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Oliver et al.

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(54) **MODULAR DECK APPARATUS**

11/022 (2013.01); *E04F 11/025* (2013.01);
E04F 11/104 (2013.01); *E04F 11/181*
(2013.01)

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(58) **Field of Classification Search**

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CPC *E04F 11/022*; *E04F 11/104*; *E04F 11/025*;
E04F 11/112; *E04F 11/035*; *E04B 1/003*;
E06C 1/39

USPC *52/378*
See application file for complete search history.

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(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this
patent is extended or adjusted under 35
U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

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(65) **Prior Publication Data**

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(Continued)

Related U.S. Application Data

Primary Examiner — Kyle J. Walraed-Sullivan

(60) Provisional application No. 62/963,312, filed on Jan.
20, 2020, provisional application No. 62/821,058,
filed on Mar. 20, 2019.

(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm* — Baker Donelson; Carl M.
Davis, II

(51) **Int. Cl.**

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E04B 1/00 (2006.01)
E04B 5/38 (2006.01)
E04F 11/022 (2006.01)
E04F 11/18 (2006.01)
E04F 11/104 (2006.01)
E04F 11/00 (2006.01)
E04F 11/025 (2006.01)

(57)

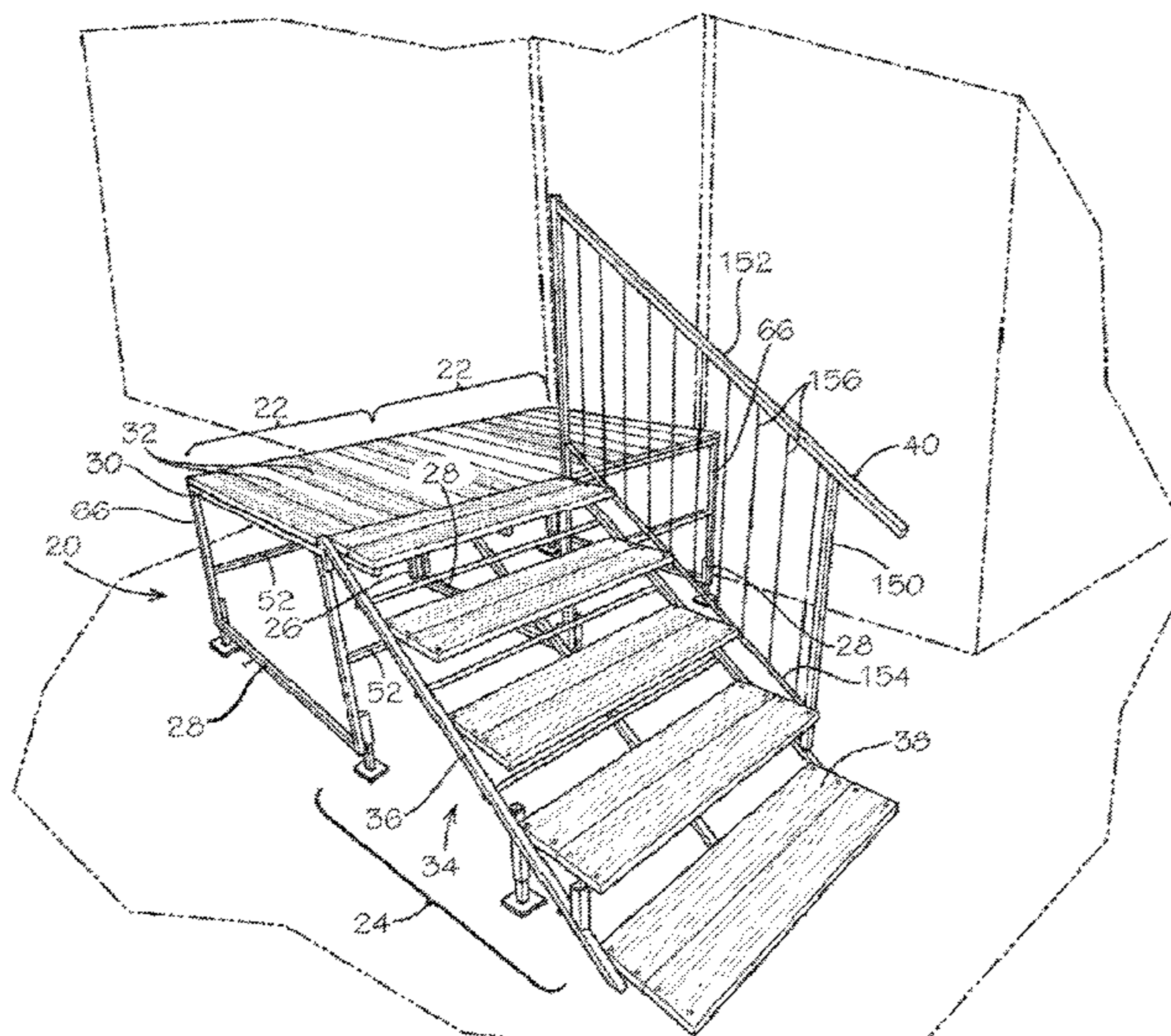
ABSTRACT

A deck apparatus for assembly with a pair of opposing brace
frames interconnected by a pair opposing connector bases
and a deck board top frame having a plurality of deck boards
disposed thereon, the connector bases having opposing posts
for being received in openings in a lower end of the
opposing brace frames ends and the deck board top frame
having posts for being received in an upper end of the
opposing brace frames, and optionally attaching a stairs riser
having a plurality of spaced-apart treads or a ramp riser for
extending from a deck surface at a height to a vertically
lower support surface.

(52) **U.S. Cl.**

CPC *E04B 5/38* (2013.01); *E04B 1/003*
(2013.01); *E04F 11/002* (2013.01); *E04F*

17 Claims, 17 Drawing Sheets



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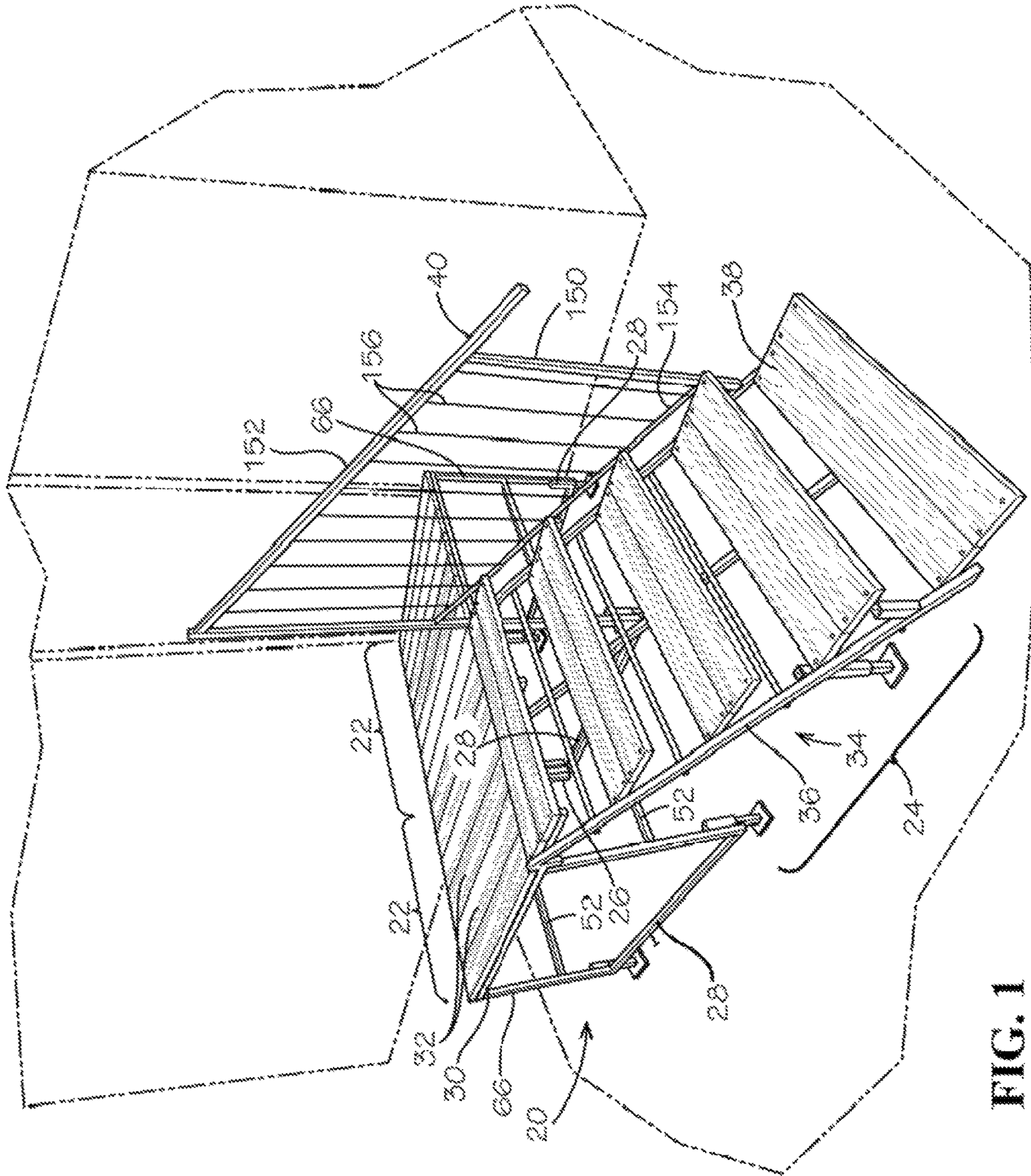


FIG. 1

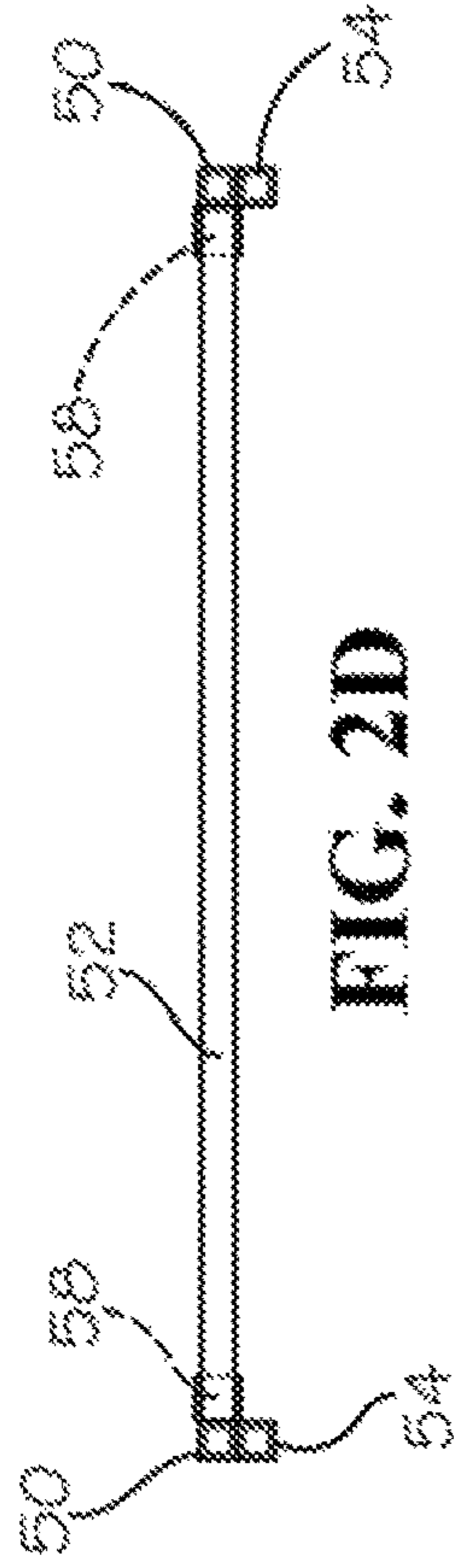


FIG. 2D

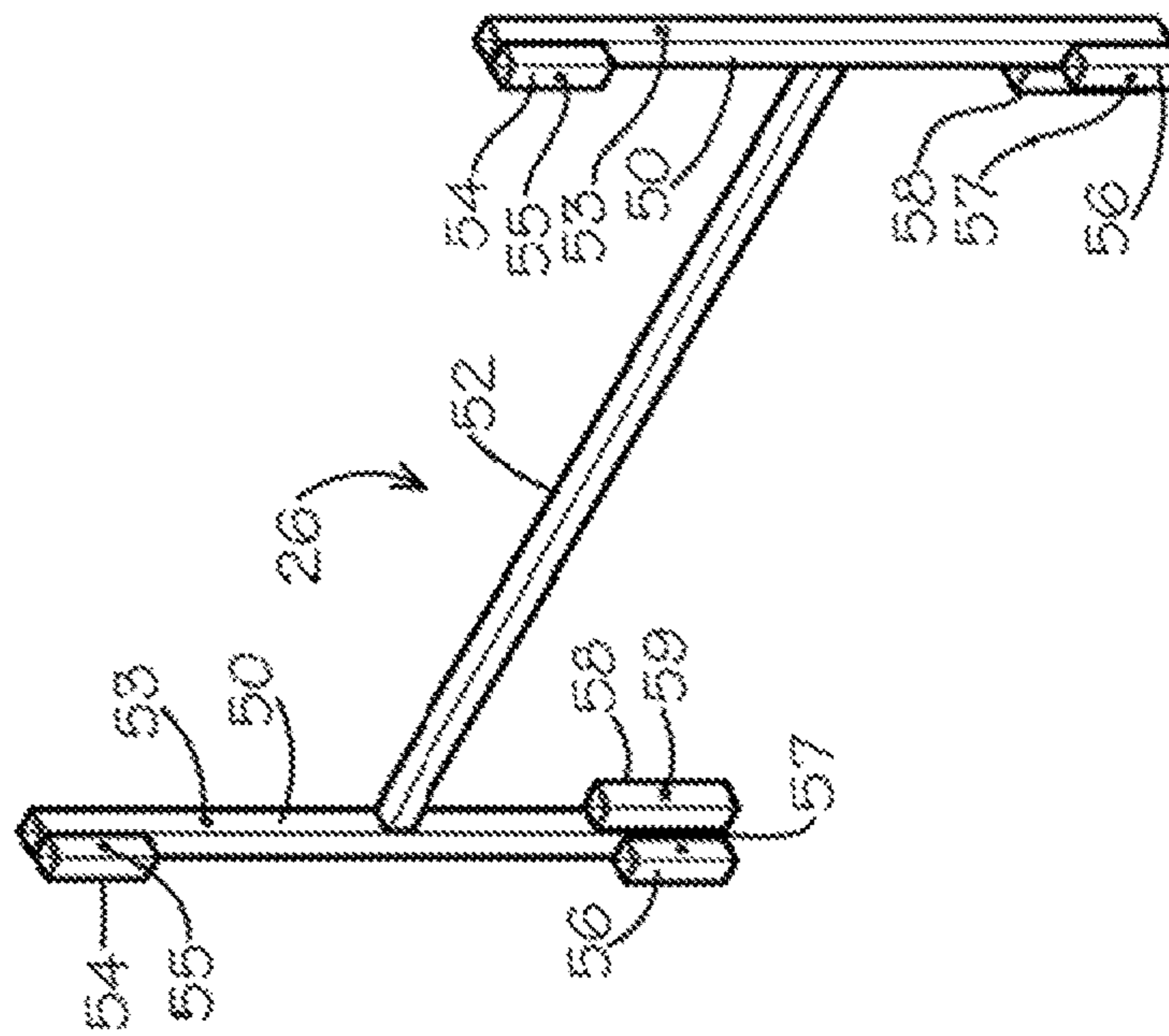


FIG. 2A

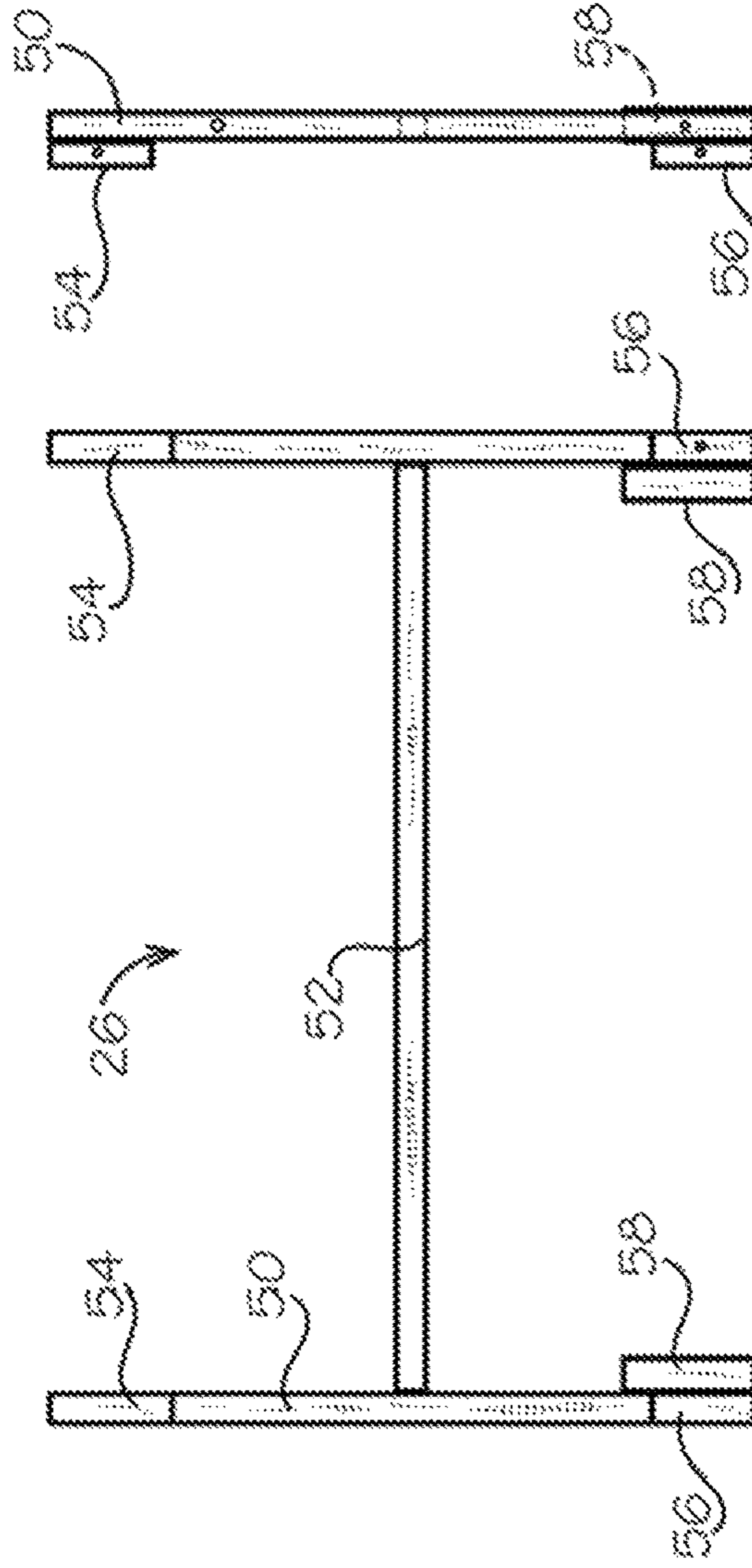


FIG. 2B

FIG. 2C

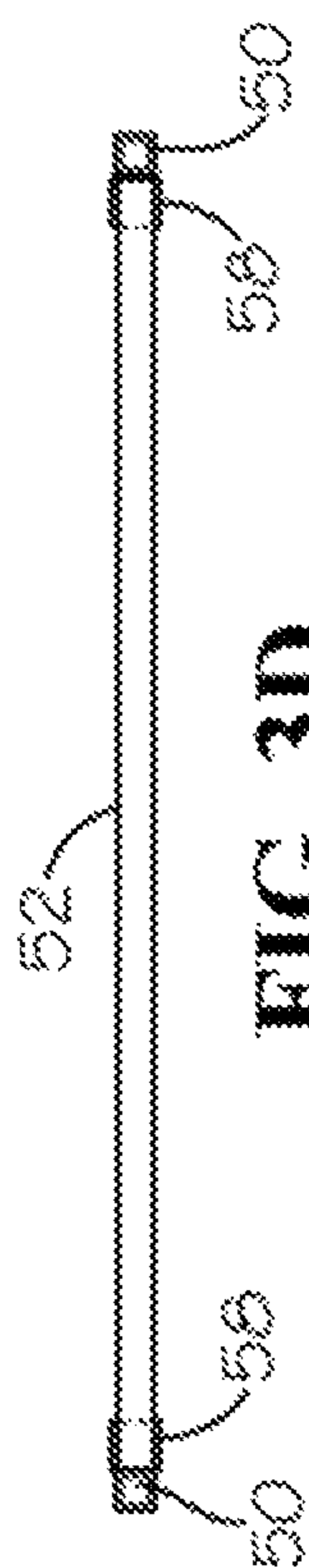


FIG. 3D

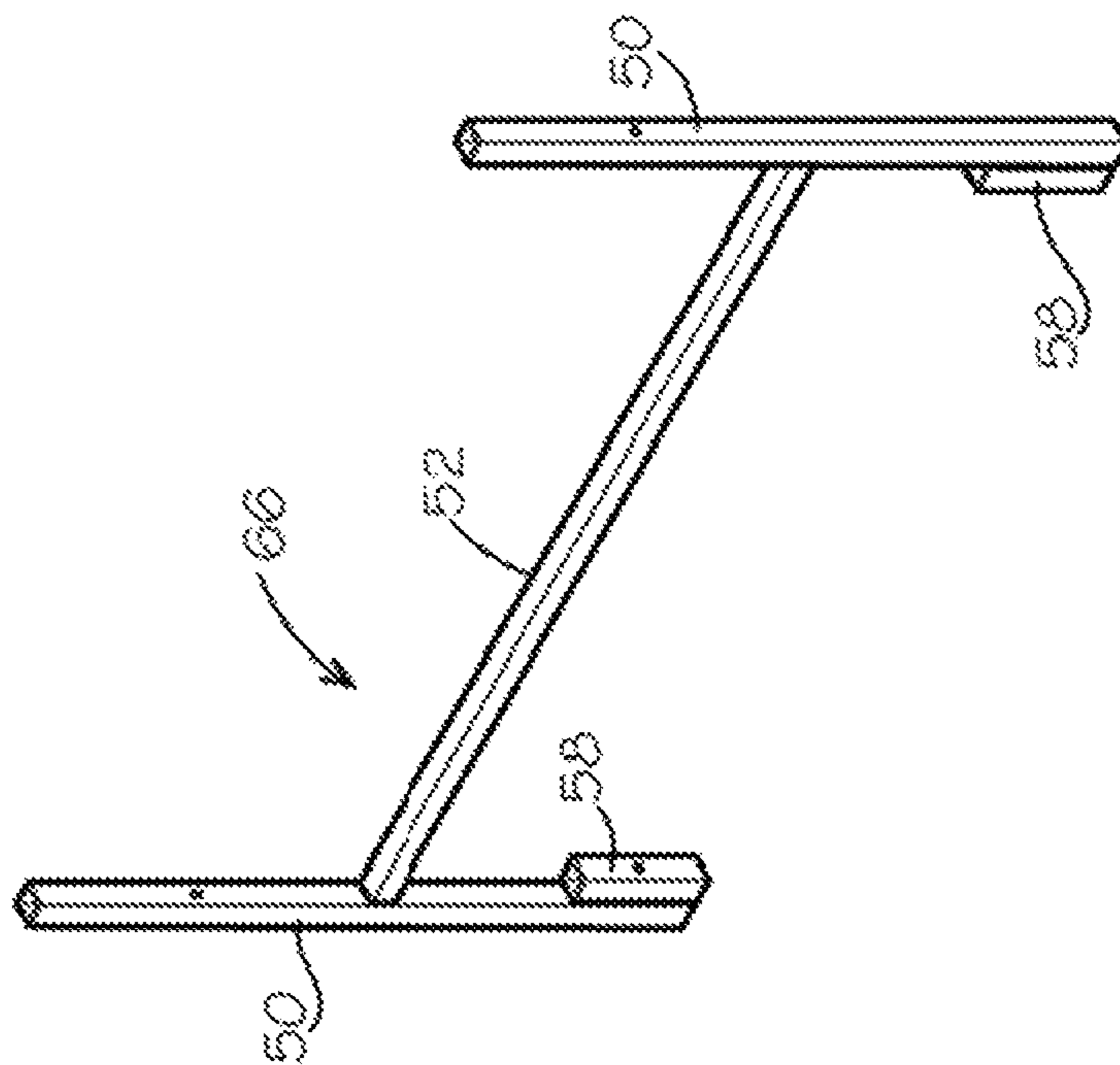


FIG. 3A

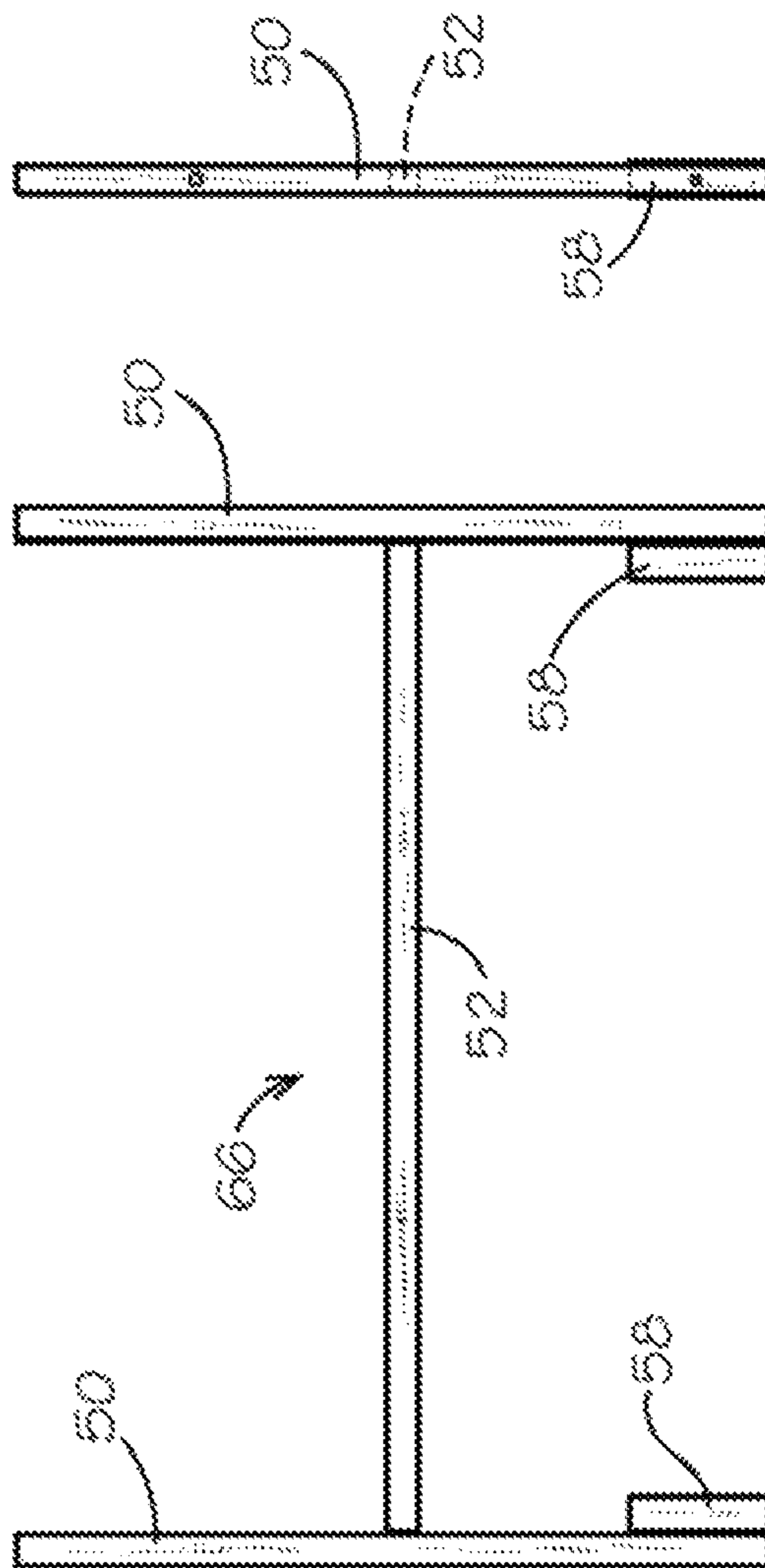


FIG. 3B

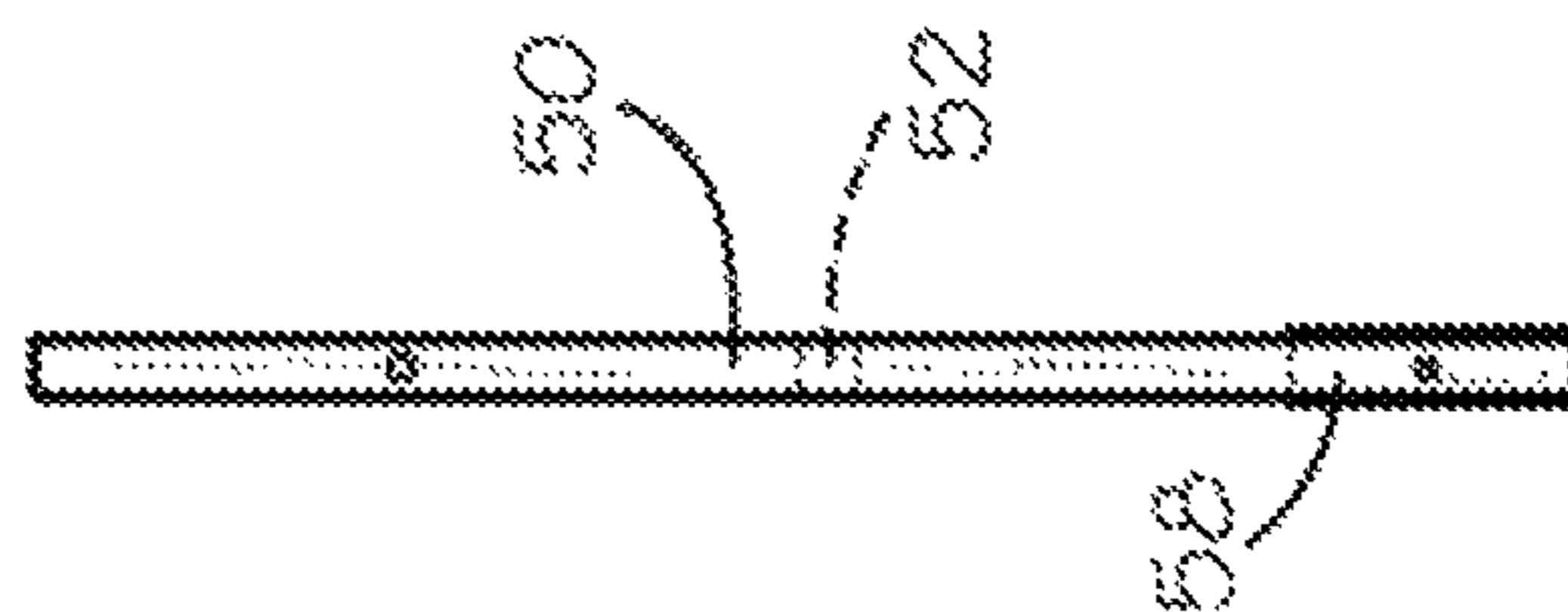


FIG. 3C

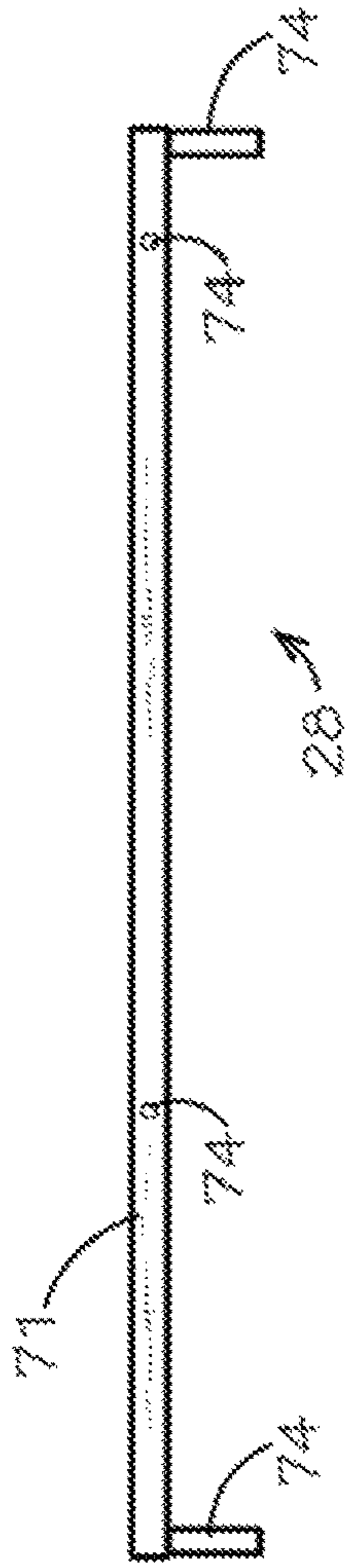


FIG. 4B

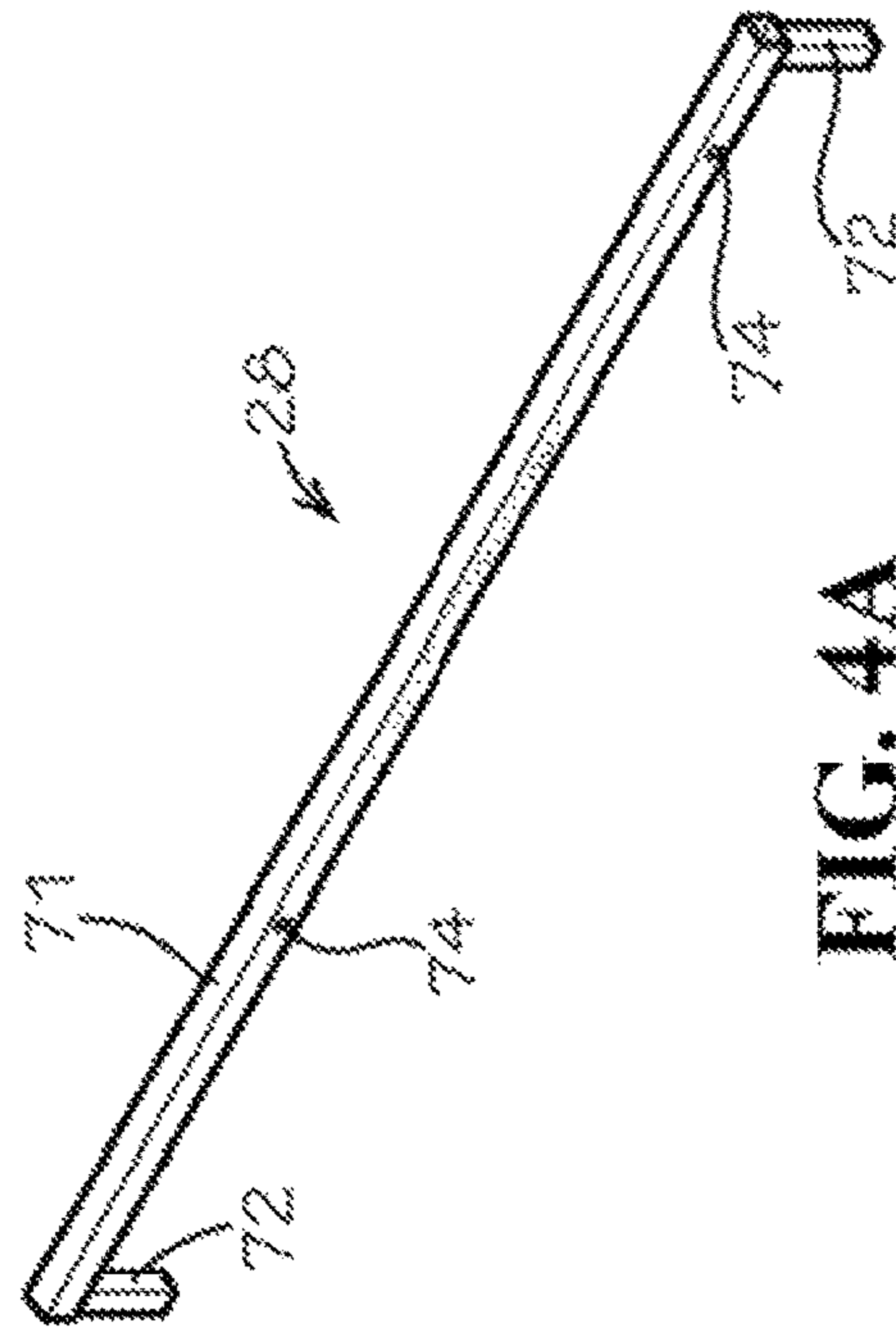


FIG. 4A

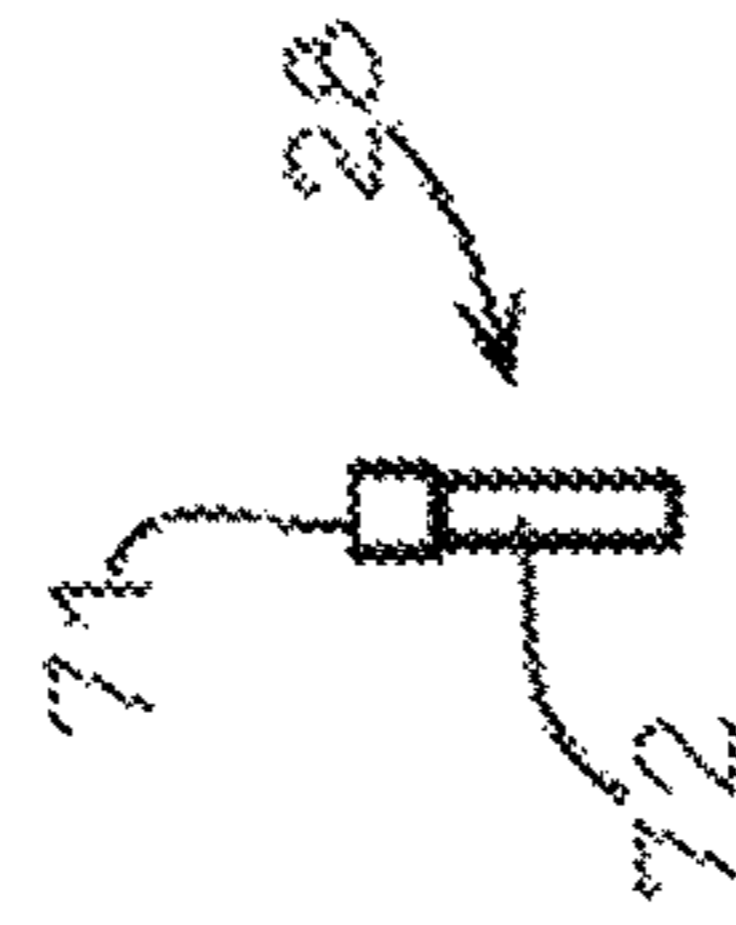


FIG. 4C

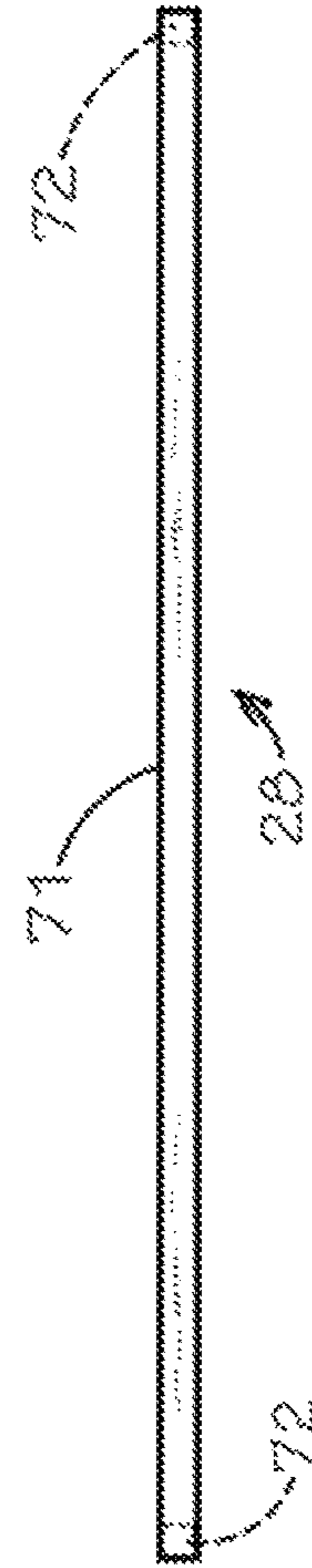


FIG. 4D

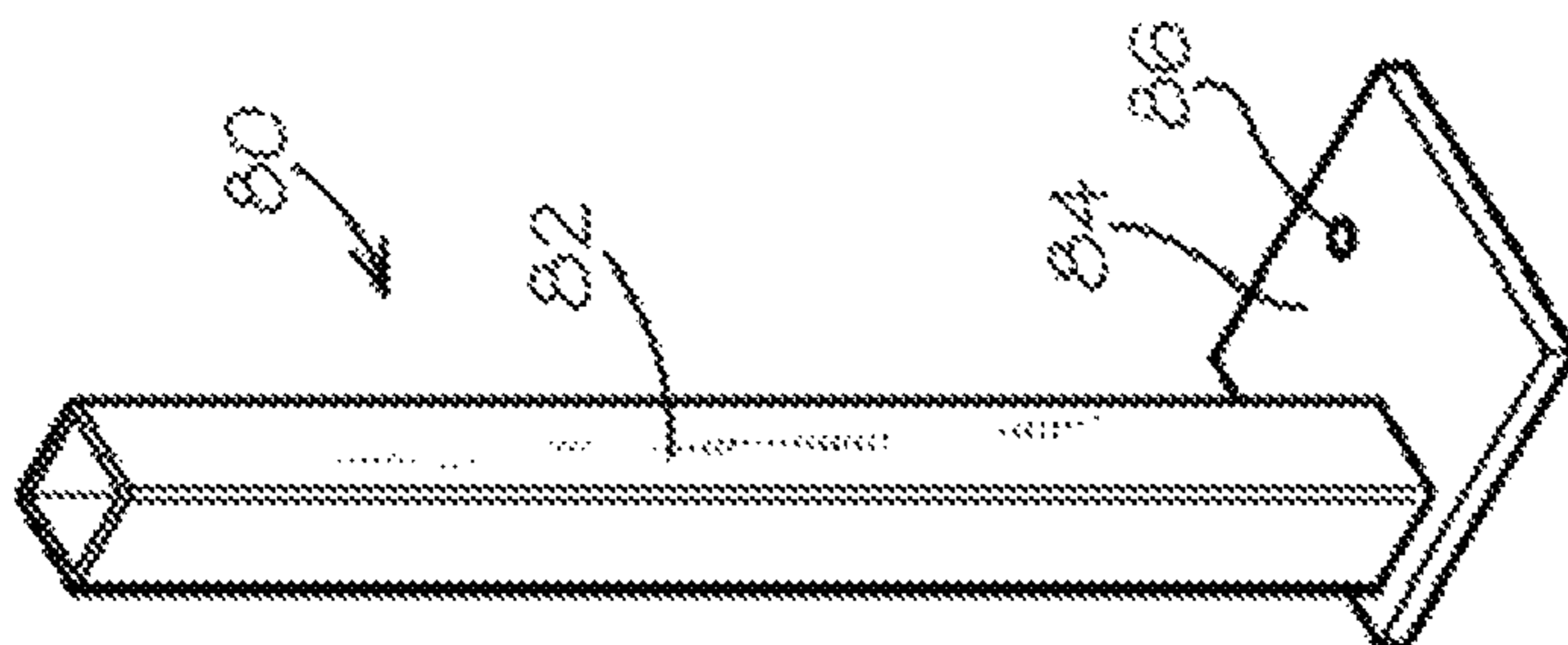


FIG. 5A

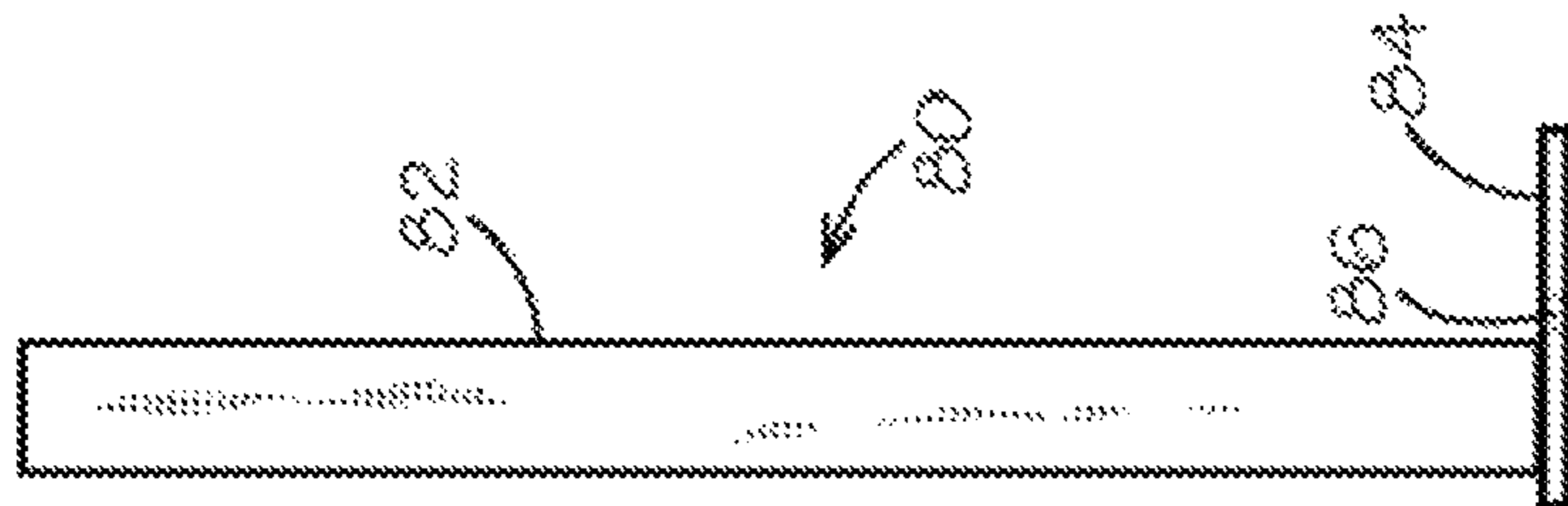


FIG. 5B

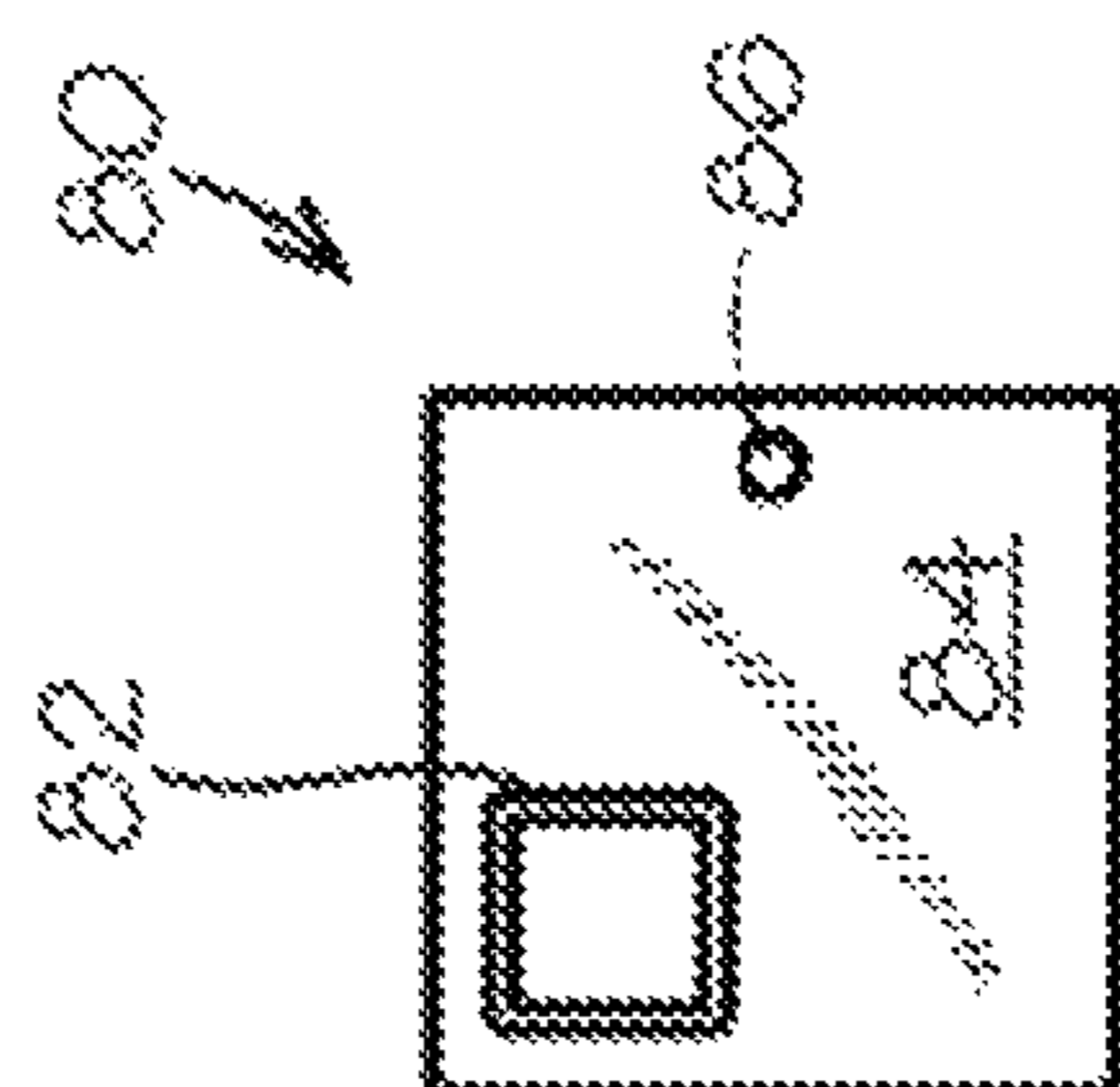


FIG. 5C

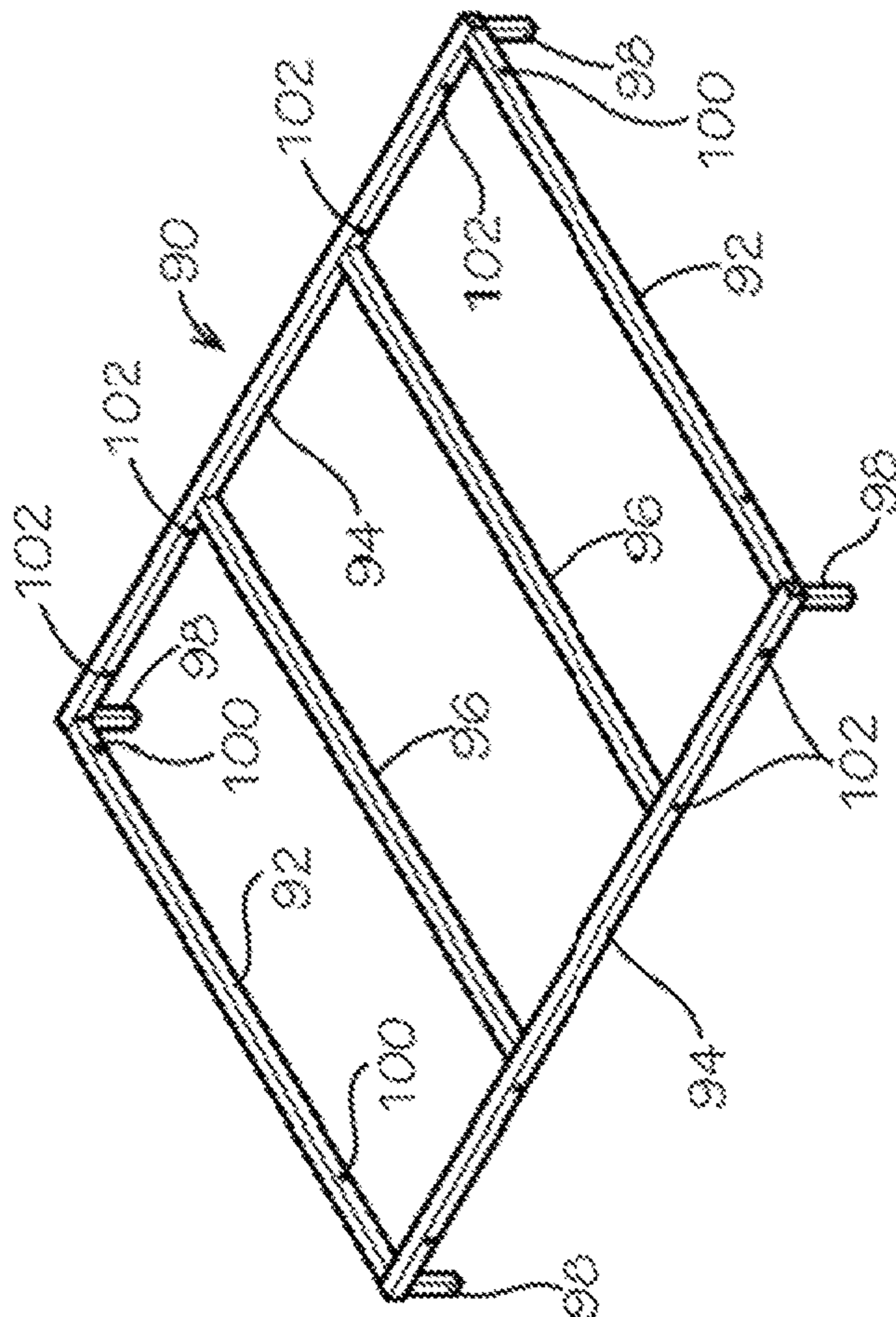


FIG. 6A

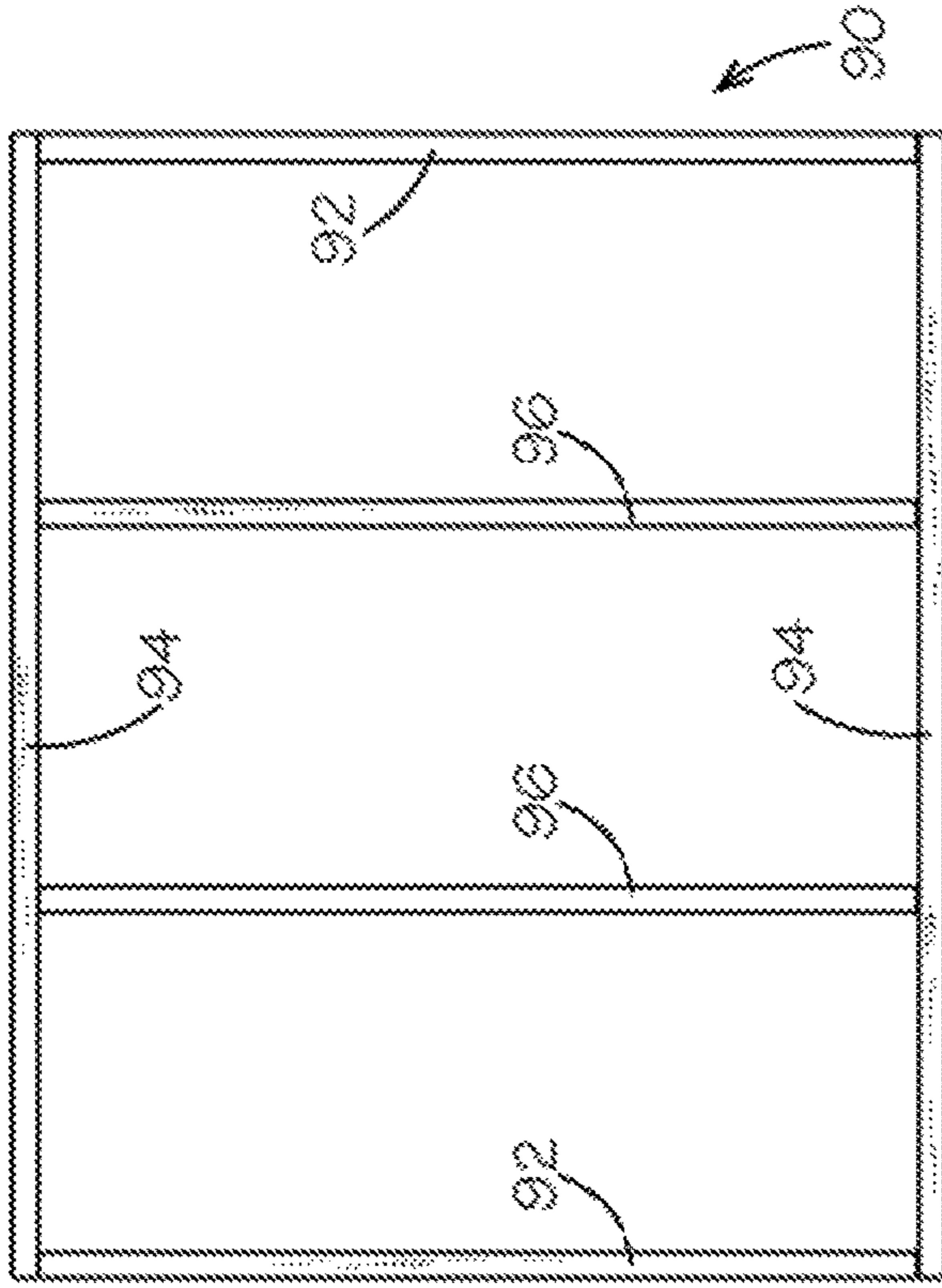


FIG. 6D

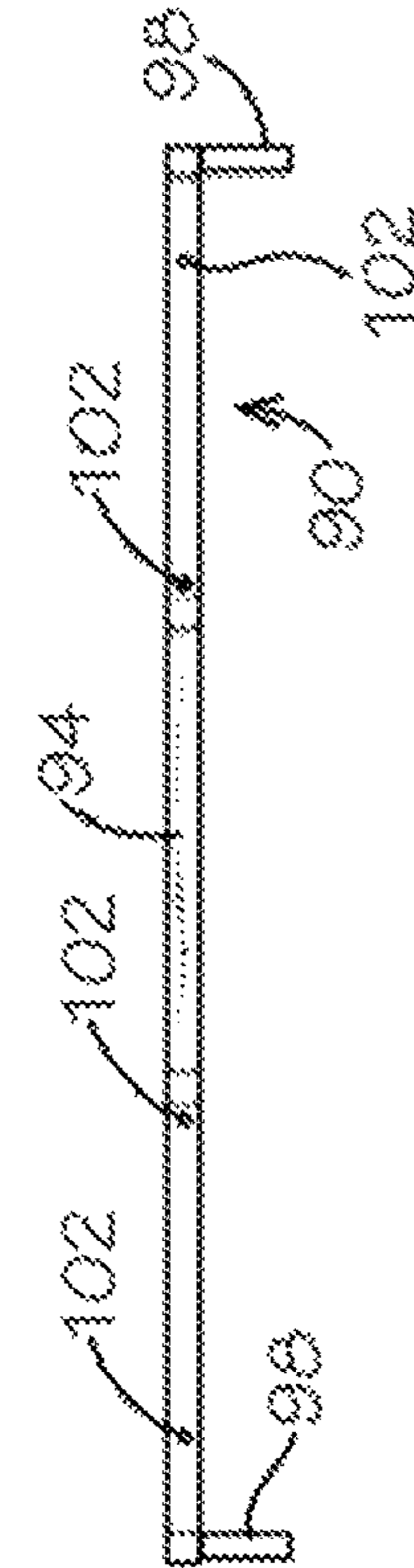


FIG. 6B

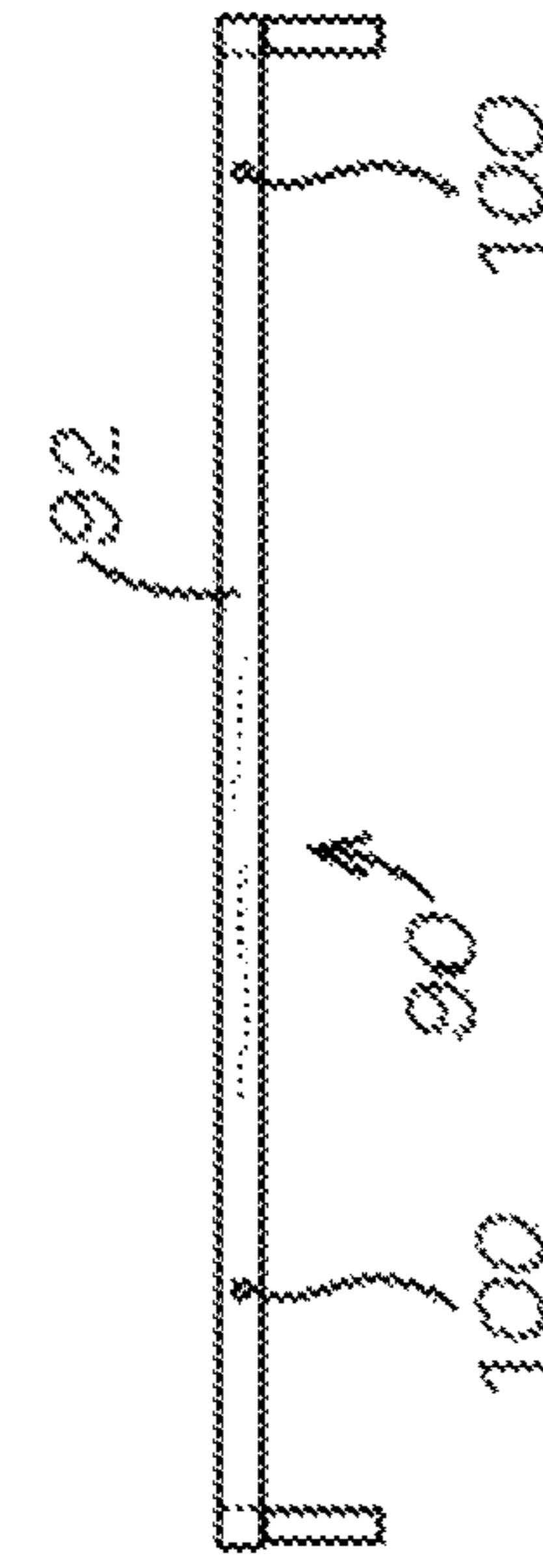


FIG. 6C

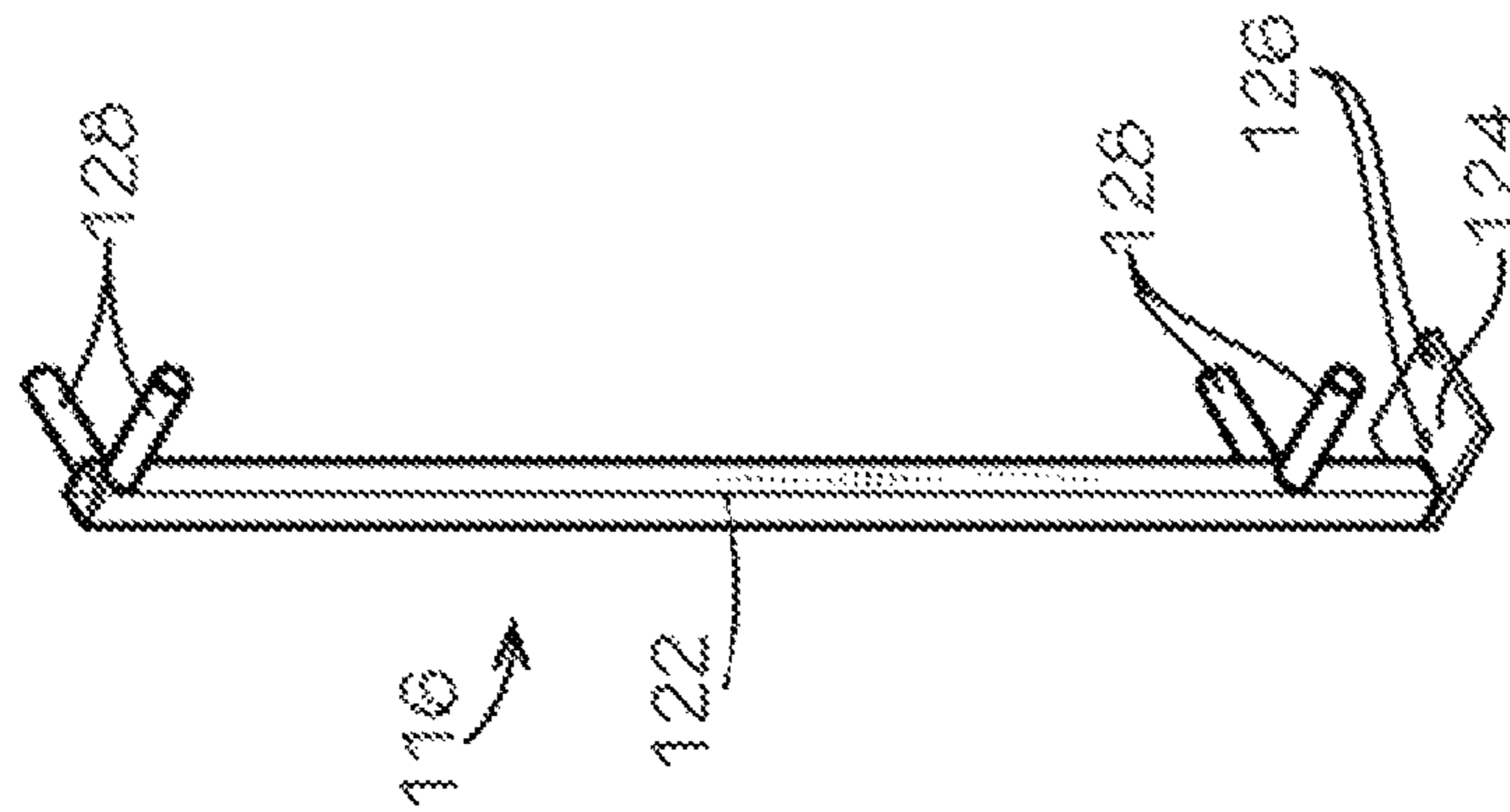


FIG. 7A

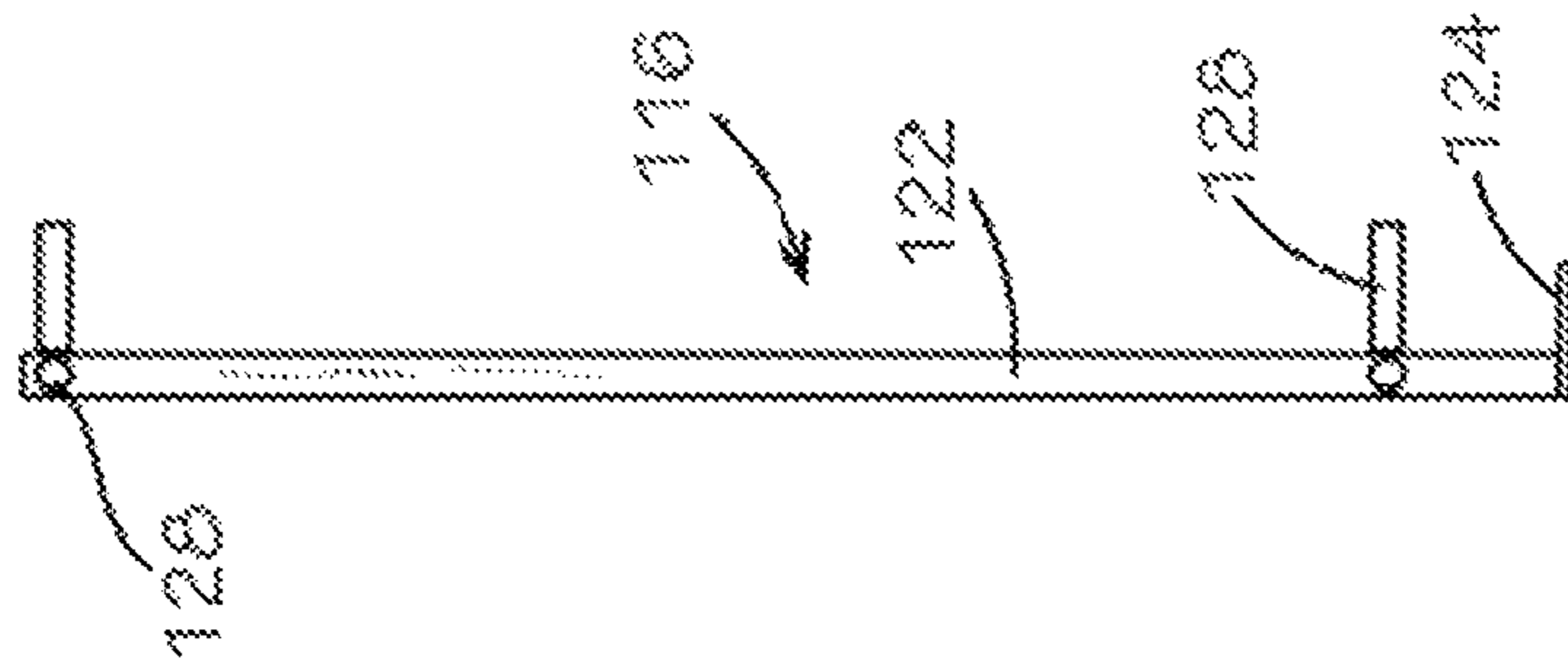


FIG. 7B

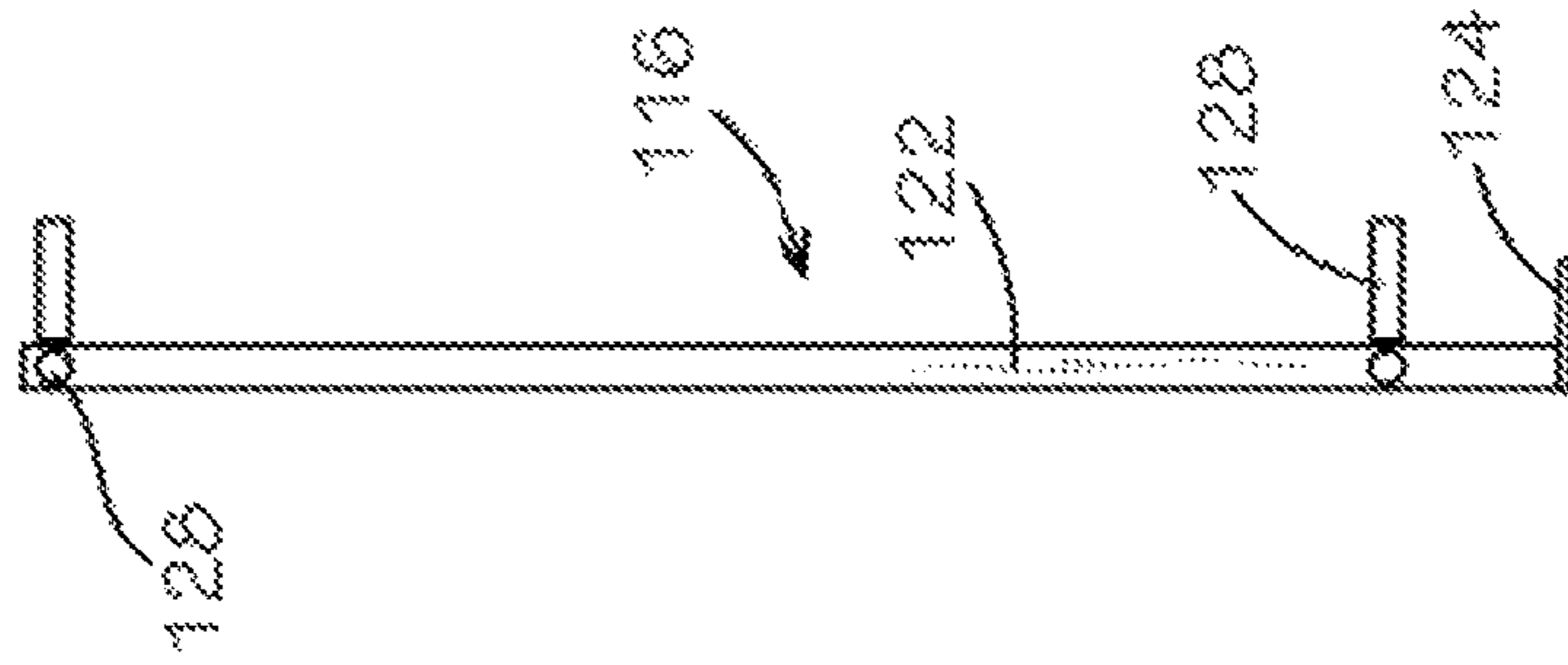


FIG. 7C

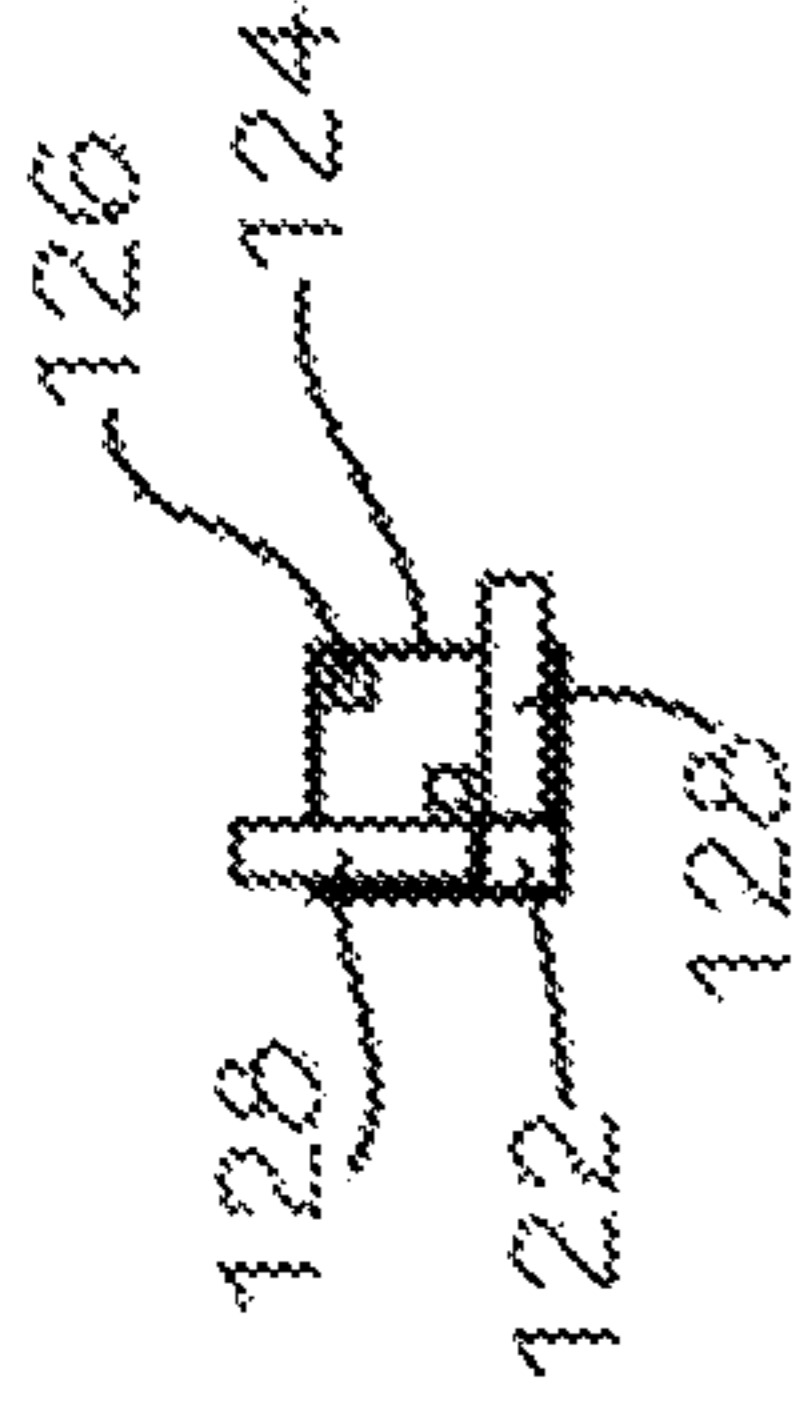


FIG. 7D

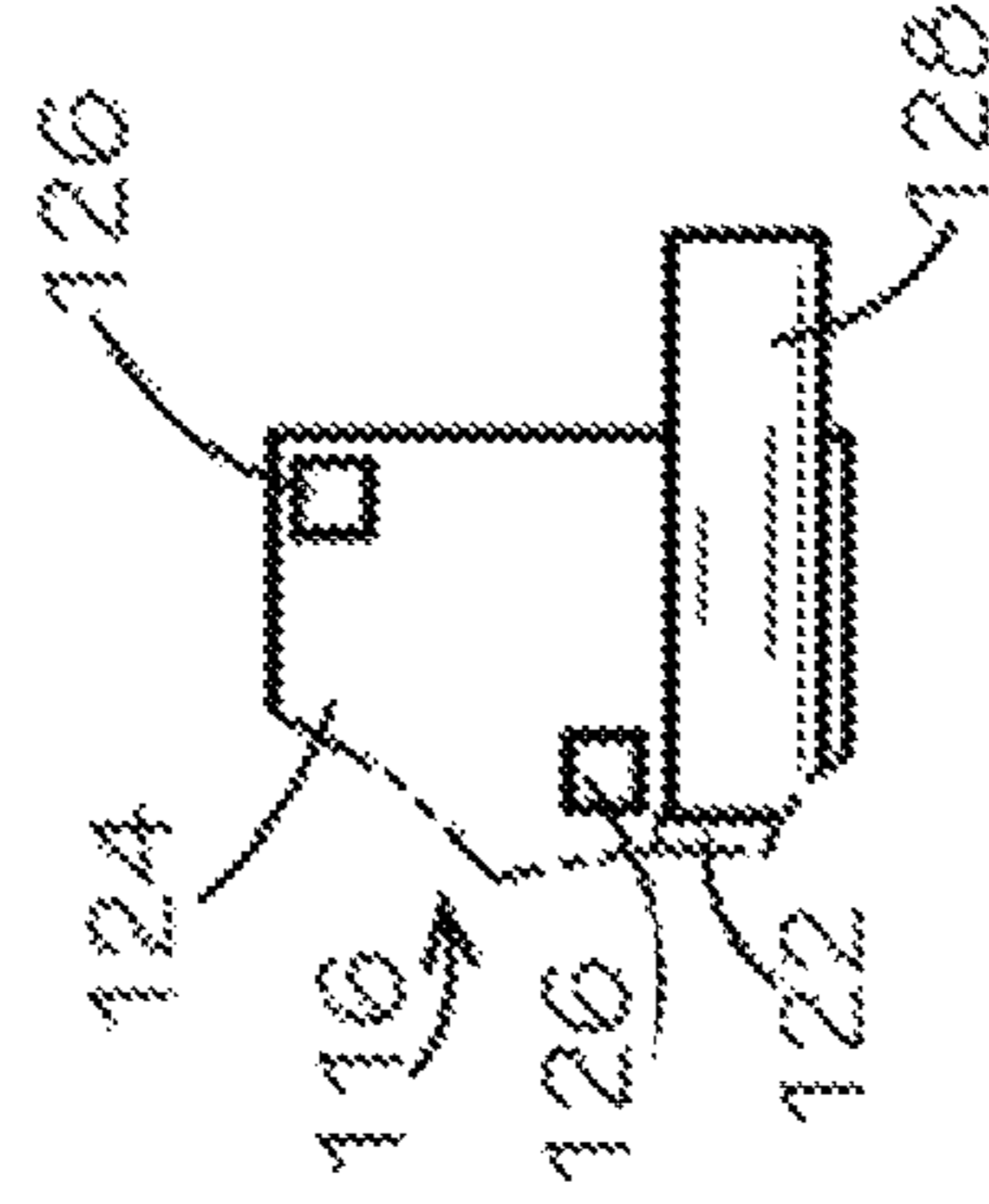


FIG. 7E

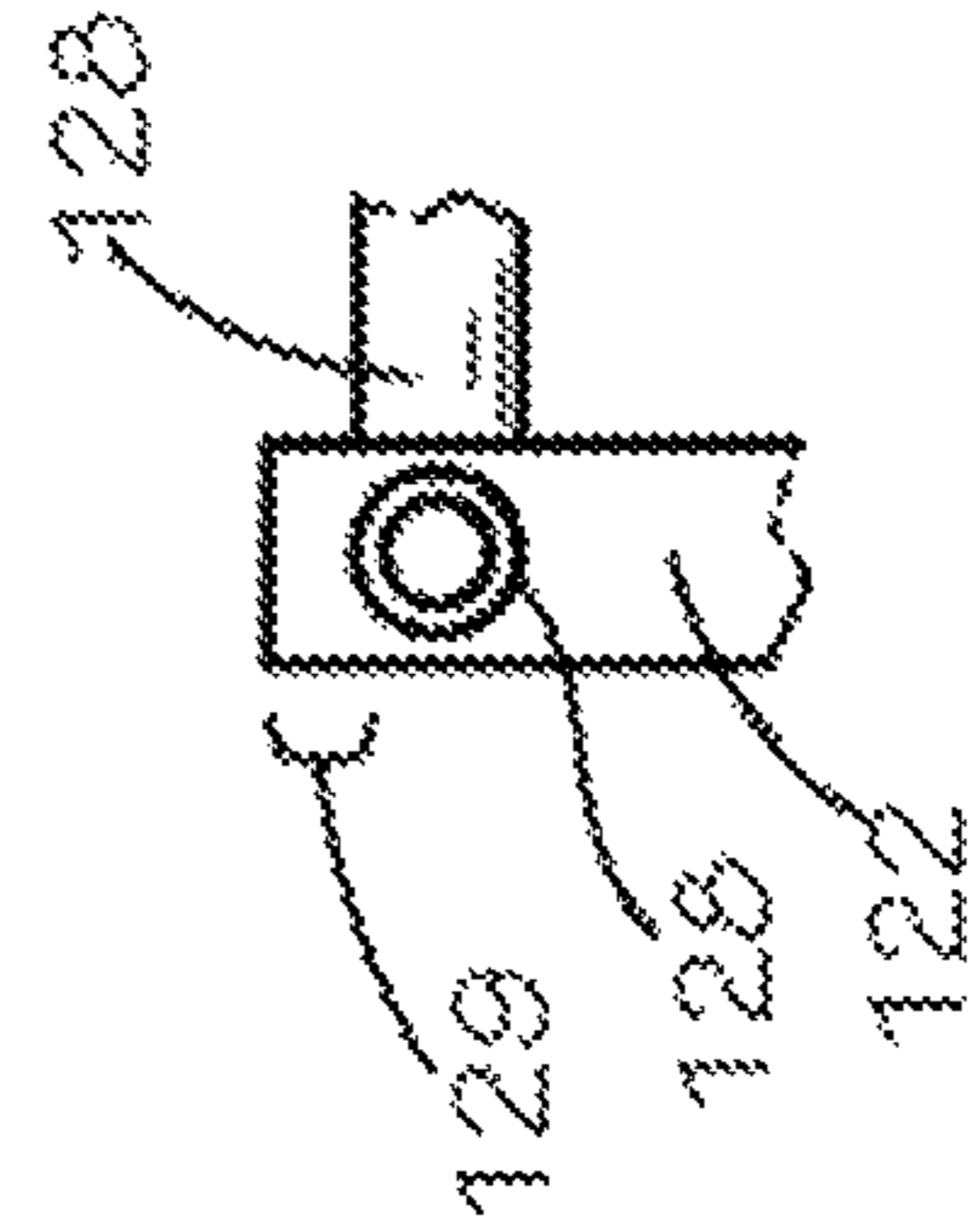


FIG. 7F

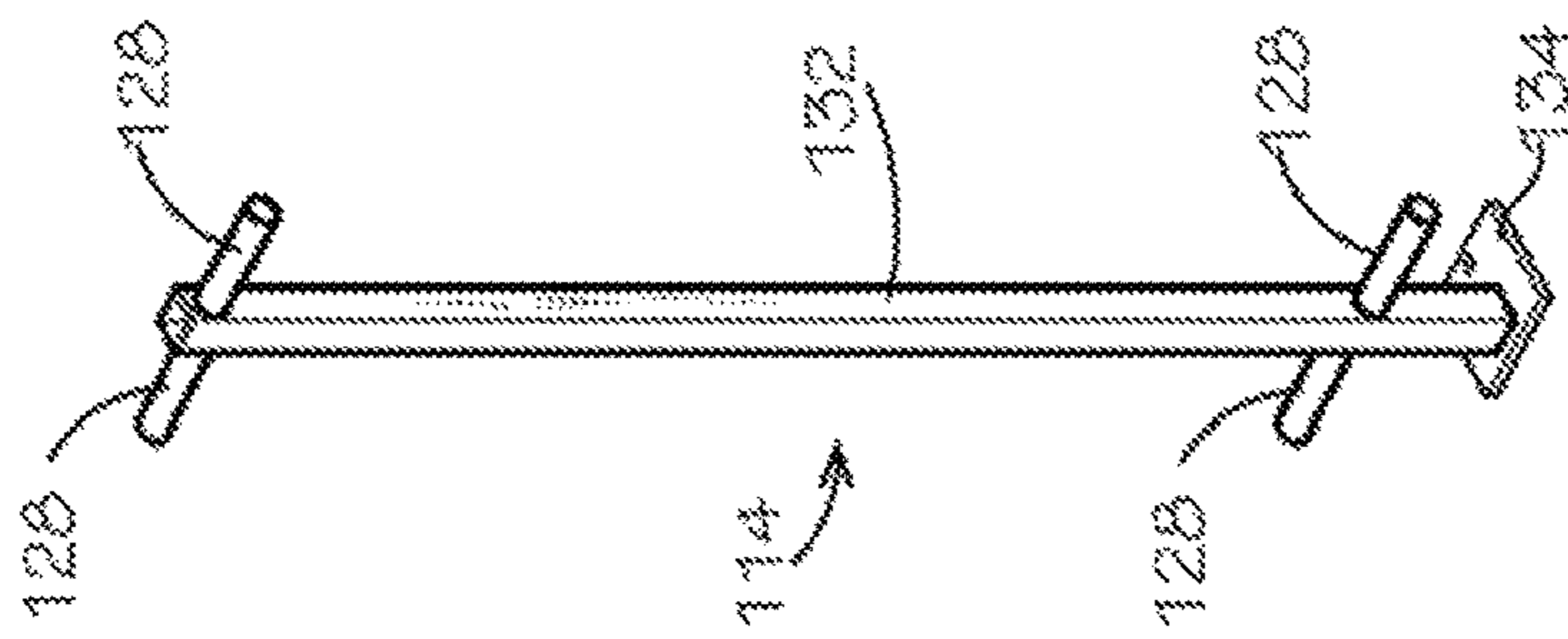


FIG. 8A

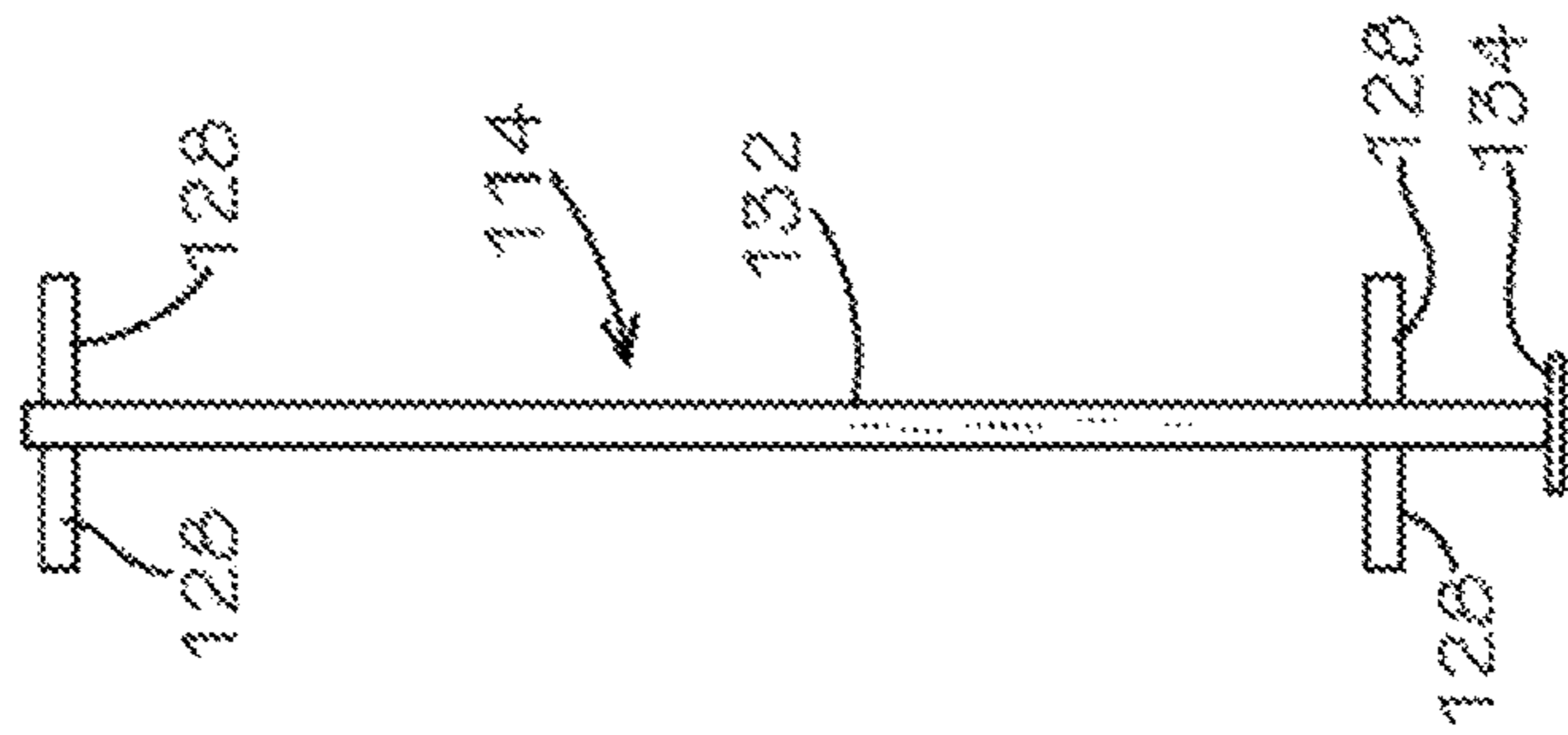


FIG. 8B

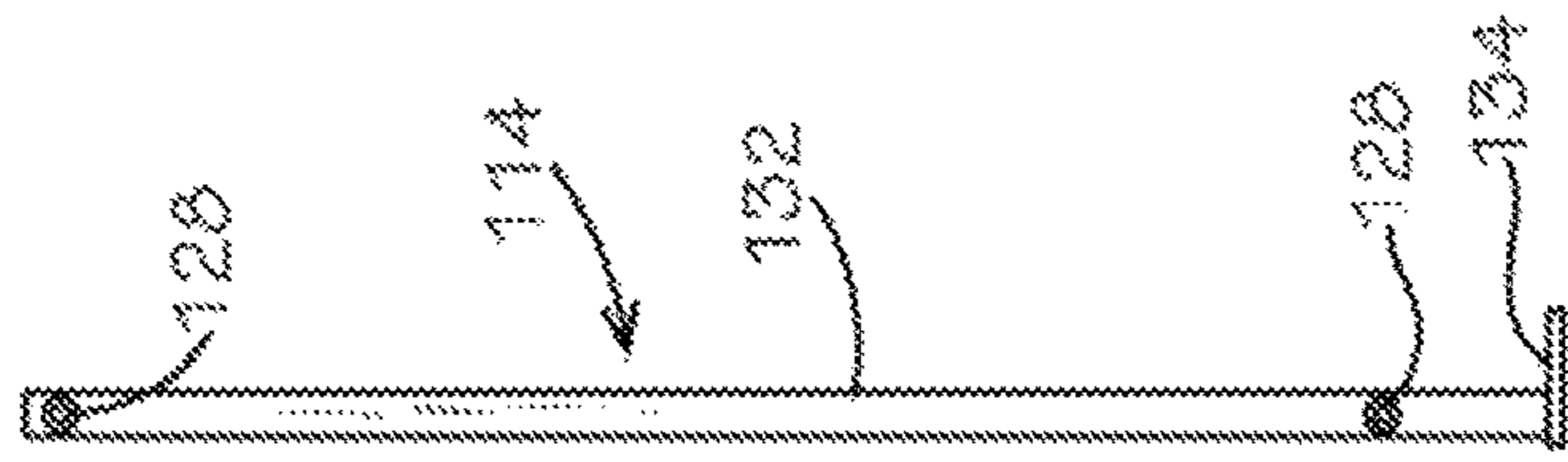


FIG. 8C

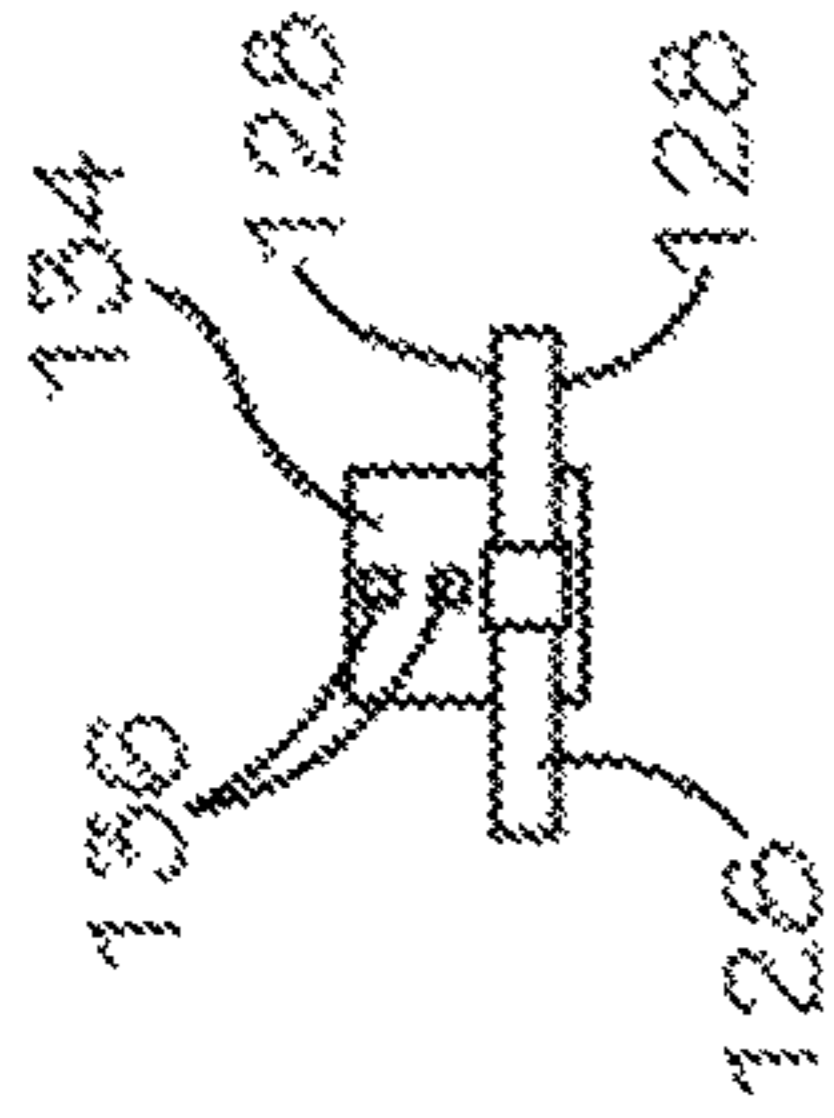


FIG. 8D

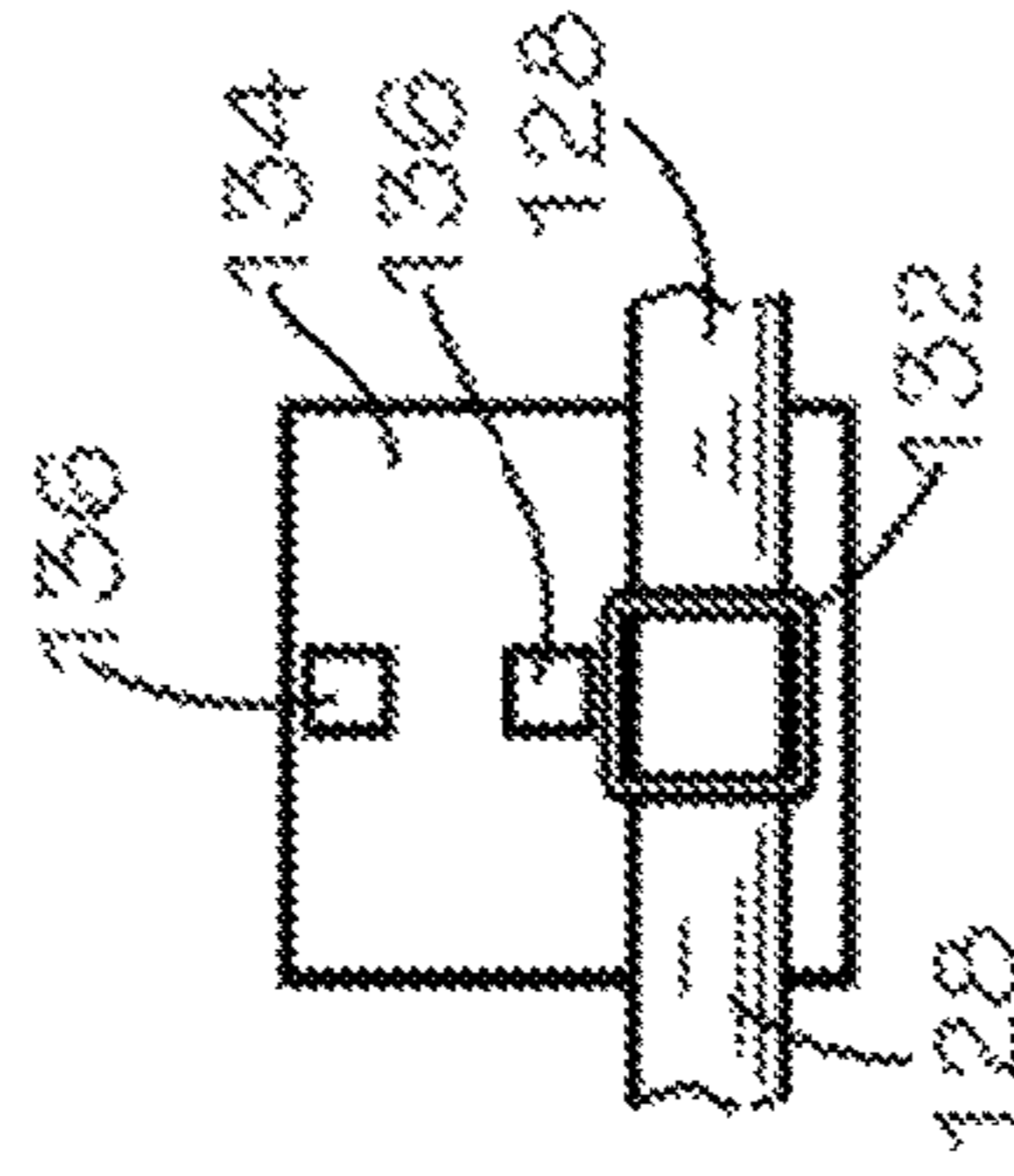


FIG. 8E

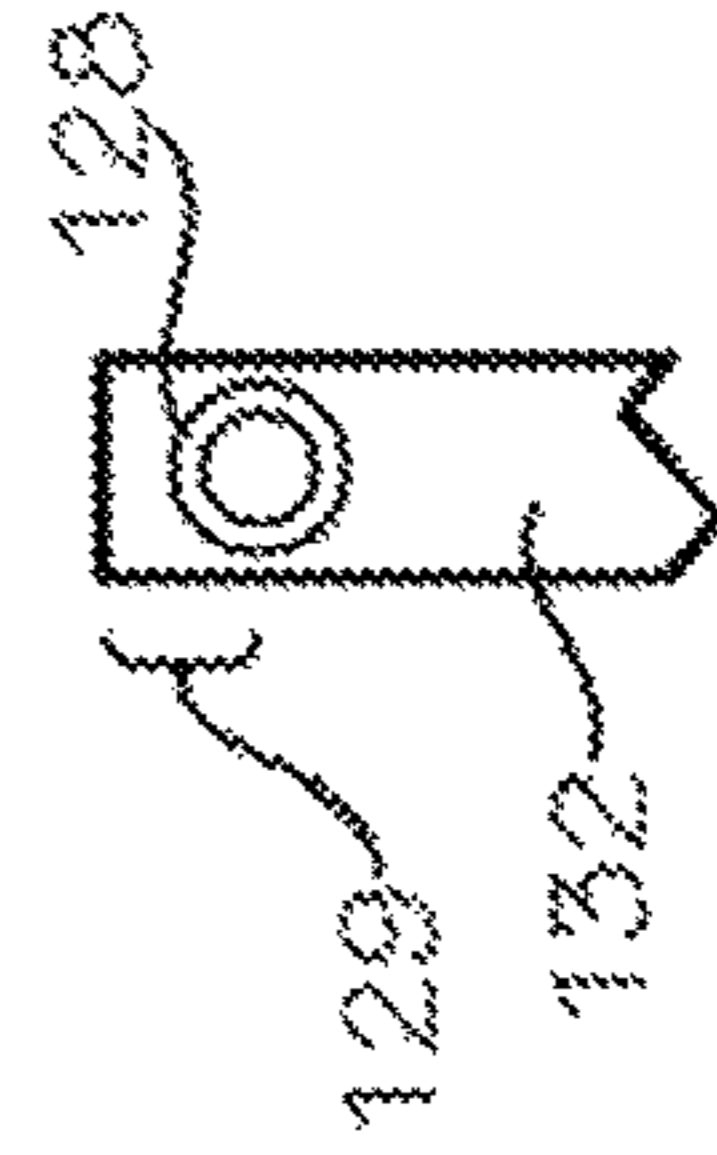


FIG. 8F

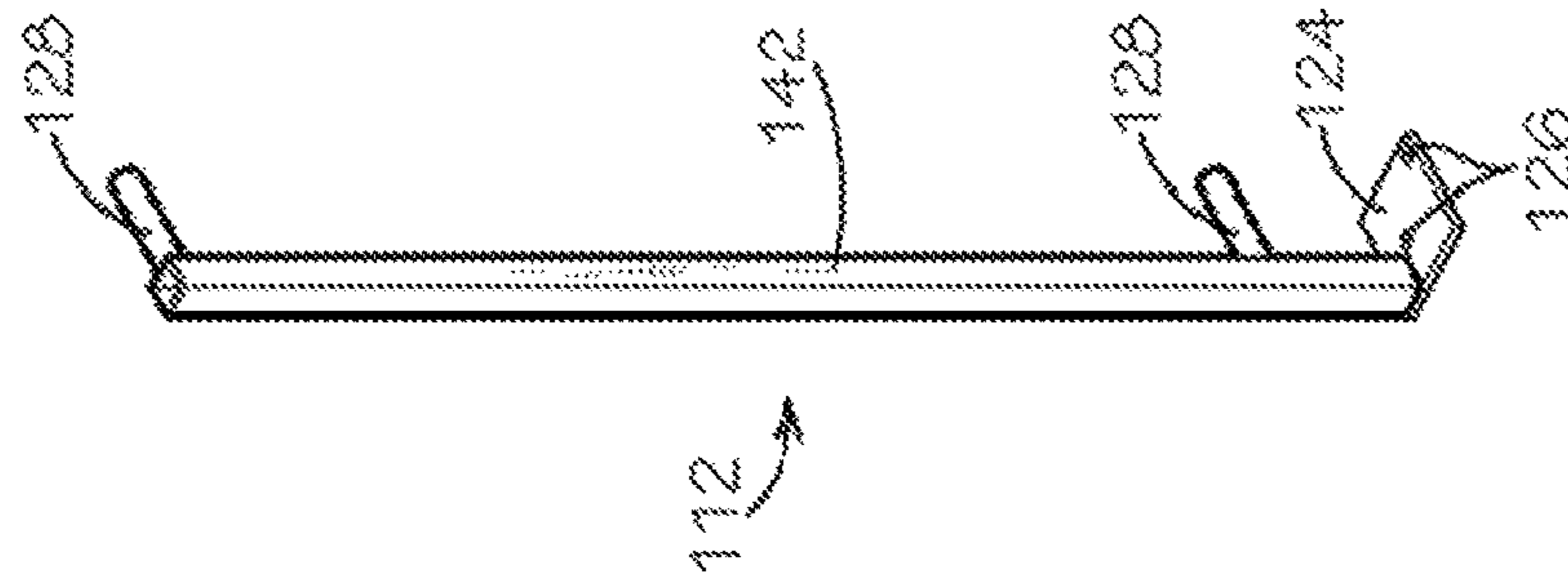


FIG. 9A

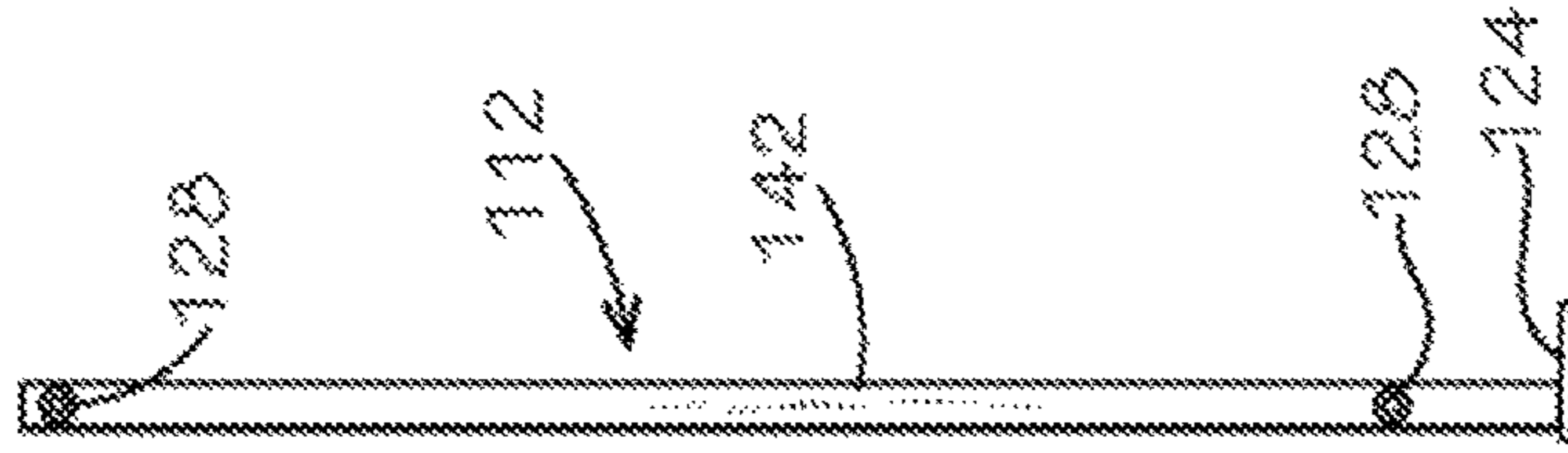


FIG. 9B

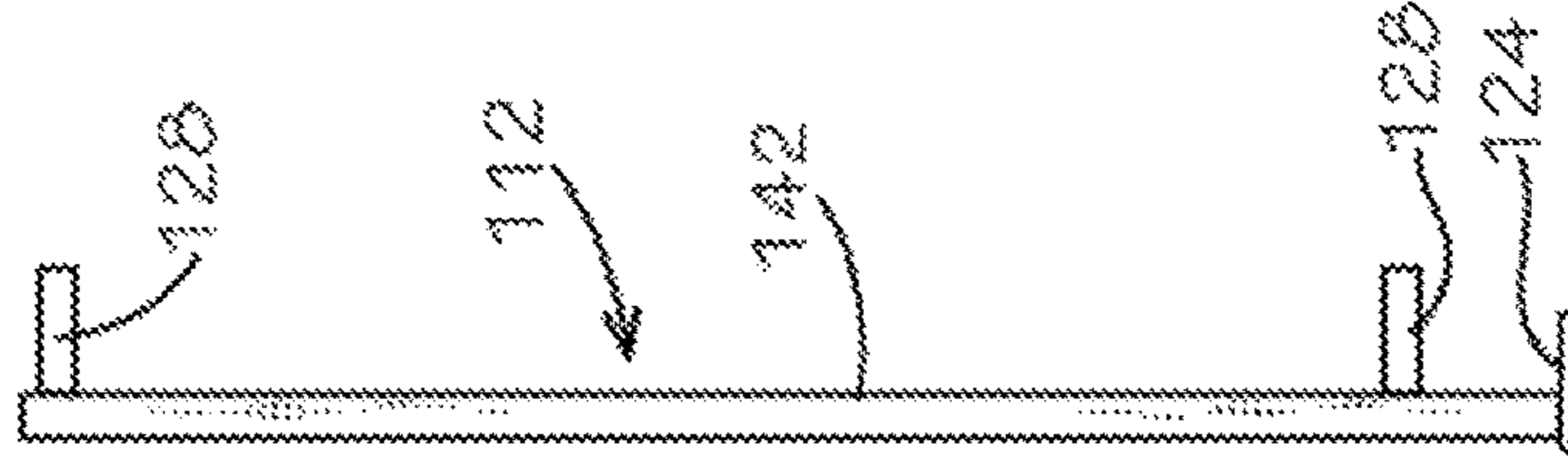


FIG. 9C



FIG. 9D

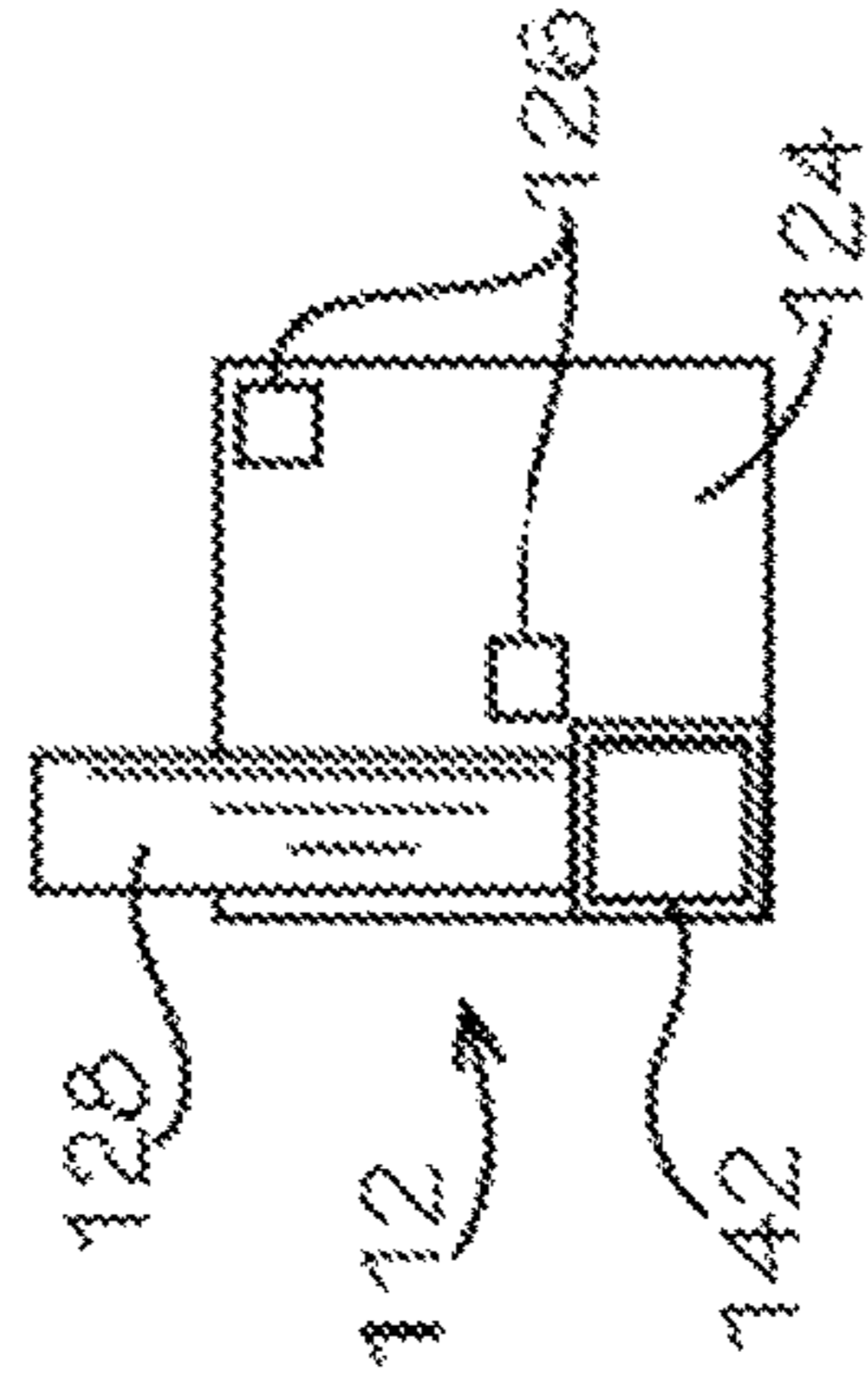


FIG. 9E

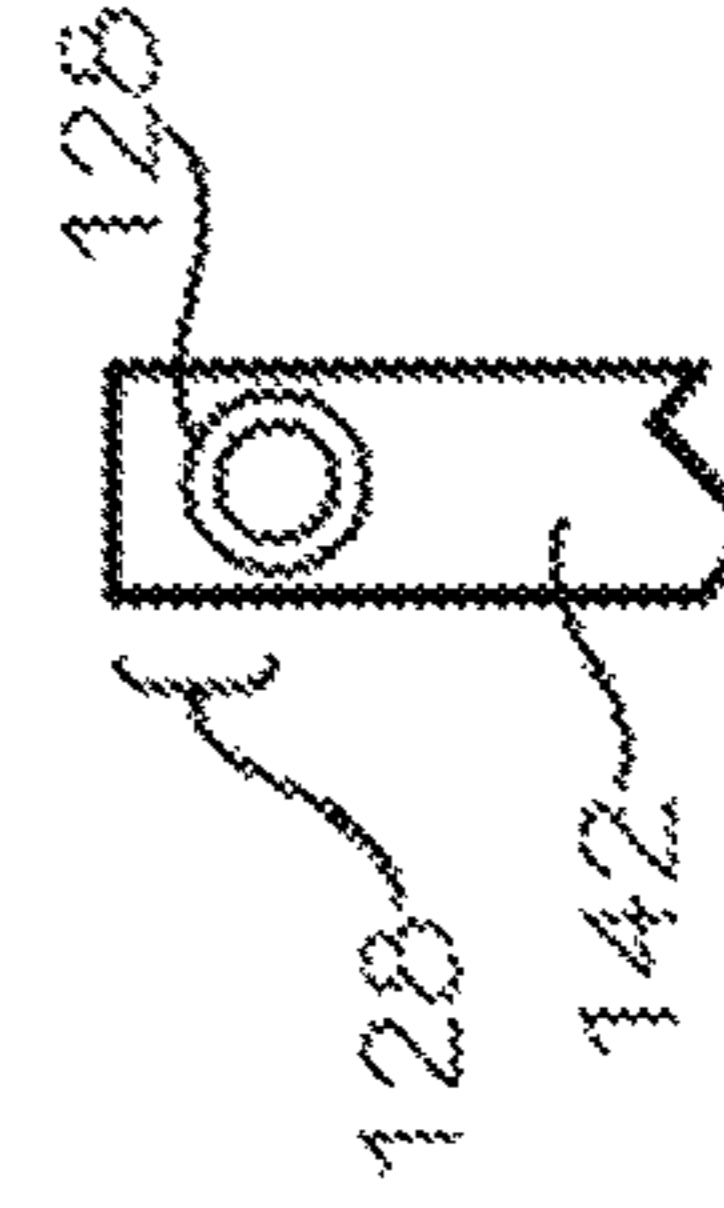


FIG. 9F

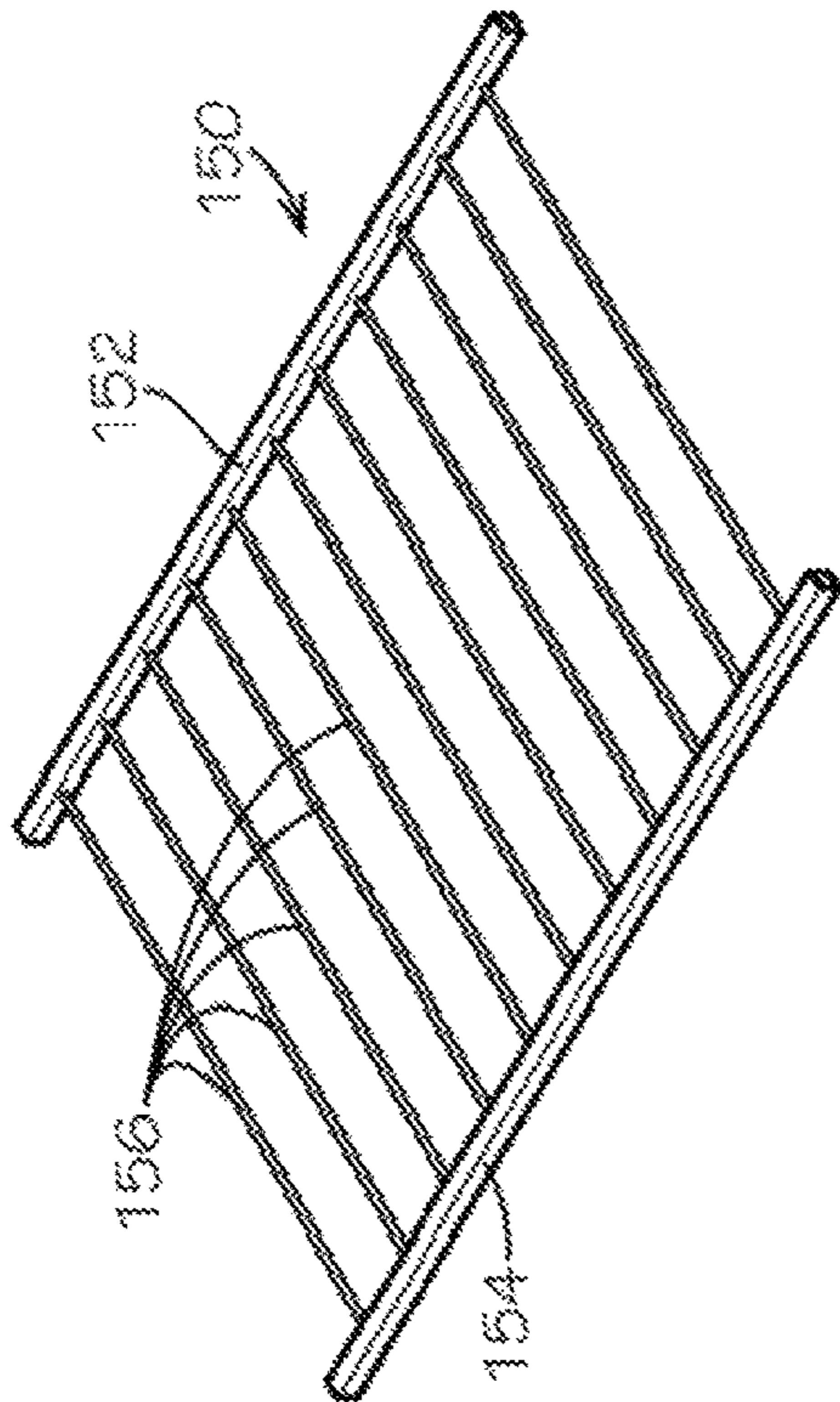


FIG. 10A

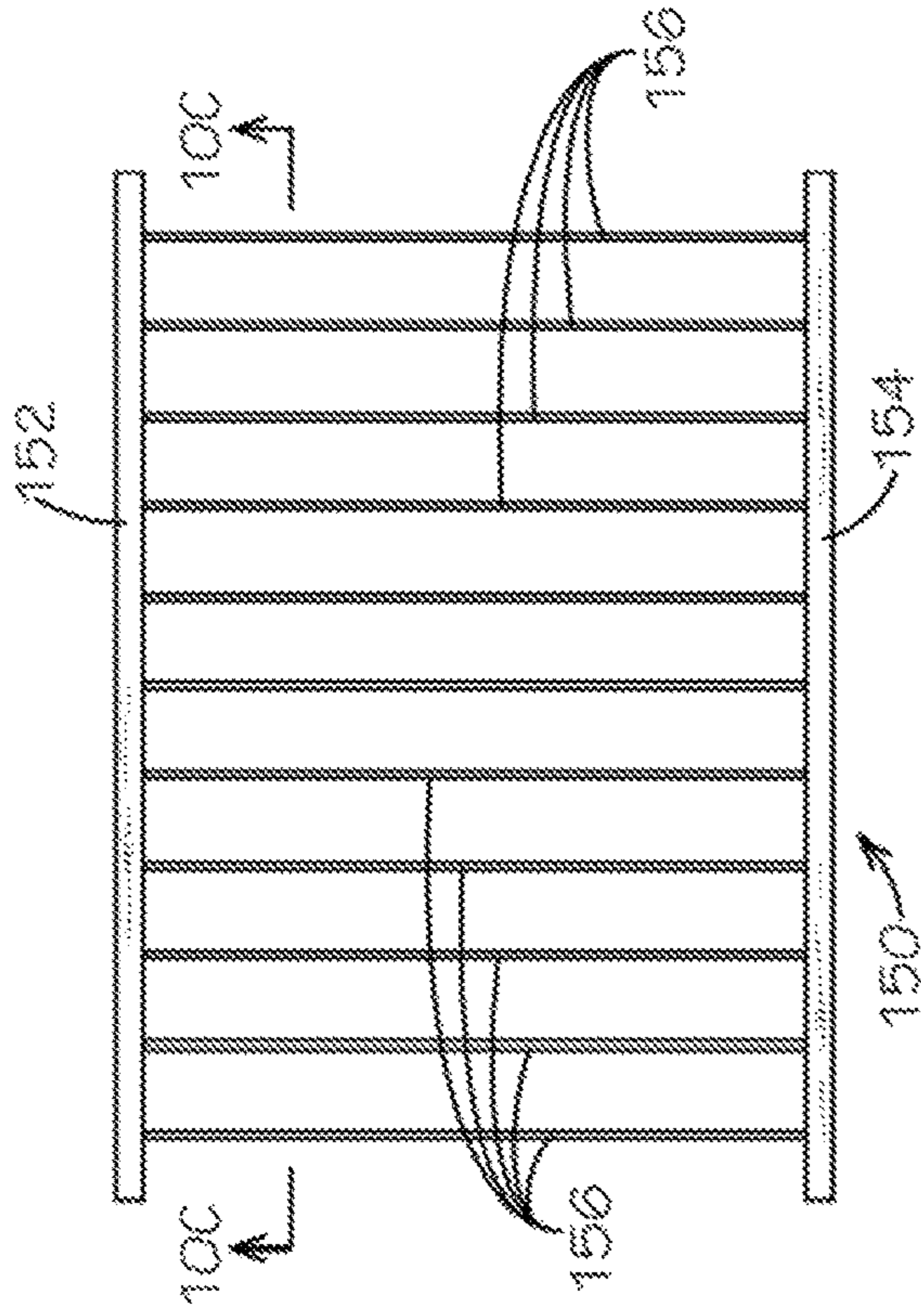


FIG. 10B

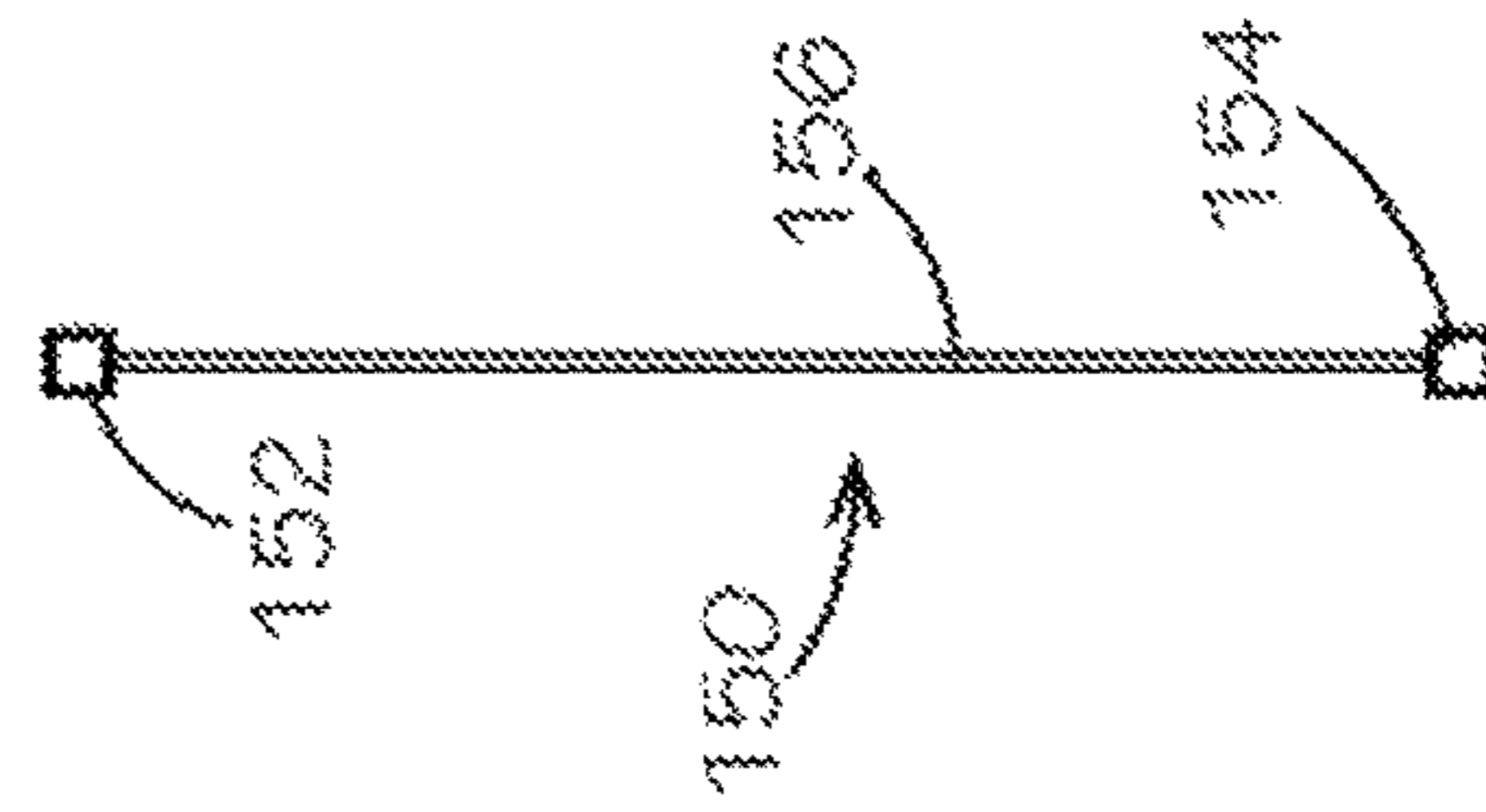


FIG. 10D

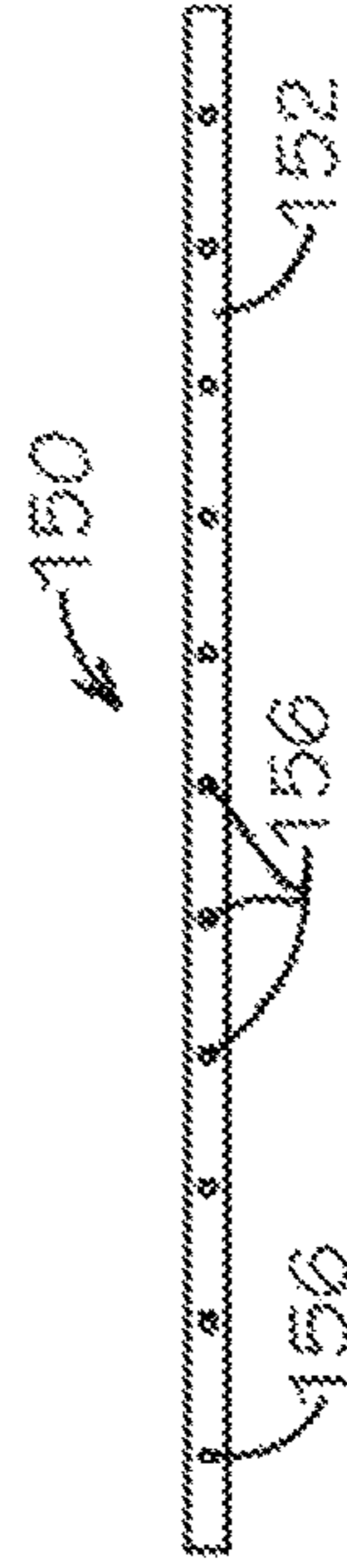


FIG. 10C

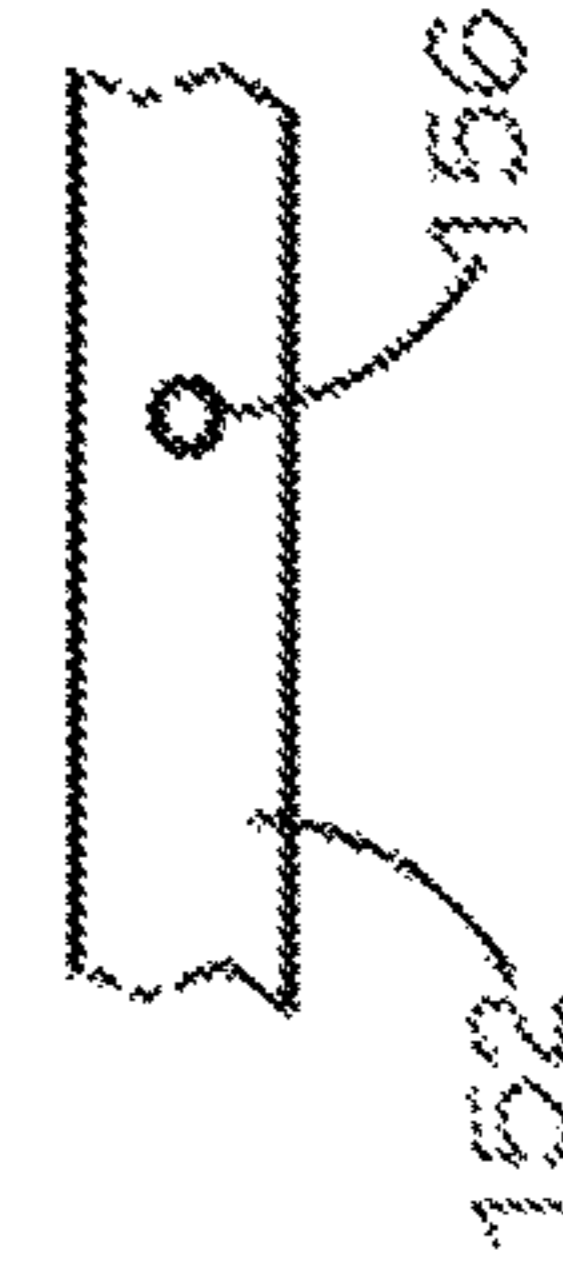


FIG. 10E

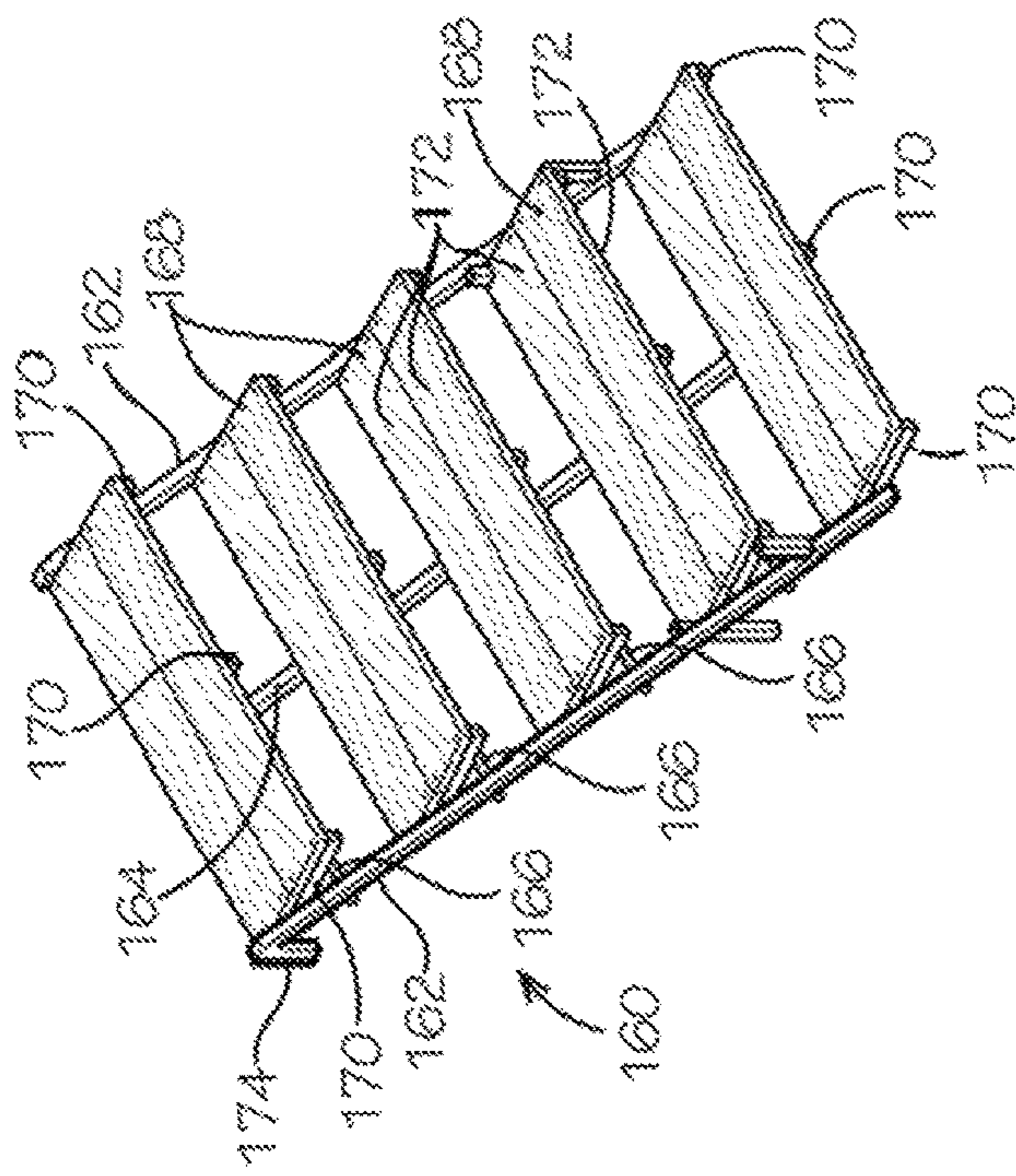


FIG. 11A

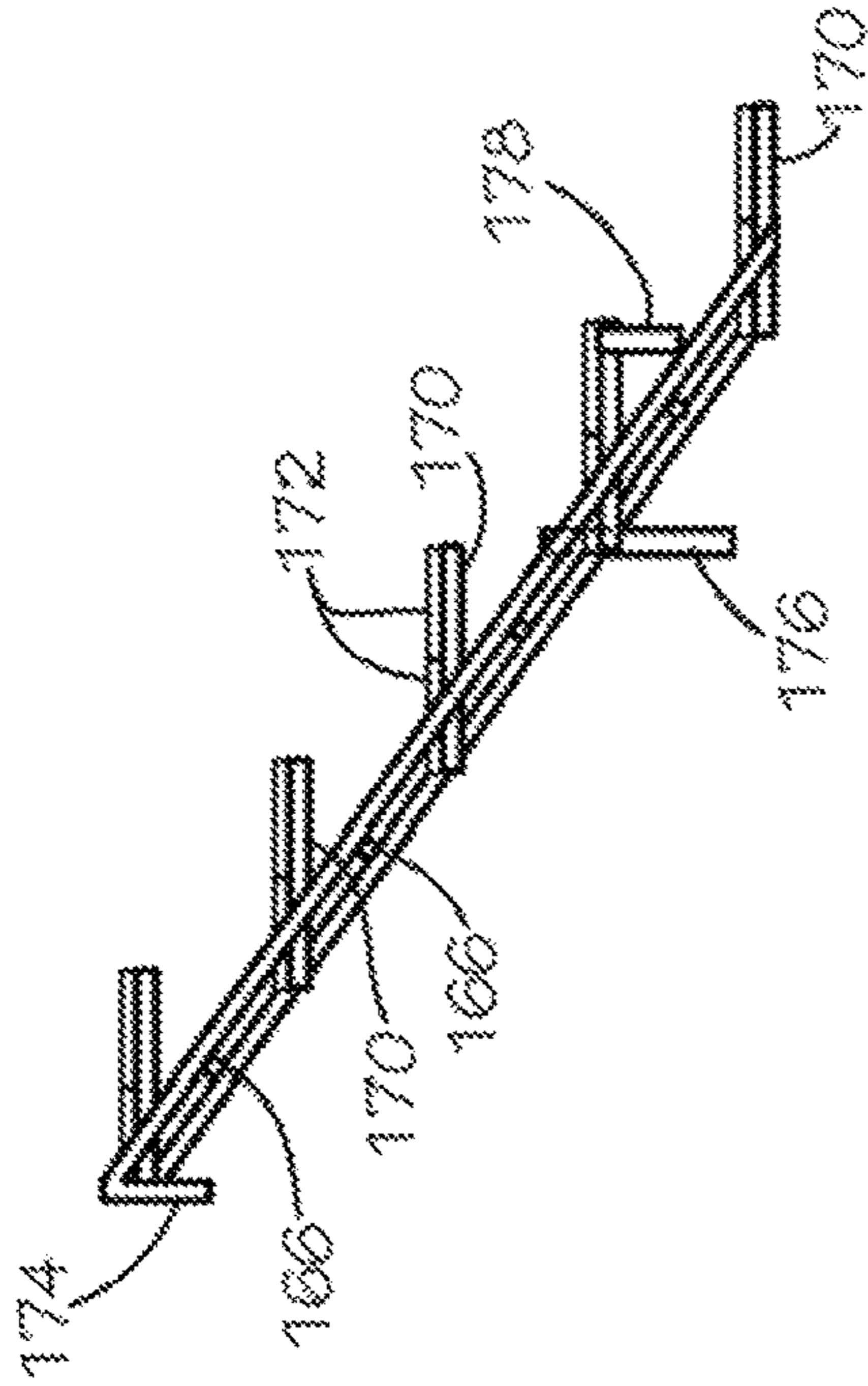


FIG. 11C

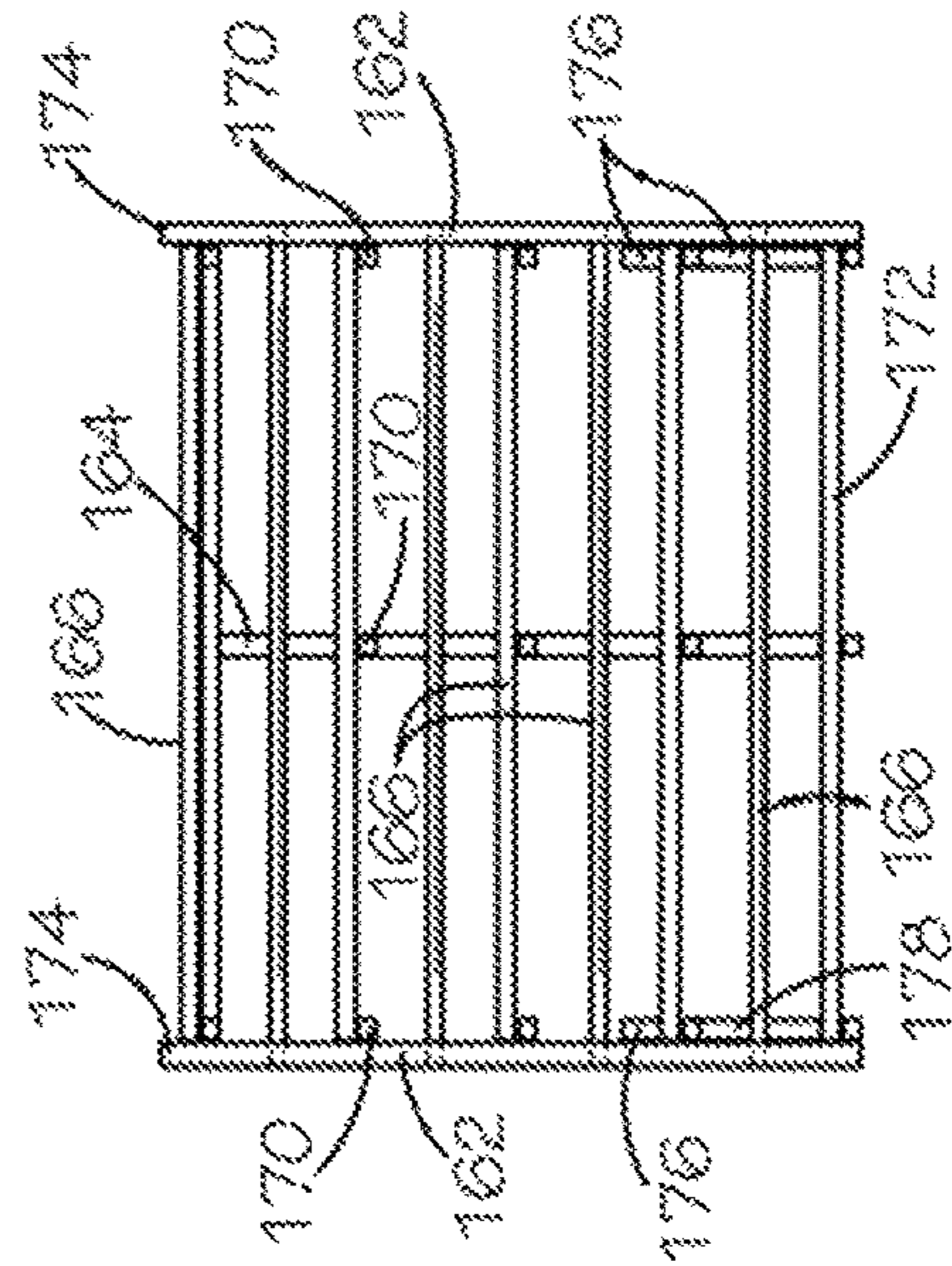


FIG. 11B

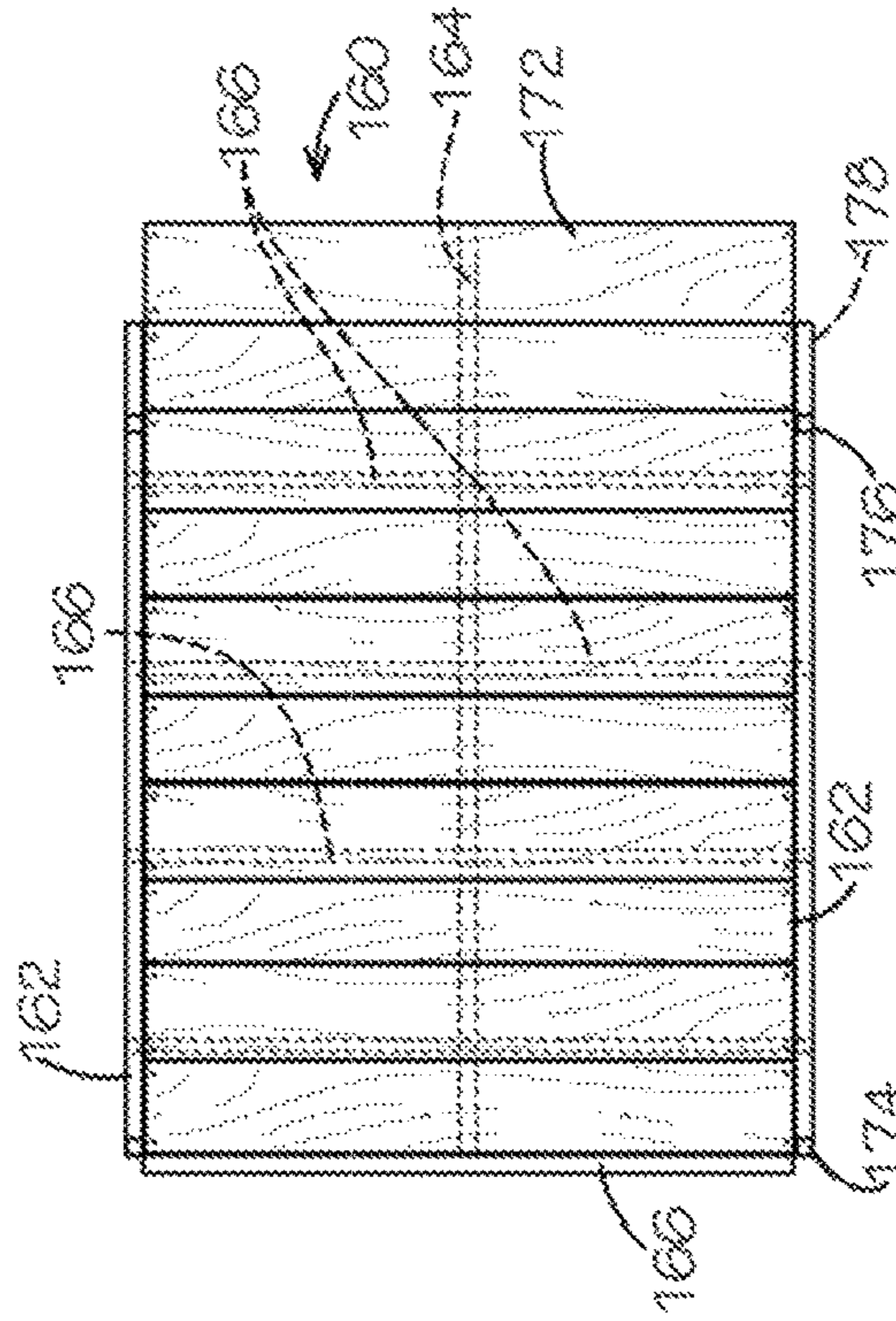


FIG. 11D

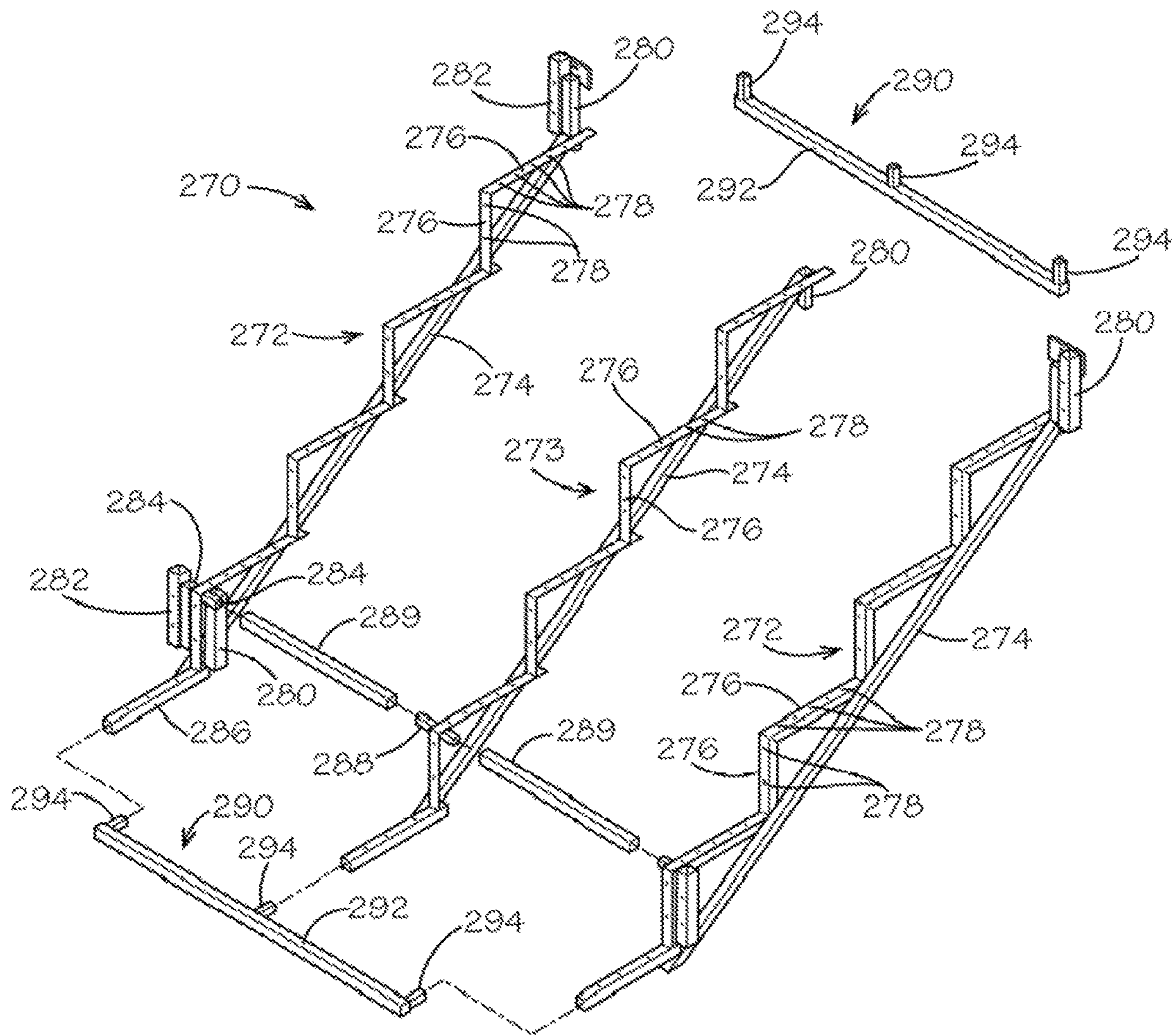


FIG. 11E

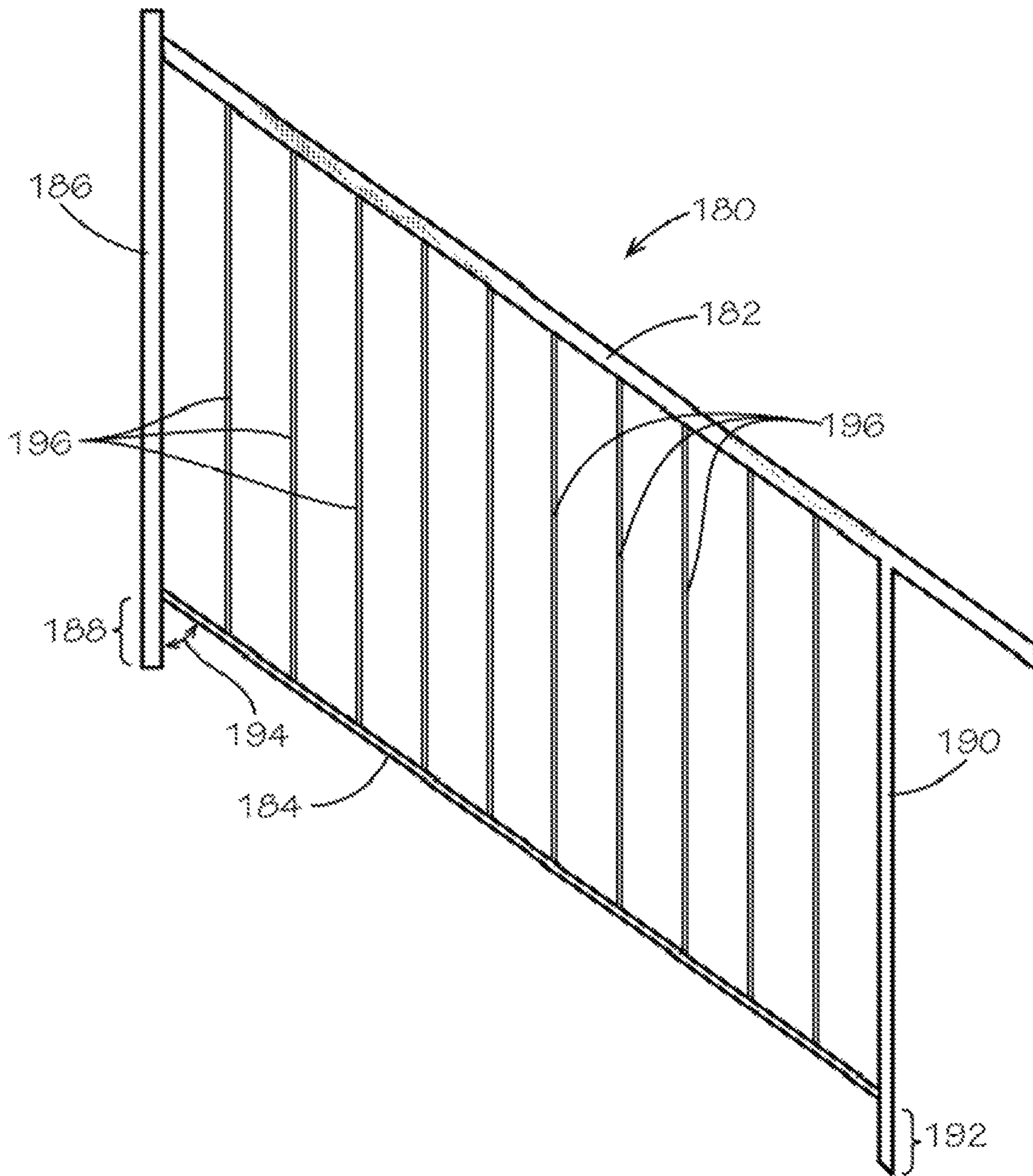


FIG. 12

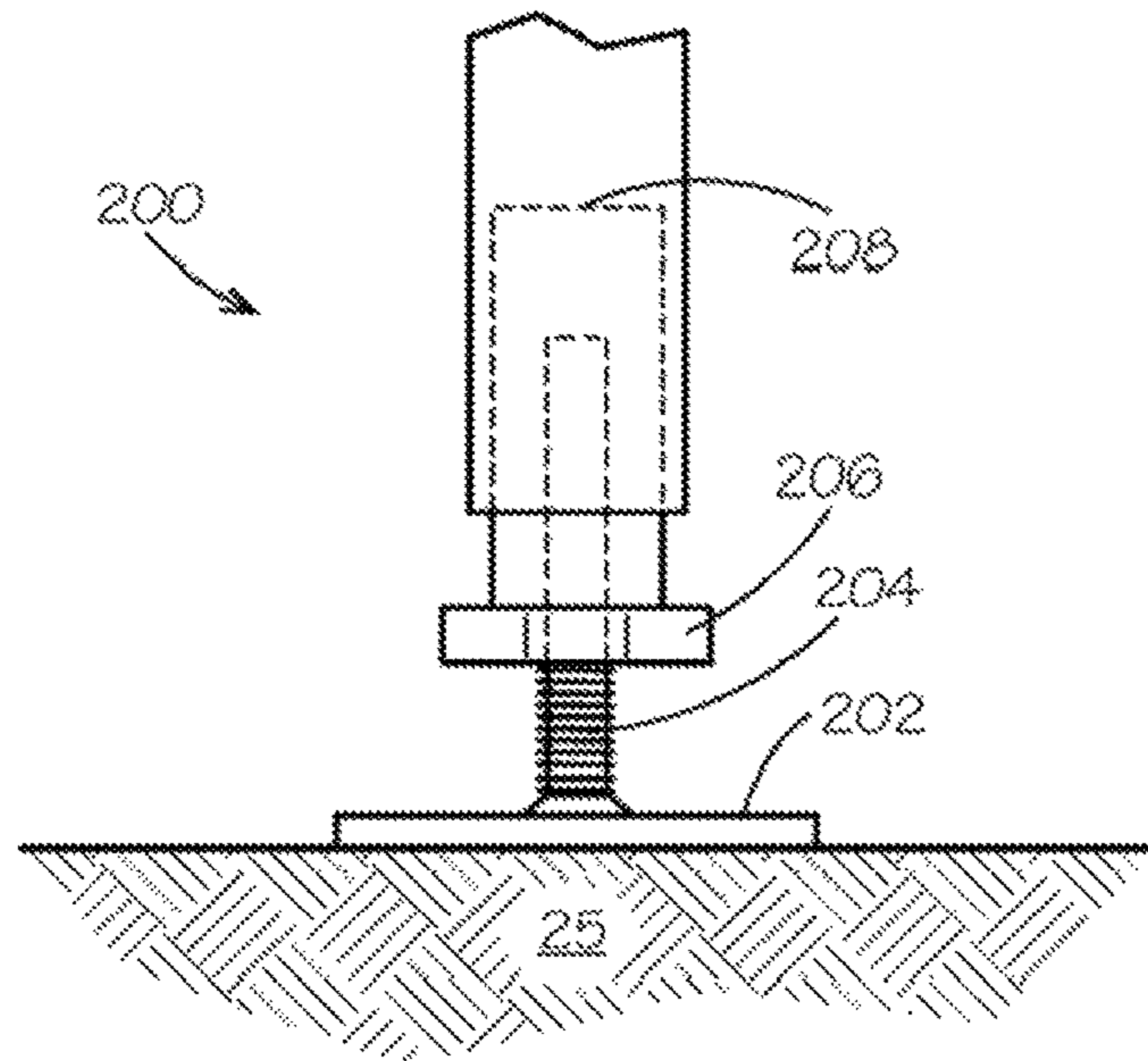


FIG. 13

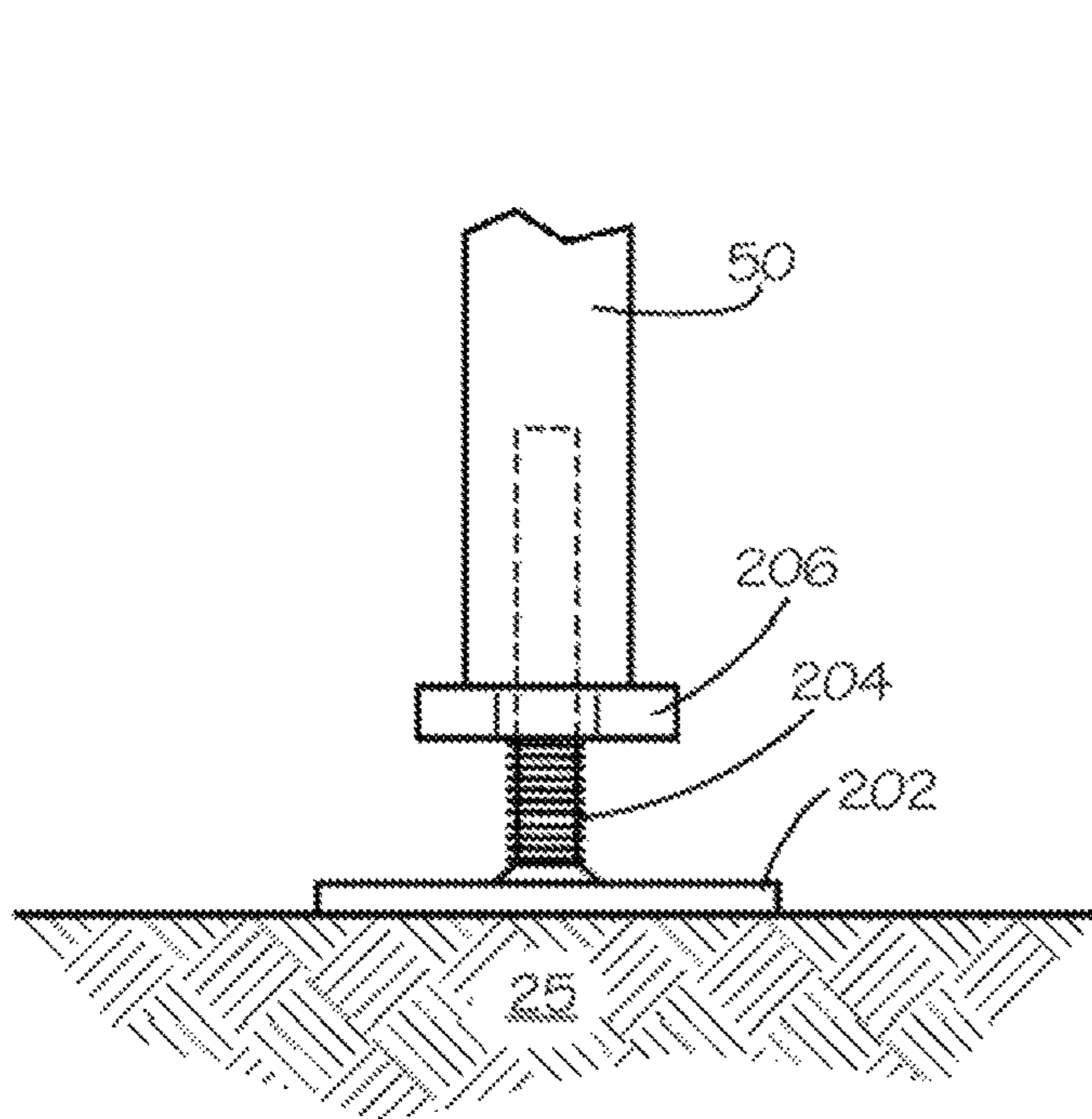


FIG. 14

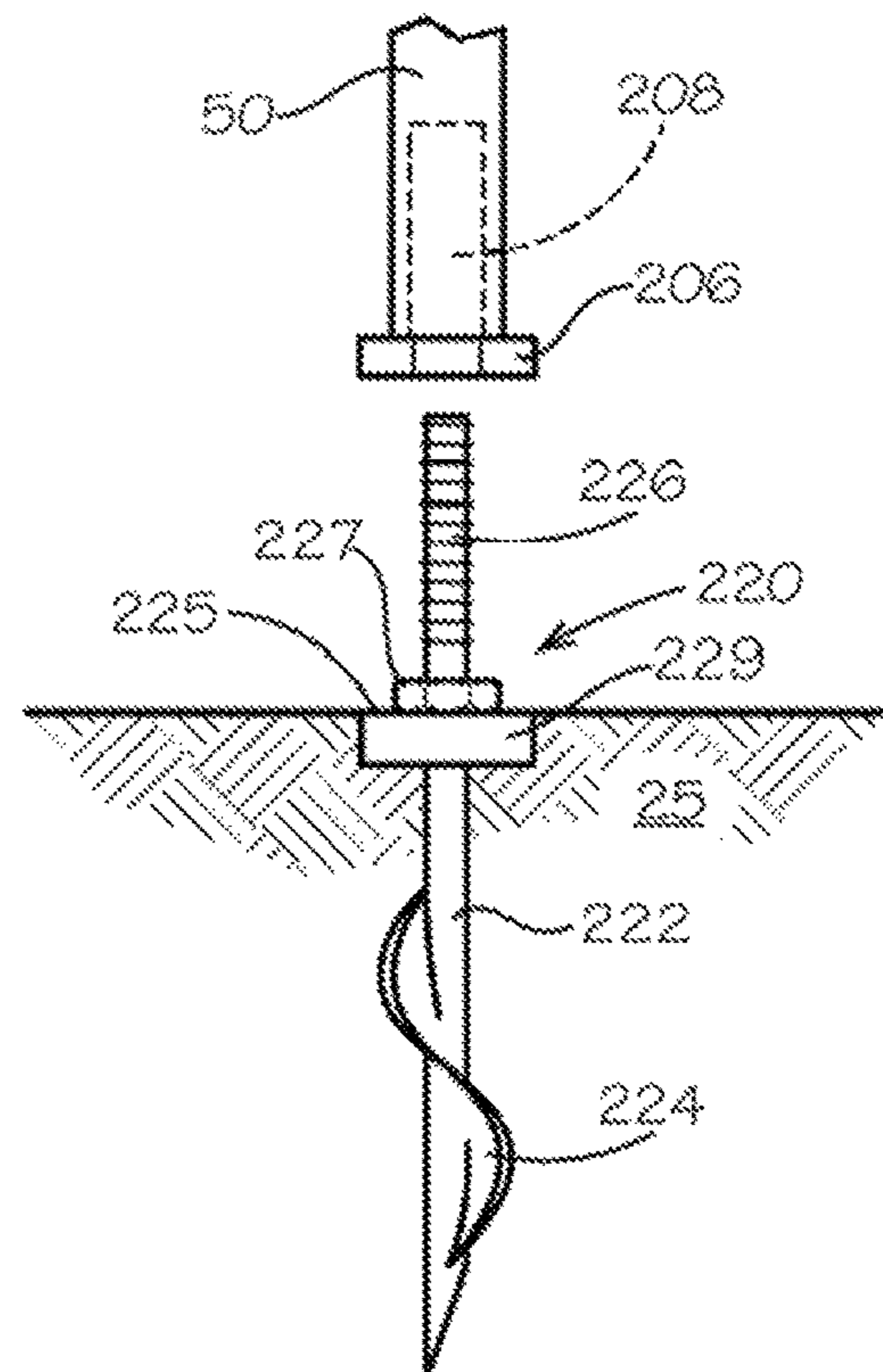


FIG. 15

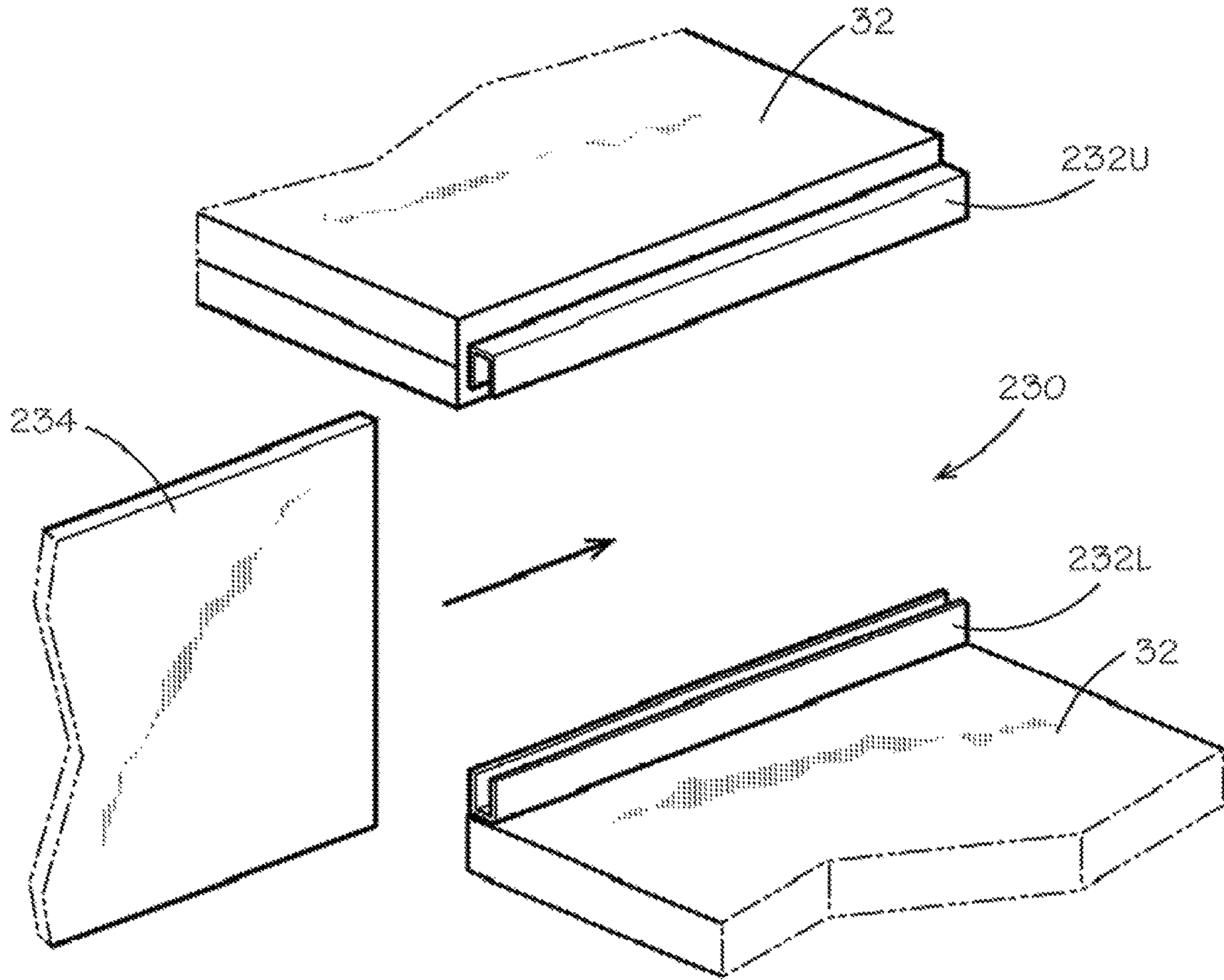


FIG. 16

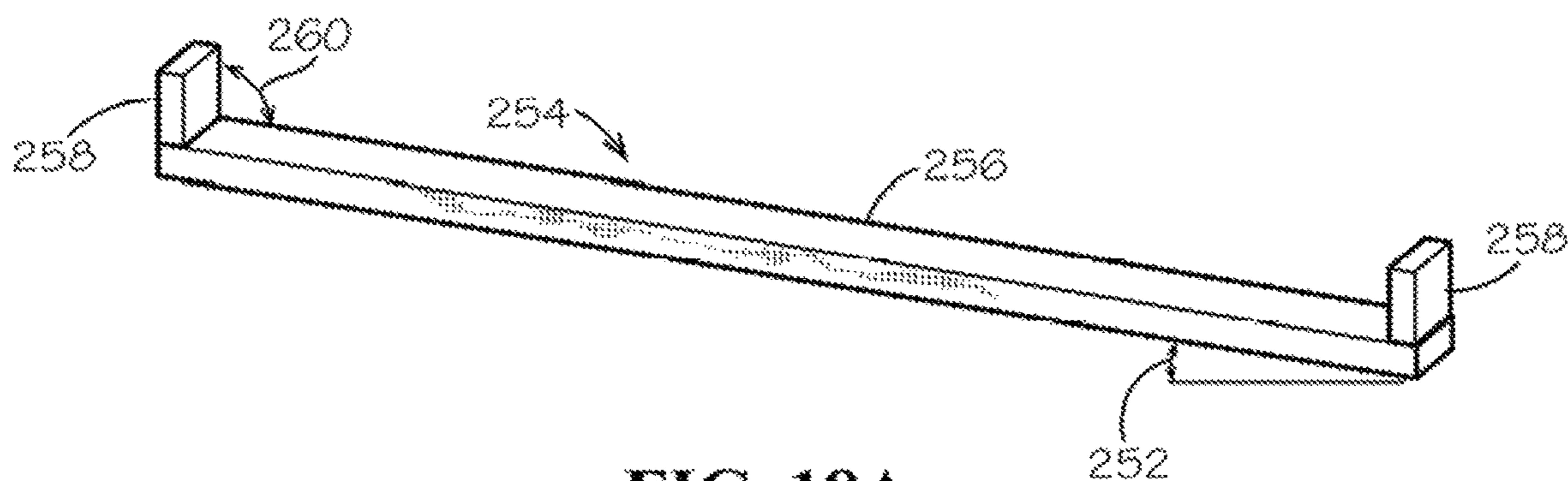


FIG. 18A

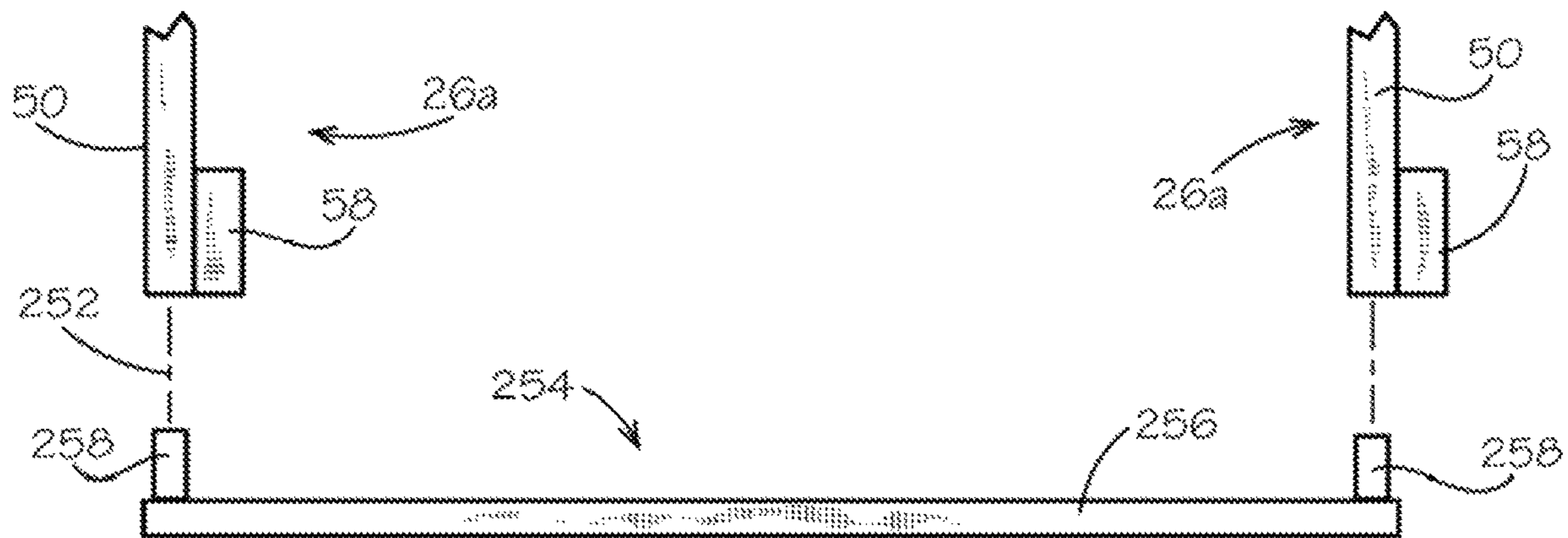


FIG. 18B

MODULAR DECK APPARATUS

TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention relates to free-standing deck apparatus. More particularly, the present invention relates to modular deck apparatus that readily assembles with one or more component frames and decking for a deck module, a deck ramp module, and a stairs module.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Often residential homes, shopping facilities, community centers such as pools and outdoor facilities, and office building complexes feature elevated deck structures. These decks provide ornamental and architectural appearances for the buildings and grounds as well as stable expanded usable space for entertaining, work, play and access to the adjacent facility and grounds. Typically, deck structures are designed and constructed with foundational supports, joists and decking secured for bearing loads imposed by persons engaged in activities on the deck. Stairs facilitate access to the elevated deck, and decks offer ornamental and structural features including multiple levels, deck board placements for designs, and built-in seating.

Typically, decks for home, offices and grounds are constructed according to engineering designs that account for loading, wind resistance, and stable foundational support. Alternatively, low height decks may be constructed as free-standing structures, in which the deck mass provides resistance to movement. There are a variety of components available for constructing decks including elongated boards for decking, beams for foundational support, stair risers that support in spaced-relation vertically and lateral offset treads, and railings that attach together with fasteners to support post. Stability requirements may necessitate foundational supports for low-height decks such as poured concrete footers having metal connectors to beams and molded concrete stabilizer blocks arranged in space-relation. Metal brackets, connectors, hangers, and fasteners join components of the decks together for a rigid stable structure. Deck boards may be wood or alternatively in recent years, plastic or composite material boards have become popular for longevity and weather resistance which may reduce periodic maintenance requirements.

Deck structures may be a desired feature for manufactured buildings such as mobile homes or offices. These manufactured buildings are typically installed above grade and supported by piers and ground anchors that connect to elongated longitudinal support beams of the manufactured building. The support beams are spaced-apart and provide a support for a floor having transverse joists and floor decking and from which the side walls extend to a roof for enclosing the building. During installation of the manufactured building at a site, a crew of installers place a foundation of a plurality of vertical piers between the ground surface and the support beams, for transferring loading from the manufactured building to the ground. The pier may seat on a rigid ground pan or connect to a footer in the ground such as for areas subject to ground freeze in winter weather. Because these buildings are installed at a height relative to the underlying ground surface, stairs or steps may be required for entrance and egress.

U.S. Pat. No. 6,634,150 discloses a foundation that provides resistance to lateral or longitudinal forces that may be exerted on the manufactured building, such as by strong winds or earthquakes. A lateral brace pivotably attaches at a

lower end to the ground pan under one of the support beams and attaches at an upper end to the other of the support beams. A separate pier is installed on the ground pan contacts the support beam above the ground pan. The lateral brace enables the ground pan to resist lateral forces on the manufactured building while the pier supports the manufactured building. Similarly, the brace may be connected between the ground pan and the support beam over the ground pan, for resisting movement caused by longitudinal forces on the manufactured building.

The ground surface typically slopes, so the piers are of different heights for positioning the manufactured building level. The height of the doorway into building is in a range of about 1 foot to about 4 feet above the ground surface, and typically in a range of about the 2 feet to 3 feet height relative to the ground. Depending on the height of the door opening to the manufactured building, the stairs structure, or stairs with a small landing area, may be installed, for access to the building. Also, persons using mobility devices (crutches, canes, wheelchairs or scooter devices (powered or manual)) may find stairs difficult, and so buildings may be provided with ramps gently sloped to facilitate entrance and egress. Many organizations and construction guidelines provide for a 4 to 7 degree incline, preferably 1:12 or about 5 degrees incline.

Alternatively, an owner of the building may contract separately for construction of a deck with stairs for an area proximate the building and for a landing area for entrance into the building and egress. Often the deck is installed by a separate decking installation crew, and it may be some several days or weeks between the installation of the manufacture building, for example, and the installation of a deck and stairs. For the interim period, temporary stairs may be used, but such is not preferred.

Also, as noted above, component products from which decks and stairs may be constructed are typically available from home improvement stores. These components include wooden stair risers, deck boards (both wood and composite) for treads and deck surface, metal braces, hangers and fasteners, railings and posts, and blocks, support beams, and concrete for foundations and supports. Nevertheless, these deck components have the drawback of in-field custom measuring, cutting and constructing.

There is a need in the art for a deck, ramp, and stairs apparatus that readily assembles and installs in the field for buildings with minimal different components that do not require alterations or the use of specialized tools. It is to such that the present invention is directed.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention meets the need in the art by providing a deck module readily assembled and installed in the field to provide a deck structure for a building. The deck module comprises a deck apparatus, comprising a pair of opposing brace frames, each brace frame having two opposing vertical members connected by a transverse member. The opposing brace frames connect together in spaced relation with a pair of opposing connector bases. Each connector base has an elongated member with a pair of posts extending in a first direction from respective end portions of the elongated member, the posts for being received in a respective open end of the aligned vertical members of the opposing brace frames to hold the brace frames in spaced-relation. A deck walking surface is provided by a deck board top frame having opposing end members and opposing side members attached at respective distal ends, with a plurality

of projecting posts each extending from a respective connection of one of the end members and one of the side members. A plurality of deck boards are disposed between the end members. Each of the posts for being received in an opposing upper end of a respective one of the vertical members of the opposing brace frames.

Objects, advantages and benefits of the invention may be readily ascertained upon a reading of the following detailed description in conjunction with the drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 illustrates a modular decking apparatus that assembles with a deck module and a stairs module for installation of a free-standing deck according to the present invention.

FIGS. 2A-2D illustrate a brace frame for the deck module illustrated in FIG. 1 in perspective, front elevational, side elevational, and top plan views.

FIGS. 3A-3D illustrate a second brace frame for the deck module illustrated in FIG. 1 in perspective, front elevational, side elevational, and top plan views.

FIGS. 4A-4D illustrate a connector base for the deck module illustrated in FIG. 1 in perspective, front elevational, side elevational, and top plan views.

FIGS. 5A-5C illustrate a leg for selectively adjusting the height of the deck module illustrated in FIG. 1 in perspective, front elevational, and top plan views.

FIGS. 6A-6D illustrate a top frame for the deck module illustrated in FIG. 1 in perspective, front elevational, side elevational, and top plan views.

FIGS. 7A-7D illustrate a corner post for supporting a railing installed on the deck module illustrated in FIG. 1 in perspective, front elevational, side elevational, and top plan views.

FIG. 7E is a detailed top plan view of FIG. 7B showing features of a footer plate.

FIG. 7F is a detailed front view of an upper end portion of the corner post illustrated in FIG. 7A.

FIGS. 8A-8D illustrate a midpost for supporting ends of opposing railings installed on the deck module illustrated in FIG. 1 in perspective, front elevational, side elevational, and top plan views.

FIG. 8E is a detailed top plan view of FIG. 8B showing features of a footer plate.

FIG. 8F is a detailed front view of an upper end portion of the midpost illustrated in FIG. 8A.

FIGS. 9A-9D illustrate an end post for supporting a railing installed on the deck module illustrated in FIG. 1 in perspective, front elevational, side elevational, and top views.

FIG. 9E is a detailed top plan view of FIG. 9B showing features of a footer plate.

FIG. 9F is a detailed front view of an upper end portion of the end post illustrated in FIG. 9A.

FIGS. 10A-10D illustrate a railing in perspective, front elevational, cross-sectional elevational view taken on lines 10C-10C in FIG. 10B, and side view, for installation on the deck module illustrated in FIG. 1.

FIG. 10E is a detail view of a portion of a tip rail shown in FIG. 10C.

FIGS. 11A-11D illustrates a stair riser for the stair module illustrated in FIG. 1 in perspective, front elevational, side elevational view, and top plan view,

FIG. 11E illustrates in perspective view an alternate embodiment of a stair riser for the star module illustrated in FIG. 1.

FIG. 12 illustrates a stair railing for attaching to the stair riser illustrated in FIG. 11.

FIG. 13 illustrates a first adjustable leg for selectively setting a foot in contact with the ground.

FIG. 14 illustrates a second adjustable leg for selectively setting a foot in contact with the ground.

FIG. 15 illustrates a ground anchor for securing the deck module or stair module fixedly to the ground with a helix disposed below a frost line as a pier for holding the structure up and resisting uplift and movement.

FIG. 16 illustrates a panel closing assembly, illustrated with closing an open gap between adjacent treads of the stair riser.

FIG. 17 illustrates in side elevational view an embodiment of a module deck with a ramp using deck modules of the present invention modified with opposing different heights to construct a sloping ramp from a ground level to a deck level.

FIGS. 18A and 18B illustrate a ramp connector base in perspective view and in front elevational view, respectively, for use with the deck module illustrated in FIG. 1.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF AN ILLUSTRATIVE EMBODIMENT

With reference to the drawings, in which like parts have like identifiers, FIG. 1 illustrates a modular decking apparatus 20 that assembles with a deck module 22 and a stairs module 24 for installation of a deck that may be free-standing on a ground surface 25, according to the present invention, in proximity to a building 27 with a doorway 29. The deck module 22 has a pair of opposing brace frames 26 joined by opposing connector bases 28 and a top frame 30 to which a plurality of deck boards 32 attach.

The stairs module 24 has a stair riser 34 with a pair of opposing spaced-apart riser arms 36 from which supports extend for holding a pair of deck boards as treads 38. A railing 40 orientated at an angle attaches to the riser arms 36 for lateral framing of the stairs module 34 (one railing 40 is shown).

FIG. 2A illustrates in perspective view the brace frame 26 for the deck module illustrated in FIG. 1, while FIGS. 2B-2D illustrate the brace frame in front elevational, side elevational, and top plan views, respectively. The brace frame 26 includes two opposing spaced-apart vertical members 50 joined by a span 52. The vertical members 50 are elongated square tubing and open at opposing ends. The span 52 welds to the vertical members 50. An inner face of the vertical member 50 includes a fastener guide hole 53. A pair of receivers 54, 56 attach in spaced relation at opposing distal ends on an outward face of each of the vertical members 50. The receivers 54, 56 are open-ended tubes and include a fastener guide hole 55, 57. The receivers 54 receive a connector base 28 for an adjacent deck module 22. The receivers 56 receive pegs or posts extending from the top frame 28 discussed below. The brace frame 26 as configured thus provides a support for one deck module or alternatively for two adjacent deck modules as discussed below. The guide holes 55, 57 on one vertical member are formed on a face transverse to the guide holes for the receivers on the opposing vertical member. A leg receiver 58 attaches to an inward face of the vertical member 50 and includes a fastener guide hole 59.

FIG. 3A illustrates in perspective view an alternate embodiment 66 of the brace frame 26 for the deck module illustrated in FIG. 1, while FIGS. 3B-3D illustrate the brace frame 66 in front elevational, side elevational, and top

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views, respectively. The brace frame **66** is the same as the brace frame **26**, but does not include the pair of receivers **54, 56**. A particular embodiment of a single deck module **22** uses two of the brace frames **66**; another embodiment configured for joining adjacent deck modules uses one of the brace frames **66** and one of the brace frames **26**.

FIG. **4A** illustrates the connector base **28** in perspective view for interconnecting a pair of the opposing brace frames **26** (or **66**). FIGS. **4B-4D** illustrate the connector base **28** in front elevational, side elevational, and top views, respectively. The connector base **28** is an elongated tube **71** having projecting legs **72** attached at respective distal ends and extending perpendicularly in a first direction. A pair of holes **74** are formed in spaced relation in a side face of the connector base **28**. The legs **72** insert into the lower open end of the vertical members **50** in opposing brace frames **26, 66**. Fasteners extending through aligned holes **74** maintain adjacent modules **22** square and together so the deck remains level while adjustable feet members enable adjusting the supported height of the deck by bearing on the ground **25**.

With reference to FIGS. **5A-5C**, a plurality of legs **80** may be used for disposing the deck module **22** a selected vertical distance from the ground surface **25**. FIG. **5A** illustrates the height adjusting leg **80** in perspective view. FIGS. **5B** and **5C** illustrate the leg **80** in front elevational and top plan views, respectively. The leg **80** includes an elongated vertical member **82** attached to a lateral corner portion of a plate **84** as a foot that contacts the ground surface **25**. The size of the plate may be selected depending on soil conditions; for example, a larger area plate is preferable for softer (sandy) soil while a smaller area plate may be sufficient support on a more dense (clay) soil. The vertical member **82** slides in the open end of the receiver **58** of the base frame **26**. A fastener extending through the opening **57** engages the vertical member **82** to secure the leg **80** at a selected position relative to the base frame **26** for positioning the base frame vertically from the ground **25** but maintain the deck surface level. The plate **84** includes an opening **86**. A stake or a lag screw (not illustrated) may be inserted through the opening **86** and into the ground or for example securing into concrete, asphalt, or wood, resists movement of the leg **80** relative to the ground.

FIG. **6A** illustrates a top frame **90** that provides a deck platform for the deck module **22** illustrated in FIG. **1**. FIGS. **6B-6C** illustrate the top frame **90** in front elevational, side elevational, and top plan views, respectively. The top frame **90** includes opposing end members **92** connected at respective distal ends to opposing side members **94** with a plurality of spaced-apart transverse support members **96** attached at distal ends to the side members. A post **98** extends from each of the corner distal ends of the attached end and side members **92, 94**. The end members **92** include a pair of spaced-apart holes **100**. The side members **94** include a pair of spaced-apart holes **102**. In the illustrated embodiment, the side members **94** include two sets of the pairs of holes **102**. The holes **100** and **102** are spaced a pre-determined distance apart for receiving fasteners to secure adjacent deck module **22** together. As discussed below, the deck boards **32** shown in FIG. **1** attach with fasteners to the upper surface of the top frame **90**. The posts **98** insert into the open upper ends of the brace frames **26, 66** for the deck module **22**. In an application having multiple deck modules **22** in adjacent relation, the posts on one side of the top frame **90** insert into the upper receivers **54** of the brace frame **26** of the adjacent deck module.

The opposing brace frames **26, (66)**, the connector bases **28**, and the top frame **90** define a deck module box for the

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deck module **22**. The boxes of adjacent deck modules **22** interconnect together for rigidity and stability of the free-standing deck and to maintain the deck surface level, with fasteners that connect adjacent braces, adjacent connector bases, and adjacent portions of the respective top frames.

Decks above the ground surface **25** may require side railings for preventing persons from stepping off or falling off the elevated deck. The modular deck apparatus of the present invention includes an elongated railing **150** (discussed below and shown in FIGS. **10A-10E**), and one or more railings **150** may be interconnected and supported on the deck module with selected end posts **112** (discussed below and shown in FIGS. **9A-9F**), midposts **114** (discussed below and shown in FIGS. **8A-8F**), and corner posts **116** (discussed below and shown in FIGS. **7A-7F**).

FIGS. **7A-7D** illustrate the corner post **116** for supporting a railing installed on the deck module illustrated in FIG. **1**, in perspective, front elevational, side elevational, and top views, respectively. The corner post **116** supports a pair of railings that extend therefrom in perpendicular planes. The corner post **116** includes a post **122** with a footer plate **124** attached at a bottom end. The footer plate **124** includes a pair of spaced-part openings **126** for receiving fasteners to secure the corner post **116** to the deck boards **32**. Two pairs of stubs **128** attach to and extend from respective transverse faces of the post **122** at upper and lower portions of the post. The first pair of stubs **128** are spaced a predetermined distance from the second pair of stubs. FIG. **7E** is a detailed top plan view of FIG. **7B** illustrating the footer plate **124** and openings **126**. FIG. **7F** is a detailed front view of an upper portion of the connector post **116** shown in FIG. **7A** illustrating a gap **129** or space between a distal end of the post **122** and the stub **128**, for accommodating a hand rail of a railing level with the distal end, as discussed below.

FIGS. **8A-8D** illustrate the midpost **114** for supporting ends of opposing railings installed on adjacent deck modules in perspective, front elevational, side elevational, and top plan views, respectively. The midpost **114** includes a post **132** with a footer plate **134** that attaches at a lower or bottom end. The footer plate **134** includes a pair of spaced-part openings **136** for receiving fasteners to secure the midpost **114** to the deck boards **32**. Two pairs of stubs **128** attach to and extend from opposing faces of the post **132** at upper and lower portions of the post. The first pair of stubs **128** are spaced the predetermined distance from the second pair of stubs. The stubs **128** in each pair extend coaxially in opposing directions. FIG. **8E** is a detailed top plan view of FIG. **8B** illustrating the footer plate **134** and openings **136**. FIG. **8F** is a detailed front view of an upper portion of the midpost **114** shown in FIG. **8A** illustrating the gap **129** between a distal end of the post **132** and the stub **128**, for accommodating a hand rail of a railing level with the distal end, as discussed below.

FIGS. **9A-9D** illustrate the end post **112** for supporting a railing installed on the deck module illustrated in FIG. **1**, in perspective, front elevational, side elevational, and top plan views, respectively. The end post **112** includes a post **142** with the footer plate **124** attached at a lower or bottom end. A pair of stubs **128** attach to and extend in the same direction from the post **142** at upper and lower portions of the post. The stubs **128** are spaced the predetermined distance apart. FIG. **9E** is a detailed top plan view of FIG. **9D** illustrating the footer plate **124** and openings **126**. FIG. **9F** is a detailed front view of an upper portion of the end post **112** shown in FIG. **9A** illustrating the gap **129** between a distal end of the post **142** and the stub **128**, for accommodating a hand rail of a railing level with the distal end, as discussed below.

The end post **112**, midpost **114** and the corner post **116** connect to and support the railing **150** illustrated in perspective view in FIG. **10A**. FIGS. **10B-10D** illustrate in the railing **150** in front elevational view, cross-sectional elevational view taken on lines **10C-10C** in FIG. **10B**, and side view, respectively. FIG. **10E** is a detailed cross-sectional view of FIG. **10C**. With reference to FIGS. **10A** and **10B**, the railing **150** includes a top rail **152** and an opposing bottom rail **154**. A plurality of spaced-apart rods **156** extend between and attach at distal ends to the rails **152**, **154**. The rails **152**, **154** are tubes with open opposing distal ends. An embodiment uses 1-inch square tubing for the rails. The rods **156** are 0.25 inch diameter steel rods. An alternate embodiment attaches an elongated wood member (not illustrated) as a grippable or hand-slidable hand-rail to the top rail **152**.

FIG. **11A** illustrates in perspective view a stair riser **160** for the stairs module **24** as illustrated in FIG. **1**. FIGS. **11B-11D** illustrate the stair riser **160** in front elevational, side elevational view, and top plan view, respectively. The stair riser **160** includes opposing riser arms **162** and an intermediate longitudinal support **164**. A plurality of transverse support members **166** disposed in spaced-apart relation attach to the riser arms **162** at respective distal ends and to the intermediate support **164**. The transverse support members **166** may be angle irons having an L-shape in longitudinal end view. The riser **160** provides for a plurality of steps **168**. The illustrated embodiment has five spaced-apart steps **168**. Each step **168** has three aligned tread support arms **170** that attach at first ends to the respective riser arms **162** and intermediate support **164** and extend laterally as a cantilever. The tread support arms **170** attach at an oblique angle relative to the riser arm and intermediate support. Treads **172** attach to the support arms **170**. In the illustrated embodiment, the treads **172** are elongated 1 inch by 6 inch (nominal) boards cut to length for extending between the support arms **170** on the riser arms **162**. A pair of upper railing support tubes **174** attach to the riser arms **162** at an upper end. A pair of leg receiving tubes **176** attach to a lower portion of the riser arms **162**. As in the embodiment illustrated in FIG. **1**, the leg receiving tubes **176** attach proximate the second tread from the bottom of the stair riser **160**, preferably between the lowermost tread and an adjacent second tread. A pair of lower railing support tubes **178** attach on opposing sides between a distal end of the respective tread support arm **170** and the riser arm **162** adjacent leg receiving tube **174**. The lowermost tread **170** defines a landing at or proximate the ground surface. In an alternate embodiment, the lowermost tread support arms bolt to the riser arms **170**, in order that the lowermost step may be angled towards the ground surface to facilitate walking transition from ground to tread or from tread to ground.

FIG. **11E** illustrates in perspective view an alternate embodiment of a stair riser **270** for the star module illustrated in FIG. **1**. The stair riser **270** includes two outer riser arms **272** and an intermediate riser arm **273** disposed in space-apart relation. The risers **272**, **273** comprise elongated tubes **274** with a plurality of angle iron members or plates **276** attached in L-shape stair-step order along a longitudinal length of the riser arm. The horizontal plates **276** define supports for the treads **172** while the vertical plates define back supports for a tread closing panel for the stairs. The plates **276** define spaced-apart openings **278** for receiving threaded fasteners for securing treads **172** and back panels to the horizontal and vertical plates **276**. A pair of receiver tubes **280** attach at a first end and an opposing second end of the riser arms **272**. A collar **281** attaches on an inward face of the receiver tube **280** extending towards the opposing

receiver tube. A pair of railing receivers **282** attach laterally of the receiver tubes **280** at the first end and laterally of a leg receiver tube **284** at the second end of the riser arm. A threshold arm **286** extends from the second end of the riser arm. The intermediate riser arm **273** includes a support tube **288** attached to the plate **276** proximate the second end aligned transverse with the collars **281**. A pair of elongate tubes **289** insert between the collar **281** and the support tube **288**. The tubes **289** connected to the support tube **288** and the opposing collars **281** provide lateral stability for side rails that attach in the rail receives **282**. A pair of transverse supports **290** engage the opposing first and second ends of the stair riser **270**. The transverse supports **290** have an elongated transverse member **292** with three spaced-apart pegs **294**. The pegs **294** of a first transverse support **290** engage open lower ends of the respective receiver tubes **280** at the first end of the stair riser **270**. The pegs **294** of a second transverse support **290** engage the threshold arms **286** at the second end of the stair riser. Treads **172** (and back panels) seat on or against the horizontal or vertical plates **276**, and screws extend through the plates and into the treads to secure the treads to the plates. The lowermost tread attached to the threshold arms **286** defines a landing at or proximate the ground surface. The threshold arms **286** may flex, or secure with bolts, in order to angle the lowermost step towards the ground to In an alternate embodiment, the lowermost tread support arms bolt to the riser arms **170** to facilitate walking transition from ground to tread or from tread to ground.

FIG. **12** illustrates a stair railing **180** for attaching to the stair riser **160** illustrated in FIG. **11**. The stair railing **180** has a hand rail **182** and a spaced-part bottom rail **184**. An upper support member **186** attaches to the ends of the hand rail **182** and bottom rail **184** with a portion extending as a leg **188** below the bottom rail. A lower support member **190** attaches to the hand rail **182** and the end of the bottom rail **184** with a leg **192** extending below the bottom rail. The hand rail **182** and the bottom rail **184** attach at an angle **194** to the upper and lower support members **186**, **190**, for aligning with the vertical and horizontal offsets of the treads in the stairs module **24**. A plurality of spaced-apart rods **196** extend between and attach at distal ends to the hand rail **182** and the bottom rail **184**. The rods **196** are 0.25 inch diameter steel rods. For example, the rods **196** may attach to the bottom rail and insert into spaced-apart openings in a bottom surface of the handrail **182**.

The modular decking apparatus **20** assembles as a deck that may be free-standing on the ground **25** with one or more deck modules **22** connected together and may include at least one stairs module **24**. With reference to FIG. **6**, the deck boards **32** attach to the upper surface of the top frame **90**. The deck boards are positioned transverse to the end members **92** and the support members **96**. A first deck board **32** is placed on the upper surface with a side edge aligned with one of the side member **94** and opposing ends aligned with the opposing end members **92**. Placement holes are drilled into the deck board in alignment with the underlying end member **92** and the support members **96**. Self-taping screws extend through the drilled holes and into the end members **92** and the support members **94** to secure the deck board **32** to the top frame and thereby defining the deck surface. Additional deck boards are placed sequentially on the top frame **92** abutted to or slightly spaced from the adjacent secured deck board **32**. For each, the installer drills placement holes that then receive fasteners and the fasteners screwed into the underlying end members **92** and the support members **94**. Preferably the deck boards **32** may be attached to the top frame **90** during manufacture at a manufacturing

plant and shipped as an assembled unit for field installation. Alternatively, it is to be appreciated that field installation of elongated deck boards across multiple adjacent deck module boxes further secure the deck modules **22** together (for example, an elongated deck board that extends over and attaches to the top frames of three deck modules **22** assists in interlocking the three adjacent modules together unitarily). As noted above, the deck boards **32** may be wood, plastic, or composite material.

With reference to FIGS. **2-6**, the deck module **22** assembles with opposing brace frames **26** (FIG. **2**) (or **66**, FIG. **3**) interconnected with opposing connector bases **28** (FIG. **4**) and the top frame **90** (FIG. **5**) having the attached deck boards **32**, with legs **80** (FIG. **6**) for selectively setting the height of the deck module **22**. First, the height of the deck is determined. Typically, the walk-on surface of the deck (i.e., the top surface of the deck boards **32** attached to the top frame **90**) is positioned slightly below the threshold of the doorway to the manufactured building; for example, no more than about 7½ inches lower than the threshold. This provides a step from the deck surface into the doorway and being below the threshold, water does not flow from the deck surface through the doorway. A measurement is made to determine a distance H between a selected deck height below the threshold and the ground. The legs **80** are then attached to one of the brace frames **66**. The legs **80** provide adjustability for vertical spacing of the deck **20**. The vertical member **82** of the leg inserts into the leg receiver **58** that will be positioned next to the building sufficiently for the extending leg and the length of the vertical member **50** to equal the height H. The leg **80** is secured in place with a self-tapping fastener extending through the guide hole **58** and into the member **82**. Another leg **80** is inserted into the opposing leg receiver **58** sufficiently so that the decking will be level or have a slight slope downwardly away from the building.

A second brace frame is prepared with adjustable legs **80**. If the deck is to have another deck module **22** positioned adjacent to the first, the brace frame **26** is used. The brace frame **26** includes receivers **54, 56** for interconnecting with the adjacent deck module. Otherwise, the brace frame **66** may be used. The legs **80** are similarly inserted and secured in the leg receivers **58** sufficiently to maintain the deck surface level. That is, a height is determined for the brace frame next to the building so that the adjustable leg **80** inserts sufficiently into the receiver **58**. The height outward of the building is similarly determined and the leg **80** inserted and secured in the opposing leg receiver **58** outwardly of the building.

The opposing brace frames then connect together using a pair of the connector bases **28**. The legs **72** of the bases **28** insert into the opposing lower open ends of the vertical members **50** on the opposing brace frames. The deck frame **90** with the attached deck boards sits on top with the posts **98** inserted into the open upper ends of the vertical members **50**. A stake or screw as appropriate inserts through the opening **86** of the plate **84** to secure the leg **80** to the ground (or ground surface such as concrete, asphalt or wood) and resists movement of the deck.

If the deck is to have an adjacent module, the brace frame **26** or **66** is prepared. The brace frame **26** is used if that module is to continue to a subsequent module; otherwise the brace frame **66** may be used. The brace frame in the prior deck module is also used for the support brace frame for the next adjacent deck module.

Adjacent deck modules **22** connect together with fasteners that secure the adjacent components of the deck module boxes together; i.e., fasteners secure through the aligned

openings **100** in the end members **92** of end-to-end adjacent deck modules; of aligned openings **102** in the side members **94** and/or aligned openings **74** in the connector bases **28** of side-to-side adjacent deck modules; and adjacent posts **50** and spans **50** of adjacent deck modules. Also, a respective set of openings **100** or **102** may be used for attaching the stair riser **160** to an end or a side of a particular deck module **22**.

The stairs module **24** attaches to one of the deck modules **22**. First, the vertical spacing of the stair riser **160** is accommodated by installing a respective one of the legs **80** into the leg receiving tubes **176**. The leg **80** is secured with a fastener in a selected position based on the determination discussed above for the height of the deck. The stair riser attaches to the deck module **22** by inserting the upper railing support tubes **174** into the open end of the respective receivers **54**. It is to be noted that the brace frame **26** is used for the deck module **22** that engages the stairs module **24**, with the receivers **54, 56** outwardly for receiving the upper railing support tubes **174** of the stair riser **160**. With each of the end members **92** and side members **94** having the openings **100, 102** respectively, the stair riser **160** readily installs on either the end or the side of the deck module with bolts that extend through the respective openings (**100** or **102**) into the upper transverse member **166** of the stair riser **160**. The upper transverse member **166** includes openings that align the respective openings **100** or paired openings **102** in the end and side members **92, 94**, respectively.

Railings may attach to an upper surface of the deck **20** on perimeter portions for preventing persons from stepping off or falling off the elevated deck. The railings assemble with a plurality of the elongated railing **150** that interconnect with end posts **112**, midposts **114**, and corner posts **116**. One of the end posts **112** positions on the deck as a starting point for the railing. Fasteners through the openings **126** secure the end post **112** to a deck board **32**. For an adjacent corner, one of the corner posts **116** attaches to a first end of one of the railings **150** by insertion of the stubs **128** into the open ends of the top and bottom rails **152, 154**. The stubs **128** in the end post **112** insert into the open ends of the top and bottom rails **152, 154** at the opposing end of the railing **150**. The corner post **116** positions on a corner of the deck module and secures in place with fasteners through the openings **126** into the deck board **32**. The stubs **128** received in the open ends of the rails, with placement and securing of the post to the deck board, assembles the side perimeter railing without having to separately fasten the rails to the posts such as with set screws. In an alternate embodiment, the stubs **128** are open-ended tubes that extend laterally from the post as an open collar. The top and bottom rails insert into the respective collar. A fastener (such as a screw threadly inserted from a bottom portion) may secure the top and bottom rails within the collar.

The midpost **114** connects intermediate two railings **150** on portions of the deck having two adjacent deck modules **22**. Continuing with the example in the preceding paragraph, one of the midposts **114** connects to an end of another railing **150**. The stubs **128** insert into the open ends of the top and bottom rails. The stubs **128** extending from the corner post **116** extend into the opposing open ends of the rails. The midpost **114** stands on the proximate deck board **32**. Fasteners extend through the openings **126** to secure the midpost **114** to the deck board.

The railing members are further similarly joined with the stubs **128** and the open ends of the railings **152, 154** in

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perimeter portions of the deck with the appropriate end posts **112**, midposts **114** and corner posts **116** secured to the deck boards.

The stairs railing **180** attaches to the stair riser **160**. The upper railing support tube **174** receives the leg **188** of the stairs railing **180** and the lower railing support tube **178** receives the leg **192**. The railing **180** may be secured with fasteners, such as self-drilling screws drilled through the support tube **174**, **178** and into the leg **188**, **192**, respectively.

FIG. **13** illustrates a first adjustable leg **200** for selectively setting a foot **202** in contact with the ground **25**. A threaded rod **204** welds vertically to the foot **202**, and receives a nut **206** attached to a lower end of an insert post **208**. The open end of the post **50** of the brace frame receives the insert post **208**. The distance between the foot **202** and the post **50** may be adjusted by rotating the nut **206** on the threaded rod **204** for selectively positioning the foot **202** on the ground **25**.

FIG. **14** illustrates a second adjustable leg **210** for selectively setting the foot **202** in contact with the ground. For one embodiment, the nut **206** attaches to a lower end of the post **50**. The threaded rod **204** rotatably inserts into the post **50** on rotation through the nut **206** for selectively positioning the foot **202** on the ground **25**. In a second embodiment, the nut **206** is not attached to the post **50**, but freely movable on the threaded rod **204** for bearing movement on the post **50** for selective height adjustment, for example, adjusting for post-installation settlement to keep the foot bearing on the ground **25**. The nut **206** is dimensionally larger than the cross-section of the post **50** that seats on the nut.

FIG. **15** illustrates a ground anchor **220** for securing the deck module **22** (or the stairs module **24**) to the ground **25**, such as for use in geographical areas susceptible to ground freeze. The ground anchor includes an elongated shaft **222** having helical flights **224** for driving the ground anchor below grade during installation. A cap **225** that is open towards the ground **25** seats on the shaft and a nut **227** welds in place. The cap **225** includes a depending side wall **229** for bearing engagement with the ground **25**. The nut **227** receives a socket of a power driven tool for drilling the anchor **220** into the ground **25**. An opposing end of the shaft **222** is threaded **226**, which receives the nut **206** of the insert post **208**. The post **208** inserts into the vertical member **50** of the deck module **22** (or the leg receiver **176** of the stair riser **160**). Rotation of the nut **206** on the threaded end **226** adjusts the height of the deck module or stair riser relative to the ground **25**. Attachment of the deck module or the stairs module to the ground anchor **220** secures the deck **20** in cold climates, as well as resisting movement from winds and prevents settling. The ground anchor holds the deck module or stair module up and keeps the deck module or stairs module secured to the ground.

FIG. **16** illustrates a panel closing assembly **230** having opposing U-channels **232** that receive a panel **234** for closing an open gap between adjacent treads of the stair riser. A first U-channel **232U** mounts to a forward portion of a first tread **32** while an opposing second U-channel **232L** mounts to a rearward portion of a second adjacent lower tread **32**. The panel **234** slides laterally into the opposing channels **232** for closing the open gap between the treads. Similar U-channels may gainfully close the open side between the deck boards and the connector base **28** of the deck modules **22**.

The brace frames may be provided selectively for different base heights adjustable within a range by the adjustable legs **80**. The vertical members **50** in the illustrated embodiment have lengths selected as 22.5 inches, 30 inches, and 37.5 inches, in order to provide for deck heights when using

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the legs **80** in ranges of between about 22.5 inches to about 30 inches, from about 32 inches to about 39.5 inches, and from about 37.5 inches to about 45 inches, respectively. These ranges accommodate a step gap between the deck board **32** and the threshold of the doorway into the building. Also, the brace frames **26**, **66** in the different heights allows decks made with multiple modules to have a portion of a first height and a second portion of a second height.

With reference to FIG. **17**, the deck assembly **20** may be configured with an elongated ramp **250** having a slope angle **252** (rise over run) suitable for movement of a wheelchair (manual or powered) or a mobility device, such as a scooter or battery-operated wheeled vehicle. Such ramp may have a rise over run at about a 4 degree angle to no more than about a 7 degree angle, based on recommendations of disability organizations and ramp specification guidelines. Preferably, the slope is 1:12 providing 1 inch of vertical rise per 12 inch length of ramp, or about a 5 degree incline. Thus, a deck height of 36 inches would preferably have a ramp length of 36 feet. In an alternate embodiment, an elongated grab rail (not illustrated) readily installs for hand-gripping/hand-sliding movement when a person walks along the ramp, as may be required.

The ramp **250** assembles with deck ramp modules **22a** in which adjacent brace frames **26** (or brace frame **66** at the lower leading end of the ramp) are of different heights and interconnected by opposing connector members **254** shown in perspective view in FIG. **18A** and side elevational view in FIG. **18B**. The connector member **254** is an elongate tube **256** having projecting legs **258** attached at respective distal ends and extending at an oblique angle **260** relative to the tube **256** in a first direction and parallel to the opposing leg. The oblique angle of the legs **258** define the slope angle **252** of the tube **256** while the legs **258** extend into the open upper ends of the vertical members **50** of the adjacent brace frames **26** (**66**), which open ends matingly receive the legs coaxially with the axis of the vertical members **50**. The adjacent brace members of the deck ramp modules **22a** receive top frames **90a** modified in that the posts **98** are attached to the side members **92**, **94** at the oblique angle based on the slope angle, for similar coaxial engagement with the receivers **54** of the brace frames **26**.

In assembly of the ramp **250**, the brace frames are sequenced selectively with decreasing heights (i.e., by decreasing the length of the vertical members **50**, for example, or adjusting with the adjustable legs **200** (or **210**) for progressively sloping the ramp from the deck level to a leading lower end of the ramp proximate the ground surface. As an illustrative example, a brace frame **26** at a first end of a deck ramp module **22a** that has a run length of four (4) feet positions the deck at 36 inches; an opposing brace frame **26** (or **66**) would be of a shorter length to position the deck at 32 inches; thus, the deck ramp slopes from the first end to the second end on a 1:12 slope. A plurality of the ramp modules interconnect in sequential adjacent relation to form the ramp of appropriate length. In an alternate embodiment, a deck module or multiple deck modules define an intermediate transition or switch-back between first and second ramp portions in the event the ground space does not accommodate a single run ramp in its full length. In such embodiment, the first portion has a downward slope in a first longitudinal direction and the second portion has a downward slope in a second longitudinal direction, for example, opposing and parallel to but spaced-apart from the first longitudinal direction or alternatively, at an angle to the first longitudinal direction such as an L-shaped ramp structure.

The adjustable legs **200** and **210** discussed above in reference to FIGS. **13** and **14** gainfully facilitate ramp height positioning in the plurality of sequenced ramp modules.

The present disclosure of the brace frames in a range of heights, the connector braces interconnect opposing brace frames, and the top frame, which interconnect as a deck module box, for deck boards to define a decking surface, the stairs risers, with railings and posts for perimeter deck installation, and for ramp connector braces for defining a sloped ramp, provide simple and readily assembled components for the modular deck apparatus, with multiple modules securely connected together for rigidity and stability of a deck, free-standing or ground secured, for an ornamental and structural addition for buildings and grounds. The elongated tubes used for the components are open-ended and of appropriate cross-section length and width for respective members to receive engaging portions as discussed above. Generally, the structural members and posts are 1 inch×1 inch square steel tubing, 1.25 inch×1.25 inch square steel tubing, or 0.75 inch×0.75 inch square steel tubing. The feet **84**, **124** may be 3 inch by 3 inch by 0.1875 steel plate. The stubs **128** are 0.75 inch round tubing. The deck boards **32** may be 5/4 pressure treated wood or a plastic or composite material suitable for outdoor deck applications.

The disclosed invention provides a deck apparatus in a first form as a deck module that assembles from a pair of opposing brace frames, each brace frame having two opposing vertical members connected by a transverse members. The opposing brace frames are held in spaced-apart relation by a pair of opposing connector bases, each connector base having an elongated member with a pair of posts extending in a first direction from respective end portions of the elongated member, the posts for being received in a respective open end of the aligned vertical members of the opposing brace frames to hold the brace frames in spaced-relation. A plurality of deck boards attached to a deck board top frame provides a walking surface for the deck assembly, which deck board top frame has opposing end members and opposing side members attached at respective distal ends, and a plurality of projecting posts each extending from a respective connection of one of the end members and one of the side members, each of the posts for being received in an opposing upper end of a respective one of the vertical members of the opposing brace frame and the plurality of deck boards disposed between the end members. In an alternate embodiment, the deck board top frame further comprises at last one transverse member connected at opposing distal ends to the opposing side members, to provide intermediate support for the deck boards.

In another aspect, the deck apparatus comprises a second deck module configured for attaching to the first deck module to provide a larger deck area. The second deck module connects to one of the brace frames of the first deck module in which each of the vertical members of at least one of the brace frames further comprises a lower receiver and an upper receiver attached in spaced-apart relation to a respective first side of the vertical member. The second deck module uses a third brace frame having the two opposing vertical members connected by the transverse member. A second pair of opposing connector bases interconnect the third brace frame and the at least one base frame of the first module. Each connector base of the second pair have the elongated member with the pair of posts extending in the first direction from respective end portions of the elongated member. A respective first one of the pair of posts of the second pair of opposing connector bases are received in a respective open end of the lower receiver of the vertical

members of the at least one of the brace frames and a respective second of the pair of posts of the second pair of opposing connector bases are received in a respective open end of the vertical members of the third brace frame to hold the at least one of the brace frames in spaced-relation to the third brace frame. A second deck board top frame has deck boards for the second deck module, which deck boards are disposed on the opposing end members and the opposing side members that attach at respective distal ends to form the deck board top frame. The plurality of projecting posts each extend from the respective connection of one of the end members and one of the side members. The posts are received in an open upper end of a respective one of the vertical members of the at least one of the brace frames and the third brace frame.

In another aspect, the deck apparatus may be configured with extension legs to accommodate seating of the brace frames in firm contact with a support surface, typically a ground surface proximate a building such as a manufactured building. This is accomplished by providing each of the vertical members of at least one of the brace frames a second lower receiver attached to a respective second side of the vertical member. The second lower receiver receives a leg member of a leg device. The leg device includes a plate a plate for bearing support on a surface and a leg member such as an elongated tube, connected at a first end to the plate and an opposing second end for being received in the open lower end of a respective one of the second lower receivers. The leg member is received into the second lower receiver and positioned with the plate in contact with the ground. A fastener driven through the vertical of the base frame and into the leg member secures the leg device at a selected length. The plate may further include an opening for receiving a support connector therethrough. The support connector may be a ground anchor with a threaded end that extends through the opening and receives a nut, a stake driven through the opening into the ground, a screw driven through the opening into the ground, or other fastener to secure the plate in contact with the ground.

The deck apparatus may include a stairs riser assembly for being attached at a first end to the deck board top frame and an opposing second end for bearing on a support surface vertically lower than the deck board top frame after attaching the first end to the deck board top frame. The stairs riser comprises a pair of opposing riser arms, each riser arm having an upper post attached at an oblique angle at the first end. A plurality of transverse supports are disposed in spaced-apart relation and connect at opposing ends between the pair of opposing riser arms. A plurality of pairs of tread support arms attach at a first end in aligned relation to the opposed riser arms and extend outwardly as a cantilever. The pairs of tread support arms are disposed in space-apart relation to the riser arms and a tread member, such as a wood, plastic, or metal planar member or board attaches to a respective pair of aligned tread support arms. One or more leg members may further support the stair risers based on ground slope. A leg receiving member attaches to a respective one of the riser arms proximate the opposing second end of the stair risers, for receiving a leg member in the receiving member and positioned for bearing contact with a support surface. A fastener secures the leg member to the leg receiving member.

In another aspect, the deck apparatus uses a ramp assembly to provide a walkable ramp sloped at an angle appropriate for wheelchairs and personal walking mobility devices. The ramp assembly assembles with a plurality of ramp brace frames. Each ramp brace frame has two oppos-

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ing vertical members connected by a transverse member and sequentially the ramp brace frames has differing heights. The ramp frame braces are disposed in spaced-apart relation along the rampway sequentially to define a slope line across the upper ends of the ramp brace frames. The vertical members in a first one of the plurality of ramp brace frames has a first length and the vertical members in each of the subsequent ones of the plurality of ramp brace frames have a respective second length, which said respective second length is less than the first length and said respective second length of a first one of the subsequent plurality of the ramp brace frames greater than the second length of a second one of the subsequent plurality of ramp brace frames. The ramp assembly includes a plurality of ramp connector bases for connecting adjacent ramp brace frames. Each ramp connector base has an elongated member with a pair of posts extending at an oblique angle in a first direction from respective end portions of the elongated member, The posts are received in a respective open end of a respective first vertical member of a first one of the plurality of ramp brace frames and in a respective open end of a respective second vertical member of a second one of the plurality of ramp brace frames to hold said first and second one of the plurality of ramp brace frames in spaced apart relation. In embodiments having more than two ramp brace frames, the intermediate ramp brace frames include a lower receiving tube attached to a face of the vertical member for receiving the post of the adjacent connector base for securing the spacing to the adjacent brace frame. A ramp deck board top frame has opposing end members and opposing side members which attach at respective distal ends. A plurality of projecting posts each extend from a respective connection of one of the end members and one of the side members at an oblique angle to conform to the slope of the ramp defined by the ramp brace frames. A plurality of deck boards disposed between the end members attach with fasteners to the end and side members. Each of the posts for being received in an opposing upper end of a respective one of the vertical members of said first and second ones of the plurality of ramp brace frames in spaced apart relation.

The foregoing has disclosed a deck apparatus readily assembled on site at a building such as a just-installed manufactured building and provides convenient access into the building with the optional stairs and/or ramp modules disclosed herein, while railings may be secured to the deck board surface to restrict persons from stepping off of the deck surface at a height above the ground, including corner posts, end posts, and midposts for supporting elongate railing assemblies. Variations and changes thereto may be made to deck apparatus and its components within the scope of the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A deck apparatus, comprising:

- a pair of opposing brace frames, each brace frame having two opposing vertical members connected by a transverse member, said base frames for disposing in spaced-relation;
- a pair of opposing connector bases, each connector base having an elongated member with a pair of posts extending in a first direction from respective end portions of the elongated member, the pair of posts for being received in a respective open end of the [aligned] vertical members of the opposing brace frames to hold the brace frames in spaced-relation;
- a deck board top frame having opposing end members and opposing side members attached at respective distal ends, a plurality of projecting deck posts each extend-

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- ing from a respective connection of one of the end members and one of the side members, and each of the deck posts for being received in an opposing upper end of a respective one of the vertical members of the opposing brace frames; and
- a plurality of deck boards for disposing between the end members;
- wherein each of the two vertical members of at least one of the pair of brace frames further comprises a first lower receiver attached to a respective first side of the vertical member;
- a third brace frame having the two opposing vertical members connected by the transverse member;
- a second pair of opposing connector bases, each second pair of connector bases having the elongated member with the pair of posts extending in the first direction from respective end portions of the elongated member, a respective first one of the pair of posts of the second pair of opposing connector bases for being received in a respective open end of the first lower receiver of the vertical members of the at least one of the brace frames and a respective second of the pair of posts of the second pair of opposing connector bases for being received in a respective open end of the vertical members of the third brace frame to hold the at least one of the brace frames in spaced-relation to the third brace frame;
- a second deck board top frame having the opposing end members and the opposing side members attached at respective distal ends, the plurality of projecting deck posts each extending from the respective connection of one of the end members and one of the side members, and whereby each of the deck posts of the second deck board top frame for being received in an open upper end of a respective one of the vertical members of the at least one of the brace frames and the third brace frame; and
- a second plurality of deck boards disposed between the end members of the second deck board top frame.

2. The deck apparatus as recited in claim **1**, wherein each of the deck board top frames further comprises at last one transverse member connected at opposing distal ends to the opposing side members.

3. The deck apparatus as recited in claim **1**, wherein each of the vertical members of at least one of the brace frames further comprises a second lower receiver attached to a respective second side of the vertical member; and further comprising:

- a pair of legs, each comprising:
 - a plate for bearing support on a surface; and
 - a leg member connected at a first end to the plate and an opposing second end for being received in an open lower end of a respective one of the second lower receivers and being secured at a selected length.

4. The deck apparatus as recited in claim **3**, wherein the plate further comprises an opening for receiving a support connector therethrough.

5. The deck apparatus as recited in claim **3**, wherein the plate further comprises an opening for receiving a support connector therethrough.

6. The deck apparatus as recited in claim **1**, further comprising a stairs riser assembly for being attached at a first end proximate the deck board top frame and an opposing second end for bearing on a support surface vertically lower than the deck board top frame after attaching the first end thereto.

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7. The deck apparatus as recited in claim 6, wherein each of the two vertical members of at least one of the pair of brace frames further comprises an upper receiver attached to the respective first side of the vertical member spaced apart from the lower receiver; and

the stairs riser assembly comprises:

- a pair of opposing riser arms, each riser arm having a riser post attached at an oblique angle at the first end, said riser post for being received in a respective upper receiver of the at least one of the pair of brace frames;
- a plurality of transverse supports disposed in spaced-apart relation between the pair of opposing riser arms; and
- a plurality of pairs of tread support arms, each pair of tread support arms attached at a first end in aligned relation to the opposed riser arms and extending as a cantilever therefrom, the pairs of tread support arms disposed in space-apart relation; and
- a plurality of treads, each tread for attaching to a respective pair of aligned tread support arms.

8. The deck apparatus as recited in claim 7, further comprising a pair of leg receiving members each attached to a respective one of the riser arms proximate the opposing second end of the stair risers, for receiving a leg member for bearing contact with a support surface.

9. The deck apparatus as recited in claim 8, wherein the leg member comprises:

- a plate; and
- a leg member connected at a first end to the plate and an opposing second end for being received in an open lower end of a respective one of the leg receiving members and being secured thereto at a selected length.

10. The deck apparatus as recited in claim 1, further comprising a ramp assembly.

11. The deck apparatus as recited in claim 10, wherein the ramp assembly comprises:

- a plurality of ramp brace frames, each ramp brace frame having two opposing vertical ramp members connected by a transverse ramp member, the vertical ramp members in a first one of the plurality of ramp brace frames having a first length and the vertical ramp members in each of a subsequent one of the plurality of ramp brace frames having a respective second length, said respective second length less than the first length and said respective second length of a first one of a subsequent plurality of the ramp brace frames greater than the second length of a second one of the subsequent plurality of ramp brace frames;

- a plurality of ramp connector bases, each ramp connector base having an elongated base member with a pair of base posts extending at an oblique angle in a first direction from respective end portions of the elongated base member, the base posts for being received in a respective open end of a respective first vertical ramp member of a first one of the plurality of ramp brace frames and in a respective open end of a respective second vertical ramp member of a second one of the plurality of ramp brace frames to hold said first and second one of the plurality of ramp brace frames in spaced apart relation;

- a ramp deck board top frame having opposing end members and opposing side members attached at respective distal ends, a plurality of projecting ramp deck posts each extending from a respective connection of one of the end members and one of the side members, each of the ramp deck posts for being received in an opposing

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upper end of a respective one of the vertical ramp members of said first and second ones of the plurality of ramp brace frames in spaced apart relation; and a plurality of deck boards for disposing between the end members.

12. A deck apparatus, comprising:

a pair of opposing brace frames, each brace frame having two opposing vertical members connected by a transverse member, said brace frames for being disposed in spaced-relation;

a pair of upper receivers each attached to a respective first side of a respective one of the two opposing vertical members of at least one of the pair of opposing brace frames;

a pair of opposing connector bases, each connector base having an elongated member with a pair of posts extending in a first direction from respective end portions of the elongated member, the pair of posts for being received in a respective open end of the [aligned] vertical members of the opposing brace frames to hold the brace frames in spaced-relation;

a deck board top frame having opposing end members and opposing side members attached at respective distal ends, a plurality of projecting deck posts each extending from a respective connection of one of the end members and one of the side members, and each of the deck posts for being received in an opposing upper end of a respective one of the vertical members of the opposing brace frames; and

a plurality of deck boards for disposing between the end members; and

a stairs riser assembly for being attached at a first end proximate the deck board top frame and an opposing second end for bearing on a support surface vertically lower than the deck board top frame after attaching the first end thereto, said stairs riser assembly comprising:

a pair of opposing riser arms, each riser arm having a riser post attached at an oblique angle at the first end, said riser post for being received in an open end of a respective one of the upper receiver;

a plurality of transverse supports disposed in spaced-apart relation between the pair of opposing riser arms; and

a plurality of pairs of tread support arms, each pair of tread support arms attached at a first end in aligned relation to the opposed riser arms and extending as a cantilever therefrom, the pairs of tread support arms disposed in spaced-apart relation; and

a plurality of treads, each tread for attaching to a respective pair of aligned tread support arms.

13. The deck apparatus as recited in claim 12, further comprising a pair of leg receiving members each attached to a respective one of the riser arms proximate the opposing second end of the stair risers, for receiving a leg member for bearing contact with a support surface.

14. The deck apparatus as recited in claim 13, wherein the leg member comprises:

- a plate; and
- a leg member connected at a first end to the plate and an opposing second end for being received in an open lower end of a respective one of the leg receiving members and being secured thereto at a selected length.

15. The deck apparatus as recited in claim 12, wherein the deck board top frame further comprises at least one transverse member connected at opposing distal ends to the opposing side members.

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16. The deck apparatus as recited in claim 12, wherein each of the vertical members of at least one of the brace frames further comprises a first lower receiver attached spaced-apart from the upper receiver to the respective first side of the vertical member; and further comprising:

a third brace frame having the two opposing vertical members connected by the transverse member; and

a second pair of opposing connector bases, each connector base having the elongated member with the pair of posts extending in the first direction from respective end portions of the elongated member, a respective first one of the pair of posts of the second pair of opposing connector bases for being received in a respective open end of the first lower receiver of the vertical members of the at least one of the brace frames and a respective second of the pair of posts of the second pair of opposing connector bases for being received in a respective open end of the vertical members of the third brace frame to hold the at least one of the brace frames in spaced-relation to the third brace frame;

a second deck board top frame having the opposing end members and the opposing side members attached at

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respective distal ends, the plurality of projecting deck posts each extending from the respective connection of one of the end members and one of the side members, and each of the deck posts for being received in an open upper end of a respective one of the vertical members of the at least one of the brace frames and the third brace frame; and

a second plurality of deck boards disposed between the end members.

17. The deck apparatus as recited in claim 12, wherein each of the vertical members of at least one of the brace frames further comprises a second lower receiver attached to a respective second side of the vertical member; and further comprising:

a pair of legs, each leg comprising:

a plate for bearing support on a surface; and

a leg member connected at a first end to the plate and an opposing second end for being received in the open lower end of a respective one of the second lower receivers and being secured at a selected length.

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