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Richardson, Jr.

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(45) **Date of Patent:** ***Jul. 3, 2018**

(54) **SPACER DEVICE**

(56) **References Cited**

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(72) Inventor: **Albert S. Richardson, Jr.**, Lexington, MA (US)

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

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This patent is subject to a terminal disclaimer.

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(21) Appl. No.: **15/383,371**

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(22) Filed: **Dec. 19, 2016**

(65) **Prior Publication Data**

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Primary Examiner — Dhirubhai R Patel

(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm* — Hamilton, Brook, Smith & Reynolds, P.C.

Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation-in-part of application No. 14/171,220, filed on Feb. 3, 2014, which is a continuation-in-part (Continued)

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A spacer device includes an elongate spacing member extending a longitudinal axis for securing to electrical transmission lines, and has a minimum thickness d_m . At least one thickened portion having a thickness T_t and length d_t is positioned intermediate along the spacing member to form at least two column lengths L_c separated by the at least one thickened portion. Each column length L_c has a portion with the minimum thickness d_m . The thickness T_t and length d_t of the at least one thickened portion can be at least two times the minimum thickness d_m to form at least one end support for the at least two column lengths L_c , such the at least two column lengths L_c behave as separate Euler type columns for producing increased Euler buckling strength with a minimal increase in weight.

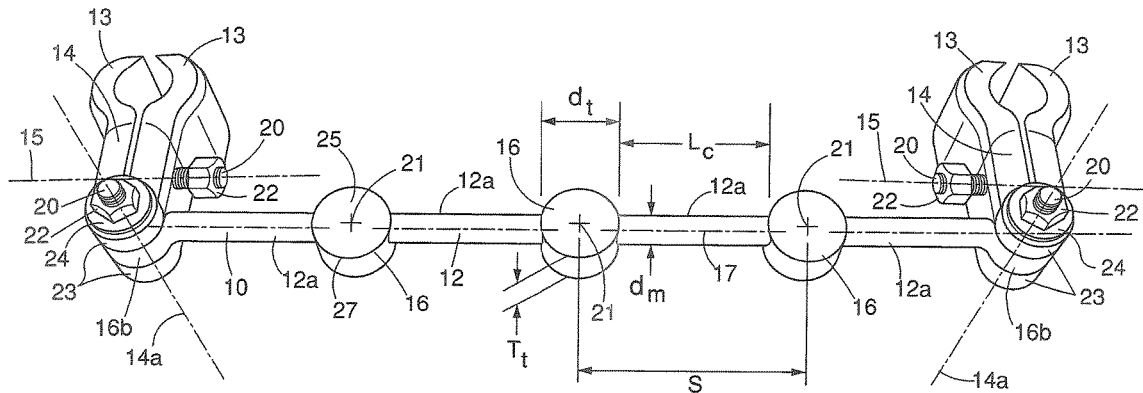
(51) **Int. Cl.**
H02G 7/12 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC **H02G 7/125** (2013.01); **Y10T 29/49826** (2015.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
CPC . H02G 7/14; H02G 7/125; H02G 7/12; Y10T 29/49826

See application file for complete search history.

20 Claims, 22 Drawing Sheets



Related U.S. Application Data

of application No. 13/008,112, filed on Jan. 18, 2011,
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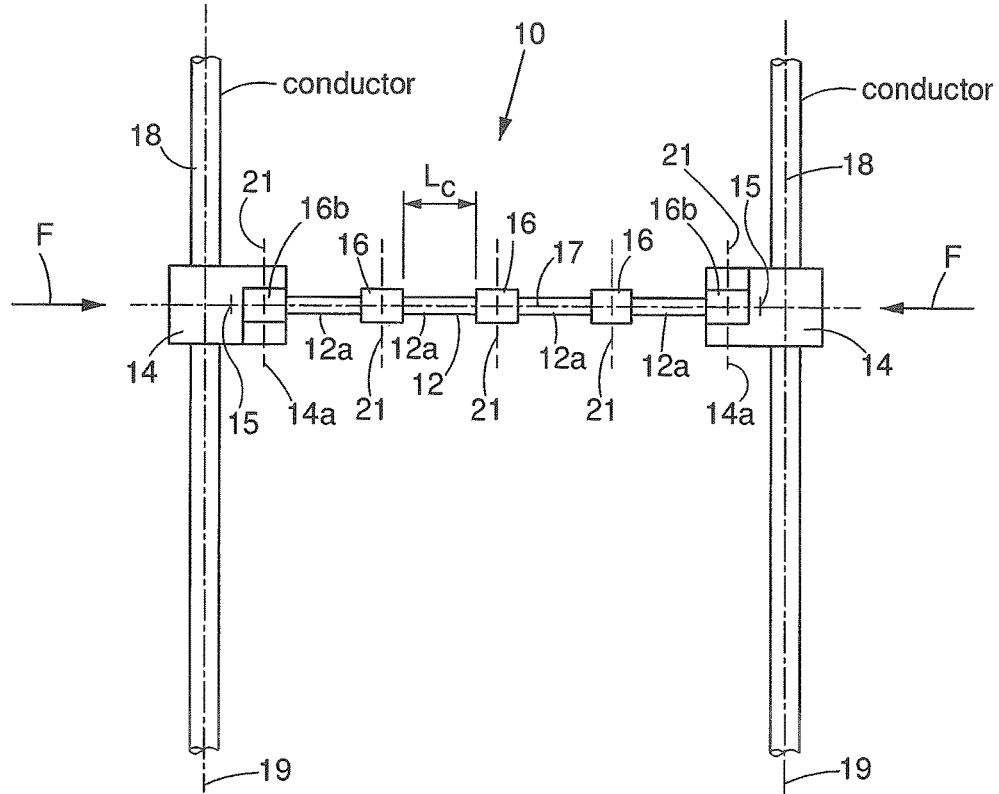


FIG. 1

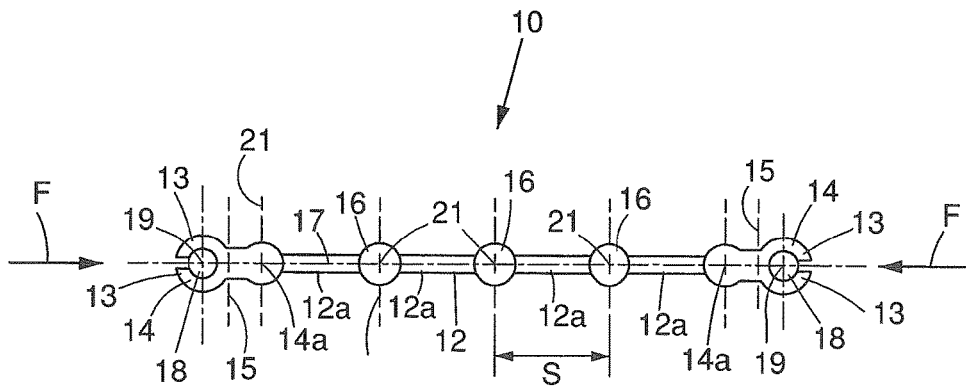


FIG. 2

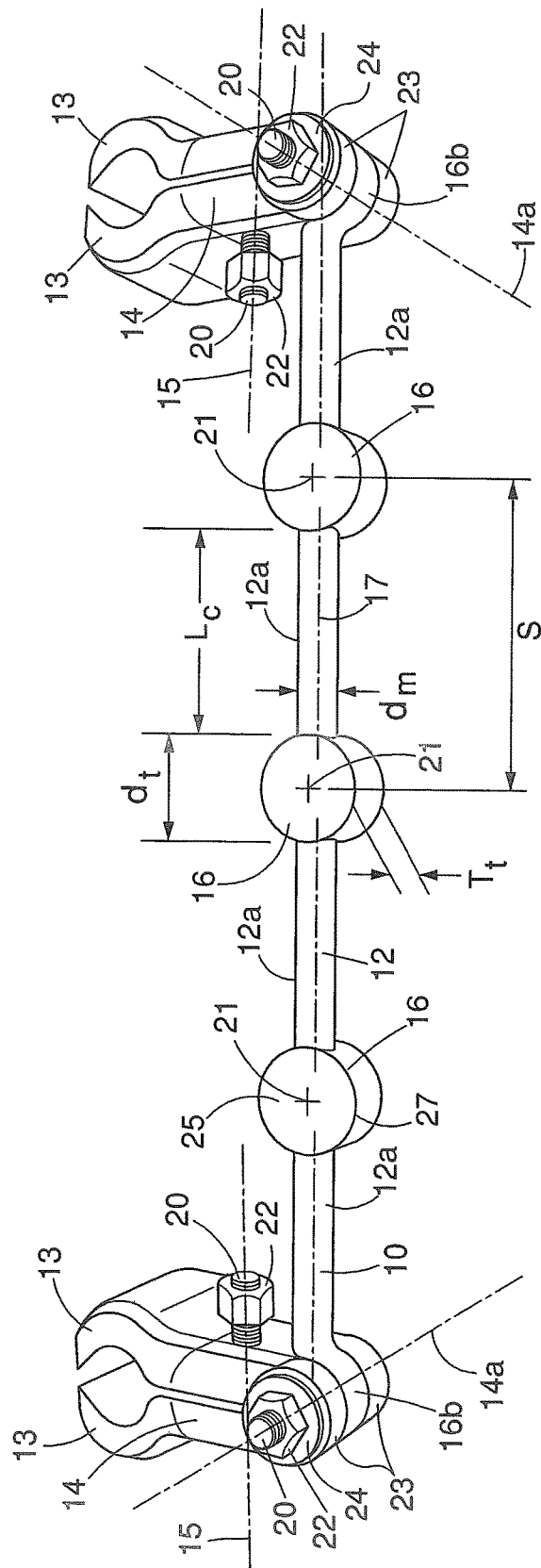


FIG. 3

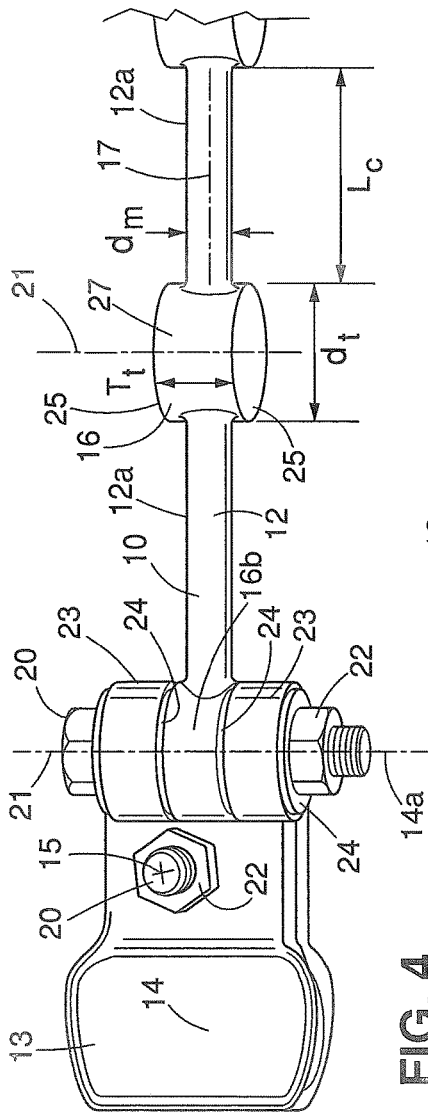


FIG. 4

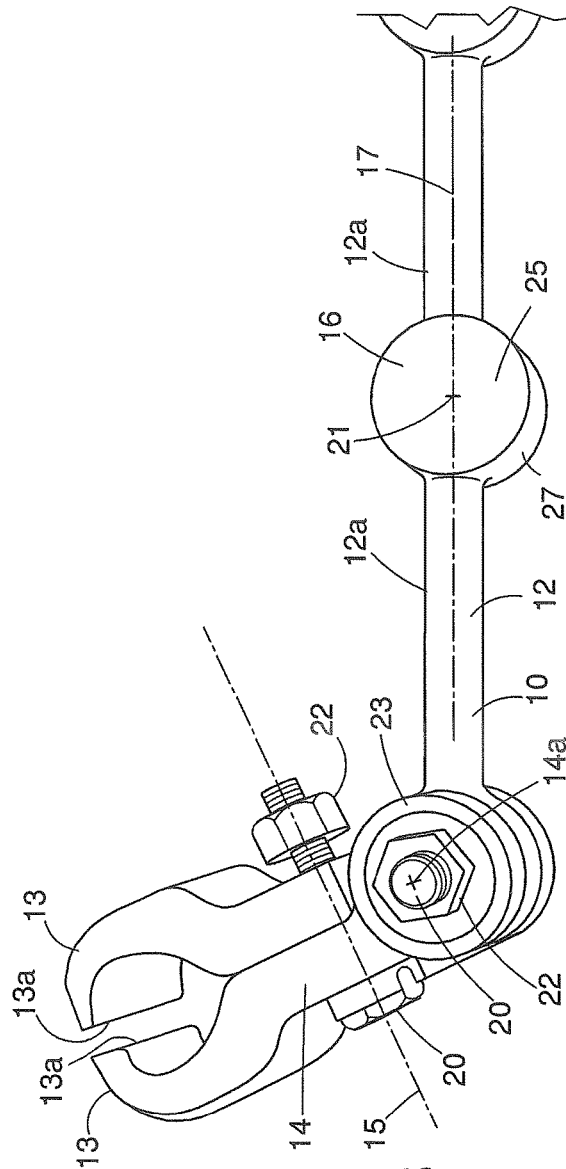


FIG. 5

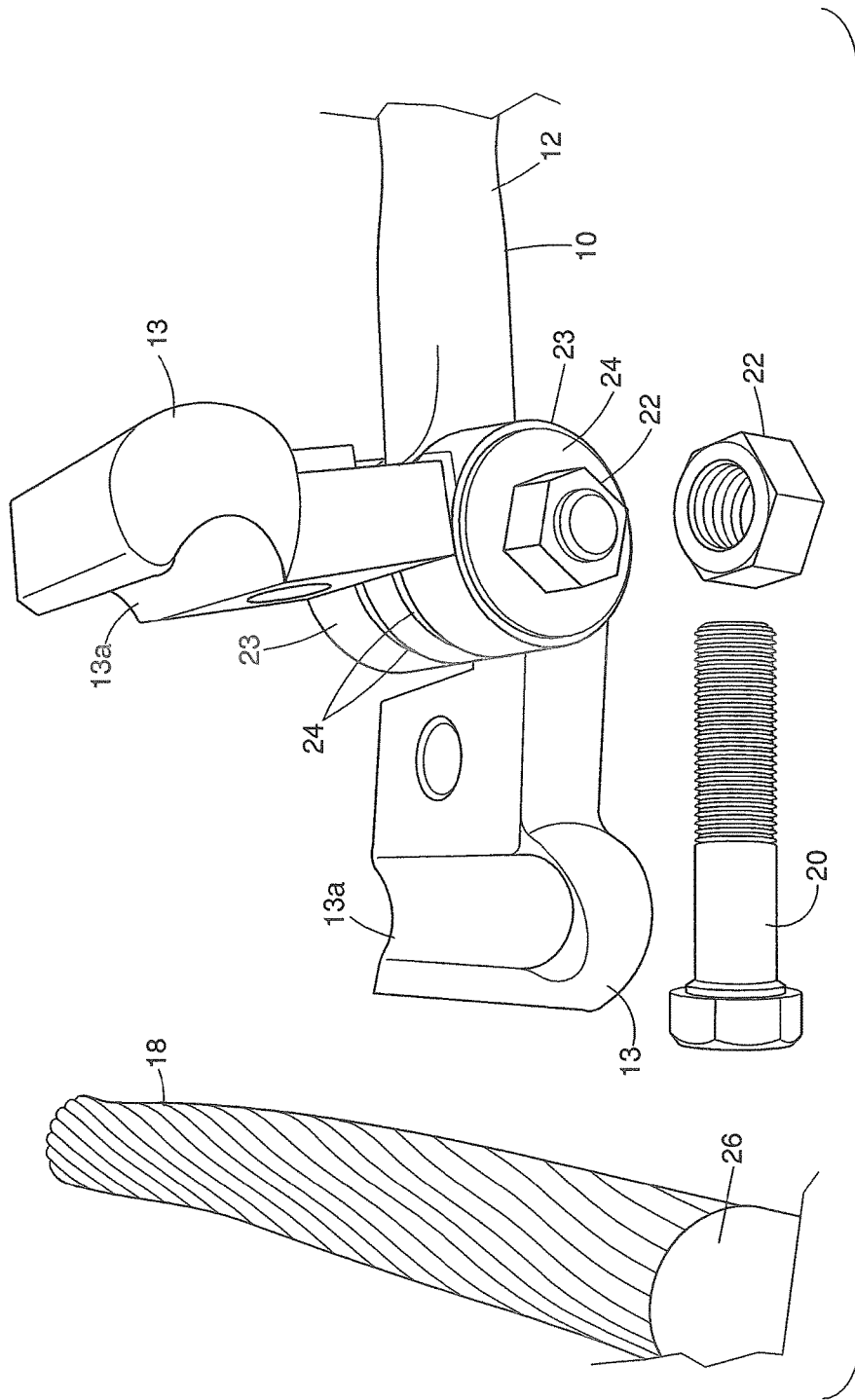


FIG. 6

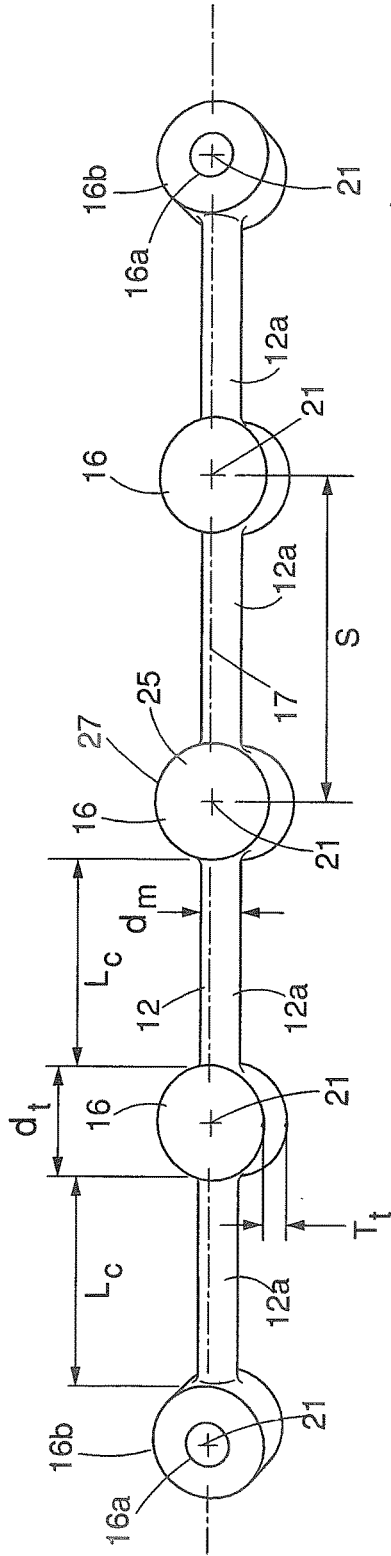


FIG. 7

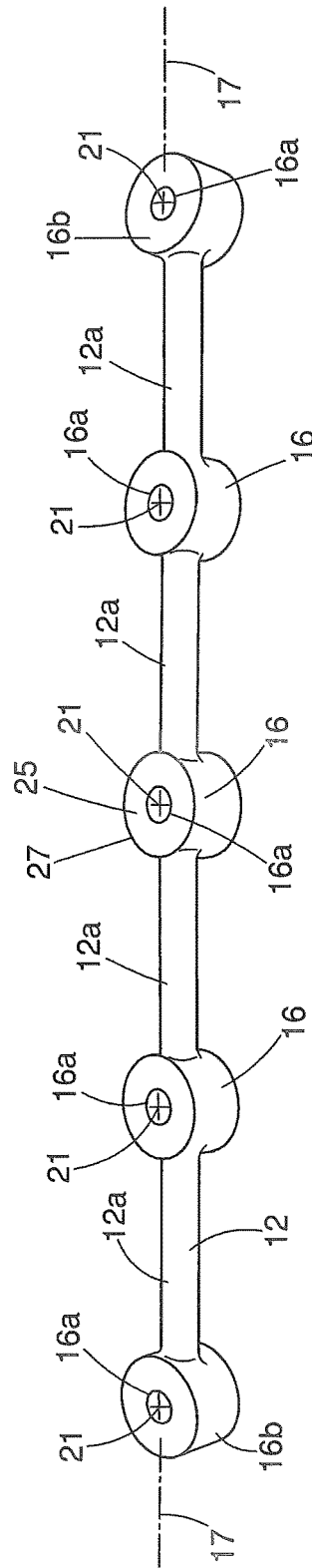


FIG. 8A

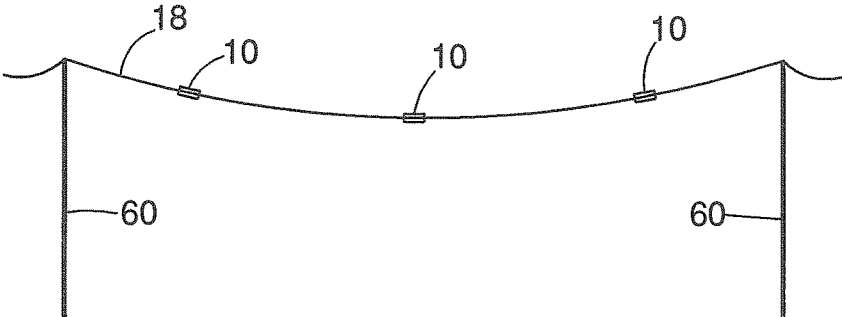


FIG. 8B

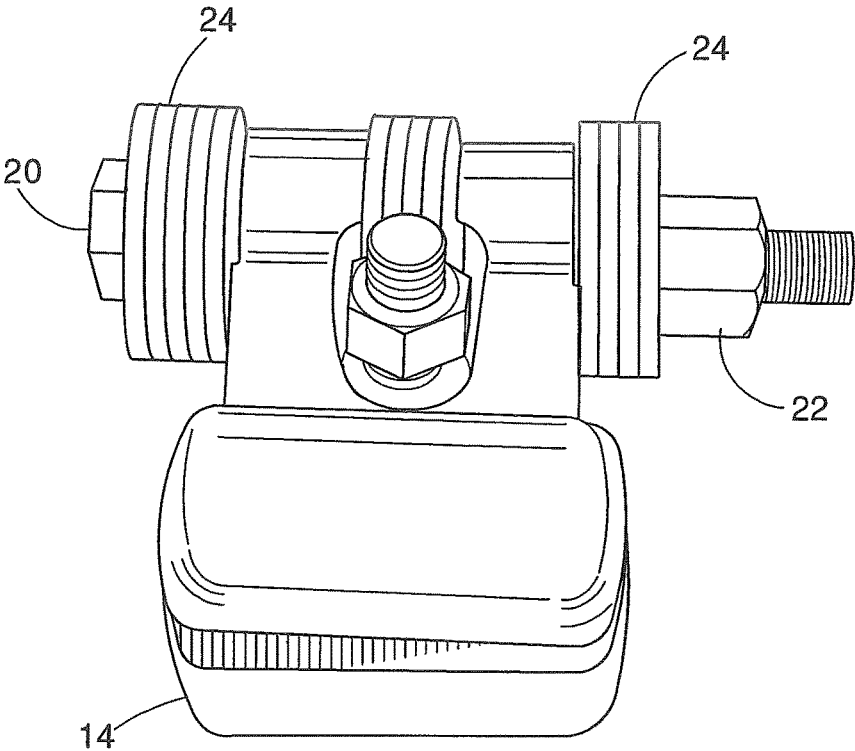


FIG. 8C

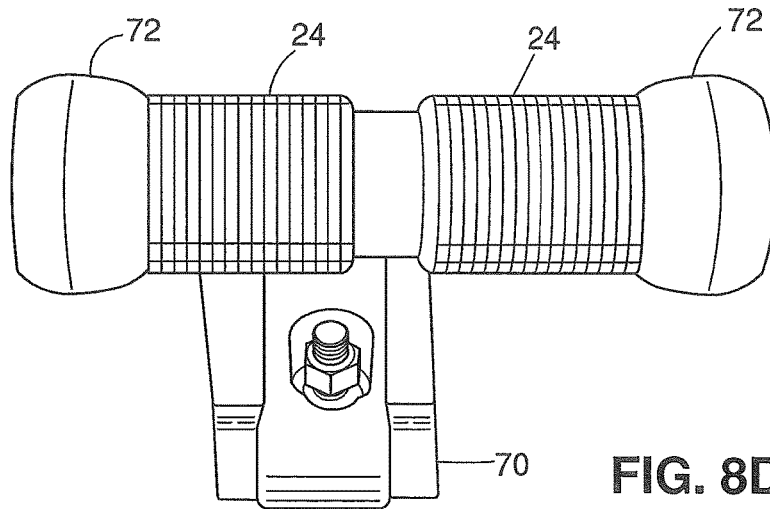


FIG. 8D

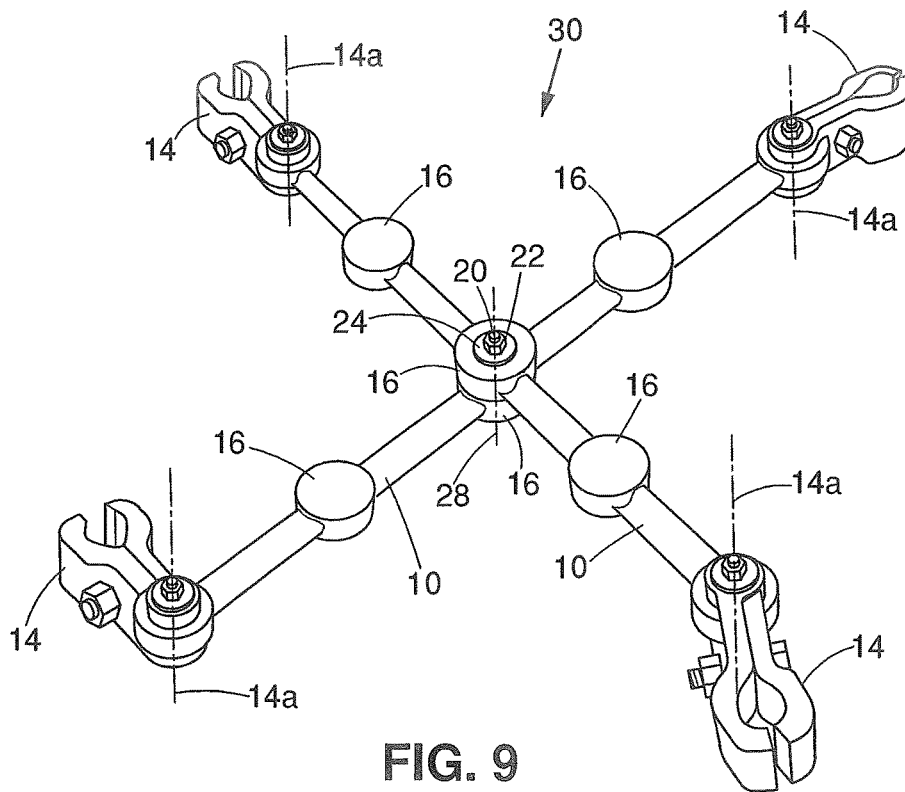
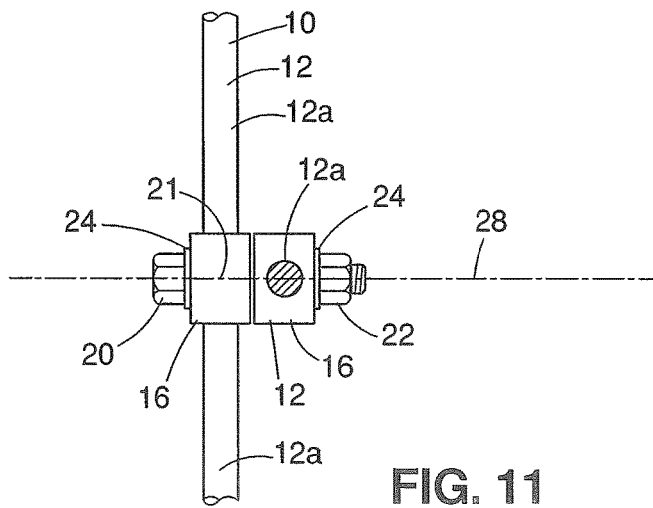
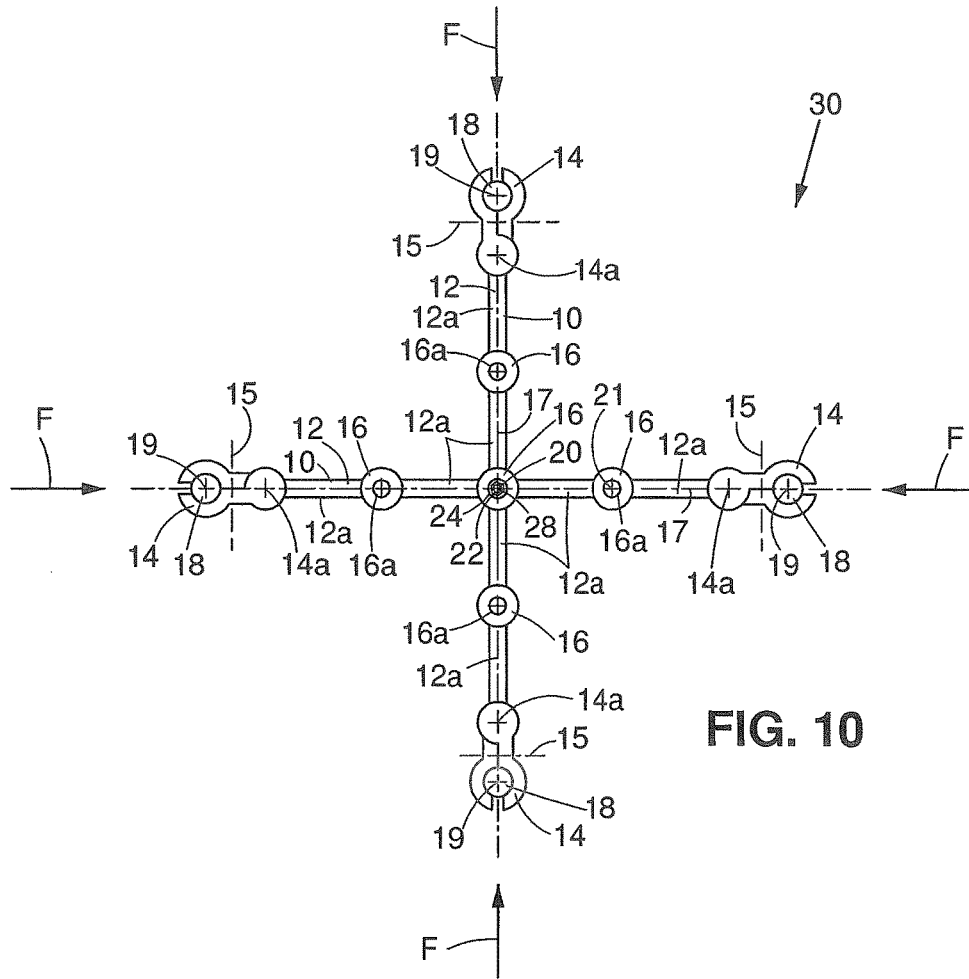


FIG. 9



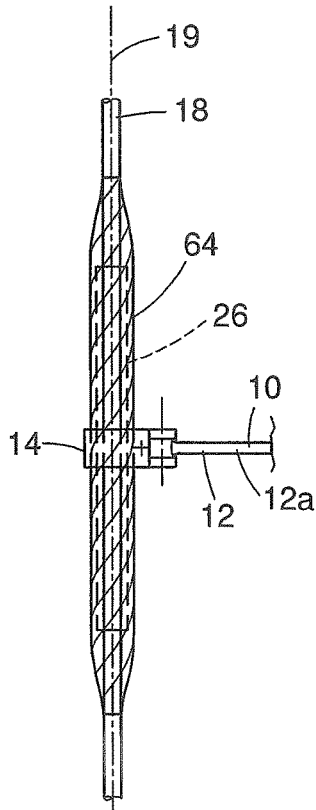


FIG. 12

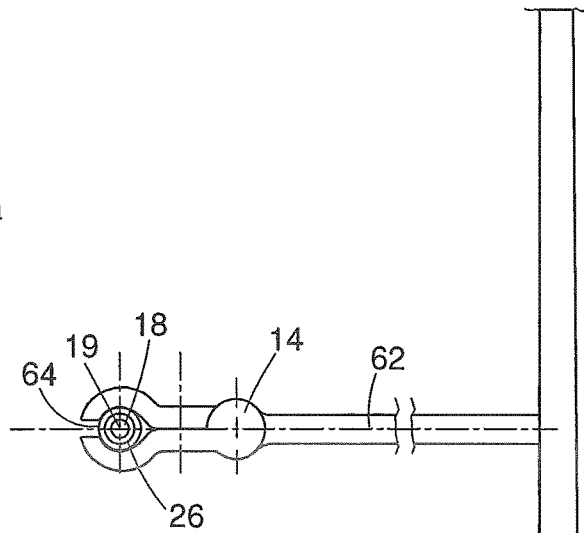


FIG. 13B

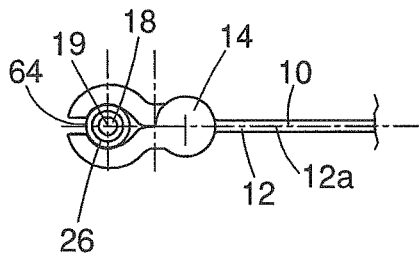


FIG. 13A

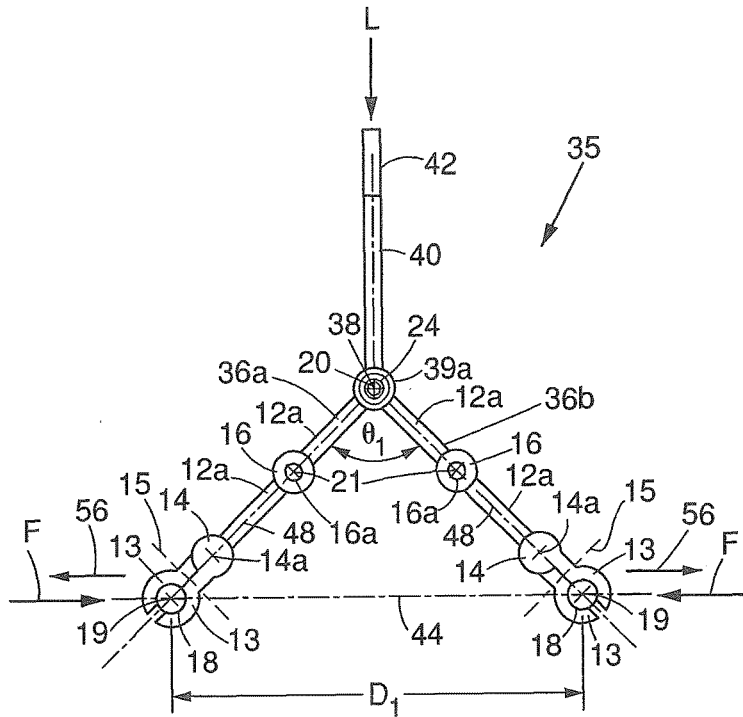


FIG. 14

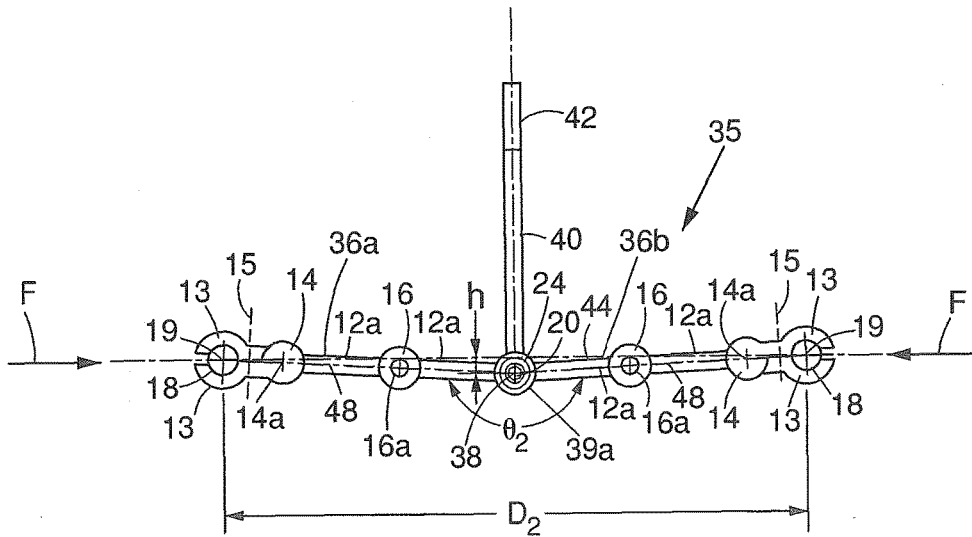


FIG. 15

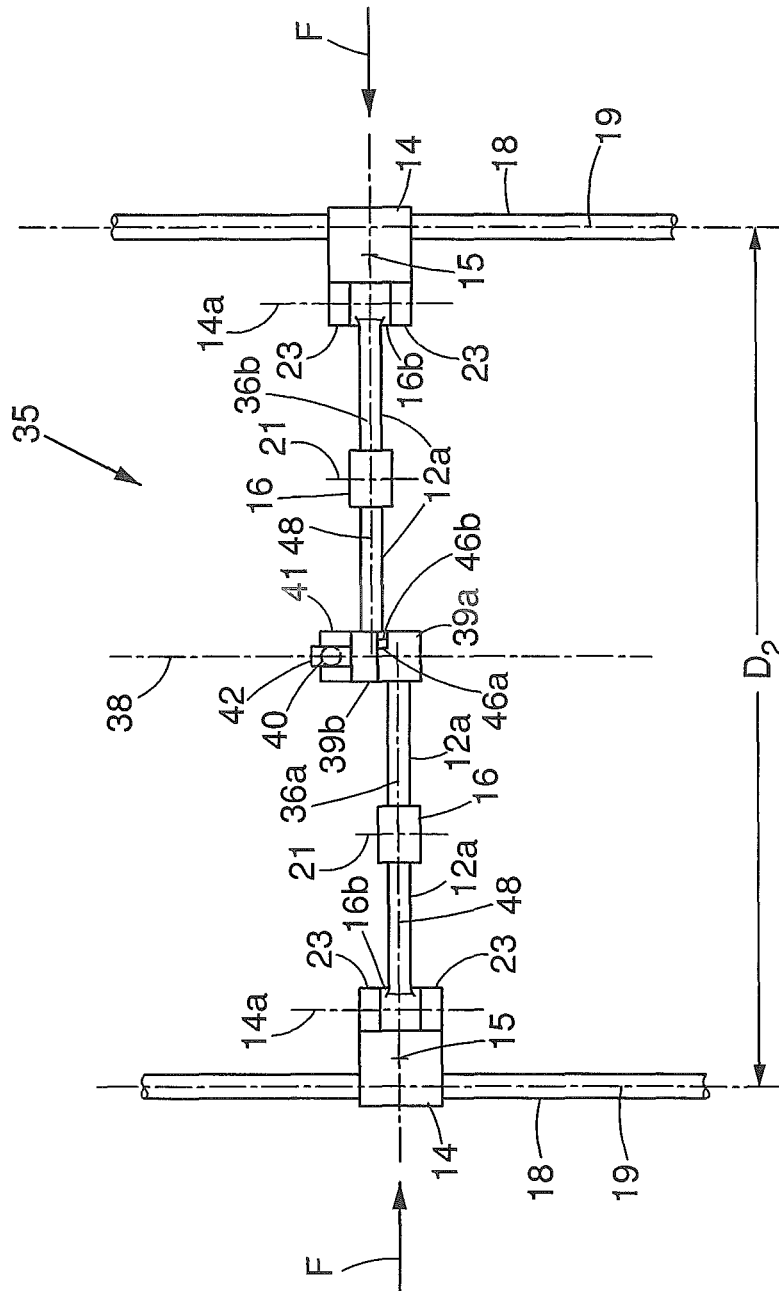


FIG. 16

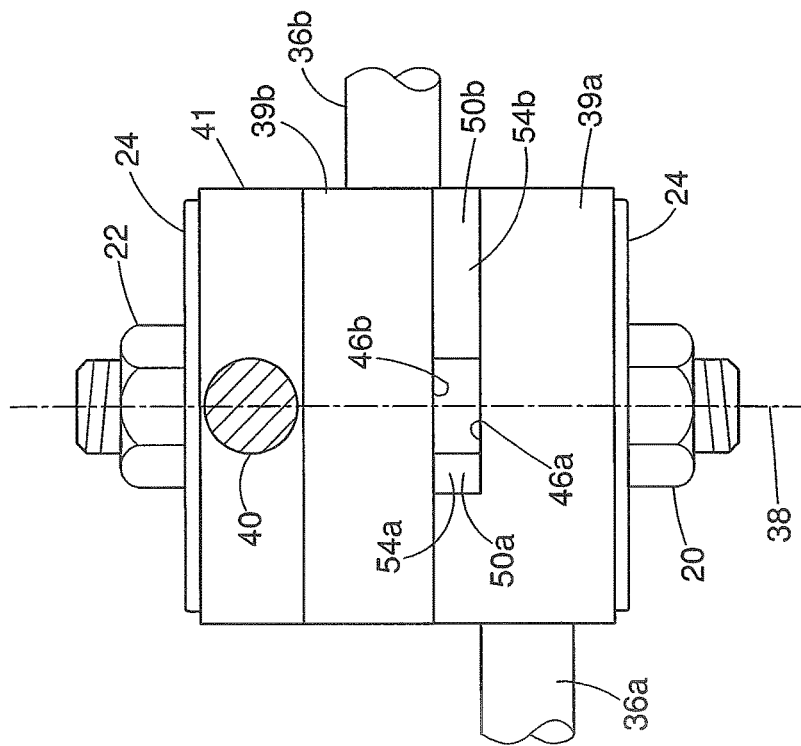


FIG. 17

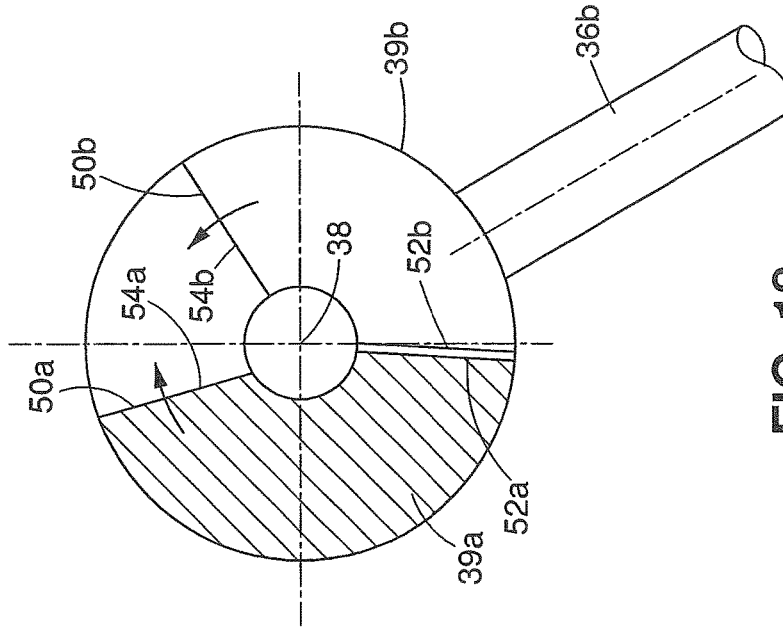


FIG. 18

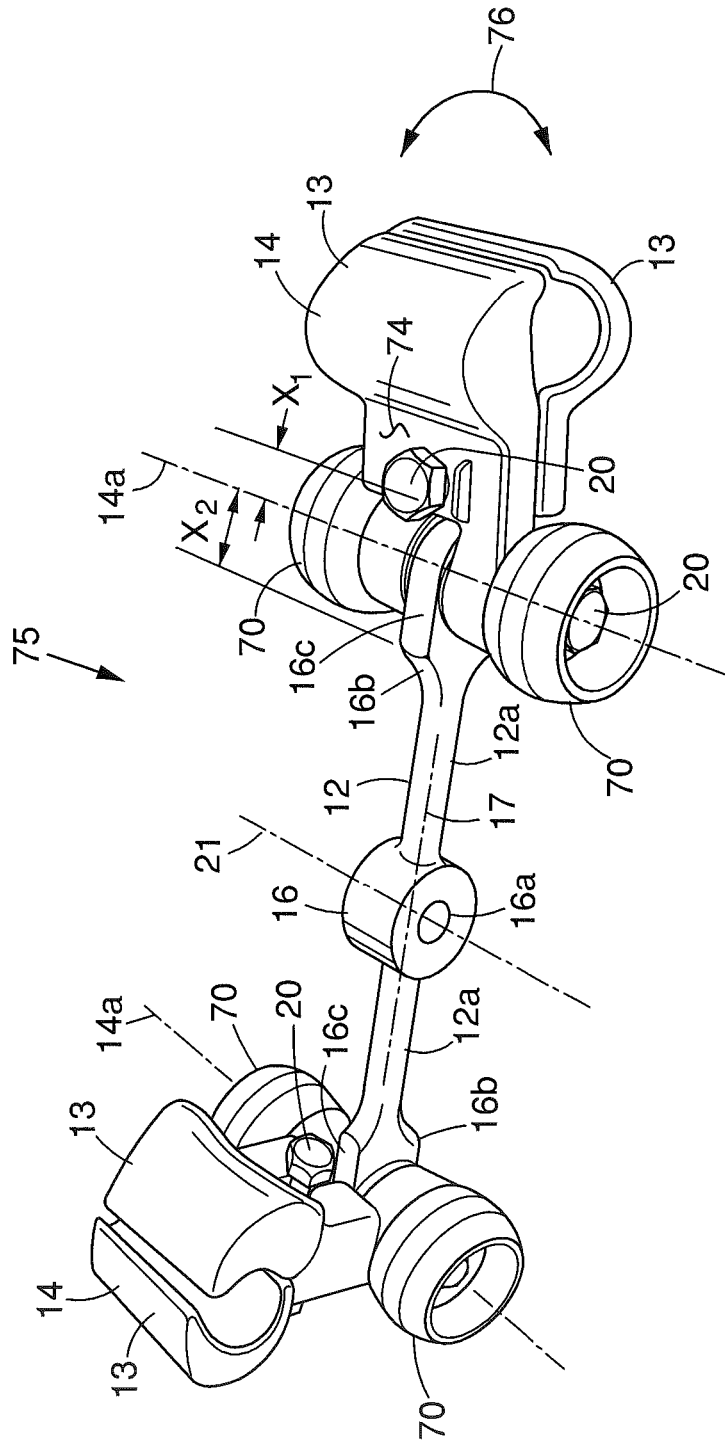


FIG. 19

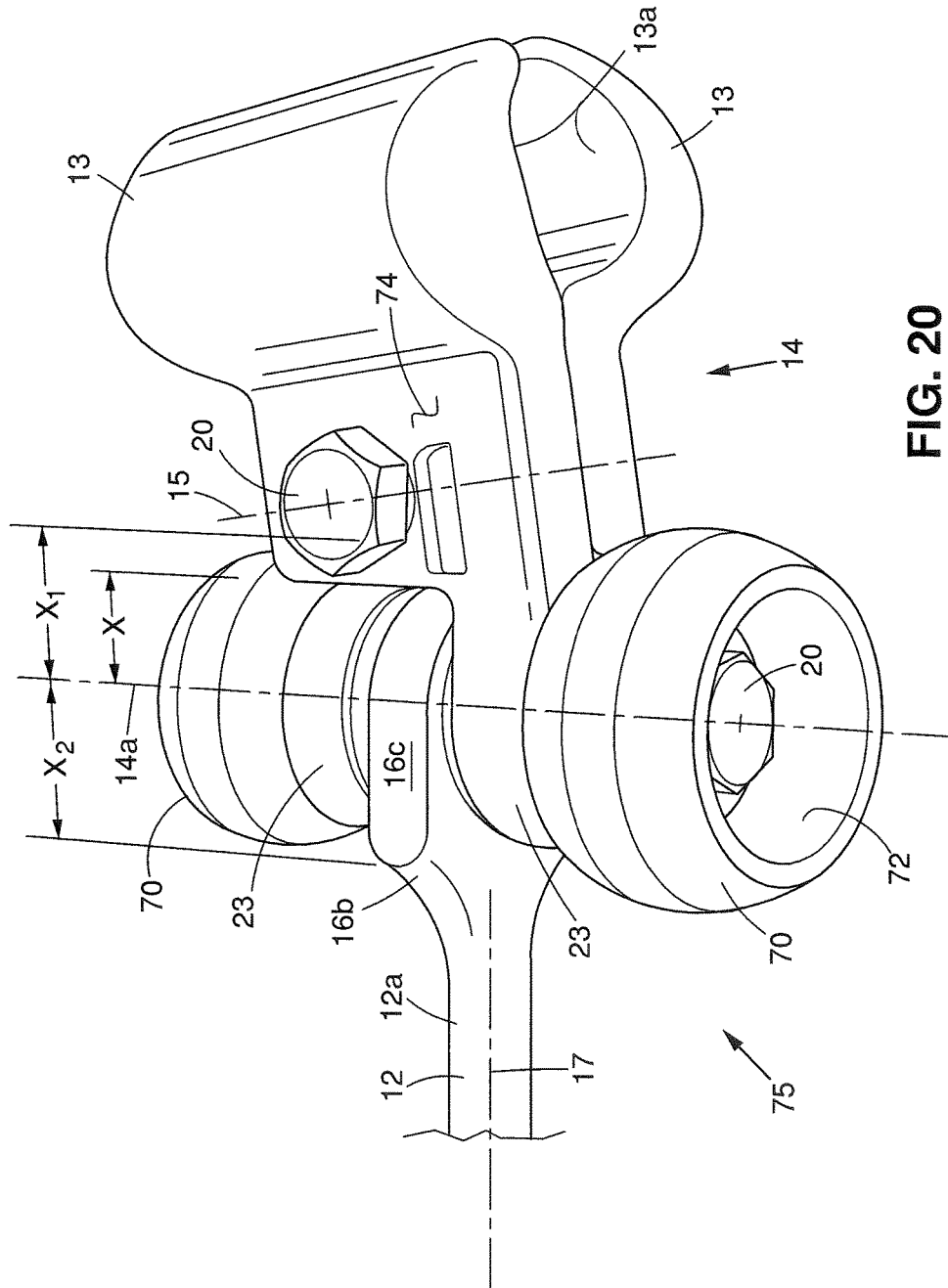


FIG. 20

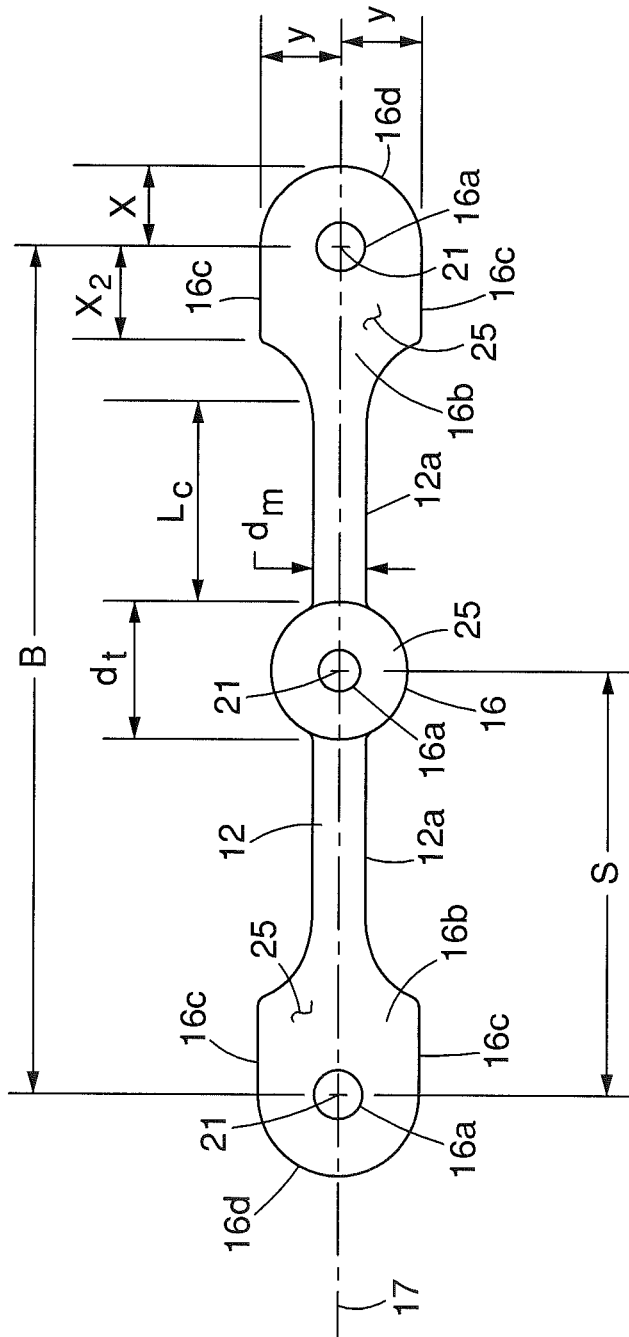


FIG. 21

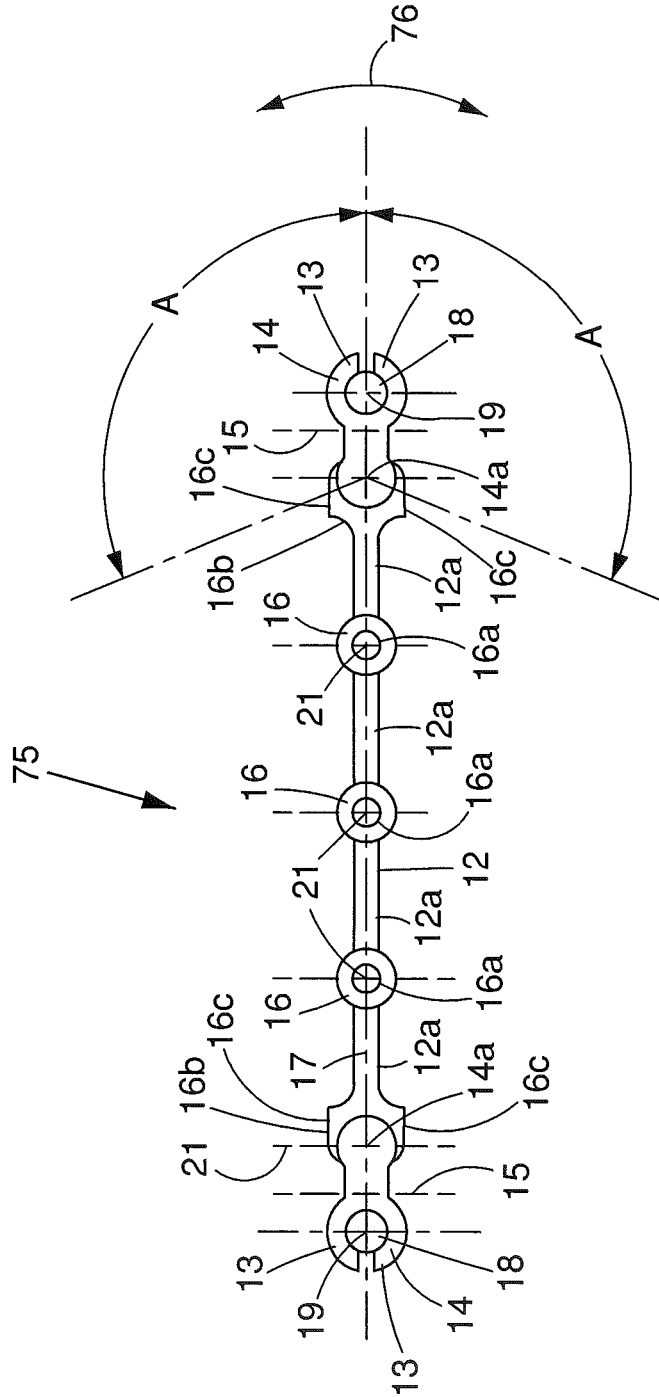


FIG. 22

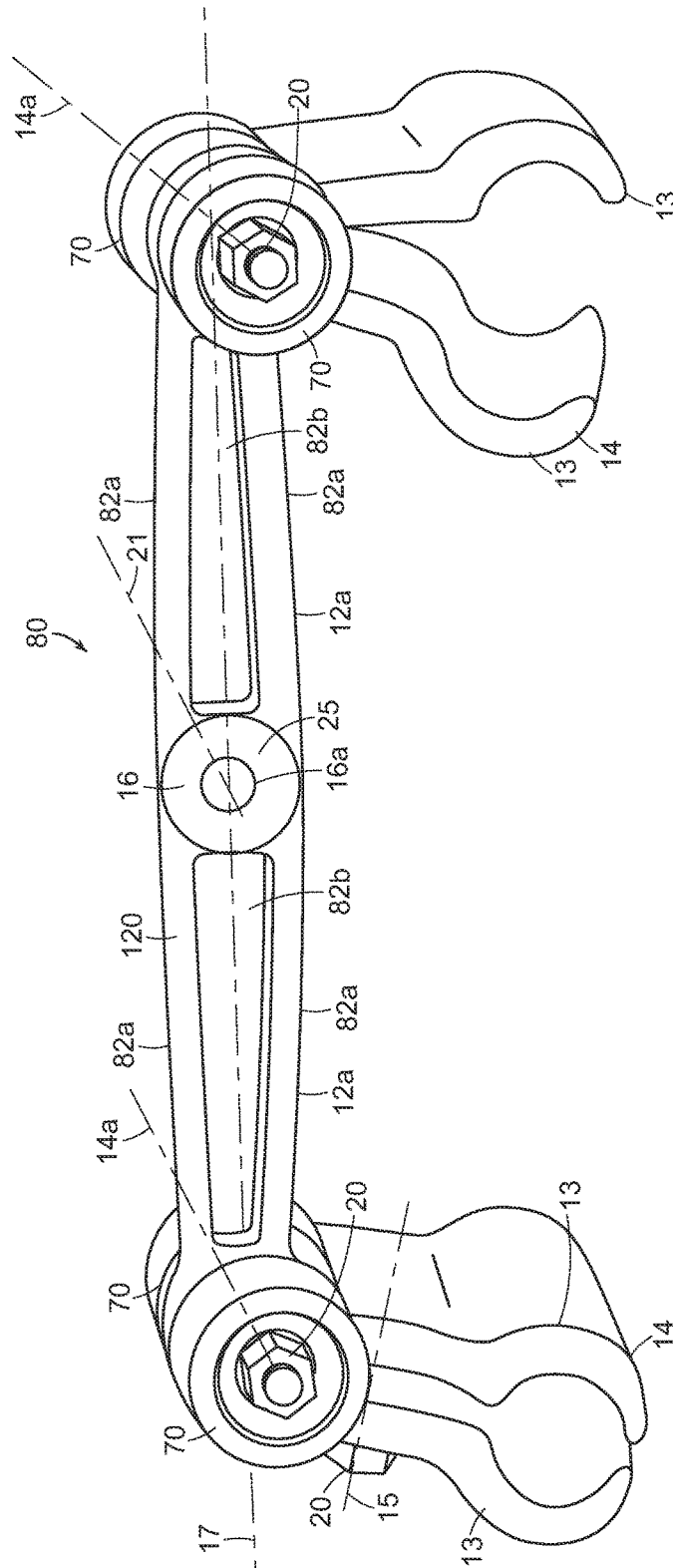


FIG. 23

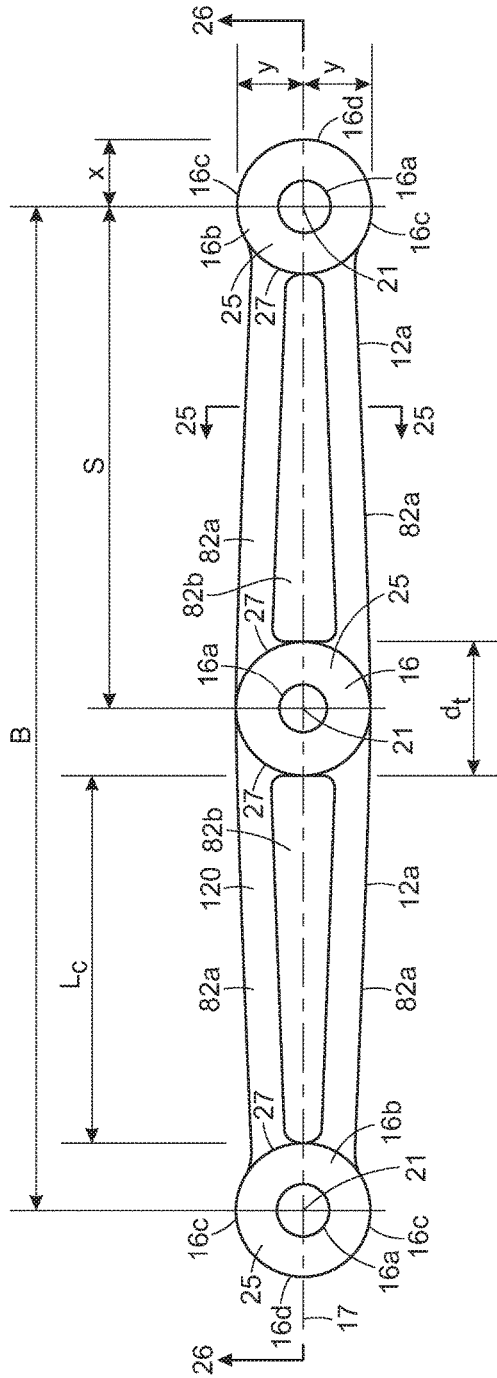


FIG. 24

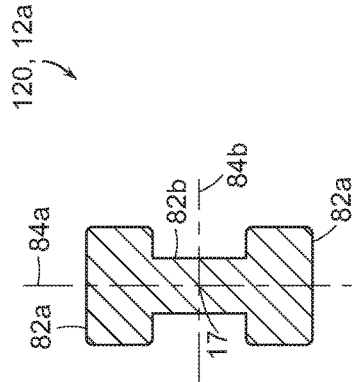


FIG. 25

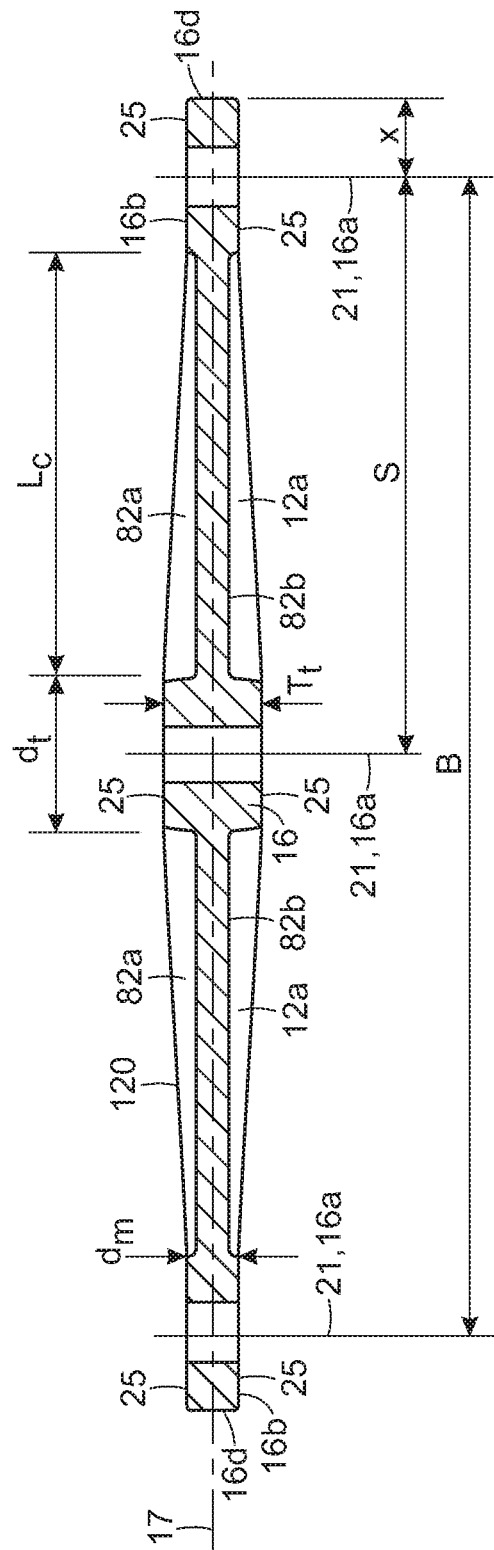


FIG. 26

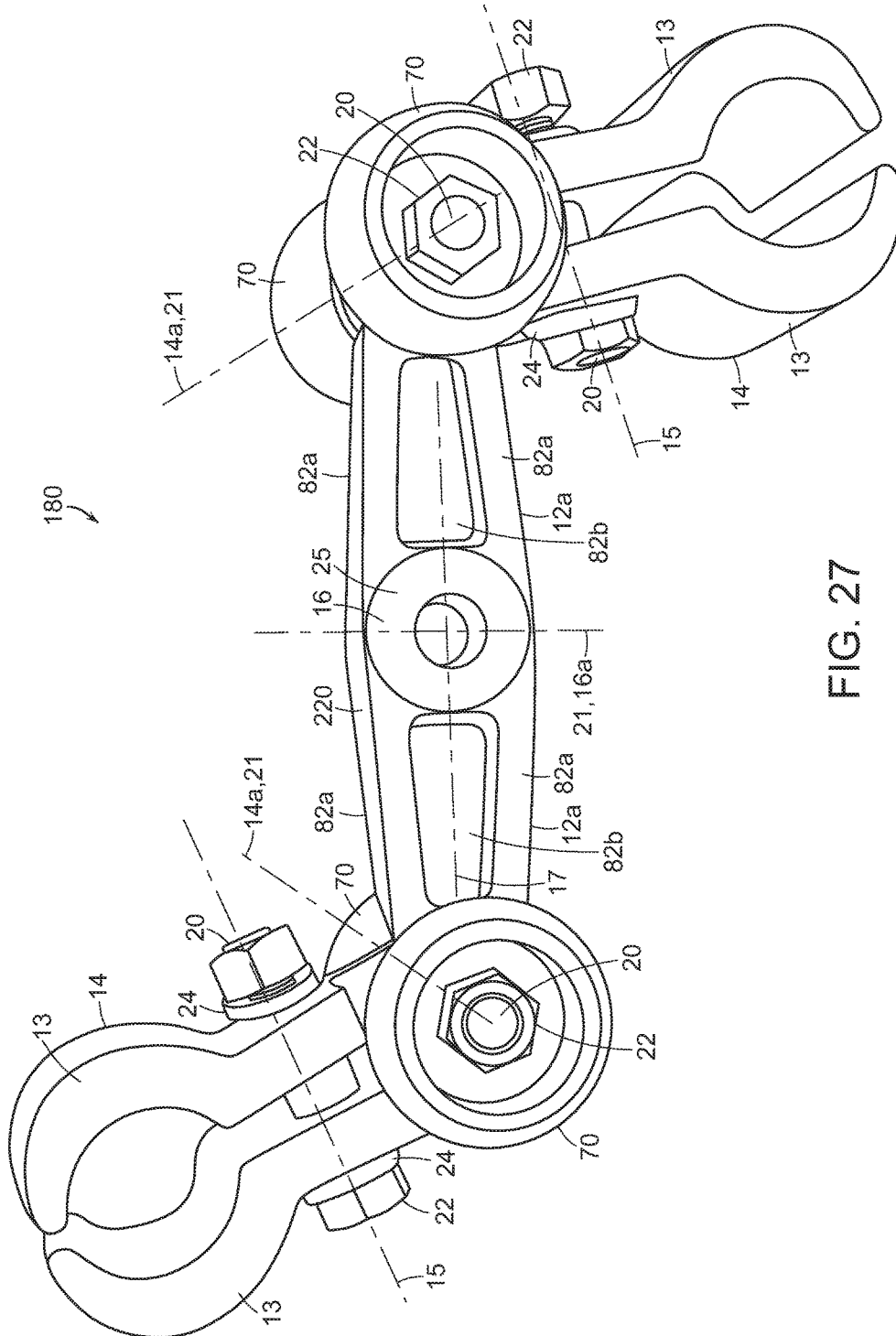


FIG. 27

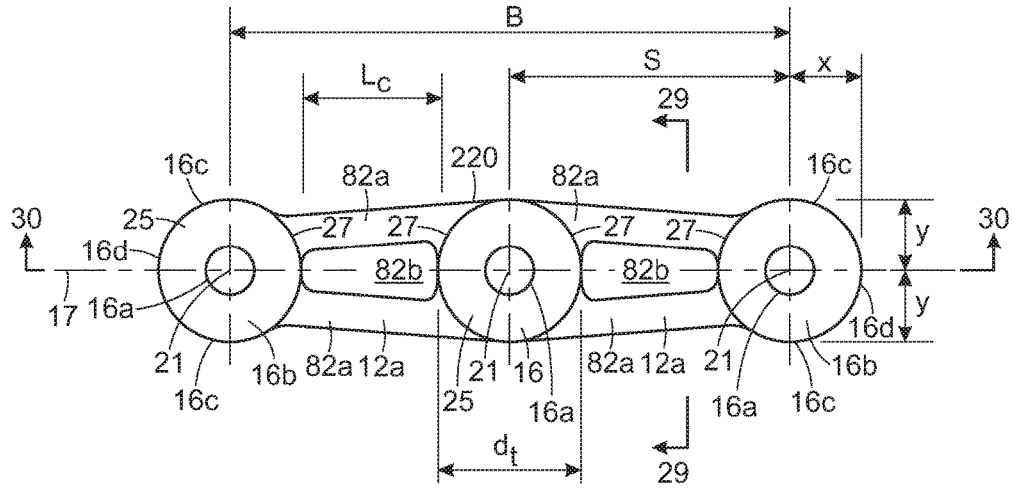


FIG. 28

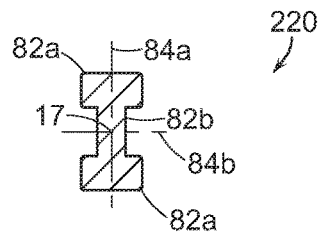


FIG. 29

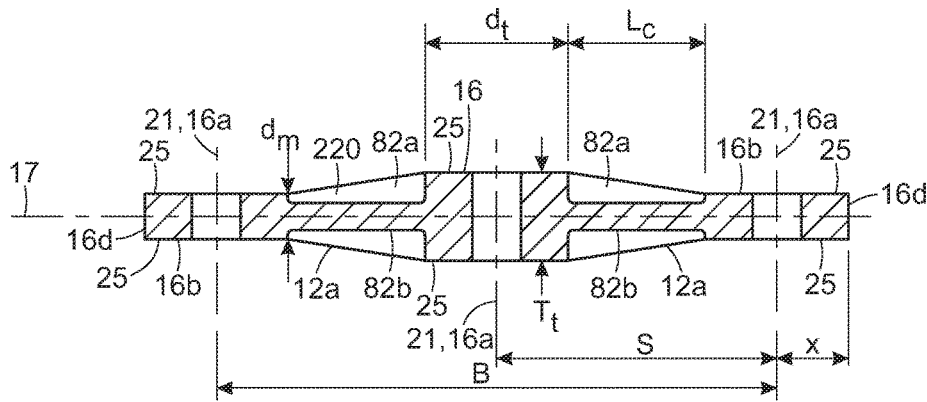


FIG. 30

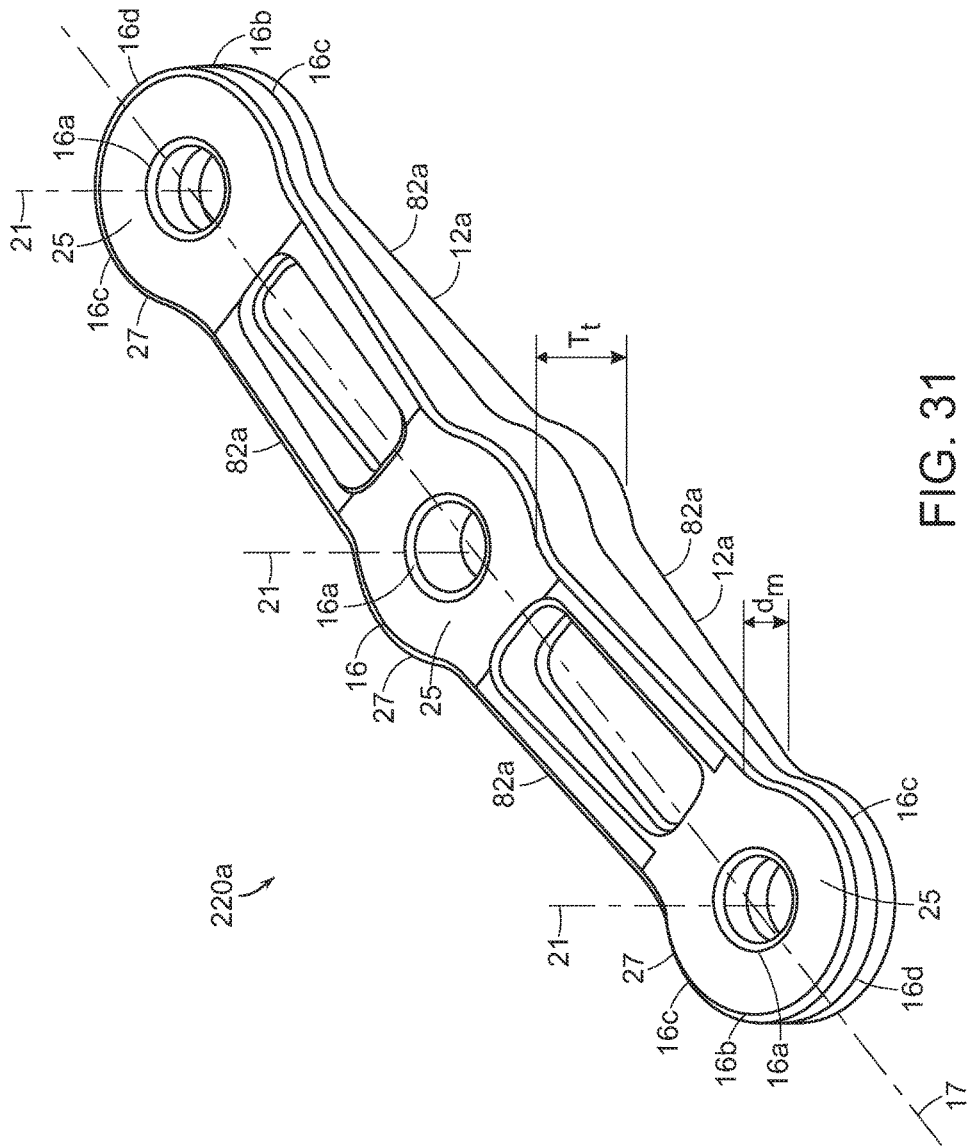


FIG. 31

SPACER DEVICE

RELATED APPLICATION

This application is a Continuation in Part application of U.S. application Ser. No. 14/171,220, filed Feb. 3, 2014, which is a Continuation in Part application of U.S. application Ser. No. 13/008,112, filed Jan. 18, 2011, now U.S. Pat. No. 8,981,227 issued on Mar. 17, 2015, which claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 61/296,203, filed on Jan. 19, 2010. The entire teachings of the above applications are incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND

Electrical transmission lines, cables or conductors can be subject to galloping during storms, which can cause damage to the transmission line system. If damage is extensive, repairs can be costly and time consuming.

SUMMARY

The present invention can provide a spacer device including an elongate spacing member extending along a longitudinal axis for securing to electrical transmission lines, and can have a minimum thickness d_m . At least one thickened portion having a thickness T_t and length d_t can be positioned intermediate along the spacing member to form at least two column lengths L_c separated by the at least one thickened portion. Each column length L_c can have a portion with the minimum thickness d_m . The thickness T_t and length d_t of the at least one thickened portion can be at least two times the minimum thickness d_m to form at least one end support for the at least two column lengths L_c , such that the at least two column lengths L_c behave as separate Euler type columns for producing increased Euler buckling strength with a minimal increase in weight.

In particular embodiments, the thickened portion can have a thickness T_t that is at least two times the minimum thickness d_m of the spacing member, and a length d_t that is at least three times the minimum thickness d_m . The spacing member can have a column length to minimum thickness L_c/d_m ratio of about 5 to 18, a thickened portion thickness to spacing member minimum thickness T_t/d_m ratio of about 1.5 to 3, and a thickened portion length to spacing member minimum thickness d_t/d_m ratio of about 2 to 5 for producing increased Euler buckling strength with a minimal increase in weight. In some embodiments, the L_c/d_m ratio can be about 6 to 7, the T_t/d_m ratio can be about 1.75 to 2.5, and the d_t/d_m ratio can be about 2.5 to 3.5. The spacing member can be a rod having a length of about 1½ to 3 feet long, and having a minimum thickness d_m of about ⅜ to ¾ inches. The at least one thickened portion can have a thickness T_t of about 1 to 2 inches, and a length d_t of about 1½ to 2½ inches. The at least one thickened portion can be integrally formed on the spacing member. At least two thickened portions can be spaced apart about 5 to 11 inches. The at least one thickened portion can be cylindrical in shape and can have a central axis orthogonal to the longitudinal axis of the spacing member. The at least one thickened portion can have a diameter of about 1½ to 2½ inches. First and second clamps can be secured to opposite ends of the spacing member for securing to respective electrical transmission lines. The clamps can be capable of rotating relative to the spacing member. The spacer device can be capable of spacing two electrical transmission lines about 30 to 32 inches apart. The elongate spacing member can be a first spacing member, and

the spacer device can further include a second elongate spacing member secured to the first spacing member and can have at least a third clamp secured to an end of the second spacing member for securing to at least another electrical transmission line.

The present invention can also provide a spacer device for electrical transmission lines including an elongate spacing rod having a length of about 1½ to 3 feet long, and a nominal thickness of about ⅜ to ¾ inches. A series of spaced apart thickened portions can be integrally formed on the spacing rod. The thickened portions can be at least two times thicker than the nominal thickness of the spacing rod and spaced about 5 to 8 inches apart for producing increased Euler buckling strength with a minimal increase in weight.

The present invention can also provide a spacer device including an elongate spacing rod extending along a longitudinal axis for securing to electrical transmission lines, and having a minimum diameter d_m . At least one thickened portion can be positioned intermediate along the spacing rod to form at least two column lengths L_c separated by the at least one thickened portion. The at least one thickened portion can be cylindrically shaped with a central axis orthogonal to the longitudinal axis of the spacing rod, and can have a diameter d_t and thickness T_t large enough to form at least one end support for the at least two column lengths L_c , such that the at least two column lengths L_c behave as separate Euler type columns for producing increased Euler buckling strength with a minimal increase in weight.

The present invention can also provide a spreading device for spreading cables apart including a first spreading arm having a proximal end and a distal end, and a second spreading arm having a proximal end and a distal end. The distal ends of the first and second spreading arms can be configured for engaging respective cables. The proximal ends of the first and second spreading arms can be pivotally connected together by a pivot point. The pivot point can be configured to permit pivoting of the first and second arms relative to each other between an acute angle and just beyond 180°, for spreading the respective cables apart and locking in a spread position.

In particular embodiments, a handle can be pivotally connected to the pivot point for moving the first and second spreading arms between the acute angle and just beyond 180°. The pivot point can include a mechanical stop for preventing rotation of the first and second spreading arms past just beyond 180°.

The present invention can also provide a spacer damper device for electrical transmission lines including two polymeric sleeves, each about 4 to 5 feet long covering a portion of two spaced apart transmission line cables. Two helical armor rods, each about 6 to 7 feet long can be wrapped around a polymeric sleeve. Ends of the armor rods can be wrapped around the cables. A spacing member can have two clamps, each for clamping over a cable at a region to clamp over an armor rod and polymeric sleeve, thereby forming a constrained viscoelastic layer where the polymeric sleeve deforms in shear when the cable bends underneath the clamp, thereby providing damping.

The present invention can also provide a damper device for electrical transmission lines including a polymeric sleeve covering a portion of a transmission line cable. A rod can be wrapped around the polymeric sleeve. Ends of the rod can be wrapped around the cable. A clamp can be clamped over the rod and polymeric sleeve, thereby forming a constrained viscoelastic layer where the polymeric sleeve deforms in shear when the cable bends underneath the clamp, thereby providing damping.

In particular embodiments, the polymeric sleeve can be about 4 to 5 feet long, and the rod can be a helical armor rod about 6 to 7 feet long. The clamp can be a first clamp and the transmission line cable can be a first transmission line cable. The damper device can further include a spacing member to which the first clamp is mounted, and a second clamp mounted to the spacing member for clamping to a second transmission line cable. In some embodiments, the clamp can be mounted to a member extending from a transmission tower.

The present invention can also provide a method of spacing two electrical transmission lines with a spacer device including securing an elongate spacing member to the two electrical transmission lines. The elongate spacing member can extend along a longitudinal axis, and can have a minimum thickness d_m . At least one thickened portion having a thickness T_t and length d_t can be positioned intermediate along the spacing member to form at least two column lengths L_c separated by the at least one thickened portion. Each column length L_c can have a portion with a minimum thickness d_m . The thickness T_t and length d_t of the at least one thickened portion can be at least two times the minimum thickness d_m to form at least one end support for the at least two column lengths L_c , such that the at least two column lengths L_c behave as separate Euler type columns for producing increased Euler buckling strength with a minimal increase in weight.

In particular embodiments, the thickened portion can have a thickness T_t that is at least two times the minimum thickness d_m of the spacing member, and a length d_t that is at least three times the minimum thickness d_m . The spacing member can have a column length to minimum thickness L_c/d_m ratio of about 5 to 18, a thickened portion thickness to spacing member minimum thickness T_t/d_m ratio of about 1.5 to 3, and a thickened portion length to spacing member minimum thickness d_t/d_m ratio of about 2 to 5 for producing increased Euler buckling strength with a minimal increase in weight. In some embodiments, the L_c/d_m ratio can be about 6 to 7, the T_t/d_m ratio can be about 1.75 to 2.5 and the d_t/d_m ratio can be about 2.5 to 3.5. The spacing member can be a rod with a length of about 1½ to 3 feet long, and a minimum thickness d_m of about ⅜ to ¾ inches. The at least one thickened portion can have a thickness T_t of about 1 to 2 inches, and a length d_t of about 1½ to 2½ inches. The at least one thickened portion can be integrally formed on the spacing member. At least two thickened portions can be spaced apart about 5 to 11 inches. The at least one thickened portion can be cylindrical in shape, and with a central axis orthogonal to the longitudinal axis of the spacing member. The at least one thickened portion can have a diameter of about 1½ to 2½ inches. First and second clamps that are on opposite ends of the spacing member can be secured to respective electrical transmission lines. The clamps can be allowed to rotate relative to the spacing member. The two electrical transmission lines can be spaced about 30 to 32 inches apart. The elongate spacing member can be a first spacing member, and the spacer device can further include a second elongate spacing member secured to the first spacing member and can have at least a third clamp secured to an end of the second spacing member for securing to at least another electrical transmission line.

The present invention can also provide a method of spacing two electrical transmission lines with a spacer device including securing an elongate spacing rod to the two electrical transmission lines. The elongate spacing rod can have a length of about 1½ to 3 feet long, and a nominal thickness of about ⅜ to ¾ inches. A series of spaced apart

thickened portions can be integrally formed on the spacing rod. The thickened portions can be at least two times thicker than the nominal thickness of the spacing rod and spaced of about 5 to 8 inches apart for producing increased Euler buckling strength with a minimal increase in weight.

The present invention can also provide a method of spacing two electrical transmission lines with a spacer device including securing an elongate spacing rod to the two electrical transmission lines. The elongate spacing rod can extend along a longitudinal axis and have a minimum diameter d_m . At least one thickened portion can be positioned intermediate along the spacing rod to form at least two column lengths L_c separated by the at least one thickened portion. The at least one thickened portion can be cylindrically shaped with a central axis orthogonal to the longitudinal axis of the spacing rod, and can have a diameter d_t and thickness T_t large enough to form at least one end support for the at least two column lengths L_c , such that the at least two column lengths L_c behave as separate Euler type columns for producing increased Euler buckling strength with a minimal increase in weight.

The present invention can also provide a method of spreading two cables apart including providing a spreading device with first and second spreading arms each having proximal and distal ends. The distal ends of the first and second spreading arms can engage respective cables. The proximal ends of the first and second spreading arms can be pivotally connected together by a pivot point. The pivot point can be configured to permit pivoting of the first and second arms relative to each other. The arms can be pivoted from an acute angle to just beyond 180°, for spreading the respective cables apart and locking in a spread position.

In particular embodiments, the first and second spreading arms can be moved between the acute angle and just beyond 180° with a handle pivotally connected to the pivot point. The first and second spreading arms can be prevented from rotating past just beyond 180° with a mechanical stop included with the pivot point. The two cables can be two electrical transmission lines, and can be spread from an initial distance of about 18 inches to a distance of about 30 to 32 inches. A spacing device can be secured to the two electrical transmission lines for maintaining the distance of about 30 to 32 inches.

The present invention can also provide a method of damping electrical transmission lines including covering two spaced apart transmission line cables with two polymeric sleeves, each about 4 to 5 feet long covering a portion of the two spaced apart transmission line cables. Two helical armor rods, each about 6 to 7 feet long can be wrapped around a polymeric sleeve. Ends of the armor rods can be wrapped around the cables. A spacing member can be secured to the two transmission line cables. The spacing member can have two clamps, each for clamping over a cable at a region to clamp over an armor rod and polymeric sleeve, thereby forming a constrained viscoelastic layer where the polymeric sleeve deforms in shear when the cable bends underneath the clamp, thereby providing damping.

The present invention can also provide a method of damping an electrical transmission line including covering a portion of an electrical transmission line cable with a polymeric sleeve. A rod can be wrapped around the polymeric sleeve. Ends of the rod can be wrapped around the cable. A clamp can be secured over the rod and polymeric sleeve, thereby forming a constrained viscoelastic layer where the polymeric sleeve deforms in shear when the cable bends underneath the clamp, thereby providing damping.

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In particular embodiments, the polymeric sleeve can be about 4 to 5 feet long, and the rod can be a helical armor rod about 6 to 7 feet long. The clamp can be a first clamp and the transmission line cable can be a first transmission line cable. A spacing member can be included to which the first clamp is mounted, and a second clamp mounted to the spacing member for clamping to a second transmission line cable. In some embodiments, the clamp can be mounted to a member extending from a transmission tower.

The present invention can also provide a spacer device including an elongate spacing member extending along a longitudinal axis for securing to electrical transmission lines, and having a minimum thickness d_m . At least one thickened portion having a thickness T_t and length d_t can be positioned intermediate along the spacing member to form at least two column lengths L_c separated by the at least one thickened portion. Each column length L_c can have a portion with the minimum thickness d_m . The thickness T_t and the length d_t of the at least one thickened portion can be at least two times the minimum thickness d_m to form at least one end support for the at least two column lengths L_c such that the at least two column lengths L_c behave as separate Euler type columns for producing increased Euler buckling strength with a minimal increase in weight. First and second clamps can be rotatably secured to opposite ends of the spacing member for securing to respective electrical transmission lines.

In particular embodiments, the spacing member can include first and second end portions at opposite ends to which the first and second clamps can be rotatably secured about respective first and second clamp rotation axes that are transverse to the longitudinal axis of the spacing member. Each end portion can have a pair of clamp stop structures for engaging clamp surfaces of a respective clamp and limit rotation of the respective clamp between the clamp stop structures. The clamp stop structures can include elongate flat surfaces parallel to and on opposite sides of the longitudinal axis of the spacing member extending wider than the column lengths. The elongate flat surfaces of the clamp stop structures of each end portion can extend parallel to the longitudinal axis of the spacing member towards each other and inward relative to the clamp rotation axes. The clamp stop structures can limit rotation of the clamps to about $\pm 110^\circ$ relative to the longitudinal axis of the spacing member. The thickened portion can have a thickness of T_t that is at least two times the minimum thickness d_m of the spacing member, and a length d_t that is at least three times the minimum thickness d_m . The spacing member can have a column length to a minimum thickness L_c/d_m ratio of about 5 to 18, a thickened portion thickness to spacing member minimum thickness T_t/d_m ratio of about 1.5 to 3, and thickened portion length to spacing member minimum thickness d_t/d_m ratio of about 2 to 5 for producing increased Euler buckling strength with a minimal increase in weight. The at least one thickened portion can be integrally formed on the spacing member. The at least one thickened portion can be cylindrical shaped and can have a central axis orthogonal to the longitudinal axis of the spacing member.

The present invention can also provide a spacer device including an elongate spacing member having at least one column length extending along a longitudinal axis. The spacing member can have first and second end portions at opposite ends. First and second clamps can be rotatably secured to respective first and second end portions of the spacing member for securing to respective electrical transmission lines. The first and second clamps can be rotatably secured about respective first and second clamp rotation

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axes that are transverse to the longitudinal axis of spacing member. Each end portion of the spacing member can have clamp stop structures that include elongate flat surfaces extending parallel to and on opposite sides of the longitudinal axis of the spacing member wider than the at least one column length towards each other and inward relative to the clamp rotation axes. The clamps can have opposed outer surfaces for engaging the clamp stop structures for limiting rotation of the clamps between the clamp stop structures to about $\pm 110^\circ$ relative to the longitudinal axis of the spacing member.

The present invention can also provide a method of spacing two electrical transmission lines with a spacer device. An elongate spacing member can be secured to the two electrical transmission lines with first and second clamps that are rotatably secured to opposite ends of the spacing member. The elongate spacing member can extend along a longitudinal axis and can have a minimum thickness d_m . At least one thickened portion having a thickness T_t and length d_t can be positioned intermediate along the spacing member to form at least two column lengths L_c separated by the at least one thickened portion. Each column length L_c can have a portion with the minimum thickness d_m . The thickness T_t and length d_t of the at least one thickened portion can be at least two times the minimum thickness d_m to form at least one end support for the at least two column lengths L_c , such that the at least two column lengths L_c behave as separate Euler type columns for producing increased Euler buckling strength with a minimal increase in weight.

In particular embodiments, the spacing member can be provided with first and second end portions at opposite ends to which the first and second clamps can be rotatably secured about respective first and second clamp rotation axes that are transverse to the longitudinal axis of spacing member. Rotation of the first and second clamps can be limited between a pair of clamp stop structures on each end portion. The clamp stop structures can engage clamp surfaces of a respective clamp. The clamp stop structures can be provided with elongate flat surfaces parallel to and on opposite sides of the longitudinal axis of the spacing member extending wider than the column lengths. The elongate flat surfaces of the clamp stop structures can extend parallel to the longitudinal axis of the spacing member towards each other and inward relative to the clamp rotation axes. Rotation of the clamps can be limited with the clamp stop structures to about $\pm 110^\circ$ relative to the longitudinal axis of the spacing member. The thickened portion can be provided with a thickness T_t that is at least two times the minimum thickness d_m of the spacing member, and a length d_t that is at least three times the minimum thickness d_m . The spacing member can be provided with a column length to minimum thickness L_c/d_m ratio of about 5 to 18, a thickened portion thickness to spacing member minimum thickness T_t/d_m ratio about 1.5 to 3, and a thickened portion length to spacing member minimum thickness d_t/d_m ratio of about 2 to 5 for producing increased Euler buckling strength with a minimal increase in weight. The at least one thickened portion can be integrally formed on the spacing member. The at least one thickened portion can have a cylindrical shape with a central axis orthogonal to the longitudinal axis of spacing member.

The present invention can also provide a method of spacing two electrical transmission lines with a spacer device including providing an elongate spacing member having at least one column length extending along a longitudinal axis. The spacing member can have first and second end portions at opposite ends. First and second clamps can

be secured to respective electrical transmission lines. The first and second clamps can be rotatably secured to respective first and second end portions of the spacing member about respective first and second clamp rotation axes that are transverse to the longitudinal axis of the spacing member. Each end portion of the spacing member can have clamp stop structures including elongate flat surfaces extending parallel to and on opposite sides of the longitudinal axis of the spacing member wider than the at least one column length towards each other and inward relative to the clamp rotation axes. Rotation of the clamps can be limited between the clamp stop structures to about $\pm 110^\circ$ relative to the longitudinal axis of the spacing member. The clamps can have opposed outer surfaces for engaging the clamp stop structures.

The present invention can also provide a spacer device including an elongate spacing member extending along a longitudinal axis for securing to electrical transmission lines, and having a minimum thickness d_m . At least one thickened portion having a thickness T_t and length d_t can be positioned intermediate along the spacing member to form at least two column lengths L_c separated by the at least one thickened portion. Each column length L_c can have at least a location with the minimum thickness d_m . The thickness T_t and length d_t of the at least one thickened portion can be at least two times the minimum thickness of d_m to form at least one end support for the at least two column lengths L_c such that the at least two column lengths L_c behave as separate Euler type columns for producing increased Euler buckling strength with a minimal increase in weight.

In particular embodiments, first and second clamps can be rotatably secured to opposite ends of the spacing member for securing to respective electrical transmission lines. The thickened portion can have a thickness of T_t that is at least two times the minimum thickness d_m of the spacing member, and a length d_t that is at least three times the minimum thickness d_m . The spacing member can have a column length to minimum thickness L_c/d_m ratio of about 18 and/or under, a thickened portion thickness to spacing member minimum thickness T_t/d_m ratio of about 1.5 to 3, and a thickened portion length to spacing member minimum thickness d_t/d_m ratio of about 2 to 5 for producing increased Euler buckling strength with a minimal increase in weight. The at least one thickened portion can be integrally formed on the spacing member. In some embodiments, each column length L_c can taper down in size to the minimum thickness d_m . Each column length L_c can have a tapering I-beam cross section that tapers relative to two orthogonal planes. The two tapering column lengths L_c can be connected to respective end portions. The minimum thickness d_m can be about $\frac{5}{8}$ inches, the thickness T_t can be about $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches, the length d_t can be about 2 inches, and the column lengths L_c can be about 2-5 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

The present invention can also provide a spacer device including an elongate spacing member extending along a longitudinal axis for securing to electrical transmission lines, and having a minimum thickness d_m . At least one thickened portion having a thickness T_t and length d_t can be positioned intermediate along the spacing member to form at least two column lengths L_c separated by the at least one thickened portion. Each column length L_c can have at least a location with the minimum thickness d_m . Each column length L_c can have a tapering I-beam cross section that tapers down in size to the minimum thickness d_m relative to two orthogonal planes. The thickness T_t and length d_t of the at least one thickened portion can be at least two times the minimum thickness d_m to form at least one end support for

the at least two column lengths L_c such that the at least two column lengths L_c behave as separate Euler type columns for producing increased Euler buckling strength with a minimal increase in weight. First and second clamps can be rotatably secured to opposite ends of the spacing member for securing to respective electrical transmission lines.

The present invention can also provide a method of spacing two electrical transmission lines with a spacer device, including securing an elongate spacing member to the two electrical transmission lines. The elongate spacing member can extend along a longitudinal axis and have a minimum thickness d_m . At least one thickened portion having a thickness T_t and a length d_t can be positioned intermediate along the spacing member to form at least two column lengths L_c separated by the at least one thickened portion. Each column length L_c can have at least a location with the minimum thickness d_m . The thickness T_t and length d_t of the at least one thickened portion can be at least two times the minimum thickness d_m to form at least one end support for the at least two column lengths L_c , such that the at least two column lengths L_c behave as separate Euler type columns for producing increased Euler buckling strength with a minimal increase in weight.

In particular embodiments, the elongate spacing member can be secured to the two electrical transmission lines with first and second clamps that are rotatably secured to opposite sides of the spacing member. The thickened portion can be provided with a thickness T_t that is at least two times the minimum thickness d_m of the spacing member, and a length d_t that is at least three times the minimum thickness d_m . The spacing member can be provided with a column length to minimum thickness L_c/d_m ratio of about 18 and/or under, a thickened portion thickness to spacing member minimum thickness T_t/d_m ratio about 1.5 to 3, and a thickened portion length to spacing member minimum thickness d_t/d_m ratio of about 2 to 5 for producing increased Euler buckling strength with a minimal increase in weight. The at least one thickened portion can be integrally formed on the spacing member. Each column length L_c can taper down in size to the minimum thickness d_m . Each column length L_c can have a tapering I-beam cross section that tapers relative to two orthogonal planes. The two tapering column length L_c can be connected to respective end portions. The minimum thickness d_m can be about $\frac{5}{8}$ inches, the thickness T_t can be $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches, the length d_t can be about 2 inches, and the column length L_c can be about 2-5 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

The present invention can also provide a method of spacing two electrical transmission lines with a spacer device including securing an elongate spacing member to the two electrical transmission lines with first and second clamps that are rotatably secured to opposite ends of the spacing member. The elongate spacing member can extend along a longitudinal axis and have a minimum thickness d_m . At least one thickened portion having a thickness T_t and length d_t can be positioned intermediate along the spacing member to form at least two column lengths L_c separated by the at least one thickened portion. Each column length L_c can have at least a location with the minimum thickness d_m . Each column length L_c can have a tapering I-beam cross section that tapers down in size to the minimum thickness d_m relative to two orthogonal planes. The thickness T_t and length d_t of the at least one thickened portion can be at least two times the minimum thickness d_m to form at least one end support for the at least two column lengths L_c , such that the at least two column lengths L_c behave as separate Euler type columns for producing increased Euler buckling strength with a minimal increase in weight.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The foregoing will be apparent from the following more particular description of example embodiments of the invention, as illustrated in the accompanying drawings in which like reference characters refer to the same parts throughout the different views. The drawings are not necessarily to scale, emphasis instead being placed upon illustrating embodiments of the present invention.

FIG. 1 is a top view on an embodiment of a spacer device in the present invention.

FIGS. 2 and 3 are side views of the spacer device of FIG. 1.

FIGS. 4 and 5 are top and side views of one end of the spacer device of FIG. 1, showing an embodiment of a rotatable clamp.

FIG. 6 is a perspective view of an embodiment of a clamp in an open position.

FIG. 7 is a top perspective view of an embodiment of a spacer rod.

FIG. 8A is a top perspective view of another embodiment of a spacer rod.

FIG. 8B is a schematic drawing of a conductor span which has a series of spacer devices secured thereto.

FIG. 8C is a perspective view of an embodiment of a clamp having a series of loose washers.

FIG. 8D is a perspective view of another embodiment of a clamp having a series of loose washers.

FIG. 9 is a perspective view of another embodiment of a spacer device in the present invention.

FIG. 10 is a side view of the spacer device of FIG. 9.

FIG. 11 is a side view of the central hub joint of the spacer device of FIG. 9.

FIG. 12 is a top view of a portion of another embodiment of a spacer device in the present invention.

FIG. 13A is a side view of the portion of the spacer device of FIG. 12.

FIG. 13B is a schematic drawing of a clamp extending from an insulator mounted to a tower, and clamping an armor rod polymeric sleeve sandwich around a conductor.

FIG. 14 is a side view of an embodiment of a spreading tool in the present invention, positioned for spreading two conductors.

FIG. 15 is a side view of the spreading tool of FIG. 14 after spreading the conductors apart.

FIG. 16 is a top view of FIG. 15.

FIG. 17 is an enlarged top view of the hub portion.

FIG. 18 is a sectional view of the hub portion showing an embodiment of a mechanical stop.

FIG. 19 is a perspective view of another embodiment of a spacer device in the present invention.

FIG. 20 is a perspective view of a portion of the spacer device of FIG. 19.

FIG. 21 is a side view of an embodiment of a spacer rod for the spacer device of FIG. 19.

FIG. 22 is a side view of another embodiment of the spacer device in the present invention.

FIG. 23 is a side view of yet another embodiment of a spacer device in the present invention.

FIG. 24 is a side view of a spacer rod or member for the spacer device of FIG. 23.

FIG. 25 is a cross section of the spacer rod of FIG. 24.

FIG. 26 is a longitudinal sectional view of the spacer rod of FIG. 24.

FIG. 27 is a side view of still another embodiment of a spacer device in the present invention.

FIG. 28 is a side view of the spacer rod or member for the spacer device of FIG. 27.

FIG. 29 is a cross section of the spacer rod of FIG. 28.

FIG. 30 is a longitudinal sectional view of the spacer rod of FIG. 28.

FIG. 31 is a perspective view of another embodiment of a spacer rod or member in the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

A description of example embodiments of the invention follows.

FIGS. 1-8A depict an embodiment of a spacer device 10 in the present invention which can be secured to lines, cables or conductors 18 extending along axes 19, such as electrical transmission lines, cables or conductors, and can operate as a spacer twister device and/or a spacer damper device. Spacer device 10 can space the conductors 18 apart from each other, can dampen vibrations, and can reduce or prevent galloping of the cables or conductors 18 during storms. The spacer device 10 can have an elongated spacing or spacer member or rod 12 extending along a longitudinal axis 17 with rotatable clamps 14 at opposite ends, which can pivot about pivot points or axes 14a. In some situations, the clamps 14 can be fixed, if desired. Rotation of the clamps 14 can allow twisting of the conductors 18 which can change or alter aerodynamic lift characteristics of the conductors 18 in heavy winds, and can reduce or prevent galloping, as well as dampen vibrations. The spacer rod 12 can have a series of spaced apart thickened knobs, bulges, protuberances, members, or portions 16 along its length. The thickened portions 16 can increase the stiffness and buckling strength of the spacer rod 12 for resisting compressive buckling forces F, and Euler type buckling, while minimizing the nominal or minimal thickness (or diameter), the weight, and the cost of the spacer rod 12.

The thickened portions 16 can be relatively short, squat or flattened round, or curved bulges that can be cylindrical, puck, or disc shaped, with their central axes 21 transverse, orthogonal or at a right angle to the spacer rod 12 and axis 17. The thickened portions 16 can have a round or curved outer diameter or perimeter surface 27, and flat end surfaces 25 on opposite axial ends (FIGS. 3 and 4). The flat end surfaces 25 can be parallel to each other and axis 17, and transverse or orthogonal or at right angles to axes 21. The thickened portions 16 can be formed by casting, and can be cast at the same time integrally together with the spacer rod 12, for example, out of aluminum. The use of aluminum for spacer rod 12 and clamps 14 can minimize the weight. Casting the thickened portions 16 integrally together with the spacer rod 12 can save manufacturing time. In addition, less material is used than if the spacer rod 12 had a constant or continuous diameter that is large enough to withstand the desired buckling force F. Using less material can decrease the weight and the cost of the spacer device 10.

By positioning the thickened portions 16 at intermediate locations along the spacer rod 12, the intermediate thickened portions 16 can form two or more short spaced apart Euler column lengths 12a along axis 17, having the nominal or minimum thickness or diameter of the spacer rod 12, which are separated from each other by the thickened portions 16. The thickened portions 16 can be made long and large enough not to bend themselves, and to act as fixed end supports for the Euler column lengths 12a of the spacer rod 12. Consequently, each shortened column length 12a can resist higher compressive Euler buckling forces than the spacer rod 12 could resist if the thickened portions 16 were

not present. Euler buckling forces are typically compressive forces acting on a column at the ends of the column in the direction of or along the longitudinal axis, which if large enough, can cause buckling of the column. A column subjected to such forces can be described or designated as a Euler column. The strength of a given Euler column is related to the square of the column length. For example, if a given Euler column is shortened by a factor of two by a thickened portion 16, the column can be increased in strength by a factor of four. The column lengths 12a typically have a round cross section which can provide uniform strength in all radial directions, but alternatively can have other cross sectional shapes, such as square, rectangular, hexagonal, octagonal, polygonal, oval, complex curves, etc.

The use of the thickened portions 16 can allow the nominal or minimum thickness or diameter of the spacer rod 12 to be made smaller than if the spacer rod had a constant diameter large enough to withstand the desired buckling force F, thereby minimizing the weight. In addition, by using thickened portions 16 that are round or cylindrical in shape, with the central axis 21 transverse, orthogonal or at a right angle to the spacer rod 12 and axis 17, the thickened portions 16 can have a configuration that is large enough, and long enough in the direction of axis 17 to act as fixed end supports to form a series of Euler type columns extending along axis 17 that are separated from each other, while also minimizing weight and material. The cylindrical shape with flat opposed surfaces 25 minimizes weight on the opposite axial ends along axis 21, and the curved outer perimeter surface 27 maximizes the length of the thickened portion 16 between the column lengths 12a in the direction of axis 17 while also minimizing weight. The curved outer perimeter surface 27 extends the length of the cylindrical thickened portion 16 along the junction with the column lengths 12a, while minimizing material and weight at radially outward locations away from the spacer rod 12. The length of the thickened portion 16 if too short, might not sufficiently act as an end support and might not provide sufficient strength. In addition, the thickened portions 16 can also have a central hole 16a (FIG. 8A) to further minimize weight. Minimizing weight is desirable for use on electrical transmission lines, cables or conductors.

The clamps 14 can include two opposed jaws 13 having hub portions 23, that can be rotatably connected to each other about axis 14a on opposite sides of end portions 16b of spacer rod 12, by bolts 20, washers 24 and nuts 22 (FIGS. 3-6). The end portions 16b can be generally cylindrical or disc shaped and can have central axis 21 similar to thickened portions 16. The end portions 16b can form end supports for the adjacent column lengths 12a, alone or in combination with the clamps 14 and can be thinner than thickened portions 16 if needed for positioning or securing between hub portions 23. The end portions 16b can have hole 16a to allow bolts 20 to pass through. The jaws 13 can have contoured, curved or rounded jaw portions 13a for gripping and clamping a conductor 18 when bolts 20 on axis 15 of clamp 14, and nuts 22 are tightened to bring jaws 13 towards each other. The bolts 20 along axes 14a can be tightened to lock clamps 14 in a fixed positioned 14a relative to spacer rod 12, or set, or replaced with a pin to allow rotation about axes 14a of the clamps 14 relative to spacer rod 12. Nuts 22 can be lock nuts to prevent loosening. Washers 24 can be positioned on opposite sides of hub portions 23 and end portions 16b to rattle and absorb or dissipate vibrational energy. Selected washers 24 can be included that are neoprene or rubber washers to reduce noise. Additional washers

24 can be added as needed to absorb vibration, and bolt 20 can be lengthened accordingly. Further washers 24 can also be added loosely to the thickened portions 16 with bolts through holes 16a in the embodiment of the spacer rod 12 seen in FIG. 8A, for absorbing or dissipating vibration. Resilient or flexible, viscoelastic, polymeric, neoprene or rubber members, sheaths sleeves or layers 26 can be positioned over each conductor 18 at the locations at which the clamp 14 clamps the conductor 18 and become sandwiched between the clamp 14 and the conductor 18. The addition of a rubber sleeve 26 can be used to control high frequency vibration. Although one embodiment of clamps 14 is shown in the drawings, other suitable clamps can be employed. In addition, clamp 14 can be, or can be similar to those disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 6,008,453, issued Dec. 28, 1999, the contents of which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

In some embodiments, the spacer rod 12 can be about 1½ or 2 to 3 feet long, and about ¾ to ¾ inches in nominal or minimum thickness or diameter d_m (FIG. 3). The thickened portions 16 can have a length or diameter d_t of about 1½ or 2 to 2½ inches, can have a thickness T_t of about ¾ or 1 to 2 inches thick, and can be spaced apart about 5 or 6 to 8 inches, and in some cases up to 9 to 11 inches. In some embodiments, the spacer rod 12 can have two thickened end portions 16b at opposite ends, and three intermediate thickened portions 16 therebetween to form four separated Euler column lengths 12a positioned along axis 17 in series or sequence. The column lengths 12a of the spacer rod 12 can have a length L_c ranging from about 3 to 9 inches long. For a length, distance or span S of the spacer rod 12 between the centers of two thickened portions 16 or end portions 16b, in some embodiments, about 50% or 55% to 80% of the length of the span S can be the column length 12a having the nominal thickness or diameter d_m , and about 20% to 45% or 50% of the length of the span S can be the thickened portions 16 or end portions 16b. The thickened portions 16 can be about ⅝ to 1¼ or 2⅛ inches thicker than spacer rod 12 (or about 2 to 4 times thicker). The thickened portions 16 can have a thickness T_t along axis 21 orthogonal to axis 17 that is at least about 2 times the thickness or diameter d_m of the spacer rod 12, and a length or diameter d_t in the direction of axis 17 that is also at least two times the thickness or diameter d_m , and can be at least three times the thickness or diameter d_m , in order to form Euler type end supports. The thickness or diameter d_t of the thickened portions 16 can also be at least two or three times the thickness or diameter d_m in the radial direction orthogonal to both axes 17 and 21, at the radially outward most point on the outer perimeter surface 27. The thickened portions 16 can have an opening 16a if desired (FIG. 8A). In other embodiments, the thickened portions 16 can have other suitable shapes and configurations, and can be separately manufactured pieces which are secured to the spacer rod 12. The number and spacing of thickened portions 16 can vary, as well as the nominal thickness or diameter d_m of the spacer rod 12.

The column lengths 12a can have a column length L_c to nominal or minimum diameter or thickness d_m ratio L_c/d_m of about 5 to 18, often about 5 to 12, or 5 to 8. The thickened portion 16 thickness T_t and the column length 12a thickness or diameter d_m can have a ratio T_t/d_m of about 1.5 to 3, and often about 1.75 to 2.5. The thickened portion 16 length or diameter d_t and the column length 12a thickness or diameter d_m , can have a ratio d_t/d_m of about 2 to 5 and often about 2.5 to 3.5. This can help provide a spacer rod 12 having maximum strength against Euler type buckling with a minimum weight.

In one embodiment, spacer device **10** can have a spacer rod **12** which is about 24 inches long between the axes **21** of the two end portions **16b**, which when clamps **14** are attached that have a distance of about 3 to 4 inches between axis **14a** and jaw portions **13a**, can space conductors **18** apart from each other about 30 to 32 inches. The spacer rod **12** can have three intermediate thickened portions **16** spaced apart from each other and the end portions **16b** by a distance or span *S* of about 6 inches between center axes **21** to form four Euler column lengths **12a** in series separated from each other along axis **17**. The column lengths **12a** can have a nominal or minimum diameter d_m of about $\frac{5}{8}$ inches and a length L_c of about 4 inches. The thickened portions **16** can have a length or diameter d_t of about 2 inches and a thickness T_t of about $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches. The end portions **16b** can have a diameter of about 2 inches and a thickness of about 0.68 or $1\frac{1}{16}$ inches. The holes **16a** can be about $\frac{5}{8}$ inches in diameter. This can provide a L_c/d_m ratio of about 6 to 7, such as about 6.4, a t/d_m ratio of about 2, and a d_t/d_m ratio of about 3.2. Although column lengths **12a** are shown to have a diameter with a smooth outer surface, it is understood that the outer surface can have corrugations or irregularities.

In some embodiments, the maximum allowed stress on an aluminum column length **12a** is about 10,000 lb./in². For a column length **12a** having a minimum diameter d_m of about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch, maximum loads for various column lengths L_c , can be as follows: for L_c of 6 inches about 1848 lbs., for L_c of seven inches about 1807 lbs., for L_c of 8 inches about 1759 lbs., and for L_c of 9 inches about 1705 lbs. For a column length **12a** having about a 0.7 inch diameter, the following maximum loads for various column lengths L_c can be as follows: for L_c of 6 inches, about 3733 lbs., for L_c of 7 inches about 3692 lbs., for L_c of 8 inches about 3644 lbs., and for L_c of 9 inches about 3590 lbs. These spacer rods **12** can be heat treated. In compressive testing where the spacer rod **12** is subjected to a compressive force exerted at the end portions **16b** via bolts through holes **16a** (for example $\frac{5}{8}$ diameter bolts), from a compressive test machine, embodiments of the spacer rod **12** when heat treated can buckle at about 2200 lbs., and at about 2440 lbs. if the bolts through the end portions **16b** are tightened to about 100 ft./lbs. to prevent rotation. Embodiments of the spacer rod **12** that are not heat treated can buckle at about 3130 lbs., and at about 3780 lbs. if the bolts through the end portions are tightened to about 100 ft./lbs.

In some embodiments, when the spacer device **10** is cast from aluminum, the spacer rod **12** can weigh about 21 lbs. and the clamps **14** about 3 lbs. each. The bolts **20** and nuts **22** can be about 2 lbs. for each set. This can provide spacer device **10** with a light weight to allow faster and easier installation on an electrical transmission line from a helicopter.

In some embodiments, for a 600 foot span, 3 spacer devices **10** can be secured to and spaced along the span about 200 feet from each other. Referring to FIG. **8B**, the spacer devices **10** on the ends of the span near the towers or poles **60** can have clamps **14** which are tightened to prevent rotation of the clamps **14** relative to the spacer rod **12** and the center spacer device **10** can have clamps **14** that are able to rotate relative to the spacer rod **12** to twist the conductors **18** to control gallop. The center spacer device **10** can include extra loose washers **24** for controlling or dissipating vibration. The end spacer devices **10** do not have to include extra loose washers **24**. FIG. **8C** depicts a clamp **14** including extra loose washers **24**. In some embodiments, the clamp **14** can range from about $1\frac{5}{16}$ inches to $1\frac{7}{16}$ inches in steps of $\frac{1}{16}$ inch. The width of the gripping portion can be about $3\frac{1}{2}$

inches. FIG. **8D** depicts another clamp **70** having a series of loose washers **24** and corona donuts **72** to shield the nut **22** and head of bolt **20** against corona. Some embodiments can dissipate frequencies from 5 HZ to 50 HZ. In some embodiments, for a span of conductors **18** that is about 1200 feet on an electrical transmission line, 7 spacer devices **10** can be secured to the conductors **18** and spaced apart on the span to reduce or prevent galloping. In such a span, two spacer devices **10** near the center can have rotating clamps **14** with loose washers **24**.

Referring to FIGS. **9-11**, two spacer devices **10** can be joined together at their respective central or middle thickened portions **16** along a common central axis **28** by a bolt **20**, washers **24** and nut **22**, to form a quad spacer device **30**. This can be used to clamp, space and dampen four conductors **18** in a quad bundle. Referring to FIG. **10**, one spacer device **10** is shown horizontally oriented, and the other or second spacer device **10** is shown vertically oriented, but it is understood that other orientations are also envisioned. Although FIG. **10** shows two spacer devices **10** joined together of equal length, in some embodiments, one spacer device **10** can have a length for spacing two conductors **18** apart from each other about 30 to 32 inches, for example, in the horizontal direction and the second spacer device can have a length for spacing two conductors **18** apart from each other about 18 inches, for example, in the vertical direction. In other embodiments, three spacer devices **10** can be joined together to clamp, space and dampen a bundle of six conductors **18**. Furthermore, a bundle of three conductors **18** can be clamped, spaced or dampened using either two spacer devices **10** joined together, or with a truncated spacer rod **12** joined to spacer device **10**. The modular ability of multiple spacer devices **10** to be joined together allows spacer devices to be formed to space different conductor bundles having varying numbers of conductors **18**.

Referring to FIGS. **12** and **13A**, in some embodiments, the region of the cable or conductor **18** at which a spacer device **10** is secured by clamp **14** can have a resilient or flexible, viscoelastic, polymeric, neoprene, or rubber sheath, sleeve or layer **26** covering the conductor **18**. The sleeve **26** can be covered by a metallic covering such as a series of members or rods, for example, armor rods **64**, which can be cylindrical or have other suitable cross sectional shapes. The clamp **14** is clamped over the sleeve **26** and armor rod **64** sandwich. The sleeve **26** and armor rod **64** sandwich can create a vibration damper where energy can be dissipated in the constrained viscoelastic layer to control high frequency vibrations. In some embodiments, the sleeve **26** can be about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch thick, have a durometer rating of about 40, can be about 4 to 5 feet long with a longitudinal slit or split to allow installment, and the armor rods **64** can be about 6 to 7 feet long, where the ends of the armor rods **64** can be brought back into contact with the conductor **18**, such as by wrapping the individual rods around the conductor **18**. The armor rods **64** can be metallic and can be formed of metal strands that are formed in a twisted or helical configuration. The armor rods **64** used can be those that are commonly commercially available. In some embodiments, 15 armor rods **64** can cover or be wrapped around the sleeve **26**. The armor rods **64** can maintain pressure on the sleeve **26** and can have some flexibility or resiliency to deform for absorbing vibration or galloping. The length of the sleeve **26** and armor rod **64** sandwich can dampen bending stresses on the conductor **18** near the clamps **14**. The sleeve **26** can deform in shear when the conductor **18** bends underneath the clamp **14**, constituting a loss of energy in each cycle of vibration. In some embodiments, the sleeve **26** and armor rods **64** can be

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used with other damping or spacer damping devices or clamps. In other embodiments, the sleeve 26 and armor rods 64 can be used with other suitable spacer devices, or with a clamp 14 or other suitable clamp that is not attached to or part of a spacer device. Clamping armor rods 64 and sleeves 26 around cables or conductors 18 with a clamp can in itself be used as a damping device. Furthermore, the armor rods 64 and sleeves 26 can have other configurations and dimensions as desired.

Referring to FIG. 13B, in another embodiment, the armor rod 64 and sleeve 26 sandwich can be clamped over a conductor 18 by a clamp 14 mounted to a member 62 extending from a transmission tower or pole 60. The clamped armor rod 64 and sleeve 26 configuration can be used to control high frequency vibration as well as galloping. The clamp 14 can be rigidly or rotatably mounted to the member 62 as desired. In some embodiments, the member 62 can be an insulator attached to the tower or pole 60, and can be in a horizontal line post configuration as shown, or can have other configurations such as a suspension configuration where the upper end of the member is mounted to pole 60, or a braced configuration. In other embodiments, other suitable clamps can be attached to the member 62.

In addition to wind loads on electrical transmission lines, cables or conductors 18, another possible loading condition can be short circuit loading. This can occur when there is a line fault and the current may change from a normal value of about 1,000 amps to a short circuit value of 25,000 amps or more. Circuit breakers at the sub-station will react quickly, in about ten cycles or a time span of 0.10 seconds. In a bundled circuit, the phase conductors 18 will be electromagnetically attracted to each other. In a twin bundle, two conductors 18 will start to move toward the middle of the bundle. In a triple bundle, three conductors 18 will start to move. In a quad bundle, four conductors 18 will start to move. If the spacer devices 10 are oversized, for example, 30 to 32 inches instead of the pre-existing standard of 18 inches, the force of the attraction between the conductors 18 is much less in the 30 to 32 inch spaced bundle than for the 18 inch bundle due to the increased spacing or distance apart. Since each bundle is a dynamic system having mass and stiffness, the motion is governed by Newton's laws of motion, and is not instantaneous, and will be determined by the natural modes of vibration. So, while the short-circuit current is instantaneous, and the relay operation occurs within a 0.1 second time frame, the force F moving the conductors 18 towards each other is an impulse in time over a time period of 0.1 second.

The use of oversized spacer devices 10 of 30 to 32 inches has many desired benefits which include, (i) increase the power delivery capacity of the transmission line over long distances, (ii) strengthen the ability of the bundle to resist forces F caused by short circuits, (iii) increase the wind speed at which galloping may occur, and (iv) prevent sub-conductor oscillation in large diameter sub-conductors.

Referring to FIGS. 14-16, spreading tool or device 35 can be used for spreading conductors 18 apart from each other and maintaining a fixed spread distance for the attachment of a spacer device 10. The spreading tool 35 can have first 36a and second 36b spreading arms with respective hubs 39a and 39b at their proximal ends. The spreading arms 36a and 36b can be rotatably or pivotably connected together at hubs 39a and 39b along a pivot point or axis 38 by bolt 20, nut 22 and washers 24. The spreading arms 36a and 36b can have a construction similar to that of spacer device 10, in that the arms 36a and 36b can have column lengths 12a, thickened portions 16, and end portions 16b extending along

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longitudinal axes 48. Clamps 14 can be secured to the distal ends of the arms 36a and 36b at end portions 16b. The dimensions of these features can be similar to those previously described. In the embodiment depicted, each arm 36a and 36b can have two column lengths 12a that are separated from each other by a thickened portion 16. A handle 40 having a knob 42 can also be rotatably or pivotably connected along pivot point or axis 38 to the spreading arms 36a and 36b. The handle 40 has a hub 41 which can be rotatably secured to hubs 39a and 39b by the bolt 20, nut 22 and washers 24. Referring to FIG. 16, hubs 39a and 39b can each have a notch 46a and 46b forming a mechanical stop 50a and 50b (FIGS. 17 and 18) which can interact to permit rotation of the arms 36a and 36b relative to each other between an acute angle θ_1 , and a reflex angle θ_2 that is just slightly beyond 180° by a few degrees, as seen in FIGS. 14 and 15. The mechanical stops 50a and 50b can have first stop surfaces 52a and 52b, which can engage each other when the arms 36a and 36b are at angle θ_1 , to prevent further rotation in that direction, and can also have second stop surfaces 54a and 54b, which can engage each other when the arms 36a and 36b are at angle θ_2 to prevent further rotation in that direction.

One use of the spreading tool 35 can be for installing spacer devices 10 that space conductors 18 about 30 to 32 inches apart from each other in a bundle having conductors 18 that are currently spaced only 18 inches apart. Referring to FIG. 14, the clamps 14 of the spreading tool 35 can be tightened in a rigid or fixed position relative to arms 36a and 36b, and positioned over or around the conductors 18 in a loose manner. For example, the jaws 13 can have about a $\frac{1}{4}$ gap clearance around the conductors 18 to allow for rotation of the conductors 18 within clamps 14. Clearance can also allow easy insertion of the conductors 18 into the clamps 14. The length of each arm 36a and 36b can be sized such that when the spreading tool 35 is held by handle 40, the arms 36a and 36b can hang downward by gravity and are at angle θ_1 by the nature of mechanical stops 50a and 50b. The distance D_1 , between the clamps 14 when arms 36a and 36b are at angle θ_1 can be about 18 inches to match the 18 inch distance between the longitudinal axes 19 of the conductors 18, thereby allowing quick and easy engagement of the jaw portions 13a of the clamps 14 from above by a user on a helicopter. In some embodiments the angle θ_1 can be about 60° . The user then can push downwardly on the handle 40 with a force or load L which pivots the arms 36a and 36b about axis 38 relative to each other while moving the axis 38 downwardly or toward the axis 44 extending between both conductors 18 from axes 19. This moves the clamps 14 and the conductors 18 outwardly relative to each other in the direction of arrows 56, until the mechanical stops 50a and 50b prevent further rotation of the arms 36a and 36b at the reflex angle θ_2 , where the axis 38 of hubs 39a and 39b are at a position offset, past or below axis 44 by a distance h, for example, $\frac{1}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ inches (FIG. 15). As the arms 36a and 36b pivot, clamps 14 can rotate relative to the conductors 18 due to the loose manner in which the clamps 14 are positioned around the conductors 18. In some embodiments, the angle θ_2 can be about 182° to 185° . In this position, the forces F pushing the conductors 18 towards each other lock the arms 36a and 36b in place, whereby the distance D_2 between the jaw portions 13a of the clamps 14 and the conductors 18 can be about 30 to 32 inches. A spacer device 10 for spacing conductors 18 a distance D_2 of about 30 to 32 inches can now be installed to achieve the benefits previously mentioned. Once the spacer device 10 is installed, the spreading tool 35 can be removed by pulling on the handle 40 to

disengage the arms **36a** and **36b** from the conductors **18**. In some situations, the handle **40** can be rotated about axis **38** to the opposite side whereby the arms **36a** and **36b** can be spread by pulling the handle **40**, and removed by pushing.

In some embodiments, the mechanical stops **50a** and **50b**, and arms **36a** and **36b**, can be configured to provide other angles θ_1 and distances D_1 and D_2 , as desired. The mechanical stops **50a** and **50b** can have other suitable configurations, and can be located outside the hubs **39a** and **39b**. The clamps **14** can be set to rotate relative to arms **36a** about axes **14a**, if desired. Although clamps **14**, and arms **36a** and **36b** having a similar design to spacer device **10** are shown, it is understood that in some embodiments, the arms **36a** and **36b** can have other suitable configurations. For example, the arms **36a** and **36b** can be formed of round, oval, square, rectangular, polygonal or complex curved tubing or solid members, or can have an I beam cross section. In addition, a version of the clamps **14** can be integrally formed with the arms **36a** and **36b**, or the clamps **14** can be omitted, with the arms **36a** and **36b** having slots or openings for engaging the conductors **18**. Although the spreading tool **35** is typically formed of aluminum, alternatively, other suitable materials can be employed such as steel, wood, composites, fiberglass, etc.

Referring to FIGS. **19-21**, spacer device **75** is another embodiment of the present invention. The spacer rod **12** can be shorter than the spacer rod in spacer device **10**, and have two column lengths **12a**, a central thickened portion **16**, and two thickened end portions **16b** at opposite longitudinal or distal ends. The column lengths **12a** and thickened portion **16** can have similar construction, dimensions and/or ratios as previously described. Two clamps **14** similar to those previously described for spacer device **10**, can be rotatably coupled to the spacer rod **12** at end portions **16b** about axes **21** of the end portions **16b**, and axes **14a** of the clamps **14**. The end portions **16b** can be generally tongue shaped and have flat lateral face surfaces **25** for fitting between the hub portions **23** of the clamps **14**. The end portions **16b** can differ from those in spacer device **10** by each having a pair of clamp stop structures **16c** located on opposite sides of the end portion **16b** for engaging clamp surfaces **74** of a clamp **14**, and limiting rotation of the clamp **14** between the clamp stop structures **16c**. A curved or rounded distal tip or end **16d** extending a distance X distally beyond axes **21** and **14a**, can allow rotation of the clamps **14** distally around the end **16d** for moving between the clamp stop structures **16c**.

Each end portion **16b** can have elongate flat surfaces or faces extending on opposite sides of the longitudinal axis **17** of spacer rod **12** by a distance or width Y to form the clamp stop structures **16c**. The distance or width Y can be considerably beyond or wider than the minimum thickness or diameter d_m of the column lengths **12a**. The flat surfaces of the clamp stop structures **16c** can be parallel to the axis **17** and orthogonal or perpendicular to faces **25**. The length of the flat surfaces forming the clamp stop structures **16c** can extend inwardly away from the distal ends **16d** of spacer rod **12** and the axes **21** and **14a** by a distance X_2 , which can be at least the distance X_1 to the location of the engaging outer opposed surfaces **74** on the clamps **14**, and can be slightly greater, as shown. Referring to FIGS. **19** and **20**, the distance X_1 can be to the perpendicular edge or face of the head of bolt **20**, or nut **22** (shown in FIG. **5**). The distance X_1 extends to the location on the clamp **14** that forms a rotatable radius location that engages the clamp stop structure **16c** when rotated around axis **14a**. With the axis of rotation of the clamps **14** being about axis **21** and axis **14a**, and being orthogonal to the longitudinal axis **17** of spacer rod **12** and

the longitudinally extending direction of the flat surfaces of the clamp stop structures **16c**, rotation of the clamps **14** in the direction of arrows **76** is stopped when outer opposed surfaces **74** aligned with axis **17** engage the surfaces of the clamp stop structures **16c**. Referring to FIG. **19**, bolt **20** and its axis **15** can be positioned to align along a common plane with axis **17** and the perpendicular edge or face surfaces of the head of bolt **20** or nut **22** can engage the surfaces of the clamp stop structures **16c** to stop rotation of the clamps **14** at a desired \pm angle A relative to the longitudinal axis **17** of the spacing rod **12**, such as seen in FIG. **22**. Depending upon the dimensions Y and X_2 of the clamp stop structures **16c**, and the location and configuration of the engaging clamp surfaces **74**, the angle A can vary, but in the embodiment shown in FIGS. **19** and **20**, can be $\pm 110^\circ$. In other embodiments, the angle A can be $\pm 120^\circ$. In some embodiments, the clamp stop structures **16c** do not have to be parallel to axis **17** but can be angled, curved or can be protrusions positioned at distance X_2 . In addition, the outer opposed surfaces **74** of clamps **14** that engage the clamp stop structures **16c** do not have to be the heads of bolts **20** or nuts **22**, but can be surfaces of the jaws **13** of the clamps **14**, and can include structures, bumps, protrusions, etc., extending along or from the jaws **13**. The clamp stop structures **16c** can prevent the clamps **14** from rotating into contact with the column lengths **12a** of the spacer rod **12**, which could cause bending or damage thereof. Bolts **20** rotatably coupling the clamps **14** to the spacer rod **12** about axes **14a**, can extend through corona rings or doughnuts **70** located on opposite sides of the clamps **14** to stop or prevent corona discharge on the bolts **20**, heads, threads and nuts **22**.

Referring to FIG. **21**, the distance B between axes **21** of the end portions **16b** can often be about 12 inches or 15 inches. These sizes can allow the clamps **14** of spacer device **75** to be secured to two sub conductors in a twin bundle. The shorter size can be for providing vertical spacing of conductors that are vertically spaced apart, with a generally vertical orientation of the spacing rod **12**, and the longer size can be for providing a horizontal spacing of conductors that are horizontally spaced apart, with a generally horizontal orientation of the spacing rod **12**. For an 18 inch spaced horizontal bundle of conductors, one or both clamps **14** can be positioned in a rotated position such as about 60° relative to axis **17** of the spacer rod **12**. This initial set up can allow the clamp **14** to rotate about 50° in one direction and about $60^\circ + 110^\circ$ in the other direction before hitting the clamp stop structures **16c**. Such rotation can cause rotation and twisting of the conductors to reduce lift and control galloping due to wind. With regard to a 12 inch spaced vertical bundle of conductors, the clamps **14** can be initially positioned generally horizontally, with the spacer rod **12** being generally vertical. Operation can be similar for reducing lift and controlling galloping.

Referring to FIG. **22** in some embodiments, spacer device **75** can have a spacer rod **12** that is longer than seen in FIGS. **19** and **21**, such as in spacer device **10**.

Referring to FIGS. **23-26**, spacer or spacing device **80** is another embodiment of the present invention which can withstand higher compressive loads. Spacer device **80** can differ from spacer device **75** in that the bar, spacer rod or member **120** has column lengths **12a** that have a tapering I-beam cross section which symmetrically tapers down in size relative to two longitudinal orthogonal directions or planes that extend along and intersect along the longitudinal central axis **17** (FIG. **25**). One or a first plane can be an upright vertical or major plane that extends in the direction of upright, vertical or major axis **84a**, and the other, or

second plane can be a lateral, horizontal or minor plane that extends in the direction of lateral, horizontal or minor axis **84b**. The I-beam cross section of the spacer rod **120** can have peripheral or outer edges or flanges **82a** that are thickened relative to thinner inner web portions **82b** in the lateral direction of axis **84b** to provide structural strength while being light weight. As can be seen in FIGS. 24-26, the spacer rod **120**, column lengths **12a** or flanges **82a** symmetrically angle, taper, decrease or narrow in size inwardly laterally (FIG. 26) relative to the major plane formed by axes **84a** and **17**, moving away from the central thickened portion **16** until reaching the end portions **16b**. In addition, the height of the spacer rod **120**, column lengths **12a** or flanges **82a** angles, tapers, decreases or narrows in size (FIG. 24) relative to the minor plane formed by axes **84b** and **17**, until reaching the end portions **16b**. The flanges **82a** can have the same height in the direction of the major axis **84a**, so that the height of the web portion **82b** becomes smaller. The central thickened portion **16** can have a rounded periphery that has the same height or dimension in the direction of major axis **84a** as the location of the exterior surfaces of the flanges **82a** of the column lengths **12a** at the joining surfaces (where they join the central thickened portion **16**) and can be integrally formed or transitioned thereto, as seen in FIG. 24. In addition, the thickness T_r of the central thickened portion **16** can have the same dimension in the direction of the minor axis **84b** as the exterior edges of flanges **82a** of the column lengths **12a** at the joining surfaces, and can be integrally formed or transitioned thereto (FIG. 26). The end portions **16b** can have rounded peripheries such as in the embodiments of FIGS. 7 and 8A, and can be the same thickness as the minimum thickness d_m of the column lengths **12a**, where the column lengths **12a** join the end portions **16b**. The clamp stop the structures **16c** on end portions **16b** can be rounded instead of having elongate flat surfaces.

In one embodiment, the spacer rod **120** can be about 17 inches long with a minimum thickness d_m in the direction of minor axis **84b** of about $\frac{5}{8}$ inches. The spacer rod **120** and column length **12a** can taper down in the direction of minor axis **84b** from the thickness of T_r of about $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches of the thickened portion **16**, down to the thickness d_m . The thickened portion **16** can have a length or diameter d_r of about 2 inches. The column lengths **12a** can have a length L_c of about $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and the length, distance or span S between centers of thickened portion **16** and end portions **16b** can be about $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches. The end portions **16b** can have a diameter of about 2 inches and a thickness of about $\frac{5}{8}$ inches. The thickness T_r can be about 2 times the thickness d_m and the length d_r can be at least about 3 times the thickness d_m . The ratio L_c/d_m can be about 18 and/or under, such as about 5 to 18, or about 8 to 9 (8.8). The ratio T_r/d_m can be about 1.5 to 3, such as about 2. The ratio d_r/d_m can be about 2 to 5, such as about 3 to 4 (3.2). Web portion **82b** can be about $\frac{3}{8}$ inches thick along axis **84b**, and flanges **82a** can each be about $\frac{1}{2}$ inches high along axis **84a**.

In one embodiment, the spacer device **80** having a spacer rod **120** with such dimensions described above can be rated for about 4000 pounds in compression and about 5500 pounds in tension, which is below the test results for actual fracture.

Referring to FIGS. 27-30, spacer or spacing device **180** is another embodiment of the present invention. Spacer device **180** can differ from spacer device **80** in that the bar, spacer rod or member **220** is shorter in length than spacer rod **120**. In one embodiment, the spacer rod **220** can be about 10 inches long with a minimum thickness d_m in the direction of minor axis **84b** of about $\frac{5}{8}$ inches. The thickened portion **16**

can have a thickness T_r of about $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches and a length or diameter d_r of about 2 inches. The column lengths **12a** can have a length L_c of about 2 inches, and the length, distance or span S between centers of thickened portion **16** and end portions **16b** can be about 4 inches. The end portions **16b** can have a diameter of about 2 inches, and a thickness of about $\frac{5}{8}$ inches. The thickness T_r can be about two times the thickness d_m and the length d_r can be at least about 3 times the thickness d_m . The ratio L_c/d_m can be about 18 and/or under, such as about 3 to 4 (3.2). The ratio T_r/d_m can be about 1.5 to 3, such as about 2. The ratio d_r/d_m can be about 2 to 5, such as about 3 to 4 (3.2). Web portion **82b** can be about $\frac{3}{8}$ inches thick, and flanges **82a** can be about $\frac{1}{2}$ inches high.

In some embodiments, the spacer device **180** can have a spacer rod **220** with such dimensions described above and can be rated for about 2500 to 4000 pounds in compression and about 8000 pounds in tension.

Referring to FIG. 31, bar, spacer rod or member **220a** is another embodiment of a spacer rod in the present invention, which differs from spacer rod **220** in that the outer rounded periphery of the thickened portion **16** extends outwardly beyond the surfaces of the column lengths **12a** in the direction of major axis **84a** as shown.

While this invention has been particularly shown and described with references to example embodiments thereof, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that various changes in form and details may be made therein without departing from the scope of the invention encompassed by the appended claims.

For example, the devices described above and shown in the drawings are not limited for use with electrical transmission lines, but can also be used for support or suspension cables, for example, towers, bridges, etc. In addition, the sizes or dimensions of the devices and their features can vary depending upon the application at hand. Although the components are typically integrally cast from aluminum for weight and manufacturing purposes, it is understood that other suitable metals and materials can be used, and that other configurations of the components and manufacturing methods can be employed.

What is claimed is:

1. A spacer device comprising:

an elongate spacing member extending along a longitudinal axis for securing to electrical transmission lines, and having a minimum thickness d_m , at least one thickened portion having a thickness T_r and length d_r being positioned intermediate along the spacing member to form at least two column lengths L_c separated by the at least one thickened portion, each column length L_c having at least a location with the minimum thickness d_m , the thickness T_r and length d_r of the at least one thickened portion being at least two times the minimum thickness d_m to form at least one end support for the at least two column lengths L_c such that the at least two column lengths L_c behave as separate Euler type columns for producing increased Euler buckling strength with a minimal increase in weight, wherein each column length L_c tapers down in size to the minimum thickness d_m .

2. The spacer device of claim 1 further comprising first and second clamps rotatably secured to opposite ends of the spacing member for securing to respective electrical transmission lines.

3. The spacer device of claim 1 in which the thickened portion has a thickness of T_r that is at least two times the minimum thickness d_m of the spacing member, and a length d_r that is at least three times the minimum thickness d_m .

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4. The spacer device of claim 1 in which the spacing member has a column length to minimum thickness L_c/d_m ratio of about 18 or under, a thickened portion thickness to spacing member minimum thickness T_t/d_m ratio of about 1.5 to 3, and a thickened portion length to spacing member minimum thickness d_t/d_m ratio of about 2 to 5 for producing increased Euler buckling strength with a minimal increase in weight.

5. The spacer device of claim 1 in which the at least one thickened portion is integrally formed on the spacing member.

6. The spacer device of claim 1 in which each column length L_c has a tapering I-beam cross section that tapers relative to two orthogonal planes.

7. The spacer device of claim 6 in which the two tapering column lengths L_c are connected to respective end portions.

8. The spacer device of claim 7 in which the minimum thickness d_m is about $\frac{5}{8}$ inches, the thickness T_t is about $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches, the length d_t is about 2 inches, and the column lengths L_c are about 2-5 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

9. A spacer device comprising:

an elongate spacing member extending along a longitudinal axis for securing to electrical transmission lines, and having a minimum thickness d_m , at least one thickened portion having a thickness T_t and length d_t , being positioned intermediate along the spacing member to form at least two column lengths L_c separated by the at least one thickened portion, each column length L_c having at least a location with the minimum thickness d_m , each column length L_c having a tapering I-beam cross section that tapers down in size to the minimum thickness d_m relative to two orthogonal planes, the thickness T_t and length d_t of the at least one thickened portion being at least two times the minimum thickness d_m to form at least one end support for the at least two column lengths L_c such that the at least two column lengths L_c behave as separate Euler type columns for producing increased Euler buckling strength with a minimal increase in weight; and

first and second clamps rotatably secured to opposite ends of the spacing member for securing to respective electrical transmission lines.

10. A method of spacing two electrical transmission lines with a spacer device comprising:

securing an elongate spacing member to the two electrical transmission lines, the elongate spacing member extending along a longitudinal axis and having a minimum thickness d_m , at least one thickened portion having a thickness T_t and length d_t , being positioned intermediate along the spacing member to form at least two column lengths L_c separated by the at least one thickened portion, each column length L_c having at least a location with the minimum thickness d_m , the thickness T_t and length d_t of the at least one thickened portion being at least two times the minimum thickness d_m to form at least one end support for the at least two column lengths L_c , such that the at least two column lengths L_c behave as separate Euler type columns for producing increased Euler buckling strength with a minimal increase in weight, wherein each column length L_c tapers down in size to the minimum thickness d_m .

11. The method of claim 10 further comprising:

securing the elongate spacing member to the two electrical transmission lines with first and second clamps that are rotatably secured to opposite sides of the spacing member.

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12. The method of claim 10 further comprising providing the thickened portion with a thickness of T_t that is at least two times the minimum thickness d_m of the spacing member, and a length d_t that is at least three times the minimum thickness d_m .

13. The method of claim 12 further comprising providing the spacing member with a column length to minimum thickness L_c/d_m ratio of about 18 or under, a thickened portion thickness to spacing member minimum thickness T_t/d_m ratio of about 1.5 to 3, and a thickened portion length to spacing member minimum thickness d_t/d_m ratio of about 2 to 5 for producing increased Euler buckling strength with a minimal increase in weight.

14. The method of claim 13 further comprising integrally forming the at least one thickened portion on the spacing member.

15. The method of claim 10 wherein each column length L_c has a tapering I-beam cross section that tapers relative to two orthogonal planes.

16. The method of claim 15 wherein the two tapering column lengths L_c are connected to respective end portions.

17. The method of claim 16 wherein the minimum thickness d_m is about $\frac{5}{8}$ inches, the thickness T_t is about $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches, the length d_t is about 2 inches, and the column lengths L_c are about 2-5 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

18. A method of spacing two electrical transmission lines with a spacer device comprising:

securing an elongate spacing member to the two electrical transmission lines with first and second clamps that are rotatably secured to opposite ends of the spacing member, the elongate spacing member extending along a longitudinal axis and having a minimum thickness d_m , at least one thickened portion having a thickness T_t and length d_t , being positioned intermediate along the spacing member to form at least two column lengths L_c separated by the at least one thickened portion, each column length L_c having at least a location with the minimum thickness d_m , each column length L_c having a tapering I-beam cross section that tapers down in size to the minimum thickness d_m relative to two orthogonal planes, the thickness T_t and length d_t of the at least one thickened portion being at least two times the minimum thickness d_m to form at least one end support for the at least two column lengths L_c , such that the at least two column lengths L_c behave as separate Euler type columns for producing increased Euler buckling strength with a minimal increase in weight.

19. A spacer device comprising:

an elongate spacing member extending along a longitudinal axis for securing to electrical transmission lines, and having a minimum thickness d_m , at least one thickened portion having a thickness T_t and length d_t , being positioned intermediate along the spacing member to form at least two column lengths L_c separated by the at least one thickened portion, each column length L_c having at least a location with the minimum thickness d_m , the thickness T_t and length d_t of the at least one thickened portion being at least two times the minimum thickness d_m to form at least one end support for the at least two column lengths L_c , the spacing member having a column length to minimum thickness L_c/d_m ratio of about 18 or under, a thickened portion thickness to spacing member minimum thickness T_t/d_m ratio of about 1.5 to 3, and a thickened portion length to spacing member minimum thickness d_t/d_m ratio of about 2 to 5, such that the at least two column lengths L_c behave as

separate Euler type columns for producing increased Euler buckling strength with a minimal increase in weight.

20. A method of spacing two electrical transmission lines with a spacer device comprising: 5
securing an elongate spacing member to the two electrical transmission lines, the elongate spacing member extending along a longitudinal axis and having a minimum thickness d_m , at least one thickened portion having a thickness T_t and length d_t being positioned intermediate along the spacing member to form at least two column lengths L_c separated by the at least one thickened portion, each column length L_c having at least a location with the minimum thickness d_m , the thickness T_t and length d_t of the at least one thickened portion being at least two times the minimum thickness d_m to form at least one end support for the at least two column lengths L_c , the spacing member having a column length to minimum thickness L_c/d_m ratio of about 18 or under, a thickened portion thickness to spacing member minimum thickness T_t/d_m ratio of about 1.5 to 3, and a thickened portion length to spacing member minimum thickness d_t/d_m ratio of about 2 to 5, such that the at least two column lengths L_c behave as separate Euler type columns for producing increased Euler buckling strength with a minimal increase in weight. 25

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