(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization
International Bureau

(43) International Publication Date
29 January 2009 (29.01.2009)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 2009/015035 A1

(51) International Patent Classification:
F04B 17/00 (2006.01)

(21) International Application Number:
PCT/US2008/070529

(22) International Filing Date: 18 July 2008 (18.07.2008)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:
60/951,080 20 July 2007 (20.07.2007) US

(71) Applicant *(for CA only)*: **SCHLUMBERGER CANADA LIMITED** [CA/CA]; 525-3rd Avenue Southwest, Calgary, Alberta T2P 0G4 (CA).

(71) Applicant *(for FR only)*: **SERVICES PETROLIERS SCHLUMBERGER** [FR/FR]; 42 rue Saint Dominique, F-75007 Paris (FR).

(71) Applicant *(for GB, JP, NL only)*: **SCHLUMBERGER HOLDINGS LIMITED** [NL/GB]; P.O. Box 71, Craigmuir Chambers, Road Town, Tortola, NO POSTAL CODE (VG).

(71) Applicant *(for AL, AM, AU, AZ, BF, BG, BJ, BY, CF, CG, CI, CM, CO, CZ, DE, DK, GA, GN, GQ, GR, GW, HU, ID, IE, IL, IT, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LT, MD, ML, MR, MX, MY, NE, NO, NZ, OM, PL, RO, RU, SI, SK, SN, TD, TG, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, UZ, ZA only)*: **SCHLUMBERGER TECHNOLOGY B.V.** [NL/NL]; Parkstraat 83-89 2514 JG, NL-NO POSTAL CODE The Hague (NL).

(71) Applicant *(for AE, AG, AO, AT, BA, BB, BE, BH, BR, BW, BZ, CH, CN, CR, CU, CY, DM, DO, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GD, GE, GH, GM, GT, HN, HR, IN, IS, KE, KM, KN, LA, LC, LK, LR, LS, LU, LV, LY, MA, MC, ME, MG, MK, MN, MT, MW, MZ, NA, NG, NI, PG, PH, PT, RS, SC, SD, SE, SG, SL, SM, SV, SY, SZ, TZ, UA, UG, VC, VN, ZM, ZW only)*: **PRAD RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT LIMITED** [NL/GB]; Craigmuir Chambers, Road Town, Tortola, NO POSTAL CODE (VG).

(72) Inventors; and

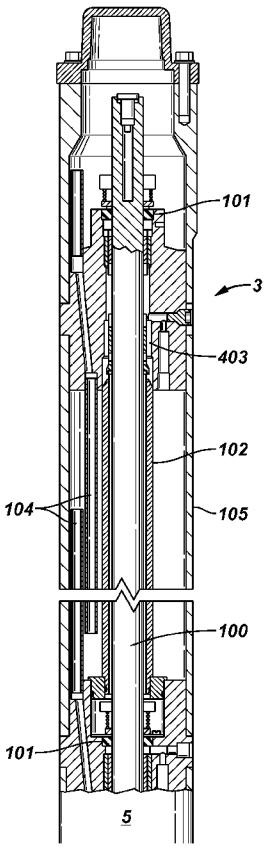
(75) Inventors/Applicants *(for US only)*: **DU, Michael Hui** [CN/US]; 3711 Parkshire Drive, Pearland, Texas 77584 (US). **WATSON, Arthur I.** [US/US]; 6502 Knoll Park

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(54) **Title:** PUMP MOTOR PROTECTOR WITH REDUNDANT SHAFT SEAL

(57) **Abstract:** An electric submersible pump device having a motor part, a pump part, and a protector part. The protector part includes redundant shaft seal parts.

FIG. 1



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Drive, Sugar Land, Texas 77479 (US). **ROWATT, David** [US/US]; 3022 Chance Court, Pearland, Texas 77584 (US). **BREMNER, Chad** [CA/GB]; 31 Hallforest Avenue, Kintore, Inverurie Aberdeenshire AB51 0TF (GB). **ARUMUGAM, Arunkumar** [IN/US]; 4222 Big Cedar Circle, Missouri City, Texas 77459 (US). **GARRETT, David** [GB/US]; 4722 SE Barlow Place, Bartlesville, OK 74006 (US). **FEATHERBY, Christopher** [US/US]; 309 Northeast Myers Avenue, Bartlesville, OK 74006 (US). **GUINDI, Ramez** [EG/US]; 2222 Settlers Way Blvd., Apt. 314, Sugar Land, TX 77478 (US).

(74) **Agents: MCGOFF, Kevin B.** et al.; 14910 Airline Road, Rosharon, Texas 77583 (US).

(81) **Designated States** *(unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of national protection available)*: AE, AG, AL, AM, AO, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BH, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DO, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, GT, HN, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KM, KN, KP, KR, KZ, LA, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LY, MA, MD, ME, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MY, MZ, NA, NG, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PG, PH, PL, PT, RO, RS, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SM, ST, SV, SY, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, ZA, ZM, ZW.

(84) **Designated States** *(unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of regional protection available)*: ARIPO (BW, GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, NA, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, LV, MC, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Published:
— *with international search report*

PUMP MOTOR PROTECTOR WITH REDUNDANT SHAFT SEAL

RELATED APPLICATION

This application claims benefit from U.S. application no.: 60/951,080 filed July 20, 2007 incorporated in its entirely herein.

TECHNICAL FIELD

The present application relates to electric submersible motors and pumping systems, and more particularly, to shaft seals and motor protector devices in connection therewith.

BACKGROUND

Fluids are located underground. The fluids can include hydrocarbons (oil) and water, for example. Extraction of at least the oil for consumption is desirable. A hole is drilled into the ground to extract the fluids. The hole is called a wellbore and is oftentimes cased with a metal tubular structure referred to as a casing. A number of other features such as cementing between the casing and the wellbore can be added. The wellbore can be essentially vertical, and can even be drilled in various directions, e.g. upward or horizontal.

Once the wellbore is cased, the casing can be perforated. Perforating involves creating holes in the casing thereby connecting the wellbore outside of the casing to the inside of the casing. That can be done by lowering a perforating gun into the casing. The perforating gun has charges that detonate and propel matter through the casing thereby creating the holes in the casing and the surrounding formation to help formation fluids flow from the formation and wellbore into the casing.

Sometimes the formation has enough pressure to drive well fluids uphole to surface. However, that situation is not always present and cannot be relied upon. Artificial lift devices can therefore be used to drive downhole well fluids uphole, e.g., to surface. The artificial lift devices are placed downhole inside the casing. An artificial lift device often has an electric motor

with internal parts. Preventing well fluids from reaching component parts of the motor is desirable.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 shows embodiments of features.

Figure 2 shows embodiments of features.

Figure 3 shows embodiments of features.

Figures 4A-C show embodiments of features.

Figure 5 shows embodiments of features.

Figure 6 shows embodiment of features.

Figure 7 shows embodiments of features.

SUMMARY

The following descriptions of certain features are exemplary and are not to limit the claim scope or overall disclosure in any way.

An embodiment of features includes an electric submersible pump device having an electric submersible motor part that produces torque having coupled thereto a drive shaft that transmits the torque. The drive shaft extends in an axial direction from the motor part. A protector part coupled with the motor part. The drive shaft extends into the protector part. The protector part comprises a tubular shaped casing extending in the axial direction. A shaft tube surrounds a portion of the drive shaft thereby defining a space between the outer surface of the shaft and an interior of the shaft tube. An opening in the shaft tube connects the interior of the shaft tube with an exterior of the shaft tube. A first compensating element is connected with the opening. The first compensating element is an expandable and contractible vessel defining a volume that is correspondingly expandable and contractible.

Another embodiment of features includes an electric submersible pump device comprising an electric submersible motor part that produces torque. The electric submersible motor part has coupled thereto a drive shaft that

transmits the torque. The drive shaft extends in an axial direction from the motor part. A pump part is rotationally coupled with the drive shaft. A protector part is coupled between the motor part and the pump part. The drive shaft extends into the protector part. The protector part comprises a tubular shaped casing extending in an axial direction having an inner surface defining an inner volume. A first shaft seal part is located inside the volume and divides the volume into an upper volume and a lower volume. The first shaft seal part comprises a first relief valve biased to only allow flow away from the motor part. A second shaft seal part is located inside the volume and divides the upper volume. The second shaft seal part comprises a second relief valve biased to only allow flow away from the first shaft seal part and the motor part. A first compensating element compensates pressure across the second shaft seal divide. The first compensating element is an expandable and contractible vessel defining an interior volume that is correspondingly expandable and contractible. At least one motor compensating element is in fluid communication with the motor part to compensate for thermal expansion and contraction of fluid in the motor part. During thermal fluid contraction a volume of fluid is between the first shaft seal part and the second shaft seal part and is prevented from fluidly flowing back into the motor part sufficiently to contribute more than half of the contraction compensation of fluid in the motor part.

Another embodiment of features includes a method including filling the motor part with motor fluid; running the motor and increasing temperature of the motor fluid and inducing thermal expansion of the motor fluid into the at least one motor compensating element beyond the maximum capacity of the at least one motor compensating element and forcing fluid through the first relief valve into the upper volume; subsequently lowering the temperature of the motor part and the motor fluid remaining in the motor part to induce thermal contraction of the motor fluid in the motor part and compensating for the thermal contraction by contracting the at least one motor compensation element; and preventing return of the motor fluid that traveled through the first biased relief valve during contraction compensation.

The above combinations of features are merely illustrative of some preferred embodiments and are not meant in any way to limit the overall scope of the present claims or any claims to which the applicants are entitled.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

In the following description, numerous details are set forth to provide an understanding of the presently claimed subject matter. However, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that the present embodiments may be practiced without many of these details and that numerous variations or modifications from the described embodiments may be possible.

In the specification and appended claims: any of the terms "connect", "connection", "connected", "in connection with", and "connecting" are used to mean "in direct connection with" or "in connection with via another element"; and the term "set" is used to mean "one element" or "more than one element". As used herein, the terms "up" and "down", "upper" and "lower", "upwardly" and downwardly", "upstream" and "downstream"; "above" and "below"; and other like terms indicating relative positions above or below a given point or element are used in this description to more clearly describe some embodiments. Moreover, the term "sealing mechanism" includes: packers, bridge plugs, downhole valves, sliding sleeves, baffle-plug combinations, polished bore receptacle (PBR) seals, and all other methods and devices for temporarily blocking the flow of fluids through the wellbore. Furthermore, while the term "coiled tubing" may be used, it could actually be replaced by jointed tubing or any relatively small diameter tubing for running downhole.

A submersible pumping system can comprise several parts, such as a submersible electric motor part and a pump part. The submersible electric motor part supplies energy to the submersible pump part. The energy is transmitted by generating torque in the motor part and transmitting the torque that is transmitted to a drive shaft coupled with the motor part. The pump is preferably a centrifugal style pump or other rotating pump that uses the torque from the drive shaft to drive rotating impellers to drive well fluid. The system further may comprise a variety of additional components, such as a connector used to connect the submersible pumping system to a deployment system.

Production tubing, cable and coiled tubing can be included as the connector. Power can be supplied to the submersible electric motor part via a power cable that runs through or along the deployment system.

Often, the subterranean environment (specifically the well fluid) and fluids that are injected from the surface into the wellbore (such as acid treatments) contain corrosive compounds that may include CO2, H2S and brine water. Those corrosive agents can be detrimental to components of the submersible pumping system, particularly to internal electric motor components, such as copper windings and bronze bearings. Moreover, irrespective of whether or not the fluid is corrosive, if the fluid enters the motor and mixes with the motor oil, the fluid can degrade dielectric and lubricating properties of the motor oil and insulating materials of motor components. Accordingly, it is desirable to keep those external fluids out of internal motor fluid and motor components. One possible mode of entrance into the motor part is by way of areas interfaces between the motor part and the drive shaft. Other interfaces are also potential entrances.

Another factor to consider is thermal expansion and/or contraction of motor fluids. For example, a submersible motor can be internally filled with a fluid, such as a dielectric oil, that facilitates cooling and lubrication of the motor during operation. In many applications, submersible electric motors are subject to considerable temperature variations due to the subterranean environment, injected fluids, and other internal and external factors. Those temperature variations may subject the fluid to expansion and contraction. For example, the high temperatures common to subterranean environments may cause the motor fluid to expand beyond a maximum capacity of the motor part thereby causing leakage and other mechanical damage to the motor components. Similarly, undesirable fluid expansion and motor damage can result from the injection of high-temperature fluids, such as steam, into the submersible pumping system. Further, after expansion, thermal contraction upon cooling of motor fluid can draw well fluids back into the motor carrying undesirable compounds noted earlier.

Accordingly, a submersible motor can benefit from an electric submersible motor protector that accommodates expanding/contracting motor

fluid while maintaining protection against ingress of well fluids. Also, the internal pressure of the motor could potentially be allowed to equalize or at least substantially equalize with the surrounding pressure found within the wellbore. As a result, it becomes less difficult to prevent the ingress of external fluids into the motor fluid and internal motor components.

Also, a submersible motor can benefit from having a protector with redundant shaft seal parts isolating volumes of fluid there between, the shaft seal parts having compensator elements to accommodate thermal expansion and contraction of the fluids.

Also, a submersible motor can benefit from having a protector that is hydraulically connected with the motor part so that excess fluid can escape the motor part 1 upon thermal expansion, and expansion compensation can occur along with a release of excess fluid beyond the compensator's capacity, thereby relieving a danger of overfilling a motor part or protector with too much fluid.

Many configurations of electrical submersible pump (ESP) protectors include a labyrinth seal as part of a labyrinth protector. Figure 1 shows a portion of a protector part 3 of an electric submersible pump unit. A shaft tube 102 in the protector part 3 has a communication path 403 near the top of the shaft tube 102. The function of the communication path 403 is to pressure balance a space inside the shaft tube 102 so that the shaft seals 101 on top and at bottom of the shaft tube 102 will not see either excessive positive pressure or excessive negative pressure, which is beneficial to the proper functioning of the shaft seals 101. In some applications, such as the SAGD horizontal well, a labyrinth protector 104 is installed in the protector part 3 for settling the well debris.

Figures 2 and 3 show a protector part 3 having a labyrinth protector 104 and a shaft tube 102 sealed off from the fluid in the chamber in the protector part 3. A motor part 1 is shown in fluid connection with a compensation element 202 that is a bellows, preferably the compensation element 202 extends around the shaft 100 and has an inner part and an outer part forming a space therein that is sealed at the end away from the motor

part 1, thereby defining the bellows enclosure. Furthermore, to compensate for thermal expansion and contraction of fluid, e.g., motor fluid, inside the shaft tube 102, a small compensation element 202 (e.g., metal bellows, bag, or piston) may be provided in connection with a communication path 403, e.g., an opening in the shaft tube 102. The labyrinth protector chamber 104 is shown as being part of a redundant seal arrangement. The ends of the shaft tube 102 are preferably sealed. An O-ring (or other seal) is installed for completely sealing off the space inside the shaft tube 102 from the surrounding chamber. When the inner space of the shaft tube 102 is sealed, the shaft tube 102 should have a compensation element 202 to handle the volume expansion and contraction due to temperature variations for oil inside the shaft tube 102, so that the pressure inside the shaft tube 102 will be generally balanced with the pressure outside of the shaft tube 102. Otherwise, if the space inside the shaft tube 102 experiences a high positive pressure, the shaft seal 101 on the top may be lifted open. If the inside of the shaft tube 102 sees excessive negative pressure, the shaft seal 101 below the labyrinth section may be lifted open. Either way, excessive positive/negative pressure may compromise the protector section 3 by opening or damaging a sealing element.

As noted above, the compensation element 202 can be a small metal bellows either axially or radially expanding, an elastomer bag, or a piston (or other volume compensating mechanism), depending on the applications. For conventional applications, a small elastomer (or other oil resistant, expandable material) bag may be sufficient. For high temperature or high corrosive application, a small metal bellows or a small piston may be a most appropriate choice. The compensating element may be coaxial with the shaft 100 or non-coaxial with the shaft 100.

The protector section 3 can be combined with any other sections or components of the protectors, such as additional labyrinth protector sections, bag protector sections, metal bellows protector sections, piston protector sections, and so forth. Furthermore, the sealed shaft tube space described above can be replaced with a space other than the shaft tube space. For example, the space could be formed with a (curved) tube that connects the

lower end of the shaft seal on the top and the upper end of the shaft seal at the bottom (not shown). Also, it could be a volume isolated by multiple shaft seal parts or other divides.

Figures 4A-C show a compensating element in the form of expandable diaphragm 404 (e.g., rubber or elastomer or even a metal sleeve) sealed around a communication path in the shaft tube 102. The expandable diaphragm 404 provides volume compensation. A shaft tube 102 is shown being around the shaft 100. The shaft tube 102 can be an elongated axially extending tubular member. As alluded to earlier, a situation could arise where fluid within the shaft tube 102 would thermally expand. Thus, as shown in Figures 4A-C the communication path 403 allows excess fluid in the shaft tube 102 to escape into the expandable diaphragm 404 thereby relieving pressure. The expandable diaphragm 404 could be a bellows. Figure 4A shows the communication path 403 in the shaft tube 102 connecting with an inside of the expandable diaphragm or bellows 404. The expandable diaphragm 404 is shown as being connected around a circumference of the shaft tube 102 above and below the communication path 403. Figure 4B shows the expandable diaphragm 404 in a contracted state. Figure 4C shows the expandable diaphragm 404 in an expanded state.

Figure 5 in the present application schematically shows an electric submersible pumping device in a well 10. The well 10 is drilled into earth strata 16 and into formation 13. The well 10 is cased with a casing 14. The electric submersible pumping device has a motor part 1 and a pump part 2. The motor part 1 can have motor fluid therein. A protector part 3 is coupled between the motor part 1 and the pump part 2 and includes a number of shaft seal parts 33 (shown in Figure 6). The protector part 3 is adapted to allow for expansion and discharge of excess motor fluid while deterring and/or preventing ingress of well fluids toward the motor part 1, e.g., upon any thermal contraction. A compensation element 5 is located below the motor part 1 to allow for motor fluid expansion and contraction. A cooler 7 and a gauge 6 can also be included. The pump part 2 is connected to jointed or coiled tubing 9. The pump part 1 can be a centrifugal style pump or other rotating style pumps. The motor part 1 receives power from a power cable 11

extending from uphole. A thrust bearing 8 can be located between the protector part 3 and the motor part 1. A production fluid flow 12 is shown traveling into an intake 4 associated with the pump part 2.

Figure 6 is a cutaway schematic of an embodiment of a protector part 3, including shaft seal parts 33a-d. A motor part 1 has a motor compensating element 5 connected below the motor part 1. Typically the motor compensating element 5 has a compensating volume of at least 1/10 the maximum oil capacity of the motor part 1, e.g., 1/6. The compensating elements 33a-d in the protector part 3 have an aggregate compensating volume of typically less than 1/20 the maximum oil capacity of the motor part 1, though it may range as low as 1/50, or 1/75, 1/100 or smaller, for example. The motor part 1 has a drive shaft 100 extending there from in an axial direction. The motor compensating element 5 is shown as being a bellows, preferably metal. The motor compensating element 5 could take many forms however, including but not limited to a bladder or a piston, or any other expandable and contractible vessel defining a correspondingly expandable and contractible volume. The protector part 3 is above the motor part 1 and has shaft seal parts 33a-d that surround the shaft 100. The protector part 3 can have a longitudinally extending tubular casing 105 that has an inner surface defining an inner volume. Each of the shaft seal parts 33a-d is located in that inner volume and can be coupled between the inner surface of the casing 105 and the shaft 100. It is not necessary that the shaft seal parts 33a-d and the shaft 100 be in direct contact though such is possible. Each of the shaft seal parts 33a-d has a shaft seal 101 that is adjacent to the shaft 100. Each shaft seal 101 can incorporate elastomeric material so as to conform closely to the surface of the shaft 100. Each shaft seals 101 could also incorporate metal, ceramic, or polymer. Each of the shaft seal parts 33a-d acts to divide the volume in the protector part 3, e.g., to divide the protector part 3 into separate fluid containing volumes sequentially fluidly isolating the motor part 1. The shaft 100 extends in the axial direction from the motor part 1 into the protector part 3 and up into a pump part 2 (not shown). A sprocket 206 is shown and forms a bubble sump 208 between the sprocket 206 and a first shaft seal part 33a. The bubble sump 208 is a chamber that collects

bubbles that can rise in oil of the motor part 1 in a chamber that isolates the bubbles.

In practice, it is difficult to determine a precise amount of motor oil to meet requirements while avoiding overfilling a motor part 1, given a scale of temperatures and resulting thermal expansion that the motor parts 1 may be subjected to. Also, the motor oil undergoes much greater thermal contraction and expansion from manufacture (e.g., 75°F), to shipping and storage (e.g., -40°F), to installation (e.g., 60°F), to operation (e.g., 600°F), to non-operation (e.g., 500°F). Thus, without relief valves, compensation of much greater capacity would be required. Accordingly, a motor compensating element 5 is provided, and the first shaft seal part 33a has a relief valve 201a. The relief valve 201a can be biased to preferentially only allow flow away from the motor part 1 during normal operation. The relief valve 201a is in a flow path that extends across the first shaft seal 33a, e.g., through opening 209a. Provision of the relief valve 201a is to allow for excess fluid to escape from the motor part 1 and is beneficial as it allows for self regulation of fluid volume in the motor part 1.

Above the first shaft seal part 33a is a second shaft seal part 33b having a relief valve 201b and a compensating element 202b. In a situation where it is desired to more perfectly isolate the motor part 1 fluidly from a protector part, or more perfectly fluidly isolate volumes between shaft seal parts, the relief valve 201b may be excluded and a relief valve may be provided connecting the motor part 1 to the wellbore. The compensating element 202b is shown as being non-coaxial with the motor part 1, the pump part 2, the casing 205 and the shaft 100, but the compensating element 202b may be coaxial too. The relief valve 202b is a biased one-way valve and in a flow path that extends across the second shaft seal part 33b, e.g., through the opening 209b. The compensating element 202b is an expandable and contractible vessel defining an internal volume that is correspondingly expandable and contractible. The compensating element 202b compensates pressure across the shaft seal divide. For example, the compensating element 202b could be a bellows. The bellows can be metal bellows, but could be other materials. The compensating element 202b could also be a

piston or a bladder. Those features can apply to all compensating elements discussed in the present application.

Above the second shaft seal part 33b is a third shaft seal part 33c having a relief valve 201c and two compensating elements 202c, both shown as being bellows. Again, in a situation where it is desired to isolate the motor part 1 hydraulically from the protector part, or hydraulically isolate the volumes defined between the shaft seal parts, the relief valve 201c could be excluded. The relief valve 201c can be one-way valve and in a flow path that extends across the second shaft seal part 33b, e.g., through the opening 209c. The relief valve 201c can be biased to only allow flow away from the motor part 1.

Above the third shaft seal part 33c is a fourth shaft seal part 33d having a relief valve 201d and a compensating element 202d shown as being a bellows. Again, in a situation where it is desired to more perfectly isolate the motor part 1 hydraulically from the protector part, or the volumes between the shaft seal parts, the relief valve 201d could be excluded. The relief valve 201d can be a one-way valve and in a flow path that crosses the shaft seal part 202d, e.g., through the opening 209d. A chamber is above the fourth shaft seal part 33d and has a relief passage 204d leading to the wellbore 15. The relief valve 201d could be biased to only allow flow away from the motor part 1.

During operation, given the embodiment shown in Figure 6, self regulation of a volume of fluid in the motor part 1 can occur. The motor part 1 can be filled with motor fluid at manufacture or installation. As the fluid in the motor part 1 becomes heated and thermally expands, the motor compensating element 5 expands to compensate for that expansion. If too much fluid is put in to account for thermal expansion, the motor compensating element 5 reaches capacity, the fluid in the motor part 1 expands beyond the capacity of the motor part 1 and the motor compensating element 5, and any excess fluid passes through the relief valve 201a and into the volume past the first shaft seal part 33a. A relief valve could lead through the casing 105 to the wellbore. The excess fluid passing through the first relief valve 201a expands compensating element 202b. If the compensating element 202b reaches capacity, excess fluid passes through relief valve 201b. Additionally,

the expansion of compensating element 202b displaces a volume after the shaft seal part 33b. The fluid passing above the second shaft seal part 33b, in addition to the displaced volume from the compensating element 202b, expands the compensating element 33c. If the two compensating elements 33c reach capacity, any excess fluid passes through the relief valve 201c and expands compensating element 202d. If compensating element 202d reaches capacity, any excess fluid passes through relief valve 201d and out relief passage 204d into the wellbore 15.

As shown in Figure 6, upon cooling of the motor part 1 and corresponding fluid, the motor compensating element 5 will contract thereby compensating for the thermal contraction of the fluid in the motor part 1. Fluid in the protector part 3 can cool and contract too. However, any of the excess fluid that passed through the relief valve 201a will be prevented from returning to the motor part 1. Upon cooling of the fluids in the volumes between the shaft seal parts 33a-d, the compensators 202b-d can contract and compensate for thermal contraction.

A feature of the present application relates to the comparative size of the motor compensating element 5 and the compensating elements 202b-d in connection with the idea of self regulation of the amount of fluid in the motor part 1. That is, the motor compensating element 5 is sized so that it can substantially be expected to compensate for all thermal expansion of fluids in the motor part 1. For example, the compensating elements 202b-d in aggregate may have a much smaller volume than the motor compensating element 5, e.g., preferably at most 1/10 the volume of the motor compensating element 5. Alternatively, the ratio of the volume in the compensating elements 202 and the motor compensating element 5 could be approximately 2/10, 3/10, 2/5 or 1/2. Given the configuration in Figure 6, the small volumes of the compensating elements 202b-d along with the relief port 204, allow for self regulation of the amount of motor fluid in the motor part 1 on initial filling through expansion and contraction. In other words, the spaces between the shaft seal parts 33a-d are isolated on contraction by the relief valves 201a-d thereby preventing back-flow into the motor part 1.

It should be noted that additional shaft seal parts and compensators can be added with those shown in Figure 6 in any number or order. Also, the order shown in Figure 6 is merely exemplary of an embodiment and is not limiting.

It is preferable that the first shaft seal part 33a have only a relief valve 201a. However, it should be appreciated that there are many variations of configurations that the shaft seal parts 33a-d can take. For example, a compensating element preferably at most 1/10 the volume of the motor compensating element 5 may be added to shaft seal part 33a without compromising the ideas herein. For example, the shaft seal part 33d could be located anywhere in the sequence, e.g., directly after the first shaft seal part 33a. Also, the shaft seal part 33b could have one compensating element 202b and the shaft seal part 33c could have one compensating element 202c. Alternatively, the two compensating elements 33c could be replaced with a single compensating element 33c having the same overall maximum volume displacement. Alternatively, more than two compensating elements 33c could be used. Also, again, the relief valves could be excluded.

A filter 207 can be provided. Figure 2 shows the filter being provided between the second shaft seal part 33b and the third shaft seal part 33c, in a fluid flow path. However, the filter 207 could be placed in almost any location provided that the filter 207 is in the fluid flow path and fluid passes across one shaft seal part to another through the filter 207. The filter 207 could be placed above the fourth shaft seal part 33c, or even below the first shaft seal part 33a. More than one filter 207 can be used in different locations too. The filter 207 can help prevent ingress of particles or other contaminants in well fluid toward the motor part 1.

Figure 7 is a hydraulic circuit diagram illustrating ideas embodied in the other figures in the present application relating to an electric submersible pumping device, and related components therein. Figure 7 shows three shaft seal parts 33a-c, delineated by dotted lines. The solid lines illustrate fluid flow paths. A motor 1 is shown having a motor compensating element 5 connected below the motor 1. The motor compensating element 5 can be a bellows. The first shaft seal part 33a is above the motor part 1 and has a

shaft seal 101a in one fluid flow path. A filter 207 is after the shaft seal 203a and is in a flow path. A relief valve 201a is in another fluid flow path. The relief valve 201a can be a one-way valve, e.g., a biased valve biased to preferentially only allow flow away from the motor part 1. A filter 207 follows the relief valve 201a. Figure 7 shows two separate filters 207 in the first shaft seal part 401, but those two filters 207 could be replaced by a single filter 207 or more than two filters 207. A protector part could be a filter in and of itself.

The first shaft seal part 33a leads into the second shaft seal part 33b. A fluid flow path in the second shaft seal part 33b is through a shaft seal 101b. Preferably that path is blocked fully by the shaft seal 101b. Another parallel fluid flow path is through a relief valve 201b that is a one-way valve that could be biased to preferentially allow flow away from the motor part 1. Another parallel fluid flow path is through a compensating element 202b that is shown as being a bellows. A filter 207 is shown outside of the second shaft seal part 101b. It should be noted that the filter 207 in the second shaft seal part 33b is outside the dotted line, but could be inside the dotted line, e.g., a shaft seal part could be considered as including or excluding a filter 207 depending on preferred design.

The second shaft seal part 33b leads into the third shaft seal part 33c. As noted above, the filter 207 is located between the second shaft seal part 33b and the third shaft seal part 33c. The third shaft seal part 33c has a shaft seal 101c blocking one fluid flow path. Preferably the shaft seal 101c entirely blocks that fluid flow path. A relief valve 201c is in another parallel fluid flow path, the relief valve being preferably one-way, e.g., biased to preferentially only allow flow away from the motor part 1. Two compensating elements 202c block the remaining parallel fluid flow paths. A single filter 207 is shown as being within the third shaft seal part 33c but could also be outside the third shaft seal part 33c. Also, multiple filters 207 could be used. The third shaft seal part 33c could lead to the wellbore 15.

During operation, as shown in Figure 7, fluid in the motor part 1 can be subjected to thermal expansion. Upon expansion, that fluid can expand into the motor compensating element 5. If the thermally expanded fluid never exceeds the maximum capacity of the motor part 1 and the motor

compensating element 5, the shaft seal parts 33a-c could have no relief valves and be hydraulically isolated while protecting the motor part 1. However, in a case where the fluid does exceed the volume of the motor part 1 and the motor compensating element 5, provision of relief valves 201a-c can be more beneficial than providing a single relief valve from the motor part 1 and motor compensating element 5 directly to the wellbore 15, because such a relief valve provides only a single barrier to well fluid entry and is exposed directly to a harmful wellbore environment. For example, when the motor compensating element 5 reaches maximum capacity the fluid can expand through the relief valve 201a of first shaft seal part 33a. The shaft seal 101a preferably blocks all the fluid from traveling along that path. The fluid preferably travels through relief valve 201a in the first shaft seal part 33a. The fluid travels through filters 207.

The fluid then expands into the second shaft seal part 33b and expands into the compensating element 202b. Preferably, no fluid travels through the path blocked by the shaft seal 101b. Once the compensating element 202b reaches maximum capacity any excess fluid will travel through the relief valve 201b and through the filter 207 into the third shaft seal part 33c.

The fluid passes through the third shaft seal part 33c thereby displacing fluid. Also, displacement is caused by expansion of the compensating element 202b. Thus, the fluid expands both compensating elements 202c thereby displacing adequate volume. Once the compensating elements 202c reach maximum capacity any excess volume passes through the relief valve 201c through the filter 207 and to the wellbore 15.

Upon cooling of the fluid in the motor part 1, the motor compensating element 5 will contract and compensate for thermal contraction of the fluid. When the volume of fluid isolated between the shaft seal parts 33a-c thermally contracts the compensating elements 202b and 202c compensate for such.

Some additional features relate to the assembly of the protector part 3. As shown in Figure 6, the parts of the casing 105 connecting to respective

shaft seal parts 33a-d can be connected together by way of threaded connections 210a-d. The threaded connections can extend around the circumference of the parts of the casing 105. Threaded connections 210a-d allow for simplification of installation as the shaft seal parts 33a-d can be lowered over the shaft 100 and threaded into place.

While a number of embodiments relating to the inventive concept are discussed in the present application, those skilled in the art will appreciate numerous modifications and variations from those embodiments are contemplated and intended. It is intended that the appended claims cover such modifications and variations as fall within the true spirit and scope thereof.

Listing of Claims

1. An electric submersible pump device, comprising:

an electric submersible motor part that produces torque having coupled thereto a drive shaft that transmits the torque, the drive shaft extending in an axial direction from the motor part;

a protector part coupled with the motor part, the drive shaft extending into the protector part, the protector part comprising a tubular shaped casing extending in the axial direction;

a shaft tube surrounding a portion of the drive shaft thereby defining a space between the outer surface of the shaft and an interior of the shaft tube;

an opening in the shaft tube connecting the interior of the shaft tube with an exterior of the shaft tube; and

a first compensating element connected with the opening, the first compensating element being an expandable and contractible vessel defining a volume that is correspondingly expandable and contractible.

2. The electric submersible pump device of claim 1, comprising:

a motor compensating element in fluid connection with the motor part, the motor compensating element being an expandable and contractible vessel defining a volume that is correspondingly expandable and contractible.

3. The electric submersible pump device of claim 1, comprising:

a first shaft seal part located inside the volume, and

a second shaft seal part located inside the volume,

the shaft tube coupled with and extending between the first shaft seal part and the second shaft seal part.

4. The electric submersible pump device of claim 1, wherein the first compensating element is a metal bellows.

5. The electric submersible pump device of claim 1, wherein the first compensating element is a piston/cylinder.

6. The electric submersible pump device of claim 1, wherein the first compensating element is an elastomeric bladder.

7. The electric submersible pump device of claim 1, wherein the first compensating element is non-coaxial with the shaft.

8. The electric submersible pump device of claim 1, wherein the first compensating element is coaxial with the shaft.

9. The electric submersible pump device of claim 2, wherein the motor compensating element is a metal bellows.

10. The electric submersible pump device of claim 1, comprising a labyrinth protector seal.

11. The electric submersible pump device of claim 1, comprising a pump part coupled with the drive shaft.

12. The electric submersible pump device of claim 1, comprising a relief valve connecting between the volume inside the casing with a volume outside the casing.

13. An electric submersible pump device, comprising:

an electric submersible motor part that produces torque, the electric submersible motor part having coupled thereto a drive shaft that transmits the torque, the drive shaft extending in an axial direction from the motor part;

a pump part rotationally coupled with the drive shaft;

a protector part coupled between the motor part and the pump part, the drive shaft extending into the protector part, the protector part comprising:

a tubular shaped casing extending in an axial direction having an inner surface defining an inner volume;

a first shaft seal part located inside the volume and dividing the volume into an upper volume and a lower volume; the first shaft seal part comprising:

a first relief valve biased to only allow flow away from the motor part;

a second shaft seal part located inside the volume and dividing the upper volume, the second shaft seal part comprising;

a second relief valve biased to only allow flow away from the first shaft seal part and the motor part;

a first compensating element compensating pressure across the second shaft seal divide, the first compensating element being an expandable and contractible vessel defining an interior volume that is correspondingly expandable and contractible; and

at least one motor compensating element in fluid communication with the motor part to compensate for thermal expansion and contraction of fluid in the motor part;

wherein during thermal fluid contraction a volume of fluid between the first shaft seal part and the second shaft seal part is prevented from fluidly flowing back into the motor part and contributing more than half of the contraction compensation of fluid in the motor part.

14. The electric submersible pump device of claim 13, comprising a third shaft seal part comprising a second compensating element

compensating pressure across the third shaft seal part divide, the second compensating element being an expandable and contractible vessel defining an interior volume that is correspondingly expandable and contractible.

15. The electric submersible pump device of claim 14, wherein the maximum volume of the second compensating element is greater than the maximum volume of the first compensating element.

16. The electric submersible pump device of claim 13, comprising a third shaft seal part comprising a second and third compensating element compensating pressure across the third shaft seal part divide, the second and third compensating elements each being expandable and contractible vessels defining interior volumes that are correspondingly expandable and contractible.

17. The electric submersible pump device of claim 16, the third shaft seal part comprising:

a third relief valve biased to only allow flow away from the first shaft seal part and the motor part.

18. The electric submersible pump device of claim 13, comprising at least one motor compensating element fluidly connected with the motor part, the at least one motor compensating element being an expandable and contractible vessel defining an interior volume that is correspondingly expandable and contractible; and

wherein the maximum volume of the at least one motor compensating element is greater than a maximum volume of the first compensating element.

19. The electric submersible pump device of claim 18, wherein the maximum volume of the at least one motor compensating element is at least 1/10 the volume of the motor fluid that can be contained in the motor part.

20. The electric submersible pump device of claim 18, wherein the maximum volume of the at least one motor compensating element is at least 5 times larger than the maximum combined volume of the first compensating element and the second compensating element.

21. The electric submersible pump device of claim 13, wherein the maximum volume of the at least one motor compensating element is at least 10 times greater than the maximum volume of the first compensating element.

22. The electric submersible pump device of claim 13, wherein the at least one motor compensating element is a bellows and the first compensating element is a bellows.

23. The electric submersible pump device of claim 13, comprising at least one filter located in a flow path of fluid.

24. A method of self regulating motor fluid volume in an electric submersible pump device having an electric submersible motor part that produces torque, the electric submersible motor part having coupled thereto a drive shaft that transmits the torque, the drive shaft extending in an axial direction from the motor part;

a pump part rotationally coupled with the drive shaft;

a protector part coupled between the motor part and the pump part, the drive shaft extending into the protector part, the protector part comprising:

a tubular shaped casing extending in an axial direction having an inner surface defining an inner volume;

a first shaft seal part located inside the volume and dividing the volume into an upper volume and a lower volume; the first shaft seal part comprising:

a first relief valve biased to only allow flow away from the motor part;

a second shaft seal part located inside the volume and dividing the upper volume, the second shaft seal part comprising;

a second relief valve biased to only allow flow away from the first shaft seal part and the motor part;

a first compensating element compensating pressure across the second shaft seal divide, the first compensating element being an expandable and contractible vessel defining an interior volume that is correspondingly expandable and contractible; and

at least one motor compensating element in fluid communication with the motor part to compensate for thermal expansion and contraction of fluid in the motor part;

the method comprising:

filling the motor part with motor fluid;

running the motor and increasing temperature of the motor fluid and inducing thermal expansion of the motor fluid into the at least one motor compensating element beyond the maximum capacity of the at least one motor compensating element and forcing fluid through the first relief valve into the upper volume;

subsequently lowering the temperature of the motor part and the motor fluid remaining in the motor part to induce thermal contraction of the motor fluid in the motor part and compensating for the thermal contraction by contracting the at least one motor compensation element; and

preventing return of the motor fluid that traveled through the first biased relief valve during contraction compensation.

FIG. 1

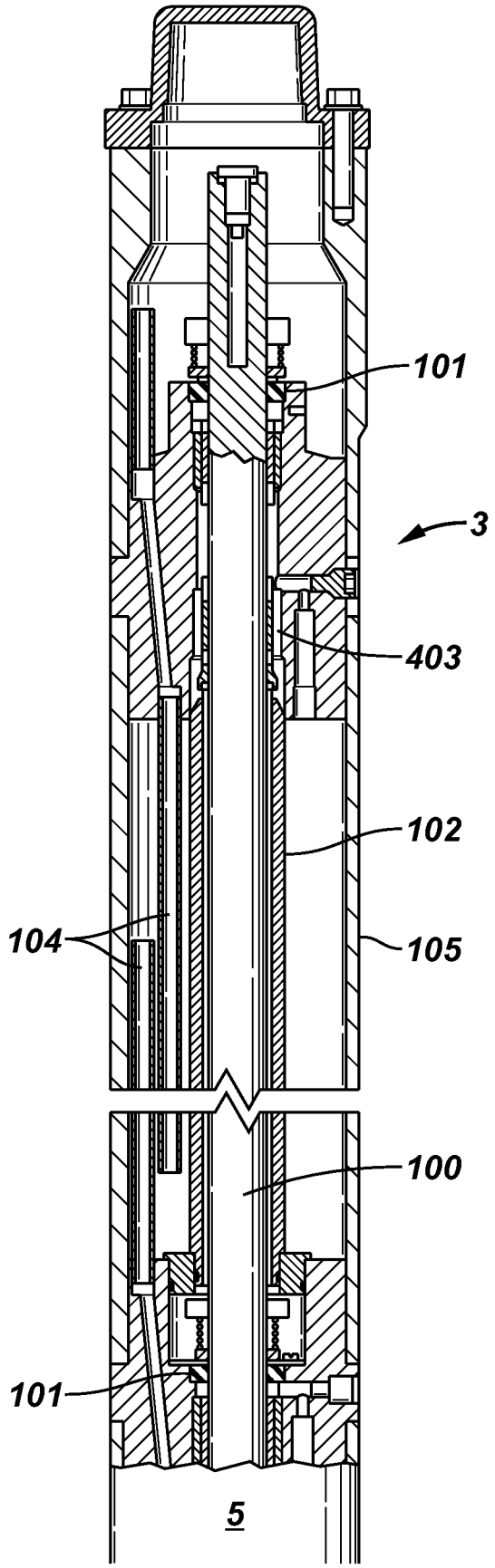

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FIG. 2

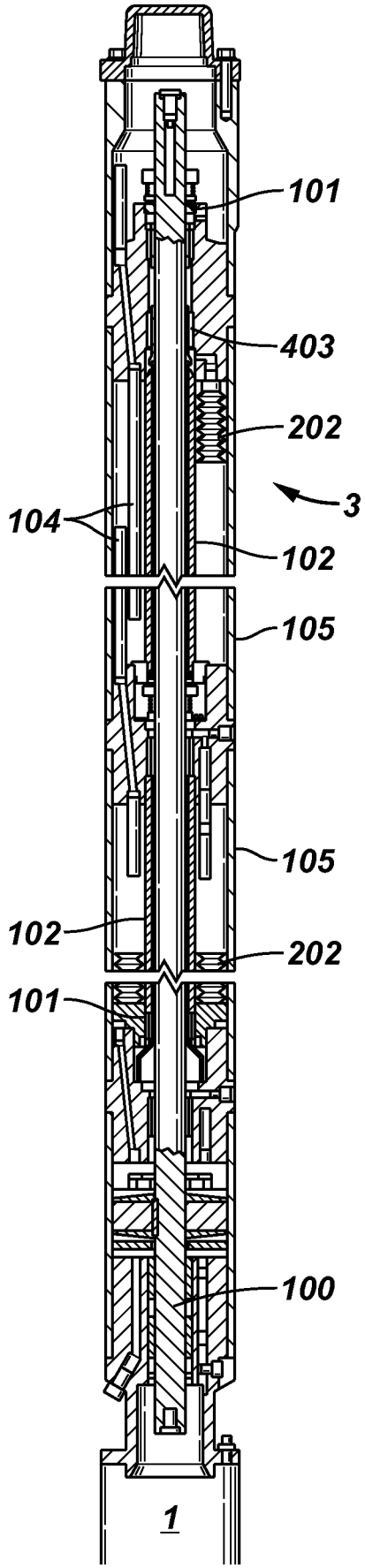

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FIG. 3

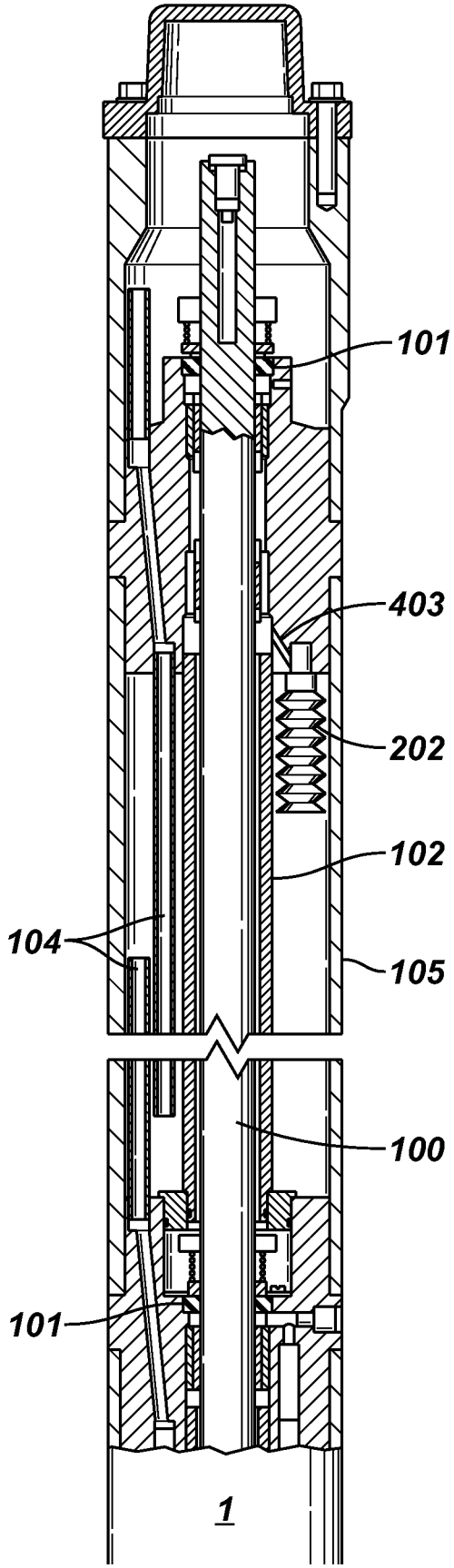


FIG. 4A

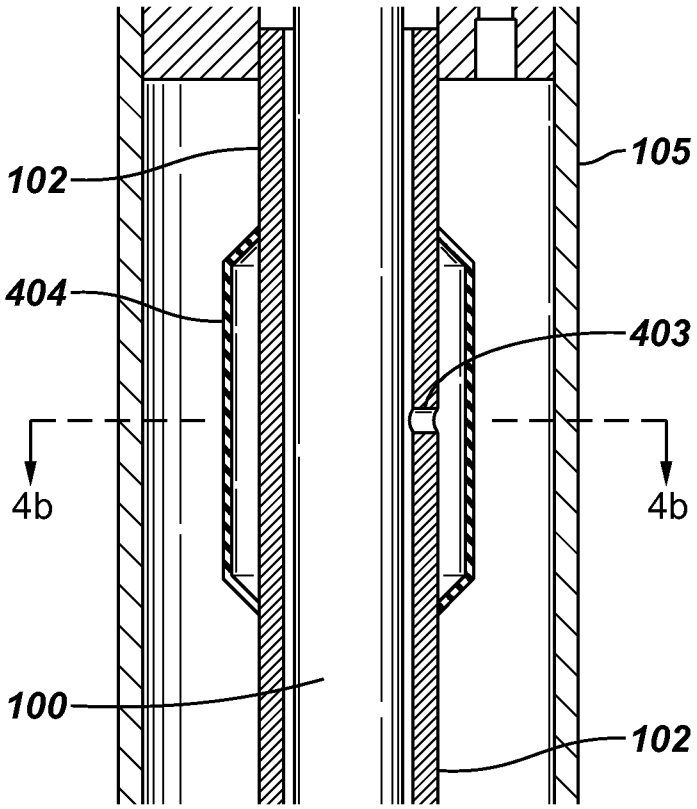


FIG. 4B

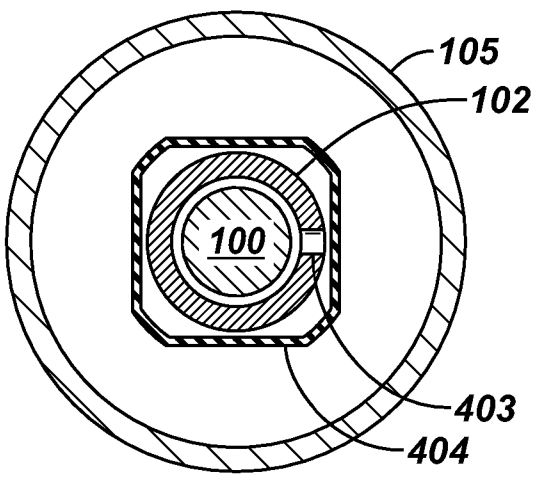


FIG. 4C

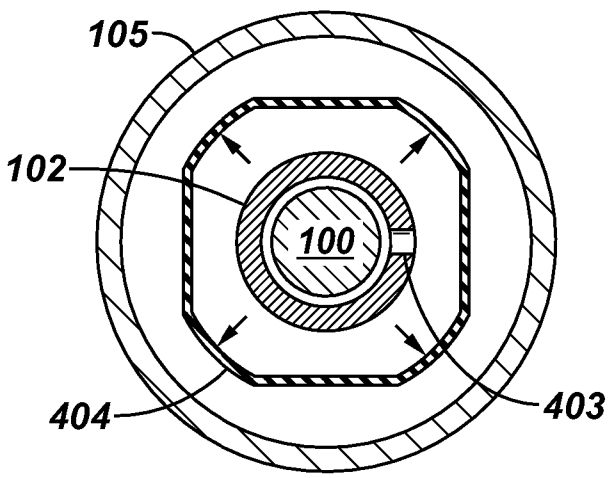


FIG. 5

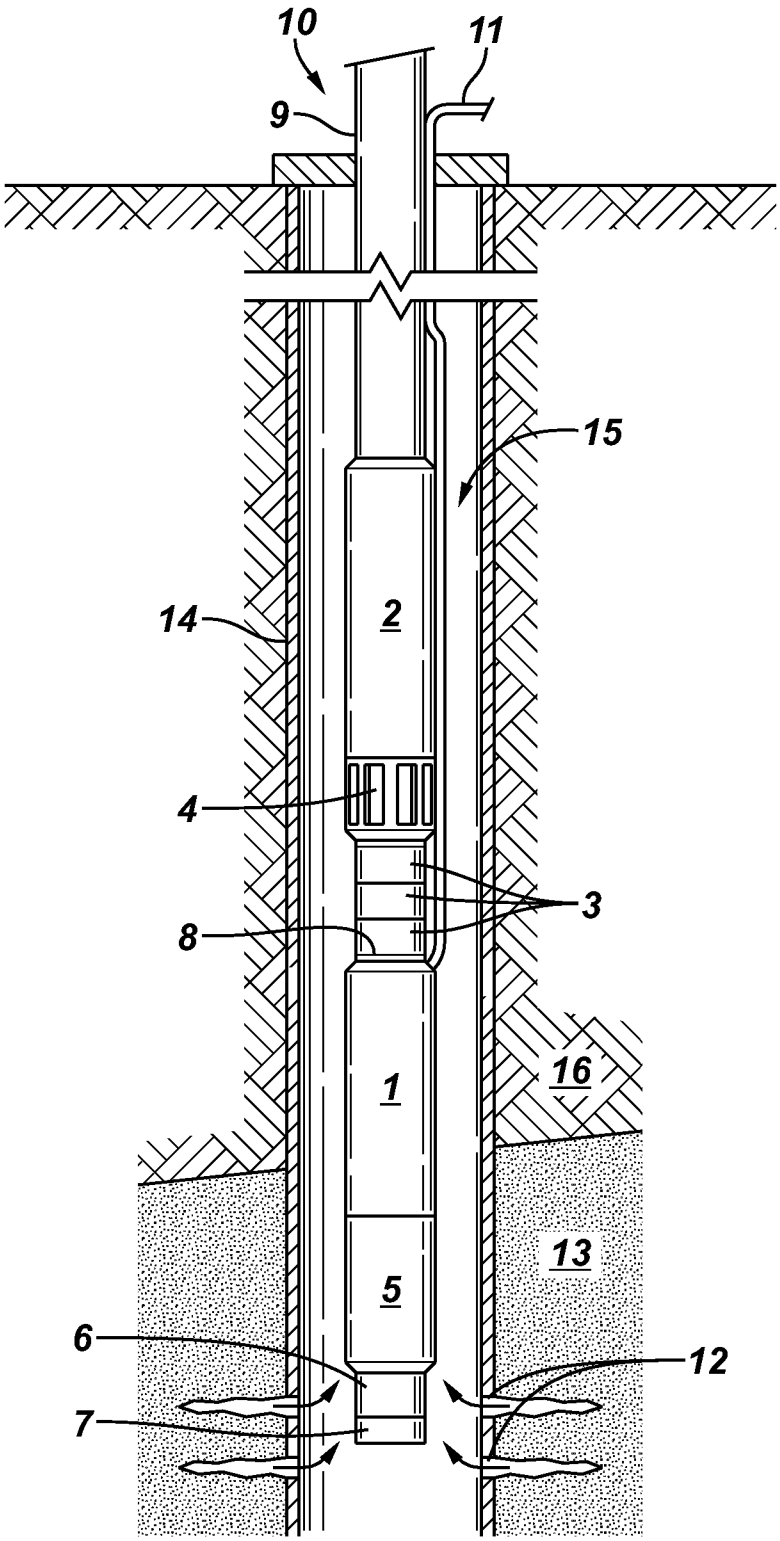


FIG. 6

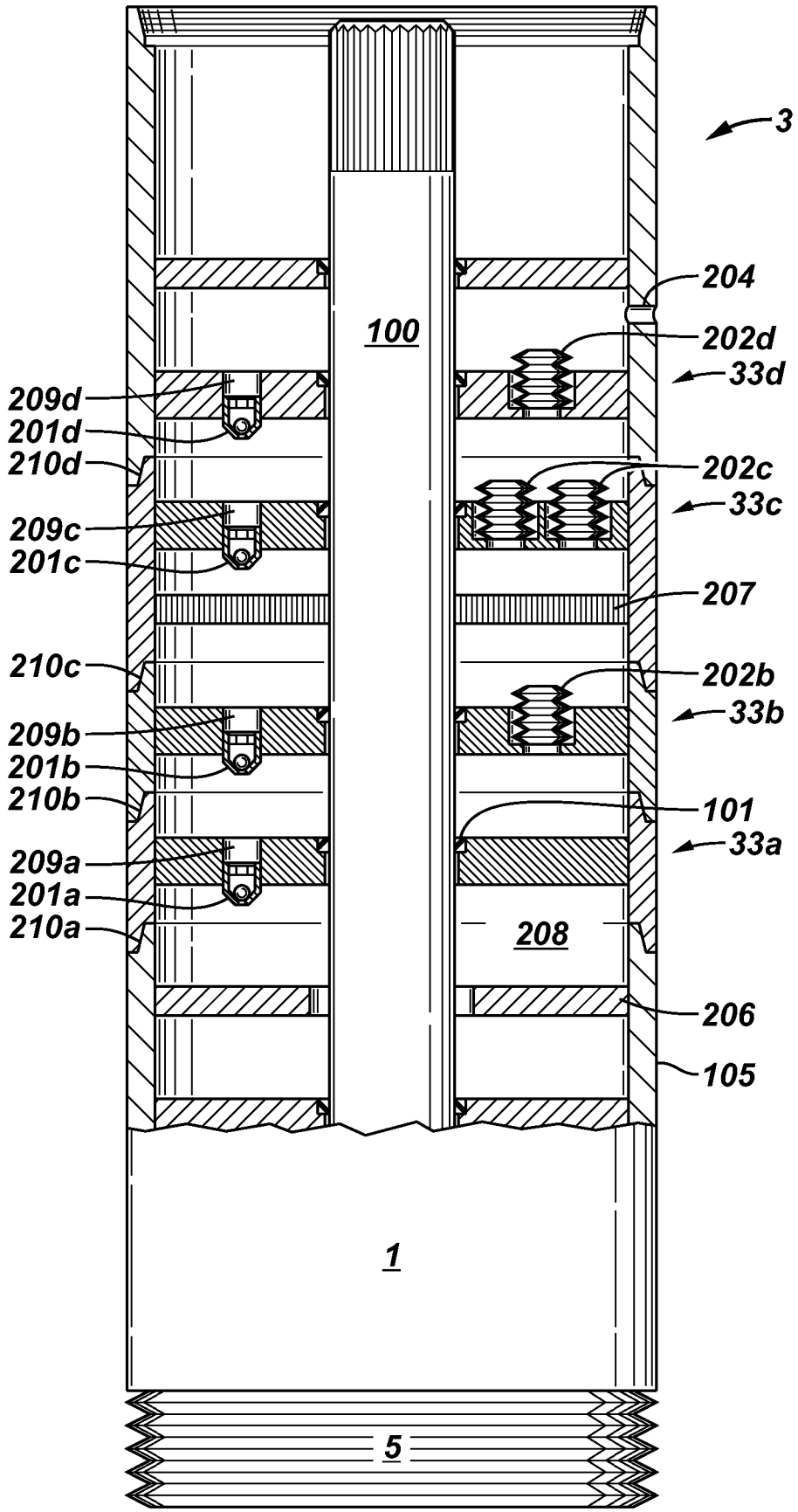
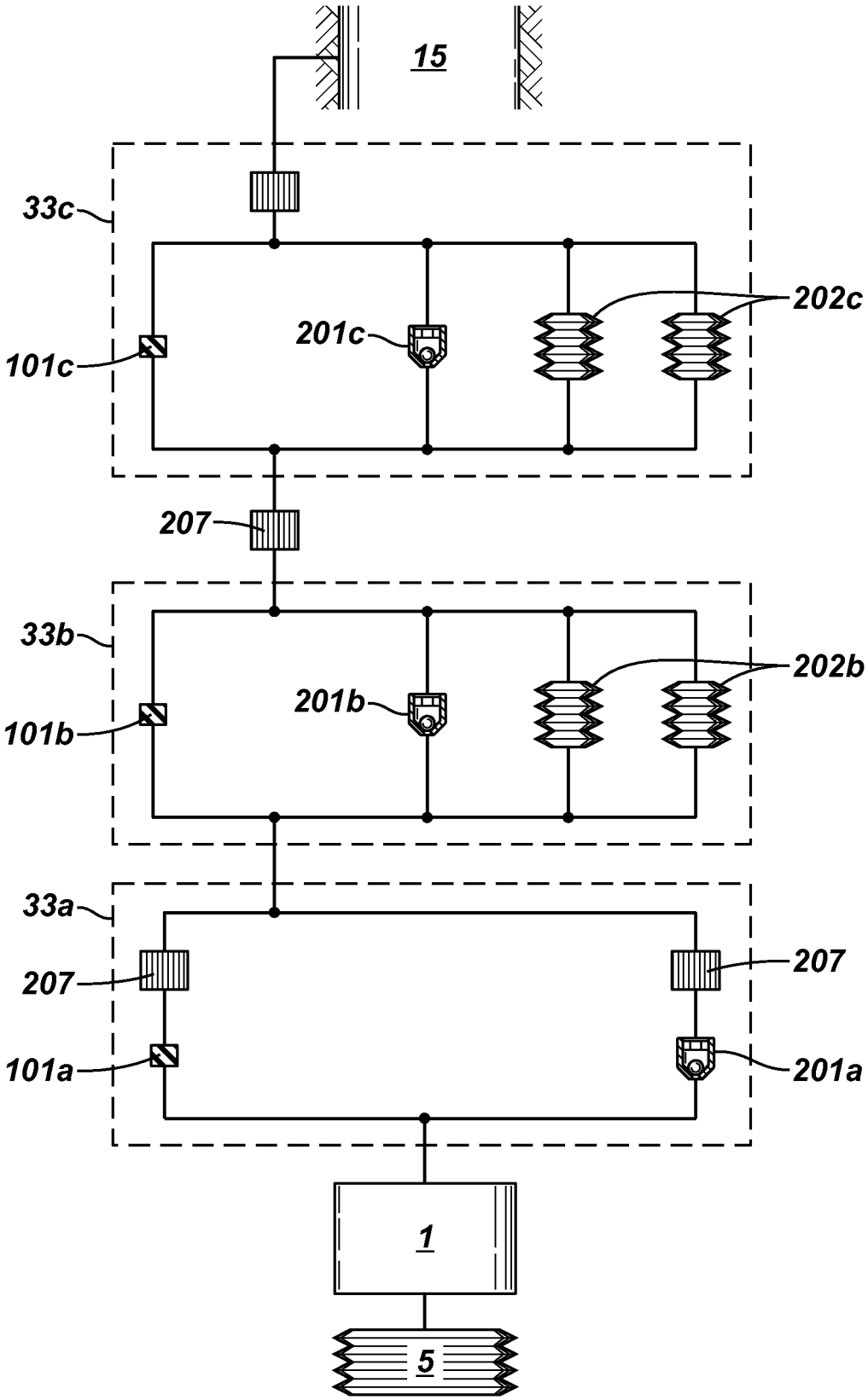

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FIG. 7


15
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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US 08/70529

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
IPC(8) - F04B 17/00 (2008.04)
USPC - 417/379
According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
IPC(8): F04B 17/00 (2008.04)
USPC: 417/379

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched
USPC: 417/424, 417/321, 417/424.1, 417/379, 166/369, 166/378, 166/105, 166/106, 166/105.1 (keyword search limited -see terms below)

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)
Electronic Databases Searched: PubWEST(USPT,PGPB,EPAB,JPAB); Google
Search terms used: third shaft seal, pump motor, torque, second shaft seal, drive shaft, shaft tube, bellows, piston, cylinder, elastomeric bladder, protector, labyrinth seal, pump, relief valve, filter, compensating, shaft sleeve

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
Y	US 5,134,328 A (Johnatakis et al) 28 July 1992 (28.07.1992) Fig 1; col 2, ln 32-36; col 3, ln 28-34, 55-59; col 4, ln 19-25; col 5, ln 45-50	1-24
Y	US 2007/0074872 A1 (Du et al.) 05 April 2007 (05.04.2007) para [0005]; para [0019]; para [0045]; para [0047]; para [0051]; para [0053]; para [0056-0057]; para [0059]; para [0065]; para [0069-0070]	1-24

☐ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. ☐

* Special categories of cited documents:
"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance
"E" earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date
"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)
"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means
"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed
"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art
"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search	Date of mailing of the international search report
19 September 2008 (19.09.2008)	25 SEP 2008

Name and mailing address of the ISA/US	Authorized officer:
Mail Stop PCT, Attn: ISA/US, Commissioner for Patents P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450 Facsimile No. 571-273-3201	Lee W. Young PCT Helpdesk: 571-272-4300 PCT OSP: 571-272-7774

Form PCT/ISA/210 (second sheet) (April 2007)