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Heat exchanger with movable tube assemblies.

A heat exchanger has a duct (11) through which heated gases pass. A plurality of tube panels (14) are within the duct and each panel includes a header (18) from which a plurality of tubes extend. A pair of hangers (30) support each tube panel to form space in the duct above and below the tube panel for maintenance access. Baffles (41,42) restrict the flow of gases through these spaces. Each hanger has a bracket (28) attached to the header of the tube panel with a rod (32) pivotally coupled to the bracket and extending through an aperture in the roof of the duct. The hangers are connected to structural members on the exterior of the duct in a manner that maintains the tube panel in a fixed position during operation of the heat exchanger, while allowing movement of a panel within said duct for maintenance. A jack (50) is also provided to raise and lower a panel (14).

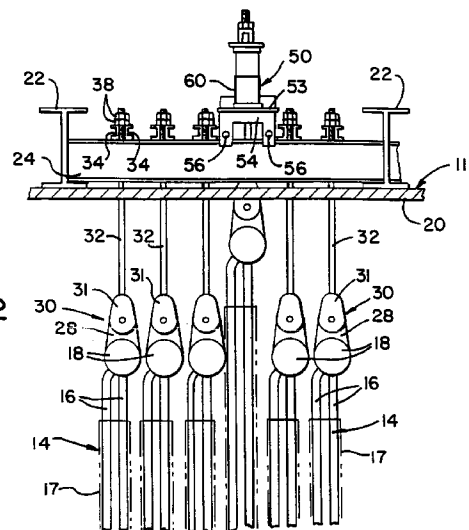


FIG. 2

Background of the Invention

The present invention relates to heat exchangers and steam generators; and specifically to heat recovery steam generators.

A considerable amount of heat energy remains in the exhaust gases from many combustion processes. Several decades ago, this "waste heat" was allowed to escape through the smoke stack. With a heightened desire to conserve energy and make combustion systems more efficient, the waste heat now is frequently passed through a heat recovery steam generator (HRSG) to transfer much of the remaining heat from the exhaust gases to water that flows through the steam generator. The resulting steam can be used to generate electricity or used in equipment converts the energy in the steam into mechanical energy.

Typical HRSG systems comprise a large steel duct that channels hot gas over several banks of internal tubes which contain water. As the hot gases pass over the tubes, heat is absorbed by water flowing in the tubes. For maximum heat transfer, conventional systems are designed so that the tube banks are packed very densely into the duct. The dense configuration forces the hot gas to flow directly over the tube surfaces. The ends of the tube banks are in close proximity to the walls of the duct to eliminate passages above, below and on either side of the banks through which the hot gases could bypass the tubes. Designers of conventional HRSG systems often went to great lengths to plug even the smallest openings or cracks that might allow such bypassing to occur.

Although the dense tube configuration optimized the efficiency of HRSG systems, it made the systems very difficult to maintain. If the interior tubes of a bank needed repair, large portions of the system had to be disassembled in order to gain access to those tubes. The disassembly was very difficult and extremely time consuming, necessitating a long down time for the HRSG system. Even inspection of the inner tubes was difficult due to the dense configuration.

Therefore, it is desirable to provide a mechanism which allows relatively easy access to the tube panels within the HRSG system, while providing a very densely packed tube configuration for maximum operating efficiency.

Summary of the Invention

A heat exchanger, such as a heat recovery steam generator, comprises a duct through which heated gas passes. A plurality of tube panels are located in the duct with each panel including a header from which a plurality of tubes extend. A separate hanger is attached to each tube panel and extends through an aperture in a roof of the duct. The hangers support the tube panels to create spaces in the duct above

and below the tube panel which are used by maintenance personnel for access the panels. Baffles can be provided in the duct to restrict gas flow in these spaces which otherwise would bypass the plurality of tube panels.

A structural member extends on the exterior of the duct. A mechanism attaches at least one, and preferably each, hanger to the structural member to support the tube panels. The mechanism is operable to allow the respective tube panel or panels to be moved vertically within the duct. In the preferred embodiment the apertures in the roof are elongated to permit horizontal, as well as vertical, movement of the panels.

A jack is disclosed which rests on the structural member and connects to the hangers for raising and lowering the panels. The jack may have rollers or other means that enable it to be moved along the structural member to transfer the tube panel horizontally.

Brief Description of the Drawings

Figure 1 is a cross sectional view through a heat exchanger according to the present invention;

Figure 2 is an enlarged view of a portion of Figure 1 showing a tube panel in a raised state for inspection or repair;

FIGURE 3 is a cross sectional view taken at right angles to Figure 2 across the width of the heat exchanger;

FIGURE 4 is a view taken along line 4-4 in Figure 3; and

FIGURES 5 and 6 illustrate two orthogonal plane views of another embodiment of a jack for moving the tube panels.

Detailed Description of the Invention

Although the present invention is being described in the context of a heat recovery steam generator, it has equal application to other types of heat exchangers such as boilers, superheaters and economizers.

With reference to Figure 1, a heat recovery steam generator 10 includes a duct 11 with a gas inlet 12. Exhaust gases from a combustion process flow in the direction indicated by arrow 13 from the inlet 12 through the duct. The inlet opens into a large section of the steam generator which for example is fifty feet high, twelve feet across (in the dimension into the paper) and 120 feet long. The gas continues to flow through the duct 11 to an outlet (not shown) on the remote end from the inlet 12.

Within duct 11 are a plurality of tube panels 14. Each panel consists of several tubes 16. The tubes 16 of each panel extend between an upper and a lower pipe header 18 and 19, respectively. Both headers 18

and 19 have a plurality of openings therein into which the tubes 16 are welded to provide fluid communication between the header and the tubes. Although not shown in the drawings, the headers of adjacent panel are connected together by additional piping so that water can be introduced into one of the headers, flow through the tubes 16 and out the other header. The welds of the tube to the headers are a common point of failure during operation of the steam generator 10.

As shown in Figures 1 through 3, a first set of vertical tubes 16 extend from the upper header 18 in a common plane across the duct. A second coplanar set of vertical tubes also extends from the upper header 14 offset from the first set along the direction of the gas flow. A separate helical fin assembly, indicated by broken lines 17, is attached to the exterior of each tube to increase heat transfer. As in previous steam generator designs, the tubes are closely spaced with respect to each other in both the longitudinal and transverse directions. This close spacing optimizes the heat transfer between the hot gas flowing through duct 11 and the water flowing through tubes 16.

Each panel 14 of tubes is suspended from the roof 20 of the duct 11 by a pair of hangers 30 thereby creating spaces in the duct above and below the panel. As shown in Figures 2 and 3, each hanger 30 includes a bracket 28 welded to the top surface of the upper pipe header 18. The bracket 28 has an aperture therethrough that receives a pin which attaches the bracket to a coupling member 31 at one end of a support rod 32. This assembly provides a pivotal connection of the tube panel 14 to the support rod 32. The support rods extend upward through elongated apertures 26 in roof 20.

A number of I-beams 22 extend transversely across the duct 11 on the exterior of roof 20 to support the tube assemblies. The ends of transverse beams 22 attach to vertical structural members (not shown) on the sides of the duct. Two pairs of longitudinal I-beams 24 are attached to and extend between adjacent transverse beams 22. As shown in Figure 3, the longitudinal beams 24 of each pair are spaced apart and lie on either side of a elongated aperture 26 in the roof 20.

With reference to Figures 2 and 4, a C-support 34 bar is placed between the upper surfaces of the pair of longitudinal beams 24 on both sides of each support rod 32. The support rod passes upward through an aperture in a hanger plate 36 which spans adjacent C-support bars 34. The upper end of the support rod 32 is threaded and receives a pair of nuts 38 which are locked in place by tightening them against one another. A short portion of the support rod extends beyond the nuts 38.

During operation of the steam generator 10, a cover box 40 is placed over and is welded to the longitudinal beams 24 to seal the aperture 26 in the duct

roof 20 as shown in Figure 1. The remaining figures of the drawings show the cover box 40 removed as occurs during inspection and maintenance of the steam generator. Additional means (not shown) can be used in sealing the aperture to prevent the exhaust gas flowing through the duct from travelling up into the cover, thereby bypassing the tube panels 14.

The upper header pipes 18 are suspended approximately three feet below the roof 20. This space is sealed by baffle plates 41 bolted to the interior of the roof 20 before and after each group of panels 14. The baffle plates abut the upper pipe header 18 of the panels on each end of the group. These baffle plates 41 close the gap between the upper pipe headers 18 and the roof 20, thereby preventing the exhaust gases from passing above the group of tube panels. A similar pair of baffles 42 are welded to the floor 21 of the duct to likewise block exhaust gases from flowing in the space between the lower pipe headers 19 and the duct floor. Each group of tube panels 14 is separated by a cavity 44.

Access openings 46 are cut in the roof 20 and are sealed by doors 48 during generator operation. These openings allow service personnel to enter the duct for inspection and repair of the tube panels 14. Similar openings 49 are located on the sidewall of the duct 11 near the floor 21, allowing maintenance personnel access to the space below each group of panels.

The steam generator 10 is specifically designed for ease of maintenance. The spaces above and below each group of panels allow a technician to enter the duct and inspect the welds where tubes 16 attach to the upper and lower headers 18 and 19. The suspension of the tube panels 14 permits vertical movement for inspection and servicing as shown in Figure 2. To gain access to a specific panel, the connection of its upper and lower headers to interconnecting piping is severed. The panel then is raised or lowered by a pair of jacks 50 which are installed for that purpose.

Each jack 50 has a base 52 formed by a horizontal plate 53 and two spaced apart vertical plates 54 extending downward from the base plate 53. Each of the vertical members 54 has an inverted U-shape with the cross member of the U welded to base plate 53. Each leg of the U-shaped vertical member 54 has an aperture therethrough containing a ball bearing. A pair of rollers 56 extends between the vertical members 54 and fit into the ball bearings. When the jack 50 is placed on the steam generator 10, the rollers rest on the longitudinal beams 24 and permit movement of the jack along the beams.

With reference to Figure 4 as well as Figure 3, the base plate has a central opening 58 therethrough which is positioned over the end of a support rod 32. A pair of fluid operated cylinders 60, such as hydraulic or pneumatic cylinders, are mounted vertically on the upper surface of the base plate 53 of each jack 50. A jacking frame 62 extends between the upper ends of

the cylinders 60. The jacking frame has a central aperture which is aligned with the end of the support rod 32 when the jack is positioned on the steam generator 10.

Prior to placing a jack 50 over the end of a support rod 32, a coupling 66 at one end of a rod extension 64 is threaded onto the upper end of the support rod 32. The other end of the extension rod 64 projects through the aperture in the jacking frame 62 and has a nut 68 threaded thereon.

To raise a panel 14, the jacks 50 are placed in their compressed state and attached to the support rods 32. Fluid is then pumped into each of the cylinders 60 thereby raising the jacking frame 62 and the panel 14 as shown in Figure 2. Maintenance personnel then can enter the duct through one of the roof access openings 46 and visually inspect the welds along the raised upper pipe header 18.

In a similar manner, the tube panel 14 can be lowered for inspection of the lower pipe header 19. To accomplish this, a pair of jacks 50 are positioned over the pair of support rods 32 for the panel and extended to substantially their full length by pumping hydraulic fluid into the cylinders 60. Nuts are tightened on the extension rods 64 which have been attached to the ends of the support rods 32. Additional fluid is pumped into the cylinder 60 to raise the panel 14 slightly. With reference to Figures 2 and 4, raising the panel 14 removes the pressure exerted by the hanger plates 38 on the C-supports 34. This permits the C-supports to be extracted between the legs of the U-shaped vertical members 54 of the jacks. The removal of the C-supports 34 allows the panel 14 to be lowered within the duct 11. To do so, fluid is released gradually from the cylinders 60 causing them to collapse under the weight of the panel 14 so that the lower pipe header 19 drops downward. A technician then can crawl along the floor 21 of the duct and inspect the welds on the lower pipe header 19. If necessary for access both above and below the panels 14, the baffles 41 and 42 can be removed temporarily.

Following inspection, the panel is raised so that a gap exists between the hanger plates 36 and the longitudinal beams 24 which is slightly greater than the height of the C-supports 34. The C-supports are inserted between the legs of the U-shaped vertical members 54 of the jack 50. Next the panel is lowered so that the hanger plates 34 drop onto the C-supports 34. At this time, the extension rods 64 can be removed and the jacks 50 transferred to raise or lower another panel 14 within the steam generator 10.

As noted previously, each of the support rods 34 extends through an elongated aperture 26 in the roof 20. This aperture runs substantially the full distance between the transverse beams 22. Should it become necessary, access between the tube panels 14 of a group can be accomplished by moving the panels along these apertures 26. To do so, the appropriate

baffles 41 and 42 are removed and the jacks 50 are attached to the outermost panel 14 of the group. That panel then is raised upward and moved longitudinally by rolling the jack 50 over the longitudinal beam 24 until the panel has been pushed away from the others. The outermost panel then can be lowered onto properly positioned C-supports 34 and the jack 50 used to similarly move other panels of the group until a space exists adjacent the panel that requires inspection or repair. The maintenance personnel enter the space created between the panels to perform the necessary work.

At the completion of the maintenance, the panels are moved back into their original positions and reattached to the interconnecting piping which carries water to and from the panel assembly. The doors over openings 46 and 49 are closed and the cover box 40 welded in place to seal the apertures 26 in roof 20.

The structure of the present steam generator 10 provides access spaces between the groups of tube panels 14 and in the duct 11 above and below the tube panels. These spaces are blocked off by baffles to prevent the flow of exhaust gases bypassing the panel assembly during operation of the steam generator. The hanging support structure enables a tube panel 14 to be moved both vertically and horizontally as needed. Thus, the structure of the steam generator 10 provides a densely packed bundle of tubes which is desirable for efficient heat transfer while facilitating access for maintenance.

Figures 5 and 6 show orthogonal views of another embodiment of a jack 70 that can be used to move the tube panels 14 within the steam generator 10. Jack 70 is formed by a base assembly 71 and an upper jacking frame 72. The base assembly 71 includes a flat base plate 53 identical to the one shown in Figure 4 which bears the same reference numeral. Two hollow tubular members 74 and 75 are mounted on the upper surface of the base plate 53 on opposite sides of the central opening 58. A separate pair of side braces 76 is attached to each of the tubular members 74 and 75 to provide lateral support. A pair of cross bars 77 extend between the side braces 76 on opposite sides of the central opening 58. The side braces 76 and cross bars 77 are welded to each other, to the base plate 53 and to tubular members 74 and 75.

Two mounting bars 78 are welded on the under side of the base plate 53 beneath the side braces 76. A ball bearing assembly 80 is bolted at each end of the mounting bars 78. Two rollers 82 extend between opposing pairs of ball bearing assemblies 80. These roller bars 82 rest on the longitudinal I-beams 24 when the jack 70 is placed on the steam generator 10. The length of the roller bars and the spacing between the ball bearing assemblies 80 is selected so that the jack 70 can span the upper plates of a pair of longitudinal I-beams 24 as shown in Figure 3 with respect to jack 50. In this position, the ball bearing assemblies guide

the jack 70 as it rolls along the I-beams preventing the jack from riding off the beam.

A fluid operated cylinder 84 is mounted vertically within each of the tubular members 74 and 75 of the base assembly 71. Each cylinder 84 has a fitting 85 through which hydraulic fluid can be pumped and withdrawn to extend and contract the cylinder.

The jacking frame 72 has a cross plate 86 with a cylindrical member 87 mounted on its upper surface over a centrally located aperture through the cross plate. The rod extension 64 extends through the aperture in cross plate 86 and another aperture in cylindrical member 87 when the jack 70 is placed on the steam generator 10. The cylindrical member 87 is supported by two side plates 88 welded to opposite sides of the member and to the cross plate 86. Two cylinder tubes 89 are welded to the underside of the cross plate 86 and spaced apart to receive the upper ends of the cylinders 84.

When fluid is pumped to extend each of the cylinders 84, the jacking frame 72 is raised with respect to the base assembly 71. This action pulls the extension rod 64 and the support rod 32 upward with respect to the duct 11 on which the jack 70 is mounted. By pushing laterally, the jack 70 can be rolled along the longitudinal I-beams 24. The cylinders 84 collapse when the fluid is released, thereby lowering the jacking frame toward the base assembly 71. The contraction of the cylinders 84 is aided by the weight of the tube panel 14 that is exerted downward on the jacking frame 72.

Claims

1. A heat exchanger comprising:
 - a duct through which heated gas can pass and having a floor and a roof;
 - a plurality of tube assemblies within the duct, each assembly including a header from which a plurality of tubes extend;
 - a separate hanger is attached to each tube assembly and extends through an aperture in the roof of said duct, each hanger supporting the attached tube assembly within the duct in a position in which spaces exist between the assembly and the roof and between the assembly and the floor;
 - means, attached to a portion of at least one hanger that extends through the aperture in the roof of said duct, for supporting the hanger, said means being operable to allow the respective tube assembly or assemblies to be moved vertically within said duct.
2. The heat exchanger as recited in Claim 1 further comprising a baffle within the duct to prevent gas from flowing through the spaces and bypassing

a flow path among the tube assemblies.

3. The heat exchanger as recited in Claim 2 wherein said baffle is removably attached to said duct.
4. The heat exchanger as recited in any one of Claims 1 to 3 wherein each hanger comprises:
 - a bracket attached to the header;
 - an elongated member extending through an aperture in the roof of said duct; and
 - a coupling member pivotally connecting said bracket to said elongated member.
5. The heat exchanger as recited in any one of the preceding Claims wherein said means for supporting the hanger comprises:
 - a pair of structural members extending across the exterior of the roof with the aperture in the roof located between said structural members; and
 - a support extending between said structural members and to which the hanger is releasably attached.
6. The heat exchanger as recited in Claim 1 wherein:
 - each hanger comprises a bracket attached to the header, and a rod coupled to said bracket and extending through an aperture in the roof of said duct; and
 - said means for supporting the hanger includes a pair of structural members extending substantially parallel to each other across the exterior of the roof and spaced apart with the aperture in the roof located therebetween, a support extending between said structural members and having an aperture through which the rod extends, and a fastener removably attached to the rod for restricting movement of the rod through the aperture in the support.
7. The heat exchanger as recited in any one of the preceding Claims wherein the aperture in the roof of said duct is elongated to permit horizontal as well as vertical movement of a tube assembly within said duct.
8. The heat exchanger as recited in any one of the preceding Claims further comprising a jack which engages a hanger for raising and lowering a tube assembly within said duct.
9. The heat exchanger as recited in Claim 8 wherein said jack has rollers for moving the tube assembly horizontally within said duct.
10. The heat exchanger as recited in any one of Claims 1 to 7 further comprising a jack for raising

and lowering a tube assembly, said jack comprising:

a base;

a pair of rollers rotably attached to an underside of said base to allow the jack to ride on either the duct or the means for supporting the hanger; 5

a pair of fluid operated cylinders coupled at one end portion to said base and projecting upward from said base on opposite sides of the aperture; 10

a jacking frame attached to another end portion of both fluid operated cylinders; and

a means for attaching said jacking frame to said hanger of the tube assembly. 15

11. The jack as recited in Claim 10 wherein said means for attaching said jacking frame to the hanger comprises an extension which can be attached to a section of the hanger that extends through the aperture in the roof of said duct, and which extends through an aperture in said jacking frame, said extension having an adjustable means which limits downward movement of the extension through the aperture in said jacking frame. 20 25

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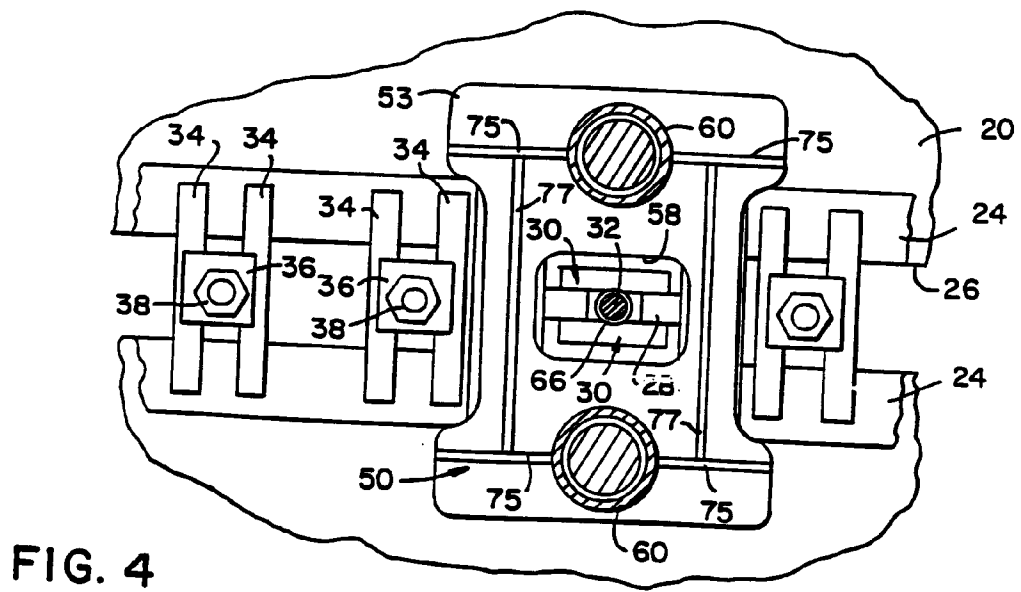
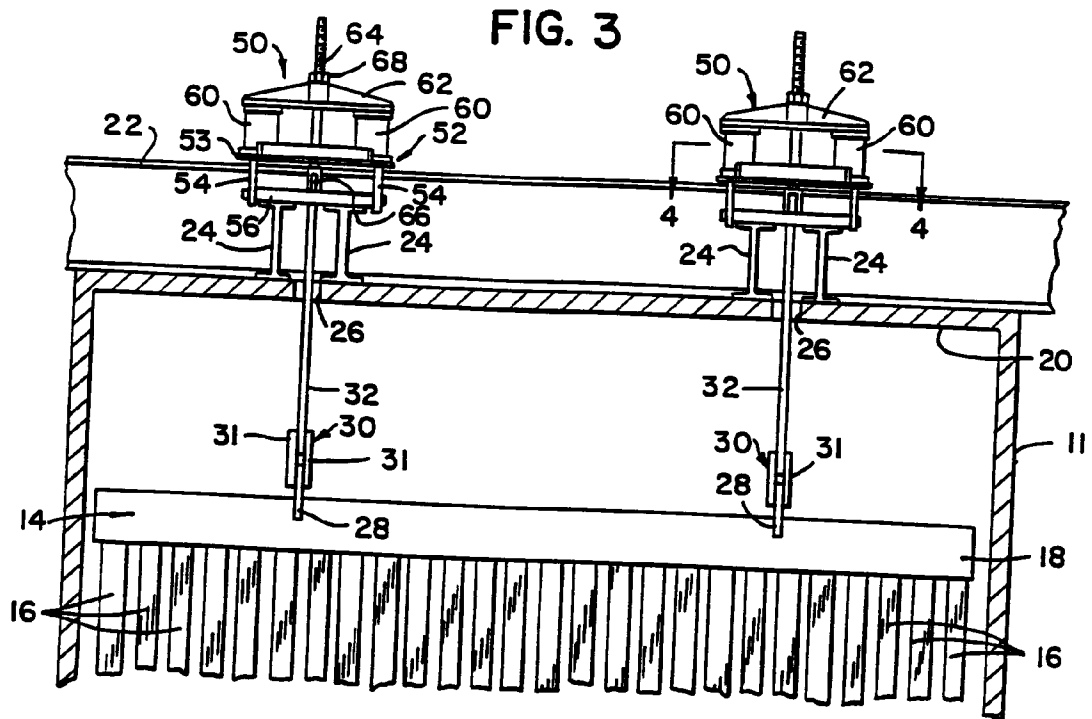
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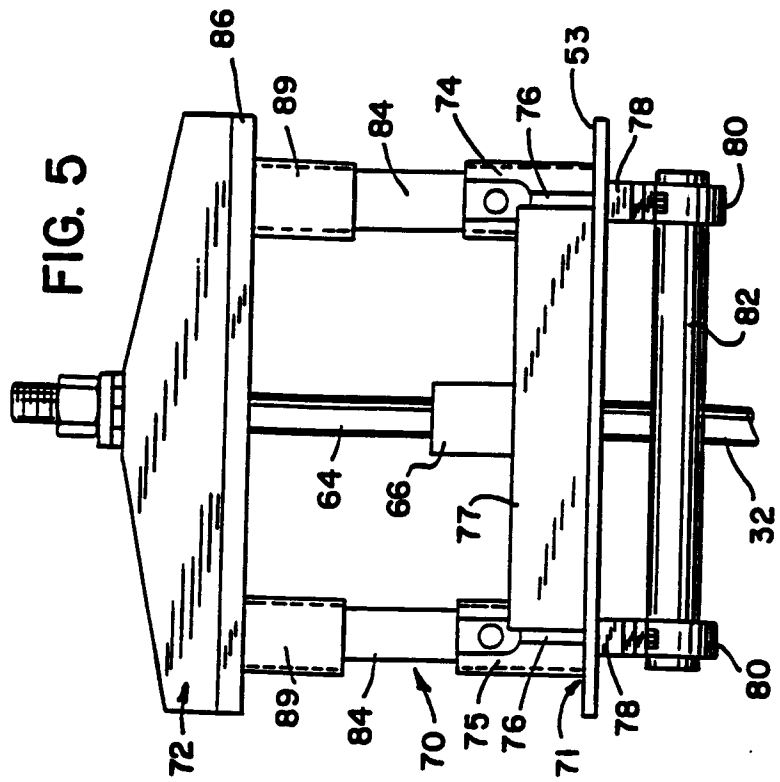
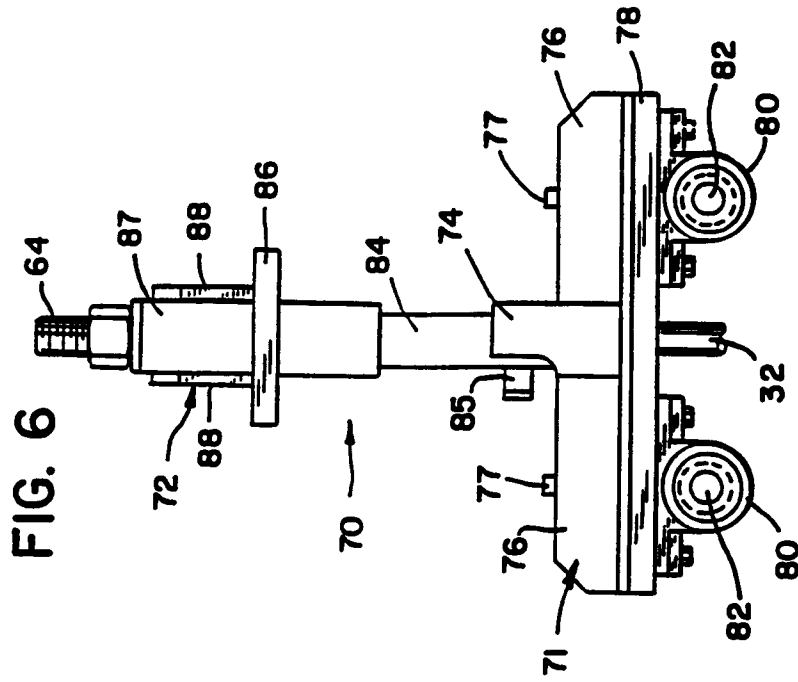
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European Patent
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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number

EP 92 30 9038

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int. Cl.5)
A	DE-A-3 441 972 (BEGORODSKIJ) * page 5, line 14 - page 8, line 10; figures * ---	1	F22B37/20 F28F9/00
A	US-A-4 685 426 (KIDALOSKI) * column 2, line 62 - column 3, line 20 * * column 4, line 66 - column 5, line 17; figures * ---	1,2	
A	US-A-3 751 783 (ROBERTS) * the whole document * -----	1	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int. Cl.5)
			F22B F28F
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 12 JANUARY 1993	Examiner VAN GHEEL J.U.M.
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