



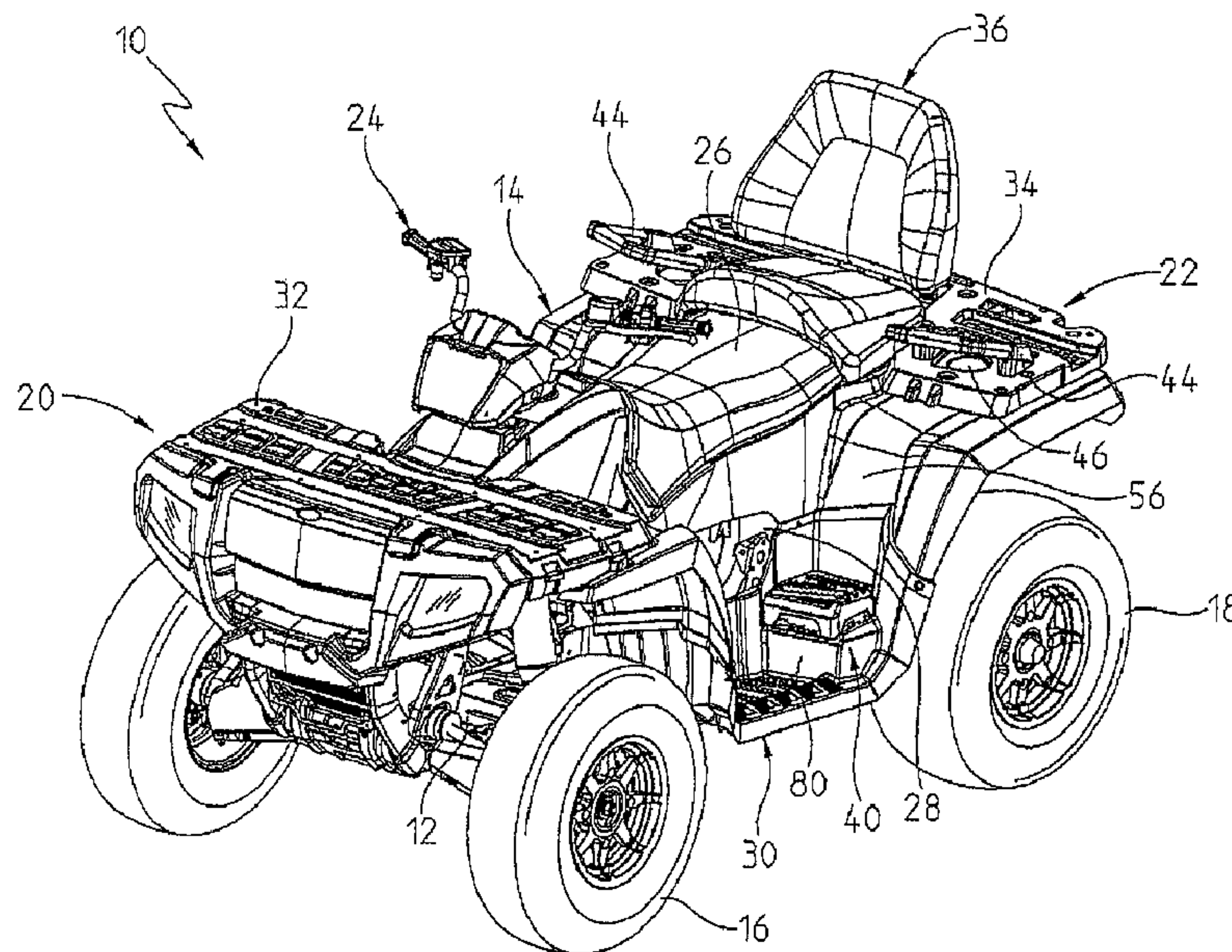
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(57) **Abrégé/Abstract:**

A vehicle comprises a frame; a plurality of ground-engaging members supporting the frame; a powertrain assembly drivingly coupled to at least one of the ground-engaging members; a seating area configured to support an operator and a passenger; and

(57) **Abrégé(suite)/Abstract(continued):**

at least one footwell positioned adjacent the seating area and configured to support a foot of the operator and the passenger when seated in the seating area, the at least one footwell including a tread surface configured to receive the foot of the operator, a platform extending upwardly relative to the tread surface, and a removable platform configured to support and raise a height of the foot of the passenger relative to the foot of the operator when seated in the seating area, the removable platform removably coupled to the platform.

ABSTRACT

A vehicle comprises a frame; a plurality of ground-engaging members supporting the frame; a powertrain assembly drivingly coupled to at least one of the ground-engaging members; a seating area configured to support an operator and a passenger; and at least one footwell positioned adjacent the seating area and configured to support a foot of the operator and the passenger when seated in the seating area, the at least one footwell including a tread surface configured to receive the foot of the operator, a platform extending upwardly relative to the tread surface, and a removable platform configured to support and raise a height of the foot of the passenger relative to the foot of the operator when seated in the seating area, the removable platform removably coupled to the platform.

ATV HAVING A HAND GRIP ARRANGEMENT FOR A PASSENGER

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

5 The present disclosure relates to all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and more specifically, to arrangements for use by a passenger on an ATV.

BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY

10 Generally, all terrain vehicles ("ATVs") and utility vehicles ("UVs") are used to carry one or two passengers and a small amount of cargo over a variety of terrains. Due to increasing recreational interest in ATVs, specialty ATVs, such as those used for trail riding, and cargo hauling have entered the market place. Most ATVs include an engine including between one and three cylinders. Most ATVs include a straddle or saddle type seat positioned above the engine. Seating systems for supporting people in a seated position on such vehicles, for example, on ATVs, are well-known. 15 Most systems generally involve a straddle type seat being secured to a frame structure.

20 Conventional straddle type seats on recreational and utility vehicles generally hold a number of people, and most commonly, the seats function in supporting one or two persons. In one example, a two-person seating system is designed with an elongated bench portion of the straddle type seat so as to support one person in front of the other. In another example, discrete seats bottoms are provided for supporting one person in front of the other, with the passenger elevated in relation to the driver.

25 U.S. Patent 7,377,570 discloses an ATV having a straddle seat for the driver and a passenger seat. A latch retains the passenger seat in position. Hand-holds flank the passenger seat.

It is desirable on ATVs to provide the most comfortable and ergonomically pleasing ride for either one or two ATV riders. Embodiments of the invention can be used to generally overcome the above shortcomings as well as others.

According to an illustrative embodiment of the present disclosure, an all-terrain vehicle includes a frame, a straddle type seat mounted to the frame for a driver, a passenger seat positioned rearward of the straddle type seat, where the straddle type seat and the passenger seat extend generally along a longitudinal axis, and
5 passenger hand-grips flank the passenger seat and are profiled for the passengers hands, each of the hand-grips are comprised of two side hand grip bars extending generally upwardly, and extending along an axis forwardly and outwardly from the longitudinal axis, the passenger hand grips further comprising an end hand grip bar connected to the side hand grips, wherein the passenger may alternatively grip
10 either of the side hand grip bars or the end hand grip bar.

In another embodiment, a vehicle comprises a frame, a straddle type seat mounted to the frame for a driver, a passenger seat is positioned rearward of the straddle type seat, where the straddle type seat and the passenger seat extend generally along a longitudinal axis, and passenger hand-grips flank the passenger seat and are
15 profiled for the passengers hands, each of the hand-grips are comprised of two side hand grip bars extending generally upwardly, and extending along an axis forwardly and outwardly from the longitudinal axis, the passenger hand grips further comprise an end hand grip bar connected to the side hand grips, wherein the passenger may alternatively grip either of the side hand grip bars or the end hand grip bar.

20 In another embodiment, a vehicle comprises a frame, a straddle type seat mounted to the frame for a driver, a passenger seat positioned rearward of the driver, where the straddle type seat and the passenger seat extend generally along a longitudinal axis, and passenger hand grips flanking the passenger seat and profiled for the passengers hands, wherein each of the hand grips is comprised of an inner base portion, and an
25 exterior casing comprised of vibration dampening material.

In another embodiment, a vehicle comprises a frame, an operator type seat mounted to the frame for a driver, a passenger seat is positioned rearward of the operator type seat, a latch assembly is cooperatively supported between the frame and the passenger seat, the latch assembly includes a fixed latch portion and a movable latch portion, wherein
30 the fixed latch portion is attached to the frame and the movable latch portion is attached to the passenger seat, and wherein the latch assembly provides attached and detached conditions for the passenger seat, and a release mechanism attached to the passenger seat, wherein a force on the release mechanism necessary to disengage the latch

assembly has a directional component substantially in the same direction as the direction for removing the passenger seat from the vehicle.

In another embodiment, a vehicle comprises a frame, an operator type seat mounted to the frame for a driver, an accessory is positioned rearward of the operator type seat and is received in an attachment opening, a latch assembly is cooperatively supported
5 between the frame and the accessory, and a release mechanism is attached to the accessory, wherein a force on the release mechanism necessary to disengage the latch assembly has a directional component substantially in the same direction as the direction for removing the accessory from the vehicle.

10 In another embodiment, a vehicle comprises a frame, a straddle type seat is mounted to the frame for a driver, a passenger seat is positioned rearward of the driver seat, an attachment mechanism is provided for attaching the passenger seat to the frame, and resilient mounting isolators are cooperatively positioned between the passenger seat and the frame to isolate the passenger seat from the vibration of the frame.

15 In another embodiment, a vehicle comprises a frame, a straddle type seat mounted to the frame for a driver, an attachment area positioned behind the driver seat, an accessory is positioned rearward of the driver and is received in the attachment area, a latch assembly is cooperatively supported between the frame and the accessory, and a release mechanism is attached to the accessory, wherein a force on the release
20 mechanism necessary to disengage the latch assembly, has a directional component substantially in the same direction as the direction for removing the accessory from the vehicle.

In another embodiment, a vehicle comprises a frame, a straddle type seat mounted to the frame for a driver, a rack portion supported by the frame, the rack comprising a rail
25 portion, and an overlying support surface, the overlying support surface covering a portion of the rail portion, leaving portions of the rail portion exposed.

In another embodiment, a vehicle comprising a frame; a straddle type seat mounted to the frame for a driver; a passenger seat positioned rearward of the driver, where the straddle type seat and the passenger seat extend generally along a longitudinal axis;
30 and passenger hand-grips flanking the passenger seat and profiled for the passengers hands, the vehicle being characterized in that each of the hand-grips is comprised of an inner base portion, and an exterior casing is comprised of vibration dampening material.

In another embodiment, a vehicle comprises a frame, a straddle type seat mounted to the frame for a driver, a rack portion supported by the frame, and a cup holder integrally formed in the rack portion.

5 In another embodiment, a vehicle comprises a frame, a straddle type seat mounted to the frame for a driver, a cup holder supported by the frame, and at least one strap, with one end attached to the frame and the opposite end having a receiving area for attachment to a cup or bottle placed in the cup holder.

10 In another embodiment, a vehicle comprises: a frame; a plurality of ground-engaging members supporting the frame; a powertrain assembly drivingly coupled to at least one of the ground-engaging members; a seating area configured to support an operator and a passenger; and at least one footwell positioned adjacent the seating area and configured to support a foot of the operator and the passenger when seated in the seating area, the at least one footwell including a tread surface configured to receive the foot of the operator, a platform extending upwardly relative to the tread surface, and a
15 removable platform configured to support and raise a height of the foot of the passenger relative to the foot of the operator when seated in the seating area, the removable platform removably coupled to the platform.

20 In another embodiment, a vehicle comprises: a frame; a plurality of ground-engaging members supporting the frame; a powertrain assembly drivingly coupled to at least one of the ground-engaging members; a seating area configured to support at least an operator; and at least one footwell positioned adjacent the seating area and configured to support a foot of at least the operator when seated in the seating area, the at least one footwell including a removable portion, wherein the at least one footwell includes a front riser coupled to a front fender of the vehicle and a rear riser coupled to a rear fender of
25 the vehicle, and the removable portion is positioned at the rear riser.

30 In another embodiment, a vehicle comprises: a frame; a plurality of ground-engaging members supporting the frame on a ground surface; a powertrain assembly drivingly coupled to at least one of the ground-engaging members; a seating area configured to support at least an operator; and at least one footwell positioned adjacent the seating area and configured to support a foot of at least the operator when seated in the seating area, the at least one footwell including a first portion and a second portion, the first

portion positioned at a first height relative to the ground surface, and a height of the second portion is adjustable relative to the ground surface, the second portion including a fixed platform extending upwardly relative to the first portion and a removable platform configured to be coupled to the fixed platform, and the fixed platform is positioned at a
5 second height relative to the ground surface which is greater than the first height, and, when the removable platform is coupled to the fixed platform, the removable platform is positioned at a third height relative to the ground surface which is greater than the second height.

In another embodiment, a vehicle comprises: a frame; a plurality of ground engaging
10 members supporting the frame on a ground surface; a powertrain assembly drivingly coupled to at least one of the ground-engaging members; a seating area configured to support at least an operator; and at least one footwell positioned adjacent the seating area and configured to support a foot of at least the operator when seated in the seating area, the at least one footwell including a fixed platform and a removable platform
15 removably coupled to the fixed platform, the removable platform defining a height of the at least one footwell relative to the ground surface that is adjustable.

In another embodiment, a vehicle comprises a frame; a straddle type seat mounted to the frame for a driver; a passenger seat positioned rearward of the driver; a foot rest positioned along the sides of the vehicle and longitudinally disposed and profiled for the
20 feet of the driver and passenger, wherein the foot rest has a first raised area providing a first raised foot area for the passenger, and a removable pedestal riser receivable over the first raised area providing a second and alternate raised foot area for the passenger.

A method of manufacturing all terrain vehicles (ATVs), comprises the steps of providing a body portion having a driver and passenger seat mount area; providing a foot rest positioned along the sides of the vehicle and longitudinally disposed and profiled for the feet of the driver and passenger, when positioned on respective driver and passenger
5 seats; providing and attaching a driver seat to the driver seat mount area; alternatively selecting a first seat or second passenger seat, where the second passenger seat upstands higher than the driver seat and the first passenger seat; and when the second passenger seat is selected, providing a removable pedestal riser positioned for the passenger, for raising the height of the passenger foot area.

10 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is a front perspective view of vehicle described;

Fig. 2 is a left side plan view of the vehicle of Figure 1;

Fig. 3 is a rear perspective view of the vehicle of Figures 1 and 2;

Fig. 4 is a view similar to that of Figure 1 showing the pedestals removed;

Fig. 5 is an enlarged view of the pedestals of Figure 4;

Fig. 6 is an enlarged view of the passenger hand grips;

Fig. 7 is a cross-sectional view through lines 7-7 of Figure 6;

Fig. 8 is a partial top plan view showing the passenger seat and hand grip area;

5 Fig. 9 is an exploded view looking upwardly at the disassembled hand grip and rear accessory panel;

Fig. 10 shows an alternate hand grip;

Fig. 11 shows the passenger seat exploded away from the vehicle;

Fig. 12 shows an enlarged view of the passenger seat of Figure 11;

10 Fig. 13 shows an exploded view of the entire passenger seat assembly;

Fig. 14 shows an underside perspective view of a portion of the passenger seat assembly of Figure 13;

Fig. 15 shows an enlarged view of the receiving area of the vehicle for receiving the passenger seat;

15 Fig. 16 shows a side view of the seat and vehicle with the chassis removed;

Fig. 17 is a view similar to that of Figure 15 showing the seat in a latched position; and

Fig. 18 shows an accessory trunk usable in lieu of the passenger seat.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The embodiments disclosed below are not intended to be exhaustive or to limit the
20 invention to the precise forms disclosed in the following detailed description. Rather,
the embodiments are chosen and described so that others skilled in the art may
utilize their teachings. For example, while the following description refers primarily to
an all terrain vehicle, it should be understood that the invention may have application
to other types of vehicles, such as snowmobiles, motorcycles, watercraft, utility
25 vehicles, scooters, golf carts, and mopeds.

Referring initially to Figs. 1 and 2, one illustrative embodiment of an all terrain vehicle (ATV) 10 is shown. ATV 10 includes a frame 12, a chassis 14 mounted on the frame 12, where the frame 12 is supported by front and rear tires 16, 18, respectively. ATV 10 also includes a front end 20 and a rear end 22. Front end

5 20 and rear end 22 are separated by handlebar assembly 24, straddle-type seat 26, drive-train 28, and foot-wells 30. Foot-wells 30 are located on both lateral sides of ATV 10, and flank the straddle-type seat 26. Front end 20 also includes front accessory panel 32 which may include a tool storage compartment. Handlebar assembly 24 is operably coupled to front wheels 16 to allow a rider to

10 steer ATV 10 when supported by straddle-type seat 26. Rear end 22 also includes rear accessory panel 34 which may also include a tool storage compartment. Front panel 32 and rear panel 34 may also include an accessory coupling system such as the one disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 7,055,454. Positioned rearward of the straddle type seat 26 is an auxiliary passenger seat 36, which as

15 described herein, is selectively removable from the ATV 10.

ATV 10 incorporates many features or accessories which are useful to a passenger or driver of the ATV. First, the ATV 10 includes a pedestal assembly 40 incorporated into the foot-wells 30, which cooperate with removable passenger seat 36. Furthermore, passenger seat 36 is selectively added or removed from ATV by way of a latch

20 assembly 42. Hand grips 44 flank the removable seat and are attached to the rear accessory panel 34. The rear accessory panel also includes an integrated cup holder 46 (Figure 6), and rack tie-downs 48 (Figure 3). With the above generally described vehicle, other features will be introduced and more fully described below.

With respect to Figures 1-3, the pedestal assembly 40 will be described. As shown,

25 foot-wells 30 conform to the general shape of the chassis 14. Chassis 14 is provided with a shroud portion 50 (Figure 2), a side panel 52 (Figures 2 and 4) beneath the straddle-type seat 26, front fenders 54 (Figure 3), and rear fenders 56 (Figure 4). Meanwhile, foot-wells 30 include a horizontal platform portion 60 (Figure 3), a side panel portion (Figure 3), a forward riser 64 (Figure 3) which conforms with the front

30 fender 54, and a rear riser 66 (Figure 4) which conforms to the rear fender 56. As

shown in any of the Figures 1-4, platform portion 60 includes a tread surface 70 for receiving the feet of the driver when seated on the straddle-type seat. As shown best in Figure 1, pedestal assembly 40 is comprised of a fixed pedestal portion 80 and a removable pedestal portion 82 (Figure 4). As best shown in Figure 4, pedestal portion 80 includes an upper tread surface 84.

With respect now to Figure 5, removable pedestal portion 82 is comprised of a unitary molded pedestal block 90 having corner pedestal portions 92 which are profiled for placement on upper tread surface 84 where fasteners (not shown) can be inserted through apertures 94 for connection of the pedestal block 90 to pedestal portion 80. Removable pedestal portion 82 further includes features to assist in keeping the rider's foot on the pedestal, namely, an outer ridge 96, and a plurality of gripping treads such as 98a, 98b, 98c and 98d. Furthermore, a removable and replaceable rubber insert 100 is insertable into a slot 102 in pedestal block 90 for gripping the shoe or boot of the rider.

The purpose and use of the removable pedestal portion 82 is twofold. First, it is anticipated that for any given chassis size, multiple passenger seats 36 could be used that have varying heights. As the height of the seat changes, the location and height of the passenger's foot also changes, thus requiring the additional pedestal. Thus, in the event the seat is, for example, co-planar with the straddle-type seat 26, the pedestal portion 82 may be removed and the passenger's foot would rest directly on upper tread surface 84; whereas when a higher seat is utilized, for example, passenger seat 36 shown herein, pedestal 82 is used and the passenger's foot is positioned on the multiple treads 98a-98d. Second, with multiple sizes of passengers, and particularly height, it would be best ergonomically to have multiple heights to allow for the different height or length of the passenger's legs. Thus, for a taller passenger, the removable pedestal portion 82 could be removed to lower the vertical positioning of the passenger's foot.

With reference now to Figure 6, hand grip 44 is shown in a position mounted to a top surface 120 of rear accessory panel 34. As shown best in Figures 6, 7 and 9, hand grips 44 include base members 122 having side hand grip bars 124 and 126 and end

hand grip bars 128 connected by corner joining members 130. As shown best in Figures 7 and 9, base member 122 includes a mounting lip 132 adjacent to an end thereof for mounting purposes as described herein. As best shown in Figure 7, base member 122 is comprised of a two component member having an internal rigidified section 140 and an overmolded portion 142. The rigidified section 140 could be comprised of any suitable structural material such as plastic or aluminum for example, whereas the overmolded material 142 would be a softer material such as a rubber-like overmolded material, for vibration resistance as will be described further herein. In the embodiment shown, cast aluminum is anticipated.

10 With respect still to Figures 7 and 9, the base members 122, and particularly the internal rigidified section 140 is comprised of a mounting portion 144 which projects downwardly from the overmolded portion 142 to define a mounting shoulder 146 as described herein. Mounting portion 144 includes mounting apertures 148 profiled to receive fasteners 150. As shown best in Figure 7, rear accessory panel 34 includes a mounting well 160 having a top mounting surface 162 and a rear slot opening 164 which is profiled at least as wide as mounting lip 132. It should be appreciated then that hand grips 44 are mounted to rear accessory panel 34 by first inserting mounting lip 132 through slot opening 164 in a manner such that hand grips 44 are then rotated counterclockwise as viewed in Figure 7 to a position where fasteners 150 may be inserted through a bottom of rear accessory panel 34 (see Figure 9). When the fasteners 150 are fully tightened, as in the position of Figure 7, a bottom surface of the mounting portion 144 (Figure 9) is flush with top mounting surface 162 and the shoulder 146 (Figure 9) is somewhat compressed against, top surface 120. It should be appreciated that the compression of the resilient overmolded portion 142 provides a vibration resistance against the vibration of the vehicle passing through to the passenger's hands, while gripping the hand grips 44.

As mounted, the hand grips 44, and particularly the side hand grip bars 124, 126, extend forwardly and upwardly by an angle α relative to a horizontal plane (see Figure 7) and the side hand grip bars 124 and 126 extend forwardly and outwardly from the longitudinal axis by an angle β as shown in Figure 8. Meanwhile, the end hand grip bars 128 extend at an angle ϕ relative to transverse (see Figure 8). By this

configuration, a passenger has three separate positions for each hand for gripping, namely, either of the bars 124, 126 or 128, and thus the passenger may find the most ergonomically comfortable position for gripping. It is anticipated, however, that a passenger would hold the end hand grip bars 128, for example, when traversing rolling terrain where the passenger's body would have the natural tendency to move in the vertical direction, whereas the passenger would more than likely have the tendency to grip either of the hand grip bars 124, 126, when traversing side to side terrain, when the passenger's body would have the natural tendency to move side-to-side.

Figure 10 shows an alternate embodiment of the hand grip 44' where the side hand grip bars 124' include integrated heating elements such as 125 for selectively warming the side hand grip bars 124' and resultantly the passenger's hands.

With reference now to Figures 6 and 9, the integrated cup holder 46 will be described in greater detail. As shown best in Figure 6, cup holder 46 is shown located directly between the hand grip 44, which is chosen due to a convenient location for the passenger's hands, although it should be appreciated that this cup holder could be positioned anywhere on the rear accessory panel 34, and, for example, anywhere on the vehicle itself. However in this particular embodiment, the cup holder is shown directly integrated with the rear accessory panel 34.

As shown best in Figure 9, rear accessory panel 34 is shown from an underside, where it can be seen that the rear accessory panel is comprised of a one piece molded construction where a cup holder well 180 projects downwardly from top surface 120 of the rear accessory panel 34. Well 180 includes a drain hole 182 integrally formed therein. As mentioned above, rear accessory panel 34 is mounted on top of the rear fenders 56, and in the embodiment of Figure 9, rear fenders 56 are mounted on top of a rear portion of frame 12. As shown, rear fender 56 includes a complementary well 190, which is profiled to receive well 180 and well 190 includes a drain hole 192 therethrough. As shown in Figure 9, while the wells 180, 190 are positioned in a substantially coaxial position, the drain holes 182 and 192 are intentionally misaligned, that is, they are each located on opposite sides of the same transverse axis, to prevent rocks or dirt from the underside of rear fender 56 from

projecting through to the passenger through drain hole 182, yet fluid may drain through the drain holes 182, 192.

With respect now to Figure 6, a retaining assembly 200 is provided, attached to the rear accessory panel 34 and includes netting 202 held by straps 204 to the top surface
5 120 of rear accessory panel 34 by way of fasteners. It should be appreciated that either or both of the netting 202 and straps 204 could be elastic such that bottle 210 is held with a downward force within the cup holder 46.

With respect again to Figure 6, rack tie-downs 48 will be described in greater detail. As with most ATVs or utility vehicles, it is often times necessary to use a rope or
10 bungee cord to retain articles to the top surface of the rear accessory panel, for example, tool boxes or other items used in hunting, fishing, camping or farming. For this purpose, integrated rack tie-downs 48 are included where the plastic of the rear accessory panel 34 is molded to include an opening at 220 to expose a length of an internal structural rib or frame 222 such as a metal rod or tube piece. This tube piece
15 222 could be a peripheral frame piece or could be separate segments located along the length or periphery, or located anywhere along the internal area of panel 34. It should also be appreciated that tie-downs 48 could also be incorporated into front panel 32.

With reference now to Figures 11-14, the passenger's seat 36 will be described in
20 greater detail. With reference first to Figures 12 and 13, passenger seat 36 includes seat back 240, seat back frame 242, seat bottom 244, seat frame 246, latch lanyard 248, and spring latch assembly 250. A latch base plate 252 is mounted within the vehicle as will be described herein.

With respect first to Figure 13, seat frame 246 includes a seat back frame portion 270,
25 a seat bottom frame portion 272 and a transition portion 274 extending therebetween. Seat back frame portion 270 includes an aperture therethrough at 276, while seat bottom frame portion 272 includes an aperture at 278. An embossed channel 280 extends between the apertures 276 and 278 and extends generally along the transition section 274 as shown. As shown best in Figure 12, rubber isolation mounts
30 282 extend from a bracket 284 mounted on the back side of seat frame 246.

With reference still to Figure 13, spring latch assembly 250 includes a receiver plate 290, spring 292, spring block 294 and back up plate 296. Receiver plate 290 includes a pin receiving aperture 300 and spring 292 includes a spring portion 302 overlapping aperture 300. Thus as shown, receiver plate 290, spring 292, block 294 and back up plate 296 stack together and may be fastened to frame portion 272 by way of fasteners 310. Block 294 and back up plate 296 also include throughholes 312, 314, respectively, which align with aperture 300 as described herein. With reference still to Figure 13, lanyard 248 includes a strap 320 having a pull loop 322 at one end and a connection link 324 at the opposite end. Link 324 is connected to release member 326 having engagement members 328 as will be described herein. Link 324 and release member 326 are attached together by way of rivets 330.

With reference now to Figure 12, seat bottom 244 includes a molded frame portion 350 comprised of corner pedestal portion 352, 354, 356 and 358, which define a central recess portion 360 for receiving spring latch assembly 250 as shown. Each of the pedestals 352-358 also include rubber isolation mounts 364. Thus as shown in Figure 12, fasteners 310 are positioned through receiver plate 290 and with spring 292 positioned on the plate 290 fasteners can extend through the block 294, back up plate 296 and are attached to frame portion 272. It should be appreciated that release member 326 is moveably trapped between plate 290 and block 294. It should also be appreciated that strap 320 is laced through apertures 278 to lie within channel 280 and exits through aperture 276 to position loop 322 on the backside of seat 36 as shown in Figure 12. As also shown in Figure 12, latch assembly 250 is mounted within the recessed portion 360 and seat frame 246 is fastened to seat bottom frame 350 and seat back frame 242 to hold the entire assembly together.

With reference still to Figure 13, latch base plate 252 includes mounting plate 380 having a mounting pin 382 upstanding therefrom having a tapered end 384 and a groove 386. With reference now to Figure 14, block 294 includes threaded bosses 388 profiled to threadably receive fasteners 310. Block 294 further includes U-shaped channels 390, posts 392, and a central post 394 which forms opening 312, and where post 394 is formed with a cut-away portion 395. As also shown in Figure 14, release member 326 includes trunnions 396 on each side thereof, and is profiled for receipt

within the U-shaped channels 390. The engagement members 328 include gripping channels 397. Finally, spring 292 includes clip ends 398.

The spring latch assembly 250 is assembled as follows: Strap 320 and link 324 are first attached to release member 326 by way of rivets 330. Trunnions 396 are then
5 positioned in U-shaped channels 390. Spring 292 is positioned with spring portion 302 positioned in cutaway 395 and in gripping channels 397, and with clip ends 398 positioned in apertures of posts 392. Receiver plate 290 and back-up plate 296 are then positioned over threaded bosses 388, and fasteners 310 may be threadably received therein, to retain the assembly in place.

10 With reference now to Figure 15, vehicle 10 is shown where vehicle includes an opening 400, intermediate rear fenders, behind straddle-type seat 26, and through the chassis. Base plate 252 is shown mounted directly to longitudinally extending frame portions 410 of frame 12. Pin 382 is also shown poised for receipt for locking with the spring latch assembly 250. Finally, rear accessory panel 34 includes a receiving area
15 420 having receiving openings 422 profiled to receive isolation mounts 282 (Figure 12).

Thus as described, seat 36 is attached to vehicle 10 by positioning seat frame 350 within opening 400 such that pin 382 aligns with opening 300 (Figure 13) in receiving plate 290, as shown in Figures 15-17. It should be appreciated that when pin 382 is
20 aligned with opening 300, spring portion 302 resiles into pin groove 386 to retain the seat assembly in position. When the seat needs to be removed, loop 322 of strap 320 is pulled which causes release plate 326 to rotate about trunnions 396. Gripping channels grip spring portion 302 and disengage spring 292 from pin 382, which allows the seat to pull straight out of opening 400. It should be noted that the movable
25 portion of the latch assembly 42, that is release member 326 and spring 292, are movably attached to the seat. It should also be noted that lanyard strap 320 is pulled generally vertically to release the latch assembly 42 from the pin 382. Therefore, the directional component of the force on the lanyard 248 assists in the removal of the passenger seat 46. As mentioned above, isolation mounts 282 are positioned in

receiving openings 422 which provides for vibration dampening between the frame of the vehicle and the frame of the passenger seat.

Finally, and with reference to Figure 18, an auxiliary trunk 500 is also usable, in lieu of the passenger seat 36 where the trunk 500 includes a frame portion 502 which is configured in a similar manner to frame 350 and would snap latch to pin 382 in a like manner. In addition, latch members such as 506 could be incorporated which are referred to as Applicants' "LOCK-N-RIDE", and which are shown and described in Applicants' U.S. Patent No. 7,222,582.

What is claimed is:

1. A vehicle, comprising:
 - a frame;
 - a plurality of ground-engaging members supporting the frame;a powertrain assembly drivingly coupled to at least one of the ground-engaging members;
 - a seating area configured to support an operator and a passenger; and
 - at least one footwell positioned adjacent the seating area and configured to support a foot of the operator and the passenger when seated in the seating area, the at least one footwell including a tread surface configured to receive the foot of the operator, a platform extending upwardly relative to the tread surface, and a removable platform configured to support and raise a height of the foot of the passenger relative to the foot of the operator when seated in the seating area, the removable platform removably coupled to the platform.
2. The vehicle of claim 1, wherein the seating area includes at least a straddle seat configured to support at least the operator and the at least one footwell includes a first footwell positioned to a first side of the straddle seat and a second footwell positioned to a second side of the straddle seat.
3. The vehicle of claim 1 or 2, wherein the removable platform of the footwell is positioned rearward of a forward extent of the seating area.
4. The vehicle of claim 1, wherein the seating area includes a first seat for the operator and a second seat configured to support the passenger.
5. The vehicle of claim 4, wherein the second seat is positioned rearward of the first seat.
6. The vehicle of claim 4 or 5, wherein the removable platform is positioned forward of a forward extent of the second seat.

7. The vehicle of claim 1, wherein the at least one footwell defines a laterally outermost surface and the removable platform is positioned inwardly from the laterally outermost surface.
8. The vehicle of claim 1, wherein the removable platform and the platform each include an edge boundary profile, and the edge boundary profile of the removable platform is generally aligned with the edge boundary profile of the fixed platform.
9. The vehicle of any one of claims 1 to 8, wherein the removable platform is in direct contact with a rear fender of the vehicle.
10. The vehicle of claim 9, wherein the at least one footwell further includes a rear riser conforming to the rear fender, and the platform is coupled to the rear riser.
11. A vehicle, comprising:
 - a frame;
 - a plurality of ground-engaging members supporting the frame;
 - a powertrain assembly drivingly coupled to at least one of the ground-engaging members;
 - a seating area configured to support at least an operator; and
 - at least one footwell positioned adjacent the seating area and configured to support a foot of at least the operator when seated in the seating area, the at least one footwell including a removable portion, wherein the at least one footwell includes a front riser coupled to a front fender of the vehicle and a rear riser coupled to a rear fender of the vehicle, and the removable portion is positioned at the rear riser.
12. A vehicle, comprising:
 - a frame;
 - a plurality of ground-engaging members supporting the frame on a ground surface;
 - a powertrain assembly drivingly coupled to at least one of the ground-engaging members;
 - a seating area configured to support at least an operator; and

at least one footwell positioned adjacent the seating area and configured to support a foot of at least the operator when seated in the seating area, the at least one footwell including a first portion and a second portion, the first portion positioned at a first height relative to the ground surface, and a height of the second portion is adjustable relative to the ground surface, the second portion including a fixed platform extending upwardly relative to the first portion and a removable platform configured to be coupled to the fixed platform, and the fixed platform is positioned at a second height relative to the ground surface which is greater than the first height, and, when the removable platform is coupled to the fixed platform, the removable platform is positioned at a third height relative to the ground surface which is greater than the second height.

13. The vehicle of claim 12, wherein the seating area includes at least a straddle seat configured to support the operator and the at least one footwell includes a first footwell positioned to a first side of the straddle seat and a second footwell positioned to a second side of the straddle seat.

14. The vehicle of claim 13, wherein the height of the second portion of the at least one footwell is adjustable at a position rearward of a forward extent of the straddle seat.

15. The vehicle of claim 12, wherein the removable platform defines the height of the second portion of the at least one footwell which is adjustable.

16. The vehicle of claim 15, wherein the seating area includes a first seat for the operator and a second seat configured to support a passenger, and the removable platform of the at least one footwell is configured to support a foot of the passenger.

17. The vehicle of claim 16, further comprising an attachment rack supported by the frame and positioned rearward of at least the first seat and the removable platform, and the attachment rack is comprised of a first material and a second material.

18. The vehicle of claim 16 or 17, wherein, when the second seat is coplanar with the first seat, the removable platform of the at least one footwell is configured to be removed.

19. The vehicle of claim 16 or 17, wherein, when the second seat extends upwardly relative to the first seat, the removable platform of the at least one footwell is configured to be coupled to a fixed portion of the at least one footwell.

20. The vehicle of claim 16 or 17, wherein the at least one footwell defines a laterally outermost surface and the removable portion is positioned inwardly from the laterally outermost surface.

21. A vehicle, comprising:

a frame;

a plurality of ground engaging members supporting the frame on a ground surface;

a powertrain assembly drivingly coupled to at least one of the ground-engaging members; a seating area configured to support at least an operator; and

at least one footwell positioned adjacent the seating area and configured to support a foot of at least the operator when seated in the seating area, the at least one footwell including a fixed platform and a removable platform removably coupled to the fixed platform, the removable platform defining a height of the at least one footwell relative to the ground surface that is adjustable.

22. A vehicle comprising a frame; a straddle type seat mounted to the frame for a driver; a passenger seat positioned rearward of the driver; a foot rest positioned along the sides of the vehicle and longitudinally disposed and profiled for the feet of the driver and passenger, wherein the foot rest has a first raised area providing a first raised foot area for the passenger, and a removable pedestal riser receivable over the first raised area providing a second and alternate raised foot area for the passenger.

23. A method of manufacturing all terrain vehicles (ATVs), comprising the steps of:

providing a body portion having a driver and passenger seat mount area;
providing a foot rest positioned along the sides of the vehicle and longitudinally disposed and profiled for the feet of the driver and passenger, when positioned on respective driver and passenger seats;

providing and attaching a driver seat to the driver seat mount area;
alternatively selecting a first seat or second passenger seat, where said second passenger seat upstands higher than said driver seat and said first passenger seat; and

when said second passenger seat is selected, providing a removable pedestal riser positioned for the passenger, for raising the height of the passenger foot area.

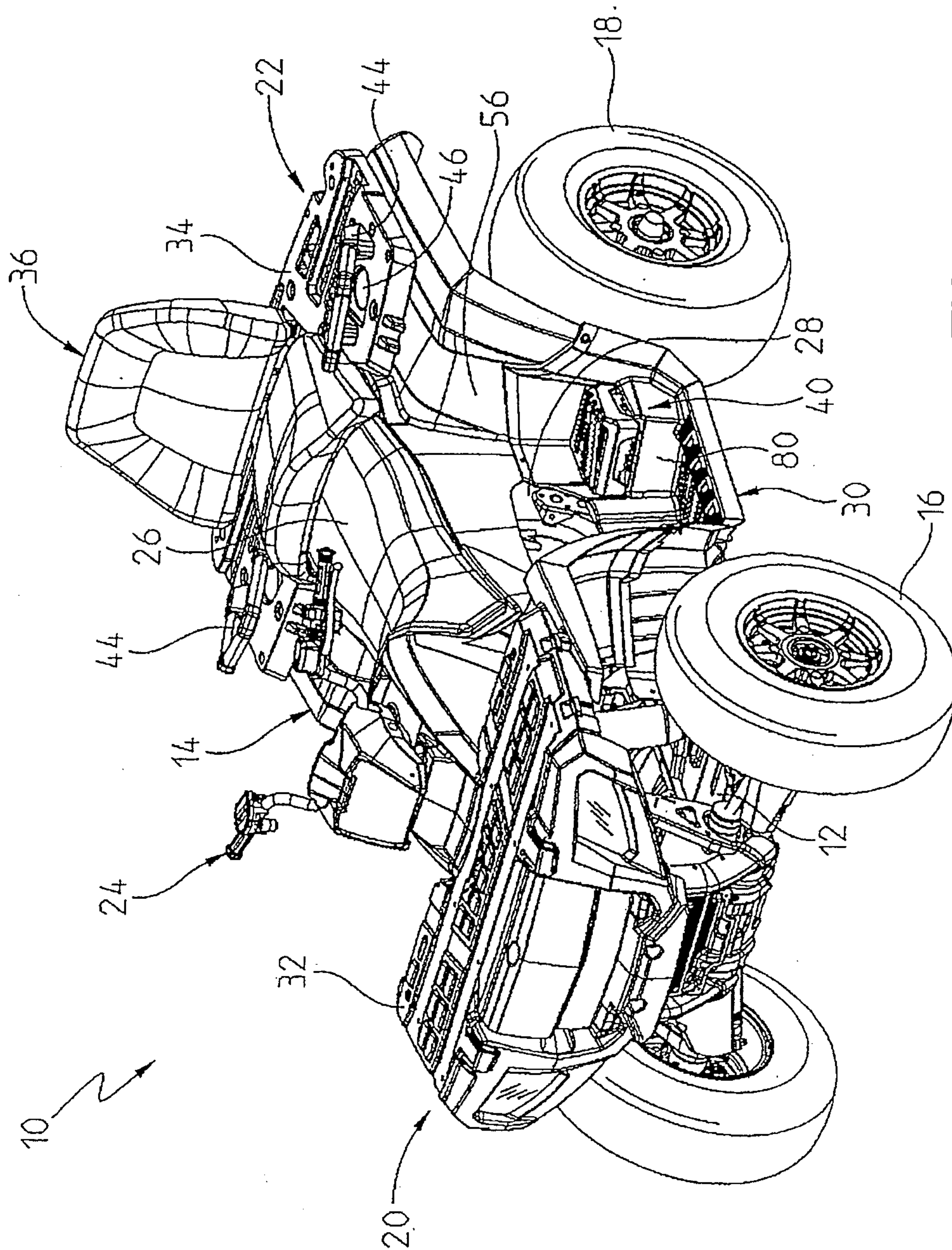


FIG. 1

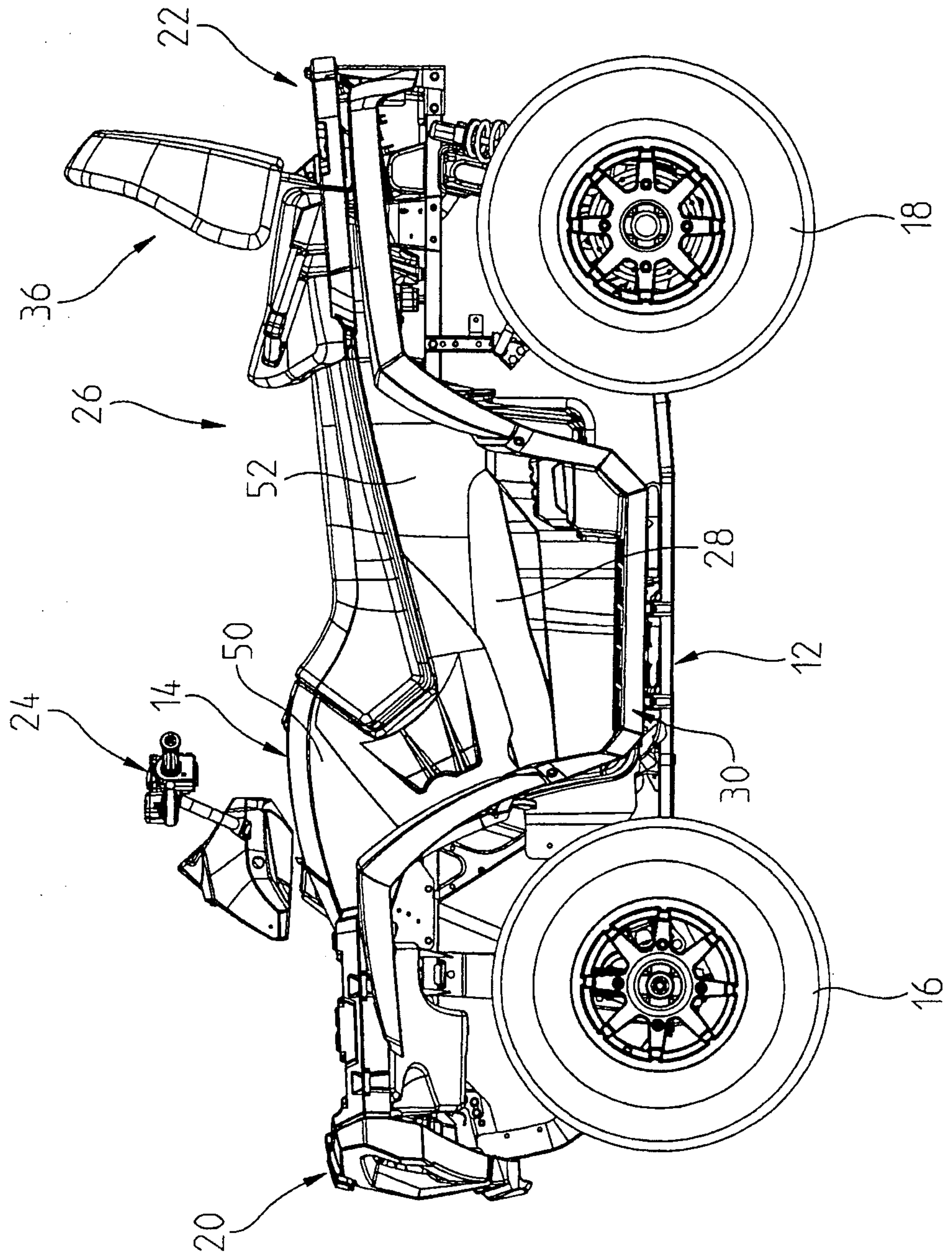


FIG. 2

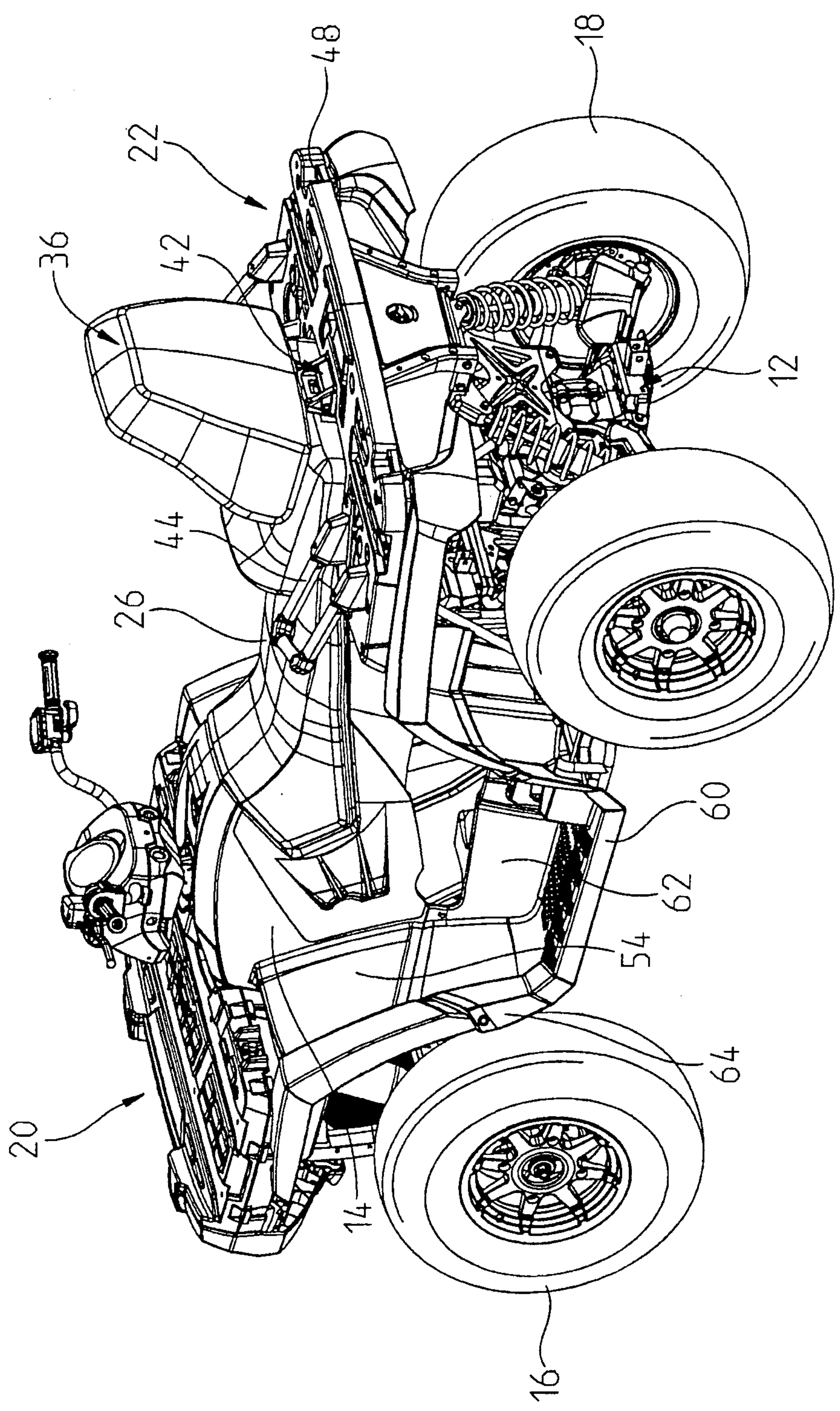


FIG. 3

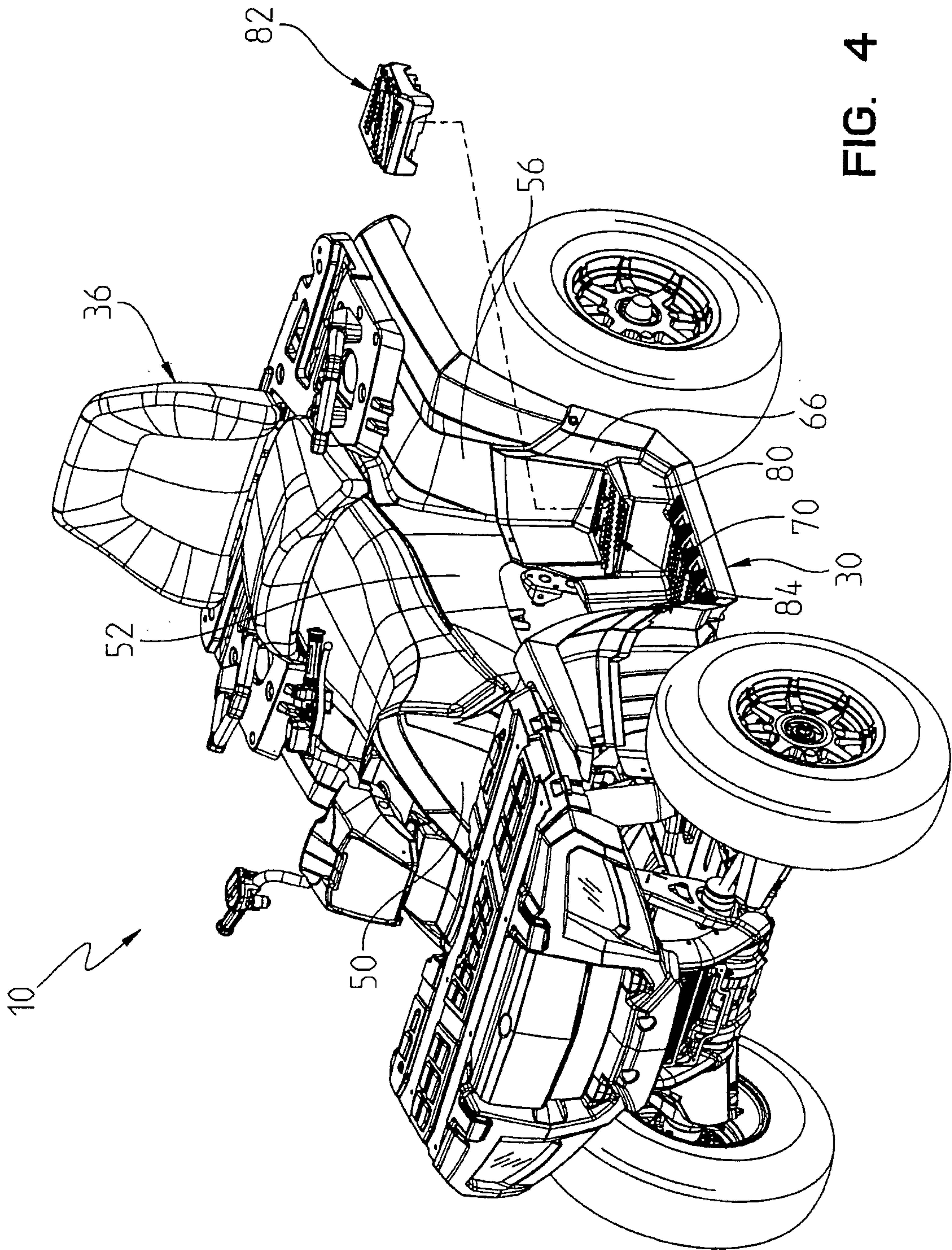


FIG. 4

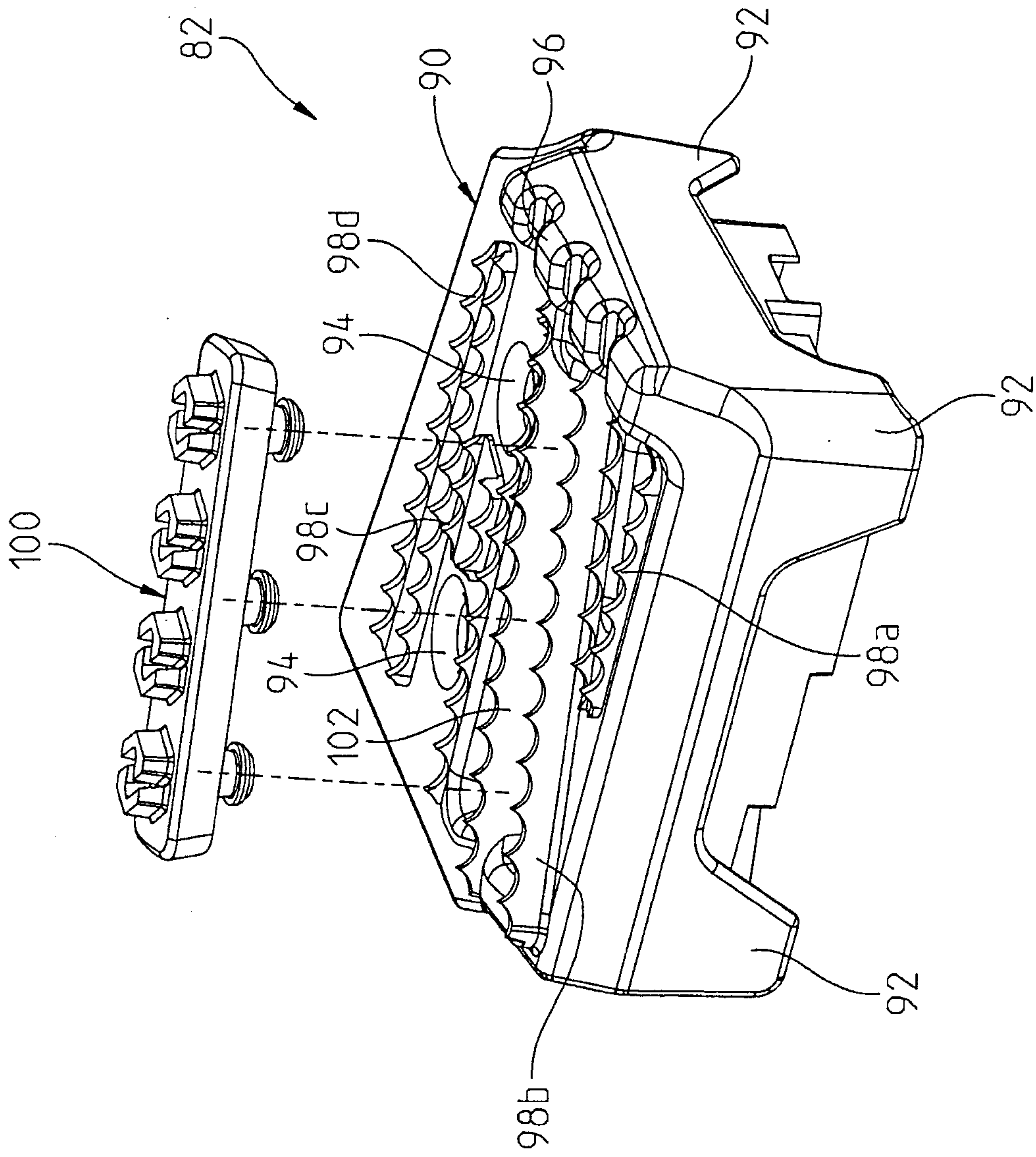


FIG. 5

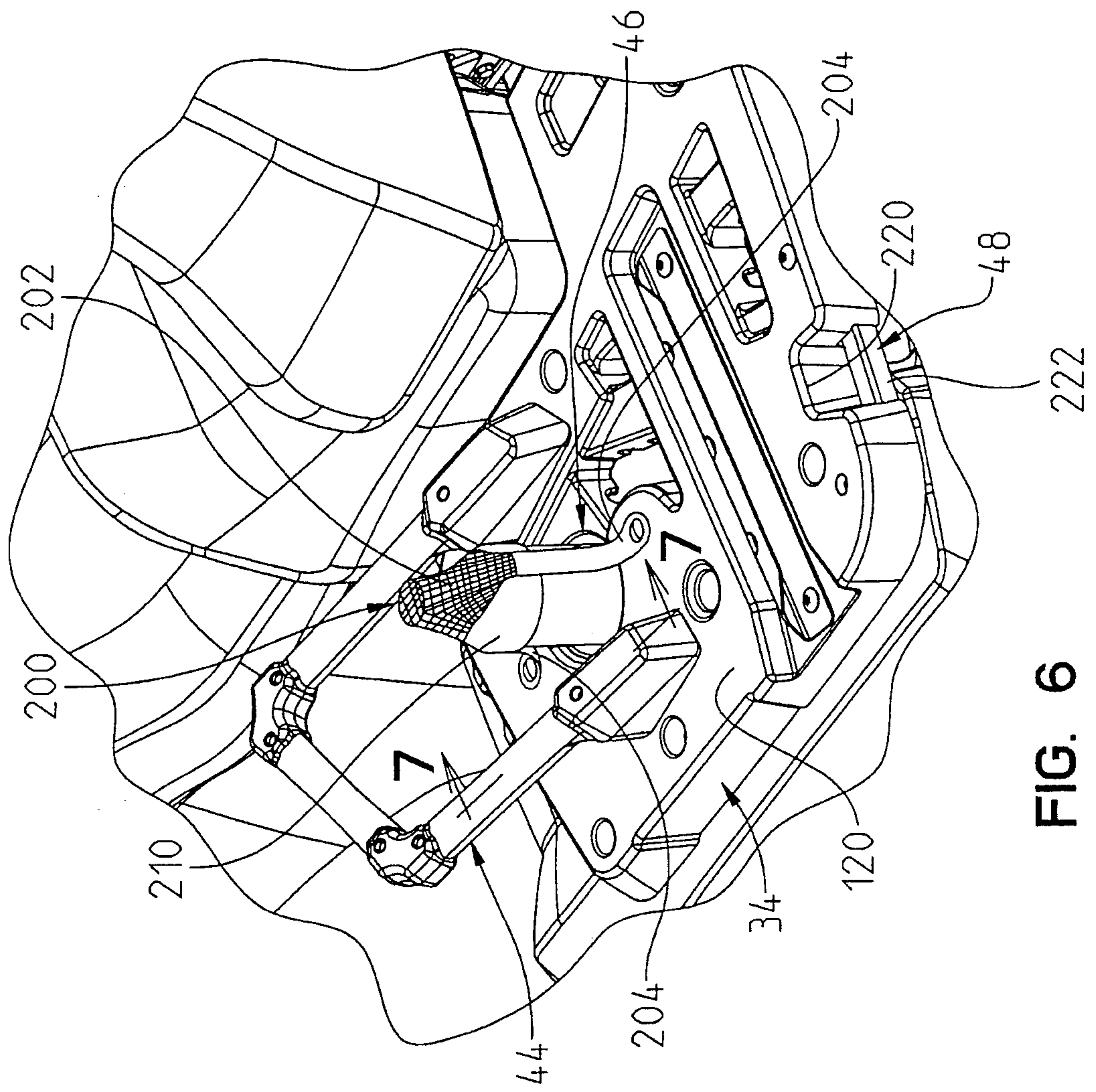


FIG. 6

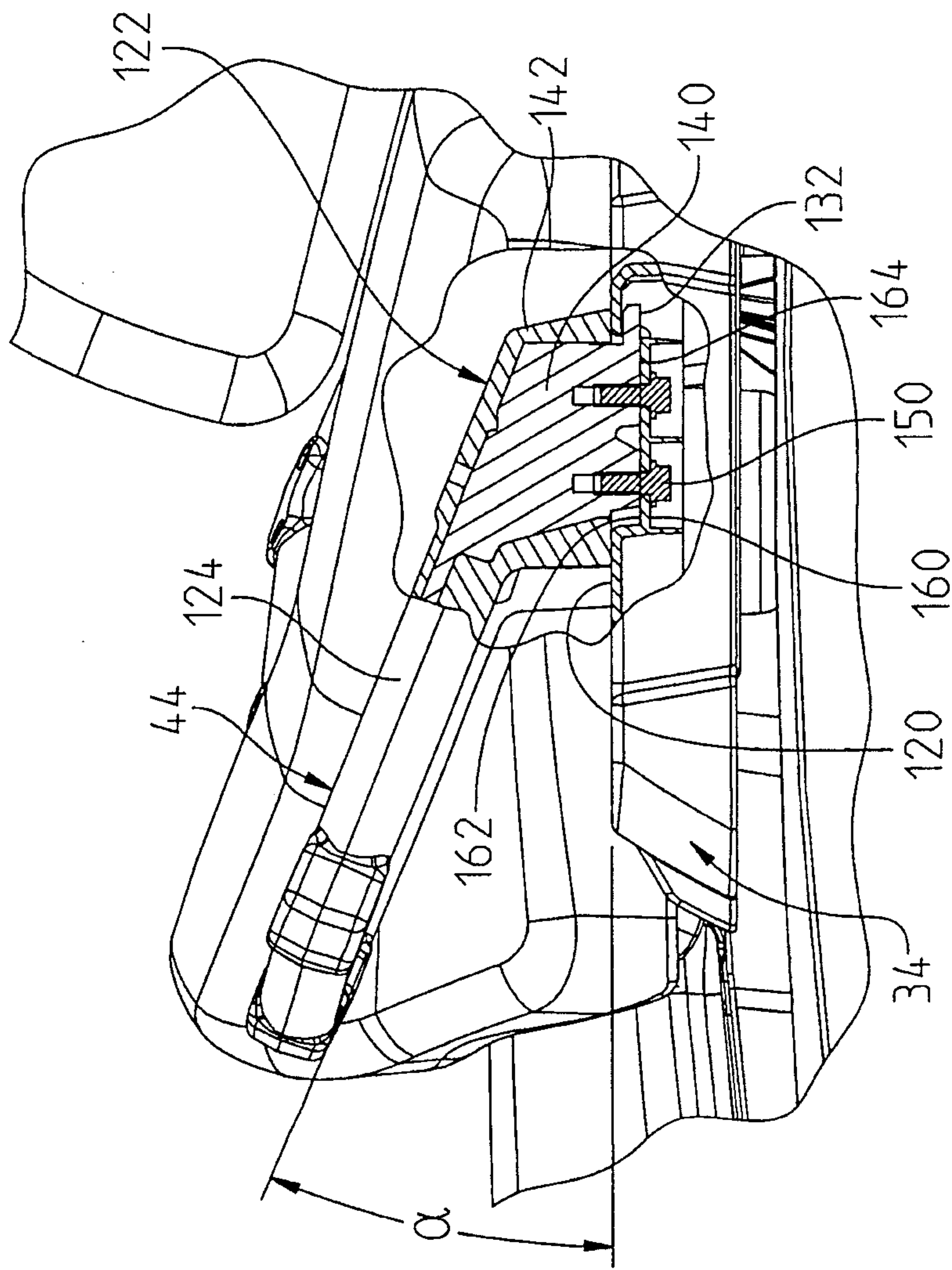


FIG. 7

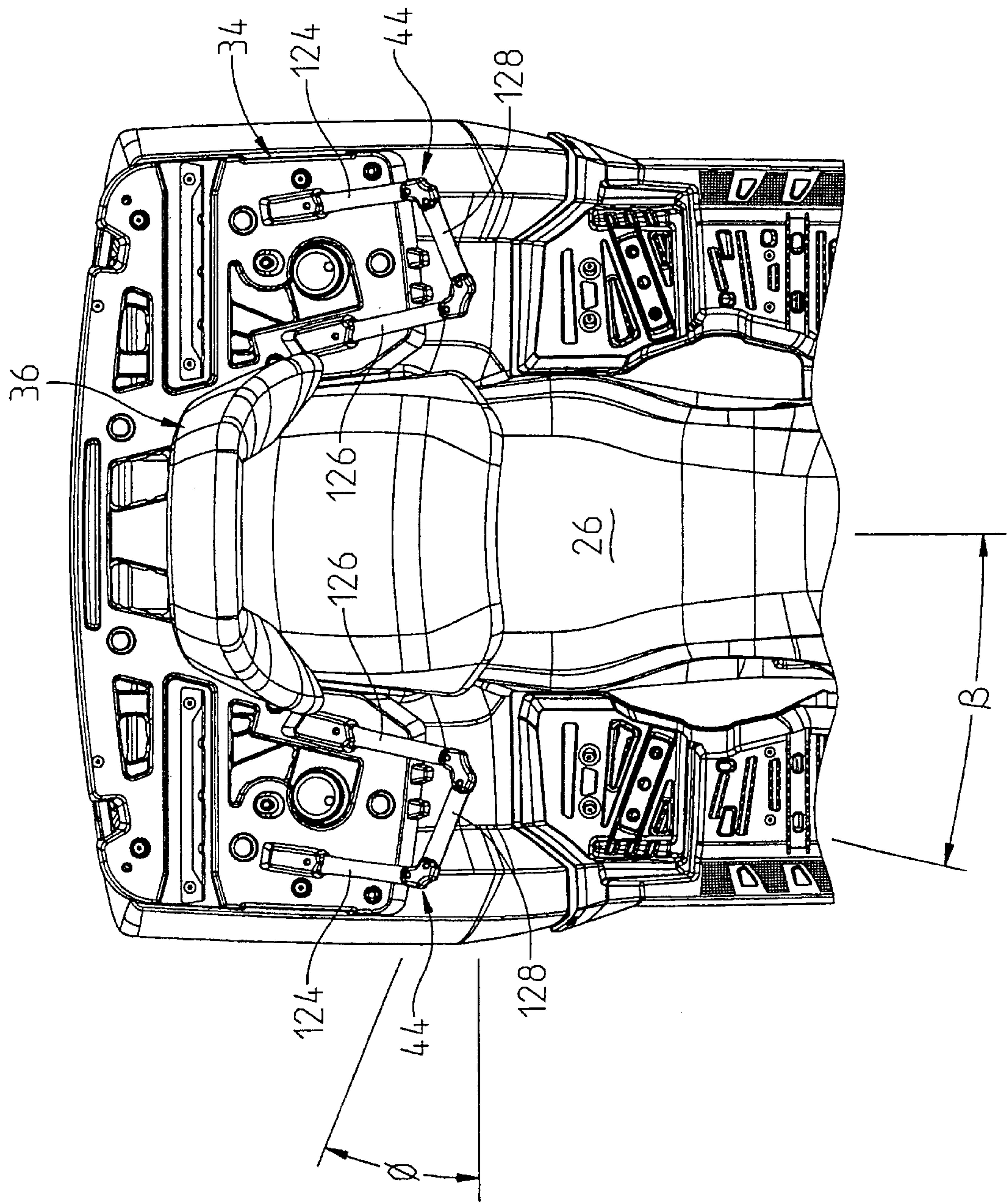


FIG. 8

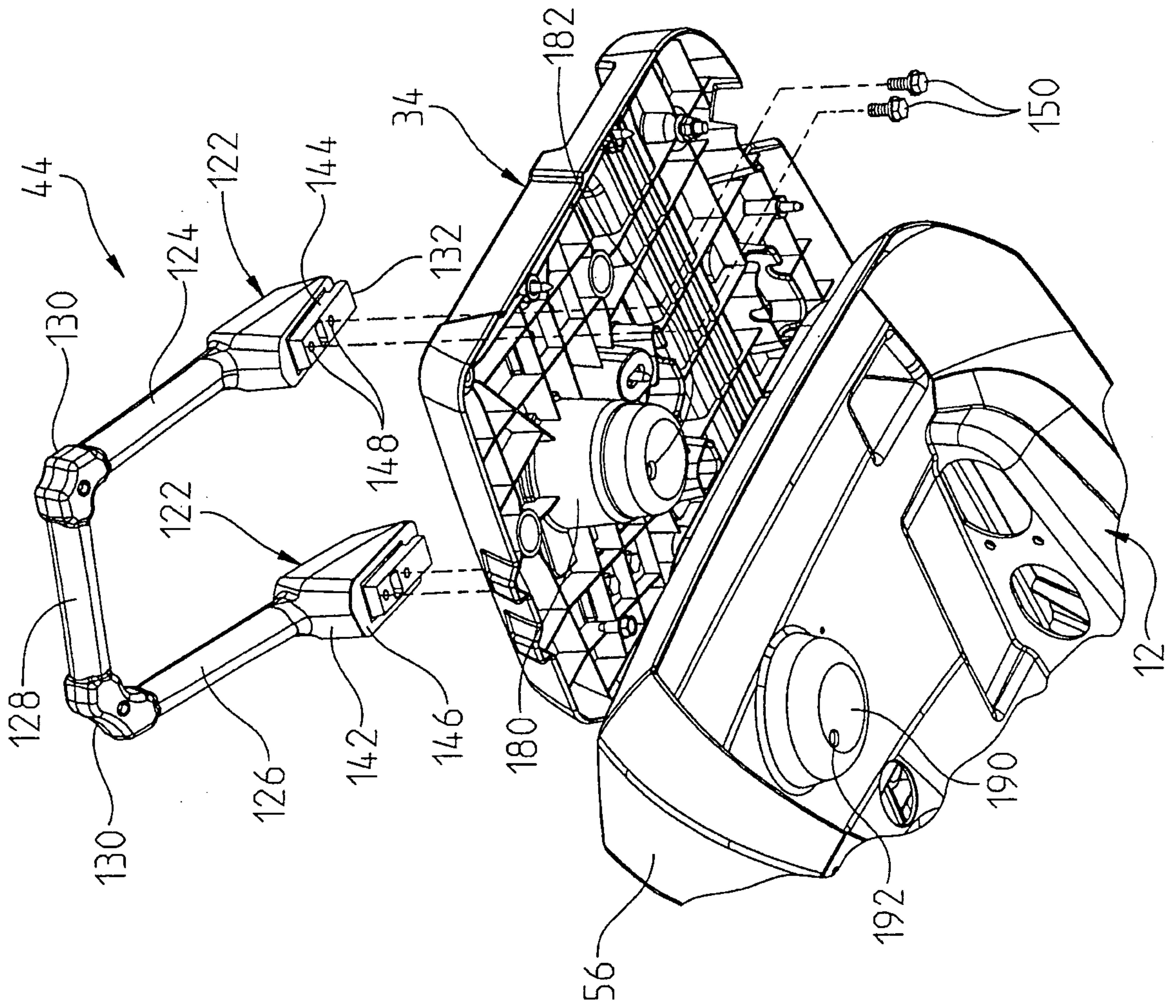


FIG. 9

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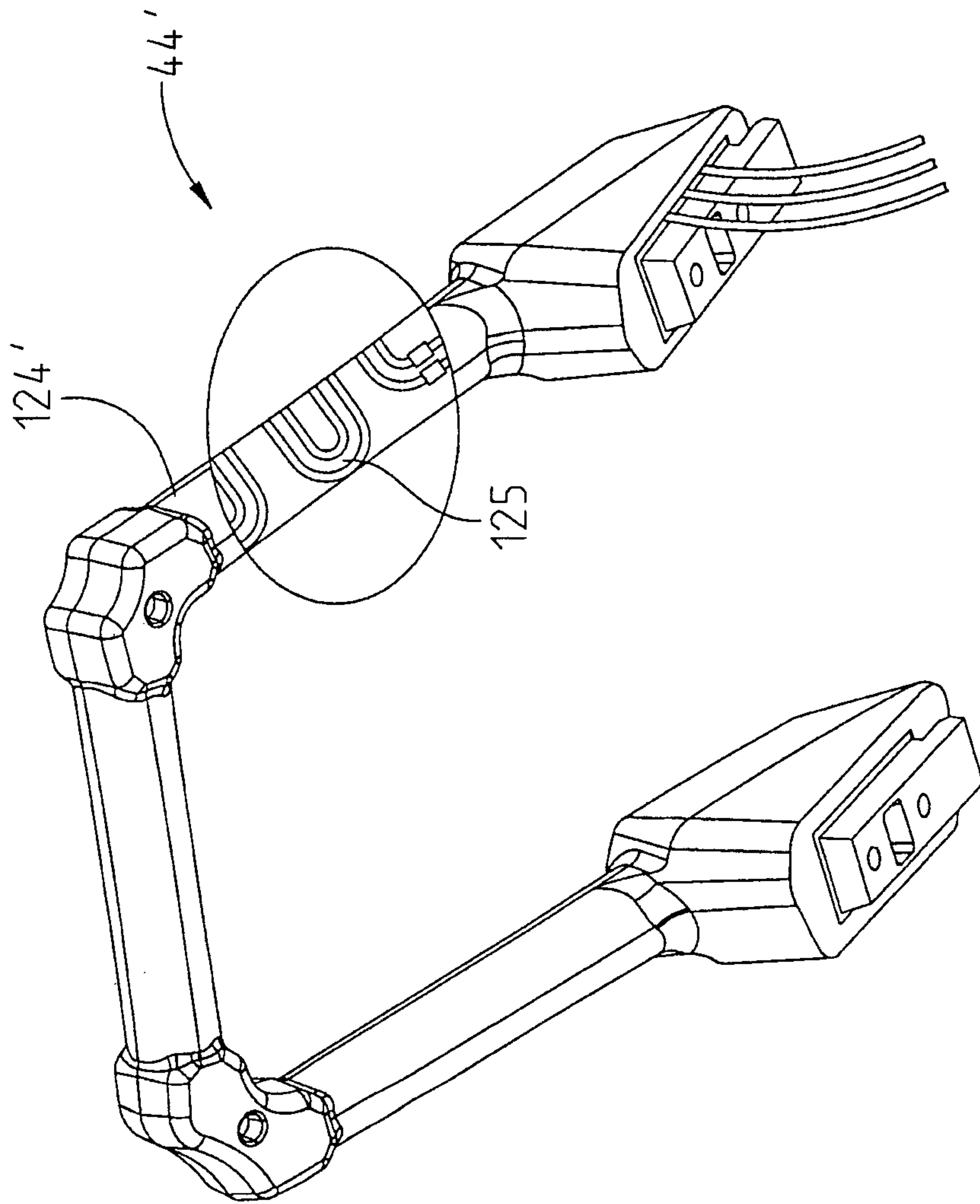


FIG. 10

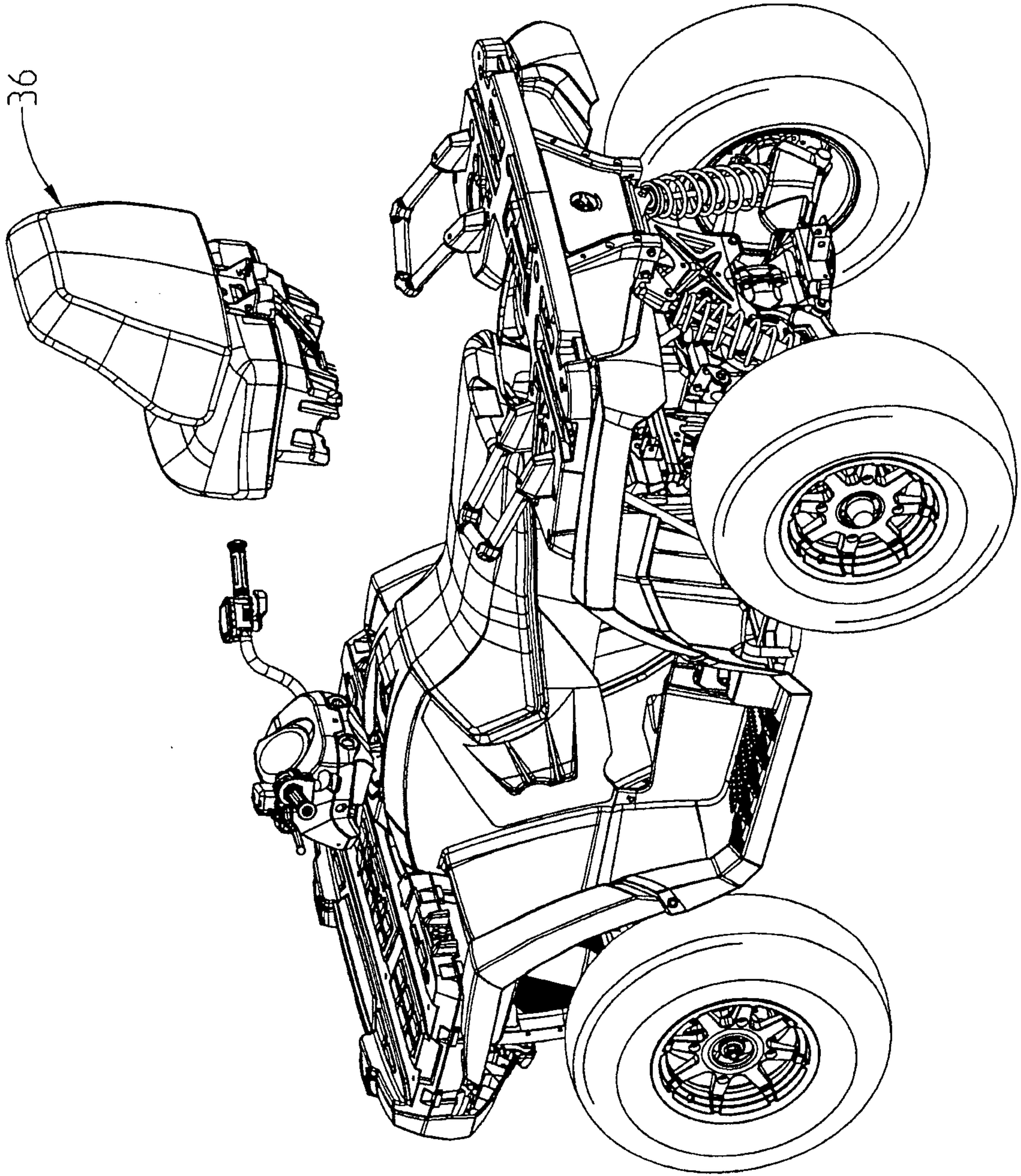


FIG. 11

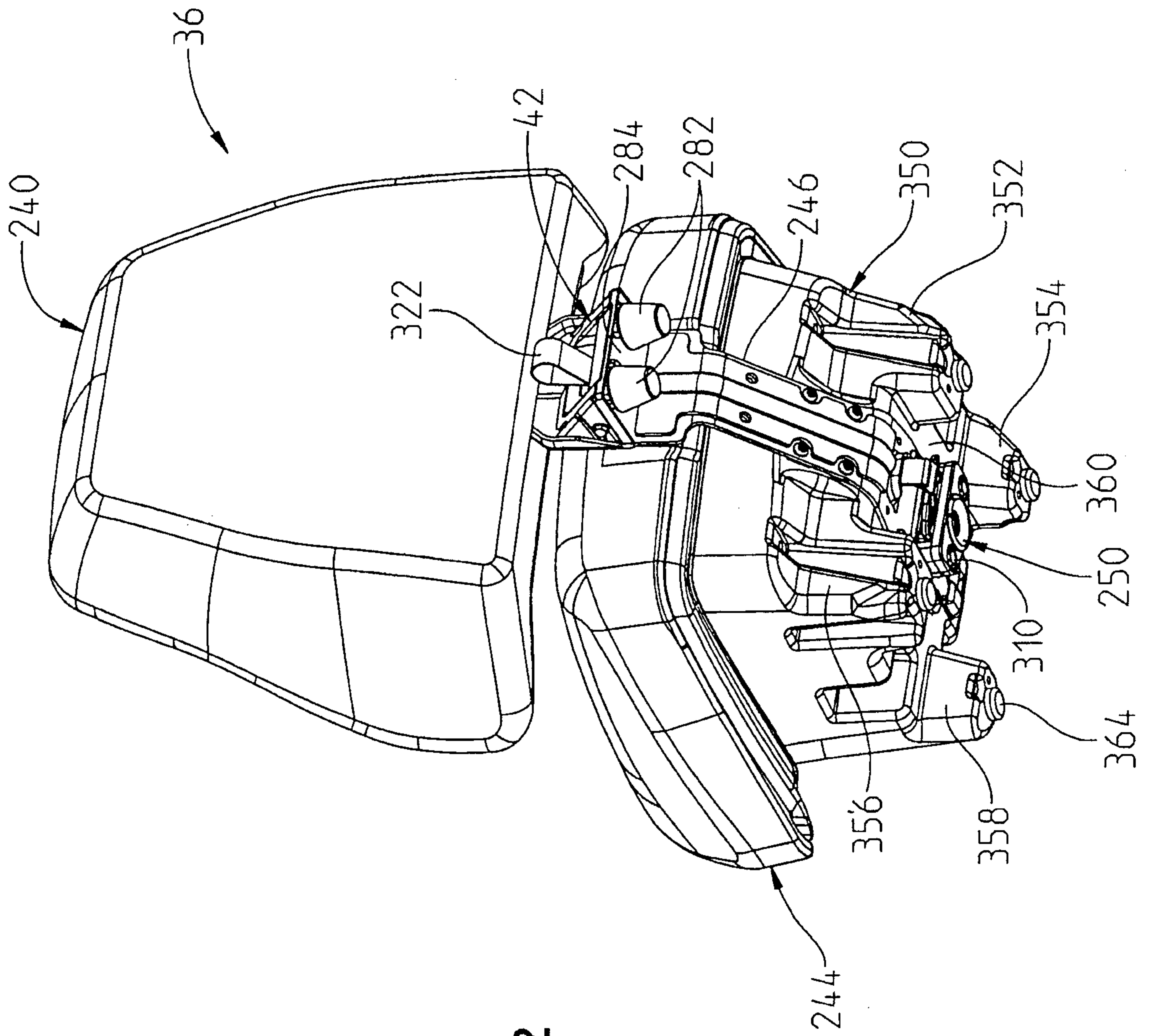


FIG. 12

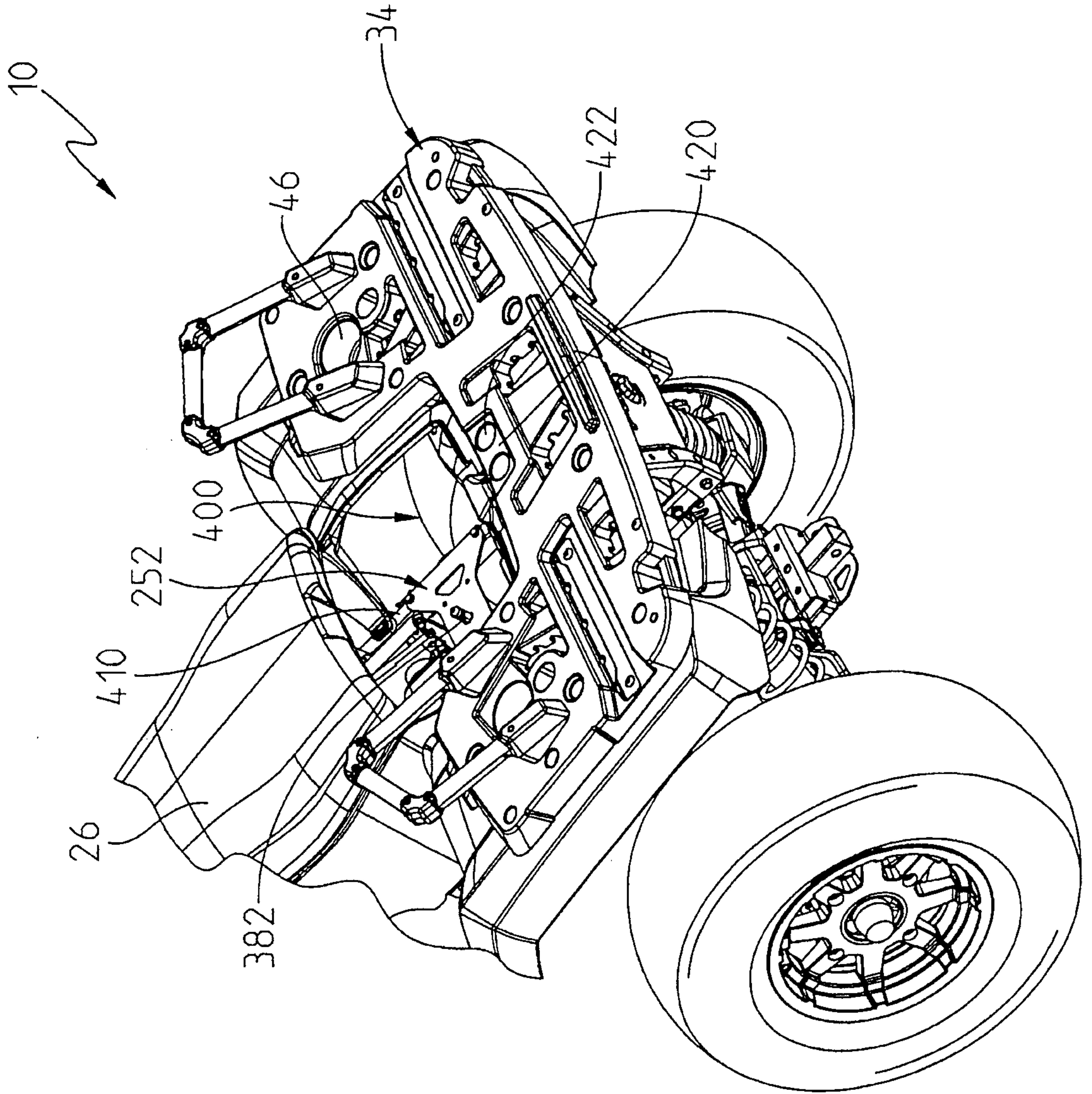


FIG. 15

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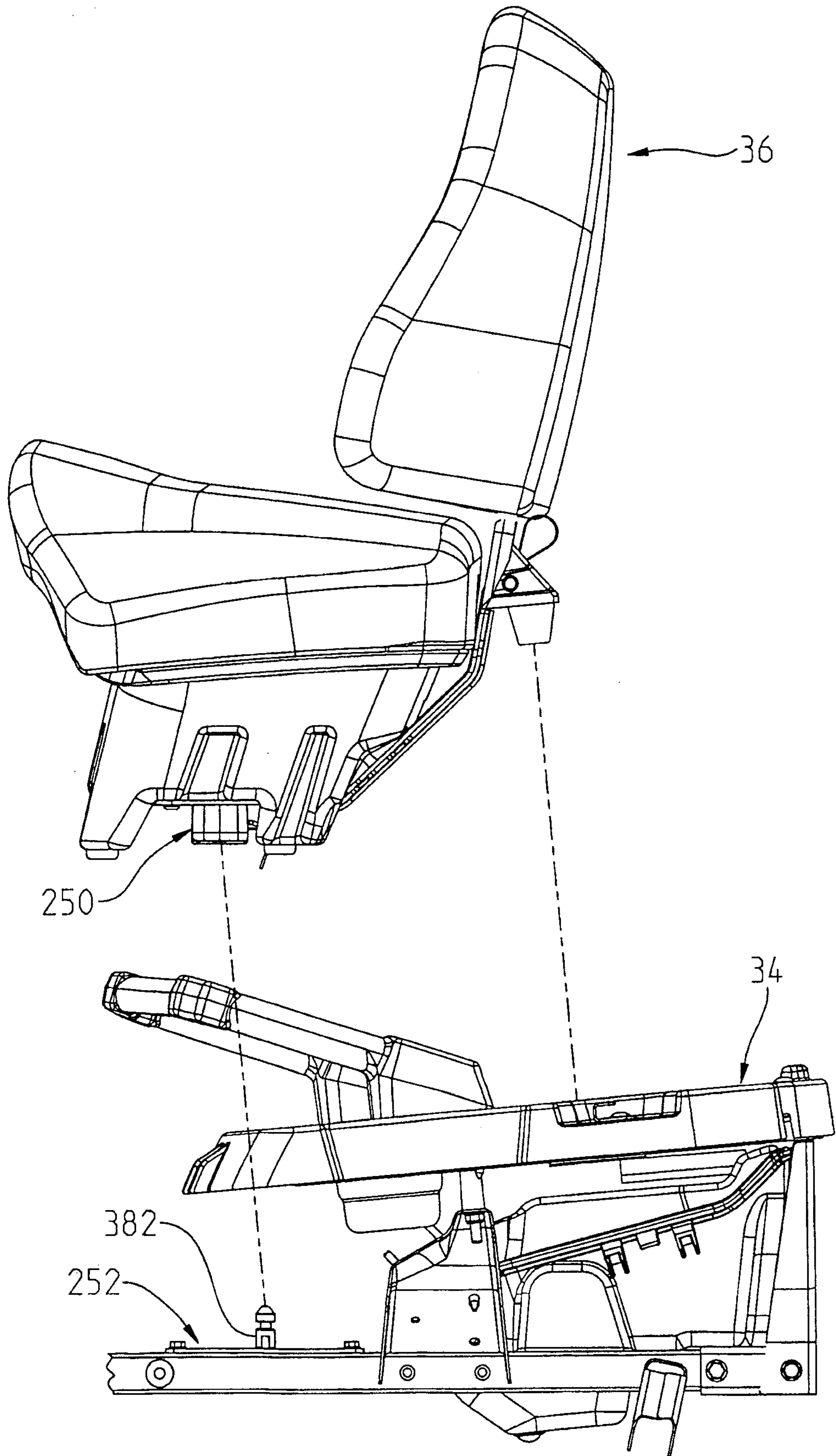


FIG. 16

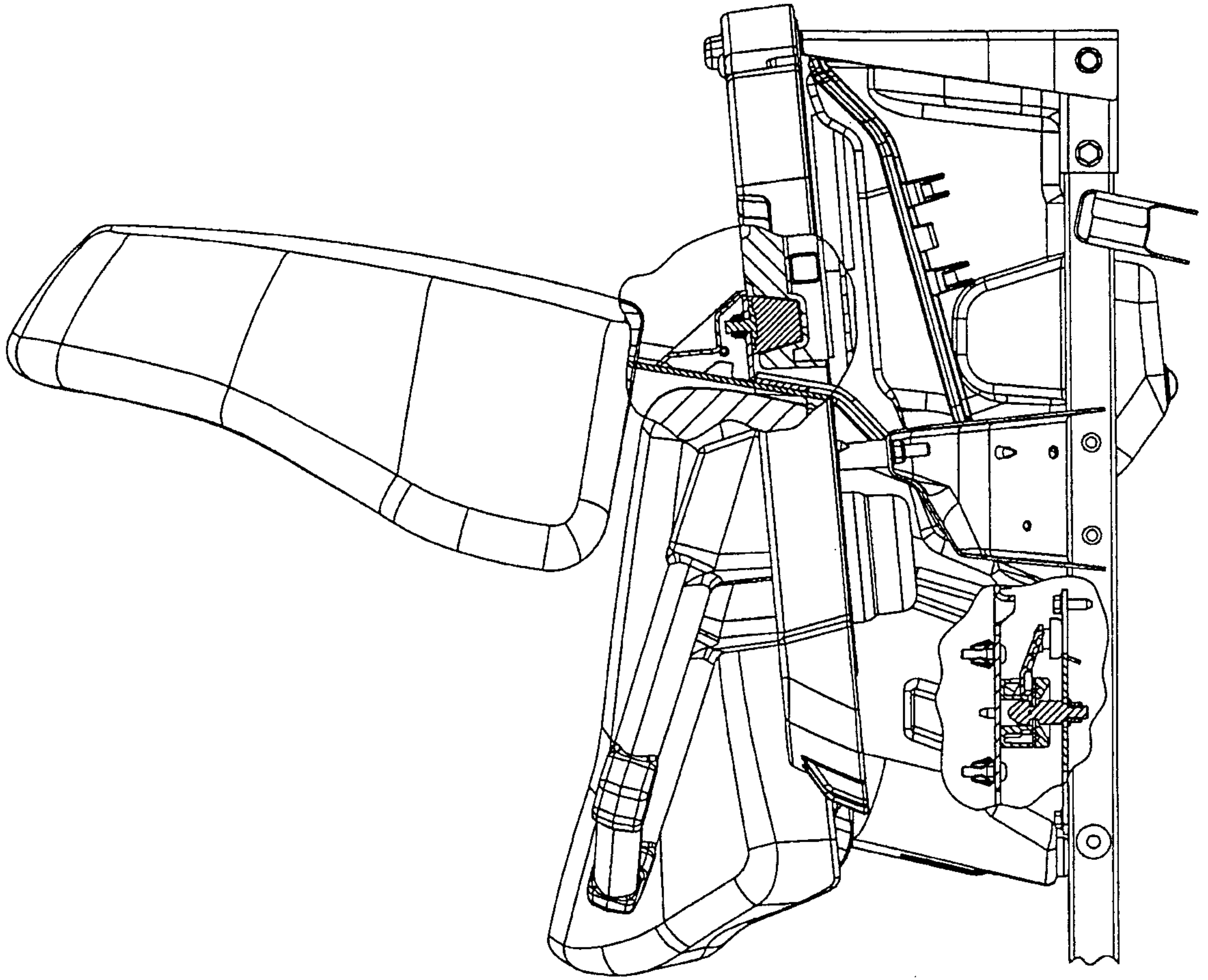


FIG. 17

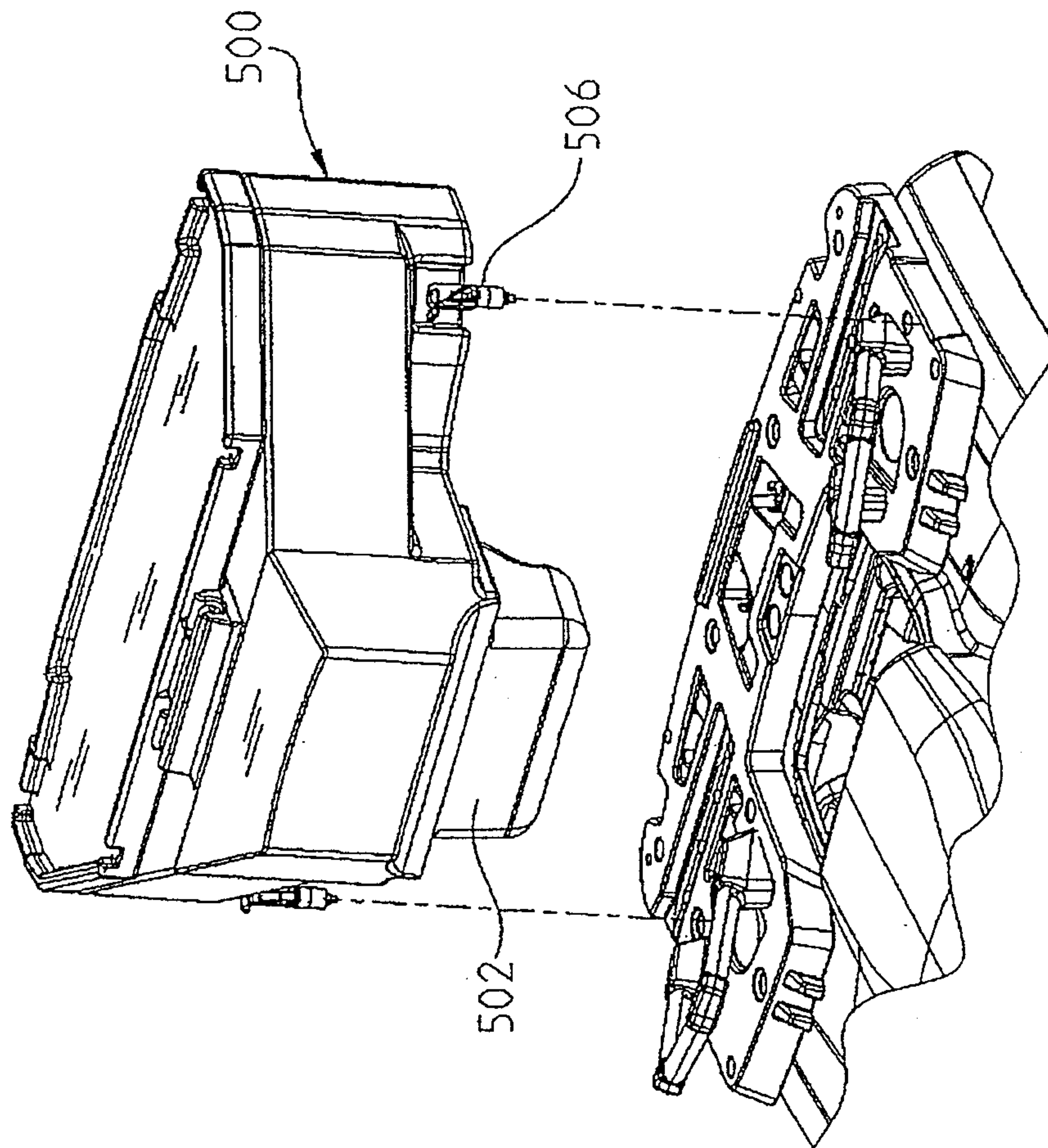


FIG. 18

