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(54) Title: TURBINE SEGMENTED COVER PLATE RETENTION METHOD

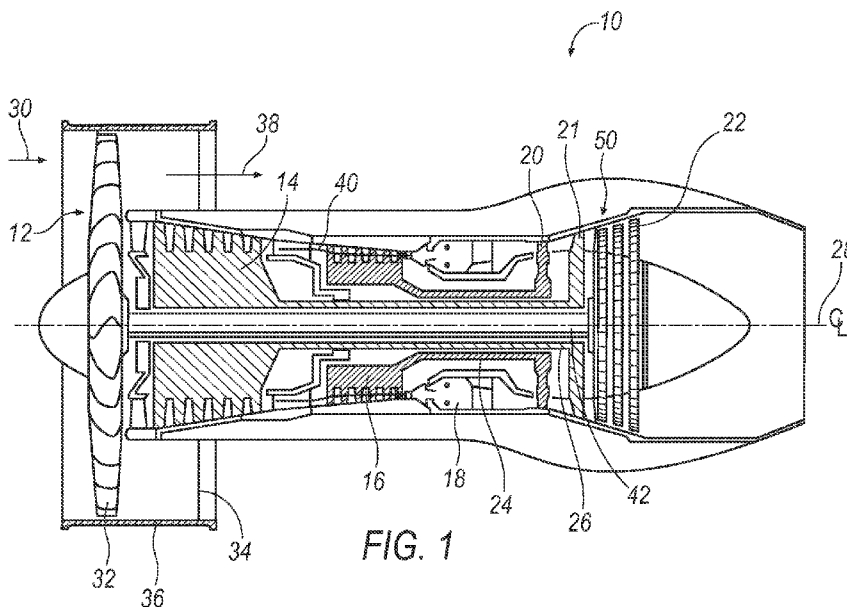


FIG. 1

(57) Abstract: An improved gas turbine cover plate assembly is disclosed for use in connection with segmented cover plates in turbine configurations where it is not possible to stagger the blades to create assembly clearance. The improved turbine assembly also avoids cover plate loading slots in the disc which can cause high stress features. The improved system also includes a method to axially retain segmented cover plates in relation to a turbine disc using a segmented retainer ring.

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## TURBINE SEGMENTED COVER PLATE RETENTION METHOD

### CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims priority to U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/773,091 filed March 5, 2013, the contents of which are hereby incorporated in their entirety.

### GOVERNMENT RIGHTS

[0002] This disclosure was made with government support under FA8650-07-C-2803 awarded by the United States Air Force. The government has certain rights in the disclosure.

### FIELD OF TECHNOLOGY

[0003] An improved gas turbine engine, and more particularly, a method and apparatus for retaining segmented cover plates to a bladed turbine disc in a gas turbine engine.

### BACKGROUND

[0004] Gas turbine engines employ turbine rotors that have a rotor body as well as a plurality of rotor blades that rotate therewith. The rotor blades may be an integral part of the rotor body or they may be separately anchored by a blade root that is positioned in one or a plurality of axially extending grooves of the rotor body. Rotors that have blades that are integral to the rotor body have certain draw backs in view of their unitary design. As such, some aerospace applications have preferred turbine rotors that have rotor blades that are individually anchored to the rotor body by employing axially extending grooves in the rotor body that are operable to receive the blade roots of the rotor blade. Retaining members known as cover plates have been employed to secure the rotor blades axially relative to the rotor body. However, a challenge with such designs is the ease of installing and then maintaining the rotor blades after they have been in service.

[0005] Prior methods for retaining a gas turbine blade relative to the rotor or disc body utilize segmented cover plates that require slots to be cut into a groove of the rotor body to allow the cover plates to slide into place, or the blades must be staggered during assembly to create clearance. Slots in the rotor body groove can create high stress areas and may not be a helpful feature. Retention methods utilizing locking wires below the segmented cover plates

require machined segmented cover plates which are heavier and more expensive than conventional formed sheet metal segmented cover plates.

**[0006]** Segmented cover plates that are held in place by grooves in the bottom of the blade platforms use a locking wire which interfaces with a groove in the radially inward edge of the cover plates and a groove in the disc. This method requires machined segmented cover plates in order to create the groove for the locking wire. It would be helpful to provide an improved segment cover plate that is formed from sheet metal which is inexpensive and lighter than machined cover plates. A new method of installing the segmented cover plate for retaining a rotor blade axially relative to a rotor body would also be helpful.

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

**[0007]** While the claims are not limited to a specific illustration, an appreciation of the various aspects is best gained through a discussion of various examples thereof. Referring now to the drawings, exemplary illustrations are shown in detail. Although the drawings represent the illustrations, the drawings are not necessarily to scale and certain features may be exaggerated to better illustrate and explain an innovative aspect of an example. Further, the exemplary illustrations described herein are not intended to be exhaustive or otherwise limiting or restricted to the precise form and configuration shown in the drawings and disclosed in the following detailed description. Exemplary illustrations are described in detail by referring to the drawings as follows:

**[0008]** FIG. 1 illustrates a schematic view of a gas turbine engine;

**[0009]** FIG. 2 illustrates a side view of a gas turbine rotor assembly as shown in FIG 1, but with the rotor blades removed;

**[0010]** FIG. 3 illustrates a perspective view of the turbine blades assembled to a disc, and the cover plate shown in position;

**[0011]** FIG. 4 illustrates an enlarged sectional view taken from arrow 4-4 of FIG. 2, showing a segmented cover plate assembly installed in the disc, with the cover plate and retainer clip locked in place;

**[0012]** FIG. 5 illustrates a step showing the cover plate being inserted within the groove of the rotor blade body;

[0013] FIG. 6 illustrates a step showing the cover plate fully positioned in place relative to the groove of the blade and disc;

[0014] FIG. 7 illustrates an enlarged sectional view taken from arrow 7-7 of FIG. 2, showing the smash plate installed in the turbine assembly; and

[0015] FIG. 8 is a side view of a segmented retainer clip or ring that is utilized in the novel assembly.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0016] An improved method is disclosed to axially retain segmented cover plates in relation to a turbine disc using a segmented retainer ring. Segmented cover plates are provided which are retained at their radially outward edge by grooves in the underside of the blade platform. The cover plates are axially retained at their radially inward edge by retainer ring segments which are inserted below each cover plate segment in groove in the disc. Segmented cover plates known as smash plates are also used and they do not require retainer ring segments. This arrangement allows the segmented cover plates to be assembled with the bladed disc without cover plate loading slots in the disc or staggering the blades to create assembly clearance.

[0017] The improved system allows the use of segmented cover plates in turbine configurations where it is not possible to stagger the blades to create assembly clearance. The improved system also avoids cover plate loading slots in the disc which can be high stress features. The improved system includes a method to axially retain segmented cover plates in relation to a turbine disc using a segmented retainer ring.

[0018] Figure 1 illustrates a gas turbine engine 10, which includes a fan 12, an intermediate pressure compressor and a high pressure compressor, 14 and 16, a combustor 18, a high pressure turbine, an intermediate pressure turbine, and a low pressure turbine, 20 and 21 and 22, respectively. The high pressure compressor 16 is connected to a first rotor shaft 24 while the intermediate pressure compressor 14 is connected to a second rotor shaft 26 and the fan is connected to a third rotor shaft 42. The shafts extend axially and are parallel to a longitudinal center line axis 28.

[0019] Ambient air 30 enters the fan 12 and is directed across a fan rotor 32 in an annular duct 34, which in part is circumscribed by fan case 36. The bypass airflow 38 provides engine thrust while the primary gas stream 40 is directed to the combustor 18 and the high pressure turbine 20. The gas turbine engine 10 includes an improved turbine segmented cover plate assembly 50 and method of installation for axially retaining turbine blades to a body of a turbine disc.

[0020] FIG. 2 illustrates a front view of the low pressure turbine 22 assembly employing the improved turbine segmented cover plate assembly 50 along with the turbine blades and a turbine disc. It will be appreciated that the cover plate assembly 50 may be employed with the high pressure and intermediate pressure turbines, 20, 21. For demonstrative purposes only, a discussion of the cover plate assembly 50 will be presented in the context of the low pressure turbine 22.

[0021] With reference to FIGS. 2 and 3, the turbine 22 includes a disc 52 having a disc body 53, an annular groove 55 that circumscribes the body 53, a segmented retainer ring or clip 56 slideably positioned within the groove 55, a cover plate or locking member 58, smash plates 60, and turbine blades 62. Exemplary smash plates 60 are located at the 12 o'clock, 4 o'clock and 8 o'clock positions. It will be appreciated that more or less smash plates 60 may be used with the turbine 22 assembly and they may be positioned at alternative locations. The segmented ring(s) 56 are approximately the same length as the segmented cover plate(s). It will be appreciated that each cover plate 58 has a width encompassing about four blade platform forms 66, however the width could be more or less. The segmented cover plates 58 and segmented ring 54 are arcuate shaped in the side profile and have a similar geometric configuration and length.

[0022] The disc body 53 of the turbine 22 includes a plurality of axially extending grooves 54 that are circumferentially spaced about the perimeter of the body 52. The grooves 54 are configured to receive a blade root 64 of each rotor blade 62. The blade root 64 leads into a blade platform 66 which in turn is the base in which the aerodynamic rotor blades (not shown) are supported. Each blade 62 is operable to slide axially relative to the corresponding axial groove 54, and they are axially retained in place by the combination of the retainer clip 56 and the cover plate 58.

[0023] FIG. 4 illustrates the cover plate assembly 50 retaining the blade 62 relative to the disc 52. The body 53 of the disc 52 includes the circumferentially spaced annular groove 55 that is positioned in a retaining arm 68 that extends from a face 70 of the assembly 50. The retaining arm 68 includes a radially extending portion 72 that extends opposite the direction of the centerline 28 of the machine 10. Distally opposed from the groove 55 is another annular groove 74 that extends circumferentially around the blade 62. The groove 74 is located in an inner shroud 76 that too extends circumferentially around the blade 62. A tab 78 radially extends towards the disc 52 and aids to retain an upper portion of the cover plate 58 in place.

[0024] The retainer clip 56 impinges upon the surface 88 of the cover plate 58 such that once it is installed within groove 55, the cover plate 58 and the clip 56 bias the blade 62 axially in the groove 54 so that the blade 62 is firmly secured in place. The retainer clip 56 has a main body 82, an upwardly extending arm 84, and a notched portion 86. While an exemplary L-shaped clip is depicted, it will be appreciated that other shaped configurations may be employed. The lower end 88 of the cover plate 58 is positioned within the notch 86 which firmly positions the lower end 88 of the cover plate 58. The cover plate 58 and the clip 56 may be constructed of high temperature steel or other material as long as it withstands gas turbine rotor operating conditions. The cover plate 58 is substantially flat and has a central portion 90, the lower portion 88, and an upper portion 92 which includes an arcuate member for being received within the groove 74. It will be appreciated that the disc 52 and the blades 62 are constructed of materials that are known in the gas turbine industry.

[0025] The method of installing a cover plate assembly 50 will now be described. With reference to FIG. 5, the blade 62 has been positioned relative to the disc wheel 52 so that the face 70 of each structure is substantially in alignment. This is accomplished by axially sliding the blade 62 within the groove 54 of the disc 52 to a point where the faces 70 are flush. The next step includes the upper portion 92 of the cover plate 58 being located within the groove 74. The lower end 88 of the cover plate 58 may then be advanced towards the face 70 to a position shown in FIG. 6. The lower end 88 of the cover plate 58 clears the radially extending member 72 of the retaining arm 68. The cover plate 58 rests against the face 70.

[0026] FIG. 6 shows the cover plate 58 properly in a position ready for the retainer clip 56 to be installed. The retainer clip 56 secures the cover plate 58 in position at the locations where a smash plate 60 is not employed.

[0027] For the next step, with reference back to FIG. 4, the retainer clip 56 is now slid in place within groove 55 so as to sandwich the lower end 88 of the cover plate 58 against the face 70. This arrangement axially retains the blade 62 within the groove 54 and maintains the disc 52 and blade 62 relative to one another. The next step includes installing the smash plate members 60 in place relative to the turbine body 53.

[0028] FIG. 7, which is a sectional view taken from arrow 7-7 of FIG. 2, depicts a smash plate 60 being positioned within sections 94, 96 and 98 of the turbine body 52. See FIG. 2. For illustrative purposes only a section cut is shown through section 98. However, similar sections are present at sections 94 and 96. The smash plate 60 is c-shaped in the end profile and is located within grooves 74 and 55 and the lower end of the smash plate 60 has an axially extending lip 100 that consumes a substantial portion of the groove 55. Each smash plate 60 is a metallic member that is operable to be forced into position as shown in FIG. 7.

[0029] During operation of the machine 10, the clip 56 and cover plate 58 collectively aid to hold the blades 62 in place and reduce fluid leakage within the system 10. Likewise the smash plates 60 retain the adjacent blades 62 and disc 52 in position.

[0030] To remove a blade 62 from the turbine assembly 22, the inverse of the aforementioned steps is employed. In particular, one or more of the smash plates 60 are removed. This clears the path for the retaining clip 56 to be clocked or rotated towards an open space or void that has been created as a result of the smash plate(s) 60 being removed. It will be appreciated that one or more of the smash plates 60 may be removed for this process depending on the circumstances as hand.

[0031] Now that a void has been created by the removal of a smash plate 60, retainer clip 56 may be clocked towards the void which permits the clip 56 to be slid out of the groove 55. This action clears the way for the cover plate 58 to be rotated out, for example as is shown in FIG. 5, so as to remove the clip 56 from the turbine assembly 22. Once the plate 58 has been removed, the blade 62 likewise is free to be axially slid apart from the disc 52. To re-install

the blade 62 or install a new blade 62, the inverse of the aforementioned steps may be employed.

**[0032]** It will be appreciated that the aforementioned method and devices may be modified to have some components and steps removed, or may have additional components and steps added, all of which are deemed to be within the spirit of the present disclosure. Even though the present disclosure has been described in detail with reference to specific embodiments, it will be appreciated that the various modifications and changes can be made to these embodiments without departing from the scope of the present disclosure as set forth in the claims. The specification and the drawings are to be regarded as an illustrative thought instead of merely restrictive thought.

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A gas turbine engine disc and cover plate assembly comprising:
  - a turbine disc having a first groove;
  - at least one segmented cover plate;
  - a turbine blade having an axially extending groove;
  - at least one retainer member positioned within the first groove of the turbine disc, the retainer member having a contact surface for retaining the segmented cover plate in place relative to the turbine disc; and
  - at least one smash plate positioned within the first groove of the turbine disc;wherein axial retention of the turbine blade relative to the turbine disc is aided by the smash plate.
2. The gas turbine engine disc and cover plate assembly as claimed in claim 1, wherein the turbine disc includes a second groove, said second groove extends axially and is operable to receive a portion of the turbine blade.
3. The gas turbine engine disc and cover plate assembly as claimed in claim 1, wherein the first groove extends circumferentially substantially around a perimeter of the disc.
4. The gas turbine engine disc and cover plate assembly as claimed in claim 1, wherein the retainer member is a segmented ring, the segmented ring has a notched portion that engages an end of the segmented cover plate.
5. The gas turbine engine disc and cover plate assembly as claimed in claim 1, wherein the segmented cover plate and the retainer member consume substantially all of the space that exists within the first groove of the turbine disc.
6. The gas turbine engine disc and cover plate assembly as claimed in claim 1, wherein the smash plate is collapsible between a first position and a second position.

7. The gas turbine engine disc and cover plate assembly as claimed in claim 1, wherein the turbine blade includes a blade root portion, said blade root portion is configured to mate with the first groove of the turbine disc.
8. The gas turbine engine disc and cover plate assembly as claimed in claim 1, wherein the retaining member is a segmented ring, the segmented ring and cover plate operate to secure the blade and disc relative to one another.
9. The gas turbine engine disc and cover plate assembly as claimed in claim 1, wherein a plurality of retaining members are positioned at various locations about a circumference of the assembly.
10. The gas turbine engine disc and cover plate assembly as claimed in claim 1, wherein the retaining member is arcuate shaped.
11. A disc and cover plate assembly for a turbo machine comprising:
  - a turbine disc having a first groove;
  - at least one cover plate;
  - a turbine blade having a groove; and
  - at least one segmented retainer member positioned within the groove of the disc, the segmented retainer member having a contact surface for retaining the cover plate in place relative to the turbine disc.
12. The disc and cover plate assembly as claimed in claim 11, further comprising a smash plate that is positioned within the first groove of the disc.
13. The disc and cover plate assembly as claimed in claim 11, wherein axial retention of the turbine blade relative to the turbine disc is aided by a smash plate.
14. The disc and cover plate assembly as claimed in claim 11, wherein the segmented retaining member is a ring.
15. The disc and cover plate assembly as claimed in claim 11, wherein the segmented retaining member is L-shaped in the end view.

16. The disc and cover plate assembly as claimed in claim 11, wherein the cover plate is segmented.

17. The disc and cover plate assembly as claimed in claim 11, further comprising a plurality of cover plates and segmented retaining members that are positioned around the perimeter of the assembly.

18. The disc and cover plate assembly as claimed in claim 11, further comprising a gas turbine engine.

19. A method of assembling a cover plate to a gas turbine engine disc comprising the steps of:

- a. providing a disc;
  - b. providing at least one segmented cover plate;
  - c. providing a blade;
  - d. providing at least one segmented retainer ring;
  - e. providing at least one smash plate;
  - f. inserting one segmented cover plate into place relative to the disc and the blade;
  - g. inserting a segmented retainer ring into a disc groove adjacent to the segmented cover plate;
  - h. sliding the segmented retainer ring into a position beneath the segmented cover plate;
  - i. continuing inserting segmented cover plates and segmented retainer rings until a predetermined number of spaces for segmented cover plates remain;
  - j. arranging the cover plates and segmented retainer rings such that the predetermined number of open spaces that remain are located to a preferred location;
- and
- k. inserting a smash plate in each open space.

20. The method of assembling a cover plate to a gas turbine engine disc as claimed in claim 19, further comprising the step of removing smash plates, removing the segmented retainer ring and removing the cover plate.

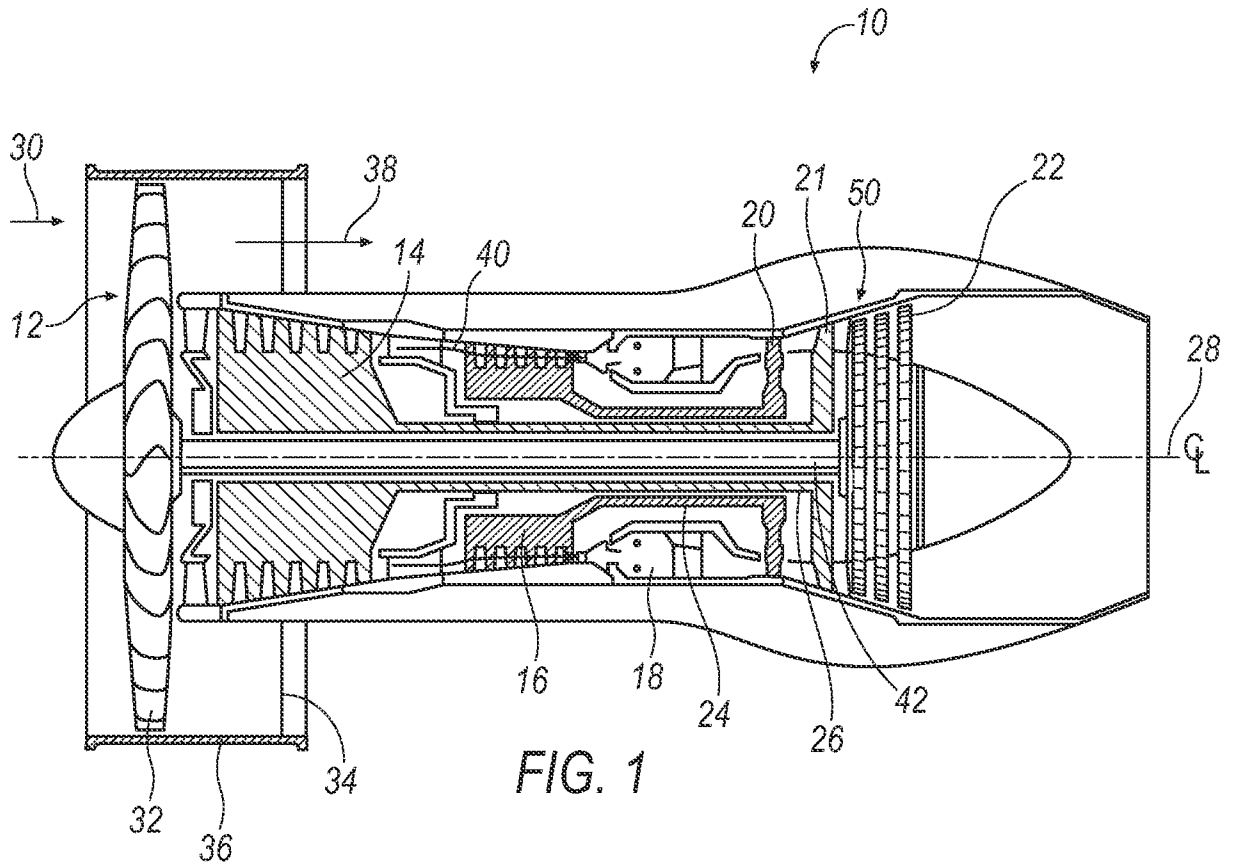


FIG. 1

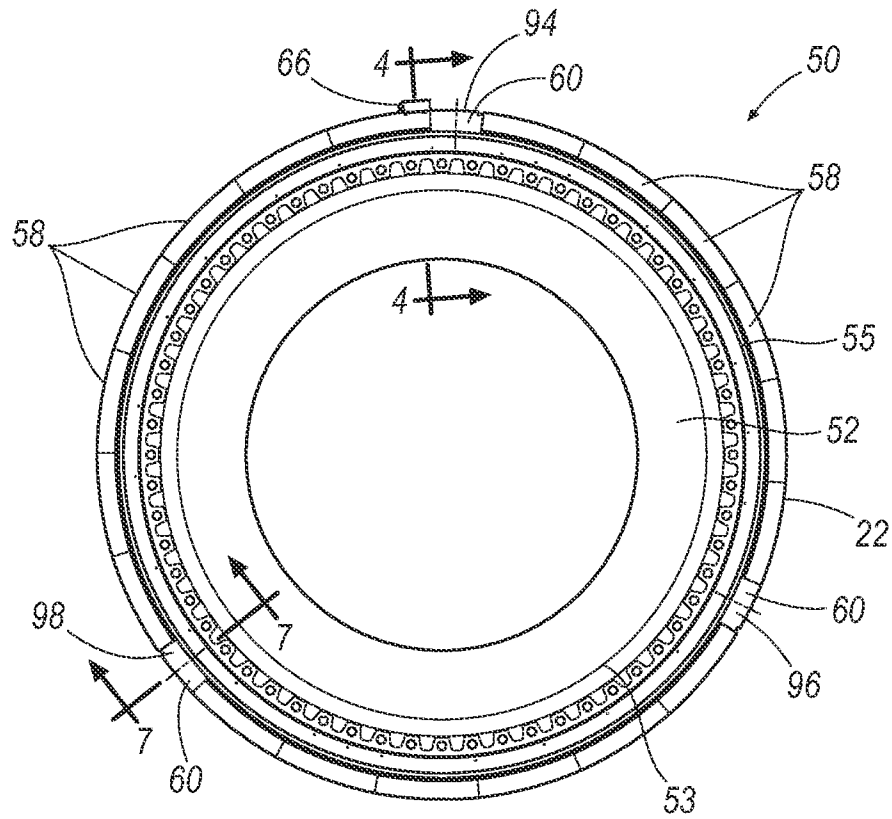
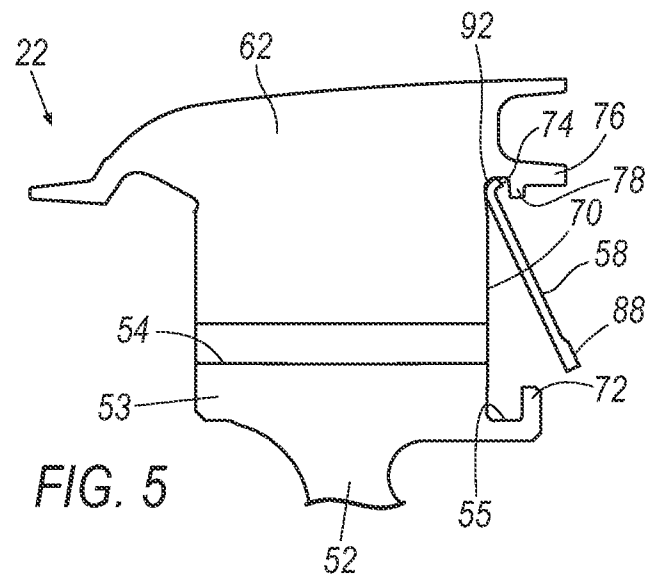
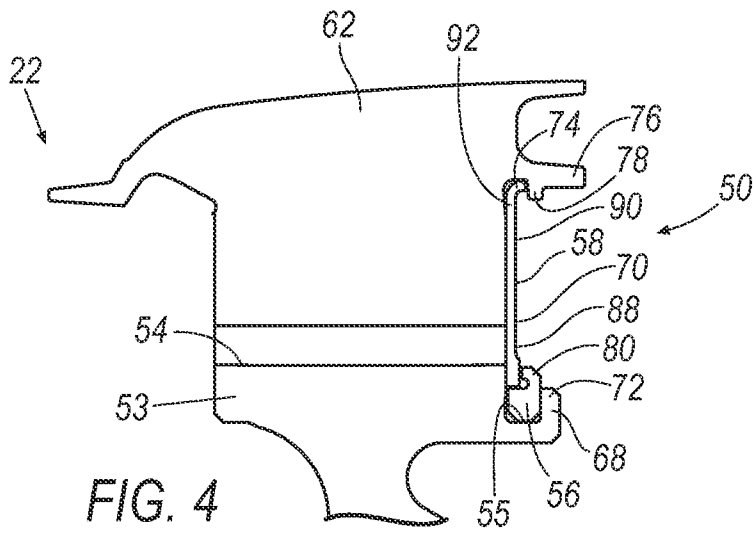
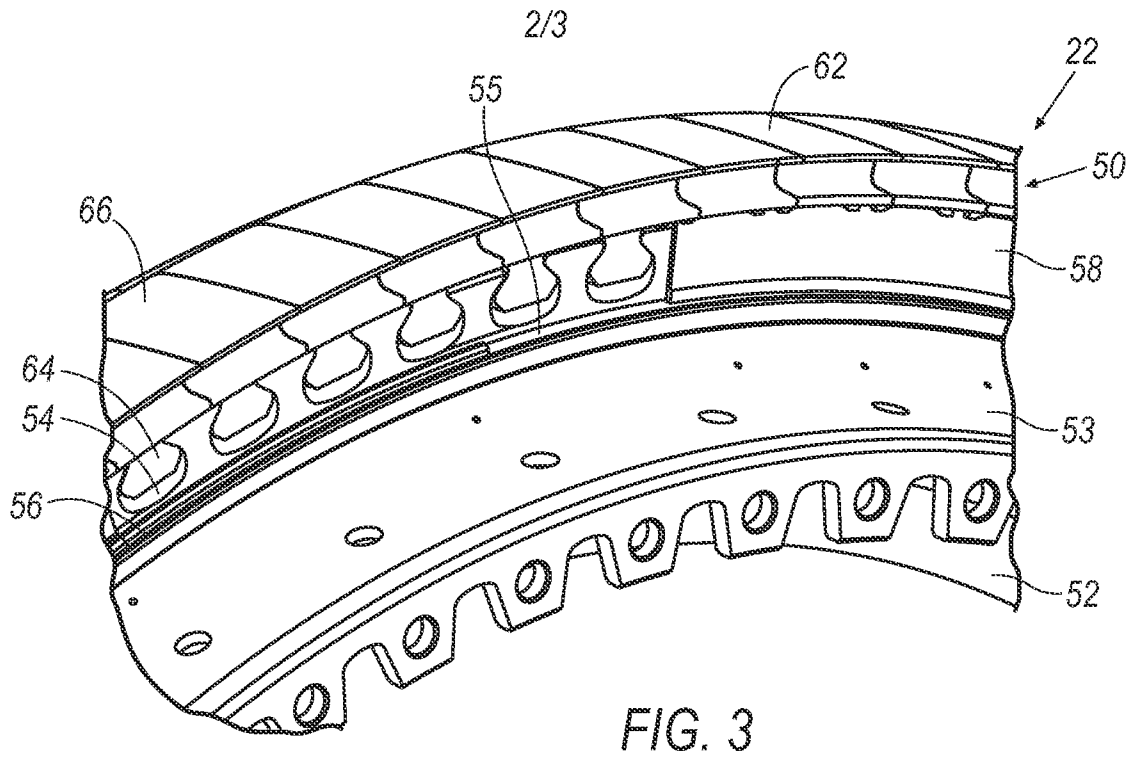


FIG. 2



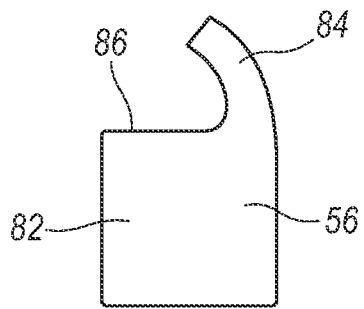
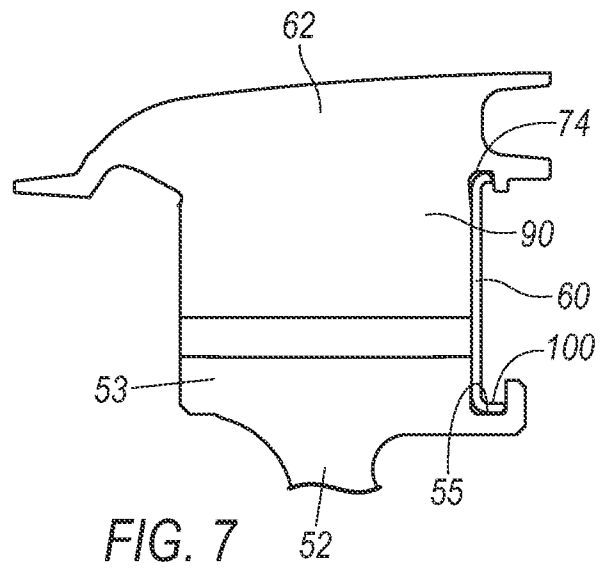
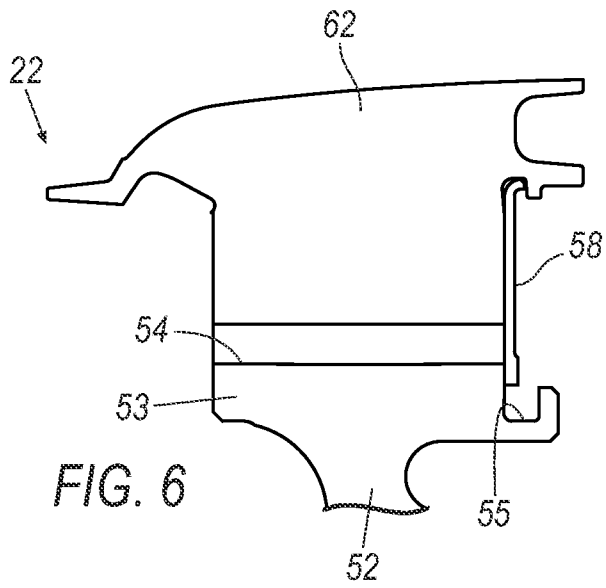


FIG. 8