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(54) Title: HEAT MANAGEMENT CONFIGURATIONS FOR CONTROLLING HEAT DISSIPATION FROM ELECTRO-SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS

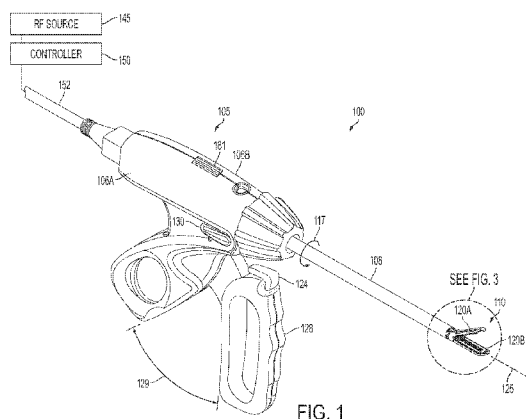


FIG. 1

(57) Abstract: In various embodiments, a surgical instrument is provided that may comprise an end effector for performing a surgical procedure on tissue, for example. The end effector may comprise at least one energy delivery surface and heat dissipation means for dissipating heat from at least a portion of the end effector. For example, in at least one embodiment, the end effector may comprise a first jaw, a second jaw, and a cutting member. The cutting member may comprise a cutting surface and a body, which may define a cavity and at least one opening communicating with the cavity. A fluid may be moved through the cavity to and/or from the opening(s). Additionally, in at least one embodiment, a surgical instrument's end effector may comprise a first jaw, a second jaw, a cutting member, and at least one heat pipe. Various other heat dissipation means are also disclosed.



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TITLE**HEAT MANAGEMENT CONFIGURATIONS FOR CONTROLLING HEAT
DISSIPATION FROM ELECTROSURGICAL INSTRUMENTS**BACKGROUND

[0001] The present disclosure is directed to medical devices and methods, and, more particularly, to electrosurgical instruments and methods for sealing and transecting tissue.

[0002] In various circumstances, a surgical instrument can be configured to apply energy to tissue in order to treat and/or destroy the tissue. In certain circumstances, a surgical instrument can comprise one or more electrodes which can be positioned against and/or positioned relative to the tissue such that electrical current can flow from one electrode, through the tissue, and to the other electrode. The surgical instrument can comprise an electrical input, a supply conductor electrically coupled with the electrodes, and/or a return conductor which can be configured to allow current to flow from the electrical input, through the supply conductor, through the electrodes and the tissue, and then through the return conductor to an electrical output, for example. In various circumstances, heat can be generated by the current flowing through the tissue, wherein the heat can cause one or more hemostatic seals to form within the tissue and/or between tissues. Such embodiments may be particularly useful for sealing blood vessels, for example. The surgical instrument can also comprise a cutting member that can be moved relative to the tissue and the electrodes in order to transect the tissue.

[0003] By way of example, energy applied by a surgical instrument may be in the form of radio frequency ("RF") energy. RF energy is a form of electrical energy that may be in the frequency range of 300 kilohertz (kHz) to 1 megahertz (MHz). In application, RF surgical

instruments transmit low frequency radio waves through electrodes, which cause ionic agitation, or friction, increasing the temperature of the tissue. Since a sharp boundary is created between the affected tissue and that surrounding it, surgeons can operate with a high level of precision and control, without much sacrifice to the adjacent normal tissue. The low operating temperatures of RF energy enables surgeons to remove, shrink or sculpt soft tissue while simultaneously sealing blood vessels. RF energy works particularly well on connective tissue, which is primarily comprised of collagen and shrinks when contacted by heat.

[0004] Further, in various open and laparoscopic surgeries, it may be necessary to coagulate, seal or fuse tissues. One means of sealing tissue relies upon the application of electrical energy to tissue captured within an end effector of a surgical instrument in order to cause thermal effects within the tissue. Various mono-polar and bi-polar RF jaw structures have been developed for such purposes. In general, the delivery of RF energy to the captured tissue elevates the temperature of the tissue and, as a result, the energy can at least partially denature proteins within the tissue. Such proteins, such as collagen, for example, may be denatured into a proteinaceous amalgam that intermixes and fuses, or "welds," together as the proteins renature. As the treated region heals over time, this biological "weld" may be reabsorbed by the body's wound healing process.

[0005] In certain arrangements of a bi-polar radiofrequency (RF) jaw, the surgical instrument can comprise opposing first and second jaws, wherein the face of each jaw can comprise an electrode. In use, the tissue can be captured between the jaw faces such that electrical current can flow between the electrodes in the opposing jaws and through the tissue positioned therebetween. Such instruments may have to seal or "weld" many types of tissues, such as anatomic structures having walls with irregular or thick fibrous content, bundles of

disparate anatomic structures, substantially thick anatomic structures, and/or tissues with thick fascia layers such as large diameter blood vessels, for example. With particular regard to sealing large diameter blood vessels, for example, such applications may require a high strength tissue weld immediately post-treatment.

[0006] The foregoing discussion is intended only to illustrate the present field and should not be taken as a disavowal of claim scope.

SUMMARY

[0007] In various embodiments, a surgical instrument is provided. In at least one embodiment, the surgical instrument can comprise an end effector comprising a first jaw, a second jaw, and a cutting member. In these embodiments, the first jaw and the second jaw can be operably coupled together. Additionally, in these embodiments, the cutting member can be configured to translate with respect to the first jaw. Further, in these embodiments, the cutting member can comprise a cutting surface and a body. Moreover, in these embodiments, the body can define a cavity and at least one opening communicating with the cavity.

[0008] In at least one embodiment, a surgical instrument is provided that can comprise an end effector comprising a first jaw, a second jaw, a cutting member, and at least one heat pipe. In these embodiments, the first jaw can comprise an energy delivery surface and define a channel. Additionally, in these embodiments, the first jaw and the second jaw can be operably coupled together. Further, the cutting member can be configured to translate with respect to the first jaw.

[0009] In at least one embodiment, a surgical instrument is provided that can comprise an end effector. In these embodiments, the end effector can comprise at least one energy delivery surface and heat dissipation means for dissipating heat from at least a portion of the end effector.

[0010] The foregoing discussion should not be taken as a disavowal of claim scope.

FIGURES

[0011] Various features of the embodiments described herein are set forth with particularity in the appended claims. The various embodiments, however, both as to organization and methods of operation, together with advantages thereof, may be understood in accordance with the following description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings as follows.

[0012] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a surgical instrument according to a non-limiting embodiment.

[0013] FIG. 2 is a side view of a handle of the surgical instrument of FIG. 1 with a half of a handle body removed to illustrate some of the components therein.

[0014] FIG. 3 is a perspective view of an end effector of the surgical instrument of FIG. 1 illustrated in an open configuration; the distal end of a cutting member is illustrated in a retracted position.

[0015] FIG. 4 is a perspective view of the end effector of the surgical instrument of FIG. 1 illustrated in a closed configuration; the distal end of the cutting member is illustrated in a partially advanced position.

[0016] FIG. 5 is a perspective view of a portion of a cutting member of the surgical instrument of FIG. 1; the cutting member is shown at least partially shaped like an I-beam.

[0017] FIG. 6A is a perspective sectional view of a portion of the cutting member of the surgical instrument of FIG. 1, taken along line 6A-6A in FIG. 5.

[0018] FIG. 6B is a cross-sectional view of the cutting member of the surgical instrument of FIG. 1, taken along line 6B-6B in FIG. 5.

[0019] FIG. 7 is a perspective view of a portion of a cutting member of a surgical instrument according to a non-limiting embodiment.

[0020] FIG. 8A is a cross-sectional view of the cutting member of FIG. 7 taken along line 8A-8A.

[0021] FIG. 8B is a cross-sectional view of a portion of a cutting member of a surgical instrument according to a non-limiting embodiment.

[0022] FIG. 8C is a cross-sectional view of a portion of a cutting member of a surgical instrument according to a non-limiting embodiment.

[0023] FIG. 8D is a cross-sectional view of a portion of a cutting member of a surgical instrument according to a non-limiting embodiment.

[0024] FIG. 9 is a perspective view of a portion of a cutting member of a surgical instrument according to a non-limiting embodiment.

[0025] FIG. 10 is a cross-sectional view of the cutting member of FIG. 9, taken along line 10-10.

[0026] FIG. 11 is a perspective, partial-sectional view of a portion of an end effector of a surgical instrument according to a non-limiting embodiment.

[0027] FIG. 12A is a partial cross-sectional view of a portion of a cutting member of the surgical instrument of FIG. 11, taken along line 12A-12A.

[0028] FIG. 12B is a partial cross-sectional view of a portion of a cutting member of the surgical instrument of FIG. 11, taken along line 12B-12B.

[0029] FIG. 13 is a side view of a surgical instrument according to a non-limiting embodiment; half of a handle body of the surgical instrument is removed to illustrate some of the components therein and some of the instrument's components are omitted for clarity.

[0030] FIG. 14 is a side view of a handle of a surgical instrument according to a non-limiting embodiment; a portion of a handle body of the surgical instrument is cut away to illustrate some of the components therein.

[0031] FIG. 15 is a perspective, partial-sectional view of a portion of an end effector of a surgical instrument according to a non-limiting embodiment.

[0032] FIG. 16 is a perspective sectional view of a portion of the end effector of FIG. 15.

[0033] FIG. 17 is a perspective sectional view of a portion of an end effector of a surgical instrument according to a non-limiting embodiment.

[0034] FIG. 18 is a perspective sectional view of a portion of an end effector of a surgical instrument according to a non-limiting embodiment.

[0035] FIG. 19 is a cross-sectional view of an end effector of a surgical instrument according to a non-limiting embodiment.

[0036] FIG. 20 is a perspective sectional view of a portion of a Peltier device of the end effector of FIG. 19.

[0037] FIG. 21 is a perspective sectional view of a portion of a jaw of the end effector of FIG. 19.

[0038] FIG. 22 is a cross-sectional view of an end effector of a surgical instrument according to a non-limiting embodiment.

[0039] FIG. 23 is a perspective view of a portion of the end effector of FIG. 22.

[0040] FIG. 24 is a side view of an end effector of a surgical instrument according to a non-limiting embodiment; the end effector is shown in an open configuration.

[0041] FIG. 25 is a cross-section view of the end effector of FIG. 24; the end effector is shown in a closed configuration.

[0042] FIG. 26 is a perspective sectional view of a portion of a heat pipe of the surgical instrument of FIG. 24.

[0043] FIG. 27 is a perspective, partial-sectional view of various components of a surgical instrument according to a non-limiting embodiment.

[0044] FIG. 28 is a side cross-sectional view of a portion of the surgical instrument of FIG. 27, taken along line 28-28; jaws of the surgical instrument are omitted for clarity.

[0045] FIG. 29 is a side view of a handle of a surgical instrument according to a non-limiting embodiment; half of a handle body of the surgical instrument is removed to illustrate some of the components therein.

[0046] FIG. 30 is a side view of a handle of a surgical instrument according to a non-limiting embodiment; half of a handle body of the surgical instrument is removed to illustrate some of the components therein.

[0047] FIG. 31 is a schematic view of a vortex tube of the surgical instrument of FIG. 30.

[0048] Corresponding reference characters indicate corresponding parts throughout the several views. The exemplifications set out herein illustrate various embodiments, in one or more forms, and such exemplifications are not to be construed as limiting the scope of the claims in any manner.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0049] Various embodiments are directed to apparatuses, systems, and methods for the treatment of tissue. 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. It will be understood by those skilled in the art, however, that the embodiments may be practiced without such specific details. In other instances, well-known operations, components, and elements have not been described in detail so as not to obscure the embodiments described in the specification. Those of ordinary skill in the art 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 do not necessarily limit the scope of the embodiments, the scope of which is defined solely by the appended claims.

[0050] Reference throughout the specification to “various embodiments,” “some embodiments,” “one embodiment,” or “an embodiment”, or the like, means that a particular feature, structure, or characteristic described in connection with the embodiment is included in at least one embodiment. Thus, appearances of the phrases “in various embodiments,” “in some embodiments,” “in one embodiment,” or “in an embodiment”, or the like, in places throughout the specification are not necessarily all referring to the same embodiment. Furthermore, the 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.

[0051] It will be appreciated that the terms “proximal” and “distal” may be used throughout the specification with reference to a clinician manipulating one end of an instrument used to treat a patient. The term “proximal” refers to the portion of the instrument closest to the clinician and the term “distal” refers to the portion located farthest from the clinician. It will be further appreciated that for conciseness and clarity, spatial terms such as “vertical,” “horizontal,” “up,” and “down” may be used herein with respect to the illustrated embodiments. However, surgical instruments may be used in many orientations and positions, and these terms are not intended to be limiting and absolute.

[0052] The entire disclosures of the following non-provisional United States patents are hereby incorporated by reference herein:

U.S. Patent No. 7,381,209, entitled ELECTROSURGICAL INSTRUMENT;

U.S. Patent No. 7,354,440, entitled ELECTROSURGICAL INSTRUMENT AND
METHOD OF USE;

U.S. Patent No. 7,311,709, entitled ELECTROSURGICAL INSTRUMENT AND
METHOD OF USE;

U.S. Patent No. 7,309,849, entitled POLYMER COMPOSITIONS EXHIBITING A PTC
PROPERTY AND METHODS OF FABRICATION;

U.S. Patent No. 7,220,951, entitled SURGICAL SEALING SURFACES AND
METHODS OF USE;

U.S. Patent No. 7,189,233, entitled ELECTROSURGICAL INSTRUMENT;

U.S. Patent No. 7,186,253, entitled ELECTROSURGICAL JAW STRUCTURE FOR
CONTROLLED ENERGY DELIVERY;

U.S. Patent No. 7,169,146, entitled ELECTROSURGICAL PROBE AND METHOD OF USE;

U.S. Patent No. 7,125,409, entitled ELECTROSURGICAL WORKING END FOR CONTROLLED ENERGY DELIVERY; and

U.S. Patent No. 7,112,201, entitled ELECTROSURGICAL INSTRUMENT AND METHOD OF USE.

[0053] The following co-pending United States patent applications, filed on even date herewith, are also hereby incorporated by reference herein:

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. _____ (Attorney Docket No. END6655USNP/090293), entitled ELECTROSURGICAL INSTRUMENT COMPRISING SEQUENTIALLY ACTIVATED ELECTRODES;

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. _____ (Attorney Docket No. END6656USNP/090294), entitled ELECTROSURGICAL INSTRUMENT EMPLOYING A THERMAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM; and

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. _____ (Attorney Docket No. END6657USNP/090295), entitled COOLING CONFIGURATIONS FOR ELECTROSURGICAL INSTRUMENTS.

[0054] Various embodiments of systems and methods relate to creating thermal "welds" or "fusion" within native tissue volumes. The alternative terms of tissue "welding" and tissue "fusion" may be used interchangeably herein to describe thermal treatments of a targeted tissue volume that result in a substantially uniform fused-together tissue mass, for example, in welding blood vessels that exhibit substantial burst strength immediately post-treatment. The strength of such welds is particularly useful for (i) permanently sealing blood vessels in vessel transection

procedures; (ii) welding organ margins in resection procedures; (iii) welding other anatomic ducts wherein permanent closure is required; and also (iv) for performing vessel anastomosis, vessel closure or other procedures that join together anatomic structures or portions thereof. The welding or fusion of tissue as disclosed herein is to be distinguished from "coagulation", "hemostasis" and other similar descriptive terms that generally relate to the collapse and occlusion of blood flow within small blood vessels or vascularized tissue. For example, any surface application of thermal energy can cause coagulation or hemostasis--but does not fall into the category of "welding" as the term is used herein. Such surface coagulation does not create a weld that provides any substantial strength in the treated tissue.

[0055] At the molecular level, the phenomena of truly "welding" tissue as disclosed herein may result from the thermally-induced denaturation of collagen and other protein molecules in a targeted tissue volume to create a transient liquid or gel-like proteinaceous amalgam. A selected energy density is provided in the targeted tissue to cause hydrothermal breakdown of intra- and intermolecular hydrogen crosslinks in collagen and other proteins. The denatured amalgam is maintained at a selected level of hydration--without desiccation--for a selected time interval which can be very brief. The targeted tissue volume is maintained under a selected very high level of mechanical compression to insure that the unwound strands of the denatured proteins are in close proximity to allow their intertwining and entanglement. Upon thermal relaxation, the intermixed amalgam results in protein entanglement as re-crosslinking or renaturation occurs to thereby cause a uniform fused-together mass.

[0056] A surgical instrument can be configured to supply energy, such as electrical energy, ultrasonic energy, and/or heat energy, for example, to the tissue of a patient. For example, various embodiments disclosed herein provide electrosurgical jaw structures adapted

for transecting captured tissue between the jaws and for contemporaneously welding or sealing the captured tissue margins with controlled application of RF energy. In more detail, in various embodiments, referring now to FIG. 1, an electrosurgical instrument 100 is shown. Surgical or electrosurgical instrument 100 can comprise a proximal handle 105, a distal working end or end effector 110 and an introducer or elongate shaft 108 disposed in-between. End effector 110 may comprise a set of openable-closeable jaws with straight or curved jaws—an upper first jaw 120A and a lower second jaw 120B. First jaw 120A and second jaw 120B may each comprise an elongate slot or channel 142A and 142B (see FIG. 3), respectively, disposed outwardly along their respective middle portions. First jaw 120A and second jaw 120B may be coupled to an electrical source 145 and a controller 150 through electrical leads in cable 152. Controller 150 may be used to activate electrical source 145. In various embodiments, the electrical source 145 may comprise an RF source, an ultrasonic source, a direct current source, and/or any other suitable type of electrical energy source, for example.

[0057] Moving now to FIG. 2, a side view of the handle 105 is shown with half of a first handle body 106A (see FIG. 1) removed to illustrate some of the components within second handle body 106B. Handle 105 may comprise a lever arm 128 which may be pulled along a path 129. Lever arm 128 may be coupled to a movable cutting member 140 disposed within elongate shaft 108 by a shuttle 146 operably engaged to an extension 127 of lever arm 128. The shuttle 146 may further be connected to a biasing device, such as spring 141, which may also be connected to the second handle body 106B, to bias the shuttle 146 and thus the cutting member 140 in a proximal direction, thereby urging the jaws 120A and 120B to an open position as seen in FIG. 1. Also, referring to FIGS. 1 and 2, a locking member 131 (see FIG. 2) may be moved by a locking switch 130 (see FIG. 1) between a locked position, where the shuttle 146 is

substantially prevented from moving distally as illustrated, and an unlocked position, where the shuttle 146 may be allowed to freely move in the distal direction, toward the elongate shaft 108. The handle 105 can be any type of pistol-grip or other type of handle known in the art that is configured to carry actuator levers, triggers or sliders for actuating the first jaw 120A and second jaw 120B. Elongate shaft 108 may have a cylindrical or rectangular cross-section and can comprise a thin-wall tubular sleeve that extends from handle 105. Elongate shaft 108 may include a bore extending therethrough for carrying actuator mechanisms, for example, cutting member 140, for actuating the jaws and for carrying electrical leads for delivery of electrical energy to electrosurgical components of end effector 110.

[0058] End effector 110 may be adapted for capturing, welding or sealing, and transecting tissue. First jaw 120A and second jaw 120B may close to thereby capture or engage tissue about a longitudinal axis 125 defined by cutting member 140. First jaw 120A and second jaw 120B may also apply compression to the tissue. Elongate shaft 108, along with first jaw 120A and second jaw 120B, can be rotated a full 360° degrees, as shown by arrow 117, relative to handle 105 through, for example, a rotary triple contact. First jaw 120A and second jaw 120B can remain openable and/or closeable while rotated.

[0059] FIGS. 3 and 4 illustrate perspective views of end effector 110. FIG. 3 shows end effector 110 in an open configuration and FIG. 4 shows end effector 110 in a closed configuration. As noted above, the end effector 110 may comprise the upper first jaw 120A and the lower second jaw 120B. Further, the first jaw 120A and second jaw 120B may each have tissue-gripping elements, such as teeth 143, disposed on the inner portions of first jaw 120A and second jaw 120B. First jaw 120A may comprise an upper first jaw body 161A with an upper first outward-facing surface 162A and an upper first energy delivery surface 175A of a first

electrode, for example. Second jaw 120B may comprise a lower second jaw body 161B with a lower second outward-facing surface 162B and a lower second energy delivery surface 175B of a second electrode, for example. First energy delivery surface 175A and second energy delivery surface 175B may both extend in a “U” shape about the distal end of end effector 110.

Additionally, in at least one embodiment, one or both electrodes may each comprise a segmented electrode or electrodes as described in U.S. Patent Application Serial No. _____ (Attorney Docket No. END6655USNP/090293), entitled ELECTROSURGICAL INSTRUMENT COMPRISING SEQUENTIALLY ACTIVATED ELECTRODE, filed on even date herewith and incorporated by reference herein.

[0060] Referring briefly now to FIGS. 5-6A, a portion of cutting member 140 is shown. The lever arm 128 of handle 105, see FIG. 2, may be adapted to actuate cutting member 140 which also functions as a jaw-closing mechanism. For example, cutting member 140 may be urged distally as lever arm 128 is pulled proximally along path 129 via shuttle 146, seen in FIG. 2 and discussed above. The cutting member 140 may comprise one or several pieces, but in any event, may be movable or translatable with respect to the elongate shaft 108 and/or jaws 120A, 120B. Also, in at least one embodiment, the cutting member 140 may be made of 17-4 precipitation hardened stainless steel. The distal end of cutting member 140 may comprise a flanged “I”-beam configured to slide within channels 142A and 142B in jaws 120A and 120B. Cutting member 140 may slide within channels 142A, 142B to open and close first jaw 120A and second jaw 120B. The distal end of cutting member 140 may also comprise upper flange or “c”-shaped portion 140A and lower flange or “c”-shaped portion 140B. The flanges 140A and 140B respectively define inner cam surfaces 144A and 144B for engaging outward facing surfaces of first jaw 120A and second jaw 120B. The opening-closing of jaws 120A and 120B

can apply very high compressive forces on tissue using cam mechanisms which may include reciprocating “I-beam” cutting member 140 and the outward facing surfaces 162A, 162B of jaws 120A, 120B.

[0061] More specifically, referring now to FIGS. 3-5, collectively, inner cam surfaces 144A and 144B of the distal end of cutting member 140 may be adapted to slidably engage first outward-facing surface 162A and second outward-facing surface 162B of first jaw 120A and second jaw 120B, respectively. Channel 142A within first jaw 120A and channel 142B within second jaw 120B may be sized and configured to accommodate the movement of cutting member 140, which may comprise a tissue-cutting element, for example, a sharp distal edge and/or surface 153 (see FIG. 5). FIG. 4, for example, shows the distal end of cutting member 140 advanced at least partially through channels 142A and 142B (see FIG. 3). The advancement of cutting member 140 can close end effector 110 from the open configuration shown in FIG. 3. The cutting member 140 may move or translate along the channel 142A between a retracted position and a fully advanced position. The retracted position can be seen in FIG. 3, where the jaws 120A, 120B are in an open position and a distal end 151 of the cutting member 140 is positioned proximal to the upper outward-facing surface 162A. The fully advanced position, while not shown, may occur when the distal end 151 of the cutting member 140 is advanced to a distal end 164 of channel 142A and the jaws are in a closed position, see FIG. 4. In the closed position shown by FIG. 4, upper first jaw 120A and lower second jaw 120B define a gap or dimension D between the first energy delivery surface 175A and second energy delivery surface 175B of first jaw 120A and second jaw 120B, respectively. Dimension D equals from about 0.0005” to about 0.005” and preferably between about 0.001” to about 0.002”. Also, the edges of

first energy delivery surface 175A and second energy delivery surface 175B may be rounded to prevent the dissection of tissue.

[0062] Referring now to FIGS. 1 and 3, end effector 110 may be coupled to electrical source 145 and controller 150. First energy delivery surface 175A and second energy delivery surface 175B may likewise each be coupled to electrical source 145 and controller 150. First energy delivery surface 175A and second energy delivery surface 175B may be configured to contact tissue and deliver electrosurgical energy to engaged tissue which is adapted to seal or weld the tissue. Controller 150 can regulate the electrical energy delivered by electrical source 145 which in turn delivers electrosurgical energy to first energy-delivery surface 175A and second energy-delivery surface 175B. The energy delivery may be initiated by an activation button 124 operably engaged with lever arm 128 and in electrical communication with controller 150 via cable 152. As mentioned above, the electrosurgical energy delivered by electrical source 145 may comprise radiofrequency (RF) energy. Further, the opposing first and second energy delivery surfaces 175A and 175B may carry variable resistive positive temperature coefficient (PTC) bodies that are coupled to electrical source 145 and controller 150. Additional details regarding electrosurgical end effectors, jaw closing mechanisms, and electrosurgical energy-delivery surfaces are described in the following U.S. patents and published patent applications, all of which are incorporated herein in their entirety by reference and made a part of this specification: U.S. Pat. Nos. 7,381,209; 7,311,709; 7,220,951; 7,189,233; 7,186,253; 7,125,409; 7,112,201; 7,087,054; 7,083,619; 7,070,597; 7,041,102; 7,011,657; 6,929,644; 6,926,716; 6,913,579; 6,905,497; 6,802,843; 6,770,072; 6,656,177; 6,533,784; and 6,500,176; and U.S. Pat. App. Pub. Nos. 2010/0036370 and 2009/0076506.

[0063] In various embodiments, it may be desirable to dissipate heat from an end effector such that when energy is delivered to the end effector, as described above with respect to end effector 110, for instance, the likelihood that tissue contacting the end effector will be unintentionally thermally altered by the end effector may be reduced or eliminated. Additionally, dissipating heat from the end effector can lead to cooling the sealed area of tissue more quickly which may produce stronger tissue welds. Further, cooling the tissue and/or at least a portion of the end effector after welding the tissue, as discussed above, may minimize the amount of thermal energy spread into and/or through tissue adjacent to the desired seal area. Accordingly, in at least one embodiment and referring again to FIG. 1, a surgical instrument, such as surgical instrument 100 described above, may be configured to dissipate heat from an end effector by extracting heat or depositing a cooling medium to the target tissue and/or end effector. The surgical instrument 100 may comprise an end effector 110 that may also include at least one energy delivery surface, such as first and/or second energy delivery surfaces 175A and 175B (see FIG. 3). Additionally, in various embodiments, referring to FIG. 2, the surgical instrument 100 may comprise a pump, such as pump 180, for example, that is configured to cause a fluid to move into at least a portion of the end effector 110. More specifically, in at least one exemplary embodiment, referring now to FIGS. 1-2, a surgical instrument 100 may be provided that comprises a pump 180 operably coupled to a handle 105. FIG. 2 shows the first handle body removed to show the components of surgical instrument 100 associated with and/or within handle 105. As illustrated, the pump 180 may be coupled to part of the handle body, such as second handle body 106B. However, while pump 180 is shown located within handle 105, the pump 180 may alternatively be positioned external to the handle 105. In any event, the pump 180 may be configured to cause a fluid to move through the cutting member 140 and into at least

a portion of the end effector 110. In at least one embodiment, the fluid may be a gas, such as air, for example. Alternatively, as discussed below, the fluid may be a liquid, such as water, distilled water, and/or saline solution, for example.

[0064] In more detail, referring still to FIGS. 1-2, the handle 105 may additionally comprise a fluid port 181 located on the body. The fluid port 181 may comprise a vent, for example, through which air from outside the instrument may pass. Additionally, in at least one embodiment, the fluid port 181 may comprise a filter, such as a HEPA air filter, to purify the air passing therethrough. The pump 180 may comprise an inlet 180A and an outlet 180B for the fluid to enter and exit the pump 180, respectively. In at least one embodiment, the inlet 180A may be coupled to the fluid port 181 via first tubing 182 and the outlet 180B may be coupled to the cutting member 140 by second tubing 183 at a proximal hole 149 of the cutting member 140.

[0065] In at least one embodiment, referring to FIG. 5, the cutting member 140 may comprise a body 155 and a cutting surface 153 that may be located at a distal portion of the cutting member 140. Referring now also to FIGS. 6A and 6B, the body 155 may define a cavity 147 therein and at least one opening, such as openings 148, for example. As shown, the cavity 147 may lie along the longitudinal axis 125 of the cutting member. Alternatively, although not shown in FIGS. 6A-6B, the cavity may be offset from the longitudinal axis 125. Additionally, as illustrated, there may be at least two or more openings 148. As can be seen in FIG. 6B, one or more of the openings 148 may communicate with the cavity 147 such that a fluid, may pass therethrough. In at least one embodiment, the openings 148 may be positioned proximal to the cutting surface 153. In other words, in various embodiments, taking the instrument 100 as a whole, the cutting member opening or openings 148 may be positioned between the handle 105 (FIG. 1) and the cutting surface 153 (FIG. 5). Further, in at least one embodiment, the opening

or openings 148 may be positioned near the cutting surface 153 such that the openings 148 are configured to dissipate heat from tissue immediately after the tissue is cut by cutting surface 153. Additionally, although not illustrated, the proximal hole 149 in cutting member 140 may communicate with the cavity 147 such that fluid flowing from second tubing 183 and into the cutting member 140 may pass through the cavity 147 and out openings 148 to effectuate heat dissipation from the cut tissue and/or end effector 110. Accordingly, the cavity 147 may partially reside within the handle 105 to a distal end of the elongate shaft 108 and/or into end effector 110.

[0066] In use, the surgical instrument 100, may function as follows. In at least one embodiment, referring to FIGS. 1-2, when activation button 124 is pressed to supply energy to the end effector 110, as discussed above, the pump 180 may simultaneously or shortly thereafter activate. In such embodiments, the pump 180 may be connected to the activation button 124 by at least one electrical conductor (not shown), such as an electrical lead, insulated wire, and/or copper wire, for example. Accordingly, the button 124 may be configured to be moved between a first and a second position where the second position completes an electrical circuit such that current may flow from a power source outside the instrument, such as that associated with controller 150 and/or electrical source 145, for example, to the pump 180. Thus, in at least one embodiment, when the button 124 is depressed to the second position, electrical current may flow from the electrical source 145, for example, through the electrical conductors (not shown), to the pump 180. The pump 180 may thereby activate and begin to draw air, designated by arrows 184, into fluid port 181, through first tubing 182 and into pump 180 via inlet 180A. The pump 180 may continue to force the air, designated by arrow 185, out outlet 180B, into second tubing 183 and into the cutting member 140 via proximal hole 149. The air, designated by

arrows 186, may then travel in a distal direction through the cavity 147 of the cutting member 140, through the elongate shaft 108, and toward the end effector 110. The air may thereafter be forced into at least a portion of the end effector 110. In at least one embodiment, the air may enter the space between jaws 120A and 120B, thereby allowing for the energy delivery surfaces 175A and 175B and any tissue between the jaws 120A and 120B to be subsequently cooled.

[0067] While the pump 180 may be configured to operate during a surgical procedure by being activated at or at about the same time as energy is delivered to surfaces 175A and/or 175B, the pump 180 may be configured to be selectively activated independently of the energy delivery activation button's use. Referring to FIG. 2, in at least one embodiment, the pump may alternatively be coupled to a control button (not shown) on the exterior of the handle 105. In such embodiments, the pump 180 may be activated before, during, and/or after a surgical procedure by pressing the control button, thereby allowing for selective cooling of the end effector 110 (see FIG. 1) before, during, and/or after a surgical operation. Alternatively, the pump may be activated by the controller 150 during a predetermined time within the treatment cycle, for example.

[0068] As discussed above, a surgical instrument may comprise a pump that is configured to cause a fluid to move over at least a portion of an end effector as described above, for example, by forcing or pushing a fluid, such as a gas, like air, for example, in a distal direction into at least a portion of the end effector. Alternatively, in various embodiments, a surgical instrument may comprise a pump that is configured to force or draw a fluid in a proximal direction over part of the end effector. In other words, a pump may be configured to function like a vacuum and draw one or more fluids into the end effector, for example. Accordingly, in at least one embodiment, referring to FIGS. 1, 2, and 5-6B, the pump 180

described above may be reversed such that, when the pump is activated, it functions as a vacuum. In such embodiments, air, carbon dioxide, or steam, for example, may be drawn into cutting member openings 148, through the cutting member cavity 147, out proximal hole 149, into pump 180, and then out fluid port 181, which may serve an exhaust vent. Accordingly, heated substances, such as air, carbon dioxide, and steam, for example, may be drawn from the end effector 110 and/or target tissue to remove the heated substance(s) therefrom, thereby cooling or dissipating heat from the end effector 110 and/or target tissue.

[0069] In various embodiments, different configurations of the cutting member 140, cavity 147, and/or opening(s) 148 may be employed to dissipate heat from the end effector 110 and/or target tissue. For example, as seen in FIGS. 5 and 6B, the cutting member 140 may define a longitudinal axis 125 and the opening(s) 148 may define a plane that is parallel to the longitudinal axis 125. In other words, the openings 148 may project to the sides of the cutting member 140. However, the opening or openings of a cutting member may be oriented differently. For example, referring now to FIGS. 7 and 8A, in at least one embodiment, a cutting member 240, similar in some respects to cutting member 140, may comprise a cutting surface 253 and a body including a distal body portion 255B (discussed in more detail below) and a proximal body portion 255A. The cutting surface 253 may be a part of and/or positioned on distal body portion 255B. The proximal body portion 255A may define a cavity 247 and openings 248 may communicate with the cavity 247. Further, the cutting member 240 may define a longitudinal axis 225 and the opening or openings 248 may define a plane that intersects the longitudinal axis 225. In other words, the openings may project proximally or distally with respect to the cutting surface 253 of the cutting member 240. As illustrated in FIGS. 7 and 8A, the openings 248 project distally, towards the cutting surface 253. Further, arrows 287 illustrate

a potential fluid flow path for a fluid flowing through the cutting member's cavity 247 and out openings 248, for example.

[0070] Additional heat may be dissipated from the end effector 110 (FIG. 1) and/or the target tissue by using a cutting member, such as cutting member 240, for example, that comprises two materials. For example, referring to FIG. 7, the cutting member's proximal body portion 255A may be made from a plastic, whereas the cutting member's distal body portion 255B may be made from a metal, such as steel, for example. In at least one embodiment, the distal body portion 255B may be coupled to the proximal body portion 255A at one or more tongue-in-groove connections 256. In such embodiments, owing to the material disparity and the inability of plastic to efficiently conduct heat, any heated substance passed through the cutting member's proximal body portion 255A may not conduct heat as effectively as the distal portion 255B, thereby preventing or resisting components of the surgical instrument 100 (FIG. 1), including end effector 110 and shaft 108, for example, from heating up when a heat substance is passed through the cutting member 240. Such embodiments may be particularly useful when the pump 180 (FIG. 2) is used as a vacuum to draw heated air and/or steam through the cutting member 240, for example.

[0071] Additional exemplary configurations of a cutting member, similar in some respects to cutting member 140 described above, are shown in FIGS. 8B-8D. FIGS. 8B, 8C, and 8D illustrate cutting members 240', 240'', and 240''', respectively, and are taken along a similar cross-section line as line 8A-8A seen in FIG. 7 for cutting member 240. Referring now to FIG. 8B, in at least one embodiment, the cutting member 240' may comprise a cutting surface 253' and a body including a distal body portion 255B' and a proximal body portion 255A'. The cutting surface 253' may be a part of and/or positioned on the distal body portion 255B'. The

proximal body portion 255A' may define a cavity (not shown) and openings 248' communicating with the cavity. While not illustrated, the cavity may lie out of the plane define by the page of FIG. 8B and/or the longitudinal axis 225', for example. Additionally, each opening 248' may traverse the entire width of the cutting member's proximal body portion 255A', running from one side of the body portion 255A' to the other side. The cutting member 240' may also define a longitudinal axis 225' and the opening(s) 248' may define a plane that is parallel to the longitudinal axis 225'. In other words, the openings 248' may project to the sides of the cutting member 240'.

[0072] Focusing now on FIG. 8C, in at least one embodiment, the cutting member 240" may comprise a body 255" and a cutting surface 253" at a distal portion of the body 255". The body 255" may define a cavity 247" and openings 248" communicating with the cavity. Additionally, each opening 248" may traverse a side wall of the cutting member's body 255", running from a side of the body 255" to the cavity 247". The cutting member 240" may also define a longitudinal axis 225" and the opening(s) 248" may define a plane that is parallel to the longitudinal axis 225". In other words, the openings 248" may project to the sides of the cutting member 240". Further, arrows 287" illustrate a potential fluid flow path for a fluid flowing through the cutting member's cavity 247" and out openings 248", for example. Also, while not illustrated, cavity 247" may be offset from longitudinal axis 225".

[0073] Referring to FIG. 8D, in at least one embodiment, the cutting member 240''' may comprise a cutting surface 253''' and a body including a distal body portion 255B''' and a proximal body portion 255A'''. The cutting surface 253''' may be a part of and/or positioned on distal body portion 255B'''. The proximal body portion 255A''' may define a cavity 247''' and openings 248''' communicating with the cavity 247'''. Further, the cutting member 240''' may

define a longitudinal axis 225''' and the opening or openings 248''' may define a plane that intersects the longitudinal axis 225'''. In other words, the openings may project proximally or distally with respect to the cutting surface 253''' of the cutting member 240'''. As illustrated in FIG. 8D, the openings 248''' project distally, towards the cutting surface 253'''. Further, arrows 287''' illustrate a potential fluid flow path for a fluid flowing through the cutting member's cavity 247''' and out openings 248''', for example.

[0074] Additionally, as discussed above, a cutting member, such as cutting member 240''', for example, may be configured to translate with respect to the first jaw 120A and/or second jaw 120B (see FIG. 4). In such embodiments, as discussed above with respect to cutting member 140, the cutting member 240''' may be moved between a retracted position and a fully advanced position with respect to the first and/or second jaws 120A and/or 120B. However, unlike cutting member 140, the openings 248''' of cutting member 240''' may be positioned such that that the openings 248''' are positioned proximal to one or both of energy delivery surfaces 175A and 175B when the cutting member 240''' is at the fully advanced position. In other words, the opening(s) 248''' may be positioned between the first jaw 120A and the handle 105 (FIGS. 1 and 2) when the cutting member is at the fully advanced position. In such embodiments, the cutting member openings 248''' may not enter the space where tissue is being clamped, cut, and/or sealed, even when the cutting member 240''' is fully advanced. Further, referring to FIG. 4, the first jaw's channel 142A may define a first length, L1. Referring to FIG. 8D, the cutting member 240''' may define a second length, L2, as measured from one of the openings 248''' to a distal edge of the cutting surface 253'''. In these embodiments, the first length may be approximately equal to the second length, or $L1 \approx L2$.

[0075] FIGS. 9-10 illustrate another exemplary embodiment of a cutting member 340, generally similar to cutting member 140 described above. For example, among other things, the cutting member 340 may comprise a body 355 and a cutting surface 353 at a distal portion of the body 355. The body 355 may define a cavity 347 and openings 348 communicating with the cavity 347. Additionally, each opening 348 may traverse a side wall of the cutting member's body 355, running from a side of the body 355 to the cavity 347. Additionally, the cavity 347 may comprise a larger portion 347A and a smaller portion 347B in fluid communication with each other. The smaller portion 347B may also directly communicate with the openings 348. Accordingly, the pressure of fluid flowing in or out of openings 348, from or through smaller cavity portion 347B may be increased over that provided to larger cavity portion 347A.

[0076] FIGS. 11-12B illustrate another exemplary embodiment of a cutting member 440, generally similar to cutting member 140 described above. As seen in FIG. 11, the cutting member 440 may be a part of an end effector 410, also similar to end effector 110 described above. In any event, among other things, the cutting member 440 may comprise a body 455 and a cutting surface 453 at a distal portion of the body 455. The body 455 may define a cavity 447 and at least one opening 448 communicating with the cavity 447. The opening 448 may be proximal to the cutting surface 453. Additionally, each opening 448 may traverse a side wall of the cutting member's body 455, running from a side of the body 455 to the cavity 447. Moreover, a porous material or insert 460 may be positioned within the opening 448. The porous insert 460 may comprise a cellular matrix and/or a sponge-like material. In any event, the porous insert may comprise one or more pores 463. The porous insert 460 and/or pores 463 may help direct any fluid passing therethrough in different directions as shown by the arrows in FIG. 12B.

[0077] Various mechanisms may be employed to move fluid through a cutting member in a surgical instrument. For example, referring now to FIG. 13, a surgical instrument 500 is shown coupled to a delivery unit 535. The surgical instrument 500 may be generally similar to surgical instrument 100 described above. For example, among other things, the surgical instrument 500 may comprise a handle 505 and a cutting member 540 operably coupled together. However, various components of the surgical instrument 500 are omitted for clarity. For instance, an elongate shaft operably coupled to the handle as well as additional components of an end effector operably coupled to the elongate shaft are not illustrated in FIG. 13.

[0078] In more detail, the surgical instrument 500 may comprise a trigger or lever arm 528 that may be movable with respect to a handle body 506B. Moving the arm 528 may correspondingly move an extension 527 formed on an upper portion of the arm 528, thereby causing a shuttle 546 to move in a proximal or distal direction. The shuttle 546 may be operably coupled to the cutting member 540. Accordingly, movement of the lever arm 528 may cause the cutting member 540 to translate with respect to the handle 505 and/or a jaw or jaws (not shown), for example.

[0079] The cutting member 540 may be coupled to a handle cable 538 either directly or via a passage in shuttle 546. In any event, the handle cable 538 may be coupled to a strain relief 539. Outside the handle 505, strain relief 539 may couple the handle tube 538 to a fluid cable 536 within an exterior cable 537. The exterior cable 537 may contain both the fluid cable 536 and a power cable 552, which both may be releasably coupled to the delivery unit 535.

[0080] The delivery unit 535 may comprise electrical source 145 and controller 150 electrically coupled to the power cable 552, as discussed above with respect to cable 152. Additionally, the delivery unit 535 may comprise a fluid chamber 580 holding water, distilled

water, saline solution and/or any other suitable biocompatible fluid. The delivery unit 535 may further comprise a pump (not shown) configured to draw fluid out of the chamber 580 and deliver the fluid through the cables 536, 537, and 538 and into and through cutting member 540.

[0081] The cutting member 540 may comprise a body 555 and a cutting surface 553 at a distal portion of the body 555. The body 555 may define a cavity 547 and at least one opening 548 communicating with the cavity 547. The opening 548 may be proximal to the cutting surface 553. Accordingly, the fluid chamber 580 may be operably coupled to the cutting member cavity 547 such that the delivery unit 535 may move a fluid from chamber 580, to cutting member 540, and out openings 548, thereby cooling or dissipating heat from the cutting member 540, an end effector (not shown), and/or tissue.

[0082] In at least one embodiment, as discussed above, the fluid chamber 580 may be located outside the handle 505. However, in various embodiments, a fluid chamber may be located within a surgical instrument's handle. For example, referring now to FIG. 14, in at least one embodiment, a surgical instrument 600 may comprise a handle 605 containing a fluid chamber 680 therein. The surgical instrument 600 may be similar to surgical instrument 100 described above; however, various components of instrument 600 are omitted from FIG. 14 for clarity. For example, jaws of an end effector are not illustrated.

[0083] In more detail, the surgical instrument 600 may comprise a trigger or lever arm 628 that may be movable with respect to a handle body 606B. Moving the arm 628 may correspondingly move an extension (not shown) formed on an upper portion of the arm 628, thereby causing a shuttle 646 to move in a proximal or distal direction. The shuttle 646 may be operably coupled to the cutting member 640. Additionally, the chamber 680 may be fixedly connected to the handle body 606B and a piston or plunger 682 may be movably positioned

within the chamber 680. The cutting member 640 may be coupled to the plunger 682 through a passage in shuttle 646. Accordingly, movement of the lever arm 628 may cause the cutting member 640 and/or plunger 682 to translate with respect to the handle body 606B, fluid chamber 680 and/or a jaw or jaws (not shown), for example.

[0084] Further, referring still to FIG. 14, the cutting member 640 may comprise a body 655 and a cutting surface (not shown) at a distal portion of the body 655. The body 655 may define a cavity 647 and at least one distal opening near the cutting surface communicating with the cavity 647. Further, the cavity 647 may be coupled to a tubing 683 at a proximal hole 649 formed in the body 655 of the cutting member, proximal to the distal opening or openings (not shown). The tubing 683 may traverse the elongate shaft 608 into the handle body 606B to ultimately connect to the fluid chamber 680 at a port 681. Accordingly, the fluid chamber 680 may be operably coupled to the cutting member cavity 647 such that a fluid may be moved from or to chamber 680, to or from cutting member 640, and out or in the opening(s), thereby cooling or dissipating heat from the cutting member 640, an end effector (not shown), and/or tissue.

[0085] In more detail, in various embodiments, the fluid chamber 680 may be configured to move or draw a fluid through the cutting member 640. For example, in at least one embodiment, the plunger 682 may be moved in a proximal direction, such as that designated by arrow "P," by operating the lever arm 628 such that the shuttle 646 causes the cutting member 640 and hence the plunger 682 to move in a proximal direction. In such embodiments, a fluid, comprising a gas and/or a liquid, such as carbon dioxide and/or saline solution, for example, may be forced out of the chamber 680 by the proximally moving plunger 682 and into and through the cutting member cavity 647 via tubing 683. Moreover, because the cutting member 640 and the plunger 682 are coupled together as shown, any cooling fluid may be driven out of the

chamber 680 and through the cutting member 640 when the cutting member 640 is moved in a proximal direction. Thus, heat dissipation from a cooling fluid may be configured to occur after a cutting action is complete, when the cutting member 640 is returning to an initial, proximal position.

[0086] Alternatively, in at least one embodiment, the fluid chamber 680 may receive fluid drawn from an end effector, for example. In such embodiments, the plunger 682 may initially, before being actuated, be located at a proximal position within the chamber 680. The plunger 682 may then be moved in a distal direction, such as that designated by arrow "D," by operating the lever arm 628 such that the shuttle 646 causes the cutting member 640 and hence the plunger 682 to move in a distal direction, thereby creating a vacuum or lower pressure state within the fluid chamber 680. Such vacuum pressure may thereby cause a fluid, comprising gas, steam, water vapor, and/or liquid, for example, to be drawn into the cutting member cavity 647 via the distal openings near the cutting surface and/or end effector (not shown), for example. Thereafter, the drawn fluid may be forced into fluid chamber 680 through tubing 683.

[0087] In some embodiments, it may be desirable to evacuate fluid out of the surgical instrument 600. Accordingly, in at least one embodiment, referring still to FIG. 14, the surgical instrument 600 may further comprise a three-way valve 684 located inline with the tubing 683 and within the handle 605. In at least one embodiment, the valve 684 may comprise a bi-directional double check valve such as that manufactured by Value Plastics, Inc. of Fort Collins, Colorado. In any event, two ports of the valve 684 may be coupled to different portions of the tubing 683 and one port of the valve 684 may be coupled to an exhaust 686 formed in the handle body 606B. The valve 684 may be configured to allow vacuum-pressure to be applied from the fluid chamber 684 to the cutting member cavity 647 through tubing 683. However, owing to the

presence of the valve 684, fluid drawn from the end effector (not shown), through the cavity 647, and proximally through the tubing 683, may be diverted from the tubing 683 at valve 684 and expelled from the instrument 600 through the exhaust 686. Accordingly, in such embodiments, the surgical instrument 600 may be used multiple times since the fluid chamber 680 may not fill with fluid.

[0088] In various embodiments described herein, a fluid may be used to help dissipate heat from an end effector of a surgical instrument and/or tissue. In such embodiments, the fluid may comprise a liquid, such as distilled water and/or saline solution, for example. Further, in at least one embodiment, the liquid may be injected through a surgical instrument's jaws in a fashion similar to a steam iron. Accordingly, the target tissue may be kept hydrated during the sealing or welding process. Moisture in the tissue may help buffer the tissue such that the tissue's temperature remains at or around the temperature of the liquid, which may be boiling. Alternatively or additionally, the liquid may comprise nano-particles that are configured to absorb and store heat. In at least one embodiment, the nano-particles may be in suspension within a liquid, such as distilled water and/or saline solution, for example. The nano-particles may further help maintain tissue at a desired sealing temperature, for example, via a phase change of chemicals encapsulated in microspheres, for example. Further, in at least one embodiment, after the sealing process is complete, the nano-particles may be configured to (1) disperse through evaporation or out-gassing, for example, (2) biodegrade by breaking down and being absorbed and/or carried away by the patient's body, for example, and/or (3) remain inert and embedded in the tissue without compromising the strength of the tissue seal, for example.

[0089] Additional embodiments of surgical instruments may dissipate heat generated within an end effector and/or tissue. For example, in various embodiments, referring to FIGS. 15

and 16, portions of an end effector 710 of a surgical instrument 700 are illustrated. The end effector 710 may be generally similar to end effector 110 described above. For example, among other things, the end effector 710 may comprise a first jaw 720A and a second jaw 720B operably coupled together and supporting a cutting member 740 therein. However, the cutting member 740 may be fixedly attached to one of the jaws 720A or 720B. Here, the cutting member 740 is shown fixed to second jaw 720B. Each jaw 720A, 720B may further comprise an energy delivery surface 775A and 775B and an exterior surface 776A and 776B, respectively. Accordingly, tissue "T" may be cut and sealed when the jaws 720A, 720B rotate from an open position (see FIG. 3) to a closed position (see FIG. 4) and energy is applied between surfaces 775A and 775B.

[0090] Either or both of the jaws 720A and 720B may further comprise open or exposed grooves 780A and 780B, respectively. The grooves 775A and 775B may be defined in the surfaces of the jaws 720A, 720B adjacent to energy delivery surfaces 775A and 775B. Further, the grooves 780A, 780B may each extend around the perimeter of the surfaces 775A, 775B, respectively. Moreover, each groove 780A and 780B may be positioned between an energy delivery surface 775A or 775B and an exterior surface 776A or 776B, within each respective jaw 720A and 720B.

[0091] In at least one embodiment, the grooves 780A, 780B may help evacuate heat and/or steam, for example, generated during energy delivery to the end effector 710. In such embodiments, the grooves 780A, 780B may be in fluid communication with a vacuum 782. The vacuum may help draw steam, water vapor, gas, liquid, or any other fluid, in directions generally designated by arrows 783 into the grooves 780A, 780B and into an elongate shaft (not shown) of

the surgical instrument 700. Accordingly, such heated substances may escape the end effector 710 or tissue near the end effector 710.

[0092] Alternatively or additionally to the vacuum 782, the grooves 780A, 780B may be in fluid communication with a fluid source 781. The fluid source 781 may provide a gas, such as carbon dioxide, for example. In at least one embodiment, the fluid source may comprise an insufflation apparatus of a type typically used during a laparoscopic procedure, for example. The fluid source 781 may provide a continuous stream of gas to the grooves 780A, 780B such that the end effector 710 and/or tissue T may be cooled. As mentioned above, the fluid source 781 may provide a gas; however, in at least one embodiment, the fluid source may provide a liquid, such as a saline solution, for example. In such embodiments, the fluid source 781 may pump the liquid into the grooves 780A, 780B from an external reservoir, thereby continuously bathing the tissue T in a chilled or cooled medium. Also, in at least one embodiment, the fluid may comprise a gel or a two-part endothermic mixture, such as water mixed with potassium chloride, citric acid mixed with sodium bicarbonate, and/or ammonium chloride mixed with water, for example.

[0093] In various embodiments, a surgical instrument may comprise a heat sink that may assist in dissipating heat from an end effector and/or tissue. For example, in at least one embodiment and referring to FIG. 17, a portion of an end effector 810 of a surgical instrument 800 is shown. The surgical instrument 800 may be generally similar to surgical instrument 700 described above. For example, among other things, the end effector 810 may comprise first and second jaws 820A and 820B that are operably coupled together. Each jaw 820A, 820B may comprise an energy delivery surface, such as energy delivery surfaces 875A and 875B, for example. A cutting member 840 may also be fixedly coupled to a jaw, such as jaw 820B, for

example. However, the first jaw 820A may further comprise a heat sink, such as heat sink 880. In at least one embodiment, the heat sink 880 may be embedded in the first jaw 820A and may be exposed through an exterior surface 876A of the first jaw 820A. The heat sink 880 may comprise a heat conductive material, such as a metal, like aluminum, and/or a ceramic material, for example.

[0094] In various embodiments, one or both of a surgical instrument's jaws may comprise a heat sink. For example, referring back to FIG. 16, the grooves 780A and/or 780B may contain and/or comprise a heat sink, which may comprise a heat conductive material, such as a metal, like aluminum, and/or a ceramic material, for example. Further, referring to FIG. 18, another embodiment of a portion of an end effector 910 of a surgical instrument 900 is shown. The surgical instrument 900 may be generally similar to surgical instrument 100 described above. For example, among other things, the end effector 910 may comprise a first jaw 920A and a second jaw 920B operably coupled together and movably supporting a cutting member 940. Each jaw 920A, 920B may also comprise an energy delivery surface 975A and 975B, respectively. However, the first jaw 920A may comprise a first heat sink 980A embedded therein and the second jaw 920B may comprise a second heat sink 980B embedded therein. Each heat sink 980A, 980B may be tubular in shape and extend to both sides of cutting member 940 such that heat may be effectively dissipated through the jaws 920A, 920B. Additionally, each heat sink 980A, 980B may comprise a heat conductive material, such as a metal, like aluminum, and/or a ceramic material, for example. In any event, in various embodiments including a heat sink, the heat sink may help efficiently transfer heat from tissue captured within an end effector's jaws away from the tissue and toward an elongate shaft of the surgical instrument, for example. In at least one embodiment, a heat sink may allow heat to equilibrate

and/or dissipate throughout an extended length equal to or greater than the length of a jaw or jaws in contact with the tissue.

[0095] In various embodiments, a heat sink may comprise a Peltier device. Referring now to FIG. 19, a cross-sectional view of jaws 1220A and 1220B of an end effector 1210 of a surgical instrument 1200 are illustrated. The surgical instrument 1200 may be generally similar to the surgical instrument 100 described above. For example, among other things, the end effector 1200 may comprise the jaws 1220A and 1220B, which may be operably coupled together. Each jaw 1220A and 1220B may comprise an energy delivery surface 1275A and 1275B, respectively. Additionally, at least one jaw, for example, jaw 1220B may comprise at least one Peltier device, such as a first Peltier device 1281 and/or a second Peltier device 1282, either or both of which may be positioned adjacent to the energy delivery surface 1275B. A Peltier device may comprise a solid-state thermoelectric cooler. Additionally, a Peltier device may function on the principle that when a voltage differential is applied to a thermocouple-like device, a temperature differential may be created between two sides of the device.

[0096] In more detail, referring now to FIG. 20, each Peltier device, such as Peltier device 1281, for example, may comprise a first section 1281a and a second section 1281b. The sections 1281a and 1281b may have a voltage differential applied between them by a voltage source "V." As the voltage source V applies a voltage differential between the first section 1281a and the second section 1281b, heat energy may be moved from the first section 1281a to the second section 1281b.

[0097] Referring now to FIG. 21, a perspective sectional view of a portion of the jaw 1220B is shown. The Peltier devices 1281 and 1282 can be seen on the perimeter of the jaw 1220B, adjacent to the energy delivery surface 1275B. In at least one embodiment, the first

section 1281a of the first Peltier device 1281 may be flush with the energy delivery surface 1275B and the second section 1281b may contact an interior surface of the jaw 1220B. Thus, when a voltage differential is applied to a Peltier device, such as Peltier device 1281, for example, heat may be moved from the first section 1281a to the second section 1281b and to the jaw 1220B, away from any tissue gripped by the jaw 1220B and/or energy delivery surface 1275B. Further, the Peltier device 1282 may be similar to the Peltier device 1281 described above. Additionally, the third and fourth Peltier devices 1283, 1285, may extend transversely from the first Peltier device 1281, and the fifth and sixth Peltier devices 1284, 1286 may extend transversely from the second Peltier device 1282. These transverse Peltier devices 1283, 1284, 1285, 1286 may further dissipate heat energy from tissue clamped between the jaws 1220A, 1220B (FIG. 19) and/or away from energy delivery surface 1275B, over that provided by longitudinal Peltier devices 1281 and/or 1282, to help prevent or resist undesired thermal alteration of tissue. In various embodiments, additional transverse Peltier devices and/or longitudinal Peltier devices may be added to the first jaw 1220A and/or the second jaw 1220B to provide additional heat dissipation. Additionally, in at least one embodiment, the Peltier devices may be instantly turned on and off at desired intervals and/or regulated in a linear fashion.

[0098] FIGS. 22-23 illustrate an embodiment of another surgical instrument 1300 comprising an end effector 1310 and a Peltier device 1380. FIG. 22 is a cross-sectional view of the end effector 1310 and FIG. 23 is a perspective view of a portion of a jaw of the end effector 1310. In various embodiments, the surgical device 1300 may be generally similar to surgical device 100 described above in that the end effector 1310 may comprise two jaws 1320A and 1320B operably coupled together. However, the surgical device 1300 may function as a tissue spot welder and may not include a cutting member. The jaws 1320A and 1320B may comprise

energy delivery surfaces 1375A and 1375B, respectively. Adjacent to and/or flush with the energy delivery surface 1375B may be the Peltier device 1380. The Peltier device 1380 may further extend around the entire perimeter of the energy delivery surface 1375B, to enhance the heat dissipation therefrom. Similar to Peltier device 1281 described above, Peltier device 1380 may comprise a first section 1380a and a second section 1380b. The sections 1380a and 1380b may be configured to receive a voltage differential between them from a voltage source "V." As the voltage source V applies a voltage differential between the first section 1380a and the second section 1380b, heat energy may be moved from the first section 1380a to the second section 1380b, thereby transferring and/or dissipating heat away from the energy delivery surface 1375B and/or tissue held between jaws 1320A and 1320B.

[0099] In various embodiments, heat dissipation from an end effector of a surgical instrument may be assisted by at least one heat pipe. In at least one embodiment, referring now to FIG. 24, the distal portion of a surgical instrument 1000 is shown. The surgical instrument 1000 may be generally similar to surgical instrument 100 described above. For example, among other things, the surgical instrument may comprise an end effector 1010 operably coupled to an elongate shaft 1008. The end effector 1010 may comprise a first jaw 1020A and a second jaw 1020B operably coupled together. The jaws 1020A and 1020B may be movable between an open configuration, such as that shown in FIG. 24, for example, and a closed configuration. Further, referring to FIG. 25, which shows a cross-sectional view of the end effector with the jaws 1020A and 1020B in a closed configuration, the end effector 1010 may comprise a cutting member 1040 that is configured to translate with respect to the jaws 1020A, 1020B. However, the end effector 1010 may also comprise at least one heat pipe, such as heat pipes 1081 and 1082. The heat pipes 1081, 1082 may be attached to the first jaw and extend proximally

therefrom, through or next to elongate shaft 1008. Additionally, the heat pipes 1081, 1082 may be adjacent to the first jaw 1020A and may reside on opposing sides of the cutting member 1040.

[0100] In more detail, referring to FIG. 26, which shows a cross-sectional portion of the heat pipe 1081, the heat pipe 1081 may comprise an outer shell 1083 and an inner porous material 1084 defining an internal cavity 1085. The cavity 1085 may be sealed within the outer shell 1083 and may be partially evacuated and contain a heat transfer fluid 1086. As illustrated in FIG. 26, portions of the outer shell 1083 and the inner porous material 1084 have been cross-sectioned to show inner portions of the heat pipe 1081. In at least one embodiment, the outer shell 1083 of the heat pipe can be made of a thermally conductive and biocompatible metallic material positioned in direct contact with the jaw 1020A (FIG. 25). When the temperature of the jaw 1020A rises during energy delivery, as discussed above, the heat transfer fluid 1086 closest to the active jaw 1020A starts to evaporate, filling the internal cavity with vapor. The vapor condenses as it is forced proximally by a vapor pressure gradient, in a direction generally designated as "P," toward a proximal portion of the heat pipe 1081, which may be thermally connected to a heat sink, for example. The resulting liquid may then flow distally, in a direction generally designated as "D," via wicking properties associated with the inner porous material 1084. Accordingly, heat may be continuously carried away from the energized jaws 1020A, 1020B, in a proximal direction P, to decrease the working temperature between the jaws 1020A, 1020B. In various embodiments, the heat transfer fluid 1086 may be selected based on a desired working temperature. For example, the heat transfer fluid may comprise water and/or water-soluble (diluted) hydrocarbons. In at least one embodiment, the heat transfer fluid may comprise 30% ethanol and 70% water, for example. Additional details regarding an exemplary heat pipe

or heat pipes may be found in U.S. Pat. No. 7,235,073, incorporated in its entirety by reference herein.

[0101] While the heat pipe(s) described above may be attached to one or both of the jaws, a heat pipe according to various embodiments may alternatively or additionally be attached to a cutting member. Accordingly, in at least one embodiment and referring now to FIG. 27, various portions of a surgical instrument 1100 are illustrated. The surgical instrument 1100 may be generally similar to surgical instrument 100 described above. For example, among other things, the surgical instrument may comprise an end effector 1110 and a handle 1105 operably coupled together by an elongate shaft 1108. The end effector 1110 may comprise a first jaw 1120A and a second jaw 1120B pivotably connected to each other. The end effector 1110 may further movably support a cutting member 1140 therein. In more detail, FIG. 28 depicts a partial side cross-sectional view of a portion of the surgical instrument 1100, taken along line 28-28 in FIG. 27, with the jaws 1120A and 1120B omitted for clarity. The cutting member 1140 may comprise a body 1155 and a cutting surface 1153 located at a distal portion of the body. Moreover, a heat pipe 1180 may be attached to the cutting member 1140. For example, in various embodiments, the heat pipe 1180 may be positioned within or attached to the exterior of the body 1155. Accordingly, in at least one embodiment, the heat pipe 1180 may be moved, relative to the jaws 1120A, 1120B, for example, when the cutting member 1140 is likewise moved. Also, in various embodiments, the heat pipe 1180 may extend along a portion of the body 1155. As illustrated in FIG. 28 and in at least one embodiment, the heat pipe 1180 may extend into the handle 1105, such that heat may be evacuated thereto. As illustrated in FIGS. 27-28, end portions of the heat pipe 1180 have been cross-sectioned to show inner portions of the heat pipe 1081; however it is to be understood that the heat pipe 1180 may be completely sealed

at both ends. Further, in at least one embodiment, the heat pipe 1180 may be similar to the heat pipes 1081, 1082, described above.

[0102] In use and in at least one embodiment, referring to FIGS. 27 and 28, tissue "T" may be clamped between jaws 1120A, 1120B. Thereafter, the jaws 1120A, 1120B may be energized as described above with regard to surgical instrument 100, thereby creating a tissue weld "TW" in the tissue T. The cutting member 1140 may concurrently or thereafter be advanced through the tissue T, severing it. Additionally, as the cutting member 1140 is advanced, any heat built up in the end effector 1110, cutting member 1140, tissue T, and/or tissue weld TW, may be transported proximally via heat pipe 1180, thereby dissipating heat from the end effector 1110, cutting member 1140, tissue T, and/or tissue weld TW, for example.

[0103] Among other things, various heat dissipation means have been described above for dissipating heat from at least a portion of an end effector of a surgical instrument and/or tissue, for example. However, additional heat dissipation means, used independently, or in addition to one or more of the above described heat dissipation means, may also provide for enhanced heat dissipation of at least a portion of an end effector. Accordingly, in various embodiments, referring again to FIGS. 1 and 3, a surgical instrument, such as surgical instrument 100 seen in FIG. 1, may comprise an end effector 110 comprising at least one energy delivery surface, such as one or both energy delivery surfaces 175A and 175B seen in FIG. 3, and a heat dissipation means for dissipating heat from at least a portion of the end effector.

[0104] In at least one embodiment, the heat dissipation means may comprise a gas container. Referring now to FIG. 29, a surgical instrument 1400 may be generally similar to surgical instrument 100 described above. For example, among other things, the surgical instrument 1400 may comprise a handle 1405 and an elongate shaft 108 operably coupling the

handle 1405 to the end effector 110 (FIG. 3). A gas container, such as gas container 1480, for example, may be operably coupled to the handle 1405. For example, as shown, the gas container 1480 may be fixedly attached to the handle inside the handle body 1406B. Alternatively, the gas container 1480 may be positioned outside the handle body 1406B. Further, the gas container 1480 may be configured to selectively release a gas such that the gas moves through the elongate shaft 108, in a distal direction, such as that demarcated by arrows 1486, and to at least a portion of the end effector 110 (FIG. 3), thereby dissipating heat from at least a portion of the end effector 110 and/or tissue.

[0105] In more detail, the gas container 1480 may include an outlet 1480B that is connected to a tubing 1483. The tubing 1483 may also be connected to a proximal hole 149 of a cutting member 140 as described above. The gas container 1480 may hold a compressed gas therein that may be released when a user presses a control button (not shown) that is configured to electrically and/or mechanically open outlet 1480B such that the compressed gas may escape the container 1480 into tubing 1483 and ultimately into the cutting member 140, for example. Alternatively, the outlet 1480B may be opened automatically before, during, and/or after activation of the energy deliver surfaces 175A, 175B (FIG. 3) via activation button 124. In various embodiments, the gas may be a biocompatible gas such as carbon dioxide, for example. When the compressed gas escapes to the environment outside the gas container 1480, the expanded gas may drop in temperature, thereby providing a cooled gas to the end effector 110 and/or tissue via the cutting member 140, as described above with respect to surgical instrument 100. Alternatively, in various embodiments, the gas may be routed internally through conduits enclosed within the jaws and/or electrodes, as a closed system, or externally such that the gas is piped to the sealing site and then released through orifices, such as openings 148 (FIG. 5) in the

cutting member 140, to escape to the atmosphere, as an open system, or through a combination of the two routes. The flow of the gas out of the gas container 1480 may be initiated after sealing tissue, and in at least one embodiment, prior to opening the jaws 120A, 120B (FIG. 4) after sealing tissue, for example.

[0106] In at least one embodiment, the heat dissipation means may comprise a vortex tube. Referring now to FIG. 30, a surgical instrument 1500 may be generally similar to surgical instrument 100 described above. For example, among other things, the surgical instrument 1500 may comprise a handle 1505 and an elongate shaft 108 operably coupling the handle 1505 to the end effector 110 (FIG. 3). A vortex tube, such as vortex tube 1580, for example, may be operably coupled to the handle 1505. For example, as shown, the vortex tube 1580 may be fixedly attached to the handle 1505 outside the handle body 1506B. Alternatively, the vortex tube 1580 may be positioned inside the handle body 1506B. Further, the vortex tube 1580 may be configured to expel a cooled gas such that the gas moves through the elongate shaft 108, in a distal direction, such as that demarcated by arrows 1586, and to at least a portion of the end effector 110 (FIG. 3), thereby dissipating heat from at least a portion of the end effector 110 and/or tissue.

[0107] In more detail, referring to both FIGS. 30 and 31, the vortex tube 1580 may comprise a body 1587 including an inlet 1582 and two outlets, warm exhaust or outlet 1585 and cool outlet 1584. The cool outlet 1584 may be connected to a port 1589 in the handle body 1505 that is connected to a tubing 1583. The tubing 1583 may also be connected to a proximal hole 149 of a cutting member 140 as described above. Additionally, the inlet 1582 may be connected to a gas container 1581 at a gas outlet 1581B. The gas container 1581 may be fixedly mounted to the handle body 1506B. The gas container may be generally similar to gas container 1480,

described above. For example, among other things, the gas container 1581 may hold a compressed gas therein that may be released when a user presses a control button (not shown) that is configured to electrically and/or mechanically open outlet 1581B such that the compressed gas may escape the container 1581 into the vortex tube 1580 via inlet 1582. Also, alternatively, the outlet 1581B may be opened automatically before, during, and/or after activation of the energy deliver surfaces 175A, 175B (FIG. 3) via activation button 124. In various embodiments, the gas may be a biocompatible gas such as carbon dioxide, for example.

[0108] The vortex tube 1580 may be a Ranque-Hilsch vortex tube (manufactured by ExAir Corporation of Cincinnati, Ohio, for example) that is configured to create a cold and hot gas stream utilizing few or no moving parts, for example. Referring to FIG. 31, the vortex tube 1580 is shown in isolation from the other components of surgical instrument 1500. As illustrated, gas may enter the vortex tube via inlet 1582 at a first temperature T1. The gas may then travel in a helical manner within the body 1587 of the vortex tube 1580 toward warm outlet 1585. Upon nearing the warm outlet 1585, the moving gas may contact a conical nozzle 1588 that is sized and configured to cause warmer gas to be expelled through the warm outlet 1585, at a second temperature T2, and force cooler gas to be returned toward the cool outlet 1584. Upon reaching the cool outlet 1584, cooler gas may be expelled from the cool outlet 1584 at a third temperature T3. The third temperature T3 may be lower than the first and/or second temperatures T1 and T2, respectively. Accordingly, the vortex tube 1580 may create a cooler gas than that otherwise created from gas escaping the gas container 1581 without the assistance of the vortex tube 1580.

[0109] Referring again to FIG. 30, after gas is released into the vortex tube 1580 from the gas container 1581, a warm gas may be expelled from the warm outlet 1585 and a cooled gas

may be expelled from the cool outlet 1584, as explained above. From the cool outlet 1584, gas may travel through the port 1589 and the tubing 1583, and into the cutting member 140 via proximal hole 149. Thereafter, gas may move through the cutting member 140 and/or elongate shaft 108 to at least a portion of the end effector 110 (FIG. 3), thereby dissipating heat therefrom, for example. In such embodiments, the cooled gas may be considered to be applied internally to the end effector 110, as the gas may be expelled from the cutting member 140 at distal openings, such as openings 148 (FIG. 5), for example. Alternatively, in at least one embodiment, the cooled gas may be applied externally to the jaws, via the elongate shaft 108, for example. Further, in at least one embodiment, cooled gas may be applied both internally and externally to the jaws. Additionally, while the vortex tube 1580 and/or gas container 1581 is shown directly attached to the handle body 1506B in FIG. 30, either or both the vortex tube and the gas container 1581 may be located in an auxiliary device, connected to the surgical device 1500 by a flexible tube, for example.

[0110] In at least one embodiment, the heat dissipation means may comprise an air cycle machine. In such embodiments, a surgical instrument (not shown) may be generally similar to instrument 100 described above. For example, the surgical instrument may comprise a handle and an elongate shaft operably coupling the handle to the end effector 110 (see FIG. 3). An air cycle machine may be operably coupled to the handle via a tube, for example. Further, the air cycle machine may be configured to expel a cooled gas such that the gas moves through the elongate shaft to at least a portion of the end effector 110 (FIG. 3), thereby dissipating heat from at least a portion of the end effector 110 and/or tissue. In such embodiments, the air cycle machine may be a miniaturized adaptation of an air cycle machine commonly used as a refrigeration unit on a turbine-powered aircraft. Accordingly, the air cycle machine may provide

chilled gas, such as air, for example, to the end effector 110, jaws 120A, 120B (FIG. 3), and/or tissue. Briefly, the principle of operation of an air cycle machine is based upon the expansion of a compressed gas and may utilize an expansion turbine to extract work from the gas as it is being cooled. The turbine may concurrently run a compressor which may boost the compression of the gas upstream.

[0111] In at least one embodiment, the heat dissipation means may comprise room temperature distilled water circulated through the jaws of a surgical instrument in a single-pass fashion and/or released externally onto jaws of a surgical instrument and/or tissue at the completion of the sealing process. The surgical instrument of such an embodiment or embodiments may be generally similar to surgical instrument 100, described above. Further, such heat dissipation means may provide quick cooling of at least a portion of an end effector and/or tissue, for example.

[0112] In at least one embodiment, the heat dissipation means may comprise a closed-loop, refrigerant-based cooling system. Such a system may cool a surgical instrument's jaws following the completion of tissue sealing. The surgical instrument may be generally similar to surgical instrument 100, as described above. Additionally, the cooling system may include an evaporator coil that may be routed directly through the surgical instrument's jaws to provide efficient heat transfer.

[0113] In at least one embodiment, the heat dissipation means may comprise a cooled liquid created by a chemical function, such as a heat of solution and/or an endothermic chemical reaction, for example. The cooled liquid may be circulated through a surgical instrument's jaws immediately following the completion of tissue sealing by the instrument, for example. In such embodiments, the surgical instrument may be generally similar to surgical instrument 100,

described above. In at least one embodiment, the cooled liquid may be created by mixing ammonium nitrate or potassium chlorate with water to produce a desired cooling effect.

[0114] In at least one embodiment, the heat dissipation means may comprise a magnetic refrigeration system. In such embodiments, a magnetic refrigeration system may be based on the magnetocaloric effect to provide cooling directly and/or indirectly, through, for example, a chilled working fluid, to a surgical instrument's jaws following the completion of tissue sealing by the instrument, for example. Such a system may utilize an alloy or alloys such as gadolinium-silicon-germanium ($\text{Gd}_5(\text{Si}_2\text{Ge}_2)$), for example. Additional information regarding such magnetic refrigeration may be found in the following article: Kerry Gibson, *Magnetic refrigerator successfully tested*, U.S. Department of Energy RESEARCH NEWS, at <http://www.eurekalert.org/features/doe/2001-11/dl-mrs062802.php> (November 1, 2001).

[0115] In at least one embodiment, the heat dissipation means may comprise one or more thermoacoustic refrigeration devices. In such embodiments, at least one thermoacoustic device may rapidly cool a surgical instrument's jaws following the completion of tissue sealing by the instrument, for example. In such embodiments, the surgical instrument may be generally similar to surgical instrument 100, described above. In at least one embodiment, each thermoacoustic device may be a relatively small tubular device with few or no moving parts, which may use acoustic and/or ultrasonic energy to pump heat away from the surgical instrument's jaws. Additionally, the thermoacoustic devices may be cylindrical and/or are ring-shaped such that they have a recirculating configuration.

[0116] As noted above, the particular features, structures, or characteristics described herein 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. For example, at least one of the above embodiments describes a blade-based cooling mechanism and at least one embodiment describes a jaw-based cooling mechanism. In at least one embodiment, these mechanisms may be employed in a single instrument, for example.

[0117] The embodiments of the devices described herein may be introduced inside a patient using minimally invasive or open surgical techniques. In some instances it may be advantageous to introduce the devices inside the patient using a combination of minimally invasive and open surgical techniques. Minimally invasive techniques may provide more accurate and effective access to the treatment region for diagnostic and treatment procedures. To reach internal treatment regions within the patient, the devices described herein may be inserted laparoscopically, such as in a multiple site laparoscopy, a single site laparoscopy, or a single incision laparoscopic surgery, for example. Further, the devices described here may be used in a a single port access procedure, for example. Additionally or alternatively, the devices described herein may be inserted through natural openings of the body such as the mouth, anus, and/or vagina, for example. Minimally invasive procedures performed by the introduction of various medical devices into the patient through a natural opening of the patient are known in the art as NOTES™ procedures. Some portions of the devices may be introduced to the tissue treatment region percutaneously or through small – keyhole – incisions.

[0118] Endoscopic minimally invasive surgical and diagnostic medical procedures are used to evaluate and treat internal organs by inserting a small tube into the body. The endoscope may have a rigid or a flexible tube. A flexible endoscope may be introduced either through a natural body opening (e.g., mouth, anus, and/or vagina) or via a trocar through a relatively small

– keyhole – incision (usually 0.5 - 1.5cm). The endoscope can be used to observe surface conditions of internal organs, including abnormal or diseased tissue such as lesions and other surface conditions and capture images for visual inspection and photography. The endoscope may be adapted and configured with working channels for introducing medical instruments to the treatment region for taking biopsies, retrieving foreign objects, and/or performing surgical procedures.

[0119] The devices disclosed herein may be designed to be disposed of after a single use, or they may be designed to be used multiple times. In either case, however, the device may be reconditioned for reuse after at least one use. Reconditioning may include a combination of the steps of disassembly of the device, followed by cleaning or replacement of particular pieces, and subsequent reassembly. In particular, the device may be disassembled, and any number of particular pieces or parts of the device may be selectively replaced or removed in any combination. Upon cleaning and/or replacement of particular parts, the device may be reassembled for subsequent use either at a reconditioning facility, or by a surgical team immediately prior to a surgical procedure. Those of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that the reconditioning of a device may utilize a variety of different techniques for disassembly, cleaning/replacement, and reassembly. Use of such techniques, and the resulting reconditioned device, are all within the scope of this application.

[0120] Preferably, the various embodiments of the devices described herein will be processed before surgery. First, a new or used instrument is obtained and if necessary cleaned. The instrument can 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 are then placed in a field of radiation that can penetrate the container, such as gamma radiation,

x-rays, or high-energy electrons. The radiation kills bacteria on the instrument and in the container. The sterilized instrument can then be stored in the sterile container. The sealed container keeps the instrument sterile until it is opened in the medical facility. Other sterilization techniques can be done by any number of ways known to those skilled in the art including beta or gamma radiation, ethylene oxide, and/or steam.

[0121] Although the various embodiments of the devices have been described herein in connection with certain disclosed embodiments, many modifications and variations to those embodiments may be implemented. For example, different types of end effectors may be employed. Also, where materials are disclosed for certain components, other materials may be used. The foregoing description and following claims are intended to cover all such modification and variations.

[0122] 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 does 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.

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A surgical instrument, comprising:

an end effector comprising:

a first jaw;

a second jaw, wherein the first jaw and the second jaw are operably coupled

together; and

a cutting member configured to translate with respect to the first jaw, wherein the cutting member comprises a cutting surface and a body, wherein the body defines a cavity and at least one opening communicating with the cavity.

2. The surgical instrument of claim 1, further comprising an elongate shaft and a handle operably coupled to the elongate shaft, wherein the end effector is operably coupled to the elongate shaft, and wherein the at least one cutting member opening is positioned between the handle and the cutting surface.

3. The surgical instrument of claim 2, wherein the cutting member is configured to translate between a retracted position and a fully advanced position with respect to the first jaw, wherein the at least one cutting member opening is positioned between the first jaw and the handle when the cutting member is at the fully advanced position.

4. The surgical instrument of claim 1, wherein the cutting member defines a longitudinal axis and wherein the at least one opening defines a plane that is parallel to the longitudinal axis.
5. The surgical instrument of claim 1, wherein the cutting member defines a longitudinal axis and wherein the at least one opening defines a plane that intersects the longitudinal axis.
6. The surgical instrument of claim 1, further comprising a porous material positioned within the at least one opening.
7. The surgical instrument of claim 1, further comprising:
 - an elongate shaft;
 - a handle operably coupled to the elongate shaft, wherein the end effector is operably coupled to the elongate shaft; and
 - a fluid chamber operably coupled to the cutting member cavity.
8. The surgical instrument of claim 7, further comprising a plunger movable within the chamber.
9. The surgical instrument of claim 7, wherein the fluid chamber contains at least one gas and/or liquid.
10. The surgical instrument of claim 7, the fluid chamber contains at least one liquid, wherein the at least one liquid comprises nano-particles that are configured to absorb and store heat.

11. A surgical instrument, comprising:
an end effector comprising:
a first jaw comprising an energy delivery surface;
a second jaw, wherein the first jaw and the second jaw are operably coupled together;
a cutting member configured to translate with respect to the first jaw; and
at least one heat pipe.
12. The surgical instrument of claim 11, wherein the at least one heat pipe is attached to the cutting member.
13. The surgical instrument of claim 11, wherein the at least one heat pipe is attached to the first jaw.
14. A surgical instrument, comprising:
an end effector comprising at least one energy delivery surface; and
heat dissipation means for dissipating heat from at least a portion of the end effector.
15. The surgical instrument of claim 14, wherein the end effector comprises:
a first jaw comprising the at least one energy delivery surface and an exterior surface,
wherein the heat dissipation means comprises a groove positioned between the energy delivery surface and the exterior surface; and

a second jaw, wherein the first jaw and the second jaw are operably coupled together;

16. The surgical instrument of claim 14, wherein the heat dissipation means comprises a heat sink and wherein the end effector comprises:

a first jaw comprising the at least one energy delivery surface and the heat sink; and

a second jaw, wherein the first jaw and the second jaw are operably coupled together.

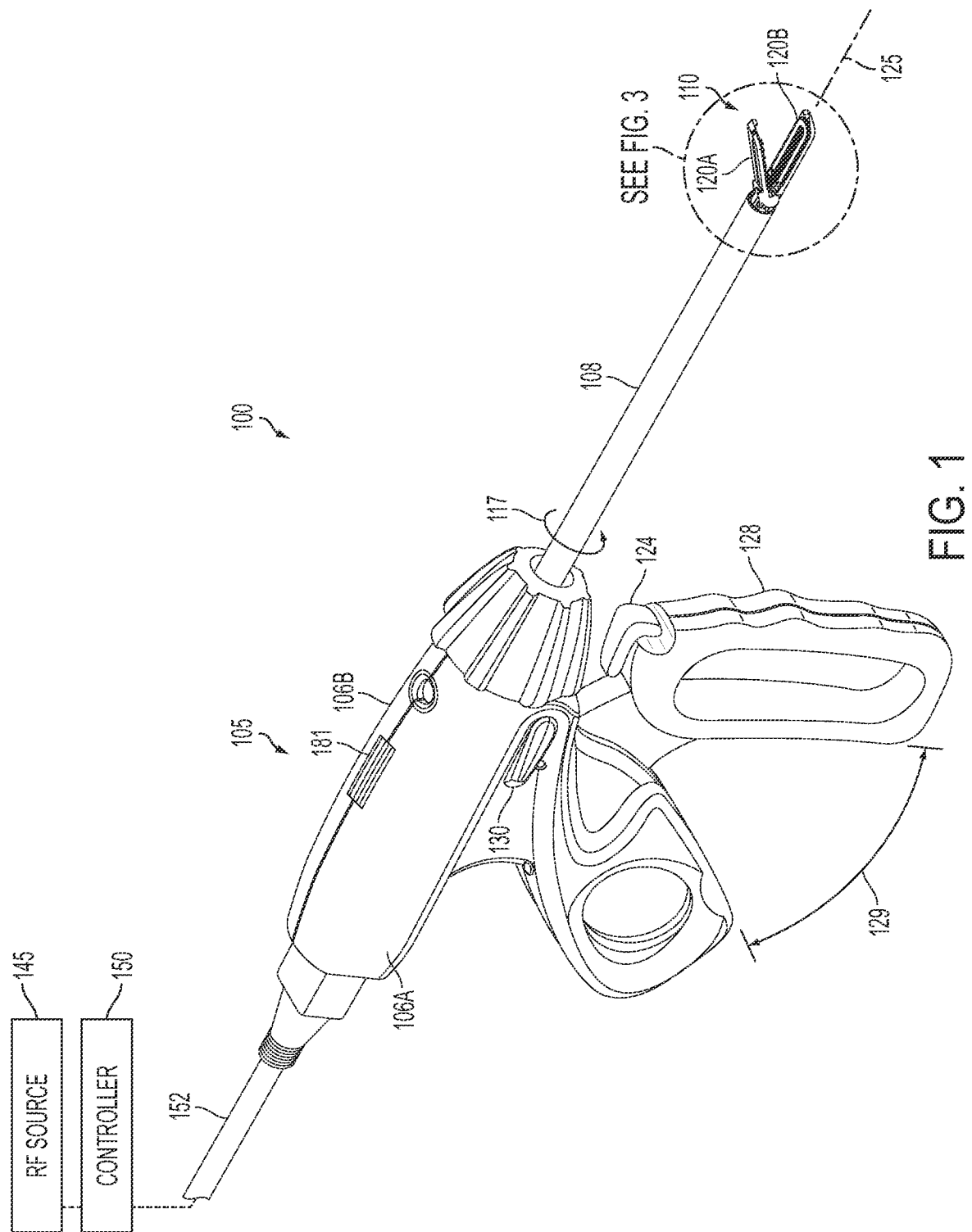
17. The surgical instrument of claim 16, wherein the heat sink comprises aluminum and/or a ceramic material.

18. The surgical instrument of claim 16, wherein the heat sink comprises a Peltier device.

19. The surgical instrument of claim 14, further comprising a handle and an elongate shaft operably coupling the handle to the end effector, wherein the heat dissipation means comprises a gas container operably coupled to the handle, wherein the gas container is configured to selectively release a gas such that the gas moves through the elongate shaft and to at least a portion of the end effector.

20. The surgical instrument of claim 14, further comprising a handle and an elongate shaft operably coupling the handle to the end effector, wherein the heat dissipation means comprises a vortex tube operably coupled to the handle, wherein the vortex tube is configured to expel a cooled gas such that the gas moves through the elongate shaft and to at least a portion of the end effector.

1/19



2/19

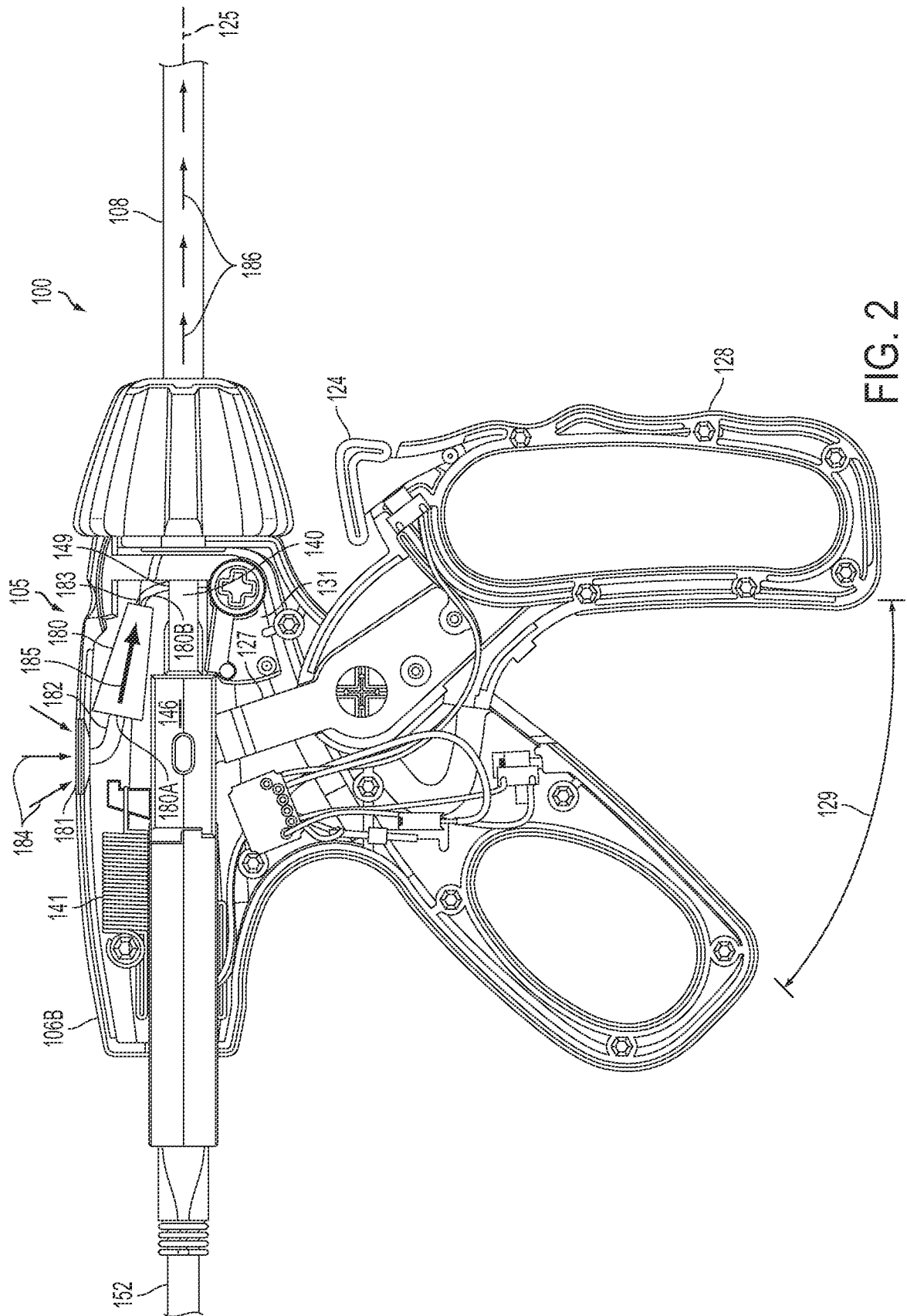


FIG. 2

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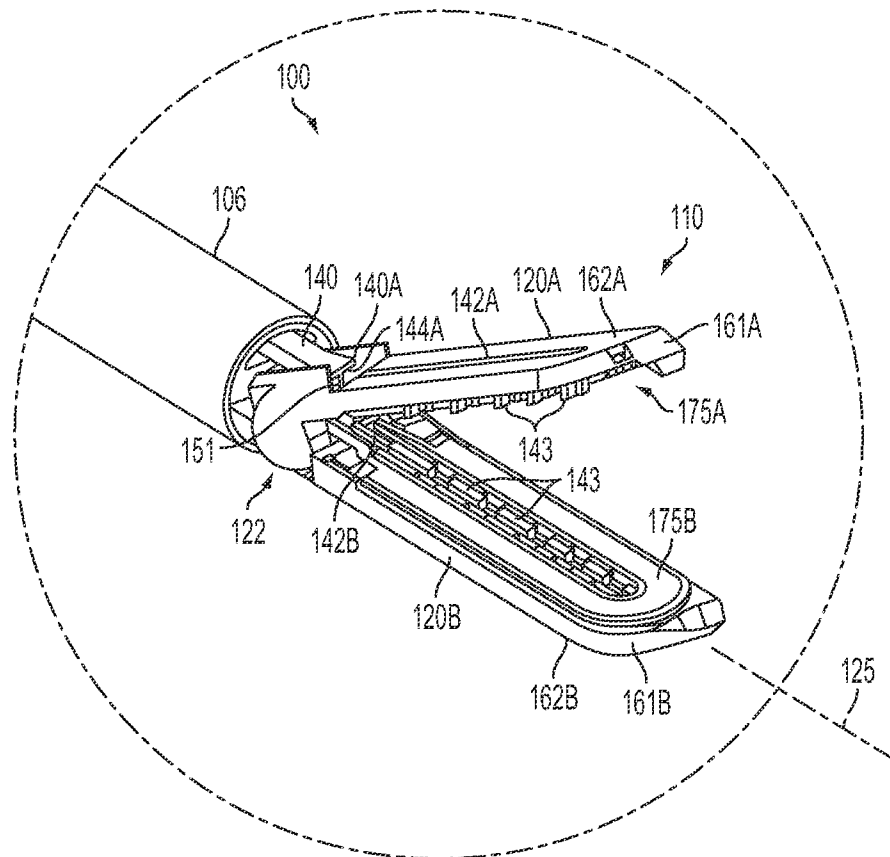


FIG. 3

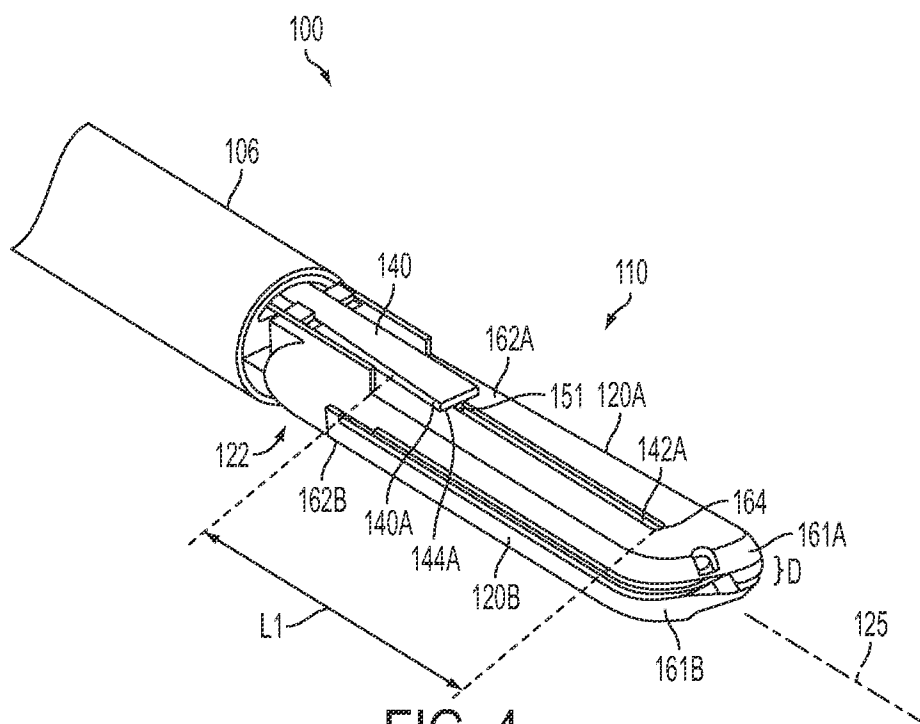
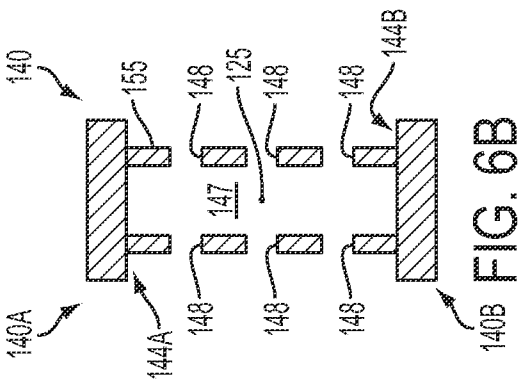
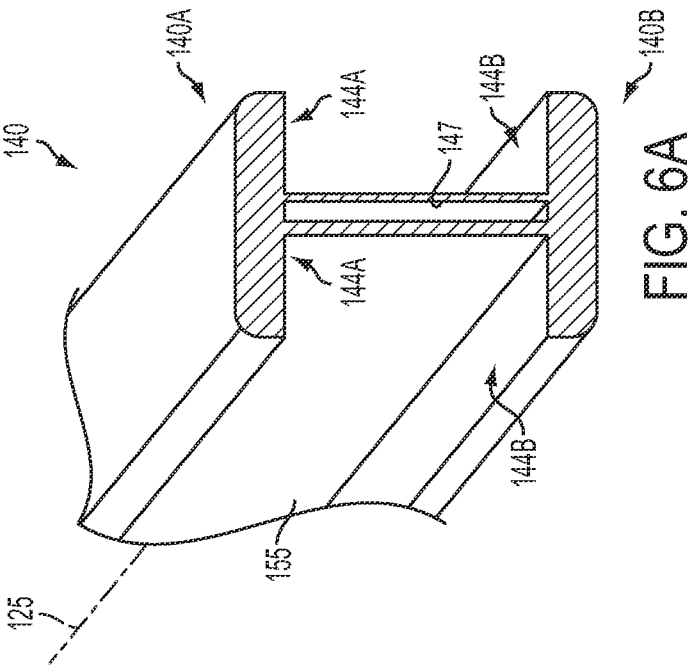
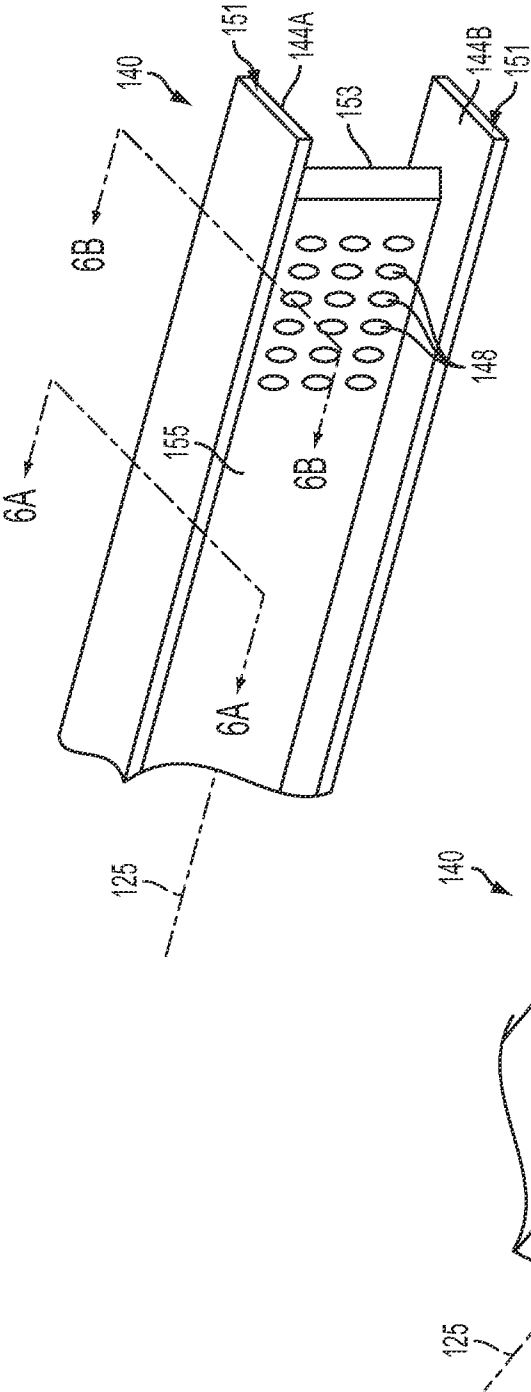


FIG. 4



5/19

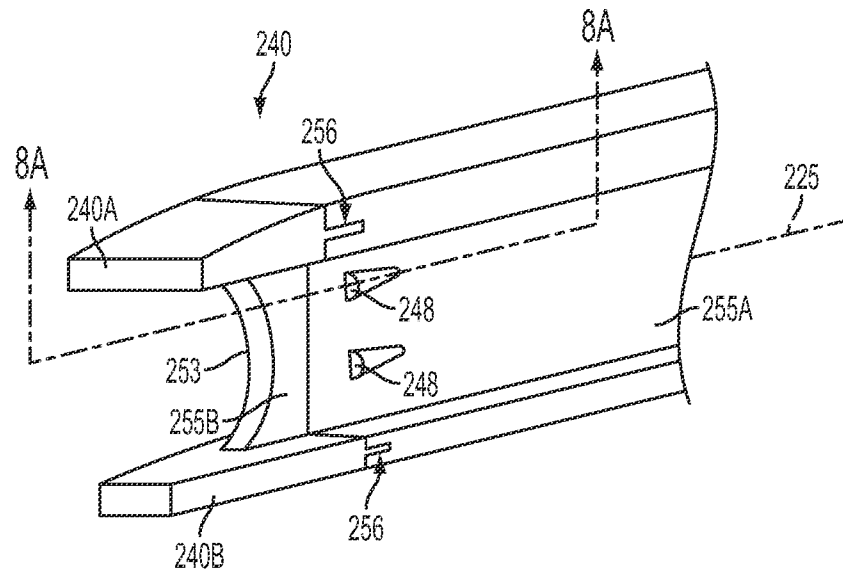


FIG. 7

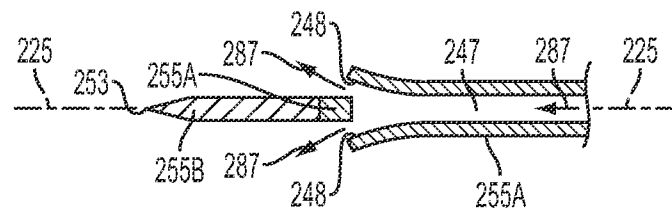


FIG. 8A

6/19

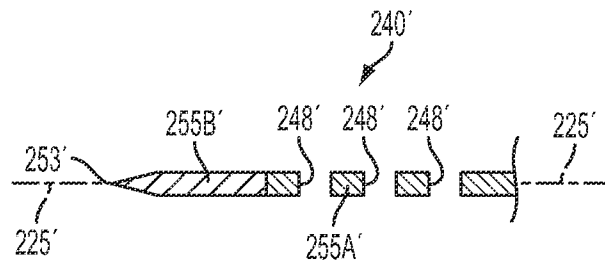


FIG. 8B

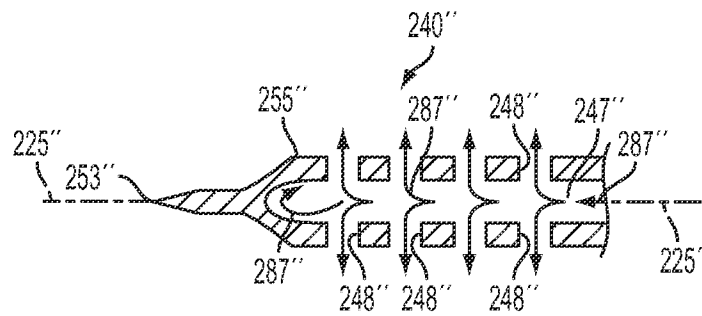


FIG. 8C

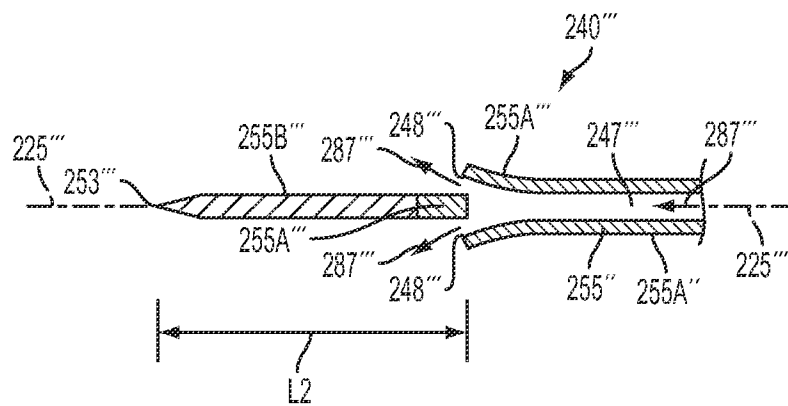


FIG. 8D

7/19

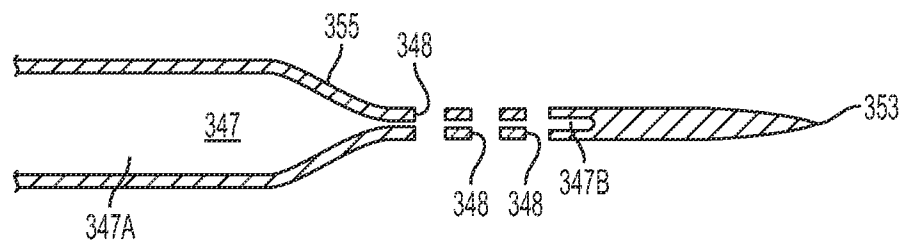
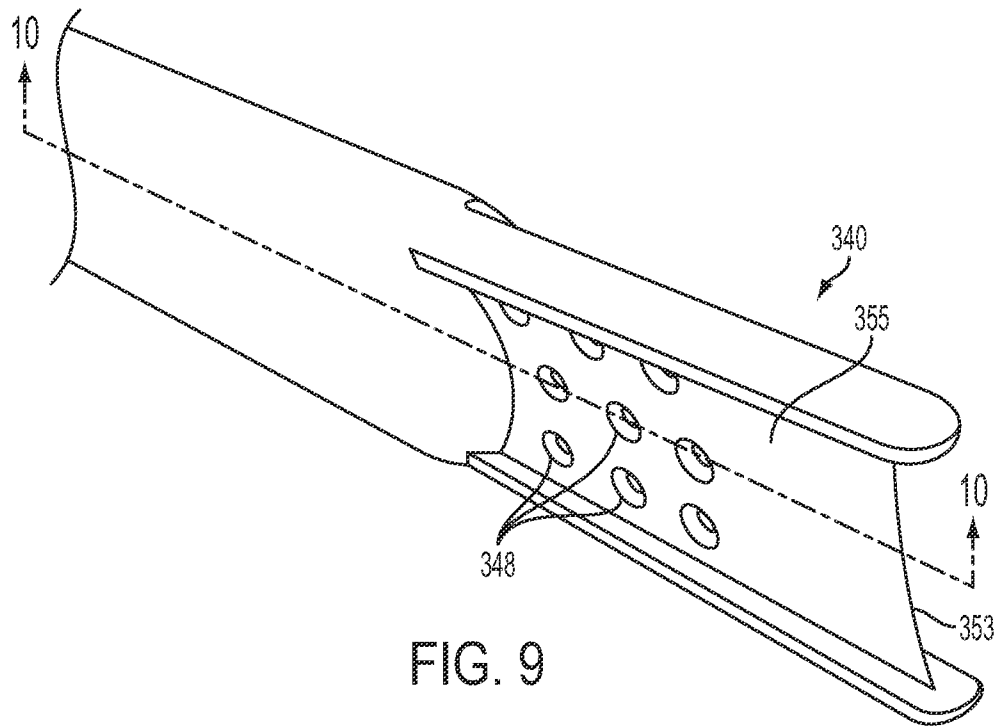


FIG. 10

8/19

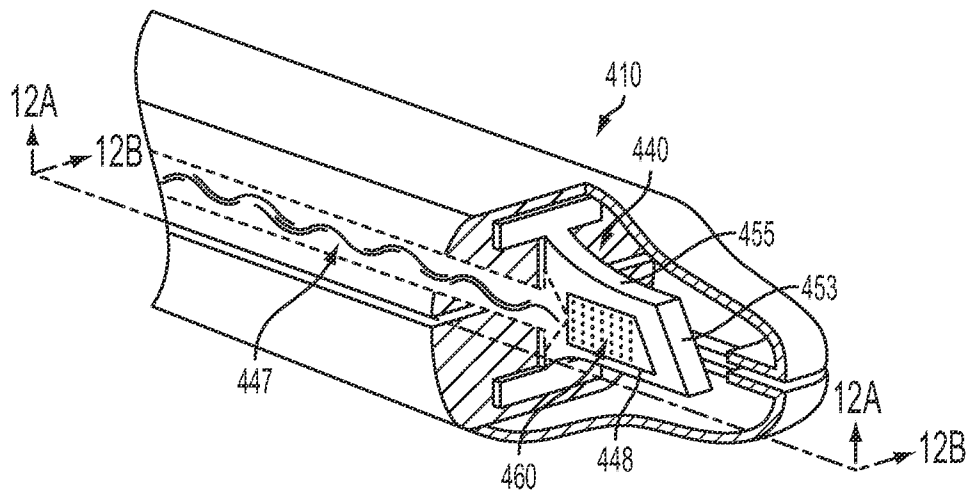


FIG. 11

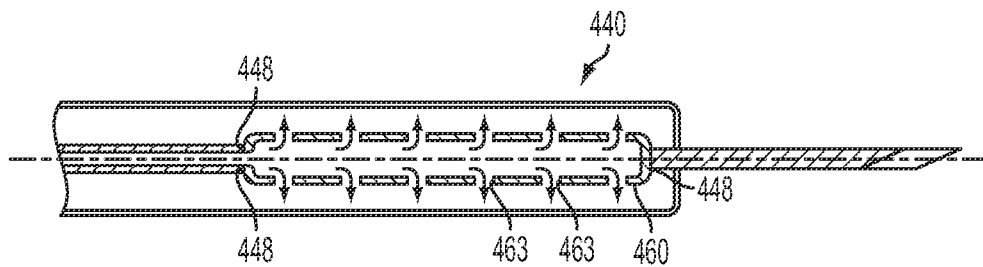


FIG. 12A

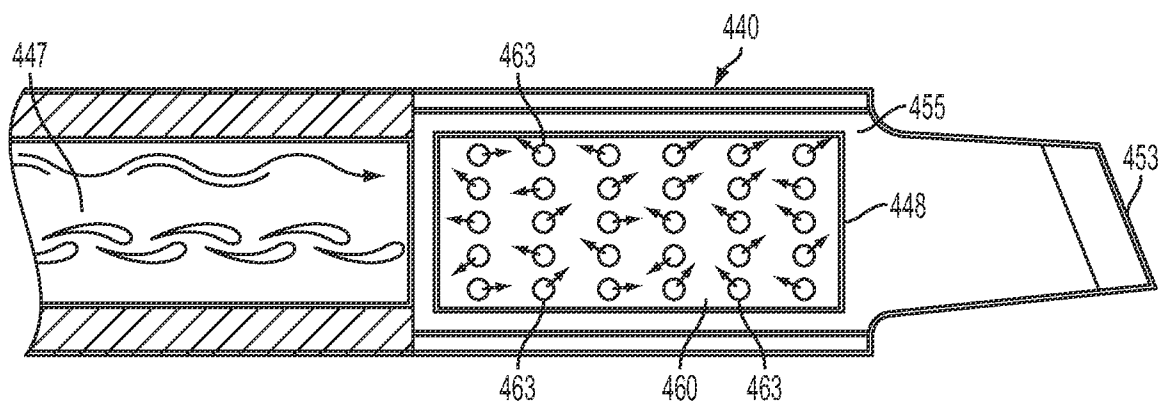
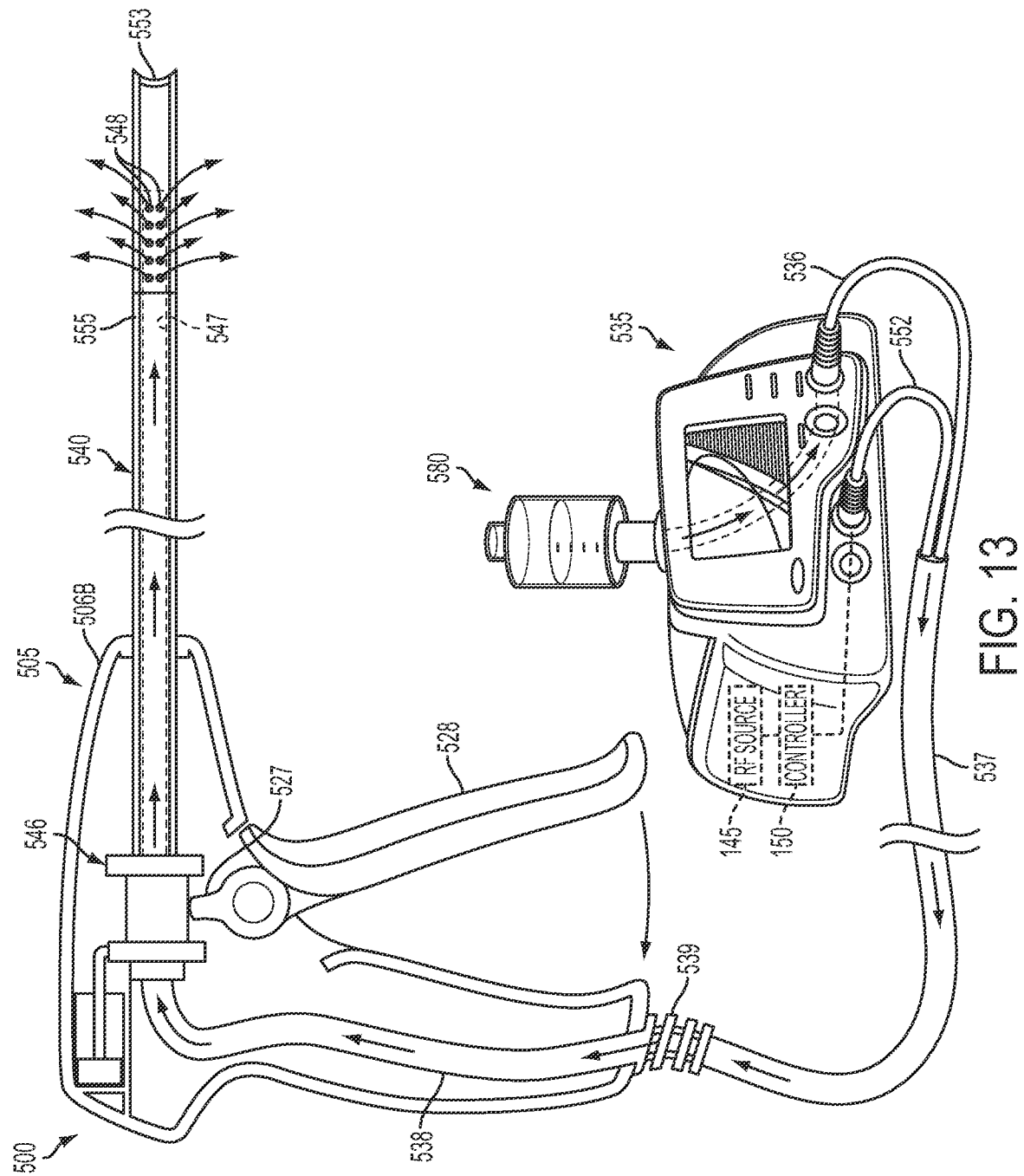
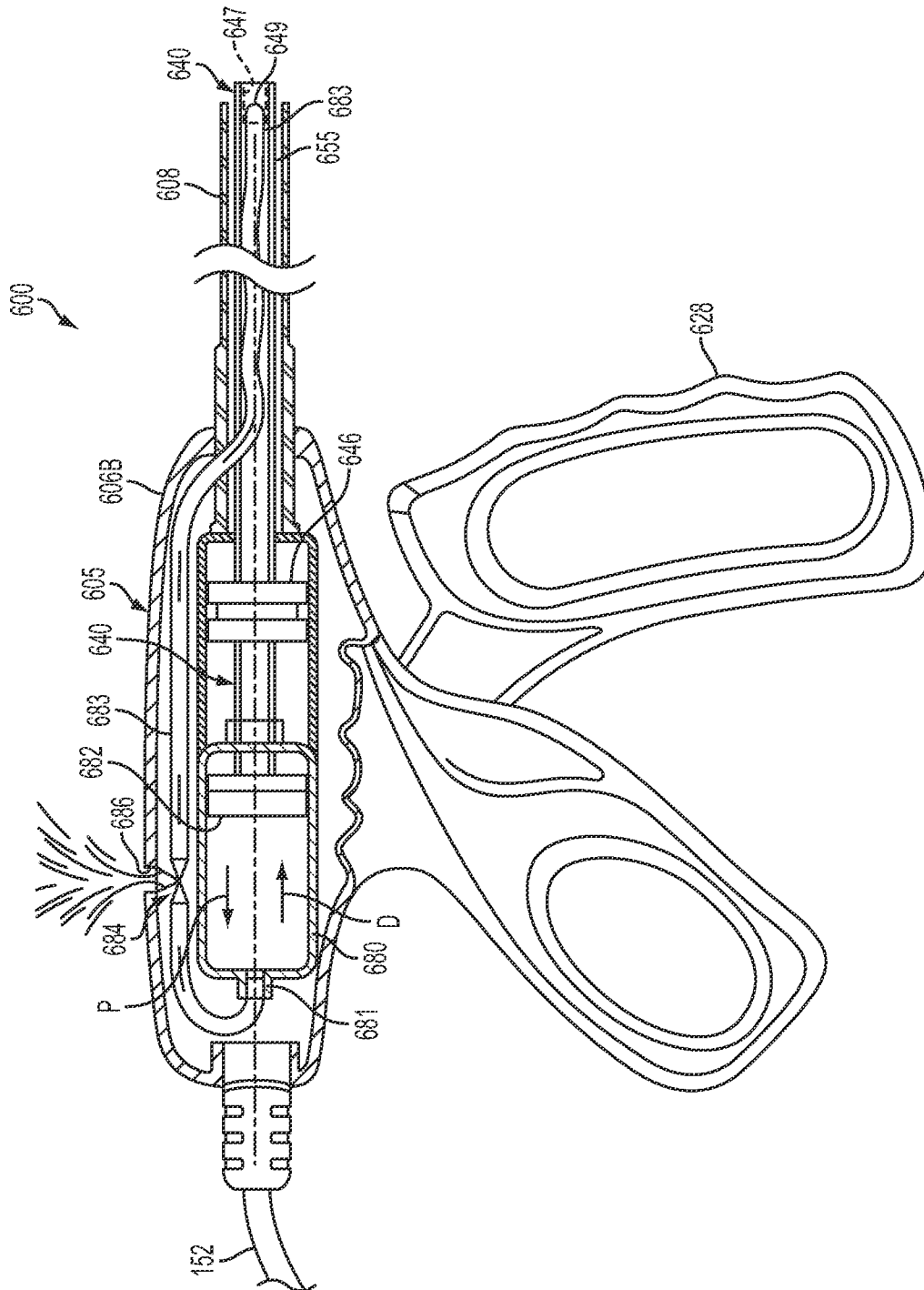


FIG. 12B

9/19



10/19



11/19

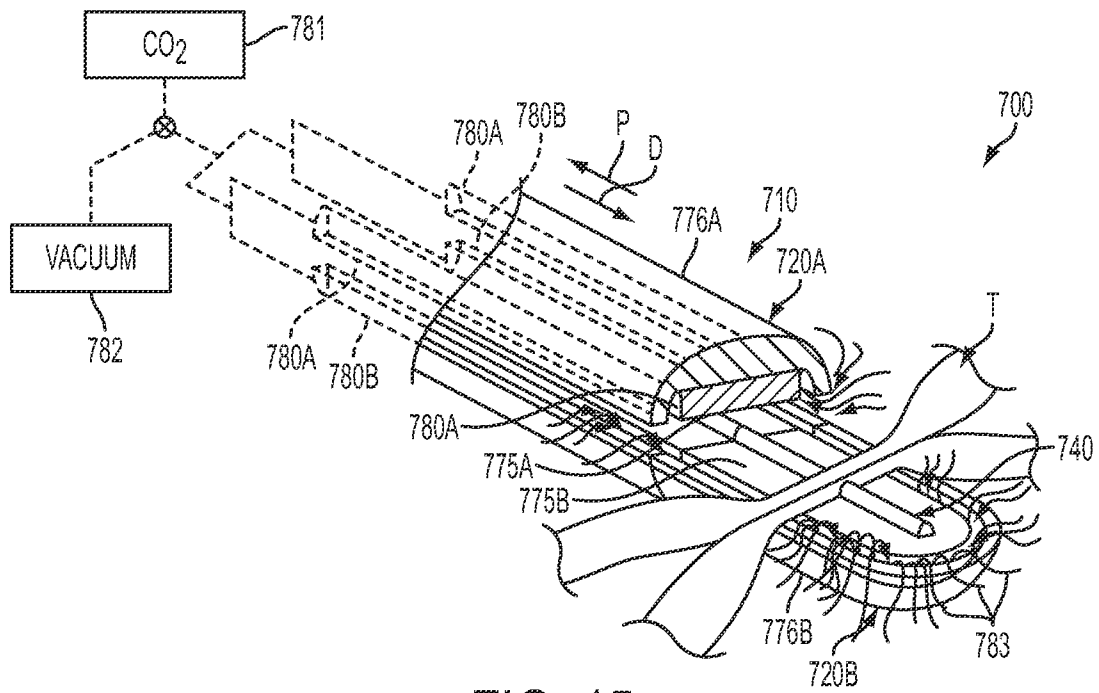


FIG. 15

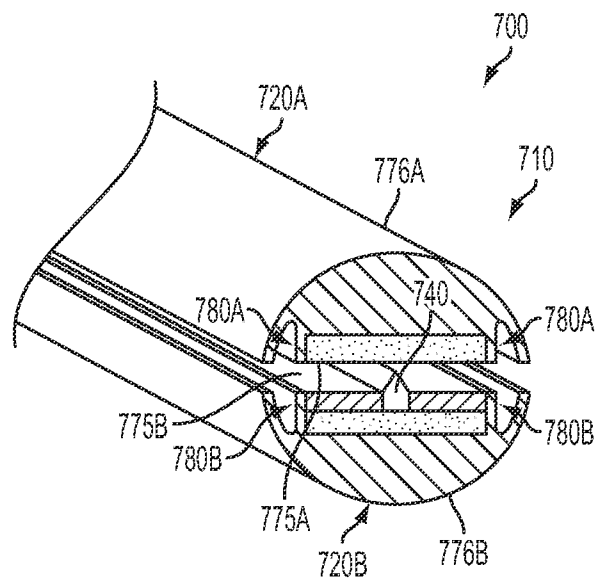


FIG. 16

12/19

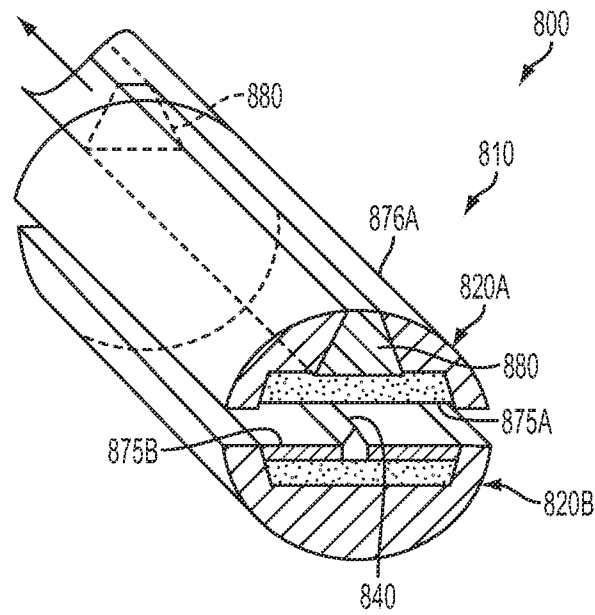


FIG. 17

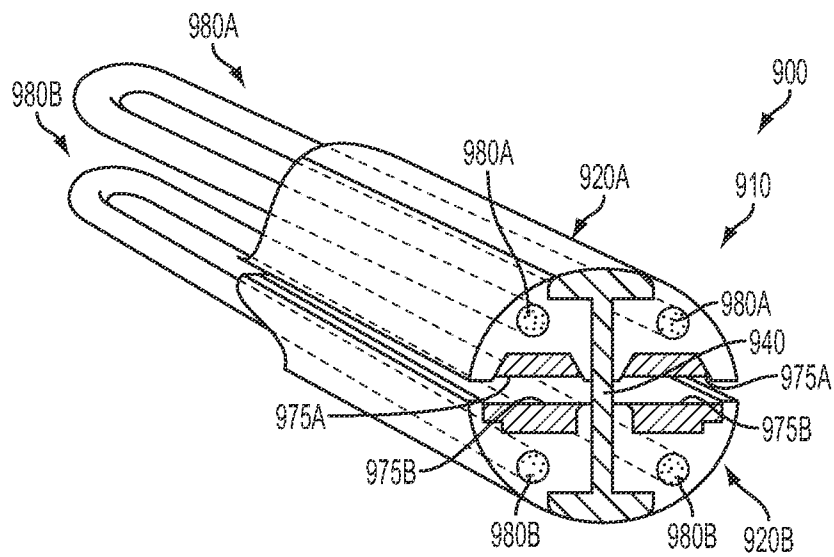
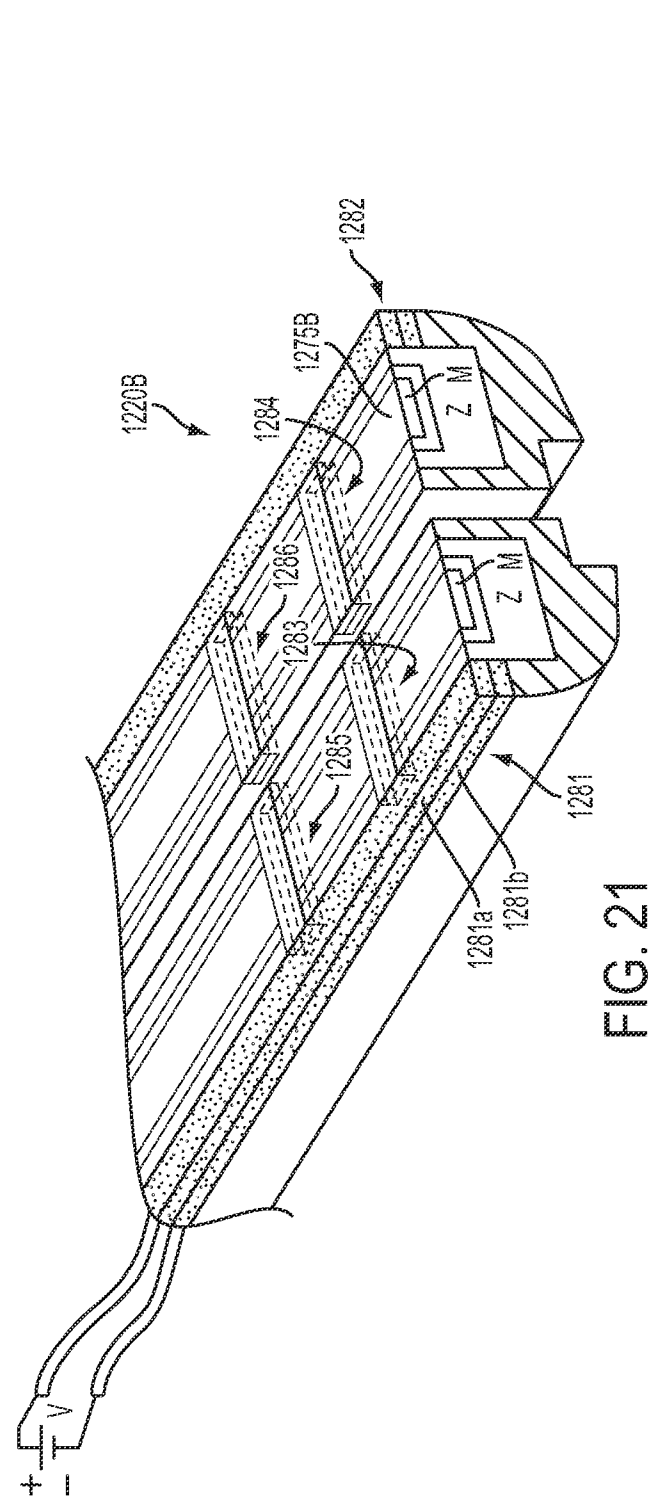
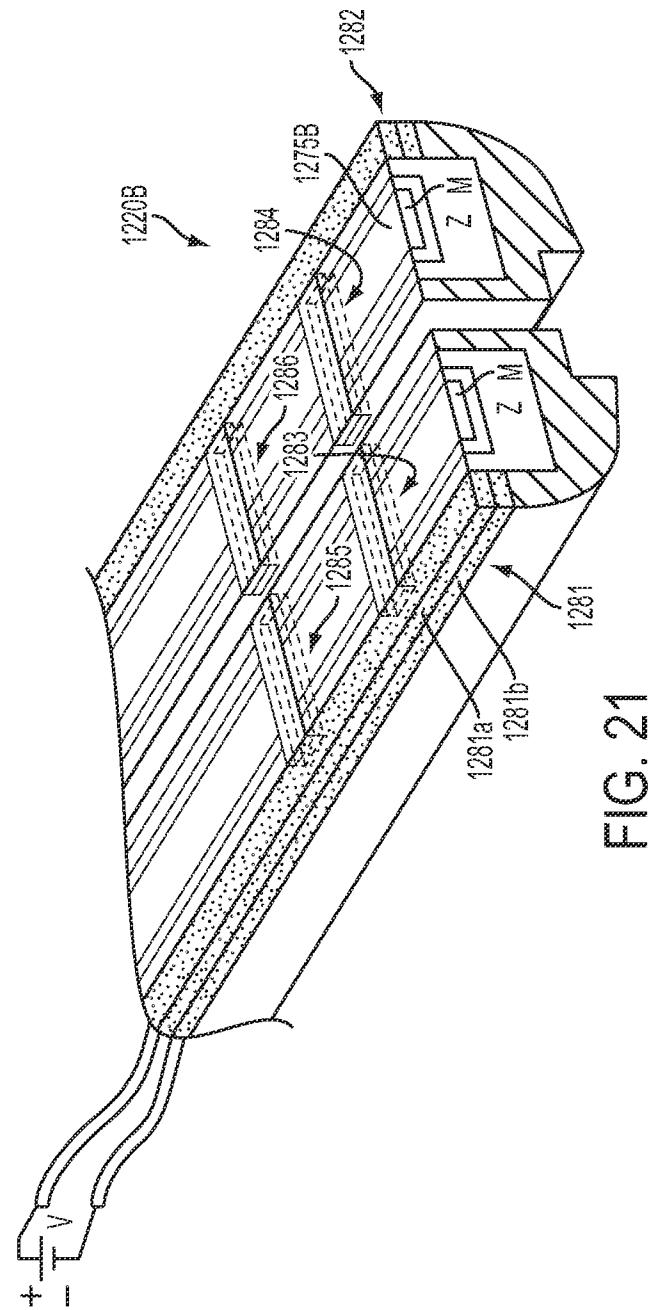
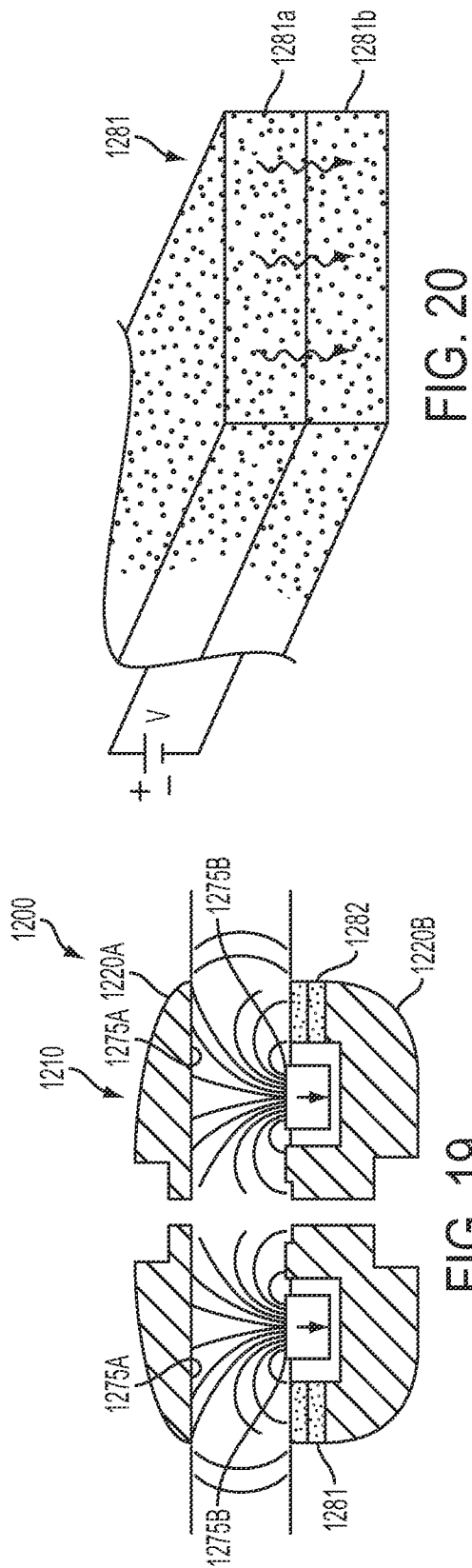


FIG. 18



14/19

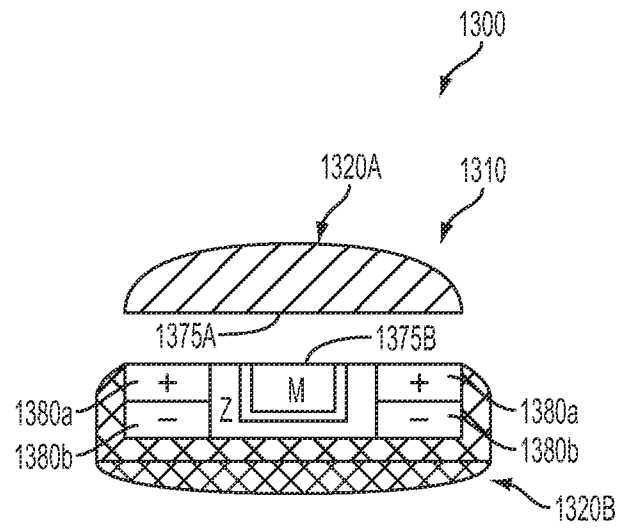


FIG. 22

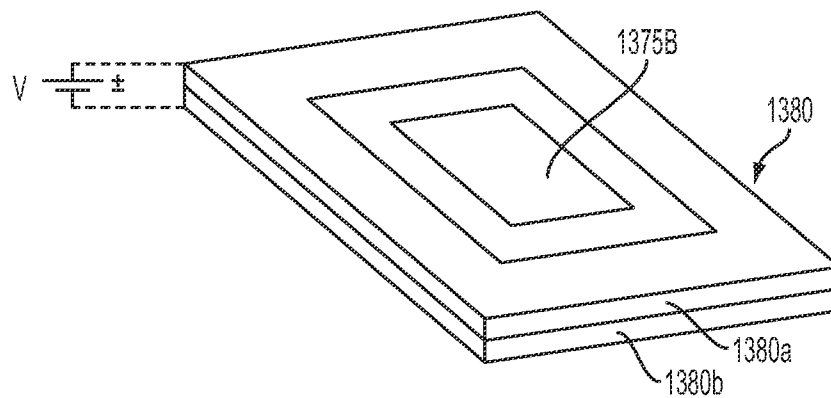


FIG. 23

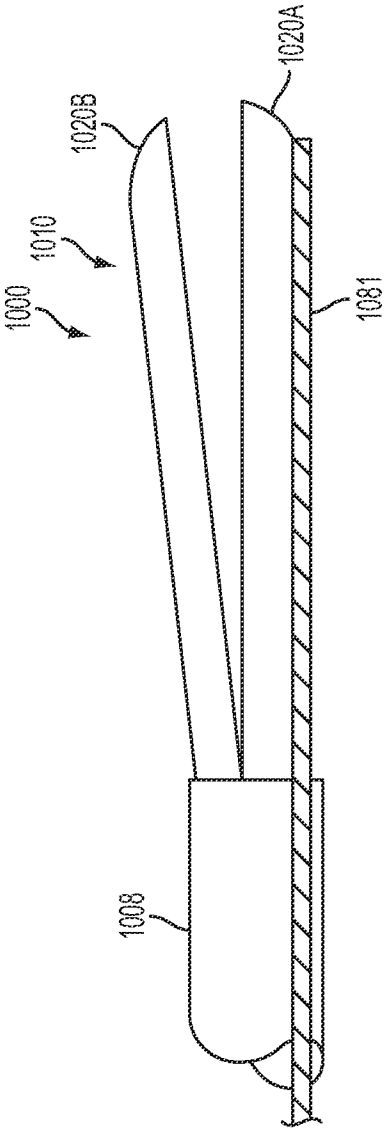


FIG. 24

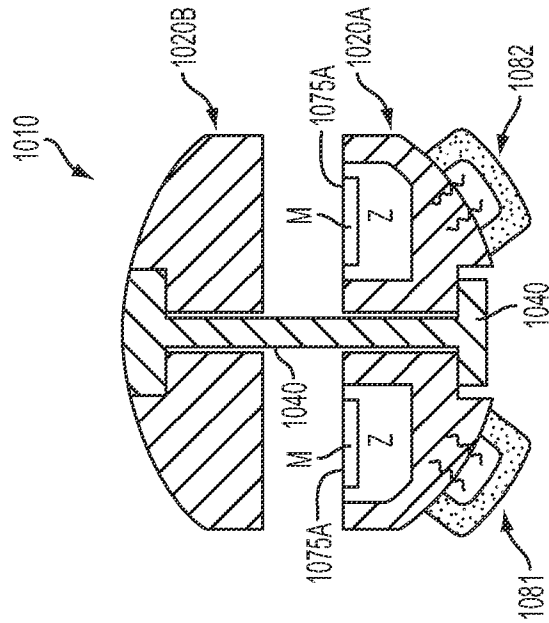


FIG. 25

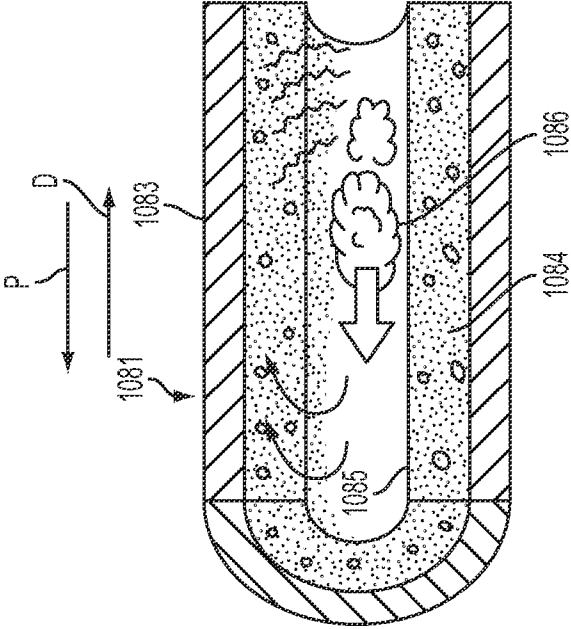
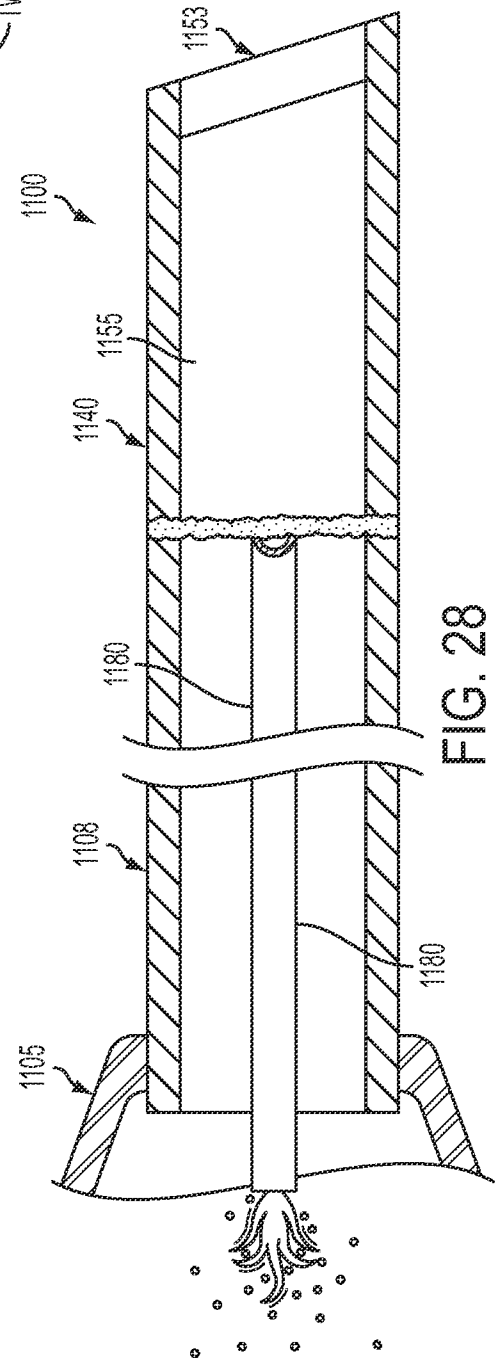
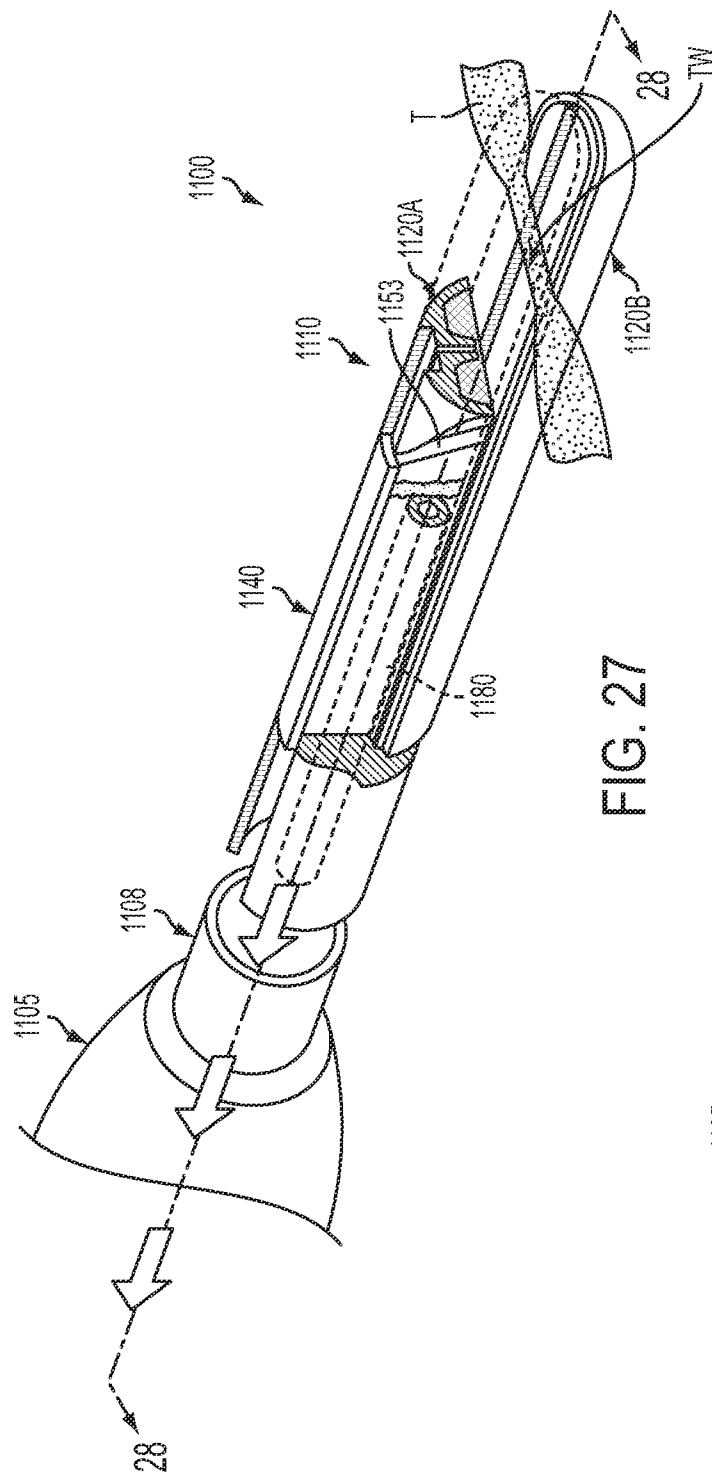


FIG. 26

16/19



17/19

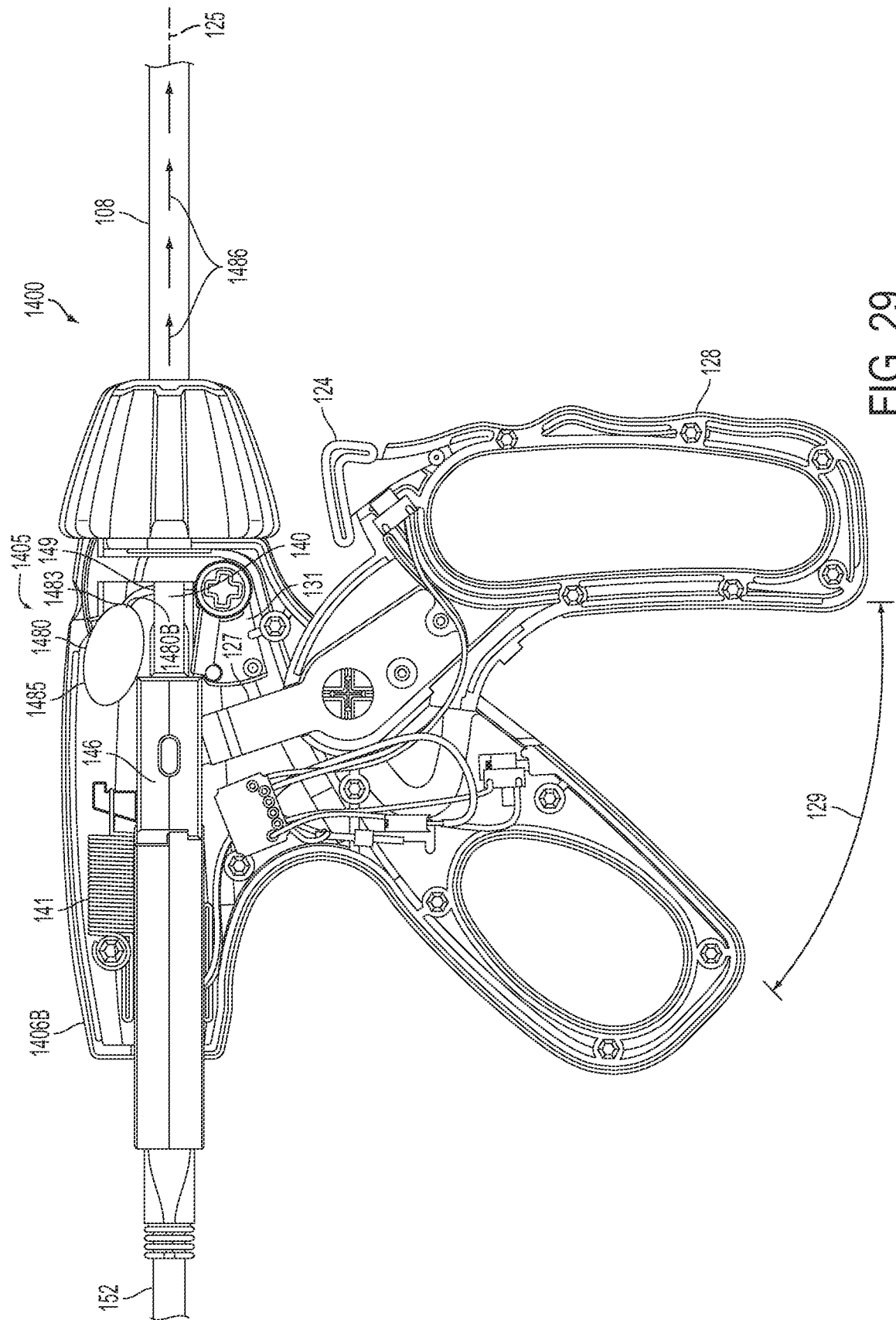


FIG. 29

18/19

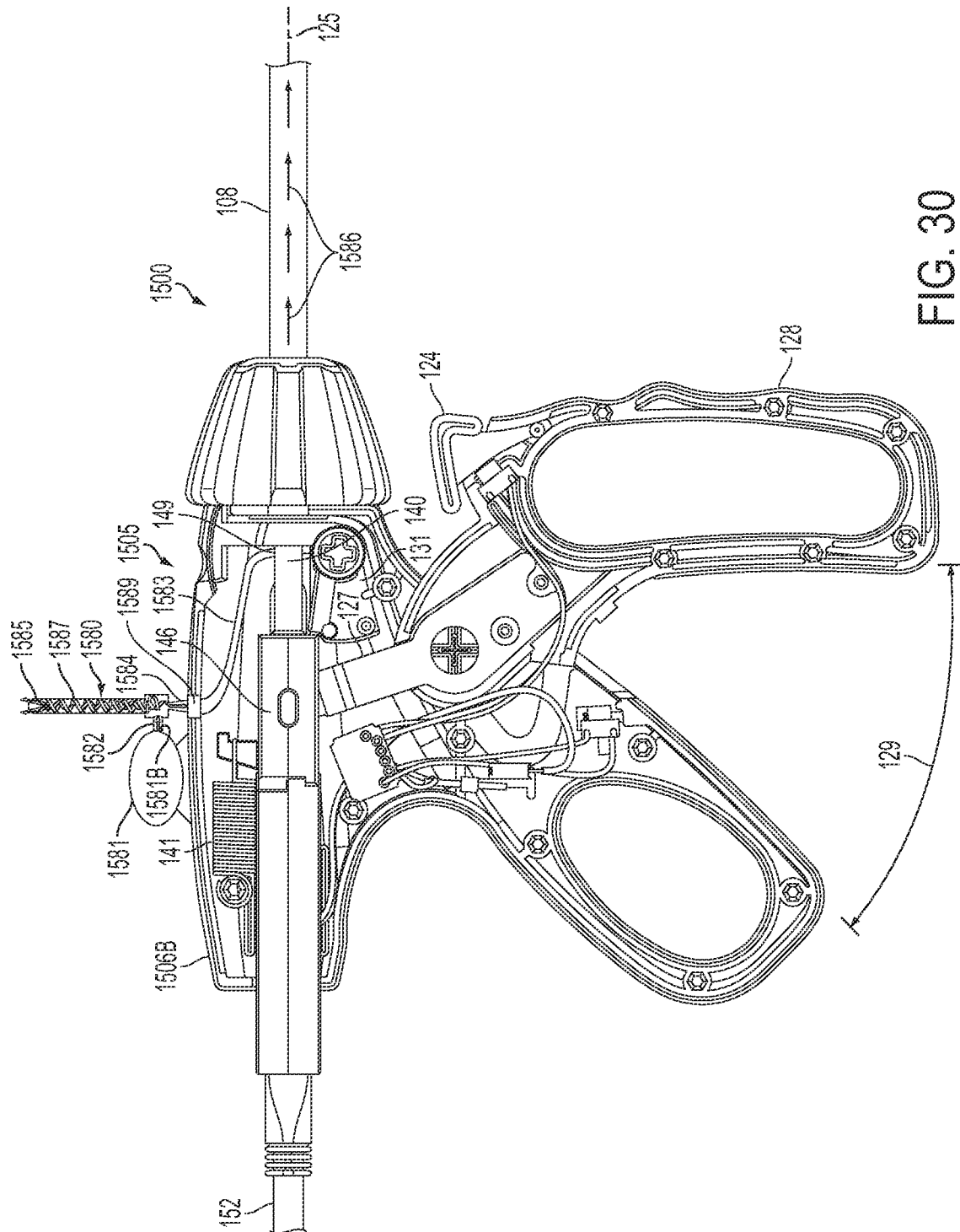


FIG. 30

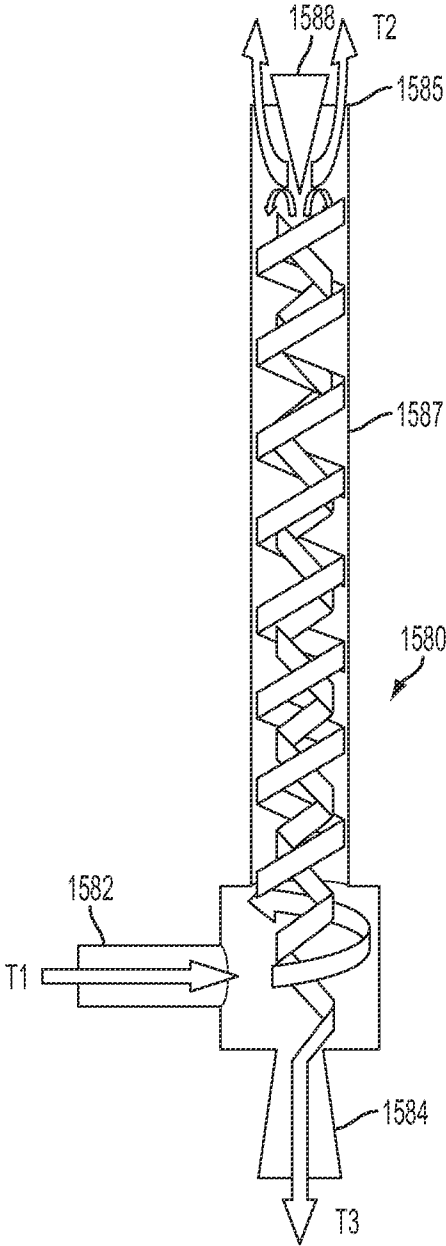


FIG. 31