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(54) **CHIP RACKS INCLUDING A RACK FOR HOLDING CHIPS AND A CARD READER AND RELATED DEVICES**

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Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation of application No. 16/140,754, filed on Sep. 25, 2018, now Pat. No. 10,532,274, which is a continuation of application No. 29/569,103, filed on Jun. 23, 2016, now Pat. No. Des. 839,965, which is a continuation-in-part of application No. 14/047,841, filed on Oct. 7, 2013, now Pat. No. 9,839,837, which is a continuation of application No. 13/452,255, filed

on Apr. 20, 2012, now Pat. No. 8,567,784, which is a continuation-in-part of application No. 29/399,334, filed on Aug. 12, 2011, now Pat. No. Des. 692,068, which is a continuation-in-part of application No. 29/399,004, filed on Aug. 8, 2011, now Pat. No. Des. 692,067, which is a continuation-in-part of application No. 29/399,000, filed on Aug. 8, 2011, now Pat. No. Des. 692,066.

Publication Classification

(51) **Int. Cl.**

A63F 9/00 (2006.01)
G07F 17/32 (2006.01)
A63F 1/18 (2006.01)
A63F 1/06 (2006.01)
A63F 11/00 (2006.01)

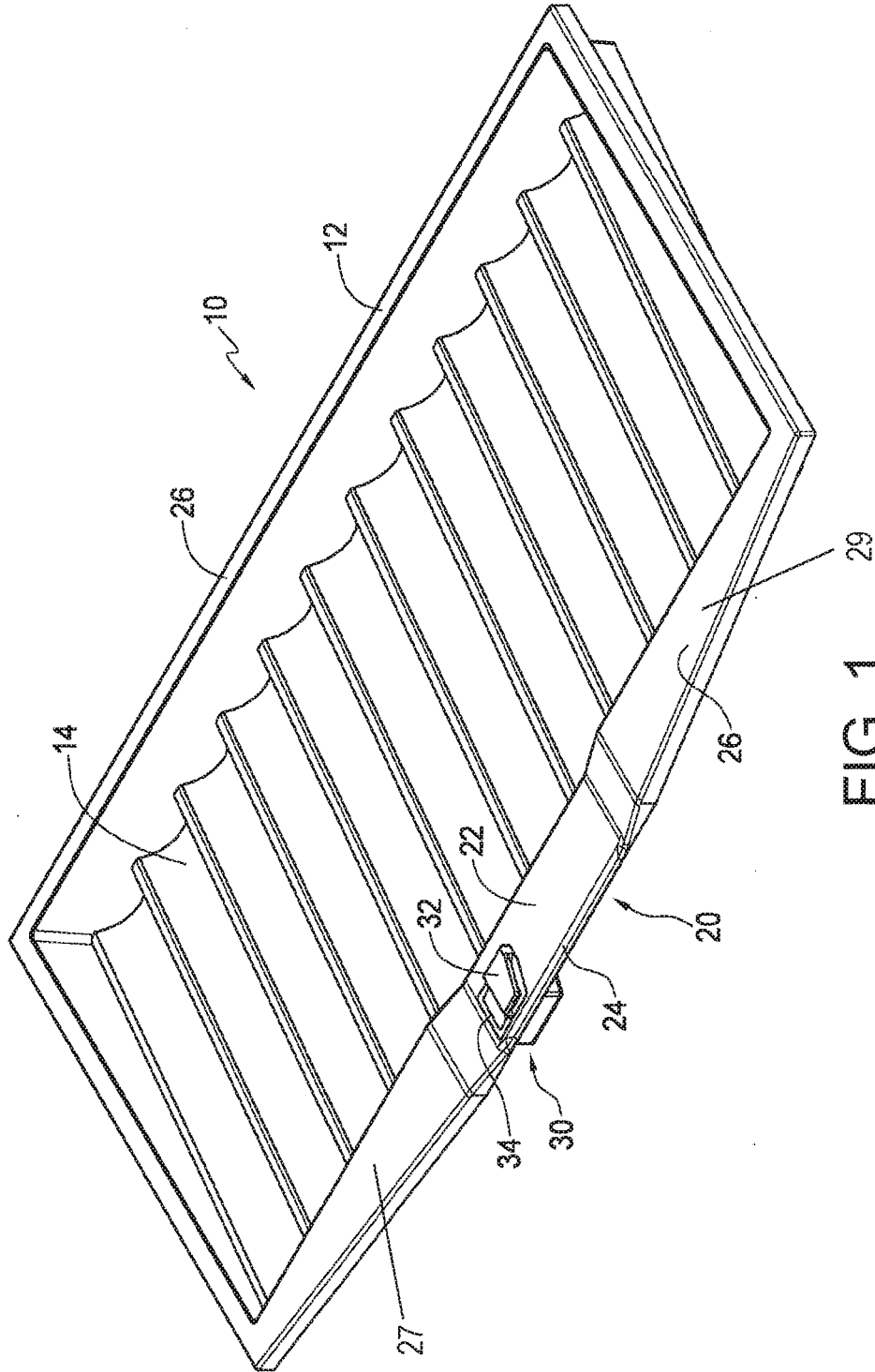
(52) **U.S. Cl.**

CPC **A63F 9/00** (2013.01); **G07F 17/32** (2013.01); **A63F 2009/2425** (2013.01); **A63F 1/06** (2013.01); **A63F 11/0002** (2013.01); **A63F 1/18** (2013.01)

(57)

ABSTRACT

Chip racks include a rack for holding chips and a card reader. Gaming devices may include such chip racks.



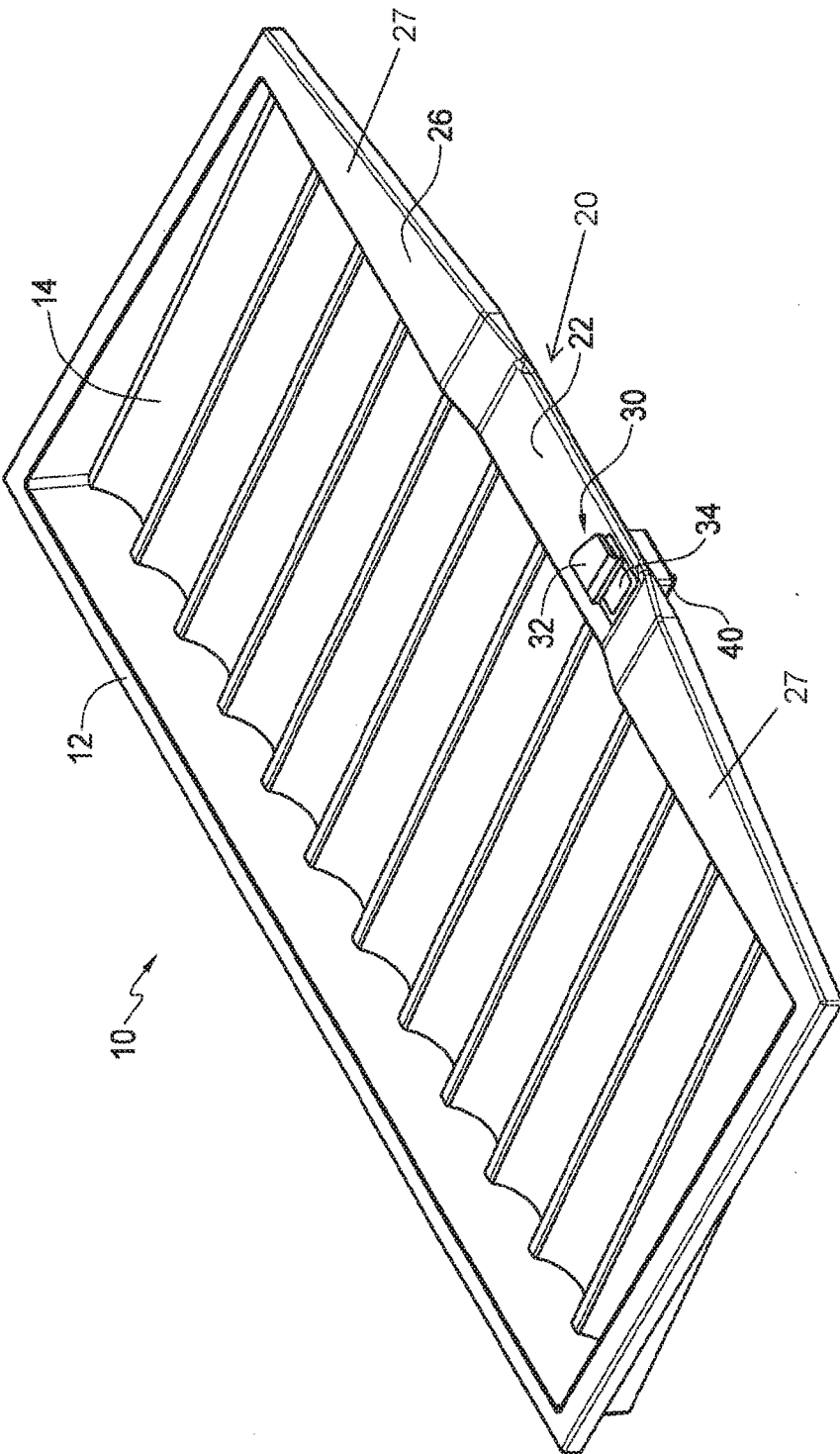


FIG. 2

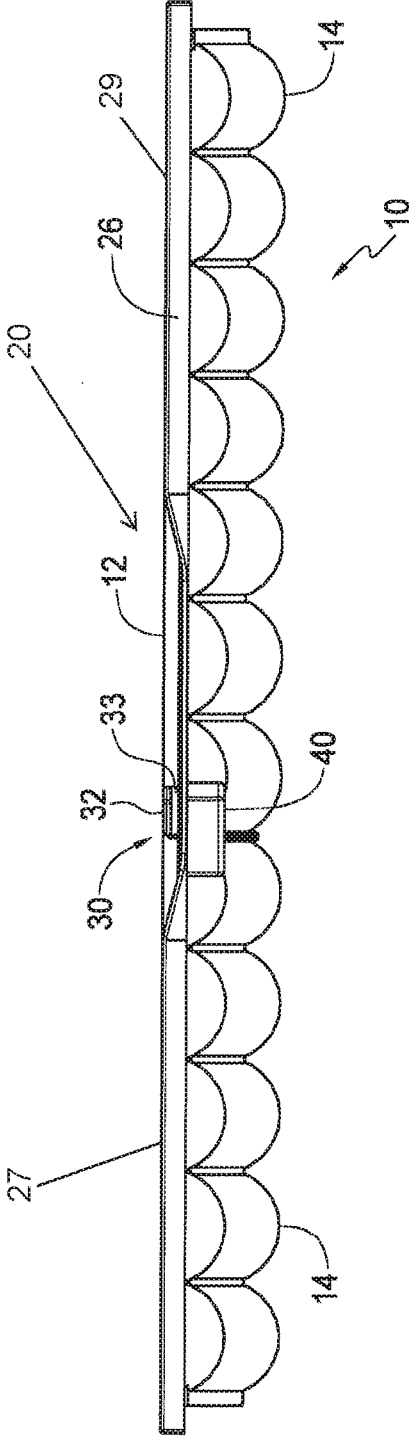


FIG. 3

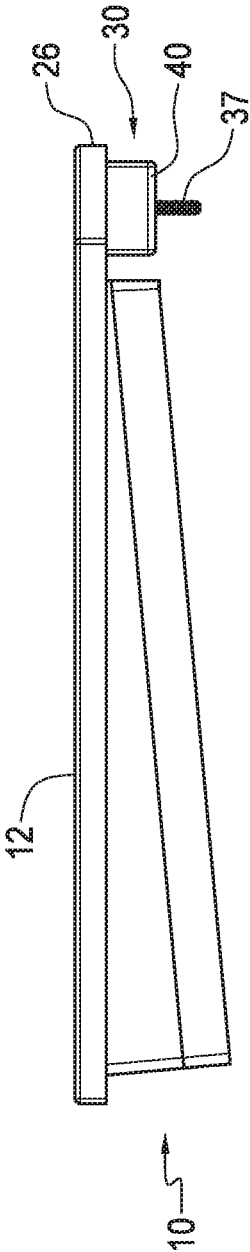


FIG. 4

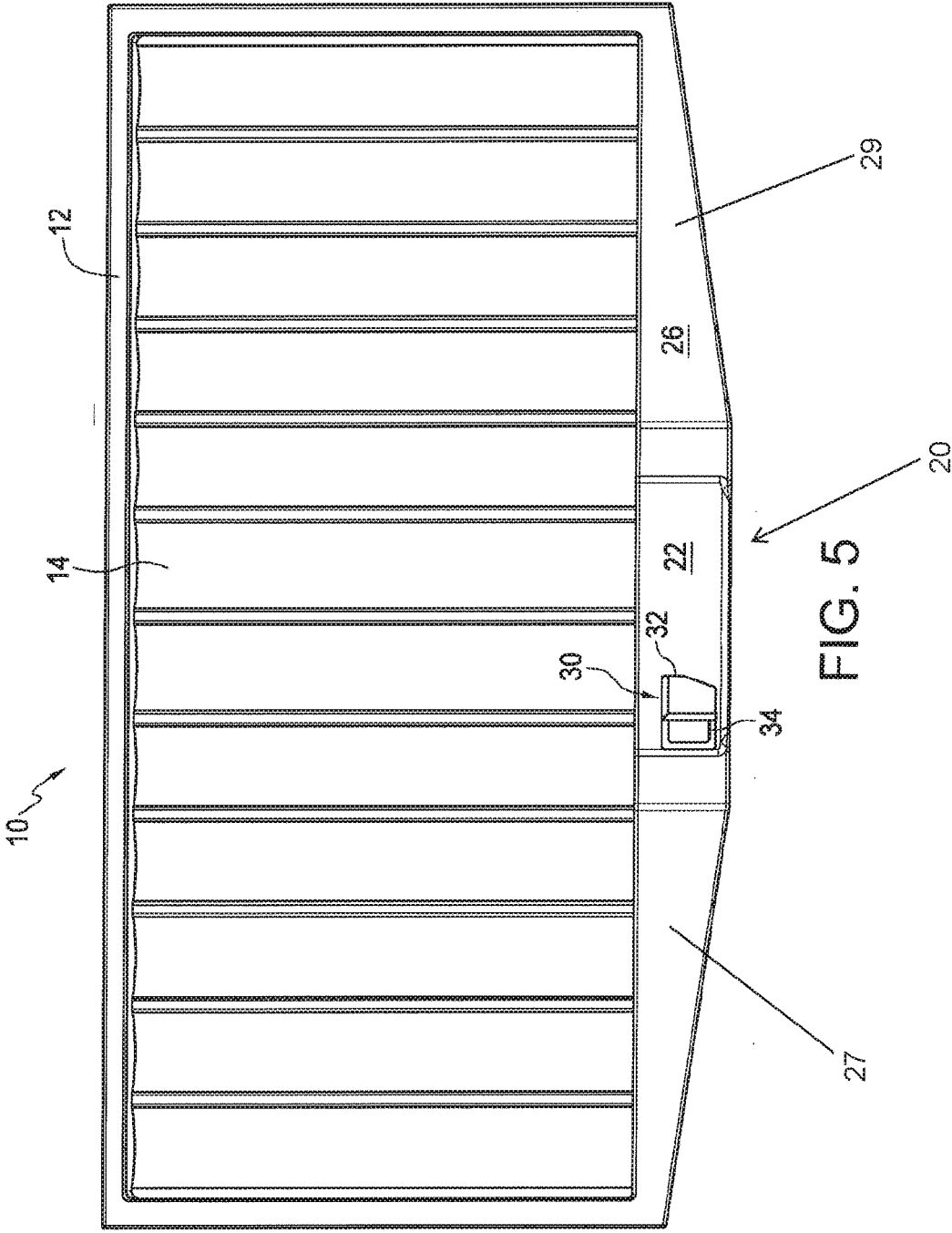


FIG. 5

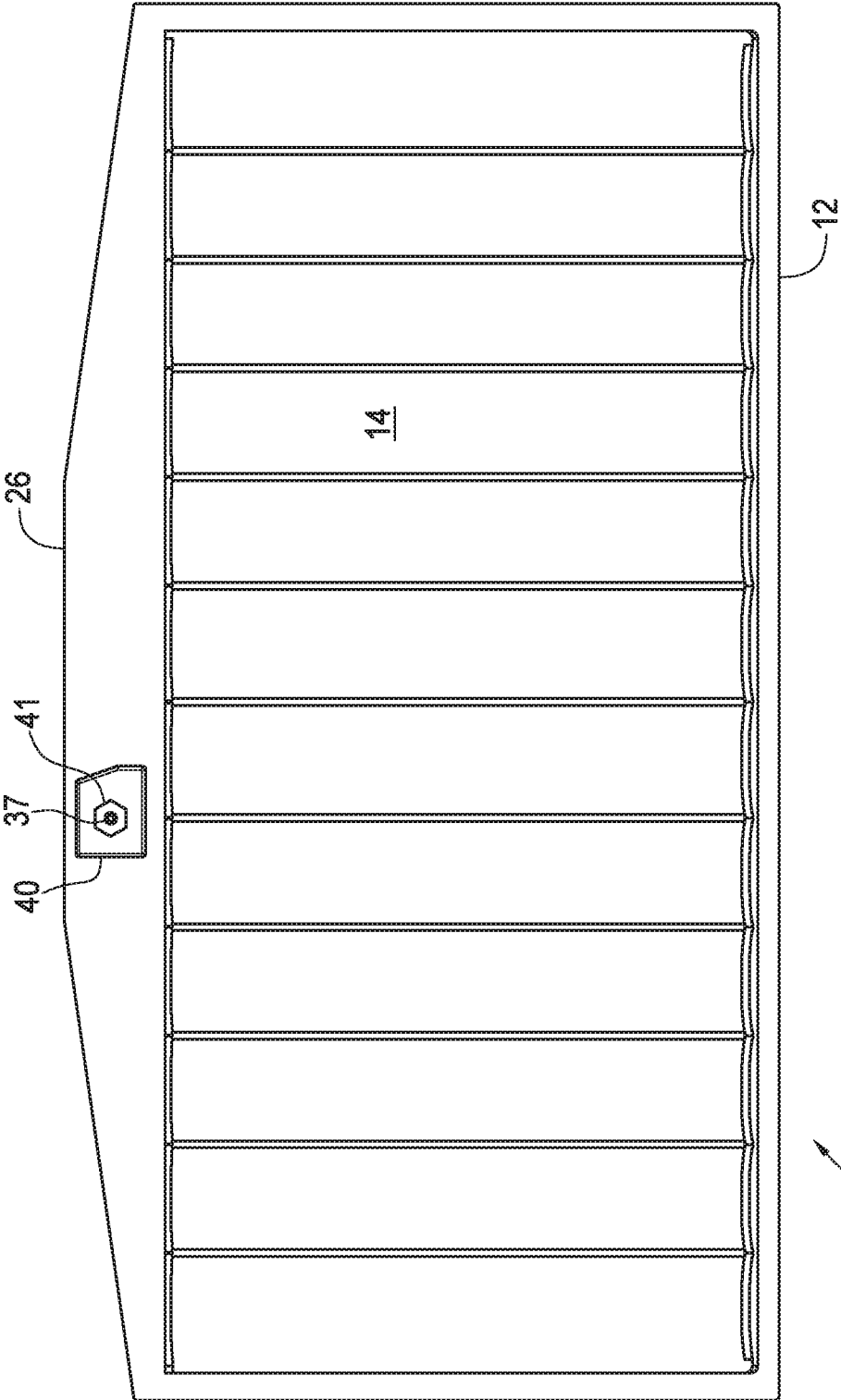


FIG. 6

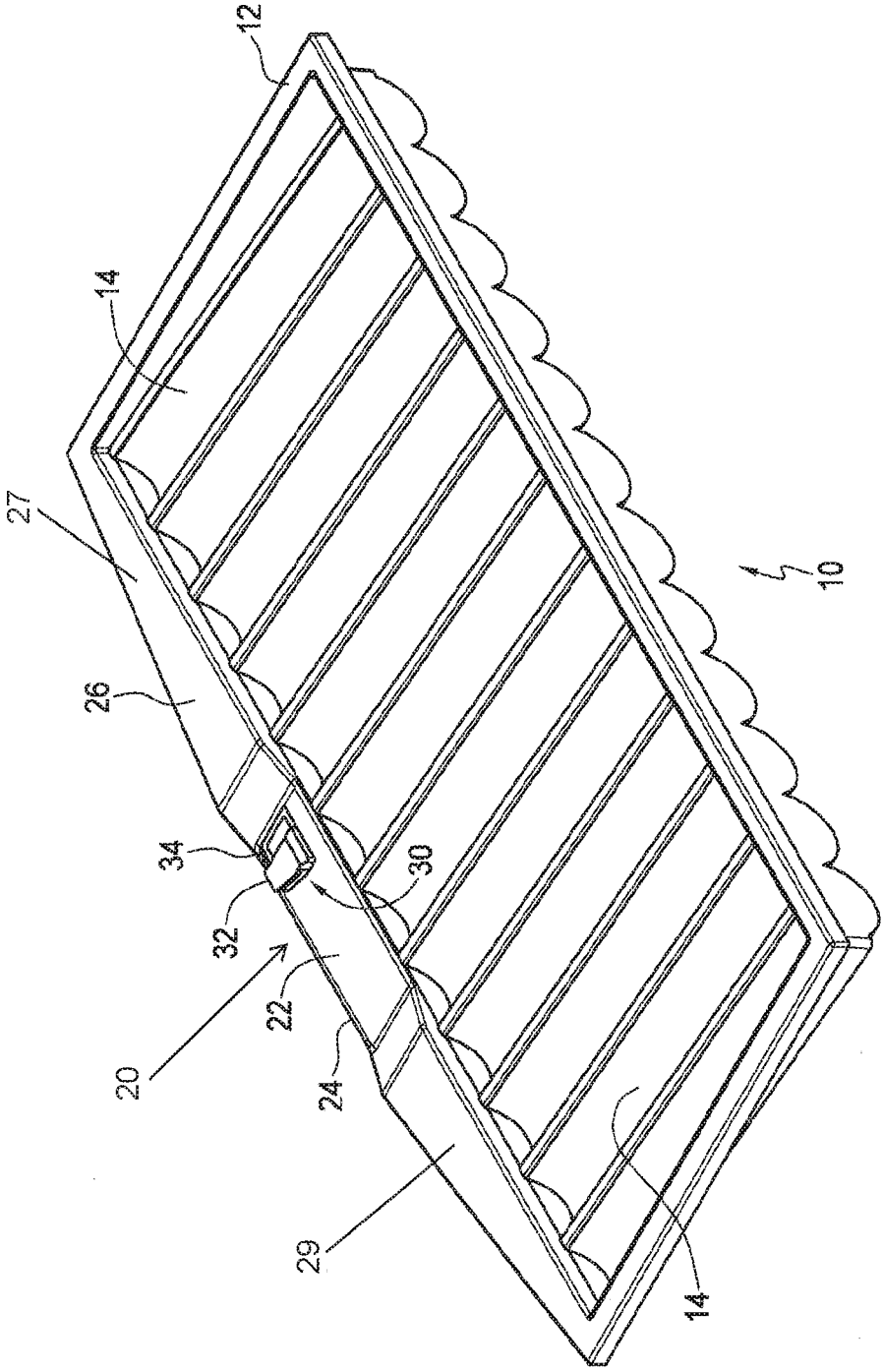


FIG. 7

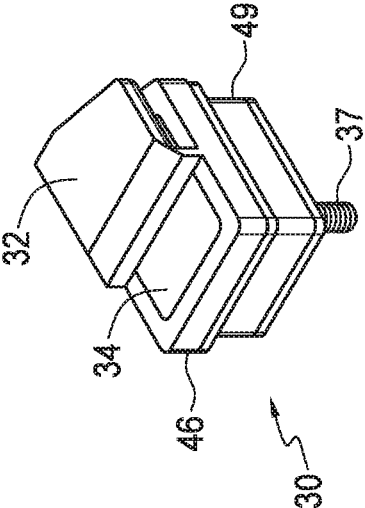


FIG. 9

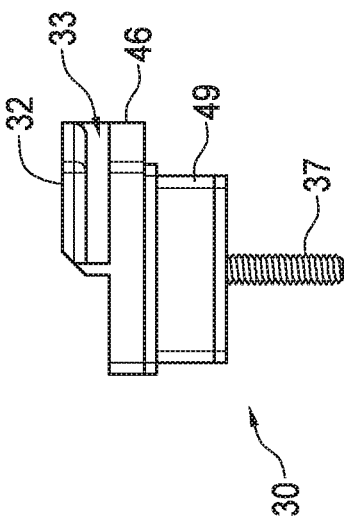


FIG. 10

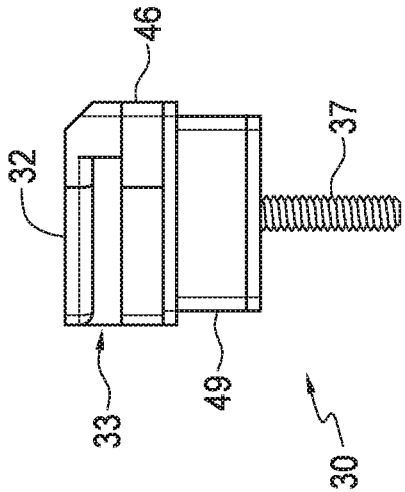


FIG. 11

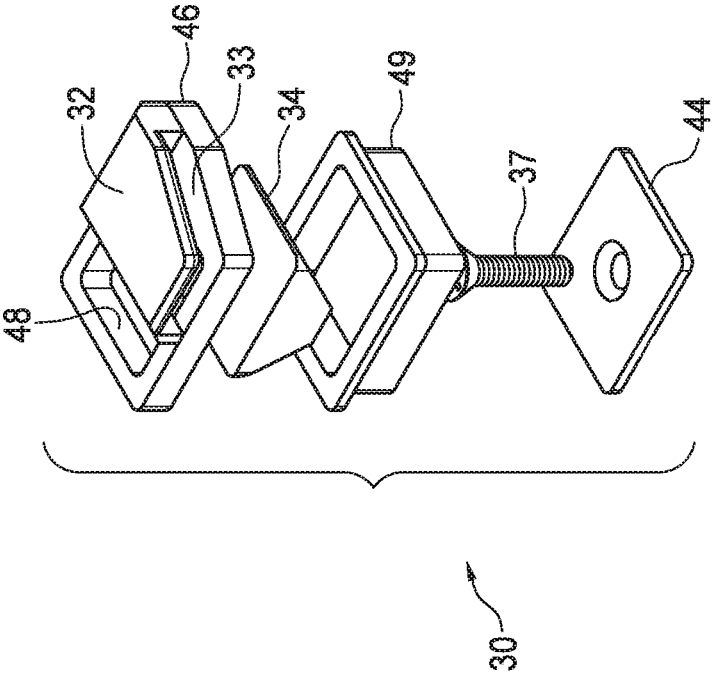


FIG. 12

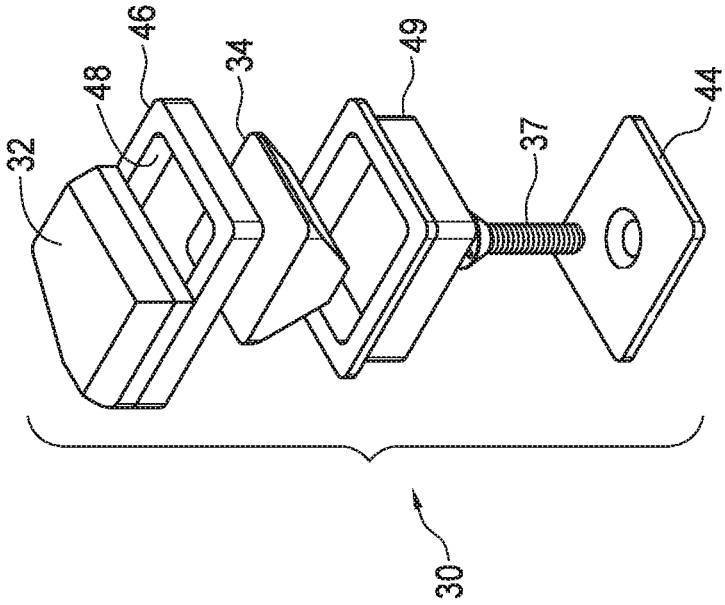


FIG. 13

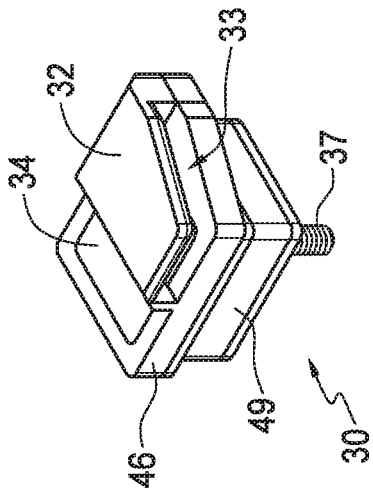


FIG. 14

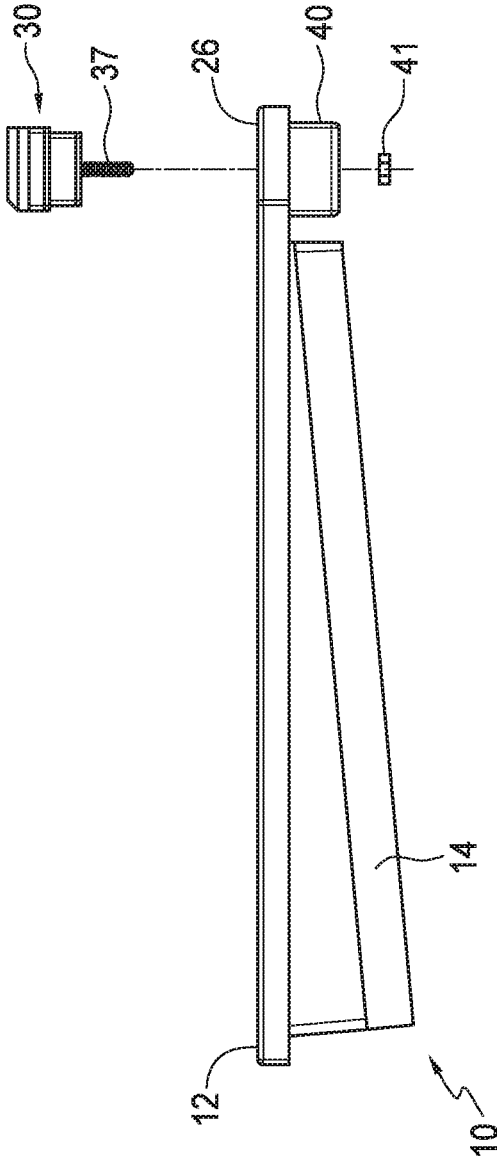


FIG. 15

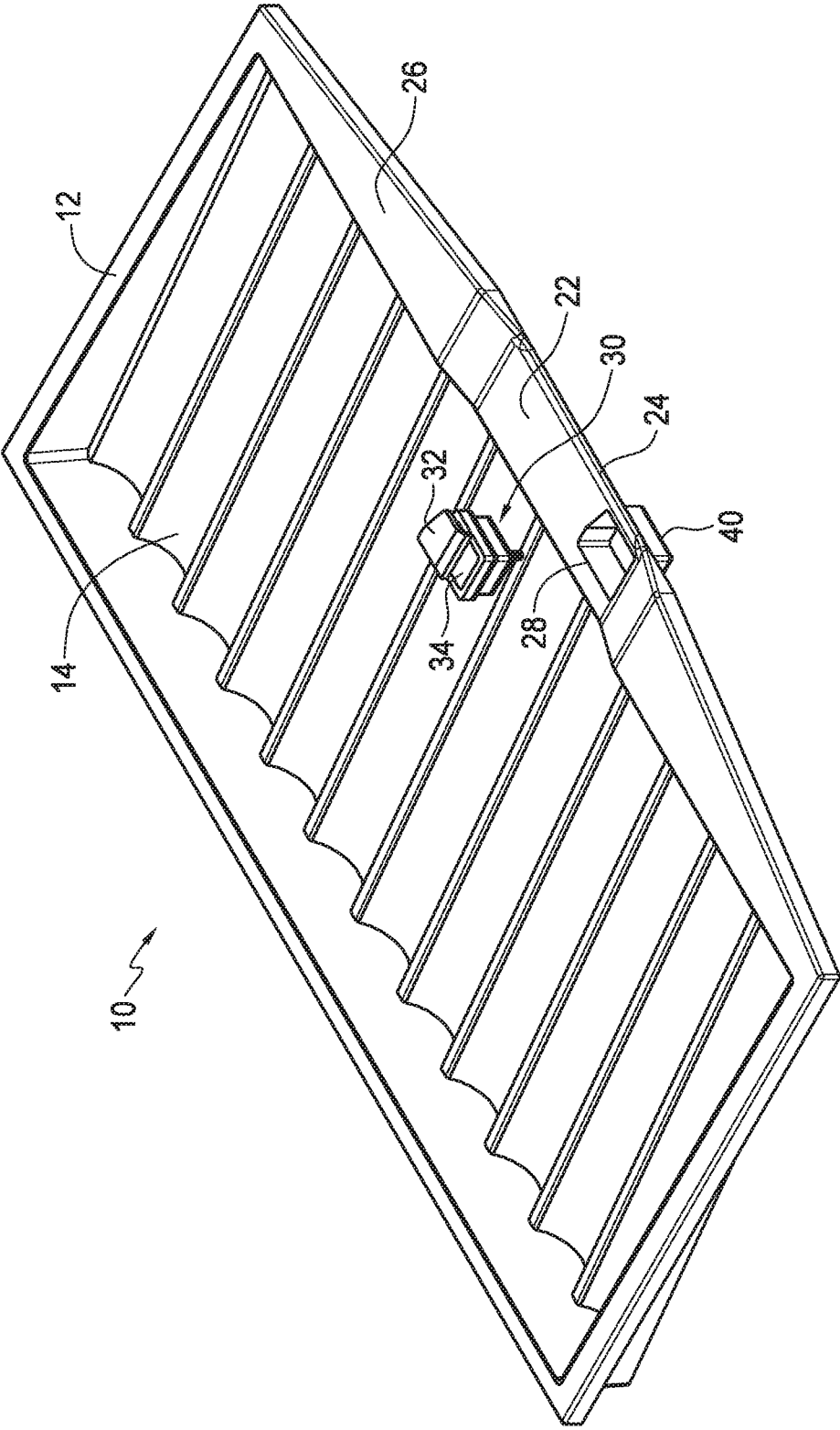


FIG. 16

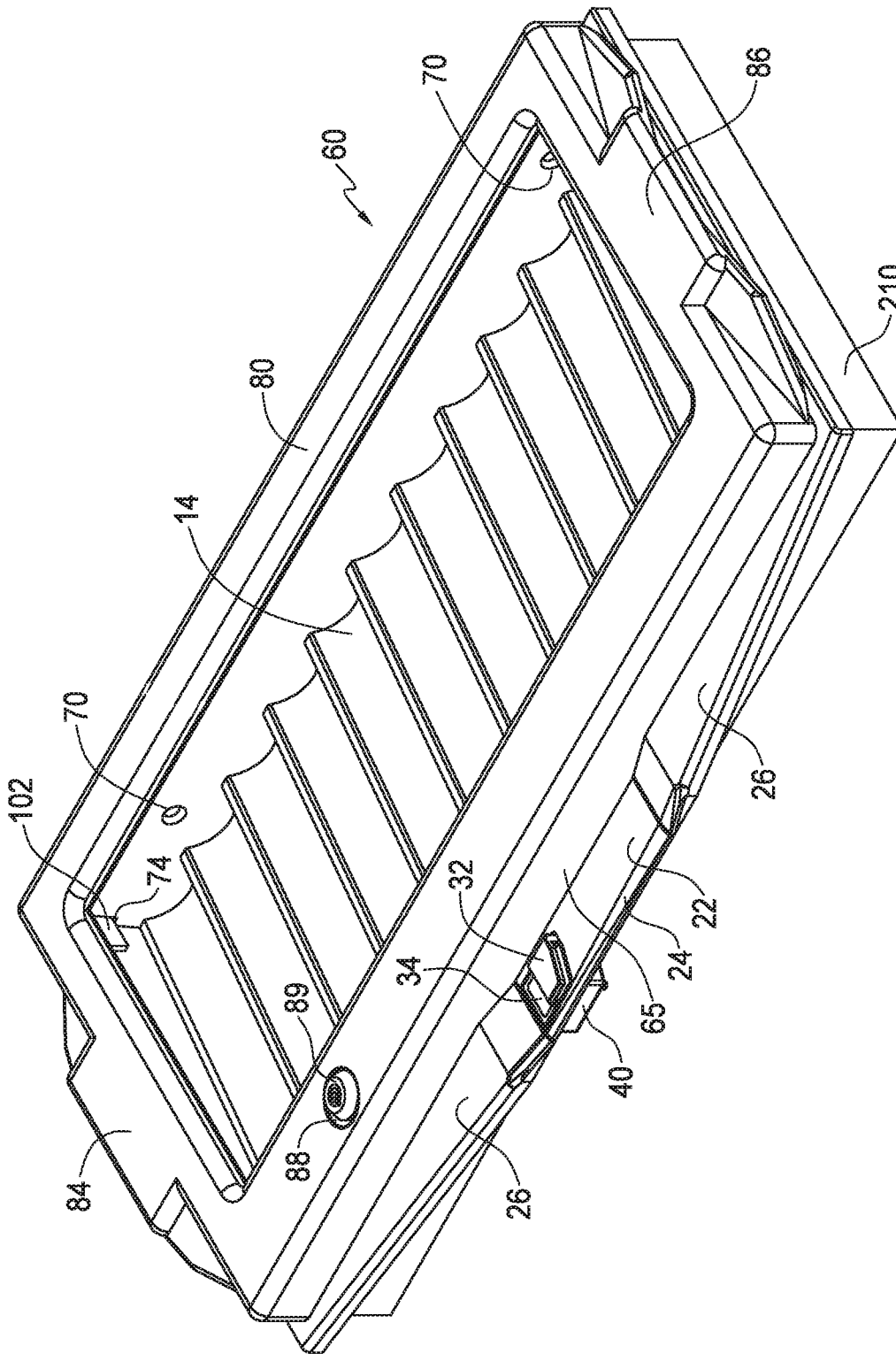


FIG. 17A

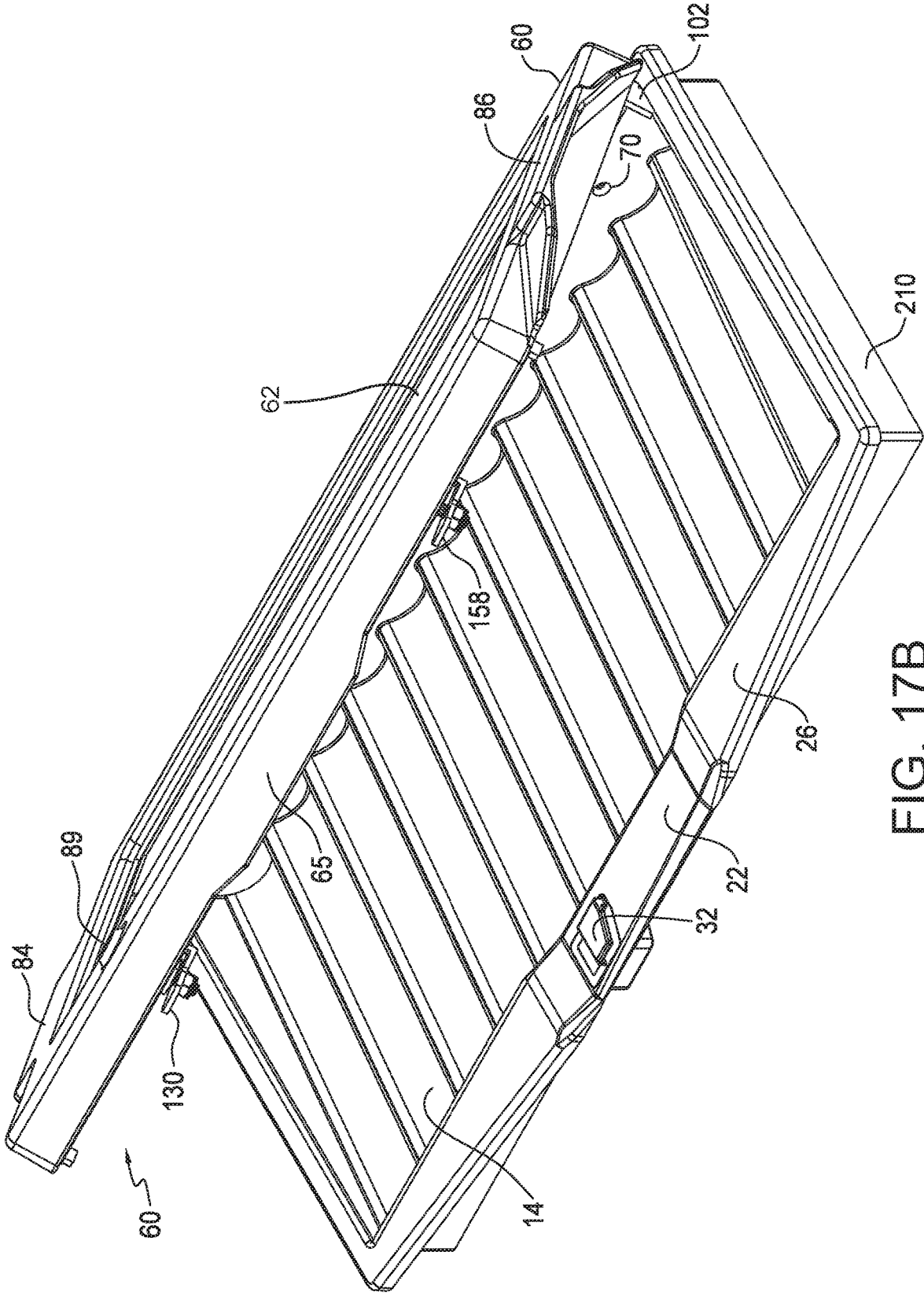


FIG. 17B

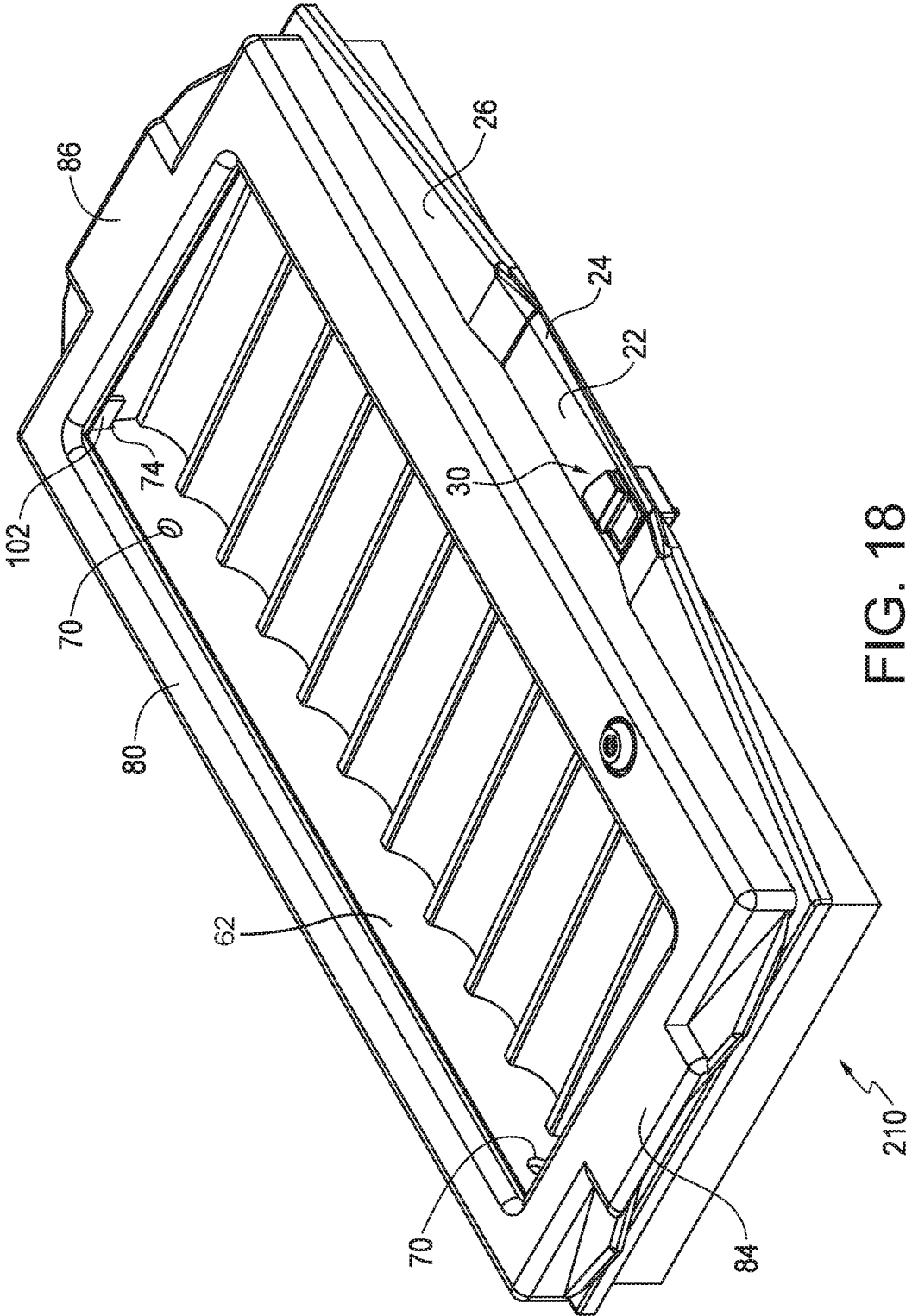


FIG. 18

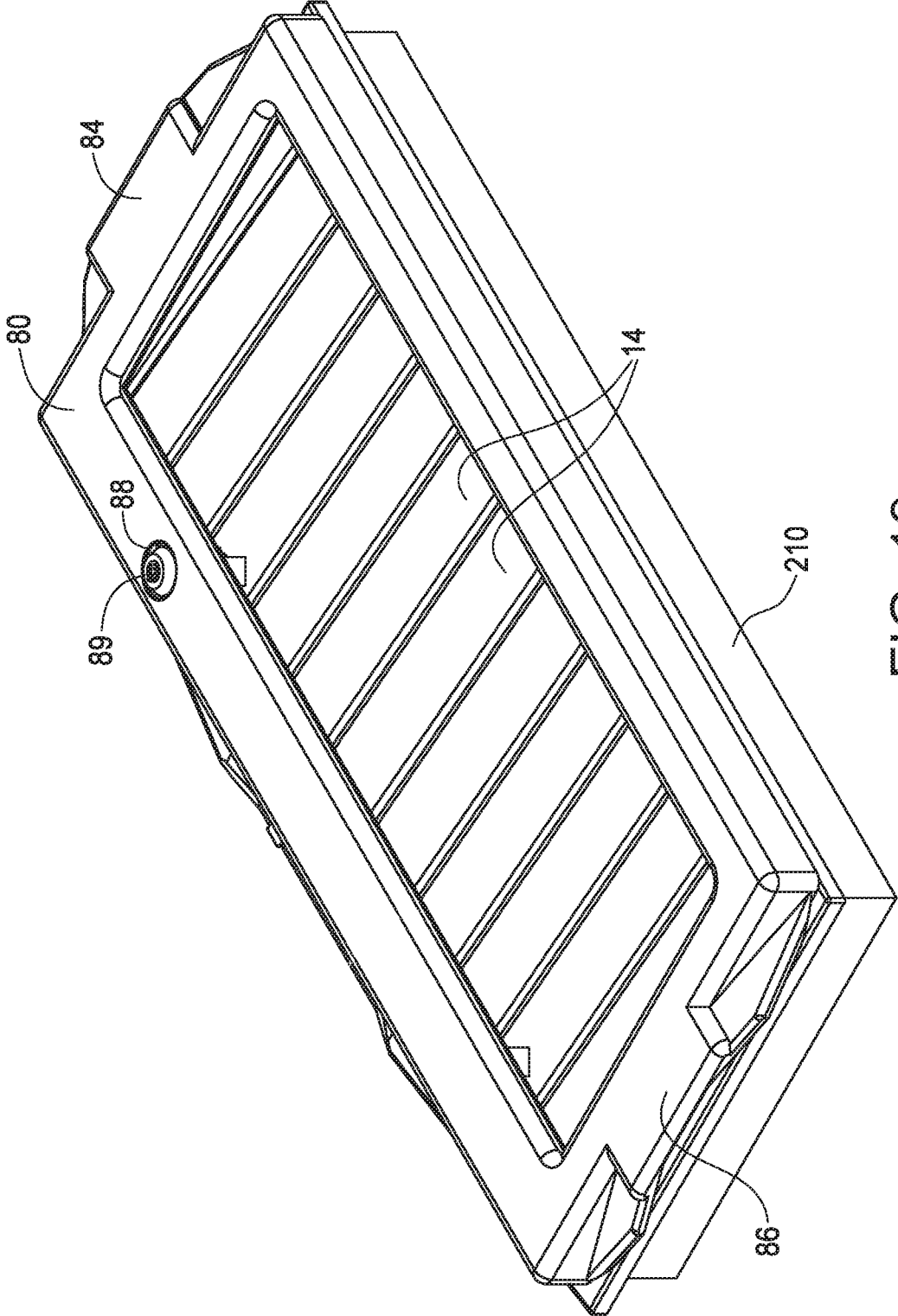


FIG. 19

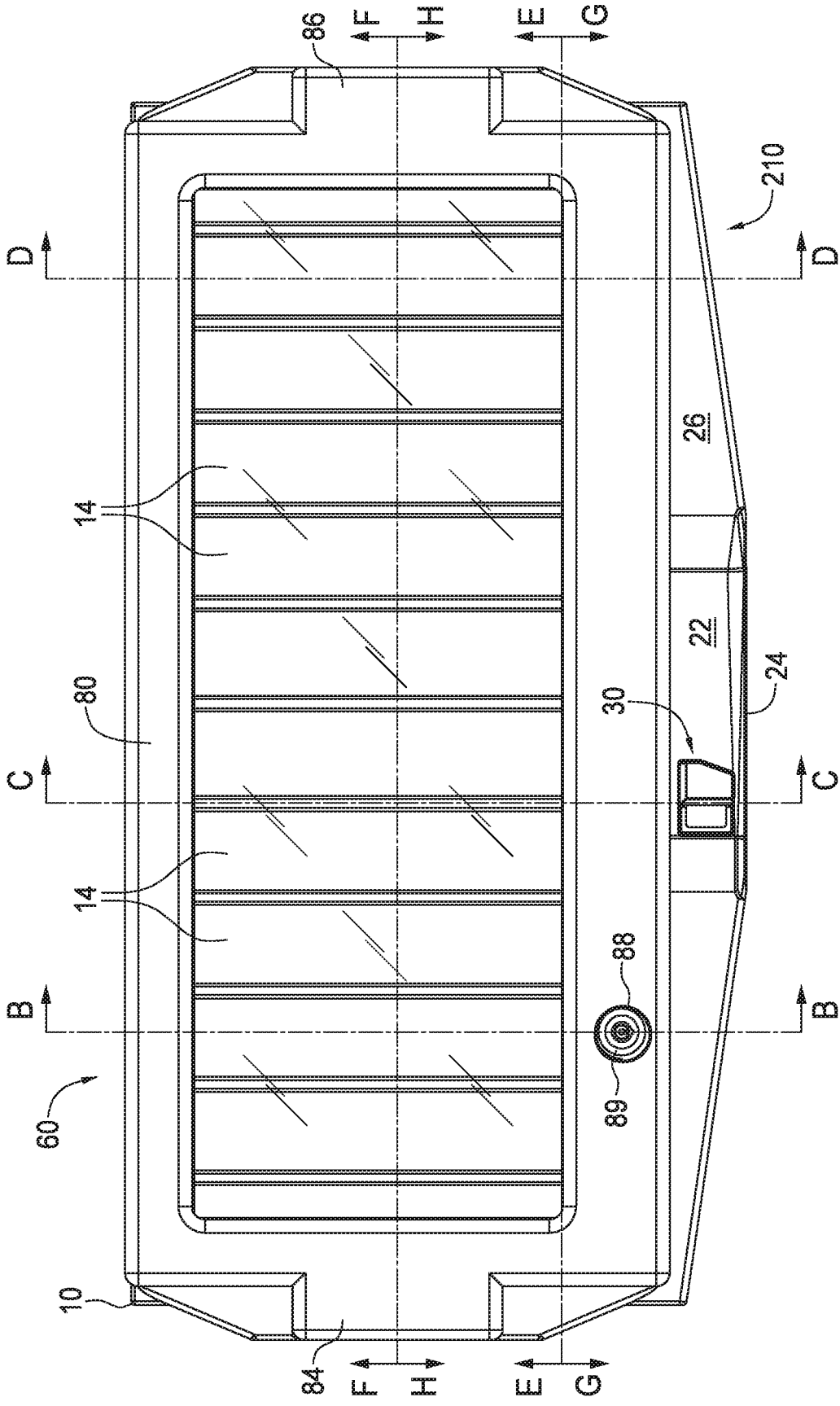


FIG. 20A

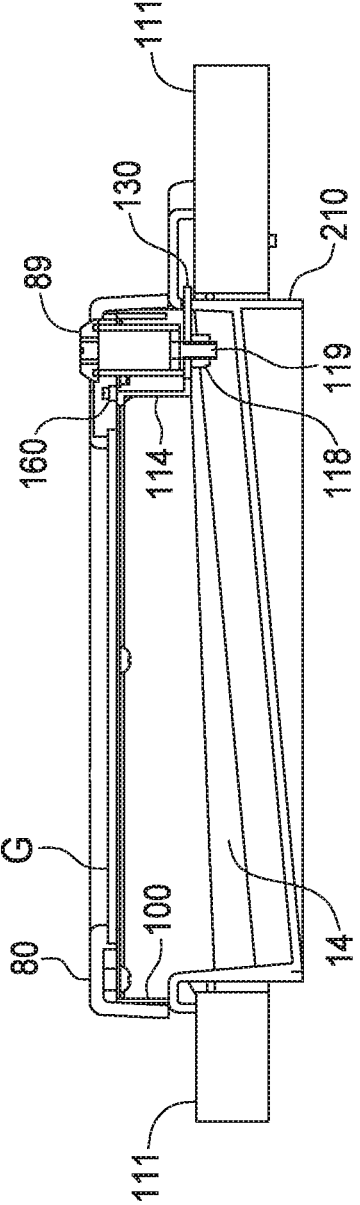


FIG. 20B

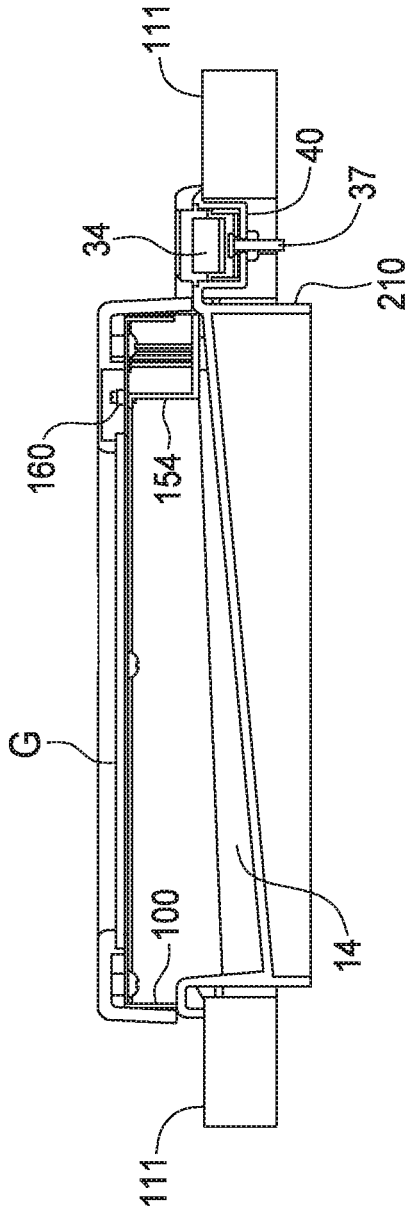


FIG. 20C

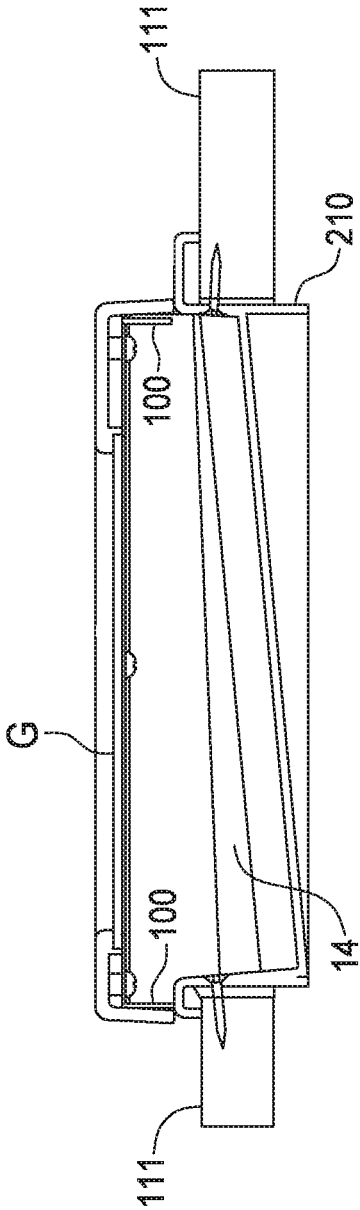


FIG. 20D

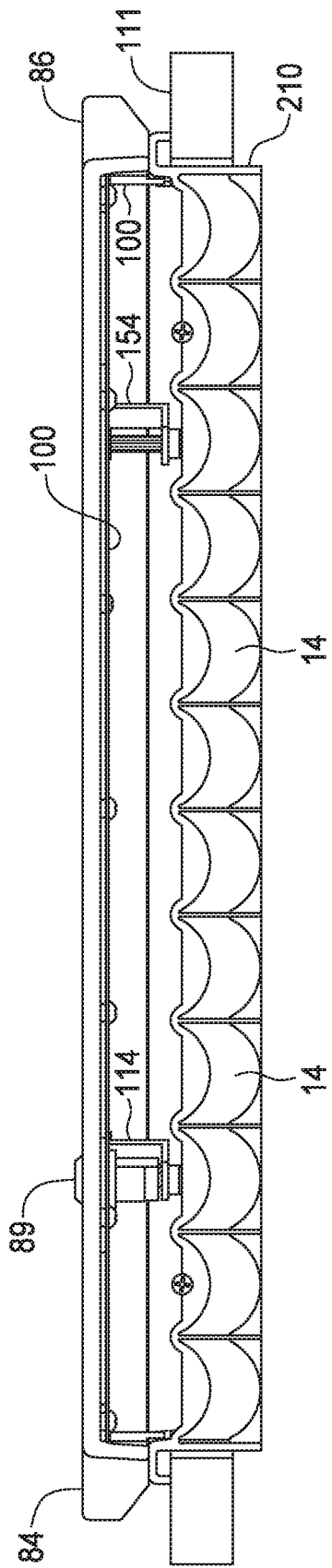


FIG. 20E

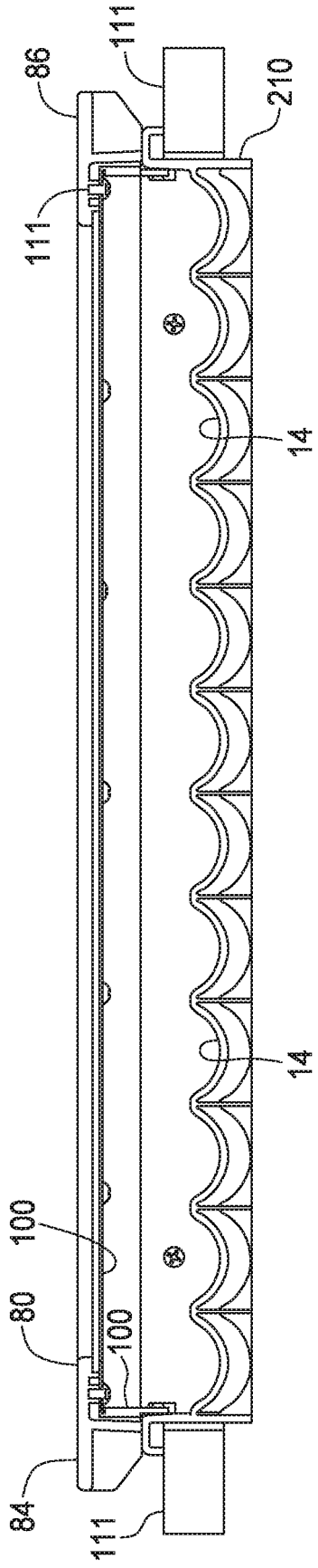


FIG. 20F

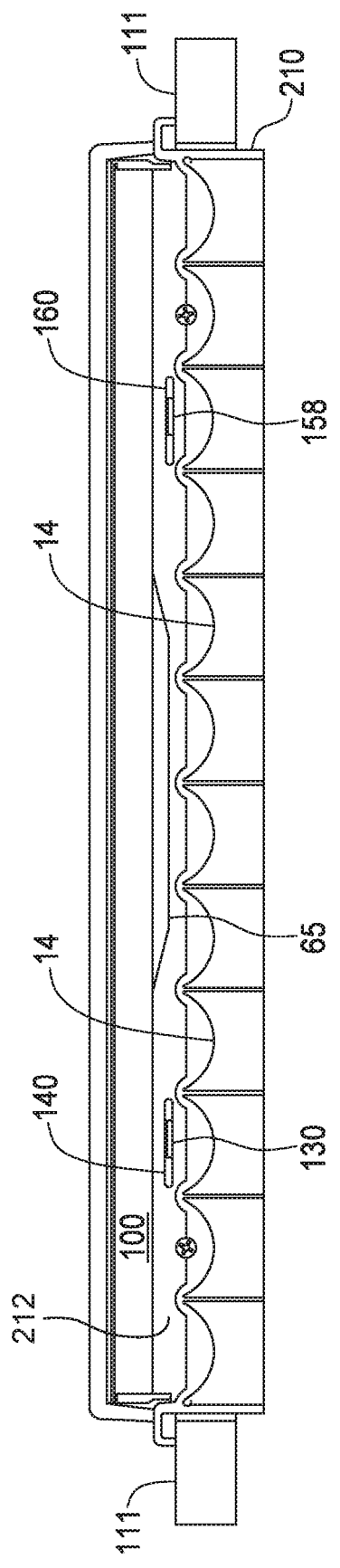


FIG. 20G

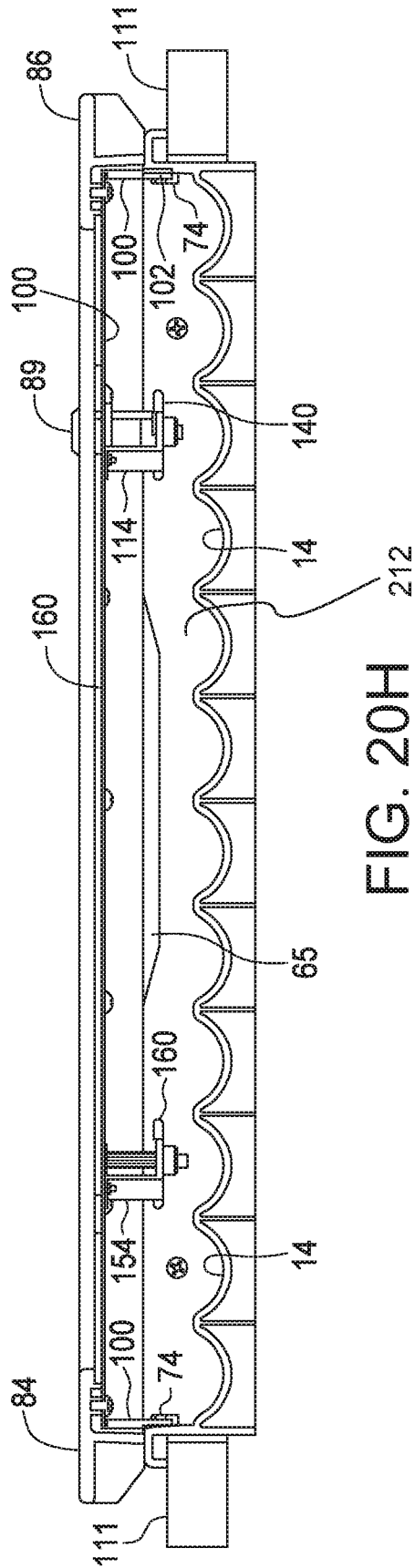


FIG. 20H

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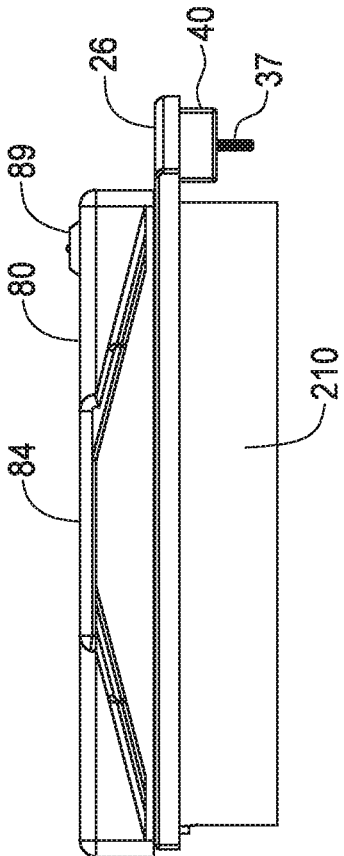


FIG. 21A

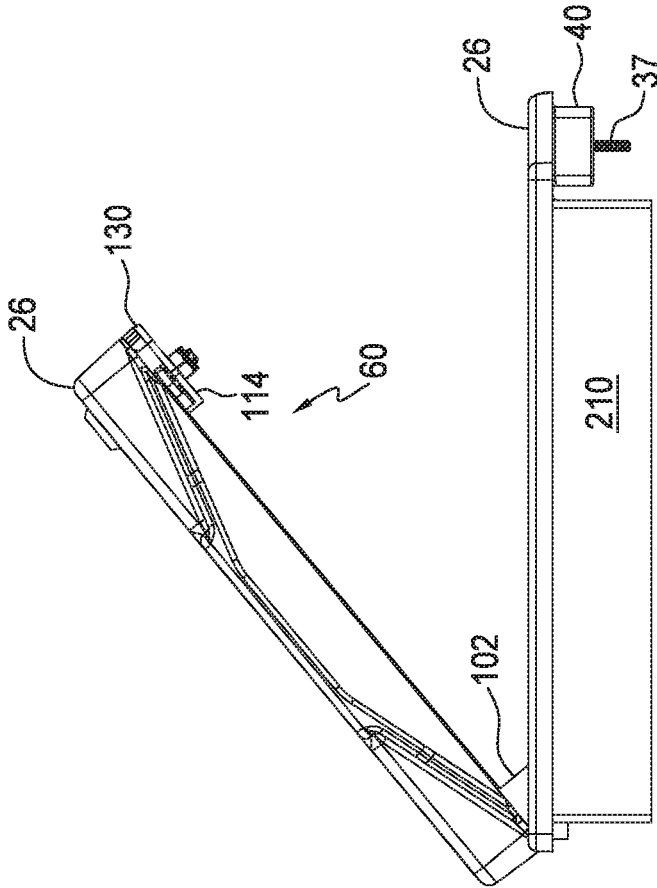


FIG. 21B

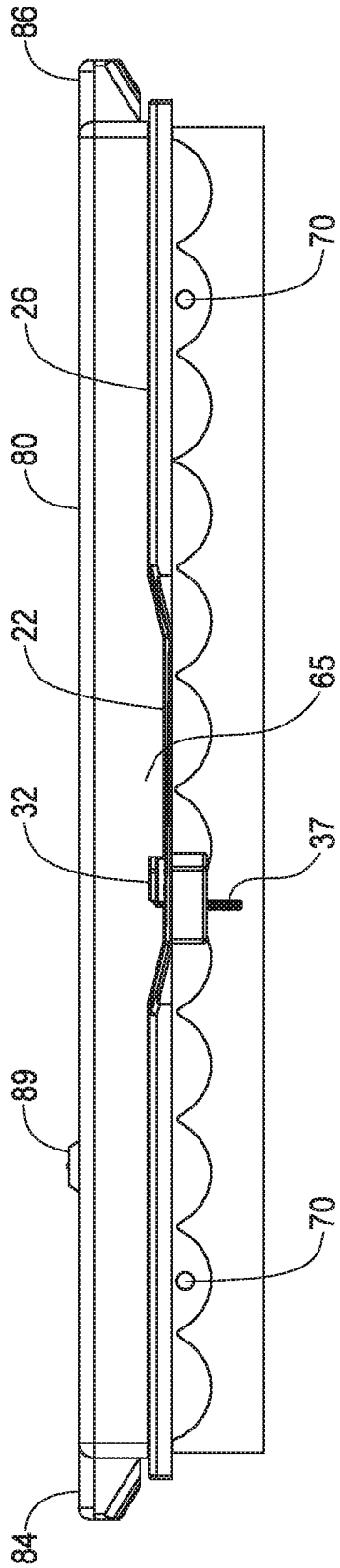


FIG. 22

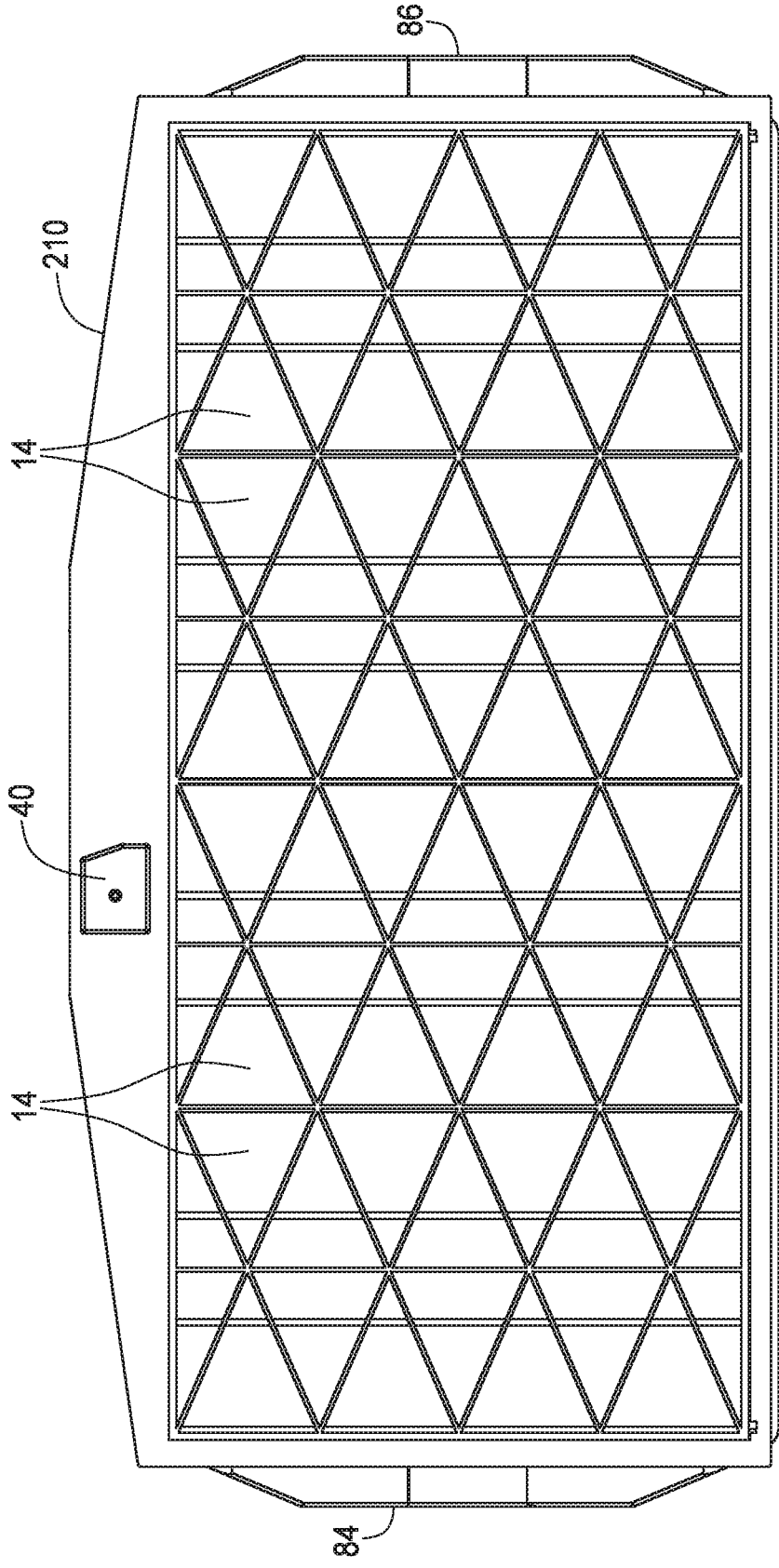


FIG. 23

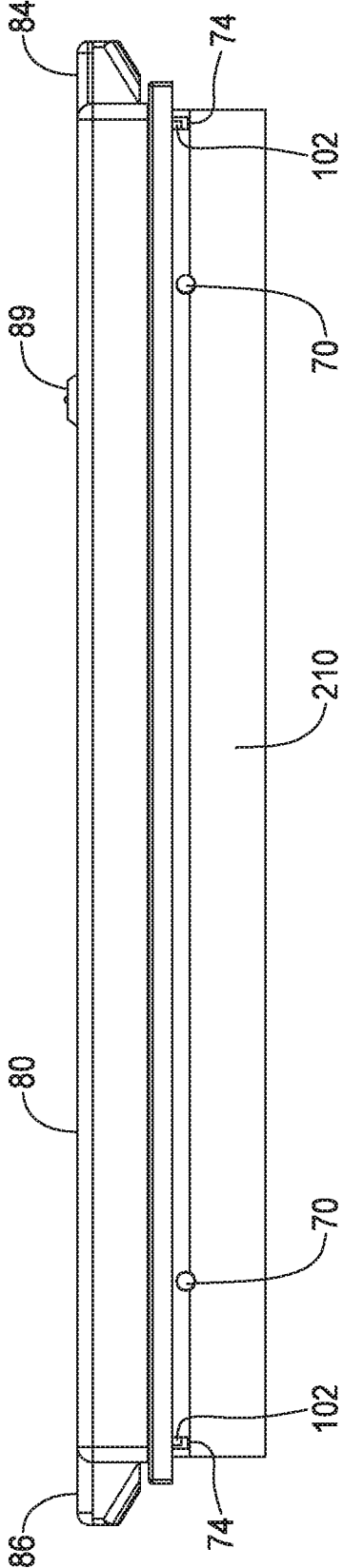


FIG. 24

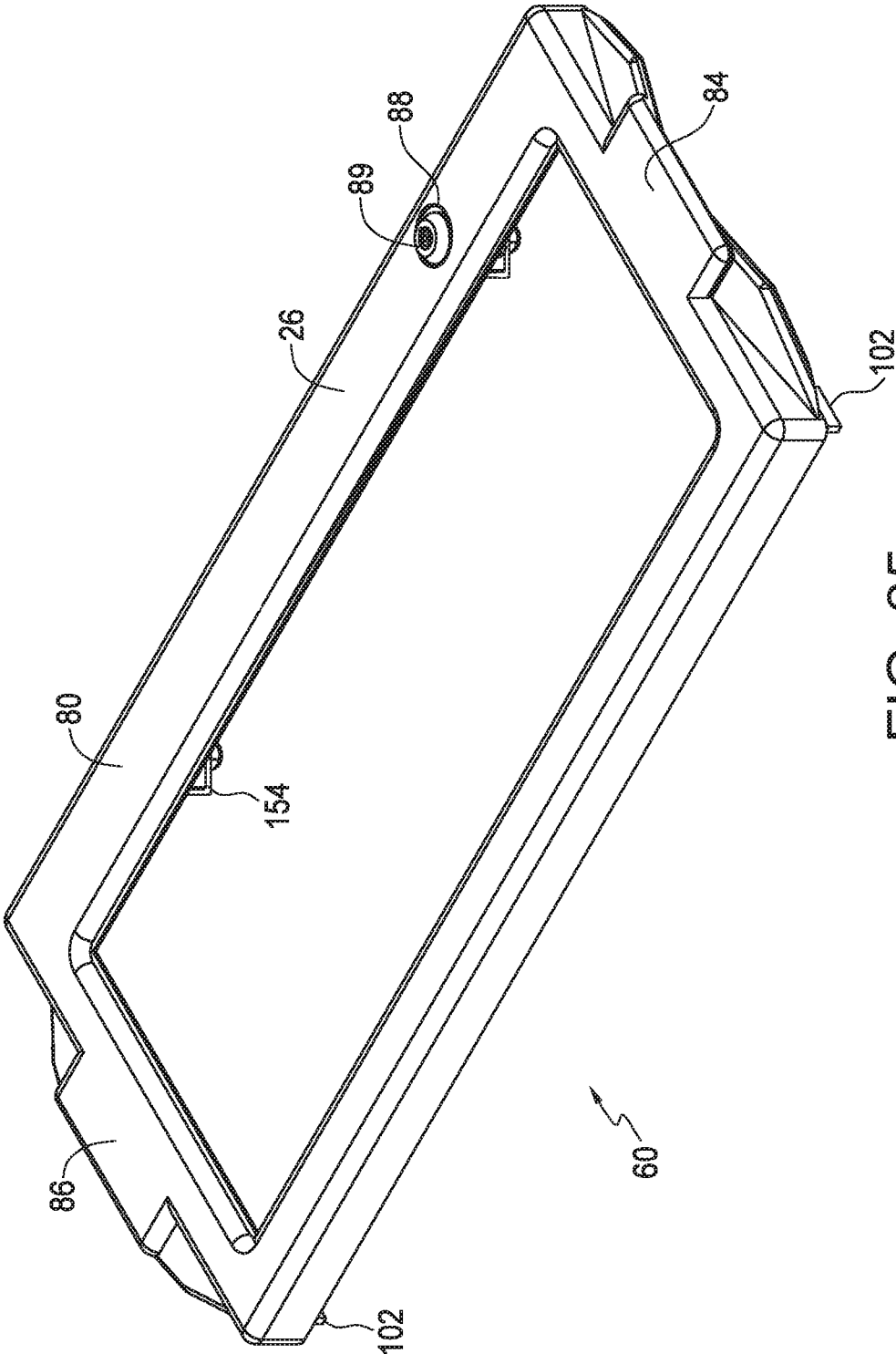


FIG. 25

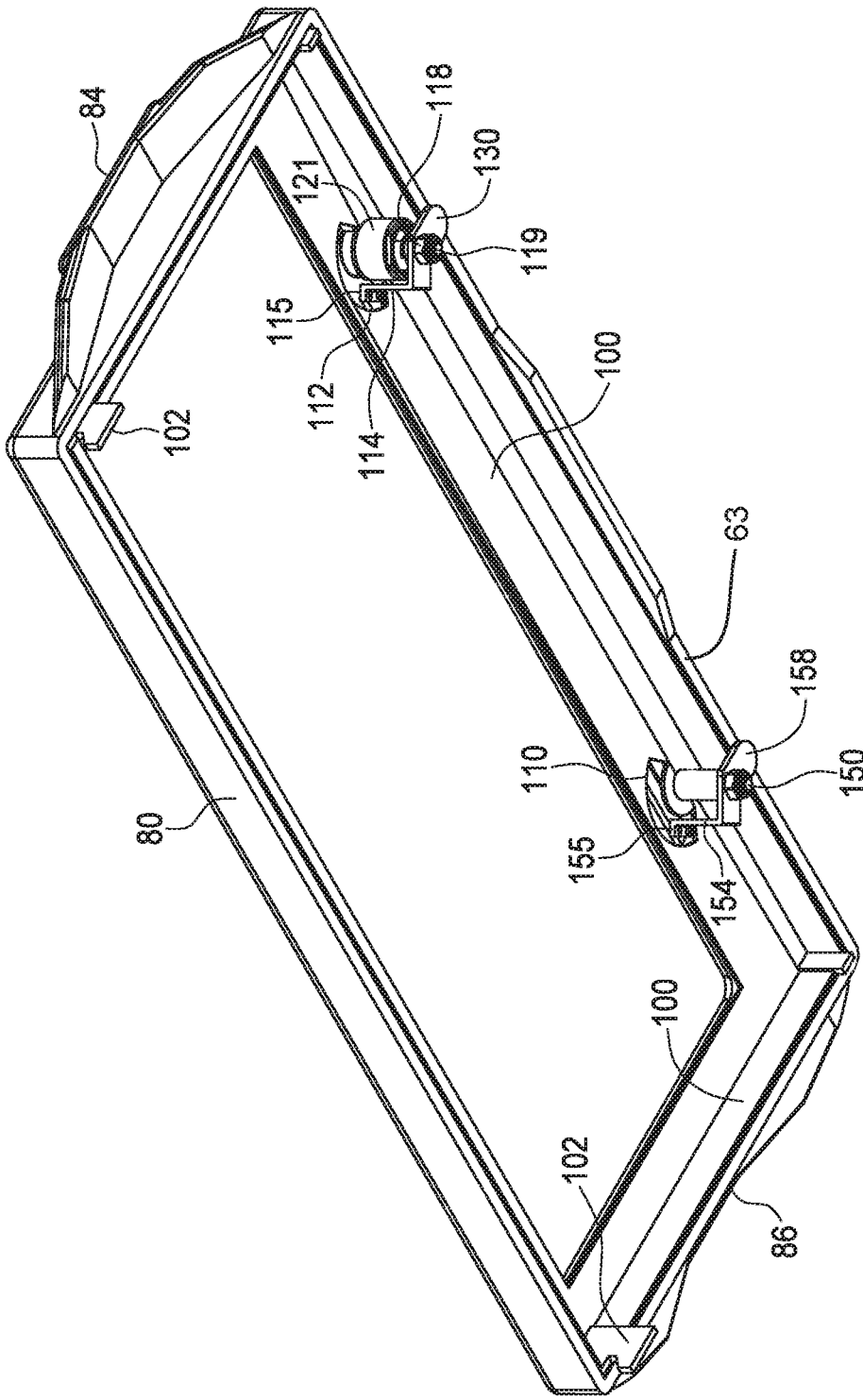


FIG. 26

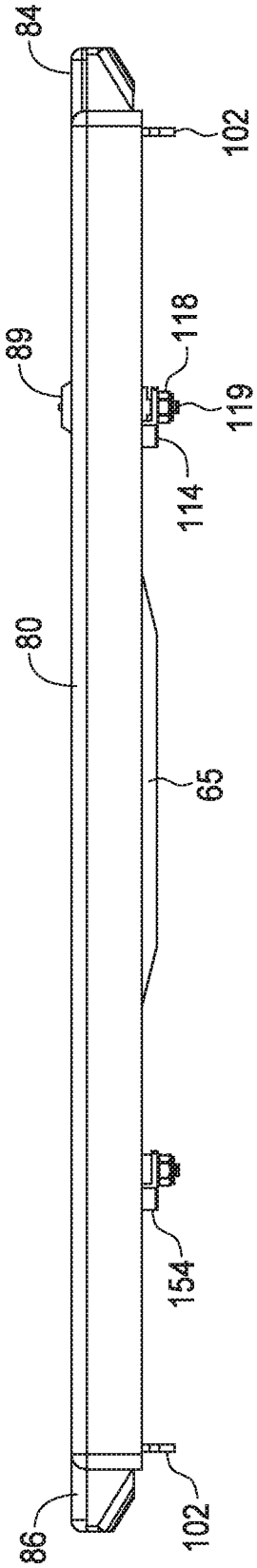


FIG. 27

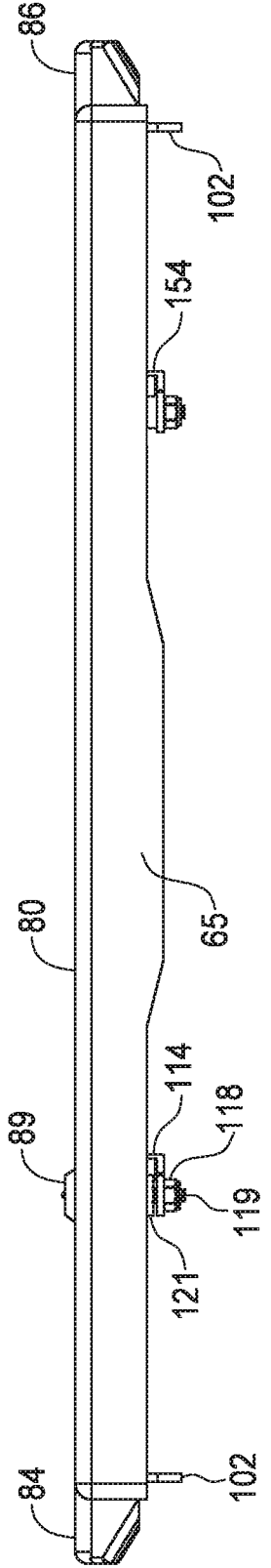


FIG. 28

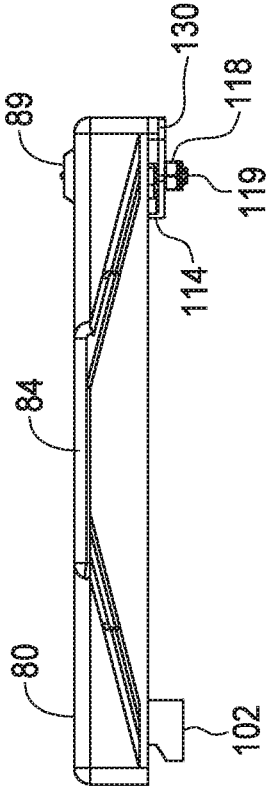


FIG. 29

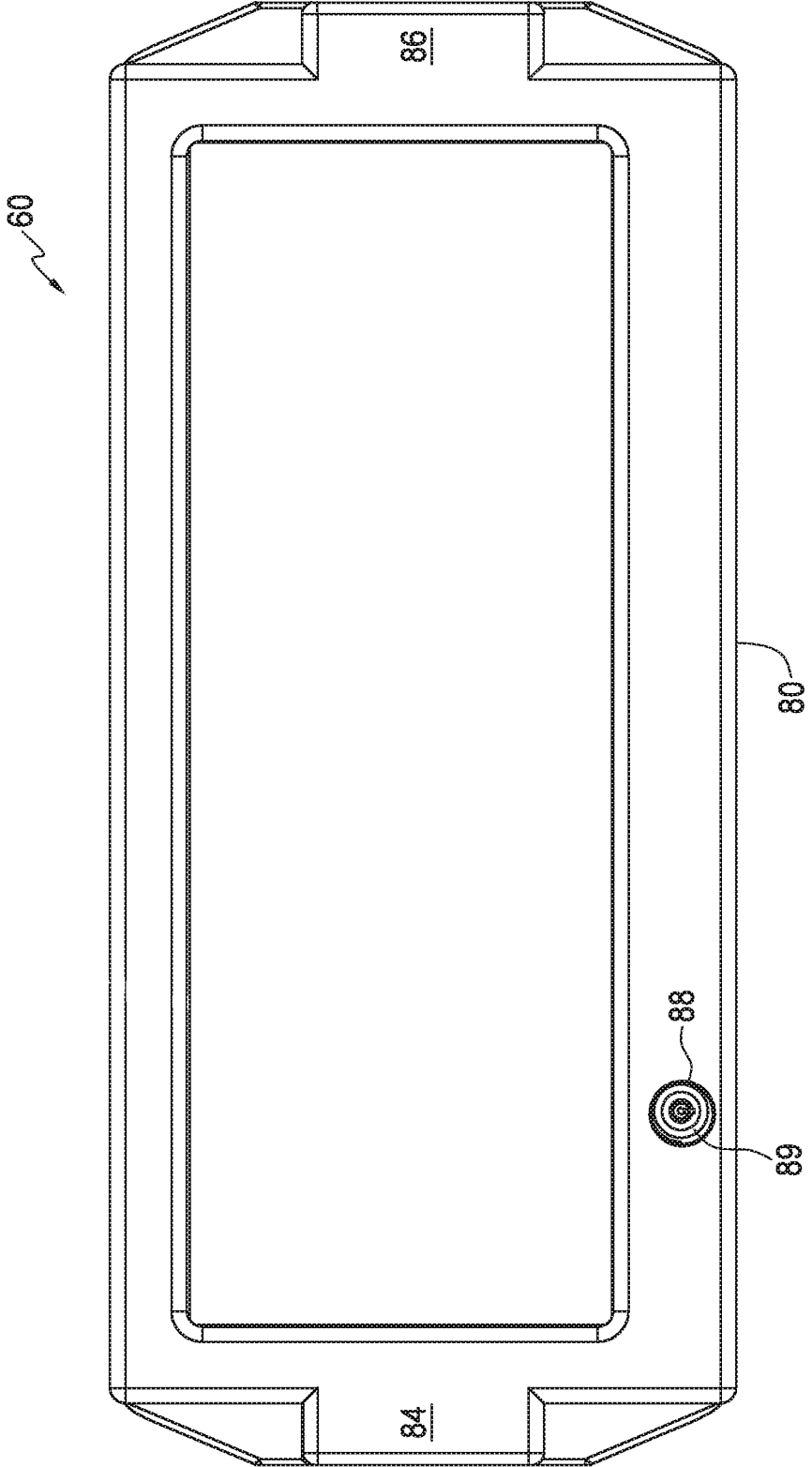


FIG. 30

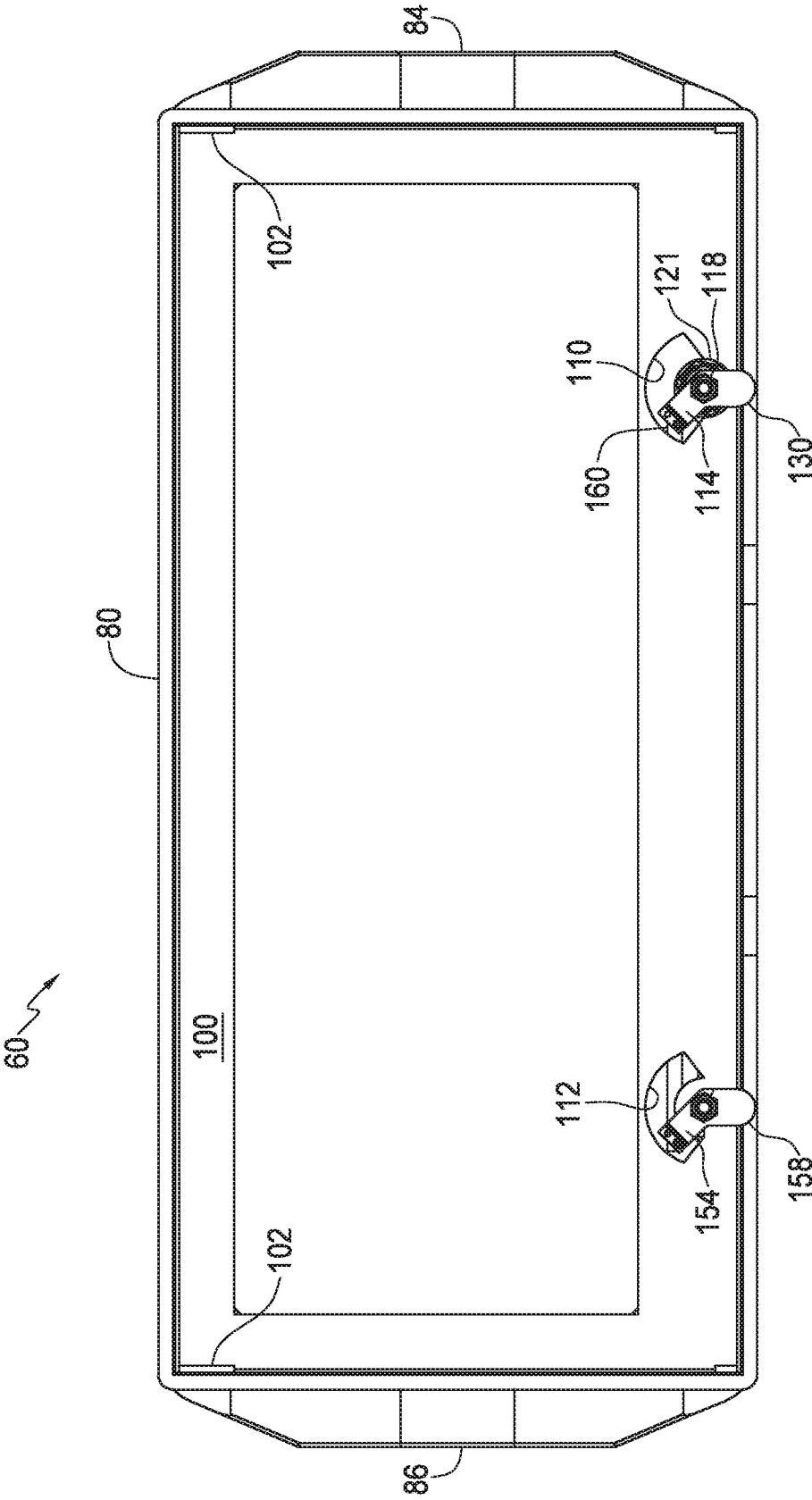


FIG. 31

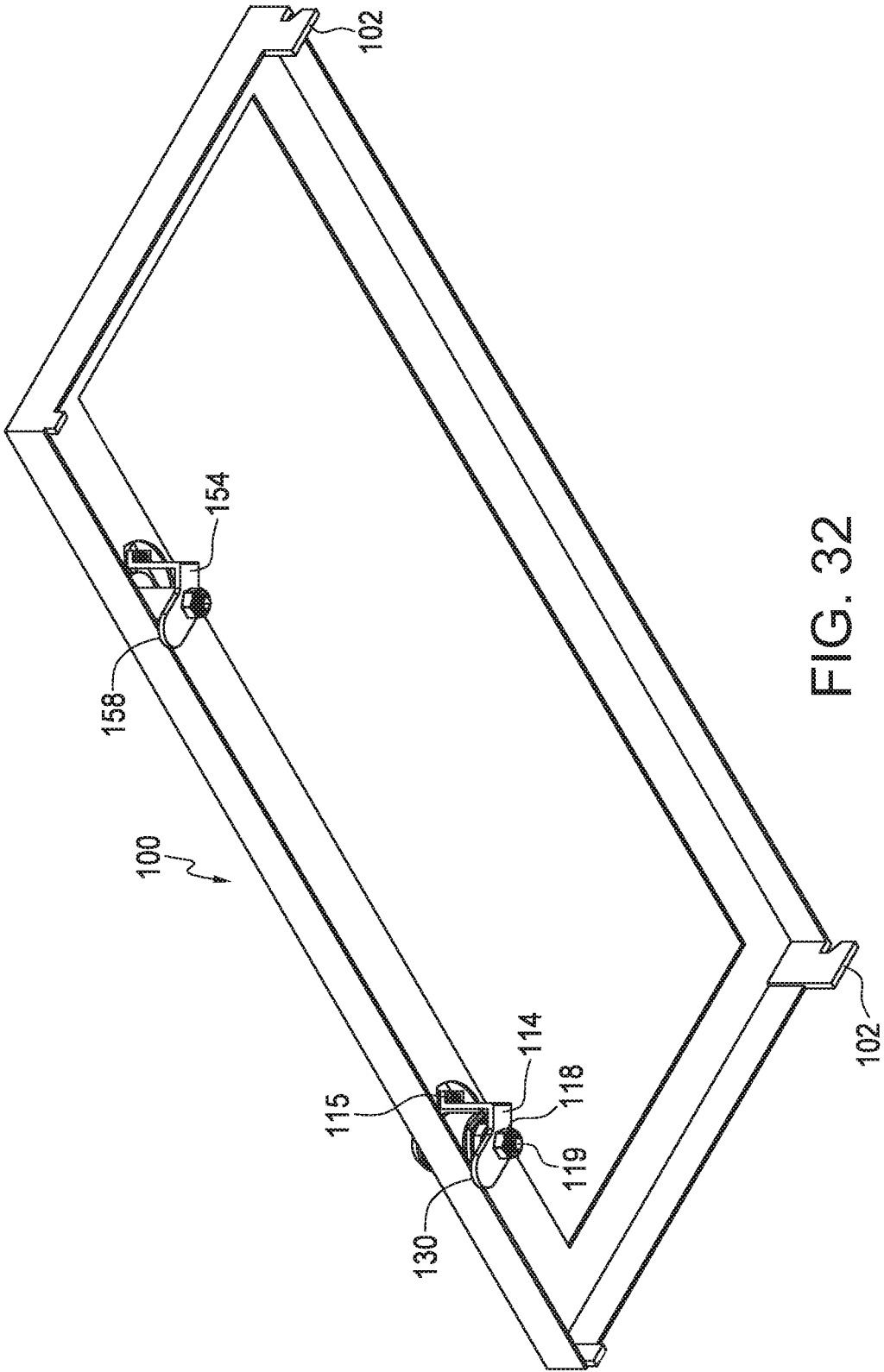


FIG. 32

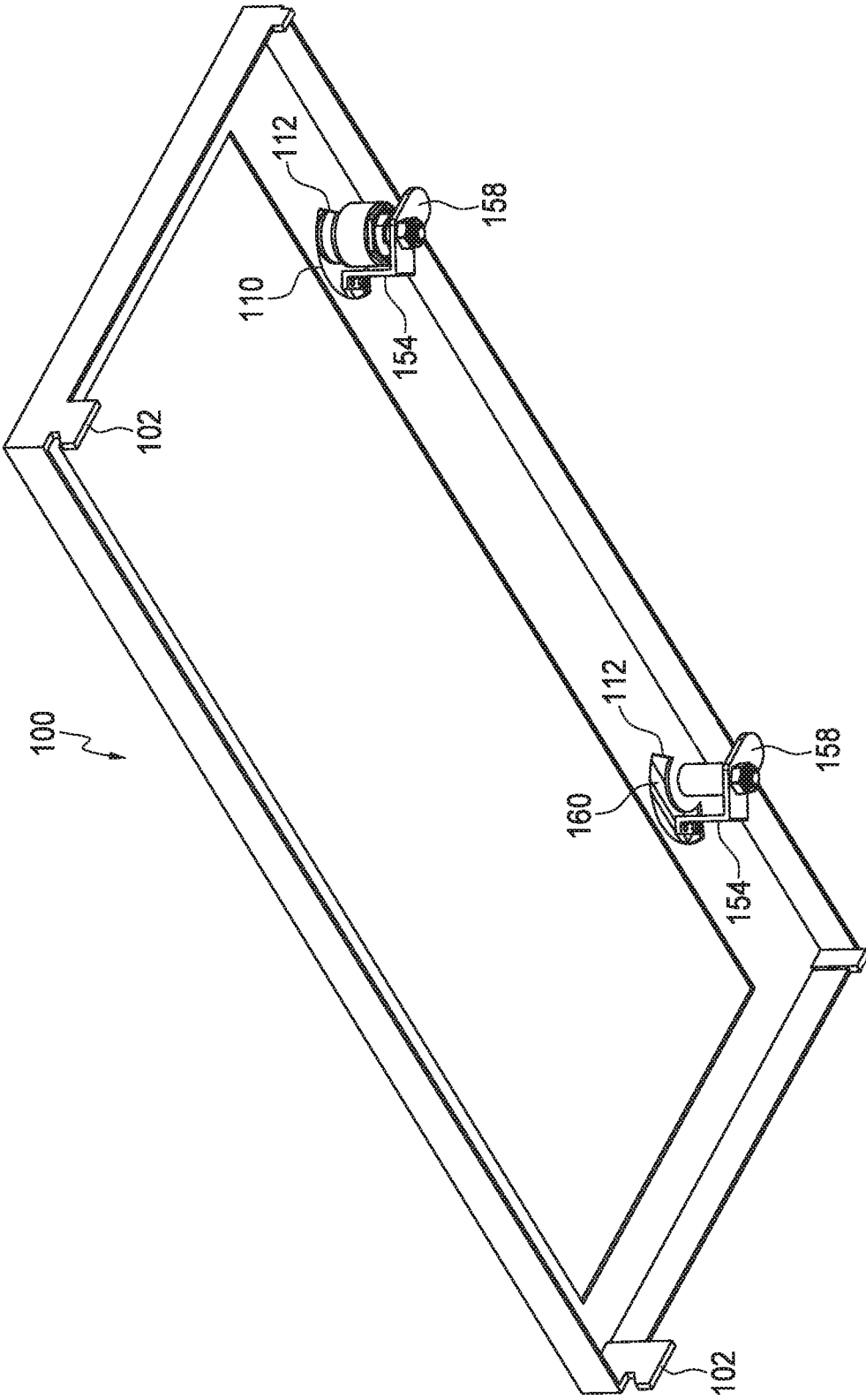


FIG. 33

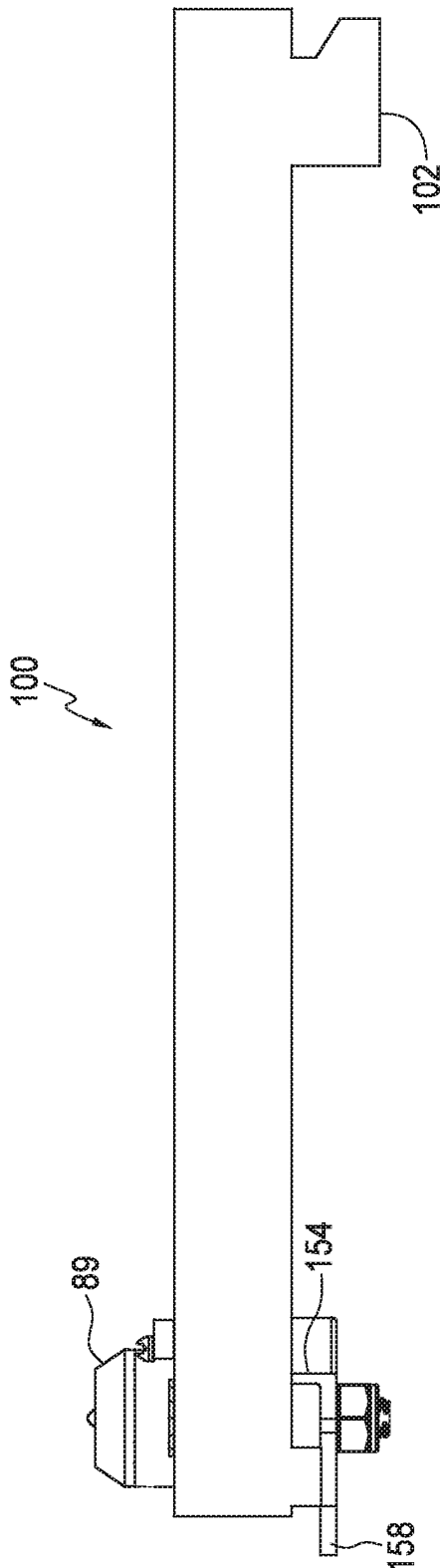


FIG. 34

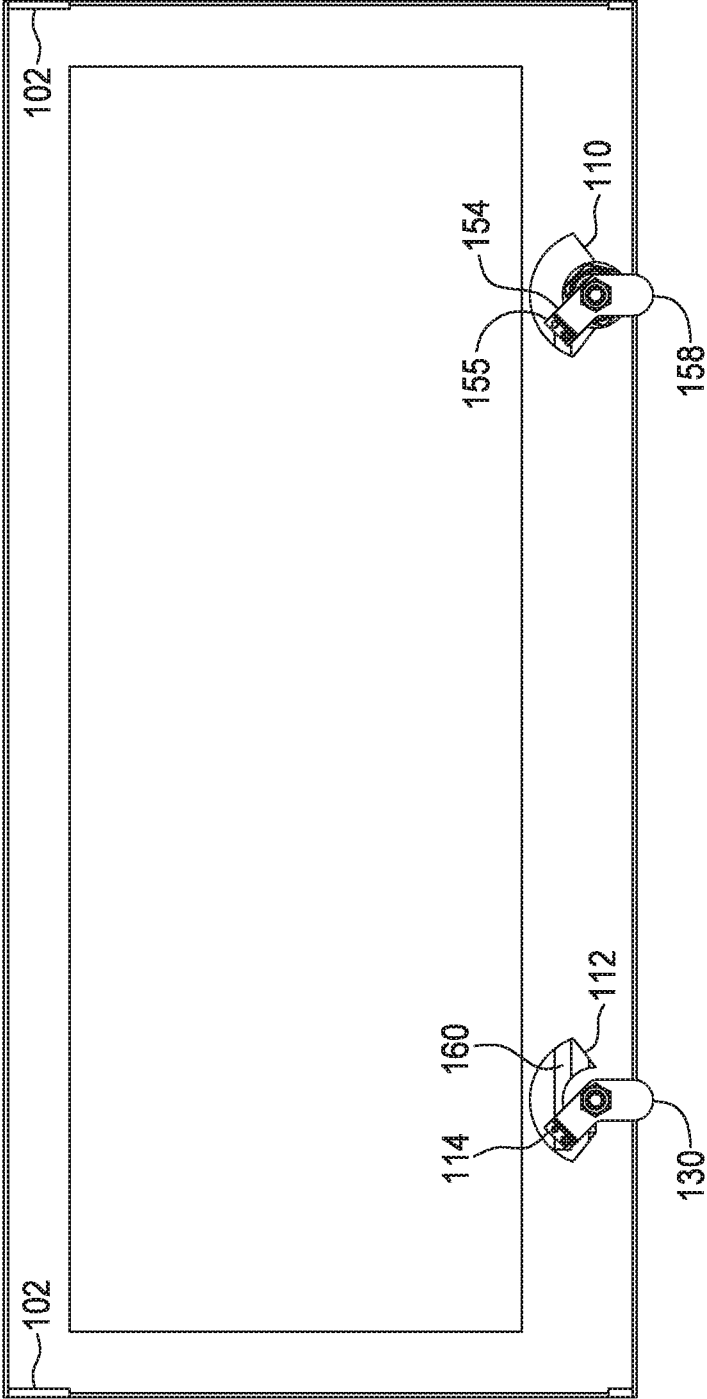


FIG. 35

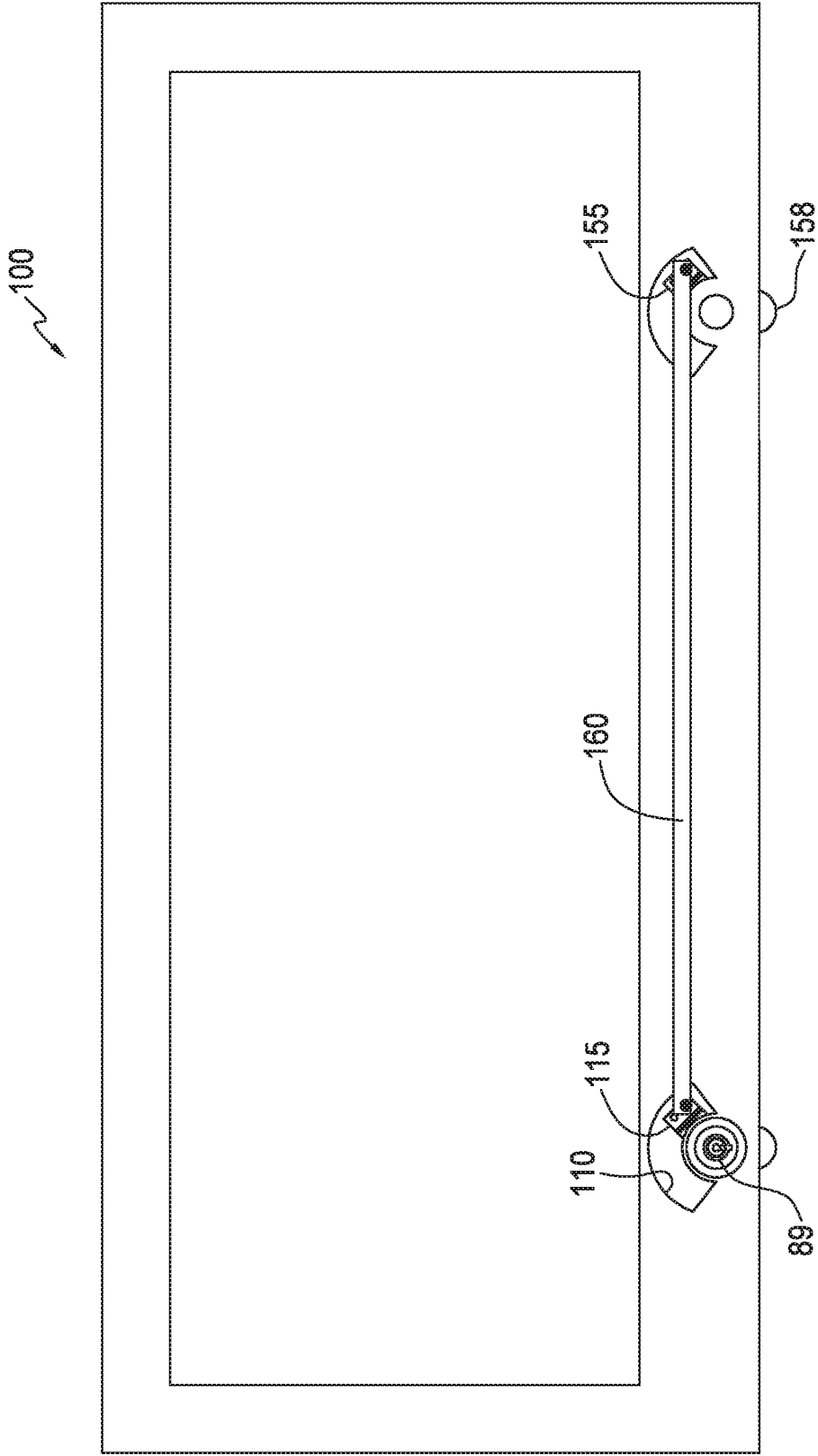


FIG. 36

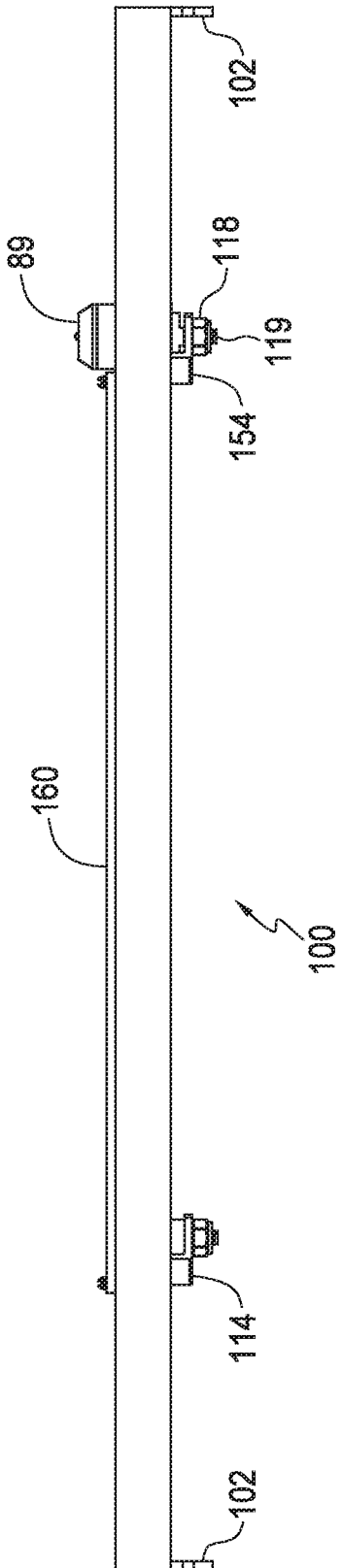


FIG. 37

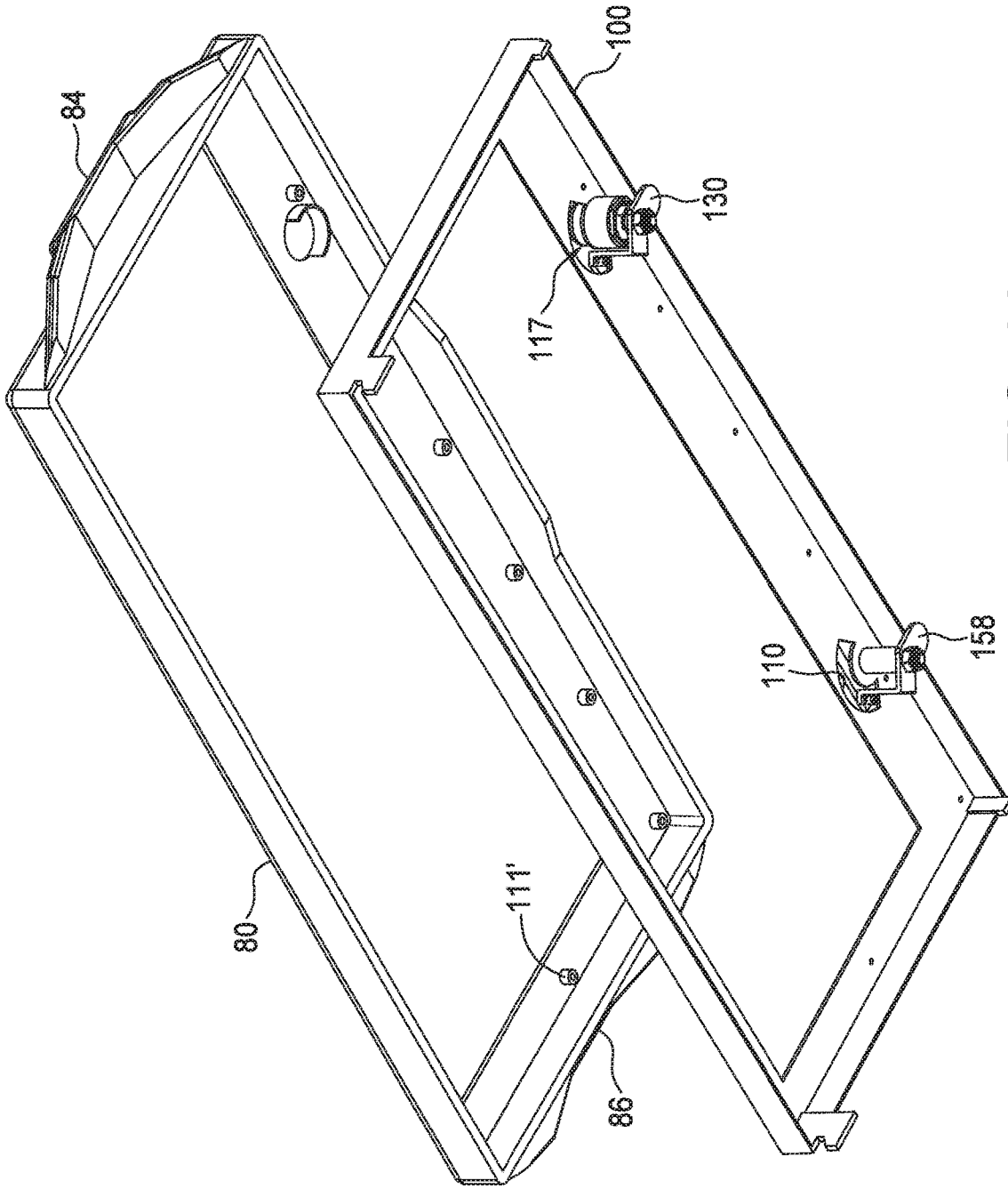


FIG. 38

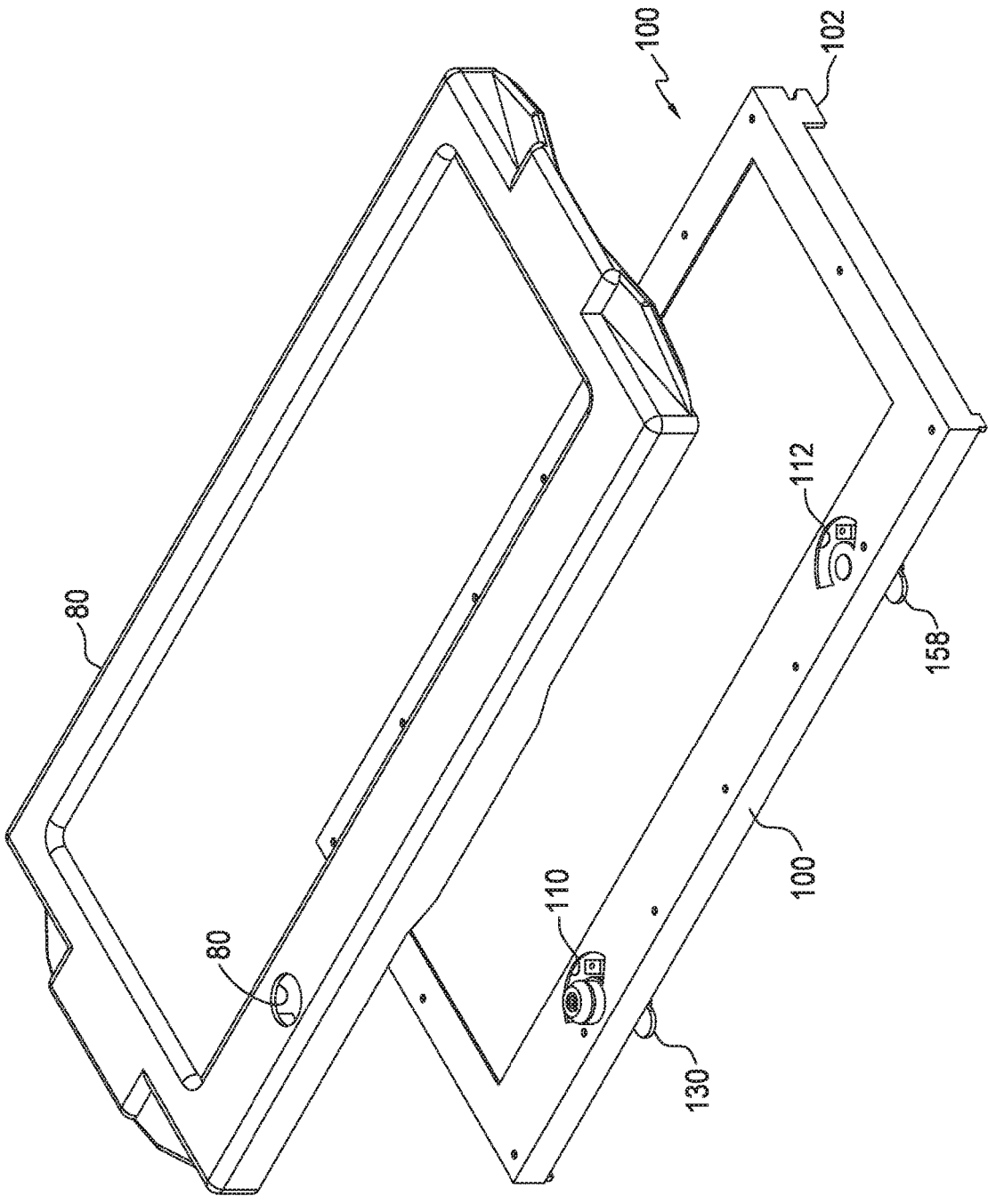


FIG. 39

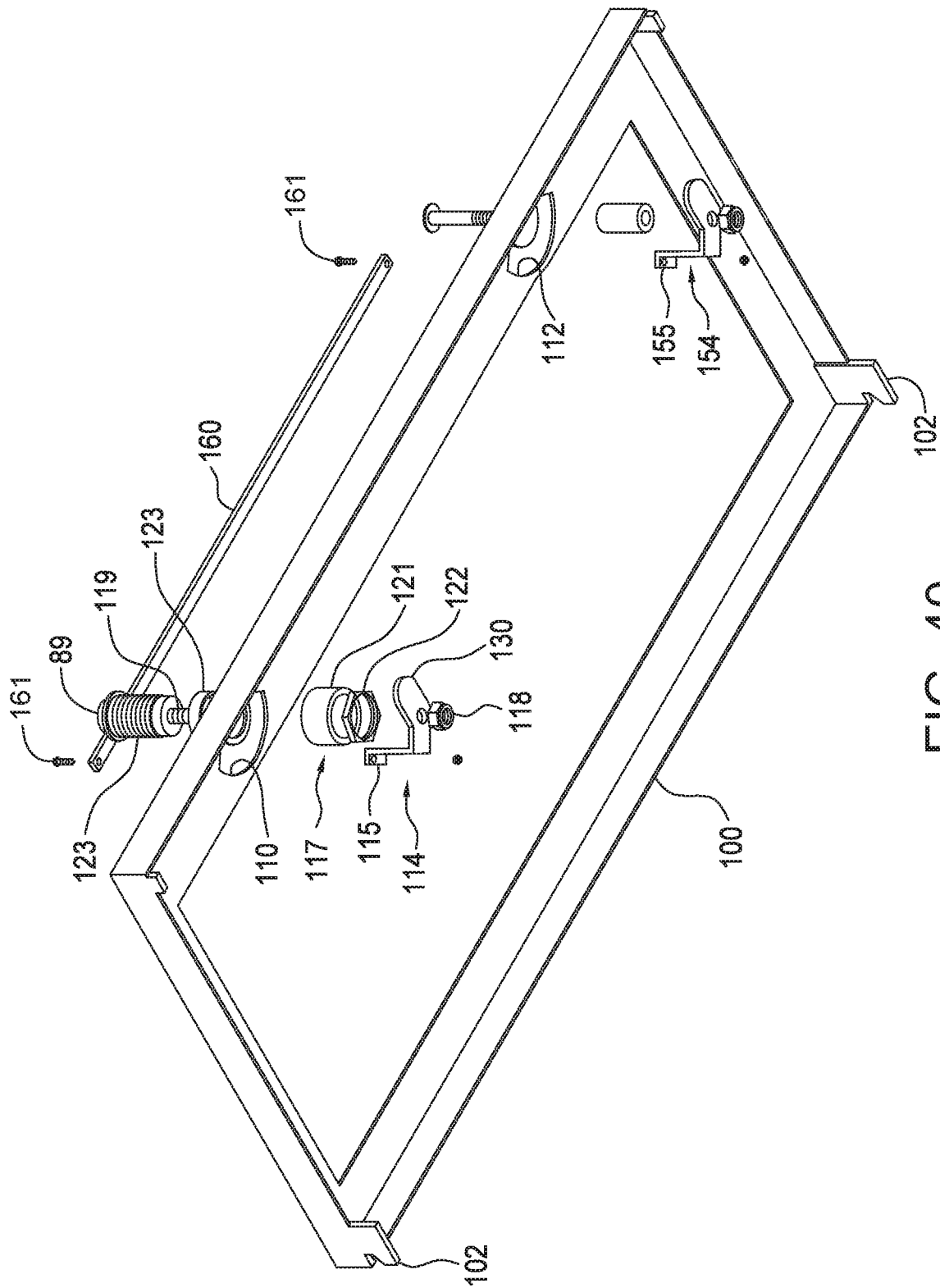


FIG. 40

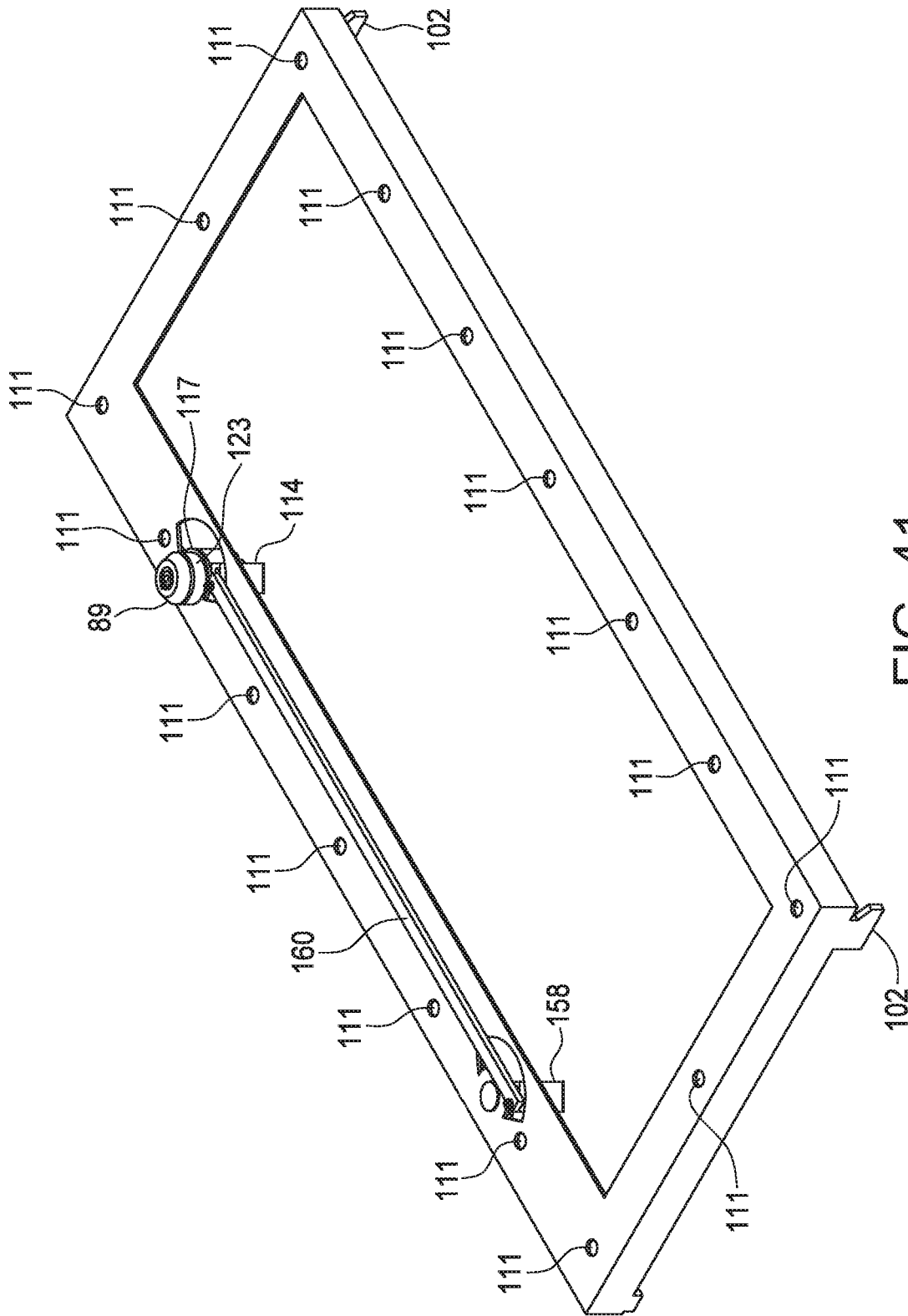


FIG. 41

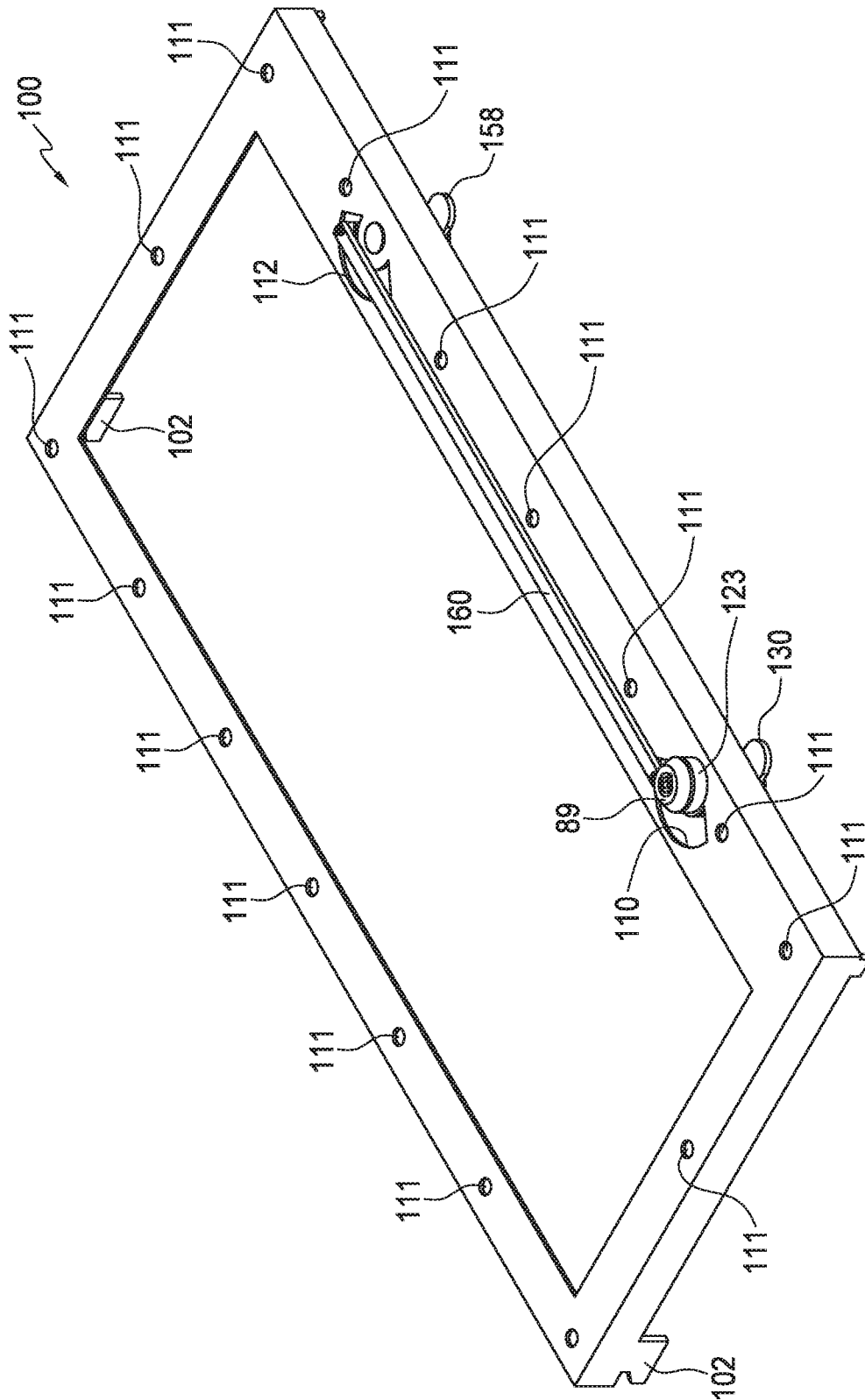


FIG. 42

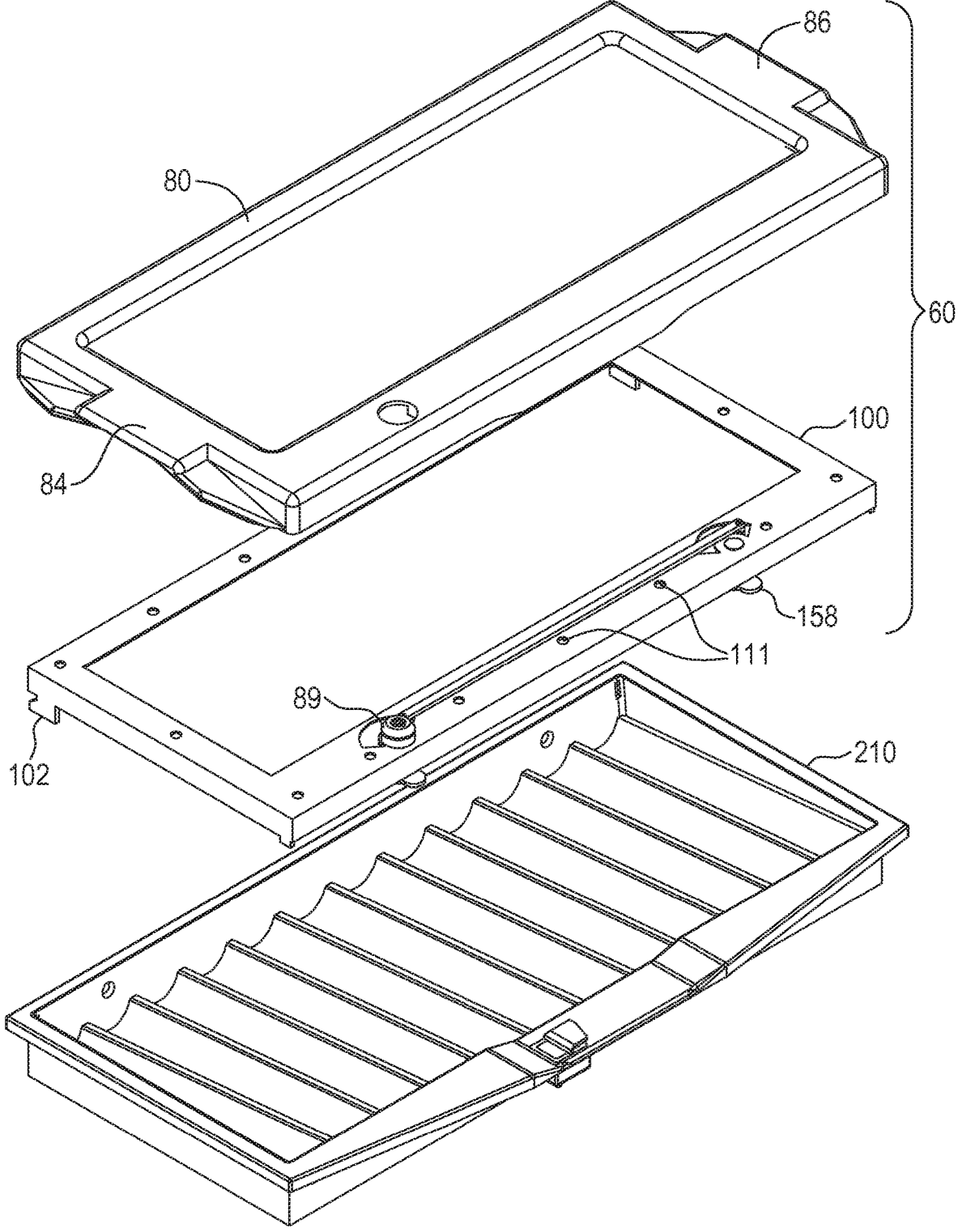


FIG. 43

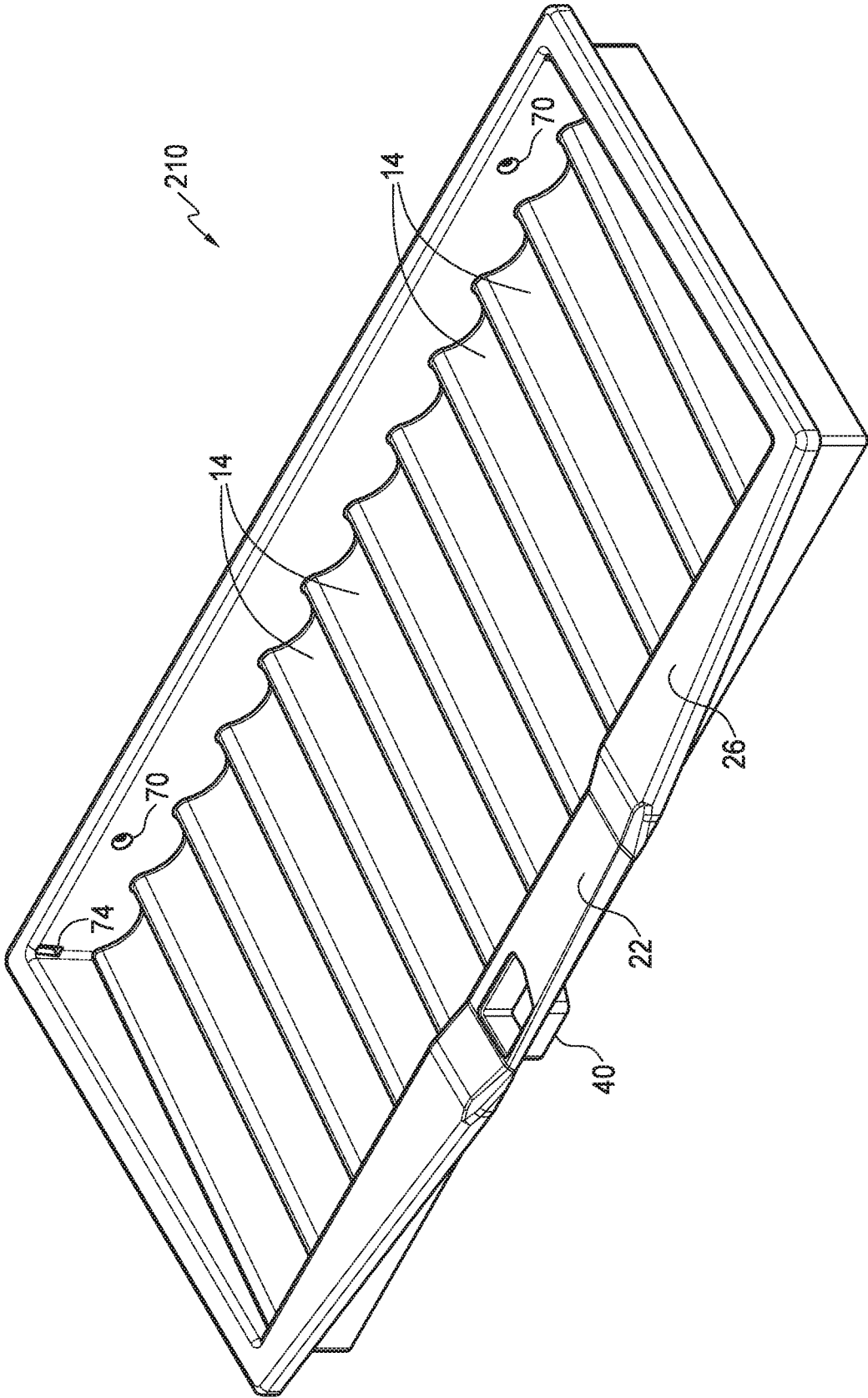


FIG. 44

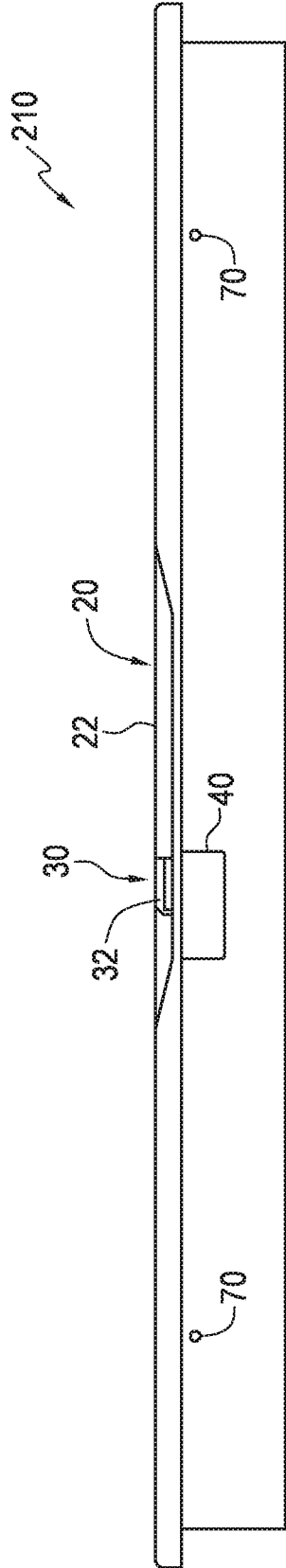


FIG. 45

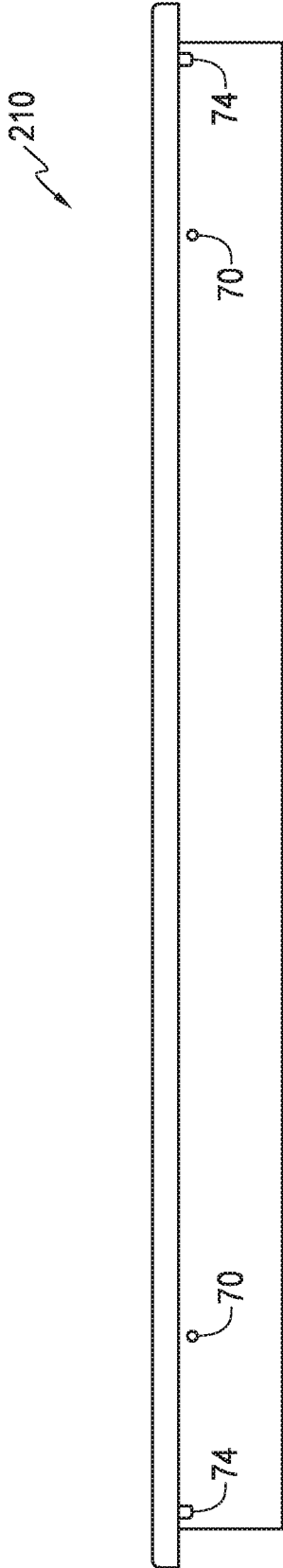


FIG. 46

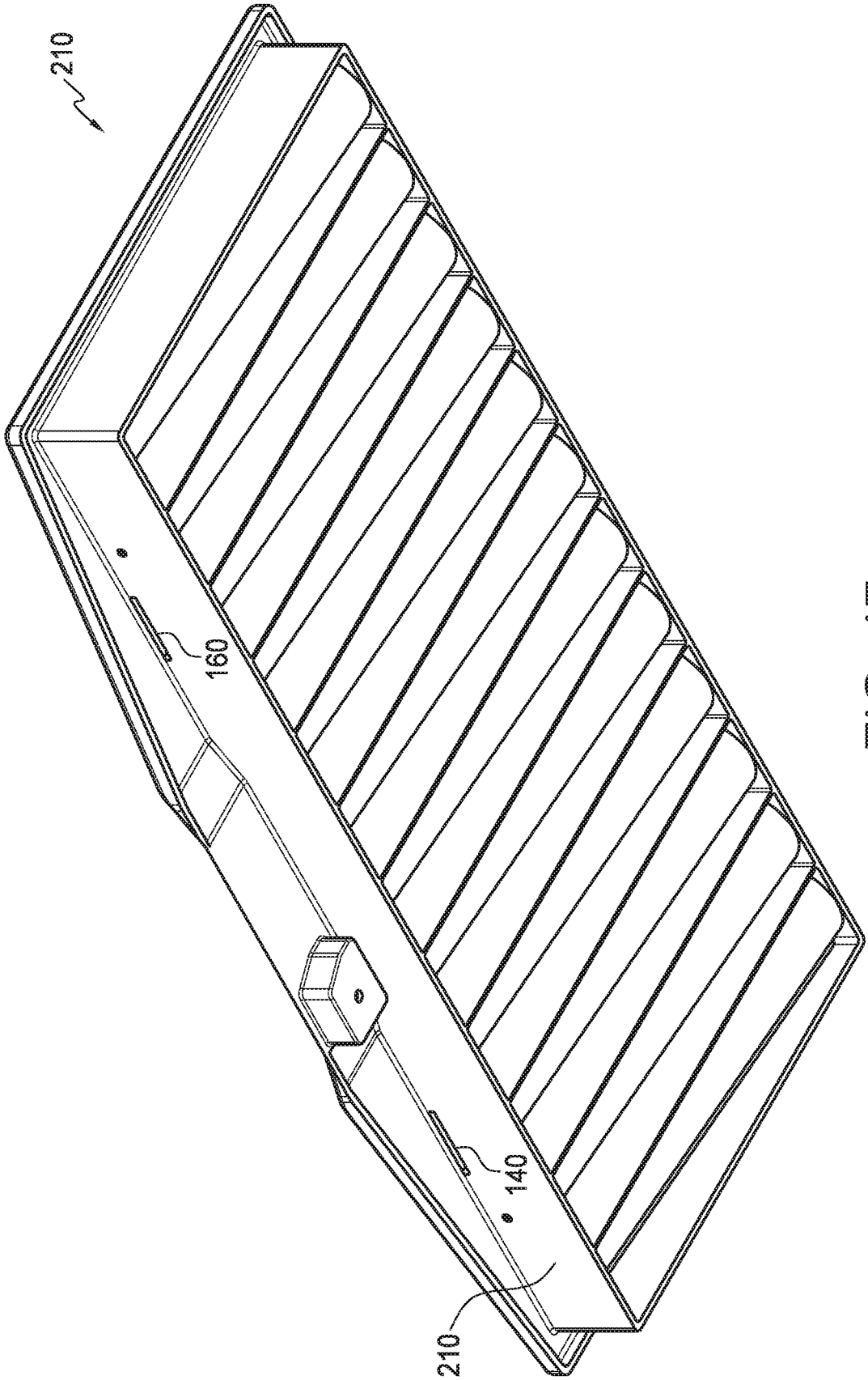


FIG. 47

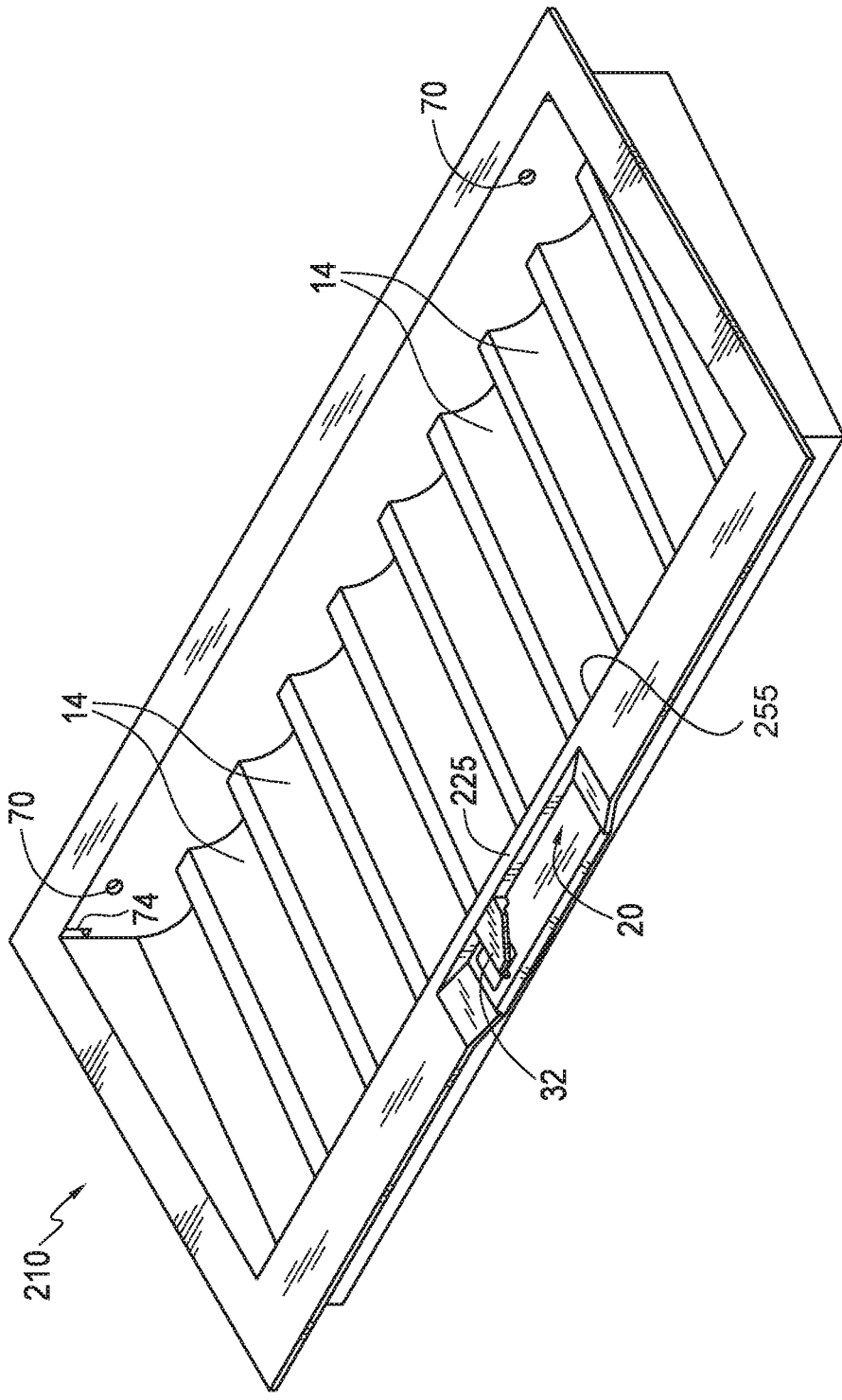


FIG. 48

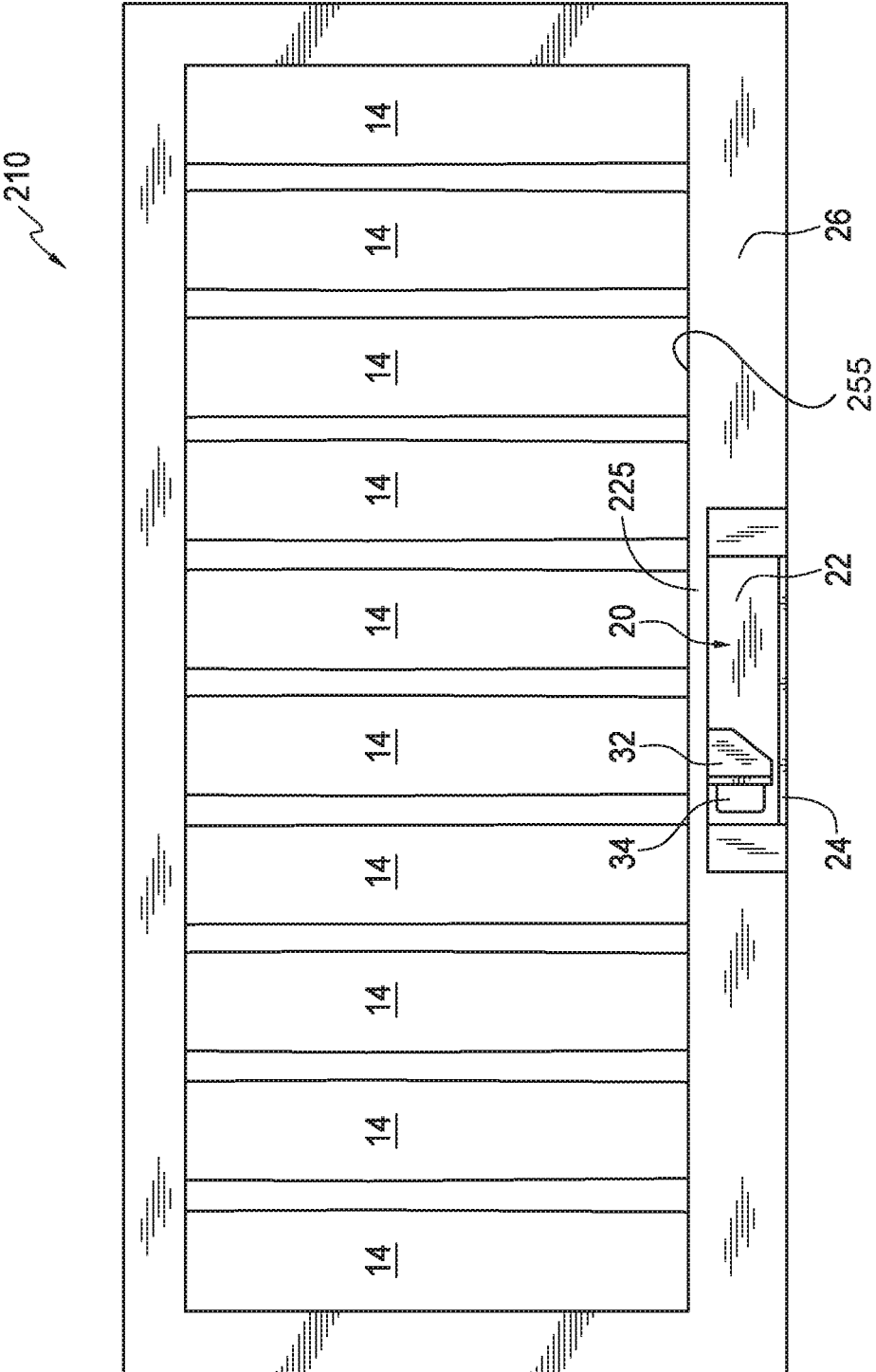


FIG. 49

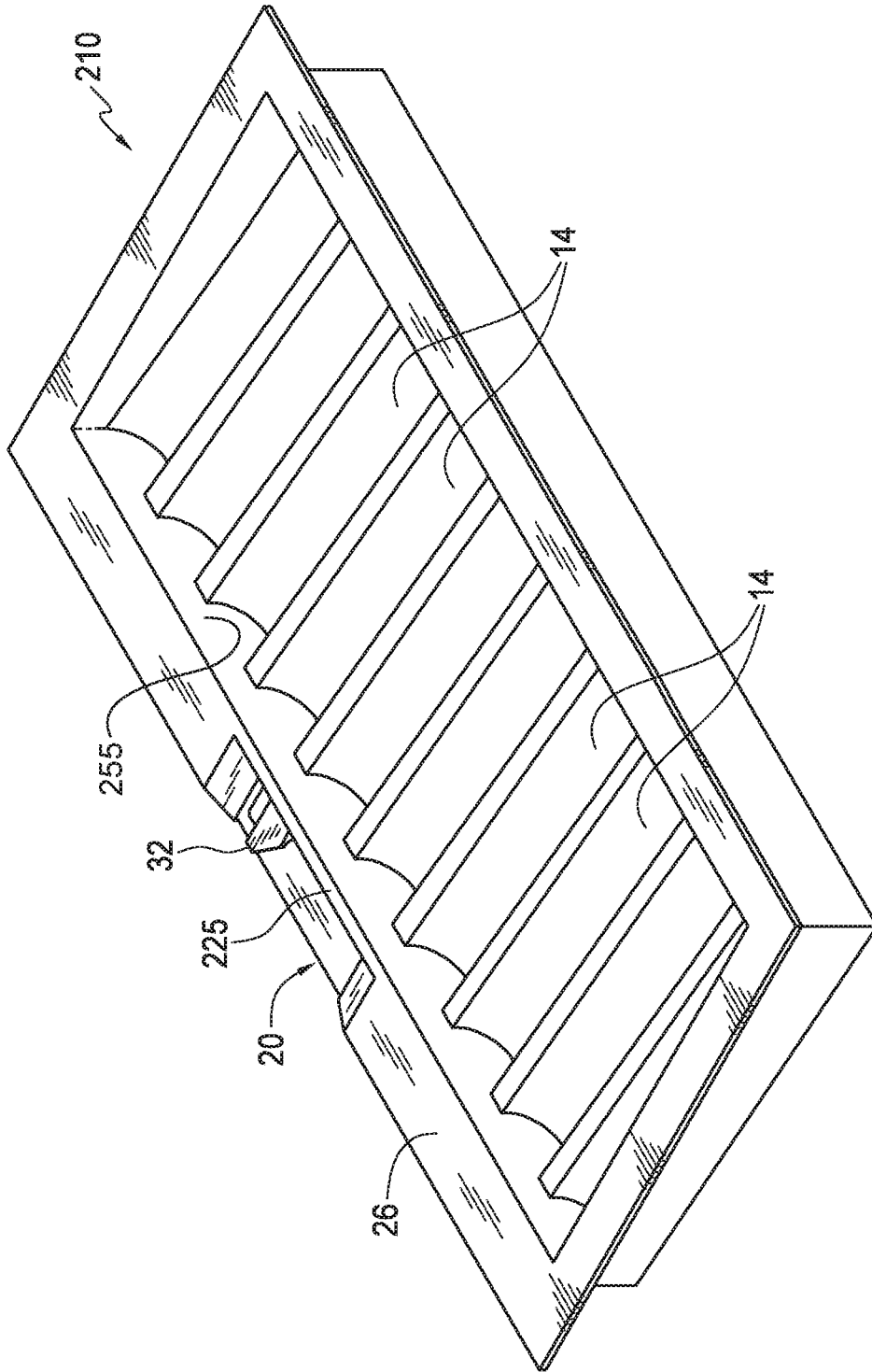


FIG. 50

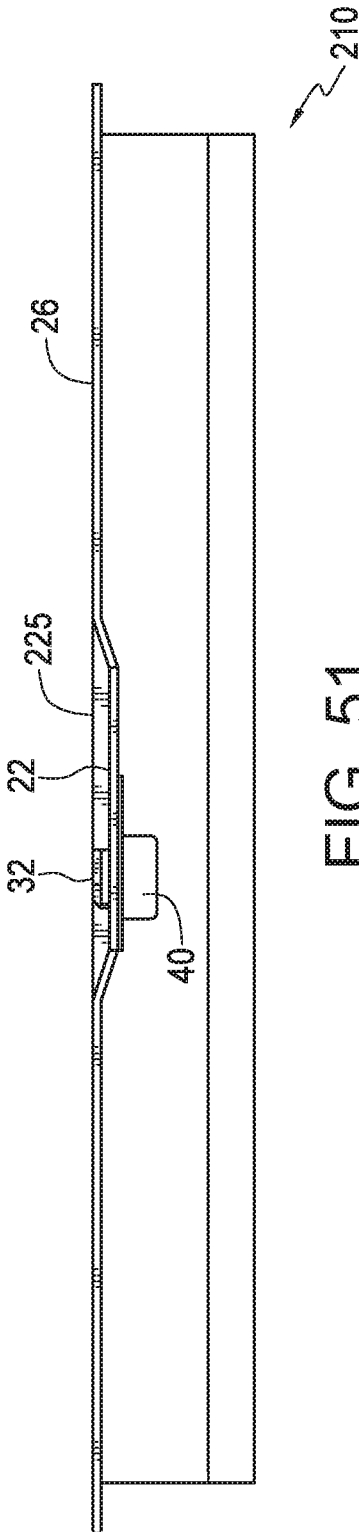


FIG. 51

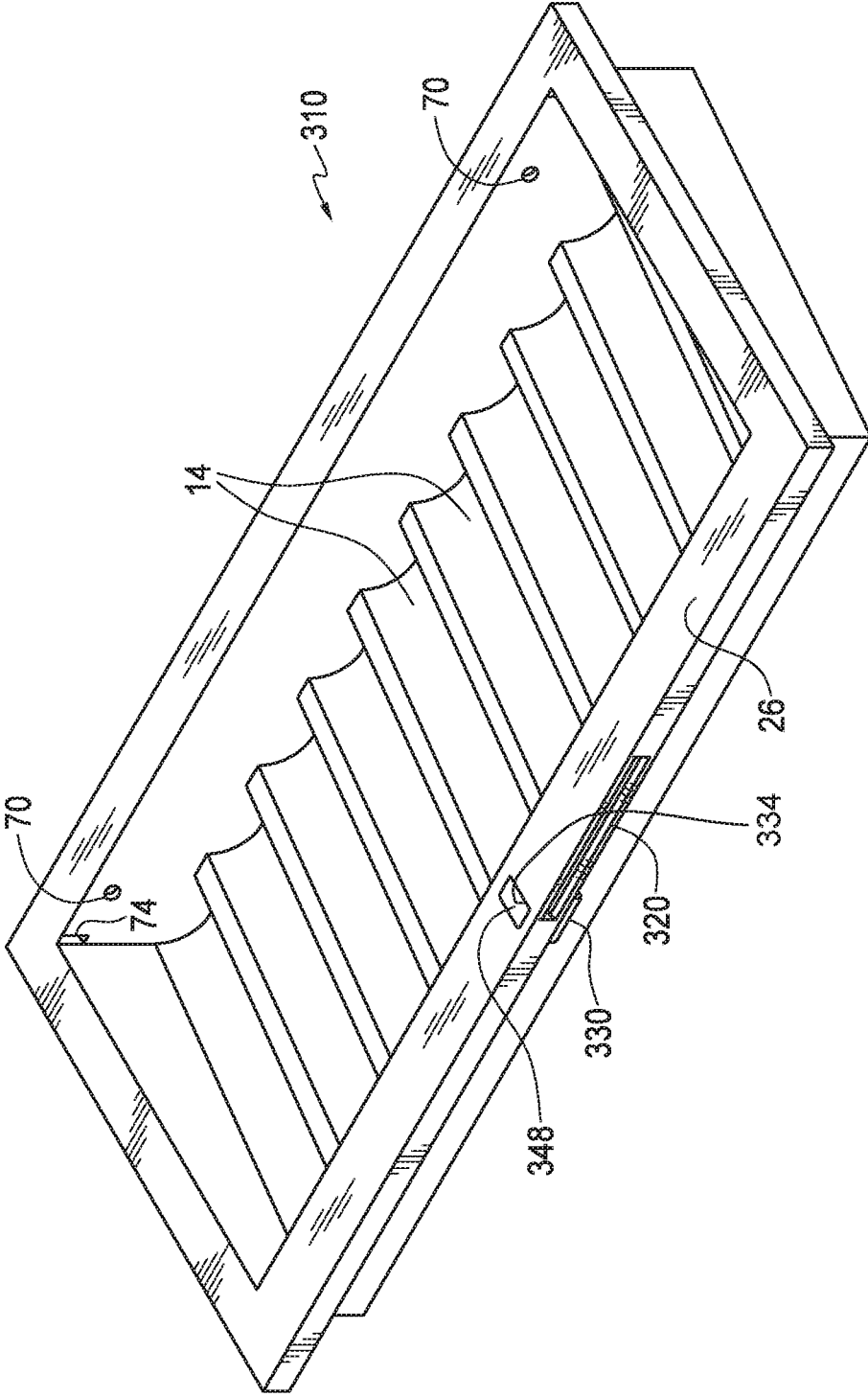


FIG. 52

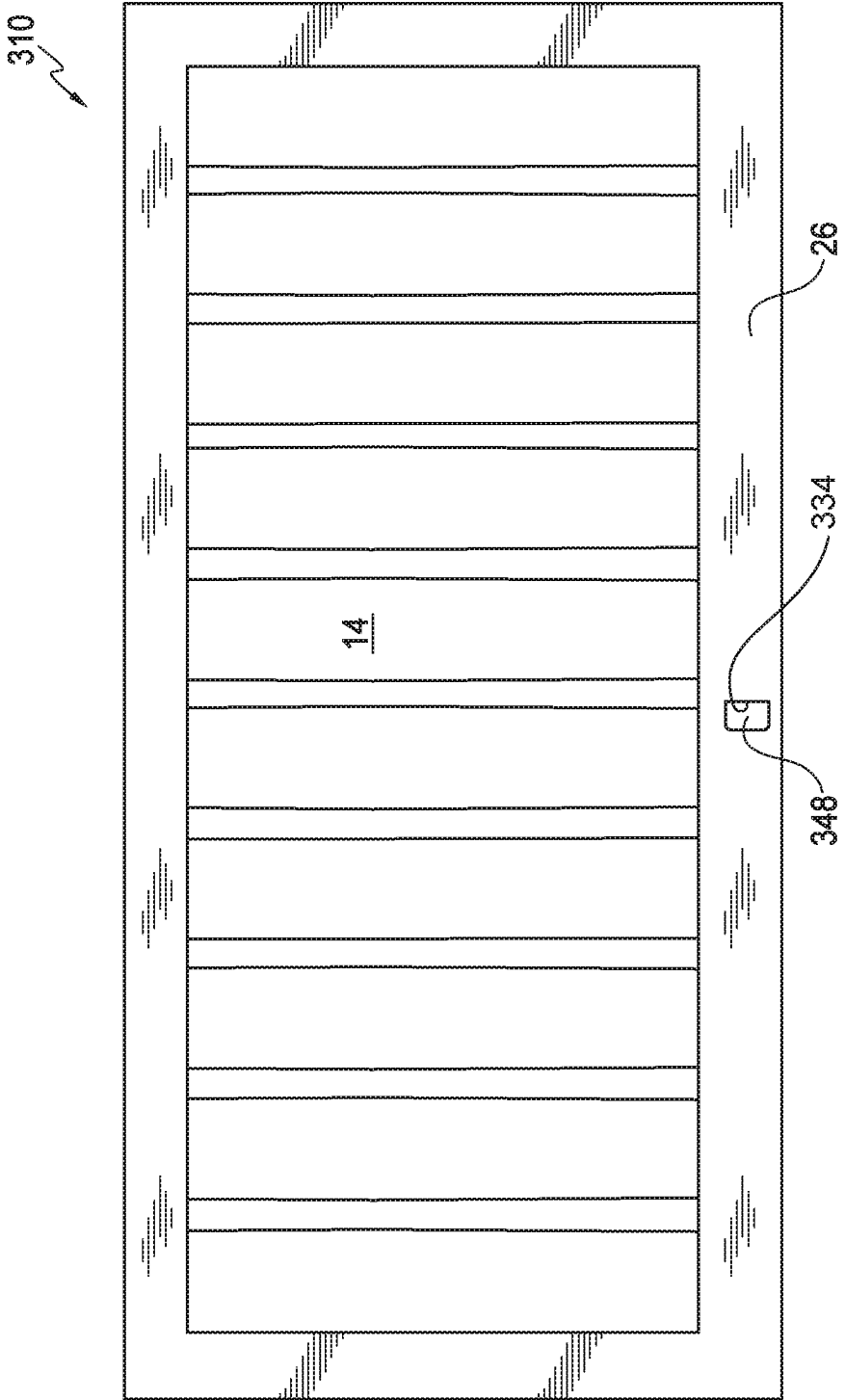


FIG. 53

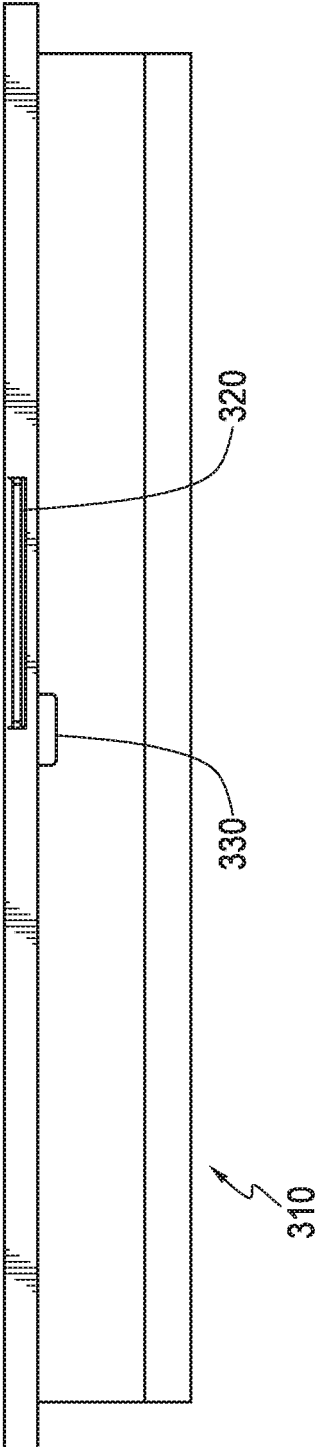


FIG. 54

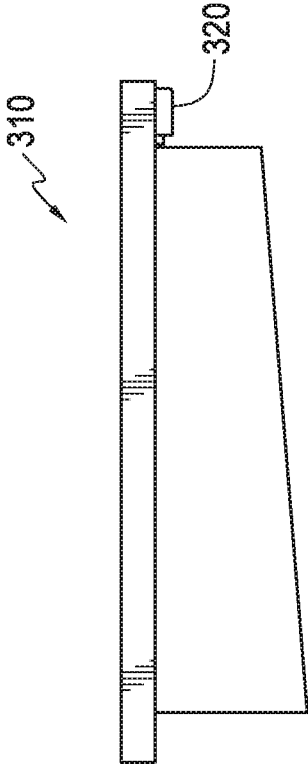


FIG. 55

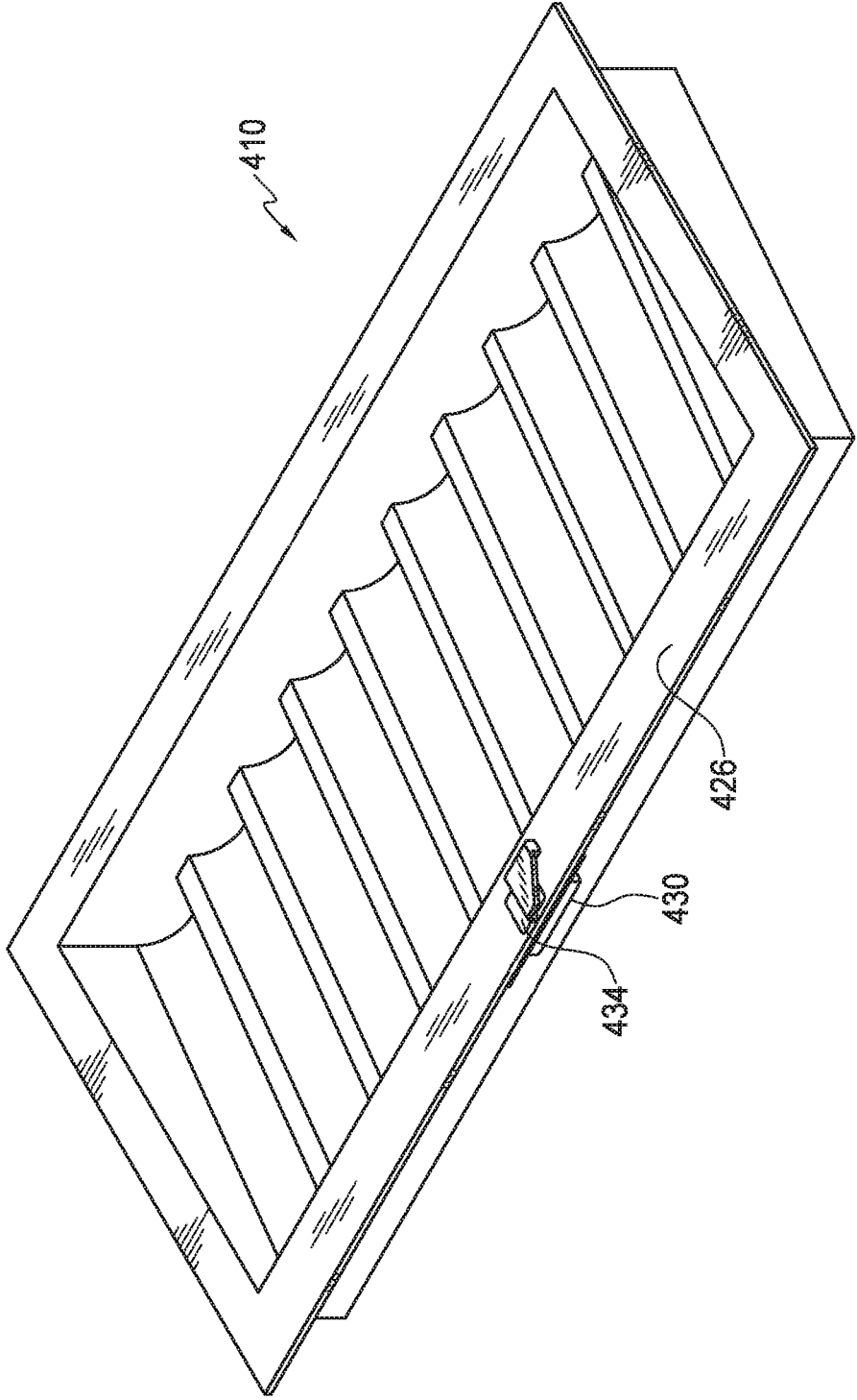


FIG. 56

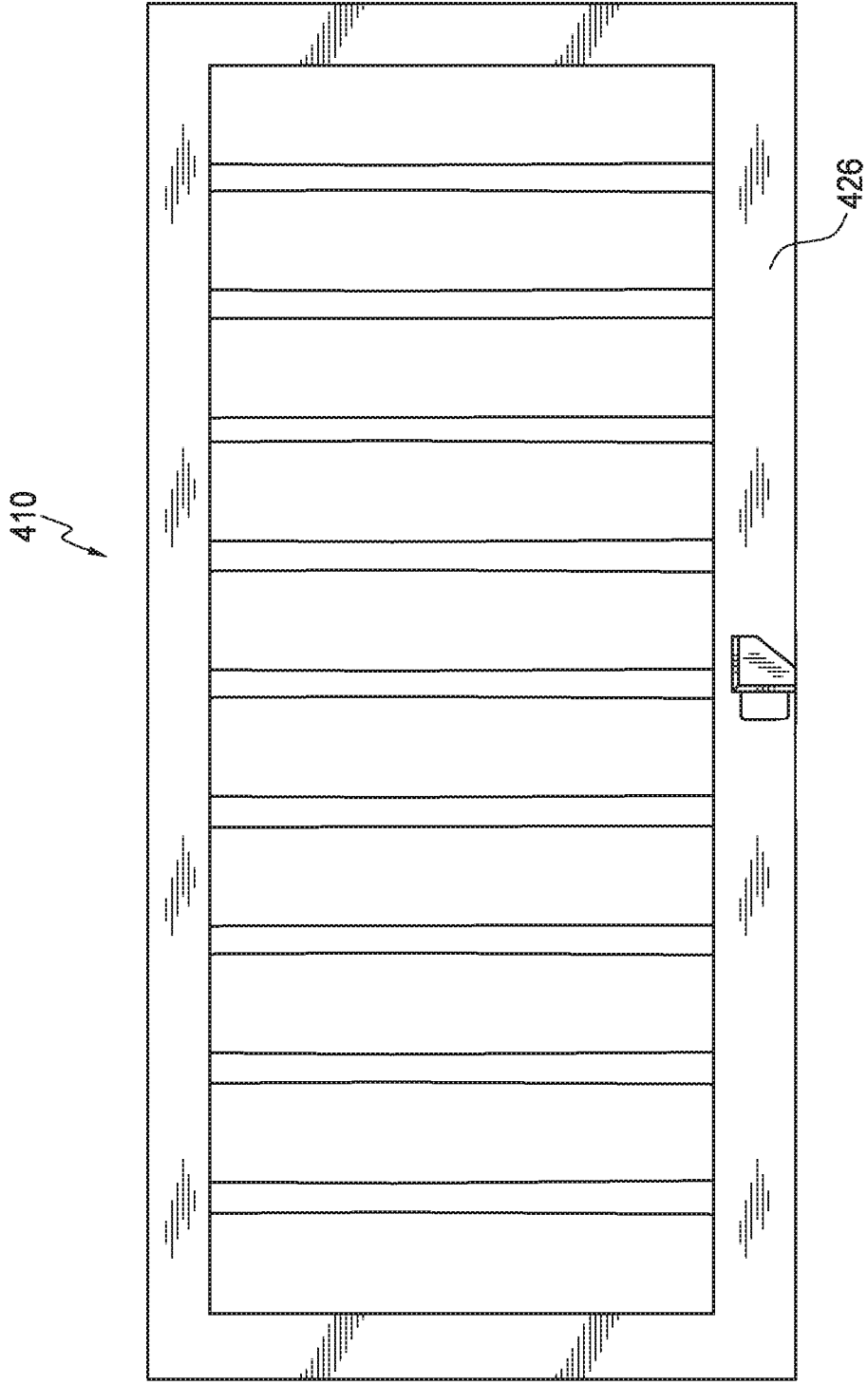


FIG. 57

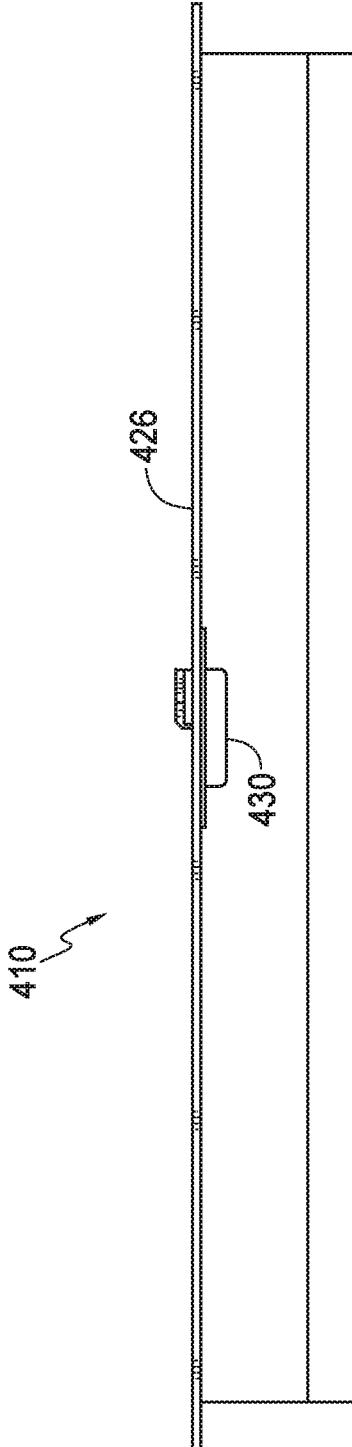


FIG. 58

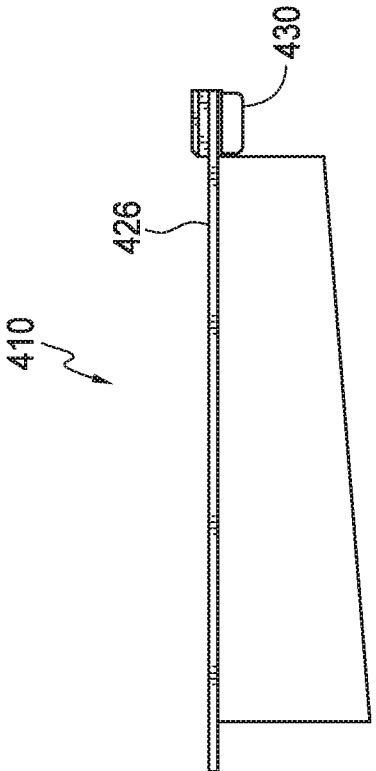


FIG. 59

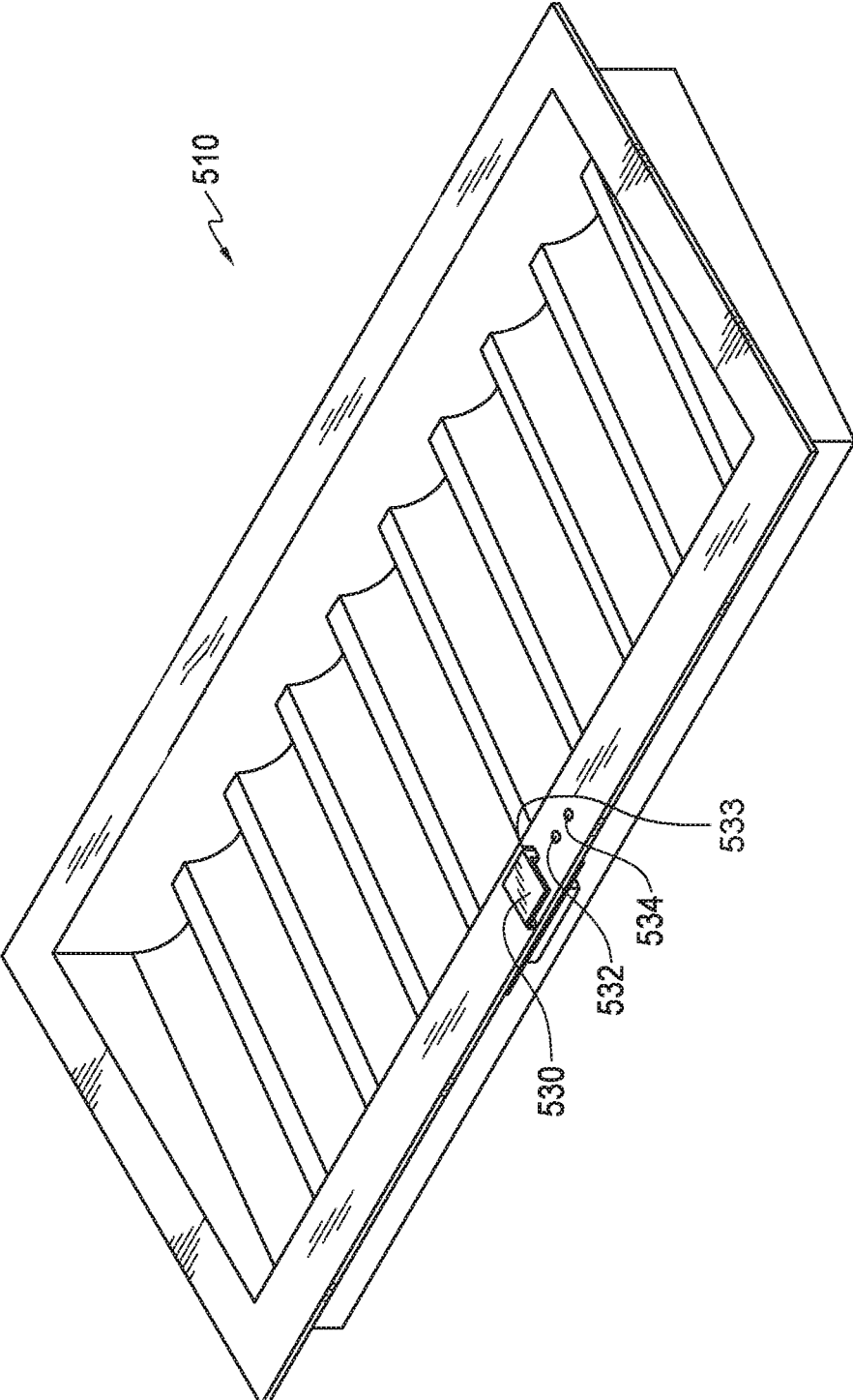


FIG. 60

**CHIP RACKS INCLUDING A RACK FOR
HOLDING CHIPS AND A CARD READER
AND RELATED DEVICES**

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED
APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 16/140,754, filed Sep. 25, 2018, which application is a utility continuation application of U.S. Design patent application Ser. No. 29/569,103, filed Jun. 23, 2016, now U.S. Design U.S. Pat. No. D839,965, issued Feb. 5, 2019, titled CHIP RACKS, which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 14/047,841, filed Oct. 7, 2013, now U.S. Pat. No. 9,839,837, issued Dec. 12, 2017, titled INTEGRATED BLACKJACK HOLE CARD READERS AND CHIP RACKS, AND IMPROVED COVERS FOR CHIP RACKS, which is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 13/452,255, filed Apr. 20, 2012, now U.S. Pat. No. 8,567,784, issued Oct. 29, 2013, titled INTEGRATED BLACKJACK HOLE CARD READERS AND CHIP RACKS, AND IMPROVED COVERS FOR CHIP RACKS, which is a continuation-in-part of the following: U.S. Design patent application Ser. No. 29/399,334 filed Aug. 12, 2011, now U.S. Design Pat. D692,068, issued Oct. 22, 2013, titled MODIFIED CHIP RACK WITH INTEGRATED HOLE CARD READER; of U.S. Design patent application Ser. No. 29/399,004, filed Aug. 8, 2011, now U.S. Design Pat. D692,067, issued Oct. 22, 2013, titled CHIP RACK WITH INTEGRATED HOLE CARD READER; and of U.S. Design application Ser. No. 29/399,000, filed Aug. 8, 2011, now U.S. Design Pat. D692,066, issued Oct. 22, 2013, titled CHIP RACK WITH INTEGRATED HOLE CARD READER; the disclosure of each of which is hereby incorporated herein in its entirety by this reference.

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0002] Embodiments of the disclosure relate generally to table wager games where chips are used, and, more particularly, to apparatus used for storing such chips having devices associated therewith for reading the hole card of a blackjack dealer during the game of “21.”

BACKGROUND

[0003] The game of blackjack, or “21,” is played in gambling casinos, private clubs and homes throughout the world. It is the most widely played table game in the world. A conventional gaming table used for playing blackjack has a plurality of player locations around the outer periphery of the table, and a dealer location located generally opposite the player locations. From the dealer’s location, the dealer effects the operation of the game, including dealing of the cards, paying winning wagers and collecting losing wagers.

[0004] An important function of the dealer in modern day blackjack is to utilize a hole card reader (“reader”) which is associated with most commercial blackjack tables adjacent the dealer position. One such reader in use today employs a refractive or reflective element located beneath the playing surface of the table which the dealer uses to read a portion of the hole, or down, card in the dealer’s dealt hand to determine if the dealer has twenty-one when the up-facing card initially dealt to the dealer is an ace or has a value of ten. One such reader is disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 5,681,039.

In that patent, an “optical” type reader is disclosed in which, in one embodiment, an optical quality prism is associated with a housing. The reader defines an aperture over which is adapted to be placed the portion of the dealer’s down card to be read when the dealer’s up facing card is an ace or has a value of ten. If the dealer determines that he or she has blackjack upon the initial deal, the hand is called, thus resulting in increased hands per hour.

[0005] Heretofore, blackjack hole card readers have been installed in a special cutout created in the blackjack table at a location between the standard chip rack and the player positions. This has required the creation of an aperture in the table surface and felt covering (“layout”) over the table, adding unnecessarily to the time to construct the table and/or retrofit the table to accommodate the hole card reader.

[0006] It would be advantageous to integrate the reader, whatever type of reader it may be (e.g. optical or digital), with the chip rack, so that the reader and the chip rack form a substantially integral unit which occupies the location in which the chip rack alone has heretofore been placed.

[0007] In addition, chip racks are typically provided with a locking cover to avoid the theft of chips when the chip rack is not being used but contains gambling chips. Heretofore, such covers are attached to the chip rack, or the table, or both, using a single locking mechanism, located centrally of one side edge of the cover. The use of a single locking connection has led to the opportunity to bend one or more corners of the cover away from the chip rack to permit unauthorized access to the contents of the chip rack. Therefore, it would be desirable to provide a fortified locking mechanism for chip rack covers.

BRIEF SUMMARY

[0008] One aspect of this disclosure is directed generally to the integration of blackjack hole card readers and chip racks. In one embodiment, a chip rack of standard configuration is provided, and defines a recess or opening into which the reader can be mounted. In other embodiments, the chip rack and reader are manufactured as a single unit. Numerous other structures for accomplishing the purposes of the disclosure are also contemplated.

[0009] A modified chip rack cover locking assembly is disclosed as well. In one such embodiment, a single locking device is associated with the cover, but two or more connections are made with the chip rack or gaming table so as to fortify the connection between the cover of the chip rack and the chip rack itself. Alternatively, two or more locking mechanisms may be employed.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0010] FIG. 1 is a left front perspective view of a first embodiment of an integrated blackjack hole card reader and chip rack.

[0011] FIG. 2 is a right front perspective view thereof.

[0012] FIG. 3 is a front elevational view thereof.

[0013] FIG. 4 is a right side elevational; view thereof.

[0014] FIG. 5 is a top plan view thereof.

[0015] FIG. 6 is a bottom plan view thereof.

[0016] FIG. 7 is a left rear perspective view thereof.

[0017] FIG. 8 is a front elevational partially exploded view thereof.

[0018] FIG. 9 is a right front assembled perspective view of a card reader suitable for use with the disclosure.

[0019] FIG. 10 is a front assembled elevational view thereof.
 [0020] FIG. 11 is a left side assembled elevational view thereof.
 [0021] FIG. 12 is a left front exploded perspective view thereof.
 [0022] FIG. 13 is a right rear exploded perspective view thereof.
 [0023] FIG. 14 is a left front assembled perspective view thereof.
 [0024] FIG. 15 is a right elevational partially exploded thereof.
 [0025] FIG. 16 is a right front partially exploded view thereof.
 [0026] FIG. 17A is a left front perspective view of a chip rack and hole card reader and a locking security cover assembly therefore with the cover assembly in the fully installed position.
 [0027] FIG. 17B is a left front perspective view of the chip rack and hole card reader and a locking security cover therefore with the cover assembly in a partially installed/removed position.
 [0028] FIG. 18 is a right front perspective view of the assembly shown in FIG. 17.
 [0029] FIG. 19 is a left rear perspective view thereof.
 [0030] FIG. 20A is a top plan view thereof.
 [0031] FIG. 20B is a cross sectional elevational view taken along lines B-B of FIG. 20A.
 [0032] FIG. 20C is a cross sectional elevational view taken along lines C-C of FIG. 20A.
 [0033] FIG. 20D is a cross sectional elevational view taken along lines D-D of FIG. 20A.
 [0034] FIG. 20E is a cross sectional elevational view taken along lines E-E of FIG. 20A.
 [0035] FIG. 20F is a cross sectional elevational view taken along lines F-F of FIG. 20A.
 [0036] FIG. 20G is a cross sectional elevational view taken along lines G-G of FIG. 20A.
 [0037] FIG. 20H is a cross sectional elevational view taken along lines H-H of FIG. 20A.
 [0038] FIG. 21A is a right side elevational view of the assembly shown in FIG. 17A.
 [0039] FIG. 21B is a right side elevational view thereof with the cover assembly in a partially installed/removed position.
 [0040] FIG. 22 is a front elevational view of the assembly shown in FIG. 17A.
 [0041] FIG. 23 is a bottom plan view thereof.
 [0042] FIG. 24 is a rear elevational view thereof.
 [0043] FIG. 25 is a right rear perspective view of the cover assembly removed from its association with the chip rack and hole card reader assembly.
 [0044] FIG. 26 is a bottom right rear perspective view thereof.
 [0045] FIG. 27 is a rear elevational view thereof.
 [0046] FIG. 28 is a front elevational view thereof.
 [0047] FIG. 29 is a right side elevational view thereof.
 [0048] FIG. 30 is a top plan view thereof.
 [0049] FIG. 31 is a bottom plan view thereof.
 [0050] FIG. 32 is a bottom left front perspective view of the cover insert member removed from its association with the cover assembly.
 [0051] FIG. 33 is a bottom right rear perspective view thereof.

[0052] FIG. 34 is a left side elevational view thereof.
 [0053] FIG. 35 is a bottom plan view thereof.
 [0054] FIG. 36 is a top plan view thereof.
 [0055] FIG. 37 is a rear elevational view thereof.
 [0056] FIG. 38 is a right rear bottom exploded perspective view of the cover assembly.
 [0057] FIG. 39 is an exploded left front top elevational view thereof.
 [0058] FIG. 40 is a bottom right front perspective exploded view of the cover insert member.
 [0059] FIG. 41 is a left rear top perspective view of the cover insert member.
 [0060] FIG. 42 is a right top front perspective view thereof.
 [0061] FIG. 43 is an exploded right front perspective view of the chip rack and integrated hole card reader along with the cover assembly.
 [0062] FIG. 44 is a left front top perspective view of another chip rack suitable for use with the cover assembly shown in FIGS. 17-43 with the hole card reader removed therefrom.
 [0063] FIG. 45 is a front elevational view thereof.
 [0064] FIG. 46 is a rear elevational view thereof.
 [0065] FIG. 47 is a bottom left front perspective view thereof.
 [0066] FIG. 48 is a left front top perspective view of an integrated chip rack and hole card reader.
 [0067] FIG. 49 is a top plan view thereof.
 [0068] FIG. 50 is a left rear top perspective view thereof.
 [0069] FIG. 51 is a front elevational view thereof.
 [0070] FIG. 52 is a left front top perspective view of an alternative embodiment of an integrated chip rack and hole card reader.
 [0071] FIG. 53 is a top plan view thereof.
 [0072] FIG. 54 is a front elevational view thereof.
 [0073] FIG. 55 is a right side elevational view thereof.
 [0074] FIG. 56 is a top left front perspective view of a further alternative embodiment of a chip rack and integrated hole care reader.
 [0075] FIG. 57 is a top plan view thereof.
 [0076] FIG. 58 is a front elevational view thereof.
 [0077] FIG. 59 is a right side elevational view thereof.
 [0078] FIG. 60 is a still further alternative embodiment of an integrated chip rack and hole card reader.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0079] Before describing in detail exemplary embodiments of the disclosure herein, it should be observed that the inventive embodiments of the disclosure reside primarily in combinations of structural components and manufacturing, installation and use steps.

[0080] Accordingly, the apparatus components have been represented where appropriate by conventional symbols in the drawings, showing only those specific details that are pertinent to understanding the embodiments of the present disclosure so as not to obscure the disclosure with details that will be readily apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art having the benefit of the description herein.

[0081] In this document, relational terms, such as “first” and “second,” “top” and “bottom,” and the like, may be used solely to distinguish one entity or element from another entity or element without necessarily requiring or implying any physical or logical relationship or order between such entities or elements.

[0082] The terms “comprises,” “comprising,” “comprise” or any other variation thereof are intended to cover a non-exclusive inclusion, such that a process, method, article, or apparatus that comprises a list of elements need not necessarily include only those elements, but may include other elements not expressly listed or inherent to such process, method, article, or apparatus.

[0083] The term “plurality of” as used in connection with any object or action means two or more of such objects or actions.

[0084] A claim element preceded by the article “a” or “an” does not, without more constraints, preclude the existence of additional identical elements in the process, method, article, or apparatus that includes the element.

[0085] As used herein, the term “hole card reader” includes any device which can be used to assist the dealer in a game of blackjack to detect if he or she has been dealt 21 in the initial deal.

[0086] FIGS. 1 through 16 show a first embodiment of a chip rack and hole card reader, which comprises a chip rack or rack 10 which may be of standard configuration, and incorporates a plurality of chip slots 14 surrounded by a peripheral wall 12. It is to be noted that the number and size of chip slots 14 is not relevant to the embodiments disclosed herein, the number and size thereof being merely a matter of choice for the casino. In addition, the overall configuration of the chip rack and reader may take any shape desired, the particular shapes illustrated herein being merely illustrative of any of the myriad options thereof which will occur to those of skill in the art after having had the benefit of reviewing this disclosure.

[0087] Rack 10 defines a card receiving area 20, which may be comprised of a slightly lowered area 22, which may or may not have a beveled leading edge 24. Sidewalls 12 of chip rack 10 may be of any width desired, the embodiment shown herein including a slightly wider wall width on the dealer position-facing side 26. In the embodiment in which the card receiving area 22 is lowered relative to the remainder of side wall 26, side wall 26 includes planar sections 27 and 29 on either side of lowered area 22.

[0088] A hole card reader 30 is integrated with front wall 26 in such a way that it is oriented to receive the dealer's down card in the appropriate circumstances for reading by the dealer. Reader 30 may or may not incorporate a top piece 32. Reader 30 defines an aperture 48 (shown in FIGS. 12-13) through which the dealer may view a portion of his or her down card. A refractive or reflective element is associated with the reader 30, such as an optical prism 34 best seen in FIGS. 12-13, or a mirror, to refract or reflect the image of the portion of the dealer's down card placed in registry with aperture 48. In one embodiment, aperture 48 extends under top piece 32, such that when the dealer's down card is placed in registry with aperture 48 the portion of the dealer's down card to be read sits in registry with the reflective element, and can be seen by the dealer.

[0089] As best seen in FIGS. 8-16, reader 30 may be integrated with chip rack 10 in the form of a unitary reader component which can be removably fastened to rack 10. It is to be understood, however, as will be exemplified elsewhere in this disclosure, and/or as will occur to those of skill in the art after having read this disclosure, the card reader feature of the disclosure may be integrated with the chip rack in a number of different fashions. Similarly, the card reader may be of the “optical” type such as those shown herein, or

may be a digital reader which detects whatever aspects of the dealer's hole card is necessary to give rise to an output signal to indicate that the dealer either does or, optionally, does not have blackjack.

[0090] In the embodiment shown, however, reader 30 is a removable component comprised generally of upper and lower housing sections 46, 49 respectively, a lower support plate 44, mounting bolt 37 and reflective member such as prism 34. Top piece 32 may optionally be employed, and, if so employed, may be connected to top housing section 46.

[0091] Upper housing section 46 defines aperture 48 through which the dealer may view the reflected portion of his or her down card to be read when the down card is placed in registry with aperture 46. Top piece 32 and upper housing section 46 define a slot 33 into which may be placed the dealer's down card. However, neither top piece 32 nor slot 33 is necessary elements of the functional aspects of the disclosure.

[0092] Mounting means such as bracket or pocket 40 may be employed to secure reader 30 to rack 10. Bracket 40 defines a lower aperture through which is passed a fastener such as bolt 37. Thereafter, a fastener such as nut 41 may be threaded thereon to removably connect reader 30 to rack 10. Other structure for mounting reader 30 to rack 10 will occur to those of skill in the art after having the benefit of reviewing this disclosure.

[0093] Rack 10, in the embodiment disclosed in FIGS. 1-8, defines an aperture 28 which is sized and shaped to receive reader 30 therein, permitting reader 30 to nest within bracket or pocket 40 for connection thereto. As reader 30 may tend to wear or even break with extended use, the removability of reader 30 is advantageous.

[0094] It is to be understood that card receiving area 20 need not include a recessed or lowered surface 22, but may be co-planar with or even raised from front wall 26. Moreover, reader 30 need not be removably connected to rack 10, but may be integrated therewith as a single unit.

[0095] FIGS. 17A-43 show a novel locking cover assembly 60 associated with a chip rack, either of the type having an integrated hole card reader, or a prior art chip rack without an integrated reader.

[0096] In one embodiment, cover assembly 60 is adapted to be releasably joined to either chip rack 10, chip rack 210 or a playing table. Cover assembly 60 may or may not define an aperture 62 through which the contents of the chip rack 10 can be viewed. It is customary to employ glass, Lexan® or the like thereover to provide a transparent covering. Cover assembly 60 may, but need not necessarily, define one or more handles 84, 86 to facilitate the raising and lowering of cover assembly 80. Cover assembly 80 may include a lock aperture 88 which is intended to lie in registry with locking device 89. The locking device 89 may be of any suitable type that will occur to those of skill in the art, such as a manual key lock mechanism, a biometrically actuated lock, a key pad lock, or the like.

[0097] As best seen in FIGS. 25-31, 38-40 and 43 cover assembly 60 may be comprised of a top or cover member 80 which defines a lower peripheral edge 63, which is adapted to nestably mate in registry with top wall 26 of chip rack 210 when the cover assembly 60 is placed in registry with rack 210. In embodiments where chip rack 10 employs a recessed card receiving area 20, such as that shown in FIGS. 1-3, 7-8, 16-18 and 20, cover member 60 may (but need not) employ

an extended area **65** to prevent access into the interior of chip rack **210** when cover assembly **60** is placed thereover.

[0098] In one embodiment, chip rack **210** is attached to the playing table through fasteners (not shown), one type of which are passed through apertures such as apertures **70** shown in FIGS. **17A-18**. Other structures for attaching chip rack **210** to the playing table are contemplated to be within the scope of this disclosure. Any number of apertures or other connecting apparatus are envisioned.

[0099] Cover assembly **60**, as discussed above, is ideally comprised of top or cover member **80** and cover insert member **100**. Cover insert member **100** nests within cover member **80** (as seen, for example, in FIG. **26**) and has associated therewith a locking mechanism to be discussed in more detail below. Cover insert member **100** may employ one or more tabs **102** adapted to engage corresponding notches **74** defined by chip rack **210**.

[0100] Cover insert member **100** may connect to cover member **80** in any suitable manner, such as by threaded sockets **111'** associated with the underside of cover member **80** being engaged by threaded screws or the like after passing said screws or the like through apertures **111** defined by cover insert **100**.

[0101] Cover insert member **100** defines a pair of arcuate slots **110**, **112** therein adapted to permit the rotational movement of respective cam members **114**, **154**, respectively. Lock mechanism **89** is connected to cover insert **100** via aperture loop **117** defined by cover insert **100** by passing the barrel of lock **89** therethrough and securing nut **118** to threaded post **119** of lock **89** (threaded post **150** of cam **154**), thereby sandwiching cam **114** in place with respect to lock **89**. A spacer such as cylindrical collar **121** may be used along with nut **122**, which can be threadingly engaged to threads **123** on the exterior wall of the barrel of lock **89**.

[0102] Cam **114** defines a lock tab **130** at one end thereof which is adapted to be rotatable with cam **114** into and out of engagement with an appropriate receiving slot such as slot **140** defined by sidewall **212** of chip rack **210** (shown in FIGS. **17A-24** and **43-47**). In the alternative, or in addition thereto, tab **130** may engage a corresponding slot or other receptacle (not shown) defined by the playing table.

[0103] Rack **10** defines a card receiving area **20**, which may be comprised of a slightly lowered area **22**, which may or may not have a beveled leading edge **24**. Sidewalls **12** of chip rack **10** may be of any width desired, the embodiment shown herein including a slightly wider wall width on the player position-facing side **26**.

[0104] A linkage member, such as link **160**, is preferably connected to the upper ends **115**, **155** of first and second cams **114**, **154**. Any suitable fasteners, such as screws **161**, may be employed to connect link **160** to first and second cam members **114**, **154**. In this way, when lock mechanism **89** is rotated, it causes first locking cam **114** to rotate as well, which causes link **160** to drive second locking cam **154** in the same manner. In this way, locking tabs **130**, **158** can be caused to be placed into and out of locking engagement with slot **140**, **160** of chip rack **210** (or corresponding slots or cutouts in the playing table) (not shown).

[0105] Cover insert **100** may be connected to cover member **80** in any suitable manner, such as by the use of fasteners which can be threaded into or otherwise connected to corresponding sockets **111'** in the underside of cover member **80** after being passed through corresponding apertures **111** defined cover insert **100**. Any other manner of securing

cover insert member **100** to cover **80** is contemplated to be within the scope of the disclosure.

[0106] Link **160** may be located above or below the upper surface **101** of cover insert member **100** (shown in FIG. **42**). The location of link **160** above surface **101** was chosen because locating link **160** in this manner places it between cover member **80** and cover insert member **100**, such that it is not able to contact any of the contents of chip rack **210** while it and the first and second locking cams **114**, **154** are being moved to lock and unlock cover **60**, and is more pleasing aesthetically.

[0107] Upper housing section **46** defines aperture **48** through which the dealer may view the reflected portion of his or her down card to be read when the down card is placed in registry with aperture **46**. Top piece **32** and upper housing section **46** define a slot **33** into which may be placed the dealer's down card. However, neither top piece **32** nor slot **33** are necessary elements of the functional aspects of the disclosure.

[0108] Mounting means such as bracket or pocket **40** may be employed to secure reader **30** to rack **10**. Bracket **40** defines a lower aperture through which is passed a fastener such as bolt **37**. Thereafter, a fastener such as nut **41** may be threaded thereon to removably connect reader **30** to rack **10**. Other structure for mounting reader **30** to rack **10** will occur to those of skill in the art after having the benefit of reviewing this disclosure.

[0109] FIGS. **52-55** depict another modified chip rack **310** in accordance with this disclosure. In this embodiment, card reader prism **334** is integrated within top wall **26** of chip rack **310**, and playing cards can be placed at least partially in registry with at least a portion of prism **334** through which a dealer can view said portion of a downwardly facing playing card.

[0110] FIGS. **55-59** depict yet another modified embodiment of a chip rack **410** of this disclosure, in which a hole card reader **430** is permanently or removably integrated into chip rack **410** in such a manner that upper wall **426** of chip rack **410** is substantially coplanar. Wall **426** defines an aperture in which prism **434** may reside to facilitate reading of cards as discussed previously. Again, this modification is for esthetic purposes only as it provides a pleasing and streamlined appearance.

[0111] FIG. **60** depicts a still further modified variation of the chip rack of this disclosure. In this embodiment, a digital hole card reader such as digital reader **530** is integrated, either removably or permanently, with chip rack **510**. Indicator lights, such as lights **532** and **534**, or other indication apparatus, such as an audible sound generator, are activated by reader **530** in accordance with pre-determined programming within reader **530**, or in accordance with an electrical circuit associated with reader **530**. Any of the known digital hole card readers, or compatible apparatus, may be employed in this embodiment, such as the reader taught by U.S. Pat. No. 5,110,134 to Laughlin. It is to be understood that a digital reader, such as reader **530** and indicator lights **532**, **534**, may be utilized with any of the chip racks disclosed herein, and may also be utilized with cover apparatus **60**.

[0112] Moreover, cover apparatus **60** may be employed with any embodiment of the chip racks disclosed herein or those chip racks which do not employ a hole card reader, which will become apparent to those of skill in the art after having the benefit of reading this disclosure.

[0113] FIGS. 48 through 51 depict a slightly modified chip rack and integrated hole card reader, wherein a wall 255 is interposed between the card reading area 225 and chip slots 14.

[0114] FIGS. 52 through 55 depict a still further embodiment of a chip rack and integrated hole card reader, wherein a card receiving slot 320 is defined by wall 26 of housing 310. A card reader 330 is integrated within wall 26 in such a way that, when a playing card is placed in slot 320, a corner of said card can be read through aperture 348. The arrangement shown in FIGS. 52 through 55 presents a more aesthetically pleasing appearance.

[0115] FIGS. 56 through 59 depict yet another chip rack and integrated hole card reader, wherein card reading area 22 is disposed of, such that wall 26 of rack 410 is flat, which also provides a more appealing appearance.

[0116] FIG. 60 depicts a further embodiment of an integrated chip rack and hole card reader in which a digital hole card reader is incorporated into the chip rack. In this embodiment, a digital reader such as reader 530 is incorporated with rack 510 in such that a card, or portion thereof, that is placed in registry with an aperture 533 in wall 26 will be electronically read or sensed and the value of the card determined. If the dealer has a blackjack pair, blackjack will be indicated by an audible, visible or tactile alarm. One such alarm may be blackjack indicator light 532. If the dealer does not have blackjack, either no alarm is provided or a blackjack absence alarm may be given, such as through blackjack absence indicator light 534.

[0117] Benefits, other advantages, and solutions to problems have been described above with regard to specific embodiments of the present disclosure. However, the benefits, advantages, solutions to problems, and any element(s) that may cause or result in such benefits, advantages, or solutions to become more pronounced are not to be construed as a critical, required, or essential feature or element of any or all the claims. The disclosure is defined solely by the appended claims including any amendments made during the pendency of this application and all equivalents of those claims as issued.

What is claimed is:

1. A method of using a chip rack comprising:
 - supporting casino chips on chip receiving slots of a chip rack;
 - sliding cards between a card playing surface of a gaming table and a card receiving surface extending outward relative to the chip receiving slots of the chip rack, the card receiving surface located distal from a dealer and the chip receiving slots positioned between the dealer and the card receiving surface; and
 - orienting at least one face-down card of the cards over at least a portion of a card reader positioned at the card receiving surface, causing the card reader to display at least one characteristic of a portion of the at least one face-down card of the cards to the dealer.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein orienting the at least one face-down card over the at least a portion of the card reader comprises reflecting the at least one characteristic of the portion of the at least one face-down card off of a reflective surface of the card reader toward the dealer.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein sliding the cards between the card playing surface of the gaming table and the

card receiving surface comprises sliding the cards at an elevation higher than an elevation of the chip receiving surface.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein sliding the cards between the card playing surface of the gaming table and the card receiving surface comprises maintaining the cards on a side of the chip receiving slots distal from the dealer.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein orienting the at least one face-down card over the at least a portion of the card reader comprises maintaining a portion of the card receiving surface interposed between the at least one face-down card and the chip receiving slots.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein sliding the cards between the card playing surface of the gaming table and the card receiving surface comprises lowering or maintaining at least substantially constant an elevation of the cards with respect to the card playing surface of the gaming table.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein sliding the cards between the card playing surface of the gaming table and the card receiving surface of the chip rack comprises maintaining the cards in continuous contact with the gaming table and the chip rack when sliding the cards between the card playing surface of the gaming table and the card receiving surface of the chip rack.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein maintaining the cards in continuous contact with the gaming table and the chip rack when sliding the cards between the card playing surface of the gaming table and the card receiving surface of the chip rack comprises sliding the cards over a beveled leading edge of the card receiving surface.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein orienting the at least one face-down card over the at least a portion of the card reader, causing the card reader to display the at least one characteristic of the portion of the at least one face-down card, comprises placing the portion of the at least one face-down card between a reflective surface and a cover of the card reader extending over a portion of the reflective surface.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein causing the card reader to display the at least one characteristic of the portion of the at least one face-down card comprises reflecting the at least one characteristic of the portion of the at least one face-down card off an optical prism of a reflective surface of the card reader toward the dealer.

11. The method of claim 1, further comprising aligning at least a corner of the at least one face-down card with a protrusion of the card reader and when orienting the at least one face-down card over the at least a portion of the card reader.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein causing the card reader to display the at least one characteristic of the portion of the at least one face-down card to the dealer comprises activating indicator light.

13. A method of using a chip rack comprising:

- placing casino wagering chips on recesses in a chip rack;
- sliding cards between a card playing surface of a gaming table and a card receiving surface of a flange portion extending outward from the recesses on a side of the recesses opposite a dealer; and

aligning a face-down card of the cards with a card reader on the card receiving surface to enable the dealer to determine a value of the face-down card.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the card reader is positioned centrally with respect to the chip rack and

wherein aligning the face-down card with the card reader comprises positioning the face-down card at least substantially centrally with respect to the chip rack.

15. The method of claim **13**, wherein the card reader is positioned proximate a distal edge of the card receiving surface and wherein aligning the face-down card with the card reader comprises positioning the face-down card proximate the distal edge of the card receiving surface.

16. The method of claim **13**, wherein the chip rack is at least partially received within a cutout in the gaming table with the flange portion supporting the chip rack from the playing surface and wherein sliding the cards between the card playing surface and the card receiving surface comprises maintaining the cards in continuous contact with the gaming table and the flange portion when sliding the cards between the card playing surface of the gaming table and the card receiving surface of the flange portion.

17. The method of claim **13**, wherein the card receiving surface comprises a recessed portion of the flange portion and wherein sliding the cards between the card playing surface of the gaming table and the card receiving surface of

the flange portion comprises lowering or maintaining at least substantially constant an elevation of the cards with respect to the card playing surface of the gaming table.

18. The method of claim **13**, wherein the recesses are slanted with respect to horizontal and wherein sliding the cards between the card playing surface of the gaming table and the card receiving surface of the flange portion on the side of the recesses opposite the dealer comprises sliding the cards between the card playing surface of the gaming table and the card receiving surface of the flange portion proximate to where each of the recesses is at maximum elevation with respect to horizontal.

19. The method of claim **13**, wherein aligning the face-down card with the card reader comprises reflecting the value of the face-down card off a reflective surface of the card reader oriented toward the dealer.

20. The method of claim **19**, wherein aligning the face-down card with the card reader comprises placing the value of the face-down card between the reflective surface and a cover extending over a portion of the reflective surface.

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