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(54) Title: SURGICAL INSTRUMENT WITH PRIMARY AND SAFETY PROCESSORS

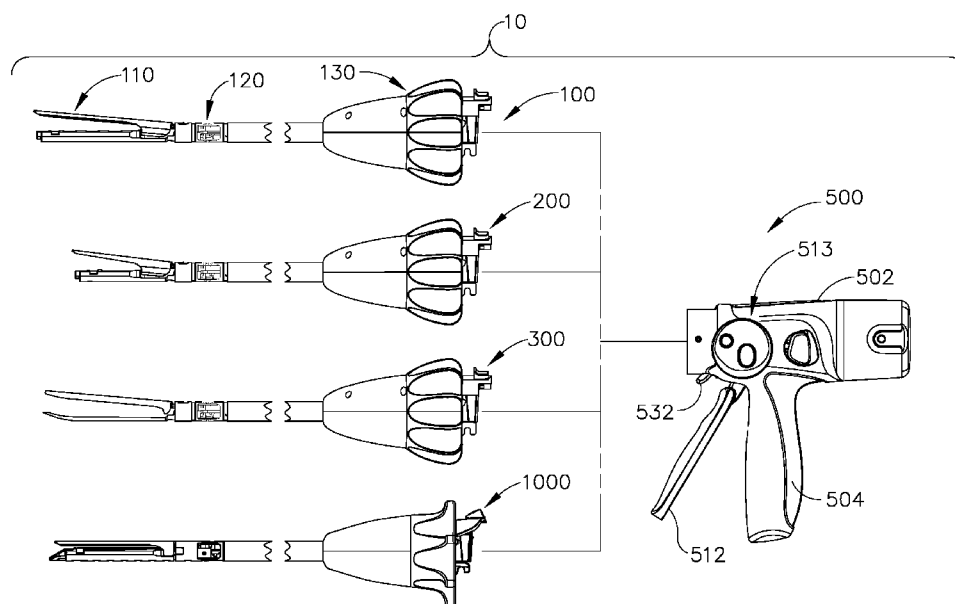


FIG. 1

(57) Abstract: A surgical instrument includes a motor operably coupled to a firing member, wherein the motor is configured to generate at least one rotational motion to motivate the firing member to cause staples to be deployed during a firing stroke. The surgical instrument includes a primary processor configured to determine a first acceleration of the firing member during the firing stroke, and compare the first acceleration to predetermined threshold acceleration. The surgical instrument also includes a secondary processor configured to determine a second acceleration of the firing member during the firing stroke, and compare the second acceleration to the predetermined threshold value.



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TITLE

SURGICAL INSTRUMENT WITH PRIMARY AND SAFETY PROCESSORS

BACKGROUND

[0001] The present invention relates to surgical instruments and, in various arrangements, to surgical stapling and cutting instruments and staple cartridges for use therewith that are designed to staple and cut tissue.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0002] Various features of the embodiments described herein, together with advantages thereof, may be understood in accordance with the following description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings as follows:

[0003] FIG. 1 is a side elevational view of a surgical system comprising a handle assembly and multiple interchangeable surgical tool assemblies that may be used therewith;

[0004] FIG. 2 is a perspective view of one of the interchangeable surgical tool assemblies of FIG. 1 operably coupled to the handle assembly of FIG. 1;

[0005] FIG. 3 is an exploded assembly view of portions of the handle assembly and interchangeable surgical tool assembly of FIGS. 1 and 2;

[0006] FIG. 4 is a perspective view of another one of the interchangeable surgical tool assemblies depicted in FIG. 1;

[0007] FIG. 5 is a partial cross-sectional perspective view of the interchangeable surgical tool assembly of FIG. 4;

[0008] FIG. 6 is another partial cross-sectional view of a portion of the interchangeable surgical tool assembly of FIGS. 4 and 5;

[0009] FIG. 7 is an exploded assembly view of a portion of the interchangeable surgical tool assembly of FIGS. 4-6;

[0010] FIG. 7A is an enlarged top view of a portion of an elastic spine assembly of the interchangeable surgical tool assembly of FIG. 7;

[0011] FIG. 8 is another exploded assembly view of a portion of the interchangeable surgical tool assembly of FIGS. 4-7;

[0012] FIG. 9 is another cross-sectional perspective view of a surgical end effector portion of the interchangeable surgical tool assembly of FIGS. 4-8;

[0013] FIG. 10 is an exploded assembly view of the surgical end effector portion of the interchangeable surgical tool assembly depicted in FIG. 9;

[0014] FIG. 11 is a perspective view, a side elevational view and a front elevational view of a firing member embodiment that may be employed in the interchangeable surgical tool assembly of FIG. 10;

[0015] FIG. 12 is a perspective view of an anvil that may be employed in the interchangeable surgical tool assembly of FIG. 4;

[0016] FIG. 13 is a cross-sectional side elevational view of the anvil of FIG. 12;

[0017] FIG. 14 is a bottom view of the anvil of FIGS. 12 and 13;

[0018] FIG. 15 is a cross-sectional side elevational view of a portion of a surgical end effector and shaft portion of the interchangeable surgical tool assembly of FIG. 4 with an unspent or unfired surgical staple cartridge properly seated with an elongate channel of the surgical end effector;

[0019] FIG. 16 is another cross-sectional side elevational view of the surgical end effector and shaft portion of FIG. 15 after the surgical staple cartridge has been at least partially fired and a firing member thereof is being retracted to a starting position;

[0020] FIG. 17 is another cross-sectional side elevational view of the surgical end effector and shaft portion of FIG. 16 after the firing member has been fully retracted back to the starting position;

[0021] FIG. 18 is a top cross-sectional view of the surgical end effector and shaft portion depicted in FIG. 15 with the unspent or unfired surgical staple cartridge properly seated with the elongate channel of the surgical end effector;

[0022] FIG. 19 is another top cross-sectional view of the surgical end effector of FIG. 18 with a surgical staple cartridge mounted therein that has been at least partially fired and illustrates the firing member retained in a locked position;

[0023] FIG. 20 is a partial cross-sectional view of portions of the anvil and elongate channel of the interchangeable tool assembly of FIG. 4;

[0024] FIG. 21 is an exploded side elevational view of portions of the anvil and elongate channel of FIG. 20;

- [0025] FIG. 22 is a rear perspective view of an anvil mounting portion of an anvil embodiment;
- [0026] FIG. 23 is a rear perspective view of an anvil mounting portion of another anvil embodiment;
- [0027] FIG. 24 is a rear perspective view of an anvil mounting portion of another anvil embodiment;
- [0028] FIG. 25 is a perspective view of an anvil embodiment;
- [0029] FIG. 26 is an exploded perspective view of the anvil of FIG. 25;
- [0030] FIG. 27 is a cross-sectional end view of the anvil of FIG. 25;
- [0031] FIG. 28 is a perspective view of another anvil embodiment;
- [0032] FIG. 29 is an exploded perspective view of the anvil embodiment of FIG. 28;
- [0033] FIG. 30 is a top view of a distal end portion of an anvil body portion of the anvil of FIG. 28;
- [0034] FIG. 31 is a top view of a distal end portion of an anvil body portion of another anvil embodiment;
- [0035] FIG. 32 is a cross-sectional end perspective view of the anvil of FIG. 31;
- [0036] FIG. 33 is a cross-sectional end perspective view of another anvil embodiment;
- [0037] FIG. 34 is a perspective view of a closure member embodiment comprising a distal closure tube segment;
- [0038] FIG. 35 is a cross-sectional side elevational view of the closure member embodiment of FIG. 34;
- [0039] FIG. 36 is a partial cross-sectional view of an interchangeable surgical tool assembly embodiment showing a position of an anvil mounting portion of an anvil in a fully closed position and a firing member thereof in a starting position;
- [0040] FIG. 37 is another partial cross-sectional view of the interchangeable surgical tool assembly of FIG. 36 at the commencement of an opening process;
- [0041] FIG. 38 is another partial cross-sectional view of the interchangeable surgical tool assembly of FIG. 37 with the anvil in the fully opened position;
- [0042] FIG. 39 is a side elevational view of a portion of the interchangeable surgical tool assembly of FIG. 36;
- [0043] FIG. 40 is a side elevational view of a portion of the interchangeable surgical tool assembly of FIG. 37;

[0044] FIG. 41 is a side elevational view of a portion of the interchangeable surgical tool assembly of FIG. 38;

[0045] FIG. 42 is a cross-sectional side elevational view of another closure member embodiment;

[0046] FIG. 43 is a cross-sectional end view of the closure member of FIG. 42;

[0047] FIG. 44 is a cross-sectional end view of another closure member embodiment;

[0048] FIG. 45 is a cross-sectional end view of another closure member embodiment;

[0049] FIG. 46 is a cross-sectional end view of another closure member embodiment;

[0050] FIG. 47 is a partial cross-sectional view of portions of a surgical end effector of an interchangeable tool assembly illustrated in FIG. 1;

[0051] FIG. 48 is a partial cross-sectional view of portions of a surgical end effector of the interchangeable surgical tool assembly of FIG. 5;

[0052] FIG. 49 is another cross-sectional view of the surgical end effector of FIG. 48;

[0053] FIG. 50 is a partial perspective view of a portion of an underside of an anvil embodiment;

[0054] FIG. 51 is a partial cross-sectional view of a portion of the interchangeable surgical tool assembly of FIG. 5 with an anvil of a surgical end effector thereof in a fully opened position;

[0055] FIG. 52 is another partial cross-sectional view of a portion of the interchangeable surgical tool assembly of FIG. 51 with the anvil of the surgical end effector thereof in a first closed position;

[0056] FIG. 53 is another partial cross-sectional view of a portion of the interchangeable surgical tool assembly of FIG. 51 at the commencement of the firing process wherein the anvil is in the first closed position and a firing member of the surgical end effector thereof has moved distally out of a starting position;

[0057] FIG. 54 is another partial cross-sectional view of a portion of the interchangeable surgical tool assembly of FIG. 51 wherein the anvil is in a second closed position and the firing member has been distally advanced into a surgical staple cartridge of the surgical end effector thereof;

[0058] FIG. 55 is a graphical comparison of firing energy versus time for different interchangeable surgical tool assemblies;

- [0059] FIG. 56 is a graphical depiction of force to fire improvements and comparisons of firing loads verses the percentage of firing distance that the firing member thereof has traveled for four different interchangeable surgical tool assemblies;
- [0060] FIG. 57 is a perspective view of an end effector of a surgical stapling instrument including a staple cartridge in accordance with at least one embodiment;
- [0061] FIG. 58 is an exploded view of the end effector of FIG. 57;
- [0062] FIG. 59 is a perspective view of the staple cartridge FIG. 57;
- [0063] FIG. 60 is a partial perspective view of a channel of the end effector of FIG. 57 configured to receive the staple cartridge of FIG. 57;
- [0064] FIG. 60A is a partial perspective view of the channel of FIG. 60;
- [0065] FIG. 60B is a circuit diagram of a cartridge circuit of the staple cartridge of FIG. 59;
- [0066] FIG. 60C is a circuit diagram of a carrier circuit of the end effector of FIG. 57;
- [0067] FIG. 61 is a bottom partial view of the end effector of FIG. 57 illustrating an intact trace element and a sled in a starting position in accordance with at least one embodiment;
- [0068] FIG. 62 is a bottom partial view of the end effector of FIG. 57 illustrating a broken trace element and a sled in a partially advanced position in accordance with at least one embodiment;
- [0069] FIG. 62A is a block diagram illustrating an electrical circuit in accordance with at least one embodiment;
- [0070] FIG. 62B is a block diagram illustrating an electrical circuit in accordance with at least one embodiment;
- [0071] FIG. 62C is a block diagram illustrating an electrical circuit in accordance with at least one embodiment;
- [0072] FIG. 62D is a block diagram illustrating an electrical circuit in accordance with at least one embodiment;
- [0073] FIG. 63 is a circuit diagram of a safety mechanism of the end effector of FIG. 57 in accordance with at least one embodiment;
- [0074] FIG. 64 is a switch of the circuit diagram of FIG. 63 in an open configuration in accordance with at least one embodiment;
- [0075] FIG. 65 illustrates the switch of FIG. 64 in a closed configuration;

[0076] FIG. 65A is a safety mechanism of the end effector of FIG. 57 in accordance with at least one embodiment;

[0077] FIG. 65B is a logic diagram of a method for controlling the firing of a surgical stapling and cutting instrument in accordance with at least one embodiment;

[0078] FIG. 66 is a partial perspective view of a staple cartridge including a conductive gate in accordance with at least one embodiment;

[0079] FIG. 67 is a partial exploded view of the staple cartridge of FIG. 66;

[0080] FIG. 68 is a cross-sectional view of the staple cartridge of FIG. 67 showing the conductive gate in a fully closed configuration;

[0081] FIG. 69 is a cross-sectional view of the staple cartridge of FIG. 67 showing the conductive gate in an open configuration;

[0082] FIG. 70 is a cross-sectional view of the staple cartridge of FIG. 67 showing the conductive gate transitioning from an open configuration to a partially closed configuration;

[0083] FIG. 71 is a block diagram illustrating an electrical circuit configured to activate/deactivate a firing system of a surgical stapling and cutting instrument in accordance with at least one embodiment;

[0084] FIG. 72 illustrates a controller a surgical stapling and cutting instrument in accordance with at least one embodiment;

[0085] FIG. 73 illustrates a combinational logic circuit of a surgical stapling and cutting instrument in accordance with at least one embodiment;

[0086] FIG. 74 illustrates a sequential logic circuit of a surgical stapling and cutting instrument in accordance with at least one embodiment;

[0087] FIG. 75 is an electromagnetic lockout mechanism for a surgical stapling and cutting instrument in accordance with at least one embodiment;

[0088] FIG. 76 illustrates the electromagnetic lockout mechanism of FIG. 75 in a locked configuration;

[0089] FIG. 77 illustrates the electromagnetic lockout mechanism of FIG. 75 in an unlocked configuration;

[0090] FIG. 78 is a circuit diagram of an electrical circuit in accordance with at least one embodiment;

[0091] FIG. 79 is a circuit diagram of an electrical circuit of a powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument in accordance with at least one embodiment;

[0092] FIG. 79A is an electrical circuit configured to detect the position and progression of a staple firing member illustrating the staple firing member in a fully fired position;

[0093] FIG. 79B illustrates the staple firing member of FIG. 79A in a fully retracted position;

[0094] FIG. 80 is a perspective view of a powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument comprising a power assembly, a handle assembly, and an interchangeable shaft assembly;

[0095] FIG. 81 is perspective view of the surgical instrument of FIG. 80 with the interchangeable shaft assembly separated from the handle assembly;

[0096] FIGS. 82A and 82B depict a circuit diagram of the surgical instrument of FIG. 80;

[0097] FIG. 83 is a circuit diagram of a powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument in accordance with at least one embodiment;

[0098] FIG. 84A is a circuit diagram of a powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument in accordance with at least one embodiment;

[0099] FIG. 84B illustrates minimum and maximum thresholds of current drawn by a motor of a powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument in accordance with at least one embodiment;

[0100] FIG. 85 is circuit diagram illustrating a beginning-of-stroke switch circuit and an end-of-stroke switch circuit with at least one embodiment;

[0101] FIG. 86 is logic diagram illustrating a failure response system in accordance with at least one embodiment;

[0102] FIG. 87 is logic diagram illustrating a failure response system in accordance with at least one embodiment;

[0103] FIG. 88 is logic diagram illustrating a failure response system in accordance with at least one embodiment; and

[0104] FIG. 89 is logic diagram illustrating a failure response system in accordance with at least one embodiment.

[0105] Corresponding reference characters indicate corresponding parts throughout the several views. The exemplifications set out herein illustrate various embodiments of the invention, in one form, and such exemplifications are not to be construed as limiting the scope of the invention in any manner.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0106] Applicant of the present application owns the following U.S. Patent Applications that were filed on December 21, 2016 and which are each herein incorporated by reference in their respective entireties:

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/386,185, entitled SURGICAL STAPLING INSTRUMENTS AND REPLACEABLE TOOL ASSEMBLIES THEREOF;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/386,230, entitled ARTICULATABLE SURGICAL STAPLING INSTRUMENTS;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/386,221, entitled LOCKOUT ARRANGEMENTS FOR SURGICAL END EFFECTORS;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/386,209, entitled SURGICAL END EFFECTORS AND FIRING MEMBERS THEREOF;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/386,198, entitled LOCKOUT ARRANGEMENTS FOR SURGICAL END EFFECTORS AND REPLACEABLE TOOL ASSEMBLIES; and
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/386,240, entitled SURGICAL END EFFECTORS AND ADAPTABLE FIRING MEMBERS THEREFOR.

[0107] Applicant of the present application owns the following U.S. Patent Applications that were filed on December 21, 2016 and which are each herein incorporated by reference in their respective entireties:

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,939, entitled STAPLE CARTRIDGES AND ARRANGEMENTS OF STAPLES AND STAPLE CAVITIES THEREIN;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,941, entitled SURGICAL TOOL ASSEMBLIES WITH CLUTCHING ARRANGEMENTS FOR SHIFTING BETWEEN CLOSURE SYSTEMS WITH CLOSURE STROKE REDUCTION FEATURES AND ARTICULATION AND FIRING SYSTEMS;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,943, entitled SURGICAL STAPLING INSTRUMENTS AND STAPLE-FORMING ANVILS;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,950, entitled SURGICAL TOOL ASSEMBLIES WITH CLOSURE STROKE REDUCTION FEATURES;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,945, entitled STAPLE CARTRIDGES AND ARRANGEMENTS OF STAPLES AND STAPLE CAVITIES THEREIN;

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,946, entitled SURGICAL STAPLING INSTRUMENTS AND STAPLE-FORMING ANVILS;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,951, entitled SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS WITH JAW OPENING FEATURES FOR INCREASING A JAW OPENING DISTANCE;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,953, entitled METHODS OF STAPLING TISSUE;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,954, entitled FIRING MEMBERS WITH NON-PARALLEL JAW ENGAGEMENT FEATURES FOR SURGICAL END EFFECTORS;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,955, entitled SURGICAL END EFFECTORS WITH EXPANDABLE TISSUE STOP ARRANGEMENTS;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,948, entitled SURGICAL STAPLING INSTRUMENTS AND STAPLE-FORMING ANVILS;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,956, entitled SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS WITH POSITIVE JAW OPENING FEATURES;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,958, entitled SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS WITH LOCKOUT ARRANGEMENTS FOR PREVENTING FIRING SYSTEM ACTUATION UNLESS AN UNSPENT STAPLE CARTRIDGE IS PRESENT; and
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,947, entitled STAPLE CARTRIDGES AND ARRANGEMENTS OF STAPLES AND STAPLE CAVITIES THEREIN.

[0108] Applicant of the present application owns the following U.S. Patent Applications that were filed on December 21, 2016 and which are each herein incorporated by reference in their respective entireties:

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,896, entitled METHOD FOR RESETTING A FUSE OF A SURGICAL INSTRUMENT SHAFT;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,898, entitled STAPLE FORMING POCKET ARRANGEMENT TO ACCOMMODATE DIFFERENT TYPES OF STAPLES;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,899, entitled SURGICAL INSTRUMENT COMPRISING IMPROVED JAW CONTROL;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,901, entitled STAPLE CARTRIDGE AND STAPLE CARTRIDGE CHANNEL COMPRISING WINDOWS DEFINED THEREIN;

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,902, entitled SURGICAL INSTRUMENT COMPRISING A CUTTING MEMBER;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,904, entitled STAPLE FIRING MEMBER COMPRISING A MISSING CARTRIDGE AND/OR SPENT CARTRIDGE LOCKOUT;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,905, entitled FIRING ASSEMBLY COMPRISING A LOCKOUT;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,907, entitled SURGICAL INSTRUMENT SYSTEM COMPRISING AN END EFFECTOR LOCKOUT AND A FIRING ASSEMBLY LOCKOUT;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,908, entitled FIRING ASSEMBLY COMPRISING A FUSE; and
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,909, entitled FIRING ASSEMBLY COMPRISING A MULTIPLE FAILED-STATE FUSE.

[0109] Applicant of the present application owns the following U.S. Patent Applications that were filed on December 21, 2016 and which are each herein incorporated by reference in their respective entireties:

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,920, entitled STAPLE FORMING POCKET ARRANGEMENTS;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,913, entitled ANVIL ARRANGEMENTS FOR SURGICAL STAPLERS;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,914, entitled METHOD OF DEFORMING STAPLES FROM TWO DIFFERENT TYPES OF STAPLE CARTRIDGES WITH THE SAME SURGICAL STAPLING INSTRUMENT;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,893, entitled BILATERALLY ASYMMETRIC STAPLE FORMING POCKET PAIRS;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,929, entitled CLOSURE MEMBERS WITH CAM SURFACE ARRANGEMENTS FOR SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS WITH SEPARATE AND DISTINCT CLOSURE AND FIRING SYSTEMS;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,911, entitled SURGICAL STAPLERS WITH INDEPENDENTLY ACTUATABLE CLOSING AND FIRING SYSTEMS;

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,927, entitled SURGICAL STAPLING INSTRUMENTS WITH SMART STAPLE CARTRIDGES;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,917, entitled STAPLE CARTRIDGE COMPRISING STAPLES WITH DIFFERENT CLAMPING BREADTHS;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,900, entitled STAPLE FORMING POCKET ARRANGEMENTS COMPRISING PRIMARY SIDEWALLS AND POCKET SIDEWALLS;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,931, entitled NO-CARTRIDGE AND SPENT CARTRIDGE LOCKOUT ARRANGEMENTS FOR SURGICAL STAPLERS;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,915, entitled FIRING MEMBER PIN ANGLE;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,897, entitled STAPLE FORMING POCKET ARRANGEMENTS COMPRISING ZONED FORMING SURFACE GROOVES;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,922, entitled SURGICAL INSTRUMENT WITH MULTIPLE FAILURE RESPONSE MODES;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,912, entitled SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS WITH JAWS THAT ARE PIVOTABLE ABOUT A FIXED AXIS AND INCLUDE SEPARATE AND DISTINCT CLOSURE AND FIRING SYSTEMS;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,910, entitled ANVIL HAVING A KNIFE SLOT WIDTH;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,903, entitled CLOSURE MEMBER ARRANGEMENTS FOR SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS; and
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,906, entitled FIRING MEMBER PIN CONFIGURATIONS.

[0110] Applicant of the present application owns the following U.S. Patent Applications that were filed on December 21, 2016 and which are each herein incorporated by reference in their respective entireties:

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/386,188, entitled STEPPED STAPLE CARTRIDGE WITH ASYMMETRICAL STAPLES;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/386,192, entitled STEPPED STAPLE CARTRIDGE WITH TISSUE RETENTION AND GAP SETTING FEATURES;

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/386,206, entitled STAPLE CARTRIDGE WITH DEFORMABLE DRIVER RETENTION FEATURES;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/386,226, entitled DURABILITY FEATURES FOR END EFFECTORS AND FIRING ASSEMBLIES OF SURGICAL STAPLING INSTRUMENTS;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/386,222, entitled SURGICAL STAPLING INSTRUMENTS HAVING END EFFECTORS WITH POSITIVE OPENING FEATURES; and
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/386,236, entitled CONNECTION PORTIONS FOR DISPOSABLE LOADING UNITS FOR SURGICAL STAPLING INSTRUMENTS.

[0111] Applicant of the present application owns the following U.S. Patent Applications that were filed on December 21, 2016 and which are each herein incorporated by reference in their respective entireties:

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,887, entitled METHOD FOR ATTACHING A SHAFT ASSEMBLY TO A SURGICAL INSTRUMENT AND, ALTERNATIVELY, TO A SURGICAL ROBOT;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,889, entitled SHAFT ASSEMBLY COMPRISING A MANUALLY-OPERABLE RETRACTION SYSTEM FOR USE WITH A MOTORIZED SURGICAL INSTRUMENT SYSTEM;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,890, entitled SHAFT ASSEMBLY COMPRISING SEPARATELY ACTUATABLE AND RETRACTABLE SYSTEMS;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,891, entitled SHAFT ASSEMBLY COMPRISING A CLUTCH CONFIGURED TO ADAPT THE OUTPUT OF A ROTARY FIRING MEMBER TO TWO DIFFERENT SYSTEMS;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,892, entitled SURGICAL SYSTEM COMPRISING A FIRING MEMBER ROTATABLE INTO AN ARTICULATION STATE TO ARTICULATE AN END EFFECTOR OF THE SURGICAL SYSTEM;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,894, entitled SHAFT ASSEMBLY COMPRISING A LOCKOUT; and
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,895, entitled SHAFT ASSEMBLY COMPRISING FIRST AND SECOND ARTICULATION LOCKOUTS.

[0112] Applicant of the present application owns the following U.S. Patent Applications that were filed on December 21, 2016 and which are each herein incorporated by reference in their respective entireties:

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,916, entitled SURGICAL STAPLING SYSTEMS;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,918, entitled SURGICAL STAPLING SYSTEMS;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,919, entitled SURGICAL STAPLING SYSTEMS;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,921, entitled SURGICAL STAPLE CARTRIDGE WITH MOVABLE CAMMING MEMBER CONFIGURED TO DISENGAGE FIRING MEMBER LOCKOUT FEATURES;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,923, entitled SURGICAL STAPLING SYSTEMS;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,925, entitled JAW ACTUATED LOCK ARRANGEMENTS FOR PREVENTING ADVANCEMENT OF A FIRING MEMBER IN A SURGICAL END EFFECTOR UNLESS AN UNFIRED CARTRIDGE IS INSTALLED IN THE END EFFECTOR;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,926, entitled AXIALLY MOVABLE CLOSURE SYSTEM ARRANGEMENTS FOR APPLYING CLOSURE MOTIONS TO JAWS OF SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,928, entitled PROTECTIVE COVER ARRANGEMENTS FOR A JOINT INTERFACE BETWEEN A MOVABLE JAW AND ACTUATOR SHAFT OF A SURGICAL INSTRUMENT;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,930, entitled SURGICAL END EFFECTOR WITH TWO SEPARATE COOPERATING OPENING FEATURES FOR OPENING AND CLOSING END EFFECTOR JAWS;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,932, entitled ARTICULATABLE SURGICAL END EFFECTOR WITH ASYMMETRIC SHAFT ARRANGEMENT;

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,933, entitled ARTICULATABLE SURGICAL INSTRUMENT WITH INDEPENDENT PIVOTABLE LINKAGE DISTAL OF AN ARTICULATION LOCK;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,934, entitled ARTICULATION LOCK ARRANGEMENTS FOR LOCKING AN END EFFECTOR IN AN ARTICULATED POSITION IN RESPONSE TO ACTUATION OF A JAW CLOSURE SYSTEM;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,935, entitled Laterally Actuable Articulation Lock Arrangements for Locking an End Effector of a Surgical Instrument in an Articulated Configuration; and
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,936, entitled ARTICULATABLE SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS WITH ARTICULATION STROKE AMPLIFICATION FEATURES.

[0113] Applicant of the present application owns the following U.S. Patent Applications that were filed on June 24, 2016 and which are each herein incorporated by reference in their respective entireties:

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/191,775, entitled STAPLE CARTRIDGE COMPRISING WIRE STAPLES AND STAMPED STAPLES;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/191,807, entitled STAPLING SYSTEM FOR USE WITH WIRE STAPLES AND STAMPED STAPLES;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/191,834, entitled STAMPED STAPLES AND STAPLE CARTRIDGES USING THE SAME;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/191,788, entitled STAPLE CARTRIDGE COMPRISING OVERDRIVEN STAPLES; and
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/191,818, entitled STAPLE CARTRIDGE COMPRISING OFFSET LONGITUDINAL STAPLE ROWS.

[0114] Applicant of the present application owns the following U.S. Patent Applications that were filed on June 24, 2016 and which are each herein incorporated by reference in their respective entireties:

- U.S. Design Patent Application Serial No. 29/569,218, entitled SURGICAL FASTENER;
- U.S. Design Patent Application Serial No. 29/569,227, entitled SURGICAL FASTENER;
- U.S. Design Patent Application Serial No. 29/569,259, entitled SURGICAL FASTENER CARTRIDGE; and

- U.S. Design Patent Application Serial No. 29/569,264, entitled SURGICAL FASTENER CARTRIDGE.

[0115] Applicant of the present application owns the following patent applications that were filed on April 1, 2016 and which are each herein incorporated by reference in their respective entirety:

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/089,325, entitled METHOD FOR OPERATING A SURGICAL STAPLING SYSTEM;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/089,321, entitled MODULAR SURGICAL STAPLING SYSTEM COMPRISING A DISPLAY;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/089,326, entitled SURGICAL STAPLING SYSTEM COMPRISING A DISPLAY INCLUDING A RE-ORIENTABLE DISPLAY FIELD;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/089,263, entitled SURGICAL INSTRUMENT HANDLE ASSEMBLY WITH RECONFIGURABLE GRIP PORTION;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/089,262, entitled ROTARY POWERED SURGICAL INSTRUMENT WITH MANUALLY ACTUATABLE BAILOUT SYSTEM;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/089,277, entitled SURGICAL CUTTING AND STAPLING END EFFECTOR WITH ANVIL CONCENTRIC DRIVE MEMBER;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/089,296, entitled INTERCHANGEABLE SURGICAL TOOL ASSEMBLY WITH A SURGICAL END EFFECTOR THAT IS SELECTIVELY ROTATABLE ABOUT A SHAFT AXIS;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/089,258, entitled SURGICAL STAPLING SYSTEM COMPRISING A SHIFTABLE TRANSMISSION;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/089,278, entitled SURGICAL STAPLING SYSTEM CONFIGURED TO PROVIDE SELECTIVE CUTTING OF TISSUE;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/089,284, entitled SURGICAL STAPLING SYSTEM COMPRISING A CONTOURABLE SHAFT;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/089,295, entitled SURGICAL STAPLING SYSTEM COMPRISING A TISSUE COMPRESSION LOCKOUT;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/089,300, entitled SURGICAL STAPLING SYSTEM COMPRISING AN UNCLAMPING LOCKOUT;

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/089,196, entitled SURGICAL STAPLING SYSTEM COMPRISING A JAW CLOSURE LOCKOUT;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/089,203, entitled SURGICAL STAPLING SYSTEM COMPRISING A JAW ATTACHMENT LOCKOUT;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/089,210, entitled SURGICAL STAPLING SYSTEM COMPRISING A SPENT CARTRIDGE LOCKOUT;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/089,324, entitled SURGICAL INSTRUMENT COMPRISING A SHIFTING MECHANISM;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/089,335, entitled SURGICAL STAPLING INSTRUMENT COMPRISING MULTIPLE LOCKOUTS;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/089,339, entitled SURGICAL STAPLING INSTRUMENT;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/089,253, entitled SURGICAL STAPLING SYSTEM CONFIGURED TO APPLY ANNULAR ROWS OF STAPLES HAVING DIFFERENT HEIGHTS;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/089,304, entitled SURGICAL STAPLING SYSTEM COMPRISING A GROOVED FORMING POCKET;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/089,331, entitled ANVIL MODIFICATION MEMBERS FOR SURGICAL STAPLERS;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/089,336, entitled STAPLE CARTRIDGES WITH ATRAUMATIC FEATURES;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/089,312, entitled CIRCULAR STAPLING SYSTEM COMPRISING AN INCISABLE TISSUE SUPPORT;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/089,309, entitled CIRCULAR STAPLING SYSTEM COMPRISING ROTARY FIRING SYSTEM; and
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/089,349, entitled CIRCULAR STAPLING SYSTEM COMPRISING LOAD CONTROL.

[0116] Applicant of the present application also owns the U.S. Patent Applications identified below which were filed on December 31, 2015 which are each herein incorporated by reference in their respective entirety:

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/984,488, entitled MECHANISMS FOR COMPENSATING FOR BATTERY PACK FAILURE IN POWERED SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/984,525, entitled MECHANISMS FOR COMPENSATING FOR DRIVETRAIN FAILURE IN POWERED SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS; and
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/984,552, entitled SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS WITH SEPARABLE MOTORS AND MOTOR CONTROL CIRCUITS.

[0117] Applicant of the present application also owns the U.S. Patent Applications identified below which were filed on February 9, 2016 which are each herein incorporated by reference in their respective entirety:

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/019,220, entitled SURGICAL INSTRUMENT WITH ARTICULATING AND AXIALLY TRANSLATABLE END EFFECTOR;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/019,228, entitled SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS WITH MULTIPLE LINK ARTICULATION ARRANGEMENTS;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/019,196, entitled SURGICAL INSTRUMENT ARTICULATION MECHANISM WITH SLOTTED SECONDARY CONSTRAINT;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/019,206, entitled SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS WITH AN END EFFECTOR THAT IS HIGHLY ARTICULATABLE RELATIVE TO AN ELONGATE SHAFT ASSEMBLY;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/019,215, entitled SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS WITH NON-SYMMETRICAL ARTICULATION ARRANGEMENTS;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/019,227, entitled ARTICULATABLE SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS WITH SINGLE ARTICULATION LINK ARRANGEMENTS;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/019,235, entitled SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS WITH TENSIONING ARRANGEMENTS FOR CABLE DRIVEN ARTICULATION SYSTEMS;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/019,230, entitled ARTICULATABLE SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS WITH OFF-AXIS FIRING BEAM ARRANGEMENTS; and
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/019,245, entitled SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS WITH CLOSURE STROKE REDUCTION ARRANGEMENTS.

[0118] Applicant of the present application also owns the U.S. Patent Applications identified below which were filed on February 12, 2016 which are each herein incorporated by reference in their respective entirety:

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/043,254, entitled MECHANISMS FOR COMPENSATING FOR DRIVETRAIN FAILURE IN POWERED SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/043,259, entitled MECHANISMS FOR COMPENSATING FOR DRIVETRAIN FAILURE IN POWERED SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/043,275, entitled MECHANISMS FOR COMPENSATING FOR DRIVETRAIN FAILURE IN POWERED SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS; and
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/043,289, entitled MECHANISMS FOR COMPENSATING FOR DRIVETRAIN FAILURE IN POWERED SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS.

[0119] Applicant of the present application owns the following patent applications that were filed on June 18, 2015 and which are each herein incorporated by reference in their respective entirety:

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/742,925, entitled SURGICAL END EFFECTORS WITH POSITIVE JAW OPENING ARRANGEMENTS;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/742,941, entitled SURGICAL END EFFECTORS WITH DUAL CAM ACTUATED JAW CLOSING FEATURES;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/742,914, entitled MOVABLE FIRING BEAM SUPPORT ARRANGEMENTS FOR ARTICULATABLE SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/742,900, entitled ARTICULATABLE SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS WITH COMPOSITE FIRING BEAM STRUCTURES WITH CENTER FIRING SUPPORT MEMBER FOR ARTICULATION SUPPORT;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/742,885, entitled DUAL ARTICULATION DRIVE SYSTEM ARRANGEMENTS FOR ARTICULATABLE SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS; and

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/742,876, entitled PUSH/PULL ARTICULATION DRIVE SYSTEMS FOR ARTICULATABLE SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS.

[0120] Applicant of the present application owns the following patent applications that were filed on March 6, 2015 and which are each herein incorporated by reference in their respective entirety:

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/640,746, entitled POWERED SURGICAL INSTRUMENT, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2016/0256184;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/640,795, entitled MULTIPLE LEVEL THRESHOLDS TO MODIFY OPERATION OF POWERED SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2016/02561185;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/640,832, entitled ADAPTIVE TISSUE COMPRESSION TECHNIQUES TO ADJUST CLOSURE RATES FOR MULTIPLE TISSUE TYPES, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2016/0256154;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/640,935, entitled OVERLAID MULTI SENSOR RADIO FREQUENCY (RF) ELECTRODE SYSTEM TO MEASURE TISSUE COMPRESSION, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2016/0256071;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/640,831, entitled MONITORING SPEED CONTROL AND PRECISION INCREMENTING OF MOTOR FOR POWERED SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2016/0256153;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/640,859, entitled TIME DEPENDENT EVALUATION OF SENSOR DATA TO DETERMINE STABILITY, CREEP, AND VISCOELASTIC ELEMENTS OF MEASURES, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2016/0256187;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/640,817, entitled INTERACTIVE FEEDBACK SYSTEM FOR POWERED SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2016/0256186;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/640,844, entitled CONTROL TECHNIQUES AND SUB-PROCESSOR CONTAINED WITHIN MODULAR SHAFT WITH SELECT CONTROL PROCESSING FROM HANDLE, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2016/0256155;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/640,837, entitled SMART SENSORS WITH LOCAL SIGNAL PROCESSING, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2016/0256163;

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/640,765, entitled SYSTEM FOR DETECTING THE MIS-INSERTION OF A STAPLE CARTRIDGE INTO A SURGICAL STAPLER, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2016/0256160;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/640,799, entitled SIGNAL AND POWER COMMUNICATION SYSTEM POSITIONED ON A ROTATABLE SHAFT, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2016/0256162; and
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/640,780, entitled SURGICAL INSTRUMENT COMPRISING A LOCKABLE BATTERY HOUSING, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2016/0256161.

[0121] Applicant of the present application owns the following patent applications that were filed on February 27, 2015, and which are each herein incorporated by reference in their respective entirety:

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/633,576, entitled SURGICAL INSTRUMENT SYSTEM COMPRISING AN INSPECTION STATION, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2016/0249919;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/633,546, entitled SURGICAL APPARATUS CONFIGURED TO ASSESS WHETHER A PERFORMANCE PARAMETER OF THE SURGICAL APPARATUS IS WITHIN AN ACCEPTABLE PERFORMANCE BAND, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2016/0249915;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/633,560, entitled SURGICAL CHARGING SYSTEM THAT CHARGES AND/OR CONDITIONS ONE OR MORE BATTERIES, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2016/0249910;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/633,566, entitled CHARGING SYSTEM THAT ENABLES EMERGENCY RESOLUTIONS FOR CHARGING A BATTERY, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2016/0249918;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/633,555, entitled SYSTEM FOR MONITORING WHETHER A SURGICAL INSTRUMENT NEEDS TO BE SERVICED, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2016/0249916;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/633,542, entitled REINFORCED BATTERY FOR A SURGICAL INSTRUMENT, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2016/0249908;

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/633,548, entitled POWER ADAPTER FOR A SURGICAL INSTRUMENT, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2016/0249909;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/633,526, entitled ADAPTABLE SURGICAL INSTRUMENT HANDLE, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2016/0249945;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/633,541, entitled MODULAR STAPLING ASSEMBLY, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2016/0249927; and
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/633,562, entitled SURGICAL APPARATUS CONFIGURED TO TRACK AN END-OF-LIFE PARAMETER, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2016/0249917.

[0122] Applicant of the present application owns the following patent applications that were filed on December 18, 2014 and which are each herein incorporated by reference in their respective entirety:

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/574,478, entitled SURGICAL INSTRUMENT SYSTEMS COMPRISING AN ARTICULATABLE END EFFECTOR AND MEANS FOR ADJUSTING THE FIRING STROKE OF A FIRING MEMBER, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2016/0174977;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/574,483, entitled SURGICAL INSTRUMENT ASSEMBLY COMPRISING LOCKABLE SYSTEMS, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2016/0174969;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/575,139, entitled DRIVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR ARTICULATABLE SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2016/0174978;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/575,148, entitled LOCKING ARRANGEMENTS FOR DETACHABLE SHAFT ASSEMBLIES WITH ARTICULATABLE SURGICAL END EFFECTORS, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2016/0174976;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/575,130, entitled SURGICAL INSTRUMENT WITH AN ANVIL THAT IS SELECTIVELY MOVABLE ABOUT A DISCRETE NON-MOVABLE AXIS RELATIVE TO A STAPLE CARTRIDGE, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2016/0174972;

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/575,143, entitled SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS WITH IMPROVED CLOSURE ARRANGEMENTS, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2016/0174983;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/575,117, entitled SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS WITH ARTICULATABLE END EFFECTORS AND MOVABLE FIRING BEAM SUPPORT ARRANGEMENTS, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2016/0174975;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/575,154, entitled SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS WITH ARTICULATABLE END EFFECTORS AND IMPROVED FIRING BEAM SUPPORT ARRANGEMENTS, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2016/0174973;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/574,493, entitled SURGICAL INSTRUMENT ASSEMBLY COMPRISING A FLEXIBLE ARTICULATION SYSTEM, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2016/0174970; and
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/574,500, entitled SURGICAL INSTRUMENT ASSEMBLY COMPRISING A LOCKABLE ARTICULATION SYSTEM, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2016/0174971.

[0123] Applicant of the present application owns the following patent applications that were filed on March 1, 2013 and which are each herein incorporated by reference in their respective entirety:

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 13/782,295, entitled ARTICULATABLE SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS WITH CONDUCTIVE PATHWAYS FOR SIGNAL COMMUNICATION, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2014/0246471;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 13/782,323, entitled ROTARY POWERED ARTICULATION JOINTS FOR SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2014/0246472;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 13/782,338, entitled THUMBWHEEL SWITCH ARRANGEMENTS FOR SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2014/0249557;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 13/782,499, entitled ELECTROMECHANICAL SURGICAL DEVICE WITH SIGNAL RELAY ARRANGEMENT, now U.S. Patent No. 9,358,003;

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 13/782,460, entitled MULTIPLE PROCESSOR MOTOR CONTROL FOR MODULAR SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2014/0246478;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 13/782,358, entitled JOYSTICK SWITCH ASSEMBLIES FOR SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS, now U.S. Patent No. 9,326,767;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 13/782,481, entitled SENSOR STRAIGHTENED END EFFECTOR DURING REMOVAL THROUGH TROCAR, now U.S. Patent No. 9,468,438;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 13/782,518, entitled CONTROL METHODS FOR SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS WITH REMOVABLE IMPLEMENT PORTIONS, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2014/0246475;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 13/782,375, entitled ROTARY POWERED SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS WITH MULTIPLE DEGREES OF FREEDOM, now U.S. Patent No. 9,398,911; and
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 13/782,536, entitled SURGICAL INSTRUMENT SOFT STOP, now U.S. Patent No. 9,307,986.

[0124] Applicant of the present application also owns the following patent applications that were filed on March 14, 2013 and which are each herein incorporated by reference in their respective entirety:

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 13/803,097, entitled ARTICULATABLE SURGICAL INSTRUMENT COMPRISING A FIRING DRIVE, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2014/0263542;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 13/803,193, entitled CONTROL ARRANGEMENTS FOR A DRIVE MEMBER OF A SURGICAL INSTRUMENT, now U.S. Patent No. 9,332,987;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 13/803,053, entitled INTERCHANGEABLE SHAFT ASSEMBLIES FOR USE WITH A SURGICAL INSTRUMENT, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2014/0263564;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 13/803,086, entitled ARTICULATABLE SURGICAL INSTRUMENT COMPRISING AN ARTICULATION LOCK, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2014/0263541;

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 13/803,210, entitled SENSOR ARRANGEMENTS FOR ABSOLUTE POSITIONING SYSTEM FOR SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2014/0263538;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 13/803,148, entitled MULTI-FUNCTION MOTOR FOR A SURGICAL INSTRUMENT, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2014/0263554;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 13/803,066, entitled DRIVE SYSTEM LOCKOUT ARRANGEMENTS FOR MODULAR SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2014/0263565;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 13/803,117, entitled ARTICULATION CONTROL SYSTEM FOR ARTICULATABLE SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS, now U.S. Patent No. 9,351,726;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 13/803,130, entitled DRIVE TRAIN CONTROL ARRANGEMENTS FOR MODULAR SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS, now U.S. Patent No. 9,351,727; and
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 13/803,159, entitled METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR OPERATING A SURGICAL INSTRUMENT, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2014/0277017.

[0125] Applicant of the present application also owns the following patent application that was filed on March 7, 2014 and is herein incorporated by reference in its entirety:

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/200,111, entitled CONTROL SYSTEMS FOR SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2014/0263539.

[0126] Applicant of the present application also owns the following patent applications that were filed on March 26, 2014 and are each herein incorporated by reference in their respective entirety:

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/226,106, entitled POWER MANAGEMENT CONTROL SYSTEMS FOR SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2015/0272582;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/226,099, entitled STERILIZATION VERIFICATION CIRCUIT, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2015/0272581;

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/226,094, entitled VERIFICATION OF NUMBER OF BATTERY EXCHANGES/PROCEDURE COUNT, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2015/0272580;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/226,117, entitled POWER MANAGEMENT THROUGH SLEEP OPTIONS OF SEGMENTED CIRCUIT AND WAKE UP CONTROL, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2015/0272574;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/226,075, entitled MODULAR POWERED SURGICAL INSTRUMENT WITH DETACHABLE SHAFT ASSEMBLIES, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2015/0272579;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/226,093, entitled FEEDBACK ALGORITHMS FOR MANUAL BAILOUT SYSTEMS FOR SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2015/0272569;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/226,116, entitled SURGICAL INSTRUMENT UTILIZING SENSOR ADAPTATION, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2015/0272571;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/226,071, entitled SURGICAL INSTRUMENT CONTROL CIRCUIT HAVING A SAFETY PROCESSOR, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2015/0272578;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/226,097, entitled SURGICAL INSTRUMENT COMPRISING INTERACTIVE SYSTEMS, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2015/0272570;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/226,126, entitled INTERFACE SYSTEMS FOR USE WITH SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2015/0272572;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/226,133, entitled MODULAR SURGICAL INSTRUMENT SYSTEM, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2015/0272557;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/226,081, entitled SYSTEMS AND METHODS FOR CONTROLLING A SEGMENTED CIRCUIT, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2015/0277471;

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/226,076, entitled POWER MANAGEMENT THROUGH SEGMENTED CIRCUIT AND VARIABLE VOLTAGE PROTECTION, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2015/0280424;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/226,111, entitled SURGICAL STAPLING INSTRUMENT SYSTEM, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2015/0272583; and
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/226,125, entitled SURGICAL INSTRUMENT COMPRISING A ROTATABLE SHAFT, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2015/0280384.

[0127] Applicant of the present application also owns the following patent applications that were filed on September 5, 2014 and which are each herein incorporated by reference in their respective entirety:

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/479,103, entitled CIRCUITRY AND SENSORS FOR POWERED MEDICAL DEVICE, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2016/0066912;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/479,119, entitled ADJUNCT WITH INTEGRATED SENSORS TO QUANTIFY TISSUE COMPRESSION, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2016/0066914;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/478,908, entitled MONITORING DEVICE DEGRADATION BASED ON COMPONENT EVALUATION, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2016/0066910;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/478,895, entitled MULTIPLE SENSORS WITH ONE SENSOR AFFECTING A SECOND SENSOR'S OUTPUT OR INTERPRETATION, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2016/0066909;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/479,110, entitled POLARITY OF HALL MAGNET TO DETECT MISLOADED CARTRIDGE, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2016/0066915;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/479,098, entitled SMART CARTRIDGE WAKE UP OPERATION AND DATA RETENTION, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2016/0066911;

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/479,115, entitled MULTIPLE MOTOR CONTROL FOR POWERED MEDICAL DEVICE, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2016/0066916; and

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/479,108, entitled LOCAL DISPLAY OF TISSUE PARAMETER STABILIZATION, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2016/0066913.

[0128] Applicant of the present application also owns the following patent applications that were filed on April 9, 2014 and which are each herein incorporated by reference in their respective entirety:

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/248,590, entitled MOTOR DRIVEN SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS WITH LOCKABLE DUAL DRIVE SHAFTS, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2014/0305987;

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/248,581, entitled SURGICAL INSTRUMENT COMPRISING A CLOSING DRIVE AND A FIRING DRIVE OPERATED FROM THE SAME ROTATABLE OUTPUT, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2014/0305989;

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/248,595, entitled SURGICAL INSTRUMENT SHAFT INCLUDING SWITCHES FOR CONTROLLING THE OPERATION OF THE SURGICAL INSTRUMENT, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2014/0305988;

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/248,588, entitled POWERED LINEAR SURGICAL STAPLER, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2014/0309666;

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/248,591, entitled TRANSMISSION ARRANGEMENT FOR A SURGICAL INSTRUMENT, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2014/0305991;

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/248,584, entitled MODULAR MOTOR DRIVEN SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS WITH ALIGNMENT FEATURES FOR ALIGNING ROTARY DRIVE SHAFTS WITH SURGICAL END EFFECTOR SHAFTS, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2014/0305994;

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/248,587, entitled POWERED SURGICAL STAPLER, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2014/0309665;

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/248,586, entitled DRIVE SYSTEM DECOUPLING ARRANGEMENT FOR A SURGICAL INSTRUMENT, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2014/0305990; and

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/248,607, entitled MODULAR MOTOR DRIVEN SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS WITH STATUS INDICATION ARRANGEMENTS, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2014/0305992.

[0129] Applicant of the present application also owns the following patent applications that were filed on April 16, 2013 and which are each herein incorporated by reference in their respective entirety:

- U.S. Provisional Patent Application Serial No. 61/812,365, entitled SURGICAL INSTRUMENT WITH MULTIPLE FUNCTIONS PERFORMED BY A SINGLE MOTOR;
- U.S. Provisional Patent Application Serial No. 61/812,376, entitled LINEAR CUTTER WITH POWER;
- U.S. Provisional Patent Application Serial No. 61/812,382, entitled LINEAR CUTTER WITH MOTOR AND PISTOL GRIP;
- U.S. Provisional Patent Application Serial No. 61/812,385, entitled SURGICAL INSTRUMENT HANDLE WITH MULTIPLE ACTUATION MOTORS AND MOTOR CONTROL; and
- U.S. Provisional Patent Application Serial No. 61/812,372, entitled SURGICAL INSTRUMENT WITH MULTIPLE FUNCTIONS PERFORMED BY A SINGLE MOTOR.

[0130] Numerous specific details are set forth to provide a thorough understanding of the overall structure, function, manufacture, and use of the embodiments as described in the specification and illustrated in the accompanying drawings. Well-known operations, components, and elements have not been described in detail so as not to obscure the embodiments described in the specification. The reader will understand that the embodiments described and illustrated herein are non-limiting examples, and thus it can be appreciated that the specific structural and functional details disclosed herein may be representative and illustrative. Variations and changes thereto may be made without departing from the scope of the claims.

[0131] The terms "comprise" (and any form of comprise, such as "comprises" and "comprising"), "have" (and any form of have, such as "has" and "having"), "include" (and any form of include, such as "includes" and "including") and "contain" (and any form of contain, such as "contains" and "containing") are open-ended linking verbs. As a result, a surgical system, device, or apparatus that "comprises," "has," "includes" or "contains" one or more elements possesses those one or more elements, but is not limited to possessing only those one or more

elements. Likewise, an element of a system, device, or apparatus that "comprises," "has," "includes" or "contains" one or more features possesses those one or more features, but is not limited to possessing only those one or more features.

[0132] The terms “proximal” and “distal” are used herein with reference to a clinician manipulating the handle portion of the surgical instrument. The term “proximal” refers to the portion closest to the clinician and the term “distal” refers to the portion located away from the clinician. It will be further appreciated that, for convenience and clarity, spatial terms such as “vertical”, “horizontal”, “up”, and “down” may be used herein with respect to the drawings. However, surgical instruments are used in many orientations and positions, and these terms are not intended to be limiting and/or absolute.

[0133] Various exemplary devices and methods are provided for performing laparoscopic and minimally invasive surgical procedures. However, the reader will readily appreciate that the various methods and devices disclosed herein can be used in numerous surgical procedures and applications including, for example, in connection with open surgical procedures. As the present Detailed Description proceeds, the reader will further appreciate that the various instruments disclosed herein can be inserted into a body in any way, such as through a natural orifice, through an incision or puncture hole formed in tissue, etc. The working portions or end effector portions of the instruments can be inserted directly into a patient’s body or can be inserted through an access device that has a working channel through which the end effector and elongate shaft of a surgical instrument can be advanced.

[0134] A surgical stapling system can comprise a shaft and an end effector extending from the shaft. The end effector comprises a first jaw and a second jaw. The first jaw comprises a staple cartridge. The staple cartridge is insertable into and removable from the first jaw; however, other embodiments are envisioned in which a staple cartridge is not removable from, or at least readily replaceable from, the first jaw. The second jaw comprises an anvil configured to deform staples ejected from the staple cartridge. The second jaw is pivotable relative to the first jaw about a closure axis; however, other embodiments are envisioned in which the first jaw is pivotable relative to the second jaw. The surgical stapling system further comprises an articulation joint configured to permit the end effector to be rotated, or articulated, relative to the shaft. The end effector is rotatable about an articulation axis extending through the articulation joint. Other embodiments are envisioned which do not include an articulation joint.

[0135] The staple cartridge comprises a cartridge body. The cartridge body includes a proximal end, a distal end, and a deck extending between the proximal end and the distal end. In use, the staple cartridge is positioned on a first side of the tissue to be stapled and the anvil is positioned on a second side of the tissue. The anvil is moved toward the staple cartridge to compress and clamp the tissue against the deck. Thereafter, staples removably stored in the cartridge body can be deployed into the tissue. The cartridge body includes staple cavities defined therein wherein staples are removably stored in the staple cavities. The staple cavities are arranged in six longitudinal rows. Three rows of staple cavities are positioned on a first side of a longitudinal slot and three rows of staple cavities are positioned on a second side of the longitudinal slot. Other arrangements of staple cavities and staples may be possible.

[0136] The staples are supported by staple drivers in the cartridge body. The drivers are movable between a first, or unfired position, and a second, or fired, position to eject the staples from the staple cavities. The drivers are retained in the cartridge body by a retainer which extends around the bottom of the cartridge body and includes resilient members configured to grip the cartridge body and hold the retainer to the cartridge body. The drivers are movable between their unfired positions and their fired positions by a sled. The sled is movable between a proximal position adjacent the proximal end and a distal position adjacent the distal end. The sled comprises a plurality of ramped surfaces configured to slide under the drivers and lift the drivers, and the staples supported thereon, toward the anvil.

[0137] Further to the above, the sled is moved distally by a firing member. The firing member is configured to contact the sled and push the sled toward the distal end. The longitudinal slot defined in the cartridge body is configured to receive the firing member. The anvil also includes a slot configured to receive the firing member. The firing member further comprises a first cam which engages the first jaw and a second cam which engages the second jaw. As the firing member is advanced distally, the first cam and the second cam can control the distance, or tissue gap, between the deck of the staple cartridge and the anvil. The firing member also comprises a knife configured to incise the tissue captured intermediate the staple cartridge and the anvil. It is desirable for the knife to be positioned at least partially proximal to the ramped surfaces such that the staples are ejected ahead of the knife.

[0138] FIG. 1 depicts a motor-driven surgical system 10 that may be used to perform a variety of different surgical procedures. As can be seen in that Figure, one example of the surgical

system 10 includes four interchangeable surgical tool assemblies 100, 200, 300 and 1000 that are each adapted for interchangeable use with a handle assembly 500. Each interchangeable surgical tool assembly 100, 200, 300 and 1000 may be designed for use in connection with the performance of one or more specific surgical procedures. In another surgical system embodiment, the interchangeable surgical tool assemblies may be effectively employed with a tool drive assembly of a robotically controlled or automated surgical system. For example, the surgical tool assemblies disclosed herein may be employed with various robotic systems, instruments, components and methods such as, but not limited to, those disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 9,072,535, entitled SURGICAL STAPLING INSTRUMENTS WITH ROTATABLE STAPLE DEPLOYMENT ARRANGEMENTS, which is hereby incorporated by reference herein in its entirety.

[0139] FIG. 2 illustrates one form of an interchangeable surgical tool assembly 100 that is operably coupled to the handle assembly 500. FIG. 3 illustrates attachment of the interchangeable surgical tool assembly 100 to the handle assembly 500. The attachment arrangement and process depicted in FIG. 3 may also be employed in connection with attachment of any of the interchangeable surgical tool assemblies 100, 200, 300 and 1000 to a tool drive portion or tool drive housing of a robotic system. The handle assembly 500 may comprise a handle housing 502 that includes a pistol grip portion 504 that can be gripped and manipulated by the clinician. As will be briefly discussed below, the handle assembly 500 operably supports a plurality of drive systems that are configured to generate and apply various control motions to corresponding portions of the interchangeable surgical tool assembly 100, 200, 300 and/or 1000 that is operably attached thereto.

[0140] Referring now to FIG. 3, the handle assembly 500 may further include a frame 506 that operably supports the plurality of drive systems. For example, the frame 506 can operably support a “first” or closure drive system, generally designated as 510, which may be employed to apply closing and opening motions to the interchangeable surgical tool assembly 100, 200, 300 and 1000 that is operably attached or coupled to the handle assembly 500. In at least one form, the closure drive system 510 may include an actuator in the form of a closure trigger 512 that is pivotally supported by the frame 506. Such arrangement enables the closure trigger 512 to be manipulated by a clinician such that when the clinician grips the pistol grip portion 504 of the handle assembly 500, the closure trigger 512 may be easily pivoted from a starting or

“unactuated” position to an “actuated” position and more particularly to a fully compressed or fully actuated position. In various forms, the closure drive system 510 further includes a closure linkage assembly 514 that is pivotally coupled to the closure trigger 512 or otherwise operably interfaces therewith. As will be discussed in further detail below, in the illustrated example, the closure linkage assembly 514 includes a transverse attachment pin 516 that facilitates attachment to a corresponding drive system on the surgical tool assembly. In use, to actuate the closure drive system, the clinician depresses the closure trigger 512 towards the pistol grip portion 504. As described in further detail in U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/226,142, entitled **SURGICAL INSTRUMENT COMPRISING A SENSOR SYSTEM**, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2015/0272575, which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety herein, when the clinician fully depresses the closure trigger 512 to attain the full closure stroke, the closure drive system is configured to lock the closure trigger 512 into the fully depressed or fully actuated position. When the clinician desires to unlock the closure trigger 512 to permit it to be biased to the unactuated position, the clinician simply activates a closure release button assembly 518 which enables the closure trigger to return to unactuated position. The closure release button 518 may also be configured to interact with various sensors that communicate with a microcontroller 520 in the handle assembly 500 for tracking the position of the closure trigger 512. Further details concerning the configuration and operation of the closure release button assembly 518 may be found in U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2015/0272575.

[0141] In at least one form, the handle assembly 500 and the frame 506 may operably support another drive system referred to herein as a firing drive system 530 that is configured to apply firing motions to corresponding portions of the interchangeable surgical tool assembly that is attached thereto. As was described in detail in U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2015/0272575, the firing drive system 530 may employ an electric motor (not shown in FIGS. 1-3) that is located in the pistol grip portion 504 of the handle assembly 500. In various forms, the motor may be a DC brushed driving motor having a maximum rotation of, approximately, 25,000 RPM, for example. In other arrangements, the motor may include a brushless motor, a cordless motor, a synchronous motor, a stepper motor, or any other suitable electric motor. The motor may be powered by a power source 522 that in one form may comprise a removable power pack. The power pack may support a plurality of Lithium Ion (“LI”) or other suitable

batteries therein. A number of batteries may be connected in series may be used as the power source 522 for the surgical system 10. In addition, the power source 522 may be replaceable and/or rechargeable.

[0142] The electric motor is configured to axially drive a longitudinally movable drive member 540 in a distal and proximal directions depending upon the polarity of the motor. For example, when the motor is driven in one rotary direction, the longitudinally movable drive member 540 the will be axially driven in the distal direction “DD”. When the motor is driven in the opposite rotary direction, the longitudinally movable drive member 540 will be axially driven in a proximal direction “PD”. The handle assembly 500 can include a switch 513 which can be configured to reverse the polarity applied to the electric motor by the power source 522 or otherwise control the motor. The handle assembly 500 can also include a sensor or sensors (not shown) that is configured to detect the position of the drive member 540 and/or the direction in which the drive member 540 is being moved. Actuation of the motor can be controlled by a firing trigger 532 (FIG. 1) that is pivotally supported on the handle assembly 500. The firing trigger 532 may be pivoted between an unactuated position and an actuated position. The firing trigger 532 may be biased into the unactuated position by a spring or other biasing arrangement such that when the clinician releases the firing trigger 532, it may be pivoted or otherwise returned to the unactuated position by the spring or biasing arrangement. In at least one form, the firing trigger 532 can be positioned “outboard” of the closure trigger 512 as was discussed above. As discussed in U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2015/0272575, the handle assembly 500 may be equipped with a firing trigger safety button (not shown) to prevent inadvertent actuation of the firing trigger 532. When the closure trigger 512 is in the unactuated position, the safety button is contained in the handle assembly 500 where the clinician cannot readily access it and move it between a safety position preventing actuation of the firing trigger 532 and a firing position wherein the firing trigger 532 may be fired. As the clinician depresses the closure trigger 512, the safety button and the firing trigger 532 pivot down wherein they can then be manipulated by the clinician.

[0143] In at least one form, the longitudinally movable drive member 540 may have a rack of teeth (not shown) formed thereon for meshing engagement with a corresponding drive gear arrangement (not shown) that interfaces with the motor. Further details regarding those features may be found in U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2015/0272575. At least one form also

includes a manually-actuatable “bailout” assembly that is configured to enable the clinician to manually retract the longitudinally movable drive member 540 should the motor become disabled. The bailout assembly may include a lever or bailout handle assembly that is stored within the handle assembly 500 under a releasable door 550. The lever is configured to be manually pivoted into ratcheting engagement with the teeth in the drive member 540. Thus, the clinician can manually retract the drive member 540 by using the bailout handle assembly to ratchet the drive member 540 in the proximal direction “PD”. U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 12/249,117, entitled POWERED SURGICAL CUTTING AND STAPLING APPARATUS WITH MANUALLY RETRACTABLE FIRING SYSTEM, now U.S. Patent No. 8,608,045, the entire disclosure of which is hereby incorporated by reference herein discloses bailout arrangements and other components, arrangements and systems that may also be employed with the various surgical tool assemblies disclosed herein.

[0144] Turning now to FIG. 2, the interchangeable surgical tool assembly 100 includes a surgical end effector 110 that comprises a first jaw and a second jaw. In one arrangement, the first jaw comprises an elongate channel 112 that is configured to operably support a surgical staple cartridge 116 therein. The second jaw comprises an anvil 114 that is pivotally supported relative to the elongate channel 112. The interchangeable surgical tool assembly 100 also includes a lockable articulation joint 120 which can be configured to releasably hold the end effector 110 in a desired position relative to a shaft axis SA. Details regarding various constructions and operation of the end effector 110, the articulation joint 120 and the articulation lock are set forth in U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 13/803,086, entitled ARTICULATABLE SURGICAL INSTRUMENT COMPRISING AN ARTICULATION LOCK, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2014/0263541, which is hereby incorporated by reference herein in its entirety. As can be further seen in FIGS. 2 and 3, the interchangeable surgical tool assembly 100 can include a proximal housing or nozzle 130 and a closure tube assembly 140 which can be utilized to close and/or open the anvil 114 of the end effector 110. As discussed in U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2015/0272575, the closure tube assembly 140 is movably supported on a spine 145 which supports articulation driver arrangement 147 for applying articulation motions to the surgical end effector 110. The spine 145 is configured to, one, slidably support a firing bar 170 therein and, two, slidably support the closure tube assembly 140 which extends around the spine 145. In various circumstances, the spine 145 includes a proximal end that is

rotatably supported in a chassis 150. See FIG. 3. In one arrangement, for example, the proximal end of the spine 145 is attached to a spine bearing (not shown) that is configured to be supported within the chassis 150. Such an arrangement facilitates rotatable attachment of the spine 145 to the chassis 150 such that the spine 145 may be selectively rotated about a shaft axis SA relative to the chassis 150.

[0145] Still referring to FIG. 3, the interchangeable surgical tool assembly 100 includes a closure shuttle 160 that is slidably supported within the chassis 150 such that it may be axially moved relative thereto. As can be seen in FIG. 3, the closure shuttle 160 includes a pair of proximally-protruding hooks 162 that are configured for attachment to the attachment pin 516 that is attached to the closure linkage assembly 514 in the handle assembly 500. A proximal closure tube segment 146 of the closure tube assembly 140 is coupled to the closure shuttle 160 for relative rotation thereto. Thus, when the hooks 162 are hooked over the pin 516, actuation of the closure trigger 512 will result in the axial movement of the closure shuttle 160 and ultimately, the closure tube assembly 140 on the spine 145. A closure spring (not shown) may also be journaled on the closure tube assembly 140 and serves to bias the closure tube assembly 140 in the proximal direction “PD” which can serve to pivot the closure trigger 512 into the unactuated position when the shaft assembly 100 is operably coupled to the handle assembly 500. In use, the closure tube assembly 140 is translated distally (direction DD) to close the anvil 114, for example, in response to the actuation of the closure trigger 512. The closure tube assembly 140 includes a distal closure tube segment 142 that is pivotally pinned to a distal end of a proximal closure tube segment 146. The distal closure tube segment 142 is configured to axially move with the proximal closure tube segment 146 relative to the surgical end effector 110. When the distal end of the distal closure tube segment 142 strikes a proximal surface or ledge 115 on the anvil 114, the anvil 114 is pivoted closed. Further details concerning the closure of anvil 114 may be found in the aforementioned U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2014/0263541 and will be discussed in further detail below. As was also described in detail in U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2014/0263541, the anvil 114 is opened by proximally translating the distal closure tube segment 142. The distal closure tube segment 142 has a horseshoe aperture 143 therein that defines a downwardly extending return tab (not shown) that cooperates with an anvil tab 117 formed on the proximal end of the anvil 114 to pivot the anvil

114 back to an open position. In the fully open position, the closure tube assembly 140 is in its proximal-most or unactuated position.

[0146] As was also indicated above, the interchangeable surgical tool assembly 100 further includes a firing bar 170 that is supported for axial travel within the shaft spine 145. The firing bar 170 includes an intermediate firing shaft portion that is configured for attachment to a distal cutting portion or knife bar that is configured for axial travel through the surgical end effector 110. In at least one arrangement, the interchangeable surgical tool assembly 100 includes a clutch assembly (not shown) which can be configured to selectively and releasably couple the articulation driver to the firing bar 170. Further details regarding the clutch assembly features and operation may be found in U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2014/0263541. As discussed in U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2014/0263541, when the clutch assembly is in its engaged position, distal movement of the firing bar 170 can move the articulation driver arrangement 147 distally and, correspondingly, proximal movement of the firing bar 170 can move the articulation driver arrangement 147 proximally. When the clutch assembly is in its disengaged position, movement of the firing bar 170 is not transmitted to the articulation driver arrangement 147 and, as a result, the firing bar 170 can move independently of the articulation driver arrangement 147. The interchangeable surgical tool assembly 100 may also include a slip ring assembly (not shown) which can be configured to conduct electrical power to and/or from the end effector 110 and/or communicate signals to and/or from the end effector 110. Further details regarding the slip ring assembly may be found in U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2014/0263541. U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 13/800,067, entitled STAPLE CARTRIDGE TISSUE THICKNESS SENSOR SYSTEM, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2014/0263552 is incorporated by reference in its entirety. U.S. Patent No. 9,345,481, entitled STAPLE CARTRIDGE TISSUE THICKNESS SENSOR SYSTEM, is also hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety.

[0147] Still referring to FIG. 3, the chassis 150 has at least one, and preferably two, tapered attachment portions 152 formed thereon that are adapted to be received within corresponding dovetail slots 507 formed within a distal end of the frame 506. Each dovetail slot 507 may be tapered or, stated another way, be somewhat V-shaped to seatingly receive the tapered attachment portions 152 therein. As can be further seen in FIG. 3, a shaft attachment lug 172 is formed on the proximal end of the firing shaft 170. When the interchangeable surgical tool

assembly 100 is coupled to the handle assembly 500, the shaft attachment lug 172 is received in a firing shaft attachment cradle 542 formed in the distal end of the longitudinally movable drive member 540. The interchangeable surgical tool assembly 100 also employs a latch system 180 for releasably latching the shaft assembly 100 to the frame 506 of the handle assembly 500. In at least one form, for example, the latch system 180 includes a lock member or lock yoke 182 that is movably coupled to the chassis 150. The lock yoke 182 includes two proximally protruding lock lugs 184 that are configured for releasable engagement with corresponding lock detents or grooves 509 in the distal attachment flange of the frame 506. In various forms, the lock yoke 182 is biased in the proximal direction by spring or biasing member. Actuation of the lock yoke 182 may be accomplished by a latch button 186 that is slidably mounted on a latch actuator assembly that is mounted to the chassis 150. The latch button 186 may be biased in a proximal direction relative to the lock yoke 182. As will be discussed in further detail below, the lock yoke 182 may be moved to an unlocked position by biasing the latch button 186 the in distal direction DD which also causes the lock yoke 182 to pivot out of retaining engagement with the distal attachment flange of the frame 506. When the lock yoke 182 is in “retaining engagement” with the distal attachment flange of the frame 506, the lock lugs 184 are retainingly seated within the corresponding lock detents or grooves 509 in the distal end of the frame 506. Further details concerning the latching system may be found in U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2014/0263541.

[0148] Attachment of the interchangeable surgical tool assembly 100 to the handle assembly 500 will now be described with reference to FIG. 3. To commence the coupling process, the clinician may position the chassis 150 of the interchangeable surgical tool assembly 100 above or adjacent to the distal end of the frame 506 such that the tapered attachment portions 152 formed on the chassis 150 are aligned with the dovetail slots 507 in the frame 506. The clinician may then move the surgical tool assembly 100 along an installation axis IA that is perpendicular to the shaft axis SA to seat the tapered attachment portions 152 in “operable engagement” with the corresponding dovetail receiving slots 507 in the distal end of the frame 506. In doing so, the shaft attachment lug 172 on the firing shaft 170 will also be seated in the cradle 542 in the longitudinally movable drive member 540 and the portions of pin 516 on the closure link 514 will be seated in the corresponding hooks 162 in the closure shuttle 160. As used herein, the term “operable engagement” in the context of two components means that the two components

are sufficiently engaged with each other so that upon application of an actuation motion thereto, the components may carry out their intended action, function and/or procedure.

[0149] Returning now to FIG. 1, the surgical system 10 illustrated in that Figure includes four interchangeable surgical tool assemblies 100, 200, 300 and 1000 that may each be effectively employed with the same handle assembly 500 to perform different surgical procedures. The construction of an exemplary form of interchangeable surgical tool assembly 100 was briefly discussed above and is discussed in further detail in U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2014/0263541. Various details regarding interchangeable surgical tool assemblies 200 and 300 may be found in the various U.S. Patent Applications that were filed on even date herewith and which have been incorporated by reference herein. Various details regarding interchangeable surgical tool assembly 1000 will be discussed in further detail below.

[0150] As illustrated in FIG. 1, each of the surgical tool assemblies 100, 200, 300 and 1000 includes a pair of jaws wherein at least one of the jaws is movable between open positions wherein tissue may be captured or manipulated between the two jaws and closed positions wherein the tissue is firmly retained therebetween. The movable jaw or jaws are moved between open and closed positions upon application of closure and opening motions applied thereto from the handle assembly or the robotic or automated surgical system to which the surgical tool assembly is operably coupled. In addition, each of the illustrated interchangeable surgical tool assemblies includes a firing member that is configured to cut tissue and fire staples from a staple cartridge that is supported in one of the jaws in response to firing motions applied thereto by the handle assembly or robotic system. Each surgical tool assembly may be uniquely designed to perform a specific procedure, for example, to cut and fasten a particular type of and thickness of tissue within a certain area in the body. The closing, firing and articulation control systems in the handle assembly 500 or robotic system may be configured to generate axial control motions and/or rotary control motions depending upon the type of closing, firing and articulation system configurations that are employed in the surgical tool assembly. In one arrangement, when a closure control system in the handle assembly or robotic system is fully actuated, one of the closure system control components which may, for example, comprise a closure tube assembly as described above, moves axially from an unactuated position to its fully actuated position. The axial distance that the closure tube assembly moves between its unactuated position to its fully actuated position may be referred to herein as its “closure stroke length”. Similarly, when a

firing system in the handle assembly or robotic system is fully actuated, one of the firing system control components which may, for example, comprise the longitudinally movable drive member as described above moves axially from its unactuated position to its fully actuated or fired position. The axial distance that the longitudinally movable drive member moves between its unactuated position and its fully fired position may be referred to herein as its “firing stroke length”. For those surgical tool assemblies that employ articulatable end effector arrangements, the handle assembly or robotic system may employ articulation control components that move axially through an “articulation drive stroke length”. In many circumstances, the closure stroke length, the firing stroke length and the articulation drive stroke length are fixed for a particular handle assembly or robotic system. Thus, each of the surgical tool assemblies must be able to accommodate control movements of the closure, firing and/or articulation components through each of their entire stroke lengths without placing undue stress on the surgical tool components which might lead to damage or catastrophic failure of surgical tool assembly.

[0151] Turning now to FIGS. 4-10, the interchangeable surgical tool assembly 1000 includes a surgical end effector 1100 that comprises an elongate channel 1102 that is configured to operably support a staple cartridge 1110 therein. The end effector 1100 may further include an anvil 1130 that is pivotally supported relative to the elongate channel 1102. The interchangeable surgical tool assembly 1000 may further include an articulation joint 1200 and an articulation lock 1210 (FIGS. 5 and 8-10) which can be configured to releasably hold the end effector 1100 in a desired articulated position relative to a shaft axis SA. Details regarding the construction and operation of the articulation lock 1210 may be found in U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 13/803,086, entitled ARTICULATABLE SURGICAL INSTRUMENT COMPRISING AN ARTICULATION LOCK, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2014/0263541, the entire disclosure of which is hereby incorporated by reference herein. Additional details concerning the articulation lock may also be found in U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/019,196, filed February 9, 2016, entitled SURGICAL INSTRUMENT ARTICULATION MECHANISM WITH SLOTTED SECONDARY CONSTRAINT, the entire disclosure of which is hereby incorporated by reference herein. As can be seen in FIG. 7, the interchangeable surgical tool assembly 1000 can further include a proximal housing or nozzle 1300 comprised of nozzle portions 1302, 1304 as well as an actuator wheel portion 1306 that is configured to be coupled to the assembled nozzle portions 1302, 1304 by snaps, lugs, screws etc. The

interchangeable surgical tool assembly 1000 can further include a closure tube assembly 1400 which can be utilized to close and/or open the anvil 1130 of the end effector 1100 as will be discussed in further detail below. Primarily referring now to FIGS. 8 and 9, the interchangeable surgical tool assembly 1000 can include a spine assembly 1500 which can be configured to support the articulation lock 1210. In the illustrated arrangement, the spine assembly 1500 comprises an “elastic” spine or frame member 1510 which will be described in further detail below. A distal end portion 1522 of the elastic spine member 1510 is attached to a distal frame segment 1560 that operably supports the articulation lock 1210 therein. As can be seen in FIGS. 7 and 8, the spine assembly 1500 is configured to, one, slidably support a firing member assembly 1600 therein and, two, slidably support the closure tube assembly 1400 which extends around the spine assembly 1500. The spine assembly 1500 can also be configured to slidably support a proximal articulation driver 1700.

[0152] As can be seen in FIG. 10, the distal frame segment 1560 is pivotally coupled to the elongate channel 1102 by an end effector mounting assembly 1230. In one arrangement, for example, the distal end 1562 of the distal frame segment 1560 has a pivot pin 1564 formed thereon. The pivot pin 1564 is adapted to be pivotally received within a pivot hole 1234 formed in pivot base portion 1232 of the end effector mounting assembly 1230. The end effector mounting assembly 1230 is attached to the proximal end 1103 of the elongate channel 1102 by a spring pin 1105 or other suitable member. The pivot pin 1564 defines an articulation axis B-B that is transverse to the shaft axis SA. See FIG. 4. Such arrangement facilitates pivotal travel (i.e., articulation) of the end effector 1100 about the articulation axis B-B relative to the spine assembly 1500.

[0153] Still referring to FIG. 10, in the illustrated embodiment, the articulation driver 1700 has a distal end 1702 that is configured to operably engage the articulation lock 1210. The articulation lock 1210 includes an articulation frame 1212 that is adapted to operably engage a drive pin 1238 on the pivot base portion 1232 of the end effector mounting assembly 1230. In addition, a cross-link 1237 may be linked to the drive pin 1238 and articulation frame 1212 to assist articulation of the end effector 1100. As indicated above, further details regarding the operation of the articulation lock 1210 and the articulation frame 1212 may be found in U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 13/803,086, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2014/0263541. Further details regarding the end effector mounting assembly and crosslink may

be found in U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/019,245, filed February 9, 2016, entitled SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS WITH CLOSURE STROKE REDUCTION ARRANGEMENTS, the entire disclosure of which is hereby incorporated by reference herein. In various circumstances, the elastic spine member 1510 includes a proximal end 1514 which is rotatably supported in a chassis 1800. In one arrangement, for example, the proximal end 1514 of the elastic spine member 1510 has a thread 1516 formed thereon for threaded attachment to a spine bearing (not shown) that is configured to be supported within the chassis 1800. Such an arrangement facilitates rotatable attachment of the elastic spine member 1510 to the chassis 1800 such that the spine assembly 1500 may be selectively rotated about a shaft axis SA relative to the chassis 1800.

[0154] Referring primarily to FIG. 7, the interchangeable surgical tool assembly 1000 includes a closure shuttle 1420 that is slidably supported within the chassis 1800 such that it may be axially moved relative thereto. In one form, the closure shuttle 1420 includes a pair of proximally-protruding hooks 1421 that are configured for attachment to the attachment pin 516 that is attached to the closure linkage assembly 514 of the handle assembly 500 as was discussed above. A proximal end 1412 of a proximal closure tube segment 1410 is coupled to the closure shuttle 1420 for relative rotation thereto. For example, a U-shaped connector 1424 is inserted into an annular slot 1414 in the proximal end 1412 of the proximal closure tube segment 1410 and is retained within vertical slots 1422 in the closure shuttle 1420. See FIG. 7. Such arrangement serves to attach the proximal closure tube segment 1410 to the closure shuttle 1420 for axial travel therewith while enabling the closure tube assembly 1400 to rotate relative to the closure shuttle 1420 about the shaft axis SA. A closure spring (not shown) is journaled on the proximal end 1412 of the proximal closure tube segment 1410 and serves to bias the closure tube assembly 1400 in the proximal direction PD which can serve to pivot the closure trigger 512 on the handle assembly 500 (FIG. 3) into the unactuated position when the interchangeable surgical tool assembly 1000 is operably coupled to the handle assembly 500.

[0155] As indicated above, the illustrated interchangeable surgical tool assembly 1000 includes an articulation joint 1200. Other interchangeable surgical tool assemblies, however, may not be capable of articulation. As can be seen in FIG. 10, upper and lower tangs 1415, 1416 protrude distally from a distal end of the proximal closure tube segment 1410 to be movably coupled to an end effector closure sleeve or distal closure tube segment 1430 of the closure tube assembly

1400. As can be seen in FIG. 10, the distal closure tube segment 1430 includes upper and lower tangs 1434, 1436 that protrude proximally from a proximal end thereof. An upper double pivot link 1220 includes proximal and distal pins that engage corresponding holes in the upper tangs 1415, 1434 of the proximal closure tube segment 1410 and distal closure tube segment 1430, respectively. Similarly, a lower double pivot link 1222 includes proximal and distal pins that engage corresponding holes in the lower tangs 1416 and 1436 of the proximal closure tube segment 1410 and distal closure tube segment 1430, respectively. As will be discussed in further detail below, distal and proximal axial translation of the closure tube assembly 1400 will result in the closing and opening of the anvil 1130 relative to the elongate channel 1102.

[0156] As mentioned above, the interchangeable surgical tool assembly 1000 further includes a firing member assembly 1600 that is supported for axial travel within the spine assembly 1500. In the illustrated embodiment, the firing member assembly 1600 includes an intermediate firing shaft portion 1602 that is configured for attachment to a distal cutting portion or knife bar 1610. The firing member assembly 1600 may also be referred to herein as a “second shaft” and/or a “second shaft assembly”. As can be seen in FIGS. 7-10, the intermediate firing shaft portion 1602 may include a longitudinal slot 1604 in the distal end thereof which can be configured to receive a tab (not shown) on the proximal end of the knife bar 1610. The longitudinal slot 1604 and the proximal end of the knife bar 1610 can be sized and configured to permit relative movement therebetween and can comprise a slip joint 1612. The slip joint 1612 can permit the intermediate firing shaft portion 1602 of the firing member assembly 1600 to be moved to articulate the end effector 1100 without moving, or at least substantially moving, the knife bar 1610. Once the end effector 1100 has been suitably oriented, the intermediate firing shaft portion 1602 can be advanced distally until a proximal sidewall of the longitudinal slot 1604 comes into contact with the tab on the knife bar 1610 to advance the knife bar 1610 and fire the staple cartridge 1110 positioned within the elongate channel 1102. As can be further seen in FIGS. 8 and 9, the elastic spine member 1520 has an elongate opening or window 1525 therein to facilitate assembly and insertion of the intermediate firing shaft portion 1602 into the elastic spine member 1520. Once the intermediate firing shaft portion 1602 has been inserted therein, a top frame segment 1527 may be engaged with the elastic spine member 1520 to enclose the intermediate firing shaft portion 1602 and knife bar 1610 therein. Further description of the

operation of the firing member assembly 1600 may be found in U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 13/803,086, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2014/0263541.

[0157] Further to the above, the interchangeable tool assembly 1000 can include a clutch assembly 1620 which can be configured to selectively and releasably couple the articulation driver 1800 to the firing member assembly 1600. In one form, the clutch assembly 1620 includes a lock collar, or sleeve 1622, positioned around the firing member assembly 1600 wherein the lock sleeve 1622 can be rotated between an engaged position in which the lock sleeve 1622 couples the articulation driver 1700 to the firing member assembly 1600 and a disengaged position in which the articulation driver 1700 is not operably coupled to the firing member assembly 1600. When lock sleeve 1622 is in its engaged position, distal movement of the firing member assembly 1600 can move the articulation driver 1700 distally and, correspondingly, proximal movement of the firing member assembly 1600 can move the articulation driver 1700 proximally. When lock sleeve 1622 is in its disengaged position, movement of the firing member assembly 1600 is not transmitted to the articulation driver 1700 and, as a result, the firing member assembly 1600 can move independently of the articulation driver 1700. In various circumstances, the articulation driver 1700 can be held in position by the articulation lock 1210 when the articulation driver 1700 is not being moved in the proximal or distal directions by the firing member assembly 1600.

[0158] Referring primarily to FIG. 7, the lock sleeve 1622 can comprise a cylindrical, or an at least substantially cylindrical, body including a longitudinal aperture 1624 defined therein configured to receive the firing member assembly 1600. The lock sleeve 1622 can comprise diametrically-opposed, inwardly-facing lock protrusions 1626, 1628 and an outwardly-facing lock member 1629. The lock protrusions 1626, 1628 can be configured to be selectively engaged with the intermediate firing shaft portion 1602 of the firing member assembly 1600. More particularly, when the lock sleeve 1622 is in its engaged position, the lock protrusions 1626, 1628 are positioned within a drive notch 1605 defined in the intermediate firing shaft portion 1602 such that a distal pushing force and/or a proximal pulling force can be transmitted from the firing member assembly 1600 to the lock sleeve 1622. When the lock sleeve 1622 is in its engaged position, the second lock member 1629 is received within a drive notch 1704 defined in the articulation driver 1700 such that the distal pushing force and/or the proximal pulling force applied to the lock sleeve 1622 can be transmitted to the articulation driver 1700. In effect, the

firing member assembly 1600, the lock sleeve 1622, and the articulation driver 1700 will move together when the lock sleeve 1622 is in its engaged position. On the other hand, when the lock sleeve 1622 is in its disengaged position, the lock protrusions 1626, 1628 may not be positioned within the drive notch 1605 of the intermediate firing shaft portion 1602 of the firing member assembly 1600 and, as a result, a distal pushing force and/or a proximal pulling force may not be transmitted from the firing member assembly 1600 to the lock sleeve 1622. Correspondingly, the distal pushing force and/or the proximal pulling force may not be transmitted to the articulation driver 1700. In such circumstances, the firing member assembly 1600 can be slid proximally and/or distally relative to the lock sleeve 1622 and the proximal articulation driver 1700. The clutching assembly 1620 further includes a switch drum 1630 that interfaces with the lock sleeve 1622. Further details concerning the operation of the switch drum and lock sleeve 1622 may be found in U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 13/803,086, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2014/0263541, and Serial No. 15/019,196. The switch drum 1630 can further comprise at least partially circumferential openings 1632, 1634 defined therein which can receive circumferential mounts 1305 that extend from the nozzle halves 1302, 1304 and permit relative rotation, but not translation, between the switch drum 1630 and the proximal nozzle 1300. See FIG. 6. Rotation of the nozzle 1300 to a point where the mounts reach the end of their respective slots 1632, 1634 in the switch drum 1630 will result in rotation of the switch drum 1630 about the shaft axis SA. Rotation of the switch drum 1630 may ultimately result in the movement of the lock sleeve 1622 between its engaged and disengaged positions. In alternative embodiments, the nozzle 1300 may be employed to operably engage and disengage the articulation drive system with the firing drive system. As indicated above, clutch assembly 1620 may operate in the various manners described in further detail in U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 13/803,086, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2014/0263541, and U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/019,196, which have each been herein incorporated by reference in their respective entirety.

[0159] In the illustrated arrangement, the switch drum 1630 includes a an L-shaped slot 1636 that extends into a distal opening 1637 in the switch drum 1630. The distal opening 1637 receives a transverse pin 1639 of a shifter plate 1638. In one example, the shifter plate 1638 is received within a longitudinal slot (not shown) that is provided in the lock sleeve 1622 to facilitate axial movement of the lock sleeve 1622 when engaged with the articulation driver

1700. Further details regarding the operation of the shifter plate and shift drum arrangements may be found in U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/868,718, filed September 28, 2015, entitled SURGICAL STAPLING INSTRUMENT WITH SHAFT RELEASE, POWERED FIRING AND POWERED ARTICULATION, the entire disclosure of which is hereby incorporated by reference herein.

[0160] As also illustrated in FIGS. 7 and 8, the interchangeable tool assembly 1000 can comprise a slip ring assembly 1640 which can be configured to conduct electrical power to and/or from the end effector 1100 and/or communicate signals to and/or from the end effector 1100, back to a microprocessor in the handle assembly or robotic system controller, for example. Further details concerning the slip ring assembly 1640 and associated connectors may be found in U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 13/803,086, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2014/0263541, and U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/019,196 which have each been herein incorporated by reference in their respective entirety as well as in U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 13/800,067, entitled STAPLE CARTRIDGE TISSUE THICKNESS SENSOR SYSTEM, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2014/0263552, which is hereby incorporated by reference herein in its entirety. As also described in further detail in the aforementioned patent applications that have been incorporated by reference herein, the interchangeable surgical tool assembly 1000 can also comprise at least one sensor that is configured to detect the position of the switch drum 1630.

[0161] Referring again to FIG. 7, the chassis 1800 includes at least one, and preferably two, tapered attachment portions 1802 formed thereon that are adapted to be received within corresponding dovetail slots 507 formed within the distal end portion of the frame 506 of the handle assembly 500 as was discussed above. As can be further seen in FIG. 7, a shaft attachment lug 1605 is formed on the proximal end of the intermediate firing shaft 1602. As will be discussed in further detail below, when the interchangeable surgical tool assembly 1000 is coupled to the handle assembly 500, the shaft attachment lug 1605 is received in a firing shaft attachment cradle 542 that is formed in the distal end of the longitudinal drive member 540. See FIG. 3.

[0162] Various interchangeable surgical tool assemblies employ a latch system 1810 for removably coupling the interchangeable surgical tool assembly 1000 to the frame 506 of the handle assembly 500. As can be seen in FIG. 7, for example, in at least one form, the latch

system 1810 includes a lock member or lock yoke 1812 that is movably coupled to the chassis 1800. In the illustrated embodiment, for example, the lock yoke 1812 has a U-shape with two spaced downwardly extending legs 1814. The legs 1814 each have a pivot lug (not shown) formed thereon that are adapted to be received in corresponding holes 1816 formed in the chassis 1800. Such arrangement facilitates pivotal attachment of the lock yoke 1812 to the chassis 1800. The lock yoke 1812 may include two proximally protruding lock lugs 1818 that are configured for releasable engagement with corresponding lock detents or grooves 509 in the distal end of the frame 506 of the handle assembly 500. See FIG. 3. In various forms, the lock yoke 1812 is biased in the proximal direction by a spring or biasing member 1819. Actuation of the lock yoke 1812 may be accomplished by a latch button 1820 that is slidably mounted on a latch actuator assembly 1822 that is mounted to the chassis 1800. The latch button 1820 may be biased in a proximal direction relative to the lock yoke 1812. The lock yoke 1812 may be moved to an unlocked position by biasing the latch button 1820 in the distal direction which also causes the lock yoke 1812 to pivot out of retaining engagement with the distal end of the frame 506. When the lock yoke 1812 is in “retaining engagement” with the distal end of the frame 506, the lock lugs 1818 are retainingly seated within the corresponding lock detents or grooves 509 in the distal end of the frame 506.

[0163] In the illustrated arrangement, the lock yoke 1812 includes at least one and preferably two lock hooks 1824 that are adapted to contact corresponding lock lug portions 1426 that are formed on the closure shuttle 1420. When the closure shuttle 1420 is in an unactuated position, the lock yoke 1812 may be pivoted in a distal direction to unlock the interchangeable surgical tool assembly 1000 from the handle assembly 500. When in that position, the lock hooks 1824 do not contact the lock lug portions 1426 on the closure shuttle 1420. However, when the closure shuttle 1420 is moved to an actuated position, the lock yoke 1812 is prevented from being pivoted to an unlocked position. Stated another way, if the clinician were to attempt to pivot the lock yoke 1812 to an unlocked position or, for example, the lock yoke 1812 was inadvertently bumped or contacted in a manner that might otherwise cause it to pivot distally, the lock hooks 1824 on the lock yoke 1812 will contact the lock lugs 1426 on the closure shuttle 1420 and prevent movement of the lock yoke 1812 to an unlocked position.

[0164] Still referring to FIG. 10, the knife bar 1610 may comprise a laminated beam structure that includes at least two beam layers. Such beam layers may comprise, for example, stainless

steel bands that are interconnected by, for example, welding or pinning together at their proximal ends and/or at other locations along their length. In alternative embodiments, the distal ends of the bands are not connected together to allow the laminates or bands to splay relative to each other when the end effector is articulated. Such arrangement permits the knife bar 1610 to be sufficiently flexible to accommodate articulation of the end effector. Various laminated knife bar arrangements are disclosed in U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/019,245. As can also be seen in FIG. 10, a middle support member 1614 is employed to provide lateral support to the knife bar 1610 as it flexes to accommodate articulation of the surgical end effector 1100. Further details concerning the middle support member and alternative knife bar support arrangements are disclosed in U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/019,245. As can also be seen in FIG. 10, a firing member or knife member 1620 is attached to the distal end of the knife bar 1610.

[0165] FIG. 11 illustrates one form of a firing member 1660 that may be employed with the interchangeable tool assembly 1000. In one exemplary form, the firing member 1660 comprises a body portion 1662 that includes a proximally extending connector member 1663 that is configured to be received in a correspondingly shaped connector opening 1614 in the distal end of the knife bar 1610. See FIG. 10. The connector 1663 may be retained within the connector opening 1614 by friction and/or welding or suitable adhesive, etc. The body portion 1662 protrudes through an elongate slot 1104 in the elongate channel 1102 and terminates in a foot member 1664 that extends laterally on each side of the body portion 1662. As the firing member 1660 is driven distally through the surgical staple cartridge 1110, the foot member 1664 rides within a passage 1105 in the elongate channel 1102 that is located under the surgical staple cartridge 1110. As can be seen in FIG. 11, one form of the firing member 1660 may further include laterally protruding central tabs, pins or retainer features 1680. As the firing member 1660 is driven distally through the surgical staple cartridge 1110, the central retainer features 1680 ride on the inner surface 1106 of the elongate channel 1102. The body portion 1662 of the firing member 1660 further includes a tissue cutting edge or feature 1666 that is disposed between a distally protruding hook feature 1665 and a distally protruding top nose portion 1670. As can be further seen in FIG. 11, the firing member 1660 may further include two laterally extending top tabs, pins or anvil engagement features 1665. As the firing member 1660 is driven distally, a top portion of the body 1662 extends through a centrally disposed anvil slot 1138 and

the top anvil engagement features 1672 ride on corresponding ledges 1136 formed on each side of the anvil slot 1134. See FIGS. 13 and 14.

[0166] Returning to FIG. 10, the firing member 1660 is configured to operably interface with a sled assembly 1120 that is operably supported within the body 1111 of the surgical staple cartridge 1110. The sled assembly 1120 is slidably displaceable within the surgical staple cartridge body 1111 from a proximal starting position adjacent the proximal end 1112 of the cartridge body 1111 to an ending position adjacent a distal end 1113 of the cartridge body 1111. The cartridge body 1111 operably supports therein a plurality of staple drivers (not shown) that are aligned in rows on each side of a centrally disposed slot 1114. The centrally disposed slot 1114 enables the firing member 1660 to pass therethrough and cut the tissue that is clamped between the anvil 1130 and the staple cartridge 1110. The drivers are associated with corresponding pockets 1116 that open through the upper deck surface 1115 of the cartridge body. Each of the staple drivers supports one or more surgical staple or fastener (not shown) thereon. The sled assembly 1120 includes a plurality of sloped or wedge-shaped cams 1122 wherein each cam 1122 corresponds to a particular line of fasteners or drivers located on a side of the slot 1114. In the illustrated example, one cam 1122 is aligned with one line of “double” drivers that each support two staples or fasteners thereon and another cam 1122 is aligned with another line of “single” drivers on the same side of the slot 1114 that each operably support a single surgical staple or fastener thereon. Thus, in the illustrated example, when the surgical staple cartridge 1110 is “fired”, there will be three lines of staples on each lateral side of the tissue cut line. However, other cartridge and driver configurations could also be employed to fire other staple/fastener arrangements. The sled assembly 1120 has a central body portion 1124 that is configured to be engaged by the hook portion 1665 of the firing member 1660. Thus, when the firing member 1660 is fired or driven distally, the firing member 1660 drives the sled assembly 1120 distally as well. As the firing member 1660 moves distally through the cartridge 1110, the tissue cutting feature 1666 cuts the tissue that is clamped between the anvil assembly 1130 and the cartridge 1110 and the sled assembly 1120 drives the drivers upwardly in the cartridge which drive the corresponding staples or fasteners into forming contact with the anvil assembly 1130.

[0167] In those embodiments wherein the firing member includes a tissue cutting surface, it may be desirable for the elongate shaft assembly to be configured in such a way so as to prevent the inadvertent advancement of the firing member unless an unspent staple cartridge is properly

supported in the elongate channel 1102 of the surgical end effector 1100. If, for example, no staple cartridge is present at all and the firing member is distally advanced through the end effector, the tissue would be severed, but not stapled. Similarly, if a spent staple cartridge (i.e., a staple cartridge wherein at least some of the staples have already been fired therefrom) is present in the end effector and the firing member is advanced, the tissue would be severed, but may not be completely stapled, if at all. It will be appreciated that such occurrences could lead to undesirable catastrophic results during the surgical procedure. U.S. Patent No. 6,988,649 entitled SURGICAL STAPLING INSTRUMENT HAVING A SPENT CARTRIDGE LOCKOUT, U.S. Patent No. 7,044,352 entitled SURGICAL STAPLING INSTRUMENT HAVING A SINGLE LOCKOUT MECHANISM FOR PREVENTION OF FIRING, and U.S. Patent No. 7,380,695 entitled SURGICAL STAPLING INSTRUMENT HAVING A SINGLE LOCKOUT MECHANISM FOR PREVENTION OF FIRING, and U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 14/742,933, entitled SURGICAL STAPLING INSTRUMENTS WITH LOCKOUT ARRANGEMENTS FOR PREVENTING FIRING SYSTEM ACTUATION WHEN A CARTRIDGE IS SPENT OR MISSING each disclose various firing member lockout arrangements. Each of those references is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety herein.

[0168] An “unfired”, “unspent”, “fresh” or “new” cartridge 1110 means herein that the cartridge 1110 has all of its fasteners in their “ready-to-be-fired positions”. When in that position, the sled assembly 1120 is located in its starting position. The new cartridge 1110 is seated within the elongate channel 1102 and may be retained therein by snap features on the cartridge body that are configured to retainingly engage corresponding portions of the elongate channel 1102. FIGS. 15 and 18 illustrate a portion of the surgical end effector 1100 with a new or unfired surgical staple cartridge 1110 seated therein. As can be seen in those Figures, the sled assembly 1120 is in the starting position. To prevent the firing system from being activated and, more precisely, to prevent the firing member 1660 from being distally driven through the end effector 1110 unless an unfired or new surgical staple cartridge has been properly seated within the elongate channel 1102, the illustrated interchangeable surgical tool assembly 1000 employs a firing member lockout system generally designated as 1650.

[0169] Referring now to FIGS. 10 and 15-19, in one form, the firing member lockout system 1650 includes movable lock member 1652 that is configured to retainingly engage the firing member 1660 when a surgical staple cartridge 1110 is not properly seated within the elongate

channel 1102. The lock member 1652 comprises at least one laterally moving locking portion 1654 that is configured to retainingly engage a corresponding portion of the firing member when the sled assembly 1120 is not present within the cartridge 1110 in its starting position. In the illustrated arrangement, the lock member 1652 employs two laterally moving locking portions 1654 wherein each locking portion 1654 engages a laterally extending portion of the firing member 1660.

[0170] In the illustrated embodiment, the lock member 1652 comprises a generally U-shaped spring member wherein each laterally movable leg or locking portion 1654 extends from a central spring portion 1653 and is configured to move in lateral directions represented by “L” in FIGS. 18 and 19. It will be appreciated that the term “lateral directions” refers to directions that are transverse to the shaft axis SA. The spring or lock member 1652 may be fabricated from high strength spring steel or similar material. The central spring portion 1653 may be seated within a slot 1236 in the end effector mounting assembly 1230. See FIG. 10. As can be seen in FIGS. 15-17, each of the laterally movable legs or locking portions 1654 has a distal end 1656 with a locking window 1658 therein. When the locking member 1652 is in a locked position, the central retainer feature 1680 on each lateral side extends into the corresponding locking window 1658 to retainingly prevent the firing member from being distally axially advanced.

[0171] Operation of the firing member lock out system will be explained with reference to FIGS. 15-19. FIGS. 15 and 18 illustrate a portion of the surgical end effector 1100 with a new unfired cartridge 1110 properly installed therein. As can be seen in those Figures, the sled assembly 1120 includes an unlocking feature 1126 that corresponds to each of the laterally movable locking portion 1654. In the illustrated arrangement, an unlocking feature 1126 is provided on or extends proximally from each of the central wedge-shaped cams 1122. In alternative arrangements, the unlocking feature 1126 may comprise a proximally protruding portion of the corresponding wedge-shaped cam 1122. As can be seen in FIG. 18, when the sled assembly 1120 is in its starting position, the unlocking features 1124 engage and bias the corresponding locking portions 1654 laterally in a direction that is transverse to the shaft axis SA. When the locking portions 1654 are in those unlocked orientations, the central retainer features 1680 are not in retaining engagement with their corresponding locking window 1658. When in those orientations, the firing member 1660 may be distally axially advanced (fired). However, when a cartridge is not present in the elongate channel 1102 or the sled assembly has

been moved out of its starting position (meaning the cartridge is partially or completely fired), the locking portions 1654 spring laterally into retaining engagement with the firing member 1660. When in that position as illustrated in FIG. 19, the firing member 1660 cannot be moved distally.

[0172] FIGS. 16 and 17 illustrate the retraction of the firing member 1660 back to the starting position after firing the cartridge 1110 and driving the sled assembly 1120 distally. FIG. 16 depicts the initial reengagement of the retaining feature 1680 into its corresponding locking window 1658. FIG. 17 illustrates the retaining feature in its locked position when the firing member 1660 has been fully retracted back to its starting position. To assist in the lateral displacement of the locking portions 1654 when they are each initially contacted by the proximally moving retaining features 1680, each of the retaining features 1680 may be provided with a proximally facing, laterally tapered end portion. Such lockout system prevents actuation of the firing member 1660 when a new unfired cartridge is not present or when a new unfired cartridge is present, but has not been properly seated in the elongate channel 1102. In addition, the lockout system may prevent the clinician from distally advancing the firing member in the case where a spent or partially fired cartridge has been inadvertently properly seated within the elongate channel. Another advantage that may be provided by the lockout system 1650 is that, unlike other firing member lock out arrangements that require movement of the firing member into and out of alignment with the corresponding slots/passages in the staple cartridge, the firing member 1660 remains in alignment with the cartridge passages while in the locked and unlocked position. The locking portions 1654 are designed to move laterally into and out of engagement with corresponding sides of the firing member. Such lateral movement of the locking portions or portion is distinguishable from other locking arrangements that move in vertical directions to engage and disengage portions of the firing member.

[0173] Returning to FIGS. 13 and 14, in one form, the anvil 1130 includes an elongated anvil body portion 1132 and a proximal anvil mounting portion 1150. The elongated anvil body portion 1132 includes an outer surface 1134 that defines two downwardly extending tissue stop members 1136 that are adjacent to the proximal anvil mounting portion 1150. The elongated anvil body portion 1132 also includes an underside 1135 that defines an elongate anvil slot 1138. In the illustrated arrangement shown in FIG. 14, the anvil slot 1138 is centrally disposed in the underside 1135. The underside 1135 includes three rows 1140, 1141, 1142 of staple forming

pockets 1143, 1144 and 1145 located on each side of the anvil slot 1138. Adjacent each side of the anvil slot 1138 are two elongate anvil passages 1146. Each passage 1146 has a proximal ramp portion 1148. See FIG. 13. As the firing member 1660 is advanced distally, the top anvil engagement features 1632 initially enter the corresponding proximal ramp portions 1148 and into the corresponding elongate anvil passages 1146.

[0174] Turning to FIGS. 12 and 13, the anvil slot 1138, as well as the proximal ramp portion 1148, extend into the anvil mounting portion 1150. Stated another way, the anvil slot 1138 divides or bifurcates the anvil mounting portion 1150 into two anvil attachment flanges 1151. The anvil attachment flanges 1151 are coupled together at their proximal ends by a connection bridge 1153. The connection bridge 1153 serves to provide support to the anvil attachment flanges 1151 and can serve to make the anvil mounting portion 1150 more rigid than the mounting portions of other anvil arrangements wherein the anvil attachment flanges are not connected at their proximal ends. As can also be seen in FIGS. 12 and 14, the anvil slot 1138 has a wide portion 1139 to accommodate the top portion and top anvil engagement features 1632 of the firing member 1660.

[0175] As can be seen in FIGS. 13 and 20-24, each of the anvil attachment flanges 1151 includes a transverse mounting hole 1156 that is configured to receive a pivot pin 1158 (FIGS. 10 and 20) therethrough. The anvil mounting portion 1150 is pivotally pinned to the proximal end 1103 of the elongate channel 1102 by the pivot pin 1158 which extends through mounting holes 1107 in the proximal end 1103 of the elongate channel 1102 and the mounting hole 1156 in anvil mounting portion 1150. Such arrangement serves to pivotally affix the anvil 1130 to the elongate channel 1102 for selective pivotal travel about a fixed anvil axis A-A which is transverse to the shaft axis SA. See FIG. 5. The anvil mounting portion 1150 also includes a cam surface 1152 that extends from a centralized firing member parking area 1154 to the outer surface 1134 of the anvil body portion 1132.

[0176] In the illustrated arrangement, the anvil 1130 is moved between an open position and closed positions by axially advancing and retracting the distal closure tube segment 1430. As will be discussed in further detail below, a distal end portion of the distal closure tube segment 1430 has an internal cam surface formed thereon that is configured to cammingly engage the cam surface 1552 or cam surfaces formed on the anvil mounting portion 1150. FIG. 22 illustrates a cam surface 1152a formed on the anvil mounting portion 1150 so as to establish a

single contact path 1155a with the internal cam surface 1444, for example, on the distal closure tube segment 1430. FIG. 23 illustrates a cam surface 1152b that is configured relative to the internal cam surface 1444 on the distal closure tube segment to establish two separate and distinct arcuate contact paths 1155b between the cam surface 1152 on the anvil mounting portion 1150 and internal cam surface 1444 on the distal closure tube segment 1430. In addition to other potential advantages discussed herein, such arrangement may serve to better distribute the closure forces from the distal closure tube segment 1430 to the anvil 1130. FIG. 24 illustrates a cam surface 1152c that is configured relative to the internal cam surface 1444 of the distal closure tube segment 1430 to establish three distinct zones of contact 1155c and 1155d between the cam surfaces on the anvil mounting portion 1150 and the distal closure tube segment 1430. The zones 1155c, 1155d establish larger areas of camming contact between the cam surface or cam surfaces on the distal closure tube segment 1430 and the anvil mounting portion 1150 and may serve to better distribute the closure forces to the anvil 1130.

[0177] As the distal closure tube segment 1430 cammingly engages the anvil mounting portion 1150 of the anvil 1130, the anvil 1130 is pivoted about the anvil axis AA which results in the pivotal movement of the distal end of the end 1133 of elongate anvil body portion 1132 toward the surgical staple cartridge 1110 and distal end 1105 of the elongate channel 1102. As the anvil body portion 1132 begins to pivot, it contacts the tissue that is to be cut and stapled which is now positioned between the underside 1135 of the elongate anvil body portion 1132 and the deck 1116 of the surgical staple cartridge 1110. As the anvil body portion 1132 is compressed onto the tissue, the anvil 1130 may experience considerable amounts of resistive forces. These resistive forces are overcome as the distal closure tube 1430 continues its distal advancement. However, depending upon their magnitudes and points of application to the anvil body portion 1132, these resistive forces could tend to cause portions of the anvil 1130 to flex which may generally be undesirable. For example, such flexure may cause misalignment between the firing member 1660 and the passages 1148, 1146 within the anvil 1130. In instances wherein the flexure is excessive, such flexure could significantly increase the amount of firing force required to fire the instrument (i.e., drive the firing member 1660 through the tissue from its starting to ending position). Such excessive firing force may result in damage to the end effector, and/or the firing member, and/or the knife bar, and/or the firing drive system components, etc. Thus, it may be advantageous for the anvil to be constructed so as to resist such flexure.

[0178] FIGS. 25-27 illustrate an alternative anvil embodiment that includes features that may improve the stiffness of the anvil body and its resistance to flexure forces that may be generated during the closing and/or firing processes. The anvil 1130' may otherwise be identical in construction to the anvil 1130 described above except for the differences discussed herein. As can be seen in those Figures, the anvil 1130' has an elongate anvil body 1132' that has an upper body portion 1165 that has an anvil cap 1170 attached thereto. In the embodiment depicted in FIGS. 25-27, the anvil cap 1170 is roughly rectangular in shape and has an outer cap perimeter 1172. The perimeter 1172 of the anvil cap 1170 is configured to be inserted through the correspondingly-shaped opening 1137 formed in the upper body portion 1165 and received on axially extending internal ledge portions 1139 formed therein. See FIG. 27. The internal ledge portions 1139 are configured to support the corresponding long sides 1177 of the anvil cap 1170. In an alternative embodiment, the anvil cap 1170 may be slide onto the internal ledges 1139 through an opening (not shown) in the distal end 1133 of the anvil body 1132'. In yet another embodiment, no internal ledge portions are provided. The anvil body 1132' and the anvil cap 1170 may be fabricated from suitable metal that is conducive to welding. A first weld 1178 may extend around the entire cap perimeter 1172 of the anvil cap 1170 or it may only be located along the long sides 1177 of the anvil cap 1170 and not the distal end 1173 and/or proximal end 1175 thereof. The first weld 1178 may be continuous or it may be discontinuous or intermittent. In those embodiments where the first weld 1178 is discontinuous or intermittent, the weld segments may be equally distributed along the long sides 1177 of the anvil cap 1170 or the weld segments may be more densely spaced closer to the distal ends of the long sides 1177 or more densely spaced closer to the proximal ends of the long sides 1177. In still other arrangements, the weld segments may be more densely spaced in the center areas of the long sides 1177 of the anvil cap 1170.

[0179] FIGS. 28-30 illustrate an anvil cap 1170' that is configured to be "mechanically interlocked" to the anvil body 1132' as well as welded to the upper body portion 1165. In this embodiment, a plurality of retention formations 1182 are formed into the wall 1180 of the upper body portion 1165 that defines opening 1137. As used in this context, the term "mechanically interlocked" means that the anvil cap will remain affixed to the elongate anvil body regardless of the orientation of the elongate anvil body and without any additional retaining or fastening such as welding and/or adhesive, for example. The retention formations 1182 may protrude inwardly

into the opening 1137 from the opening wall 1180. The retention formations 1182 may be integrally formed into the wall 1180 or otherwise be attached thereto. The retention formations 1182 are designed to frictionally engage a corresponding portion of the anvil cap 1170' when it is installed in the opening 1137 to frictionally retain the anvil cap 1170' therein. In the illustrated embodiment, the retention formations 1182 protrude inwardly into the opening 1137 and are configured to be frictionally received within a correspondingly shaped engagement area 1184 formed in the outer perimeter 1172' of the anvil cap 1170'. In the illustrated arrangement, the retention formations 1182 only correspond to the long sides 1177' of the anvil cap 1170' and are not provided in the portions of the wall 1180 that correspond to the distal end 1173 or proximal end 1175 of the anvil cap 1170'. In alternative arrangements, the retention formations 1182 may also be provided in the portions of the wall 1180 that correspond to the distal end 1173 and proximal end 1175 of the anvil cap 1170' as well as the long sides 1177' thereof. In still other arrangements, the retention formations 1182 may only be provided in the portions of the wall 1180 that correspond to one or both of the distal and proximal ends 1173, 1175 of the anvil cap 1170'. In still other arrangements, the retention formations 1182 may be provided in the portions of the wall 1180 corresponding to the long sides 1177' and only one of the proximal and distal ends 1173, 1175 of the anvil cap 1170'. It will be further understood that the retention protrusions in all of the foregoing embodiments may be alternatively formed on the anvil cap with the engagement areas being formed in the elongate anvil body.

[0180] In the embodiment illustrated in FIGS. 28-30, the retention formations 1182 are equally spaced or equally distributed along the wall portions 1180 that correspond to the long sides 1177' of the anvil cap 1170'. In alternative embodiments, the retention formations 1182 may be more densely spaced closer to the distal ends of the long sides 1177' or more densely spaced closer to the proximal ends of the long sides 1177'. Stated another way, the spacing between those retention formations adjacent the distal end, the proximal end or both the distal and proximal ends may be less than the spacing of the formations located in the central portion of the anvil cap 1170'. In still other arrangements, the retention formations 1182 may be more densely spaced in the center areas of the long sides 1177' of the anvil cap 1170'. Also in alternative embodiments, the correspondingly shaped engagement areas 1184 may not be provided in the outer perimeter 1172' or in portions of the outer perimeter 1172' of the anvil cap 1170'. In other embodiments, the retention formations and correspondingly shaped engagement

areas may be provided with different shapes and sizes. In alternative arrangements, the retention formations may be sized relative to the engagement areas so that there is no interference fit therebetween. In such arrangements, the anvil cap may be retained in position by welding, adhesive, etc.

[0181] In the illustrated example, a weld 1178' may extend around the entire perimeter 1172' of the anvil cap 1170' or the weld 1178' may only be located along the long sides 1177' of the anvil cap 1170' and not the distal end 1173 and/or proximal end 1175 thereof. The weld 1178' may be continuous or it may be discontinuous or intermittent. In those embodiments where the weld 1178' is discontinuous or intermittent, the weld segments may be equally distributed along the long sides 1177' of the anvil cap 1170' or the weld segments may be more densely spaced closer to the distal ends of the long sides 1177' or more densely spaced closer to the proximal ends of the long sides 1177'. In still other arrangements, the weld segments may be more densely spaced in the center areas of the long sides 1177' of the anvil cap 1170'.

[0182] FIGS. 31 and 32 illustrate another anvil arrangement 1130'' that is has an anvil cap 1170'' attached thereto. In the depicted example, the anvil cap 1170'' is roughly rectangular in shape and has an outer cap perimeter 1172''. The outer cap perimeter 1172'' is configured to be inserted through the correspondingly-shaped opening 1137'' in upper body portion 1165 of the anvil body 1132'' and received on axially extending internal ledge portions 1139'' and 1190'' formed therein. See FIG. 32. The ledge portions 1139'' and 1190'' are configured to support the corresponding long sides 1177'' of the anvil cap 1170''. In an alternative embodiment, the anvil cap 1170'' may be slid onto the internal ledges 1139'' and 1190'' through an opening (not shown) in the distal end 1133'' of the anvil body 1132''. The anvil body 1132'' and the anvil cap 1170'' may be fabricated from metal material that is conducive to welding. A first weld 1178'' may extend around the entire perimeter 1172'' of the anvil cap 1170'' or it may only be located along the long sides 1177'' of the anvil cap 1170'' and not the distal end 1173'' and/or proximal end (not shown) thereof. The weld 1178'' may be continuous or it may be discontinuous or intermittent. It will be appreciated that the continuous weld embodiment has more weld surface area due to the irregularly shape perimeter of the anvil cap 1170'' as compared to the embodiments with a straight perimeter sides such as the anvil caps shown in FIG. 26, for example. In those embodiments where the weld 1178'' is discontinuous or intermittent, the weld segments may be equally distributed along the long sides 1177'' of the anvil cap 1170'' or the

weld segments may be more densely spaced closer to the distal ends of the long sides 1177" or more densely spaced closer to the proximal ends of the long sides 1177". In still other arrangements, the weld segments may be more densely spaced in the center areas of the long sides 1177" of the anvil cap 1170".

[0183] Still referring to FIGS. 31 and 32, the anvil cap 1170" may be additionally welded to the anvil body 1132" by a plurality of second discrete "deep" welds 1192". For example, each weld 1192" may be placed at the bottom of a corresponding hole or opening 1194" provided through the anvil cap 1170" so that a discrete weld 1192" may be formed along the portion of the anvil body 1132" between the ledges 1190" and 1139". See FIG. 32. The welds 1192" may be equally distributed along the long sides 1177" of the anvil cap 1170" or the welds 1192" may be more densely spaced closer to the distal ends of the long sides 1177" or more densely spaced closer to the proximal ends of the long sides 1177". In still other arrangements, the welds 1192" may be more densely spaced in the center areas of the long sides 1177" of the anvil cap 1170".

[0184] FIG. 33 illustrates another anvil cap 1170'" that is configured to be mechanically interlocked to the anvil body 1132'" as well as welded to the upper body portion 1165. In this embodiment, a "tongue-in-groove" arrangement is employed along each long side 1177'" of the anvil cap 1170'". In particular, a laterally extending continuous or intermittent tab 1195'" protrudes from each of the long sides 1177'" of the anvil cap 1170'". Each tab 1195" corresponds to an axial slot 1197'" formed in the anvil body 1132'". The anvil cap 1170'" is slid in from an opening (not shown) in the distal end of the anvil body 1132'" to "mechanically" affix the anvil cap to the anvil body 1132'". The tabs 1195'" and slots 1197'" may be sized relative to each other to establish a sliding frictional fit therebetween. In addition, the anvil cap 1170'" may be welded to the anvil body 1132'". The anvil body 1132'" and the anvil cap 1170'" may be fabricated from metal that is conducive to welding. The weld 1178'" may extend around the entire perimeter 1172'" of the anvil cap 1170'" or it may only be located along the long sides 1177'" of the anvil cap 1170'". The weld 1178'" may be continuous or it may be discontinuous or intermittent. In those embodiments where the weld 1178'" is discontinuous or intermittent, the weld segments may be equally distributed along the long sides 1177'" of the anvil cap 1170'" or the weld segments may be more densely spaced closer to the distal ends of the long sides 1177'" or more densely spaced closer to the proximal ends of the long sides

1177'''. In still other arrangements, the weld segments may be more densely spaced in the center areas of the long sides 1177''' of the anvil cap 1170'''.

[0185] The anvil embodiments described herein with anvil caps may provide several advantages. One advantage for example, may make the anvil and firing member assembly process easier. That is, the firing member may be installed through the opening in the anvil body while the anvil is attached to the elongate channel. Another advantage is that the upper cap may improve the anvil's stiffness and resistance to the above-mentioned flexure forces that may be experienced when clamping tissue. By resisting such flexure, the frictional forces normally encountered by the firing member 1660 may be reduced. Thus, the amount of firing force required to drive the firing member from its starting to ending position in the surgical staple cartridge may also be reduced.

[0186] As indicated above, as the anvil 1130 begins to pivot, the anvil body 1132 contacts the tissue that is to be cut and stapled which is positioned between the undersurface of the elongate anvil body 1132 and the deck of the surgical staple cartridge 1110. As the anvil body 1132 is compressed onto the tissue, the anvil 1130 may experience considerable amounts of resistive forces. To continue the closure process, these resistive forces must be overcome by the distal closure tube segment 1430 as it cammingly contacts the anvil mounting portion 1150. These resistive forces may be generally applied to the distal closure tube segment 1430 in the vertical directions V which, if excessive, could conceivably cause the distal closure tube segment 1430 to expand or elongate in the vertical direction (distance ID in FIG. 31 may increase). If the distal closure tube 1430 elongates in the vertical directions, the distal closure tube segment 1430 may not be able to effectively close the anvil 1130 and retain the anvil 1130 in the fully closed position. If that condition occurs, the firing member 1660 may encounter dramatically higher resistance which will then require higher firing forces to distally advance the firing member.

[0187] FIGS. 34 and 35 illustrate one form of a closure member for applying a closure motion to a movable jaw of a surgical instrument. In the illustrated arrangement, the closure member comprises, for example, a distal closure tube segment 1430 that has a closure body portion 1470. As discussed above, one form of the interchangeable surgical tool assembly 1000 is configured so as to facilitate selective articulation of the surgical end effector 1100. To facilitate such articulation, the distal closure tube segment 1430 is movably coupled to the proximal closure tube segment 1410 by means of an upper tang 1434 and a lower tang 1436 and upper and lower

double pivot links 1220 and 1222. See FIG. 10. In one arrangement, the distal closure tube segment 1430 may be machined or otherwise formed from round bar stock manufactured from, for example, suitable metal material. In the illustrated arrangement, the closure body 1470 has an outer surface 1431 and an inner surface 1433 that defines an upper wall portion 1440 that has an upper wall cross-sectional thickness UWT and a lower wall portion 1442 that has a lower wall thickness LWT. The upper wall portion 1440 is located above the shaft axis SA and the lower wall portion 1442 is located below the shaft axis SA. The distal end 1441 of the upper wall portion 1440 has an internal cam surface 1444 formed thereon at a cam angle Θ . Also in the illustrated embodiment, $UWT > LWT$ which serves to provide a longer internal cam surface 1444 than might otherwise be attainable if the distal closure tube segment has a uniform wall thickness. A long internal cam surface may be advantageous for transferring the closure forces to the cam surface(s) on the anvil mounting portion 1150. As can also be seen in FIGS. 34 and 35, the transitional sidewalls 1446, 1448 that are located on each side of the shaft axis SA between the upper wall portion 1440 and the lower wall portion 1442 comprise generally flat, vertically extending internal sidewall surfaces 1451, 1453 that may be generally parallel to each other. The transitional sidewalls 1446, 1448 each have a wall thickness that transitions from the upper wall thickness to the lower wall thickness.

[0188] In the illustrated arrangement, the distal closure tube segment 1430 also includes positive jaw or anvil opening features 1462 that correspond to each of the sidewalls 1446 and 1448 and protrude inwardly therefrom. As can be seen in FIGS. 34 and 35, the anvil opening features 1462 are formed on a lateral mounting body 1460 that sized to be received within a correspondingly-shaped cavity 1447, 1449 machined or otherwise formed in the transitional sidewalls 1446, 1448 adjacent the distal end 1438 of the distal closure tube segment 1430. The positive anvil opening features 1462 extend inwardly through corresponding openings 1450, 1452 in the transitional sidewalls 1446, 1448. In the illustrated arrangement, the lateral mounting bodies 1460 are welded to the distal closure tube segment 1430 with welds 1454. In addition to the welds or in alternative to the welds, the lateral mounting bodies 1460 may be retained in place with a mechanical/frictional fit, tongue-in-groove arrangements, adhesive, etc.

[0189] FIGS. 36-41 illustrate one example of the use of the distal closure tube segment 1430 to move the anvil 1130 from a fully closed position to a fully open position. FIGS. 36 and 39 illustrate the position of the distal closure tube segment 1430 and, more particularly the position

of one of the positive anvil opening features 1462 when the distal closure tube segment 1430 is in the fully closed position. In the illustrated example, an anvil opening ramp 1162 is formed on the underside of each of the anvil attachment flanges 1151. When the anvil 1130 and the distal closure tube segment 1430 are in their fully closed positions shown in FIG. 36, each of the positive anvil opening features 1462 is located in a cavity 1164 that is established between the anvil opening ramps 1162 and the bottom portion of the elongate channel 1102. When in that position, the positive anvil opening features 1462 do not contact the anvil mounting portion 1150 or at least do not apply any significant opening motions or forces thereto. FIGS. 37 and 40 illustrate the positions of the anvil 1130 and the distal closure tube segment 1430 upon the initial application of an opening motion in the proximal direction PD to the distal closure tube segment 1430. As can be seen in FIG. 37, the positive jaw opening features 1462 have initially contacted the anvil opening ramps 1164 to cause the anvil 1130 to start pivoting to an open position. In the illustrated arrangement, each of the positive anvil opening features 1462 has a ramped or rounded distal end 1463 to facilitate better camming contact with the corresponding anvil opening ramp 1162. In FIGS. 38 and 41, the distal closure tube segment 1430 has been retracted back to its fully retracted position which has caused the positive anvil opening features 1462 to be driven to the distal ends of the anvil opening ramps 1162 which causes the anvil 1130 to be pivoted to its fully open position as shown therein. Other embodiments may not employ the positive jaw opening features, but may rely on springs or other biasing arrangements to bias the anvil to the open position when the distal closure tube segment has been retracted to its proximal-most starting position.

[0190] FIGS. 42 and 43 illustrate another closure member for applying closure motions to a movable jaw of a surgical instrument. In this example, the closure member comprises a distal closure tube segment 1430' that may be similar to the distal closure tube segment 1430 without the positive anvil opening features. The distal closure tube segment 1430' has a closure body 1470' that has an outer surface 1440' and an inner surface 1433' that define an upper wall portion 1440' and a lower wall portion 1442'. As indicated above, it may be desirable to employ as large of internal camming surface 1444' as possible in order to maximize the camming contact with the camming surface on the anvil mounting portion 1150 to thereby effectively transfer the closure forces thereto. Thus, the upper wall portion 1440' of the distal closure tube segment 1430' may be provided with the thickest wall thickness UWT and the lower portion of the distal

closure tube segment 1430' may have the thinnest wall thickness LWT. For reference purposes, the UWT and LWT are measured along a common reference line that extends through a center axis or point C of the distal closure tube segment 1430'. Thus, where UWT is diametrically opposite from LWT, $UWT > LWT$. Such wall thickness arrangements facilitate formation of a longer internal camming surface 1444'.

[0191] As can be seen in FIG. 43, the distal closure tube segment 1430' has an outer surface 1431' that has circular cross-sectional shape. The distal closure tube segment 1430' may be machined from solid bar stock. In the illustrated example, internal radius R_1 from a first center axis A_{inner} extends to the inner surface 1433' and the outer radius R_2 from a second center axis A_{outer} extends to the outer surface 1431'. In the illustrated example, axis A_{inner} is offset by distance OR from axis A_{outer} and $R_2 > R_1$.

[0192] FIG. 44 illustrates another closure member for applying closure motions to a movable jaw of a surgical instrument. In this example, the closure member comprises a distal closure tube segment 1430'' that has a closure body 1470''. The closure body 1470'' has an outer surface 1431' and an inner surface 1433'' that define an upper wall portion 1440'' that has an upper wall thickness UWT and a lower wall portion 1442'' that has a lower wall thickness LWT and two sidewall portions 1435' that each has a sidewall thickness SWT. In the illustrated example, $UWT > LWT$. In addition, $SWT > UWT$. Thus, $SWT > UWT > LWT$. In the illustrated arrangement, sidewall portions 1435' have the same sidewall thickness SWT. In other arrangements, the sidewall portions 1435' may have different thicknesses. As can be seen in FIG. 44, each sidewall portion 1435' defines an internal, vertically extending internal surface portion 1437'. In the illustrated embodiment, the vertically extending internal surface portions are approximately parallel to each other. Such thicker vertical sidewall portions 1435' may help to prevent or at least minimize the vertical elongation of the distal closure tube segment 1430'' when in use.

[0193] In the example depicted in FIG. 45, R_1 and R_2 are measured from a common center point or center axis C and $R_1 > R_2$. Each of the sidewall portions 1435'' of the closure body portion 1470''' of the distal closure tube segment 1430''' that extend between the upper portion 1431'' and 1433'' have a sidewall thickness SWT that is approximately equal to the UWT at points along a horizontal reference line HR. The horizontal reference line HR is perpendicular to a vertical reference line VR that extends through the center axis C and along which the UWT and

LWT may be measured and compared. Thus, $SWT = UWT$. In other examples, SWT, when measured along the horizontal reference line HR may be slightly less than the UWT. The SWT may continue to decrease until the side wall portions 1435' transition into the lower portion 1433' that has a constant lower wall thickness LWT. Thus, the inner sidewalls 1437'' extend at an angle A_2 when measured from a corresponding vertical reference axis VR' that is perpendicular to the horizontal reference axis HR and parallel to vertical reference axis VR.

[0194] FIG. 46 illustrates another closure member for applying closure motions to a movable jaw of a surgical instrument. In this example, the closure member comprises a distal closure tube segment 1430'' that has a closure body 1470'' that has a round outer surface 1431'' and a rectangular shaped internal passage 1439 extending therethrough. The outer surface 1431'' is located a distance R from the geometric center point or center axis C. When measured along a vertical reference axis VR that extends through the center point or center axis C as shown, the upper wall thickness UWT is equal to the lower wall thickness LWT. When measure along a horizontal reference axis HR that extends through the center point or center axis C and which is perpendicular to the vertical reference axis VR, the thicknesses SWT of the sidewall portions 1437'' are greater than the upper wall and lower wall thicknesses UWT and LWT. Thus, SWT is greater than UWT and LWT. Stated another way, the portion of the distal closure tube segment 1430'' located above the horizontal reference line HR is a mirror image of the portion of the distal closure tube segment 1430'' located below the horizontal reference line HR. In this example, the side portions 1437'' are thicker than the upper and lower wall portions and may tend to prevent or minimize the tendency of the distal closure tube segment to elongate in the vertical directions. The internal camming surface may be formed on the distal end of the upper wall portion 1440''.

[0195] In the illustrated arrangement, the anvil 1130 is moved between open and closed positions by distally advancing the distal closure tube segment 1430. As can be seen in FIG. 41, when the anvil 1130 is in the fully open position, the distal ends 1163 of the anvil attachment flanges 1151 may extend above the deck surface 1116 of the staple cartridge 1110. When the closure process is commenced by distally advancing the distal closure tube segment in the distal direction DD, the distal ends 1163 of the anvil attachment flanges 1151 extend past the deck surface 1116 of the staple cartridge 1110 to thereby prevent infiltration of tissue therebetween which might hamper the closure process. See FIG. 40. Once the anvil 1130 has been moved to

the fully closed position by the distal closure tube segment 1430, the distal ends 1461 of the lateral mounting bodies on the distal closure tube segment 1430 further act as tissue stops to prevent tissue from infiltrating therebetween. See FIG. 41.

[0196] FIG. 47 depicts portion of a surgical end effector 110' that may be similar to the surgical end effector 110 of the interchangeable surgical tool assembly 100 of FIGS. 1 and 2. In the example illustrated in FIG. 47, the anvil 114 includes an elongate body portion 190 and an anvil mounting portion 192. The anvil mounting portion 192 comprises two spaced anvil mounting flanges 194 that protrude proximally from the elongate body portion 190. Each anvil mounting flange 194 has an outwardly extending trunnion 196 thereon. The trunnions 196 are each movably received within a corresponding kidney slot or elongated arcuate trunnion slot 197 that is provided in the elongate channel 112. When the anvil 114 is in a "fully opened" position, the trunnions 196 are generally located in the bottom portions 198 of the elongated arcuate trunnion slots 197. The anvil 114 can be moved to a closed position by distally advancing the distal closure tube segment 142 in the distal direction DD so that the end 148 of the distal closure tube segment 142 rides up a cam surface 193 that is formed on the anvil mounting portion 192 of the anvil 114. As the distal end 148 of the distal closure tube segment 142 is distally advanced along a cam surface 193 on the anvil mounting portion 192, the distal closure tube segment 142 causes the body portion 190 of the anvil 114 to pivot and move axially relative to the surgical staple cartridge 116. When the distal closure tube segment 142 reaches the end of its closure stroke, the distal end 148 of the distal closure tube segment 142 abuts/contacts an abrupt anvil ledge 191 and serves to position the anvil 114 so that the forming pockets (not shown) in the underside of the body portion 190 are properly aligned with the staples in the cartridge. The anvil ledge 191 is defined between the cam surface 193 on the anvil mounting portion 192 and the elongate anvil body portion 190. Stated another way, in this arrangement, the cam surface 193 does not extend to the outermost surface 195 of the anvil body 190. After the distal closure tube 142 has reached this fully extended position, any further application of closure motions/forces to the anvil 114, may cause damage to the anvil and/or the closure system components. As can be seen in FIG. 47, in this arrangement, the closure force F_H is parallel to the shaft axis SA. The distance between an axis or plane T_A passing through the centers of the trunnions 196 to the closure force vector F_H is represented as distance X_R . This distance X_R times the closure force F_H represents a closure moment C_M that is applied to the anvil 114.

[0197] FIGS. 48 and 49 illustrate the closure force configurations for an anvil 1130 of a surgical end effector 1100 of the interchangeable tool assembly 1000. As indicated above, the anvil trunnions 1158 are pivotally mounted within holes 1154 in the elongate channel 1102. Unlike the anvil 114 described above, the anvil 1130 does not move axially. Instead, the anvil 1130 is constrained to only pivot about the anvil axis AA. As the distal closure tube segment 1430 is advanced in the distal direction DD under the horizontal closure force F_{H1} , the interaction between the internal cam surface 1444 on the distal closure tube segment 1430 and the cam surface 1152 on the anvil mounting portion 1150 results in the distal closure tube segment 1430 experiencing a vertical closure force component V_F . The resultant force vector F_N experienced by the cam surface 1152 on the anvil mounting portion 1150 is “normal to” or perpendicular to the internal cam surface 1444. Angle Θ in FIGS. 48 and 49 represents the angle of the camming surface 1152 as well as the internal camming surface 1440 to the horizontal. The distance between this resultant force vector F_N and an axis or plane T_A that extends through the centers of the anvil trunnions 1158 is represented as moment arm M_A . This moment arm distance M_A times the resultant force vector F_N represents a closure moment C_{M1} that is applied to the anvil 1130. Thus, in applications wherein the horizontal closure forces $F_H = F_{H1}$, the actual amount of closure torque applied to anvil 1130 will be greater than the amount of closure torque applied to the anvil 114 because $M_A > X_R$ and therefore the closure moment applied to the anvil 1130 will be greater than the closure moment applied to the anvil 114. FIG. 49 also illustrates the resistive forces established by the tissue during the closure process. F_T represents the force generated by the tissue when the tissue is clamped between the anvil and the staple cartridge. This “counter” moment M_T that is applied to the anvil 1130 equals the distance X_T between the tissue force T_F and the axis or plane T_A that extends through the centers of the anvil trunnions 1158 times the tissue force T_F . Thus, in order to achieve a desired amount of anvil closure, C_{M1} must be greater than M_T .

[0198] Returning to the example depicted in FIG. 47, it can be seen that the firing bar 170 is attached to a firing member 174 that, when in a starting or unfired position, is located within the elongate channel 112 and, more particularly, is located completely distal to the distal closure tube segment 142 in a position wherein a top portion 175 of the firing member 174 is in contact with a portion of the anvil 114. Because the firing member 174 is located in a position wherein the top portion 175 thereof can contact the anvil as the anvil 114 is moved to the closed position,

such arrangement may result in the need for higher closure forces to move the anvil 114 to a completely or fully closed position. In addition, when the firing system is activated, higher firing forces may be required to overcome the frictional interference between the top portion 175 of the firing member 174 and the anvil 114. Conversely as can be seen in FIG. 48, in the end effector 1100, the firing member 1660 is “parked” in the firing member parking area 1154 that is within the distal closure tube segment 1430. When the firing member 1660 is located within the firing member parking area 1154 within the distal closure tube segment 1430, it is unable to generate significant frictional forces with the anvil. Thus, one of the advantages that may be achieved by parking the firing member 1660 completely within the distal closure tube segment 1430 may be the reduction of the amount of closure force necessary to close the anvil to a fully closed position and/or a reduction in the amount of firing force needed to advance the firing member from the starting to ending position within the end effector. Stated another way, parking the firing member 1660 so that the firing member 1660 is completely proximal to the distal end of the distal closure tube segment 1430 and the internal cam surface 1444 thereon and in a starting position wherein any frictional contact between the firing member and the anvil is eliminated or reduced, may ultimately require lower closure and firing forces to be generated for operation of the end effector.

[0199] As discussed above, excessive flexure of the anvil during the closure and firing processes can lead to the need for undesirably higher firing forces. Thus, stiffer anvil arrangements are generally desirable. Returning to FIGS. 20 and 21, another advantage that may be provided by the anvil 1130 and elongate channel 1102 depicted therein is that the anvil mounting portion 1150 of the anvil 1130 is generally more robust and therefor stiffer than other anvil and elongate channel arrangements. FIG. 50 illustrates use of stiffener gussets 199 between the anvil mounting flanges 194 and the elongate anvil body portion 190. Similar gusset arrangements may also be employed between the anvil attachment flanges 1151 and anvil body 1132 of anvil 1130 to further enhance anvil stiffness.

[0200] As indicated above, the interchangeable surgical tool 1000 includes an elastic spine member 1520. As can be seen in FIGS. 6, 7, 7A, 8 and 51-54, the distal end portion 1522 of the elastic spine member 1520 is separated from the proximal end portion 1524 of the elastic spine member 15 by a stretch feature 1530 formed in the elastic spine member 1520. In addition, a stretch limiting insert 1540 is retainingly supported between the distal end portion 1522 and the

proximal end portion 1524. In various arrangements, the elastic spine member 1520 may be fabricated from, for example, suitable polymeric material, rubber, etc. which has a modulus of elasticity designated as ME_1 for reference purposes. The stretch feature 1530 may include a plurality of stretch cavities 1532. As can be seen in FIG. 7A, the illustrated stretch feature 1530 includes four triangular-shaped stretch cavities 1532 that are arranged to define some what flexible wall segments 1534 therebetween. Other shapes and numbers of stretch cavities 1532 may be employed. The stretch cavities 1532 may be molded or machined into the elastic spine member 1520, for example.

[0201] Still referring to FIGS. 6, 7 and 51-54, the stretch limiting insert 1540 comprises a body portion 1541 which has a modulus of elasticity designated as ME_2 for reference purposes. As can be seen in FIG. 6, the body portion 1541 includes two downwardly extending mounting lugs 1542 that are each configured to be seated into mounting cavities 1535 formed in the elastic spine member 1520. See also FIG. 7A. To provide the stretch limiting insert 1540 with a desired amount of stretch capacity and elasticity, the body portion 1541 in the illustrated arrangement is provided with a plurality of upper cavities 1543. The illustrated example includes four upper cavities 1543 that are relatively square or rectangular in shape and which are spaced to define flexible walls 1544 therebetween. Other embodiments may include other numbers and shapes of upper cavities. The body portion 1541 of the illustrated stretch limiting insert 1540 also includes a centrally disposed, downwardly protruding central lug portion 1545 that is configured to be seated in a central cavity 1536 above the stretch feature 1530. See FIG. 7A. In the illustrated example, the central lug portion 1545 includes a pair of central passages 1546 that extend laterally therethrough to define a flexible wall 1547 therebetween.

[0202] Also in the illustrated example, the stretch limiting insert 1540 includes an elongated lateral cavity 1548 that is positioned on each lateral side of the body portion 1541. Only one lateral cavity 1548 may be seen in FIGS. 6 and 51-54. Each elongated lateral cavity 1548 is configured to support a corresponding stretch limiter 1550 therein. Thus, in the described example, two stretch limiters 1550 are employed in the stretch limiting insert 1540. In at least one arrangement, the stretch limiter 1550 includes an elongate body portion 1552 that terminates on each end with a downwardly extending mounting lug 1554. Each mounting lug 1554 is received in a corresponding lug cavity 1549 formed in the body portion 1541. The stretch limiter

may have a modulus of elasticity for reference purposes of ME_3 . In at least one arrangement, $ME_3 < ME_2 < ME_1$.

[0203] Actuation of the interchangeable surgical tool assembly 1000 when operably attached to the handle assembly 500 will now be described in further detail with reference to FIGS. 51-54. FIG. 51 illustrates the anvil 1130 in an open position. As can be seen in that Figure, the distal closure tube segment 1430 is in its starting or unactuated position and the positive anvil opening features 1462 have pivoted the anvil 1130 to the open position. In addition, the firing member 1660 is in the unactuated or starting position wherein the upper portion, including the top nose portion 1630, is parked in the firing member parking area 1154 of the anvil mounting portion 1150. When the interchangeable tool assembly 1000 is in this unactuated state, the stretch limiting insert 1540 is in an unstretched state. The axial length of the stretch limiting insert 1540 when in the unstretched state is represented by L_{us} in FIG. 51. L_{us} represents the distance between a reference axis A that corresponds to the proximal end of the body portion 1541 of the stretch limiting insert 1540 and a reference axis B that corresponds to the distal end of the body portion 1541 as shown in FIG. 51. The axis labeled F corresponds to the location of the distal end of the staple cartridge 1110 that has been properly seated within the elongate channel 1102. It will be understood that when the tool assembly 1000 is in this unactuated state, the elastic spine member 1520 is in a relaxed unstretched state.

[0204] FIG. 52 illustrates the interchangeable surgical tool assembly 1000 after the closure drive system 510 has been activated as described above to drive the distal closure tube segment 1430 distally in the distal direction DD. As the distal closure tube segment 1430 moves distally, the cam surface 1444 on the distal end 1441 of the upper wall portion 1440 of the distal closure tube segment 1430 cammingly contacts the cam surface 1152 on the anvil mounting portion 1150 and pivots the anvil 1130 to the closed position as shown. The closure drive system 510 moves the distal closure tube segment 1430 through its entire closure stroke distance and then is deactivated and the distal closure tube segment is axially locked or otherwise retained in that position by the closure drive system 510. As the distal closure tube segment 1430 contacts the anvil mounting portion 1150, the closure forces generated by the distal advancement of the distal closure tube segment 1430 on the anvil 1130 will also axially advance the anvil 1130 and the elongate channel 1102 in the distal direction DD. The stretch feature 1530 in the elastic spine 1520 will begin to stretch to accommodate this distal advancement of the elongate channel 1102

and anvil 1130. Axis B as shown in FIG. 52 is a reference axis for the stretch limiting insert 1540 when in a relaxed or unstretched state. Axis C corresponds to the end of the stretch limiting insert 1540 after the stretch limiting insert has been stretched into its maximum elongated state. The distance L_s represents the maximum amount or length that the stretch limiting insert 1540 may elongate. Axis G corresponds to the location of the distal end of the surgical staple cartridge 1110 after the anvil 1130 has been moved to that “first” closed position. The distance L_T between reference axes F and G represents the axial distance that the elongate channel 1102 and the anvil 1130 have traveled during actuation of the closure drive system 510. This distance L_T may be equal to the distance L_s that the stretch limiting insert 1540 was stretched during the closure process as limited by the stretch limiter 1550.

[0205] Returning to FIG. 51, it can be noted that there is a space S between each mounting lug 1554 of the stretch limiter 1550 and the inner walls 1551 of each of the lug cavities 1549 prior to commencement of the closure process. As can be seen in FIG. 52 the spaces S are gone. That is, each of the mounting lugs 1554 abuts its corresponding cavity wall 1549 in the stretch limiting insert 1540. Thus the stretch limiter 1550 serves to limit the amount of elongation experienced by the stretch limiting insert 1540 which in turn limits the amount of distal travel of the elongate channel 1102 and anvil 1130 relative to the proximal end portion 1524 of the elastic spine 1520. The distal closure tube 1430 is axially locked in position by the closure drive system 510. When in that position, the anvil 1130 is retained in a “first” closed position relative to the surgical staple cartridge 1110. Because the firing drive system 530 has yet to be actuated, the firing member 1660 has not moved and remains parked in the firing member parking area 1154. The position of the underside of the anvil 1130 when in the “first” closed position is represented by axis K in FIGS. 52 and 53.

[0206] FIG. 53 illustrates the position of the firing member 1660 after the firing drive system 530 has been initially actuated. As can be seen in that Figure, the firing member 1660 has been distally advanced out of the firing member parking area 1154. The top portion of the firing member 1660 and, more specifically, each of the top anvil engagement features 1672 has entered the proximal ramp portion 1138 of the corresponding axial passage 1146 in the anvil 1130. At this point in the process, the anvil 1130 may be under considerable bending stress caused by the tissue that is clamped between the underside of the anvil 1130 and the deck of the staple cartridge 1110. This bending stress, as well as the frictional resistance between the various

portions of the firing member and the anvil 1130 and elongate channel 1102, serve to essentially retain the elongate channel 1102 and the distal closure tube segment in a static condition while the firing member 1660 is initially distally advanced. During this time period, the amount of force required to fire the firing member 1660 or, stated another way, the amount of force required to distally push the firing member 1660 through the tissue that is clamped between the anvil 1130 and the cartridge 1110 is increasing. See line 1480 in FIG. 55. Also during this time period, the stretch limiting insert is trying to retract the elongate channel 1102 and anvil 1130 in the proximal direction PD into the distal closure tube segment 1430. Once the amount of friction between the firing member 1660 and the anvil 1130 and elongate channel 1102 is less than the retraction force generated by the stretch limiting insert 1540, the stretch limiting insert 1540 will cause the elongate channel 1102 and anvil 1130 to be drawn proximally further into the distal closure tube segment 1430. The position of the distal end 1113 of the staple cartridge 1110 after the elongate channel 1102 and anvil 1130 have traveled in the proximal direction PD is represented as position H in FIG. 54. The axial distance that the elongate channel 1102 and the anvil 1130 traveled in the proximal direction PD is represented as distance I in FIG. 54. This proximal movement of the anvil 1130 and the elongate channel 1102 into the distal closure tube segment 1430 will result in the application of additional closure forces to the anvil 1130 by the distal closure tube segment 1430. Line M in FIG. 54 represents the “second” closed position of the anvil 1130. The distance between position K and position M which is represented as distance N comprises the vertical distance that the distal end 1133 of the anvil body 1132 traveled between the first closed position and the second closed position.

[0207] The application of additional closure forces to the anvil 1130 by the distal closure tube segment 1430 when the anvil 1130 is in the second closed position, resists the amount of flexure forces applied to the anvil 1130 by the tissue that is clamped between the anvil 1130 and the cartridge 1110. Such condition may lead to better alignment between the passages in the anvil body 1130 and the firing member 1660 which may ultimately reduce the amount of frictional resistance that the firing member 1660 experiences as it continues to advance distally through the end effector 1100. Thus, the amount of firing force required to advance the firing member through the balance of its firing stroke to the ending position may be reduced. This reduction of the firing force can be seen in the chart in FIG. 55. The chart depicted in FIG. 55 compares the firing force (Energy) required to fire the firing member from the beginning to the end of the

firing process. Line 1480 represents the amount of firing force required to move the firing member 1660 from its starting to ending position when the end effector 1100 is clamping tissue therein. Line 1482, for example, represents the amount of firing force required to move the firing member the interchangeable surgical tool assembly 1000 described above. Line 1482 represents the firing force required to move the firing member 174 from its starting to ending position through tissue that is clamped in the end effector 110 or 110'. As can be seen from that chart, the firing forces required by both of the surgical tool assemblies 100, 1000 are substantially the same or very similar until the point in time 1484 wherein the elastic spine assembly 1510 of the interchangeable tool assembly 1000 results in an application of a second amount of closure force to the anvil. As can be seen in the chart of FIG. 55, when the second amount of closure force is experienced by the anvil 1130 (point 1484), the amount of closure force required to complete the firing process is less than the amount of closure force required to complete the closing process in tool assembly 100.

[0208] FIG. 56 compares the amount of firing load required to move a firing member of various surgical end effectors from a starting position (0.0) to an ending position (1.0). The vertical axis represents the amount of firing load and the horizontal axis represents the percentage distance that the firing member traveled between the starting position (0.0) and the ending position (1.0). Line 1490 depicts the firing force required to fire, for example, the firing member of a surgical tool assembly 100 or similar tool assembly. Line 1492 depicts the firing force required to fire the firing member of a surgical tool assembly that employs the various firing member improvements and configurations that may be disclosed in, for example, U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/385,917, entitled STAPLE CARTRIDGE COMPRISING STAPLES WITH DIFFERENT CLAMPING BREADTHS, and the other above-mentioned U.S. Patent Applications that were filed on even date herewith and which have been incorporated by reference herein in their respective entirety. Line 1494 depicts the firing force required to fire the firing member from its starting to ending position of surgical tool assemblies that employ at least some of the features and arrangements disclosed herein for stiffening the anvil. Line 1496 depicts the firing force required to fire, for example, surgical tool assemblies that employ the elastic spine arrangement and at least some of the features and arrangements disclosed herein for stiffening the anvil. As can be seen in that Figure, the surgical tool assembly that employs the

elastic spine arrangement and at least some of the anvil stiffening arrangements disclosed herein have a much lower force-to-fire requirement.

[0209] Traditionally, surgical stapling and cutting instruments comprised robust mechanical lockouts configured to protect against unauthorized firing of the surgical stapling and cutting instruments because of the dangers associated with such unauthorized firing. For example, firing a surgical stapling and cutting instrument that is not loaded with a staple cartridge, or is loaded with a staple cartridge that has already been fired, may cause severe bleeding if the tissue cutting is performed without any tissue stapling.

[0210] The recent transition to motorized surgical stapling and cutting instruments presents new challenges in ensuring the safe operation of such instruments. Among other things, the present disclosure presents various electrical and electro-mechanical lockouts that are suitable for use with motorized surgical stapling and cutting instruments. Since lockout failure can result in a serious risk to the patient, the present disclosure presents multiple safeguards that operate in redundancy to ensure that lockout failures are avoided. The present disclosure provides various techniques for detecting when a staple cartridge is attached to an end effector of a surgical stapling and cutting instrument. The present disclosure further provides various techniques for detecting whether an attached staple cartridge is spent.

[0211] An end effector 4000 of a surgical stapling system is illustrated in FIG. 57. The end effector 4000 comprises a frame 4002, a cartridge jaw 4004, and an anvil 4006. The cartridge jaw 4004 extends fixedly from the frame 4002. The anvil 4006 is movable between an open, or unclamped, position and a closed, or clamped, position (FIG. 57) relative to the cartridge jaw 4004. In alternative embodiments, the cartridge jaw 4004 is movable between an open, or unclamped, position and a closed, or clamped, position relative to the anvil 4006. In at least one such embodiment, the anvil 4006 extends fixedly from the frame 4002.

[0212] The cartridge jaw 4004 includes a channel or carrier 4022 configured to receive a staple cartridge, such as a staple cartridge 4008, for example. Referring to FIG. 58, the staple cartridge 4008 comprises a cartridge body 4010. The cartridge body 4010 comprises a deck 4012 configured to support the tissue of a patient, a longitudinal slot 4014, and six longitudinal rows of staple cavities 4016 defined therein. Each staple cavity 4016 is configured to receive and removably store a staple therein. The staple cartridge 4008 further comprises staple drivers configured to drive the staples out of the staple cavities 4016. Other staple cartridges with

various other arrangements of staple cavities, decks, and/or staples are envisioned for use with the end effector 4000.

[0213] Further to the above, the staple cartridge 4008 further comprises a sled 4018 configured to engage the staple drivers. More specifically, the sled 4018 comprises ramps 4020 configured to engage cams defined on the staple drivers and lift the staple drivers and the staples within the staple cavities 4016 as the sled 4018 is moved distally through the staple cartridge 4008. A firing member is configured to motivate the sled 4018 distally from a proximal, unfired, or starting position toward a distal, fired, or end position during a staple firing stroke.

[0214] Referring to FIGS. 58, 59, 60B, the staple cartridge 4008 includes a cartridge circuit 4024. The cartridge circuit 4024 includes a storage medium 4026, a cartridge connector-region 4017 comprising a plurality of external electrical contacts 4028, and a cartridge-status circuit portion 4032 that includes a trace element 4034. The storage medium 4026 can be a memory that stores information about the staple cartridge 4008 such as, for example, various characteristics of the staple cartridge 4008 including a firing status, staple-type, staple-size, cartridge batch number, and/or cartridge color.

[0215] Referring to FIGS. 61-62, the sled 4018 further includes a circuit breaker 4019 comprising a gripping member 4021 that is configured to capture and sever the trace element 4034 from the cartridge-status circuit portion 4032 as the sled 4018 is advanced distally from a starting position. By severing the trace element 4034, the circuit breaker 4019 transitions the cartridge-status circuit portion 4032 from a closed configuration to an open configuration which signals a transition of the staple cartridge 4000 from an unfired, or unspent, status to a fired, or spent, status. Information about this transition can be stored in the storage medium 4026. Accordingly, sensing that a staple cartridge 4008 has a severed trace element 4034 can indicate that the staple cartridge 4008 has already been fired.

[0216] As illustrated in FIGS. 61-62, the gripping member 4021 of the circuit breaker 4019 has a right-angle configuration with a first portion 4023 protruding or extending away from a bottom surface 4025 of the sled 4018 and a second portion 4027 defining a right angle with the first portion 4023. The second portion 4027 is spaced apart from the bottom surface 4025 a sufficient distance to snugly hold a severed trace element 4034, as illustrated in FIG. 62. This arrangements ensures that the severed trace element 4034 is not accidentally lost in a patient's body after completion of the firing steps of an end effector 4000. In at least one instance, the

circuit breaker 4019 may comprise a magnetic member configured to magnetically retain a severed trace element 4034, for example. In various instances, a trace element can be cut or displaced to sever or establish an electrical connection indicative of whether a staple cartridge has been fired without completely severing the trace element.

[0217] In at least one instance, a carrier 4022 may include a Hall effect sensor 4029 (FIG. 62A) configured to detect the presence of a magnet embedded into or attached to a sled 4018. While the sled 4018 is at a start, proximal, or unfired position, the Hall effect sensor 4029 is able to detect the presence of the magnet. But, once the sled 4018 is advanced distally toward an end, distal, or fired position, the Hall effect sensor 4029 no longer senses the presence of the magnet. In at least one instance, a controller 4050 can be configured to receive input from the Hall effect sensor 4029 to assess the position of the sled 4018 and, accordingly, determine whether an attached staple cartridge 4008 is spent based on the readings of the Hall effect sensor 4029. In certain instances, the Hall effect sensor 4029 can be attached to the sled 4018 while the corresponding magnet is attached to and/or embedded into the carrier 4022. In certain instances, other position sensors can be employed to determine whether the sled 4018 is at the start, proximal, or unfired position.

[0218] In certain instances, a Hall effect sensor and magnet combination can be employed to determine whether a staple cartridge is spent by detecting whether a staple driver is at a start or unfired position. As described above, during a firing stroke, a sled 4018 is transitioned from a start, proximal, or unfired position toward an end, distal, or fired position to motivate a plurality of staple drivers to deploy staples of a staple cartridge. Each staple driver is generally lifted from a start or unfired position toward an final or fired position to deploy one or more staples. The Hall effect sensor can be coupled to the carrier 4022 or the staple cartridge 4008. The corresponding magnet can be coupled to a staple driver such as, for example, a proximal staple driver of the staple cartridge 4008. In at least one instance, the corresponding magnet is coupled to a proximal-most staple driver of the staple cartridge 4008. In certain instances, the Hall effect sensor is coupled to the carrier 4022 or the staple cartridge 4008 while the magnet is coupled to the staple driver. In certain instances, the Hall effect sensor is coupled to the carrier 4022 or the staple cartridge 4008 while the magnet is coupled to the proximal-most staple driver.

[0219] The Hall effect sensor is configured to detect the presence of the magnet while the staple driver is in the start or unfired position. But once the sled 4018 motivates the staple driver

to be lifted from the start or unfired position, the Hall effect sensor no longer senses the presence of the magnet. Alternatively, the Hall effect sensor and magnet arrangement can be configured to detect when the staple driver reaches the final or fired position, for example. The Hall effect sensor and magnet arrangement can be configured to detect when the distal-most staple driver reaches the final or fired position, for example. In any event, a controller 4050 can be configured to receive input from the Hall effect sensor to assess the position of the staple driver and, accordingly, determine whether an attached staple cartridge 4008 is spent based on the readings of the Hall effect sensor 4029. In certain instances, other position sensors can be employed to determine whether the staple driver is at the start or unfired position.

[0220] As illustrated in FIG. 62A, the controller 4050 may comprise a processor 4052 and/or one or more storage mediums such as, for example, a memory 4054. By executing instruction code stored in the memory 4054, the processor 4052 may control various components of the surgical stapling and cutting instrument such as a firing system 4056 and a user interface 4058 such as, for example, a display. The memory 4054 includes program instructions which, when executed by the processor 4052, cause the processor 4052 to determine whether an attached staple cartridge 4008 is spent based on input from one or more sensors such as, for example, the Hall effect sensor 4029.

[0221] The user interface 4058 may include one or more visual feedback elements including display screens, backlights, and/or LEDs, for example. In certain instances, the user interface 4058 may comprise one or more audio feedback systems such as speakers and/or buzzers, for example. In certain instances, the user interface 4058 may comprise one or more haptic feedback systems, for example. In certain instances, the user interface 4058 may comprise combinations of visual, audio, and/or haptic feedback systems, for example.

[0222] In at least one instance, the carrier 4022 includes one or more electrical contacts configured to be electrically connected to corresponding electrical contacts in a sled 4018 of a staple cartridge 4008 seated in the carrier 4022. The electrical contacts define an electrical circuit 4031 (FIG. 62B) that remains closed while the sled 4018 is in a proximal unfired position. The electrical circuit 4031 is transitioned into an open configuration when the sled 4018 is advanced toward an end, distal, or fired position due to the severance of the electrical connection between the electrical contacts of the carrier 4022 and the sled 4018.

[0223] The electrical circuit 4031 may further include one or more sensors such as, for example, voltage or current sensors configured to detect whether the electrical circuit 4031 is in a closed configuration or an open configuration. Input from the one or more sensors can be received by a controller 4050. The controller 4050 can determine whether an attached staple cartridge 4008 is spent based on the input from the one or more sensors. The memory 4054 may include program instructions which, when executed by the processor 4052, cause the processor 4052 to determine whether an attached staple cartridge 4008 is spent based on input from the one or more sensors.

[0224] In certain instances, a staple cartridge 4008 may include an ETS lockout with a continuity path along a path of a sled defined by sled guide rails, for example. When the sled is in a proximal-most position, the sled is configured to interrupt the electrical path. However, when the sled is advanced distally the electrical path is completed and is sensed by an inductance sensor in the carrier 4022, for example. In various instances, one or more inductance sensors can be configured to track one or more proximal forming pockets for identification of the finger print of staples received within the proximal pockets. The inductance sensors can be configured to detect the absence of the staples from their respective forming pockets. Examples of ETS lockouts are described in U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2013/0248577, entitled **SURGICAL STAPLING DEVICE WITH LOCKOUT SYSTEM FOR PREVENTING ACTUATION IN THE ABSENCE OF AN INSTALLED STAPLE CARTRIDGE**, filed March 26, 2012, now U.S. Patent No. 9,078,653, the entire disclosure of which is incorporated by reference herein.

[0225] In at least one instance, a staple cartridge, similar to the staple cartridge 4008, includes at least one electrical circuit 4033 (FIG. 62C) that comprises two electrical contacts that are spaced apart from one another. The electrical contacts are configured to be bridged by a staple of the staple cartridge when the staple is in an unfired position. Accordingly, the electrical circuit 4033 is in a closed configuration when the staple is in the unfired position. In addition, the electrical circuit 4033 is in an open configuration when the staple is lifted by a staple driver for deployment into tissue. The lifting of the staple by a staple driver during a firing stroke separates the staple from the electrical contacts of the electrical circuit 4033 thereby transitioning the electrical circuit 4033 into an open configuration.

[0226] The electrical circuit 4033 may further include one or more sensors such as, for example, voltage or current sensors configured to detect whether the electrical circuit 4033 is in a closed configuration or an open configuration. Input from the one or more sensors can be received by a controller 4050. The controller 4050 can determine whether an attached staple cartridge 4008 is spent based on the input from the one or more sensors. The memory 4054 may include program instructions which, when executed by the processor 4052, cause the processor 4052 to determine whether an attached staple cartridge 4008 is spent based on input from the one or more sensors.

[0227] In at least one instance, a staple cartridge, similar to the staple cartridge 4008, includes at least one electrical circuit 4035 (FIG. 62D) that comprises a conductive bridge that is configured to be ruptured when a staple driver of the staple cartridge is lifted to deploy one or more staples into tissue, which causes the electrical circuit 4035 to be transitioned from a closed configuration to an open configuration. The lifting of the staple driver during a firing stroke causes the conductive bridge of the electrical circuit 4035 to be severed, cut, or displaced thereby transitioning the electrical circuit 4033 into an open configuration. The conductive bridge of the electrical circuit 4035 is placed in a predetermined path of the staple driver. In at least one instance, the conductive bridge extends across, or at least partially across, a staple pocket configured to store the staple in an unfired position.

[0228] The electrical circuit 4035 may further include one or more sensors such as, for example, voltage or current sensors configured to detect whether the electrical circuit 4035 is in a closed configuration or an open configuration. Input from the one or more sensors can be received by a controller 4050. The controller 4050 can determine whether an attached staple cartridge 4008 is spent based on the input from the one or more sensors. The memory 4054 may include program instructions which, when executed by the processor 4052, cause the processor 4052 to determine whether an attached staple cartridge 4008 is spent based on input from the one or more sensors.

[0229] In various instances, upon determining that an attached staple cartridge 4008 is spent, a controller 4050 is configured to cause the firing system 4056 to be deactivated and/or provide user feedback as to the reason for the deactivation through a user interface such as, for example, a display 4058. The controller 4050 may identify and/or aid a user in addressing the cause of the deactivation of the firing system 4056. For example, the controller 4050 may alert a user that an

attached staple cartridge is spent or is not the correct type to be used with the end effector 4000. Other techniques for determining whether a staple cartridge is spent are included in U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 15/131,963, entitled METHOD FOR OPERATING A SURGICAL INSTRUMENT, filed April 18, 2016, which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

[0230] As illustrated in FIG. 60A, the carrier 4022 includes a carrier circuit 4043 (FIG. 60C) separably couplable to a cartridge circuit 4024 of a staple cartridge 4008. The carrier circuit 4043 has a plurality of electrical contacts 4036. In addition, the carrier circuit 4043 includes a carrier connector-region 4013 comprising a plurality of connectors 4038 that each defines a first electrical contact 4038a and a second electrical contact 4038b. The connectors 4038 are positioned such that a gap is maintained between the electrical contacts 4036 and the first electrical contacts 4038a of the connectors 4038 in their neutral positions. Each of the connectors 4038 comprises a curved portion protruding from a supporting wall 4040. The second electrical contacts 4038b are defined at the curved portions of the connectors 4038. When the staple cartridge 4008 is inserted in the carrier 4022, the external electrical contacts 4028 of the staple cartridge 4008 are configured to engage and move the connectors 4038 into a biased configuration where the electrical contacts 4036 are electrically coupled to the corresponding first electrical contacts 4038a of the connectors 4038. While the staple cartridge 4008 is seated in the carrier 4022, the external electrical contacts 4028 of the staple cartridge 4008 are also electrically coupled to the corresponding second electrical contacts 4038b of the connectors 4038.

[0231] To ensure a robust electrical connection, one or more of the electrical connectors 4038, external electrical contacts 4028, the electrical contacts 4036, the electrical contacts 4038a, and/or the electrical contacts 4038b can be coated, or at least partially coated, with a fluid-repellant coating, and/or potted in an insulating material such as silicon to prevent fluid ingress. As illustrated in FIG. 60A, a fluid-repellant coating is added to the electrical connectors 4038 and the electrical contacts 4036. In at least one aspect, the fluid-repellant coating is added to all the electrical cables and/or connections of a staple cartridge. One or more fluid-repellant coatings manufactured by Aculon, Inc., for example, can be used.

[0232] Further to the above, the electrical contacts 4038b of the spring-biased electrical connectors 4038 include wearing features, or point contacts, 4039 in the form of a raised dome-shaped structure configured to remove or scratch off the fluid-repellant coating from the external

electrical contacts 4028 of the staple cartridge 4008 thus establishing an electrical connection with the staple cartridge 4008. A compressible seal 4041 is configured to prevent, or at least resist, fluid ingress between a carrier 4022 and a staple cartridge 4008 seated in the carrier 4022. The compressible seal 4041 can be comprised of a compressible material that snugly fits between a carrier 4022 and a staple cartridge 4008 seated in the carrier 4022. As illustrated in FIG. 60A, the compressible seal 4041 defines walls that define a perimeter around, or at least partially around, the electrical connectors 4038 and the external electrical contacts 4028 of the staple cartridge 4008 when the staple cartridge 4008 is seated in the carrier 4022.

[0233] Referring primarily to FIGS. 58-60, the carrier connector-region 4013 and the cartridge connector-region 4017 are configured to facilitate an electrical connection between the cartridge circuit 4024 and the carrier circuit 4043 when the staple cartridge 4008 is seated within the carrier 4022. As illustrated in FIG. 60, the carrier connector-region 4013 is located on a side wall 4009 of the carrier 4022. The carrier connector-region 4013 is secured to an inner surface 4011 of the side wall 4009. As illustrated in FIG. 59, the cartridge connector-region 4017 is located on a side wall 4007 of the staple cartridge 4008. The cartridge connector-region 4017 is secured to an outer surface 4005 of the side wall 4007. The carrier connector-region 4013 is configured to abut against the cartridge connector-region 4017 when the staple cartridge 4008 is seated in the carrier 4022. The compressible seal 4041 prevents, or at least resists, fluid ingress between the carrier connector-region 4013 and the cartridge connector-region 4017. Positioning the carrier connector-region 4013 and the cartridge connector-region 4017 on the corresponding side walls 4009 and 4007 facilitates the establishment of an electrical connection between the staple cartridge 4008 and the end effector 4000 by seating the staple cartridge 4008 within the carrier 4022. Positioning the carrier connector-region 4013 and the cartridge connector-region 4017 on the corresponding side walls 4009 and 4007 permits establishing a connection between the carrier connector-region 4013 and the cartridge connector-region 4017 simply by seating the staple cartridge 4008 in the carrier 4022.

[0234] As illustrated in FIG. 63, a first electrical interface 4042 is defined by the electrical contacts 4036 and 4038a. The first electrical interface 4042 is configured to be transitioned between an open configuration where the electrical contacts 4036 and 4038a are spaced apart and a closed configuration where the electrical contacts 4036 and 4038a are electrically coupled. Likewise, a second electrical interface 4044 is defined by the electrical contacts 4038b and 4028.

The second electrical interface 4044 is configured to be transitioned between an open configuration where the electrical contacts 4038b and 4028 are spaced apart and a closed configuration where the electrical contacts 4038b and 4028 are electrically coupled. Furthermore, a third electrical interface 4046 is defined between the end effector 4000 and a handle portion of a surgical stapling and cutting instrument. The third electrical interface 4046 is also configured to be transitioned between an open configuration where the end effector 4000 is not attached to the handle portion and a closed configuration where the end effector 4000 is attached to the handle portion.

[0235] The transition of the electrical interface 4042 from an open configuration to a closed configuration indicates that a staple cartridge has been attached to the carrier 4022. In addition, the transition of the electrical interface 4044 from an open configuration to a closed configuration indicates that a correct type of staple cartridge has been attached to the carrier 4022. When the electrical interface 4044 is in the closed configuration, the storage medium 4026 of the staple cartridge 4008 can be accessed to obtain information stored therein about staple cartridge 4008.

[0236] In certain instances, as illustrated in FIG. 63, the electrical interfaces 4042, 4044, and 4046 and the cartridge-status circuit portion 4032 are electrically connected in a control circuit 4048. In such instances, a safety mechanism can be incorporated to prevent the firing of the end effector 4000 if at least one of the electrical interface 4042, the electrical interface 4044, the electrical interface 4046, and the cartridge-status circuit portion 4032 is in an open configuration. Said another way, if the control circuit 4048 is in an open configuration, the safety mechanism prevents the firing of the end effector 4000. In other words, if the end effector 4000 is not correctly attached to the handle portion of the surgical instrument, if no staple cartridge is attached to the carrier 4022, if an incorrect staple cartridge is attached to the carrier 4022, and/or if a spent staple cartridge is attached to carrier 4022, the safety mechanism prevents the firing of the end effector 4000.

[0237] In certain instances, one or more of the electrical interface 4042, the electrical interface 4044, the electrical interface 4046, and the cartridge-status circuit portion 4032 are connected in parallel with non-severable sections of the control circuit 4048 which helps avoid any single point failure due to a full interruption of the control circuit 4048. This arrangement ensures a continued electrical connection within the control circuit 4048 in the event one or more of the

electrical interface 4042, the electrical interface 4044, the electrical interface 4046, and the cartridge-status circuit portion 4032 is in an open configuration. For example, as illustrated in FIG. 63, the trace element 4034 of the cartridge-status circuit portion 4032 is in parallel with a first resistive element 4037 and in series with a second resistive element 4037' to ensure continued operation and avoid a single point failure of the control circuit 4048 in the event the trace element 4034 is severed. One or more sensors, including but not limited to voltage and/or current sensors, can be employed to detect a current configuration and/or a transition between an open or severed configuration and a closed or intact configuration.

[0238] In certain instances, one or more of the electrical interface 4042, the electrical interface 4044, the electrical interface 4046, and the cartridge-status circuit portion 4032 are not connected in series. In such instances, one or more of the electrical interface 4042, the electrical interface 4044, the electrical interface 4046, and/or the cartridge-status circuit portion 4032 are configured to separately provide feedback regarding their dedicated functions.

[0239] Referring to FIGS. 63-65, one or more of the electrical interface 4042, the electrical interface 4044, the electrical interface 4046, and the cartridge-status circuit portion 4032 can be implemented in the form of a conductive gate 4060 transitionable between an open configuration, as illustrated in FIG. 64, and a closed configuration, as illustrated in FIG. 65. In the closed configuration, the conductive gate 4060 enables an electrical connection between two end-points of an electrical circuit such as, for example, the control circuit 4048. The electrical connection, however, is severed when the conductive gate 4060 is transitioned to the open configuration.

[0240] The conductive gate 4060 can be repeatedly transitioned between a closed configuration and an open configuration. The conductive gate 4060 includes a pivot portion 4062 rotatably attached to a first end-point 4068 of the control circuit 4048. The conductive gate 4060 is configured to pivot about the first end-point 4068 between the open and closed configurations. The conductive gate 4060 further includes an attachment portion 4066 spaced apart from the pivot portion 4062. A central bridge portion 4064 extends between and connects the pivot portion 4062 and the attachment portion 4066. As illustrated in FIGS. 64 and 65, the attachment portion 4066 is in the form of a hook or latch configured to releasably capture a second end-point 4069 of the control circuit 4048 to transition the conductive gate 4060 from the open configuration to the closed configuration. In certain instances, the attachment portion 4066 may

comprise a magnetic attachment or any other mechanical attachment, for example. In at least one instance, the conductive gate 4060 can be spring-biased in the closed configuration.

Alternatively, the conductive gate 4060 can be spring-biased in the open configuration.

[0241] As illustrated in FIG. 65A, a safety mechanism 4047 of the surgical instrument may include a controller 4050 which may comprise a processor 4052 and/or one or more storage mediums such as, for example, a memory 4054. By executing instruction code stored in the memory 4054, the processor 4052 may control various components of the surgical instrument such as a firing system 4056 and a user interface such as, for example, a display 4058. The controller 4050 keeps track of the statuses of the electrical interface 4042, the electrical interface 4044, the electrical interface 4046, and/or the cartridge-status circuit portion 4032. As described in greater detail below, the controller 4050 may, depending on the reported statuses of one or more of the electrical interface 4042, the electrical interface 4044, the electrical interface 4046, and/or the cartridge-status circuit portion 4032, cause the firing system 4056 to be deactivated and/or provide user feedback as to the reason for the deactivation. In certain instances, the controller 4050 may identify and/or aid a user in addressing the cause of the deactivation of the firing system 4056. For example, the controller 4050 may alert a user that an attached staple cartridge is spent or is not the correct type to be used with the end effector 4000.

[0242] In various instances, the memory 4054 includes program instructions which, when executed by the processor 4052, cause the processor 4052 to determine that a staple cartridge 4008 has been attached to the carrier 4022 when a transition of the electrical interface 4042 to a closed configuration is detected by the processor 4052. In addition, the memory 4054 may include program instructions which, when executed by the processor 4052, cause the processor 4052 to determine that that attached staple cartridge 4008 has already been spent or fired when a transition of the electrical interface 4042 to a closed configuration is detected by the processor 4052 but the cartridge-status circuit portion 4032 is in the open configuration.

Further to the above, the memory 4054 may also include program instructions which, when executed by the processor 4052, cause the processor 4052 to determine that a memory 4026 of an attached staple cartridge 4008 is accessible when a transition of the electrical interface 4044 to a closed configuration is detected by the processor 4052. In addition, the processor 4052 may be configured to retrieve certain information stored in the memory 4026 of the attached staple cartridge 4008. In certain instances, detecting a closed configuration of the electrical interface

4042 while not detecting a closed configuration of the electrical interface 4044 indicates that an incorrect staple cartridge is attached to the carrier 4022.

[0243] Further to the above, the memory 4054 may also include program instructions which, when executed by the processor 4052, cause the processor 4052 to determine that a successful connection between the end effector 4000 and the handle portion of the surgical instrument has been detected when a transition of the electrical interface 4046 to a closed configuration is detected by the processor 4052.

[0244] Referring to FIG. 65B, a block diagram depicts a method 4071 of firing a surgical instrument that includes an end effector such as, for example, the end effector 4000. In a first step 4073, a firing trigger 4550 (FIG. 80) is pressed while a cutting member of the end effector 4000 is positioned proximally to a predetermined no-cartridge-lockout zone. One or more position sensors can be employed to determine the position of the cutting member. The firing trigger can be located on a handle of the surgical instrument and can be pressed by a user, for example, to initiate a firing stroke of the surgical instrument. Next, a first decision block 4075 is configured to check whether the trace element 4034 (FIG. 61) is intact, and a second decision block 4077 is configured to check whether the memory 4026 (FIG. 59) can be read. If the trace element 4034 is not intact or the memory 4026 cannot be read, the firing lockout is engaged, as indicated in step 4079. Then, once captured tissue is released by unclamping the end effector 4000 at step 4070, an articulation mode is re-engaged in step 4072. If, however, the trace element 4034 is intact and the memory 4026 is read, the firing system 4056 is permitted to proceed through the firing stroke, step 4074. A decision block 4076 is configured to provide a threshold at a pre-determined cutline at which point, the firing system 4056 is reset. Resetting the firing system 4056 can include returning the cutting member to a pre-determined default position, as depicted in step 4078. As illustrated in step 4074a, if the firing trigger 4550 is pressed while the cutting member of the end effector 4000 is positioned distal to the predetermined no-cartridge-lockout zone, the firing system 4056 is permitted to proceed with the firing stroke.

[0245] Referring to FIGS. 66-70, a staple cartridge 4100 is similar in many respects to the staple cartridge 4008. The staple cartridge 4100 is releasably attached to the end effector 4000. In addition, the staple cartridge 4100 includes a cartridge-status circuit 4102 for assessing whether the staple cartridge 4100 is attached to an end effector 4000 and/or whether an attached staple cartridge 4100 was previously fired.

[0246] As illustrated in FIG. 66, the staple cartridge 4100 comprises a conductive gate 4160 at a proximal portion 4103 of the staple cartridge 4100. The conductive gate 4160 is movable between a first closed configuration (FIG. 68), a second closed configuration (FIG. 70), and an open configuration (FIG. 69). A controller can be configured to assess whether the staple cartridge 4100 is attached to an end effector 4000 and/or whether an attached staple cartridge 4100 was previously fired by determining whether the conductive gate 4160 is at an open configuration, a first closed configuration, or a second closed configuration. In at least one instance, the first closed configuration is a partially closed configuration while the second closed configuration is a fully closed configuration.

In a closed configuration, the conductive gate 4160 extends across an elongate slot 4114 defined between a first deck portion 4112a and a second deck portion 4112b of the staple cartridge 4100. The conductive gate 4160 extends between a first end-point 4168 of the cartridge-status circuit 4102 and a second end-point 4170 of the cartridge-status circuit 4102. The first end-point 4168 is defined on a first side wall 4114a of the elongate slot 4114 and the second end-point 4170 is defined on a second side wall 4114b of the elongate slot 4114. To connect the first end-point 4168 and the second end-point 4170 in the closed configuration, the conductive gate 4160 bridges the elongate slot 4114, as illustrated in FIG. 68.

[0247] As illustrated in FIG. 66, the conductive gate 4160 includes a pivot portion 4162 rotatably attached to the first end-point 4168 of the cartridge-status circuit 4102. The conductive gate 4160 is configured to pivot about the first end-point 4168 between the open, first closed, and second closed configurations. The conductive gate 4160 further includes an attachment portion 4166 spaced apart from the pivot portion 4162. A central bridge portion 4164 extends between and connects the pivot portion 4162 and the attachment portion 4166. As illustrated in FIG. 66, the attachment portion 4166 is in the form of a hook or latch configured to be releasably captured by the second end-point 4170. The attachment portion 4166 includes a “C” shaped ring 4171 configured to receive the second end-point 4170 in the second closed configuration. An opening 4173 of the “C” shaped ring 4171 is slightly smaller than the second end-point 4170. Accordingly, for the second end-point 4170 to be received within the “C” shaped ring 4171 an external force is needed to pass the second end-point 4170 through the opening 4173 of the “C” shaped ring 4171 and bring the conductive gate 4160 to the second closed configuration, as illustrated in FIG. 68.

[0248] Although the conductive gate is spring-biased toward a closed configuration, the spring-biasing force is insufficient to bring the conductive gate 4160 to the second closed configuration. Accordingly, in the absence of an external force to motivate the conductive gate 4160 toward an open configuration or a second closed configuration, the conductive gate 4160 will swing, under the effect of the spring-biasing force, to a resting position at the first closed configuration, as illustrated in FIG. 70. At the first closed configuration, an intermediate region 4175 between the “C” shaped ring 4171 of the attachment portion 4166 and the central bridge portion 4164 is in contact with the second end-point 4170. However, the second end-point 4170 is not received within the “C” shaped ring 4171.

[0249] The staple cartridge 4100 further comprises a sled 4118 which is similar in many respects to the sled 4018. A firing member 4113 is configured to motivate the sled 4118 distally from a proximal, unfired, or start position toward a distal, fired, or end position during a staple firing stroke. In addition, the sled 4118 includes a catch member 4119 configured to engage and transition the conductive gate 4160 from a second closed configuration to an open configuration as the sled 4118 is advanced distally from the proximal, unfired, or start position toward a distal, fired, or end position. Upon losing contact with the catch member 4119, the conductive gate 4160 is configured to return to the first closed configuration from the open configuration under the influence of the spring-biasing force and in the absence of any external force.

[0250] Referring to FIG. 67, the catch member 4119 extends proximally from the sled 4118 and includes a proximal-extending portion 4119a and an engagement portion 4119b protruding from a proximal end of the proximal-extending portion 4119a. The engagement portion 4119b is arranged such that conductive gate 4160 is captured by the engagement portion 4119b as the sled 4118 is advanced from the proximal, unfired, or start position toward the distal, fired, or end position to deploy staples during a firing stroke of the surgical stapling and cutting instrument.

[0251] At least a portion of the catch member 4119 may be constructed from a non-conductive material. In at least one example, the engagement portion 4119b is at least partially made from a non-conductive material.

[0252] Other arrangements and configurations of the catch member 4119 are contemplated by the present disclosure. In at least one aspect, the catch member 4119 can be a post extending away from a base 4118a of the sled 4118, for example. In another instances, the catch member 4119 can be in the form of a ramp wherein the conductive gate 4160 is configured to engage a

lower portion of the ramp and, as the sled 4118 is advanced distally, the ramp transitions the conductive gate 4160 to an open configuration. Once the conductive gate 4160 reaches the top of the ramp, the spring-biasing force returns the conductive gate 4160 to a first closed position.

[0253] Referring to FIGS. 68-71, the first closed configuration, the second closed configuration, and the open configuration represent a first resistance-status, a second resistance-status, and an infinite resistance-status, respectively, wherein the first resistance-status is different than the second resistance-status and the infinite resistance-status, and wherein the second resistance-status is different than the first resistance-status and the infinite resistance-status. By sensing which of the three statuses is current and/or by sensing transitions between the statuses, a controller 4050 (FIG. 71) can determine whether the staple cartridge 4100 is attached to an end effector 4000 and/or whether an attached staple cartridge 4100 was previously fired.

[0254] The conductive gate 4160 can be configured to define a first resistance when the conductive gate 4160 is at the first closed configuration and a second resistance, different than the first resistance, when the conductive gate 4160 is at the second closed configuration. The controller 4050 may comprise a processor 4052 and/or one or more storage mediums such as, for example, a memory 4054. By executing instruction code stored in the memory 4054, the processor 4052 may identify a current resistance-status of the conductive gate 4160. The controller 4050 may, depending on the detected resistance-status, perform one or more function such as, for example, causing the firing system 4056 to become inactivated and/or providing user feedback as to the reason for such deactivation.

[0255] In various instances, the memory 4054 includes program instructions which, when executed by the processor 4052, cause the processor 4052 to determine that an unspent or unfired staple cartridge 4100 is attached to the carrier 4022 when a second resistance-status is detected by the processor 4052. In addition, the memory 4054 may include program instructions which, when executed by the processor 4052, cause the processor 4052 to determine that a spent or previously fired staple cartridge 4100 is attached to the carrier 4022 when a first resistance-status is detected by the processor 4052. The memory 4054 may include program instructions which, when executed by the processor 4052, cause the processor 4052 to determine that no staple cartridge is attached to the carrier 4022 when an infinite resistance-status is detected by the processor 4052.

[0256] The controller 4050 can be configured to make a determination as to whether a staple cartridge 4008 is detected upon activation or powering of the surgical stapling and cutting instrument by performing a first reading, or a plurality of readings, of the resistance-status. If an infinite resistance-status is detected, the controller 4050 may then instruct a user through the display 4058, for example, to load or insert a staple cartridge 4008 into the carrier 4022. If the controller 4050 detects that a staple cartridge 4008 has been attached, the controller 4050 may determine whether the attached staple cartridge has been previously fired by performing a second reading, or a plurality of readings, of the resistance-status. If a first resistance-status is detected, the controller 4050 may instruct the user that the attached staple cartridge 4008 has been previously fired and/or to replace the staple cartridge 4008.

[0257] The controller 4050 employs a resistance-status detector 4124 to detect a current resistance-status and, in turn, determine whether the conductive gate 4160 is in the open configuration, the first closed configuration, or the second closed configuration. In at least one aspect, the resistance-status detector 4124 may comprise a current sensor. For example, the controller 4050 may cause a predetermined voltage potential to be generated between the first end-point 4168 and the second end-point 4170, and then measure the current passing through the conductive gate 4160. If the measured current corresponds to the first resistance, the controller 4050 determines that the conductive gate 4160 is at the first closed configuration. On the other hand, if the measured current corresponds to the second resistance, the controller determines that the conductive gate 4160 is at the second closed configuration. Finally, if no current is detected, the controller 4050 determines that the conductive gate 4160 is at the open configuration. In at least one aspect, the resistance-status detector 4124 may comprise other sensors such as, for example, a voltage sensor.

[0258] In various instances, one or more controllers of the present disclosure such as, for example, the controller 4050 may be implemented using integrated and/or discrete hardware elements, software elements, and/or a combination of both. Examples of integrated hardware elements may include processors, microprocessors, controllers, integrated circuits, application specific integrated circuits (ASIC), programmable logic devices (PLD), digital signal processors (DSP), field programmable gate arrays (FPGA), logic gates, registers, semiconductor devices, chips, microchips, chip sets, microcontroller, system-on-chip (SoC), and/or system-in-package (SIP). Examples of discrete hardware elements may include circuits and/or circuit elements (e.g.,

logic gates, field effect transistors, bipolar transistors, resistors, capacitors, inductors, relay and so forth). In other embodiments, one or more controllers of the present disclosure may include a hybrid circuit comprising discrete and integrated circuit elements or components on one or more substrates, for example.

[0259] In one embodiment, as illustrated in FIG. 72, a circuit 4080 may comprise a controller comprising one or more processors 4082 (e.g., microprocessor, microcontroller) coupled to at least one memory circuit 4084. The at least one memory circuit 4084 stores machine executable instructions that when executed by the processor 4082, cause the processor 4082 to execute machine instructions to implement one or more of the functions performed by one or more controllers of the present disclosure such as, for example, the controller 4050.

[0260] The processor 4082 may be any one of a number of single or multi-core processors known in the art. The memory circuit 4084 may comprise volatile and non-volatile storage media. In one embodiment, as illustrated in FIG. 72, the processor 4082 may include an instruction processing unit 4086 and an arithmetic unit 4088. The instruction processing unit may be configured to receive instructions from the one memory circuit 4084.

[0261] In one embodiment, a circuit 4090 may comprise a finite state machine comprising a combinational logic circuit 4092, as illustrated in FIG. 73, configured to implement one or more of the functions performed by one or more controllers of the present disclosure such as, for example, the controller 4050. In one embodiment, a circuit 4200 may comprise a finite state machine comprising a sequential logic circuit, as illustrated in FIG. 74. The sequential logic circuit 4200 may comprise the combinational logic circuit 4202 and at least one memory circuit 4204, for example. The at least one memory circuit 4204 can store a current state of the finite state machine, as illustrated in FIG. 74. The sequential logic circuit 4200 or the combinational logic circuit 4202 can be configured to implement one or more of the functions performed by one or more controllers of the present disclosure such as, for example, the controller 4050. In certain instances, the sequential logic circuit 4200 may be synchronous or asynchronous.

[0262] In other embodiments, the circuit may comprise a combination of the processor 4082 and the finite state machine to implement one or more of the functions performed by one or more controllers of the present disclosure such as, for example, the controller 4050. In other embodiments, the finite state machine may comprise a combination of the combinational logic circuit 4090 and the sequential logic circuit 4200.

[0263] In some cases, various embodiments may be implemented as an article of manufacture. The article of manufacture may include a computer readable storage medium arranged to store logic, instructions and/or data for performing various operations of one or more embodiments. In various embodiments, for example, the article of manufacture may comprise a magnetic disk, optical disk, flash memory or firmware containing computer program instructions suitable for execution by a general purpose processor or application specific processor. The embodiments, however, are not limited in this context.

[0264] The functions of the various functional elements, logical blocks, modules, and circuits elements described in connection with the embodiments disclosed herein may be implemented in the general context of computer executable instructions, such as software, control modules, logic, and/or logic modules executed by the processing unit. Generally, software, control modules, logic, and/or logic modules comprise any software element arranged to perform particular operations. Software, control modules, logic, and/or logic modules can comprise routines, programs, objects, components, data structures and the like that perform particular tasks or implement particular abstract data types. An implementation of the software, control modules, logic, and/or logic modules and techniques may be stored on and/or transmitted across some form of computer-readable media. In this regard, computer-readable media can be any available medium or media useable to store information and accessible by a computing device. Some embodiments also may be practiced in distributed computing environments where operations are performed by one or more remote processing devices that are linked through a communications network. In a distributed computing environment, software, control modules, logic, and/or logic modules may be located in both local and remote computer storage media including memory storage devices.

[0265] Additionally, it is to be appreciated that the embodiments described herein illustrate example implementations, and that the functional elements, logical blocks, modules, and circuits elements may be implemented in various other ways which are consistent with the described embodiments. Furthermore, the operations performed by such functional elements, logical blocks, modules, and circuits elements may be combined and/or separated for a given implementation and may be performed by a greater number or fewer number of components or modules. As will be apparent to those of skill in the art upon reading the present disclosure, each of the individual embodiments described and illustrated herein has discrete components and

features which may be readily separated from or combined with the features of any of the other several aspects without departing from the scope of the present disclosure. Any recited method can be carried out in the order of events recited or in any other order which is logically possible

[0266] The foregoing detailed description has set forth various embodiments of the devices and/or processes via the use of block diagrams, flowcharts, and/or examples. Insofar as such block diagrams, flowcharts, and/or examples contain one or more functions and/or operations, it will be understood by those within the art that each function and/or operation within such block diagrams, flowcharts, or examples can be implemented, individually and/or collectively, by a wide range of hardware, software, firmware, or virtually any combination thereof. In one embodiment, several portions of the subject matter described herein may be implemented via Application Specific Integrated Circuits (ASICs), Field Programmable Gate Arrays (FPGAs), digital signal processors (DSPs), or other integrated formats. Those skilled in the art will recognize, however, that some aspects of the embodiments disclosed herein, in whole or in part, can be equivalently implemented in integrated circuits, as one or more computer programs running on one or more computers (e.g., as one or more programs running on one or more computer systems), as one or more programs running on one or more processors (e.g., as one or more programs running on one or more microprocessors), as firmware, or as virtually any combination thereof, and that designing the circuitry and/or writing the code for the software and or firmware would be well within the skill of one of skill in the art in light of this disclosure. In addition, those skilled in the art will appreciate that the mechanisms of the subject matter described herein are capable of being distributed as a program product in a variety of forms, and that an illustrative embodiment of the subject matter described herein applies regardless of the particular type of signal bearing medium used to actually carry out the distribution. Examples of a signal bearing medium include, but are not limited to, the following: a recordable type medium such as a floppy disk, a hard disk drive, a Compact Disc (CD), a Digital Video Disk (DVD), a digital tape, a computer memory, etc.; and a transmission type medium such as a digital and/or an analog communication medium (e.g., a fiber optic cable, a waveguide, a wired communications link, a wireless communication link (e.g., transmitter, receiver, transmission logic, reception logic, etc.), etc.).

[0267] Various mechanisms are described herein for detecting attachment of a staple cartridge to a surgical stapling and cutting instrument. In addition, various mechanisms are described

herein for determining whether an attached staple cartridge is spent. Since firing a surgical stapling and cutting instrument in the absence of an unspent and properly attached staple cartridge presents a significant danger to the patient, an electromagnetic lockout mechanism 4300 is employed in connection with a firing system such as, for example, the firing system 4056 to prevent firing the surgical stapling and cutting instrument if a staple cartridge is not attached to a carrier 4022 of the surgical stapling and cutting instrument, or if an attached staple cartridge is spent.

[0268] Referring to FIGS. 75-78, a lockout mechanism 4300 for a surgical stapling and cutting instrument interacts with a drive train 4302 of the firing system 4056. The lockout mechanism 4300 comprises an electro-mechanical lockout that includes a latch 4304 transitionable between a locked configuration with a drive train 4302 and an unlocked configuration with the drive train 4302. In the unlocked configuration, as illustrated in FIG. 77, the drive train 4302 is permitted to advance to deploy staples into tissue and/or cut the tissue. In the locked configuration, illustrated in FIG. 76, the drive train 4302 is prevented from being advanced either because no staple cartridge is attached to the carrier 4022 or an attached staple cartridge is spent.

[0269] As illustrated in FIG. 75, the drive train 4302 includes a hole 4306 configured to receive the latch 4304 when the latch 4304 is in the locked configuration. An electrical circuit 4308 is configured to selectively transition the latch 4304 between the locked configuration and the unlocked configuration. The electrical circuit 4308 includes an electrical magnet 4310 which is configured to selectively transition the lockout mechanism 4300 between the locked configuration and the unlocked configuration. The electrical circuit 4308 further includes a power source 4312 and a power relay 4314 configured to selectively transmit energy to power the electrical magnet 4310. Powering the electrical magnet 4310 causes the lockout mechanism 4300 to be transitioned from a locked configuration to an unlocked configuration. In an alternative embodiment, powering the electrical magnet 4310 can cause the lockout mechanism 4300 to be transitioned from an unlocked configuration to a locked configuration.

[0270] The electrical magnet 4310 is configured to selectively move the latch 4304 between a first position, where the latch 4304 is at least partially positioned in the hole 4306, and a second position, where the latch 4304 is outside the hole 4306. In other words, the electrical magnet 4310 is configured to selectively move the latch 4304 between a first position, where the latch 4304 interferes with advancement of the drive train 4302, and a second position, where the latch

4304 permits advancement of the drive train 4302. In an alternative embodiment, a drive train of the firing system 4056 comprises a protrusion or a latch configured to be received in a hole of a corresponding structure that is operably attached to the electrical magnet 4310. In such an embodiment, the electrical magnet 4310 is configured to selectively move the structure comprising the hole between the first position and the second position. Although a latch and a corresponding structure that includes a hole are described in connection with the lockout mechanism 4300, it is understood that other mechanical mating members can be employed.

[0271] As illustrated in FIG. 75, the lockout mechanism 4300 further includes a piston 4315 comprising a biasing member such as, for example, a spring 4316 movable between an first compressed configuration, as illustrated in FIG. 76, and a second compressed configuration, as illustrated in FIG. 77. In the second compressed configuration, the spring 4316 lifts or maintains the latch 4304 out of engagement with the drive train 4302, as illustrated in FIG. 77. When the spring 4316 is allowed to return to the first compressed configuration, the latch 4304 is also returned into engagement with the drive train 4302, as illustrated in FIG. 76.

[0272] Further to the above, a permanent magnet 4318 is attached to the latch 4304. Alternatively, the latch 4304, or at least a portion thereof, can be made from a ferromagnetic material. When the electrical circuit 4308 activates the electrical magnet 4310, the permanent magnet 4318 is attracted toward the electrical magnet 4310 causing the spring 4316 to be biased or compressed. In addition, the permanent magnet 4318 causes the latch 4304 to be lifted or transitioned out of engagement with the drive train 4302, as illustrated in FIG. 77. However, when the electrical circuit 4308 deactivates the electrical magnet 4310, the biasing force of the spring 4316 returns the permanent magnet 4318 and the latch 4304 to their original positions where the latch 4304 is engaged with the drive train 4302, as illustrated in FIG. 76.

[0273] Referring to FIG. 78, a safety mechanism 4347 of a surgical stapling and cutting instrument may include a controller 4050 which may comprise a processor 4052 and/or one or more storage mediums such as, for example, a memory 4054. By executing instruction code stored in the memory 4054, the processor 4052 may control activating and/or deactivating the lockout mechanism 4300. The processor 4052 may receive input 4320 regarding whether a staple cartridge is attached to the carrier 4022 and/or whether an attached staple cartridge is spent. Depending on the received input, the processor 4052 may activate or deactivate the lockout

mechanism 4300 to permit or prevent the firing system 4056 from being used to perform a staple firing stroke.

[0274] FIGS. 80-82B generally depict a motor-driven surgical fastening and cutting instrument 4500. As illustrated in FIGS. 80 and 81, the surgical instrument 4500 includes a handle assembly 4502, a shaft assembly 4504, and a power assembly 4506 ("power source," "power pack," or "battery pack"). The shaft assembly 4504 includes an end effector 4508 which can be configured to act as an endocutter for clamping, severing, and/or stapling tissue, although, in other instances, different types of end effectors may be used, such as end effectors for other types of surgical devices, graspers, cutters, staplers, clip appliers, access devices, drug/gene therapy devices, ultrasound devices, RF device, and/or laser devices, for example. Several RF devices may be found in U.S. Patent No. 5,403,312, entitled ELECTROSURGICAL HEMOSTATIC DEVICE, which issued on April 4, 1995, and U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 12/031,573, entitled SURGICAL FASTENING AND CUTTING INSTRUMENT HAVING RF ELECTRODES, filed February 14, 2008, the entire disclosures of which are incorporated herein by reference in their entirety.

[0275] Referring primarily to FIGS. 81-82B, the handle assembly 4502 can be employed with a plurality of interchangeable shaft assemblies such as, for example, the shaft assembly 4504. Such interchangeable shaft assemblies may comprise surgical end effectors such as, for example, the end effector 4508 that can be configured to perform one or more surgical tasks or procedures. Examples of suitable interchangeable shaft assemblies are disclosed in U.S. Provisional Patent Application Serial No. 61/782,866, entitled CONTROL SYSTEM OF A SURGICAL INSTRUMENT, and filed March 14, 2013, the entire disclosure of which is hereby incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

[0276] Referring primarily to FIG. 81, the handle assembly 4502 may comprise a housing 4510 that contains a handle 4512 that may be configured to be grasped, manipulated and actuated by a clinician. However, it will be understood that the various arrangements of the various forms of interchangeable shaft assemblies disclosed herein may also be effectively employed in connection with robotically-controlled surgical systems. Thus, the term "housing" may also encompass a housing or similar portion of a robotic system that houses or otherwise operably supports at least one drive system that is configured to generate and apply at least one control motion which could be used to actuate the interchangeable shaft assemblies disclosed herein and

their respective equivalents. For example, the interchangeable shaft assemblies disclosed herein may be employed with various robotic systems, instruments, components and methods disclosed in U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 13/118,241, entitled SURGICAL STAPLING INSTRUMENTS WITH ROTATABLE STAPLE DEPLOYMENT, now U.S. Patent No. 9,072,535, the entire disclosure of which is incorporated by reference herein.

[0277] Referring again to FIG. 81, the handle assembly 4502 operably supports a plurality of drive systems therein that can be configured to generate and apply various control motions to corresponding portions of the interchangeable shaft assembly that is operably attached thereto. For example, the handle assembly 4502 operably supports a first or closure drive system, which is employed to apply closing and opening motions to the shaft assembly 4504 while operably attached or coupled to the handle assembly 4502. The handle assembly 4502 operably supports a firing drive system that is configured to apply firing motions to corresponding portions of the interchangeable shaft assembly attached thereto.

[0278] Referring primarily to FIGS. 82A and 82B, the handle assembly 4502 includes a motor 4514 which is controlled by a motor control circuit 4515 and is employed by the firing system of the surgical instrument 4500. The motor 4514 may be a DC brushed driving motor having a maximum rotation of, approximately, 25,000 RPM. Alternatively, the motor 4514 may include a brushless motor, a cordless motor, a synchronous motor, a stepper motor, or any other suitable electric motor. The motor control circuit 4515 may comprise an H-Bridge field-effect transistors (FETs) 4519, as illustrated in FIGS. 82A and 82B. The motor 4514 is powered by the power assembly 4506 (FIGS. 82A and 82B) which can be releasably mounted to the handle assembly 4502 for supplying control power to the surgical instrument 4500. The power assembly 4506 comprises a battery which may include a number of battery cells connected in series that can be used as the power source to power the surgical instrument 4500. The battery cells of the power assembly 4506 may be replaceable and/or rechargeable. In at least one example, the battery cells can be Lithium-Ion batteries which can be separably couplable to the power assembly 4506.

[0279] The shaft assembly 4504 includes a shaft assembly controller 4522 which communicates with the power management controller 4516 through an interface while the shaft assembly 4504 and the power assembly 4506 are coupled to the handle assembly 4502. The interface may comprise a first interface portion 4525 which includes one or more electric connectors for coupling engagement with corresponding shaft assembly electric connectors and a

second interface portion 4527 which includes one or more electric connectors for coupling engagement with corresponding power assembly electric connectors to permit electrical communication between the shaft assembly controller 4522 and the power management controller 4516 while the shaft assembly 4504 and the power assembly 4506 are coupled to the handle assembly 4502. One or more communication signals can be transmitted through the interface to communicate one or more of the power requirements of the attached interchangeable shaft assembly 4504 to the power management controller 4516. In response, the power management controller modulates the power output of the battery of the power assembly 4506, as described below in greater detail, in accordance with the power requirements of the attached shaft assembly 4504. One or more of the electric connectors comprise switches which can be activated after mechanical coupling engagement of the handle assembly 4502 to the shaft assembly 4504 and/or to the power assembly 4506 to allow electrical communication between the shaft assembly controller 4522 and the power management controller 4516.

[0280] The interface facilitates transmission of the one or more communication signals between the power management controller 4516 and the shaft assembly controller 4522 by routing such communication signals through a main controller 4517 residing in the handle assembly 4502. Alternatively, the interface can facilitate a direct line of communication between the power management controller 4516 and the shaft assembly controller 4522 through the handle assembly 4502 while the shaft assembly 4504 and the power assembly 4506 are coupled to the handle assembly 4502.

[0281] The main controller 4517 may be any single core or multicore processor such as those known under the trade name ARM Cortex by Texas Instruments. The surgical instrument 4500 may comprise a power management controller 4516 such as a safety microcontroller platform comprising two microcontroller-based families such as TMS570 and RM4x known under the trade name Hercules ARM Cortex R4, also by Texas Instruments. Nevertheless, other suitable substitutes for microcontrollers and safety processor may be employed, without limitation. The safety processor may be configured specifically for IEC 61508 and ISO 26262 safety critical applications, among others, to provide advanced integrated safety features while delivering scalable performance, connectivity, and memory options.

[0282] The main controller 4517 may be an LM 4F230H5QR, available from Texas Instruments. The Texas Instruments LM4F230H5QR is an ARM Cortex-M4F Processor Core

comprising on-chip memory of 256 KB single-cycle flash memory, or other non-volatile memory, up to 40 MHz, a prefetch buffer to improve performance above 40 MHz, a 32 KB single-cycle serial random access memory (SRAM), internal read-only memory (ROM) loaded with StellarisWare® software, 2KB electrically erasable programmable read-only memory (EEPROM), one or more pulse width modulation (PWM) modules, one or more quadrature encoder inputs (QEI) analog, one or more 12-bit Analog-to-Digital Converters (ADC) with 12 analog input channels, among other features that are readily available for the product datasheet. The present disclosure should not be limited in this context.

[0283] The power assembly 4506 includes a power management circuit which comprises the power management controller 4516, a power modulator 4538, and a current sense circuit 4536. The power management circuit is configured to modulate power output of the battery based on the power requirements of the shaft assembly 4504 while the shaft assembly 4504 and the power assembly 4506 are coupled to the handle assembly 4502. For example, the power management controller 4516 can be programmed to control the power modulator 4538 of the power output of the power assembly 4506 and the current sense circuit 4536 is employed to monitor power output of the power assembly 4506 to provide feedback to the power management controller 4516 about the power output of the battery so that the power management controller 4516 may adjust the power output of the power assembly 4506 to maintain a desired output.

[0284] It is noteworthy that one or more of the controllers of the present disclosure may comprise one or more processors and/or memory units which may store a number of software modules. Although certain modules and/or blocks of the surgical instrument 4500 may be described by way of example, it can be appreciated that a greater or lesser number of modules and/or blocks may be used. Further, although various instances may be described in terms of modules and/or blocks to facilitate description, such modules and/or blocks may be implemented by one or more hardware components, e.g., processors, Digital Signal Processors (DSPs), Programmable Logic Devices (PLDs), Application Specific Integrated Circuits (ASICs), circuits, registers and/or software components, e.g., programs, subroutines, logic and/or combinations of hardware and software components.

[0285] The surgical instrument 4500 may comprise an output device 4542 which includes one or more devices for providing a sensory feedback to a user. Such devices may comprise visual feedback devices (e.g., an LCD display screen, LED indicators), audio feedback devices (e.g., a

speaker, a buzzer) or tactile feedback devices (e.g., haptic actuators). The output device 4542 may comprise a display 4543 which may be included in the handle assembly 4502. The shaft assembly controller 4522 and/or the power management controller 4516 can provide feedback to a user of the surgical instrument 4500 through the output device 4542. The interface 4524 can be configured to connect the shaft assembly controller 4522 and/or the power management controller 4516 to the output device 4542. The reader will appreciate that the output device 4542 can instead be integrated with the power assembly 4506. In such circumstances, communication between the output device 4542 and the shaft assembly controller 4522 may be accomplished through the interface 4524 while the shaft assembly 4504 is coupled to the handle assembly 4502.

[0286] Having described a surgical instrument 4500 in general terms, the description now turns to a detailed description of various electrical/electronic component of the surgical instrument 4500. For expedience, any references herein to the surgical instrument 4500 should be construed to refer to the surgical instrument 4500 shown in connection with FIGS. 80-82B. Turning to FIG. 79, a circuit 4700 is depicted. The circuit 4700 is configured to control a powered surgical instrument, such as the surgical instrument 4500 illustrated in FIG. 80. The circuit 4700 is configured to control one or more operations of the powered surgical instrument 4500. The circuit 4700 includes a safety processor 4704 and a main or primary processor 4702. The safety processor 4704 and/or the primary processor 4702 are configured to interact with one or more additional circuit elements to control operation of the powered surgical instrument 4500. The primary processor 4702 comprises a plurality of inputs coupled to one or more circuit elements. The circuit 4700 can be a segmented circuit. In various instances, the circuit 4700 may be implemented by any suitable circuit, such as a printed circuit board assembly (PCBA) within the powered surgical instrument 4500.

[0287] It should be understood that the term processor as used herein includes any microprocessor, microcontroller, or other basic computing device that incorporates the functions of a computer's central processing unit (CPU) on an integrated circuit or at most a few integrated circuits. The processor is a multipurpose, programmable device that accepts digital data as input, processes it according to instructions stored in its memory, and provides results as output. It is an example of sequential digital logic, as it has internal memory. Processors operate on numbers and symbols represented in the binary numeral system.

[0288] The primary processor 4702 is any single core or multicore processor such as those known under the trade name ARM Cortex by Texas Instruments. The safety processor 4604 may be a safety microcontroller platform comprising two microcontroller-based families such as TMS570 and RM4x known under the trade name Hercules ARM Cortex R4, also by Texas Instruments. Nevertheless, other suitable substitutes for microcontrollers and safety processor may be employed, without limitation. In one embodiment, the safety processor 4704 may be configured specifically for IEC 61508 and ISO 26262 safety critical applications, among others, to provide advanced integrated safety features while delivering scalable performance, connectivity, and memory options.

[0289] The primary processor 4702 may be an LM 4F230H5QR, available from Texas Instruments. The Texas Instruments LM4F230H5QR is an ARM Cortex-M4F Processor Core comprising on-chip memory of 256 KB single-cycle flash memory, or other non-volatile memory, up to 40 MHz, a prefetch buffer to improve performance above 40 MHz, a 32 KB single-cycle serial random access memory (SRAM), internal read-only memory (ROM) loaded with StellarisWare® software, 2KB electrically erasable programmable read-only memory (EEPROM), one or more pulse width modulation (PWM) modules, one or more quadrature encoder inputs (QEI) analog, one or more 12-bit Analog-to-Digital Converters (ADC) with 12 analog input channels, among other features that are readily available for the product datasheet. Other processors may be readily substituted and, accordingly, the present disclosure should not be limited in this context. Examples of powered surgical instruments that include primary processors and safety processors are described in U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2015/0272574, entitled POWER MANAGEMENT THROUGH SLEEP OPTIONS OF SEGMENTED CIRCUIT AND WAKE UP CONTROL, filed March 26, 2014, the entire disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference.

[0290] The safety processor 4704 is configured to implement a watchdog function with respect to one or more operations of the powered surgical instrument 4500. In this regard, the safety processor 4704 employs the watchdog function to detect and recover from malfunctions of the primary processor 4702. During normal operation, the safety processor 4704 monitors for hardware faults or program errors of the primary processor 4702 and to initiate corrective action or actions. The corrective actions may include placing the primary processor 4702 in a safe state

and restoring normal system operation. In at least one aspect, the primary processor 4702 and the safety processor 4704 operate in a redundant mode.

[0291] The primary processor 4702 and the safety processor 4704 are housed in a handle portion of the powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument 4500. At least one of the primary processor 4702 and the safety processor 4704 is in communication with a shaft processor 4706 through an interface 4707. The shaft processor 4706 is configured to receive input from a cartridge detection system 4709 configured to detect whether an unspent staple cartridge has been attached to the powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument 4500.

[0292] The circuit 4700 further includes a motor 4714 operably coupled to a firing member of the powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument 4500. One or more rotary position encoders 4741 can be configured to provide feedback to the primary processor 4702 and/or the safety processor 4704 as to the operational status of the motor 4714. A motor driver, including a metal-oxide-semiconductor field-effect transistor (MOSFET) 4711, controls power delivery to the motor 4714 from a power source 4713. The MOSFET 4711 is controlled by an AND logic gate 4717. A high output of the AND logic gate 4717 causes the MOSFET 4711 to be activated, which causes the motor 4714 to run. The high output of the AND logic gate 4717 depends on receiving an input from the primary processor 4702 and the safety processor 4704, as illustrated in FIG. 79. The primary processor 4702 and the safety processor 4704 are configured to independently determine whether to allow the motor 4714 to run. Said another way, the primary processor 4702 and the safety processor 4704 are configured to independently determine whether to permit advancement of the firing member of the powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument 4500.

[0293] In the event of an agreement, where both of the primary processor 4702 and the safety processor 4704 determine to run the motor 4714, the AND logic gate 4717 produces a high output causing the MOSFET 4711 to be activated thereby allowing the motor 4714 to run and, in turn, the firing member to be advanced to fire the powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument 4500. However, in the event of a disagreement, where only one of the primary processor 4702 and the safety processor 4704 determines to run the motor 4714 while the other one of the primary processor 4702 and the safety processor 4704 determines not to run the motor 4714, the AND logic gate 4717 fails to produce a high output and, in turn, the MOSFET 4711 remains inactive.

[0294] Further to the above, the decision as to whether to run the motor 4714 depends, at least in part, on information communicated to the primary processor 4702 and/or the safety processor 4704 through the interface 4707 regarding whether or not an unspent staple cartridge has been attached to the powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument 4500. As described in greater detail elsewhere herein, a cartridge detection system 4709 can be employed to determine, among other things, whether or not an unspent staple cartridge, is attached to the powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument 4500.

[0295] Referring to FIGS. 79A-79B, a translatable staple firing member 4460 of a stapling assembly 4400 of the powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument 4500 is movable between a proximal, unfired, or start position and a distal, fired, or end position along a staple firing path 4463. A detectable magnetic element 4461, for example, is mounted to the staple firing member 4460 which moves along, or at least substantially along, the staple firing path 4463. In at least one instance, the magnetic element 4461 is a permanent magnet, for example, which is comprised of iron, nickel, and/or any other suitable material. The cartridge detection system 4709 comprises a first, or proximal, sensor 4401' and a second, or distal, sensor 4401 which are configured to detect the magnetic element 4461 as it moves along the staple firing path 4463 with the staple firing member 4460. The first sensor 4401' and the second sensor 4401 each comprise a Hall Effect sensor; however, the sensors 4401' and 4401 can comprise any suitable sensor. The sensors 4401' and 4401 output a voltage that varies depending on their respective distances from the magnetic element 4461 (a higher voltage is output when the distance is small and a lesser voltage is output when the distance is great).

[0296] Further to the above, the cartridge detection system 4709 comprises a sensor circuit 4708 including, among other things, a voltage source 4403, for example, in communication with the sensors 4401' and 4401 which supplies power to the sensors 4401' and 4401. The sensor circuit 4708 further comprises a first switch 4405' in communication with the first sensor 4401' and a second switch 4405 in communication with the second sensor 4401. In at least one instance, the switches 4401' and 4401 each comprise a transistor, such as a FET, for example. The outputs of the sensors 4401', 4401 are connected to the central (gate) terminal of the switches 4405', 4405, respectively. Prior to the firing stroke of the staple firing member 4460, the output voltages from the sensors 4401', 4401 are high so that the first switch 4405' and the second switch 4405 are in closed conditions.

[0297] When the magnetic element 4461 passes by the first sensor 4401', the voltage output of the first sensor 4401' is sufficient to change the first switch between a closed condition and an open condition. Similarly, the voltage output of the second sensor 4401 is sufficient to change the second switch 4405 between a closed condition and an open condition when the magnetic element 4461 passes by the second sensor 4401. When both of the switches 4405' and 4405 are in an open condition, a ground potential is applied to an operational amplifier circuit 4406. The operational amplifier circuit 4406 is in signal communication with an input channel of a shaft processor 4706 of the motor controller and, when a ground potential is applied to the operational amplifier circuit 4406, the processor 4706 receives a ground signal from the circuit 4406.

[0298] When the processor 4706 receives a ground signal from the circuit 4406, the processor 4706 can determine that the staple firing stroke has been completed and that the staple cartridge positioned in the stapling assembly 4400 has been completely spent. Other embodiments are envisioned in which the sensor system is configured to detect a partial firing stroke of the staple firing member 4460 and supply a signal to the processor 4706 that indicates that the staple cartridge has been at least partially spent. In either event, the motor controller can be configured to prevent the staple firing member 4460 from performing another firing stroke until the staple cartridge has been replaced with an unspent cartridge. In at least one instance, further to the above, the sensor system comprises a sensor configured to detect whether the spent cartridge has been detached from the stapling assembly and/or whether an unspent cartridge has been assembled to the stapling assembly.

[0299] Further to the above, the sensor system can be configured to detect whether the staple firing member 4460 has been retracted along a retraction path 4462. In at least one instance, the magnetic element 4461 can be detected by the sensor 4401 as the magnetic element 4461 is retracted along the path 4462 and change the second switch 4405 back into a closed condition. Similarly, the magnetic element 4461 can be detected by the sensor 4401' as the magnetic element 4461 is retracted along the path 4463 and change the first switch 4405' back into a closed condition. By closing the switches 4405 and 4405', the voltage polarity from the battery 4403 is applied to the circuit 4406 and, as a result, the processor 4706 receives a Vcc signal from the circuit 4406 on its input channel.

[0300] Further to the above, the cartridge detection system 4709 includes a cartridge circuit 4724. The cartridge circuit 4624 is similar in many respects to the cartridge circuit 4024 (FIG.

59). For example, the cartridge circuit 4724 includes a trace element 4734 which is transitioned between a severed status, where the staple cartridge is spent, and an intact status, where the staple cartridge is unspent. As illustrated in FIG. 79, the trace element 4734 is positioned in parallel with a first resistive element 4737 and in series with a second resistive element 4737' to insure that the detection of failure of the sensor or interruption of its circuit is not merely lack of signal output. One or more sensors, including but not limited to voltage and/or current sensors, can be employed to detect a current status and/or a transition between severed status and an intact status.

[0301] As illustrated in FIG. 79, accurate communications between the processors 4702, 4704, and 4706 can be ensured using security codes such as, for example, cyclic redundancy checks (CRC) which are error-detecting codes attached to data communications to detect accidental changes in communicated data which may occur during data transmission. Blocks of data entering these systems get a short check value attached, based on the remainder of a polynomial division of their contents. In certain instances, two parameter sets with separate CRCs are loaded into the shaft processor 4706 wherein one is normal and the other has a STOP command, for example, and parameters like a 0mm transection length.

[0302] In at least one instance, the primary processor 4702 tracks the status of the trace element 4734 via a shared universal asynchronous receiver/transmitter (UART) pin, and the position of the motor 4714 via the rotary position encoder 4741, for example. The primary processor 4702 can be configured to prevent the motor 4714 from running if the primary processor 4702 detects that the trace element 4734 has been severed.

[0303] In various instances, the primary processor 4702 and/or the safety processor 4704 can be configured to prevent the motor 4714 from running if a movement of the firing member is detected by the proximal sensor 4401', as described above, after a severed status of the trace element 4734 is detected. The detection of the movement of the firing member and the severed status of the trace element 4734 can be performed by the cartridge detection system 4709, as described above. The shaft processor 4706 can be configured to send a STOP command to the primary processor 4702 and/or the safety processor 4704 a severed status of the trace element 4734 is detected. The communication between the shaft processor 4706, the primary processor 4702, and/or the safety processor 4704 can be a CRC communication, for example. In various instances, the safety processor 4704 is configured to watch for the STOP command and to enter a

sleep mode once the STOP command is received. In various instances, the safety processor 4704 is configured to stop the motor 4714 from running if a computed CRC, which is computed from the received data, does not match the received CRC. A CRC verification module can be employed by the safety processor 4704 to compute a CRC from the received data and compare the computed CRC with the received CRC.

[0304] In various instances, the primary processor 4702, the safety processor 4704, and/or the shaft processor 4706 may comprise security code generator modules and/or security code verification modules. Security codes can be generated by CHECK-SUM, HASH, or other suitable protocols. The security code generation module and/or the security code verification module may be implemented in hardware, firmware, software or any combination thereof. Ensuring the validity of the communications between the primary processor 4702, the safety processor 4704, and/or the shaft processor 4706 is important because body fluids may interfere with communicated signals between such processors.

[0305] As described above, the shaft processor 4706 can be configured to send a STOP command to the primary processor 4702 and/or the safety processor 4704 via a CRC communication. In one example, the shaft processor 4706 includes a security code generator configured to generate a security code and attached the security code to the STOP command transmitted to the primary processor 4702, for example. The primary processor 4702 includes a security code verification module configured to verify the integrity of the transmission received from the shaft processor 4706. The security code verification module is configured to compute a security code based on the received STOP command data and compare the computed security code to the security code received with the STOP command data. If the primary processor 4702 confirms the integrity of the received message, the primary processor 4702 may activate a stop mode 4688, for example.

[0306] In certain instances, the safety processor 4704 may be tasked with ensuring the integrity of messages transmitted to the primary processor 4702. In one example, the safety processor 4704 includes a security code verification module configured to verify the integrity of a message transmission from the shaft processor 4706. The security code verification module of the safety processor 4704 is configured to compute a security code based on the received STOP command data and compare the computed security code to the security code received with the

STOP command data. If the safety processor 4704 confirms the integrity of the received message, the safety processor 4704 may activate a stop mode 4688 (FIG. 86), for example.

[0307] Turning now to FIG. 83, a circuit 4600 is configured to control a powered surgical instrument, such as the surgical instrument 4500 illustrated in FIG. 80. The circuit 4600 is configured to control one or more operations of the powered surgical instrument 4500. The circuit 4600 includes a safety processor 4604 and a main or primary processor 4602, which are similar in many respects to the safety processor 4704 and the primary processor 4702, respectively. The safety processor 4604 and/or the primary processor 4602 are configured to interact with one or more additional circuit elements to control operation of the powered surgical instrument 4500. The primary processor 4602 comprises a plurality of inputs coupled to one or more circuit elements. The circuit 4600 can be a segmented circuit. In various instances, the circuit 4600 may be implemented by any suitable circuit, such as a printed circuit board assembly (PCBA) within the powered surgical instrument 4500.

[0308] The circuit 4600 comprises a feedback element in the form of a display 4609. The display 4609 comprises a display connector coupled to the primary processor 4602. The display connector couples the primary processor 4602 to a display 4609 through one or more display driver integrated circuits. The display driver integrated circuits may be integrated with the display 4609 and/or may be located separately from the display 4609. The display 4609 may comprise any suitable display, such as an organic light-emitting diode (OLED) display, a liquid-crystal display (LCD), and/or any other suitable display. In some embodiments, the display 4609 is coupled to the safety processor 4604. Furthermore, the circuit 4600 further comprises one or more user controls 4611, for example.

[0309] The safety processor 4604 is configured to implement a watchdog function with respect to one or more operations of the powered surgical instrument 4500. In this regard, the safety processor 4604 employs the watchdog function to detect and recover from malfunctions of the primary processor 4602. During normal operation, the safety processor 4604 is configured to monitor for hardware faults or program errors of the primary processor 4602 and to initiate corrective action or actions. The corrective actions may include placing the primary processor 4602 in a safe state and restoring normal system operation.

[0310] In at least one aspect, the primary processor 4602 and the safety processor 4604 operate in a redundant mode. The primary processor 4602 and the safety processor 4604 are coupled to

at least a first sensor. The first sensor measures a first property of the surgical instrument 4500. The primary processor 4602 is configured to determine an output based on the measured first property of the surgical instrument 4500 and compare the output to a predetermined value. Likewise, the safety processor 4604 is configured to separately determine an output based on the measured first property of the surgical instrument 4500 and compare the output to the same predetermined value. The safety processor 4604 and the primary processor 4602 are configured to provide a signal indicative of the value of their determined outputs. When either the safety processor 4604 or the primary processor 4602 indicates a value outside of an acceptable range, appropriate safety measures can be activated. In certain instances, the primary processor 4602 and the safety processor 4604 receive their inputs from separate sensors that are configured to separately measure the first property of the surgical instrument 4500. In certain instances, when at least one of the safety processor 4604 and the primary processor 4602 indicates a value within an acceptable range, the surgical instrument 4500 is allowed to continue in a normal mode of operation. For example, the firing system 4056 can be allowed to complete a firing stroke of the surgical instrument 4500 when at least one of the safety processor 4604 and the primary processor 4602 indicates a value within an acceptable range. In such instances, a discrepancy between the values or results determined by the safety processor 4604 and the primary processor 4602 can be attributed to a faulty sensor or a calculation error, for example.

[0311] As illustrated in FIG. 83, linear position encoders 4640 and 4641 are coupled to the primary processor 4602 and the safety processor 4604, respectively. The position encoder 4640 provides speed and position information about a firing member of the powered surgical instrument 4500 to the primary processor 4602 an analog to digital converters 4623a (ADCs). Likewise, the position encoder 4640 provides speed and position information about a firing member of the powered surgical instrument 4500 to the safety processor 4604 through a separate analog to digital converter 4623b (ADCs). The primary processor 4602 and the safety processor 4604 are configured to execute an algorithm for calculating at least one acceleration of the firing member based on the information derived from the linear position encoders 4640 and 4641. The acceleration of the firing member can be determined based on the following equation:

$$a = \frac{v_2 - v_1}{t_2 - t_1}$$

, wherein a is the current acceleration of the firing member, wherein v_2 is a current velocity of the firing member recorded at time t_2 , and wherein v_1 is a previous velocity of the firing member at a previous time t_1 .

[0312] The acceleration of the firing member can also be determined based on the following equation:

$$a = \frac{d_2 - d_1}{(t_2 - t_1)^2}$$

, wherein a is the current acceleration of the firing member, wherein d_2 is a distance traveled by the firing member between an initial position and a current position during a time t_2 , and wherein d_1 is a distance traveled by the firing member between an initial position a previous position during a time t_1 .

[0313] The primary processor 4602 is further configured to compare the determined acceleration value to a predetermined threshold acceleration which can be stored in a memory unit in communication with the primary processor 4602, for example. Likewise, the safety processor 4604 is configured to compare its determined acceleration value to a predetermined threshold acceleration which can be stored in a memory unit in communication with the safety processor 4604, for example. In the event the primary processor 4602 and/or the safety processor 4604 determine that the determined acceleration values are beyond the a predetermined threshold acceleration, appropriate safety measures can be taken such as, for example, stopping power delivery to the motor 4514 and/or resetting the firing system 4056. Alternatively, in certain instances, when at least one of the safety processor 4604 and the primary processor 4602 indicates an acceptable acceleration value, the surgical instrument 4500 is allowed to continue in a normal mode of operation. For example, the firing system 4056 can be allowed to complete a firing stroke of the surgical instrument 4500 when at least one of the safety processor 4604 and the primary processor 4602 reports an acceptable acceleration. In such instances, a discrepancy between the values or results determined by the safety processor 4604 and the primary processor 4602 can be attributed to a faulty sensor or a calculation error, for example.

[0314] As described above, the primary processor 4602 and the safety processor 4604 are further configured to compare the determined acceleration values to a predetermined threshold acceleration which can be stored in a memory unit, for example. The threshold acceleration can be determined from a threshold force corresponding to a failure load of a lockout mechanism of

the firing system 4056. In certain instances, the failure load is known to be about 100 lbf. In such instances, Newton's second law of motion can be employed to determine the corresponding threshold acceleration based on the equation:

$$F = m \times a$$

, wherein F is the threshold force, and m is the mass exerting the force.

[0315] Acceleration of the firing member of the firing system 4056 can also be assessed by tracking the electrical current drawn by a motor 4514 during a firing stroke. The load on a firing member driven by the motor 4514 through a firing stroke is directly related the electrical current drawn by a motor 4514. Accordingly, the load experienced by the firing member can be assessed by measuring the electrical current drawn by the motor 4514 during a firing stroke. Newton's second law of motion can be employed to calculate the acceleration of the firing member based on the load experienced by the firing member which can be assessed by tracking the electrical current drawn by a motor 4514 during the firing stroke.

[0316] As illustrated in FIG. 84A, a sensor 4617 can be coupled to a motor control circuit 4619 to measure the current drawn by the motor 4514 during the firing stroke. In at least one instance, the sensor 4617 can be a current sensor or a Hall effect sensor, for example. The readings of the sensor 4617 can be amplified using a buffer amplifier 4625, digitized using an ADC 4623, and transmitted to the primary processor 4602 (FIG. 83) and the safety processor 4604 (FIG. 83) which are configured to execute an algorithm to determine the corresponding load on the firing member and determine an acceleration of the firing member based on Newton's second law of motion.

[0317] Referring to FIG. 84A, the sensor 4617 can be coupled to the motor control circuit 4619 to measure the current drawn by the motor 4514 during the firing stroke. During normal operation of the motor 4514, the readings of the sensor 4617 are expected to be within a normal predetermined range. As illustrated in FIG. 84B, the normal range can have a minimum threshold of about 0.5A, for example, and a maximum threshold of about 5.0A, for example. A sensor reading above the maximum threshold or a sensor reading above zero but below the minimum threshold can indicate a failure in the sensor 4617. The maximum threshold can be any value selected from a range of about 4.0A, for example, to 6.0A, for example. The minimum threshold can be any value selected from a range of about 0.4A, for example, to 0.6A, for example.

[0318] As described above, the readings of the sensor 4617 can be amplified using a buffer amplifier 4625, digitized using an ADC 4623, and transmitted to the primary processor 4602 which is configured to execute an algorithm to determine whether the readings of the sensor 4617 are within a predetermined normal range. In the event it is determined that the readings of the sensor 4617 is beyond the predetermined normal range, appropriate safety measures can be taken by the primary processor 4602. In one example, the primary processor 4602 may permit completion of the firing stroke in a safe mode because the abnormal motor current readings are likely due to a faulty sensor 4617. In another example, the primary processor may cause power delivery to the motor 4514 to be stopped and alert a user to utilize a mechanical bailout feature. The primary processor 4602 may alert a user through the display 4058 to contact a service department to replace the faulty sensor 4617. The primary processor 4602 may provide instructions on how to replace the faulty sensor 4617.

[0319] In certain instances, the safety processor 4604 can be configured to receive readings from another sensor, independent from the sensor 4617, configured to separately measure the current drawn by the motor 4514 during the firing stroke. Like the primary processor 4602, the safety processor 4604 can be configured to execute an algorithm to determine whether the readings of the other sensor are within a predetermined normal range. If at least one of the primary processor 4602 and the secondary processor 4604 determines that the current drawn by the motor 4514 is within the predetermined normal range, the motor 4514 is allowed to complete the firing stroke. In such instances, a discrepancy between the values or results determined by the safety processor 4604 and the primary processor 4602 are attributed to a faulty sensor or a calculation error, for example.

[0320] In certain instances, the primary processor 4602 and the safety processor 4604 can be configured to track or determine at least one acceleration of a firing member of the firing system 4056 using different techniques. If at least one of the primary processor 4602 and the safety processor 4604 determines that the acceleration of the firing member is within a normal range, the firing member is allowed to complete the firing stroke. A discrepancy between the acceleration values determined by the safety processor 4604 and the primary processor 4602 can be attributed to a faulty sensor or a calculation error. This ensures unnecessary interruptions of the firing system 4056 that are due to a faulty sensor or a calculation error.

[0321] In one example, the primary processor 4602 can be configured to determine or track an acceleration of a firing member of the firing system 4056 using a first technique. For example, the primary processor 4602 can be configured to determine or track an acceleration of the firing member by employing the sensor 4617 to measure the current drawn by the motor 4514. The primary processor 4602 can then execute an algorithm for calculating at least one acceleration of the firing member based on input from the sensor 4617, as described above. On the other hand, the safety processor 4604 can be configured to determine or track the acceleration of the firing member using a second technique, different than the first technique. For example, the safety processor 4604 can be configured to determine or track the same acceleration of the firing member by employing the position encoders 4640 to detect the position of the firing member during a firing stroke. The safety processor 4604 can execute an algorithm for calculating at least one acceleration of the firing member based on input from the position encoders 4640, as described above. The calculated accelerations can be compared against a predetermined normal range. In the event, the primary processor 4602 and the safety processor 4604 are in agreement that their respective acceleration values are within the normal range, the firing member is allowed to complete the firing stroke. If, however, the primary processor 4602 and the safety processor 4604 are in agreement that their respective acceleration values are outside the normal range, appropriate safety measures can be taken by the primary processor 4602, for example, as described above. In the event of a discrepancy between the outcomes determined by the primary processor 4602 and the safety processor 4604 with regard to the acceleration of the firing member, the firing member is allowed to complete the firing stroke.

[0322] Firing the powered surgical cutting and stapling instrument 4500 involves a mechanical component, where a firing trigger is squeezed by a user, and an electrical component, where an electrical current flows to the motor 4514 in response to a transition of the motor control circuit 4515 from an open configuration to a closed configuration when the firing trigger is squeezed by the user. A trigger-sensing control circuit 4627 (FIG. 84A) of the powered surgical cutting and stapling instrument 4500 includes a firing-trigger Hall effect sensor 4629 which is configured to detect the transition of the firing trigger 4550 between an open configuration and a closed configuration. In addition, the trigger-sensing control circuit 4627 also includes a verification-trigger Hall effect sensor 4631 configured to detect current drawn by the motor 4514 when the firing trigger is transitioned to the closed configuration. The sensors 4629 and 4631 are in signal

communication with the primary processor 4602 and/or the safety processor 4604. The readings of the sensor 4629 and 4631 are amplified using buffer amplifiers 4625, digitized using ADCs 4623 and transmitted to the primary processor 4602 and/or the safety processor 4604 for analysis and comparison.

[0323] During normal operation, the transmitted readings of the sensors 4629 and 4631 provide a redundant assurance to the primary processor 4602 that the mechanical and electrical components involved in the firing of the powered surgical cutting and stapling instrument 4500 are functioning properly. In the event of a disagreement, where the sensor 4629 indicates that firing trigger has been squeezed while the sensor 4631 indicates that no current is being drawn by the motor 4514, the primary processor 4602 may determine that the sensor 4631 is not functioning properly. Where the sensor 4629 fails to indicate that firing trigger has been squeezed while the sensor 4631 indicates that current is being drawn by the motor 4514, the primary processor 4602 may determine that the sensor 4629 is not functioning properly. In one aspect, the primary processor 4602 may permit completion of the firing stroke in a safe mode because the disagreement is attributed to a faulty sensor. In another example, the primary processor may cause power delivery to the motor 4514 to be stopped and alert a user, for example, to utilize a mechanical bailout feature. The primary processor 4602 may alert a user through the display 4058 to contact a service department to replace the faulty sensor. The primary processor 4602 may provide instructions on how to replace the faulty sensor.

[0324] As illustrated in FIG. 83, the primary processor 4602 and/or the safety processor 4604 are in signal communication with one or more linear position encoders 4640 and/or one or more rotary position encoders 4641. The rotary position encoder 4641 is configured to identify the rotational position and/or speed of a motor 4514. In addition, the linear position encoder 4640 is configured to identify the position and/or speed of the firing member which is driven by the motor 4514 during a firing stroke of the surgical cutting and stapling instrument 4500.

[0325] During normal operation, the readings of the rotary position encoder 4641 are in correlation with the readings of the linear position encoders 4640. This is because the motor 4514 is operably coupled to the firing member such that the rotation of the motor 4514 causes the firing member to be advanced during the firing stroke. The readings of the rotary position encoder 4641 may not correlate with the readings of the linear position encoders 4640 if the advancement speed of the firing member is outside a tolerance band as measured by the linear

position encoder 4640. Upon detecting a loss in the correlation between the readings of the rotary position encoder 4641 and the readings of the linear position encoders 4640, appropriate safety measures can be activated by the primary processor 4602 and/or the safety processor 4604.

[0326] In various instances, an input member such as, for example, a sensor or switch can be positioned in parallel with a first resistive element and in series with a second resistive element to insure that the detection of failure of the sensor or interruption of its circuit is not merely lack of signal output. Referring to FIG. 85, an electrical circuit 4650 includes a beginning-of-stroke switch 4652 positioned in parallel with a first resistive element 4654 and in series with a second resistive element 4656. In addition, the electrical circuit 4650 includes an end-of-stroke switch 4662 positioned in parallel with a first resistive element 4664 and in series with a second resistive element 4666. Examples of beginning and end of stroke switches are described in U.S. Patent No. 8,210,411, entitled MOTOR-DRIVEN SURGICAL CUTTING INSTRUMENT, issued on July 3, 2012, which is incorporated herein by reference its entirety.

[0327] The electrical circuit 4650 also includes a voltage source 4660 providing an input voltage of 5 volts, for example. As illustrated in FIG. 85, output voltages 4659 and 4669 can be processed by buffer amplifiers 4625 and ADCs 4623 to generate digital outputs which can be communicated to the primary processor 4602. The primary processor 4602 is configured to execute an algorithm to assess one or more statuses of the circuit 4650 based on the received digital outputs. In the event the output voltage 4659 is equal to the input voltage of the voltage source 4660, the primary processor 4602 determines that connection wires 4658 are disconnected. In the event the output voltage 4659 is equal to half of the input voltage of the voltage source 4660, the primary processor 4602 determines that connection wires 4658 are connected but the beginning-of-stroke switch 4652 is in an open configuration. In the event the output voltage 4659 is equal to one third of the input voltage of the voltage source 4660, the primary processor 4602 determines that connection wires 4658 are connected and the beginning-of-stroke switch 4652 is in a closed configuration. In the event the output voltage 4659 is equal to zero, the primary processor 4602 determines that there is a short in the circuit 4650. In certain instances, determining that the output voltage 4659 is equal to zero indicates a failure of the end-of-stroke switch 4652. In certain instances, determining that the output voltage 4659 is equal to the input voltage indicates a failure of the end-of-stroke switch 4652.

[0328] In the event the output voltage 4669 is equal to the input voltage of the voltage source 4660, the primary processor 4602 determines that connection wires 4668 are disconnected. In the event the output voltage 4669 is equal to half of the input voltage of the voltage source 4660, the primary processor 4602 determines that connection wires 4668 are connected but the end-of-stroke switch 4662 is in an open configuration. In the event the output voltage 4669 is equal to one third of the input voltage of the voltage source 4660, the primary processor 4602 determines that connection wires 4668 are connected and the end-of-stroke switch 4662 is in a closed configuration. In the event the output voltage 4669 is equal to zero, the primary processor 4602 determines that there is a short in the circuit 4650. In certain instances, determining that the output voltage 4669 is equal to zero indicates a failure of the end-of-stroke switch 4662. In certain instances, determining that the output voltage 4669 is equal to the input voltage indicates a failure of the end-of-stroke switch 4662.

[0329] Referring now to FIGS. 86, a powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument 4500 may comprise a failure response system 4681 that includes a number of operational modes that can be selectively engaged in response to input, or the lack thereof, from the above-described positions encoders, sensors, and/or switches of the powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument 4500. As illustrated in FIG. 86, a warning mode 4682 is activated if the readings of the sensor 4617, which represent current drawn by the motor 4514, are beyond a predetermined normal range. The warning mode 4682 is also activated if a failure of at least one of the beginning-of-stroke switch 4652 and the end-of-stroke switch 4662 is detected.

[0330] The warning mode 4682 is limited to providing a user of the powered surgical cutting and stapling instrument 4500 with a warning without taking additional steps to stop or modify the progress or parameters of a firing stroke. The warning mode 4682 is activated in situations where aborting a firing stroke is unnecessary. For example, the warning mode 4682 is activated when a detected error is deemed to be attributed to a failed sensor or switch. The warning mode 4682 employs the user interface 4058 to deliver a visual, audio, and/or haptic warning.

[0331] The powered surgical cutting and stapling instrument 4500 further includes a warning/back-up system mode 4680. The warning/back-up system mode 4680 is activated if the readings of the linear position encoder 4640 do not correlate with the readings of the rotary position encoder 4641. Like the warning mode 4682, the warning/back-up system mode 4680 employs the user interface 4058 to deliver a visual, audio, and/or haptic warning. In addition,

warning/back-up system mode 4680 causes a back-up system to be activated. During normal operation, a normal mode 4684 employs a primary system that includes primary sensors and primary control means. However, a back-up system which comprises secondary sensors and/or secondary control means is used in lieu of the primary system if an error is detected that warrants activation of the warning/back-up system mode 4680.

[0332] Further to the above, the powered surgical cutting and stapling instrument 4500 also includes a limp mode 4686 which is a failure response mode or state that is triggered if (i) the readings of the linear position encoder 4640 do not correlate with the readings of the rotary position encoder 4641 and (ii) a failure of at least one of the beginning-of-stroke switch 4652 and the end-of-stroke switch 4662 is detected. Like the warning mode 4682, the limp mode 4686 employs the user interface 4058 to deliver a visual, audio, and/or haptic warning. In addition, the limp mode 4686 slows the progress of the firing stroke.

[0333] In certain instances, the limp mode 4686 can reduce a current rotational speed of the motor 4514 by any percentage selected from a range of about 75% to about 25%. In one example, the limp mode 4686 can reduce a current rotational speed of the motor 4514 by 50%. In one example, the limp mode 4686 can reduce the current rotational speed of the motor 4514 by 75%. The limp mode 4686 may cause a current torque of the motor 4514 to be reduced by any percentage selected from a range of about 75% to about 25%. In one example, the limp mode 4686 may cause a current torque of the motor 4514 to be reduced by 50%.

[0334] Further to the above, the powered surgical cutting and stapling instrument 4500 also includes a stop mode 4688 which is an escalated failure response mode or state that is triggered if (i) the readings of the linear position encoder 4640 do not correlate with the readings of the rotary position encoder 4641, (ii) a failure of at least one of the beginning-of-stroke switch 4652 and the end-of-stroke switch 4662 is detected, and (iii) the readings of the sensor 4617, which represent current drawn by the motor 4514, are beyond a predetermined normal range. Like the warning mode 4682, the stop mode 4688 employs the user interface 4058 to deliver a visual, audio, and/or haptic warning. In addition, when triggered, the stop mode 4688 causes the motor 4514 to be deactivated or stopped leaving only a mechanical bailout system available for use to retract the firing member to a starting position. The stop mode 4688 employs the user interface 4058 to provide a user with instructions on operating the bailout system. Examples of suitable bailout systems are described in U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2015/0272569, entitled

FEEDBACK ALGORITHMS FOR MANUAL BAILOUT SYSTEMS FOR SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS, filed March 26, 2014, which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

[0335] The above-identified operational modes of the powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument 4500 create redundant electronic control pathways that enable operation of the powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument 4500 even as some of the inputs, switches, and/or sensors fail integrity checks. For example, as illustrated in FIG. 86, triggering the limp mode 4686 requires detecting two separate and discrete failures, and triggering the stop mode 4688 requires detecting three separate and discrete failures. A single failure, however, only triggers the warning mode 4682. In other words, the failure response system 4681 of the powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument 4500 is configured to escalate to a more secure mode of operation in response to an escalation in detected failures.

[0336] The failure response system 4681 can be implemented using integrated and/or discrete hardware elements, software elements, and/or a combination of both. Examples of integrated hardware elements may include processors, microprocessors, controllers, integrated circuits, application specific integrated circuits (ASIC), programmable logic devices (PLD), digital signal processors (DSP), field programmable gate arrays (FPGA), logic gates, registers, semiconductor devices, chips, microchips, chip sets, microcontroller, system-on-chip (SoC), and/or system-in-package (SIP). Examples of discrete hardware elements may include circuits and/or circuit elements (e.g., logic gates, field effect transistors, bipolar transistors, resistors, capacitors, inductors, relay and so forth). In other embodiments, one or more controllers of the present disclosure may include a hybrid circuit comprising discrete and integrated circuit elements or components on one or more substrates, for example.

[0337] In at least one instance, the failure response system 4681 can be implemented by a circuit including a controller that comprises one or more processors (e.g., microprocessor, microcontroller) coupled to at least one memory circuit. The at least one memory circuit stores machine executable instructions that when executed by the processor, cause the processor to execute machine instructions to implement one or more of the functions performed by the failure response system 4681. The processor may be any one of a number of single or multi-core processors known in the art. The memory circuit may comprise volatile and non-volatile storage media. The processor may include an instruction processing unit and an arithmetic unit. The

instruction processing unit may be configured to receive instructions from the one memory circuit.

[0338] In at least one aspect, the failure response system 4681 may comprise a finite state machine comprising a combinational logic circuit configured to implement one or more of the functions performed the failure response system 4681. In one embodiment, a failure response system 4681 may comprise a finite state machine comprising a sequential logic circuit. The sequential logic circuit may comprise the combinational logic circuit and at least one memory circuit, for example. The at least one memory circuit can store a current state of the finite state machine. The sequential logic circuit or the combinational logic circuit can be configured to implement one or more of the functions performed by one or more controllers of the present disclosure such as, for example, the controller. In certain instances, the sequential logic circuit may be synchronous or asynchronous.

[0339] In at least one aspect, as illustrated in FIG. 86, the failure response system 4681 is implemented, at least in part, using a number of logic gates. A logic circuit 4691 can be configured to deliver a binary input to an AND logic gate 4690 as to whether the readings of the linear position encoder 4640 correlate with the readings of the rotary position encoder 4641. The second input of the AND gate 4690 is delivered through an OR logic gate 4692 which receives inputs from the beginning-of-stroke switch 4652 and the end-of-stroke switch 4662. The OR logic gate 4692 delivers a high output to the AND logic gate 4690 if a failure of at least one of the beginning-of-stroke switch 4652 and the end-of-stroke switch 4662 is detected. The AND logic gate 4690 delivers a high output, which causes the limp mode 4686 to be activated, if the logic circuit 4691 and the OR logic gate 4692 deliver high outputs to the AND logic gate 4690.

[0340] Further to the above, a logic inverter or a NOT logic gate 4694 maintains the normal mode 4684 in the absence of a high output from the AND logic gate 4690. An AND gate 4696 is responsible for causing the stop mode 4688 to be activated upon receiving a high output from the AND logic gate 4690 and a high output from a high output from a logic circuit 4698 configured to monitor current drawn by the motor 4514. The logic circuit 4698 is configured to receive the readings of the sensor 4617, which represent current drawn by the motor 4514, and deliver a high output when such readings are beyond a predetermined normal range which indicates a sensor failure. An OR logic gate 4699 is configured to cause the warning mode 4682 to be activated upon receiving a high output from one of the logic circuit 4698 and the OR logic gate 4692.

[0341] Referring to FIG. 87, an alternative embodiment of a failure response system 4681' is depicted. The failure response system 4681' is similar in many respects to the failure response system 4681 and includes the normal mode 4684, the limp mode 4686, and the stop mode 4688. The failure response system 4681' includes the AND logic gate 4690, the OR logic gate 4692, and an AND logic gate 4674. A logic circuit 4670, which can be configured to implement a decision block, is configured to receive an input from the AND logic gate 4690. The logic circuit 4670 is configured to activate the limp mode 4686 if the logic circuit 4670 receives positive input from the AND logic gate 4690. However, if the logic circuit 4670 does not receive a positive input from the AND logic gate 4690, the normal mode 4684 remains active.

[0342] Further to the above, the failure response system 4681' includes a second logic circuit 4672, which can be configured to implement a decision block. The second logic circuit 4672 is configured to receive an input from an AND logic gate 4674. The AND logic gate 4674 delivers a positive output if the limp mode 4686 is active and the logic circuit 4698 determines that the readings of the sensor 4617, which represent current drawn by the motor 4514, are beyond a predetermined normal range. If, however, the AND logic gate 4674 does not deliver an output to the logic circuit 4672, the limp mode 4686 remains active.

[0343] Referring to FIG. 88, a failure response system 5001 is similar in many respects to the failure response system 4681, and includes the limp mode 4686 and the stop mode 4688. The failure response system 5001 is configured to transition the powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument 4500 from the limp mode 4686 to a stop mode 4688 if (i) the trigger-sensing control circuit 4627 determines that the readings of the firing-trigger Hall sensor 4629 and the verification-trigger Hall effect sensor 4631 do not correlate, and (ii)(a) the beginning-stroke-switch 4652 is in a closed configuration (FIG. 85) or (ii)(b) the readings of the linear position encoder 4640 do not correlate with the readings of the rotary position encoder 4641.

[0344] As illustrated in FIG. 88, the failure response system 5001 includes an OR logic gate configured to receive a positive input 5008 if the readings of the linear position encoder 4640 do not correlate with the readings of the rotary position encoder 4641. The OR logic gate 5004 is also configured to receive a positive input 5006 from the electrical circuit 4650 (FIG. 85) if the beginning-stroke-switch 4652 is in a closed configuration. The failure response system 5001 further includes an AND logic gate 5010 configured to receive a positive input 5012 from the trigger-sensing control circuit 4627 if the trigger-sensing control circuit 4627 determines that the

readings of the firing-trigger Hall sensor 4629 and the verification-trigger Hall effect sensor 4631 do not correlate. The OR logic gate 5004 is configured to deliver a positive input to the AND logic gate 5010 in response to receiving one of the inputs 5006 and 5008.

[0345] The failure response system 5001 further includes a logic circuit 5002, which is configured to implement a decision block. The logic circuit 5002 is configured to maintain a limp mode 4686 in the absence of a positive output of the AND logic gate 5010. The logic circuit 5002 is further configured to transition from the limp mode 4686 to the stop mode 4688 in the presence of a positive output from the AND logic gate 5010.

[0346] Referring to FIG. 89, an alternative embodiment of a failure response system 5021 is depicted. The failure response system 5021 is similar in many respects to the failure response system 4681 and includes the normal mode 4684 and the stop mode 4688. The failure response system 5021 is configured to maintain the powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument 4500 in the normal mode 4684 until three separate failures are detected, as described in greater detail below. Upon detecting such failures, the failure response system 5021 causes the stop mode 4688 to be activated.

[0347] Further to the above, the failure response system 5021 includes an AND logic gate 5024, an OR logic gate 5026, and an AND logic gate 5028. A logic circuit 5022, which can be configured to implement a decision block, is configured to receive an input from the AND logic gate 5024. The logic circuit 5022 is configured to activate the stop mode 4688 if the logic circuit 5022 receives a positive input from the AND logic gate 5024. However, if the logic circuit 5024 does not receive a positive input from the AND logic gate 5024, the normal mode 4684 remains active.

[0348] As illustrated in FIG. 89, the AND logic gate 5024 is coupled to the logic circuit 4691, which is configured to deliver a binary input to an AND logic gate 5024 as to whether the readings of the linear position encoder 4640 correlate with the readings of the rotary position encoder 4641. The second input of the AND gate 5024 is delivered through the AND logic gate 5026 which is which is coupled to the logic circuit 4698. The logic circuit 4698 is configured to deliver a binary output to the AND logic gate 5026 as to whether the readings of the sensor 4617, which represent current drawn by the motor 4514, are beyond a predetermined normal range. The second input of the AND gate 5026 is delivered through an OR logic gate 5028 which receives inputs from the beginning-of-stroke switch 4652 and the end-of-stroke switch 4662. The

OR logic gate 5028 delivers a high output to the AND logic gate 4690 if a failure of at least one of the beginning-of-stroke switch 4652 and the end-of-stroke switch 4662 is detected.

[0349] Accordingly, the failure response system 5021 protects against malfunctions that are based on sensor and/or switch errors by requiring a plurality of sensor and/or switch errors to be detected before activating the stop mode 4688. This ensures that a single point failure such as a failure of a sensor and/or a switch will not by itself render the powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument 4500 inoperable. The failure response system 5021 requires a plurality of inputs to indicate failures prior to activating the stop mode 4688. When one failure is reported such as, for example, a lack of correlation between the readings of the linear position encoder 4640 the readings of the rotary position encoder 4641, the failure response system 5021 is configured to look for failures in other related or relevant inputs such as, for example, motor current inputs, inputs from the beginning-of-stroke switch 4652 and the end-of-stroke switch 4662, before activating the stop mode 4688.

[0350] In at least one instance, a first circuit and a second circuit are configured to separately assess or detect an operational parameter of a powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument 4500 such as, for example, an operational parameter in connection with the performance of a firing member during a firing stroke of the powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument 4500. In at least one instance, the second circuit output can be used to verify and/or as a substitute, within a control loop of the firing stroke, for the output of the first circuit should the output of the first circuit be identified as erroneous.

[0351] For example, the primary processor 4702 can be configured to track a first operational parameter by assessing the current drawn by the motor 4514 during the firing stroke, and the safety processor 4704 can be configured to track a second operational parameter by assessing correlation between the rotational motion of the motor 4514 and the linear motion of the firing member during the firing stroke. Under normal operating conditions, the current drawn by the motor 4514 corresponds to the speed of the firing member and/or falls within a normal predetermined range. Also, under normal operating conditions, the rotational motion of the motor 4514 correlates with the linear motion of the firing member. Accordingly, the primary processor 4702 and the safety processor 4704 separately track separate operational parameters of the powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument 4500 that provide feedback as to the performance of the firing member within a control loop of the firing stroke.

[0352] The primary processor 4702 and/or the safety processor 4704 may be configured to generate outputs indicative of whether their respective operational parameters are within normal operating conditions. In one example, the output of the safety processor 4704 can be used to verify and/or as a substitute, within a control loop of the firing stroke, for the output of the primary processor 4702 should the assessment of operational parameter of the safety processor 4704 be identified as erroneous or indicative of abnormal operating conditions while the second operational parameter indicates normal operating conditions.

[0353] The outputs of the primary processor 4702 and/or the safety processor 4704 may comprise activating an operational mode of the powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument 4500 selected from a group comprising a normal mode, a warning mode, a limp mode, and a stop mode. In one example, the output of the primary processor 4702 may comprise activating a failure response mode such as, for example, a limp mode or a stop mode but if the output of the safety processor 4704 comprises activating/continuing a normal mode of operation, the normal mode is used as a substitute for the failure response mode. Accordingly, the powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument 4500 will continue to operate in normal mode in spite of the error identified based on the assessment of the operational parameter tracked by the primary processor 4702.

[0354] In one example, a failure response system can be configured to activate a first failure response mode if a first error is detected, a second failure response mode if a second error is detected in addition to the first error, and a third failure response mode if a third error is detected in addition to the first and second errors. In at least one instances, a powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument 4500 remain operational in the first failure response mode and the second failure response mode, and is deactivated in the third failure response mode.

[0355] In one example, a failure response system can be configured to elevate or escalate a failure response to accommodate an escalation in detected failures. In one example, a failure response system is configured to transition from a first failure response mode to a second response failure response mode in response to an increase in detected errors, wherein the detected errors include at least one sensor failure and/or at least one switch failures. In one example, a failure response system is configured to activate transition from a first failure response mode to a second failure response mode in response to an increase in detected errors,

wherein the detected errors include at least one measurement outside a predetermine normal range.

[0356] In one example, a failure response system is configured to activate a first failure response mode if a first error is detected and is configured to transition from the first failure response mode to a second failure response mode if a second error is detected in addition to the first error. In one example, a failure response system is configured to activate a first failure response mode if a first plurality of errors are detected and is configured to transition from the first failure response mode to a second failure response mode if a second plurality of errors are detected, wherein the second plurality of errors are greater than the first plurality of errors, and wherein the second plurality of errors encompasses the first plurality of errors. In one example, the second failure response mode involves a greater number of restrictions on operation of the powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument 4500 than the first failure response mode.

[0357] *Examples*

Example 1 - A surgical instrument comprising an anvil and an elongate channel, wherein at least one of the anvil and the elongate channel is movable to capture tissue between the anvil and the elongate channel. The elongate channel comprises a plurality of first electrical contacts, and a plurality of electrical connectors. The plurality of electrical connectors further comprise a plurality of second electrical contacts, wherein the electrical connectors are spring-biased such that a gap is maintained between the first electrical contacts and the second electrical contacts. The surgical instrument also comprises a staple cartridge releasably attachable to the elongate channel. The staple cartridge comprises a cartridge body including a plurality of staple cavities and, in addition, a plurality of staples deployable from the staple cavities into the tissue. The staple cartridge also comprises a plurality of third electrical contacts, wherein the attachment of the staple cartridge to the elongate channel moves the electrical connectors which causes the second electrical contacts to bridge the gap and become electrically coupled to the first electrical contacts.

Example 2 - The surgical instrument of Example 1, wherein the staple cartridge comprises a storage medium configured to store information about the staple cartridge. The storage medium

is accessible by the surgical instrument through at least one of the third electrical contacts when the cartridge body is attached to the elongate channel.

Example 3 - The surgical instrument of Examples 1 or 2, wherein the storage medium comprises a memory unit.

Example 4 - The surgical instrument of Examples 1, 2, or 3, wherein the information comprises an identifier of the staple cartridge.

Example 5 - The surgical instrument of Examples 1, 2, 3, or 4, wherein the information further comprises a spent status of the staple cartridge.

Example 6 - The surgical instrument of Examples 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5, wherein the electrical connectors are at least partially coated with a fluid-repellant coating.

Example 7 - The surgical instrument of Examples 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6, wherein the third electrical contacts are at least partially coated with a fluid-repellant coating.

Example 8 - The surgical instrument of Examples 5, 6, or 7, wherein the connectors comprise wearing features configured to at least partially remove the fluid-repellant coating during attachment of the staple cartridge to the elongate channel.

Example 9 - The surgical instrument of Example 8, wherein at least one of the wearing features comprises a raised-dome shape.

Example 10 - The surgical instrument of Example 1, wherein the staple cartridge comprises a cartridge-status circuit portion comprising a trace element configured to be broken during deployment of the staples.

Example 11 - The surgical instrument of Example 1, wherein the elongate channel comprises a compressible seal configured to resist fluid ingress between the staple cartridge and the elongate channel when the staple cartridge is attached to the elongate channel.

Example 12 - A staple cartridge for use with an end effector of a surgical instrument, wherein the staple cartridge comprises a cartridge body releasably attachable to the end effector, and wherein the cartridge body comprises a plurality of staple cavities. The staple cartridge also comprises a plurality of staples at least partially stored in the staple cavities and, in addition, a camming member movable relative to the cartridge body from a starting position to cause staples to be deployed from the staple cavities. The staple cartridge further comprises an electrical circuit including a plurality of external electrical contacts configured to be electrically coupled to corresponding electrical contacts of the end effector when the cartridge body is attached to the

end effector. The electrical circuit also comprises a storage medium configured to store information about the staple cartridge, wherein the storage medium is accessible through at least one of the external electrical contacts when the cartridge body is attached to the end effector. The electrical circuit further comprises a cartridge-status circuit portion including a trace element configured to be broken during movement of the camming member.

Example 13 - The staple cartridge of Example 12, wherein the storage medium comprises a memory unit.

Example 14 - The staple cartridge of Examples 12 or 13, wherein the information comprises an identifier of the staple cartridge.

Example 15 - The staple cartridge of Examples 12, 13, or 14, wherein the information comprises a spent status of the staple cartridge.

Example 16 - The staple cartridge of Example 12, wherein the external electrical connectors are at least partially coated with a fluid-repellant coating.

Example 17 - A staple cartridge for use with an end effector of a surgical instrument, wherein the staple cartridge comprises a cartridge body releasably attachable to the end effector, and wherein the cartridge body comprises a plurality of staple cavities. The staple cartridge also comprises a plurality of staples at least partially stored in the staple cavities and, in addition, a sled movable relative to the cartridge body from a starting position to cause the staples to be deployed from the staple cavities during a firing stroke. The staple cartridge further comprises a detection means for determining a spent status of the staple cartridge and a storage medium configured to store a spent status of the staple cartridge.

Example 18 - The staple cartridge of Example 17, wherein the detection means includes an electrical circuit configured to be transitioned between a closed configuration and an open configuration by the sled during a firing stroke.

Example 19 - The staple cartridge of Examples 17 or 18, wherein the detection means includes a Hall effect sensor.

Example 20 - The staple cartridge of Examples 17, 18, or 19, wherein the detection means includes an electrical circuit comprising a conductive bridge configured to be severed during the firing stroke.

Example 21 - A powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument, comprising a staple cartridge, wherein the staple cartridge comprises a housing, a plurality of staple cavities and, in addition, a

plurality of staples deployable from the staple cavities during a firing stroke. The staple cartridge also comprises a firing member movable during a firing stroke to deploy staples from the staple cavities and a motor operably coupled to the firing member, wherein the motor is configured to generate at least one rotational motion to motivate the firing member to cause staples to be deployed from the staple cavities during a firing stroke. The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument also comprises a failure response system comprising a first circuit configured to detect a first operational error of the powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument if the movement of the firing member and the rotational motion of the motor are beyond a predetermined correlation during the firing stroke. The failure response system also comprises a second circuit configured to detect a second operational error of the powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument if a failure is detected in at least one of a beginning-of-stroke switch and an end-of-stroke switch. The failure response system further comprises a control circuit configured to activate a first failure response mode if the first operational error is detected, wherein the control circuit is configured to activate a second failure response mode which is different than the first failure response mode if the second operational error is detected in addition to detection of the first operational error.

Example 22 - The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Example 21, wherein the first failure response mode is a warning mode.

Example 23 - The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Examples 21 or 22, wherein the second failure response mode is a limp mode.

Example 24 - The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Examples 21, 22, or 23, wherein the motor is run at a reduced speed in the limp mode.

Example 25 - The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Examples 21, 22, 23 or 24, wherein the firing member is moved at a reduced speed in the limp mode.

Example 26 - The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Example 21, further comprising a third circuit configured to detect a third operational error of the powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument if a current drawn by the motor during a firing stroke is beyond a predetermined range.

Example 27 - The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Example 26, wherein the control circuit is configured to activate a third failure response mode which is different than the

first failure response mode and the second failure response mode if the third operational error is detected in addition to detection of the first operational error and the second operational error.

Example 28 - The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Example 27, wherein the third failure response mode is more restrictive than the second failure response mode.

Example 29 - A powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument, comprising a staple cartridge wherein the staple cartridge comprises a housing, a plurality of staple cavities and, in addition, a plurality of staples deployable from the staple cavities during a firing stroke. The staple cartridge also comprises a firing member movable during a firing stroke to cause staples to be deployed from the staple cavities, and a motor operably coupled to the firing member, wherein the motor is configured to generate at least one rotational motion to motivate the firing member to cause staples to be deployed from the staple cavities during a firing stroke. The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument further comprises a failure response system which comprises a first circuit configured to detect a first operational error of the powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument if movement of the firing member and the rotational motion of the motor are beyond a predetermined correlation during a firing stroke. The failure response system also comprises a second circuit configured to detect a second operational error of the powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument if a failure is detected in at least one of a beginning-of-stroke switch and an end-of-stroke switch. The failure response system further comprises a controller which includes a memory and a storage medium comprising program instructions which, when executed by the processor, cause the processor to activate a first failure response mode if the first operational error is detected, and also cause the processor to activate a second failure response mode which is different than the first failure response mode if the second operational error is detected in addition to detection of the first operational error.

Example 30 - The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Example 29, wherein the first failure response mode is a warning mode.

Example 31 - The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Examples 29 or 30, wherein the second failure response mode is a limp mode.

Example 32 - The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Examples 29, 30, or 31, wherein the motor is run at a reduced speed in the limp mode.

Example 33 - The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Examples 29, 30, 31, or 32, wherein the firing member is moved at a reduced speed in the limp mode.

Example 34 - The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Example 29, further comprising a third circuit configured to detect a third operational error of the powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument if a current drawn by the motor during a firing stroke is beyond a predetermined range.

Example 35 - The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Example 29, wherein the storage medium comprises program instructions which, when executed by the processor, cause the processor to activate a third failure response mode which is different than the first failure response mode and the second failure response mode if the third operational error is detected in addition to detection of the first operational error and the second operational error.

Example 36 - The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Example 35, wherein the third failure response mode is more restrictive than the second failure response mode.

Example 37 - A failure response system for use with a powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument configured to deploy a plurality of staples into tissue during a firing stroke, wherein the failure response system comprises a first circuit configured to detect a first operational error of the powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument during a firing stroke, and a second circuit configured to detect a second operational error of the powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument during a firing stroke, wherein the second operational error is different than the first operational error. The failure response system also comprises a third circuit configured to detect a third operational error of the powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument during a firing stroke, wherein the third operational error is different than the first operational error and the second operational error. The failure response system further comprises a control circuit configured to activate a first failure response mode if the first operational error is detected, wherein the control circuit is configured to activate a second failure response mode, which is different than the first failure response mode if the second operational error is detected in addition to detection of the first operational error. The control circuit is configured to activate a third failure response mode which is different than the first failure response mode and the second failure response mode if the third operational error is detected in addition to detection of the first operational error and the second operational error.

Example 38 - The failure response system of Example 37, wherein the first failure response mode is a warning mode.

Example 39 - The failure response system of Examples 37 or 38, wherein the second failure response mode is a limp mode.

Example 40 - The failure response system of Examples 37, 38, or 39, wherein the third failure response mode is more restrictive than the second failure response mode.

Example 41 - A powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument comprising, a staple cartridge comprising a housing, a plurality of staple cavities, and, in addition, a plurality of staples deployable from the staple cavities during a firing stroke. The staple cartridge also comprises a firing member movable during a firing stroke to cause staples to be deployed from the staple cavities, and a motor operably coupled to the firing member. The motor is configured to generate at least one rotational motion to motivate the firing member to cause the staples to be deployed from the staple cavities during the firing stroke. The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument also comprises a primary controller comprising a primary processor and a primary storage medium storing first program instructions which, when executed by the primary processor, cause the primary processor to determine a first acceleration of the firing member during a firing stroke and compare the first acceleration to a predetermined threshold acceleration. The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument further comprises a secondary controller including a secondary processor and a secondary storage medium storing second program instructions which, when executed by the secondary processor, cause the secondary processor to determine a second acceleration of the firing member during a firing stroke and to compare the second acceleration to the predetermined threshold value.

Example 42 - The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Example 41, wherein the first acceleration is determined based on a distance between a first position and a second position, wherein the distance is traveled by the firing member during a firing stroke.

Example 43 - The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Examples 41 or 42, further comprising a sensor configured to detect the firing member at the second position.

Example 44 - The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Example 43, wherein the sensor is a linear position encoder.

Example 45 - The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Examples 43 or 44, wherein the sensor is in electrical communication with the primary processor.

Example 46 - The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Examples 41, 42, 43, 44, or 45, wherein the second acceleration is separately determined by the secondary processor based on the distance.

Example 47 - The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Examples 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, or 46, further comprising another sensor configured to detect the firing member at the second position.

Example 48 - The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Example 47, wherein the other sensor is a linear position encoder.

Example 49 - The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Examples 47 or 48, wherein the other sensor is in electrical communication with the secondary processor.

Example 50 - The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Examples 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, or 49, wherein the primary processor is configured to activate a failure response mode if (i) the first acceleration is beyond the predetermined threshold value and (ii) the second acceleration is beyond the predetermined threshold value.

Example 51 - The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Examples 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, or 50, wherein the failure response mode comprises stopping the motor.

Example 52 - The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Examples 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, or 48, wherein the primary processor is configured to activate a failure response mode if at least one of the first acceleration and the second acceleration is beyond the predetermined threshold value.

Example 53 - The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Example 52, wherein the failure response mode comprises stopping the motor.

Example 54 - The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Example 41, wherein the second program instructions further cause the secondary processor to generate an output based on the comparison of the second acceleration to the predetermined threshold value and cause the output to be communicated to the primary controller.

Example 55 - A powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument comprising a staple cartridge comprising a housing, a plurality of staple cavities, and in addition, a plurality of staples deployable from the staple cavities during a firing stroke. The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument also comprises a firing member movable during a firing stroke to cause the staples to be deployed from the staple cavities, and a motor operably coupled to the firing

member. The motor is configured to generate at least one rotational motion to motivate the firing member to deploy staples from the staple cavities during a firing stroke. The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument further comprises a primary circuit including a primary processor configured to assess a first operational parameter indicative of performance of the firing member during a firing stroke and generate a first output based on the assessment of the first operational parameter. The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument further comprises a second circuit including a safety processor configured to assess a second operational parameter indicative of the performance of the firing member during a firing stroke, wherein the second operational parameter is different than the first operational parameter and to generate a second output based on the assessment of the second operational parameter, wherein the second output is used to verify the first output within a control loop of a firing stroke.

Example 56 - The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Example 55, wherein the second output is used as a substitute for the first output if it is determined that the first operational parameter indicates an abnormal performance of the firing member during a firing stroke while the second operational parameter indicates a normal performance of the firing member.

Example 57 - The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Example 55, wherein the first output is configured to activate a mode of operation selected from a group comprising a normal mode, a warning mode, a limp mode, and a stop mode.

Example 58 - The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Examples 55 or 57, wherein the second output is configured to activate a mode of operation selected from a group comprising a normal mode, a warning mode, a limp mode, and a stop mode.

Example 59 - The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Example 55, wherein the first output is communicated to the safety processor in a message comprising the first output and a security code.

Example 60 - The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Example 59, wherein the security code comprises a cyclic redundancy check (CRC).

[0358] Many of the surgical instrument systems described herein are motivated by an electric motor; however, the surgical instrument systems described herein can be motivated in any suitable manner. In various instances, the surgical instrument systems described herein can be motivated by a manually-operated trigger, for example. In certain instances, the motors

disclosed herein may comprise a portion or portions of a robotically controlled system. Moreover, any of the end effectors and/or tool assemblies disclosed herein can be utilized with a robotic surgical instrument system. U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 13/118,241, entitled SURGICAL STAPLING INSTRUMENTS WITH ROTATABLE STAPLE DEPLOYMENT ARRANGEMENTS, now U.S. Patent No. 9,072,535, for example, discloses several examples of a robotic surgical instrument system in greater detail.

[0359] The surgical instrument systems described herein have been described in connection with the deployment and deformation of staples; however, the embodiments described herein are not so limited. Various embodiments are envisioned which deploy fasteners other than staples, such as clamps or tacks, for example. Moreover, various embodiments are envisioned which utilize any suitable means for sealing tissue. For instance, an end effector in accordance with various embodiments can comprise electrodes configured to heat and seal the tissue. Also, for instance, an end effector in accordance with certain embodiments can apply vibrational energy to seal the tissue.

[0360] The entire disclosures of:

- U.S. Patent No. 5,403,312, entitled ELECTROSURGICAL HEMOSTATIC DEVICE, which issued on April 4, 1995;
- U.S. Patent No. 7,000,818, entitled SURGICAL STAPLING INSTRUMENT HAVING SEPARATE DISTINCT CLOSING AND FIRING SYSTEMS, which issued on February 21, 2006;
- U.S. Patent No. 7,422,139, entitled MOTOR-DRIVEN SURGICAL CUTTING AND FASTENING INSTRUMENT WITH TACTILE POSITION FEEDBACK, which issued on September 9, 2008;
- U.S. Patent No. 7,464,849, entitled ELECTRO-MECHANICAL SURGICAL INSTRUMENT WITH CLOSURE SYSTEM AND ANVIL ALIGNMENT COMPONENTS, which issued on December 16, 2008;
- U.S. Patent No. 7,670,334, entitled SURGICAL INSTRUMENT HAVING AN ARTICULATING END EFFECTOR, which issued on March 2, 2010;
- U.S. Patent No. 7,753,245, entitled SURGICAL STAPLING INSTRUMENTS, which issued on July 13, 2010;

- U.S. Patent No. 8,393,514, entitled SELECTIVELY ORIENTABLE IMPLANTABLE FASTENER CARTRIDGE, which issued on March 12, 2013;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 11/343,803, entitled SURGICAL INSTRUMENT HAVING RECORDING CAPABILITIES; now U.S. Patent No. 7,845,537;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 12/031,573, entitled SURGICAL CUTTING AND FASTENING INSTRUMENT HAVING RF ELECTRODES, filed February 14, 2008;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 12/031,873, entitled END EFFECTORS FOR A SURGICAL CUTTING AND STAPLING INSTRUMENT, filed February 15, 2008, now U.S. Patent No. 7,980,443;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 12/235,782, entitled MOTOR-DRIVEN SURGICAL CUTTING INSTRUMENT, now U.S. Patent No. 8,210,411;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 12/249,117, entitled POWERED SURGICAL CUTTING AND STAPLING APPARATUS WITH MANUALLY RETRACTABLE FIRING SYSTEM, now U.S. Patent No. 8,608,045;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 12/647,100, entitled MOTOR-DRIVEN SURGICAL CUTTING INSTRUMENT WITH ELECTRIC ACTUATOR DIRECTIONAL CONTROL ASSEMBLY, filed December 24, 2009; now U.S. Patent No. 8,220,688;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 12/893,461, entitled STAPLE CARTRIDGE, filed September 29, 2012, now U.S. Patent No. 8,733,613;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 13/036,647, entitled SURGICAL STAPLING INSTRUMENT, filed February 28, 2011, now U.S. Patent No. 8,561,870;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 13/118,241, entitled SURGICAL STAPLING INSTRUMENTS WITH ROTATABLE STAPLE DEPLOYMENT ARRANGEMENTS, now U.S. Patent No. 9,072,535;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 13/524,049, entitled ARTICULATABLE SURGICAL INSTRUMENT COMPRISING A FIRING DRIVE, filed on June 15, 2012; now U.S. Patent No. 9,101,358;
- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 13/800,025, entitled STAPLE CARTRIDGE TISSUE THICKNESS SENSOR SYSTEM, filed on March 13, 2013, now U.S. Patent No. 9,345,481;

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 13/800,067, entitled STAPLE CARTRIDGE TISSUE THICKNESS SENSOR SYSTEM, filed on March 13, 2013, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2014/0263552;

- U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2007/0175955, entitled SURGICAL CUTTING AND FASTENING INSTRUMENT WITH CLOSURE TRIGGER LOCKING MECHANISM, filed January 31, 2006; and

- U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2010/0264194, entitled SURGICAL STAPLING INSTRUMENT WITH AN ARTICULATABLE END EFFECTOR, filed April 22, 2010, now U.S. Patent No. 8,308,040, are hereby incorporated by reference herein.

[0361] Although various devices have been described herein in connection with certain embodiments, modifications and variations to those embodiments may be implemented. Particular features, structures, or characteristics may be combined in any suitable manner in one or more embodiments. Thus, the particular features, structures, or characteristics illustrated or described in connection with one embodiment may be combined in whole or in part, with the features, structures or characteristics of one or more other embodiments without limitation. Also, where materials are disclosed for certain components, other materials may be used. Furthermore, according to various embodiments, a single component may be replaced by multiple components, and multiple components may be replaced by a single component, to perform a given function or functions. The foregoing description and following claims are intended to cover all such modification and variations.

[0362] The devices disclosed herein can be designed to be disposed of after a single use, or they can be designed to be used multiple times. In either case, however, a device can be reconditioned for reuse after at least one use. Reconditioning can include any combination of the steps including, but not limited to, the disassembly of the device, followed by cleaning or replacement of particular pieces of the device, and subsequent reassembly of the device. In particular, a reconditioning facility and/or surgical team can disassemble a device and, after cleaning and/or replacing particular parts of the device, the device can be reassembled for subsequent use. Those skilled in the art will appreciate that reconditioning of a device can utilize a variety of techniques for disassembly, cleaning/replacement, and reassembly. Use of such techniques, and the resulting reconditioned device, are all within the scope of the present application.

[0363] The devices disclosed herein may be processed before surgery. First, a new or used instrument may be obtained and, when necessary, cleaned. The instrument may then be sterilized. In one sterilization technique, the instrument is placed in a closed and sealed container, such as a plastic or TYVEK bag. The container and instrument may then be placed in a field of radiation that can penetrate the container, such as gamma radiation, x-rays, and/or high-energy electrons. The radiation may kill bacteria on the instrument and in the container. The sterilized instrument may then be stored in the sterile container. The sealed container may keep the instrument sterile until it is opened in a medical facility. A device may also be sterilized using any other technique known in the art, including but not limited to beta radiation, gamma radiation, ethylene oxide, plasma peroxide, and/or steam.

[0364] While this invention has been described as having exemplary designs, the present invention may be further modified within the spirit and scope of the disclosure. This application is therefore intended to cover any variations, uses, or adaptations of the invention using its general principles.

[0365] Any patent, publication, or other disclosure material, in whole or in part, that is said to be incorporated by reference herein is incorporated herein only to the extent that the incorporated materials do not conflict with existing definitions, statements, or other disclosure material set forth in this disclosure. As such, and to the extent necessary, the disclosure as explicitly set forth herein supersedes any conflicting material incorporated herein by reference. Any material, or portion thereof, that is said to be incorporated by reference herein, but which conflicts with existing definitions, statements, or other disclosure material set forth herein will only be incorporated to the extent that no conflict arises between that incorporated material and the existing disclosure material.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument, comprising:
 - a staple cartridge, comprising:
 - a housing;
 - a plurality of staple cavities;
 - a plurality of staples deployable from said staple cavities during a firing stroke;
 - a firing member movable during said firing stroke to cause said staples to be deployed from said staple cavities; and
 - a motor operably coupled to said firing member, wherein said motor is configured to generate at least one rotational motion to motivate said firing member to cause said staples to be deployed from said staple cavities during said firing stroke;
 - a primary controller, comprising:
 - a primary processor; and
 - a primary storage medium storing first program instructions which, when executed by the primary processor, cause the primary processor to:
 - determine a first acceleration of said firing member during said firing stroke; and
 - compare said first acceleration to a predetermined threshold acceleration;
 - and
 - a secondary controller, comprising:
 - a secondary processor; and
 - a secondary storage medium storing second program instructions which, when executed by said secondary processor, cause the secondary processor to:
 - determine a second acceleration of said firing member during said firing stroke; and
 - compare said second acceleration to said predetermined threshold value.
2. The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Claim 1, wherein said first acceleration is determined based on a distance between a first position and a second position, wherein said distance is traveled by said firing member during said firing stroke.

3. The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Claim 2, further comprising a sensor configured to detect said firing member at said second position.
4. The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Claim 3, wherein said sensor is a linear position encoder.
5. The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Claim 3, wherein said sensor is in electrical communication with said primary processor.
6. The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Claim 5, wherein said second acceleration is separately determined by said secondary processor based on said distance.
7. The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Claim 6, further comprising another sensor configured to detect said firing member at said second position.
8. The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Claim 7, wherein said other sensor is a linear position encoder.
9. The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Claim 7, wherein said other sensor is in electrical communication with said secondary processor.
10. The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Claim 9, wherein said primary processor is configured to activate a failure response mode if (i) said first acceleration is beyond said predetermined threshold value and (ii) said second acceleration is beyond said predetermined threshold value.
11. The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Claim 10, wherein said failure response mode comprises stopping said motor.

12. The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Claim 9, wherein said primary processor is configured to activate a failure response mode if at least one of said first acceleration and said second acceleration is beyond said predetermined threshold value.
13. The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Claim 12, wherein said failure response mode comprises stopping said motor.
14. The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Claim 1, wherein said second program instructions further cause the secondary processor to:
- generate an output based on said comparison of said second acceleration to said predetermined threshold value; and
 - cause said output to be communicated to said primary controller.
15. A powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument, comprising:
- a staple cartridge, comprising:
 - a housing;
 - a plurality of staple cavities; and
 - a plurality of staples deployable from said staple cavities during a firing stroke;
 - a firing member movable during said firing stroke to cause said staples to be deployed from said staple cavities;
 - a motor operably coupled to said firing member, wherein said motor is configured to generate at least one rotational motion to motivate said firing member to deploy said staples from said staple cavities during said firing stroke;
 - a primary circuit, comprising a primary processor configured to:
 - assess a first operational parameter indicative of performance of said firing member during said firing stroke; and
 - generate a first output based on said assessment of said first operational parameter; and
 - a second circuit, comprising a safety processor configured to:

assess a second operational parameter indicative of said performance of said firing member during said firing stroke, wherein said second operational parameter is different than said first operational parameter; and

generate a second output based on said assessment of said second operational parameter, wherein said second output is used to verify said first output within a control loop of said firing stroke.

16. The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Claim 15, wherein said second output is used as a substitute for said first output if it is determined that said first operational parameter indicates an abnormal performance of said firing member during said firing stroke while said second operational parameter indicates a normal performance of said firing member.

17. The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Claim 15, wherein said first output is configured to activate a mode of operation selected from a group comprising a normal mode, a warning mode, a limp mode, and a stop mode.

18. The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Claim 15, wherein said second output is configured to activate a mode of operation selected from a group comprising a normal mode, a warning mode, a limp mode, and a stop mode.

19. The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Claim 15, wherein said first output is communicated to said safety processor in a message comprising said first output and a security code.

20. The powered surgical stapling and cutting instrument of Claim 19, wherein said security code comprises a cyclic redundancy check (CRC).

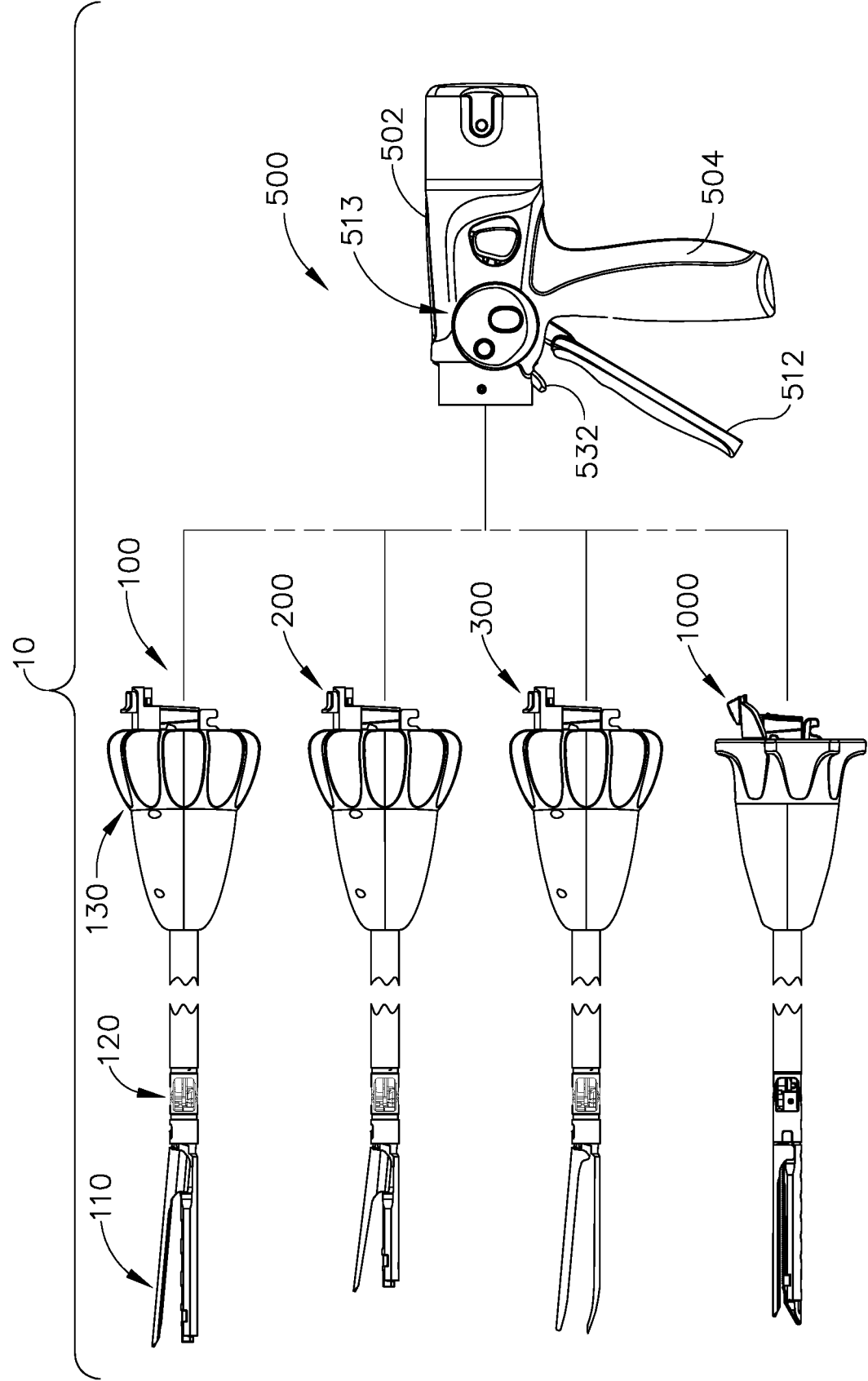


FIG. 1

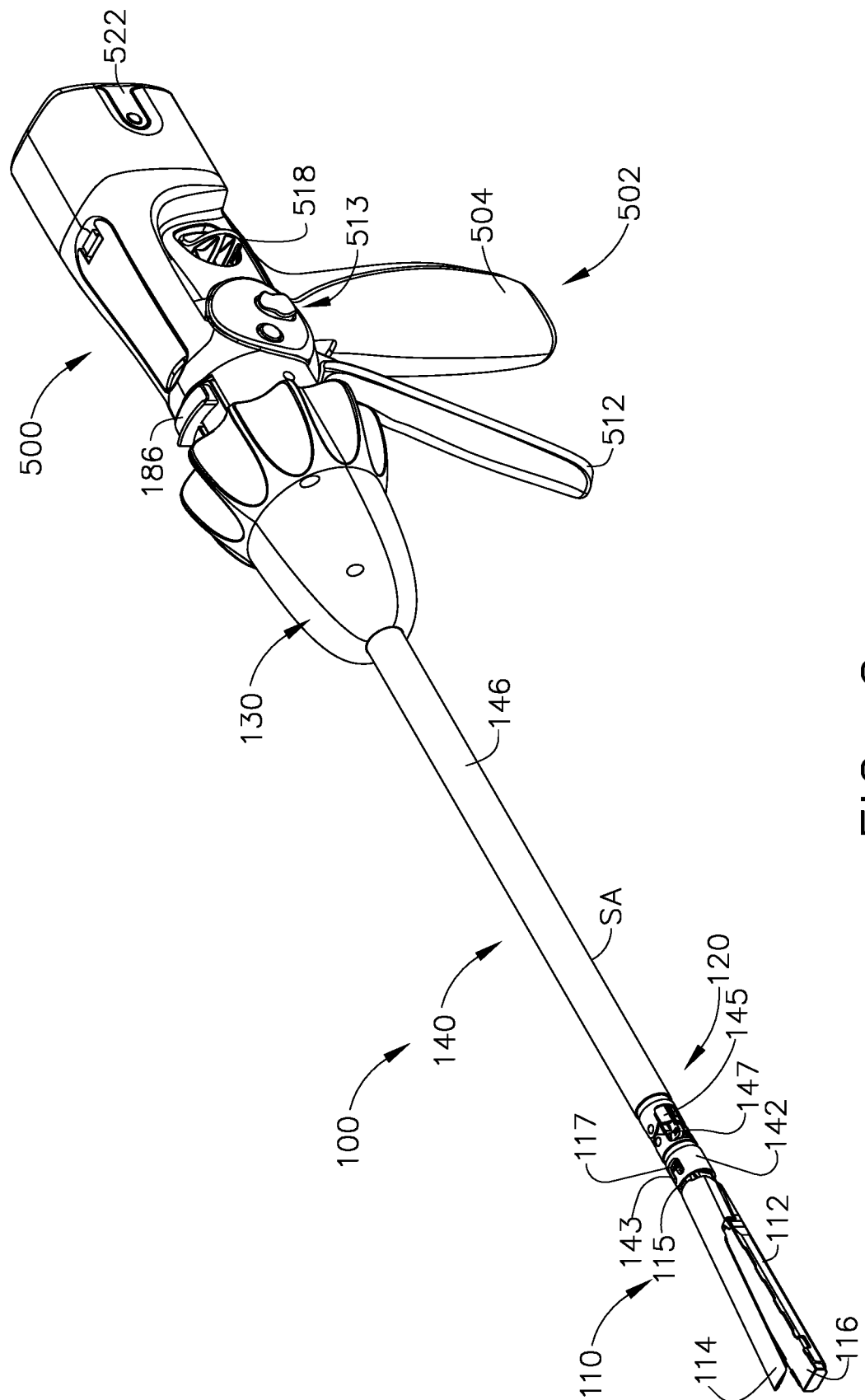


FIG. 2

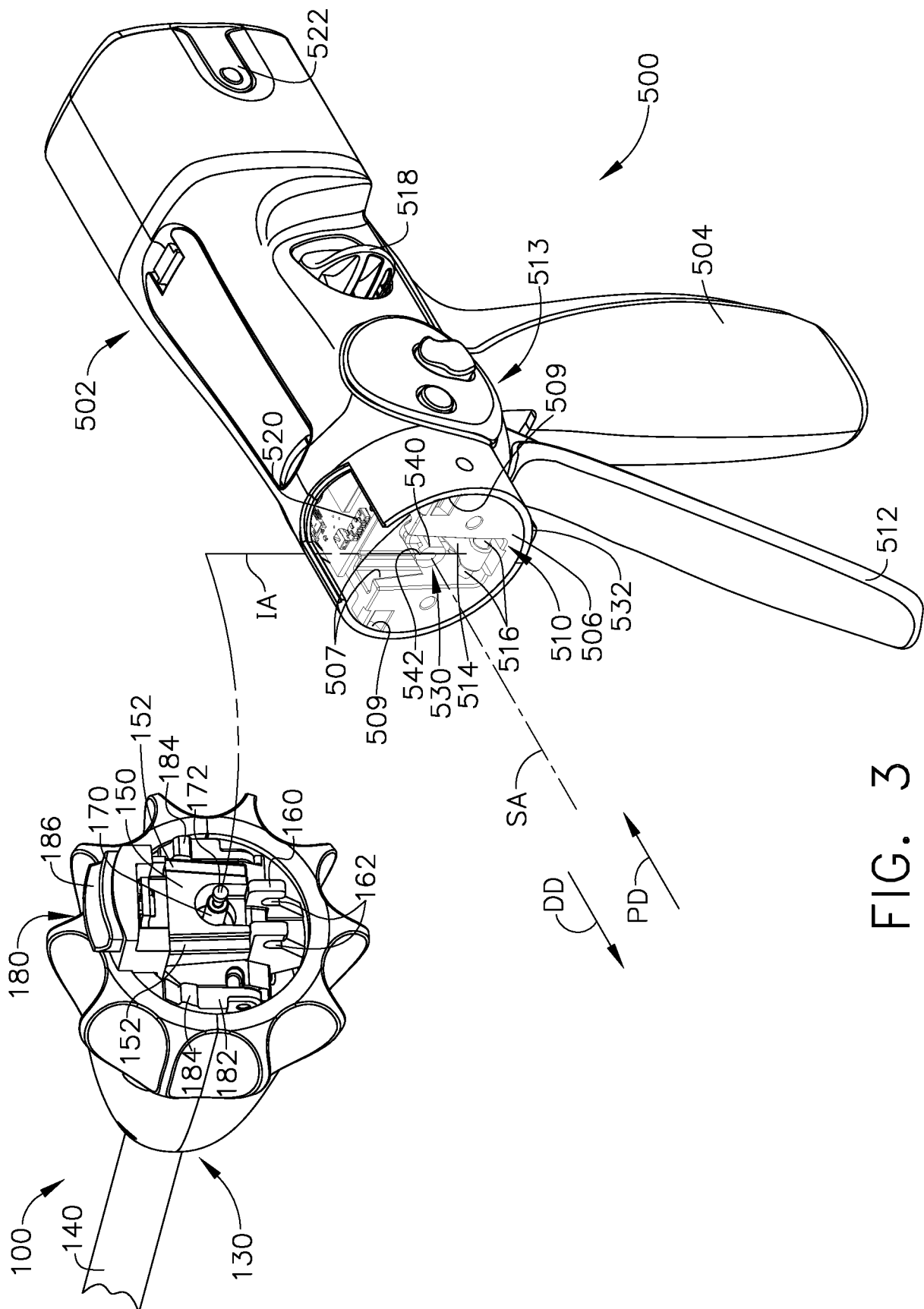


FIG. 3

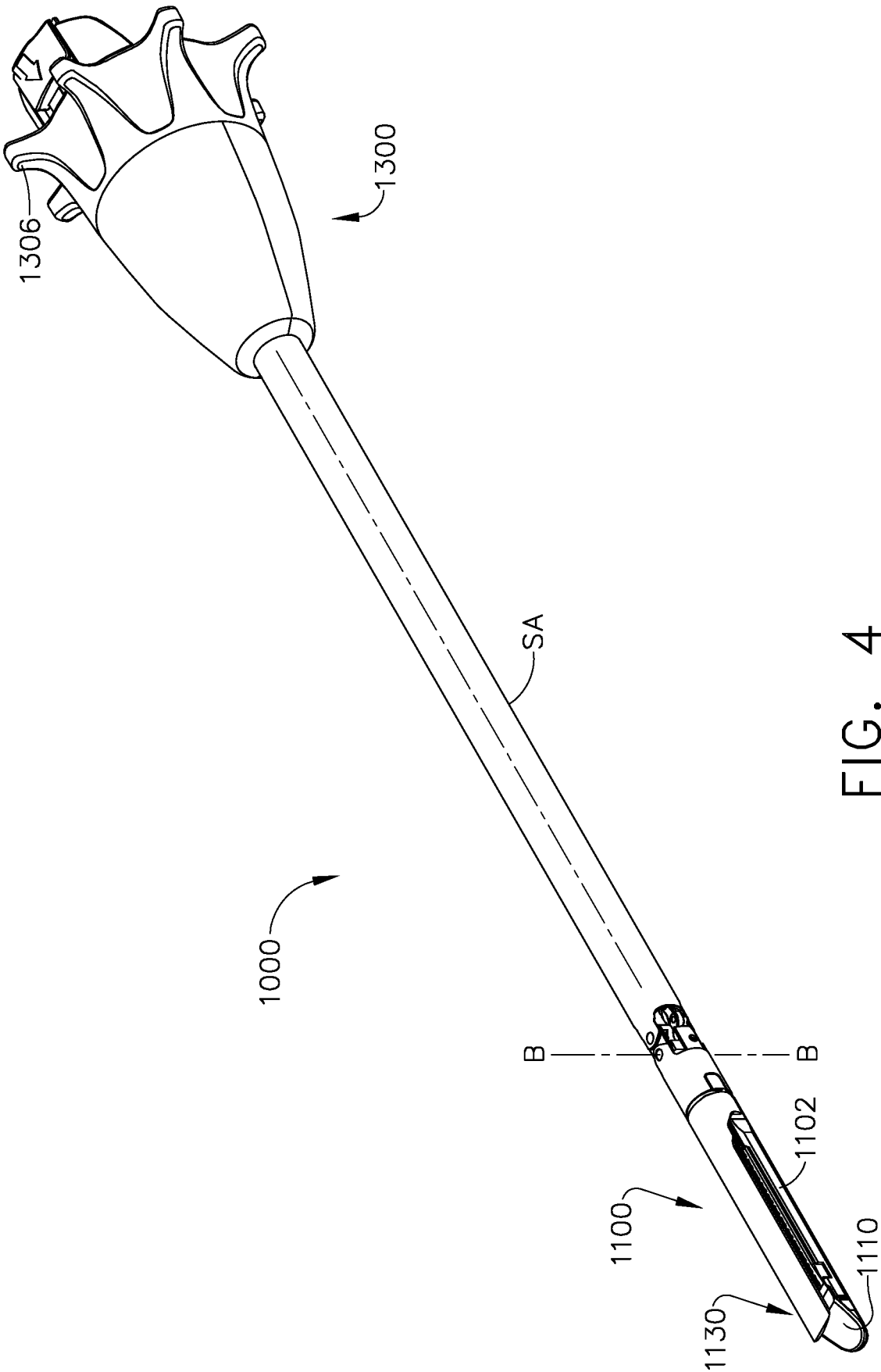


FIG. 4

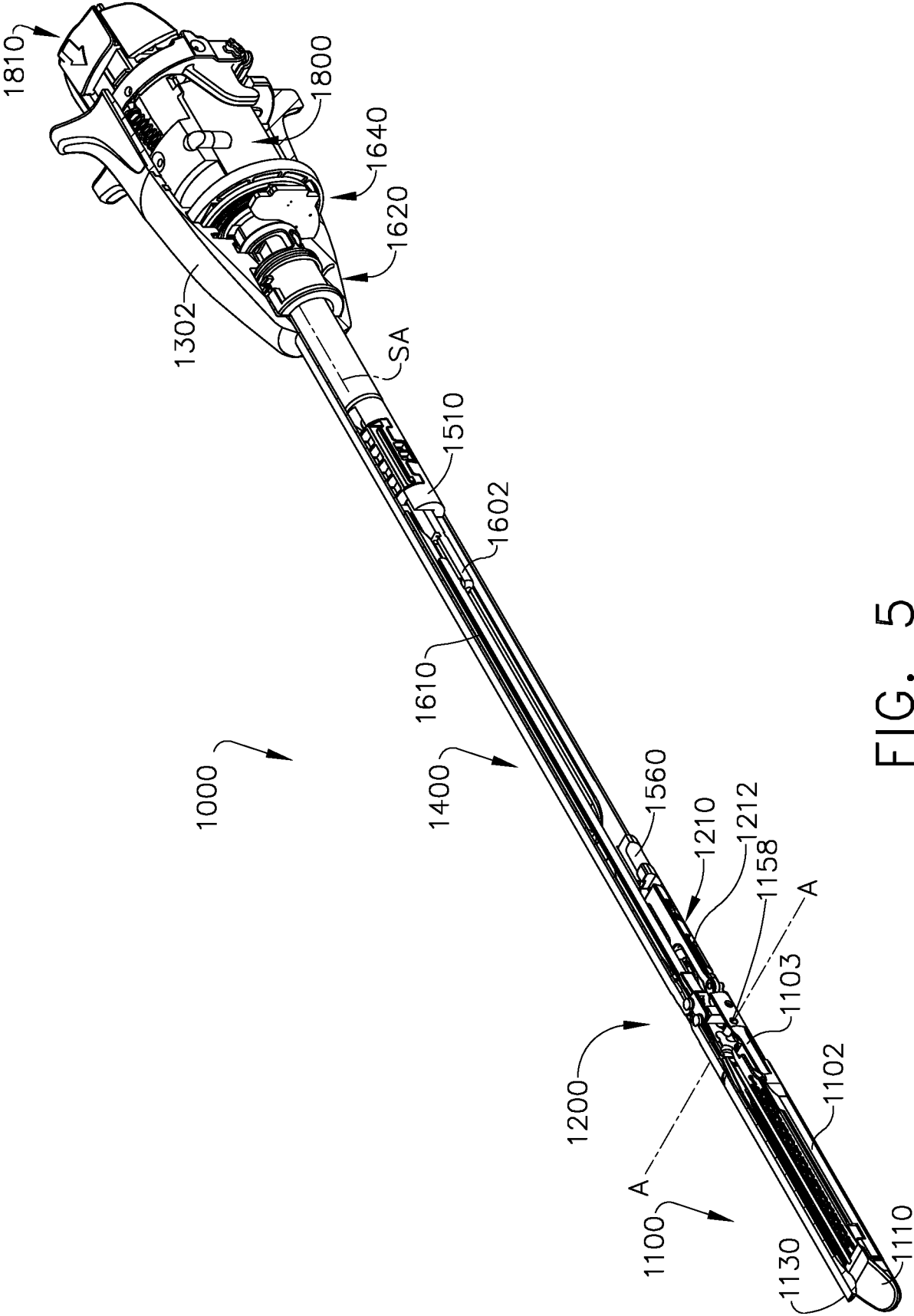


FIG. 5

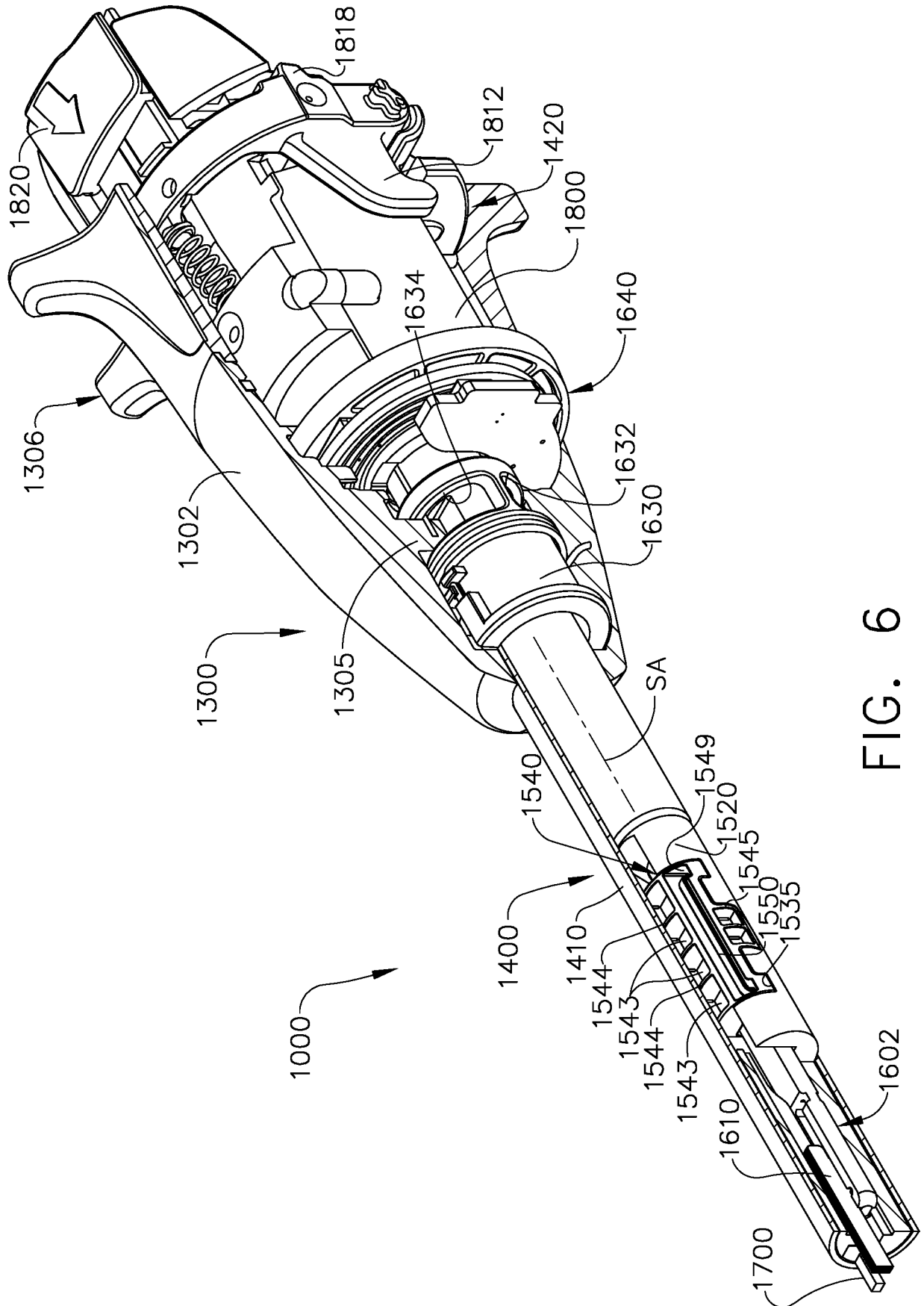


FIG. 6

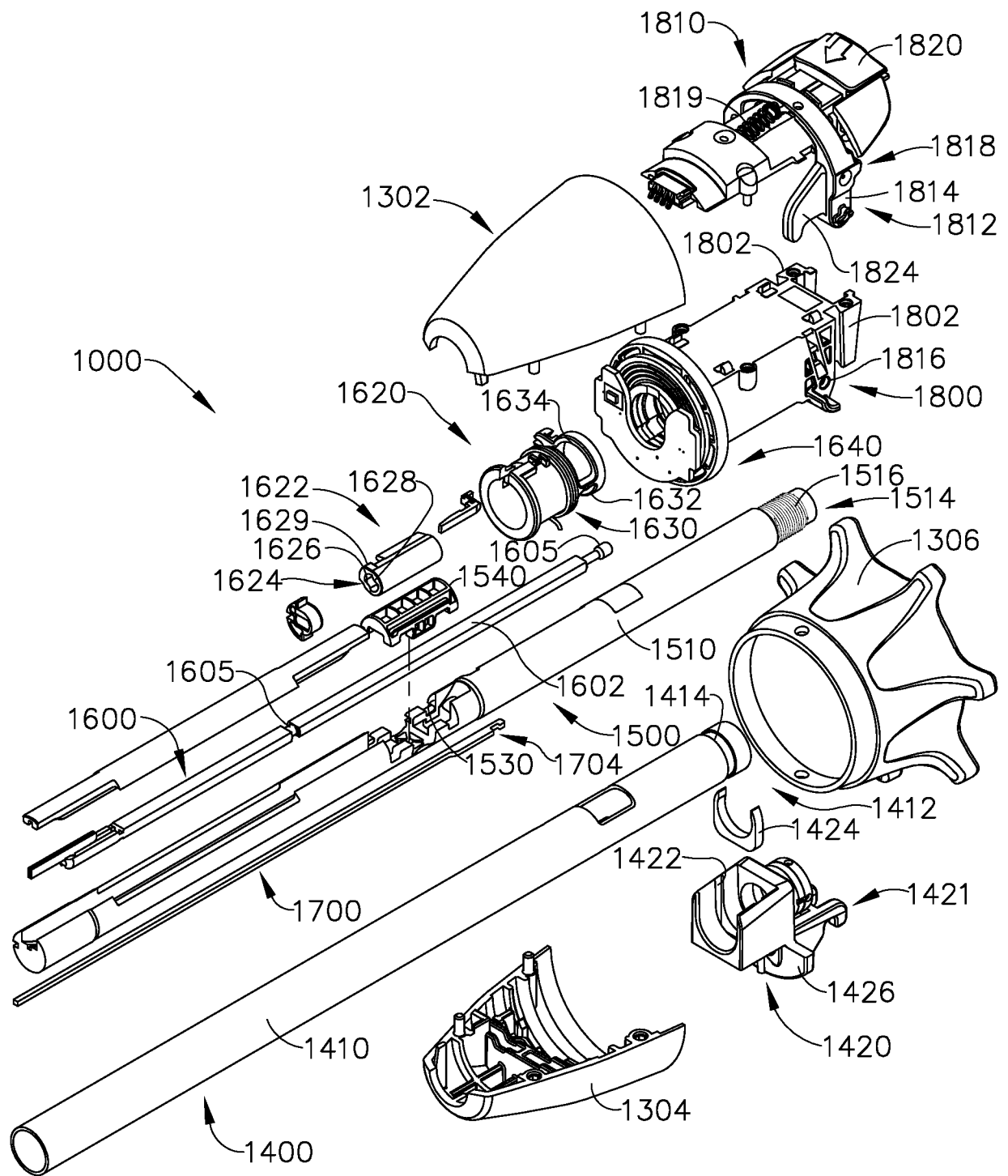


FIG. 7

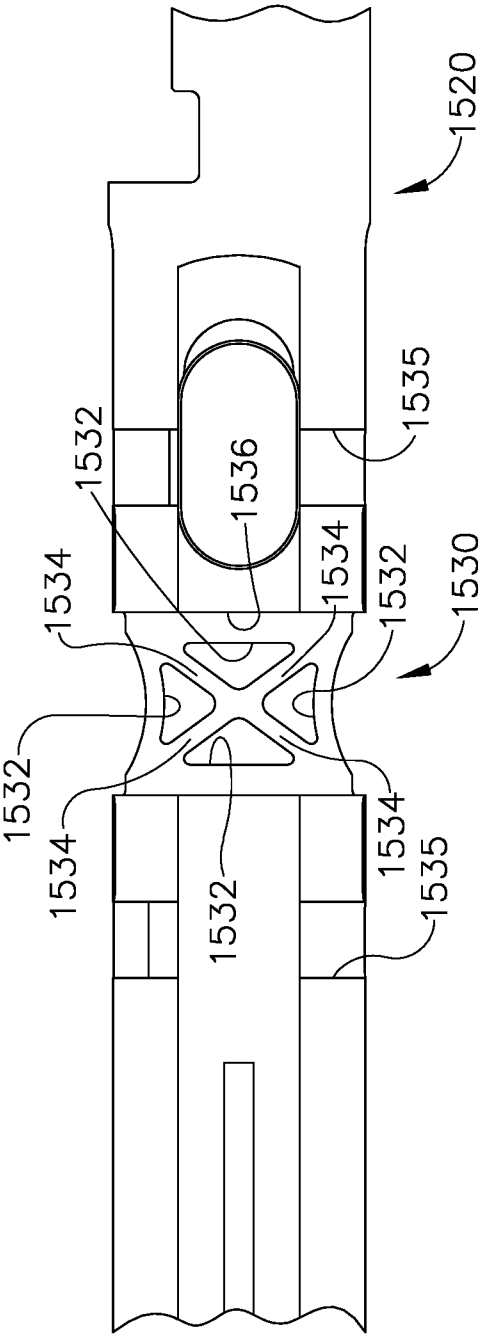


FIG. 7A

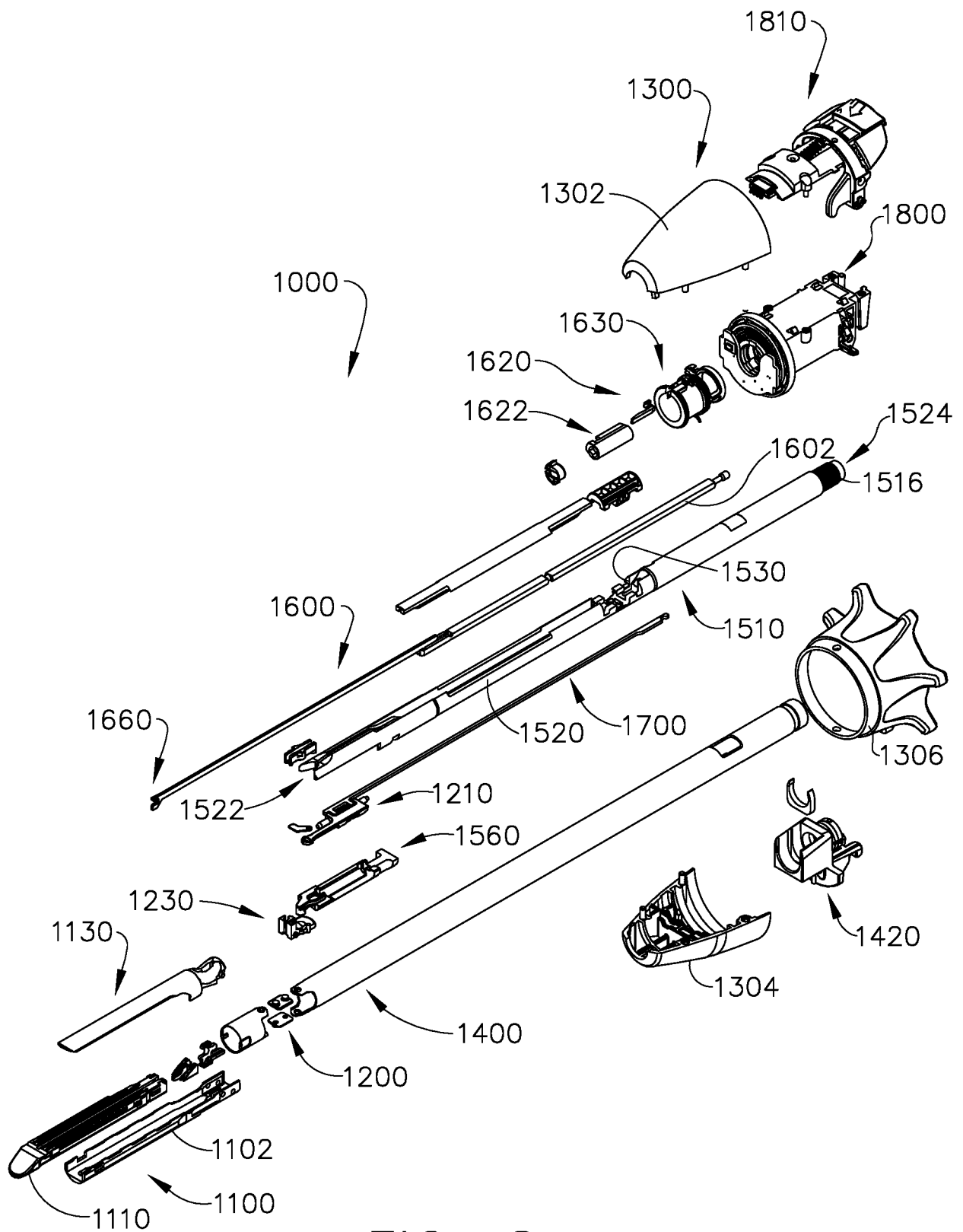
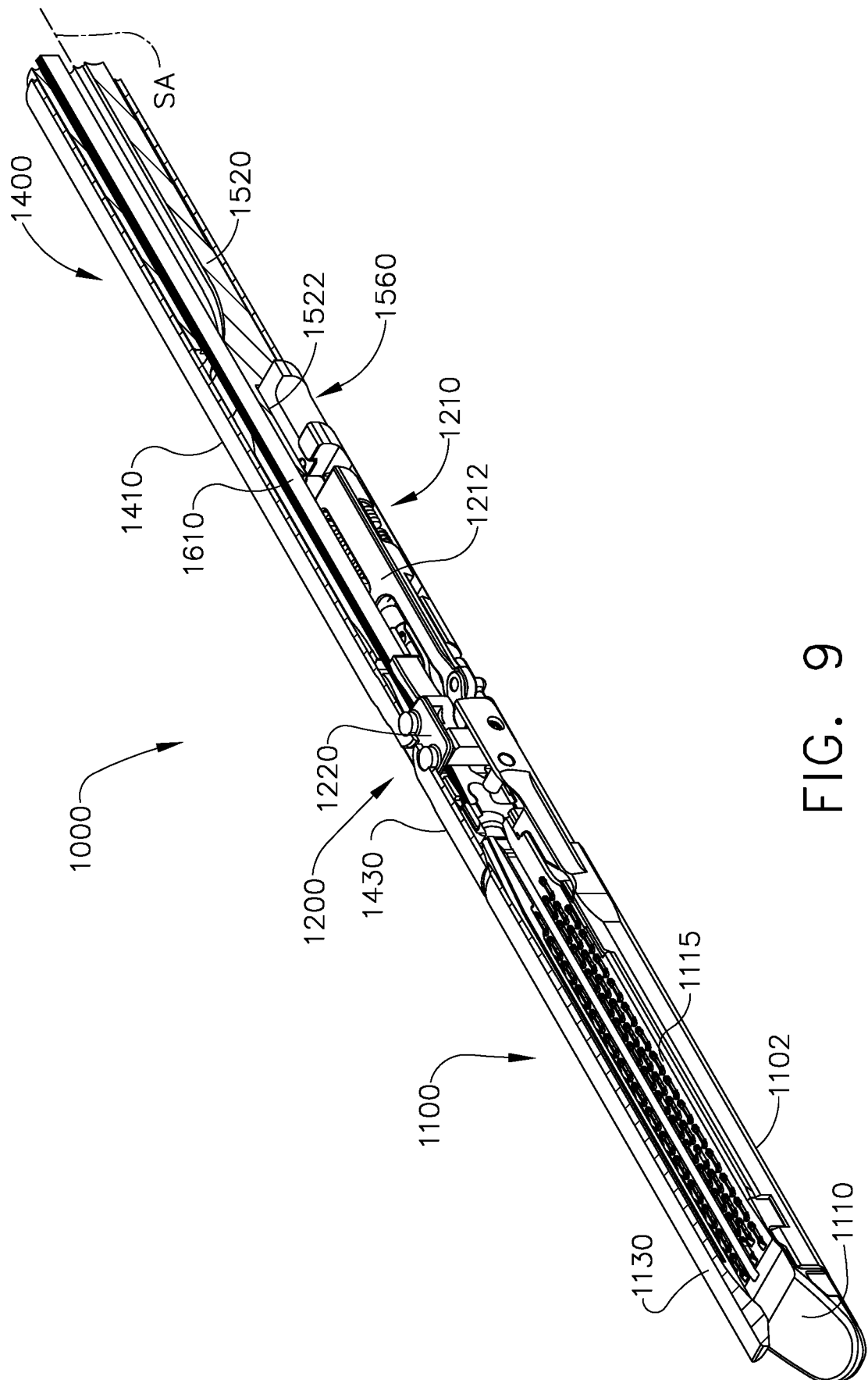
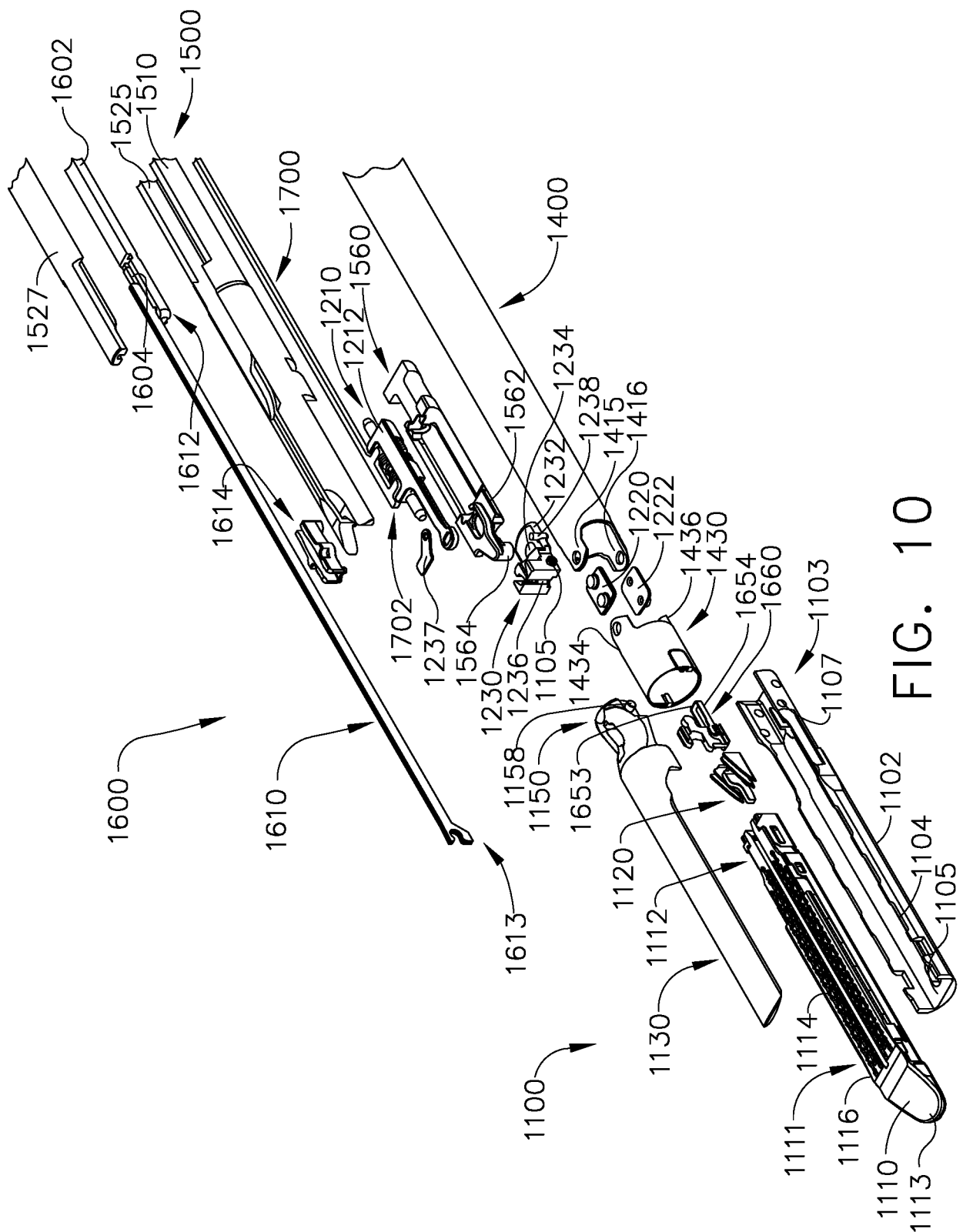


FIG. 8





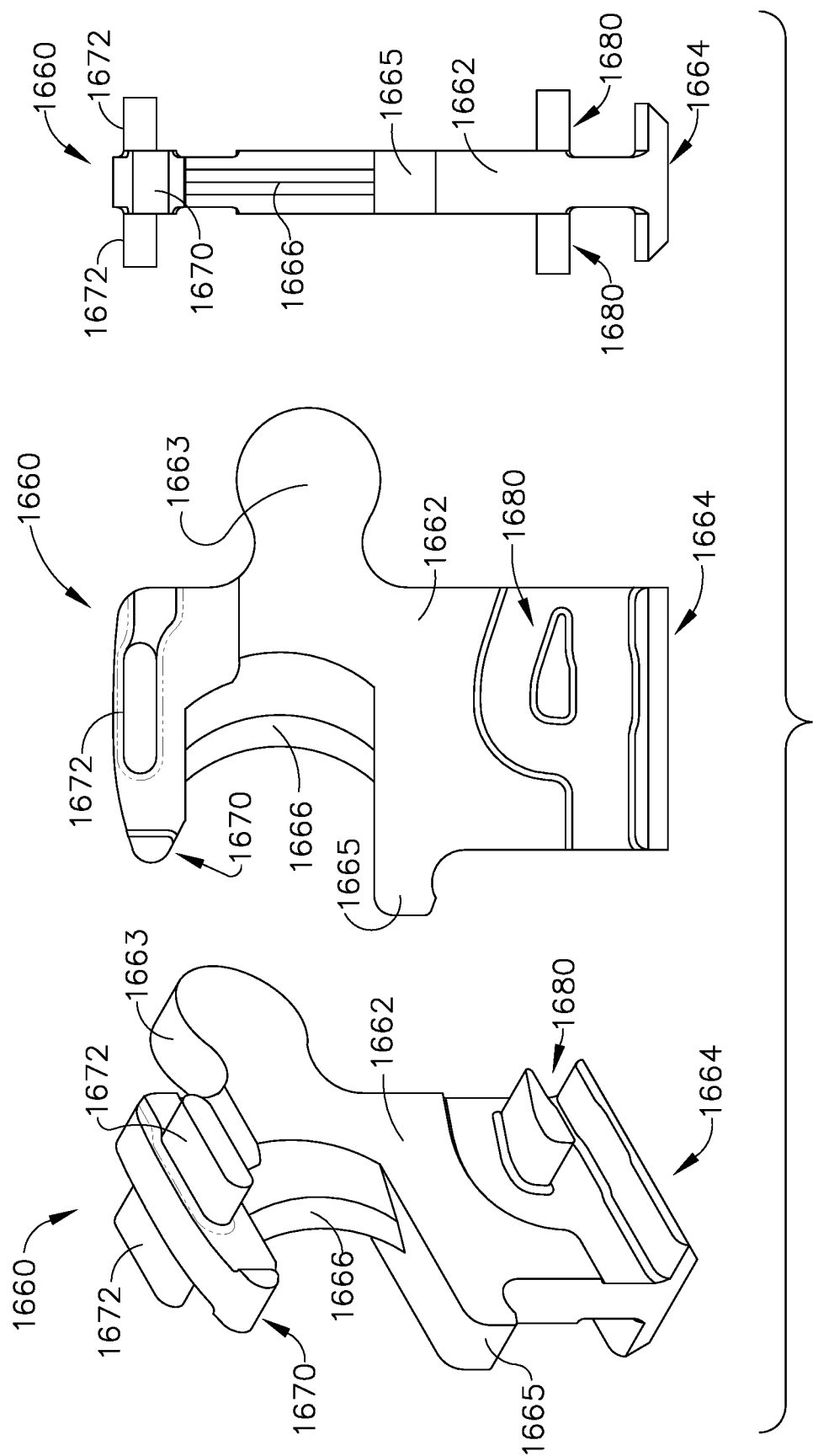


FIG. 11

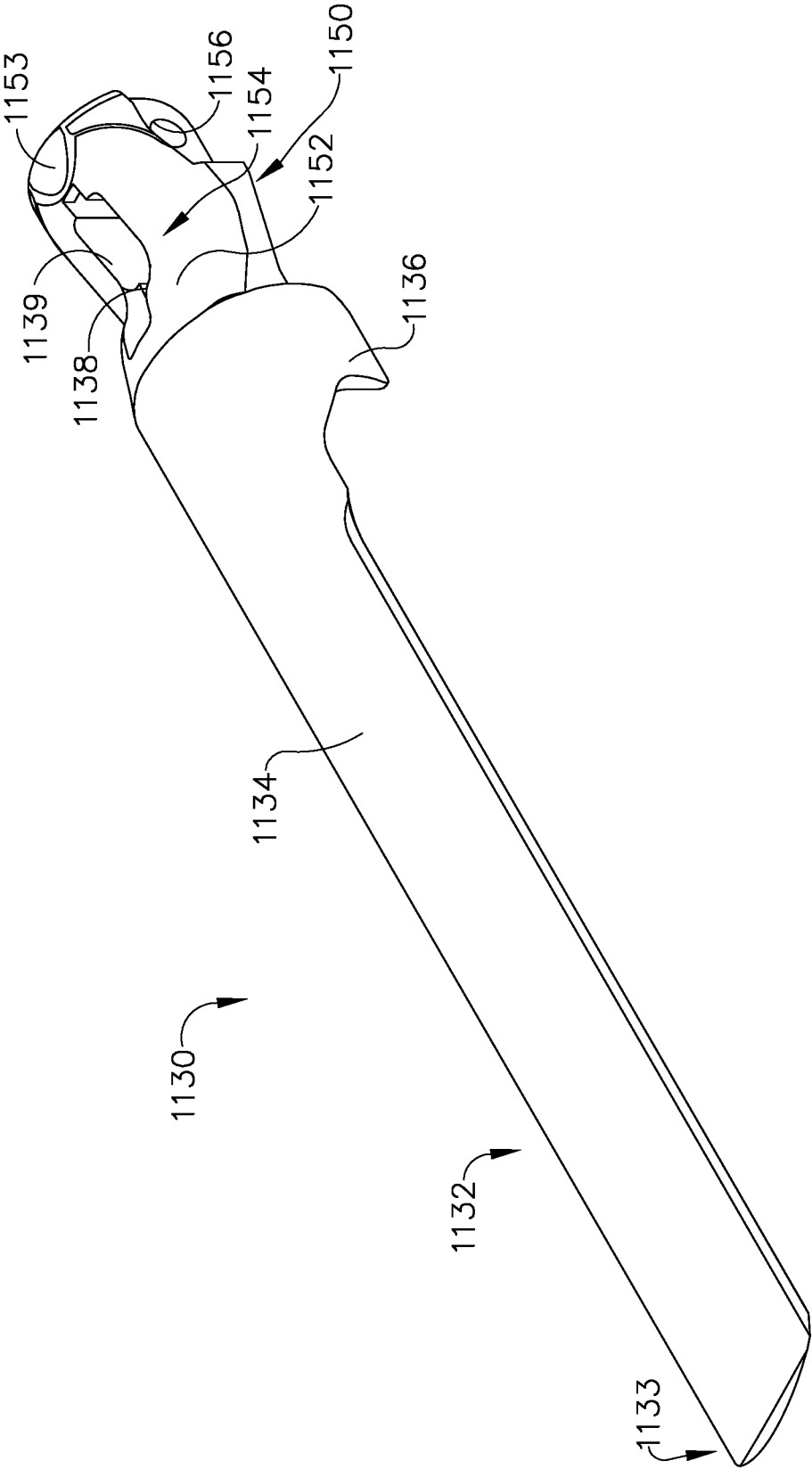


FIG. 12

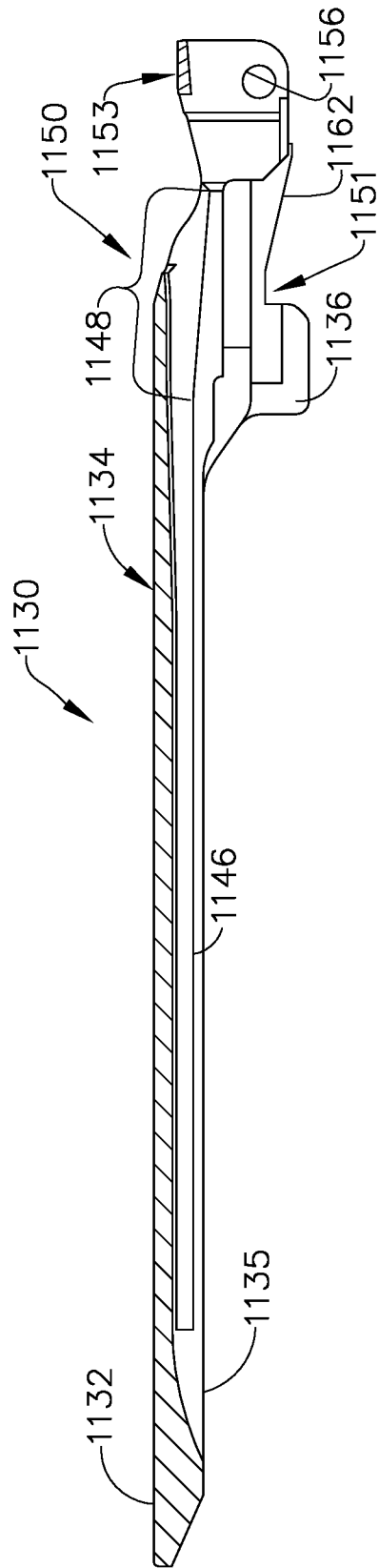


FIG. 13

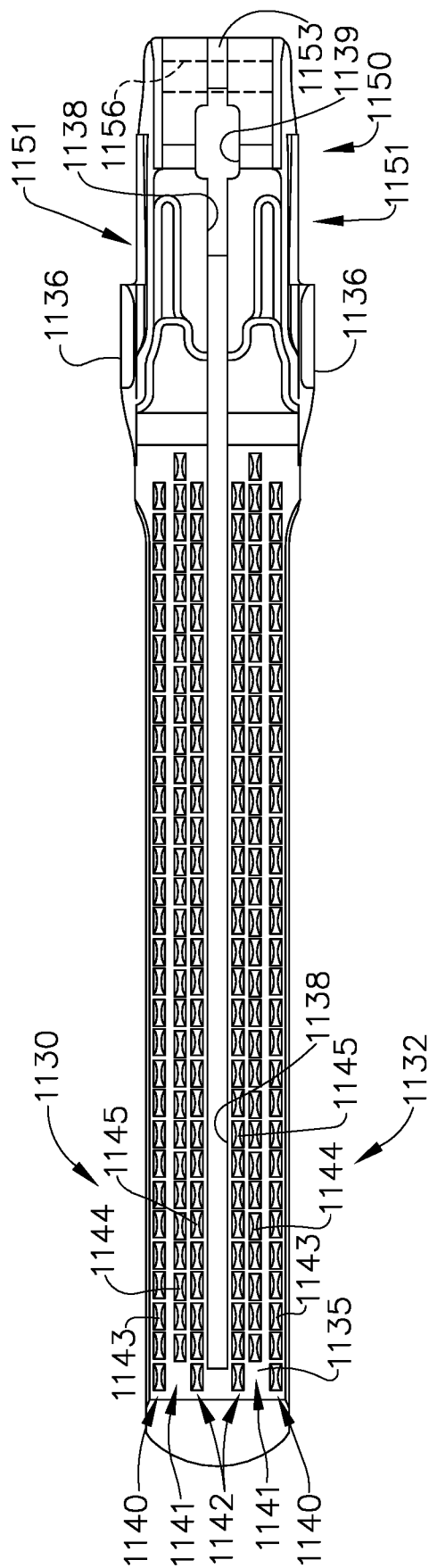


FIG. 14

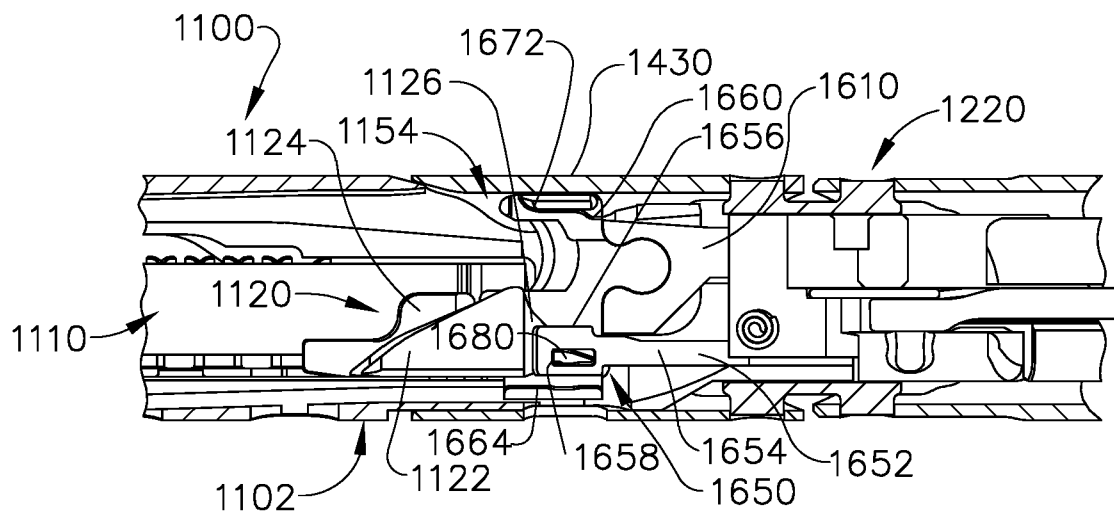


FIG. 15

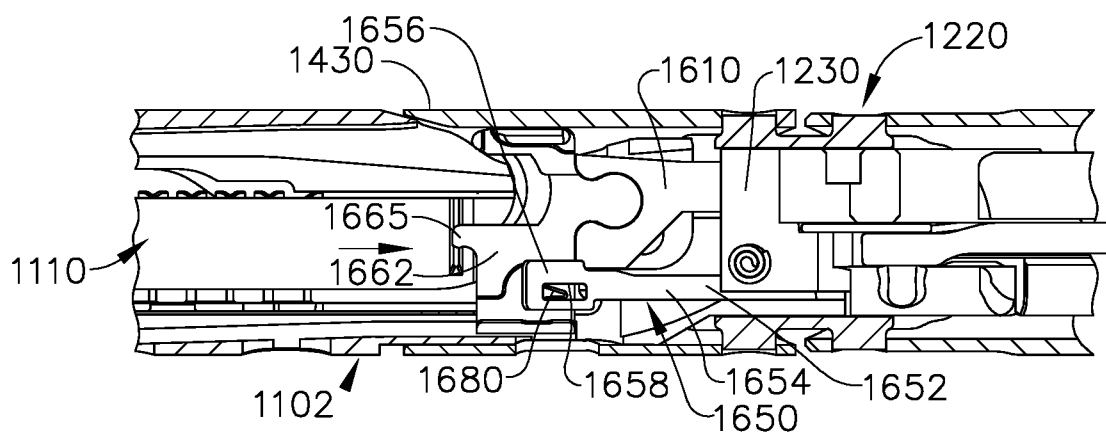


FIG. 16

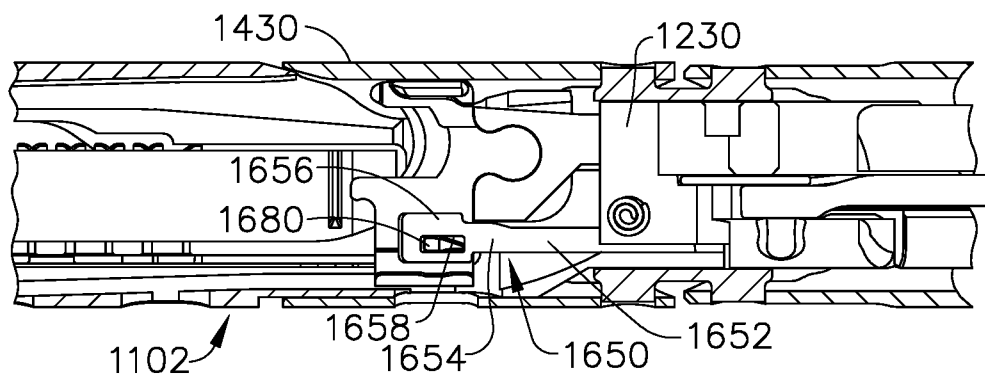


FIG. 17

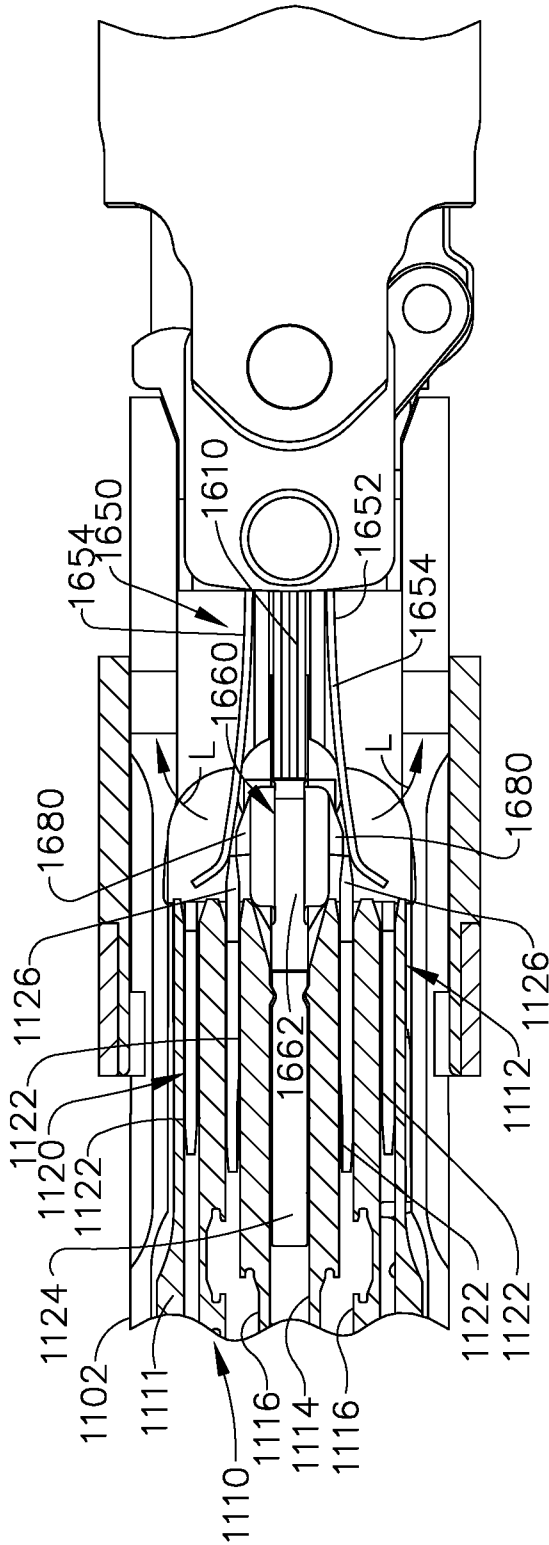


FIG. 18

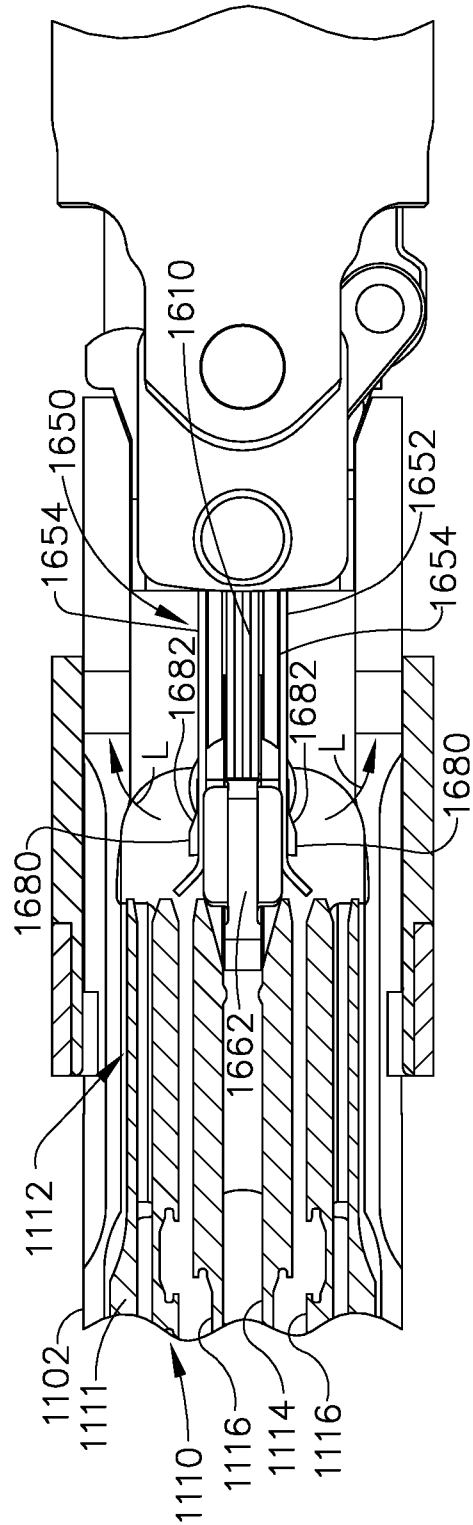


FIG. 19

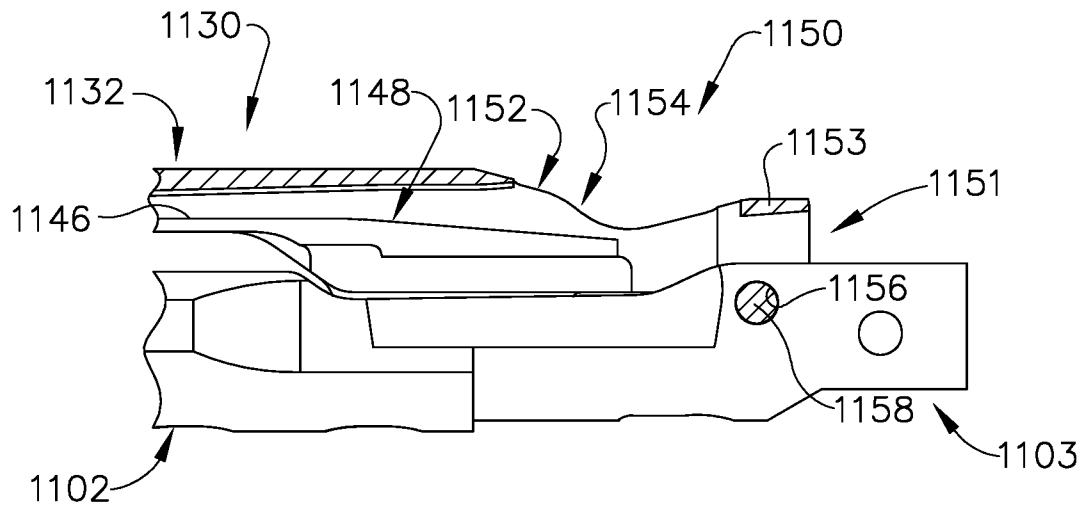


FIG. 20

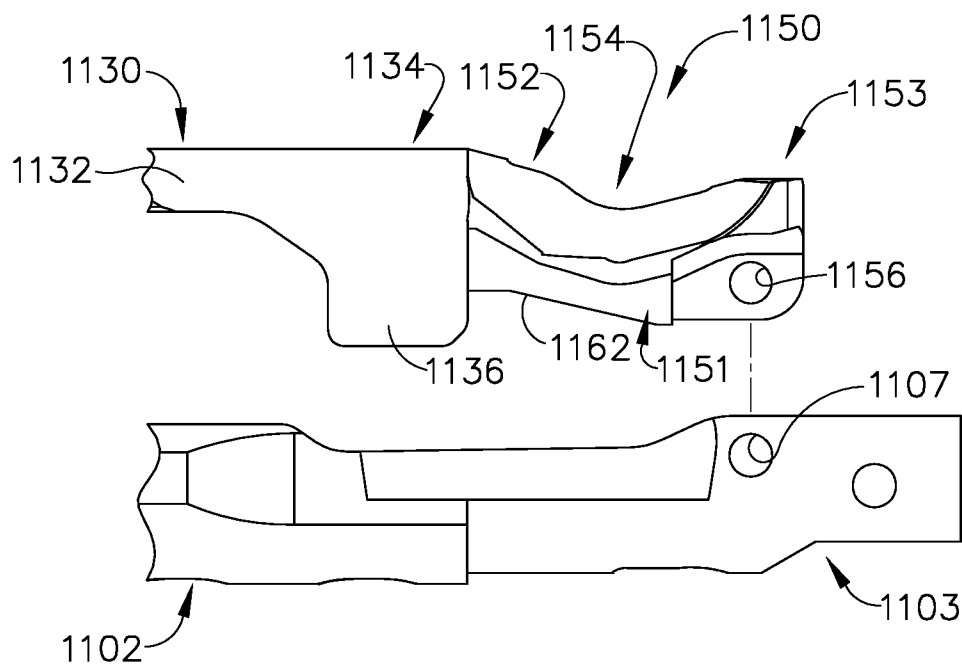


FIG. 21

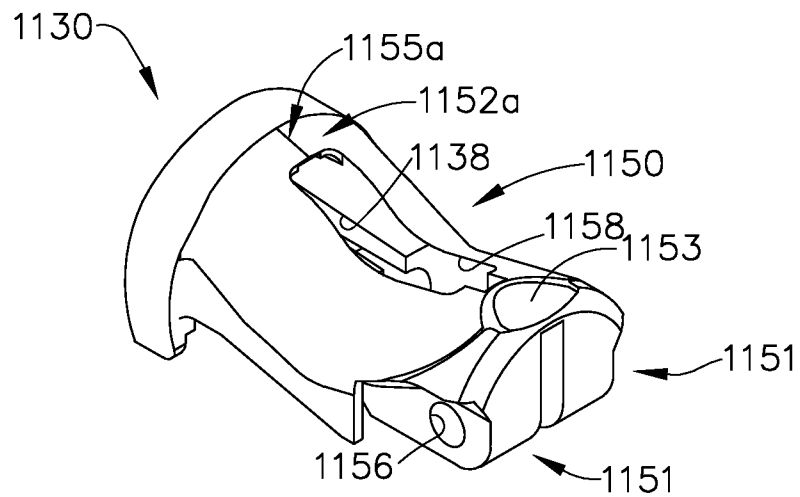


FIG. 22

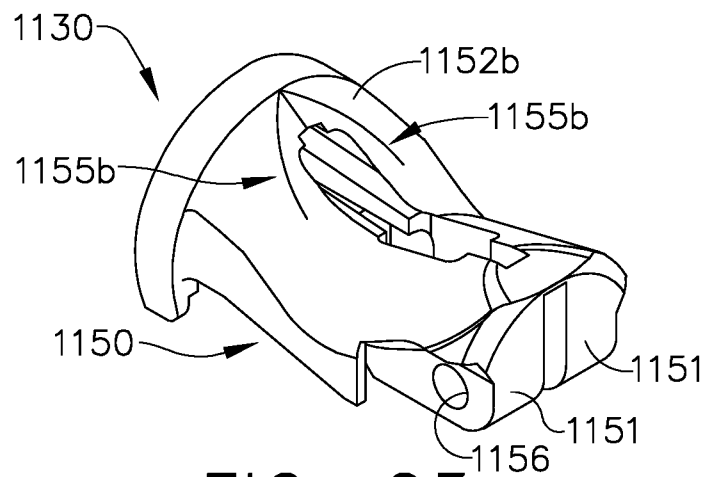


FIG. 23

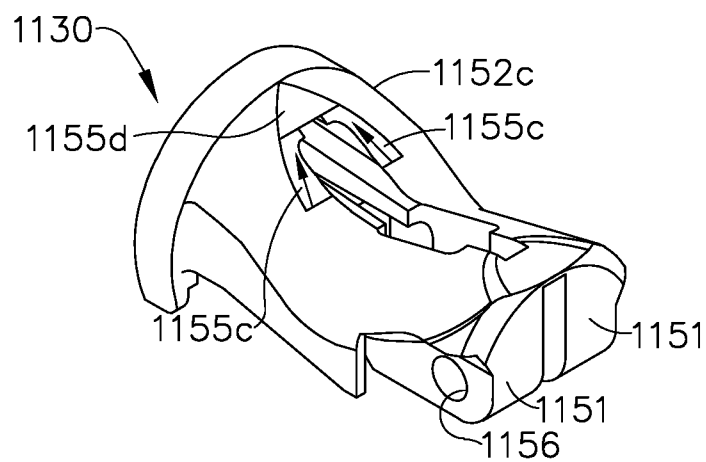
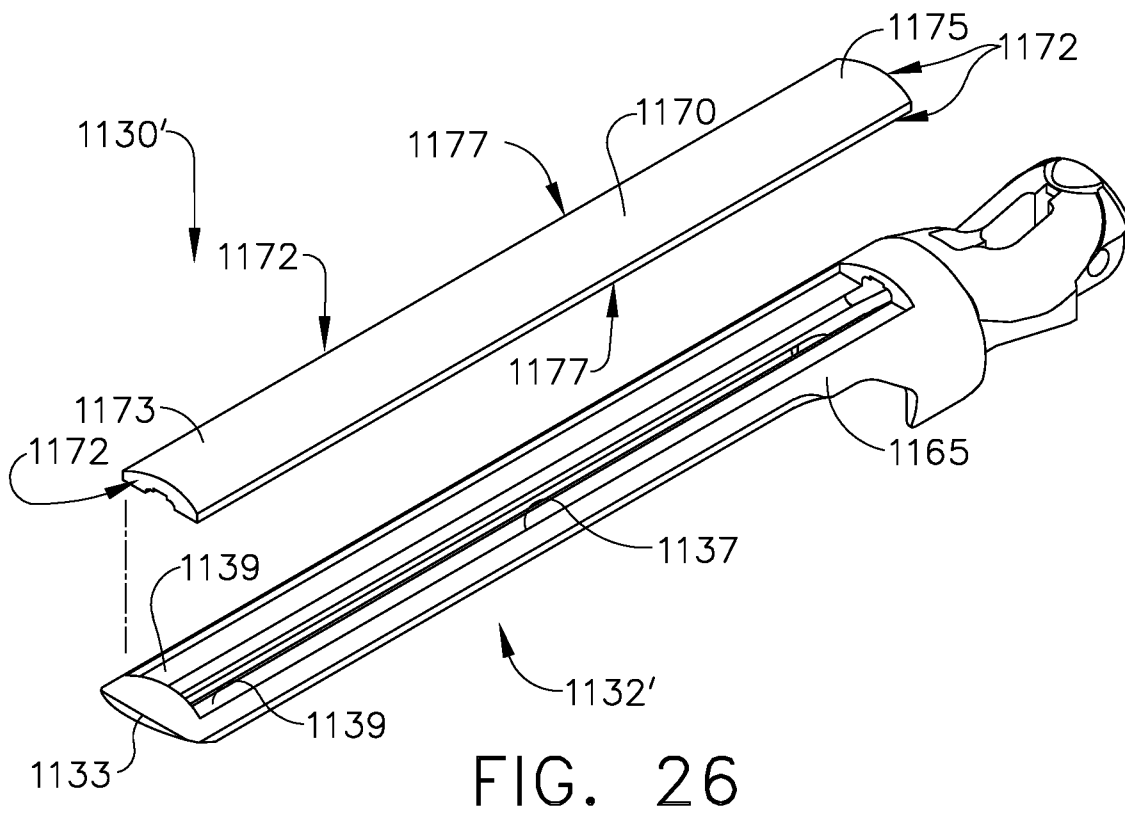
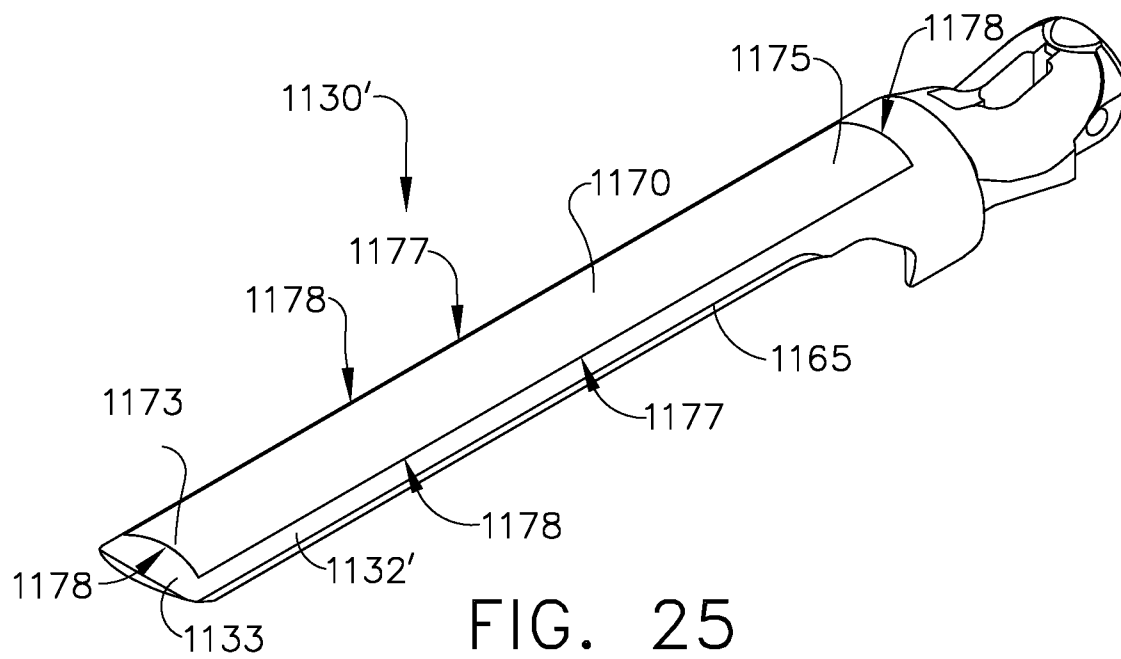


FIG. 24



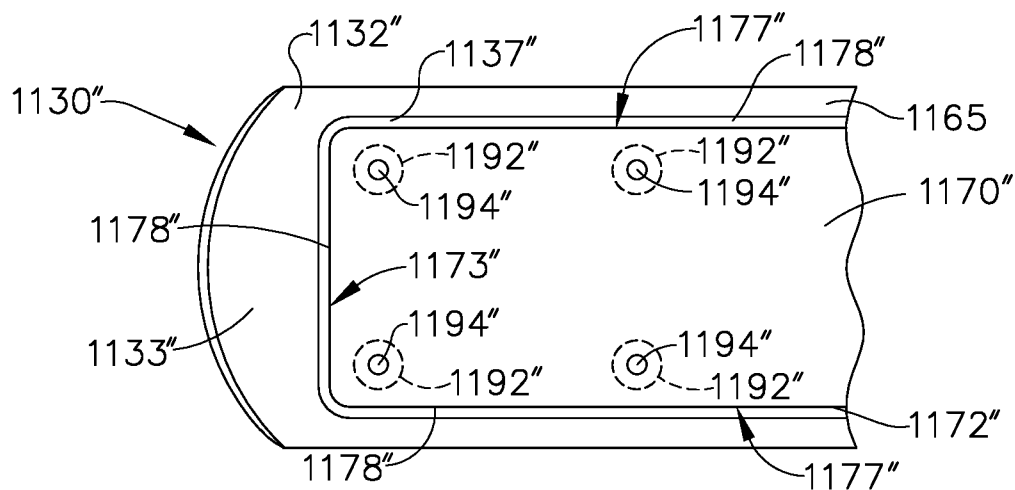


FIG. 31

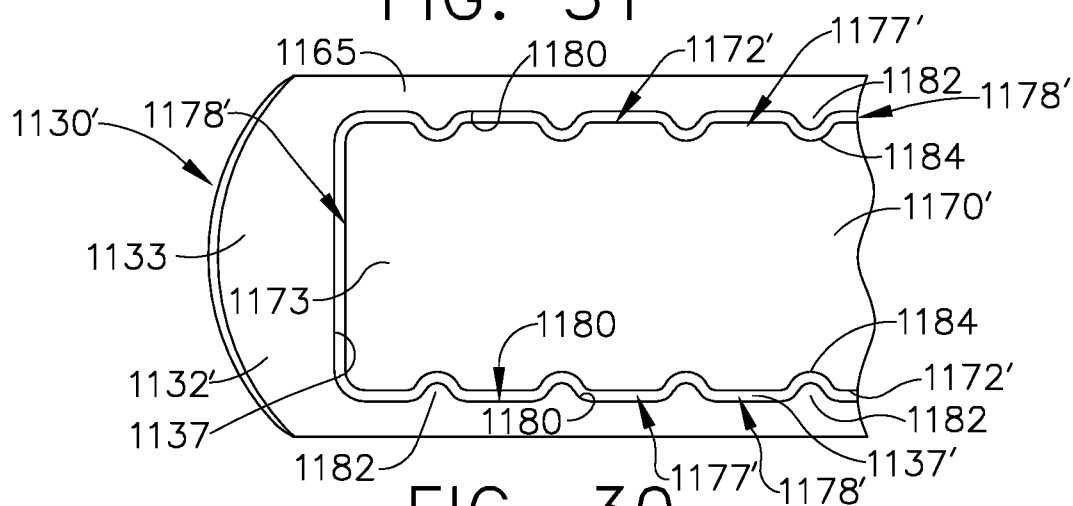


FIG. 30

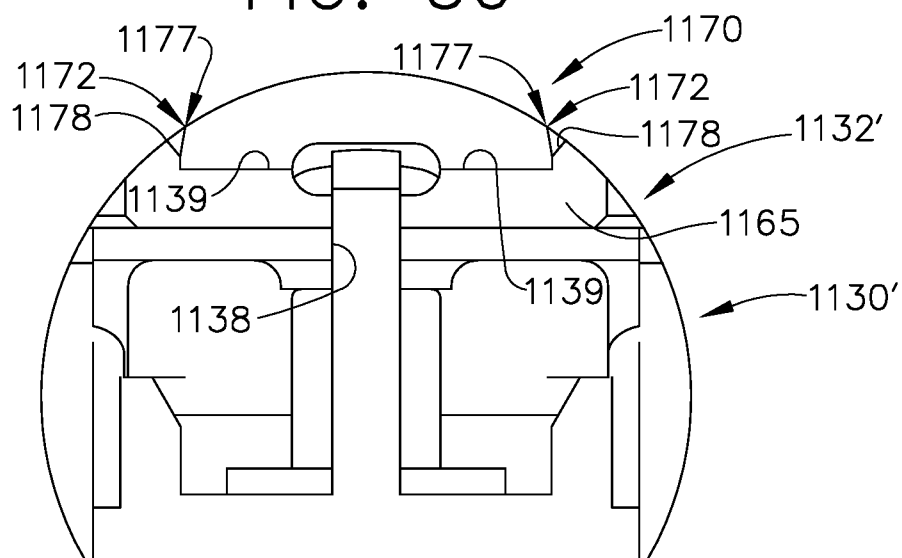
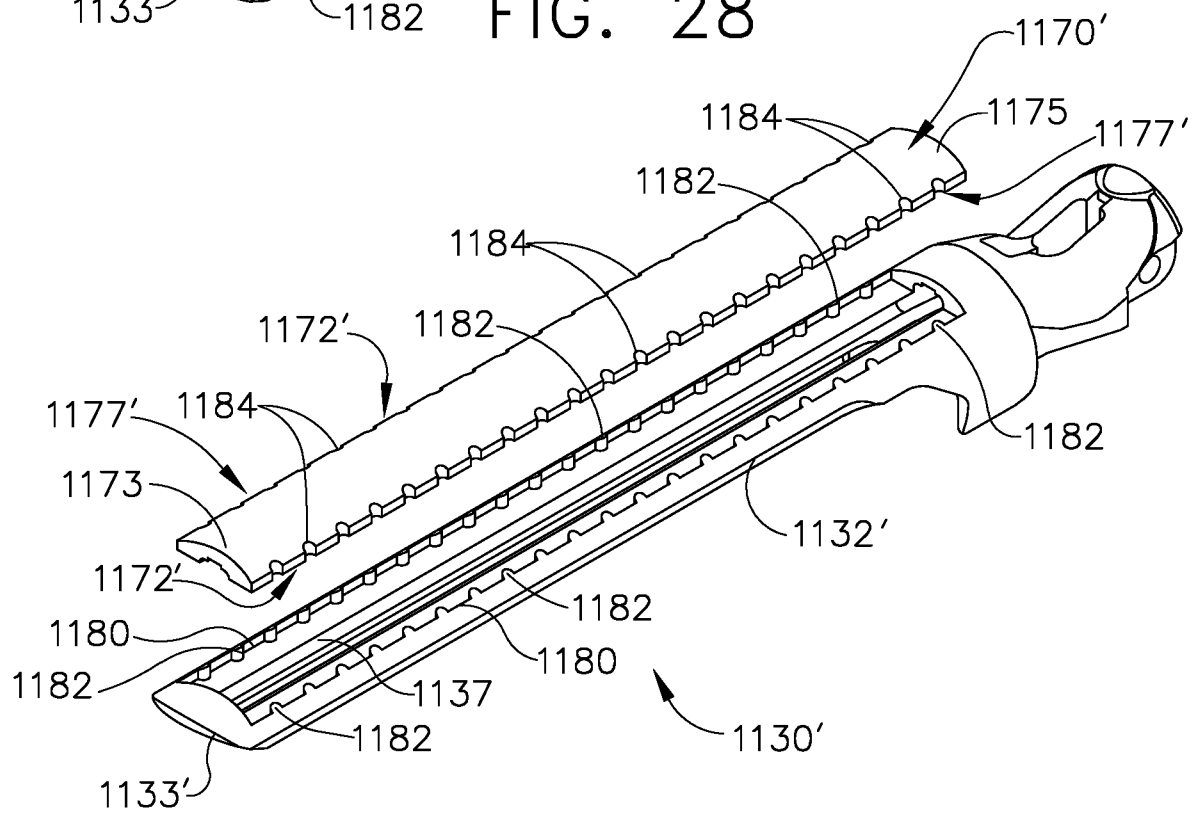
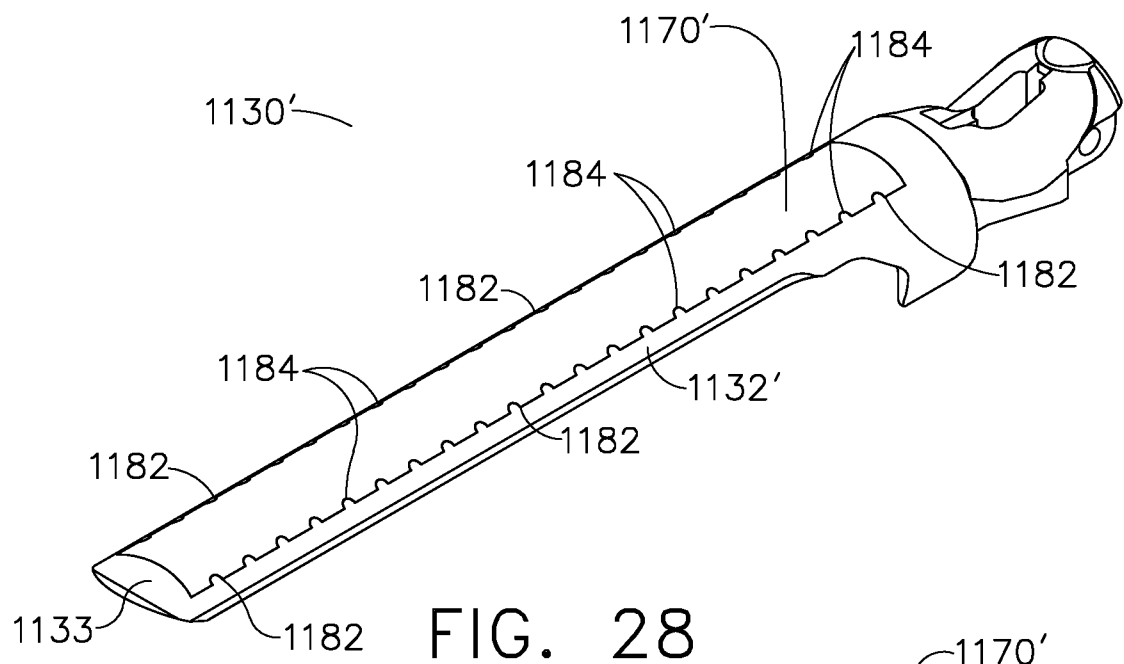


FIG. 27



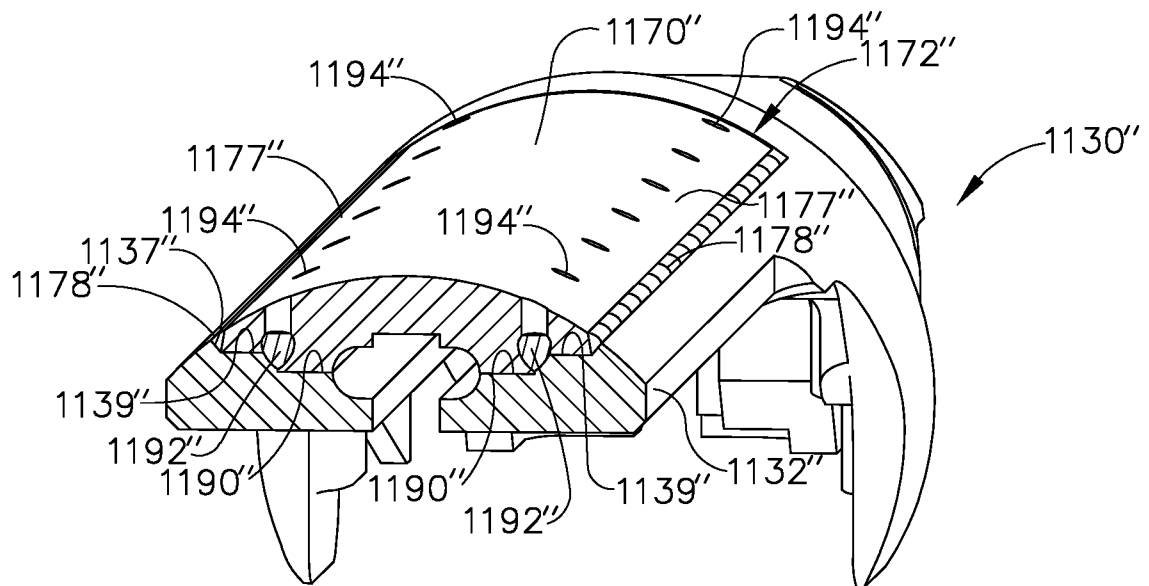


FIG. 32

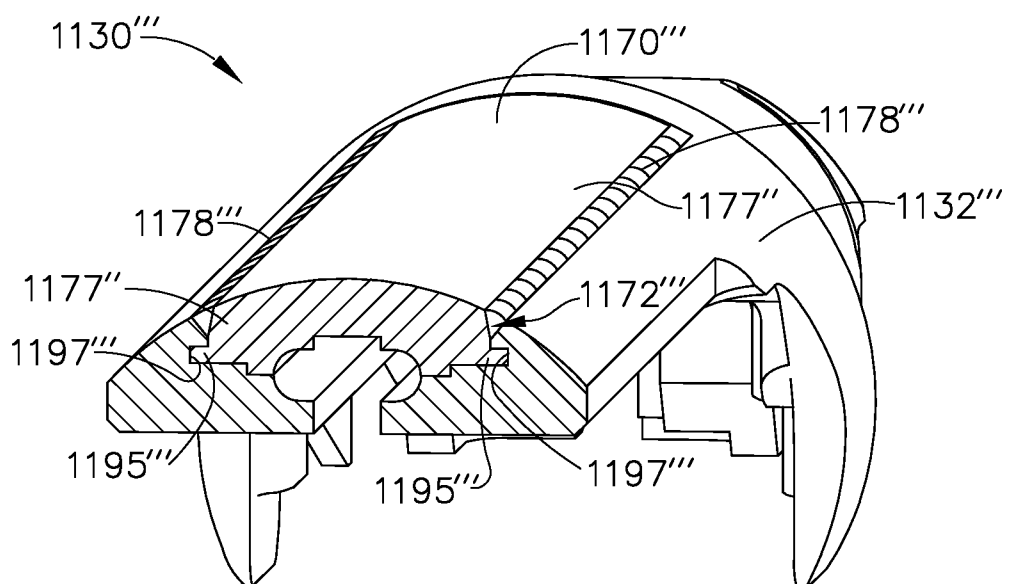


FIG. 33

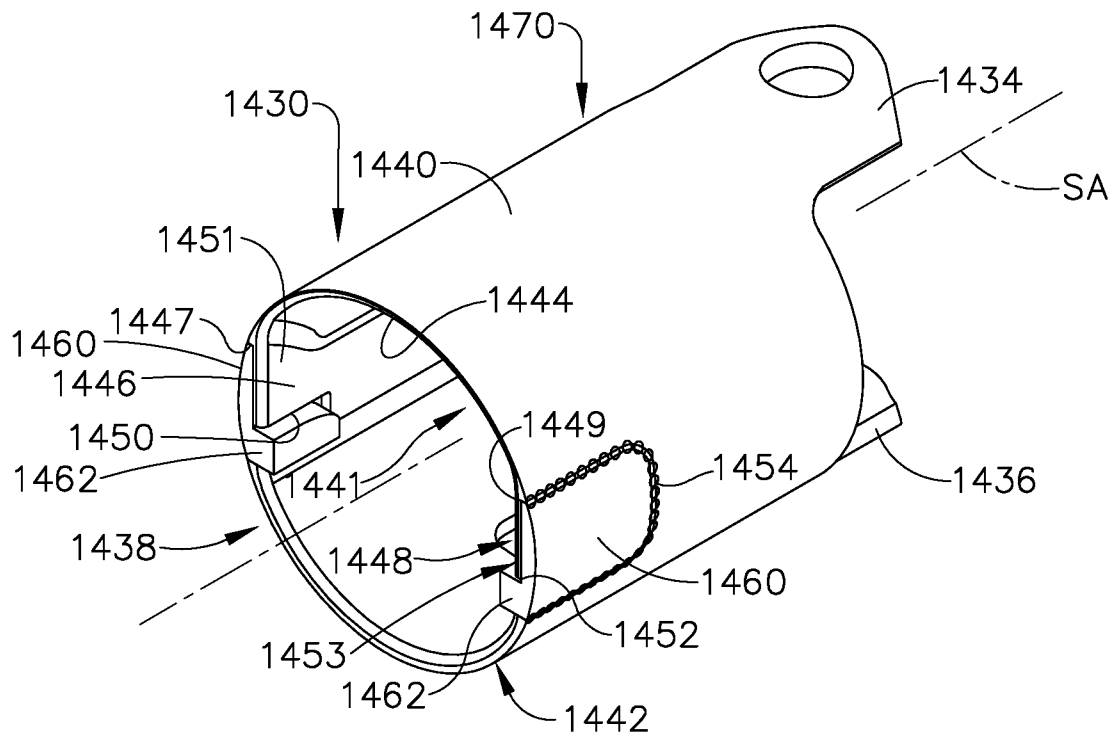


FIG. 34

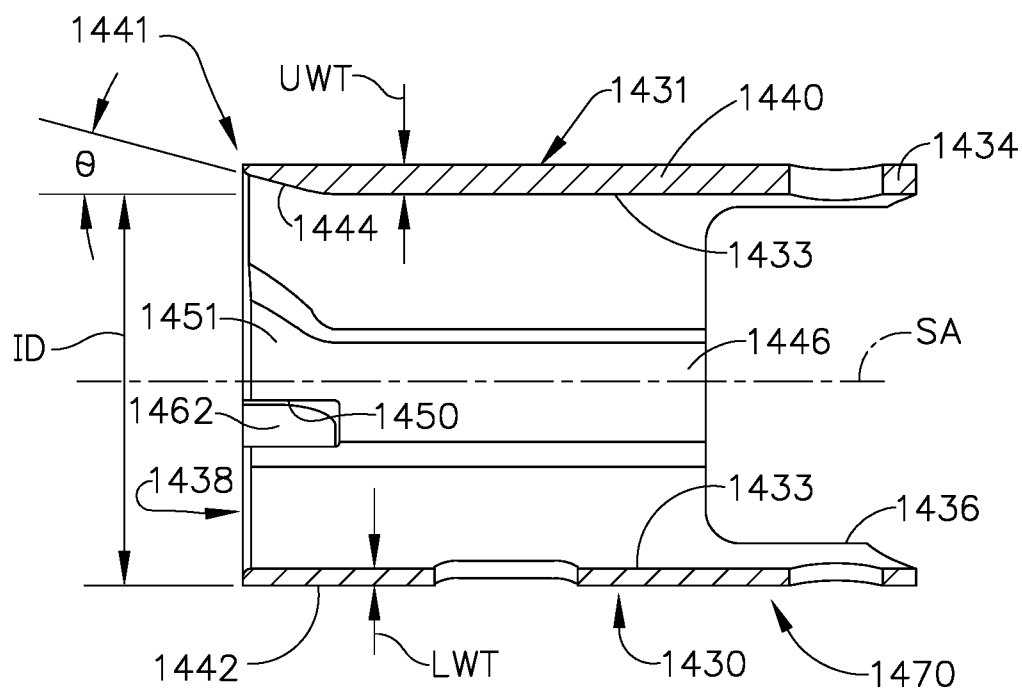


FIG. 35

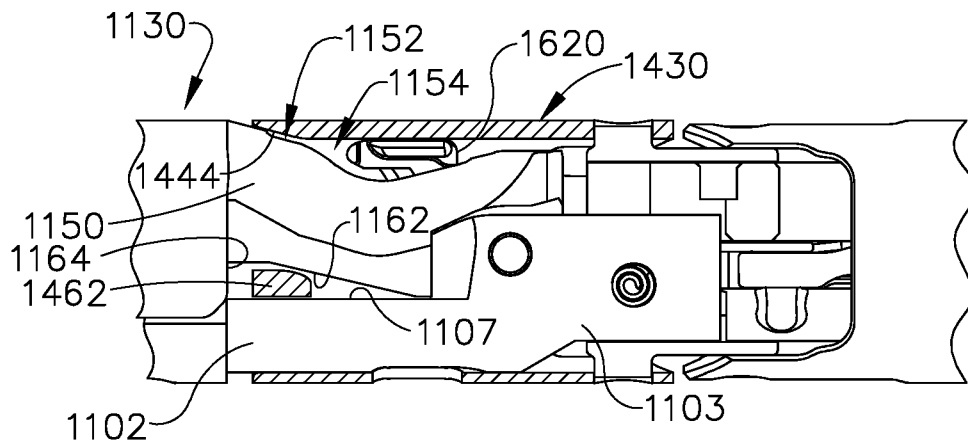


FIG. 36

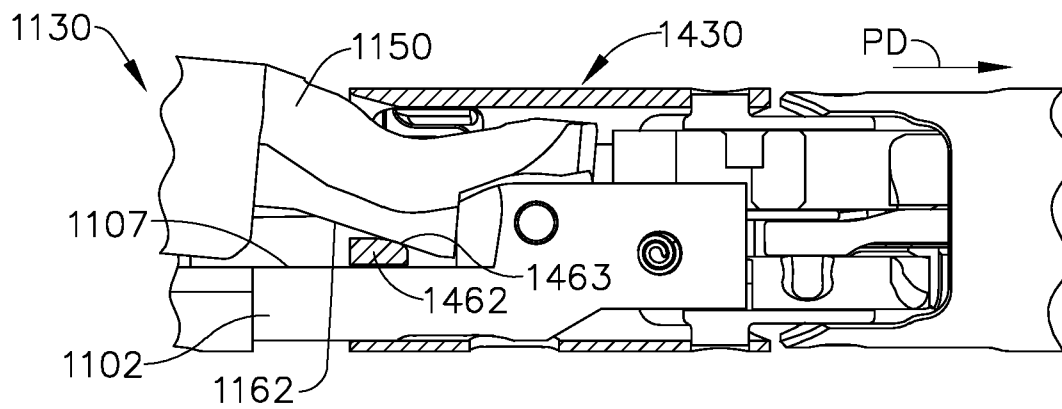


FIG. 37

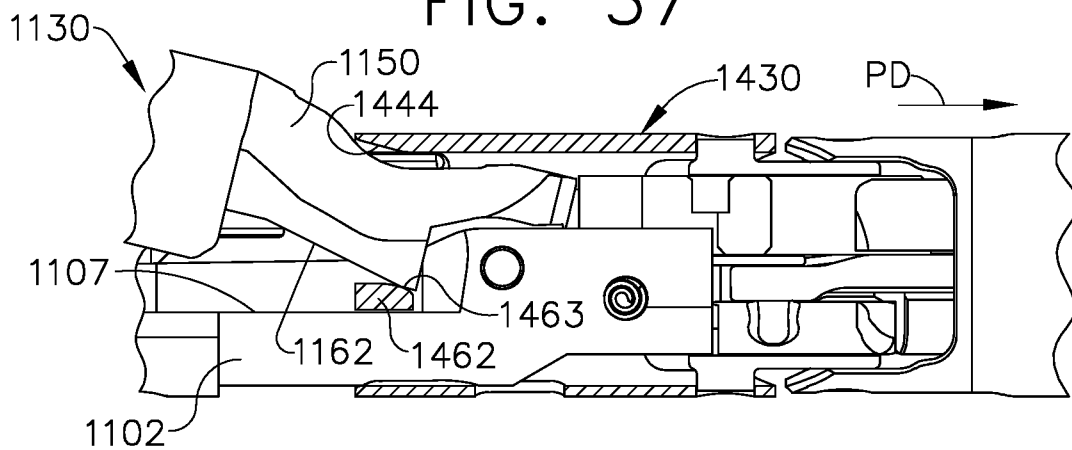


FIG. 38

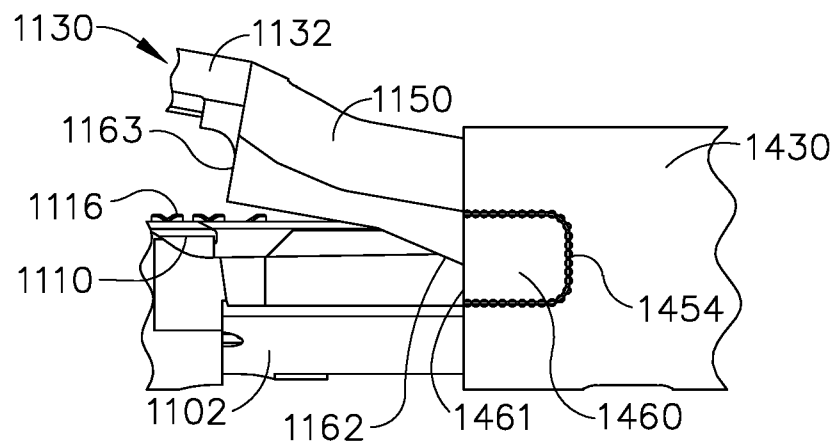


FIG. 41

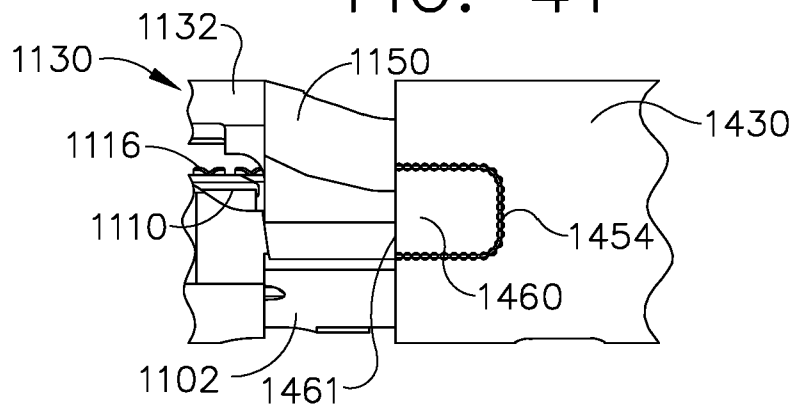


FIG. 40

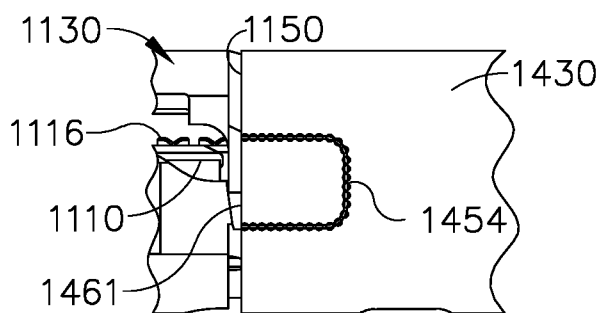
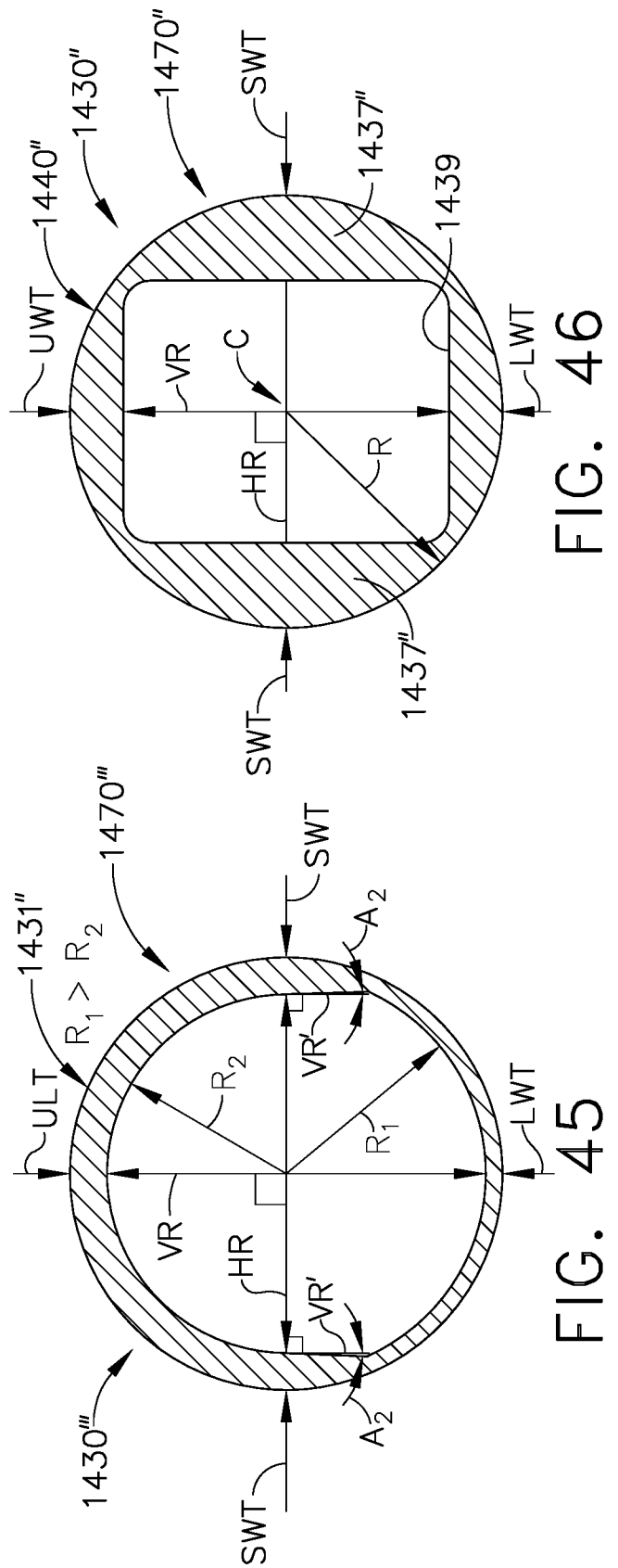
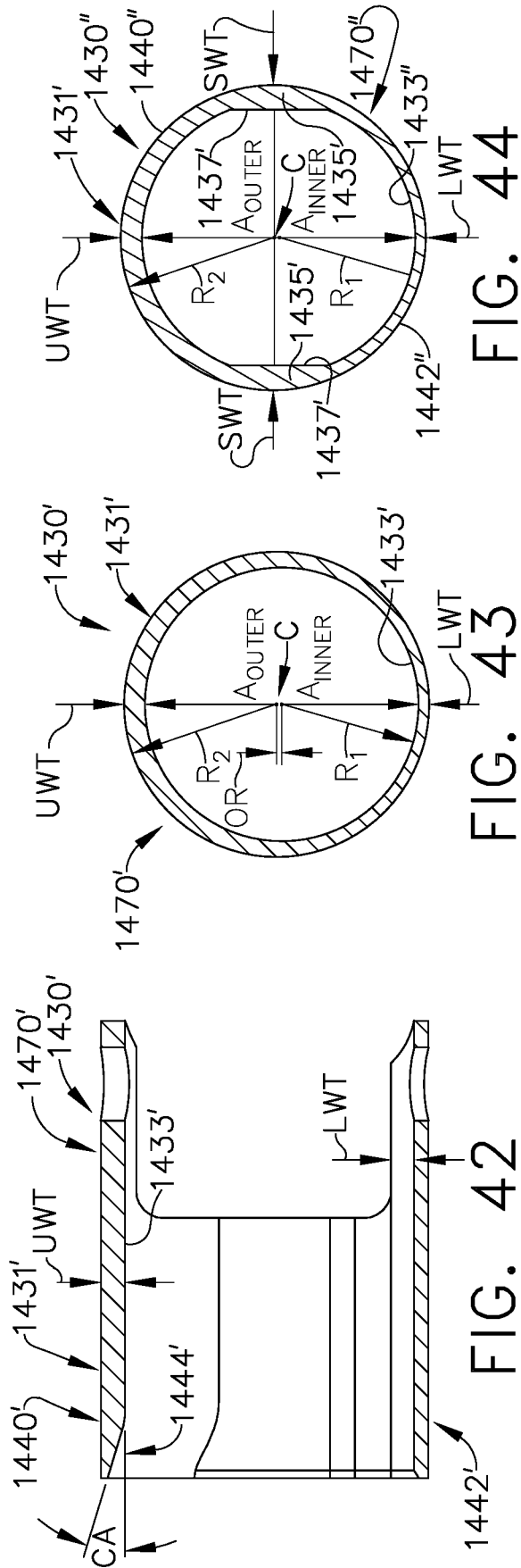
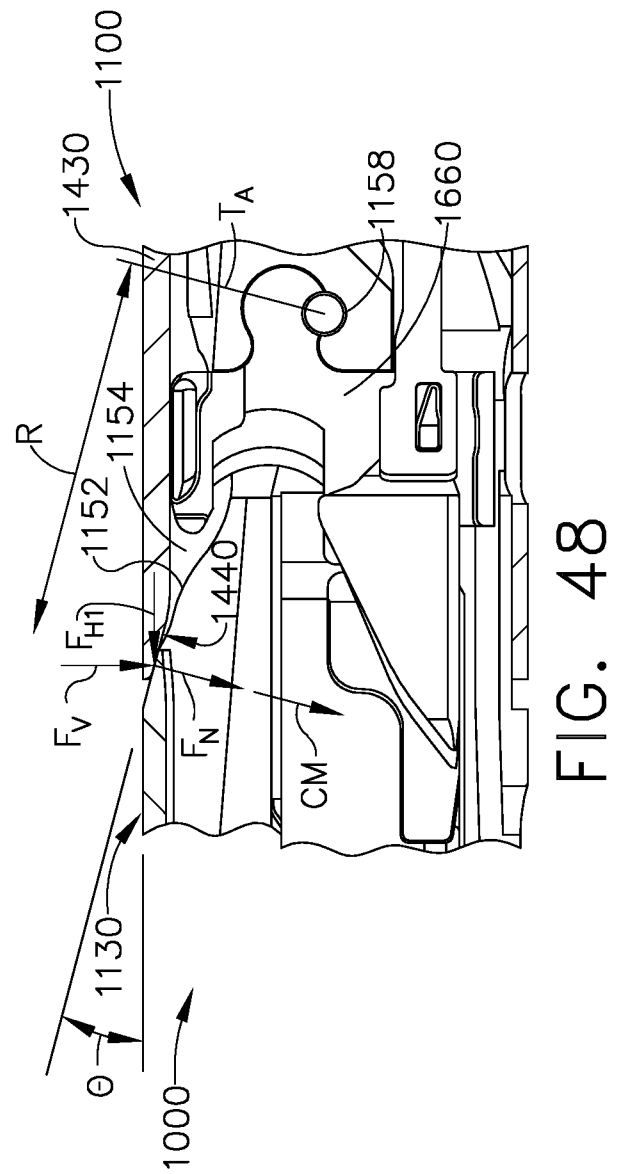
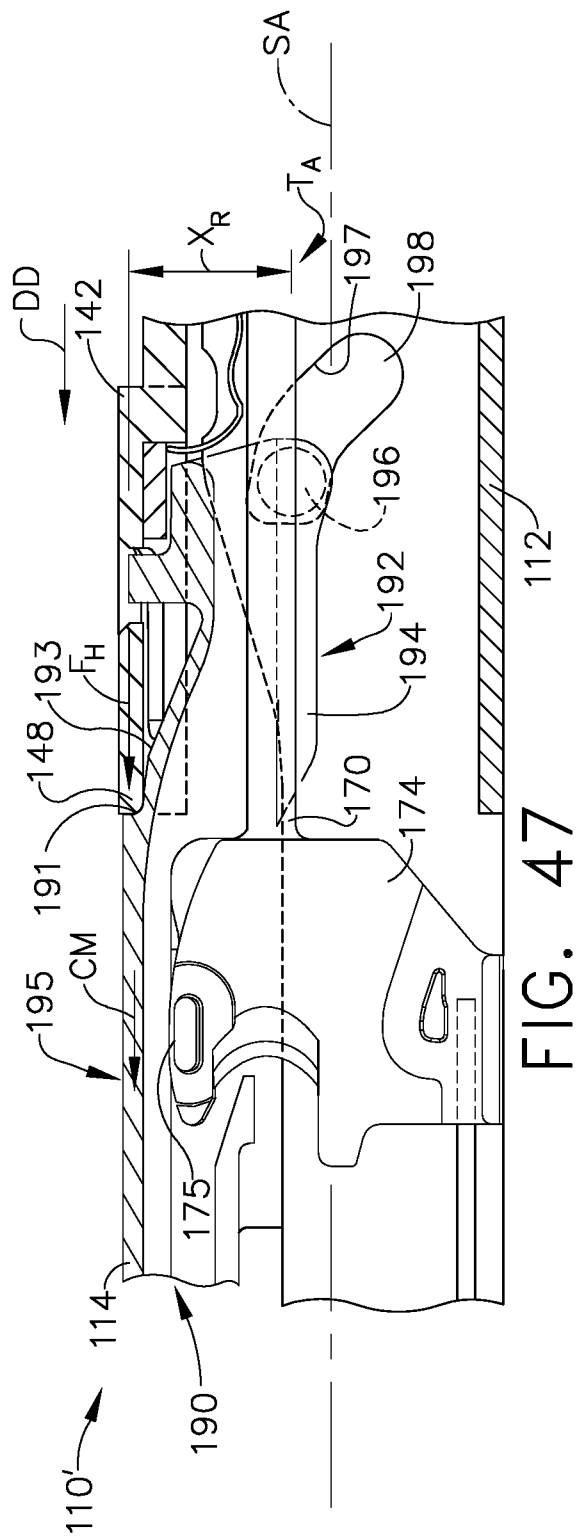


FIG. 39





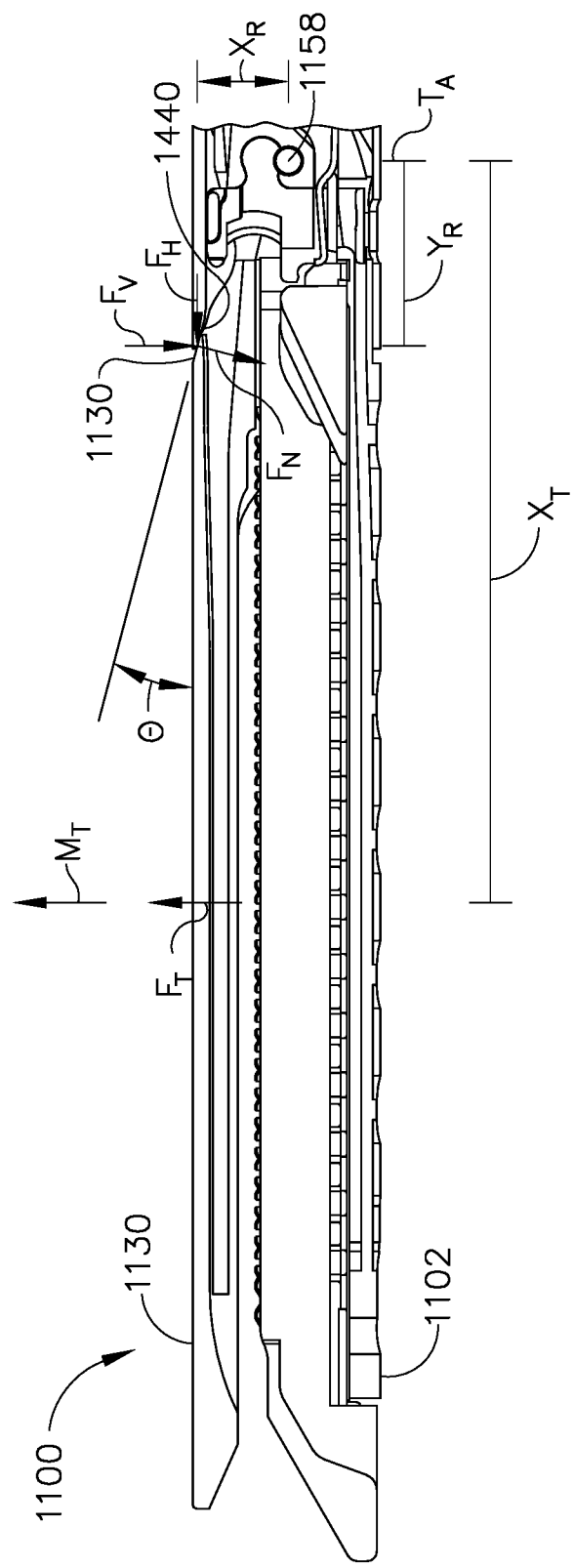


FIG. 49

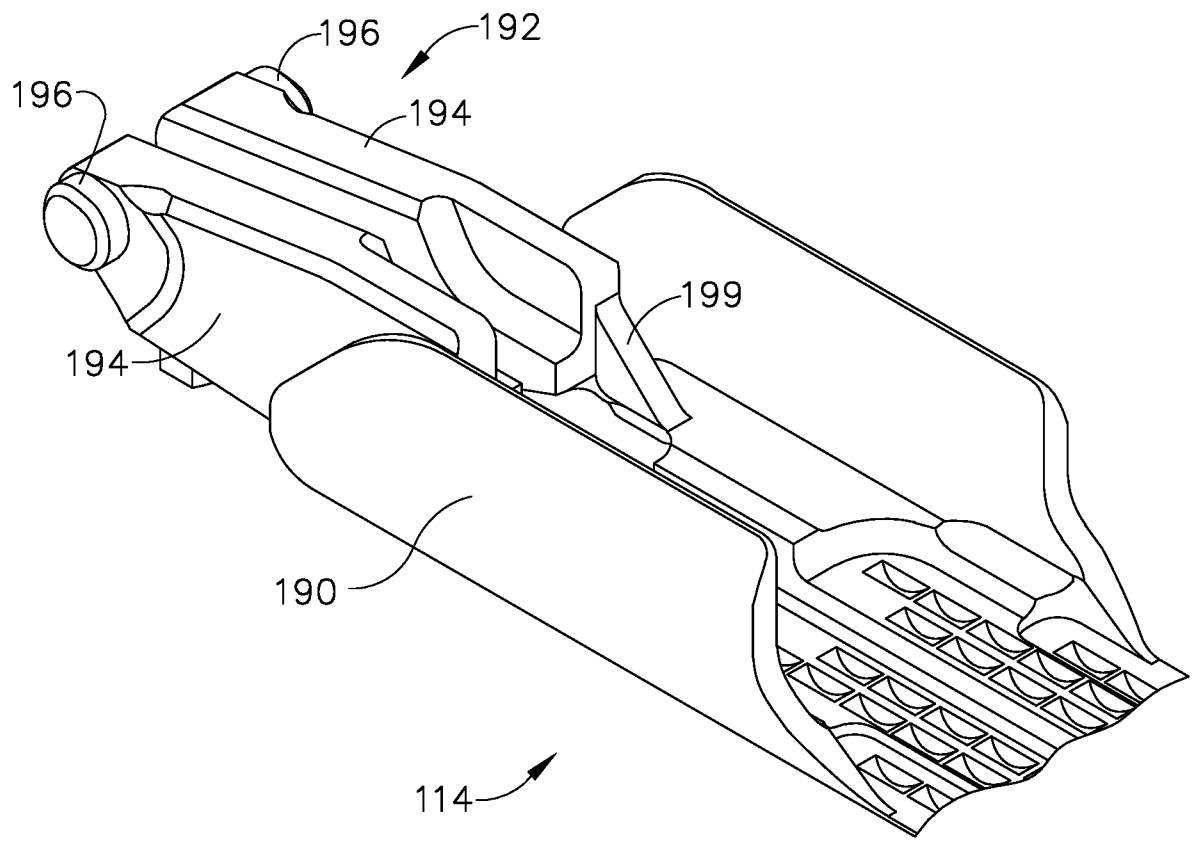


FIG. 50

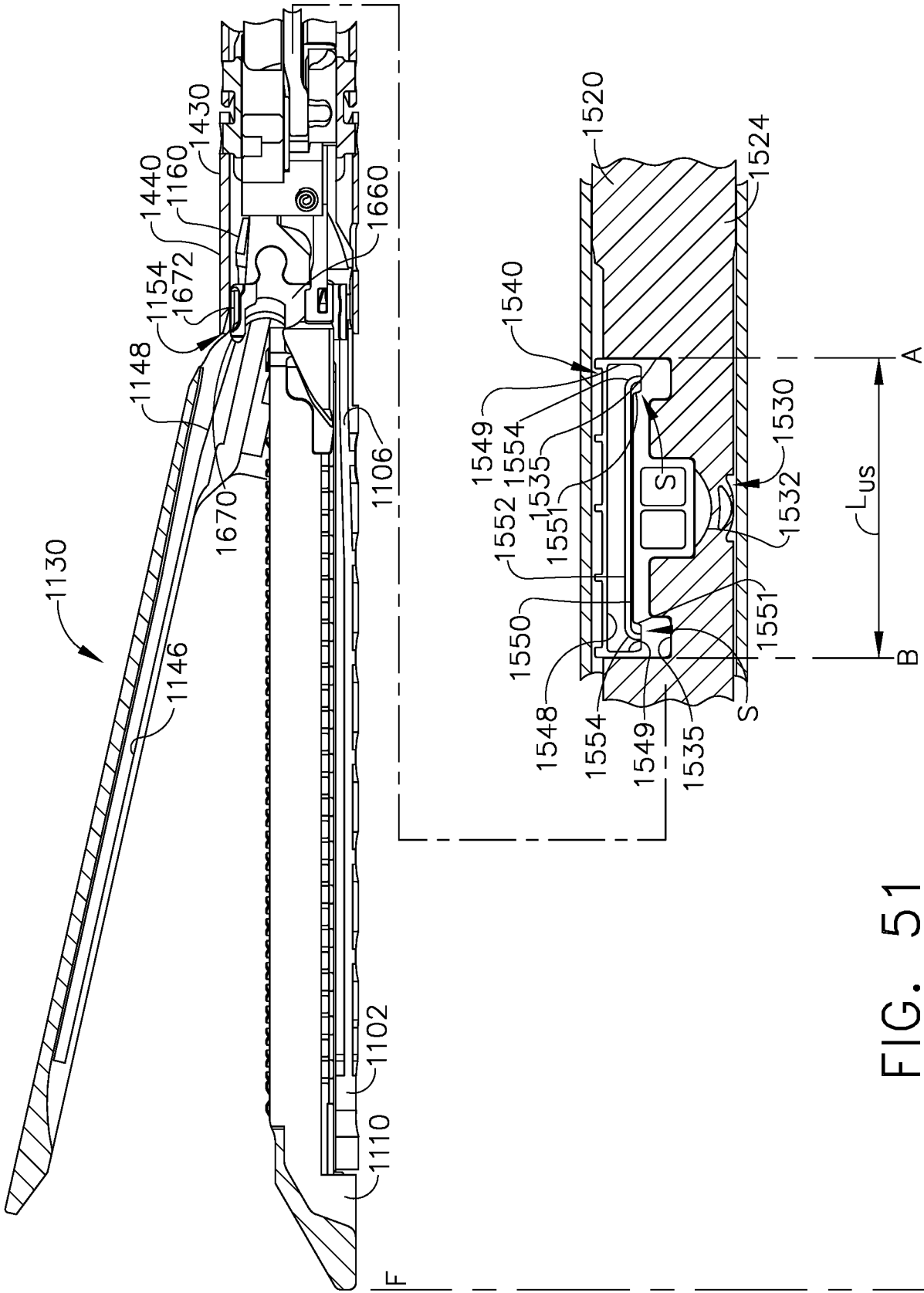


FIG. 51

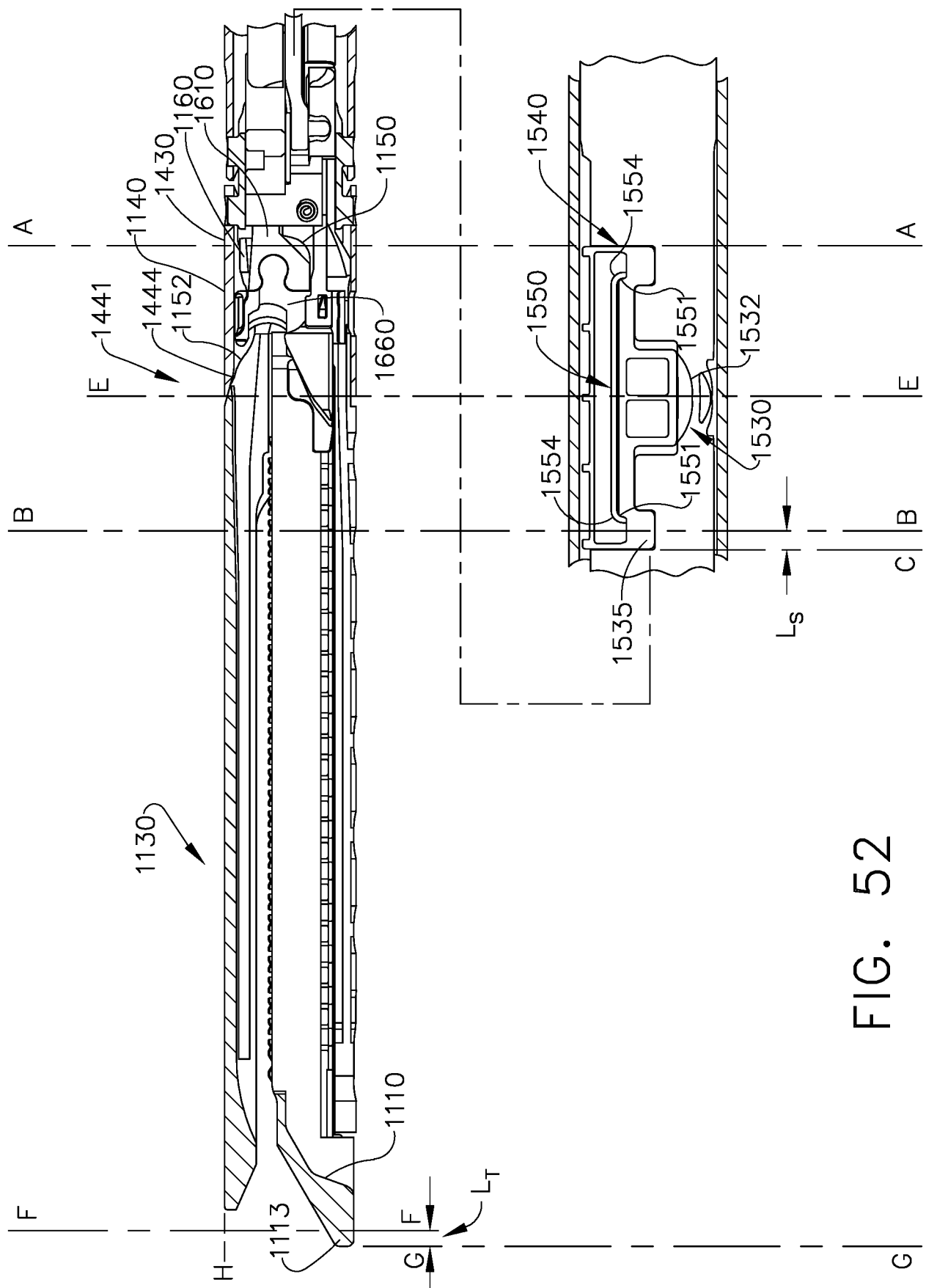
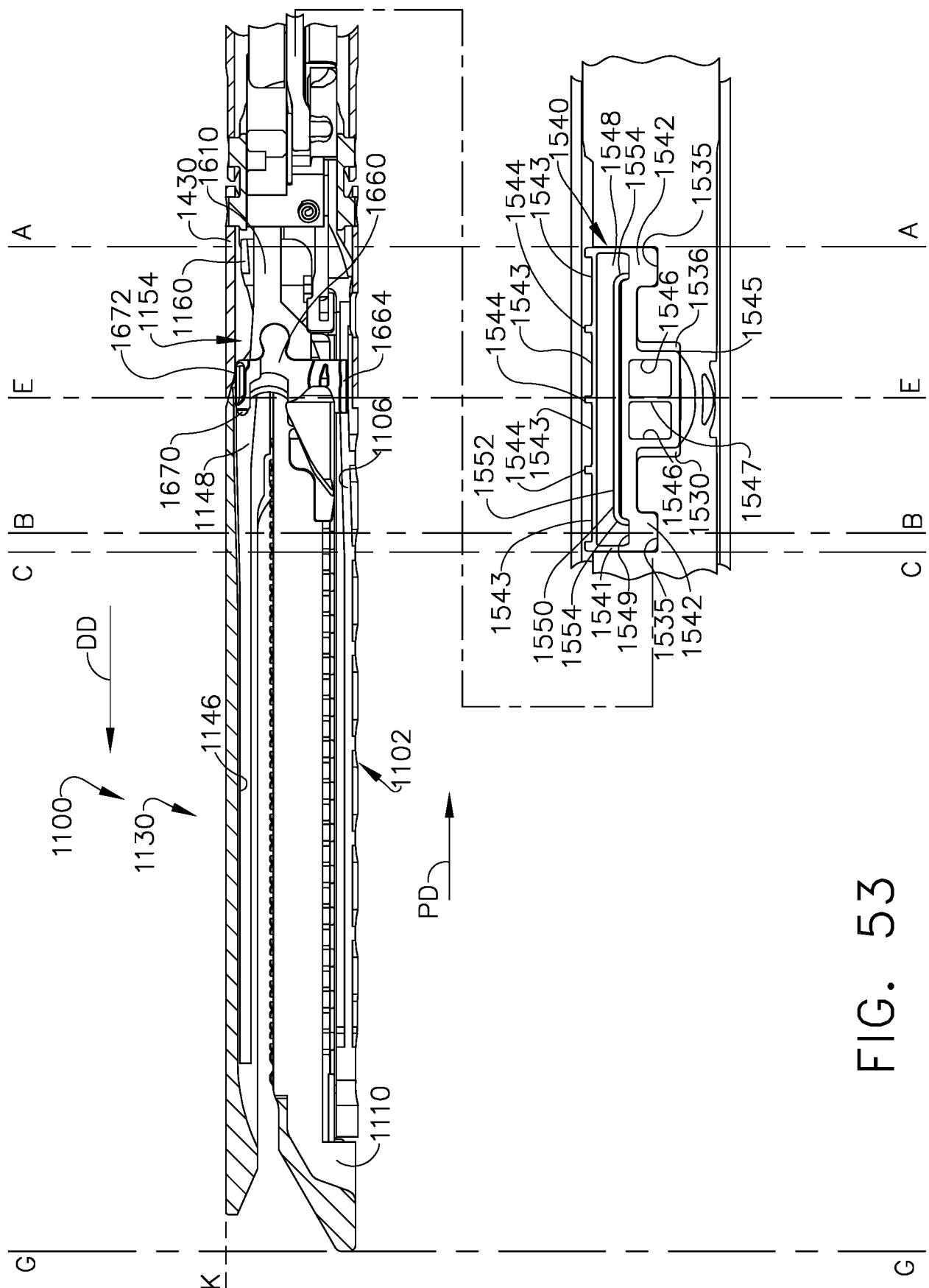


FIG. 52



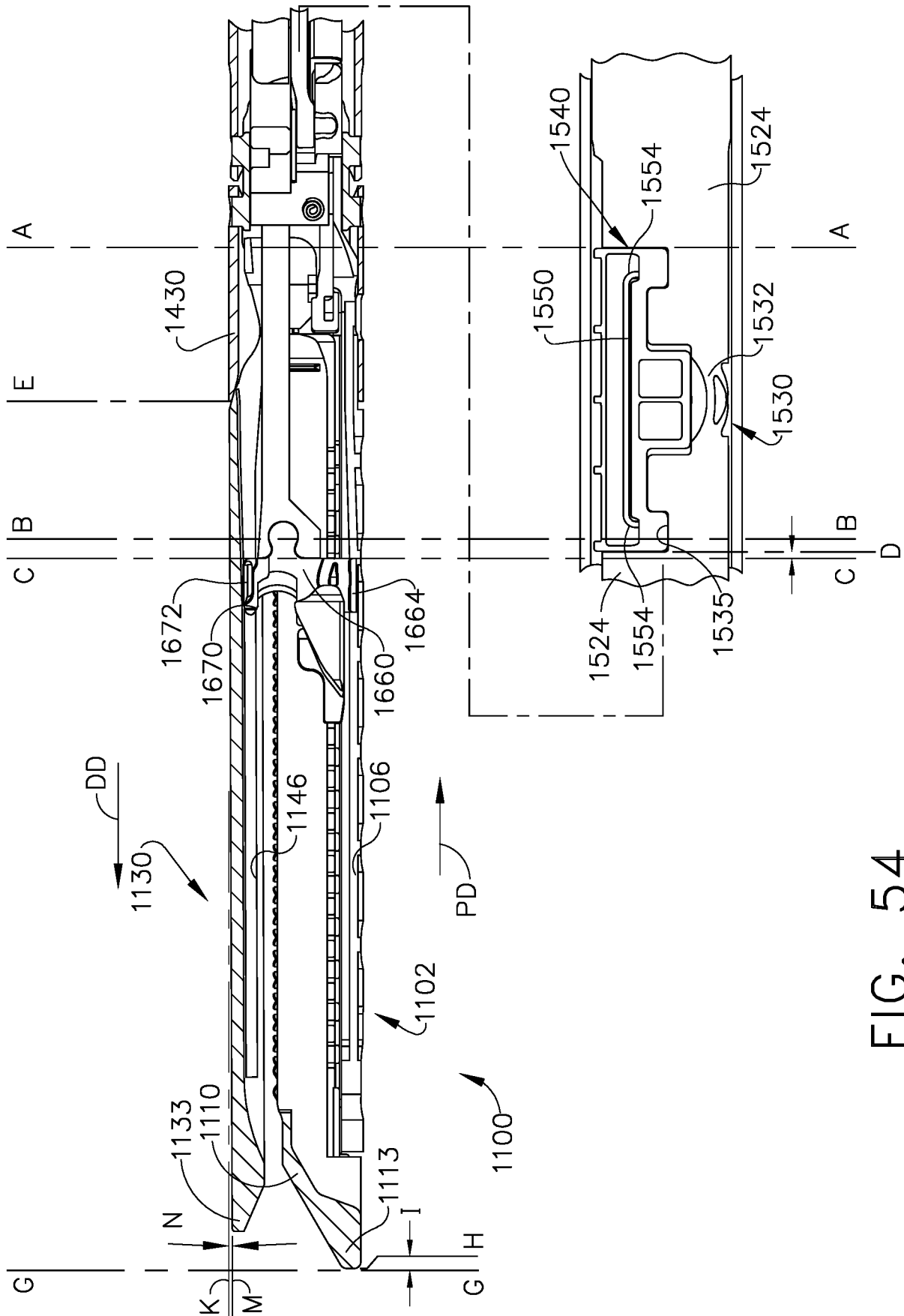


FIG. 54

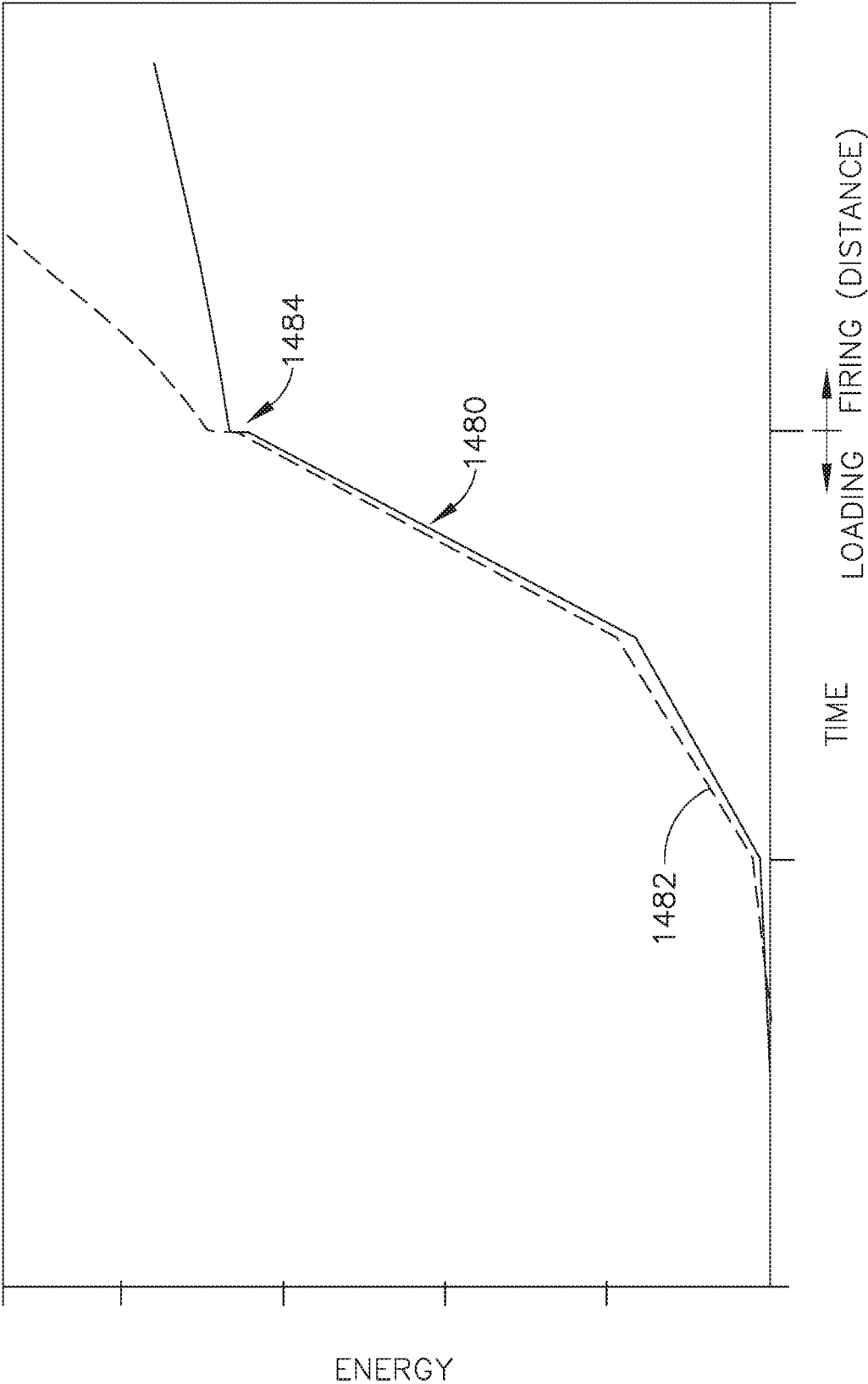


FIG. 55

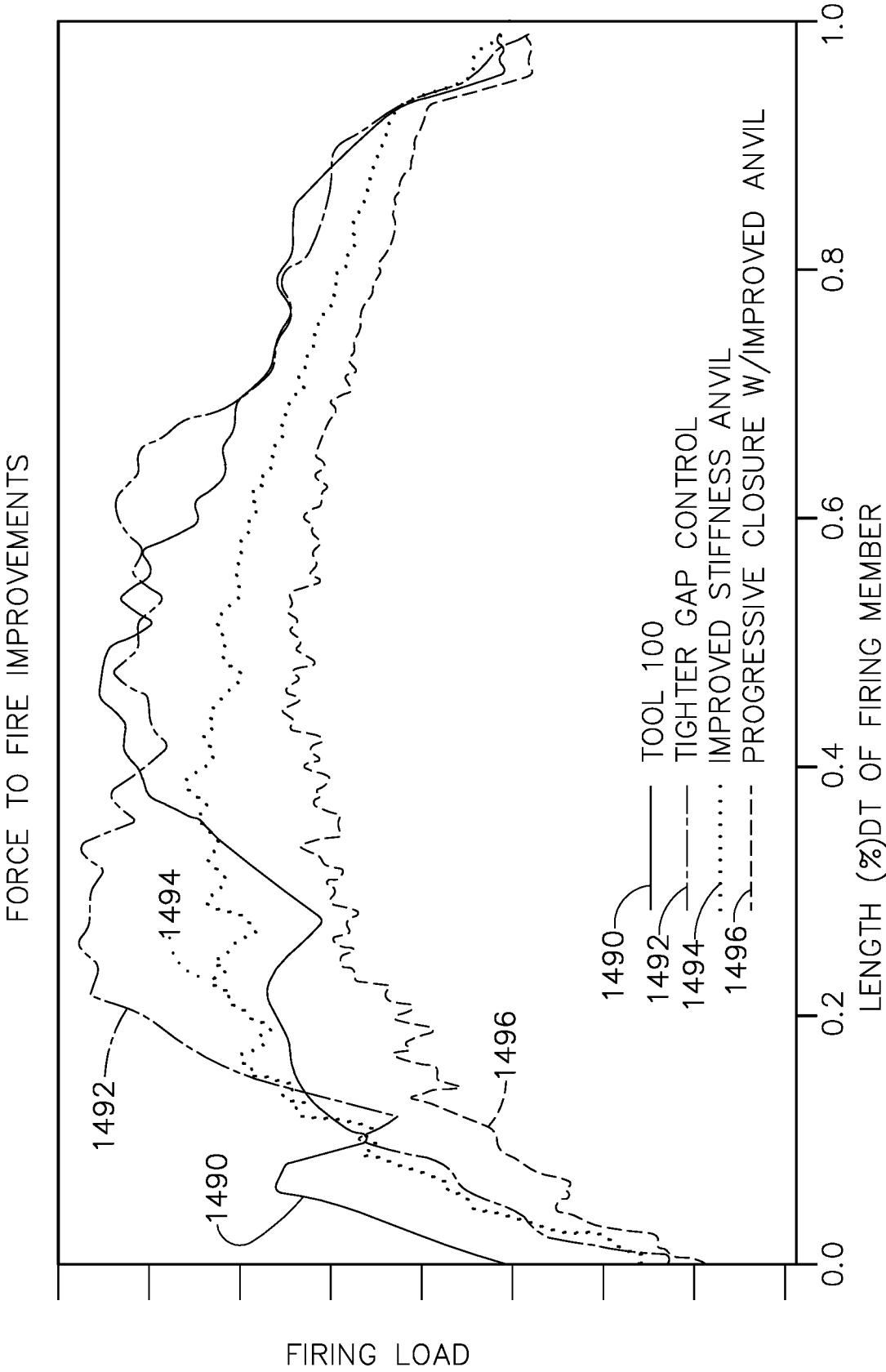


FIG. 56

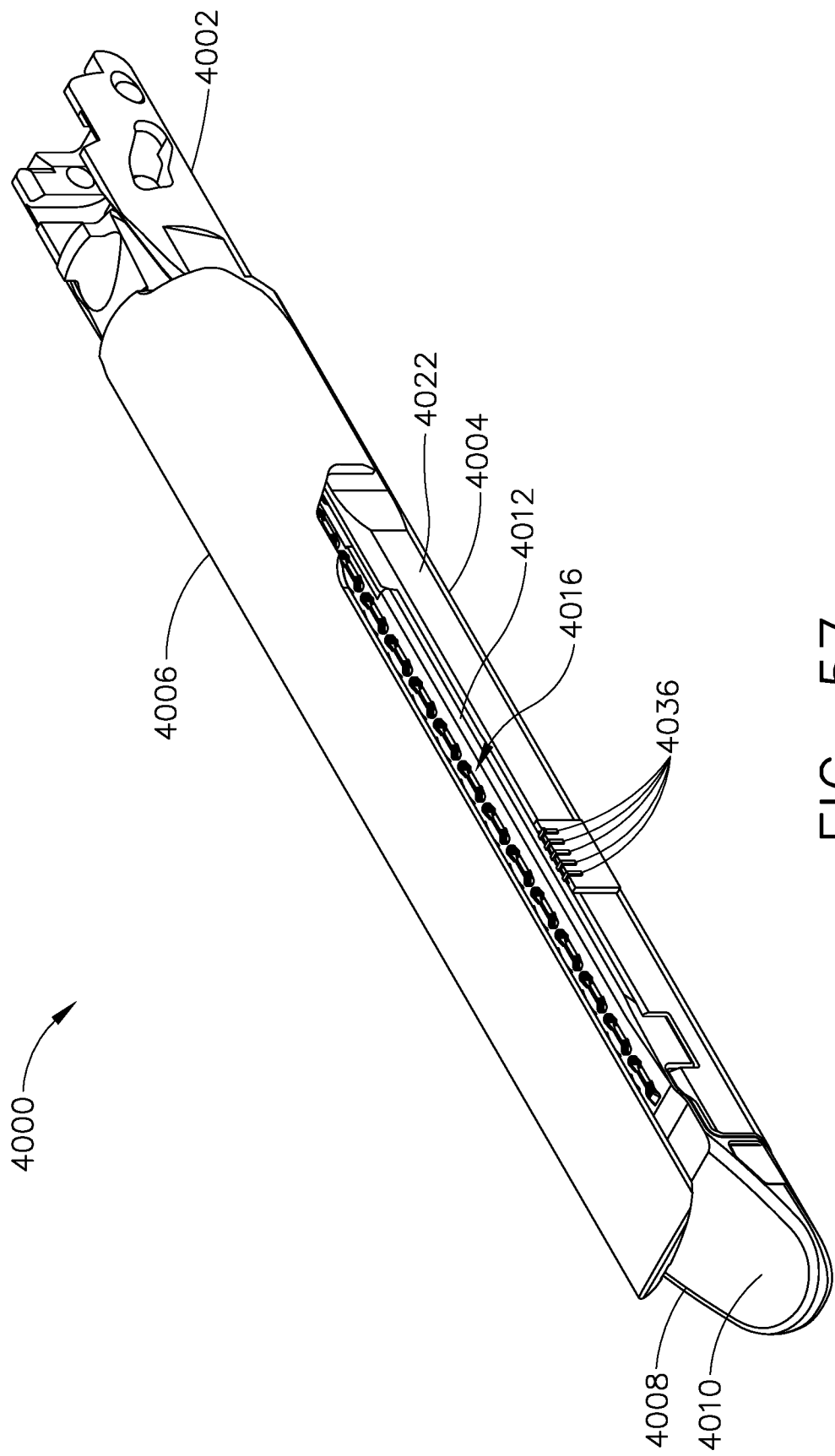


FIG. 57

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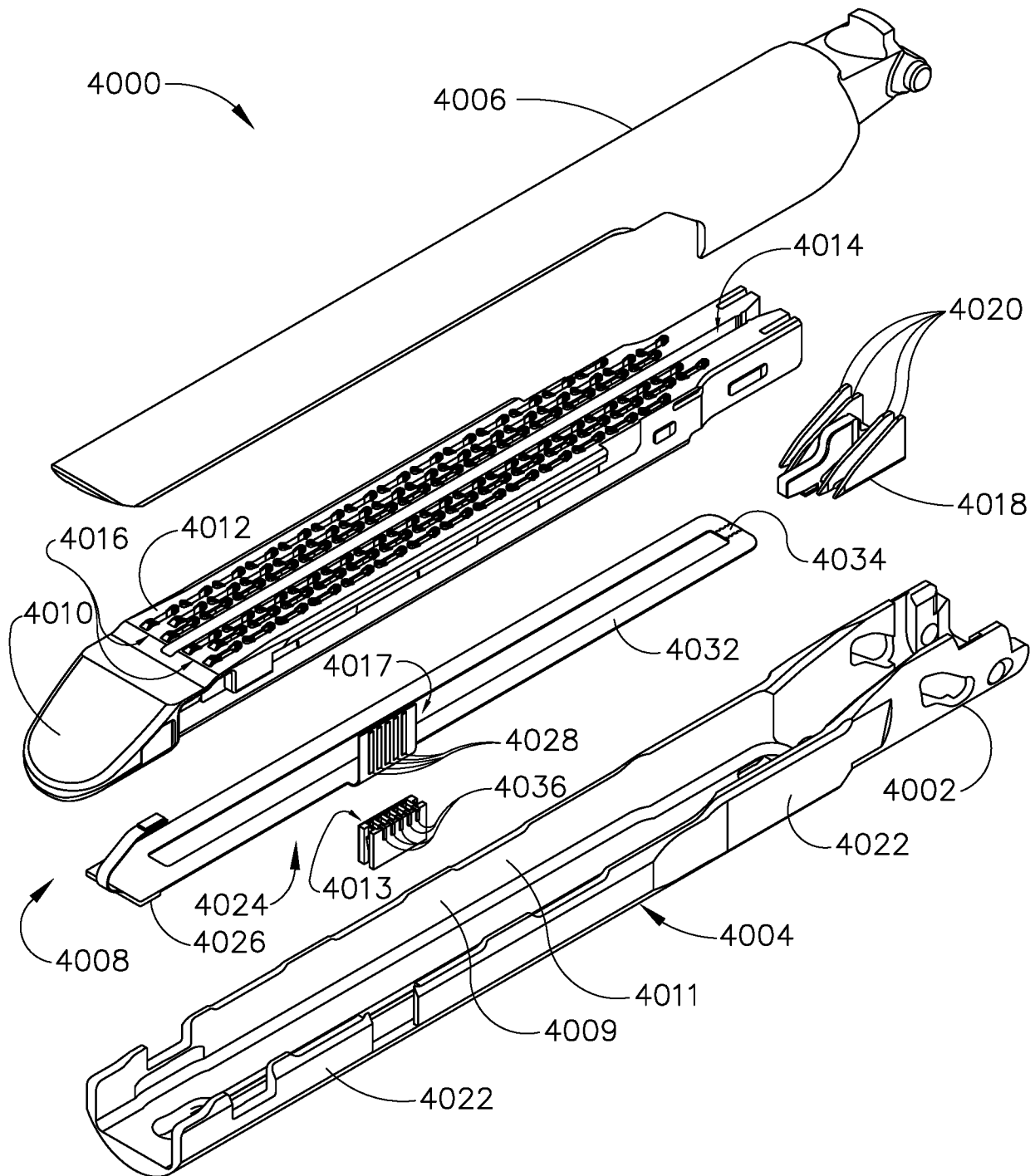


FIG. 58

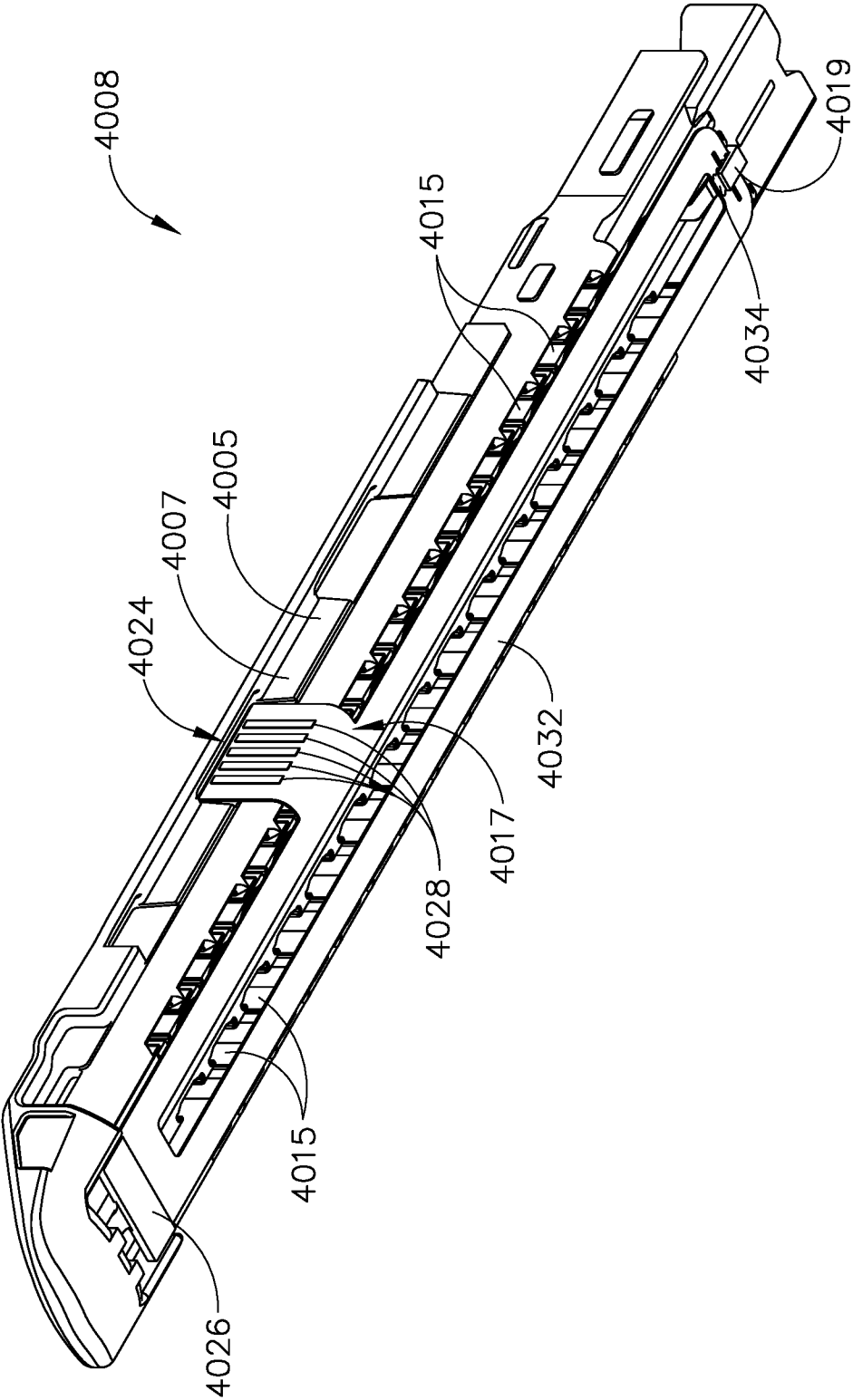


FIG. 59

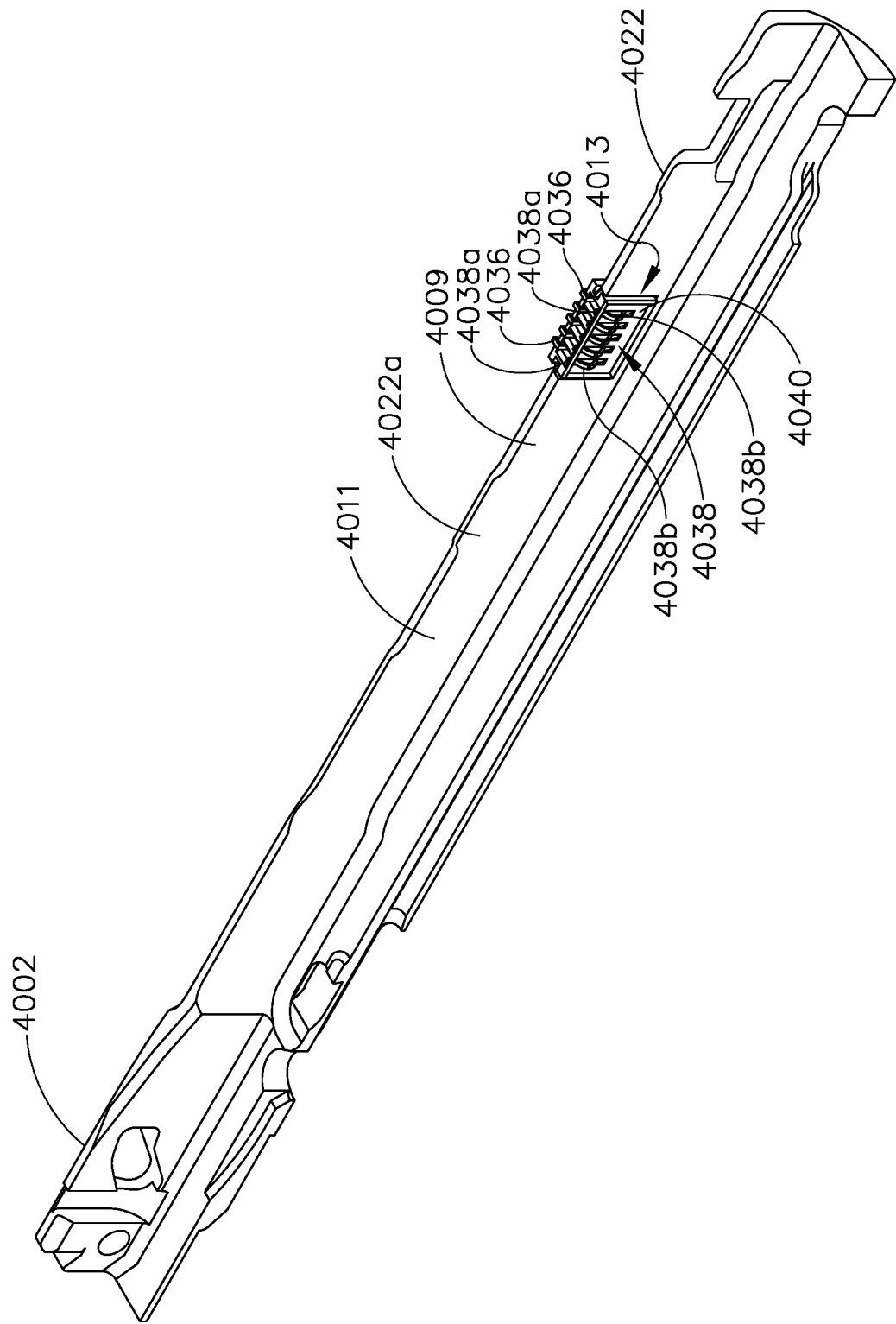


FIG. 60

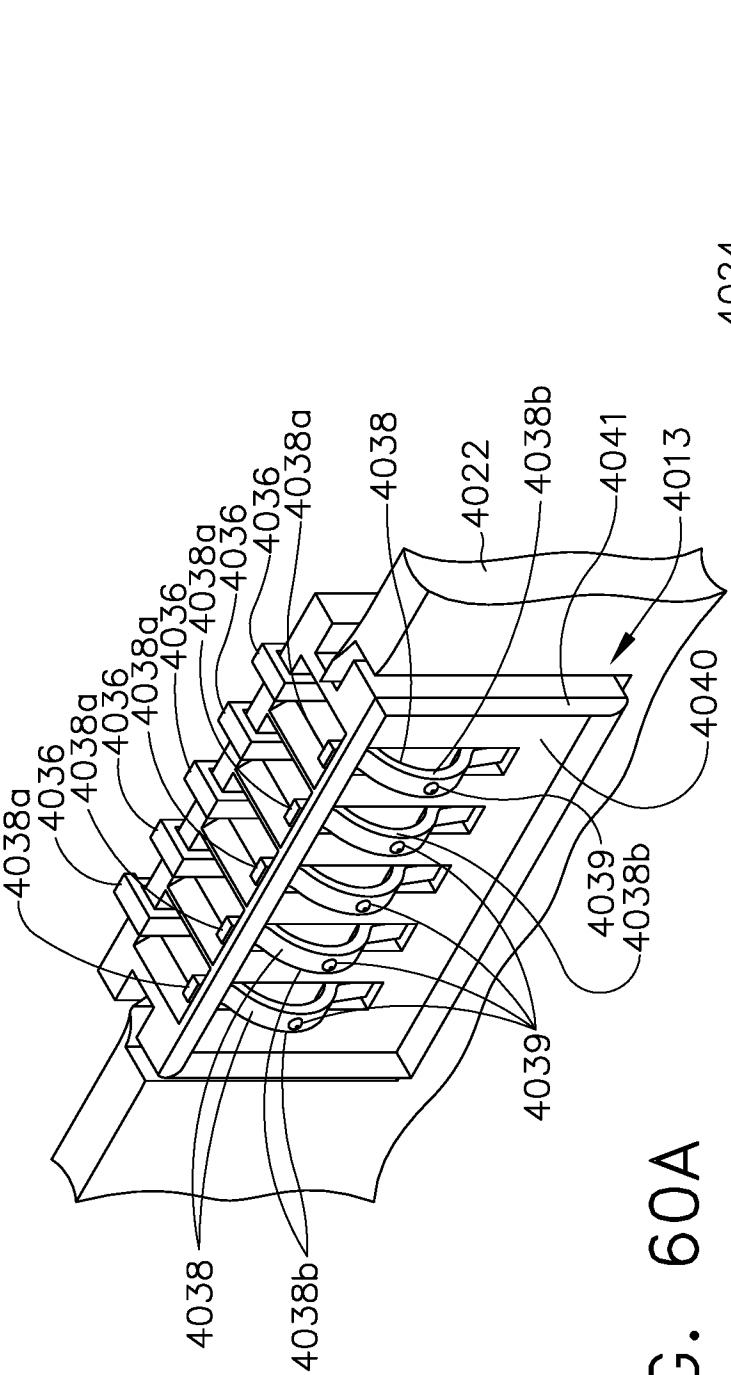


FIG. 60A

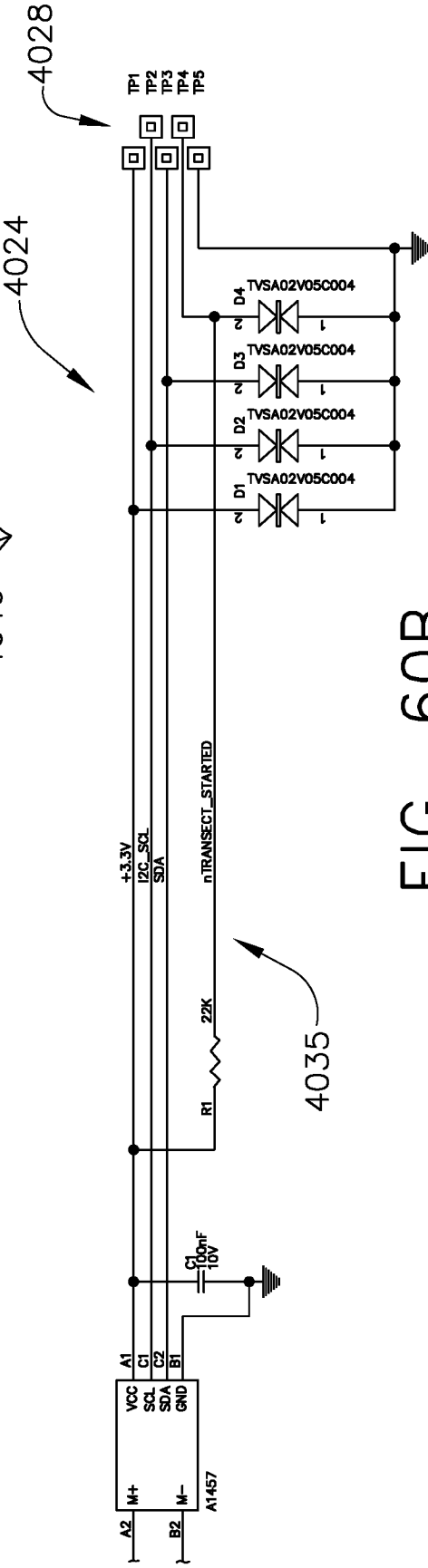


FIG. 60B

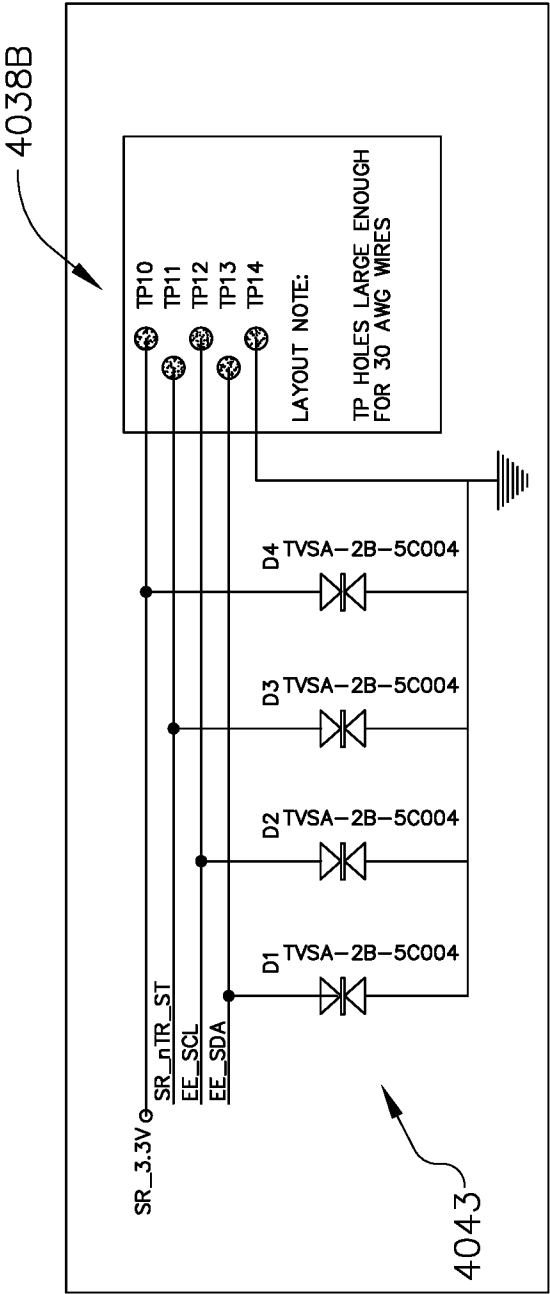


FIG. 60C

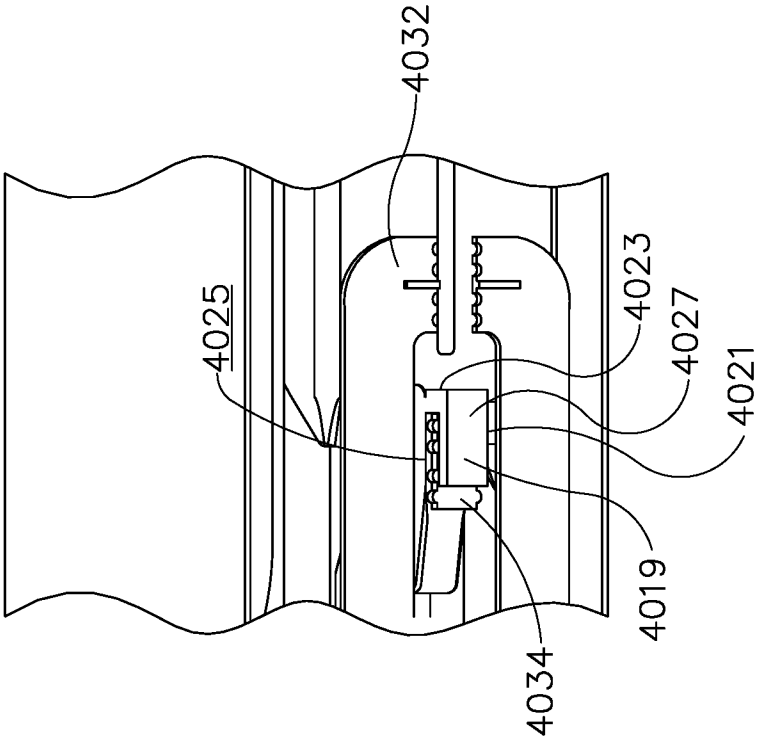


FIG. 62

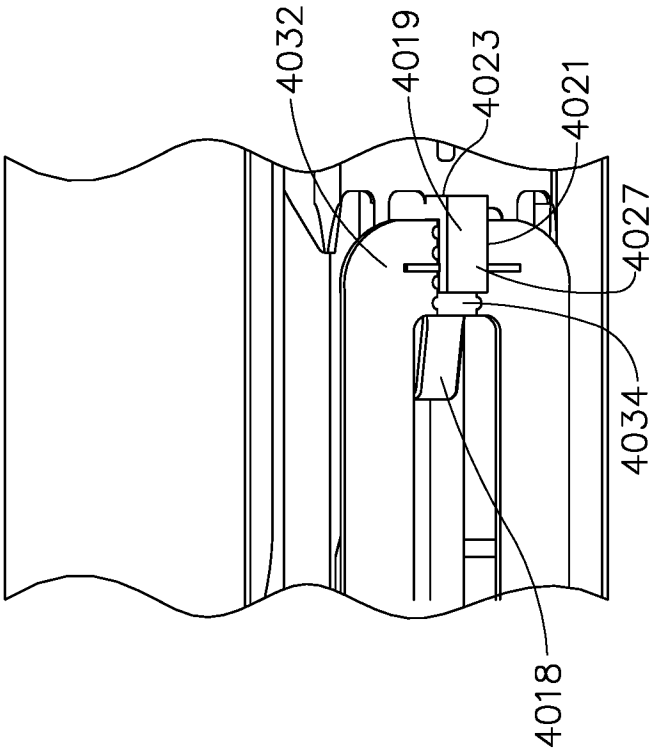


FIG. 61

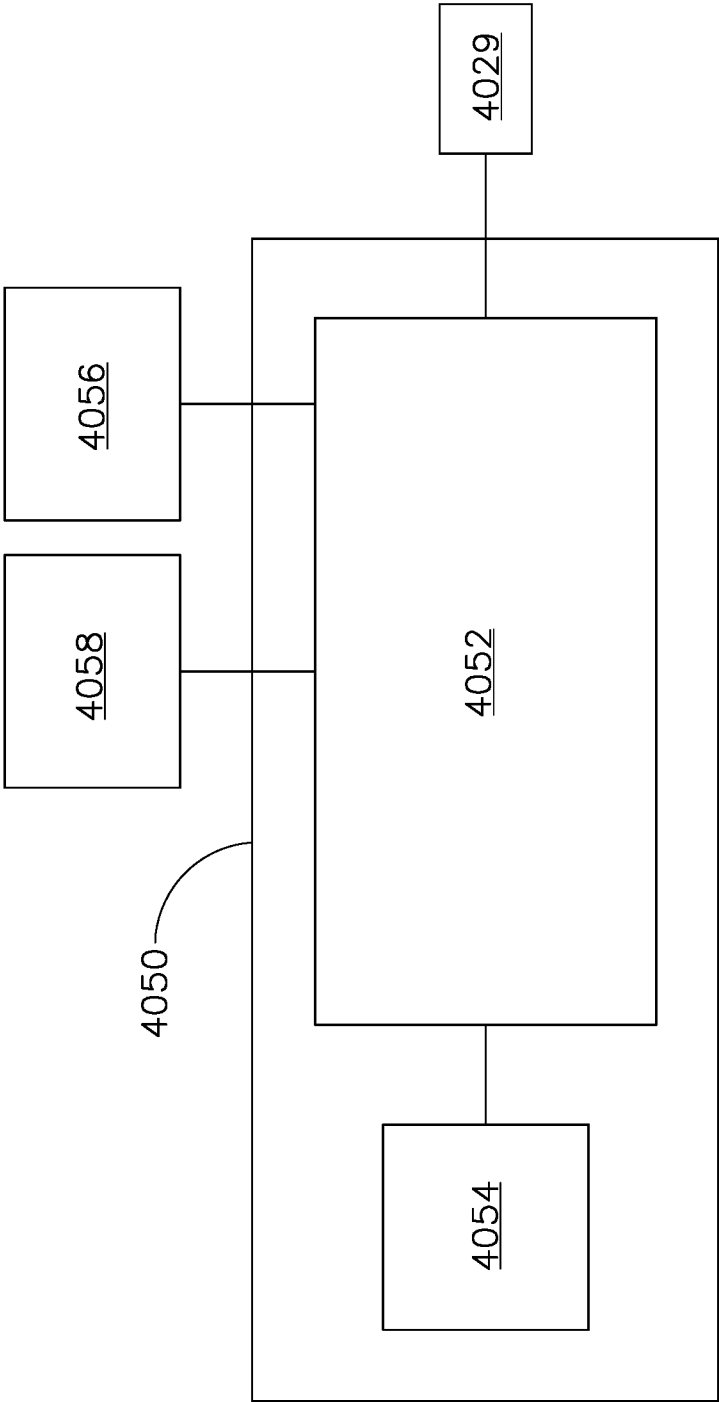


FIG. 62A

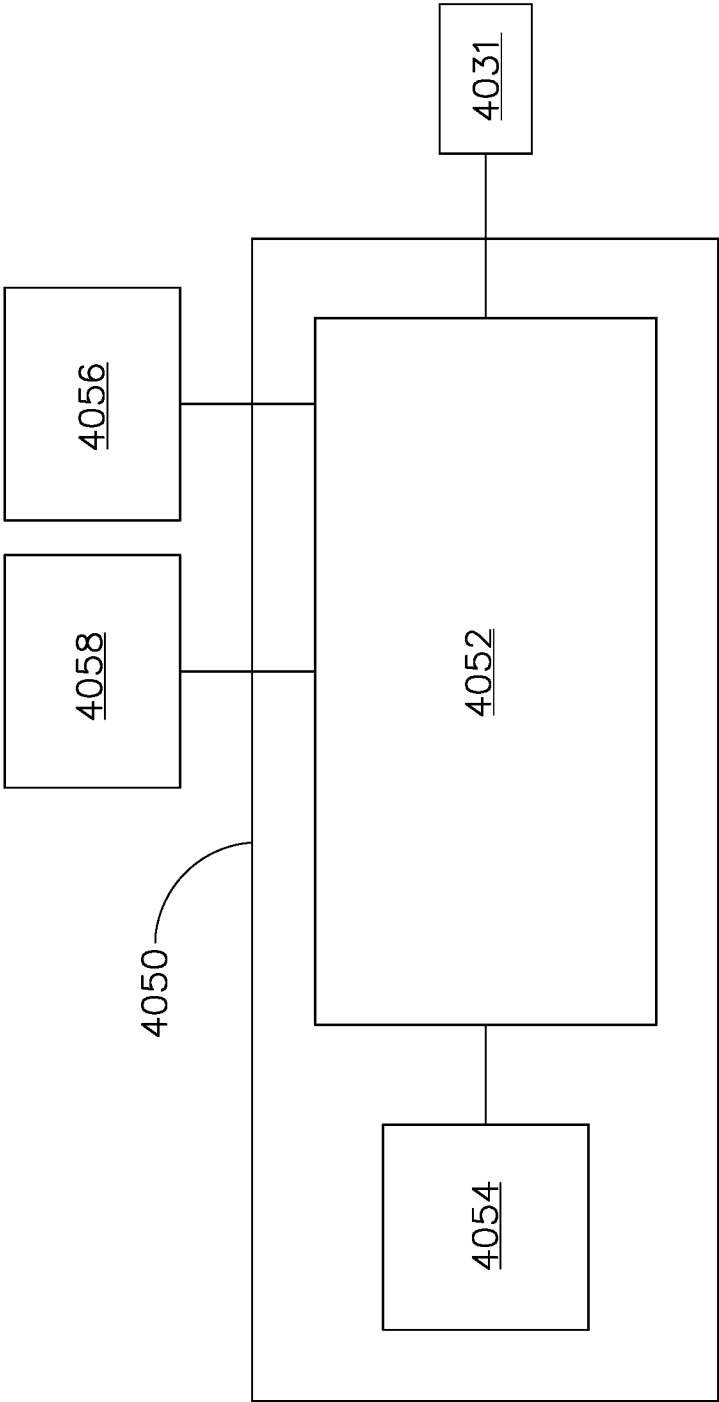


FIG. 62B

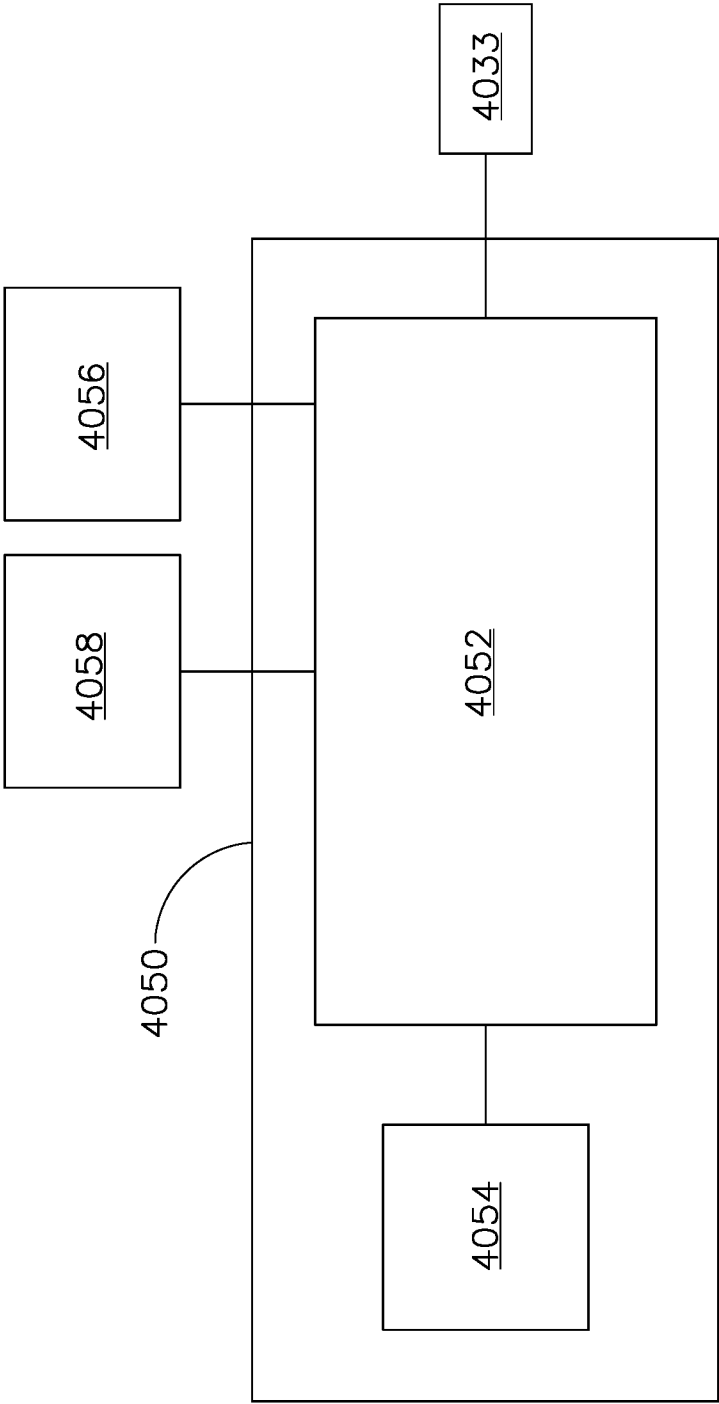


FIG. 62C

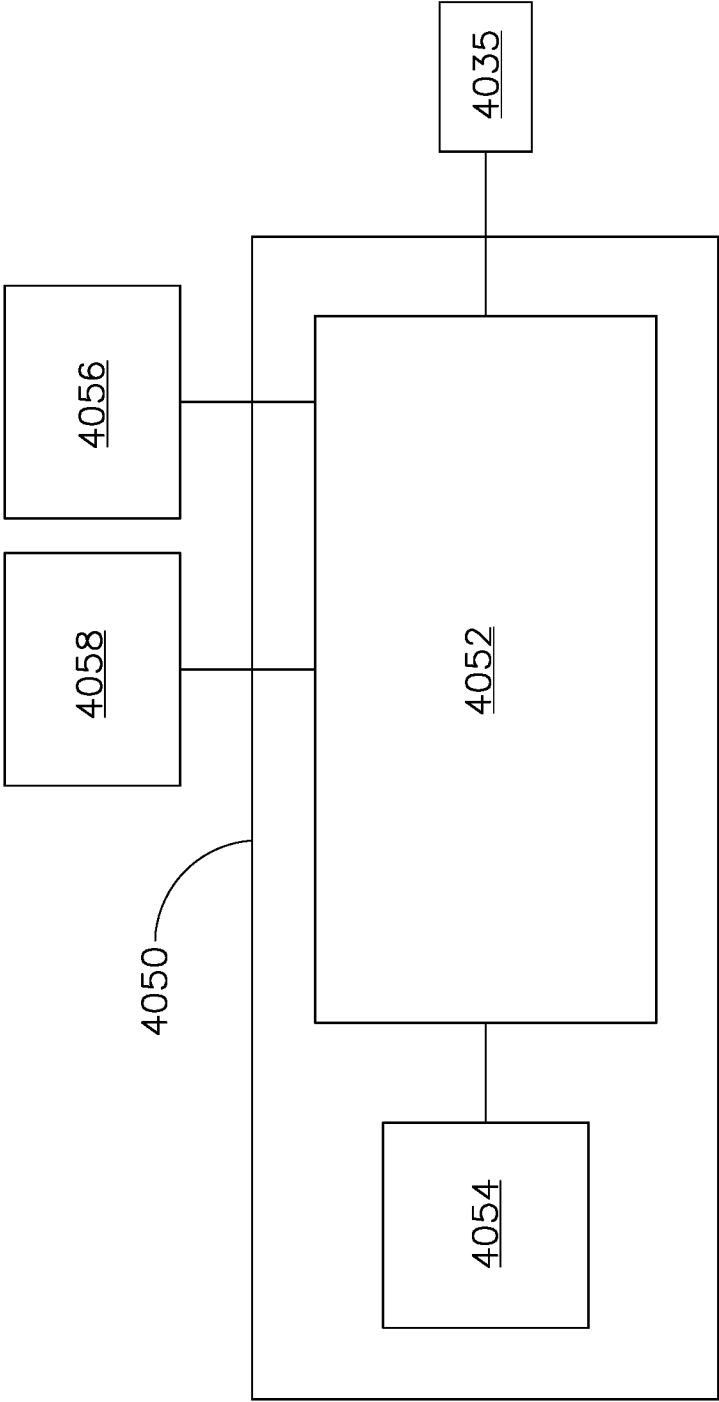


FIG. 62D

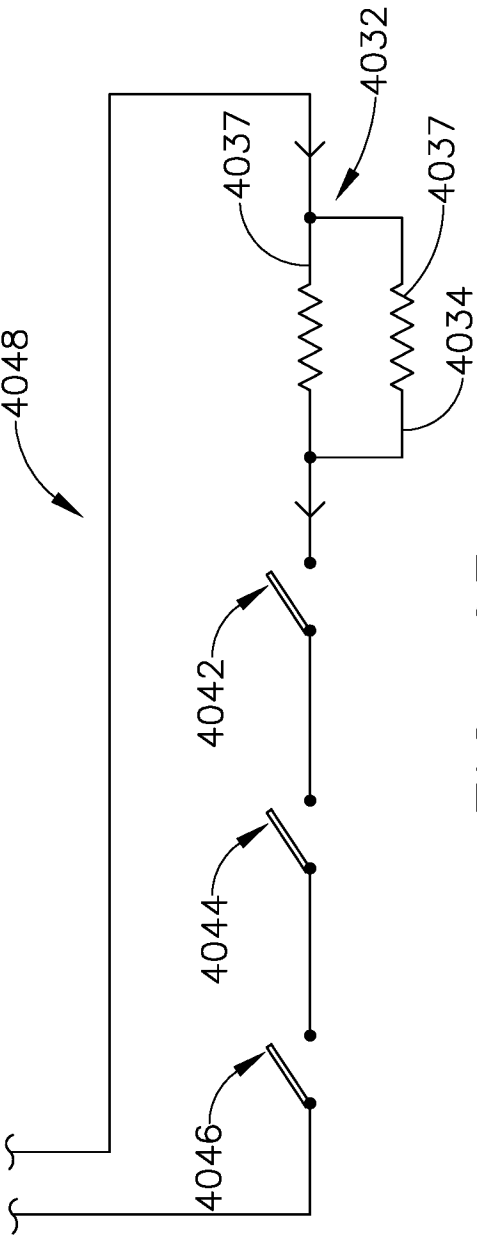


FIG. 63

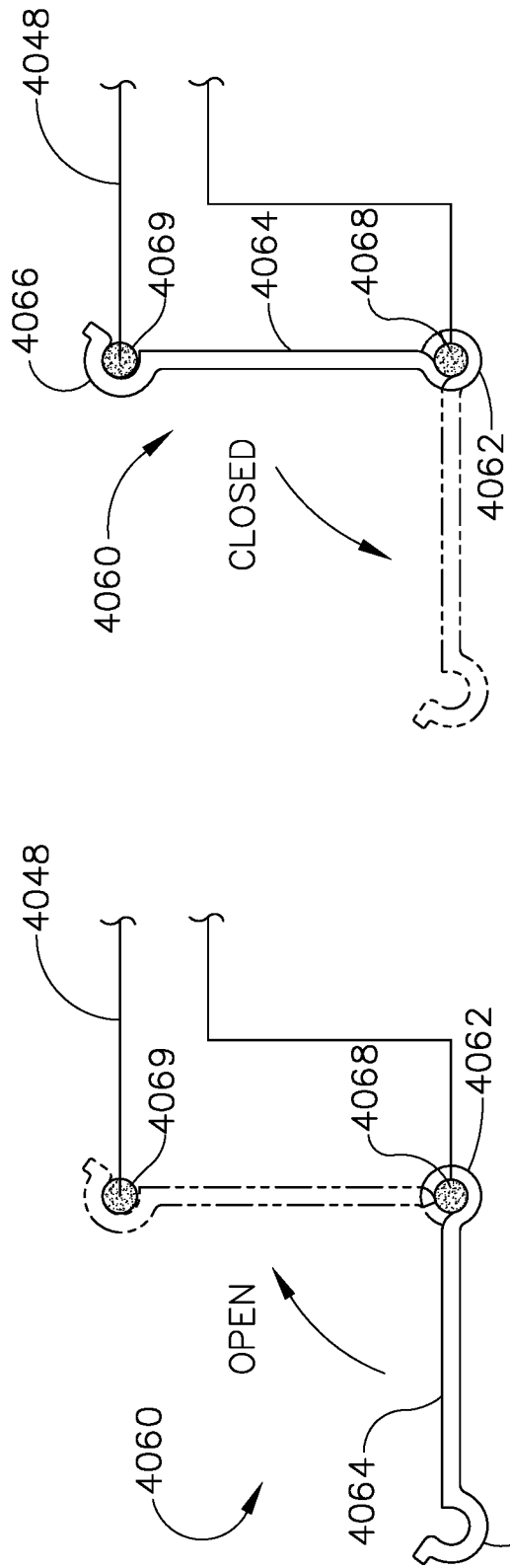


FIG. 64

FIG. 65

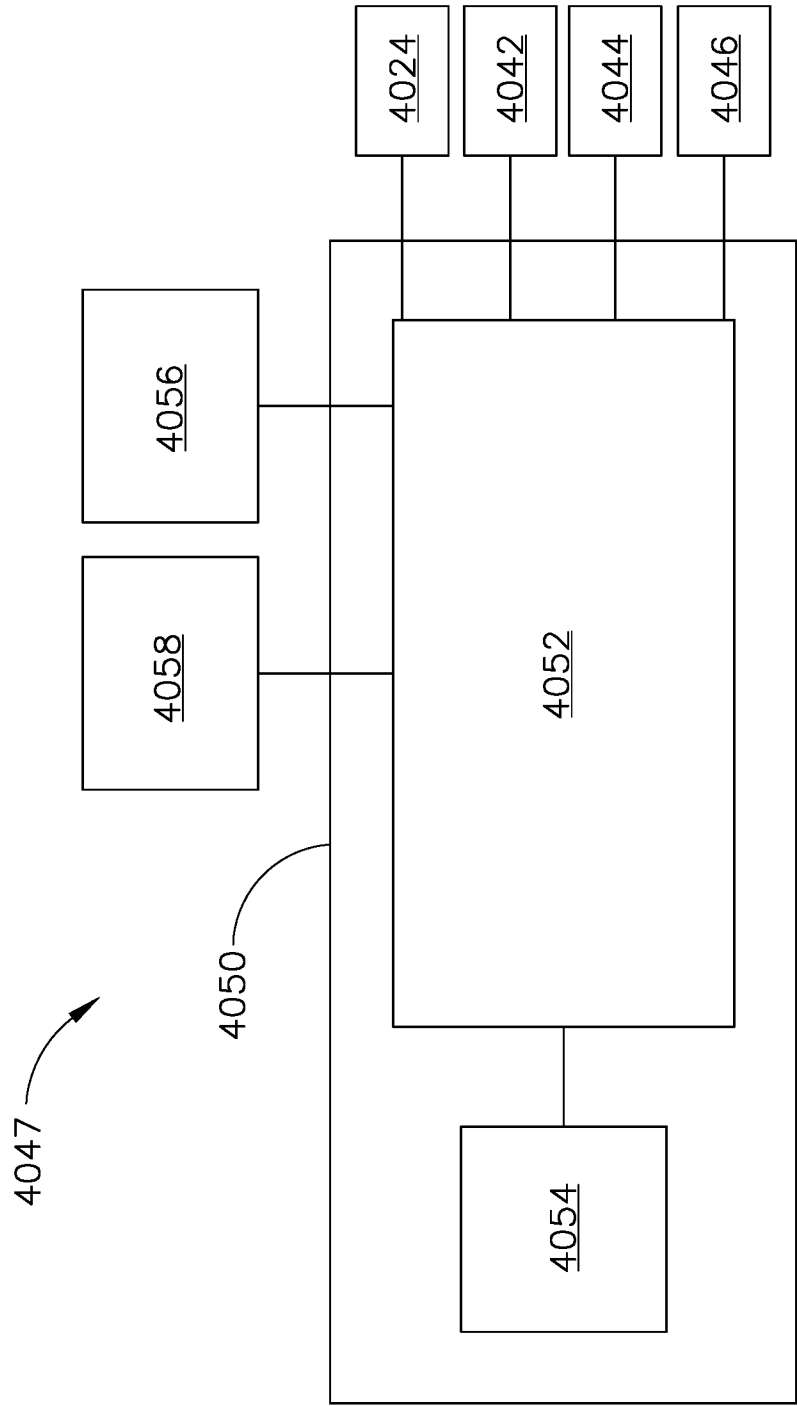


FIG. 65A

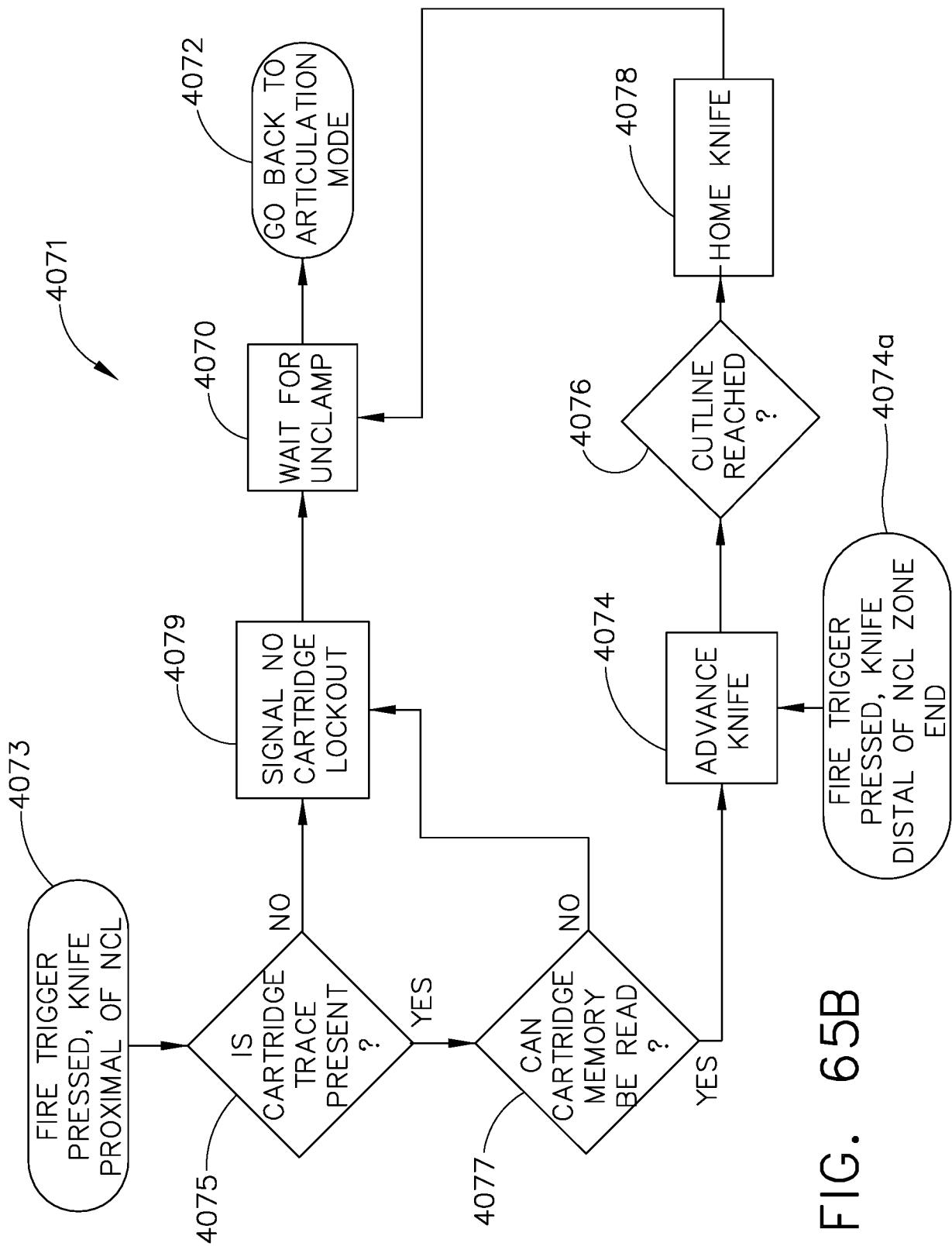
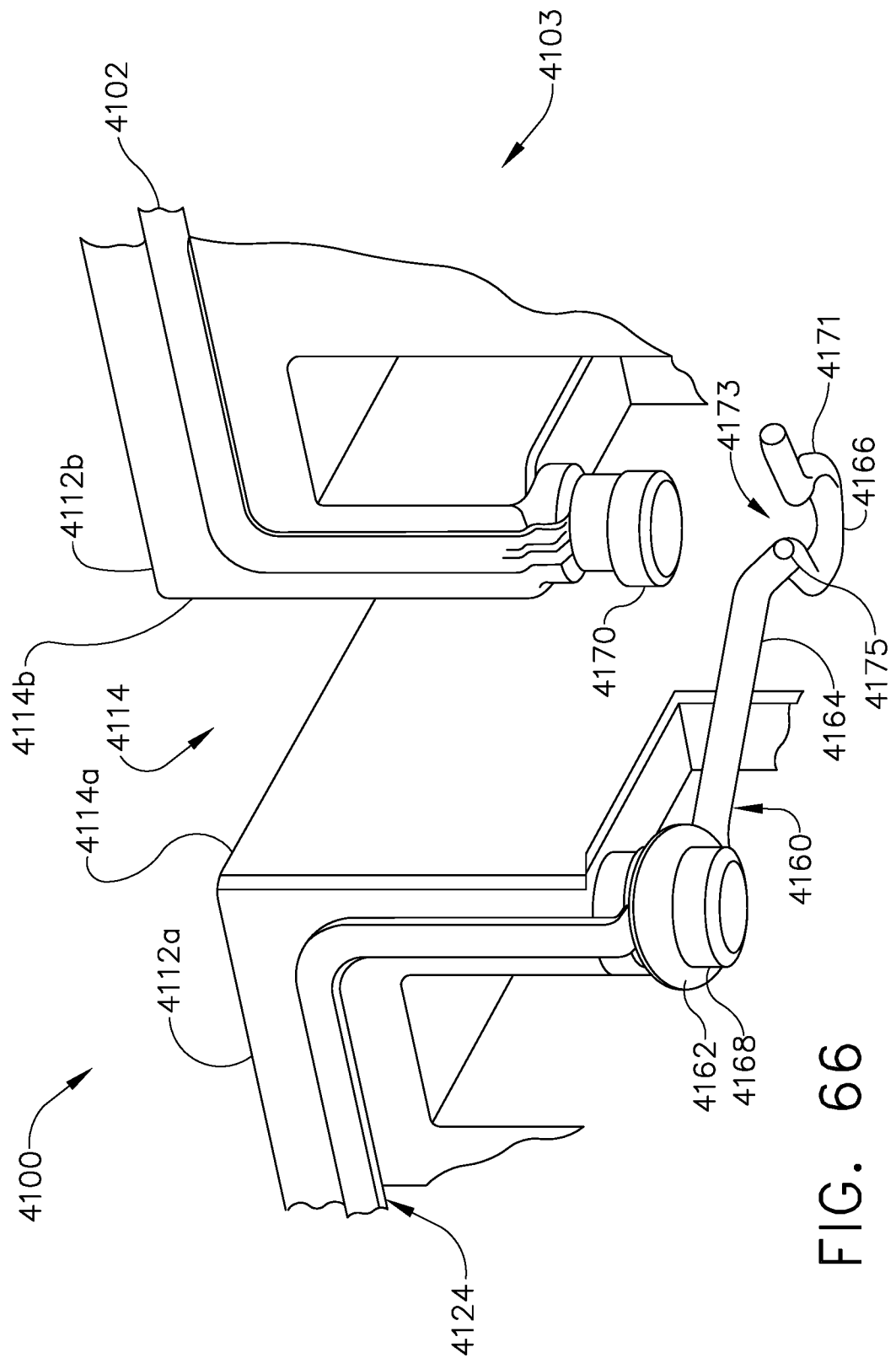


FIG. 65B



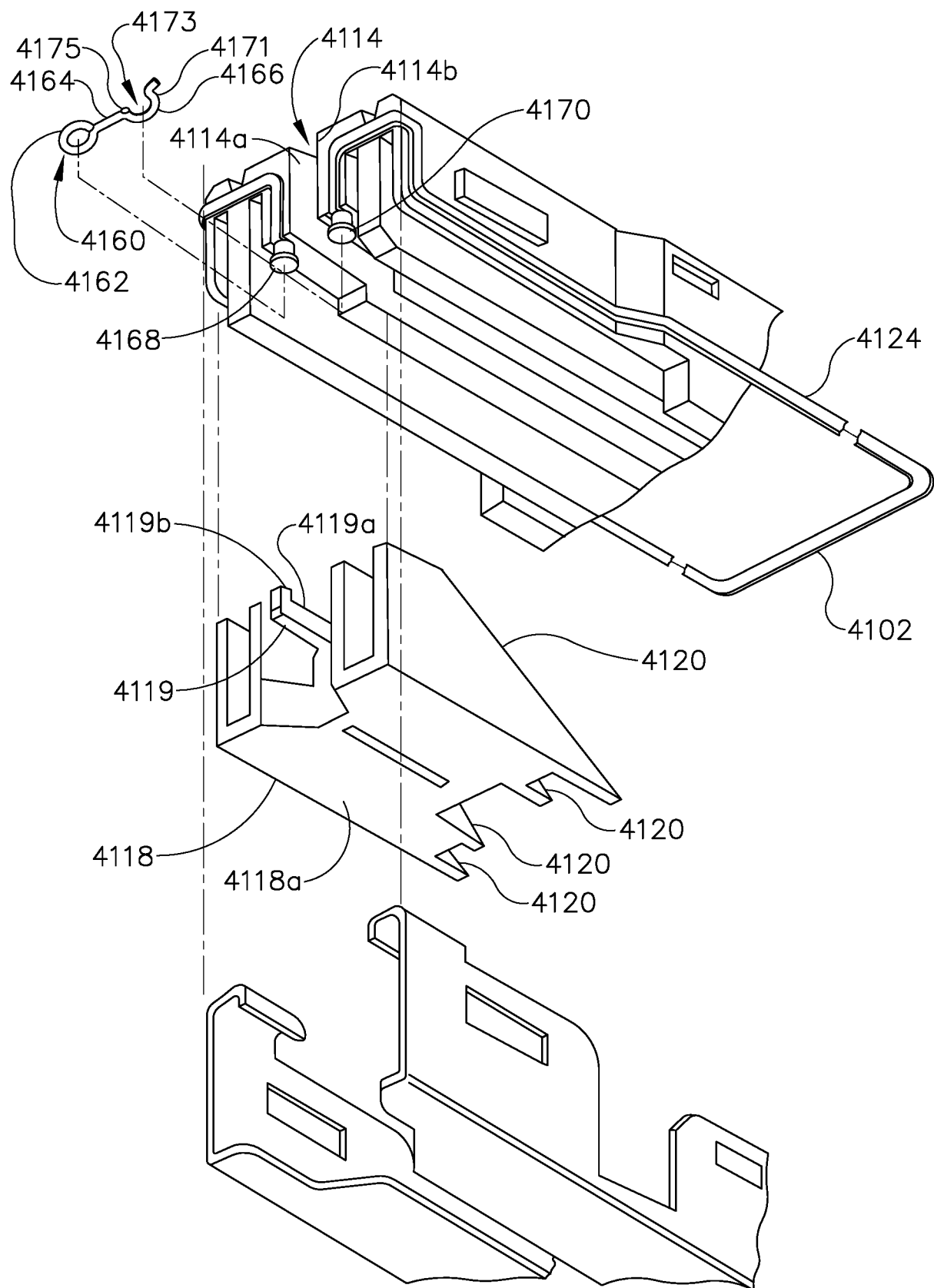
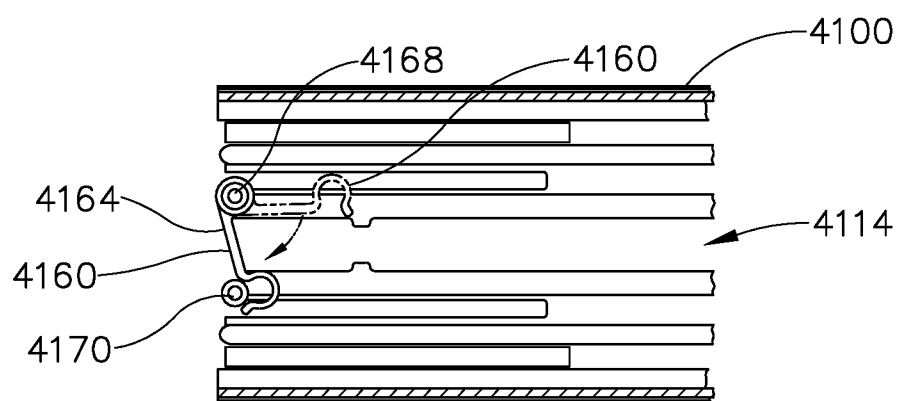
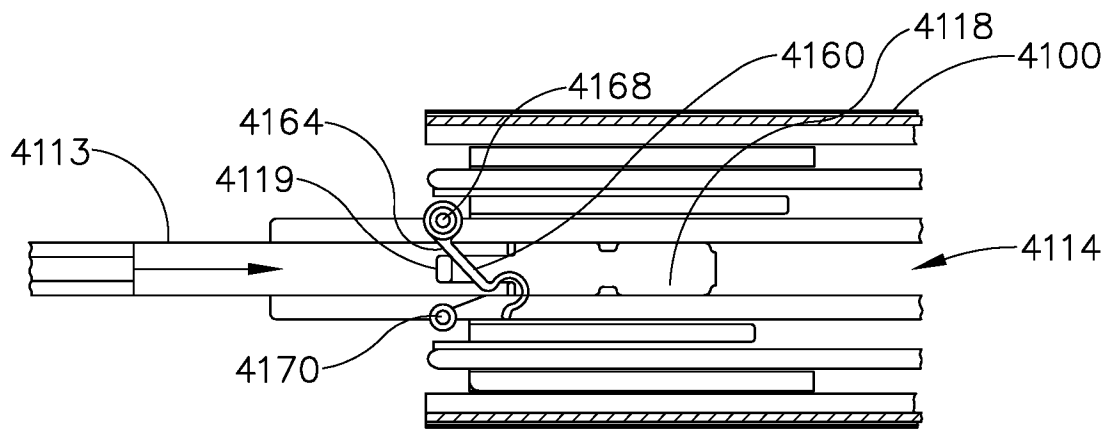
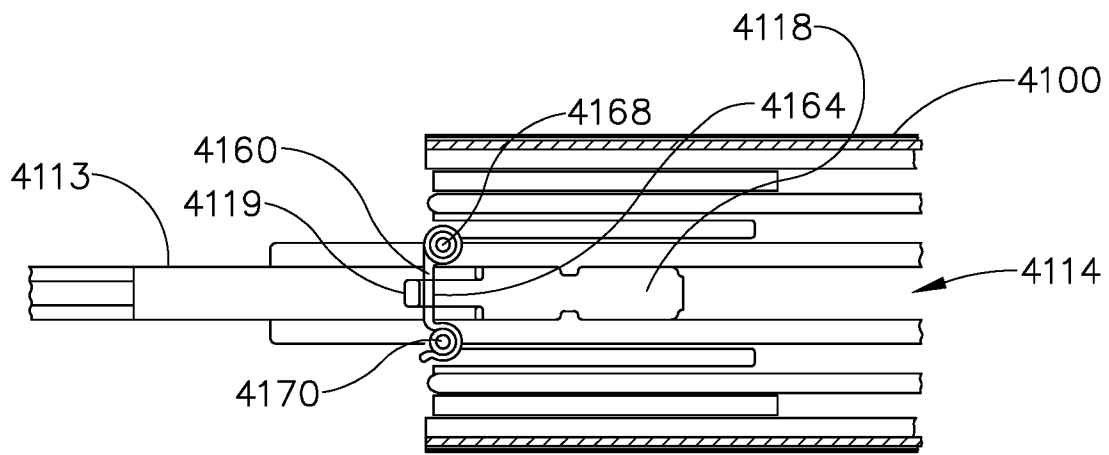


FIG. 67



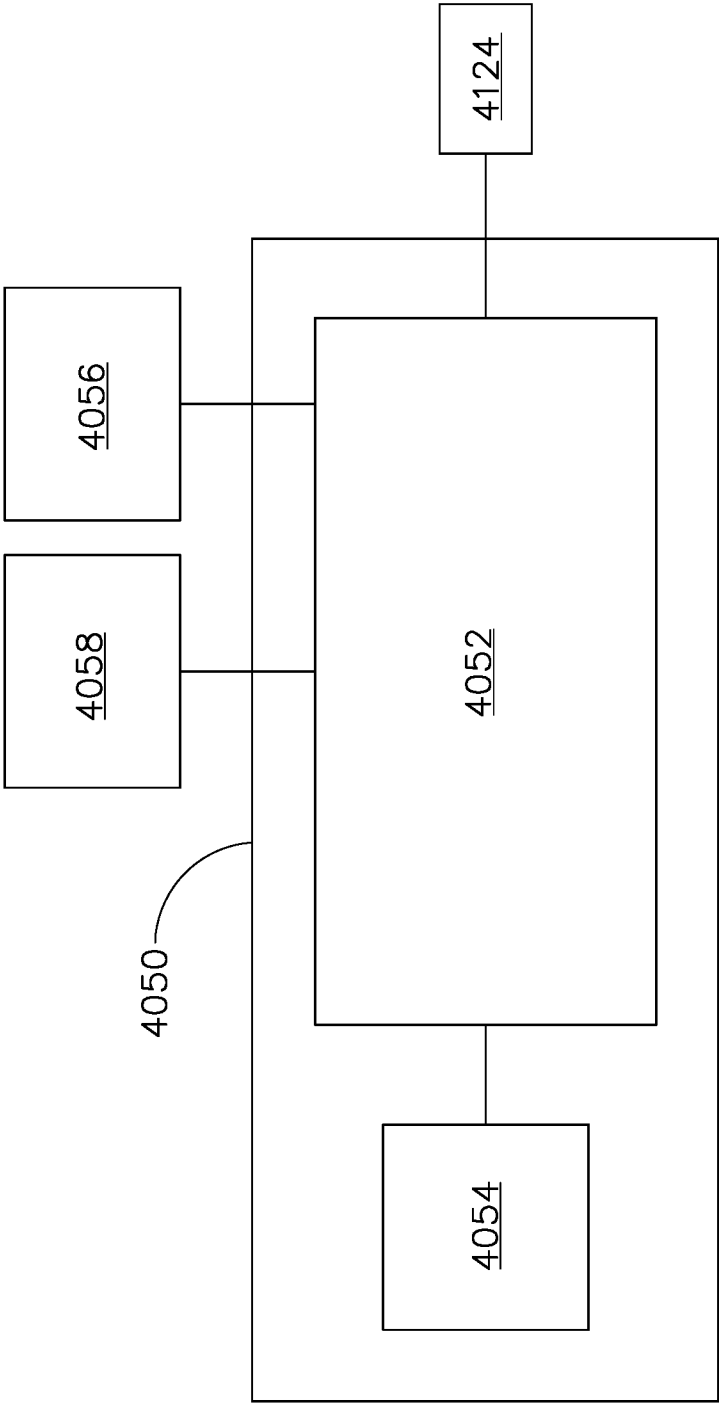


FIG. 71

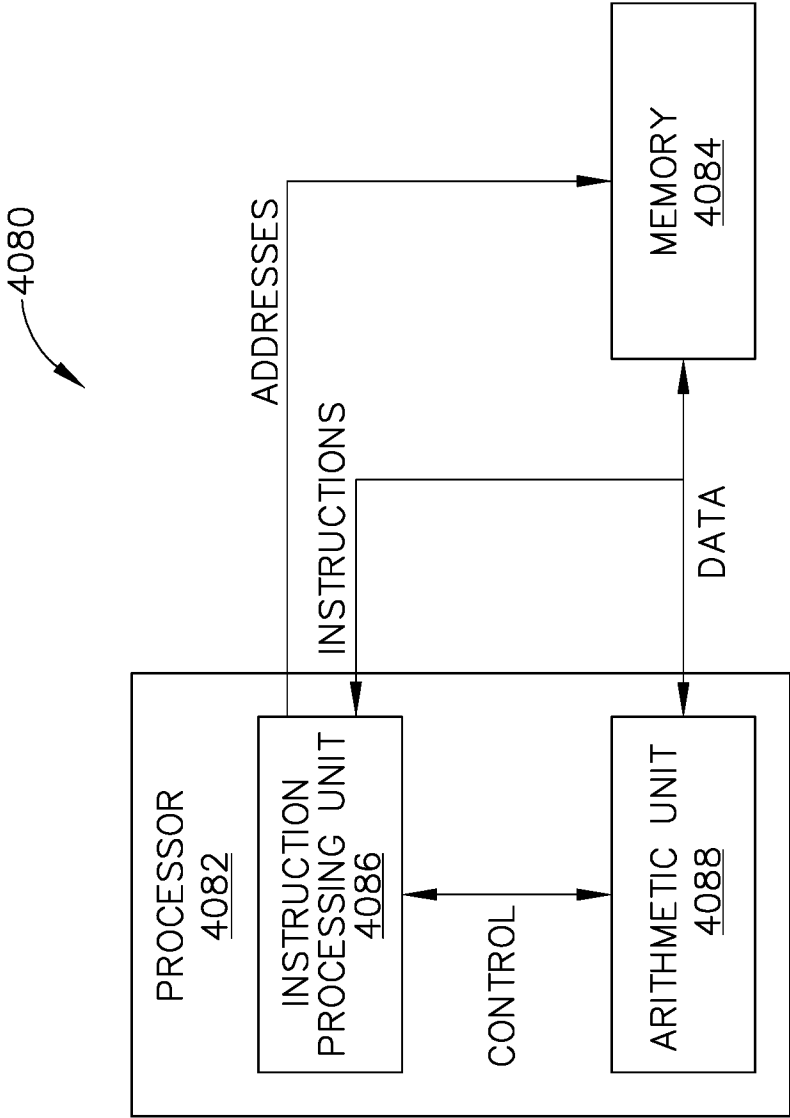


FIG. 72

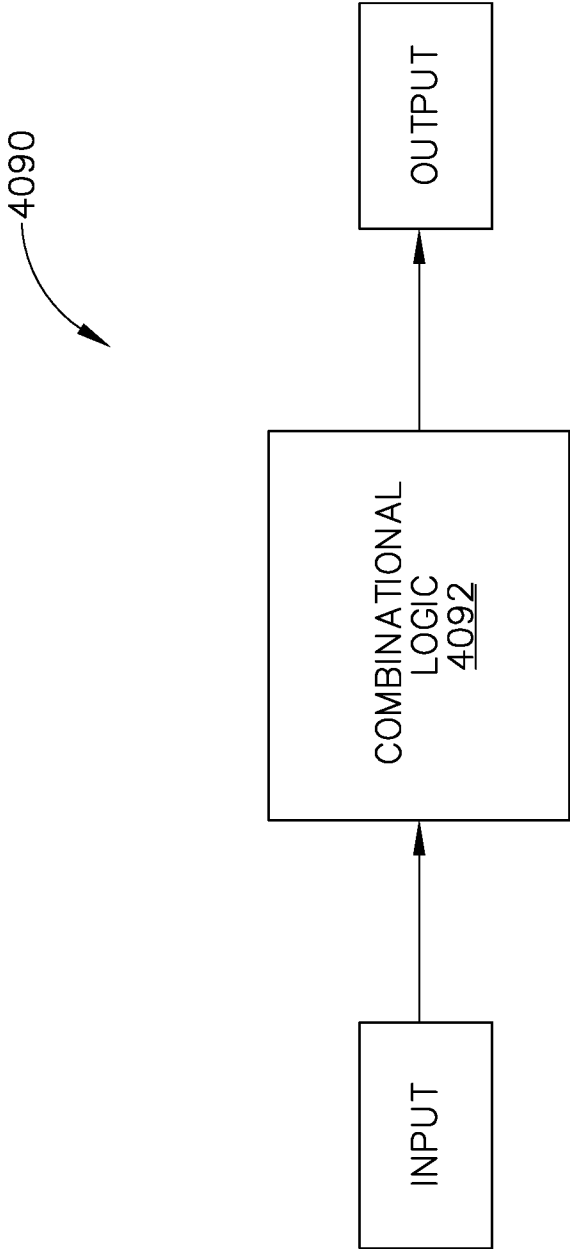


FIG. 73

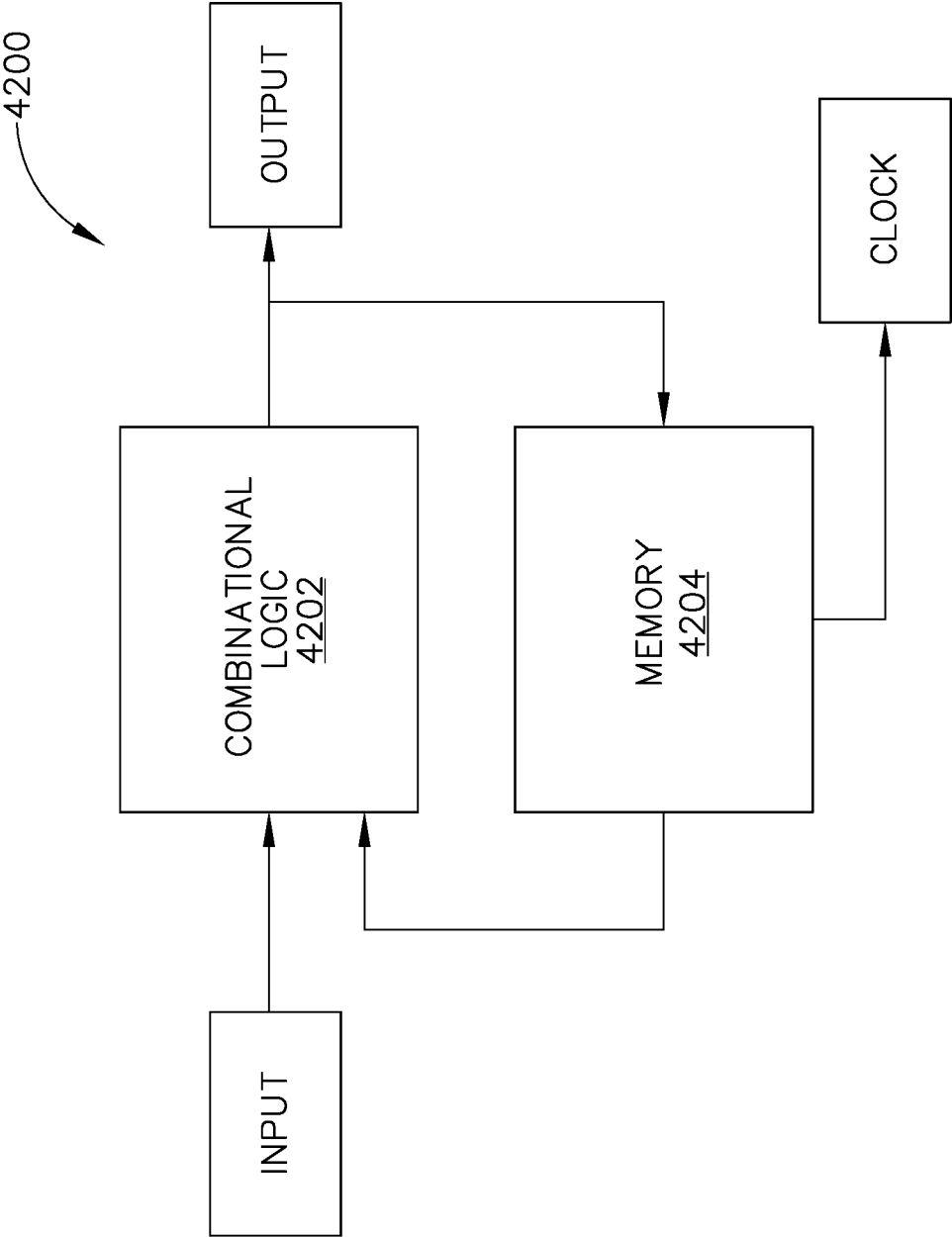


FIG. 74

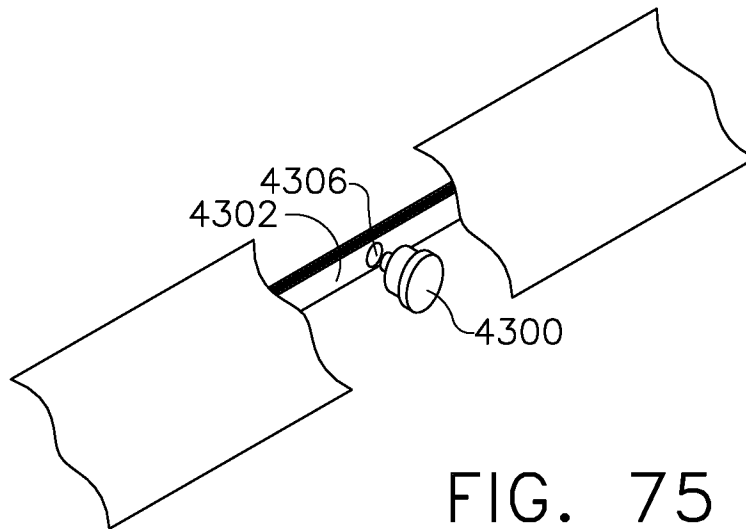


FIG. 75

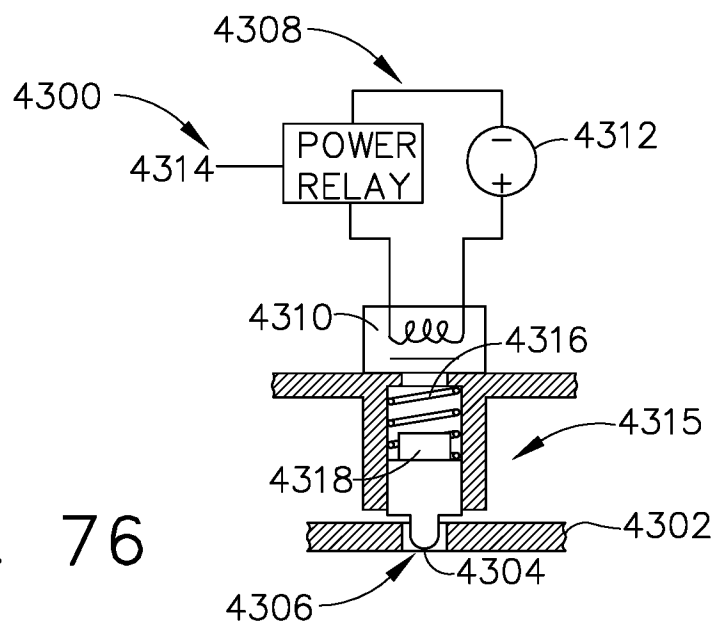


FIG. 76

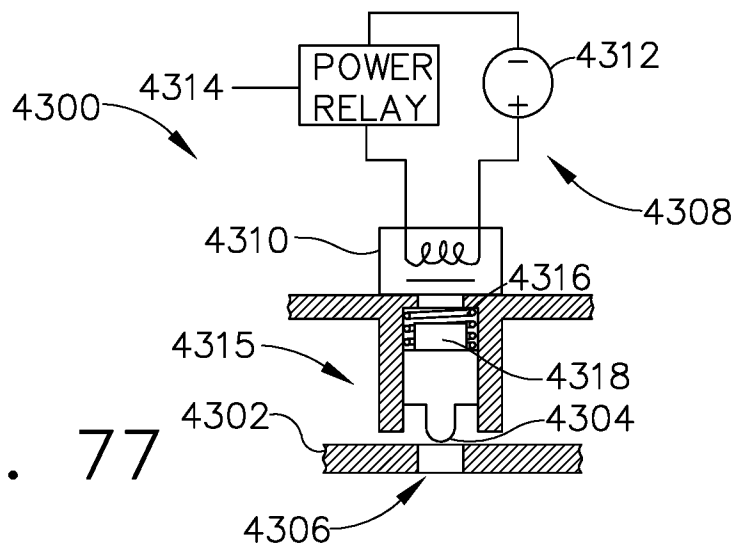


FIG. 77

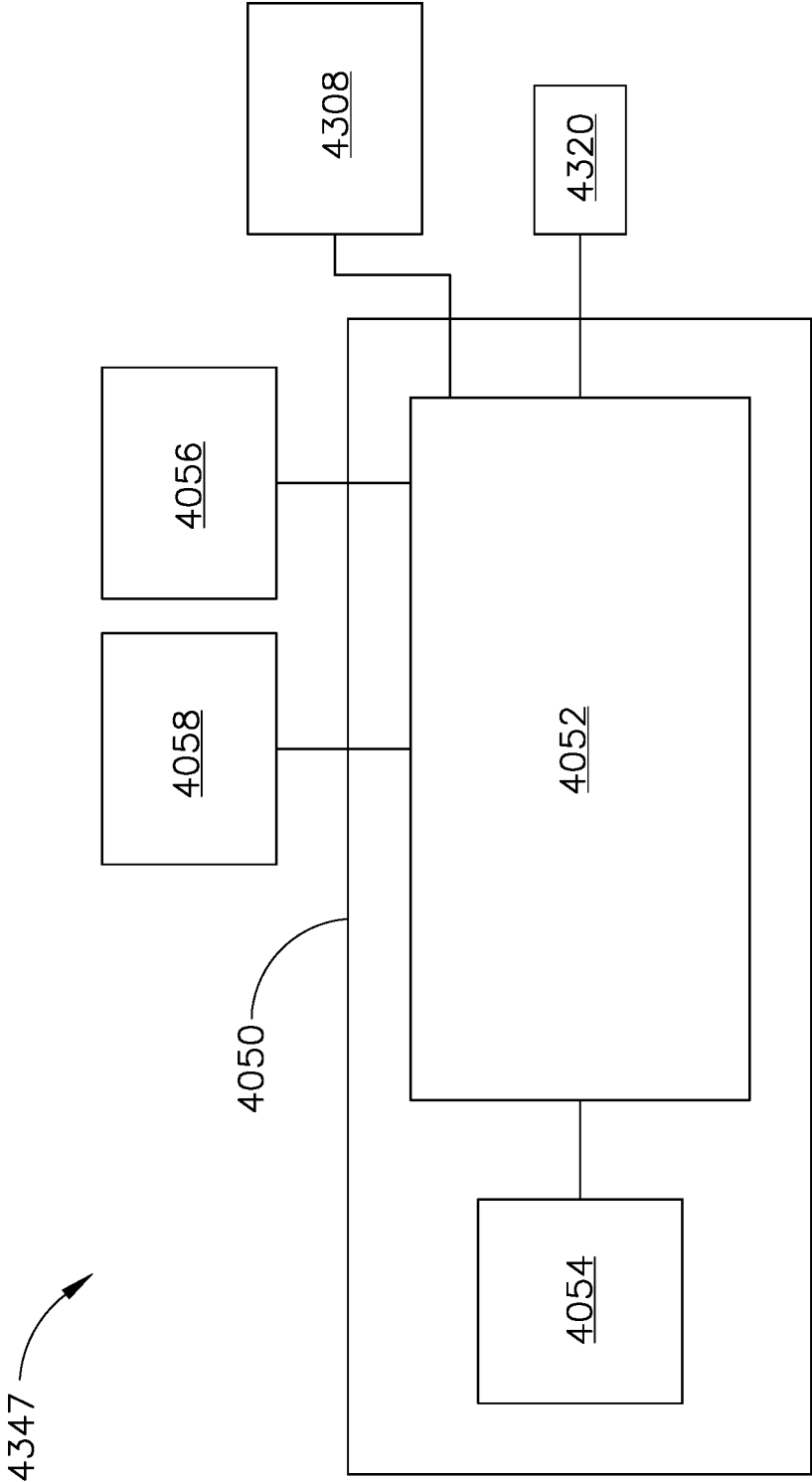


FIG. 78

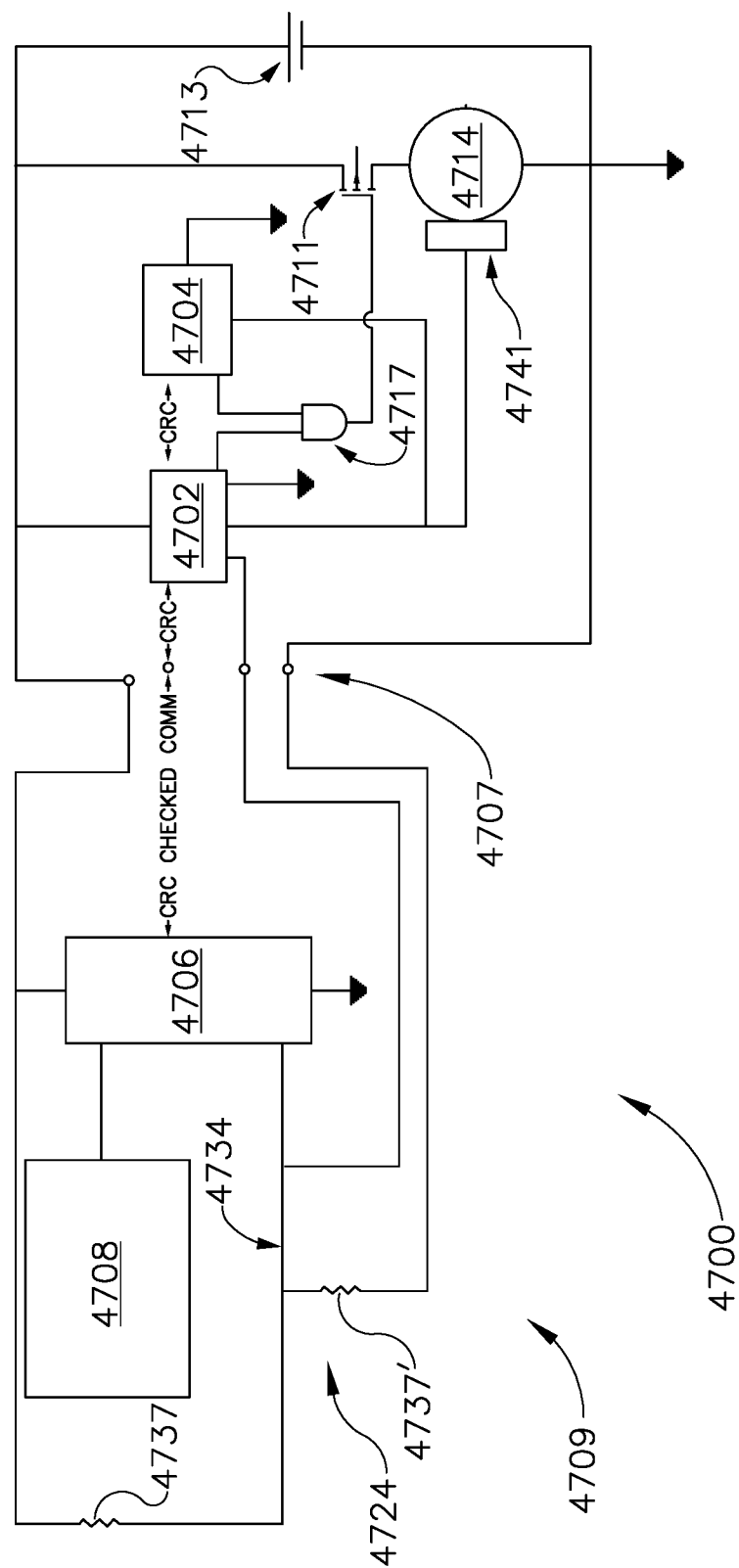


FIG. 79

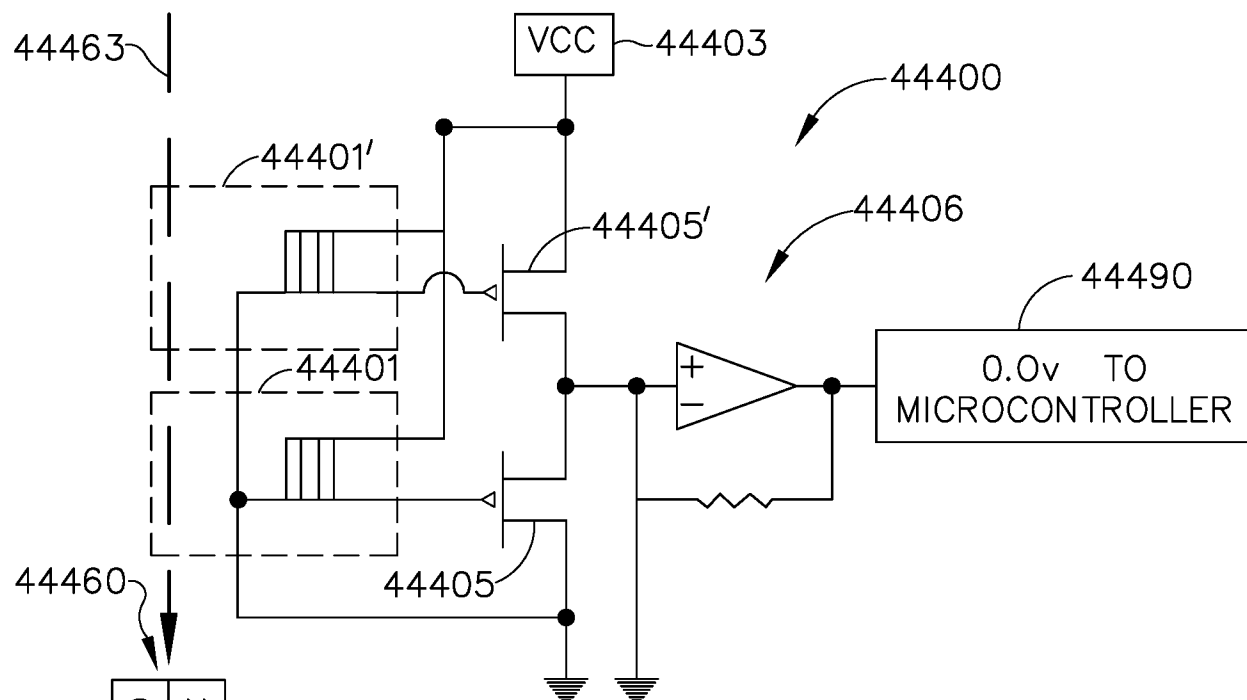


FIG. 79A

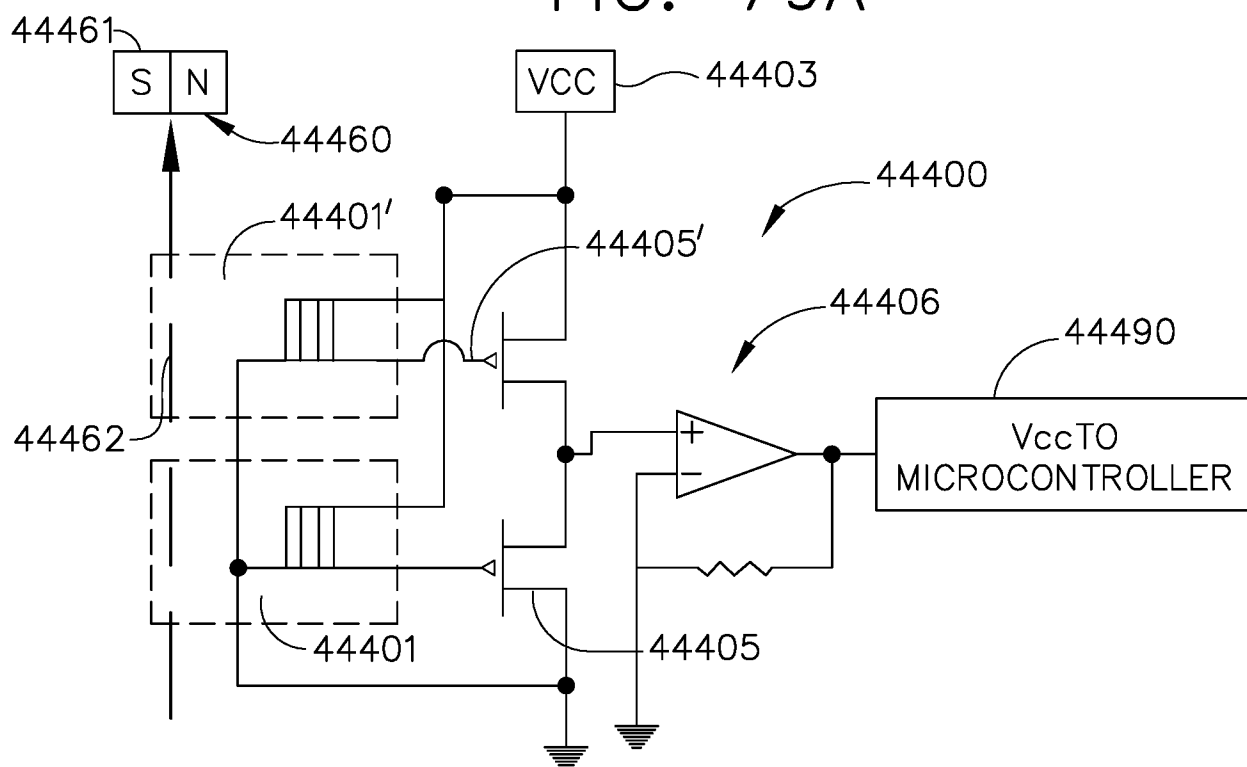


FIG. 79B

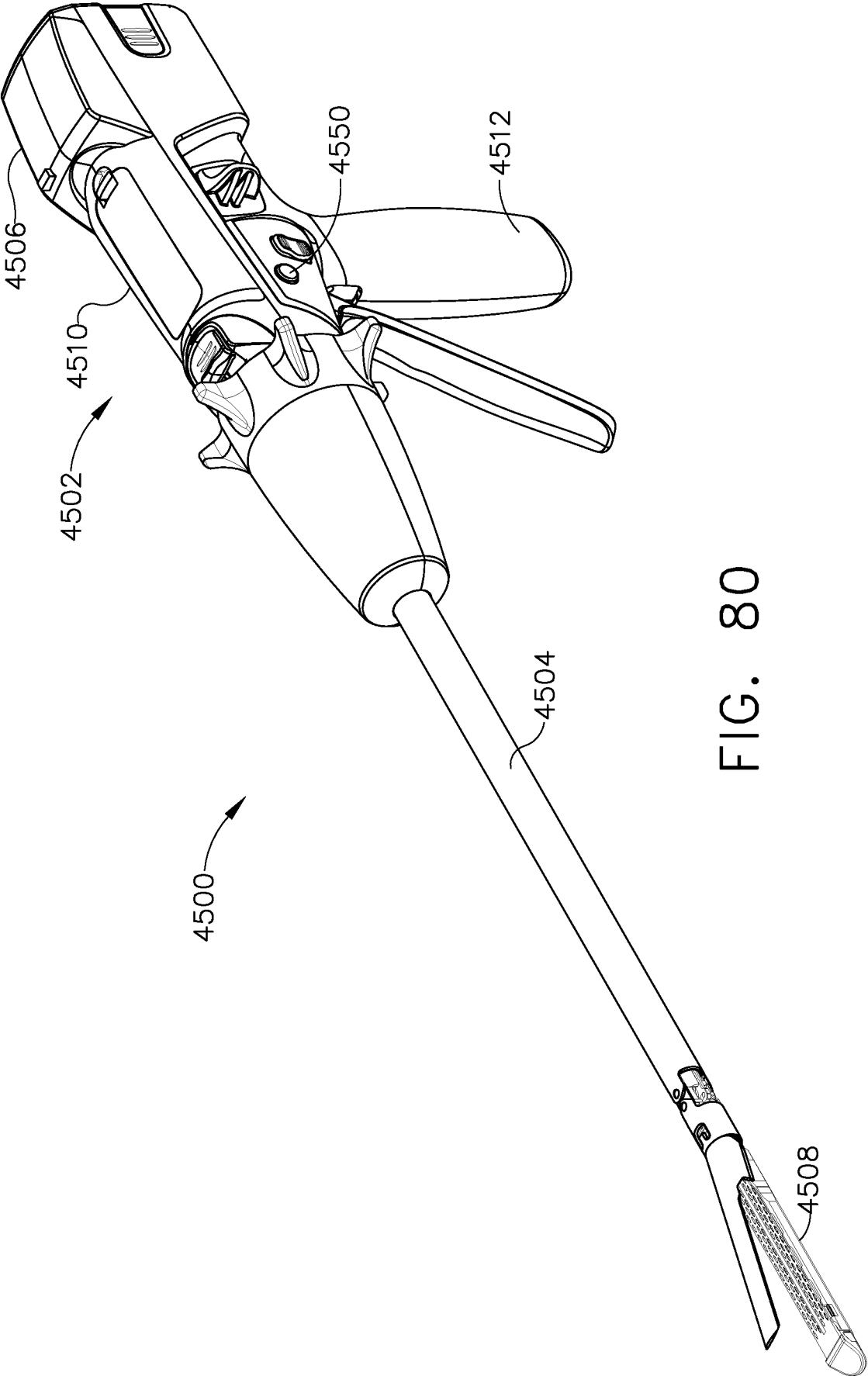


FIG. 80

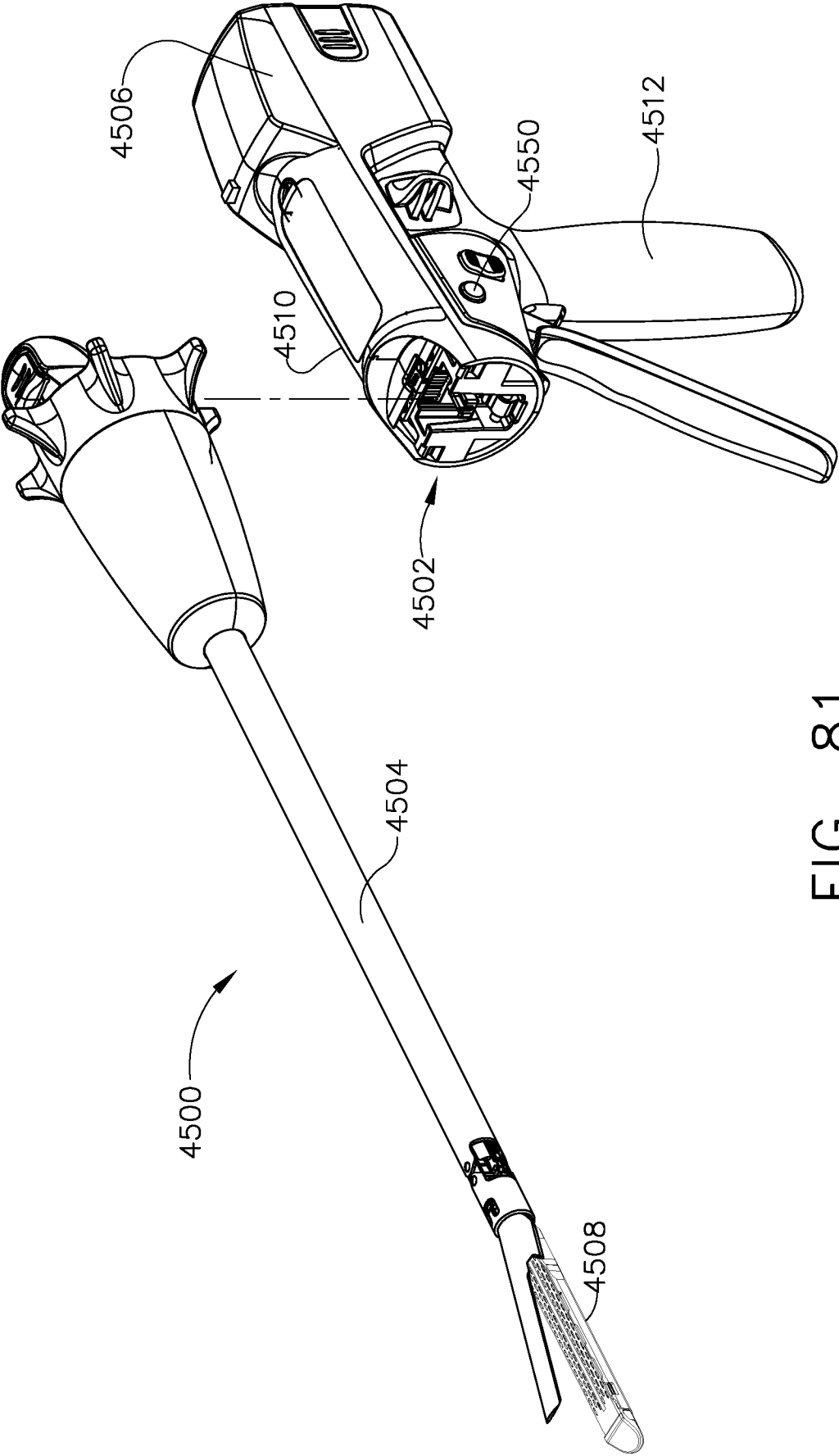


FIG. 81

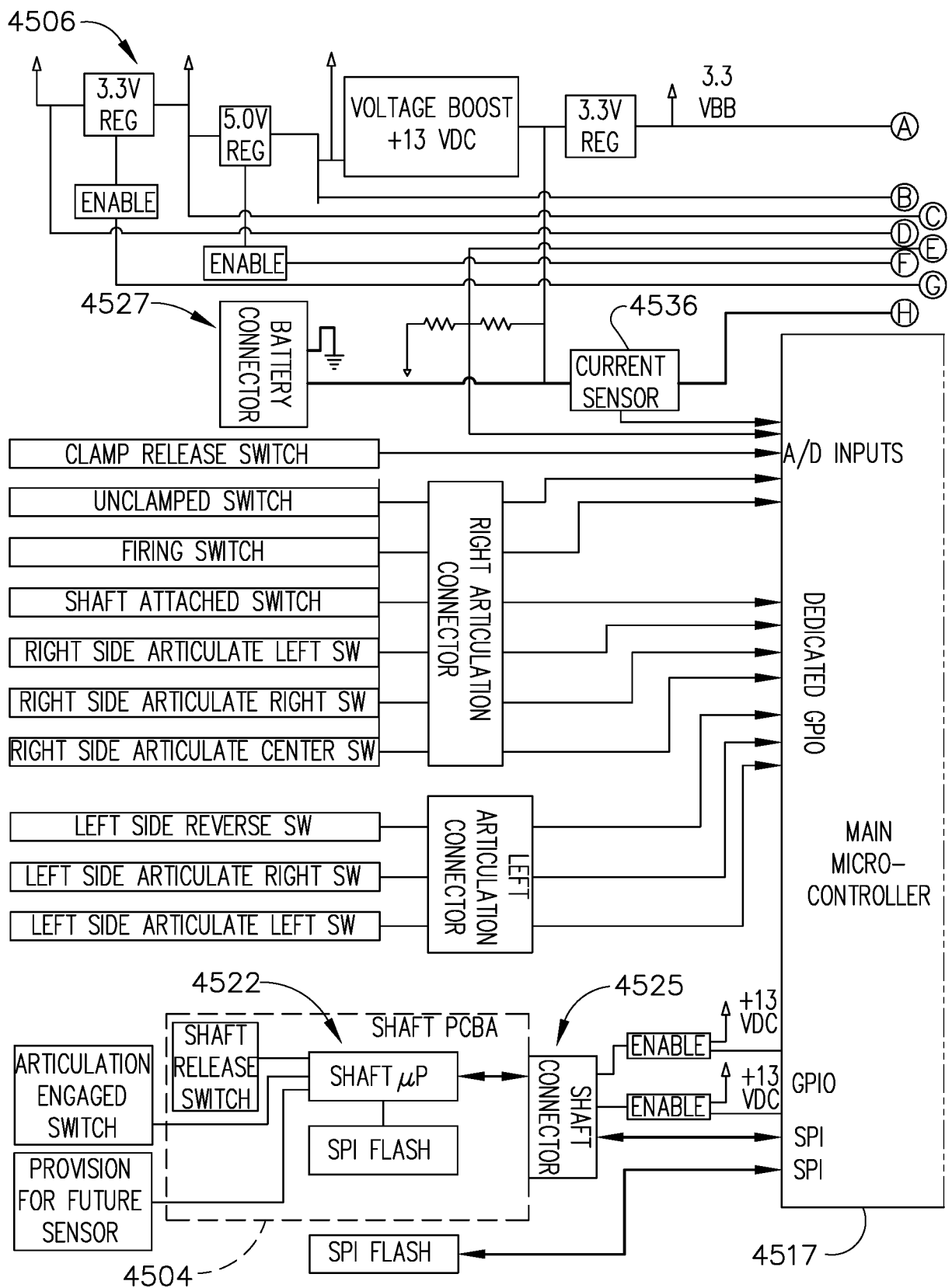


FIG. 82A

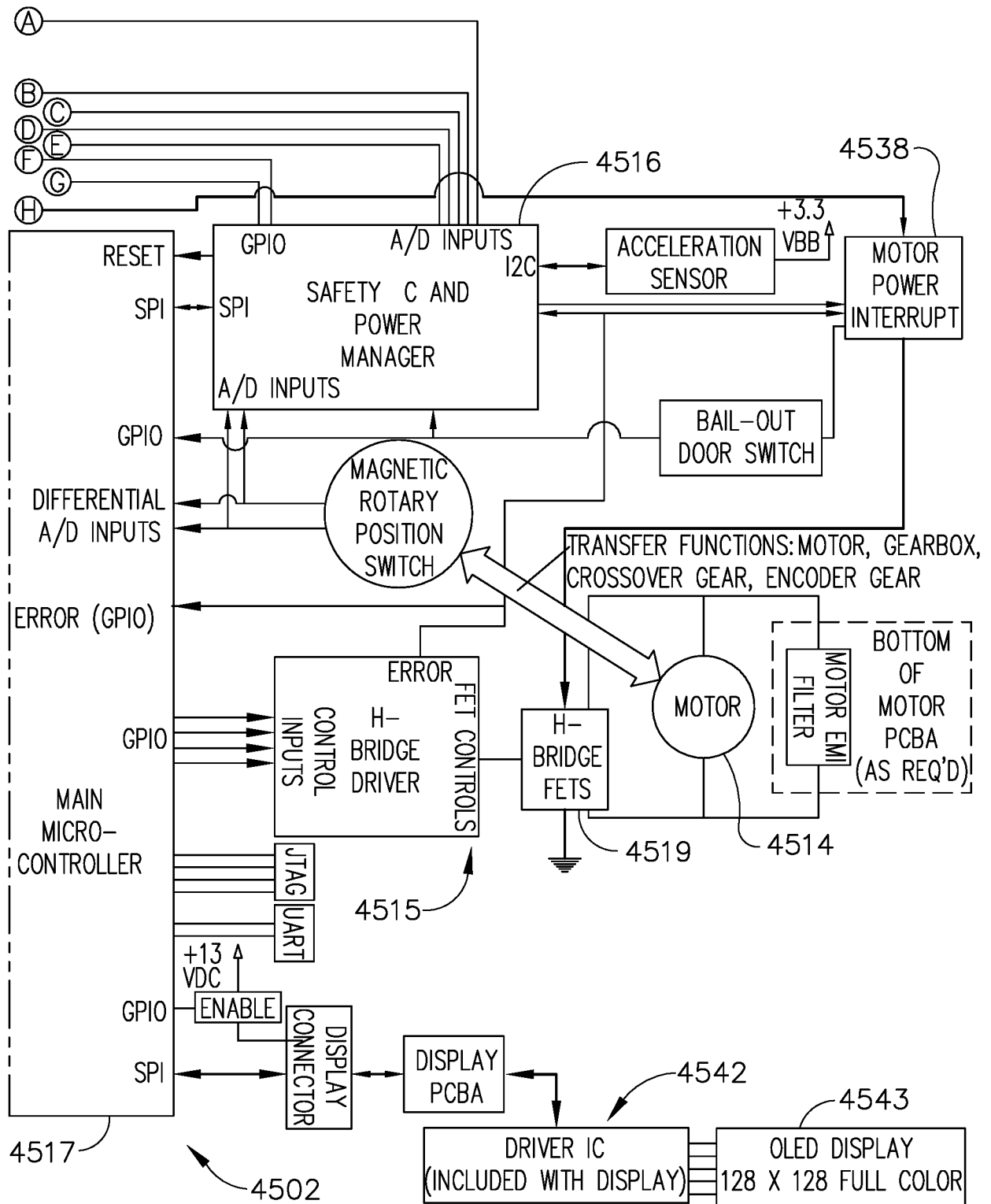


FIG. 82B

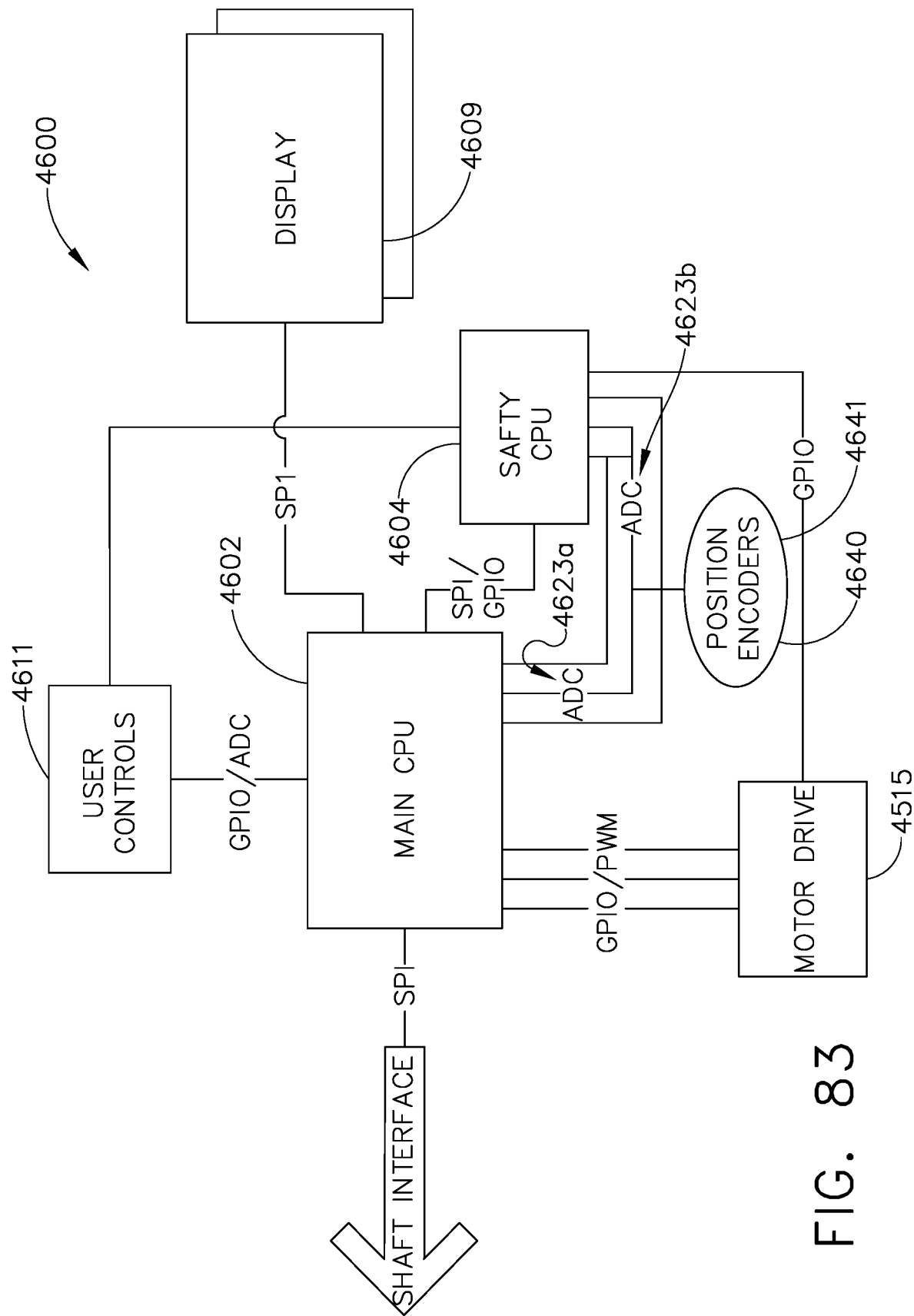


FIG. 83

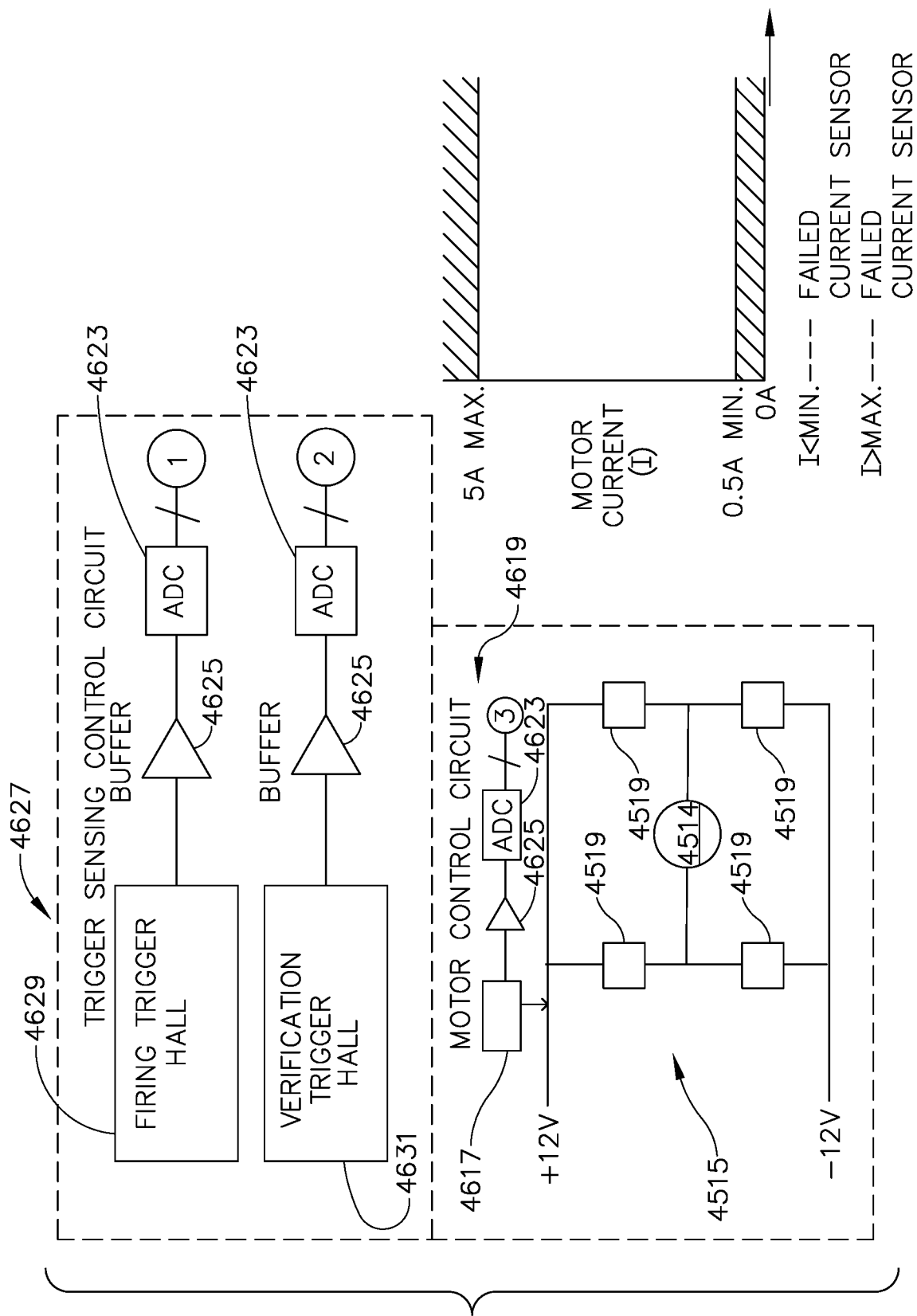
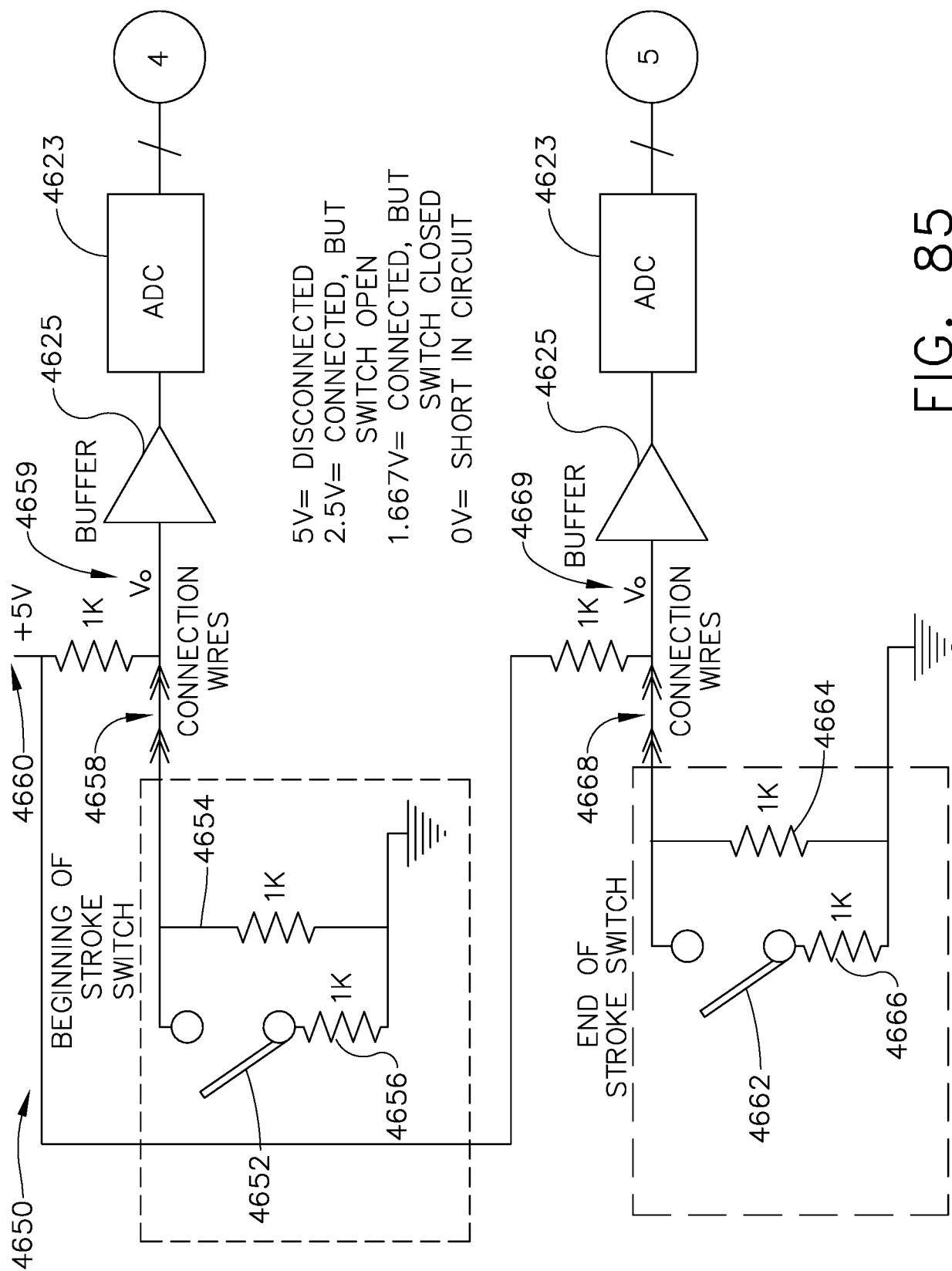


FIG. 84B

FIG. 84A



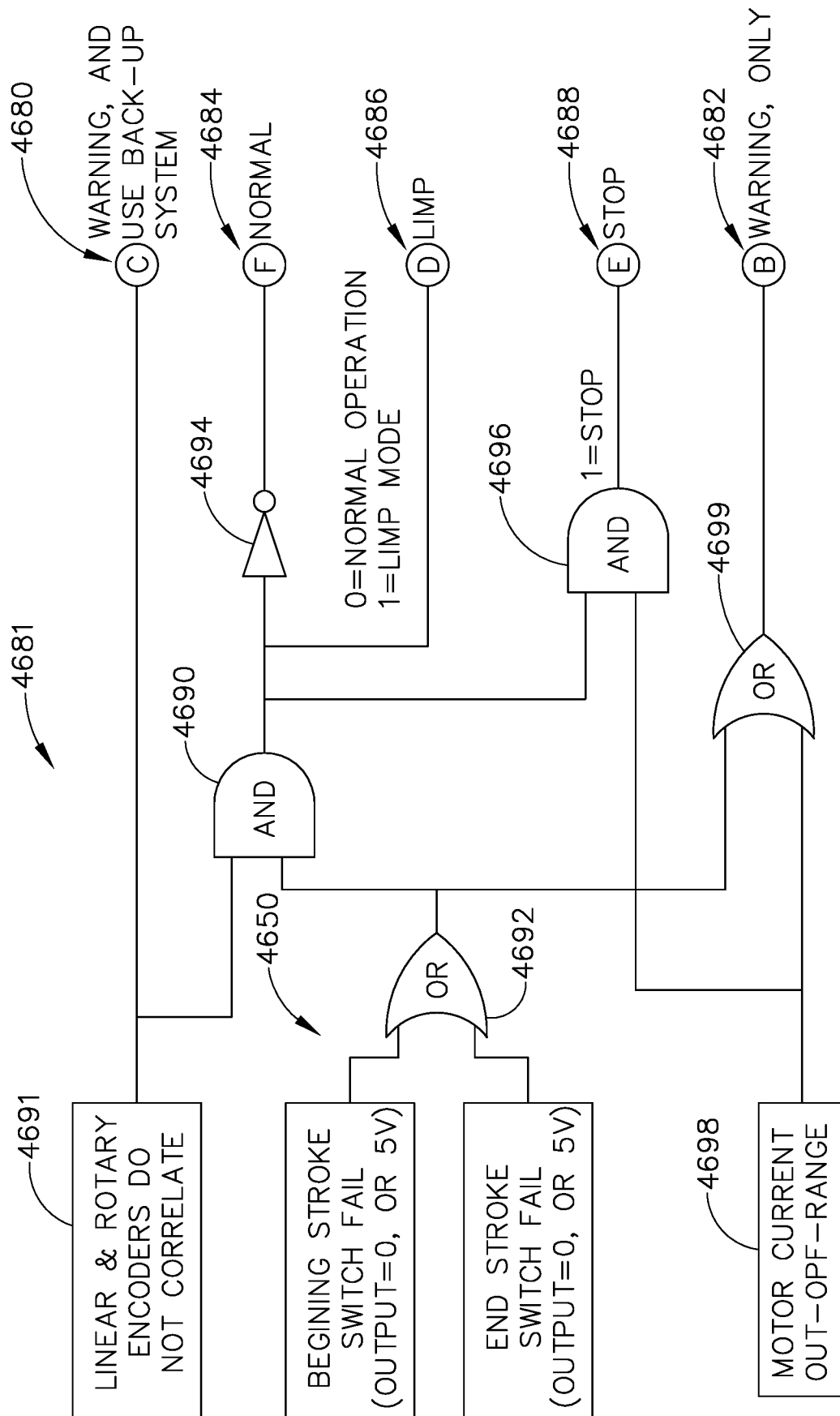
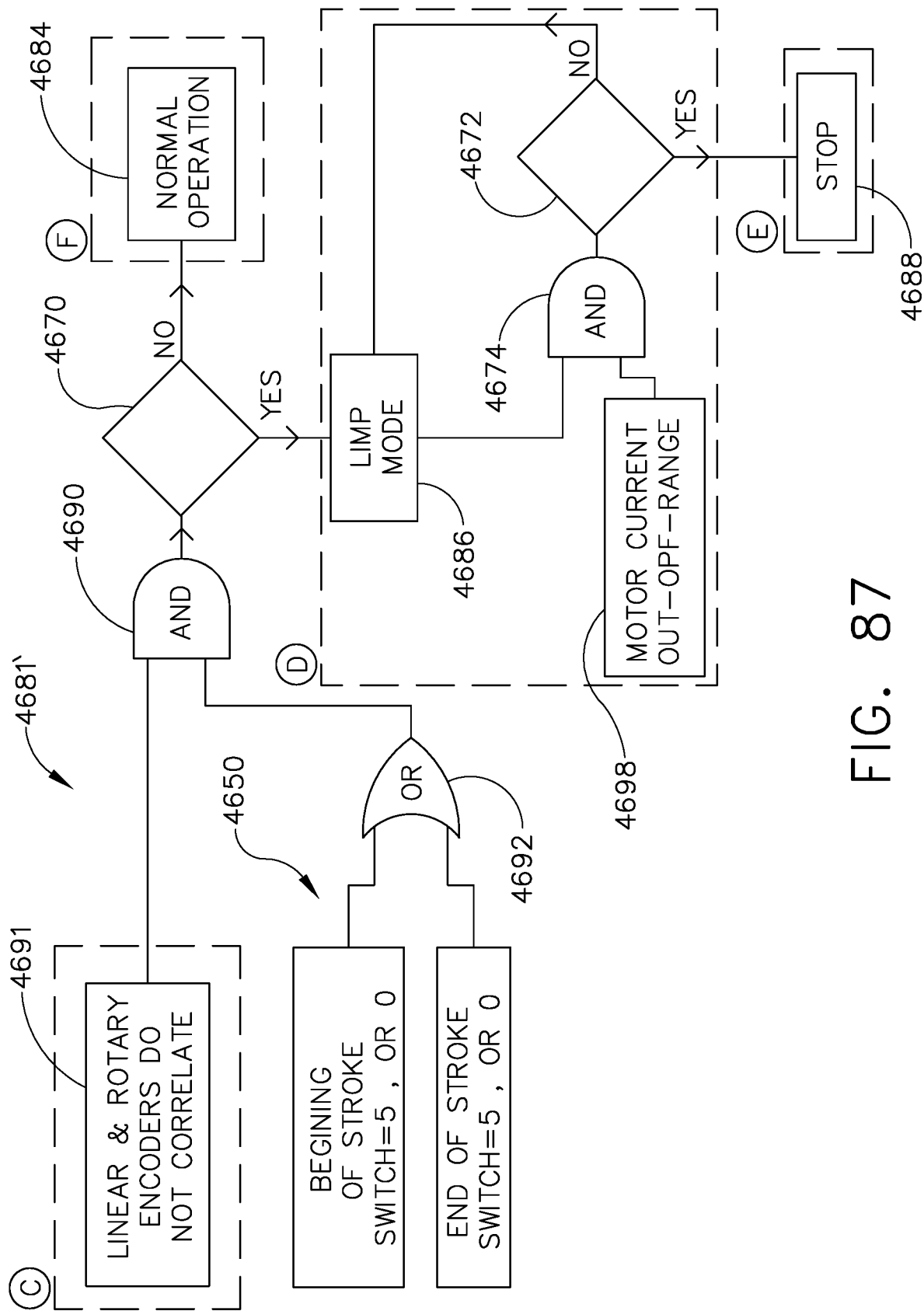


FIG. 86



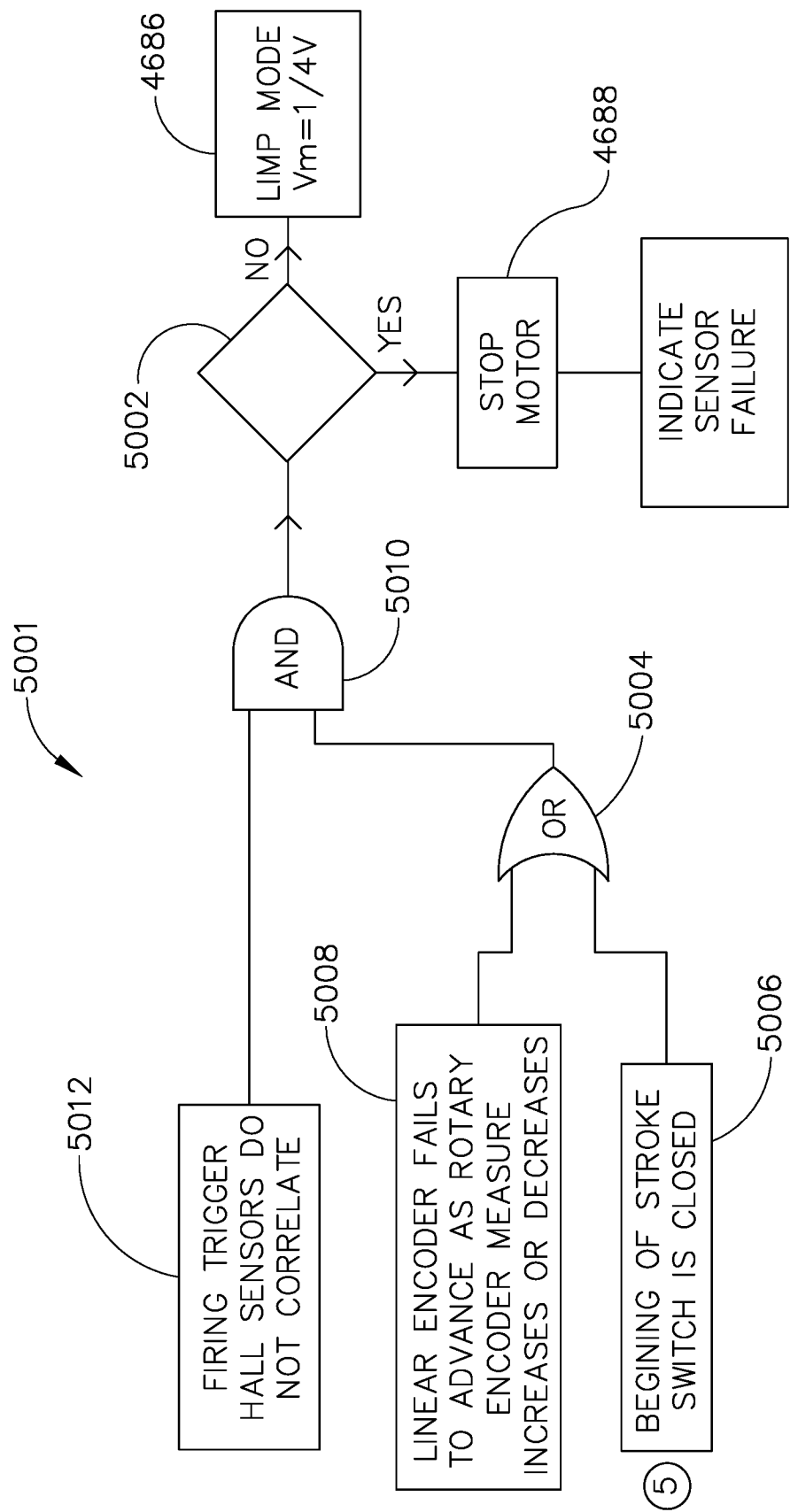


FIG. 88

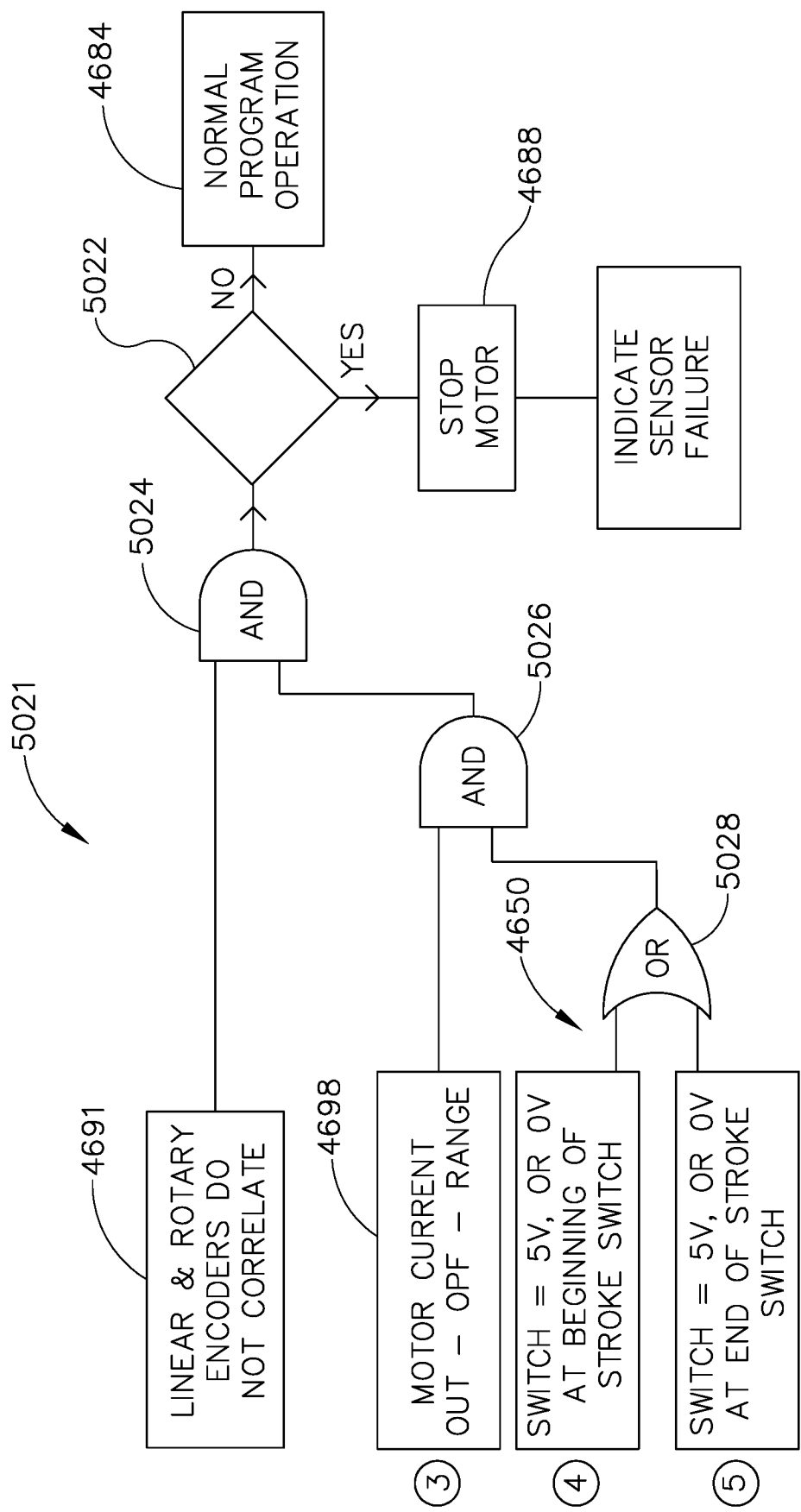


FIG. 89