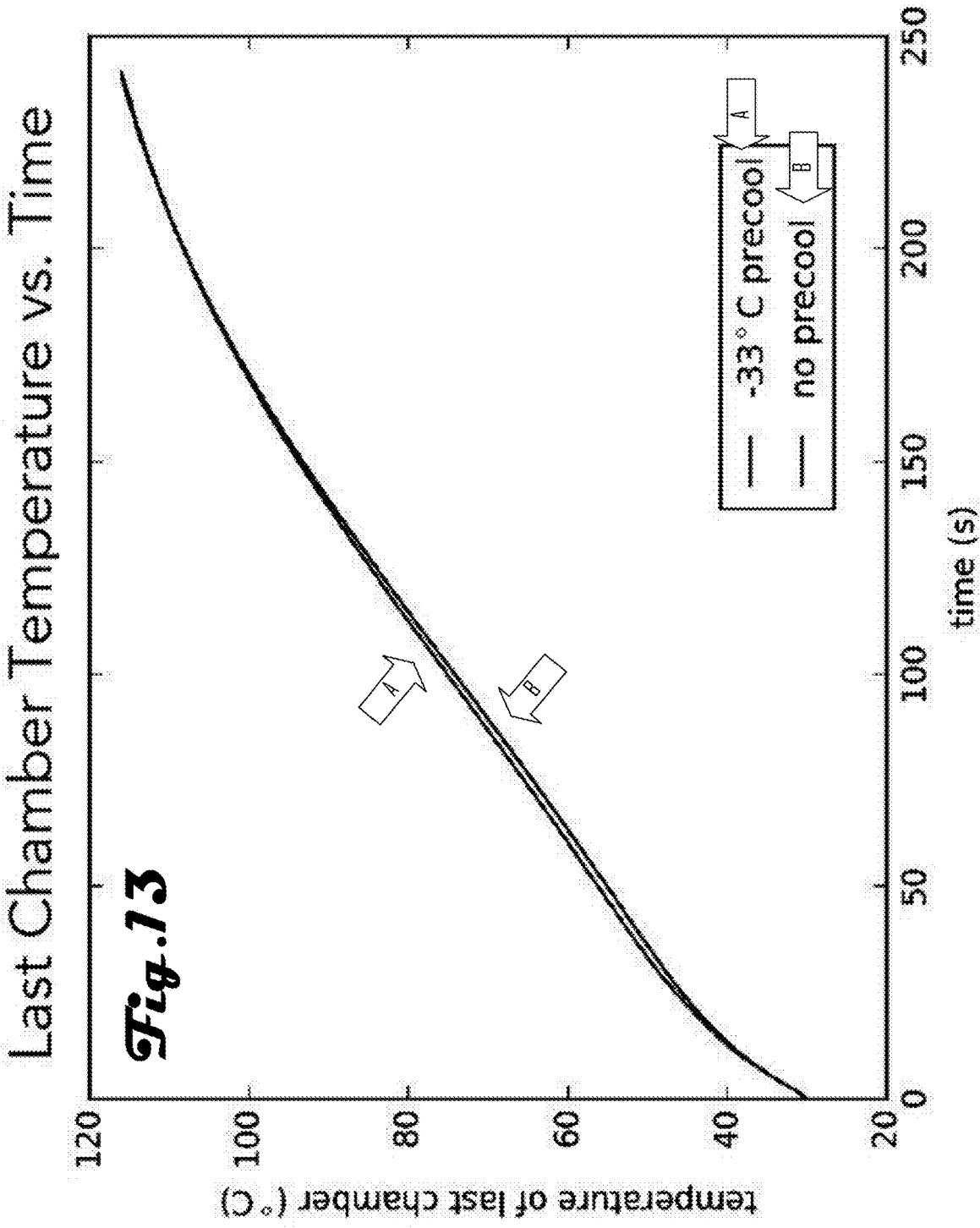


Fig.10

Tank	Precool	Time	P _{avg}	T _{avg}
Conventional	-33°C	248 s	88 MPa	87°C
Conventional	none	279 s	100 MPa	136°C
Volute	-33°C	242 s	86 MPa	62°C
Volute	none	240 s	85 MPa	83°C

Fig. 11





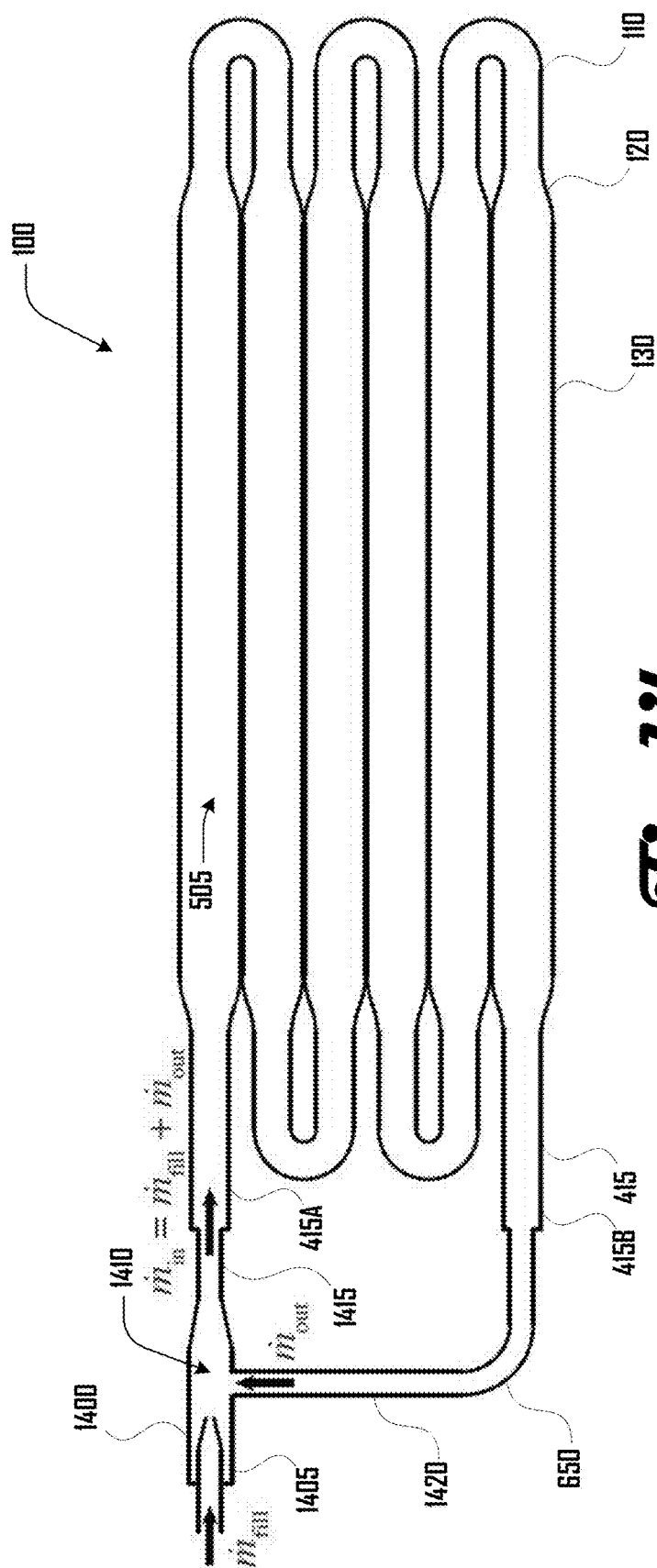


Fig. 14

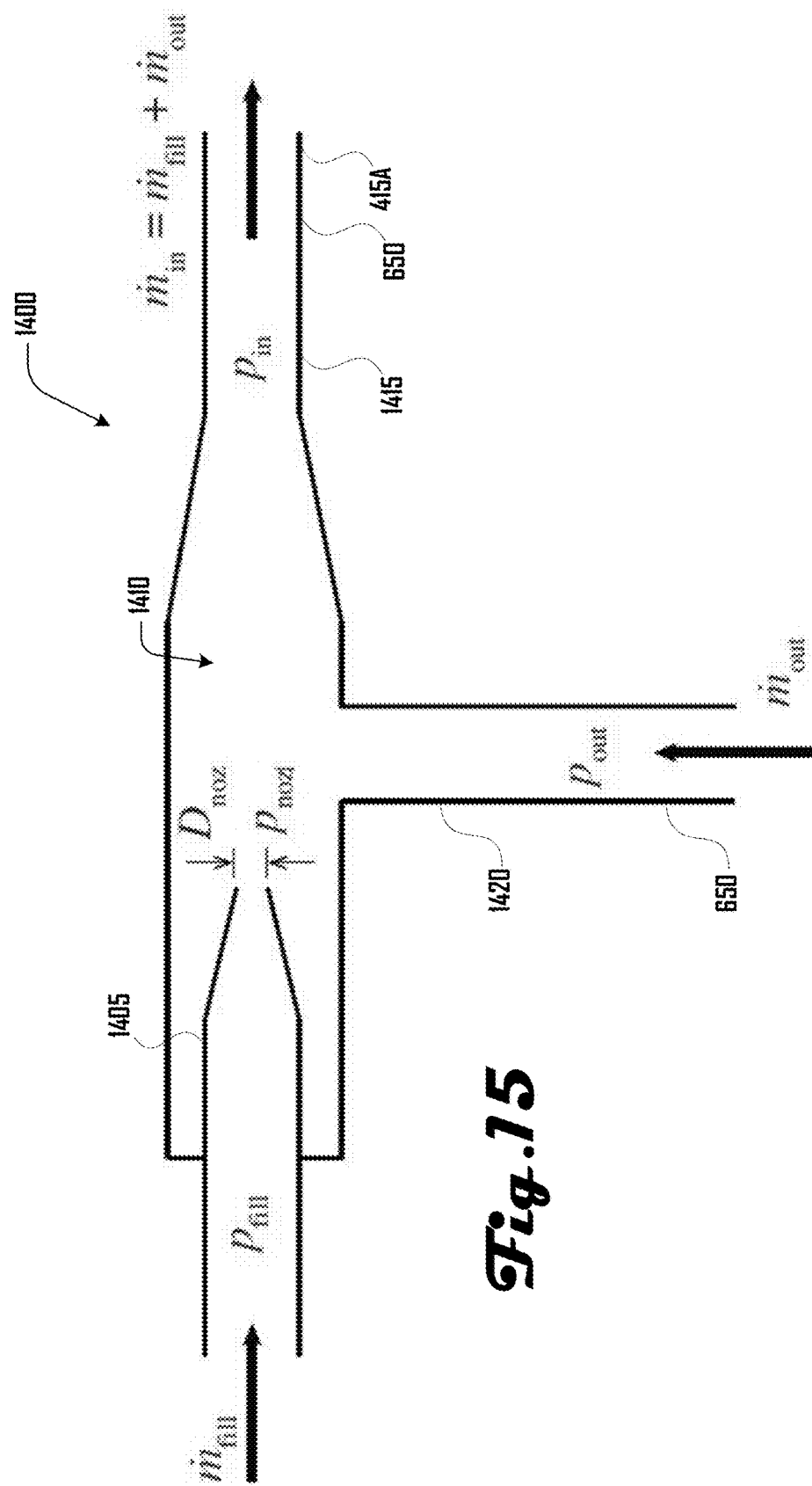


Fig. 15

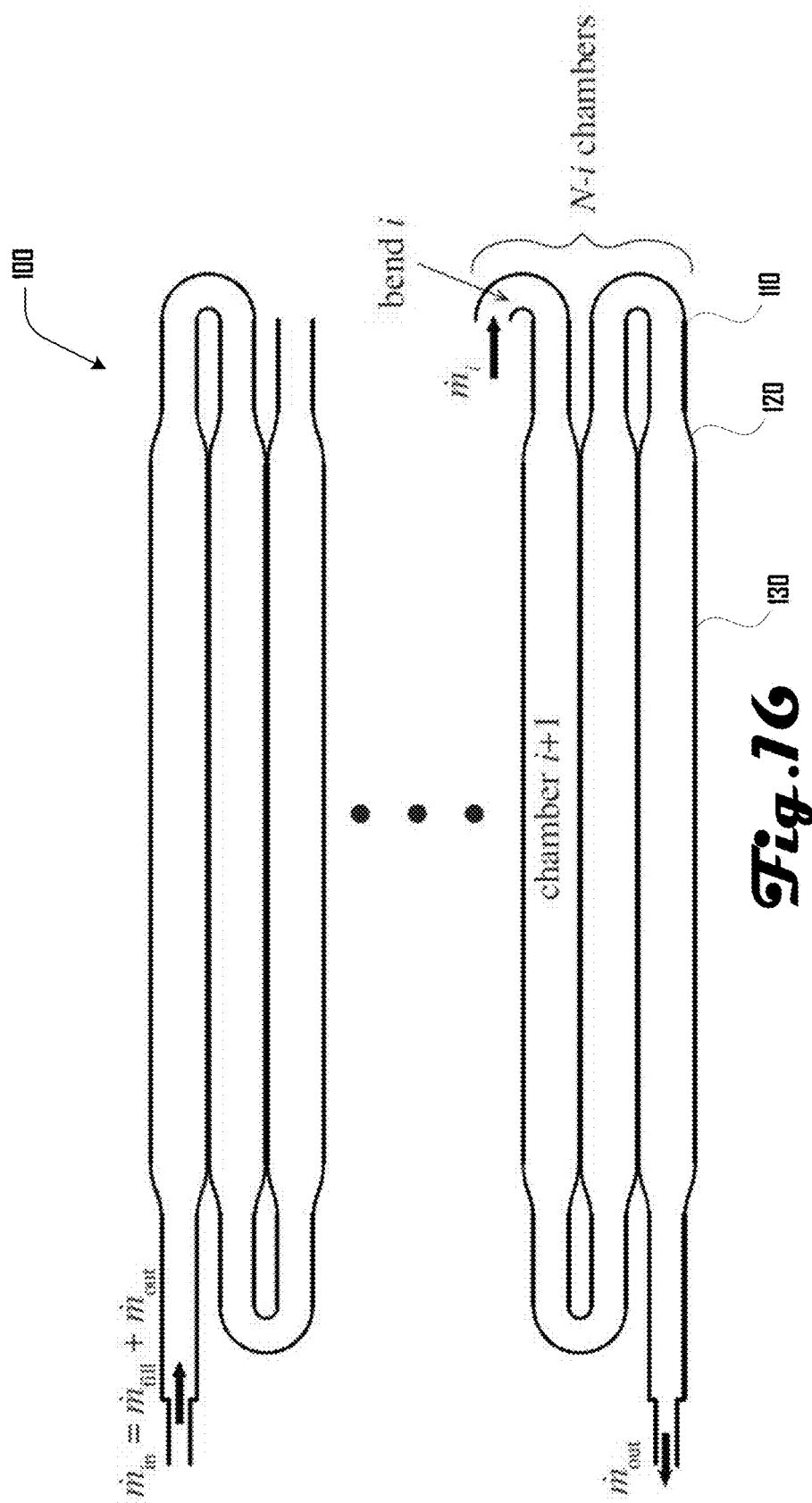


Fig. 16

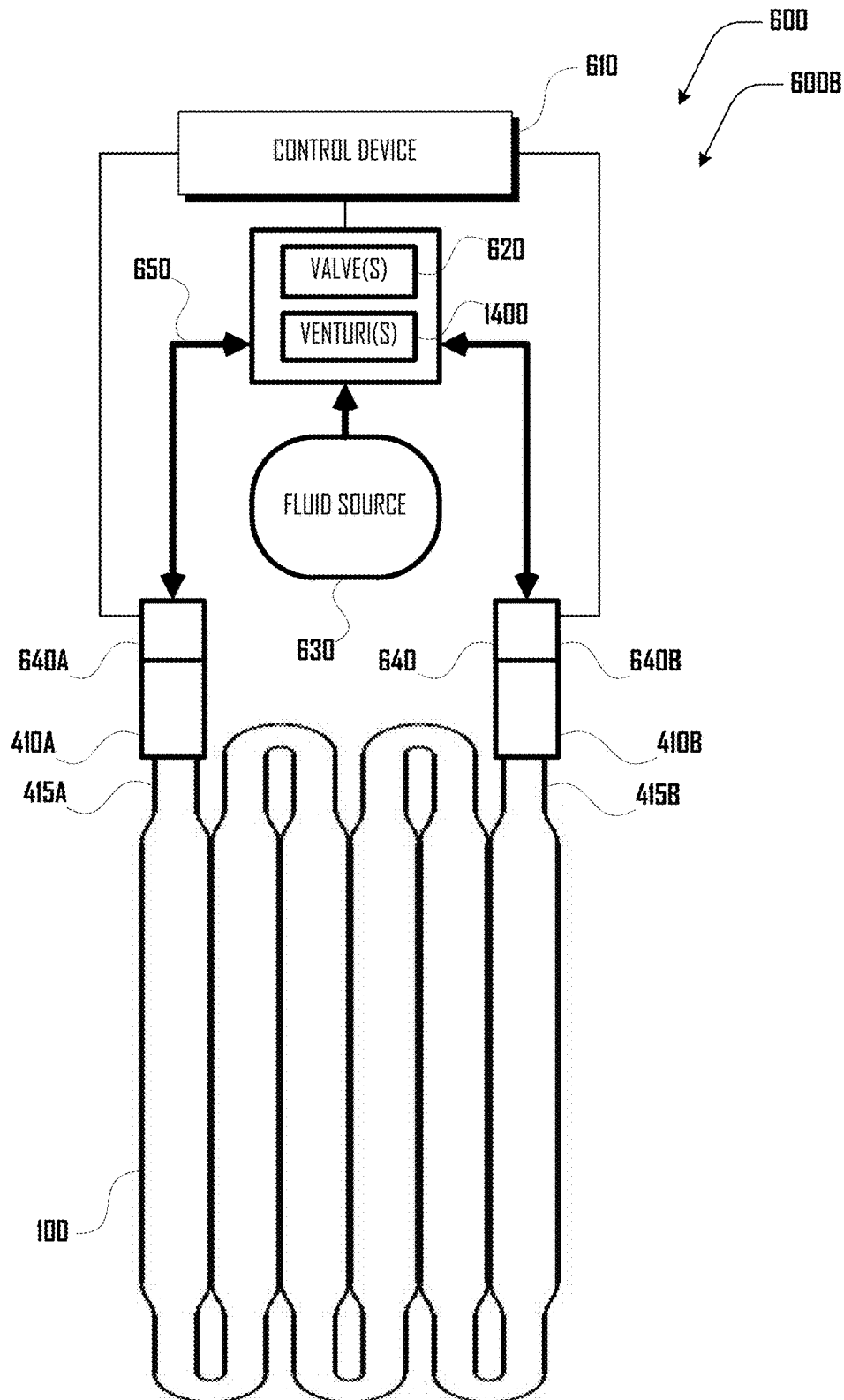


Fig. 17

TANK FILLING SYSTEM AND METHOD

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application is a non-provisional of and claims priority to U.S. Provisional applications entitled “FAST-FILL TANK SYSTEM AND METHOD” and “TANK FILLING SYSTEM AND METHOD” and respectively having application numbers 62/479,699 and 62/620,935 respectively filed Mar. 31, 2017 and Jan. 23, 2018. These applications are hereby incorporated herein by reference in their entirety and for all purposes.

[0002] This application is related to U.S. application Ser. No. 13/887,201 filed May 3, 2013; U.S. application Ser. No. 14/172,831 filed Feb. 4, 2014; U.S. application Ser. No. 15/183,614 filed Jun. 15, 2016; U.S. application Ser. No. 14/624,370 filed Feb. 17, 2015; U.S. application Ser. No. 15/368,182 filed Dec. 2, 2016; U.S. application Ser. No. 15/792,090 filed Oct. 24, 2017; U.S. Application Ser. No. 62/479,598 filed Mar. 31, 2017; U.S. Application Ser. No. 62/479,699 filed Mar. 31, 2017. These applications are hereby incorporated herein by reference in their entirety and for all purposes.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0003] FIGS. 1a and 1b illustrate side views of a bare liner comprising a body having connector portions, taper portions and tubing portions.

[0004] FIG. 1c illustrates a close-up side view of corrugations of connector portions of a bare liner.

[0005] FIG. 1d illustrates a close-up side view of corrugations of tubing portions of a bare liner.

[0006] FIG. 2a illustrates a side view of a bare liner bending via corrugations of the connector portions.

[0007] FIG. 2b illustrates a side view of the liner of FIG. 2a covered with braiding.

[0008] FIG. 3 illustrates a side view of a bare liner comprising a body having a connector portion with a cuff and corrugations, a taper portion and tubing portion.

[0009] FIG. 4 illustrates one embodiment of a tank that is folded and held in a stacking architecture defined by a plurality of transverse planks that engage with a plurality of lateral planks.

[0010] FIG. 5 illustrates a cutaway side view of a set of fittings coupled to an end of a tank.

[0011] FIG. 6 is a diagram of a tank filling system in accordance with an embodiment.

[0012] FIG. 7 is a block diagram of a method of filling a tank with fluid in accordance with one embodiment.

[0013] FIG. 8 illustrates an example tank having one hundred and twelve chambers in accordance with one embodiment.

[0014] FIG. 9a illustrates parameters of a conventional tank used in a simulation study performed for the tank shown in FIG. 8.

[0015] FIG. 9b illustrates four cases used to perform a 3D and 1D simulation.

[0016] FIG. 10 is a plot of average tank temperature over time for the simulations.

[0017] FIG. 11 is a table of data obtained in the simulations.

[0018] FIG. 12 is a plot of average chamber temperature over time with no precool.

[0019] FIG. 13 is a plot of last chamber temperature over time.

[0020] FIG. 14 is a schematic showing a Venturi assembly connected to a 6-chamber tank, circulating gas flow during the filling of an example 6-chamber tank with fluid.

[0021] FIG. 15 is a schematic showing the Venturi assembly of FIG. 14 circulating the flow during the filling of a tank with fluid.

[0022] FIG. 16 is a schematic showing a tank having i+3 chambers.

[0023] FIG. 17 is a block diagram of a tank filling system in accordance with another embodiment.

[0024] It should be noted that the figures are not drawn to scale and that elements of similar structures or functions are generally represented by like reference numerals for illustrative purposes throughout the figures. It also should be noted that the figures are only intended to facilitate the description of the preferred embodiments. The figures do not illustrate every aspect of the described embodiments and do not limit the scope of the present disclosure.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0025] Turning to FIGS. 1a-d, a bare liner 100A is shown as comprising a body 105 having connector portions 110, taper portions 125 and tubing portions 130. The connector portion 110 can be corrugated, which can allow the connector portion 110 to be flexible such that the liner 100 can be folded into a housing 300 as illustrated in FIGS. 3a and 3b. Non-corrugated portions 120 can be rigid in various embodiments.

[0026] In various embodiments, the connector portion 110 can have a diameter that is smaller than the tubing portions 130, with the taper portion 125 providing a transition between the diameter of the connector portion 110 and the tubing portion 130. However, further embodiments can comprise a liner 100 with portions having one or more suitable diameter, and in further embodiments, a liner 100 can have portions that are non-cylindrical, which can include various suitable shapes. The connector portion 110 can comprise connector corrugations 111, which can allow the connector portion 110 to be flexible (e.g., as illustrated in FIGS. 2a and 2b) such that the liner 100 can be folded into a housing 300 as illustrated in FIGS. 3a and 3b.

[0027] Additionally, as illustrated in FIGS. 1a, 1b, 2a and 3 the connector portion 110 can comprise a cuff portion 115 defined by a non-corrugated portion 120 or rigid portion of the connector portion 110 between the corrugations 111 of the connector portion 110 and the taper portion 125. In further embodiments, the cuff portion 115 can be various sizes as illustrated in FIGS. 1a, 1b, 2a and 3. More specifically, FIGS. 1a and 1b illustrate a cuff portion 115 being smaller compared to the cuff portion 115 illustrated in FIGS. 2a and 3. In some embodiments, the cuff portion 115 can have a length that is less than, equal to, or greater than the length of the taper portion 125. In some embodiments, the taper portion 125 can have a length that is less than, equal to, or greater than the length of the cuff portion 115 or twice the length of the cuff portion 115.

[0028] Similarly, in some embodiments, the tubing portions 130 can comprise corrugations 131. However, in further embodiments, the corrugations 131 can be absent

from the tubing portions (e.g., as illustrated in FIG. 2a). Non-corrugated portions 120 can be rigid in various embodiments.

[0029] In one embodiment, the liner 100 can be generated via extrusion molding systems or the like, which can comprise rotating dies that are configured to rotate in concert such that corresponding dies mate about an extruded tube generated by an extruder. Corresponding mated dies can thereby define one or more of the connector portion 110, taper portion 125 and/or the tubing portion 130.

[0030] In various embodiments, a vacuum can pull the material of an extruded tube to conform to negative contours defined by the mated die. In some embodiments, positive pressure can be introduced within the tube to conform to negative contours defined by the mated die. In various embodiments, such a manufacturing process can be beneficial because liners 100 can be made seamlessly, with no welds, and using a single material.

[0031] In some embodiments, liners 100 having varying lengths of the connector portion 110, taper portion 125 and/or the tubing portion 130 can be made by selectively choosing the order of dies such that desired portions are made longer or shorter. For example, in some embodiments, a liner 100 can be produced that fits into an irregular or non-rectangular cavity, which can require a liner 100 to have tubing portions 130 of variable lengths.

[0032] In some embodiments, a liner 100 can be made by forming various pieces of the liner 100 and then coupling the pieces together. For example, connector portion 110 can be manufactured separately from the taper portion 125 and/or the tubing portion 130, and/or the cuff portion 115. Such separate portions can be subsequently coupled together to form the liner 100.

[0033] A liner 100 can comprise various suitable materials including plastic, metal, or the like. In some preferred embodiments, a liner 100 can comprise Ultramid PA6, Rilsamid PA12, Lupolen HDPE, or the like.

[0034] Accordingly, the embodiments of a liner 100 shown and described herein should not be construed to be limiting on the wide variety of liners 100 that are within the scope and spirit of the present invention. For example, liners 100 as described in U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 62/175,914, which is incorporated herein by reference, illustrate some further example embodiments of liners 100.

[0035] In some embodiments, a liner 100 can be a naked liner 100A as illustrated in FIGS. 1a-d, and 2a. However, as illustrated in FIG. 2b, in some embodiments a liner 100 can be a covered or over-braided liner 100B, which can include a braiding 200 or other suitable covering. An over-braided liner 100B can be desirable because the braiding 200 can increase the strength of the liner and thereby increase the duty pressure under which the liner 100 may safely operate. Additionally, braiding 200 can be disposed in a plurality of layers in various embodiments. For example, in one preferred embodiment, the braid 200 can comprise six layers of 48 carrier carbon braid 200.

[0036] As discussed in detail herein, the material(s), shape, size, configuration and other variables related to a braid 200 can be chosen to increase the strength provided by the braiding 200, increase the flexibility of the braiding 200, increase the strength to weight ratio of the braiding, and the like. In various preferred embodiments, braiding 200 can be configured to completely cover a liner 100. In other words, one or more layers of braiding 200 can be configured to

cover the liner 100 such that the liner is not visible through the braid 200 once applied to the liner 100 and such that gaps between the braid are not present such that the liner 100 is visible through the braid 200.

[0037] In various embodiments, the tank 100 can be folded into a three-dimensional structure. For example, FIG. 4 illustrates one embodiment where an over-braided liner 100B is folded and held in a stacking architecture 405. The tank 100 can also include fittings 410 disposed at ends 415 of the tank 100. More specifically, a first fitting 410A can be coupled at a first end 415A of the tank 100 and a second fitting 410B can be coupled at a second end 415B of the fitting. Although FIG. 4 illustrates fittings 410 coupled to the connector portion 110 of the tank 100, in further embodiments, fittings can be coupled at any suitable portion of the tank 100, including the cuff portions 115, taper portions 125 and/or tubing portions 130. Such fittings 410 can include crimp fittings, bolt fittings, or any other suitable type of fitting. Examples of fittings in accordance with some embodiments are shown and described in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 15/792,090 entitled FITTINGS FOR COMPRESSED GAS STORAGE VESSELS, filed Oct. 24, 2017, which as discussed above is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety for all purposes.

[0038] In various embodiments, such fittings 410 can be configured to interface with a tank valve and have a hollow center bore that is not only large enough to allow the passage of a fluid but also large enough to allow the pass-through of valve instrumentation, or the like. For example, in various embodiments, such tank valves can be instrumented to detect tank conditions within the tank 100, including temperature, pressure, or the like, as described in more detail herein.

[0039] In some embodiments, a tank 100 can comprise smooth cuffs 115 at one or both ends 415 of the tank 100 for fitting attachment (e.g., as illustrated in FIGS. 2a and 3, but with the corrugated portion 105 removed). In some examples, connector portions 110 can comprise cuff sections 115 and corrugation sections 105 to allow for a smooth attachment surface for crimp fittings 410. However, in further embodiments, with modification to tooling mold blocks or the like, it is possible to incorporate cuff sections 115 to the end sections 415 of the tank 100, leaving internal connector portions 110 completely corrugated. Such cuff sections 115 at ends 415 of the tank 100 can be various suitable diameters, which can be the same size as, larger than, or smaller than internal connector portions 110, and such connector portions 110 can be completely or partially corrugated. In other words, some embodiments can include repeating tank geometries for internal portions of the tank 100 between the ends 415, with a different tank geometry on the ends 415 of the tank 100. Non-periodic tank geometries can be generated in various suitable ways including a liner forming machine with swappable mold blocks as discussed herein, or the like.

[0040] Turning to FIG. 5, fittings 410 can be configured to couple with ends 415 of a liner 100. In some embodiments, fittings 410 can be configured to couple with an over-braided liner 100B that includes a liner 100, which is surrounded by one or more layer of braiding 200 as illustrated in FIG. 5. For example, fittings 410 can comprise a stem 520 and a ferrule 540, which are configured to couple with an end 415 of a liner 100 that is surrounded by one or more layer of braiding 200 as described in detail herein.

[0041] Fittings 410 can be made of various suitable materials including metal, plastic, or the like. In some embodiments, fittings 410 can be configured to be in contact with compressed hydrogen and can be configured to be resistant to hydrogen embrittlement or weakening of the fittings 410 and fracturing resulting from hydrogen diffusion into the fittings 410. For example, the fittings 410 can comprise a material and/or surface coating that is resistant to hydrogen induced fracturing.

[0042] The stem 520 can define a bore 521 that extends through the stem 520 along an axis X between a first and second end 522, 523. In some embodiments having a larger diameter bore 521 can be desirable to increase the flow rate through the bore 521, which can be desirable for faster filling. Additionally, a larger diameter bore 521 can be desirable for allowing sensors to be inserted into the bore 521 and into the interior cavity 505 defined by the liner 100.

[0043] The stem 520 can comprise a head 524 that includes threads 525, which can be configured to couple with various systems such that suitable fluids can be introduced to and/or removed from an interior cavity 505 defined by the liner 100 as described in more detail herein. For example, where such a fluid comprises hydrogen, the head 524 can be directly or indirectly coupled with a hydrogen filling station to fill the interior cavity 505 defined by the liner 100 with hydrogen and can be directly or indirectly coupled with a vehicle engine to provide hydrogen fuel to the vehicle engine from hydrogen stored within the interior cavity 505 defined by the liner 100.

[0044] The head 524 can also connect to various other suitable components including a valve, pressure regulator, thermally activated pressure relief device, temperature sensor, pressure sensor, or the like. While various example embodiments discussed herein relate to a male conical shape of a head 524 that can be configured to seal against a corresponding female cone, further coupling or mating structures of various configurations can be implemented in further embodiments. For example, in one embodiment, the head 524 can comprise an O-ring face-seal, an O-ring bore-seal, or the like.

[0045] Additionally, various components can be configured to extend into a fitting 410 or into the cavity 506 defined by the over-braided liner 100B. For example such components can include at least a portion of a gas injector, a gas receiver (e.g., including a filter and an excess flow valve), a temperature sensor, a pressure sensor, a bleed valve, a temperature pressure relief device (TPRD), and the like. In some embodiments such components can be inserted into and reside within the bore 521 of the stem 520 and/or within the cavity 505 defined by the liner. In various embodiments, it can be desirable to have a large diameter bore 521 to accommodate such components.

[0046] The head 524 can extend to a coupling architecture 528 defined by a first and second rim 529, 530 disposed on opposite sides of and defining a coupling groove 531. A coupling body 532 can extend from the coupling architecture 528 and terminate at the tip 533 disposed at the second end 523 of the stem 520.

[0047] The ferrule 540 can comprise a cylindrical body having a first and second end 541, 542 with a lip 544 defining a coupling orifice at the first end 541. The ferrule 540 can further define a cavity that extends between the first and second end 541, 542 and opens to the coupling orifice at the first end 541 and an opening at the second end 542.

[0048] In various embodiments, the stem 520 and ferrule 540 can couple about an end 415 of an over-braided liner 100B in various suitable ways such that a fluid-tight seal is generated by the resulting fitting 410. Such a coupling can be configured or rated for use with pressurized fluids including being rated for use at 10 MPa, 25 MPa, 50 MPa, 70 MPa, 90 MPa, 110 MPa, 130 MPa, 150 MPa, or the like. In one preferred embodiment, a fitting 410 comprising a stem 520 and ferrule 540 as described herein can be rated for use with pressurized hydrogen at 70 MPa nominal working pressure. In another preferred embodiment, a fitting 510 comprising a stem 520 and ferrule 540 as described herein can be rated for use with compressed natural gas (CNG) at 25 MPa nominal working pressure. Although various embodiments discussed herein can be configured for use with fuel fluids such as hydrogen or CNG, further embodiments can be configured for use with any suitable fluid at various suitable pressures. Additionally, some embodiments can be configured for use with cryogenic fluids, room-temperature fluids, or heated fluids.

[0049] Turning to FIG. 6, a tank filling system 600 of one embodiment 600A is illustrated that comprises a control device 610 that drives a valve assembly 620 to direct fluid from a fluid source 630 to filling couplers 640 via fluid lines 650. The filling couplers 640 are removably coupled to fittings 410 on ends 415 of a tank 100. More specifically, a first filling coupler 640A is removably coupled to a first fitting 410A at a first end 415A of the tank 100, and a second filling coupler 640B is removably coupled to a second fitting 410B at a second end 415B of the tank. The control device can be operably connected to the filling couplers 640 as described in more detail below.

[0050] The filling couplers 640 can be removably coupled to the fittings 410 in various suitable ways. For example, referring to the example fittings 410 of FIG. 5, filling couplers 640 can couple with the threads 525 on the head 524 of the stem 520, which can provide a fluid-tight seal between the filling coupler 640 and the fittings 410. Additionally, in various embodiments, the filling couplers 640 can comprise one or more sensors, which can include a temperature sensor, pressure sensor, velocity sensor, and the like. When a filling coupler 640 is coupled with a fitting 410, such sensors can be disposed within the body of the filling coupler 640, and can extend into and be disposed within the fittings 410 (e.g., within the bore 521) or within a portion of the tank 100 (e.g., the cavity 505).

[0051] The control device can comprise any suitable computing system or computing device, which can receive data from one or more sensors associated with the fitting couplers 640, tank 100 or the like, via wired and/or wireless communication. The control device 610 can control the one or more valves 620 to control flow of fluid from the fluid source 630 to the ends 415 of the tank 100 via the fluid lines 650. Although one example configuration of valves 620 is illustrated in FIG. 6, it should be clear that any suitable configuration of one or more valves, or the like, is within the scope and spirit of the present disclosure, and the example configuration of FIG. 6 should not be construed to be limiting. For example, the illustration of FIG. 6 should not be construed to exclude configuration having valves collocated at the fluid source 630, fitting couplers 640, or the like.

[0052] Pressurized gaseous fuel tanks can experience heating when filled due to heat of compression and, for some gasses, to the Joule-Thompson effect. For safety, some

compressed fuel filling stations control the filling rate to avoid dangerously high temperatures. In addition, the high temperatures can be undesirable because they can result in low density at a given pressure, thus requiring overpressure to reach the target density (state of charge near 100%) or under-filled tanks.

[0053] Such heat generation can therefore result in undesirably long filling times that take longer than filling gasoline or diesel fuel tanks and/or under-filled tanks. To mitigate these issues associated with gaseous fuel tanks, many stations have the option of gas pre-cooling. With gas pre-cooling, the gas is cooled to a low temperature (e.g., as low as -40°C .) before the gas enters the tank. This has the effect of lowering the maximum temperature that the gas reaches due to heat of compression, since the initial temperature is lower.

[0054] Gas pre-cooling can add significant additional complexity to the construction of fueling stations, which can undesirably increase capital cost and operational cost for the fueling station. This increased cost may be transferred to the customer in the form of higher gas prices. In addition, pre-cooling components can have poor reliability in some examples, resulting in significant station downtime and additional cost due to maintenance and replacement parts.

[0055] Novel conformable tanks discussed herein and in related applications (e.g., U.S. Ser. No. 13/887,201; U.S. Ser. No. 14/172,831; U.S. Ser. No. 14/624,370; U.S. Ser. No. 15/183,614; and U.S. Ser. No. 15/368,182, which are hereby incorporated herein by reference) can be advantageous over conventional monolithic compressed gas tanks because the conformable shapes can have more surface area per unit volume of storage. Such increased surface area can allow for more rapid heat dissipation, which can increase fast-fill performance. In addition, such conformable tanks can have a smaller cross-sectional area, which can result in higher flow velocity during filling and hence better convective heat transfer from the gas to the tank wall (i.e., higher Nusselt number).

[0056] During filling or fast-fill, such novel pressure vessels can reach a lower average temperature than conventional pressure vessels. This can be because such novel pressure vessels have a higher ratio of surface area to volume, and because the gas can have a higher average speed due to the smaller tank diameter, resulting in greater convective heat transfer. This can result in a reduced need for gas pre-cooling. Conformable pressure vessels can thus be filled with fluid that is pre-cooled to a higher temperature or not pre-cooled at all, while still achieving the filling speeds that are normally associated with pre-cooled gas.

[0057] However, in some embodiments, less mixing can occur during the filling of various example tanks **100** or pressure vessels due to their elongated shape, meaning that the difference between maximum and minimum temperature at the end of a filling can be much more extreme than for other configurations of pressure vessels. In particular, the gas temperature near the ends **415** can remain close to the temperature of the inflowing gas, since the flow speed at the ends **415** can result in good heat transfer to the walls. The chambers of the tank **100** that are far from the ends **415**, on the other hand, can heat up considerably because there is little flow in the far region of the tank **100** and hence have poor convective heat transfer.

[0058] Such a temperature rise at one end **415** of the tank **100** in such embodiments can be mitigated by filling from

alternating ends **415A**, **415B** of the tank **100**. For example, at the start of fill, the tank **100** can be filled from the first end **415A**, and the temperature at the second end **415B** can rise. When the temperature at the second end **415B** reaches a defined high value, the inlet to the first end **415A** can be closed, and the inlet to the second end **415B** can be opened. Thus, in various embodiments, the end **415** that is hottest can be given a high flow velocity and can dump heat to the walls of the tank **100**. This pattern can be repeated until the tank **100** is filled. The frequency of flow switching can be chosen so that the fluid temperature of the tank **100** stays below a target maximum temperature.

[0059] Turning to FIG. 7, a block diagram of method **700** of filling a tank **100** with fluid in accordance with one embodiment is illustrated. The method **700** begins at **705**, where a first fitting coupler **640A** is coupled with a first fitting **410A** at a first end **415A** of a tank **100** (e.g., see FIG. 6). At **710**, a second fitting coupler **640B** is coupled with a second fitting **410B** at a second end **415B** of the tank **100**.

[0060] The method **700** continues to **715**, where filling of the tank **100** with fluid at the first end **415A** is initiated. For example, referring to the example tank filling system **600** of FIG. 6, the tank **100** can be filled with fluid from the fluid source **630** by the control device **610** actuating one or more of the valves **620** such that fluid from the fluid source **630** travels via a fluid line **650** to the first fitting coupler **640A**, where the fluid enters the first fitting **410A** and enters the first end **415A** of the tank **100**. In some examples, filling can be initiated by a user actuating a button associated with the tank filling system **600** and the control device **610** can confirm suitable coupling between the fitting couplers **640** and fittings **410** before initiating filling at the first end **415A**.

[0061] Returning to the method **700**, at **720** a determination is made whether filling is complete. For example, in various embodiments a fill status of the tank **100** can be determined based at least in part on data from one or more sensors associated with the tank **100** and/or fitting couplers **640**. In one example, one or both of the fitting couplers **640** can include a pressure sensor that determines a pressure of fluid within the tank **100**, which can be used to determine a fill state of the tank **100**. In other words, one or more pressure sensors can be used to determine whether the tank **100** is full or at a filling threshold based at least in part on a determined pressure of the tank **100**.

[0062] If at **720** filling is not complete, then the method **700** continues to **725**, where a determination is made whether a temperature of the first end **415A** of the tank **100** has reached a threshold. For example, in various embodiments, the first fitting coupler **640A** can comprise a temperature sensor that can sense a temperature at the first end **415A** of the tank **100**. Temperature thresholds can be any suitable temperature threshold, including a maximum temperature threshold of 85°C . However, in further embodiments, such a maximum threshold can include 60°C ., 70°C ., 80°C ., 90°C ., 100°C ., and the like.

[0063] If at **725** a temperature at the first end **415A** has not reached the temperature threshold, then the method **700** cycles back to **715**, where filling of the tank **100** at the first end **415A** continues. However, if a temperature at the first end **415A** has reached the temperature threshold, then at **730**, filling of the tank **100** at the first end **415A** is stopped, and at **735**, filling of the tank **100** at the second end is initiated. For example, the control device **610** can receive temperature readings from one or more temperature sensors

associated with the first fitting coupler 640A and determine whether the temperature at the first end 415A has reached the temperature threshold. The control device 610 can control the one or more valves 620 to maintain filling at the first end 415A or to stop filling at the first end 415A and begin filling at the second end 415B.

[0064] Returning to the method 700, at 740, a determination is made whether filling is complete, and if not, the method 700 continues to 745 where a determination is made whether a temperature at the second end 415B has reached a temperature threshold. If not, the method 700 cycles back to 735, where filling at the second end 415B is maintained. However, where it is determined that a temperature at the second end 415B has reached a temperature threshold, then the method 700 continues to 750, where filling at the second end is stopped, and then at 715, filling of the tank 100 at the first end is initiated.

[0065] As shown in the example method of FIG. 7, filling can alternate between the first and second ends 415A, 415B until it is determined that filling is complete at 720 or 740. For example, where the control device 610 obtains data from one or more sensors associated with the tank 100, filling couplers 640, or the like, that indicates that the tank 100 is full or at a filling threshold, then filling at the first and/or second ends 415A, 415B can be terminated to stop filling at 799. The first and second filling couplers 640A, 640B can then be removed from the first and second fittings 410A, 410B at the first and second ends 415A, 415B of the tank 100.

[0066] In various examples, any of the steps or operations of the method 700 of FIG. 7 can be performed automatically and without human intervention. For example, the control device 610 can, beginning at 715, initiate filling of the tank 100; determine whether filling of the tank is complete, switch filling between ends 415; maintain filling at an end 415; determine whether a temperature at the ends 415 has reached or exceeded a temperature threshold; and stop a filling session at 799. In further examples, coupling and/or de-coupling of the filling couplers 640A, 640B can also be automated, including via an automated docking station, robotic arm(s), and the like.

[0067] A simulation study was performed comparing one example of a tank 100B as shown in FIG. 8 to a conventional tank having the parameters illustrated in FIG. 9a. A 3D simulation for the example tank 100B (5 kg having one hundred and twelve tubing portion chambers 130) was performed for the four cases illustrated in FIG. 9b, and a 1D simulation was performed for the conventional tank for the same four cases illustrated in FIG. 9b.

[0068] Each of the test cases included:
20° C. ambient temperature, 30° C. “hot soak”
0.5 MPa initial pressure

21.8 MPa/min., as per SAE J2601

[0069] H70-T40 (−33° C. pre-cool)
Fill time of 3.1 minutes to 67.9 MPa

[0070] NOTE: In some embodiments, no standard exists for 0° C. pre-cool or no pre-cool, but the 70-T20 specification allows for −17.5° C. pre-cool. This can require 6.7 MPa/min. for a 9.9 minute fill.

[0071] Plots of various results are illustrated in FIGS. 10-13.

[0072] The results can illustrate the following for various embodiments of the novel tank 100 compared to conventional tanks:

[0073] Increased surface area and flow velocity of novel tanks 100 can allow for better heat transfer in various embodiments. Accordingly, pre-cool can be unnecessary in such embodiments of tanks 100. In some embodiments, it can be desirable for materials to be designed for working temperature of 120° C. However, if 120° C. working temperature is not possible, filling from alternating ends can keep maximum temperature well below 85° C., in accordance with some embodiments. More specifically, the 3D results show maximum temperatures at the last chamber of 120° C. and 116° C., respectively. These temperatures are higher than a limit of 85° C., but that limit applies only to the average temperature of the pressure vessel as a whole.

[0074] Additionally, the following was observed during these tests:

[0075] Flow rate is <3 g/s for 10-chamber tanks. For a 4.5 kg tank, required flow rate is ~30 g/s for a 3-minute fill. Highest temperature is at the far end of the tank, where gas is the most stagnant and, therefore, has the lowest heat transfer coefficient for transferring heat to the walls. For some tank sizes, peak temperature goes down as number of chambers goes up—this can be because the flow rate goes up, so more heat is transferred to walls as gas is flowing. Initial gas in the tanks can be the gas that hits peak temperatures, since this gas is not pre-cooled and has a low thermal mass due to low initial density. Tank pressure can be nearly uniform throughout tank during fill—this surprising result indicates that the flow resistance caused by the bends can be negligible.

[0076] In some examples, a challenge with tanks 100 is how to estimate the state of charge (SOC) of a tank 100 during filling, if the difference in temperature from between the first and second ends 415A, 415B is extreme. The average density must be determined in some examples in order to know the SOC, and to estimate the average density, two thermodynamic state variables can be required: the average pressure and the average temperature. The simulations show very little deviation in pressure along the length of the tank 100, so the average temperature is the only unknown in various examples.

[0077] In some embodiments it is possible to estimate density using temperature at the non-filling end. Density can have a weak dependence on temperature in the relevant range of temperatures. Therefore, the temperature at the non-filling end of the tank can be used as a replacement for the average temperature when estimating the average density. For example, a filling simulation with no precool ends when $P_{avg}=85$ MPa and $T_{avg}=83^{\circ}$ C., yielding an average final density of $\rho_{avg}=39.6$ g/L. If instead the temperature of the last chamber $T_{last}=116^{\circ}$ C. were used, it would result in an estimated final density of $\rho_{avg}=37.2$ g/L, which is only 6% off from the actual value. Note too that this can yield a conservative estimate, thereby ensuring that the tank 100 will not be over-pressurized.

[0078] Some embodiments can estimate density using flux of gas during filling. Before filling, the initial density, $\rho_{initial}$, can be estimated accurately in some examples since there may be minimal temperature variations within the tank 100. Given this value and the tank volume, V , the density can be estimated during filling by integrating the mass flux into the tank, $\dot{m}(t)$. In hydrogen filling stations, for example, it can be

necessary in some embodiments to have an accurate estimate of the mass flux in order to charge the customer for fuel, so this information may already be available. The average density can then be given by the equation

$$\rho_{avg}(t) = \rho_{initial} + \frac{\int_0^t \dot{m}(\tau) d\tau}{V}.$$

[0079] In another example, a fueling and defueling simulation of a 50-chamber, 10 kg tank **100** was conducted to measure state of charge (SOC) of the tank. In various examples, it can be desirable to measure the instantaneous (SOC) of a tank **100** during fueling and defueling of the tank **100** to within a certain accuracy, which entails measuring the average density to within a certain accuracy. In order to estimate the average density, and hence the SOC, the average pressure and average temperature in the tank **100** can be determined. In various examples, pressure deviations in the tank **100** can be considered minimal; therefore, it can be desirable to determine the average temperature.

[0080] In some examples, it can be challenging to determine the average temperature at the end of fueling for various reasons including temperature being least homogeneous at the end of fueling. Additionally, pressure can be highest at the end of fueling, so incorrect temperature measurements can lead to a large absolute error in density measurement.

[0081] In some embodiments, sensors (e.g., thermocouples or the like) can be disposed at the first and second ends **415A**, **415B** of a tank **100** (e.g., associated with fitting couplers **640**). Accordingly, in various examples, such sensors can be used to determine the SOC in the first and last (i.e., 50th) chamber:

$$SOC_1 = \rho(p, T_1) / \rho(70 \text{ MPa}, 15^\circ \text{ C.})$$

$$SOC_{50} = \rho(p, T_{50}) / \rho(70 \text{ MPa}, 15^\circ \text{ C.})$$

[0082] One way to determine the average SOC of the tank **100** includes averaging readings from sensors at the first and second ends **415A**, **415B** of a tank **100**,

$$SOC_{tank} = (SOC_1 + SOC_{50}) / 2$$

[0083] However, in some examples, such a calculation may not produce an estimate that is accurate enough to meet a desired accuracy threshold. Since SOC_{tank} can be closer in value to SOC_{50} than to SOC_1 , an alternative method of determining SOC_{tank} can include taking a weighted average of the readings from sensors at the first and second ends **415A**, **415B** of a tank **100**, so that SOC_{50} is weighted higher than SOC_1 ,

$$SOC_{tank} = (\alpha \cdot SOC_1 + SOC_{50}) / (1 + \alpha).$$

[0084] In various examples, $\alpha < 1$ can produce a desirable estimate of the SOC_{tank} , since $\alpha < 1$ can result in a formula that weights the SOC of the chambers **130** at the terminal end **415B** of the tank **100** more than the chambers **130** at the beginning end **415A**.

[0085] During filling of an elongated and folded tank **100** with fluid, the fluid within the tank can exceed a maximum desired temperature limit locally, even if the average fluid temperature within the tank **100** stays below such a desired maximum temperature limit. This can be due to the fact that there is limited mixing in some embodiments of such tanks

100, where the fluid at a non-filling second end **415B** of the tank **100** heats up due to having a low flow velocity (and hence low heat transfer) but is not able to mix with cool fluid near an inlet end **415A**.

[0086] Various suitable temperature limits can be accommodated in accordance with embodiments discussed herein. For example, vessel regulatory standards (such as UN GTR 13, SAE J2579, SAE J2601) are written for a maximum gas temperature of 85° C. due to a maximum tank component temperature of 85° C. However, in further embodiments, a maximum gas temperature can include 60° C., 70° C., 80° C., 90° C., 100° C., and the like.

[0087] In some embodiments, filling the tank **100** from alternating ends as discussed herein can result in lower maximum (as well as average) temperatures, due to various effects. For example, when the filling end is switched, the hot stagnant fluid at the non-filling end **415** of the tank **100** can be given a high flow velocity by filling, allowing the fluid to dump heat to the walls of the tank **100**. In another example, when the filling end is switched, the cold incoming fluid can mix with the hot fluid at the end that was formerly the outlet, helping to decrease the maximum temperature in that location.

[0088] In further embodiments, a Venturi nozzle (also known as an eductor or an ejector) can be used to circulate fluid flow during the filling process, which can result in lower maximum (as well as average) temperatures of the fluid and/or tank **100** during filling. For example, FIG. **14** is a schematic showing a Venturi assembly **1400** circulating fluid flow during the filling of an example 6-chamber tank **100**. FIG. **15** is a close up schematic showing the Venturi assembly **1400** circulating the flow during the filling of the tank **100**.

[0089] The Venturi assembly **1400** is shown comprising a Venturi nozzle **1405** that introduces a flow of fluid to a Venturi chamber **1410**. The mixing chamber of the Venturi **1410** is connected to an inlet **1415** that communicates with a first end **415A** of the tank **100** and introduces fluid into the interior cavity **505** of the tank **100**. An outlet **1420** is shown coupled at a second end **415B** of the tank **100**, with the outlet **1420** coupled with the Venturi chamber **1410** that introduces a flow of fluid into the Venturi chamber **1410** that originates from fluid leaving the second end **415B** of the tank **100**.

[0090] As shown in FIG. **15**, fluid can enter the Venturi assembly **1400** via the Venturi nozzle **1405** at an inlet pressure p_{fill} before accelerating through the nozzle **1405** with diameter D_{noz} , where the pressure drops to p_{noz} due to the increased speed of the flow. The low pressure draws in the fluid from the outlet **1420** of the tank **100**, which enters the Venturi chamber **1410** at a pressure p_{out} . The two fluid streams from the nozzle **1405** and outlet **1420** can mix in the Venturi chamber **1410** and then exit the Venturi chamber **1410** via the inlet **1415** to enter the first end of the tank **100**, at a pressure p_{in} . In some embodiments, the Venturi assembly **1400** and tank **100** can be configured to operate with a maximum mass flow rate $\dot{m}_{fill}$ of 60 g/s. In further embodiments, it can be desirable for a tank **100** and Venturi assembly **1400** be configured for, and to be filled at, a maximum pressure ramp rate of less than or equal to 28.5 MPa/min.

[0091] Use of a Venturi assembly **1400** can decrease the maximum temperature during filling in various ways. In one example, the flow at the second end **415B** of the tank **100**, rather than being stagnant, can have a mass flow rate $\dot{m}_{out}$

which can enable better heat transfer from the hot fluid to the walls of the tank **100**. In another example, there can be less temperature variation overall throughout the tank **100**, since the hot fluid at the second end **415B** of the tank **100** can be removed from the tank **100** via $\dot{m}_{out}$, and mixed with the cold filling gas, $\dot{m}_{fill}$. Then, the hot gas at the second end **415B** of the tank **100** can be replaced with cooler gas that is flowing from the inlet of the tank **1415**.

[0092] In some embodiments, it can be desirable for the pumping pressure of the nozzle **1405** to be strong enough to generate a significant circulating mass flow, $\dot{m}_{out}$. In various examples, the amount of circulating flow, $\dot{m}_{out}$, can be determined by a balance between the dynamic pressure drop in the Venturi valve and the pressure drop through the tank **100** and connecting tubing **650**. In further examples, for a fixed Venturi nozzle geometry, the circulating mass flow rate, $\dot{m}_{out}$, can be approximately proportional to the filling mass flow rate, $\dot{m}_{fill}$, and not dependent on the instantaneous pressure, density, or temperature. In other words, $\phi = \dot{m}_{out} / \dot{m}_{fill}$ is only a function of geometry and flow resistance (which is itself a function of geometry) in various examples.

[0093] In some embodiments, a smaller Venturi nozzle diameter D_{noz} can lead to a greater dynamic pressure drop and hence more circulation. However, the nozzle diameter D_{noz} can be limited by choking concerns. If the nozzle diameter D_{noz} is too small in some embodiments, the nozzle **1405** will choke, restricting flow into the tank **100**. This can cause the tank **100** to fill slower at low pressures and to speed up in filling rate once the tank **100** fills enough to eliminate the choking condition. Then, the tank **100** may not reach a full state of charge at the end of filling. In some examples, it can be desirable to configure a Venturi assembly **1400** having a nozzle diameter $D_{noz} > 16.5$ mm. In further examples, it can be desirable to configure a Venturi assembly **1400** having a minimum of 6 mm inner diameter for the Venturi nozzle **1405**. In still further examples, it can be desirable to configure a Venturi assembly **1400** having a minimum of 2 mm, 3 mm, 4 mm, or 5 mm inner diameter for the Venturi nozzle **1405**, or other suitable minimum diameter.

[0094] Additionally, it can be desirable to use a Venturi nozzle **1405** with a varying diameter, so that the nozzle diameter D_{noz} can be decreased when choking is not a concern. For example, the nozzle diameter D_{noz} can be decreased once the tank **100** reaches a high enough absolute pressure and/or at high ambient temperature when the filling rate is slower.

[0095] In some embodiments, the ratio ϕ can be increased by increasing the inner diameter of corrugations **111** of a tank **100** (see e.g., FIGS. **1**, **2a** and **3**). In some examples, improved circulation can be obtained through increasing corrugation inner diameter while keeping the ratio of corrugation inner diameter to outer diameter constant, and while keeping the ratio of corrugation outer diameter to chamber outer diameter constant. In further examples, improved circulation can also be obtained through increased corrugation inner diameter while keeping corrugation outer diameter constant.

[0096] In some embodiments, it can be desirable for tubing **650** that connects the second end **415B** of the tank **100** to the Venturi chamber **1410** to be as short and as wide as possible. In some examples, this can limit potential tank designs by requiring the two ends **415** of the tank **100** to be positioned near each other.

[0097] In further examples, the Venturi assembly **1400** can be placed directly at the first end **415A** of the tank **100** in order to minimize losses and maximize circulation. In some examples, tubing **650** should only be used to connect the second end **415B** of the tank **100** to the Venturi suction port.

[0098] FIG. **16** is a schematic showing a tank **100** having i+3 chambers **130**. In various embodiments, increasing or decreasing the number of chambers **130** in a tank **100** can change fluid circulation through a tank **100**. For example, decreasing the number of chambers **130** can also increase circulation through decreased flow resistance. This effect can be more prominent for tanks **100** with smaller diameters of corrugations **111**. In some examples, additional chambers **130** can add a negligible amount of flow resistance for some tank geometries. While various embodiments can have any suitable plurality of chambers **130**, in some embodiments it can be desirable to configure a tank **100** for a capacity of 7-10 kg regardless of the number of chambers **130**.

[0099] In some embodiments, it can be desirable to split a tank into multiple units. For example, splitting a tank into multiple units can increase the amount of gas circulation, since the diameter of the Venturi nozzle **1405** can be decreased due to less mass flow per tank, $\dot{m}_{fill}$, being required.

[0100] In various embodiments, it can be desirable to make the Venturi nozzle **1405** as small as possible so that Venturi nozzle **1405** provides as much suction pressure as possible without choking the flow. In further embodiments, it can be desirable to reduce the hydraulic resistance of the tank **100** (e.g., the tubing portions **130**, connector portions **110**, and the like) as much as possible. For example, in some embodiments reducing the hydraulic resistance of the tank **100** can be done by increasing the diameter of corrugations **105**, making the connector portions **110** as short and/or as wide as possible, and the like. In some examples, a purpose of one or both of such elements can be to enable as high a ratio of $\dot{m}_{out} / \dot{m}_{fill}$ as possible.

[0101] Also, while various embodiments discussed herein relate to introducing fluid into a tank **100**, various embodiments can be employed similarly during defueling, which can limit the temperature variations in the tank **100** during defueling and/or can reduce the temperature drop in the tank **100** during defueling. Additionally, while some examples herein may be discussed in relation to gas, in further embodiments any suitable fluid can be used to fill a tank **100** or be held within a tank **100**, including one or both of liquids and gases. Also, while hydrogen gas storage tanks are discussed in some embodiments, any other suitable fluid fuel can fill and be held within a tank **100** in further embodiments, including natural gas, oxygen, methane, propane, acetylene, or the like. Additionally, some embodiments can include use of any suitable non-fuel gasses.

[0102] In various embodiments, the Venturi **1400** can be part of a passive filling system that does not require control devices, temperature sensors, and the like. In other words, in some examples, the fluid flow through the Venturi **1400** solely drives recirculation. However, in further embodiments, the Venturi **1400** can include active control. For example one embodiment can include Venturi recirculation with a variable diameter of the Venturi nozzle **1405**. Another embodiment can include Venturi recirculation combined with end switching.

[0103] Turning to FIG. **17**, a tank filling system **600** of another embodiment **600B** is illustrated that comprises a

control device **610** that drives a valve assembly **620** associated with one or more Venturi **1400** to direct fluid from a fluid source **630** to filling couplers **640** via fluid lines **650**. The filling couplers **640** can be removably coupled to fittings **410** on ends **415** of a tank **100**. More specifically, a first filling coupler **640A** is removably coupled to a first fitting **410A** at a first end **415A** of the tank **100**, and a second filling coupler **640B** is removably coupled to a second fitting **410B** at a second end **415B** of the tank. The control device **610** can be operably connected to the filling couplers **640** as described herein.

[0104] The control device can comprise any suitable computing system or computing device, which can receive data from one or more sensors associated with the fitting couplers **640**, tank **100**, or the like, via wired and/or wireless communication. The control device **610** can control the one or more valves **620** to control flow of fluid from the fluid source **630** to the ends **415** of the tank **100** via the fluid lines **650** and control the flow of fluid from the ends **415** of the tank **100** to the one or more Venturi assembly **1400**. Although one example configuration of valves **620** and one or more Venturi assembly **1400** is illustrated in FIG. 17, it should be clear that any suitable configuration of one or more valves, one or more Venturi assembly, or the like, is within the scope and spirit of the present disclosure, and the example configuration of FIG. 17 should not be construed to be limiting.

[0105] For example, the illustration of FIG. 17 should not be construed to exclude a configuration of a filling system **600** having valves collocated at the fluid source **630**, fitting couplers **640**, or the like. In another example, a filling system **600** can include the configuration as shown in FIGS. 14 and 15 where a single Venturi assembly **1400** introduces fluid to the first end **415A** of the tank **100** with the second end **415B** of the tank **100** providing an outlet **1420** that feeds into the Venturi chamber **1405**.

[0106] In some embodiments, the filling system **600** can be non-alternating. In other words, the filling system **600** may not switch the filling end **415** between the first and second ends **415A**, **415B**. Accordingly, in some embodiments, the first end **415A** can remain the inlet **1415** and the second end can remain the outlet **1420**. However, in further embodiments, the inlet **1415** can switch between the first and second ends **415A**, **415B** with the outlet **1420** similarly switching between the first and second ends **415A**, **415B**. For example, the valves **620** can be configured to switch the inlet **1415** and outlet **1420**.

[0107] In another example, the filling system can comprise a first and second Venturi assembly **1400** that are respectively associated with first and second ends **415A**, **415B** with the first Venturi assembly **1400** having the first end **415A** as the inlet **1415** and the second end **415B** as the outlet **1420**. The second Venturi assembly **1400** can have the first end **415A** as the outlet **1420** and the second end **415B** as the inlet **1415**. In such examples, the valve(s) **620** can switch between the first and second Venturi to switch filling from the first and second ends **415A**, **415B**.

[0108] Such switching of filling between the first and second ends **415A**, **415B** having one or more Venturi can be achieved as discussed herein and as illustrated in FIG. 7, with the switching between the inlet filling end **1415** also including switching of the outlet end **1420**.

[0109] The described embodiments are susceptible to various modifications and alternative forms, and specific

examples thereof have been shown by way of example in the drawings and are herein described in detail. It should be understood, however, that the described embodiments are not to be limited to the particular forms or methods disclosed, but to the contrary, the present disclosure is to cover all modifications, equivalents, and alternatives.

[0110] It should be noted that the figures are not drawn to scale and that elements of similar structures or functions are generally represented by like reference numerals for illustrative purposes throughout the figures. It also should be noted that the figures are only intended to facilitate the description of the preferred embodiments. The figures do not illustrate every aspect of the described embodiments and do not limit the scope of the present disclosure.

What is claimed is:

1. A method of filling an elongated folded tank having a first and second end, the method comprising:
 - coupling an elongated folded tank with filling system to a tank by:
 - coupling a first filling coupler to a first set of fittings disposed at a first tank end; and
 - coupling a second filling coupler to a second set of fittings disposed at a second tank end;
 - wherein the elongated folded tank extends between the first and second end and the elongated folded tank includes:
 - a plurality of elongated rigid tubing portions having a first diameter,
 - a plurality of connector portions having a second diameter that is smaller than the first diameter and having flexible corrugations and a rigid cuff, and
 - taper portions disposed between and coupling successive tubing portions and connector portions;
 - introducing a first fluid flow into the first end of the tank via the first filling coupler and the first set of fittings disposed at the first tank end;
 - determining based at least in part on first temperature data obtained from a first temperature sensor of the second filling coupler that a temperature at the second end of the tank has at least reached a first threshold;
 - based at least in part on the determining that the temperature at the second end of the tank has at least reached the first threshold, stopping the fluid flow into the first end of the tank via the first filling coupler and the first set of fittings disposed at the first tank end, and beginning to introduce a second fluid flow into the second end of the tank via the second filling coupler and the second set of fittings disposed at the second tank end;
 - determining based at least in part on second temperature data obtained from a second temperature sensor of the first filling coupler that a temperature at the first end of the tank has at least reached a second threshold;
 - based at least in part on the determining that the temperature at the first end of the tank has at least reached the second threshold, stopping the second fluid flow into the second end of the tank via the second filling coupler and the second set of fittings disposed at the second tank end, and beginning to introduce a third fluid flow into the first end of the tank via the first filling coupler and the first set of fittings disposed at the first tank end;
 - determining that tank filling is complete;
 - stopping any flow to the first and second tank ends;
 - de-coupling the first filling coupler from the first set of fittings disposed at the first tank end; and

de-coupling the second filling coupler from the second set of fitting disposed at the second tank end.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the determining that the temperature at the second end of the tank has at least reached a first threshold is performed by a computing device automatically without human interaction;

wherein the stopping the fluid flow into the first end of the tank and the beginning to introduce the second fluid flow into the second end of the tank is generated by the computing device automatically without human interaction;

wherein the determining that a temperature at the first end of the tank has at least reached the second threshold is performed by the computing device automatically without human interaction; and

wherein the stopping the fluid flow into the second end of the tank and beginning to introduce a third fluid flow into the first end of the tank is generated by the computing device automatically without human interaction.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the determining that tank filling is complete is performed by the computing device automatically without human interaction.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the first and second threshold are the same temperature threshold.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the first threshold is a temperature of 85° C.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the first, second and third fluid flows comprise hydrogen.

7. A method of filling a tank having a first and second tank end, the method comprising:

introducing a first fluid flow into the first end of the tank via a filling coupler and a first set of fittings disposed at the first tank end;

determining based at least in part on first temperature data obtained from a first temperature sensor of a second filling coupler disposed at the second end of the tank that a temperature at the second end of the tank has at least reached a first threshold;

based at least in part on the determining that the temperature at the second end of the tank has at least reached the first threshold, stopping the fluid flow into the first end of the tank via the first filling coupler and the first set of fittings disposed at the first tank end, and beginning to introduce a second fluid flow into the second end of the tank via the second filling coupler and a second set of fittings disposed at the second tank end;

determining based at least in part on second temperature data obtained from a second temperature sensor of the first filling coupler that a temperature at the first end of the tank has at least reached a second threshold; and

based at least in part on the determining that the temperature at the first end of the tank has at least reached the second threshold, stopping the second fluid flow into the second end of the tank via the second filling coupler and the second set of fittings disposed at the second tank end, and beginning to introduce a third fluid flow into the first end of the tank via the first filling coupler and the first set of fittings disposed at the first tank end.

8. A computer implemented method performed automatically without human interaction, the method comprising the steps of claim 7.

9. The method of claim 7, further comprising coupling a tank filling system to the tank by coupling the first filling

coupler to the first set of fittings disposed at the first tank end and coupling a second filling coupler to a second set of fitting disposed at a second tank end.

10. The method of claim 7 wherein the tank extends between the first and second end includes:

a plurality of elongated rigid tubing portions having a first diameter,

a plurality of connector portions having a second diameter that is smaller than the first diameter and having a flexible portion, and

taper portions disposed between and coupling successive tubing portions and connector portions.

11. The method of claim 7, wherein the tank is elongated and folded between the first and second ends.

12. The method of claim 7, further comprising:

determining that tank filling is complete; and

stopping any flow to the first and second tank ends based at least in part of the determining that tank filling is complete.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the determining that tank filling is complete and stopping any flow to the first and second tank ends occurs via a computing device automatically and without user interaction.

14. The method of claim 12, further comprising, after stopping any flow to the first and second tank ends based at least in part of the determining that tank filling is complete, de-coupling the first filling coupler from the first set of fittings disposed at the first tank end; and de-coupling the second filling coupler from the second set of fitting disposed at the second tank end.

15. The method of claim 7, wherein a Venturi assembly provides a fluid flow to the first filling coupler coupled to the first set of fittings disposed at the first tank end; and wherein the Venturi assembly received a fluid flow from the second filling coupler coupled to the second set of fittings disposed at the second tank end.

16. A tank filling system comprising:

a first filling coupler that couples to a first set of fittings disposed at a first tank end of a tank;

a second filling coupler that couples to a second set of fittings disposed at a second tank end of the tank;

a fluid source;

a set of fluid lines and one or more fluid valves that communicate fluid from the fluid source to the first and second filling couplers;

a computing device configured to control the one or more fluid valves.

17. The tank filling system of claim 16, further comprising a Venturi assembly coupled to the set of fluid lines and is configured to introduce an inlet fluid flow into the first filling coupler and into the first set of fittings disposed at the first tank end of a tank, the Venturi assembly further configured to receive an outlet fluid flow from the second filling coupler that is coupled to the second set of fitting disposed at the second tank end of the tank.

18. The tank filling system of claim 16, further comprising a first temperature sensor disposed at the first filling coupler and a second temperature sensor disposed at the second filling coupler, and wherein the computing device receive temperature data from the first and second temperature sensor and controls the one or more fluid valves based at least in part on the temperature data from the first and second temperature sensor.

19. The tank filling system of claim **16**, wherein the first filling coupler is configured to be removably coupled to the first set of fittings disposed at the first tank end of the tank; and wherein the second filling coupler is configured to be removably coupled to the second set of fittings disposed at the second tank end of the tank.

* * * * *