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EP 4 062 793 B1

Description

FIELD OF INVENTION

[0001] This disclosure relates to luggage and luggage systems. 5

BACKGROUND

[0002] Suitcases may be used for transporting clothing, footwear, and other materials or items. However, the demands of travel can sometimes cause damage to the suitcase or damage to their contents. Either traveling by airplane or traveling by automobile, a durable and water-proof suitcase may be needed to protect the contents within a suitcase. 10 15

[0003] A releasably connected liner provides a protection of suitcase content. Such a liner is known, for example, from WO 2020/206312 A2. For ease of movement, a trolley handle gives a user a simple means to pull or push a wheeled suitcase. 20

BRIEF SUMMARY

[0004] The present disclosure refers to a suitcase according to claim 1. Preferred embodiments are defined in the dependent claims. Aspects of this disclosure relate to a suitcase comprising: 25 a base including:

- a first shell structure having a first side and a second side opposite the first side, the first shell structure having a first end and a second end opposite the first end; 30
- a bottom portion connected to the first end of the first shell structure and configured to support the suitcase on a surface; 35
- a first interior void defined by the first shell structure and the bottom portion; and a lid rotatably connected to the base, the lid including: 40
 - a second shell structure having a third side and a fourth side opposite the third side, the second shell structure having a first end and a second end opposite the first end; 45
 - a top portion connected to the first end of the second shell structure; and
 - a second interior void defined by the second shell structure and the top portion; and 50
 - an interior liner releasably secured to either the base within the first interior void or the lid within the second interior void, wherein the interior liner includes at least one storage cavity recessed from an upper surface of the interior liner, wherein the interior liner includes a plurality of first fastener portions positioned near the upper surface of the interior liner that releasably connect to a plurality of second fastener portions positioned 55

on either the base or the lid;

wherein the interior liner includes a first set of openings extending through a first side of the interior liner and a second set of openings extending through a second side of the interior liner, wherein the first side is opposite the second side, wherein each opening of the first set of openings includes a grommet, and wherein the grommet has an interior layer and an exterior layer that are joined together and the interior layer has a first outward facing surface that is substantially parallel with the interior surface of the interior liner and the exterior layer of the grommet has a second outward facing surface that is substantially parallel with the exterior surface of the interior liner; and

wherein the interior layer and the exterior layer of the grommet are permanently joined in a central region prior to a hole that receives a mount being cut in the central region of the grommet.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0005] The present invention is illustrated by way of example and not limited in the accompanying figures in which like reference numerals indicate similar elements and in which: 25

Figures 1 to 30 relate to an exemplary suitcase not falling within the scope of the present invention. FIG. 1 is a front perspective view of an exemplary suitcase according to one or more aspects described herein. FIG. 2 is a rear perspective view of the suitcase of FIG. 1 according to one or more aspects described herein. FIG. 3 is a front view of the suitcase of FIG. 1 according to one or more aspects described herein. FIG. 4 is a right side view of the suitcase of FIG. 1 according to one or more aspects described herein. FIG. 5 is a rear view of the suitcase of FIG. 1 according to one or more aspects described herein. FIG. 6 is a left side view of the suitcase of FIG. 1 according to one or more aspects described herein. FIG. 7 is a top view of the suitcase of FIG. 1 according to one or more aspects described herein. FIG. 8 is a bottom view of the suitcase of FIG. 1 according to one or more aspects described herein. FIG. 9 is a front view of the suitcase of FIG. 1 with the extendable trolley handle in a raised position according to one or more aspects described herein. FIG. 10A is a front perspective view of a wheel assembly removed from the suitcase of FIG. 1 according to one or more aspects described herein. FIG. 10B is a rear perspective view of a wheel assembly removed from the suitcase of FIG. 1 according to one or more aspects described herein. FIG. 11A is an exploded perspective view of an alternate wheel assembly being installed onto the suit-

case of FIG. 1 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 11B is a rear perspective view of the housing of the alternate wheel assembly illustrated in FIG. 11A according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 11C is an enlarged rear perspective view of the wheel recess in the suitcase to receive the alternate wheel assembly illustrated in FIG. 11A according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 11D is a partial cross-sectional view of the alternate wheel assembly illustrated in FIG. 11A installed onto the suitcase of FIG. 1 with some components removed for clarity according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 12A is a partial exploded view of the identification tag holder being installed onto the suitcase of FIG. 1 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 12B is a rear perspective view of the identification tag holder according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 12C is a partial cross-sectional view of the identification tag holder installed in the suitcase of FIG. 1 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 13 is a top perspective view of the suitcase of FIG. 1 in an open configuration according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 14A is a side perspective view of the suitcase of FIG. 1 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 14B is an enlarged side perspective view of the suitcase of FIG. 1 with the latch assembly removed according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 15A is a partial exploded perspective view of the latch assembly being assembled to the lid of the suitcase of FIG. 1 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 15B is a partial perspective view of the latch assembly assembled to the lid of the suitcase of FIG. 1 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 15C is a partial exploded perspective view of the latch assembly assembled to the base of the suitcase of FIG. 1 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 16A is a partial cross-sectional side view through the latch assembly of the suitcase of FIG. 1 in a locked position according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 16B is a partial cross-sectional side view through the latch assembly of the suitcase of FIG. 1 in an unlocked position according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 17 is a front perspective view of a latch assembly of the suitcase of FIG. 1 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 18 is a rear perspective view of a latch assembly of the suitcase of FIG. 1 according to one or more

aspects described herein.

FIG. 19 is a side perspective view of an alternate embodiment of the suitcase of FIG. 1 in a locked orientation according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 20 is a side perspective view of an alternate embodiment of the suitcase of FIG. 1 in an unlocked orientation according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 21 is a perspective schematic view of an alternate embodiment of the suitcase of FIG. 1 with a deployable bag according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 22 is a top perspective view of an alternate embodiment of the suitcase with a deployable bag of FIG. 21 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 23 is a front right perspective view of the deployable bag in a closed configuration of the suitcase of FIG. 21 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 24 is a front right perspective view of the deployable bag in an open configuration of the suitcase of FIG. 21 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 25 is a rear perspective view of the deployable bag in a closed configuration of the suitcase of FIG. 21 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 26 is a rear perspective view of the deployable bag in an open configuration of the suitcase of FIG. 21 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 27 is an enlarged view of the deployable bag installed in the suitcase of FIG. 21 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 28 is an enlarged view of the deployable bag installed in the suitcase of FIG. 21 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 29 is an enlarged view of the deployable bag installed in the suitcase of FIG. 21 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 30 is a rear perspective view of the suitcase of FIG. 1 with the trolley handle extended and some components removed according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 31 is a front perspective view of the grip portion of the trolley handle assembly of an exemplary suitcase according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 32 is a side view of the grip portion of FIG. 31 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 33 is a front view of the grip portion of FIG. 31 with the outer housings removed according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 34 is a perspective view of the grip portion of FIG. 33 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 35 is a front perspective view of another exemplary suitcase according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 36 is a rear perspective view of the suitcase of FIG. 35 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 37 is a front view of the suitcase of FIG. 35 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 38 is a right side view of the suitcase of FIG. 35 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 39 is a rear view of the suitcase of FIG. 35 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 40 is a left side view of the suitcase of FIG. 35 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 41 is a top view of the suitcase of FIG. 35 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 42 is a bottom view of the suitcase of FIG. 35 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 43A is a partially exploded top right perspective view of the suitcase of FIG. 35 in an open configuration according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 43B is a perspective partial exploded view of an alternate attachment assembly for an interior liner with the liner removed of the suitcase of FIG. 35 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 43C is a perspective partial view of the attachment assembly of FIG. 43B according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 43D is a perspective partial view of the attachment assembly of FIG. 43B according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 43E is a perspective exploded view of the liner attachment assembly of FIG. 43B according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 43F is a perspective view of the lid of the suitcase of FIG. 35 with some components removed according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 43G is an enlarged perspective view of the mechanical connector arranged on the interior of the lid of FIG. 43F according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 43H is an enlarged perspective view of the mechanical connector arranged on the interior of the lid of FIG. 43F according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 44A is a front view of the suitcase of FIG. 35 in an open configuration with some components removed according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 44B is a partially exploded front perspective view of the suitcase of FIG. 35 in an open configuration with some components removed according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 44C is a partial front perspective view of the suitcase of FIG. 35 in an open configuration with some components removed according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 44D is an enlarged partial cross-sectional perspective view of the lid of the suitcase of FIG. 35 with some components removed according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 45 is a partial front perspective view of the suitcase of FIG. 35 in an open configuration with some components removed according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 46 is a partial top view of the suitcase of FIG. 35 in an open configuration with some components removed according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 47 is a rear perspective view of the wheel assembly of the suitcase of FIG. 35 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 48 is a front perspective view of the wheel assembly of the suitcase of FIG. 35 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 49 is a right front perspective view of the lid shell of the suitcase of FIG. 35 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 50 is a left front perspective view of the lid shell of the suitcase of FIG. 35 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 51 is a left front perspective view of the base shell of the suitcase of FIG. 35 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 52 is a right front perspective view of the base shell of the suitcase of FIG. 35 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 53 is a partial rear perspective view of the partially assembled suitcase of FIG. 1 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 54 is a partial front perspective view of view of the trolley handle extrusion assembly of one side of the trolley handle assembly of the suitcase of FIG. 1 with the suitcase shell removed for clarity according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 55A is a partial cross-sectional side view of the suitcase of FIG. 1 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 55B is an enlarged cross-sectional side view of FIG. 55A according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 56 is a partial cross-sectional side view of suitcase of FIG. 1 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 57A is a rear perspective view of the shell of the suitcase of FIG. 1 with the trolley handle removed for clarity according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 57B is an enlarged partial rear perspective view of FIG. 57A according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 58 is a partial cross-sectional side view of suitcase of FIG. 1 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 59 is an enlarged front perspective view of the

trolley handle assembly of FIG. 54 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 60 is an enlarged front perspective view of the trolley handle assembly of FIG. 54 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 61 is a top cross-sectional view of the extrusions of the trolley handle extrusion assembly of FIG. 54 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 62 is a partial rear perspective view of the trolley handle extrusion assembly of FIG. 54 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 63 is an enlarged rear perspective view of the juncture of the minor extrusion and major extrusion of the view of the trolley handle assembly of FIG. 62 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 64 is an enlarged rear bottom perspective view of the trolley handle assembly of FIG. 54 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 65 is a rear perspective view of the major extrusion of the trolley handle extrusion assembly according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 66 is a rear perspective view of the minor extrusion of the trolley handle extrusion assembly according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 67 is a rear perspective view of the tertiary extrusion of the trolley handle extrusion assembly according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 68 is a rear perspective view of the top cap of the trolley handle extrusion assembly according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 69 is a rear perspective view of the bottom cap of the trolley handle extrusion assembly according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 70 is a rear perspective view of the mounting clip of the suitcase of FIG. 1 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 71 is a rear perspective view of an exemplary suitcase according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 72A is a front perspective view of a trolley handle assembly of the suitcase of FIG. 71 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 72B is a top cross-sectional view of the extrusions of the trolley handle extrusion assembly of FIG. 72A according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 73 is a rear perspective view of the trolley handle assembly of FIG. 72A according to one of more aspects described herein.

FIG. 74 is a front perspective view of the trolley handle assembly of FIG. 72A with some components removed according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 75 is a front perspective view of the trolley handle assembly of FIG. 72A with some components removed according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 76 is a front perspective view of the trolley han-

dle assembly of FIG. 72A with some components removed according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 77 is a rear perspective view of the suitcase of FIG. 71 with some components removed according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 78 is a partially exploded cross-sectional side view of the suitcase of FIG. 71 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 79 is a partially exploded cross-sectional side view of the suitcase of FIG. 71 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 80 is a partial cross-sectional side view of the suitcase of FIG. 71 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 81 is an enlarged partial perspective view of the suitcase of FIG. 71 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 82 is a perspective view of the major bushing of the trolley handle assembly of FIG. 72A according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 83 is a perspective view of the minor bushing of the trolley handle assembly of FIG. 72A according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 84 is a perspective view of the bottom cap of the trolley handle assembly of FIG. 72A according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 85 is a front perspective view of the grip portion of the trolley handle assembly of FIG. 72A with some components removed according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 86 is a rear perspective view of the grip portion of the trolley handle assembly of FIG. 72A with some components removed according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 87 is a front perspective view of an interior liner for a base of a suitcase according to the present invention.

FIG. 88 is a front perspective view of an interior liner for a lid of a suitcase according to the present invention.

FIG. 89 is a front view of the interior liner of FIG. 87 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 90 is a right side view of the interior liner of FIG. 87 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 91 is a front view of the interior liner of FIG. 88 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 92 is a left side view of the interior liner of FIG. 88 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 93 is a left side view of the interior liner of FIG. 88 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 93 is a right side view of the interior liner of FIG. 92 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 94 is an enlarged partial cross-sectional view

the interior liner of FIG. 87 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 95 is a perspective view of a portion of a fastener attached to the interior liner of FIG. 87 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 96 is a cross-sectional schematic of the attachment of the portion of the fastener shown in FIG. 95 according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 97 is a front view of the interior liner of FIG. 87 with exemplary straps extending across the interior liner and the suitcase removed according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 98 is a front view of an exemplary strap according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIGS. 99A-99E are perspective views of a manufacturing process of the grommet according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 100 illustrates a flowchart for the manufacturing process of the grommet shown in FIGS. 99A-99E.

FIGS. 101A-101D are perspective views of optional mechanical connectors that can be arranged on the interior of either a lid or a base of a suitcase according to one or more aspects described herein.

FIG. 102 is a front view of the suitcase of FIG. 35 in an open configuration that shows optional locations for mechanical connectors with some components removed according to one or more aspects described herein.

[0006] Further, it is to be understood that the drawings may represent the scale of different components of one single embodiment; however, the disclosed embodiments are not limited to that particular scale.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0007] In the following description of various example structures according to the invention, reference is made to the accompanying drawings, which form a part hereof, and in which are shown by way of illustration various example devices, systems, and environments in which aspects of the invention may be practiced. It is to be understood that other specific arrangements of parts, example devices, systems, and environments may be utilized and structural and functional modifications may be made without departing from the scope of the present invention. Also, while the terms "top," "bottom," "front," "back," "side," "rear," and the like may be used in this specification to describe various example features and elements of the invention, these terms are used herein as a matter of convenience, e.g., based on the example orientations shown in the figures or the orientation during typical use. Nothing in this specification should be construed as requiring a specific three-dimensional orientation of structures in order to fall within the scope of this invention. Also, the reader is advised that the attached drawings are not necessarily drawn to scale.

[0008] Additionally, the term "plurality," as used herein,

indicates any number greater than one, either disjunctively or conjunctively, as necessary, up to an infinite number.

[0009] "Generally parallel," as the term is used herein, means that a first line, segment, plane, edge, surface, etc. is approximately (in this instance, within 5%) equidistant from with another line, plane, edge, surface, etc., over at least 50% of the length of the first line, segment, or edge, or over at least 50% of the area of the plane or surface, etc. In some examples, lines, segments, or edges may be considered "generally parallel" if one such a line, segment, or edge is approximately equidistant ($\pm 5\%$) to another respective line, segment, or edge over at least 60%, at least 75%, at least 85%, at least 90%, or even at least 95% of a length of either of the lines, segments, or edges being considered. Additionally, planes or surfaces may be considered "generally parallel" if one plane or surface is approximately equidistant ($\pm 5\%$) to another respective plane or surface over at least 60%, at least 75%, at least 85%, at least 90%, or even at least 95% of a surface area of either of the planes or surfaces being considered.

[0010] "Generally perpendicular," as the term is used herein, means that a first line, segment, plane, edge, surface, etc. is approximately (in this instance, within 5%) orthogonal from with another line, plane, edge, surface, etc., over at least 50% of the length of the first line, segment, or edge, or over at least 50% of the area of the plane or surface, etc. In some examples, lines, segments, or edges may be considered "generally perpendicular" if one such a line, segment, or edge is approximately orthogonal ($\pm 5\%$) to another respective line, segment, or edge over at least 60%, at least 75%, at least 85%, at least 90%, or even at least 95% of a length of either of the lines, segments, or edges being considered. Additionally, planes or surfaces may be considered "generally perpendicular" if one plane or surface is approximately orthogonal ($\pm 5\%$) to another respective plane or surface over at least 60%, at least 75%, at least 85%, at least 90%, or even at least 95% of a surface area of either of the planes or surfaces being considered.

[0011] In general, the present disclosure relates to suitcases, or containers, and aspects of the suitcase such as latching assemblies, wheel assemblies, and other sub-assemblies. According to various aspects and embodiments, the suitcases and latching assemblies described herein may be formed of one or more of a variety of materials, such as metals (including metal alloys), polymers, and composites, and may be formed in one of a variety of configurations, without departing from the scope of the invention. It is understood that the suitcases may contain components made of several different materials. Additionally, the components may be formed by various forming methods. For example, metal components, may be formed by forging, molding, casting, stamping, machining, and/or other known techniques. Additionally, the polymer components may be formed or manufactured by polymer processing techniques, such

as various molding and casting techniques and/or other known techniques.

[0012] The various figures in this application illustrate examples of suitcases according to this disclosure. When the same reference number appears in more than one drawing, that reference number is used consistently in this specification and the drawings refer to the same or similar parts throughout. The suitcase may be configured to contain, store, carry, etc., items including but not limited to, clothing, footwear, electronics, or any other items. Additionally or alternatively, the suitcase may be configured to store fragile materials without departing from the scope of the disclosure described herein.

[0013] FIGS. 1-8 depict views of the suitcase 100. The suitcase designated at 100, which does not fall within the scope of the present invention, may comprise a base 102 and a lid 104 that may be coupled together. For example, the base 102 and the lid 104 may be rotatably coupled together such that the base 102 and the lid 104 are connected by a hinge 106 or a plurality of hinges 106. Both the base 102 and the lid 104 may be a structure that forms a void for containing articles, as will be discussed more fully herein. In some examples, the base 102 and the lid 104 may have a similar volumetric displacement such that the size of the interior void 103 of the base 102 is substantially the same as the size of the interior void 105 of the lid 104, or where the volume of the void of the base 102 may be within 10 percent of the volume of the void of the lid 104. In some embodiments, the volume of suitcase 100 may be approximately 42,000 cubic centimeters, or within a range of 35,000 cubic centimeters and 45,000 cubic centimeters. The base 102 and the lid 104 may be cuboidal or substantially cuboidal in shape. For example, in some embodiments, the suitcase 100 may have a length of approximately 22 inches (55.9 cm), a width of approximately 14 inches (35.6 cm), and a height of 9 inches (22.9 cm). While in other embodiments, the suitcase 100 may have different dimensions. In other examples, the base 102 may be prismatic or substantially prismatic (e.g., a pentagonal prism, hexagonal prism, heptagonal prism, or the like) in shape. In still other examples, the base 102 may be substantially cylindrical in shape or may have a substantially trapezoidal cross section. Various other shapes may be used without departing from the invention.

[0014] The suitcase 100 may also include a tow pull or extendable trolley handle assembly 400, a plurality of handles 160, a plurality of wheels 168 located on a bottom of the suitcase 100, a plurality of latch assemblies 180, and a pair of retractable padlock loops 178, 179 to allow a padlock to be installed to secure the suitcase 100 during travel. In addition, suitcase 100 may be configured to be water resistant, or waterproof, or not allow substantially any water or moisture to enter the interior of the suitcase 100. As another feature, the exterior of the suitcase 100 may have a contoured shape that may include a plurality of recesses to accommodate the latch assemblies 180, hinges 106, a trolley handle assembly 400, and wheels

168 to minimize their profile and exposure to possible damage from collisions with other objects during travel.

[0015] The base 102 may include a lower shell structure 108 having a first side 110, a second side 112 opposite the first side 110, a third side 114 extending between an edge of the first side 110 and an edge of the second side 112, and a fourth side 116 opposite the third side 114. The lower shell 108 may also have a first end 118 and a second end 120 near the opening for the interior void 103 of the base 102. The lower shell 108 may also include a bottom portion 122 connected to a first end 118 of the lower shell structure 108 and configured to support the suitcase 100 on a surface such as a table, the ground, or the like. Similarly, the lid 104 may include an upper shell structure 124 having a first side 126, a second side 128 opposite the first side 126, a third side 130 extending between an edge of the first side 126 and an edge of the second side 128, and a fourth side 132 opposite the third side 130. The upper shell structure 124 may also have a first end 134 and a second end 136 near the opening for the interior void 105 of the lid 104. The upper shell structure 124 may also include a top portion 138 connected to a first end 134 of the upper shell structure 124 and configured to support the suitcase 100 on a surface such as a table, the ground, or the like.

[0016] In some examples, both the upper shell 124 and the lower shell 108 may each be formed as a unitary, or single, member such that each shell is seamless. Additionally, the upper shell 124 and the lower shell 108 may be free of any apertures or openings that pierce or extend from an exterior surface into the respective interior voids 103, 105 of the base 102 and lid 104. By having shells 108, 124 that are free of openings extending from the exterior to the interior, the suitcase 100 may advantageously prevent any moisture or water from entering the interior of the suitcase 100. The shells 108, 124 may generally have a thickness within a range of 2 mm and 4 mm, or within 1.5 mm and 6 mm. The shells 108, 124 may also include varying wall thicknesses in localized regions. For example, some areas may be thicker than other regions of the shells 108, 124 to provide attachment locations for the various components. These thicker regions may be arranged to receive mechanical fasteners or other connecting members. As another feature, the shells 108, 124 may include ribs, or rubrails, 109, which may be arranged along an outer or inner surface of the lower shell 108 and the upper shell 124 to increase the stiffness and strength of the shells and also provide extra protection for the shells 108, 124. For example, the ribs 109 may be oriented along the length of the top portion 138 of the upper shell 124 and along the bottom portion 122 of the lower shell 108. In some embodiments, the ribs 109 may be evenly spaced from the first and second sides 126, 128 of the upper shell 124 and may be arranged in pairs of ribs 109.

[0017] As discussed above, the upper shell 124 and the lower shell 108 may form the majority of the exterior of the suitcase 100 and each may have a contoured

shape that includes a primary surface, a raised surface, and a plurality of recesses, where the recesses may protect the components from collisions or damage. For example, the upper shell 124 may include a raised protruded surface 140 that extends near and/or along the second end 120 around the perimeter of the upper shell 124. The raised surface 140 may be offset a fixed distance from a primary surface 142 of the upper shell. A plurality of upper latch recesses 144 may be at least partially formed within the raised surface 140. Each upper latch recess 144 may have a depth equal to or greater than the thickness of each of the latch assemblies 180 to provide protection from the latch assemblies 180. The upper latch recesses 144 may have a substantially rectangular shape, or alternatively a shape that closely matches the shape of the latch assembly 180. Each latch recess 144 may have receiving features to secure a latch assembly 180 within the recess 144. The receiving features may comprise a pocket on either side of the recess 144 to receive a pin or other mounting hardware for the latch assemblies 180.

[0018] Similar to the upper shell 124, the lower shell 108 may include a primary surface 146, a raised protruded surface 148 that extends near and/or along the second end 136 around the perimeter of the lower shell 108. The raised surface 148 may be offset a fixed distance from a primary surface 146 of the upper shell. A plurality of lower latch recesses 150 may be at least partially formed within the raised surface 148. Each lower latch recess 150 may have a depth equal to or greater than the thickness of each of the latch assemblies 180. The lower latch recesses 150 may have a depth that is generally the same as the depth of the upper latch recess 144. The latch recesses 150 may include a latch keeper 182 that extends across the recess 150 and provides an engaging surface for the latch assembly 180 to secure the lower shell 108 to the upper shell 124. Each recess 150 may have a substantially rectangular shape, or alternatively a shape that closely matches the shape of the latch assembly 180. The shape and size of the recesses 144, 150 may be mirror images of each other to and may be aligned to form a larger recess to receive the entire latch assembly 180.

[0019] The trolley handle assembly 400 may be attached to the lower shell 108 along the exterior of the bottom portion 122. The trolley handle assembly 400 may be formed as a separate member and attached to the lower shell 108. The lower shell 108 may have a tow pull recess or trolley handle recess 154 that is offset from the primary surface 146 on the bottom portion 122 of the lower shell 108. The tow pull recess 154 may be substantially U-shaped as shown in FIG. 2, or may be a pair of symmetrical elongated recesses 154 to receive trolley handle assembly 400. The recess 154 may have a depth that is equal to or greater than the thickness of the extrusions of the trolley handle to adequately protect the trolley handle assembly 400 from impacts. The trolley handle assembly 400 may include an extendable extrusion assembly 410 that slides upward from the top of the

suitcase to provide an elevated grip for a user to easily pull the suitcase 100 as shown in FIG. 9.

[0020] Additionally, to allow the user to easily pull the suitcase 100, the bottom of the suitcase may include a plurality of wheel assemblies 164 positioned on the rear and bottom of the suitcase 100. Each wheel assembly 164 may be formed as a separate member, as shown in FIGS. 10A and 10B, and may include a wheel housing 166 having a rounded shape and at least one mounting flange 167 located on at least one end, and a wheel 168 mounted on an axle (not shown) such that the axle is aligned with a center of the rounded shape. The mounting flange 167 may include a mounting hole. The lower shell 108 may include a wheel recess 170 to receive the wheel assembly 164. The wheel assembly 164 may be secured to the wheel recess using at least one mechanical fastener extending through the mounting hole positioned in the mounting flange 167. As shown in the exemplary embodiment, the suitcase 100 may comprise a pair of wheel assemblies 164; however, in other embodiments the suitcase may include more additional wheel assemblies 164. The wheel assemblies 164 may be evenly spaced from the sides of the suitcase 100. The housing 166 may be formed from a polymer material, such as a polyamide (nylon) or similar material, while the wheels 168 may be formed from a polymer material, such as a polyurethane, or similar material.

[0021] FIGS. 11A-11D illustrate another option for the wheel assembly 264 that may install onto suitcase 100. Wheel assembly 264 may include a wheel housing 266 that has a rounded shape and a mounting flange 267. The wheel assembly 264 may further include a wheel 268 mounted on axle 269. The housing 266 may further include a pair of horizontally oriented projections 271 positioned along each side of the housing 266 that may insert into a pair of grooves 273 oriented within the recess 270 of the lower shell 108. Each projection 271 of the pair of projections is received into each groove 273 of the pair of grooves to support to the housing 266 in a vertical direction within the recess 270. The wheel assembly 264 may then be secured in a horizontal direction by a mechanical fastener extending through a mounting hole on the flange 267 and into a thickened portion of the shell 108, which prevents the fastener from piercing into an interior of the shell. As another option, the housing 266 may also include a detent 275, or protrusion, on a forward end of the housing 266. The detent 275 may be received in a slot 277 near the rear end of the recess 270 to provide additional support in a horizontal direction to the wheel assembly 264.

[0022] In some embodiments, the bottom (corresponding to the fourth side 132 of the upper shell 124) of the suitcase 100 may also and/or alternatively include one or more feet 172A which may support the suitcase 100 on a surface such as a table, the ground, or the like. The feet 172 may be attached may be attached to the upper shell 124 and may be located opposite the wheel assemblies 164 to give a proper balance as shown in FIG. 8.

The feet 172 may be formed of a non-skid or non-sliding impact absorbing material, such as a rubber, elastomer, or other similar material. For example, the feet 172 may be formed from an EPDM (ethylene propylene diene monomer) rubber (ethylene propylene diene monomer) or similar material. The feet may be attached to the shell using an adhesive, ultrasonic welding technique, or electromagnetic bonding (such as Emabond®). By attaching the feet using a bonding or welding technique the shells 108, 124 may remain free of any intrusions into their interior.

[0023] Each of the feet 172 may be received in a foot recess 174 that may be formed within the raised surface 148 of the upper shell 124. The foot 172 may have a substantially elliptical shape, a square shape, or any shape. In addition, each foot 172 may extend an amount equal to the distance each wheel 168 extends beyond the suitcase. Thus, the top of the suitcase 100 may be approximately level when sitting on the ground. As another option, one or more feet 172B may also be located along the second side 112, 128 of the shells 108, 124 such that the feet 172B are positioned opposite each other on both the upper shell 124 and the lower shell 108. As shown in FIG. 6, the feet 172B may be positioned along the second side 128 of the upper shell 124 and along the second side 112 of the lower shell 108. The feet 172 B may be formed from a similar material to the feet 172A on the bottom of the suitcase 100. While having the same material, the shape of the feet 172B may be slightly different than the feet 172A in that the feet 172B may have a generally truncated elliptical shape. The feet 172 may be generally aligned with one of the hinges 106 where a flat portion of the feet 172B are spaced from an edge of a hinge 106. In addition, the feet 172B may be arranged to contact one another when the suitcase 100 is fully opened to reduce the impact forces on the hinges and the other components of the suitcase 100 when it is opened.

[0024] Still another feature of the suitcase 100 is an identification tag holder 250 to help a user easily identify the suitcase 100 as illustrated in FIGS. 12A-12C. The identification tag holder 250 may be located on either the lid 104 or the base 102. For example, the identification holder 250 may be located between the extrusion assemblies 410 of the trolley handle assembly 400. The identification tag holder 250 may include a transparent card sleeve 252, and a slidable card mount 254. The card mount 254 may have a central opening 253 and may be slidably engaged with a slot 255 positioned in the lower shell 108 such that the card mount 254 moves in a vertical direction. The card mount 254 may include a pocket to secure the card sleeve 252. The card sleeve 252 may have an opening to receive an identification tag 257 such as a business card or similar material that may contain a user's identification information. The card mount 254 may slide upward along the slot 255 to an open position exposing the pocket to allow a user to install the card sleeve 252 and then slide the card mount 254 downward

into the slot 255. The card mount 254 may include a pair of grooves or depressions 258 arranged on each side of the card mount 254 to receive a detent 260, or protrusion, positioned within the slot 255. As the card mount 254 is slid downward within the slot 255, the detent 260 may be received within the groove 258 of the card mount 254. The card mount 254 may be secured within the slot 255 by the detents 260 engagement with the grooves 258. The slot 255 may have a pair of detents 260 with a detent 260 being located on both sides of the slot 255. The grooves 258 may be positioned near a lower end 259. The identification material may then be easily viewed through the opening 253 of the card mount 254. In some embodiments, the detents 260 may be arranged on the card mount 254 and the grooves 258 arranged within the slot 255.

[0025] To help improve the security of the suitcase 100, the suitcase 100 may include a pair of padlock loops 178, 179 to receive a padlock (not shown) to prevent any unauthorized opening of the suitcase 100. A first padlock loop 178 may be connected to the upper shell 124 and a second padlock loop 179 may be connected to the lower shell 108 such that the first padlock loop 178 is aligned with the second padlock loop 179 to allow a padlock to be inserted into the opening of each padlock loop 178, 179. Each padlock loop 178, 179 may be retractable where they can rotate into slots on the respective shells 124, 108 to store and protect the loops 178, 179 when they are not in use.

[0026] The suitcase 100 including the upper and lower shells 124, 108 may be formed from various materials, such as one or more metals, alloys, polymers, ceramics, or fiber-reinforced materials. In some examples, the upper and lower shells 124, 108 may be formed of a polymer material, such as a polycarbonate alloy, a thermoplastic olefin (TPO), or other similar material, that is molded to form both the shells 108, 124. In some arrangements, the shells 108, 124 are formed using injection molding or roto-molding/rotational molding processes as would be understood by one of ordinary skill in the art (not shown). However, various other types of molding or other manufacturing processes (e.g., stamping, casting, forging, and the like) may be used to form the suitcase 100 without departing from the invention.

[0027] As discussed above, the base 102 and the lid 104 may be rotatably coupled to each other. The hinges 106 may be one of various types of hinges, including a continuous piano hinge, double hinge, ball joint hinge, living hinge, and the like double hinges to allow the base 102 and the lid 104 to rotate away from each other up to at least 180 degrees in a fully opened position as shown in FIG. 13. In some examples, the lid 104 may be removably or permanently connected to the base 102 at the hinge(s) 106. When in the open configuration, the interior voids 103, 105 of both the base 102 and the lid 104 may be accessible to a user. When in the closed configuration, the hinge 106 may facilitate rotation of the lid 104 and the base 102 to secure the contents within the suitcase

100.

[0028] Additionally, as shown in FIG. 13, the interior voids 105, 103 of both the lid 104 and the base 102 may include a liner 115 to provide a soft interior surface. The liner 115 may include a waterproof fabric material to provide an extra level of moisture protection for the contents of the suitcase 100. As another option, a plurality of magnetic or ferromagnetic elements may be arranged around the inner edges along the second end 120 of the lower shell 108 of the base 102 and also along the inner edges along the second end 136 of the upper shell 124 of the lid 104. These magnetic elements may assist in aligning and closing the lid 104 and the base 102.

[0029] In addition, in some arrangements, the suitcase 100 may include a gasket 176 or other sealing device. The gasket 176 may be arranged in either the lid 104 or the base 102 and may aid in sealing the lid 104 and base 102 when the suitcase 100 is in a closed configuration. The gasket 176 may be arranged in a recess or channel in the lid 104. Alternatively, the gasket 176 may be arranged in a recess or channel formed in the base 102. In some examples, the gasket 176 may be a traditional gasket having a substantially circular cross section.

[0030] In still other embodiments, the suitcase 100 may be capable of achieving an IP52 rating up to an IP67 rating (as set forth by International Electrotechnical Commission). For example, in one embodiment, the suitcase 100 may be manufactured such that it is protected from limited dust ingress and water resistant to a water spray test corresponding to achieving an IP52 rating. While in other embodiments, the suitcase 100 may be manufactured such that it is dust tight when tested for 8 hours and/or waterproof when tested for 30 minutes under 1 meter of water. In some embodiments, the suitcase 100 may be capable of achieving an IP67 rating which specifies that there is no ingress of dust or complete protection from dust when tested for 8 hours and ingress of water in harmful quantities is not possible when the enclosure is immersed in water under defined conditions of pressure and time (up to 1 m of submersion). The IP67 dust test is 8 hours long and the enclosure is tested in a vacuum. The IP67 water test is 30 minutes long and the enclosure is tested with the lowest point of the enclosure 1000 mm below the surface of the water, or the highest point 150 mm below the surface whichever is deeper. Depending on the IP rating, the suitcase 100 may include a one-way air vent. For example, if the rating is an IP52, a one-way air vent may not be necessary, but if the rating is higher such as an IP67, a one-way air vent may be necessary.

[0031] In some arrangements, the suitcase 100 may include one or more handles 160. The handles 160 may be arranged on one or more portions of the base 102 along the lower shell 108. The handles 160 may be arranged on a top side and a right side of the suitcase 100. The handles 160 may be secured to the raised surface 148 of the lower shell 108. The handles 160 may be formed from a polymer and molded with a thermoplastic

urethane (TPU) to provide a soft comfortable surface for a user to grip. The handles 160 may be connected to camming rings that attach to brackets 162. The brackets 162 may be engaged/secured to the lower shell 108 using mechanical fasteners, where the mechanical fasteners do not extend into the interior of the lower shell 108.

[0032] As discussed above, the suitcase 100 may also include one or more latch assemblies 180. The latch assemblies 180 may have a locked position and an unlocked position and may be configured to lock the lid 104 to the base 102 when the lid 104 is in a closed configuration. The latch assemblies 180 may include one or more portions integrally formed with or otherwise attached to the suitcase 100. As shown in FIGS. 14A-16B, the suitcase 100 may include a latch keeper 182 located within lower latch recess 150. The latch keeper 182 may extend from a sidewall of the lower latch recess 150 of the lower shell 108. The recess 150 has a shape configured to receive a portion of the locking member 190 as will be discussed in more detail below. The latch keeper 182 may have an upper surface 184, an inner surface 186 and a lower surface 188. As will be discussed in greater detail below, the latch assemblies 180 may engage the latch keeper 182 to lock the lid 104 to the base 102 when the suitcase 100 is in a closed configuration.

[0033] In some embodiments, the latch assembly 180 may be rotatably coupled to a lid latch mount 181 prior to being installed to the lid 104. The latch assembly 180 may be coupled to the lid latch mount 181 using a pin 203, or hinge. The pin 203 may be inserted into an opening in the latch body 200 of the latch assembly 180 and into a pair of openings in the sides of the lid latch mount 181 as shown in FIGS. 15A and 15B. The lid latch mount 181 may be received in the upper latch recess 144 of the upper shell 124. The lid latch mount 181 may be installed in recess 144 in a direction generally parallel to the surface of the first side 126 and secured to the shell 124 using at least one mechanical fastener inserted into an opening on flange 183 of lid latch mount 181. The mechanical fastener securing the flange 183 to the upper shell 124 may insert into a threaded hole in a thickened portion of the shell 124, which may prevent the fastener from piercing into the interior of the shell 124. The pin 203 may be a straight pin, or a stepped pin and may have knurled features.

[0034] Similarly, in some examples, a base latch mount 185 may be received in lower latch recess 150 of the lower shell 108 as shown in FIG. 15C. The latch keeper 182 may be installed into the base latch mount 185 prior to being installed to the base 102. The base latch mount 185 may be installed in recess 150 in a direction generally parallel to the surface of the first side 110 and secured to the lower shell 108 using at least one mechanical fastener inserted into an opening on flange 187 of lid latch mount 185. The mechanical fastener securing the flange 187 to the shell 108 may insert into a threaded hole in a thickened portion of the shell 108 to prevent the fastener from piercing into the interior of the shell 108.

[0035] Referring now to the latch assembly 180 as shown in FIGS. 15A-18, the latch assembly 180 may include multiple components including a latch body 200, a locking member 190, a biasing member 220, and an activating member 230. As discussed above, the latch assembly 180 may include a locked position and an unlocked position.

[0036] The latch body 200 may be pivotally engaged with the lid 104. As shown in FIG. 17, the latch body 200 may be pivotally engaged with the lid 104 using pin, or hinge 203, however, any suitable pivotal engagement may be used. In some embodiments, the hinge 203 may be removably engaged with the suitcase 100. This hinge 203 may allow a user to easily remove and replace the latch assembly 180 if it becomes damaged. The latch body 200 may include an inner surface 204 and an outer surface 206. The outer surface 206 may be contoured and may not extend outward of the outer edge of the raised surface 148 of the lower shell 108 or raised surface 140 of the upper shell 124. The inner surface 204 may also be curved and may also include a number of different features. One exemplary feature that may be included on the latch body 200 may be one or more engagement lugs 208. As will be discussed in more detail below the engagement lugs 208 may engage the base 102, or latch keeper 182, and may assist in compressing the lid 104 against the base 102 of the suitcase 100.

[0037] The latch body 200 may also be engaged with the locking member 190. As shown in FIGS. 16A and 16B, the locking member 190 may be slidably engaged with the latch body 200 such that the locking member 190 may move between an upward position and a downward position in a substantially linear path. The locking member 190 may be configured to lock the lid 104 in a closed configuration when the locking member 190 is in the downward position and unlock the lid 104 when the locking member 190 is in the upward position.

[0038] As shown primarily in FIG. 18, the locking member 190 may be movably engaged with one or more guide members 192 such that the locking member 190 may slide up and down the guide members 192. In one embodiment, the locking member 190 may include apertures 194 passing through the locking member 190 and through which the guide members 192 may also pass. The guide members 192 may be engaged with the latch body 200 at a top end 195 and at a bottom end 196. As shown in FIG. 18 the guide members 192 are cylindrical rods but any suitable shape may be used that permits upward and downward movement of the locking member 190. For example, guide members 192 may be prismatic or substantially prismatic (e.g., a pentagonal prism, hexagonal prism, heptagonal prism, or the like) in shape. In still other examples, the latching assembly 180 may include other devices suitable for allowing generally linear movement between the locking member 190 and the latch body 200, including for example, rails.

[0039] As also shown in FIG. 18, the latch assembly 180 may also include at least one biasing member 220

engaged with the latch body 200 and the locking member 190. As will be discussed in more detail below, the biasing member 220 is configured to bias the locking member 190 in a downward position. The biasing member 220 may be a compression spring as shown in FIG. 18, but may in alternative embodiments be any suitable device for biasing the locking member 190 in the downward position.

[0040] The locking member 190 may include a base portion 210 and a hook portion 212 extending inwards from the base portion 210. The hook portion 212 may include a lower surface 214 and an inward facing surface 216. As shown in FIG. 15, when the latch assembly 180 is in the locked position, the lower surface 214 of hook portion 212 of the locking member 190 may engage the upper surface 184 of the latch keeper 182 and the inward facing surface 216 of the hook portion 212 may engage the inner surface 186 of the latch keeper 182. Additionally, when the latch assembly 180 is in the locked position the upper surface of the engagement lugs 202 may engage the lower surface 188 of the latch keeper 182.

[0041] The latch body 200 may also be pivotally engaged with an activating member 230. The activating member 230 may also be engaged with the locking member 190 and may be configured to move the locking member 190 from the downward position to the upward position. As shown in FIGS. 15 and 16, the activating member 230 may be pivotally engaged to the latch body 200 by a hinge 232 extending through the latch body 200 and the activating member 230. The activating member 230 may include a grip portion 234, an activating barrel 236, and one or more arms 238 connecting the grip portion 234 and the activating barrel 236. As shown in FIG. 16B, the grip portion 234 is spaced a distance from the lower surface of the recess 150 of the lower shell 108. This distance may allow a user grip the back surface 240 of the grip portion 234 with their fingers placed between the lower surface of the recess 150 and the grip portion 234. As shown in FIGS. 15 and 16, the activating barrel 236 of the activating member 230 may engage the locking member 190. The activating barrel 236 may include a raised portion 242. As will be discussed in greater detail below, a user may pull the grip portion 234 of the activating member 230 forward causing the raised portion 242 of the activating barrel 236 to rotate and lift up the locking member 190. This movement causes the latch assembly 180 to unlock and allows the lid 104 to be moved from the closed configuration to an open configuration.

[0042] Referring now to FIGS. 16A and 16B, a procedure for moving an embodiment of the latch assembly 180 from the locked position to an unlocked position is shown with side cross-sectional views of the latch assembly 180 and portions of the base 102 and lid 104. FIGS. 16A and 16B illustrate simplified versions of the base 102 and the lid 104 to focus the illustrations on the latch assembly 180. FIG. 16A depicts the latch assembly 180 in the locked position, and FIG. 16B depicts the latch

assembly 180 in an unlocked position. As shown in FIG. 16A, in the locked position, the lower surface 214 of hook portion 212 is engaged with the upper surface 184 of the latch keeper 182; the inward facing surface 216 of the hook portion 212 is engaged with the inner surface 186 of the latch keeper 182, and the engagement lugs 202 are engaged with the lower surface 188 of the latch keeper 182.

[0043] As shown in FIG. 16B, the latching assembly 180 may be moved to the unlocked position by rotating the activating member 230 as shown with arrow. This rotation may be accomplished by a user pulling forward on back surface 240. As the activating barrel 236 rotates, the raised portion 242 engages the locking member 190 and raises the locking member 190.

[0044] The latch assembly 180, including the latch body 200, locking member 190, and activating member 230, may each be separately formed and may be formed of materials such as plastic materials or another suitable material which can be formed or molded into the desired shape. The latch assembly 180 may be made of sufficient size, thickness and materials of construction to withstand repeated cycles of stress as the latch is engaged/disengaged with the latch keeper 182 over time. The suitcases described herein include various features that ensure easy and efficient manufacture of the suitcases, while providing durability and wear resistance.

[0045] FIGS. 19-20 illustrate suitcase 100 with alternate latching assemblies 280 to lock and unlock the lid 104 to the base 102. The latching assemblies 280 may include a handle 282 that can rotate about an axis that is generally oriented generally perpendicularly to the first side 110 of the lower shell 108 and the first side 126 of the upper shell 124. The handle 282 may be permanently attached to the lid 104 and have a latch or hook such that when in a locked orientation, the latch engages to the base 102 to lock the lid 104 to the base 102. To unlock the suitcase 100, the handle 282 may be rotated approximately 90 degrees to disengage the latch from the base 102 allowing the lid 104 to move relative to the base 102.

[0046] FIGS. 21-29 illustrate another option for the suitcase 100. In this embodiment, the suitcase 100 may include a deployable bag 300 that attaches to one or both of the interior voids 103, 105. FIG. 21 illustrates the conversion of the bag 300 from being removed from interior void 105 of the lid 104, and then converted to a backpack. FIG. 21 also shows the bag 300 in an open configuration with a front pocket unzipped. While the illustrated embodiment shows the deployable bag 300 releasably attached to the interior void 105 of the lid 104, the deployable bag 300 may be releasably attached to the interior void 103 of the base 102. The deployable bag 300 may be secured within the suitcase 100 and then removed to easily convert to a portable bag that can easily be carried by a user. The deployable bag 300 may have at least one carrying strap or a pair of carrying straps 302 as shown such that the bag 300 may be worn as a backpack by the user.

[0047] The deployable bag 300 may have a plurality of pockets including a rear pocket 304 that may secure and store the straps 302 such that the bag 300 may be carried by either the handle 306A located on the top of bag 300 or the handle 306B located on the side of the bag 300. The bag 300 may also have a closure 320 on the front side of the bag along with a closure 322 along the sides that allow access to the interior of the bag 300. The front closure 320 allows a user to access the interior of the bag 300 even when the bag 300 is secured within the lid 104. The bag 300 may include a waterproof exterior material and may have a volume of approximately 20 liters or within a range of 15 to 30 liters. As another way of defining the size, the bag 300 may substantially fill the volume of the interior void 105 of the lid 104. As another option for the deployable bag 300, a one-way air vent may be provided to allow the bag 300 to be compressed to remove the air from the bag 300 to minimize the volume of the bag within the suitcase 100.

[0048] In addition, bag 300 may include a plurality of attachment loops 308 arranged along an exterior perimeter of the bag 300. For instance, the attachment loops 308 may be evenly spaced along the top, bottom, left, and right sides of the bag 300. Each side of the bag 300 may include at least two attachment loops 308, or in some embodiments, each side of the bag 300 may have three or more attachment loops 308. Each attachment loop 308 may engage a hook 310 located along the sides of the interior void 105 of the lid 104. As shown in FIGS. 27, the hook 310 may engage and extend through the loop 308 to secure the bag 300 to the suitcase 100. FIG. 28 illustrates the removal of the loop 308 from the hook 310 to disengage the bag 300 from the suitcase 100. The hook 310 may be permanently connected to an interior side surface 312 of the lid 104. The hook 310 may comprise an outward member 314 extending outward from the side surface 312 and then a downward member 316 that extends from the edge of the outward member 314 towards the interior bottom surface 318 of the lid 104.

[0049] The attachment loops 308 may be part of an outer band that is attached to the exterior surface of the bag 300, or alternatively, the loops 308 may be individually placed along the exterior surface of the bag. The attachment loops 308 may be formed from a nylon or other suitable fabric material. As an alternative, the attachment loops 308 may be replaced by alternate fastening methods such as hook and loop type fasteners, magnetic elements, or other releasable element that may be positioned around the perimeter of the bag 300.

[0050] As another option, the bag 300 may be replaced by a plurality of deployable bags 300 that are removably coupled to the interior of the lid 104. The plurality of deployable bags 300 may be modular bags of different sizes. For example, the plurality of deployable bags 300 may include a first bag that fills approximately one-half of the interior void 105 and a second and third bag that each fills approximately one-quarter of the interior void 105. Additionally, at least one of the plurality of bags may

be waterproof or all of the plurality of bags may be waterproof.

[0051] The suitcase 100 may also include a trolley handle assembly 400 or tow pull handle. The trolley handle assembly, or tow pull, may be used in conjunction with wheels on a suitcase to easily pull or push the suitcase making it more maneuverable. The trolley handle assembly 400 may comprise a pair of extrusion assemblies 410 that are connected to the base 102 of the suitcase 100 and connected to each other by a handle or grip 402. The components of the trolley handle assembly 400 may be formed by various forming methods. For example, metal components, may be formed by forging, extruding, molding, casting, stamping, machining, and/or other known techniques. The polymer components may be formed or manufactured by polymer processing techniques, such as various molding and casting techniques and/or other known techniques.

[0052] As discussed above, the exterior of the suitcase 100 may have a contoured shape that may include a plurality of recesses to accommodate the latch assemblies, trolley handle assembly 400, and wheels 168 to minimize their profile and exposure to possible damage from collisions with other objects during travel. For instance, the lower shell 108 may have a tow pull recess 154 that is offset from the primary surface 146 on the bottom portion 122 of the lower shell 108. The tow pull recess 154 may have a depth that is equal to or greater than the thickness of the extrusion assembly 410 to adequately protect the trolley handle assembly 400 from impacts. The trolley handle assembly 400 may include an a pair of extendable extrusion assemblies 410 that can extend above from the top of the suitcase 100 to provide an elevated grip 402 for a user to easily pull the suitcase 100 as shown in FIG. 30. The extrusion assemblies 410 may include a major extrusion 420 and one or more minor extrusions 430, 460, where the minor extrusions may be nested within a central opening of the major extrusion 420, and slidably engaged with the major extrusion 420.

[0053] FIGS. 31-34 illustrate an exemplary grip or handle 402 of the trolley handle assembly 400. As discussed above the grip 402 may extend between the extrusion assemblies 410 and act as the interface for a user to extend and lower the trolley handle 400. The grip 402 may include a release button 411, an upper grip housing 413, and a lower grip housing 415. The lower grip housing 415 may include a pair of extension members 417 that extend away from an upper surface 419 of the upper grip housing 413. These extension members 417 may have an opening 431 with a shape and profile that is slightly larger than the profile of the minor extrusion 430 or of the tertiary or second minor extrusion 460 such that the uppermost extrusion member 430, 460 may be inserted into the opening 431 and secured. The extrusion member 430, 460 may then be secured to the grip 402 by means known to one skilled in the art.

[0054] The release button 411 may be centrally located

in both a horizontal and vertical direction along the grip 402. In addition, the upper surface 419 may be contoured to match the adjacent surfaces of the suitcase to provide a clean aesthetic appearance. The release button 411 also may include a contoured upper surface 433 to correspond with the upper surface 419 of the grip 402. Further, the release button 411 may be coupled to a rack and pinion gear assembly 435 as shown in FIGS. 33 and 34 that are illustrated with the upper grip housing 413 and the lower grip housing 415 removed. The release button 411 may have two lower engaging members 437 on each end of the button 411 that contact an engaging member 441 located on each of a pair of rack gear members 439. Each rack gear member 439 may include an engaging member 441, a rack gear portion 443 at a first end, a base member 445, and a transmitting member 447 at a second end opposite the first end. The rack gear portion 443 of each of the rack gear members 439 may engage with a pinion gear 449. The pinion gear 449 may be centrally located beneath the release button 411, such that when the release button 411 is pushed, the release button 411 may move in a direction generally perpendicular to the upper surface 419 of the grip 402. As the button 411 is pushed, the lower engaging members 437, which may have an angled surface 461, may contact and slide along a corresponding angled surface 463 of the engaging member 441 on the rack gear member 439. Angled surface 463 may have a compound angle relative to an upper surface of the base member 445, where the compound angle is angled to two orthogonal planes that are also orthogonal to the upper surface of the base member 445. The compound angle of surface 463 may form acute angles between 1 degree and 60 degrees to the two orthogonal planes. As the angled surfaces 461, 463 move along one another, both of the rack gear members 439 be urged to move outward. The pinion gear 449 may help to keep the movement between both gear members 439 equal and in a controlled manner. As the gear members 439 move outward, the transmitting member 447 then applies a force to an activating member 465 located in a slot positioned within the lower extension 417. The transmitting member 447 may include an angled surface that contacts an angled surface on activating member 465. Activating member 465 may disengage a locking mechanism for the trolley handle assembly 400 allowing the grip 402 to be pulled upward and extend the extrusion assembly 410.

[0055] FIGS. 35-52 illustrate an exemplary suitcase 500 comprising a base 502 and a lid 504 according to the present invention. The features of suitcase 500 are referred to using similar reference numerals under the "5xx" series of reference numerals, rather than "1xx" as used in the embodiment of FIGS. 1-30. Accordingly, certain features of suitcase 100 that were already described above as shown in FIGS. 1-30 may be described in lesser detail, or may not be described at all. In addition, suitcase 500 may also include a latch assembly 180 and trolley handle 400 as described above. Exemplary suitcase 500

includes a base 502 and the lid 504 rotatably coupled together by a hinge 506 or a plurality of hinges 506.

[0056] The base 502 includes a lower shell structure 508 having a first side 510, a second side 512 opposite the first side 510, a third side 514 extending between an edge of the first side 510 and an edge of the second side 512, and a fourth side 516 opposite the third side 514. The lower shell 508 also has a first end 518 and a second end 520 near the opening for the interior void 503 of the base 502. The lower shell 508 also includes a bottom portion 522 connected to a first end 518 of the lower shell structure 508 and configured to support the suitcase 500 on a surface such as a table, the ground, or the like. Similarly, the lid 504 includes an upper shell structure 524 having a first side 526, a second side 528 opposite the first side 526, a third side 530 extending between an edge of the first side 526 and an edge of the second side 528, and a fourth side 532 opposite the third side 530. The upper shell structure 524 also has a first end 534 and a second end 536 near the opening for the interior void 505 of the lid 504. The upper shell structure 524 also includes a top portion 538 connected to a first end 534 of the upper shell structure 524 and configured to support the suitcase 100 on a surface such as a table, the ground, or the like.

[0057] Similar to the example suitcase 100, both the upper shell 524 and the lower shell 508 may each be formed as a unitary, or single, member such that each shell is seamless. Additionally, the upper shell 524 and the lower shell 508 may be free of any apertures or openings that pierce or extend from an exterior surface into the respective interior voids 503, 505 of the base 502 and lid 504 when the various components of the suitcase 500 are assembled to the shells 524, 508. Shells 508, 524 may generally have a thickness within a range of 2 mm and 4 mm, or within 1.5 mm and 6 mm. The shells 508, 524 may also include varying wall thicknesses. As another feature, the shells 508, 524 may include external ribs (or rubrails) 509, which may be arranged along an outer or inner surface of the lower shell 108 and the upper shell 524 to increase the stiffness and strength of the shells as well as to protect the shells from impacts.

[0058] Upper shell 524 and lower shell 508 may form the majority of the exterior of the suitcase 500 and each may have a contoured shape that includes a primary surface, a raised surface, and a plurality of recesses, where the recesses may protect the components from collisions or damage. For example, the upper shell 524 may include a raised outward facing surface 540 that extends near and/or along the second end 520 around the perimeter of the upper shell 524. The raised outward facing surface 540 may be offset a fixed distance from an outward facing primary surface 542 of the upper shell 524. A plurality of upper latch recesses 544 and hinge recesses 545 may be formed within the raised surface 540. Each upper latch recess 544 may have a depth equal to or greater than the thickness of each of the latch assemblies 180 to provide protection for the latch assemblies 180. In some examples, each upper latch recess may have a rear sur-

face 544A, an upper surface 544B, and a pair of opposing side surfaces 544C, and an opening 544D opposite the upper surface 544B. The upper recess depth of latch recess 544 may be defined as the horizontal distance between the outward facing surface 540 to the rear surface 544A. The upper latch recesses 544 may have a substantially rectangular shape, or alternatively a shape that closely matches the shape of the latch assembly 180. Each latch recess 544 may have receiving features to secure a latch assembly 180 within the recess 544. The receiving features may include a pocket on either side of the recess 544 to receive a pin or other mounting hardware for the latch assemblies 180. Similarly, each hinge recess 545 may be formed within the raised surface 540. Each upper hinge recess 545 may have a depth equal to or greater than the thickness of each of each hinge 506 to provide protection for hinge 506 from impacts.

[0059] Similar to the upper shell 124, the lower shell 508 may include a primary outward facing surface 546, a raised outward facing surface 548 that extends near and/or along the second end 536 around the perimeter of the lower shell 508. The raised outward facing surface 548 may be offset a fixed distance from a primary outward facing surface 546 of the lower shell 508. A plurality of lower latch recesses 550 and lower hinge recesses 551 may be formed within the raised surface 548. Each lower latch recess 550 may have a depth equal to or greater than the thickness of each of the latch assemblies 180. The lower latch recesses 550 may have a depth that is generally the same as the depth of the upper latch recess 544. In some examples, each lower latch recess 550 may have a rear surface 550A, an upper surface 550B, and a pair of opposing side surfaces 550C, and an opening 550D opposite the upper surface 550B. The lower recess depth of lower latch recess 550 may be defined as the horizontal distance between the outward facing surface 548 to the rear surface 550A. The latch recesses 550 may include a latch keeper 182 that extends across the lower recess 550 and provides an engaging surface for the latch assembly 180 to secure the lower shell 508 to the upper shell 524. Each latch recess 550 may have a substantially rectangular shape, or alternatively a shape that closely matches the shape of the latch assembly 180. The shape and size of the latch recesses 544, 550 may be mirror images of each other to and may be aligned to form a larger recess to receive the entire latch assembly 180 when the suitcase 500 is in a closed configuration. By receiving the entire latch assembly 180 within this larger recess, the exposed surfaces of latch assembly 180 may be below outward facing surfaces 540, 548 and also protected around the sides of the latch assembly 180 such that when the suitcase is in the closed configuration, a perimeter of the latch assembly 180 may be located within a combined perimeter of the upper latch recess 544 and lower latch recess 550.

[0060] In some examples, as shown in FIGS. 44B and 44C, the latch assembly 180 may be rotatably coupled

to a lid latch mount 181 prior to being installed to the lid 504. The lid latch mount 181 may include a body member 189 that may be received within upper latch recess 544 and a flange 183 that may be mounted to a shelf within recess 544 or mount to a surface adjacent the upper latch recess 544. The lid latch mount 181 may be installed in recess 544 in a direction generally parallel to the surface of the first side 526 and secured to the shell 124 using at least one mechanical fastener inserted into an opening on flange 183 of lid latch mount 181. The mechanical fastener securing the flange 183 to the upper shell 524 may insert into a threaded hole in a thickened portion of the shell 524, which may prevent the fastener from piercing into the interior of the shell 524. As described above, in some examples, a base latch mount 185 may be received in lower latch recess 550 of the lower shell 508. The latch keeper 182 may be installed into the base latch mount 185 prior to being installed to the base 102. The base latch mount 185 may include a base member 191 that may be received within lower latch recess 550 and a flange member 187 that may be mounted to a shelf within recess 544 or mount to a surface adjacent the upper latch recess 544. The lower latch mount 185 may be installed in lower latch recess 550 in a direction generally parallel to the surface of the first side 110 and secured to the lower shell 508 using at least one mechanical fastener inserted into an opening on flange 187 of lid latch mount 185. The mechanical fastener securing the flange 187 to the shell 108 may insert into a threaded hole in a thickened portion of the shell 508 to prevent the fastener from piercing into the interior of the shell 508. The mechanical fasteners 623 securing the latch mounts 181, 185 to their respective shells 524, 508 may be oriented generally parallel to each other and may also be parallel to the first side 510 of the shell 508 and also may be parallel to the first side 526 of shell 524.

[0061] The lower hinge recesses 551 may be formed within the raised surface 548. Each lower hinge recess 551 may have a depth equal to or greater than the thickness of each of each hinge 506 to provide protection for hinge 506 from impacts. The shape and size of the recesses 545, 551 may be mirror images of each other to and may be aligned to form a larger recess to receive the entire hinge 506. The larger recess formed from recesses 545, 551 may have a shape that surrounds a majority of the perimeter of the hinge assembly 506.

[0062] As shown in FIG. 43A, suitcase 500 may include an interior liner 600. The interior liner 600 may be molded and may be releasably secured into either the interior void 503 of the base 502 or the interior void 505 of the lid 504. The interior liner 600 may have a formed exterior shape to match the interior profile of either interior void 503, 505. The interior liner 600 may include a storage cavity 602 recessed from an upper surface 608 of the liner 600 to accommodate different cargo. For example, the storage cavity 602 may include a plurality of different shaped cavities to receive and protect different shaped items. The interior liner 600 may be formed via a molding

process where the liner 600 is molded from a rubber, polymer, or foam material such as ethylene-vinyl acetate (EVA) or other similar material. The liner 600 may include mechanical elements 604, such as clips or hooks, that are spaced around the exterior of the liner 600 where the mechanical elements 604 engage corresponding mechanical elements, such as loops, positioned along the interior of the base 502 and the lid 504. Optionally, the interior liner 600 may also be secured using an adhesive, hook and loop type fasteners (Velcro), magnetic elements, or other connection methods. For example, the interior liner 600 may have a plurality of magnetic or ferromagnetic elements positioned along a perimeter and/or bottom surface that may attach to corresponding magnetic or ferromagnetic elements positioned along or within the interior surfaces of the shells 508, 524. In some instances, suitcase 500 may include multiple interior liners 600 where the interior liners 600 may be interchangeably installed into suitcase 500 depending on the contents to be secured. In some examples, the liner 600 may include a releasable netting or layer 606 to further secure items within the liner 600.

[0063] As another option to releasably secure the interior liner 600 to within the interior void 503 of the base shell 508 or interior void 505 of the lid shell 524, the liner 600 may include a liner attachment assembly 620 that releasably engages a base attachment member 639. FIGS. 43B-43E illustrate an alternate means to releasably attach the liner 600 to either of the shells 508, 524. The liner attachment assembly 620 may move between a locked position to secure the liner 600 to one of the shells 508, 524 and an unlocked position that allows the liner 600 to be removed from the suitcase 500. The liner attachment member 620 may be permanently attached to the interior liner 600 and the base attachment member 639 may be permanently attached to an interior surface 507, 525 of the base shell 508 or the lid shell 524. The liner attachment assembly 620 may include a tail member 622, a flange member 627, and a grip member 634. The tail member 622 may include a tail body member 624 with a locking projection 625 extending outwardly from the tail body member 624. In some cases, such as the illustrated example in FIG. 43E, the tail member 622 may have a pair of locking projections 625 that are arranged opposite each other. The locking projections 625 may have at least one tapered surface to securely engage the base attachment member 639. In addition or optionally, each locking projection 625 may have a detente or recess to engage a corresponding recess or detent on the base attachment member 639 to provide positive feedback of the attachment assembly 620 reaching the locked position. The body member 624 of the tail member 622 may have a generally cylindrical shape or may have any shape that is symmetrical around a central axis. The flange member 627 may include a flange body 629 that may be permanently secured to the liner 600 (i.e. through stitching, rivets, adhesives, or other means known to one skilled in the art) and a flange opening 631. The flange

opening 631 may receive a portion of the tail member 622, and the grip member 634 may attach to the portion of the tail member 622 that extends into the flange opening 631. The grip member 634 may be any shape and provide a surface to allow a user to grab and rotate the grip member 634.

[0064] The base attachment member 639 may include a first wall 641 and a second wall 643 where each wall 641, 643 may extend away from the interior surface 507 of the base shell 508 with a first end 645 at the interior surface and a second end 647 opposite the first end 645. The first wall 641 may include a first base locking projection 649 located at the second end 647 that extends toward the second wall 643, where the second wall 643 includes a second base locking projection 649 located at the second end that extends toward the first wall 643. The first wall 641 and second wall 643 may be spaced a fixed distance from each other. Each of the base locking projections 649 may include a contoured edge shape 651 to receive the tail member 622 such that the body member 624, the contoured edge shape 651, and the opening 631 may be coaxial with each other when the attachment assembly 620 is in a locked position.

[0065] The liner attachment assembly 620 may be moved to a locked position from an unlocked position by rotating the grip member 634 a predetermined amount in a first direction, and may be moved to an unlocked position from a locked position by rotating the grip member 634 a predetermined amount in a second direction, where the second direction is opposite the first direction. For example, the liner attachment assembly 620 may be moved to a locked position from an unlocked position by rotating the grip member 634 approximately 90 degrees in a first direction, and may be moved to an unlocked position from a locked position by rotating the grip member 634 approximately 90 degrees in a second direction, where the second direction is opposite the first direction. In some examples, the grip member 634 may be moved to a predetermined amount in the same direction to move the attachment assembly 620 from a locked position to an unlocked position. When in the locked position, the locking projection of the liner attachment assembly is at least partially positioned underneath the first base locking projection or the second base locking projection.

[0066] The liner may include a plurality of liner attachment assemblies 620 that may be attached to the base attachment members 639. For examples, the liner attachment assemblies 620 may be located within the storage cavities 602 or within anywhere on the liner 600 such as the sidewalls or bottom surface. Similarly, the shells 508, 524 may include a plurality of base attachment members 639 that may be arranged anywhere along the interior surfaces of the corresponding shell. For examples, base attachment members 639 may be placed along the interior side surfaces and/or bottom surfaces of the shells 508, 524. As another option, backpack 300 may also include the liner attachment assemblies 620 and may be releasably secured to the shells 508, 524 as described

above.

[0067] FIGS. 43F and 43G illustrate another example of an attachment configuration to releasably secure liner 600 to the base 502 and lid 504. FIG. 43F illustrates an example of base 502 with a plurality of mechanical connectors 660 positioned along the interior surface 507. While not shown, lid 504 may have a plurality of mechanical connectors 660 arranged in a similar manner. In this example, liner 600 may have a plurality of mechanical connectors 660 that releasably engage a plurality of corresponding mechanical connectors that are arranged along the interior of the lower and upper shells 508, 524. The mechanical connectors 660 may be attached to an interior surface 507, 525 of the base 502 or the lid 504. The mechanical connectors 660 may be evenly or irregularly spaced along each of the interior surfaces 507, 525 of the respective base 502 and lid 504. The mechanical connectors 660 may be attached to an interior surface 507, 525 using an adhesive, tape, or other means known to one skilled in the art. In some examples, the interior surface 507, 525 may have a rib 552 positioned offset a predetermined distance along a portion of a perimeter of the mechanical connector 660 as shown in FIG. 43G. In some examples, the rib 552 may be located less than 2 mm from an edge of the connector 660, or located less than 4mm from the edge, or less than 8 mm from the edge. The rib 552 may act to protect the mechanical connector 660 from impacts and prevent any shear forces from acting on the mechanical connector 660 to prevent any mechanical connectors 660 from coming loose. The rib 552 may be continuous around an entire perimeter of the mechanical connector 660 or be discontinuous as shown in the illustrated example. For example, rib 552 may have an opening or plurality of openings or breaks 553 within the length of the rib 552. This discontinuity or opening 553 may allow a user to use a tool to slide through the opening 553 in the rib 552 to engage the mechanical connector 660 and pry the connector 660 off in order to repair or replace a damaged connector 660. Each rib 552 may be formed as a part of shells 508, 524. While the illustrated examples show a circular mechanical connector 660 and rib 552, the mechanical connector 660 and rib 552 may have any shape, such as rectangular shape, triangular shape, or other geometric shape. Alternatively, the connector 660 may have a magnetic or ferromagnetic element that releasably engages a complementary connector on the liner 600.

[0068] In addition, both the base 502 and lid 504 may include a plurality of mounts or plugs 556 that attach to the interior surfaces 507, 525 respectively. FIGS. 43F and 43H illustrate the mounts 556. The mounts 556 may be plugs that attach to a boss 558 that is formed with the base shell 508 and lid shell 524. The mounts 556 may have a groove 560 that helps releasably connect the mount 556 to a strap or other restraining device. The mounts 556 may allow a strap (not shown) to releasably connect to mounts 556 on a first side of the suitcase 500 and stretch across to the second side of the suitcase 500

to secure any contents stored within the suitcase 500. In some examples, the mounts 556 may extend through openings that are located in the liner 600 to allow a user to access the mounts 556 to attach the releasable straps when a liner is secured in either the base 502 and/or lid 504.

[0069] FIG. 44A illustrates a front view of the suitcase in an open configuration with some components removed. The plurality of hinges 506 that join the base 502 and lid 504 together may be secured to the base 502 and lid 504 such that the lid portion and base portion of the hinge 506 may be slid into the respective hinge recess 545, 551 and then secured the using a mechanical element 621, such as a mechanical fastener. The mechanical element 621 may be oriented generally perpendicular to the bottom portion 522 of the base 502. Similarly, the latch assembly 180 may be installed into the lid 504 by sliding the latch assembly 180 into the lid latch recess 544 and securing it to the lid 504 using a mechanical element 623, such as a mechanical fastener, where the mechanical element 623 may also be oriented generally perpendicular to the bottom surface 522 of the base 502.

[0070] As discussed above, the suitcase 500 may include a gasket 576 or other sealing device. As shown, the gasket 576 may be arranged in a recess 577 arranged on the lower surface 537 at the second end 536 of the lid 504. The base 502 may have a sealing rib 581 arranged along the upper surface 521 at the second end 520 of the base 502 that engages the gasket 576 when the suitcase 500 is in the closed configuration. In addition, when the suitcase 500 is in the closed configuration, the engagement of the gasket 576 and the sealing rib 581 may prevent the upper surface 521 of the base 502 from contacting the lower surface of the lid 504, where the upper surface and the lower surface and the fourth end surface are spaced apart from each other where the lid 504 is spaced apart a fixed distance from the base 502 creating a gap between them. The gasket 576 may be formed from a rubber or polymeric material and in some examples, have a substantially circular cross-section. Alternatively, the gasket 576 may be arranged in a recess or channel formed in the base 502.

[0071] As shown in FIG. 44D, the recess 577 may include a rib 578 that extends upward to engage the gasket 576 opposite the engagement of the sealing rib 581. This rib 578 within the recess may help create a symmetrical load on the gasket 576 to enable the gasket 576 to have a circular cross-section while still providing an adequate seal.

[0072] In addition, the base 502 of suitcase 500 may include a tapered region 523 between the bottom portion 522 and the fourth surface 516. The tapered region 523 may be located between the pair of wheel assemblies 564 and form an acute angle with the central region of the bottom portion 522. This tapered portion may extend at an angle within a range of 1 degree and 30 degrees when measured from the central portion of the bottom portion 522 to a lower surface of the tapered region 523

(or tangent plane to a lower surface of the tapered region 523). Tapered portion 523 allows suitcase 500 to be pulled using the trolley handle 400 in a larger variety of positions to accommodate users having different heights.

[0073] FIGS. 63 and 64 illustrate the hinge 506. The hinge assembly 506 may include at least two linkages 626, a base hinge insert 628, a lid hinge insert 630, and a plurality of linkage pins 632. A portion of each linkage 626 may be connected via a linkage pin 632 to the lid 504 and a portion of each linkage 626 may be connected via a linkage pin 632 to the base 502. The hinge assembly 506 may define a hinge axis 633 for the rotation of the lid 504 relative to the base 502. Hinge axis 633 may be located outside of a rear edge of the base 502 and also outside of a rear edge of the lid 504. Additionally, the hinge axis 633 may be outside of the physical geometry of the hinge assembly 506. The base hinge insert 628 and the lid hinge insert 630 may each have a recess 636, 638 respectively. The hinge recesses 636, 638 may receive the plurality of linkages 626. Each recess 636, 638 may have a depth measured from a respective top surface and bottom surface 640, 642 of the hinge insert 628, 630 to a bottom surface of the recess that is greater than a thickness of each of the linkages 626. This arrangement allows the hinge inserts 628, 630 to protect the linkages 626 from any damage.

[0074] Each linkage 626 may have a top surface 640 and a bottom surface 642 opposite the top surface 640 as well as side surfaces 644 extending between the top and bottom surfaces 640, 642. A pair of holes 646 may extend through the side surfaces 644 where the holes 646 receive the linkage pins 632. For example, linkage 626 may include a first linkage opening 646 that receives a first linkage pin 632 that extends through the opening 646 into an opening in the base hinge insert 628 and a second linkage opening 646 that receives a second linkage pin 632 that extends through the opening 646 into an opening in the lid hinge insert 630. Thus, each linkage 626 is connected to both the base 502 and the lid 504. In addition, the bottom surface 642 may include a slot 648 that receives one of the linkage pins 632 when the suitcase is in the closed configuration and a slot 650 on the top surface 640 that receives one of the linkage pins 632 when the suitcase is in the open configuration. The linkages 626 may be arranged adjacent each other where the first linkage may be oriented with the top surface 640 facing toward the top perimeter of both the lid 504 and the base 502 when the suitcase 500 is in the open configuration and the second linkage may be oriented with the bottom surface 642 facing toward the top perimeter of both the lid 504 and the base 502 when the suitcase 500 is in the open configuration as shown in FIG. 45.

[0075] Each of the base hinge insert 628 and lid hinge insert 630 may have a generally rectangular shape when viewed from the left side view of the suitcase 500. As discussed above, each hinge insert 628, 630 has a hinge recess 636, 638, where each hinge recess is open on one end and surrounded by a hinge insert wall on the

remaining sides. When installed, the open end of each recess 636, 638 may align with each other to form an overall hinge recess to receive the linkages 626 and allow them to move. Each hinge insert 628, 630 may have a hinge flange 652 extending from the hinge insert wall at the end of the hinge insert 628, 630 that has the open end of the recess 636, 638. The hinge flange 652 may have at least one opening to receive the mechanical element 621 that secures the hinges 506 within the respective hinge recesses 550, 551 of the base 502 and lid 504.

[0076] Similar to the configuration of suitcase 100, the feet 572 may be generally aligned with one or more of the hinges 506 where a flat portion of the feet 572B are spaced from an edge of a hinge 506. In addition, the feet 572B may be arranged to contact one another when the suitcase 500 is fully opened to reduce the impact forces on the hinges and the other components of the suitcase 500 when it is opened as shown in FIG. 46. While the illustrated example suitcase 500 has three hinge assemblies 506, the suitcase 500 may only have two hinges 506 or may have more than three hinges.

[0077] The components of the hinge assembly 506 such as the linkages 626, hinge inserts 628, 630, linkage pins 632, may be formed of metallic materials such as steel or aluminum to provide adequate strength and stiffness. Alternatively, these components may be formed from a polymeric material or composite material such as a fiber-filled polymer. The components may be manufactured using known methods such as casting, machining, and molding.

[0078] Similar to suitcase 100, suitcase 500 may include a plurality of wheel assemblies 564 positioned near the rear and bottom corners of suitcase 500. As shown in FIG. 47, wheel assembly 564 may be installed into wheel recess 570 of the lower shell 508. Wheel assembly 564 may include a wheel housing 566 that has a rounded shape and a mounting flange 567. The wheel assembly 564 may further include a wheel 568 mounted on an axle and bearings (not shown). The housing 566 may further include a plurality of guide rails 569 oriented along a side surface of wheel housing 566 and a plurality of guide rails 571 positioned along the top surface of the wheel housing 566. The guide rails 569, 571 will slide into corresponding guide slots 573, 575 arranged within the wheel recess 570 of the lower shell 508. The guide slots 573, 575 and guide rails 569, 571 may include at least one tapered surface to provide a tighter fit as the wheel assembly 564 is slid into its final position. Furthermore, the guide rails 573, 575 and guide slots 569, 571 may secure the wheel assembly 564 in both a lateral and vertical direction (when looking at the rear view of the suitcase 500). The wheel assembly 564 may be secured to the wheel recess 570 using at least one mechanical element, such as mechanical fastener, extending through the mounting hole positioned in the mounting flange 567, wherein the mechanical element is oriented parallel to the mechanical elements 621 and 624 that secure the hinges 506 and latch assemblies 180 respectively. As shown in the illus-

trated example, each wheel assembly may be secured with a single mechanical fastener.

[0079] Each wheel assembly 564 may be formed as a separate member, as shown in FIGS. 47 and 48. Each wheel assembly 564 may include a wheel housing 566 having a rounded shape and at least one mounting flange 567 located on at least one end, and a wheel 568 mounted on an axle and bearings (not shown) such that the axle is aligned with a center of the rounded shape. In addition, each wheel housing 566 may have a contoured surface that generally follows the contour of the bottom surface 522 of the suitcase and includes the tapered portion 523. The outward facing surface 583 of wheel housing 566, when installed, may be spaced outward of the bottom surface 522 and tapered portion 523 of the base 502. By spacing the outward facing surface 583 away from the base 502 may help to protect the base 502 from any impacts.

[0080] As shown in the illustrated examples, the suitcase 500 may comprise a pair of wheel assemblies 564, however, in other embodiments the suitcase may include additional wheel assemblies 564. The wheel assemblies 564 may be evenly spaced apart and may be located on the outer edges of the suitcase 500 such that the wheel housing 566 is exposed on at least three sides of the base 502. The housing 566 may be formed from a polymer material, such as a polyamide (nylon) or similar material, w6461e the wheels 568 may be formed from a polymer material, such as a polyurethane, or similar material. In some examples, the wheels 568 may include a rubber coating or rubber exterior for better traction and wear.

[0081] As discussed above, the base 502 may include a lower shell 508 and the lid 504 may include an upper shell 524 to provide a rigid structure that may form a barrier to protect the stored contents. The lower and upper shells 508, 524 may be formed from various materials, such as one or more metals, alloys, polymers, ceramics, or fiber-reinforced materials. In some examples, the upper and lower shells 124, 108 may be formed of a polymer material, such as a polycarbonate alloy, a thermoplastic olefin (TPO), or other similar material, that is molded to form both the shells 508, 524. In some arrangements, the shells 508, 524 are formed using injection molding or roto-molding/rotational molding processes as would be understood by one of ordinary skill in the art (not shown). In order to further enhance the structure, the shells 508, 524 may include elongated rib structures to further stiffen the structure in areas around the latch assemblies 180 and hinges 506. For instance, as shown in FIGS. 49 and 50, upper shell 524 may have a set of elongated ribs 527 extending from a surface underneath each of the upper latch recesses 544 to the interior surface on the top portion 538 of upper shell 524. Similarly, a set of elongated ribs 527 may extend from a surface underneath each of the upper hinge recesses 545 to the interior surface of the top portion 538 of upper shell 524. Each rib 527, 529 within each set may be evenly spaced

apart from the next adjacent rib, where each rib may be spaced apart from each other a distance of approximately 9.5 times the thickness of each rib 527, 529, or spaced apart from each other within a range of 8 times to 10 times the thickness of each rib 527, 529, or spaced apart from each other within a range of 6 to 12 times the thickness of each rib 527, 529. Each rib 527, 529 may have a thickness of approximately 1.6 mm or within a range of 1.0 mm and 2.2 mm. Similarly, as shown in FIGS. 51 and 52, the lower shell 508 may have a set of elongated ribs 511 extending from a surface underneath each of the lower latch recesses 550 to the interior surface bottom portion 522 of lower shell 508. Similarly, a set of elongated ribs 513 may extend from a surface underneath each of the lower hinge recesses 551 to the interior surface of the bottom portion 522 of lower shell 508. Each rib 511, 513 within its set of ribs may be evenly spaced apart from the next adjacent rib, where each rib 511, 513 may be spaced apart from each other a distance of approximately 9.5 times the thickness of each rib 511, 513, or spaced apart from each other within a range of 8 to 10 times the thickness of each rib 511, 513, or spaced apart from each other within a range of 6 to 12 times the thickness of each rib 511, 513. Each rib 511, 513 may have a thickness of approximately 1.6 mm or within a range of 1.0 mm and 2.2 mm. The rib structures 511, 513, 527, 529 may also be connected to the adjacent interior surface of the shell structure of the respective lid and base shells 524, 508. The rib structures 511, 513, 527, 529 help to stiffen and strengthen shells 508, 524. As another option, the lower shell 508 may have an opening 515 arranged within the ribs 513 under one of the hinge recesses 551 to receive a one-way pressure release valve.

[0082] FIGS. 53-70 illustrate a trolley handle assembly 400 along with its attachment to the suitcase 100. Trolley handle assembly 400 may be attached to the lower shell 108 along the exterior of the bottom portion 122 of the shell 108. The trolley handle 400 may be formed as a separate member or assembly and attached to the lower shell 108. The trolley handle 400 may comprise a pair of extrusion assemblies 410, and a grip 402 for a user to grasp that extends between the pair of extrusion assemblies 410. In some embodiments, the trolley handle 400 may comprise a single extrusion assembly 410. Each extrusion assembly 410 may have a major extrusion 420, a minor extrusion 430, a top cap or major bushing 440 positioned between the major extrusion 420 and the minor extrusion, and a bottom cap 450 attached to a bottom end of the major extrusion 420. Alternatively, each extrusion assembly 410 may have a major extrusion 420, a minor extrusion 430, a tertiary or second minor extrusion 460, a top cap 440 positioned between the major extrusion 420 and the minor extrusion 430, an upper cap or minor bushing 404 positioned between the tertiary extrusion 460 and the minor extrusion 430, and a bottom cap 450 attached to a bottom end of the major extrusion 420. Still in other embodiments, the number of extrusions in each extrusion assembly 410 may comprise a single

extrusion or more than three extrusions.

[0083] As shown in FIGS. 61 and 65-67, the extrusions 420, 430, 460 of the extrusion assembly 410 may be configured in a nested arrangement. The major extrusion 420 may have a central opening 422 surrounded by an outer wall 429, where the central opening 422 has a generally rectangular shape with an alignment member 429A arranged on the rear side of the outer wall 429. The alignment member 429A may be a centrally located indentation along the outer wall 429 extending into the opening 422 to help align the other extrusions 430, 460 within the openings 422, 432 as they move relative to each other. While the exemplary alignment member 429A has a trapezoidal shape, the alignment member 429A may be curved, triangular, or other geometric shape. The minor extrusion 430 may have an exterior surface 434 with a shape or profile that generally corresponds to the shape of the opening 422 of the major extrusion 420 such that the minor extrusion 430 may be inserted into an opening 422 of the major extrusion 420. The exterior shape of the minor extrusion 430 may be offset a predetermined distance from the interior surface of the opening 422 and include alignment member 434A to permit the minor extrusion 430 to slide freely upward and downward within the opening 422 of the major extrusion 420 to allow the trolley handle 400 to extend to a usage position or withdraw to a storage position. Similarly, the tertiary extrusion 460 may have an exterior surface 464 with a shape or profile that generally corresponds to the shape of the central opening 432 of the minor extrusion 430 such that the tertiary extrusion 460 may be inserted into an opening 432 of the minor extrusion 430. The exterior shape of the tertiary extrusion 460 may be offset a predetermined distance from the interior surface of the opening 432 and include alignment member 464A to permit the tertiary extrusion 460 to slide freely upward and downward within the opening 432 of the minor extrusion 430. The grip 402 may be secured to the tertiary extrusion 460 of each of the extrusion assemblies 410. In some instances, the minor extrusion 430 may be the uppermost extrusion of the extrusion assembly 410 where the grip 402 secured between pair of minor extrusions 430.

[0084] The major extrusion 420, minor extrusion 430, and tertiary extrusion 460 may each be formed as a single unitary piece, where each extrusion 420, 430, 460 may have a substantially constant cross-sectional profile. FIG. 61 further illustrates the nested arrangement and the cross-sectional profile of the major extrusion 420 may have a central opening 422 with a channel 424 positioned adjacent the central opening 422 on the front side of the major extrusion 420 with a central slot 423 extending into the channel 424. The outer channel wall 426 extends from either side of the slot 423 and wrap around until connecting to the outer wall 429 that surrounds the central opening 422.

[0085] As illustrated in FIGS. 53-70, the trolley handle assembly 400 may be secured externally to the base 102 of the suitcase 100, where the base 102, or lower shell

108, is free of any apertures that extends through the shell 108. The trolley handle assembly 400 each extrusion assembly 410 may be secured to the lower shell 108 using a plurality of mounting clips 470. As shown in FIG. 53, a plurality of mounting clips 470 may be secured within the tow pull recess 154 of the lower shell 108. The plurality of mounting clips 470 may include three mounting clips 470 evenly spaced apart a first clip 470 secured in an upper region of the recess 154, a second clip secured in a central region of the recess 154, and a third clip secured in a lower region of the recess 154, while other embodiments may comprise two mounting clips 470 or may comprise four mounting clips 470. To install the trolley handle 400 onto the suitcase 100, each extrusion assembly 410 may be slid downward into the tow pull recess 154 such that a central slot 423 in an outer channel 424 of the major extrusion 420 slides over each of the mounting clips 470 until each of the outer spring arms 482 of the mounting clips 470 engages a receiver 425 located adjacent an outer channel wall 426 of the major extrusion 420. As shown in FIGS. 54, 55A-B, 60 and 61, the outer channel 424 may be adjacent the central opening 422 and arranged on a front side of the major extrusion 420 such that the outer channel wall 426 faces the tow pull recess 154 of the lower shell 108. The receiver 425 of the major extrusion 420 may comprise a slot that extends outward from the central slot 423. Each major extrusion 420 may include a plurality of receivers 425. The plurality of receivers 425 may be arranged as a set, where the number of receivers 425 in each set is equal to the number of spring arms 482 on the mounting clips 470. For example, in the exemplary embodiments shown in the figures, four receivers 425 are arranged in a set to correspond to the four outer spring arms 482 on each mounting clip 470.

[0086] As best illustrated in FIG. 70, the mounting clips 470 may have a central body 472 with a top end 474, a bottom end 476, a front side 478, a rear side 480, a plurality of outer spring arms 482 arranged on both the left side 484 and the right side 486, a central spring arm 488 extending from the front side 478 of the central body 472, and a plurality of mounting holes 479 extending through the central body 472. Each outer spring arm 482 may have fixed end 492 attached to the central body 472 and a free end 494, such that the outer spring arm 482 is cantilevered from the fixed end. Additionally each free end 494 may have an upper surface 495, a rear surface 496, and a lower surface 497. The angle 498 formed by the upper surface 495 and the rear surface 496 may be an obtuse angle. For example, angle 498 may be approximately 115 degrees, or may be in a range of 91 degrees and 135 degrees. By arranging angle 498 in this manner, the major extrusion 420 may be able to push the outer spring arms 482 inward to allow the extrusion 420 to slide downward over the mounting clips 470 until it reaches the bottom without the upper mounting clip 470 causing it to become locked midway down. As best seen in FIG. 55A and 55B, as the major extrusion 420 moves down-

ward, the upper edge 427 of the receiver 425 may contact the upper surface 495 and push the outer spring arm 482 inwards towards the front side 478 to allow the major extrusion to continue to move downward until arriving at its final assembly position. In addition, the rear surface 496 and lower surface 497 of the free end 494 form angle 499, which is an acute angle. For example, angle 499 may be approximately 85 degrees, or within a range of 45 degrees and 89 degrees. By arranging the lower surface 497 and the rear surface at acute angle 499, the major extrusion 420 may be unable to be removed by being pulled upward after a spring arm 482 has engaged with its corresponding receiver 425. Once the spring arm 482 is engaged, if the major extrusion 420 is pulled upward, lower edge 428 of receiver 425 may contact lower surface 497 where the angled lower surface 497 will cause the outer spring arm 482 to resist moving inward thereby keeping the major extrusion 420 from moving upward.

[0087] As shown in FIG. 56, each mounting clip 470 may be secured to the lower shell using a mechanical fastener 406 inserted through each the mounting hole 479 of the mounting clip 470. The fasteners 406 may be inserted into blind holes 159 formed in the lower shell 108 such that the holes 159 do not extend into the interior void of the suitcase 100, which keeps the lower shell 108 free of any openings extending through its body. The lower shell 108 may have a wall thickness that is greater than the wall thickness of the majority of the lower shell 108 in the regions that secure the mounting clips 470.

[0088] Since each mounting clip 470 is arranged to allow the movement of the major extrusion 420 in only one direction, the mounting clip 470 may be mounted on the suitcase in a manner to ensure its proper operation. Each mounting clip 470 may have a pocket 493 on the rear side 480 that may engage a boss 155 arranged in the tow pull recess 154. Each boss 155 may have an asymmetrical shape along at least one plane that intersects the axis of the blind holes 159 that engages pocket 493 having a corresponding asymmetrical shape. The bosses 155 may be arranged in pairs to engage the pockets 493 arranged on the each mounting clip 470. For example, as shown in FIGS. 57A and 57B, the bosses 155 may be arranged as three pairs of bosses 155 in each recess 154 to connect to three mounting clips 470 within each recess 154. Such the number of pairs of bosses 155 may equal the number of mounting clips 470 attached to the shell 108. Each boss 155 may be D-shaped where an upper region is rounded and a lower region is straight. The asymmetry of boss 155 and pocket 493 may help to prevent the mounting clip 470 from being assembled to the lower shell 108 incorrectly. Alternatively, only one boss 155 of each pair of bosses 155 may be asymmetrically shaped.

[0089] In addition, as a means of creating a secure installation of the trolley handle 400 to the suitcase, the central spring arm 488 of the mounting clip 470 may provide a horizontally oriented force to help further secure

the extrusion assembly 410 to the shell 108 and reduce any vibration within the trolley handle 400 relative to the suitcase 100. As discussed above, the central spring arm 488 may extend outward from the front side 478 of the central body 472 toward the bottom end 476. The spring arm 488 may have a fixed end 489 on the front side 478 of the mounting clip 470 and a free end 490 spaced away from the front side 478. The free end 490 may contact the portion of the outer wall 429 of the major extrusion 420 that is positioned between the central opening 422 and the channel 424. As the free end 490 contacts the outer wall 429, the central spring arm 488 is compressed and as it is compressed it exerts a force against the major extrusion 420 to reduce any vibration and keep the trolley handle 400 secured to lower shell 108.

[0090] The extrusion assembly 410 may have a means to keep dirt and debris from causing the extrusions 420, 430, 460 from binding as they move relative to each other. Each extrusion 420, 430, 460 includes a central opening 422, 432, 462 respectively to allow any dirt or debris that enters the assembly 410 to pass easily through the center. Additionally, as shown in FIGS. 63 and 68, the extrusion assembly 410 may include the top cap 440 inserted into the central opening 422 at the top of the major extrusion 420. The top cap 440 may have upper lip 442 that rests on a top surface 421 of the major extrusion 420 and a lower portion 444 that inserts into the central opening 422. The top cap 440 may have a central opening 446 that extends through the top cap 440 with a shape that corresponds with the exterior surface 434 of minor extrusion 430. The upper lip 442 may have a plurality of inward facing grooves 448. These grooves 448 provide small openings to allow dust and debris to pass through, such that the dust may travel along the inside of the extrusion assembly 410 without affecting the sliding movement of the minor extrusion 430 and allowing the minor extrusion 430 to move freely relative to the major extrusion 420. Similarly, the upper cap 404 may be inserted into the opening 432 of the minor extrusion 430 and have a central opening to receive the tertiary extrusion 460. The upper cap 404 may have all of the features discussed above of the top cap 440 such the plurality of inward facing grooves to allow dust and debris to pass through, such that the dust may travel along the inside of the extrusion assembly 410 without affecting the sliding movement of the tertiary extrusion 460 and allowing the tertiary extrusion 460 to move freely relative to the minor extrusion 430.

[0091] Additionally, the bottom cap 450 of each extrusion assembly 410 may provide a means to further secure the trolley handle 400 to the suitcase 100 and also provide a means to allow dirt and debris to exit each extrusion assembly 410. The bottom cap 450 may be inserted into central opening 422 at the bottom of major extrusion 420. As shown in FIGS. 56, 58, 42, and 20, the bottom cap 450 may comprise an upper portion 451 that extends into the central opening 422 of the major extrusion 420 and a lower portion 452 that remains outside of the major

extrusion 420 and forms a bottom portion of the extrusion assembly 410. The lower portion 452 may comprise a lower spring arm 453 that extends downward away from a bottom surface 454 of the bottom cap 450. The lower spring arm 453 may have a fixed end 455 and a free end 456, where the free end 456 may contact a side surface 157 of the recess 154 as shown in FIG. 56. The lower spring arm 453 may exert a force upward onto the major extrusion to limit vibration and further secure the extrusion assembly 410 to the shell 108. The bottom cap 450 may also include a channel 458 along the lower portion 452 of the cap 450. In addition, the bottom cap 450 may include a central opening 457 through the bottom surface 454, which may be formed where the lower spring arm 453 extends from bottom surface 454 as shown in FIG. 58. The central opening 457 may allow dirt and debris to exit the extrusion assembly 410. As best illustrated in FIG. 64, the bottom cap 450 may also have a plurality of side openings 459 arranged on either side of the central opening 457 that extend through the bottom surface 454 to allow dirt and debris to exit the extrusion assembly 410. The side openings 459 may be any geometric shape, such as substantially rectangular as shown in the exemplary embodiment, or circular, elliptical, or other shape. In addition, side surface 157 of the tow pull recess 154 may be angled downward to help move the dirt and debris away from and out of the extrusion assembly 410.

[0092] FIGS. 71-86 illustrate an alternate trolley handle 700, which may be attached to the base 502 of suitcase 500. The features of trolley handle assembly 700 are referred to using similar reference numerals under the "7xx" series of reference numerals, rather than "4xx" as used in the embodiments of FIGS. 1-70. Accordingly, certain features of trolley handle assembly 700 that were already described above as shown in FIGS. 1-70 may be described in lesser detail, or may not be described at all. The trolley handle assembly 700 may be attached to the lower shell 508 along the exterior of the bottom portion 522 of the lower shell 508. Similar to trolley handle assembly 400, trolley handle assembly 700 may be formed as a separate member or assembly and attached to the lower shell 508. The trolley handle assembly 700 may comprise a pair of extrusion assemblies 710, and a grip 702 for a user to grasp that extends between the pair of extrusion assemblies 710. In some embodiments, the trolley handle assembly 700 may comprise a single extrusion assembly 710. Each extrusion assembly 710 may have a major extrusion 720, a minor extrusion 730, a tertiary or second minor extrusion 760, a top cap or major bushing 740 positioned between the major extrusion 720 and the minor extrusion 730, an upper cap or minor bushing 704 positioned between the tertiary extrusion 760 and the minor extrusion 730. In other examples, the number of extrusions may comprise a single extrusion, two extrusions, or more than three extrusions.

[0093] Similar to extrusion assembly 410, extrusion assembly 710 may have a nested arrangement. The major extrusion 720 may have a central opening 722 surround-

ed by an outer wall 729, where the central opening 722 has a generally rectangular shape with an alignment member 729A arranged on the rear side of the outer wall 729. The alignment member 729A may be a centrally located indentation along the outer wall 729 extending into the opening 722 to help align the other extrusions 730, 760 within the openings 722, 732 as they move relative to each other. While the exemplary alignment member 729A has a trapezoidal shape, the alignment member 729A may be curved, triangular, or other geometric shape. The minor extrusion 730 may have an exterior surface 734 with a shape or profile that generally corresponds to the shape of the opening 722 of the major extrusion 720 such that the minor extrusion 730 may be slidably engage with opening 722. Similarly, the exterior surface 764 may have a shape or profile that generally corresponds to the shape of the central opening 732 of the minor extrusion 730 such that the tertiary extrusion 760 may slidably engage opening 732 of the minor extrusion 730. The grip portion 702 may be secured to the tertiary extrusion 760 of each of the extrusion assemblies 710. In some instances, the minor extrusion 730 may comprise the uppermost extrusion of the trolley handle assembly 700 and have the grip 702 secured between pair of minor extrusions 730.

[0094] FIGS. 74-76 illustrate the trolley handle assembly 700 with various components removed to illustrate the nested arrangement. For example, FIG. 74 illustrates the trolley handle assembly 700 with the major extrusion 720 removed from one of the extrusion assemblies 710. FIG. 74 shows the minor extrusion 730 underneath the major extrusion 720. In addition, the major bushing 740 may be positioned between the major extrusion 720 and minor extrusion 730 at the top the extrusion assembly 710. A major stop 781 may be positioned at a bottom of the minor extrusion 730 that contacts has a shelf 783 that contacts the bottom end of the minor extrusion 730. The major stop 781 may have a plug portion 785 that extends into opening 732 of the minor extrusion 730 to help secure the major stop 781 to the extrusion assembly 710 as shown in FIG. 75, which illustrates an extrusion assembly 710 with both the major extrusion 720, minor extrusion 730, and major bushing 740 removed. FIG. 75 also shows the minor bushing 704 that is attached to the top of the tertiary extrusion 760. FIG. 76 further illustrates the tertiary extrusion 760 removed along with the middle stop 787 positioned at the bottom end of the tertiary extrusion 760. Similar to the major stop 781, the middle stop 787 may have shelf 789 to contact the tertiary extrusion 760 and a plug portion 791 that extends into the opening 762 of the tertiary extrusion 760 to help secure the middle stop 787 to the extrusion assembly 710 as shown in FIG. 76. The push rod 793 connects from the activation member 765 to the locking mechanism to allow the grip portion 702 to be pulled upward extending the extrusion assembly 710.

[0095] Like the extrusions of trolley handle assembly 400, the major extrusion 720, minor extrusion 730, and

tertiary extrusion 760 may each be formed as a single unitary piece, where each extrusion 720, 730, 760 may have a substantially constant cross-sectional profile as shown in FIG. 72B.

[0096] As illustrated in FIGS. 77-82, the trolley handle assembly 700 may be secured externally to the base 502 or lower shell 508. Each extrusion assembly 710 may be secured to the lower shell 508 using a plurality of mounting clips 770. As shown in FIG. 78, a plurality of mounting clips 770 may be secured within the tow pull recess 554 of the lower shell 508. The plurality of mounting clips 770 may include two mounting clips 770 with a first clip 770 in an upper region of the recess 554 and a second clip secured in a lower region of the recess 554, while other embodiments may comprise three mounting clips 770 or may comprise four mounting clips 770. To install the trolley handle assembly 700 onto the suitcase 500, each extrusion assembly 710 may be lowered into the tow pull recess 554 in a direction toward the front of the suitcase 500 such that a central slot 723 and receiver 725 in an outer channel 724 of the major extrusion 720 slides over each of the mounting clips 770. The extrusion assemblies 710 may then slide upward toward the top surface 514 (away from the wheel assemblies 564). The extrusion assemblies 710 may stop when the lower edge 725A of the receiver 425 engages a lower surface 771 of an upper shelf 773 of mounting clip 770. The spring arms 782 may engage the outer channel wall 726 to keep the channel wall 426 in contact with a rear side 780 of the mounting clip 770. The receiver 725 of the major extrusion 720 may comprise a slot that extends outward from the central slot 723. Each major extrusion 760 may include a plurality of receivers 725. The plurality of receivers 725 may be arranged as a set, where the number of receivers 725 in each set is equal to the number of spring arms 782 on the mounting clips 770. For example, in the exemplary embodiments shown in the figures, two receivers 725 are arranged in a set to correspond to the two outer spring arms 782 on each mounting clip 770. Once the extrusion assemblies 710 are engaged with the mounting clips 770, a bottom cap 750 may be positioned within each recess 554 and secured to the shell 508 to prevent each extrusion assembly 710 from moving downward. Once the bottom cap 750 is secured, the trolley handle assembly 700 is secured to the suitcase 500. The bottom cap 750 may prevent the extrusion assemblies 710 and accordingly the trolley handle assembly 700 from downward moving towards the bottom of the suitcase (in a direction toward a plane created by axes of a plurality of wheels 564).

[0097] As best illustrated in FIG. 81, the mounting clips 770 may have a central body 772 with a top end 774, a bottom end 776, a front side 778, a rear side 780, a plurality of outer spring arms 782 arranged on both the left side 784 and the right side 786, and a mounting hole extending through the central body 772. Each outer spring arm 782 may have fixed end 792 attached to the central body 772 and a free end 794, such that the outer

spring arm 782 is cantilevered from the fixed end 792. Each spring arm 782 of the mounting clip 770 may provide a horizontally oriented force to help further secure the extrusion assembly 710 to the shell 508 and reduce any vibration within the trolley handle assembly 700 relative to the suitcase 500. As the free end 794 contacts the outer channel wall 726, the spring arm 782 is compressed and as it is compressed it exerts a force against the major extrusion 720 to reduce any vibration and keep the trolley handle assembly 700 secured to lower shell 508.

[0098] As shown in FIG. 77, each mounting clip 770 may be secured to the lower shell 508 using a mechanical fastener 706 inserted through each the mounting hole 779 of the mounting clip 770. The fastener 706 is inserted into a blind threaded hole 559 formed in the lower shell 508 such that the holes 559 do not extend into the interior void of the suitcase 500. Each mounting clip 770 may be arranged to allow the movement of the major extrusion 720 in only one direction, the mounting clip 770 may be mounted on the suitcase in a manner to ensure its proper operation. Each mounting clip 770 may be positioned within a pocket 557 located within the recess 554. The pocket 557 may include the mounting hole 559 that is located away from a center of the pocket such that the mounting clip 770 may only be attached one way to the shell 508.

[0099] Similar to extrusion assembly 410, extrusion assembly 710 may have a means to keep dirt and debris from causing the extrusions 720, 730, 760 from binding as they move relative to each other. Each extrusion 720, 730, 760 may include a central opening 722, 732, 762 respectively to allow any dirt or debris that enters the assembly 710 to pass easily through the center. Additionally, as shown in FIGS. 72A-76 and 82-83, each extrusion assembly 710 may include a top cap 740 inserted into the central opening 722 at the top of the major extrusion 720. The major bushing 740 may have a lower portion 744 that inserts into the major extrusion 720 and a central opening 746 that extends through the top cap 740 with a shape that corresponds with the exterior surface 734 of minor extrusion 730. The upper shelf 742 may have a plurality of inward facing grooves 748. These grooves 748 may provide small openings to allow dust and debris to pass through, such that the dust may travel along the inside of the extrusion assembly 710 without affecting the sliding movement of the minor extrusion 730 and allowing the minor extrusion 730 to move freely relative to the major extrusion 720. Similarly, the minor bushing 704 may have a lower portion 703 that is inserted into the opening 732 of the minor extrusion 730, an upper shelf 708 that rests on top of the minor extrusion 730, and a central opening 707 to receive the tertiary extrusion 760. The upper cap 704 may have all of the features discussed above of the top cap 740 such the plurality of inward facing grooves 705 to allow dust and debris to pass through, such that the dust may travel along the inside of the extrusion assembly 710 without affecting

the sliding movement of the tertiary extrusion 760 and allowing the tertiary extrusion 760 to move freely relative to the minor extrusion 730.

[0100] Additionally, as shown in FIG. 84, each bottom cap 750 of the trolley assembly 700 may provide a means to allow dirt and debris to exit each extrusion assembly 710. In addition, the bottom cap 750 may include at least one opening 757 through the bottom surface 754 to allow dirt and debris to exit the extrusion assembly 710.

[0101] FIGS. 85-86 illustrate an exemplary grip or handle 702 of the trolley handle assembly 700. The features of grip 702 are referred to using similar reference numerals under the "7xx" series of reference numerals, rather than "4xx" as used in the embodiments of FIGS. 1-70. Accordingly, certain features of grip portion 702 that were already described above as shown in FIGS. 1-70 may be described in lesser detail, or may not be described at all. As discussed above the grip portion 702 may extend between the extrusion assemblies 710 and act as the interface for a user to extend and lower the trolley handle assembly 700. The grip 702 may include a release button 711, an upper grip housing (not shown), and a lower grip housing 715. The release button 711 may be centrally located in both a horizontal and vertical direction along the grip 702. A seal 709 may be arranged around the release button 711 to prevent any dirt or moisture from entering into the grip portion 702. For example, the release button 711 may be over-molded with a rubber or soft polymer material. In addition to or optionally, the seal 709 may also include a wiper gasket around the perimeter of the base of the release button 711.

[0102] Similar to grip portion 402, the release button 711 may be coupled to a rack and pinion gear assembly 735 as shown in FIG. 86 that has with the upper grip housing and the lower grip housing 715 removed. The release button 711 may have two lower engaging members 737 on each end of the button 711 that contact an engaging member 741 located on each of a pair of rack gear members 739. As the button 711 is pushed, the lower engaging members 737, which may have an angled surface 761, may contact and slide along a corresponding angled surface 763 of the engaging member 741 on the rack gear member 739. As the angled surfaces 761, 763 move along one another, both of the rack gear members 739 be urged to move outward. The pinion gear 749 may help to keep the movement between both gear members 739 equal and in a controlled manner. As the gear members 739 move outward, the transmitting members 747 may then apply a force to the activating members 765 located in a slot positioned within the lower extension 717. The transmitting member 747 may include an angled surface that contacts an angled surface on activating member 765. Activating member 765 may connect to the push rod 793 to disengage a locking mechanism allowing the grip 702 to be pulled upward e the extrusion assemblies 710.

[0103] According to the invention, the suitcase 500 comprises an interior liner or a pair of liners that releas-

ably secure to either the base 502 or the lid 504. FIGS. 87-100 illustrate aspects of interior liners 802 and 804. Base interior liner 802, shown in FIGS. 87, 89, and 90, may have a base liner body 803 that has a contoured exterior shape to fit the shape of the interior void 503 of the base 502 (i.e. the base liner body 803 may have various raised or recessed surfaces to correspond with raised or recessed surfaces within the interior void 503 of the base 502). Similarly, lid interior liner 804, shown in FIGS. 88 and 91-93, may have a lid liner body 805 that has a contoured shape to fit the shape of the interior void 505 of the lid 504 (i.e. the lid liner body 805 may have various raised or recessed exterior surfaces to correspond with raised or recessed surfaces within the interior void 505 of the lid 504). The majority of the overall shape of the interior liners 802, 804 may be formed from multiple layers that are compression molded together to form the contoured shape as shown in FIG. 94. Optionally, the liners 802, 804 may be formed using other manufacturing methods that include but not limited to vacuum forming, Mucell[®] type molding process (i.e. a process that has a solid outer layer and a foamed core), or other type of molding process. The interior liners 802, 804 may have an outer fabric layer 850 that forms an exterior surface 806, a middle foam layer 852, and an inner waterproof layer 854 that forms an interior surface 818. The interior surface 818 formed by the inner waterproof layer 854 may contact an interior surface 507, 525 of either the base 502 or the lid 504. In addition a portion of the interior surface 818 of the interior liners 802, 804 may face toward the bottom portion 522 when installed in the base and faces toward the top portion 538 when installed in the lid. An adhesive layer (not shown) may be applied between the outer fabric layer 850 and the middle foam layer 852 and also applied between the inner waterproof layer 854 and the middle foam layer 852. The adhesive layer may include a polyurethane based adhesive, but may also include various glues, epoxies, acrylics, adhesive tapes, or other material to make a permanent bond between the two materials. These adhesives may require a heating or curing process and may be applied using a process to ensure a consistent thickness of adhesive, such as rolling or spraying the adhesive onto the designated surfaces. In some examples, the adhesive between the layers 850, 854 and the foam 852 may include multiple layers of adhesives and even different adhesives within the multiple layers. The outer fabric layer 850 may be a polyester fabric or other similar material, while the inner waterproof layer 854 may be a polyurethane coated liner scrim or other similarly coated material. In some examples, the inner waterproof layer 854 may include a polyurethane coated fabric that is permanently joined to a scrim layer, such as with an adhesive. In other examples, the inner waterproof layer may include a stretch woven material or other similar material that is waterproof while still being air permeable. In addition, the middle foam layer 852 may be a rubber, polymer, or foam material such as ethylene-vinyl acetate (EVA) or other similar ma-

terial. The middle foam layer 852 may have a relatively smooth surface finish or may have a roughened surface finish. In general, the construction of the base liner 802 and lid liner 804 may be similar to each other. Alternatively, the interior liners 802, 804 may be formed from a single layer of material using any of the materials included herein.

[0104] Each interior liner 802, 804 includes a storage cavity 808 recessed from an upper surface 810 of each the liners 802, 804 to accommodate different cargo. In some examples, the storage cavity 808 may be a single cavity as shown in FIG. 87 or may include a plurality of different shaped cavities to receive and protect different shaped items. Since the liners 802, 804 are releasably engaged, alternate liners with different configurations and storage cavity arrangements may be interchangeably installed into either the base 502 or lid 504 of suitcase 500. These alternate liners could have padded regions to hold electronics or other devices. Further, in some examples, as shown in FIGS. 88 and 91, the lid liner 804 may include a cover 812 over the storage cavity 808 that can be selectively opened and closed to help secure items within the storage cavity 808 of the lid liner 804. In addition, the cover 812 may include additional pockets 814 that can be selectively opened and closed to help secure items within those pockets 814. The selective closure 816 for the cover 812 and the additional pockets 814 may be zippers, magnetic closures, or other mechanical elements that form a selective closure 816.

[0105] As discussed above, base interior liner 802 is releasably secured the interior void 503 of the base 502, and lid interior liner 804 is releasably secured to the interior void 505 of the lid 504. The liners 802, 804 includes a plurality of mechanical connectors or fasteners 820, such as clips, hooks, or portions of snap fasteners that are positioned around near the upper surface 810 and are spaced around the exterior surface of the liners 802, 804. The mechanical elements or connectors 820 on the liners 802, 804 releasably engage corresponding mechanical elements or connectors 660 positioned along the interior surfaces of the base 502 and the lid 504. For example, each first snap fastener portion 820 of the plurality of first snap fastener portions 820 may be a female fastener portion that releasably connects to a corresponding male fastener portion 660 of the plurality of second mechanical connector or snap fastener portions 660 on either the base 502 or the lid 504. Alternatively, the male fastener portion may be on the fastener portion 820 on the liners 802, 804 and the female fastener portion may be on the mechanical connector 660 on the base 502 and lid 504. Each side of the liners 802, 804 may include multiple snap fastener portions 820. As shown in the illustrated examples, for a generally rectangular shaped liner, the longer sides of the liner 802, 804 may have four or more fastener portions 820 and the shorter sides may have two or more fastener portions 820. Each fastener portion 820 may be aligned with a corresponding fastener portion 820 on an opposite side of the liner 802,

804.

[0106] In addition to the fasteners 820 being located along the side surfaces, or as an alternative to the fasteners 820 being arranged on the side surfaces of the liners 802, 804, a plurality mechanical connectors or fasteners 820 may be positioned along the bottom surfaces of liners 802, 804. The fasteners 820 when positioned along the bottom surfaces of the liner 802, 804 may engage with mechanical connectors 660 arranged on the base 502 and lid 504 as shown in FIG. 102. As shown in the illustrated example of FIG. 102, the mechanical connectors 660 may be arranged in a linear array that is substantially centered or in a pair of linear arrays that are spaced apart from each other on a bottom surface or bottom surfaces of the interior surfaces 507, 525 of the base 502 and lid 504. In some examples, the mechanical connectors 660 may be arranged in arrays that are in a pattern that is not linear in nature. Similarly, the mechanical connectors 820 on either liner 802, 804 may be arranged in arrays that correspond to the arrays of mechanical connectors 660 arranged on the liner's corresponding base 502 or lid 504. The plurality of mechanical connectors 660 may have a variety of shapes such as rectangular base shape 661 with the connecting portion 662 arranged in a center of the base shape 661 as shown in FIG. 101A. Optionally, as shown in FIGS. 101B and 101C, the connecting portion 662 may be offset from a center point of the base in at least one direction. Still as another option, similar to the mechanical connector 660 illustrated in FIG. 43G, the mechanical connector 660 may have a base 661 with a generally circular shape and the connecting portion 662 substantially centered on the base 661 as shown in FIG. 101D.

[0107] As shown in FIGS. 95 and 96, each fastener portion 820 may be affixed to a tab or webbing 822 with a first end 824 that is secured underneath an upper fabric binding 830 that extends along an upper surface 810. The tab 822 may wrap around and over the upper fabric binding 830 along the upper surface 810. The second end 826 of the tab 822 may be secured to an exterior surface 806 of the respective liners 802, 804. In addition, a supportive member 832 may be arranged along the interior surface 818 behind and between the first end 824 of the tab 822 and the second end 826 of each tab 822. In some examples, the supportive member 832 may extend below the first end 824 of each tab 822 along the interior surface 818 of each respective interior liner 802, 804. In some examples, each tab 822 may be secured to its respective interior liner 802, 804 using stitching 827. Each supportive member 832 may help to further reinforce the stitching 827 as it perforates the respective liner 802, 804. In some cases the supportive member 832 may be a thermoplastic polyurethane (TPU) or other waterproof or water resistant material to prevent any moisture from penetrating through the regions where each tab 822 is secured to its respective liners 802, 804. In some cases, the tab 822 may be attached without a supportive member 832. Alternatively, the tabs 822 holding the fas-

tener portions 820 may be attached using an adhesive, fabric welding, or other permanent joining technique known to one skilled in the art. Optionally, the interior liners 802, 804 may also be secured using an adhesive, hook and loop type fasteners (Velcro), magnetic elements, or other connection methods. For example, the interior liners 802, 804 may have a plurality of magnetic or ferromagnetic elements positioned along a perimeter and/or bottom surface that may attach to corresponding magnetic or ferromagnetic elements positioned along or within the interior surfaces of the base 502 and lid 504.

[0108] Each of the liners 802, 804 has a first set of openings 840 extending through a first side 842 of each liner 802, 804 and a second set of openings 844 extending through a second side 846 of the interior liners 802, 804, where the first side 842 is opposite the second side 846. Each set of openings 840, 844 may comprise a pair of openings, but in some examples, may comprise more than two openings, such as three openings, four openings, or more. A center of a first opening 840A of the first set of openings 840 may be aligned with a center of a second opening 844A of the second set of openings 844. Each opening 840 of the first set of openings 840 on the first side 842 may be aligned with a corresponding opening 844 of the second set of openings 844 on the second side 846. When the liners 802, 804 are installed the base 502 and lid 504 respectively, the mounts 556 on the base 502 and lid 504 may extend through these openings 840, 844. The mounts 556 may releasably engage with mechanical elements 892 of strap 890, where the strap 890 may help to constrain any cargo in the storage cavity 808. FIG. 97 illustrates strap 890 extending across base liner 802 with the base 502 removed, while FIG. 98 illustrates strap 890 with mechanical elements 892 that releasably engage the mounts 556.

[0109] Each opening 840, 844 includes a grommet 860. The grommet 860 may help to increase the durability of the openings 840, 844 through repeated insertions of the mounts 556 into the openings 840, 844. Each mount 556 may extend through a hole 872 in the corresponding grommet 860, where the strap 890 releasably connects to the mount 556. Each grommet 860 may be formed from a waterproof or water resistant material such as a (TPU) based material or other flexible material that receive the mount 556 through the openings 840, 844. As will be described in more detail below, each grommet 860 has an interior layer 862 and an exterior layer 864 that are joined together. The interior layer 862 and exterior layer 864 may be formed from the same material, or in some examples, these layers 862, 864 may be formed from different materials. The interior layer 862 has a first outward facing surface 866 that is substantially parallel with an interior surface 818 of each interior liner 802, 804, and the exterior layer 864 of the grommet 860 has a second outward facing surface 868 that is substantially parallel with an exterior surface 806 of each interior liner 802, 804. In other examples, each grommet 860 may be formed from a weldable film, coated fabric, or laminated

fabric and joined by processes such as sonic welding, radiofrequency (RF) welding, adhesive glues, or adhesive films.

[0110] The grommets 860 may be formed and installed using the process 880 shown in FIG. 100 and illustrated in FIGS. 99A-99E. First, as shown in FIG. 99A, the base material may be cut into the desired shape for the grommet 860 to form the multiple layers 862, 864 of the grommet 860. In the illustrated examples, each layer 862, 864 may have a circular shape to form a circular shaped grommet 860, however, the shape of the grommet 860 is not limited to a circular shape and may be square, rectangular, or other geometric shape. Next, as shown in FIG. 99B, the layers 862, 864 permanently joined together in a central region 870. The central region 870 may be approximately 55 percent of the overall surface area of one of the outward facing surfaces 866, 868 of the grommet 860. In some examples, the central region 870 may be within a range of 40 percent and 70 percent of the overall surface area of one of the outward facing surfaces 866, 868 of the grommet 860. The layers 862, 864 may be joined using RF welding, adhesives, or other means known to one skilled in the art. FIG. 99C illustrates the next step, where a hole or opening 872 is cut through the central region 870. The hole 872 is sized to receive the mount 556 and may be arranged such that the central region may extend within a range of 2 mm and 4 mm from an outer edge of the hole 872 of the grommet 860, or the central region may extend within a range of 2 mm and 8 mm from an outer edge of the hole 872 of the grommet 860. Lastly, as shown in FIG. 99D and the cross-sectional schematic in FIG. 99E, the grommet 860 may be secured using stitching, adhesive, or other means into the opening 840, 844 of each liner 802, 804 such that a center of hole 872 in each grommet 860 is aligned with a center of the corresponding opening 840, 844 in the respective liner 802, 804. Further, the interior layer 862 may be arranged with a portion of a first outward facing surface 866 substantially parallel with the interior surface 818 of each interior liner 802, 804, and the exterior layer 864 of the grommet 860 may be arranged with a portion of the second outward facing surface 868 being substantially parallel with an exterior surface 806 of each interior liner 802, 804. Each grommet 860 may be secured using stitching, adhesive, or other means of permanently joining the grommet 860 to its respective liner 802, 804.

[0111] In some embodiments, this disclosure relates to a suitcase comprising a lid rotatably connected to a base, where the lid may include an upper shell formed as a unitary member and where the base includes a lower shell formed as a unitary member. The suitcase may be configured in an open orientation or a closed configuration, where in the closed configuration, a plurality of latch assemblies secure the lid to the base. In addition, the upper shell and the lower shell may be free of apertures or openings extending from an exterior surface through an interior surface. As another option, the latch assem-

blies may be located within an upper latch recess and a lower latch recess located on the lid and base respectively. Additionally, a wheel assembly comprising a housing, a wheel, and an axle may be formed as a separate member and received in a recess formed on the lower shell.

[0112] The present disclosure is disclosed above and in the accompanying drawings with reference to a variety of examples. The purpose served by the disclosure, however, is to provide examples of the various features and concepts related to the disclosure, not to limit the scope of the invention. One skilled in the relevant art will recognize that numerous variations and modifications may be made to the examples described above without departing from the scope of the present invention, which is defined by the appended claims.

Claims

1. A suitcase (500) comprising:

a base (502) including:

a first shell structure (508) having a first side (510) and a second side (512) opposite the first side (510), the first shell structure (508) having a first end (518) and a second end (520) opposite the first end (518);

a bottom portion (522) connected to the first end (518) of the first shell structure (508) and configured to support the suitcase (500) on a surface;

a first interior void (503) defined by the first shell structure (508) and the bottom portion (522); and

a lid (504) rotatably connected to the base (502), the lid (504) including:

a second shell structure (524) having a third side (530) and a fourth side (532) opposite the third side (530), the second shell structure (524) having a first end (534) and a second end (536) opposite the first end (534);

a top portion (538) connected to the first end (534) of the second shell structure (524); and

a second interior void (505) defined by the second shell structure (524) and the top portion (538); and

an interior liner (802, 804) releasably secured to either the base (502) within the first interior void (503) or the lid (504) within the second interior void (505), wherein the interior liner (802, 804) includes at least one storage cavity (808) recessed from an upper surface (810) of the interior liner (802,

- 804), wherein the interior liner (802, 804) includes a plurality of first fastener portions (820) positioned near the upper surface (810) of the interior liner (802, 804) that releasably connect to a plurality of second fastener portions (660) positioned on either the base (502) or the lid (504); wherein the interior liner (802, 804) includes a first set of openings (840) extending through a first side (842) of the interior liner (802, 804) and a second set of openings (844) extending through a second side (846) of the interior liner (802, 804), wherein the first side (842) is opposite the second side (846), **characterised in that** each opening of the first set of openings (840, 844) includes a grommet (860), and wherein the grommet has an interior layer (862) and an exterior layer (864) that are joined together and the interior layer (862) has a first outward facing surface (866) that is substantially parallel with the interior surface (818) of the interior liner (802, 804) and the exterior layer (864) of the grommet (860) has a second outward facing surface (868) that is substantially parallel with the exterior surface (806) of the interior liner (802, 804); and wherein the interior layer (862) and the exterior layer (864) of the grommet (860) are permanently joined in a central region (870) prior to a hole (872) that receives a mount (556) being cut in the central region (870) of the grommet (860).
2. The suitcase of claim 1, wherein each first fastener portion (820) of the plurality of first fastener portions (820) are affixed to a tab (822) that is affixed to an upper fabric binding (830) at a first end (824) of the tab (822).
 3. The suitcase of claim 2, wherein the tab (822) wraps around the upper surface (810) of the interior liner (802, 804) and the second end (826) of the tab (822) is affixed to an exterior surface (806) of the interior liner (802, 804).
 4. The suitcase of claim 1, wherein each first fastener portion (820) of the plurality of first fastener portions (820) is a female fastener portion, and each second fastener portion (660) of the plurality of second fastener portions (660) is a male fastener portion.
 5. The suitcase of claim 1, wherein the interior liner (802, 804) has multiple layers comprising a fabric outer layer (850) forming an exterior surface (806) of the interior liner (802, 804), a foam middle layer (852), and a waterproof layer (854) forming an interior surface (818) of the interior liner (802, 804), wherein a portion of the interior surface (818) of the interior liner (802, 804) faces toward the bottom portion (522) when installed in the base and faces toward the top portion (538) when installed in the lid.
 6. The suitcase of claim 1, wherein a center of a first opening (840A) of the first set of openings (840) is aligned with a center of a second opening (844A) of the second set of openings (844).
 7. The suitcase of claim 1, wherein a mount (566) on one of the base (502) or the lid (504) extends through an opening of the first set of openings (840, 844) of the interior liner (802, 804).
 8. The suitcase of claim 1, wherein the central region extends within a range of 2 mm and 8 mm from an edge of the hole (872) of the grommet (860) after the hole is cut in the central region.
 9. The suitcase of claim 1, wherein the central region is radiofrequency welded together.
 10. The suitcase of claim 1, wherein the interior liner (802, 804) comprises multiple layers, with a fabric outer layer (850) forming an exterior surface (806), a foam middle layer (852), a waterproof layer (854) forming an interior surface (818), wherein a portion of the interior surface (818) of the interior liner (802, 804) faces toward the bottom portion (522) when installed in the base and faces toward the top portion (538) when installed in the lid, and at least one storage cavity (808) recessed from an upper surface (810) of the interior liner (802, 804).
 11. The suitcase of claim 1, wherein the interior layer (862) and the exterior layer (864) are formed from the same material, and wherein the central region (870) is within a range of 40 percent and 70 percent of the overall surface area of the first outward facing surfaces (866, 868).
 12. The suitcase of claim 1, wherein the grommet (860) is formed from a thermoplastic polyurethane (TPU) based material.
- Patentansprüche**
1. Koffer (500), umfassend:
 - ein Unterteil (502), beinhaltend:
 - eine erste Schalenstruktur (508), die eine erste Seite (510) und eine zweite Seite (512) gegenüber der ersten Seite (510) aufweist, wobei die erste Schalenstruktur (508)

ein erstes Ende (518) und ein zweites Ende (520) gegenüber dem ersten Ende (518) aufweist;

einen unteren Abschnitt (522), der mit dem ersten Ende (518) der ersten Schalenstruktur (508) verbunden und so konfiguriert ist, dass er den Koffer (500) auf einer Oberfläche trägt;

einen ersten inneren Hohlraum (503), der durch die erste Schalenstruktur (508) und den unteren Abschnitt (522) definiert ist; und

einen Deckel (504), der drehbar mit dem Unterteil (502) verbunden ist, wobei der Deckel (504) beinhaltet:

eine zweite Schalenstruktur (524), die eine dritte Seite (530) und eine vierte Seite (532) gegenüber der dritten Seite (530) aufweist, wobei die zweite Schalenstruktur (524) ein erstes Ende (534) und ein zweites Ende (536) gegenüber dem ersten Ende (534) aufweist;

einen oberen Abschnitt (538), der mit dem ersten Ende (534) der zweiten Schalenstruktur (524) verbunden ist; und

einen zweiten inneren Hohlraum (505), der durch die zweite Schalenstruktur (524) und den oberen Abschnitt (538) definiert ist; und eine Innenauskleidung (802, 804), die lösbar an entweder dem Unterteil (502) in dem ersten inneren Hohlraum (503) oder dem Deckel (504) in dem zweiten inneren Hohlraum (505) befestigt ist, wobei die Innenauskleidung (802, 804) mindestens einen Aufbewahrungshohlraum (808) beinhaltet, der von einer oberen Fläche (810) der Innenauskleidung (802, 804) vertieft ist, wobei die Innenauskleidung (802, 804) eine Mehrzahl von ersten Befestigungsabschnitten (820) beinhaltet, die nahe der oberen Fläche (810) der Innenauskleidung (802, 804) positioniert sind, die mit einer Mehrzahl von zweiten Befestigungsabschnitten (660) lösbar verbunden werden, die auf entweder dem Unterteil (502) oder dem Deckel (504) positioniert sind;

wobei die Innenauskleidung (802, 804) einen ersten Satz von Öffnungen (840), die sich durch eine erste Seite (842) der Innenauskleidung (802, 804) erstrecken, und einen zweiten Satz von Öffnungen (844), die sich durch eine zweite Seite (846) der Innenauskleidung (802, 804) erstrecken, beinhaltet, wobei die erste Seite (842) der zweiten Seite (846) gegenüberliegt,

dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass jede Öffnung des ersten Satzes von Öffnungen (840, 844) eine Dichtung (860) beinhaltet, und wobei die Dichtung eine Innenschicht (862) und eine Außenschicht (864) aufweist, die aneinandergesetzt sind, und wobei die Innenschicht (862) eine erste nach außen weisende Fläche (866) aufweist, die im Wesentlichen parallel zu der Innenfläche (818) der Innenauskleidung (802, 804) ist, und die Außenschicht (864) der Dichtung (860) eine zweite nach außen weisende Fläche (868) aufweist, die im Wesentlichen parallel zu der Außenfläche (806) der Innenauskleidung (802, 804) ist; und

wobei die Innenschicht (862) und die Außenschicht (864) der Dichtung (860) in einer mittleren Zone (870) vor einem Loch (872) dauerhaft zusammengefügt sind, das eine Halterung (556) aufnimmt, die in die mittlere Zone (870) der Dichtung (860) geschnitten ist.

2. Koffer nach Anspruch 1, wobei jeder erste Befestigungsabschnitt (820) der Mehrzahl von ersten Befestigungsabschnitten (820) an einer Lasche (822) fixiert ist, die an einer oberen Textilverbindung (830) an einem ersten Ende (824) der Lasche (822) fixiert ist.
3. Koffer nach Anspruch 2, wobei die Lasche (822) um die obere Fläche (810) der Innenauskleidung (802, 804) gewickelt ist und das zweite Ende (826) der Lasche (822) an einer Außenfläche (806) der Innenauskleidung (802, 804) fixiert ist.
4. Koffer nach Anspruch 1, wobei jeder erste Befestigungsabschnitt (820) der Mehrzahl von ersten Befestigungsabschnitten (820) ein weiblicher Befestigungsabschnitt ist, und jeder zweite Befestigungsabschnitt (660) der Mehrzahl von zweiten Befestigungsabschnitten (660) ein männlicher Befestigungsabschnitt ist.
5. Koffer nach Anspruch 1, wobei die Innenauskleidung (802, 804) mehrere Schichten aufweist, umfassend eine äußere Textilschicht (850), die eine Außenfläche (806) der Innenauskleidung (802, 804) bildet, eine mittlere Schaumstoffschicht (852) und eine wasserfeste Schicht (854), die eine Innenfläche (818) der Innenauskleidung (802, 804) bildet, wobei ein Abschnitt der Innenfläche (818) der Innenauskleidung (802, 804) hin zu dem unteren Abschnitt (522) weist, wenn sie in dem Unterteil installiert ist, und hin zu dem oberen Abschnitt (538) weist, wenn sie in dem Deckel installiert ist.
6. Koffer nach Anspruch 1, wobei eine Mitte einer ersten Öffnung (840A) des ersten Satzes von Öffnun-

- gen (840) mit einer Mitte einer zweiten Öffnung (844A) des zweiten Satzes von Öffnungen (844) ausgerichtet ist.
7. Koffer nach Anspruch 1, wobei eine Halterung (566) an einem des Unterteils (502) oder des Deckels (504) sich durch eine Öffnung des ersten Satzes von Öffnungen (840, 844) der Innenauskleidung (802, 804) erstreckt.
8. Koffer nach Anspruch 1, wobei sich die mittlere Zone in einem Bereich von 2 mm und 8 mm von einer Kante des Lochs (872) der Dichtung (860) erstreckt, nachdem das Loch in die mittlere Zone geschnitten wurde.
9. Koffer nach Anspruch 1, wobei die mittlere Zone hochfrequenzverschweißt ist.
10. Koffer nach Anspruch 1, wobei die Innenauskleidung (802, 804) mehrere Schichten, mit einer äußeren Textilschicht (850), die eine Außenfläche (806) bildet, einer mittleren Schaumstoffschicht (852), einer wasserfesten Schicht (854), die eine Innenfläche (818) bildet, wobei ein Abschnitt der Innenfläche (818) der Innenauskleidung (802, 804) hin zu dem unteren Abschnitt (522) weist, wenn sie in dem Unterteil installiert ist, und hin zu dem oberen Abschnitt (538) weist, wenn sie in dem Deckel installiert ist, und mindestens einen Aufbewahrungshohlraum (808) umfasst, der von einer oberen Fläche (810) der Innenauskleidung (802, 804) vertieft ist.
11. Koffer nach Anspruch 1, wobei die Innenschicht (862) und die Außenschicht (864) aus demselben Material ausgebildet sind, und wobei die mittlere Zone (870) in einem Bereich von 40 Prozent und 70 Prozent des Gesamtflächeninhalts der ersten nach außen weisenden Flächen (866, 868) liegt.
12. Koffer nach Anspruch 1, wobei die Dichtung (860) aus einem Material auf Basis eines thermoplastischen Polyurethans (TPU) ausgebildet ist.

Revendications

1. Valise (500) comprenant :
une base (502) comprenant :

une première structure de coque (508) ayant un premier côté (510) et un deuxième côté (512) opposé au premier côté (510), la première structure de coque (508) ayant une première extrémité (518) et une deuxième extrémité (520) opposée à la première extrémité (518) ;
une partie inférieure (522) reliée à la première extrémité (518) de la première structure de co-

que (508) et configurée pour soutenir la valise (500) sur une surface ;
un premier vide intérieur (503) défini par la première structure de coque (508) et la partie inférieure (522) ; et
un couvercle (504) relié de manière rotative à la base (502), le couvercle (504) comprenant :

une deuxième structure de coque (524) ayant un troisième côté (530) et un quatrième côté (532) opposé au troisième côté (530), la deuxième structure de coque (524) ayant une première extrémité (534) et une deuxième extrémité (536) opposée à la première extrémité (534) ;
une partie supérieure (538) reliée à la première extrémité (534) de la deuxième structure de coque (524) ; et
un deuxième vide intérieur (505) défini par la deuxième structure de coque (524) et la partie supérieure (538) ; et
un revêtement intérieur (802, 804) fixé de manière amovible à la base (502) dans le premier espace intérieur (503) ou au couvercle (504) dans le second espace intérieur (505), le revêtement intérieur (802, 804) comprenant au moins une cavité de stockage (808) en retrait d'une surface supérieure (810) du revêtement intérieur (802, 804), le revêtement intérieur (802, 804) comprenant une pluralité de premières parties de fixation (820) positionnées près de la surface supérieure (810) du revêtement intérieur (802, 804) qui se relie de manière amovible à une pluralité de secondes parties de fixation (660) positionnées sur la base (502) ou le couvercle (504) ;
le revêtement intérieur (802, 804) comprenant un premier ensemble d'ouvertures (840) s'étendant à travers un premier côté (842) du revêtement intérieur (802, 804) et un deuxième ensemble d'ouvertures (844) s'étendant à travers un deuxième côté (846) du revêtement intérieur (802, 804), le premier côté (842) étant opposé au deuxième côté (846), **caractérisé en ce que** chaque ouverture du premier ensemble d'ouvertures (840, 844) comprend un œillet (860), et l'œillet ayant une couche intérieure (862) et une couche extérieure (864) qui sont jointes ensemble et la couche intérieure (862) ayant une première surface orientée vers l'extérieur (866) qui est sensiblement parallèle à la surface intérieure (818) du revêtement intérieur (802, 804) et la couche extérieure (864) de l'œillet (860) ayant une deuxième surface orientée vers l'extérieur (868) qui est sensiblement parallèle à la sur-

- face extérieure (806) du revêtement intérieur (802, 804) ; et la couche intérieure (862) et la couche extérieure (864) de l'œillet (860) étant assemblées de façon permanente dans une région centrale (870) avant qu'un trou (872) qui reçoit une monture (556) ne soit découpé dans la région centrale (870) de l'œillet (860).
2. Valise selon la revendication 1, chaque première partie de fixation (820) de la pluralité de premières parties de fixation (820) étant fixée à une languette (822) qui est fixée à un lien de tissu supérieur (830) à une première extrémité (824) de la languette (822).
 3. Valise selon la revendication 2, la languette (822) entourant la surface supérieure (810) du revêtement intérieur (802, 804) et la deuxième extrémité (826) de la languette (822) étant fixée à une surface extérieure (806) du revêtement intérieur (802, 804).
 4. Valise selon la revendication 1, chaque première partie de fixation (820) de la pluralité de premières parties de fixation (820) étant une partie de fixation femelle, et chaque deuxième partie de fixation (660) de la pluralité de deuxièmes parties de fixation (660) étant une partie de fixation mâle.
 5. Valise selon la revendication 1, le revêtement intérieur (802, 804) ayant de multiples couches comprenant une couche extérieure en tissu (850) formant une surface extérieure (806) du revêtement intérieur (802, 804), une couche intermédiaire en mousse (852), et une couche imperméable (854) formant une surface intérieure (818) du revêtement intérieur (802, 804), une partie de la surface intérieure (818) du revêtement intérieur (802, 804) étant orientée vers la partie inférieure (522) lorsqu'elle est installée dans la base et vers la partie supérieure (538) lorsqu'elle est installée dans le couvercle.
 6. Valise selon la revendication 1, un centre d'une première ouverture (840A) du premier ensemble d'ouvertures (840) étant aligné avec un centre d'une deuxième ouverture (844A) du deuxième ensemble d'ouvertures (844).
 7. Valise selon la revendication 1, un support (566) sur l'une des bases (502) ou le couvercle (504) s'étendant à travers une ouverture du premier ensemble d'ouvertures (840, 844) du revêtement intérieur (802, 804) .
 8. Valise selon la revendication 1, la région centrale s'étendant dans une plage de 2 mm à 8 mm d'un bord du trou (872) de l'œillet (860) après que le trou a été découpé dans la région centrale.
 9. Valise selon la revendication 1, la région centrale étant soudée par radiofréquence.
 10. Valise selon la revendication 1, le revêtement intérieur (802, 804) comprenant plusieurs couches, avec une couche extérieure en tissu (850) formant une surface extérieure (806), une couche intermédiaire en mousse (852), une couche imperméable (854) formant une surface intérieure (818), une partie de la surface intérieure (818) du revêtement intérieur (802, 804) étant orientée vers la partie inférieure (522) lorsqu'elle est installée dans la base et vers la partie supérieure (538) lorsqu'elle est installée dans le couvercle, et au moins une cavité de stockage (808) en retrait d'une surface supérieure (810) du revêtement intérieur (802, 804).
 11. Valise selon la revendication 1, la couche intérieure (862) et la couche extérieure (864) étant formées du même matériau, et la région centrale (870) étant comprise entre 40 % et 70 % de la surface totale des premières surfaces orientées vers l'extérieur (866, 868) .
 12. Valise selon la revendication 1, l'œillet (860) étant formé d'un matériau à base de polyuréthane thermoplastique (TPU).

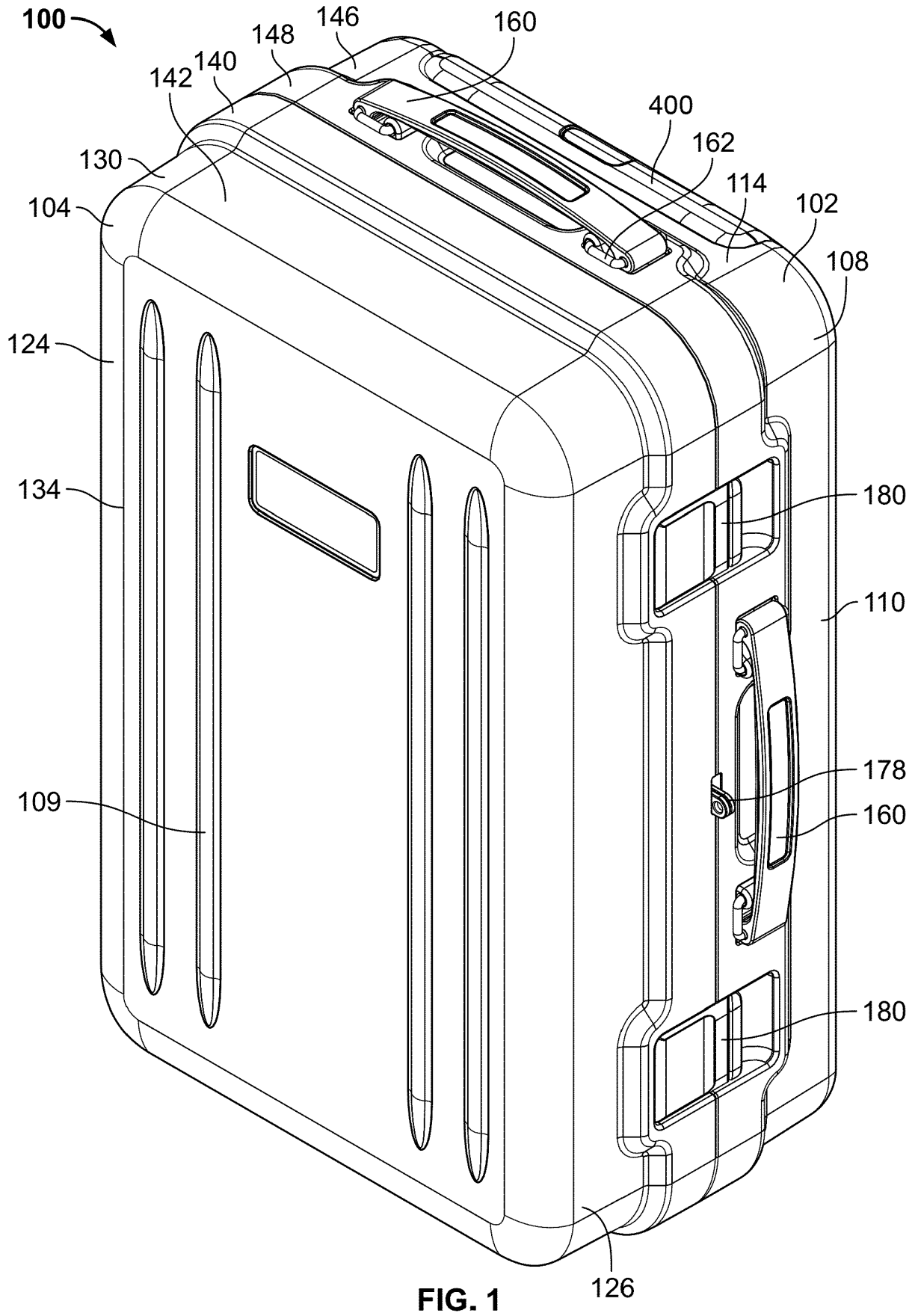
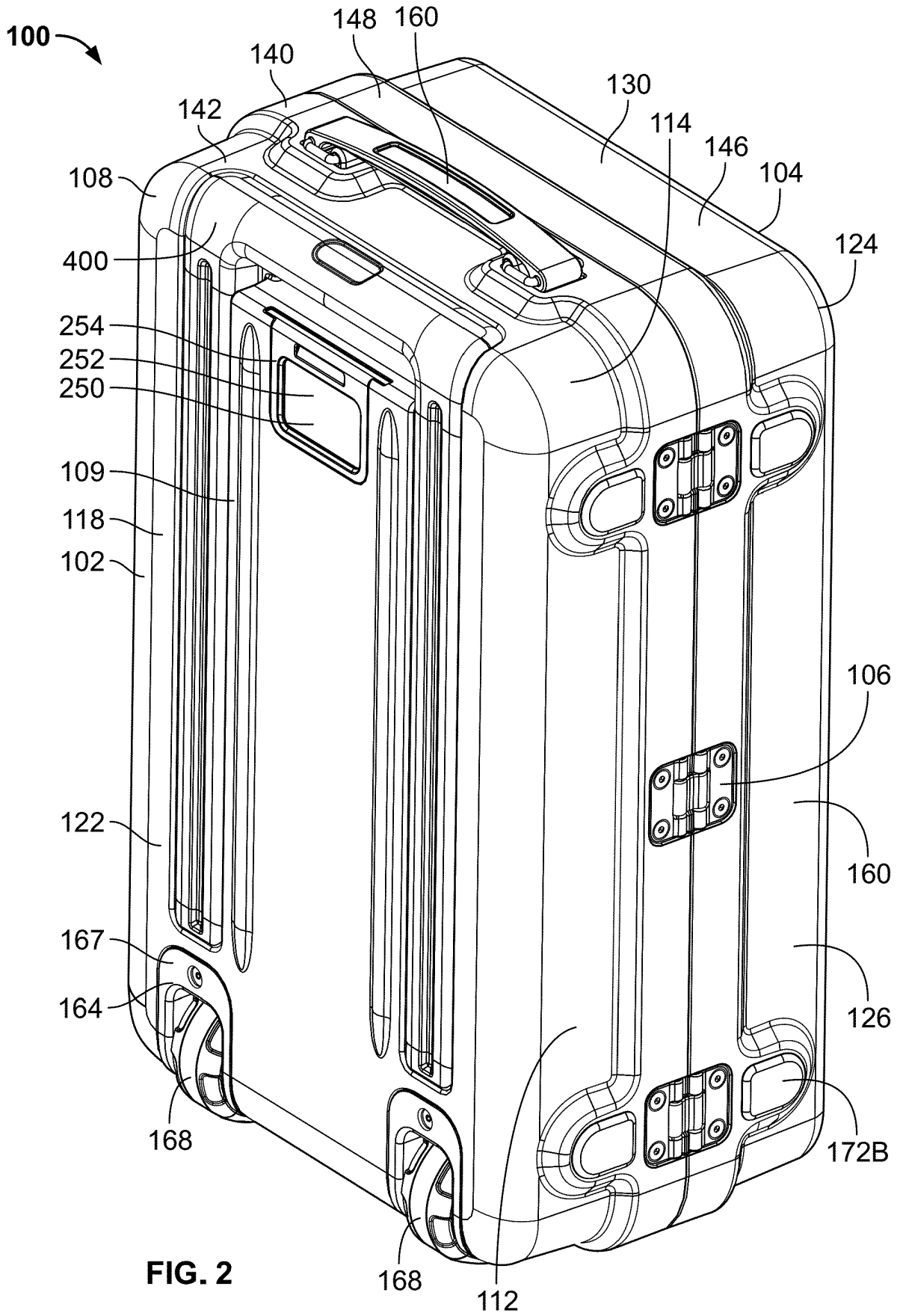


FIG. 1



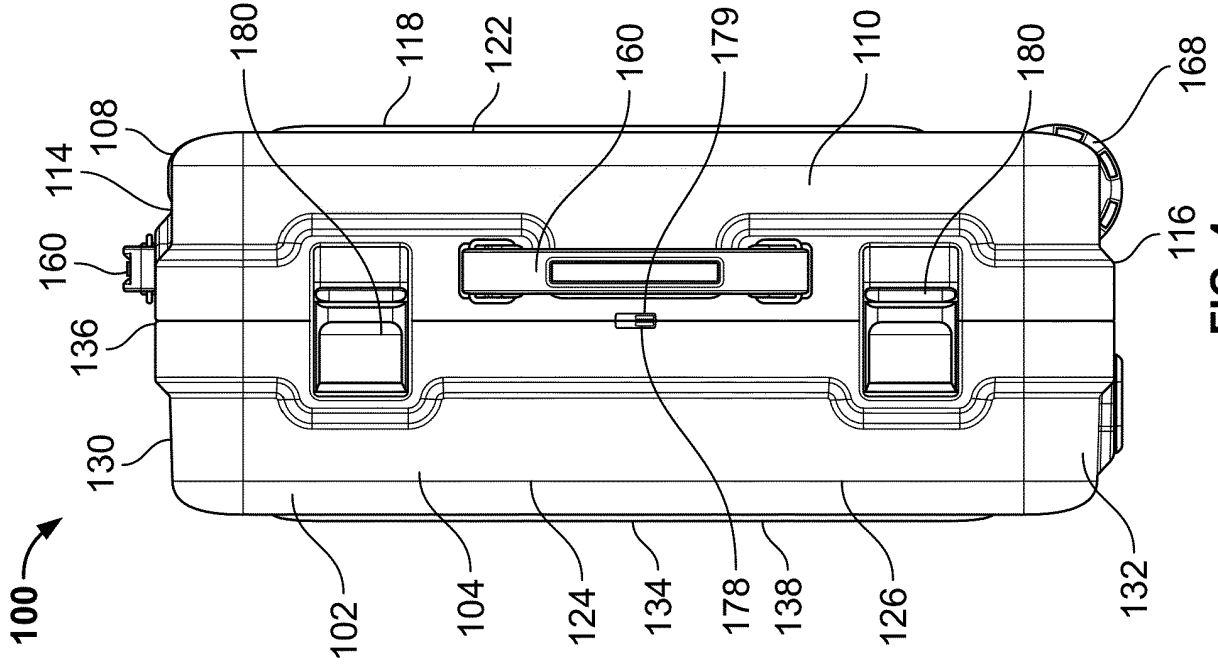


FIG. 4

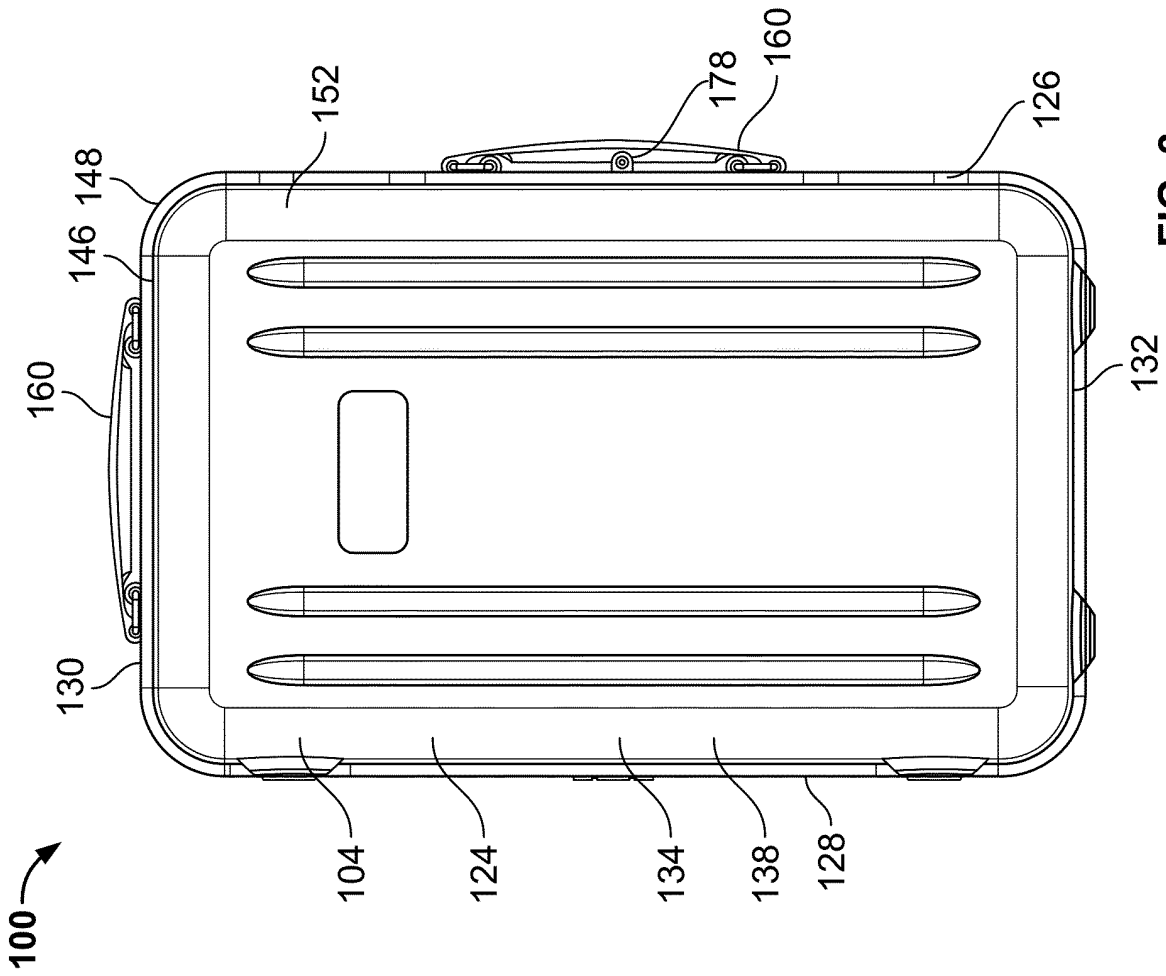


FIG. 3

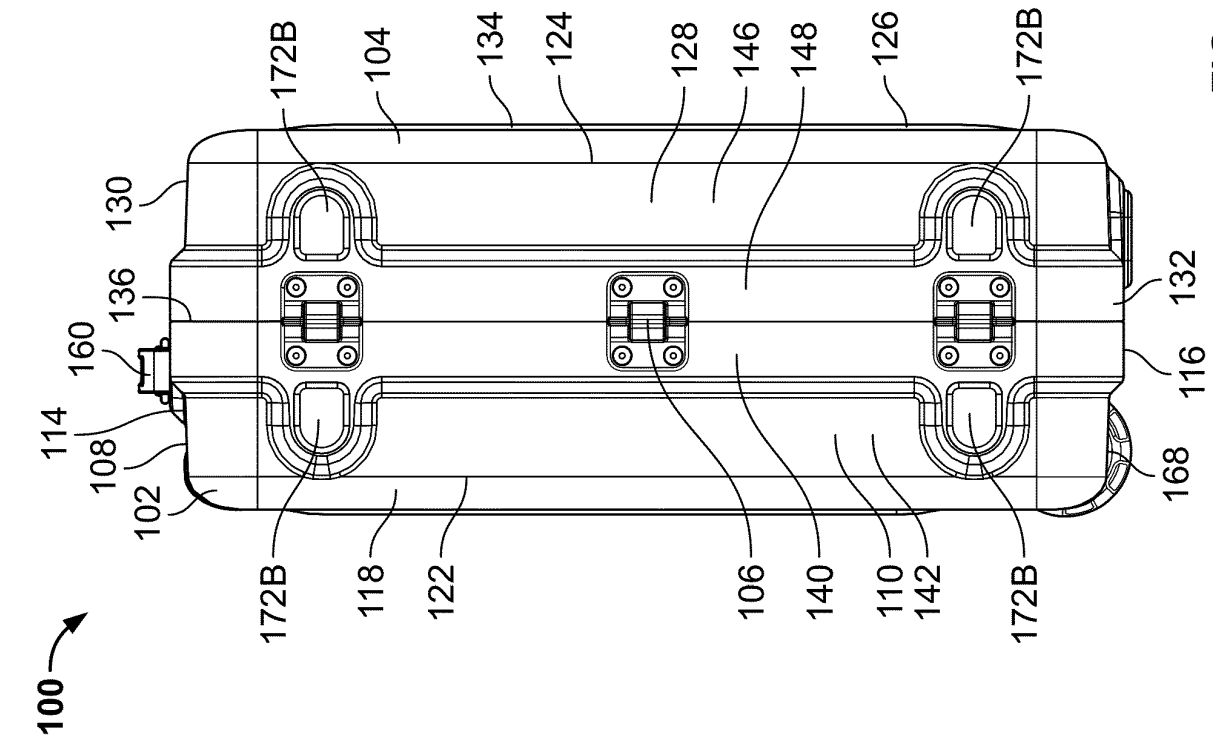


FIG. 5

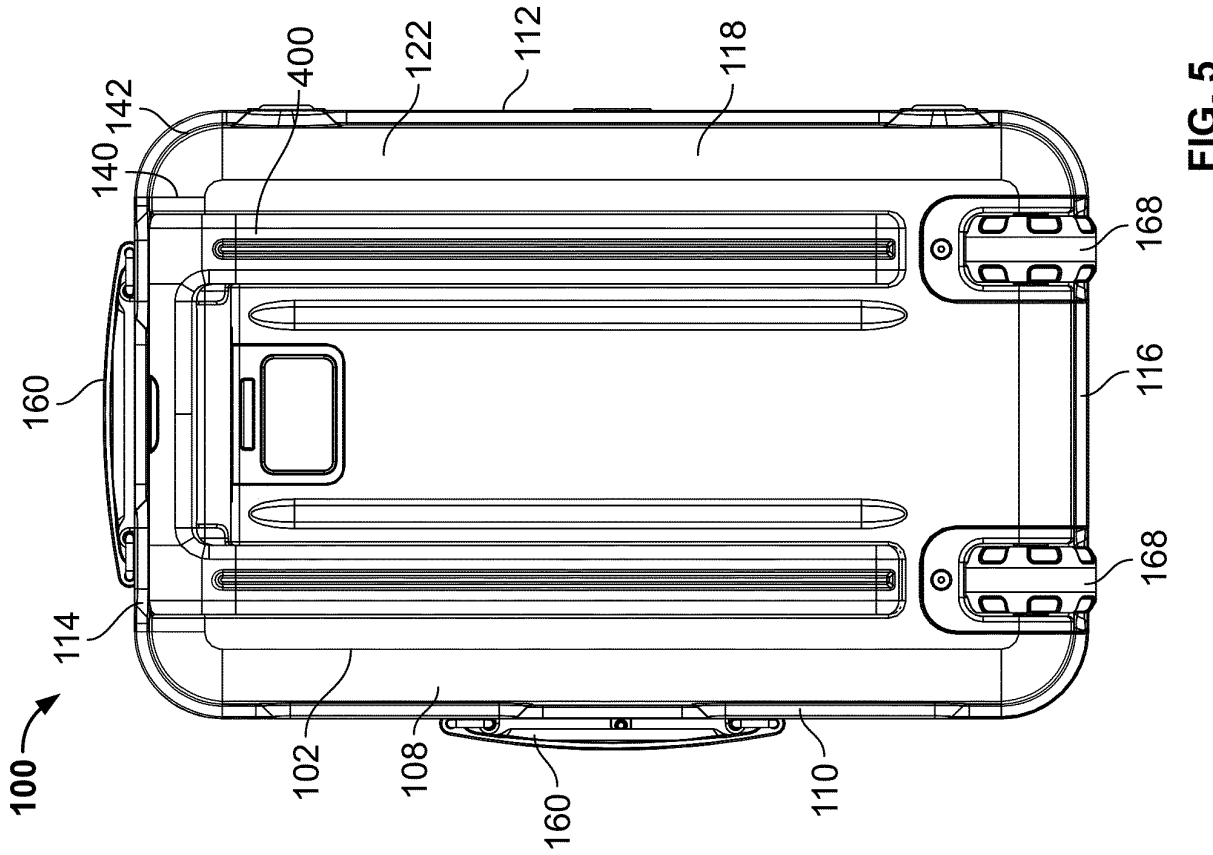


FIG. 6

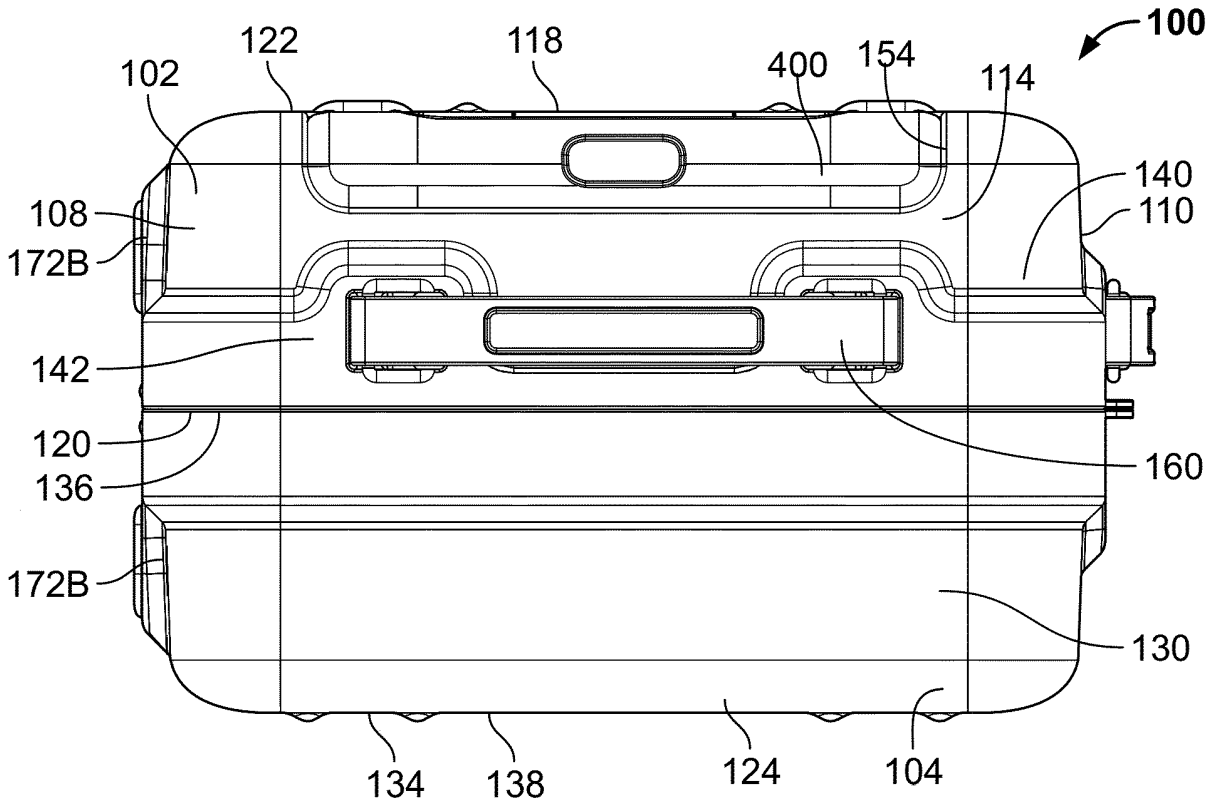


FIG. 7

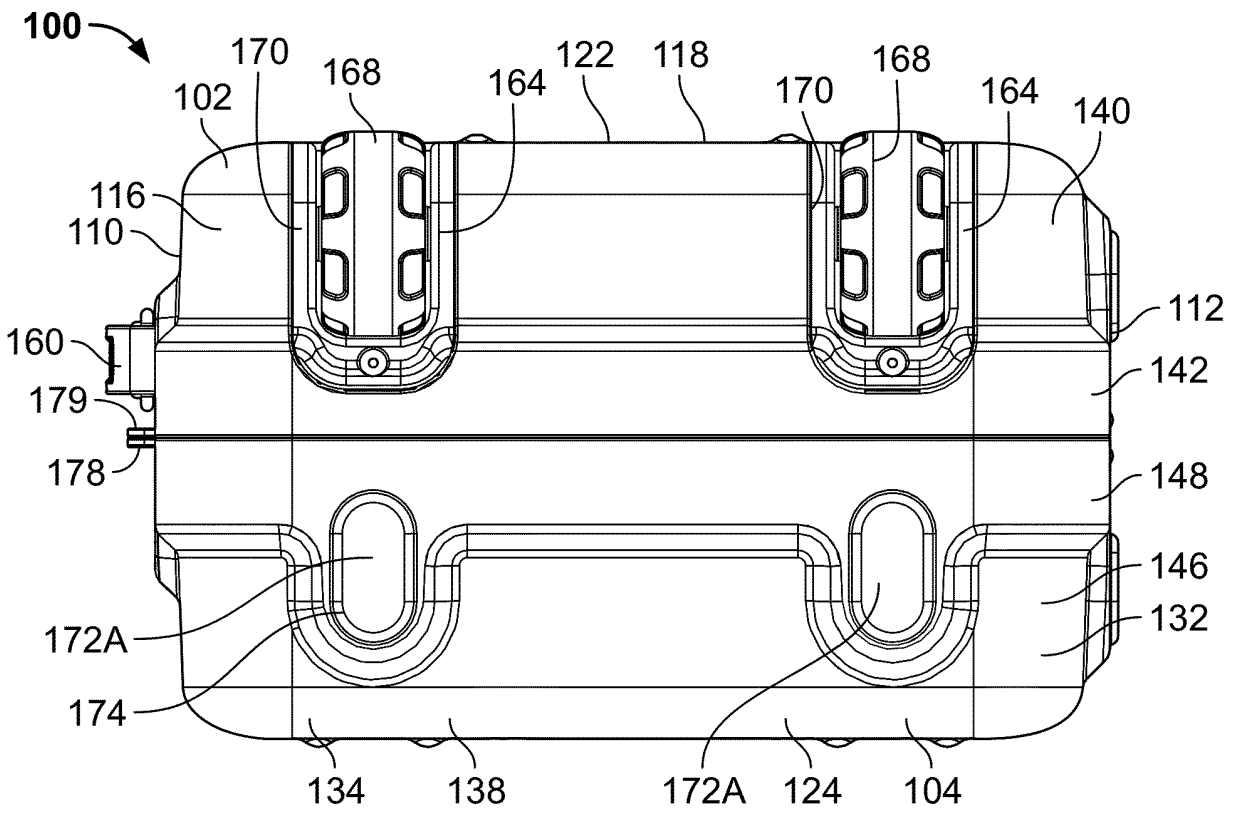


FIG. 8

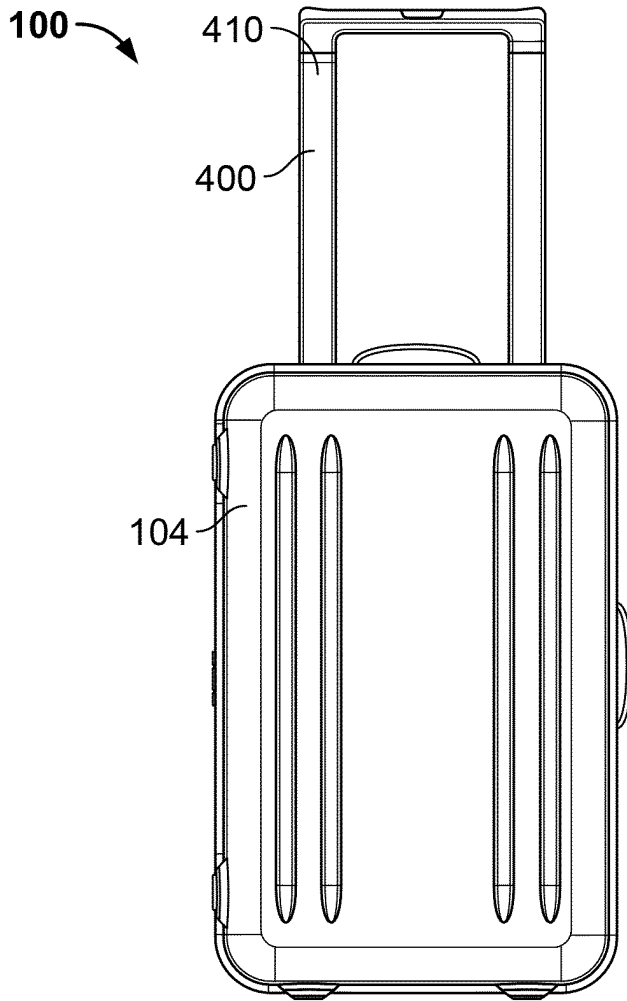


FIG. 9

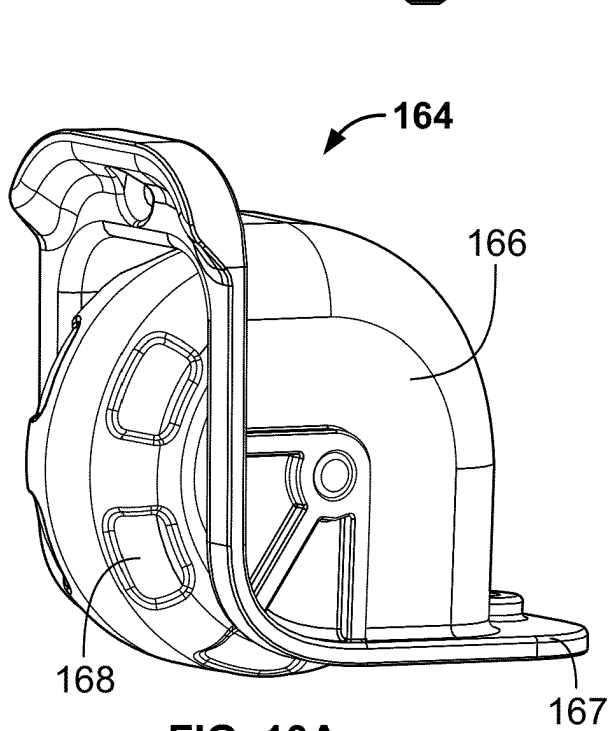


FIG. 10A

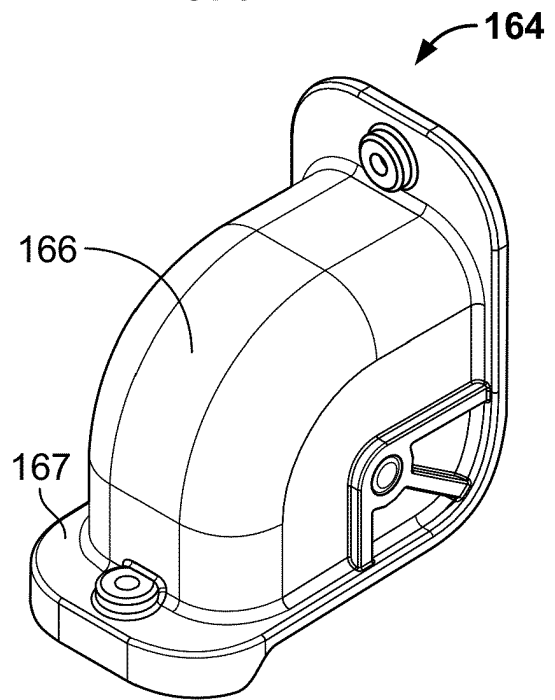


FIG. 10B

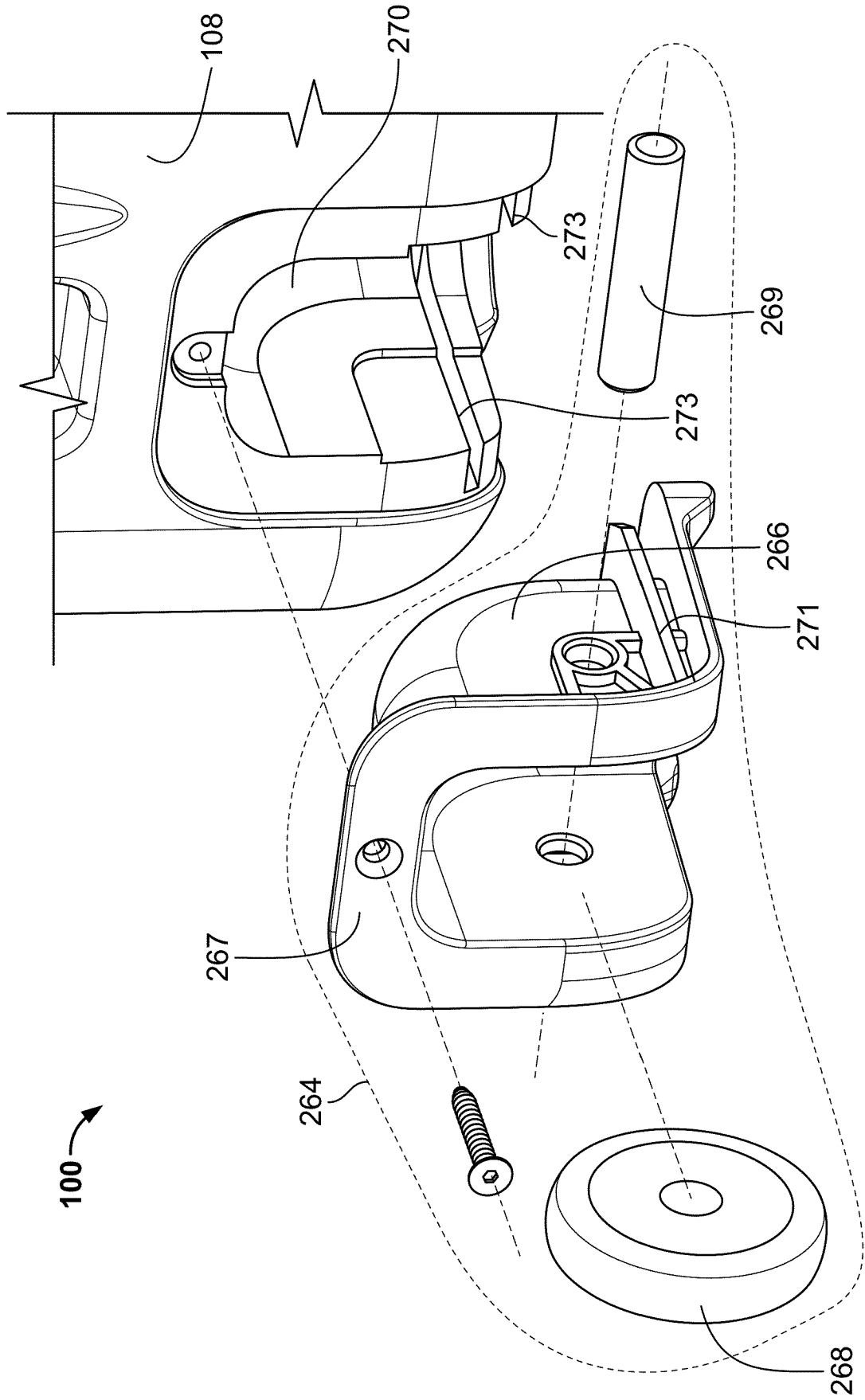


FIG. 11A

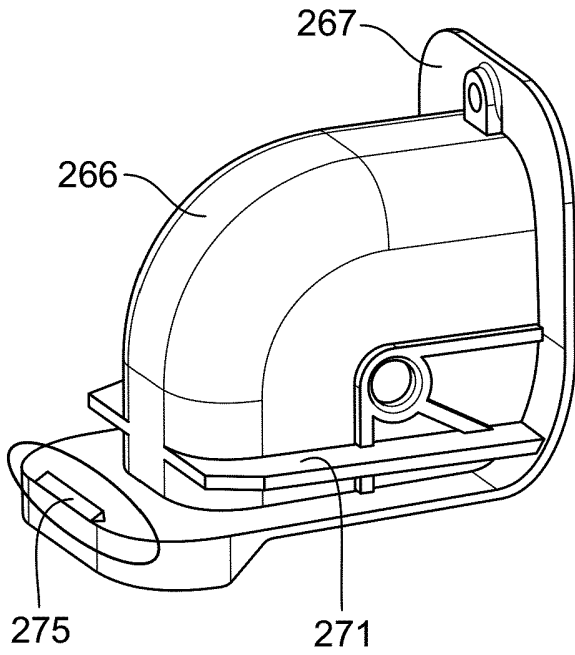


FIG. 11B

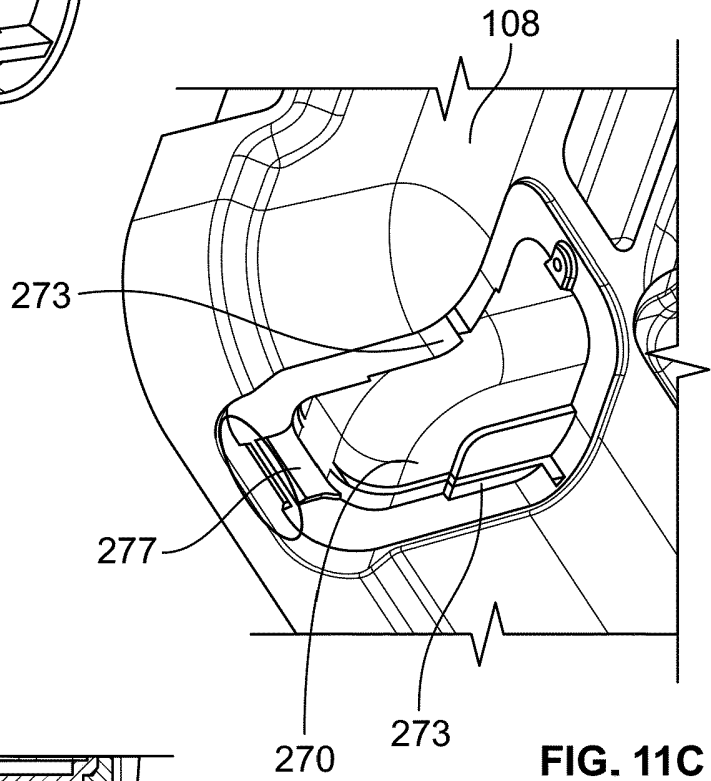


FIG. 11C

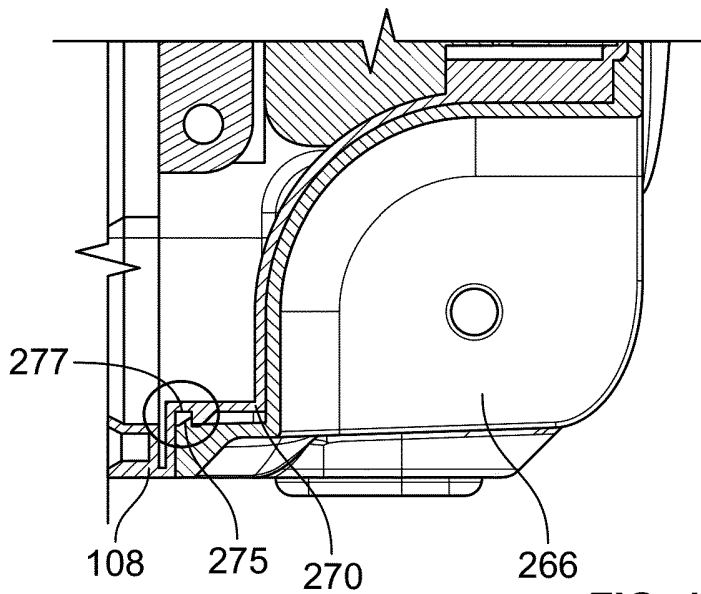


FIG. 11D

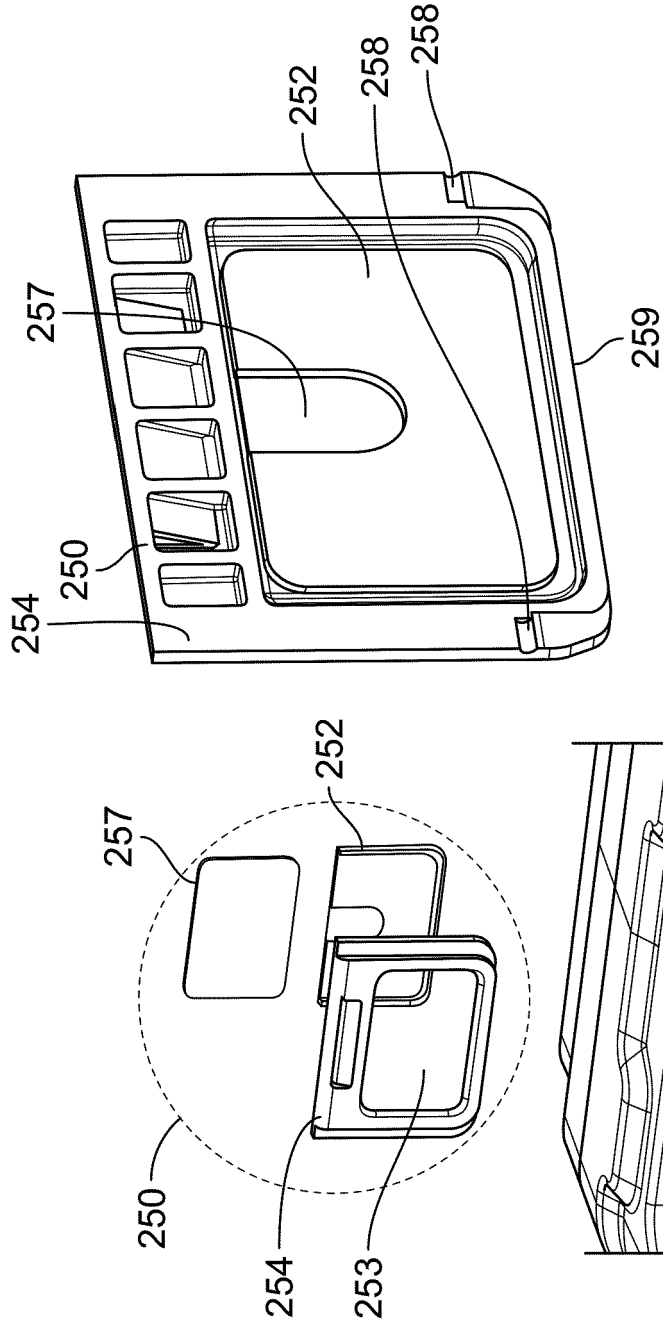


FIG. 12A

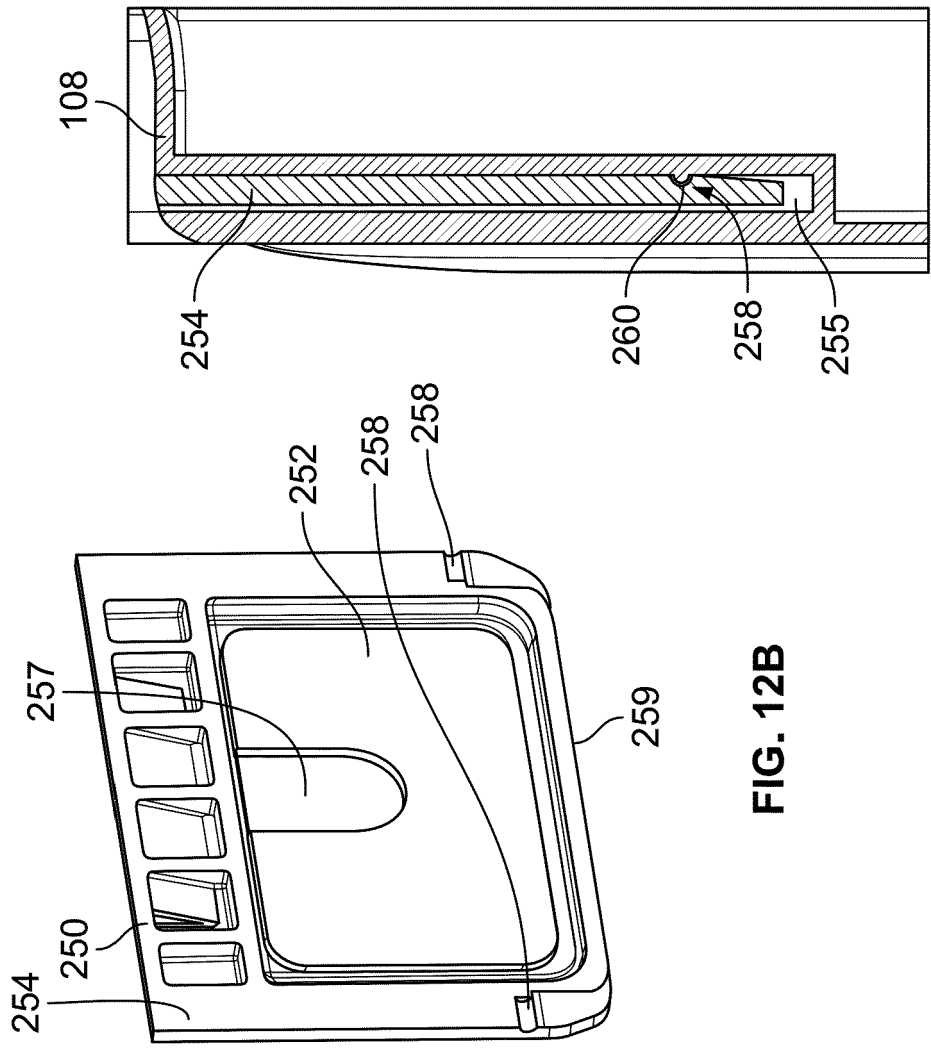


FIG. 12B

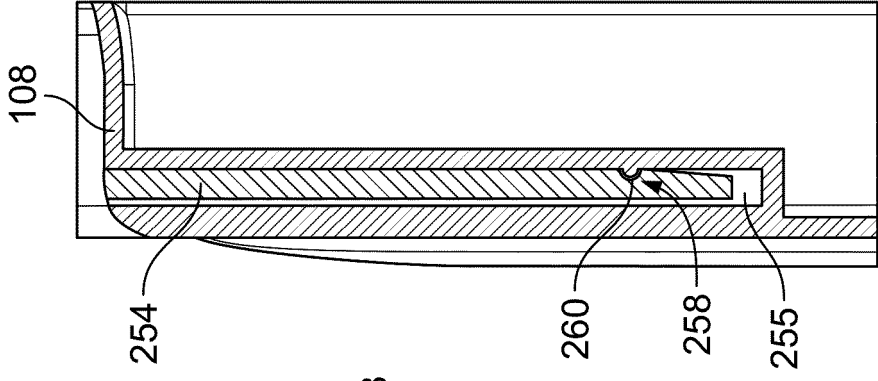
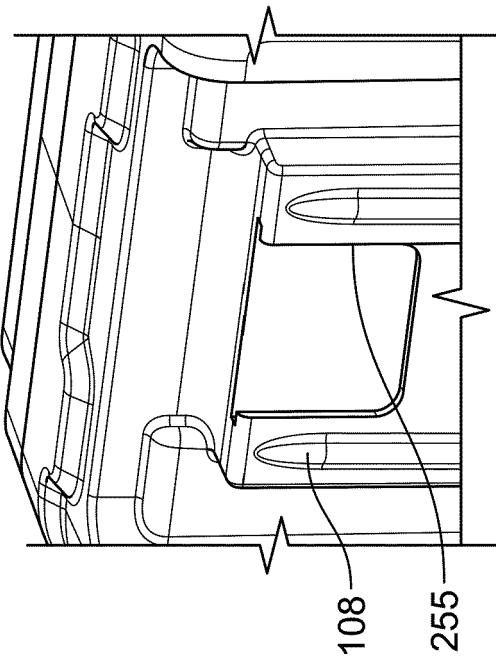


FIG. 12C



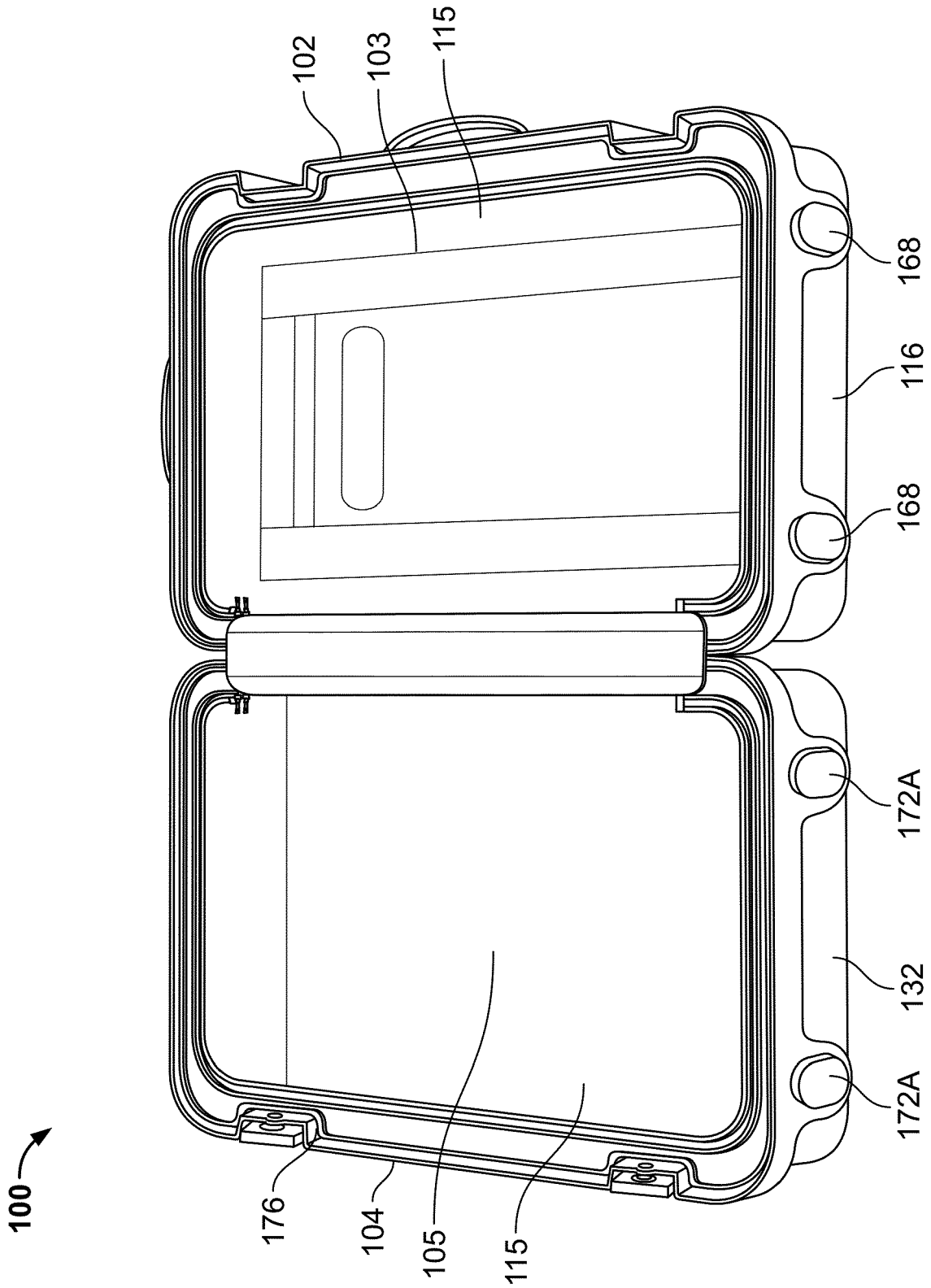


FIG. 13

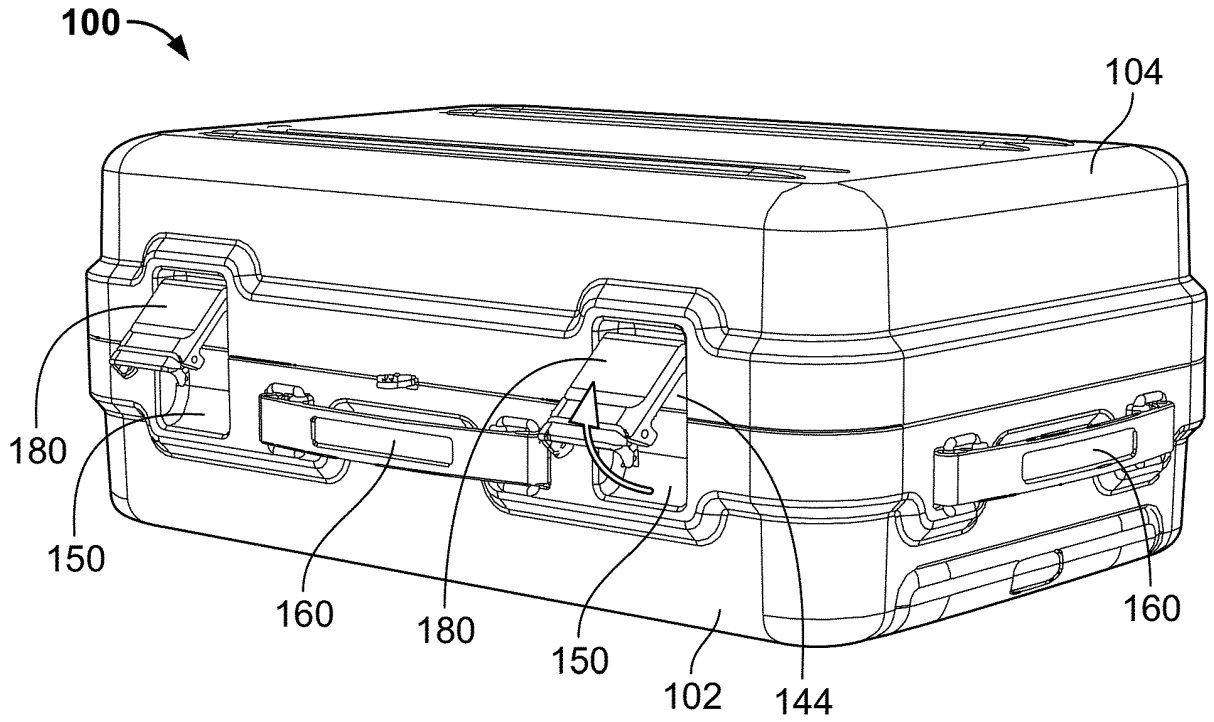


FIG. 14A

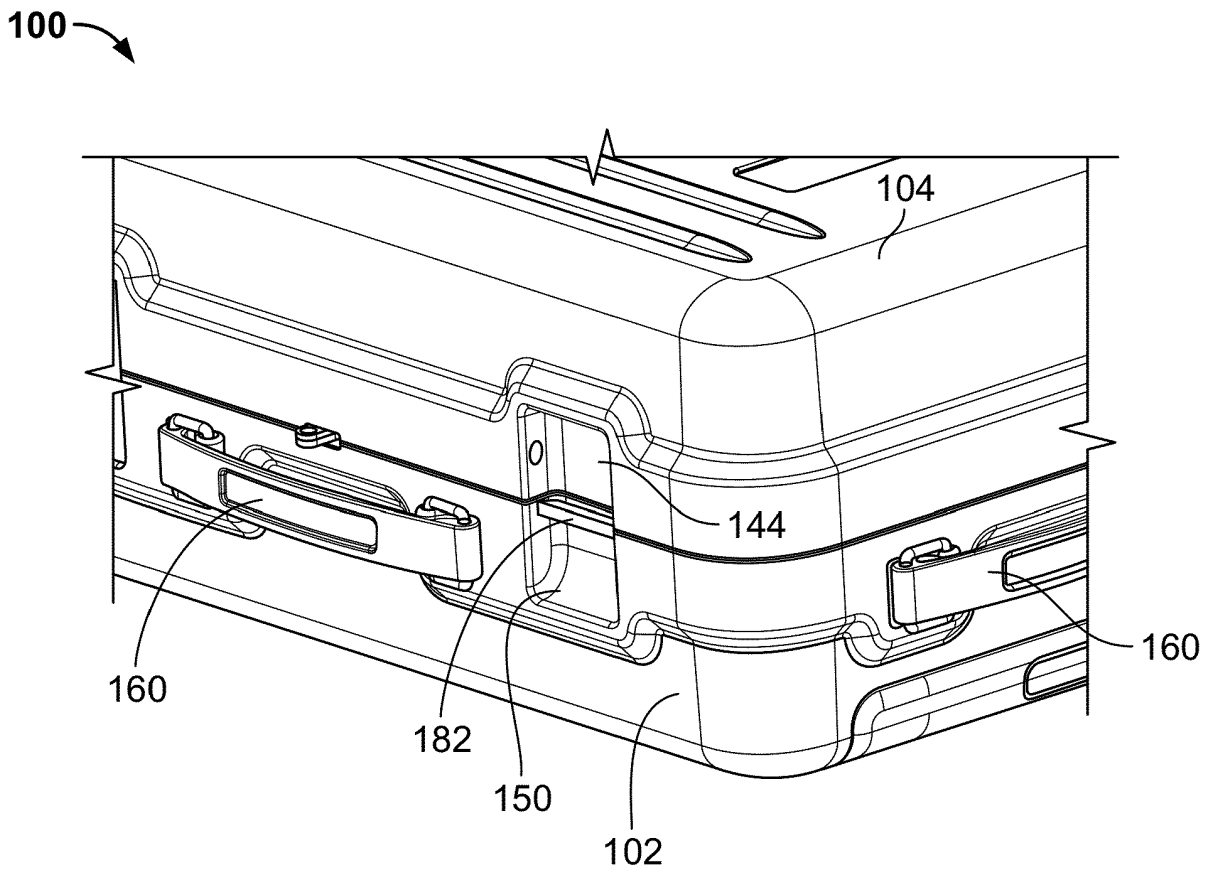


FIG. 14B

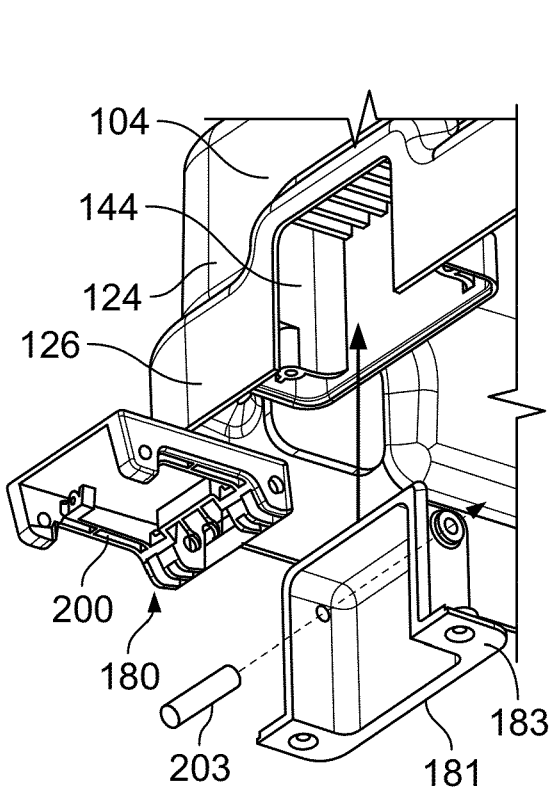


FIG. 15A

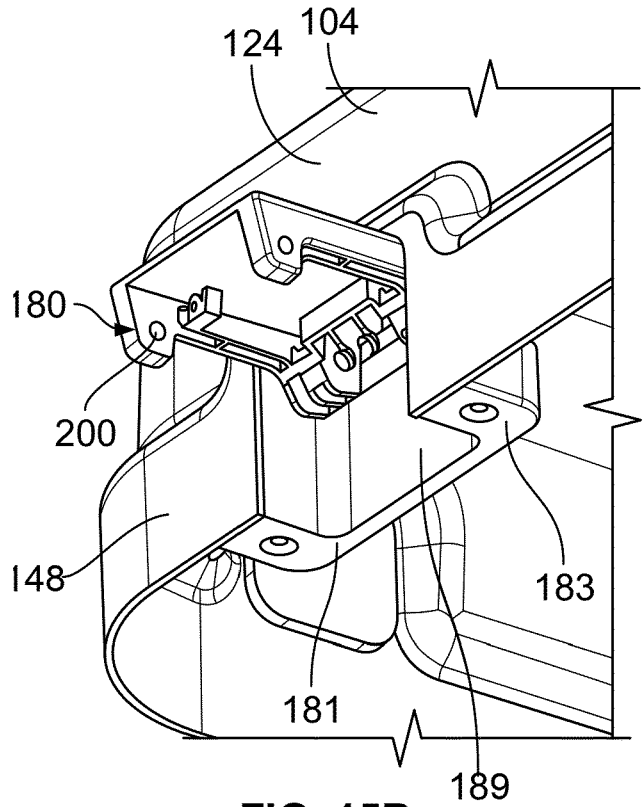


FIG. 15B

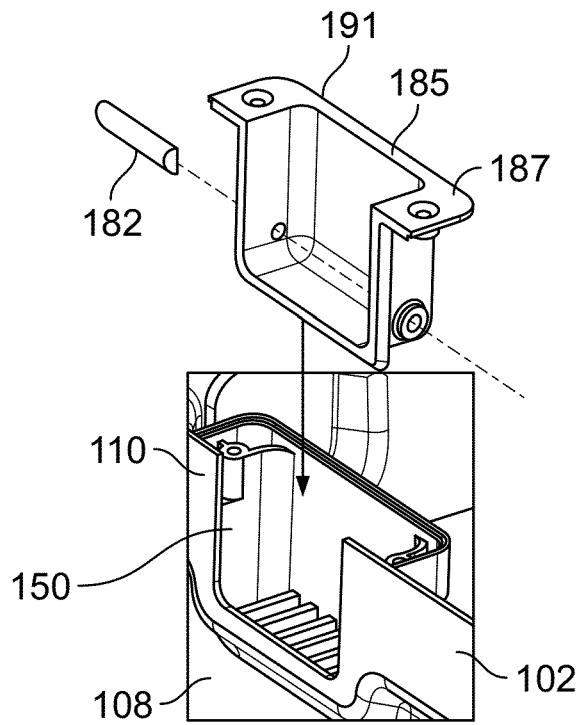


FIG. 15C

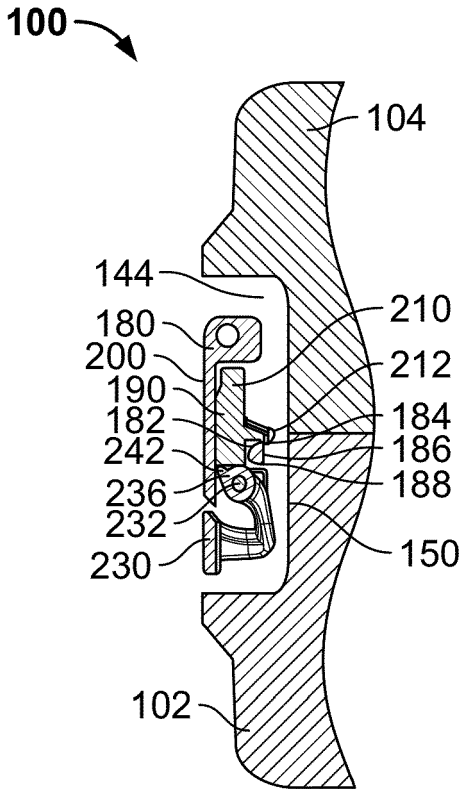


FIG. 16A

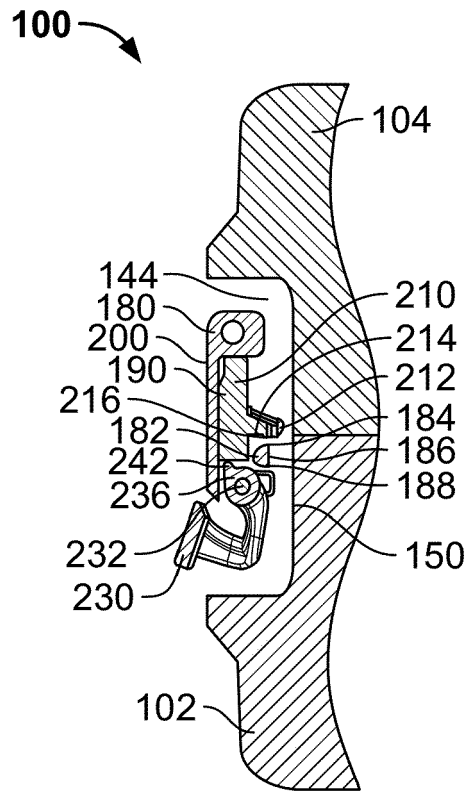


FIG. 16B

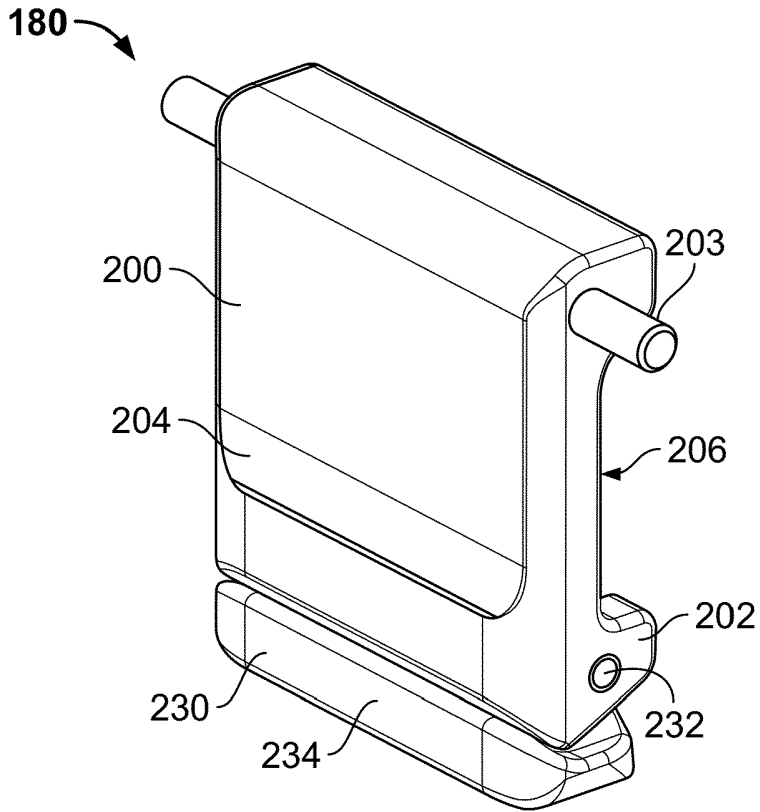


FIG. 17

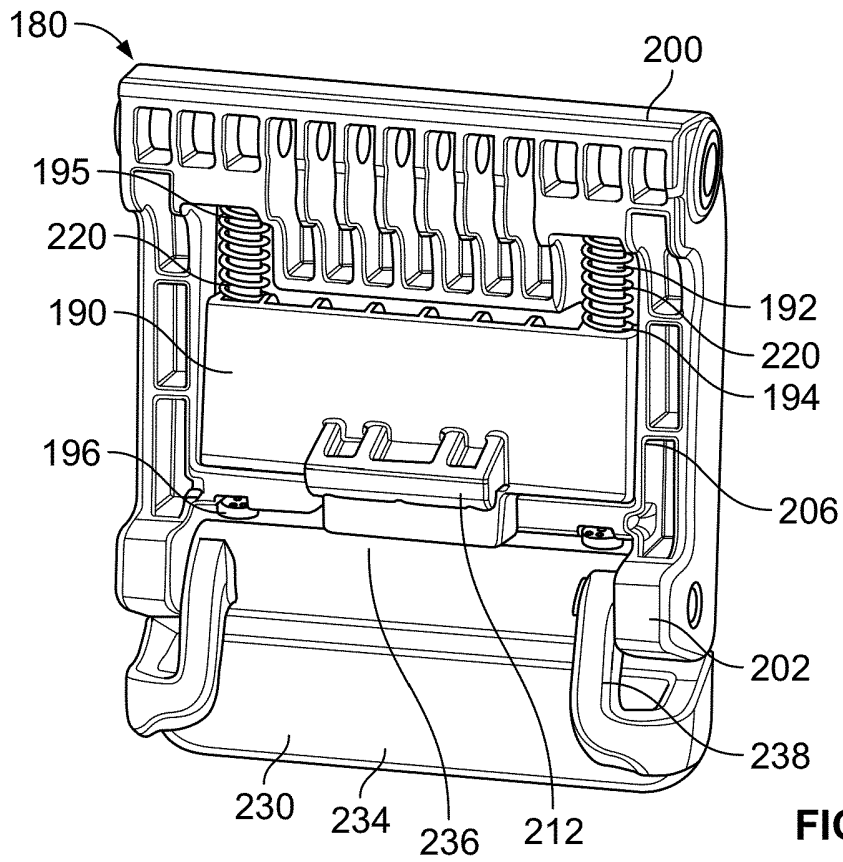


FIG. 18

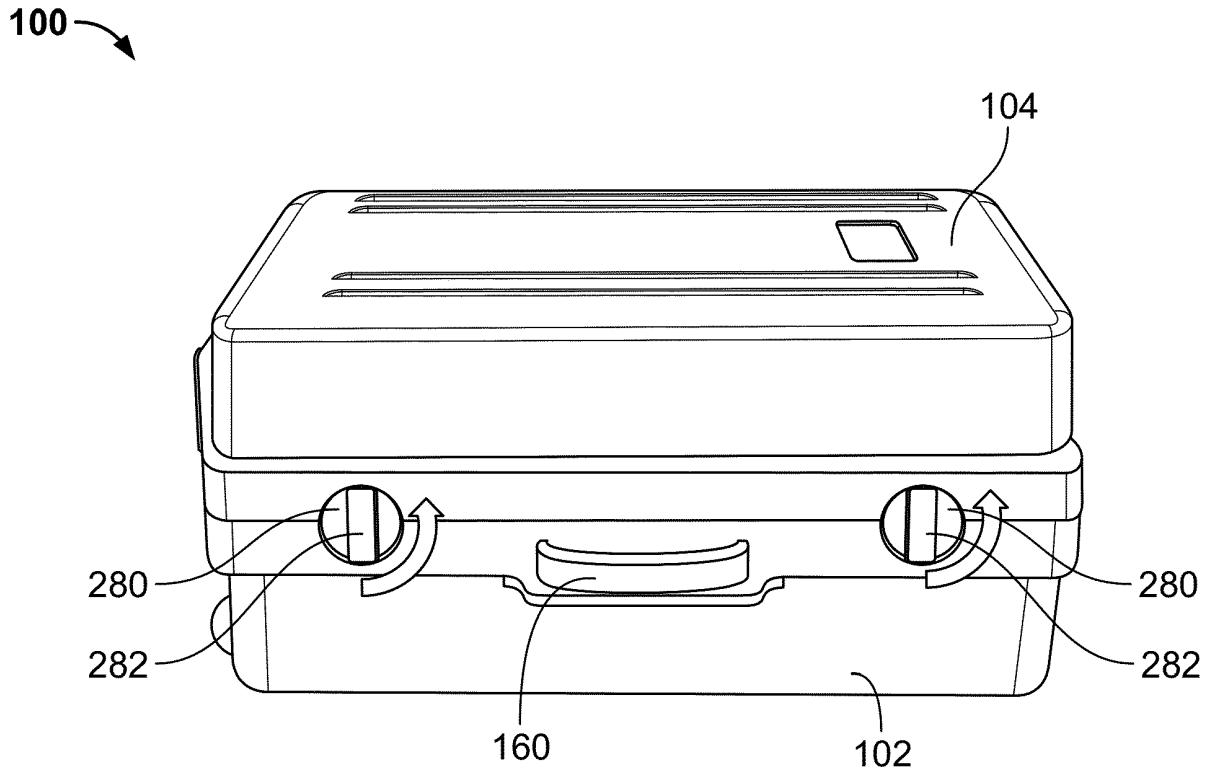


FIG. 19

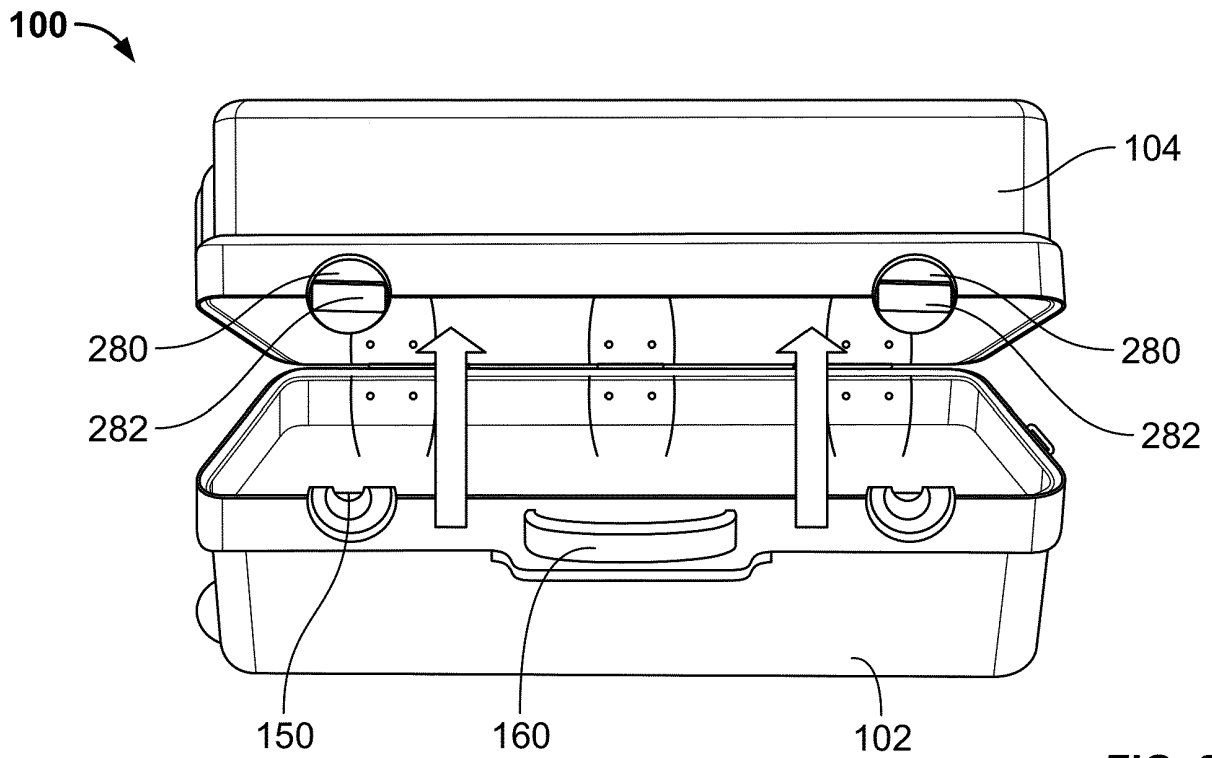


FIG. 20

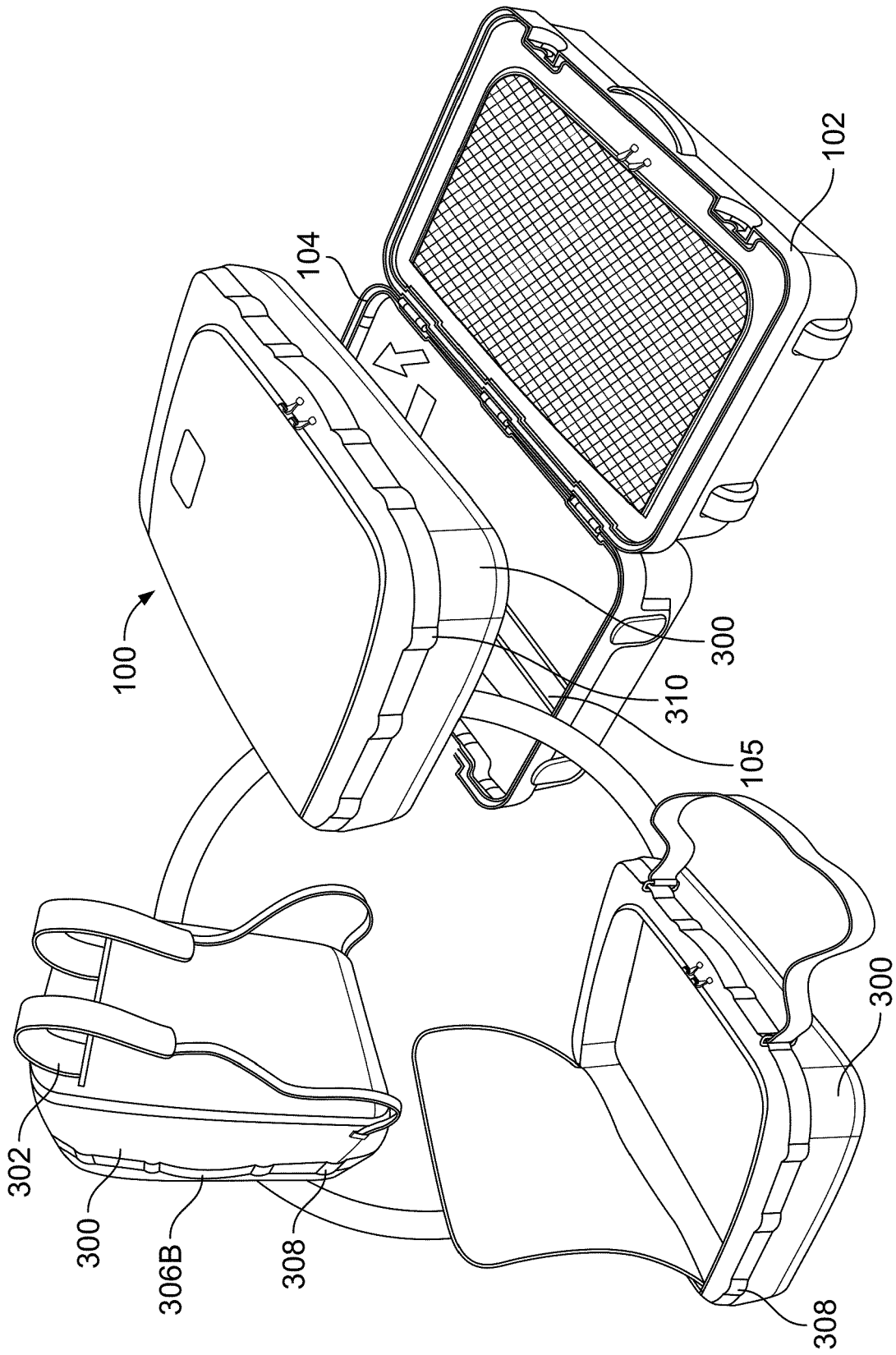


FIG. 21

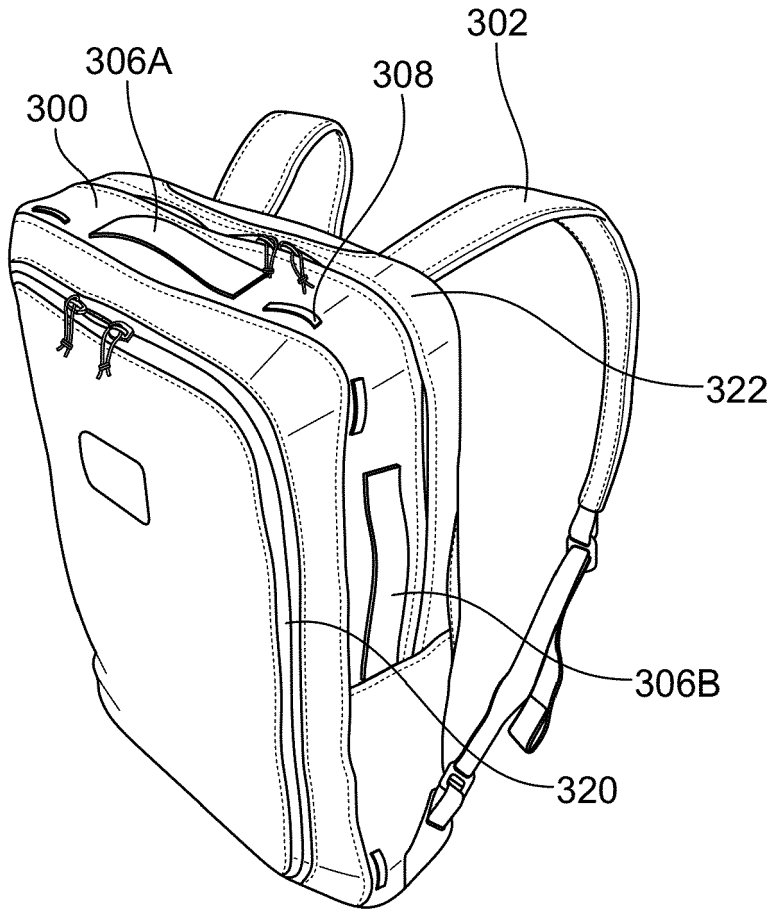


FIG. 23

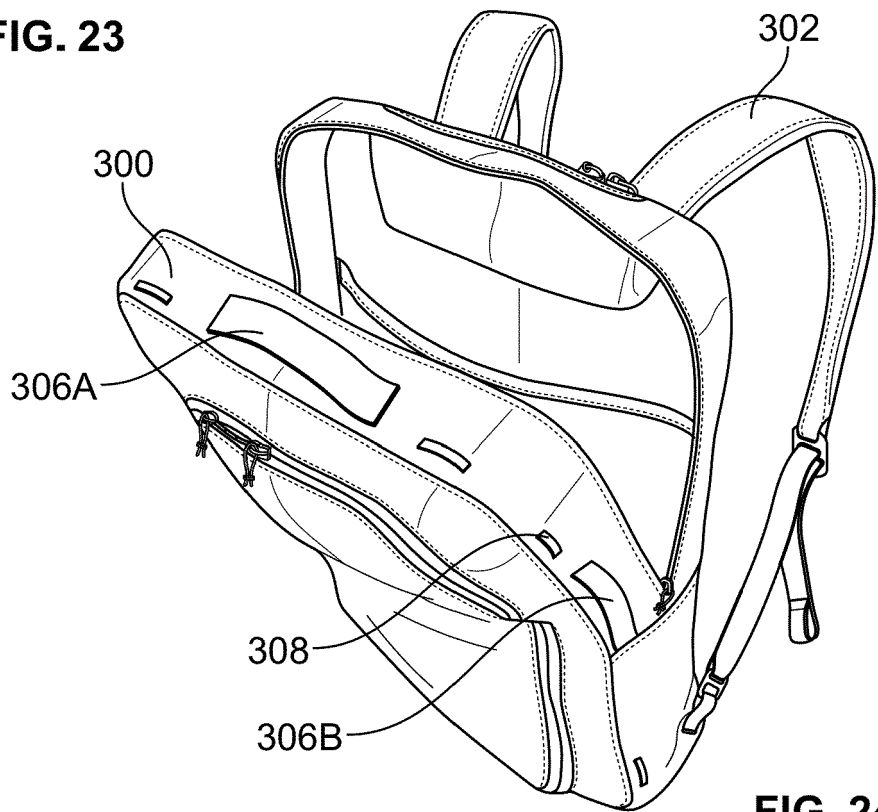


FIG. 24

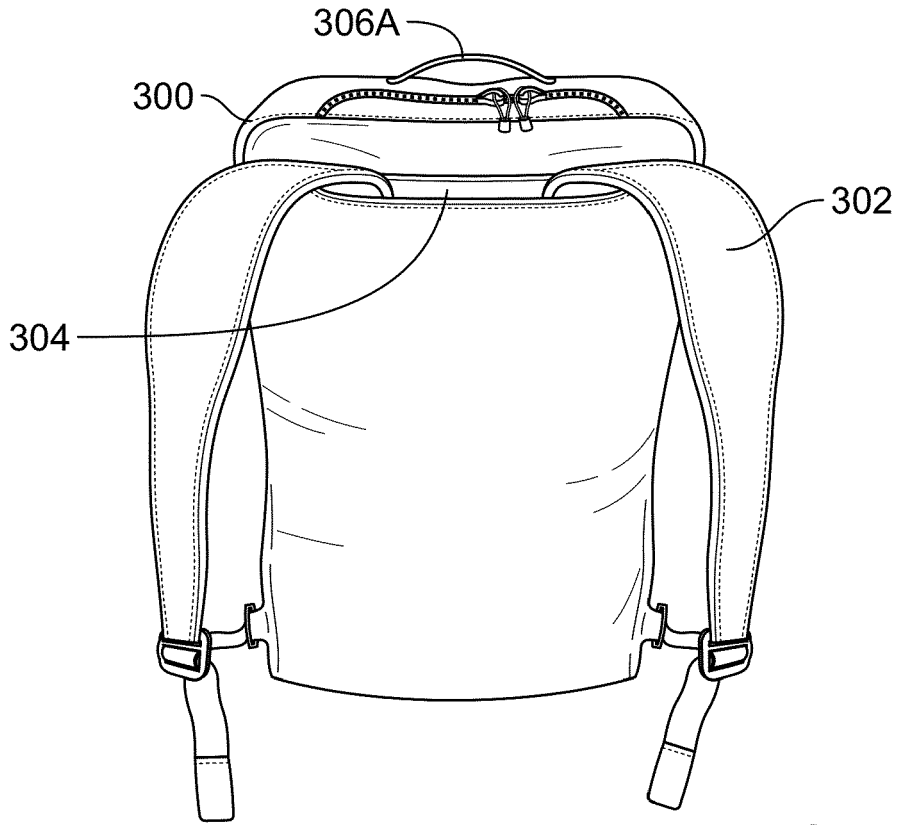


FIG. 25

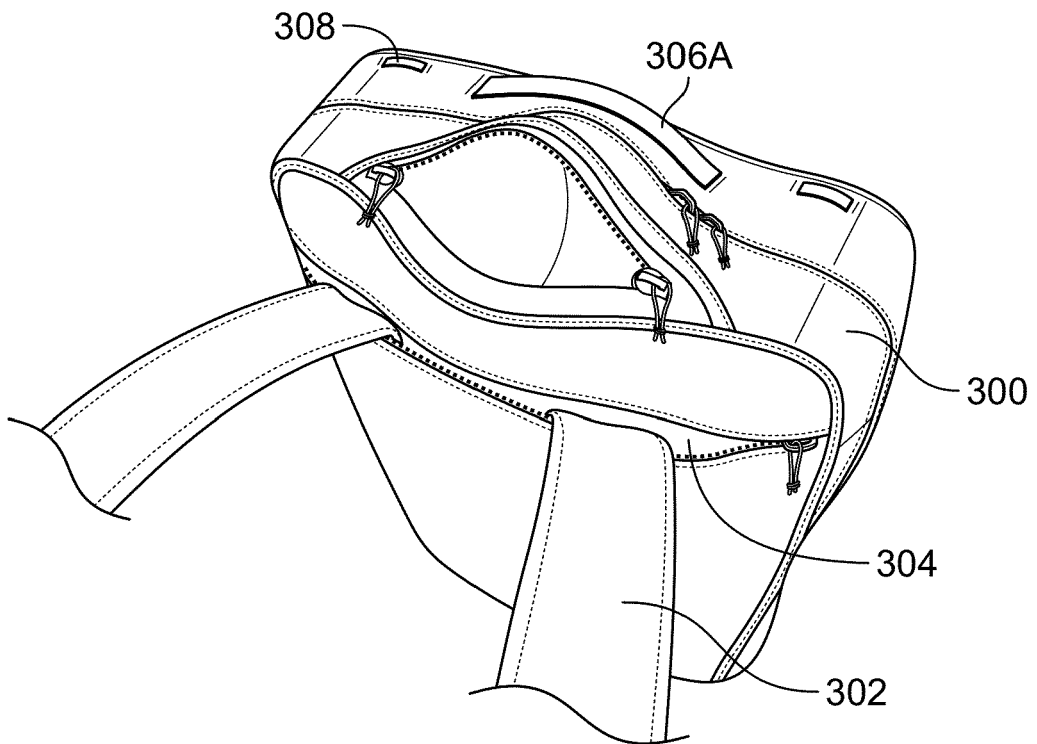


FIG. 26

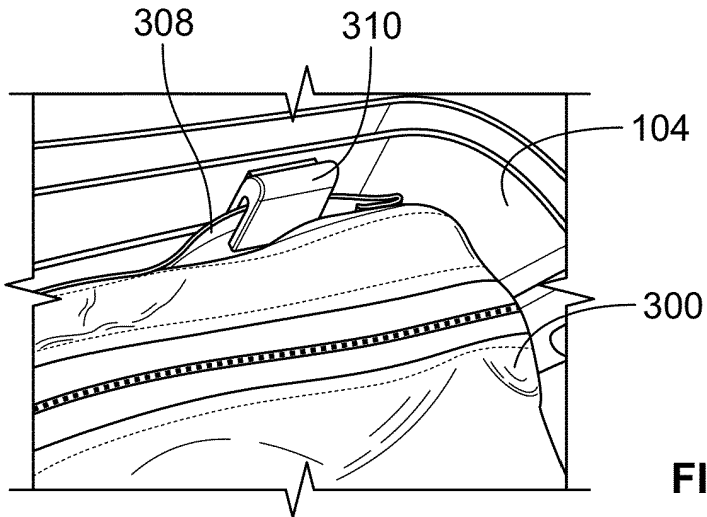


FIG. 27

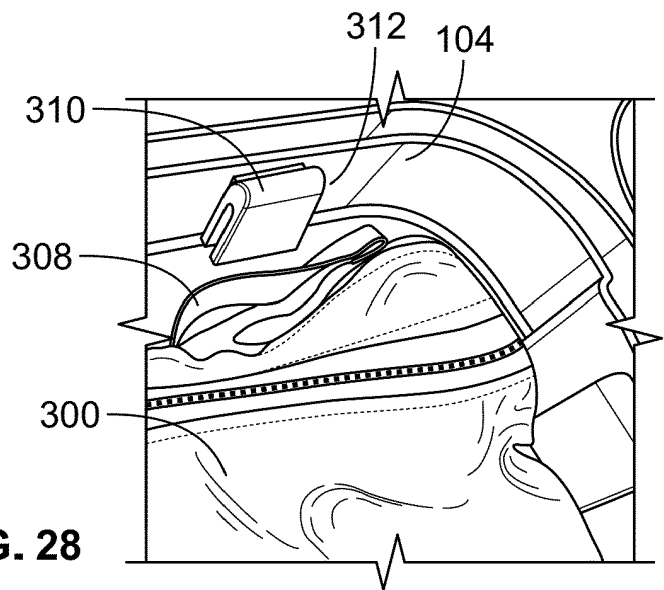


FIG. 28

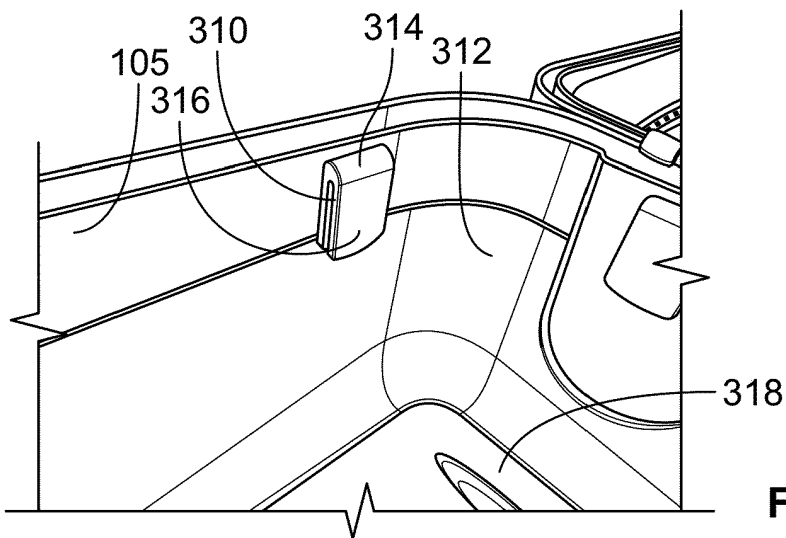


FIG. 29

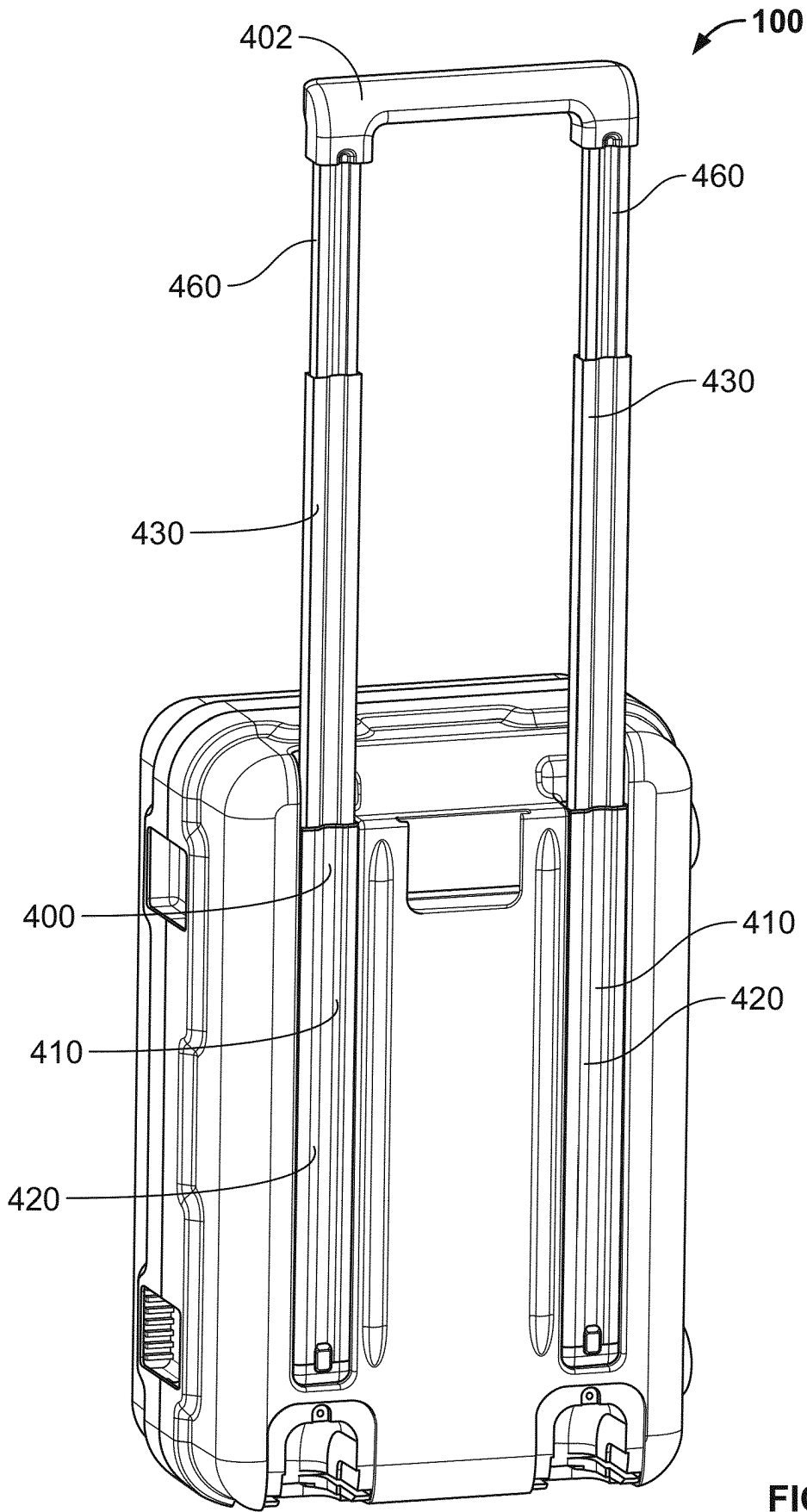


FIG. 30

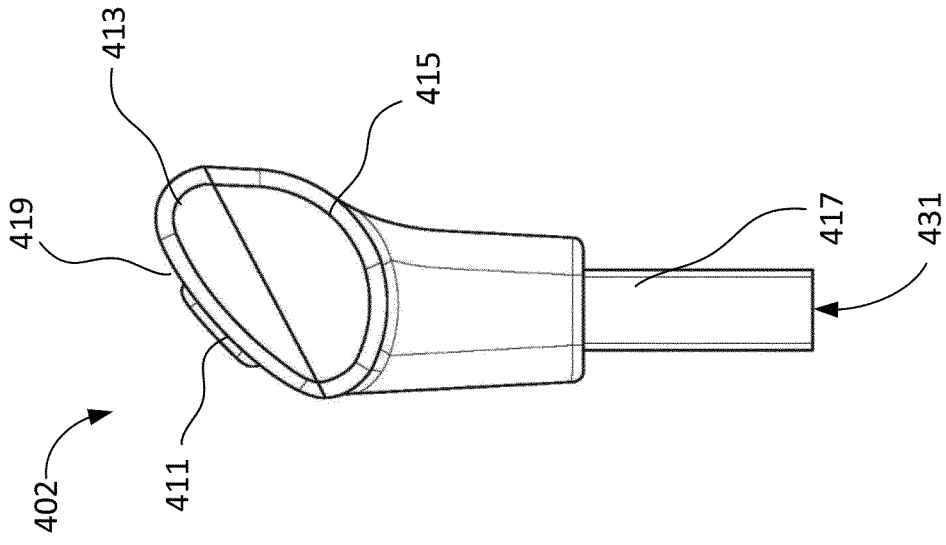


FIG. 32

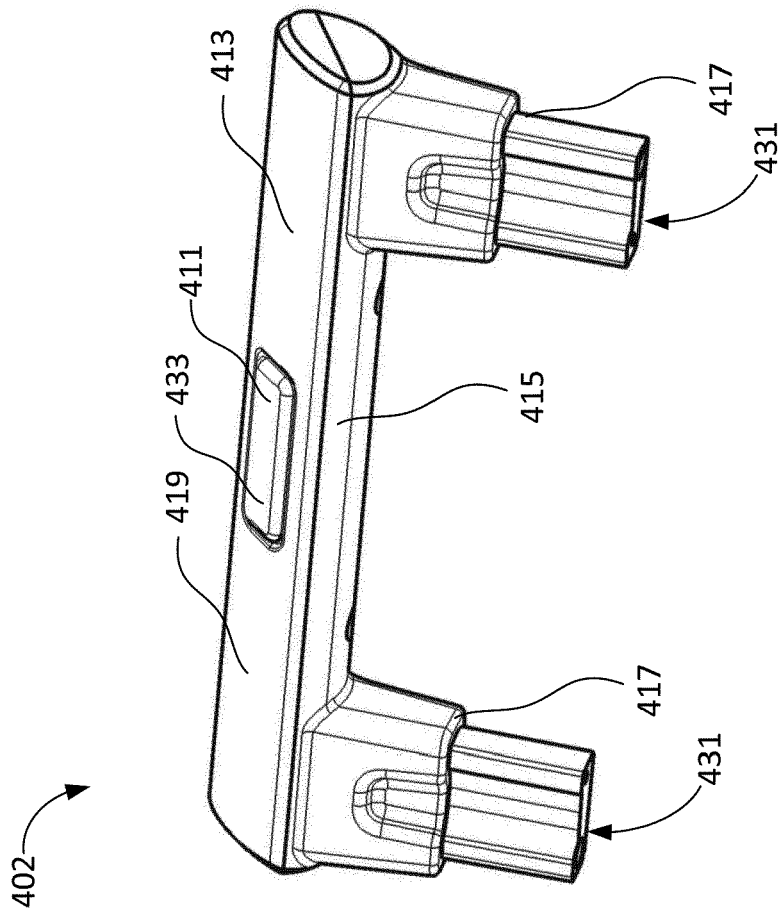


FIG. 31

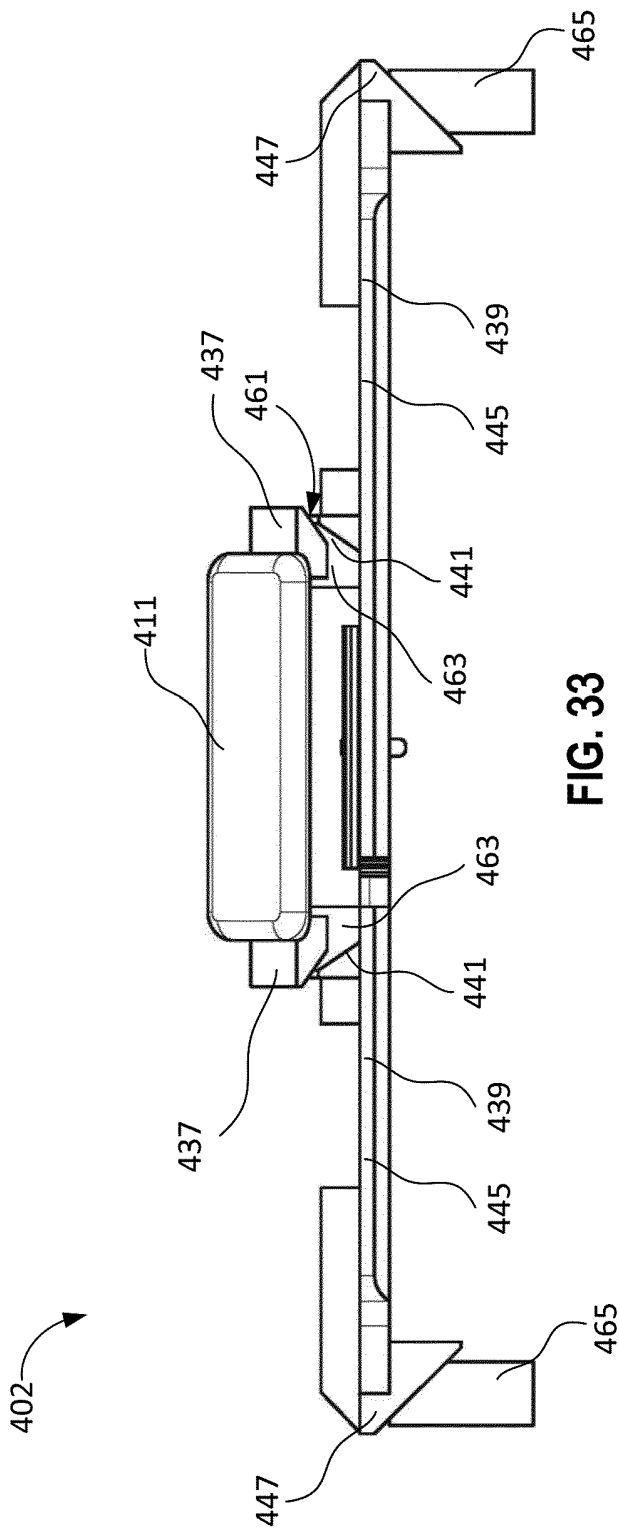


FIG. 33

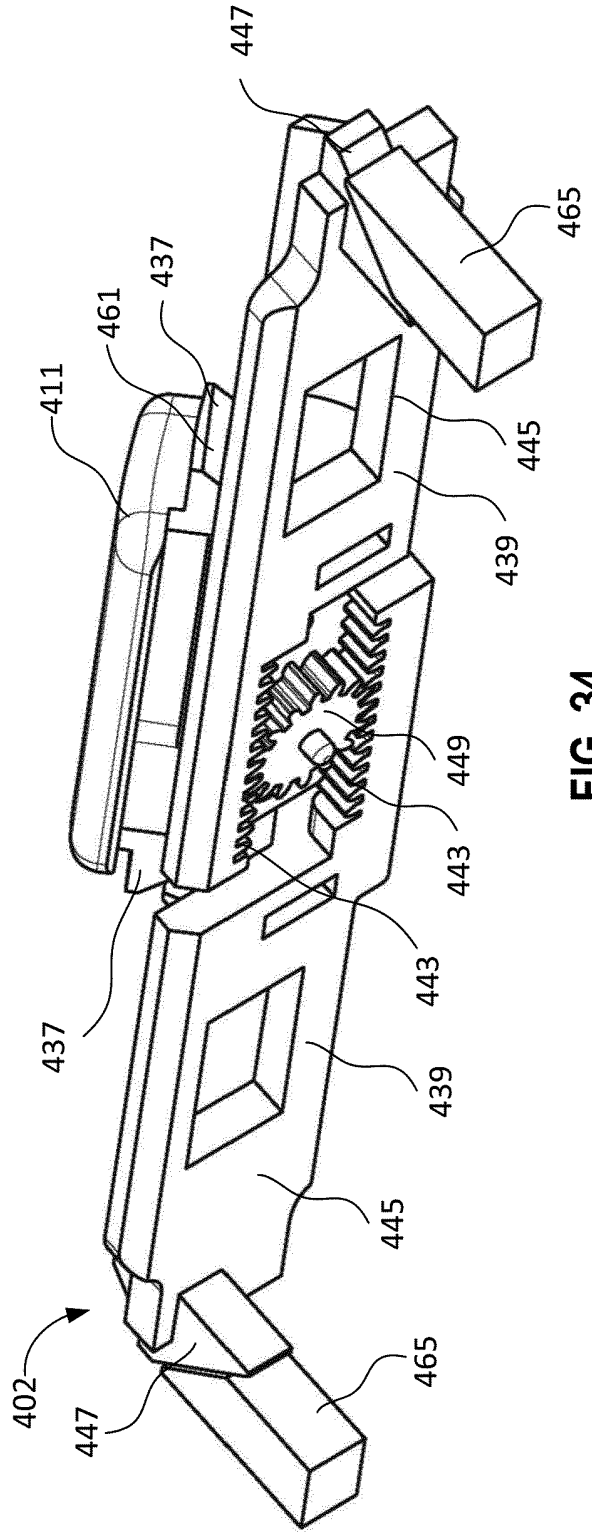
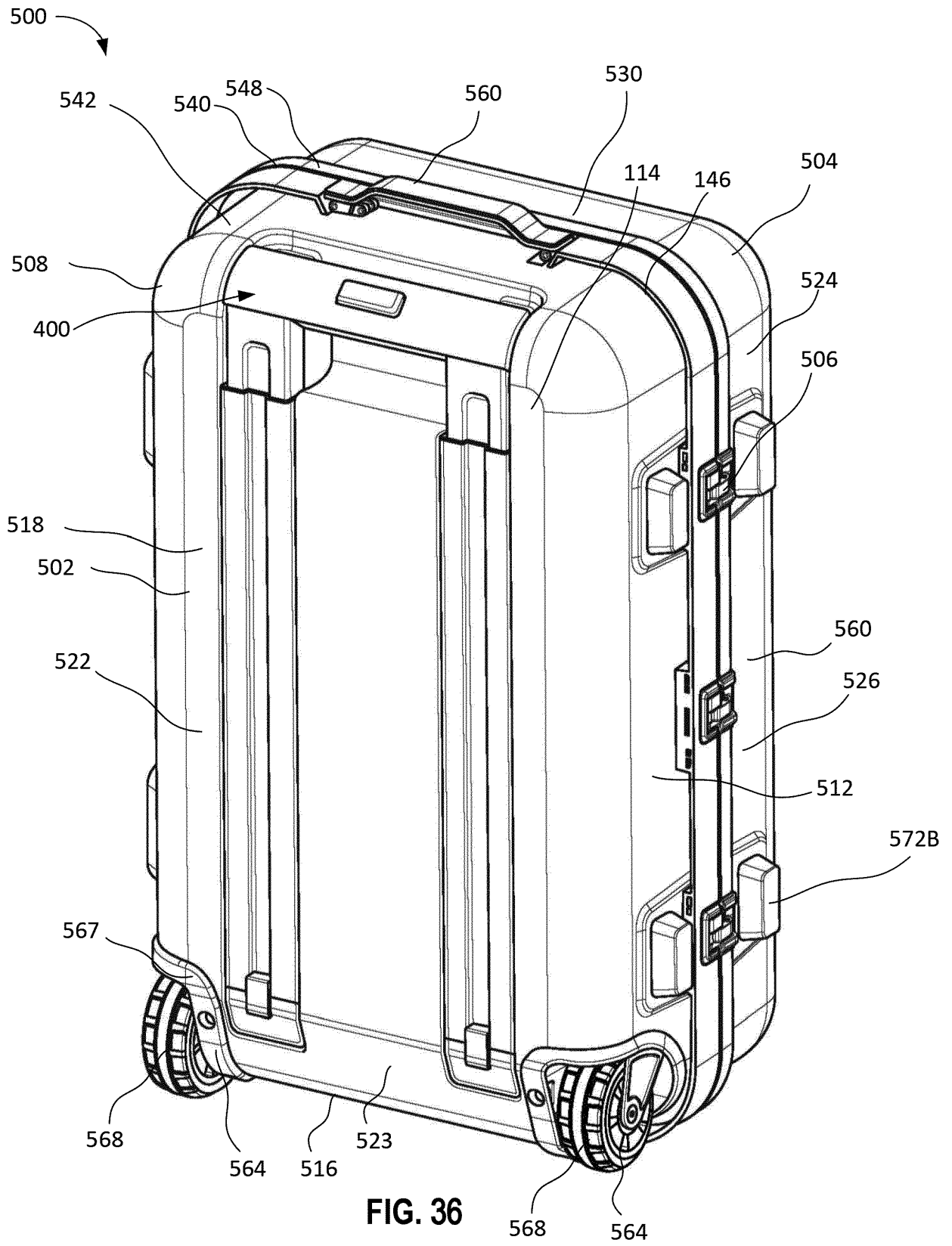
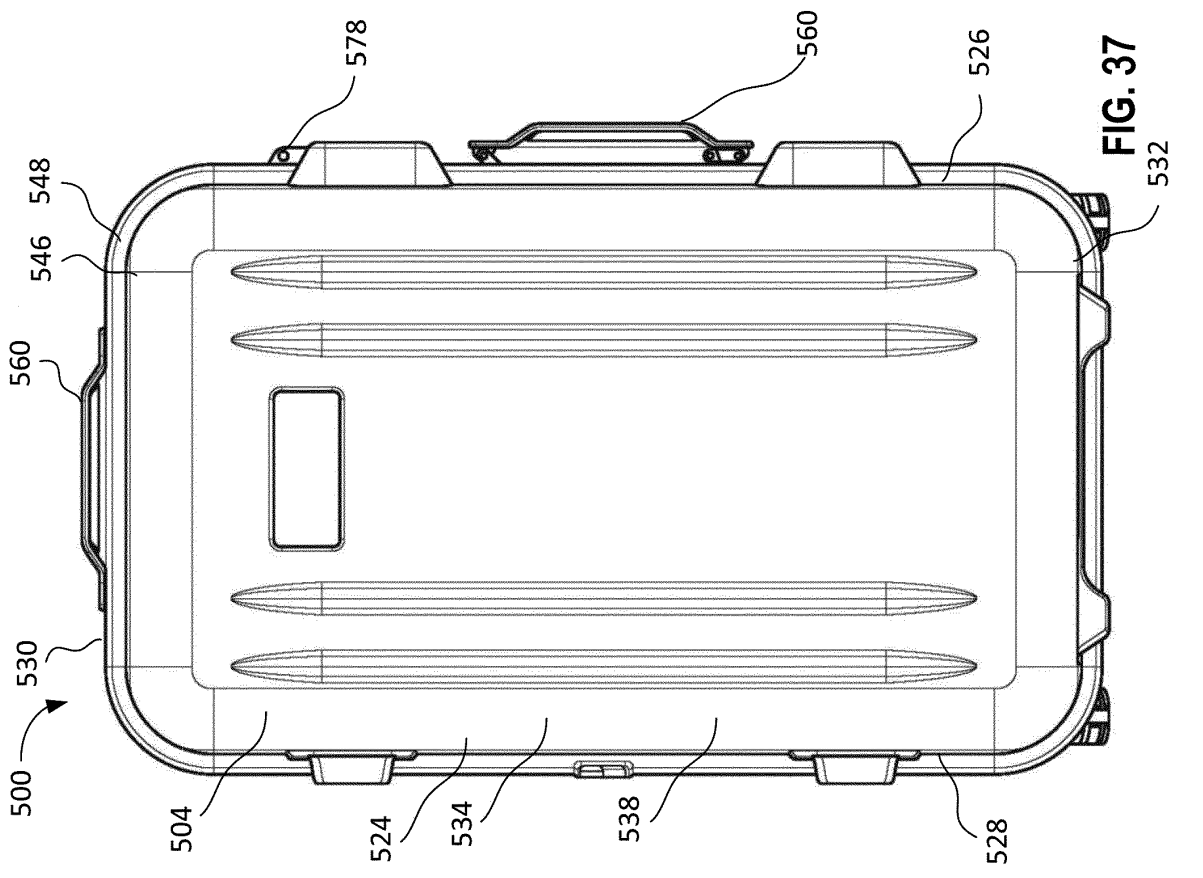
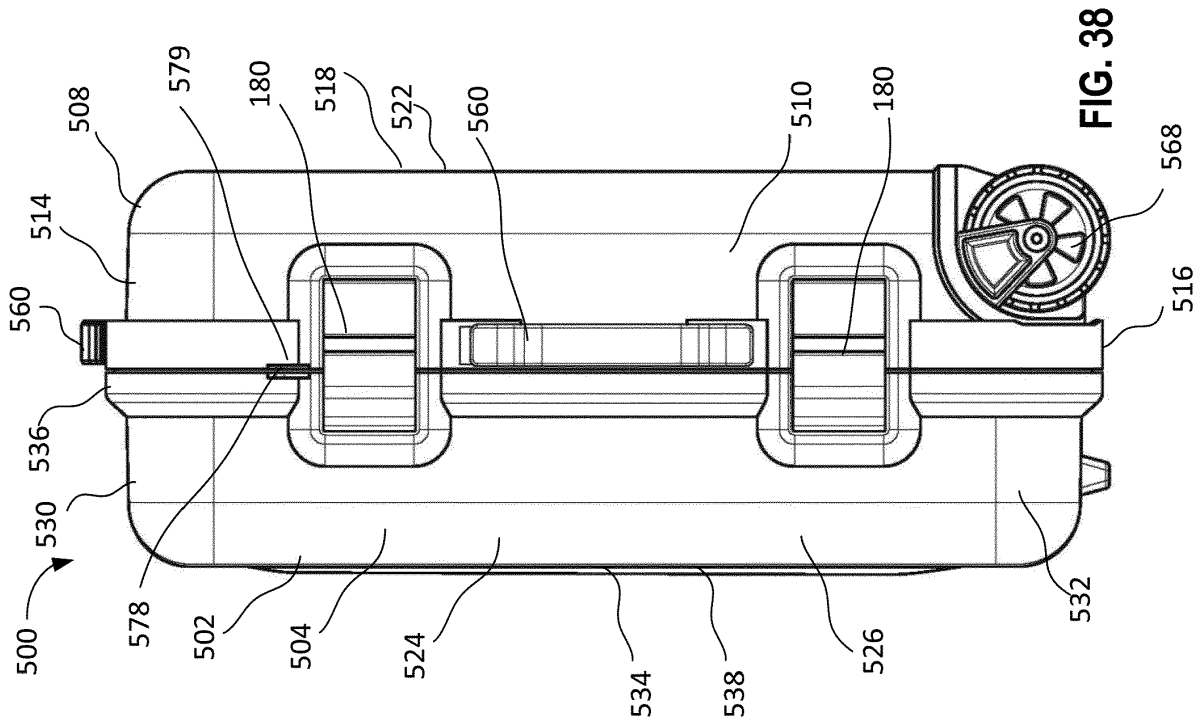


FIG. 34





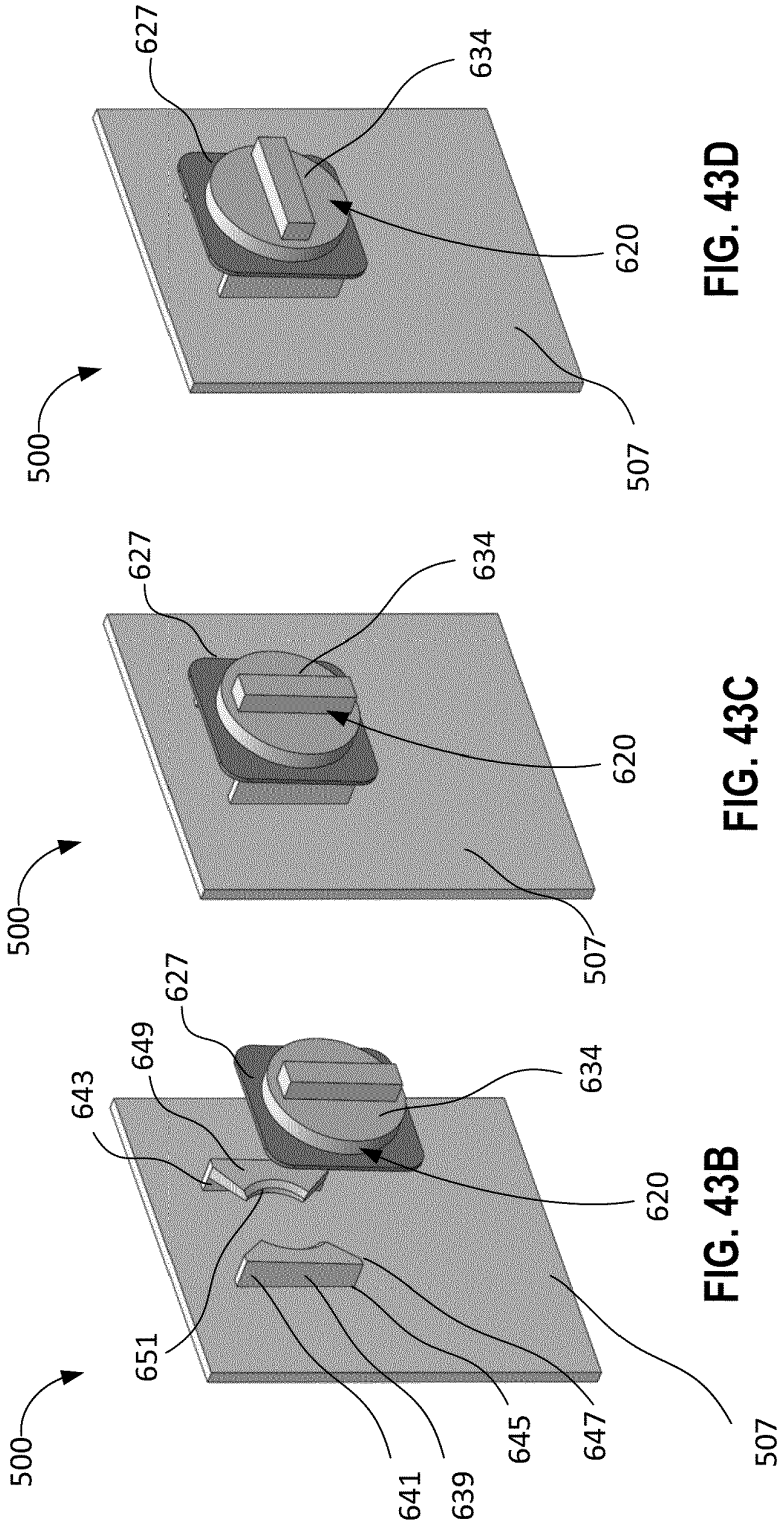


FIG. 43D

FIG. 43C

FIG. 43B

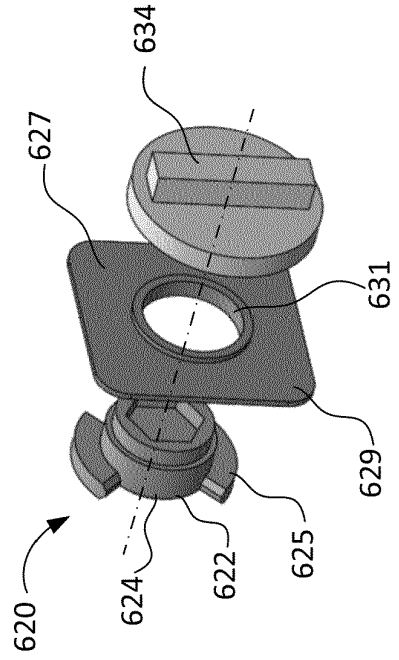


FIG. 43E

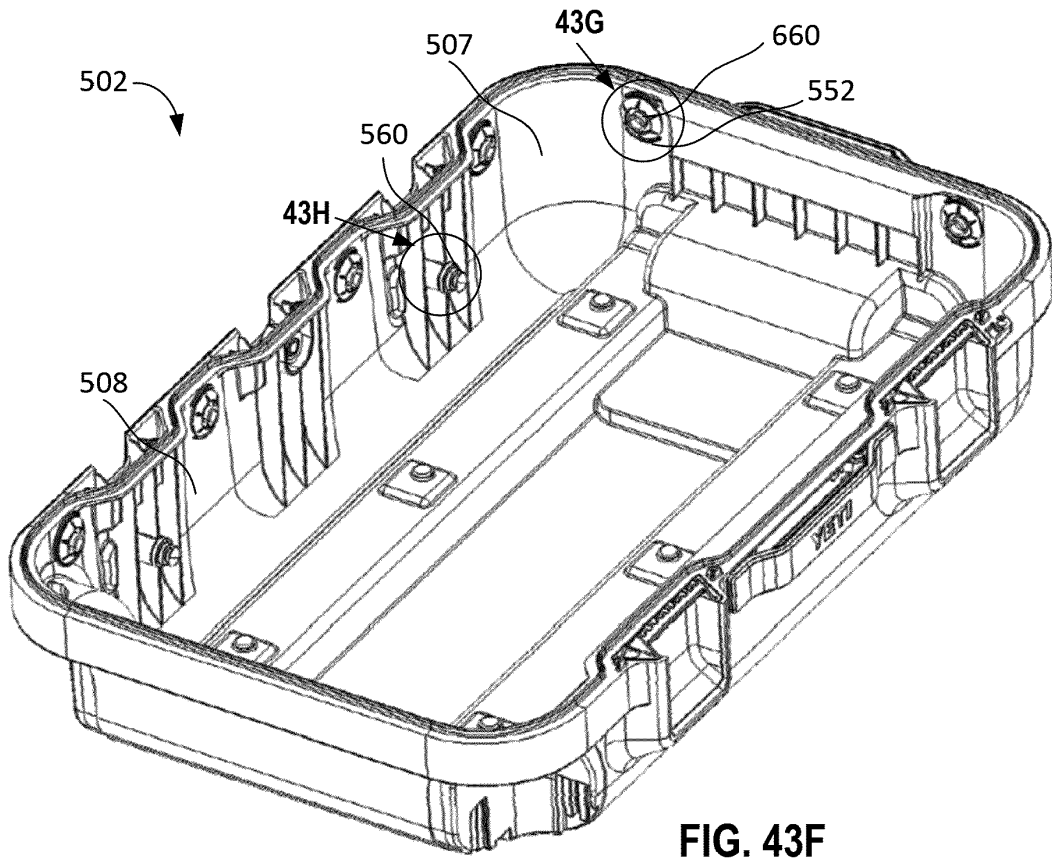


FIG. 43F

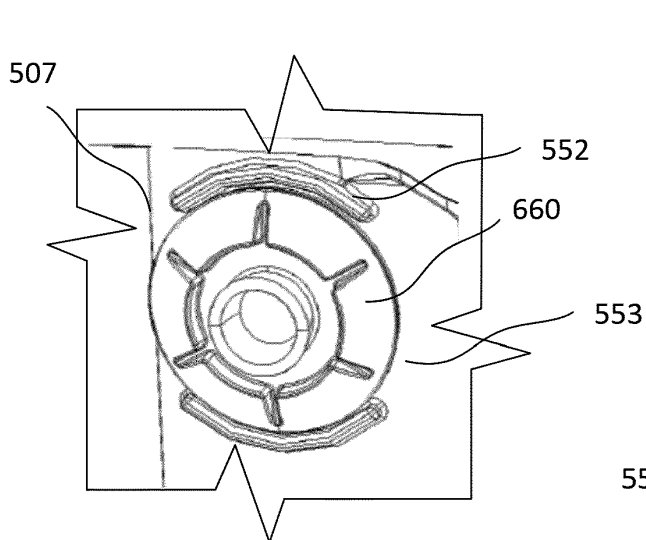


FIG. 43G

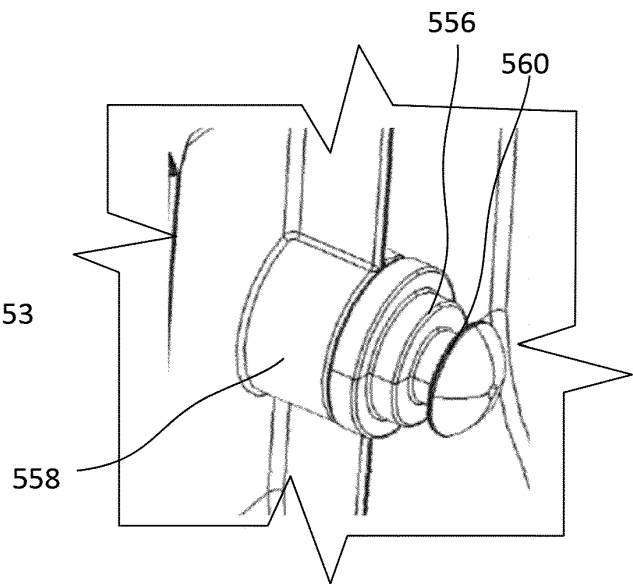
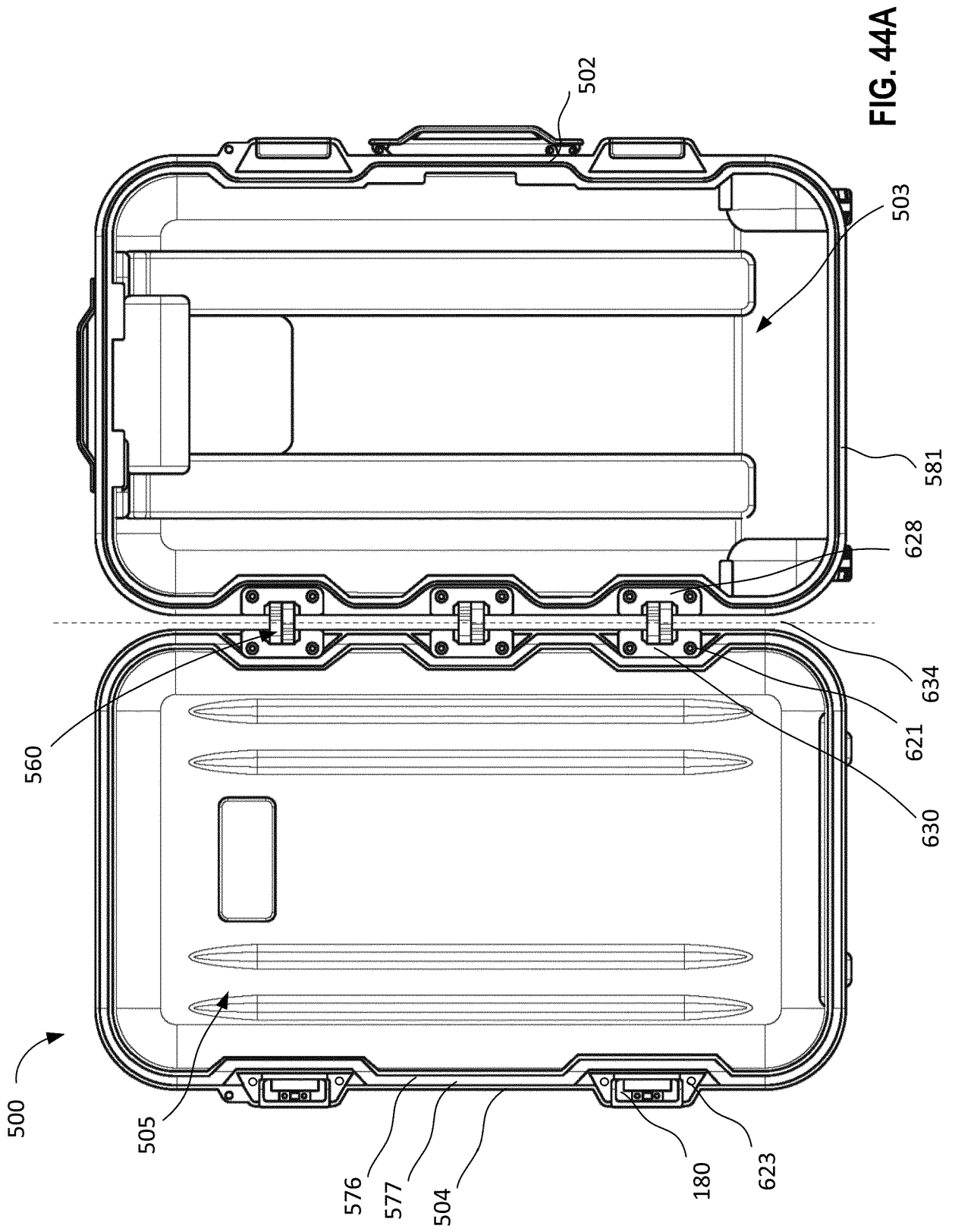


FIG. 43H



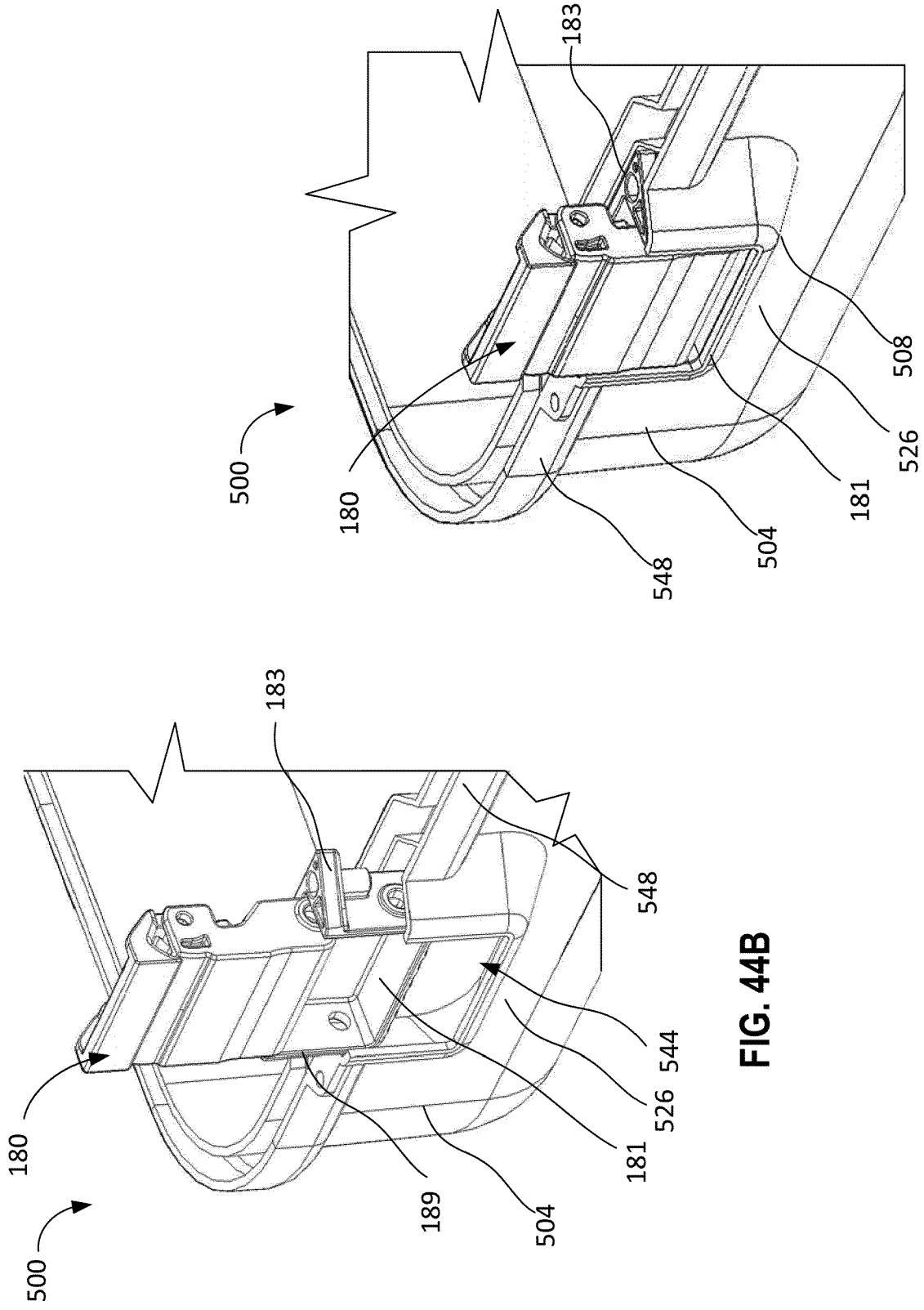


FIG. 44C

FIG. 44B

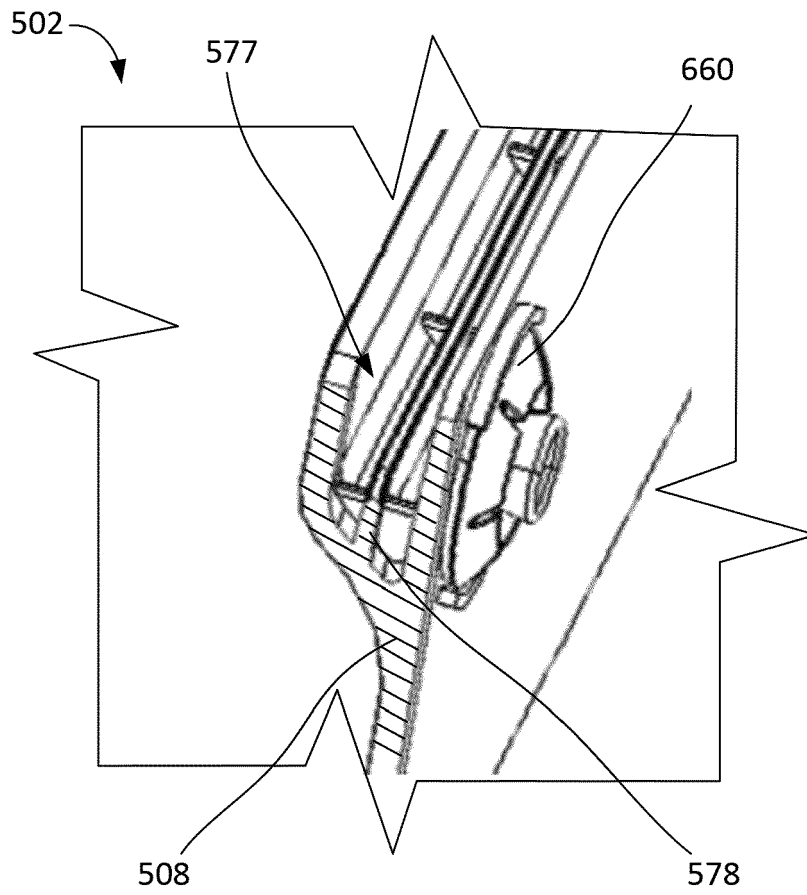


FIG. 44D

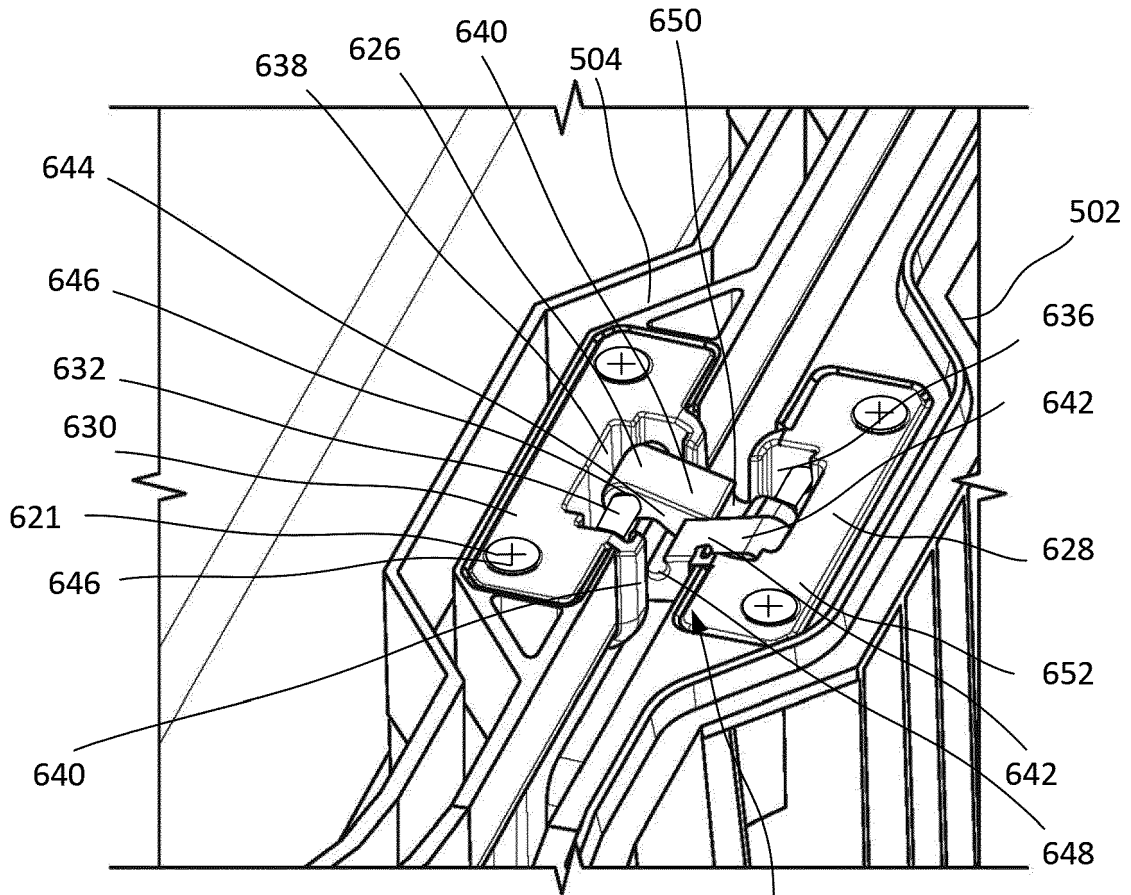


FIG. 45

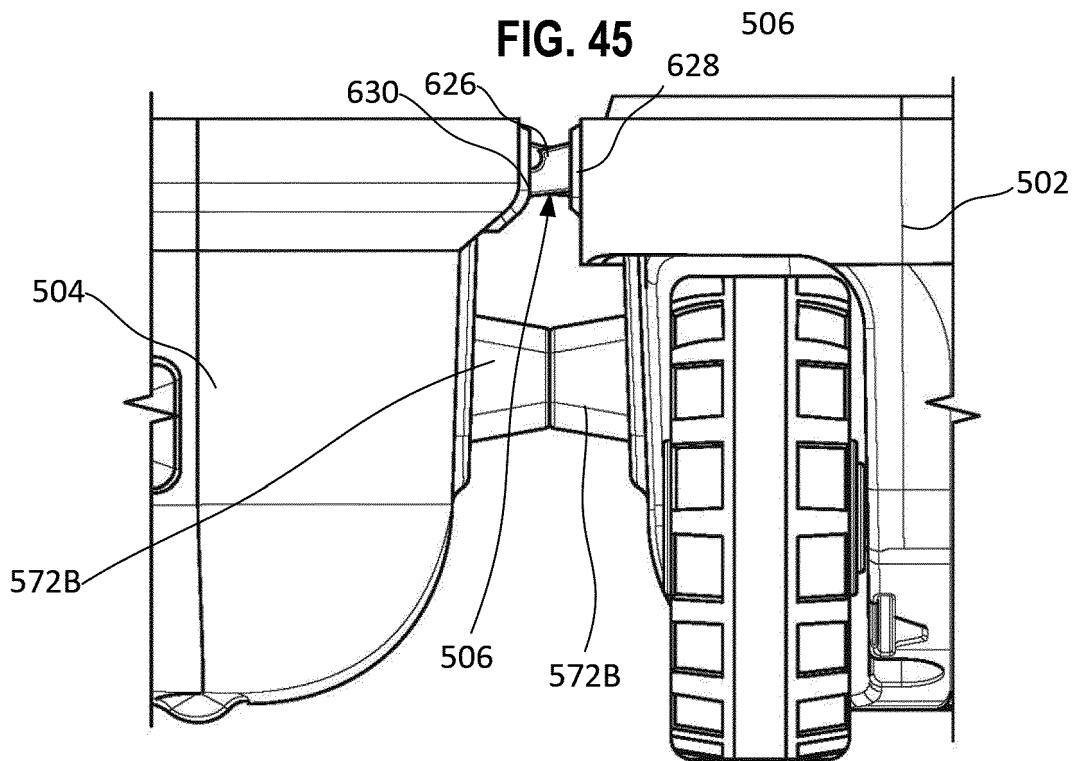


FIG. 46

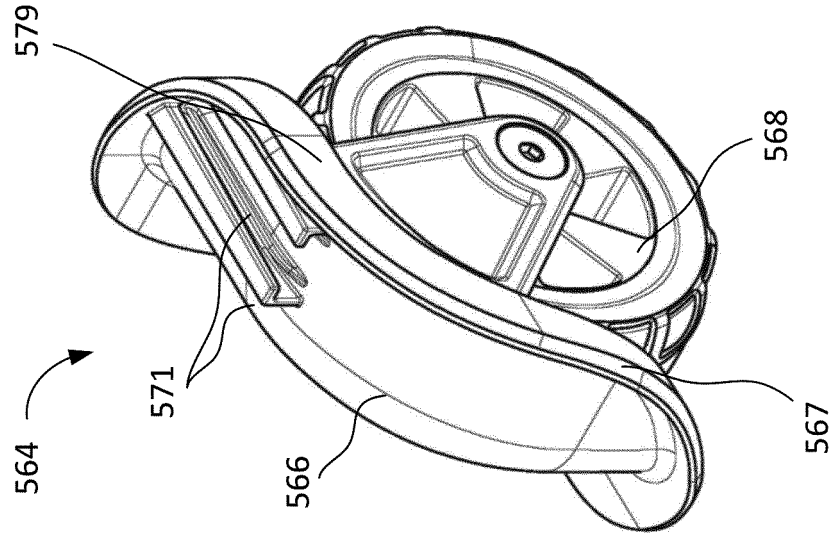


FIG. 48

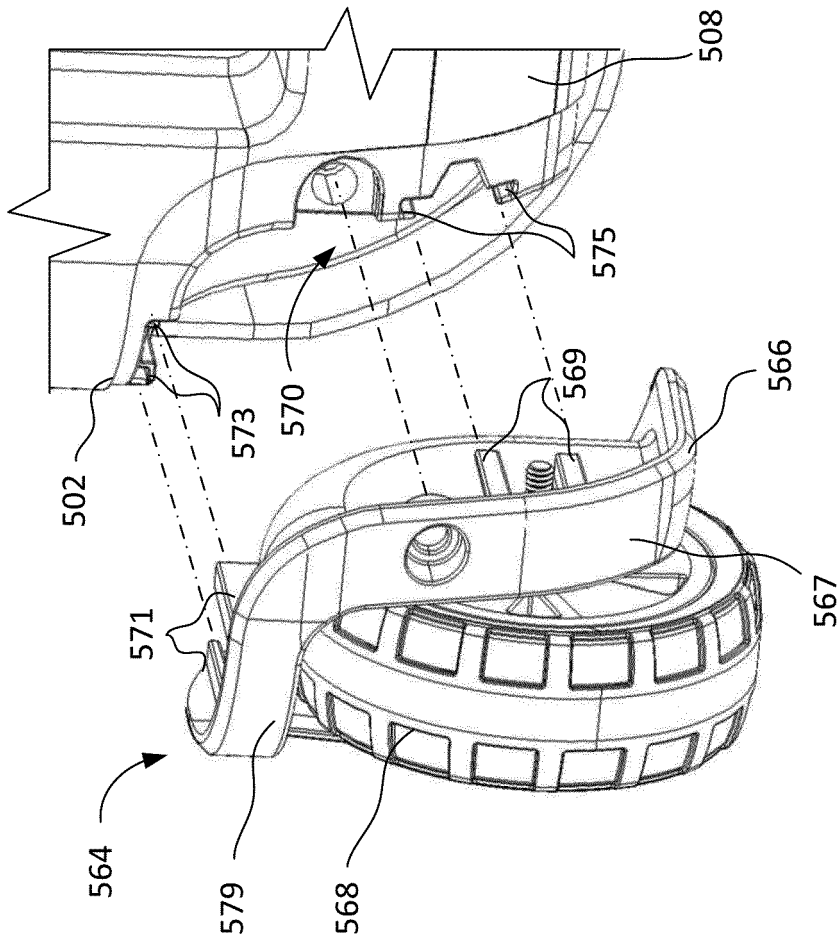


FIG. 47

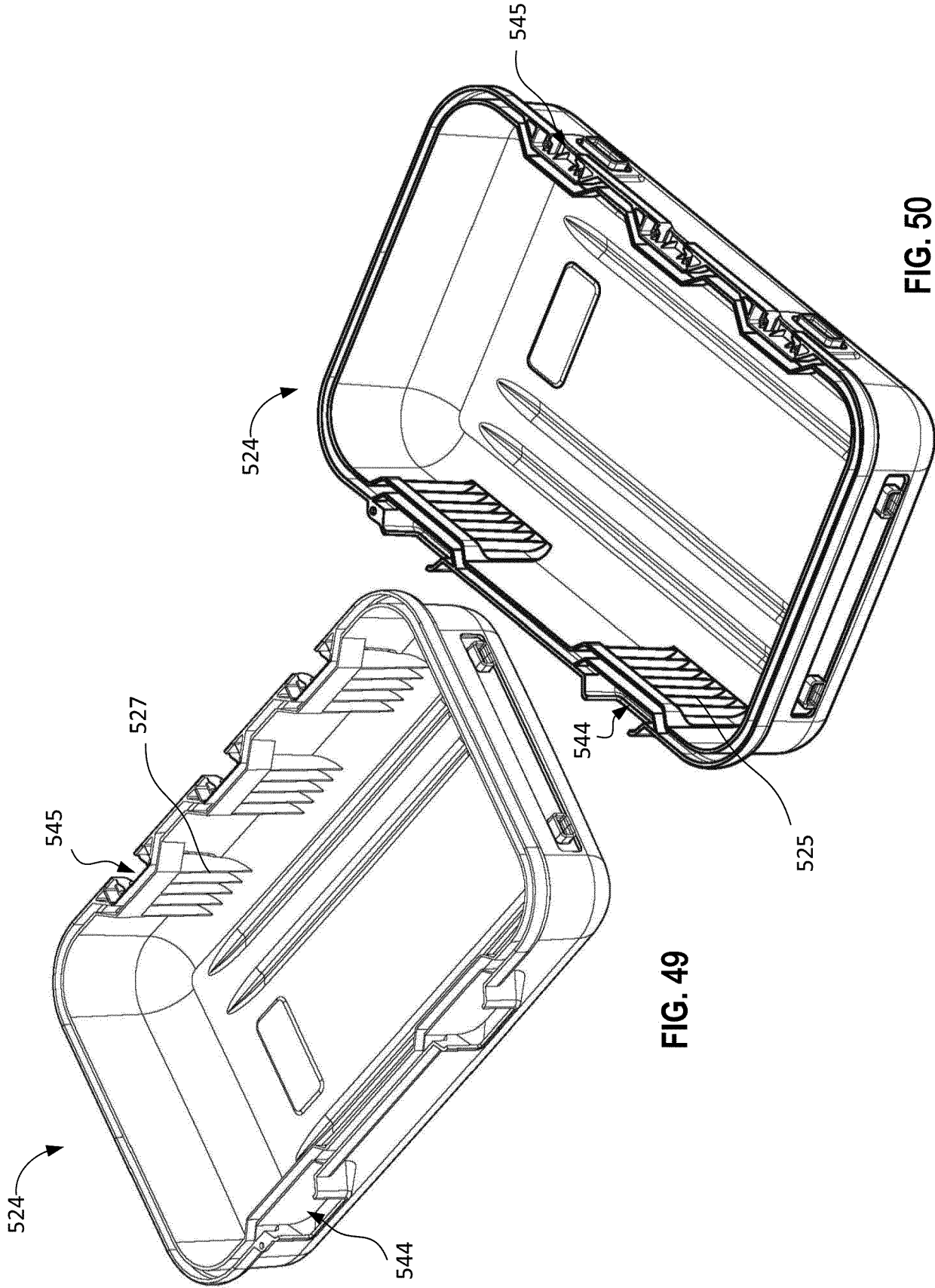


FIG. 49

FIG. 50

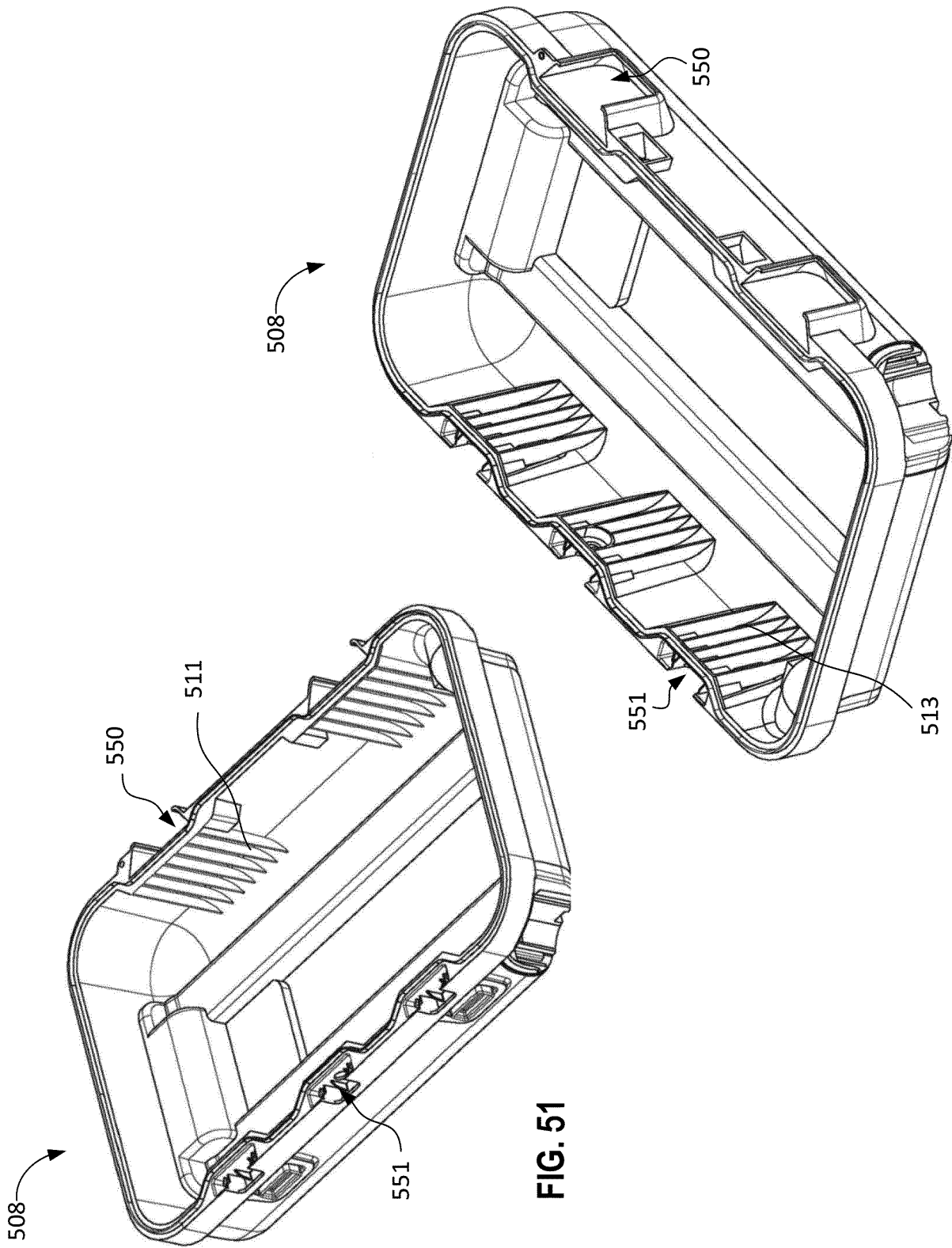


FIG. 52

FIG. 51

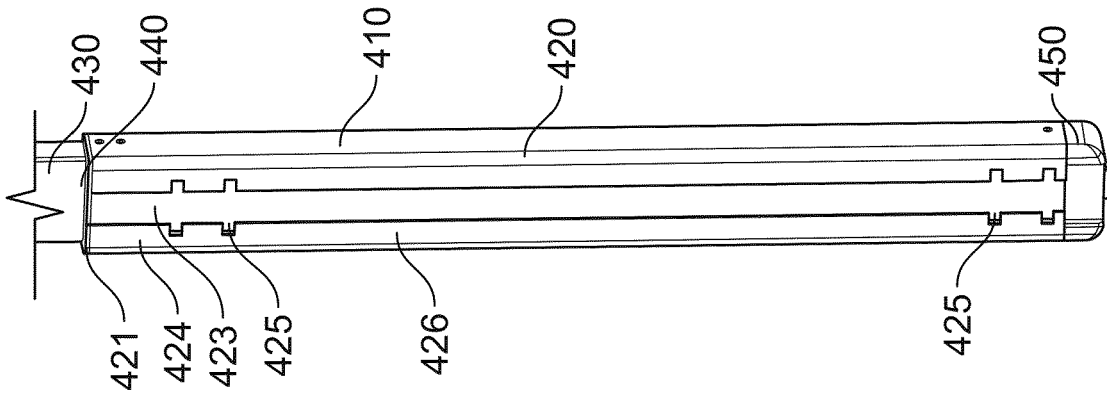


FIG. 54

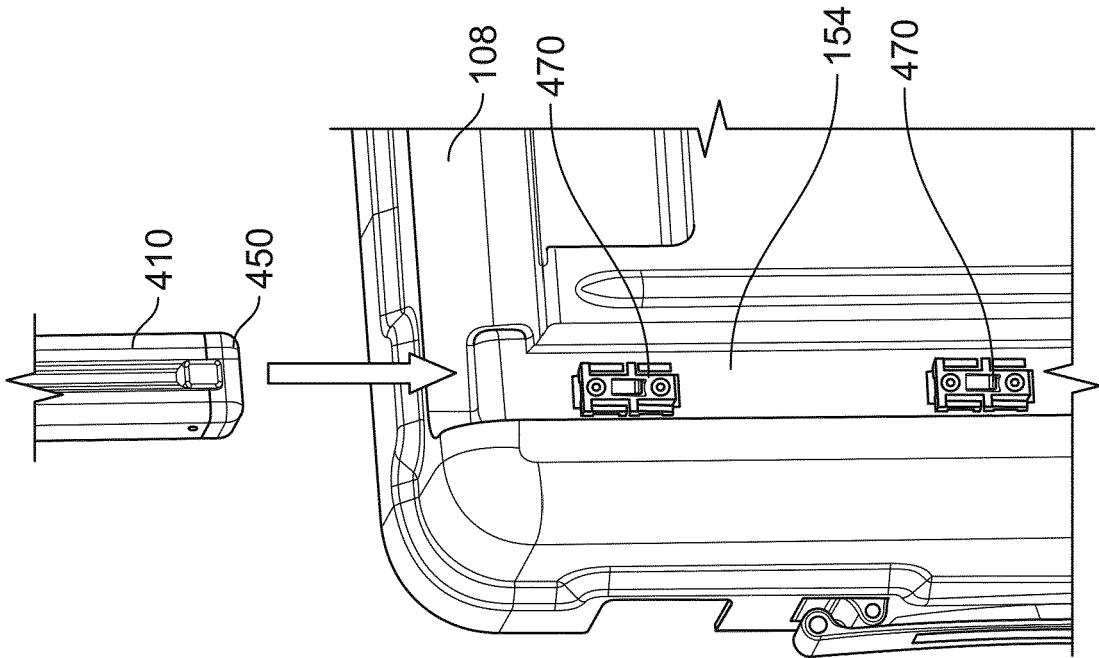


FIG. 53

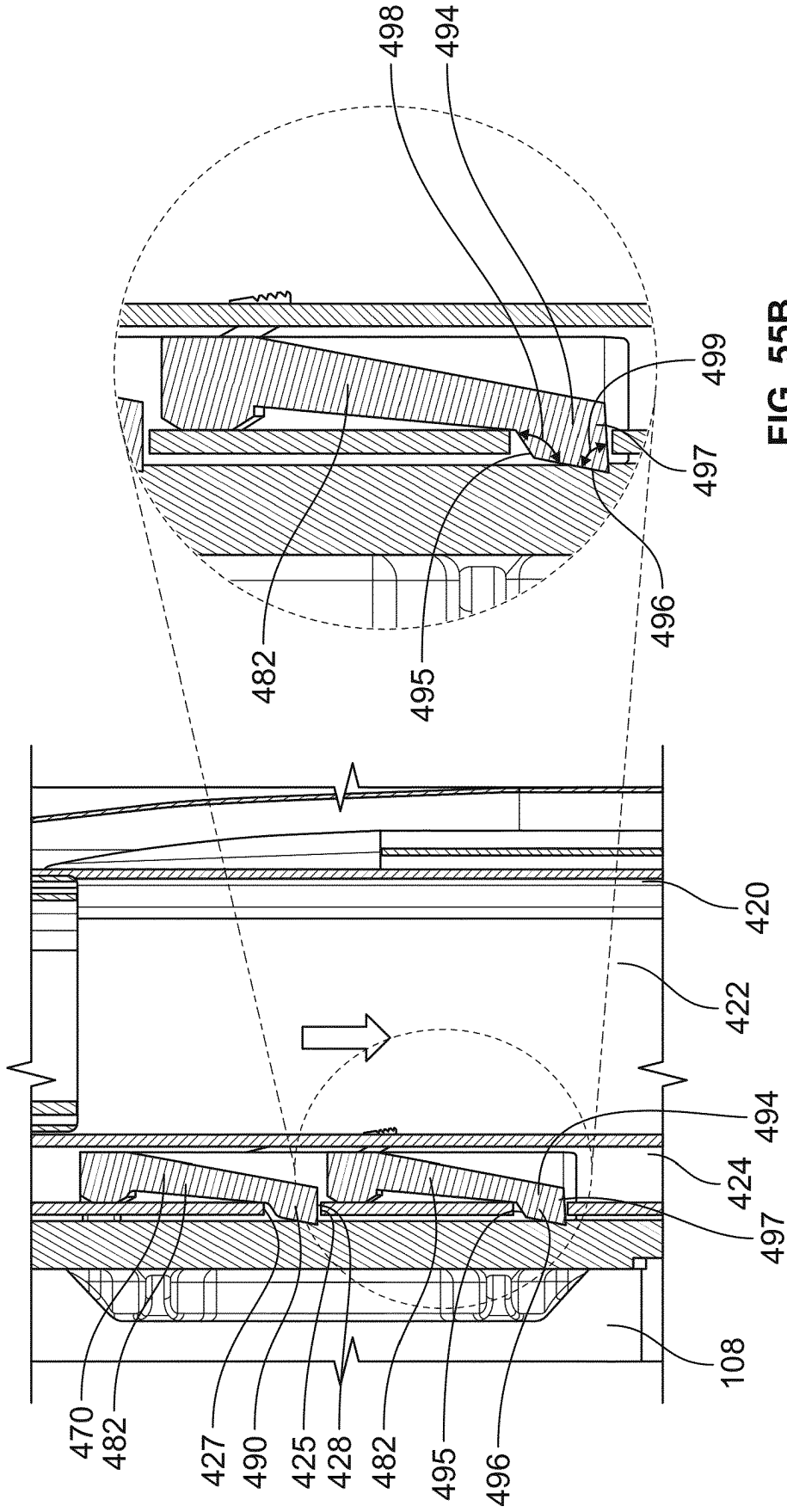


FIG. 55B

FIG. 55A

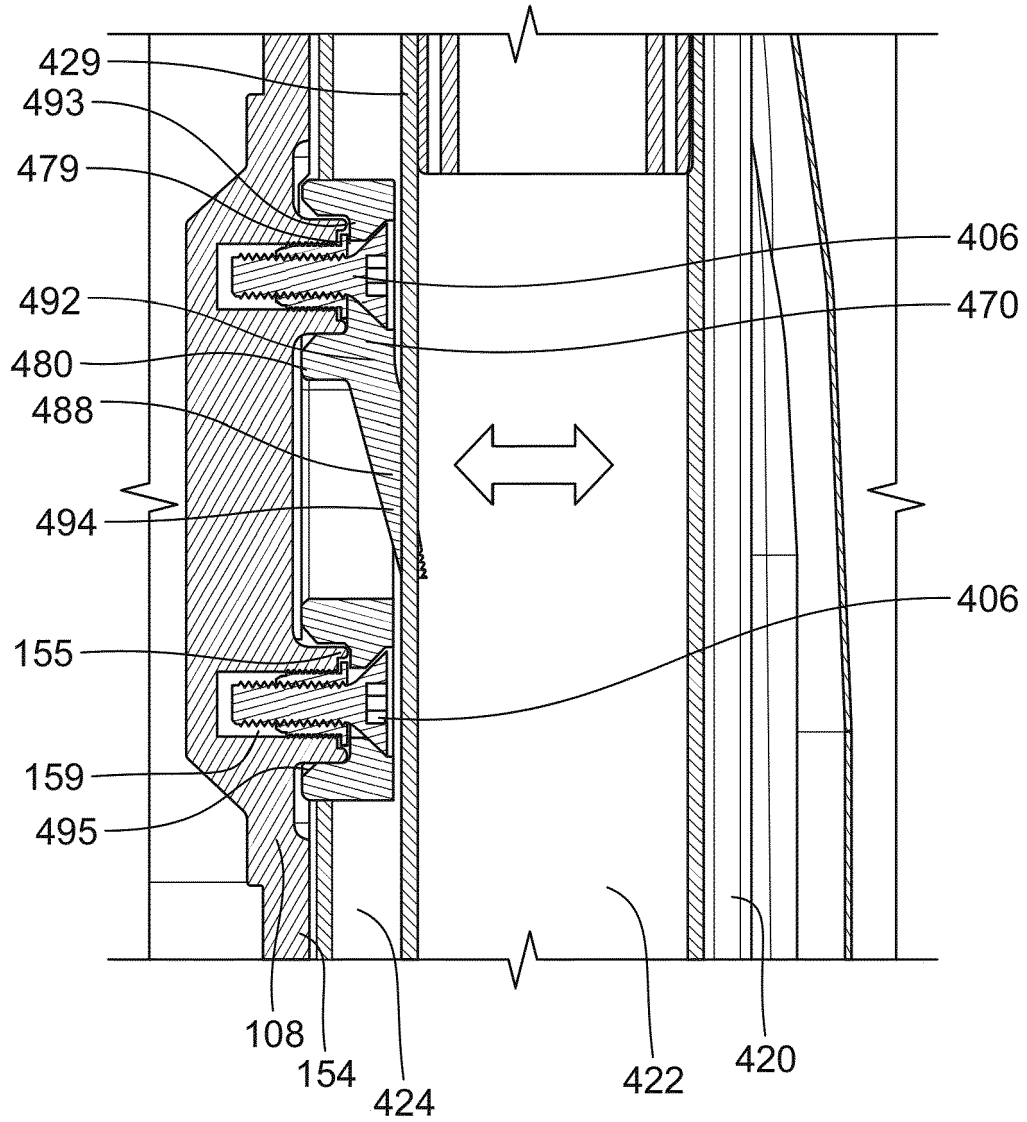


FIG. 56

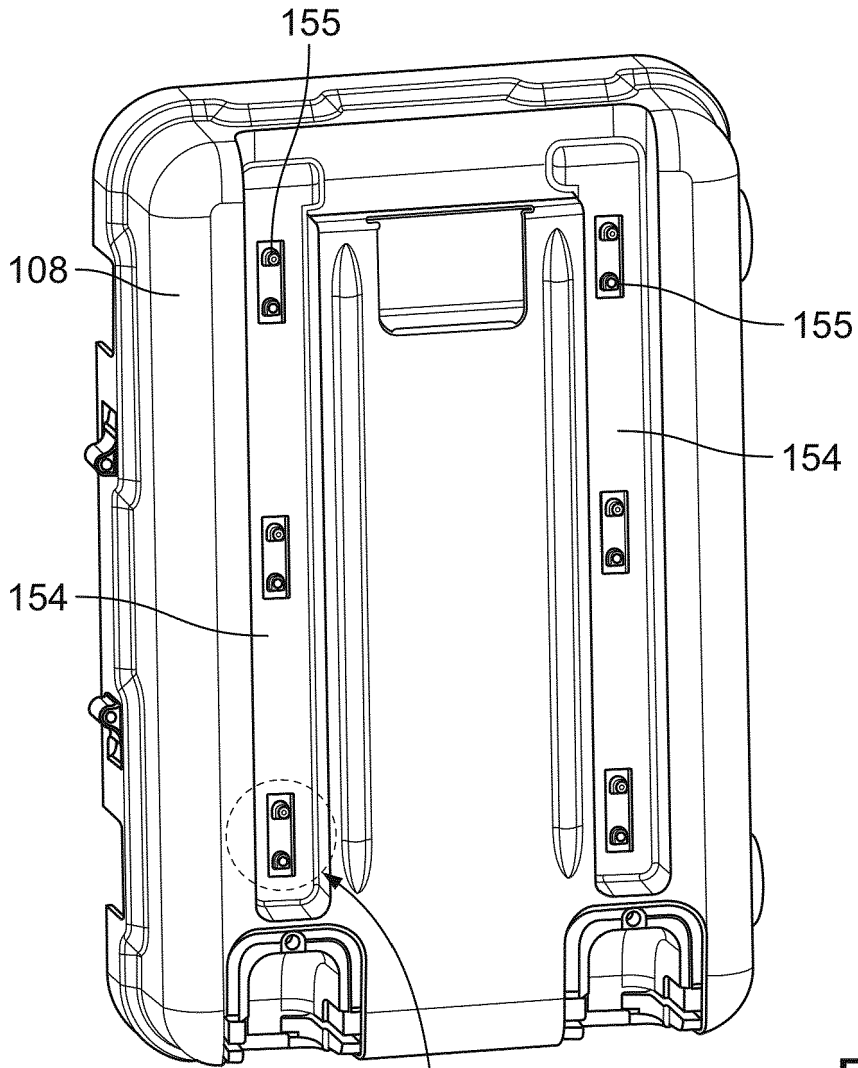


FIG. 57B

FIG. 57A

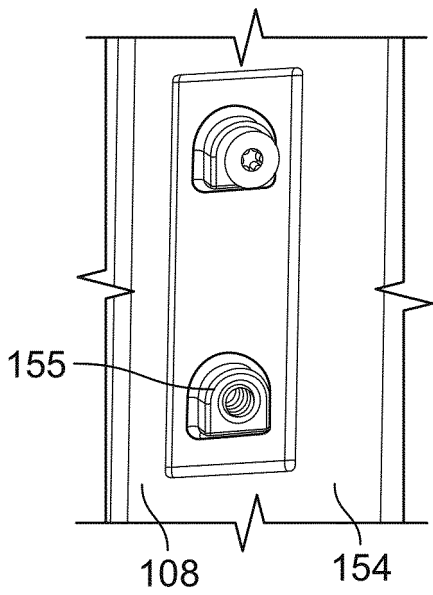


FIG. 57B

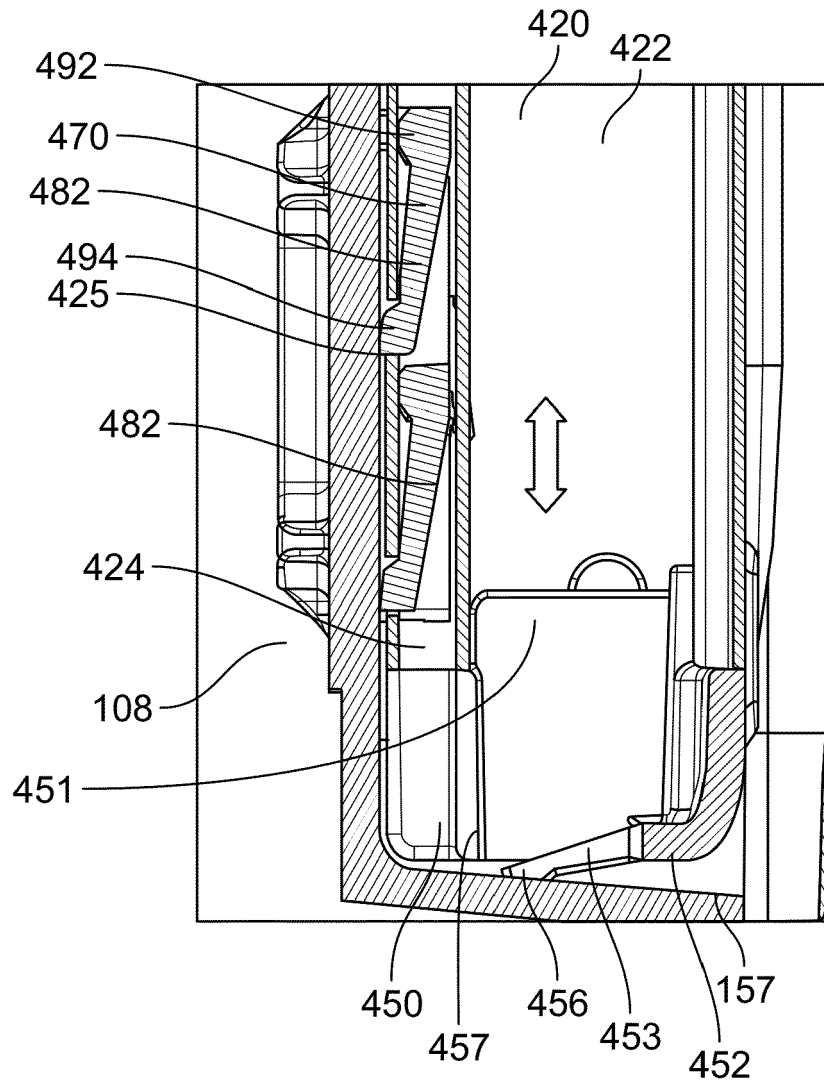


FIG. 58

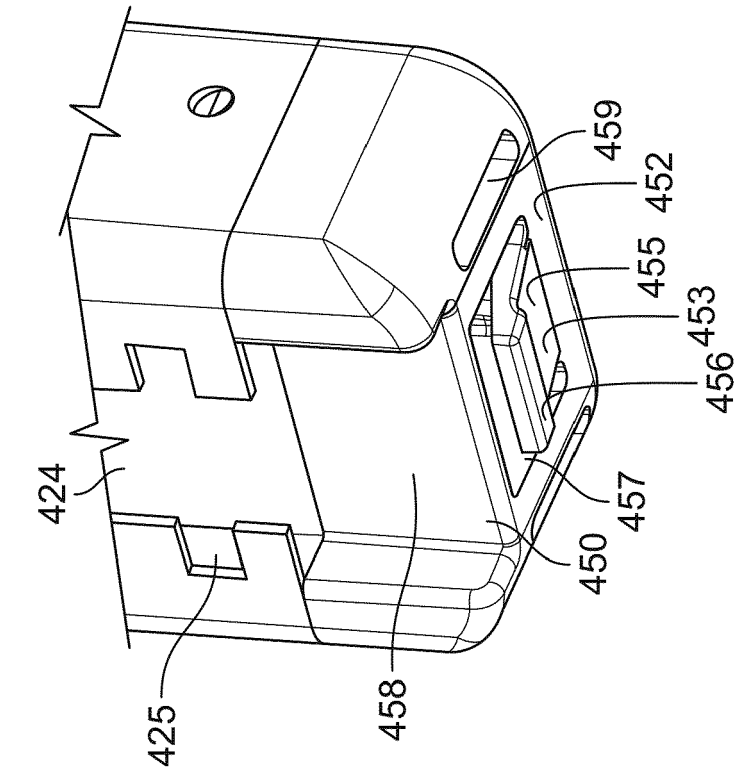


FIG. 59

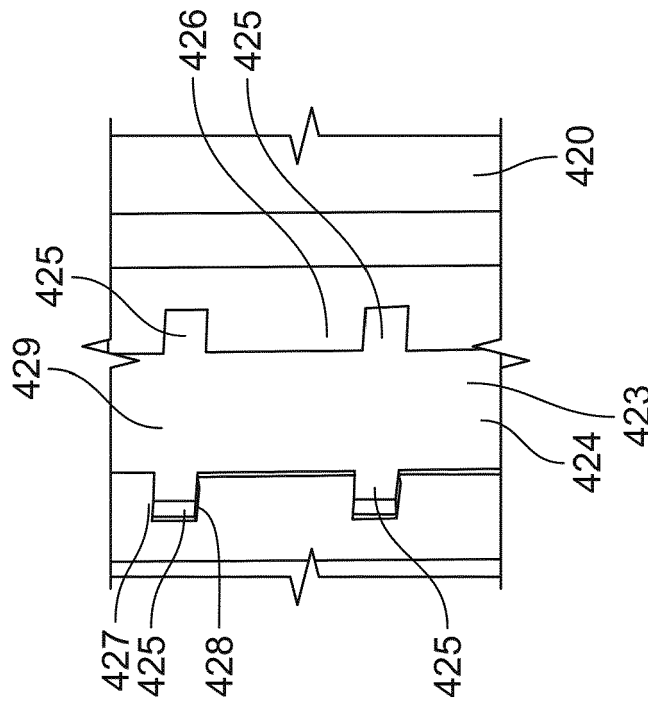


FIG. 60

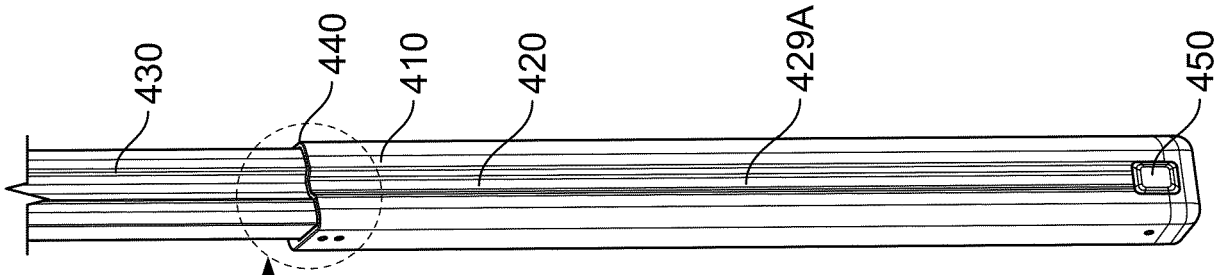


FIG. 63

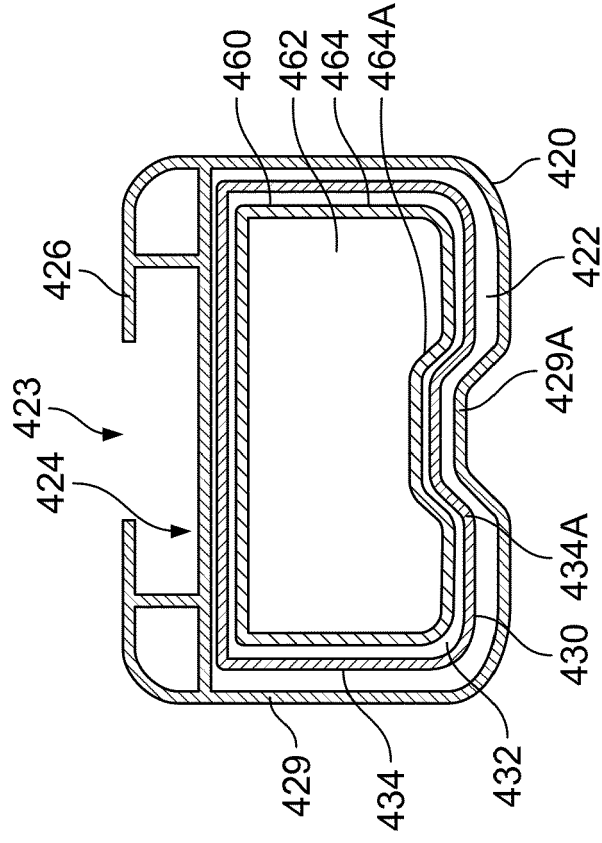


FIG. 61

FIG. 62

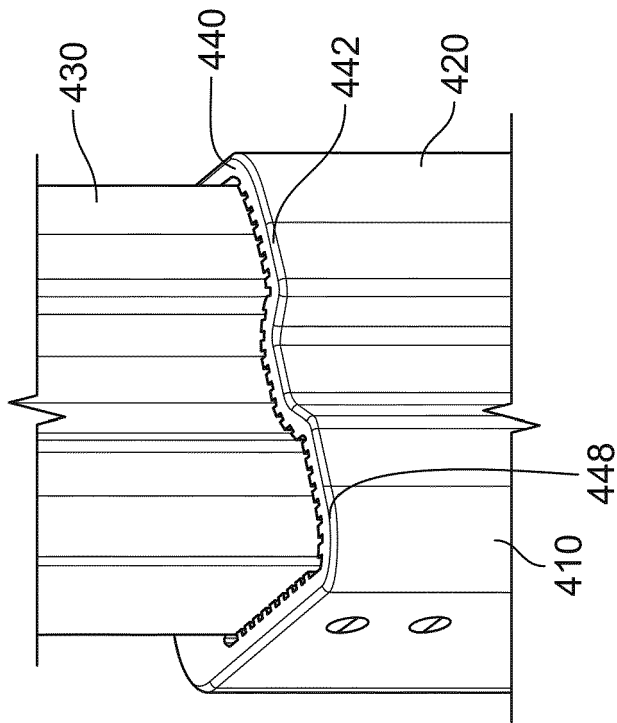


FIG. 63

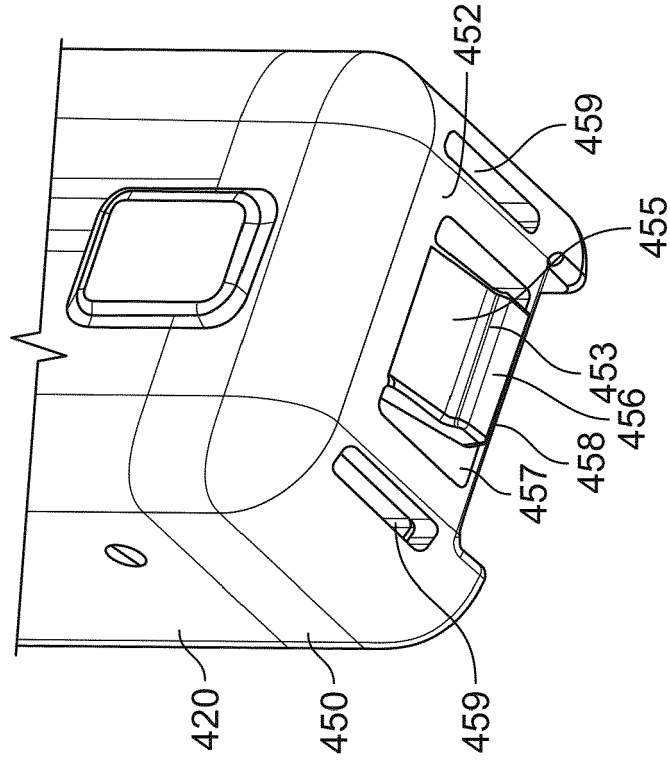


FIG. 64

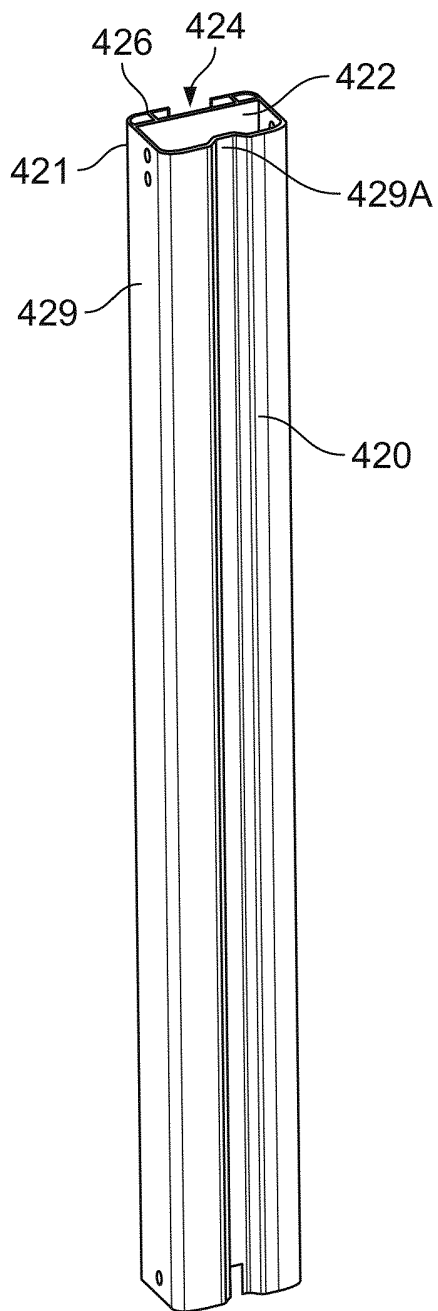


FIG. 65

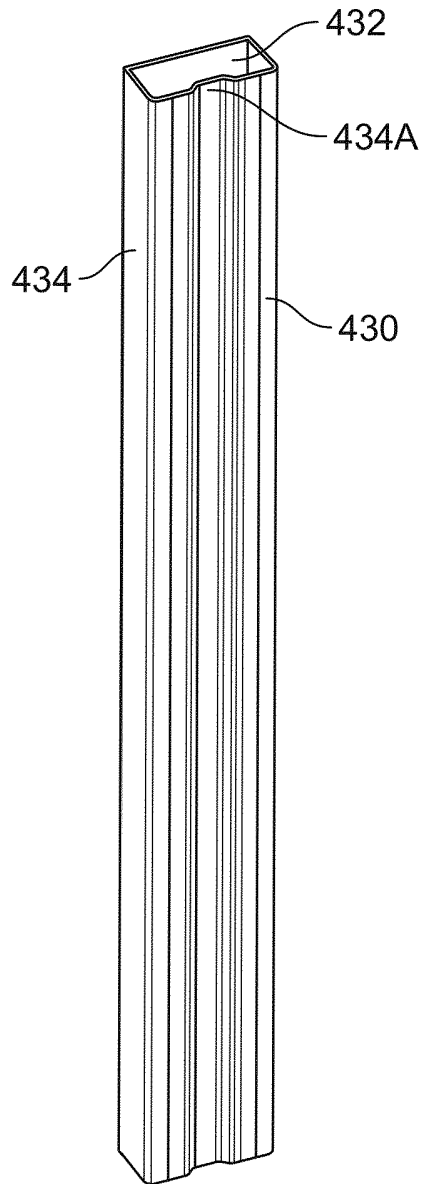


FIG. 66

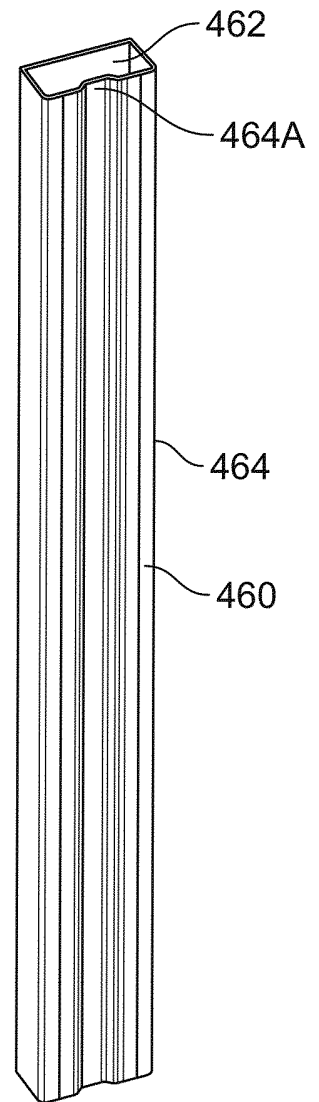


FIG. 67

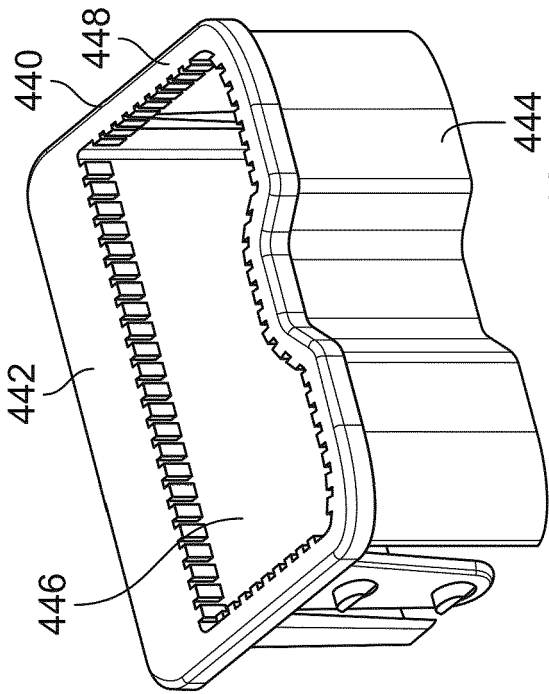


FIG. 68

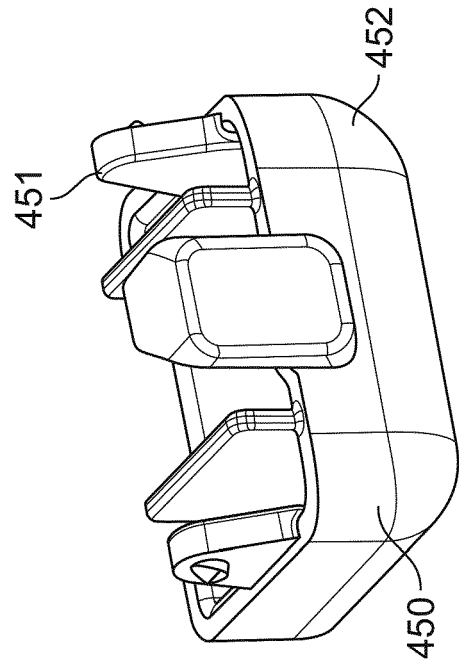


FIG. 69

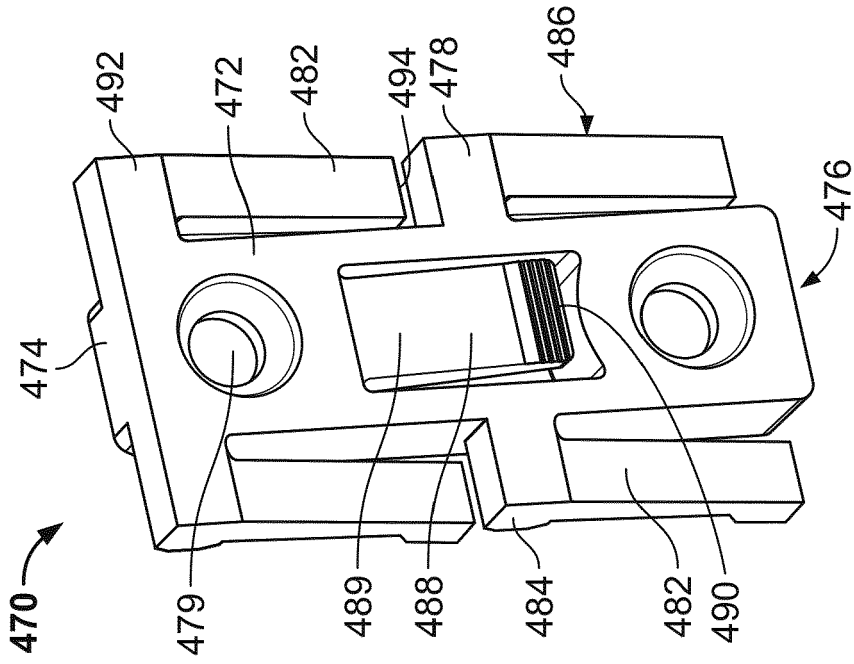


FIG. 70

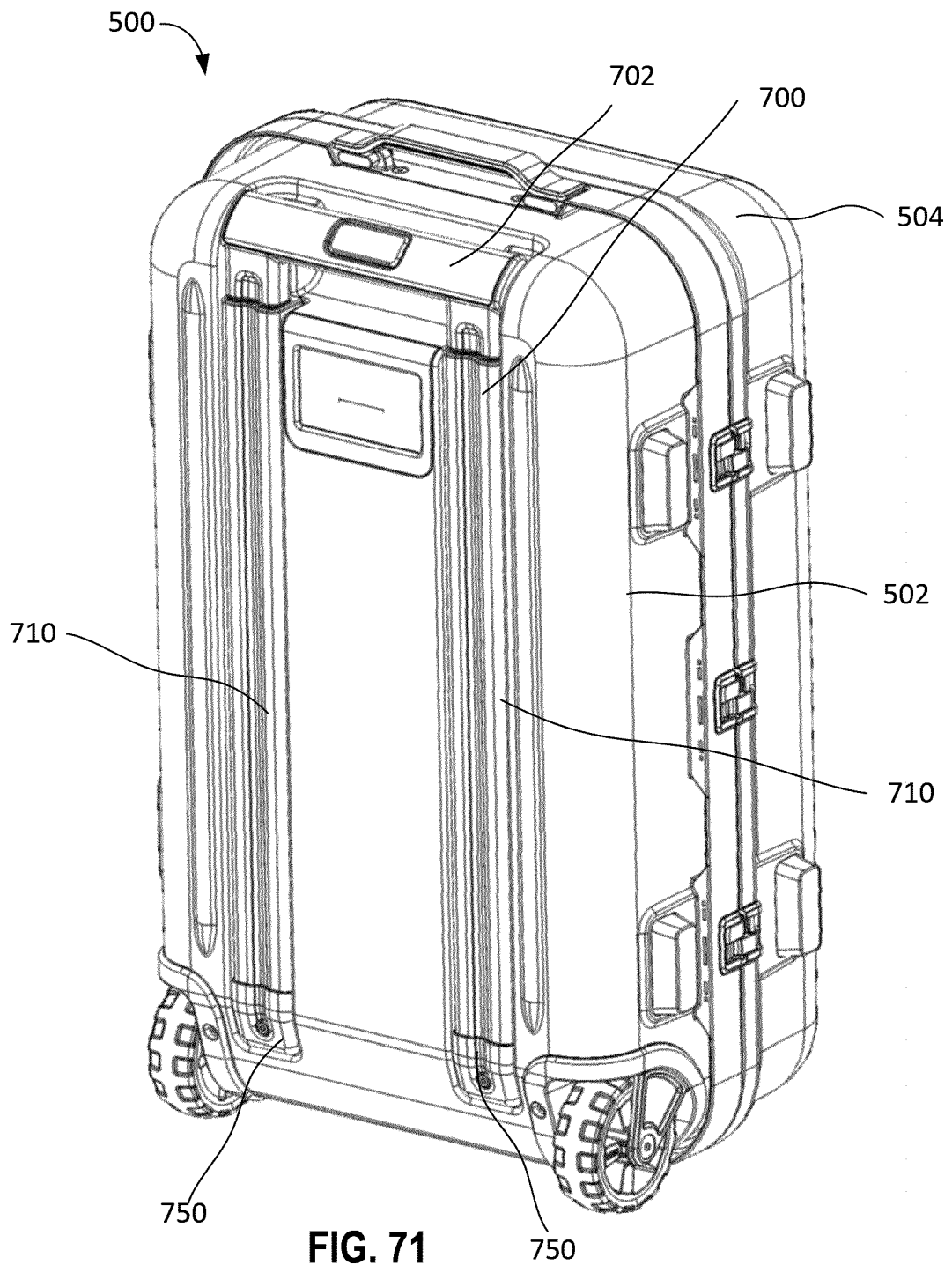


FIG. 71

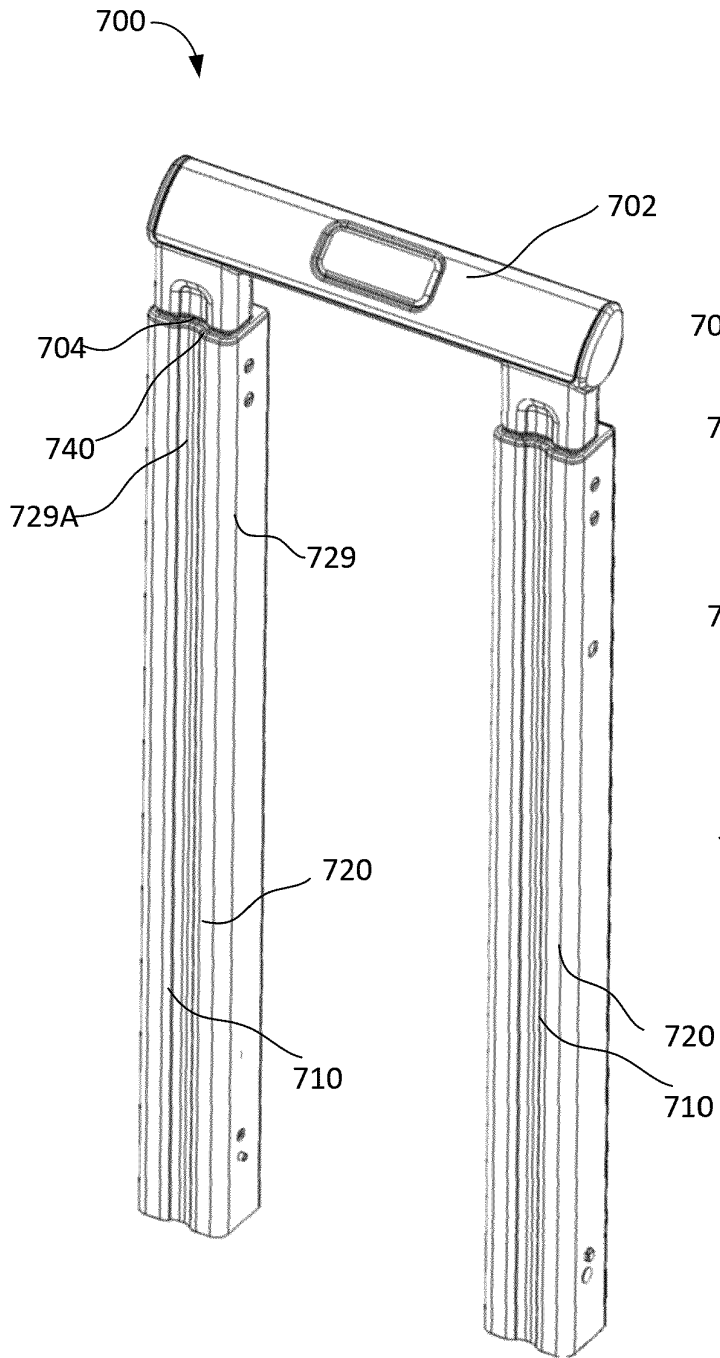


FIG. 72A

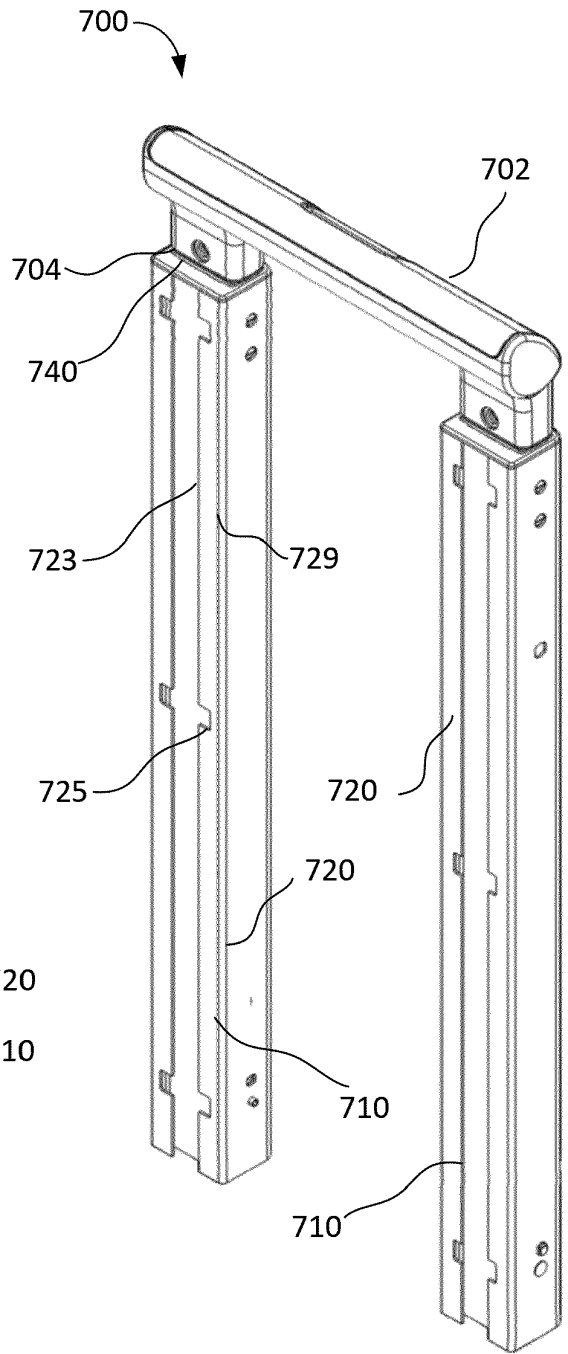


FIG. 73

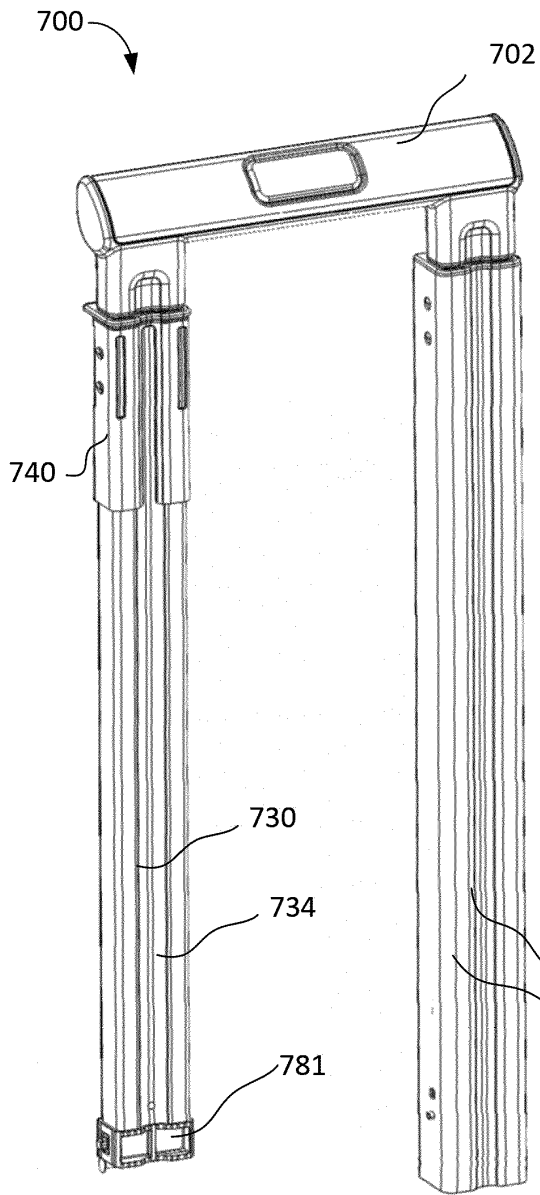


FIG. 74

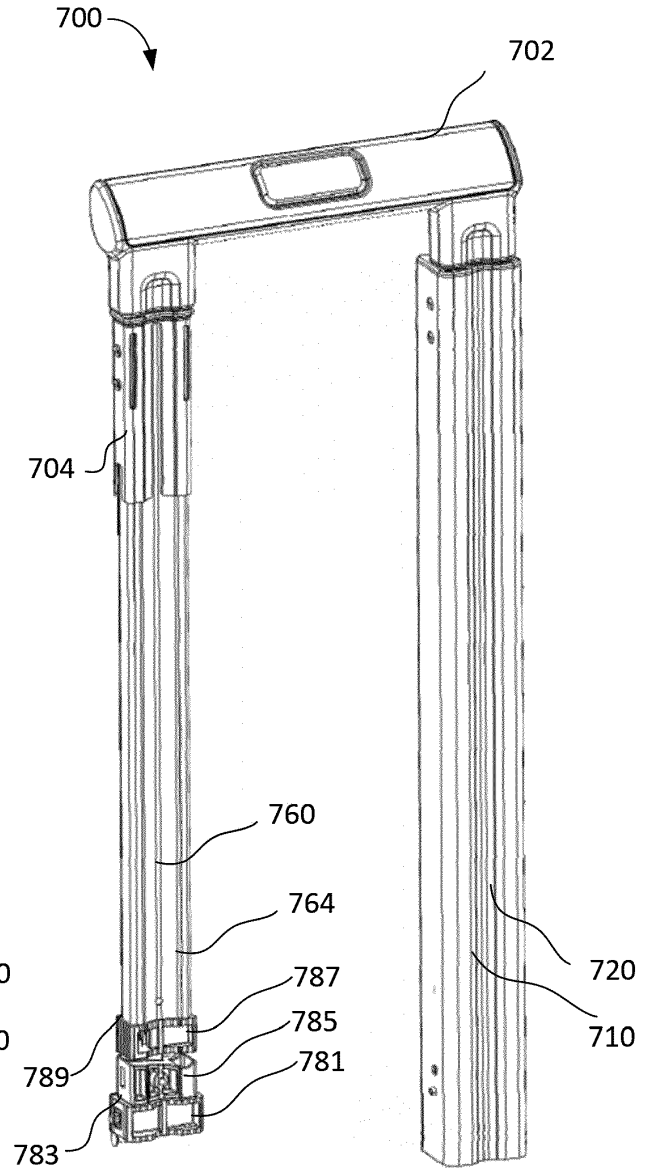


FIG. 75

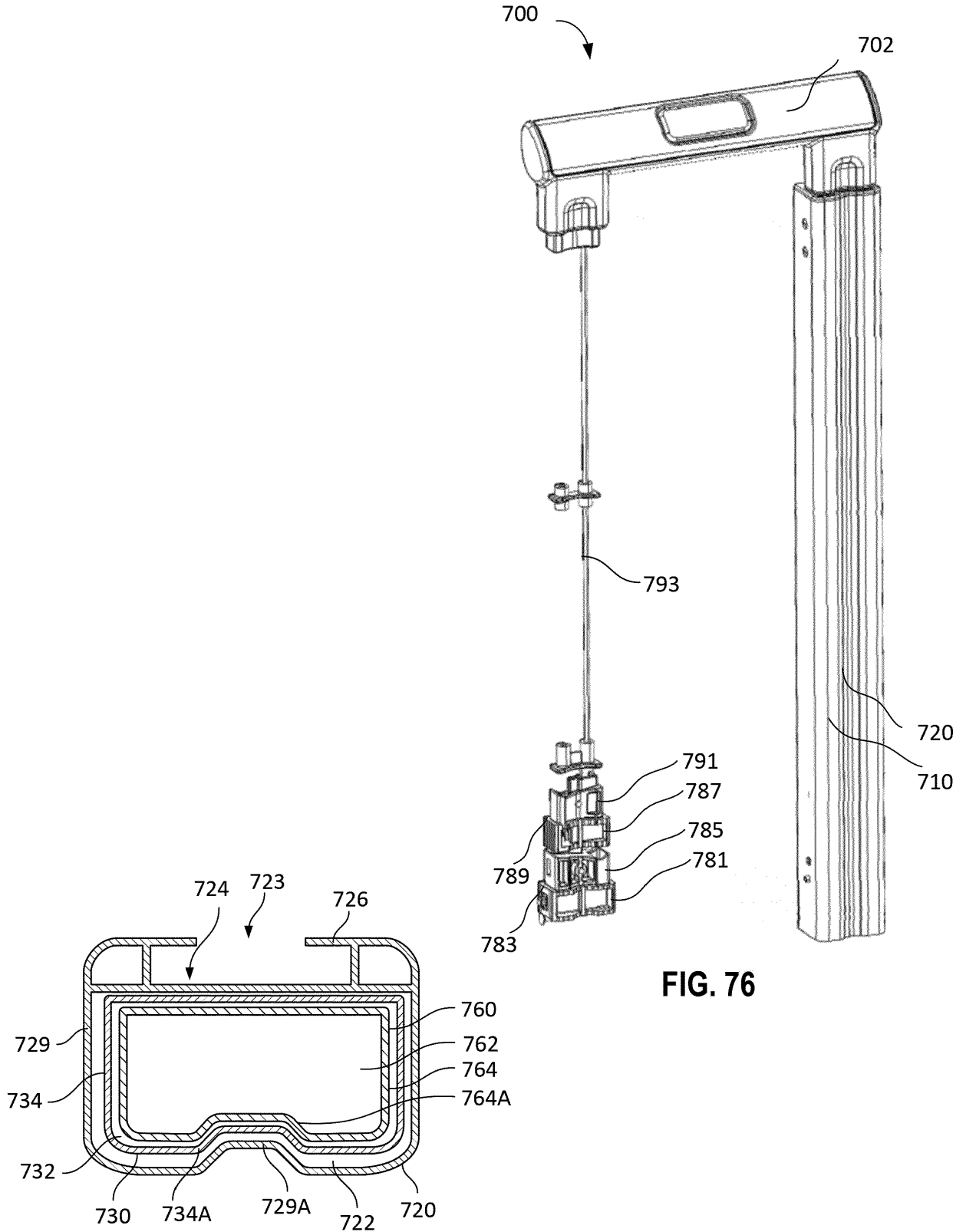


FIG. 72B

FIG. 76

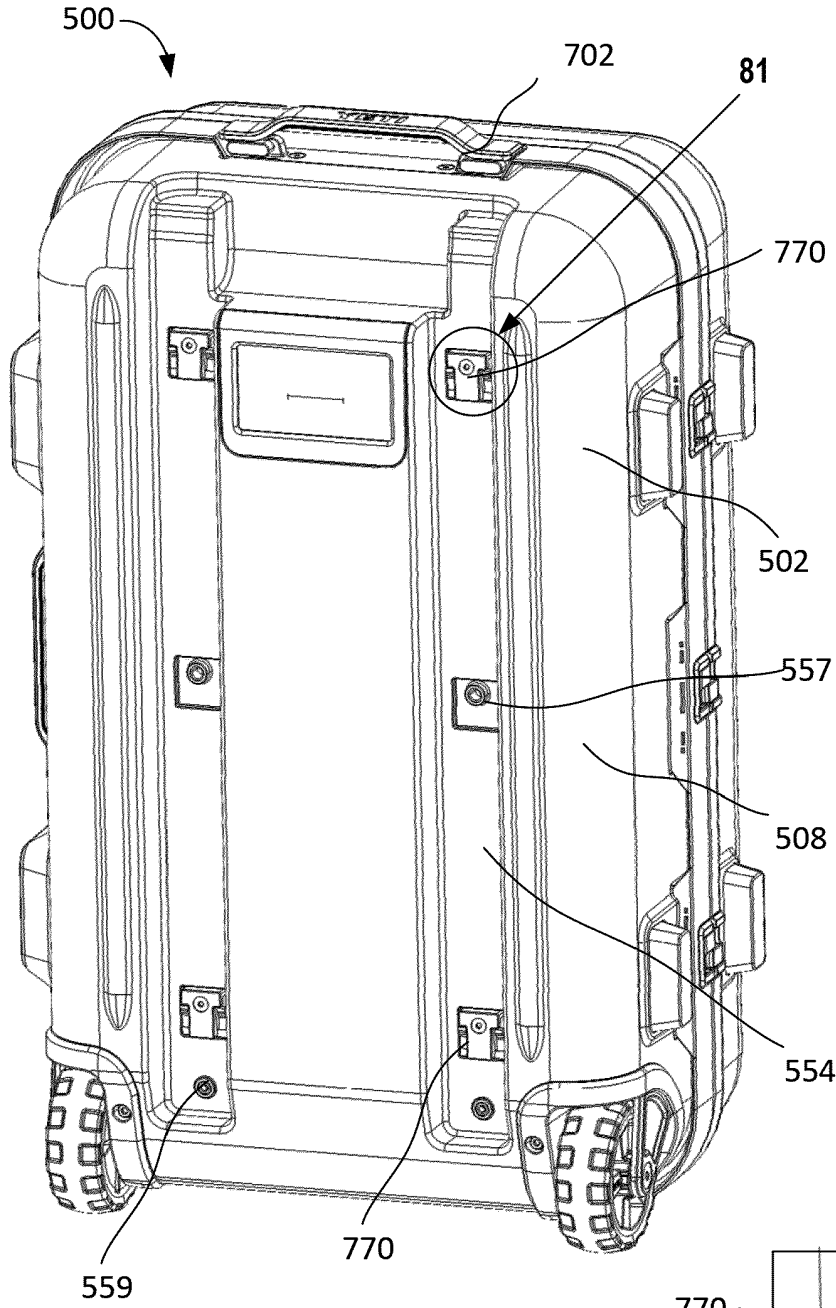


FIG. 77

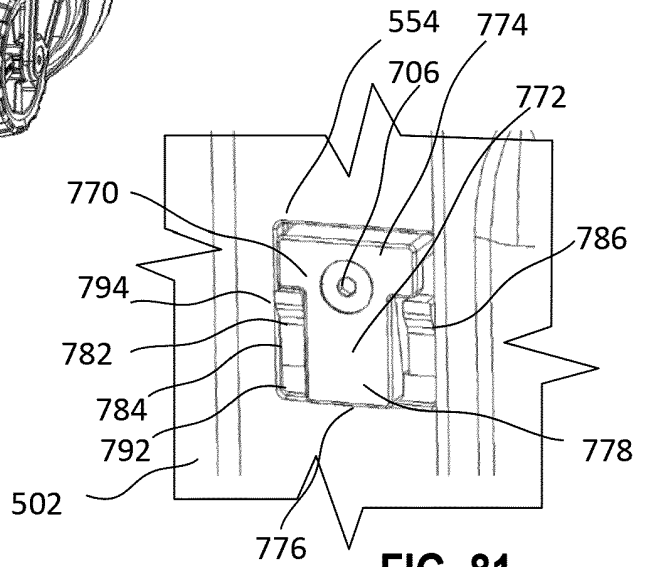


FIG. 81

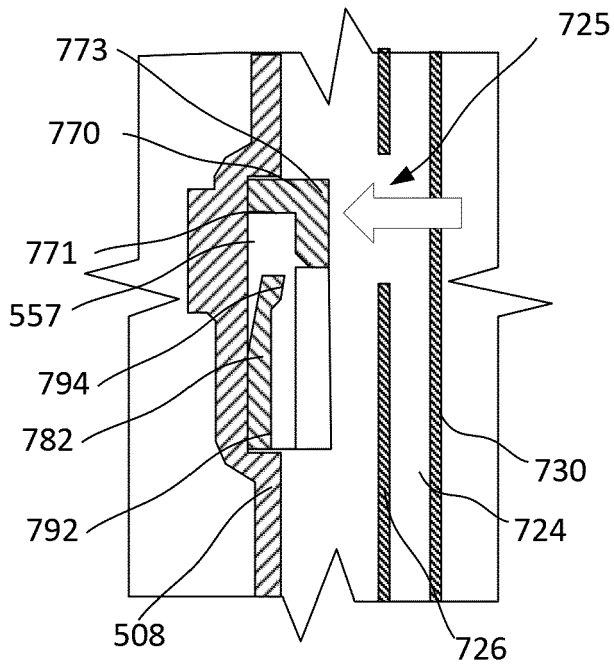


FIG. 78

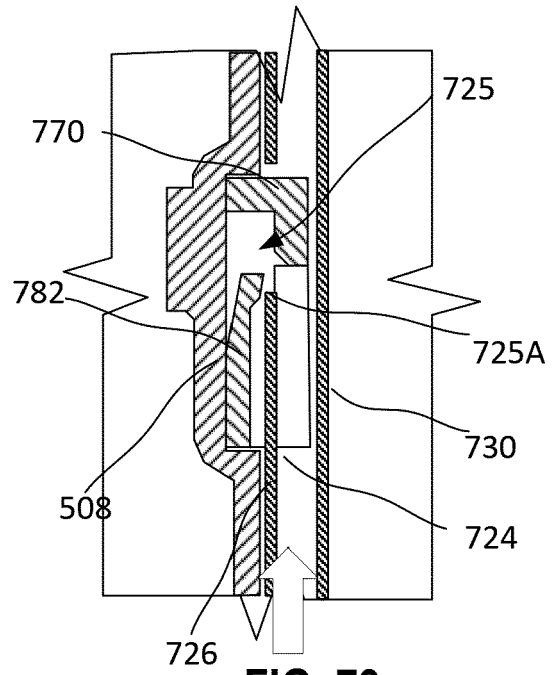


FIG. 79

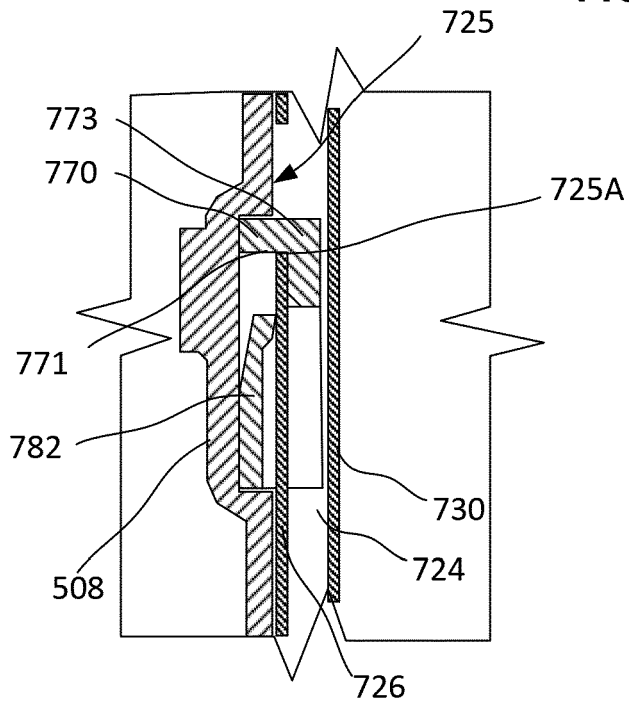


FIG. 80

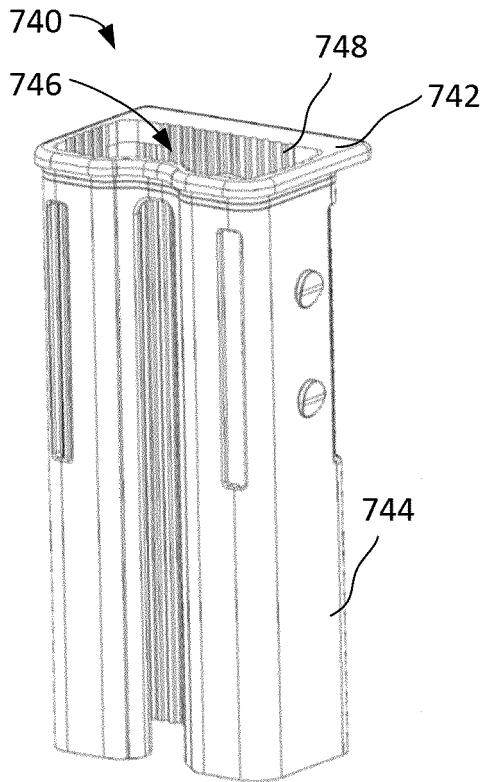


FIG. 82

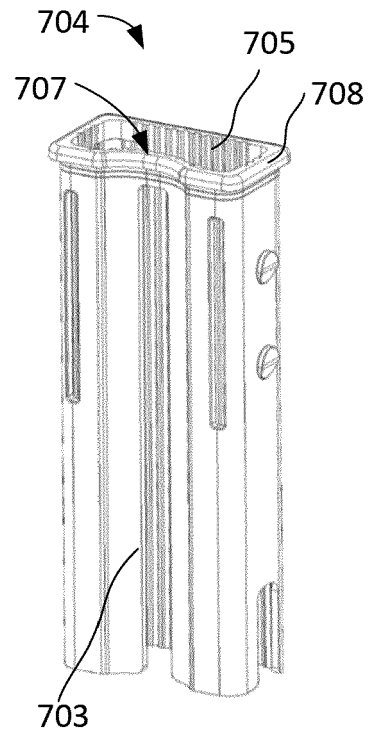


FIG. 83

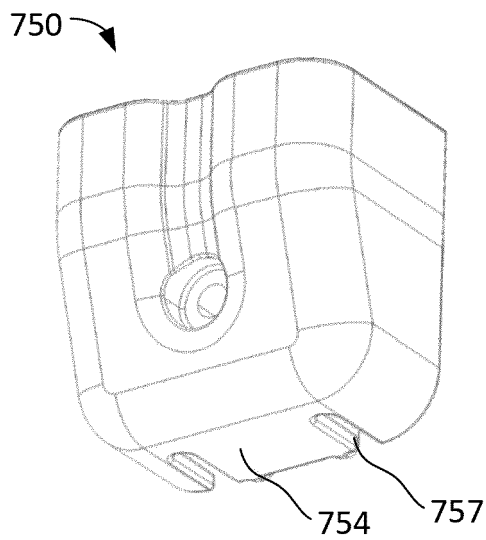


FIG. 84

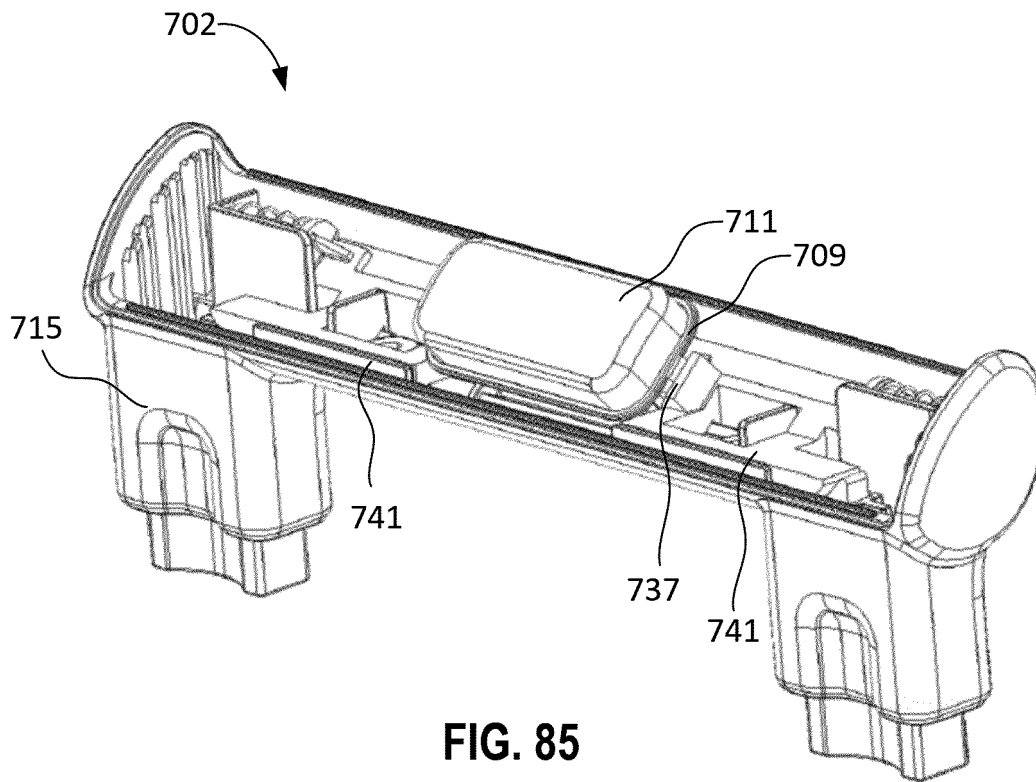


FIG. 85

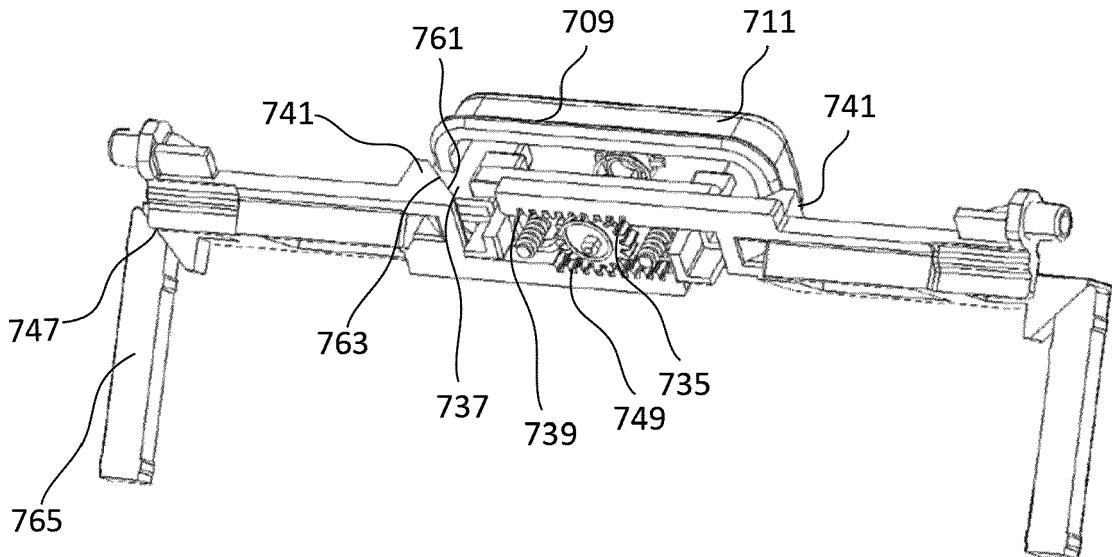


FIG. 86

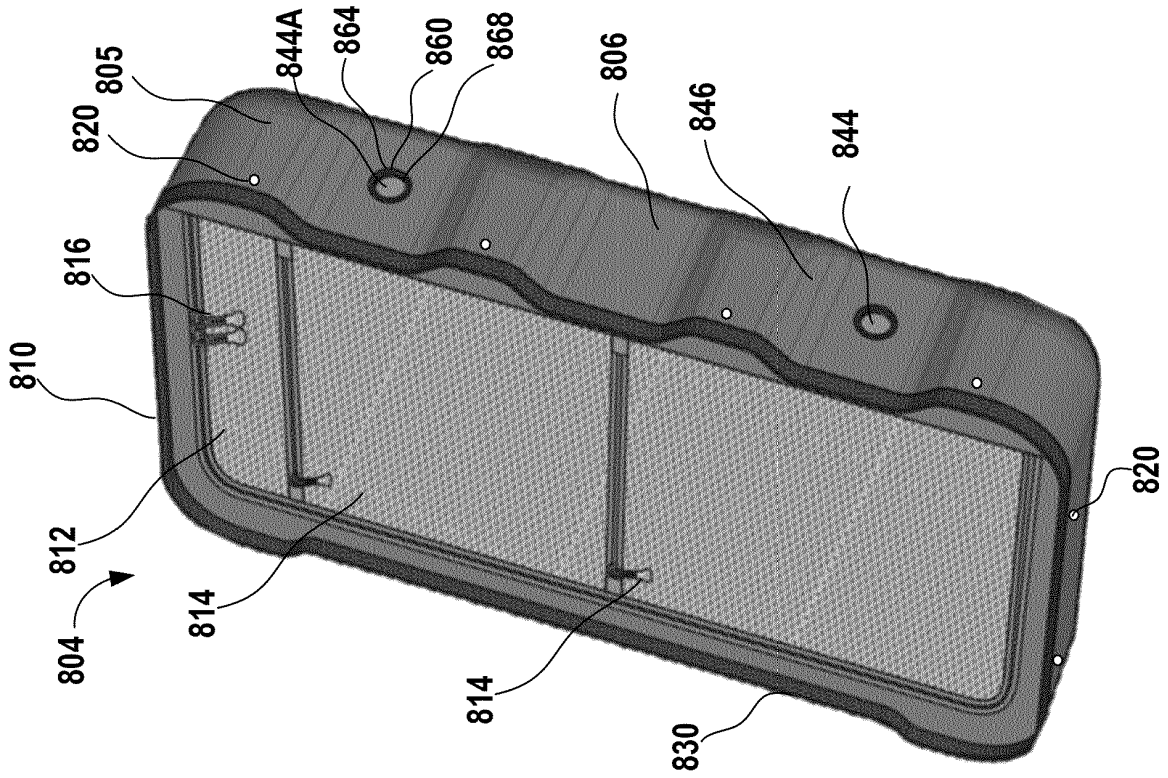


FIG. 88

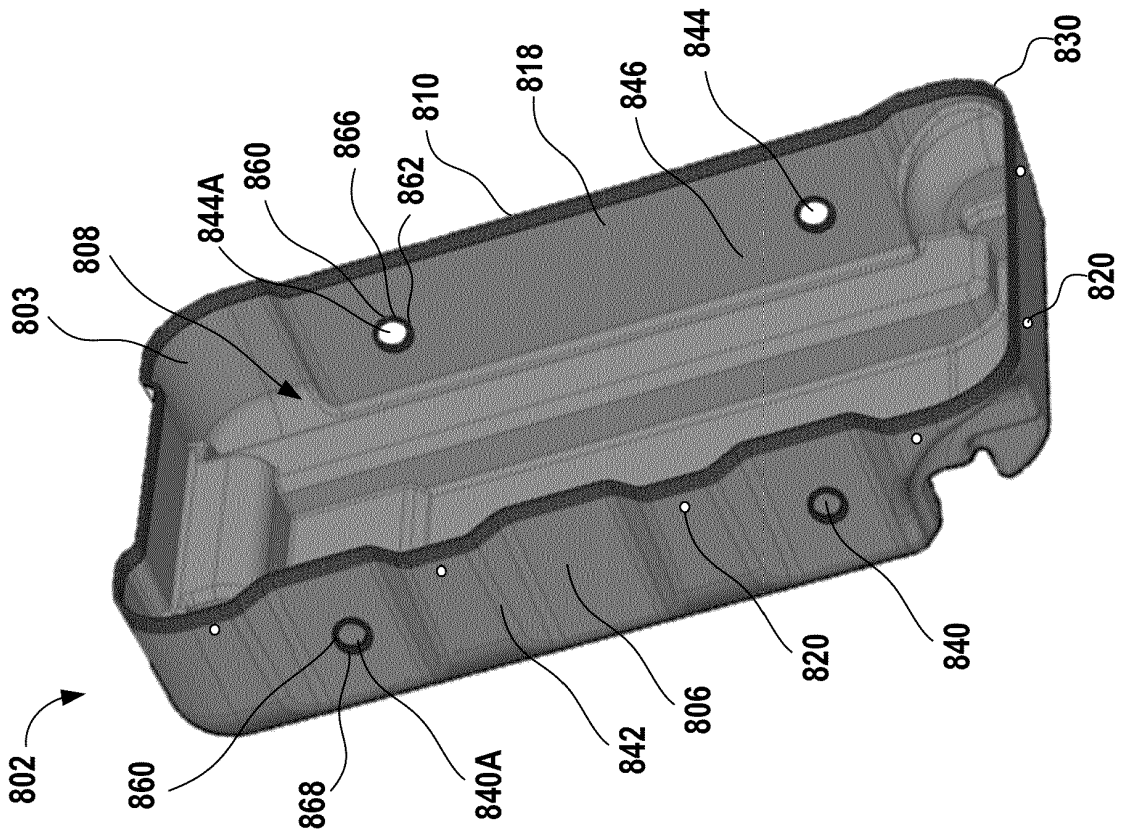


FIG. 87

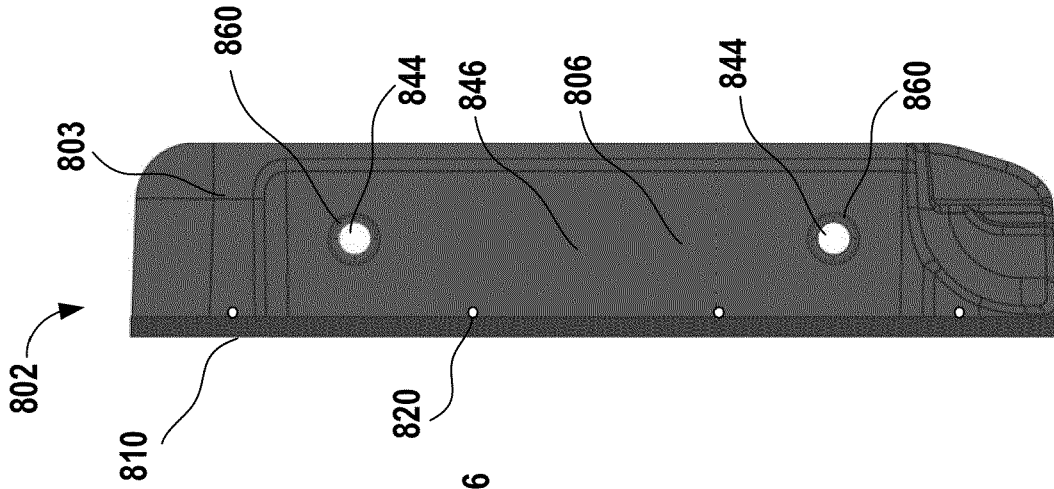


FIG. 89

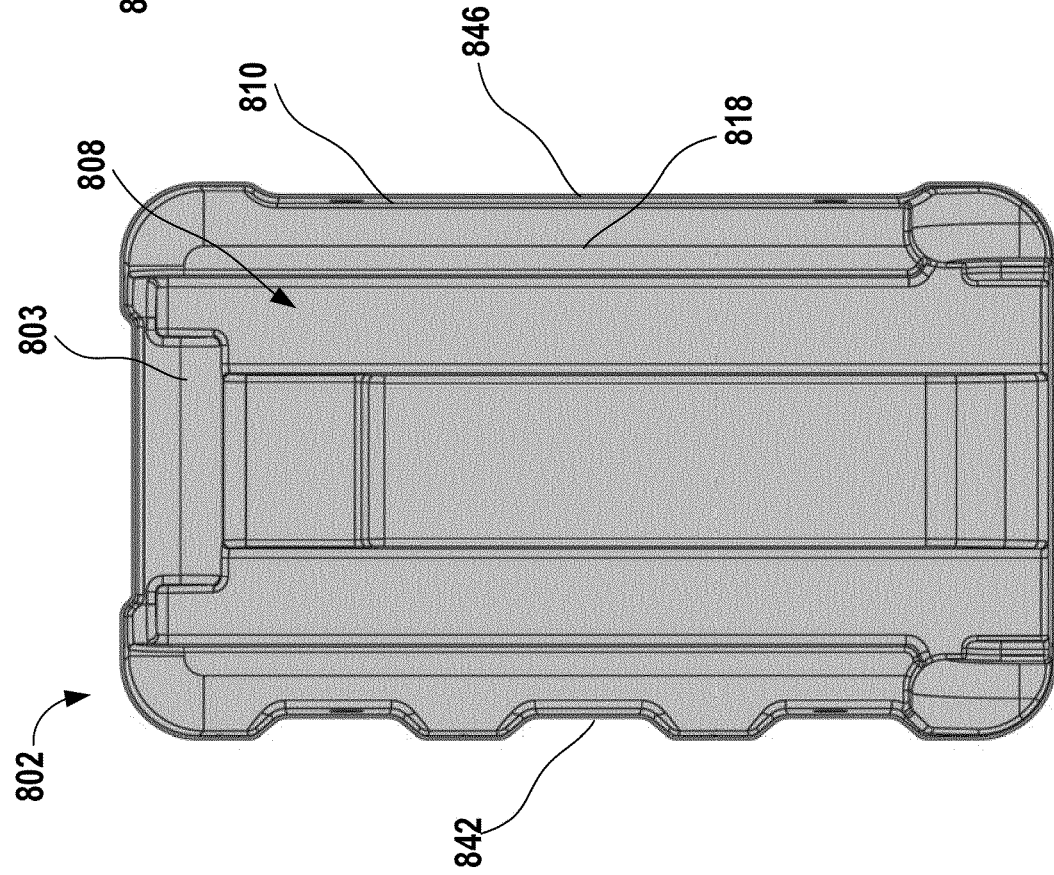


FIG. 90

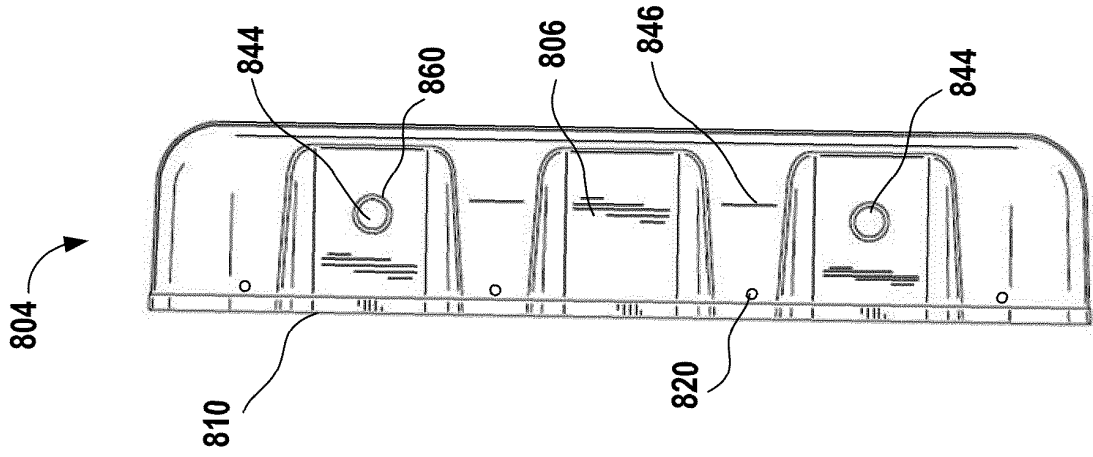


FIG. 93

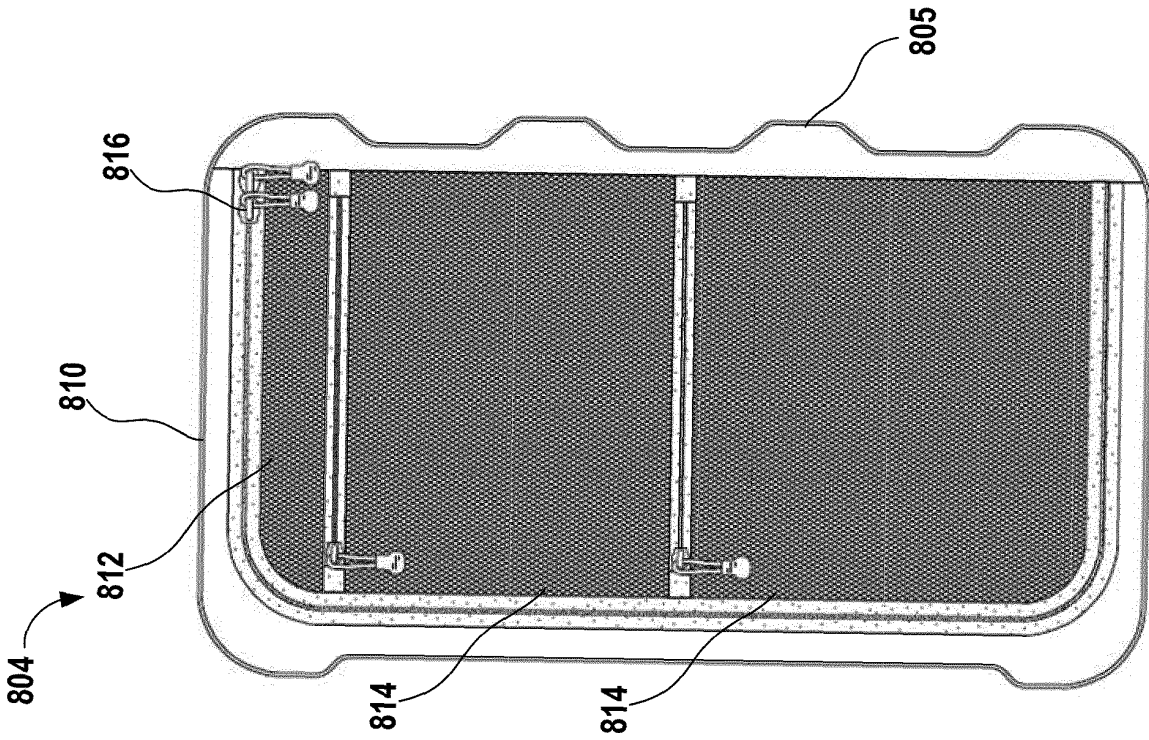


FIG. 91

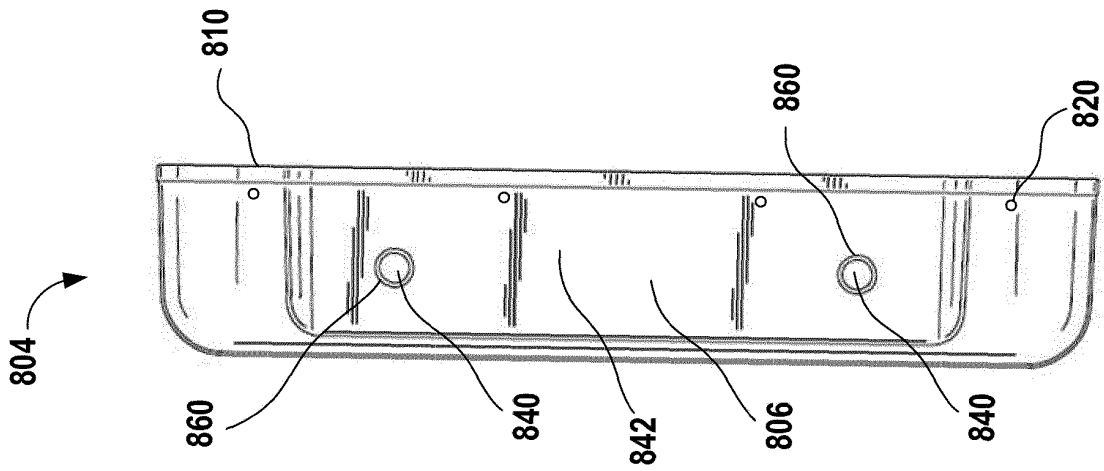


FIG. 92

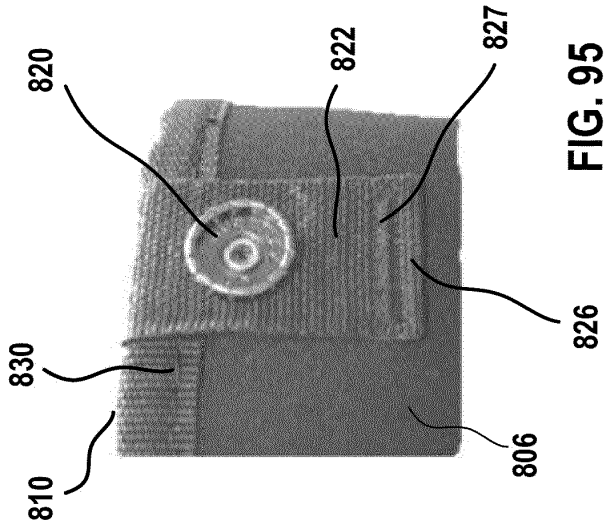


FIG. 95

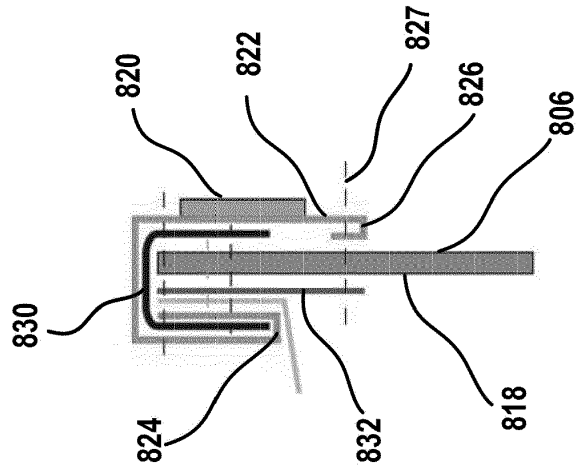


FIG. 96

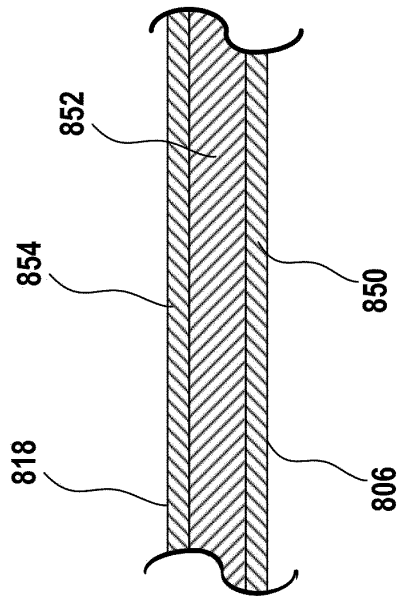


FIG. 94

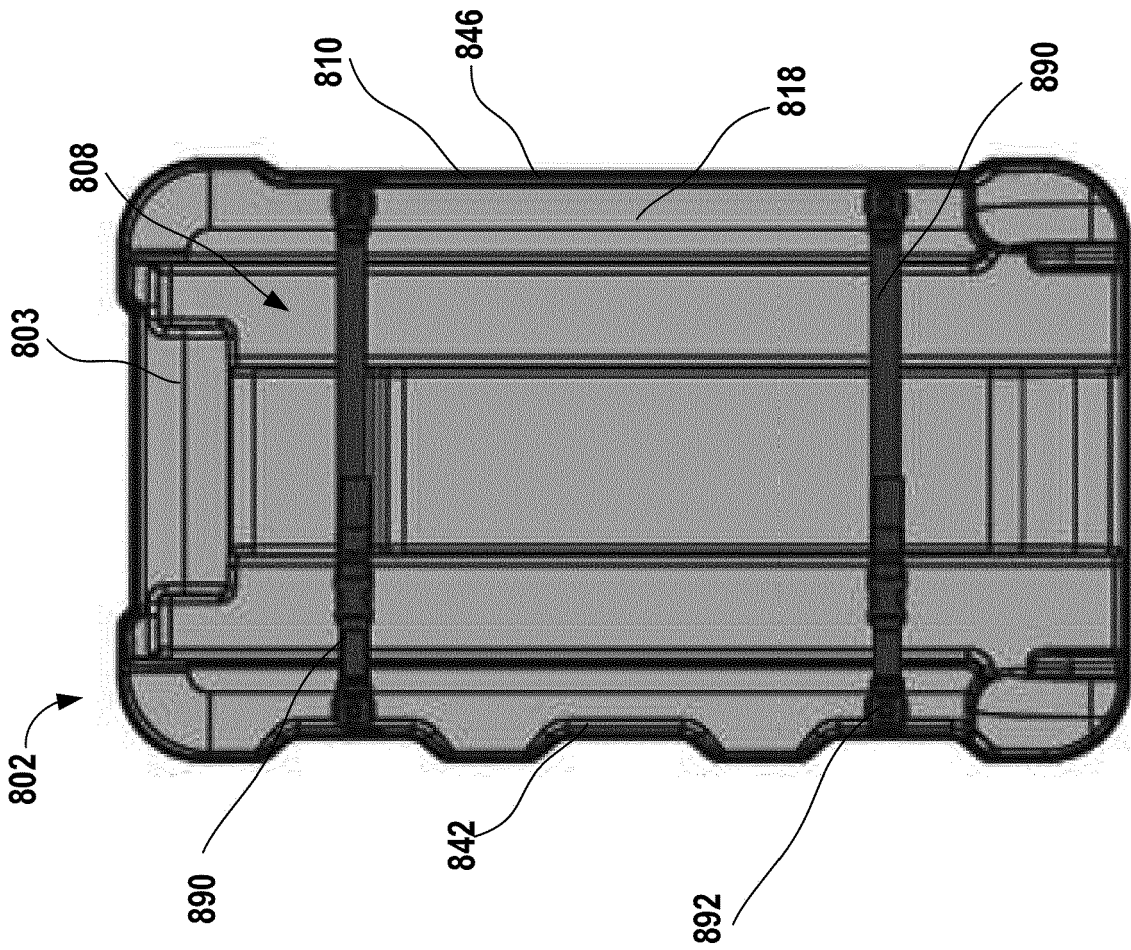


FIG. 97

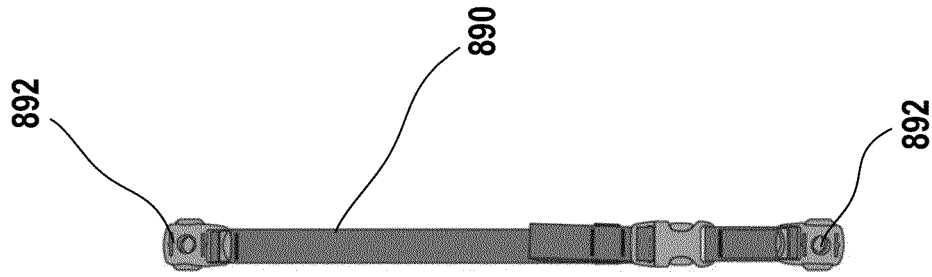


FIG. 98

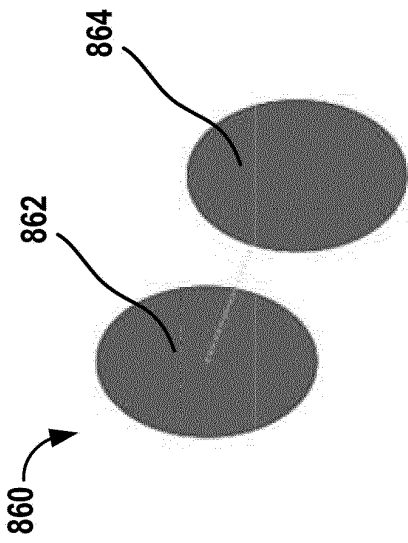


FIG. 99A

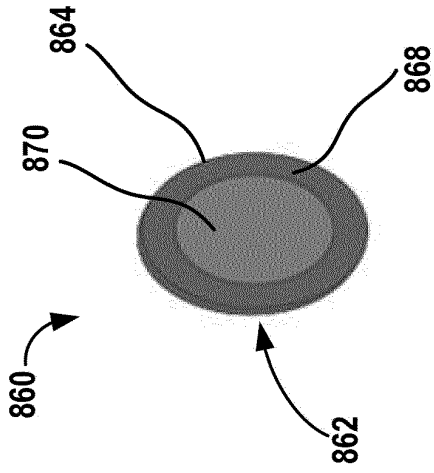


FIG. 99B

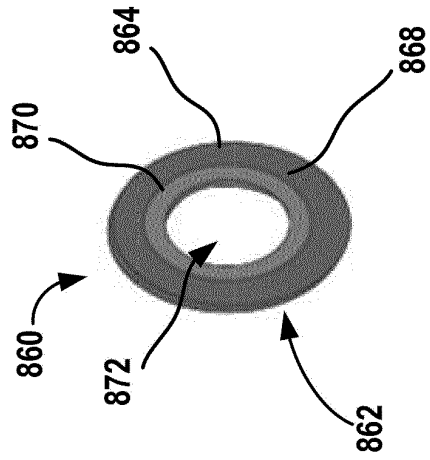


FIG. 99C

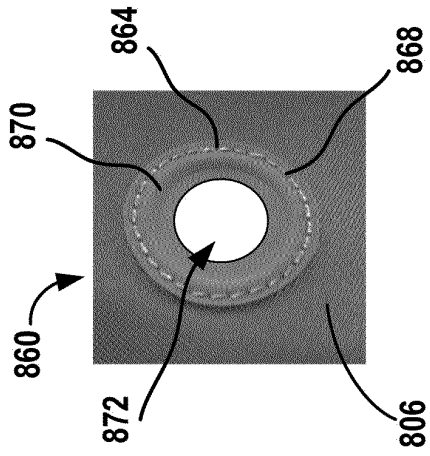


FIG. 99D

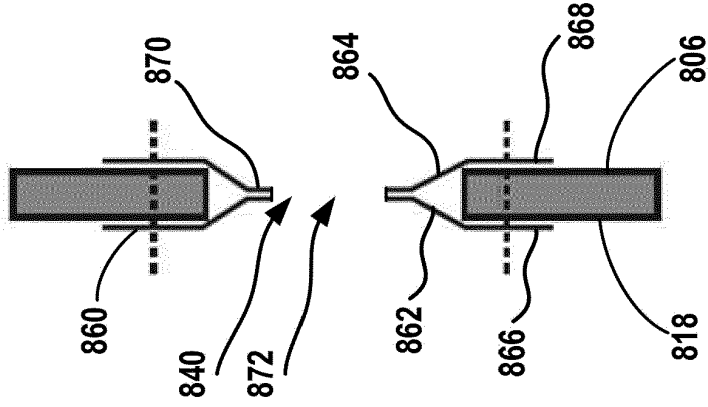


FIG. 99E

880

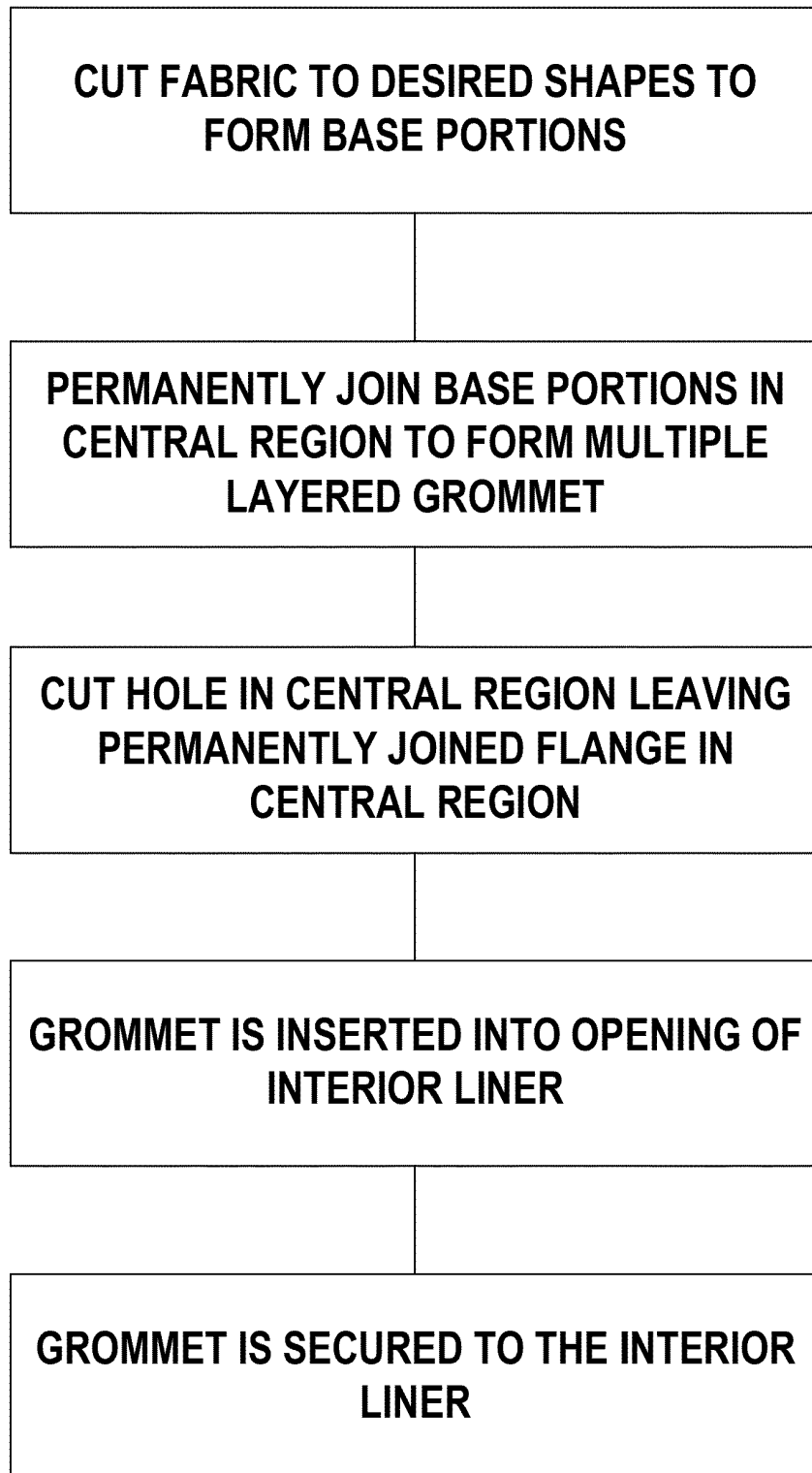
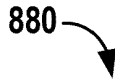


FIG. 100

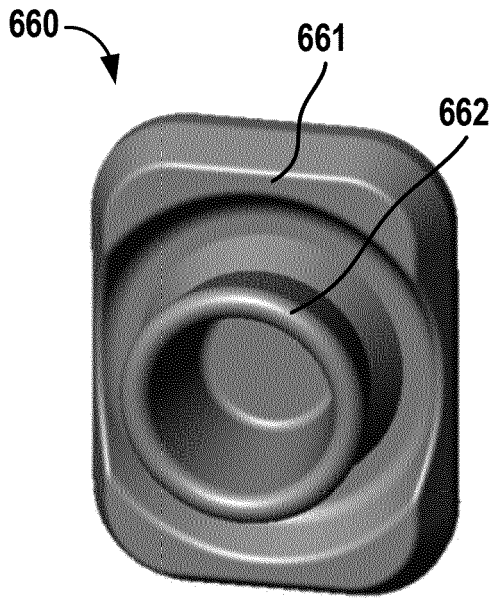


FIG. 101A

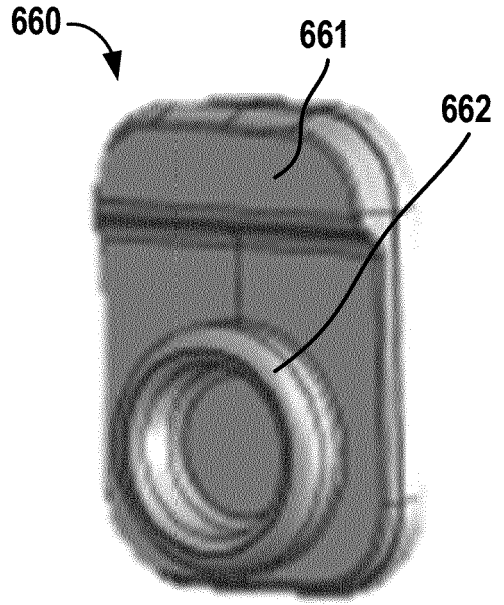


FIG. 101B

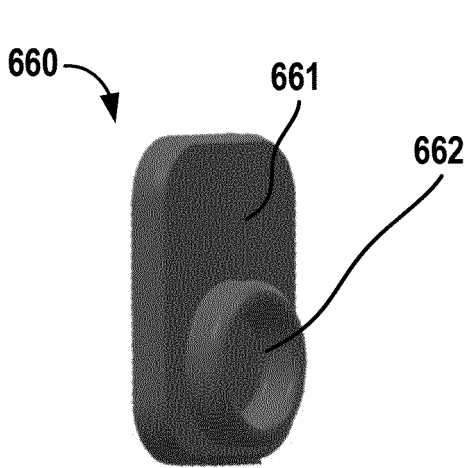


FIG. 101C

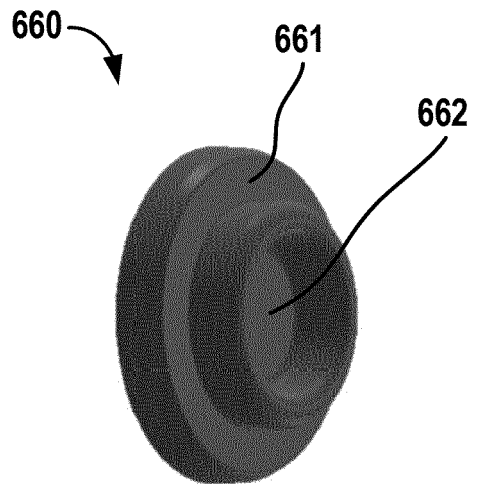


FIG. 101D

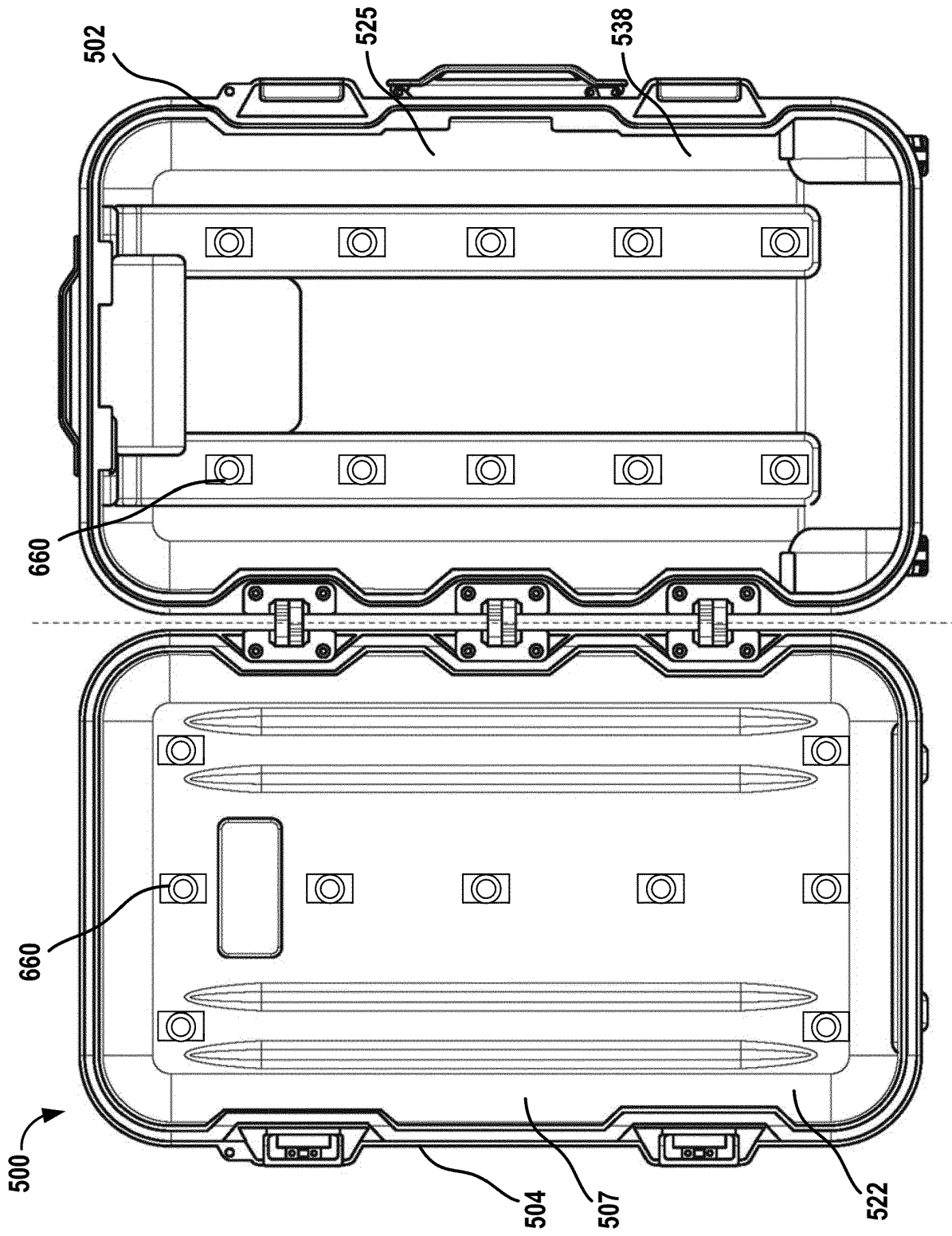


FIG. 102

REFERENCES CITED IN THE DESCRIPTION

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Patent documents cited in the description

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