



(11) **EP 1 199 040 B1**

(12) **EUROPEAN PATENT SPECIFICATION**

(45) Date of publication and mention
of the grant of the patent:
06.02.2008 Bulletin 2008/06

(51) Int Cl.:
A61B 17/22 (2006.01) **A61B 17/32** (2006.01)
A61B 18/14 (2006.01)

(21) Application number: **01308873.7**

(22) Date of filing: **19.10.2001**

(54) **Ring contact for rotatable connection of switch assembly for use in a surgical system**

Ringförmiger Kontakt für eine drehbare Verbindung einer Schaltanordnung zum Verwenden in einem chirurgischen System

Contact annulaire pour une connexion pivotante d'un ensemble commutateur utilisé dans un système chirurgical

(84) Designated Contracting States:
DE ES FR GB IT NL

(30) Priority: **20.10.2000 US 693549**

(43) Date of publication of application:
24.04.2002 Bulletin 2002/17

(73) Proprietor: **ETHICON ENDO-SURGERY, INC.**
Cincinnati, Ohio 45242 (US)

(72) Inventors:
• **Cook, Robert G.**
Mason, OH 45040 (US)
• **Schwemberger, Richard F.**
Cincinnati, OH 45247 (US)

- **Madan, Ashvani K.**
Mason, OH 45040 (US)
- **Donofrio, William T.**
Cincinnati, OH 45249 (US)
- **Gill, Robert P.**
Mason, OH 45040 (US)

(74) Representative: **Fisher, Adrian John et al**
CARPMAELS & RANSFORD
43-45 Bloomsbury Square
London WC1A 2RA (GB)

(56) References cited:
US-A- 4 492 832 **US-A- 5 071 418**
US-A- 5 098 430 **US-A- 5 468 240**
US-A- 5 769 211 **US-A- 5 997 533**

Note: Within nine months from the publication of the mention of the grant of the European patent, any person may give notice to the European Patent Office of opposition to the European patent granted. Notice of opposition shall be filed in a written reasoned statement. It shall not be deemed to have been filed until the opposition fee has been paid. (Art. 99(1) European Patent Convention).

Description

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] This invention relates to ultrasonic surgical systems and, more particularly, to an improved apparatus for facilitating the performance of surgical procedures such as simultaneous soft tissue dissection and cauterization of large and small blood vessels through the use of a precisely controlled ultrasonically vibrating instrument, such as a blade or scalpel.

[0002] It is known that electric scalpels and lasers can be used as surgical instruments to perform the dual function of simultaneously effecting the incision and hemostasis of soft tissue by cauterizing tissues and blood vessels. However, such instruments employ very high temperatures to achieve coagulation, causing vaporization and fumes as well as splattering, which increases the risk of spreading infectious diseases to operating room personnel. Additionally, the use of such instruments often results in relatively wide zones of thermal tissue damage.

[0003] Cutting and cauterizing of tissue by means of surgical blades vibrated at high speeds by ultrasonic drive mechanisms is also well known. In such systems, an ultrasonic generator is provided which produces an electrical signal of a particular voltage, current and frequency, e.g., 55,500 cycles per second. The generator is connected by a cable to a handpiece, which contains piezoceramic elements forming an ultrasonic transducer. In response to a switch on the handpiece or a foot switch connected to the generator by another cable, the generator signal is applied to the transducer, which causes a longitudinal vibration of its elements. A structure connects the transducer to a surgical blade, which is thus vibrated at ultrasonic frequencies when the generator signal is applied to the transducer. The structure is designed to resonate at the selected frequency, thus amplifying the motion initiated by the transducer. The blade is often non-symmetrical in shape and, during the surgical procedure, the physician manipulates the handpiece to cause the blade to contact the tissue to be treated. Because the switch which control operation of the blade is disposed on the handpiece, the location of the switch may at times prevent the physician from contacting tissue with the desired orientation of the blade because the relative position between the switch and the blade may prevent or render it difficult for the physician to manipulate the blade to the proper position while still being able to activate the switch with his/her fingers.

[0004] Thus, there is a need for a handpiece and switch assembly which will permit the physician to freely access tissue and operate thereon without having to worry about the relative position between the switch and the blade.

[0005] In US 5,468,240, there is disclosed a surgical instrument handpiece of the type set out in the preamble of the accompanying claim 1.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] According to the invention, there is provided a surgical instrument handpiece as set out in the accompanying claim 1. Further preferred aspects are set out in the accompanying dependent claims.

[0007] Thus, the handpiece body and the switch mechanism disposed within the switch end cap are electrically connected to one another in such a manner that permits the switch end cap may be freely rotated about the handpiece body while the electrical connection is maintained. This permits a user, e.g. a surgeon, to rotate the switch end cap during operation of the handpiece in order to position the switch end cap in an optimum position relative to the blade. Because the blade has a generally non-symmetrical nature, the surgeon may prefer to alter the relative position of the switch end cap with respect to the blade in order to conveniently contact tissue. The present invention provides such a feature and permits the surgeon to tailor the specific location of the switch end cap for and during a specific surgical operation.

[0008] Other features and advantages of the present invention will be apparent from the following detailed description when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] The foregoing and other features of the present invention will be more readily apparent from the following detailed description and drawings of an illustrative embodiment of the invention in which:

FIG. 1 is an illustration of a console for an ultrasonic surgical cutting and hemostasis system, as well as a handpiece and foot switch in accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the present invention;
 FIG. 2 is a fragmentary exploded perspective view of one exemplary handpiece and switch end cap;
 FIG. 3 is a longitudinal cross-sectional view of the handpiece;
 FIG. 4 is a longitudinal cross-sectional view of the switch end cap;
 FIG. 5 is a cross-sectional view of the handpiece and switch end cap taken along the section line 5-5 of FIG. 1;
 FIG. 6 is an enlarged cross-sectional view showing the switch end cap with a portion of the outer surface broken away;
 FIG. 7 is a fragmentary enlarged cross-sectional view of the electrical connection between the switch end cap and the handpiece body and taken along the line 7-7 of FIG. 4;
 FIG. 8 is a fragmentary exploded perspective view of an exemplary handpiece and switch end cap according to a second embodiment;
 FIG. 9 is a fragmentary exploded perspective view of an exemplary handpiece and switch end cap ac-

cording to a third embodiment;

FIG. 10 is a longitudinal cross-sectional view of a rotatable surgical device according to another embodiment of the present invention; and

FIG. 11 is a side view of a switch end cap according to a fourth embodiment with the outer shell being removed therefrom;

FIG. 12 is a fragmentary perspective view of an exemplary handpiece according to a fourth embodiment; and

FIG. 13 is a fragmentary enlarged cross-sectional view of the electrical connection between the switch end cap of the embodiment of FIG. 1 and the handpiece body of FIG. 12.

DESCRIPTION OF ILLUSTRATIVE EXEMPLARY EMBODIMENTS

[0010] Referring first to FIG. 1 in which an ultrasonic surgical cutting and hemostasis system according to the present invention is illustrated and generally indicated at 10. The system 10 includes a console or housing 20 for containing an ultrasonic generator (not shown) and a control system located within the console 20 which forms a part of the system 10. A first cable 22 connects the console 20 to a handpiece 100 and serves to provide an electrical connection therebetween. The first cable 22 includes a first set of wires (not shown) which permit electrical energy, i.e., drive current, to be sent from the console 20 to the handpiece 100 where it imparts ultrasonic longitudinal movement to a surgical instrument 30. According to the present invention, the surgical instrument 30 is preferably a sharp scalpel blade or shear. This instrument 30 can be used for simultaneous dissection and cauterization of tissue.

[0011] The supply of ultrasonic current to the handpiece 100 is controlled by a switch mechanism 110 disposed within the handpiece 100. As will be described in greater detail hereinafter, the switch mechanism 110 is connected to the console 20, more specifically the generator thereof, by one or more wires (not shown) of the first cable 22. The generator may also be optionally and further controlled by a foot switch 40 which is connected to the console 20 by a second cable 50. Thus, in use, a surgeon may apply an ultrasonic electrical signal to the handpiece 100, causing the instrument 30 to vibrate longitudinally at an ultrasonic frequency, by operating the switch mechanism 110 on the handpiece 100 or the foot switch 40. The switch mechanism 110 is activated by the hand of the surgeon and the foot switch 40 is activated by the surgeon's foot.

[0012] The console 20 also includes a liquid crystal display device 24, which can be used for indicating the selected cutting power level in various means, such as percentage of maximum cutting power or numerical power levels associated with the cutting power. The liquid crystal display device 20 can also be utilized to display other parameters of the system. A power switch 26 and

power "on" indicator 28 are also provided on the console 20 to permit the user to further control the operation of system 10. Additional buttons and control switches, generally indicated at 60, control various other functions of the system 10 and may be located on the front panel of the console 20.

[0013] When the power is applied to the ultrasonic handpiece 100 by operation of either switch mechanism 110 or switch 40, the surgical scalpel or instrument 30 is caused to vibrate longitudinally at approximately 55.5 KHz, and the amount of longitudinal movement will vary proportionately with the amount of driving power (current) applied, as adjustably selected by the user. When relatively high cutting power is applied, the instrument 30 is designed to move longitudinally in the range of about 40 to 100 microns at the ultrasonic vibrational rate. Such ultrasonic vibration of the instrument 30 will generate heat as the blade contacts tissue. This results because the acceleration of the instrument 30 through the tissue converts the mechanical energy of the moving instrument 30 to thermal energy in a very narrow and localized area. This localized heat causes a narrow zone of coagulation, which will reduce or eliminate bleeding in small vessels, such as those less than one millimeter in diameter. The cutting efficiency of the instrument 30, as well as the degree of hemostasis, will vary with the level of driving power applied, the cutting rate of the surgeon, the nature of the tissue type and the vascularity of the tissue. One exemplary ultrasonic surgical system is disclosed in European Patent Application No. 01308901 (Attorney's ref: P028404EP) (claiming priority from USSN 09/693621) filed concurrently herewith.

[0014] Referring now to FIGS. 2-7, in which the handpiece 100 is illustrated in greater detail, the ultrasonic handpiece 100 houses a piezoelectric transducer, generally indicated at 120, for converting electrical energy to mechanical energy that results in longitudinal vibrational motion of the ends of the transducer. The transducer 120 is preferably in the form of a stack of ceramic piezoelectric elements with a motion null point between the end of the stack. A horn 130 is coupled to the transducer 120 on one side. Instrument 30 is fixed to a portion of the horn 130. As a result, the instrument 30 will vibrate in the longitudinal direction at the ultrasonic frequency rate of the transducer 120. The ends of the transducer 120 achieve maximum motion when the transducer 120 is driven with a current of 380mA RMS at the transducer resonant frequency. This is merely a general overview of the operation of the handpiece 100 and one of skill in the art will appreciate how the specific components operate to accomplish the ultrasonic surgical action.

[0015] The parts of the handpiece 100 are designed such that the combination will oscillate at the same resonant frequency. In particular, the elements contained therein are tuned such that the resulting length of each element is one-half wavelength. Longitudinal back and forth motion is amplified as the diameter closer to the instrument 30 of the acoustical mounting horn 130 de-

creases. Thus, the horn 130, as well as the instrument 30, are shaped and diminished so as to amplify blade motion and provide harmonic vibration in resonance with the rest of the acoustic system, which produces the maximum back and forth motion of the end of the acoustical mounting horn 130 close to the instrument 30.

[0016] The handpiece 100 includes a body 150 which contains internal operating components, such as but not limited to the transducer 120 and the horn 130. The body 150 is designed to mate with a switch end cap 200 (FIG. 2) which is rotatably coupled to the body 150, as will be described in greater detail hereinafter. Preferably, the switch end cap 200 is detachably connected to the body 150. The body 150 has a distal end 152 and an opposing proximal end 154 which attaches to one end of the cable 22. The body 150 may have any number of shapes and is designed so that a user may easily grip and comfortably hold the handpiece 100 in one's hand. Preferably, the body 150 is generally annular in shape and in the exemplary embodiment, the handpiece 100 has a design with multiple tapered sections permitting the user to grasp and rest a thumb and one or more fingers around the handpiece 100. In the illustrated embodiment, the body 150 is formed of a metal material; however, one will appreciate that the body 150 may be formed of a number of materials, including but not limited to plastic materials.

[0017] At the proximal end 154, an electrical adapter 156 is provided and is electrically connected to the cable 22 by means of one or more wires (not shown). The electrical adapter 156 is also electrically connected to other internal components of the handpiece 100 so that power may be selectively provided to the handpiece 100 using the switch mechanism 110, as will be described in greater detail hereinafter. The proximal end 154 is generally closed ended with the cable 22 being routed there-through, while the distal end 152 is at least partially open ended. The horn 130 extends in the direction of the distal end 152 such that a distal tip 132 of the horn 130 extends beyond the distal end 152 of the handpiece 100. The distal tip 132 has a stud 156 or the like extending outwardly therefrom. Preferably, the stud 156 comprises a threaded stud and is designed to threadingly mate with the instrument 30 to secure the instrument 30 to the handpiece 100. The instrument 30 has a blade portion 32 (FIG. 5) with an insulative sheath 34 disposed about the blade portion 32. The blade portion 32 also has an exposed blade tip 36 which extends beyond the insulative sheath 34 so as to be available for contacting and cutting tissue and the like. The insulative sheath 34 is formed of any number of suitable insulative materials, and in one exemplary embodiment is formed of a plastics material.

[0018] At the distal end 152, the body 150 has a reduced diameter so as to form a flange member 160 (FIG. 3). The flange member 160 defines a cavity 162 through which the horn 130 extends. In the illustrated embodiment, the flange member 160 is annular in shape and extends to a location just before the distal tip 132 of the horn 130 so that a portion of the horn 130, including the

distal tip 132, extends beyond the end of the flange member 160. A shoulder 164 is formed at the location where the flange member 160 extends from the remaining portion of the body 150. An outer surface 166 of the flange member 160 may include one or more ridges, generally indicated at 168, which extend annularly around the outer surface 166. In the illustrated embodiment shown in FIG. 2, there are two ridges 168 in the form of threads spaced apart from one another and, because of the annular shape of the outer surface 166, the ridges 168 comprise annular threads. It will be appreciated that the outer surface 166 is constructed so that it complementarily mates with the switch end cap 200.

[0019] As best shown in FIGS. 2 and 7, the body 150 also includes a first handpiece conductive member, or finger element, 170 which is disposed about the horn 130 within cavity 162. In the exemplary embodiment, the first handpiece conductive member 170 is an annular ring-like member formed of a plurality of fingers 171 radially disposed about the horn 130. Each finger 171 of the first handpiece conductive member 170 has a serially-connected first section 172 and a second section 174, which comprises a free end of the finger 171. The free second section 174 electrically engages another conductive member when the handpiece 100 is assembled, as will be described in greater detail hereinafter. The second section 174 is preferably bent in several locations so that it assumes a generally zig-zag shape and is resilient so that the fingers 171 may be bent outwardly under an applied force. It will be appreciated that instead of having a plurality of fingers 171, only a single finger 171 may be provided.

[0020] At the proximal end of the first section 172, each finger 171 connects to a first conductive base ring, generally indicated at 176, which provides a conductive path between all of the fingers 171. The first conductive base ring 176 is also used to properly locate and position the first handpiece conductive member 170 within the body 150 and more specifically, within the cavity 162. The first conductive base ring 176 is anchored within the body 150 and is electrically isolated from the conductive body 150 by using one or more spacers 178 which are disposed between the body 150 within the cavity 162 and the ring 176. Because of the annular shape of the body 150 and the horn 130, the one or more spacers 178 are generally in the form of insulative ring structures disposed between the fingers 171 and the conductive body 150. Typically, the one or more spacers 178 are formed of any number of suitable plastic materials or elastomeric materials. The first handpiece conductive member 170 is also spaced a sufficient distance from the horn 130, which is also formed of a conductive material, e.g., metal, so that the fingers 171 or other part of the member 170 do not make contact with the horn 130 during assembly of the handpiece 100. By disposing the one or more spacers 178 between the fingers 171 and the body 150, the spacer 178 serves to slightly urge the fingers 171 inwardly away from a conductive inner surface 151 of the body

150.

[0021] As previously mentioned with respect to FIG. 3, the cable 22 serves to provide power to the handpiece and accordingly, the first handpiece conductive member, or finger element 170 is electrically connected to the electrical adapter 156 by means of one or more electrical wires (not shown) which extend along a length of the body 150 from the electrical adapter 156 to the first handpiece conductive member 170. It will also be appreciated and will be described in greater detail hereinafter, that the body 150 itself is a second handpiece conductive member which serves as an electrical pathway or wire because the body 150 is electrically connected to the cable 22.

[0022] As best shown in FIGS. 4-7, the switch end cap 200 which mates with the body 150 so that the switch end cap 200 may freely rotate about the handpiece body 150 during operation of the handpiece 100. The switch end cap 200 is formed of an outer shell 201 having a distal end 202 and an opposing proximal end 204 with the proximal end 204 of the switch end cap 200 receiving and mating with the distal end 152 of the body 150 (FIG. 4). The shell 201 has an outer surface 206 (FIG. 7) which is contoured to be gripped and held by a user during operation of the handpiece 100. The proximal end 204 of the shell 201 is generally annular in nature and the exemplary shell 201 slightly tapers inwardly to form a switch section 210 close to the distal end 202. This slight taper forms finger shaped recessed portions which permit the fingers of a user to easily grip and hold the shell 201 as during coupling of the switch end cap 200 to the body 150 or during rotational movement of the switch end cap 200 relative to the body 150.

[0023] The switch section 210 is actually formed of a pair of opposing contoured finger sections, generally indicated at 212 (FIG. 1), and a pair of opposing recessed button sections, generally indicated at 214 (FIG. 6). Preferably each finger section 212 is formed about 180° apart from the other finger section 212 and one recessed button section 214 is formed about 180° apart from the other button section 214. The holding and rotational manipulation of the shell 201 is done by placing a thumb on one finger section 212 and a finger, i.e., the middle finger, in the other of the finger sections 212. This permits the index finger to rest upon one of the button sections 214. Each button section 214 is slightly tapered relative to the proximal end 204, while the taper to form the finger sections 212 is more pronounced to accommodate resting locations for the thumb and one or more fingers.

[0024] The outer shell 201 is at least partially open at both the distal end 202 and the proximal end 204 with a bore 220 extending therethrough (FIG. 4). The bore 220 is sized to receive a first end cap conductive member 230 which is securely located within the switch end cap 200 by disposing the first end cap conductive member 230 within the bore 220. In the exemplary embodiment, the first end cap conductive member 230 comprises a cylindrical member formed of a suitable conductive ma-

terial, such as a metal. The first end cap conductive member 230 extends along a length of the outer shell 201 from a point near the distal end 202 to a point near the proximal end 204. Preferably, the diameter of the opening at the distal end 202 is about the same size as the diameter of the first end cap conductive member 230 and is axially aligned therewith so as to permit access to the inside of the first end cap conductive member 230 so that the instrument 30 may be inserted therein and the inside of the first end cap conductive member 230 may be cleaned, etc.

[0025] As best shown in FIGS. 5 and 6, at the distal end 202, a seal member 240 is disposed at the end of the first end cap conductive member 230. More specifically, the seal member 240 is retained in a groove formed in the shell 201 adjacent to the first end cap conductive member 230. The seal member 240 is preferably formed of an elastic material, preferably a plastics material, and more preferably is formed of silicon. As will be described in greater detail hereinafter, the seal member 240 is designed to prevent unwanted foreign matter from entering the inside of the first end cap conductive member 230. When the switch end cap 200 mates with the handpiece body 150, the instrument 30 extends through the first end cap conductive member 230 and exits through the opening formed at the distal end 202 of the switch end cap 200. Accordingly, the instrument 30 extends through the seal member 240. Due to the elastic nature of the seal member 240, the seal member 240 engages the sheath 34 of the instrument 30 to produce a seal therebetween. This seal prevents the unwanted foreign matter from entering through the opening formed at the distal end 202 of the shell 201 because any matter that might enter, during a surgical operation, is restricted by the seal member 240.

[0026] As best shown in FIG. 6, near the proximal end 204, the switch end cap 200 has an annular platform 250 formed thereat which is preferably concentric to the first end cap conductive member 230. The annular platform 250 has an opening formed at the center thereof because the bore 220 is formed through the annular platform 250 and more specifically, one end of the bore 220 begins at the annular platform 250. The annular platform 250 extends radially inwardly toward the proximal end 204 and away from another annular surface 252 which extends between the inner surface 203 of the shell 201. Because the annular platform 250 preferably has a diameter less than the diameter defined by the inner surface 203 of the outer shell 201, a gap 254 is formed between the annular platform 250 and an inner surface 203 of the shell 201. The annular platform 250 may thus be thought of as a spacer member. The first end cap conductive member 230 has a length such that a section of the first end cap conductive member 230 extends beyond the annular platform 250 into a cavity formed between the inner surface 203 of the shell 201 at the proximal end 204. The inner diameter of the shell 201 near the proximal end 204 may vary slightly due to one or more lip portions 258

being formed on the inner surface 203 of the shell 201. These one or more lip portions 258 serve to provide engaging surfaces for the handpiece 100 when the handpiece body 150 is coupled to the switch end cap 200.

[0027] As best shown in FIGS. 5 and 6, the switch end cap 200 also includes a pair of switch button members 270 which are detachably secured within the button sections 214 formed in the outer shell 201. Each switch button member 270 has an upper surface 272 and includes a flange 274 seating against a retainer 275 formed as part of the outer shell 201. The flange 274 seals with the retainer 275 so to prevent any foreign material and the like from entering the electronic switch components of the switch mechanism 110. The retainer 275 is preferably attached to the outer shell 201 by conventional techniques, including a snap-fit arrangement. First and second posts 276, 278, respectively, extend outwardly from the switch button member 270. The first and second posts 276, 278 are spaced apart from one another with a center traverse wall 280 being formed therebetween. The upper surface 272 includes a first raised section 282 and a second raised section 284 spaced therefrom with a center recessed section 286 being formed therebetween. The upper surface 272 is thus slightly beveled as the switch button member 270 transitions from the center recessed section 286 to the first and second raised sections 282, 284. In the illustrated embodiment, the first post 276 is disposed generally below the first raised section 282 and the second post 278 is disposed generally below the second raised section 284 so that when a user presses downwardly upon the first raised section 282, the first post 276 is also directed downward. Similarly, when the user presses downwardly upon the second raised section 284, the second post 278 is directed downward.

[0028] The switch button members 270 are designed to act as a depressable switch button for selectively causing activation of the handpiece 100 as will be described in greater detail hereinafter. The switch button members 270 are formed of suitable materials, such as plastic materials, and preferably the switch button members 270 are formed of a resilient plastic material. In one exemplary embodiment, the switch button members 270 are formed of silicon which permits the members to be sufficiently resilient enough so that they may be fitted and secured within the button sections 214 and also provide an engagement surface for a finger or thumb during operation of the handpiece 100. In one aspect of the present invention, the contour of the switch button member 270 permits a fingertip to easily rest between the first and second raised sections 282, 284. In other words, the finger tip seats and rests within the center recessed section 286 without actuating the switch mechanism 110. Because the switch button members 270 are disposed within the button sections 214, the switch button members 270 are spaced about 180° from one another. The recessed section 286 advantageously provides a location for the user to rest a finger during operation of the switch button member 270 without inadvertently activating the

switch button member 270. This results because the recessed section 286 is above the pivot point of the switch button member 270.

[0029] The switch end cap 200 also includes a pair of printed circuit boards (PCBs) 290 which form a part of the electronic switch mechanism 110. The PCBs 290 are disposed within the outer shell 201 such that the PCBs 290 are disposed between the first end cap conductive member 230 and the switch button members 270. The PCBs 290 extend longitudinally relative to an axis extending through the bore 220 formed in the switch end cap 200. A distal end 292 of each PCB 290 is located near the distal end 202 of the switch end cap 200 and proximate to the seal member 240. The PCB 290 has a proximal end 294 opposite the distal end 292. It will be understood that instead of using PCBs 290, other suitable electronic components may be used, such as a flexible circuit component known as a "flexprint".

[0030] A pair of fasteners 300 serve to electrically connect the PCBs 290 to the first end cap conductive member 230. More specifically, one side of a switch circuit according to the present invention is defined by the first end cap conductive member 230 since the PCB 290 is electrically connected thereto. The pair of fasteners 300 extend through openings (not shown) formed in the PCBs 290 to provide the desired electrical connection between the PCBs 290 and the conductive member 230.

[0031] As shown in FIG. 5, the pair of fasteners 300 are positioned beneath the center traverse wall 280. Each button section 214 formed in the outer shell 201 contains openings formed therein and spaced apart from one another for receiving the first and second posts 276, 278 of the switch button member 270. The exemplary switch mechanism 110 is known as a rocker type switch mechanism and, according to the present invention, two switch button members 270 form, in part, the switch mechanism 110. Each switch button member 270 has two switch settings. For example, the first raised section 282 and the first post 276 are associated with a first switch setting and the second raised section 284 and the second post 278 are associated with a second switch setting. Preferably, the first switch setting of one switch button member 270 is the same as the first switch setting of the other switch button member 270 disposed about 180° therefrom. In one exemplary embodiment, the first switch setting is a maximum power setting and the second switch setting is a minimum power setting. It will be understood that the opposite may equally be true, in that the first switch setting may be designed for causing the transmission of minimum power to the handpiece 100 and the second switch setting will then cause the transmission of maximum power to the handpiece 100.

[0032] The PCBs 290 are thus also designed to provide a circuit having two different switch settings. It will also be appreciated that any number of PCBs 290 may be used in the practice of the present invention so long as the PCBs 290 contain circuits which provide signals to the generator or the like causing the delivery of at least

two different levels of power to the handpiece 100 depending upon which portion of the switch button member 270 is contacted by the user. One preferred type of PCB 290 is a dome switch type PCB 290 in which a first dome (not shown) is formed as part of the PCB 290 for generating a first signal (e.g., a maximum power signal) when the first dome is collapsed under an applied force. The dome switch type PCB 290 also includes a second dome (not shown) formed as part of the PCB 290 for generating a second signal (e.g., a minimum power signal) when the second dome is collapsed under an applied force. It will be understood that the switch mechanism 110 of the present invention is not limited to generating signals for controlling the delivery of power to the handpiece 10. The switch mechanism 110 may also be used to generate signals which control other functions of the handpiece 10. For example, the control signals may be used to selectively control console functions, including but not limited to, a stand-by function, a diagnostic function, and turning the console 20 on and off.

[0033] The first dome is disposed underneath the first post 276 so that when the user depresses the first raised section 282, the switch button member 270 pivots about the fastener 300 and the first post 276 is directed downwardly through the respective opening formed in the button section 214 until contact is made between the first post 276 and the PCB 290. More specifically, the first post 276 contacts the first dome of the PCB 290 and causes the first dome to collapse. When the first dome collapses, electrical current flows in a first direction through the PCB 290 and generally through the switch mechanism 110. When the user depresses the second raised section 284, the second post 278 contacts and collapses the second dome and causes electrical current to flow in an opposite second direction through the PCB 290 and generally through the switch mechanism 110. It will also be understood that the present invention is not limited to the use of domes but rather any mechanism which serves to close a normally open switch may be used in the practice of the present invention. The collapsing motion of a dome is merely one exemplary way of closing a normally open switch.

[0034] As best shown in FIGS. 6 and 7, the switch end cap 200 also includes a second end cap conductive member, or finger element, 310 which is disposed about the proximal end of the first end cap conductive member 230. In the exemplary embodiment, the second end cap conductive member 310 is an annular ring-like member formed of a plurality of fingers 311 radially disposed about the conductive member 230. Each finger 311 of the conductive finger element 310 has a first section 312 which is electrically connected to one of the PCBs 290 and a serially-connected second section 314 which comprises a free end of the finger 311. The free second section 314 makes electrical contact to another conductive member when the handpiece 100 is assembled as will be described in greater detail hereinafter. The second section 314 is preferably bent in several locations so that it as-

sumes a generally zig-zag shape. The first handpiece conductive member and the second end cap conductive member 170, 310 may be formed of any number of suitable conductive materials.

[0035] Between the first and second sections 312, 314, each finger 311 connects to a conductive base ring, generally indicated at 316, which provides a conductive path between all of the fingers 311 (FIG. 7). The conductive base ring 316 also is used to properly locate and position the second end cap conductive member 310 within the switch end cap 200. The annular platform 250 preferably includes a plurality of radially spaced tabs (not shown) which serve to retain the second end cap conductive member 310 by inserting the conductive base ring 316 underneath the tabs such that the second section 314 of the finger 311 is located between and extends outwardly from adjacent tabs. By anchoring the second end cap conductive member 310 within the annular platform 250, the second sections 314 of the plurality of fingers 311 may be manipulated and moved in directions generally towards or away from the first end cap conductive member 230. The number of fingers 311 may vary depending upon the precise application and in one exemplary embodiment, the second end cap conductive member 310 includes six (6) fingers 311. The fingers 311 also provide a mechanism for releasably retaining the switch end cap 200 to the flange 160. When the switch end cap 200 is mated with the handpiece body 150, the fingers 311 are flexed inward by engagement with the inner surface of the body 150. This inward flexing of the fingers 311 causes the fingers 311 to apply an outwardly directed biasing force against the flange 160 causing retention between the switch end cap 200 and the body 150. Because the second-end cap conductive member 310 provides, in part, an electrical path for the handpiece 100, it is important that the second end cap conductive member 310 not touch the first end cap conductive member 230. It will be appreciated that the switch end cap 200 preferably includes a number of other spacer members which serve to further isolate the first and second end cap conductive members, namely the member 310 and member 230.

[0036] All of the conductor members used in the surgical device 10 (FIG. 1) of the present invention are formed of any number of suitable conductive materials. In one exemplary embodiment, the conductive members are formed of stainless steel, gold plated copper, beryllium copper, titanium nitride, or conductive plastics which serve to reduce the tendency of the members to corrode from harsh cleaning solutions or autoclaving.

[0037] The assembly and operation of the handpiece 100 will now be described with reference to FIGS. 1-7. The switch end cap 200 is removably attached to the handpiece body 150 by aligning the stud 156 and the horn 130 with the inside of the first end cap conductive member 230. After the stud 156 and the horn 130 are aligned with the bore formed in the first end cap conductive member 230, the switch end cap 200 is brought into engagement with flange member 160 causing the stud

156 and a portion of the horn 130 to be disposed inside of the first end cap conductive member 230 when the switch end cap 200 is properly fitted about the body 150. However, the stud 156 and the horn 130 do not make contact with the first end cap conductive member 230 when switch end cap 200 is attached to the body 150. The proximal end 204 of the switch end cap 200 seats proximate to or against the shoulder 164. As stop 391 formed in the switch end cap 200 engages distal end 152 of the body 150, thereby providing a stop which restricts further movement of the switch end cap 200.

[0038] Because the stud 156 and a portion of the horn 130 are disposed inside of the first end cap conductive member 230 at a proximal end thereof, the instrument 30 is secured within the switch end cap 200 by securing the instrument 30 to the stud 156. More specifically, the instrument 30 preferably has a threaded bore formed therein at an end opposite the blade tip 36 (FIG. 3). The instrument 30 preferably attaches to the stud 156 by threadingly engaging the threaded bore with the threaded stud 156 resulting in the instrument 30 being secured to the stud 156. The instrument 30 is easily removed for cleaning or replacement thereof by simply twisting the instrument 30 in one direction until the instrument 30 disengages the stud 156. When the instrument 30 is secured to the stud 156, the insulative sheath 34 of the instrument 30 contacts and forms a seal with the seal member 240 so that unwanted foreign matter is prevented from traveling through the opening formed in the distal end 202. Because of the resilient nature of the seal member 240, the seal member 240 conforms to the blade shape and the resilient nature of the insulative sheath 34 further provides an effective seal.

[0039] In accordance with another aspect of the present invention, the first handpiece conductive member 170 and the second end cap conductive member 310 provide an electrical pathway between the switch mechanism 110 of the switch end cap 200 and the cable 22, which provides the means for delivering power to the handpiece 100. As best shown in FIG. 7, when the switch end cap 200 is attached to the body 150 and the fingers 171 of the first handpiece conductive member 170 contact and are biased against an outer surface 231 of the first end cap conductive member 230. This results because the first end cap conductive member 230 is disposed between the fingers 171 and the horn 130 as the switch end cap 200 is attached. Because of the conductive nature of both the first end cap conductive member 230 and the fingers 171, an electrical pathway is formed between the PCBs 290 and the cable 22. This electrical connection also serves to complete one side of the circuit of the switch mechanism 110 when one of the switch button members 270 is depressed to cause one of the domes to collapse, thereby permitting current to flow through the PCBs 290. Once the user releases either of the first and second raised sections 282, 284 (which the user had previously depressed), the dome expands and the electrical pathway is interrupted, thereby interrupting

the flow of current through the switch mechanism 110. This stops the delivery of power to the handpiece 100. It will also be appreciated that the switch mechanism 110 of the present invention may include only a single button member 270.

[0040] While, the switch mechanism 110 has been generally discussed as being a normally open switch assembly in which a mechanism (such as one or more domes) is activated to cause the closing of the switch, one of skill in the art will appreciate that the switch mechanism 110 may be a normally closed switch assembly. In this embodiment, depressing one of the sections 282, 284 will cause one of the switches to open and not close as in the other embodiment. Because the dual switch mechanism 110 has current flowing in first and second opposing directions, the opening of one switch will leave current flowing only in a single direction. In this embodiment, the generator or the like will have a sensing mechanism, such as sensing circuit, which is designed to detect the current flowing in the single direction and equate this to the activation of one of the sections 282, 284.

[0041] A first electrical pathway is thus specifically defined by the PCBs 290, the fasteners 300, the first end cap conductive member 230, the fingers 171 and one or more wires electrically connecting the fingers 171 to the cable 22. In other words, the connection between the fingers 171 and the first end cap conductive member 230 serves to electrically bridge the body 150 and the switch mechanism 110 together. Electrical current flows through the cable 22 and then through the one or more wires to the first handpiece conductive member 170. The current then flows into the switch mechanism 110 by means of the electrical connection between the fingers 171 and the first end cap conductive member 230 once the switch mechanism 110 is actuated by manipulation of one of the switch button members 270.

[0042] In a similar manner, the fingers 311 of the second end cap conductive member 310 contact and are biased against the body 150 of the handpiece 100. Because the body 150 in this embodiment is formed of a conductive member and is electrically connected to one or more wires of the cable 22, the body 150 comprises a second handpiece conductive member which can be used to complete the circuit of the switch mechanism 110. The fingers 311 are spaced sufficiently away from the first end cap conductive member 230 so that the fingers 171 are actually disposed between the fingers 311 and the first end cap conductive member 230 when the switch end cap 200 is attached to the body 150.

[0043] The resilient nature of the second sections 314 of the fingers 311 permits the fingers 311 to contact the body 150 and flex inwardly or outwardly relative thereto as the switch end cap 200 is attached. Because the first sections 312 of the fingers 311 are electrically connected to the PCBs 290, the contact between the second ends 314 and the body 150 completes the circuit of the switch mechanism 110 and permits current to flow through the body 150 and the second end cap conductive member

310 once the switch mechanism 110 is actuated. In other words, a second electrical pathway is formed and is defined by the PCBs 290, the second end cap conductive member 310 and the body 150.

[0044] The switch mechanism 110 may be thought of as including four (4) switches with each having a diode in series. More specifically, first raised section 282 of one switch button member 270 corresponds to a first front switch, the second raised section 284 of the one switch button member 270 corresponding to a first rear switch, the first raised section 282 of the other switch button member 270 corresponding to a second front switch, and the second raised section 284 of the other switch button member 270 corresponding to a second rear switch. It will be understood that each of the aforementioned front and rear switches has a diode in series with one another. Preferably, the first and second front switches have the same diode orientation and the first and second rear switches have the same opposite diode orientation. The polarity of the diode depends upon whether the diode is part of the front or rear switches. When a user depresses one of the first raised sections 282, the corresponding first or second front switch will be actuated due to the associated PCB dome collapsing due to the force applied by one of the first posts 276. This causes current to flow in a first direction through the handpiece 100. When a user depresses one of the second raised sections 284, the corresponding first or second rear switch will be actuated due to the associated PCB dome collapsing due to the force applied by one of the second posts 278. This causes current to flow in an opposite second direction through the handpiece 100. Thus, in this embodiment, there are four domes formed as part of the PCBs 290 with two domes being formed on each PCB 290.

[0045] The handpiece 100 may be designed so that the front switches comprise maximum power switches with the front diodes thereof serving to signal the delivery of maximum power to the handpiece 100 for maximum vibration of the instrument 30. In this embodiment, the rear switches comprise minimum power switches with the rear diodes thereof serving to signal the delivery of the minimum power to the handpiece 100 for minimum vibration of the instrument 30. The generator is designed so that upon sensing current in the first direction from the actuation of one of the front switches, the generator is programmed to deliver maximum power to the handpiece 100 and similarly, when the generator senses current in the second direction, the generator delivers minimum power to the handpiece 100. If one of the front switches and one of the rear switches are accidentally depressed at the same time, the generator will sense current in both the first and second directions. Upon sensing the opposing currents, the generator is programmed to stop delivering power to the handpiece 100 until the condition is rectified. Preferably, an error or warning message will also appear on the liquid crystal display device 20.

[0046] Importantly, the fingers 171 of the first handpiece conductive member 170 and the fingers 311 of the

second end cap conductive member 310 do not contact one another during operation of the handpiece 100. If one of the fingers 171 were to contact one of the fingers 311, an electrical short would likely result because the electrical pathways have been crossed. If an electrical short exists in the handpiece 100, the generator will sense current in both the first and second directions, thereby causing the generator to stop delivering power to the handpiece 100 and optionally generate some type of error or warning message.

[0047] In another aspect of the present invention, the switch end cap 200 is free to rotate about the handpiece body 150 without disrupting the electrical connection provided between the cable 22 and the switch mechanism 110 housed in the outer shell 201. The one or more ridges 168 formed on the flange member 160 provide annular surfaces for the inner surface 203 of the switch end cap 200 to ride along as the switch end cap 200 is freely rotated about the distal end 154 of the body 150. Because the switch end cap 200 and the body 150 advantageously are electrically connected by the rotatable first handpiece conductive member 170 and second end cap conductive member 310, the switch end cap 200 and the body 150 are free to rotate relative to one another without causing an interruption in the flow of current within the handpiece 100. The second sections 174, 314 of the fingers 171, 311, respectively, are sufficiently biased against the corresponding complementary conductive surfaces so that the second sections 174, 314 rotationally slide along these conductive surfaces. Thus, the switch end cap 200 may be rotated about the body 150 to a desired position and continues to remain in electrical communication with the body 150 and the generator regardless of the position of the switch end cap 200. Because most blades 30 are non-symmetrical in nature, the surgeon may prefer to alter the relative position of the switch button members 270 to the instrument 30 which is held in one position within the handpiece 100. The conductive members (finger elements) 170, 310 permit this.

[0048] The present invention overcomes the deficiencies of the conventional surgical devices by a means for switch electrical communication without the need for hard wiring. This permits the switch end cap 200 to be easily detached from the body 150 for cleaning and other purposes. For example, the design permits easy inspection of the members providing the electrical communication between the switch end cap 200 and the body 150. Therefore, the integrity of the first handpiece conductive member 170 and second end cap conductive member 310 may be checked at any time to ensure that they remain in working condition. Also, if the need arises to replace or service either the switch end cap 200 or the handpiece body 150, the two components are quickly and easily separable and replacement or servicing may be done. This permits the surgical operations to continue in an unimpeded manner.

[0049] The switch end cap 200 is also ergonomically designed in that the two switch button members 270 are

disposed about 180° apart from one another because this provides a preferred orientation where the user (surgeon) may easily contact both switch button members 270 as the handpiece 100 is being grasped by the user. By placing the switch button members 270 in more than one location, the user may easily and quickly manipulate one switch button member 270 closest to the activating finger(s). In other words, it has been found that during a typical manual manipulation of the switch end cap 200, one thumb and one or more fingers are generally positioned 180° apart from another and this complements the positioning of the two switch button members 270. The 180° orientation also has strategic benefits in that if the switch button members 270 were placed at multiple locations, such as three, it would be difficult for the user to grasp the surgical device 10 without possibly contacting and engaging one of the switch button members 270. In the present design, the 180° orientation provides a grasping area in which the user's fingers do not contact the switch button members 270 when the user is holding the device 10. Other design features, e.g., opposing contoured finger sections 212, are designed to also provide the switch end cap 200 with a better feel and permit the user to easily grasp and rotate the switch end cap 200.

[0050] The present invention thus provides a surgical handpiece 100 in which the switch mechanism 110 of the switch end cap 200 is electrically connected to the handpiece body 150 in such a manner that permits the switch end cap 200 to be freely rotated about the handpiece body 150 while the electrical connection is maintained.

[0051] While the present invention has been described as being a freely rotatable system, it also within the scope of the present invention that the handpiece 100 may be only partially rotatable. In this instance, a number of stoppers or detents (not shown) are incorporated into the structure of the handpiece 100 so that the switch end cap 200 may only be partially rotated with respect to the handpiece body 150. The degree of rotation may thus be selected by the manufacture and the stoppers or detents positioned accordingly. In another embodiment, the detents may be formed so that the switch end cap 200 is rotated incrementally in a ratchet like manner. Once again, these detents may be formed and complementary enageable features are also formed to provide this ratcheting effect. Also, the handpiece 100 may be designed to provide indexable rotation where the rotation of the switch end cap 200 is indexed relative to the instrument 30. For example, the instrument 30 may be designed so that upon being fastened to the horn 130, the instrument 30 always assumes one orientation. For example, the instrument 30 may assume a north-south (vertical) orientation. By using detents and the like, the rotation of the switch end cap 200 may be indexed so that the switch end cap 200 is initially in a predetermined first position and rotation of the switch end cap 200 causes the switch end cap 200 to rotate in predetermined increments, e.g., 90° increments. This permits the most favored positions

of the switch end cap 200 to be provided for by the indexed rotation system.

[0052] It will also be understood that the present invention broadly discloses a method of providing rotation between the switch end cap 200 and the handpiece body 150 where a predetermined number of conductive pathways are formed by mating electrical conductors. Each pair of mating electrical conductors is designed to convey an independent electrical signal.

[0053] Turning now to FIG. 8 in which another embodiment of the present invention is illustrated. This embodiment is similar to the first embodiment shown in FIGS. 1-7 in that the handpiece body 150 and the switch mechanism 110 (FIG. 1) disposed within the switch end cap 200 are detachable relative to one another and are electrically connected to one another in such a manner that permits the switch end cap 200 to be freely rotated about the handpiece body 150 while the electrical connection is maintained therebetween. However, the mechanism in this embodiment is different with respect to the second embodiment of FIG. 8. For purpose of illustration, it will be understood that the handpiece body 150 and switch end cap 200 of FIG. 8 are essentially identical to those described in the first embodiment with the differences being noted herein. More specifically, the handpiece body 150 includes a first handpiece conductive member comprising a first conductive ring 400 and a second handpiece conductive member comprising a second conductive ring 410 which are securely disposed within the handpiece body 150.

[0054] In one exemplary embodiment, the first handpiece conductive member 400 comprises a ring member which is disposed between the handpiece body 150 and the horn 130. Preferably the first handpiece conductive member 400 is formed adjacent to the flange member 160 within the cavity 162 and is electrically isolated from other electrical components. The first handpiece conductive member 400 is anchored to and extends upwardly from a non-conductive platform or the like (not shown) which is formed within the handpiece body 150. The first handpiece conductive member 400 is electrically connected to the cable 22 (FIG. 1) by means of one or more electrical wires (not shown) which extend along the length of the body 150 from the electrical adapter 156 (FIG. 3) to the first handpiece conductive member 400.

[0055] The second handpiece conductive member 410 of the handpiece body 150 similarly comprises a ring member which is disposed between the handpiece body 150 and the horn 130. The second handpiece conductive member 410 is disposed between the first handpiece conductive member 400 and the horn 130 and therefore the first and second handpiece conductive members 400, 410 are concentric members. The second handpiece conductive member 410 is likewise electrically isolated from the first handpiece conductive member 400 and other electrical components contained within the body 150. Similar to the first handpiece conductive member 400, the second handpiece conductive member 410 prefera-

bly is anchored to and extends upwardly from the non-conductive platform. It will be understood that the first and second handpiece conductive members 400, 410 are sufficiently spaced from one another so that they are electrically isolated from each other. This may be accomplished by using one or more spacers 413 disposed between the first and second handpiece conductive members 400, 410 or between the members 400, 410 and other members within the handpiece body 150. The second handpiece conductive member 410 is also electrically connected to the cable 22 (FIG. 1) by means of one more electrical wires (not shown) which extend along the length of the body 150 from the electrical adapter 156 (FIG. 3) to the second handpiece conductive member 410. The second handpiece conductive member 410 is thus provided to partially define a second electrical pathway from the cable 22 to the switch mechanism 110 (FIG. 4).

[0056] It will be appreciated that in this embodiment, the handpiece body 150 is preferably formed of a non-conductive material, such as a plastic material, because both electrical pathways within the handpiece body 150 are defined by the first and second handpiece conductive members 400, 410 (with their respective electric wires) and not the handpiece body 150 itself as in the first embodiment. As will be described in greater detail herein-after, a first planar contact surface 401 of the first handpiece conductive member 400 and a second planar contact surface 411 of the second handpiece conductive member 410 provide conductive surfaces which engage complementary conductive members of the switch end cap 200 to provide the electrical connection therebetween.

[0057] The switch end cap 200 is modified so that the member 230 (FIG. 7) does not serve as a conductive member but rather comprises a member 230' which simply receives the horn 130 and the instrument 30 (FIG. 1). Accordingly, the member 230 is not electrically connected to the PCBs 290 (FIG. 4) and may be formed of a non-conductive material, such as a plastic. In addition, in this embodiment of FIG. 8, the member 310 (FIG. 7) is referred to as the first end cap conductive member and is given the reference 310', and the second end cap conductive member is given the reference 420. In one exemplary embodiment, the second end cap conductive member 420 comprises an annular ring-like member formed of a plurality of electrical contacts 421 radially disposed about the member 230'. The contacts 421 may be in the form of fingers, pins, or the like. The second end cap conductive member 420 is disposed between the first end cap conductive member 310' and the member 230'. Similar to the first end cap conductive member 310', the second end cap conductive member 420 is electrically connected to the PCBs 290 (FIG. 4) by means of one or more electric wires (not shown). Thus, the second end cap conductive member 420 and not the member 230 is electrically connected to the PCBs 290 (FIG. 4) to thus complete one side of the circuit of the switch mechanism 110 (FIG. 4).

anism 110 (FIG. 4) once one of the switch button members 270 (FIG. 4) is depressed to cause one of the domes to collapse, thereby permitting current to flow through the PCBs 290 (FIG. 4).

[0058] In accordance with this embodiment of the present invention, the first and second end cap conductive members 310', 420 and the first and second handpiece conductive members (rings) 400, 410 provide first and second electrical pathways between the switch mechanism 110 (FIG. 1) of the switch end cap 200 and the cable 22 (FIG. 1), which provides the means for delivering power to the handpiece 100 (shown entirely in FIG. 1). More specifically, when the switch end cap 200 mates with the handpiece 100, the first end cap conductive member 310' engages the first planar contact surface 401 of the first handpiece conductive member (ring) 400 to establish the first electrical pathway. Because the first end cap conductive member 310' comprises an annular member having radially spaced contacts 311', the rotation of the switch end cap 200 causes the contacts 311' to ride along the first planar contact surface 401. Contacts 311' may be in the form of conductive fingers, pins, or the like. As the switch end cap 200 is rotated and the contacts 311' ride along the surface 401, the first electrical pathway is maintained.

[0059] Similarly, the contacts 421 of the second end cap conductive member (finger element) 420 engage the second planar contact surface 411 of the second handpiece conductive member (ring) 410 to establish the second electrical pathway. Because both the second end cap conductive member 420 and the second handpiece conductive member 410 comprise annular members, the switch end cap 200 may be freely rotated without disruption of the electrical connection between the switch mechanism 110 (FIG. 4) and the handpiece 100. In this embodiment, the contacts 311', 421 are generally disposed longitudinal to the first and second handpiece conductive members 400, 410.

[0060] The rotatable connection between the contacts 311', 421 and the first and second handpiece conductive members (rings) 400, 410 serves to electrically bridge the body 150 and the switch mechanism 110 (FIG. 4) together. Electrical current flows through the cable 22 (FIG. 1) and then through the electrical wires to the first and second conductive rings 400, 410. The current then flows through the fingers 311', 421 to the switch mechanism 110 (FIG. 4) once the switch mechanism 100 (FIG. 4) is actuated by manipulation on one of the switch button members 270 (FIG. 4). Once the user depresses one of the first and second raised sections 282, 284 (FIG. 4), one of the domes is collapsed, thereby permitting current to flow through the PCBs 290 (FIG. 4). Once the user releases either of the first and second raised sections 282, 284 (FIG. 4), the dome expands and the electrical pathway is interrupted, thereby interrupting the flow of current through the switch mechanism 110 (FIG. 4). This stops the delivery of power to the handpiece 100.

[0061] The operation of the switch mechanism 110

(FIG. 4) in this embodiment is essentially the same as the operation in the first embodiment of FIGS. 1-7 and therefore will not be described in greater detail. It will also be appreciated that depending upon the number of switches included in the switch mechanism 110 (FIG. 4), the number of complementary and mating contact-ring members will vary. For example, while FIG. 8 shows two sets of contact-ring assemblies, it will be appreciated that additional contact-ring assemblies can be added to the switch end cap 200 and the body 150, respectively. It will also be appreciated that the placement of the first and second end cap conductive members 310' and 420 and the first and second handpiece conductive members 400, 410 may be reversed. In other words, the first and second handpiece conductive members (rings) 400, 410 may be provided in the switch end cap 200 with each being electrically connected to the PCBs 290 (FIG. 4) by means such as an electric wire. The first and second end cap conductive members 310, 420 are disposed within the body 150 and preferably within the flange 160 thereof. The first and second end cap conductive members 310', 420 are here electrically connected to the cable 22 (FIG. 1) by means such as electrical wires between each member 310, 420 and the cable 22 (FIG. 1). The operation of the device is the same because a rotatable electrical connection is provided between the handpiece 100 and the switch mechanism 110 (FIG. 4) disposed within the switch end cap 200.

[0062] It will be appreciated that the first and second end cap conductive members 310', 420 and the first and second handpiece conductive members 400, 410 are formed of a conductive material, such as stainless steel or gold plated copper. It will also be appreciated that instead of containing a plurality of conductive contacts, each of the first and second end cap conductive members 310, 420 may comprise a single conductive finger. The inclusion of an array of commonly connected conductive fingers (as shown in FIGS. 1-8) provides increased contact robustness because if one of the fingers becomes inoperative, there are a number of other contacts which serve to provide the electrical connection. Furthermore, the first and second end cap conductive members 310, 420 are spaced sufficiently from each other so that the individual contacts do not contact one another during operational coupling of the switch end cap 200 to the handpiece body 150. If the first and second end cap conductive members 310, 420 were to contact one another, a short circuit condition would likely result.

[0063] Accordingly, this embodiment, as with the first embodiment, provides a surgical device in which the switch mechanism 110 (FIG. 4) of the switch end cap 200 is electrically connected to the handpiece body 150 in such a manner that permits the switch end cap 200 to be freely rotated about the handpiece body 150 while the electrical connection is maintained. Advantageously, the electrical communication of the switch does not require hard wiring. This permits the switch end cap 200 to be detachable from the body 150 and also permits rotation

of the switch end cap 200 so that the user easily adjust its position during an operation.

[0064] Turning now to FIG. 9 in which another embodiment of the present invention is shown. In this embodiment, the switch end cap 200 has a first end cap conductive member 600 and a second end cap conductive member 610. As with the embodiment of FIG. 8, in this embodiment, the member 230' does not serve as a conductive member for electrically connecting the PCBs 290 (FIG. 4) to the cable 22 (FIG. 1). Instead, the member 230' comprises a member which receives the horn 130 and the instrument 30 (FIG. 1). It will be appreciated that the member 230 may therefore be formed of a conductive material or a non-conductive material.

[0065] In the exemplary embodiment, the first end cap conductive member 600 is annular in shape; however, it is not in the shape of an annular ring as in the other embodiments, but rather preferably comprises a semi-circular member. The first end cap conductive member 600 is disposed between the member 230 and the outer shell 201 of the switch end cap 200. The first end cap conductive member 600 includes one or more contacts 601 which extend outwardly toward the proximal end 204 of the switch end cap 200. The contacts 601 may be in the form of conductive fingers, pins, or the like. The first end cap conductive member 600 is electrically connected to the PCBs 290 (FIG. 4) by means of one or more electrical wires or the like. Similarly, the second end cap conductive member 610 preferably comprises a semi-circular member which is also disposed between the member 230 and the outer shell 201 opposite the first end cap conductive member 600. The second end cap conductive member 610 includes one or more contacts 611 which extend toward the proximal end 204. The contacts 611 may be in the form of conductive fingers, pins, or the like. The second end cap conductive member 610 is electrically connected to the PCBs 290 (FIG. 4) by means of one or more electrical wires of the like. Preferably, a common radius exists between fingers 601 and the member 230' and the contacts 611 and the member 230'.

[0066] In this embodiment, the handpiece body 150 has a first handpiece conductive member 620 and a second handpiece conductive member 630. As shown in FIG. 10, each of the first and second handpiece conductive members 620, 630 preferably has a semi-circular shape so as to complement the first and second end cap conductive members 600, 610. More specifically, the first handpiece conductive member 620 is disposed about the horn 130 and the second handpiece conductive member 630 is also disposed about the horn 130 opposite the first handpiece conductive member 620. A gap 650 is formed between each end of the first handpiece conductive member 620 and each end of the second handpiece conductive member 630. It will be appreciated that if the first and second handpiece conductive members 620, 630 were joined together, a continuous annular conductive ring would be formed. The first and second handpiece conductive members 620, 630 are formed in the body

150 (preferably between the flange 160 thereof) so that each is electrically isolated from other conductive members. For example, one or more insulating spacers (not shown) may be used to accomplish this.

[0067] The first handpiece conductive member 620 is electrically connected to the cable 22 (FIG. 1) by means of one or more electric wires (not shown) and the second handpiece conductive member 630 is likewise electrically connected to the cable 22 (FIG. 1) by means of one or more electric wires (not shown). Thus, this embodiment has the electrical features of two concentric conductive rings in a single segmented ring structure. This advantageously requires the body 150 to house one "ring width" rather than two and therefore provides an attractive alternative design when the body 150 has limited space for receiving conductive ring members.

[0068] The switch end cap 200 of this embodiment mates with the body 150 in a similar manner as that previously described with reference to the embodiment of FIG. 8. For purpose of illustration only, the first end cap conductive member 600 will be described as mating with the first handpiece conductive member 620 and the second end cap conductive member 610 will be described as mating with the second handpiece conductive member 630. The first handpiece conductive member 620 has a first planar contact surface 622 and the second handpiece conductive member 630 has a second planar contact surface 632. An electrical connection is formed between the switch mechanism 110 (FIG. 4) and the handpiece body 150 by mating the switch end cap 200 with the body 150 such that the first end cap conductive member 600 engages the first planar contact surface 622 and the second end cap conductive member 610 engages the second planar contact surface 632 when the switch end cap 200 is securely yet rotatably coupled to the body 150.

[0069] The contacts 601, 611 are free to rotate in an electrically conductive manner about a majority of the annular rotation range defined by the first and second handpiece conductive members 620, 630. More specifically, the only location where one of the contacts 601, 611 is not in electrical contact with one of the members 620, 630 is in one of the gaps 650. As the user rotates the switch end cap 200 relative to the body 150, the contacts 601, 611 travel about the respective first and second planar contact surfaces 622, 632 and then cross over one of the gaps 650 to the other of the first and second planar contact surfaces 622, 632.

[0070] The operation of the switch mechanism 110 (FIG. 4) in this embodiment is the same as or similar to the operation described with reference to earlier embodiments. While, the first and second end cap conductive members 600, 610 have each been described as containing a number of contacts 601, 611, respectively, it will be understood that a single conductive contact may be provided for each element. Because of the electrical pathways provided between the members 600, 610 and members 620, 630, the switch mechanism 110 (FIG. 4)

is electrically connected to the cable 22 (FIG. 1) in such a manner that the switch end cap 200 is freely rotatably and the switch end cap 200 is not hard wired to the body 150.

[0071] Turning now to FIG. 10 in which yet another embodiment of the present invention is illustrated. In this embodiment, a surgical device is provided and generally indicated at 700. The surgical device 700 includes a handpiece 710, partially shown, and a switch end cap, generally indicated at 720 with a switch mechanism 730 being formed therein. As with the other embodiments, the surgical device 700 is preferably an ultrasonic surgical device with the handpiece 710 housing a piezoelectric transducer, generally indicated at 712, for converting electric energy to mechanical energy that results in longitudinal vibrational motion of the ends of the transducer. A horn 714 is coupled to the transducer 710 with the surgical blade, generally indicated at 716, being attached to the horn 714. Thus, the blade 716 vibrates in the longitudinal direction at the ultrasonic frequency rate of the transducer 710.

[0072] According to this embodiment, a first handpiece conductive member; or band, 740 is provided as part of the handpiece 710. The first handpiece conductive member 740 preferably comprises a continuous annular band which extends around an internal member of the handpiece 710, such as the horn 714. The handpiece 710 also includes a second handpiece conductive member, or band, 750 which preferably also comprises a continuous annular band extending around the horn 714. A third handpiece conductive member, or band 760 is disposed around the horn 714 with the second handpiece conductive band 750 being disposed between the first and third handpiece conductive bands 740, 760. The third handpiece conductive band 760 also preferably comprises a continuous annular band. Each of the bands 740, 750, 760 has a width and is arranged such that a first gap 770 is formed between the first and second bands 740, 750 and a second gap 772 is formed between the second and third bands 750, 760. Each of the bands 740, 750, 760 is electrically connected to an electrical adapter and cable assembly (not shown) of the handpiece 710 which provides power to the handpiece 710. Preferably, one or more electric wires (not shown) are used to electrically connect each of the bands 740, 750, 760 the electrical adapter and cable assembly.

[0073] Unlike the switch mechanism 110 (FIG. 4) of the other embodiments, the switch mechanism 730 of this embodiment comprises a simple mechanical mechanism for providing an electric current between the switch mechanism 730 and the handpiece 710 where the switch end cap 720 is freely rotatable during operation without disrupting the electrical connection therebetween. The switch mechanism 730 is generally formed of one or more switch button members 780. In the case that more than one switch button members 780 are used, the switch button members 780 are spaced apart from one another, e.g., 180° spacing when two switch button members 780.

Each switch button member 780 has a first depressable portion 782 and a second depressable portion 784. The switch button member 780 may be in the form of a rocker type switch having a center pivot portion 786 to permit the switch button member 780 to pivot thereabout depending upon which one of the first and second depressable portions 782, 784 is depressed.

[0074] The switch button member 780 has a first end cap conductive member 790 having a first protrusion 792 formed at one end and a second protrusion 794 formed at the opposite end. The switch button member 780 also includes a second end cap conductive member 800 having a first protrusion 802 formed at one end and a second protrusion 804 formed at the opposite end. In one exemplary embodiment, the first and second protrusions 792, 802, 794, 804, respectively, each comprises a tooth extending outwardly from the remaining portion of the first and second end cap conductive members 790, 800.

[0075] This embodiment illustrates the use of the first and second end cap conductive members 790, 800 as switches. The first end cap conductive member 790 is attached to the switch button member 780 at the end which includes the first depressable portion 782 and the second end cap conductive member 800 is attached to the switch button member 780 at the opposite end which includes the second depressable portion 784. Preferably, the first and second end cap conductive members 790, 800 have a width similar to the width of the switch button member 780 so that the members 790, 800 lie beneath the switch button member 780.

[0076] In a disengaged position of the switch button member 780, the first protrusion 792 is positioned above the first handpiece conductive member (band) 740 and the second protrusion 794 is positioned above the second handpiece conductive member (band) 750. The second protrusion 804 of the second end cap conductive member 800 is also positioned above the second handpiece conductive member (band) 750 at an opposite thereof relative to the position of the second protrusion 794. The first protrusion 802 is positioned above the third handpiece conductive member (band) 760. It will be appreciated that the bands 740, 750, 760 may have different widths; however, the second conductive band 750 is preferably wider than the first and third conductive bands 740, 760 because both the first and second end cap conductive members 790, 800 engage the second conductive band 750.

[0077] In operation, the user will depress one of the first and second depressable portions 782, 784 of the switch button member 780 to cause current to flow from a generator (not shown) to the handpiece 710 for causing vibration of the blade 716. For example, if the user depresses the first depressable portion 782, the first protrusion 792 engages the first handpiece conductive member 740 and the second protrusion 794 engages the second handpiece conductive member 750. An electrical connection is thus provided by bridging the first and second handpiece conductive members 740, 750 together

using the first end cap conductive member 790. As long as the first depressable portion 782 remains depressed, current can flow between the first and second conductive bands 740, 750 to complete one electrical path resulting in power being delivered to the handpiece 710. As soon as the first depressable portion 782 is released, the bridge between the first and second handpiece conductive members 740, 750 is eliminated and power is no longer delivered to the handpiece 710.

[0078] Similarly, if the user depresses the second depressable portion 784, the first protrusion 802 engages the third handpiece conductive member 760 and the second protrusion 804 engages the second handpiece conductive member 750. An electrical connection is thus provided by bridging the second and third handpiece conductive members 750, 760 together using the second end cap conductive member 800. As long as the second depressable portion 784 remains depressed, current can flow between the second and third handpiece conductive members 750, 760 to complete one electrical path resulting in power being delivered to the handpiece 710. As soon as the second depressable portion 784 is released, the bridge between the second and third handpiece conductive members 750, 760 is eliminated and power is no longer delivered to the handpiece 710.

[0079] In this embodiment, the first and second end cap conductive members 790, 800 thus act as switches by providing a bridge electrically connecting two respective handpiece conductive members which are electrically connected to a power supply. Thus, once the bridge is in place, the electrical path is completed and power is delivered to the handpiece 710. Depending upon the desired configuration of the switch mechanism 730, the first depressable portion 782 may be used to provide a first level of power to the handpiece 710 and the second depressable portion 784 may be used to provide a second level of power to the handpiece 710. It will also be understood that the additional handpiece conductive members (bands) and complementary end cap conductive members may be provided in the device 700 for providing additional switches.

[0080] It will be appreciated that the switch end cap 720 is rotatable relative to the handpiece 710 such that the electrical connection therebetween is not interrupted during the rotation of the switch end cap 720 when one of the first and second depressable portions 782, 784 is actuated. This results because the respective first and second protrusions remain engaged with the respective handpiece conductive members by simply sliding across the surface of the conductive bands as the switch end cap 720 is rotated. Because the handpiece conductive members are annular in nature and extend around the complete circumference of the handpiece 710, the electrical connection is maintained as the switch end cap 720 is rotated to any position about the handpiece 710.

[0081] This embodiment provides a much simpler switch mechanism than the other embodiments; however, the switch end cap 720 may still be rotated without

disrupting the electrical connection and no hard wires are needed between the handpiece 710 and the switch end cap 720.

[0082] Referring now to FIGS. 11-13 in which another embodiment of the present invention is illustrated. This embodiment is similar to the embodiments illustrated in FIGS. 1-9 in that the switch end cap 200 mates with the handpiece body 150 to form an electrical connection therebetween. In this embodiment, the first end cap 200 has a first end cap conductive member 910 and a second end cap conductive member 920 which mate respectively with a first handpiece conductive member 930 and a second handpiece conductive member 940 disposed within the handpiece body 150. For purpose of simplicity, FIG. 1 illustrates the switch end cap 200 without the outer shell 201 so that the first and second end cap conductive members 910, 920 may be better viewed. The first end cap conductive member 910 is retained within a first gap or channel 912 formed in the switch end cap 200. The first channel 912 is defined by opposing first and second members 914, 916 with the first channel 912 being defined therebetween. It will be understood that the first and second members 914, 916 preferably comprise insulative members which isolate the first end cap conductive member 910. In the exemplary embodiment shown, each of the first end cap conductive member 910 and the first and second members 914, 916 has an annular shape. Preferably, the first end cap conductive member 910 is in the form of an O-ring which is retained within the channel 912 between the members 914, 916. When the first end cap conductive member 910 is seated within the channel 912, a portion 918 generally protrudes above the outer surfaces of the members 914, 916. This portion 918 serves as the conductive contact surface for the first end cap conductive member 910.

[0083] Similarly, the second end cap conductive member 920 is retained within a second gap or channel 922 formed in the switch end cap 200. The second channel 922 is defined by opposing third and fourth members 924, 926 with the second channel 922 being defined therebetween. The third and fourth member 924, 926 preferably comprise insulative members which isolate the second end cap conductive member 920. Like the first end cap conductive member 910, the second end cap conductive member 920 is preferably an O-ring which is retained within the second channel 922. When the second end cap conductive member 920 is seated within the second channel 922, a portion 928 generally protrudes above the outer surface of the members 924, 926 and is designed to provide a conductive contact surface.

[0084] In this embodiment, as in the embodiment of FIG. 8, the member 230' does not serve as a conductive member but rather comprises a member which simply receives the horn 130 and instrument 30. The first and second end cap conductive members 910, 920 are each electrically connected to the PCBs 290 (FIG. 4) to form one side of the circuit of the switch mechanism 110. The electrical connection between each of the first and sec-

ond end cap conductive members 910, 920 and the PCBs 290 (FIG. 4) may be formed using any number of techniques including wiring the first and second end cap conductive members 910, 920 to the PCBs 290.

[0085] Referring now to FIG. 12 in which the handpiece body 150 is shown in greater detail. In this embodiment, the handpiece body 150 is similar to the handpiece body 150 shown and described with reference to FIG. 8 in that the handpiece body 150 includes complementary conductive members which mate with the first and second end cap conductive members 910, 920 of the switch end cap 200 to provide the electrical connection between the switch end cap 200 and the handpiece body 150. More specifically, the handpiece body 150 includes first and second handpiece conductive members 930, 940 which mate respectively with the first and second end cap conductive members 910, 920. In one exemplary embodiment, each of the first and second handpiece conductive members 930, 940 comprises a conductive strip which is disposed within the flange 160 section of the handpiece body 150. Because of the general annular nature of the handpiece body 150, the first and second conductive handpiece members 930, 940 likewise have an annular shape. The first and second handpiece conductive members 930, 940 are disposed within the handpiece body 150 so that each one is electrically isolated from the other. In other words, one or more spacers formed of an insulative material are disposed between the first and second handpiece conductive members 930, 940. Each of the first and second handpiece conductive members 930, 940 is electrically connected to the cable 22 (FIG. 1).

[0086] As best shown in FIG. 13, in another aspect of this embodiment, the first and second handpiece conductive members 930, 940 each include a slight recessed section, generally indicated at 950, which serve as a retaining feature for capturing the respective first or second end cap conductive member 910, 920. Because the first and second end cap conductive members 910, 920 preferably comprise conductive coil springs in the form of O-rings, the members 910, 920 store and release energy depending upon whether the rings are compressed or not. When the switch end cap 200 mates with the handpiece body 150, the first end cap conductive member 910 seats within the recessed section 950 formed in the first handpiece conductive member 930 and the second end cap conductive member 920 seats within the recessed section 950 formed in the second handpiece conductive member 940. The first and second end cap conductive members 910, 920 thus serve as detents which are received within the sections 950 because of the resilient nature thereof. In other words, when the switch end cap 200 is initially mated with the handpiece body 150, the first and second end cap conductive members 910, 920 are compressed by the inner surface of the flange 160 and upon meeting the sections 950, the members 910, 920 flex outwardly into the sections 950. The sections 950 thus serve to locate the first and second end cap conductive members 910, 920 against the first and sec-

and handpiece conductive members 930, 940 so that electrical connection results therebetween.

[0087] In this embodiment, a seal 960 is also preferably provided to ensure a secure fit between the switch end cap 200 and the handpiece body 150 when the two mate together. This seal 960 is preferably formed of a resilient material such as an elastomer. The switch end cap 200 and the handpiece body 150 are rotatable relative to one another as during rotation, the first and second end cap conductive members 910, 920 simply travel within the recessed sections 950 and continuously remain in electrical contact with the first and second handpiece conductive members 930, 940, respectively. In the illustrated embodiment, the diameter of the first end cap conductive member 910 is less than a diameter of the second end cap conductive member 920 to complement the shape of the handpiece body 150. As with the other embodiments, when an electrical connection is formed between the switch end cap 200 and the handpiece body 150, the power is delivered from the generator (not shown) through the cable 22 and then along two electrical pathways. The first electrical pathway is defined by the respective first end cap and handpiece conductive members 910, 930 and the second electrical pathway is defined by the respective second end cap and handpiece conductive members 920, 940. It will be understood that there may only be a single electrical pathway or there may be more than two electrical pathways with each pathway being defined by one pair of complementary conductive members.

[0088] In another aspect of the present invention, the present invention provides a mechanism for ensuring that the effect of debris and other foreign conductive material on the mating conductive members (contacts) be mitigated. Surface oxidation or debris or other foreign matter that could interfere with conduction between the contacts. By removing these materials, robust conductive contact may be restored. In the present invention, there are at least two forms of frictional contact/scraping action that re-establishes robust contact between intended surfaces. The first, is that the insertion of the switch end cap 200 into the main handpiece body 150 results in contact flexure and frictional rubbing as the contacts engage and become fully seated against each other. Second, rotational adjustment of the switch end cap 200, while initially orientating the switches to align with the desired blade symmetry or reorientation during use causes a wiping action between the contacts. This wiping action wipes the contact surfaces clean and also friction rubbing of the contacts abrades away oxides.

[0089] While the invention has been particularly shown and described with reference to the preferred embodiments thereof, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that various changes in form and detail may be made therein without departing from the scope of the invention as defined by the accompanying claims.

Claims

1. A surgical instrument (100) handpiece comprising:

- 5 a handpiece body (150 ; 710) having distal and proximal ends (152, 154), the proximal end receiving an electrical cable (22) for providing power to the handpiece, the handpiece body including a first handpiece conductive member (170; 400; 620 ; 740 ; 930);
- 10 a switch end cap (200 ; 720) connected to the handpiece body, the switch end cap including a switch mechanism (110 ; 730) for selectively controlling at least one function of the handpiece, the switch end cap having a first end cap conductive member (230, 310'; 600; 750; 760; 940) which mates with the first handpiece conductive member (170; 400; 620; 740; 930) to provide an electrical connection between the handpiece body (150 ; 710) and the switch end cap (200 ; 720); and
- 15 an instrument (30 ; 716) detachably connected to the handpiece body (150 ; 710);

25 **characterised in that** the switch end cap (200 ; 720) is rotatable about the handpiece body (150 ; 710) while the electrical connection is maintained between the handpiece body (150 ; 710) and the switch end cap (200 ; 720).

30 2. The surgical instrument handpiece of claim 1, wherein the instrument (30 ; 716) is ultrasonically vibrated for performing a surgical operation.

35 3. The surgical instrument handpiece of claim 1, wherein the handpiece body (150 ; 710) includes a horn member (130 ; 714) disposed therein and extending along a longitudinal axis thereof, the instrument (30 ; 716) being detachably connected to one end of the horn member.

40 4. The surgical instrument handpiece of claim 1, wherein the first handpiece conductive member comprises a first conductive ring element (170 ; 400 ; 740 ; 930) disposed within the handpiece body (150 ; 710) so that the first conductive ring element intimately contacts the first end cap conductive member (230; 310'; 600 ; 740 ; 910) to provide the electrical connection.

45 5. The surgical instrument handpiece of claim 4, wherein the first end cap conductive member (230) comprises a conductive member disposed within a bore (220) of the end cap (200), wherein the first conductive ring element (170) includes a plurality of conductive fingers (171) connected in an annular ring, the fingers contacting and seating against the first end cap conductive member (230), the instrument (30) extending through an opening formed through

the first end cap conductive member (230) so that a portion thereof extends beyond the switch end cap (200).

6. The surgical instrument handpiece of claim 4, wherein the handpiece body (150) is formed of a conductive material so that the handpiece body itself acts as a conductive body contact. 5
7. The surgical instrument handpiece of claim 6, wherein the first conductive ring element (170) includes a plurality of conductive fingers (171) connected in an annular ring, the fingers being radially spaced within a cavity (162) formed at the distal end (152) of the handpiece body (150), the plurality of fingers being electrically isolated from the conductive handpiece body (150) by a spacer member (178) disposed therebetween. 10
15
8. The surgical instrument handpiece of claim 6, wherein the conductive handpiece body (150) is electrically connected to the electrical cable (22). 20
9. The surgical instrument handpiece of claim 4, wherein the first conductive ring element (170; 400; 740; 930) is electrically connected to the electrical cable (22) by at least one wire. 25
10. The surgical instrument handpiece of claim 4, wherein the handpiece body (150) includes a flange member (160) formed at the distal end (152) thereof, a portion of an outer shell (201) of the switch end cap (200) being detachably connected about the flange member. 30
11. The surgical instrument handpiece of claim 1, wherein the switch end cap (200) includes an outer shell (201) having a bore extending therethrough from the distal end (202) to the proximal end (204). 35
40
12. The surgical instrument handpiece of claim 11, wherein the switch mechanism (110 ; 730) includes one or more switch button members (270 ; 780) operatively attached to the outer shell (201), each of the one or more switch button members having a first switch setting and a second switch setting. 45
13. The surgical instrument handpiece of claim 12, wherein the first switch setting is a maximum power setting and the second switch setting is a minimum power setting. 50
14. The surgical instrument handpiece of claim 12, wherein activation of one of the first and second switch settings controls turning on or off certain preselected console functions. 55
15. The surgical instrument handpiece of claim 12,

wherein the one or more switch button members (270) each are formed with an inactive center region (286) for resting of a finger without inadvertently activating the handpiece.

16. The surgical instrument handpiece of claim 1, wherein the switch mechanism (110) includes at least one printed circuit board (290) disposed within the switch end cap (200), the printed circuit board being electrically connected to the first handpiece conductive member (170; 400; 620) so that actuation of the switch mechanism causes current to flow through the printed circuit board and the instrument (30) is vibrated.
17. The surgical instrument handpiece of claim 1, wherein the switch mechanism (110) comprises:

a pair of printed circuit boards (290) disposed about the first end cap conductive member (230) which extends through the switch end cap (200), a pair of switch button members (270) electrically connected to the first handpiece conductive member (170; 400; 620), each of the first and second switch button members having a first switch setting and a second switch setting, each of the switch button members selectively contacting one of the printed circuit boards (290) so that actuation of the first switch setting generates a first control signal and actuation of the second switch setting generates a second control signal.
18. The surgical instrument handpiece of claim 17, wherein the first control signal is delivered to a power source and causes the instrument to be actuated at maximum power, the second control signal being delivered to the power source and causing the instrument to be actuated at a minimum power.
19. The surgical instrument handpiece of claim 17, wherein the first end cap conductive member (230) comprises a conductive member extending through an outer shell (201) of the switch end cap (200), the instrument (30) being received within and extending through the first end cap conductive member (230) and the switch end cap (200) further including a second end cap conductive member (310) disposed between the first end cap conductive member (230) and the outer shell (201).
20. The surgical instrument handpiece of claim 19, wherein the second end cap conductive member (310) is coupled to a spacer member disposed about the first end cap conductive member (230) so that the second end cap conductive member (310) is electrically isolated from the first end cap conductive member (230).

21. The surgical instrument handpiece of claim 19, wherein the first end cap conductive member (230) comprises a metal cylindrical tube.
22. The surgical instrument handpiece of claim 19, wherein the second end cap conductive member (310) includes a plurality of conductive fingers (311) connected in an annular ring and disposed radially about the first end cap conductive member (230), the conductive fingers (311) electrically contacting the handpiece body (150) which acts as a conductive member so that a first electrical pathway from the cable (22) is defined by the conductive handpiece body (150) and the second end cap conductive member (310), whereby during rotation of the switch end cap (200), the conductive fingers (311) travel radially in contact with the handpiece body (150).
23. The surgical instrument handpiece of claim 19, wherein the first end cap conductive member (230) intimately contacts a plurality of conductive fingers (171) which form a part of the first handpiece conductive member (170) and are electrically connected to the cable (22) so that a second electrical pathway from the cable is defined by the conductive fingers (171) of the handpiece body (150) and the first end cap conductive member (230), whereby during rotation of the switch end cap (200), the conductive fingers (171) travel radially in contact with first end cap conductive member (230).
24. The surgical instrument handpiece of claim 1, further comprising a seal member (240) disposed within the switch end cap (200) near the distal end (202) thereof, the seal member sealingly engaging the instrument (30) so as to prevent foreign matter from entering and contacting the switch mechanism (110).
25. The surgical instrument handpiece of claim 24, wherein the seal member (240) comprises a ring member.
26. The surgical instrument handpiece of claim 21, wherein the plurality of conductive fingers (311) of the second end cap conductive member (310) act as a retention mechanism for detachably retaining the switch end cap (200) to the handpiece body (150) by being biased outwardly so that coupling between the switch end cap and the handpiece body causes the conductive fingers (311) to flex inwardly against the outward bias force applied by the conductive fingers.
27. The surgical instrument handpiece of claim 1, wherein the instrument (30 ; 716) is one of a surgical blade, scalpel, and shear instrument.
28. The surgical instrument of claim 1. wherein:
- the handpiece body (150 ; 710) further includes a second handpiece conductive member (410 ; 630 ; 150 ; 750 ; 760 ; 940)
the switch end cap (200 ; 720) further comprises a second end cap conductive member (420 ; 610 ; 310 ; 800 ; 920), the first and second end cap conductive members (310', 420; 600, 610; 230 ; 310 ; 790 ; 800 ; 910 ; 920) being complementary to and mating with the first and second handpiece conductive members (400, 410; 620, 630 ; 170 ; 150 ; 740 ; 750 ; 760 ; 930 ; 940) provide an electrical connection between the handpiece body (150) and the switch end cap (200); and
activation of a first setting of the switch mechanism (110 ; 780) causes a first control signal to be delivered across the respective first handpiece and end cap conductive members (400, 310'; 620, 600 ; 170 ; 230; 740 ; 930 ; 910) for selectively controlling the first function of the handpiece and activation of the a second setting causes a second control signal to be delivered across the respective second handpiece and end cap conductive members (410, 420; 630, 610 ; 150 ; 310 ; 750 ; 800 ; 940 ; 920) for selectively controlling the first function of the handpiece.
29. The surgical instrument handpiece of claim 28, wherein each of the first and second handpiece conductive members (400, 410) comprises a ring contact, the first and second conductive ring contacts being electrically isolated from one another.
30. The surgical instrument handpiece of claim 28, wherein the each of the first and second end cap conductive members (310'; 420) comprises an annular contact member having one or more protruding members (311', 421) extending therefrom, the first and second end cap conductive members (310', 420) being electrically isolated from one another, the one or more protruding members (311', 421) engaging the first and second handpiece conductive members (400, 410) to provide the electrical connection between the respective first handpiece and end cap conductive members (400, 310') and the respective second handpiece and end cap conductive members (410, 420).
31. The surgical instrument handpiece of claim 30, wherein the one or more protruding members (311', 421) comprise resilient contact fingers.
32. The surgical instrument handpiece of claim 30, wherein the one or more protruding members (311', 421) comprise contact pins.
33. The surgical instrument handpiece of claim 28,

wherein the first and second end cap conductive members (310', 420) are electrically connected to the switch mechanism (110) and the first and second handpiece conductive members (400, 410) are electrically connected to a power supply, whereby activation of the switch mechanism (110) causes power of a predetermined magnitude to be delivered to the handpiece (100) when the switch end cap (200) is electrically connected to the handpiece body (150).

34. The surgical instrument handpiece of claim 28, wherein each of the first and second end cap conductive members (310', 420) comprises a ring contact, the first and second end cap conductive ring contacts being electrically isolated from one another.

35. The surgical instrument handpiece of claim 28, wherein the each of the first and second handpiece conductive members (400, 410) comprises an annular contact member having one or more protruding members extending therefrom, the first and second handpiece conductive members (400, 410) being electrically isolated from one another, the one or more protruding members engaging the first and second end cap conductive members (310', 420) to provide the electrical connection between the respective first handpiece and end cap conductive members (400, 310') and the respective second handpiece and end cap conductive members (410, 420).

36. The surgical instrument handpiece of claim 35, wherein the one or more protruding members comprise resilient contact fingers.

37. The surgical instrument handpiece of claim 35, wherein the one or more protruding members comprise contact pins.

38. The surgical instrument handpiece of claim 28, wherein:

the first and second handpiece conductive members (620, 630) together form a first conductive split member having first and second contacts separated from one another, the first and second handpiece conductive members (620, 630) being electrically connected to the cable (22);

the switch cap (200) is detachably connected to the handpiece body (150);

the first and second end cap conductive members (600, 610) together form a second conductive split member having first and second contacts separated from one another, the first and second end cap conductive members (600, 610) being electrically connected to the switch mechanism (110) such that mating between the first

and second conductive split members provides an electrical connection between the handpiece body (150) and the switch end cap (200).

39. The surgical instrument handpiece of claim 38, wherein each of the first and second conductive split members comprises a split conductive ring, the first and second handpiece conductive members (620, 630) comprising first and second contacts of the first split conductive ring and the first and second end cap conductive members (600, 610) comprising first and second contacts of the second split conductive ring, the contacts of one of the first and second conductive split members each having one or more protruding contacts (601, 611) which engage the first and second contacts of the other of the first and second conductive split members.

20 Patentansprüche

1. Handstück für ein chirurgisches Instrument (100), umfassend:

einen Handstückkörper (150; 710) mit distalen und proximalen Enden (152, 154), wobei das proximale Ende ein elektrisches Kabel (22) zum Versorgen des Handstücks mit Strom aufnimmt, wobei der Handstückkörper ein erstes Handstückleitelement (170; 400; 620; 740; 930) enthält;

eine mit dem Handstückkörper verbundene Schalterabschlußkappe (200; 720), wobei die Schalterabschlußkappe eine Schalteinrichtung (110; 730) zum wahlweisen Steuern von mindestens einer Funktion des Handstücks enthält, wobei die Schalterabschlußkappe ein erstes Abschlußkappenleitelement (230, 310'; 600; 750; 760; 940) enthält, das mit dem ersten Handstückleitelement (170; 400; 620; 740; 930) zum Bereitstellen einer elektrischen Verbindung zwischen dem Handstückkörper (150; 710) und der Schalterabschlußkappe (200; 720) zusammenpaßt; und

ein Instrument (30; 716), das mit dem Handstückkörper (150; 710) lösbar verbunden ist;

dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß die Schalterabschlußkappe (200; 720) um den Handstückkörper (150; 710) drehbar ist und dabei die elektrische Verbindung zwischen dem Handstückkörper (150; 710) und der Schalterabschlußkappe (200; 720) aufrechterhalten wird.

2. Handstück für ein chirurgisches Instrument nach Anspruch 1, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß** das Instrument (30; 716) zur Durchführung einer chirurgischen Operation mit Ultraschall angeregt wird.

3. Handstück für ein chirurgisches Instrument nach Anspruch 1, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß** der Handstückkörper (150; 710) ein Hornelement (130; 714) enthält, das darin angeordnet ist und sich entlang einer Längsachse desselben erstreckt, wobei das Instrument (30; 716) mit einem Ende des Hornelements lösbar verbunden ist.
4. Handstück für ein chirurgisches Instrument nach Anspruch 1, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß** das erste Handstückleitelement ein erstes leitfähiges Ringelement (170; 400; 740; 930) umfaßt, das in dem Handstückkörper (150; 710) so angeordnet ist, daß das erste leitfähige Ringelement das erste Abschlußkappenleitelement (230; 310; 600; 740; 910) zur Bereitstellung der elektrischen Verbindung innig kontaktiert.
5. Handstück für ein chirurgisches Instrument nach Anspruch 4, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß** das erste Abschlußkappenleitelement (230) ein leitfähiges Element umfaßt, das in einer Bohrung (220) der Abschlußkappe (200) angeordnet ist, wobei das erste leitfähige Ringelement (170) eine Vielzahl von leitfähigen Fingern (171) enthält, die in einem ringförmigen Ring verbunden sind und das erste Abschlußkappenleitelement (230) kontaktieren und dort aufliegen und sich das Instrument (30) durch eine Öffnung erstreckt, die durch das erste Abschlußkappenleitelement (230) ausgebildet ist, so daß sich ein Teil desselben über die Schalterabschlußkappe (200) hinaus erstreckt.
6. Handstück für ein chirurgisches Instrument nach Anspruch 4, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß** der Handstückkörper (150) aus einem leitfähigen Material gebildet ist, so daß der Handstückkörper selbst als ein leitfähiger Körperkontakt wirkt.
7. Handstück für ein chirurgisches Instrument nach Anspruch 6, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß** das erste leitfähige Ringelement (170) eine Vielzahl von leitfähigen Fingern (171) enthält, die in einem ringförmigen Ring verbunden sind, wobei die Finger in einem Hohlraum (162) radial beabstandet sind, der an dem distalen Ende (152) des Handstückkörpers (150) ausgebildet ist, und die Vielzahl von Fingern vom leitfähigen Handstückkörper (150) durch ein dazwischen angeordnetes Abstandhalterelement (178) elektrisch isoliert ist.
8. Handstück für ein chirurgisches Instrument nach Anspruch 6, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß** der leitfähige Handstückkörper (150) mit dem elektrischen Kabel (22) elektrisch verbunden ist.
9. Handstück für ein chirurgisches Instrument nach Anspruch 4, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß** das erste leitfähige Ringelement (170; 400; 740; 930) durch mindestens einen Draht mit dem elektrischen Kabel (22) elektrisch verbunden ist.
10. Handstück für ein chirurgisches Instrument nach Anspruch 4, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß** der Handstückkörper (150) ein Flanschelement (160) enthält, das an dem distalen Ende (152) desselben ausgebildet ist, wobei ein Teil einer Außenschale (201) der Schalterabschlußkappe (200) um das Flanschelement lösbar verbunden ist.
11. Handstück für ein chirurgisches Instrument nach Anspruch 1, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß** die Schalterabschlußkappe (200) eine Außenschale (201) mit einer Bohrung enthält, die sich dort hindurch vom distalen Ende (202) zum proximalen Ende (204) erstreckt.
12. Handstück für ein chirurgisches Instrument nach Anspruch 11, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß** die Schalteinrichtung (110; 730) ein oder mehr Schalterknopfelement(e) (270; 780) enthält, die an der Außenschale (201) operativ befestigt sind, wobei jedes des einen oder mehr Schalterknopfelemente eine erste Schalterstellung und eine zweite Schalterstellung aufweist.
13. Handstück für ein chirurgisches Instrument nach Anspruch 12, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß** die erste Schalterstellung eine Einstellung mit maximaler Leistung ist und die zweite Schalterstellung eine Einstellung mit minimaler Leistung ist.
14. Handstück für ein chirurgisches Instrument nach Anspruch 12, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß** eine Aktivierung von einer der ersten und zweiten Schalterstellungen das Ein- oder Ausschalten von bestimmten vorab ausgewählten Konsolenfunktionen steuert.
15. Handstück für ein chirurgisches Instrument nach Anspruch 12, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß** das eine oder mehr Schalterknopfelement (270) jeweils mit einem inaktiven zentralen Gebiet (286) zum Lagern eines Fingers ohne versehentliches Aktivieren des Handstücks ausgebildet ist bzw. sind.
16. Handstück für ein chirurgisches Instrument nach Anspruch 1, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß** die Schalteinrichtung (110) mindestens eine Leiterplatte (290) enthält, die in der Schalterabschlußkappe (200) angeordnet ist, wobei die Leiterplatte mit dem ersten Handstückleitelement (170; 400; 620) so elektrisch verbunden ist, daß eine Aktivierung der Schalteinrichtung einen Stromfluß durch die Leiterplatte bewirkt und das Instrument (30) in Schwingungen versetzt wird.

17. Handstück für ein chirurgisches Instrument nach Anspruch 1, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß** die Schalteinrichtung (110) umfaßt:

ein Paar Leiterplatten (290), die um das erste Abschlußkappenleitelement (230) angeordnet sind, das sich durch die Schalterabschlußkappe (200) erstreckt,
 ein Paar Schalterknopfelemente (270), die mit dem ersten Handstückleitelement (170; 400; 620) elektrisch verbunden sind, wobei jedes der ersten und zweiten Schalterknopfelemente eine erste Schalterstellung und eine zweite Schalterstellung aufweist, wobei jedes der Schalterknopfelemente wahlweise eine der Leiterplatten (290) so kontaktiert, daß eine Aktivierung der ersten Schalterstellung ein erstes Steuersignal erzeugt und eine Aktivierung der zweiten Schalterstellung ein zweites Steuersignal erzeugt.

18. Handstück für ein chirurgisches Instrument nach Anspruch 17, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß** das erste Steuersignal einer Stromquelle zugeführt wird und bewirkt, daß das Instrument mit maximaler Leistung aktiviert wird, und das zweite Steuersignal der Stromquelle zugeführt wird und bewirkt, daß das Instrument mit minimaler Leistung aktiviert wird.

19. Handstück für ein chirurgisches Instrument nach Anspruch 17, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß** das erste Abschlußkappenelement (230) ein leitfähiges Element umfaßt, das sich durch eine Außenschale (201) der Schalterabschlußkappe (200) erstreckt, wobei das Instrument (30) in dem ersten Abschlußkappenleitelement (230) aufgenommen wird und sich dort hindurch erstreckt und die Schalterabschlußkappe (200) ferner ein zweites Abschlußkappenleitelement (310) enthält, das zwischen dem ersten Abschlußkappenleitelement (230) und der Außenschale (201) angeordnet ist.

20. Handstück für ein chirurgisches Instrument nach Anspruch 19, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß** das zweite Abschlußkappenleitelement (310) mit einem Abstandhalterelement gekoppelt ist, das um das erste Abschlußkappenleitelement (230) so angeordnet ist, daß das zweite Abschlußkappenleitelement (310) vom ersten Abschlußkappenleitelement (230) elektrisch isoliert ist.

21. Handstück für ein chirurgisches Instrument nach Anspruch 19, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß** das erste Abschlußkappenleitelement (230) ein zylindrisches Metallrohr aufweist.

22. Handstück für ein chirurgisches Instrument nach Anspruch 19, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß** das zweite Abschlußkappenleitelement (310) eine Viel-

zahl von leitfähigen Fingern (311) enthält, die in einem ringförmigen Ring verbunden und um das erste Abschlußkappenleitelement (230) radial angeordnet sind, wobei die leitfähigen Finger (311) den Handstückkörper (150) elektrisch kontaktieren, der als ein leitfähiges Element wirkt, so daß eine elektrische Leiterbahn vom Kabel (22) durch den leitfähigen Handstückkörper (150) und das zweite Abschlußkappenleitelement (310) definiert ist, wodurch während einer Drehung der Schalterabschlußkappe (200) sich die leitfähigen Finger (311) radial in Kontakt mit dem Handstückkörper (150) bewegen.

23. Handstück für ein chirurgisches Instrument nach Anspruch 19, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß** das erste Abschlußkappenleitelement (230) eine Vielzahl von leitfähigen Fingern (171) innig kontaktiert, die einen Teil des ersten Handstückleitelements (170) bilden und mit dem Kabel (22) elektrisch verbunden sind, so daß eine zweite elektrische Leiterbahn vom Kabel durch die leitfähigen Finger (171) des Handstückkörpers (150) und das erste Abschlußkappenleitelement (230) definiert ist, wodurch während einer Drehung der Schalterabschlußkappe (200) sich die leitfähigen Finger (171) radial in Kontakt mit dem ersten Abschlußkappenleitelement (230) bewegen.

24. Handstück für ein chirurgisches Instrument nach Anspruch 1, ferner umfassend ein Abdichtungselement (240), das in der Schalterabschlußkappe (200) in der Nähe des distalen Endes (202) derselben angeordnet ist, wobei der Dichtungselement das Instrument (30) dichtend ergreift, um dadurch zu verhindern, daß Fremdkörper in die Schalteinrichtung (110) eindringen und diese kontaktieren.

25. Handstück für ein chirurgisches Instrument nach Anspruch 24, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß** das Abdichtungselement (240) ein Ringelement umfaßt.

26. Handstück für ein chirurgisches Instrument nach Anspruch 21, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß** die Vielzahl von leitfähigen Fingern (311) des zweiten Abschlußkappenleitelements (310) als eine Halteeinrichtung zum lösbaren Halten der Schalterabschlußkappe (200) an dem Handstückkörper (150) wirken, indem sie nach außen vorgespannt werden, so daß eine Kopplung zwischen der Schalterabschlußkappe und dem Handstückkörper bewirkt, daß sich die leitfähigen Finger (311) gegen die von den leitfähigen Fingern ausgeübte nach außen gerichtete Vorspannkraft nach innen biegen.

27. Handstück für ein chirurgisches Instrument nach Anspruch 1, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß** das Instrument (30; 716) eine chirurgische Schneide, ein Skalpell oder ein Scherinstrument ist.

28. Handstück für ein chirurgisches Instrument nach Anspruch 1, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß**

der Handstückkörper (150; 710) ferner ein zweites Handstückleitelement (410; 630; 150; 750; 760; 940) enthält;
 die Schalterabschlußkappe (200; 720) ferner ein zweites Abschlußkappenleitelement (420; 610; 310; 800; 920) aufweist, wobei die ersten und zweiten Abschlußkappenleitelemente (310', 420; 600, 610; 230; 310; 790; 800; 910; 920) komplementär zu den ersten und zweiten Handstückleitelementen (400, 410; 620, 630; 170; 150; 740; 750; 760; 930; 940) sind und damit zusammenpassen, um eine elektrische Verbindung zwischen dem Handstückkörper (150) und der Schalterabschlußkappe (200) bereitzustellen; und
 eine Aktivierung einer ersten Einstellung der Schalteinrichtung (110; 780) bewirkt, daß ein erstes Steuersignal über die jeweiligen ersten Handstück- und Abschlußkappenleitelemente (400, 310'; 620, 600; 170; 230; 740; 790; 930; 910) zum wahlweisen Steuern der ersten Funktion des Handstücks abgegeben wird, und daß eine Aktivierung der zweiten Einstellung bewirkt, daß ein zweites Steuersignal über die jeweiligen zweiten Handstück- und Abschlußkappenleitelemente (410, 420; 630, 610; 150; 310; 750; 800; 940; 920) zum wahlweisen Steuern der ersten Funktion des Handstücks abgegeben wird.

29. Handstück für ein chirurgisches Instrument nach Anspruch 28, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß** jedes der ersten und zweiten Handstückleitelemente (400, 410) einen Ringkontakt aufweist, wobei die ersten und zweiten leitfähigen Ringkontakte voneinander elektrisch isoliert sind.

30. Handstück für ein chirurgisches Instrument nach Anspruch 28, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß** jedes der ersten und zweiten Abschlußkappenleitelemente (310, 420) ein ringförmiges Kontaktelement mit einem oder mehreren vorstehendem Element (311', 421) aufweist, das/die sich davon erstreckt/erstrecken, wobei die ersten und zweiten Abschlußkappenleitelemente (310', 420) voneinander elektrisch isoliert sind, das eine oder die mehreren vorstehenden Elemente (311', 421) mit den ersten und zweiten Handstückleitelementen (400, 410) in Eingriff stehen, um die elektrische Verbindung zwischen den jeweiligen Handstück- und Abschlußkappenleitelementen (400, 310') und den jeweiligen zweiten Handstück- und Abschlußkappenleitelementen (410, 420) bereitzustellen.

31. Handstück für ein chirurgisches Instrument nach An-

spruch 30, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß** das eine oder die mehreren vorstehenden Elemente (311', 421) elastische Kontaktfinger aufweist/aufweisen.

32. Handstück für ein chirurgisches Instrument nach Anspruch 30, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß** das eine oder die mehreren vorstehenden Elemente (311', 421) Kontaktstifte aufweist/aufweisen.

33. Handstück für ein chirurgisches Instrument nach Anspruch 28, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß** die ersten und zweiten Abschlußkappenleitelemente (310', 420) mit der Schalteinrichtung (110) elektrisch verbunden sind und die ersten und zweiten Handstückleitelemente (400, 410) mit einer Stromversorgung elektrisch verbunden sind, wodurch eine Aktivierung der Schalteinrichtung (110) bewirkt, daß Leistung mit einer vorab festgelegten Größe an das Handstück (100) abgegeben wird, wenn die Schalterabschlußkappe (200) mit dem Handstückkörper (150) elektrisch verbunden ist.

34. Handstück für ein chirurgisches Instrument nach Anspruch 28, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß** jedes der ersten und zweiten Abschlußkappenleitelemente (310', 420) einen Ringkontakt aufweist, wobei die ersten und zweiten Abschlußkappenleitringkontakte voneinander elektrisch isoliert sind.

35. Handstück für ein chirurgisches Instrument nach Anspruch 28, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß** jedes der ersten und zweiten Handstückleitelemente (400, 410) ein ringförmiges Kontaktelement mit einem oder mehreren vorstehenden Elementen aufweist, das/die sich davon erstreckt/erstrecken, wobei die ersten und zweiten Handstückleitelemente (400, 410) voneinander elektrisch isoliert sind, das eine oder die mehreren vorstehenden Elemente mit den ersten und zweiten Abschlußkappenleitelementen (310', 420) in Eingriff stehen, um die elektrische Verbindung zwischen den jeweiligen ersten Handstück- und Abschlußkappenleitelementen (400, 310') und den jeweiligen zweiten Handstück- und Abschlußkappenleitelementen (410, 420) bereitzustellen.

36. Handstück für ein chirurgisches Instrument nach Anspruch 35, daß das eine oder die mehreren vorstehenden Elemente elastische Kontaktfinger aufweist/aufweisen.

37. Handstück für ein chirurgisches Instrument nach Anspruch 35, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß** das oder die mehreren vorstehenden Elemente Kontaktstifte aufweist/aufweisen.

38. Handstück für ein chirurgisches Instrument nach Anspruch 28, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß**

die ersten und zweiten Handstückleitelemente (620, 630) gemeinsam ein erstes leitfähiges geteiltes Element mit ersten und zweiten voneinander getrennten Kontakten bilden, wobei die ersten und zweiten Handstückleitelemente (620, 630) mit dem Kabel (22) elektrisch verbunden sind;

die Abschlußkappe (200) mit dem Handstückkörper (150) lösbar verbunden ist;

die ersten und zweiten Abschlußkappenleitelemente (600, 610) gemeinsam ein zweites leitfähiges geteiltes Element mit ersten und zweiten voneinander getrennten Kontakten bilden, wobei die ersten und zweiten Abschlußkappenleitelemente (600, 610) mit der Schalteinrichtung (110) elektrisch verbunden sind derart, daß Zusammensetzen der ersten und zweiten leitfähigen geteilten Elemente eine elektrische Verbindung zwischen dem Handstückkörper (150) und der Schalterabschlußkappe (200) bereitstellt.

39. Handstück für ein chirurgisches Instrument nach Anspruch 38, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß** jedes der ersten und zweiten leitfähigen geteilten Elemente einen geteilten leitfähigen Ring aufweist, wobei die ersten und zweiten Handstückleitelemente (620, 630) erste und zweite Kontakte des ersten geteilten leitfähigen Rings aufweisen und die ersten und zweiten Abschlußkappenleitelemente (600, 610) erste und zweite Kontakte des zweiten geteilten leitfähigen Rings aufweisen, wobei die Kontakte von einem der ersten und zweiten leitfähigen geteilten Elemente jeweils einen oder mehrere vorstehenden Kontakt/Kontakte (601, 611) aufweisen, die mit den ersten und zweiten Kontakten des anderen der ersten und zweiten leitfähigen geteilten Elemente in Eingriff stehen.

Revendications

1. Pièce à main (100) d'un instrument chirurgical comprenant :

■ un corps de pièce à main (150, 710), présentant des extrémités distale et proximale (152, 154), l'extrémité proximale recevant un câble électrique (22) pour fournir de l'électricité à la pièce à main, le corps de la pièce à main comprenant un premier élément conducteur de la pièce à main (170 ; 400 ; 620 ; 740 ; 930),

■ une capsule terminale de commutation (200 ; 720) reliée au corps de la pièce à main, la capsule terminale de commutation comprenant un mécanisme de commutation (110 ; 730) pour contrôler sélectivement au moins une fonction de la pièce à main, la capsule terminale de commutation présentant un premier élément con-

ducteur de la capsule terminale (230 ; 310' ; 600 ; 750 ; 760 ; 940) qui s'apparie avec le premier élément conducteur de la pièce à main (170 ; 400 ; 620 ; 740 ; 930) pour assurer une connexion électrique entre le corps de pièce à main (150 ; 710) et la capsule terminale de commutation (200 ; 720) ; et

■ un instrument (30 ; 716) relié de façon détachable au corps de pièce à main (150 ; 710) ;

caractérisée en ce que la capsule terminale de commutation (200 ; 720) peut tourner autour du corps de la pièce à main (150 ; 710) alors que la connexion électrique est conservée entre le corps de pièce à main (150 ; 710) et la capsule terminale de commutation (200 ; 720).

2. Pièce à main d'un instrument chirurgical selon la revendication 1, dans laquelle l'instrument (30 ; 716) est à vibrations ultrasoniques pour effectuer une intervention chirurgicale.

3. Pièce à main d'un instrument chirurgical selon la revendication 1, dans laquelle le corps de la pièce à main (150 ; 710) comprend un bras (130 ; 714) disposé dans celui-ci et s'étendant le long de son axe longitudinal, l'instrument (30 ; 716) étant relié de façon détachable à une extrémité du bras.

4. Pièce à main d'un instrument chirurgical selon la revendication 1, dans laquelle le premier élément conducteur de la pièce à main comprend un premier élément annulaire conducteur (170 ; 400 ; 740 ; 930) disposé dans le corps de la pièce à main (150 ; 710) de sorte que le premier anneau conducteur soit en contact étroit avec le premier élément conducteur de la capsule terminale (230 ; 310' ; 740 ; 910) pour assurer la connexion électrique.

5. Pièce à main d'un instrument chirurgical selon la revendication 4, dans laquelle le premier élément conducteur de la capsule terminale (230) comprend un élément disposé dans un alésage (220) de la capsule terminale (200), le premier élément annulaire conducteur (170) comprenant une pluralité de doigts conducteurs (171) reliés dans une bague annulaire, les doigts étant en contact et appuyant contre le premier élément conducteur de la capsule terminale (230), l'instrument (30) s'étendant par une ouverture formée dans le premier élément conducteur de la capsule terminale (230) de sorte qu'une partie de celui-ci s'étende au-delà de la capsule terminale de commutation (200).

6. Pièce à main d'un instrument chirurgical selon la revendication 4, dans laquelle le corps de pièce à main (150) est formé d'un matériau conducteur de telle sorte que le corps de pièce à main lui-même agisse

comme contact conducteur du corps.

7. Pièce à main d'un instrument chirurgical selon la revendication 6, dans laquelle le premier élément annulaire conducteur (170) comprend une pluralité de doigts conducteurs (171) reliés dans une bague annulaire, les doigts étant espacés radialement dans une cavité (162) qui est isolée électriquement du corps de pièce à main conducteur (150) par un élément d'espacement (178) disposé entre eux. 5
8. Pièce à main d'un instrument chirurgical selon la revendication 6, dans laquelle le corps de pièce à main conducteur (150) est relié électriquement au câble électrique (22). 10
9. Pièce à main d'un instrument chirurgical selon la revendication 4, dans laquelle le premier élément annulaire conducteur (170 ; 400 ; 740 ; 930) est relié électriquement au câble électrique (22) par au moins un fil. 15
10. Pièce à main d'un instrument chirurgical selon la revendication 4, dans laquelle le corps de la pièce à main (150) comprend une bride (160) formée à l'extrémité distale (152) de celui-ci, une partie d'une coque externe (201) de la capsule de commutation terminale (200) étant reliée de façon détachable autour de la bride. 20
11. Pièce à main d'un instrument chirurgical selon la revendication 1, dans laquelle la capsule terminale de commutation (200) comprend une coque externe (201) présentant un alésage s'étendant au travers de celle-ci de l'extrémité distale (202) à l'extrémité proximale (204). 25
12. Pièce à main d'un instrument chirurgical selon la revendication 11, dans laquelle le mécanisme de commutation (110 ; 730) comprend un ou plusieurs boutons de commutation (270 ; 780) qui sont fixés de façon fonctionnelle à la coque externe (201), le bouton ou chacun des multiples boutons de commutation présentant une première position de commutation et une deuxième position de commutation. 30
13. Pièce à main d'un instrument chirurgical selon la revendication 12, dans laquelle la première position de commutation est une position à puissance maximale et la deuxième position de commutation est une position à puissance minimale. 35
14. Pièce à main d'un instrument chirurgical selon la revendication 12, dans laquelle l'activation de l'une des première et deuxième positions de commutation commande la mise en route ou l'arrêt de certaines fonctions de console présélectionnées. 40

15. Pièce à main d'un instrument chirurgical selon la revendication 12, dans laquelle le ou les multiples boutons de commutation (270) sont formés respectivement d'une région centrale inactive (286) pour laisser reposer un doigt sans qu'il active par inadvertance la pièce à main. 45

16. Pièce à main d'un instrument chirurgical selon la revendication 1, dans laquelle le mécanisme de commutation (110) comprend au moins un circuit imprimé (290) disposé dans la capsule terminale de commutation (200), le circuit imprimé étant relié au premier élément conducteur de la pièce à main (170 ; 400 ; 620) de sorte que l'activation du mécanisme de commutation entraîne l'écoulement du courant dans le circuit imprimé et la vibration de l'instrument (30). 50

17. Pièce à main d'un instrument chirurgical selon la revendication 1, dans laquelle le mécanisme de commutation (110) comprend 55

■ une paire de circuits imprimés (290) disposés autour du premier élément conducteur de la capsule terminale (230) qui s'étend dans la capsule terminale de commutation (200),

■ une paire de boutons de commutation (270) reliés électriquement au premier élément conducteur de la pièce à main (170 ; 400 ; 620), chacun des premier et second boutons de commutation présentant une première position de commutation et une deuxième position de commutation, chacun des boutons de commutation étant en contact sélectivement avec l'un des circuits imprimés (290) de sorte que l'activation de la première position de commutation génère un premier signal de commande et que l'activation de la seconde position de commutation entraîne un second signal de commande. 60

18. Pièce à main d'un instrument chirurgical selon la revendication 17, dans laquelle le premier signal de commande est distribué à une source d'électricité et entraîne l'activation de l'instrument à une puissance maximale, le second signal de commande étant délivré à la source d'électricité et entraînant l'activation de l'instrument à une puissance minimale. 65

19. Pièce à main d'un instrument chirurgical selon la revendication 17, dans laquelle le premier élément conducteur de la capsule terminale (230) comprend un élément conducteur s'étendant au travers d'une coque externe (201) de la capsule de commutation terminale (200), l'instrument (30) étant reçu dans et s'étendant dans le premier élément conducteur de la capsule terminale (230) et la capsule terminale de commutation (200) comprenant en outre un second élément conducteur de la capsule terminale (310) 70

disposé entre le premier élément conducteur de la capsule terminale (230) et la coque externe (201).

20. Pièce à main d'un instrument chirurgical selon la revendication 19, dans laquelle le deuxième élément conducteur de la capsule terminale (310) est couplé à un élément d'espacement disposé autour du premier élément conducteur de la capsule terminale (230) de sorte que le second élément conducteur de la capsule terminale (310) soit isolé électriquement du premier élément conducteur de l'extrémité terminale. 5
21. Pièce à main d'un instrument chirurgical selon la revendication 19, dans laquelle le premier élément conducteur de la capsule terminale (230) comprend un tube cylindrique métallique. 10
22. Pièce à main d'un instrument chirurgical selon la revendication 19, dans laquelle le second élément annulaire conducteur (310) de la capsule terminale comprend une pluralité de doigts conducteurs (311) reliés dans une bague annulaire et disposés radialement autour du premier élément conducteur de la capsule terminale (230), les doigts conducteurs (311) étant en contact électriquement avec le corps de la pièce à main (150) qui agit comme un élément conducteur de sorte qu'une première voie électrique à partir du câble (22) soit définie par le corps de la pièce à main conducteur (150) et le second élément conducteur de la capsule terminale (310), moyennant quoi, pendant la rotation de la capsule terminale de commutation (200), les doigts conducteurs (311) se déplacent radialement en étant en contact avec le corps de la pièce à main (150). 20 25 30 35
23. Pièce à main d'un instrument chirurgical selon la revendication 9, dans laquelle le premier élément conducteur de la capsule terminale (230) est en contact étroit avec une pluralité de doigts conducteurs (171) qui forment une partie de l'élément conducteur de la pièce à main (170) et sont reliés électriquement avec le câble (22) de sorte qu'une deuxième voie électrique à partir du câble soit définie par les doigts conducteurs (171) du corps de la pièce à main (150) et le premier élément conducteur de la capsule terminale (230), moyennant quoi pendant la rotation de la capsule terminale de commutation (200), les doigts conducteurs (171) se déplacent radialement en étant en contact avec le premier élément conducteur de la capsule terminale (230). 40 45 50
24. Pièce à main d'un instrument chirurgical selon la revendication 1, comprenant en outre un joint (240) disposé dans la capsule terminale de commutation (200) à proximité de l'extrémité distale de celle-ci, le joint s'engageant de façon hermétique dans l'instrument (30) de façon à empêcher des matières étran-

gères d'entrer en contact avec le mécanisme de commutation (110).

25. Pièce à main d'un instrument chirurgical selon la revendication 24, dans laquelle le joint (240) comprend un élément annulaire.
26. Pièce à main d'un instrument chirurgical selon la revendication 21, dans laquelle la pluralité de doigts conducteurs (311) du second élément conducteur de la capsule terminale (310) agit comme un mécanisme de rétention pour maintenir de façon détachable la capsule terminale de commutation (200) dans le corps de la pièce à main (150) en étant courbée vers l'extérieur de sorte que le couplage entre la capsule terminale de commutation et le corps de la pièce à main entraîne la flexion des doigts conducteurs (311) vers l'intérieur, contre la force de courbure vers l'extérieur appliquée par les doigts conducteurs.
27. Pièce à main d'un instrument chirurgical selon la revendication 1, dans laquelle l'instrument (30 ; 176) fait partie d'une lame chirurgicale, d'un scalpel et d'un ciseau.
28. Instrument chirurgical selon la revendication 1, dans lequel
 - le corps de la pièce à main (150 ; 710) comprend en outre un second élément conducteur de la pièce à main (410 ; 630 ; 150 ; 750 ; 760 ; 940) ;
 - la capsule terminale de commutation (200 ; 720) comprend un second élément conducteur de la capsule terminale (420 ; 610 ; 310 ; 800 ; 920), les premiers et seconds éléments conducteurs de la capsule terminale (310', 420 ; 600 ; 610 ; 230 ; 310 ; 790 ; 800 ; 910 ; 920) étant complémentaires et appariés aux premiers et seconds éléments conducteurs de la pièce à main (400 ; 410 ; 620 ; 630 ; 170 ; 150 ; 740 ; 750 ; 760 ; 930 ; 940) pour assurer une connexion électrique entre le corps de la pièce à main (150) et la capsule terminale de commutation (200) et
 - l'activation d'une première position du mécanisme de commutation (110 ; 780) entraîne la distribution d'un premier signal de commande dans les premiers éléments conducteurs de la pièce à main et de la capsule terminale respectifs (400 ; 310 ; 620 ; 600 ; 170 ; 230 ; 540 ; 790 ; 930 ; 910) pour commander sélectivement la première fonction de la pièce à main et l'activation de la seconde position entraînant la distribution d'un second signal de commande dans les seconds éléments conducteurs de la pièce à main et de la capsule terminale respectifs (410 ; 420 ; 630 ; 610 ; 150 ; 310 ; 750 ; 800 ;

- 940 ; 920) pour commander sélectivement la première fonction de la pièce à main.
- 29.** Pièce à main d'un instrument chirurgical selon la revendication 28, dans laquelle chacun des premier et second éléments conducteurs de la pièce à main (400, 410) comprend un contact annulaire, les premier et deuxième contacts annulaires conducteurs étant isolés électriquement les uns des autres. 5
- 30.** Pièce à main d'un instrument chirurgical selon la revendication 28, dans laquelle chacun des premier et second éléments conducteurs de la capsule terminale (310', 420) comprend un élément de contact annulaire présentant un ou plusieurs éléments proéminents (311', 421) s'étendant à partir de celui-ci, les premiers et second éléments conducteurs de la capsule terminale (310', 420) étant isolés électriquement les uns des autres, le ou les éléments proéminent(s) (311', 421) s'engageant avec les premier et second éléments conducteurs de la pièce à main (400, 410) pour assurer une connexion électrique entre les premiers éléments conducteurs respectifs de la pièce à main et de la capsule terminale (400, 310') et les seconds éléments conducteurs respectifs de la pièce à main et de la capsule terminale (410, 420). 10 15
- 31.** Pièce à main d'un instrument chirurgical selon la revendication 30, dans laquelle un ou plusieurs éléments proéminents (311', 421) comprennent des doigts de contact élastiques. 20
- 32.** Pièce à main d'un instrument chirurgical selon la revendication 1, dans laquelle un ou plusieurs éléments proéminents (311', 421) comprennent des broches de contact. 25
- 33.** Pièce à main d'un instrument chirurgical selon la revendication 28, dans laquelle les premier et second éléments conducteurs de la capsule terminale (310', 420) sont reliés électriquement au mécanisme de commutation (110) et les premier et second éléments conducteurs de la pièce à main (400, 410) sont reliés électriquement à une source d'électricité, moyennant quoi l'activation du mécanisme de commutation (110) entraîne la distribution d'une ampleur prédéterminée à la pièce à main (100) lorsque la capsule terminale de commutation (200) est reliée électriquement au corps de la pièce à main (150). 30 35 40 45 50
- 34.** Pièce à main d'un instrument chirurgical selon la revendication 28, dans laquelle chacun des premier et second éléments conducteurs de la capsule terminale (310', 420) comprend un contact annulaire, les premiers et deuxièmes contacts annulaires conducteurs de la capsule terminale étant isolés électriquement les uns des autres. 55
- 35.** Pièce à main d'un instrument chirurgical selon la revendication 28, dans laquelle chacun des premier et deuxième éléments conducteurs de la pièce à main (400, 410) comprend un élément de contact annulaire présentant un ou plusieurs éléments proéminents s'étendant à partir de celui-ci, les premier et second éléments conducteurs de la pièce à main (400, 410) étant isolés électriquement les uns des autres, le ou les éléments proéminents s'engageant avec les premier et second éléments conducteurs de la capsule terminale (310', 420) pour assurer une connexion électrique entre les premiers éléments conducteurs respectifs de la pièce à main et de la capsule terminale (400, 310') et les seconds éléments conducteurs respectifs de la pièce à main et de la capsule conductrice (410, 420).
- 36.** Pièce à main d'un instrument chirurgical selon la revendication 35, dans laquelle le ou les éléments proéminents comprennent des doigts de contact élastiques.
- 37.** Pièce à main d'un instrument chirurgical selon la revendication 35, dans laquelle le ou les éléments proéminents comprennent des broches de contact.
- 38.** Pièce à main d'un instrument chirurgical selon la revendication 28, dans laquelle
- les premier et second éléments conducteurs de la pièce à main (620, 630) forment conjointement un premier élément de séparation conducteur présentant des premiers et seconds contacts séparés les uns des autres, les premier et second éléments conducteurs de la pièce à main (620, 630) étant reliés électriquement au câble (22) ;
 - la capsule de commutation (200) est reliée de façon détachable avec le corps de la pièce à main (150) ;
 - les premiers et seconds éléments conducteurs de la capsule terminale (600, 610) forment conjointement un second élément de séparation conducteur présentant des premiers et seconds contacts séparés les uns des autres, les premiers et seconds éléments conducteurs de la capsule terminale (600, 610) étant reliés électriquement au mécanisme de commutation (110) de sorte que l'appariement entre les premiers et seconds éléments de séparation conducteurs assurent une connexion électrique entre le corps de la pièce à main (150) et la capsule de commutation terminale (200).
- 39.** Pièce à main d'un instrument chirurgical selon la revendication 38, dans laquelle chacun des premiers et seconds éléments de séparation conducteur comprend un anneau de séparation conducteur, les pre-

miers et seconds éléments conducteurs de la pièce à main (620, 630) comprenant des premiers et seconds contact du premier anneau conducteur de séparation et des seconds éléments conducteurs de la capsule terminale (600, 610) comprenant des premiers et seconds contacts du second anneau conducteur de séparation, les contacts de l'un des premiers et seconds éléments de séparation conducteurs présentant respectivement un ou plusieurs contacts proéminents (601, 611) qui s'engagent avec les premiers et seconds contacts de l'autre élément des premiers et seconds éléments de séparation conducteurs.

15

20

25

30

35

40

45

50

55

FIG. 1

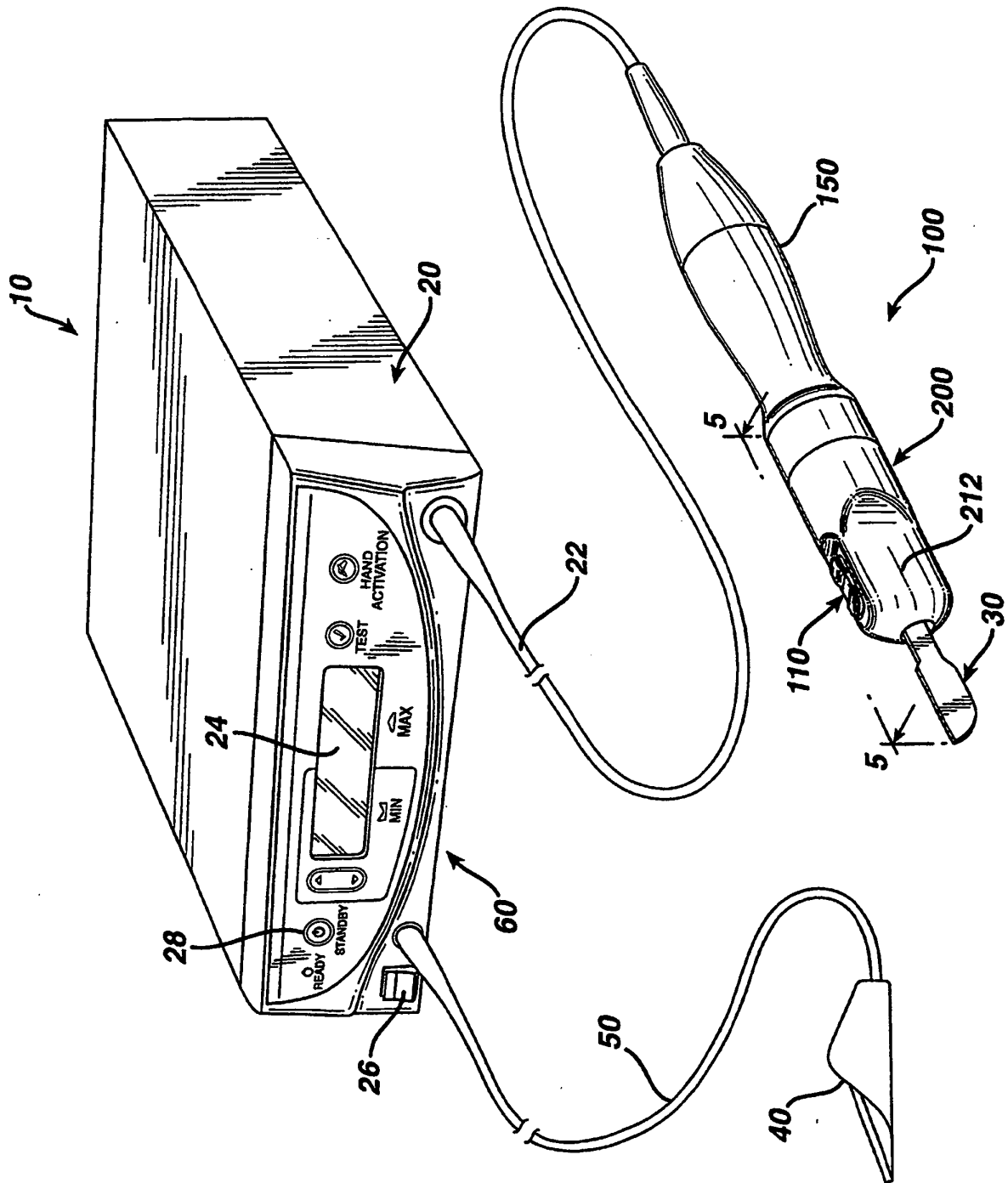


FIG. 2

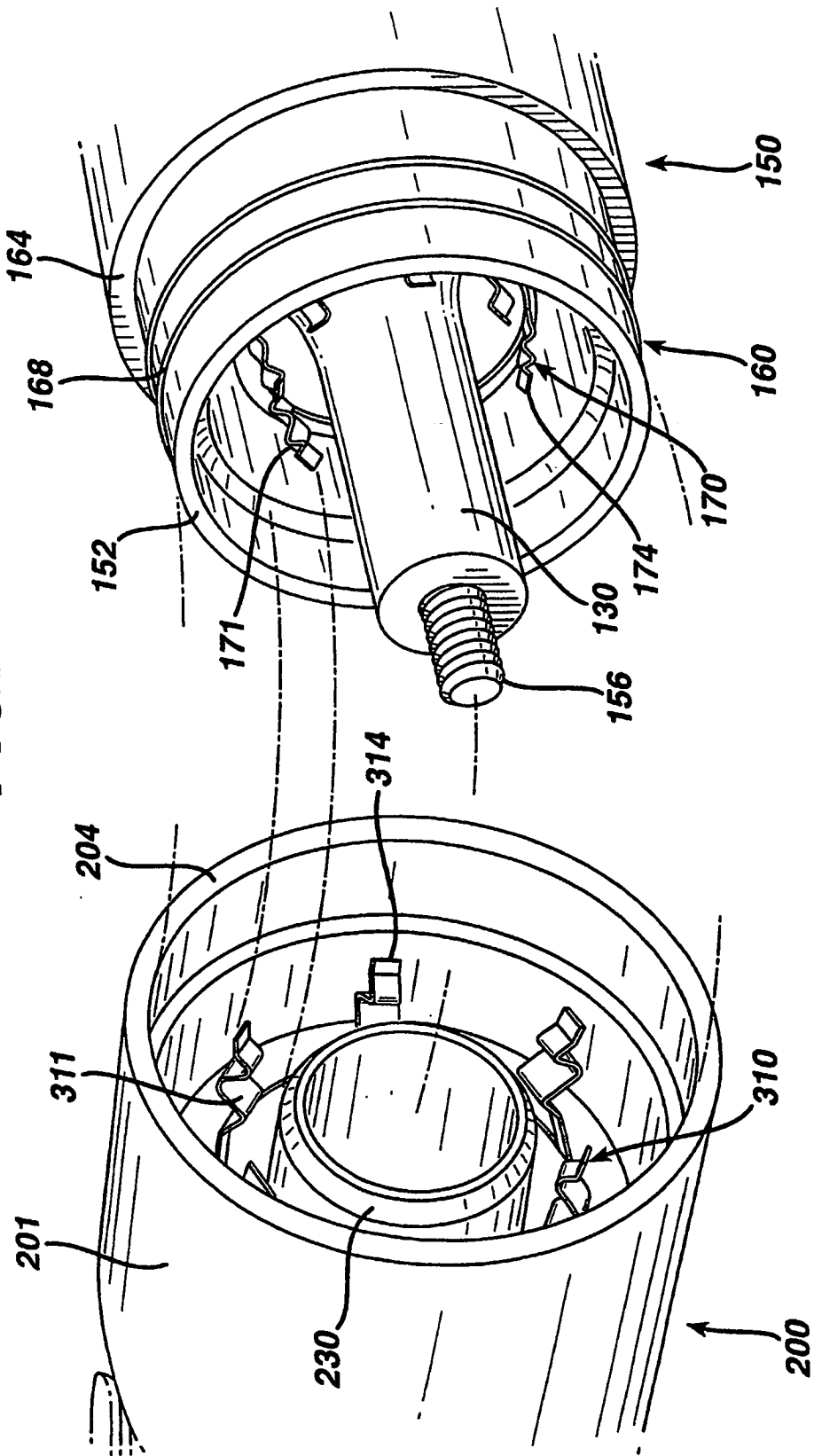


FIG. 3

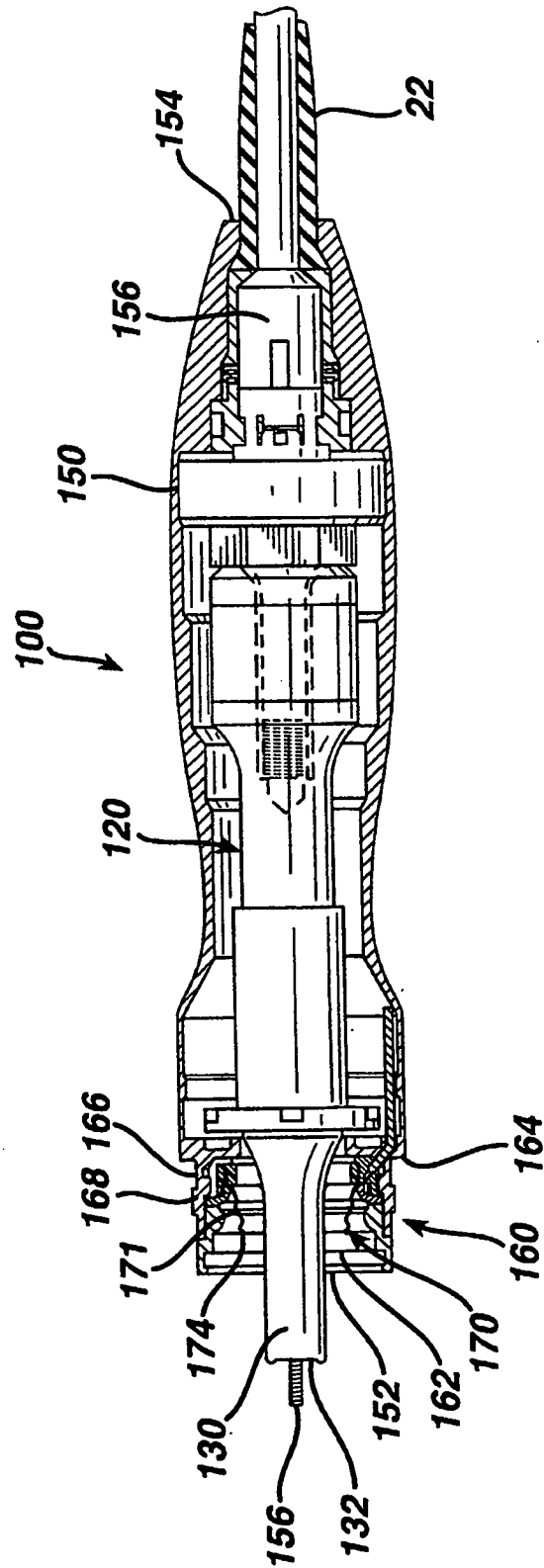
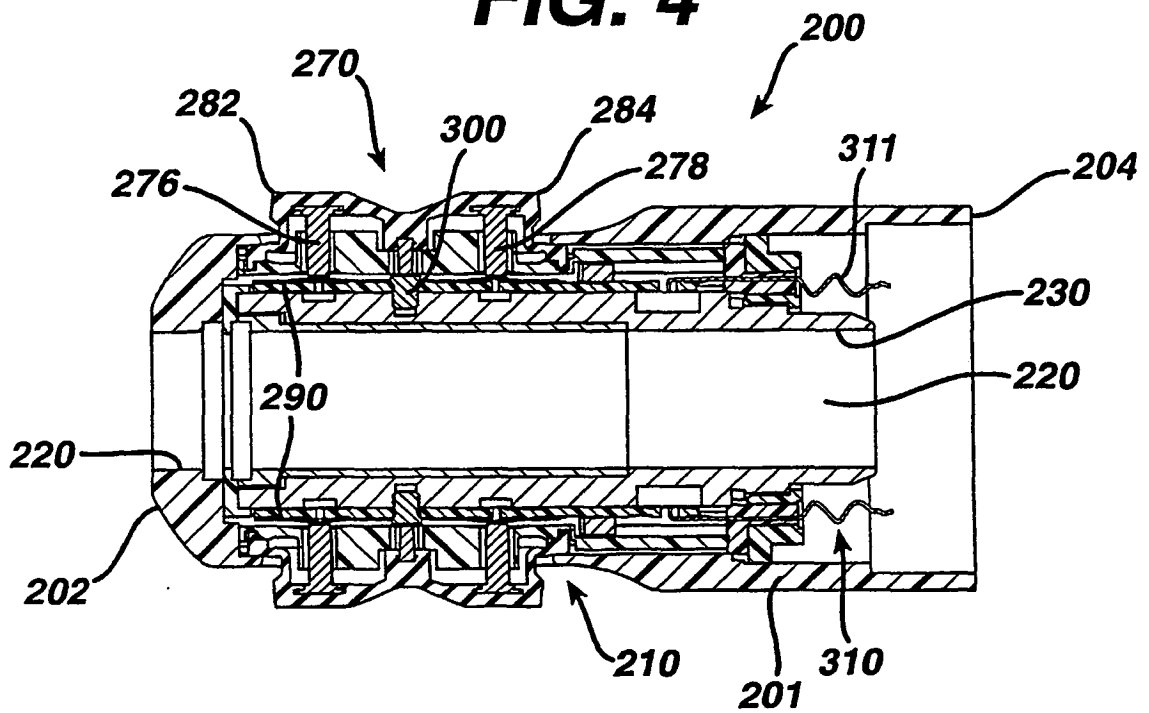


FIG. 4



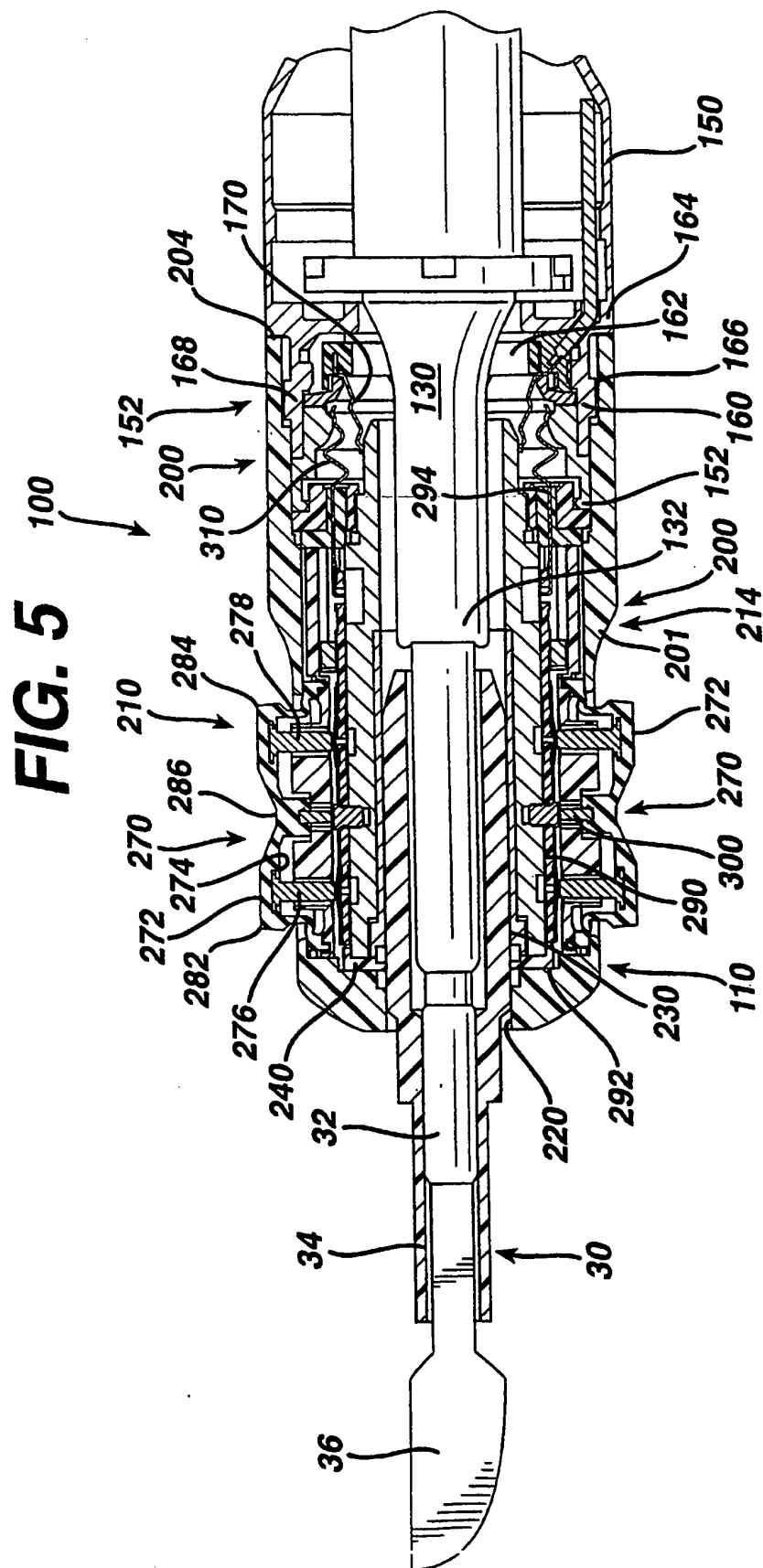


FIG. 6

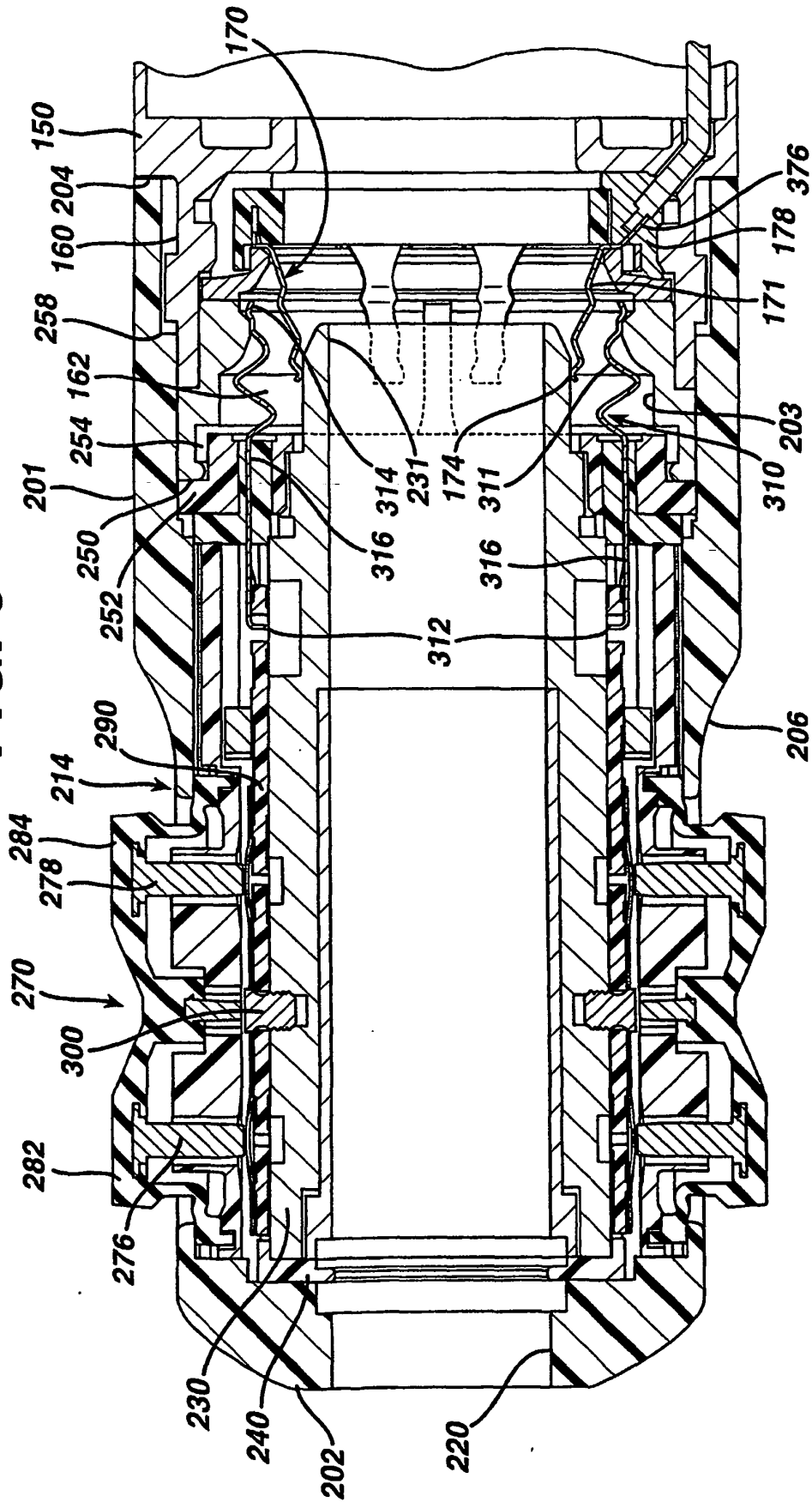
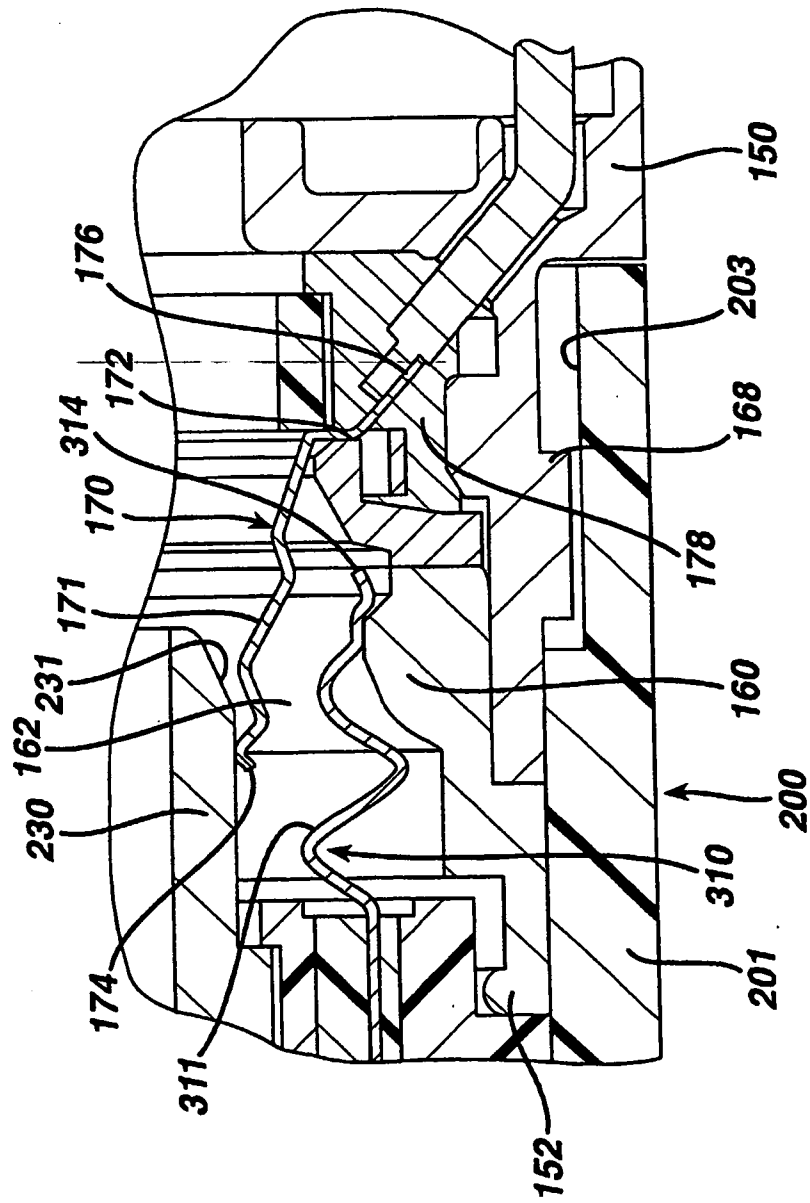


FIG. 7



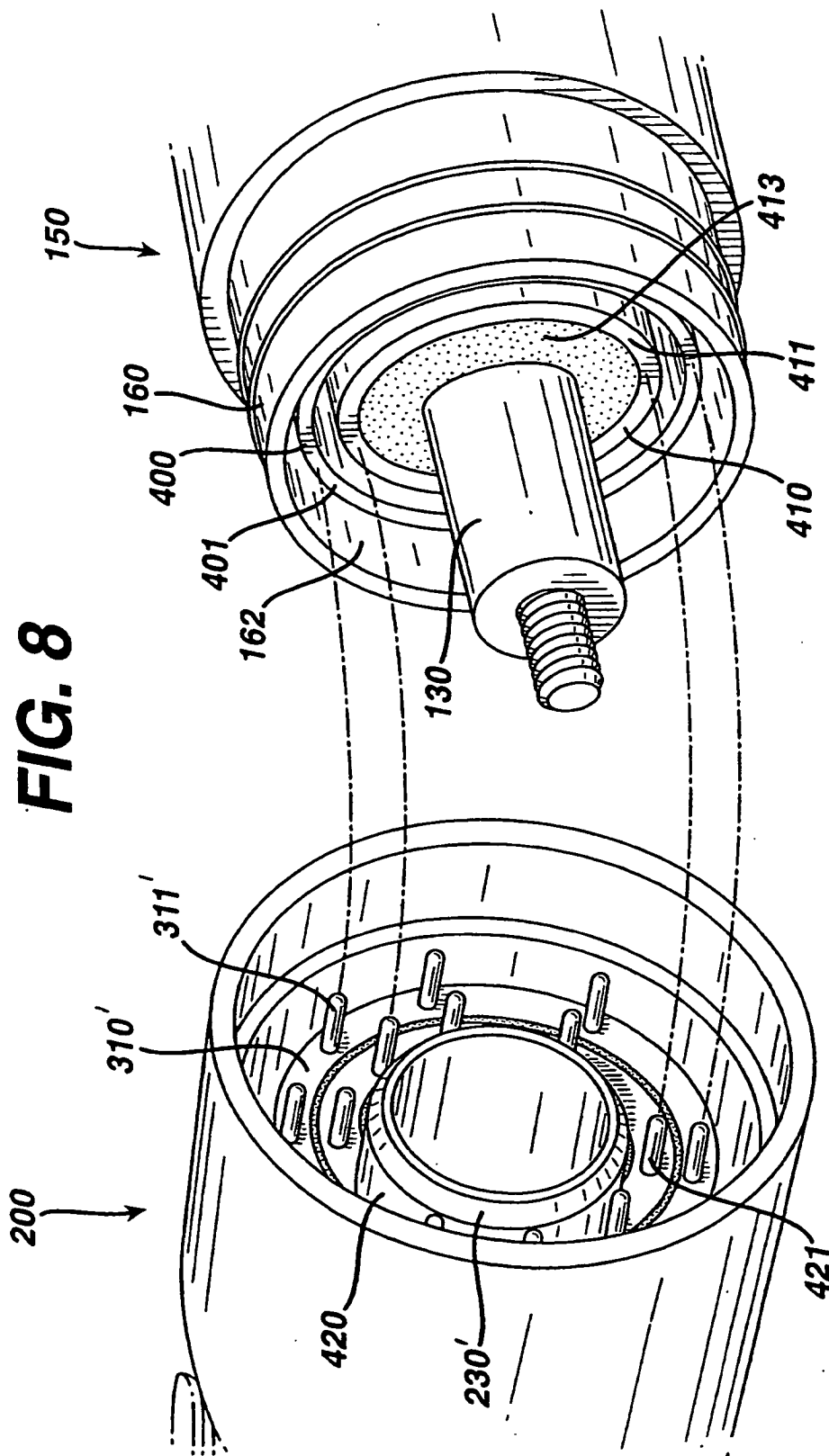
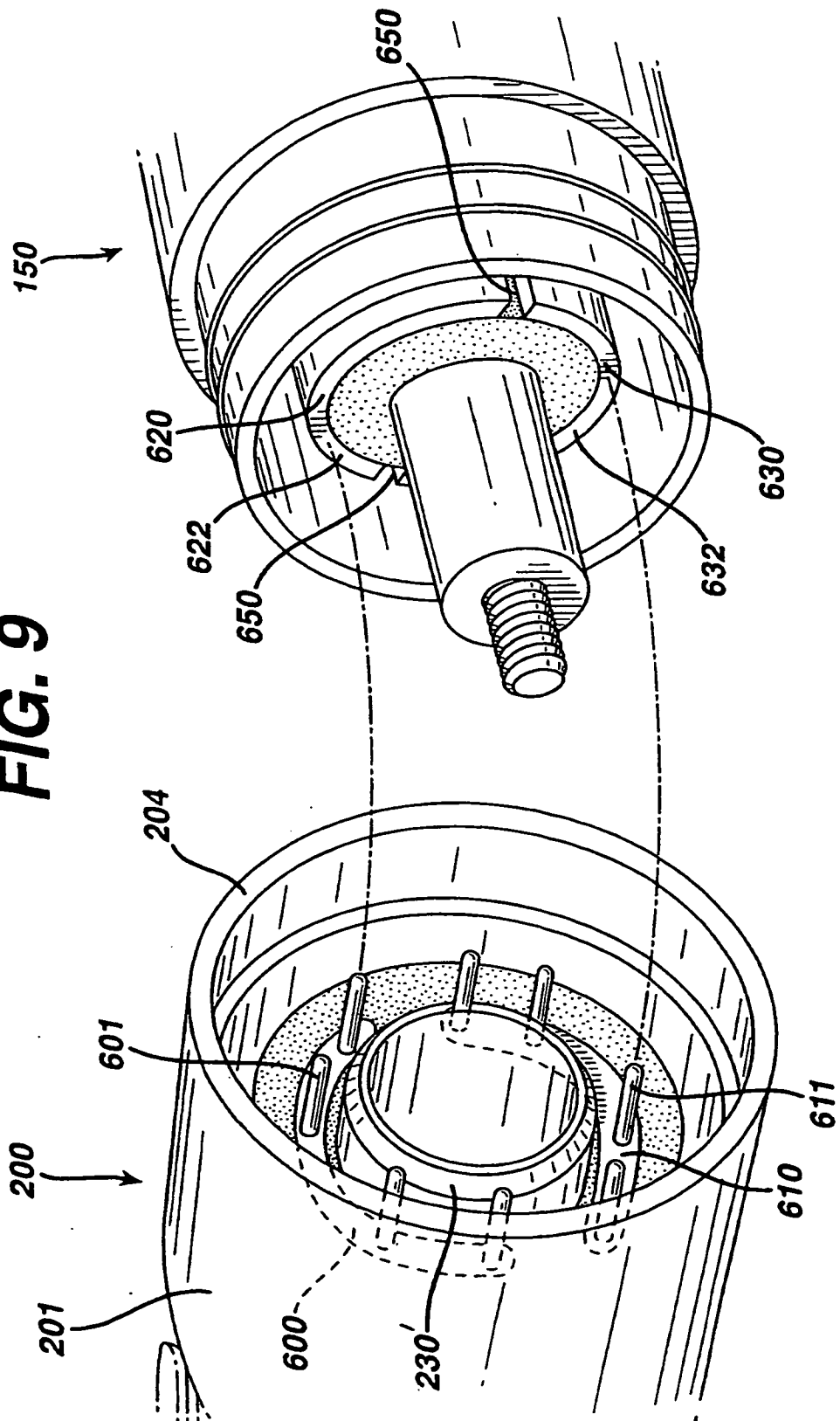


FIG. 9



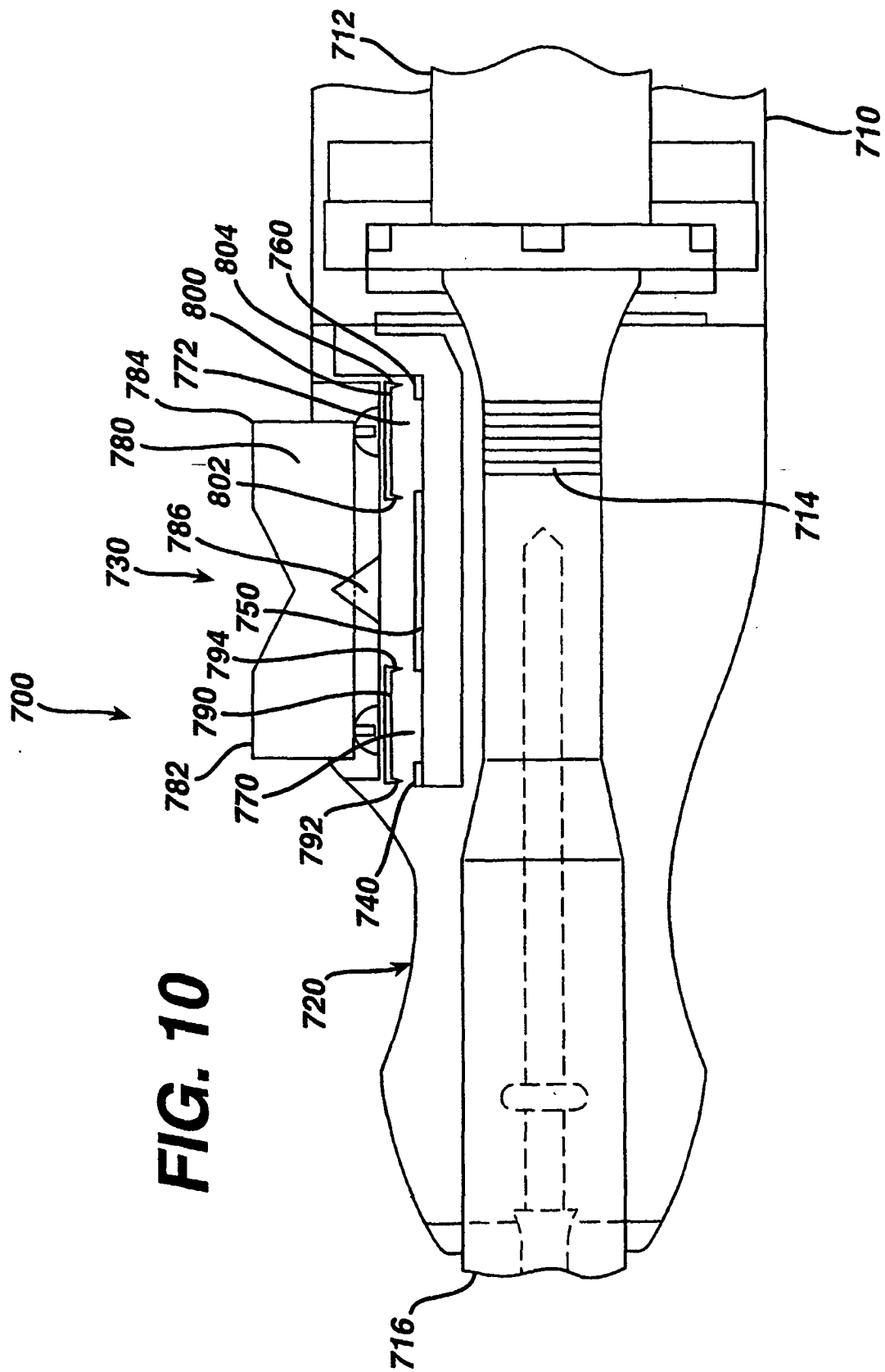
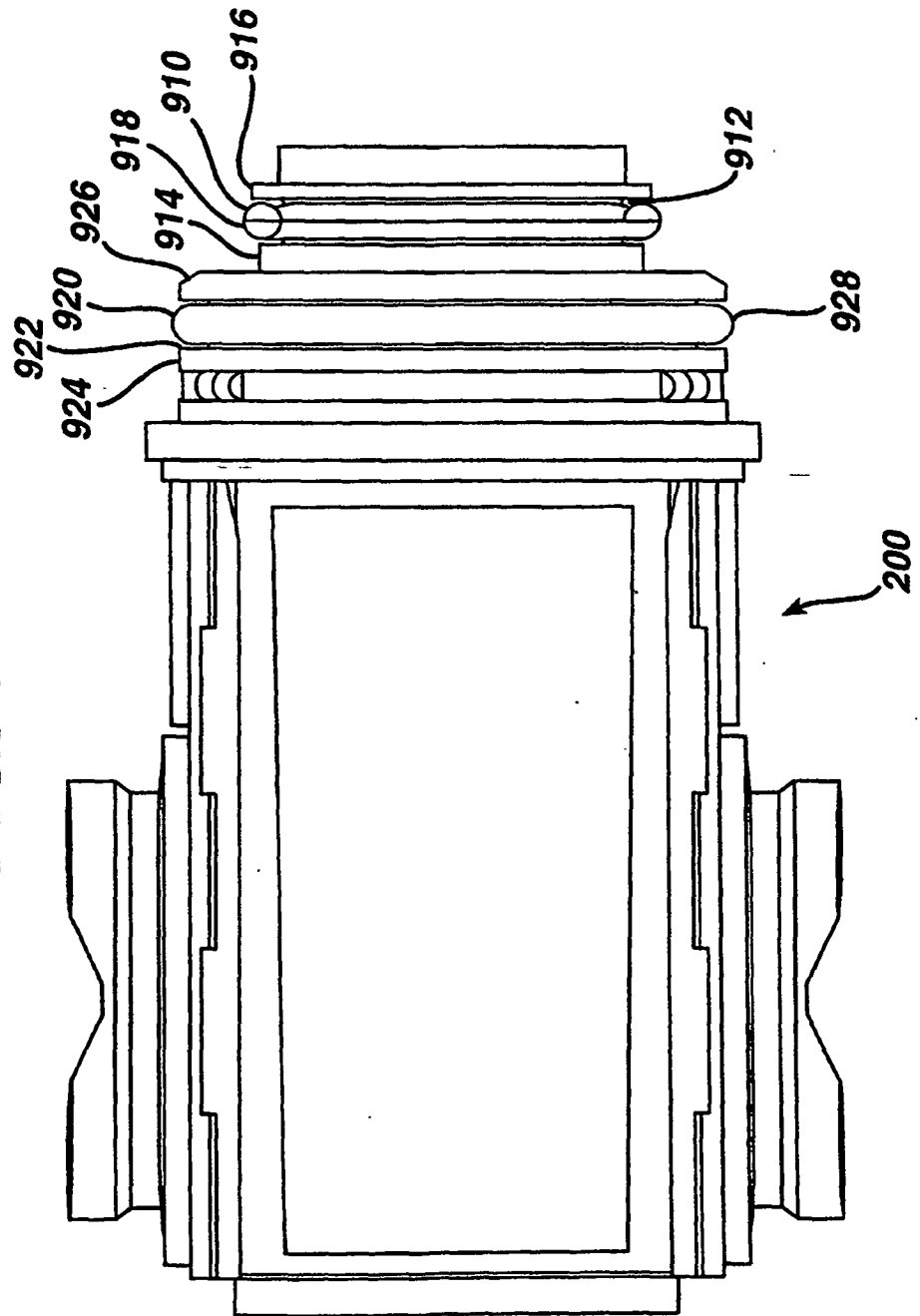


FIG. 11



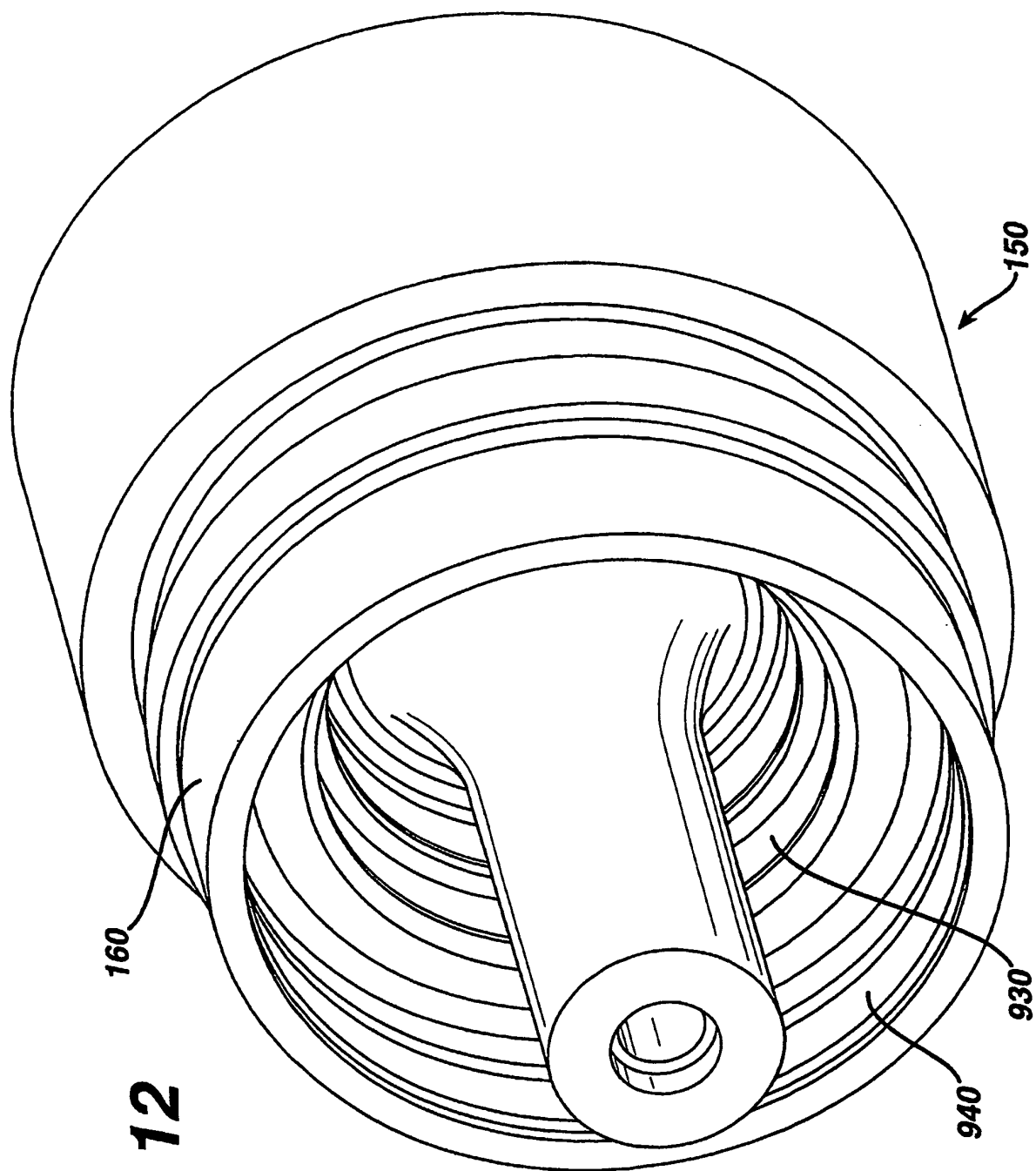
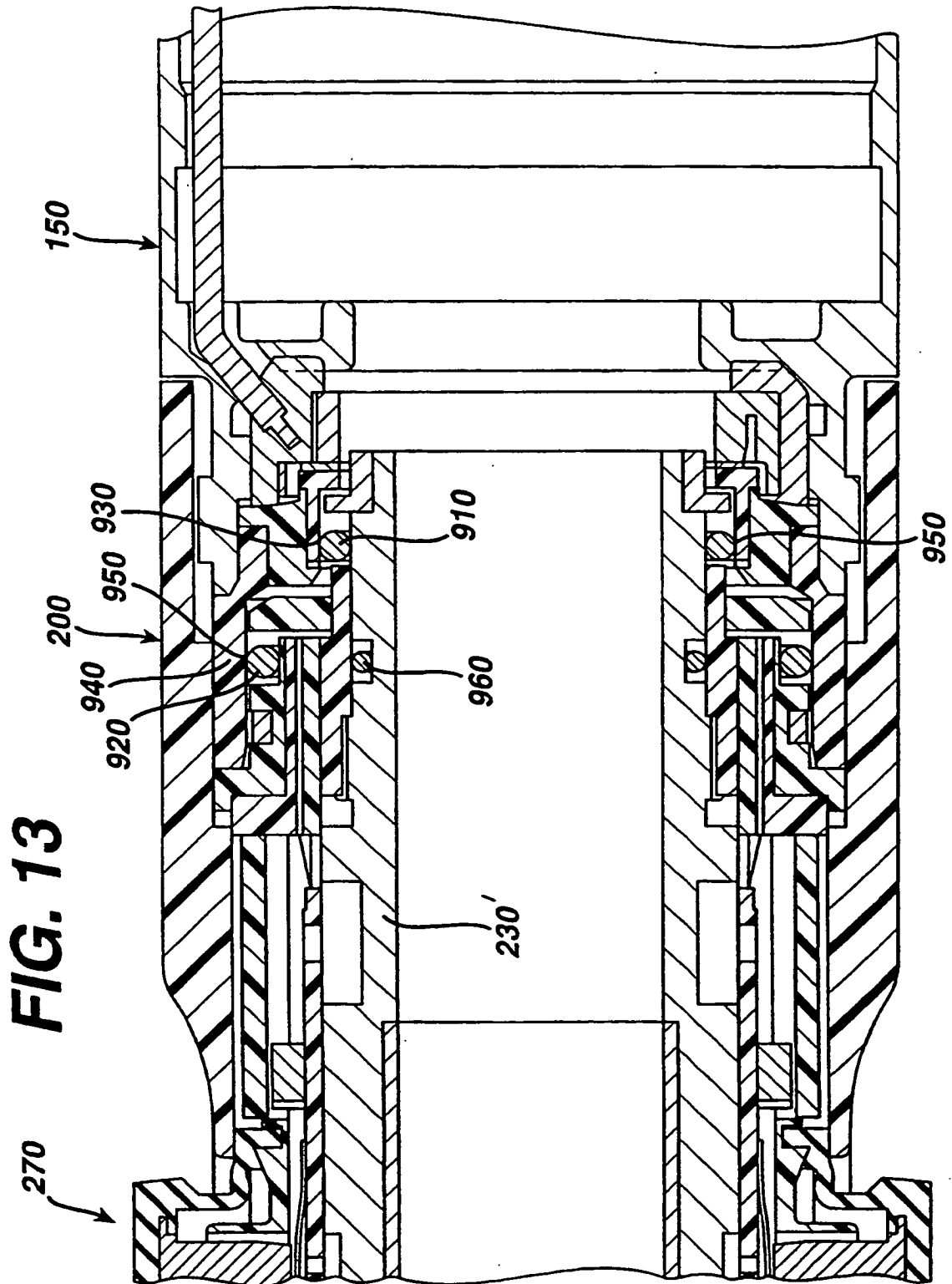


FIG. 12



REFERENCES CITED IN THE DESCRIPTION

This list of references cited by the applicant is for the reader's convenience only. It does not form part of the European patent document. Even though great care has been taken in compiling the references, errors or omissions cannot be excluded and the EPO disclaims all liability in this regard.

Patent documents cited in the description

- US 5468240 A [0005]
- EP 01308901 A [0013]
- US 693621 A [0013]

专利名称(译)	环形触点，用于可旋转地连接开关组件，用于手术系统		
公开(公告)号	EP1199040B1	公开(公告)日	2008-02-06
申请号	EP2001308873	申请日	2001-10-19
[标]申请(专利权)人(译)	伊西康内外科公司		
申请(专利权)人(译)	爱惜康内镜手术，INC.		
当前申请(专利权)人(译)	爱惜康内镜手术，INC.		
[标]发明人	COOK ROBERT G SCHWEMBERGER RICHARD F MADAN ASHVANI K DONOFRIO WILLIAM T GILL ROBERT P		
发明人	COOK, ROBERT G. SCHWEMBERGER, RICHARD F. MADAN, ASHVANI K. DONOFRIO, WILLIAM T. GILL, ROBERT P.		
IPC分类号	A61B17/22 A61B17/32 A61B18/14 A61B17/00 A61B17/28 A61B18/00 A61B18/12		
CPC分类号	A61B18/1402 A61B2017/00296 A61B2017/00424 A61B2017/2929 A61B2017/320069 A61B2017/320071 A61B2017/320082 A61B2018/00916 A61B2018/1861		
代理机构(译)	FISHER，ADRIAN JOHN		
优先权	09/693549 2000-10-20 US		
其他公开文献	EP1199040A2 EP1199040A3		
外部链接	Espacenet		

摘要(译)

本发明提供一种手术手持件，其具有可拆卸且可旋转地连接到手持件主体的开关端盖。将手术器械插入手持件主体内，使得其一部分延伸超出手持件主体并被致动以执行外科手术。开关端盖包括具有一个或多个开关按钮构件的开关机构，用于选择性地发信号通知从电源输送到手持件的功率水平。根据本发明的一个方面，开关端盖内的开关机构以这样的方式电连接到手持件主体，即允许开关端盖绕手持件主体自由旋转，同时仍保持其间的电连接。。这是通过使导电指状构件和互补导电构件在开关端盖和手持件主体之间提供电连接来实现的。这允许用户将开关端盖定位在相对于手持件主体和仪器的期望位置。

